READING AKKADIAN PRAYERS & HYMNS

An Introduction

Edited by
Alan Lenzi

Ancient Near East Monographs – Monografías sobre el Antiguo Cercano Oriente
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AKKADIAN PRAYERS AND HYMNS

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Number 3
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A Reader

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Society of Biblical Literature
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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....vii

About This Book.....ix

Abbreviations.....xix

INTRODUCTION.....1

Prayers and Hymns from a Religious Studies Perspective.....2
Prayers and Hymns in a General Mesopotamian Perspective.....8
An Introduction to Particular Classes of Mesopotamian Prayer.....23
Incantation-Prayers.....24
Shuillas.....24
Namburbis.....36
Dingirshadibbas.....40
Ershaḫungas.....43
Ikribus.....46
Tamitus and Other Queries.....49
Letter-Prayers ("Gottesbriefe").....53
Royal Prayers.....55
Hymns.....56
The Use of Akkadian Prayers in the Study of the Hebrew Bible.....61

OLD BABYLONIAN TEXTS.....69

Prayers of the Diviner
An OB Prayer To the Gods of the Night.....71
An OB Ikribu-Like Prayer to Shamash and Adad.....85

Others
An OB Letter-Prayer to Ninmug.....105
An OB Royal Hymn to Ishtar.....111

STANDARD BABYLONIAN TEXTS.....131

Incantation-Prayers
Ghosts of My Family 1.....133
Girra 2.....145
Gods of the Night 1.....157
Ishtar 24.....169
Nusku 12.....179
Salt.....189
Shamash 73.....197

Shuillas

Anu 1 217

Ea 1a 227

Gula 1a 243

Ishtar 2: “The Great Ishtar Prayer” 257

Marduk 4 291

Marduk 2 313

Nabu 1 325

Nergal 2 339

Nisaba 1 351

Shamash 1 367

Sin 1 385

Namburbis

Ea, Shamash, and Asalluḫi 1 403

Shamash 25 421

Dingirshadibbas

To Personal Deities 431

Others

An Ershaḫunga to Any God 447

 A Tamitu to Shamash and Adad 465

A NB Royal Prayer to Nabu 475

A Hymn to Marduk: *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* I 1–40 483

Contributors 503

Index 505

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Alan Lenzi
Stockton, CA
March 18, 2011

About This Book

ALAN LENZI

This book is a pedagogical tool intended to increase reading fluency for second or third semester Akkadian students by way of annotated readings. It is equally an introduction to Akkadian prayers and hymns from ancient Mesopotamia: selected classes, their vocabulary and phraseology, and to some extent their ritual uses. Finally, the introductory material in this book exposes readers to theoretical and critical perspectives that will be useful in the study of other ancient religious texts. More advanced students of Akkadian may therefore find something profitable here as well.

The idea for this book was inspired by tools developed in Biblical and Classical Studies in which lexical and grammatical help is printed on the same page as the ancient text to be read.[1] This arrangement cuts out the time-consuming process of looking up words and allows the intermediate student to cement their basic grammatical knowledge and expand their vocabulary through extensive reading. There is currently nothing like this available for Akkadian.

As many students will attest, academic books are often quite expensive, taking important tools out of the reach of economically-challenged students and/or those who may be without access to a well-stocked academic research library. It is gratifying therefore to make this volume available free of charge through the SBL's electronic open-access Ancient Near East Monograph series. If the reader finds this tool useful, please feel free to share it with others.

Because prayers and hymns—but especially prayers—display stereotyped forms and utilize a manageable core of vocabulary, selecting texts from this body of material seemed a perfect choice for this kind of book. But selecting prayers and hymns also serves educational interests beyond Akkadian fluency for the book's targeted audiences. For Assyriological students, learning the forms and vocabulary of prayers and hymns as well as something about the addressees

[1] See, e.g., Peter Jones, *Reading Ovid: Stories from the* Metamorphoses (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Ehud Ben Zvi, Maxine Hancock, and Richard A. Beinert, *Readings in Biblical Hebrew: An Intermediate Textbook* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); and Richard J. Goodrich and David Diewert, *A Summer Greek Reader: A Workbook for Maintaining Your Biblical Greek* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001).

of such is an important step toward gaining a broad familiarity with the Akkadian religious textual corpus. The contents and format of this book will facilitate acquiring that familiarity with relative ease, preparing them for advanced study. Although Classicists are increasingly taking an interest in Akkadian, the majority of non-Assyriological students who study Akkadian comes from the ranks of biblical scholarship. As there is a long history of interaction between Assyriology and Biblical Studies in the matter of prayers and hymns, selecting texts from this corpus again seemed to serve an important segment of Akkadian students. It is hoped that this volume will fill a gap in the available resources to these Akkadian students and spur other scholars on to produce similar pedagogical materials for different genres, especially historical inscriptions.

THE SELECTION OF TEXTS IN THIS VOLUME:

There are a great many texts one might choose to include in a volume of Akkadian prayers and hymns. We have made our very limited selection according to a few guiding principles.

1. *Texts included in this volume represent several different kinds of Akkadian prayers*. Not every category of prayer is represented, but a good variety is offered. Due to the great number of extant shuilla- and incantation-prayers as well as their importance in both Assyriological research and the comparative work of biblical scholars, we have included a very generous selection from these categories. As hymns are not nearly as numerous and those preserved are often quite long (e.g., two hundred lines), only a couple of samples have been included. But as one will see, most prayers contain a hymnic element. So even when reading a prayer, one frequently will gain some exposure to the language of praise as well.

2. *Texts included in this volume reflect a wide variety of addressees*. We have included prayers to most of the high gods of the Mesopotamian pantheon (Enlil, Ashur, and Ninurta are obvious omissions) as well as examples of prayers to personal gods, familial ghosts, and materials used in the cult. Some deities are very richly represented among extant prayers (e.g., Shamash, Ishtar, and Marduk). We have reflected this popularity by including several prayers addressed to these gods.

3. *Texts included in this volume have a suitable modern edition available.* The treatments offered in this volume do not produce a new critical edition of the prayer or hymn under study. That epigraphic and text critical work has been done, freeing contributors to focus on helping students understand the grammar and meaning of the texts. Satisfying the first two criteria above, however, took precedence over this criterion. There are a few cases therefore in which contributors were forced to use a dated edition (e.g., from Erich Ebeling's *Die akkadische Gebetsserie "Handerhebung." Von neuem gesam-*

melt und herausgegeben (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1953; abbreviated, Ebeling, *AGH*).[2]

4. *Texts included in this volume have accessible modern translations available.* Although each treatment includes a fresh translation, choosing to treat previously translated texts ensured that each text would be relatively well-understood. This gave contributors conversation partners in their annotations and offers students more resources for in-depth study.

5. *Texts included in this volume are written in either the Old Babylonian* (*OB*) *or Standard Babylonian* (*SB*) *dialects of the Akkadian language.* Prayers and hymns are preserved in various Akkadian dialects. But most students begin learning Akkadian with the OB dialect and then progress to SB. It seemed pedagogically appropriate therefore to include prayers in these two dialects (as opposed to also including some in Assyrian or peripheral dialects). As the greatest number of prayers and hymns are preserved in SB and most second year Akkadian students will be ready to read these, the SB prayers comprise the majority of texts treated in this volume.

THE CONTENTS OF EACH TEXTUAL TREATMENT:

Each textual treatment in this volume is self-contained. A student can begin reading with text no. 13 (𒀭𒊩), for example, and have all the information necessary within the treatment to read and understand that text.[3] This feature allows students to read the prayers in any order; it also gives professors the flexibility to assign any sub-set of prayers in the volume without concern that the student will be missing something assumed from an earlier textual treatment. Although this manner of presentation results in significant overlap and repetition, this is pedagogically beneficial. Seeing the meanings of the same word over and over will help a student lock it into their memory. As the student's reading fluency increases, they can easily pass over glosses and annotations that are no longer necessary to them. Each treatment includes the following sections:

An introduction to the deity/entity addressed or praised
An introduction to the prayer
The text of the prayer or hymn in transliteration
Notes on the text, including a normalization
Comparative suggestions
A translation in English
The text of the prayer in a cuneiform font

[2] One of the most pressing desiderata in Assyriological research related to prayers is a comprehensive edition of all of the known Akkadian shuillas.
[3] Cross-referencing between treatments is limited, generally reserved for major issues or reference to deities.

Deity. Each treatment begins with a succinct introduction to the entity addressed or praised in the text. In most cases, this means an introduction to a deity. But in a few treatments, the addressee is undetermined (see the Prayer to Any God on page 447) or not a deity (as in the prayers to familial ghosts, see page 133, and salt, page 189). These introductions attempt to give something more than what one finds in Jeremy Black's and Anthony Green's useful book, *Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia*,[4] but less than the very rich and technical entries in the *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* (*RlA*). Although the content of the introductions varies, the ones concerned with deities usually include a discussion of the deity's sphere of power, their position in the pantheon, their original city, the locations of their major temples, their relationships to other deities, their iconographic and astrological representations, and their divine number. The purpose of this section is to help the reader gain some familiarity with the deity so as to understand the broader context of the prayer. The reader who works through this book will have substantially enriched their knowledge of a variety of non-obvious beings from ancient Mesopotamia.

The Prayer. The second section of each treatment gives an introduction to the prayer or hymn under consideration. In the case of many SB prayers, these texts are identified by the name of the deity invoked followed by a number (e.g., Shamash 1 or Nusku 12). This identification convention follows Werner Mayer's catalog of incantation-prayers in his important work *Untersuchungen zur Formensprache der babylonischen „Gebetsbeschwörungen"* (abbreviated, Mayer, *UFBG*).[5] Although one might expect these introductions to vary due to each text's individual character, genre, or availability of data, they also vary due to the different interests of the contributing authors. Some contributors give more attention to the ritual uses of the particular text under discussion while others prefer to exposit the text's literary features and themes. This diversity of approach will benefit the reader by illustrating the diverse results various analytical and interpretive methods can produce. The one common denominator in all of the treatments is the identification of the structure of the prayer, that is, how it "works" rhetorically.

Essential Bibliography. After the two introductions, each treatment includes an essential bibliography for both the deity and the text treated. The full citation for works cited by author or by author and short title in the footnotes to the introductions will be found here. In the case of prayers and hymns, the bibliography includes references to the most recent edition, several translations, and an important work or two that has discussed the text at some length—if available. As the title of the section indicates, this is only *essential* bibliography as judged by the contributors and the editor. It is not exhaustive.

[4] *An Illustrated Dictionary* (illustrations by Tessa Richards; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992); henceforth, Black and Green.

[5] Werner Mayer, *Untersuchungen zur Formensprache der babylonischen „Gebetsbeschwörungen"* (Studia Pohl: Series Maior 5; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1976), 375–437.

Edition: Knowing the edition upon which the treatment's text is based was considered essential. Full publication information for each witness to or manuscript (MS) of the text was not deemed essential. Usually, one can consult the text's most recent edition to learn the identity of the various manuscripts (MSS, that is, tablets) that attest the text. And this will tell the reader where the tablets are housed and assist them in locating the pertinent hand copies or photos for further study. Generally, only in cases where the edition is very dated (e.g., when the only edition is in Ebeling's *AGH*) or is in press (e.g., the shuilla to Nisaba) has information about the tablets and/or their copies been included in the bibliography or its footnotes. Consulting tablets (deciphering or collating actual tablets and reading from photos or hand copies of tablets) is a very important part of Assyriological research and therefore an essential element of Assyriological training. The present volume, however, is not intended to be a handbook on cuneiform epigraphy or a manual on how to produce a critical edition. It is a tool to facilitate more fluent reading in Akkadian religious texts. For readers who want to learn more about the textual basis for an individual prayer, the best place to start is the most recently published critical edition.

Translations: References to the translations by Foster (English), Seux (French), and Falkenstein/von Soden (German), when available, are included among the essential bibliography, although contributors may choose to add others. Reference to these translators is made by way of their last name alone. Foster's translations may be found in Benjamin R. Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature* (3d ed.; Bethesda: CDL Press, 2005); Seux's are in Marie-Joseph Seux, *Hymnes et Prieres aux Dieux de Babylonie et d'Assyrie* (Paris: Les Éditions de Cerf, 1976); and von Soden's (in one of our prayers, Falkenstein's) are in Adam Falkenstein and Wolfram von Soden, *Sumerische und akkadische Hymnen und Gebete* (Die Bibliothek der Alten Welt; Stuttgart: Artemis-Verlag Zürich, 1953), 233–407. For students interested in digging deeper into the text of a prayer or hymn, these translations, especially Foster and Seux, are a treasure trove of useful information, often offering different understandings of the text, pointing to further bibliography, and sometimes including new witnesses discovered since the production of the text's critical edition.

The Text in Transliteration. Anyone wishing to utilize Akkadian in their research will encounter the language in transliteration, that is, in a sign for sign system of notation using Latin letters and various diacritical marks. The center piece of each treatment therefore is the text of the prayer or the hymn in transliteration. The text is printed a few lines at a time at the top of the page.

The text utilized in each treatment generally follows the reconstruction of the most recent critical edition with one major exception: in order to avoid overloading the student's eye with epigraphic technicalities, *half-brackets in the editions were ignored*. Moreover, no textual apparatus is included and there has been no attempt to provide in the notes a comprehensive discussion of all of the variants in all of the MSS of each prayer or hymn. Such would have transformed this work into something quite different. Occasionally, a departure from the critical edition's reconstructed text is identified in a note at the foot of the page. Depar-

tures may be something as simple as selecting a variant reading rather than the one preferred by the critical edition because the variant provided a pedagogically advantageous text. For example, the edition may have selected the harder reading (*lectio difficilior*) when deciding between variants whereas the contributor to this volume preferred the one best suited to a pedagogical context. In other cases, the critical edition required the contributors to make a decision about which lines to include and which lines to exclude. For example, various MSS of a prayer may preserve a self-introduction formula at different places in the prayer or one MS may insert an *attalû*-formula while others lack it. If the critical edition did not reconstruct an "original" text (as, e.g., in the editions for Sin 1 and the Universal Namburbi), the contributors had to make decisions about what would be used in their treatment and what would be excluded. It must be emphasized therefore that *the texts used in this edition are no substitute for the consultation and careful study of a modern critical edition and the individual witnesses that preserve the text*. For readers who want to understand the textual diversity of a given prayer or take their study of its text to an advanced level, they *absolutely must* consult the text's modern critical edition.

A word should also be said here about the use of sequential line numbering in the presentation of the texts. Critical editions may reconstruct line numbers based on what the editor has chosen as the primary textual witness (usually dubbed MS A). This, for example, was the procedure used by Werner Mayer in the selection of prayers he edited at the back of *UFBG* (439–541). In other cases, the editor contrives a system of line numbering that makes the best sense of the preserved, perhaps fragmentary witnesses and allows for designating what the editor deems secondary. When variant lines occur, they are given number-letter designations (e.g., 7a and 7b would occur after line 7 of the main text) or simply placed in a footnote. The potential for confusion in this diversity of methods in text editions is compounded by the fact that some texts are part of a larger, multi-tablet work. For example, the prayers to salt and to Girra included in this volume come from the eight-tablet, anti-witchcraft series called *Maqlû*, "burning," and the hymn to Marduk comes from the four-tablet poem *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*. The texts of these prayers are properly referenced by the tablet in which the text occurs and then the line number on that tablet (e.g., I 1–40, which means Tablet I, lines 1 through 40).

For pedagogical purposes, a simplified consistent numbering method was decided upon. Throughout the volume, each treatment begins with line number 1 and proceeds sequentially to the text's end, even when the critical edition or the position of the text in a multi-tablet series indicated otherwise. There is only one exception to this practice. In the Universal Namburbi, there is a gap (due to a tablet break) of undetermined length in the middle of the text (see page 412). When the text resumes, the line numbering in this treatment begins with 1′. As is standard in Assyriological literature, the prime marker (′) indicates that the absolute line numbering cannot be determined due to a lack of evidence among the witnesses (because of a break on a tablet).

Annotations. At the foot of the page are brief notes on each line of Akkadian text. Every logogram in the text is given its Akkadian equivalent and the first occurrence of each word in the prayer or hymn is defined briefly.[6] At the discretion of the contributor, grammatical and syntactical help is provided for difficult forms or complex sentences. In many notes, the contributor also offers brief commentary that may highlight a literary feature, a ritual gesture, and/or a broader textual, linguistic, or cultural item suggested by the text. At the end of each note the text of the Akkadian line is given again in normalized Akkadian, that is, in a Latin-character transcription that approximates how the language would have sounded in ancient times. This normalization is intended to help clarify the grammar of the line.

Assyriologists have differing ideas about how to normalize an Akkadian sentence. Even the dictionaries disagree sometimes about the normalization of individual words (e.g., they often disagree about vowel length and doubled consonants). For consistency's sake, contributors were asked to follow John Huehnergard's system of normalization as practiced in his popular pedagogical grammar, *A Grammar of Akkadian*, 2d ed.,[7] and the normalization of words according to the handbook dictionary most students will use in their early studies: *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian* (*CDA,*[8] based on von Soden's *AHw*[9]). But there is an important caveat with regard to the latter's use. Unlike the *CDA*, which always gives the lemma in OB form, the glossed words and normalized lines of text in this volume always use OB forms in OB texts and SB forms in SB texts (e.g., *amātu* instead of *awātum* in SB texts). An alternate normalization or the OB form is sometimes given alongside an Akkadian word that is glossed in the notes. The alternates are given in order to facilitate looking these words up in the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* (CAD)[10]—the indispensible reference lexicon of the Akkadian language—or the OB-based *CDA*. After gaining some familiarity with the basic sound changes from OB to SB Akkadian (see Huehnergard's Appendix D) and some practice, navigating through these minor differences and disagreements among the dictionaries will be no trouble.

Another point about normalization requires our brief attention. SB Akkadian shows more freedom in the use of case-endings (final vowels) on substantives

[6] Given the multiple contributors to the volume and the varied contexts in which words are used, the editor has not attempted a thorough standardization of the meanings of words that recur frequently.

[7] HSS 45; Cambridge: Harvard Semitic Museum / Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005.

[8] Jeremy Black, Andrew George, and Nicholas Postgate, ed. (SANTAG 5; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1999). For addenda, corrigenda, and supporting bibliography, go to: http://www.trin.cam.ac.uk/cda archive/default.htm.

[9] Wolfram von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, 3 Vols. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1972–1985).

[10] *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1956–2011). Electronic versions of this multi-volume, standard reference dictionary are freely available for download as PDF files at the following URL: http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/pubs/catalog/cad/.

than does OB Akkadian. Late copies of SB compositions (from, e.g., Babylon, Sippar, and Uruk) show even more freedom—some might say disarray—in this respect. Normalizations in this volume have not forced these texts to conform to OB grammatical expectations. The case ending in the text at the top of the page is also adopted in the normalization in the notes. If the tablet reads a genitive where one expects an accusative, the normalization will show the genitive. The contributors often alert the student to these instances in their grammatical comments.

Comparative Suggestions. Comparativism may have fallen out of style in many fields (due to Postmodernism's particularism and the many pitfalls inherent in comparative practices) but it continues unabated among Akkadian-reading biblical scholars.[11] Given the series and publisher of the present volume, it seemed appropriate to include in each treatment a section in which the contributor offers ideas about how the Akkadian prayer might tie in to biblical literature on a linguistic, thematic, or cultural (including religious) level. Assyriological students may not be interested in this section. It is easily skipped. Biblical students may wish for more. That is often facilitated by references to the biblical text and/or secondary literature. It should be emphasized that contributors were instructed to offer only brief *suggestions* not fully developed arguments, which could easily—but were not allowed to—over-shadow the entire treatment.

Translation. The translations offered for each text in this volume tend toward the literal side of the translation spectrum. They are not intended to be polished, literary renderings. A literal-tending translation gives the reader one more layer of help to understand the Akkadian grammar. As the reader advances in their knowledge of Akkadian, their translations should progress toward a more sophisticated translation technique. In fact, we encourage readers to rework the translations offered here in light of their own interpretive decisions and as their Akkadian fluency increases.[12]

[11] For an important essay that argues for the continued usefulness of the comparative method in Religious Studies, see Jonathan Z. Smith, "In Comparison a Magic Dwells," in his *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism; Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 19–35. A more recent book that builds on Smith's view (actually reprinting his essay in full on pp. 23–44) is Kimberley C. Patton and Benjamin C. Ray, *A Magic Still Dwells: Comparative Religion in the Postmodern Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

[12] A brief note about inclusive language: Throughout the prayers, the supplicant is referred to in Akkadian with masculine singular pronouns. Although in some cases, it is clear that the supplicant is a man, there is no conclusive evidence known to me that the supplicant in all prayers was always male. Since the masculine grammatical gender was the default gender and since it seems unlikely to me that women never prayed or needed the services of an exorcist, it seems reasonable to believe women prayed other prayers besides those dealing with specifically women's issues (e.g., Ishtar 28 and 29). Rather than cluttering up the text with "he or she" or "her/him," etc. when referring to the supplicant, I have advised contributors to use the pronouns "they, them, their, theirs." For justification of using a third person plural pronoun as a gender neutral third person singular pronoun, see the online dictionary maintained by Oxford University Press at this address: http://oxforddictionaries.com/page/384 (accessed last, March 12, 2011). On the

Cuneiform. At the end of each treatment the Akkadian text is presented in a Unicode cuneiform font. Unlike the sophisticated shading of signs in the most recent volumes of the State Archives of Assyria Cuneiform Text (SAACT) series, there is no indication of restored or broken signs. The available Unicode fonts did not allow this kind of precision. Moreover, in some cases, the signs are not quite perfectly shaped. The cuneiform is given here simply so readers can practice their knowledge of the script. This neat, uniform presentation of the text in cuneiform is, of course, no substitute for reading from hand copies, photos of tablets, and eventually the tablets themselves. The reality on the tablets is much messier and, on first glance at least, more chaotic than anything a handbook can teach.

The font used for OB texts, Santakku, is based on the OB cursive sign list. The SB font is called Assurbanipal, based on the Neo-Assyrian inventory of signs. Both fonts were created by Sylvie Vanséveren at the Université Libre de Bruxelles.[13] Students wishing to work from the cuneiform are encouraged to print out a hardcopy of the pages containing this section and use it in tandem with the transliteration and notes.

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other hand, and despite the inconsistency, we have not rendered *māru*, "son," in an inclusive manner when it appears in the phrase *annanna mār annanna*, "so-and-so, son of so-and-so."

[13] The fonts are embedded in the PDF file and should display properly without installing the font. If, however, one wishes to obtain the fonts for other uses, they may be downloaded at the following URL:
http://www.hethport.uni-wuerzburg.de/cuneifont/Unicode%20fonts%20for%20Cuneiform.html
(last accessed February 15, 2011).

Abbreviations

Textual Symbols

!	Scribal error: incorrect sign in ancient text
?	Uncertain sign or text
[ ]	Break in text: proposed reconstructed text is placed inside
< >	Scribal omission: sign inserted by modern author; corrects text
« »	Scribal addition: an unnecessary sign written by ancient author; delete
()	In a translation, words unrepresented in the original language: provided to clarify meaning

General

AB	Assyriologische Bibliothek
AB	Anchor Bible Commentary Series
AbB	*Altbabylonische Briefe in Umschrift und Übersetzung*
ABD	David Noel Freedman, ed. *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. 6 Vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
ABRT	James A. Craig. *Assyrian and Babylonian Religious Texts*. 2 Vols. AB 13. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1895–1897.
acc.	accusative
adj.	adjective
ADFUW	Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft in Uruk-Warka
AEAD	Simo Parpola, ed. *Assyrian-English-Assyrian Dictionary*. Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2007.
AEM I/1	Jean-Marie Durand. *Archives Épistolaires de Mari I/1*. ARM 26. Paris: Editions Recherche sur le Civilisations, 1988.
AfO	*Archiv für Orientforschung*
AHw	Wolfram von Soden. *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*. 3 Vols. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1972–1985.
Akk.	Akkadian
ALASP	Abhandlungen zur Literatur Alt-Syren-Palästinas und Mesopotamiens
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ANET[3]	James B. Pritchard, ed. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. 3d ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.
AnSt	*Anatolian Studies*
AO	Der Alte Orient
AO	Tablets in the collection of the Louvre, Paris
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AoF	*Altorientalische Forschungen*
ARM	Archives royales de Mari
ASSF	Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicae
BaghM	*Baghdader Mitteilungen*
BAM	Franz Köcher. *Die babylonisch-assyrische Medizin in Texten und Untersuchungen*. 6 Vols. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1963–1980.
BH	Biblical Hebrew

BHS	Karl Elliger and Willhelm Rudolph, ed. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. 5th ed. Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 1990.
BibOr	Biblica et Orientalia
BiOr	*Bibliotheca orientalis*
Borger, *MZL*	Rykle Borger. *Mesopotamisches Zeichenlexikon*. AOAT 305. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2004.
BM	Tablets from the British Museum
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
CAD	A. Leo Oppenheim, Erica Reiner, Martha Roth, ed. *The Assyrian Dictionary of the University of Chicago*. Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1956–2011.
CANE	Jack M. Sasson, ed. *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. 4 Vols. New York: Scribner, 1995.
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CBS	Tablets in the University Museum, Philadelphia
CDA	Jeremy Black, Andrew George, and Nicholas Postgate, ed. *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*. SANTAG 5. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999.
CDLI	Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative
col.	column
COS	William H. Hallo, ed. *The Context of Scripture*. 3 Vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997–2003.
CRRAI	Comptes rendus de la Rencontre assyriologique internationale
CT	*Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum*, 58 Volumes
CThW	Calwer Theologische Monographien
CUSAS	Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology
DDD	Karel van der Toorn *et al*, ed. *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, 2d ed. Leiden: Brill / Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.
DN	divine name
d	dual
EA	El Amarna tablet
EAE	*Enūma Anu Enlil*
Ebeling, *AGH*	Erich Ebeling. *Die akkadische Gebetsserie "Handerhebung." Von neuem gesammelt und herausgegeben*. Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin. Institut für Orientforschung. Veröffentlichung 20. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1953.
Ebeling, *TuL*	Erich Ebeling. *Tod und Leben nach den Vorstellungen der Babylonier*. I. Teile: Texte. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1931.
ED	Early Dynastic
EJ^2	Fred Skolnik and Michael Berenbaum, ed. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. 2d ed. 22 Vols. Detroit: Macmillan, 2007.
ER	Mircea Eliade, Charles J. Adams *et al*, ed. *Encyclopedia of Religion*. 16 Vols. New York: Macmillan, 1987.
ET	English Translation
f, fem.	feminine
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FOTL	Forms of Old Testament Literature
GAG	Wolfram von Soden. *Grundriss der akkadischen Grammatik*. 3d ed. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1995.
HALOT	Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann Jakob Stamm, ed. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament in English*. Study Edition. Translated by M. E. J. Richardson. 2 Vols. Leiden: Brill, 2001.
HBS	Herders biblische Studien

Hecker, *TUAT* II/5	Willhelm H. Ph. Römer and Karl Hecker. *Lieder und Gebete*, fascicle 1, *Religiöse Texte*, vol. 2, Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1989.
HKL	Rykle Borger. *Handbuch der Keilschrift Literatur*. 3 Vols. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967–1975.
HSM	Tablets in the Harvard Semitic Museum
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
Hunger, *BAK*	Hermann Hunger. *Babylonische und assyrische Kolophone*. AOAT 2. Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker / Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1968.
IBRSup	Institute of Biblical Research Supplement
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
IM	Tablets in the Iraq Museum (Baghdad)
impv.	imperative
inf.	infinitive
JANER	*Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religion*
JANES	*Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
JESHO	*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSP	*Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
K.	Tablets from the Kuyunjik Collection of the British Museum
KAI	H. Donner and W. Röllig, ed. *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften.* 2d ed. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1966–1969.
KAR	Erich Ebeling. *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*. 2 Vols. WVDOG 28, 34. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1915.
KAV	Otto Schroeder. *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur verschiedenen Inhalts*. WVDOG 35. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1920.
King, *BMS*	Leonard W. King, ed. *Babylonian Magic and Sorcery. Being 'The Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand'. The Cuneiform Texts of a Group of Babylonian and Assyrian Incantations and Magical Formulae Edited with Transliterations and Full Vocabulary from Tablets of the Kuyunjik Collections Preserved in the British Museum.* London: Luzac, 1896.
KTU	M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín, ed. *Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit*. AOAT 24/1. Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker / Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1976.
Kunstmann, *BGB*	Walter G. Kunstmann. *Die babylonische Gebetsbeschwörung.* Leipziger semitische Studien, n. F. 2. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1932.
LKA	Erich Ebeling. *Literarische Keilschrifttexte aus Assur*. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1953.
Loretz-Mayer, AOAT 34	Oswald Loretz and Werner R. Mayer. *Šu-ila-Gebete: Supplement zu L. W. King: Babylonian Magic and Sorcery*. AOAT 34. Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker / Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1978.
LSS	Leipziger semitische Studien
LXX	Septuagint
m, masc.	masculine

Maul, *ZB*	Stefan M. Maul. *Zukunftsbewältigung: Eine Untersuchung altorientalischen Denkens anhand der babylonisch-assyrischen Löserituale (Namburbi)*. Baghdader Forschungen 18. Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1994.
Maul, *HB*	*'Herzberuhigensklagen': Die sumerisch-akkadischen Eršaḫunga-Gebete.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1988.
Mayer, *UFBG*	Werner Mayer. *Untersuchungen zur Formensprache der babylonischen „Gebetsbeschwörungen"*. Studia Pohl: Series Maior 5. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1976.
MB	Middle Babylonian
MS(S)	manuscript(s)
MSL	Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon
MT	Masoretic Text
MTSR	*Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*
NA	Neo-Assyrian
NABU	*Nouvelles assyriologiques breves et utilitaires*
NB	Neo-Babylonian
ND	Tablets from Nimrud
NIDB	Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, ed. *The New Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible*. 5 Vols. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2009.
OB	Old Babylonian
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OEANE	Eric M. Meyers, ed. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*. 5 Vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
OECT	Oxford Editions of Cuneiform Texts
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
Or n.s.	*Orientalia*, new series
Parpola, *LASEA* 2	Simo Parpola. *Letters from Assyrian Scholars*. Part II: Commentary and Appendices. AOAT 5. Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker / Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1983.
PBS	Publications of the Babylonian Section, University Museum, Philadelphia.
p, pl.	plural
PN	Personal Name
PSBA	*Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*
RA	*Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale*
RHR	*Revue de l'histoire des religions*
RIMA	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyria Periods
RlA	*Reallexikon der Assyriologie*
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
SAA 2	Simo Parpola and Kazuko Watanabe. *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths*. SAA 2. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1988.
SAA 10	Simo Parpola. *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars*. SAA 10. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1993.
SAA 11	F. M. Fales and J. N. Postgate. *Imperial Administrative Records, Part II: Provincial and Military Administration*. SAA 11. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1995.
SAA 18	Frances Reynolds. *The Babylonian Correspondence of Esarhaddon and Letters to Assurbanipal and Sin-šarru-iškun from Northern and Central Babylonia*. SAA 18. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 2003.
SAACT	State Archives of Assyria Cuneiform Texts
SAALT	State Archives of Assyria Literary Texts
SAAS	State Archives of Assyria Studies
SANE	Sources from the Ancient Near East
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization
s, sing.	singular

SB	Standard Babylonian
SBLWAW	Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World
SCHANE	Studies in the Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
Sm.	Tablets in the British Museum
SpBTU I	Hermann Hunger. *Spätbabylonische Texte aus Uruk*. Teil 1. ADFUW 9. Berlin: Mann, 1976.
SpBTU II	Egbert von Weiher. *Spätbabylonische Texte aus Uruk*. Teil 2. ADFUW 10. Berlin: Mann, 1983.
SpBTU III	Egbert von Weiher. *Spätbabylonische Texte aus Uruk*. Teil 3. ADFUW 12. Berlin: Mann, 1988.
SSN	Studia Semitica Neerlandica
StBoT	Studien zu den Bogazköy-Texten
STT	O. R. Gurney and J. J. Finkelstein. *The Sultantepe Tablets*. Volume 1. Occasional Publications of the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara no. 3. London: British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, 1957. O. R. Gurney and P. Hulin. *The Sultantepe Tablets*. Volume 2. Occasional Publications of the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara no. 7. London: British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, 1964.
Sum.	Sumerian
ŠL	*Šumerisches Lexikon*
TAPS	Transactions of the American Philosophical Society
Tawil, *ALCBH*	Hayim ben Yosef Tawil. *An Akkadian Lexical Companion for Biblical Hebrew: Etymological-Semantic and Idiomatic Equivalents with Supplement on Biblical Aramaic*. Jersey City: KTAV Publishing, 2009.
TB	Theologische Bücherei: Neudrucke und Berichte aus dem 20. Jahrhundert
TDOT	*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*
TUAT	*Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments*
UBL	Ugaritisch-biblische Literatur
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
Streck, VAB VII	Maximilian Streck. *Assurbanipal und die letzen assyrischen Könige bis zum Untergange Niniveh's*. 3 Vols. VAB VII. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1918.
VAS	Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler
von Soden, *TUAT* III/1	"»Weisheitstexte« in akkadischer Sprache, 1. Der leidende Gerechte." Pages 110–35 in *Weisheitstexte*, fascicle 1, *Weisheitstexte, Mythen und Epen*, vol. 3, Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1990.
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
WdO	*Die Welt des Orients*
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WVDOG	Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft
YNER	Yale Near Eastern Researches
YOS	Yale Oriental Series
YOS 11	Jan van Dijk, M. I. Hussey, and Albrecht Götze. *Early Mesopotamian Incantations and Rituals*. YOS 11. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985.
ZA	*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*
ZABR	*Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtgeschichte*
ZAH	*Zeitschrift für Althebräistik*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
Zimmern, *BBR*	Heinrich Zimmern. *Beiträge zur Erkenntnis der babylonischen Religion.* AB 12. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1901.
ZThK	*Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*

Introduction

ALAN LENZI, CHRISTOPHER FRECHETTE, AND ANNA ELISE ZERNECKE*

Interpreting textual remains from an ancient culture requires a reader to develop multiple competencies that will both situate the textual material in its original context and translate this material to the contemporary sphere in a manner that is authentic yet understandable. The interpreter of ancient texts requires more than a strong knowledge of the language used in the texts; they also need a theoretical interpretive framework suitable to the material at hand, a broad understanding of the historical, cultural, and textual issues surrounding the documents, and a literary competence in the specific genres to which the texts belong. Religious texts from ancient Mesopotamia present an array of challenges with regard to the acquisition of these intellectual tools, challenges which are compounded by the fact that the texts are often utilized in a comparative fashion. This introductory chapter is intended to help the reader of Akkadian prayers and hymns begin working through these complex issues and developing the multiple competencies required to interpret ancient prayers and hymns well.

First, this introduction sets out a general interpretive framework for defining and understanding prayer and praise within the various human activities we deem religious. Although space will not permit a full discussion of all the complexities involved, issues surrounding the definition of religion, the academic study of religion in a post-Enlightenment Western intellectual milieu, and the multi-faceted character of prayer and praise will receive some attention. The goal in this section, although apparently distant from Akkadian prayers and hymns, is to familiarize the reader with some broad trends in Religious Studies so as to sharpen their interpretive approach to the Akkadian materials.

Second, turning to ancient Mesopotamia, this introduction provides a general discussion of the definition of prayer and to some extent praise as they are applied to ancient Mesopotamian texts in order to fine tune these definitions to the Akkadian material. This inevitably brings up the thorny issue of how modern

* Although throughout the writing of this introduction we have enjoyed several collegial conversations and offered one another constructive criticism of the other's material, each scholar is responsible for their section(s) alone: Frechette for the shuilla-prayer discussion, Zernecke for the comparative discussion, and Lenzi for the remaining parts.

scholarly categorizations relate (or should relate) to the ancient scribal classificatory labels that were applied to the texts. The position adopted here is that the modern imposition of conceptual categories and definitions upon ancient texts is inevitable and can be quite useful for the modern scholar; however, one must also be ever vigilant to reflect upon the relationship between the modern and ancient manner of classifying texts lest one conflate one's own categories with those of the Mesopotamians and distort the material being interpreted.

Third, having explored the parameters of Akkadian prayer and praise in a general manner, the focus narrows to descriptions of the most important kinds of Akkadian texts scholars have usually classified as prayers. The goal in this section is to provide useful overviews along with essential bibliographical assistance that will help the reader understand the specific prayers included in this volume (and others they may read outside of this volume) within the context of prayers of the same class.

Finally, a brief survey of the use of Akkadian prayers in biblical scholarship concludes the introductory material. Akkadian prayers and hymns have a long history of comparative use, full of pitfalls, missteps, but also insights. This section informs the reader of the history of scholarship and offers suggestions for the way ahead.

Due to the length and varied content of the introduction, one might find it most useful to read the first two sections before reading any Akkadian texts and then return to the relevant part of the third section when one begins to read a prayer from a particular class. The fourth section may be read independently.

PRAYERS AND HYMNS IN A RELIGIOUS STUDIES PERSPECTIVE:

The various characteristics that comprise what is called "prayer" and "hymn" are commonly understood by contemporary people as falling within the conceptual domain of religion, a term readily understood when used in everyday conversation. Though a tacit definition of religion may be useful—indeed, necessary—in everyday life, it repays the careful student of another culture (and time!) to reflect upon issues surrounding the definition of religion, lest one impose one's own parochial understanding of religion on the culture under study in a prejudicial and/or uncritical manner. Of course, defining religion is rather complex and raises more issues than can be covered, let alone solved here. The following reflections therefore remain general and are only intended to introduce the philological student to some issues and contemporary literature that may contribute to the development of a general interpretive framework for Mesopotamian religious texts, especially prayers and hymns.

Like other abstract terms used in the social sciences—terms such as art, literature, or history—religion is not easily defined.[1] Unlike objective entities such

[1] This introduction is not the place to explore the definition of religion in great depth. The following social-scientifically-oriented works have shaped this brief presentation on the task of

as a book, a desk, or a tablet, scholars cannot simply point to the thing / concept "religion" and thereby make the referent of the term more or less clear to all with whom they would communicate. Scholars therefore must devise a technical definition. As one might imagine, there are no shortages of these in the literature. Classic theorists often looked to the supposed content of religion (substantivist definitions) or what religion putatively does (functionalist definitions) for help.[2] Attempts to define religion substantively may isolate one essential feature (an essentialist definition) that *really* captures the essence of religion (e.g., Frazer thought belief in divine beings was the essential ingredient) or may enumerate a series of family resemblances a number of which every example of religion will have. Attempts to define religion functionally tend to look for what religion does for/to its adherents: it provides psychological comfort (Freud), creates social solidarity (Durkheim), formulates "a general order of existence" that establishes "uniquely realistic" "moods and motivations" via a "system of symbols" (Geertz),[3] or creates a "false consciousness" (an ideology) that veils the true nature of economic exploitation of the masses by the owners of the means of production (Marx). Functionalist definitions may also take an essentialist approach, arguing that one function *really* explains what religion does and thereby captures its true nature or essence.

Both approaches have had their problems and detractors. Substantivist definitions might evoke accusations of prejudice, political bias, arbitrariness, or circularity. One might easily ask why a belief (intellectual assent) should define religion instead of, for example, a set of behaviors, or why a majority of broad features found in the (assumed) major world religions today should define religion universally (and from the past).[4] Even as functionalist definitions provide insight into those activities deemed religious, they run the risk of being applied in a metaphysically reductionistic manner; that is, they may explain religion

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defining and the actual definition of religion: William Arnal, "Definition," in *A Guide to the Study of Religion* (ed. Willi Braun and Russell T. McCutcheon; London and New York: Cassell, 2000), 21–34; Bruce Lincoln's chapter entitled "The Study of Religion in the Current Political Moment" in *Holy Terrors: Thinking about Religion after September 11* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003; 2d ed., 2006), 1–8; Melford E. Spiro, "Religion: Problems of Definition and Explanation," in *Culture and Human Nature: Theoretical Papers of Melford E. Spiro* (ed. Benjamin Kilborne and L. L. Langness; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 187–98, and Jonathan Z. Smith, "Religion, Religions, Religious," in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies* (ed. Mark C. Taylor; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 269–84.

[2] For a treatment of a number of classic theorists of religion, see Daniel Pals, *Eight Theories of Religion* (2d ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[3] See Clifford Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 90 and 91–123 for his elaboration.

[4] For criticisms of the former, see Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); for issues surrounding the latter, see Jonathan Z. Smith, "Classification," 41–43 in *Guide to the Study of Religion*.

away as nothing but psychology, sociology, biology, etc.[5] Or, functionalist definitions may fail to clarify how their proposed understanding of religion identifies a distinctive subset of human activity. Watching a football game or attending a rock concert can create social solidarity. Are these examples of religion? Finally, in as much as substantivist and functionalist definitions attempt to circumscribe the genuine essence of a "transhistorical and transcultural phenomenon," they may reflect a kind of epistemological idealism and/or conceal an implicit theological assumption on the part of their wielder.[6]

Given these problems and pitfalls of defining the concept, some scholars refuse to define religion at all and content themselves with deconstructing what people might mean by the term.[7] Others, such as Jonathan Z. Smith, have argued that scholars simply ought to recognize that religion as such does not actually, objectively exist in space and time but can be understood as something constructed by scholars and wielded usefully as an analytical category for understanding cultural data (i.e., *observable* human activities and the products thereof).[8] In this case, the ideas and perspectives offered by substantivist and functionalist definitions, without their absolutist claims, may be incorporated into this approach in an eclectic manner, if such ideas and perspectives are deemed useful for the scholar's purposes. This latter option is adopted here.

Before deciding how to construct this category called religion, it is important to note that the recognition of "religion" and its continued use among scholars as a useful category for understanding human culture are the product of a specific confluence of historical circumstances in the West, especially the European Enlightenment.[9] This need not negate religion's analytical usefulness, since every concept is a product of some place and time and has a history.[10]

[5] It is well-known, e.g., that Durkheim, Freud, and Marx, all three major figures in functionalist approaches to religion, were ardent atheists and believed their theories explained transcendental religious claims away. For the important distinction between metaphysical and methodological (see below) reductionism, see Russel T. McCutcheon, *Critics Not Caretakers: Redescribing the Public Study of Religion* (Issues in the Study of Religion; Albany: State University of New York, 2001), x–xi.

[6] "Transhistorical and transcultural phenomenon" are the words of Talal Asad, quoted in Arnal, "Definition," 30. The work of Mircea Eliade, an important and popular twentieth century historian of religion, is often criticized for its implicit theological assumption (see, e.g., Pals, *Eight Theories of Religion*, 223).

[7] This is Arnal's preference ("Definition," 30). See also Timothy Fitzgerald's provocative *The Ideology of Religious Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[8] Jonathan Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism; Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1982), xi. Human claims about the gods and their actions, for example, are observable and therefore count as data.

[9] This is argued forcefully by Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), especially 27–54, who dismantles Geertz's once dominant definition of religion. For details about the struggle of the philosophes against Christianity, see, e.g., Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, vol. 1, *The Rise of Modern Paganism* (New York: Knopf, 1967).

[10] See Lincoln, *Holy Terrors*, 2, who counters Asad in this manner.

Moreover, without some kind of categorization, one simply cannot begin any intellectual undertaking—how would one know what to look for?[11] But it is worth considering that our analytical awareness to mark religion out as a distinct element in culture is the result of historical struggles in which the cultural hegemony of specific institutions in Europe, notably the churches, receded and made room for secular cultural institutions and activities. In a rather unusual turn of cultural events, that which is called religion in the West lost its unquestioned position of primacy in the public sphere (e.g., the separation of Church and State was only thinkable in a post-Enlightenment context) and has largely retreated to the private sector.[12] The recognition of this contemporary cultural context should urge caution when approaching a non-Western, non-modern culture such as ancient Mesopotamia, where one might reasonably ask, in light of our modern situation and definition offered below, "What is not religious in Mesopotamia?"[13]

The purpose of providing a definition in this introduction is to create a useful heuristic mechanism, a filter that serves our descriptive and interpretive purposes by identifying a subset of human cultural activity as religious.[14] Due to the limits of time, skills, technology, interests, observable data, and perhaps our inability to see beyond our own prejudices, defining religion in this mode will be limited and limiting in its scope. In other words, this understanding of definition is *methodologically* reductionistic. Methodological reductionism, according to McCutcheon, means one's definitional stance is prefaced as follows: "given my methods/theories, the discursive rules of our institution, and my particular set of

[11] See Jonathan Z. Smith, "Classification," 43, where he concludes his essay with this statement: "the rejection of classificatory interest is, at the same time, a rejection of thought."

[12] These statements are not intended to negate the fact that religious people and groups continue to have a substantial impact on the public sphere. They clearly do. But their influence in, e.g., the United States, is not due to a State-sanctioned, privileged position. Even in some places where a Christian church does have state sanction, reason seems to have trumped revelation on a large scale. See Paul Zuckerman, *Society Without God: What the Least Religious Nations Can Tell Us About Contentment* (Albany: New York University Press, 2008).

[13] See Niek Veldhuis's comments in his book *Religion, Literature, and Scholarship: The Sumerian Composition Nanše and the Birds, with a catalogue of Sumerian bird names* (Cuneiform Monographs 22; Leiden/Boston: Styx/Brill, 2004), 11–13. Bruce Lincoln's essay "Culture" in *A Guide to the Study of Religion* (ed. Willi Braun and Russell T. McCutcheon; London and New York: Cassell, 2000), 409–22 provides a useful model for thinking about culture. Culture, according to Lincoln, may be considered to be composed of two major domains of human preferences: ethics (what is good) and aesthetics (what is pleasing). These two domains are always present in culture. Religion, as he defines it (see below), is a third, potential component that does not offer unique content (for ethics and aesthetics subsume all cultural content) but authorizes particular ethical and aesthetic preferences in a way that gives them supra-human or transcendent authority. In some cultures, religion plays this role minimally, affecting relatively few or only private preferences; in others, it has maximal effect, touching nearly every ethical and aesthetic preference a person holds. Mesopotamian cultures, according to this model, would fall on the "maximal" side of the spectrum.

[14] The same caveat applies to the definitions of "prayer" and "hymn" developed below, which should not be understood as natural categories but constructs used for analytical purposes.

interests and curiosities, religion turns out to be. . . ."[15] Moreover, such a definition should be held as provisional, a starting point; it should undergo refinement and adjustment as new data are examined, the definition's limitations explored, and one's interests and focus change.

Given the complexity of human activity in general, a multi-faceted or polythetic definition of religion may be more useful than one that attempts to home in on a single feature or two. Bruce Lincoln offers the following helpful perspective on the matter:

> Briefly, I take religion to include four different components, which can relate to one another in various ways, including disjuncture and contradiction. These components are:
>
> 1. A discourse that claims its concerns transcend the human, temporal and contingent, while claiming for itself a similarly transcendent status.
> 2. A set of practices informed and structured by that discourse.
> 3. A community, whose members construct their identity with reference to the discourse and its attendant practices.
> 4. An institution that regulates discourse, practices and community, reproducing and modifying them over time, while asserting their eternal validity and transcendent value.[16]

Turning to prayers and hymns and how they fit into Lincoln's definition of religion, one might think they obviously and only belong to discourse. After all, prayer, in everyday language, is simply a kind of religious or ritual speech that communicates one's concerns/petitions to a benevolent supra-human being via words. Understood thus, prayer as a type of speech includes hymns, which constitute a thematically more specific variety of prayer; namely, hymns communicate *praise* (predominantly) by the same means. A prayer considered as discourse, alongside its primary and obvious purpose of communicating information (one's own, often worldly concerns and petitions) to the supra-human addressee, also communicates something to any human who hears its words, including the one praying. For prayers, as Sam Gill has stated, are often "composed for the purpose of edifying, instructing, and influencing people in the matters of dogma, belief, and tradition."[17] Thus, prayers contain the petitions of the supplicant but may also convey to people authoritatively "concerns [such as theological truths, that] transcend the human, temporal and contingent." Furthermore, given the general sources from which one learns to pray (e.g., a scripture [Matt 6:5–13, Luke 11:1–13; Deut 6:4–9; Sura 1], an official prayerbook, a

[15] *Critics Not Caretakers*, x.

[16] Bruce Lincoln, "Culture," in *Guide to the Study of Religion*, 416. See also his *Holy Terrors*, 5–7 for elaboration.

[17] Sam Gill, "Prayer," *ER* 11:490, qualifying this statement significantly with "although this is but a partial understanding." This statement occurs in his section "Prayer as Act"; speaking is practice, too.

priest of a god, an authoritative adult, a myth, and/or a normative tradition handed down from the ancestors), it is not difficult to see how liturgical/ritual prayer, even spontaneous prayer to the extent that it is shaped by an authoritative model,[18] may at least implicitly claim "for itself a similarly transcendent status."

Related to this discourse perspective, one may also consider prayers and hymns as a form of practice because the words spoken in a prayer have illocutionary effects (i.e., they do things). The very act of uttering the words of a hymn is to give honor, and the very act of directing words or petitions to a deity is to seek assistance. But there is more to prayer/praise as practice than an act of communication that may also give honor or seek assistance. In as much as actions (rituals, gestures, posture, comportment, etc.) are prescribed to accompany the verbal act, prayers or hymns display other aspects of religious practice. These actions, just like the forms of speech used in prayers, are historically and culturally conditioned and may shed significant light on a prayer when considered alongside its other features.

Prayers as discourse/practice complexes are always spoken in a particular social context, a community, which is implicitly or explicitly under the guidance and (often but not always) authority of institutions (e.g., temples) and community leaders (e.g., parents, priests, elders, a headman, etc.).[19] Considering the communal and the institutional context of prayer helps one see its various aspects that extend beyond the individual supplicant. As noted earlier in the citation of Gill, when considering prayer as discourse, the wording of prayers often contain more than the communication of one's personal concerns; they may also instruct and exhort others. "Such aspects of prayer," Gill writes, "must be recognized as important and often essential to the continuity and communication of tradition and culture. In its capacity of performing these important functions, the formulaic, repetitive, and standardized characteristics of prayer are effective pedagogically and to enculturate."[20] In other words, prayer as discourse and practice is often institutionally prescribed or encouraged as a means of perpetuating or reshaping, in times of liturgical reform, the community. When one prays, one participates in a community and perpetuates its institutional values, relevance, and power in society. To modify Donne's famous line, no supplicant is an island unto themselves.

Lincoln's definition of religion brings into focus, therefore, how prayers are more than texts. They are part and parcel of a whole network of social activities that reflect and perpetuate the broader social formation that uses them. Failing

[18] Note Gill's generalization in this regard: "the record of personal prayers found in letters, biographies, and diaries suggests a strong correlation and interdependence of personal prayer with ritual and liturgical prayer in language, form, style, and physical attitude" (ibid., 490).
[19] Even the person praying spontaneously while completely alone will have had some communal and institutional influence. How else would they know how to pray or to whom to direct it?
[20] Ibid., 490.

to take these aspects into consideration explicitly when reading prayers and hymns—even if the evidence for determining the details of a practice, community, or institution is more limited than one would like—may lead to failing to understand fully or seriously misunderstanding the prayers one reads and the humans who produced and/or utilized them.

PRAYERS AND HYMNS IN A GENERAL MESOPOTAMIAN PERSPECTIVE:

Although this book focuses on language and on increasing one's Akkadian fluency, the above brief remarks provide a conceptual starting point for going beyond reading Mesopotamian prayers and hymns as texts that simply "speak for themselves." It moves the reader toward *interpreting* prayers and hymns in a multi-faceted manner as cultural artifacts situated in a subset of human activities identified as religious. But all of this raises an initial question that needs to be explored: How does one identify a prayer or a hymn when reading an Akkadian text? Although this is not the place to present a complete discussion of what might constitute a genus "Mesopotamian ritual speech" of which "prayer" might be distinguished as a species, some consideration of this issue is in order.

One could begin to answer this question of identification with an appeal to particular textual details such as scribal rubrics (a label at the end of a text) or superscripts (a label at the head of a text) that the ancient scribes used to identify and classify their own writings. In other words, one could identify prayers based on the Mesopotamians' own ideas of classifying prayers. Potential candidates of such scribal metadata could include én, én-é-nu-ru, šu-íla, *tamītu*, *ikribu*, ér-šà-ḫun-gá, nam-búr-bi, nam-érim-búr-ru-da, $uš_{11}$-búr-ru-da, dingir-šà-dib-ba, etc. Having identified these, one could then populate the categories of prayer and hymn based on an indigenous classification. Unfortunately, the indigenous labels are often problematic in their own right (see the extensive discussion of the shuilla-rubric below), and not every text bears one, thus potentially depriving the dataset of some relevant texts. Moreover, while some rubrics, for example, *ikribu*, might be translated generically as "prayer," there is no native classifier that corresponds to the broad categories of prayers and hymns proposed here. Thus, there is a more fundamental problem with this well-meaning methodology: one must already know what a prayer/hymn is before one can identify the indigenous superscripts or rubrics that would supposedly populate the category with texts. Rather than using tacit notions of prayer and hymn as a guide, one might instead simply recognize that one is guided initially in the classificatory endeavor by specific definitions arising from one's own sphere and then to refine and clarify these definitions in interaction with the data that is encountered from the ancient world. In other words, in proposing to treat certain Akkadian texts as prayers and hymns, the modern reader must impose their own ide-

as upon them initially.[21] But as the modern reader works with the texts, a process is initiated in which one attempts to understand them with increasing precision within their own cultural contexts. Ideally, this process will in turn lead to improvements in the models/definitions one uses to translate and interpret the texts in and for the contemporary sphere.

An initial foray into the subject might begin with an everyday notion of prayer and hymn as mentioned above. A prayer, to start with, is a kind of religious, ritual form of speech that communicates one's concerns/petitions to a benevolent supra-human being (or more than one being) via words; a hymn is a similar communication with a narrower thematic focus: petition is either lacking or very restricted while praise and adoration (the expression of a different kind of concern) dominate the text. The boundary between the two is not hard and fast. Despite the fuzzy boundary, these initial definitions are useful for the present analytical purpose. But there are some aspects of the definitions that raise important questions that deserve fuller consideration. In the attempt to answer these questions, the definition of prayer offered above will develop toward one that more suitably fits the Mesopotamian data.

First, what does benevolent supra-human being mean in polytheistic ancient Mesopotamia?[22] In Mesopotamia there were a great many entities that were not human, though characterized anthropomorphically,[23] and had powers that went well-beyond normal human capacity. These supra-human beings included ghosts, gods, protective spirits (e.g., *lamassū* and *šēdū*), demons, witches, certain cult-objects, and others (e.g., the *apkallū*, "primordial semi-divine sages").[24] Humans could use ritual speech to communicate with all of these beings; descrip-

[21] Although this point is a commonplace among social scientific and religious studies scholars, it seems to be resisted by ancient historians. See classicist Sarah Iles Johnston's review article "Describing the Undefinable: New Books on Magic and Old Problems of Definition," *History of Religions* 43.1 (2003), 50–54, especially 54 for the same conclusion as presented above. In her concluding remarks, she offers an important reason for imposing our own categories on the data we study. She says that "without etic categories [that is, categories defined by the outside investigator], however provisional, the Hellenist is unable to talk to the Assyriologist, the Egyptologist to the scholar of Judaism." In other words, if our work is to be meaningful and informative beyond the insular world of our own fields of study, constructing meaningful categories that communicate across contemporary academic boundaries is absolutely essential.

[22] We could, of course, have asked something similar about our own contemporary setting in the earlier general discussion, but such was unnecessary for our present purposes.

[23] One can see the anthropomorphism even in the incantation-prayer addressed to salt (see page 189) and in the one to the horse that pulls Marduk's chariot in W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Oracle Questions* (Mesopotamian Civilizations 13; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007), no. 9, lines 15–27. For the role of anthropomorphism in the human imagining of supra-human powers, see Stewart Guthrie, *Faces in the Clouds: A New Theory of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) generally and *What Is a God? Anthropomorphic and Non-Anthropomorphic Aspects of Deity in Ancient Mesopotamia* (ed. Barbara Nevling Porter; Transactions of the Casco Bay Assyriological Institute 2; Chebeaugue Island, ME: Casco Bay Assyriological Institute, 2009) for ancient Mesopotamia.

[24] See Black and Green for a convenient summary of the most important of these.

tions of such communication as well as the actual texts that contain these communications are well-attested. Many of these powerful beings could be both benevolent and malevolent toward a human. Enlil, for example, could be gracious or vindictive; family ghosts could be implored for help or ritually expelled to the netherworld; the *apkallū*, the sages of Ea, could assist or afflict humans; Pazuzu was to be feared in his own right as a demon but could also be utilized for apotropaic purposes against Lamashtu.[25] In order for a definition of prayer to be useful in Mesopotamia, it needs to specify that "benevolent supra-human being," for the present purposes, refers to any supra-human being to whom a text directs itself and about whom the text assumes, implicitly or explicitly, sufficient power to aid the speaker. Because the text expresses hope for a beneficent response, one might find words of deference or honor addressed to the supra-human power at the beginning of the communication (see below, for example, on the structure of the incantation-prayer). This text-centered orientation makes speculation about an actual speaker's subjective intention or emotion irrelevant. The perspective and warrants of the text are all that is accessible to modern readers.

Because the present definition defines prayer as something directed to *benevolent* supra-human powers, texts that communicate concerns or desires to malevolent demons, ghosts, witches, illnesses, and other powerful entities are not prayers. The same applies to texts that address themselves to mere humans or no one in particular, benevolent or otherwise. These texts use forms of ritual speech, to be sure (see below); but an investigation of the broader domain of "Mesopotamian ritual speech" goes beyond the present purpose, which is focused on the narrower categories of Mesopotamian prayer and the even more focused category of hymn or praise. Other forms of ritual speech will be brought into the present discussion only in so far as they help delineate the conceptual parameters of prayer and praise by way of contrast (see fig. 1).

Second, does the descriptor "communication via words" in the initial definition do justice to the Mesopotamian data about prayer and praise? Despite the prominence and therefore usefulness that verbal communication has for the present purpose (this book does after all deal with language), the answer is negative. "Communication via words" does Mesopotamian prayer justice no more than it does justice to the contemporary Muslim practice of *ṣalāt* (صلاة). Throughout the ancient Near East, texts that contain or describe prayers and hymns—recognized as such by the initial definition given above—often record or prescribe various bodily gestures. These may include prostration, raising one's hands, kneeling, lifting up one's head, facing oneself toward a temple, etc. as well as ritual acts

[25] For the malevolent and benevolent character of some of these in Mesopotamian tradition from an iconographic perspective, see Anthony Green, "Beneficent Spirits and Malevolent Demons: The Iconography of Good and Evil in Ancient Assyria and Babylonia," in *Popular Religion* (ed. Hans G. Kippenberg; Visible Religion: Annual for Religious Iconography 3; Leiden: Brill, 1984), 80–105.

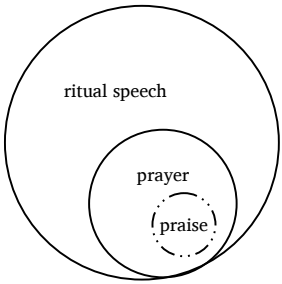

Fig. 1 Prayer and Praise in Conceptual Relationship to Ritual Speech

such as setting up altars, making offerings, applying substances to one's body, and manipulating objects (e.g., figurines or other items) before, during, and/or after the recitation of the verbal communication. For a variety of reasons, the descriptions of such practices may not be preserved with the texts to be recited and so may not be as easily identified. Nevertheless, attending to these other features—and therefore adjusting the definition of prayer in light of them—is important in order to avoid a truncated understanding of Mesopotamian prayer and praise. In order to capture the discourse/practice complex that is Mesopotamian prayer, it is advisable to think about most prayers as "ritual-prayers," comprising *dromena*, that which is done, and *legomena*, that which is spoken.[26]

Further, a definition of Mesopotamian prayer should avoid making communication via words a central or essential feature. Obviously the verbal or textual side of prayer is important for the purposes of this volume. Yet this focus should not unduly limit one's view of Mesopotamian prayer and praise. Although nonverbal prayer is not explored in this volume, it is important to keep in mind that a votive statue placed in a temple or a cylinder seal depicting a presentation scene may represent a petitioner's attempt to express their concerns or praise to a benevolent being *visually*, a manner completely lacking any linguistic form of communication.[27]

[26] There are exceptions. Some prayers, e.g., the prayers used in royal building inscriptions, do not as far as we know have a ritual element.

[27] For general remarks on votive statues, see, e.g., Dominique Collon, *Ancient Near Eastern Art* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 60–62, with a photo of the famous Tell Asmar votive statues; on presentation scenes, see her *Near Eastern Seals* (Interpreting the Past; Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 46–47. We should not neglect to mention the fact that some cylinder seal legends (inscriptions) contained actual prayers in Sumerian and Akkadian. Although probably not intended for speaking aloud, these inscribed supplications were "recited" with each impression of the seal. For many examples of these silent prayers, see Henri Limet, *Les legendes de sceaux cassites* (Académie royale de Belgique, Classe des letters: Mémoires LX/2; Bruxelles: Palais des Académies, 1971).

Third, does the phrase "one's concerns/petitions" adequately capture all that one might see in Mesopotamian texts identified as prayers? No. One might suggest that petitions, easily identified since they are usually expressed grammatically with imperatives or precatives, are essential to identifying and understanding prayers because supplicants seem *always* to present at least one request in the course of a prayer and sometimes many, many more (as in, e.g., Nebuchadnezzar's prayer to Nabu on page 475).[28] But petitions sometimes comprise a tiny fraction of what one sees in a prayer. For example, in Nabu 1 (see page 325), the petition consists of only one line in twenty, a mere five percent. Moreover, hymns, a subset of prayer, may not contain a petition at all, but occupy themselves with enumerating the character and actions of the deity. Although one might say that concerns/petitions capture important aspects of the content of prayers and hymns, it would be a mistake to absolutize these as the exclusive content of what is communicated in the texts. What else therefore might a Mesopotamian prayer/hymn generally contain?

Although an exhaustive listing is not appropriate here (in some cases, more detail will be presented when various kinds of prayers are introduced), the following are important general elements one will find in the texts. Mesopotamian prayers normally begin with an **invocation** of the deity by name, which identifies the benevolent supra-human being to whom the prayer is directed. Just as one might speak one's friend's name aloud in a group to gain their attention before conversing with them, the invocation is intended to get the supra-human being's attention before the prayer continues on to other matters. Prayers also often contain **praise**. Along with the invocation, for example, one may see a hymnic introduction in which the supplicant praises the deity invoked via a list of divine epithets, attributes, actions, or other features. This introductory praise functions as a kind of formal greeting, a social protocol utilized when a social inferior approaches a social superior with an unsolicited address (see the discussion of shuillas below). When this hymnic element is present, the length varies significantly from as little as one line to a dozen or more. Prayers may also end with praise of thanksgiving, or rather, a promise to give the deity thanks via verbal (see, e.g., the end of incantation-prayers) and/or other ritual means (see, e.g., the animal sacrifices in the OB letter-prayer to Ninmug on page 105). In the subset of prayer identified here as hymn, praise predominates throughout. Another common element of content in prayers is the **self-presentation** or self-introduction formula, in which the supplicant identifies their name, filiation, and perhaps personal gods. The supplicant may also voice their concerns in the form of **complaints** or **laments** about the problems that have given them reason to seek supra-human assistance.[29] During the course of praising, complaining to,

[28] Moreover, hymns are not entirely devoid of petition. See, e.g., the OB hymn to Ishtar on page 111.

[29] Cultic laments such as balags and ershemmas, composed in Sumerian and used liturgically by the *kalû*, "cult-singer," fall outside the purview of this study. The ershaḫunga-prayers, however,

or petitioning the deity or in their promise of thanksgiving the supplicant may refer to various **ritual actions** they have performed, are performing, or will perform. These descriptions in the text of the prayer are not always identical to or do not always seem to correspond to the **ritual instructions** that may accompany the text. (The ritual instructions may be listed in a separate section on the tablet at the end of the prayer or written on a separate ritual tablet altogether in the case of prayers that belong to long ritual series such as *Maqlû*.) The reason for what seems to be an imperfect correspondence may be due to the fact that the precise meaning of a ritual act mentioned in the prayer is not fully understood (e.g., *sissikta ṣabātu*, "to seize the hem"), that the ritual instructions are truncated or entirely lacking, the prayer or ritual has undergone scribal development, leaving evidence of such in the resulting mismatch, and/or that the text assumes the specialist would have known certain routine procedures and therefore did not record them (e.g., when to bow, when to kneel, etc.). But there are numerous instances of the contrary situation; that is, there are texts that show a close correspondence between ritual actions mentioned in the prayer and the ritual instructions (see, e.g., Nusku 12 on page 179).[30]

Fourth, despite the complexities of the issue, it is an important and worthwhile exercise to revisit the earlier concern with indigenous categorization of texts and ask, *Does the definition of Mesopotamian textual prayer developed here jibe with the various Mesopotamian categorization of texts (i.e., the scribal metadata)? And if not, should this be a concern?* To the first question, the answer will have to be a firm no; the present definition actually cuts across various Mesopotamian scribal categories. The answer to the second question should probably be both yes and no. It should be a concern that the present definition does not correspond to any ancient category and one ought to *remain aware* of the fact that a modern scholarly conceptualization of categories is different from the indigenous Mesopotamian ones. On the other hand, it is the prerogative of the interpreter to establish what seem to be productive avenues of cultural interpretation, including how to categorize and organize data so that it will communicate with contemporaries. Indigenous sources are just that, sources. They should of course inform contemporary scholarship; but they *should not dictate* the interpretive results.[31] The brief discussion in the next several paragraphs will show via

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also part of *kalûtu*, "the craft of the cult-singer," are discussed below. Although the balags and ershemmas were also given interlinear Akkadian translations by ancient scribes, the ershaḫungas were included in this volume because they have affinities with some of the monolingual Akkadian penitential prayers for individuals (i.e., the dingirshadibbas and the shuilla Marduk 4). Moreover, the one ershaḫunga-prayer treated in this volume, the prayer to any god (see page 447), has appeared in various anthologies of Mesopotamian/Akkadian prayers.

[30] See the more detailed statement on page 32.

[31] When our ancient sources are allowed to determine or dictate to us our interpretive results, we have moved from being an ancient historian to a curator or caretaker of antiquity. See Bruce Lincoln, "Theses on Method," *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 8 (1996), 225–27 (reprinted in *MTSR* 17 [2005], 8–10).

concrete examples how the present categorization of prayer cuts across known Mesopotamian scribal categories and how this informs and refines the present understanding of prayer. The discussion will also suggest, however, that there is an interpretive benefit in maintaining modern constructions of categorization despite the important ancient scribal rubrics and superscripts that have come down to us.

Consider the following two texts. Each is the ritual wording of a (different) shaziga-ritual that was used to remedy a man's sexual impotence. The Sumerian term šà-zi-ga (Akk. *nīš libbi*, "rising of the heart") was the rubric scribes used to classify the *purpose* of these rituals. They normally placed the rubrics at the end of the text. The superscript én, discussed further below, marks the beginning of the ritual's wording recited in the course of the ritual.

> én: Let the wind blow (*lillik*)! Let the grove quake (*linūš*).
> Let the clouds gather (*lištakṣir*)! Let the moisture fall (*littuk*)!
> Let my potency be (*lū*) flowing river water!
> Let my penis be (*lū*) a (taut) harp string
> So that it will not slip out of her! tu_6 én.[32]

> én: O Adad, canal inspector of heaven, son of Anu,
> Who gives oracular decisions for all people, the protector of the land,
> At your supreme command which cannot be opposed,
> And your faithful affirmation which cannot be altered,
> May NN son of NN, become stiff (*limgug*)[33] for NN, daughter of NN,
> may he come into contact with (*limḫaṣ*), mount (*lirkab*), and
> penetrate (*lišērib*) (her)! tu_6 én.[34]

The second text begins with an invocation of a supra-human being; there are several honorific epithets and statements intended to glorify the deity; and the text concludes with a complex petition (note the four precatives) for the deity to act upon. It becomes clear in the course of the prayer that the deity is construed as benevolent because a) he is assumed to be interested in hearing the prayer and b) he is assumed to be capable of acting upon it for the benefit of the supplicant. This text is clearly a prayer according to the definition developed above (more specifically, modern scholars call this text an "incantation-prayer," about which see page 24 below).[35]

[32] Robert D. Biggs, *Šà.zi.ga: Ancient Mesopotamian Potency Incantations* (TCS 2; Locust Valley: J. J. Augustin, 1967), 35 (text no. 15). Line 19, the last line of the ritual, gives the purpose of this ritual-prayer as šà-zi-ga. The translation is Biggs', only slighted adjusted here and in the following in that I have not translated the opening and closing formulae (én and tu_6 én).

[33] CAD A/140 notes an emendation to Biggs' text that I have incorporated here: *li-e-gu-ug* should be read *li-im*^{l}*-gu-ug*.

[34] Biggs, *Šà.zi.ga*, 42 (text no. 23). Line 13 gives the following rubric after the wording and before the ritual: ka-inim-ma šà-zig-ga, "the wording of a shaziga." NN is a placeholder, meaning "so-and-so." The actual names of the people involved would be filled in during the ritual.

[35] Mayer, *UFBG*, 378 identifies this incantation-prayer as Adad 8.

As for the first text, the agent to whom it is directed, if any at all, is unclear; there is no invocation. The text does, however, contain what one might call petitions (note the four precatives and the two uses of *lū*). These statements are grammatically identical to what one sees in the petitions of the second text. In fact, the precatives in the first shaziga dominate the text even more so. But the precatives in this first text have a more general character than those in the second. Although the precatives in both texts express the speaker's desires (wishes, hopes), only those in the second may be further qualified as petitions since petitions by definition require the involvement of one thought capable of responding (the addressee, Adad). As there is no invocation of a benevolent supra-human being to act upon the precatives in the first text, they remain conceptually at a more general level of expressed desire. Because it lacks an invocation of a benevolent supra-human being, praise, and petition the first shaziga, according to the present definition, is not a prayer (or hymn); rather, it is another form of ritual speech.

To be sure, both texts belong to the corpus of shaziga-rituals, designated by a common rubric; both texts were used for the same general remedial purpose. But only the second one qualifies as a prayer according to the definition developed above. One might be inclined to adjust one's definition of prayer to account for this mismatch between the modern definition and the ancient rubrics. This is, of course, one way to allow the evidence to re-shape the heuristic definition. The following paragraphs, however, will suggest that such is unnecessary and ultimately may be unhelpful to the larger interpretive project.

The two examples of shazigas bring up another, more general (and troublesome) scribal label that illustrates how the present definition of prayer cuts across Mesopotamian categories: the Sumerian superscript én or én-é-nu-ru in OB and older texts.[36] These Sumerian terms are equivalent to the Akkadian term *šiptu* and translated into English, conventionally and unfortunately, as "incantation."[37] As was stated earlier, there are a great many ritual texts in Akkadian that contain prescribed words to communicate concerns or desires to demons, ghosts, witches, illnesses, and other malevolent things/forces. These texts usually communicate a desire for protection from (apotropaism) or the expulsion of (exorcism) these forces. The following is a representative example:

> én: Fire, fire!
> Fire seized a lone man.
> It seized (his) insides, (his) temple,

[36] See Graham Cunningham, *'Deliver Me From Evil': Mesopotamian Incantations 2500–1500 BC* (Stupia Pohl: Series Maior 17; Roma: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1997) for a catalog and analytical study.

[37] The translation is unfortunate because "incantation" has been closely associated with magic, paganism, primitivism, and generally those things that are "other" to "true" religion (especially as defined by Protestant Europeans). For the intellectual background to such issues in the West, see Stanley Tambiah, *Magic, Science, Religion, and the Scope of Rationality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 1–41.

It spread (to others) the gnawing of (his) insides,
The stock of the human race was diminished.
Belet-ili went before Ea the king,
"O Ea, humankind was created by your spell,
"Second, you pinched off their clay
from the firmament of the depths.
"By your great command, you determined their capacities.
"I cast a spell on the …-disease, fever, boils,
"Leprosy(?), jaundice!
"Rain down like dew,
"Flow down like tears,
"Go down to the netherworld!"
This incantation is an incantation of Belet-ili, the great queen.[38]

Although these kinds of texts are clearly excluded from the present understanding of prayer because they are directed at malevolent (here, an illness) rather than benevolent powers, they often bear one of the two Sumerian superscripts, én or én-é-nu-ru, under discussion. There are a number of other texts that also bear one of these superscripts but are directed at such things as an animal, the wind, a would-be human lover, and in some cases nothing clearly discernible, as in the first shaziga cited above. Finally, as in the second shaziga cited, there are still other texts that bear the én superscript but also fit the present definition of prayer. In fact, nearly all of the SB shuilla- and dingirshadibba-prayers in this volume bear the én superscript (and are therefore usually called "incantation-prayers" by contemporary scholars). Besides recognizing that our constructed category of prayer cuts across another indigenous Mesopotamian scribal category, this fact calls for some deeper reflection about how the notion of prayer that is developed here relates to the ancient Mesopotamian category of ritual speech labeled én—a Sumerian. term often translated simply as "incantation" but better rendered "ritual wording."[39]

First, applying an antiquated Frazerian dichotomy between "mechanical" magic and "personal" religion—personal in that volitional agents are involved—should be resisted because it is not helpful in clarifying or explaining the texts.[40]

[38] See W. G. Lambert, "Fire Incantations," *AfO* 23 (1970), 39–45 for an edition of the text and Foster, 971, whose translation is cited here.

[39] Despite the fact that "ritual wording" is probably a better translation of the terms én and *šiptu*, the conventional translation "incantation" is so entrenched in Assyriological scholarship that we have (hesitantly) opted to use this rendering throughout the volume. For how our modern notion of prayer does not correspond with the ancient superscript én, see briefly W. G. Lambert, "The Classification of Incantations," in *Proceedings of the 51st Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Held at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, July 18–22, 2005* (ed. Robert D. Biggs, Jennie Myers, and Martha T. Roth; SAOC 62; Chicago: Oriental Institute, 2008), 93–97 (reference courtesy of Christopher Frechette).

[40] See Pals, *Eight Theories of Religion*, 31–51 for a brief summary and useful critique of Frazer's views. See also Tambiah, *Magic, Science, Religion*, 18–20 for the intellectual genealogy of such a dichotomy.

In discussing these two shaziga-prayers above, their ancient scribal categorization, and how these relate to a modern definition of prayer, only the formal, linguistic features of the texts have been addressed. *Both* shazigas—both of which also bear the én superscript—are forms of ritual speech used for the same remedial purpose, and they "work" conceptually rather similarly, whatever one decides to call them in a modern system of classification. Note, for example, the ritual instructions that follow each of the two shazigas.[41] Although the instructions for each text differ with regard to the accompanying ritual actions, they do agree that the ritual wording for each, identified on the tablet with the én superscript in both cases, is to be recited seven times. Despite their respective addressees (or lack thereof), both were apparently considered more effective when repeated multiple times. If repetition of words is associated with "mechanical" magic, as it often was among some past interpreters,[42] then one would have to argue that the shaziga that the above definition identifies as a prayer (called an "incantation-prayer" by scholars today) is just as "magical" as the shaziga that the above definition dismisses from the category of prayer (and therefore is often simply called an "incantation" by modern scholars). In this case, therefore, the magic vs. religion model is not very helpful in making sense of the data. A better interpretation is to recognize that the common ritual instructions calling for repetition of these two shazigas point to conceptual similarities in the utilization of these two examples of ritual speech (both labeled én by the ancients), despite the modern distinction in seeing one as prayer and one as not-prayer.

Another important point in this regard is that the involvement of a deity in a text labeled a prayer by modern scholarship does not *necessarily* impute to this form of ritual speech a more contingent or uncertain efficaciousness than that associated with texts one might view as "mechanical" incantations. It would be a mistake to think that the supplicant nervously had to await the deity's answer to the shaziga identified as a prayer but could feel confident that the other text worked automatically against whatever or whomever it was directed.[43] There are, to be sure, places where one reads of supplicants asking a deity to hear or accept their prayer and others when supplicants mention how a deity *has* accepted or heard their prayer.[44] There are even complaints about unheeded prayers (see Marduk 4, lines 3–4 on page 296). Clearly, the personal-agent-element of a prayer elicited talk from the Mesopotamians about prayer in terms of divine

[41] The ritual instructions are identified on the tablet by the typical indicator in Sumerian, dù-dù-bi, "its ritual action." The ritual instructions are generally placed immediately after the last line of the ritual wording.

[42] This was historically a problem among Protestant interpreters, who could appeal to Matt 6:7–8 to support their position.

[43] There are, of course, cases of prayer in Mesopotamia in which the supplicants do await a divine response (see, e.g., the tamitus). But this is due to the particular kind of prayer being offered, one which accompanies an oracular extispicy.

[44] Several examples of both situations can be found under the words *maḡāru* (CAD M/1, 38–39), *leqû* (CAD L, 136–37), and *šemû* (CAD Š/2, 284–85), among others.

response or lack thereof. Indeed, the ancient Mesopotamians knew full well that the gods were sovereign over the affairs of humans; the gods ultimately decided if, when, and how a response to human supplication would occur (see *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*, for example).[45] But this need not contradict the fact that some (most?) prayers seem to have worked, i.e., instilled good reason for the supplicant to have confidence that positive results had been gained for their petitions, simply by virtue of their being spoken. In other words, despite modern misgivings about inconsistency, the involvement of a personal, benevolent agent need not have ruled out a genuine confidence in the efficaciousness of a prayer.[46] In fact, some ritual instructions for prayers actually state that after a specified number of recitations of the text the supplicant's prayer would be heard (see, e.g., Gula 1a, line 28 on page 252). Such a statement can plausibly be interpreted as intended to instill confidence in the supplicant.[47] (Of course, this confident expectation clashed sometimes with lived reality and resulted in dashed hopes and deep despair, as we see in *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* II 1–48. The sufferer does everything right but sees nothing but wrong around him!) These points should again caution us from drawing an overly-precise conceptual distinction in ancient Mesopotamia between impersonal ritual speech directed at malevolent (or other kinds of) entities and ritual speech directed at personal and benevolent agents (i.e., what we are calling prayer).

If this discussion has somewhat blurred the conceptual line between the forms of ritual speech that are often called "incantation" by modern scholars and the present category of "prayer" (including what modern scholars call "incantation-prayers") then it is has achieved its purpose.

It would, however, be a mistake, I think, simply to dissolve the conceptual boundaries between all Mesopotamian texts that the present definition identifies as prayers and all Mesopotamian texts that follow the scribal én superscript. Though some of the texts called prayers here are identified by the Mesopotamians as an én (thus the modern label "incantation-prayer"), there are many other texts that the present definition would identify as a prayer but do not bear the én label (e.g., the OB ikribu-like prayer, the NB royal prayer, and the OB letter-prayer, to name three in this volume). Maintaining a distinct category of prayer

[45] See Maul's statement in *ZB*, 74 and the observation by Claus Ambos, cited in note 99 below. See also the very interesting tamitu-prayer in which the supplicant queries Shamash and Adad regarding whether or not his penitential prayer (*šigû*) will be accepted by the gods. The reply, which is not preserved, would have been given via extispicy. See W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Oracle Questions*, no. 8, rev. For *Ludlul*, see Amar Annus and Alan Lenzi, *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi: The Standard Babylonian Poem of the Righteous Sufferer* (SAACT 7; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2010).

[46] See likewise Mayer, *UFBG*, 356 and Stefan M. Maul, "How the Babylonians Protected Themselves against Calamities Announced by Omens," in *Festschrift für Rykle Borger zu seinem 65. Geburtstag am 24. Mai 1994:* Tikip santakki mala bašmu. . . . (ed. Stefan M. Maul; Cuneiform Monographs 10; Groningen: Styx, 1998), 127.

[47] Whether the statement did instill confidence in the supplicants is, of course, inaccessible and therefore a matter of psychologizing speculation.

based on a modern definition, therefore, helps one analytically by identifying and including these other, similar texts for study within the dataset. (At the same time, of course, one must keep in mind that the Mesopotamians themselves may have been baffled by such a lumping together of what to their minds were probably distinct groups of texts.) Furthermore, even among those texts categorized as prayers by the definition that *do* in fact bear the én label, there are formal features that mark a conceptual distinction between them and other forms of ritual speech (such as incantations directed against malevolent powers) that bear the én label. This calls for a brief explanation.

If one surveys the various texts scholars call incantations, that is, the many texts bearing the scribal rubric én or én-é-nu-ru, one can generally see two opposing formal characteristics that distinguish incantation-prayers from the other incantation texts: the first concerns how the texts begin; the other, how the texts end. First, incantation-prayers invoke a supra-human power near the beginning of the text who will *help*, it is assumed, the supplicant achieve a favorable result for their petitions—a benevolent supra-human power. Non-prayer incantations, on the other hand, may announce at the beginning to what or whom the incantation addresses itself, but the addressee is not invoked to help achieve the speaker's expressed desires. Rather, the addressee is usually *told what to do*. Although incantation-prayers may use imperatives, they do so typically within a framework that begins (and often ends) with praise, a sign of deference; the imperatives in these texts, therefore, have quite a different tone than the ones in non-prayer incantations. This is an important formal difference that hints at a conceptual distinction. This distinction is clarified by the other formal characteristic.[48]

The second formal characteristic lies in the way the speaker of an incantation gained help for their ritual speech's effectiveness: help came in the form of legitimation formulae, generally attached at the conclusion of an incantation, in which the incantation was asserted to be divine rather than human speech. The most common Akkadian examples include *šiptu ul yuttun* (*yattun*), "the incantation is not mine," *šipat* DN, "(it is) the incantation of [some deity]," *ina qibīt* DN,

[48] A general survey—by no means exhaustive—of various terms for or used with supplication or beseeching (*atnu*, *emēqu* [Št], *enēnu*, *ikribu*, *leqû*, *magāru*, *maḫāru*, *naqbītu*, *niš qāti*, *qāta našû*, *qibītu* [see CAD Q, 246–47], *sīpu*, *sullû* [noun and verb], *suppû* [noun and verb], *surāru*, *surruru*, *šemû*, *šuʾillakku*, *tarsītu*, *tēmēqu*, *tēnīnu*, *teslītu*, *tespītu*, *unnīnu*, *utnēnu*, and *upna petû*) showed that when such was directed to non-humans—kings could also hear supplications—the non-humans were always benevolent powers (such as deities), never malevolent ones (such as demons). The distinction is rather clearly made in one text that describes the *utukku*-demon as *ša teslītu lā imaḫḫaru*, "who does not accept prayer" (see CAD T, 370 [bilingual section], citing CT 17 36, K.9272:14 and duplicates). We should, however, probably not expect perfect consistency as the following illustrates. There are some instances in which Lamashtu, commonly believed to be a demon, "accepts a prayer" (*unnīna leqû*, see CAD L, 136 for references). Despite her malevolency, Lamashtu was considered to be a deity, the daughter of Anu, in ancient Mesopotamia (see Black and Green, 115–16). Despite this borderline case, it seems that the Mesopotamians generally made a distinction between gods and demons when they used "prayer" words.

"by order of [some deity]," and DN *šipta iddi/iqbi*, "[some deity] cast/spoke the incantation."[49] These legitimation formulae were intended to raise the authority of the ritual speech to the level of divine decree and thereby coerce the addressee to obey. As this volume shows, most incantation-prayers conclude with either a petition or thanksgiving for the benevolent power's favorable response. Only very rarely does one see the legitimation formulae in incantation-prayers. For example, there are only four instances of *šiptu ul yuttun* attached to an incantation-prayer, which makes these four quite exceptional among this very populous category of texts.[50] See, likewise, *Maqlû* I 36 (see page 164), in which the supplicant uses the *ina qibīt* formula to assert the accomplished defeat of the malevolent witch.[51] These exceptions are reminders that cultural data rarely fit neatly into compartmentalized categories. However, the fact that they are exceptional examples bolsters the usefulness of the analytical generalization presented here.

From the above observations, it may be concluded that some ritual texts modern scholars call incantations were generally construed as divine speech while those identified as incantation-prayers generally reflect that of human speech.[52] Even though this generalization is still simplistic,[53] it suggests there is heuristic value to maintaining our modern category of prayer as a subset of Mesopotamian ritual speech (see fig. 2).

One final question concludes this discussion of refining a definition of prayer and praise to fit the Akkadian material, namely, *how do the communal and institutional aspects of religious activity come to bear upon our understanding of Akkadian prayer and praise?*

As for the communal side of the issue, we do not know as much as we would like about the actual *Sitz im Leben* of many prayers (see the descriptions below). Based on the content of the ritual instructions that often follow the wording of many prayers, however, the supplicant and the ritual expert seem to have been the only people involved, at least usually, in the actual performance of

[49] Sometimes this formula is expanded with *–ma anāku ušanni/aššī*, "and I repeated/bore (it)."

[50] See Alan Lenzi, "*Šiptu ul Yuttun*: Some Reflections on a Closing Formula in Akkadian Incantations," in *Gazing on the Deep: Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Jewish Studies in Honor of Tzvi Abusch* (ed. Jeffrey Stackert, Barbara Nevling Porter, and David P. Wright; Bethesda: CDL Press, 2010), 131–66 for the issue of legitimation formulae in incantations and an explanation of exceptional cases of these formulae in what the definition developed in this introduction would identify as prayers.

[51] See, however, the variant MS containing a precative form of the verb, as noted by Abusch, in line 35, which, if accepted, would substantially change the meaning of the *ina qibīt* formula in line 36.

[52] See Foster's similar conceptual distinction between prayers/hymns, treated under the heading "Devotion: Speaking to the Gods," and incantations, treated under "Divine Speech: the Magic Arts" (*Akkadian Literature of the Late Period* [Guides to the Mesopotamian Textual Record 2; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2007], 73 and 91).

[53] See the institutional comments just below.

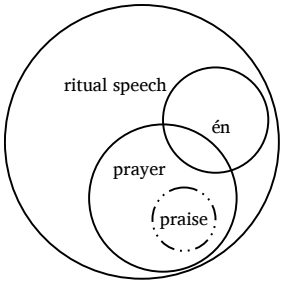

Fig. 2 The Scribal Superscript én in Relation to the Constructed Category of Prayer

a ritual-prayer (i.e., reciting the text and performing the ritual actions that accompanied it).[54] Aside from certain kinds of royal prayers that may have included a public element to them, ancient Akkadian prayers were not spoken in a congregational setting; rather, they were individual. Despite the limited number of people involved, such ritual-prayers were not necessarily private since they may have been performed on a roof or beside a canal, although sometimes an inaccessible place was prescribed. In any case, although ritual-prayers were intended for individuals, they were hardly individualistic.

Who was present at or had access to the location of the ritual-prayer's enactment is probably the least important element of the communal aspect of Mesopotamian prayer. The broader social embeddedness of the individual and the manner in which this shaped their identity occupy a much more important role in the proper understanding of ancient Akkadian prayers. The Mesopotamians seem to have created personal identity primarily via their family, social position/occupation, and city, among other things.[55] Even when praying alone (or only with the ritual expert), these communal aspects of life were ever-present concerns and therefore unsurprisingly impacted the kinds of petitions we find in the prayers. For example, the ubiquitous petition for life (*balāṭu*) included more than biological health or longevity; "life" encompassed the entire social and physical well-being of the person, as is clear from the poem *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*. In this doxological text the protagonist of the poem recounts how Marduk's anger resulted in his social alienation (I 41–104) and physical suffering (II 49–120). When Marduk sent healing, the physical ailments were dispelled (III 68–line m) and the sufferer was reintegrated into his community in a very public manner

[54] In the case of prayers of the diviner, the supplicant and ritual expert were one and the same. And in the cases of letter-prayers and royal prayers in building inscriptions, there are no ritual experts involved. The generalizations in this paragraph will need adjustment according to the specific kind of prayer one is reading.

[55] See Karel van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel: Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life* (SHCANE 7. Leiden: Brill, 1996).

(IV 38ff.). In fact, people marveled at his renewed well-being and praised the gods for it (IV 70–82). Although there is much more one might say here, this one examples illustrates the importance in becoming familiar with and keeping in mind the broader communal and social contexts as one interprets ancient prayers.

As for the institutional perspective, all of the texts that have come down to us were preserved in writing by a group of elite, literate members of ancient Mesopotamian society, the scribes. Most of the documents that the above definition of religion would identify as religious are not simple, workaday scribal texts such as letters, account summaries, or receipts. Rather, they are complicated texts that demonstrate linguistic sophistication, contain theological erudition, and would have required ritual expertise for their proper execution (such as the performance of an extispicy, the making of figurines, the setting up of altars, etc.). The scribes/ritual experts that composed and used these texts were likely therefore not normal scribes but masters of the scribal craft (Akk. *ummânū*), well-educated in the traditional cuneiform curricula. Most of them would have worked for one or both of the great institutions of their day: the royal palace and the temples. It follows that the composition and preservation of much of the material treated in this volume was due to the patronage/support of the king and/or the temples. Furthermore, judging from the content of the prayers and hymns, their most common kinds of findspots (e.g., palaces and temples), and clues from texts such as royal letters, the king was the most important, though certainly not the exclusive, user/beneficiary of these prayers and hymns.

The three most important institutional groups of scholars/ritual experts with regard to the Akkadian prayers and hymns in this volume are the diviners (*bārû*), the exorcists (*āšipū*), and the cult-singers (*kalû*). Although they were working in earlier times (see, e.g., the two OB prayers of the diviner in this volume), our best evidence for these three professions comes from first millennium tablets. From such texts we learn that these men—they were all men to the best of our knowledge—served the king and temples via their learned corpora, including many prayers that they believed derived from the gods themselves.[56] Thus, from an institutional rather than formal textual perspective many ritual-prayers could also be considered divine speech because the gods had delivered them to the institutional experts, who in turn performed them for and with the supplicant—adapting them as necessary.[57] In order to contextualize specific

[56] See Alan Lenzi, *Secrecy and the Gods: Secret Knowledge in Ancient Mesopotamia and Biblical Israel* (SAAS 19; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2008).

[57] Understanding an ancient Mesopotamian prayer as both human (primarily) and divine speech is akin to a theological understanding of Christianity's most well-known prayer. The Lord's Prayer was attributed to Jesus, who is traditionally identified as divinity incarnate; was recorded by a biblical author in Scripture, which is traditionally believed to be divinely-inspired; and is prayed by contemporary Christians on their own behalf. For a similar issue in contemporary Maya rituals, see William F. Hanks, "Exorcism and the Description of Participant Roles," in *Natural Histories of Discourse* (ed. Michael Silvertein and Greg Urban; Chicago: University of Chicago Press,

prayers in this volume institutionally, the identification of the group that used and were responsible for a particular class of prayer will be given, when appropriate,[58] in the descriptions offered below.

AN INTRODUCTION TO PARTICULAR CLASSES OF MESOPOTAMIAN PRAYER:

Essential Bibliography: Tzvi Abusch. "Prayers, Hymns, Incantations, and Curses: Mesopotamia." Pages 353–55 in *Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*. Edited by Sarah Iles Johnston. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004. {A concise treatment of prayers by one of the foremost interpreters of the genre.} Benjamin R. Foster. *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature*. 3d ed. Bethesda: CDL Press, 2005, 1–47. {The opening chapter, entitled "General Introduction: In Search of Akkadian Literature," is an important overview that puts Akkadian prayers and hymns into the broader context of the Akkadian textual materials.} Idem. *Akkadian Literature of the Late Period*. Guides to the Mesopotamian Textual Record 2. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2007, 73–91. {An authoritative, bibliographic essay on the various kinds of Akkadian prayers and hymns from first millennium Babylonia and Assyria. This survey covers many more examples than is possible to discuss here and is indispensible to all serious students.} Wolfram von Soden. "Gebet II. (babylonisch und assyrisch)." *RlA* 3 (1957–1971), 160–70. Idem. "Hymne. B. Nach akkadischen Quellen." *RlA* 4 (1972–1975), 344–548. {Although dated, these articles remain valuable.}[59] Kenton L. Sparks. *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible: A Guide to the Background Literature*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005, 84–104. {A useful resource for brief introductions to various kinds of Akkadian prayers and hymns with references to the secondary literature. Brief comparative remarks connect the text or genre under discussion to the Hebrew Bible.}

Having explored the definition of prayer presented in the first section of this introduction and modifying it in light of the Mesopotamian material in the second, this third section turns to consider the various classes that scholars have recognized as examples of Mesopotamian prayer. Some of the classes discussed below are recognized on the basis of ancient scribal labels and rubrics (e.g., shuillas, ikribus, and tamitus). Other classes are modern conventions, created because scholars recognized certain thematic and/or structural similarities in the texts (e.g., incantation-prayers, royal prayers, and letter-prayers). A comprehensive treatment of every class of Mesopotamian prayer in Akkadian is not

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1996), 160–202 (reference courtesy of Seth Sanders), especially 161–62, where Hanks notes that "all ritual speech in Maya could be construed as a sort of semiquote, insofar as shamans claim to have learned its forms either from other shamans, from dreams, or in charismatic dialogues with the very sprits they invoke in the third person. Shamans are not merely relayers of divine speech, however, since they consciously change their prayer forms over time, in order to beautify them."

[58] The caveat "when appropriate" is necessary because not all prayers are attributable to one of these three groups.

[59] One might also usefully consult W. Röllig "Literatur. Überblick über die akkadische Literatur," *RlA* 7 (1987–1990), 48–66, especially 54–56.

possible in these pages. The following only introduces the main features of several of the more important ones.[60]

***Incantation-prayers*:**

Because it is the largest group of prayers preserved in Akkadian and the best represented class in this volume, the section begins with a lengthy and more technical discussion of Akkadian prayers known broadly as the incantation-prayer and considers the vexing issue of the relationship between the incantation-prayer and the shuillas, a very important member of the incantation-prayer group in the history of scholarship. After sorting through this issue and presenting a full discussion of shuillas, two other kinds of incantation-prayers are more briefly discussed, namely, the namburbi-prayers and the dingirshadibba-prayers.

Shuillas:
Christopher Frechette

Essential Bibliography: I. Tzvi Abusch. "The Form and Meaning of a Babylonian Prayer to Marduk." *JAOS* 103 (1983), 3–15. {A classic study with careful literary analysis of the best attested Akkadian shuilla-prayer.} Erich Ebeling. *Die akkadische Gebetsserie "Handerhebung." Von neuem gesammelt und herausgegeben.* Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1953. {The most recent anthology of Akkadian shuillas in transliteration and translation.} Christopher Frechette. *Mesopotamian Ritual-prayers (Šuillas): A Case Study Investigating Idiom, Rubric, Form and Function*. AOAT 379. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, forthcoming. {A study of the characteristics and purpose of Akkadian shuillas in light of the meaning of the rubric.} Walter G. Kunstmann. *Die babylonische Gebetsbeschwörung*. LSS, n.f. 2. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1932. {A classic form-critical study of incantation prayers.} Werner R. Mayer. *Untersuchungen zur Formensprache der babylonischen „Gebetsbeschwörungen"*. Studia Pohl: Series Maior 5. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1976. {An in-depth form-critical treatment of incantation-prayers with editions of selected prayers.} Anna Elise Zernecke. *Gott und Mensch in Klagegebeten aus Israel und Mesopotamien*. AOAT 387. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, forthcoming. {A comparative study of two Akkadian shuillas and biblical Psalms 38 and 22.} Annette Zgoll. "Audienz—Ein Modell zum Verständnis mesopotamischer Handerhebungsrituale: Mit einer Deutung der Novelle vom *Armen Mann von Nippur*." *BaghM* 34 (2003),

[60] So-called prayer names, that is, names of people that express petition, praise, or lament (e.g., *Nabû-kudurri-uṣur*, "O Nabu, guard my firstborn," *Aššur-rabi*, "Ashur is great!," and *Ātanaḫ-ilī*, "I have become weary, my god!"), are not treated in this introduction (see, e.g., von Soden, "Gebebt II," §6 and Rainer Albertz, *Persönliche Frömmigkeit und offizielle Religion: Religionsinterner Pluralismus in Israel und Babylon* [Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1978; repr., Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005], 102–19). Although probably practiced in ancient Mesopotamia, this introduction will also leave extemporaneous prayer out of consideration. See the brief comments by von Soden in "Gebet II," §7. See also the observation by Richard I. Caplice (*The Akkadian Namburbi Texts: An Introduction* [SANE 1/1; Los Angeles: Undena, 1974], 12) that some instructions for namburbi-rituals direct the supplicant to speak whatever is on their mind (expressed in Akk. as *mala libbašu ṣabtu idabbub*, "he may speak as much as is in his heart"; *amāta ša libbīšu idabbub*, "he may speak the matter from his heart"; or *maʾdāti iṣâti ina libbīšu idabbub*, "he may speak everything [lit. many things, few things] on his heart").

181–99. {An important structural analysis of Akkadian shuillas.} Idem. *Die Kunst des Betens: Form und Funktion, Theologie und Psychagogik in babylonisch-assyrischen Handerhebungs-gebeten zu Ištar*. AOAT 308. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2003. {A detailed analysis of the psychological and theological function of the prayer texts of all known Akkadian shuillas to Ishtar.} Idem. "Für Sinne, Geist und Seele: Vom konkreten Ablauf mesopotamischer Rituale zu einer generellen Systematic von Ritualfunktionen." Pages 25–46 in *Ritual und Poesie: Formen und Orte religiöser Dichtung im Alten Orient, im Judentum und im Christentum*. Edited by E. Zenger. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2003. {An assessment of Akkadian shuillas, addressing their psychological and social effects upon the participants as well as the effects they were understood to have had upon the deities.}

Whether one studies Mesopotamian prayers primarily within their own cultural contexts or for comparative purposes, one will likely encounter shuillas. The term shuilla is derived from a Sumerian rubric meaning "lifted hand(s)" that functioned as a classifier of ritual-prayers.[61] Subscriptions to copies of such prayers may include a shuilla-rubric, and both ritual instructions and descriptions of ritual enactments may employ it to indicate the recitation of prayers of this class. Gestures of lifted hands taken to express prayer or greeting are common in Mesopotamian figural art, and such gestures are attested in terms besides those corresponding to this rubric.[62] Texts identified by a shuilla-rubric constitute the best attested single category of Mesopotamian ritual-prayers. The term "shuilla" refers to such ritual-prayers and the term "shuilla-prayer" refers explicitly to the texts to be recited. The present book includes eleven of them. Yet, despite more than a century of modern scholarly investigation of texts bearing this rubric, several fundamental problems bedevil the use of this term among scholars and therefore require detailed attention. This introductory treatment discusses each of the following, in turn:

(1) While three major classes of shuillas have been identified, scholars do not always specify the one to which they are referring. This section offers a brief overview of the evidence for these classes.

(2) Concerning the best attested of these classes, the Akkadian shuillas of the *āšipu*, "exorcist," a fundamental disagreement has arisen about whether the term shuilla should be applied to texts not actually bearing this rubric but considered similar to them. Because of this, it is often not apparent to what group of texts a given author intends the term to refer. This section offers a summary of arguments on both sides of the issue.

(3) Also concerning this best-attested class of shuilla, scholars disagree as to its pur-

[61] This rubric, šu.íl.la$_{(2)}$, combines the Sum. terms šu, "hand," íl, "to lift," and the nominalizing element –a.

[62] Various combinations of šu and íl (in some cases mu) and their corresponding Akkadian terms *qāta*, "hand," *našû*, "to lift," and *šuʾillakku*, "lifted hands," express a gesture of greeting/prayer predicated of humans toward deities. Other idioms for such a gesture may be addressed to humans as well as to deities, e.g., *ultu imittu karābu*, "to greet with the right (hand)," and *qāta elû*, "to raise the hand."

pose and its defining characteristics. This section provides a detailed review of several key issues and proposals.

(1) *Three Classes of Shuillas*: Three major classes of shuillas have been differentiated based on the language in which the prayers are written and the ritual expert associated with them. For each of these, some purpose and literary structure has been proposed. Yet, neither all occurrences of the rubric nor every prayer labeled with it can be clearly associated with one of these classes or its proposed purpose and structure.[63] Almost all shuillas have been associated with one of two types of ritual expert, the *kalû*, "cult-singer," or the *āšipu*, "exorcist." In Mesopotamian culture, in which adverse events were perceived as the result of divine or demonic activity, the cult-singer was responsible for appeasing the hearts of the angry gods by means of chanting lamentations and performing rites of intercession; the exorcist was responsible for rituals offering prevention and healing of illness, both spiritual and physical, as well as for effecting reconciliation between individuals and their personal deities, in effect preventing the punishments sent by the gods from taking full effect.[64]

All known shuillas belonging to the craft of the cult-singer are in the Emesal dialect of Sumerian.[65] These prayers probably originated in the public cult and were performed, always one prayer to one deity, in the frame of an annual festival, presumably at the end of a procession involving the statue of the deity addressed. They were recited in the first place to greet the deity. One type of them was intended to calm the addressee, who immediately upon returning from a cultic event interpreted as a battle, was caught up in a hostile mood.

In the craft of the exorcist, there are two major classes of shuillas distinguished, inter alia, by their language of composition, Akkadian or Sumerian.[66] Of the few shuillas of the exorcist written in Sumerian, a group of five were recited in the *Mīs pî* ("washing of the mouth") ritual, used for the animation of

[63] For a discussion of the range of evidence, see Christopher Frechette, *Mesopotamian Ritual-prayers (Šuillas): A Case Study Investigating Idiom, Rubric, Form and Function* (AOAT 379; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, forthcoming), §1.

[64] Paul-Alain Beaulieu, "Late Babylonian Intellectual Life," in *The Babylonian World* (ed. G. Leick; New York: Routledge, 2007), 479. From a complementary perspective, Jean Bottéro associates the cult-singer primarily with what he calls the theocentric cult, characterized by activities such as feeding and offering of praise and luxury believed necessary to care for the gods, and the exorcist primarily with what he calls the sacramental cult, characterized by activities concerned with knowing the future and alleviating or preventing human suffering (*Religion in Ancient Mesopotamia* [trans. T. L. Fagan; Chicago: University of Chicago, 2001], 114–202).

[65] This paragraph summarizes conclusions found in Daisuke Shibata, "Ritual Contexts and Mythological Explanations of the Emesal Šuilla-Prayers in Ancient Mesopotamia," *Orient* 45 (2010), 67–85.

[66] A few texts associated with the exorcist do not fit easily in either of these classes, including some bilingual Sumerian-Akkadian as well as in monolingual Sumerian texts found in rituals intended to dissolve evil fates, including rituals pertaining to dreams and namburbi-rituals.

divine images.[67] This ritual spanned two days, and these five prayers were all recited at the high point of the ritual.[68] Four of these prayers are preserved; they range from nineteen to forty-seven lines in length, and their content concerns the activity of the ritual.[69] It is widely recognized that shuillas in monolingual Akkadian were employed in a variety of ritual contexts and in many cases explicitly request one of the "high gods" to intercede with the speaker's angry personal gods. Yet, proposals for a fuller grasp of the Akkadian shuillas' purpose and defining characteristics remain under discussion and are treated in more detail below.

(2) *Incantation-prayer = or ≠ Shuilla?* The best attested class of shuillas are those written in Akkadian and belonging to the craft of the exorcist.[70] All of the shuillas in the present volume fall into this category and are referred to simply as "Akkadian shuilla-prayers." They have been classified along with other Akkadian ritual-prayers of the exorcist that bear not the shuilla-rubric but other classifying rubrics on the basis of the following shared basic literary structure.[71]

1. Address (including invocation and praise),
2. Petition (including lament), and
3. Thanksgiving/blessing.

The resulting genre is conventionally known as *Gebetsbeschwörung*, "incantation-prayer."[72] Assyriologists, however, do not agree on the application of the term shuilla within this broad category, and this discrepancy of usage adds confusion

[67] See Michael Dick, "Pīt pī und Mīs pī (Mouth-Opening and Mouth-Washing of Statue(tte)s)," *RlA* 10 (2003–2005), 580–85.

[68] Christopher Walker and Michael Dick, *The Induction of the Cult Image in Ancient Mesopotamia: The Mesopotamian* Mīs Pî *Ritual* (SAALT 1; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2001), 64, n.111. For a discussion of this sequence of prayers within this ritual, see Angelika Berlejung, *Die Theologie der Bilder: Herstellung und Einweihung von Kultbildern in Mesopotamien und die alttestamentliche Bilderpolemik* (OBO 162; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag / Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 231–39.

[69] For instance, the first prayer conveys the central theology of the ritual, describing the supernatural origin of the statue and the activation of its sensory perception and vital functions. Berlejung, *Die Theologie*, 231–32.

[70] About eighty individual such prayers bearing the shuilla-rubric are attested in roughly two hundred fifty (some quite fragmentary) exemplars (i.e., tablets). Roughly forty additional prayers not attested with the rubric may have belonged to this class. See Mayer, *UFBG*, 375–435, and discussion in Frechette, *Mesopotamian Ritual-prayers*, §§3–4.

[71] This schema given here is that of Walter G. Kunstmann, *Die babylonische Gebetsbeschwörung* (Leipziger semitistische Studien, n. F., no. 2; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1932), 7, henceforth *BGB*. For other vartiations, see: Friedrich Stummer, *Sumerisch-akkadische Parallelen zum Aufbau alttestamentlicher Psalmen* (Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums 11/ 1 & 2; Paderborn: Schöningh, 1922), 9; Benno Landsberger, "[Review of] *Sumerisch-akkadische Parallelen zum Aufbau alttestamentlicher Psalmen* [by] Friedrich Stummer," *OLZ* 28 (1925), 479–83; Joachim Begrich, "Die Vertrauensäußerungen im israelitischen Klageliede des Einzelnen und in seinem babylonischen Gegenstück," *ZAW* 46 (1928), 221–60, 227ff. For a table comparing all five of these structural proposals in detail, see Mayer, *UFBG*, 35.

[72] For a discussion of the various terms employed in scholarship, see Mayer, *UFBG*, 7–9.

to scholarship concerning this rubric, which is already complex. Two influential studies have differentiated sub-genres of this broad class proceeding from a fundamental distinction among rubrics: the term shuilla, "lifted hand(s)," which has long been recognized as indicating a gesture of prayer or greeting (King, *BMS*, xix-xx), and other rubrics recognized as indicating specific purposes, for example, the dissolution of an evil omen or of a spell. Since the classification systems of both of these studies remain in use among scholars, both are summarized briefly here.

Kunstmann's study from the 1930s made the term shuilla synonymous with incantation-prayer (see *BGB*). Two factors apparently contributed to this usage: the idiomatic meaning of the shuilla-rubric was taken as synonymous with "prayer" in a general sense, and yet this rubric appeared on prayers regarded as belonging to different sub-genres of incantation-prayer. The term "incantation-prayer" grew out of a clear distinction between prayer and magic: these texts were seen as incantations in that they accomplished their goal, in part, magically by the recitation of powerful speech and the carrying out of actions, both speech and act being believed effective in themselves; they were seen as prayers in that they addressed petitions to one or more gods (Kunstmann, *BGB*, 3–4). Each incantation-prayer was placed into one of three categories: "general," "special," or "in-between" on the basis of two criteria: (1) purpose, either general or specific; and (2) emphasis, either on its magical actions or on the prayer itself and its offering. Most of those bearing the shuilla-rubric were considered "general shuillas" chiefly because they lacked indicators of specific purpose. These also tended to include little ritual activity besides an offering. "Special shuillas" clearly specified a purpose and were often accompanied by more complex ritual actions. Those bearing the shuilla-rubric and including a further specification of occasion or purpose were in most cases classified as "in-between" (Kunstmann, *BGB*, 70–72).[73]

Mayer in the 1970s advocated that in order to respect its native usage among incantation-prayers, the term shuilla should be employed exclusively to refer to those prayers which are actually attested with the rubric or to those which arguably would have born it (Mayer, *UFBG*, 7–8, 377). The present volume espouses this position. Other scholars, however, continue to use the term shuilla to refer to the broader category. Avoiding the dichotomy between magic and ritual, this later study defined incantation-prayers as ritual petition-prayers of the individual, explaining that they are: (1) oriented to a ritual unit; (2) comprised of mostly pre-formulated petitionary speech of an especially powerful type; and (3) combined with other specified ritual actions over all of which a

[73] Kunstmann placed only two prayers bearing the shuilla-rubric in the "special" category, one on the basis of a clearly specified purpose added to the rubric, and the other on the basis that it had several characteristics of incantations for activating materials for ritual use (*BGB*, 5, 80–82). The latter, Nisaba 1, is included in the present volume at page 351.

ritual expert presided on behalf of an individual (Mayer, *UFBG,* 10–12, 22).[74] This study identified in these ritual-prayers a two-part core, an *address with names* and a *petition*, and around this core it described the following structure, the sequence of which may vary (adapted from Mayer, *UFBG*, 36–37):

- By expressing the deity's greatness, power and goodness, those praying can make these qualities ritually present (*vergegenwärtigen*).
- The petition may be developed in multiple respects or can be embedded in the context of a motivating clause. If the petition is motivated by distress, it can be expressed in the form of a "lament" and thereby appeal to the mercy of the god.
- Petitioners may articulate before the god what they do in carrying out the prayer and ritual: namely that they turn to the god pleading, or that they have brought certain "advance payment" in the form of sacrifices and gifts.
- The petition referring to a specific concern may be preceded by a petition for the merciful attention of the deity, and it may be extended by a petition for other concerns.
- An "offer to perform," i.e., the promise to praise the divinity for that god's help or the wish that others do so, may follow the petition and serve also to help motivate the divinity.
- Those praying may introduce themselves by name and suitable epithets in the parts of the prayer which refer to themselves.
- The expert responsible for the sequence of the petition ritual may intervene in the prayers of petitioners or speak for the petitioners' concerns.

Of all incantation-prayers the best attested are namburbis and Akkadian shuillas, treated in detail below. Others served various purposes, including freeing a person from malignant powers or events such as sickness, demons, witchcraft, and bad dreams.[75] One ought to recognize the apparent creativity and flu-

[74] Given the continued disagreement on this issue, it is confusing when scholars offer Mayer's definition of an incantation-prayer in order to explain what a shuilla is. See, e.g., Sally A. L. Butler, *Mesopotamian Conceptions of Dreams and Dream Rituals* (AOAT 258; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1998), 130.

[75] Mayer distinguished three major sub-types of incantation-prayers: shuillas, namburbis and prayers serving to free a person from malignant powers; beyond these he identified an array of smaller groups, though he stressed that these should not be taken as an exhaustive listing (*UFBG*, 13–18). The smaller groups concern the dissolution of unclear or bad dreams, the fending off of field pests, shigu-prayers (petitions for absolution from sin), and blessings for houses and buildings. Mayer did not include dingirshadibba-prayers, which are treated below, in his study, pointing out that they do not seem to have a unified literary form (ibid., 16–17). One class of texts for which Mayer creates a separate listing in *UFBG* (432–35) but which he does not discuss as a subgenre of incantation-prayer in the introduction to that study are *Kultmittelbeschwörungen.* Assyriologists coined this classifier to designate incantations addressed to materials used in rituals and intended to activate, enhance, and elicit the qualities of the materials (Kunstmann, *BGB*, 80; I. Tzvi Abusch, "Blessing and Praise in Ancient Mesopotamian Incantations," in *Literatur, Politik und Recht in Mesopotamien: Festschrift für Claus Wilcke* (ed. W. Sallaberger, K. Volk, and A. Zgoll; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003], 1–14, here 2). Under Mayer's definition of the core of incantation-prayers—address of a deity with petitions—such texts could be considered incantation-prayers if they include both of these elements and to the extent that the materials addressed are

idity with which purposes could be constructed and combined. For instance, one namburbi is for dissolving "evil that can cling to someone because of the magical manipulations of witches" and so associates the general purpose of namburbis, to dissolve evil fate, with defense against the malignant power of witchcraft (see Maul, *ZB*, 445).[76] Moreover, Akkadian shuillas were in many cases carried out in conjunction with namburbis (see Frechette, *Mesopotamian Ritual-prayers*, §6). Aside from namburbis, dingirshadibbas, and Akkadian shuillas, all other incantation-prayers are referred to simply as such in the present volume.

(3) *Akkadian Shuillas*: Even if one accepts the position that the shuilla-rubric marks a particular class of ritual petition-prayers of the individual, as does the present volume, one must recognize a range of scholarly opinion regarding the distinguishing characteristics and purpose of Akkadian shuillas. The present discussion clusters around the interpretation of four aspects of these ritual-prayers: the shuilla-rubric; typical and distinctive characteristics of the prayers; essential elements of the ritual activity associated with them; and the rationale and purpose of these ritual-prayers as a whole.

Recognizing that the term "shuilla" refers to a gesture of greeting or prayer, most translators either render it literally as "lifted-hand" or translate it "prayer" or "petition-prayer."[77] As already noted, by contrast to other rubrics that convey more specific purposes, the prayers bearing the shuilla-rubric tend not to be assigned to a ritual having a specific purpose (Kunstmann, *BGB*). In fact, one scholar has taken this rubric to mark a non-category of ritual-prayers, those having no specific purpose.[78] Interpreted as "prayer" or "petition-prayer," one could imagine the shuilla-rubric applying to the entire genre of incantation-prayer. However, the linguistic features of Akkadian shuilla-prayers demonstrate a

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seen to represent recognized deities or personified objects. See the incantation-prayer to Salt, page 189 in this volume.

[76] On the blending of ritual function in the Akkadian shuilla Nisaba 1, see pages 350–52 in this book.

[77] In translating the rubric as "petition-prayer," Mayer follows Franz Kraus (*UFBG*, 7). Zgoll prefers the literal translation (Annette Zgoll, *Die Kunst des Betens: Form und Funktion, Theologie und Psychagogik in babylonisch-assyrischen Handerhebungsgebeten zu Ištar* [AOAT 308; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2003, passim]). While stressing that the rubric marks prayers with distinctive characteristics and not just any prayer at all, Zgoll views the shuilla-rubric as supplying an overarching category "prayer" when combined with other rubrics (*Die Kunst des Betens*, 21–22). However, she has not taken up the issue of the distinctiveness of shuillas as a class in detail. Frechette rejects interpretation of this rubric as synonymous with "prayer." See his "Reconsidering ŠU.IL$_2$.LA$_{(2)}$ as a Classifier of the *Āšipu* in Light of the Iconography of Reciprocal Hand-Lifting Gestures," in *Proceedings of the 51st Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale Held at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, July 18–22, 2005*, (ed. R. Biggs, J. Myers, and M. Roth; SAOC 62; Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2008), 39–46; and *Mesopotamian Ritual-prayers*, §2.

[78] Wilfred Lambert, "Review of *Untersuchungen zur Formensprache der babylonischen Gebetsbeschwörungen*, by Werner R. Mayer," *AfO* 25 (1974–1977), 197–99.

number of distinctive tendencies as compared with the other incantation-prayers, including the following:[79]

- They employ elevated speech befitting the formality of an audience.
- They include petitions to reconcile client and personal gods.
- They include petitions for health and well-being stated in general terms while being adaptable to specific occasions.[80]

The basic structure of and rationale for Akkadian shuillas manifest the concept of an "audience," a fundamental situation of ancient Near Eastern culture concerning ceremonies for a meeting in which someone presents a request to someone of a higher social status.[81] Noting that other Mesopotamian ritual-prayers also reflect such a rationale, one scholar argues that the shuilla-rubric itself offers a key to the distinctive rationale for these ritual-prayers. Preferring a literal translation of the shuilla-rubric, he interprets its idiomatic meaning as concretely grounded in a formal gesture of greeting appropriate when entering the court of a god or king and analogous to a military salute in that it demonstrates recognition of an asymmetrical relationship between the subordinate who offers the gesture and the one of higher status who receives it and who may have been understood to offer a reciprocal gesture of some kind.[82] The following schema for Akkadian shuillas is followed by a detailed discussion of each section:[83]

[79] These findings of Mayer are not summarized in *UFBG*, but they are discussed by Frechette (*Mesopotamian Ritual-prayers*, §4). Mayer provisionally characterized shuilla-prayers as concerned in a general way with a good human condition, liberation from what is life-threatening, and attainment of what supports life (*UFBG*, 13). Such characterization, however, assumes a form-critical stance that is overly confident in the capacity of a type of text considered original to disclose the function of a genre. In thus characterizing shuilla-prayers, he discounted the many cases in which rather specific petitions have been added to a given exemplar.

[80] Noting that many particular exemplars of the canonical form of a given prayer are adapted for specific occasions, Frechette considers such adaptability a defining characteristic of shuillas (*Mesopotamian Ritual-prayers,* §§4, 6, 7).

[81] Annette Zgoll, "Audienz—Ein Modell zum Verständnis mesopotamischer Handerhebungsrituale: Mit einer Deutung der Novelle vom *Armen Mann von Nippur*," *BaghM* 34 (2003), 181–99; structure and elements are detailed at 183–87; discussion of the "audience concept," at 187–97; discussion of reciprocity at 197–99. For a more recent discussion of an audience, see Friedhelm Hartenstein, *Das Angesicht JHWHs: Studien zu seinem höfischen und kultischen Bedeutungshintergrund in den Psalmen und in Exodus 32–34* (Freiburger Altorientalische Studien 55; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 53–58.

[82] See Frechette, *Mesopotamian Ritual-prayers*, §2. He acknowledges there that notions of prayer, blessing, and greeting are closely related in Mesopotamian culture, as can be seen in that the same term (*karābu*) can express all three. On this point, see the landmark article by Benno Landsberger, "Das 'gute Wort,'" in *Altorientalische Studien: Bruno Meissner zum sechzigsten Geburtstag am 25. April 1928* (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1928–1929), 294–321.

[83] This schema and discussion represent a modification of the work of Zgoll (*Die Kunst*; "Audienz"; and "Für Sinne, Geist und Seele: Vom konkreten Ablauf mesopotamischer Rituale zu einer generellen Systematic von Ritualfunktionen," in *Ritual und Poesie: Formen und Orte religiöser Dichtung im alten Orient, im Judentum und im Christentum* [ed. E. Zenger; Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2003], 25–46) and that of Frechette ("Reconsidering"; and *Mesopotamian Ritual-prayers*).

- *Setting*:
  - They are addressed to a single high-ranking deity (rarely to multiple deities as a collective).
  - While they could be performed as units in isolation, they were certainly performed in immediate conjunction with other ritual procedures in many cases.
  - They usually take place outdoors at night or in early morning in order to address the deities in their astral aspects.

- *Essential Elements (to which others may be added)*:
  - Purification of the place (often by sweeping and sprinkling with water)
  - Offerings, which usually include the burning of aromatics and pouring of libations and may include food offerings
  - Hand-lifting gesture(s) and prostration or kneeling of the client
  - Triple recitation of the specified text to the deity, which typically emphasizes an eloquent address
- *Rationale and Purpose*:
  - The rationale of reciprocity operative in an audience determined that by accepting the offerings, gestures, and speech of the subject, the superior being addressed was to some degree obliged to respond favorably to the request for assistance. Through this ritual, one sought to (re-)establish such a reciprocal relationship with the deity, but the deity was regarded as free to accept or to refuse.
  - The shuilla-rubric names the entire ritual by highlighting as its central action the hand-lifting gesture, which in a condensed and apt way signals to the deity simultaneously the client's submission and expectation of favorable recognition and response to petition.

Prior to discussing the specific points of this schema, it should be noted that all ritual instructions preserved in connection with prayers should be regarded as aids to memory rather than comprehensive or exact indicators of what was enacted. For instance, it has been observed that some ritual actions were considered so obvious that they were taken for granted and not specified in written instructions.[84] Where multiple copies of a specific ritual of the exorcist are preserved, we may observe disparity among them in the amount of detail with which ritual instructions are given as well as differences in the elements or order of elements included.[85] Such differences may result in some cases from the variety of purposes for which a given tablet may have been copied, for example, for

[84] Stefan Maul notes that while *Kultmittelbeschwörungen* incantations intended to activate the effectiveness of various materials used in rituals, e.g., water and flour, are well attested in other rituals, they are with one exception not attested in any instructions for namburbi-rituals (*ZB*, 33, n.67). He explains this omission by suggesting that such incantations were so self-evident to the expert that they did not need to be written (ibid., 33).

[85] Maul has shown that different copies of the same ritual might provide details in different degree, from a more elaborate "handbook" style, perhaps intended to instruct the beginner, to a much more laconic style which regarded a greater number of actions as self-evident (ibid., 96–97).

archival purposes, for enactment on a specific occasion, or within a certain ritual context, as an amulet or votive, or as a demonstration by an apprentice that he had mastered a given text.[86] Among those copies of shuilla-prayers containing no ritual instructions at all, some bear colophons indicating that they were copied for a specific ritual series. For instance, instructions citing the prayers by incipit occur on the ritual-tablets of *Bīt salāʾ mê*, a ritual lasting several days for the purification of the king that took place during the fall Babylonian New Year's festival.[87]

Concerning the setting: Akkadian shuilla-prayers are directed primarily to "high gods" (as opposed to "personal gods").[88] While many shuilla-prayers include petitions for healing, they have been characterized as concerned to obtain help in reconciling personal gods to the speaker.[89] Comparative analysis demonstrates that petitions for intercession regarding such reconciliation occur with a significantly higher frequency in shuilla-prayers than in other incantation-prayers.[90] In the *Bīt salāʾ mê* ritual for the legitimation of the Babylonian king, the sequence of shuilla-rituals is intended to gain the intercession of the many high-ranking gods addressed with the king's angry personal deities in order to reconcile them with him.[91]

All three major classes of shuillas are addressed to deities as individuals.[92]

Considerable evidence demonstrates inclusion of Akkadian shuillas alongside or within other rituals.[93] For instance, they were likely enacted routinely with namburbis, and lengthy sequences of them are attested in elaborate royal rituals such as *Bīt salāʾ mê* and *Bīt rimki*.

Concerning the essential elements: This organization of elements for Akkadian shuillas is not restrictive, and much of it is not distinctive. The notion of petitioning deities in the context of an audience with its necessary purificatory preparations, offerings, gestures, and recitations may be observed in other Mes-

[86] See ibid., 159–90 and Ishtar 2 on page 257.

[87] Claus Ambos, *Der König im Gefängnis und das Neujahrsfest im Herbst: Mechanismen der Legitimation des babylonischen Herrschers im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr. und ihre Geschichte*, (Habil-itation, Heidelberg, 2010; rev. forthcoming), §II.3.3.9; idem, "Das 'Neujahrs'-Fest zur Jahresmitte und die Investitur des Königs im Gefängnis," in *Fest und Eid: Instrumente der Herrschaftssicherung im Alten Orient* (ed. D. Prechel; Würzburg: Ergon, 2008), 1–12. See discussion at page 355 of this book.

[88] Zgoll describes these prayers as addressed especially to gods responsible for illness. However, a number of the gods she cites in support of this point are addressed not in any known shuilla-prayers but in other incantation-prayers (*Die Kunst*, 22, n.52 citing Nils Heeßel, *Babylonisch-assyrische Diagnostik* [AOAT 43; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2000], 83f.; but the note at 83, n.41 citing Mayer, *UFBG* gives the mistaken impression that at least one prayer to each of the gods listed is considered in *UFBG* to be a shuilla).

[89] Beaulieu, "Late Babylonian Intellectual Life," 479.

[90] For a summary of Mayer's comparative analysis in *UFBG*, see Frechette, *Mesopotamian Ritual-prayers*, §4.

[91] See note 87.

[92] See ibid., §§1, 4. Among Akkadian shuillas, two are addressed to collectives: *Zappu*, the constellation Pleiades, and *Kakkabū*, "all stars."

[93] See ibid., §6.

opotamian rituals, especially those designated as "meal or aromatic gift offerings."[94] Some Akkadian shuillas include elements not listed here, such as the manipulation of materials (bricks, minerals, fabric) or the making of other gestures (holding of objects, anointing of the client).[95]

In only two extant exemplars (Nusku 7 and Ishtar 1) is it fairly clear that an instruction specifies that a shuilla-prayer be recited in conjunction with a gesture of hand-lifting. Nevertheless, in light of the rubric and of the practice of scribes to dispense with noting obvious elements, it is likely that a gesture of hand-lifting was assumed.[96]

The instruction for a triple recitation of the text occurs in many cases and was likely presumed. In the texts of the prayers, typically the address of the deity occupies a large portion of the total prayer and is expressed with heightened rhetorical style.[97]

Concerning the rationale and purpose: By means of this ritual-prayer one sought to establish a reciprocal relationship with the deity addressed as was typical of asymmetrical relationships in the ancient Near East; in such relationships the one receiving the gifts, gestures, and prayers would be to some degree obliged to respond favorably to the petitioner.[98] While the convention of reciprocity certainly influenced perceptions of shuilla-rituals as effective for presenting petitions, the efficacy of Mesopotamian rituals derived primarily from their perceived divine origin, and a favorable response to petitions included in them could not be presumed.[99]

[94] See Werner Mayer and Walther Sallaberger, "Opfer. A.I. Nach schriftlicher Quellen: Mesopotamien," *RlA* 10 (2003–2005), 93–102, §7.2. Of the types of prayer included in the present volume, this listing includes namburbis.

[95] Zgoll's discussion lists the burning of aromatics as an essential element separate from the offering of libations and possibly foods ("Für Sinne," 29–30). However, one well-attested, laconic formula simply instructs either the setting up of a ritual arrangement (*riksu*) or a censer (*nignakku*). Such an option is attested at least once in exemplars of fourteen different shuilla-prayers. Since *riksu* here likely refers to an array of ritual paraphernalia including the censer, this formula leaves open the possibility that in some cases only incense was offered. For discussion of this instruction, see Frechette, *Mesopotamian Ritual-prayers*, §5.

[96] For a detailed discussion of the significance of the rubric and its implications for the ritual activity accompanying these shuilla-prayers, see ibid., §§2, 3, 5. The gesture of lifted hand(s) is mentioned in neither Zgoll's discussion of the function of the procedures and words in these rituals ("Für Sinne," 27–43) nor in her sketch of the structure and elements of these rituals ("Audienz," 183–87). However, her comparison of the elements of shuilla-rituals with those of an audience with a human ruler as portrayed in The Poor Man of Nippur asserts that such a gesture was enacted and gave the ritual its name ("Audienz," 189–97).

[97] See Zgoll, "Für Sinne," 34–36.

[98] Zgoll, "Audienz," 197–98; See also her "Für Sinne," 33, and Frechette, *Mesopotamian Ritual-prayers*, §§3, 7.

[99] Claus Ambos offers the following summary of the operative worldview:

> Mesopotamian techniques of ritual and divination were believed to have been transmitted to man by the gods themselves, and they could never work against the will of the gods nor force them to perform an action merely because it was desired by the ritual's human participants. The reason is that ritual was not effective in itself but de-

The shuilla-rubric names the ritual by highlighting the hand-lifting gesture as a central action, one likely presumed by the exorcists, and the rationale for highlighting this gesture may be summarized as follows:[100] A gesture of lifted hands expressed by terms corresponding to the shuilla-rubric is instructed for various rituals, but for this one it was of central significance. That an element occurring in various rituals could be the classifying rubric of a particular ritual for which it held such significance is otherwise attested.[101] While offerings and speech were essential to an audience, Akkadian shuillas emphasized the communicative gesture to which the shuilla-rubric refers, a salutation signaling recognition of a reciprocal but asymmetrical relationship between client and deity.[102] Given the lexical and visual evidence that such greetings were exchanged in a reciprocal manner, this gesture would have provided a particularly apt ritual focus for expressing both the *desire* to (re-)establish such a relationship with the deity and the *anticipation* of the deity's acceptance of this relationship and favorable response to the petitions presented. As already noted, the proportion of text dedicated to formal address of the deity typically occupies up to half of the text of the prayer. These shuilla-prayers did convey petitions and were often recited in conjunction with other prayers expressing petitions, but their ritual designation highlighted this formal gesture of greeting. In so doing, the ritual focused on an action which in a condensed and apt way signaled to the deity simultaneously the client's willing submission and expectation of favorable recognition and help. In this way, the petitions associated with these shuillas were explicitly contextualized by this gesture which affirmed an asymmetrical yet reciprocal relationship between petitioner and deity.

Additional specifications of purpose within either rubrics or ritual instructions, while rare, are attested among exemplars of Akkadian shuilla-prayers. These may be seen as explicit statements of context within which the assistance of the deity addressed was sought.[103]

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pended upon the gods' collaboration. This concept could also account for occasional ritual failure: the gods simply were refusing any communication with the human sphere and were not inclined to accept a prayer or a ritual.

("Ritual Healing and the Investiture of the Babylonian King," in *The Problem of Ritual Efficacy* [ed. W. Sax, J. Quack, J. Weinhold; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010], 17–44, here 17).

[100] This explanation of this rationale follows Frechette, *Mesopotamian Ritual-prayers*, §§ 3, 7.

[101] A particular ritual element, even one commonly attested among various rituals, was employed in some cases to name a particular ritual for which that element captured the central significance. Claus Ambos discusses how this is the case for the sprinkling rite central to the *Bīt salāʾ mê*, "house of sprinkling," ritual as well as for the "mouthwashing" central to the *Mīs pî* ritual, "mouth-washing" (*Der König*, §II.3.2). See also Dick, "Pīt Pī," 581–82).

[102] As noted above, these shuilla-rituals were addressed, like those of the other two recognized classes mentioned above, almost exclusively to individual high-ranking deities.

[103] See Frechette, *Mesopotamian Ritual-prayers*, §3, 6.

Namburbis:

Essential Bibliography: Richard I. Caplice. *The Akkadian Namburbi Texts: An Introduction*. SANE 1.1. Los Angeles: Undena Publications, 1974. {An older overview and selection of texts in English that synthesize Caplice's earlier publications of editions in *Or* n.s. 34–40, 43 (1965–1971, 1974) and *JNES* 33 (1974).} Stefan M. Maul. "How the Babylonians Protected Themselves against Calamities Announced by Omens." Pages 123–29 in *Festschrift für Rykle Borger zu seinem 65. Geburtstag am 24. Mai 1994:* Tikip santakki mala bašmu. . . . Edited by Stefan M. Maul. Cuneiform Monographs 10. Groningen: Styx, 1998. {A short article that explains how namburbi-rituals work, based on Maul's views developed in the following work}. Idem. *Zukunftsbewältigung: Eine Untersuchung altorientalischen Denkens anhand der babylonish-assyrisches Löserituale (Namburbi*). Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1994 {Henceforth, *ZB*. A very lengthy and technical study of namburbi-rituals and their meaning. A great many namburbi-rituals are edited in the second half of the book.[104]} Niek Veldhuis. "On Interpreting Mesopotamian Namburbi Rituals." *AfO* 42–43 (1995–1996), 143–54. {A critical review of Maul's work on namburi-rituals, which calls into question much of Maul's intellectualist interpretive methodology and results.}

Omens were important indicators of the will of the gods for the ancient Mesopotamians and could manifest themselves in anything that was a) deemed significant in their system of divination and b) observed by someone. Solicited omens were obtained through human actions intent on finding signs as, for example, in the case of liver divination (i.e., hepatoscopy, sacrificing an animal and examining its liver to interpret the signs the gods had placed on it). Unsolicited omens could take the form of a host of things one might observe in the course of everyday life. Certain signs were deemed unfavorable and others were favorable. The description of signs and their significance was expressed in an "if-then" statement and recorded on tablets. The "if" clause is technically called the protasis by scholars; the "then" clause is called the apodosis. In the course of time, scribes compiled long lists of omens and arranged them thematically into tablet series such as Shumma Alu, dealing with terrestrial omens, Shumma Izbu, dealing with malformed births, and Enuma Anu Enlil, dealing with celestial omens. It was believed that before a calamity happened, the gods might announce it with an evil omen.[105] The shape of a malformed animal fetus, the appearance of a lizard on the wall in one's house, the movement of a planet, the content of a dream—these and many, many other things could be understood as

[104] Despite its size, Maul's volume does not contain all known namburbi-rituals. He states that his interpretations are based on both the published editions and on about two hundred other namburbi-ritual fragments known to him (*ZB*, XII, n.11). Unfortunately, he does not list these fragments systematically anywhere in the volume.

[105] Not all omens were evil, however; some were interpreted as favorable. In the case of evil omens counteracted by namburbi-rituals, Maul suggests that the Mesopotamians understood the impending evil to have been the result of a human misdeed, committed by the one affected by the omen, that had angered the gods (see "How the Babylonians Protected Themselves," 124 and *ZB*, 60).

unsolicited evil signs.[106] According to Maul, these things are omen bearers; they bore the evil of the omen to the person affected.[107]

Despite the announcement of coming calamity, the one affected by the evil omen did not have to resign themselves to its ravages. The execution of a namburbi-ritual, performed by the exorcist for and with the person affected—often the king but others as well, would avert the impending ill announced by an evil omen before it happened and thereby return the affected person to normal life.[108] Attested rituals counteract many different kinds of evil, as a perusal of Maul's table of contents will show (see *ZB*, VI–VII). For example, there are rituals against evil omens associated with the behavior or specific observations of birds, snakes, dogs, lizards, ants, and other animals, against the observation of lightning, against the appearance of fungus in a house, against a specific time of a child's birth, against a lunar eclipse, and against chariot accidents while on campaign, among others. The namburbi-ritual could be quite short or be carried out over several days. If one is to judge from the ritual accoutrement involved (e.g., precious metals, a host of food and drink offerings, and the fabrication of figurines), some of the namburbi-rituals would have been very expensive and taken days to prepare.[109] Whatever its cost, without a ritual response to release or undo the evil portended by the omen, the evil that was announced, so it was thought, would become a reality.

Namburbi-prayers comprise the class of incantation-prayer recited during namburbi-rituals for the specific purpose, as the name suggests (the Sum. word nam-búr-bi means "its releasing"),[110] of releasing the announced evil so it would not actually harm the person affected by the appearance of the omen.[111] Not

[106] There is much, much more to say about divination in ancient Mesopotamia. For a concise overview, see A. K. Grayson, "Divination," in *Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*, 373–76 and Jean Bottéro, *Mesopotamia: Writing, Reasoning, and the Gods* (trans. Zainab Bahrani and Marc van de Mieroop; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 125–37. A much fuller treatment is presented in Stefan Maul, "Omina und Orakel. A. Mesopotamien," *RlA* 10 (2003–2005), 45–88. It should be noted that the omen collections were not merely observation-based collections. Rather, they underwent scholastic development and therefore often contain signs that would be highly unlikely or impossible to ever observe (e.g., a seven-headed *izbu* or a lunar eclipse on, say, the fifth day of a lunar month).

[107] For a summary of Maul's view of the "omen bearers," see pages 357 and 407.

[108] That namburbi-rituals fell within the professional and institutional domain of the exorcist is clear from KAR 44, rev. 6 (and parallels), the so-called Vademecum of the Exorcist, where namburbi-rituals are listed among the texts an exorcist must master. See M. J. Geller, "Incipits and Rubrics" in *Wisdom, Gods, and Literature: Studies in Assyriology in Honour of W. G. Lambert* (ed. A. R. George and I. L. Finkel; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 225–58 for the most recent edition.

[109] See Maul, *ZB*, 29–36 for a presentation of what can be gleaned about ritual preparations from the royal correspondence of Neo-assyrian scholars and 39–47 for his reconstruction of preparations from the ritual instructions.

[110] The Sumerian suffix –bi, "its," in the name originally referred to the omen apodosis, the "then" part of the omen entry that asserted the significance of the observed sign (see Maul, *ZB*, 12).

[111] Although releasing evil was the usual purpose of namburbi-rituals, a very small minority were intended for a positive purpose. For example, we have namburbi-rituals to bring about an

every namburbi-ritual required a namburbi-prayer, however,[112] and other kinds of prayers may also have been required during the course of the ritual (e.g., shuilla-prayers and cult-material incantation-prayers or *Kultmittelbeschwörungen*).[113] When a prayer was prescribed by the ritual instructions—namburbi or otherwise, it might appear as a full text embedded in the broader ritual context. Sometimes, however, the instructions only cited the incipit, that is, the prayer's initial line; the remainder of the prayer would have been provided by the exorcist performing the ritual, presumably from memory or from another tablet.

A namburbi-prayer was only one part in a rather complex ritual process, which is briefly summarized here in an idealized form.[114] After the exorcist prepared the items needed for the ritual (e.g., holy water and figurines) and erected an altar,[115] the people and places[116] involved in the ritual would be purified (e.g., the one affected by the omen may wash in water). An offering of various foods and drinks, which in fact constituted a meal, would be presented to the gods involved in the ritual, typically Shamash, Ea, and Asalluḫi.[117] Incense may also be burned during the meal.[118] With the preparations made for approaching the gods and the mood for a favorable hearing achieved, the heart of the ritual began: the removal of the impending evil from the one affected by the evil sign. It is at this point in the ritual that the prayer would have been recited.

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increase in trade for a business owner or other professional (see Caplice, *Akkadian Namburbi Texts*, 9 and 23–24) and to overcome the estrangement of a couple who had been separated for a time (see *ZB*, 409–14).

[112] This point is easily verified by perusing the examples translated in Caplice, *Akkadian Namburbi Texts*. As with all ritual instructions, however, the possibility must be considered that not everything that was to be done in a namburbi-ritual was actually written on the tablet. In some cases, the ritual instructions may have presumed the exorcist knew what (else) there was to do.

[113] For the incorporation of the shuilla-prayer, Sin 1, into a namburbi against the evil of a lunar eclipse, see page 386, n.7 and the references there. For cult-material prayer-incantations, as stated earlier, we must presume they were recited during namburbi-rituals from memory by the exorcist since they were not incorporated into the actual instructions (with one exception). See Maul's statements in *ZB*, 33 with n.67, 107 with n.8, and 375, 377, line 12′h for the exception).

[114] This summary is idealized because not every element in it is attested in every namburbi-ritual, and there is no attempt here at an exhaustive listing of the great variety in ritual details. For the variety of ritual actions, see Maul's thorough treatment in ibid., 39–113 and the much briefer overview in Caplice, *Akkadian Namburbi Texts*, 9–12.

[115] See *ZB*, 39–47.

[116] The ritual could take place in a variety of settings such as the roof of a house, the bank of a canal, or where the omen manifested itself. But it is not uncommon for the instructions to describe the location only vaguely: a secluded place in the steppe (*ina ṣēri parsi*) or some other inaccessible locale (*ašar šēpu parsat*, lit. "a place where the foot is barred"; see ibid., 48).

[117] See ibid., 48–59.

[118] Caplice, remarking on the burning of aromatics, writes, "it is clear that burning them on a censer was part of the normal banquet situation among human beings in the Neo-Assyrian period, so that their use in rituals providing a divine banquet was natural" (*Akkadian Namburbi Texts*, 11). Note also the similarity to the meal-related activities as described in the OB ikribu-like prayer, line 11ff. (see page 90).

Formally, namburbi-prayers follow the typical outline of other incantation-prayers.[119] That is, they begin with an invocation and praise of the deity or deities involved. As noted above, Shamash, god of justice, is the god predominantly invoked, often along with Ea and Asalluḫi, gods of wisdom and magic.[120] The reason for this, according to Maul, is that

> [e]ven if the great gods Ea, Šamaš, and Asalluhi, whom the conjuror had summoned, were not the divinities who had sent the . . . omen, they had at the very least allowed the person to be burdened with that fate. Only when the person involved had convinced the gods, especially Šamaš, the god of law (*kittu*) and justice (*mišaru*), that the impending, evil fate would befall him unjustly, could the sinister power of the harbinger . . . be broken.[121]

After the introduction, the prayers turn to a description of the problem (lament) and the request for its resolution (petition). The lament often includes a description of the sign (*ina/aššu lumun* X, "on account of the evil of X") and how it affected the supplicant, typically stated as *palḫāku adrāka u šutādurāku*, "I am afraid, anxious, and constantly in fear."[122] The petition part of the namburbi-prayer is invariably concerned with requesting the deity to avert the impending evil from the supplicant and to make the evil keep its distance. The prayers generally conclude with a brief promise of praise.

The ritual instructions typically complement the petitions of the prayer via the actions prescribed against the omen bearer or, as is often the case, its substitute in the form of a figurine.[123] The evil was transferred symbolically to the omen bearer/substitute in some way (e.g., the water used to purify the supplicant was poured over the omen bearer)[124] and then eliminated (e.g., the omen bearer or its substitute was tossed into the river, placed on a boat going downstream, or carried off by a fish or bird).[125] After another rite of purification,[126] the supplicant might be told, for example, to return home, go to another place, or to enter a tavern, being careful not to look back or to return on the same path by which they had come.[127] Sometimes the supplicant would also be required to wear an amulet necklace for a prescribed number of days.[128]

[119] In fact, Mayer (*UFBG*, 35) uses a namburbi-prayer, Shamash 25 (see page 421) as an example of the typical structure of an incantation-prayer in the introduction to his study.
[120] Other gods could be invoked in prayers, too (e.g., Naru, "the deified River," and Ishtar).
[121] "How the Babylonians Protected Themselves," 125.
[122] Although other incantation-prayers use these formulae, they are found very frequently in namburbi-prayers. See Mayer, *UFBG*, 73–74.
[123] As Maul mentions, a few namburbis require the use of a figurine of the one affected by the omen—the supplicant themselves. This substitute then receives the evil and symbolically suffers its effects instead of the real person. See *ZB*, 74–75.
[124] See ibid., 72–84, with the accomplishment of the transfer via items other than water beginning on 76.
[125] See ibid., 85–93 for various details.
[126] See ibid., 94–100.
[127] See ibid., 101–6.
[128] See ibid., 107–13.

As one might surmise from the prominence of Shamash, god of justice, in the ritual recitations, namburbi-rituals are permeated with legal language. Despite the legal imagery's importance, it is probably overstepping the bounds of evidence to suggest, as does Maul, that the namburbi-ritual is patterned exclusively on a legal trial,[129] ending with a river ordeal for the evil bearer.[130] As Veldhuis points out, the legal imagery is an important perspective to keep in mind while interpreting the namburbis but not all examples fit this model as well as others.[131] For example, not all namburbis end with the evil bearer being cast into the river (see Maul, *ZB*, 89–90). Moreover, focus on the legal aspects may lead to neglecting other useful perspectives.

Although there are a couple of Akkadian and Hittite tablets from Hattusha that preserve rituals of releasing evil, suggesting OB forerunners for namburbi-ritual texts, by far our most numerous sources for namburbi-rituals come from first millennium sites in Babylonia and Assyria and are written in SB Akkadian.[132] The textual witnesses to namburbi-rituals come down to us in various forms: some rituals appear in the omen tablets themselves as a brief insertion after the related omens that the namburbi-ritual counteracts; a couple of rituals are part of a larger medical-ritual compendium that includes various other texts; many namburbi-rituals are preserved individually on a tablet, one ritual per tablet; others are transmitted on *Sammeltafeln*, that is, tablets that collect a number of namburbi-rituals, which may or may not be thematically organized; finally, some namburbi-rituals are preserved on amulets, suggesting that even the inscribed tablet itself had apotropaic effectiveness.[133] According to Maul, evidence suggests that namburbi-rituals were arranged into a series of at least 136 tablets for Ashurbanipal's library. Unfortunately, evidence is currently too sparse to reconstruct the series.[134] Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian scholars to the king, however, provide important evidence for the preparation and actual execution of namburbi-rituals in the Assyrian capital.[135]

Dingirshadibbas:

Essential Bibliography: W. G. Lambert, "DINGIR.ŠÀ.DIB.BA Incantations." *JNES* 33 (1974), 267–322. {A text edition of the prayers. It is now out-dated and does not deal with the ritual contexts of the prayers. But it is the only available edition at the time

[129] See ibid., 60–71 especially, but this view informs Maul's general treatment of the ritual materials and its application to a namburbi-ritual against lightning (ibid., 39–113 and 117–56). More concisely, see his "How the Babylonians Protected Themselves against Calamities Announced by Omens."

[130] See Maul, *ZB*, 85–89.

[131] "On Interpreting Mesopotamian Namburbi Rituals," 150–51.

[132] See Maul, *ZB*, 159.

[133] See ibid., 163–81 for a full discussion of the forms in which namburbis were preserved in the written record.

[134] See ibid., 216–21 for a general discussion of Ashurbanipal's series and 217 for the specific number of tablets.

[135] See footnote 109 above.

of this writing.} Karel van der Toorn. *Sin and Sanction in Israel and Mesopotamia: A Comparative Study*. Assen: Van Gorcum, 1985, 121–24. {A brief look at the ritual setting and purpose of these prayers.} Margaret Jaques at the University of Zurich is publishing a fuller edition and study of the dingirshadibbas, including the prayers and their rituals. Her study will also address their reception history and reuse, too.

Dingirshadibba-prayers take their name from the Sum. rubric that sometimes occurs at their conclusion: ka-inim-ma dingir-šà-dib-ba gur-ru-da-kam, "it is the wording for appeasing (lit. turning back) an angry god."[136] Because the wording of the prayer is often preceded by the én superscript modern scholars refer to them as incantation-prayers. As the name dingirshadibba suggests, these incantation-prayers were used for penitential purposes; that is, they were prayed when one needed to turn back the wrath of a god. Like the other Akkadian incantation-prayers discussed above, the dingirshadibba-prayers were part of the professional sphere of the exorcist (see KAR 44, obv. 4 and parallels).[137] Thematically, the dingirshadibbas are not distinctive since several other kinds of prayers were also intended to appease the anger of various gods (e.g., ershaḫunga-prayers[138] and the still rather poorly known shigu-prayers[139]). What is distinctive about the dingirshadibba-prayers is the deity to whom they were typically directed: the personal deity.[140] (For more on personal deities, see page 431.)

Because the supplicant was quite familiar with the addressee, many of the dingirshadibba-prayers have a more intimate and personal tone than the other kinds of prayers in this volume. The opening may exemplify this tone best.[141] Rather than beginning the prayer with an invocation and a long string of epithets that invoke, honor, and praise the deity being addressed, the dingirshadibba-prayers typically begin with a very short invocation, sometimes as simple

[136] The rubric does not occur in all of the examples that Lambert reconstructed. Some of the prayers he treats in his edition were classified as dingirshadibba-prayers by content alone. His edition, as he states, is tentative ("DINGIR.ŠÀ.DIB.BA Incantations," 267). Jaques reads the third sign of the prayer's name as dab (see the lexical section of *ṣabātu* in CAD Ṣ, 6), thus, dingir-šà-dab-ba. The meaning is, however, the same.

[137] See footnote 108 above for the most recent edition of this text.

[138] In fact, Lambert has shown that some texts he edits as dingirshadibbas were also known in the form of bilingual and unilingual Sumerian ershaḫunga-prayers. See his lines 71–108 ("DINGIR.ŠÀ.DIB.BA Incantations," 278–81, 288–93, and 297–304) and Maul, *HB*, 213–15. For more on ershaḫunga-prayers, see page 43 below.

[139] See Mayer, *UFBG*, 15 for the handful of prayers that falls into this small category and his pages 111–13 for their characteristic features. The most recent treatment, with references to literature since Mayer, is van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction in Israel and Mesopotamia*, 117–21, with a few texts treated in 125–36. See also the earlier work by M.-J. Seux, "*Šiggayôn = šigû*?" in *Mélanges bibliques et orientaux en l'honneur de M. Henri Cazelles* (ed. A. Caquot and M. Delcor; AOAT 212; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker / Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1981), 419–38.

[140] As Lambert notes, the rubric is not applied in an entirely consistent manner to generic personal gods since occasionally a dingirshadibba-prayer addresses a high god such as Sin or Marduk and Zarpanitu ("DINGIR.ŠÀ.DIB.BA Incantations," 268).

[141] See Alan Lenzi, "Invoking the God: Interpreting Invocations in Mesopotamian Prayers and Biblical Laments of the Individual," *JBL* 129 (2010), 303–15.

as "my god" (*ilī*). When other epithets follow they often have some personal connection to the supplicant. Lines 40–41 of Lambert's provisional edition of the dingirshadibbas provide a notable example in this respect, though the opening is longer than is usual: *ilī bēlī bānû šumīya nāṣir napištīya mušabšû zērīya*, "my god, my lord, 'builder' of my name, guardian of my life, creator of my progeny."[142]

Unlike the other classes of incantation-prayers, the dingirshadibba-prayers do not show a common structure, although laments, petitions, and, in a few cases, a promise of praise can be found variously in the prayers. Thematically, dingirshadibba-prayers are focused on the supplicant's personal sin. Both confession of sin and pleas of ignorance (in general and about sin specifically) dominate the prayers, finding expression in direct statements (e.g., *mādū arnūya ēma ēpušu ul īde*, "my iniquities are many! I do not know what I did!"),[143] questions (e.g., *mīnu annūya kīam epšēku*, "what are my sins (that) I am treated thus?"),[144] and metaphors (e.g., *alpu anākū-ma šammu ākulu ul īde*, "I am an ox; I do not know the plant that I eat.").[145] One also finds various statements that assert the inherent sinfulness of humanity and the remoteness of the divine realm, suggesting that because sin is inevitable and the deity so remote human frailties should be excused.[146]

We do not know whether the dingirshadibba-prayers were arranged into a series as were the namburbis in Nineveh. There is at present no published colophon evidence to go on. We do know, however, that the prayers were used with various ritual actions[147] and in various ritual settings. As the evidence is still rather thin, a fuller treatment of the ritual setting of these prayers must await Margaret Jaques' new edition in her Habilitation at the University of Zurich. Lambert mentions the incorporation of dingirshadibba-prayers into *Bīt rimki* and their apparent use in a ritual preserved on KAR 90 (which was followed by *Šurpu*); but he was reticent to discuss the ritual setting of the dingirshadibbas further because the evidence was "too incomplete and uncertain in every respect for any overall view to be obtained."[148] Karel van der Toorn offers a brief discussion of some of the diverse occasions for the performance of these incantation-prayers in the hopes that understanding "[t]he ritual *Sitz im Leben* of the individual prayers may . . . furnish the key to a better comprehension of their place in the more elaborate rituals"[149] (such as *Bīt rimki*). He believes the dingirshadibbas were "designed for situations in which the general circumstances point to

[142] Lambert, "DINGIR.ŠÀ.DIB.BA Incantations," 276–77.
[143] See ibid., 274–75: 29.
[144] See ibid., 284–85: 10.
[145] See ibid., 284–85: 12.
[146] See, e.g., ibid., 280–83: 132–34 and 276–77: 44–45. For a general treatment of divine wrath, sin, and the role of human ignorance, see van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction*, 56–99.
[147] See, e.g., Lambert, "DINGIR.ŠÀ.DIB.BA Incantations," 276–77: 48–49 and 280–81: 119 and van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction*, 123–24.
[148] "DINGIR.ŠÀ.DIB.BA Incantations," 269.
[149] *Sin and Sanction*, 122.

the wrath of the personal gods,"[150] which is supported by the citation of a dingirshadibba in what he believes are diagnostic texts. After looking at some shared terminology in the prayers and the diagnostic texts, he concludes that "the *dingiršadibba*s with their rather vague rubrics represent the therapeutic counterpart of the diagnostic texts."[151] Sally Butler has noticed that prayers very similar to the dingirshadibba-prayers (though the dingirshadibba-rubric is lacking) are prescribed in what she calls the Ashur Dream Ritual Compendium, col. iv, lines 21–30 and 31–41b.[152] These sections of the compendium are intended to induce a pleasant dream (see lines 30 and 41b). Apparently, one impediment to a pleasant dream was the anger of personal deities. Thus, it seems that the prayers were used in this case to reconcile the gods to the supplicant prior to their going to sleep.

Ershaḫungas:

Essential Bibliography:[153] Stefan Maul. *'Herzberuhigungsklagen': Die sumerisch-akkadischen Erschahunga-Gebete*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1988.[154] {Henceforth, *HB*. The standard edition of ershaḫunga-prayers, including a full introduction.}

An ershaḫunga-prayer (Sum. ér-šà-ḫun-gá),[155] as the name indicates, is a "lament to appease the heart (of a god)." Although these prayers were originally written in the Emesal dialect of Sumerian, most of the texts were provided with an Akkadian interlinear translation.[156] The ershaḫunga-prayers show various affinities with the Sumerian balags and ershemmas,[157] but they do not address

[150] Ibid., 122.

[151] Ibid., 121–24. As Nils P. Heeßel has pointed out, however, none of the texts van der Toorn cites is actually diagnostic in nature; rather, they are therapeutic (see Nils P. Heeßel, *Babylonisch-assyrische Diagnostik* [AOAT 43; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2000], 83).

[152] See Sally A. L. Butler, *Mesopotamian Conceptions of Dreams and Dream Rituals* (AOAT 258; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1998), 284–89, 301–2 for the text and her analysis on 129–30, 135, 144–45, and 209–11.

[153] Seux offers a wide selection of these prayers in French translation (139–68).

[154] Add to Maul's collection of texts those in his "Zwei neue 'Herzberuhigungsklagen'," *RA* 85 (1991), 67–74 and M. J. Geller, "CT 58, no. 70. A Middle Babylonian Eršahunga," *BSOAS* 55.3 (1992), 528–32.

[155] This brief introduction relies on Maul's (*HB*, 1–72). The name of the prayer is always written logographically in Akkadian contexts. Maul believes the loanword was probably more likely written as *eršaḫungakku* than *eršaḫungû* (see ibid., 1, n.1 and compare *CDA*, 79).

[156] For a brief justification of including the ershaḫunga-prayers in a volume treating Akkadian prayers, see note 29 above.

[157] See Maul, *HB*, 15–16 and Uri Gabbay, "The Sumero-Akkadian Prayer 'Eršema': A Philological and Religious Analysis," 2 vols. (Ph.D. Dissertation, Hebrew University–Jerusalem, 2007), 1.11–12. (I wish to thank Dr. Gabbay for making his dissertation available to me.) Barbara Böck ("„Wenn du zu Nintinugga gesprochen hast, . . ." Untersuchungen zu Aufbau, Inhalt, Sitz-im-Leben und Funktion sumerischer Gottesbriefe," *AoF* 23 [1996], 3–23, here 18, n.30) has called into question the appropriateness of comparing the ershaḫungas to the Neo-Sumerian letter-prayers, first suggested by William W. Hallo, "Individual Prayer in Sumerian: The Continuity of a Tradition," *JAOS* 88 (1968), 71–89 (repr. in *The World's Oldest Literature: Studies in Sumerian*

political concerns or lament the destruction of a sanctuary. They, rather, are spoken by an individual with personal concerns, ultimately, to appease an angry god. Thematically, therefore, ershaḫunga-prayers are very similar to the dingirshadibbas. The ershaḫungas differ conspicuously, however, from the dingirshadibba-prayers in several respects: the ershaḫunga-prayers belong to the corpus of the cult-singer (*kalû*), they do not begin with the én superscript, they show a common structure, and they are not exclusively directed to the personal god.

Maul's edition of the ershaḫungas presents the text of over one hundred forty different prayers, many of which are fragmentary.[158] Although the divine addressee of some of these prayers is impossible to determine due to damage on the tablet, there are prayers attested for many well-known high deities such as Anu, Aya, Ishtar, Enlil, Ninlil, Nusku, Damkina, Ea, Sin, Shamash, Marduk, Ninurta, Zarpanitum, and Tashmetum, among others, as well as prayers to other gods, such as the ones directed to a personal god[159] and to "any god" (included in this volume, see page 447). Although the form goes back to OB times,[160] most of the currently known prayers come from the first millennium and were discovered in the remains of Ashurbanipal's library in Nineveh, though other sites have yielded some prayers, too.[161]

The ershaḫunga-prayers exhibit a common structure.[162] Each prayer begins with an introductory litany, which has four thematic variations:[163] praise (e.g., *bēlum puluḫtaka galtat, qarrādu abu Adad puluḫtaka galtat* "O lord, your terror is frightening! O hero, father Adad, your terror is frightening!");[164] wooing (e.g., *anāku ana bēlīya taṣlītum luqbīšu, qarrādu abu Adad taṣlītum luqbīšu*, "I will speak a prayer to my lord, the hero, father Adad, I will speak a prayer!");[165] petitioning (e.g., *ša bēlim nuggat libbīšu ana ašrīšu litūra,* "may the anger of the lord's heart

Belles-Lettres [Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 35; Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2010], 255–85 [reference courtesy of C. Jay Crisostomo]).

[158] Due to their partial preservation, some of these prayers may turn out to belong to another genre.

[159] Lambert treated the text as a dingirshadibba-prayer, but he also recognized that some MSS labeled the text an ershaḫunga (see footnote 138 above).

[160] See Maul, *HB*, 9–10 for a short list of OB prayers with close affinities to the first millennium's ershaḫunga-prayers. See also his edition of BM 29632 (with references to the secondary literature, 10–15), which bears the ershaḫunga rubric. (The tablet was originally recognized and published by Piotr Michalowski, "On the Early History of the Ershahunga Prayer," *JCS* 39 [1987], 37–48. On the basis of this tablet, Michalowski proposed to identify a number of OB prayers as ershaḫungas [42–43]).

[161] Maul, *HB*, 2. A few prayers come from Ashur, Babylon, Nippur(?), and Uruk(?), and a tablet preserving ritual instructions that include the recitation of an ershaḫunga-prayer was discovered at Sultantepe.

[162] See ibid., 17–25, upon which the following summary relies.

[163] Many of the structural features follow broadly the outline of the incantation-prayer. See ibid., 17, n.37, who also notes the exceptions.

[164] See ibid., 158.

[165] See ibid., 142.

return to normal" [or "relent," lit. "return to its place"], see page 449),[166] or lamenting (e.g., *anāku ana bēltīya mīnâ ēpuš*, "what have I done to my lady?").[167]

The lament follows this opening litany and occupies a prominent place in the text. The lament typically describes the effect of suffering upon the supplicant's body but details are usually lacking, making the prayers applicable to many situations. According to Maul's interpretation of the laments, "the described symptoms such as tears, tremors, moans, sleeplessness, debilitation, grief, and depression are not to be seen as the actual complaint, but rather as secondary evils."[168] These symptoms are the results of something deeper, namely, the supplicant's offense against the deity. Thus, one finds confessions of sin (and ignorance) and requests for forgiveness in the lament section of the ershaḫungas, which often look similar to what one finds in the dingirshadibba-prayers (see above, page 40). In the transition between the lament and the petition one may find the description of a ritual act of the supplicant similar to what Mayer calls a *Hinwendung*, a "turning"[169] (e.g., kneeling, calling out, kissing the feet of the deity, etc.). In conjunction with the supplicant's confession of sin, these acts often have a penitential character.[170]

The petition follows upon the lament, as it does in the incantation-prayers. In this section the supplicant calls upon the deity to remedy the breach in their relationship and to bring the supplicant's suffering to an end. It is common for this section to begin with a mention of the word that the supplicant wishes the deity to speak, the word that could put an end to the supplicant's tribulation: *aḫulap*, "(it is) enough!" Like the incantation-prayers, the supplicant may petition the deity for forgiveness of sins, renewed attention, and/or restoration of health and well-being.[171] Between the petition and the next section, the intercessory litany, many ershaḫunga-prayers have a promise of praise.

In the intercessory litany the supplicant calls on their personal deities as well as deities related to or associated with the primary deity invoked in the prayer (e.g., if Enlil is invoked, one will find Ninlil, his wife, and Nusku, his vizier, called upon in this section, among others).[172] The supplicant seeks the help of these other gods in securing the divine appeasement of the primary deity addressed in the prayer, sometimes requesting that the intercessory deities speak a prayer on the supplicant's behalf.

[166] See ibid., 237.
[167] See ibid., 280.
[168] See ibid., 21. My translation. The German reads, "Die beschriebenen Symptome wie Tränen, Zittern, Stöhnen, Schlaflosigkeit, Schwächung, Betrübnis, Depression sind nicht als das eigentlich Beklagte, sondern nur als sekundäres Übel zu sehen."
[169] See Mayer, *UFBG*, 122–49
[170] See Maul, *HB*, 21.
[171] See ibid., 22, citing Mayer, *UFBG*, 210ff.
[172] In some cases, however, a standard litany of gods, known from the Sumerian balags, is used (see Maul, *HB*, 23).

The final section is aptly called the "concluding formula" (*Die Eršaḫunga-Schlußformel*) and appears in all but one ershaḫunga-prayer treated by Maul (the exception is his no. 47). It reads in Sumerian as follows:

šà-zu šà-ama-tu-ud-da-gim ki-bi-šè ḫa-am-gi$_4$-gi$_4$
ama-tu-ud-da a-a-tu-ud-da-gim ki-bi-šè ḫa-am-gi$_4$-gi$_4$

The Akkadian translation, when provided, reads thus:[173]

libbaka kīma libbi ummi ālittim ana ašrīšu litūra
kīma ummi ālitti abi ālidi ana ašrīšu litūra

May your heart, like the heart of the mother who gave birth (to me) return to normal,
Like the mother who gave birth (to me), the father who engendered (me), may it return to normal.

The prayers currently attested are written on one-column tablets with one prayer per tablet. There are no ritual instructions included on the tablets attesting ershaḫunga-prayers. However, there are other tablets consisting of ritual instructions that prescribe the use of ershaḫunga-prayers in various ritual complexes. These ritual instructions often include the recitation of balags and ershemmas before the recitation of the ershaḫunga-prayers.[174] The ritual texts have both cultic and apotropaic purposes. The latter, according to NA letters from scholars, are always connected to the king. It seems plausible to presume, however, based on the individualistic content of the prayers, that the prayers may have (also?) been used, originally, at least, by private citizens. But there is currently no evidence to support this.

Ikribus:

Essential Bibliography:[175] Ivan Starr. *The Rituals of the Diviner*. Bibliotheca Mesopotamica 12. Malibu: Undena Publications, 1983. {An edition of and commentary on an important OB ikribu-ritual, YOS 11 23.} Heinrich Zimmern. *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der babylonischen Religion*. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1901, nos. 75–101 (pp. 190–219). {A now severely out-dated edition of SB ikribu-rituals.} W. G. Lambert is preparing a new edition of the texts.

The Akk. term *ikribu* is often used as a generic term for prayer (see CAD I/J, 62, 65–66). Due to its distinctive employment in the rubrics of divinatory ritual texts, however, the term has also come to designate a specific kind of prayer of the diviner. As Ivan Starr describes it,

[173] See, e.g., Maul's no. 6, rev. 14′, 16′ (ibid., 101).
[174] All of the ritual texts related to ershaḫunga-prayers are edited by ibid., 29–56.
[175] For translations of several first-millennium prayers of the diviner, many of which attest the ikribu-rubric, see Foster, 715–16, 754–56, 758–59; Seux, 470–82; and von Soden, 275–79. For related OB texts, see Foster, 207–13; Seux, 467–71; and von Soden, 274–75.

> [t]he term *ikribu* must be understood within a ritual setting: it is bound with the acts accompanying each step of the diviner's ritual activities in the course of performing an extispicy. The *ikribu* forms an integral part of such a set of rituals. This suggests the following definition: an *ikribu* is a prayer organically bound with each particular step in the ritual activities of the diviner, and recited by him in the course of performing an extispicy.[176]

Note, however, that the term is not always employed in a consistent manner by Assyriologists. It has been extended by some scholars to other prayers of the diviner that contain content similar to the ikribu-prayers yet do not bear the ikribu-rubric (see page 85).[177]

As Starr's comments have already shown, the ikribu-prayers are embedded in a broader ritual text/performance—indicated sometimes explicitly by the surrounding ritual instructions on the tablet or only implicitly by the content of the prayer itself or the sequence in which several prayers are ordered. Throughout the course of the ikribu-ritual the diviner prepares and performs in a series of steps the ritual slaughter of the animal used for divination (i.e., extispicy). For each step of the ritual process an ikribu-text may contain ritual instructions about the diviner's actions and/or an indication of the appropriate ritual wording (prayer) that accompanies the actions. When the text of a prayer is given on the tablet, the purpose of the prayer is identified with a rubric, *ikrib* X, in which X stands for the ritual action of a particular step in the larger ritual process. For example, Zimmern, *BBR*, no. 95, a fragmentary tablet, preserves five rubrics (see lines 2, 12, 20, 25, and 31) to five different ikribu-prayers preserved (partially) on the tablet.[178] There are no ritual instructions surrounding the prayers, but the five rubrics clearly outline various ritual steps in the process of an extispicy:

> 2. [*ikrib*] *ina surti* [*bīni nadê*], "an ikribu-prayer that accompanies the setting down of a circle of tamarisk wood."
>
> 12. [*ikrib kalli upunta*[179] *mullî-ma*] *kunni*, "an ikribu-prayer that accompanies the filling and setting out of a bowl of flour."

[176] Starr, *Rituals of the Diviner*, 45. *Ikrib* is W. G. Lambert's preferred designation, as mentioned in an oral communication to the Würzburg Rencontre Assryiologique Internationale in 2008 (personal communication, Christopher Frechette) and utilized in his work on the tamitu-prayers (see, e.g., *Babylonian Oracle Questions*, 12). He argues that because the construct form is always used in the rubric, that form of the word should be the name of this class of the diviners' prayers.

[177] See, e.g., Mayer, *UFBG*, 32, n.63, who lists some (OB) texts that do not have the rubric together with ones that do bear it. (The list is now out-dated.) See also L. de Meyer, "Deux prières *ikribu* du Temps d'Assmī-ṣaduqa," in *Zikir Šumim: Assyriological Studies Presented to F. R. Kraus on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday* (ed. G. van Driel, Th. J. H. Krispijn, M. Stol, and K. R. Veenhof; Leiden: Brill, 1982), 271–78, who uses the label *ikribu* for two OB prayers that do not actually bear the rubric. (See likewise the mention of a third prayer at 271, n.7.)

[178] Line 32 seems to begin a sixth prayer.

[179] Zimmern, *BBR*, 210 reads *upuntu* (also written *upumtu*) here while CAD (e.g., K, 83) reads *maḫaṣtu*. Both words denote some kind of flour.

20. [*ikrib erēni ina upun*]*ti zuqqupi* (or *sukkupi*), "an ikribu-prayer that accompanies the setting up(?)[180] of cedar in flour."

25. [*ikrib nignakka*] *pēnta mullî-ma kunni*, "an ikribu-prayer that accompanies the filling of a censor with charcoal and setting (it) out."

31. [*ikrib p*]*uḫādi ḫuppi*, "an ikribu-prayer that accompanies the purifying of the lamb."

The fact that these prayers are to be recited sequentially within a broader ritual is demonstrated by another ikribu-text that preserves ritual instructions prescribing a series of recitations of ikribu-prayers and their associated ritual actions, all of which precisely match the sequence above (see *BBR*, nos. 75–78: 22–29).[181]

Ikribu-prayers typically begin with the invocation of Shamash and Adad, the gods of extispicy, though other deities could be invoked, too (e.g., Ninurta as the star Sirius,[182] Ishtar of Nineveh, and Sin). The wording of the invocation of Shamash and Adad is almost always the same: *Šamaš bēl dīnim u Adad bēl bīri*, "O Shamash, lord of judgment, Adad, lord of divination."[183] The middle section of the prayers contains statements and petitions appropriate to whatever ritual actions are being prescribed. The most important theme in this section is acceptance of the diviner's ritual actions. The prayers do not end with praise as many of the prayers discussed so far. Rather, they tend to conclude with very formulaic petitionary phrases that lay emphasis on the central concern of the ritual as a whole. For example, YOS 11 23, a long OB text preserving a number of ikribu-prayers, preserves the following concluding formula in several brief prayers near the tablet's end: *ina imitti puḫādim annîm kittam u šumēl puḫādim annîm kittam šuknān*, "in the right of this lamb (place) truth, and the left of this lamb place truth" (see lines 137, 140, 142). Similarly, the first millennium ikribu-prayers conclude—when a conclusion is preserved—with the following formula: *Šamaš u Adad izizzānim-ma ina qibītīya nīš qātīya ina mimma mala eppušu tamīt akarrabu kitta libši*, "O Shamash and Adad, stand here that in my speaking, the lifting of my hands, whatever I do, the query that I pray there may be truth!" This final petition for the gods to place truth (*kittu*), an idea that arises quite

[180] The meaning of *zuqqupu* or *sukkupu* is uncertain (see CAD Z, 54).

[181] The same five prayers, referenced by rubric only (the text is not given), appear in the same order in Zimmern, *BBR*, no. 96: 6–10.

[182] For a new edition of the Ninurta as Sirius prayer, see now Werner R. Mayer, "Das Gebet des Eingeweideschauers an Ninurta," *Or* n.s. 74 (2005), 51–56 (reference courtesy of Christopher Frechette).

[183] There are exceptions to this invocation, however. See, e.g., YOS 11 23:1 (= HSM 7494), edited by Starr, *Rituals of the Diviner*, 25–106, specifically 30, and AO 7032: 1, given in copy by Jean Nougayrol, "Textes hépatoscopiques d'époque ancienne conserves au Musée du Louvre," *RA* 38 (1941), 67–88, specifically 87, transliterated by Starr, *Rituals of the Diviner*, 122. Both of these read: *Šamaš bēl dīnim u Adad bēl ikribī u bīri*, "O Shamash, lord of judgment, Adad, lord of extispicy-rituals and divination." See the same additional epithet throughout the ikribu-related OB prayer of the diviner, beginning on page 85.

frequently in the ikribu-prayers and others associated with them,[184] is the central purpose of both the ikribu-prayer as well as the entire ritual of extispicy. By asking the deities to "place truth" the diviner intends to make an "appeal for the manifestation of the oracular verdict,"[185] an accurate and trustworthy indication of the will of the gods in the exta of the animal.

Unfortunately, the current state of publication of the ikribu-prayers does not allow us to discuss issues of standardization or the arrangement of the prayers in a series. It is hoped that W. G. Lambert's promised edition will shed light on such issues.

Tamitus and other Queries:

Essential Bibliography: W. G. Lambert. *Babylonian Oracle Questions*. Mesopotamian Civilizations 13. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007. {A long-awaited edition of the first-millennium tamitu-prayers.} Ivan Starr. *Queries to the Sungod: Divination and Politics in Sargonid Assyria*. SAA 4. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1990. {An edition of all the divination queries and reports written during the Sargonid period of the NA empire.}

Although there is still some question about the precise meaning of the term, Akk. *tamītu* is understood by Lambert to mean "oracle question."[186] Despite this name, there is no reason to exclude the tamitu-texts from the category of prayer as it is defined in this introduction.[187] These texts invoke a god and express concerns to that god (albeit in the form of a question) in order to gain divine assistance (in the form of a yes-no response via an extispicy result). All of the texts treated in Lambert's edition are written in SB Akkadian and were found in first millennium contexts, even if it is likely that some of them go back to OB times.[188]

The tamitu-prayers address Shamash and Adad as a pair, using the same epithets in their initial lines as do the ikribu-prayers: "lord of judgment" (*bēl dīnim*) and "lord of divination" (*bēl bīri*), respectively. Like the ikribu-prayers,[189] the

[184] The phrase also occurs in the OB prayers related to the diviner treated in this volume. See the prayer at page 85 (its lines 13, 18, 33, 41, 49, 53, 57, 66) and the one at page 78 (line 24).
[185] Starr, *Rituals of the Diviner*, 58.
[186] See *Babylonian Oracle Questions*, 5–7 for Lambert's etymological discussion. He claims that the two very similar words *tāmītu* (OB *tāwītum*) and *tamītu* were "confused or equated" in ancient times (6). Starr translates the term similarly, "oracle query" (*Queries to the Sungod*, 357). *CDA*, 402, following *AHw*, 1340 (s.v. *tāwītum*), renders the former "response" ("Anfragebeantwortung") and the latter "oath" ("Beschworenes, Eid") (*CDA*, 397 and *AHw*, 1314).
[187] On the basis of his remarks in the introduction, it is likely that Lambert would agree (see *Babylonian Oracle Questions*, 5). On the other hand, von Soden does not include tamitus in his overview of Akkadian prayers (see his "Gebete II," 165).
[188] See *Babylonian Oracle Questions*, 7 and Starr, *Queries to the Sungod*, xxix.
[189] In fact, some tamitu-prayer colophons preserve the phrase *tamīt ikribi*, rendered by Lambert as "petitionary *tamītus*" (*Babylonian Oracle Questions*, 5), which shows the close relationship of the two kinds of texts. For the ikribus and other texts related to tamitus, see ibid., 12–14.

tamitu-prayers petition the gods of extispicy for a judgment. The distinctive characteristic of the petitions in the tamitus is that they communicate the actual query the supplicant wishes the gods to answer. The queries are always couched in question form; in fact, the texts are dominated typically by a (sometimes long) string of questions that often cover the issue of concern from various perspectives, "so that," as Lambert writes, "the answer would not mislead due to defects in the phraseology of the question."[190] These questions are always asked in a fashion that can be answered via an affirmative or negative reply. Sometimes the questions concern things beyond the control of the supplicant (e.g., a lunar eclipse or whether a pregnant woman will survive delivery), but more often than not the questions concern a course of action to which the supplicant wants the gods to give the stamp of approval (e.g., a military action). Because the diviners were aware of the possibility that even the longest list of questions could leave potential loopholes that might lead to an unclear reply, the diviners added what is called *ezib*-clauses (*ezib* is an imperative meaning "leave aside, ignore") that asked the gods to overlook or dismiss anything that might impede a reliable answer. The answer, that is, the decision of the gods, is provided via extispicy, though there is one text in which an exceptional means of divination occurs (see Lambert's text no. 15). The answers are not recorded with the tamitus. We do, however, have tablets on which diviners report the results of their extispicy rituals for delivery to the person concerned, oftentimes the king.[191]

The queries as they have come down to us were not asked for a particular occasion; or rather, if they were, the particulars were not usually preserved (there are a few exceptions). Several lines of evidence taken together suggest this conclusion. First, some of the textual witnesses for tamitus preserve more than one query-prayer per physical tablet, indicating an attempt to create a compendium or series. Although there is no single standardized series of tamitus, Lambert presents evidence for several local serial collections from Nimrud, Nineveh, and some other Babylonian city (possibly Sippar or Babylon).[192] Second, some of the texts occur in multiple copies. If these were one-off texts created for a particular situation, one would not expect to find multiple copies. Third, *annanna* and *annannītu* occur as substitutes for proper names within the texts with only a few exceptions (all of the exceptions are names that go back to the

[190] Ibid., 7. See Lambert's text no. 1, 26–94, which, in the course of inquiring about the safety of a city, lists several dozen different military strategies that might be used against it (pp. 24–29).

[191] See, e.g., Starr, *Queries to the Sungod*, 262–315 for examples of NA divination reports and Niek Veldhuis, "Divination: Theory and Use," in *If a Man Builds a Joyful House: Assyriological Studies in Honor of Erle Verdun Leichty* (ed. Ann K. Guinan et al; Cuneiform Monographs 31; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2006), 487–97, here 487, n.2 for OB divination reports.

[192] *Babylonian Oracle Questions*, 10–12. Eleanor Robson goes farther in stating that apart from a couple of exceptions, there is "virtually no duplication across libraries" in the material ("Review of W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Oracle Questions*," *BSOAS* 72 [2009], 560).

OB period).[193] These generic placeholder words strongly suggest the texts were intended to be adapted for a variety of clients. It seems therefore that the tamitu-prayers were part of the scribal tradition and were preserved as models, at least potentially, for similar situations that might arise in the future. Lambert finds this idea "certain because different surviving questions on related subjects are in part identically worded."[194]

The tablets preserving the tamitus in Lambert's edition typically include the rubric *tamīt* X at the end of each query, where X represents a thematic distillation of the text's query. For example, Lambert's text no. 1, line 183 reads *tamīt ana šulum maṣṣarti*, "a query for the safety of the guards (lit. watch)" (see page 470). His text no. 21, line 9 reads *tamīt annannītu itti annanna mutīša kīnāti ītammi*, "a query concerning whether female so-and-so is speaking the truth (lit. true things) to male so-and-so, her husband." The tamitu-prayers range over a broad array of topics including such things as lunar eclipses, the result of a river ordeal, and whether a slave had been faithful to his master, but the success of military actions and personal safety are the topics most frequently found.

The following is a description of the structure of a typical tamitu-prayer, based on Lambert's work.[195] After the invariable invocation (cited above), tamitu-prayers may include an identification of the person for whom the diviner is performing the extispicy and the stipulated term, that is, the time period for which the inquiry applies (usually within the month or the year the ritual is being performed). The question that the supplicant wishes the gods to answer may be presented at any point after the invocation. The persuasions take the form of flattery, *ilūtkunu rabītu īde*, "your great divinity knows," or what Lambert interprets (cautiously) as an implied threat, *āmiru immaru šēmû išemmû*, "the seer will see (and) the hearer will hear." The latter is interpreted by Lambert as follows: "if no answer, or a wrong answer is given, news of this may spread to the detriment of the gods' reputation."[196] The first form of persuasion may occur anywhere after the invocation; the second form always comes after the diviner's question. Technical qualifications, that is, the clauses intended to cover possible oversights or problems with the formulation of the question, if present, occur after the question itself. These qualifications are usually expressed with the *ezib*-clauses but a "why"-question format, whose meaning is still unclear, is also attested. The tamitu-prayers end in a variety of ways, but the most common is the rather abrupt (*ilūtkunu*) *Šamaš u Adad kīam*, "Your divinity, O Shamash and Adad, thus." It is likely that the *kīam* indicates an abbreviation and should be taken to mean "etc.," suggesting that the diviner would fill in the ending for

[193] The OB names are all kings, Hammurabi, Abi-Eshuḫ, and Samsu-ditana, and they are only mentioned in the Nimrud edition (see Lambert, *Babylonian Oracle Questions*, 15).
[194] See ibid., 8 (for the quote) and 20.
[195] See ibid., 14 with his notes on each section in pp. 15–20.
[196] See ibid., 17 for a brief discussion of both stock phrases and contrast it with Starr's interpretation (*Queries to the Sun God*, xix–xx). See note 200 below.

themselves with some formulaic phrase(s). Sometimes *kīam* is followed by a description of the ritual acts involved in the extispicy.[197]

The tamitu-prayers are very similar to the NA queries to Shamash, written during the Sargonid-era (722–609 BCE) in SB Akkadian and edited by Ivan Starr in *Queries to the Sun God* (SAA 4). Unlike the tamitus in Lambert's edition, these prayer-queries are coarsely written one to a tablet without duplicates and seem therefore to be intended for one and only one occasion. Also unlike the tamitus, they are only addressed to Shamash; Adad is entirely absent. There are many structural similarities between the two kinds of queries and they share many phrases, but on the whole the NA queries are more rigid and formulaic.

These prayers invariably open with the phrase, *Šamaš bēlu rabû ša ašallūka anna kīna apalanni*, "O Shamash, great lord, whom I am asking, answer me with a firm yes."[198] The stipulated term is designated and then follows the query proper, formulated as a direct question, as in the tamitu-prayers. Unlike the question in the tamitu-prayers, however, the query in the NA texts have a highly formulaic structure and utilize stereotyped phrases throughout, some of which are keyed to particular topics that arise in the queries somewhat frequently.[199] The first and last of three closing formulae in the query correspond to what Lambert calls persuasions (see above). The middle closing formula in the query reads, *ina šalimti ina pî ilūtīka rabīti Šamaš bēlu rabû qabi kūn*, "with a favorable reply, according to the command of your great divinity, O Shamash, great lord, speak (and) confirm (it)."[200]

The *ezib*-clauses follow the query. Unlike the tamitu-prayers, these clauses are quite extensive in the NA texts and may be divided into three sections. The first section of *ezib*s derives from the particular situation of the query and therefore contains clauses of quite variable content. The second section contains *ezib*s that are attested between three and eight times and seem to be somewhat stereotyped (e.g., "disregard that an angry man, or one in distress spoke angrily the words of his report"[201]). They are much less common than those found in the third section, the standard *ezib*s. These seven clauses are concerned with the ritual performance itself and the purity of everything involved in the extispicy (the diviner, the lamb, and the location of the ritual). These *ezib*s are always found in the queries, appear in the same order, and, apart from the last two, show little variation in their construction and wording.[202]

[197] See *Babylonian Oracle Questions*, 5, 18–20.
[198] The following general outline of the NA query to Shamash is based on Starr's work in *Queries to the Sun God*, xvi–xxviii.
[199] See ibid., xviii.
[200] Starr translates all three closing formulae as questions (ibid., xx). The above translation follows Lambert's notion that the phrases that conclude the query are intended to persuade the deity to give a positive reply. Therefore, they are translated as statements.
[201] See ibid., xxi.
[202] See ibid., xxii–xxvii for details.

A standardized formula bridges between the *ezib*s and the repetition of the query: *lū nasḫā lū bērā*, "though they (i.e., these formulations) be excerpted, though they be selected."[203] According to Lambert, this formula, which may also conclude a tamitu-prayer, was one last attempt by the diviner to cover all potential problems in his prayer that might lead to misleading results.[204] The repeated query, unlike the first occurrence, is stated as an indirect question, *ašâlka Šamaš bēlu rabû kî*, "I ask you, O Shamash, great lord, whether. . . ."

Two closing formulae end the prayer. The first one has a longer and shorter form:[205] *ina libbi immeri annî izizzam-ma anna kīna {uṣurāti šalmāti šērē tamīt damqāti šalmāti ša pî ilūtīka rabīti} šuknam-ma lūmur*, which, following Starr, may be translated as "be present (lit. stand) in this sheep, place an affirmative answer (in it), {favorable designs, favorable, propitious omens of the oracular query by the command of your great divinity} so that I may see (them)." The second closing formula reads: *eli ilūtīka rabīti Šamaš bēlu rabû lillik-ma têrtu līṭappal*, "[m]ay (this) query go to your great divinity, O Shamash, great lord, and may an oracle be given as an answer" (again, following Starr).[206] These two closing formulae were often written with a gap between them on the tablet, into which the diviner recorded the technical results of the extispicy.

Letter-prayers ("Gottesbriefe"):

Essential Bibliography: R. Borger. "Gottesbrief." *RlA* 3 (1957), 575–76. Idem. *HKL* 3, §58. {Both of the previous items list letter-prayers from people/kings to gods—the exclusive concern of the present section—*as well as* messages from gods to kings (messages to private individuals are not attested). Borger's lists do not include texts discovered after 1975.[207]} Beate Pongratz-Leisten. *Herrschaftswissen in Mesopotamien: Formen der Kommunikation zwischen Gott und König im 2. und 1. Jahrtausend v.Chr.* SAAS 10. Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1999, 202–65. {A discussion of royal letter-prayers from Mari and the Neo-Assyrian period as well as the divine messages to kings.[208]} Karel van der Toorn. *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria,*

[203] See ibid., xxvii for a different understanding.
[204] *Babylonian Oracle Questions*, 18.
[205] The braces {} mark what is excluded from the shorter form.
[206] See *Queries to the Sun God*, xxviii.
[207] For additional Akkadian letter-prayers (all from private individuals), see F. R. Kraus, "Eine neue Probe akkadischer Literatur, Brief eines Bittstellers an eine Gottheit," *JAOS* 103 (1983), 205–9 (van der Toorn [*Family Religion*, 133], however, has argued that this letter is actually addressed to a human king); L. de Meyer, "Une letter d'Ur-Utu galamah à une divinité," in *Reflets des deux fleuves: Volume de mélanges offerts à André Finet* (ed. M. Lebeau and P. Talon; Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 41–43 (which contains a very interesting situation in which a man asks forgiveness for breaking a taboo, *asakkam . . . ušakilūni-x*[?]); W. H. van Soldt, *Letters in the British Museum* (*AbB* 12; Leiden: Brill, 1990), no. 99; and W. H. van Soldt, *Letters in the British Museum*, Part 2 (*AbB* 13; Leiden: Brill, 1994), no. 164. Also, Marten Stol, *Letters from Yale* (*AbB* 9; Leiden: Brill, 1981), no. 141 is an edition of what Borger lists as "Lutz YOS 2 n141" in *HKL* 3 §58.
[208] For editions of the latter, see Alasdair Livingstone, *Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea* (SAA 3; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1989), 108–15.

and Israel: Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life. SHCANE 7. Leiden: Brill, 1996, 130–33. {A brief discussion of OB private letter-prayers.}

As a preface to the discussion, some important distinctions should be noted within the Akkadian material grouped by modern Assyriologists under the heading "letter-prayers."[209] Akkadian letter-prayers in the OB period were written by private individuals and kings. Individuals presented personal petitions to a deity, probably a personal deity.[210] Kings expressed concerns that may be characterized as political and/or military in nature to a deity—issues more appropriate to a king.[211] The literary form of all of these OB letter-prayers is quite comparable to a mundane or secular letter. And there is no indication that the senders viewed them as anything beyond just that (though see below). (The identification of these texts as prayer, therefore, derives not from an ancient scribal classification but from the modern definition of prayer that scholars have imposed on the texts.) In distinction to the OB letter-prayers, the Akkadian letter-prayers in the first millennium all derive from the Assyrian imperial court and were composed by/for Assyrian kings to report their military actions to the gods. These texts display a very polished literary style and include various feats of heroism and military prowess in order to aggrandize the king.[212] Although they begin as do letters, these texts show more similarities with the Assyrian royal inscriptions than mundane letters. Without intending to prejudice the discussion or to disqualify or limit the term's use to only a segment of this material, the ensuing discussion is based on the OB letter-prayers from individuals.

The OB letter-prayers often contain many of the same features as other classes of prayer discussed in this introduction: an invocation, perhaps a brief divine epithet, laments, petitions, and a promise of praise. Three elements, however, make the letter-prayers distinct from the other prayer classes discussed in this

[209] For a recent discussion of the Sumerian letter-prayers, see Böck, "„Wenn du zu Nintinugga gesprochen hast, . . ."," 3–23. The work of William W. Hallo, a long-time student of Sumerian letter-prayers, is now available in his collected essays volume *The World's Oldest Literature: Studies in Sumerian Belles-Lettres*, 255–367.

[210] Van der Toorn (*Family Religion*, 131) believes all of the private letter-prayers are addressed to a deity in the capacity of a personal god. There are only about a half dozen or so OB letter-prayers from individuals (see van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 130, n.64). Those known to me include the prayers listed in note 207 above along with F. R. Kraus, "Ein altbabylonischer Privatbrief an eine Gottheit," *RA* 65 (1971), 27–36.

[211] All of the OB royal letter-prayers are from Mari. See ARM 26=*AEM* I/1, nos. 191 and 193 and ARM 1 3. On the latter, see Jack M. Sasson, "Yasmah-Addu's Letter to God (*ARM* I : 3)," *NABU* 1987, #109 (with previous literature).

[212] See, e.g., Riekele Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons Königs von Assyrien* (AfO Beiheft 9; Osnabrück: Biblio-Verlag, 1967 [1956]), 102–7 (§68) for Esarhaddon's letter to the gods. An English translation is available in Daniel D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926–1927), 2.231–37; Erle Leichty, "Esarhaddon's 'Letter to the Gods'," in *Ah Assyria . . .: Studies in Assyrian History and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography Presented to Hayim Tadmor* (ed. Mordechai Cogan and Israel Eph'al; Scripta Hierosolymitana 33; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1991), 52–57 offers a brief historical treatment (with literature). A majority of the Akkadian examples listed by Borger in *RlA* are Assyrian royal letter-prayers.

introduction. First, the letter-prayers use the epistolary format to express the supplicant's concerns to the deity. The letter-prayers therefore begin as would any standard letter, *ana* DN *qibī-ma umma* PN-*ma*, "To DN, thus says PN." Second, the letter-prayers were written for a particular situation. Therefore, one will not find in these prayers the generic *annanna mār annanna*, "so-and-so, son of so-and-so," formula often found in the other prayers because the OB letter-prayers were not intended to be used over and over again. Finally, the OB letter-prayers seem to have been used as *ex voto* objects.[213] That is, like a statue placed before a deity on one's behalf (see footnote 27 above), an OB letter-prayer was deposited before the deity's image in the shrine. If the evidence of *AbB* 6, no. 135 may be generalized, it seems a letter-prayer was read to the deity (by someone other than the supplicant) before being deposited.[214] The tablet would then become a physical reminder before the deity of the supplicant's concerns and petitions.

Royal Prayers:

Essential Bibliography: Benjamin R. Foster. *Akkadian Literature of the Late Period.* Guides to the Mesopotamian Textual Record 2. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2007, 82–87. {A list of several royal prayers and hymns.}

In many respects "royal prayers" is a non-category since nearly all of the prayers in this volume were or could have been used by kings of ancient Mesopotamia. The prayers that modern scholars typically place in this category, therefore, are miscellaneous and occasional prayers that were composed explicitly for royal purposes but do not fit easily elsewhere in the taxonomy of prayers used by Assyriologists. Rather than list these *in extenso*, only the largest, most coherent group of texts is discussed here: the various prayers found in building inscriptions. The NB kings almost always ended their building inscriptions with a prayer (also referred to as a blessing, *Segenswunsch*).[215] The deity addressed in the prayer was determined by what was most appropriate for the structure being commemorated in the inscription.[216] For example, the concluding prayer to an inscription commemorating Nebuchadnezzar's restoration of the Ebabbar temple at Larsa was directed to Shamash, the resident deity of the temple.[217] Examples

[213] See Böck, "„Wenn du zu Nintinugga gesprochen hast, . . .“," 20–22 and van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 130 and n.63.

[214] See R. Frankena, *Briefe aus dem Berliner Museum* (*AbB* 6; Leiden: Brill, 1974), no. 135, cited by van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction*, 205, n.473.

[215] See Rocío Da Riva, *The Neo-Babylonian Royal Inscriptions: An Introduction* (Guides to the Mesopotamian Textual Record 4; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2008), 97–98.

[216] See Foster, 842–65, Seux, 505–24, Hecker, *TUAT* II/5, 781–83, and von Soden, 283–91 for selections of such texts in translation. Foster also includes with these Neo-Babylonian royal prayers a translation of what he identifies as "the last datable Akkadian prayer" (866; see also Seux, 525–26 and von Soden, 291). The prayer, directed at Nabu, occurs in a building inscription from the reign of the Seleucid king Antiochus Soter (281–261 BCE).

[217] See Paul-Richard Berger, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften: Königsinschriften des ausgehenden babylonischen Reiches, 626-539 a. Chr.* (AOAT 4; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker; Neukirchen-

of this kind of concluding prayer in Assyrian royal inscriptions are rather rare,[218] although the Assyrian kings occasionally had prayers literally inscribed on the various parts of their royal structures. The particular god addressed by such a prayer, as was the case in the NB prayers, was determined by the object being inscribed. The parade example comes from Dur Shurrukin, where Sargon had a short prayer inscribed on the thresholds (or stairs) leading to the temples of Sin, Adad, Ninurta, Ea, Ningal, and Nabu.[219] In each case, the deity of the temple is invoked and then petitioned to grant something to the king such as life, a long reign, good weather, etc. Conspicuously and similar to the NB prayers, these prayers do not end in praise.

Hymns:

Essential Bibliography: Dietz O. Edzard. "Sumerische und akkadische Hymnen." Pages 19–31 in *Hymnen der Alten Welt im Kulturvergleich.* Edited by Walter Burkert and Fritz Stolz. OBO 131. Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1994. {A brief reflection from a prominent Sumerologist on some characteristics of Mesopotamian hymns, including the question of how to differentiate them from prayer.} Erica Reiner. *Your Thwarts in Pieces, Your Mooring Rope Cut: Poetry from Babylonia and Assyria.* Michigan Studies in the Humanities 5. Ann Arbor: Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies at the University of Michigan, 1985, 68–84. {A brief, but exemplary reading of the Great Shamash Hymn.}

Akkadian hymnic material, that is, passages in texts that contain praise to a benevolent supra-human entity, exists in a variety of genres in Akkadian: myths (e.g., *Enūma eliš* VI 121–VII 162[220]), literary texts (e.g., *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* I 1–40, see page 483), prayers (as already mentioned above), and royal inscriptions (e.g., in dedicatory inscriptions [*ana* DN, followed by epithets] or hymnic invo-

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Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1973), 249–51 for information on the text and Foster, 848, Seux, 510, and *COS* 2.122A:309 for translations.

[218] See, e.g., Ashurbanipal's Mullissu inscription (Streck, VAB VII, 2.274, no. 11, see also Rykle Borger with Andreas Fuchs, *Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbanipals: Die Prismenklassen A, B, C = K, D, E, F, G, H und T sowie andere Inscriften* [Wiesbaden: Harrossowitz, 1996], 354); translations are available in Seux, 504 and von Soden, 282.

[219] For editions of the prayers, see Gordon Loud with Henri Frankfort and Thorkild Jacobsen, *Khorsabad, Part I: Excavations in the Palace and at the City Gate* (OIP 38; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), 130–33, nos. 3–7 and Gordon Loud and Charles B. Altman, *Khorsabad, Part II: The Citadel and the Town* (OIP 40; Univeristy of Chicago Press, 1938), 103, no. 1. The texts are also available in the more recent work of Andreas Fuchs, *Die Inschriften Sargons II. aus Khorsabad* (Göttingen: Cuvillier, 1994), 280–83 (texts) and 369–71 (translations). There seems to have been a prayer to Shamash also, but it is very poorly preserved (Fuchs, *Inschriften*, 281). See Foster, 784–87, Seux, 527–30, and von Soden, 279–81 for translations.

[220] Von Soden considers this material hymnic, even if not a hymn strictly speaking (see his "Hymne. B. Nach akkadischen Quellen," 547). The text is available in Philippe Talon, *The Standard Babylonian Creation Myth: Enūma Eliš* (SAACT 4; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2005), 25–30 (cuneiform), 67–76 (transliteration), 102–8 (French translation). See also Foster, 473–85 for a translation.

cations in annalistic texts[221]). Independent hymnic compositions that praise a benevolent supra-human being (e.g., a god, but also a king, temple, or even city[222]) comprise a relatively small group in the preserved Akkadian textual corpus. The number of complete or very well-preserved examples is even smaller. Unfortunately, despite superscripts and subscripts on some hymnic texts as well as the availability of ancient catalogs that organize various lyrical compositions under specific labels, modern scholars have not been able to match formal features of the hymns with indigenous scribal classificatory labels.[223] Introductory treatments of hymns, therefore, tend to be compilations of attested texts, organized by time period, content (e.g., by entity praised or by the human doing the praise), and/or various formal characteristics in the hymns that have caught the eye of the modern scholar.[224]

A complete taxonomy of the extant hymns with an exhaustive listing is not possible here.[225] Rather, the present section provides a selection of notable, representative, and relatively well-preserved examples of hymns[226] that are available in modern editions and translations. Readers desiring to study more hymns beyond the couple in this volume might turn to these examples next.

[221] For dedicatory texts, see, e.g., two dedications to Adad and Ninurta in A. Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC: II (858–745 BC)* (RIMA 3; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 59 and 182, respectively. Many others could be cited. See also the hymnic invocations used in, e.g., several versions of the annals of Shalmaneser (Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium*, 13, 26, 33, 51, etc.).

[222] For a listing of hymns to the latter three groups, see Foster, *Akkadian Literature of the Late Period*, 44–47. For the problems and artificiality of differentiating between these, see briefly Edzard, "Sumerische und akkadische Hymnen," 22.

[223] The fragmentary state of many hymns has not helped matters. For a discussion of hymns, scribal superscripts/subscripts, and catalogs, see Brigitte Groneberg, "Searching for Akkadian Lyrics: From Old Babylonian to the 'Liederkatalog' KAR 158," *JCS* 55 (2003), 55–74. Classificatory scribal labels, as Groneberg shows, do not seem to correspond to textual form. Rather, they may have reflected the text's musical accompaniment, mode of performance, language, ritual function, and/or content.

[224] See, e.g., von Soden, "Hymne. B. Nach akkadischen Quellen," 545–48 and Foster, *Akkadian Literature of the Late Period*, 78–91.

[225] For OB hymns, however, the catalog of literary texts in Nathan Wasserman, *Style and Form in Old-Babylonian Literary Texts* (Cuneiform Monographs 27; Leiden/Boston: Styx/Brill, 2003), 187–224 presents a convenient list of all of the (then) known hymns (many of which are fragmentary). Add the hymn to Ningishzida in A. R. George, *Babylonian Literary Texts in the Schøyen Collection* (Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology 10; Bethesda: CDL Press, 2009), no. 7 and see also M. Krebernik, "Altbabylonische Hymnen an die Muttergöttin (HS 1884)," *AfO* 50 (2003–2004), 11–20. The anthologies of Akkadian hymns and prayers (see especially Foster, Seux, and von Soden) give a large and representative sample of hymns, but they do not reflect an exhaustive catalog. Also, Foster, *Akkadian Literature of the Late Period*, 78–91 provides an annotated listing of many first millennium examples.

[226] Though, the OB examples are not so well-preserved.

Among OB Texts:

A hymn to Nanaya (VAS 10 215) is composed in fourteen quatrains, as is the hymn to Ishtar in this volume (see page 111). The Nanaya hymn is relatively well-preserved, though still incomplete.[227]

A hymn to Ishtar from the Louvre (AO 6035) was edited by Brigitte Groneberg for the first time relatively recently. Although the tablet is not complete and an English translation is not available (to my knowledge), Groneberg's edition is accompanied by an extensive commentary.[228]

Another OB hymn that has regularly found its way into anthologies praises the obscure god Papulegarra.[229] The tablet probably contains several hymns, but breaks make precise demarcations between the hymns impossible.[230]

Among SB Texts:

Although there are several examples that could be listed, two lengthy and well-preserved hymns ought to be mentioned first: the Great Shamash Hymn and the Gula Hymn of Bulluṭsa-rabi.

The Great Shamash Hymn, edited by W. G. Lambert in his book *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*,[231] is a two-hundred-line hymn that celebrates a wide array of the sun-god's attributes.[232] The hymn begins with Shamash's role as the universal illuminator of darkness, whose light reaches the innermost parts of everything, and then continues on to mention various justice-related attributes of the deity: investigation of cases, protection of travelers and other innocents, enforcement

[227] See W. von Soden, "Ein Hymnus an Nanâ für Samsuiluna von Babylon," *ZA* 44 (1938), 30–44 for an edition. Foster, 89–92, Seux, 42–45, von Soden 237–39, and Hecker, *TUAT* II/5, 724–26 offer translations.

[228] See Brigitte R. M. Groneberg, *Lob der Ištar: Gebet und Ritual an die altbabylonsiche Venusgöttin* (Cuneiform Monographs 8; Groningen: Styx, 1997), 3–54 for an edition, translation, and commentary (with plates I–XXVI). The Agushaya Poem, also called Ishtar and Ṣaltu (*ṣaltu* means "strife" in Akk.), recounts a chapter in Ishtar's mythology, but it contains a significant hymnic element. See Groneberg, *Lob der Ištar*, 55–93 for an edition, translation, and commentary. See Foster, 96–106 and Hecker, *TUAT* II/5, 731–40 for translations.

[229] See M. Krebernik, "Pap(a)-ule-ĝara," *RlA* 10 (2003–2005), 329–30, who draws on the hymn just mentioned for most of what the article says about this god.

[230] See Th. G. Pinches, "Hymns to Pap-due-garra," *JRAS* Centenary Supplement (1924), 63–86 with plates VI–IX for an edition. Foster, 93–94, Seux, 46–50, and Hecker, *TUAT* II/5, 728–31 have translated the text.

[231] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960; repr., Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 121–38 (text), 318–23 (notes), and 346 (addendum), with plates 33–36, 73. See A. R. George and F. N. H. Al-Rawi, "Tablets from the Sippar Library. VII. Three Wisdom Texts," *Iraq* 60 (1998), 187–206 for a recent addition. See also G. R. Castellino, "The Šamaš Hymn: A Note on Its Structure," in *Kramer Anniversary Volume: Cuneiform Studies in Honor of Samuel Noah Kramer* (ed. B. L. Eichler; AOAT 25; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker / Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1976), 71–74.

[232] The content of the hymn ("practical advice on living") led Lambert to include it among his collection of "wisdom" texts (*Babylonian Wisdom Literature,* 5). See page 6 above for the potential hortatory purpose of prayers and hymns among human listeners.

of oaths, impartial judgment of cases, ensuring of fair business transactions, helping those in need, granting wisdom to those who ask, etc.

The Gula Hymn of Bulluṭsa-rabi, also edited by Lambert,[233] is another two-hundred-line hymn, which divides into twenty stanzas of varied length. After an introductory line that mentions the goddess in the third person, Gula speaks in the first person until line 188, at which point Bulluṭsa-rabi, the putative author of the text, begins his concluding petition (in the third person). In the nineteen stanzas before Bulluṭsa-rabi's petition Gula alternates her speech between a stanza of self-praise (the topic of which varies from stanza to stanza) followed by a stanza of praise for her spouse, Ninurta (the topic of which is always martial). Each of these nineteen stanzas ends with the giving of a different name to the goddess or god.[234]

These two texts fall into a category called "Great Hymns and Prayers" by Foster.[235] In this group, he lists seven hymns/prayers, distinguished mostly by their extraordinary length (well over one hundred lines). Other examples of the great hymns and prayers include the Great Prayer to Marduk,[236] the Great Hymn to Marduk,[237] the Great Hymn to Nabu,[238] Ishtar Queen of Heaven,[239] and the Great Prayer to Ishtar (for which, see page 257).[240] Given the sophistication of

[233] See W. G. Lambert, "The Gula Hymn of Bulluṭsa-rabi," *Or* n.s. 36 (1967), 105–32 with plates VII–XXIII for an edition. Translations may be found in Foster, 583–91 and Hecker *TUAT* II/5, 759–64 (only lines 1–17, 35–78, 101–158, 178–200).

[234] For other examples of a deity's self-praise, see the OB fragmentary Ishtar hymn VAS 10 213 (edition: Heinrich Zimmern, *Ištar und Ṣaltu: Ein altakkadisches Lied* [Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1916], 43; translations: Foster, 95 and von Soden, 239–40); the fragmentary bilingual hymn to Nanaya (edition: Erica Reiner, "A Sumero-Akkadian Hymn of Nanâ," *JNES* 33 [1974], 221–36); and the incantation-hymn(?) known as Marduk's Address to the Demons (edition: W. G. Lambert, "An Address of Marduk to the Demons," *AfO* 17 [1954–1956], 310–20, with plates XIII–XVI; idem, "An Address of Marduk to the Demons: New Fragments," *AfO* 19 [1959–1960], 114–19, with plates XXIV–XXVII; and idem, "Marduk's Address to the Demons," in *Mesopotamian Magic: Textual, Historical, and Interpretive Perspectives* [ed. Tzvi Abusch and Karel van der Toorn; Ancient Magic and Divination 1; Groningen: Styx, 1999], 293–96. Translation: Foster, 954–58).

[235] See Foster, *Akkadian Literature of the Late Period*, 78–81.

[236] See W. G. Lambert, "Three Literary Prayers of the Babylonians," *AfO* 19 (1960), 47–66, here 55–60 (with plates XII–XVI) for an edition and Foster, 611–13, Seux, 172–81, von Soden 270–72 (partial), and Hecker, *TUAT* II/5, 754–58 for translations.

[237] See Lambert, "Three Literary Prayers of the Babylonians," 61–66 (with plates XVII–XXIII) for an edition and Foster, 617–20, Seux, 70–75, and von Soden, 253–54 for translations.

[238] See W. von Soden, "Der grosse Hymnus an Nabû," *ZA* 61 (1971), 44–71 for an edition and Foster, 617–26, Seux, 181–85, von Soden, 263–64 (partial) for translations.

[239] See W. G. Lambert, "The Hymn to the Queen of Nippur," in *Zikir Šumim: Assyriological Studies Presented to F. R. Kraus on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday* (ed. G. van Driel, Th. J. H. Krispijn, M. Stol, and K. R. Veenhof; Leiden: Brill, 1982), 173–218. For translations, see Foster, 592–98 and Seux, 93–98.

[240] Why Foster excludes from his list here the long prayer to Ishtar, edited by Lambert in "Three Literary Prayers of the Babylonians," 50–55 (with plates VIII–XI), is unclear since he includes it in *Before the Muses*, 606–10 (see also Seux, 194–99).

these texts in terms of language, style, and content, they are probably the work of ancient scholars.

Ashurbanipal's hymn to Ashur (ABRT I 32–34) provides a good, if still incomplete example of a hymn in SB Akkadian from the Neo-Assyrian court.[241] In this hymn, written for the sake of Ashurbanipal (see rev. 8′), Ashur's name is written as if it were Anshar (AN.ŠÁR), the father of Anu and the great-grandfather of Marduk according to the *Enūma eliš*, thus equating Ashur with a god older than Marduk and exalting Ashur to the head of the pantheon (see rev. 6′).

The so-called syncretistic hymns laud a deity while equating various other gods with aspects of the deity being praised. Several (incomplete) examples are known, including a hymn containing a petition to Marduk (KAR 25 ii 3–24),[242] and hymns to Nabu (LKA 16),[243] Ninurta (KAR 102 + 328),[244] and Ishtar (BM 65454 +).[245]

Finally, some of the hymns preserved in Akkadian display acrostics, in which the first syllable of each line combines to spell out a name, petition, or statement of praise. A notable example is found in Ashurbanipal's hymn to Marduk (ABRT I 29–31 +).[246] The syllables at the beginning of each line combine to spell out *anāku Aššur-bāni-apli ša ilsûka bulliṭannī-ma Maruduk* (*ma-ru-du-uk*) *dalilīka ludlul*, "I (am) Ashurbanipal, who has called out to you, O Marduk. Preserve me that I may sing your praises!"[247]

[241] See Alasdair Livingstone, *Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea*, no. 1 for the text (several other hymns may be found in this volume). Foster, 817–19, Seux, 90–93, and von Soden, 254–56 provide translations.

[242] See Ebeling, *AGH*, 14–15 for an edition and Foster, 692–93, Seux, 129–31, and von Soden, 301–2 for translations.

[243] See Erich Ebeling, "Ein Loblied auf Nabû aus neuassyrischer Zeit," *WdO* 1.6 (1952), 476–79, for an edition and Foster, 702–03, Seux, 134–36, and Hecker, *TUAT* II/5, 770–72 for translations.

[244] See Erich Ebeling, *Quellen zur Kenntnis der babylonischen Religion I* (Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft 23/1; Leipzig, Hinrichs, 1918), 47–49 for an edition. Translations may be found in Foster, 713–14, Seux, 131–33, and von Soden, 258–59.

[245] See the edition in W. G. Lambert, "A Syncretistic Hymn to Ištar," *AfO* 50 (2003–2004), 21–27.

[246] See Livingstone, *Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea*, no. 2 for the edition and Foster, 821–26, Seux, 115–21, and von Soden, 249–53 for translations. For acrostic prayers, see, e.g., the double acrostic prayers to Nabu and Marduk, written by a private individual named Nabu-ushebshi, in W. G. Lambert, "Literary Style in First Millennium Mesopotamia," *JAOS* 88 (1968), 130–32. Translations are available in Foster, 704–05 and Seux, 264–66. R. F. G. Sweet recognized the double acrostic, see "A Pair of Double Acrostics in Akkadian," *Or* n.s. 38 (1969), 459–60.

[247] Another example may be found in the very dated edition of S. A. Strong, "A Hymn of Nebuchadnezzar," *PSBA* 20 (1898), 154–62. Foster, 849–51 and Seux, 124–28 give translations.

THE USE OF AKKADIAN PRAYERS IN THE STUDY OF THE HEBREW BIBLE:
Anna Elise Zernecke

Scholars of the Hebrew Bible have compared Akkadian prayers and hymns to the biblical text since the late nineteenth century, when publications and translations of the Akkadian texts first appeared. Unfortunately, the interest in these texts was much greater at the beginning of the twentieth century than it is today. The following pages outline the use of Akkadian prayers in the history of biblical scholarship, assess the strengths and weaknesses of the various approaches employed, and conclude by offering some prospects for future comparative work.[248]

The first editions and translations of prayers of the lifting of the hand were published in 1896 by King. The title of King's book, *Babylonian Magic and Sorcery. Being 'The Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand'*, already indicates that he was not sure whether the texts were to be classified as religious or magical.[249] This insecurity is also clear in the introduction where he characterizes these texts as "a complete group of tablets inscribed with prayers and religious compositions of a devotional and somewhat magical character."[250] The qualification of their character as magical or religious has also influenced the interest of biblical scholars in these texts, so that decisions in favor of one of these categories or the other often gave direction to the Akkadian texts' reception and interpretation. The transmission of the texts as part of a ritual was deemed very important in this regard, though the ritual instructions were often not included in Assyriological editions.

Shortly after the first editions appeared, anthologies of translated texts aiming at a wider public made the Akkadian prayers more easily accessible.[251] Biblical scholars at this time began using the Akkadian prayers as parallels to biblical prayers, especially the Psalms. The "religionsgeschichtliche Schule" had just started to establish itself. Therefore, it is not surprising that the first monograph that compares biblical Psalms with Akkadian prayers, the Habilitation of Stummer, written in Würzburg in 1917, used its form-critical methodology.[252] Along with his innovative method, Stummer also pursued another question that has often been asked since the Akkadian prayers were discovered: Is there a genetic

[248] This section traces the history of discussion mainly of prayers of lament.

[249] Leonard W. King, ed. *Babylonian Magic and Sorcery. Being 'The Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand'. The Cuneiform Texts of a Group of Babylonian and Assyrian Incantations and Magical Formulae Edited with Transliterations and Full Vocabulary from Tablets of the Kuyunjik Collections Preserved in the British Museum* (London: Luzac, 1896), abbreviated King, *BMS* in this volume.

[250] King, *BMS*, XV.

[251] For German speaking countries, see Heinrich Zimmern, *Babylonische Hymnen und Gebete* (AO 7,3; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1905). Second volume: *Babylonische Hymnen und Gebete*. Zweite Auswahl (AO 13,1; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1911). Arthur Ungnad, *Die Religion der Babylonier und Assyrer* (Religiöse Stimmen der Völker 3; Jena: Diederichs, 1921).

[252] Friedrich Stummer, *Sumerisch-akkadische Parallelen zum Aufbau alttestamentlicher Psalmen* (Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums 11/1 & 2; Paderborn: Schöningh, 1922).

relationship between the Akkadian and Hebrew prayers? Stummer answers this by stating that the authors of the Psalms in fact knew Mesopotamian prayers. Due to the Akkadian material's state of publication at the time of his writing, Stummer mixes texts of many genres and does not differentiate between Sumerian and Akkadian material. But the more basic problem in his work is that the comparison is done with a theological aim: he wants to establish the high religious level of Israel's sacred poetry.[253] Following Gunkel's form-critical methodology at that time, Stummer had taken Gunkel's statement that there was no more pressing task for Old Testament scholarship than the systematic comparison of the Babylonian and Hebrew religious poetry as an impetus for his work.[254] In response to Stummer's work, however, Gunkel and Begrich wrote in their *Introduction to the Psalms* (1933)[255] that the time had not yet come for a systematic comparison of both literatures, as neither of them had been independently and thoroughly studied.[256]

Nevertheless, it was Begrich, who analyzed one aspect of Biblical and Mesopotamian prayers in a comparative perspective in an article entitled "Die Vertrauensäußerungen im israelitischen Klageliede des Einzelnen und in seinem babylonischen Gegenstück" (1928).[257] Begrich's approach is much more cautious than Stummer's. He first establishes the comparability of biblical and Mesopotamian prayers, discussing the superscriptions and subscriptions, the person of the supplicant, and their situation. After this, he analyzes the main differences between the psalms of individual lament and prayers of the lifting of the hand. Instead of a personal confession of trust as in the biblical texts, the Babylonian prayers show descriptions of the magnificence of the deity. For Begrich, the underlying relationship between god and man is different in both cultures: where there is trusting confidence in the biblical material because of a personal relation, in Mesopotamia, the distance between the supplicant and the deity is such that the striving for a relationship based on trust is squelched by the consciousness of the grandeur of the deity.[258] Many more Mesopotamian texts are published today and the editions are much more detailed, making Begrich's results

[253] Stummer, *Sumerisch-akkadische Parallelen*, V.

[254] Hermann Gunkel, *Ausgewählte Psalmen* (4th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1917), VII.

[255] Hermann Gunkel, *Einleitung in die Psalmen: Die Gattungen der religiösen Lyrik Israels* (completed by Joachim Begrich; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1933); ET: Hermann Gunkel and Joachim Begrich, *Introduction to the Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel* (trans. J. Nogalski; Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998).

[256] Gunkel and Begrich, *Einleitung in die Psalmen*, 19–20, note 1.

[257] Joachim Begrich, "Die Vertrauensäußerungen im Israelitischen Klagelied des Einzelnen und in seinem babylonischen Gegenstück," *ZAW* 46 (1928), 221–60; repr. Joachim Begrich, "Die Vertrauensäußerungen im israelitischen Klageliede des Einzelnen und in seinem babylonischen Gegenstück," in *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (ed. W. Zimmerli; TB 21; München: Kaiser, 1964), 168–216.

[258] Begrich, "Die Vertrauensäußerungen im Israelitischen Klagelied des Einzelnen," 189.

out-of-date. Still, his cautious and precise methodology retains its value for contemporary scholarship.

Shortly after its publication, Begrich's conclusions were contested in one of the first Assyriological monographs dealing with the literary form of Mesopotamian prayers, Kunstmann's dissertation *Die babylonische Gebetsbeschwörung* (1932).[259] It was presumably this publication that coined the term "Gebetsbeschwörung" (incantation-prayer), following Kunstmann's teacher Landsberger. Kunstmann's methodology is form-critical. He distinguishes "allgemeine" (general) and "spezielle" (special) "Gebetsbeschwörungen" (incantation-prayers). In the special variety, the magical act is dominant. In the general incantation-prayers, on the other hand, the prayer is the main and sometimes only thing.[260] This distinction has not stood the test of time (see above, page 28).

In the years following, several biblical scholars used prayers from Mesopotamia as parallels for biblical texts. Widengren's monograph *The Accadian and Hebrew Psalms of Lamentation as Religious Documents* (1937) is an early example.[261] Widengren is not interested in the literary development of the prayers, but in the comparison of religions. He presupposes an opposition of cult religion and religious literature and sees a direct dependence of the biblical prayers on Akkadian religious literature. Widengren's book consists of long lists of phrases from both types of texts and their interpretation. Though focusing on "cult religion," the precise cultic setting of the texts is oddly not taken into account. Widengren's monograph is now of little more than historical interest; his main thesis has not been followed.

Another comparative approach, again more form-critical in orientation, is taken by Castellino in his *Le Lamentazioni individuali e gli inni in Babilonia e in Israele. Raffrontati riguardo alla forma e al contenuto* (1940).[262] Castellino's study compares individual laments and hymns from Mesopotamia and Israel. He first establishes the general compatibility of the texts by describing each corpus separately and then compares the results. Despite this cautious methodology, the results of the study are hampered by Castellino's notion of magic, which is never made explicit. He states that all Babylonian individual prayers are essentially magical incantations aiming at coercing the gods. Therefore, his study ends up being a comparison of the "Hebrew" and the "Babylonian-Assyrian religions," in which Israel certainly comes out as superior.

Just after Ebeling's new edition of the Akkadian prayers appeared (*Die akkadische Gebetsserie "Handerhebung." Von neuem gesammelt und herausgegeben*,

[259] Walter G. Kunstmann, *Die babylonische Gebetsbeschwörung* (LSS n.F. 2; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1932), abbreviated Kunstmann, *BGB* in this volume.
[260] Kunstmann, *BGB*, 3.
[261] Geo Widengren, *The Accadian and Hebrew Psalms of Lamentation as Religious Documents: A Comparative Study* (Stockholm: Bokförlags Aktiebolaget Thule, 1937).
[262] R. G. Castellino, *Le Lamentazioni individuali e gli inni in Babilonia e in Israele. Raffrontati riguardo alla forma e al contenuto* (Torino: Società editrice internazionale, 1940).

1953),[263] a new form-critical assessment of the relation between Mesopotamian and Biblical prayers took shape in Westermann's study *Das Loben Gottes in den Psalmen* (first published in 1954).[264] Following Stummer and Kunstmann, his main focus is on the hymnic introduction. Noting that Mesopotamian prayers of lament have a hymnic introduction that has no equivalent in psalms of lament, Westermann argued that this indicates that there are two different genres in the Bible (the individual lament and what Westermann calls the hymn of descriptive praise) whereas there is only one in Mesopotamia. The hymnic passages are seen as praise of the deity within the pantheon in Mesopotamia, whereas in Israel Yahweh has a history with his people which is praised. In other words, Mesopotamians praised the gods in their cosmic function and their general actions and the Israelites praised their god for what he had done for them in history. One problem with this approach is that Westermann only looks at the abstract structures without taking into account their concretion in the individual texts. Also, he does not see that in the hymnic passages of Akkadian prayers, the characteristics of the deity, which are vital for the problems of the supplicant, are often praised, therefore establishing a relationship between god and supplicant.

The general problem of many form-critical approaches is that the peculiarities of the individual texts are overlooked in overall comparisons of genres. Dalglish's monograph avoids this at least on one side: one single text, Psalm 51,[265] is analyzed with parallels in structure and content from all over the ancient Near East. The aim is to establish the relationship between biblical and ancient Near Eastern prayer literature. The particularistic analysis of only one side of the comparison, however, makes the study somewhat lopsided. Dalglish explains the similarities in the ancient Near Eastern and biblical texts partly as a common Proto-Semitic heritage and partly as influence of these other texts on Hebrew literature.[266] But still, in his opinion, the differences outweigh the similarities.

After these studies, the form-critical approach lost its appeal to many biblical scholars. A symptom of this can be seen in Muilenburg's presidential address at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in 1968.[267] Yet among Assyriologists the most important form-critical analysis of Akkadian prayers of individual lament, Mayer's *Untersuchungen zur Formensprache der babylonischen*

[263] Erich Ebeling, *Die akkadische Gebetsserie "Handerhebung." Von neuem gesammelt und herausgegeben* (Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin. Institut für Orientforschung. Veröffentlichung 20; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1953), abbreviated Ebeling, *AGH* in this volume.

[264] Claus Westermann, *Das Loben Gottes in den Psalmen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1954). Since the fifth edition in 1977, the title has been *Lob und Klage in den Psalmen*. The English translation of the fifth edition is *Praise and Lament in the Psalms* (trans. Keith R. Crim and Richard N. Soulen; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981).

[265] Edward R. Dalglish, *Psalm Fifty-one in the Light of Ancient Near Eastern Patternism* (Leiden: Brill, 1962).

[266] Dalglish, *Psalm Fifty-one*, 254.

[267] Published as James Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," *JBL* 88 (1969), 1–18.

„Gebetsbeschwörungen“ (1976),[268] was only published after the majority of Biblicists had lost interest. Mayer closely follows Kunstmann's study and meticulously collects the phrases and their combinations in every part of the prayers he analyzes. This book was cited and studied among biblical scholars, but it could not trigger a new initiative for comparing Akkadian and Hebrew prayers, even though many of the former drawbacks in such work would now have been much easier to overcome. Still, the Akkadian prayers continued to be read and studied by some biblical scholars.

Gerstenberger's monograph, *Der bittende Mensch: Bittritual und Klagelied des Einzelnen im Alten Testament* (1980),[269] investigates the *Sitz im Leben* of the individual laments in the book of Psalms. He reconstructs this partly by using shuilla-prayers and namburbi-rituals as analogies and postulates on the basis of this analogy the existence of ritual specialists in Israel. These reconstructions are quite plausible, though rather optimistic, as there is very little biblical evidence with which to work.

A new approach is taken by Albertz in his *Persönliche Frömmigkeit und offizielle Religion: Religionsinterner Pluralismus in Israel und Babylon* (1978).[270] In this work Albertz first established the plurality within the religion of ancient Israel. He distinguishes between different social strata of religion and tries to reconstruct elements of private piety, which must be differentiated from the official religion. Within this socially-differentiated framework, he classifies the biblical psalms of individual lament as deriving from the domain of pre-exilic private piety, whereas the Mesopotamian incantation-prayers originated in another social stratum of religion because of their complicated ritual contexts and their developed hymnic introductions. Albertz also discusses the concept of a "personal god" for both Mesopotamia and Israel, which was first analyzed by Vorländer.[271]

In the last third of the twentieth century, Akkadian prayers were used in Hebrew Bible scholarship in a variety of approaches. For example, the enemies in the Biblical laments were explained as sorcerers in analogy to Mesopotamian ritual texts.[272] The several biblical laments of the individual that lament Yah-

[268] Werner Mayer, *Untersuchungen zur Formensprache der babylonischen „Gebetsbeschwörungen“* (Studia Pohl: Series maior 5; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1976), abbreviated Mayer, *UFBG* in this volume.

[269] Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Der bittende Mensch: Bittritual und Klagelied des Einzelnen im Alten Testament* (WMANT 51; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1980).

[270] Rainer Albertz, *Persönliche Frömmigkeit und offizielle Religion: Religionsinterner Pluralismus in Israel und Babylon* (CThM 9; Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1978).

[271] Hermann Vorländer, *Mein Gott. Die Vorstellung vom persönlichen Gott im Alten Orient und Alten Testament* (AOAT 23; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker / Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1975).

[272] Vorländer, *Mein Gott*, 250–65; Lothar Ruppert, "Klagelieder in Israel und Babylonien – verschiedene Deutungen der Gewalt," in *Gewalt und Gewaltlosigkeit im Alten Testament* (ed. Norbert Lohfink; QD 96; Freiburg: Herder, 1983), 111–58; Hermann Schulz, "Zur Fluchsymbolik in der altisraelitischen Gebetsbeschwörung," *Symb* n. f. 8 (1986), 35–59. In fact, they are following the

weh's absence[273] and the change of mood ("Stimmungsumschwung") near the psalms' conclusions were seen to have Mesopotamian analogies.[274] Akkadian prayers were also used and cited when studying different literary and conceptual motifs.[275] But the texts stood only rarely at the center of attention, as in the dissertation by Lee, *Gattungsvergleich der akkadischen Šu-ila-Gebete mit den biblischen Lobpsalmen* (1996).[276]

Despite the occasional attention, only in the last ten years has a renewed interest in Akkadian prayers and their relevance for the study of the Hebrew Bible taken place. Following the methodological initiative of an article by Abusch,[277] Zgoll not only edited all extant shuilla-prayers addressed to Ishtar and fragments thereof, but also interpreted them as pieces of literature (2003).[278] She also analyzed the function of the ritual setting of these prayers in several articles.[279] The ritual dimensions and the problems of genre are also the main topic of Frechette's dissertation, "The Name of the Ritual: Investigating Ancient Mesopotamian 'Hand-lifting' Rituals with Implications for the Study of Genre in the Psalms" (2005).[280] He inquires into the meaning of the characteristic subscription of shuilla-prayers and discloses the problems of previous form-critical studies, which treated the ancient subscription as modern designations of genres without inquiring into their original significance. He demonstrates the flexibility of shuilla-prayers, which were recited in different ritual contexts. Finally, his

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initiative of Mowinckel, see his *Psalmenstudien I-II* (Amsterdam: P. Schippers, 1966; repr., Kristiania: in Kommission bei Jacob Dybwad, 1921–1924), 77–124.

[273] Lothar Perlitt, "Die Verborgenheit Gottes," in *Probleme biblischer Theologie* (ed. Hans Walter Wolff; München: Kaiser, 1971), 367–82.

[274] Rudolf Kilian, "Ps 22 und das priesterliche Heilsorakel," *BZ* n. f. 12 (1968), 172–85, 179.

[275] Many examples could be cited. See, for example, Bernd Janowski, *Rettungsgewißheit und Epiphanie des Heils: Das Motiv der Hilfe Gottes "am Morgen" im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament*, vol. 1 (Alter Orient; WMANT 59; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1989). Bernd Janowski, *Konfliktgespräche mit Gott: Eine Anthropologie der Psalmen* (2d ed.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2006).

[276] Tae-Hoon Lee, "Gattungsvergleich der akkadischen Šu-ila-Gebete mit den biblischen Lobpsalmen" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Münster, 1996).

[277] Tzvi Abusch, "The Form and Meaning of a Babylonian Prayer to Marduk," *JAOS* 103 (1983), 1–15.

[278] Annette Zgoll, *Die Kunst des Betens: Form und Funktion, Theologie und Psychagogik in babylonisch-assyrischen Handerhebungsgebeten zu Ištar* (AOAT 308; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2003).

[279] See Annette Zgoll, "Audienz – Ein Modell zum Verständnis mesopotamischer Handerhebungsrituale. Mit einer Deutung der Novelle vom *Armen Mann von Nippur*," *BagM* 34 (2003), 181–203. Annette Zgoll, "Für Sinne, Geist und Seele: Vom konkreten Ablauf mesopotamischer Rituale zu einer generellen Systematik von Ritualfunktionen," in *Ritual und Poesie: Formen und Orte religiöser Dichtung im Alten Orient, im Judentum und im Christentum* (ed. Erich Zenger; HBS 36; Freiburg: Herder, 2003), 25–46.

[280] Christopher G. Frechette, "The Name of the Ritual. Investigating Ancient Mesopotamian 'Hand-lifting' Rituals with Implications for the Study of Genre in the Psalms" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 2005); see now *Mesopotamian Ritual-prayers (Šuillas): A Case Study Investigating Idiom, Rubric, Form and Function* (AOAT 379; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, forthcoming).

interpretation of the "lifted-hand" as a central and reciprocal gesture converges with Zgoll's analysis of the ritual as audience.

A very different approach is taken by Achenbach in two related articles (2004), which look into the *Sitz im Leben* of both Mesopotamian and Biblical prayers of different genres and investigate their transmission, collection, and new contextualization within different rituals.[281]

Lenzi (2010)[282] and Zernecke (2009)[283] take up anew the form-critical question of Begrich's "classical" paper. Via a different approach, both simultaneously arrived at the conclusion that Begrich is right in his analysis that the relation between deity and supplicant is different in Akkadian shuilla-prayers and biblical prayers of individual lament. But this does not indicate that the trust in Yahweh was generally greater in Israel than the trust in the deities in Mesopotamia. Shuilla-prayers are not the appropriate analogy to biblical laments of the individual in terms of the relation between god and man. The Mesopotamian dingirshadibba-prayers are structured like the biblical psalms of lament without hymnic introduction, but they also comprise addresses demonstrating a close and trustful relationship. Therefore, both authors conclude that the psalms of individual lament are addressed to Yahweh as the personal god of the supplicant, just as dingirshadibba-prayers are addressed to the personal god. On the other hand, shuilla-prayers speak to a high deity of the pantheon and mention the personal god and goddess only in passing. Zernecke arrives at this conclusion via a detailed study of particular texts, as the definition of genre is different in Assyriology and in Hebrew Bible studies. By comparing individual texts, the conclusions are necessarily limited in scope, but this enables her to analyze the different versions of single texts and their possible development over time.

During the last one hundred years, Akkadian prayers have proven an interesting and important parallel to the prayers transmitted within the canon of the Bible. The importance of the Mesopotamian texts cannot be overemphasized. Since there are very few comparable texts from the Levant in Ugaritic or Aramaic with which to compare the biblical prayers, the Akkadian prayers are the closest analogy to the biblical prayers and deserve much more attention than they have received up to now. Most Akkadian prayers are known from tablets of the first millennium BCE, spanning nearly the whole millennium; therefore, they can be considered more or less contemporary to biblical literature.

[281] Reinhard Achenbach, "Zum Sitz im Leben mesopotamischer und altisraelitischer Klagegebete. Teil I: Zum rituellen Umgang mit Unheilsdrohungen in Mesopotamien," *ZAW* 116 (2004), 364–78. "Teil II: Klagegebete des Einzelnen im Psalter," *ZAW* 116 (2004), 581–94.

[282] Alan Lenzi, "Invoking the God: Interpreting Invocations in Mesopotamian Prayers and Biblical Laments of the Individual," *JBL* 129 (2010), 303–13.

[283] Anna Elise Zernecke, "Gott und Mensch in Klagegebeten aus Israel und Mesopotamien" (Ph. D. Dissertation, Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, 2009); see now *Gott und Mensch in Klagegebeten aus Israel und Mesopotamien. Die Handerhebungsgebete Ištar 10 und Ištar 2 und die Klagepsalmen Ps 38 und Ps 22 im Vergleich* (AOAT 387; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, forthcoming).

As scholars who study the form of these texts are now paying more attention to their ritual setting and function as well as to the difference between the ancient subscriptions and modern form-critical designations, the discussion of form-critical parallels should start afresh. Also, the question of ritual settings and the different contextualizations of Akkadian prayers could be more intensively discussed by biblical scholars. Most theories in the realm of literary criticism, that is, reconstructing earlier stages of Biblical texts, are hypothetical. In this point, the Akkadian material could serve as an important parallel, as the texts are often transmitted on more than one tablet and with substantial differences. The poetic form of both Akkadian and biblical prayers is often similar, but comparative studies in this field are rare so far. The wealth of motives and concepts, of formulas and stock-phrases in both literatures also awaits a systematic analysis.

All of these prospective approaches are dependent on the future development of Assyriology. But the analysis of these texts holds out the promise of solutions for several old problems in biblical studies and the development of a better understanding of what prayer and ritual meant in the ancient Near East, in Mesopotamia and Israel, and how these cultures conceived the relation between deity and humanity.

Old Babylonian Texts

An OB Prayer to the Gods of the Night

JEFFREY L. COOLEY

THE GODS OF THE NIGHT:

The gods invoked in this prayer are not particularly distinguished in the OB period. Indeed, other than Girra and Erra, those listed are not well-attested as the focus of veneration, nor are they featured as principles in contemporary literature.[1] Nevertheless, the Gods of the Night (*ilū mušītim*) do appear in several prayers in the magical ritual *Maqlû*, where they are petitioned for protection against disease, black magic, and ritual impurity.[2] A more elaborate prayer to night gods also for the purpose of preparing for an extispicy is known from the NA period as well (see Oppenheim), though there does not seem to be any genetic relationship between it and the OB prayer treated here. Although there is modest overlap, the gods listed in our prayer, *Maqlû*, and the NA prayer are not the same. Thus, the epithet "Gods of the Night" is by no means a formal title associated with a fixed set of divinities. Rather, it is simply a descriptive rubric to refer to any divine grouping that is visible at night in astral form and which a particular text wishes to address *en masse*.

The primary manifestations of most of the Gods of the Night appear to be specific stars and constellations, some of which we are able to identify with reasonable certainty (see the notes below). On the other hand, Girra and Erra are gods associated with fire and plague respectively and are mostly featured outside of a celestial context in cult and literature. Girra is the god of fire and the hero in a fragmentary OB myth. In that myth, Girra slays a monster named Elamatum, which is then transformed into a constellation.[3] He is often equated with the god Gibil (one of Marduk's fifty names in *Enūma eliš* VII 115), though the two deities were originally separate. Girra/Gibil plays a significant role in the magical defense against witchcraft, being one of the prime deities appealed

[1] A possible exception to this is *mušḫuššu*, which might be featured in the fragmentary Labbu Myth (see the comments to line 18).

[2] See page 157. See also Foster, 664–66. For extensive discussions of *Maqlû*, see Tzvi Abusch, *Mesopotamian Witchcraft: Toward a History and Understanding of Babylonian Witchcraft Beliefs and Literature* (Ancient Magic and Divination 5; Leiden: Brill/Styx, 2002).

[3] Christopher Walker, "The Myth of Girra and Elamatum," *AnSt* 33 (1983), 145–52. See the notes to line 15 below.

to in the series *Maqlû*. Erra (who is often associated with Nergal) is the dark protagonist of the first-millennium epic Erra and Ishum,[4] in which, not coincidentally, celestial divination plays a major role.[5] Girra and Erra are associated with celestial features in addition to their primary mundane hypostases. While we do not know with what astral feature Girra is associated, Erra is later identified as a particular star, the Fox (MUL.KA$_5$.A, Akk. *šēlebum*) in the Wagon constellation (MUL.MAR.GÍD.DA, Akk. *ereqqum*, see line 19 below),[6] or even the planet Mars (via his identification with the Fox star, which is also equated with Mars).[7]

THE PRAYER:

The prayer makes petition to these celestial deities for their participation in an extispicy ritual, during which a lamb was sacrificed and its exta were examined. It would have been recited by a diviner (*bārû*) in the evening that the sacrifice took place. Such mantic acts were conceived in terms of a trial, with the inquirer as the defendant and the gods as the judges. Thus, the terminology used in the prayer is, to a certain degree, legal in nature (e.g., lines 6 and 8: *Šamaš Sîn Adad Ištar . . . ul idinnū dīnam ul iparrasū awātim* "Shamash, Sin, Adad and Ishtar . . . do not render judgment, they do not decide a case," and line 24, *kittam šuknān*, "place truth!").

Though the patron gods of extispicy were Shamash and Adad (see pages 197 and 85), many of the major gods who dwelled in the sky were responsible for the legal decision to be made.[8] According to the prayer (lines 6–7), however, they are no longer present for the diviner to appeal to. The celestial deities here invoked are stars and constellations which, like the sun during the day, have a universal purview of the cosmos at night. They are not, however, the primary judges of the extispicy, but rather function in a mediating role between the petitioning *bārû*, together with his client, and the high gods. Specifically, Steinkeller

[4] See L. Cagni, *L'Epopea di Erra* (Studi Semitici 34; Rome: Università di Roma, 1969), together with W. G. Lambert, "New Fragments of Babylonian Epics," *AfO* 27 (1980), 76–80, as well as F. Al-Rawi and J. Black, "The Second Tablet of 'Išum and Erra,'" *Iraq* 51 (1989), 111–22. Recent translations of the myth include Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh and Others* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 282–315, Foster, 880–911, and G. Müller, "Ischum und Erra," *TUAT* III/4: 781–801.

[5] Jeffrey L. Cooley, "'I Want to Dim the Brilliance of Šulpae!' Mesopotamian Celestial Divination and the Poem of *Erra and Išum*," *Iraq* 70 (2008), 179–88.

[6] MUL.APIN I i 16–17.

[7] CT 26 45:16–18 (K. 2067); for an edition and discussion, see Ernst Weidner, *Handbuch der babylonischen Astronomie* (Assyriologische Bibliothek 24; Leipzig: Hinrichs 1915), 19–20, as well as F. Reynolds, "Unpropitious Titles of Mars in Mesopotamian Scholarly Tradition," in *Intellectual Life of the Ancient Near East* (ed. J. Prosecký; CRRAI 43; Prague: Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Oriental Institute, 1998), and CAD Ṣ, 397.

[8] Adad, as a weather god, is located in the sky. Ishtar and Sin are, obviously, Venus and the moon, respectively. The prayer seems to have been used, thus, on an evening when neither that planet nor the moon was visible.

argues, the stars act as personal advocates of the inquirer. While the high gods, primarily Shamash and Adad, are ultimately responsible for the verdict rendered, the night gods nonetheless play a vital role for the inquirer who, by the very choice to engage in such a mantic act, has entered the courtroom of the most powerful judges in the cosmos. The inquirer desires a truthful and propitious outcome and for this they need all the help they can muster.

The prayer is logically divided into two sections. The first, lines 1–13, describe the situation: the city is buttoned up and the high gods are unavailable. Lines 14–24 form the second: the actual invocation of the Gods of the Night in which they are asked to stand at the ready so that they might assist in the extispicy. Line 25 is the rubric.

The text of the prayer is quite well-preserved in two OB copies of unknown provenance. Variations between these are relatively minor. This treatment features the text discovered in 1924 but most recently published by Wayne Horowitz in 2000 (= MS A). The second copy (= MS B) was discovered and published by G. Dossin in 1935, shortly after MS A came to light.

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1. *pu-ul-lu-lu ru-bu-ú*

2. *wa-aš-ru-ú sí-ik-ku-ru ši-re-tum ša-ak-na-a*

3. *ḫa-ab-ra-tum ni-šu-ú ša-qú-um-ma-a*

4. *pe-tu-tum ud-du-lu-ú ba-a-bu*

5. *i-li ma-tim iš-ta-ra-at ma-a-tim*

6. ^{d}UTU ^{d}EN.ZU ^{d}IŠKUR *ù* ^{d}INANA

Line 1: *Pullulum* (D of *palālum*), "to guard closely." This form, like several of the verbs that follow, is a predicative. Predicative verbal constructions predominate in lines 1–4, and this underscores the inert state of the land as described in the text. This first word of the prayer has been the subject of significant debate, but it is now generally agreed that this is the reading, though the form is admittedly unusual, in that the D stem of this root is otherwise unattested (see A. Livingstone, *NABU* 1990, #86). *Rubûm*, "prince."

pullulū rubû

Line 2: *Wašārum*, "to sink, to let down." *Sikkūrum*, "a locking bolt." *Šīrtum* (*šērtum*), "a locking ring." For this definition, see A. Livingstone, *NABU* 1990, #87. *Šakānum*, "to set, to place." Note also that *šīrtum* is a homophone of *šīrtum*, "morning." Perhaps this is a deliberate word play on the author's part? For this line, MS B has *šikkātum šērētum tabkā*, "the pegs, the locking rings are lying flat."

wašrū sikkūrū šīrētum šaknā

Line 3: *Ḫabrum*, "noisy, busy." *Nišum*, "people," usually occurs in the (irregular fem.) plural, *nišū*. *Šaqummum*, "silent," an adj., is used here predicatively (3fp).

ḫabrātum nišū šaqummā

Line 4: *Petûm*, "open," is a verbal adj. *Uddulum* (D of *edēlum*), "to shut, to lock." *Bābum*, "gate, door."

petûtum uddulū bābū

Line 5: *Ilum*, "god." We expect *ilū* (i.e., the expected nominative construct/bound state) rather than *ilī*. For the genitive when we expect the nominative, see also *mušītim* in line 9 and *ilī mušītim* in line 14. *Mātum*, "land." *Ištartum*, "goddess." The proper name of the goddess, *par excellence*, is frequently used as a common noun to indicate female gods.

ilī mātim ištarāt mātim

Line 6: ^{d}UTU = *Šamaš*. ^{d}EN.ZU = *Sîn*. ^{d}IŠKUR = *Adad*. ^{d}INANA = *Ištar*. MS B lists the gods Adad, Ea, Shamash, and Ishtar.

Šamaš Sîn Adad Ištar

7. *i-te-er-bu-ú a-na ú-tu-ul ša-me-e*

8. *ú-ul i-di-in-nu di-na-am ú-ul i-pa-ar-ra-sú a-wa-tim*

9. *pu-us-sú-ma-at mu-ši-i-tim*

10. É.GAL-*lum ša-ḫu-ur-ša ku-um-mu ad-ru-ú*

Line 7: *Erēbum*, "to enter." This common verb takes on a technical meaning when referring to a celestial body, such as the sun (i.e., Shamash), the moon, a planet, or star, namely, "to set." *Utlum,* "lap" (*utul* is the construct/bound form). *Šamû*, "sky, heaven." The word almost always occurs in the plural. *Utul šamê* refers to the sky's interior that is not visible to humanity but in which the gods reside. See Wayne Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography* (Mesopotamia Civilizations 8; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1998), 250–52 for discussion.

īterbū ana utul šamê

Line 8: *Ul*, a particle of negation. *Diānum* (*dânu*), "to judge." *Dīnum*, "judgment, decision." The idiom *dīnam diānum* indicates a variety of things, including "to (legally) sentence, to render a judgment." Within the context of this prayer and within divination in general, this is the act of providing guidance through an oracle. As noted above, the gods' guidance in mantic practice was considered the rendering of a binding legal decision. *Parāsum*, "to cut." *Awātum*, "word, matter." The idiom *awātam parāsum* is essentially synonymous with *dīnam diānum.*

ul idinnū dīnam ul iparrasū awātim

Line 9: *Pussumum* (D of *pasāmum*, with the same meaning as the G in the predicative), "to cover, to veil." *Mušītum*, "night." *Mušītim* is clearly the subject of the D fs predicative *pussumat*; however, it is in the genitive case and this might be a scribal error. MS B has *mu-ši-tum* here. For the genitive when we expect the nominative, see also lines 5 and 14.

pussumat mušītim

Line 10: É.GAL = *ēkallum*, "palace." *Šaḫūrum*, a kind of ritual building associated with a larger complex of buildings, is often translated simply as "chapel." See CAD Š/1, 108–9. *Kummum*, "shrine, innermost sanctum, cella." The term can refer both to a part of a structure and to a structure in its own right. See CAD K, 533–34. It is undoubtedly in the singular (no vowel length is indicated in the orthography, though the scribe does not consistently indicate this), but it lacks the expected mimation. *Adārum* "to be dark, obscured" (G 3mp predicative). The term is particularly common in celestial divination literature in which it can refer to the eclipse of the sun or moon, or the obscuration of a star or planet. See CAD A/1, 103–4 and note, in particular, the usage of *adārum* in the OB celestial omen text from the Hermitage (republished in the edition by Horowitz, 204, line 12). The idea might be that these religious structures, which are the seats of certain deities during the day are, in a sense, "eclipsed" during the night, when the night gods take over and *their* seats, i.e., the stars, etc., are visible.

ēkallum šaḫūrša kummu adrū

11. [*a*]-*li-ik ur-ḫi-im* DINGIR-*lam* [*i-ša*]-*si ù ša di-nim uš-te-bé-er-re ši-it-tam*

12. [*d*]*a-a-a-an ki-na-tim a-bi e-ki-a-tim*

13. ^{d}UTU *i-te-ru-ub a-na ku-um-mi-šu*

14. *ra-bu-tum i-li-i mu-ši-i-tim*

15. *na-aw-ru-um* ^{d}BIL.GI

Line 11: *Alākum*, "to walk, to go." *Urḫum*, "path, road." How would you translate the phrase *ālik urḫi* idiomatically? DINGIR = *ilum*, "god." *Šasûm*, "to call, to shout, to invoke." The scribe's orthography here (*i-ša-ši*) is defective for the durative form. Instead of *išassi*, MS B has *uselle* (from *sullûm*), "he appeals to, prays to." *Ša dīnim*, though often understood as the petitioner, clearly must refer to the petitioned god, i.e., *dayyānum ša dīnim*. See Dossin's translation of the same text in MS B: "le tribunal se rassasie de sommeil." *Šutebrûm* (Št of *bitrûm* [Gt]) "to do permanently, to continue." The origin of this common but unusual root is difficult; *AHw* derives it from *berûm*, "to starve." See *AHw*, 123 and CAD B, 279–81. *Šittum*, "sleep." Here the accusative case is adverbial.

ālik urḫim ilam išassi u ša dīnim uštebrre šittam

Line 12: *Dayyānum*, "judge" (*dayyān* = construct/bound form). *Kittum* (from *kintum**), "truth." *Abum*, "father." *Ekūtum*, "a destitute girl." MS B repeats *kittum* at the end of the line, replacing *ekūtum*. The masculine equivalent of the term *ekūtum* does not occur. As such it often occurs in parallel with *almattum*, "widow." See CAD E, 72–73. Here the epithets *dayyān kinātim* and *abi ekiātim* are epithets of the sun god Shamash, mentioned by name in the next line.

dayyān kinātim abi ekiātim

Line 13: *Erēbum*, see line 7. Shamash's *kummum* here does not seem to be an area of an earthly shrine, but rather his own private cella in the celestial residence of the gods.

Šamaš īterub ana kummīšu

Line 14: Line 14 begins a long sentence, whose main verb appears in line 21. *Rabûm*, "great." The mp adjective here seems to be acting in apposition to *ilī mušītim* rather than serving as an attributive adjective. For *ilī* as a nominative, see comments to line 5 and 9.

rabûtum ilī mušītim

Line 15: *Nawrum*, "shining, brilliant," is a common adj. applied to celestial bodies. ^{d}BIL.GI = *Girra*. As mentioned in the introduction, the fire god Girra is the protagonist in the poorly preserved OB myth called Girra and Elamatum, in which he slays a monster called *Elamatum* and makes her into a constellation. In this context, it is important to note that the constellation *Elamatum* appears in MS B after *qaštum* (MS A line 17) and in the place of *nīrum*. Ms B thus features both the protagonist and adversary of the OB myth.

nawrum Girra

16. *qú-ra-du-um* ^{d}*èr-ra*

17. *qá-aš-tum ni-ru-um*

18. *ši-ta-ad-da-ru-um mu-uš-ḫu-uš-šu-um*

19. GIŠ.MAR.GÍD.DA *en*$_6$*-zu-um*

20. *ku-sa-ri-ik-ku-um ba-aš-mu-um*

Line 16: *Qurādum*, "warrior, hero." A common epithet for gods, *qurādum* is also applied to Erra in the Erra and Ishum myth (III D 3).

qurādum Erra

Line 17: *Qaštum*, "bow." Here *qaštum* refers to the Bow constellation, probably part of Canis Major (Reiner and Pingree, 11; Gössmann, #47). This constellation features prominently in *Enūma eliš* as Marduk's prized weapon, which is installed in the sky and adopted by Anu as his own daughter (VI 82–91). That passage is a rare example of catasterism in Mesopotamian literature. (See also Astrolabe B B1:14–16 [KAV 218] and MUL.APIN I ii 7.) *Nīrum*, "yoke." Otherwise written logographically as ŠUDUN. *Nīrum* is possibly to be identified as the constellation Boötes (Reiner and Pingree, 15; Gössmann, #379).

qaštum nīrum

Line 18: MS B begins the line with *ẓappum*, literally, "a bristle of hair," but here a name for the Pleiades (normally written MUL.MUL; Reiner and Pingree, 13; Gössmann, #171 and #279) *Šitadarrum*, "Orion." Note also the by-forms *šitadallum* and *šidallum*, as well as the common Sumerian orthography SIPA.ZI.AN.NA ("the true shepherd of heaven"). The origin and meaning of the Akkadian name is unclear, though Gössmann suggests it is derived from the verb *šadālum*, "to be wide," and means something like "the wide man, the giant" (Reiner and Pingree, 14; Gössmann, #348). *Mušḫuššum*, "furious serpent." This constellation is only attested in the OB period. It might be the dragon whose origin is described in the Labbu Myth (Frans Wiggermann, "Tišpak, his Seal, and the Dragon Mušhuššu," in *To the Euphrates and Beyond: Archaeological Studies in Honor of Maaits N. van Loon* [ed. O. Haex et al; Rotterdam: A. A. Balkema, 1989], 117–33, esp. 126). Gössmann equates it with the later constellation MUŠ, though this is by no means certain; if it is the case, however, it is possibly to be identified with the constellation Hydra (Reiner and Pingree, 13; Gössmann, #284).

šitaddarum mušḫuššum

Line 19: GIŠ.MAR.GÍD.DA = *ereqqum*, "wagon, cart," is a constellation roughly corresponding to our Ursa Major (Reiner and Pingree, 13; Gössmann, #258). *Enzum*, "goat," is often, though not here, written logographically ÙZ. It is perhaps the constellation Lyra (Reiner and Pingree, 16; Gössmann #145).

ereqqum enzum

Line 20: *Kusarikkum,* "bison." The bison is depicted as a wild monster in Mesopotamian conflict mythology, such as *Enūma eliš* I 143 (see the discussion of monster lists in W. G. Lambert, "Ninurta Mythology in the Babylonian Epic of Creation," in *Keilschrift Literaturen:*

21. *li-iz-zi-<zu>-ú-ma*

22. *i-na te-er-ti e-ep-pu-š*[*u*]

23. *i-na pu-ḫa-ad a-ka-ar-ra-bu-ú*

24. *ki-it-ta-am šu-uk-na-an*

Ausgewählte Vorträge der XXXII. Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Münster, 8.–12.7.1985 [ed. K. Hecker and W. Sommerfeld; Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1986], 55–59). In these mythological contexts, however, there is no need to identify *kusarrikkum* with this astral manifestation. *Bašmum*, "horned serpent." This unidentified constellation is only attested in the OB period. Though Gössmann (#51) suggested that this be identified as the constellation Hydra, his proposal is merely a stab in the dark. A *bašmum* is also featured as one of the monsters created by Tiamat in *Enūma eliš* (I 141). In addition to their literary attestations, these two monsters appear together in *Šurpu* VIII 6–7 (see Erica Reiner, *Šurpu: A Collection of Sumerian and Akkadian Incantations* [AfO Beiheft 11; Graz, 1958], 39). MS B omits *bašmum* but adds *ilū mušītim rabītim*, "gods of the great night."

kusarikkum bašmum

Line 21: *Izuzzum/uzuzzum*, "to stand, to make an appearance." The form is a G 3mp precative. This root in the precative is quite common in prayers which request a god's presence. The scribe mistakenly omitted a ZU sign. MS B has the cp impv. *izizzānim* here, thus keeping the person by which the supplicant addresses the deities consistent. See comment on line 24 below. The enclitic *–ma* is attached to a volitive/injunctive form and is followed by another volitive/injunctive form, i.e., *šuknān* in line 23. Thus, a simple "and" will not suffice in a translation. It needs to be rendered as indicating a purpose clause ("so that, in order that").

lizzizū-ma

Line 22: *Têrtum*, "extispicy." The term refers broadly to a report or instruction. But within this context it is a technical term referring to this particular act of divination. *Epēšum*, "to do, to make." The verb has the subordinating/subjunctive marker *–u*. The relative clause is, in this case, *not* marked by *ša*. In such unmarked clauses the antecedent is in the bound/construct state, as is *têrti* here (see also line 23). *Têrtam epēšum* is an idiom meaning, "to perform an extispicy."

ina têrti eppušu

Line 23: *Puḫādum*, "lamb." The word is in the bound/construct state, since it precedes an unmarked relative clause. MS B has *ikribi*, "offering." *Karābum*, "to offer." Note again the subordinating/subjunctive marker *–u*.

ina puḫād akarrabu

Line 24: *Kittum*, "truth, justice." *Šakānum*, "to place" (cp impv. plus what seems to be a shortened form of the 1cs dative object [= ventive suffix *–nim*]). Note that between the first verb in the sequence, *lizzizū-ma* (in line 21), and this verb, the author has changed the person in which the gods are addressed from third person to second. Just as "the locking

25. 24 MU.BI *ik-<ri>-ib mu-ši-tim*

rings are set in place," *širētum šaknā* (line 2), so the gods will "place truth," *kittam šuknān*, in the entrails of the animal.

kittam šuknān

Line 25: MU = *šumum*, "line, item." The term most simply means "name," but in scribal terminology it indicates an entry or line of text. BI = *–šu*, 3ms possessive suffix. MU.BI = *šumūšu*. MS B omits MU.BI. This term is often found in colophons giving a summary of the number of lines in the text. *Ikribu*, "prayer." The scribe has mistakenly omitted a RI sign.

24 *šumūšu ikrib mušītim*

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

Extispicy is quite well-attested in the Late Bronze Levant, both in the north (i.e., Ugarit) and the south (Hazor) in the form of Babylonian-style liver models.[1] Despite the ample Late Bronze evidence, however, there is no clear evidence for the practice in Iron Age Israel or Judah. This is not particularly surprising since the Akkadian Late Bronze hepatoscopic texts outside of Mesopotamia, and the non-Akkadian ones they inspired at Ugarit, are the result of the international exportation of Babylonian scholarship that went hand-in-hand with the Babylonian cultural *koiné* of the Late Bronze Age. When that international use and appreciation of Babylonian knowledge ended in the tumult of the thirteenth to twelfth centuries, the mantic exports, in many ways the pinnacle of what would become *ummânūtu* (expertise in the scribal craft), ceased as well. Thus, Ezek 21:26 is the only mention of the practice in indisputable terms in the Hebrew Bible. In this case, the prophet is referring to the decision-making of the Babylonian monarch Nebuchadnezzar II, as he plots his military strategy during his conquest of Canaan. The king "looked at the liver" (רָאָה בַּכָּבֵד) in addition to performing an act of belomancy (divination using arrowheads) and consulting teraphim. In the prophet's presentation, Yahweh has guided the results of the mantic acts so as to lead the king to conquer Jerusalem. Though Yahweh directs these undertakings, his presence in them is described as something exceptional—the

[1] Twenty-two models of exta, including the inscribed liver models (KTU 1.141, 1.142, 1.143, 1.144, 1.155, and an inscribed lung model, 1.127) have been uncovered at Ugarit (see M. Dietrich and O. Loretz et al., *Mantik in Ugarit: Keilalphabetische Texte der Opferschau, Omensammlungen, Nekromantie* [ALASP 3; Münster: Ugarit Verlag, 1990], 5–38) while three inscribed and three uninscribed fragmentary liver models dating to roughly the Old Babylonian/Middle Babylonian periods have been discovered at Hazor (W. Horowitz et al., *Cuneiform in Canaan: Cuneiform Sources from the Land of Israel in Ancient Times* [Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society/Hebrew University, 2006], 66–68 and Wayne Horowitz, et al, "Hazor 17: Another Clay Liver Model," *IEJ* 60 (2010), 133–45).

Judahites, the prophet tells us, believe the results of Nebuchadnezzar's divinations are false by their very nature (Ezek 21:28).

Despite the lack of Iron Age archaeological evidence and textual witness, several scholars have argued that extispicy was practiced in ancient Israel and Judah. Sigmund Mowinckel claims that certain Psalms were, in fact, oracle questions posed to Yahweh before the ritual slaughter of an animal whose exta were to be examined.[2] Specifically, based on its usage in 2 Kgs 16:15 and Ps 5:4, Mowinckel makes the case that the verb בקר (normally translated "to inquire") is a technical term referring to performing an extispicy.[3] Otto Loretz, building on Mowinckel's study and citing the liver models from Ugarit as precedent, posits that the "signs," אֹתוֹת, mentioned in Ps 74:4, 9 are, in fact, liver omina.[4] Frederick Cryer, looking at the time, location, equipment, procedure, language, and personnel described in the various descriptions of (condoned) divination in the Hebrew Bible, maintains that these accounts are modeled on NA extispicy reports and queries and implies that, under the heavily edited biblical narratives which report them, lies buried the remains of an Israelite hepatoscopic tradition.[5] Anne Jeffers considers whether the participle נֹקֵד, "sheep-tender" (used only twice in the Hebrew Bible, 2 Kgs 3:4 and Amos 1:1), might refer to one who not only raises sheep, but was actually involved in sacrifice and mantic liver examination.[6]

All of these proposals share certain elementary problems. Why are there no models of exta known from Iron Age sites in Israel and Judah, though they are attested in the Late Bronze Age? Why, if the biblical authors use specific technical terminology to refer to hepatoscopy (i.e., בקר and נֹקֵד, as per Mowinckel, Loretz and Jeffers) do they *not* employ that terminology when referring to the practice in Ezek 21:26? Even if it is because they reject the foreign, but not domestic, practice of extispicy, the biblical authors are perfectly willing to call other illegitimate diviners by native technical terms (e.g., prophets of other deities: 1 Kgs 18:19; 2 Kgs 10:19; Jer 2:8; 23:13; false prophets of Yahweh: 1 Kgs

[2] Sigmund Mowinckel, *Psalmenstudien I* (Amsterdam: P. Schippers, 1961), 145–49.

[3] Ibid., *Psalmenstudien I*, 146.

[4] Otto Loretz, *Leberschau, Sündenbock, Asasel in Ugarit und Israel: Leberschau und Jahwestatue in Psalm 27, Leberschau in Psalm 74* (UBL 3; Altenberge: CIS–Verlag, 1985), 9–34, 81–112.

[5] Frederick Cryer, *Divination in Ancient Israel and its Near Eastern Environment: A Socio-Historical Investigation* (JSOTSup 142; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 298–305. Notably, while Cryer astutely rejects the methods of Mowinckel (296) and Loretz (296–98), he accepts their conclusion that extispicy was known and practiced in ancient Israel. The fundamental problem with Cryer's argument is that *all* mantic acts include the elements named above to a high degree since *all* divinatory acts are rituals conducted by special personnel, which respond in time and place to specific situations! Celestial divination, for example, for which we also have extensive reports dating to the NA period, mention all, some, or many of these elements. This does not mean that the biblical narrative, and ultimately the real practice which lies behind it, is based on Babylonian or native Israelite celestial divination.

[6] Anne Jeffers, *Magic and Divination in Ancient Palestine and Syria* (SHCANE 8; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 111–16.

22:6). Why the unwillingness in this case? Why, if hepatoscopy was practiced in Israel and Judah, only later to be condemned and its overt mention eradicated from the biblical text, is it not mentioned in the list of prohibited diviners in Deut 18:10–11? Ultimately, all arguments in favor of Israelite and Judahite extispicy are highly speculative.

Functionally speaking, we are also at a loss to find biblical parallels for this prayer. While there are several acceptable means of divination in the biblical tradition, i.e., prophecy, cleromancy, oneiromancy (see 1 Sam 28:6), and quite a few forbidden ones (Deut 18:10–11), we have no Israelite or Judahite preparatory prayers made for these acts, other than the specific questions posited (e.g., 1 Sam 30:8; 1 Kgs 22:6; and perhaps Psalms 4, 60, 108, 119 and 143). The Hebrew Bible contains narrative descriptions of divination and often its results—but it is not a diviner's manual and contains no traces of one. One wonders if any mantic technical literature (e.g., lists of dream omens or rules for lots), other than the results of prophecy, was ever committed to writing in Israel and Judah or if the divinatory traditions were ultimately and exclusively oral.

The thrust of the prayer is a plea for an accurate, truthful extispicy, guided by the gods. And, though we have no divinatory manuals from ancient Israel, within the Hebrew Bible we can observe a certain amount of anxiety regarding the truthfulness of an oracle. According to Deut 18:21–22, a prophet of Yahweh can only be judged legitimate if the oracles he delivers come to fruition. When making a decision, of course, it is not much good to know *after* the fact whether the oracle relays the truth. Thus, in 1 Kgs 22, the king of Judah, Jehoshaphat, asks for a second prophetic opinion regarding the joint Judahite-Israelite military expedition against Ramoth-Gilead. When the prophet Micaiah ben Imlah is summoned, his initial oracle confirms the previous one offered unanimously by four-hundred prophets. But the king of Israel is incredulous and demands that the prophet offer him the truth in Yahweh's name (1 Kgs 22:16, אֱמֶת בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה). The truthful oracle is decidedly negative and the vision of Yahweh's court that the lone prophet recounts indicates that the deity was, in fact, guiding the oracle of the four-hundred prophets—but *not* with the truth! Instead, Yahweh deliberately misled the kings by dispatching a "false spirit" (רוּחַ שָׁקֶר, 1 Kgs 22:22–23). Though theologically upsetting to many ancient and modern readers, 1 Kgs 22 sheds light on our prayer by revealing that the plea for a truthful extispicy might not merely be a plea for divine mediation and accuracy in the extispicy procedure, but also a plea for the gods to be honest in guiding their servants!

While there are no real functional parallels in the Hebrew Bible, the concept that an oracle was a legal decision does have some analogies. It has been noted since at least the days of Gunkel and Begrich that certain oracles are framed as lawsuits, i.e., the so-called *Gerichtsrede* ("Judgment Speech/Oracle").[7] As stated above, in the Prayer to the Gods of the Night the night gods serve as an advocate

[7] Hermann Gunkel and Joachim Begrich, *Introduction to the Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel* (trans. J. Nogalski; Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998), 279–80.

of the inquirer. In the biblical Judgment Oracle, it is the prophet himself who acts as a mediator, but in these cases he is representing the plaintiff, i.e., Yahweh (e.g., Isa 1:2–20; Mic 6:1–8), and the cosmos acts as witness.[8] Such oracles, like our prayer, employ legal terminology and concepts, such as "lawsuit" (Mic 6:1, רִיב) and the calling of witnesses, "Listen, O Sky, and pay attention, O Earth, for Yahweh hereby speaks!" (Isa 1:2a, שִׁמְעוּ שָׁמַיִם וְהַאֲזִינִוּ אֶרֶץ כִּי יְהוָה דִּבֵּר). While this is hardly a profound correlation, it demonstrates that, unsurprisingly, in both our prayer and certain biblical pericopes the writers conceived of the invisible administration of divine-human relationships in mundane legal terms with which they were quite familiar.

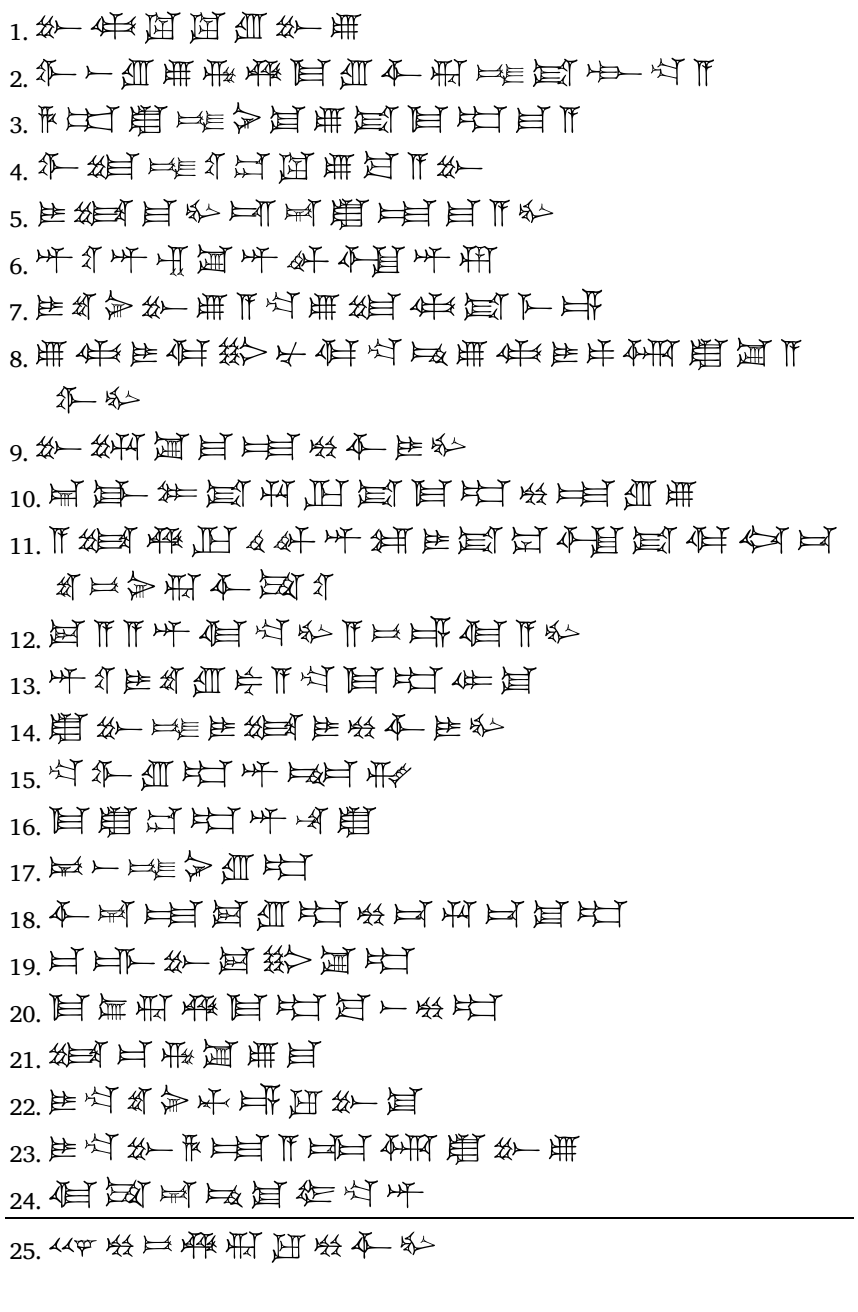
[8] For an overview, see Claus Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech* (trans. H. White; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991), 129–94.

TRANSLATION:

1. The princes are closely guarded,
2. The locking-bolts lowered, the locking rings placed,
3. (Though previously) noisy, the people are silent,
4. (Though previously) open, the doors are locked.
5. The gods of the land (and) the goddesses of the land,
6. Shamash, Sin, Adad and Ishtar
7. Have entered into the lap of heaven.
8. They do not render judgment, they do not decide a case.
9. The night is veiled.
10. The palace, its chapel, the cella are obscured.
11. The traveler invokes god, but the one (who offers) a decision remains asleep.
12. The judge of truth, father of the impoverished girl,
13. Shamash has entered his cella.
14. The great ones, the gods of the night,
15. Bright Girra,
16. Warrior Erra,
17. The Bow, the Yoke,
18. Orion, the Furious Serpent,
19. The Wagon, the Goat,
20. The Bison, the Horned Serpent,
21. May they stand by so that,
22. In the extispicy I am performing,
23. In the lamb I am offering,
24. You may place the truth.

25. Twenty-four lines. A prayer of the night.

CUNEIFORM:



An OB Ikribu-Like Prayer to Shamash and Adad

ALAN LENZI

SHAMASH:

See page 197.

ADAD:

Adad (also, Ḫaddu, Ḫadda, Addu, Adda) is the Semitic name of the ancient Near Eastern storm god *par excellence* who was responsible for storms, thunder, lightning, wind, and rain. Worship of this god extended across the entire ancient Near East under various other names, such as Ishkur (Sum.), Teshub (Hurrian), Baʿlu (Ugaritic), and Taru/Tarḫun(t) (Hattic/Hittite-Luwian). In Mesopotamian traditions, he was the son of Anu or sometimes Enlil, his consort was Shala (identified with Sum. Medimsha), and his ministers were Shullat and Ḫanish. Iconographically, Adad was represented by a lion-dragon in third millennium sources and a bull by OB times. In anthropomorphic depictions, he is frequently found holding a weapon or a lightning bolt, as if ready to strike an opponent in battle. Although his name is usually written with the logogram IŠKUR, a sign that can be read as the Sumerian word im, "wind," one also finds it written syllabically in Akkadian and sometimes logographically as $^{d}10$.

Adad was syncretized to the Sumerian storm god Ishkur during the Sargonic and Ur III periods (i.e., the late third millennium) and became a major power in the Mesopotamian pantheon by OB times. His shrines and temples were quite numerous throughout Mesopotamia, Syria (e.g., at Ebla, Mari, Emar, Ḫalab, and Ugarit), and beyond, extending chronologically from Early Dynastic to Hellenistic times. Prominent examples of sanctuaries include the double Anu-Adad temple in Ashur, dating back to the reign of Shamshi-Adad I, and Adad's most important Babylonian shrine—according to first millennium sources—located at Zabban (90km east of the Tigris and 175km southeast of Ashur).

Given Adad's sphere of power, it can be no surprise that he was both productive and destructive to humans, bringing abundance, on the one hand, via

rain that watered crops and animals (see, e.g., *Atram-ḫasīs* II i 11–16, 30–33),[1] and wreaking devastation, on the other, with powerful storms and floods (see, e.g., *Atram-ḫasīs* III ii 48–55).[2] Due to the latter association, Adad was an important war god, especially evident among Middle and Neo-Assyrian sources.

Along with his role as a storm god, Adad was also a guardian of oaths. In Sippar, for example, he was closely associated with Shamash, who together with Adad was invoked to bear witness to legal cases and contracts. This must be significant for their association in divinatory texts, attested as early as OB times.[3]

To explain Adad's rather unexpected role in oracular divination, Daniel Schwemer offers two suggestions. First, Adad "was a celestial god who . . . had power over numerous ominous phenomena and dwelled in immediate proximity to the celestial sun-god." And second, he "was lord of the winds, which were seen in Mesopotamia as the divine carriers,"[4] perhaps thereby providing the means to communicate the extispicy verdict to the human diviner.[5]

THE PRAYER:

This OB prayer was used in the diviner's extispicy ritual to petition the high gods in charge of the oracular decision: Shamash and Adad. (It is closely associated with the OB Prayer to the Gods of the Night, see page 71). After the diviner had gathered the gods via this prayer and made them amenable to hear inquiries, the diviner may have made his inquiry in the form of a tamitu-prayer (see page 465). In order to learn the answer to his inquiry, the diviner would examine the animal sacrificed in the extispicy and read the signs that the gods had placed in its exta. In this way, the diviner could learn the will of the gods in the matter about which he had inquired.

The prayer falls into two main parts. In the first ten lines the diviner undertakes his ritual purification.[6] In the remainder of the text (lines 11–66), the diviner performs six more ritual actions, directed at Shamash alone, and asks Shamash,[7] sometimes including Adad, eight times in the course of the prayer to

[1] See W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, *Atra-ḫasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969; repr., Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 73.
[2] See ibid., 93.
[3] For brief thoughts about the close association of Shamash and Adad and their role in Babylonian extispicy, see W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Oracle Questions* (Mesopotamian Civilizations 13; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 1–5.
[4] Schwemer, "Storm Gods, Part I," 150.
[5] For Adad's possible role in communicating the extispicy verdict, see Steinkeller, 43–45.
[6] See W. Sallaberger, "Reinheit. A. Mesopotamien," *RlA* 11 (2006–2008), 295–99 for a general discussion of purity in Mesopotamia.
[7] Shamash is mentioned seventeen times in the text: 1, 11, 14, 19, 21, 24, 25, 26, 34, 36, 42, 44, 50, 51, 54, 55, and 58. Adad is mentioned only six times: lines 11, 27, 36, 44, 51, 55, always in tandem with an invocation of Shamash. Only Shamash is invoked at the beginning of each of seven ritual actions described in the text (see lines 1, 14, 19, 25, 34, 42, 50; and Starr, 46).

"place the truth" (*kittam šuknam*) in the extispicy offering (see lines 13, 18, 33, 41, 49, 53, 57, 66; see also the OB prayer to the Gods of the Night, line 24 [see page 78]). In other words, the diviner asks the deity to answer his oracular question with a firm reply via the placing of a sign in the exta of the animal being sacrificed (see YOS 11 23:16).[8]

The preparations mentioned in lines 1–10 apparently form a rite of purification (see line 9), making the diviner worthy to approach the place of extispicy, the place to which the gods are summoned.[9] Cedar plays a major role in this process of purification but the precise significance of its various uses is not at all clear. One assumes the aromatic qualities of cedar or cedar resin figure into the process somehow.

The remainder of the prayer is highly repetitive, but its presentation shows a very clear logic. Lines 11–66 describe the ritual preparations of a meal for the gods (see Starr, 57): incense makes the air pleasant to smell,[10] water is offered for washing the hands, food is laid out, and the guests are announced.[11] After the initial preparation (incense and water, lines 11–24), the gods are to come to the table, eat, sit on thrones, and render a judgment (see lines 29–30, 38–39, and 45b–48a). In or during their meal the gods, now present and happily sated by their repast, were requested to leave a sign in the sacrificed animal in response to the diviner's oracular inquiry, perhaps asked after this prayer in the form of a tamitu-prayer. The diviner would then find and interpret the sign in the animal's exta to learn the gods' decision.

The present prayer is similar to the ikribu-prayers discussed in the general introduction (see page 46), even being included among a list of such prayers by Mayer (*UFBG*, 32, n.63). Yet it is not an ikribu-prayer, properly speaking. As Starr writes:

> The OB Prayer . . . deviates in form from the standard *ikribu*. It does not begin with the opening formula . . . , but with a vivid description of how the diviner uses cedar (resin, most likely) for purposes of cultic purification, and the whole ritual (lines 1–10) is addressed to Šamaš alone. Only the second unit (line 11ff.)

[8] The edition of YOS 11 23 is in Starr, 25–106, here 30, 37; see Steinkeller, 30 for the interpretation.

[9] For the various qualifications that diviners had to meet before they could perform an extispicy, see W. G. Lambert, "The Qualifications of Babylonian Diviners," in *Festschrift für Rykle Borger zu seinem 65. Geburtstag am 24. Mai 1994:* tikip santakki mala bašmu . . . (ed. Stefan M. Maul; Cuneiform Monographs 10; Groningen: Styx, 1998), 141–58.

[10] See Karel van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction in Israel and Mesopotamia: A Comparative Study* (Studia Semetica Neerlandica 22; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1985), 34.

[11] Compare, e.g., the ritual and ikribu-prayers in Zimmern, *BBR*, nos. 75–78. On meals in Mesopotamia generally, see J. J. Glassner, "Mahlzeit. A. In Mesopotamien," *RlA* 7 (1987–1990), 259–67. On meals for the gods, see the overview in W. G. Lambert, "Donations of Food and Drink to the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia," in *Ritual and Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East* (ed. J. Quaegebeur; OLA 55; Leuven: Peeters, 1993), 191–201 and A. Leo Oppenheim's classic presentation "The Care and Feeding of the Gods" in his *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portraits of a Dead Civilization* (rev. Erica Reiner; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 183–98.

> opens with the introductory formula of the *ikribus*. Here too, the text deviates from the latter by placing the closing formula (*ina ikrib akarrabu*, etc.) immediately after the opening formula (line 12). In short, while the OB Prayer is constructed along the lines of an *ikribu*, employing identical formulas and describing a set of activities of the diviner, it bears neither the title *ikribu*, nor does it employ the (opening and closing) formulas in the orthodox manner. . . . From this we should draw the conclusion that not all prayers of the diviner are *ikribus*, although they may appear to be so.[12]

[12] Starr, 45–46.

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Text. Edition: Albrecht Goetze. "An Old Babylonian Prayer of the Divination Priest." *JCS* 22 (1968), 25–29 (YOS 11 22). Translations: Foster, 209–11. Seux, 467–70. Hecker, *TUAT* II/5, 719–21. Studies: Ivan Starr. *The Rituals of the Diviner*. Bibliotheca Mesopotamica 12. Malibu: Undena Publications, 1983. Piotr Steinkeller. "Of Stars and Men: The Conceptual and Mythological Setup of Babylonian Extispicy." Pages 11–47 in *Biblical and Oriental Essays in Memory of William L. Moran*. Edited by Agustinus Gianto. BibOr 48. Roma: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2005.[ii]

[i] The final two studies summarize the first, which is a massive tome of over a thousand pages. Schwemer's detailed and exhaustive work has surpassed all previous studies.

[ii] Although not commenting on our text at length—though it is mentioned several times, these studies contextualize the present prayer within the activities of the diviner as represented in other ritual texts, including other OB prayers of the diviner (see especially Starr, 44–60).

1. ^{d}UTU *a-ša-ka-an a-na pi-ia* GIŠ.EREN *el-la-am*

Line 1: UTU = *Šamaš*, the sun god. Notice the brief invocation. The diviner regularly came before Shamash and Adad during extispicies. Perhaps this familiarity explains the lack of an elaborate hymnic introduction (salutation). Alternatively, one could suggest that ritual acts (and their description in the prayer) serve as the introductory motif. The diviner shows himself to be ritually prepared to meet with the gods of divination. *Šakānum*, "to place, to put." *Ana*, "to, for." *Pûm*, "mouth." GIŠ.EREN = *erēnum*, "cedar." It is unclear

2. *a-sà-ni-ib-ku i-na i-ti-iq pe-er-ti-ia*

3. *a-ša-ka-an-ku-um i-na sú-ni-ia*

4. *ša-bi-am* GIŠ.EREN

5. *em-sí pi-ia ù qá-ti-ia*

6. *ak-pu-ur pi-ia i-na ša-bi-im* GIŠ.EREN

whether the diviner put the actual cedar wood or only cedar resin in his mouth (see CAD E, 279 for this general ambiguity). *Ellum*, "pure, clear."

Šamaš ašakkan ana pīya erēnam ellam

Line 2: Goetze read the first word as *a-ṣa-ni-ip-ku*, but there is no known root **ṣanāpum* in Akkadian. As others have since recognized, the verb is *sanābum* (or *sanāpum*), "to tie" (see CAD S, 132–33). The pronominal suffix on the verb is a 2ms dative without mimation, as also in lines 8 and 54 (compare line 3). *Ina,* "in, on, by, from, with." *Itqum*, "fleece, tuft, lock (of hair)." *Pērtum* (*pirtum*), "hair (of head)." According to CAD P, 415, *itiq pērtim* means "forelock," which refers to the hair that covers one's forehead. The object of the verb must be implied from context (see lines 1 and 7). It is not clear what exactly the diviner is doing with his hair. Is he tying a piece of cedar *into* his hair or is he using a piece of his hair as a binding?

asannibku ina itiq pērtīya

Line 3: The verb from line 1 is repeated here, but this time it has the 2ms pronominal suffix (with mimation). The text's *a-ša-ka-an-ku-um* is a morphographemic writing since the final radical of the root, *n*, would have assimilated to the following consonant in speech (*–nk–* becomes *–kk–*). *Sūnum*, "lap, loin."

ašakkakkum ina sūnīya

Line 4: The meaning of *šabium* (*šabû*) is unknown. Goetze translates it as "compact" (with a note on 27–28) while Foster renders it "bushy," but the lexica do not even attempt a gloss. It seems to describe cedar somehow, either as a substantive in construct, a preceding adjective, or an appositive. See CAD Š/1, 17 for a brief discussion. In any case, this line provides the object of the verb in line 3.

šabiam erēnam

Line 5: *Mesûm*, "to wash, to purify." *U*, "and." *Qātum*, "hand." Notice the verbs in this line and the next two have changed to preterites (from the previous duratives). These may indicate that the diviner purified himself before the prayer in preparation to meet with the gods. Washing the hands and mouth as a ritual preparation is found relatively frequently in the Mesopotamian ritual materials. One did not want to offend the gods with filthy hands and bad breath (see van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction*, 33–34).

emsi pīya u qātīya

Line 6: *Kapārum*, "to wipe (clean)."

akpur pīya ina šabîm erēnim

7. *as-ni-ib* GIŠ.EREN *el-la-am i-na i-ti-iq pe-er-ti-ia*

8. *al-ta-pá-ak-ku ša-bi-am* GIŠ.EREN

9. *el-le-ku a-na pu-ḫu-ur ì-lí e-ṭe-eḫ-ḫi*

10. *a-na di-nim*

11. ^{d}UTU *be-el di-nim* ^{d}IŠKUR *be-el ik-ri-bi ù bi-ri*

Line 7: See lines 1 and 2. How the action here relates to the action of line 2 is unclear. Does the diviner repeat in line 2 during the prayer the action that he had already done prior to speaking it (recounted here)?

asnib erēnam ellam ina itiq pērtīya

Line 8: Goetze read the first word as *al-ta-ba-ak-ku* but this did not supply adequate sense. As Seux notes (467), Erica Reiner suggested the present reading, deriving the verb from *šapākum*, "to heap up, to pile, to pour on." The form is a 1cs perfect. Again, we see the 2ms dative pronominal suffix without mimation.

altappakku šabiam erēnam

Line 9: The form of *ellum* is a 1cs predicative. *Puḫrum*, "assembly." *Ilum*, "god." *Ṭeḫûm*, "to approach, to be(come) near to." It is unclear whether the prepositional phrase in this line should be read with the first or the second verb, but the meaning, on either reading, is very similar. Having completed his preparations, the diviner is in a state of purity. He may now approach the divine assembly for their decision (see line 10). The prayer is performative in that his speaking it initiates his approach.

ellēku ana puḫur ilī eṭeḫḫi

Line 10: *Dīnum*, "decision, judgment." The diviner purifies himself and ritually enters the divine assembly to obtain their decision with regard to his inquiry. The answer, of course, is delivered via extispicy.

ana dīnim

Line 11: The diviner renews the invocation but now includes Adad (= ^{d}IŠKUR) with Shamash. *Bēlum*, "lord." *Ikribum* generally means "prayer, blessing," but see the next line. The word is best taken here as a plural. *Bīrum*, "divination" (both the act of extispicy and the answer received). Goetze (25) suggests the missing mimation on this final word of the line is due to the lack of space on the tablet. This is the only instance where it is missing (see otherwise lines 27, 37, 45, 52, and 56). The epithets *bēl dīnim* and *bēl bīrim* are applied to Shamash and Adad a millennium later in the SB tamitu-prayers (see Lambert, *Babylonian Oracle Questions* and page 465 in this book) and ikribu-prayers (see Zimmern, *BBR*, nos. 75–101 [pp. 190–219]).

Šamaš bēl dīnim Adad bēl ikribī u bīri

12. *i-na ik-ri-ib a-ka-ra-bu i-na te-er-ti e-pu-šu*

13. *ki-it-tam šu-uk-nam*

14. ^{d}UTU *a-š*[*a-k*]*a-an a-na pi-i qú-ut-re-nim*

15. *ša* [*ma-aḫ*]*-ri-i-ka* GIŠ.EREN *el-la-am li-ši-ib qú-ut-re-nu*

16. *li-iq-ri-a-am i-li ra-bu-tim*

Line 12: *Karābum*, "to pray, to bless, to greet," generally, but with its cognate, *ikribum*, the idiom means "to utter a prayer, a blessing," and probably refers here to "the ritual-cum-prayer part, i.e., the various cultic activities and prayers associated with the ritual of the diviner, which are usually described in the subscript to each *ikribu*" (Starr, 50). *Têrtum*, "message, instruction, omen, extispicy." The gods make their will known via the *têrtum* that they place on the exta of the sheep. With the verb *epēšum*, "to do, to make," the idiom means "to perform an extispicy" (Starr, 50). In both phrases that comprise our line, we do not simply have a verb and its object. Rather, we have a prepositional phrase whose substantive is the object of the verb to which it is bound (thereby forming brief relative clauses): "in the X, which I do." This explains the subjunctive *–u* on both verbs.

ina ikrib akarrabu ina têrti ēpušu

Line 13: *Kittum*, "truth." *Šuknam* is the ms imperative of *šakānum* with a ventive. This statement, which appears numerous times throughout the prayer, is "an appeal for the manifestation of the oracular verdict" (Starr, 58).

kittam šuknam

Line 14: *Qutrēnum* (*qutrīnum*, *qutrinnum*), "incense." *Pî qutrēnim* is obscure, though it may refer to the opening of the flask containing incense (see Seux, 468, n.10). Foster takes *qutrēnim* as the object of the verb. But this understanding must assume a mistaken case vowel on *qutrēnim*. In any case, the diviner again invokes Shamash and places pure cedar (see line 15) "to the mouth" of something, as in line 1.

Šamaš ašakkan ana pî qutrēnim

Line 15: The restoration in this line follows CAD Q, 324. *Ša*, "which," introduces a brief relative clause that further describes the *pî qutrēnim* in line 14. *Maḫrīka*, "before you, in front of you." *Erēnam ellam* is the direct object of the verb in line 14. (*W*)*ašābum*, "to sit, to dwell, to reside." When used with smoke-like things, "linger" seems an appropriate translation of the verb (see Goetze, 26 and Foster, 209). Goetze suggests the missing mimation on the final noun is simply due to the lack of space on the tablet (see 25).

ša maḫrīka erēnam ellam lišib qutrēnu

Line 16: *Qerûm*, "to call, to invite." The ventive on the precative indicates the diviner wishes to summon the gods to his present location. The subject of the verb should be understood as the incense mentioned in the previous line. As Goetze has written, "[t]he fragrance of the burned cedar is supposed to stay for a while and to bring the gods to the

17. *i-na ik-ri-ib a-ka-ra-bu i-na te-er-ti e-pu-šu*

18. *ki-it-tam šu-uk-nam*

19. ^{d}UTU *na-ši-ku-um me-e* ÍD.IDIGNA *ù* BUR[ANUN-NA]

20. *ša iš-tu ša-di-im* GIŠ.EREN *ù* GIŠ.ŠU.ÚR.MÌN

21. *a-na ka-ši-im ba-ab-lu-ú mu-ti-sí* ^{d}UTU *qú-ra-d*[*u-um*]

place where the ritual takes place. The *qutrinnu* fulfills the same function as the *šurqinnu* in the Deluge story" (28), citing Gilgamesh Tablet XI. See also Starr, 48. *Rabûm*, "great."

liqriam ilī rabûtim

Lines 17–18: See lines 12–13.

ina ikrib akarrabu ina têrti ēpušu
kittam šuknam

Line 19: The invocation is renewed yet again, though only to Shamash. *Našûm*, "to lift up, to raise." Goetze reads the text as if the verb were a durative with a 2ms dative pronominal suffix, *anaššīkum*. But the copy (YOS 11 22:19) does not show an initial A. Before positing a scribal omission, one should note that the same orthography appears in lines 25, 34, 42, and 50 (thus the understanding of the same verb in line 25 by CAD L, 206, *<a>-na-ši-ku-um*, is atomistic and unlikely; see a different solution in CAD P, 408 on line 42). As Goetze has suggested for line 25, *na-ši-ku-um* stands here for *našiākkum*, an apocopated 1cs predicative with 2ms dative suffix. In support of this, he writes, "[t]he corresponding form with plural suffix *na-ši-a-ku-nu-ši-im* is actually found in AO 7032 (RA 38 87 [see now Starr, 122:2]) and from there to be restored in YBT XI 2 obv.2" [=YOS 11 2:2, for which see Starr, 30:2] (29). Even if Goetze is correct, we do not know why the scribe used this odd orthography in all four instances of the verb in this text. *Mû* (always pl.), "water." ÍD.IDIGNA = *Idiqlat*, "Tigris." ÍD.BURANUN(UD-KIB-NUN)-NA = *Purattum*, "Euphrates."

Šamaš našīkkum? mê Idiqlat u Purattim

Line 20: The relative *ša* refers back to *mê* in line 19. *Ištu*, "from, out of." *Šadûm*, "mountain(s)." GIŠ.ŠU.ÚR.MÌN = *šurmēnum*, "cypress." Goetze's GIŠ.SU-ÚR-MÌN in the text (26) is corrected in the notes (29). Cedar and cypress occur together frequently in rituals of the diviner (see Goetze, 29).

ša ištu šadîm erēnam u šurmēnam

Line 21: *Kâšim* is the 2ms independent dative pronoun, "to, for you." *Babālum*, "to carry, to bring." The verb is a transitive *parsāku* form—identical in appearance to the predicative; cedar and cypress (from line 20) are its direct objects. It ends the subordinate clause begun with the *ša* in line 20. *Mutassûm* (Dt of *mesûm*), "to wash oneself." *Mutissi* is a ms imperative. *Qurādum*, "hero, warrior." The washing here and in the next couple of lines is in preparation for eating the sacrificial meal that the diviner lays out before the gods.

ana kâšim bablū mutissi Šamaš qurādum

22. *li-im-te-sú it-ti-i-ka* DINGIR.MEŠ *ra-bu-tum*

23. *ù at-ta mu-te-sí* ^{d}*bu-ne-ne na-aš-pa-ar*

24. *ki-it-tim ma-ḫa-ar* ^{d}UTU *da-a-a-nim*

25. ^{d}UTU *na-ši-ku-um li-iq-tam lu-ú-qú-ut*

26. *me-e sà-as-ki-im el-lu-tim* ^{d}UTU *be-el di-nim*

27. ^{d}IŠKUR *be-el ik-ri-bi ù bi-ri-im*

Line 22: *Limtessû* is a 3mp Dt precative from *mesûm* (see line 21). *Itti*, "with." DINGIR.MEŠ = *ilū*, "gods."

limtessû ittīka ilū rabûtum

Line 23: *Attā*, "you" (ms). *Mutissi* in line 21 is the same verb form as *mutessi* here. *Bunene* is the chief minister (and sometimes son) of Shamash (see Goetze, 29, citing Zimmern, *BBR* 1–20, line 105 [p. 102]: *Bunene sukkal Šamaš u Aya*, "Bunene, vizier of Shamash and Aya"). *Našparum*, "messenger, envoy." The form of the noun is due to the fact that the word is bound to *kittim* in the following line.

u attā mutessi Bunene našpar

Line 24: Although *kittum* means "truth," its being bound to a preceding noun (*našpar* in line 23) as it is here might be better rendered in English with an adj. preceding the translation of *našpar*. Thus, instead of the literalistic "messenger of truth," one might translate the construction as "reliable messenger." *Maḫar* is the bound form of *maḫrum* used in line 15. Bunene is to wash himself in front of Shamash. *Dayyānum*, "judge." Shamash's role as judge is quite typical. He decides the case put before the gods in the form of an extispicy.

kittim maḫar Šamaš dayyānim

Line 25: For the verb *na-ši-ku-um*, see line 19. *Liqtum*, "gathered material, selection, a quality item, gift." *Luqut* is an imperative, probably derived from *laqātum*, "to pick up, to gather, to collect." This is the understanding of our line in CAD L, 206 (under *liqtu*). Oddly, the entry for *laqātu* in the CAD does not cite our line. The direct object of the imperative follows in line 26.

Šamaš našīkkum? liqtam luqut

Line 26: *Mû*, see line 19. *Saskûm* (*sasqûm*) is a fine flour, often used in rituals. *Mê saskîm* can be drunk (see CAD S, 193). It is probably, therefore, some kind of liquid concoction comprised of *saskû*-flour and water that one can drink or pour out as a libation offering. *Ellūtim* is plural and therefore must modify *mê* not *saskîm*.

mê saskîm ellūtim Šamaš bēl dīnim

Line 27: Adad has been absent since line 11, where we find the identical epithets as here.

Adad bēl ikribī u bīrim

28. *wa-ši*[!]*-ib* GIŠ.GU.ZA.MEŠ KÙ.GI *a-ki-il* GIŠ.BANŠUR NA_4.ZA.G[ÌN]

29. *tu-ur-ra-da-am ta-ak-ka-al tu-uš-ša-a*[*b*]

30. *i-na* GIŠ.GU.ZA *ta-di-an di-*[*nam*]

31. *i-na ik-ri-ib a-ka-ra-bu*

32. *i-na te-er-ti e-pu-šu*

33. *ki-it-tam šu-uk-nam*

34. ^{d}UTU *na-ši-ku-um bi-la-at* EN-*ut*[?]*-tim*

Line 28: (*W*)*ašābum*, see line 15. *Akālum*, "to eat." GIŠ.GU.ZA = *kussûm*, "chair, throne." KÙ.GI = *ḫurāṣum*, "gold." GIŠ.BANŠUR = *paššurum* (*paššūrum*), "offering table." NA_4.ZA.GÌN = *uqnûm*, "lapis lazuli." The participles in this line both seem to describe Adad (notice that the participle is singular), whose divine dining furniture is made from precious materials. But given Adad's secondary position in this prayer, perhaps the participles are best understood as describing Shamash (see also the series of 2ms verbs that follow this line).

wāšib kussî ḫurāṣim ākil paššur uqnîm

Line 29: All three verbs in this line are G 2ms duratives, derived from (*w*)*arādum*, "to go down, to descend," *akālum*, "to eat," and (*w*)*ašābum*, respectively. Although the verbs sound descriptive here, simply telling us what the god is going to do, these words are in fact directed *at* the god. They are probably best understood as telling the god what he is *supposed* to do (see Foster's translation, 210). Likewise for the verb in line 30.

turradam takkal tuššab

Line 30: The opening prepositional phrase describes where Shamash (Adad?) is to sit (see line 29). *Diānum* (*dânu*), "to judge, to render a verdict." Note the cognate accusative in the second half of the line.

ina kussî tadîan dīnam

Lines 31–33: See lines 12–13 and 17–18.

ina ikrib akarrabu
ina têrti ēpušu
kittam šuknam

Line 34: Shamash is invoked again to receive an offering. For the verb *na-ši-ku-um*, see line 19. *Biltum*, "load, yield, tribute." EN-*ut-tim* stands for *bēlūtim*, "lordship, rule, domination" (gen.).

Šamaš našîkum[?] *bilat bēlūtim*

35. *ša i-na* x *i-li a-na ka-ši-im* [. . .]

36. ^{d}UTU *be-el di-nim* ^{d}IŠKUR *be-e*[*l ik-ri-bi*]

37. *ù bi-ri-im wa-ši-ib* GIŠ.GU.ZA.MEŠ KÙ.GI

38. *a-ki-il* GIŠ.BANŠUR NA_4.ZA.GÌN *tu-ur-ra-da-am ta-ka-al*

39. *tu-uš-ša-ab i-na* GIŠ.GU.ZA [*ta*]*-da-an di-nam*

40. *i-na ik-ri-ib a-ka-ra-bu i-na te-er-ti e-pu-šu*

41. *ki-it-tam šu-uk-nam*

42. ^{d}UTU *na-ši-ku-um mu-ut-qí-i* 7 *ù* 7

43. *ša pe-er-ki ši-na-a a-na ka-ši-im pa-ar-ku*

Line 35: The *ša* refers back to *bilat bēlūtim* in line 34 (see the parallel construction in lines 19–20). The sign marked x in the transliteration above is an undeciphered sign. Foster translates the word as "courtyard" (210), citing Andrew George as his source (211), but it is unclear what actually stands behind that suggestion. One would presume *kisallu*, "courtyard," but its logogram does not fit the sign we have in the copy unless we suppose KISAL$^{!}$. In the gap at the end of the line, we expect a verb in the subjunctive, as in lines 21 and 43. But it is unclear what this verb should be.

ša ina . . . ilī ana kâšim . . .

Line 36–41: These lines repeat lines 26b–33 nearly verbatim.

Šamaš bēl dīnim Adad bēl ikribī
u bīrim wāšib kussî ḫurāṣim
ākil paššur uqnîm turradam takkal
tuššab ina kussî tadân dīnam
ina ikrib akarrabu ina têrti ēpušu
kittam šuknam

Line 42: This line begins as lines 19 and 25 did. *Mutqûm*, "sweet bread." 7 = *sebettum* (the free form of the number; *sebet*[*ti*] is its absolute form) with masculine nouns. Since there are still unsolved issues with the pronunciation and syntax of numbers, the normalization given here is an approximation. By "seven and seven," the text means seven pairs.

Šamaš našîkkum$^{?}$ *mutqî sebettam u sebettam*

Line 43: The reading and syntax of this line follows N. Ghanem, "OB Divination Prayer YOS XI 22:42–43," *NABU* 2012, #18. *Ša* refers back to *mutqû*. The meaning of *perkum* (*pirkum*) is unclear. In other contexts, the word may refer to a transverse line or the chord of a circle (in mathematical texts), a part of a gate, or a region/territory. Foster (210) suggests "row" for its meaning here (likewise Seux, 469, n.16), which seems contextually appropriate. As the word is in the accusative, Ghanem proposes to read it adverbially,

44. ^{d}UTU *be-el di-nim* ^{d}IŠKUR *be-el ik-ri-bi*

45. *ù bi-ri-im wa-ši-ib* GIŠ.GU.ZA.MEŠ [KÙ.GI]

46. *a-ki-il* GIŠ.BANŠUR NA_4.ZA.GÌN *tu-u*[*r-ra-da-am*]

47. *ta-ka-al tu-uš-ša-ab i-na* GIŠ.GU.ZA

48. *ta-di-an di-nam i-na ik-ri-ib a-ka-ra-bu*

49. *i-na te-er-ti e-pu-šu ki-it-tam šu-uk-nam*

50. ^{d}UTU *na-ši-ku-um ḫi-iṣ-ba-am ša ì-lí*

51. *nu-wu-ur* ^{d}NÍSABA ^{d}UTU *be-el di-nim* ^{d}IŠKUR *be-el ik-ri-bi*

52. *ù bi-ri-im i-na ik-ri-ib a-ka-ra-bu*

53. *i-na te-er-ti e-pu-šu ki-it-tam šu-uk-nam*

modifying the verb *parākum*, "to lie across transversely" (here a 3mp predicative). The next word, *šina*, "two," is likewise to be understood adverbially ("by twos"). Thus, *perkī šina* may indicate a dual row-like arrangement of the bread. Until *perku* is clarified, however, the precise arrangement will remain unclear.

ša perkī šina ana kâšim parkū

Lines 44–49: These lines repeat nearly verbatim the formula presented in lines 26b–33 and 36–41.

Šamaš bēl dīnim Adad bēl ikribī
u bīrim wāšib kussî ḫurāṣim
ākil paššur uqnîm turradam
takkal tuššab ina kussî
tadīan dīnam ina ikrib akarrabu
ina têrti ēpušu kittam šuknam

Line 50: After the by-now-familiar opening invocation and verb (see also lines 19, 25, and 42), the line should read *ḫi-iṣ-ba-am* rather than Goetze's *ḫi-iš-ba-am* (likewise, line 54). *Ḫiṣbum*, "plenty, abundant yield." As the next line implies, this "plenty" is to be identified as grain.

Šamaš našīkum$^{?}$ *ḫiṣbam ša ilī*

Lines 51–53: *Nuwwurum*, "brilliance" (only recognized by *CDA*, 259). ^{d}NÍSABA (^{d}NAGA), also read as ^{d}NÍDABA = *Nisaba*, goddess of grain (see page 351). Lines 51b–53 repeat lines 11–13, the short version of the fuller formula used in lines 26b–33, 36–41, and 44–49.

nuwwur Nisaba Šamaš bēl dīnim Adad bēl ikribī
u bīrim ina ikrib akarrabu
ina têrti ēpušu kittam šuknam

54. ^{d}UTU *uš-na-al-ku ḫi-iṣ-ba-am ša ì-lí nu-wu-ur* ^{d}NÍSABA

55. ^{d}UTU *be-el di-nim* ^{d}IŠKUR *be-el ik-ri-bi*

56. *ù bi-ri-im i-na ik-ri-ib a-ka-ra-bu*

57. *i-na te-er-ti e-pu-šu ki-it-tam šu-uk-nam*

58. *ši-ib* ^{d}UTU *qú-ra-du li-iš-bu*

59. *it-ti-i-ka* DINGIR.MEŠ *ra-bu-tum*

60. *an-nu-um a-bi ša-me-e* ^{d}EN.ZU *šar-ri a-gi-im*

61. ^{d}*nè-er*$_4$*-gal be-el ka-ak-ki-i*

Line 54: *Ušnālku* is a 1cs Š durative with a 2ms dative pronominal suffix (without mimation, as in lines 2 and 8). The verb is derived from *itūlum* (*utūlu*, *niālum*, *nâlu*), which in the Š stem means "to make someone lie down, sleep, to lay something down." For the remainder of the line, see the notes on lines 50–51.

Šamaš ušnālku ḫiṣbam ša ili nuwwur Nisaba

Lines 55–57: These lines again repeat the short formula first found in lines 11–13 and repeated several times throughout the prayer.

Šamaš bēl dīnim Adad bēl ikribī
u bīrim ina ikrib akarrabu
ina têrti ēpušu kittam šuknam

Line 58: The copy shows that the scribe has mistakenly added an UM to the end of the line. Goetze believes this UM should have been placed at the end of *qurādu*, which is lacking mimation (see 25, n.1 and 27, n.9). *Šib* is the ms imperative of *(w)ašābum*. *Lišbū* is the 3mp precative of the same verb (compare the 3cs in line 15). The subject is announced in line 59. *Qurādum*, see line 21.

šib Šamaš qurādu lišbū

Line 59: If one includes the verb in line 58 with it, this line is comparable to line 22.

ittīka ilū rabûtum

Line 60: Several gods are now enumerated. They form the subject of the verb in line 63. *Annum* is Anum, god of the sky (see page 217), or, as mentioned here, the *abum*, "father," of the *šamûm*, "heavens." ^{d}EN.ZU = *Sîn*, who is the moon god (see page 385), *šarrum*, "king," of the *agûm*, "crown, tiara."

Anum abi šamê Sîn šarri agîm

62. ^{d}INANA *be-le-et ta-ḫa-zi-im*

63. *li-iš-bu-ú-ma it-ti-i-ka*

64. *i-na ik-ri-ib a-ka-ra-bu*

65. *te-er-ti e-pu-šu*

66. *ki-it-tam šu-uk-nam*

Line 61: Nergal is a chthonic deity, who rules over pestilence and war (see page 339). *Bēl* X is a common construction in Akkadian. When referring to humans *bēl* may designate a person responsible for or possessor of the noun that follows, whether an office, object, or something more abstract (see CAD B, 198; e.g., *bēl šutummi*, "steward of the storehouse," *bēl narkabti*, "charioteer," or *bēl dabābi*, "adversary" [lit. "owner of a lawsuit"]). Similarly with deities (see CAD B, 193). For example, Ea is called *bēl pirištim*, "lord of the secret council," in an OB text from Malgium. The phrase *bēl kakkī*, "lord of weapons," identifies Nergal quite appropriately as an expert wielder of weapons.

Nergal bēl kakkī

Line 62: ^{d}INANA = *Ištar*. Ishtar was the goddess of war and sex (see page 169). *Bēltum*, "lady," is the feminine form of *bēlum* and implies the same idea of power and authority as that of its masculine form. *Tāḫāzum*, "battle, combat." *Bēlet tāḫāzim* is a common epithet for Ishtar (see CAD T, 47).

Ištar bēlet tāḫāzim

Line 63: For the verb, see line 58. Lines 60–63 compare to lines 58b–59. In the latter, the verb comes first, followed by the prepositional phrase and subject. In lines 60–63 we have the exact opposite order: the compound subject is in lines 60–62 with the verb and prepositional phrase following in line 63.

lišbū-ma ittīka

Lines 64–66: The short formula repeated several times earlier (first in lines 12–13) ends the text.

ina ikrib akarrabu
ina têrti ēpušu
kittam šuknam

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

The suggestions offered in the OB Prayer to the Gods of the Night (see page 79) supply a broad comparative view on the issue of extispicy and divination. The following will focus on two particular issues only briefly: the use of cedar in Mesopotamian and biblical rituals and the idea of humans feeding the gods.

Given the concerns for ritual purity among religious leaders the world over, it is not at all surprising that both ancient Mesopotamian and biblical texts spec-

ify the need for ritual officials to purify themselves before engaging in ritual activities. The means to do so in both cultures were very often similar. For example, washing with water, shaving, and laundering one's clothing were means of purification in both Mesopotamian and biblical texts.[1] What is distinctive when comparing Mesopotamian and biblical materials with regard to cedar (and its products) is just how different the two cultures treated this kind of wood. In Mesopotamia, cedar and its resin were used fairly frequently in ritual and medical texts as a material for figurines and a ritual substance, whether burned as incense or rubbed on/held in one's body as a purifying agent (see CAD E, 276–79). It is striking that the biblical ritual corpora preserve only a few references to the role of cedar (BH אֶרֶז). Only in the rituals for the purification of "leprosy" (i.e., scale disease, Lev 14) and corpse contamination (the red heifer ritual, Num 19) does cedar play a role (see Lev 14:4, 6, 49, 51, 52 and Num 19:6). And even in these two cases cedar is quite secondary, a mere additive to the blood that acts as the real ritual detergent. In fact, Milgrom goes so far as to say that cedar was chosen for these particular rituals because of its reddish color and thus its association with blood (note also the use of a crimson yarn).[2] There is no indication that such a symbolic association between blood and cedar existed in Mesopotamia.[3] Rather, one gets the impression that it was the aromatic nature of the wood that commended its ritual use.

Our prayer very clearly sets up a meal for the gods, around which they gather, eat, and then pronounce judgment. This explicitly anthropomorphic representation of the gods eating a meal has a close counterpart in the sacrificial practices depicted throughout the Hebrew Bible. Although a full presentation is not possible here, a few key pieces of evidence will make the case rather clear. Yahweh was offered a combination of meat, grain, and wine—things that look very much like the elements of a meal—every morning and evening (see Exod 29:38–42). The sacrifices and offerings prescribed by ritual texts are often called "food" (לֶחֶם, e.g., Lev 3:11, 16, 21:6, 8, 21, 22, and 28:2, 24). Yahweh's altar is sometimes called a table (see Mal 1:7, where there is the mention of food [לֶחֶם] and a parallel between מִזְבְּחִי and שֻׁלְחַן יְהוָה; see also v. 12). Finally, Yahweh's offerings are very frequently described as a "pleasing aroma" to him (רֵיחַ נִיחוֹחַ; see Gen 8:21; Exod 29:18, 25, 41; Lev 1:9, 13, 17, 2:2, 9, 12, 3:5, 16, 4:31, 6:15, 21, 8:21, 28, 17:6, 23:13, 18; Num 15:3, 7, 10, 13, 14, 24, 18:17, Num 28:2, 6, 8, 13, 24, 27, and 29:2, 6, 8, 13, 36). Although there are very vocal statements (that get a lot of attention from modern scholars) in opposition to the view (see, e.g., the strong statement in Ps 50:12–14 and prophetic critiques in, e.g., Isa

[1] For a general and comparative discussion of purity in Mesopotamian and biblical sources, see van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction*, 27–36. For a thorough discussion of ritual purity in the legislation of the Hebrew Bible, especially the pentateuchal Priestly Source, see David P. Wright, "Unclean and Clean (OT)," *ABD* 4.729–41.

[2] Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 3; New York: Doubleday, 1991), 835.

[3] But as blood did not factor significantly into Mesopotamian rituals, this is not unexpected.

1:11–14,[4] Jer 7:21–13, Amos 5:21–25, and Mic 6:6–8), it seems unavoidable to conclude that at least for some biblical authors sacrifices provided Yahweh with food.[5]

[4] Note, however, the use of the word שׂבע, "to be sated," in Isa 1:11, a word generally used of being sated with food and drink.
[5] See the discussion in Gary A. Anderson, "Sacrifice and Sacrificial Offerings (OT)," *ABD* 5:870–86, especially 872 and 881–82.

TRANSLATION:

1. O Shamash, I place to my mouth pure cedar.
2. I tie (it) for you in/with(?) a lock of my hair.
3. I place in my lap
4. . . . cedar.
5. I washed my mouth and my hands.
6. I wiped my mouth clean with . . . cedar.
7. I tied pure cedar in/with(?) a lock of my hair.
8. I have poured out . . . cedar.
9. I am pure. I draw near to the assembly of the gods
10. For judgment.
11. O Shamash, lord of the decision, Adad, lord of ritual prayers and divination,
12. In the ritual prayer that I perform, in the extispicy that I do,
13. Place the truth.
14. O Shamash, I place at the mouth of the incense (jar),
15. Which is before you, pure cedar. Let the incense (smoke) linger.
16. Let it summon to me the great gods.
17. In the ritual prayer that I perform, in the extispicy that I do,
18. Place the truth.
19. O Shamash, I raise to you water from the Tigris and Euphrates,
20a. Which from the mountains,
21a. Brought to you 20b. cedar and cypress.
21b. Wash yourself, O Shamash, warrior.
22. May the great gods wash themselves with you.
23. And you, O Bunene, reliable messenger, wash yourself
24. Before Shamash, the judge.
25. O Shamash, I raise to you a gift. Take
26. The pure water with fine flour. O Shamash, lord of judgment,
27. Adad, lord of ritual prayers and divination,
28. Who sits on a throne of gold, eats at a table of lapis lazuli,
29. You will descend, you will eat, you will sit
30. On a throne (and) you will render judgment.
31. In the ritual prayer that I perform,
32. In the extispicy that I do,
33. Place the truth.

34. O Shamash, I raise to you tribute (befitting) of (your) lordship,
35. Which in . . . the gods . . . to you,
36. O Shamash, lord of judgment, Adad, lord of ritual prayers
37. And divination, who sits on a throne of gold,
38. Eats at a table of lapis lazuli, you will descend, you will eat,
39. You will sit on a throne (and) you will render judgment.
40. In the ritual prayer that I perform, in the extispicy that I do,
41. Place the truth.
42. O Shamash, I raise to you seven and seven sweet (loaves of) bread,
43. Which are arranged row-like by twos[?] for you,
44. O Shamash, lord of judgment, Adad, lord of ritual prayers
45. And divination, who sits on a throne of gold,
46. Eats at a table of lapis lazuli, you will descend,
47. You will eat, you will sit on a throne (and)
48. You will render judgment. In the ritual prayer that I perform,
49. In the extispicy that I do, place the truth.
50. O Shamash, I raise to you the abundant yield of the gods,
51. The brilliance of Nisaba. O Shamash, lord of judgment, Adad, lord of ritual prayers
52. And divination, in the ritual prayer that I perform,
53. In the extispicy that I do, place the truth.
54. O Shamash, I lay down for you the abundant yield of the gods, the brilliance of Nisaba.
55. O Shamash, lord of judgment, Adad, lord of ritual prayers
56. And divination, in the ritual prayer that I perform,
57. In the extispicy that I do, place the truth.
58. Sit, O Shamash, warrior, may
59. The great gods sit with you.
60. Anum, the father of the sky, Sin, the king of the crown,
61. Negal, lord of the weapons,
62. Ishtar, lady of battle,
63. May they sit with you.
64. In the ritual prayer that I perform,
65. In the extispicy that I do,
66. Place the truth.

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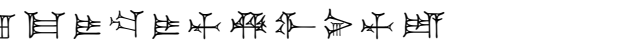
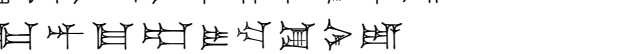
2. 
3. 
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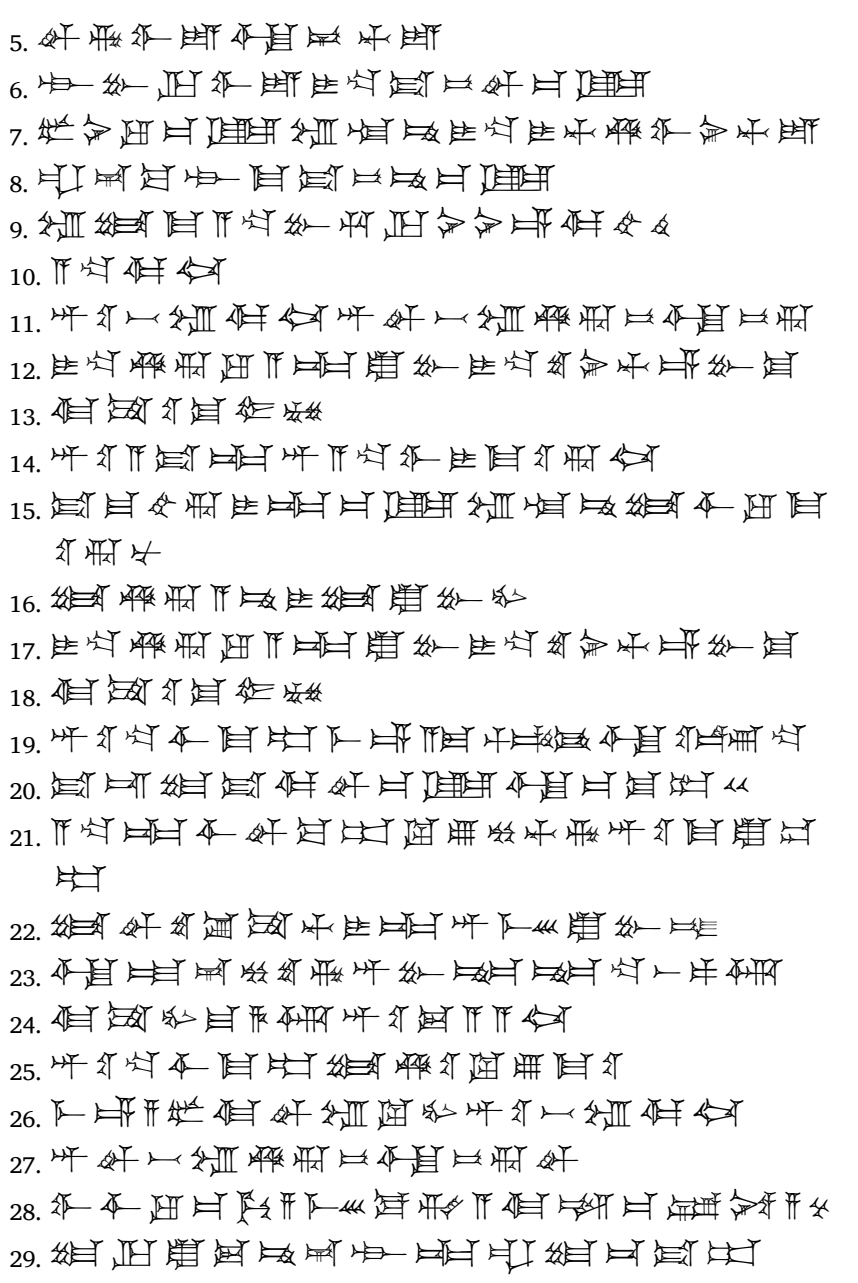
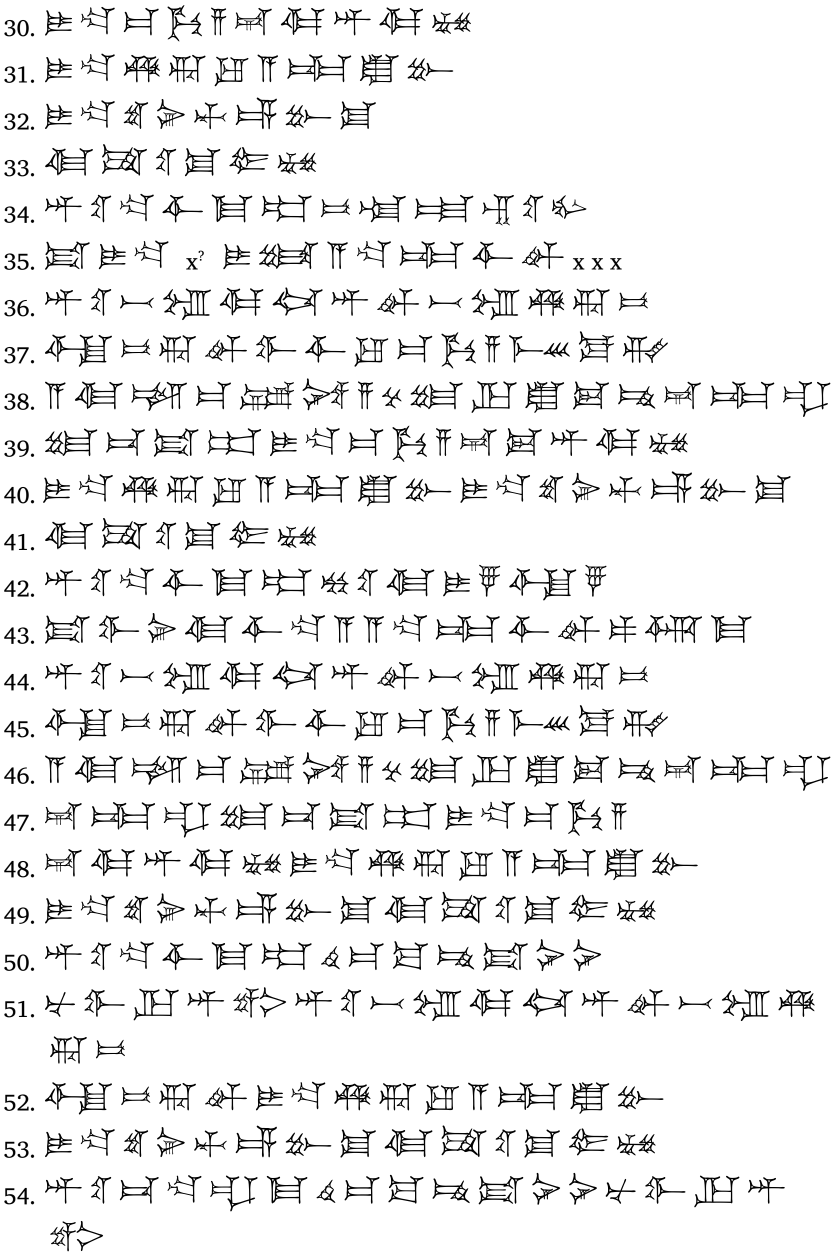
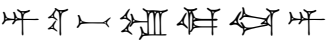
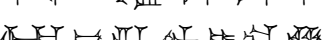
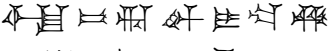




55. 
56. 
57. 
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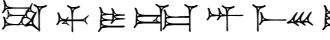
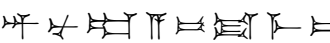
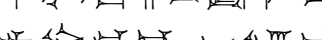
61. 
62. 
63. 
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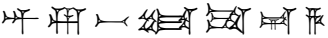
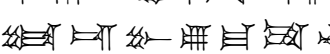
65. 
66. 

An OB Letter-Prayer to Ninmug

ALAN LENZI

NINMUG:

We know very little about Ninmug, if that is the correct reading of her name.[1] She was a minor goddess in Mesopotamia, often associated with craftsmanship and birth. In some traditions, including our text, Ninmug is the wife of Ishum/Ḫendursaga. In Enki and the World Order, line 406, she is mentioned among several other goddesses as a sister of Enki (Akk. Ea). A handful of early texts bears witness to Ninmug's cult at Mesopotamian sites such as Fara, perhaps Kisiga, Adab, Lagash, and Umma. Several Old Babylonian cylinder seal legends and the present letter-prayer indicate that her veneration continued into the second millennium.[2]

THE PRAYER:

As the opening few lines make clear, this short prayer was written in epistolary form. The language in the opening displays the same kind of social hierarchy as one might find in a letter addressed to royalty by a loyal subject: "your servant" (*waradki*) writes to "my lady" (*bēltīya*). Unlike many other prayers in this volume that contain long preliminary praise or extensive lamentation and petition, this letter-prayer gets to the point rather quickly (lines 5–7). Ninmug is simply asked to intercede on behalf of Ninurta-qarrad, the (male) supplicant, with her husband, Ishum. Apparently the supplicant believes Ishum is the one who has the authority to change his situation. It is not at all atypical for a god-

[1] See Cavigneaux and Krebernik, 471.

[2] According to Cavigneaux and Krebernik this early goddess may be related to a later male deity, ^{d}Nin-MUG (473). This later deity, whose name is probably to be read ^{d}Nin-zadim, played a role in the *Mīs pî* ritual complexes. See Christopher Walker and Michael Dick, *The Induction of the Cult Image in Ancient Mesopotamia: The Mesopotamian* Mīs Pî *Ritual* (SAALT 1; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2001), 23, n.69 and throughout; see also Angelika Berlejung, *Die Theologie der Bilder: Herstellung und Einweihung von Kultbildern in Mesopotamien und die alttestamentliche Bilderpolemik* (OBO 162; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag / Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 126.

dess to intercede with a god she can influence (line 4) on behalf of a supplicant (see, e.g., the prayer to Gula on page 243).

Interestingly, more than half of the prayer (lines 8–19) consists of the supplicant's promise to give thanks to the goddess *after* she has interceded for him (notice the *inūma*, "when, at that time," in lines 8 and 15). Giving thanks is both material and verbal: the supplicant will bring a sacrifice for Ishum and a sheep for Ninmug, but he will also "proclaim the praises" (*dalīlī dalālu*) of both deities. The latter phrase is something one sees quite often in various Akkadian prayers.

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[i] Although not a study of the present letter-prayer, van der Toorn presents a brief but helpful general discussion of private OB letter-prayers.

1. *a-n*[*a*] *be-el-ti-ia* ^{d}NI[N].MU[G] 2. *qí-bí-ma* 3. *um-ma* ^{d}NIN.URTA-*qar-ra-ad wa-ra-ad-ki-ma* 4. *qá-ba-ki* ^{d}*i-šum i-še-mi* 5. *a-na an-ni-tim ḫi-ṭi-tim* 6. *ša ub-l*[*a*]*m qá-ta-ti-ia* 7. *it-ti* ^{d}*i-šum li-qé-a*

Lines 1–3: The first three lines of the text show a typical epistolary opening formula. *Ana*, "to." *Bēltum*, "lady," which in this case is a goddess. ^{d}NIN.MUG = *Ninmug*, the goddess to whom the letter is directed. *Qabûm*, "to say, to speak." *Umma* is a particle that introduces direct speech. One may translate it "thus says" or "PN says as follows." The one speaking is identified after the particle. *Ninurta-qarrad* is the proper name of the supplicant. *Wardum*, "servant."

ana bēltīya Ninmug qibī-ma umma Ninurta-qarrad waradkī-ma

Lines 4–7: *Qabâki* is an infinitive with a 2fs pronominal suffix; it is the object of the verb at the end of line 4. Ishum is the husband of Ninmug and the god with whom she is requested to intercede. *Šemûm*, "to hear, to listen to." Line 4 provides the pre-existing basis for the petition in lines 5–7. *Annītum*, "this." *Ḫiṭītum*, "shortfall, loss, sin." *Ša* introduces a subordinate clause that modifies *ḫiṭītim*. *Wabālum* often means "to carry, to bring" (see line

8. *i-nu-ú-ma qá-ta-t*[*i-i*]*a* 9. *te-el-te-qé* 10. *i-na pa-ni-in na-am-ru-tim* 11. *a-na* ^{d}*i-šum ni-qí-a-am* 12. *ub-ba-la-am* 13. *ù a-na ka-ši-im* 14. UDU.NÍTA *ub-ba-la-*[*a*]*m* 15. *i-nu-ú-ma da-li-li* 16. *a-*[*n*]*a* [*m*]*a-*[*ḫ*]*ar* ^{d}*i-šum* 17. *a-da-la-lu* 18. *ù da*$^{!}$*-li-li-ki* 19. *lu-ud-lu-ul*

12); but in this context it means "to commit" a sin (see CAD A/1, 18). *Qātum*, "hand." *Itti*, "with." *Leqûm*, "to take." *Qatam leqûm* is an idiom meaning "to stand surety for someone," which in this context suggests intercession. The beneficiary of the action is indicated by the pronominal suffix on the noun. The ubiquitous presentation scene on cylinder seals provides visual confirmation of this description of intercession. In these scenes, a *lamassu* leads a human by the hand into the presence of a seated deity or king.

qabâki Išum išemmi ana annītim ḫiṭītim ša ublam qatātīya itti Išum liqea

Lines 8–14: *Inūma*, "when," introduces a temporal clause that extends to the end of line 9. This clause sets up the prior condition for the main clause in lines 10–14. *Telteqe* is the G perf. of *leqûm*. The preposition *ina* can be translated many ways; here it means "with." *Pānīn*, "face," is in the oblique dual case. *Namrum*, "bright, radiant." "A bright face" is usually understood to refer to a person's emotional disposition. Without detracting from this interpretation, one may also consider the possibility that this imagery derived from the fact that a person would normally anoint themselves with oil as part of their daily hygienic practices. A person in mourning or doing penance would not carry out this daily routine; rather, they would display their sorrow or contrition via their unkempt appearance. Notice the adj. is not *nawrum* as one might expect in an OB context. *Nīqium*, "sacrifice, offering." *U*, "and." *Kâšim*, "to, for you." UDU.NÍTA = *immerum*, "sheep."

inūma qatātīya talteqe ina pānīn namrūtim ana Išum nīqiam ubbalam u ana kâšim immeram ubbalam

Lines 15–19: Lines 15–17 contain a temporal clause that introduces the time frame (rather than prior condition) of the main clause in lines 18–19. *Dalīlū*, "praises." *Ana maḫar*, "in front of, in the presence of." *Dalālum*, "to praise." *Adallalu* bears the subjunctive *–u* because the verb ends the subordinate clause that began with line 15. *Dalīlī dalālum* is a cognate accusative construction; that is, the verb and its object both come from the same root. One should translate this idiomatically, "to proclaim praises" or the like. The final verb is a 1cs precative and is ubiquitous in Akkadian prayers of all periods.

inūma dalīlī ana maḫar Išum adallalu u dalīlīki ludlul

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

The idea of presenting a petitionary letter to a deity follows logically from the dominant social model upon which ancient Near Eastern concepts of deity were generally based, the royal elites of society. Letters addressed to the king

from subjects for the purpose of obtaining something (sometimes of only personal importance) are commonplace in the ancient record. It therefore seems quite reasonable to apply the same idea to deities. If one wants something, one writes to the deity and sends it to their house (a temple) for their perusal.

Although we do not find letter-prayers in the Hebrew Bible,[1] we do have a case in 2 Kgs 19:14–19, where a king, Hezekiah, takes a letter that he himself received from a foreign king, Sennacherib, to the temple of the Israelite god, Yahweh, in order to petition the god to assistant him against the threats of the foreign king. It is significant that this text mentions the fact that Hezekiah spread the letter out in front of Yahweh (v. 14; וַיִּפְרְשֵׂהוּ חִזְקִיָּהוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה).[2] Whatever "before Yahweh" may have meant precisely to the biblical author (or in historical Judah at the end of the eighth century BCE), Hezekiah intends for Yahweh to see and hear the letter along with his own prayer, as his petitions in v. 16 make clear, so that Yahweh will act accordingly. Although the presentation of this human letter to the Israelite god is not a precise parallel to our Mesopotamian letter-prayer, the idea of placing a letter in front of the Israelite god bears a striking resemblance to the mentality that gave rise to the letter-prayer in ancient Mesopotamia

[1] Building on the suggestions of earlier scholars, William Hallo has cautiously connected Hezekiah's מִכְתָּב, "letter," mentioned in Isa 38:9 to the Sumerian letter-prayer tradition. See William W. Hallo, "The Royal Correspondence of Larsa: I. A Sumerian Prototype for the Prayer of Hezekiah?" in *Kramer Anniversary Volume: Cuneiform Studies in Honor of Samuel Noah Kramer* (ed. B. L. Eichler; AOAT 25; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker / Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1976), 209–24; repr. in William W. Hallo, *The World's Oldest Literature: Studies in Sumerian Belles-Lettres* (Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 35; Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2010), 333–51. But Hallo recognizes that מִכְתָּב should probably be read here as מִכְתָּם, "inscription," a word found among the superscriptions in the Psalter (see Pss 16 and 57–60), and that the content of its text, given in vv. 10–20, is not a letter at all.

[2] Is it significant that the BH verb used here to describe Hezekiah's placement of the letter is used elsewhere to describe a ritual gesture of the hands in prayer? See, e.g., 2 Kgs 8:22, *HALOT*, 976, and page 239 in this volume.

TRANSLATION:

1.–2. Speak to my lady Ninmug, 3. thus says Ninurta-qarrad, your servant: 4. "(Because) Ishum listens to your speaking, 5.–7. intercede for me with Ishum for this sin that I committed. 8.–9. When you have interceded for me, 10. with a cheerful attitude 11.–12. I will bring a sacrifice to Ishum 13.–14. and to you I will bring a sheep. 15.–17. When I proclaim praises before Ishum, 18.–19. I will (also) proclaim praises to you."

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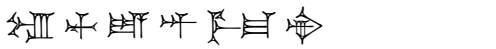
1. 
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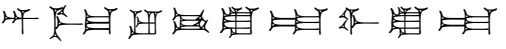
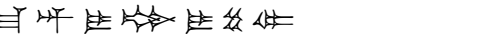
3. 
4. 
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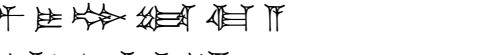
7. 
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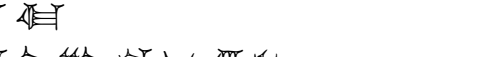
9. 
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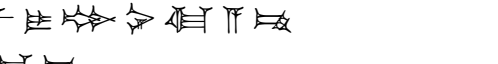
11. 
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An OB Royal Hymn to Ishtar

ALAN LENZI

ISHTAR:

See page 169.

THE HYMN:

This OB hymn to Ishtar comprises fourteen quatrains, each separated from the next by an inscribed line on the tablet.[1] The first ten praise Ishtar (lines 1–40). The remaining four (lines 41–56) turn attention to the king the hymn was to benefit: Ammiditana (1683–1647 BCE), the great-grandson of Hammurabi. A three line refrain (lines 57–59) and a rubric (line 60) complete the text.

The first ten stanzas fall into two equal parts, marked formally by a recurring pattern: the first two stanzas of each half (i, ii, vi, and vii) utilize the so-called Sumerian hymnic style; the other three do not (iii–v and viii–x). As one will see, the Sumerian hymnic style in a quatrain consists of two nearly identical couplets. The first couplet describes the deity, identifying her with only a generic term (e.g., *iltam*); the second couplet repeats the first verbatim but replaces the generic term with the deity's proper name (see also the hymn to Marduk in *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* I 1–4, page 485 in this volume). Thematically-speaking, each half of the first ten stanzas focuses on different aspects of the goddess. Stanzas i–v center on the description of her *person*, lauding her greatness, her sexuality, her loveliness, her intelligence, and her personality. Stanzas vi–x center on the description of her *position* among the gods, celebrating her greatness (compare stanza i), her word/authority, her title and rank, her equality to Anu, and her court. Considered as a whole, the ten stanzas present a full picture of the goddess, personally and professionally.

The final four stanzas of the text deal with Ishtar's beneficence to Ammiditana. The first stanza depicts the king's piety, showing him worthy of the heavenly queen's favor.[2] The second and third stanzas describe Ishtar's interces-

[1] Eight stanzas appear on the obverse and six on the reverse of the only tablet attesting the text.
[2] Note how stanza xi introduces Ammiditana: first generically in line 41 and then by name in line 43—a partial imitation of the Sumerian hymnic style used for Ishtar. It is also worthy of

sion on his behalf with Anu and her gift of long life to him as well as universal dominion—both common desires of Mesopotamian kings (see, e.g., Nebuchadnezzar's royal prayer on page 475). The last stanza reflexively describes the hymn itself and how the king's recitation of it will elicit a blessing from Ea, god of wisdom (see page 227).

The final three lines of the text form what line 60 calls "its antiphonal," perhaps the refrain that would be used in antiphonal recitations of the hymn. These three lines, like the preceding stanzas, are separated by an inscribed line on the tablet.

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note that Ishtar is called the queen in line 29 while Ammiditana is introduced as the king (line 41).

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1. [*i*]*l-ta-am zu-um-ra-a ra-šu-ub-ti i-la-tim*

2. *li-it-ta-i-id be-li-it ni-ši ra-bi-it i-gi-gi*

Line 1: *Iltum* (pl. *ilātum*), "goddess." *Zamārum*, "to sing of." The form is a cp impv. *Rašbum* (m), *rašubtum*, *rašbatum* (f), "awe-inspiring, terrifying." The last two words are bound and imply a superlative statement.

iltam zumrā rašubti ilātim

Line 2: *Litta*ʾ*id* is a 3cs precative from the Dt stem of *nâdum*, "to be praised." *Bēltum*, "lady." *Nišū* (pl), "people." *Rabītum* (f), *rabûm* (m), "great." *Igigû* is a general name for the gods of heaven, in contrast to *Anunnakkū*, who are the gods of the netherworld (see Black and Green, 106; *Enūma eliš* VI 69 gives the *Igigû* as three hundred in number and the *Anunnakkū* six hundred; contradicting this, VI 39–44 number both groups as three hundred).

*litta*ʾ*id bēlit nišī rabīt Igigî*

3. $IŠ_8$.DAR *zu-um-ra ra-šu-ub-ti i-la-tim*

4. *li-it-ta-i-id be-li-it i-ši-i ra-bi-it i-gi-gi*

5. *ša-at me-li-ṣi-im ru-à-ma-am la-ab-ša-at*

6. *za-aʾ-na-at in-bi mi-ki-a-am ù ku-uz-ba-am*

7. $IŠ_8$.DAR *me-le-ṣi-im ru-à-ma-am la-ab-ša-at*

8. *za-aʾ-na-at in-bi mi-ki-a-am ù ku-uz-ba-am*

9. [*ša*]-*ap-ti-in du-uš-šu-pa-at ba-la-ṭú-um pí-i-ša*

Line 3: Adopting the typical Sumerian hymnic style, the opening couplet is repeated nearly verbatim in lines 3–4. The second stanza (lines 5–8) shows the same literary artifice. The major difference between this line and line 1, of course, is that the deity's name ($IŠ_8$.DAR = *Ištar*) replaces the more general word for goddess (*iltam*).

Ištar zumrā rašubti ilātim

Line 4: *Iššum*, "woman." The second line of the couplet is repeated nearly verbatim but replaces *nišī*, "people," with the similar sounding word *iššī*, "women."

littaʾʾid bēlit iššī rabīt Igigî

Line 5: *Šāt* (fs), "she of, that of, which." *Mēleṣum*, "excitement, exhilaration, joy." *Ruʾāmum*, "love, sexual charm." The accusative is adverbial, describing how the goddess clothes herself. *Labāšum*, "to clothe oneself, to put on." *Labšat* is a 3fs predicative.

šāt mēleṣim ruʾāmam labšat

Line 6: *Zaʾānum*, "to be adorned." The G predicative is only used of gods and means "to be decorated with" (see *CDA*, 442). *Inbum*, "fruit, sexual allure." *Mikûm*, "seductive charm." (The CAD normalizes the word as *mēqû* and renders it "cosmetics," see I/J, 20. Such a rendering is unlikely.) *U*, "and." *Kuzbum*, "attractiveness, sexual appeal."

zaʾnat inbī mikiam u kuzbam

Line 7: The previous couplet's first line is repeated, substituting the goddess's name.

Ištar mēleṣim ruʾāmam labšat

Line 8: *Kuzbum* is also used to describe both Shamḫat and Gilgamesh in the Epic of Gilgamesh (see, e.g., I 181, 189 and I 237).

zaʾnat inbī mikiam u kuzbam

Line 9: *Šaptān*, "lips" (d). *Šaptīn* is in the oblique case (gen.–acc.) and functions as an adverbial accusative. *Duššupum*, "sweetened, very sweet," is a denominative (D stem) from *dišpum*, "honey." One may wish to use some form of honey in the translation: "honeyed" or "dripping with honey." The adj. is used as a 3fs predicative here. *Balāṭum*, "life, health, vigor." *Pûm*, "mouth." The line suggests both the allure of the goddess (in that kissing her would be sweet) as well as her powers to sustain life (in that carbohydrate-loaded honey

10. *si-im-ti-iš-ša i-ḫa-an-ni-i-ma ṣi-ḫa-tum*

11. *šar-ḫa-at i-ri-mu ra-mu-ú re-šu-uš-ša*

12. *ba-ni-à-a ši-im-ta-à-ša bi-it-ra-a-ma i-na-ša ši-it-a-ra*

would revive one's strength). In light of lines 6 and 8, "lips" and "mouth" in this line are likely to be understood as double entendres.

šaptīn duššupat balāṭum pīša

Line 10: *Simtum* has a wide semantic range, including "person or thing that is fitting, suitable, seemly, appropriate, necessary," "person or thing that befits, does honor to, is the pride of," "appurtenances, ornament, characteristic, insigne, proper appearance or behavior or ways, figural representation," and "face, features" (see CAD S, 278). The latter meaning is most appropriate here (see CAD S, 283). The form *simtišša* includes the terminative-adverbial ending *–iš* before the 3fs pronominal suffix, *–ša* (note also that the resulting *–šš–* does not change to *–ss–*). The adverbial ending in this construction has a locative meaning ("in" or "on"). *Ṣīḫtum*, "smile" (pl. *ṣīḫātum*). *Ḫanāmum*, "to thrive, to be luxuriant, to flourish" (see *CDA*, 105; *AHw*, 320). The older CAD Ḫ volume suggests "to bloom" (76), but this meaning cannot account for the verb's use with sheep, noted in *CDA* and *AHw*.

simtišša iḫannimā ṣīḫātum

Line 11: *Šarḫum*, "proud, magnificent, splendid" (used as a 3fs predicative). On the basis of the context, it is likely that the adjective describes Ishtar's appearance rather than her internal attitude. *I-ri-mu* is difficult. The text may be read as *irimmu* (so CAD I/J, 177 and *CDA*, 131) and translated "beaded necklace" or the like. Joan and Aage Westenholz ("Help for Rejected Suitors: The Old Akkadian Love Incantation MAD V 8," *Or* n.s. 46 [1977], 198–219, specifically, 205–7) argue that the word "*īrimum* (or *irīmum* ?) denotes a quality, apparently mostly of females, which makes its possessor irresistibly attractive to the opposite sex" (206). They suggest the word has an abstract meaning in its plural form: "loveliness, love." (The singular, they suggest, may be used to designate a personification of the attribute in the form of a mythological being like the Greek Eros or Roman Cupid [see 205 and 207]. For further support for the Babylonian Cupid from a new OB love poem, see A. R. George, *Babylonian Literary Texts in the Schøyen Collection* [Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology 10; Bethesda: CDL Press, 2009], 53.) Following the Westenholzes, Foster translates the word as "love-charms," but he also recognizes the possibility that these may take the form of "a necklace or headband" (85, n.1). *Ramûm*, "to set in place, to be endowed with." The form is a 3mp predicative. *Rēšum*, "head." The locative-adverbial ending *–um* and a 3fs pronominal suffix are attached to the noun, describing where the beads have been placed. The *m* of the locative-adverbial ending assimilates to the *š* of the pronominal suffix (*–mš–* becomes *–šš–*). Notice the consonance in the final three words of the line.

šarḫat īrimū ramû rēšuššа

Line 12: *Banûm*, "good, beautiful." *Šimtum*, "mark, token," may refer to skin tone; as it is dual, perhaps it refers to rosy cheeks (*CDA*, 373). *Bitrāmum*, "multi-colored." *Īnū*, "eyes." *Šitʾārum*, "variegated, iridescent." The adjectives in this line are 3fp predicatives.

baniā šimtāša bitrāmā īnāša šitʾārā

13. *el-tu-um iš-ta-à-ša i-ba-aš-ši mi-íl-ku-um*

14. *ši-ma-at mi-im-ma-mi qá-ti-iš-ša ta-am-ḫa-at*

15. *na-ap-la-su-uš-ša ba-ni bu-a-ru-ú*

16. *ba-aš-tum ma-aš-ra-ḫu la-ma-as-su-um še-e-du-um*

Line 13: *Eltum* is probably a by-form of *iltum*, "goddess," but has also been understood to mean "pure one" (see Hecker, 722, n.13a). This opening word is an anacoluthon that establishes the topic of the line, the goddess. *Išti*, "with." We expect the suffixed form to be *ištīša* but *ištaša* is attested elsewhere in OB Akkadian (see CAD I/J, 283). The preposition almost always occurs with a suffix; the one known exception is in our line 45. One could argue that the preposition is to be understood as *ištu*, "from, out of," but the context suggests the line should be about characterizing the goddess herself—what she possesses—rather than what comes from her. *Bašûm*, "to be, to exist." *Milkum*, "counsel, advice, intelligence," is the grammatical subject of the sentence.

eltum ištaša ibašši milkum

Line 14: *Šīmtum*, "what is fixed, fate, destiny." *Šīmāt* is a fp construct form. *Mimmāmu/a/i*, "everything, all." *Qātum*, "hand." Here again we see the terminative-adverbial ending followed by a pronominal suffix indicating location. *Tamāḫum*, "to grasp." The form looks like a 3fs predicative, but it is a transitive *parsāku* (thus the object).

šīmāt mimmāmi qātišša tamḫat

Line 15: *Naplāsum*, "glance, look" (a noun), bears the locative-adverbial ending (*–um*) and a 3fs pronominal suffix. The *m* of the locative assimilates to the *š* of the suffix. *Bani* may derive from *banûm*, "to be good" (see CAD B, 91, though translating it with "is created (?)," *AHw*, 102, 135, and Seux, 40; see also the cognate in line 12). But von Soden's earlier translation in this line, "ist . . . geschaffen," "is . . . created," suggests a derivation from *banûm*, "to build, to engender, to create" (likewise Foster's "is born" [86]). *Buʾārum*, "health, prosperity, happiness." Notice the lack of mimation on the final substantive.

naplāsušša bani buʾāru

Line 16: The list of things engendered by Ishtar's glance continues. *Bāštum* (*baštum*), "dignity, good looks, pride," sometimes occurs in contexts with *lamassum* and *šēdum* (see CAD B, 142). *Mašraḫū*, "good health (?)" (always pl.); CAD M, 385 suggests "splendor, attractiveness." The word only occurs twice in extant texts, both times in OB hymns. *Lamassum* and *šēdum* were protective spirits that guarded individuals, temples, and cities. See further Daniel Foxvog, Anne Draffkorn Kilmer, and Wolfgang Heimpel, "Lamma/Lamassu. A.I. Mesopotamien. Philogisch," *RlA* 6 (1980–1983), 446–53. For individuals, they are closely associated with the personal god and goddess (see, e.g., *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*, I 43–46).

bāštum mašraḫū lamassum šēdum

17. *ta-ar-ta-mi te-eš-me-e ri-tu-ú-mi ṭú-ú-bi*

18. *ù mi-it-gu-ra-am te-be-el ši-i-ma*

19. *ar-da-at ta-at-ta-ab um-ma ta-ra-aš-ši*

20. *i-za-ak-ka-ar-ši i-ni-ši i-na-ab-bi šu-um-ša*

21. *a-ia-um na-ar-bi-à-aš i-ša-an-na-an ma-an-nu-um*

Line 17: Several obscure words make this line difficult. The first word may be *tartāmū* (pl), "mutual love" (CAD T, 245), "love-making" (*CDA*, 400), "whispers" (see Foster, 86, citing W. von Soden, review of Marie-Joseph Seux, *Hymnes et prières aux dieux de Babylonie et d'Assyrie. Introduction, traduction et notes*, *ZA* 67 [1977], 279 but see also *AHw*, 1332). But it may also be a 3fs form of *ramû*, *tartāmi* (see CAD T, 245 and 374, Seux, 40, and von Soden, 235). There are several verbal forms with a *ta–* affix in the next several lines that must be understood as 3fs. *Tešmûm*, "attention, listening, compliance." *Ritūmum*, "intense(?) love, passion" (CAD R, 391), "love-making" (*CDA*, 306). *Ṭūbum*, "goodness, happiness, prosperity, good will, peace, contentedness, satisfaction."

tartāmi tešmê ritūmi ṭūbī

Line 18: *Mitgurum* is a Gt infinitive used as a substantive, meaning "agreement, graciousness." *Bêlum*, "to rule over, to control, to dispose of." Given the context of describing the goddess's attributes, the verb should be understood as a durative. *Šī*, "she." The presence of the independent pronoun indicates emphasis.

u mitguram tebêl šī-ma

Line 19: *Ardatum*, "young woman." The noun is bound to the following verb, which comprises a short subordinate clause that describes the young woman. *Ta-at-ta-ab* is problematic since we expect a subjunctive on the verb. Thureau-Dangin takes *ta-at-ta-ab* for the verb *tattabû*, a 3fs (see also the final verb in the line) perfect from *nabûm*, "to call, to name" (see 175, n.9). Others (e.g., von Soden, 236 [implied by translation]) have opted to read the signs as *ta-at-ta-du*$^{\text{!}}$, presumably understanding the form as an N 3fs perfect (*tattaddû*) from *nadûm*, "to throw down," here "to abandon." See Seux, 40, n.9 for a brief discussion and his preference for the former verb. Neither option is without problems. *Ummum*, "mother." Notice the loss of mimation. *Rašûm*, "to acquire, to obtain." *Tarašši* is a 3fs durative.

ardat tattabû/tattaddû umma tarašši

Line 20: *Zakārum*, "to say, to speak, to invoke." *I-ni-ši* may be a sandhi writing for *ina iššī*, "among the women" (*iniššī*) or "*ina nišī*, "among the people" (*innišī*). See lines 2 and 4, Seux, 40, n.10, and Foster, 88 at the note for line 20. For *nabûm*, see the note on line 19. *Šumum*, "name." Invoking or calling on the name of a deity was a means of honoring them.

izakkarši iniššī/innišī inabbi šumša

Line 21: *Ayyum* (see CAD *ajû*), "who?, which?" *Narbium*, "greatness." The *š* on the noun is an apocopated 3fs pronominal suffix (*narbiam* + *ša* > *narbiašša* > *narbiaš*). The initial sound of the following verb may have contributed to the loss of the suffix's *a*.

22. *ga-aš-ru ṣi-i-ru šu-ú-pu-ú pa-ar-ṣú-ú-ša*

23. $IŠ_8$.DAR *na-ar-bi-à-aš i-ša-an-na-an ma-an-nu-um*

24. *ga-aš-ru ṣi-i-ru šu-ú-pu-ú pa-ar-ṣú-ú-ša*

25. *ša*$^{!}$*-at i-ni-li a-ta-ar na-az-za-zu-uš*

26. *ka-ab-ta-at a-ma-as-sà el-šu-nu ḫa*-AB-*ta-at-ma*

Šanānum, "to rival, to equal." *Mannum*, "who?" The line contains two question words, thus two questions.

ayyum narbiaš išannan mannum

Line 22: *Gašrum*, "powerful, mighty." *Ṣīrum*, "exalted, supreme, splendid." *Šūpûm*, "manifest, resplendent, brillliant." All of the adjs. are mp predicatives. *Parṣū*, "cultic ordinances, rites."

gašrū ṣīrū šūpû parṣūša

Line 23: The poem returns to the Sumerian hymnic style used in the opening two stanzas of the hymn. Ishtar's name here, however, does not replace a pronoun in line 21 that refers to her. Rather, the initial interrogative pronoun there (*ayyum*) is removed and the inserted divine name here in line 23 functions as an anacoluthon, similar to the use of *eltum* at the opening of line 13.

Ištar narbiaš išannan mannum

Line 24: This line repeats line 22 verbatim.

gašrū ṣīrū šūpû parṣūša

Line 25: The initial signs on the tablet are *bi-a-at*; the present reading comes from von Soden (see Foster, 86 at the note on line 25 and Seux, 40, n.11). *Šāt*, see line 5. Again, the presence of the independent pronoun here is emphatic (and redundant with the pronominal suffix on *nazzāzuš*). *Atārum*, "to exceed in number or size, to surpass in importance, quality." The form *atar* is 3ms predicative. *I-ni-li* is probably a sandhi writing for *ina ilī*, "among the gods" (see similarly line 20). *Nanzāzum* (*nanzazum*, *nazzāzum*), "attendant, courtier; position, station." The latter meaning is most appropriate here.

šāt inilī atar nazzāzuš

Line 26: *Kabātum*, "to be(come) heavy, important, respected." *Amātum*, "word, matter." Notice we have the later form of the word rather than *awātum*; the former does occasionally occur in OB Akkadian contexts. The addition of the 3fs pronominal suffix, *–ša*, directly to the base of the noun, *amāt–*, results in the sound change: *–tš–* becomes *–ss–*. *El*, "on, above, beyond," is a by-form of the more common preposition *eli*. It is unclear whether the pronominal suffix attached to the preposition refers to the gods' words ("over them," i.e., their words) or to the gods themselves ("over them," i.e., the gods). Regarding *ḫa*-AB-*ta-at-ma*, the middle radical of the root from which the final verb derives is disputed; thus, the AB sign is in Roman capital letters. CAD Ḫ derives the verb from *ḫabātum*

27. IŠ$_8$.DAR *i-ni-li a-ta-ar na-az-za-zu-uš*

28. *ka-ab-ta-at a-ma-as-sà el-šu-nu ḫa*-AB-*ta-at-ma*

29. *šar-ra-as-su-un uš-ta-na-ad-da-nu si-iq-ri-i-ša*

30. *ku-ul-la-as-su-un ša-aš ka-am-su-ú-ši*

31. *na-an-na-ri-i-ša i-la-ku-ú-ši-im*

32. *iš-šu-ú ù a-wi-lum pa-al-ḫu-ši-i-ma*

(11); *CDA* (106) and *AHw* (321) take it from *ḫapātum*. Whatever one's decision on this, all three lexica agree that the verb means "to prevail, to triumph."

kabtat amāssa elšunu ḫabtat-ma

Line 27: Once again the previous couplet is repeated with the predictable substitution of the deity's name in the first line.

Ištar inilī atar nazzāzuš

Line 28: The goddess's position and the effectiveness of her word are inextricably linked.

kabtat amāssa elšunu ḫabtat-ma

Line 29: *Šarratum*, "queen." The form *šarrassun* is a 3fs predicative with a shortened 3mp pronominal suffix, *–šun*(*u*), attached to it. *Šutadunnum* (Št lex. of *nadānum*), "to deliberate, to discuss something (with others)." The form is a 3mp durative. *Siqrum* is a by-form of *zikrum*, "utterance, speech, command." See *GAG* §30c for the occurrence of *s* for an expected *z*.

šarrassun uštanaddanū siqrīša

Line 30: *Kullatum*, "all of, totality." *Šâš* is an OB poetic form of the dative pronoun *šâšim*, "to her." *Kamāsum*, "to kneel, to crouch." The 3fs dative suffix (without the final *m*) on the predicative is redundant with *šâš* earlier in the line.

kullassun šâš kamsūši

Line 31: *Nannārum* (*nannarum*), "luminary, light of the sky, moon." This is a common epithet of the moon god Sin and occasionally for Ishtar. Thureau-Dangin reads the final verb as *i-la-qú-ši-im*, deriving it from *leqûm*, "to receive." Others have suggested the present reading, which derives the verb from *alākum*, "to go." See Foster, 88 at the note for line 31 for references.

nannāriša illakūšim

Line 32: *Iššū*, "women." *Awīlum*, "man, human being." In light of the first plural noun, the singular one that follows is probably either a mistake or functioning as a collective. *Palāḫum*, "to fear." Given the fact that there is an object on the verb, we should understand the form as a transitive *parsāku* construction.

iššū u awīlum palḫūši-ma

33. *pu-uḫ-ri-iš-šu-un e-te-el qá-bu-ú-ša šu-tu-úr*

34. *a-na an-nim šar-ri-šu-nu ma-la-am aš-ba-as-su-nu*

35. *uz-na-am ne-me-qí-im ḫa-si-i-sa-am er-še-et*

36. *im-ta-al-li-i-ku ši-i ù ḫa-mu-uš*

37. *ra-mu-ú-ma iš-ti-ni-iš pa-ra-ak-ka-am*

Line 33: *Puḫrum*, "assembly." The noun also bears the terminative-adverbial ending (*–iš*) and a shortened 3mp pronominal suffix. This assembly is the divine council. The substantive *etellum* can have a nominal sense, "lord, prince," as well as an adjectival one, "preeminent," as here. *Šūturum*, "supreme, surpassing." Both adjectives in the line are predicatives. Ishtar's word is authoritative, which is partly due to her position (line 34) but also a product of her insight (see line 35).

puḫriššun etel qabûša šūtur

Line 34: *Ana*, "to, for." *An-nim* is for *Anim*, the genitive of *Anum.* Anu(m) is the Mesopotamian sky god (see page 217). *Šarrum*, "king." *Malâm*, "as an equal," only occurs here and in the Agushaya Poem. (*W*)*ašābum*, "to sit, to dwell." The form of the verb is a 3fs predicative. The accusative pronominal suffix is not a direct object; rather, it is an adverbial accusative describing the goddess's sitting. She sits "with them" or "among them," i.e., with/among the other gods.

ana Anim šarrīšunu malâm ašbassunu

Line 35: *Uznum*, literally "ear" but also "understanding." *Nēmequm*, "knowledge, wisdom, experience." We expect an accusative rather than a genitive case ending. *Ḫasīsum*, "ear, hearing, wisdom, comprehension." All three words modify *eršet* adverbially. *Eršu*, "wise," is used as a 3fs predicative. Line 33 asserted the authority of Ishtar's word. Here we see a reason for that authority: she speaks with wisdom.

uznam nēmeqim ḫasīsam eršet

Line 36: *Mitlukum* (Gt of *malākum*), "to confer (about something), to discuss (with others)." *Ḫammum*, "master, head of household, head of family." Ishtar's *ḫammum* is certainly Anu. The line states the conclusion for which the previous lines of the stanza have prepared.

imtallikū šī u ḫammuš

Line 37: *Ramûm* is the same word as in line 11, but here it means "to take up residence, to occupy." For other occurrences with *parakkum*, see CAD R, 134. *Ištīniš* (*ištēniš*), "together." *Parakkum*, "cult, dais, sanctuary." Again we see Ishtar described as equal in rank to Anu.

ramû-ma ištīniš parakkam

38. *i-ge-e-gu-un-ni-im šu-ba-at ri-ša-tim*

39. *mu-ut-ti-iš-šu-un i-lu-ú na-zu-iz-zu-ú*

40. *ip-ši-iš pí-šu-nu ba-ši-à-a uz-na-šu-un*

41. *šar-ru-um mi-ig-ra-šu-un na-ra-am li-ib-bi-šu-un*

42. *šar-ḫi-iš it-na-aq-qí-šu-nu-ut ni-qí-a-šu el-la-am*

Line 38: *Iggegunnîm* is the result of *ina* plus *gegu*(*n*)*nûm* (*gigunû*), "raised temple." *Gegunnûm* is some kind of "sacred building erected on terraces" (CAD G, 67). The word sometimes occurs in apposition to *ziqqurratum*, "ziggurrat, temple step-tower," and may refer "to the sanctuary on top of the temple tower" (CAD G, 70). *Šubtum*, "dwelling, seat." *Rištum*, "joy, exultation, jubilation." *Rišātim* is a plural.

iggegunnîm šubat rišātim

Line 39: *Muttiš*, "in front of, before." *Ilu*, "god, deity." *Nazuzzū* is a 3mp predicative from *nazzazum* (N of *i/uzuzzu*; see *GAG* §107e), "to appear, to become present." The *i* in the third sign of the verb's orthography is superfluous. This line provides another aspect of Ishtar's authority: the gods appear before her (and Anu) as servants.

muttiššun ilū nazuzzū

Line 40: *Ipšum* means "deed, action." But bound to *pûm*, "mouth," *ipiš pî* means "speech, command" (see CAD I/J, 170). The form of the word here, *ipšiš*, is to be explained as *ipšu* plus the terminative-adverbial ending, which has replaced the preposition *ana*. *Bašûm* means "to be, to be available" but with ears and eyes, "to be fixed on, to be attentive." *Uznāšun* is the nom. dual of *uznum* with an apocopated 3mp pronominal suffix. The servile status of the other gods, intimated in the previous line, is confirmed and described here.

ipšiš pīšunu bašiā uznāšun

Line 41: This line subtly introduces Ammiditana (see line 43), the OB king who is lauded here as the beneficiary of Ishtar's largess. *Migrum* can mean "consent, approval, agreement" but also "favored one, favorite" (see CAD M/2, 48), as is appropriate here. *Narāmum*, "beloved." *Libbum*, "heart." This line only introduces the subject of the sentence, which is completed in the next line.

šarrum migrašun narām libbīšun

Line 42: *Šarḫiš*, "proudly, splendidly, in a lavish manner." *Itaqqû*, (Gtn of *naqû*), "to offer a libation, sacrifice repeatedly." The form of the verb is durative, though one might expect *ittanaqqi*. The present form may be explained by the fact that the Gtn stem of I-*n* and I-*w* verbs sometimes elide the *–ta–* (see *GAG* §91d and §102k). The pronominal suffix is a 3mp accusative, though a dative, *–šunūšim*, is expected. As is often the case in this text, the final short vowel has dropped off. *Nīqum*, "offering, sacrifice." *Ellum*, "pure, holy."

šarḫiš itnaqqīšunūt nīqašu ellam

43. *am-mi-di-ta-na el-la-am ni-qí-i qá-ti-i-šu*

44. *ma-aḫ-ri-i-šu-un ú-še-eb-bi li-i ù ia-li na-am-ra-i-i*

45. *iš-ti an-nim ḫa-me-ri-i-ša te-te-er-ša-aš-šu-um*

46. *da-ri-a-am ba-la-ṭa-am ar-ka-am*

47. *ma-da-a-tim ša-na-at ba-la-à-ṭi-im a-na am-mi-di-ta-na*

48. *tu-ša-at-li-im* IŠ$_8$.DAR *ta-at-ta-di-in*

49. *si-iq-ru-uš-ša tu-ša-ak-ni-ša-aš-šu-um*

Line 43: *Ammiditana* (1683–1647 BCE) is the name of Hammurabi's great-grandson. *Nīqi* is bound to the following noun, *qātum*, "hand," and functions as an accusative, modified by *ellam*. *Ellam nīqi qātīšu* is parallel with and grammatically in apposition to *lî u yalī namrā'ī* in line 44. Note Foster's conflated translation: "His personal, pure libation of cattle and fatted stags" (87). Both phrases are the direct object of the verb in line 44.

Ammiditana ellam nīqi qātīšu

Line 44: *Maḫrum* as a preposition means "before, in front of, in the presence of." *Šubbûm* (D of *šebûm*), "to fill with, to satisfy with (= acc.)." *Lûm* (*lī'um*), "bull." *Yalum* (*ayyalum*, *ajalu*), "stag, deer." *Namrā'ū*, "fattened" (pl).

maḫrīšun ušebbi lî u yalī namrā'ī

Line 45: *Išti* here means "from." *Ḫāmirum* (*ḫāwirum*), "husband." *Erēšum*, "to request, to demand" from (= *ištī*). The form of the verb is perfect (*tētereš*), as is the case throughout this stanza, with both a ventive (*–am*) and a 3ms dative (*–šum*) suffix on the end. The object of the verb is contained in the following line. Other traditions make Ishtar the daughter rather than the spouse of Anu.

išti Anim ḫāmerīša tēteršaššum

Line 46: *Dārium*, "lasting, perpetual, eternal." *Arkum*, "long."

dāriam balāṭam arkam

Line 47: *Mādum*, "many, numerous." *Šattum*, "year." *Ana Ammiditana* makes explicit the referent of the dative pronominal suffix on the verb in the previous couplet (see line 45).

mādātim šanāt balāṭim ana Ammiditana

Line 48: *Šutlumum*, "to grant, to bestow generously," only occurs in the Š stem. *Tušatlim* is a 3fs preterite. *Nadānum*, "to give." *Tattadin* is a 3fs perfect.

tušatlim Ištar tattadin

Line 49: *Siqrum*, see line 29, bears the locative-adverbial ending, *–um*, substituting here for *ina*, plus a 3fs pronominal suffix. *Šuknušum* (Š of *kanāšum*), "to make someone

50. *ki-ib-ra-at er-bé-e-em a-na še-pí-i-šu*

51. *ù na-ap-ḫa-ar ka-li-šu-nu da-ad-mi*

52. *ta-aṣ-ṣa-mi-su-nu-ti a-ni-ri-i-ši-ù*

53. *bi-be-el li-ib-bi-i-ša za-ma-ar la-le-e-ša*

54. *na-ṭù-um-ma a-na pí-i-šu si-iq-ri é-a i-pu-is-si*

55. *eš-me-e-ma ta-ni-it-ta-a-ša i-ri-us-su*

bow down, submit." The 3fs verb ends with both a ventive and a 3ms dative pronominal suffix. The verb's object occurs in the following line.

siqrušša tušaknišaššum

Line 50: *Kibrum*, "edge, bank, shore, rim." The plural form of the word bound to the word *erbûm*, "four," means "the whole world, all the lands" (*kibrāt erbêm*). *Šēpum*, "foot."

kibrāt erbêm ana šēpīšu

Line 51: *Napḫarum*, "total, all, the whole." *Kalûm*, "all, totality. *Dadmū*, "inhabited world, villages, settlements."

u napḫar kalīšunu dadmī

Line 52: *Ṣamādum*, "to yoke, to tie up." The form is a 3fs perfect with a 3mp accusative pronominal suffix, which is redundant with the object expressed already in the previous line. The *t* of the perfect infix assimilates to the sibilant first root letter (*–ṣt–* become *–ṣṣ–*). Also, the *–dš–* cluster at the boundary of the verb and suffix becomes *–ss–*. *Nīru*, "yoke." *Ana* + *nīru* + 3ms pronominal suffix *–šu* results in *anīrīšu*. With regard to the last two signs in the line, see lines 39 and 54 for a similar orthography.

taṣṣamissunūti anīrīšu

Line 53: *Biblum* means "the (action of) bringing, things brought." But the phrase *bibil* (*bibel*) *libbim* means "heart's desire." *Zamārum*, "song." *Lalûm*, "exuberance, desire, (sexual) charms." CAD L, 50 translates *zamār lalêša* as "her favorite song."

bibel libbiša zamār lalêša

Line 54: *Naṭûm*, "suitable, fitting." The word describes the phrases in the previous line. The "his" of *ana pīšu* is probably king Ammiditana. Ea is the god of wisdom, magic, and water (see page 227). *Epēšum*, "to do, to make," but with an object in the semantic domain of speech or speaking (here, *siqrum*), "to speak." *Īpussi* is the 3cs preterite plus a 3fs dative pronominal suffix (*–šim*). The subject is the king.

naṭûm-ma ana pīšu siqri Ea īpussi

Line 55: *Šemûm*, "to hear." The verb is 3cs; Ea is the subject. *Tanittum*, "praise." *Riāšum*, "to rejoice, to exult in, to exult over." *Iriš* is a 3cs preterite with a 3ms pronominal suffix. The verbal action is sequential.

ešmē-ma tanittaša irīssu

56. *li-ib-lu-uṭ-ma šar-ra-šu li-ra-am-šu ad-da-ri-iš*

57. IŠ$_8$.DAR *a-na am-mi-di-ta-na šar-ri ra-i-mi-i-ki*

58. *ar-ka-am da-ri-a-am ba-la-ṭa-am šu-úr-ki*

59. *li-ib-lu-uṭ*

60. giš-gi$_4$-gál-bi

Line 56: This line seems to provide the content of Ea's exultation. *Balāṭum*, "to live, to be healthy." The form is a 3cs precative (as is the other verb in the line). The king is the beneficiary of the well-wishing, that is, he is the grammatical subject. *Šarrašu*, "his king," the subject of the second precative, refers to the king's king, perhaps the city god. But it is unclear. See Thureau-Dangin, 177, n.3 (also Foster, 87, n.2). *Râmum*, "to love." *Addāriš* is *ana* plus *dāriš*, "forever."

libluṭ-ma šarrašu lirāmšu addāriš

Line 57: Lines 57–59 are the antiphonal refrain. *Rāʾimīki* is a G ms participle from *râmum* (see line 56) with a 2fs pronominal suffix. The participle modifies *šarri*. Note, also, the loss of mimation in *šarri*. Just as Ea requested that his king love Ammiditana (line 56), he characterizes Ammiditana as one who loves the goddess.

Ištar ana Ammiditana šarri rāʾimīki

Line 58: For *arkam dāriam balāṭam*, the object of the (fs) imperative, see line 46. *Šarākum*, "to grant, to bestow." The line repeats sentiments expressed already in lines 46 and 47.

arkam dāriam balāṭam šurkī

Line 59: See line 56 for the verb. Wishing the king long life was not only a means to show loyalty to the king, it might also be in the best interest of the wisher. The transition from one king to another could be marred by civil unrest and/or military action.

libluṭ

Line 60: This line is composed in Sumerian, which translates into Akkadian as *miḫiršu*. It means "its antiphonal." The term is found in several OB hymnic compositions. See CAD M/2, 57 (*miḫru*).

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

Although there are several hymns in the Hebrew Bible to Yahweh (e.g., Pss 8, 29, Nah 1:2–8, etc.),[1] there are no hymns to goddesses. Perhaps the closest candidate of such is the self-description of the female personified Wisdom in

[1] See Hermann Gunkel and Joachim Begrich, *Introduction to the Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyrics of Israel* (trans. James D. Nogalski; Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998), 22–23 for a rather full listing of hymns and "hymn-like elements" in the Hebrew Bible.

Prov 8:4–36.[2] But only a small minority of scholars believes Wisdom has the attributes here of a full-fledged, independent goddess.[3] The so very obvious absence of licit (or sanctioned) goddess worship in the Hebrew Bible is one of the Bible's most distinctive features as compared to other ancient Near Eastern religious texts.[4]

On a smaller scale, several phrases in our hymn merit comparative attention. In line 9 Ishtar is enticingly described as having lips dripping with honey. The same sensual idea is found in Song 4:11, where the female lover is described as follows: נֹפֶת תִּטֹּפְנָה שִׂפְתוֹתַיִךְ כַּלָּה דְּבַשׁ וְחָלָב תַּחַת לְשׁוֹנֵךְ, "your lips drip pure honey, honey and milk (lie) under your tongue."[5] It seems rather clear that in both cases honey functions as a sensual metaphor for the desirability of kissing feminine lips.[6] Yet the juxtaposition of the phrase in line 9a of our hymn with the statement in line 9b, namely, "her mouth (is) vivacity" (*balāṭum*, lit. "life"), suggests that honey is more than an ancient flavored lip gloss in the hymn. Honey is also life-sustaining; its sweetness invigorates. The same idea is expressed literally in 1 Sam 14:24–30, the account of Jonathan disobeying his father's oath by eating some honey found in the field, and used metaphorically in Prov 24:13–14, where the desirability of eating honey is used to impress upon young boys (note בְּנִי, "my son" in v. 13) the desirability of obtaining wisdom. For with wisdom, so the proverb goes, יֵשׁ אַחֲרִית וְתִקְוָתְךָ לֹא תִכָּרֵת, "there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off" (v. 14).

The incomparability of the goddess trope that we see in lines 21 and 23 compares to similar hymnic expressions used of Yahweh.[7] For example, in the celebrated Song of the Sea Miriam exclaims מִי כָמֹכָה בָּאֵלִם יְהוָה מִי כָּמֹכָה נֶאְדָּר בַּקֹּדֶשׁ נוֹרָא תְהִלֹּת עֹשֵׂה פֶלֶא, "Who is like you, O Yahweh, among the gods? Who is like you, glorious in holiness?[8] Awesome in splendor, working wonders!" David and Solomon, both kings like Ammiditana, laud Yahweh similarly with statements in 2 Sam 7:22 (‖ 1 Chron 17:20): גָּדַלְתָּ אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה כִּי אֵין כָּמוֹךָ וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים זוּלָתֶךָ, "you are

[2] Compare the first person self-praise here with the same in the Gula Hymn of Bulluṭsa-rabi (see W. G. Lambert, "The Gula Hymn of Bulluṭsa-rabi," *Or* n.s. 36 [1967], 105–32, with plates VII–XXIII for the most recent edition of the text). See also n.234 on page 59 of the general introduction for other references to the self-praise of deities.

[3] See Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 18A; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 334–35 for a brief overview of representative scholars and criticism of their positions.

[4] For a recent, spirited discussion of this issue (among many others), see William G. Dever, *Did God Have a Wife? Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

[5] It should be noted that the most common word for honey in BH, דְּבַשׁ, is cognate to Akk. *dišpu*, despite the metathesis of the final two consonants. See Tawil, *ALCBH*, 72.

[6] Honey, of course, is not limited to sensual metaphors. The sweetness of honey is used in Ezek 3:3 to describe the literal taste of the divine scroll Ezekiel ate and in Ps 119:103 as the basis of comparison to convey the surpassing sweetness of Yahweh's word.

[7] For a study of divine incomparability in the ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible generally, see C. J. Labuschagne, *The Incomparability of Yahweh in the Old Testament* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966).

[8] LXX *εν αγιοις* suggests בַּקְּדוֹשִׁים, "among the holy ones." See *BHS*, 111, n.11[b].

great, O lord Yahweh, for there in no one like you, and there is no god except you!" and 1 Kgs 8:23 (‖ 2 Chron 6:14): יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵין־כָּמוֹךָ אֱלֹהִים בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְעַל־הָאָרֶץ מִתָּחַת, "O Yahweh, god of Israel, there is no one like you among the gods in the heavens above and upon the earth below. . . ." (It is notable that both royal hymnic statements occur in the context of petitionary prayer.) See also, for example, Pss 35:10, 71:19, 86:8, Jer 10:6–7, and Mic 7:18. Interestingly, the incomparability of Yahweh—especially as compared to Mesopotamian gods—is a major theme in Second Isaiah, where, although humans do laud this divine attribute (see, e.g., 40:18), it is the deity himself who proclaims it most ardently (see, e.g., 40:25, 44:7, 45:21, and 46:5).

Lines 25–40 of our hymn describe Ishtar's position in the divine assembly. Since I present a brief comparative discussion of the divine assembly elsewhere in this volume (see Sin 1 on page 398), I focus here on one particular aspect that indicates a common representation in Israel and Mesopotamia of the hierarchy within it. In line 39 the hymn states that the gods appear before Ishtar and Anu, indicating thereby (and throughout the context) the pre-eminent position of the divine couple in relation to all of the other deities under their command (see lines 26, 28, and 40). The Akk. word translated as "appear" in line 39 is an N stem verb with an ingressive sense, derived from *i/uzuzzu*, "to stand." This standing posture of the gods is in direct opposition to Ishtar's being seated, described in line 34. The very same notion of divine beings making an appearance or presenting themselves to a divine king occurs in the Hebrew Bible at Job 1:6 and 2:1, where we read: וַיָּבוֹאוּ בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים לְהִתְיַצֵּב עַל־יְהוָה, "the gods entered (the divine court) to present themselves to Yahweh." Notice the use of the hitpael stem of יצב, a by-form of נצב, "to stand." In fact, verbs of standing (especially עמד) are commonly used in BH to describe the posture of subordinates serving a superior, sometimes depicted as seated. A number of examples of servants standing before their human master could be cited,[9] but the most relevant text for understanding the divine assembly is 1 Kgs 22:19 (‖ 2 Chron 18:18), where Micaiah describes Yahweh's throne room: רָאִיתִי אֶת־יְהוָה יֹשֵׁב עַל־כִּסְאוֹ וְכָל־צְבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם עֹמֵד עָלָיו מִימִינוֹ וּמִשְּׂמֹאלוֹ, "I saw Yahweh sitting on his throne and the entire host of heaven was standing before him, on his right and on his left." The court discusses for a moment how to entrap Ahab in battle. And then in v. 21 (‖ 2 Chron 18:20) a particular servant steps out from the throng to proffer the winning idea: וַיֵּצֵא הָרוּחַ וַיַּעֲמֹד לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי אֲפַתֶּנּוּ, "the spirit came forward, stood before Yahweh, and said, 'I will deceive him.'" Isa 6:1–2 presents the very same image of a seated Yahweh with divine servants standing in attendance. As many others have demonstrated,[10] the divine assembly is a common mythological idea throughout the ancient Near East based on the royal court. It is this common human model that explains the mythological commonalities in the texts.

[9] See Alan Lenzi, *Secrecy and the Gods: Secret Knowledge in Ancient Mesopotamia and Biblical Israel* (SAAS 19; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2008), 256–57 for references.
[10] See ibid., 237–38 for the literature.

TRANSLATION:

i

1. Sing of the goddess, the most awe-inspiring of the goddesses,
2. Let the lady of the people, the great one of the Igigi be praised!
3. Sing of Ishtar, the most awe-inspiring of the goddesses,
4. Let the lady of the women, the great one of the Igigi be praised!

ii

5. She of excitement, clothed with sexual charm,
6. She is adorned with sexual allure, attraction, and appeal.
7. Ishtar of excitement, clothed with sexual charm,
8. She is decorated with sexual allure, attraction, and appeal.

iii

9. With regard to (her) lips she drips honey, her mouth vivacity,
10. Smiles flourish upon her face.
11. She is resplendent, loveliness is set upon her head,
12. Her tones are beautiful, her eyes colorful (and) iridescent.

iv

13. The goddess—counsel is with her,
14. She holds the destinies of everything in her hand.
15. At her glance happiness is engendered,
16. Dignity, splendor, a protective spirit (and) guardian.

v

17. She loves attention, passion, (and) contentedness,
18. And she controls concord.
19. The young woman whom/who she calls/has been abandoned obtains a mother (in her),
20. One invokes her among women/people, one calls her name.

vi

21. Who can rival her greatness? Who?
22. Her cultic ordinances are powerful, supreme, (and) brilliant.
23. Ishtar—who can rival her greatness?
24. Her cultic ordinances are powerful, supreme, (and) brilliant.

vii

25. She is the one whose position is foremost among the gods,
26. Her word is respected, it prevails over them/theirs.
27. Ishtar, whose position is foremost among the gods,
28. Her word is respected, it prevails over them/theirs.

viii

29. She is their queen, they discuss her utterances,
30. All of them kneel before (lit. to) her.
31. They go to her (in) her luminescence,
32. Women and men fear her.

ix

33. In their assembly, her speaking is pre-eminent, supreme,
34. She is seated with them as an equal to Anu, their king.

35. She is wise with regard to/in terms of understanding, knowledge, (and) insight,
36. They confer together (about decisions), she and her householder.

x

37. They occupy the dais together,
38. In the sanctuary, the abode of jubilations.
39. The gods appear before them,
40. Their (i.e., the gods') ears are attentive to their (i.e., Ishtar's and Anu's) command.

xi

41. The king, their favorite, the beloved of their heart,
42. Magnificently offered time and again pure offerings to them.
43. Ammiditana, with the pure offering of his hands,
44. In their presence, satisfied (them) with fattened bulls and stags.

xii

45. She has asked for him from Anu her husband,
46. Long, enduring life.
47. Many years of life for Ammiditana,
48. Ishtar has granted, has given.

xiii

49. By her command, she makes bow down to him,
50. The entire world at his feet.
51. And all of the inhabited world,
52. She has tied them to his yoke.

xiv

53. The desire of her heart, her favorite song,
54. Is suitable for his mouth; he uttered for her the speech of Ea.
55. (When) he heard her praise, he exulted over him,
56. (Saying,) "May he live! May his king love him forever!"

57. O Ishtar, to Ammiditana, the king who loves you,
58. Bestow long, enduring life!
59. May he live!

60. Its antiphonal.

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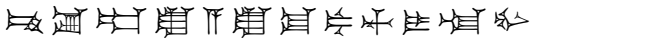
1. 
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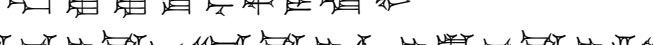
3. 
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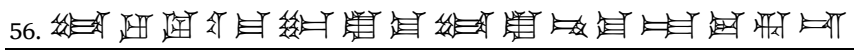
56. 

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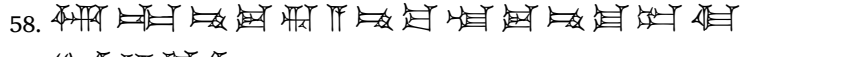
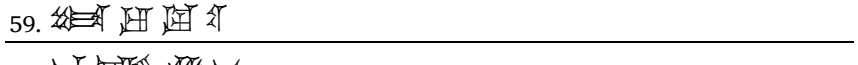
58. 

59. 

60.

STANDARD BABYLONIAN TEXTS

An Incantation-Prayer: Ghosts of My Family 1

ALAN LENZI

GHOSTS:

Ancient Mesopotamians believed ghosts were the animating force in human bodies that (usually) continued to exist in the grave/netherworld or elsewhere after physical death. A proper burial, i.e., interment, was necessary for a person's ghost to take up its new and proper residence in the grave/netherworld. Without this social dignity, they might be condemned to roam as a restless ghost—though there were other reasons a person became a restless ghost after death.[1] Once the deceased was laid to rest, a cyclical ritual called *kispu*(*m*) had to be performed by a surviving relative (usually). This person was known as the *pāqidu*, "the one who attends to (it)." This rite included making funerary offerings of various kinds of food (*kispa kasāpu*), pouring out libations of water (*mê naqû*), and invoking the deceased's name as a memorial (*šuma zakāru*). The performance of this rite was necessary to maintain the deceased's ghost in the netherworld. Without it, the ghost would have a miserable existence and could turn malevolent against humans. This rite did not, however, have to continue indefinitely. Rather, after a generation or two—after those who had known the deceased were themselves dead—a ghost would become part of the collective dead and no longer receive offerings as an individual.

Ghosts were believed to have supra-human powers, somewhat like demons. They could act benevolently toward humans—thus the appeal in our prayer, but we have relatively few texts that seek their assistance.[2] In some of these, the ghosts are asked to assist the supplicant with the removal of a certain evil by handing it over to specific denizens of the netherworld (as in our prayer). In others, we see the practice of necromancy, divination via the dead (see Finkel). Usually, however, ghosts were considered malevolent, bringing illness and other

[1] See Scurlock, "Ghosts and the Afterlife," 1890 for a list of reasons people became ghosts. Annihilation seems to have been the fate of those who were burned to death (see the final lines of Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Netherworld).

[2] See, e.g., Prescriptions 83–88 (pp. 343–63) in Scurlock's dissertation.

misfortunes upon those they afflicted. Many rituals were developed and performed by exorcists (*āšipus*) to treat these ghost-induced maladies.[3]

THE PRAYER:

This incantation-prayer is embedded in a larger anti-witchcraft ritual that contains several other incantation-prayers.[4] The incantation-prayers that precede ours address various netherworld-related beings, such as the Divine River (*Nāru*), the Anunnakki, Shamash, and Gilgamesh, the latter two of which function as netherworld judges (see our line 7). The incantation-prayer that follows ours is addressed to the ghost of nobody (*eṭem lā mammanama*), represented by a skull (*gulgullu*).[5] A very close parallel to our incantation-prayer appears in an incantation-prayer to Ishtar and Dumuzi.[6] This illustrates how incantation-prayers were adopted into and adapted to different ritual contexts (see Farber, 118).

The text of the prayer may be divided thematically into the three typical parts of an incantation-prayer: the invocation (lines 1–4a), the petition (lines 4b–15, 17a), and the promise of praise (lines 16, 17b); but these parts are grammatically integrated into one another. That is, the first element in the petition section of the prayer (line 4b) completes the sentence begun in the invocation, and the two elements comprising the promise of praise are each dependent upon one of the last two petitions in the prayer: line 16 depends on line 15 and line 17b upon line 17a. Given this, the prayer's brevity, and the fact that it lacks the various transitional phrases one often sees in, for example, the shuilla-prayers—transitions such as the self-presentation formula or the reiterated invocation, the prayer reads very quickly and smoothly. Perhaps the one feature in the text of the prayer that creates a sense of disjunction between or transition from one conceptual part to another is the use of first person verbal forms in lines 4b–6, which moves the prayer from invocation to petition,[7] and the return of these first person verbs starting in line 14, which moves the prayer from a predominance of petition to the lines containing its promise of praise.

The invocation differs from many of the other prayers in this volume in that it does not extensively laud the beings invoked. The ghosts are not reminded of their attributes or cosmic position via a string of epithets at the beginning of this prayer. Rather, the invocation simply identifies—in multiple ways—to whom the prayer is directed: any and all family ghosts. I have suggested elsewhere that the

[3] See Scurlock, *Magico-Medical Means of Treating Ghost-Induced Illnesses* and page 197 below.
[4] See Ebeling, *TuL*, 122–33 for a dated textual edition of the ritual. A new edition will soon appear in Abusch and Schwemer's edition of the witchcraft corpus (see note i below).
[5] This incantation was treated in Scurlock's dissertation as Prescription 87 (pp. 357–61).
[6] For a critical edition of the text, see Farber, 150–53. Scurlock also treats the incantation as Prescription 86 (pp. 354–57) in her dissertation.
[7] The disjunction created by the first person verbs in lines 4b–6 is heightened by the initial 2mp independent pronoun (*attunu*) and the anacoluthon that follows in the invocation.

dingirshadibba-prayers have very brief invocations because the personal god addressed in those prayers, unlike the high gods entreated in the shuilla-prayers, is familiar with the supplicant and already has a close personal relationship with him. One need not heap honorifics upon a deity one already knows well; but a god near the top of the divine hierarchy would have to be addressed with all due respect.[8] The same reasoning for the brief invocation of the present prayer would seem to apply here as well.

The invocation moves seamlessly into the petition section of the prayer. The first part of this section describes the supplicant's preparatory actions (lines 4b–6) via a series of first person preterite verbs. Three petitions to establish the ghosts' presence begin the petitions proper (lines 7–8). These are followed by a series of petitions in lines 9–15 and 17a that concern the supplicant's affliction and recovery.

Interlaced with the final two petitions of the prayer is the promise of praise (lines 16, 17b). The first promise, to libate cool water down the grave pipe, is specific to the ghostly audience of the prayer. The second is a stock phrase, apparently added to our prayer mechanically (with a 2ms pronominal suffix rather than the expected 2mp).

[8] See Alan Lenzi, "Invoking the God: Interpreting Invocations in Mesopotamian Prayers and Biblical Laments of the Individual," *JBL 129* (2010), 303–15 and page 442 in this volume.

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Text. Edition: Scurlock. "Magical Means of Dealing with Ghosts," 351–54.[i] Translations: Foster, 658–59. Seux, 432–33. Study: Walter Farber. *Beschwörungsrituale an Ištar und Dumuzi: Attī Ištar ša Ḫarmaša Dumuzi.* Veröffentlichungen der Orientalischen Kommission 30. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1977, 117–18, 150–53.

[i] The text is not treated in her published revision of the dissertation, *Magico-Medical Means of Treating Ghost-Induced Illnesses*. A revised edition of the text, incorporating new material, will be published in Tzvi Abusch and Daniel Schwemer, *Corpus of Mesopotamian Anti-witchcraft Rituals*, Volume 2 (Ancient Magic and Divination; Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

1. *at-tu-nu* GIDIM *kim-ti-ia ba-nu-ú qab-*[*ra*]

2. AD.MU AD AD.MU AMA.MU AMA AMA.MU ŠEŠ.MU NIN.MU

3. *kim-ti-ia ni-šu-ti-ia u sa-la-ti-i*a

Line 1: One of the witnesses to the prayer, LKA 89, preserves traces of the word ÉN = *šiptu*, "ritual wording, incantation," which indicates to the user of the tablet that a prayer or incantation follows. GIDIM = *eṭemmu*, "ghost of a dead person." Given the 2mp pronoun *attunu*, "you," at the head of the line in apposition to the vocative *eṭemmu*, the latter is certainly to be rendered as a collective, thus "ghosts." Notice also the consonance between *attunu* and *eṭem* (the bound form of *eṭemmu*). *Kimtu*, "family." One might consider rendering *eṭem kimtīya* as "my ancestral family" (see Abusch, "Etemmu," 309). *Bānû*, literally "builder," but in the context of kinship is better rendered "begetter, progenitor" (also collective). *Qabru*, "grave." If the restoration at the end of the line is correct, the case ending should be understood as an adverbial accusative of place. Line 1 begins a long anacoluthon, recognized as such only after the appearance of the words *kispa aksipkunūši* in line 4.

attunu eṭem kimtīya bānû qabra

Line 2: AD = *abu*, "father." MU = 1cs pronominal suffix, "my." AMA = *ummu*, "mother." ŠEŠ = *aḫu*, "brother." NIN = *aḫātu*, "sister." Specific relatives are listed, thereby further defining the ghosts addressed by the prayer. We should probably assume that the bound form of the word for ghost, *eṭem*, has been elided from the head of the line but in fact governs all of the nouns. The nouns should therefore be taken as genitives (see the next line, where the oblique case form of the 1cs pronominal suffix is explicitly indicated). The repetition of *abi* and *ummi*, the similar sounding *aḫi* and *aḫāti*, and the six instances of the oblique 1cs pronominal suffix give the line a sing-song sound.

(*eṭem*) *abīya abi abīya ummīya ummi ummīya aḫīya aḫātīya*

Line 3: *Nišūtu*, "kin, relatives." *Salātu*, "family, clan." Again, *eṭem* has been elided from the head of the line but governs the nouns in the genitive. The prayer reverts back to collective kinship terms to designate the ghosts addressed. Notice how the 1cs pronominal suffixes on each feminine noun affect the phonological rhythm of the line.

(*eṭem*) *kimtīya nišūtīya salātīya*

4. *ma-la ina* KI-*tim ṣal-lu ki-is-pa ak-sip-ku-nu-ši*

5. A.MEŠ *aq-qí-ku-nu-ši ú-kan-ni*[!]*-ku-nu-ši*

6. *ú-ša*[*r*]*-riḫ-ku-nu-ši ú-ka*[*b-b*]*it-ku-nu-ši*

Line 4: *Mala*, "as much as, as many as." *Mala* is an all-inclusive term, used to make sure no dead relative is left out (and thereby, in this case, offended). KI = *erṣetu*, "earth." In a context that deals with the dead, however, *erṣetu* must mean "netherworld." Although Akkadian lost mimation (final *m*) in the late OB period, some scholars prefer to read the phonetic complement that follows KI in our text as *–tim*, seeing in it a kind of frozen traditional orthography. Others prefer to indicate the loss of mimation explicitly by reading the same sign as *–tì*. This is generalizable so that some will read a final TUM, e.g., as tu_4 while others will read it as *tum*. Regardless of the convention one adopts, the meaning of the word is not affected. *Ṣalālu*, "to sleep." Sleeping is, of course, a very common way of speaking about the state of the dead. In keeping with the plurality of address in the invocation, the predicative *ṣallū* is 3mp. *Kispa kasāpu*, "to offer a funerary offering" (cognate accusative). The preceding kinship nouns, which constitute a long anacoluthon, are the referents of the dative pronominal suffix, *–kunūši*, "to you" (mp), on the verb here and on the next four verbs in lines 5 and 6. This suffix brings the text back conceptually to *attunu* in line 1. The 1cs verbs here and in lines 5 and 6 introduce the supplicant and describe the supplicant's ritual actions. These actions, in tandem with the verbal invocation, attempt to get the ghosts' attention.

mala ina erṣeti ṣallū kispa aksipkunūši

Line 5: A.MEŠ = *mû*, "water." *Naqû*, "to pour out (a libation), sacrifice." An actual libation would probably have accompanied this prayer. Liquids that were libated in ritual contexts included water, beer, wine, oil, honey, and milk among others. Only ghosts are offered water (see Mayer, *UFBG*, 152). *Kunnû*, "to treat kindly, to honor," and the two verbs in the following line are speech-acts (or performatives), the speaking of which execute their ritual action (i.e., "I hereby honor you"). All three verbs, which do not seem to refer to distinct physical acts, probably further define the intention of the libation: the supplicant is preparing the deity to pay attention to the supplicant's petitions. Both *naqû* and *kunnû* are commonly found in rituals honoring a superior, which includes deities and other non-obvious beings like dead ancestors (see CAD N/1, 337–38 and K, 541–42). Notice how consonance and assonance abounds in this line and the next. Though the repeated 2mp pronominal suffix adds to these phonological features, they are not limited to such. For example, both verbs are from weak roots containing an unvoiced velar consonant and an *i* theme-vowel. Also, the supplied object for the first verb, while balancing out the longer form of the second verb and thereby creating a symmetrical line in terms of syllables, also provides a nasal consonant (*m*) that resonates well with the *n* in the second verb.

mê aqqīkunūši ukannīkunūši

Line 6: *Šurruḫu* (D of *šarāḫu*), "to glorify, to give praise, to make splendid." *Kubbutu* (D of *kabātu*), "to treat with honor, respect." These two verbs are also frequently found in ritual contexts honoring a superior. For other contexts that use both verbs together, see

7. *ina* UD-*mi an-né-e* IGI ^{d}UTU ^{d}GIŠ.GÍN.MAŠ *i-ziz-za-nim-ma*

8. *di-ni di-na* EŠ.BAR-*a-a* KUD-*sa*

9. NÍG ḪUL *šá ina* SU.MU UZU.MEŠ.MU SA.MEŠ.MU GÁL-*ú*

10. *ana* ŠU ^{d}NAM.TAR SUKKAL KI-*tim pi-iq-da-nim*

CAD Š/2, 38. The grammatical form of the two strong verbs in this line—D preterites—reinforces the line's assonance.

ušarriḫkunūši ukabbitkunūši

Line 7: UD = *ūmu*, "day." *Ina ūmi annî*, literally, "on this day," should be translated more idiomatically. IGI = *maḫru*, "front," or *pānu*, "face"—both are possible. The term should be taken here as the equivalent of *ina maḫri* or *ina pāni*, "before." ^{d}UTU = *Šamaš*. Shamash is the sun god and god of justice (see page 197). ^{d}GIŠ.GÍN.MAŠ = *Gilgameš*. Gilgamesh takes on the role of a netherworld judge in some ritual texts (see, e.g., *Maqlû* I 38 and the references in Parpola, *LASEA 2*, 204). *Izuzzu*, "to stand." The ventive (*–nim*) on the imperative can be translated as "here." Line 7 contains the supplicant's first petition: they are invoking their ancestors in this prayer in order for the ancestors to stand on the supplicant's behalf before two important judicial deities of the netherworld, Shamash and Gilgamesh.

ina ūmi annî pān Šamaš Gilgameš izizzānim-ma

Line 8: *Dânu*, "to judge." *Dīnī*, "my case." EŠ.BAR = *purussû*, "decision, verdict." KUD = *parāsu*, literally, "to cut, to divide," but in this legal context "to decide." These two verbs frequently occur together (see CAD P, 530–32 for some examples). This line continues the supplicant's petition.

dīnī dinā purussāya pursā

Line 9: NÍG ḪUL = *mimma lemnu*, "everything evil." Rather than list all the suspected problems, the supplicant uses the most general terms possible. Besides ensuring coverage of the supplicant's own problem, this manner of speaking would also make the prayer suitable for any number of other people suffering from a wide variety of maladies. SU = *zumru*, "body." UZU.MEŠ = *šīrū*, "flesh." The plural form does not change the meaning. SA.MEŠ = *šerʾānū*, "sinews, veins, tendons, muscles." GÁL = *bašû*, "to exist, to be." The form of the verb is probably a 3ms predicative (*bašī*) plus subjunctive *–u* (but there are no syllabic spellings in the MSS to confirm this). Line 9 forms the object of the verb in line 10.

mimma lemnu ša ina zumrīya šīrīya šerʾānīya bašû

Line 10: ŠU = *qātu,* "hand," though a metaphorical rendering may be more appropriate: "power," "charge," or "responsibility." ^{d}NAM.TAR = *Namtar*, a netherworld deity, whose name means "fate." SUKKAL = *šukkallu* (*sukkallu*), "a court official, minister, counselor," is in apposition to Namtar. *Šukkallu* is an epithet for many gods, although the noun that this term governs is typically a divine name (e.g., Ninshubur, *šukallu* of Anu; see CAD S, 358–59 for other examples). Here the word specifies Namtar's position in the netherworld (*erṣetī*). *Paqādu* + *ana*, "to entrust, to hand over something to someone." The supplicant makes yet another petition of the ancestral ghosts, but this is the first one that specifies their personal problem. They ask the ghosts to give the malady with which they

11. ^{d}NIN.GIŠ.ZI.DA GU.ZA.LÁ KI-*tim* DAGAL-*tim* EN.NUN-*šú-nu* [*l*]*i-dan-nin*

12. ^{d}BÍ.DU$_8$ Ì.DU$_8$ GAL KI-*tim pa-ni-šú-nu* [*li-dil*$^{?}$]

13. DAB.MEŠ-*šu-ma šu*$^{?}$*-ri-da-šú ana* KUR.NU.GI$_4$.A

are suffering to Namtar, presumably so he can take it to the netherworld where it belongs (see line 13).

ana qāti Namtar šukkal erṣeti piqdānim

Line 11: ^{d}NIN.GIŠ.ZI.DA = *Ningizzida*, another netherworld deity. GU.ZA.LÁ = *guzalû*, literally, "throne-bearer." Like *šukkallu*, this word is an epithet for deities and demons and specifies Ningizzida's position in the netherworld. DAGAL = *rapšu* (m), *rapaštu* (f), "wide," a common modifier of *erṣeti* when used of the netherworld (see CAD R, 162). EN.NUN = *maṣṣartu*, "watch, guard, observation, security." *Dunnunu* (D of *danānu*), literally, "to make strong, to reinforce," but with *maṣṣarta* as the object, the verb means "to watch strictly, carefully" (see CAD M/1, 335). The 3mp pronominal suffix on the noun becomes the direct object of the verb in idiomatic English. The imperatives have given way to a precative in this line. This change is simply due to the fact that the agent of the verb, Ningizzida, is not being addressed by the speaker directly in this petition; an imperative would be inappropriate.

Ningizzida guzalê erṣeti rapašti maṣṣartašunu lidannin

Line 12: ^{d}BÍ.DU$_8$ = *Bidu*, a netherworld deity. There is some dispute about the proper reading of this god's name. Some read the name as Nedu. Ì.DU$_8$.GAL = *idugallu*, "chief gatekeeper." The meaning of this word is generally agreed upon, but the proper reading of the logogram and the precise Akkadian equivalent is unclear. (Compare Andrew George, "Seven Words," *NABU* 1991, #19 [followed here], *CDA*, 125, s.v. *idugallu*, the entries of the related term *atû* in both CAD A/2, 516–18 [note the reference to *atūgallu* on p. 518] and *CDA*, 31, and finally *AEAD*, 28, s.v. *etūgallu*. I thank Bob Whiting for providing a number of references with regard to this word.) Given the mention of a third party, Bidu, at the head of the line, we expect a precative main verb in this line, as in line 11, to continue the supplicant's petitions. Scurlock (352) suggests *līdil*, "let him shut," from *edēlu*, "to shut, to bolt." An unpublished witness to this prayer replaces *pānīšunu* with EGIR-*šú*-[*nu*], *arḫīšunu*, "behind them" (see Scurlock, 352). Locking a gate behind someone makes sense if the guard is on the exterior side of the gate. (For example, after a person exits a restricted room, the guard in the hallway makes sure the door is locked behind them.) In Bidu's case, he is on the interior of the netherworld, the place where the supplicant wants his affliction to go. Bidu guards the gate so *no one can get out*. It makes sense, therefore, to wish Bidu to lock the gate in front of a recent arrival to the netherworld. Upon passing through the entrance to the netherworld, a person might wish to turn around and leave. But Bidu will not allow it; he locks the gate in front of them.

Bidu idugal erṣeti pānīšunu līdil

Line 13: DAB.MEŠ = *Ṣubbutu* (D of *ṣabātu*), "to seize." The verb should be understood as an imperative to match the following one. *Šūrudu* (Š of [*w*]*arādu*), "to cause to go down." (The sign that comprises the first syllable of the verb is unclear on the tablet, but a ŠU sign fits the traces.) The prayer reverts to imperatives in its continuation of the petition

14. *ana-ku* ÌR-*ku-nu lu-ub-luṭ lu-uš-lim-ma*

15. *aš-šu* NÍG.AK.A.MEŠ *ina* MU-*ku-nu lu-uz-ki*

16. *a-na a-ru-ti-ku-nu* A.MEŠ *ka-ṣu-ti lu-uš-qí*

section. Oddly, the pronominal suffixes on the verbs are both 3ms despite the fact that all the previous suffixes are 3mp (but note line 9's *mimma lemnu*). Although corruption in the transmission of the prayer is not out of the question (i.e., the NU sign dropped off the 3mp suffix *–šunu*, twice!), this explanation seems unlikely. Perhaps the supplicant assumes the problem (singular) has been identified at this point in the prayer (?). KUR.NU.GI$_4$.A = *Kurnugi*, literally, "the land of no return" (*māt lā târi*), "netherworld." Notice the prepositional phrase occurs at the end of the line. This is not typical syntax (compare lines 7 and 10). This position may be explained in light of the double imperative: the text intends to align the actions of the two verbs closely, and since the location given in the prepositional phrase only makes sense in terms of the second verb, the prepositional phrase follows it.

ṣubbitāšū-ma šūridāšu ana Kurnugi

Line 14: *Anāku*, "I." ÌR = *ardu* (*wardum*), "servant, slave." Line 14 contains a stock phrase that usually occurs toward the end of prayers (see page 413 for an example in this volume and Mayer, *UFBG*, 282–83 for the generalization and exceptions). The word "servant" is a common way for a person addressing a social superior to demonstrate their lower social status. The same hierarchical logic operates with regard to a deity. *Balāṭu*, "to live, to be healthy." *Šalāmu*, "to be(come) healthy, to be(come) well, to be(come) whole." The text turns emphatically—notice the independent pronoun at the head of the line—to the supplicant's positive wishes for themselves. As in the previous lines of the petition, appropriate volitional forms, here precatives, are used to convey that which is desired. First person forms, absent in the prayer since line 6, now dominate its remainder.

anāku aradkunu lubluṭ lušlim-ma

Line 15: *Aššu*, "concerning, on account of, because of, with respect to." NÍG.AK.A.MEŠ = *upšaššû*, "sorcery." MU = *šumu*, "name," though here something more metaphorical may be better: "reputation, authority." *Zakû*, "to be pure, to be clear." Prepositions like *aššu* and *ina* can be difficult to translate. Taking their range of meaning into consideration along with the other components in the line, provide an idiomatic rendering. What does it mean to be pure *aššu* sorcery *ina* the name of someone?

aššu upšaššê ina šumūkunu luzqi

Line 16: *Arūtu*, "clay pipe." A pipe was inserted into a subterranean grave so the living on the surface could pour libations through it to the deceased down below (as stated in line 5). *Kaṣû*, "cold." *Šaqû*, "to give to drink, to water, to libate." Lines 15 and 16 are balanced in terms of length and show several grammatical and phonological parallelisms. Notice, for example, that both lines open with a prepositional phrase and end with a precative from a root comprised of a sibilant and velar consonant. Despite the grammatical parallelism, there is conceptual movement between the lines. What is unwanted, "sorcery," occupies the same position in line 15 as that which will benefit from removing what is unwanted in line 16 ("pipe," which stands for the dead ancestors). The transfer of the pronominal suffix *–kunu* from the instrumental prepositional phrase in line 15 (*ina*

17. *bul-liṭ-ṭa-an-ni-ma dà-lí-lí-ka lud-lul*

šumūkunu) to the phrase containing the object of the supplicant's appreciation (*ana arūtīkunu*) demonstrates the nature of the "deal" the supplicant is brokering in these final lines: "you do something for me, and I will do something for you." The precative in this line, therefore, is not so much a wish as it is a promise to thank the deity for acting on the supplicant's behalf (so also in line 17). Given the general trend of the Mesopotamian climate, cold drinking water would be particularly desirable.

ana arūtīkunu mê kaṣûti lušqi

Line 17: *Bulluṭu* (D of *balāṭu*), "to heal, to revive, to spare, to provide support for." *Bulliṭṭānnī-ma* stands here for *bulliṭānnī-ma*. A direct imperative here, a kind of final plea, accentuates this line among those otherwise dominated by precatives (lines 14–17). *Dalīlū*, "praises." *Dalālu*, "to praise." The two form a cognate accusative. *Dalīlīka* (2ms) is not expected here; rather, *dalīlīkunu*, "your (2mp) praises." Given the ubiquity of the final two words of our prayer in Mesopotamian prayers generally, we may assume the scribe rather mechanically appended the well-known phrase in a grammatically incorrect manner. Line 17b and its parallel in line 16b form the prayer's concluding "promise of praise."

bulliṭṭānnī-ma dalīlīka ludlul

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

Two issues stand out prominently in our prayer for comparative consideration: the issue of benevolent ghosts in the Hebrew Bible and "honoring" one's deceased relatives.[1]

Before looking at these two issues briefly, it is important to consider the idea of the collective dead in the Hebrew Bible. According to some strands of tradition, when a person died, they were "gathered to his people" (see, e.g., Gen 25:8, 17, 35:29, 49:29, 33; Num 20:24, 27:13; etc.) or "to his ancestors" (lit. "fathers"; Judg 2:10) and believed to "lie with his ancestors" (lit. "fathers"; see, e.g., 1 Kgs 1:21, 2:10, 11:21, 43, 14:20, 31, etc.). This manner of speaking about the dead shows a clear conceptual connection to the situation in our prayer, in

[1] Ancestor worship and necromancy in the Hebrew Bible, the two most important issues that arise with regard to benevolent ghosts, have received considerable attention in the last several decades. A consensus seems to have crystallized around the idea that the ancient Israelites did practice some form of ancestor worship and did utilize necromancy, despite the biblical prohibitions. For brief overviews with literature, see Theodore J. Lewis, "Ancestor Worship," *ABD* 1.240–42; Idem, "Dead," *DDD*, 230–31; Idem, "Teraphim," *DDD*, 844–50; J. Tropper, "Spirit of the Dead," *DDD*, 806–09; and H. Rouillard, "Rephaim," *DDD*, 692–00. See also the chapter entitled "A Hidden Heritage: The Israelite Cult of the Dead" in Karel van der Toorn's *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel*, 206–35 for an important treatment; for an archaeologically-informed presentation, see Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead* (JSOTSup 123; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992). For a dissenting view, see Brian Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition* (Freiburger Altorientalische Studien 11; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1994; repr. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996).

which the dead family members sleep together in the Netherworld, a mythological notion that reflects the use of familial tombs/graves. Archaeological evidence from ancient Israel supports similar familial burial practices.[2]

The clearest instance of a ghost in the Hebrew Bible is found in 1 Sam 28. In this passage Saul enlists the witch of Endor to conjure Samuel's ghost in order to seek his guidance—an attempted necromancy (divination via the dead). Samuel's apparition is called an אֱלֹהִים in v. 13, which probably indicates the ghost's preternatural powers. Despite Samuel's apparition and true prediction about Saul's fate, the Deuteronomistic Historian, in line with the Deuteronomic condemnations of all forms of necromancy (Deut 18:9–11) and ancestor worship (Deut 26:14), presents Saul's actions in a negative light. This condemnation along with many other negative evaluations of such practices elsewhere (e.g., Lev 19:26–28, 20:6, 27; 2 Kgs 21:6, 23:24; Isa 8:19–22 [it seems אֱלֹהִים and מֵתִים are used interchangeably here], 19:3 [making mention of אִטִּים, "ghosts," which is probably cognate to Akk. *eṭemmu*], 45:18–19, 57:6, 65:4; and Ezek 43:7–9) strongly suggest that there were people in ancient Israel who believed in the powers of the beneficent dead and engaged in various death-related rituals. (Why would one prohibit something if it were not occasionally practiced?) We do not, however, have any *condoned* instances in the Hebrew Bible of consulting the dead or seeking their aid, as in our Akkadian prayer.[3] This absence has led some interpreters to the conclusion that the biblical author's purged these popular-level practices from the official, normative form of Yahwism as presented in the Hebrew Bible.[4]

In the context of our prayer's description of a post-mortem provisioning (lines 4b–6), the supplicant mentions that they "honor" their deceased family members. The verb used here is the D stem of *kabātu*. This verb is cognate to BH כבד, which occurs in the D stem in the Decalogue's command to honor one's father and mother (כַּבֵּד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמֶּךָ; Exod 20:12, Deut 5:16; see similarly Mal 1:6). In light of what we know about ancestor veneration in ancient Israelite popular religion, the importance of a proper burial, and the on-going importance of familial land and gravesites, it seems plausible to suggest that part of honoring one's parents, at least at some point in the commandment's history, included observing the appropriate post-mortem funerary rituals, whatever they may have been.[5] But such rituals are not, of course, the same thing as *petitioning* a dead family member, as is done in our Akkadian prayer.

[2] See Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead*, passim.

[3] In fact, Job 14:21 and Qoh 9:4–6, 10 both present the dead as utterly impotent, ignorant, and unable to help the living.

[4] See, e.g., Lewis, "Ancestor Worship," 242 and Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead*, 147.

[5] See Herbert Chanan Brichto, "Kin, Cult, Land, and Afterlife—A Biblical Complex," *HUCA* 44 (1973), 1–54, especially 29–35.

TRANSLATION:

1. You, the ghosts of my family, progenitors in the grave,
2. (The ghosts of) my father, my grandfather, my mother, my grandmother, my brother, my sister,
3. (The ghosts of) my family, my kin, (and) my clan,
4. As many as are sleeping in the netherworld, I make a funerary offering to you.
5. I pour out water to you; I lavish care upon you.
6. I glorify you; I honor you.
7. Stand here today before Shamash (and) Gilgamesh.
8. Judge my case, decide my verdict.
9. Everything evil that is in my body, my flesh, (and) my sinews,
10. Hand over to Namtar, counselor of the netherworld.
11. Let Ningizzida, throne-bearer of the wide netherworld, watch them carefully.
12. Let Bidu, chief gatekeeper of the netherworld, bolt (the gate) before them.
13. Seize it and take it down to the land of no return.
14. Let me, your servant, live; let me be well.
15. Let me be clear of sorcery through your names,
16. (That) I may libate cool water into your pipe.
17. Heal me that I may sing your praises.

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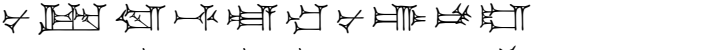
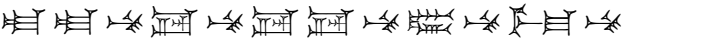
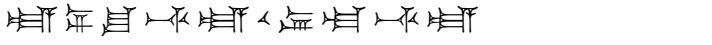
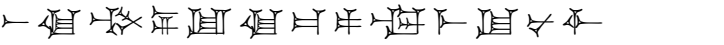
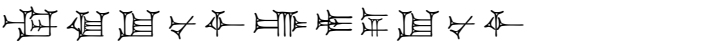
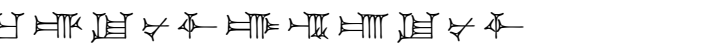
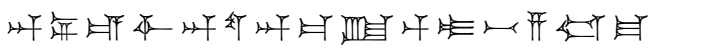
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
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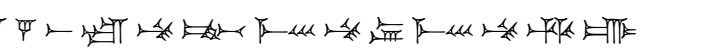
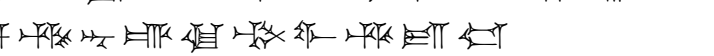
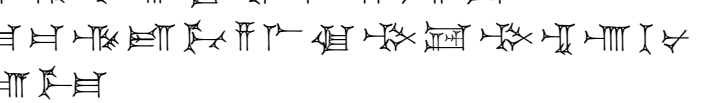
9. 
10. 
11. 
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17.

An Incantation-Prayer: Girra 2

CHARLES HALTON

GIRRA:

Girra was the Mesopotamian god of fire. Starting in the Ur III period and continuing through the Old Babylonian period, the gods Girra and Gibil, another fire god, were distinguished. However, by the Neo-Assyrian period the gods merged and the names Girra and Gibil were used interchangeably to refer to the same singular deity. Girra was written logographically in Akkadian as ^{d}GIŠ.BAR and ^{d}BIL.GI.

Girra was typically regarded as the son of Anu and his consort Shala(sh). However, he was occasionally identified as the son of Anu and Ki, Ishkur and Shala(sh), or as a son of Nusku. His lineage made him a middling deity with respect to rank in the pantheon; however, since he was the god of fire this elevated his importance within literature and the lives of Mesopotamians. As the agent of Nusku, Girra is mentioned as one of the occupants of Nusku's temple in Nippur, É-me-lám-ḫuš, "House of Awesome Radiance."[1]

Fire is both an indispensible gift and a terrifyingly destructive force. Accordingly, Mesopotamian literature reflects both of these aspects. For example, Gibil is mentioned in *Enūma eliš* as one of the fifty names of Marduk in which his creative ability and wisdom is celebrated:

> Gibil, the one who maintains the edge of the weapon,
> Who in combat with Tiamat created wonders,
> Who is vast of understanding, wise, and intelligent,
> Having a mind so wide that the gods in their assembly are not able
> to comprehend. (VII 115–118; my translation)

On the other hand, Girra also had a fearsome nature which is illustrated in a poem praising Shalmaneser III's campaign to Urartu that pairs Girra with Nergal, the god of the underworld, in an invocation: "Go, lord of kings! [. . .] May Nergal go before you, Girra [after you . . .]" (SAA 11 17:28–29). Girra is an appropriate complement to Nergal since the poem celebrates the Assyrian king's destruction of the Urartian army and line 9 states that the city, Til Barsip, was

[1] A. R. George, *House Most High: The Temples of Ancient Mesopotamia* (Mesopotamian Civilizations 5; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1993), #767.

burned. The order of the invocation is as logical as it is chilling: Nergal goes before Shalmaneser and kills all the people while Girra sweeps in and burns up the carnage.

Finally, the so-called Verse Account of Nabonidus contains a stylistically beautiful line composed of two synonymously parallel stichoi that reflect an identification of Girra with fire:

> Whatever he (Nabonidus) made, he (Cyrus) had Girra burn it up,
> Whatever he made, he had fire (*išātu*) consume it (vi 23′–24′).[2]

Since Girra was the god of fire he was regarded as the patron deity of metalworkers. Also, he was acknowledged for his role in the construction of buildings by providing the means to bake bricks. Appropriately, his symbol was the torch.

THE PRAYER:

This incantation-prayer is a part of *Maqlû*, "burning," an Akkadian magical series, consisting of eight incantation tablets (I–VIII) and one ritual tablet (IX), that was performed at the end of the month Abu to combat illegitimate witches and witchcraft. The first eight tablets contain almost one hundred incantations. Tablet IX lists the incantations according to their opening words (incipit) and describes the proper rituals to employ with each. An exorcist led the incantations and associated rituals which emphasize the innocence of the supplicant as well as their inability to counteract their enemy. The ceremony was performed at the supplicant's home and began at night and was continued the following morning. Although the ceremony was complex we may break it down into three main parts: summoning the gods, cleansing the patient's bedroom, and performing ceremonial washings the following morning.[3]

The incantation-prayer to Girra occurs in the first part of the ritual in Tablet II, lines 76–103. Our text begins with a brief hymnic introduction that praises Girra's ability to guide the divine council toward right verdicts (lines 1–9). After the hymn is the petition section of the prayer (lines 10–24). It begins with a standard self-presentation formula (line 10) and then follows a typical sequence. In the first section the supplicant's situation is described in the form of a lament (lines 11–13). The second part contains ritual actions involving figurines (lines 15–17) followed by the recitation of several petitions (lines 18–21, 23), which marks the end of the petition section. Finally, the prayer is concluded with praise (lines 24–27).

[2] My translation. See Hanspeter Schaudig, *Die Inschriften Nabonids von Babylon und Kyros' des Grossen* (AOAT 256; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2001), 572 for an edition.

[3] This section is adapted from Tzvi Abusch, *Mesopotamian Witchcraft* (Ancient Magic and Divination 5; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 288–89.

The petition portion of the prayer repeats invocations in order to transition between elements of the prayer as well as to give the composition a sense of unity and coherence. Line 14 provides a bridge between the lament and ritual segments by contrasting the "exalted" (*šurbû*) and "holy" (*ellu*) attributes of Girra with the wretched description of the supplicant in the lament section. Similarly, the last invocation (line 22) transitions between the precative petitions and the direct, imperatival petitions in lines 23 and 24 by addressing Girra as "magnificent" (*šarḫu*) and "eminent among the gods" (*ṣīru ša ilī*).

This prayer contains many poetic features. For instance, lines 18–21 prominently use repetition and consonance. Each line has the same format: *šuɲu* followed by a precative, then *anāku* followed by a precative. Furthermore, some of the lines show alliteration between the two verbs. For example, *limūtū* and *lubluṭ* (line 18) both contain dental and labial consonants (*t*=*ṭ* and *m*~*b*). Lastly, the pronouns in this section are emphatic and highlight the petitioner's request that Girra intervene and punish the supplicant's enemies while causing the supplicant to flourish.

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[i] The British Museum will make the photo available on CDLI in 2011 (P394446).

1. ÉN ^{d}GIŠ.BAR *a-ri-ru bu-kur* ^{d}*a-nim*

2. *da-in di-ni-ia* KA *pi-riš-ti at-ta-ma*

3. *ik-le-e-ti tu-uš-nam-mar*

4. *e-šá-a-ti dal-ḫa-a-ti tu-uš-te-eš-šir*

5. *a-na* DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ EŠ.BAR-*a ta-nam-din*

Line 1: ÉN = *šiptu*, "incantation, ritual wording." This word marks the beginning of the prayer. It is not a part of the prayer itself. ^{d}GIŠ.BAR = *Girra*. *Āriru*, "burning one." The adj. *āriru* is used elsewhere to describe a blazing fire or a burning lamp (see CAD A/2, 268). *Bukur* is the construct state of *bukru*, "son." It is common for invocations to include genealogical information for summoned deities.

Šiptu: *Girra āriru bukur Anim*

Line 2: *Dânu* (*diānum*), "to judge." *Dīnu*, "judgment, decision, legal case." *Dīna dânu* means "to render a verdict." KA = *atmû* (*atwûm*), "speech, word" (see CAD P, 399). *Pirištu*, "secret." *Attā*, "you." Shamash is the deity most commonly associated with judging / judgment since he looked down on the world (and underworld during the night) and saw all of humankind's deeds. However, when petitioners prayed to a specific deity for help their prayers usually included a request for the deity to render a judgement on their behalf. For an extensive treatment of the topic of divine secrecy, see Alan Lenzi, *Secrecy and the Gods: Secret Knowledge in Ancient Mesopotamia and Biblical Israel* (SAAS 19; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2008). Our line is treated briefly on p. 84, n.99.

dā'in dīnīya atmê pirišti attā-ma

Line 3: *Iklēti* (*ekletu*), "darkness." *Šunammuru* (ŠD of *namāru* [*nawārum*]), "to shine, to illuminate." The form is a 2ms durative. This is a very appropriate description given Girra's connection with fire.

iklēti tušnammar

Line 4: *Ešâti* is a fp from *ešû*, "confused." Likewise, *dalḫāti* from *dalhu*, "mixed up, perplexed." *Tuštešširr* is a 2ms Št-lexical durative from *ešēru*. We could normalize this verb in accordance with the expected *i*-vowel that is often colored by the following *r* so that it becomes *e* (Huehnergard §36.1), which would yield *tušteššer*. The Št-lexical of *ešēru* means "to put and keep in order, to straighten, to set aright." This verb is commonly used in invocations of and petitions to deities that they might "clear up confusion" and "provide justice" (see CAD E, 361 and Tawil, *ALCBH*, 151–52). Superficially, this line is a description of the deity's character; however, it could also be seen as an implicit plea that the deity act in accordance with this confession. This prayer contains many lines that function similarly (see, e.g., line 25).

ešâti dalḫāti tuštešširr

Line 5: DINGIR = *ilu*, "god." GAL = *rabû*, "great." EŠ.BAR = *purussû*, "decision." The *–a* after the logogram is a phonetic complement, indicating the accusative case. *Nadānu*, "to give." In the form, *tanamdin*, *–dd–* dissimilates to *–md–*. Here *nadānu* used with *purussû*

6. *šá la ka-a-ta* DINGIR *ma-am-man* EŠ.BAR-*a ul i-par-ra-as*

7. *at-ta-ma na-din ur-ti ù ṭe-e-me*

8. *e-piš lum-ni at-ta-ma ar-ḫiš ta-kam-mu*

9. *lem-nu a-a-*[*bu*] *ta-kaš-šad ar-ḫiš*

10. *a-na-ku* NENNI DUMU DINGIR-*šú ša* DINGIR-*šú* NENNI ^{d}*iš-tar-šú* NENNI

11. *ina kiš-pi* [*lu-up-pu-ta*]*-ku-ma ma-ḫar-ka az-ziz*

means "to make a decision," but in other contexts it can also mean "to give an oracle" (see CAD N/1, 54). Lines 5–7 describe Girra's pivotal role in divine decision making. Since the petitioner is seeking divine adjudication of their situation, they hope Girra will take up their cause and persuade the other gods to act on their behalf.

ana ilī rabûti purussâ tanamdin

Line 6: *Kâta* is the genitive/accusative form of the 2ms independent pronoun. *Mamman*, "somebody, anybody." *Parāsu*, "to separate, to decide." There is a variant reading of this line which inserts the expected *lā* after the first sign to yield the idiom, *ša lā* X = "without X."

ša lā kâta ilu mamman purussâ ul iparras

Line 7: *Ûrtu* (*wuʾʾurtu*), "instruction, command." *Ṭēmu*, "order, decree; reason; communication."

attā-ma nādin ûrti u ṭēme

Line 8: *Epēšu*, "to do." *Lumnu*, "evil, misery." *Arḫiš*, "quickly." *Kamû*, "to capture, bind." *Maqlû* does not only allow the supplicant to pray for relief from the evil spell that is afflicting them; the ritual also includes vengeance against the person who commissioned the magic. Therefore, lines 8 and 9 highlight the aspects of Girra's actions that include quickly capturing and overtaking the enemy.

ēpiš lumni attā-ma arḫiš takammu

Line 9: *Lemnu*, "bad, wicked." *Ayyābu* (see *ajābu* in CAD and *ajjābu* in *AHw*), "enemy." *Kašādu*, "to reach, to overcome."

lemnu ayyābu takaššad arḫiš

Line 10: *Anāku*, "I." NENNI = *annanna* (fs, *annannītu*), "so-and-so." DUMU = *māru*, "son." This pronoun is used as a placeholder; during the incantation the officiant would insert the name of the supplicant here. This line transitions from the hymnic invocations, which describe various attributes of Girra, to the petition section of the prayer (lines 11–24), where the supplicant begins with a description of their predicament.

anāku annanna mār annanna ša ilšu annanna ištaršu annannītu

Line 11: The transliterations and normalizations for lines 11–13 are from Abusch (*Mesopotamian Magic*, 86, n.9). *Kišpu*, "sorcery, evil spell." *Lupputāku* is a 1cs predicative of *lupputu* (D of *lapātu*), "to afflict, to touch." *Izuzzu* (*uzuzzu*), "to stand, to serve." Lines 11–

12. *ina* IGI DINGIR *u*$^{?}$ LÚ$^{?}$ [. . .] [*šu*]-*zu-ra-ku-ma e-li-ka* [. . .]

13. UGU *a*-[*me-ri-ia mar*]-*ṣa-ku-ma šá-pal-ka ak-mis*

14. ^{d}GIŠ.BAR *šur-bu-ú* DINGIR *el-lu*

15. *e-nin-na ina ma-ḫar* DINGIR-*ti-ka* GAL-*ti*

16. 2 NU.MEŠ ^{lú}*kaš-šá-pi u* ^{munus}*kaš-šap-ti šá* ZABAR *e-pu-uš qa-tuk-ka*

13 are similar in form: the first cola uses a predicative verb to lament the supplicant's cursed condition, while the second uses a preterite to describe their presence before the deity. Mayer (*UFBG*, 122–45) describes the action in the second half of these cola as *Hinwendung*, the "turning."

ina kišpi lupputākū-ma maḫarka azziz

Line 12: Abusch ("Witchcraft and the Anger of the Personal God," 86, n.9) notes a variant to this line: *ina pān ili u amēli šuzzurākū-ma elīka x / allaka ana maḫrīka,* "detestable before god and man to you . . . I come in front of you." IGI = *pānu*, "face," though it could also stand for *maḫru*, "front." *Ina pān*(*i*)*/maḫar* means, "in the presence of." LÚ = *amīlu* (*awīlum*), "a man, a human being." *Šuzzuru* (Š of *nazāru*), "to make detestable, to curse" (see CAD N/2, 140, under 4. III). The form here is a 1cs predicative, which literally means "I am made detestable." *Eli*, "on, over, above, to, towards."

ina pān ili u amēli . . . šuzzurākū-ma elīka . . .

Line 13: UGU = *eli. Amāru*, "to see." *Marāṣu*, "to be(come) sick." *Šaplu*, "under; at the feet of." *Kamāsu*, "to kneel, to bow down."

eli āmerīya marṣākū-ma šapalka akmis

Line 14: *Šurbû*, "exalted, supreme." *Ellu*, "pure, holy." In contrast to the previous three lines that describe the supplicant's lowly condition, this line portrays Girra as exalted and undefiled. The descriptives in this line all have *–u* endings and the words, *ilu ellu*, are similar in sound.

Girra šurbû ilu ellu

Line 15: *Eninna* = *inanna*, "now." *Ilūtu*, "divinity," is the abstract form of *ilu*, "god."

eninna ina maḫar ilūtīka rabîti

Line 16: NU = *ṣalmu*, "image, figurine, statue." *Kaššāpu*, "sorcerer, warlock;" *kaššaptu*, "witch." LÚ and MUNUS are determinatives indicating, redundantly, the gender of the following nouns. ZABAR = *sipparu*, "bronze." *Qātukka* is *qātu*, "hand; power; authority," the locative-adverbial ending *–um*, plus the 2ms pronominal suffix. The *m* assimilates to the *k* of the suffix (see *GAG* Paradigm 5). The *–um* suffix corresponds to prepositional phrases in which a genitive is proceeded by the prepositions *ina* or *ana* (see *GAG* §66); thus, this phrase is translated "in your hand/power." The statues described here were burned during the recitation of this incantation. Afterward, the figures were trampled in water and their remains buried (Abusch, "An Early Form of the Witchcraft Ritual Maqlû," 123).

2 *ṣalmī kaššāpi u kaššapti ša sippari ēpuš qātukka*

17. *ma-ḫar-ka ú-gir-šú-nu-ti-ma ka-a-šá ap-qid-ka*

18. *šu-nu li-mu-tu-ma ana-ku lu-ub-luṭ*

19. *šu-nu li-te-eb-bi-ru-ma ana-ku lu-ši-ir*

20. *šu-nu liq-tu-ú-ma ana-ku lu-um-id*

Line 17: *Ugguru* (D of *egēru*, "to twist"). Twisting the feet of statues was part of the *Bīt rimki* rituals directed to Shamash (see J. A. Scurlock, "KAR 267//BMS 53: A Ghostly Light on *bīt rimki*?," *JAOS* 108.2 [1998], 203–4; see also CAD E, 42). However, the verb in the *Bīt rimki* ritual (*tuzār* from *zâru*, CAD Z, 72) is different from that found in this prayer. Foster translates this line as "I have made crossed marks(?) upon them" (661) and speculates that the action of twisting refers to making cross marks on the statues. *Kâša* is the dative form of the 2ms independent pronoun (*GAG* §41f). The verb *paqādu*, "to assign, entrust," contains an accusative 2ms pronominal suffix and likely refers to the statue while the independent pronoun refers to the deity. The context surrounding the verb *apqid* indicates that it should be interpreted as a performative (for more on the performative in Semitic languages, see F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, "(More) On Performatives in Semitic," *ZAH* 17–20 (2004–2007), 36–81. For a discusion of this within Akkadian see *GAG* §79b and 80c. Regardless of precisely what is done to the statue, the ritual intends to bring harm to the person that cursed the patient.

maḫarka uggiršunūtī-ma kâša apqidka

Line 18: *Šunu*, "they." *Mâtu*, "to die." *Balāṭu*, "to live, to recover." See the introduction to the prayer above for a discussion of the structure and poetic features of lines 18–21. The content of these lines reveals the intention behind the ritual in line 17. The petitioner asks Girra to reverse the effects of the curse against them and allow them to heal, while the person who brought the curse in the first place has a time of suffering.

šunu limūtū-ma anāku lubluṭ

Line 19: *Ešēru*, "to be straight, to be right." The first half of this line is difficult to interpret. The verb should be read either as *liddappirū-ma* (Tzvi Abusch, personal communication) from *duppuru*, "to drive away, expel," or as *litebbirū-ma* from *abāru*, "to bind." From the pattern in lines 18, 20–21 of antithetical parallelism, we can assume that the first half of the line conveys the opposite sense of the second; however, *ešēru* is semantically flexible, which makes the interpretation of this line more difficult.

šunu litebbirū-ma anāku lūšir

Line 20: *Qatû*, "to come to an end." *Mâdu* (*maʾādu*), "to increase."

šunu liqtû-ma anāku lumīd

21. *šu-nu li-ni-šu-ma ana-ku lu-ud-nin*

22. ^{d}GIŠ.BAR *šar-ḫu ṣi-ru šá* DINGIR.MEŠ

23. *ka-šid lim-ni u a-a-bi* KUR-*su-nu-ti-ma a-na-ku la aḫ-ḫab-bil*

24. *ana-ku* ÌR-*ka lu-ub-luṭ lu-uš-lim-ma ma-ḫar-ka lu-uz-ziz*

25. *at-ta-ma* DINGIR.MU *at-ta-ma be-lí*

26. *at-ta-ma da-a-a-ni at-ta-ma re-ṣu-ú-a*

Line 21: *Enēšu*, "to be(come) weak." *Danānu*, "to be(come) strong."
šunu līnišū-ma anāku ludnin

Line 22: *Šarḫu*, "proud, magnificent." *Ṣīru*, "outstanding, eminent." This line reprises the invocations in lines 1 and 14. The first three words of the phrase, *šarḫu ṣīru ša ilī*, all begin with sibilants and the first two words both have *r* and *u* sounds.
Girra šarḫu ṣīru ša ilī

Line 23: *Kašādu*, "to defeat, to overtake." In *kušussunūtī-ma* (G imperative of *kašādu*) the *d* of *kašādu* assimilates into the *š* of the accusative 3mp suffix to form *–ss–* (*GAG* §30f and §65b). *Naḫbulu* (N of *ḫabālu*), "to wrong, to oppress" (see CAD Ḫ, 6 for a note on this word's complicated semantic range). Lines 23 and 24 cluster words that begin with *k*, *l*, and *a* sounds to create a sense of excitement before the unit in lines 25–27.
kāšid lemni u ayyābi kušussunūtī-ma anāku lā aḫḫabbil

Line 24: ÌR = *ardu* (*wardum*), "servant." *Izuzzu*, see line 11. This line is a common trope in which the supplicant promises to praise and serve the god/goddess should he/she heal the sufferer; see Tzvi Abusch, "The Promise to Praise the God in Šuilla Prayers," in *Biblical and Oriental Essays in Memory of Wiliam L. Moran* (ed. Agustinus Gianto; BibOr 48; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2005), 5.
anāku aradka lubluṭ lušlim-ma maḫarka luzziz

Line 25: MU = 1cs pronominal suffix. *Bēlu*, "lord." The use of *–ma* puts focus on the personal pronoun, "*you* (and not some other deity) are my god" (see *GAG* §123a). Lines 25–27 comprise a structural unit; the lines are bound together with the repetition of *attā-ma*. Lines 25 and 26 each consist of two phrases two words in length beginning with *attā-ma*. The two lines build to a crecendo into line 27, which again begins with *attā-ma* but is one long line instead of two short clauses. The first two lines confess fidelity to the deity and recognize his ability to help the petitioner. The final line is framed as a description of the deity, yet it is a veiled plea for the deity to rise up and act in accordance with the confession, "You are the one restoring my fortune."
attā-ma ilī attā-ma bēlī

Line 26: *Dayyānu* "judge." *Rēṣu*, "helper, supporter." We would expect *rēṣī* here; possibly the line below has influenced the choice of the suffix.
attā-ma dayyānī attā-ma rēṣūya

27. *at-ta-ma mu-tir-ru šá gi-mil-li-ia* TU$_6$ ÉN

28. ka-inim-ma uš$_{11}$-búr-ru-da nu zabar-ké

Line 27: *Gimillu*, "kindness, favor; vengeance." *Turru* (D of *târu*, "to return") *gimilla*, "to return an act of kindness; to wreak vengeance" (see CAD G, 74). The logograms TU$_6$ and ÉN represent *šiptu*, "incantation, ritual wording," and are the concluding formula rather than part of the prayer itself (see CAD Š/3, 86). They are not translated.

attā-ma mutirru ša gimillīya

Line 28: The rubric, typically written in Sumerian, identifies the kind of incantation-prayer the text is. The rubric may be translated as "the wording of an ushburuda via bronze figurines." *Ušburuda* means "witchcraft-releasing."

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

Several phrases and words within the prayer to Girra are similar in structure and meaning to biblical analogues. For instance, in line 24 the phrase *maḫarka luzziz* literally means, "may I stand before you"; however, just like the analogous phrase in BH, עמד לִפְנֵי, it is used idiomatically to indicate service to an official or deity (*HALOT*, 841). For example, Num 16:9 "Does it seem too small a thing to you that the god of Israel has separated you from the community of Israel…to perform the service (לַעֲבֹד אֶת־עֲבֹדַת) of Yahweh's tabernacle and to stand before (וְלַעֲמֹד לִפְנֵי) the community to minister to them (לְשָׁרְתָם)?"

This prayer also contains poetic features that are similar to those employed by biblical writers. For instance, lines 18–21 cluster antonym word pairs within the same line: die | live ‖ bind | straight ‖ expire | flourish ‖ weak | strong. Examples of biblical passages with similar structure include Amos 5:15, "Hate evil and love good" (שִׂנְאוּ־רָע וְאֶהֱבוּ טוֹב) and Psalm 107:26, "They went up to the sky / they went down to the depths" (תְּהוֹמוֹת).[1]

In addition to sharing certain poetic features, the psalmists and the author of this prayer to Girra use similar divine titles and descriptions. In Ps 40:18b and the parallel passage in Ps 70:6b the psalmist confesses, "You are my help (Ps 40, עֶזְרָתִי; Ps 70, עֶזְרִי) and my deliverer," which is semantically similar to line 26 in the prayer to Girra: "you are my helper" (*rēṣūya*). Of course confessions such as "you are my god" and "you are my lord" in line 25 are quite common within biblical literature (e.g., Ps 63:2: "O Elohim, (you are) my god, I search for you," אֱלֹהִים אֵלִי אַתָּה אֲשַׁחֲרֶךָּ; and Ps 16:2: "I said to Yahweh, 'You are my lord,'" אָמַרְתְּ לַיהוָה אֲדֹנָי אָתָּה).[2]

[1] For a list of biblical passages that contain word pair clusters, see Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Traditional Techniques in Classical Hebrew Verse* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 152–55.

[2] The 1cs perfect has been restored on the basis of the Greek and Syriac traditions; the MT reads אָמַרְתִּ.

Even though the Bible does not contain apotropaic rituals to counter witchcraft, it does recount rituals that contain curses. When individuals or communities concluded a covenant, curses were invoked upon whomever violated the agreement (e.g., Exod 24). Sometimes biblical writers linked times of adversity with these curses. For instance, the Chronicler asserts that the land finally received its sabbath rest because Yahweh invoked the curse of exile (2 Chron 36:21; see Lev 25:4, 26:34; Jer 29:10). Instead of a declaration of innocence and a specific ritual to ward off curses as seen in the prayer to Girra, biblical writers prescribed confession of sin and repentance to reverse the effects of curses associated with oaths (e.g., Lev 26:40).

Numbers 5:11–31 describes a curse embedded within a ritual used when a man suspected that his wife committed adultery. In these instances the husband would bring his wife before a priest. The priest mixed dust from the tabernacle floor with holy water, and the woman took an oath denying that she had an adulterous encounter. After this, the priest wrote curses on a scroll and washed the ink off into the water and dust mixture. He then gave the mixture to the woman to drink. Presumably, an innocent woman would be unharmed while a guilty one would suffer the curses she imbibed.[3]

[3] This ritual contains several layers of meaning. For a discussion of the various communicative dimensions, see Gerald A. Klingbeil, *Bridging the Gap: Ritual and Ritual Texts in the Bible* (IBRSup 1; Winona Lake, Eisenbrauns, 2007), 212–14, and for a literary and contextual treatment of this ritual, see Richard M. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007), 349–54.

TRANSLATION:

1. Incantation: O Burning Girra, son of Anu,
2. You are the one who decides my case, the secret word.
3. You illuminate the darkness.
4. You straighten out confusions (and) perplexities.
5. You make decisions for the great gods.
6. Without you no god could make a decision.
7. You, yes, you are the giver of instruction and direction.
8. You yourself quickly capture the evildoer.
9. You quickly overtake the evil enemy.
10. I, so-and-so son of so-and-so, whose personal god is such-and-such and whose personal goddess is such-and-such,
11. Afflicted with witchcraft, stand before you.
12. Detestable in the presence of god and man, to you […].
13. Sick to anyone looking at me, I bow before you.
14. O exalted Girra, holy god,
15. Now, before your great divinity,
16. I have made two bronze figures of a sorcerer and sorceress in your hand.
17. Before you I twisted them, and I (hereby) entrust them to you.

18. As for them, let them die, so that I might live.
19. As for them, let them be bound, so that I might go straight.
20. As for them, let them expire, so that I might flourish.
21. As for them, let them be weak, so that I might be strong.
22. O magnificent Girra, eminent among the gods,
23. O conqueror of evil and enemy, conquer them so I am not oppressed.
24. May I, your servant, be healthy and whole (and) well so I might serve you.
25. You are my god; you are my lord.
26. You are my judge; you are my helper.
27. You are the one who restores my fortunes.

28. The wording of an ushburuda via bronze figurines.

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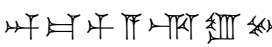
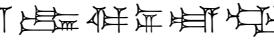
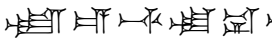
1. 
2. 
3. 
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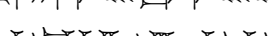
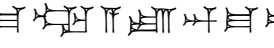
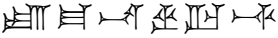
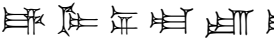
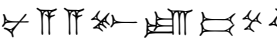
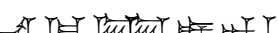
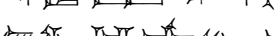
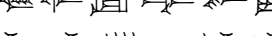
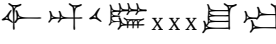
6. 
7. 
8. 
9. 
10. 
11. 
12. 
13. 
14. 
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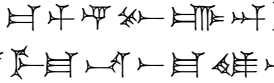
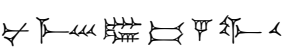
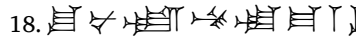
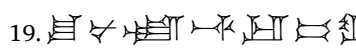
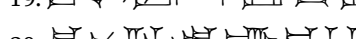
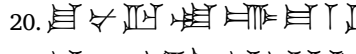
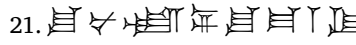
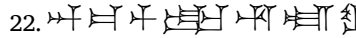
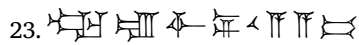
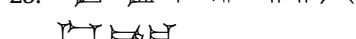
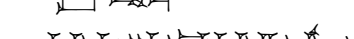
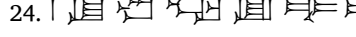
16. 
17. 

18. 
19. 
20. 
21. 
22. 
23. 
24. 
25. 
26. 
27. 
28.

An Incantation-Prayer: Gods of the Night 1

TZVI ABUSCH

GODS OF THE NIGHT:

See page 71.

THE PRAYER:

Context: This address to the gods of the night is the first incantation-prayer in the magical series *Maqlû*, "burning." *Maqlû* is the longest and most important Mesopotamian text concerned with combating witchcraft. This composition comprises eight tablets of incantations and a ritual tablet. The incantation tablets record the text of almost one hundred incantations directed against witches and witchcraft; in the ritual tablet, these incantations are cited by incipit, and alongside each citation appropriate ritual directions are prescribed. Long thought to be a random collection of witchcraft materials, an important breakthrough in the understanding of *Maqlû* came with the discovery that it was a single complex ceremony. This ceremony was performed during a single night and into the following morning at the end of the month Abu (July/August).[1]

But the present text of *Maqlû* stands at the end of a long and complex literary and ceremonial development. An earlier version of the ceremony would have been performed in the daytime and would have begun with what is now the sixth incantation (I 73ff.), which was originally addressed to Shamash. After the ceremony was transferred to the nighttime, the present introductory section, I 1–72, was added. In line with its new ceremonial context, this section now opens with the address to the gods of the night. This opening section is an indictment of the witch. The incantation-prayer draws together magical and legal imagery

[1] For the nature of *Maqlû*, see I. T. Abusch, "Mesopotamian Anti-Witchcraft Literature: Texts and Studies. Part 1: The Nature of *Maqlû*: Its Character, Divisions and Calendrical Setting," *JNES* 33 (1974), 251–62; repr. in Tzvi Abusch, *Mesopotamian Witchcraft* (Ancient Magic and Divination 5; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 99–111. For its history, see idem, "An Early Form of the Witchcraft Ritual *Maqlû* and the Origin of a Babylonian Magical Ceremony," in *Lingering over Words: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William L. Moran* (ed. T. Abusch, et al; HSS 37; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 1–57; repr. in Abusch, *Mesopotamian Witchcraft*, 113–62.

for this purpose. It should be emphasized that this incantation-prayer is not a simple prayer in which a stable negative situation is described and a change asked for. Rather, it is a speech that accompanies a ritual act and gives expression to a dynamic situation. The text thus reflects the changes in state undergone by the patient and the witch from the beginning of the ritual to its end. It is possible that an earlier form of this text ended with line 20 and that lines 21–35 represent an innovation.

Structure: The incantation-prayer is in the form of a speech in the first person made by the patient, who invokes the heavenly gods of Anu (lines 1–3). The patient first presents his plaint in the form of a description of the acts that the witch performed against him and of the resultant state (lines 4–12). On this basis, the patient asks the gods to take up his case (lines 13–14). The patient proclaims that he has caused the accused witch to be present in the judgment in the form of figurines of male and female witches (lines 15–17) and asks that the witch be punished for having sought—perhaps by means of accusations—unmotivated evil against the patient and that the witch's bewitchment be released (lines 18–20). The patient asks to be cleared (of bewitchment and any imputed guilt) by means of a standard set of plants—these plants usually serve to purify, but here they function as (an oath and) a form of juridical ordeal (lines 21–24). The patient, having proven his innocence and having been cleared (lines 25–26), is now able to assert that since the witch's utterance belongs to an evil witch, her accusation has been refuted (lines 27–28), and to ask the gods of the night to bring the witch to justice and indict her, and the night watches to release the witchcraft (lines 29–30). By means of a magical identification and act, the patient expresses the wish that the organs of speech of the witch be destroyed (lines 31–33). Finally, he asserts that the witch's actions and accusations have been wholly nullified (lines 34–35) by the gods of the night (line 36).

ESSENTIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Gods of the Night. See page 73.

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1. ÉN *al-si-ku-nu-ši* DINGIR.MEŠ *mu-ši-ti*

2. *it-ti-ku-nu al-si mu-ši-tu*$_4$ *kal-la-tu*$_4$ *kut-tùm-tu*$_4$

3. *al-si ba-ra-ri-tu*$_4$ *qab-li-tu*$_4$ *u na-ma-ri-tu*$_4$

4. *áš-šú* MUNUS.UŠ$_{11}$.ZU *ú-kaš-šip-an-ni*

5. *e-le-ni-tu*$_4$ *ub-bi-ra-an-ni*

6. DINGIR.MU *ù iš*$_8$*-tár-i*$_{14}$ *ú-šas-su-ú* UGU.MU

Lines 1: ÉN = *šiptu*, "incantation, ritual wording." This superscript marks the beginning of the ritual wording; it is not part of the prayer. *Šasû*, "to call." The form *alsīkunūši* is a 1cs preterite plus 2mp dative suffix, which functions here as an accusative. The preterite forms of *šasû* in lines 1–3 are examples of performative preterites and should be translated "I call." DINGIR.MEŠ = *ilū*, "gods." *Mušītu*, "night."

alsīkunūši ilū mušīti

Line 2: *Itti*, "with," bears a 2mp pronominal suffix. *Kallatu*, "bride." *Kuttumtu*, "veiled, covered."

ittīkunu alsi mušītu kallatu kuttumtu

Line 3: *Barārītu*, "twilight." *Qablītu*, "midnight." *Namārītu*, "dawn." These are the names of the three watches of the night. *U*, "and."

alsi barārītu qablītu u namārītu

Line 4: This line describes the actions of the witch; line 5, her utterances. Line 4 refers to the witch's act of silencing the victim (=speaker); line 5 refers to the witch's act of leveling an accusation against the victim. *Aššu*, "because," at the beginning of line 4 governs lines 4–12; hence, the verbs in these lines are in the subjunctive (in this context note *amruṣu* in line 7) and are singular, not plural. MUNUS.UŠ$_{11}$.ZU = *kaššaptu*, "witch." *Kuššupu* (D of *kašāpu*), "to bewitch." The form *ukaššīpanni* is a 3cs preterite plus a 1cs accusative pronominal suffix (so also the verb in line 5).

aššu kaššaptu ukaššīpanni

Line 5: *Elēnītu*, "deceitful," is used substantively here. *Ubburu* (D of *abāru*), "to accuse" (<"to bind").

elēnītu ubbiranni

Line 6: DINGIR.MU = *ilī*, "my god." *Ištarī*, "my goddess." *Šussû* (Š of *nesû*), "to drive away, to cause to be estranged." The 3cs preterite is normally *ušassi*; *ušassû* adds the subjunctive *–u*. UGU.MU = *elīya*, "from, upon me."

ilī u ištarī ušassû elīya

7. UGU *a-me-ri-ia*$_5$ *am-ru-ṣu a-na-ku*

8. *em-de-ku la ṣa-la-lu* GI$_6$ *ù ur-ra*

9. *qu-ú im-ta-na-al-lu-ú* KA-*ia*

10. *ú-pu-un-ti* KA.MU *ip-ru-su*

11. A.MEŠ *maš-ti-ti-ia*$_5$ *ú-maṭ-ṭu-ú*

12. *e-le-li nu-bu-ú ḫi-du-ti si-ip-di*

13. *i-zi-za-nim-ma* DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ *ši-ma-a da-ba-bi*

Line 7: *Amāru*, "to see." The participle is used substantively and bears a 1cs pronominal suffix. *Marāṣu*, "to be(come) ill, sickening." *Amruṣu*: so in one Nineveh MS. Other Nineveh MSS read *am-ru-uṣ*.

eli āmerīya amruṣu anāku

Line 8: *Emēdu*, "to beset (with)." The form is a 1cs predicative; the speaker is the subject of this passive construction (this subject would have been the first object in an active construction), and *lā ṣalālu*, "not sleeping," is the object (it would have been the second object in an active construction). GI$_6$ = *mūšu*, "night." *Mūša* and *urra* are accusatives of time.

emdēku lā ṣalālu mūša u urra

Line 9: *Qû*, lit. "thread, string," but here "gag." *Mitallû* (Gtn of *malû*), "to fill continually." The form is a 3cs durative with subjunctive. KA = *pû*, "mouth."

qû imtanallû pīya

Line 10: *Upuntu* (*upumtu*), a type of flour, here stands for food in general. KA.MU = *pīya* (see line 9). *Parāsu*, "to block, to keep distant." The verb is a 3cs preterite with subjunctive; *qû* from line 9 is the subject.

upunti pīya iprusu

Line 11: A.MEŠ = *mû*, "water." *Maštītu*, "drinking organ." *Muṭṭû* (D of *maṭû*), "to diminish."

mê maštītīya umaṭṭû

Line 12: *Elēlu*, "cheerful song." *Nubû*, "lament, wailing." *Ḫidûtu*, "joy, rejoicing." *Sipdu*, "wailing, mourning."

elēli nubû ḫidûtī sipdi

Line 13: *Izuzzu*, "to stand"; here *izuzzu* connotes participation in a judicial proceeding. The form is a cp impv. with 1cs dative pronominal suffix. DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ = *ilū rabûtu*, "great gods." *Šemû*, "to hear," is also in the form of a cp impv. *Dabābu*, "to speak."

14. *di-ni di-na a-lak-ti lim-da*

15. *e-pu-uš* NU LÚ.UŠ$_{11}$.ZU.MU *ù* MUNUS.UŠ$_{11}$.ZU.MU

16. *ša e-piš-ia*$_5$ *ù muš-te-piš-ti-ia*$_5$

17. *áš-kun ina šap-li-ku-nu-ma a-dab-bu-ub di-ni*

18. *áš-šú i-pu-šá lem-né-e-ti iš-te-ʾa-a la ba-na-a-ti*

19. *ši-i li-mut-ma a-na-ku lu-ub-luṭ*

The inf. with 1cs pronominal suffix is functioning nominally; thus, "my speaking," which denotes here the supplicant's legal case against the witch.
izizzānim-ma ilū rabûtu šimâ dabābī

Line 14: *Dīnu*, "legal case." *Dânu* (*diānu*), "to judge." *Alaktu* here has the meaning "(oracular) decision." *Alaktu,* from *alāku*, "to go," refers to the movements of heavenly bodies. *Lamādu* normally means "to learn, to come to know," but in this context the verb has a revelatory connotation. The phrase *dīnī dīnā alaktī limdā* here is equivalent to *dīnī dīnā purussâya pursā*, "judge my case, give a decision." See T. Abusch, "*Alaktu* and *Halakhah*: Oracular Decision, Divine Revelation," *HTR* 80 (1987), 15–42.
dīnī dīnā alaktī limdā

Line 15: *Epēšu*, "to do, to make." The form is a 1cs preterite. NU = *ṣalmu*, "image, figurine." LÚ.UŠ$_{11}$.ZU, MUNUS.UŠ$_{11}$.ZU = *kaššāpu*, "warlock," *kaššaptu*, "witch."
ēpuš ṣalam kaššāpīya u kaššaptīya

Line 16: *Ša*, "of." *Ēpišu*, "sorcerer." *Muštēpištu*, "the woman who instigates sorcery," or perhaps in some instances, just "sorceress." *Ēpišu* is sometimes coupled with *ēpištu.*
ša ēpišīya u muštēpištīya

Line 17: *Šakānu*, "to set, to place." The performative preterite here has the force of a punctual present, "I set (it)." *Ina šapli* idiomatically means "at the feet (of)." The noun bears a 2mp pronominal suffix. The durative *adabbub* has the force of a durative present, "I am (now) pleading."
aškun ina šaplīkunū-ma adabbub dīnī

Line 18: *Aššu*, see line 4. *Epēšu*, "to perform" here. The witch is the subject; the supplicant is the referent of the 1cs dative suffix (*–am*, with loss of final *m*, *–a*). *Lemnu*, "evil." *Šiteʾʾû* (Gtn of *šeʾû*), "to seek constantly." The form is a 3cs preterite with a 1cs dative pronominal suffix. *Banû*, "good." Both adjectives are fem. pl.
aššu īpuša lemnēti ištaʾʾâ lā banâti

Line 19: *Šī*, "she." *Mâtu*, "to die." *Anāku*, "I." *Balāṭu*, "to live, to be well." Both verbs are precative: the first is 3cs, referring to the supplicant's wish for the witch; the second is 1cs, referring to the supplicant's desire for himself.
šī limūt-ma anāku lubluṭ

20. *kiš-*[*p*]*u-šá ru-ḫu-šá ru-su-ú-šá lu pa-áš-ru*

21. GIŠ.ŠINIG *lil-líl-an-ni šá qim-ma-tú ša-ru-ú*

22. [G]IŠ.GIŠIMMAR *lip-šur-an-ni ma-ḫi-rat ka-lu-ú* IM

23. Ú.IN.NU.UŠ *li-bi-ban-ni šá* KI-*tì ma-la-a-ta*

24. GIŠ.ŠE.Ù.SUḪ$_5$ *lip-šur-an-ni šá* ŠE.AM *ma-la-a-ta*

25. *ina maḫ-ri-ku-nu e-te-lil ki-ma* Ú.KI.KAL

Line 20: *Kišpū* (usually plural), *ruḫû*, and *rusû* are all words referring to sorcery. *Pašāru*, "to release." *Lū pašrū* is a precative in *lū*, "may, let," plus the 3mp predicative form. It is possible that this construction is an asseverative: "verily are her witchcraft . . . released."

kišpūša ruḫûša rusûša lū pašrū

Line 21: The main verbs in lines 21–24 are all precatives with a 1cs pronominal accusative suffix; each initial half of the line names a plant and is followed by the precative verb, indicating the supplicant's wish for what the plant should do to him. GIŠ.ŠINIG = *bīnu*, "tamarisk." *Ullulu* (D of *elēlu*), "to clear." The relative clause introduced by *ša* modifies tamarisk. *Qimmatu*, "crown," here is an accusative of respect. *Šarû*, "to be copious," is a 3ms predicative with subjunctive.

bīnu lillilanni ša qimmatu šarû

Line 22: GIŠ.GIŠIMMAR = *gišimmaru*, "date-palm," is feminine here (see *māḫirat*). *Pašāru*, see line 20. *Lipšuranni* is a 3cs precative plus a 1cs accusative suffix. *Māḫirat* is a fs participle in construct from *maḫāru*, "to withstand," it modifies date-palm. *Kalû*, "all, totality." IM = *šāru*, "wind."

gišimmaru lipšuranni māḫirat kalû šāri

Line 23: Ú.IN.NU.UŠ = *maštakal*, "soapwort," is feminine here (see *malâta*). *Ubbubu* (D of *ebēbu*), "to cleanse." KI-*tì* = *erṣeti*, "earth." *Malû*, "to be(come) full, to fill." *Malâta* is a 3fs transitive *parsāku* form. Both here and in line 24 *malâta* is in the subjunctive.

maštakal libbibanni ša erṣeti malâta

Line 24: GIŠ.ŠE.Ù.SUḪ$_5$ = *terinnatu*, "cone," is usually understood as the plural of *terinnu* and transcribed *terinnātu*, but note here the singular verb form *malâta*. In this line, *malâta* is intransitive. ŠE.AM = *še'u*, "grain," indicates the seeds with which the cone is filled.

terinnatu lipšuranni ša še'a malâta

Line 25: *Ina maḫri*, "before, in the presence of." *Elēlu*, "to be(come) pure." The verbs *ētelil*, *ētebib*, and *azzaku* in lines 25–26 are in the perfect, indicating that the state of cleanliness or innocence described has now been achieved as a result of the wishes of the previous lines (21–24). All three verbs are 1cs. *Kīma*, "like, as." Ú.KI.KAL = *sassatu*, "grass."

ina maḫrīkunu ētelil kīma sassati

26. *e-te-bi-ib az-za-ku ki-ma la-ár-di*

27. *tu-ú-šá ša* MUNUS.UŠ$_{11}$.ZU *le-mut-te*

28. *tu-ur-rat* INIM-*sa ana* KA-*šá* EME-*šá ka-aṣ-rat*

29. *ina* UGU *kiš-pi-šá lim-ḫa-ṣu-ši* DINGIR.MEŠ *mu-ši-ti*

30. 3 EN.NUN.MEŠ *šá mu-ši lip-šu-ra*$^{!}$ *ru-ḫe-šá lem-nu-ti*

31. KA-*šá lu-ú* Ì.UDU EME-*šá lu-ú* MUN

32. *šá iq-bu-ú* INIM ḪUL-*tì-ia*$_5$ *ki-ma* Ì.UDU *lit-ta-tuk*

Line 26: *Ebēbu*, "to be(come) clean." *Zakû*, "to be(come) innocent." The *t* of the perfect assimilates to the *z* of the root (*–zt–* becomes *–zz–*). *Lardu*, "nard."
ētebib azzaku kīma lardi

Line 27: *Tû*, "spell, incantation." *Lemutte* is an adjective, "evil," modifying *kaššaptu* ("her spell being that of an evil witch"), and not the predicate of the clause. Note the transformations in our text achieved by the use of forms of *lemēnu* as additions or replacements: thus *kaššaptu* in line 4 becomes *kaššaptu lemutte* here in line 27; *aššu . . . ukaššipanni . . . ubbiranni* in lines 4–5 becomes *aššu īpuša lemnēti* in line 18.
tûša ša kaššapti lemutte

Line 28: *Turru* (D of *târu*), "to turn back." The form of both *turrat* and *kaṣrat* is a 3fs predicative. INIM-*sa* = *amāssa*: *amātu* (*awātum*), "word," plus a 3fs pronominal suffix (*–tš–* becomes *–ss–*). EME = *lišānu*, "tongue." The *n* assimilates to the *š* of the 3fs pronominal suffix. *Kaṣāru*, "to tie up, to bind."
turrat amāssa ana pîša lišāšša kaṣrat

Line 29: *ina* UGU = *ina muḫḫi*, lit., "on top of"; here "on account of." *Maḫāṣu*, "to strike." The form of *limḫaṣūši* is a 3mp precative plus a 3fs accusative suffix. Here *maḫāṣu* connotes intimidation, humiliation, and accusation. *Ilū mušīti*, "the gods of the night," are the subjects of the verb.
ina muḫḫi kišpīša limḫaṣūši ilū mušīti

Line 30: 3 = *šalāš*. EN.NUN.MEŠ = *maṣṣarātu* (sg. *maṣṣartu*), "observation, guard, watch." The reading *lip-šu-ra*$^{!}$ is an emendation of *lip-šu-ru*; the attested forms in the MSS are *lipšurū*, *lipšur*, and *lipašširū*. In view of the divergence in the readings, the verb should be emended to *lipšurā* in agreement with the feminine plural subject (*maṣṣarātu*).
šalāš maṣṣarātu ša mūši lipšurā ruḫêša lemnūti

Line 31: *Lū*, "may it be." Ì.UDU = *lipû* (*lipium*), "tallow." MUN = *ṭabtu*, "salt."
pūša lū lipû lišāšša lū ṭabtu

Line 32: *Qabû*, "to speak." In view of the equations in line 31, it is clear that, contrary to most earlier translations, the subject of *iqbû* here must be *pû*, "mouth," and that of *īpušu*

33. *šá i-pu-šú kiš-pi ki-ma* MUN *liš-ḫar-miṭ*

34. *ki-iṣ-ru-šá pu-uṭ-ṭu-ru ep-še-tu-šá ḫul-lu-qa*

35. *kal a-ma-tu-šá ma-la-a* EDIN

36. *ina qí-bit iq-bu-ú* DINGIR.MEŠ *mu-ši-ti* TU_6 ÉN

in line 33 must be *lišānu*, "tongue." ḪUL-*tì* = *lemutti*, "evil, wickedness." *Itattuku* (Gtn of *natāku*), "to drip ever away." The form of the verb is 3cs precative.

ša iqbû amāt lemuttīya kīma lipî littattuk

Line 33: *Lišḫarmiṭ* is a Š precative 3cs from *naḫarmuṭu*, "to dissolve." There is a variant that reads *liḫḫarmiṭ*, an N precative 3cs. Semantically, *liḫḫarmiṭ* seems to be the better reading, but it is only attested in two MSS, one Babylonian, the other from Nippur, whereas *lišḫarmiṭ* is found in four MSS, including all Nineveh texts.

ša īpušu kišpī kīma ṭabti lišḫarmiṭ

Line 34: *Kiṣru*, "bond, knot." *Puṭṭuru* (D of *paṭāru*), "to release." *Ḫulluqu* (D of *ḫalāqu*), "to nullify." Both *puṭṭurū* and *ḫulluqā* are predicatives; the former is 3mp, the latter 3fp. The reading *ḫulluqā* is to be preferred over the variant *ḫulluqū* because its subject is a feminine plural noun *epšētūša*, "her deeds." Lines 34–35 assert that the actions (line 34) and the utterances (line 35, actually accusations) of the witch have been nullified. These two lines parallel the initial description of the witch's deeds in lines 4–5: 34 ‖ 4 and 35 ‖ 5.

kiṣrūša puṭṭurū epšētūša ḫulluqā

Line 35: *Kal*, "all" (see *kalû* in line 22). *Amâtu* is the plural of *amātu* (see line 28). A variant in this line shows the precative *limlâ* rather than *malâ* (compare line 23). EDIN = *ṣēru*, "field."

kal amâtūša malâ ṣēra

Line 36: *Ina qibīt*, "according to the command of/that." *Qibīt* in construct introduces a subordinate clause, which follows in the second half of the line. TU_6.ÉN marks the end of the ritual wording (compare ÉN in line 1). This last line sounds like a standard legitimating formula and therefore blurs the boundary between supplicatory and incantatory speech (see page 20 in the general introduction). Note, however, the variant in line 35, which, if accepted, would give this last sentence a very different tone.

ina qibīt iqbû ilū mušīti TU_6.ÉN

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

Our incantation-prayer, as many others in *Maqlû* and elsewhere, accompanies a dynamic ritual and thus gives expression to the changes in state experienced by the patient and witch throughout the ritual. In this context we note that some psalms of individual lament seem, because of the apparent use of the perfect, to contain not only the petitioner's prayer, but also an expression of trust that the deity has heard him (e.g., Ps 6). Some have taken this to mean that the psalm is part of a ritual and that the statement of confidence is the supplicant's response to the deity's decision spoken by the priest in the form of an ora-

cle after the prayer itself, an interpretation to which I do not subscribe. But should this interpretation be correct, then the laments containing the statement of confidence should be compared to our incantation-prayer, for they too would have been part of a dynamic ritual.[1]

As noted earlier, this incantation-prayer was recited at night to the gods of the night sky. For biblical texts recited as part of a night ritual, see, e.g., Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1–59: A Continental Commentary* (trans. Hilton C. Oswald; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 179.

For a description of the evil actions of one's enemies and their unjust accusations, as well as the victim's imprecations against these enemies, see Ps 109.

For the prohibition against witchcraft in the Hebrew Bible, see Exod 22:17. Pentateuchal legislations object to some practices of divination and magic largely because these practices are associated with foreigners (e.g., Deut 18:9ff., Lev 19:26, 31, and 20:6, 27). Magic and monotheism are not incompatible, and of course magic was practiced in ancient Israel.[2]

Sigmund Mowinckel argued with some justice that פּוֹעֲלֵי עָוֶן of the Psalms were malevolent magicians similar to the Mesopotamian witches (see his *Psalmenstudien I*: *ʾÅwän und die individuellen Klagepsalmen* (Kristiania: in Kommission bei Jacob Dybwad, 1921).

A few points of specific interest in the Hebrew Bible: For line 14, compare perhaps usages of רִיב involving God adjudicating a case (see, e.g., Pss 35:1, 63:1). *Alaktu* in line 14 with the meaning "(oracular) decision" should be compared with later Hebrew and Aramaic הלכתא / הלכה. For the meaning of the Akkadian and the relationship with the Hebrew terms, see Abusch, "*Alaktu* and *Halakhah*: Oracular Decision, Divine Revelation," *HTR* 80 (1987), 15–42. For the cleansing motif in lines 21–24, compare Ps 51:4. With the striking in line 29, see Ps 3:8, "deliver me, O my God! For you slap all my enemies in the face; you break the teeth of the wicked." For line 32 and the melting of wax, see Mic 1:4 and Ps 68:3.

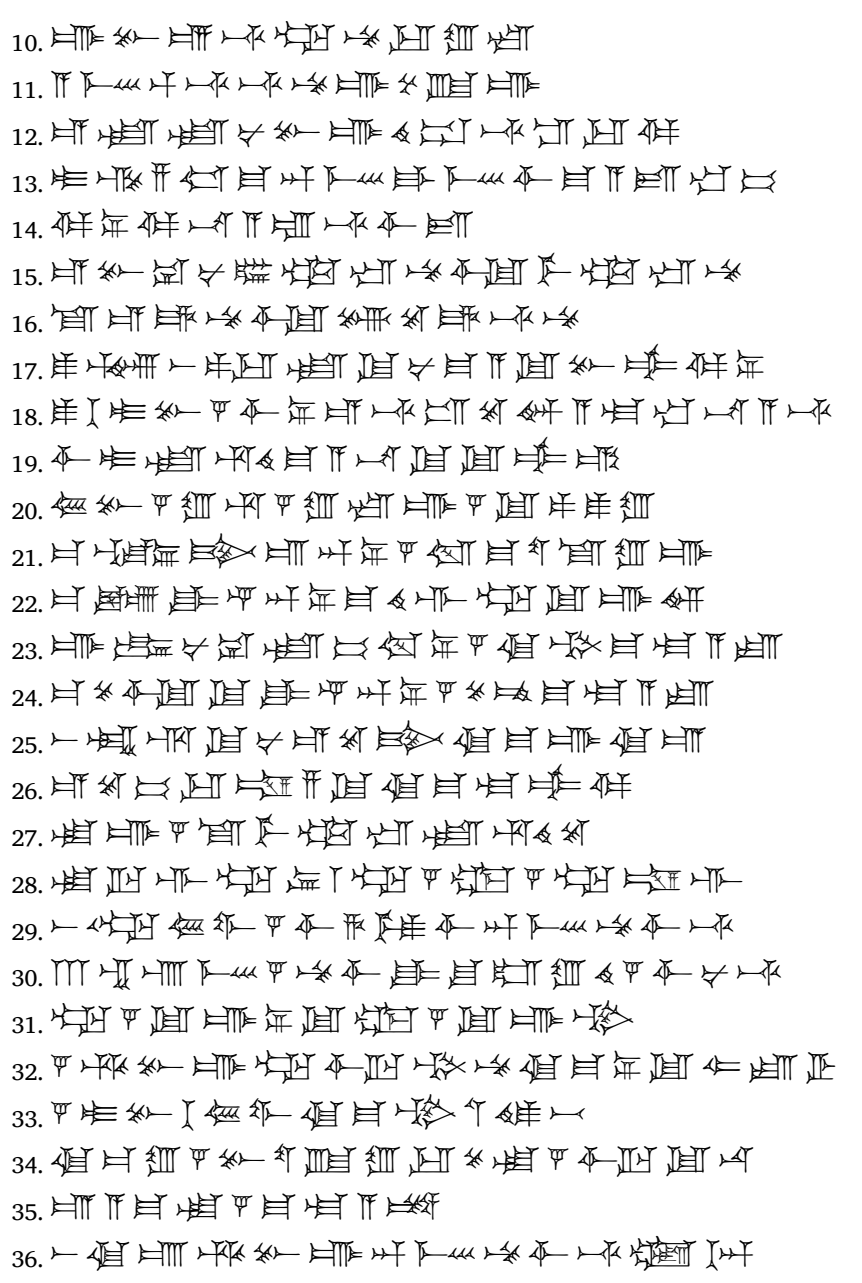
[1] For a different understanding of these psalms, see Anna Zernecke's suggestion on page 279.
[2] See my forthcoming article on "Exorcism" in the *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception.*

TRANSLATION:

1. Incantation. I call upon you, gods of the night,
2. With you I call upon night, the veiled bride,
3. I call upon twilight, midnight, and dawn.
4. Because a witch has bewitched me,
5. A deceitful woman has accused me,
6. She has (thereby) caused my god and goddess to be estranged from me (and)
7. I have become sickening to anyone who beholds me,
8. I am (thus) unable to rest day or night,
9. A gag continually filling my mouth
10. Has kept food distant from my mouth and

11. Has diminished the water which passes through my drinking organ,
12. My song of joy has become wailing and my rejoicing mourning—
13. Stand by me, O great gods, and give heed to my suit,
14. Judge my case and grant me an (oracular) decision!
15. I have made a figurine of my warlock and witch,
16. Of my sorcerer and the woman who instigates sorcery against me,
17. I set (it) at your feet and am now pleading my case:
18. Because she has performed evil against me and has constantly conjured up baseless charges against me,
19. May she die, but I live.
20. May her witchcraft, her spittle, her enchainment be released.
21. May the tamarisk that is copious of crown clear me,
22. May the date palm that withstands all winds release me,
23. May the soapwort that fills the earth cleanse me,
24. May the cone that is full of seeds release me.
25. In your presence have I now become pure like grass,
26. Clean and innocent like nard.
27. Her spell being that of an evil witch,
28. Her word has been turned back into her mouth and her tongue constricted.
29. On a(c)count of her witchcraft, may the gods of the night strike her,
30. May the three watches of the night release her evil spell.
31. Her mouth be tallow, her tongue be salt:
32. May that which uttered evil against me drip ever away like tallow,
33. May that which performed witchcraft against me dissolve like salt.
34. Her bonds are broken, her deeds nullified;
35. All of her words fill the steppe—
36. By the command pronounced by the gods of the night. Incantation.

CUNEIFORM:



An Incantation-Prayer: Ishtar 24

ANNA ELISE ZERNECKE

ISHTAR:

Ishtar (Sum. Inana) is the most prominent goddess of the Mesopotamian pantheon, of prime importance in all stages of history, and venerated in many (most!) places (e.g., Arbela, Ashur, Niniveh, Uruk, and Babylon), partly with special names.[1] Different genealogical places in the pantheon are attributed to her: Inana / Ishtar can be described as daughter of An, the god of heaven, or of Sin, the moon-god (see Ishtar 2:5, 105 on pages 261 and 278 of this volume). In contrast to other female deities, she is often not the wife of a mighty god but independent, though in Sumerian sources she can be An's consort or, in Ashur, married to the god Ashur. Her most prominent husband is Dumuzi (biblical Tammuz; Ishtar 24 was transmitted as part of a ritual for Ishtar and Dumuzi). As she is the epitome of a female goddess, from Old Babylonian times onwards, her name with the divine determinative (^{d}*ištaru*) is used as an appellative, meaning "goddess,"[2] especially—with suffix—for the personal protective deity (see Ishtar 2:39, 67, 68, 86, beginning on page 267 of this volume). She is the goddess of the planet Venus in both its form as evening star and morning star. Most often, she is characterized as goddess of love, sexuality, and war.[3] This combination of "competences" has been explained as the result of the fusion of several deities.[4] Several sources emphasize her androgynity.[5] Interestingly, her sexual aspect does not make her a mother-goddess—she is only rarely presented as mother, though her stay in the Netherworld results in the loss of fertility.[6] She is prominent in several mythical texts, either as a warlike goddess (e.g. Descent to the

[1] For an overview see Wilcke, 75–79.
[2] Selz, 33.
[3] Wilcke, 82–85; Abusch, 452–53; Selz, 30–33.
[4] Abusch, 453–54. Selz, 37–39, alternatively emphasizes her embodying of opposing aspects and general bipolarity.
[5] Groneberg, 156–65; but see Selz, 38.
[6] Abusch, 454; Selz, 38.

Netherworld, Agushaya) or, mostly in lyrical compositions, as beloved of Dumuzi.[7] Ishtar is often associated with lions.

In both prayers addressed to her that are part of this volume (Ishtar 2 and 24), her astral and warlike aspects are particularly stressed. Especially in Ishtar 2, she is the great and omnipotent goddess whose competence is universal and who can save from the realm of chaos and death. She is the high goddess, the addressee in case of problems with the personal protective deities (see Ishtar 2:85, 86 on page 275). This coincides with the fact that there is only dubious evidence that she was anyone's personal deity herself, though her minister Ninshubur is known in this function.[8]

Both prayers, and especially their invocations, cannot be read as "dogmatic treatises" of Ishtar's characteristics. Rather, they emphasize those aspects that are important for the intention of the text: the supplicant wants something, therefore they stress, on the one hand, the characteristics appealed to, and, on the other, traits that they experience and interpret them in a positive way.

Ishtar is related to the levantine Astarte[9] and is one of the probable candidates for the identification of the "queen of heaven" (מלכת השמים) in Jer 7:18; 44:17–19, 25.[10] In addition, the name Esther (אֶסְתֵּר) has been discussed as possibly derived from Ishtar.[11]

THE PRAYER:[12]

The text of the prayer is transmitted with small variants in six manuscripts. As none of them is unbroken, though three of them transmit the prayer in its entirety, the text given here is eclectic and usually follows the majority of the manuscripts.

The prayer is transmitted in different ritual contexts. The editions of Farber and Schwemer both publish manuscripts in which it forms part of a ritual addressed to Ishtar and Dumuzi. The supplicant is suffering because magical rites have been performed against them; figurines of them have been buried in a grave. The ritual aims at liberating the supplicant from the netherworld while sending the sorcerers into it. The mythical background for the ritual is Ishtar's descent into the netherworld.[13] The prayer is the first spoken part of the ritual

[7] Wilcke, 82–85.

[8] Karel van der Toorn, *Familiy Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel: Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life* (SHCANE 7; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 80–81. Nevertheless, her name is prominent in the onomasticon; see Wilcke, 86.

[9] Selz, 32–33.

[10] Abusch, 455; Selz, 38–39.

[11] Abusch, 455.

[12] [Ed. note: The author does not agree with the use of the conventional designation "incantation-prayer" tentatively adopted by the editor of this volume. In the interest of consistency, she has graciously allowed the word to stand in the title of this treatment.]

[13] Schwemer, *Rituale*, 215–17; see also Farber, 218–21.

after the preparations. Nevertheless, the supplicant does not introduce themselves by name; it is inscribed on the figurine of them which is formed before the recitation of the prayer.

The prayer begins with an invocation (lines 1–8) in which Ishtar's greatness is praised, especially the effect of her command (*ina qibītīki Ištar*, lines 4 and 7) on the suffering. In the following lines (9–14), the supplicant presents themselves as suffering and appealing to Ishtar, asking her to decide their case and hoping to witness her aspects just praised. In lines 15–22, the machinations of sorcerers are identified as the root of the supplicant's sufferings, ending with the proclamation of the decision to act magically against them (line 22). The prayer ends (23–27) with the supplicant's entrusting themselves to Ishtar's might and pleas.

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1. ÉN KÙ-*tum* ^{d}15 *šá-qu-tu* DINGIR.MEŠ ^{d}*í-gì-gì*

2. *e-pi-šat a-nun-ti šá-ki-nat tu-qu-un-ti*

3. *šá-ru-uḫ-tu gít-mal-tu* ^{d}15.MEŠ

4. *ina qí-bi-ti-ka* ^{d}15 *uš-te-še-re te-ne-še-e-te*

5. LÚ.GIG *i-bal-lu-uṭ a-mi-ru* IGI-*ki*

Line 1: ÉN = *šiptu*, the superscription of the prayer, which is not part of the text to be recited. *Šiptu* is usually translated as "incantation" (CAD Š/3, 86); but it should be understood as a technical term for the beginning of the text to be recited in a ritual; thus, "ritual wording" or the like. KÙ = *ellu*, "pure, clean, holy." *Šaqû* (m), *šaqūtu*, *šaqītu* (f), "high, elevated"; as the adjective is the regens of a construct chain, the *–u* at the end is not expected. DINGIR.MEŠ = *ilū* "gods." *Igigû*, the gods of heaven, see Ishtar 2, notes to line 3. In MS HH, the line is longer: *šaqūt ilī šaruḫti Igigî*, "most high among the gods, splendid one of the Igigi!" (*Šarḫu*, "proud, splendid.") In all preserved texts, the name Ishtar (lines 1, 4, 7, 8, 15) is written differently, the single MSS are not consistent: ^{d}INANA, ^{d}15, and ^{d}IŠ$_8$.DAR.

šiptu: *elletum Ištar šaqūtu ilī Igigî*

Line 2: *Epēšu*, "to do, to make." This verb is used four times in this prayer (lines 2, 14 twice, and 22). In all other contexts, its special connotation is important: besides the neutral sense "to do," it can also mean "to perform" (a ritual, magic, especially hostile magic, 'Schadenzauber'; see Schwemer, *Rituale*, 1, n.2.). *Anuntu*, "fight, combat." *Šakānu*, "to put, to place, to arrange." *Tuquntu* (*tuqumtu*), "battle." Note Ishtar 2:6 (page 261): the second part of the line is identical.

ēpišat anunti šākinat tuqunti

Line 3: *Gitmālu* (m), *gitmāltu* (f), "perfect, ideal." ^{d}15 is not only a way of writing the name of the goddess Ishtar, but also the noun *ištaru*, "goddess." As *gitmāltu ištarāti* is a construct chain, the case vowel ending *gitmāltu* is not expected.

šaruḫtu gitmāltu ištarāti

Line 4: *Qibītu*, "command, order." The suffix is written *–ka* (2ms) here rather than the expected *–ki* (2fs), but it certainly refers to Ishtar. *Ina qibītika / qibītīki* at the head of this line connects the line to lines 7 and 23. *Uštešširē* is 3fp durative from *šutēšuru* (Št pass. of *ešēru*), "to be put in order, to be guided aright." *Tenēštu*, "people, personnel," pl. *tenēšētu*, "humankind." The ending is grammatically nominative. In lines 4–11 the reading in MS HH is partly different. These differences are normalized and translated at the end of every note. Variant HH: *ina qabêki Ištar iššerā te*[*nēšētu*], "at your speaking, Ishtar, humankind is well."

ina qibītika Ištar uštešširē tenēšēte

Line 5: LÚ.GIG = *marṣu*, "sick person." *Balāṭu*, "to live, to be healed." *Amāru*, "to see, to look at." The participle, which modifies *marṣu*, is bound to the following substantive (IGI = *pānū*, "face"). An "overhanging" *u* on a participle in construct is not uncommon in SB

6. *ip-paṭ-ṭar e-il-ta-šú i-te-eb-bi ár-ḫìš*

7. *ina qí-bit-ki* ^{d}15 *la na-ṭi-lu* IGI.LÁ ^{d}ZÁLAG

8. *iš-šèr* ^{d}15 *la i-šá-ru a-mi-ru* IGI-*ki*

9. *ana-ku šum-ru-ṣu* IGI-*ki ak-mis az-ziz*

10. *ana da-nu-uš di-ni-iá di-pa-rat* DINGIR.MEŠ *as-ḫur-ki*

Akkadian (see Brigitte R. M. Groneberg, *Syntax, Morphologie und Stil der jungbabylonischen „hymnischen" Literatur*, 2 Vols. [Freiburger Altorientalische Studien 14/1–2; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1987], 2.41 for examples). Besides Ishtar's verbal action (lines 4, 7), the invocation is structured by the effects of seeing her face on the suffering (lines 5, 8). See Ishtar 2:40–41 (see page 267). Variant HH: *mītu iballuṭ*, "the dead one lives."

marṣu iballuṭ āmiru pānīki

Line 6: *Napṭuru* (N of *paṭāru*), "to be loosened, to be untied." The form is a 3cs durative. *E'iltu* (*i'iltu*), "bond, liability, sin." *Tebû*, "to rise up, to get up." *Arḫiš*, "quickly, hastily." Variant HH: *kasû ippaṭṭar,* "the one who is bound is untied."

ippaṭṭar e'iltašu itebbi arḫiš

Line 7: See line 4. We expect *ina qibītīki* rather than *ina qibītki*. Perhaps the BIT sign is to be read *biti*. *Nāṭilu*, "seeing"; *lā nāṭilu*, "blind." IGI.LÁ = *amāru*, "to see, to look at." ^{d}ZÁLAG = *nūru*, "light." Variant HH: *lā nāṭi*[*lu*, "the blin[d one . . .]."

ina qibītīki Ištar lā nāṭilu immar nūra

Line 8: See line 5. *Ešēru*, "to be well, to thrive, to prosper." *Išaru*, "straight, right, in order"; *lā išaru*, "not right." The participle *āmiru* modifies *lā išaru*. See Ishtar 2:41. HH: *iššer Ištar lā išaru ina* [. . .], "the unfortunate becomes all right, Ishtar, in. . . ."

iššer Ištar lā išaru āmiru pānīki

Line 9: *Anāku*, "I." *Šumruṣu*, "suffering" (adj.). The use of *šumruṣu* refers back to the praise of Ishtar's effect on the *marṣu* (line 5; *marṣu* and *šumruṣu* come from the same root). IGI = *maḫru*, "front"; (*ina*) *maḫar*, "before, in the presence of (someone)." *Kamāsu*, "to kneel, to squat down." *Izuzzu*, "to stand, to serve, to be present." *Kamāsu* and *izuzzu* are both preterites which can be interpreted as performative (Koinzidenzfall); see Mayer, *UFBG*, 181–209. Variant HH: *anāku šumruṣāku maḫarki* [. . .], "I am suffering, in front of you [. . .]."

anāku šumruṣu maḫarki akmis azziz

Line 10: *Dipāru*, "torch." The fem. form only occurs here. *Dânu* (*diānum*), "to judge," often with *dīnu* ("legal decision, lawsuit") as object (*figura etymologica*). The verb is an infinitive with a locative-adverbial suffix (see Farber, 253; *GAG* §66f) in two MSS (aa, gg); the other two MSS (b, HH) read *dânu*. *Saḫāru*, "to go around, to turn (to), to search." Again, the preterite is performative.

ana dânuš dīnīya dipārat ilī asḫurki

11. IGI.MEŠ-*ki a-ta-mar lip-pa-ṭir ka-si-ti*

12. *la tu-mar-re-e e-šá-ku u dal-ḫa-ku*

13. *ki-ma šá ina tar-kúl-li maḫ-ṣu e-mat* ZI-*tim*

14. *e-pi-iš taq-bi-i e-pu-uš*

15. ^{d}INANA *lu-ú kaš-šá-pi lu-ú kaš-šap-ti*

16. *šá at-ti ti-de-ma ana-ku la i-du-ú*

17. *ina ri-kis kiš-pi* ḪUL.GIG *u* ZI.KU$_5$.RU.DA

Line 11: IGI = *pānū*, see line 5. *Pānīki ātamar* refers back to lines 5 and 8 which describe the effect of looking at Ishtar's face for the suffering one; the plea *lippaṭir kasītī* alludes to *ippaṭṭar e'iltašu* in line 6. *Kasītu*, "(magical) constraint"; see line 6 in MS HH, which mentions the *kasû*, "bound, captive." Variant HH: *uṣḫī murṣi lippaṭ*[*ir*. . .], "tear out my illness, may it be loosened [. . .]."

pānīki ātamar lippaṭir kasītī

Line 12: It is a bit of a problem to determine from which verb *tumarrê* is derived. Farber, 253, analyzes it tentatively as a G or D stem 2fs durative from *marû*, "to do slowly"; see Seux, 458, n.6. *Ešû*, "confused." *Dalḫu*, "troubled, disturbed."

lā tumarrê ešâku u dalḫāku

Line 13: *Tarkullu*, "wooden post, pole." *Maḫṣu*, "beaten, smitten." *Emû* (*ewûm*), "to become." The form is a 3fs predicative. ZI = *napištu*, "throat, life, self."

kīma ša ina tarkullī maḫṣu emât napištim

Line 14: *Epēšu*, "to do, to make." See line 2. *Epiš* is a 3ms predicative; *ēpuš* is a 1cs preterite. *Qabû*, "to say, to speak, to command."

epiš taqbî ēpuš

Line 15: ^{d}INANA = *Ištar*. *Lū . . . lū*, "either . . . or." *Kaššāpu*, "sorcerer." *Kaššaptu*, "sorceress." Lines 15–20 are one syntactical unit with lines 19 and 20 as main clauses.

Ištar lū kaššāpī lū kaššaptī

Line 16: *Attī*, "you" (2fs). *Tīdê* (2fs) and *īdû* (1cs with subjunctive) are forms of *edû*, "to know."

ša attī tīdê-ma anāku lā īdû

Line 17: *Riksu*, "binding, knot, bond; assemblage (of offerings)." *Kišpu*, "sorcery, evil spell." ḪUL.GIG = *zīru*, "hate." ZI.KU$_5$.RU.DA = *zikurudû*, "cutting of life." Two MSS begin the line with *ša* instead of *ina*. *Rikis kišpi zīri u zikurudê* is one construct chain.

ina rikis kišpi zīri u zikurudê

18. *šá ina maḫ-ri-ki ir-ku-sà*

19. NU.MEŠ.MU *ina qab-rim uš-ni-lu*

20. *ana* KUD-*as* ZI-*ia iz-za-az-zu*

21. *šu-nu šar-qiš i-pu-šú-ni*

22. *ana-ku šu-piš ep-pu-us-su-nu-ti*

23. *ina* DU_{11}.GA-*ki ṣir-ti šá* NU KÚR-*ru*

24. *ù an-ni-ki ki-nim šá* NU BAL-*ú*

Line 18: *Rakāsu*, "to tie, to prepare, to set." The *ša* relative clause is dependent on *rikis* (line 17).
ša ina maḫrīki irkusā

Line 19: NU = *ṣalmu*, "image, figure." MU = 1cs possessive suffix. *Qabru*, "grave, tomb." *Šunullu* (Š of *nâlu*), "to lay (someone or something) down."
ṣalmīya ina qabrim ušnillū

Line 20: KUD = *nakāsu* "to fell, to cut down." *Izuzzu*, "to stand, to serve." The form is a 3mp durative.
ana nakās napištīya izzazzū

Line 21: *Šunu*, "they" (3mp). *Šarqiš*, "secretly, by stealth." *īpušūni* is a 3mp preterite with 1cs suffix from *epēšu*. Lines 21 and 22 are formulated antithetically; they use the same verb (*epēšu*) but antonymous adverbs (*šarqiš*, *šūpîš*).
šunu šarqiš īpušūni

Line 22: *Šūpîš*, "openly, publicly." *Eppussunūti* is a 1cs durative with a 3mp accusative suffix from *epēšu*. The *š* of the root and the *š* of the 3mp suffix (*–šunūti*) become *–ss–*.
anāku šūpîš eppussunūti

Line 23: DU_{11}.GA = *qibītu*. *Ṣīru*, "exalted." NU = *lā*. KÚR = *nakāru*, "to be(come) different, to change." The form behind the logogram may be a G inf., for parallels to which, see CAD N/1, 165, or a Dt durative, *uttakkaru*. Lines 23–24 form a frequent stock phrase, used in pleas and at the end of prayers; see Mayer, *UFBG*, 303–4.
ina qibītīki ṣīrti ša lā nakāru

Line 24: *Annu*, "(word of) consent, approval." *Kīnu*, "permanent, true, reliable." BAL = *enû*, "to change." The form is again either a G inf. (see CAD E, 175 for parallels) or an N durative, *innennû*.
u annīki kīnim ša lā enû

25. *mim-ma ma-la a-qab-bu-u kit-tú lib-ši*

26. *ina pi-ki el-li li-ṣa-a ba-lá-ṭi*

27. *a-ḫu-lap-ki at-ti-ma i-la-at i-la-ti*

Line 25: *Mimma mala*, "everything that." *Kittu*, "truth." *Bašû*, "to be."
mimma mala aqabbû kittu libši

Line 26: *Pû*, "mouth." (*W*)*aṣû*, "to go out." *Balāṭu*, "life."
ina pīki elli liṣâ balāṭī

Line 27: *Aḫulap*, "an exclamation used to express or to seek compassion" (CAD A/1, 213). See the discussion in Ishtar 2 at line 27 (page 265). *Iltu*, "goddess." The text is transmitted rather consistently in the five MSS, though this is not the case for the second half of the last line, in which also signs are missing in most exemplars. The text given here follows MS gg.
aḫulapki attī-ma ilat ilāti

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

The supplicant in Ishtar 24 is not mentioned alone, but is involved in different relations. As it is usual also in biblical psalms of individual lament, there is an "I" (the supplicant), a "you" (the deity), and a "them" (a group of "others"). The complaints can be directed in these three directions: they can be "I-complaints" (see lines 12b, 13), "god-complaints" (not in Ishtar 24), or complaints against the hostile group, here the sorcerer or sorceress (lines 15–20).[1] In the Psalms, the hostile group consists usually of enemies, whose affronting acts are the objects of complaints (see, e.g., Ps 13:5. 38:20–21) and whose threatening character can be compared to wild and deadly animals (see Ps 22:13–14, 17, and 22). The general similarity has led to the interpretation that the enemies in the Psalms are not only a structural parallel to the Mesopotamian sorcerers in the three dimensions of relations in prayers, but that their evil actions are to be interpreted as magical.[2] The prayer Ishtar 24 indicates that this interpretation is at least not obvious. The eight lines dealing with the sorcerers (lines 15–22) and already some passages in the earlier complaints show the well-developed Mesopotamian terminology for witchcraft: besides the generic term *kišpu* ("witch-

[1] For the Psalms, see Claus Westermann, *Lob und Klage in der Psalmen* (6th ed. of *Das Loben Gottes in den Psalmen* [orig. 1954]; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), 128–30; 141–49 (see the English translation of the 5th ed., *Praise and Lament in the Psalms* [trans. Keith R. Crim and Richard N. Soulen; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981], 169–70, 181–89).

[2] See, e.g., Sigmund Mowinckel, *Psalmenstudien I–II* (Amsterdam: P. Schippers, 1966; repr., Kristiania: in Kommission bei Jacob Dybwad, 1921–1924), 77–124. Hermann Vorländer, *Mein Gott: Die Vorstellung vom persönlichen Gott im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament* (AOAT 23; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker / Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1975), 250–65.

craft", line 17) and the related nouns *kaššāpu* and *kaššaptu* ("wizard / sorcerer" and "witch / sorceress", line 15), there are special terms for malevolent magical practices: *zikurudû* ("cutting of life," line 17), *nakās napišti* ("cutting the throat / life," line 20) and even the description of magical acts (the laying of figures of a person in a grave as in line 19). There is also *epēšu*, a verb with special connotations in magical contexts (lines 2, 14, and 22), which the supplicant uses for their actions against the sorcerers (line 22).[3] The descriptions of the enemies in the Psalms show no such specialized terminology but are much more ambiguous, though the enemies still seem to be surrounded by a "demonic atmosphere."[4]

[3] See the note on line 2. For the terminology, see Schwemer, *Rituale*, 1, n.2. The ritual in which Ishtar 24 is embedded in at least three of the MSS aims at doing what the supplicant mentions in line 22: the figure representing them is saved from the netherworld and cleaned, the figures representing the sorcerer and sorceress are sent into the netherworld as their substitute; see Schwemer, *Abwehrzauber*, 215–17.

[4] "Aura des Dämonischen," Bernd Janowski, *Konfliktgespräche mit Gott: Eine Anthropologie der Psalmen* (2d ed.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2006), 113.

TRANSLATION:

1. Text to be recited: Pure Ishtar, most high among the gods, the Igigi!
2. The one who makes (a) fight, arranges battle,
3. Splendid one, most perfect of goddesses!
4. At your command, Ishtar, humankind is guided aright,
5. The sick one who sees your face lives.
6. Their (lit. "his") bond is loosened, they (lit. "he") get(s) up quickly.
7. At your command, Ishtar, the blind one sees the light.
8. The unfortunate one who sees your face, Ishtar, becomes all right.
9. I—suffering—I kneel, I stand before you.
10. For the judgment of my case, (O) torch of the gods, I turn to you.
11. I have seen your face. May my constraint be loosened!
12. Do not be slow! I am confused and disturbed.
13. (My) life has become like that (of someone) beaten with wooden poles.
14. What you said to do, I did.
15. Ishtar! My sorcerer or my sorceress,
16. whom you know, but I do not know,
17. In an assemblage of sorcery of hate and cutting of life,
18. Which they have prepared before you,
19. They have laid figures of me into a grave,
20. (And) are standing (ready) to cut down my life.
21. They have performed (rituals) on me secretly,
22. I perform (rituals) on them openly!
23. At your exalted command that cannot be changed,
24. And your righteous consent that cannot be altered,
25. May everything I say be(come) truth.
26. May from your pure mouth my life go out to me!
27. Your *aḫulap*! You indeed are the goddess of goddesses!

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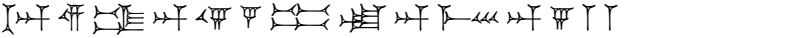
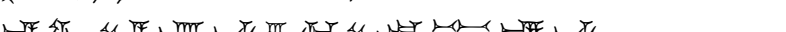
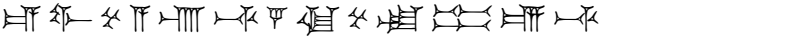
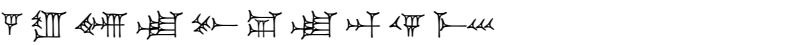
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
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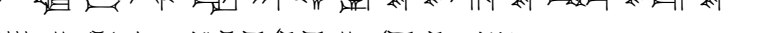
7. 
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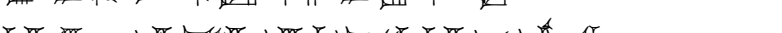
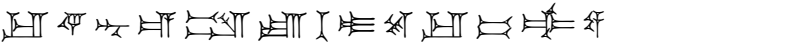
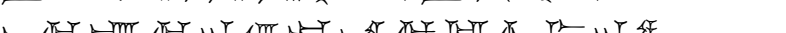
9. 
10. 
11. 
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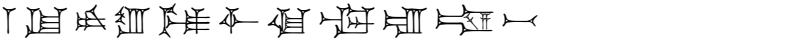
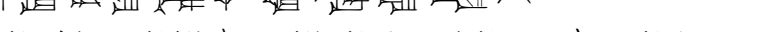
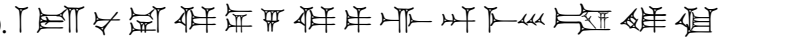
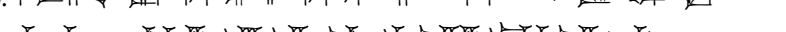
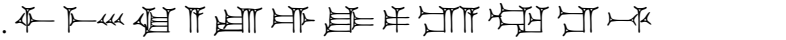
15. 
16. 
17. 
18. 
19. 
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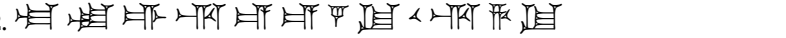
21. 
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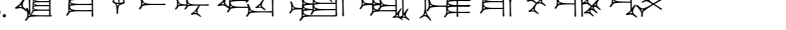
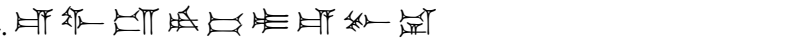
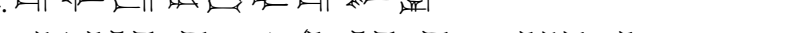
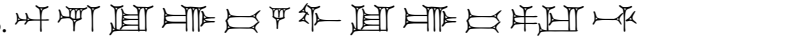
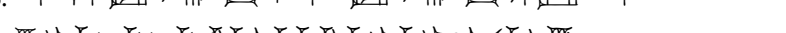
23. 
24. 
25. 
26. 
27. 

An Incantation-Prayer: Nusku 12

DUANE SMITH

NUSKU:

Nusku was the god of fire and lamp/torch light. Iconographically, he is represented by a lamp. In some texts, he is the son of Enlil, in others of Anu. At Harran in northern Syria, where he seems to have had a cult center, he is the son of Sin.[1] As Parpola suggests,[2] Nusku may have been worshiped as the god of the crescent moon at some locations. At least at Harran, and perhaps elsewhere, Nusku is associated with the moon. He has an important relationship with Shamash.[3] As the present prayer indicates, he is the *tappê Šamaš*, "the companion of Shamash." While never among the most prominent Mesopotamian gods, Nusku was venerated for a very long time, with evidence of his worship extending from the Old Akkadian (2350–2120 BCE) to the Hellenistic periods (330–30 BCE).[4] There were two temples dedicated to him at Nippur. There were also shrines dedicated to him at Babylon in the Marduk temple complex and at Dur Untash (modern Chogha Zanbil) in Elam. Many of Nusku's roles and traits are nearly identical to those of Girra, also a god of fire (see page 145). Three of his roles are particularly important in understanding the present prayer: a guardian of the night, a courier of dreams, and, like Shamash, an anti-magician.[5] When called upon, Nusku could reverse ominous portents or magical spells. The following lines from *Maqlû* exemplify this role.[6]

Nusku šurbû ilitti Anim
. . .
kaššāpu ikšipanni kišpī ikšipanni kišipšu
kaššaptu takšipanni kišpī ikšipanni kišipši

[1] See Hageneuer.
[2] Parpola, *LASEA 2*, 101.
[3] See Tzvi Abusch, "An Early Form of the Witchcraft Ritual *Maqlû* and the Origin of a Babylonian Magical Ceremony," in *Lingering Over Words: Studies In Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William L. Moran* (ed. Tzvi Abusch et al; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 1–59, here 27–28.
[4] See Hageneuer.
[5] See Abusch, "An Early Form," 17 and Foster, 717–20.
[6] *Maqlû* I 122, 126–32; see Abusch, "An Early Form," 16–18.

ēpišu īpušanni ipšū īpušanni epussu
ēpištu tēpšanni ipšū īpušanni epussi

O Nusku most great, offspring of Anu,
. . .
A (male) witch bewitched me; bewitch him with the witchcraft with which he bewitched me.
A (female) witch bewitched me; bewitch her with the witchcraft with which she bewitched me.
A sorcerer performed magic on me; perform on him the magic which he performed on me.
A sorceress performed magic on me; perform on her the magic which she performed on me.

THE PRAYER:

This prayer to Nusku is part of an apotropaic ritual whose purpose is to provide relief from a dream with a possible bad portent.[7] The text introduces the prayer with a simple indication of direct speech, *umma šū-ma*—in fact, this is part of the ritual instructions. Unlike the common tri-partite structure of most prayers, this prayer has two parts: an extremely short invocation and a complicated petition, as the following indicates.

I) Invocation (lines 1–2a)
  A) Name, relationship, and function
II) Petition (2b–11)
  A) Plea for help (2b)
  B) Nature of concern (2c–4)
    1) Potential bad portents from a dream
    2) Time of dream
    3) Nature of knowledge of dream
      a) The god's
      b) The supplicant's
  C) Request for remedy (5–7a)
    1) In the case of a positive dream
    2) In the case of a negative dream
      a) Request that portent not be effective
      b) Statement of disassociation
  D) Ritual analogies and final petition (7b–11)
    1) Like this reed

[7] The prayer begins on line 3 of fragments K.3333 + K.8583 + Sm.1069, hereafter called MS A. Another now very fragmentary tablet that once contained all or part of the incantation is 79-7-8, 77, rev. 1′–18′, hereafter called MS B.

2) Like this hem
3) Final request

The prayer begins with an invocation that calls upon Nusku as judge and companion of Shamash, the consummate judge, and asks that Nusku judge the supplicant's case. The petition begins by recounting a dream. The supplicant is concerned about the portent of a dream that he had had the previous night. He uses only an indefinite time formula, *ina bararti qablīti šāt urri*, to identify the dream. The supplicant acknowledges that Nusku will certainly understand the dream's portent even if he does not. But there is a further concern. Not knowing the portent of the dream, the supplicant does not know if it is for good or evil. He asks Nusku to remove any evil portent while preserving benefits of any good portent. But the major concern remains any potential negative consequence of the dream. At this point, the supplicant asks that he be permanently dissociated from the dream even to the point of asking that it not be his. The supplicant then references the just completed ritual using its symbolic acts as analogies for his requested dissociation from any evil portent of the dream. This rather convoluted sentence ties back to the opening of the petition by restating the time formula. Finally, the prayer has the supplicant summarize the petition, "may it not be mine."

Although only fragmentary portions of the accompanying ritual are now extant, Butler was able to glean several important elements from these. In the portion of the ritual just before the prayer, the supplicant's hem is cut off and held along with a reed(?) before a lamp, the symbol of Nusku. After the prayer is spoken, it appears that the reed is snapped and wrapped(?) in the hem. Another brief prayer follows. The ground is touched and the lamp lit. Finally, the supplicant prays (again?) to his personal deities and to the lamp.[8]

Oppenheim suggested the supplicant had forgotten the worrisome dream but Butler argues, I think correctly, that it was the nature of the dream's portent that was unknown to the supplicant.[9] The portent may be good; but then again it may be awful. The supplicant therefore seeks relief from any negative portent without forfeiting any possible good that may come of it.

Even though he could find no physical join, Oppenheim[10] suggested as a "working hypothesis" that the most complete witness to this prayer, MS A, belonged to Tablet I of the series *Zīqīqu*, the *Assyrian Dream Book*. He based his suggestion on orthography and the double line column separator. Be this as it may, there can be no doubt that our prayer is part of the same oneiromantic tradition as *Zīqīqu*.

[8] Butler, 188–89, 313–17. While it is possible to reconstruct some coherent text from a few lines of the ritual portions of the tablets, most of it is unreadable. I therefore have not included it below.
[9] Oppenheim, 232; Butler, 92. See note on line 4.
[10] Oppenheim, 297.

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Text: Editions: Sally A. L. Butler. *Mesopotamian Concepts of Dreams and Dream Ritual*. AOAT 258. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1998, 313–17. A. Leo Oppenheim. "The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East, with a Translation of an Assyrian Dream-Book." TAPS 46/3. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1956, 179–373, here 340 (K. 3333+: 3–13, our MS A), 342–43 (79-7-8, 77, rev. 3′–17′, our MS B). Translations: Shaul Bar. *A Letter That Has Not Been Read: Dreams in the Hebrew Bible*. Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 2001, 99–100. Foster, 719. Seux, 373. Study: Mayer, *UFBG*, 407 and *passim*.

1. *um-ma šu-ma* ^{d}PA.KU *tap-pe-e* ^{d}UTU *at-*[*ta*]

2. *da-a-a-na-ta di-ni di-in* MÁŠ.GE$_6$ *an-ni-*[*tú*]

Line 1: *Umma šū-ma* is not part of the prayer proper. *Umma* indicates the beginning of direct discourse. *Šū-ma* refers to the person offering the prayer. The *–ma* tightly ties *umma šū* to what follows. ^{d}PA.KU (^{d}PA-TÚG) = the god Nusku. ^{d}UTU = the god Shamash (see page 197). *Tappû*, here in the acc., has a range of meanings from "business partner" to "neighbor" to "companion" (see CAD T, 184–90). Syntactically, *attā*, "you," belongs to the next line.

umma šū-ma Nusku tappê Šamaš attā

Line 2: This line begins with three forms of *dânu* (*diānum*), "to judge," that are part of two separate but related clauses: *dayyānāta*, 2ms predicative; *dīnu*, "case, verdict, punishment" or the like, with 1cs suffix; and *dīn*, G impv. This same three-word stock expression occurs elsewhere with reference to other gods (see CAD D, 101). Of particular significance is KAR 252 iii 4, which reads, *Šamaš dayyānāta dīnī dīn*, "Shamas, you are the judge. Judge my case!" Nearly identical language is used of Girra in *Maqlû* II 69–90. See Oppenheim, 300, for a translation and discussion. See also *Maqlû* I 76, *Nusku dayyānu*, "Nusku is the judge." Such language is common with reference to Shamash and Adad but not so common with Nusku. The two clauses and their use of the same root provide a transition from the brief invocation to the petition. Nusku is a judge. Now it is time for him to judge the supplicant's case. MÁŠ.GE$_6$ = *šuttu*, "dream," is accompanied by the demonstrative pronoun *annītu*, "this."

dayyānāta dīnī dīn šuttu annītu

3. *ša ina ba-ra-ar-ti qab-li-ti šat ur-*[*ri*]

4. *ib-bab-lam-ma šá at-ta* Ì.ZU *ana-ku la i-du-*[*ú*]

5. *šum-ma dam-qat du-muq-šá a-a i-ši-ṭa-a*[*n-ni*]

6. *šum-ma* ḪUL ḪUL-*šá a-a ik-šu-dan-ni*

Line 3: The *ša* introduces a relative clause, whose verb is *ibbablam-ma* in line 4. The clause further defines the dream. *Barartu* (*barāritu*), "evening watch." *Qablīti*, "middle (watch)." *Šāt urri*, "morning watch." The line means little more than "some unknown time during the night or early morning."

ša ina bararti qablīti šāt urri

Line 4: *Nabbulu* (N of *babālu*, related to [*w*]*abālu*), "to be carried, to be brought." The ventive suffix on the verb prevents it from showing the subjunctive, which is expected in a subordinate (relative) clause (see *ša* in line 3). The *–ma* is conjunctive. Because of the parallel with the first person form of *idû*, "to know," in the second half of the line, there can be little doubt that Ì.ZU = *tīdû*, "you know," in the first half. IGI.ZU is a far more common writing for this root. *Ša attā tīdû anāku lā īdû* is a version of a stock formula found in many prayers. Butler argues that we would expect *kullu* (DIB) rather than *idû* if the supplicant simply didn't remember the dream (92). Although our text has the Sumerogram Ì.ZU for *tīdû*, Ì.ZU can also stand, on occasion, for *asû*, "physician," or even *bārû*, "diviner." See CAD A, 344 and B, 121 for examples. In light of this, one might consider the possibility of what Scott Noegel calls a "visual (purely based on orthography)" as opposed to an "oral (based only on sound)" pun between Ì.ZU and *īdû* (see his *Nocturnal Ciphers: The Allusive Language of Dreams in the Ancient Near East* [New Haven: American Oriental Society, 2007], 1, n.2). If such a pun were involved, the orthography, but not the pronunciation, would further contrast Nusku's knowledge (Ì.ZU) with the supplicant's lack of knowledge (*lā īdû*) and simultaneously imply extending Nusku's range of knowledge to include healing and divination.

ibbablam-ma ša attā tīdû anāku lā īdû

Line 5: *damqat* is from *damāqu*, "to be(come) good." In dreams and omens, *dumqu*, (*dumuq* is the bound form) means "favorable interpretation"; see CAD D, 180–81. The writing *a-a* = *ayy-*, "may it not," is the vetitive prefix, which indicates a negative wish. *Šêṭu* here, as in other prayers and curses, means "to leave, to bypass, to escape (me)" (see CAD Š/2, 344).

šumma damqat dumuqša ayy-išīṭanni

Line 6: ḪUL = *lemnet*, a 3fs predicative from *lemēnu*, "to be(come) bad," parallel to *damqat* in line 7. ḪUL-*šá* = *lumun-ša* = *lumušša*, "its evil." *Kašādu*, "to reach, to arrive." *Kašādu* is often associated with the arrival of diseases and other misfortunes, including death; see CAD K, 278.

šumma lemnet lumušša ayy-ikšudanni

7. *la ia-ut-tu-un ši-i ki-ma* GI *an-nu-u na-aṭ-pu-ma*

8. *ana* KI-*šú* NU GUR *ù* GIM TUG.SIG *an-ni-tú ina* TUG-*ia bat-*[*qat*]*-ma*

9. *ana* TUG-*ia* GIM *ib-bat-qu-ma* NU GUR ḪUL MAS.GE$_6$ *an-ni-ti*!

Line 7: *Yattun*, "mine," is a fs form of *yā'u* (see also line 11). Alan Lenzi discusses lines 6–12—specifically the phrase *lā yattun šī* here and in line 12—in the context of the stock expression *šiptu ul ya/uttun*, "the incantation is not mine." Notice that in our text the stock phrase has been turned into a wish, a subjunctive as indicated by *lā* rather than its more common indicative mood with *ul* ("*Siptu ul Yuttun*: Some Reflections On A Closing Formula In Akkadian Incantations," in *Gazing on the Deep: Ancient Near Eastern and Other Studies in Honor of Tzvi Abusch* [ed. Jeffrey Stackert, Barbara Nevling Porter, and David P. Wright; Bethesda: CDL Press, 2010], 131–66, here 161). The word *kīma*, "as, like," introduces the first ritual analogy of the prayer. GI = *qanû*, "reed." *Naṭpu*, "torn out," is a verbal adjective from *naṭāpu*, "to tear out, to uproot" (see CAD N/2, 128) with a subjunctive (*–u*) suffix. *Kīma* marks the beginning of a very long, complex sentence with several subordinate clauses (and even a subordinate clause within a clause). The subject of the sentence is in line 9b (*lumun šutti*) and its verb is in line 11 (*ayy-ikšudanni*).

lā yattun šī kīma qanû annû naṭpū-ma

Line 8: MS A reads *ana* KI-*šú* but MS B reads *ana ni-iṭ-pi-šú*, "to its place of plucking." KI = *ašru*, "place." *Ana ašrīšu* generally means "(to be restored) to its place." NU = *lā*. GUR (MS A's reading) = *iturru*, a G preterite with subjunctive *–u*, from *târu*, "to turn, to return." MS B confirms this reading with *i-tu-*[*ru . . .*]. The first partially readable line of the ritual preceding the prayer mentions *qan kiṣri*, "a reed joint" (see Butler, 314, line 1). Unfortunately, the associated verb is unclear. The *kīma* in this line begins a second ritual analogy. TÚG.SÍG = *sissiktu*, "hem, fringe, edge." See CAD S, 322–25 for the most common definitions of *sissiktu*. Meir Mallul suggested that a *sissiktu* is "some type of loincloth or lapgarment" ("'Sissiktu' and 'sikku' Cutting Off a *sissiktu* - Their Meaning and Function," *BiOr* 43.1/2 [1986], 20–36, here 36). See the further discussion of *sissiktu* in the note on line 15 of Shamash 25, page 426. The impression of a *sissiktu* could serve in lieu of a seal (CAD S, 322–25). TÚG = *ṣubātu*, "garment." *Batāqu*, "to cut off." MS B preserves the expected subjunctive on the 3fs predicative verb (*batqatu*). This second ritual analogy may reflect the cutting (*batāqu)* of a *sissiktu* as a symbolic act of divorce just as tying (*rakāsu*) a *sissiktu* was a symbolic act of marriage (see CAD S, 322). The supplicant seeks to symbolically divorce himself from any negative portent of his dream.

ana ašrīšu (var. *niṭpīšu*) *lā iturru kīma sissiktu annītu ina ṣubātīya batqat*(*u*)*-ma*

Line 9: MS A inserts the word *ḫepî*, "broken," between TÚG and GIM, indicating that there were unreadable signs in this place in the text (somewhere in the ancestry of MS A) due to a broken or defaced tablet. *Ḫepî* is the common scribal method of indicating such a break. MS B, however, reads TÚG-*ia* at this location. GIM = *kīma*, here means "because" or the like and introduces a subordinate clause within the larger subordinate clause. *Ibbatqu*, "it was torn," is an N preterite of *batāqu* (with subjunctive). MS B varies, reading a G preterite (with subjunctive): *ibtuqu*, "he tore (it)." The image of the torn hem reflects the ritual requirement to "cut off (*batāqu*) the hem of the right side of his (garment)" in the ritual

10. *šá ina ba-ra-ar-ti qab-li-ti šat u*[*r-ri*] *ib-*[*bab-lam-ma*]

11. *a-a ik-šú-dan-ni la ia-tu-un ši-i . . .*

instructions immediately before the prayer (Butler, 314; Oppenheim, 289, 340). The last few words of the line form the subject of the independent clause, upon which the preceding lines (7b–9a) depend.

ana ṣubātīya kīma ibbatqū-ma lā iturru lumun šutti annīti

Line 10: Assuming that the end of this line is correctly restored, line 10 is identical to line 3 plus the first word in line 4. As there, these words form a relative clause that further defines the dream. This restatement together with the final plea provides a summary statement of the long plea that precedes it. As such, it produces an emphasized sense of urgency.

ša ina bararti qablīti šāt urri ibbablam-ma

Line 11: *Ayy-ikšudanni* is the main verb of the long sentence that started in line 7b. MS A lacks this verb and instead understands the final clause of the line to be the main sentence. According to MS A, everything preceding *lā yattun šī* all the way back to the *kīma* in line 7b must be read as an anacoluthon. This final clause is identical to the first clause in line 7, thereby framing (in MS B) the ritual analogies and final petition. Here the prayer proper apparently ends. The rest of the ritual is rather broken (see the introduction to the prayer above).

ayy-ikšudanni lā yattun šī . . .

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

In 1873, Sayce tentatively suggested that biblical Nisroch (נסרך, 2 Kgs 19:37 ‖ Isa 37:38) might be none other than the god Nusku. Since then, this view has come in and out of currency but has never gained permanent traction. At the very best, the evidence is weak and dependent on unsupportable assumptions about a number of modifications and/or errors in the way Hebrew scribes wrote and preserved the name. These unsupportable assumptions render the suggestion unlikely if not impossible. Uehlinger outlines the several problems with the suggestion.[1]

Nusku as the lamp that lights the darkness is not mentioned in this Akkadian prayer, though the ritual implies this role for the deity. The prayer-hymn of David in 2 Sam 22, especially כִּי־אַתָּה נֵירִי יְהוָה וַיהוָה יַגִּיהַּ חָשְׁכִּי, "You, O Yahweh, are my lamp; Yahweh lights my darkness" (v 29), attributes a similar role to Yahweh.

One of the obvious elements of this Akkadian prayer is that the supplicant does not know the meaning of his dream. In contrast is the story of Joseph in

[1] A. H. Sayce, "Critical Examination of Isaiah xxxvi.–xxxix. on the Basis of Recent Assyrian Discoveries," *Theological Review* 10, issue 40 (1873), 15–31, here 27; note Christoph Uehlinger, "Nisroch," *DDD*, 630–32.

Gen 37 where both Joseph and his brothers know the meanings of his dreams and know them without the aid of professional oneiromancy. One sees the same with Daniel's dreams. In general, biblical actors understand their dreams without professional assistance. Among the very few exceptions are foreigners, Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar, for example.[2] This Nusku prayer and its ritual do not appear to comprehend the possibility that a dream might be meaningless—a possibility suggested by Job 20:8 and Isa 29:7–8.[3]

Discussed more fully in connection with one of the prayers to Shamash,[4] the role of the gods, particularly Shamash and Adad and less frequently Nusku, as judges is important in several prayers. Compare the role of Yahweh as judge in Gen 18:25, Job 21:22, Pss 7:9, 43:1, 50:6, 82:1, 3, 8, and elsewhere. The Akkadian stock phrase *dīnī dīn*, "judge my case," in line 2, finds an extremely close semantic equivalent in שָׁפְטָה מִשְׁפָּטִי, "judge my case," in Lam 3:59b.

Cutting off the hem of a garment as a metaphor for an act that cannot be undone is reminiscent of David's cutting off of Saul's כְּנַף־הַמְּעִיל, "corner of the cloak," in 1 Sam 24:5, an act of humiliation. By tearing off the hem of his own garment, our supplement humbles himself while at the same time provides a symbol of the desire for a permanent "divorce," or separation, from any evil portent of his dream. Compare also 1 Sam 15:27, where Saul tears off Samuel's כְּנַף־הַמַּעִיל as a symbol of the transfer of kingship.

The Biblical tradition does not share the concern expressed in the Nusku prayer that a dream's significance could be ambiguous.[5] The closest parallel to this prayer within the extended Jewish tradition comes from the Babylonian Talmud rather than the Hebrew Bible. Ber 55b[6] records a prayer containing similar themes to some of those found in our Nusku prayer.

> Sovereign of the Universe, I am Thine and my dreams are Thine. I have dreamt a dream and I do not know what it is. Whether I have dreamt about myself or my companions have dreamt about me, or I have dreamt about others, if they are

[2] Moshe Greenberg, *Biblical Prose Prayer* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 3–4. Judg 7:15 reports a rare case where a dream is apparently interpreted by a professional.

[3] See also Qoh 5:6(7), where the meaning of the Hebrew, is uncertain and Ps 73:20. See Luther H. Martin, "Dreams," *NIDB*, 2:162–63 as well as Scott Noegel, "Dreams and Dream Interpreters in Mesopotamia and the Hebrew Bible [Old Testament]," 45–71, in *Dreams: A Reader on Religious, Cultural and Psychological Dimensions of Dreaming* (ed. Kelly Bulkeley; New York: Palgrave, 2001), for discussion and bibliography of biblical dreams and their interpretation.

[4] See page 379.

[5] In fact, biblical authors show a strong tendency to distrust diviners. In places there is great concern that diviners might be the source of false prophecy. See Deut 13:2–6, where we see the concern that, even if the portent comes true, such diviners may lead to the worship of other gods. Deut 18:21–22 claims that an oracle that does not come true is a sure indication that it is not from Yahweh.

[6] Epstein's translation. This parallel was first noted by Oppenheim, 299. Devorah Schoenfeld discusses this prayer/ritual as evidence for an "incomplete transition" from a revelation to interpretation based religion (see "Madness and Prophecy: Dreams, Texts, and the Power of Rabbinic Interpretation," *Pastoral Psychology* 56:2 [Nov, 2007], 223–35).

> good dreams, confirm them and reinforce them like the dreams of Joseph, and if they require a remedy, heal them, as the waters of Marah were healed by Moses, our teacher, and as Miriam was healed of her leprosy and Hezekiah of his sickness, and the waters of Jericho by Elisha. As thou didst turn the curse of the wicked Balaam into a blessing, so turn all my dreams into something good for me. [References omitted]

The prayer is attributed to Amemar II (c. 400 CE), Mar Zutra, or R. Ashi (most likely Amemar). This prayer answered a challenge to tell something the other members of the group might not know. Note the uncertainty as to the portent of the reported dream in both the Talmudic prayer and our Nusku prayer. Both also desire that the portent of their dreams be upheld if good but avoided if bad.

TRANSLATION:

1. Thus, he (says), “O Nusku, companion of Shamash,
2. You are the judge. Judge my case! This dream,
3. Which during the evening, middle, (or) early morning watch
4. Was brought to me, which you understand (but) I do not understand:
5. If it is good, may its good luck not bypass me.
6. If it is evil, may its evil not afflict me.
7. May it not be mine! Like this reed that was torn out and
8. To its place cannot return, and like this hem on my garment was torn off and
9. To my garment cannot return because it was torn off, may the evil of this dream,
10. Which in the evening, middle, (or) early morning watch was brought to me,
11. Not afflict me. May it not be mine!

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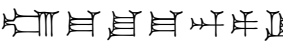
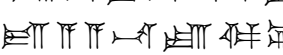
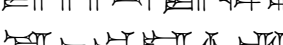
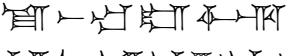
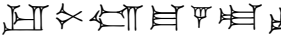
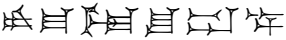
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
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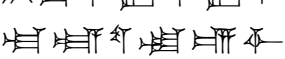
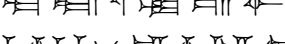
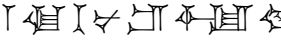
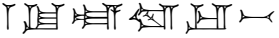
8. 
9. 
10. 
11. 

An Incantation-Prayer to the Cultic Agent Salt

JEFFREY STACKERT

SALT:

There is little evidence from ancient Mesopotamia for the deification of salt. The ruler of the Middle Euphrates kingdom of Mari, Zimri-Lim, did erect a statue to Ḫatta, the god of salt,[1] but it does not seem that such veneration of a salt god was widespread or persistent. Salt was employed widely in the ancient Near East for various utilitarian purposes (e.g., curing hides, preservation, flavor enhancement, and medicine). It was also a regular ingredient in ritual and magical practices.[2] For example, by analogy to its use at the human table, Mesopotamian texts describe the application of salt to animal and vegetable offerings. It is also employed in incense offerings, various magical rites, and ritual curses. The analogies of Mesopotamian omen literature likewise reference salt. Among Hittite rituals, perhaps the best known use of salt is one that parallels its use in Mesopotamian curses: the First Hittite Soldier's Oath employs salt within an analogical curse ritual against that soldier who would commit sedition.[3]

The ancient Near Eastern ritual applications for salt indicate that it carries both positive and negative significances. It can symbolize health, purification, and well-being, but it can also be associated with infertility, dissolution, and destruction. Salt is also employed ritually across the gamut of social ranks.

[1] See CAD Ṭ, 11b, citing M.10591: 9 (discussed briefly by Francis Joannes in *NABU* 1989, #75).
[2] It is oftentimes difficult to draw a meaningful distinction between medicine and magic. For discussions of these categories and their relationship, see, e.g., Jean Bottéro, "Magic and Medicine," in *Everyday Life in Ancient Mesopotamia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 162–82; Walter Farber, "Witchcraft, Magic, and Divination in Ancient Mesopotamia," *CANE* 3:1895–1909; Robert Biggs, "Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health in Ancient Mesopotamia," *CANE* 3:1911–24. See also JoAnn Scurlock's discussion of medicaments (*Magico-Medical Means of Treating Ghost-Induced Illnesses in Ancient Mesopotamia* [Ancient Magic and Divination 3; Leiden: Brill/Styx, 2006], 67–71), as well as her texts nos. 60 and 191a for examples of the magico-medical usage of salt in Mesopotamia.
[3] See the translation of Billie Jean Collins, "The First Soldiers' Oath," *COS* 1.66:165–67.

THE PRAYER:

The salt incantation-prayer appears in Tablet VI (lines 111–119) of the eight tablet series known as *Maqlû* ("burning"). The canonical form of *Maqlû* dates from the first millennium BCE and constitutes a complex ritual ceremony for counteracting sorcery and effecting retribution against the witch(es) or warlock(s) who has (have) unjustly afflicted an innocent target. The salt incantation-prayer is one of several incantations to be recited by a victim of black magic and, according to the ritual tablet that accompanies the series, is to be attended by a fumigation rite.[4] The prayer is characterized by a tripartite structure: hymnic introduction, petition, and promise of praise in response to divine assistance. The first four lines comprise the hymnic introduction with stereotypical acclaim of the addressee. Lines 5–8a comprise the entreaty to remove the witchcraft that afflicts the speaker. Lines 8b–9 contain the concluding promise to praise salt upon its successful intervention on the petitioner's behalf.

Because it does not address a deity, the salt incantation-prayer is not a conventional example of the shuilla. It instead belongs to a relatively small subcategory of texts termed *Kultmittelbeschwörungen* or *Kultmittelgebete* ("incantations/prayers to a cultic agent").[5] Much like shuillas directed to particular deities, incantation-prayers to cultic agents attempt to exploit specific characteristics of their addressees to remedy the patient's predicament.

The speaker's predicament in the salt incantation-prayer appears to be twofold. What is obvious is that the supplicant suffers the ill effects of witchcraft. Yet several factors suggest that the situation in this case is more complex. First, this text's promise of praise contains two significant features that point to a richer religious conceptualization of the speaker's predicament: (1) The speaker draws an analogy between their action and the action taken toward "the god who made me," i.e., the personal god; and (2) The promise to praise employs the iterative stem of the verb (*lultammarki*), a unique usage among the shuilla-type incantation-prayers that address non-deified objects. Second, the progression of ritual applications for salt envisioned in this incantation-prayer (flavor enhancer for food offerings, incense additive, and finally fumigation additive) may reflect a progression of ritual activities performed by the speaker to counteract misfortune. This precise sequence is attested in *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* II 1–22.[6] This passage in *Ludlul* explicitly describes divine abandonment and its effects, a recurrent

[4] The ritual (Ritual Tablet [IX] 118–120) reads: *šiptu attī ṭābtu ša ina ašri elli ibbanû / ana muḫḫi kīrban ṭābti tamannū-ma / ina muḫḫi nignakki ša qutāri ša ina rēš mayyāli tašakkan*, "The incantation 'You are salt, the one made in a pure place' you shall recite over a lump of salt and you shall place (it) (i.e., the salt) in the fumigant burner that is at the head of the bed (i.e., of the patient)." See Meier's edition (61).

[5] For the classification of incantation-prayers to cultic agents, see page 29, n.75 in the general introduction.

[6] See the new study edition by Amar Annus and Alan Lenzi, *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi: The Standard Babylonian Poem of the Righteous Sufferer* (SAACT 7; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2010), 6, 19.

topic in *Maqlû* (e.g., I 1–14).[7] Taken together, these factors suggest that the salt incantation-prayer provides a remedy not only for the witchcraft that afflicts the supplicant but also the abandonment of the personal god, a departure effected by the afflicting spell.[8]

[7] See Tzvi Abusch, "Witchcraft and the Anger of the Personal God," in *Mesopotamian Magic: Textual, Historical and Interpretive Perspectives* (ed. Tzvi Abusch and Karel van der Toorn; Groningen: Styx, 1999), 83-121.

[8] For full argumentation, see Jeffrey Stackert, "The Variety of Ritual Applications for Salt and the *Maqlû* Salt Incantation," in *Gazing on the Deep: Ancient Near Eastern and Other Studies in Honor of Tzvi Abusch* (ed. Jeffrey Stackert, Barbara Nevling Porter, and David P. Wright; Bethesda: CDL Press, 2010), 235–52.

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[i] I have made minor revisions to Meier's text on the basis of Tzvi Abusch's unpublished edition of *Maqlû*. I thank Professor Abusch for making his edition available to me.

1. ÉN *at-ti* MUN *šá ina áš-ri* KÙ *ib-ba-nu-ú*

Line 1: ÉN = *šiptu*, "incantation, ritual wording." This term marks the beginning of the prayer but is not part of its text. It is characteristic of ritual texts more broadly and is thus not limited to prayers *per se*. *Attī*, "you" (fs). MUN = *ṭābtu*, "salt." *Ašru*, "place." KÙ = *ellu*, "pure, clean." *Nabnû* (N of *banû*), "to be built, to be made." The form is a 3cs preterite with subordination marker. *Ša ina ašri elli ibbanû*: this terminology parallels that used to describe the production of divine images in Mesopotamia (see Christopher Walker and Michael B. Dick, "The Induction of the Cult Image in Ancient Mesopotamia: The Mesopotamian *mīs pî* Ritual," in *Born in Heaven, Made on Earth: The Making of the Cult Image in the Ancient Near East*, [ed. Michael B. Dick; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1999], 55–122).

šiptu: *attī ṭābtu ša ina ašri elli ibbanû*

2. *ana ma-ka-le-e* DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ *i-šim-ki* ^{d}EN.LÍL

3. *ina ba-li-ki ul iš-šak-kan nap-tan ina* é-kur

4. *ina ba-li-ki* DINGIR LUGAL IDIM *u* NUN *ul iṣ-ṣi-nu qut-rin-nu*

5. *ana-ku* NENNI A NENNI *šá kiš-pi ṣu-ub-bu-tu-in-ni*

Line 2: *mākālû*, "food, meal," oftentimes used to characterize food offerings to deities. DINGIR.MEŠ = *ilū*, "gods." GAL.MEŠ = *rabûtu*, "great." The "great gods" can refer to the gods in general or to the chief deities of the pantheon. In light of the parallelism with Ellil (= ^{d}EN.LÍL), the lauditory tone of the invocation, and especially the banquet described in the following line, the great gods here are likely the principle deities. *Šâmu* (*šiāmu*), "to appoint". The 2fs accusative suffix on the verb refers to *ṭābtu*, "salt" in line 1. Among its various usages, the verb *šâmu* may denote the assignment of roles and offices to deities, including by Ellil (see CAD Š/I, 358–59). Ellil, "lord [of the] wind," is the high god who resides in the temple é-kur, "mountain house" (see line 3), in Nippur.

ana mākālê ilī rabûti išīmki Ellil

Line 3: *Ina balī*-X, "without X." *Naškunu* (N of *šakānu*), "to be set, to be established." *Iššakkan* is an N 3cs durative. *Naptanu*, "meal, (royal/cultic) banquet." *Naptan* may be read as the absolute form of the noun. Yet there seems to be little significance to the absence of the case ending here. *Maqlû* II 9–10, which is a near verbatim parallel to lines 3–4 here, attests two variants: *naptanu* and *naptana*. These examples suggest the possibility of reading the TAN sign here as a CVCV sign (i.e., *tana*) rather than a CVC sign. Alternatively, the case ending could simply be implied. It must also be noted that, as a first millennium Assyrian text, such omission of the case vowel is hardly anomalous.

ina balīki ul iššakkan naptan ina E-kur

Line 4: LUGAL = *šarru*, "king." IDIM = *kabtu*, "noble, influential person." NUN = *rubû*, "prince, nobleman." The quartet of god, king, noble, and prince recurs in Mesopotamian prayers and incantations as a formulaic expression to denote those to whom the speaker is subordinate. *Eṣēnu*, "to smell." *Qutrinnu*, "incense." Incense offerings oftentimes appear alongside food offerings. The claim of this line is also applied elsewhere to deities, again underscoring the conceit of addressing the non-deity salt in a shuilla-type prayer.

ina balīki ilu šarru kabtu u rubû ul iṣṣinū qutrinnu

Line 5: This line begins with a standard self-introduction formula. The remainder of line 5 through the end of line 6 constitutes a sort of complaint, informing the addressee of the supplicant's condition. Complaints frequently follow the self-introduction. NENNI = *annanna*, "so and so." *Annanna* serves as a place marker for the name and patronymic of the petitioner who employs the stock prayer. A = *māru*, "son." *Kišpū*, "sorcery, witchcraft." *Ṣubbutu* (D of *ṣabātu*), "to sieze." *Ṣubbutū'inni* is a D 3mp "active stative" (or "transitive *parsāku*"; see Heuhnergard § 33.2) plus 1cs accusative suffix. It is formally identical to the predicative construction. One might expect the accusative to be *–ninni*, but the form without the initial *n* is often found in SB Akkadian (see *GAG* §84d and Verbalparadigma 12a, n.6 on p. 11*). The *alef* placed after the verb and before the pronominal suffix convention-

6. *up-šá-še-e le-eʾ-bu-in-ni*

7. BÚR *kiš-pi-ia* MUN *pu-uš-ši-ri ru-ḫe-e-a*

8. *up-šá-še-e muḫ-ri-in-ni-ma* GIM DINGIR *ba-ni-ia*

9. *lul-tam-mar-ki*

ally indicates that the two adjacent vowels are to be pronounced separately.

anāku annanna mār annanna ša kišpī ṣubbutūʾinni

Line 6: *Upšāšû* (*upšaššû*), "magical intrigues, sorcery." *Laʾābu*, "to afflict." *Leʾbūʾinni* is a G 3mp active stative or transitive *parsāku* construction plus 1cs accusative suffix. Line 6 is subordinate to the *ša* in line 5; thus, *upšāšê leʾbūʾinni* is in apposition to *kišpī ṣubbutūʾinni*.

upšāšê leʾbūʾinni

Line 7: BÚR = *paṭāru*, "to release, to loosen." *Puṭrī* is a G fs impv. *Puššuru* (D of *pašāru*), "to dispel, to disperse, to release." *Pušširī* is a D fs impv. *Ruḫû*, "sorcery, witchcraft." The petition proper begins in this line. Note also that alongside the petition itself is a renewed invocation of salt. The verbs *paṭāru* and *pašāru* are common in incantations against sorcery and their accompanying rituals. As attested in the accompanying ritual to this text, release is attempted in this case through the recitation of the salt incantation-prayer as a part of a fumigation rite that features a lump of salt. In other instances in *Maqlû*, the afflicted patient burns an effigy of the witch and warlock responsible for their torment (e.g., I 135–143). In some cases, the incantation texts portray witchcraft as physically binding the patient, and various metaphors for release dramatize the victim's liberation. See, e.g., *Maqlû* V 51ff., 95–97, which characterize witchcraft as a binding to be broken, peeled like garlic, and released like a string.

puṭrī kišpīya ṭābtu pušširī ruḫêya

Line 8: *Maḫāru*, "to receive, take upon oneself." *Muḫrīnnī-ma* is a G fs impv. plus 1cs accusative suffix and enclitic *–ma*. GIM = *kīma*, "like, as." *Banû*, "to build, make." *Bānīya* is a G ms participle (genitive case) with a 1cs possessive suffix. It is functioning attributively in relation to *ili*, "god." "The god who made me" is an epithet for the personal god. Other similar epithets for the personal god include "the god who guards you" (*ilu nāṣirka*), "the god who provides good health" (*ilu mušallimu*), and "the god at my side" (*ila aḫīya*). For references to these different epithets, see CAD I/J, 100. For discussion of the personal god, see page 431 in this book. Note that *kīma ili bānīya* should be read syntactically with the verb in line 9.

upšāšê muḫrīnnī-ma kīma ili bānīya

Line 9: *Šamāru*, "to praise." *Lultammarki* is a Gtn 1cs precative plus 2fs suffix (*–št–* often becomes *–lt–* in SB Akkadian texts). Across literary genres, *šamāru* appears primarily in the Gt stem, which has led to some debate over the productivity of the iterative stem for this verb. Mayer, however, does take *šamāru* as Gtn here (*UFBG*, 323). It should also be noted that the promise of praise that closes the shuilla-type incantation-prayer is at times accompanied by modifiers such as *ana dārâti* "forever," which is conceptually parallel to the iterative aspect of the Akkadian *–tan–* stems. For examples of the uses of *šamāru* in the

closing formulae of Mesopotamian prayers, see *UFBG*, 323–24. For discussion of the closing promise in shuilla-prayers, see Abusch, "Promise to Praise" as well as his "Blessing and Praise in Ancient Mesopotamian Incantations," in *Literatur, Politik und Recht in Mesopotamien: Festschrift für Claus Wilcke* (ed. W. Sallaberger, K. Volk, and A. Zgoll; Orientalia Biblica et Christiana 14; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003), 1–14.

lultammarki

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

Though there are no prayers addressed to cultic agents in the Hebrew Bible, there are still important resonances between this prayer and religious phenomena from ancient Israel and Judah. The various uses for salt attested across the ancient Near East correspond closely with those described in the Hebrew Bible. For example, biblical texts reference salt as a flavor enhancer (Job 6:6, Ezra 4:14, 6:9) and medicine (Ezek 16:4). Priestly sacrificial rules require the application of salt to food offerings presented to the deity (Lev 2:13, Num 18:19, Ezek 43:24). Salt is also added to biblical incense offerings (Exod 30:35), employed as a healing agent in prophetic magic (2 Kgs 2:20–22), and dispersed as part of cursing rituals (Deut 29:20–26).[1]

The conceptualization of sacrifice as the food meant to solicit divine favor is especially prominent in the opening address of this prayer. Within the Hebrew Bible, a similar view obtains (see, e.g., Lev 3:11, 16; 21:6, 8, 17, 21, 22; 22:25; Num 28:2, 24; Ezek 44:7, 16; Mal 1:6–12), although there is also some attempt to rebut this conception of sacrifice (e.g., Ps 50:12–13). In the case of Ps 50, by offering a polemic against sacrifice as divine food, the psalmist reinforces the normative status of this understanding.[2]

[1] The relation between salt and curse—and by extension, salt and covenant—has been explored extensively within biblical studies. See, e.g., F. Charles Fensham, "Salt as Curse in the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East," *BA* 25 (1962), 48–50; H. Eising, "מלח," *TDOT* 8:331–33 (at 333). For broader connections between salt and covenant and especially sacrificial aspects, see Baruch A. Levine, *Leviticus* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1989), 13; Idem, *Numbers 1–20* (AB 4; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 449; and Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16* (AB 3; New York: Doubleday, 1991), 191–92.

[2] For discussions of sacrifice as divine food and enticement in the ancient Near East, see, *inter alia*, W. G. Lambert, "Donations of Food and Drink to the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia," in *Ritual and Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East* (ed. J. Quaegebeur; OLA 55; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters en Departement Oriëntalistiek, 1993), 191–201; Tzvi Abusch, "Sacrifice in Mesopotamia," in *Sacrifice in Religious Experience* (ed. Albert I. Baumgarten; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 39–48; JoAnn Scurlock, "Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Mesopotamian Religion," in *A History of the Animal World in the Ancient Near East* (ed. B. Collins; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 389–403; Ronald Hendel, "Table and Altar: The Anthropology of Food in the Priestly Torah," in *To Break Every Yoke: Essays in Honor of Marvin L. Chaney* (ed. R. B. Coote and N. K. Gottwald; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007), 131–48; David P. Wright, "The Study of Ritual in the Hebrew Bible," in *The Hebrew Bible: New Insights and Scholarship* (ed. Frederick E. Greenspahn; New York: New York University Press, 2008), 120–38 (esp. 124–34).

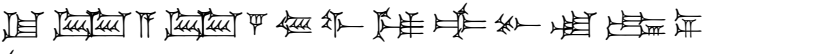
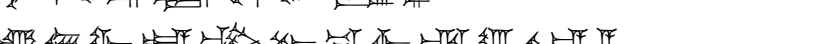
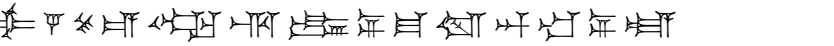
The conception of the personal god as the individual's creator finds a close parallel in biblical texts such as Isa 44:2 (יְהוָה עֹשֶׂךָ וְיֹצֶרְךָ מִבֶּטֶן יַעְזְרֶךָ, "the LORD, your maker and creator, who has helped you from the womb"), Prov 14:31 (עֹשֵׁק דָּל חֵרֵף עֹשֵׂהוּ וּמְכַבְּדוֹ חֹנֵן אֶבְיוֹן, "He who oppresses the poor reproaches his maker, but he who is gracious to the needy honors him"; see Prov 17:5), and Job 35:10 (וְלֹא אָמַר אַיֵּה אֱלוֹהַּ עֹשָׂי נֹתֵן זְמִרוֹת בַּלָּיְלָה, "But no one says, 'Where is God, my maker, the one who gives songs in the night?'"). The Second Isaiah text cited here is also noteworthy because it applies the intimate epithets of the personal god, with singular possessives, to the collective exilic community (see also Isa 45:9, 11; 46:4; 51:13; Hos 8:4; Ps 95:6; 149:2).

As for the promise of praise, texts such as Ps 44:9, 115:18, 119:64, and 145:2 emphasize iterative praise of the deity akin to the promise in this prayer.

TRANSLATION:

1. Incantation: You are salt, the one made in a pure place.
2. For the food of the great gods Ellil appointed you.
3. Without you, the royal banquet is not set in the Ekur temple.
4. Without you, god, king, noble, and prince do not smell incense.
5. As for me, so-and-so, son of so-and-so, whom spells are seizing,
6. Whom magical intrigues are afflicting—
7. Release my spell, O salt! Disperse my sorcery!
8. Take from me the magical intrigues and, just as (I will continue to praise) the god who made me,
9. I will continue to praise you.

CUNEIFORM:

1.
2.
3.
4. 
5. 
6. 
7.
8.
9.

A Ritual and Incantation-Prayer against Ghost-Induced Illness: Shamash 73

DUANE SMITH

SHAMASH:

For the ancient Mesopotamians, Shamash (Akk.) or Utu (Sum.) was the deified sun.[1] He brought light and warmth to the world and its inhabitants during the day. It was in this capacity that Shamash brought life to the world and caused plants to grow. At night, he surveyed the underworld. While the serrated blade, sometimes called a saw, commonly appears in depictions of Shamash, the winged solar disk is his most common iconographic symbol.[2] His anthropomorphic image is that of a bearded old man, sometimes seated, often with solar rays emanating from his shoulders and holding a scepter and/or his serrated blade.[3] His divine number is 20. Shamash, the twin brother of the goddess Ishtar (Inana), was the son of Sin (Nanna). His mother is Ningal and his consort is Aya.

[1] It is often difficult to conceptualize the relationship between the nature of the astrological gods as divine beings and their nature as the celestial bodies with which the ancients identified them. For many of them, including Shamash, this conceptual difficulty extends to them having an anthropomorphic representation while at the same time being associated with a celestial body. On these difficulties see JoAnn Scurlock, *Magico-Medical Means of Treating Ghost-induced Illnesses in Ancient Mesopotamia* (Ancient Magic and Divination 3; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 77 and her several references. The prayer discussed here well illustrates this point in lines 21–25 as does line 3 of Shamash 1 (see page 370).

[2] See Dominique Collon, "Iconographic Evidence for Some Mesopotamian Cult Statues," in *Die Welt der Götterbilder* (ed. Brigitte Groneberg and Hermann Spieckerman; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 57–84, here 57–65 plus 72–78, for a recent discussion of Shamash iconography. On the boundary stone symbol, the solar disk alone, see W. G. Lambert, "Ancient Mesopotamian Gods. Superstition, Philosophy, Theology," *RHR* 207.2 (1990), 115–30, here 124. On the possible judicial function of the serrated blade (*šaššāru*) of Shamash, see CAD Š/2, 175: *ina šaššārim ša Šamaš bītum ussanniq-ma*, "the (contested) property was checked by means of the saw of Shamash" (CT 2 45:9), and the discussion in Irving L. Finkel and Markham J. Geller, eds. *Sumerian Gods and Their Representations* (Cuneiform Monographs 7; Groningen: Styx, 1997), 5.

[3] On the issue of the anthropomorphic character of celestial gods, see Lambert, "Ancient Mesopotamian Gods," 120, 124–29, and Barbara Nevling Porter, ed. *What Is a God? Anthropomorphic and Non-Anthropomorphic Aspects of Deity in Ancient Mesopotamia* (Transactions of the Casco Bay Assyriological Institute 2; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 3, *passim*.

Archaeologists have uncovered temples for Shamash at Sippar and at Larsa, both named É-babbar, "shining house." He also shared a temple with Sin at Ashur. While the importance of Utu/Shamash waxed and waned over time,[4] Sumerian and Akkadian texts give witness to his worship from the earliest times until late in the history of Mesopotamia.

Because Shamash could survey the earth by day and the underworld by night—and therefore nothing could remain hidden from him, he was revered as the god of truth and justice, who corrected injustice and mitigated the portents of evil omens.[5] In the epilogue of the Code of Hammurabi, for example, Shamash is called *dayyānim rabîm ša šamê u erṣetim* (xxiv 85–86), "the great judge of heaven and earth." The bas-relief on the upper part of the Code's stele depicts Hammurabi before Shamash. The attribution of law and justice to Shamash appeared long before Hammurabi. The epilogue to the Laws of Lipit-Ishtar, c. 1939 BCE, reads in part, "in accordance with the true word of the god Utu, I made the lands of Sumer and Akkad hold fair judicial procedure."[6]

Ancient texts compare the kings Ur-Nammu, Amar-Sin, Lipit-Ishtar, Hammurabi, and Zimri-Lim to Utu/Shamash.[7] He was the protector of several heroes including Gilgamesh.[8] More than many other gods, Shamash involved himself positively in the affairs of humans, in which he seemed to have considerable interest.

THE PRAYER:

The most complete witness to Shamash 73 includes the incantation-prayer as part of a ritual (Scurlock's MS A [BAM 323: 1–38]). This textual witness will anchor our treatment here.[9] The purpose of the ritual is to cure diseases induced

[4] See Fischer, 125–34.

[5] See Leick, 147 and Piotr Steinkeller, "Of Stars and Men: The Concept and Mythological Setup of Babylonian Extispicy," in *Biblical and Oriental Essays in Memory of William L. Moran* (ed. Agustinus Gianto; BibOr 48; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2005), 11–49, here 23–24.

[6] Laws of Lipit-Ishtar, xxi 5–6, following the translation of the Sumerian in Martha T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor* (SBLWAW 6; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 33. Similar passages may have been part of the even earlier "Law of Ur-Namma" (A i 1–30; A iii 104–113) but both candidate occurrences depend on rather extensive reconstruction of the Sumerian text (Roth, *Law Collections*, 15).

[7] Mark S. Smith, "The Near Eastern Background of Solar Language for Yahweh," *JBL* 109 (1990), 29–39; René Labat, "Le caractère religieux de la royauté assyro-babylonienne," in *Etudes d'Assyriologie* 2 (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1939), 231–33.

[8] See, e.g., the Standard Babylonian version of Gilgamesh I 241 (Gilgamesh is beloved by Shamash), III 43–119 (Gilgamesh's mother prays to Shamash for his protection) and IV 189–198 (Gilgamesh prays to Shamash and Shamash responds).

[9] Scurlock includes two other witnesses in her edition: Gray, *Šamaš*, pl. 12: 2′–15′ (K.2132) as her MS B and KAR 74: 16–20 as the fragmentary MS C. Claus Ambos includes an important new duplicate, Sm.1118, in his treatment of this ritual in his forthcoming book, *Der König im Gefängnis und das Neujahrsfest im Herbst: Mechanismen der Legitimation des babylonischen Herrschers im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr. und ihre Geschichte* (Habilitation, Heidelberg, 2010; rev. forthcoming). This

by an *eṭemmu* ("ghost"), an evil *alû*-demon, or a *mukīl rēš lemutti*-demon. The text, at the highest level, has the structure of a conditional instruction. The ritual functions as an extended apodosis addressing the condition in the brief protasis. The ritual includes various ritual preparations and a performance of two incantation-prayers, one by an *āšipu*, "exorcist," and the other, Shamash 73, by the *marṣu*, "diseased person, patient." Although the second prayer is our focus, the full ritual instructions are included here.

The conditional instruction structure is a common feature of most Mesopotamian "magico-medical" texts.[10] As with many other ancient Mesopotamian rituals designed to treat ghost-induced diseases, this ritual seeks to transfer the offending ghost from the infected person to a specially prepared figurine and then to bury that figurine along with the ghost it now embodies in an appropriate place.

The ritual begins by providing rather specific instructions to the practitioner who is addressed in the second person: "you gather. . . ." Nowhere does the text clearly provide a title for this second person practitioner. Line 11 introduces an *āšipu* in the third person: "He places. . . ." This *āšipu* performs a short but poignant incantation. In line 17, the text returns to the second person, "you set up," and provides further instructions, presumably to the practitioner of the first sixteen lines. Is the practitioner that the text addresses in the second person also the third person *āšipu* of lines 11–16? It is not possible to be certain. JoAnn Scurlock argues that they are the same person. Texts of this broad type that specify the participants generally mention only an *āšipu* and a *marṣu*.[11] However, three related texts indicate the participation of *āšipu* and *asû*, "physician," as practitioners in rituals intended to cure a person of a ghost-induced disease. If there is only one practitioner in our text, the shift from second person to third person and back to second person may indicate that the text is composite. As we will see, there are other possible indications that this ritual was stitched together from various loosely-related or previously-unrelated sources.

The conditional instruction begins with a protasis listing illness sources for which the following ritual, the apodosis or the instruction, is prescribed. The practitioner is to construct a figurine and outfit it with various attire and provisions. This figurine is placed on the roof of the patient's house and libated with a mixture of grain flour mixed into water and beer. Slivers of cedar and a magic

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new tablet provides an important duplicate to the ritual instructions. Reference to these witnesses will be noted occasionally as seems necessary.

[10] "Magico-medical" is adopted from Scurlock's *Magico-Medical Means of Treating Ghost-Induced Illnesses in Ancient Mesopotamia*, in which she studies over three hundred texts dealing with various ghost-induced illnesses.

[11] JoAnn Scurlock, "Physician, Exorcist, Conjurer, Magician: The Tale of Two Healing Professions," in *Mesopotamian Magic: Textual, Historical, and Interpretative Perspectives* (ed. Tzvi Abusch and Karel van der Toorn; Ancient Magic and Divination 1; Groningen: Styx, 1999), 69–79, here more specifically 70–71 and 75.

circle are placed around it. The practitioner then covers the figurine with an unfired fermenting vat. For three days and nights, the covered figurine is to be left outdoors while an exorcist (*āšipu*) places loaves and juniper censers by day (*ana pāni Šamaš*) and pours out emmer flour by night (*ana pāni kakkabī mūšītim*). Day and night, the exorcist recites a short incantation directed at the ghost. In the evening of the third day, the practitioner must prepare a ritual before Shamash. The patient then raises the figurine and recites the incantation that is the principle subject of this treatment. Following this incantation, the practitioner must place the figurine in a pot and bind it by an oath. The ritual ends with the instructions to "bury it in abandoned wastelands."

Under the guidance and instruction of the practitioner (*kīam tušadbabšu*, "you shall make him recite as follows"), the patient recites the longest incantation-prayer of the ritual, Shamash 73. One of the textual witnesses to the prayer lacks any associated ritual (Scurlock's MS C). The existence of this tablet suggests that the prayer circulated independently of the ghost ritual. For this reason, it is possible that a compiler simply plugged the prayer into the ritual. This may account for the apparent differences between the description of the disease in the protasis of the ritual ("ghost," "an evil *alû*-demon or a *mukīl rēš lemutti*-demon") and the description in lines 29 and 30 of the prayer ("an *utukku*-demon, a *rābiṣu* demon, a ghost, a *lilû*-demon, paralysis, dizziness, numbness of the flesh, vertigo, stiffness, [and] confusion"). Only *eṭemmu*, "ghost," is common between them.

The structure of the prayer is as follows:

I) Invocation
  A) The god's name and honorific titles (19–22)
  B) Praise for the god's nature and special skills (23–27a)
II) Petition
  A) Self-introduction (27b)
  B) Acknowledgement of reverential stance *vis-a-vis* the god (27c)
  C) Lament (28–30)
  D) Plea (31–34a)
III) Conditional call for agreement and rejoicing (34b–35)

The invocation first calls on Shamash by name and by several of his honorific titles. These highlight his role among the gods and among people. It then praises his various talents. He is judge, bringer of light and warmth to all humankind and even to the animals. The invocation takes up the important theme of judge a second time. Here the supplicant reminds Shamash that he makes right the verdicts of the wronged man and woman. The invocation thus sets the stage for the petition. The petition itself begins with a common formulaic self-introduction that leads directly to a lament in which the supplicant recounts their condition: exhausted and bound (*iʾiltu iʾʾilanni*, "a binding has bound me") by an angry god or goddess. Here, with reference to ritual behavior, the supplicant indicates that they are standing before Shamash. The prayer unfolds the details of how they are bound. At this point, the plea, returning to the theme of Shamash as judge, calls on Shamash to render a verdict in the supplicant's case

and to do it without delay. Referring back to binding, the prayer asks that Shamash not take up any other case until the supplicant's binding (*iʾiltī*, "my binding") is released. With the repetition of similar language, the prayer closely ties the lament and plea together. The prayer ends by calling on the gods to agree with Shamash's verdict and for both the heavens and the earth to celebrate his granting of the supplicant's plea.

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1. DIŠ NA GIDIM DAB-*su-ma* UŠ.MEŠ-*šú lu* A.LÁ ḪUL DAB-[*su*]

Line 1: DIŠ = *šumma*, "if." NA = *amīlu* (*awīlum*), "man." Magico-medical texts often open with the words *šumma amīlu*. *Amīlu* is the antecedent to the pronominal suffix on the verb (*–šu*). GIDIM = *eṭemmu*, "ghost." See JoAnn Scurlock and Burton R. Andersen, *Diagnoses in Assyrian and Babylonian Medicine: Ancient Sources, Translations, and Modern Medical Analyses* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 436–37, 441, 455–56 on *eṭemmu* as a disease symptom. DAB = *ṣabātu*, "seize, take hold." Note that *–tš–* (the last radical of the root and the first letter of the pronominal suffix) becomes *–ss–*. The *–ma* serves here as a conjunctive particle. UŠ = *redû*, "to accompany, pursue" In this case the MEŠ indicates an iterative form of the verb, the Gtn: *riteddû*, "to pursue, to chase constantly." *Lū . . . lū*, "either . . . or." A.LÁ = *alû*, a kind of demon. ḪUL = *lemnu*, "evil," is an adj. that modifies *alû*. The reconstruction of the last three words of the line follows the new duplicate Sm.1118.

šumma amīla eṭemmu iṣbassū-ma irteddīšu lū alû lemnu iṣbassu

2. *lu* SAG.<ḪUL>.ḪA.ZA DAB-*su lu mim-ma lem-nu* DAB-*su ina* SU-*šú* ZI-*ḫi*

3. SAḪAR URU ŠUB-*i* SAḪAR É ŠUB-*i* SAḪAR É DINGIR ŠUB-*i* SAḪAR KI.MAḪ SAḪAR KIŠI$_8$

4. SAḪAR ÍD ŠUB-*ti* SAḪAR KASKAL 1-*niš* TI-*qe* KI ÚŠ GU$_4$ [Ḫ]E.ḪE NU *mim-ma lem-nu* DÙ-*uš*

5. KUŠ UR.MAḪ MU$_4$.MU$_4$-*su* NA$_4$.GUG È *ina* GÚ-*šú* GAR KUŠ.A.GÁ.LÁ ZÌ.KASKAL-*su*

Line 2: SAG.<ḪUL>.ḪA.ZA = *sagḫulḫazû*-demon or *mukīl rēš lemutti*-demon. Scurlock, based on syllabic spellings, prefers the latter reading (533). *Mimma*, "anything, something, everything." SU = *zumru*, "body." ZI= *nasāḫu*, "to remove, to expel." The last four words again follow Sm.1118. The infinitive at the end of the line provides the purpose of the ritual: to remove (all the evil) from his body. See lines 14 and 16 below.

lū mukīl rēš lemutti iṣbassu lū mimma lemnu iṣbassu ina zumrīšu nasāḫi

Line 3: SAḪAR = *eperu*, "dust, earth, soil." URU = *ālu*, "city." ŠUB = *nadû*, "abandoned, deserted." Note the phonetic complement *–i* indicating the adj., *nadî*; therefore, the phrase *āli nadî* is in the genitive and *eper*, from *eperu*, must be a bound form. This structure continues throughout this line and the beginning of the next. É = *bītu*, "house." É DINGIR = *bīt ili*, "house of a god, temple." KI.MAḪ = *kima(ḫ)ḫu* (*kimāḫu*), "tomb," a Sumerian loanword. KIŠI$_8$ = *kulbābu*, "ant." "Dust of an ant" is probably to be rendered "dust from anthill" (see CAD K, 502). The last word is attested clearly on Sm.1118.

eper āli nadî eper bīti nadî eper bīt ili nadî eper kimaḫi nadî eper kulbābi

Line 4: ÍD = *nāru*, "river, canal." "Canal" is preferable here because the other sources of dust from abandoned places are man-made. KASKAL = *ḫarrānu*, "road." 1-*niš* = *ištēniš*, "together." TI = *leqû*, "to gather, to obtain, to take something in hand." KI = *itti*, "with." ÚŠ = *dāmu*, "blood." GU$_4$ = *alpu*, "bull, ox." ḪE.ḪE = *bullulu* (D of *balālu*), "to mix (up)." NU = *ṣalmu*, "figurine, image." DÙ = *epēšu*, "to make, to build." Were it not for the phonetic complement, one might be tempted to read DÙ as *banû*, perhaps the more common verb in these contexts. See CAD B, 86–87.

eper nāri nadīti eper ḫarrāni ištēniš teleqqe itti dām alpi tuballal ṣalam mimma lemnu teppuš

Line 5: KUŠ = *maškU*, "skin." UR.MAḪ = *nēšu*, "lion." A variant reads *alpu*, "bull," here instead. MU$_4$.MU$_4$ = *lubbušu* (D of *labāšu*), "to provide with clothing." Note that *–šš–* (the last radical of the root and the first letter of the 3ms pronominal suffix) becomes *–ss–*. NA$_4$.GUG = *sāmtu*, "carnelian, (red stone)." È = *šakāku*, "to string, to thread." The context requires that *ina* be understood as "around," within the semantic range of "on" in such contexts. GÚ = *kišādu*, "neck." GAR = *šakānu*, "to put, to place." KUŠ.A.GÁ.LÁ = *narūqu*, "bag," perhaps "leather bag" (see CAD N/1, 379, *AHw*, 749). The typical contents of a *narūqu* are dry goods, flour, barley, bread, textiles, hides, or the like. A variant reads KUŠ.A.EDIN.LÁ = *nādu*, "waterskin," here. While *nādu* often denotes a "waterskin," it too means leather bag in some contexts (see CAD N/1, 100, *AHw*, 702). ZÌ.KASKAL = *ṣidītu*, "(tra-

6. *u ṣú-de-e* SUM-*šú* UD.3.KÁM 9 ŠUK-*su* ÚTUL *ṣer-pe-ti ana* IGI-*šú* GAR-*an*

7. *ina* ÙR É LÚ.GIG GUB-*sú-ma* ZÌ ŠE.SA.A *ina* A *u* KAŠ SÌG-*aṣ-ma* BAL-*qí-šú*

8. 3 *sil-ti* GIŠ.EREN.NA *i-ta-ti-šú tu-zaq-qap*

9. ZÌ.SUR.RA NIGIN-*šú* DUG.NÍG.DÚR.BÙR NU AL.ŠEG$_6$.GÁ

vel) provisions," is clearly attested on Sm.1118. Lines 5b and 6a show the provisioning of the image with water and food.

mašak nēši tulabbassu sāmta tašakkak ina kišādīšu tašakkan narūqa ṣidīssu

Line 6: *Ṣudû*, "rations, provisions." SUM = *nadānu*, "to give." UD = *ūmu*, "day." As a determiniative, KÁM, generally follows an ordinal number. Therefore, UD.N.KÁM, generally means "the Nth day." But here, as in some other cases, it surely means "for N days." Perhaps we should read UD.3.KÁM here as *šalāš umī*. Notice that UD.3.KÁM is not preceded by *ina* nor is there an indication of the plural (compare the expression in lines 11 and 17). ŠUK = *kurummatu*, "food ration," was often barley or flour. ÚTUL = *diqāru*, "serving bowl." On *ṣerpētu* (*ṣirpētu*), see CAD Ṣ, 208: "a dish made with barley and milk or fat." IGI = *pānu* "front, face (pl)." *Ana pānīšu* means "before/in front of him (or it)."

u ṣudê taddaššu UD.3.KÁM 9 *kurummassu diqār ṣerpēti ana pānīšu tašakkan*

Line 7: ÙR = *ūru*, "roof." LÚ.GIG = *marṣu*, "sick person, patient." GUB = *šuzuzzu* (Š of *i/uzuzzu*), "to make stand, to set up." *Tušazzassu* is a 2ms Š durative (*tušazzaz*) plus a 3ms pronominal suffix (*–šu*). The *–zš–* cluster becomes *–ss–*. The *–ma*, both here and later in this line, is conjunctive, "and then." ZÌ = *qēmu*, "flour." ŠE.SA.A = *qalītu* or *labtu*, "parched grain" (on *labtu*, see *CDA*, 175). The use of flour from parched grain is part of various rituals; see CAD Q, 59 for other examples. A = *mû*, "water." KAŠ = *šikaru*, "beer." SÌG = *maḫāṣu*, "to beat, to weave" here "to stir." BAL = *naqû*, "to pour as a libation."

ina ūr bīt marṣi tušazzassū-ma qēm qalīti ina mê u šikari tamaḫḫaṣ-ma tanaqqīšu

Line 8: GIŠ.EREN.NA = *erēnu*, "cedar." *Siltu*, "sliver, chip (of wood)." *Itû*, "boundary." *Itâtīšu* is the fp with a 3ms pronominal suffix; it literally means "its boundaries" but is being used here as a preposition (see *CDA*, 137), "all around it." *Zuqqupu* (D of *zaqāpu*), "to plant, to erect."

3 *siltī erēni itâtīšu tuzaqqap*

Line 9: *Zisurrû*, "magic circle;" such magic circles were often made with (barley) flour. See CAD Z, 138. NIGIN = *lamû* (*lawûm*), "to encircle." DUG.NÍG.DÚR.BÙR = *namzītu*, "fermenting vat." NU = *lā*, "not." AL.ŠEG$_6$.GÁ should be read *ṣarpu* when used with earthenware, "refined, fired," as does CAD Ṣ, 113. It is not as likely to be read *bašlu*, "cooked, heat-treated," which tends not to be used with earthenware.

zisurrâ talammīšu namzīta lā ṣarpa

10. UGU-*šú tu-kàt-tam* <*ina*> UD.BI DUG.NÍG.DÚR.BÙR! ^{d}UTU *li-mur-šú ina* GE_6 MUL.MEŠ *li-mu-ru-šú*

11. UD.3.KÁM MAŠ.MAŠ UD GE_6 23 NINDA.ḪI.A NÍG.NA ŠIM.LI *ana* IGI ^{d}UTU GAR-*an*

12. *ina* GE_6 ZÌ ÁŠ.A.AN *ana* IGI MUL.MEŠ GE_6-*tim* DUB-*aq*

13. *ana* IGI ^{d}UTU *u* MUL.MEŠ UD.3.KÁM *ana muḫ-ḫi im-ta-*<*na*>*-an-nu*

14. ÉN GIDIM *mim-ma lem-nu iš-tu* UD-*mi an-ni-i ina* SU! NENNI A NENNI ZI-ta_5 *šu-ṣa-a-ta*

Line 10: UGU = *eli*, "over." *Kuttumu* (D of *katāmu*), "to cover (with)." UD.BI is probably a Sumerogram complex for "his day," Akk., *ūmīšu*. The pronoun likely refers to Shamash. ^{d}UTU = *Šamaš*. *Amāru*, "to see." GE_6 = *mūšu*, "night." MUL.MEŠ = *kakkabū*, "stars."

elīšu tukattam ina ūmīšu namzīta Šamaš līmuršu ina mūši kakkabū līmurūšu

Line 11: MAŠ.MAŠ = *āšipu*, "exorcist." NINDA.ḪI.A = *akalu*, "loaf, bread." NÍG.NA = *nignakku*, "censer." The reading of 23 loaves and one censer follows Sm.1118. Scurlock's MS A does not mention loaves, as she reads it, but requires 22 censers to be set up (22 NÍG.NA.NÍG.NA = 22 *nignakkū*; note that the duplication of the logogram must be taken as an indication of the plural). ŠIM.LI = *burāšu*, "juniper tree." Note the change in subject to third person; the *āšipu* introduced in this line performs the action. What, if anything, does this change in person indicate?

UD.3.KÁM *āšipu ūmi mūši* 23 *akalī nignak burāši ana pāni Šamaš išakkan*

Line 12: ÁŠ.A.AN or ZÍZ.ÀM (as Scurlock reads it) = *kunāšu*, "emmer." GE_6-*tim* = *mūšītim*, gen. "of night-time." DUB = *sarāqu*, "to strew, to sprinkle."

ina mūši qēm kunāši ana pāni kakkabī mūšītim isarraq

Line 13: Here *ana pāni Šamaš u kakkabī* means "day and night" but divine connotations should not be discounted. *Ana muḫḫi* here means "over (it)," with the "it," referring to the figurine's ritual arrangement, implied. *Mitannû* (Gtn of *manû*), "to count repeatedly, to recite repeatedly." On the reading of the verb as *imtanannu* (3cs Gtn durative), see Scurlock, 533.

ana pāni Šamaš u kakkabī UD.3.KÁM *ana muḫḫi imtanannu*

Line 14: ÉN = *šiptu*, "incantation, spell, ritual wording." This indicates to the user of the tablet that the instructions turn now to what he should recite. This first incantation is very brief, making it easy to recite repeatedly as prescribed in line 13. *Ištu*, "from." *Annî*, "this" (gen.). NENNI A NENNI = *annanna mar annanna*, "so-and-so, son of so-and-so," is a common placeholder for the actual name of the supplicant in prayers. Sometimes an even longer identification formula including the name of a personal god and goddess is used. See also lines 27 below. ZI= *nasāḫu*, see line 2; the form is a 2ms predicative (as is the next three verbs). *Šūṣû* (Š of [*w*]*aṣû*), "to make go out, to dismiss, to expel."

šiptu: *eṭemmu mimma lemnu ištu umi annî ina zumur annanna mar annanna nasḫāta šūṣâta*

15. *ṭar-da-ta u kuš-šu-da-ta* DINGIR *šá-kin-ka*

16. ^{d}15 *šá-kin-ta-ka ina* SU NENNI A NENNI GIG *is-su-ḫu-ka*

17. *ina* UD.3.KÁM *ina* UD.GURUM.MA KEŠDA *ana* IGI ^{d}UTU KEŠDA

18. LÚ.GIG NU ÍL-*ma ana* IGI ^{d}UTU *ki-a-am tu-šad-bab-šú*

19. ÉN ^{d}UTU *mu-tál* ^{d}*a-nun-na-ki e-tel* ^{d}*í-gì-gì mas-su-ú ṣi-ru mut-tar-ru-u te-ni-ši-e-ti*

Line 15: *Ṭarādu*, "to send away, to drive away." *Kuššudu* (D of *kašādu*), "to drive away, to chase off." *Šākikka* is a ms participle (*šākin*) with a 2ms pronominal object suffix (*–ka*). The *n* of the root assimilates to the following consonant. The same is true in the fem. participle in the following line.

ṭardāta u kuššudāta ilu šākikka

Line 16: ^{d}15 = *ištaru*, "goddess." ^{d}15 is often used in parallel with *ilu* (see CAD I/J, 272). GIG = *marṣu*, "sick person, patient." *Issuḫūka* is a 3mp G preterite (with 2ms pronominal suffix) from *nasāḫu* (see line 2 and 14). This is the last line of the first incantation.

ištaru šākittaka ina zumur annanna mar annanna marṣa issuḫūka

Line 17: The ritual instructions resume. On *ina* UD.3.KÁM, see the note on line 6. UD.GURUM.MA = *qiddat ūmi*, "late afternoon, evening." In the first instance, KEŠDA represents a noun in the accusative, *riksa*, "ritual arrangement." On contextual and syntactical grounds, the second instance of KEŠDA must be the verb *tarakkas* from *rakāsu*, "to bind, to prepare, to set up." The noun and the verb have the same root and appear together in similar phrases. See CAD R, 351. Notice the return to the second person, indicated more explicitly in line 18.

ina UD.3.KÁM *qiddat ūmi riksa ana pāni Šamaš tarakkas*

Line 18: ÍL = *našû*, "to raise." *Šudbubu* (Š of *dabābu*), "to make someone speak, to make someone recite aloud." Expressions like this are common ritual instructions for prayers. See, e.g., *ṣalma šuātu tanaššī-ma kīam taqabbi*, "you lift up that image and say this," cited in CAD N/2, 83.

marṣu ṣalma inaššī-ma ana pāni Šamaš kīam tušadbabšu

Line 19: The second incantation, Shamash 73, begins here. As is expected, the supplicant's prayer begins with an invocation and hymnic praise. *Muttallu* (*muttellu*), "princely, noble." *Anunnakkū* is a collective name from Sumerian that likely originally specified all the gods of the pantheon but later, and particularly in Akkadian contexts, may only refer to gods of earth and the underworld (See Black and Green, 34). *Etellu*, "pre-eminent, lord." On the connotation of *etellu* as applied to the younger gods, see CAD E, 383. *Igigî* refers to the lesser gods of the pantheon. *Massû*, "leader, expert." *Ṣīru*, "first rank, supreme, outstanding." *Muttarrû*, "leader, guide," has the form of a Gtn participle from *arû* (see CAD A/2, 314). Despite the nom. case ending, the word is bound to the following noun in the gen. *Tenēšētu* (pl), "people, humankind."

šiptu: *Šamaš muttal Anunnakkī etil Igigî massû ṣīru muttarrû tenēšēti*

20. *da-a-a-an* AN-*e u* KI-*tim la e-nu-u qí-bi-tuš-šú*

21. ^{d}UTU *muš-te-šir ek-le-ti šá-kin nu-ri a-na ni-ši*

22. ^{d}UTU *ina e-re-bi-ka* ZÁLAG *ni-ši ú-ta-aṭ-ṭi* ^{d}UTU *ina a-ṣi-ka i-nam-mi-ra kib-ra-a-ti*

23. *e-ku-tum al-mat-tum ki-gul-la-tum ù ru-ut-tum*

24. *ṣi-it-ka uš-táḫ-ḫa-na ka-la ab-ra-a-tum*

Line 20: *Dayyānu*, "judge." AN = *šamû*, "heaven." KI = *erṣetu*, "earth." *Dayyān šamê u erṣetim* is a very common and old epithet for Shamash. This epithet is particularly poignant as part of this prayer. It is echoed in line 31, part of the petition, *Šamaš dayyānu attā*. In lines 31–33 the supplicant prays for an immediate "verdict" in his case. *Enû*, "to change, to shift, to revoke." The negated infinitive describes a quality of Shamash. *Qibītu*, "speech, command." *Qibītuššu* includes the locative-adverbial ending *–um* plus the 3ms pronominal suffix (*–šu*). The *m* assimilates to the *š* of the suffix. Although we may expect *qibīssu* here (as a variant suggests), the locative-adverbial ending does stand sometimes in place of the accusative (see *GAG* §66f).

dayyān šamê u erṣeti lā enû qibītuššu

Line 21: *Muštēšir* is a Št lex. participle (ms) from *ešēru*, "to cause to straighten, to put in order." *Ekletu*, "darkness." The idea here is that Shamash puts the darkness in order. See CAD N/2, 349. *Šākin* from *šakānu* is a G participle. *Nūru*, "light." *Nišū*, "people."

Šamaš muštēšir ekleti šākin nūri ana nišī

Line 22: *Erēbu*, "to enter," but with reference to the sun, "to set." The pronominal suffix becomes the subject of the infinitive's action: "in your setting." ZÁLAG = *nūru*, "light." *Uteṭṭû* (Dt of *eṭû*), "to be darkened." *Aṣû* (*waṣûm*), "to go out," but with reference to the sun, "to rise." *Namāru* (*nawārum*), "to be(come) bright, to shine." *Kibrātu,* "the regions," specifically the four regions of the earth, the four edges or shores, that is, the whole world.

Šamaš ina erēbīka nūr nišī ūtaṭṭi Šamaš ina aṣīka inammirā kibrāti

Line 23: *Ekû* (m), *ekūtu* (f), "impoverished, orphaned." *Almattu*, "widow." Here and elsewhere in this text, the mimation is archaic and almost certainly aphonemic and likely aphonetic in which case the signs should perhaps be read *tu*$_4$ or *tì*, as appropriate. The reason for reading these signs *tum* and *tim* is that elsewhere in the text the signs TU and TI are used for *tu* and *ti*. On *kigullatu*, "waif(?)," see *AHw*, 474 and CAD K, 349–50. *Ruttu* (*rūtu*), "female associate, companion." This line serves to indicate that the *kala abrātu* in the next line includes even the most disenfranchised elements of humanity.

ekūtu almattu kigullatu u ruttu

Line 24: *Ṣītu*, "exit," but with regard to the sun, "rising." *Šutaḫḫunu* (Dt of *šaḫānu*), "to be warmed up." The form is a 3fp durative. *Kala*, "all." *Abrātu*, "humankind" appears only in the pl. See CAD A/1, 62.

ṣētka uštaḫḫanā kala abrātu

25. *bu-lum šik-na-at* ZI-*tim a-šu*$^{!}$*-ú ṣe-e-ri*

26. *it-ta-nab-ba-la-ka nap-šat-si-na meš-re-ta*

27. *di-in ḫab-lim ù ḫa-bil-ti ta-da-an* EŠ.BAR-*ši-na tuš-te-šer / ana-ku* NENNI A NENNI *šú-nu-ḫu kám-sa-ku*

28. *ša ina šib-sat* DINGR *u* ^{d}15 *i*$^{\flat}$*-il-tum i-*$^{\flat}$*-i-la-an-ni*

Line 25: *Būlu*, "beasts," and *ašû*, "animals," are common synonyms. See CAD Ṣ, 114. ZI = *napištu*. *Šiknat napišti* are "living creatures," an idiom based on *šakānu*, "to place, to put," and *napištu*, "life, vitality." See CAD Š/2, 436. *Ṣēru*, "steppe, open country."

būlu šiknat napišti ašû ṣēri

Line 26: *Ittabbulu* (Gtn of [*w*]*abālu*), "to carry constantly, to bring constantly." The form is a 3fp durative plus a 2ms pronominal suffix. *Napšāssina* is the fp of *napištu* with a 3fp pronominal suffix. But the word could be read differently. For example, Seux (426), following *AHw*, 698, reads *nablāṭsina* from *nablāṭu*, "healing, life giving." The final word, *meš-re-ta*, is also ambiguous. Is it a variant of *mašrītu*, "riches" (*AHw*, 629), as adopted by Seux (427) and Foster (731), or is it *mešrêtu*, "limbs," as Scurlock (535) and von Soden (323) suggest? Should we understand this as a reference to sacrifice?

ittanabbalāka napšassina mešrêta

Line 27: The two halves of this double line straddle the hymnic introduction and the petition section of the prayer, thereby providing a transition between the sections. The line begins by calling on Shamash in his role as judge, a role that is directly applicable to the petition. It recalls Shamash's epithet as *dayyān šamê u erṣetim* in line 20. The first part of this line summarizes the previous lines of the petition. It then identifies the petitioner via a standard self-introduction formula. *Dīnu*, "case, judgment." *Ḫablu* (m), *ḫabiltu* (f), "wronged person." While it is possible to understand *ḫablu* as "oppressed," "wronged" seems to work better in the context of this prayer. *Dânu* (*diānum*), "to judge." EŠ.BAR = *purussû*, "verdict, decision." *Purussû* is commonly used in the context of verdicts from the gods. Given the medical context of this prayer, we might call the god's verdict a prognosis; but for the Mesopotamian, a god's decision, even with regard to an illness, is ultimately legal in nature. *Šutēšuru* (Št lex. of *ešēru*), "to put in order, to clear up, to provide justice." The form is 2ms durative. *Šūnuḫu*, "exhausted, troubled." The adjective is used substantivally here, "the exhausted one." This is the first hint of a complaint in the prayer. A string of complaints follows in lines 28–30. *Kamāsu*, "to kneel." The form is 1cs predicative.

dīn ḫablim u ḫabilti tadân purussêšina tuštešširr
anāku annanna mar annanna šūnuḫu kamsāku

Line 28: *Šibšātu*, "anger, angry rejection." *Ina* must mean something like "on account of" or "by." *E*$^{\flat}$*iltu* (*i*$^{\flat}$*iltu*), "bond, obligation, liability, sin." *E*$^{\flat}$*ēlu*, "to bind." *I*$^{\flat\flat}$*ilanni* is a G 3cs durative with a 1cs pronominal object suffix. The *ša* introduces a relative clause that describes the condition of the supplicant. They are bound due to divine anger, which may be the result of some ritual failure but it need not be. Notice the alliteration in this line.

ša ina šibsāt ili u ištari i$^{\flat}$*iltu i*$^{\flat\flat}$*ilanni*

29. UDUG MAŠKIM GIDIM LÍL.LÁ *ḫi-mi-tum di-mi-tum šim-mat* UZU *ṣi-da-nu*

30. *šá-áš-šá-ṭu mi-qit ṭe-mi iš-qu-lu-nim-ma* UD-*mi-šam-ma uD-Dam-ma-mu-nin-ni*

Line 29: UDUG = *utukku*, "demon, ghost." MAŠKIM = *rābiṣu*, "demonic guardian," see CAD R, 23. GIDIM = *eṭemmu*, "ghost." (As a symptom of one or more diseases, see Scurlock and Andersen, *Diagnoses*, 436–37, 441, 455–56; *eṭemmu* can also be the *cause* of disease, see CAD E, 397.) LÍL.LÁ = *lilû*, a kind of demon (see CAD L, 190 and Scurlock and Andersen, *Diagnoses*, 434–36). Concerning *ḫimītu* (*ḫimittu*), *dimītu*, *šimmat šīri* (= UZU), and *ṣīdānu*: the several differing attempts listed here to provide definitions for these words illustrate the considerable uncertainty about their meanings. ("Scurlock" in the list refers to her edition of the text.)

CAD	*ḫimītu*	*dimītu*	*šimmat šīri*	*ṣīdānu*
D, 143, Ḫ, 19	paralysis	dizziness(?)	poisoning of the flesh,	St. Vitus' dance
Š/3, 7	gooseflesh	vertigo,	paralysis of the muscles	St. Vitus' dance
Ṣ, 171	paralysis	dizziness(?)	poisoning of the flesh	vertigo
Foster, 731	goose pimples	dizziness	paralysis(?)	vertigo
Seux, 427	*la chair de poule*	*la vertige*	*la paralysie*	*le tournis*
von Soden, 324	*Chimittu*	*Dimutu*	*Vergiftung*	*Fieberglut*
Scurlock, 535	paralysis	twisting	numbness of the flesh	dizziness

Scurlock and Andersen treat several of these in their *Diagnoses*: for *ḫimītu*, see 289–90; for *šimmatu*, see 434–36, 444; for *ṣīdānu*, see 720, n.81, 734–35, n.58. Needless to say, one's translation will be tentative.

utukku rābiṣu eṭemmu lilû ḫimītu dimītu šimmat šīri ṣīdānu

Line 30: *Šaššaṭu*, "stiff joints." Following CAD Ṣ, 171, Seux translates *šaššaṭu* as "L'arthrite" (427); Scurlock does not translate it at all (535). Scurlock and Andersen suggest that this symptom is best understood by the modern term "tetanus" (*Diagnoses*, 66–68). See also CAD Š/2, 175: [*šumma kišāssu*?] *qablāšu ašṭa šaššaṭa* MU.NI, "[If his neck?] (and) hips are stiff, it is called *šaššaṭu*" (citing BAM 129 iv 3). *Miqittu*, "attack." *Ṭēmu* here means "reason" or the like. *Miqit ṭēmi* is "an attack on reason." *Šaqālu*, "to weigh, to balance." *Išqulūnim-ma* is a G 3mp preterite with a 1cs dative pronominal suffix and an enclitic *–ma*. In this line we see two different uses of the enclitic *–ma*. On the verb (*išqulūnim-ma*), the *–ma* functions as a conjunction, binding this sentence with the next. UD = *ūmu*, "day." *Ūmišam-ma*, "daily," from *ūmi* plus *–išam* and the enclitic *–ma*. The *–išam* suffix often forms distributive adverbs from nouns (see *GAG* §67g): "day" becomes "daily." Here the *–ma* brings special emphasis to the adverb *ūmišam*. The reading of the final verb is uncertain (Scurlock's MS B has *ú-dam-ma-mu-*[. . .). Attempts to derive the verb from *damāmu*, *damû*, or *ṭamû* all flounder on morphological and/or contextual grounds. (The capital *D*'s in the transliteration indicate uncertainty about the value of the dental consonant. Should we read *uṭ-ṭam-* or *ud-dam-*?) A scribal error cannot be ruled out.

šaššaṭu miqit ṭēmi išqulūnim-ma ūmišam-ma . . .

31. ^{d}UTU DI.KUD *at-ta-ma* ZI-*tì ub-lak-ka di-nu* GIG *ša* DAB-*an-ni ana di-ni kám-sa-ku*

32. *di-nu di-in* EŠ.BAR-*a-a* KUD-*us a-di di-i-ni* EŠ.BAR-*a-a tu-šar-šu-ú*

33. *ana di-ni šá-*[*nim-ma la*]*-a* SUM-*in* [EŠ.BAR-*š*]*u iš-tu di-ni* EŠ.BAR *tuš-ter-šu-ú*

34. *i*^{2}*-il-ti ú-taš-ši-ra-an-ni* [*ina*] SU.MU *it-tap-ra-šú e-ma tak-la-ku* DINGIR.MEŠ *lim-tag-ru pu-ka*

Line 31: The line comprises three clauses. The first clause is verbless and conveys the supplicant's confidence in Shamash's judicial role. DI.KUD = *dayyānu*. Note that line 20 spells *dayyānu* syllabically, *da-a-a-an*, while here the text uses a logogram. *Attā*, "you" (ms). The second clause illustrates the supplicant's confidence through action. (*W*)*abālu*, "to carry, to bring." *Ublakka* is the G 1cs preterite (*ubil*) with a ventive (*–am*) and a 2ms pronominal suffix (*–ka*). The *m* of the ventive has assimilated to the *k* of the pronominal suffix (*–mk–* becomes *–kk–*). The verb is performative. By speaking it the supplicant performs the implied action (i.e., saying that he brings his life to Shamash actually brings his life to Shamash). The final clause is more complex. The first *dīnu* in the line must mean "case, issue" or the like; the second means "judgment, verdict, prognosis." GIG = *murṣu*, "sickness, disease." (This reading follows MS C, see also Seux, 427, n.22; MS A reads LÚ.GIG = *marṣu*, "patient, sick person.") The relative clause that follows *murṣu* defines the sickness further via the verb *iṣbatanni*. The supplicant is kneeling submissively, the line says, waiting for the deity to render a verdict about the case of disease that has seized him.

Šamaš dayyānu attā-ma napištī ublakka dīnu murṣi ša iṣbatanni ana dīni kamsāku

Line 32: *Dīn* is a ms impv. from *dânu* (see line 27) with a cognate accusative (*dīnu*). The phonetic compliment on EŠ.BAR (*-a-a*) indicates that *purussû* ends in a long *a*. KUD = *parāsu*, "to cut," but with *purussû* it means "to render a decision or verdict." *Adi*, "until," begins a temporal clause. *Šuršû* (Š of *rašû*), "to cause someone or something to acquire something." *Tušaršû* is a 2ms preterite with subjunctive (*–u*).

dīnu dīn purussâ purus adi dīnī purussâ tušaršû

Line 33: The text follows Seux in the reading of the first lacuna (see 427, n.23). The restoration of the second lacuna follows Scurlock (532). *Šanû*, "another." SUM = *nadānu*, "to give, to deliver." The construction *lā tanaddin* is a prohibitive, a negative impv. ("do not"). The object of the verb follows it. A temporal clause, parallel to the one in line 32, begins with the word *ištu* and introduces the prayer's concluding section of praise. The basic meanings of the preposition *ištu* are "from, since;" here it means "after." (Note that MS A reads the earlier form, *ištu*, while MS C reads *ultu*, the later form.) The verb in the clause, *tušteršû* (for *tuštaršû*), is a 2ms perfect with subjunctive from *šuršû* (see line 32).

ana dīni šanîm-ma lā tanaddin purussâšu ištu dīnī purussâ tušteršû

Line 34: On *e*^{2}*iltu* (*i*^{2}*iltu*), see line 28. This word is the subject of the following two verbs. (*W*)*uššuru* (D of [*w*]*ašāru*), "to release, to set free." Although no subjunctive marker is present (due to the object suffix), this verb is part of the subordinate clause from the previous line (beginning with *ištu*). SU.MU = *zumrī*, *zumru* plus 1cs pronominal suffix (Sum. MU = *–ia*$_{5}$). *Naprušu* (N, no G stem), "to fly"; in a simile "to flee." The form is a 3cs perfect

35. [AN-*u liḫ*]-*du-ka* KI-*tim li-riš-ka* TU_6 ÉN

36. [*ki-a-am tu*]-*šad-bab-šu ana* DUG GAR-*an-šu-ma tu-tam-ma-šu*

37. [*niš* KI-*tim lu-u ta-ma-ta*$_5$] *niš* AN-*e lu-u ta-ma-ta*$_5$ *niš* ^{d}UTU *lu-u ta-ma-ta*$_5$ DU_{11}.GA-*ma* KÁ-*šú* ÚŠ-*ḫi*

38. [. . .] *ina ḫar-bi na-du-ti te-qé-ber-šú*

with subjunctive, indicating that this verb also continues the subordinate clause. *Ēm(a)*, "wherever." *Takālu*, "to trust." *Mitguru* (Gt of *magāru*), "to agree with one another, to come to an agreement." *Pūka*, "your mouth, your word." We expect *pī–* before a pronominal suffix, but *pū–* does occur in literature (see Scurlock, 533, citing *AHw*, 872). The Gt of *magāru* is reciprocal and thus does not take an object. *Pūka* therefore must be taken adverbially, "(with regard to) your word." Many translators suspect an error at the end of this line, emending it to read *likrubūka*, "may they bless you" (see Foster, 731, Seux, 427, n.26, and implied by von Soden, 324).

i'iltī ūtašširanni ina zumrīya ittaprašu ēma taklāku ilū limtagrū pūku

Line 35: *Ḫadû*, "to be joyful." *Râšu* (*riāšum*), "to rejoice." TU_6 ÉN is a common Sumerian formula that marks the end of the incantation, closing out what ÉN in line 19 began. Notice the reprise "heaven and earth" thematically reflecting the divine epithet of Shamash as judge of heaven and earth in the invocations to the prayer.

šamû liḫdūka erṣeti lirîška TU_6 ÉN

Line 36: Mirroring the language at the end of line 20, *kīam tušadbabšu* brackets the supplicant's prayer. DUG = *karpatu*, "pot." GAR-*an* = *tašakkan*. *Tummû* (D of *tamû*), "to bind by oath, to make someone swear." *Tutammāšu* is a 2ms durative with a 3ms pronominal suffix. The 3ms pronouns on the verbs refer to the figurine. *Tutammāšu* introduces what Scurlock calls a "ritual oath formula" (533). Such formulae occur in several ghost prescriptions but are far from exclusive to such texts.

kīam tušadbabšu ana karpati tašakkaššū-ma tutammāšu

Line 37: *Nīšu*, "(oath on the) life." The ritual formula literally reads, "(by) the life of the earth/heaven." *Lū* expresses a wish. *Tamāta* is a G 2ms predicative from *tamû*, "to swear, to adjure." DU_{11}.GA = *qabû*, "to say." We expect a 2ms durative form here. KÁ = *bābu*, "gate, door;" but since it refers to the jar, it means "opening." ÚŠ = *peḫû*, "to block, to close, to seal."

nīš šamê lū tamāta nīš erṣeti lū tamāta nīš Šamaš lū tamāta taqabbī-ma bābšu tepeḫḫi

Line 38: *Ḫarbu*, "desert, wasteland." *Nadûti*, from *nadû*, see line 3. *Qebēru*, "to bury." Note how the ritual instructions come full circle with the mention of *nadû*: the abandoned dust used to create the figurine is returned to an abandoned place.

. . . ina ḫarbī nadûti teqebberšu

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

Tawil demonstrated that Akkadian *ṣalmu*, "figurine, image" and Hebrew צֶלֶם are not only cognates but also share nearly identical semantic ranges (Tawil,

ALCBH, 323). However, in all cases save two, the creation of man (Gen 1:26–27) and the birth of Seth (Gen 5:3), the Hebrew Bible views having, making, or being a צֶלֶם negatively. The expression וְצַלְמֵי תוֹעֲבֹתָם, "and images of their abominations," in Ezek 7:20, and צַלְמֵיכֶם, "your images," in Amos 5:26 are examples of the negative evaluations of figurines or images. Nowhere does the Hebrew Bible clearly refer to a צֶלֶם as having the same or similar function as the *ṣalmu* in this Akkadian ritual.[1]

The semantic equivalent of the complete epithet *dayyān šamê u erṣeti*, "judge of heaven and earth," does not occur in the Hebrew Bible. However, הִנָּשֵׂא שֹׁפֵט הָאָרֶץ, "judge of the earth rise up," in Ps 94:2 may reflect the first part of the epithet here applied to Yahweh. The phrase שֹׁפֵט כָּל־הָאָרֶץ, "judge of all the earth," in Gen 18:25 may reflect the same traditional usage.[2] On "judge" as a divine epithet in the Hebrew Bible, see Shamash 1 in the comparative suggestions (page 379).

[1] While archaeologists have discovered many clay figurines from the Iron Age, none of them is clearly of the type or function as those described in Akkadian exorcism rituals. For overviews of Iron Age figurines from the southern Levant see Ziony Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches* (London: Continuum, 2001), 267–74 and Ronald S. Hendel, "Israelite Religion," *Encyclopedia Of Religion* (ed. Lindsay Jones; 2d ed.; Detroit: Macmillan, 2005), 4724–52, here 4744.

[2] Compare 1 Sam 2:10, "the Lord will judge the ends of the earth" (JPS).

TRANSLATION:

1. If a ghost seizes a man and constantly pursues him or an evil *alû*-demon seizes him 2. or a *mukīl rēš lemutti*-demon seizes him or something evil seizes him, to expel (it) from his body, 3. dust of an abandoned city, dust of an abandoned house, dust of an abandoned temple, dust of an abandoned tomb, dust from an anthill, 4. dust of an abandoned canal, dust of a road, you gather together, you mix (them) with bull's blood, (and) you make a figurine of whatever evil thing (it is). 5. (With) a lion's skin you clothe it. You thread carnelian (and) place (it) around its neck. You provide it with a leather bag, its travel provisions, 6. and rations you give it. For three days, you place nine bowls of gruel before it (as) its food ration. 7. On the roof of the house of the patient, you stand it. Then you stir parched grain flour into water and beer, and you libate it. 8. You plant three slivers of cedar around it. 9. You surround it with a magic circle. With an unfired fermenting vat 10. you cover over it. Let Shamash see the fermenting vat during the day; let the stars see it during the night. 11. For three days, day and night, the exorcist places twenty-three loaves (and) a censer of juniper before Shamash. 12. At night, he pours out emmer flour before the stars of the night. 13. Before Shamash and the stars, for three days, he constantly recites over (it):

14. Incantation: Ghost (or) whatever evil, from this day forward, from the body of so-and-so, son of so-and-so, you are expelled, dismissed,
15. Driven away, and banished. The god who placed you (there),

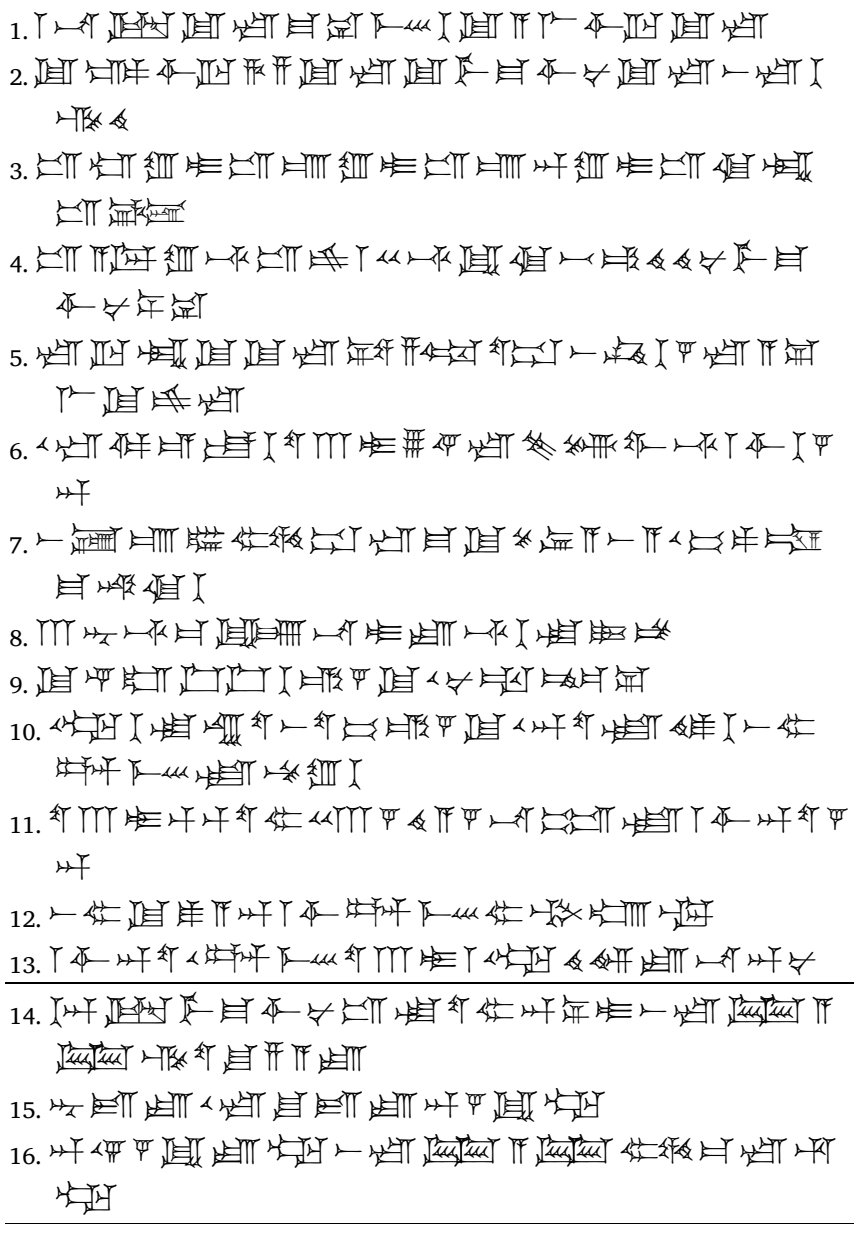
16. The goddess who placed you (there), they have expelled you from the body of so-and-so, son of so-and-so, the patient.

17. On the third day, in the evening, you set up a ritual arrangement before Shamash. 18. The patient raises the figurine before Shamash, and you make him recite as follows:

19. Incantation: O Shamash, noble among the Anunnakki, prince among the Igigi, pre-eminent leader, guide of the people,
20. Judge of heaven and earth, unchanging with regard to his command,
21. O Shamash, organizer of darkness, bringer of light for humanity,
22. O Shamash, at your setting, humanity's light darkens; O Shamash, at your rising, the four quarters brighten.
23. The homeless girl, the widow, the waif(?), and the female companion,
24. (By) your rising all humanity is warmed.
25. Beasts, living creatures, animals of the steppe,
26. They continually give you their lives, their limbs.
27. You judge the case of the wronged man and woman. You make their verdict right.
    I, so-and-so, son of so-and-so, exhausted, am kneeling (before) you,
28. Who on account of the anger of a god and goddess a binding has bound me.
29. An *utukku*-demon, a *rābiṣu*-demon, a ghost, a *lilu*-demon, paralysis, dizziness, numbness of the flesh, vertigo,
30. Stiffness, (and) confusion weigh on me and daily. . . .
31. O Shamash, you are the judge. I bring you my life. I am kneeling for a verdict with regard to the case of the disease that has seized me.
32. Judge my case. Provide my verdict. Until you make my case come to a verdict,
33. To another case, do not deliver its verdict. After you make my case come to verdict,
34. (And) my binding releases me and flees from my body, wherever I put my trust, may the gods agree with one another with regard to what you say (lit. your mouth).
35. May the heavens be joyful with you. May the earth rejoice in you. End of incantation.

36. Thus you have him speak. You put it (i.e., the figurine) in a pot and you bind it (i.e., the figurine) by oath: 37. "By Earth be adjured; by Heaven be adjured; by Shamash be adjured," you say and then you block its (i.e, the pot's) opening.
38. . . . You bury it in abandoned wastelands.

CUNEIFORM:



17.

18.

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27.

28.

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31.

32.

33.

34.

35. [illegible]

36. [illegible]

37. [illegible]

38. x x x [illegible]

A Shuilla: Anu 1

KYLE GREENWOOD

ANU:

Anu is known throughout Mesopotamian mythology as the sky god. The deity is represented in cuneiform with the AN sign. When this sign is read in Sumerian, it is pronounced /an/ and means "heaven," which is the Sumerian name for the deity (Sum. An; Akk. *Anu*). The sign is also commonly read in Sumerian as dingir, which may refer to the generic word for "deity," Akk. *ilu*, or as the determinative for any deified being (^{d}DN). In the earliest cuneiform writing, AN resembled a star or rosette.

In classic Mesopotamian mythology Anu was one of the three highest ranked deities, along with Enlil and Ishtar. However, in the Great Hymn of the Queen of Nippur, Anu shares paternity with Enlil and Sin. Anu possessed the authority to decree and elevate fates. Along with Enlil, Anu was responsible for conferring kingship and granting royal authority. Some epithets of Anu include *šar ilī*, "king of the gods"; *šar šamê*, "king of heaven"; and *šar matāti*, "king of the lands."

As is the case with the other celestial deities, Anu is not only the god whose dominion is heaven; Anu also represents the heavens themselves. Anu is the antithesis of *erṣetu*, "earth." In *Atram-ḫasīs*, Anu is known as *abu*, "father," and the aforementioned *šar ilī*, "king of the gods." While Anu ascended to heaven, Enlil assumed control of the earth. The Sumerian myth Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Netherworld intimates that heaven and earth were once a single entity, until Anu carried off and occupied heaven, and Enlil carried off and occupied earth.

In the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic, Anu is associated with military action. In this epic Anu is said to press *miṭṭa lā pādâ elu targīgi* "the relentless mace upon the wicked." However, Anu is not typically associated with warfare. Rather, the deity is summoned amid dire circumstances so the Kassite king Kashtiliash might feel the full brunt of Assyria's pantheon.

Based on the textual and archaeological record, the cult of Anu had limited official geographical distribution. Apparently, Anu received limited homage in Dilbat, Kesh and Ur. However, the deity also appears to have had a dais at É-sagíl in Babylon. In Ashur, Anu and Adad shared a long-standing temple that consisted of a pair of ziggurats, one for each deity. Of primary significance, however, was the Anu cult in Uruk. Anu's temple, named *Bīt Rēš* in Akkadian, was one

of two major temple structures, the other one being the temple of Inana. Both temples were extensively rebuilt during the Seleucid and Parthian periods.

In Mesopotamian astronomical tradition, "the path of Anu" (*ḫarrān šūt Anim*) lay between the "paths" of Enlil and Ea (see page 411 for more on the celestial "paths"). With respect to iconography, Anu's divine symbol is the horned cap. His divine number was 60, the highest among the gods.

THE PRAYER:

This prayer to Anu follows the standard tripartite construction of a shuilla. The hymnic introduction (lines 1–8a) consists of four parts. The first three parts are organized in sets of parallel lines, following Sumerian hymnic style (see Mayer, *UFBG*, 40). In each case, the second line begins with the vocative "O Anu" then repeats the first line verbatim. The first of the four parts impresses upon the deity his worthiness to be called upon. Anu is "magnificent" and is associated with holy purification rites. The second part appeals to Anu's status in the cosmic realm. The third and fourth parts of the hymnic introduction shift from appealing to the deity's generic value as the hearer of prayers to the deity's specific merit for hearing this particular prayer. Not only is Anu the magnificent god of the heavens, but, more importantly to the supplicant, Anu is the deity who can remove the afflictions from this persecuted human.

The petition section (lines 8b–13) consists of a series of five requests, followed by the imperative "have mercy!" There is a sort of rhythmic cadence in this section as the prayer moves from the beneficence of the deity to the transgressions of the person; from the ferocity of the supplicant's personal gods, to the compassion of the magnificent Anu. The petition demonstrates the precarious nature in which anguished people of the ancient world found themselves with respect to their health and the whims of the gods.

The prayer concludes (lines 14–16) with a section of promissory praise. Should Anu successfully intervene on behalf of the supplicant, this person will reward the deity with riches and honor.

Aside from the use of parallelism in the first section, the prayer employs a number of recurring words. For example, *bēlu* occurs once in each of the first six lines and once in line 15. *Pašāru* occurs in participial form three times in the hymnic introduction and twice as a precative in the petition section. In that same section, *lemnētu* and *Ḫaṭâtu* appear three times each. These recurring words are significant in that they not only influence the themes of their respective sections, but they also serve to unify the prayer as a cohesive composition.

In the *Bīt salāʾ mê* purification ritual series this prayer to Anu initiates the ninth section (*pirsu*) of the series, which consists of prayers to multiple deities, including Nusku, Sin, Gula and Shamash. The ritual itself was named for the location in which it was performed, the *Bīt salāʾ mê*, "House of Water Sprin-

kling." It involved the transfer of evil from the king to its suspected source by means of a purification bath.[1]

There are three known MSS of this prayer, BMS 6: 1–16 (referred to here as MS A), CT 51 211 (MS B), and LKA 50 (MS C). All of these are incomplete, but the latter is the best preserved (at least, after line 6). The treatment presented here follows the line numbering of BMS 6 as a matter of convenience (see likewise Foster's translation). The text at the beginning of the prayer is very fragmentary, shows signs of scribal errors (especially in MS C), and varies among the sources. The text of lines 1–6 presented here is, therefore, tentative. With line 7, this treatment follows MS C. Even here, due to the fragmentary nature of the text, many reconstructions are conjectural. The present text cannot substitute for studying the original manuscripts or consulting a new modern edition, which is unfortunately still a desideratum.

[1] For more information on the *Bīt salāʾ mê*, see Ambos' forthcoming study.

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1. ÉN EN *šur-bu-ú ša* [*ina*] AN-*e šu*-[*luḫ-ḫu-šú* KÙ]

Line 1: ÉN = *šiptu*, "incantation, ritual wording." This word marks the beginning of the prayer, but is not a part of the prayer itself. EN = *bēlu,* "master, lord, ruler." *Šurbû*, "great, supreme," is a Š stem verbal adjective from *rabû*. Note that the superlative form in Akkadian, known as the elative, is expressed via the Š verbal adjective. The prayer begins appropriately by praising the deity as *bēlu šurbû,* "most excellent lord." *Ša* with a resumptive pronoun such as *–šu* attached to a noun X is a common grammatical construct meaning "whose X." *Ina šamê* (= AN), "in heaven," reflects Anu's chief role as god of the heavens. *Šuluḫḫu*, "purification rite," usually occurs in the plural, as here (see CAD Š/3, 260). *Ellū* is a G 3mp predicative from *elēlu* (= KÙ), "to be clean, pure, holy, sacred."

šiptu: *bēlu šurbû ša ina šamê šuluḫḫūšu ellū*

2. ^{d}*a-num* EN *šur-bu-ú* [*ša ina* AN-*e šu-luḫ-ḫu-šú* KÙ]

3. DINGIR AN-*e* EN [*ṣa*]-*ad-di* EN [AGA]

4. ^{d}*a-num* DINGIR AN-*e* [EN *ṣa-ad-di* EN AGA]

5. *pa-šir* u_4*-mi* EN [*ṣa-ad-di* EN AGA]

6. ^{d}*a-num pa-šir* u_4*-me* [EN] *ṣa-ad-di* EN *a-g*[*e-e*$^{?}$]

Line 2: Lines 1–6 consist of three pairs of parallel lines that imitate Sumerian hymnic style. Each pair moves from the general to the specific. The first line of each pair addresses the deity with a particular epithet. The epithet is repeated verbatim in the second line of the pair, except that the deity addressed is called by name. Notice the retention of mimation in the DN Anu, which is otherwise absent in the text.

Anum bēlu šurbû ša ina šamê šuluḫḫūšu ellū

Line 3: DINGIR = *ilu*, "god." MS B begins the line with *bēlu* instead of *ilu*. *Ṣaddu* means "sign, signal," particularly as it pertains to omens. AGA = *agû*, "crown." In some texts the crown of Anu represents kingship in the divine council. The title *bēl agê*, "lord of the crown," also underscores Anu's authority to coronate kings. In the astrological text Astrolabe B, the crown of Anu is a constellation called *is lê*, "Jawbone-of-an-Ox."

il šamê bēl ṣaddi bēl agê

Line 4: If the connection between Anu and the heavens were not clear from line 1, there can be no mistaking the connection in line 4. This relationship is even more striking with the presence of three DINGIR signs in the line. There is some ambiguity—perhaps intended—regarding the precise function of the genitive *šamê*. The options are "heaven's god," "the heavenly god," "the god in heaven," or "the god whose domain is the heavens." MS C seems to have skipped our lines 4 and 5, probably due to parablepsis (homoioarchton).

Anum il šamê bēl ṣaddi bēl agê

Line 5: Lines 5–8 employ substantive participles to define the attributes of the deity that are pertinent to the petitioner's request. *Pašāru*, "to release, to loosen." As is often the case with this verb, a deity, in this case Anu, is its agent. *Ūmu*, "day," is in the genitive case, which is to be expected by the fact that it is preceded by a participle in the bound form. The exact meaning of *pāšir ūmi*, "the one who absolves the day," is uncertain. One suggestion is that it refers to a clearing of the weather (see CAD P, 239). The context of the prayer does not warrant such an interpretation here. Rather, the day in question is likely the day of suffering, which is the impetus for the prayer. Thus, it likely refers to the removal of that day of suffering from the memory of the supplicant.

pāšir ūmi bēl ṣaddi bēl agê

Line 6: MS B attests the start of a fragmentary line between lines 5 and 6 and again between lines 6 and 7. In both cases the line reads *mukallim ṣaddi*, "the one who reveals the sign."

Anum pāšir ūmi bēl ṣaddi bēl agê

7. *pa-šir* MÁŠ.GE$_6$.MEŠ ḪUL.[MEŠ] *ḫa-ṭa-a-te pár-da-a-*[*ti*] Á.MEŠ GISKIM.MEŠ ḪU[L.MEŠ]

8. *mu-še-te-eq lum-ni ḫi-ṭi-te u gi-la-te ma-ru-uš-*[*te*] *ḫu-uṣ* GAZ *lìb-bi šá iš-*[*šak-nu-ma*]

9. UŠ.UŠ.MEŠ-*ni ú-ka-*[*su*? . . .?] UZU.MEŠ-*ia ina te-e-ka* [*ša* TI.LA] *lu-up-ta-ṭi-ru*

10. [*mim-mu-ú*] *ma-la a-na* DINGIR.MU [*u* ^{d}IŠ$_8$.DAR.MU] *aḫ-ṭu-ú lip-pa-*[*áš-ra*]

Line 7: MÁŠ.GE$_6$ = *šuttu* (pl. *šunātu*), "dream." ḪUL = *lemnu*, "bad, evil, wicked." *Ḫaṭû* (*ḫāṭû*), "wrong, defective, portending evil." *Pardu*, "frightening," particularly as it pertains to dreams. Á.MEŠ = *idātu*, "powers, signs, omens." GISKIM.MEŠ = *ittātu*, "marks, signs, omens." *Pāšir* is followed by a string of fp genitive nouns and adjectives. The first noun, *šunāti*, is modified by three adjectives, *lemnēti*, *haṭâti*, and *pardāti*. The adjective *lemnēti* is understood here as modifying both *idāti* and *ittāti*, though it is equally plausible that it only modifies the latter. From this line to the end of the prayer, MS C is the textual basis.

pāšir šunāti lemnēti ḫaṭâti pardāti idāti ittāti lemnēti

Line 8: Lines 8 and 9 are problematic from a textual perspective. The present treatment closely follows MS C (cited as an alternate reading in Seux, 271, n.11 and a variant by Foster, 640, n.2). *Šūtuqu* (Š of *etēqu*), "to cause to pass through, to cross," thus "to remove, to avert." *Lumnu*, "evil, wickedness." *Ḫiṭītu*, "act of negligence, sin, offense." *Gillatu*, "crime, misdeed, sin." *Maruštu* (*maruṣtu*, *marṣu*, see CAD M/I, 291), "severe, grievous." *Ḫūṣu*, "pain." GAZ = *ḫīpu* at its root means "a break," but this brokenness when applied to one's health connotes "disease, ailment, or affliction." *Ḫūṣ ḫīpi libbi* is understood idiomatically and may refer to either physical or emotional pain (CAD Ḫ, 260). Originally, *ḫūṣ ḫīpi libbi* was likely a hendiadys, explaining the use of the plural verb (see *luptaṭṭirū* in line 9). The relative *ša* that follows begins a subordinate clause telling more about this situation in terms of the supplicant's experience. The three verbs in the subordinate clause are plural forms. *Naškunu* (N of *šakānu*), "to be inflicted" (CAD Š/1, 154). The enclitic *–ma* joins this verb with line 9.

mušēteq lumni ḫiṭīte u gillate marušte ḫūṣ ḫīpi libbi ša iššaknū-ma

Line 9: UŠ.UŠ = *riteddû* (Gtn of *redû*), "to guide constantly, to control constantly; to persecute continually." The reduplication of the UŠ sign is an indication of the Gtn. *Kussu* (D of *kasû*), "to bind." I take the first two verbs in this line as duratives, showing the ongoing effects of the situation described by *iššaknū-ma* in line 8. UZU = *šīru*, "flesh." TI.LA = *balāṭu*, "life." *Tû*, "incantation, spell." *Ina tēka ša balāṭi* is a formulaic expression. Seux (271, n.12) suggests *ittēka*, as preserved in MS C, might be a contraction of *ina tēka*, which is only preserved in MS A. *Putaṭṭuru* (Dt of *paṭāru*), "to be loosened, to be released." The *lu–* prefix usually indicates a 1cs precative but the verb seems to refer back to *Ḫūṣ ḫīpi libbi* (understood as a plural) and therefore must be a 3cp precative. Therefore, the prefix, only attested in MS C from Ashur, is probably an Assyrianism. See *GAG* §81c on page 132.

irteneddûni ukassû . . . šērīya ina tēka ša balāṭi luptaṭṭirū

Line 10: *Mimmû mala*, "all that," introduces a relative clause. Note the 1cs pronominal suffixes (MU) on *ilu* and *ištaru* (= IŠ$_8$.DAR), indicating these are the supplicant's personal

11. *lìb-bi* DINGIR.MU *u* [^{d}IŠ$_{8}$.DAR.MU] *ze-nu-te a-na* KI-*šú l*[*i-tu-ur*]

12. *ag-gu lìb-ba-ka li-*[*nu-ḫa*]

13. *lip-pa-áš-ra kab-ta-at-*[*ka*] *ri-šá-a re-e-m*[*u*]

14. *lu-ṭa-ḫi-id* É-[*ka*] *ši-ga-ra-ka lu-šá-az-*[*nin* ì]

god and goddess. *Ištaru*, rather than *iltu*, is used for the personal goddess when parallel with *ilu* (see CAD I/J, 90). *Aḫṭû* is a G 1cs preterite (*aḫṭi*) plus subjunctive *–u* from *ḫaṭû*, "to do wrong (*ana*, to), to sin (against)." *Lippašra* is a 3cs precative with the ventive from *napšuru* (N of *pašāru*), "to be released."

mimmû mala ana ilīya u ištarīya aḫṭû lippašra

Line 11: *Zenû*, "angry." The genitive plural form of this adj. indicates it modifies both *ilu* and *ištaru*. *Târu* with *ašru* means, "to return to normal, to subside." In ancient Mesopotamian thought, physical distress was most often associated with offenses committed against the gods. The only remedy was to appease the gods, confess one's transgressions, and plea for divine reprieve. Thus, the request is for freedom from the physical anguish caused by the angry gods.

libbi ilīya u ištarīya zenūte ana ašrīšu litūr

Line 12: *Aggu*, "angry." As is typical in the phrase *aggu libbu*, *aggu* assumes the atypical position of preceding the noun it modifies. *Libbu* often refers to the heart as the seat of the intellect; therefore, "mind, intent, choice." Note the use of a 2ms pronominal suffix rather than the 2mp, as we might expect as both god and goddess were previously mentioned. *Linūḫa* is a G 3cs precative with ventive from *nâhu*, "to be at rest, to relent."

aggu libbaka linūḫa

Line 13: *Kabattu* (*kabtatu* in poetic texts) is literally a "liver" but it also means "emotions, thoughts, mind, spirit." It is the subject of *lippašra* from *napšuru*, for which see line 10. *Rašû*, "to get, to acquire." The form is a ms impv. with ventive. On the expression *rišâ rēmu* and its variants, see Mayer, *UFBG*, 225. Having declared Anu as the deity who generally releases (*pašāru*) misfortune in line 7, the supplicant now calls upon the deity to make those powers effective in this particular case. One should expect *rēmu* to be in the accusative case, but the nominative frequently stands for the accusative in SB Akkadian and the current form is frequently attested in the idiom, *rišâ rēmu*, "to show pity; have mercy" (see CAD R, 199).

lippašra kabtatka rišâ rēmu

Line 14: *Ṭuḫḫudu* (D of *ṭaḫādu*), "to provide lavishly, to endow richly, to make prosperous." The characteristic doubled second radical in the orthography is missing. However, the *a-i* vowel pattern is sufficient to diagnose this form as a D 1 cs precative. É = *bītu*, "house." The function of both precatives in this sentence is to conclude the petitions in lines 8b–13. The supplicant wishes to lavish the deity with material and verbal offerings when the deity honors his request. *Šigaru*, "door bolt, lock." *Zanānu*, "to poor out, to drip." Here the form is a Š 1cs precative. The causative verb takes the double accusative: "I make

15. *dà-lí-lí* EN-*iá lud-l*[*ul*]

16. *nàr-bi* DINGIR-*ti-ka* GAL-[*ti*] *ka-a-a-na lu-uš-ta-*[*mar*]

17. [ka-inim]-ma šu-íl-la ^{d}*a-nu*[*m*-kam]

your lock (*šigara*) drip oil (*šamna*).” The line is structured according to inverse parallelism, a-b, b′-a′.

luṭaḫḫid bītaka šigaraka lušaznin šamna

Line 15: *Dalīlū*, “praises.” *Dalālu*, “to praise.” *Dalīlī ludlul* is a cognate accusative construction; that is, the verb and its object both come from the same root. Translate idiomatically, “let me proclaim the praises.”

dalīlī bēlīya ludlul

Line 16: *Narbû*, “greatness,” is a verbal adjective from the N stem of *rabû*. The singular bound form is *narbi*. *Kayyāna*, “always, constantly.” Note the antecedent for the 2ms pronominal suffix on *ilūtu* is Anu. The *–ūt* ending on the noun *ilu* is the abstract noun marker, creating the meaning “the state of being a god” or “divinity.” *Šitammuru* (Gtn of *šamāru*), “to praise continually.”

narbi ilūtīka rabīti kayyāna luštammar

Line 17: The prayer concludes with a standard shuilla-rubric. All but the god’s name is written in Sumerian.

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

Aside from its structural similarity to biblical prayers of lament like Ps 22, perhaps the most obvious point of comparison with this text and the Hebrew Bible is the association of the deity with the heavens. In this shuilla Anu is twice referred to as *il šamê*, “god of heaven,” a reference to the deity’s cosmic abode, or to its very divine nature. The biblical equivalent occurs as אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם in BH and as אֱלָהּ שְׁמַיָּא in biblical Aramaic. Most, if not all, of the twenty-three instances of this phrase seem to appear in late texts.[1] Nonetheless, the authors of the Hebrew Bible apply this epithet to their god, Yahweh.

However, this point of contact leads also to a point of strong contrast. It is one thing to be deemed the heavenly god, or to have the heavens declared a god, as is the case with Anu. It is quite another matter simply to state that the heavens constitute one of the abodes of the deity, as is the case with Yahweh. In fact, the Hebrew Bible is adamant that the heavens are not divine, but are merely one of Yahweh’s many creations. Genesis 1:1 proclaims that Elohim “created

[1] See Gen 24:3, 7; 2 Chr 36:23; Ezra 1:2; 5:11; 7:12, 21, 23 (x2); Neh 1:2, 4, 5; 2:4, 20; Dan 2:18, 37, 44; Jonah 1:9. Although the dating of Gen 24:3 and 7 is speculative, J. van Seters has made the most cogent argument for dating the Yahwist source to the late exilic period (*Abraham in History and Tradition* [New Haven: Yale, 1975], 148–53). Another view is that Gen 24:3, 7 reflect “an older concept” that is revived in the Persian period (Hutter, 389).

the heavens and the earth." In Isa 42:5, Yahweh is "the one who created the heavens." The phrase is not an action, but an epithet; it serves to define Yahweh's role and power. Ps 102:25 expresses the same idea in more anthropomorphic terms, "the heavens are the work of your hands." This idea of Yahweh as creator of the heavens, not simply a resident of the heavens, is conveyed in multiple texts in which Yahweh is said to have created the heavenly bodies, such as the sun, moon, stars, and constellations. Thus, while Anu and Yahweh are both gods of the heavens, the Hebrew Bible repeatedly distinguishes Yahweh from the heavens. One possible exception is Dan 4:23, תִּנְדַּע דִּי שַׁלְטַן שְׁמַיָּא, "You will acknowledge that Heaven is mighty." In this case, "Heaven" is the subject of the predicate adjective "mighty," and represents the only instance in which "Heaven" is synonymous with the god of Israel.[2] However, it may well be that "Heaven" is no more deified in this verse than "the White House" is considered the President of the United States. Each refers to the location from which ultimate authority of its respective precinct resides.

Although the phrase *pāšir ūmi* does not have a counterpart in BH, the concept is at the forefront of Job's distress. During the initial response to his calamity, he cried out הַיּוֹם הַהוּא יְהִי חֹשֶׁךְ, "may that day (i.e., the day he was born) be as darkness" (3:4). If that day had never happened, he would not have lived his tortuous existence. While not worded the same, Job's desire is essentially the same as that of this prayer's supplicant, namely, may the deity remove all traces of this arduous day from thought or memory. On a separate note, the verb *pašāru* has פתר as its Hebrew cognate and פשׁר as its Aramaic cognate. This verb is found only in the context of the Joseph Narrative (Gen 40–41) and in Dan 5. Always with "dream" as its object, it literally means, "to loosen the dream," implying that there is a trapped meaning of the dream that must be released in order for the dream to be interpreted.

Continuing this theme, dreams in the ancient Near East were powerful forces. They were considered channels of divine communication.[3] Given the fact that deities could be either beneficent or malevolent depending on one's piety, dreams could elicit a frightening experience. Such is the case, once again, with Job. He cries out in protest to Yahweh, "If I say, 'My bed comforts me and my couch bears my complaint,' then you scare me with dreams and terrify me with visions; so that my throat chooses suffocation, and my bones, death" (7:13–15). In this light, it is no wonder both the supplicant and Job would wish for dreams to be absolved.

Line 14 reflects the ancient Near Eastern notion that the earthly temple was a scale model of the deity's heavenly residence. A stairway connected the two abodes, with a gate situated at the top of the stairway at the entrance of the

[2] The idea of a deified heaven is prevalent in the books of 1 Macc (3:18, 19, 50; 4:24) and 2 Macc (7:11; 8:20).

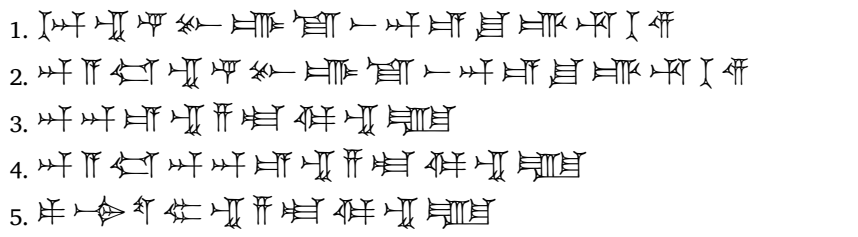
[3] A. Leo Oppenheim, *The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East with a Translation of an Assyrian Dream-Book* (TAPS 46/3; Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1956), 23.

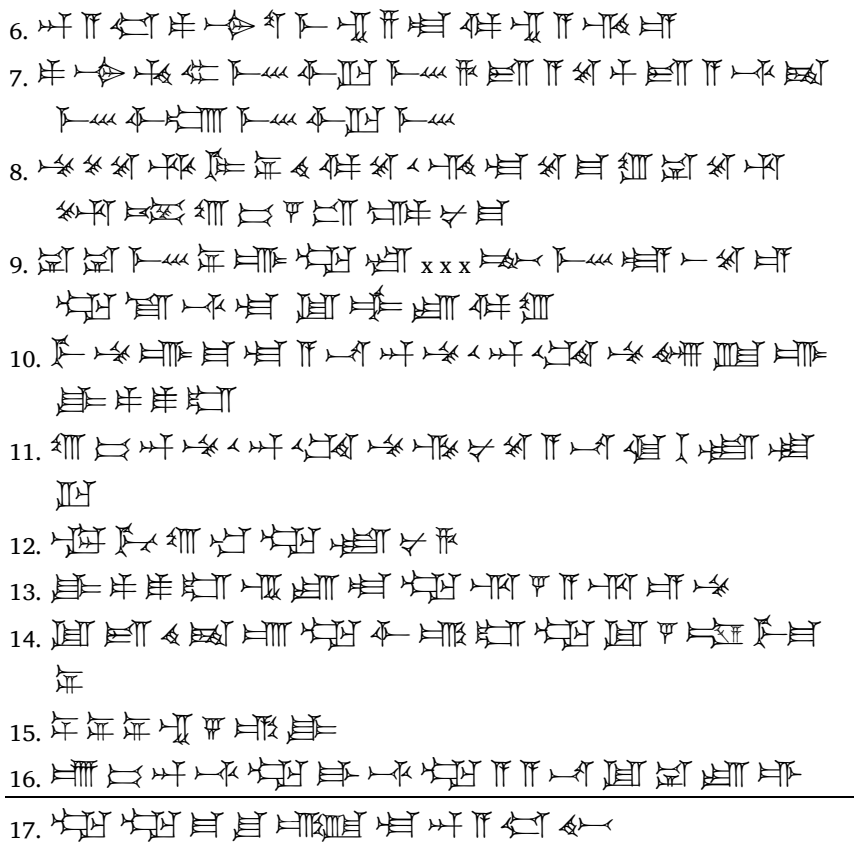
cosmic dwelling. This concept is most clearly reflected in the Tower of Babel narrative of Gen 11:1–9. It is also reflected in Gen 28:17, in which Jacob, after having experienced a terrifying theophany, proclaimed, הַזֶּה אֵין זֶה כִּי אִם־בֵּית אֱלֹהִים וְזֶה שַׁעַר הַשָּׁמָיִם, "Is this none other than the temple of the gods? Is this not the gate of heaven?" Jacob not only alludes to the mythological concept, but also affirms it by equating the temple with the gate of heaven. This notion is likely at work in Ezek 43:4, as well, in which Yahweh's glory enters the temple by way of the gate.

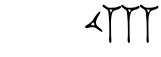
TRANSLATION:

1. Incantation: O most excellent lord, whose purification rites in heaven are pure,
2. O Anu, most excellent lord, whose purification rites in heaven are pure,
3. O god of heaven, lord of the sign, lord of the crown,
4. O Anu, god of heaven, lord of the sign, lord of the crown,
5. Who absolves the day, lord of the sign, lord of the crown,
6. O Anu, who absolves the day, lord of the sign, lord of the crown,
7. Who absolves evil, wicked and frightening dreams, evil powers and signs,
8. Who removes evil, sin, egregious crimes, may the distress which was inflicted (on me) and
9. Constantly pursues me (and) binds . . . my flesh be released through your incantation of life.
10. May every sin that I committed against my god and my goddess be absolved.
11. May the heart of my angry god and of my angry goddess subside.
12. May your angry heart relent.
13. May your mind be appeased. Have mercy,
14. That I may lavish your temple with riches and cause your door bolt to drip oil.
15. Let me proclaim the praises of my lord.
16. Let me constantly and continually exalt the greatness of your great divinity.
17. It is the wording of a lifted-hand to Anu.

CUNEIFORM:







A Shuilla: Ea 1a

ALAN LENZI

EA:

Ea (Akk.; Sum. Enki) was the god of fresh water, wisdom, and magic. Originally from the southern city of Eridu (modern Abu Shahrain), Ea was venerated throughout Mesopotamia from earliest times into the Hellenistic period. Besides his temple at Eridu, Ea had cult installations in Borsippa, Drehem, Kish, Lagash, Larsa, Mari, Shuruppak, Umma, and Uruk, among others. In the first millennium, the imperial capitals of Assyria and Babylon both had prominent cult centers dedicated to the deity.

Various traditions make Ea the son of Anu or the son of the goddess Nammu. His wife is Damgalnuna/Damkina. His most prominent son is Marduk, though he is also the father of Adapa and Nanshe, among others. His well-known grandson is Nabu, god of wisdom and scribes. Ea's vizier is the two-faced Isimud/Usmu.

Ea was first and foremost the god of fresh water, the basis of life and agricultural abundance. The ancient city of Eridu was the location of his main temple, É-abzu, "Apsu-house" (also called É-engur-ra, "House of Fresh Waters"), which in ancient times was situated in a marshy area near the coast where the Euphrates emptied into the Persian Gulf. This ecological locale may explain his watery association and almost certainly the large amounts of fish bones—remnants of offerings—that archaeologists have recovered in deep soundings of his temple.[1]

Mythologically, Ea resided in a subterranean watery place called the *Apsû*, the source of all fresh waters. According to *Enūma eliš* Tablet I, Apsu (male) and Tiamat (female) were originally two primordial bodies of water that mingled to create all of the gods. When Ea learned of Apsu's plot to kill his noisy offspring, Ea immobilized Apsu with an incantation, killed him, and turned him into his divine abode. This mythological narrative reflects what is widely known from other religious and ritual texts: Ea's incantatory word was powerful and effective (see our lines 13, 24, and 26).

[1] See Michael D. Danti and Richard L. Zettler, "Eridu," in *OEANE* 2:258–60.

Ea was widely known in Mesopotamian tradition as a protective, benevolent, and caring god to humans. According to several myths, Ea had a hand in creating humanity and was always ready to help preserve his creation in the face of danger, even when this meant, as in Gilgamesh XI and *Atram-ḫasīs*, subverting the plan of the other gods who had decreed humanity's destruction. As seen in the myths Inana and Enki and Enki and the World Order, Ea was also the original holder of the divine powers (Sum. me) that gave shape to the world and organized human civilization. According to another sparsely preserved tradition, Ea sent seven antediluvian sages (*apkallū*) to bring the arts of civilization to humanity; the most prominent of these is Adapa. These seven sages occasionally appear in incantations.[2]

As god of wisdom and magic, Ea played a prominent role as patron of various crafts, including those of everyday artisans as well as those especially associated with intermediation between humans and gods (i.e., exorcism, lamentation, divination, astrology, and medicine in the first millennium).[3] A common incantatory phrase used in namburbi-rites, "Ea has done, Ea has undone" (*īpuš Ea ipšur Ea*), reflects Ea's protective and benevolent character as well as the magical power of his word.[4]

In keeping with his role as god of water, Ea was identified in iconography by streams of water pouring out of his shoulders. Sometimes he appears in a structure that is surrounded by water, probably representing the Apsu. In post-Kassite times, Ea was symbolized by the goat-fish, a turtle, or a curved staff with a ram's head on the end.

Like Anu and Enlil, Ea was associated with one of the three regions (or "paths," *ḫarrānū*) of the sky and the stars therein. Ea's region was the southern most (see page 411 for more on the celestial "paths"). Ea was closely associated with the constellation *Nūnu*, "The Fish" (our Piscis Austrinus). Ea's divine number was 40.

THE PRAYER:

Ea 1a follows the typical tri-partite structure found in many other incantation-prayers. The prayer begins with a fairly long introductory hymn in lines 1–13, continues with the supplication section in lines 14–28, and concludes with three lines of praise (lines 29–31).

[2] See Alan Lenzi, *Secrecy and the Gods: Secret Knowledge in Ancient Mesopotamia and Biblical Israel* (SAAS 19; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2008), 109–13 for references. For the malevolent side of the *apkallū*, see Amar Annus, "On the Origin of Watchers: A Comparative Study of the Antediluvian Wisdom in Mesopotamian and Jewish Traditions," *JSP* 19 (2010), 277–320.

[3] See Lenzi, *Secrecy and the Gods*, 76–103.

[4] See Parpola, *LASEA 2*, 41 for attestations of the phrase.

The long opening hymn may be analyzed as consisting of four parts (or stanzas) of unequal size. Lines 1–6 form the first part. In each of these lines there are two epithets for Ea, each of which celebrates his authority, wisdom, and/or role as creator and sustainer. These latter two roles are expressed by means of participles in lines 1a and 6, which grammatically distinguish them from the other epithets in this first part of the hymn. The very general epithets in line 1 are complemented in lines 2–5 by several that localize Ea in his home town of Eridu and the cult centers dedicated to him there (É-abzu, É-engur-ra, and É-unir). Finally, line 6, with its reference to waterways, prepares for the second section of the hymn in lines 7–8. This second part utilizes tight grammatical parallelism (see the comments to line 8) and second person verbs to bestow praise upon the deity. Ea's natural sphere of influence (i.e., water and abundance) comes into clear focus here. In the third part of the hymn (lines 9–11) the hymn shifts to describe what others think of Ea. Third person verbs dominate these lines. Foreshadowing the concluding praise of the prayer (see lines 29–31), lines 9–10 depict the gods of heaven and the netherworld praising Ea. In line 11, the people, sandwiched between the two divine realms, praise Ea for his authority (*zikirka kabta*) and thereby prepare both for the final section of the hymn and lines 14–16 in the petitions.[5] Lines 12–13 close the hymn with a reference to Ea's role as sagacious councilor to the gods (line 12), recalling line 1 generally, and an affirmation of the life giving power of his authoritative, incantatory word (line 13). This last line of the hymn is the first to associate Ea explicitly with magic. The power here attributed to Ea's "incantation of life," namely, that it keeps the moribund from death, anticipates the phrase's appearance later in the petitions (lines 24 and 26) and segues nicely into the supplication section of the prayer, which is centered on the supplicant's desire for a healthy, long life (line 17).

The supplication section of the prayer is dominated by two motifs, effective speech (lines 14–20) and release from witchcraft (lines 21–28), each of which provide a perspective on the over-arching theme of the prayer: life. In lines 14–20 effective speech is first requested from Ea (14–16). The supplicant wants Ea to give the order so that they may be restored, their speech be heard, and they achieve favorable things. Line 17 follows with a strong expression of the supplicant's desire for life. Note the imperative, the last one in the prayer, followed by the precative. This line announces the prayer's central theme at its most general level and anticipates the specific requests of line 28 (at the end of the second half of the supplication section). Lines 18–19 then turn to the issue of the supplicant's speech and desire for it to be acceptable to their personal deities and to influence the actions of both god and king. The juxtaposition of lines 17 and 18–19 suggest that "life" is inextricably united to the issue of social acceptance and

[5] For an insightful treatment of this section of the prayer and its anticipation of the final prayer's concluding praise, see Hunt, 47–59.

standing. The final petition of this first half of the supplication section mentions the instruments of speech, mouth and tongue, and requests their intercession.

The second half of the supplication section is dominated by the supplicant's concern for release from witchcraft. In lines 21–23 the supplicant begins with a request that any evil machinations *not approach*. In lines 24–25, using similar language as in lines 21–23 (lines 22 and 24b are identical), the supplicant requests that the machinations (that apparently have arrived) *depart*. Then in lines 26–27 the supplicant requests the *release* of the bonds of witchcraft, which implies they actually have the supplicant in their grip. Just as the evil intensifies in lines 21–27 so too do the supplicant's appeals to authorities that can counter them: Ea's incantation is cited in lines 24 and 26 and Ea's recruitment of Marduk, his son and traditional assistant in some forms of incantations (see the comments), is requested in line 27. The end result for all of these requests comes out only in line 28: that the supplicant's body be free of illness.

The prayer does not conclude with the typical line or two in which the supplicant promises to praise the deity. Rather, it ends with three lines that present a unique arrangement of several traditional phrases of praise in which the gods are the actors.[6]

Despite the fact that there is only a single line of ritual instructions preserved on one manuscript, Mayer's MS A, we know that Ea 1a, as with several other shuilla-prayers, was incorporated into various ritual complexes as a prescribed prayer. For example, its incipit is cited in a royal investiture ritual,[7] a universal namburbi handbook (*SpBTU* II, no. 18, rev. 27),[8] and part of *Bīt rimki* (see Zimmern, *BBR* 26 iii 45).[9]

[6] See Mayer, *UFBG*, 327–40 for this form of ending generally and 337 for the unique arrangement of the various elements in Ea 1a specifically. Mayer's MS F expands the praise to four lines by incorporating another traditional phrase (see 446, n.21[1]).

[7] See Angelika Berlejung, "Die Macht der Insignien: Überlegungen zu einem Ritual der Investitur des Königs und dessen königsideologischen Implikationen," *UF* 28 (1996), 1–35.

[8] See Christopher Frechette, *Mesopotamian Ritual-prayers (Šuillas): A Case Study Investigating Rubric, Genre, Form and Function* (AOAT 379; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, forthcoming), §6.

[9] For *Bīt rimki*, see Jørgen Læssøe, *Studies on the Assyrian Ritual and Series Bît Rimki* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1955).

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Text. Edition: Mayer, *UFBG*, 442–49.[i] Translations: Foster, 643–44. Seux, 275–77. von Soden, 295–96. Study: Joel Hunt. "The Hymnic Introduction of Selected *Šuilla* Prayers Directed to Ea, Marduk, and Nabû." Ph.D. Dissertation. Brandeis University, 1994, 17–86.

[i] A new edition will appear in the Akkadian anti-witchcraft corpus being published by Tzvi Abusch and Daniel Schwemer. See their *Corpus of Mesopotamian Anti-witchcraft Rituals*, vol. 1 (Ancient Magic and Divination 8; Leiden: Brill, 2011), 15. Our prayer is listed under group 9, "Anti-witchcraft Incantation within *Bīt rimki* and Related Texts."

1. ÉN LUGAL *né-me-qí ba-nu-ú ta-šim-ti*

2. MAS.SÙ *ṣi-ru ú-s*[*u*]*-um* é-zu.[ab]

3. ^{d}EN.LÍL.BÀN.DA *it-pe-šú ka-ru-b*[*u*]

4. *ur-šá-nu* ERI.DU$_{10}$ ABGAL ^{d}*í-gì-gì*

Line 1: ÉN = *šiptu*, "incantation, ritual wording." This word marks the beginning of the prayer on the tablet. It is not a part of the prayer itself. LUGAL = *šarru*, "king." *Nēmequ*, "wisdom." *Banû*, "to create, to build." *Tašīmtu*, "prudence, practical intelligence, discernment." One might choose to translate the genitives in this line adjectivally. Thus, e.g., "king of wisdom" may be rendered "wise king." The hymnic introduction begins with epithets befitting the Mesopotamian god of wisdom.

šiptu: *šar nēmeqi bānû tašīmti*

Line 2: *Massû*, "leader, expert," like many other terms in the hymnic introduction, is commonly used to describe rulers and deities (see CAD M/1, 327–28). *Ṣīru*, "exalted, supreme, august." (*W*)*usmu*, "someone or something worthy, suitable," is another term used to describe both gods and kings (see *AHw*, 1497). *Usum* is the bound form of the noun. É-zu-ab, "House of the Abzu," is the Sumerian name of Ea's temple in Eridu, his original home town. The Abzu (Sum.; Akk. *Apsû*), is Ea's residence, located in the subterranean fresh waters (see, e.g., *Enūma eliš* I 71).

massû ṣīru usum E-abzu

Line 3: ^{d}EN.LÍL.BÀN.DA = *Enlilbanda*, "little Enlil," a common epithet for Ea. Hunt, after noting three texts that equate Sum. bàn-da with Akk. *tašīmtu*, translates the epithet as "Enlil of expertise," that is, Ea is the ultimate authority within the sphere of wisdom (30–32, and n.39). He sees this epithet as connecting line 3 back to the use of *tašīmtu* in line 1 (24–25). *Itpēšu*, "wise, expert," is an adjective used to describe kings and deities (see CAD I/J, 299). *Karūbu*, "honored one, reverently greeted one." This word is only attested with deities.

Enlilbanda itpēšu karūbu

Line 4: *Uršānu*, "hero, warrior" (see *AHw*, 1434 for other references with kings and gods). ERI.DU$_{10}$ = *Eridu*, Ea's home town. The case vowel on *uršānu* indicates that it is not

5. EN é-[engur-r]a *ṣu-lul* é-u_6-n[ir]

6. [*b*]*a-bíl* ILLU ḪÉ.GÁL *mu-riš* ÍD.DIDLI

7. *ina ta-mat u ṣu-ṣe-e tu-deš-ši* ḪÉ.NUN

8. *ina qer-bé-ti tu-šab-ši* ZI-*tì* UN.MEŠ

bound to *Eridu*; thus, the toponym is functioning adverbially, indicating the hero's place of origin. ABGAL (NUN-ME) = *apkallu*, "sage." This term is often used of gods (e.g., Ea and Marduk) as well as special humans, such as Adapa and the other antediluvian sages (see J. C. Greenfield, "Apkallu," *DDD*, 72–74). *Igigû* is a general name for the gods of heaven, in contrast to *Anunnakkū*, who are the gods of the netherworld (see Black and Green, 106; *Enūma eliš* VI 69 gives the *Igigû* as three hundred in number and the *Anunnakkū* six hundred; contradicting this, VI 39–44 number both groups as three hundred).

uršānu Eridu apkal Igigî

Line 5: EN = *bēlu*, "lord." É-engur-ra, "House of Fresh Waters," is another Sumerian name for Ea's temple in Eridu. *Ṣulūlu*, "canopy, covering," is a common metaphor of divine or royal protection (see CAD Ṣ, 243). É-u_6-nir, the Sumerian name of Ea's ziggurrat at Eridu (U_6.NIR is the logogram for Akk. *ziqqurratu*, "temple tower"). The parallelism between *bēlu* and *ṣulūlu* in this line mutually illuminates the meanings of these two terms. The epithets here and in the next few lines reflect Ea's status as the Mesopotamian god of water.

bēl E-engura ṣulūl E-unir

Line 6: *Babālu*, "to carry, to bring," is a by-form of (*w*)*abālu*. ILLU (A-KAL) = *mīlu*, "high water, flood." Bringing high waters is a positive thing here, as the next word in the genitive chain, ḪÉ.GÁL = *ḫegallu*, "prosperity, abundance," and the second half of the line explain. *Ruššu* (D of *râšu*), "to make rejoice." ÍD = *nāru*, "river." DIDLI is a plural marker like MEŠ. Notice the parallel participles. Does "rejoicing rivers" refer to the sound of faster moving water in the river beds (see likewise, Hunt, 36)?

bābil mīl ḫegalli murīš nāri

Line 7: *Tâmtu*, "sea, lake, large body of water." The noun appears here as a fp absolute form (without case ending). Whether there is a grammatical (rather than, e.g., metrical) purpose for the absolute form is unclear. *Ṣuṣû*, "reed thicket." Reed thickets, especially prominent in the marshlands of the south, teemed with animals and plants that humans in ancient Mesopotamia could use to their advantage for both food and raw materials. Eridu was located near the marshes. *Dešû*, "to let prosper, to provide someone or something bountifully with something." ḪÉ.NUN = *nuḫšu*, "plenty, abundance." The text continues to praise Ea's watery beneficence in this line.

ina tâmāt u ṣuṣê tudešši nuḫša

Line 8: Note the tight grammatical parallelism with line 7: prepositional phrase beginning with *ina*, a second person verb, then the direct object. The longer prepositional phrase in line 7 is balanced here by a genitive chain for the direct object. *Qerbetu*, "environs, meadowland." *Šubšû* (Š of *bašû*), "to create, to produce." ZI = *napištu*, "life, subsistence, livelihood." UN.MEŠ = *nišū*, "people." Ea's beneficial creative activity extends beyond the watery areas to include the meadows. Mayer's MS D identifies the "life" of the people

9. ^{d}*a-nu u* ^{d}EN.LÍL *ḫa-diš ri-šu-ka*

10. ^{d}*a-nun-na-ki ina ma-ḫa-zi-šú-nu i-kar-ra-bu-k*[*a*]

11. UN.MEŠ KUR *iš-tam-ma-ra zi-kir-ka kab-t*[*a*]

12. *a-na* DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ *ta-nam-din mil-k*[*a*]

13. ^{d}*é-a ina te-ka šá* TI *la i-mat* LÚ.[Ú]Š

here by adding the word "grain"—an association also known in the Code of Hammurabi xxvii 10–13.

ina qerbeti tušabši napišti nišī

Line 9: *Anu*, the sky god, was the high god of the Mesopotamian pantheon but was a *deus otiosus*. ^{d}EN.LÍL = *Ellil*, god of the wind and another of the high gods, was the active head of the pantheon until he was replaced by Marduk, probably in the late second millennium. *Ḫadiš*, "joyfully." *Râšu*, "to rejoice, to exult." *Rīšū* is a 3mp predicative. The object of the verb is the cause for rejoicing.

Anu u Ellil ḫadiš rīšūka

Line 10: For the *Anunnakkī*, see line 4 above. *Māḫāzu*, "shrine, cult center." *Karābu*, "to bless, greet (with a blessing)." The *Anunnakkī* are mentioned, whose place in the netherworld was the extreme opposite of the heavenly abodes of *Anu* and *Ellil*.

Anunnakkī ina māḫāzīšunu ikarrabūka

Line 11: KUR = *mātu*, "land, earth." *Šitmuru* (Gt of *šamāru*), "to praise." *Zikru*, "utterance, command." *Kabtu*, "heavy, weighty, important, honored." Between heaven (line 9) and the netherworld (line 10) are the people. Gods and humans both laud Ea.

nišū māti ištammarā zikirka kabta

Line 12: DINGIR.MEŠ = *ilū*, "gods." GAL.MEŠ = *rabûtu* (mp), "great." *Nadānu*, "to give." The *–md–* in the middle of the verb is the result of nasalization (*–dd–* changes to *–md–*). *Milku*, "counsel, advice." As a god of wisdom, Ea is especially suited to counsel the gods. (But see the similar line in the prayer to Sin, page 392.)

ana ilī rabûti tanamdin milka

Line 13: In the last line of the opening hymn the prayer invokes the deity's primary name for the first time (see also line 24). *Tû*, "incantation, spell." TI(.LA) = *balāṭu*, "life, health" (see also line 17). *Lā*, "not," is used here with the durative verb to form a prohibition ("he shall not die"). *Mâtu*, "to die." LÚ.ÚŠ = *mītu*, literally means "dead," but it seems the word sometimes means someone who is as good as dead but has not ceased bodily function. Foster (643) translates the word with "moribund," which captures its meaning nicely. The effectiveness of Ea's incantatory word is well-known. See, e.g., *Enūma eliš* I 62–63.

Ea ina têka ša balāṭi lā imât mītu

14. *ul-li re-ši-ia i-bi šu-mu*

15. *qí-b*[*i-t*]*uk-ka liš-še-mu-ú zi-ik-ru-ú-a*

16. *ina q*[*í*]*-bi-ka ana* SIG$_5$*-tì lu-uk-šu-ud*

17. *šur-kám-ma* TI.LA *lu-bur a-na* [*d*]*a-a-ri*

Line 14: The prayer turns now to petition, as the two imperatives indicate. *Ullû* (D of *elû*), "to raise up." *Rēšu*, "head." When a social superior raised a person's head, it meant taking notice of the person's lowly condition and restoring them to their former status or position. *Nabû*, "to name, to call," with *šumu*, "name," as its object (the nominative case ending often occurs where the accusative is expected in SB Akkadian) means "to summon, to call a person (to exercise a function), to appoint a person to an office" (see CAD N/1, 35–37). The supplicant is asking Ea to change their lowly situation, whatever it was. Mayer's MS E inserts a two line self-presentation formula, naming a certain *Balāṭa-ēreš*, and a standardized lament at this point in the prayer (see Mayer, *UFBG*, 50–52, 102–3, and 444, n.6[1]).

ulli rēšīya ibi šumu

Line 15: *Qibītu*, "speech, command." The ending of the first word bears the locative-adverbial *–um*, which is the equivalent of *ina* (see line 16), and a 2ms pronominal suffix. (The *m* of the locative assimilates into the *k* of the suffix; *–mk–* becomes *–kk–*.) *Nešmû* (N of *šemû*), "to be heard." *Zikru*, see line 11. Whether the supplicant is asking that the words of the prayer specifically or their words in broader society generally be heard, the line demonstrates how effective human speech is founded on divine decree (divine effective speech). As if to underline this point, the verbs in this and the next line have changed from imperatives (as in lines 14 and 16) to precatives.

qibītukka liššemû zikrūya

Line 16: *Qību*, "command, pronouncement." SIG$_5$ = *damqu* (m), *damiqtu* (f), "favorable, good." *Kašādu*, "to accomplish, to reach, to achieve." *Ana* often accompanies *kašādu*, indicating what or where one is reaching or achieving. The results of effective speech are also requested: favorable things.

ina qībīka ana damiqti lukšud

Line 17: *Šarāku*, "to give, to grant, to bestow." TI.LA, see line 13. *Bâru*, "to stay firm, to remain in good health." A variant, *lul-bur*, in MS E may derive the verb from *labāru*, "to be(come) old." But we would expect *lul-bir*, if that were the case. Perhaps we should read MS E as *lu*^{l}*-bur* or *lu*$_5^{?}$*-bur* here (see Seux, 277, n.20). *Ana dāri*, "forever and ever," should not be taken too literally. The supplicant is not asking for immortality; rather, they want to live a very, very long time. With this petition, the supplicant reaches the very root of their desire: life.

šurkam-ma balāṭa lubūr ana dāri

18. *at-mé-e-a li-ṭib* UGU DINGIR *u* [^{d}1]5$^{?}$

19. DINGIR *u* LUGAL *šá qa-bé-e-a li-pu-š*[*u*]

20. *pu-ú u li-šá-nu liš-te-mì-qú-ni*

21. *a-a iq-*[*ri-ib-an-ni*] *a-a* KUR-*an-ni*

22. *mim-ma lem-nu mim-ma* NU DÙG.GA

Line 18: *Atmû*, "speech, manner of speaking." UGU = *eli*. ^{d}15 = *ištaru*, "goddess." *Ṭâbu eli X*, "to be pleasing, to be good to someone." If Ebeling's copy of MS A [= KAR 59] is accurate, the above suggested restoration is better than Mayer's LUGAL; see likewise Foster, 643 and Seux, 277, n.22. Mayer's MS E contains a variant: *ilū u šarru*, "gods and king," for which see line 19. The prayer returns to the theme of effective speech (see line 15), but now lays emphasis on the supplicant's personal deities. They wish the deities to be pleased with what they say.

atmêya liṭīb eli ili u ištari

Line 19: *Qabêya* is a G inf. with a 1cs pronominal suffix. *Epēšu*, "to do, to make." Again the text brings up effective speech but now in terms of action rather than just reception (as in line 18). The supplicant explicitly requests that both god and king *do* whatever they say.

ilu u šarru ša qabêya līpušū

Line 20: *Pû*, "mouth." *Lišānu*, "tongue." *Pû u lišānu* are metonyms for intercessory speech or prayer (see CAD L, 211). *Šutēmuqu* (Št of *emēqu*), "to pray, to supplicate" (see CAD Š/3, 400–401). The dative 1cs suffix on the verb indicates the beneficiary of the intercession: the supplicant.

pû u lišānu lištēmiqūni

Line 21: What I have arranged as a single line here is actually composed of parts of the previous and following lines (according to MS A) in Mayer's edition. The first half of our line is uncertain, though a vetitive, paralleling the second half, seems quite likely and a verb from *qerēbu* plausible (see Seux, 277, n.25). KUR = *kašādu*, see line 16. The line supplies the verbs for the following two lines that describe what the supplicant wants to stay away.

ayy-iqribanni ayy-ikšudanni

Line 22: *Mimma*, "anything, everything." *Lemnu*, "evil, bad, unfavorable." NU DÙG.GA = *lā ṭābu*, "not good, hostile, unfavorable." The supplicant first makes a broad statement concerning undesirable things generally before turning to a more specific problem in line 23.

mimma lemnu mimma lā ṭābu

23. *u šu-nu ú-piš kaš-šá-pi ù kaš-šap-ti*

24. ^{d}*é-a ina te-e-ka šá* TIN *mim-ma lem-nu mim-ma* NU DÙG.GA

25. *li-né-ʾ-ú i-rat-su-un*

26. *ri-kis kaš-šá-pi u kaš-šap-ti li-pa-aṭ-ṭi-ir šip-ti šá* ERI.DU$_{10}$

27. *rik-si-šú-nu* ḪUL.MEŠ *li-paṭ-ṭir* ABGAL DINGIR.MEŠ ^{d}AMAR.UTU

Line 23: *Šunu*, means "them," but is probably best taken as emphasizing the following word. *Upīšu*, "magical procedure," usually occurs in the plural (just as *šunu* would lead us to expect). But here it lacks the mp ending *–ū*; thus, it is a singular bound form. The word governs the following two paired genitives. *Kaššāpu*, "warlock." *Kaššaptu*, "witch." As happens frequently in prayers, the machinations of the anti-social (black) magic of the witch and warlock are introduced. In this case, they seem to be the main reason for the supplicant's problems. Mayer's MS F further defines the *upīšū* of the witch and warlock as *kišpīšunu ruḫêšunu rusêšunu*, "their witchcraft, black magic, and sorcery." These three semantically-related terms occur together rather frequently in witchcraft contexts.

u šunu upīš kaššāpi u kaššapti

Line 24: *Tû*, see line 13. TIN = *balāṭu*, "life, health." The line reprises the invocation used in line 13 (absent in Mayer's MS F). This line reiterates its concern for the general evil mentioned in line 22. The main verb of the sentence occurs in the next line of the text.

Ea ina têka ša balāṭi mimma lemnu mimma lā ṭābu

Line 25: *Nêʾu*, means "to turn back." *Irtu* (pl. *irātu*), "breast, chest," bears a 3mp pronominal suffix (lacking the final vowel). The consonant cluster *–tš–* becomes *–ss–*. The idiom *irta nêʾu* means "to turn back, to depart, to withdraw." Although the supplicant has already requested that nothing unfavorable reach them, they request now that Ea use his incantatory speech to deflect the evil.

linēʾū irāssun

Line 26: *Riksu*, "binding, knot, bond," here refers to the evil actions of the warlock and witch. *Puṭṭuru* (D of *paṭāru*), "to loosen, to undo a knot." *Šiptu*, "incantation, ritual wording." The "incantation of Eridu" stands for Ea. Again the supplicant appeals to the effective word of Ea. The power of the supplicant's enemies seems to be growing stronger. First the supplicant wished that nothing evil would approach (21–23). Then the supplicant requested that any and all evil be turned back (lines 24–25). Now it seems the evil powers of the warlock and witch have a hold on the supplicant and they need to be undone.

rikis kaššāpi u kaššapti lipaṭṭir šipti ša Eridu

Line 27: ḪUL.MEŠ = *lemnūtu*, "evil things" (mp). For ABGAL, see line 4. Drawing on previous lines, the supplicant now requests that Ea use Marduk, his son, to help the supplicant get free of the magical machinations of the witch and warlock. This may allude to a common motif in Sumerian incantations in which Ea and Marduk cooperate explicitly to fight the problem addressed in the incantation (see Adam Falkenstein, *Die Haupttypen der*

28. *li-bi-ba mi-na-tu-ú-a meš-re-tu-ú-a e-li-ia*$_5$ *li-ṭi-ba*

29. AN-*ú liḫ-du-ka* ZU.AB *li-riš-ka*

30. DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ *e*$^{!?}$*-tel-liš li-šá-li-lu-ka*

31. *dum-qí-ka liq-bu-ú* DINGIR.MEŠ ^{d}*i-gi*$_4$*-gi*$_4$

Sumerischen Beschwörung: Literarisch Untersucht [Leipzig: August Pries, 1931], 44–76; repr. Leipzig: Zentralantiquariat der DDR, 1968).

riksišunu lemnūti lipaṭṭir apkal ilī rabûti Marduk

Line 28: *Ebēbu*, "to be(come) pure, bright," but here "to be(come) clear (of illness)." *Minâtu*, the plural of *minītu*, "limbs, body," is often used in parallel to *mešrêtu*, "limbs" (see CAD M/2, 88). *Ṭâbu eli* X here (as opposed to its meaning in line 18) means "to be in good condition, to be sound, to be healthy." A first person reference is finally mentioned explicitly again, absent in the prayer since line 21.

lībibā minâtūya mešrêtūya elīya liṭībā

Line 29: AN = *šamû*, "the heavens." *Ḫadû*, "to be joyful." The object supplies the cause for joy. *Râšu*, "to rejoice." See line 9 where *Anu* rejoices, using very similar words. The parallel use of the heavens and the *Apsû* creates a merism: the entire universe is encouraged to give praise to Ea for his beneficence to the supplicant. This line begins a crescendo of cosmic praise that concludes the prayer, replacing the otherwise ubiquitous personal promise of praise: *dalīlīka ludlul*, "let me resound your praises."

šamû liḫdūka Apsû lirišᵏa

Line 30: *Etelliš*, "as a lord, in a lordly fashion." The first sign of the word is uncertain. *Šūlulu* (Š of *alālu*), "to celebrate, to laud." The population of the heavens and the netherworld (see line 29) are now drawn in to praise Ea. How *etelliš* functions in the sentence is unclear. Does it describe the great gods ("in a lordly fashion they laud you") or does it further define the praise the great gods offer to Ea ("they laud you as a lord")? The word is almost always attested with verbs that deal with the body in motion or repose (standing, going, entering, or sitting) and is most often attested with *alāku* (see CAD E, 380–81). Our instance would seem to be the exception. The adjectival use of the cognate *etellu* as a description of speech (CAD E, 382), however, suggests a basis for understanding the use of the adverb here with a speech-related verb. Moreover, in every instance of *etelliš* the word modifies the subject's action, designated by the verb. It seems most likely therefore that the adverb is to be attached to the great gods' activity of praise here. Mayer's MS E concludes the line with *ilū rabûti libbaka liṭibbū*, "may the great gods please your heart," and his MS F offers *ilū ša kiššat likrubū*-KI$^{!}$ (for *–ka*) *ilū rabûti libbaka liṭib*-ŠU$^{!}$ (for *–bū*), "may the gods of the totality bless you, may the great gods please your heart."

ilū rabûtu etelliš lišālilūka

Line 31: *Dumqu*, "good fortune." The crescendo of praise grows more specific, naming here the *Igigî* gods, for which see line 4 above, as representatives of the great gods in line 30.

dumqīka liqbû ilū Igigî

32. ka-inim-ma šu-íl-lá ^{d}en-líl-b[àn]-da-kám

33. [*lu ina* KEŠDA] *lu ina* NÍG.NA DÙ-*uš*

Line 32: This line is the rubric, which tells something about the classification of the preceding lines. In this case, the rubric identifies the form of the prayer and to whom it is directed. As is typical, the rubric is written in Sumerian. It may be translated, "it is the wording of a lifted-hand to Enlilbanda," i.e., Ea. One MS of the text indicates the prayer is directed at ^{d}en-ki, the Sumerian name for Ea. Another MS shows that it was directed to ^{d}amar-utu, Marduk. Unfortunately, this latter MS does not preserve anything before our line 25, so we cannot ascertain how the text was adjusted to fit Marduk.

Line 33: The ritual instructions comprise a single line, preserved in only one MS. The instructions begin without any indicator (such as DÙ.DÙ.BI = *epuštašu*, "its ritual," which is used very frequently). The phrase we have here in line 33 is quite stereotypical and commonly attached to shuillas. It probably serves only as the catchphrase to a fuller ritual, which the exorcist would recall and perform probably from memory (see Mayer, *UFBG*, 119, n.3). *Lū . . . lū*, "either . . . or." KEŠDA = *riksu*, "ritual arrangement, assemblage of offerings" (compare the usage here to those in lines 26 and 27 above). NÍG.NA = *nignakku*, "incense burner." DÙ = *epēšu*, "to do, to make."

lū ina riksi lū ina nignakki teppeš

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

Although our prayer offers several interesting possibilities for comparative purposes, we focus here on two: the "hand-lifting" gesture accompanied by a formal address found in all shuilla-prayers and the BH equivalents to the supplicant's first petitions in line 14.

Lines 1–12 of our prayer to Ea comprise a lengthy hymnic introduction, which is of course a typical feature of shuilla-prayers. As discussed in the general introduction, the hand-lifting gesture along with its verbal component of honored address was a complex formal gesture of greeting in ancient Mesopotamia based on a master-servant relationship. When used with prayer, the complex of gesture and formal address (i.e., hymnic introduction) "emphasized the communicative gesture . . . , a salutation signaling recognition of a reciprocal but asymmetrical relationship between client and deity" (see page 35 of the general introduction). Do we find a similar adaptation of such a greeting in the prayers of the Hebrew Bible? Although the Bible does not show evidence of a special kind of "lifted-hand" ritual-prayer, the Hebrew Bible does preserve attestations in its prayers of the hand raising gesture and the formal mode of address (of varying lengths) similar to the shuilla's hymnic introduction. In light of the comparative evidence, these texts display another facet of ancient Israel's master-servant model of divine-human relations.

Formal address dominated by praise is found at the beginning of several biblical prayers in which individuals or a representative group pray on behalf of the community. Note, for example, the brief hymnic introduction to a penitential

prayer in Dan 9:4 and the longer ones to communal laments in Pss 44:2–9 and 89:2–19. Nehemiah 9, a penitential prayer like Dan 9, in which Levites stand before the community and petition Yahweh to forgive the people's sin, is a particularly interesting example. The prayer begins in v. 5b and ends in v. 37; the introductory hymn occupies vv. 5b–32a! At the start of the prayer the Levites address Yahweh in a manner that recalls the significance of Akkadian *karābu* (BH cognate: ברכ)[1] to the hand-raising greeting (see page 35 of the general introduction): בָּרוּךְ אַתָּ יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, "You are blessed, O Yahweh, our god" (v. 5b).[2] The hymn then goes on to praise Yahweh's name, uniqueness, creative and sustaining power, and especially his historical dealings with Israel, from the exodus to the speaker's present day. This long account of the history between Yahweh and Israel also brings out Yahweh's character: his compassion, long-suffering, forgiveness, and willingness to discipline his people rather than to forsake them. The entire hymn is prelude to the relatively brief petition in vv. 32b–37.

Although we see the formal address in this long opening hymn, we of course do not see the hand raising gesture. The opening statement about Yahweh's blessedness, however, may be enough to suggest hand-raising lies in the presumed background for both the author and their early readers. This is a plausible presumption in light of passages like Ps 134:1–2, "Bless Yahweh, all (you) servants of Yahweh . . . lift up your hands . . . bless Yahweh!" (בָּרֲכוּ אֶת־יְהֹוָה כָּל־עַבְדֵי יְהֹוָה . . . שְׂאוּ־יְדֵכֶם . . . וּבָרֲכוּ אֶת־יְהֹוָה), and Ps 63:5, "I bless you . . . I lift up my hands" (אַבֲרֶכְךָ . . . אֶשָּׂא כַפָּי).[3] As these texts suggest, the hand-raising gesture is closely aligned with offering blessing (or praise) to the deity. It is also associated with petitionary prayer in other passages. Note, for example, how Ezra lifts his hands in prayer (אֶפְרְשָׂה כַפַּי) in Ezra 9:5, a third penitential prayer (though this prayer lacks a hymnic introduction). Solomon does the same in 1 Kgs 8:22 (וַיִּפְרֹשׂ כַּפָּיו), where introductory praise accompanies the gesture (vv. 23–24) and precedes the petition (vv. 25ff.).[4]

If our comparative material is at all instructive, we should look at each of these biblical contexts in similar terms as the audience model described for the Mesopotamian shuilla-prayer: a supplicant reaches out to a social superior for

[1] Tawil, *ALCBH*, 58.

[2] This reading, which assumes continuity between vv. 5 and 6, requires a slight emendation to the MT, which reads: בָּרֲכוּ אֶת־יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, "Bless Yahweh, your god." See H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah* (WBC 16; Waco: Word, 1985), 303–4. For a different understanding, see Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988), 296, 301.

[3] Note the related issue of lifting hands as part of conferring a blessing on people in, e.g., 1 Kgs 8:54 and Lev 9:22.

[4] See also, e.g., Exod 9:29, 33, 1 Kgs 8:38, and Ps 28:2 (בְּנָשְׂאִי יָדַי) for the gesture in a context of supplication. The hand-raising gesture is also reflected farther afield in 1 Tim 2:8. For a fuller discussion of the various phrases in Biblical Hebrew that denote the hand-raising gesture and reflection about how each relates specifically to praise and/or supplication, see Mayer I. Gruber, *Aspects of Nonverbal Communication in the Ancient Near East* (Studia Pohl 12/1; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1980), 25–44.

help, greeting the one petitioned via a conventional gesture and formal address that recognizes the superior's higher position in relation to the supplicant. In this manner, the supplicant hopes to establish a favorable relationship with the one petitioned and thereby obtain a positive answer to their request. It is interesting that we do not see the hand-lifting gesture or lengthy formal address in either the dingirshadibba-prayers to personal gods or biblical laments of the individual. For reflections on this latter point, see page 442.

In the prayer's first line of petitions (line 14) the supplicant says, "raise my head, call (my) name!" (*ulli rēšīya ibi šumu*). These two idioms have equivalents in BH. Before we make any comparisons, however, we should recognize that "to raise the head" and "to call a name" have more than one meaning in both Akkadian and BH (see CAD N/2, 107–8 and *HALOT*, 1164–65 for the former and CAD N/1, 33–37 and *HALOT*, 1129 for the latter). The sense of *rēša ullû* in our Akkadian prayer is something like "to take notice with favorable intention." The same sense for the BH cognate phrase נשׂא ראשׁ occurs in 2 Kgs 25:27 (‖ Jer 52:31), where Jehoichan is shown mercy by the Babylonian king Evil-merodach, and Gen 40:13, where Joseph informs the Pharaoh's chief cupbearer that the Pharaoh will restore him to his former position.[5] *Šuma nabû* in our prayer has the sense of summoning or appointing a person for a particular position or standing. The same meaning is found in the BH idiom קרא בְּשֵׁם. See, for example, Exod 31:2, 35:30, Josh 21:9 (where it is used as a means to allocate land; see also 1 Chron 6:50), Isa 40:26, 43:1, 45:3, 4, and Isa 49:1, where the idiom is broken up across the line's poetic parallelism. These idioms demonstrate once again the significant cultural (including religious) continuity between ancient Israel and ancient Mesopotamia despite their many differences.

[5] Note, however, that the idiom "to raise the head" is also used later in the narrative (Gen 40:19, 31) in other senses, rather literally, as in "the Pharaoh will raise your head from upon you" (מֵעָלֶיךָ; v. 19), and in the idiomatic sense, "to summon" (v. 31).

TRANSLATION:

1. Incantation: O wise king, discerning creator,
2. August leader, worthy one of E-abzu,
3. Enlilbanda, wise honored one,
4. Hero of Eridu, sage of the Igigi,
5. Lord of E-engura, protection of E-unir,
6. The one who brings the flood of abundance, who makes the rivers rejoice,
7. Among the waters and reed thickets you bountifully bestow abundance,
8. Among the meadows you create the sustenance of the people.
9. Anu and Ellil are rejoicing joyfully on account of you.
10. The Anunnakki-gods greet you in their shrines.
11. The people of the earth praise your honored command.
12. To the great gods you give counsel.
13. O Ea, on account of your incantation of life the moribund need not die.

14. Raise my head, call (my) name!
15. By your command may my utterances be heard!
16. By your pronouncement may I achieve favorable things!
17. Give me life that I may be healthy forever!
18. May my speech be pleasing to (my) god and goddess.
19. May god and king do what I say.
20. May mouth and tongue intercede for me.
21.–23.
    May nothing evil, nothing unfavorable,
    Nor even the machinations of witch and warlock
    Draw near to me, may it not reach me.
24.–25.
    O Ea, because of your incantation of life may anything evil, anything unfavorable depart.
26. May the incantation of Eridu release the bond of witch and warlock.
27. May Marduk, the sage of the gods, release their evil bonds.
28. May my limbs be free of illness, may my members be healthy.
29. May the heavens rejoice, may the Apsu be glad on your account.
30. May the great gods laud you as a lord.
31. May the Igigi-gods decree your good fortune.
32. It is the wording of a lifted-hand to Enlilbanda.

33. You do (the ritual) with either a ritual arrangement or an incense burner.

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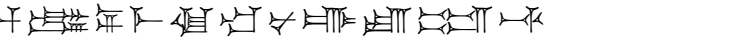
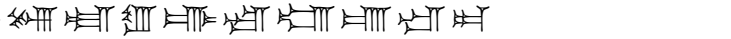
1. 
2. 
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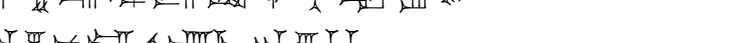
4. 
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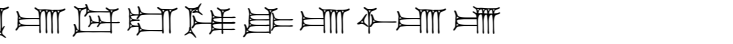
6. 
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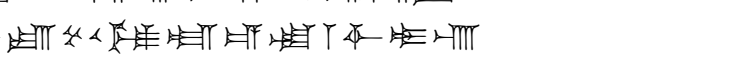
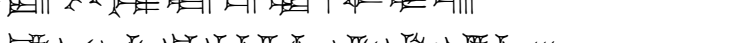
8. 
9. 
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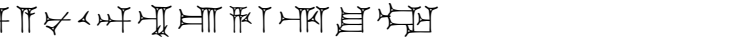
11. 

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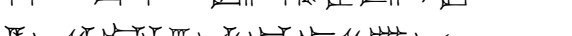
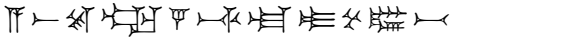
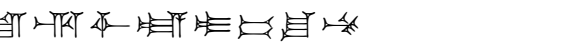
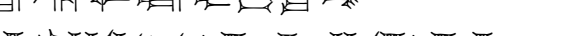
13. 
14. 
15. 
16. 
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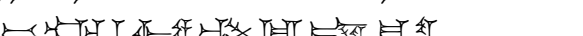
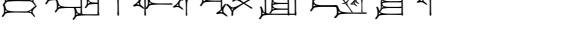
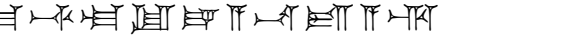
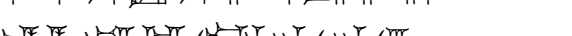
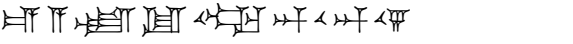
18. 
19. 
20. 
21. 
22. 
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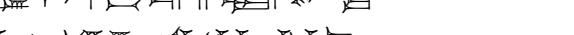
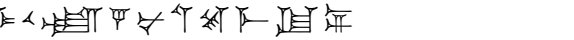
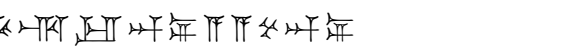
24. 
25. 
26. 
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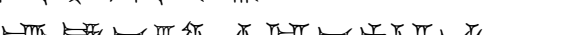
29. 
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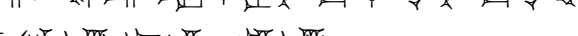
32. 

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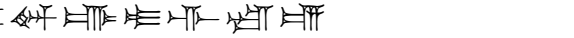
33. 

A Shuilla: Gula 1a

ALAN LENZI

GULA:

Gula was a mother goddess from the Babylonian city of Isin and one of the high gods of the Mesopotamian pantheon. According to various traditions Gula was the daughter of An and Urash, the wife of Ninurta or Pabilsag, and the mother of Damu and Ninazu. Gula is attested already in third millennium texts (perhaps as early as the ED period in Fara) and persists in the Mesopotamian pantheon until Hellenistic times. By the OB period Gula had already been identified with and worshipped as the goddesses Ninisina, Nintinugga, Ninkarrak, Gunura, and Baba, among others. As the *azugallatu*, "the chief physician," Gula was closely associated with healing and the patron deity of the *asû*, "physician." She was also the patron god of dogs and associated with the dog in iconography.[1] Given her power over disease, Gula was sometimes invoked in curse formulae to bring illness upon transgressors (see, e.g., SAA 2, no. 6, §52).

Gula's main temple, É-gal-maḫ, "the exalted palace," was in Isin, but she had temples and shrines—sometimes more than one—in many other cities (e.g., Ashur, Babylon, Borsippa, Nippur, Lagash, Larsa, Umma, Ur, and Uruk). Excavations at cultic sites in Isin, Nippur, and Sippar have revealed dog and human figurines as well as models of body parts.[2] Some of the dog figurines seem to be apotropaic or petitionary in nature, but others were clearly placed as thanksgiving votives to Gula for help received.[3] The human figurines probably represent individuals. The varied hand placement of these figurines upon their body may have been intended to indicate the part of the sufferer's body that was afflicted. The temples of Gula were also a center for storing and copying texts associated with the healing professions. Tablets have been found in her temple at Isin, and colophons mention tablets being copied from an original stored at a temple of Gula (see, e.g., Hunger, *BAK*, nos. 199[d], 203[k], 380).

[1] Gula's temple is called the É-ur-gi$_7$-ra, "the dog house," in some texts, and thirty-three dog burials were uncovered near Gula's temple in Isin. See Avalos, 210–12 and references there.
[2] Ibid., 202–10.
[3] See the text cited by Avalos, ibid., 216.

Gula's star was Lyra and her canine representation is associated with our constellation Hercules. One of the most important first-millennium texts associated with the goddess is a two-hundred-line hymn that alternates between a description of Gula and her spouse, Ninurta.[4]

THE PRAYER:

The prayer may be divided into three sections: the introduction (lines 1–10), the petition section (lines 11–24), and the promise of praise (line 25).

Lines 1–10 form the introductory section of the prayer. An invocation and a mere three epithets (line 1) lead directly into what Mayer calls the "turning" (*Hinwendung*; see *UFBG*, 122–49) in lines 2–3. Here the supplicant explicitly seeks the goddess's attention with first person verbs and demands (note the imperatives) that she be present and listen to the prayer. The supplicant gives reasons for turning to Gula in lines 4–6. Since all of these reasons concern the functional domain of the goddess (and recall hymnic epithets found elsewhere), we may also consider these lines a kind of implicit praise of the goddess, continuing what the prayer started in line 1. Lines 7–8 reprise the invocation and praise of the goddess with three epithets, repeating or paralleling line 1. These lines lead into lines 9–10, where the supplicant turns to the deity again, using first person verbs, and demands her attention, using imperatives (compare lines 2–3). The mixture of invocation, hymnic elements, and explicit requests for the goddess's attention prepares the way for the petition section of the prayer in lines 11–24.

The petition section can be divided into three parts, lines 11–19, which concern the angry personal and city deities; lines 20–22, which deal with Marduk; and lines 23–24, which make a final general plea. The supplicant begins in lines 11–12 by wishing to send Gula to intervene on their behalf with their angry personal and city deities (the *lušpurka* formula; see *UFBG*, 236–39). Although the problem of angry deities is worked into this first petition proper rather than stated as an independent complaint, its ramifications are clearly expressed in the complaint that follows in lines 13–14: the supplicant is afraid due to evil oracles and dreams. Having expressed a desire to send Gula, the supplicant now spells out in lines 15–19 exactly what they want her to do. By the power of her divine word, the supplicant requests that she restore their troubled relationship with their protective deities. As if to emphasize its importance, the supplicant prefaces this second petition proper with another reprised invocation in line 15 (see line 1 and compare line 7). The same invocation is repeated in line 20, the opening of the second part of the prayer's petition section.

In a somewhat surprising turn of events, the supplicant now requests that Gula also intercede with Marduk (line 21–22a) and put in a good word on the supplicant's behalf (line 22b). The precise reason for this second intercessory

[4] See W. G. Lambert, "The Gula Hymn of Bulluṭsa-rabi," *Or* n.s. 36 (1967), 105–32 and plates VIII–XXIII.

petition is unclear, but Gula's role as an intermediary goddess is attested elsewhere. One could imagine the cooperation between the human *asû*, "physician," and *āšipu*, "exoricist," suggested the cooperation between Gula, patron of physicians, and Marduk, a god closely associated with magic.[5] In any case, the comparison of Gula to a personal god in line 3 has foreshadowed her intermediary role here.

The petition section ends with one final, general petition for Gula to protect, forgive, and provide well-being for the supplicant. This last petition leads into the promise of praise in line 25.

Two major elements in the prayer give its text a sense of unity. The first among these is the repeated invocation in structurally significant locations, lines 1, 15, and 20.[6] The latter two instances introduce a part of the prayer in which the supplicant asks Gula to intercede with another divine power on their behalf. The repetition of the invocation in these places maintains the prayer's focus on Gula, even while Gula's attention is directed elsewhere. Another unifying element is the thematic prevalence of mercy and intercession. This is most obviously manifested in the repetition of the word *rēmēnītû/rēmēnû*, "merciful," in lines 1, 7, and 21. But one can also see the theme in the "hem of the garment" imagery of line 3, the string of infinitives in lines 5–6 (*bulluṭu*, *šullumu*, *eṭēru*, *gamālu*, and *šūzubu*),[7] and the two-fold use of the idiom *abbūta ṣabātu*, "to intercede," in lines 20 (as an epithet for the goddess) and 22 (as an imperative).

Although the prayer is directed to Gula in the majority of MSS, three of Mayer's MSS (B, E, and H) direct the prayer to a different goddess, Belet-ili (*Bēlet-ilī*). These same three MSS also preserve an *attalû* formula within the prayer's text, though at different places in each. These variations in addressee and the content demonstrate once again how shuilla-prayers could be adapted for various ritual purposes. In addition to this, recent work on *Bīt salāʾ mê* has placed our prayer in the ninth section of that ritual series among a number of other shuilla-prayers (see Ambos).

[5] For the intermediary role of Gula, see Avalos, 187–91, who mentions the parallel between the cooperation of human ritual officials and that of the gods.

[6] See also line 7 in Mayer's MSS A and G.

[7] Note the use in line 24, near the end of the prayer, of nouns cognate to two of these verbs (*gimillu*, "requital," cognate to *gamālu* and *balāṭu*, "life," cognate to *bulluṭu*).

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Text. Edition: Mayer, *UFBG*, 450–54.[i] Translations: Foster, 671–72. Seux, 337–39. von Soden, 327–28. Study: Claus Ambos, *Der König im Gefängnis und das Neujahrsfest im Herbst: Mechanismen der Legitimation des babylonischen Herrschers im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr. und ihre Geschichte*. Habilitation. Heidelberg, 2010; rev. forthcoming.

[i] Two new duplicates are published in copy in Loretz-Mayer, AOAT 34, nos. 19–20.

1. ÉN ^{d}*gu-la* GAŠAN *šur-bu-tum* AMA *re-mé-ni-tum a-ši-bat* AN-*e* KÙ.MEŠ

2. *al-si-ki* GAŠAN.MU *i-ziz-zi-im-ma ši-mi-i ia-a-ti*

Line 1: ÉN = *šiptu*, "incantation." This word marks the beginning of the prayer. It is not a part of the prayer itself. Three MSS (Mayer's B, E, and H) direct this same prayer to the goddess Belet-ili simply by substituting her name for Gula's. GAŠAN = *bēltu*, "lady" (but also *šarratu*, "queen"). *Šurbūtu* (fs), *šurbû* (m), "exalted, supreme," is often used to describe deities and their epithets (see CAD Š/3, 341–42). The Š stem verbal adjective is used here as an elative (i.e., superlative), "most exalted." The form is not to be confused with the infrequently occurring noun *šurbûtu*, "greatness, exaltedness." The TUM sign may also be read as *tu*$_4$, indicating SB Akkadian's loss of mimation. AMA = *ummu*, "mother." *Rēmēnītû* (f), *rēmēnû* (m), "merciful," is also frequently used to describe deities and their epithets (see CAD R, 238). Compare this epithet to Marduk's on page 296. (*W*)*ašābu*, "to dwell, to sit." The participle is functioning substantively, in apposition to the other epithets in the line. AN = *šamû*, "heavens," is always plural. KÙ = *ellu*, "pure, clear."

Gula bēltu šurbūtu ummu rēmēnītû āšibat šamê ellūti

Line 2: *šasû*, "to call out to, to shout." The G preterite form of the verb, *išši* (3cs), often becomes *ilsi* in later Akkadian. *Alsi* is a 1cs preterite. MU = 1cs pronominal suffix. *Izuzzu*, "to stand." The suffixed *–m* on the verb is the ventive morpheme. *Šemû*, "to hear, to listen to." *Yâti*, "to me." The supplicant interrupts the string of epithets to request Gula's attention directly with performative verbs, the speaking of which executes their ritual actions (i.e., "I hereby call to you"). The imperatives demand Gula's presence and attention. This and the following line illustrate a common rhetorical move in Mesopotamian prayers.

alsīki bēltī izizzīm-ma šimî yâti

3. *eš-e-ki as-ḫur-ki* GIM TÚG.SÍG DINGIR.MU *u* ^{d}15.MU TÚG.SÍG-*ki aṣ-bat*

4. *aš-šum di-ni da-a-ni* EŠ.BAR KUD-*si*

5. *aš-šum bul-lu-ṭu u šul-lu-mu ba-šu-ú it-ti-ki*

6. *aš-šum e-ṭe-ra ga-ma-la u šu-zu-ba ti-de-e*

7. ^{d}*gu-la* GAŠAN *šá-qu-tum* AMA *re-me-ni-tum*

Line 3: *še'û*, "to seek out." *Saḫāru*, "to turn." GIM = *kīma*, "like, as." TÚG.SÍG = *sissiktu*, "fringe, hem." DINGIR = *ilu*, "god." ^{d}15 = *ištaru*, "goddess." *Ṣabātu*, "to seize." The prayer builds on *alsīki* in line 2 with another three 1cs performative verbs. The last verb must be understood metaphorically, unless we are to imagine the supplicant standing before the divine image. Seizing the hem of a social superior's garment was a symbolic gesture, in the present case, of supplication (see CAD Ṣ, 18 and the discussion of the gesture on page 426, line 15).

ešēki asḫurki kīma sissikti ilīya u ištarīya sissiktaki aṣbat

Line 4: *Aššum*, "because." *Dīnu*, "(legal) case," is the object of the infinitive (despite the written case vowel). *Dânu* (*diānum*), "to judge." EŠ.BAR = *purussû*, "(legal) decision." *Parāsu*, "to cut, to decide." Both phrases in the line are cognate accusative constructions (i.e., the verb and its object derive from the same root), creating a rhythmic and alliterative line. Render both phrases idiomatically. The supplicant lays out in lines 4–6 the specific reasons for turning to Gula, a god who has the power to judge. Although these lines provide supporting evidence for the supplicant's turning, they use verbs that appear in various hymnic epithets. They therefore should also be considered implicit praise for the deity.

aššum dīni dâni purussâ parāsi

Line 5: *Bulluṭu* (D of *balāṭu*), "to heal, to revive, to spare, to provide support for." *Šullumu* (D of *šalāmu*), "to keep well, to heal." The infinitives are functioning as gerunds. *Bašû*, "to be, to exist." *Itti*, "with." How would one translate "they are with you" idiomatically? The supplicant has turned to Gula because she also has the power to heal and restore people to health.

aššum bulluṭu u šullumu bašû ittīki

Line 6: *Eṭēru*, "to save, to take away." *Gamālu*, "to do a favor, to spare," but see also page 328. *Šūzubu* (Š of *ezēbu*), "to make someone leave, to rescue." *Idû*, "to know." Gula's knowledge described in this line is not abstract or theoretical; rather, it is functional. She knows how to deploy actions that save, spare, and rescue people.

aššum eṭēra gamāla u šūzuba tīde

Line 7: The supplicant repeats the invocation, nearly repeating the first half of the opening line. *Šaqūtu* (fs), *šaqû* (m), "elevated, prominent, sublime," is often used to describe deities and their qualities (see CAD Š/2, 17–19). It is a near synonym of the adjec-

8. *ina ma-aʾ-du-ti* MUL.MEŠ *šá-ma-mi*

9. GAŠAN *ka-a-ši as-ḫur-ki ib-šá-ki* GEŠTU.II-*a-a*

10. ZÌ.MAD.GÁ *muḫ-ri-in-ni-ma le-qé-e un-ni-ni-ia*

11. *lu-uš-pur-ki ana* DINGIR.MU *ze-ni-i* ^{d}15.MU *ze-ni-ti*

tive it replaces from line 1, *šurbūtu*. Note, however, that Mayer's MSS A and G in this line actually read *šurbūtu*; there is no replacement in these MSS.

Gula bēltu šaqūtu ummu rēmēnītû

Line 8: *Maʾdû* (*maʾdûti*, mp), "large quantity, abundance." MUL.MEŠ = *kakkabū*, "stars." *Šamāmū*, "heavens," is a poetical equivalent of *šamû*. The reprised invocation continues, providing a semantic parallel to the second half of line 1. "Among the myriad stars of heaven" is a way of describing Gula in the heavenly realm as she exists among her divine peers. (Deities were associated with stars.)

ina maʾdûti kakkabī šamāmī

Line 9: *Kâši*, "to you," is redundant (perhaps emphatic) since the verb that follows it (*saḫāru*, see line 3) also has a 2fs dative pronominal suffix. GEŠTU.II = *uznā*, "ears" (d). When used with ears or eyes, *bašû* means "to be fixed on, to be attentive to" (see *CDA*, 40). Mayer's MS H (from Sippar) includes 8 very formulaic lines here (including a self-presentation formula, the *attalû*-formula [see *UFBG*, 100], and a formulaic lament and petition) in which Shamash-shum-ukin laments (as king, with Marduk and Zarpanitu as his personal deities) on account of an evil eclipse (see *UFBG*, 452, n.79(4)).

bēltu kâši asḫurki ibšâki uznāya

Line 10: ZÌ.MAD.GÁ = *maṣḫatu*, "(a kind of) flour." *Maḫāru*, "to accept, to receive." *Leqû*, "to take, to accept." *Unnīnu*, "prayer, supplication." The verb *muḫrīnni* has two objects, the one marked by the 1cs pronominal suffix and the word *maṣḫata*, "flour." The two objects should be understood as in apposition (thus, to receive the flour is to receive the supplicant) and rendered in an idiomatic manner. The line contains a couple of stock phrases in which the supplicant asks Gula to accept both the offering and the prayer. The two imperatives in this line hark back to the two in line 2. The imperatives in line 10 provide the next step in the logical progression begun with the earlier imperatives: "stand here and listen to me" (line 2) and "receive my flour offering, accept my prayer" (line 10). One could even suggest that the actions of each imperative are collated via their position in their respective lines, with the first ones showing movement from one to the other and likewise the second ones: "stand here, receive my flour offering" (2a, 10a); "listen to me, accept my prayer" (2b, 10b). Together these requests form a ritual prelude for the personal and therefore more important petitions (from the supplicant's perspective) that follow in the next several lines.

maṣḫata muḫrīnnī-ma leqē unnīnīya

Line 11: *Šapāru*, "to send." *Zenû* (m), *zenītu* (f), "angry." The supplicant wants to send Gula to their personal deities to intercede on their behalf. For a discussion of the personal god in Mesopotamia, see page 431.

lušpurki ana ilīya zenî ištartīya zenīti

12. *ana* DINGIR URU.MU *šá šab-su-ma kam-lu it-ti-ia*

13. *ina bi-ri u šu-ut-ti it-ta-na-áš-ka-nam-ma*

14. *pal-ḫa-ku-ma a-ta-nám-da-ru*

15. ^{d}*gu-la* GAŠAN *šur-bu-tum ina a-mat qí-bi-ti-ki ṣir-ti šá ina* é-kur *šur-bat*

Line 12: URU = *ālu*, "city." The words *šabsu* and *kamlu* are predicative constructions in a subordinate clause (note the *ša*). When the subjunctive *–u* is added to the 3ms predicative forms (*šabis* and *kamil*), the short *i*-vowels reduce. Both words mean "is angry." Besides the personal gods, the supplicant also wishes to send Gula to the city god. Mayer's MS E includes a fragmentary *attalû*–formula after this line (see *UFBG*, 453, n.82(5)).

ana il ālīya ša šabsū-ma kamlu ittīya

Line 13: *Ina* here means "as a result of, on account of." *Bīru*, "the answer received through divination, an oracle." *Šuttu*, "dream." Given the following verb, both singular nouns are probably to be understood as collectives. *Itaškunu* (Ntn of *šakānu*), "to occur, arise continually" (said of signs); see CAD B, 265 for a near parallel. The verb is in an unmarked relative clause (i.e., there is no *ša*) and does not take a subjunctive ending (*–u*) due to the presence of the ventive *–am*. The text begins a new sentence in line 13, which gives the reasons for the states of mind described in line 14. Mayer's MS E includes a one line self-presentation formula and a truncated *attalû*-formula here (see *UFBG*, 453, n.83(4)); both formulae are similar to what MS H adds after line 9, only they are shorter here and use generic name and date "placeholders" (NENNI).

ina bīri u šutti ittanaškanam-ma

Line 14: *Palāḫu*, "to fear, to be afraid." There are two homonymic roots in Akkadian that have closely related meanings, *adāru* A or I and B or II (according to the CAD or *CDA*). The first means "to be dark, to be worried." The second means "to be afraid." Determining which root is used in a specific context is difficult sometimes (see CAD A/1, 107–8 and 109). Despite the CAD listing our line under *adāru* B, its own criteria (A/1, 107–8) would suggest *adāru* A for our case, in which psychological trauma rather than religious awe is paramount. The form of the verb is a Gtn, "to be anxious, worried constantly." The doubled second letter of the root (*–dd–*) is nasalized in our example, thus *atanamdaru*. The final *–u* is superfluous, perhaps inserted under the influence of the 1cs predicative ending of the first verb in the line. A subjunctive is not called for.

palḫākū-ma atanamdaru

Line 15: The first part of the line recalls the opening of line 1 in another reprise of the initial invocation (see also line 7). *Amātu* (*awātum*), "word." *Qibītu*, "speech, command." *Ṣīru* (m), *ṣīrtu* (f), "exalted, august." É-kur was Enlil's temple in Nippur. *Šurbât* is a 3fs predicative related to *šurbūtu*, "exalted, supreme," earlier in the line (and in line 1). This line and the next comprise a long vocative address, directing the wishes (third person precatives) expressed in lines 17–19 to Gula's attention. The first *ina* in this line governs a rather complex prepositional phrase that includes the rest of line 15 and all of line 16. The *ša* introduces a short relative clause that futher defines Gula's authoritative word.

Gula bēltu šurbūtu ina amat qibītīki ṣīrti ša ina Ekur šurbât

16. *ù an-ni-ki ki-nim šá* NU BAL-*ú*

17. DINGIR.MU *šab-su li-tu-ra* ^{d}15.MU *ze-ni-tum li-is-saḫ-r*[*a*]

18. DINGIR URU.MU *šá šab-su-ma kam-lu* KI-*ia*$^{!}$

19. *šá i-zi-za li-nu-ḫa šá i-gu-ga lip-pa-*[*á*]*š-r*[*a*]

20. ^{d}*gu-la* GAŠAN *šur-bu-tum ṣa-bi-ta-at a-bu-ut en-ši*

Line 16: *Annu*, "consent, approval." The relative clause modifies Gula's consent and grammatically parallels the relative clause in line 15. *Kīnu*, "firm, true." NU = *lā*, "not." BAL = *enû*, "to change, to alter." The inf. expresses the permanence or unchangeable quality of the deity's word (see CAD E, 175), a common motif in Mesopotamian texts.

u annīki kīnim ša lā enû

Line 17: *Târu*, "to return, to turn back." *Nasḫuru* (N of *saḫāru*), "to turn back, to turn again with favor to." Note the ventive on both verbs. The supplicant, having gotten Gula's attention in the previous lines, now begins expressing desires of reconciliation with their angry deities (named earlier in lines 11 and 12).

ilī šabsu litūra ištartī zenītu lissaḫra

Line 18: This line repeats line 12 nearly verbatim.

il ālīya ša šabsū-ma kamlu ittīya

Line 19: *Ezēzu*, "to be(come) angry, to be in a rage." *Nâḫu*, "to rest, to relent." *Agāgu*, "to be(come) furious." *Napšuru* (N of *pašāru*), "to be released, to be reconciled, to be soothed, to forgive." *Ezēzu* and *agāgu* occur together frequently (see CAD E, 427 for other examples). The line consists of two grammatically and semantically parallel parts. One might even suggest a certain phonological similarity between the two as well. As with the personal gods, the supplicant makes known to Gula their desire for reconciliation with their angry city god.

ša īziza linūḫa ša īguga lippašra

Line 20: *Ṣabātu* means "to seize" and *abbūtu*, "fatherhood, a fatherly attitude." When used together the idiom *abbūta ṣabātu* means "to intercede for someone, to help someone's cause" (see CAD Ṣ, 24–25). Despite the masculine connotation of the literal meaning of the words, the idiom may be applied to gods or, as here, goddesses (see also line 22). *Enšu*, "weak, powerless," is used substantively. A fourth invocation echoes line 1 in the first part of the line. The second part contains an epithet, which may be interpreting line 1's *rēmēnītû*. In any case, it illustrates Gula's mercy and concern for the less fortunate.

Gula bēltu šurbūtu ṣābitat abbūt enši

21. *ana* ^{d}AMAR.UTU LUGAL DINGIR.MEŠ EN *re-mé-ni-i*

22. *a-bu-ti ṣab-ti qí-bi-i da-me-eq-t*[*i*]

23. *ṣu-lul-ki rap-šu ta-a-a-ra-tu-ki kab-t*[*a-tu lib-š*]*á-nim-m*[*a*]

24. *gi-mil dum-qí u ba-lá-ṭi* UG[U]*-ia* [*šuk-ni*]*-ma*

25. *nar-bi-ki lu-šá-pi dà-lí-lí-ki* [*lud-lu*]*l*

Line 21: ^{d}AMAR.UTU = *Marduk* (on whom, see page 291). LUGAL = *šarru*, "king." EN = *bēlu*, "lord," the masculine form of *bēltu*, used throughout the prayer. *Rēmēnû*, "merciful," for which see line 1. Marduk is being described with many of the same words used for Gula earlier in the prayer.

ana Marduk šarri ilī bēlu rēmēnû

Line 22: *Qabû*, "to speak." *Damiqtu*, "favorable, good," is used substantively ("something favorable"). See CAD A/1, 50 for a similar line with 3ms pronominal suffixes on the substantives. In the first half of the line the supplicant appeals to Gula's merciful nature, brought out already in line 20 with the same idiom as used here and earlier in lines 1 and 7, where the supplicant invokes caring parental imagery ("merciful mother"). In the second half of the line the supplicant appeals to Gula's effective word for a favorable pronouncement (see lines 15 and 16). In both parts of the line, the supplicant asks Gula to present the supplicant in a good light before Marduk. The assumption seems to be that Marduk will have the power to set things right.

abbūtī ṣabtī qibî dameqtī

Line 23: *Ṣulūlu*, "canopy, covering," is a common metaphor of divine or royal protection (see CAD Ṣ, 243). *Rapšu*, "wide." *Tayyartu*, "forgiveness" (*tajārtu*). *Kabtu*, "heavy, important, noble, honored." *Bašû*, see line 5. The ending *–nim* is a 1cs dative suffix. This line brings to the goddess's attention that her intercession with Marduk on the supplicant's behalf would demonstrate her protection and forgiveness for him. In other words, the requested action in lines 21–22 and the requested relationship in line 23 are two sides of the same coin.

ṣulūlki rapšu tayyartūki kabtu libšanim-ma

Line 24: *Gimillu*, "requital, a return in kind, a friendly deed." *Dumqi*, "goodness, prosperity." *Balāṭu*, "life." UGU = *eli*, "on, upon, on to." *Šakānu*, "to put, to place, to provide." The supplicant makes one final, summarizing plea to Gula, which recognizes her actions—her acceptance of their prayer and successful intercession with Marduk on their behalf—as the key to future happiness and prosperity.

gimil dumqi u balāṭi elīya šuknī-ma

Line 25: *Narbû*, "greatness." *Šūpû* (Š of [*w*]*apû*), "to proclaim, to announce." *Dalīlū*, "praises." *Dalālu*, "to praise." *Dalīlīka ludlul* is a cognate accusative construction; that is, the verb and its object both come from the same root. Translate idiomatically, "let me

26. ka-inim-ma šu-íl-lá ^{d}[g]u-la-kám

27. DÙ.DÙ.BI *ana* IGI ^{d}*gu-la* KEŠDA *tara-k*[*ás . . .* K]AŠ SAG BAL-[*qí*]

28. ÉN *an-ni-tum* 3-*šú* ŠID-*ma tés-lit-*[*su . . .*] *iš-šem-m*[*i*]

proclaim your praises" or the like. Shuilla-prayers almost always conclude with some form of foreword looking praise. The phrases used here are very common.

narbīki lušappi dalīlīki ludlul

Line 26: This line is the rubric, which tells something about the classification of the preceding lines. In this case, the rubric identifies the form of the prayer and to whom it is directed. As is typical, the rubric is written in Sumerian. It may be translated, "it is the wording of a lifted-hand to Gula."

Line 27: The ritual is fragmentary. The present text is based on Mayer's MS G, but is not in his edition. Other MSS deviate from this one. DÙ.DÙ.BI = *epuštašu*, "its ritual." These words alert the user of the tablet that the ritual instructions follow. Compare the ÉN at the beginning of the prayer. IGI = *maḫru*, "front," or *pānu*, "face." According to Mayer, *maḫru* is the more likely reading for *ina/ana* IGI (see *UFBG,* 175–76). In any case, the meaning is the same. KEŠDA = *riksu*, "ritual arrangement, assemblage of offerings." *Rakāsu*, literally, "to bind, tie up," but in ritual instructions the word means "to prepare, to set out (offerings)." The other verbs in the ritual instructions should be understood as second person verbs, too. KAŠ = *šīkaru*, "beer." SAG = *rēšu*, "top, head, best." *Šīkaru rēšu* designates first-rate beer, a very common item to libate. BAL = *naqû*, "to pour out, to libate, to sacrifice."

epuštašu: ana maḫar Gula riksa tarakkas . . . šikara rēša tanaqqi

Line 28: ÉN = *šiptu*, "incantation." *Annītu*, "this." 3-*šú* = *šalāšīšu*, "three times." ŠID = *manû*, "to recite, to count." *Teslītu*, "petition, request." *Nešmû* (N of *šemû*), "to be heard." The final phrase indicates to its user that the ritual-prayer will be successful.

šipta annīta šalāšīšu tammanū-ma teslīssu . . . iššemmi

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

In line 8 we learn that the goddess exists "among the myriad stars of the heavens" (*ina maʾdûti kakkabī šamāmī*). The close association of Mesopotamian gods and stars is well-known among contemporary scholars.[1] For example, Gula's star is Lyra and her constellation is the one we call Hercules. This close connection between stars and gods is enshrined in the cuneiform writing system: the divine determinative (DINGIR) looks like a star in the earliest pictographic forms

[1] The ancient Hebrew scribes were aware of the Mesopotamian connection, too. See, e.g., Amos 5:26 and the comments on this passage by Shalom Paul, *Amos: A Commentary on the Book of Amos* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 194–97. See also my comments below on the "host of heaven."

of the script.[2] Given this, it is worth considering whether or not there is a similar relationship between divinity and stars in the Hebrew Bible.[3]

Akkadian *kakkabu* is etymologically related to the BH word כּוֹכָב, pl. כּוֹכָבִים. Like Akkadian, this word usually designates the innumerable group of small celestial objects that are visibly dimmer than the sun and the moon (see, e.g., Gen 37:9, Ecc 12:2). The Hebrew word "host" (צָבָא)—a term closely associated with the military (both in terms of the army, e.g., Num 2:8, and its activities, e.g., Num 31:14)—and the phrase "host of heaven" (צְבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם) were used as collective designations for all the stars in the heavens (see, e.g., Isa 45:12, Deut 4:19).

There is some indication in the Hebrew Bible that stars were believed to be divine beings that could influence the events on earth. Judges 5:20, where stars fight from heaven against Sisera, is perhaps the best example of such an idea.[4] Stars were therefore venerated as deities both individually as, for example, the "queen of heaven" (מְלֶכֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם), identified as Ishtar—our Venus, in Jer 7:18 and 44:17–19, and collectively as the "host of heaven" (צְבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם) in, for example, 2 Kgs 17:16, 21:3, 5, Jer 19:13, and Zeph 1:5. Some scholars have suggested this astral worship was a direct result of Assyrian and then Babylonian influence.[5] In any case, all such worship was illicit and condemned repeatedly by biblical authors (see the previous references and, e.g., Deut 17:2–5, 2 Kgs 23:4–5, Job 31:26). In fact, Deut 4:19 informs the Israelites that Yahweh gave the worship of celestial bodies to other nations, not to Israel.

Although the Hebrew deity's dwelling was in the heavenlies (Ps 103:19), as high as the stars (Job 22:12, Isa 14:13), it is significant that Yahweh himself is never described as a star in the Hebrew Bible. Rather, Yahweh is always considered superior to anything in the celestial sphere. The stars and the heavenly host, for example, are often said to be created or counted or in some way controlled by Yawheh (e.g., Gen 1:16, 2:1, Ps 8:4, 136:9, 147:4, Jer 31:35, Job 9:7 [see v. 9], Ezek 32:7, Isa 13:10, 40:26, Joel 2:10, 15 [and see Amos 5:8 and Job 38:31–32, which name particular stars]). In Ps 148:2–4 celestial bodies offer praise to Yahweh; in Neh 9:6 the host of heaven bow down to him, their creator; and in Job 25:5 the stars are said to be impure compared to the Hebrew god.

Yet Yahweh's royal retinue, his servants that surround him in the divine assembly, is sometimes identified as the heavenly host (1 Kgs 22:19, 2 Chron

[2] See Erica Reiner, *Astral Magic in Babylonia* (TAPS 85/4; Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1995), 1–7.

[3] See F. Lelli, "Stars," *DDD*, 809–15 and H. Niehr, "Host of Heaven," *DDD*, 428–30 for useful surveys in this matter, with references to other relevant resources.

[4] Another important context for seeing the connection between stars and divinity is Isa 14:12–15, where a divinized king's hubris is punished by Yahweh with expulsion from among the stars. See Mattias Albani, "The Downfall of Helel, the Son of Dawn: Aspects of Royal Ideology in Isa 14:12–13," in *The Fall of the Angels* (ed. Christoph Auffarth and Loren T. Stuckenbruck; Themes in Biblical Narrative; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 62–86.

[5] See, e.g., Lelli, "Stars," 811.

18:18; and note Ps 103:20–21 and 148:2, where צְבָאָיו, "his hosts," and מַלְאָכָיו, "his messengers," are in parallel) or stars (see Job 38:7, where כּוֹכְבֵי בֹקֶר, "morning stars," and כָּל־בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים, "all the sons of god," are in parallel). Yahweh stands over these lesser divine beings (who are apparently not gods) as their king (Ps 103:19–21).

Yahweh himself was therefore not closely associated with a particular star as was Gula; rather, he was the creator (Isa 40:26, Neh 9:6) and ruler of the celestial host (see Ps 89:6–9).

TRANSLATION:

1. O Gula, most exalted lady, merciful mother, who dwells in the pure heavens,
2. I call out to you, my lady, stand nearby and listen to me!
3. I seek you out, I turn to you, as the hem of my god('s) and goddess('s garment), I lay hold of your (garment's) hem,
4. Because judging a case, handing down the decision,
5. Because restoring and maintaining well-being are within your power,
6. Because you know how to save, to spare, and to rescue.
7. O Gula, sublime lady, merciful mother,
8. Among the myriad stars of the heavens,
9. O lady, to you I turn; my ears are attentive to you.
10. Receive my flour offering, accept my prayer.
11. Let me send you to my angry (personal) god (and) my angry (personal) goddess,
12. To the god of my city who is furious and enraged with me.
13. On account of oracles and dreams that are hounding me,
14. I am afraid and constantly anxious.
15. O Gula, most exalted lady, through the word of your august command, which is supreme in Ekur,
16. And your sure approval, which cannot be altered,
17. May my furious god turn back to me; may my angry goddess turn again to me with favor.
18. May the god of my city who is furious and enraged with me,
19. Who is in a rage, relent; who is incensed, be soothed.
20. O Gula, most exalted lady, who intercedes on behalf of the powerless,
21. With Marduk, king of the gods, merciful lord,
22. Intercede! Speak a favorable word!
23. May your wide canopy (of protection), your noble forgiveness be with me.
24. Provide a requital of favor and life for me,
25. That I may proclaim your greatness (and) resound your praises!

26. It is the wording of a lifted-hand to Gula.

27. Its ritual: You prepare an assemblage of offerings in front of Gula . . . you libate first-rate beer. 28. You recite this incantation three times and the supplicant's (lit. his) prayer . . . will be heard.

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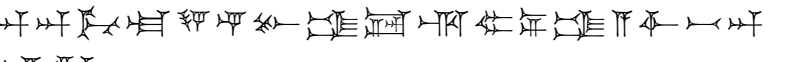
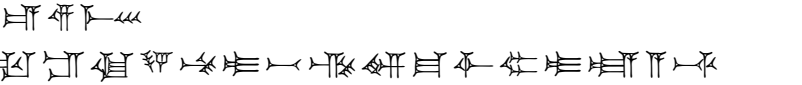
1. 
2. 
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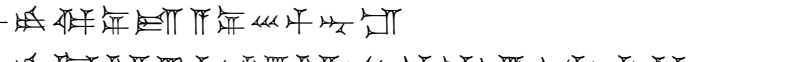
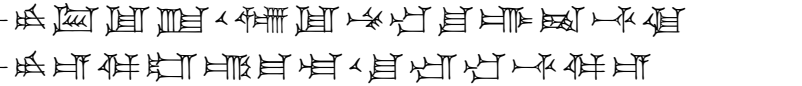
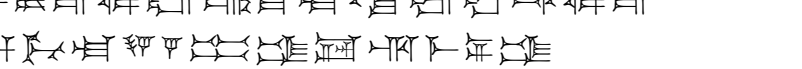
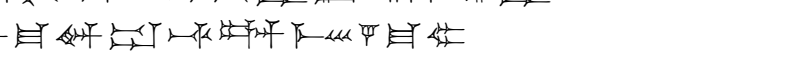
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 
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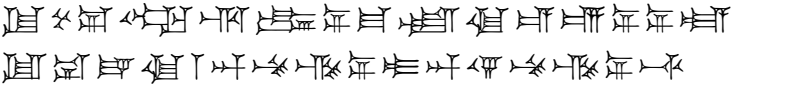
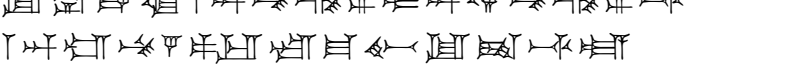
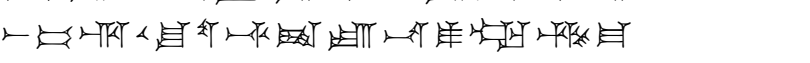
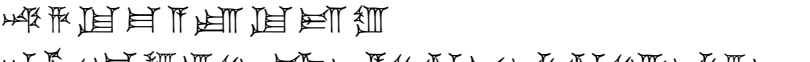
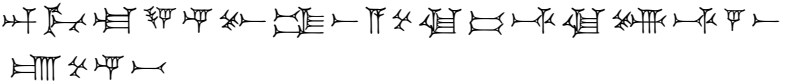
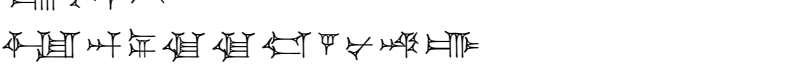
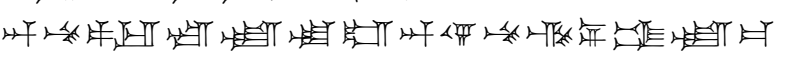
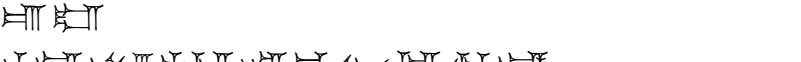
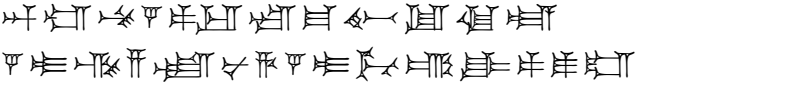
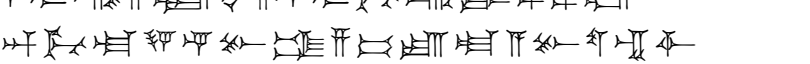
10. 
11. 
12. 
13. 
14. 
15. 
16. 
17. 
18. 
19. 
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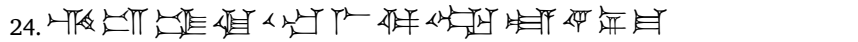
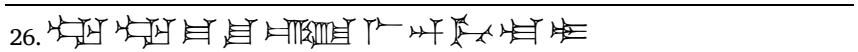
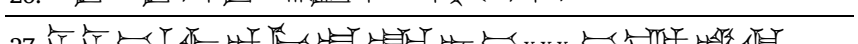
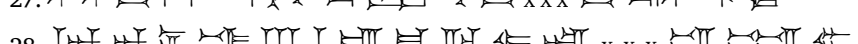
24. 

25. 

26. 

27. 

28.

A Shuilla: Ishtar 2
"The Great Ishtar Prayer"

ANNA ELISE ZERNECKE

ISHTAR:

See page 169.

THE PRAYER:

The prayer Ishtar 2 is unique in its form, length, and transmission. Only one of its six textual witnesses known in Akkadian preserves a subscription that classifies the prayer as a "prayer of the lifting of the hand" (šu-íl-lá). The present treatment of the prayer follows this tablet exclusively, the only copy in which no text is missing (MS A in Zgoll's edition). Its provenance is unknown. The tablet is in the British Museum today (BM 26187). The colophon describes it as a votive offering in the temple Esagila in Babylon, being the copy of an original from Borsippa. Two copies of the prayer were found in Boğazköy, one of them in Akkadian (MS F in Zgoll), and a very fragmentary second one in Hittite.[1] Together with a tablet from the Emar region containing Ishtar 10,[2] these tablets are the only attestations of prayers from the second millennium that are later known as shuillas, though neither this classification nor any other subscription is preserved in these early copies.[3] Despite the fragmentary state of the Akkadian text from Boğazköy, it can be demonstrated that it contained a shorter version of the prayer in which the praise of the deity was proportionally much more important.[4]

The structure of the prayer can be established by correlating aspects of form (the various uses of first, second, and third person voice, preponderance of nominal clauses and/or predicative constructions versus imperatives and precatives)

[1] About both texts from Boğazköy, see Reiner and Güterbock.
[2] Zgoll, 107–14.
[3] See Christopher Frechette, *Mesopotamian Ritual-prayers (Šuillas): A Case Study Investigating Idiom, Rubric, Form and Function* (AOAT 379; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, forthcoming), §3.
[4] Zernecke, 114–20.

and content. The beginning and the end of the prayer are formed by (hymnic) invocations of the deity (lines 1–41, 103–105), the middle section is characterized by two petitions (lines 42–55, 79–102) framing a complaint (lines 56–78).[5]

The first invocation (lines 1–41) contains epithets and sentences praising Ishtar's astral radiance, her power and prowess, and her cosmic and cultic importance. This long section of praise culminates in the mentioning of Ishtar's function as righteous and pardoning judge (lines 25–26) and her attention to the weak and sick (lines 40–41). Ishtar is the subject of inflected verbs only in these two passages of the opening invocation. Throughout the invocation, the supplicant approaches Ishtar in various ways: the address changes several times between third person and the more intimate second person voice.

The beginning of the first petition (lines 42–55) corresponds to the beginning of the prayer: the supplicant mentions an act of invocation (line 42, compare line 1) and characterizes themselves as weak and in pain, just after having praised Ishtar's saving of the weak and sick in general (lines 40–41). The main aim of the first petition is to gain Ishtar's attention and to pray for her forgiveness (lines 45–50), as her wrath seems to be the most important reason for their suffering (lines 45, 51–52).

The complaint (lines 56–78) describes the suffering of the supplicant and the hostility of enemies and others. The state of the supplicant is compared to natural phenomena (lines 62–64). The supplicant does not find fault in their behavior, but feels to be treated as if they had neglected the personal protecting deities (lines 67–68). The supplicant is separated from deities and humankind and is already in the sphere of death (line 74). They are not active: in most cases in which they are the subject, the verb is either intransitive or the form is a predicative construction.

The second petition (lines 79–102) is dominated by precise requests for Ishtar's action and her care for the supplicant. They hope for an end of the disturbance in their relations to both gods and humans. Only here do they mention their guilt, but the terminology is comprehensive (lines 80–82). The supplicant hopes for Ishtar's intervention against enemies (lines 97–98) so that they themselves will be judged as a living demonstration of her might (lines 101–102).

The final section of invocation and praise (lines 103–105) forms the anticipated praise of the supplicant and the witnesses of Ishtar's saving actions on the supplicant's behalf (compare lines 101–102). Most of the vocabulary is derived from the beginning of the prayer (lines 1–5). Thus, the final praise forms an inclusio with the very beginning of the prayer. The ritual instruction demands the

[5] The structure can also be analysed differently; compare Wright, 116; Reiner and Güterbock, 263; Mayer, *UFBG*, 28–29, n.60; Zgoll, 69. The differences are caused by transitional passages leading from one main part to the next and by differing analyses of the overall structure of the prayer (see Zernecke, 99–100). Mayer, *UFBG*, 28–29, n.60 characterizes Ishtar 2 as an atypical shuilla because of its length, its elaborated structure, the repetitions of certain words and phrases ("litaneiartig") and the exceptional and partly literary motifs.

prayer to be recited three times (lines 109–110). Thereby, beginning and end would merge.[6]

Ishtar 2 is a very complex prayer with an elaborate structure. Only a few aspects of the complex framework of references interlacing all parts can be mentioned here. The first lines of every part establish the mode of speech and the main topic of the following lines. Furthermore, several "seams" are highlighted by the use of terms for speech and prayer (lines 1, 42, 79–80). Also, the semantic field of sight, face, care, and aversion pervades the prayer in different and characteristic nuances. The relationship between Ishtar and the supplicant changes in the course of the prayer. This can be shown best in the way the goddess is addressed: in both invocations, a variety of names is used (Ishtar, Irnini, and Gushea) and—among others—the title *bēlet*, "lady." In both petitions and in the complaint, she is almost exclusively addressed as *bēltī*, "my lady," thus accentuating the personal relation between the supplicant and the goddess.[7] The overall structure of the prayer can be described as approaching Ishtar for the request that is reinforced by the complaint, and then withdrawing out of the presence of the goddess. The ritual demanding the repeated recitation emphasizes this circular structure.[8]

No normalization of this text has been published so far. This is possibly not without reason, as the written vowels frequently do not correspond to the standard grammar, especially at the end of the words. So every attempt to transcribe the text "normalizes" it "away" from the textual witness. The normalization given here tries to follow the text.

[6] Compare Zgoll, 69–95; Zernecke, 99–113.
[7] The only exception is the hapax legomenon Irninitu in line 51. Ibid., 122–25.
[8] Zgoll, 72–80; Zernecke, 122–52.

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Klagepsalmen Ps 38 und Ps 22 im Vergleich. AOAT 387. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, forthcoming.

1. ÉN *ú-sal-li-ki be-let be-le-e-ti i-lat i-la-a-ti*

2. ^{d}*iš-tar šar-ra-ti kul-lat da-ád-me muš-te-ši-rat te-né-še-e-ti*

3. ^{d}*ir-ni-ni mut-tal-la-a-ti ra-bat* ^{d}*í-gì-gì*

Line 1: ÉN = *šiptu*, the superscription of the prayer, corresponding to the subscription in line 106. Both superscription and subscription are not part of the prayer itself, but form a frame for the text to be recited. *Šiptu*, derived from the same root as *āšipu*, the designation for the ritual specialist, is usually translated as "incantation" (CAD Š/3, 86). This translation suggests a classification of the following text as "magical." As the opposition of "magic" and "religion" is obsolete, *šiptu* should be understood as a technical term for the beginning of the text to be recited in a ritual. Compare Mayer, *UFBG*, 22–23 and Zernecke, 326. *Sullû*, a D preterite with suffix, "to implore, to pray to," can be interpreted as performative (Koinzidenzfall), Mayer, *UFBG*, 181–209. The same form occurs again in line 80 at the beginning of the second petition. *Bēltu*, "lady." *Iltu*, "goddess."

šiptu: *usallīki bēlet bēlēti ilat ilāti*

Line 2: *Šarratu*, "queen." *Šarrat* is the expected bound form; the vowel at the end in our text is unnecessary, which is not atypical in late Babylonian copies. *Kullatu*, "whole." *Dadmū*, "inhabited world." *Šarrati kullat dadmē* is a construct chain. *Šutēšuru* (Št lex. of *ešēru*), "to guide aright." *Tenēštu*, "people, personnel," pl. *tenēšētu*, "humankind." The participle, *muštēširat*, is used here to characterize Ishtar's action towards humankind. In line 26 the objects of her guidance are the wronged and afflicted (compare *ešēru* in the G stem in line 41), whereas in line 84 (imperative Št lex.) the supplicant uses it to ask her for guidance.

Ištar šarrati kullat dadmē muštēširat tenēšēti

Line 3: ^{d}*Irnini* is an alternative name of Ishtar. *Muttallu* (*muttellu*), "noble." The form, *muttallāti*, is a 2fs predicative. This is the first time the goddess is addressed in the second person. *Rabû* (m), *rabītu* (f), "big, great." *Ra-bat* is problematic. As *rabāt*, the word may be an unexpected fem. sg. form of the adj. bound to the following gen. (see CAD R, 37 and the analogous *leʾāt* in line 32). *Rabīt Igigî*, "greatest of the Igigi," is one of Ishtar's epithets (see page 112 for an example in an OB hymn). Alternatively, perhaps *ra-bat* is the 3fs predicative, *rabât*, "she is great," but the change of person in the middle of the line seems odd. *Igigû* is a general name for the gods of heaven, in contrast to *Anunnakkū*, who are the gods of the netherworld (see Black and Green, 106; in *Enūma eliš* VI 69 the *Igigû* number three hundred and the *Anunnakkū* six hundred whereas in VI 39–44, contradictorily, the two groups both number three hundred).

Irnini muttallāti rabāt Igigî

4. *gaš-ra-a-ti ma-al-ka-a-ti šu-mu-ki ṣi-ru*

5. *at-ti-ma na-an-na-rat* AN-*e u* KI.TIM *ma-rat* ^{d}30 *qa-rit-ti*

6. *mut-tab-bi-la-at* GIŠ.TUKUL.MEŠ *šá-ki-na-at tu-qu-un-ti*

7. *ḫa-mi-mat gi-mir par-ṣi a-pi-rat a-ge-e be-lu-ti*

8. ^{d}GAŠAN *šu-pu-ú nar-bu-ki* UGU *ka-la* DINGIR.MEŠ *ṣi-ru*

Line 4: The predicatives continue in this line. *Gašru*, "powerful, very strong." *Malkatu*, "ruler (f), queen." *Šumu*, "name." *Ṣīru*, "exalted." Ishtar's name(s) are also praised in lines 15, 20, 22.

gašrāti malkāti šumūki ṣīrū

Line 5: *Attī*, "you" (fs). *Nannartu*, "luminary, light of the sky." AN = *šamû*, "heaven"; also in lines 20, 27, and 35. Interestingly, in lines 13 and 63, "heaven" is written syllabically as *šá-ma-mi* (gen. of *šamāmū*). But in both lines, this is not in the formula "heaven and earth." KI.TIM = *erṣetu*, "earth," also in lines 13, 20, 27, 35. Zgoll, 61 classifies this writing as pseudologographic or archaizing. *Mārtu*, "daughter." ^{d}30 = *Sîn*, the moon god (see page 385). *Qardu* (m), *qarittu* (f), "heroic, valiant." We expect *qaritti* here to be in the nominative (*qarittu*), as in Zgoll's MS C. The epithet *mārat Sîn qaritti* reappears as the last words of the prayer in line 105.

attī-ma nannarat šamê u erṣeti mārat Sîn qaritti

Line 6: *Ittabbulu* (Gtn of [*w*]*abālu*), "to look after, to maintain, to serve; to control, to steer." *Muttabbilat* is the Gtn participle. GIŠ.TUKUL = *kakku*, "weapon." *Šakānu*, "to put, to place, to arrange." *Tuquntu* (*tuqumtu*), "battle."

muttabbilat kakkī šākinat tuqunti

Line 7: *Ḫamāmu*, "to gather, to collect." *Gimru*, "totality, all." *Apāru*, "to cover the head, to wear on the head." *Agû*, "crown." *Bēlūtu*, "lordship." Because of the varied meanings of *parṣu* (also, line 15), "rite, ritual; temple office; divine authority, power, office; symbol, insignia; authoritative decision, command, decree; custom, practice" (see CAD P, 195), the translations of this line differ widely. See Zgoll, 61.

ḫāmimat gimir parṣī āpirat agê bēlūti

Line 8: GAŠAN = *bēltu*, here a vocative; compare lines 29 and 104. Interestingly, this title in this form is used only in the invocations. In the petitions and the complaint, *bēltu* is always written with a first person pronominal suffix (^{d}GAŠAN.MU = *bēltī*, lines 43, 56, 59, 72, 73, 79, 93, 94). *Bēltu* is only written with a logogram when it is vocative. In all other cases (genitive constructions), *be-let* is found (lines 1, 11, 27, 28, 30). *Šūpû*, "resplendent, manifest." *Narbû*, "greatness" (s), "great feats" (pl). UGU = *eli*, "on, over, above." *Kalû* (absolute, *kala*), "all." DINGIR = *ilu*, "god."

bēlet šūpû narbūki eli kala ilī ṣīrū

9. MUL *ta-nu-qa-a-ti muš-tam-ḫi-ṣa-at* ŠEŠ.MEŠ *mit-gu-ru-ti*

10. *mut-ta-ad-di-na-at it-ba-ru*

11. *it-bur-ti be-let tu-šá-ri mut-tak-ki-pat šá-di-ia*

12. ^{d}*gu-še-e-a šá tu-qu-un-ta ḫal-pat la-bi-šat ḫur-ba-šá*

13. *gam-ra-a-ti šip-ṭa u* EŠ.BAR *ur-ti* KI.TIM *u šá-ma-mi*

14. *suk-ku eš-re-e-ti né-me-da u* BÁRA.MEŠ *ú-paq-qu ka-a-ši*

Line 9: MUL = *kakkabu*, "star." *Tanūqātu*, "battle cry." *Šutamḫuṣu* (Št lex. of *maḫāṣu*), "to cause constant enmity" (see CAD M/1, 84). ŠEŠ = *aḫu*, "brother." *Mitguru*, "harmonious."

kakkab tanūqāti muštamḫiṣat aḫḫī mitgurūti

Line 10: *Itaddunu* (Gtn of *nadānu*), "to give constantly, repeatedly." *Itbāru*, "friend, colleague." Compared to the rest of the text, this line is half as long as a normal line. But on the tablet BM 26187, it is written as a whole line. Compare line 92, where the second part of the line is erased.

muttaddinat itbāru

Line 11: *Itburtu* is a hapax legomenon. *AHw*, 263 (*etpuru*) derives it from *apāru* and translates "mit Tiara geschmückt" ("adorned with a Tiara"), compare *CDA*, 136 (*itpuru*). Zgoll, 62 explains the form as a Gt verbal adjective of *abāru / ubburu*, characterizing Ishtar's strength; see CAD I/J, 295. The same meaning is assumed in the translations of Foster ("Strong (?) one," 601) and Stephens ("O mighty one," 384). *Tūšaru* (*tūšāru*), "battlefield, pitched battle." *Muttakkipu,* "goring, knocking over" (based on the Gtn participle of *nakāpu*). Zgoll, 62 identifies *šá-di-ia* as a late Babylonian writing for *šadî*, "mountains" (gen.).

itburti bēlet tūšari muttakkipat šadî

Line 12: *Gušea* is an alternative name for Ishtar, related to the poem of Agushaya and Ishtar's function as goddess of war (see Zgoll, 62). *Ḫalāpu*, "to slip into," but in the predicative (as here, 3fs), "clad in." *Labāšu*, "to clothe oneself"; predicative, "clothed with." *Ḫurbāšu*, "terror, frost."

Gušea ša tuqunta ḫalpat labišat ḫurbāša

Line 13: *Gamāru*, "to bring to conclusion, to settle." *Šipṭu*, "judgment, verdict," is mentioned again in line 73 as something the supplicant has witnessed and is a source of his complaints. EŠ.BAR = *purussû*, "decision." *Ûrtu* ([*w*]*uʾurtu*), "command, commission." KI.TIM = *erṣetu*, compare line 5, also concerning the syllabical writing of *šamāmū*, "heaven," which can be found twice in this text, always at the end of the line (lines 13, 63).

gamrāti šipṭa u purussâ ûrtī erṣeti u šamāmī

Line 14: *Sukku*, "shrine, chapel." *Ešertu*, "shrine, chapel." *Nēmedu*, "base," as a designation of a sanctury. BÁRA = *parakku*, "cult dais, sanctuary." Line 14 is one of the most

15. *e-ki-a-am la* MU-*ki e-ki-a-am la par-ṣu-ki*

16. *e-ki-a-am la uṣ-ṣu-ra* GIŠ.ḪUR.MEŠ-*ki e-ki-a-am la* ŠUB.MEŠ BÁRA.MEŠ-*ki*

17. *e-ki-a-am la ra-ba-a-ti e-ki-a-am la ṣi-ra-a-ti*

18. ^{d}*a-num* ^{d}*en-líl u* ^{d}*é-a ul-lu-ú-ki ina* DINGIR.MEŠ *ú-šar-bu-ú be-lu-ut-ki*

striking examples of the writing of final vowels in MS A; as *suk-ku eš-re-e-ti né-me-da u* BÁRA.MEŠ is an enumeration, all nouns function as subjects of *upaqqū* and all of them are probably to be analyzed as nom. plural. *Kâši*, "to you." The verb *puqqu*, "to pay attention to," can be found again in line 79 at the very beginning of the second petition. In both cases, Ishtar is the object. In line 79, the supplicant is the subject.

sukkū ešrēti nēmeda u parakkū upaqqū kâši

Line 15: *Ēkīam*, "where?" MU = *šumu*, "name," see also line 22. *Parṣu*, see line 7. Lines 15–17 all begin with *ēkīam lā*. This is not the only chain of lines beginning with the same word or groups of words; in fact, it is one of the typical features of this prayer (see lines 27–30, 46–50, 72–73, and 93–94). Note that only the repetitions in the first invocation have parallels in the version from Boğazköy (lines 15–16, 27–30).

ēkīam lā šumki ēkīam lā parṣūki

Line 16: GIŠ.ḪUR = *uṣurtu*, "drawing, plan," in the plural, "ordinances" of the gods. Note the *figura etymologica* with *uṣṣuru* (D of *eṣēru*), "to draw, to plan." ŠUB = *nadû*, "to throw, to lay down," also of foundations. The translation "set up" follows Foster, 602. BÁRA = *parakku*, see line 14.

ēkīam lā uṣṣurā uṣurātīki ēkīam lā nadû parakkūki

Line 17: The adjectives *rabû* and *ṣīru*, in 2fs predicative form here, are used several times in correspondence to characterize Ishtar. *Rabû* can be found in lines 3, 17, 23, and in line 100 in an intensified form (*rabbû*); see also *rabû*, the verb with the same root, in lines 18 (Š) and 34 (G). *Ṣīru* is equally used several times for Ishtar: lines 4, 17, 23, 103, and 104. Line 17 therefore structures the text by relating to the combination of both adjectives in lines 3 and 4 and to line 23. Lines 17 and 23 are especially parallel; they form a frame around the passage dealing with Ishtar's exaltation (lines 18–22).

ēkīam lā rabâti ēkīam lā ṣīrāti

Line 18: Anum, the god of heaven, see page 217. Ellil, the god of wind. Ea, the god of water, wisdom, and magic, see page 227. These three gods are the highest gods in the Mesopotamian pantheon. *Ullû* (D of *elû*), "to raise, to elevate." *Ina*, "in, among, at." The line consists of two clauses. *Ina ilī* stands between both and can be understood as part of either. *Šurbû* (Š of *rabû*), "to make great, to aggrandize, to promote, to magnify." Lines 18–19 (in fact, through line 22) refer to Ishtar's exaltation among the gods, which is also known from a separate text: Blahoslav Hruška, "Das spätbabylonische Lehrgedicht 'Inannas Erhöhung,'" *ArOr* 37 (1969), 473–522. In this text, Ishtar is made the queen of heaven and earth and receives supreme power. In the present context (lines 18–22) the structure of the text changes: verbal clauses dominate.

Anum Ellil u Ea ullûki ina ilī ušarbû bēlūtki

19. *ú-šá-áš-qu-ki ina nap-ḫar* ^{d}*í-gì-gì ú-šá-ti-ru man-za-az-ki*

20. *a-na ḫi-is-sat šu-me-ki* AN-*ú u* KI.TIM *i-ru-ub-bu*

21. DINGIR.MEŠ *i-šub-bu i-nar-ru-ṭu* ^{d}*a-nun-na-ki*

22. MU-*ki ra-áš-bu iš-tam-ma-ra te-né-še-e-ti*

23. *at-ti-ma ra-ba-a-ti ù ṣi-ra-a-ti*

24. *nap-ḫar ṣal-mat qaq-qa-di nam-maš-šu-ú te-né-še-e-ti i-dal-la-lu qur-di-ki*

25. *di-in ba-ḫu-la-a-ti ina kit-ti u mi-šá-ri ta-din-ni at-ti*

Line 19: *Šašqû* (Š of *šaqû*), "to exalt, to elevate." *Napḫaru*, "total, sum, entirety." As with *ina ilī* in line 18, *ina napḫar Igigî* can be understood as pertaining to both clauses in the line. *Šūturu* (Š of [*w*]*atāru*), "to make surpass, to make excel." *Manzāzu* (*mazzāzu*), "position, rank, abode."

ušašqûki ina napḫar Igigî ušātirū manzāzki

Line 20: *Ḫissatu* sometimes means "understanding, wisdom," but here connotes "mention, thought." *Râbu*, "to shake, to tremble."

ana ḫissat šumēki šamû u erṣetu irubbū

Line 21: *Šâbu*, "to quake." *Narāṭu*, "to sway, to tremble." *Anunnakkū*, see line 3.

ilū išubbū inarruṭū Anunnakkī

Line 22: *Rašbu*, "terrifying." *Šitmuru* (Gt of *šamāru*), "to praise."

šumki rašbu ištammarā tenēšēti

Line 23: See line 17.

attī-ma rabâti u ṣīrāti

Line 24: *Ṣalmāt qaqqadi*, "black-headed ones," refers to humankind. The imagery comes from the simile of people as sheep in need of leadership. *Nammaššû* (*nammaštû*), "moving things, animals, herds; settlement, people." *Qurdu* (s), "heroism," (pl), "heroic acts." *Dalālu*, "to praise, to glorify," is interpreted in the translations as having two or three subjects, with *nam-maš-šu-ú te-né-še-e-ti* as either a construct chain or as two nominatives. The vowel ending of *nam-maš-šu-ú* makes the interpretation as construct chain more probable. An interpretation as two nominatives cannot explain the ending vowel of *te-né-še-e-ti*. The translation given here follows Zgoll, 50, in analyzing the two words as a construct chain.

napḫar ṣalmāt qaqqadi nammaššû tenēšēti idallalū qurdīki

Line 25: *Dīnu*, "legal decision, lawsuit." *Baḫūlātu* (*baʾūlātu*), "subjects, people, troops." *Kittu*, "truth." *Mīšaru*, "justice." *Dânu* (*diānum*), "to judge." Lines 25 and 26 are very important for the characterization of Ishtar in the first invocation: only here and in line 40 is she the subject of inflected verbs, all of which are in the present (durative) in its

26. *tap-pal-la-si ḫab-lu u šag-šu tuš-te-eš-še-ri ud-da-kám*

27. *a-ḫu-lap-ki be-let* AN-*e u* KI.TIM *re-é-a-at* UN.MEŠ *a-pa-a-ti*

28. *a-ḫu-lap-ki be-let é-an-na qud-du-šú šu-tùm-mu el-lu*

29. *a-ḫu-lap-ki* ^{d}GAŠAN *ul a-ni-ḫa* GÌR.II-*ki la-si-ma bir-ka-a-ki*

habitual function. Ishtar's actions are described; her astral dimensions, cosmic importance, or prowess in war are set aside: she is a righteous judge. Interestingly, lines 25–26 have no parallel in the version from Boğazköy.

dīn baḫūlāti ina kitti u mīšari tadinnī attī

Line 26: This line is central for the connection between the first invocation and the rest of the text. The verb *Naplusu* (N of *palāsu*), "to look at, to look favorably upon," is used for the first time to characterize Ishtar's action as regards suffering. In line 40, she is again subject of this verb. In the later parts of the prayer, the petition *kīnīš naplisīnnī-*[*ma*], "look faithfully upon me," is repeated three times (lines 44, 54, 92); it is the most frequent petition and is clearly related to the description of Ishtar's actions in lines 26 and 40. The second verb, *šutēšuru* (Št lex. of *ešēru*), "to guide aright," connects line 26 to the very beginning of the prayer (line 2) and is also used at the end of the invocation (line 41) and in a petition (line 84, see the note to line 2). Ishtar is helpful towards the *ḫablu*, the "wronged person," and the *šagšu* (verbal adj. of *šagāšu* "to kill, to slaughter"), here translated as "afflicted"—apparently a person in a life-threatening situation. *Uddakam*, "every day, forever."

tapallasī ḫablu u šagšu tuštešširī uddakam

Line 27: Lines 27–30 begin with *aḫulap*, "an exclamation used to express or to seek compassion"; the word denotes both the mercy granted by a god or king or the petition for such mercy (CAD A/1, 213–14; *AHw*, 22–23. See Zgoll, 75, n.164). Here *aḫulap* (with a 2fs suffix and always followed by an address to Ishtar) is Ishtar's answer to prayers, which is praised by the supplicant. See the corresponding lines 45–50, which also begin with *aḫulap* but this time with a 1cs suffix or as regens in a construct chain with this suffix. There, in the first petition, the supplicant prays for Ishtar's verbal action that they praise in lines 27–30. *Rēʾâtu* (*rēʾītu*), "shepherd" (f). UN.MEŠ = *nišū*, "people." *Apâtu*, "numerous, teeming."

aḫulapki bēlet šamê u erṣeti rēʾât nišī apâti

Line 28: E-ana (E-anna) is the name of Ishtar's temple in Uruk. *Quddušu*, "holy, consecrated." *Šutummu*, "storehouse, treasury." *Ellu*, "pure, clean, holy." We expect the gen. case ending on the last three words.

aḫulapki bēlet Eanna quddušu šutummu ellu

Line 29: See the notes to line 8. GÌR = *šēpu*, "foot"; II = the dual sign. *Anīḫu* (*āniḫu*), "tired." *Lāsimu*, "swift." Both adjs. are used predicatively (3fp). *Birku*, "knee." Like *šēpu*, *birku* is a dual.

aḫulapki bēlet ul anīḫā šēpāki lāsimā birkāki

30. *a-ḫu-lap-ki be-let ta-ḫa-zi ka-li-šú-nu tam-ḫa-ri*

31. *šu-pu-ú-tu*$_4$ *la-ab-bat* ^{d}*Í-gì-gì mu-kan-ni-šat* DINGIR.MEŠ$^{!}$ *sab-su-ti*

32. *le-eʾ-a-at ka-li-šú-nu ma-al-ku ṣa-bi-ta-at* (erasure) *ṣer-ret* LUGAL.MEŠ

33. *pe-ta-a-at pu-su-um-me šá ka-li-ši-na* KI.SIKIL.MEŠ

34. *na-an-še-a-at na-an-di-a-at qa-rit-ti* ^{d}15 *ra-bu-ú qur-di-ki*

Line 30: *Tāḫāzī* (gen. pl.), "battles, combats." *bēlet tāḫāzī* is a construct chain. *Tamḫārī* (gen. pl.), "battles, combats", is a second nomen rectum. *Kalîšunu*, "all of them," breaks the chain and is probably related to both recta.

aḫulapki bēlet tāḫāzī kalîšunu tamḫārī

Line 31: The MEŠ sign is actually a ME on the tablet; the exclamation point marks the correction. *Šūpūtu* is the fem. sg. form of *šūpû*, for which see line 8. *Labbatu* (*lābatu*), "lioness." *Kunnušu* (D of *kanāšu*), "to subject, to force submission." *Sabsu* (*šabsu*), "angry." *Mukannišat ilī sabsūti* is an important epithet for the course of the prayer because it corresponds to several petitions: compare the use of *sabsu* in line 86 and the combination of *sabsu* and *kanāšu* (D stem) in line 98 (Zgoll, 94; Zernecke, 149). In lines 31–33, Ishtar's rule over all humankind is detailed depending on their social rank.

šūpūtu labbat Igigî mukannišat ilī sabsūti

Line 32: *Lēʾû* (m), *lēʾītu* (f; also *lēʾātu*, see CAD L, 160), "powerful, capable." *Malku*, "prince." We expect the oblique plural to be *malkī*. *Ṣabātu*, "to hold, to seize." *Ṣerretu*, "nose-rope," was a rope tied to a ring that pierced the nose of an animal in order to control it. The same method was used on captive humans (see CAD Ṣ, 136–37 for a brief discussion). LUGAL = *šarru*, "king."

lēʾāt kalîšunu malkū ṣābitat ṣerret šarrī

Line 33: *Petû*, "to open." *Pētât* is a fs participle, bound form. *Pusummu*, "veil." KI.SIKIL = (*w*)*ardatu*, "girl, young woman." This (and possibly line 39) is the only reference to Ishtar's otherwise prominent function as erotic goddess.

pētât pusummē ša kalîšina ardāti

Line 34: *Nanšû* (N of *našû*), "to be raised." *Nandû* (N of *nadû*), "to be laid down." The first two words of the line can be understood as 3fs predicatives, uncontracted *nanšeat* for expected *nanšât* and uncontracted *nandiat* for *nandât* (see *GAG* §102c). The content is difficult to understand. Since a reference to defeat is hardly probable in such a hymnic context, an astral interpretation, relating to the different positions of the planet Venus, seems to be most plausible (Zgoll, 50, n.130; Zernecke, 80, n.36). The CAD offers two other alternatives. On the one hand, CAD N/2, 111 cautiously interprets the words as 2fs predicative forms of *našû* and *nadû* and translates them with a military interpretation: "whether you have been elevated or brought down, heroic Ištar (your warlike deeds are great)." CAD E, 379, 413, on the other hand, takes the words as forms of *ešû* and *eṭû* and translates, "(Ishtar) is disturbed, gloomy."

Nanšeat nandiat qaritti Ištar rabû qurdīki

35. *na-mir-tu*$_4$ *di-par* AN-*e u* KI.TIM *šá-ru-ur kal da-ád-me*

36. *ez-ze-et qab-lu la ma-ḫar a-li-lat tam-ḫa-ri*

37. *a-ku-ku-ú-tu*$_4$ *šá ana a-a-bi nap-ḫat šá-ki-na-at šaḫ-lu-uq-ti ek-du-ti*

38. *mu-um-mil-tu*$_4$ ^{d}*iš-tar mu-paḫ-ḫi-rat pu-uḫ-ri*

39. *i-lat* NITA.MEŠ ^{d}*iš-tar* MUNUS.MEŠ *šá la i-lam-ma-du mi-lik-šú ma-am-man*

40. *a-šar tap-pal-la-si i-bal-luṭ* ADDA *i-te-eb-bi mar-ṣu*

Line 35: *Namirtu* (*nawir*[*a*]*tu*), "brightness, light." *Dipāru*, "torch." *Šarūru*, "brilliance, ray."

namirtu dipār šamê u erṣeti šarūr kal dadmē

Line 36: *Ezzu* (m), *ezzetu* (f), "furious," is used substantively here. *Qablu*, "battle." *Lā maḫār*, "not confrontable, not opposeable; irresistible." *Qablu lā maḫār* can be understood as a frozen construction that was used as an adjective (see Burkhart Kienast, "*qabal lā maḫār*," *JCS* 29 [1977], 73–77). *Alīlu* (m), *alīltu* (f), "powerful," is also used substantively.

ezzet qablu lā maḫār alīlat tamḫāri

Line 37: *Akukūtu*, "firebrand." *Ayyābu*, "enemy." *Napāḫu*, "to light up, to ignite." *Šakānu*, see line 6. *Šaḫluqtu*, "destruction, annihilation." *Ekdu*, "furious, wild."

akukūtu ša ana ayyābī napḫat šākinat šaḫluqti ekdūti

Line 38: *Mummiltu* is often used for Ishtar, but it is not clear from which root it is derived. Two possibilities are discussed: *mummillu*, derived from *mēlulu* ("dancer, player, actor"), would lead to a translation as "dancing Ishtar" (see CAD M/2 196 and Foster, 603). The alternative is a D participle of (*w*)*amālu*, "to veil, to darken, to eclipse," but also used in connection with scintillating stars (*AHw*, 1459). In this latter case the word can be understood as being related to Ishtar's astral aspect ("scintillating, glimmering"), see Zgoll, 51; Zernecke, 81, n.38. *Puḫḫuru* (D of *paḫāru*), "to bring together, to assemble." *Puḫru*, "assembly."

mummiltu Ištar mupaḫḫirat puḫri

Line 39: NITA = *zikaru*, "male, man." MUNUS = *sinništu*, "female, woman." ^{d}*Ištar* is in this case probably not the name of the goddess but the bound form of the noun *ištaru*, "goddess." Note the unequivocal instances of *ištaru*, "goddess," in lines 67, 68, 86 (always with *ilu*), which are also written with the determinative. *Lamādu*, "to learn." *Milku*, "advice, counsel, plan." *Mamman*, "somebody," with neg. "nobody."

ilat zikarī ištar / Ištar sinnišāti ša lā ilammadu milikšu mamman

Line 40: *Ašru*, "place." The bound form, *ašar*, indicates that a subordinate clause follows (comprising one verb); the word may be translated as "wherever." *Balāṭu*, "to live, to be healed." ADDA (LÚ X ÚŠ) = *mītu*, "dead, dead person." *Tebû*, "to rise up, to get up." *Marṣu*, "sick, sick person." As in lines 25–26, Ishtar here is the subject of an inflected verb, the N stem of *palāsu*, as in line 25 (see the notes to lines 25–26). The designation of the

41. *iš-ši-ir la i-šá-ru a-mi-ru pa-ni-ki*

42. *ana-ku al-si-ki an-ḫu šu-nu-ḫu šum-ru-ṣu* ÌR-*ki*

43. A.MUR-*in-ni-ma* ^{d}GAŠAN.MU *le-qe-e un-ni-ni-ia*

44. *ki-niš nap-li-sin-ni-ma ši-mé-e tés-li-ti*

person who receives help as *marṣu* is interesting, as the supplicant uses *šumruṣu*, derived from the same root and intensified in meaning, as a self-description only two lines later (line 42; see also lines 47 and 66). In the complaint, they describe themselves as being already in the sphere of death (line 74).

ašar tappallasī iballuṭ mītu itebbi marṣu

Line 41: *Ešēru*, "to be well, to thrive, to prosper." *Lā išaru* is a substantive here, meaning "the one who is not right." *Amāru*, "to see, to look at." The form of *āmiru* is a ms participle, bound to *pānū*, "face." An "overhanging" *u* on a participle in construct is not uncommon in SB Akkadian (see Brigitte R. M. Groneberg, *Syntax, Morphologie und Stil der jungbabylonischen „hymnischen" Literatur*, 2 Vols. [Freiburger Altorientalische Studien 14/1–2; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1987], 2.41 for numerous examples). In lines 40–41, at the end of the first invocation, Ishtar's help for the afflicted is presented as eye contact. The goddess' gaze gives life (line 40); a look at the goddess puts one in order (line 41). The motif of eye contact between Ishtar and the supplicant is central throughout the whole prayer.

iššir lā išaru āmiru pānīki

Line 42: *Anāku*, "I." *Šasû*, "to call out." *Alsīki* is a 1cs preterite and is to be interpreted as performative (see line 1). *Anḫu*, "tired." *Šūnuḫu*, "wearied." Both adjs. come from *anāḫu*. *Šumruṣu*, "suffering" (adj.). ÌR = (*w*)*ardu*, "slave, servant." Referring back to line 1, the supplicant mentions their act of praying at the beginning of the first petition (lines 42–55; see the introduction to the prayer). There is no self-introduction in Ishtar 2, where the supplicant has to mention their or their father's name (see Mayer, *UFBG*, 46–58). Instead, they introduce themselves in line 42 with their relation to Ishtar as her servant (*aradki*) and as an afflicted person, therefore already identifying themselves as the afflicted who receives the help of the goddess (lines 25–26, 40–41).

anāku alsīki anḫu šūnuḫu šumruṣu aradki

Line 43: A.MUR-*in-ni-ma*: Zgoll interprets this as an alternative (CVC for CC) writing for *amrīnnī-ma*, which is a G fs impv. with a 1cs suffix and enclitic *–ma*. This is not unique in the shuilla-prayers addressed to Ishtar (see Zgoll, 64, 189). ^{d}GAŠAN.MU = *bēltī*, see note to line 8. *Leqû*, "to receive, to accept." *Unnīnu*, "supplication, petition." In correspondence to the end of the invocation, the very first petition resumes the subject of eye contact: the supplicant asks the goddess to look at them. The second petition mentions the actual prayer. It is a typical stock-phrase, repeated in line 82 (see Mayer, *UFBG*, 217).

amrīnnī-ma bēltī leqê unnīnīya

Line 44: *Kīniš*, "faithfully, truly." Both petitions are typical (see Mayer, *UFBG*, 214, 216); both deal with the central motifs of the prayer: the eye contact (again: *palāsu* in the N stem, here as an impv.; see the note to line 26) and the praying (*teslītu*, "prayer," which

45. *a-ḫu-lap-ia qí-bi-ma ka-bat-ta-ki lip-pa-áš-ra*

46. *a-ḫu-lap* SU-*ia na-as-si šá ma-lu-ú e-šá-a-ti u dal-ḫa-a-ti*

47. *a-ḫu-lap lìb-bi-ia šum-ru-ṣu šá ma-lu-ú dím-ti u ta-né-ḫi*

48. *a-ḫu-lap te-re-ti-ia na-as-sa-a-ti e-šá-a-ti u dal-ḫa-a-ti*

49. *a-ḫu-lap* É-*ia šu-ud-lu-pu šá ú-na-as-sa-su* ÉR.MEŠ

50. *a-ḫu-lap kab-ta-ti-ia šá uš-ta-bar-ru-ú dím-ti u ta-né-ḫi*

comes from the same root as *sullû* in lines 1 and 80). The petition *kīniš naplisīnnī*-[*ma*] is repeated three times in this single prayer (lines 44, 54, 92). *Šemû*, "to hear."

kīniš naplisīnnī-ma šimê teslītī

Line 45: See line 27. Both parts of the line are usual stock-phrases in petitions. *Kabattaki lippašra* appears also in lines 52, 96. See Mayer, *UFBG*, 226, 241. *Kabattu*, often in parallel to *libbu*, "heart" (see lines 51–52), probably denotes the liver, but more often "emotions, thoughts, mind, spirit" (CAD K, 11). This reflects the physiological observation that the intestines react very strongly to negative situations (compare the use of "guts" in English!). *Napšuru* (N of *pašāru*), "to be released, to be reconciled, to forgive." *Lippašra* is a 3cs precative with a 1cs dative suffix (*–a*).

aḫulapīya qibî-ma kabattaki lippašra

Line 46: SU = *zumru*, "body, person." *Nassu*, "groaning, wretched." *Malû*, "to be full." Although it looks like the infinitive, *malû* is a 3ms predicative with the subjunctive *–u*, which has contracted with the *i* of *mali*. *Ešû*, "confused." *Dalḫu*, "troubled, disturbed." Lines 46–50 are part of the first petition, but already they give information about the suffering of the supplicant. It is interesting that most of the vocabulary is not reused in the complaint (see Zernecke, 136).

aḫulap zumrīya nassi ša malû ešâti u dalḫāti

Line 47: *Šumruṣu* modifies *libbīya* despite the presence of a nom. case ending. *Dimtu*, "tear," is translated as plural, but it is singular; see also in line 50. *Tānēḫu*, "sighing, distress."

aḫulap libbīya šumruṣu ša malû dimti u tānēḫi

Line 48: Note that the omina (*têrtu*, "omen," pl. *têrētu*) are qualified in the same way as the body in line 46 (*nassu*, *ešû*, and *dalḫu*).

aḫulap têrētīya nassāti ešâti u dalḫāti

Line 49: É = *bītu*, "house." *Šudlupu*, "sleepless, troubled." *Nussusu* (D of *nasāsu*), "to lament, to wail, to moan." ÉR = *bikītu*, "weeping, wailing, mourning."

aḫulap bītīya šudlupu ša unassasu bikâti

Line 50: See note on line 47. *Šutabrû* (Št lex. of *bitrû*), "to continue, to persevere." *Uštabarrû* is a durative with subjunctive *–u* (see *AHw*, 123, sub *berû/barû* II and CAD B, 280, sub *bitrû*). *Kabtatu* (lines 50, 94) is an alternative form of *kabattu* (see line 45). The

51. ^{d}*ir-ni-ni*(one sign erased)-*i-tu*$_4$ *la-ab-bu na-ad-ru lìb-ba-ki li-nu-ḫa*

52. *ri-i-mu šab-ba-su-ú ka-bat-ta-ki lip-pa-áš-ra*

53. SIG$_5$.MEŠ IGI.II-*ki lib-šá-a e-li-ia*

54. *ina bu-ni-ki nam-ru-ti ki-niš nap-li-sin-ni ia-a-ši*

55. *uk-ki-ši ú-pi-šá* ḪUL.MEŠ *šá* SU.MU ZÁLAG-*ki nam-ru lu-mur*

56. *a-di ma-ti* ^{d}GAŠAN.MU EN.MEŠ *da-ba-bi-ia né-kel-mu-ú-in-ni-ma*

description of the suffering of the supplicant's *kabattu* (lines 50, 66) corresponds to the petitions concerning Ishtar's *kabattu* (lines 45, 52, 94, 96).

aḫulap kabtatīya ša uštabarrû dimti u tānēḫi

Line 51: The interpretation of *Irninītu* (hapax legomenon) is dubious because of the erasure. As the text is very diligently written and corrected (see lines 32, 82, and 92), it is most probably to be considered as a form of Ishtar's name *Irnini* (see lines 3 and 105). Possibly, it is a mythical allusion (see Zgoll, 279). *Labbu*, "lion." *Nadru*, "wild, aggressive." *Nâḫu*, "to (be at) rest, to calm down." *Linūḫa* is a 3cs precative with a 1cs dative suffix. This and the following line contain the first references to the supplicant as the object of Ishtar's wrath.

Irninītu labbu nadru libbaki linūḫa

Line 52: *Rīmu*, "wild bull." *Šabbasû*, "very angry." See also the notes to line 45.

rīmu šabbasû kabattaki lippašra

Line 53: SIG$_5$ = *damqu* (m), *damiqtu* (f; see line 95), "good, kind." IGI = *īnu*, "eye"; with the dual sign. *Bašû*, "to be." *Eli*, "on, over, upon." This line and the following two, which conclude the first petition, contain yet another reference to the eye contact between supplicant and deity.

damqātu īnāki libšâ elīya

Line 54: *Būnu*, "goodness, outward appearance," pl. "face." *Namru* (*nawrum*), "bright, shining." See also the note to line 44.

ina būnīki namrūti kīniš naplisīnni yâši

Line 55: *Ukkušu* (D of *akāšu*), "to drive away, to expel." *upīšū*, "magical procedures," is typically plural. We therefore expect *upīšī* here as the object of the impv. ḪUL = *lemnu*, "bad, evil." SU = *zumru*, see line 46. ZÁLAG = *nūru*, "light." *Lūmur* is a 1cs precative from *amāru*.

ukkišī upīša lemnūti ša zumrīya nūrki namru lūmur

Line 56: *Adi mati*, "how long?" The complaint (lines 56–78) is introduced by two questions (lines 56 and 59); in the second petition, another two questions have the same interrogative particle (lines 93–94). The seam of the text before line 56 is not stressed by references to the act of praying (see lines 1, 42, and 79–80), but the theme of eye contact is kept up, though it is now the malevolent regard of the enemies (*nekelmû*, "to frown at,

57. *ina sur-ra-a-ti u la ki-na-a-ti i-kap-pu-du-ni lem-né-e-ti*

58. *re-du-ú-a ḫa-du-ú-a iš-tam-ma-ru* UGU.MU

59. *a-di ma-ti* ^{d}GAŠAN.MU *lil-lu a-ku-ú i-ba-aʾ-an-ni*

60. *ip-na-an-ni muq-qu ar-ku-um-ma ana-ku am-mer-ki*

61. *en-šu-ti id-ni-nu-ma ana-ku e-ni-iš*

62. *a-sab-bu-uʾ ki-ma a-gi-i šá up-pa-qu* IM *lem-na*

63. *i-šá-aʾ it-ta-nap-raš lìb-bi ki-ma iṣ-ṣur šá-ma-mi*

to regard malevolently"; the form is an "active-stative" or transitive *parsāku* construction). EN = *bēlu*, "lord, master." *Bēl dabābi*, "adversary, enemy."
adi mati bēltī bēlū dabābīya nekelmûʾinnī-ma

Line 57: *Surru*, "deceit, falsehood." *Kīnu*, "true, right." *Kapādu*, "to plan, to scheme against." *Lemnu*, "bad, evil."
ina surrāti u lā kīnāti ikappudūni lemnēti

Line 58: *Rēdû*, "pursuer, persecutor." *Ḫādû*, "one who rejoices, gloats," is a person who takes pleasure in another's misfortune. UGU = *eli*. We find *ištammarū* here instead of *ištammurū*, 3mp durative. The verb is the Gt of *šamāru*, "to be furious, to attack furiously, to rage"; see Zgoll, 64.
rēdûya ḫādûya ištammarū elīya

Line 59: *Lillu*, "idiot." *Akû* can mean "cripple" or "powerless, weak," depending on which of the two homonyms one accepts in the context. *Bâʾu*, "to walk, to go along, to pass, to overtake, to defeat."
adi mati bēltī lillu akû ibâʾanni

Line 60: *Panû*, "to go ahead, to be in front." *Muqqu*, "wearied." *Arkû* (*warkû*), "rear, hindmost." *Nemerkû* (*namarkû*; N stem), "to be late, to lag behind." *Ammerki* is a 1cs preterite.
ipnânni muqqu arkûm-ma anāku ammerki

Line 61: *Enšu*, "weak." *Danānu*, "to be(come) strong." *Enēšu*, "to be(come) weak."
enšūti idninū-ma anāku ēniš

Line 62: *Sabāʾu*, "to rock, to toss about." *Agû*, "wave" (compare the homonym in line 7). *Uppuqu* (D of *epēqu*), "to make massive" (see CAD E, 184). IM = *šāru*, "wind, breath."
asabbuʾ kīma agî ša uppaqu šāru lemna

Line 63: *Šâʾu*, "to fly." *Itaprušu* (Ntn of *naprušu*), "to fly about." *Ittanapraš* is a 3cs durative. *Iṣṣūru*, "bird."
išâʾ ittanapraš libbī kīma iṣṣūr šamāmī

64. *a-dam-mu-um ki-ma su-um-ma-tu$_4$ mu-ši u ur-ra*

65. *na-an-gu-la-ku-ma a-bak-ki ṣar-piš*

66. *ina u$_8$-ú-a a-a šum-ru-ṣa-at ka-bat-ti*

67. *mi-na-a e-pu-uš* DINGIR.MU *u* ^{d}*iš-tar-ia$_5$ a-na-ku*

68. *ki-i la pa-liḫ* DINGIR.MU *u* ^{d}IŠ$_8$.DAR.MU *ana-ku ep-še-ek*

69. *šak-nu-nim-ma mur-ṣu di-i^{2}-i ḫu-lu-uq-qu-ú u šaḫ-lu-uq-ti*

70. *šak-na-ni per-da-a-ti suḫ-ḫur pa-ni u ma-le-e lib-ba-a-ti*

Line 64: *Damāmu*, "to wail, to moan." *Summatu*, "dove, pigeon." *Mūšu*, "night." *Urru*, "day." The simile is a stock-phrase used in several prayers, see Mayer, *UFBG*, 83.
adammum kīma summatu mūši u urra

Line 65: The meaning of *nangulāku* (N 1cs predicative from *nagālu*) is uncertain; the verb is used in two different contexts: with stars as subject or with expressions of emotions, especially in complaints. Zgoll, 52, 65 translates as "glühend" ("glowing / burning"), because of a possible reference to a symptom of an illness. See Zernecke, 83. n.45. *Bakû*, "to weep, to cry." *Ṣarpiš*, "bitterly."
nangulākū-ma abakki ṣarpiš

Line 66: *Ū^{2}a*, "woe! alas!" *Â* (*aî*), "alas!" See also line 42.
ina ū^{2}a â šumruṣat kabattī

Line 67: *Mīnâ* (*mīnu*), "what?" *Epēšu*, "to do, to make." In this line, the "third party involved" is introduced, the supplicant's personal protective deities. *Ištaru* with suffix is here definitely not the principal addressee of the prayer but used as a noun for "goddess." Like Ishtar (see lines 51–52), the personal deities are angry, but the supplicant is not conscious of guilt or negligence (line 68). Foster, 604, understands the line as a direct address to the personal deities. As they are obviously not addressed in the following line 68, this singular change of direction of speech is improbable.
mīnâ ēpuš ilī u ištarī anāku

Line 68: *Kī*, "as, like." *Palāḫu*, "to fear, to revere." The 1cs predicative elides the final vowel (*epšēku* becomes *epšēk*).
kī lā pāliḫ ilī u ištarī anāku epšēk

Line 69: *Di^{2}u*, "headache." *Ḫuluqqû* (*ḫuluqqā^{2}u*), "loss." *Šaḫluqtu*, see line 37.
šaknūnim-ma murṣu di^{2}i ḫuluqqû u šaḫluqti

Line 70: *Pardāti*: Zgoll, 46 reads *per-da-a-ti*; but as the first sign can also be read as *par*, the word *pardāti*, a fem. plural. form of *pardu*, "afraid, fearful; frightening," is also possible. The adj. is used as a noun here, "terror, fright." *Suḫḫuru*, "to turn away, toward."

71. *uz-zu ug-ga-ti sib-sat* DINGIR.MEŠ *u a-me-lu-ti*

72. *a-ta-mar* ^{d}GAŠAN.MU UD.MEŠ *uk-ku-lu-ti* ITI.MEŠ *na-an-du-ru-ti* MU.MEŠ *šá ni-ziq-ti*

73. *a-ta-mar* ^{d}GAŠAN.MU *šip-ṭa i-ši-ti u saḫ-maš-ti*

74. *ú-kal-la-an-ni mu-ú-tu u šap-šá-qu*

75. *šu-ḫar-ru-ur sa-ge-e-a šu-ḫar-ru-rat a-šîr-ti*

76. UGU É KÁ *u qar-ba-a-ti-ia šá-qu-um-ma-ti tab-kát*

77. DINGIR.MU *ana a-šar-šá-nim-ma suḫ-ḫu-ru pa-nu-šú*

Libbātu, "rage, fury." The infinitives are bound to the following nouns.
šaknāni pardāti suḫḫur pānī u malê libbāti

Line 71: *Uzzu*, "anger." *Uggatu*, "rage, fury." *Sibsatu* (*šibsatu*), "anger, angry rejection." *Amēlūtu* (*amīlūtu*), "humanity." This enumeration of further pains is also dependent on *šaknāni* in line 70.
uzzu uggati sibsat ilī u amēlūti

Line 72: UD (or U_4) = *ūmu*, "day." *Ukkulu*, "very dark." ITI = (*w*)*arḫu*, "month." *Nanduru* (*naʾduru*), "darkened, obscured, eclipsed." MU = *šattu*, "year." *Niziqtu*, "worry, grief." Again, the motif of seeing and eye contact is taken up: the supplicant looks back and beholds (*amāru*) their suffering, whereas they hope to see (*amāru*) Ishtar's face. Note the other instances of *amāru* in lines 41, 43, and 101.
ātamar bēltī ūmī ukkulūti arḫī nandurūti šanāti ša niziqti

Line 73: *Šipṭu*, see line 13. *Išītu* (*ešītu*), "confusion." *Saḫmaštu*, "rebellion, uprising."
ātamar bēltī šipṭa išīti u saḫmašti

Line 74: *Mūtu*, "death." *Šapšāqu*, "constraint, hardship." *Kullu* (D), "to hold, to hold back." The supplicant is already in the sphere of death. In line 73, they are the subject of a verb for the last time in the complaint section. Here in line 74, they themselves are mentioned for the last time. In the following lines, the supplicant has grammatically vanished and is present only in nouns that have a 1cs suffix.
ukallânni mūtu u šapšāqu

Line 75: *Šuḫarruru*, "to be deathly still." *Sagû* (*sāgu*), "cella, shrine." *Aširtu* (*ešertu*), "chapel, shrine." The verb appears as a predicative in both instances (3ms and 3fs).
šuḫarrur sagêya šuḫarrurat aširtī

Line 76: UGU: see line 8. KÁ = *bābu*, "gate, door." *Qarbatu* (*qerbetu*), "environs, meadowland, field." *Šaqummatu*, "deathly silence." *Tabāku*, "to pour out."
eli bīti bābi qarbātīya šaqummati tabkat

Line 77: *Ašaršanimma* (*ašaršani*), "anywhere else." See also lines 67–68 and 70.
ilī ana ašaršanimma suḫḫurū pānūšu

78. *sap-ḫat il-la-ti ta-bi-ni pur-ru-ur*

79. *ú-pa-qa a-na* ^{d}GAŠAN.MU *ka-a-ši ib-šá-ki* GEŠTU.II-*a-a*

80. *ú-sal-li-ki ka-a-ši eʾ-il-ti pu-uṭ-ri*

81. *pu-uṭ-ri ár-ni šèr-ti gíl-la-ti u ḫi-ṭi-ti*

82. *mé-e-ši gíl-la-ti* $^{\text{gloss: } i\text{-}ši\text{-}ti}$*-iá le-qé-e un-ni-ni-ia*

83. *ru-um-mi-ia ki-si-iá šu-bar-ra-a-a šuk-ni*

Line 78: *Sapāḫu*, "to scatter, to disperse." *Illatu*, "family, group, clan." *Tabīnu*, "shelter." *Purruru* (D of *parāru*), "to scatter, to smash." The first complaint in this line is taken up as a petition in line 89 (*sapiḫtu illatī lipḫur*).

sapḫat illatī tabīnī purrur

Line 79: GEŠTU = *uznu*, "ear, wisdom, understanding." Both preterites can be understood as performatives (see line 1). With this line, the attention turns back from the suffering of the supplicant to Ishtar. See the relation to line 14 (*puqqu* D). At the beginning of the first invocation (line 1) and the first petition (line 42), the act of praying is mentioned. In line 79, at the beginning of the second petition (lines 79–102), the main stress lies at first on the awaiting of Ishtar's reaction.

upaqqa ana bēltīya kâši ibšāki uznāya

Line 80: *Kâši*, "to you," is redundant with the pronominal suffix (*–ki*) on the verb; it probably serves to emphasize the supplicant's calling out to the deity and it underlines the shift of attention from the supplicant back to the deity. *Eʾiltu* (*iʾiltu*), "bond, liability, sin." *Paṭāru* , "to release, to absolve." Now the act of praying is mentioned with direct reference to the very beginning of the prayer (line 1: *usallīki bēlet bēlēti ilat ilāti*). Only here does it become evident that the supplicant feels guilty despite the plea to the contrary in line 68. In line 81, however, there is a whole catalogue of terms for sin and guilt, which has parallels in other prayers (see Mayer, *UFBG*, 115, n.93.).

usallīki kâši eʾiltī puṭrī

Line 81: *Arnu*, "guilt, penalty, fault, sin." *Šērtu*, "guilt, offense, punishment." *Gillatu*, "sin." *Ḫiṭītu*, "act of negligence, sin, offense."

puṭrī arnī šērtī gillatī u ḫiṭītī

Line 82: *Mêšu*, "to disregard." *Išītu*, see line 73. See also line 43.

mêšī gillātīya [gloss: *išītīya*] *leqê unnīnīya*

Line 83: *Ru-um-mi-ia* is to be read as *rummî* (D impv. from *ramû*, "to release, to unlock"), a late Babylonian writing, see *šadî* in line 11 (Zgoll, 65). *Kīsu*, "bonds, binding." *Šubarrû*, "freedom from service obligations," with a 1cs suffix.

rummî kīsīya šubarrâya šuknī

84. *šu-te-ši-ri kib-si nam-riš e-tel-liš it-ti* LÚ.TÌL.MEŠ *lu-ba-aʾ* SILA

85. *qí-bi-ma ina qí-bi-ti-ki* DINGIR *ze-nu-ú li-is-lim*

86. ^{d}15 *šá is-bu-sa li-tu-ra*

87. *e-ṭu-ú qat-ru lim-mì-ir ki-nu-ni*

88. *be-li-ti li-in-na-pi-iḫ di-pa-ri*

89. *sa-pi-iḫ-tú il-la-ti lip-ḫur*

Line 84: *Kibsu*, "step, track, route." *Namriš*, "brilliantly, brightly." *Etelliš*, "like a lord." *Itti*, "with." The verb *šutēšuru* (Št lex. of *ešēru*), here as an imperative, is used twice in the first invocation to characterize Ishtar's action towards mankind (see lines 2 and 26). The petition in this line refers back to these praises and shows the interconnection between the different parts of the prayer. LÚ.TI (or LÚ.TÌL) = *balṭu*, an adj. meaning "alive, safe and sound." In its substantival use, it means "living person." Compare *mītu* in line 40. SILA = *sūqu*, "street."

šutēširī kibsī namriš etelliš itti balṭūti lubāʾ sūqa

Line 85: *Qibītu*, "command, order." *Zenû*, "angry." *Salāmu*, "to be(come) at peace." Note the repetition of the root *qabû*, which is not translated concordantly. A variant in another textual witness (MS C: *ilī ša iznû*: "my god who was angry," see Zgoll, 46) makes clear that the personal god is meant.

qibî-ma ina qibītīki ilu zenû lislim

Line 86: In correspondence to the previous line, ^{d}15 is best understood as a substantive (*ištaru*, "goddess") and not as Ishtar's name. Unfortunately, MS C, the alternative textual witness in line 85, is broken here. *Târu*, "to return, to turn back, to relent."

ištaru ša isbusa litūra

Line 87: *Eṭû*, "dark." *Qatru*, "smoky." *Namāru* (*nawārum*), "to become bright." *Kinūnu*, "brazier." This and the following lines describe a state of darkness but petition for light and warmth. See the praise of Ishtar's astral aspects in the first invocation (see, e.g., lines 5, 35, and 37–38).

eṭû qatru limmir kinūnī

Line 88: *Belû* (m), *belītu* (f), "extinguished." *Nanpuḫu* (N of *napāḫu*), "be ignited." *Dipāru*, see line 35.

belīti linnapiḫ dipārī

Line 89: *Sapḫu* (m), *sapiḫtu* (f), "scattered." *Paḫāru*, "gather, assemble" (intransitive). See the corresponding complaint in line 78 and Ishtar's characterization in line 38.

sapiḫtu illatī lipḫur

90. TÙR *li-ir-piš liš-tam-di-lu su-pu-ri*

91. *mug-ri le-bé-en ap-pi-ia ši-me-e su-pe-e-a*

92. *ki-niš nap-li-sin-ni-ma* (erasure)

93. *a-di ma-ti* ^{d}GAŠAN.MU *ze-na-ti-ma suḫ-ḫu-ru pa-nu-ki*

94. *a-di ma-ti* ^{d}GAŠAN.MU *ra-aʾ-ba-ti-ma uz-zu-za-at kab-ta-at-ki*

95. *tir-ri ki-šad-ki šá ta-ad-di-ia* [*ana*] *a-mat* SIG$_5$*-tì pa-ni-ki šuk-ni*

Line 90: TÙR = *tarbaṣu*, "pen, enclosure, courtyard." *Rapāšu*, "to be(come) broad, wide." *Supūru*, "sheepfold." *Šutaddulu* (Dt of *šadālu*), "to be widened, broadened." *Lištamdil* is a 3cs precative, with reduplication via nasalisation (*–dd–* becomes *–md–*); see *GAG* §96j. The final *–u*, as with other cases in this late Babylonian MS, is superfluous.

tarbaṣu lirpiš lištamdilu supūrī

Line 91: *Magāru* generally means "to consent, to agree," but in this context of supplication it means "to hear, to grant." The expression *lebēn appa* is not usually translated literally ("stroking of the nose"), see CAD L, 11 (sub *labānu*), "to beg humbly, to exhibit utmost humility (in gestures), to pray contritely." It is usually found in the context of gestures of praying, its function is to praise the gods and to accept their might; see Zgoll, 65; Zernecke, 84 n.51. *Supû*, "prayer, supplication."

mugrī lebēn appīya šimê supêya

Line 92: See lines 44 and 54. According to the first edition, "the second half of the line has been deeply erased by the scribe" (King, pl. LXXXIII). Several translations complete the line with "accept my supplication" (see, e.g., King, 1.235; Stephens, 385).

kīniš naplisīnnī-ma [...]

Line 93: See lines 56 and 59 for *adi mati* and line 85 for *zenû*, which is used predicatively here (2fs). In line 77, the same expression is used for the averted face of the personal deity (*suḫḫurū pānū*). Only here, at the end of the prayer, the supplicant can explicitly mention Ishtar's wrath. It is a distinctive feature of this prayer that her anger is not "camouflaged" in a subordinate clause (see Zgoll, 65, 93; Mayer, *UFBG*, 96, n.58).

adi mati bēltī zenâtī-ma suḫḫurū pānūki

Line 94: *Raʾbu*, "raging." *Uzzuzu* (D of *ezēzu*), "to make furious," but in the predicative, "be infuriated."

adi mati bēltī raʾbātī-ma uzzuzat kabtatki

Line 95: SIG$_5$ = *damiqtu*, "good, kind"; see line 53. *Tirrī* is a fs impv. from *turru* (D of *târu*), "to turn, to bend." *Kišādu*, "neck." *Ta-ad-di-ia* is a late Babylonian writing for *taddî* (see also lines 11 and 83; Zgoll, 65). The form is a G preterite from *nadû*, "to throw," but in reference to a body part it frequently means "to drop." *Amātu* (*awātum*), "word, matter." *Šakānu* with *pānū* as the object, "to set the face," means "to intend, to decide."

tirrī kišādki ša taddî [*ana*] *amāt damiqti pānīki šuknī*

96. *ki-ma* A.MEŠ *pa-šîr* ÍD *ka-bat-ta-ki lip-pa-áš-ra*

97. *ek-du-ti-ia ki-ma qaq-qa-ru lu-kab-bi-is*

98. *sab-su-ti-ia kun-ni-šim-ma šu-pal-si-ḫi ina šap-li-ia*

99. *su-pu-ú-a u su-lu-ú-a lil-li-ku* UGU-*ki*

100. *ta-a-a-ra-tu-ki rab-ba-a-ti lib-šá-a* UGU-*ia*

101. *a-mi-ru-ú-a ina* SILA *li-šar-bu-ú zi-kir-ki*

Line 96: A.MEŠ = *mû*, "water." ÍD = *nāru*, "river, watercourse, canal." For the second half of the line, see line 45. It is not clear to which act the reconciliation of the feelings is compared in the first half of the line. *Pa-šîr* can be analysed as a G predicative or participle of *pašāru*. *Tertium comparationis* is the water, but it is not clear if the water is calm, flowing, or cleansing by flowing, or if this is a reference to the "undoing water" (*mû pāširūtu*) from namburbi-rituals. The translation follows Zgoll's, "wie (durch) Wasser, den 'Löser' des Flusses," who also offers a list of previous translations (53, 65–66). CAD P, 252–53 analyzes the word as *pāširu*, an adjective of uncertain meaning, and lists this passage together with the namburbi references.

kīma mê pāšir / pašir nāri kabattaki lippašra

Line 97: *Ekdu*, see line 37. The adj. is used as a substantive here. *Qaqqaru*, "ground, earth." *Kabāsu*, "to tread, to tread down."

ekdūtīya kīma qaqqaru lukabbis

Line 98: This petition clearly refers back to the praise in line 31. *Kunnušu*, see line 31. *Šupalsiḫī* is a fs impv. from *šupalsuḫu* (Š of *napalsuḫu*), "to make prostrate." *Šaplu*, literally means "bottom, underside," but one might translate the present usage as "under me" or even "at my feet."

sabsūtīya kunnišīm-ma šupalsiḫī ina šaplīya

Line 99: *Sulû*, "supplication, prayer." *Alāku*, "to go." *Lillikū* is a 3mp precative. UGU = *eli*, see line 58.

supûya u sulûya lillikū elīki

Line 100: *Tayyartu* (see CAD T, 58, *tajārtu*), "return, forgiveness," is pl. with a 2fs pronominal suffix; it is derived from *târu* (see lines 86 and 95).

tayyarātūki rabbâti libšâ elīya

Line 101: The mp participle *āmirū* bears a 1cs pronominal suffix. SILA, see line 84. *Šurbû* (Š of *rabû*), "to make great, to magnify, to praise." *Zikru*, "name, reputation."

āmirūya ina sūqi lišarbû zikirki

102. *u ana-ku ana ṣal-mat* SAG.DU DINGIR-*ut-ki u qur-di-ki lu-šá-pi*

103. ^{d}*iš-tar-ma ṣi-rat* ^{d}*iš-tar-ma šar-rat*

104. ^{d}GAŠAN-*ma ṣi-rat* ^{d}GAŠAN-*ma šar-rat*

105. ^{d}*ir-ni-ni ma-rat* ^{d}30 *qa-rit-ti ma-ḫi-ri* NU TUKU

106. ka-inim-ma šu-íl-lá ^{d}inana$^{[n]a}$-kám

107. KÌD.KÌD.BI KI GÌR KUD-*at* ÙR SAR A KÙ SUD 4 SIG$_4$.ḪI.A *šà-ḫa-a* ŠUB-*di*

108. *lu-te-e* GIŠ.ÁSAL *te-ṣe-en* IZI ŠUB-*di* ŠIM.ḪI.A ZÌ.MAD.GÁ ŠIM.LI

Line 102: SAG.DU = *qaqqadu*, "head." *Ilūtu*, "divinity." *Šūpû* (Š of [*w*]*apû*), "to proclaim, to announce." The end of the second petition is formed by this promise of praise (lines 101–102), which creates a transition to the following (second) invocation.
u anāku ana ṣalmāt qaqqadi ilūtki u qurdīki lušāpi

Line 103: See lines 2 and 4.
Ištar-ma ṣīrat Ištar-ma šarrat

Line 104:
bēlet-ma ṣīrat bēlet-ma šarrat

Line 105: NU = *ul* or *lā*, negative particle; in this case *ul*, as it is the negation of a main clause. TUKU = *išû*, "to have." *Māḫiru*, "opponent, enemy, rival."
Irnini mārat Sîn qaritti māḫirī ul īši

Line 106: This line is the subscription of the prayer, corresponding to the superscription at the beginning of line 1. In contrast to the superscription, the subscription is graphically marked on the tablet by two rule lines. The form is typical for shuilla-prayers.

Line 107: KÌD.KÌD.BI = *kik(k)iṭṭûšu*, "its ritual." KI = *ašru*, see line 40. GÌR, see line 29. KU$_5$ = *parāsu*, "to cut off, to keep away." The phonetic complement suggests a 3fs predicative, *parsat*. The first phrase in the line literally means "the place the foot is kept away." One might better render it idiomatically (e.g., "in an inaccessible place"). ÙR = *ūru*, "roof." SAR = *šabāṭu*, "to sweep." We expect a 2ms durative in these kinds of ritual instructions. A = *mû*, see line 96. KÙ = *ellu*, see line 28. SUD = *salāḫu*, "to sprinkle." SIG$_4$ = *libittu*, "brick." ḪI.A is a plural marker like MEŠ. *Šà-ḫa-a* (perhaps ŠÀ.ḪA-*a*) is probably *šaḫâ*, a very rare word meaning "edge to edge" or "at angles" (see CAD Š/1, 75). ŠUB = *nadû* (see line 16).
kik(k)iṭṭûšu: ašar šēpi parsat ūra tašabbaṭ mê tasallaḫ 4 *libittī šaḫâ tanaddi*

Line 108: *Lutû*, "twigs." GIŠ.ÁSAL = *ṣarbatu*, "Euphrates poplar." *Ṣênu*, "to load up, to heap." IZI = *išātu*, "fire." *Nadû* with fire as its object means "to kindle, to set fire to." ŠIM.ḪI.A = *rīqu* (*riqqu*), an aromatic substance. ZÌ.MAD.GÁ = *maṣḫatu*, a kind of flour. ŠIM.LI = *burāšu*, "juniper" (pieces of wood or its resin).
lutê ṣarbati teṣên išāta tanaddi rīqa maṣḫata burāša

109. DUB-*aq mi-iḫ-ḫa* BAL-*qí-ma* NU *tuš-ken mi-nu-tú an-ni-tú ana* IGI ^{d}*iš-tar*

110. 3-*šú* ŠID-*nu* KI.ZA.ZA-*ma ana* EGIR-*ka* NU IGI.BAR

Line 109: DUB = *sarāqu*, "to strew, to sprinkle." *Miḫḫu*, a type of beer. BAL = *naqû*, "to pour out, to libate, to sacrifice." *Šukênu* (= KI.ZA.ZA, see line 110), "to prostrate oneself." The negative (NU) particle suggests a prohibition. *Minûtu*, "recitation." *Annītu*, "this."

tasarraq miḫḫa tanaqqī-ma lā tuškên minûtu annītu ana pān Ištar

Line 110: 3-*šú* = *šalāšīšu*, "three times." ŠID = *manû*, "to recite, to count." EGIR = (*w*)*arka*, "behind." IGI.BAR = *naplusu* (N of *palāsu*), see line 26.

šalāšīšu tamannu tuškên-ma ana arkīka lā tappallas

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

A text of such length and depth as Ishtar 2 comprises many aspects that could be compared to biblical texts and their problems. Only two shall be mentioned here: an interesting structural parallel concerning the end of the prayer and the two stages of use of this text.[1]

The "Sudden Change of Mood"—A Structural Parallel.[2] A sudden transition from complaints and petitions to praise and promise to praise at the end of the text, the so-called sudden change of mood ("Stimmungsumschwung"), is a characteristic feature of certain psalms of lament, though its interpretation is debated. One hypothesis reconstructs an oracle of salvation, which would have been spoken by a priest, between the complaints and the praise.[3] The alternative interpretation explains the change of mood within the course of the prayer: despite describing a god-forsaken situation, the supplicant hopes that God is near during their time of despair. On this line of interpretation complaints and petitions are enriched by elements of trust; the elements of continuity between complaint and praise are stressed.[4]

As there is also a sudden change of mood in the prayers of the lifting of the hand, it is strange that they have only rarely been used within this debate in Old Testament scholarship. In this point, it is possible to compare the texts, and the analogy is significant. The ritual instructions of the Mesopotamian prayers allow one to draw conclusions about the ritual context of the recitation. Ishtar 2 hopes for Ishtar's verbal action, her "word of salvation," in favor of the supplicant. But there is no evidence that this word of salvation was "performed" in any way within the ritual procedure.

[1] Further comparative discussion concerning Ishtar 2 can be found in Zernecke, 276–362.

[2] See ibid., 306–15.

[3] The first prominent development of this hypothesis is Joachim Begrich, "Das priesterliche Heilsorakel," *ZAW* 52 (1934), 81–92.

[4] Bernd Janowski, *Konfliktgespräche mit Gott. Eine Anthropologie der Psalmen* (2d. ed.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2006), 77–84.

In both types of prayer the final praise has two different functions, one for the relation between supplicant and deity and the other for the supplicant only. The promise and the appeal to praise can be understood as "offer of service" by the supplicant to the deity. They do not only promise to praise but to function themselves as living examples of divine action. Such an unequivocal "offer of service" can also be found in biblical texts. Note the appeal to Yahweh to save the supplicant from the underworld, since no-one praises him there (see Ps 6:6, 30:10, 88:11–12, Isa 38:18). Such an offer can be understood within the conception of the prayer as audience, which is important at least for the prayers of the lifting of the hand.[5] The gift as greeting in an actual audience (corresponding to the offering in the hand-lifting ritual), the proskynesis, and the praise of the elevated person aim at obligating the elevated person to help. The structure of the audience—and the prayer respectively—want to make the counterpart accept the petition. Because of the logic of reciprocity governing audiences in the ancient Near East, it is possible that the praying person already gives thanks and praise though their situation is still the same.

The concluding praise has a second but different function for the supplicant.[6] At the end of the prayer, they envision the power of the deity. They bring to mind the deity they experience as turned away, hoping that the god will act on their behalf. The certainty of salvation is realized in advance by articulating it. In this context, the basic character of the prayers as set forms, not as individual expression has to be kept in mind: praise and promise to praise that anticipate the salvation can strengthen the trust of the supplicant in the saving power of the deity. In this way, their function can be compared to the functions of the expressions of confidence in the psalms of lament and the hymnic invocation in the prayers of the lifting of the hand. The form invites the supplicant to leave behind the fixation on their own needs and to rest in the saving action by the deity. This structure can be compared to "de-reflection" in its psychotherapeutic sense. Prayers of the lifting of the hand can lead back from the final praise into the initial invocation in repeated recitations; psalms of lament can proceed from complaint to praise. The sudden change of mood can be interpreted as an element of "pastoral care" in both cases, independent of the different structures of the prayers.

The form of the sudden change of mood in Ishtar 2 is special: there is not only a promise to praise (lines 101–102) but the anticipated praise itself in the final section of the prayer (lines 103–105). These last three lines could well be set in quotation marks. This phenomenon is attested in other Mesopotamian prayers, too,[7] but also in biblical laments of the individual. A striking example is

[5] Annette Zgoll, "Audienz – Ein Modell zum Verständnis mesopotamischer Handerhebungsrituale. Mit einer Deutung der Novelle vom *Armen Mann von Nippur*," *BaghM* 34 (2003), 181–203 and see the introduction, page 31.

[6] For the following paragraph, see Zgoll, 269–70.

[7] See Mayer, *UFBG*, 350–57.

Ps 22, a long psalm of individual lament, in which the section of complaint, mixed with petitions and expressions of confidence (Ps 22:2–22), is followed by elements of a thanksgiving psalm: a double promise of praise (Ps 22:23, 26) and its fulfillment (Ps 22:24–25, 27).[8] This "mixture of genres" has been interpreted as indicating that the "true" genres and their *Sitze im Leben* were not valid anymore at the time of writing; therefore, Ps 22 was considered "nachkultisch," not as prayer, but as "Gebetsliteratur" (prayer literature).[9] The parallel of Ishtar 2:101–105 makes it possible to understand Ps 22:23–27 as promise to praise and anticipated praise without necessitating the use of source criticism.[10]

The history of use.[11] The tablet BM 26187 (MS A) only contains Ishtar 2. Its colophon (lines 112–113 in Zgoll's edition; line 111 gives the beginning of the prayer Ishtar 3) can be translated as follows: "A copy from Borsippa. According to its original. Nergal-balassu-iqbi, son of Atamar-KAL.ME, ritual expert (*āšipu*), has written (it) for his life, checked (it) through and permanently deposited (it) in Esagila."

This colophon contains information about the scribe and the use he made of this particular copy of the prayer. Nergal-balassu-iqbi, the scribe, was a ritual expert (*āšipu*).[12] He deposited the tablet in Esagila, the temple of Marduk in Babylon, "for his life." Thus, this tablet is a votive offering of one of the persons who transmitted and executed this kind of ritual and was never meant to be used for the execution of the ritual written down on it with all of the practical instructions. The *Sitz im Leben* of the text inscribed on the tablet therefore is not identical with its use. The use has changed; in this special case, it is part of the "private piety" of a ritual expert.

In all probability, most psalms were not written for the collection of the Book of Psalms, but independently, and were collected and arranged afterwards—possibly also for "private piety" in the post-exilic period.[13] The two stages of usage of Ishtar 2 are an interesting parallel to the development of the contextualization of the Psalms.

[8] Ps 22:28–32 seem to be a later addition which enlarges the praising people in time and space; see, e.g., Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Psalms. Part 1 with an Introduction to Cultic Poetry* (FOTL 14; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 112.

[9] See, e.g., Fritz Stolz, "Psalm 22: Alttestamentliches Reden vom Menschen und neutestamentliches Reden von Jesus," *ZThK* 77 (1980), 129–48, here 137.

[10] See Zernecke, 244–47, 250–53.

[11] See ibid., 329–32, 338–40.

[12] See Zgoll, 67.

[13] See Notker Füglister, "Die Verwendung und das Verständnis der Psalmen und des Psalters um die Zeitenwende," in *Beiträge zur Psalmenforschung: Psalm 2 und 22* (ed. J. Schreiner; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1988), 319–84, 350–84.

TRANSLATION:

1. Text to be recited: I pray to you, lady of ladies, goddess of goddesses!
2. Ishtar, queen of the entire inhabited world, guiding mankind aright,
3. Irnini, you are noble, greatest of the Igigi.
4. You are the strong one, you are sovereign, your names are exalted!
5. You indeed are the luminary of heaven and earth, valiant daughter of Sin!
6. Wielding weapons, arranging battle,
7. Concentrating / gathering the entirety of ordinances, wearing the crown of domination,
8. Lady, resplendent are your great deeds, exalted over all gods!
9. Star of the battle-cry, making harmonious brothers fight each other,
10. Always giving a friend,
11. Mighty one, lady of the battlefield, knocking down mountains!
12. Gushea, clad in battle, clothed with terror!
13. You bring to conclusion judgment and decision, the commands for earth and heaven.
14. Shrines, chapels, socles, and daises are attentive to you.
15. Where is not your name? Where are not your ordinances?
16. Where are your plans not implemented? Where are your daises not set up?
17. Where are you not great? Where are you not exalted?
18. Anu, Ellil and Ea have elevated you among the gods, they have made your domination great.
19. They have exalted you among the entirety of the Igigi, they have made your rank outstanding.
20. At the mention of your name, heaven and earth shake,
21. The gods quake, the Anunnakku tremble,
22. Humanity praises your terrifying name.
23. You indeed are great and exalted!
24. The entirety of the black-headed ones, the "herds" of mankind, they praise your heroic acts.
25. You render the verdict for subject peoples in righteousness and justice.
26. You look upon the wronged and afflicted, you guide (them) aright every day.
27. Your *aḫulap*, Lady of heaven and earth, shepherdess of the numerous people!
28. Your *aḫulap*, Lady of holy Eana, the pure treasury!
29. Your *aḫulap*, Lady—your feet do not tire, your knees are swift!
30. Your *aḫulap*, Lady of all battles (and) combats!
31. Resplendent one, lioness of the Igigi, making submissive the angry gods!
32. Most powerful of all princes, holding the leading rope of kings!
33. Opening the veil of all young women!
34. Rising (or) "laying", valiant Ishtar, great are your heroic acts!
35. Brightness, torch of heaven and earth, brilliance of the entire inhabited world!
36. Furious one in irresistible onslaught, powerful one in combat!

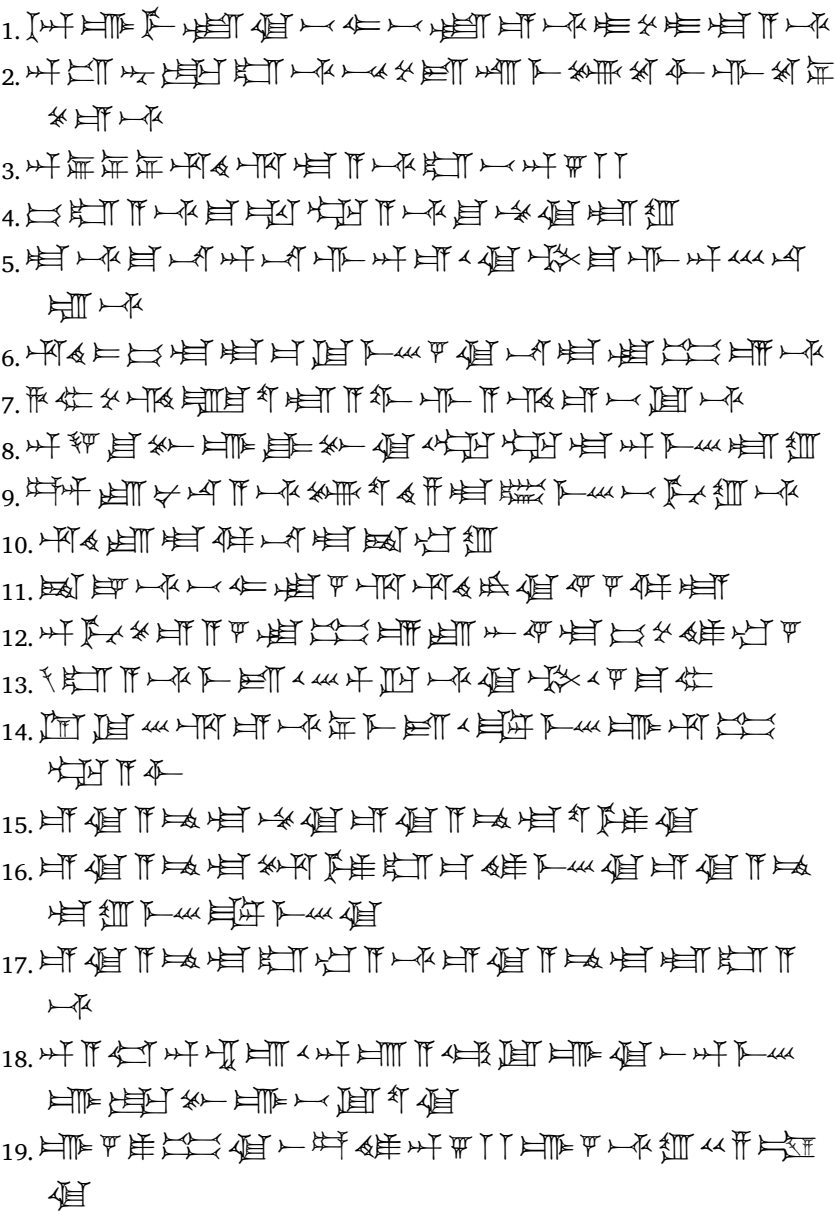
37. Firebrand that is ignited against the enemies, contriving disaster for the furious!
38. Glimmering Ishtar, assembling the assembly!
39. Goddess of men, goddess / Ishtar of women, whose resolution no one comes to know!
40. Wherever you look, the dead lives, the sick arises.
41. The one who is not right becomes all right (when) seeing your face.
42. I appeal to you, your tired, wearied, suffering servant:
43. Look at me, my Lady, and accept my supplication!
44. Look faithfully upon me and listen to my prayer!
45. *Aḫulap* pronounce for me, and let your feelings become reconciled to me—
46. *Aḫulap* for my wretched body which is full of confusion and trouble,
47. *Aḫulap* for my suffering heart which is full of tears and sighs,
48. *Aḫulap* for my wretched, confused and troubled omens,
49. *Aḫulap* for my sleepless house which laments (with) wailing,
50. *Aḫulap* for my feelings which persevere (in) tears and sighs!
51. Irninitu! The aggressive lion, let your heart be at rest with respect to me!
52. The furious wild bull, let your feelings be reconciled to me!
53. May your kind eyes be upon me!
54. With your bright face look faithfully upon me!
55. Drive away the evil dealings concerning my body, let me see your bright light!
56. How long, my Lady, will my enemies look malevolently at me,
57. (And) with lies and untruths plan evil against me?
58. My persecutors (and) ill-wishers rage against me.
59. How long, my Lady, will the idiot (and) cripple overtake me?
60. The wearied went ahead of me, but I, I lagged far behind.
61. The weak became strong, I have become weak.
62. I toss like a wave that an evil wind amasses.
63. My heart flies (and) flutters around like a bird of heaven.
64. I moan like a dove night and day.
65. I "glow / burn" and weep bitterly.
66. In "woe" (and) "alas" my feelings are suffering.
67. What indeed have I done to my god and goddess?
68. I am treated as if I did not fear my god and my goddess!
69. Disease, headache, loss, and disaster are imposed upon me.
70. Terrors, averted faces, and abundance of fury are imposed upon me,
71. Anger, rage, fury of gods and men.
72. I have seen, my Lady, very dark days, gloomy months, years of worry.
73. I have seen, my Lady, judgment, confusion and rebellion.
74. Death and constraint keep hold on me.
75. My shrine is deathly still, my sanctuary is deathly still.
76. Over house, gate (and) my fields, deathly silence is poured out.
77. My god: his face is averted to another place.
78. My clan is scattered, my shelter is broken.

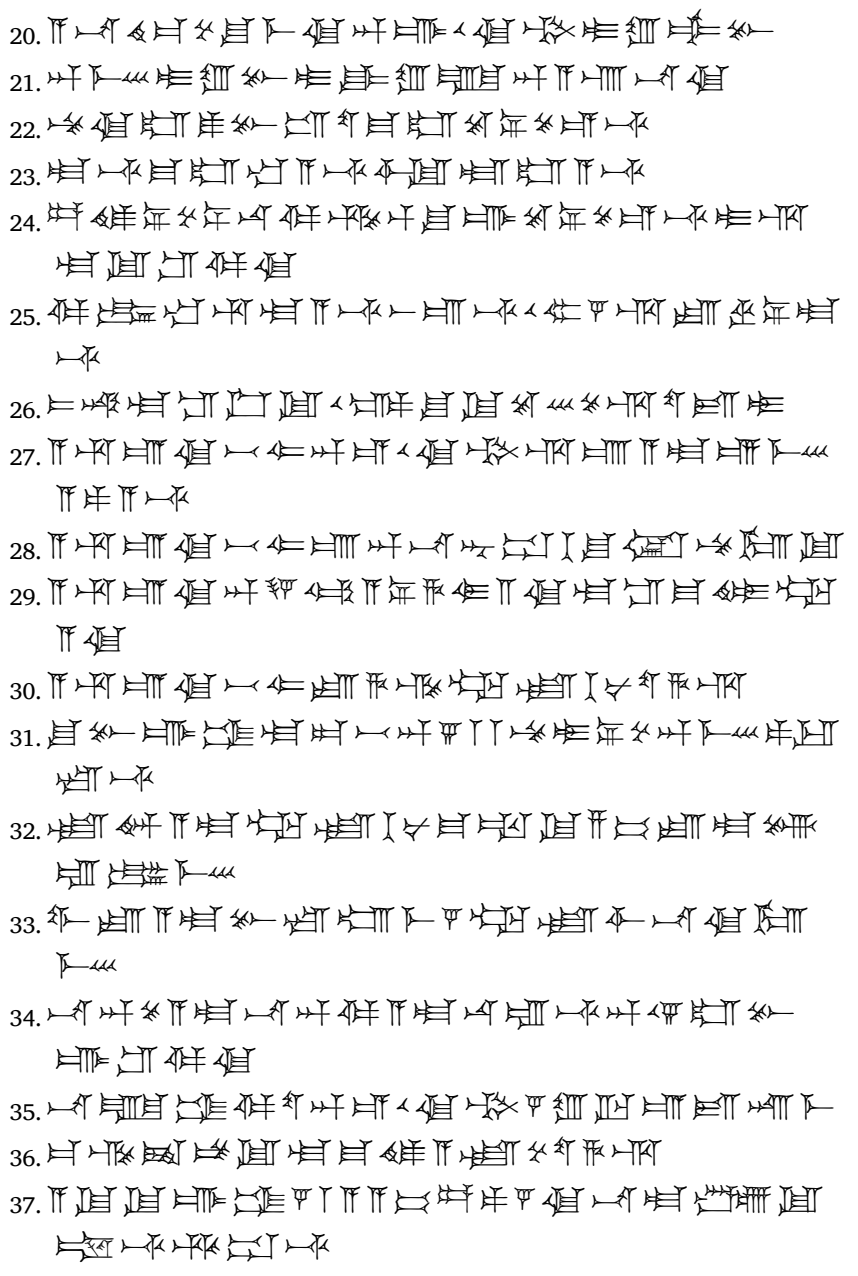
79. I am attentive to my Lady, on you my ears are fixed.
80. I indeed pray to you, absolve my blame!
81. Absolve my guilt, my crime, my sin, and my fault!
82. Disregard my sins (gloss: my confusion), accept my supplication!
83. Release my bonds, secure my freedom!
84. Guide my step aright! Brightly, as a lord may I walk along the street among the living!
85. Speak, so that at your command the angry god may become peaceful,
86. (So that) the goddess who has turned away from me in anger may return to me!
87. Dark (and) smoky, may my brazier become bright!
88. Extinguished, may my torch be ignited!
89. May my scattered clan assemble!
90. May the courtyard widen, my sheepfold increase!
91. Accept my prostration, listen to my prayer!
92. Look faithfully upon me [...]
93. How long, my Lady, will you be angry and your face be averted?
94. How long, my Lady, will you rage and your feelings be infuriated?
95. Turn your neck that you had let drop, set your face (on) a good word!
96. Like water "undoing" (?) the river, may your feelings be reconciled to me!
97. May I tread over those furious with me as (over) the ground!
98. Make submissive those angry with me and make them prostrate under me!
99. May my prayers and my supplications come to you!
100. May your very great forgiveness be with me!
101. May those who see me in the street magnify your name,
102. And may I make glorious your divinity and your heroism for the black-headed people:
103. Ishtar is exalted, Ishtar is queen!
104. The Lady is exalted, the Lady is queen!
105. Irnini, the valiant daughter of Sin, has no opponents!

106. It is the wording of the lifted hand (prayer) to Ishtar.

107. Its ritual: In an inaccessible place (lit., where the foot is kept away) you sweep the roof, you sprinkle pure water, (and) you lay four bricks at right angles to one another. 108. You heap twigs of the Euphrates poplar (on the brazier), (and) you kindle the fire. Aromatic plants, scented flour, juniper wood 109. you strew. You pour out beer. You do not prostrate yourself. This recitation before Ishtar 110. you recite three times. You prostrate yourself, and you do not look behind you.

CUNEIFORM:





38. [illegible]
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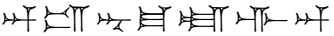
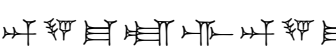
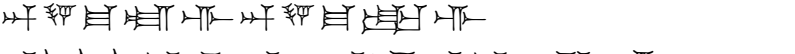
103. 

104. 

105. 

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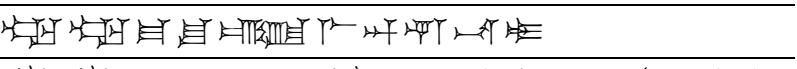
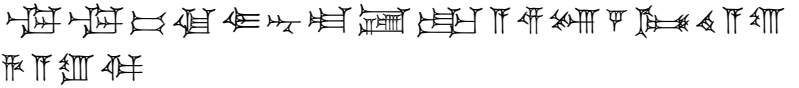
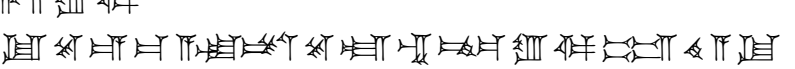
107. 

108. 

109. 

110.

A Shuilla: Marduk 4

ALAN LENZI

MARDUK:

Marduk was the local god of the city of Babylon. He eventually replaced Enlil as the chief god of the Mesopotamian pantheon. Although he had many names, *Bēl*, "lord," best conveys Marduk's ultimate position in Mesopotamian religious thought. Marduk's shrine in Babylon was called É-sag-íl, "the house with uplifted head," and his ziggurat was É-temen-an-ki, "house of the foundation platform of heaven and the netherworld." Zarpanitu was Marduk's consort; Nabu was his son.

There is some dispute about the etymology and meaning of Marduk's name. The common logographic writing ^{d}AMAR.UTU may represent Sumerian amar-utu-a(k). (Whether this is a genuine Sumerian etymology or a folk etymology, that is, an indigenous attempt to explain an incomprehensible pre-Sumerian name with Sumerian, is a matter of speculation and ultimately moot.) Some have translated amar-utu-a(k) as "calf of the Sun (god)" (Lambert, 8) and others as "calf of the storm" (Abusch, 543). In any case, the Sumerian etymology suggests the early name of the deity (i.e., in the OB period) was *Marūtuk* or *Marūtu*, which may have been shortened in later periods to *Martuk / Marduk*. But the lack of unambiguous syllabic spellings of the name (e.g., ^{d}*ma-ar-* instead of the typical ^{d}*mar(u)-*)[1] sheds some doubt on the existence of this short form as do Hebrew and Greek transliterations of the name in the biblical tradition (e.g., Jer 50:2 MT: מְרֹדָךְ; Jer 27:2 LXX: μαρωδαχ).[2]

Although Marduk is probably attested as early as the third millennium in texts from Fara (ancient Shuruppak) and Abu Salabikh,[3] we can only begin to trace his veneration in the OB period. Originally, Marduk was a rather insignificant local god from the city of Babylon, perhaps associated with justice (so

[1] See Lambert, 7, who notes the increased use of CVCV signs in post-Kassite Akkadian and thus the ambiguity of writings with *mar*.

[2] Note also the spelling of the name in Ashurbanipal's acrostic hymn to Marduk (*ma-ru-du-uk*). See Alasdair Livingstone, *Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea* (SAA 3; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1989), no. 2, rev. 1, 3, 6, and 8.

[3] The interpretation of these texts is disputed. Compare Sommerfeld, "Marduk," 363 and Lambert, 8.

Sommerfeld, 364), thunderstorms (so Abusch, 544), or canal digging (so Oshima). With the advent of Hammurabi in the early eighteenth century BCE and the meteoric rise of Babylon as a political and cultural power, Marduk was elevated to a position among the high gods of the pantheon. This is clearly evidenced by the opening lines of the Code of Hammurabi as well as by Marduk's growing popularity as the theophoric element in personal names.[4] Although he was not made the head of the pantheon in the OB period, Marduk's prominence was secured at this time and his cult spread to several other cities.

Marduk's rise to the head of the pantheon is probably first officially recognized during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar I (1125–1104 BCE), who unified post-Kassite Babylonia and recovered Marduk's statue from the Elamites, who had carried it off a generation earlier.[5] Mythologically speaking, Marduk's rise is recounted in the *Enūma eliš*, which may date to this period (though the dating of *Enūma eliš* continues to elicit debate). In this well-known myth the gods send Marduk to defeat the raging Tiamat and her minions. As a reward for this heroic exploit, the gods crown him king of the gods (see IV 28 and V 110). After Marduk creates the cosmos and forms humanity, the gods build him a temple, Esagil, and a ziggurat, Etemenanki, in Babylon. The myth concludes with a long section in which the gods pronounce Marduk's fifty names. The founding of Babylon in this myth was clearly intended to replace the former central sanctuary of Mesopotamia, Nippur, the seat of Enlil. Giving Marduk fifty names was a piece of theological revisionism to position Marduk as the replacement of Enlil (whose divine number was 50).[6]

Throughout the first millennium, Marduk was honored as the chief god of the Mesopotamian pantheon, even recognized as such by the Assyrians in their royal inscriptions. This prominence was celebrated in an unparalleled manner during the Neo-Babylonian empire and later employed politically by the Persians to legitimize their conquest of Babylon in 539 BCE (see The Cyrus Cylinder[7]). Although the cult of Marduk suffered a major set back when Alexander failed to rebuild Marduk's destroyed temple complex, Marduk (Bel) was still revered in the Hellenistic and Parthian periods.

[4] Sommerfeld has shown that the use of Marduk as a theophoric element in personal names skyrocketed between the early and late OB periods, so much so that he thinks it likely that nearly every family had a member bearing a name formed on Marduk ("Marduk," 364).

[5] See W. G. Lambert, "The Reign of Nebuchadnezzar I: A Turning Point in the History of Ancient Mesopotamian Religion," in *The Seed of Wisdom: Essays in Honour of T. J. Meeks* (ed. Stewart McCullough; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), 3–13.

[6] A similar attempt is probably attested in the god list AN = ^{d}Anum, where Marduk is given fifty names (some of which are different from those in *Enūma eliš*). See Richard L. Litke, *A Reconstruction of the Assyro-Babylonian God-Lists*, AN : ^{d}an-nu-um *and* AN : anu ša amēli (Texts from the Babylonian Collection 3; New Haven: Yale Babylonian Collection, 1998), 89–95, esp. 89, note to 185, and Lambert, 4.

[7] For an edition, see Hanspeter Schaudig, *Die Inschriften Nabonids von Babylon und Kyros' des Großen samt den in ihrem Umfeld entstandenen Tendenzschriften: Textausgabe und Grammatik* (AOAT 256; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2001), 550–56. For a translation, see *COS* 2.124:314–16.

Marduk was associated and then identified with a god named Asalluḫi (Asarluḫi), a move that started in the early OB period and was completed by Kassite times.[8] Since Asalluḫi was the son of Ea, god of wisdom and magic, this identification resulted in linking Marduk (and therefore Babylon) to the ancient and prestigious pantheon of Eridu, which gave Marduk, who was previously an insignificant deity, a legitimate place in the high levels of the Mesopotamian pantheon and bolstered his authority.[9] It is no accident therefore to see Marduk's birth to Ea (and Damkina) depicted in *Enūma eliš* I 79–108.[10] We know that Marduk became an important god of magic and exorcism. What is not completely clear is whether this status *suggested* his eventual identification with Asalluḫi or whether it was the *result* of his association with Asalluḫi and/or Ea. For more about Asalluḫi, see page 403.

In iconography Marduk was symbolized by a pointed spade and associated with a snake-dragon (*mušḫuššu*). Jupiter was his astrological representation.

THE PRAYER:

This prayer shows the three typical structural elements of a shuilla-prayer, hymnic introduction, petition, and concluding praise, but it implements these in an unusual manner, probably under the influence of ershaḫunga-prayers.

The prayer opens with an unusually short invocation and hymnic introduction; in fact, its two lines form one of the shortest hymns attested among shuilla-prayers.

The petition section of the prayer is also unusual in size, accounting for all but a couple of the text's remaining lines (3–27, 29–39). This section divides into several smaller units that may be characterized successively as complaint, protest, and petition. An introductory complaint in lines 3–6 is followed by the supplicant's protestation of human fallibility and ignorance in lines 8–15—an unusual theme for a shuilla but attested in ershaḫungas (see page 449).[11] A second invocation in line 7 bridges the two units. A unique and very brief self-presentation formula (line 16a) stands at the head of the first section of petitions (lines 16b–27). A second section of petitions, whose leitmotif is anticipated by line 19b, occurs in lines 29–39. This section consists of a seven-fold, repetitive litany in which the supplicant pleads for forgiveness of sin (lines 29–37) and a couplet in which the supplicant seeks the restoration of parent-like divine favor

[8] For various ideas about the cause for this identification, see page 403.

[9] For the mythological association of Eridu and Babylon via Marduk/Asalluḫi, see A. R. George, *Babylonian Topographical Texts* (OLA 40; Leuven: Peeters, 1992), 252–53.

[10] See Philippe Talon, *The Standard Babylonian Creation Myth: Enūma Eliš* (SAACT 4; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2005), 36–37 for the text.

[11] See Mayer's edition, 199, who notes parallels with ershaḫungas and several other kinds of prayers, including a "literary prayer" to Marduk, for which, see W. G. Lambert, "Three Literary Prayers of the Babylonians," *AfO* 19 (1959/1960), 47–66, here 57:105–110. Translations of the latter are in Foster, 611–16, Seux, 172–81, von Soden, 270–72, and Hecker, *TUAT* II/5, 754–58.

(lines 38–39). Both of these elements reflect the concluding sections of the ershaḫunga-prayers (compare the ending of the prayer at page 448, n.5 and see the general introduction, page 46); they do not normally occur in Akkadian shuillas.[12]

Lines 28 and 40 bracket this second section of petitions and together form a disjointed promise of praise that concludes the prayer. This discontinuous concluding praise might suggest that lines 29–39 are a secondary insertion in the prayer.[13] Given the manner in which incantation-prayers were adjusted and adapted for various purposes, this is not an implausible suggestion, but it is not currently supported by the evidence at hand (i.e., we do not have a MS lacking the litany). Rather than evidence for literary accretion, it seems more likely that the disjointed promise of praise points to the influence of another structural feature of the ershaḫungas. As mentioned in the general introduction, the ershaḫunga-prayers may include a transitional statement that leads into the intercessory litany; this transition may include praise to the deity. Given this and the affinities mentioned above, it is likely that the text of this prayer was influenced by typical features of both the shuilla- and ershaḫungas-prayers.

Three elements frame the prayer: the invocation *qarrādu Marduk*, "O warrior Marduk," in line 1 and line 40; the parental imagery in line 2 (*abu*) and lines 38–39 (*abi ālidīya*, *ummi ālittīya*); and the contrasting imagery of the supplicant as an old man (*šību*) in line 6 and as a youth (*ṣeḫērīya*) in line 36. Two of these framing elements also appear in the middle of the text: the parental / familial terms appear in lines 22–23 and the supplicant's youth mentioned in line 18. Furthermore, the *qarrādu Marduk* invocation occurs again at line 30. All of these features lend literary coherence to the prayer.

The three-fold repetition of the invocation *qarrādu Marduk*, "O warrior Marduk," in lines 1, 30, and 40 may help bind this rather complex and atypical prayer into a unit. But Hunt (90–91) argues that this epithet may also shed light on the prayer's literary development. Because he believes *qarrādu* is superfluous in the opening hymn (i.e., it has no parallel in line 2) and absent in a (supposed) citation of the prayer's incipit in a letter from an exorcist (*ABL* 716 = SAA 18, no. 181, rev. 25), he suggests the epithet may have been inserted into line 1 to give unity to the prayer *after* the petitionary litany in lines 29–39 had been, in his opinion, added. Although this is an interesting idea, the evidence is not strong enough to support it. First, Hunt's poetic understanding of lines 1–2 is open to question. *Qarrādu* may not have a parallel term in line 2 but neither does Marduk's name; the parallelism between lines 1–2 lies in *ša ezissu abūbu* ‖ *napšuršu abu rēmēnû*. Since *qarrādu Marduk* was a commonly used phrase to describe Marduk (see CAD Q, 141), it may have been understood as a single epithet here, whose lack of parallel in line 2 was intended to give the deity's invocation prominence in this first line of the prayer. Second, the assumed absence

[12] See Seux, 169, n.3; Mayer, 198–99; and Maul, *HB*, 16, 17, n.37, and 22–25.
[13] See, e.g., Hunt, 90, 130–34.

of the word *qarrādu* in the citation of the prayer's incipit may be a mistaken assumption. Perhaps the writer of the letter who cited the incipit simply left *qarrādu* out due to a memory lapse or because the word did not fit his rhetorical purpose. If one looks at the context of the letter, the writer is alluding to attributes of Marduk to flatter the king; he is not explicitly citing an incipit to prescribe a prayer. In fact, it may well be that he was *not* alluding to this prayer at all. Rather, he may have been simply using epithets of Marduk that also occur in our prayer to flatter the king. It is clear that our prayer has been influenced by features of ershaḫunga-prayers. But the evidence is still too slight and ambiguous to posit this influence occurred *after* the initial composition of the prayer rather than at the time of it.

The prayer turns thematically on a single idea, forgiveness of sins, and therefore recalls the themes of the ershaḫunga- and dingirshadibba-prayers, both of which are penitential in nature.[14] Although the supplicant confesses sin in lines 16–18 and 36, they also present three general reasons for sin—not to excuse their disobedience but to garner mercy and avert punishment. First, lines 8–15, the protest section, depict humans as frail and ignorant, living and working under a divine economy that makes human sin practically inevitable. The prayer seems to ask implicitly, How could the supplicant not sin in such a world? Second, the prayer mentions the issue of adolescent sins twice (lines 18 and 36). In these cases, the supplicant seems to request forbearance for immature mistakes. Finally, inherited sin or collective guilt finds a place in the prayer in lines 22–24. The supplicant does not plead their family's innocence in these lines. Rather, they wish to avert personal responsibility for the sins and ask that the sins' ill effect go elsewhere. Throughout the long petitionary section of the prayer, one sees a supplicant striving to cover the gamut of reasons for culpability, including, significantly, the mention of inadvertent sin in line 18b. Such broad coverage of possibilities is clearly due to the supplicant's ignorance of a precise cause for the misfortune that has come their way, a common motif in Mesopotamian religious texts.[15]

But all is not darkness and gloom. There is reason for hope, which peeks through in line 40, in the very existence of the prayer itself: for if there was no hope for the supplicant to change the situation, there would be no reason to use the divinely-inspired shuilla.

Two MSS preserve varying ritual instructions. Mayer's MS A is followed here. MS A also preserves a catchline to Marduk 9 (see Mayer, *UFBG*, 396) after our line 45 and before the tablet's colophon.

[14] See Seux, 169, 170, n.10, and Hunt, 100–101, n.34 and 118–19. See also the penitential prayer edited by Karel van der Toorn in his *Sin and Sanction in Israel and Mesopotamia: A Comparative Study* (Studia Semetica Neerlandica 22; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1985), 139–46.

[15] For a brief discussion of human ignorance of sin or rather ignorance about the cause of what is perceived as the effects of sin (i.e., sickness, social problems, etc.), including the human propensity for sin, adolescent sins, and unknown sins, see van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction*, 94–97.

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Text. Edition: Werner R. Mayer. "Das Bußgebet an Marduk von *BMS* 11." *Or* n.s. 73 (2004), 198–214. Translations: Foster, 680–82. Seux, 169–72. von Soden, 298–300. Study: Joel Hunt. "The Hymnic Introduction of Selected *Šuilla* Prayers Directed to Ea, Marduk, and Nabû." Ph.D. Dissertation. Brandeis University, 1994, 87–143.

1. ÉN *qar-ra-du* ^{d}AMAR.UTU *šá e-ziz-su a-bu-bu*

2. *nap-šur-šu a-bu re-mé-nu-ú*

3. *qa-bu-ú u la še-mu-ú id-dal-pan-ni*

Line 1: ÉN = *šiptu*, "incantation, ritual wording." This word marks the beginning of the prayer but is not a part of the prayer itself. It may have been read as Sumerian rather than Akkadian. The prayer opens with a very short hymnic introduction that invokes Marduk with appropriate divine epithets. *Qarrādu*, "hero, warrior." *Qarrādu* is a very common epithet for male deities (see CAD Q, 141–42). ^{d}AMAR.UTU = *Marduk*. *Ezēzu*, "to be(come) angry, furious." *Ezissu* is a 3ms predicative plus 3ms (resumptive) pronominal suffix, which literally means "his being angry," that is, Marduk's present state of rage. It is best rendered by "his anger." The pronominal suffix resumes the relative pronoun *ša* at the head of the phrase (*ša ezissu abūbu*). *Abūbu*, "flood," is often used metaphorically to characterize the inexorable power of a deity's anger, a king's military actions, or either's weapons (see CAD A/1, 78–79).

šiptu: *qarrādu Marduk ša ezissu abūbu*

Line 2: *Napšuru* (N of *pašāru*), "to be released, to be reconciled to, to forgive." *Abu*, "father." *Rēmēnû*, "merciful." (Gula is called "merciful [*rēmēnû*] mother" on page 246.) *Abu*, a positive image here, plays on the negative a*būbu* in line 1. The use of *eziz* and *napšur* here at the beginning of the prayer recalls the second line in the opening hymn of *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* (see page 486): *eziz mūši muppašir urri*, "he is angry at night but relenting at daybreak" (I 2). As mentioned by Hunt (89), it is significant that the merciful aspect of Marduk's character lies closest to the petitionary part of the prayer that follows.

napšuršu abu rēmēnû

Line 3: This line begins the complaint section of the prayer. *Qabû*, "to speak, to command, to decree." *Lā*, "not," is the particle used to negate individual substantives. *Šemû*,

4. *ša-su-ú u la a-pa-lu id-da-ṣa-an-ni*

5. *am-ma-ti-ia ina lìb-bi-ia uš-te-ṣi-ma*

6. *ki-ma ši-bi uq-ta-ad-di-da-an-ni*

7. EN GAL-*ú* ^{d}AMAR.UTU DINGIR *re-mé-nu-ú*

"to hear." The infinitives are being used as nouns here (more specifically, as gerunds), "speaking and not hearing." Ineffective speech, to speak an unheeded word, is a common Mesopotamian concern. When in the context of other humans, this anxiety may be related to a (perceived) loss of communal respect or self-esteem. In a context of divine communication, the supplicant expresses worries that his petitions are ignored. The heavens have become brass. *Dalāpu*, "to keep someone awake, to stir up, to harrass." The *–dd–* in the verb is the result of an assimilation of the perfect's infixed *–t–* to the first letter of the root. See also the verb in line 4. (One exemplar of the prayer inserts a still very fragmentary line between lines 3 and 4. All that is preserved is the word *iššaknūni*, "they are placed here for me." See Mayer, 201.)

qabû u lā šemû iddalpanni

Line 4: *Šasû*, "to shout, to call out." *Apālu*, "to answer." *Dâṣu*, "to treat with injustice, to treat with disrespect." With perfect grammatical parallelism, line 4 restates line 3; semantically speaking, however, the two lines bear witness to an intensifying of the anxiety. The action in the lines moves from reception of the spoken word ("hearing") to active response ("answering"), precisely what the supplicant wants but is not getting. Moreover, the supplicant's reaction moves from agitation to a feeling of disrespect.

šasû u lā apālu iddāṣanni

Line 5: *Ammatu*, literally, "forearm, cubit," but seems to have a metaphorical meaning here (and only here), "strength" (see CAD A/2, 70, which says the meaning of this passage is uncertain). *Libbu*, "heart, mind." *Šūṣû* (Š of [*w*]*aṣû*), "to cause to go out, to expel." Given the odd use of *ammatu* and its phonological similarities to *amātu* (*awātum*), "word, matter," one might well wonder if there is a double meaning to this line. The primary one is clear: the supplicant's strength is sapped; the secondary one, reading the verb as a 1cs, is more subtle: the supplicant has revealed the secrets of his heart, presumably to the god. For *amāta šūṣû*, "to reveal a matter (i.e., secret)," see CAD A/2, 372–73. On this reading, line 5 is a sort of conceptual pivot point between lines 3–4 and line 6.

ammatīya ina libbīya uštēṣī-ma

Line 6: *Kīma*, "like." *Šību*, "elder, old person." *Quddudu* (D of *qadādu*), "to bend down, to bow low." Although *qadādu* sometimes describes a gesture of humility, the preceding line and the simile here (*kīma šībi*) require us to understand the verb in terms of degeneration of the supplicant's body. The chain of 3cs perfect verb forms continues into this line, the last of the complaint section. It is surely significant that three of the four verbs in the complaint section end with the *–anni* pronominal suffix.

kīma šībi uqtaddidanni

Line 7: EN = *bēlu*, "lord." GAL = *rabû* (m), "great." DINGIR = *ilu*, "god." Line 7 provides a transition between the complaint and protest sections of the prayer. This line's

8. *a-me-lu-tu ma-la šu-ma na-bat*

9. *an-na ra-ma-ni-šá man-nu i-lam-mad*

10. *man-nu la i-šeṭ a-a-ú la ú-gal-lil*

11. *a-lak-ti* DINGIR [*man*]*-nu i-lam-mad*

vocative, "O great lord Marduk," is unique within the prayer (compare lines 1, 30, and 40); the attached epithet, "merciful god," recalls line 2. The epithet *Bēl(u)* would eventually become Marduk's primary name in Babylon.

bēlu rabû Marduk ilu rēmēnû

Line 8: Lines 8–15 form the supplicant's protest, not of innocence but of human frailty and the divine economy that makes human sin practically inevitable. Compare the similar ideas about human sinfulness in lines 132–134 of a dingirshadibba (see W. G. Lambert, "DINGIR.ŠÀ.DIB.BA Incantations," *JNES* 33 (1974), 280–83) and other examples cited by Hunt, 101–4 and Karel van der Toorn, "Theodicy in Akkadian Literature," in *Theodicy in the World of the Bible: The Goodness of God and the Problem of Evil* (ed. Antti Laato and Johannes C. de Moor; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 62, 72–73. Human ignorance and tendency to sin is not used as an excuse; rather, they are a basis for the supplicant's request for divine mercy and forgiveness. *Amēlūtu* (*amīlūtu*, *awīlūtum*), "humanity, human being, people." *Mala*, "as much as, as many as." *Šumu*, "name." *Nabû*, "to name." *Mala / ša šuma nabû*, is an idiom for "everything, everyone" (see CAD N/1, 35 for other examples with *amēlūtu*). Foster's "by whatever name" captures the sense and style of the Akkadian idiom nicely (680). *Nabât* is fem. because *amēlūtu* is fem. Line 8 introduces by way of anacoluthon the referent of *mannu*, "who?," in the next several lines.

amēlūtu mala šuma nabât

Line 9: *Annu* (*arnu*), "guilt, fault, sin." *Ramāniša*, "itself, its own"; the fem. pronominal suffix refers back to *amēlūtu*. *Mannu*, "who?" *Lamādu*, "to learn, to recognize, to understand." Lines 9–11 use rhetorical questions (note the use of *mannu* in each) to emphasize humanity's ignorance with regard to their own sins. Prayers often express this idea with simple statements such as "I do not know my sin" or "my sin which I do not know but you know" (compare line 18 below). The point is clear: Mesopotamians almost always assumed some sin was behind the problems they experienced, even when they could not identify it (see similarly Mayer, 207).

anna ramāniša mannu ilammad

Line 10: *Lā*, "not," is also the form of negation used after interrogative pronouns. *Šêṭu*, "to miss, to disdain, to be negligent." *Ayû* (*ajû*, *ayyu*), "who?, which?, what?" *Gullulu*, "to commit a sin." Continuing the rhetorical questions, the line offers two that are both grammatically and semantically parallel. These raise the stakes laid out in lines 8–9 because not only is it difficult to know one's own sins, everyone does it. *Everyone* sins. For similar statements in prayers, see the references in Seux, 170, n.10.

mannu lā išēṭ ayû lā ugallil

Line 11: Although the second half of this line repeats the second half of line 9, the difference encountered in the first halves of each significantly shifts the focus from the

12. *lu-ut-ta-id-ma gul-lul-tú la a-ra-áš-ši*

13. *aš-rat ba-la-ṭi lu-uš-te-ʾe-ma*

14. *ina ár-ra-ti i-tab-bu-la ina* DINGIR.MEŠ *qa-bat*

human realm (line 9) to the divine (line 11). *Alaktu*, usually means "way, manner, course," but also means "divine decree" in some contexts (see I. Tzvi Abusch, "*Alaktu* and *Halakhah*: Oracular Decision, Divine Revelation," *HTR* 80 [1987], 15–52). If the latter meaning is correct here, the supplicant may be complaining that the divine will is inscrutable. See similarly, e.g., the statement in *Ludlul* II 34–36 (see Amar Annus and Alan Lenzi, *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi: The Standard Babylonian Poem of the Righteous Sufferer* (SAACT 7; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2010), xxi, with other references cited in n.35).

alakti ili mannu ilammad

Line 12: *Itʾudu* (Gt of *naʾādu*), "to watch carefully, to observe strictly." *Gullutu*, "sin," which is cognate to the verb in line 10. *Rašû*, "to acquire, to gain." The 1cs precative may express an indirect command ("I ought") here (and in line 13) rather than a wish ("let me"). One's understanding of the context will determine one's decision between the two. In the second half of the line, the *lā* plus durative indicates a prohibitive ("I may not"). After painting the big picture of human ignorance, the prayer now focuses in on the individual supplicant. The second half of the line presents the result of the supplicant's actions in the first half.

luttaʾid-ma gullultu lā arašši

Line 13: *Ašru*, "place, location"; *ašrātu* (pl). *Balāṭu*, "life, health, well-being." *Šiteʾûʾû* (Gtn of *šeʾû*) means "to look all over, to search everywhere" but also "to be assiduous (in reverence) toward," especially when used with something like *ašrāt ili*, "sanctuaries of a god" (see CAD Š/2, 358–62).

ašrāt balāṭi lušteʾûʾī-ma

Line 14: *Arratu*, "curse." *Ittabbulu* (Gtn of [*w*]*abālu*), "to look after, to manage, to direct, to be active." The form is an inf. DINGIR.MEŠ = *ilū*, "gods." *Qabât* is a 3fs predicative from *qabû*, which here seems to mean something like "to command, to decree." The fem. subject may go back to *amēlūtu* in line 8 or may simply refer to the general situation described in the line (an impersonal "it"); in either case, the focus is pulled away from the supplicant and back onto a general, rather pessimistic view of humanity's situation (lines 8–11), as is clear from line 15, which shows why the sentiments of lines 12–13 are so difficult to implement in real life (see Mayer, 207).

ina arrati ittabbula ina ilī qabât

15. *qa-ta šá* DINGIR *ana* LÚ *ba-ba-lu*

16. ÌR-*ka ana-ku šet-tu-tú lu e-pu-uš*

17. *i-ta-a šá* DINGIR *lu e-ti-iq*

18. [*šá ul-t*]*u*ʾ *meṣ-ḫe-riš* ZU–*u* NU ZU-*u mé-ši-ma*

Line 15: *Qātu*, "hand." LÚ = *amēlu* (*amīlu*, *awīlum*), "human being, man." *Qāt* DN, "the hand of [a god's name]," is often used to denote illnesses and diseases (e.g., *qāt Ištar*). Here the word may explain *arratu* in the previous line, meaning something like divine weight or affliction (see Foster, 681 for the latter option). *Babālu*, "to carry, to bring," is a by-form of (*w*)*abālu*, the inf. of which was also used in the previous line (in the Gtn stem).

qāta ša ili ana amēli babālu

Line 16: The self-presentation formula is minimal. ÌR = *ardu* (*wardum*), "servant." Servant language is very common in Mesopotamian religious texts. The gods are conceived as divine kings. Humans are therefore their subjects. *Anāku*, "I." This is the only instance of *aradka* preceding *anāku* in a self-presentation formula (see Mayer, *UFBG*, 49, n.8). Some MSS preserve the opposite, more typical order (see *UFBG*, 203, n.16(1)). There are at least three possible understandings of *aradka anāku*. The phrase may be understood as a nominal sentence, "I am your servant." The two words may be in apposition to one another and rendered as an introduction to the line, "as for your servant, me." (More idiomatic English requires rephrasing: "as for me, your servant.") Finally, *aradka* may introduce the line, "as for your servant," and *anāku* may emphasize the first person verb, "I myself, I actually." One's interpretive decision here and in the rest of the line will be based on one's understanding of the larger context. *Šettūtu*, "sin." *Lū* plus preterite may express concession, "even if, even though," or affirmation, "indeed, verily" (see also line 17). *Epēšu*, "to do." The prayer returns to focus on the supplicant, who confesses that they have in fact sinned.

aradka anāku šettūtu lū ēpuš

Line 17: *Itû*, "boundary, border." *Etēqu*, "to cross over, to pass through." Idiomatically, *itâ etēqu* means "to trespass, to transgress." Line 17 provides a second, parallel confession of sin to that of line 16.

itâ ša ili lū ētiq

Line 18: The restoration here follows Mayer, who also lists and discusses the variants in the other textual witnesses (203, n.18(1) and 209–10). The line opens with a subordinate clause in which the *ša* functions substantively, "that which." We expect the verb to conclude the clause, but in this poetic context the word order does not follow the norm. *Meṣḫēriš*, "in / during childhood, youth." The supplicant refers back to possible sins committed earlier in his life. ZU = *edû* (*idû*), "to know." NU = *lā*, "not." Here the supplicant covers both known sins and those unknown to them—a common motif in Mesopotamian religious texts. The entire subordinate clause forms the object of the main verb, an imperative. *Mêšu*, "to disregard, to forgive." We expect the imperative of *mêšu* (*mēš*) to appear without a final vowel. For other instances of the imperative with various final vowels, see CAD M/2, 42. This line forms the beginning of a long litany of petitions.

ša ultu meṣḫēriš edû lā edû mēšī-ma

19. *ina lìb-bi-ka a-a ik-kud an-ni pu-ṭur-ma šér-ti pu-šur*

20. *e-šá-ti-ia nu-um-me-er*

21. *dal-ḫa-ti-ia zu-uk-ki*

22. *an-na* AD.MU AD AD.MU *an-na* AMA.MU AMA AMA.MU

23. [*an-na k*]*im-ti-ia ni-su-ti-ia*$_5$ *u sa-la-ti-ia*$_5$

Line 19: *Libbu*, see line 5. *Nakādu*, literally, "to throb, to pound." *Ina libbīka nakādu* may be understood metaphorically to mean "to worry, to be concerned about." *Paṭāru*, "to loosen, to undo, to release." *Šērtu*, "guilt, offence, punishment." *Pašāru*, "to loosen, to undo, to release." Both *pašāru* and *paṭāru* occur in contexts dealing with the forgiveness of sins/guilt or the release from sickness/demonic oppression (CAD P, 237–39 and 290–92). The second half of line 19 anticipates lines 29–35. Volitional forms, here a vetitive (a negative precative) and two imperatives, continue to dominate the text and will continue to do so for a number of lines hence. Notice, finally, the consonance and assonance in the second half of the line.

ina libbīka ayy-ikkud annī puṭur-ma šērtī pušur

Line 20: Lines 20 and 21 seem rather short and probably belong together in one poetic line. *Ešû*, "unclear, confused, uncertain." *Ešâtīya* is a mp verbal adjective with a 1cs pronominal suffix, "my confused states (of mind)" (similarly *dalḫâtīya* in line 21). *Nummuru* (D of *namāru*), "to brighten, to illuminate, to clarify, to clear up." The imperative requests a reversal of the supplicant's state of mind (likewise in line 21).

ešâtīya nummer

Line 21: *Dalḫu*, "troubled, disturbed" (when used of water the word means, "muddied," and of eyes, "blurred"). *Zukkû* (D of *zakû*), "to cleanse, to purify, to free." Lines 20 and 21 show close grammatical and semantic parallelism. Significantly, *ešâtu* and *dalḫâtu* are also both used to describe ambiguous results of divination ("omens are confused"); see, e.g., CAD E, 378.

dalḫâtīya zukki

Line 22: AD = *abu*, "father." MU = 1cs pronominal suffix, "my." AMA = *ummu*, "mother." It is not uncommon for a prayer to add a reference to one's brother and sister in such a list of relatives (see line 2 on page 136 for an example in this volume). In fact, three MSS of the present prayer preserve a longer list that includes them (see Mayer, 203, n.22(5)). This line and the next form the compound subject of the vetitive in line 24, *ayyiṭḫâ*. The supplicant turns now to deal with sin that may have been inherited from family members.

anna abīya abi abīya anna ummīya ummi ummīya

Line 23: *Kimtu*, "family." *Nišūtu*, "kin, relatives." *Salātu*, "family, clan." The list of relatives continues from line 22 but now with collective terms rather than terms for indi-

24. *a-na ra-ma-ni-ia a-a* TE-*a a-ḫi-tam-ma lil-lik*

25. [*u*]*l-ṭa-ba-an-ni-ma ì-lí* GIM Ú.KI.KAL *ub-bi-ban-ni*

26. *a-na* ŠU.MEŠ SIG_5.MEŠ *šá* DINGIR.MU *u* $^{d}IŠ_8$.DAR.MU

vidual members. Notice how the 1cs pronominal suffixes on each noun in lines 22 and 23 affect the phonological rhythm of the lines.

anna kimtīya nišūtīya u salātīya

Line 24: *Ana ramānīya*, literally, "to my person, self." TE = *ṭeḫû*, "to draw near, to approach." The phonetic complement on the logogram (*–a*) must indicate the ventive. *Aḫītam*, "aside, elsewhere," is an adverb of place. *Alāku*, "to go." The two halves of the line are generally parallel in terms of grammar and semantics. Rather than the supplicant wishing guilt (or its consequences) to be turned toward some other person (e.g., a foreigner or enemy, *aḫû*), the supplicant simply wishes it to go away, to go elsewhere (*aḫītam alāku*).

ana ramānīya ayy-iṭḫâ aḫītam-ma lillik

Line 25: Mayer has collated the witnesses to this line and determined that the reading previous translators have used (*iq-ṭa-ba-an-ni*, deriving from King's copy, *BMS* 11) is mistaken. He takes the first verb as a Š durative of *ṭâbu*, "to make good, to make favorable," with the *š* changing to *l* before the dental, rather than taking it as a G perfect of *qabû* (see Mayer, 210–11). Due to the non-volitional form of the verb at its head (a durative), previous translators have usually understood the first half of the line as a subordinate clause, either conditional (assuming an understood *šumma*, "if") or temporal (*enūma*, "when"). GIM = *kīma*, "like." Ú.KI.KAL = *sassatu*, "grass." The supplicant wants to become as pure as grass. *Ubbubu* (D of *ebēbu*), "to cleanse, to purify." The form is a D impv. with a 1cs object suffix. Since the other volitional forms in the immediate context are directed to Marduk, it seems likely that the final verb in this line is, too. One might identify the god mentioned in the first half of the line as either Marduk or the supplicant's personal god. The latter may seem more likely given the generic and personal manner of reference: *ilī*, "my god" (thus Mayer, 206). But one does not expect Marduk to wait on a personal god's actions to act upon the supplicant's petition (*ubbibanni*, "purify me"). Moreover, the supplicant asks Marduk to entrust them to the hands of the personal deities in the very next line. The supplicant therefore does not seem to be in any position just yet to place hope in the actions of the personal god. Finally, one might wonder if the orthography for *ilī, ì-lí* = NI-NI, preserved in one MS (another reads DINGIR.MU), was intentionally used to differentiate between Marduk and the personal god, who is referred to in the next line with the more typical logogram DINGIR. (For different understandings of the line, see, e.g., Hunt, 122–24 and Seux, 171, n.27.)

ulṭābannī-ma ilī kīma sassati ubbibanni

Line 26: ŠU, see line 15. SIG_5 = *damqu* (m), *damiqtu* (f), "favorable, good." $IŠ_8$.DAR.MU = *ištarī*, "my goddess." *Šalmu*, "peace, well-being." TI.LA = *balāṭu*, "life, health, well-being." *Paqādu* + *ana*, "to entrust, to hand over something to someone." The supplicant continues to petition the deity for favor. In this case, he requests the deity to entrust them into the hands of their personal god and goddess. It is significant that the text specifies "the favorable hands" of the deities. The working assumption in the prayer may be that

ana šùl-me u TI.LA *piq-dan-ni*

27. *ina ik-ri-be tés-li-ti u te-me-qí da-riš lu-ziz-ku*

28. *ni-šú de-šá-a-tu*$_4$ KUR *šá ina aš-ri šak-na-át li-na-du-ka*

29. *an-ni pu-ṭur an-ni pu-šur*

the supplicant was not on the best of terms with the personal deities. They now ask Marduk to set that relationship aright. The imagery of the "hand of a god" here and in line 15 presents a significant contrast.

ana qātī damqāti ša ilīya u ištarīya ana šalme u balāṭi piqdanni

Line 27: *Ikribū*, "prayers, votive offerings" (for a discussion of the nuances of this term, see CAD I/J, 66). *Teslītū*, "petitions, requests." *Tēmēqū* (*tēmīqū*), "deep prayers, well-conceived presentations of a case" (see CAD T, 335). *Dāriš*, "forever." *Izuzzu*, "to stand, to serve," has here a dative 2ms pronominal suffix, "to, for you." Having addressed their position with regard to their personal deities, the supplicant now attends to their relationship to Marduk. They wish to stand before him in perpetual supplication. Standing before another is a sign of one's subservience. This fits the relationship between deity and supplicant perfectly (see line 16, *aradka*). Perpetual supplication may seem obsequious, but one might also consider this wish from another standpoint: uninterrupted access. To have constant communicative access with the deity would be a great privilege and a means for insuring one's security. Contrast this desire with the problem mentioned in line 3.

ikribē teslītī u tēmēqī dāriš luzzizku

Line 28: *Nišū* (f), "people, populace." *Dešû*, "abundant, numerous." The precise syntactical function of KUR = *mātu*, "country, land," and the relative clause that it governs is unclear. It may be in apposition to *nišū dešâtu*, "abundant people," at the head of the line. It may modify *nišū dešâtu* somehow: "the abundant people (living in, of, from) the land. . ." (see CAD D, 129 and Š/1, 148). Or, it may functional adverbially, specifying where the people offer their praise: "let the abundant people praise you (in) the land. . . ." *Ašru*, see line 13. *Šakānu*, "to put, to establish, to set up." The nuanced meaning of the relative phrase *ša ina ašri šaknat*, literally, "which is set in (its) place," is also unclear (see Mayer, 211). The CAD suggests "which is well organized" (D, 129 and N/1, 102) or "which is well established" (Š/1, 148). *AHw* suggests "which lies on the earth" (83, see likewise, Hunt, 127–28), but understanding *ašru* as "earth" is unique. *Nâdu*, "to praise." The final verb is actually the first word in line 29, but it only makes sense if it is considered a part of line 28. The supplicant now broadens their view and wishes that a large body of people will also honor Marduk with their praise. The implication is that the people will see what Marduk has done for the supplicant and join in their thanksgiving. The same idea is presented explicitly and more fully in *Ludlul* IV 69–82 (according to the line numbers of SAACT 7). This line seems to lead naturally into line 40, the final line of the prayer.

nišū dešâtu māti ša ina ašri šaknat linādūka

Line 29: This line begins a seven-fold petition for forgiveness of sin. The supplicant begins here with a general request, presumably directed to Marduk. All of the ones to follow will be directed to a specifically invoked deity. It may be surprising to see the issue

30. UR.SAG ^{d}AMAR.UTU *an-ni pu-ṭur an-ni pu-šur*

31. GAŠAN GAL-*tu*$_4$ ^{d}*e*$_4$-*ru*$_6$-*u*$_8$ *an-ni pu-uṭ-ri*

32. *šu-mu ṭa-a-bu* ^{d}AG *an-ni pu-ṭur*

33. GAŠAN GAL-*tu*$_4$ ^{d}*taš-me-tum an-ni pu-uṭ-ri*

34. UR.SAG ^{d}U.GUR *an-ni pu-ṭur*

35. DINGIR.MEŠ *a-ši-bu* ^{d}*a-nim an-ni pu-uṭ-ra*

of forgiveness resurface after the wish for widespread praise of the deity in line 28. But the prayer seems to be under the influence of the ershaḫunga's form (see the introduction to this prayer). For *annu*, *paṭāru*, and *pašāru*, see lines 9 and 19. *Annu* is consistently written with the 1cs pronominal suffix in the following lines.

annī puṭur annī pušur

Line 30: UR.SAG = *qarrādu*. See line 1 for this epithet. Although the prayer is already directed to Marduk, the supplicant re-invokes Marduk, echoing the opening words of the prayer, and asks him to forgive their sins. This line seems redundant after line 29.

qarrādu Marduk annī puṭur annī pušur

Line 31: GAŠAN = *bēltu*, "lady." GAL = *rabītu* (f), "great." ^{d}*E*$_4$-*ru*$_6$-*u*$_8$ is *Zarpānītu*, consort of Marduk (see Mayer's MS E, which spells out the goddess's name).

bēltu rabītu Zarpānītu annī puṭur

Line 32: *Šumu*, "name." *Ṭābu*, "sweet, good," used with *šumu* means "excellent, worthy." ^{d}AG = *Nabû*, scribal god and son of Marduk (see page 325).

šumu ṭābu Nabû annī puṭur

Line 33: *Tašmētum*, consort of Nabu. The litany appeals to the first god of the pantheon and his spouse in lines 30–31 and then the next ranking divine pair, Nabu and Tashmetu, in lines 32–33.

bēltu rabītu Tašmētum annī puṭur

Line 34: ^{d}U.GUR = *Nergal* (one MS writes Nergal's name ^{d}GÌR.UNU.GAL), an underworld deity associated with plague and disaster (see page 339). He is probably used here as a contrast to the heavenly gods invoked in the next line (Hunt, 133).

qarrādu Nergal annī puṭur

Line 35: *Ašābu* (*wašābum*), "to sit, to dwell." ^{d}*Anum* is literally "(the god) Anu," who stands for the cosmic realm of "heaven" here. The litany broadens its view to all the celestial deities.

ilī āšibū Anim annī puṭur

36. *an-na* GAL-*a šá ul-tu* u_4-*um ṣe-ḫe-ri-ia*$_5$ *i-pu-šú*

37. *su-up-pi-iḫ-ma* EN 7-*šu pu-ṭur*

38. [*lì*]*b-ba-ka ki-ma a-bi a-lid-ia*

39. *ù* AMA *a-lit-ti-ia a-na áš-ri-šu li-tu-ra*

40. *qar-ra-du* ^{d}AMAR.UTU *bul-liṭ-an-ni-*[*ma*] *dà-lí-lí-ka lud-lul*

Line 36: *Ša* introduces a relative clause that modifies *anna rabâ*. *Ultu*, often for *ištu*, "from, out of; since, after, when." *Ūmu*, "day." *Ṣeḫēru*, "to be(come) small, little," but as an infinitive, "to be young, to be a minor" (see CAD Ṣ, 122). The pronominal suffix is the subject of the infinitive, literally, "my being a minor." A substantive would provide a better idiomatic rendering. *Epēšu*, "to do, to make." Here *īpušu* stands for *ēpušu* (1cs). The final *–u* is the subjunctive marker, indicating that the verb only functions within the relative clause; it is not the main verb of the sentence. The entire line forms the object of the verbs in line 37. The supplicant now treats the accumulation of all of their sins since their youth as one large, collective sin. In so doing, it recalls line 18.

anna rabâ ša ultu ūm ṣeḫērīya īpušu

Line 37: *Suppuḫu* (D of *sapāḫu*), "scatter, disperse." EN = *adi*, "up to, until, as far as." 7-*šu* = *sebîšu*, "seven times, sevenfold." A seven-fold dispersal, paralleling the seven-fold call for forgiveness in lines 29–35, indicates the desire for total forgiveness of all accumulated sin. The supplicant wants a fresh start, a clean slate.

suppiḫ-ma adi sebîšu puṭur

Line 38: *Alādu* (*walādum*), "to give birth to" (female subject), "to engender, to beget" (male subject). The pronominal suffix on the participle (here and in the next line, according to Mayer's MS A) is the object of the verbal action. *Libbaka* is the object of the sentence's main verb at the end of line 39. The parental simile here and in the next line recalls the use of *abu* in line 2.

libbaka kīma abi ālidīya

Line 39: *Ālittu* is a fs participle from *alādu*. The third root letter *d*, a dental, has assimilated to the *t* of the feminine marker. *Ašrīšu* is *ašru* plus a 3ms pronominal suffix. *Târu*, "to return, to turn back"; but *târu* with *ašru* means "to return to normal" (see CAD T, 255). Marduk has been angry; his heart has been exercised. The supplicant asks that Marduk now return to normal (i.e., relent from his anger), which the supplicant defines in terms of the affection of human parents.

u kīma ummi ālittīya ana ašrīšu litūra

Line 40: The same invocation used in lines 1 and 30 is repeated here in the otherwise formulaic promise of praise. *Bulluṭu*, "to restore to health, to revive." *Dalīlū*, "praises." *Dalālu*, "to praise." *Dalīlīka ludlul* is a cognate accusative construction; that is, the verb and its object both come from the same root. Translate idiomatically, "let me proclaim your praises" or the like.

qarrādu Marduk bulliṭannī-ma dalīlīka ludlul

41. ka-inim-ma šu-íl-la ^{d}amar-utu-kám

42. KÌD.KÌD.BI *ana* IGI ^{d}AMAR.UTU NÍG.NA ŠIM.LI GAR-*an*

43. [GI.DU$_8$ GIN]-*an* NINDA.Ì.DÉ.A LÀL Ì.NUN.NA GAR-*an*

44. [KAŠ.SAG BAL-*q*]*í* NUMUN Ú.IN.NU.UŠ *ana* ŠÀ Ì.GIŠ ŠUB-*di*

45. [*ana* IGI ^{d}AMAR.UT]U GAR-*an* ŠID-*tú* ŠID-*ma* Ì.GIŠ ŠÉŠ-*aš*

Line 41: This line is the rubric, which tells something about the classification of the preceding lines. In this case, the rubric identifies the kind of prayer on the tablet and to whom it is directed. As is typical, the rubric is written in Sumerian. It may be translated, "it is the wording of a lifted-hand to Marduk."

Line 42: KÌD.KÌD.BI = *kik(k)iṭṭûšu*, "its ritual." One MS preserves a common alternative: DÙ.DÙ.BI = *epuštašu*, "its ritual." The ritual follows Mayer's MS A. A variation of this ritual exists in his MS d. KÌD.KÌD.BI (or DÙ.DÙ.BI) alerts the user of the tablet that the ritual instructions follow. Compare the ÉN at the beginning of the prayer. All of the items included in the following are common elements of Mesopotamian ritual. IGI = *pānu*, "face," or *maḫru*, "front"; both are possible. *Ana pāni*, *maḫri* means "to the face of, in front of." NÍG.NA = *nignakku*, "incense burner." (GIŠ.)ŠIM.LI = *burāšu*, "juniper" (pieces of wood or its resin). The juniper is the material to be burnt in the incense burner. GAR = *šakānu*, "to set up, to erect."

kik(k)iṭṭûšu: *ana pāni Marduk nignakka burāša tašakkan*

Line 43: GI.DU$_8$ = *paṭīru*, "portable altar." GIN = *kunnu* (D of *kânu*), "to set up." NINDA.Ì.DÉ.A = *mersu*, "*mersu*-cake" (made of dates, sesame, and oil). LÀL = *dišpu*, "honey." Ì.NUN.NÀ = *ḫimētu*, "ghee, butter."

paṭīra tukān mersa dišpa ḫimēta tašakkan

Line 44: KAŠ = *šikaru*, "beer." SAG = *rēštû*, "first, pre-eminent." *Šikaru rēštû* designates first-rate beer, a very common item to libate (see CAD Š/2, 426). BAL = *naqû*, "to pour out, to libate, to sacrifice." NUMUN = *zēru*, "seed." Ú.IN.NU.UŠ = *maštakal*, "(an alkaline plant)." ŠÀ = *libbu* means "heart" but "into, toward" when preceded by *ana*. Ì.GIŠ = *šamnu*, "oil." ŠUB = *nadû*, "to throw down, to lay down."

šikara rēštâ tanaqqi zēr maštakal ana libbi šamni tanaddi

Line 45: ŠID = *minûtu*, "recitation," a cognate accusative to the following verb: ŠID = *manû*, "to recite, to count." ŠÉŠ = *pašāšu*, "to smear, to anoint."

ana pāni Marduk tašakkan minûta tamannū-ma šamna tapaššaš

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

There are many items in this prayer that we could discuss comparatively with the Hebrew Bible, but space only permits a few suggestions.[1]

Lines 2 and 38 of our prayer compare Marduk to a father (*abu*).[2] Several texts in the Hebrew Bible also imagine Yahweh as a father (אָב): to Israel as a people (e.g., Deut 32:6, Isa 63:16, 64:7, Jer 3:19, 31:9, Mal 2:10, and 3:17), to their king (e.g., 2 Sam 7:14 and Ps 89:7, and compare Ps 2:7, in which Yahweh says, "you are my son, today I have fathered you" [יְלִדְתִּיךָ, cognate to Akk. *alādu* in lines 38–39]), and to individuals within Israel (e.g., Prov 3:12). Although it provides another example of Yahweh as father to the individual, Ps 103:13 is particularly striking in its similarities to the sentiments of *abu rēmēnû*, "merciful father," in line 2 of our prayer: כְּרַחֵם אָב עַל־בָּנִים רִחַם יְהוָה עַל־יְרֵאָיו, "as a father shows mercy (רִחֵם, D inf., cognate to Akk. *rēmēnû*) to (his) children, (so) Yahweh shows mercy to those who fear him." The comparable use of parental or fatherly imagery for a deity in Israel and Mesopotamia should not be understood in terms of cultural diffusion or borrowing. Rather, the use of parental imagery is rooted in an anthropomorphizing model of deity that clarifies certain divine attributes via analogy with a common, basic social reality: loving parents.

A rhetorical question in lines 8–9 of our prayer broaches the topic of human ignorance of sin (see also line 18), a common motif in Mesopotian prayer.[3] Ps 19:13 contains a very similar idea in the form of a rhetorical question: שְׁגִיאוֹת מִי יָבִין מִנִּסְתָּרוֹת נַקֵּנִי, "Who can discern (one's) errors? Acquit me of hidden sins" (contrast Ps 51:5, where the supplicant is quite aware of his failing).[4] Although the question in this verse is almost identical to what we see in line 9 of our prayer, the biblical petition does not have the same tone as the petitions of the Akkadian prayer. Rather, in the psalm the measure for understanding the depths of one's failings *as well as* the means to achieve obedience are revealed in the Torah (vv. 8–12). The petition in v. 13 and those in vv. 14–15, therefore, seem to be uttered by a supplicant confident about the deity's will and requirements; this

[1] Many broad thematic studies could be suggested. For example, Marduk's epithet *qarrādu*, "warrior," suggests a comparison with the Hebrew Bible's depiction of Yahweh as divine warrior. The penitential theme of the entire prayer suggests a comparison with the Penitential Psalms (Pss 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143), among others. And the sentiments expressed in lines 11–15 of our prayer represent a rather pessimistic view on divine–human relations, bringing to mind for different reasons both the primeval curse on the original humans in Gen 3 and the grim outlook on everyday life expressed in Qoh 1:13–15. As interesting as they are, these topics are too large and involved to consider here.

[2] Contrast line 39, where Marduk is compared to a mother.

[3] Line 10 changes the subject significantly, asking rhetorically if there is anyone without sin. The question and implied answer are not so much an excuse for sin as a basis for mercy. See Ps 130:3, which asks a similar rhetorical question for the same purpose. See also, e.g., 1 Kgs 8:46, for the idea that no one is without sin in a context dealing with supplication.

[4] See also Ps 90:8 for another psalm that mentions secret sins. For a brief discussion of secret sin, the human propensity for sin, and adolescent sins in the Hebrew Bible, see van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction*, 97–99.

stands in contrast to what line 11 in our Akkadian prayer suggests. This interpretation is supported by the epithets the psalmist uses in v. 15 for the deity: צוּרִי וְגֹאֲלִי, "my rock and my redeemer." But seeing this confidence in Ps 19 is not to suggest that such an attitude was pervasive throughout all of Israel at all times. In fact, the stress and anxiety one reads in the biblical laments of the individual suggest that supplicants often were uncertain about the reasons for their problems—much like our Akkadian-speaking supplicant.

The phrase *itâ etēqu*, used in line 17, literally means "to cross a boundary" but may also have a more ethically-charged meaning in some contexts, "to transgress." A similar semantic range exists in the use of the BH root עבר. For example, in Job 14:6 עבר with חֹק as its object means "to cross a boundary or limit": חֻקָּיו עָשִׂיתָ וְלֹא יַעֲבוֹר, "you have made his limits that he cannot cross." But other objects may be used with the verb to bring out the ethical idea more explicitly and to identify what one has transgressed (as is sometimes the case with Akkadian *etēqu*, see CAD E, 389). Thus, for example, one may illicitly cross or transgress a commandment (מִצְוָה, e.g., Deut 26:13, 2 Chron 24:20, and Esth 3:3 [of a human king]), a covenant (בְּרִית, e.g., Deut 17:2, Judg 2:20, Josh 7: 11, 15, 23:16, and Jer 34:18), divine instruction(s) (תּוֹרָה / תּוֹרַת, e.g., Dan 9:11, Isa 24:5), or the word of Yahweh (פִּי יְהוָה, e.g., Num 14:41, 22:18, 1 Sam 15:24, Prov 8:29 [פִּיו]). Given the fact that Israel is often addressed in the Bible as a group, it should be no surprise that many of the biblical references talk about collective transgression (but see Esth 3:3).

TRANSLATION:

1. Incantation: O warrior Marduk, whose anger (is) a flood,
2. Whose forgiving (is that of) a merciful father.
3. Speaking without hearing has stirred me,
4. Calling out without reply has slighted me.
5. (This situation) has expelled the strength of my heart,
6. Like an old man, it has bowed me low.
7. O great lord, Marduk, merciful god!
8. Human beings, by whatever name—
9. Who (among them) can ascertain their own sin?
10. Who has not been negligent; what (person) has not sinned?
11. Who can understand the way of a god?
12. I ought to be vigilant lest I acquire sin,
13. I ought to search out relentlessly the sanctuaries of life,
14. (But) it is decreed by the gods to go about tasks under a curse,
15. For a man to bear the hand of the god.
16. As for me, your servant, though I have committed sin,
17. Though I have transgressed (lit., crossed the boundary of the god),
18. Disregard that (i.e., the sins) from my youth, known (or) unknown,
19. May (it) not cause concern; (rather) forgive my guilt, cancel my punishment.
20. Illuminate my confusion,

21. Clear my consternation.
22. May the guilt of my father, my grandfather, the guilt of my mother, my grandmother,
23. The guilt of my family, kin, and clan,
24. Not draw near to me. Let it go elsewhere.
25. (If ?) my god (i.e., Marduk ?) causes me to find favor, purify me like grass!
26. Entrust me to the favorable hands of my (personal) god and goddess for well-being and life.
27. May I stand before you perpetually with prayers, requests, and petitions.
28. Let the abundant people of the well-organized land praise you!
29. Forgive my guilt, cancel my guilt.
30. O warrior Marduk, forgive my guilt, cancel my guilt.
31. O great lady Zarpanitu, forgive my guilt, cancel my guilt.
32. O excellent name Nabu, forgive my guilt.
33. O great lady Tashmetu, forgive my guilt.
34. O warrior Nergal, forgive my guilt.
35. O gods who dwell in Anu (i.e., the heavens), forgive my guilt.
36. The great guilt that I have committed since the day of my youth,
37. Disperse (it), forgive (it) sevenfold.
38. May your heart, like the father who engendered me,
39. And (like) the mother who gave birth to me, return to normal.
40. O warrior Marduk, restore me to health, that I may resound your praises!

41. It is the wording of a lifted-hand to Marduk.

42. Its ritual: In front of Marduk you place an incense burner with juniper. 43. You set up a portable altar. You set out a *mersu*-cake, honey, and ghee. 44. You libate first-class beer. The seed of *mashtakal*-plant you toss into the oil. 45. Before Marduk you set (it). You say a recitation, and you smear the oil.

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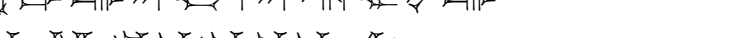
6. 
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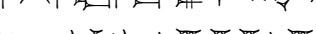
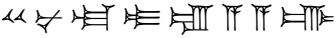
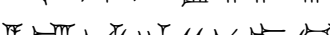
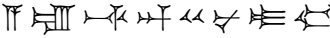
10. 
11. 
12. 
13. 
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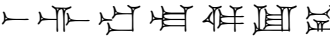
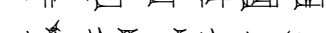
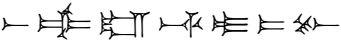
16. 
17. 
18. 
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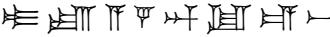
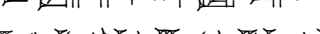
22. 
23. 
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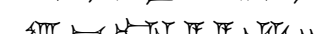
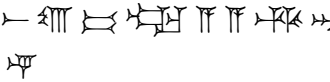
25. 
26. 
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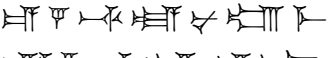
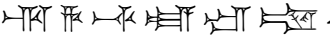
28. 
29. 
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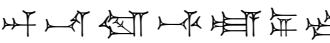
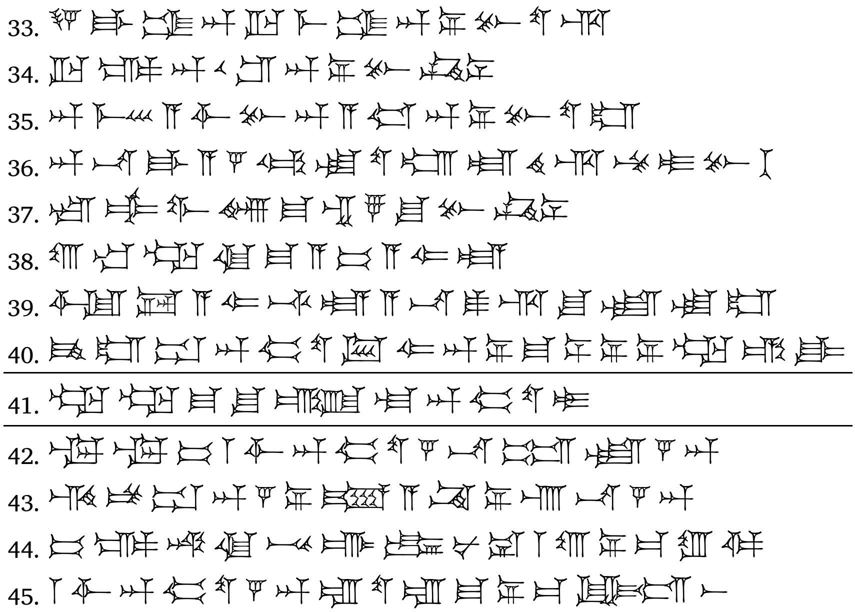
32. 



A Shuilla: Marduk 2

KYLE GREENWOOD

MARDUK:

See page 291.

THE PRAYER:[1]

Like other shuilla-prayers, this prayer to Marduk consists of an introductory hymn (lines 1–9), a petition (lines 12–20 [13–21]), and a benediction (lines 21–25 [25–27]).[2] The prayer concludes with a ritual formula. Abusch has outlined the structure of the entire prayer as follows:

I. Introductory Hymn (1–9)
  A. Capsule Shuilla (10–11) [10–12]
II. Prayer for Success (12–20) [13–21]
  A′. Capsule Shuilla (21–22) [22–24]
III. Concluding Benediction (23–25) [25–27]

Unlike other shuilla-prayers, this prayer has two summary statements, one immediately preceding the petition and one immediately following the petition.

If the prayer were indeed chiastic in structure, one would expect the central literary unit to display some of the characteristics of the entire unit. In fact, this is very much the case. One can readily appreciate the prayer's grammatical sophistication.

a *lukšud* (precative) (12) [13]
  b *šuškin* (imperative) (13–14) [14–15]
    c *liqbû* (precative) (15) [16]
      d *lizziz* (precative) (16) [17]
      d′ *lizziz* (precative) (17) [18]

[1] This brief introduction draws upon Tzvi Abusch's thorough and insightful literary analysis of this prayer. For a more detailed presentation, the reader is directed to that study.
[2] Since this numbering differs from Abusch's study, his numbering system has been indicated in brackets.

c′ *lū kayān* (precative) (18) [19]
b′ *šurkam-ma* (imperative) (19) [20]
a′ *lū magrat* (precative) (20) [21]

Not only is there balance in the verbal forms, but there is concentric movement in the person of the verbal forms: 1–2–3–3–3–3–2–1.[3] Furthermore, this balance is evident in the themes: success ‖ acceptance; mouth, mind ‖ speak, hear, obey; courtier and attendant ‖ protective god; god ‖ goddess. Within the framework of the petition, the supplicant requests success and protection, which come hand-in-hand. In order to receive protection from his personal deities, the supplicant must be successful in his moral and religious obligations.

Two summary statements (lines 10–11 [10–12], 21–22 [22–24]) flank the petition section. The inclusion of the summary statements is a deviation from the standard shuilla-prayer structure. However, they serve two important literary functions. First, as Abusch notes, these summaries or "capsules" consist of two parallel sections with shared vocabulary and forms.

Invocation:
Marduk bēlu rabû (*ilu rēmēnû*) ‖ *Marduk bēlu rabû*
Prayer for Life:
ina qibītīka kitti lubluṭ lušlim-ma ‖ *napištī qīša balāṭ napištīya qibi*
Promise of Service:
luštammar ilūtka ‖ *maḫarka namriš atalluka lušbi*

In each case, the capsule both introduces and is distinct from the prayer section that immediately follows. Moreover, each capsule is constructed along the norms of a regular shuilla-prayer: hymn (invocation), petition, benediction. Second, since they are parallel with each other, these capsules broaden the chiastic structure displayed in the petition section.

At the outermost edges of the chiasm are the introductory hymn and benediction. The hymnic introduction, lines 1–9, consists of three stanzas of three lines each. According to Abusch, "the first stanza emphasized city and temple; the second, temple and human life; the third stanza serves both to broaden Marduk's focus of concern and action as well as to bring together again locality, temple, and human community—but this time on a higher level of generalization" (8). This introduction functions to convey Marduk's expansion from local deity and divine offspring to universal and supreme god. The benediction recalls the main theme addressed in the introductory hymn. Marduk is a universal deity with historical connections to the great gods of Eridu.

The overall effect of the structure is to create a literary version of a presentation scene, a glyptic motif commonly seen on Mesopotamian cylinder seals. The supplicant prepares to meet Marduk in the center of the petition section. He then meets Marduk in the two capsules, at which point he would present his

[3] This particular facet of the text is not discussed by Abusch.

offerings. Finally, in the outer bands of the prayer, he praises the deity as one worthy of his offerings.

As is the case with other incantation-prayers in this volume, this shuilla was utilized in lustration rituals. The king would recite this and other incantations as part of the royal ceremonies of *Bīt mēseri*, "House of Detention," and *Bīt rimki*, "House of Ablution," in the hope of counteracting the evil effects wrought by impurity, thereby restoring his health.

The textual tradition for Marduk 2 is extensive.[4] The benefits of such a broad corpus are invaluable. Of course, this leads to certain inconsistencies among the MSS. In addition to the expected textual variants, some MSS lack the formulaic conclusion. Furthermore, there are some discrepancies in line numbering. For the purposes of this volume and due to the fact that an up-to-date edition that utilizes all of the MSS is lacking, this treatment follows Ebeling's edition, which is based on KAR 59. Other MSS will be used only selectively to fill its gaps or to provide better readings.

[4] See Ebeling; Meier; and Mayer in the bibliography. See also Loretz-Mayer, AOAT 34, nos. 26–30; *SpBTU* II 11; and *SpBTU* III 78 rev. for copies of Mayer's unpublished and additional textual witnesses.

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Text. Edition: Ebeling, *AGH*, 64–65. PBS I/2, 108. Translations: Foster, 686–87. Seux, 290–92. von Soden, 297–98. Studies: Tzvi Abusch. "The Form and Meaning of a Babylonian Prayer to Marduk." *JAOS* 103 (1983), 3–15. Rykle Borger. "Die Beschwörungsserie *Bīt Mēseri* und Die Himmelfahrt Henochs." *JNES* 33 (1974), 183–96. King, *BMS*, 44–47. Mayer, *UFBG*, 395. G. Meier. "Die zweite Tafel der Serie *bīt mēseri*." *AfO* 14 (1941–1944), 137–52 (= IV R^{2*} 21 no. 1(c)).

1. ÉN *ga-áš-ru šu-pu-ú e-tel* ERI.DU$_{10}$

Line 1: ÉN = *šiptu*, "incantation, ritual wording." This word only marks the point at which the prayer begins; it is not part of the prayer itself. The prayer begins with a series of epithets. *Gašru*, "strong, powerful, outstanding," and *šūpû*, "splendid, famous, great, brilliant," are both ms adjectives modifying *etellu*, "pre-eminent one, prince, lord." ERI.DU$_{10}$ is the Sumerian rendering of Eridu, a city in Southern Babylonia. According to the Sumerian King List and the so-called Eridu Genesis, the office of kingship descended from heaven and was first established at Eridu.

šiptu: *gašru šūpû etel Eridu*

2. *ru-bu-ú ti-iz-qa-ru bu-kúr* ^{d}*nu-dim-mud*

3. ^{d}AMAR.UTU *šal-ba-bu mu-riš* é-engur-ra

4. EN é-sag-íl *tukul-ti* KÁ.DINGIR.RA^{ki}

5. *ra-im* é-zi-da *mu-šal-lim* ZI-*ti*

6. *a-šá-red* é-maḫ-ti-la *mu-deš-šu-ú* TI.LA

Line 2: NUN = *rubû*, "prince," is a common epithet in royal inscriptions (see M. J. Seux, *Épithètes royales akkadiennes et sumériennes* [Paris: Letouzey et ANÉ, 1967], 251–56). *Tizqāru* (*tizqaru*), "supreme, exalted, prominent." *Bukru*, "son, offspring." Nudimmud is an epithet for the god better known as Enki in Sumerian and Ea in Akkadian (see page 227). In the Eridu Genesis (also known as the Ziusudra Epic), Nudimmud was appointed as the patron deity of Eridu. The phrase *bukur Nudimmud* recalls the mythologies in which Marduk is identified as the son of Nudimmud. Thus, lines 1–2 invoke the memory of Marduk's historical significance in the Babylonian pantheon.

rubû tizqāru bukur Nudimmud

Line 3: ^{d}AMAR.UTU, "bull-calf of the sun/storm," is one of several designations for Marduk (see page 291). The adjective *šalbābu*, "wise" is a common epithet for Marduk. *Ruššu* (D of *râšu*), "to give cause for rejoicing, celebration." This participle presumably refers to the anonymous worshippers of Marduk at É-engur-ra. This temple, whose Sumerian name means "House of the Sweet Waters," is not attested elsewhere as a temple of Marduk. However, it is known to be the name for temples of Inana and Nanshe, as well as a dais for Ea at E-sagil (see A. R. George, *House Most High: The Temples of Ancient Mesopotamia* [Mesopotamian Civilizations 5; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1993], #248). The five participles in lines 3–7 are used substantively as epithets of the deity.

Marduk šalbābu murīš E-engura

Line 4: EN = *bēlu*, "lord." É-sag-íl, "House Whose Top is High," was the Sumerian name of Marduk's temple in Babylon (George, *House Most High*, #967). *Tukultu*, "trust, object of trust, support." KÁ.DINGIR.RA^{ki} = *Bābili*, "Babylon." There are other orthographies attested for the name of Babylon in the various MSS, e.g., E^{ki} and *báb-ì-lí*.

bēl E-sagil tukulti Bābili

Line 5: *Râmu*, "to love." É-zi-da, which means "True House" in Sumerian, was known primarily as a temple for Nabu, but Marduk was venerated periodically at a temple by this name in Borsippa (George, *House Most High*, #1236). *Šullumu* (D of *šalāmu*), "to preserve, to keep well." *Napištu* and *balāṭu* (see line 6) are parallel terms meaning "life." Taking line 21 into consideration, *balāṭu* has been translated as "health" in an effort to remain faithful to the Akkadian nuances.

rāʾim E-zida mušallim napišti

Line 6: *Ašarēdu* (*ašaridu*), "foremost, prominent." TI.LA = *balāṭu*, "life, health." The phrase *mudeššû balāṭi* does not translate smoothly. The D stem participle of *dešû*, "to be or

7. *ṣu-lul ma-a-ti ga-mil* UN.MEŠ DAGAL.MEŠ

8. UŠUMGAL *ka-liš* BARAG.MEŠ

9. *šum-ka ka-liš ina pi-i* UN.MEŠ *ṭa-a-bi*

10. ^{d}AMAR.UTU EN GAL-*ú* DINGIR *re-mé-nu-ú*

11. *ina qí-bi-ti-ka kit-ti lu-ub-luṭ lu-uš-lim-ma lu-uš-tam-ma-ra* DINGIR-*ut-ka*

become abundant," denotes causation of abundance. In terms of one's life or well-being, the English verb "invigorate" provides a close approximation to the original intent. É-maḫ-ti-la was the Sumerian name of Marduk's throne in E-sagil (George, *House Most High*, #735). Most MSS preserve a Sumerian word play in lines 5–6 between the name of the temple in the first stichos and Marduk's relationship to humanity in the second. Thus, é-**zi**-da . . . ZI-*ti* ‖ é-mah-**ti-la** . . . **TI.LA** (see Abusch, 6).

ašarēd E-maḫtila mudeššû balāṭi

Line 7: *Ṣulūlu*, "roof, protection." *Gamālu*, "to do a favor, to be kind to, to spare, to save." UN = *nišū*, "people." DAGAL = *rapšu* (m), *rapaštu* (f), "broad, expansive, wide." *Nišī rapšāti* literally means, "an extensive people," connoting that the people are vast in number and widespread in geography. *Nišū* is a feminine noun, hence the feminine ending on the adjective.

ṣulūl māti gāmil nišī rapšāti

Line 8: UŠUMGAL (= *ušumgallu*) is composed of the two signs GAL-UŠUM. Its primary definition is "great dragon," or "great serpent." This word was a royal and divine epithet, meaning "omnipotent, sovereign." *Kališ*, "all, everywhere." BARAG is a Sumerian word that comes into Akkadian as *parakku*, meaning "dais, sanctuary, chapel."

ušumgal kališ parakkī

Line 9: In the ancient world *šumu*, "name," entailed the identity of the one possessing the name. The ability to speak the deity's name gave the supplicant an element of control over that deity. The supplicant is confessing to Marduk that those who know the deity's name are properly handling that name. *Ina pī* literally means "in the mouth of," but the idiom works best in English as "on the lips of." *Ṭâbu*, "to be(come) good, sweet, favorable." The form here is a G 3ms predicative.

šumka kališ ina pī nišī ṭāb

Line 10: *Rēmēnû*, "merciful." Capsule A of lines 10–11, with its renewed invocation (see line 3), forms a transition between the opening hymn and the petition section of the prayer.

Marduk bēlu rabû ilu rēmēnû

Line 11: Line 11 contains three consecutive 1cs precatives, as indicated by the *lu–* preformative, rather than *li–* (see also the end of line 12). *Kīnu* (m), *kittu* (f), "true, just, correct, steadfast." MSS vary with regard to this adj. Variants include *kabitti*, "heavy, severe, weighty," and *ṣīrti*, "exalted, supreme, august." *Luštammar* is in the Gt stem, from *šamāru*, "to extol, praise." Note the abstract ending (*–ūt*) on *ilu*, rendering the noun as

12. *e-ma ú-ṣa-am-ma-ru lu-uk-šu-ud*

13. *šu-uš-kin kit-ti ina pi-ia*

14. *šub-ši* INIM SIG_5*-tì ina lìb-bi-ia*

15. *ti-ru u na-an-za-zi liq-bu-ú* SIG_5*-tì*

16. DINGIR.MU *li-zi-ziz i-na im-ni-ia*

"divinity" or "god-ness." Recall that clauses joined by *–ma* are logically connected. Since *lušlim-ma* is followed by another injunctive form, we should understand *luštammar ilūtka* as a resultative clause.

ina qibītīka kitti lubluṭ lušlim-ma luštammar ilūtka

Line 12: The particle *ēma*, "whatever," introduces a dependent clause, which is concluded by *uṣammaru*, a 1cs durative of *ṣummuru* (D of *ṣamāru*), "to strive for, to aim, to plan." The *–u* suffix is the subjunctive marker. *Kašādu*, "to reach, to achieve." In military contexts, the verb implies victory; that is, the army *reaches* its goal.

ēma uṣammaru lukšud

Line 13: *Šakānu*, "to put, to place, to establish." *Kittu*, "truth, justice, steadfastness," is a noun and should be distinguished semantically from the homonym, a fem. adj., in line 12. "Place truth" is a common way of speaking about one's desire for a god to establish the right thing in a particular situation. Here the supplicant wants Marduk to give the right words to say so they can find the social success that they presently lack. Having received this truth, the supplicant may be better positioned for successful intercession.

šuškin kitti ina pīya

Line 14: *Šubšû* (Š of *bašû*), "to cause to be, to create." INIM = *amātu* (*awātum*), "word, matter." SIG_5 = *damqu* (m), *damiqtu* (f), "good, favorable." Note the parallel structure of lines 13 and 14: imperative, noun, prepositional phrase.

šubši amāta damiqti ina libbīya

Line 15: *Tīru* and *nanzāzu* are interchangeable terms referring to people of social prominence, "courtier, attendant." *Qabû*, "to speak, to utter, to pronounce, to report." *Damiqtu*, "favor, goodwill, goodness," is a noun and should be distinguished from the homonym, a fem. adj., in line 14. *Damiqta qabû* literally means "to speak good will, favor," but may be translated idiomatically as "to intercede" (see CAD D, 64). The supplicant's desire is that the divinely placed "good word" will be received by the social elites, who will then intercede on his behalf.

tīru u nanzāzu liqbû damiqtī

Line 16: MU is a logogram for the 1cs pronominal suffix. One should read it as *–ī* in lines 16 and 17 since the nouns are in the nominative case. By contrast, note the *–ya* suffix on *imnu*, "right," and *šumēlu*, "left" (see line 17), both of which are in the genitive case. *Izuzzu/uzuzzu*, "to stand." For a detailed study of this verb, see J. Huehnergard, "*Izuzzum* and *Itūlum*," in *Riches Hidden in Secret Places: Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Memory of Thorkild Jacobsen* (ed. Tzvi Abusch; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 161–85. Lines 16–

17. ^{d}15.MU *li-zi-ziz i-na* GÙB-*ia*

18. DINGIR *mu-šal-li-mu ina* Á-*ia lu-ú ka-a-a-an*

19. *šur-kám-ma qa-ba-a še-ma-a u ma-ga-ra*

20. *a-mat a-qab-bu-ú* GIM *a-qab-bu-ú lu-ú ma-ag-rat*

21. ^{d}AMAR.UTU EN GAL-*ú* ZI-*ti qí-i-šá* TI.LA ZI-*ia qí-bi*

17 introduce a significant feature of ancient Near Eastern religion. The common person did not have access to the great royal temples. Thus, individuals sought a personal god or goddess. The term "to acquire a god" (Akk. *ila rašû*; Sum. lú-dingir tuk) is synonymous with what we would call luck or fortune (CAD I/J, 101). Since misfortune, such as illness or disease, was thought to have derived from demons, the personal deities, standing on the right and left, may have served an apotropaic function, thus ensuring good luck. For more on the personal deities, see page 431.

ilī lizziz ina imnīya

Line 17: The divine number for Ishtar is 15. In this case, 15 = *ištaru*, used generically to refer to the supplicant's personal goddess. GÙB = *šumēlu*, "left side."

ištarī lizziz ina šumēlīya

Line 18: *Šullumu* (D of *šalāmu*), see line 5. The participle *mušallimu* functions as an attributive adjective modifying *ilu*. *Kayyān*, "constantly, regularly." *Lū*, "let (it) be." Á = *idu*, "arm, side, strength."

ilu mušallimu ina idīya lū kayyān

Line 19: *Šurkam-ma* is a G impv. from the root *šarāku*, "to grant" with ventive (*–am*) and enclitic *–ma*. The impv. precedes three infinitives in the accusative case serving as direct objects of the finite verb. *Šemû*, "to hear." *Magāru*, "to follow an order, to obey" (see CAD M/I, 34). There is some discrepancy in the exemplars on the final sign of the line. KAR 59 reads RI, while other MSS read RU or RA. Following King and Meier, the accusative reading has been adopted here.

šurkam-ma qabâ šemâ u magāra

Line 20: *Aqabbû* is a 1 cs G present with the subjunctive *–u*. GIM = *kīma*, "as, like." Because *amāt* is in the bound form, its syntactical function is to introduce the dependent clause. The 3fs form of the predicative, *magrat*, is used for agreement with its subject, the feminine noun *amātu*.

amāt aqabbû kīma aqabbû lū magrat

Line 21: *Qīša* (*qâšu*, "to give, to bestow") and *qibi* are both ms imperatives. When referring to the gods, *qabû* often has the meaning, "to give an order, decree." TI.LA = *balāṭu*, see line 6. *Balāṭ napištīya*, lit. "good health of my life," is an objective genitive construction. That is, *balāṭu* is not equivalent to *napištī*, but is manifest in it. Lines 21–22, comprise the prayer's third invocation, capsule A′.

Marduk bēlu rabû napištī qīša balāṭ napištīya qibi

22. IGI-*ka nam-riš a-tal-lu-ka lu-uš-bi*

23. ^{d}*en-líl liḫ-du-ka* ^{d}*é-a li-riš-ka*

24. DINGIR.MEŠ *šá kiš-šá-ti lik-ru-bu-ka*

25. DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ *lìb-ba-ka li-ṭib-bu*

Line 22: *Namriš*, "brilliantly, splendidly." Note the terminative-adverbial ending (*–iš*), indicating the manner in which the action of the verb is to be enacted. As a manner of walking, *namriš* has the sense of "radiantly" as in "a bright mood" (CAD N/I, 239). *Maḫru* (= IGI), "front, presence." *Atalluka* is a Gtn stem infinitive of *alāku* in the accusative case, meaning "to walk about, to roam about." It is the object of the precative *lušbi* (*šebû*, "to be satisfied, to be full"). For more on the Akkadian use of *maḫar atalluku*, see M. Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East," *JAOS* 90 (1970), 185–88. Lines 22–25 utilize a series of precatives to communicate the essence of the prayer.

maḫarka namriš atalluka lušbi

Line 23: The two precatives from *hadû* and *râšu*, both meaning "to rejoice (in/over)," are synonyms in parallel construction. Enlil (Akk. *Ellil*) is one of the most significant deities in Mesopotamia. In Sumerian mythology, he was known as ab-ba-dingir-re-ne, "father of the gods." His consort was Ninlil and together they bore many important deities, such as Adad, Nanna-Suen, Nergal, Nusku, and Shamash. Given the long, rich history of the ancient Near East, it is understandable that traditions regarding its many deities were not uniform. In some texts, Enlil was considered a descendent of Anu. Elsewhere, he was deemed a son of Ea. In either case, both Enlil and Ea are extremely important deities in the Babylonian pantheon. That they might rejoice over Marduk would be considered the highest of complements to the deity.

Ellil liḫdūka Ea liriška

Line 24: The reading *kiššatum* in KAR 59 is less desirable, since mimation is not attested elsewhere in the text and because one would expect the genitive case ending. Therefore, the present text follows *BMS* 9 and KAR 23. *Kiššatu* is a political, rather than cosmological term. It refers to the dominion of kings and deities in the inhabited world. *Karābu*, "to greet (with a blessing), to beseech," is the root of a common Akkadian word for prayer, *ikribu*.

ilū ša kiššati likrubūka

Line 25: *Ilū rabûtu* may refer to Enlil and Ea, since they are the nearest antecedents. However, this phrase generally refers to the divine council. The great gods seem to serve both a generic and a specific purpose, particularly in royal inscriptions. There the divine council may represent the entire pantheon available to the king, or it may refer to those specific deities relevant to the king for accomplishing a specific purpose. These purposes may include military aid or the protection of sacred structures (see Kyle R. Greenwood, "The Hearing Gods of the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions," *JANER* 10 (2010), 211–18). *Liṭibbū* is a 3mp precative from *ṭubbu* (D of *ṭâbu*), "to do something well, to satisfy."

ilū rabûtu libbaka liṭibbū

26. ka-inim-ma šu-íl-lá ^{d}amar-utu-kám

27. DÙ.DÙ.BI *šum*$_4$*-ma ina* KEŠDA *šum*$_4$*-ma ina* NÍG.N[A DÙ]

Line 26: This line is the prayer's rubric, which tells about the text's classification. In this case, the rubric identifies the form of the prayer and to whom it is directed. As is typical, the rubric is written in Sumerian.

Line 27: DÙ.DÙ.BI = *epuštašu*, "its ritual." KEŠDA = *riksu*, lit. means "knot, binding," but in ritual contexts it carries the connotation of arranging the show table with food and drink, that is, offerings, for the deity. The word is generally translated as "ritual arrangement" (CAD R, 351–52). NÍG.NA = *nignakku*, "incense burner." DÙ = *epēšu*, "to do, to make." *Šumma . . . šumma* is a syntactical construction indicating "either . . . or." In its present context, it signifies two options for performing the ritual. This line is a variation of an abbreviated ritual instruction commonly found in shuillas. It probably serves as the catchphrase to a fuller ritual, which the exorcist would recall and perform from memory (see Mayer, *UFBG*, 119, n.3).

epuštašu: *šumma ina riksi šumma ina nignakki teppuš*

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

Many comparisons could be made between the epithets of Marduk and those of Yahweh. Most are easily recognizable, such as prince (Isa 9:6), protection (Ps 41:2; 121:7; 146:9), salvation (Gen 49:18; Ps 3:8; Mic 7:7), support (2 Sam 22:19 ‖ Ps 18:18; 2 Chr 16:9), and wise (Job 9:4; 28:12–23; Prov 2:6). However, the epithet *tukulti Bābili* has an interesting parallel with BH, מְצֻדַת צִיּוֹן, "stronghold of Zion." *Tukultu* and מְצֻדָה are not semantic equivalents, but they connote similar concepts. The former literally means, "support, trust, reliance," while the latter means, "stronghold" or "fortress." According to biblical tradition, מְצֻדַת צִיּוֹן was the original name for Jerusalem (2 Sam 5:7 ‖ 1 Chr 11:5) prior to its conquest by David. Upon the completion of the temple, Jerusalem became the locus of Israel's deity. Thus, Zion was recognized as the holy mountain (Joel 4:17), Yahweh's throne (Ps 9:12) and dwelling place (Ps 76:3), the place where Yahweh's name dwelled (Isa 18:7) and whence his name shined forth (Ps 50:2). Although the actual phrase מְצֻדַת צִיּוֹן only occurs in the two aforementioned verses, the notion that Yahweh was the source of Zion's strength and support occurs elsewhere. In Ps 31:3, the psalmist cries out to Yahweh that the deity would be לְבֵית מְצוּדוֹת לְהוֹשִׁיעֵנִי "as a fortress to save me." The same idea is present elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, as well (e.g., Ps 9:9; 18:2; Jer 16:19; Joel 4:16; Nah 1:7). In the same way, Marduk is the source of support and trust for the city of Babylon and for all who worshipped him.

The idea of the personal god is not foreign to the biblical authors, although evidence of a personal goddess is not forthright. This is not to say that Yahweh or Elohim were only considered personal gods. Such an assertion could not be substantiated. However, there are instances where the theology of the personal god was, at the very least, in the background. Certainly, the ancestral narratives

were cognizant of the idea. In the Old Akkadian period, one way of referring to the personal god was *il abi*, "the god of the father," or "ancestral deity." This should immediately call to mind the biblical phrase אֱלֹהֵי אָבִי, "the god of my father," or more specifically אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, "the god of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (e.g. Exod 3:16). In fact, Jacob had some uncertainty whether or not he would claim Yahweh as his own personal god, placing stipulations on his commitment. If Jacob would return safely on his quest for a wife, וְהָיָה יְהוָה לִי לֵאלֹהִים, "then Yahweh will become my deity" (Gen 28:21). Another example from the Pentateuch is found in the account of Rachel and Laban. As Rachel leaves her father's home, she absconds his תְּרָפִים (Gen 31:19). While there is some degree of uncertainty over the precise meaning of this term, the underlying idea inherent in most suggestions is that it refers to the personal or household god.[1] If its etymology is rooted in רפא, "to heal,"[2] then the term fits well with the ancients' expectations of a personal god. Finally, Ps 22 may need to be considered in light of the belief in the personal god: אֵלִי אֵלִי לָמָּה עֲזַבְתָּנִי רָחוֹק מִישׁוּעָתִי דִּבְרֵי שַׁאֲגָתִי, "My god, my god, why have you abandoned me? Why are my groans so far from my deliverance?" The supplicant cries out to their deity, in this case Yahweh, as one who is under attack from disease, i.e., evil spirits, and is in desperate need of protection from this affliction.

Additionally, we find in the phrase *maḫarka namriš atalluka* (line 22) several interesting parallels. First, *namriš* derives from *nawāru* (> *namāru*). In Biblical Hebrew this root appears in noun form as נֵר (from נור), "lamp." The *u*-class medial vowel has been retained in the derivative noun מְנוֹרָה, "lampstand." Second, the Gtn infinitive *atalluku* corresponds directly to the Hebrew hitpael (Gtn) הִתְהַלֵּךְ. Furthermore, *maḫarka atalluku* is analogous to הִתְהַלֵּךְ לְפָנַי (Gen 17:1). The reflexive form of the verbs indicates repetitive, habitual action. Examples of this phrase are attested in Gen 24:40 and 48:15. Third, several of the psalms express the idea communicated in the phrase. Psalm 16:11 says, "You inform me of the way of life. Your presence is the fullness of joy. Good fortune is in your right hand forever." Even more striking is Ps 43, a psalm of lament with a similar theme as Capsule A′ of our prayer. Verse 4 reads, "Then I will go to the altar of God; to God, the source of my joy. I will praise you on the lyre, O God, my god." In both of these examples the psalmists articulate the same sentiment as the supplicant in our prayer to Marduk. That is, living in the presence of the deity brings immeasurable joy to the life of the worshiper.

[1] Karel van der Toorn, "The Nature of the Biblical Teraphim in the Light of Cuneiform Evidence," *CBQ* 52 (1990), 203–22.

[2] Hedwige Rouillard and Josef Tropper, "*trpym*, rituels de guérison et culte des ancêstres d'après 1 Samuel xix 11–17 et les texts parallèles d'Assur et de Nuzi," *VT* 37 (1987), 340–61.

TRANSLATION:

1. Incantation: Powerful, resplendent, lord of Eridu,
2. Supreme prince, the firstborn of Nudimmud,

3. Wise Marduk, who brings about rejoicing at E-engura.
4. Lord of E-sagila, support of Babylon,
5. Beloved of E-zida, protector of life,
6. Pre-eminent of E-maḫtila, invigorator of health,
7. Guardian of the land, savior of the masses,
8. Unrivaled ruler of all the sanctuaries,
9. Your name is sweet on lips of people everywhere.
10. Marduk, great lord, compassionate god,
11. By your righteous decree may I live and be well, that I may praise your divinity.
12. May I succeed at whatever I plan.
13. Place truth in my mouth.
14. Create a good word in my heart.
15. May courtier and attendant intercede on my behalf.
16. May my god stand at my right,
17. May my goddess stand at my left.
18. May the protective god be always at my side.
19. Grant to me (the ability) to speak, hear, and obey.
20. May the matter on which I speak be accepted in the manner in which I speak (it).
21. Marduk, great lord, grant me my life. Command good health for my life.
22. May I be fully satisfied walking about radiantly before you.
23. May Enlil rejoice over you, may Ea exult over you.
24. May the gods of the universe bless you.
25. May the great gods satisfy your heart.

26. It is the wording of a lifted-hand to Marduk.

27. Its ritual: you perform (this) either with a ritual arrangement or with a censer.

CUNEIFORM:

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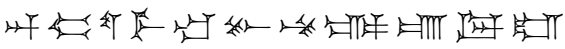
3. 
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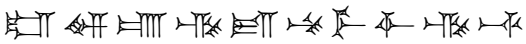
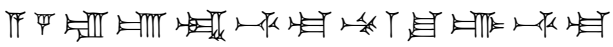
5. 
6. 
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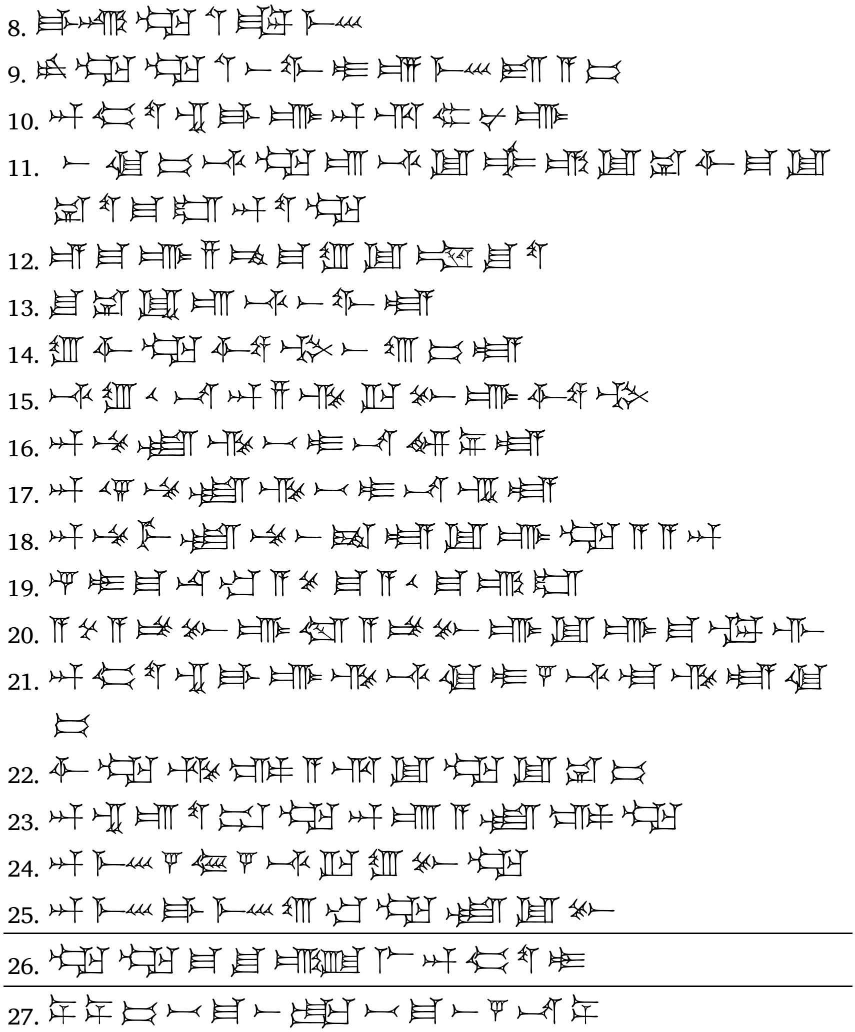

A Shuilla: Nabu 1

ALAN LENZI

NABU:

A Babylonian scribal god hailing from Borsippa, Nabu was the son of Marduk and a major god in the post-OB Mesopotamian pantheon. His consort was Tashmetu. Although attested already in the early second millennium, we can trace Nabu's rise to prominence only starting in the later second millennium. His status in the pantheon reached its zenith during the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods, as attested by the several temples and shrines dedicated to him in many major Assyrian and Babylonian cities (e.g., Nineveh, Nimrud, Borsippa, and Babylon). Personal names are further proof of his importance. Nabu was the most common deity invoked in Neo-Assyrian theophoric names and second only to Marduk in first millennium Babylonia. Note especially the Neo-Babylonian royal names Nebuchadnezzar (*Nabû-kudurrī-uṣur*, "O Nabu, guard my firstborn") and Nabonidus (*Nabû-naʾid*, "Nabu is praised").

Archaeologists have uncovered tablets in several of Nabu's É-zi-da temples ("The True House"). The Nimrud finds are especially impressive, which have yielded copies of the Succession Treaty of Esarhaddon (see SAA 2, no. 6) in a throne room and about three hundred tablets of literary content in the temple's library (see CTN IV).[1] Tablets found in libraries at Ashur, Nineveh, and Huzirina (modern Sultan Tepe) bear formulaic colophons that clearly demonstrate scribal devotion to Nabu (e.g., Hunger, *BAK*, nos. 233, 318, and 353, the latter of which reads *tākilka ul ibâš Nabû*, "the one who trusts in you, O Nabu, will not be put to shame").

In keeping with his function as the scribe of the gods, Nabu was represented by a stylus or wedge in iconography. Celestially, he is associated with the planet Mercury. He is mentioned by name in the Bible in Isa 46:1.

[1] For a general overview of the tablet finds, see Joan and David Oates, *Nimrud: An Assyrian Imperial City Revealed* (London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 2001), 203–10.

THE PRAYER:

The prayer adapts the typical three-part structure of shuillas. It starts with the customary hymnic introduction in lines 1–11. Line 12 contains the usual self-identification formula and recognition of the supplicant's humble position in relation to the deity ("the servant who fears you"). Lines 13–20 comprise the prayer's petition section, thematically-centered on the supplicant's old age. A description of piety (lines 13–14) precedes the complaint (lines 15–18). A recapitulation of the invocation follows in line 19 (compare with line 1) just before the prayer's very brief petition proper in line 20. The prayer concludes with a one line formulaic promise of future praise (line 21).

Joel Hunt has recognized a tri-partite structure to the opening hymn based on grammatical and thematic features. In lines 1–5 substantives and participial phrases that describe Nabu's character predominate. These lines present a timeless portrait of Nabu's attributes. In Lines 6–8 complete sentences using third person verbs describe Nabu's word, his relationship to his father, Marduk, and thus his position within the hierarchy of the gods. Finally, lines 9–10, using complete sentences and second person verbs (if one follows Mayer's MS B in line 9), characterize Nabu as one willing and able to help a supplicant with angry personal deities. The use of second person verbs in this final part of the hymn begins a transition between the hymnic introduction and the petition section.

Although its structure is fairly typical, the prayer offers a couple of points of literary interest. I have already mentioned how line 19 near the end of the prayer, positioned between lament and petition, re-invokes the deity with words that recall the first line. Notice also that the use of the words "days" and "years" in line 17, part of the lament, recalls the vocabulary of line 3, part of the hymnic introduction. The employment of the verb *ṣabātu*, "to seize, hold," in line 20 harks back to the same verb in line 2, if the restoration is correct: Nabu holds his stylus; the supplicant seizes Nabu's prayer. Finally, just as Nabu is the one who opens the ear (line 2) to receive divine insight, the supplicant is the one who opens their hands (line 14) in prayer (for a possible pun, see the notes on line 14). It seems the prayer re-uses the vocabulary of the first few lines throughout the remainder of the prayer, but especially toward its conclusion, thereby giving the prayer a certain coherence with regard to language.

The prayer presents the supplicant as an elderly person (lines 14 and 17), perhaps one who has lived a life of devotion (line 13). Despite their humility before the gods and humans (?, lines 15–16), they feel they have not received the favor and mercy due them (line 18). The precise nature and origin of the mistreatment—whether from the gods or humans or both—are not entirely clear. But one might infer from lines 9–10 that the anger of the supplicant's personal gods is involved. One might also consider, in light of the supplicant's years having come to an end (line 17), that the supplicant worries about their impending death. In any case, the supplicant wishes to be set free from that which is troubling them (line 20). There is little more that can be said without indulging in speculation.

Two of the three MSS used in Mayer's edition (A and B) preserve ritual instructions, though Mayer himself did not include them in his edition (see Ebeling, *AGH*, 12, who provides several conjectural restorations). Unfortunately, both tablets are broken or abraded in the same area of the ritual instructions, leaving us with an incomplete picture of the actions prescribed. What does seem relatively clear is the setting up of censors and having the supplicant repeat some of the words of the prayer. The final act is a prostration, a fitting gesture of subordination as one leaves the presence of a superior.

One final comment: The colophons of MSS A and B indicate that the tablets were copied by young scribes (*šamallû ṣeḫru*), perhaps wishing to make a good impression on their patron deity (see Hunger, *BAK*, nos. 235 and 395).[2]

[2] Mayer's MS A (KAR 25 +) contains the following shuillas: Nabu 1, Marduk 2, 18, 19, Nabu 2, Sin 9, and Enlil 1b, in that order, followed by a fourteen-line colophon, in which a very proud young scribe traces his genealogy back several generations. MS B (STT 55) contains Marduk 2 and Nabu 1, followed by a fragmentary, one line colophon.

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Text. Edition: Mayer, *UFBG*, 469–72.[i] Translations: Foster, 697. Seux, 301–2. Mayer, 471–72. Study: Joel Hunt, "The Hymnic Introduction of Selected *Šuilla* Prayers Directed to Ea, Marduk, and Nabû." Ph.D. Dissertation. Brandeis University, 1994, 187–232.

[i] A copy of Mayer's MS C (K.3433) is now available in Loretz-Mayer, AOAT 34, no. 73.

1. [ÉN ^{d}A]G$^{?}$ *reš-tu-ú* IBILA *ke-e-nu*

Line 1: ÉN = *šiptu*, "incantation." This word marks the beginning of the prayer. It is not a part of the prayer itself. ^{d}AG = *Nabû*. There is no question that this prayer is directed to Nabu (see lines 7, 19, and 22). There is, however, some question as to whether the text actually indicates this by stating the deity's name at its beginning (the sign read as AG here is partly broken). *Rēštû*, "firstborn, preeminent." One's semantic decision should be based on the whole line, especially the meaning of IBILA. For confirmation, see the usage in CAD R, 275, which cites this lexeme in other contexts alongside *māru* and *aplu*. IBILA = *aplu*, "heir, son." *Kēnu* (*kīnu*), "true." Here, the word denotes legitimacy, as in the "true heir."

šiptu: *Nabû rēštû aplu kēnu*

2. [*ṣa-bit*] GI *ṭup-pi* BAD-*ú ḫa-sis-si*

3. [. . . UD[?]].MEŠ *ba-ru-ú* MU.AN.NA.MEŠ

4. [*e-ṭir*] *na-piš-ti mu-ter gi-mil-li*

Line 2: *Ṣabātu,* "to seize, to hold." GI = *qanû*, "reed" (*qan* = bound form). *Ṭuppu*, "tablet." One should translate the words "the reed of the tablet" in light of the material culture of the Mesopotamian scribe. With what did scribes write? Note the sound play between *kēnu* and *qan* in lines 1 and 2, respectively. Is this significant? Note also the use of *kittu*, the feminine form of *kēnu*, in the following phrase said of Nabu: *ṣābit-ma qan ṭuppu kittu*, "(Nabu), who holds the proper stylus" (cited in CAD K, 393). BAD = *pītu*, "opening" (lit.); or BAD = *petû*, "to open." *Ḫasissu* is usually written *ḫasīsu* (see *CDA*, 109, CAD Ḫ, 126, and the variant in Mayer's MS C: *ḫa-si-*[*si*]), "aperture of the ear, understanding." BAD may be understood as either the noun *pītu* or a participle, *pētû*, "the one who opens." The former interpretation yields *pīt ḫasissi*, literally, "opening of the ear," which denotes extraordinary intelligence (CAD P, 446). Here the phrase would imply that extraordinary intelligence is an attribute of the deity and is related to or possibly a result of Nabu's scribal ability. But what is one to do with the phonetic complement *–u*? The latter interpretation (BAD = *pētû*) maintains the grammatical parallel with lines 3 and 4 (and the restoration in line 2) and implies that Nabu, as the paradigmatic scribe, imparts knowledge to human scribes. The implication of the phrase is revelatory, as *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* II 8, using the near synonym *uznu*, demonstrates: *zaqīqu abāl-ma ul upatti uznī*, "I prayed to the dream god, but he did not open my ear." As for the phonetic complement on BAD, in SB Akkadian a participle from a III-weak root in construct with a following substantive often ends with *–û* (see Brigitte R. M. Groneberg, *Syntax, Morphologie und Stil der jungbabylonischen „hymnischen" Literatur*, 2 Vols. [Freiburger Altorientalische Studien 14/1–2; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1987], 1.95).

ṣābit qan ṭuppi pētû ḫasissi

Line 3: UD.MEŠ = *ūmū* (f. *ūmātu*), plural(s) of *ūmu*, "day." *Barû*, "to watch over, to inspect, to observe"; also used technically by scribes in tablet colophons, "to collate." The latter usage is not appropriate here, but may provide background information for interpreting Nabu's epithet here in line 3b. MU.(AN.NA.)MEŠ = *šanātu*, plural of *šattu*, "year" (see line 17 also).

. . . ūmī bārû šanāti

Line 4: *Eṭēru*, "to spare (someone)." Possibly read [*na-ṣir*], from *naṣāru*, "to protect, to guard." *Napištu,* "life." *Turru* (D of *târu*) *gimilla*, "to return a kindness, to avenge." The social and literary context in which this phrase is used determines the kind of return one will receive, good or bad (see CAD G, 74–75 for examples). Given the positive epithet in line 4a, the returning of a kindness may seem most appropriate. But, one may also entertain the idea that line 4a is directed at the speaker of the prayer while 4b against those who would threaten the speaker's life. In this case, avenging may be the best interpretation. Given the possibilities, one may wish to choose a translation that conveys both posi-

5. [SAG.KAL] DINGIR.MEŠ *šu-mu kab-tu*$_4$

6. [*zi-kir*]-*šu ul e-ni a-bu ba-nu-šú*

7. [^{d}]TU.TU *ul e-ni zi-kir* ^{d}AG DUMU-*šú*

8. [*in*]*a* DINGIR.MEŠ *ma-ši-šu a-mat-su ṣi-rat*

9. [*š*]*a* DINGIR-*šú is-bu-su tu-sa-ḫar* GÚ-*su*

tive and negative connotations of the phrase. For example, Nabu is "one who responds to actions in kind."

ēṭir napišti mutēr gimilli

Line 5: SAG.KAL = *ašarēdu* (*ašaridu*), "leader, foremost." DINGIR.MEŠ = *ilū*, "gods." *Ašarēd ilī* is a very common title for various deities in prayers (see CAD A/2, 417). *Šumu*, "name." *Kabtu* (= DUGUD), "heavy, weighty, important." See line 28.

ašarēd ilī šumu kabtu

Line 6: *Zikru*, "speech, command, name." The pronominal suffix on *zikru* refers to Nabu, who is the center of attention here. *Enû*, "to change." The subject for this verb is in the second part of the line. *Bānû*, "progenitor, creator." This term is commonly found in apposition with *abu*, "father." See CAD B, 94.

zikiršu ul enni abu bānûšu

Line 7: ^{d}TU.TU = *Marduk*. DUMU = *māru*, "son." Notice the grammatical and semantic parallel constructions in lines 6 and 7. The verb, *ul enni*, and the kinship terms, *bānû* and *māru*, occupy the same place in each line, but there is a chiastic pattern in the positions of *zikiršu / zikir Nabû* and *abu /* ^{d}TU.TU.

Marduk ul enni zikir Nabû mārišu

Line 8: *Māšu*, "twin brother," is the third kinship term in the last few lines. Mayer's MS B has *maš-še-šu* (normalized *maššêšu*). *Maššû* is a by-form of *māšu* (see CAD M/1, 401). How might one understand the idea of the gods as Nabu's twin brothers? Perhaps he is/was their equal or peer. *Amātu* (*awātum*), "word." *Ṣīru*, "august, supreme, exalted," is a very common adjective used with divinity (see CAD Ṣ, 210–12). Here the adjective is predicative (3fs). The exaltation of Nabu's word in the latter part of the line may indicate his position of authority *over* those gods once his peers.

ina ilī māšišu amāssu ṣīrat

Line 9: Notice the change of person here and in line 10. The prayer now directly addresses Nabu with second person verbs. Lines 9 and 10 are characterized by strong grammatical and semantic parallelism: both begin with relative clauses describing a person experiencing divine anger (god and goddess, alternately) and then contain a second person verb plus complement (substantive or prepositional phrase, both ending in *–šu*). *Sabāsu* (more commonly *šabāsu*), "to be angry." *Suḫḫuru* (D of *saḫāru*), "to turn (away, toward)." The above text follows Mayer's MS B, which shows a second person durative verb (*tusaḫḫar*); this reading enhances the parallelism between lines 9 and 10. (MS A has a third

10. *ša ze-na-at* NAM-*šú tu-sal-lam it-ti-šu*

11. [*šá ar-n*]*a*$^{?}$ *i-šú ta-pa-ṭar ar-an-šu*

12. [*ana-ku*] NENNI A NENNI ÌR *pa-liḫ-ka*

13. [*i*]*na meṣ-ḫa-ru-ti-ia ma-ši-šu-ti ú-sa-pa*

person preterite, *usaḫḫira*.) GÚ = *kišādu*, "neck." The *š* of the 3ms pronominal suffix (*–šu*) and the final dental consonant (*d*) of the noun change to *–ss–* (*–dš–* becomes *–ss–*). To whom does the pronominal suffix on this word refer? Nabu is the implied subject of *tusaḫḫar*. The idiom *suḫḫuru kišāda* (or *pānī*), "to turn the neck (or face)," indicates the direction of the neck's owner's attention, away, toward, or back to someone or something, depending on context. See CAD S, 49–50. In this case, Nabu turns *the angry personal god* back to his devotee. While the deity's attention is directed away from his or her ward, the individual is open to all kinds of potential evils. Thus it is important for the deity's face (or neck) to be turned at all times toward the devotee. For a discussion of the personal god, see page 431.

ša ilšu isbusu tusaḫḫar kišāssu

Line 10: *Zenû*, "to be angry." *Zenât* is a 3fs predicative form. NAM = *šīmtu*, "fate." Here, however, the term probably refers to an individual's personal goddess (*ištaru*), thus completing the parallelism started in line 9 of the angered personal god. An angry personal god and goddess is a common motif in Mesopotamian prayers. *Sullumu* (D of *salāmu*), "to reconcile." *Itti*, "with."

ša zenât šīmtašu tusallim ittīšu

Line 11: Mayer's MS B adds a self-identification formula here in two lines after our line 10. They are inserted here for sake of interest. Line 11 continues the grammatical and semantic parallelism of lines 9–10. *Arnu*, "guilt." The *n* of the bound form (*aran–*) assimilates to the *š* of the pronominal suffix. *Išû*, "to have, to own." *Paṭāru*, "to release."

ša arna išû tapaṭṭar araššu

Line 12: NENNI A NENNI = *annanna mār annanna*, "so-and-so, son of so-and-so." This is a very common phrase in prayers. It serves as a placeholder for the name and filiation of the person speaking the prayer (as in the phrase, "I, *state your name*"). *Annanna* sometimes also holds the place for the names of a person's personal god and goddess. ÌR = (*w*)*ardu*, "servant." The god–devotee relationship is imagined in terms of a king and his servant. *Palāḫu*, "to fear." The presence of this line, a self-presentation formula, at this point in the prayer clearly signals a transition from hymn to petition.

anāku annanna mār annanna ardu pāliḫka

Line 13: *Meṣḫarūtu* (*meṣḫerūtu*), "youth." How does this word influence one's understanding of the prayer? How does this line fit with the next? Is there a contrast between youth and old age or does the supplicant intend to show continuity of devotion throughout life? It is difficult to say because a key word in the line, *ma-ši-šu-ti*, is obscure (see Hunt, 217–19 for the following options). The text is secure (against CAD M/2, 37), but the meaning is uncertain. Deriving the term from the root *mašāšu*, "to wipe," one might understand the word as *mašišūti*, an adverbial accusative of condition, and translate it with regard to

14. [*š*]*e-ba-a-ku ana* DÙ DINGIR.MEŠ *pe-ta-a up-na-a-a*

15. [*ina*] *li-pi-in ap-pi-a tak-tu-ru na-pa*[*l-ti*]

16. [*ina*] IGI NAM.LÚ.U_{18}.LU *ki-ma me-ḫe-e ana-ku*

the end result of wiping, "in a purified condition" (see Mayer, 472, "in gereinigtem Zustand [?]"). However, the word may describe the wiping action itself rather than its result. In this case, one might suppose that the supplicant's hands were constantly moving about—as if wiping something—while uplifted in prayer (see Karel van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction in Israel and Mesopotamia: A Comparative Study* [SSN 22; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1985], 96 and 209, n.22, who translates the word "with ever fidgety hands" and sees a contrast between youth and old age in lines 11 and 12). *Suppû*, "to pray."

ina meṣḫarūtīya ma-ši-šu-ti usappa

Line 14: *Šēbu* (*šību*), "old person, elder." The form is predicative (1cs). Note the life-cycle contrast with line 13: youth to old age. DÙ = *kalû*, "all, totality"; but in construct, *kal*(*a*), "all of, the whole of, everyone of." *Upnu*, "hand." Note the dual form with 1cs suffix. *Petû upnī*, lit. "to open the hands"; more idiomatically, "to pray." In line 14, *upnu* is the subject (*upnā* is nom. dual) and *petâ* is 3fp predicative. This phrase may be punning on the idiom discussed in the notes to line 2, *petû uzna*. If so, the line may imply that a *petû upna*, "opening of the hand," was one way to receive a *petû uzna*, "opening of the ear" (i.e., a divine response). In any case, opening or raising one's hands was a basic petitionary ritual gesture in the ancient Near East (see Mayer I. Gruber, *Aspects of Nonverbal Communication in the Ancient Near East* [Studia Pohl 12/1; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1980], 50–59). This gesture, of course, is closely related to the label that identifies many Mesopotamian prayers, namely, šu-íl-lá = *šuʾillakku*, "(prayer of) lifted hands."

šēbāku ana kal ilī petâ upnāya

Line 15: *Lipin appi*, lit. "stroking of the nose, prostration." The word *lipnu / libnu* is not recognized by the CAD (see L, 11 *labānu*); rather, see *AHw*, 551 or *CDA*, 182 under *libnu*. *Karû*, "to be(come) short." Notice the Assyrian form of the 3fs G perfect (with prefixed *ta–* and harmonization of the second syllable's vowel). With *napaltu* (= *napaštu*), "life, throat, breath," as the subject, the verb means, "to be(come) short of breath." One may wish to translate this phrase more idiomatically as a first person verb.

ina lipin appīya takturu napaltu

Line 16: IGI = *pānu*, "face." *Ina pāni*, "in front of, before." NAM.LÚ.$U_{18/19}$.LU = *amīlūtu* (*awīlūtum*), "humanity." *Kīma*, "like, as." *Meḫû*, "storm, whirlwind." *Anāku*, "I." How does one explain this simile? A few suggestions: The simile may be a poetic expansion upon the person's breathlessness noted in line 15; it may indicate the speaker's poor bodily condition; it may be an attempt to convey the speaker's tumultuous life in broader human society; or, in light of line 17, the simile may indicate the transitory character of the speaker's existence. In other contexts, *meḫû* in similes and metaphors conveys strength, chaos, and even violence (see CAD M/2, 6). Since similes activate a field of associations, one need not nail this simile down to one meaning.

ina pāni amīlūti kīma meḫê anāku

17. *it-ta-at-la-ku* UD.MEŠ-*ia iq*$^{!}$-*ta-at-a* MU.MEŠ-*ia*

18. *ul a-mur* SIG_5 *né-me-lu la* TUKU-*ši*

19. [IBILA$^{?}$ *k*]*e-e-nu* ^{d}AG *geš-ru*

20. [*aṣ*]-*bat*$^{?}$ *si*$^{?}$-*pe-e-ka kul-lim-ma-an-ni* ZÁLAG

Line 17: Notice the similarity between this line and line 3 (if the restoration is correct). Is the end of the prayer looking back to the beginning? See also line 19, assuming the correctness of the restorations there. *Ittatlakū* is a Gt perfect of *alāku*, "to go, to walk"; in the Gt, "to go away." It makes little sense for "days to go away," so one will need to choose a verb in the translation that conveys the sense more idiomatically. *Qatû*, "to come to an end, to finish." As the line progresses it shows an intensification, depicted in the action of the verbs (leaving vs. coming to an end) and the duration of time (days vs. years). The supplicant, it seems, believes themselves to be as good as dead.

ittatlakū ūmūya šanātūya iqtatâ

Line 18: SIG_5 = *dumqu*, "good fortune." *Nēmelu*, "benefit, gain, profit." As is common in SB Akkadian, the nom. stands in place of the expected acc. case. TUKU = *rašû*, "to acquire." Since the first verb in the line is a preterite, the one from *rašû* is likely to be one as well. Line 18 indicates a general absence of success throughout the speaker's life.

ul āmur dumqa nēmelu lā arši

Line 19: *Gešru* (*gašru*), "powerful, mighty. Used substantively, this word was a very common epithet for deities in Mesopotamian prayers. This line recapitulates the invocation at the beginning of the prayer. Given its proximity to the conclusion of the prayer, one might interpret this line as purely literary, creating a sort of ring structure in the prayer, or as a rhetorical intensification, increasing the sense of urgency within the prayer. In the latter case, this line insures the deity's attention just before stating the petition in the following line.

aplu kēnu Nabû gešru

Line 20: Notice again, if the restorations are correct, the harking back to words from the beginning of the prayer: *ṣabātu* also occurs in line 2 (restored). Here the preterite may have a performative sense, and may thus be best rendered with a present. *Si*$^{?}$*-pe-e-ka* is obscure. It may be *sīpu*, "prayer." Thus, *aṣbat sīpēka*, literally, "I seize your prayers"; more idiomatically, "I pray to you" (see CAD Ṣ, 32 for an analogy). The word may also be *sippu*, "doorjamb." If so, then the line may merely indicate that the speaker has come to Nabu's temple for supplication, "I take hold of your (temple's) doorjambs." In any case, line 20a remains uncertain. *Kullumu*, "to show." The verb form is a D ms imperative with 1cs suffix: *kullimmanni* stands here for *kullimanni*, as is evident from MS A's ritual section, which reads *kul-li-ma-an-ni* (see line 29). ZÁLAG = *nūru*, "light." (A variant in Mayer's MS B reads: *lūmur nūru*, "let me see the light.") One may think on first glance to interpret the phrase *kullimanni nūra*, "show me the light," in terms of a revelatory experience (or perhaps even a wish for death). The idiom, however, derives from the imagery of a prisoner being set free from a dark prison cell. See CAD K, 524. In light of Nabu's ability to turn back the anger of one's personal deities (lines 9–10) and in light of the fact that the speaker seems to have

21. [*na*]*r-bi-ka lu-šá-pi dà-lí-lí-ka lud-lul*

22. [k]a-inim šu-íla ^{d}ag-kám

23. DÙ.DÙ.BI KI SAR A.MEŠ KÙ.MEŠ SUD GI.DU$_8$ GIN-*an*

24. 2 NÍG.NA 1-*en* [*a-na* ^{d}UTU].È 2-*tú a-na* ^{d}UTU.ŠU.A GAR-*an*

25. *ina* [UD] *ša* ^{d}[AG$^{?}$ . . .] GIŠ.EREN

had a lifetime without good fortune, it may be that the freedom the speaker seeks is freedom from divine displeasure. However, one might also consider, since the speaker believes themselves to be at the end of their years, that this wish is a desire to be freed from death itself, the final prison of all the living.

aṣbat sīpēka kullimanni nūra

Line 21: *Narbû*, "greatness," pl. "great deeds." *Šūpû* (Š of [*w*]*apû*), "to proclaim, to announce." This verb and the one in 21b are precatives, "let me. . . ." *Dalīlū*, "praises." *Dalālu*, "to praise." *Dalīlīka ludlul* is a cognate accusative construction; that is, the verb and its object both come from the same root. One should translate this idiomatically, "let me proclaim your praises" or the like. Shuilla-prayers almost always conclude with some form of foreword looking praise. The phrases *narbīka lušāpi* and *dalīlīka ludlul* are very commonly used for this purpose (see CAD A/2, 202–3).

narbīka lušāpi dalīlīka ludlul

Line 22: This line is the rubric, that is, it tells something about the classification of the preceding lines. In this case, the rubric identifies the form of the prayer and to whom it is directed. As is typical, the rubric is written in Sumerian. It may be translated, "it is the wording of a lifted-hand to Nabu."

Line 23: DÙ.DÙ.BI = *epuštašu*, "its ritual." KI = *qaqqaru*, "ground." SAR = *šabāṭu*, "to sweep, to clear away." The form is probably to be understood as a 2ms durative, as are most of the verbs in these instructions. A.MEŠ = *mû*, "water." KÙ.MEŠ = *ellūtu* (mp), "pure, clean." SUD = *salāḫu*, "to sprinkle (with)." GI.DU$_8$ = *paṭīru*, "portable altar." GIN = *kunnu* (D of *kânu*), "to set up."

epuštašu: qaqqara tašabbiṭ mê ellūti tasallaḫ paṭīra tukān

Line 24: 2 = *šinā* (with a m. noun). NÍG.NA = *nignakku*, "incense burner." 1-*en* = *ištēn*, "one." ^{d}UTU.È = *ṣīt šamši*, "sunrise, east." 2-*tú* = *šanītu*, "second." ^{d}UTU.ŠU.A = *ereb šamši*, "sunset, west." GAR = *šakānu*, "to put, to place."

šinā nignakka ištēn ana ṣīt šamši šanītu ana ereb šamši tašakkan

Line 25: This line is obscure due to breaks in the text. Perhaps the first part of the line makes reference to a propitious day of Nabu, but that is speculative. GIŠ.EREN = *erēnu*, "cedar."

ina ūmi ša Nabû . . . erēnu

26. [. . . GIŠ.ŠI]M.LI *ina ki-lá-ta-an*[!]

27. [. . . *t*]*a-sár-raq mi-ḫa* GEŠTIN.MEŠ BAL-*qí*

28. [DU_{11}.GA[?] ^{d}AG[?] *šu*]-*mu* DUGUD

29. [*aṣ-bat si-pe-e-ka*] *kul-li-ma-an-ni* ZÁLAG

30. [*ki-am*[?] DU]$_{11}$.GA-*ma uš-kin*

Line 26: GIŠ.ŠIM.LI = *burāšu*, "juniper" (pieces of wood or its resin). The juniper is the material to be burnt in the incense burners. *Kilallān* (m), *kilattān* (f), "both." Both incense burners (line 24) are supposed to contain cedar and juniper (?).

. . . *burāšu kilattān*

Line 27: *Sarāqu*, "to scatter, to strew." What is scattered is uncertain. See CAD S, 172–74 for various options and Ebeling, *AGH*, 12 for his conjecture. *Miḫḫu*, "a kind of beer." GEŠTIN.MEŠ =*karānu*, "wine." BAL = *naqû*, "to pour out, to libate, to sacrifice."

. . . *tasarraq miḫḫa karāna tanaqqi*

Line 28: DU_{11}.GA = *qabû*, "to speak, to say." The restoration of instructions for the supplicant (thus a 3cs durative verb) to speak seems reasonable. See also line 30. It seems that part of the prayer is repeated in lines 28–29. Here we may have a reprise of part of line 5.

iqabbi Nabû šumu kabtu

Line 29: This line may be quoting line 20 of the prayer. Note the orthography of *kullimanni* here as compared to line 20.

aṣbat sīpēka kullimanni nūra

Line 30: *Kīam*, "so, thus." *Šukênu*, "to prostrate oneself." Both verbs are 3cs duratives.

kīam iqabbī-ma uškên

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

A few idioms in the prayer are worthy of our comparative attention. The phrase *pētû ḫasīsu*, "the one who opens the ear," in line 2 is comparable to the BH phrase פָּתַח אֶת־הָאֹזֶן, "to open the ear" (Isa 50:5 and 48:8) and the similar גָּלָה אֶת־הָאֹזֶן, "to uncover the ear" (see 1 Sam 9:15, 20:2, 12, 13, 22:8 (2x's), 22:17, 2 Sam 7:27, Isa 22:14, Job 33:16, 36:10, 15, Ruth 4:4, and 1 Chron 17:25). In reference to human activity, the Hebrew idioms mean "to inform" (e.g., 1 Sam 20:13). When a deity is the one informing a human, however, the idiom denotes revelatory activity (e.g., 1 Sam 9:15 and Isa 50:5). The means of conveying the information may be different (e.g., a dream, prophetic intuition, or the scribal tradition, as our prayer implies), but the Hebrew and Akkadian phrases designate the same mythological idea: a deity somehow informs a human of something he or she would not otherwise have known apart from the deity.

Turru (D of *târu*) *gimilla*, "to return a kindness, to avenge," in line 4 compares to the BH phrase הֲשִׁיב גְּמוּל, "to return in kind," and שִׁלֵּם גְּמוּל, "to repay in kind." As with the Akkadian phrase, the BH phrases can indicate something either positive or negative, depending on the situation. The idea is simply that one receives treatment (i.e., requital) in accord with one's own actions (see Obad 15). The phrases are usually used negatively, designating a payment of retribution against evildoers, the proud, or enemies (see, e.g., Ps 28:4, 94:2, Isa 66:6, Jer 51:6, and Ps 137:8). But the positive use is also attested (see Prov 19:17 and 2 Chron 32:25). For the two phrases in the same context (of requiting an enemy), see Joel 4:4.

The idiom *suḫḫuru kišāda* (or *pānī*), "to turn the neck (or face) back toward or away from," when used negatively (i.e., in the sense of "away from") compares conceptually[1] to the common BH idea of the deity hiding his face (הִסְתִּיר אֶת־הַפָּנִים, see, e.g., Pss 13:2, 27:9, 44:25, 69:18, 88:15, 102:3, and 143:7). As Ps 143:7 indicates, when the deity hides his face, the supplicant feels like one headed for the grave. The opposite of the deity hiding his face is the deity making his face to shine upon, i.e., to be happy with, an individual (הֵאִיר אֶת־פָּנִים, see, e.g., Pss 31:17, 67:2, 80:4, 8, 20, 119:135, and of course Num 6:25). As in Mesopotamia, devotees in ancient Israel desired the protective attention of their deity at all times.

Turning to a more thematic level of comparison, one can see that our Akkadian prayer presents a supplicant advanced in years, perhaps at death's gates. Ps 71, a lament of the individual, depicts a comparable supplicant and is therefore related, thematically-speaking.[2] In this psalm the supplicant explicitly recounts their devotion during not only their youth (vv. 5 and 17) but even from birth (v. 6)! They fear, however, in their old age (עֵת זְקֻנָה, v. 9a, and זִקְנָה וְשֵׂיבָה, v. 18), when they most need the deity (כִּכְלוֹת כֹּחִי, "when my strength is failing," v. 9b), Yahweh has cast them aside (אַל־תַּשְׁלִיכֵנִי, v. 9), abandoned them (אַל־תַּעַזְבֵנִי, vv. 9 and 18a), and become distant (אַל־תִּרְחַק, v. 12). This abandonment is not death as we define it (i.e., cessation of bodily functions) because it is precisely during this period of divine absence that the supplicant fears their enemies will overtake them (vv. 10–11). Viewed from the perspective of their own ancient Israelite milieu, however, the supplicant was as good as dead, so that they describe their restoration as nothing less than a kind of resurrection: "you will make me live again and draw me up again out of the depths" (i.e., Sheol) (תְּחַיֵּנִי תָּשׁוּב וּמִתְּהֹמוֹת הָאָרֶץ תָּשׁוּב תַּעֲלֵנִי; v. 20).[3] The supplicant alternates between praise, la-

[1] There are attestations of turning (שׁוּב in the hiphil) the face toward (e.g., Dan 11:18) or away from (e.g., Ezek 14:6) someone or something in BH, of course, but this idiom does not convey the idea of divine abandonment or renewal of attention.

[2] For old age in ancient Israel, see J. Gordon Harris, "Old Age," *ABD* 4:10–12.

[3] For this qualified notion of resurrection, see Jon D. Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel: The Ultimate Victory of the God of Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 35–66.

ment, and petition throughout the psalm but ends like our Akkadian prayer with praise, though here it is much more extensive (vv. 22–24).

TRANSLATION:

1. Incantation: O Nabu, firstborn, true heir,
2. Who holds the stylus, who imparts knowledge,
3. Who . . . the days, who watches over the years,
4. Who saves life, who responds in kind.
5. Foremost of the gods, honored name.
6. The father, his progenitor, does not change his command,
7. Marduk does not change the command of Nabu, his son.
8. Among the gods, his peers, his word is august.
9. To the one whose god was angry you turn his (i.e., the god's) attention back.
10. With the one whose goddess is angry you reconcile (the goddess) with them (lit. him).
11. You release the guilt of the one who has guilt.
12. I, so-and-so, the son of so-and-so, the servant who fears you,
13. In my youth I prayed . . .
14. (Now that) I am old, my hands are opened to all of the gods.
15. On account of prostration, I have become short of breath.
16. Before humanity I am like a whirlwind.
17. My days have passed, my years have come to an end.
18. I have seen no good fortune, I have acquired no benefit.
19. O true heir, O powerful Nabu,
20. I seize your . . . , show me the light!
21. Let me proclaim your greatness, let me resound your praises!

22. It is the wording of a lifted-hand to Nabu.

23. Its ritual: You sweep the ground clear. You sprinkle pure water. You set up an altar. 24. You place two censors, one toward the east, the second toward the west. 25. On the day of Nabu . . . cedar . . . 26. juniper . . . both. 27. . . . you scatter. *Miḫḫu*-beer (and) wine you libate. 28. He says, "O Nabu, honored name, I seize your . . . show me the light!" 30. Thus he says, then he prostrates himself.

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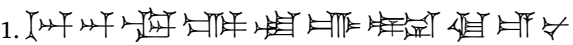
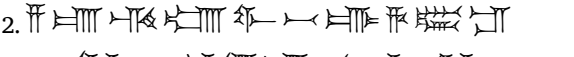
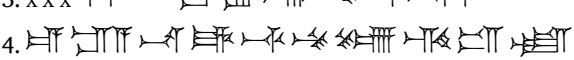
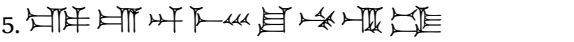
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
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7. [illegible]
8. [illegible]
9. [illegible]
10. [illegible]
11. [illegible]
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13. [illegible]
14. [illegible]
15. [illegible]
16. [illegible]
17. [illegible]
18. [illegible]
19. [illegible]
20. [illegible]
21. [illegible]

22. [illegible]

23. [illegible]
24. [illegible]
25. [illegible] xxxx [illegible]
26. xxxxxxxx [illegible]
27. xxxxxxxxxx [illegible]
28. [illegible]
29. [illegible]
30. [illegible]

A Shuilla: Nergal 2

TZVI ABUSCH

NERGAL:

Nergal is a god of death and of war (as the one who inflicts death in war). The name Nergal probably means, or at least was understood as, ^{d}nin-uru-gal-(ak), "Lord of the great city (i.e., the netherworld)." The standard writing of the name Nergal is ^{d}GÌR-eri$_{11}$-gal (GÌR here is read by some as nè); this writing is gradually replaced by ^{d}U.GUR. The writing u.gur has been interpreted by W. G. Lambert as *uqur*, the imperative of *naqāru*, "to destroy."[1] The name Nergal in our text is written both as ^{d}U.GUR and as ^{d}GÌR-eri$_{11}$-gal. Nergal's main temple, É-meslam, "house, warrior of the netherworld," is in Cutha, where he is also called Meslamtaʾea, "the one who comes forth from the Meslam." His parentage is Nippurian: Enlil and Ninlil. He is associated with the planet Mars as well as with the netherworld. (In the myth Nergal and Ereshkigal, he takes his place as its ruler together with Ereshkigal.) Thus, he has a place both in heaven and in the netherworld (see lines 5–8).

[1] "Studies in Nergal," *BiOr* 5/6 (1973), 356.

THE PRAYER:

This prayer to Nergal is an excellent example of a shuilla-prayer. It contains the three expected sections: a hymnic introduction in which the god is invoked and described (1–10); a supplication containing the self-presentation of the petitioner, a description of his difficulty, his approach to the god, and his request (11–23); and a promise of praise (24). The sections are clearly articulated and coherent; they are thematically well-developed and have a formal shape. I limit my comments here to the hymnic introduction and to lines 15–18 where the speaker sets out the features of Nergal that have encouraged him to approach the god.

Hymnic Introduction: The hymnic introduction is devoted to the descriptive praise of Nergal. It contains three stanzas that are syntactically linked together. They treat the god's nature and place in a divine family (lines 1–4); his place in

the cosmos (lines 5–8); and his relationship to the world of humans and animals (lines 9–10).

The first stanza treats two themes: the god's nature as a warrior (a) and his place in a divine family (b). Each line is made up of two half-lines; the lines form couplets and the two couplets form a stanza. The two aforementioned themes are integrated and laid out chiastically. Notice that the chiasm is reversed in the second couplet:

1. a b
   ×
2. b′ a′
3. b ( )
   ×
4. a′ b′

Note, however, that the composer deviated from the chiastic pattern in the second part of line 3, where instead of presenting a feature of Nergal's power (theme a), he provides an epithet of Kutushar, Nergal's mother, thus explicating and expanding on the first half of the line.

The second stanza describes the god's place in the cosmos. Here, again, the composer follows a formal structure. Each couplet contains two parallel lines. Yet, here, the form is different from that of lines 1–4, for lines 5–6 are each made up of two independent (though obviously associated) clauses, whereas both lines 7 and 8 form single clauses. Common themes and, even more, the distribution of grammatical forms between lines and between couplets, draw together each of the individual subsections and, then, the stanza as a whole. That is, grammatically, line 5a parallels line 6a, and line 7a parallels line 8a; moreover, whereas the first half-lines draw together each of the two subsections (lines 5–6 and 7–8), the latter halves draw together the stanza as a whole, for the corresponding half-lines 5b/7b and 6b/8b share syntactic forms:

5a. 2ms pred. + prep. (*ina*) + region	5b. pred.+ subject with 2ms suffix
6a. 2ms pred. + prep. (*ina*) + region	6b. object + prefixed verb (2ms)
7a. prep. (*itti*) DN(s) + prep. (*ina*) + region	7b. subject with 2ms suffix + pred.
8a. prep. (*itti*) DN(s) + prep. (*ina*) + region	8b. prefixed verb (2ms) + object

Whereas the parallel lines of each couplet have the same syntax and grammatical word order in their first half, the latter halves of these lines correspond in respect to their syntax not with each other, but rather with those of the other couplet: 5b/7b, 6b/8b. Note, moreover, the chiastic arrangement of the grammatical forms in the corresponding lines of the two couplets (5b × 7b, 6b × 8b). Thus, the first half-lines define and draw together the individual couplets, and the final half-lines define and draw together the stanza as a whole.

The third stanza describes the god's relationship to humans and animals, thus bringing the god down to earth and serving as a prelude to the petitioner's

call upon the god in the next section. This stanza is made up of two clauses, each of which extends over a whole poetic line. But in contrast to lines 7–8, the clauses in lines 9–10 are connected by the enclitic *–ma* attached to *iddikkā-ma* of line 9 and thus form a longer sentence.

Thus, lines 1–4 comprise a series of hemistichs where each half contrasts with the other, lines 5–6 comprise a series of hemistichs where each half supplements the other, lines 7–8 comprise full clauses, and finally lines 9–10 have two full clauses that are connected with each other. The types of clauses form a sequence that unify the hymn and move from an arena where the gods alone exist to areas of concern to humans, from the poetic divine to the prosaic human, from the world of the divine alluded to by compact poetic images to the world of the human depicted in drawn out prosaic descriptions.

Approach to the God: In lines 15–18 the speaker then points to the features of Nergal that have encouraged him to approach the god. Before laying out the structure and form of these lines, I should first note that against the majority of witnesses, I follow Mayer's MS B (K.2836+) in placing our line 17 before line 18 because *muppalsāta* of line 18 should, I think, lead directly into *naplisannī-ma* of line 19. Contrary to this order, these lines are transposed in the other MSS and in the main edition of Mayer. Lines 15, 16, 17, 18, as I number them in the present treatment, parallel each other. More specifically, the opening hemistichs of lines 15–18 all contain: *aššum* + a predicative adjectival form which describes a permanent feature of the divine addresee + a 2ms subject pronominal suffix (*gammalāta* ‖ *tayyārāta* ‖ *rēmēnêta* ‖ *muppalsāta*). The second hemistichs of these lines all contain verbs in the same grammatical form: 1cs perfect + either a 2ms object pronominal suffix or an accusative noun + a 2ms possessive pronominal suffix. The verbs in the opening halves of these lines seem to be synonymous. On the other hand, the verbs in the latter halves seem to represent a meaningful sequence or progression of movement towards the presence of the god: searching for him, focusing upon him, standing before him, looking at him, all done in preparation for making a request from him (lines 19–23).

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Text. Edition: Mayer, *UFBG*, 478–81. Translations: von Soden, 313–14. Seux, 312–14. Study: The present introduction is drawn from a longer study by the author to be published in the near future.

1. ÉN *be-lu$_4$ gaš-ru ti-iz-qa-ru bu-kúr* ^{d}*nu-nam-nir*

2. *a-šá-red* ^{d}*a-nun-na-ki* EN *tam-ḫa-ri*

3. *i-lit-ti* ^{d}*ku-tu-šár šar-ra-ti* GAL-*ti*

4. ^{d}U.GUR *kaš-kaš* DINGIR.MEŠ *na-ram* ^{d}*nin-men-na*

5. *šu-pa-a-ta ina* AN-*e* KÙ.MEŠ *šá-qu-ú man-za-az-ka*

Line 1: ÉN = *šiptu*, "incantation, ritual wording." This is the superscript, marking the beginning of the ritual wording. It is not part of the prayer. *Bēlu*, "lord." *Gašru*, "very strong, powerful." *Tizqāru*, "exalted." This adjective describes the god's status (and not his strength) and thus modifies the nomen regens of the following construct chain and not the preceding noun. The pattern of this adjective is *pitrāsu*; our form is due to metathesis resulting from the sibilant *z*: **zitqāru* > *tizqāru*. *Bukru*, "son." In Akkadian, in contrast to biblical Hebrew, *bukru* is not limited to the firstborn. ^{d}Nunamnir, the father of Nergal, is here a name of Enlil. The name reflects that god's authority: Nu(n)-nam-nir, "prince of sovereignty" or "the one of sovereignty."

šiptu: bēlu gašru tizqāru bukur Nunamnir

Line 2: In this line the composer brings together Nergal's roles as ruling god of the netherword and as god of war. *Ašarēdu*, "foremost." The Anunnakki here refer to the gods of the netherworld. EN = *bēlu*, see line 1. *Tamḫāru*, "battle, combat."

ašarēd Anunnakkī bēl tamḫāri

Line 3: *Ilittu*, "offspring." ^{d}Kutušar, a mother goddess, the mother of Nergal; here, it is probably a name of Ninlil. The name reflects that goddess's function as a mother goddess (see the Sumerian myth Enlil and Ninlil, where Ninlil gives birth to Nanna, Nergal, Ninazu, and Enbilulu). *Šarratu*, "queen." *Rabû* (m), *rabītu* (f), "great."

ilitti Kutušar šarrati rabīti

Line 4: *Kaškaššu*, "all powerful." DINGIR.MEŠ = *ilū*, "gods." *Narāmu*, "beloved." The goddess Ninmena here is the wife of Nergal, though she appears elsewhere as his mother.

Nergal kaškaš ilī narām Ninmenna

Line 5: *Šūpâta* is a 2ms predicative of *šūpû* (Š of [*w*]*apû*), "to be(come) manifest, brilliant." *Ina*, "in." *Šamû*, "heavens." KÙ.MEŠ = *ellūtu*, "pure." *Šaqû*, "to be(come) elevated." *Šaqu* is the 3ms predicative form. *Manzāzu* (*mazzāzu*), lit. "position, place of standing." Here the word has the astral meaning "station, position" in the heavens, referring to Mars. *Ina šamê ellūti* (line 5) and *ina arallî* (line 6) are syntactically part of the first half of each line, but also apply to the second half.

šūpâta ina šamê ellūti šaqu manzāzka

6. *ra-ba-ta ina* É.KUR.ÚŠ *ma-ḫi-ra la ti-šú*

7. *it-ti* ^{d}*é-a ina* UKKIN DINGIR.MEŠ *mi-lik-ka šu-tur*

8. *it-ti* ^{d}30 *ina* AN-*e te-še-ʾi gim-ri*

9. *id-din-ka-ma* ^{d}EN.LÍL AD-*ka ṣal-mat* SAG.DU *pu-ḫur* ZI-*ti*

10. *bu-ul* ^{d}GÌR *nam-maš-še-e qa-tuk-ka ip-qid*

Line 6: *Rabû*, "to be big, great." *Rabâta* is the 2ms predicative form. É.KUR.ÚŠ = *aral-lû*, a name of the netherworld. *Māḫiru*, "rival, opponent." *Lā*, "not." *Išû*, "to have."
rabâta ina arallî māḫira lā tišu

Line 7: *Itti*, "with." Ea is god of wisdom, water, and magic (see page 227). UKKIN = *puḫru*, "assembly." *Milku*, "counsel, advice." *Šūtur* is a 3ms predicative of *šūturu* (Š of [*w*]*atāru*), "to be preeminent." In line 7, LKA 30 and PBS 1/2 119 (Mayer's MSS F and G from Ashur and Babylonia, respectively) read ^{d}*A-ni*$_{7}$. In line 8, PBS 1/2 119 adds *u* KI-*tì*, thus reading *šamê u erṣeti*. If we follow the main text of lines 7–8, then we have a chiastic arrangement a-b-b′-a′ in lines 5–8: a. heaven (line 5); b. institution, i.e., netherworld (line 6); b′. institution, i.e., council (line 7); a′. heaven (line 8). But the pattern in the variant texts (especially *šamê u erṣeti* in line 8) seems to be different.
itti Ea ina puḫur ilī milikka šūtur

Line 8: ^{d}30 = *Sîn*, the moon god (see page 385). *Šeʾû*, "to observe." The form is a G 2ms durative. *Gimru*, "totality, everything."
itti Sîn ina šamê tašeʾʾi gimri

Line 9: *Nadānu*, "to give." The signs *id-din-ka* present a morphographemic writing. The final radical of the root assimilates into the initial consonant of the 2ms pronominal suffix, thus *id-din-ka* is transcribed *iddikka*. ^{d}EN.LÍL = *Ellil*, the father of Nergal. *Abu*, "father." *Ṣalmāt qaqqadi*, "black-headed ones," refers to mankind. *Napištu*, "life."
iddikkā-ma Ellil abūka ṣalmāt qaqqadi puḫur napišti

Line 10: *Būlu*, "animals, livestock." *Šakkan* was the divine protector of wild animals. *Nammaššû* (*nammaštû*), "wild animals." *Qātu*, "hand." *Qātukka* is the noun *qātu* with the locative-adverbial ending (*–um*) plus a 2ms possessive suffix. Here, however, the locative ending has a terminative meaning, *ana*, "to(ward)." The *m* of the ending assimilates to the *k* of the 2ms pronominal suffix. *Paqādu*, "to entrust, to care for, to appoint."
būl Šakkan nammaššê qātukka ipqid

11. *ana-ku* NENNI A NENNI ÌR-*ka*

12. *šib-sat* DINGIR *u* ^{d}IŠ$_{8}$.DAR *iš-šak-nu-nim-ma*

Line 11: *Anāku*, "I." NENNI = *annanna*, "so-and-so." A = *māru*, "son." ÌR = *ardu* (*wardum*), "servant." In place of the generic formula, "I (am) so-and-so, the son of so-and-so, your servant," of line 11, two MSS (Mayer's MSS B and G) add different expanded versions of the self-presentation. The texts read as follows:

B:	12. *ana-ku* ^{Id}*aš-šur*-DÙ-IBILA ÌR-*ka*	*anāku Aššurbānipal aradka*
	13. *ina* ḪUL AN.GI$_{6}$ ^{d}30 *šá ina* ITI UD GAR-*na*	*ina lumun attalî Sîn ša ina arḫi ūmi iššakna*
	14. ḪUL Á.MEŠ GIŠKIM.MEŠ ḪUL.MEŠ NU DÙG.MEŠ	*lumun idāti ittāti lemnēti lā ṭābāti*
	15. *šá ina* É.GAL-MU *u* KUR-*a* GÁL-*a*	*ša ina ekallīya u mātīya ibšâ*

I, Ashurbanipal, your servant,
On account of the evil of the lunar eclipse that took place
in month (so-and-so and) day (so-and-so)
The evil of the unfavorable, not good signs (and) portents,
That happened in my palace and my land, . . .

G:	12′. [*ana-ku* ^{Id}]GIŠ.ŠIR-MU-GI-NA DUMU DINGIR-*šú*	*anāku Šamaš-šum-ukīn mār ilīšu*
	13′. [*šá* DINGIR-*šú* ^{d}AMAR].UTU ^{d}15-*šú* ^{d}*zar-pa-ni-tu*$_{4}$	*ša ilšu Marduk ištaršu Zarpānītu*
	14′. [*ina* ḪUL Á.MEŠ] GIŠKIM.MEŠ ḪUL.MEŠ NU DÙG.GA.MEŠ	*ina lumun idāti ittāti lemnēti lā ṭābāti*
	15′. [*šá ina* É.GAL-*ia u* KUR]-*ia ib-šá-a-ma*	*ša ina ekallīya u mātīya ibšâ-ma*
	16′. [*pal-ḫa-ku ad*]-*ra-ku u šu-ta-du-ra-ku*	*palḫāku adrāku u šutādurāku*
	17′. [ḪUL.BI *ana* É].GAL-*ia a-na* KUR-*ia*	*lumuššina ana bītīya ana mātīya*
	18′. [*a-a* TE *a-a* KU.NU]-*ma a-a* DIM$_{4}^{!}$ *a-a* KUR-*an-ni*	*ayy-iṭḫâ ayy-isniq(a) ayy-iqrib(a) ayy-ikšudanni*

I, Shamash-shum-ukin, the son of his god,
Whose god (is) Marduk, whose goddess (is) Zarpanitu,
On account of the evil of the unfavorable, not good signs (and) portents,
That happened in my palace and my land,
Am afraid, anxious, and constantly in fear.
May their evil to my house and my land,
Not come near, not approach, not come close, (and) not reach me.

MS B adds the so-called *attalû* ("eclipse") formula to the self-presentation formula, which names Ashurbanipal (see Mayer, *UFBG*, 100–102 for a brief discussion). MS G attests a longer self-presentation, naming Shamash-shum-ukin, adds the *attalû* formula but without the line mentioning the eclipse (see *UFBG*, 101, n.65), and also includes a sterotypical lament and petition for the removal of the evil (*UFBG*, 73–75 and 265–69).

anāku annanna mār annanna aradka

Line 12: *Šibsātu*, "anger," is a feminine plural. The construct form is *šibsāt*. Note the plural form of the verb. IŠ$_{8}$.DAR = *ištaru*, "goddess." *Našḫunu* (N of *šakānu*), "to be placed," here "to beset." The form *iššaknūnim* is a 3mp preterite with a 1cs dative suffix. This line is omitted in MS G. The omission comes immediately after the introduction of Shamash-shum-ukin as the speaker of the text and the request that the evil portended by signs not affect the palace and land. The omission may be due to the fact that when the scribe intro-

13. ZI.GA *u ḫu-lu-uq-qu-ú ib-ba-šu-u ina* É.MU

14. *qa-bu-u u la še-mu-ú id-dal-pu-nin-ni*

15. *aš-šum gam-ma-la-ta be-lí* ^{d}U.GUR *as-sa-ḫur* DINGIR-*ut-ka*

16. *aš-šum ta-a-a-ra-ta eš-te-ʾe-e-ka*

17. *aš-šum re-mé-né-ta at-ta-ziz ma-ḫar-ka*

duced these matters in place of line 11, he dropped line 12 accidentally—if so, then lines 11 and 12 were probably written on one line in his *Vorlage*. (A less likely explanation is that the evil signs mentioned in this insertion were meant to replace "the anger of the god and goddess" as the cause of the difficulties described in lines 13 and 14.)

šibsāt ili u ištari iššaknūnim-ma

Line 13: ZI.GA = *ṣītu*, "expenses." *Ḫuluqqû* (*ḫuluqqāʾu*), "losses." *Nabšû* (N of *bašû*), "to befall, to occur." The form is a 3mp preterite. É = *bītu*, "house." MU = "my," the 1cs possessive suffix in Sumerian. It may represent either the Akk. pronominal suffix *–ya* or *–ī*, depending on the case of the noun to which it is attached.

ṣītu u ḫuluqqû ibbašû ina bītīya

Line 14: *Qabû*: "to speak, to command." *Šemû*, "to hear, to listen." Both forms are G infinitives, nom. case. The inf. is neutral in regard to voice; hence, *šemû* should be understood as "to be heard" (passive) and not "to hear" (active). *Nadlupu* (N of *dalāpu*), "to keep awake" (transitive). The form is a 3mp preterite with a 1cs accusative pronominal suffix.

qabû u lā šemû iddalpūninni

Line 15: The opening hemistichs of lines 15, 16, 17, and 18 all contain *aššum* + adjectival forms serving as predicates, which describe a permanent feature of the divine addressee. The closing hemistichs of lines 15, 16, 17, and 18 all contain 1cs perfect verbs with either a 2ms object pronominal suffix or an accusative noun plus 2ms possessive pronominal suffix. *Aššum*, "because, on account of." *Gammalu*, "very merciful, gracious, sparing." The adjective is predicative (2ms); see also the forms in lines 16 and 17. *Saḫāru*, "to turn (toward)." *Assaḫur* is a 1cs perfect (see also the forms in lines 16–18). The *t* has assimilated to the *s*. DINGIR-*ut* = *ilūtu*, "godhead, divinity."

aššum gammalāta bēlī Nergal assaḫur ilūtka

Line 16: *Tayyāru*, "compassionate." *Šeʾû*, "to seek." The form is 1cs perfect with a 2ms object suffix.

aššum tayyārāta ešteʾēka

Line 17: All of the MSS but one transposes our lines 17 and 18. I follow, however, MS B, in which these lines are ordered as above because *muppalsāta* of our line 18 should lead directly to *naplisannī-ma* of line 19. The reading *re-mé-né-ta* follows MS A. *Rēmēnû*, "merciful." *Izuzzu*, "to stand." *Maḫarka*, "before you."

aššum rēmēnêta attaziz maḫarka

18. *aš-šum mu-up-pal-sa-ta a-ta-mar pa-ni-ka*

19. *ki-niš* IGI.BAR-*an-ni-ma ši-me tés-li-ti*

20. *ag-gu lìb-ba-ka li-nu-ḫa*

21. *pu-ṭur an-ni ḫi-ṭi-ti u gil-la-ti*

22. *ki-ṣir lìb-bi* DINGIR-*ti-ka* GAL-*ti* [x x *lip*]-*pa-áš-ra*

23. DINGIR *u* ^{d}15 *ze-nu-tu*$_4$ *šab-su-tu*$_4$ [*u ki*]-*it-mu-lu-tú li-is-li-mu* KI.MU

24. *nar-bi-ka lu-šá-pi dà-lí-lí-ka lud-lul*

Line 18: *Naplusu*, "to look upon," here, "to be favorably inclined." *Muppalsāta* is a ms participle functioning predicatively (2ms). *Amāru*, "to see." *Pānū*, "face."
aššum muppalsāta ātamar pānīka

Line 19: *Kīniš*, "faithfully, truly"; here *kīniš* has the force of "favorably, positively." IGI.BAR-*an-ni-ma* = *naplisannī-ma* from *naplusu* (cf. Sum. igi.zid – bar). The form is a ms impv. with a 1cs object suffix plus enclitic *–ma*. *Šime* is likewise a ms impv., from *šemû* (see line 14). *Teslītu*, "prayer."
kīniš naplisannī-ma šime teslītu

Line 20: *Aggu libbaka*, "furious heart." Here the adjective precedes the noun. *Nâḫu*, "to become calm." *Linūḫa* is a 3cs precative with a 1cs dative suffix.
aggu libbaka linūḫa

Line 21: *Paṭāru*, "to release, to forgive." The form is a ms impv. *Annu* (*arnu*), "sin, crime." *Ḫiṭṭītu*, "fault, crime, sin." *Gillatu*, "misdeed, sin." All three nouns bear a 1cs pronominal suffix.
puṭur annī ḫiṭṭītī u gillatī

Line 22: *Kiṣir libbi*, lit., "a knot of the heart/innards," means "anger, indignation." *Napšuru* (N of *pašāru*), "to be released." The form is a 3cs precative.
kiṣir libbi ilūtīka rabīti . . . lippašir

Line 23: ^{d}15 = *ištaru*, "goddess." *zenûtu*, *šabsūtu*, and *kitmulūtu* are all mp verbal adjectives (nominative) that mean "angry" or the like. *Salāmu*, "to be(come) at peace (with)." KI.MU = *ittīya*, "with me."
zenûtu šabsūtu kitmulūtu lislim ittīya

Line 24: *Narbû*, "greatness," pl. "great deeds." *Šūpû* (Š of [*w*]*apû*), "to proclaim, to announce." Both verbs in the line are 1cs precatives. *Dalīlū*, "praises." *Dalālu*, "to praise." *Dalīlīka ludlul* is a cognate accusative construction; that is, the verb and its object both come from the same root. One should translate this idiomatically, "let me proclaim your praises" or the like.
narbīka lušāpi dalīlīka ludlul

25. ka-inim-ma šu-íl-lá ^{d}u-gur-kam

26. [DÙ.DÙ.BI *lu ina* KEŠDA *lu*] *ina* NÍG.NA DÙ-*uš*

Line 25: This line is the rubric, that is, it tells something about the classification of the preceding lines. The rubric identifies the form of the prayer here and to whom it is directed. As is typical, the rubric is written in Sumerian. It may be translated, "it is the wording of a lifted-hand to Nergal."

Line 26: DÙ.DÙ.BI = *epuštašu*, "its ritual." These words alert the user of the tablet that the ritual section follows. Compare the ÉN at the beginning of the prayer. *Lū . . . lū*, "either . . . or." KEŠDA = *riksu*, "ritual arrangement, assemblage of offerings." NÍG.NA = *nignakku*, "incense burner, censer." DÙ = *epēšu*, "to do."

epuštašu: *lū ina riksi lū nignakki teppuš*

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

In 2 Kgs 17:24 the people of Cutha are said to have been settled in Samaria subsequent to the conquest and deportation of northern Israel, and in v. 30 the people of Cutha are described as worshipping Nergal. In Jer 39:3, 13 Nergal appears in the PN נֶרְגַּל שַׂר־אֶצֶר, Nergal-sar-ezer, an official of the Babylonian king (for the name, see *HALOT*, 723b). Nergal is identified with the western Resheph (see Wiggermann, 216, 218, 222), a god of battle, death, and disease, who is armed with bow and arrow. Resheph appears in demonic form in the Hebrew Bible as the personification of pestilence (see Deut 32:24, Hab 3:5, and Job 5:7).

For points of specific interest in the Hebrew Bible and later Hebrew, I note the following: With *arallû* (line 6) compare אֲרִיאֵל / הַרְאֵל in Ezek 43:15, which Albright thought was a loan word from *arallû* (see *HALOT*, 87b). With Enlil's placing of animals under the control of Nergal (lines 9–10) compare Ps 8:7–9, especially v. 8. For *ṣītu u ḫuluqqu* (line 13), "expenses and losses," compare later Hebrew הוצאות ואבדות, as well as Aramaic נפקתא and אבדתא. With the descriptions of the deity in the first hemistichs in lines 15–18, *gammalāta*, *tayyārāta*, *rēmēnêta*, *muppalsāta*, compare respectively Hebrew גמל חָנוּן, שׁוב/סלח, רָחוּם, and מַאִיר פָּנִים.

TRANSLATION:

1. Mighty lord, exalted son of Nunamnir,
2. Foremost among the Anunnakki, lord of battle,
3. Offspring of Kutushar, the great queen,
4. Nergal, all powerful among the gods, beloved of Ninmenna.

5. You are manifest in the bright heavens, your station is exalted,
6. You are great in the netherworld, you have no rival.
7. Together with Ea, your counsel is preeminent in the assembly of the gods.

8. Together with Sin, you observe everything in the heavens.

9. Enlil, your father, gave to you the black-headed ones, all living beings, (and)
10. The herds, the creatures, into your hands he entrusted.

11. I, so-and-so, son of so-and-so, your servant:
12. The anger of god and goddess has beset me so that
13. Expenses and losses befall my estate (and)
14. Giving orders but not being obeyed (lit. heard) keep me awake.

15. Because you are sparing, my lord, I have turned toward your divinity,
16. Because you are compassionate, I have sought you,
17. Because you are merciful, I have stood before you,
18. Because you are favorably inclined, I have looked upon your face.

19. Favorably look upon me and hear my supplication,
20. May your furious heart become calm toward me,
21. Pardon my crime, my sin, and my misdeed,
22. May the indignation of your great divinity . . . be appeased for me,
23. May the offended, angry, and irate god and goddess be reconciled with me.

24. Then will I declare your great deeds and sing your praise!

25. It is the wording of a lifted-hand to Nergal.
26. Its ritual: You do (the ritual) with either an offering assemblage or incense burner.

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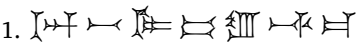
1. 
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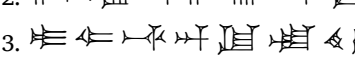
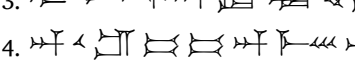
3. 
4. 
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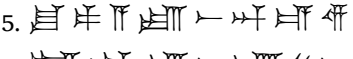
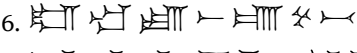
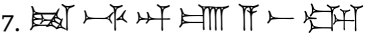
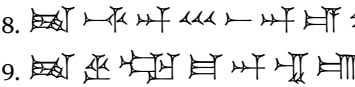
6. 
7. 
8. 
9. 
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21. [illegible]
22. [illegible] x x [illegible]
23. [illegible]
[illegible]
24. [illegible]

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25. [illegible]

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26. [illegible]

A Shuilla: Nisaba 1

CHRISTOPHER FRECHETTE

NISABA:

In the Mesopotamian pantheon, Nisaba was the goddess of grain and of the scribal arts and was accorded familial associations with several major gods. The Sumerogram ^{d}NISABA can signify either this goddess's name or a general term for grain. Nisaba was considered the oldest child of Enlil and a daughter of Urash, ancestor of Anu. In first millennium texts, she was considered a daughter of Anu or Ea, and therefore an aunt or sister of Marduk. In the Ur III and OB periods, her spouse was Ḫaya, but in the first millennium Nabu was considered her spouse, apparently because of their shared association with the scribal arts.[1] In the OB period, Nabu and Nisaba are attested as personal gods of scribes.[2] A tablet found at the site of the Temple of Nabu at Nimrud (CTN IV, no. 168) and identified by a note on its left edge as "shuillas of great and exalted goddesses" contains seven prayers with ritual instructions to four goddesses (Nisaba, Ishtar, Tashmetu, and Nanaya), their common characteristic being a spousal or love relationship to Nabu.[3] The first two prayers on the tablet are to Nisaba, the first of which is the present prayer.

The cult of Nisaba, about which there is little information, dates as early as the ED period and seems to have been limited primarily to Nippur, where she was worshipped at the temple of her daughter Ninlil; no temples dedicated to her are yet attested.[4] Despite the fact that her status seems to have waned by the

[1] Dietz Edzard, "Mesopotamien. Die Mythologie der Sumerer und Akkader," in *Götter und Mythen im vorderen Orient* (ed. H. Haussig; Stuttgart: E. Klett, 1965), 115; Black and Green, 143.

[2] Anne Löhnert and Annette Zgoll, "Schutzgott. A. In Mesopotamien," *RlA* 12 (2009), 313.

[3] While Nabu was considered a spouse of Nisaba in the late period, Nabu's more long-standing consorts were initially Tashmetu and later Nanaya (see Francesco Pomponio, "Nabû. A. Philologisch," *RlA* 9 [1998–2001], 16–24). Nanaya, the goddess of erotic love and the mistress of Nabu, belonged to the circle of Ishtar, with whom she was at some points syncretized (Marten Stol, "Nanaja," *RlA* 9 [1998–2001], 146–51). In Nabu's home city of Borsippa, both Nanaya and Tashmetu were identified as "queens of Borsippa" (Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *The Pantheon of Uruk During the Neo-Babylonian Period* [Cuneiform Monographs 23; Leiden/Boston: Brill/Styx, 2003], 77).

[4] Michalowski, 578.

OB period, her association with writing and grain remained. As with Nabu, a stylus served as her emblem.[5] At present, while no iconographic depiction of Nisaba can be identified with certainty, it is possible that among representations of deities associated with vegetation, e.g., anthropomorphic figures with branches above their shoulders or in their hands, some may depict her.[6]

Nisaba was not included among the elite of the Mesopotamian pantheon. Nevertheless, combined with her familial relationships to Ea, Enlil, and Nabu, the associations of Nisaba with grain and with the scribal arts suggest that she was regarded as wielding significant influence among the gods. Indeed, her ability to influence other deities is central to the present prayer. For, as do many Akkadian shuilla-prayers of the *āšipu*, this prayer asks a deity to intercede with other deities, specifically the client's personal god and goddess, in order to gain forgiveness and reconciliation. Grain was the most important food for people in Mesopotamian society, and consequently it was the most important type of offering in Mesopotamian rituals.[7] Moreover, feeding a deity was understood to render him or her receptive to petition. Since the gods were believed to rely on food offerings, and since grain was the most important of these, the grain used to pacify the gods through offerings ritually manifested her influential capacity. Her association with the scribal arts linked her influence to the enactment of this ritual prayer. Vital throughout Mesopotamian culture, the scribal arts held particular importance for ritual experts. Written records allowed these scholars to preserve for their use the sacred traditions of the very ritual prayers and actions employed to engage the gods properly in order to gain their favor.

THE PRAYER:

Nisaba 1 provides a window into the multi-faceted rationale by which elements of ritual functioned in first-millennium Mesopotamian religion. Based on its language, literary form, classifying rubric, and inclusion within the craft of the *āšipu*, this ritual-prayer may be classified as an Akkadian shuilla.[8] Typical of such ritual-prayers, it functioned in part to gain the intercession of Nisaba in reconciling personal gods and speaker. However, the instructions describing the context of its recitation indicate that it functioned also to prepare a material for use in ritual activity, a function atypical of Akkadian shuillas but found in a number of incantations which modern scholars have called *Kultmittelbeschwörungen* (see page 29). Blending both functions this ritual-prayer manifests the powerful influence of Nisaba for reconciling individuals with their angry deities.

[5] Edzard, "Mesopotamien," 115–16.
[6] Eva Braun-Holzinger, "Nisaba. B. Archäologisch," *RlA* 9 (1998–2001), 579.
[7] See Maul, *ZB*, 50.
[8] As explained in the general introduction, in this book the term "shuilla" refers to the ritual prayer as a whole, including the recited text and associated ritual activity; the term "shuilla-prayer" refers specifically to the text of the prayer.

Its four known exemplars and two texts preserving its incipit, all date to the first millennium and come from diverse locations, including Nineveh, Sippar, and Kalḫu.[9]

The first part of the classifying rubric appended to this prayer fits the typical form for this class of shuilla-prayer: "wording of a 'lifted-hand' to DN" (ka-inim-ma šu-íl-la$_{(2)}$ ^{d}DN-ke$_4$). The term "lifted-hand" in this context likely refers to the composite ritual activity of spoken words and attendant actions among which a gesture of hand-lifting was likely assumed by the ritual specialist (see discussion in the introduction, p. 35). While most such classifying rubrics conclude with the name of the deity, both of the exemplars of this prayer that are not broken away after the name of the goddess continue by clarifying that it is "for turning away divine anger" (dingir-šà-dib-ba gur-ru-da-kám). This Sumerian phrase identifies a class of ritual-prayers of the *āšipu* that are typically addressed to the personal deities whose anger is at issue (see the discussion in the introduction, page 40).[10] The present prayer, like the other Akkadian shuilla-prayers, is not directed to a personal deity but to one of the "high gods," and like many of them asks Nisaba to intercede with the speaker's angry personal gods. Since Akkadian shuillas commonly declare the petitioner's desire to be reconciled with angry deities, the rubric's inclusion of the words "for turning away divine anger" may be interpreted as emphasizing or further specifying the purpose of this particular shuilla-prayer. Such additional identifying rubrics, while rare, are attested among Akkadian shuillas. (See page 29 in the introduction.)

Like other shuilla-prayers, which range from twenty to thirty lines in length, Nisaba 1 includes several standard elements in typical sequence but is relatively short. Four lines of address characterize the deity (lines 1–4), three lines of petition seek her intercession to reconcile personal deities with the client (lines 5–7), and three lines seek forgiveness of the client's sins (lines 14–16). The prayer concludes with a single line offering to praise the goddess (line 17).

One exemplar, our MS A, which is in NB script and was apparently written for a specific occasion, includes an insertion of several formulaic elements after the section seeking reconciliation: an identification of the speaker as Shamash-shum-ukin (lines 8–9),[11] a complaint concerning omens portending evil fates

[9] Since a new edition of this prayer is in press and not yet available at the time of writing, a summary of the textual witnesses is in order. The four exemplars of this prayer are MS A = BM 78219; MS B = K.6028; MS C = K.3392; MS D = ND 5493 = IM 67630. Two texts preserve only the incipit: MS E = BM 122647 and MS F = K.2798+. In the current transliteration and translation, lines 1–13 follow MS A; line 14 completes MS C with MS D; line 15 follows MS D; lines 16–17 follow MS C; and lines 18–19 complete MS C with MS D.

[10] W. G. Lambert, "DINGIR.ŠÀ.DIB.BA Incantations," *JNES* 33 (1974), 267–322.

[11] Shamash-shum-ukin, whose name means "Shamash has firmly established a name" (Akk. *Šamaš-šum-ukīn*), reigned as king of Babylon from 667–648 BCE. He was a son of Esarhaddon and older brother of Ashurbanipal and succeeded to the throne of Babylon after the death of their father in 669 BCE. Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria from 668–c.630 BCE, began fighting to supplant Shamash-shum-ukin in 652 BCE; the latter died (or was killed) in 648 BCE. See Grant Frame, "Šamaš-šuma-ukīn," *RlA* 11 (2008), 618–21.

(lines 10–11), and a petition for protection from those fates (lines 12–13). Based on this exemplar alone, the end of which is broken, we cannot know the precise ritual context of that occasion. However, considerable evidence indicates that shuilla-rituals were sometimes carried out in conjunction with namburbi-rituals, whose explicit purpose was to dissolve the calamitous fate portended by an omen (see the introduction, page 36). Such may have been the case for this exemplar.

The complaint in lines 10–11 is a variation on a formulaic expression of concern over unfavorable omens.[12] Such a complaint is usually followed by one or more statements in which the speaker expresses fear, turns to the deity, requests the deity's attention, or petitions for help. In MS A, however, such a statement is absent. Consequently, the element of complaint takes the form of a lengthy prepositional phrase that is grammatically subordinate to the petition:

ina lumun idāti ittāti lemnēti lā ṭābāti	Concerning (*ina*) [the evil omens]
ša ina ekallīya u mātīya ibšâ	That occurred in my palace and my land,
lumuššina ayyâši u ekallīya	May their evil towards me and my palace
ayy-iṭḫâm ayy-isniq ayy-iqrib ayy-ikšudanni	Not approach, not come near, not come close, not reach me!

This sentence is comprehensible, but awkward. An exemplar of the prayer Nergal 2 contains a nearly identical insertion which also names Shamash-shum-ukin, but that exemplar adds a line to the complaint-element.[13] As a result, the complaint is no longer couched in a subordinate prepositional phrase, but forms a complete sentence expressing the king's anxiety:

ina lumun idāti ittāti lemnēti lā ṭābāti	As a result of (*ina*) [the evil omens]
ša ina ekallīya u mātīya ibšâ	That occurred in my palace and my land,
palḫāku adrāku u šutādurāku	**I am afraid, anxious, and panicked.**
lumuššina ayyâši u ekallīya	May their evil towards me and my palace
ayy-iṭḫâm ayy-isniq ayy-iqrib ayy-ikšudanni	Not approach, not come near, not come close, not reach me!

[12] While Werner Mayer includes this complaint formula among exemplars of the so-called "*attalû* formula" concerning a lunar eclipse that portends evil for the king's palace and land, the present insertion lacks the formula's first line, which mentions the eclipse (*UFBG*, 100–102). Of the twenty-eight occurrences of this formula noted by Mayer, twenty-four occur in shuilla-prayers; occurrences in the present insertion and in one exemplar of Nergal 2 are the only two in which the first line, which mentions the eclipse, does not occur. (For a list of all exemplars of this formula see *UFBG*, 100, n. 64. For a transliteration of the insertion in this exemplar of Nergal 2, see *UFBG*, 480, Text G, lines 12′–18′ and page 344 in this book.) Moreover, Mayer describes another complaint formula that is strikingly similar to the *attalû* formula, but it lacks the line concerning the eclipse altogether and refers to evil that threatens the ordinary person's house and person, not the king's palace (Formula α, *UFBG*, 102–3). The self-identification formula, which may or may not immediately precede either of these two complaint formulas, may function either as a subject for what follows or as an independent clause (see *UFBG*, 46–52).

[13] See the previous footnote.

The insertion as it appears in Nergal 2 avoids the dubious syntax of Nisaba 1 and clarifies the logical connection between the king's predicament and his petition. Moreover, this additional line, *palḫāku adrāku u šutādurāku*, constitutes a stock phrase found in parallel formulas in many Akkadian shuilla-prayers and so was arguably omitted by mistake. Consequently, it makes sense to restore this line.

In most cases, an Akkadian shuilla would have been carried out "in front of" (*ina/ana maḫar*) a deity manifest either in its astral form or in the form of a cult image or standard.[14] The three exemplars of the full text of Nisaba 1 for which the end of the prayer is preserved all include the same brief ritual instruction: the prayer is to be recited not to the deity by name but to a certain type of inexpensive flour (*maṣḫatu*) used almost exclusively for ritual offerings.[15] This flour, then, was presumably identified as a manifestation of the goddess Nisaba.

The ritual instructions on the preserved exemplars of Nisaba 1 only indicate recitation of the prayer to the flour. As in any written ritual instruction from Mesopotamia, however, one ought not to presume that ritual actions were limited to what is written. Indeed, flour as a ritual offering was typically scattered (*sarāqu*) either upon a censer or the animal offering and could be mixed with other ingredients such as water or oil before being poured.[16] A similar but more detailed instruction for the recitation of this prayer in the ritual tablet for the elaborate *Bīt salāʾ mê* ("house of water-sprinkling") royal ritual confirms such a usage.[17] The ritual instructions call first for setting up an altar and for making an offering in front of *maṣḫatu*-flour and then for the recitation of Nisaba 1. After the making of an offering to the planet Jupiter (which is identified with Marduk), the same *maṣḫatu*-flour is poured out or scattered, presumably as part of the offering to Jupiter/Marduk.

As mentioned above, although Nisaba 1 is addressed to *maṣḫatu*-flour, neither the prayer nor its ritual activity fits neatly with what is typical of *Kultmittelbeschwörungen*. Rather, evidence for the ritual context of Nisaba 1 in *Bīt*

[14] Ritual instructions appended to copies of shuilla-prayers vary greatly in the degree of detail given and in many cases do not identify the deity before whom the prayer is recited or the offering set up. However, when the recipient of an offering or prayer is indicated, it is typically a name for the deity addressed in the prayer. Some Mesopotamian deities have more than one name. For instance, the god Ea may also be referred to as Enlilbanda (see page 227).

[15] Lucio Milano, "Mehl," *RlA* 8 (1993-1997), 25.

[16] Milano, "Mehl," 25, 31.

[17] *Bīt salāʾ mê* was carried out from the fourth to the eight of Tashritu during the fall New Year's festival in Babylon. Claus Ambos, "Das 'Neujahrs'-Fest zur Jahresmitte und die Investitur des Königs im Gefängnis," in *Fest und Eid: Instrumente der Herrschaftssicherung im Alten Orient*, (ed. D. Prechel; Würzburg: Ergon, 2008), 1–12. Idem. "Ritual Healing and the Investiture of the Babylonian King," in *The Problem of Ritual Efficacy* (ed. W. Sax, J. Quack and J. Weinhold; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 17–44. Idem. *Der König im Gefängnis und das Neujahrsfest im Herbst: Mechanismen der Legitimation des babylonischen Herrschers im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr. und ihre Geschichte*, (Habilitation, Heidelberg, 2010; rev. forthcoming). For a discussion of Nisaba 1 in this ritual, see Frechette and Hrůša.

salāʾ mê, strengthened by its likely similar context in an additional royal ritual,[18] illuminates the way in which this prayer blended functionality typical of Akkadian shuilla-prayers with that of *Kultmittelbeschwörungen*. Nisaba's presumed influence over other gods is manifested in both respects. Like the *Kultmittelbeschwörungen*, which included descriptions of the special qualities of the objects addressed,[19] Nisaba 1 is directed to a material that is then manipulated in a ritual. However, the words addressed to the *maṣḫatu*-flour do not describe its material qualities but rather name anthropomorphic characteristics of the goddess, as do many shuilla-prayers; she is "merciful," she "creates god, king, and human," she "reconciles angry gods to humans."[20]

The image of Nisaba as a "net" (*saparru*, line 3) capable of making angry deities relent captures well the influence of this deity. A *saparru* is attested as being spread out or thrown in order to capture and pacify an opposing deity. This image provides a link between the anthropomorphic images of Nisaba and the material manifestation of the goddess as flour, which, like such a net, is cast towards the deity. The recital of Nisaba 1 in conjunction with ritual scattering of *maṣḫatu*-flour as an offering would have manifested influence to calm angry deities. In *Bīt salāʾ mê* this ritual-prayer would have rendered Jupiter/Marduk, widely attested as a furious warrior, calm and amenable to interceding for the king in order to reconcile him with his personal gods. It begins there a lengthy sequence of shuillas to the gods of Nippur and Babylon that continues through the night intended to gain also their intercession on the king's behalf. It is possible that at least some of the offerings in the subsequent lengthy sequence of shuilla-rituals in *Bīt salāʾ mê* might also have included *maṣḫatu*-flour and, if so, would have further manifested Nisaba's influence.

[18] Noting that the colophon to MS C identifies it with the royal ritual complex *Bīt rimki*, Cecil Mullo-Weir argued that Nisaba 1 may be restored as initiating the lengthy sequence of shuillas in one version of that complex (*BBR* 26+), where, as in *Bīt salāʾ mê*, it is followed immediately by a shuilla to Marduk ("The Prayer Cycle in the Assyrian Ritual *bît rimki*, Tablet IV," *AfO* 18 [1957–1958], 371–72).

[19] Tzvi Abusch, "Blessing and Praise in Ancient Mesopotamian Incantations," in *Literatur, Politik und Recht in Mesopotamien: Festschrift für Claus Wilcke* (ed. W. Sallaberger, K.Volk, and A. Zgoll; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003), 1–14, here 3–4.

[20] Moreover, in *Bīt salāʾ mê*, Nisaba 1 differs from the sequence of ten *Kultmittelbeschwörungen* which immediately precede it in that none of them include instructions for the making of an offering to the materials to which they are addressed. Yet, an offering is made to the *maṣḫatu*-flour in conjunction with the recitation of Nisaba 1.

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1. ÉN ^{d}NISABA *šar-ra-tu$_4$ ḫu-ma-li-t*[*i*]

2. DÙ-*at* DINGIR LUGAL *ù* NAM.LÚ.U$_{18}$.L[U]

3. *sa-par* ^{d}*a-nun-na-ki* DINGIR.MEŠ *ek-*[*d*]*u-t*[*i*]

Line 1: ÉN in many cases marks the beginning of wording to be recited in rituals; while it is often equated by scholars with *šiptu*, "incantation," it is not clear that the scribes read the word as Akkadian. They may have simply understood it as a Sumerian word. In any case, it is not part of the prayer itself. ^{d}NISABA (^{d}ŠE.NAGA; also read ^{d}NIDABA) can signify either a general term for grain or the goddess Nisaba. The NAGA sign originally depicted a plant, possibly barley, and the ŠE sign may have originally represented a spike of grain. *Šarratu*, "queen." *Ḫumālu* is a rare term of uncertain meaning. Neither the CAD (Ḫ, 234) nor Seux (339) offers a translation. Wolfram von Soden has suggested that behind this term stands the Heb. (Canaanite) חָמַל, "to have compassion" ("Bemerkungen zu einigen literarischen Texten in akkadischer Sprache aus Ugarit," *UF* 1 [1969], 191). This view is reflected in *AHw*, which glosses *ḫumalīti* as "freundliche"? (355a) but offers a correction, glossing *ḫumālu* as "Mitleid [compassion]"? (1562a). The *CDA* reflects both possibilities, glossing *ḫumalīti* as "friendly, sympathetic"? (120). Following Hrůša's edition, the present form is here taken as a denominative adjective ("merciful") in a form referred to as "nisbe" (the term is borrowed from Arabic grammar), in which *-ī* is added to the base of the noun (see Huehnergard, §6.2; *GAG*, §56 q). The case vowel is *i*, rather than the expected *u* of the nominative, but case endings in texts from the late period are often arbitrary.

šiptu: *Nisaba šarratu ḫumalīti*

Line 2: While DÙ may indicate either *banû* or *epēšu*, context here suggests the former. *Banû*, "to create." The form is a fs participle in construct with the following three terms (all gen.). DINGIR = *ilu*, "god." LUGAL = *šarru*, "king." NAM.LÚ.U$_{18}$.LU = *amīlūtu* (*awīlūtum*), "mankind, humanity."

bānât ili šarri u amīlūti

Line 3: *Saparru*, "net, throw-net." This term is attested as a kind of (divine) weapon which was "spread out" (*šuparruru* or *tarāṣu*) in order to capture and pacify a raging hostile deity (see CAD S, 161; CAD Š/3, 317–18). Such use of a *saparru* is attributed to Nisaba, e.g., *saparru ša Nisaba liksûšu*, "May Nisaba's net ensnare him" (cited by CAD S, 161). Hammurabi also describes himself as *sapar nakirī* "enemy-ensnaring throw-net" (Laws of Hammurabi ii 68; Martha Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor* [2d ed.; SBLWAW 6; Scholars Press: Atlanta, 1997], 78). Depicting Nisaba as a net for constraining an opponent provides a significant link between words and ritual action. It not only corresponds with the request in the present prayer that Nisaba pacify the speaker's angry personal deities, it also mirrors the ritual activity of pouring or sprinkling of flour as a ritual offering. The last two words in the line form a phrase in apposition to *Anunnakkī*. *Anunnakkū* is often left untranslated. In earlier Sum. texts the term referred to the gods, espe-

4. *mu-sal-li-mat* DINGIR *ze-na-a* ^{d}15 *ze-ni-t*[u_4]

5. *lu-uš-pur-ki a-na* DINGIR.MU *ze-ni-i* ^{d}15.MU *ze-*[*ni-ti*]

6. *šá kám-lu šab-su lìb-ba-šú-nu-ma ze-nu-ú* KI.[MU]

7. *su-ul-li-*<*mi*>*-im-ma* DINGIR.MEŠ *ze-nu-u* ^{d}15 *ze-n*[*i-tu*]

cially those born first and not differentiated by names; from MB times it came to refer to gods of earth and underworld, over against the *Igigû*, the gods of heaven (Black and Green, 34). *Ekdu*, "wild, furious."

sapar Anunnakkī ilī ekdūti

Line 4: *Sullumu* (D of *salāmu*), "to bring about peace, reconciliation; to cause to relent." This participle is in construct with the following four words, all of which are in the gen. *Zenû* (ms), *zenītu* (fs), "angry." While one would not ordinarily expect a construct chain to be interrupted by adjectives, this rule is sometimes violated. MS A *ze-na-a*, MS D *ze-ne-e*: the case vowel *â* in MS A is an apparently erroneous accusative case; the case vowel *ê* in MS D reflects the Assyrian genitive ending *–e* (rather than the Babylonian *–i*). *Ištaru*, "goddess." While the Sumerogram ^{d}15 may indicate the name of the goddess Ishtar, the name of this divinity also became a general appellative for "goddess," as in the typical phrase "god and goddess." *Ze-ni-t*[u_4]: Only MS A preserves the ending here, which erroneously indicates the case vowel *u* rather than the expected *i*.

musallimat ila zenâ ištara zenītu

Line 5: *Šapāru*, "to send." The form is a 1cs precative with a 2fs pronominal suffix. After the preposition *ana* the nouns and adjectives are all in the genitive; both nouns have pronominal suffixes 1cs (indicated by MU). Having described pertinent characteristics of Nisaba in lines 1–4, the speaker now begins the petition using language echoing that description.

lušpurki ana ilīya zenî ištarīya zenīti

Line 6: *Ša* introduces a relative clause. While one might take the following two forms, as well as *zenû* to be adjectives, they are more likely predicative constructions (statives) with the subordination (or subjunctive) marker *–u*. *Kamālu*, "to be(come) angry, wrathful." *Šabāsu*, "to be angry, furious." *Libbu*, "heart." The *–ma* here, which occurs in only one of the two preserved MSS, may serve as a conjunction or have an emphatic or topicalizing function (see *GAG* §123a). *Zenû*, "to be angry." KI = *itti*, "with." KI.MU = *ittīya*, "with me." While these predicative constructions are single in agreement with the subject *libbu*, the translation should reflect plurality: "whose hearts are wrathful, furious and angry."

ša kamlu šabsu libbašunū-ma zenû ittīya

Line 7: *Sullumu*, see line 4. *Sullimī* is a D fs impv. plus ventive. The *–ma* is emphatic. Of the four MSS preserving DINGIR here, only MS A adds MEŠ, and this need not indicate a plural. Assyriologists generally recognize that in some nominal forms MEŠ has become a frozen form; thus, Borger notes that in nominal forms, MEŠ may be meaningless (*MZL*, no. 754, 420). Since *u* may serve as the case vowel for the accusative as well as the nominative in SB, and seeing that of the four terms requiring an accusative ending in this line,

8. *ana-ku* ^{Id}GIŠ.NU$_{11}$-MU-GI.NA DUMU DINGIR-*š*[*ú*]

9. [*šá*] DINGIR-*šú* ^{d}AMAR.UTU ^{d}15-*šú* ^{d}*zar-pa-ni-t*[*u*$_4$]

10. [*ina* ḪUL] Á.MEŠ [GI]SKIM.MEŠ ḪUL.MEŠ NU DÙG.GA.ME[Š]

only the case vowel *u* is preserved, the logograms have been normalized in agreement with it.

sullimīm-ma ilu zenû ištaru zenītu

Line 8: ^{Id}GIŠ.NU$_{11}$-MU-GI.NA = *Šamaš-šum-ukīn*. DUMU = *māru*, "son." Regarding lines 8–13, an insertion comprised of a sequence of formulas found only in MS A, see the discussion under THE PRAYER. Self-presentation formulas, such as that in lines 8–9, may function as an independent clause or as a subject for what follows (see Mayer, *UFBG*, 46–52).

anāku Šamaš-šum-ukīn mār ilišu

Line 9: *Ša* introduces a relative clause. Marduk (= ^{d}AMAR.UTU), the ruling god of Babylon, and his spouse Zarpanitu are here named as the personal god and goddess of Shamash-shum-ukin, the Babylonian king.

ša ilšu Marduk ištaršu Zarpānītu

Line 10: *Ina*, "as a result of." ḪUL = *lumnu*, "evil, misfortune, calamity." Á.MEŠ = *idāti* and GISKIM.MEŠ = *ittāti* are often taken as alternate gen. fp forms of *ittu*, "omen, ominous sign." However, the two terms, although identical in semantic range, represent two different bases *itta-* and *idat-* (see CAD I/J, 309–10). For a detailed linguistic and conceptual treatment of *ittu* as *Omenanzeiger* [omen-announcer] and *idātu* as "die (fein)materiell gedachte 'Abstrahlung' des Omenanzeigers [the (subtly) tangible 'radiation' of the omen-announcer]," see Maul, *ZB*, 6–7. ḪUL = *lemnu*, "inauspicious, ill-boding, dangerous." NU = *lā*, "not." DÙG.GA = *ṭābu*, "auspicious, favorable." The syntax of this line is clear, but its meaning depends on one's understanding of how omens operated. *Lumun* is in construct with *idāti* and *ittāti*, and the adjectives *lemnēti lā ṭābāti* may be taken to modify *ittāti* or both *idāti* and *ittāti*. Stefan Maul takes both the adjectives in this phrase, which occurs frequently in namburbis, as modifying both nouns: "Die bösen, unguten *idātu* und *ittātu* [The evil, no-good *idātu* and *ittātu*]" (*ZB*, 6 n.41). Seux's translation of the line inserts an implied verb and a relative pronoun: "[Quant au mal] (qu'annoncent) les signes et les présages mauvais, défavorables" (340). Thus, Seux takes the construct chain *lumun idāti ittāti* to imply, "the evil *that* the signs and evil, unfavorable portents *announce*." Mayer also assumes that signs and portents announce evil, but his translation does not represent the Akkadian syntax literally, taking *lemnēti lā ṭābāti* as what is being announced: "bei/wegen dem Übel von Vorzeichen und Anzeichen, die Schlechtes und Unheil (verkünden) [because of the evil of the signs and portents, (which announce) something bad and disaster]" (*UFBG*, 103). While Seux and Mayer agree that in the Mesopotamian worldview omens announce events, Maul clarifies that omens there "announce" not only by *indicating* a portended event, but by *activating* it in a concrete way (*ZB*, 5).

ina lumun idāti ittāti lemnēti lā ṭābāti

11. [*šá ina*] É.GAL-*ia u* KUR-*ia* GÁL.ME[Š]

    ⟨*pal-ḫa-ku ad-ra-ku u šu-ta-du-ra-ku*⟩

12. [ḪUL.BI I]A-*ši u* É.G[AL-*ia*]

13. [*a-a* TE-*a a-a* DIM$_4$] *a-a* KU.NU *a-a* K[UR-*an-ni*]

14. *an-nu-ú-a lip-pa-áš-ru gíl-la-tu-ú-a li-i*[*n-na-ab-ka*]

Line 11: *Ša* introduces a relative clause whose antecedent is *idāti ittāti*. É.GAL = *ekallu*, "palace." KUR = *mātu*, "land." GÁL.MEŠ = *bašû*, "to occur." While the MEŠ sign in verbal logograms can signify the plural or an iterative stem (Borger, *MZL*, no. 754, 420), the present normalization is based on the syllabic spelling *ib-šá-a-ma* in the parallel formula in Nergal 2 discussed in the introduction to the prayer (see Mayer, *UFBG*, 480, Text G: 15′). The text following the line is restored after a formula occurring in that same parallel text (see discussion under THE PRAYER). *Palḫāku adrāku u šutādurāku*, "I am anxious (*palāḫu*), I am afraid (a*dāru*), and I am panicked (Št *adāru*)." All three forms are 1cs predicative constructions (statives). For this formulary, see also Mayer, *UFBG*, 73.

ša ina ekallīya u mātīya ibšâ / ⟨palḫāku adrāku u šutādurāku⟩

Line 12: The pronominal suffix on *lumnu*, BI = *–šina*, refers back to *idāti ittāti*. Note that the *n* of the noun assimilates to the *š* of the suffix. *Ayyâši*, "towards me," is a form of the 1cs dative pronoun to which the preposition *ana* has assimilated (*ayyâši* < *ana yâši*, cf. *GAG*, §41 j 2). IA-*ši* is taken here as *ayyâši* since the É.G[AL-*ia*] which follows it demands the preposition *ana* (see Mayer, *UFBG*, 267). For the possibility of reading IA as *av*(*v*)V, see Werner Mayer, "Besonderheiten in der Verwendung des Graphems A.A im Akkadischen," *Or* n.s. 72 (2003), 293–306, at 305–6. While the translation given below may be read ambiguously, it is important to recognize that the prepositional phrase, "towards me and my palace," modifies the series of verbs in the following line, not the subject, "their evil."

lumuššina ayyâši u ekallīya

Line 13: TE = *ṭeḫû*, "to come near to, to approach." DIM$_4$ = *sanāqu*, "to check, to approach, to come near." KU.NU = *qerēbu*, "to approach, to come close to." KUR = *kašādu*, "to reach, to arrive, to conquer." All of these verbs are vetitives (prefix *ayy–* plus the preterite), that is, negative commands.

ayy-iṭḫâm ayy-isniq ayy-iqrib ayy-ikšudanni

Line 14: *Annu* is an alternative form of *arnu*, "guilt, fault, offense, penalty." *Napšuru* (N of *pašāru*), "to be released, freed." MSS B and C have *lip-pa-áš-ru*; MS D has *lip-pá-aṭ*$^{?}$*-ru* (N stem of *paṭāru*, for which see line 15). *Gillatu*, "sin, sacrilege, crime, misdeed." In view of the following verb (a 3fp precative), this noun is plural. *Nanbuku* (N of *abāku*), "to be taken away."

annūya lippašrū gillātūya linnabkā

15. *ḫi-ṭa-tu-ú-a lim-ma-*[*šá*]*-a / i-il-ti lip-pa-ṭir ka-si-ti li-ir-*[*ta-am*]*-mi*?

16. *pa-ṭar e*ʾ*-il-ti-ia*$_5$ *liq-qa-bi* NAR? [B]I? DÙG MU-K[A]

17. *nar-bi* DINGIR-*ti-ki ka-a-a-an lu-*[*ša-pi*]

18. ka-inim-ma šu-íl-lá ^{d}nisaba.ke$_4$ dingir-šà-dib-ba gur-ru-da-kám

19. *ana* IGI ZÌ.MAD.GÁ *im-man-ni*

Line 15: *Ḫiṭṭītu*, "shortfall, crime, cultic mistake." The form *ḫiṭâtūya* is a fp with 1cs pronominal suffix. *Namšû* (N of *mašû*), "to be forgotten." *E*ʾ*iltu*, "sin, obligation, liability." *Napṭuru* (N of *paṭāru*), "to be loosened, released, cleared." For expressions regarding forgiveness of offenses parallel to this and the prior line, see Mayer, *UFBG*, 111–17. *Kasītu*, "(magical) constraint." *Rutammû* (Dt of *ramû*), "to be loosened, released."

*ḫiṭâtūya limmašâ e*ʾ*iltī lippaṭir kasītī lirtammi*

Line 16: *Paṭāru* is a G inf. here, meaning "releasing" (thus, "absolution"). It is bound to the following noun, *e*ʾ*iltīya*. These two words form a genitive (construct) chain, which is the object of the following verb. *Naqbû* (N of *qabû*), "to be spoken, commanded." In prayers, the request that the deity "speak" or "command" what the speaker desires reflects the view that the divine word was effective for determining events (see Mayer, *UFBG*, 297–306). The remainder of this line is not well preserved in any of the textual witnesses. The reading *šumu* (= MU), "name, repute, fame," is possible but uncertain because of missing context. The presence of *šumka* could indicate that the second half of this line begins the typical element of the promise of praise. While *šumu* is not well attested in typical phrases in the context of a "promise to praise," Mayer identifies the expression *šuma ullulu* in this context, interpreting it, "to let the name shine brightly" (*UFBG*, 340).

*paṭār e*ʾ*iltīya liqqabi* [. . .]

Line 17: *Narbû*, "great deeds," pl. of *narbû* "greatness." This form may be read as singular or plural. Regarding its occurrence in the context of the "promise to praise" in prayers, while CAD interprets it as the singular "greatness" (CAD N/1, 351), both Mayer (*UFBG*, 320) and Maul (*ZB*, 418/420, line 20) take it as a plural meaning "great deeds." MS D has *dalīl* (the bound form of *dalīlu*, "praise"). *Ilūtu*, "divine power, divine nature, divine rank." *Kayyān*, the adverbial form of *kayyānu*, means "constantly, regularly." *Šūpû* (Š of [*w*]*apû*), "to bring forth, make manifest, make appear, make known." *Lušāpi* is a 1cs precative.

narbî ilūtīki kayyān lušāpi

Line 18: After a ruling, this line contains a rubric, written in Sumerian, that classifies the preceding prayer for ritual use (see discussion under THE PRAYER).

Line 19: *Namnû* (N of *manû*), "to be recited, to be recounted." While the theme vowel for *manû* is *u* in the OB period, in SB it often changes to *i*. IGI = *maḫru*. *Ana maḫar*, "before (someone), into the presence of (someone)." ZÌ.MAD.GÁ = *maṣḫatu*, a type of inexpensive flour used almost exclusively for ritual offerings (see Milano, "Mehl," 25). As discussed earlier, the instructions for the recitation of this same prayer within the royal ritual *Bīt*

salā' mê indicate that an offering was to be made in front of the *maṣḫatu* flour before the prayer was recited.

ana maḫar maṣḫati immanni

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

In light of the function of this ritual-prayer to Nisaba, who is manifested both mythically as an influential goddess who makes angry deities relent and concretely in the *maṣḫatu*-flour employed within the ritual, I begin these comparative suggestions with a discussion of grain and grain offerings in the Bible.

In the agrarian societies of the ancient Near East, grain was the fundamental building block of the economy and the main medium of taxation.[1] In Mesopotamia, grain was the most important among human foods and among ritual food offerings for the gods; it was offered in the form of bread, cereal products, porridge, and flour.[2] As flour, it was typically scattered (*sarāqu*) either upon a censer or upon the burnt animal offering and could be mixed with other ingredients such as water or oil before being poured.[3] Among libations, beer made from barley or emmer-wheat was very common.

While the Mesopotamians identified grain with Nisaba, the Bible depicts Yahweh as responsible for providing it. Deuteronomy identifies abundance of grain as among the blessings assured by Yahweh in response to covenant loyalty (Deut 7:13) and the lack of grain resulting in the people's destruction as among the curses for covenant infidelity (Deut 28:51). Psalm 65:9–13 offers a lyric description of the Israelite god's intimate involvement in bringing forth an abundant harvest of grain. The Bible also portrays grain as an offering given to the deity. In the Priestly material of the Pentateuch, the term מִנְחָה, which otherwise in BH may simply signify "gift," specifies "cereal offering."[4] Leviticus 2:1–16 and 6:7–11 describe an array of cereal offerings, all of which combine fine flour (סֹלֶת) and oil but contain no leaven; they may take the shape of unleavened cakes or wafers and may be baked or cooked on a griddle or in a pan. A portion of each is "turned into smoke" (hiphil of קטר) with frankincense as an offering to Yahweh, and the remainder of each is then given to the priests. Thus, in the Priestly material as in Mesopotamia, and in particular as we may understand offerings accompanying Nisaba 1, various forms of food made from flour were offered ritually by burning. While the Priestly material specifies cooking or baking of these foods prior to offering them, the Mesopotamian sources allow for offering flour, perhaps mixed with oil or water, directly.

[1] See David Hopkins, "Grain," *NIDB* 2:660–61.
[2] Maul, *ZB*, 50.
[3] Milano, "Mehl," 25, 31.
[4] Gary Anderson, "Sacrifice and Sacrificial Offerings (OT)," *ABD* 5:874. Such an interpretation is supported by parallel texts from among Phoenician cultic tariffs.

The explicit purpose of Nisaba 1 in conjunction with grain offerings as an appeal for help in calming angry gods finds only indirect parallels in the story of Noah and in the sacrificial system of the Priestly writings.

In the Priestly system, if sacrifices and offerings to Yahweh can be said to have a pacifying function, it is with an emphasis on their capacity to please the deity rather than on the necessity of calming divine anger. Many biblical narratives and prayers acknowledge Yahweh's anger, but the use of offerings to calm this anger is not addressed in the Priestly sacrificial system. While sinful acts may have been presumed to anger the deity, sin offerings are not explicitly characterized as calming divine anger.

More specifically, one view of Leviticus 1–3 supports the possibility that the grain offerings described in Leviticus 2 might have been applied in a variety of situations, including times of distress which could well have been attributed to divine anger. In both Mesopotamian and biblical sources, cereal offerings are inexpensive, and even the poorest worshipers can make them. Prayers to Shamash and Marduk specify *maṣḫatu* flour as what the widow offers to the god.[5] Baruch Schwartz considers that Leviticus 1–3 is a unified divine speech pertaining to gift offerings (אִשֶּׁה), which are distinct from expiatory offerings in that they allowed the worshiper to offer Yahweh a token of reverence on various occasions, including: fulfillment of vows, visits to the sanctuary, supplication in times of distress, and gratitude.[6] Schwartz also suggests that Leviticus 2 was placed between the two major categories of such offerings (whole burnt offerings in Leviticus 1 and sacrifices of well-being in Leviticus 3) precisely to affirm that even the poorest Israelite could make a gift offering.[7] The Priestly material also allows that for a purification offering, someone too poor to afford either a sheep or two turtledoves may offer a portion of choice flour (סֹלֶת, Lev 5:11).

In the story of Noah, although the text does not explicitly use terms for "anger" to describe the deity's attitude in sending the flood, such a destructive act in the ancient Near Eastern context presumes anger (Gen 6–7). The sacrifice offered by Noah after the flood is pleasing to Yahweh and clearly implies a pacification of divine anger (Gen 8:20–22). While animals rather than grain are offered there, a gradation of offerings allowing for more affordable commodities such as grain may be assumed in the sacrificial system presumed by this story. The evidence from Mesopotamia and from the Priestly writings just discussed supports such a presumption.

[5] Prayer to Shamash: The CAD cites two variants (K.3333 and K.3286) of such a statement, and these are edited by Sally Butler as exemplars of the same prayer (CAD A, 363; Sally Butler, *Mesopotamian Conceptions of Dreams and Dream Rituals* (AOAT 258; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1998), 274/298, line 22. Prayer to Marduk: Marduk 19, see the transliteration of KAR 25 ii 19 at CAD M, 331.

[6] See his commentary to the book of Leviticus in *The Jewish Study Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 206.

[7] *The Jewish Study Bible*, 208–9.

Line 17 of Nisaba 1 concludes with the speaker's offer to proclaim the goddess's great achievements, an offer that fits the form often described as a concluding "promise/vow of praise." In the ancient Near East praise was conceived primarily as public narration, likely accompanied by celebration, in which the speaker attested to specific experiences of divine favor by which the deity had confirmed his or her responsiveness and power.[8] This conception is reflected in the Hebrew Bible. Biblical scholars classify roughly a third of the biblical psalms as having a literary form known as the individual lament, whose description has been heavily influenced by the structure of incantation-prayers (see page 61). Like incantation-prayers, the individual lament follows petition with a vow of praise. However, among the biblical psalms, such a structure rarely occurs in a simple linear way. In Psalm 9:14–15, for example, the speaker's petition for mercy is followed by a promise to praise the deity in public:[9] "so that I may recount all your praises, and, in the gates of daughter Zion, rejoice in your deliverance." Yet, verse twenty of the same psalm voices another petition: "Rise up, O LORD! Do not let mortals prevail."

[8] See, e.g., the poem *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*, especially the opening hymn (page 483) and Tablet IV.
[9] Both the verb used here (ספר piel, "to recount") and the location of the speaker suggest a public performance.

TRANSLATION:

1. Incantation. O Nisaba, merciful queen,
2. The one who creates god, king, and human,
3. Net against the Anunnakki, the furious gods,
4. Who makes the angry god (and) the angry goddess relent,
5. I want to send you to my angry god, to my angry goddess,
6. Whose hearts are wrathful, furious and angry with me.
7. Reconcile to me (my) angry god (and my) angry goddess!
8. I, Shamash-shum-ukin, a son of his god,
9. Whose god is Marduk and whose goddess is Zarpanitu,
10. As a result of the evil (announced by) inauspicious, not good signs (and) portents,
11. That occurred in my palace and my land,
    ⟨Am afraid, anxious, and panicked.⟩
12. May their evil towards me and my palace
13. Not approach, not come near, not come close, not reach me!
14. May my offenses be released, may my crimes be taken away!
15. May my (cultic) mistakes be forgotten, may my sin be absolved, may my (magical) constraint be released!

16. May the absolution of my sin be commanded! [. . .]
17. May I constantly make manifest the great achievements of your divinity!

18. It is the wording of a lifted-hand to Nisaba for turning away divine anger.

19. It is to be recited in front of *maṣḫatu*-flour.

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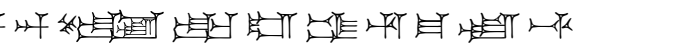
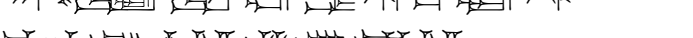
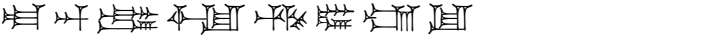
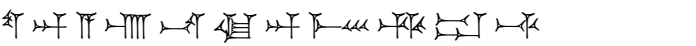
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
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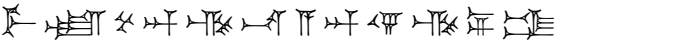
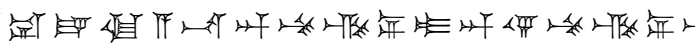
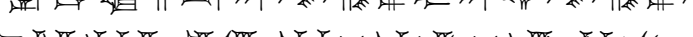
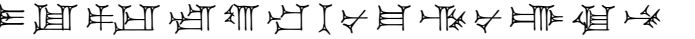
6. 
7. 
8. 
9. 
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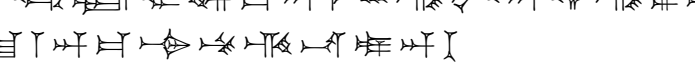
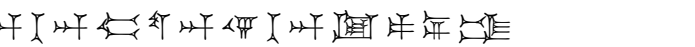
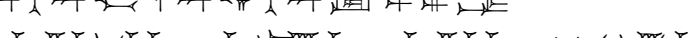
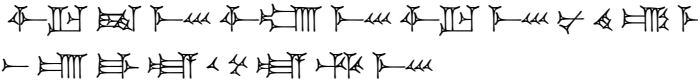
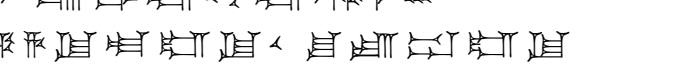
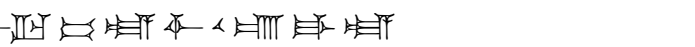
11. 
12. 
13. 
14. 
15. 
16. 

17.

18.

19.

A Shuilla: Shamash 1

DUANE SMITH

SHAMASH:

See page 197.

THE PRAYER:

While not completely consistent, those textual witnesses to the prayer that preserve a rubric refer to our prayer in Sumerian as ka-inim-ma šu-íl-lá ^{d}utu-kam, "the wording of a shuilla to Shamash."[1] Several witnesses show interesting variations within the text of the prayer.[2] For example, two versions of the petition suggest differing emphases. In several MSS, the self-introduction and the lament are missing. This leaves the prayer with little motivation beyond the general desire for a good life. The unnamed supplicant seeks a life filled with positive portents. But the longer versions of the prayer, namely, MSS D 8′–11′, G 19–26, and I 17–22, which differ among themselves, contain a self-introduction and a lament and are therefore more specific in their concern. Particularly in MS G, the supplicant, perhaps a king,[3] is concerned with bad omens that cause him to be continually anxious. The difference in emphasis of the prayer is accomplished simply by adding (or removing[4]) several lines without otherwise modifying the surrounding text.

There is evidence that supplicants recited Shamash 1 in a variety of ritual contexts. Claus Ambos places Shamash 1, particularly as exemplified in MS A (along with the other rituals and prayers on the same tablet) in the ritual series *Bīt salāʾ mê* ("Water-sprinkling house").[5] MSS α, β and γ quote the incipit, that is, the first few words of Shamash 1, in their ritual instructions. MS α is likely also a

[1] MSS A, B, F and I. MS K reads šu-íl-lá ^{d}utu-ke$_4$.
[2] See Mayer, *UFBG*, 503 for the textual witnesses. I follow his sigla.
[3] In MS G the supplicant is an unknown Aplutu; MS D reads in this place *anāku annanna mar annanna*, "I am so-and-so, son of so-and-so," the most common place holder in prayers; and MS I reads, *Šamaš-šum-ukīn*, the seventh century king of Babylon. In the present treatment of the text, lines 18–25 of the text, notes, and translation represent the major addition in MS G.
[4] One cannot be certain of the textual history of the two major versions.
[5] See Ambos, 45–53 and 280–89.

Bīt salāʾ mê ("Water-sprinkling house") ritual.[6] MS β is a collection of medical rituals and incantations.[7] It references several incantations, including ours, only by way of their incipits. Of these, scholars have only identified our prayer with relative certainty.[8] While superficially the whole of MS γ is identifiable as a namburbi collection, the MS actually includes a mixture of ritual types.[9] For this reason, it is not clear that MS γ is itself a witness to a namburbi context for our prayer.[10] In any case, it is clear that some version of our prayer was used in both *Bīt salāʾ mê* and various medical rituals.

The prayer has three major sections: a long invocation, an extended petition, and a rather short conditional call for praise.

A detailed structure of the prayer is as follows:

I) Invocation
  A) God's name, honorific titles and attributes (1–6)
  B) Praise for the god's nature and special skills (7–17)
II) Petition
  A) Self-introduction (18–19) (missing in the shorter versions)
  B) Lament (20–25) (missing in the shorter versions)
  C) Plea (25–43)
III) Final, conditional call for praise of the god (43–47)

A lengthy invocation begins with a set of traditional honorific epithets before calling on Shamash by name. The last of these involve the bringing of happiness to the people and setting them free. These set the stage for mention of the various skills that the god will need to meet the supplicant's petition. The invocation continues with additional honorific titles and transitions to a praise of specific and special skills of Shamash. These skills, providing a lone man with a friend, giving an heir to the impotent, etc., continue the theme of Shamash being a provider of happiness and freedom to the people. The invocation ends with praise of Shamash's actions as judge of the gods and as one who gives judgment

[6] Compare Mayer's suggestion that MSS A and α are *mīs pî* rituals (*UFBG*, 503).

[7] The incipit referencing our prayer is at BAM 322:64. See Mayer, *UFBG*, 503. On the composite nature of this witness see Franz Köcher, *Die babylonisch-assyrische Medizin in Texten und Untersuchungen* (6 vols; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1962–1980), IV.ix–x and 322. F. A. M. Wiggermann, *Mesopotamian Protective Spirits: The Ritual Texts* (Groningen: Styx, 1992), 126 notes a possible association between our prayer and those mentioned in BAM 332 that use the epithet ur.sag, Akk. *qarrādu*, "hero," for example at line 64. Other examples include BAM 3:28′–32′, also a medical text, and KAR 253, rev. 8. The exact nature of this relationship if any is unclear.

[8] See Köcher, *babylonisch-assyrische Medizin*, IV.v.

[9] Of MS γ Maul writes, "The basis for the combination of such diverse rituals as in KAR 72 will probably always remain unclear" ("Der Grund für die Kombination von so unterschiedlichen Ritualen wie in der Tafel KAR n72 wird wohl für immer unklar bleiben"; *ZB*, 175). And in note 162 on the same page he says, "The purpose of the first ritual (KAR 72, obv. 1–25) is unclear" ("Der Zweck des ersten Ritual [KAR n72 Vs, 1–25] ist unklar"). KAR 72:24 is our MS γ. On the multiple ritual contexts of our prayer see also Mayer, *UFBG*, 19–20.

[10] See also MS K, which attests the whole prayer on a tablet concerned with a namburbi-ritual.

to humankind by way of haruspicy, "on the exta of a sheep you inscribe the omen; you place judgment."

This praise of Shamash as judge provides not only an end of the invocation but an introduction to the petition. Aplutu, the supplicant of MS G, first formally introduces himself and then laments, "the sting of the flesh (omen) has befallen me." This directly ties to the previous reference to Shamash's role in giving judgment by haruspicy. But as the lament unfolds, we quickly learn that there are other evil signs, broken chariot parts, red ants in the house, and other unnamed evil omens, that befall the supplicant. The lament ends with the stock phrase, *palḫāku adrāku u šutādurāku*, "I am afraid, anxious, and constantly in fear." The shorter versions of this prayer lack both the self-introduction and lament. The plea proper asks Shamash, in his role as judge, to "decree"[11] favorable portents, including good dreams and good fortune. To some extent, the final three lines read as a continuation of the plea. But based on the rather set patterns in such prayers, I think there can be little doubt that this section is conditional. Unlike many other such conditional endings, these lines in our prayer are the supplicant's request that Shamash be praised rather than the more common conditional vow that the supplicant himself will praise the god.[12]

One might analyze the last section of this shuilla-prayer as an apodosis to its plea's protasis and understand it as the closing element of the petition.[13] While the final section does serve such a function, it also harks back to the invocation and creates, with the invocation, an *inclusio* for the whole prayer. The supplicant enumerates many praiseworthy attributes of the god in the invocation. The fulfillment of the petition adds yet another praiseworthy element to Shamash's resumé. In this way, the final conditional section ties the invocation and the petition together. For this reason, I think it best to consider the final section on the same level as the invocation and petition.

[11] See the comment on line 26 below.

[12] See Tzvi Abusch, "The Promise to Praise the God in Šuilla Prayers," in *Biblical and Oriental Studies in Memory of William L. Moran* (ed. Agustinus Gianto; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2005), 3–48.

[13] Mayer lists the ending of our prayer among a group of conclusions to prayers that he characterizes as follows: "A short praise formula *is integrated into the petition*, and thus does not have the character of a *concluding* promise or wish of praise" ("Eine kurze Lobformel ist in die Bitten integriert, hat also nicht den Charakter eines abschliessenden Lobversprechen oder -wunsches"; *UFBG*, 347; emphasis original). This group makes up one of three under his more general heading of "Petitions involving the promise of praise, or wish of praise" ("Bitten nach dem Lobversprechen bzw. Lobwunsch"; see *UFBG*, 347–48). Abusch, "Promise," 6, also notes the existence of deviations in the way shuilla-prayers end.

ESSENTIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Shamash. See page 201.

Text. Edition: Mayer, *UFBG*, 503–10.[i] Translations: Foster, 744–45. Seux, 283–86. von Soden, 318–20. Studies: Claus Ambos. *Der König im Gefängnis und das Neujahrsfest im Herbst: Mechanismen der Legitimation des babylonischen Herrschers im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr. und ihre Geschichte*. Habilitation. Heidelberg, 2010; rev. forthcoming.

[i] Mayer's MS K (W 22730/3) was published as *SpBTU* II, no. 18. Mayer's MSS D and E were published in copy as Loretz-Mayer, AOAT 34, nos. 23 and 22, respectively. One other duplicate (K.17009) was published as no. 21.

1. ÉN *šur-bu-ú gít-ma-lu a-pil* ^{d}AŠ.ÍM.BABBAR

2. ZÁLAG *ed-deš-šu-ú pe-tu-u pa-an* UN.MEŠ *mu-kal-lim nu-r*[*a*]

3. ^{d}UTU *muš-te-šir* LÚ.ÚŠ *u* LÚ.TI *ba-ár kal mim-ma šum-šú*

Line 1: ÉN = *šiptu*, "incantation, ritual wording." This marks the beginning of the wording of the prayer. It is not actually part of the prayer itself. *Šurbû*, "exalted, supreme," is often used to describe deities and their epithets (see CAD Š/3, 341–42). The Š stem verbal adjective is used here as an elative (i.e., superlative), "most exalted." *Gitmālu*, "perfect, ideal." *Aplu*, "son, heir." ^{d}AŠ.ÍM.BABBAR = *Namraṣīt*, an epithet for Sin, the lunar deity. The prayer begins with several lines of stock epithets to Shamash or minor variants on such stock epithets. Despite the fact that the prayer does not use Shamash's name until line 3, there can be no doubt that the prayer is addressed to him.

šiptu: *surbû gitmālu apil Namraṣīt*

Line 2: ZÁLAG = *nūru*, "light," is on occasion an appellative for Shamash. *Eddēššû*, "constantly self-renewing." Based on the participle in the following clause, the form of *petû*, "to open," is best understood as a ms participle (*pētû*). The participle is bound to the following noun; therefore, we expect *pēti*. But in SB Akkadian a participle from a III-weak root in construct with a following substantive often ends with *–û* (see Brigitte R. M. Groneberg, *Syntax, Morphologie und Stil der jungbabylonischen „hymnischen" Literatur*, 2 Vols. [Freiburger Altorientalische Studien 14/1–2; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1987], 1.95). UN.MEŠ = *nišū*, "people." The idiom *pān nišī petû*, "to open the peoples' face," means "to bring happiness" (see CAD P, 351). *Nūra kullumu*, "to show someone the light," implies setting someone free from prison. Note the PN *Šamaš-nūra-kullimanni*, "O Shamash, set me free!" See CAD K, 524–25. Participial description dominates in this line and the next.

nūru eddēššû pētû pān nišī mukallim nūra

Line 3: ^{d}UTU = *Šamaš*. *Muštēšir* from *šutēšuru* (Št lex. of *ešēru*), "to put in order, to clear up, to provide justice." The form is a ms participle (bound form). LÚ.ÚŠ = *mītu*, "dead person." LÚ.TI = *balāṭu, "*living person." *Barû*, "to see." Participles from III-weak roots sometimes lack the final short vowel; it is preserved in MSS E and F. *Kalû* (bound: *kal*[*a*]), "all, every." The idiom *mimma šumšu*, lit. "whatever its name," means "anything, everything" (see CAD M/2, 75–76). Shamash can provide justice for all people, living and dead,

4. ^{d}UTU *nu-úr* AN-*e u* KI-*tim šá-ru-ur* KUR.KUR

5. EN *sip-par ṣu-lul* é-babbar-ra

6. *ta-lim* ^{d}AMAR.UTU *tuk-lat* KÁ.DINGIR.RA^{ki}

7. *a-na* ZÁLA[G]*-ka ú-pa-qa te-ni-še-e-tum*

8. *a-na qí-bi-ti-ka ú-taq-qu-ú* DINGIR.MEŠ ^{d}*í-gì-gì*

because he sees everything everywhere.
Šamaš muštēšir mīti u balāṭi bār kal mimma šumšu

Line 4: AN = *šamû*, "heaven." KI = *erṣetu*, "earth, land." Mayer's MSS F and G replace *šamê u erṣetim* with *ilī*, "of the gods." KUR = *mātu*, "land, country." KUR.KUR = *mātāti* (pl. of *mātu*). Note the doubling of the sign to indicate a plural noun. *Šarūru*, "radiance."
Šamaš nūr šamê u erṣetim šarūr mātāti

Line 5: EN = *bēlu*, "lord." *Ṣulūlu*, literally "canopy, covering," is a common metaphor of divine or royal protection (see CAD Ṣ, 243). É-babbar-ra = E-babbar, the Sumerian name of Shamash's temple at Sippar. See A. C. V. M. Bongenaar, *The Neo-Babylonian Ebabbar Temple at Sippar: Its Administration and Its Prosopography* (Leiden: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, 1997).
bēl Sippar ṣulūl E-babbar

Line 6: *Talīmu*, "favorite or beloved brother." ^{d}AMAR.UTU = *Marduk*. *Tukultu* (*tuklatu*), "trust, mainstay, object of trust, help." KÁ.DINGIR.RA^{ki} = *Bābilu*, "Babylon."
talīm Marduk tuklat Bābili

Line 7: This line is missing from MSS B, C, I, K. *Upaqqā* is a 3fp durative from *puqqu*, "to pay attention to," attested only in the D stem. *Teništu* (*tenēštu*), "humankind." Rather than continuing with the list of epithets, lines 7ff. use finite verbs in complete sentences to describe Shamash. Lines 7–9 use verbs in the third person; those in lines 10–15 are second person.
ana nūrīka upaqqā tenīšētum

Line 8: *Qibītu*, "speech, command." *Utaqqû* (Dt of [*w*]*aqû*), "to wait attentively on someone or something, to attend." Mayer's MS F reads the verb as *upaqqā* instead, mirroring the previous line. DINGIR.MEŠ = *ilū*, "gods." Generally, the Igigi-gods are the lesser or younger gods in the pantheon but, on occasion, the name seems to imply the whole pantheon. Mayer's MS F reads GAL.MEŠ = *rabûtu*, "the great ones," in place of DINGIR.MEŠ. Occasionally, *rabûtu* is an epithet for the *Igigî* (see CAD R, 35).
ana qibītīka utaqqû ilū Igigî

9. UN.MEŠ DAGAL.MEŠ *ṣal-mat* SAG.DU *i-dal-la-la qur-di-ka*

10. GURUŠ AŠ *tap-pa-a tu-šar-ši*

11. *ana la i-šá-ri ta-nam-din ap-lu*

12. *ed-lu-ti sik-kur* AN-*e tu-pat-ti*

13. *ana la na-ṭi-li ta-šak-kan nu-ú-ru*

Line 9: UN.MEŠ, see line 2. DAGAL.MEŠ = *rapšāti*, fp of *rapšu*, "wide, far-flung." *Nišī rapšāti*, is a common idiom for widespread peoples (see CAD R, 164). *Ṣalmu*, "black." SAG.DU = *qaqqadu*, "head." The idiom *ṣalmāt qaqqadi*, "the black-headed ones," refers to humankind. They are like sheep led by their divine shepherds. Mayer's MS G reads the beginning of the line differently: *ilu u šarru nišī ṣalmāt qaqqadi*, "god and king, the black-headed people." *Dalālu*, "to praise." *Qurdu*, "heroism," in the plural means "heroic deeds."

nišī rapšāti ṣalmāt qaqqadi idallalā qurdīka

Line 10: GURUŠ = *eṭlu*, "young man, youth." AŠ (also read DILI) = *ēdu*, "single, individual." See *eṭlu ēdu*, "single/lone man," in CAD E, 36, 37, 409, and CAD T, 188. (Mayer, 505 reads the logogram as KAL DILI, but this does not change the meaning.) *Tappû*, "partner, friend, companion." *Šuršû* (Š of *rašû*), "to cause to acquire, to provide." Description of Shamash with second person verbs begins in this line and continues through line 15.

eṭla ēda tappâ tušarši

Line 11: Here *lā* is used proclitically to negate the following noun. CAD I/J, 226 understands *lā išari* as an idiom for "impotent" based on *išaru*, "normal" or "straight" rather than *išaru,* "penis." See also Seux, 284, n.11 and *AHw*, 392. *Tanamdin* (for *tanaddin*) is from *nadānu*, "to give." The *–dd–* often changes to *–nd–* or *–md–*, as here. See *GAG*, §32b,c. One might expect *apla* instead of *aplu* but the nominative case ending often stands for the accusative in SB Akkadian. See *GAG*, §63e. Note that MS D reads *ap-li* here, apparently understanding the word as a plural (*aplī*).

ana lā išari tanamdin apla

Line 12: *Edlu*, "locked." *Sikkūru*, "bolt, bar." Given the plural adj., this noun should be taken as a plural, too. *Puttû* (D of *petû*), "to open, to unlock."

edlūti sikkūr šamê tupatti

Line 13: *Lā nāṭili* is a common expression, based on the adj. *nāṭilu*, "seeing." Compare *ana lā išari* in line 11. See CAD N/2, 129. In some contexts, *nūra šakānu* can be understood idiomatically to mean "to provide joy" (see CAD N/2, 349). But here a more literal understanding is called for. Again, the nominative case vowel appears in place of the accusative (i.e., on the object of the verb): *nūru* for *nūra*. The light of Shamash can penetrate the darkness of a blind person.

ana lā nāṭili tašakkan nūru

14. *ṭup-pa ar-ma la pe-ta-a ta-šá-as-si*

15. *ina lìb-bi* UDU.NÍTA *ta-šaṭ-ṭar* UZU.MEŠ *ta-šá-kan di-n*[*a*]

16. *da-a-a-a*[*n*] DINGIR.MEŠ EN ^{d}*í-gì-gì*

17. ^{d}UTU EN *ši-mat* KUR *at-ta-ma*

18. [*ana-ku* ^{I}]IBILA-*u-tú* DUMU D[INGI]R-[*šú*]

Line 14: *Ṭuppu*, "tablet." *Armu*, "enclosed." A *ṭuppu armu* is a tablet with its envelope, an encased tablet. *Lā petû*, "un-opened." *Šasû*, "to shout out, to read aloud." This verb is often used with tablets or inscriptions; see CAD Š/2, 162–63. Shamash sees everything (see line 3), even the contents of a tablet inside its clay envelope.

ṭuppa arma lā petâ tašassi

Line 15: *Libbu* literally means "heart" but can also refer to the exta (i.e., the insides) of an animal. UDU.NÍTA = *immeru*, "sheep." *Šaṭāru*, "to write, to inscribe." UZU.MEŠ = *šīru*, "meat, flesh," here means an ominous sign (see CAD Š/3, 121–22). One should take inscribing the *šīru* as marking it with abnormalities so that the exta, primarily the liver but also other organs including lungs, indicate some omen. Extispicy was a common practice in Mesopotamia and elsewhere. *Šakānu*, "to put, to place." *Dīnu*, "judgment." The last two words are added in MSS C and G; they clarify the judicial meaning of "writing omens." MS G also adds the following line between our lines 15 and 16: [*Š*]*amaš muštēšir māti bēl šīmāti gišḫurāte a*[*ttā-ma*], "O Shamash, who sets the land in order, you are the lord of the fates (and) plans." Compare MSS D and F in line 17.

ina libbi immeri tašaṭṭar šīra tašakkan dīna

Line 16: *Dayyānu*, "judge." *Igigî* is in synonymous parallelism with *ilī*.

dayyān ilī bēl Igigî

Line 17: *Šīmtu*, "fate, destiny." Mayer's MSS G and I vary slightly here. MS G has: [*bēlu*$^{?}$ *m*]*ušīm šīmāt mātāti attā-*[*ma*$^{?}$], "O lord, you are the one who determines the fates of the lands." MS I: *Šam*[*aš*] *bēl mušīm šīmāti attā-ma*, "O Shamash, you are the lord who determines the fates." Mayer's MSS D and F offer more significant variation. They replace the text we have labeled line 17 with something else. MS D has: [*Šamaš*] *bēl šīmāti gišḫurāte attā-ma*, "O Shamash, you are the lord of the fates (and) plans." MS F: *Šamaš muštēš*[*ir*] *mātāti attā / bēl šīmāti gišḫurāte attā-ma*, "O Shamash, you are the one who sets the lands in order, you are the lord of the fates (and) plans."

Šamaš bēl šīmat māti attā-ma

Line 18: Three witnesses, Mayer's MSS F, G, and I, add four, eight, and six lines respectively after line 17. These all offer variations on stock self-presentation and lamentation formulas. Lines 18 to 25 follow MS G (translated by Mayer in *UFBG*, 510). Similar lines are found in MS I but they name Shamash-shum-ukin, king of Babylon c. 650 BCE, as the supplicant (translated by von Soden, 319). MS D's supplement is generic, using common placeholders for the supplicant's name. The variations in and rearrangements of textual material evidenced here and in the last several lines are quite typical for Mesopotamian

19. [*šá* DINGIR-*šú*] ^{d}30 ^{d}15-[*šú*] ^{d}NIN.[GAL]

20. *s*[*i*$^{?}$-*ḫi-i*]*l-ti* UZU GAR-*ma* «ma» US.U[S-*ni*]

21. *ina* [Ḫ]UL *m*[*im-ma ḫ*]*u-ṣab* GIŠ.GIGIR.MU *šá iš-š*[*eb-ru*]

22. *ina* ḪUL *kul-*[*ba-b*]*i* SA$_5$.MEŠ *šá ina* É.MU IGI-[*ru*]

prayers and incantations. Consulting a critical edition is absolutely necessary to work through this material properly (see *UFBG*, 506–7). IBILA-*u-tú* = *Aplūtu*, literally "sonship," is the proper name of an individual from Ḫuzirina (modern Sultantepe).

anāku Aplūtu mār ilīšu

Line 19: This line completes a common self-presentation formula, "I am PN$_1$, son of PN$_2$, whose god is DN$_1$ and whose goddess is DN$_2$." ^{d}30 = *Sîn*. ^{d}NIN.GAL = *Nikkal*, Sin's consort. ^{d}15 = *ištaru*, here alongside *ilu*, means "goddess."

ša ilšu Sîn ištaršu Nikkal

Line 20: *Siḫiltu*, "pricking, sting." GAR = *naškunu* (N of *šakānu*), "to be placed, to be set in place, to occur" (see CAD Š/3, 156). A passive form is required by context, either an N stem preterite, *iššaknam*, or a predicative, *šaknam*; as expected, the form is accompanied by the 1cs dat. suffix, *–am* (see *UFBG*, 91). Compare the first part of the line with the following: *siḫilti šīri ana bīti šuāti iššakkan*, "*siḫilti šīri* will befall that house" (CAD S, 235, citing CT 38 47:41). This "sting of the flesh" is a negative portent resulting from hepatomancy (i.e., liver divination). The enclitic *–ma* connects the two halves of the line. The second MA sign, represented as «ma» above, is a scribal dittography. UŠ.UŠ = *riteddû* (Gtn of *redû*), "to drive constantly, to pursue constantly." The doubling of the logogram is one way scribes indicated an iterative stem like the Gtn. The *–ni* on the verb indicates a 1cs pronominal object suffix. This line begins the supplicant's lament, that is, why he is appealing to the deity for help.

siḫilti šīri šaknam-ma irteneddanni

Line 21: Here *ina*, in expressions like *ina lumun*, is causative or instrumental, meaning "because of," "by means of," or "on account of." ḪUL = *lumnu*, "evil (omen)." The words that follow *lumun* (bound form of *lumnu*) in the next several lines indicate the sign of the evil omen that perplexes the supplicant. GIŠ.GIGIR = *narkabtu*, "chariot." MU is the logogram for a 1cs pronominal suffix. A *ḫuṣāb narkabti* is a wooden part of the chariot that can be broken by a horse (see CAD Ḫ, 258). *Šebēru*, "to break." The verb ends with the subjunctive marker, *–u*, because it occurs in a relative clause (headed by *ša*). Particular omens in this line and the next have caused the supplicant distress.

ina lumun mimma ḫuṣāb narkabtīya ša iššebru

Line 22: *kulbābu*, "ant." SA$_5$.MEŠ = *sāmūti* from *sāmu*, "red." The MEŠ indicates the plural form of the adj. É = *bītu*, "house." IGI-*ru* = *nanmuru* (N of *amāru*), "to be seen, to occur." Like *iššebru* in the previous line, the form of this verb is 3cs preterite with subjunctive. Several Akkadian omens mention ants and red ants in particular in their protasis. For example, "If (a man has dug a well within his house and) red ants (*kulbābū sāmūtu*) have

23. *ina* ḪUL Á.M[EŠ GISK]IM.MEŠ [ḪUL].MEŠ [NU DÙG.GA.MEŠ]

24. *šá ina* É.[MU GAL.MEŠ *ana* IGI.MU GIB.MEŠ]

25. *pal-ḫa-ku a*[*d-ra-ku u šu-ta-du-ra-ku*]

26. *šim-ti ši-im a-lak-ti dum-mi-iq*

27. *li-ši-ra i-da-tu-ú-a*

28. *lid-mi-qa* MÁŠ.GI$_6$.MEŠ-*ú-a*

been seen, the owner of the well will die" (CT 38 22:16). See other examples referenced in *UFBG*, 510 and CAD K, 502.

ina lumun kulbābī sāmūti ša ina bītīya innamru

Line 23: Á.MEŠ = *idātu*, "signs." GISKIM.MEŠ = *ittātu*, "signs." On *ittātu* and *idātu*, see CAD I/J, 307–8 (and note page 359). DÙG.GA.MEŠ = *ṭābāti*, "good things" (sg. *ṭābu*). This line and the next form a common lament formula (see *UFBG*, 101–2). This formula serves as a basis for the textual reconstruction. The lament moves now to a very general and vague lament about untoward omens the supplicant has experienced. Its generality permits coverage of everything the supplicant—any supplicant—might be worried about.

ina lumun idāti ittāti lemnēti lā ṭābāti

Line 24: GÁL.MEŠ = *bašû*, "to be." IGI = *pānu*. GIB(or GIL).MEŠ = *parāku*, "to lay across, to block, to obstruct." When used with *ana pāni*, the verb means "to oppose, to confront" (see CAD P, 156–57).

ša ina bītīya ibšâ ana pānīya ipparkā

Line 25: All the verbs in this line are 1cs predicatives. *Palāḫu*, "to fear, to be afraid." *Adāru*, "to be afraid (of), to fear." *Šutādurāku* is a Št 1cs predicative (from *adāru*). It means "I am constantly in fear." See CAD A/1, 109 for a discussion of *šutādurāku* and related words.

palḫāku adrāku u šutādurāku

Line 26: In most versions of this prayer, the second major section of the prayer, the petition, begins here without any preceding self-presentation or lament. The first and second sections are bound together by *šīmat* in line 17 and *šīmtī šīm* here. *Šâmu* "to allot power, to decree." *Alaktu*, "way, route." *Dummuqu* (D of *damāqu*), "to improve, to make favorable, pleasant." Note the imperatives, which are common in petitions.

šīmtī šīm alaktī dummiq

Line 27: *Ešēru*, "to go well, to be straight." With omens, the verb means "to be favorable." The form is a 3fp precative. *Idātu*, see line 23, here with 1cs suffix. This line and the next belong together (see *UFBG*, 507). The linguistic parallelism is very tight.

līširā idātūya

Line 28: *Damāqu*, "to be good." MÁŠ.GI$_6$ = *šuttu*, "dream" (pl. *šunātu*).

lidmiqā šunātūya

29. MÁŠ.GI$_6$ *aṭ-ṭu-la ana* SIG$_5$*-ti šuk-na*

30. *i-šá-riš lul-lik tap-pe-e lu-uk-šu-ud*

31. *šá u$_4$-mi-ia lu-u* SIG$_5$*-ti*

32. *šu-ut-li-ma-am-ma* INIM.GAR SIG$_5$

33. *ina* SILA *lu-u ma-gir qa-bu-ú-a*

Line 29: *Šunat* is the bound form of *šuttu*; it introduces here a dependent clause. *Naṭālu*, "to see." SIG$_5$ = *damqu* (m), *damiqti* (f), *damqāti* (fp), "good, favorable," pl. "good news, good luck." The word is probably to be understood as a plural, *damqāti*. But one could read *damiqti* with about the same meaning. The choice between *damqāti* and *damiqti* is in large measure a matter of convention. See CAD D, 67. *Šukna* is an impv. from *šakānu* plus 1cs dative suffix. MS F reads *terre*, a ms impv. from *turru* (D of *târu*), which with *ana*, means "to turn something into something."

šunat aṭṭula ana damqāti šukna

Line 30: *Išariš*, "normally, correctly." *Alāku*, "to walk, to go." *Išariš lullik* is an idiom for "let me prosper" or "let me have a good life" (see CAD I/J, 223). *Lukšud* "to reach, to achieve, to accomplish." *Tappû*, "friend, comrade."

išariš lullik tappê lukšud

Line 31: The relative pronoun *ša* here means, "with reference to." *Ša ūmīya*, should likely be understood as an idiom for "during my life," not unlike the English idioms "all my days" or "in my day." The particle *lū*, among other uses, expresses a wish in a verbless sentence. It is related to the precative. Notice the connection here with line 29 above and line 32 below via SIG$_5$.

ša ūmīya lū damqāti

Line 32: *Šutlumu*, "to grant, to bestow generously." The form is a ms impv. plus 1cs pronominal suffix. INIM.GAR = *egirrû* can mean "reputation," but it also means "ominous utterance." The reader should be mindful of the ambiguity in this lexeme. Several texts associate *egirrû* and dreams. For example, "the *šunātim* and *igirrê* which I saw and heard" (CAD E, 45, citing A 7705:13; see further Sally A. L. Butler, *Mesopotamian Concepts of Dreams and Dream Ritual* [AOAT 258; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1998], 151–57). Here the context favors "portents," perhaps "spoken portents," over the far less specific "reputation." SIG$_5$ = *dumqu*, "goodness, good, welfare." *Egirrê dumqi* is a common expression for good (spoken) omens.

šutlimam-ma egirrê dumqi

Line 33: SILA = *sūqu*, "street." *Ina sūqi* is a common idiom for "publicly." *Magir* is the 3ms predicative of *magāru*, "to consent, to agree." In the predicative the verb means "to be agreeable, to find favor, to be acceptable." *Qabû*, "to speak." The form is an infinitive plus 1cs pronominal suffix. Conceptually speaking, perhaps one might understand this and the following lines against the contrasting context of *Ludlul* I 73–98.

ina sūqi lū magir qabûya

34. DINGIR *u* LUGAL *li-šá-q*[*í-ru-i*]*n-ni*

35. IDIM *u* NUN *ša qa-bi-*[*ia*] *li-pu-uš*

36. *ina ul-ṣi u ri-šá-a-ti lu-bil* u_4*-mu*

37. ^{d}*kit-tu li-iz-ziz ina* ZAG.MU

38. ^{d}*mi-šar* [*l*]*i-iz-ziz ina* GÙB.MU

39. *lit-tal-lak* DINGIR *mu-šal-li-mu ina* A.MU

40. *a-a ip-par-ku* MAŠKIM *šùl-mu ina* EGIR.MU

Line 34: MSS F and G add two lines here (our lines 34–35). LUGAL = *šarru*, "king." *Šūquru* (Š of *aqāru*), "to hold in esteem, to give honor." Note that gods and kings are cited as a class to themselves, a class above the *kabtu u rubû* of the next line.
ilu u šarru lišāqirūʾinni

Line 35: IDIM = *kabtu*, "politically influential person." NUN = *rubû*, "prince or noble person." *Kabtu u rubû* can refer to a person or a god. Texts often pair these two words. *Epēšu*, "to do, to make." Given the plural subject, we expect *līpušū* rather than the singular *līpuš*. In light of the previous line, note the following: *kabtum u rabûm mamman ša lā ušaqqaranni ul ibašši*, "there is no influential person or official who does not hold me in esteem" (see CAD K, 27, citing TLB 4 22:29).
kabtu u rubû ša qabîya līpuš

Line 36: *Ulṣu*, "pleasure, rejoicing." *Rīštu*, "rejoicing, celebration." *Ina ulṣi u rīšāti* is a very common expression referring to all the joys of life without its difficulties. (*W*)*abālu*, "to bring, to carry," but with *ūmu* as its object, "to pass time" (see CAD A/1, 20).
ina ulṣi u rīšāti lubil ūmu

Line 37: *Kittu*, "truth," commonly deified as here (note the determinative). Kittu and Mishar (see next line) are children of Shamash, which is appropriate given the fact that he is the god of justice. *Izuzzu* (*uzuzzu*), "to stand." ZAG = *imittu*, "right side."
Kittu lizziz ina imittīya

Line 38: GÙB = *šumēlu*, "left side." *Mīšaru*, "justice."
Mīšar lizziz ina šumēlīya

Line 39: *Atalluku* (Gtn of *alāku*), "to walk, to go constantly." The Gtn here is used to indicate persistence of protection. *Mušallimu* is a participle from *šullumu* (D of *šalāmu*), "to keep well, to give well-being, to heal," functioning as an adjective. Á = *idu*, "arm, side."
littallak ilu mušallimu ina idīya

Line 40: *a-a* = *ayy–*, indicates the vetitive, a negative wish. *Naparkû*, "to cease, to stop doing." *Ipparku* is the 3cs preterite of this quadriradical root; with *ayy–*, the form is a vetitive. MAŠKIM = *rābiṣu*, a person or being (demon/protective genius) with authority to

41. *li-ta-mu-ka* ^{d}*bu-ne-ne* SUKKAL-*ka* SIG_5-*tì*

42. ^{d}*a-a ḫi-ir-tu na-ram-ta-ka ši-lim liq-bi-ka*

43. ^{d}UTU *a-šá-red* DINGIR.MEŠ *at-ta ri-šá-a re-e-mu*

44. AN-ú *liḫ-du-ka* KI-*tim li-riš-k*[*a*]

45. DINGIR.MEŠ *šá kiš-šá-ti lik-ru-bu-ka*

act on someone's behalf. *Šulmu*, "well-being." On *rābiṣu šulmu*, see CAD R, 22–23. EGIR = (*w*)*arki*, "after, behind."

ayy–ipparku rābiṣu šulmu ina arkīya

Line 41: *Atmû* (Gt of *amû* [*awûm*]), "to speak." The preterite (and therefore the precative) can be either *ītamu* (so MSS G and K) or *ītami* (so MS A); see CAD A/2, 86. Bunene, a son and sometimes *sukkallu* of Shamash, as here, is frequently associated with Kittu and Mishar. SUKKAL = *sukkallu* (*šukkallu*) is a court official. In some places, Elam, for example, a *sukkallu* was a ruler. For other references to Bunene as the *sukkallu* of Shamash, see CAD S, 359. In light of the verb, the "good thing" in this line (*damiqti*) is probably a good word.

lītamūka Bunene sukkalka damiqti

Line 42: ^{d}*a-a, Aya*, the consort of Shamash. *Ḫīrtu*, "wife." *Narāmtu*, "beloved (woman)." *Šilim* is a ms impv. from *šalāmu*, "to be(come) healthy, well, at peace."

Aya ḫīrtu narāmtaka šilim liqbīka

Line 43: *Ašarēdu* (*ašaridu*), "first in rank, foremost." *Rašû*, "to acquire, to get." *Rišâ* is a ms impv. *Rēmu* "mercy, compassion." On the expression *rišâ rēmu* and its variants, see *UFBG*, 225. After this line MS F inserts [*ī*]*lu libbaka liṭīb k*[*abatt*]*aka li*[*ppašir*], "May the god satisfy your heart, may your mind (lit. liver) be released" (see *UFBG*, 509, n.129(1)). Seux offers a somewhat different reading and reconstruction of this additional line (see 285, n.33). Compare this addition with line 46 below, which provides a very close parallel and is missing in MS F. Shamash is invoked one final time in superlative terms, as in the opening line, before the final petition for mercy.

Šamaš ašarēd ilī attā rišâ rēmu

Line 44: This line and the following two comprise the short conditional call for the gods to praise Shamash. This line harks back to line 4, where Shamash is called *nūr šamê u erṣetim*, "the light of heaven and earth." *Ḫadû*, "to rejoice (in/over)." *Râšu*, "to rejoice (in/over)." On the extremely common parallel between *ḫadû* and *râšu*, see CAD Ḫ, 26 and R, 211.

šamû liḫdūka erṣetim lirīška

Line 45: *Kiššatu*, "totality, world." The expression *ilū ša kiššati* likely refers to the whole pantheon. See CAD K, 459. *Karābu*, "to pronounce a blessing." Such blessings, often in the form of praise, frequently come from the gods.

ilū ša kiššati likrubūka

46. DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ *lìb-ba-ka li-ṭib-bu*

47. ka-inim-ma šu-íl-lá ^{d}utu-kam

Line 46: GAL.MEŠ = *rabûtu* from *rabû*, "great." *Ṭubbu* (D of *ṭâbu*), "to do something well, to give well-being to." *Libbaka ṭubbu*, as an idiom, means something like "to satisfy you."

ilū rabûtu libbaka liṭibbū

Line 47: This line is a rubric indicating the general nature of what precedes it. As is the case here, the language of such rubrics is normally Sumerian. It may be translated as "it is the wording of a lifted-hand to Shamash."

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

The Hebrew Bible occasionally applies solar imagery to Yahweh that is similar to that applied to Shamash himself. Ps 84:12, for example, refers to Yahweh as "a sun and a shield" (כִּי שֶׁמֶשׁ וּמָגֵן יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים). In Isa 10:17 he is called אוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל, "light of Israel." Solar imagery is particularly clear in Isa 60:2–3, וְעָלַיִךְ יִזְרַח יְהוָה, "but upon you Yahweh will shine," and וְהָלְכוּ גוֹיִם לְאוֹרֵךְ וּמְלָכִים לְנֹגַהּ זַרְחֵךְ, "and nations will walk by your light and kings by your shining radiance." The passage shows a strong semantic equivalence to the imagery used in lines 2 and 4 of our prayer. On the other hand, in Ezek 8:16, idolatrous temple worshipers are said to be "bowing low to (towards) the sun in the east" (וְהֵמָּה מִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם קֵדְמָה לַשֶּׁמֶשׁ). Taken together, the cited passages approve solar imagery when applied to Yahweh but condemn the worship of the sun.[1]

Line 16 refers to Shamash as "judge of the gods, lord of the Igigi." It is in this role that the supplicant calls upon him.[2] The Hebrew Bible uses the 'Judge' epithet for Yahweh and often portrays him in the role of judge. Ps 94:2, for example, invokes the deity's judicial role, הִנָּשֵׂא שֹׁפֵט הָאָרֶץ, "rise up, O judge of the earth." Using an imperative rather than a noun, Ps 82:8 demands that Yahweh exercise this role actively, קוּמָה אֱלֹהִים שָׁפְטָה הָאָרֶץ, "rise up, O God, judge the earth!" (Notice the use of הִנָּשֵׂא in Ps 94:2 may reflect solar imagery, though marshal imagery cannot be ruled out.) Gen 18:25 makes a similar reference in question form: הֲשֹׁפֵט כָּל־הָאָרֶץ לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה מִשְׁפָּט, "Shall the judge of the earth not do

[1] See Mark S. Smith, "The Near Eastern Background of Solar Language for Yahweh," *JBL* 109 (1990), 29–39 for a more exhaustive list of examples. Compare Ben Sira 50:7 with Ezek 8:16 and Kuntillet Ajrud inscription 8:1, *wbzrḥ* [ ] *ʾl* with Isa 60:2–3. 2 Kgs 23:11 includes a type of solar imagery, a chariot, not seen in our prayer but used with reference to Shamash in other contexts. However, line 30 mentions Bunene, Shamash's chariot driver. See also the apparent solar rite in Job 31:26–28, where a lunar image is also involved.

[2] Other prayers to Shamash further developed his role as judge (see Shamash 73:22–28, for example, page 206).

justice?" In Ps 7, a psalm permeated with judicial imagery,[3] Yahweh judges the people (יְהוָה יָדִין עַמִּים; v 2). In Isa 2:4 Yahweh will judge among the nations. The supplicant of Ps 26:1 asks Yahweh "judge me!" (שָׁפְטֵנִי; see likewise Ps 7:9). Here and elsewhere שָׁפְטֵנִי is sometimes translated "vindicate me" because the supplicant surely expects that he or she will be vindicated via Yahweh's judgment. Although the references could be multiplied, these clearly show that Yahweh exercised a similar divine role in Israel as Shamash did in Mesopotamia. But an interesting contrast comes up in a survey of biblical texts related to Yahweh's judicial role. On the one hand, Yahweh, unlike Shamash, who is the judge of the gods, calls the gods to assemble to judge his people (Ps 50:4–5, where "heavens" and "earth" seem to stand for divine beings). On the other hand, in Ps 82:1, while Yahweh stands in the divine assembly (בְּעֲדַת אֵל) and gives judgment, the psalmist (Ps 82:2) thinks this activity is perverse (עָוֶל). Rather than judging the cases of the divine beings, the psalmist implores Yahweh to judge the cases of the wretched, the orphan, the lowly, and the poor.

Lines 44–46 in our prayer find noteworthy parallels in the Hebrew Bible. For example, these lines are thematically comparable to Deut 32:43 LXX, *προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες υἱοὶ θεοῦ* (parallel to *ἄγγελοι θεοῦ*), "let all the divine sons do obeisance to him" (*NETS*), which is reflected in the text of 4QDeut[q] 32:43 (4Q44 Frag. 5ii): השתחוו לו כל אלהים, "worship him all you gods."[4] And Ps 96:11a illustrates a very similar motif to *šamû liḫdūka erṣetim lirišk*a of line 44. It reads: יִשְׂמְחוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְתָגֵל הָאָרֶץ, "let the heavens rejoice and the earth exult." The juxtaposition of "heavens" and "earth" as seen in this parallel is a common device in Biblical Hebrew and in many Akkadian texts.[5]

While it is possible to make too much of it, we might also note the thematic similarities between bringing sight, "light," to the blind in line 13 and Yahweh's ability to restore sight as mentioned, for example, in Isa 35:5, תִּפָּקַחְנָה עֵינֵי עִוְרִים, "the eyes of the blind will be opened," and Isa 61:1c (Old Greek), *καὶ τυφλοῖς ἀνάβλεψιν*, "and recovery of sight to the blind."[6] The preceding context of the Isaiah 61 passage includes bringing good news to the poor, binding up the bro-

[3] See Christoph O. Schroeder, *History, Justice, and Agency of God: A Hermeneutical and Exegetical Investigation on Isaiah and Psalms* (Boston: Brill, 2001), 110–20

[4] I wish to thank Daniel O. McClellan (personal communication) for alerting me to the polytheistic implications of LXX and 4QDeut[q] versions of Deut 32:43. On 4QDeut[q] and various readings of Deut 32:43, see Martin Karrer, "Epistle to the Hebrews and the Septuagint," in *Septuagint Research: Issues and Challenges in the Study of the Greek Jewish Scriptures* (ed. Wolfgang Kraus and R. Glenn Wooden; Septuagint and Cognate Studies Series 53; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 335–53, here 349–51.

[5] Likewise in Ugaritic, Phoenician (KAI 27:13 for example), and Aramaic. See M. Hunter, "Heaven and Earth," *DDD*, 390–91. Joan Goodnick Westenholz, "Heaven and Earth: Asexual Monad and Bisexual Dyad," in *Gazing on the Deep: Ancient Near Eastern and Other Studies in Honor of Tzvi Abusch* (ed. Jeffery Stackert, Barbara Nevling, and David P. Wright; Bethesda: CDL Press, 2010), 293–326, discusses the relationship between Heaven and Earth in Mesopotamian literature.

[6] Compare 4Q521 2, ii 8 as well as Gen 3:5–7, Luke 4:18, and *Barn.* 14:9.

kenhearted, and *freeing* the captives. It seems that both Yahweh and Shamash can restore sight to the figuratively or physically blind.

In his ability to read encased tablets, Shamash can free their contents from the darkness of their enclosure. A similar idea is found in Isa 29:11–12, which uses הַסֵּפֶר הֶחָתוּם, "the sealed book/scroll," as a metaphor for prophecy. Yahweh surely knows the contents of the sealed document, for he is the source of prophecy. Note, however, that Hebrew חָתוּם and Akkadian *armu* have but limited overlap in their semantic ranges. חָתוּם is from חתם, "to affix a seal," or, as in Isa 29:11–12 and elsewhere, "to shut up, to close," while Akkadian *armu* is from *arāmu*, "to cover, to stretch or place something over something else in order to cover it."

The emotion, if not the language expressing it, reflected in the stock phrase *palḫāku adrāku u šutādurāku*, "I am afraid, anxious, and constantly in fear," in the context of an ominous dream, is similar to the report of Pharaoh's dream in Gen 41:8, וַתִּפָּעֶם רוּחוֹ, "his spirit was upset," and the comparable report from Nebuchadnezzar in Dan 2:1 (וַתִּתְפָּעֶם רוּחוֹ). But whatever parallel there might be between the Akkadian and biblical passages is weakened by the frequent use of the Akkadian phrase in many contexts that do not involve dreams. Using even more semantically distant language, Dan 5:6 also reflects the dread of an evil omen, אֱדַיִן מַלְכָּא זִיוֹהִי שְׁנוֹהִי וְרַעְיֹנֹהִי יְבַהֲלוּנֵּהּ וְקִטְרֵי חַרְצֵהּ מִשְׁתָּרְיִן וְאַרְכֻבָתֵהּ דְּא לְדָא נָקְשָׁן, "the king's (i.e., Belshazzar's) face darkened, and he was alarmed by his thoughts; the knots/joints of his loins were loosened and his knees knocked together."[7]

[7] On the meaning of וְקִטְרֵי חַרְצֵהּ מִשְׁתָּרְיִן, see Al Wolters, "Untying the King's Knots: Physiology and Wordplay in Daniel 5," *JBL* 110 (1991), 117–22 and Shalom M. Paul, "Decoding a 'Joint' Expression in Daniel 5:6, 16," *JANES* 22 (1993), 121–27. Tawil, *ALCBH*, 451, discusses the semantic and cognate relationships between Aramaic קטר and Akkadian *kiṣru*.

TRANSLATION:

1. Incantation: O most exalted perfect one, heir of Namratsit,
2. O ever-renewing light, who brings happiness to the people, who sets (them) free,
3. O Shamash, who brings order to the dead and the living, who sees everything,
4. O Shamash, light of heaven and earth, radiance of the lands,
5. Lord of Sippar, protection of the Ebabbar,
6. Beloved brother of Marduk, the trust of Babylon,
7. Humanity pays heed to your light.
8. The Igigi gods are attentive to your command.
9. The widespread, black-headed people praise your heroic deeds.
10. You provide the lone man with a friend.
11. You give an heir to the impotent.
12. You open the locked bolts of the heavens.
13. You provide light for the blind.

14. You can read an encased tablet, (still) unopened.
15. On the exta of a sheep you inscribe the omen; you place judgment.
16. Judge of the gods, lord of the Igigi,
17. O Shamash, you are lord of the land's destiny.
18. I (am) Aplutu, son of his god,
19. Whose god is Sin, whose goddess is Nikkal.
20. The sting of the flesh (omen) has befallen me, and it continually pursues me.
21. On account of the evil of (i.e., associated with) some wooden part of my chariot which broke,
22. On account of the evil of red ants, which appeared in my house,
23. On account of the evil of signs, unfortunate (and) untoward omens,
24. Which are in my house (and) confront me,
25. I am afraid, anxious, and constantly in fear.
26. Decree my destiny; make my course favorable.
27. May my signs be favorable.
28. May my dreams be good.
29. Make the dream I saw good news for me.
30. May I prosper; may I acquire friends.
31. During my days, may there be good fortune.
32. Grant me good portents!
33. In the street, may my speech be acceptable.
34. May god and king esteem me.
35. May the influential and noble do what I say.
36. May I spend (my) days in pleasure and rejoicing.
37. May Kittu (Truth) stand at my right;
38. May Mishar (Justice) stand at my left.
39. May a protecting god go ever at my side.
40. May a guardian of well-being not cease (being) behind me.
41. May Bunene, your vizier, speak to you a good (word concerning me).
42. May Aya, your beloved wife, say to you, "Peace!"
43. O Shamash, you are foremost of the gods, show mercy!
44. May the heavens rejoice in you; may the earth be jubilant in you.
45. May the whole pantheon bless you.
46. May the great gods make your heart content.

47. It is the wording of a lifted-hand to Shamash.

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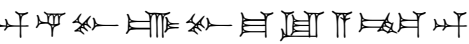
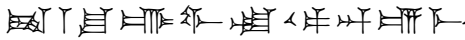
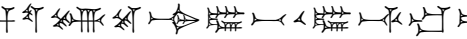
1. 
2. 
3. 
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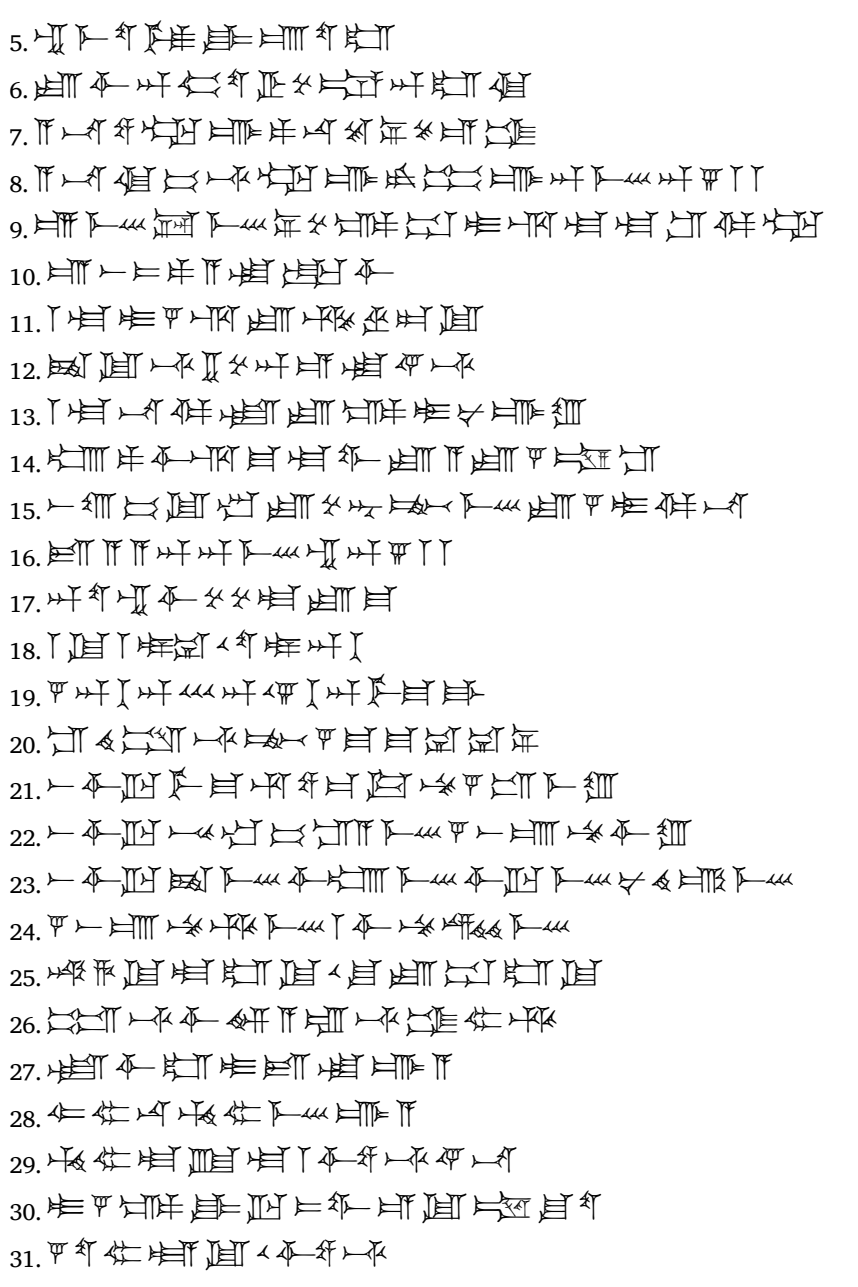
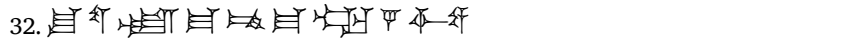


32. 
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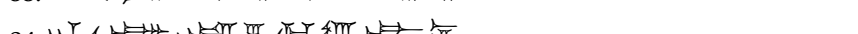
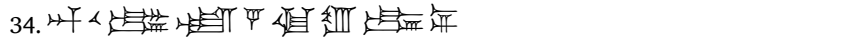
35. 
36. 
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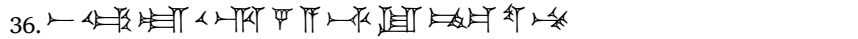
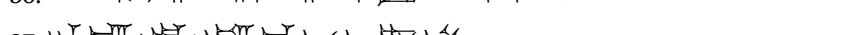
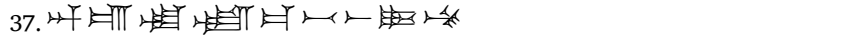
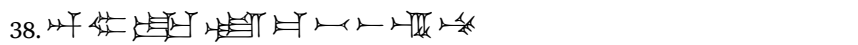
39. 
40. 
41. 
42. 
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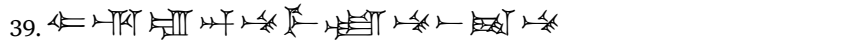
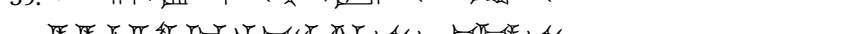
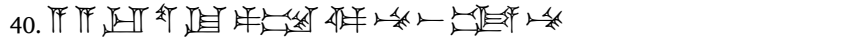
44. 
45. 
46. 

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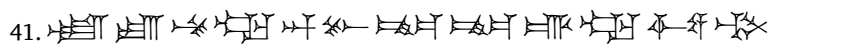
47. 

A Shuilla: Sin 1

ALAN LENZI

SIN:

Sin (Akk. *Su'en* > *Sîn*; Sum. Nanna) was the Babylonian god of the moon and a high god in the Mesopotamian pantheon. He was the firstborn son of Enlil and Ninlil, conceived during their illicit relationship described in the myth bearing their names. Sin's consort was Nikkal (Sum. ^{d}Nin-gal). He was the father of Shamash and Ishtar, along with a few lesser known deities.

Sin's major cultic center was in Ur (at the temple É-kiš-nu-gál), but he was honored with a temple or shrine in a number of other Mesopotamian cities, including Babylon, Nippur, Ashur, and Uruk. Evidence for his worship appears in some of the earliest cuneiform documents and suggests a pre-historic origin. Sin's cult is also known from the Syrian town of Harran. Although already attested at the site in the early second millennium, Sin's cult flourished at Harran in the first millennium (at the temple É-ḫul-ḫul, "house that gives joy"), benefitting significantly from Nabonidus' infamous zeal for the deity.[1] (Nabonidus' mother was a high priestess of Sin at Harran, and he installed a daughter as priestess to Sin in Ur.)

The moon god was responsible for regulating the month, reflecting the Mesopotamian use of a lunar calendar. According to the opening lines of the astrological series *Enūma Anu Enlil* this fate was determined for Sin by Anu, Enlil, and Ea.[2] Within the same work we see the great oracular significance the Mesopotamians attributed to the appearance of the moon. In fact, the first twenty-two tablets of the divinatory series are given over to the moon. (There were seventy

[1] Worship of Sin continued at Harran as late as the eleventh century of our era. See Tamara M. Green, *The City of the Moon God: Religious Traditions of Harran* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 114; Leiden: Brill, 1992) for the religious history of the city, including an interesting account of how the polytheistic moon-worshippers of Harran navigated (and survived) the Islamic conquest by claiming to be the Sabians mentioned in the Quran (2.62, 5.69, 22.17).

[2] See Foster, 494–95 for a translation of the relevant lines and Lorenzo Verderame, *Le tavole I-VI della serie astrologica Enūma Anu Enlil* (NISABA 2; Messina: Dipartimento di Scienze dell' Antichita dell'universita degli Studi di Messina, 2003), 9, 23–24 for an edition of the text.

tablets total in *Enūma Anu Enlil*.[3]) Tablets 1–14 treat the appearance of the moon's first crescent (*tāmarāti ša Sîn*), and tablets 15–22 deal with the middle of the month, the potential time for a lunar eclipse.[4] This background informs lines 18–19 of our prayer.

Sin was represented in iconography by a number of symbols, the most important of which is the recumbent crescent moon. This symbol is sometimes understood as the horns of a bull, the animal associated with Sin (see the incantatory text A Cow of Sin[5]), or a boat. In keeping with his calendrical duties, Sin's divine number was 30.

A few biblical names show Sin as their theophoric element: Sennacherib (Heb. סַנְחֵרִיב; Akk. *Sîn-aḫḫē-erība*, "Sin has replaced the brothers"), Sanballat (Heb. סַנְבַלַּט; Akk. *Sîn-uballiṭ*, "Sin has brought back to life"), and Shenazzar (Heb. שֶׁנְאַצַּר; Akk. *Sîn-uṣur*, "O Sin, protect!").[6]

THE PRAYER:

The most recent edition of this prayer lists nine MSS that preserve parts of the prayer and/or ritual instructions. This MS tradition shows significant textual diversity, which must be related to the fact that the prayer was used in the *Bīt rimki* ritual series (actually noted by Butler's MS A) as well as in a namburbi to dispel the evil of a lunar eclipse.[7] For the sake of illustration, a few examples of this textual variation follow. MSS A_1 and B_1 include an *attalû* formula in its version of the prayer between our lines 12 and 16 while MSS C_1 and F_1, the other two MSS attesting this part of the prayer, do not.[8] MS F_1 does, however, make an addition in its place: it contains a self-presentation formula that names Ashurbanipal as the supplicant of the prayer. In contrast to this identification, MSS A and B name Shamash-shum-ukin in our line 22 of the prayer as the supplicant. MS C_1, though leaving out the *attalû* formula, presents a fuller text of the prayer in other places, with additions after our lines 8, 16 (several lines), and 26.

[3] For an introduction to *Enūma Anu Enlil*, see Francesca Rochberg, *The Heavenly Writing: Divination, Horoscopy, and Astronomy in Mesopotamian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 66–78.

[4] See Francesca Rochberg-Halton, *Aspects of Babylonian Celestial Divination: The Lunar Eclipse Tablets of Enūma Anu Enlil* (AfO Beiheft 22; Horn: Ferdinand Berger & Söhne, 1988) for an edition of these omens.

[5] See Niek Veldhuis's treatment in *A Cow of Sin* (Library of Oriental Texts 2; Groningen: Styx, 1991).

[6] See A. R. Millard, "Assyrian Royal Names in Biblical Hebrew," *JSS* 21 (1976), 1–14.

[7] The ritual instructions cite our prayer's incipit (see Butler, 381). For an edition of the namburbi, see Maul, *ZB*, 458–60. The incipit is cited in obv. 13′ (see 459, n.5 for Maul's identification). Christopher Frechette, *Mesopotamian Ritual-prayers (Šuillas): A Case Study Investigating Idiom, Rubric, Form and Function* (AOAT 379; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, forthcoming), §6 offers a fuller discussion of how the shuilla was integrated into the namburbi.

[8] For a fuller discussion of this formula, see Mayer, *UFBG*, 100–102.

The present text is deliberately eclectic, including material that we deem useful for readers trying to acquire familiarity with shuillas. This pedagogical text cannot replace consultation of the critical edition.

Our shuilla begins with an invocation and a very lengthy hymnic introduction in lines 1–20 (minus lines 13–15, for which see below). Lines 21–22 create a transition between the opening hymn and the petition section of the prayer, which occurs in lines 23–34. The prayer ends in line 35 with a very brief promise of praise.[9]

The structure of the long opening hymn deserves closer attention. It consists of two parts: lines 1–8 treat Sin's light-bearing qualities—eternal divine attributes—in relation to temporal beneficiaries, the people; lines 9–20 focus on his authority and revelatory powers among the gods.

The hymn introduces the deity with an invocation and a couple of traditional epithets that set out Sin's position among the gods (line 1). The following couplet uses participial phrases (in lines 2b and 3a) to show Sin, "the perpetually renewing one" (line 2a), actively dispelling darkness and bringing forth light for the benefit of the people (line 3b). In lines 4–7, predicative verbal constructions and nouns with 2ms pronominal suffixes are used to depict Sin's radiance, again a timeless characteristic of the deity; but this depiction is clearly framed by references to those who benefit from it—the people (line 4a) and the wide earth (line 7b). Line 8 marks the end of the first half of the hymn with a report of the people's positive reaction to the deity.

Line 9 begins the second half of the hymn by re-invoking Sin as Anu, the high god, and asserting his inscrutable knowledge. The following couplet (lines 10–11) makes lexical connections back to lines 5a (*ṣētu*) and 6b (*kīma* DN) and uses predicative verbal constructions and nouns with 2ms pronominal suffixes, as did lines 4–7; despite reprising Sin's radiance, the couplet's purpose is to establish Sin's high position and esteem among the gods. Lines 12, 16–17 advance the idea of lines 10–11 while also picking up on the theme announced in line 9. Sin presides over the divine assembly, answers the queries of other gods, and teaches them at his feet. In short, he is sagacious and worthy of exaltation among their ranks. Lines 18–19 focus this idea further. The query of the gods is revelatory (thus secret) and related to Sin's calendrical function; he alone determines the length of the month, which had hemerological and astrological implications. Line 20 concludes the hymn in a manner that conceptually recalls line 8 (see the notes on the latter line below): people celebrate Sin's divinity.

If *ēmūq lā šanān* in line 21 is a comment on *ašarēdu* in line 1, then line 21 summarizes both parts of the hymn by explaining or repeating the second half of their introductory lines (1b and 9b). In any case, this line moves the prayer from praise (lines 1–20) to petition (lines 23–34) via the self-presentation formula that follows it in line 22 (in two MSS).

[9] My interpretation is based on an eclectic text. Individual MSS vary. See the critical edition and the notes below. For example, the self-presentation in line 22 only occurs in two MSS.

The petition section of the prayer is carefully structured to move the deity to respond to the supplicant's petitions. The section begins in lines 23–24 with a description of (prior) ritual actions performed for the deity's benefit. These lead naturally into lines 25–27 in which the supplicant explicitly calls on the deity to act on their behalf. Both of these sections prepare the deity to heed the supplicant's petitions, which come in three groups (lines 28, 30–31, and 33–34). Line 28 contains the first and most general petition: the supplicant wants a favorable oracle (note the imperative verb). Line 29 then establishes the supplicant's need (using a verb that is neither an imperative nor precative) in what we may identify as the prayer's only complaint: the supplicant's personal deities are angry with them. Using three precative verbs, the next two lines (30–31) present the supplicant's petitions for Sin to heal this strained relationship. Line 32 establishes the supplicant's course of action (using a verb that is neither an imperative nor precative): the supplicant has commissioned Anzagar, the dream god, to intervene on their behalf with Sin. The next two lines (33–34), using three precative verbs, contain the petitions related to what the supplicant hopes the dream god can do for them: forgive their sin and restore them to well-being.

According to my analysis of this eclectic version of the prayer, the text is well-structured to persuade the deity to respond to the supplicant. One may well wonder, therefore, why and for what purpose lines 13–15, the so-called *attalû* formula, was inserted into this prayer (attested in two MSS, Butler's A_1 and B_1). I believe the answer is fairly straight forward. First, the *attalû* formula concerns the evil of a lunar eclipse, a matter that is directly related to Sin, the moon god. Second, lines 12, 16–17, and 18–19 thematically establish Sin's authority among the gods and his revelatory knowledge with regard to celestial matters. The second part of the hymn therefore seems to be an appropriate context to address Sin about the problem of the eclipse. Finally, line 12 mentions "the decision of the land," which, when followed by the *attalû* formula, takes on that formula's clearly defined concern. Furthermore, line 16 describes the gods inquiring of Sin for his judgment on the matter. The insertion of the formula between these two lines, therefore, attempts to turn what was a rather general statement about Sin's standing and decision making among the gods into the specific concern of resolving the issue of the eclipse. If this interpretation is correct, the insertion of the *attalû* formula here was a clever scribal intervention.

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Mesopotamian Ritual-prayers (Šuillas): A Case Study Investigating Idiom, Rubric, Form and Function. AOAT 379. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, forthcoming, §6.

1. ÉN ^{d}30 ^{d}NANNA-*ru šu-pu-u* SAG.KAL DINGIR.MEŠ

2. ^{d}30 *ed-deš-šu-ú mu-nam-mir uk-li*

3. *ša-ki-in na-mir-ti a-na* UN.MEŠ *a-pa-a-ti*

4. *ana* UN.MEŠ *ṣal-mat* SAG.DU *uš-šu-ru šá-ru-ru-k*[*a*]

Line 1: ÉN = *šiptu*, "ritual wording, incantation." This word marks the beginning of the prayer on the tablet. It is not a part of the prayer itself. ^{d}30 is Sin's symbolic number. ^{d}NANNA-*ru* = *nannāru*, "light of the sky, moon." *Šūpû*, "resplendent, manifest, brilliant, famous." SAG.KAL = *ašarēdu* (*ašaridu*), "leader, foremost." DINGIR.MEŠ = *ilū*, "gods." *Ašarēd ilī* is a very common title for various deities in prayers (see CAD A/2, 417). It is not specific to Sin.

šiptu: *Sîn nannāru šūpû ašarēd ilī*

Line 2: Given the lunar cycle, *eddeššû* (also *eddēšû*), "perpetually self-renewing," is an appropriate epithet for the moon god. The word may be taken as an attributive adjective, modifying the deity's name, or it may be taken substantively. Line 1 commends the latter option. *Nummuru* (D of *namāru*), "to make bright, to illuminate." *Uklu*, "darkness." Obviously, the moon is the brightest light in the night sky.

Sîn eddeššû munammir ukli

Line 3: *Šakānu*, "to put, to place, to provide." *Namirtu*, "light, brightness." UN.MEŠ = *nišū*, "people." *Apâtu*, "numerous, teeming," is often used to describe people. It can also be used alone in the sense of "humanity." The positions of the participles in lines 2b and 3a form a grammatical chiasm while the following genitives (*ukli* vs. *namirti*) contrast with one another semantically.

šākin namirti ana nišī apâti

Line 4: This line takes up where line 3 left off: with the people, the beneficiaries of Sin's work. SAG.DU = *qaqqadu*, "head." *Ṣalmāt qaqqadi*, "black-headed ones," is a common designation for the people of ancient Mesopotamia. It derives from the application of ideas about shepherding to the social structure. The king is a shepherd and the people sheep. The fact that the sheep in Mesopotamia had black heads and the people had dark hair may have suggested the specific designation. *Uššuru* (D of *ašāru*), "to release, to send forth." *Šarūru*, "brilliance, ray." The text describes Sin's radiance here and in the next three lines, without mentioning his active role in providing light (as in the previous two). Notice the use of predicative constructions and nouns with a 2ms pronominal suffix attached.

ana nišī ṣalmāt qaqqadi uššurū šarūrūka

5. *nam-rat* UD.DA-*ka ina* AN-*e e*[*l*^{l}-*lu-ti*]

6. *šar-ḫat di-pa-ra-ka* GIM ^{d}BIL.GI *ḫi-*[*miṭ-ka*$^{?}$]

7. *ma-lu-ú nam-ri-ru-ka* KI-*ta* DAG[AL-*ta*]

8. *šar-ḫa* UN.MEŠ *ug-da-šá-ra ana a-ma-ri ka-a-ta*

Line 5: *Namrat* is a 3fs predicative from *namāru*, "to be(come) bright, to shine." UD.DA = *ṣētu*, "light, shining appearance." Although *ṣētu* is very close to the word *ṣītu* (logogram È = signs UD-DU), "exit, rising" (see Foster, 760, Seux, 278, and von Soden, 316), the latter is generally used of the sun's rising, not the moon's (but see the celestial epithet in line 21). AN = *šamû*, "heaven." *Ellu*, "pure, clear, bright" (= KÙ in line 26). The restoration follows Ebeling, *AGH*, 6, adopted by Butler (382).

namrat ṣētka ina šamê ellūti

Line 6: *Šarḫu*, "proud, magnificent, splendid." The adjective is a predicative (3fs); see also lines 5 and 8. *Dipāru*, "torch." We expect the suffixed form of the nom./acc. noun to be *dipārka*, but *dipāra-* with a suffix is attested elsewhere (see CAD D, 156, citing BRM 4 50:20). GIM = *kīma*, "like, as." ^{d}BIL.GI = *Girra*, the fire god (see page 145). *Ḫimṭu*, "burning, scorching." The restoration follows Mayer's suggestion (*UFBG*, 491). The lexical choices in this line support the Girra simile.

šarḫat dipāraka kīma Girra ḫimiṭka

Line 7: *Malû*, "to fill." The verb is a transitive *parsāku* construction, which is identical in form to a predicative but is transitive, i.e., it takes an object (*erṣetu*). *Namrirrū*, "awe-inspiring luminosity," is usually plural. One might compare it to the word *melammu*, "radiance, awe-inspiring sheen" (see CAD M/2, 9–12 and the lexical and bilingual sections of the *namrirrū* entry in the CAD [N/1, 237]). KI = *erṣetu*, "earth." DAGAL = *rapšu* (m), *rapaštu* (f), "wide." *Erṣetu rapaštu* is a common phrase for referring to the whole world.

malû namrirrūka erṣeta rapašta

Line 8: The previous four lines have expatiated upon Sin's radiance. This line reports the reaction of those who have benefited from it (see line 4a and 7b). *Šarḫa* (see line 6 above) is an adverbial accusative of manner, modifying the line's verb. *Gutaššuru* (Dt of *gašāru*), "to vie with one another." This is the only instance of this stem of the verb with this meaning (see CAD G, 56). When the first letter of a root is *g*, the infixed *–t–* usually changes to a *–d–*. *Amāru*, "to see." *Kâta*, "you" (acc.). Although the text has mentioned people already (lines 3–4), here people take an active role in the prayer. They jostle about as if in a crowd to catch a glimpse of Sin. Perhaps we are to imagine people watching a religious procession, straining to see the divine image as it passes by. Butler's MS C_1 adds a (broken) line here (see 283, line 8a), which may shed some light on the present line: [ ] *ana ilūtīka upaqqū kayyāna*, ". . . to your divinity they are attentive (*puqqu*) constantly."

šarḫa nišū ugdaššarā ana amāri kâta

9. ^{d}*a-num* AN-*e šá la i-lam-ma-du mì-lik-šú ma-a*[*m-man*]

10. *šu-tu-rat* UD.DA-*ka* GIM ^{d}UTU *bu-uk-ri-*[*ka*]

11. *kám-su* [*ma-ḫ*]*ar-ka* DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ

12. EŠ.BAR KUR.KUR GAR-*in ina* IGI-[*ka*]

13. *ina* ḪUL AN.GE$_6$ ^{d}30 *šá ina* ITI NENNI UD NENNI GAR-*n*[*a*]

Line 9: Sin is invoked as ^{d}*Anum*, the sky god, the high god of the Mesopotamian pantheon. The prayer is (rhetorically) exalting Sin, for purposes of praise, to the highest place in the pantheon. The *ša* here is possessive, "whose," anticipating the referent of the pronominal suffix on *milku*. *Lamādu*, "to learn." *Milku*, "counsel, advice." *Mamman*, "somebody, nobody," is an indeclinable indefinite pronoun. The second half of the line changes the direction of the hymn; in fact, it introduces its last half. The inscrutability of the gods is a common theme (see also page 267). Its function in a hymnic setting like this, besides the obvious idea of praise, is to contrast the supplicant's helplessness with the deity's power. The supplicant recognizes and confesses (implicitly) reliance upon the deity's benevolent knowledge.

Anum šamê ša lā ilammadu milikšu mammam

Line 10: *Šūturu*, "supreme, very great," is a 3fs predicative. ^{d}UTU = *Šamaš*, the sun god and god of justice. *Bukru*, "son." Shamash is Sin's son. This line somewhat parallels the first half of line 5 and the second of line 6. The moon god's shining appearance (*ṣētu*) is likened to Shamash, the sun! Even if this is doxological hyperbole, the attempt to elevate Sin is clear.

šūturat ṣētka kīma Šamaš bukrīka

Line 11: *Kamāsu*, "to kneel." *Maḫru*, is a substantive meaning, "front, presence," but can also function as a prepositional phrase, (*ina*) *maḫar–*, "before, in front of." GAL.MEŠ = *rabûtu*, "great" (pl). The elevation of Sin continues. The great gods submit themselves, which is the meaning of the kneeling gesture, to his authority. For the purposes of this prayer, Sin is the most important, authoritative deity.

kamsū maḫarka ilū rabûtu

Line 12: EŠ.BAR = *purussû*, "decision, verdict." KUR = *mātu*, "land." The reduplicated logogram indicates plurality. GAR = *šakānu*, "to put, to place, to establish." But the context requires a passive, thus an N stem: *naškunu*, "to be set, to be established." IGI = *maḫru*, "front," or *pānu*, "face." The former is preferred by Mayer (*UFBG*, 175–76). *Ina maḫrīka* means "in front of you." The gods are not the only ones that submit to his authority; he decides the cases of the land, too. In both lines 11 and 12 the submitters do so in front of, that is, in the presence of the deity.

purussû mātāti šakin ina maḫrīka

Line 13: Lines 13–15 above are Butler's lines 12–13 from her MSS A_1 and B_1. These lines preserve the *attalû* formula, a kind of lament. The fact that line 16 resumes the themes of lines 11 and 12 (and the tone of praise) suggests the formula was secondarily

14. ḪUL Á.MEŠ GISKIM.MEŠ ḪUL.MEŠ NU DÙG.MEŠ

15. *šá ina* É.GAL.MU *u* KUR.MU GÁL-*a*

16. DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ *i-šal-lu-ka-ma* SUM-*in mil-ka*

17. *uš-bu pu-ḫur-šú-nu uš-ta-mu-ú ina* KI.TA-*k*[*a*]

inserted into these MSS. Butler's MS C_1 in fact proves that in at least one version of the prayer our line 12 is continued by line 16 (it lacks the formula). Butler's MS F_1, also intervening between our lines 12 and 16, deviates from all of these other MSS by naming Ashurbanipal here in a self-presentation formula while leaving out the *attalû* lines (see 384, lines 13a–13c; note also our line 22 below, preserved in line 19a of Butler's MSS A and b, in which Ashurbanipal's brother, Shamash-shum-ukin, is named as the supplicant). All of this textual data indicates how shuillas could be tailored to a particular occasion for a specific individual. To sort through this properly, one must consult the critical edition. ḪUL = *lumnu*, "evil." AN.GE_6 = *antalû*, *attalû*, "eclipse." The following $^{d}30$ indicates this is a lunar eclipse. ITI = *arḫu*, "month." NENNI = *annanna* is a place holder; here it stands for any month name or, following UD, day of the month. UD = *ūmu*, "day." GAR = *šakānu*, generally means "to put, to place, to establish" (see line 12 above), but here it means "to occur." The present case calls for a passive verb, thus we should read the logogram as an N stem, *iššakna*, with the ventive.

ina lumun attalî Sîn ša ina arḫi annanna ūmi annanna iššakna

Line 14: Á.MEŠ = *idātu* and GISKIM.MEŠ = *ittātu*. For the relationship of the two logograms to *ittu*, see CAD I/J, 304–10, especially 309–10; note also Maul's distinctive understanding of the words, discussed on pages 359 and 409 of the present volume. NU DÙG = *lā ṭābu*, "not good, unfavorable."

lumun idāti ittāti lemnēti lā ṭābāti

Line 15: É.GAL = *ekallu*, "palace." MU = 1cs pronominal suffix. GÁL = *bašû*, "to be, to exist." The fact that both palace and land are mentioned together rather strongly suggests the *attalû* formula was reserved for prayers involving the king, the one who ensures security and stability throughout the kingdom.

ša ina ekallīya u mātīya ibšâ

Line 16: *Šalû*, "to ask, to inquire." SUM = *nadānu*, "to give." The logogram should be understood as a 2ms durative here and in line 18 (see Butler's MS C_1 on p. 385). For *milku*, see line 9. Resuming the theme of lines 11 and 12, the text again highlights Sin's reputation for counsel and continues its expansive opening section of praise. After this line, Butler's MS C_1 offers a fragmentary, deviating text for several lines (see 385–86 and Mayer, *UFBG*, 492, n. 14[3]).

ilū rabûtu išallûkā-ma tanaddin milka

Line 17: *Ašābu* (*wašābum*), "to sit, to dwell." The verb *ušbū* is a 3mp preterite, but it may be better to emend it to read *ašbū* (see Seux, 279, n.19), a 3mp predicative. *Puḫru*, "assembly." The singular noun is an adverbial accusative of place (not the subject of the verb, which is plural). *Šutāmû* (Št of *amû* [*awûm*]), "to discuss, to consider." The object of the verb is probably an understood *milku* from the previous line. If we accept the emenda-

18. ^{d}30 *šu-pu-ú šá* é-kur *i-šal-lu-ka-ma ta-mit* DINGIR.MEŠ SUM-*in*

19. UD.NÁ.ÀM u_4-*um ta-mit-ti-ka pi-riš-ti* DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ

20. UD.30.KÁ[M] *i-sin-na-ka* u_4-*um ta-šil-ti* DINGIR-*ti-ka*

21. ^{d}AŠ.IM$_5$.BABBAR *e-muq la šá-na-an šá la i-lam-ma-du mi-lik-šú ma-am-man*

tion at the beginning of the line, this verb should probably be read as a durative. KI.TA = *šaplu* can mean "underside, bottom," but here, with *ina* and the 2ms pronominal suffix, it means "at your feet." This line develops the idea of line 16 by means of a concrete image: the divine council sits at Sin's feet as students sit at the feet of their schoolmaster. Again, Sin is exalted to the head of the pantheon. On the divine council in Mesopotamia, see Alan Lenzi, *Secrecy and the Gods: Secret Knowledge in Ancient Mesopotamia and Biblical Israel* (SAAS 19; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2008), 27–66.

ašbū puḫuršunu uštammû ina šaplīka

Line 18: The opening invocation is nearly repeated; the remainder of the line is an adaptation of line 16. É-kur is the Sum. name of Enlil's temple in Nippur, often associated with the location of the divine assembly of Mesopotamian deities. *Tāmītu* (also *tāwītum*), "(oracular) question and/or response" (see CAD T, 123–24). For preserved texts of tamitu-prayers, see page 49. W. G. Lambert discusses the present passage within the context of celestial divination in his *Babylonian Oracle Questions* (Mesopotamian Civilizations 13; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 6. The unspecified "they" in our line must be the great gods or divine assembly of lines 16–17.

Sîn šūpû ša E-kur išallûkā-ma tāmīt ilī rabûti

Line 19: UD.NÁ.ÀM = *bibbulu* (*bubbulu*), "new moon, the day of disappearance of the moon." *Tāmittu* stands here for *tāmītu* (see line 18). *Pirištu*, "secret," stands in apposition to *tāmītu*, thereby expressing the common idea that divine revelation is secret—inaccessible to humans. Butler's MS C_1 varies here, describing *bibbulu* as *ūm purussê ša ilī rabûti*, "the day of the (oracular) decision of the great gods" (see 385, line 17). This variant speaks against reading *tāmittu* as *tašīltu*, "celebration, delight, splendor," as some have done (see, e.g., Seux, 279; the sign for MIT and ŠIL are very similar). For the revelatory significance of the new moon as described here, see Lenzi, *Secrecy and the Gods*, 165–66, n.145.

bibbulu ūm tāmittīka pirišti ilī rabûti

Line 20: UD.30.KÁM means "the 30th day." The Akkadian for this logogram is uncertain. *Isinnu*, "feast day, festival." *Tašīltu*, "joy, delight, festiveness, celebration." DINGIR-*ti* = *ilūtu*, "divinity." Butler's MS C_1 adds two fragmentary lines here (see 386, lines 18a–18b).

UD.30.KÁM *isinnaka ūm tašīlti ilūtīka*

Line 21: ^{d}AŠ.IM$_5$.BABBAR = *Namraṣīt*, an epithet for Sin, which means something like "Radiant Rising One." *Ēmūqu*, "force, strength." *Lā šanān*, "unrivaled, without equal." This epithet may be picking up on *ašarēdu* in line 1. The last half of the line repeats line 9b. It seems the line has attempted to summarize the two parts of the foregoing hymn. It functions as a transition from praise to petition, the next section of the prayer.

Namraṣīt ēmūq lā šanān ša ilammadu milikšu mamman

22. *ana-ku* ^{d}GIŠ.NU$_{11}$-MU-GI.NA ÌR-*ka*

23. *as-ruq-ka ši-riq mu-ši el-la*

24. *aq-qí-ka re-eš-ta-a ši-kara da-áš-pa*

25. *ina* GIŠ.GÁN.LAGAB$^{?}$ *qud-du-ši šum-ka az-kur*

26. *al-si-ka be-lí ina qé-reb* AN-*e* KÙ.MEŠ

Line 22: This self-presentation is only preserved in two MSS, Butler's A and b; the ritual actions and gestures described in the next several lines, however, are attested in these and other MSS. *Anāku* = "I." ^{d}GIŠ.NU$_{11}$-MU-GI.NA = *Šamaš-šum-ukīn* ("Shamash established the name"), king of Babylon from 667–648 BCE and the brother of the great Assyrian king Ashurbanipal. Shamash-shum-ukin waged a civil war for four years against his brother in Nineveh. ÌR = *ardu* (*wardum*), "servant."

anāku Šamaš-šum-ukīn aradka

Line 23: *Sarāqu*, "to sprinkle, to pour, to strew." *Širqu* (also *sirqu*, *serqu*), literally, "sprinkling," but generally refers to an offering of strewn flour. Note this word is a cognate accusative of the verb. *Mūšu*, "night." *Ellu*, "pure, clean," conceptually must refer to the offering, *širqu*, rather than the night. In lines 23–24 the supplicant describes the ritual actions they perform. These are similar but not identical to the actual instructions attested on some of the textual witnesses, which vary among themselves. If the actions in lines 23–24 were performed, it is likely they were done before the reciting of the prayer (see Mayer, *UFBG*, 208–9).

asruqka širiq mūši ella

Line 24: *Naqû*, "to pour out, to libate." *Šikaru*, "beer." SAG = *rēštû*, "first, pre-eminent." *Šikaru rēštû* designates first-rate beer, a very common item to libate (see CAD Š/2, 426). *Dašpu*, "honey." Compare the use of honey here with that in the ritual instructions in line 38.

aqqīka rēštâ šikara dašpa

Line 25: GIŠ.GÁN.LAGAB$^{?}$ is obscure. *Quddušu*, "purified, consecrated." *Šumu*, "name." *Zakāru*, "to name, to invoke." After reminding the deity of the ritual actions already performed, the supplicant makes their appeal in lines 25–27 for the god's attention, what Mayer calls the "turning" (*Hinwendung*) part of the prayer (*UFBG*, 122–45). The verbs are probably best taken as performative utterances, the speaking of which executes the ritual action. One might translate these "I hereby do X." These lines lead up to the petitions proper in lines 28ff.

ina GIŠ.GÁN.LAGAB *qudduši sumka azkur*

Line 26: *Šasû*, "to call on, to appeal to." *Bēlu*, "lord." *Ina qereb*, "in the midst of." See line 5 for the vocabulary in the rest of the line. (Butler's MS C_1 adds a line after this one, see 387.) Grammatically speaking, the elements of lines 25–26 are arranged chiastically: prepositional phrase, substantive referring to the deity, verb / verb, substantive referring

27. *kam*-[s]a-ku az-za-az a-še-eʾ ka-a-šá*

28. INIM.GAR *dum-qí u mì-šá-ri šu-kun* UGU-*iá*

29. DINGIR.MU *u* ^{d}IŠ$_{8}$.DAR.<MU> *ša iš-tu* UD.MEŠ *ma-aʾ-du-tú is-bu-su* UGU-*iá*

30. *ina kit-ti u mi-šá-ri lis-li-mu* KI.MU

31. *ur-ḫi lid-mì-iq pa-da-ni li-šir*

to the deity, prepositional phrase.

alsīka bēlī ina qereb šamê ellūti

Line 27: For *kamāsu*, see line 11. *Izuzzu*, "to stand." *Šeʾû*, "to seek." Kâšu, "you." The verbs that open the line describe the bodily gestures that are attendant to the supplicant's seeking of the deity. These gestures are commonly associated with prayer. It may be significant to note that just as the gods kneel before Sin so too does the supplicant. The last verb is a preterite and should be understood as a performative (see Mayer, *UFBG*, 170).

kamsāku azzaz ašēʾ kâša

Line 28: INIM.GAR = *egerrû*, "reputation, mood, ominous utterance, kledon" (see CAD E, 43–45). *Dumqu*, "good, good fortune." *Mīšaru,* "justice." The first three words are literally translated, "an oracle of good fortune and justice," but the genitives are best translated adjectivally. UGU = *eli*, "on, onto, to." *Šukun* is a G imperative of *šakānu*, for which see line 13. With line 28 the prayer moves into a petitionary mode, asking first for a propitious and just oracular utterance.

egerrê dumqi u mīšari šukun elīya

Line 29: MU = 1cs pronominal suffix. ^{d}IŠ$_{8}$.DAR.<MU> = *ištartī*, "my goddess." The transcription < > indicates that the scribe mistakenly omitted the MU sign. *Ištu*, "from." *Maʾdu* (*mādu*), "numerous, many." Despite the *u* case vowel, one should understand this word as a genitive, matching the case of *ūmī*, the noun it modifies. *Sabāsu* (more commonly *šabāsu*), "to be angry." In this line and the next, the supplicant seeks reconciliation with their angry personal deities, who apparently have been estranged from the supplicant for quite some time. For personal deities, see page 431.

ilī u ištarī ša ištu ūmī maʾdūtu isbusu elīya

Line 30: *Kittu*, "truth." *Salāmu*, "to be(come) at peace, to reconcile." KI = *itti*, "with." *Kittu* and *mīšaru* are a common word pair (see CAD M/2, 117–18).

ina kitti u mīšari lislimū ittīya

Line 31: *Urḫu*, "way, path." *Damāqu*, "to be(come) favorable, good." *Padānu*, "way, path, way of life." These two nouns are commonly found together (see CAD P, 3). *Ešēru*, "to be well, to go well, to be straight." Both nouns end with a 1cs pronominal suffix (*–ī*). In a well-balanced line that shows both grammatical and semantic parallelism, the supplicant expresses their desire for easier days, which, following as it does on line 30, must have been closely associated with a renewed positive relationship with their personal deities.

32. *ú-ma-ʾi-ir-ma* AN.ZA.GÀR DINGIR *šá* MÁŠ.GE$_6$.MEŠ

33. *ina šat mu-ši-im li-paṭ-ṭi-ra ár-ni-ia*$_5$

34. *lu-uš-lim*[!] *šèr-ti lu-ta-líl ana-ku*

35. *ana dà-ra-ti lud-lul dà-lí-lí-ka*

36. ka-inim-ma šu-íl-lá ^{d}zuen-na-kam*

The image of a path or way for the course of one's life is widespread in the ancient Near East, figuring prominently in, e.g., biblical literature.

urḫī lidmiq padānī lišir

Line 32: Lines 32–33 are difficult. *Uʾʾuru* (D of [*w*]*âru*), "to give orders to someone, to send, to commission." AN.ZA.GÀR = *Anzagar* is, as the text says, the god of dreams (*ili ša šunāti*), for whom see Butler, 83–85. MÁŠ.GI$_6$.MEŠ = *šunātu*, "dreams." Some translators opt to make this line the beginning of a conditional sentence, in which Sin is the understood subject of the verb (see Butler, 392 and Foster, 761). Others, the present work included, take the verb as a 1cs preterite (a performative like the preterites in lines 25–27, see Mayer, *UFBG*, 199), thereby making the supplicant the subject (see von Soden, 317 and Seux, 280). Either way, Anzagar is being used here as an intermediary between the supplicant and the deity the supplicant addresses, Sin.

umaʾʾir-ma Anzagar ili ša šunāti

Line 33: *Ina šāt mūši*, "at, during night time." Given the role of the dream god, it makes sense that the action will take place at night. *Paṭāru*, "to loosen, undo, release." *Arnu*, "guilt, fault, sin." The supplicant desires Anzagar to release them from their guilt, perhaps informing the supplicant through a propitious dream. The details of this idea are unclear.

ina šāt mūšim lipaṭṭira arnīya

Line 34: *Šalāmu*, "to be(come) healthy, whole." All four MS witnesses read the first verb as *lušme*, "let me hear" (i.e., "let me know"), which is difficult to understand in context. The present reading (see Butler, 392) assumes that an early exemplar was corrupted by way of copying a ME sign for the text's LIM. The signs are quite close in cuneiform. *Šērtu*, "guilt, offense, punishment." *Utallulu* (Dt of *elēlu*), "be purified."

lušlim šērti lūtallil anāku

Line 35: The prayer ends with the usual promise of praise. *Ana darâti*, "forever and ever." *Dalīlū*, "praises." *Dalālu*, "to praise." *Dalīlīka ludlul* is a cognate accusative construction; that is, the verb and its object both come from the same root. Translate idiomatically, "let me proclaim your praises."

ana dārâti dalīlīka ludlul

Line 36: This line is the rubric, that is, it tells something about the classification of the preceding lines. In this case, the rubric identifies the form of the prayer and to whom it is directed. As is typical, the rubric is written in Sumerian.

37. DÙ.DÙ.BI GIŠ.BANŠUR *bi-ni ana* IGI ^{d}30 *tara-kás* 12 NINDA *ḫa-še-e* 12 NINDA ŠE.GIŠ.Ì

38. ZÚ.LUM.MA ZÌ.EŠA DUB-*aq*$^{!}$ NINDA.Ì.DÉ LÀL Ì.NUN GAR-*an*

39. KAŠ BAL-*qí* ÉN 3-*šú* ŠID-*nu* NÍG.NA ŠIM.LI *a-na* AN.ZA.GÀR *ina* SAG GIŠ.NÁ-*šú* GAR-*an*

40. AN.ZA.GÀR *na-áš-pár-ti* ^{d}NANNA-r[*i*$^{!}$]

41. [. . .] x x x-*ma* GEŠTUG.II.MEŠ BAD.MEŠ DU$_{11}$.GA-*ma*

42. *ina* ^{ú}*áp-ru-šá qul-qú-la-ni* ŠU.II-*šú u* GÌR.II-*šú* LUḪ-*si*

Line 37: DÙ.DÙ.BI = *epuštašu*, "its ritual." These words alert the user of the tablet that the ritual instructions follow. Compare the ÉN at the beginning of the prayer. GIŠ.BANŠUR = *paššūru*, "table." *Bīnu*, "tamarisk." *Rakāsu*, literally, "to bind, tie up," but in ritual instructions the word means "to prepare, to set up, to set out (offerings)." NINDA = *akalu*, "loaf." *Ḫašû*, "thyme(?)." ŠE.GIŠ.Ì = *šamaššammū*, "sesame." The second person verbs throughout the instructions refer to the ritual officiant, an *āšipu* or exorcist; the third person references refer to the supplicant (the exorcist's client or patient).

epuštašu: *paššūr bīni ana pāni Sîn tarakkas* 12 *akal ḫašê* 12 *akal šamaššammī*

Line 38: ZÚ.LUM.MA = *suluppu*, "date," probably understood collectively here. ZÌ.EŠA = *saskû* (*sasqû*), "a fine flour." DUB= *sarāqu*, see line 23. NINDA.Ì.DÉ = *mersu*, "*mersu*-cake" (made of dates, sesame, and oil). LÀL = *dašpu*, "honey." Ì.NUN = *ḫimētu*, "ghee, butter."

suluppa saskâ tasarraq mersa dašpa ḫimēta tašakkan

Line 39: KAŠ = *šikaru*, "beer." BAL = *naqû*, "to pour out, to libate, to sacrifice." 3-*šú* = *šalāšīšu*, "three times." ŠID = *manû*, "to recite, to count." NÍG.NA = *nignakku*, "incense burner." (GIŠ.)ŠIM.LI = *burāšu*, "juniper" (pieces of wood or its resin). SAG = *rēšu*, "head, top." GIŠ.NÁ = *eršu*, "bed."

šikara tanaqqi šipta šalāšīšu tamannu nignak burāši ana Anzagar ina rēš erši tašakkan

Line 40: *Našpartu*, "message," that is, the means of communication between the supplicant and Sin. ^{d}NANNA-*ru*, see line 1.

Anzagar našparti nannāri

Line 41: GEŠTUG.II.MEŠ = *uznā*, "ears" (dual). BAD.MEŠ = *pitettû* (Gtn of *petû*), "to open continually," but with *uznu* the verb takes on the meaning "to reveal constantly." DU$_{11}$.GA = *qabû*, "to say."

. . . *uznī liptette taqabbi*

Line 42: *Aprušu* is some kind of plant. *Qulqullânu*, a plant, perhaps "cassia." ŠU.II = *qātā*, "hands" (dual). GÌR.II = *šēpā*, "feet" (dual). LUḪ = *mesû*, "to wash, to cleanse."

ina apruši qulqullâni qātīšu u šēpīšu tamessi

43. [ú-meš dingir-šà-dib-ba] gur-ru-da-kam*

44. *kur-ba-ni* MUN ^{šim}*qul-qú-la-ni* ŠIM.LI LAG KÁ *ka-mì-i ina* ^{túg}*ši-ši-ik-ti-šú tara-kás*

[Four fragmentary lines follow before the tablet, Butler's MS A, breaks.]

Line 43: This line is written in Sumerian, like the rubric in line 36. It may be translated, "they are the plants for turning back the anger of a (personal) god."

Line 44: LAG = *kirbānu* (*kurbannu*), "lump." MUN = *ṭabtu*, "salt." KÁ = *bābu*, "gate." *Kamû* (*kawûm*), "outer." *Sissiktu*, "hem, fringe" of a garment.

kurbanni ṭabtu qulqullâni burāši kirbāni bābi kamî ina sissiktīšu tarakkas

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

There are several obvious items we could discuss in a comparative treatment of this prayer with biblical literature. For example, we could compare and contrast the nature of the primary deity in this prayer and the Hebrew Bible: Sin *is* (or is closely associated with) the moon whereas Yahweh *created* the moon (Gen 1:14–18). Despite such a difference, both deities are supremely strong (line 1, 21 and, e.g., Exod 15:2–19, Ps 66:3, 2 Chron 20:6), uniquely inscrutable (lines 9, 21 and, e.g., Deut 29:28, Isa 40:13, Job), and universally influential, filling (*malû* ‖ מלא) the earth with something of their divinity (line 7 and Isa 6:3, Jer 23:24). We could also note common ritual gestures and postures: kneeling is a gesture associated with prayer and standing before someone often implies a position of servitude in both our Mesopotamian prayer (lines 11, 27) and the Hebrew Bible (e.g., 1 Kgs 8:54, Gen 41:46, 1 Kgs 18:15). Or, among still other possible comparisons, we could choose to consider the common use of "path" and "way" as metaphors for the course of one's life (line 31 and, e.g., Prov 4:14, 15:19 [אֹרַח (Akk. *urḫu*) ‖ דֶּרֶךְ])[1] and "calling" as a common means of gaining the deity's attention in times of need (compare *šasû* in line 26 [and other prayers, see Mayer, *UFBG*, 129–31] with קרא in the biblical laments of the individual; see, e.g., Pss 3:5, 22:3, 28:1, 31:18, 61:3, 88:10, 130:1). Instead of looking at these in more detail, I will turn our attention to the important idea of the divine assembly and the royal image used to depict its leadership.[2]

The biblical writers used the following terms to describe the divine assembly in Israel: קָהָל, in the phrase קְהַל קְדֹשִׁים, "the assembly of the holy ones," in Ps 89:6; עֵדָה, found in the phrase עֲדַת אֵל, "assembly of god" (Ps 82:1); מוֹעֵד, used for the divine assembly in Isa 14:13 (בְּהַר מוֹעֵד, "on the mountain of the assembly");

[1] *Urḫu* and *padānu* are often used with the verb *ešēru* (see CAD P, 3 and CAD E, 355). Compare the use of the cognate ישׁר in Prov 3:6 (see Tawil, *ALCBH*, 32).

[2] The following is adapted from Lenzi, *Secrecy and the Gods*, 237–40. See the comments to line 17 above for the full citation.

and סוֹד, which is the most frequently used term, attested in the phrase סוֹד יְהוָה, "council of Yahweh," in Jer 23:18 and 22, סוֹד קְדֹשִׁים, "council of the holy ones," in Ps 89:8, and סוֹד אֱלוֹהַּ, "council of god," in Job 15:18. These are the semantic equivalents of our prayer's *puḫru*. As one can see, this terminology offers us rather sparse data for understanding the divine assembly in the Bible. We therefore need to locate passages that may be thematically or conceptually relevant; we need to widen the net.

Besides the broader contexts in which the above terms occur, there are many other passages that offer evidence for Yahweh's divine assembly, including at least the following: Gen 1:26–27, 3:22, 6:1–4, 11:7, Deut 32:8–9, 33:2–3, 1 Kgs 22:19–23, Job 1–2, Pss 29, 58:1, Isa 6, 24:21, 40:1–11, Ezek 1:1–3:15, 28:14, 16, Zech 3, and Dan 10.

Reading these passages together, we may piece together an image of Yahweh presiding over his divine assembly as a king (see Ps 29, especially v. 10, Isa 6:1, and 1 Kgs 22:19). Like his human counterpart, here Yahweh held court with his divine retinue (Job 1:6, 2:1), deliberated about the direction of various human affairs (1 Kgs 22:19–23 ‖ 1 Chron 18:18–22), sat in judgment on other divine beings (Ps 82:1–8), and commissioned human messengers to deliver his words (Isa 6, Jer 23:18–22), among other activities. Like a king, Yahweh is presented as the ultimate and final authority in the divine assembly—as Sin is presented in our prayer (lines 11 and 17). Moreover, just as a king's council would often meet in the palace (the king's house), a god's assembly would often meet in his house, a temple. Sin's assembly met in Ekur, according to line 18 of our prayer; Yahweh's assembly is explicitly described as meeting in his temple in Isa 6:1. In other words, Yahweh presided over a divine assembly very much like the one described in our prayer (and known from many other Mesopotamian sources), even if he alone was considered a god.

TRANSLATION:

1. Incantation: O Sin, resplendent luminary, foremost of the gods!
2. O Sin, perpetually renewing one, who illuminates the darkness,
3. And provides light for the teeming people!
4. To the black-headed people, your rays are sent forth,
5. Your shining appearance is bright in the pure heavens,
6. Your torch is magnificent, your burning like Girra,
7. Your awe-inspiring luminosity fills the wide earth.
8. With pride, the people vie with one another to gaze upon you.
9. O Anu of the heavens, whose advice no one can learn,
10. Your shining appearance is supreme, like Shamash, your son.
11. The great gods kneel before you.
12. The decision of the lands is set before you—
13. Because of the evil of a lunar eclipse, which occurred in month so-and-so, on the day so-and-so,
14. (And) the evil of portents (and) omens, unpleasant (and) unfavorable,

15. Which are present in my house and (throughout) my land—
16. The great gods inquire of you, and you give advice,
17. They are seated in their assembly and discuss (it) at your feet.
18. O resplendent Sin of Ekur, they inquire of you, and you give the oracle of the gods,
19. The day of the new moon (is) the day of your oracle, the secret of the great gods.
20. The thirtieth day (of the month) is your festival, the day for celebrating your divinity.
21. O Namraṣit, unrivalled in strength, whose advice no one can learn,
22. I, Shamash-shum-ukin, your servant,
23. Offered to you a pure flour-offering of the night.
24. I libated for you first class beer (and) honey.
25. With the consecrated . . . I (hereby) invoke your name,
26. I (hereby) call out to you, my lord, in the midst of the pure heavens.
27. Kneeling (and) standing, I (hereby) seek you.
28. Establish for me a propitious and just oracular utterance.
29. My god and my goddess, who have been angry with me for many days,
30. Through truth and justice, may they be at peace with me,
31. May my path be favorable, may my way be straight.
32. I (hereby) send Anzagar, god of dreams.
33. Let him absolve my sins at night,
34. Let me be whole, let me be purified of my punishment.
35. Let me proclaim your praises forever!

36. It is the wording of a lifted-hand to Sin.

37. Its ritual: You set up a table (made) of tamarisk before Sin. Twelve loaves of thyme, twelve loaves of sesame, 38. dates, (and) fine flour you strew about. You set out *mersu*-cakes, honey, (and) ghee. 39. You libate beer. You recite the incantation three times. You set up an incense burner with juniper for Anzagar at the head of their (lit. his) bed. 40. “Anzagar, the message of Nannaru, 41. . . . let him open (the supplicant’s) ears continually,” you say. 42. You wash their (lit., his) hands and their (lit. his) feet with *aprushu*-plant (and) cassia(?). 43. (They are the plants for turning back the anger of a personal god.) 44. You tie a lump of salt, cassia(?), juniper, and a lump from the outer gate into their (lit., his) (garment’s) hem . . . (the rest is fragmentary and broken away).

CUNEIFORM:

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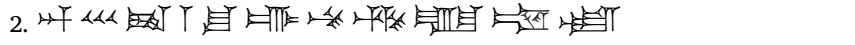
2. 
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4. [illegible]

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44.

A Universal Namburbi: Ea, Shamash, and Asalluḫi 1

JEFFREY L. COOLEY

EA, SHAMASH:

See pages 227 and 197, respectively.

ASALLUḪI:

Like many minor gods, Asalluḫi (also, Asarluḫi) was once a minor god associated with a minor location (Kuara, a site near Eridu), who was later syncretized with a high god. In this case, that high god was Marduk.[1] The earliest evidence for this syncretism is in the OB period. Though it is not entirely clear why the syncretism took place, it is possible that Marduk, who was up to that point essentially unknown in the south, was equated with Asalluḫi because of both deities' association with incantations. Later, as Marduk continued to grow in status, his identification with Asalluḫi became entirely confined to such magical contexts.[2] Alternatively, we know that Asalluḫi was considered the son of Enki. Perhaps as Marduk's regional standing increased and he too was afforded this patrilineage, the two gods were simply equated.[3] Or maybe it was a deliberate invention on the part of the Babylonian priesthood to give the upstart Marduk legitimacy via a relationship with Enki by placing him in the Eridu pantheon.[4]

Whatever the origin of the Marduk-Asalluḫi syncretism, the latter name is almost exclusively used as Marduk's epithet in incantations and prayers. In addition to this, the syncretism is grounded mythologically twice in *Enūma eliš*. First, Anshar dubs the triumphant Marduk "Asalluḫi" (Tablet VI 101), the result of which all the gods must obey his commands. Though this is not stated explicitly in *Enūma eliš*, the logic seems to be that people invoke Marduk-Asalluḫi because

[1] Sommerfeld, 13. For more on Marduk, see page 291.
[2] The connection of Asalluḫi with incantations is quite strong, even in the Sumerian material (though Abusch points out that even this has been overstated; 543). Early evidence for such a link between Marduk and magic, however, is significantly more limited making this hypothesis for the syncretism difficult to demonstrate (Sommerfeld, 16–18).
[3] Black and Green, 36.
[4] Abusch, 543–44.

the gods are bound, by oath, to obey his commands in the wake of the conflict with Tiamat.[5] Later on the same tablet (but within the litany of Marduk's fifty acquired names), Anu also gives Marduk the name "Asalluḫi" (VI 147) as well as two variants associated specifically with the Asalluḫi moniker, ^{d}nam-til-la and ^{d}nam-ru. The two names do not seem to reflect any deity actively worshipped or widely (or narrowly) recognized in the society of ancient Iraq. Rather, they appear to be deified abstractions that reflect upon specific facets of Marduk-Asalluḫi's godhead. The ancient hermeneutics of name etymology in Akkadian are beyond the scope of this introduction. Nonetheless, a few, brief comments can be made.

The first of these variants, ^{d}nam-til-la, (VI 151) is grounded in the creation myth: *bēlum ša šiptīšu elletim uballiṭu ilī mītūti*, "(^{d}nam-til-la is) the lord who, by his pure incantation, revived the dead gods" (VI 153). This mythic etiology links Asalluḫi (i.e., Marduk in incantation, *šiptu*) with Marduk as the gods' savior in *Enūma eliš* (nam-til = *balāṭu*).[6] Nonetheless, the link that connects this deified idea and the god Asalluḫi is unclear. The second variant, ^{d}nam-ru, (VI 155) is explained in *Enūma eliš* as if it were the Akkadian word *namru*, "shining," and by extension, "pure": *ilu ellu mullilu alaktīni*, "the pure god who purifies our ways" (VI 156).[7] However, nam-ru can also be read nam-šub, a logographic writing of *šiptu*![8] In this case it is entirely clear why the abstract idea should be divinized and associated with Asalluḫi.

In addition to this, both ^{d}nam-til-la and ^{d}nam-ru appear in the same order in the god-lists.[9] There, the name ^{d}nam-ru is understood differently: *Asarluḫi* nam-ru : *Marduk ša mēti*, "Asalluḫi is Namru : Marduk of the dead." The scribe who contributed this explanation in the god list understood the name as Sumerian and, perhaps, interpreted it as nam = Sumerian abstraction morpheme + šub = *miqittu*, "fallen one" (corpse, etc.), creating a (artificial) Sumerian word nam-šub = "fallenness," i.e., death. While this answer to the name's Akkadian explanation in the god-list is admittedly speculative, it is supported by the fact that the name before it is ^{d}nam-til-la, "life." Such polarized epithets are appropriate descriptors of Marduk as Asalluḫi who is in command of fate, as our prayer tells us (lines 2–10)

[5] Thus, compare lines 4–10 with *Enūma eliš* VI 102–104 .

[6] Note also, that Marduk, as part his personal armament in his battle against Tiamat, holds an incantation on his lips, *ina šaptīšu tâ ukalla* (IV 60). The terms *šiptu* and *tû* frequently occur in parallel (see CAD T, 441 for references). See also our prayer here, line 9.

[7] Foster, 475.

[8] See CAD Š/3, 86b.

[9] Richard L. Litke, *A Reconstruction of the Assyro-Babylonian God-Lists*, AN : ^{d}an-nu-um *and* AN : anu ša amēli (Texts from the Babylonian Collection 3; New Haven: Yale Babylonian Collection, 1998), 89–90 (II 186 and 187).

THE PRAYER:

This prayer (or more accurately, variations thereof) is unusually well attested. No less than nine copies, all Assyrian, have come to light. When it can be determined, the only major variation between copies occurs in the list of ominous signs, with one copy (Maul's MS C) prepared specifically for Esarhaddon that includes around two hundred specific possible portents. Our edition here follows Maul's MS A, which is the most intact in regards to the opening and closing sections and provides a workable copy for pedagogical purposes. This presentation is in no way a critical edition, for which one should consult Maul.

This type of prayer, a namburbi, was employed during a prophylactic ritual to avert the possible results of evil portents (see page 36 in the general introduction). Thus, the relationship between such prayers and the Mesopotamian mantic tradition is significant.

Regardless of how we might organize the prayer, the scribe himself has indicated his own sections by incising section divider lines on the tablet. Lines 1–20 serve as the opening invocation, in which the supplicant identifies the gods he is addressing and presents the personal situation which has precipitated the ritual. The description of the gods is quite verbose in lines 1–17, and this is indicative of the great "sociological" gap between the supplicant and the high gods.[10] The supplicant, using a common self-presentation formula, presents himself as a mere peon who has been terrified by various gloomy portents (lines 18–20).

Following the invocation is a list of those portents (lines 21–22 and into a gap of indeterminate length). These omens vary greatly in number and content by manuscript and are derived from divination literature, specifically the unprovoked types, *Šumma ālu* (terrestrial omens) and *Enūma Anu Enlil* (celestial omens).[11] Preserved in the present version are general celestial omen categories: lunar and solar eclipses, as well as stellar and planetary phenomena. These categories are all dealt with in separate sections of *Enūma Anu Enlil*. No doubt, lost in the lacuna are specific omens within these general categories or perhaps reference to terrestrial omens. Though not the case in many other prayers, it is because of these listed omens that we can be certain just who the supplicant was: the king. Celestial omens always concern the monarchy and the state, never private individuals.[12]

[10] For the issue of invocations and social location, see, most recently, Alan Lenzi, "Invoking the God: Interpreting Invocations in Mesopotamian Prayers and Biblical Laments of the Individual," *JBL* 129 (2010), 303–15.

[11] This is in opposition to provoked omens, such as extispicy.

[12] Astrology, per se, in which celestial phenomena are thought to influence the lives and fortunes of the individual, does not appear until the Persian period.

In that gap as well begins the next section (presently consisting of lines 1′–12′),[13] in which the supplicant describes the solution to these omina. The gods should act in such a way so as to protect him from the portents and their ill effects. The image is one of winds that blow by—winds are invisible, but those they pass can still physically feel the effects. The supplicant specifically requests that the portents' evil effects not be allowed to emanate from the ominous sign (lines 3′–7′: *lumuššunu ayy-izīqa*, "don't let their evil blow"). Thus, there is the recognition that the negative portents will inevitably happen, but the supplicant wants the gods to keep their ill effects from taking hold on his person. The sum outcome of the gods' intervention is the health and well-being of the supplicant, who will thus be able to continue in his praise and adoration of the gods.

A single line (13′ [MS A's rev. 14′]) supplies the rubric describing this particular prayer: ka-inim-ma ḫul-meš dù-a-bi nam búr-da-kam, literally, "It is the wording for the resolution of fate concerning all bad things." There are at least two references to this prayer (described as nam-búr-bi ḫul dù-a-bi = *namburbî lemni kalāma*, "apotropaic ritual against any evil") in the letters sent by Assyrian and Babylonian scholars to the Assyrian monarch Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal.[14] In both of these letters, the scholar recommends that the king perform the ritual. In one of them, the unidentified scholar relays to the king that he should modify the namburbi (as well as a prescribed shuilla) by inserting the specific omina against which the prayer is supposed to act. This is the likely explanation as to why this prayer has a number of variant manuscripts in which the reworkings lie entirely in the portents section. The text of this prayer was considered adjustable to a particular ominous situation and this makes it unique among the extant namburbi-prayers.

The manuscript ends with a colophon (rev. 15′–18′, not included in this treatment),[15] identifying the copyist and, it seems, adding a bit of a curse, a not uncommon feature.[16] It was discovered in Ashur, alongside related tablets in the so-called "House of the Exorcist." The copy is written in NA script but the language is Standard Babylonian. As is often the case in such circumstances, some

[13] The text picks up after the break on the reverse of the tablet after one illegible line. The preserved lines of this section in MS A are therefore technically referred to as rev. 2′–rev. 13′. Assyriologists use the prime mark in these situations because it is uncertain how many previous lines of the prayer are actually missing. In the present treatment, the numbering of these lines will generally follow Maul's numbering on pages 475–76 (thus, rev. 2′–rev. 12′ = lines 1′–11′) with one caveat. Maul has omitted MS A's rev. 13′ (= line 12′), which makes the rubric rev. 14′ (= line 13′). All lines after his line 11′ therefore should be increased by one (thus, *his* line 12′ is the present line 13′ and the rubric becomes line 14′).

[14] SAA 10, no. 278 (Parpola, *LASEA*, no. 204) and no. 381 (Parpola, *LASEA*, no. 334).

[15] See Maul, *ZB*, 476–77.

[16] See examples in Hunger, *BAK*, 12–14.

Neo-Assyrianisms peak through: for example, *dēn* for *dīn* (lines 2, 11) and *ūmē* for *ūmī* (line 11′).[17]

[17] Though, this is not always an indication of Neo-Assyrian pronunciation and might simply be an orthographic convention; see Martin Worthington, "Dialect Admixture of Babylonian and Assyrian in *SAA* VIII, X, XII, XVII and XVIII," *Iraq* 68 (2006), 62.

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Text. Edition: Maul, *ZB*, 465–83. Translation: Foster, 646–47. Study: Maul, *ZB*, 465–66.

1. [ÉN ^{d}*é-a* ^{d}U]TU$^{!}$ *u* ^{d}*asal-lú-ḫi* DINGIR.MEŠ [GAL.MEŠ]

2. [*da-i-n*]*u*$^{!}$ *de-en* KUR *mu-šim-m*[*u* NAM.TAR.MEŠ]

3. [*mu-u*]*ṣ-ṣi-ru* GIŠ.ḪUR.MEŠ *mu-us-si-ku i*[*s*$^{!}$*-qé-e-ti*]

Line 1: ÉN = *šiptu*, "spell, incantation, ritual wording." ^{d}UTU = *Šamaš*. DINGIR = *ilu*, "god." GAL = *rabû*, "great." The opening sentence of the prayer, which begins here and ends in line 4, invokes the appropriate gods who are to act as cosmic judges. These lines establish certain key concepts (*dīna dânu*, *šimta šâmu*, *uṣurta uṣṣuru* and *isqēta ussuku*) for the hymnic section (lines 5–12) of the invocation.

šiptu: *Ea Šamaš u Asalluḫi ilī rabûti*

Line 2: *Dânu* (*diānu*), "to judge." The form is a G mp participle. *Dīnu*, "legal decision, trial." The word here is in the bound/construct form and the *ē* suggests a Neo-Assyrianism. KUR = *mātu*, "land." *Šâmu* (*šiāmu*), "to decree." The form is a D mp participle; for this root the D participle is usually used in place of the G participle. NAM(.TAR) = *šīmtu*, "fate, destiny." Maul restores NAM.MEŠ here (467), making MS A accord with MS B's preserved reading. But MS A writes NAM.TAR.MEŠ in the two other instances of the word (see lines 5–6). Assuming scribal consistency, I have restored MS A here in agreement with the usage there.

dāʾinū dēn māti mušimmū šīmāti

Line 3: *Eṣēru*, "to design, to plan, to draw." The use of the mp participle continues in this line. GIŠ.ḪUR = *uṣurtu*, "design, plan." *Esēqu*, "to distribute (lots)." In the D stem, the *q* in the root is normally written with a *k* (see *AHw*, 249; *CDA*, 80), though here one could conceivably read the last sign of the word as *qú* (see CAD I/J, 201). *Isqu*, "lot."

muṣṣirū uṣurāti mussikū isqēti

4. *šá* AN-*e u* KI-*tim at-tu-nu-*[*ma*]

5. NAM.TAR.MEŠ *šá-a-mu* GIŠ.ḪUR.MEŠ *uṣ-ṣu-ru ša* ŠU.II-*ku-*[*nu-ma*]

6. NAM.TAR.MEŠ TI.LA *at-tu-nu-ma ta-šim-*[*ma*]

7. GIŠ.ḪUR.MEŠ TI.LA *at-tu-nu-ma tu-uṣ-ṣa-r*[*a*]

8. [E]Š.BAR.MEŠ TI.LA *at-tu-nu-ma ta-par-ra-sa*

9. TU_6-*ku-nu* TI.LA *ṣi-it* KA-*ku-nu šá-la-a-mu*

10. *e-piš* KA-*ku-nu* TI.LA-*um-ma*

Line 4: AN = *šamû*, "sky, heaven." KI = *erṣetu*, "earth, land." The writing KI-*tim* is simply an orthographic convention—mimation had been lost in Babylonian and Assyrian for a millennium. Alternatively, one could transcribe *tim* as *tì*. *Attunu*, "you" (2mp subject pronoun). The *–ma* on *attunu* is non-coordinating here, putting the emphasis on the pronoun, which brings the opening sentence to completion. One's translation should highlight this.

ša šamê u erṣeti attunū-ma

Line 5: *Šâmu* and *uṣṣuru* are inifinitives of *šâmu and eṣēru*, respectively (see lines 2–3). ŠU.II = *qātā* (nom. dual), "hands."

šīmāti šâmu uṣurāti uṣṣuru ša qātīkunū-ma

Line 6: TI.LA = *balāṭu*, "life." The precise nuance of the phrase *šīmat balāṭi* (and its variants) is not entirely clear, but a simple literal translation will suffice (see CAD B, 48; Š/1, 360). *Tašimmā* is a G 2cp present/durative from *šâmu* (see line 2).

šīmāt balāṭi attunū-ma tašimmā

Line 7: *Tuṣṣarā* is a D 2cp present/durative from *eṣēru* (see line 3). Note the close parallelism between lines 6 and 7, which together form a kind of commentary on line 5.

uṣurāti balāṭi attunū-ma tuṣṣarā

Line 8: EŠ.BAR = *purussû*, "decision." *Parāsu*, "to decide." The grammatical parallelism in lines 5–6 continues in this line.

purussê balāṭi attunū-ma taparrasā

Line 9: TU_6 = *tû*, "spell, incantation." *Ṣītu*, "product, issuance." KA = *pû*, "mouth." *Ṣīt pî*, "utterance, command." *Šalāmu*, "to be(come) whole, intact, healthy." The form is a G infinitive.

tûkunu balāṭu ṣīt pīkunu šalāmu

Line 10: *Epšu*, "action; sorcery" (*epiš* = bound/construct form). *Epiš pî*, "command." The writing of the *–um* after TI.LA indicates that the mimation is not lost when the enclitic *–ma* is added, as is typical for SB.

epiš pīkunu balāṭum-ma

11. *da-i-nu de-en* KUR *ka-bi-su* KI-*tim*! DAGAL-*tim*

12. *e-ma* [A]N-*e saḫ-pu ka-bi-su* AN-*e* SUD.MEŠ *at-tu-nu-ma*

13. *mu-nak-ki-ru lum-ni šá-ki-nu dum-q*[*í*]

14. *mu-pa-si-su* Á.MEŠ GISKIM.MEŠ ḪUL.M[EŠ]

15. M[ÁŠ.GI$_6$].MEŠ *pár-da-a-ti* ḪUL.MEŠ NU DÙG.GA.M[EŠ]

Line 11: The first half of the line repeats the first half of line 2, essentially beginning the invocation anew. *Kabāsu*, "to tread." The form is a G mp participle. Participles (again) dominate the next several lines. DAGAL = *rapšu* (m), *rapaštu* (f), "wide." As in line 4, writings KI-*tim* and DAGAL-*tim* are simply an orthographic convention.

dā'inū dēn māti kābisū erṣeti rapašti

Line 12: *Ēma*, "wherever." *Saḫāpu*, "to spread, envelop." *Saḫpū* is a G mp predicative. SUD = *rūqu*, "remote, distant." Note the close parallelism between the second halves of lines 11 and 12. Note also the reiteration of the gods' heavenly and earthly dominions mentioned in line 4 here in lines 11–12: line 4 . . . *šamê u erṣeti attunū-ma* and lines 11–12 . . . *kābisū erṣeti rapašti* . . . *kābisū šamê rūqūti attunū-ma*.

ēma šamê saḫpū kābisū šamê rūqūti attunū-ma

Line 13: *Nakāru*, "to change, to eliminate, to remove. *Lumnu*, "evil." *Šakānu*, "to establish." *Dumqu*, "good." Lines 13–17, which begin a sentence that ends in line 20, offer a transition from the introductory hymn and the self-presentation formula of 18–20. In this transition, the supplicant establishes why these are the appropriate gods to invoke: they are capable of reversing oracular fate.

munakkirū lumni šākinū dumqi

Line 14: *Pasāsu*, "to erase, to obliterate, to negate." Á = *ittu*, "(ominous) sign" (plural = *idātu*). GISKIM = *ittu*, "(ominous) sign" (plural = *ittātu*). The plural by-forms of *ittu*, *idātu* and *ittātu*, occur frequently side-by-side in logographic writing Á.MEŠ GISKIM.MEŠ, see CAD I/J, 307–8 and the discussion of **idatu* and *ittu* on pp. 309–10. Often understood as simply a pleasant sounding word play involving synonymous plural by-forms of the singular *ittu*, Maul has argued that these two terms do, in fact, refer to two different things (*ZB*, 6–7). GISKIM (= *ittu*, plural = *ittātu*) is the animal, plant, star, etc. (or combination of these things), by which the sign reveals itself (i.e., "omen indicator," Maul's "Omenanzeiger"). Á (= *ittu*, plural = *idātu*) is the radiating (positive or negative) power of the GISKIM on the affected party (Maul's "'Abstrahlung' des Omenanzeiger"). One might not be able to prevent a certain ominous event (GISKIM) from occurring, but one might be able deflect its power (Á). ḪUL = *lemnu*, "evil."

mupassisū idāti ittāti lemnēti

Line 15: MÁŠ.GI$_6$ = *šuttu*, "dream" (pl. *šunātu*). *Pardu*, "terrifying." NU = *lā*, a negative particle. DÙG.GA = *ṭābu*, "good."

šunāti pardāti lemnēti lā ṭābāti

16. [*mu-sa*]*l-li-tu qé-e lum-ni mu-pa-áš-ši-ru* NAM.BÚR.BI-*e*

17. *e*-[*m*]*a* GISKIM.MEŠ *ma-la ba-šá-a*

18. *ana-ku* NENNI A NENNI *ša* DINGIR-*šú* NENNI ^{d}IŠ$_8$.DAR-*šú* NENNI-*tum*

19. *šá* Á.MEŠ GISKIM.MEŠ ḪUL.MEŠ *it-ta-nab-šá-nim-ma*

20. *p*[*a*]*l-ḫa-ku-ma ad-ra-ku u šu-ta-du-ra-k*[*u*]

21. [*ina* ḪUL A]N.GE$_6$ ^{d}30 *ina* ḪUL AN.GE$_6$ ^{d}[UTU]

Line 16: *Salātu,* "to trim, to sever." *Qû*, "thread, line." Maul suggests that the *qê lumni* was conceived of as a kind of incubation or development which took place in the time between the omen's indication and the actual calamity (*ZB*, 5) and, in a sense, tied the omen indicator and result together. It was in the gods' ability to sever that thread and the namburbi-ritual initiated that act. *Pašāru*, "to loosen, to solve, to dispel, to unravel." *Namburbû*, "apotropaic ritual" (see introduction).

musallitū qê lumni mupašširū namburbê

Line 17: *Mala*, "as much as." *Bašû*, "to be, to exist." The form is a G fp predicative. *Mala bašû* (and variants) is a common idiom meaning "as much as there is, everything," etc.

ēma ittāti mala bašâ

Line 18: *Anāku*, 1cs subject pronoun. NENNI = *annanna* (NENNI-*tum* = *annannītu*), "so-and-so." A = *māru*, "son" (*mār* = bound/construct state). IŠ$_8$.DAR = *ištaru*, "goddess." As in lines 4 and 11, mimation is written in a frozen orthography. Lines 18–20 comprise the main clause of the sentence that began in line 13 and describes precisely: a) who the supplicant is (line 18); b) what has happened (line 19); and c) the supplicant's resulting emotional condition (line 20).

anāku annanna mār annanna ša ilšu annanna ištaršu annannītu

Line 19: *Itabšû* (Ntn of *bašû*), "to happen, to occur repeatedly." *Ittanabšānim-ma* is a 3fp durative + ventive/1cs dative + enclitic *–ma*.

ša idāti ittāti lemnēti ittanabšānim-ma

Line 20: *Palāḫu*, "to fear." *Adāru*, "to fear." *Šutāduru* (Št pass. of *adāru*), "to be frightened." All three of these verbs are 1cs predicatives. Lines 20–22 are similar to a formula also found in shuilla-prayers (see Mayer, *UFBG*, 100–102).

palḫākū-ma adrāku u šutādurāku

Line 21: ḪUL = *lumnu*, "evil, wickedness" (*lumun* = bound/construct form). AN.GE$_6$ = *attalû* (also *attallû*, *antalû, antallû*), "eclipse." ^{d}30 = *Sîn*, the moon god. In the celestial divination series, *Enūma Anu Enlil*, not all lunar and solar eclipses were bad portents (for the lunar eclipse portions of the series, see Francesca Rochberg-Halton, *Aspects of Babylonian Celestial Divination: The Lunar Eclipse Tablets of Enūma Anu Enlil* [AfOB 22; Horn: Ferdinand Berger & Söhne, 1988]; the solar eclipse portions remain unpublished). Nonethe-

22. [*ina* ḪUL MU]L.MEŠ *šá šu-ut* ^{d}*é-a šu-ut* ^{d}*a-nim šu-*[*ut* ^{d}IDIM]

23. [*ina* ḪUL MUL.UDU.IDIM *šá ana* MUL.MEŠ KASKAL.MEŠ *is-ni-qu*]

less, such eclipses were the cause of significant concern in the Assyrian court and every known example of the so-called substitute king ritual (itself a *namburbî*) documented in the reports and letters to the Assyrian kings was instigated by a lunar or a solar eclipses (see Parpola, *LASEA 2*, xxii)

ina lumun attalî Sîn ina lumun attalî Šamaš

Line 22: MUL = *kakkabu*, "star, constellation, planet." *Šūt*, "those of . . ." (occurs before a nominal form in the genitive case). ^{d}*A-nim* is a frozen orthography—the mimation had not been pronounced for a millennium. ^{d}IDIM = *Enlil/Ellil*. Maul restores ^{d}EN.LÍL here (469), but I am following MS B's preserved text. The "stars of (the paths) of Ea, Anu and Enlil" refer to the stars and constellations which fall into three specific regions of the sky, envisioned as celestial bands running from east to west, and often referred to as *ḫarrān šūt Ea*, "Path of Ea," etc. Particular astral features were associated with each of these bands (e.g., stars of the Path of Enlil = MUL.APIN I i 1–33; stars of the Path of Anu = MUL.APIN I i 34–ii 18; stars of the Path of Ea = MUL.APIN I ii 19–35; H. Hunger and D. Pingree, *MUL.APIN: An Astronomical Compendium in Cuneiform* [AfOB 24; Horn: Ferdinand Berger & Söhne, 1989]). Erica Reiner and David Pingree understand the Paths of Enlil, Anu, and Ea to be variously defined sections of the horizon over which stars are expected to rise heliacally: Enlil the northern-most, Anu in the center and closest to the celestial equator, while Ea lies to the south (*Babylonian Planetary Omens Part 2: Enūma Anu Enlil, Tablets 50–51* [Bibliotheca Mesopotamica 2.2; Malibu: Undena, 1981], 7). The exact stars contained within each path vary according to source. Based on the data provided in MUL.APIN, the Path of Enlil began at about 13 degrees north of east, Ea extended south beginning at about 11 degrees south of east, and Anu would be the area in between these two points (*Babylonian Planetary Omens Part 3* [Cuneiform Monographs 11; Groningen: Styx, 1998], 15–16). In mentioning all three, the author has effectively included all visible astral phenomena involving the fixed stars exclusively.

ina lumun kakkabī ša šūt Ea šūt Ani šūt Ellil

Line 23: This entire line is only preserved by a few trace wedges in MS A. Enough is preserved, however, that the text, preserved in MS B can be recognized. MUL.UDU.IDIM = *bibbu*, "wild sheep, a planet." The term is the common word in astronomical texts to refer to planets whose movement, relative to the fixed stars, seems erratic at first glance (see the Greek term πλανήτης, "wanderer"). In some texts MUL.UDU.IDIM refers specifically to Mercury (and occasionally Saturn or even Mars), but when it is generally used, as in this case, it refers to any of the planets. KASKAL = *ḫarrānu*, "path, road, way." The term here is being used in its technical sense (see line 22 for discussion of the star paths). *Sanāqu*, "to approach." The form is G 3cs preterite + subjunctive *–u*. In contrast to the omina alluded to in line 22, those referred to by this line involve both planets and fixed stars. Conjunctions of planets and stars were common celestial fodder for omens, and could be either propitious or ominous depending on the planets and stars/constellations involved. For a full discussion of planetary phenomena in ancient Mesopotamian celestial divination literature,

The prayer has a gap in its text here of indeterminate length.

1′. [. . .] *šu-ti-qa-nin-ni-ma*[!]

2′. [. . . *ana*] UZU *a-sak-ki la am-man-*[*n*]*i*[?]

3′. I[M . . . *li-zi-qa-a*]*m*[?]*-ma* ḪUL-*šú-nu a-a i-z*[*i-qa*]

4′. IM.U[$_{18}$.LU *li-zi-qa-a*]*m-ma* ḪUL-*šú-nu a-a i-zi-qa*

5′. IM.SI.[SÁ *li-zi-q*]*a-am-ma* ḪUL-*šú-nu a-a i-zi-*[*qa*]

see David Brown, *Mesopotamian Planetary Astronomy-Astrology* (Cuneiform Monographs 18; Groningen: Styx, 2000).

ina lumun bibbu ša ana kakkabī ḫarrānāti isniqu

Line 1′: *Šūtuqu* (Š of *etēqu*), "to cause to pass." The form is a cp impv. + 1cs acc. pronominal suffix with enclitic *–ma*.

. . . šūtiqāninni-ma

Line 2′: UZU = *šīru*, "flesh, entrails." *Asakku*, "a kind of demon, also the sickness the demon causes." *Namnû* (N of *manû*), "to be counted, to be delivered," but with *ana* or the terminative-adverbial *–iš*, "to be turned into something" (see CAD M/1, 226, 227). This line finds a very close parallel in newly discovered material in *Ludlul* IV, line 32 according to the new edition (see Amar Annus and Alan Lenzi, *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi: The Standard Babylonian Poem of the Righteous Sufferer* [SAACT 7; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2010], 28 and idem, "A Six-Column Babylonian Tablet of *Ludlul Bēl Nēmeqi* and the Reconstruction of Tablet IV," *JNES* [forthcoming 2011]).

. . . ana šīri asakki lā ammanni

Line 3′: IM = the determinative preceding directions, and, by extension, various winds; in this case we are missing the second part of the word. *Zâqu* (*ziāqu*), "to blow." The form *lizīqam-ma* is a G 3cs precative + ventive *–am* + enclitic *–ma*. *–šunu* = 3mp possessive suffix. *Ayy–* is the negative particle prefixed before the preterite to create the vetitive, expressing a negative wish. *Ayy-izīqa* is to be parsed as a vetitive 3cs + ventive *–am*. The final *m* of the ventive has been lost with the loss of mimation in SB.

IM *. . . lizīqam-ma lumuššunu ayy-izīqa*

Line 4′: IM.U$_{18}$.LU = *šūtu*, "south (wind)." Though only the first wedge is preserved, the reading is probable, given what follows in the next line.

šūtu lizīqam-ma lumuššunu ayy-izīqa

Line 5′: IM.SI.(SÁ) = *ištānu*, "north (wind)."

ištānu lizīqam-ma lumuššunu ayy-izīqa

6′. IM.KUR.RA [*li-zi-qa*]-*am-ma* ḪUL-*šú-nu a-a i-z*[*i-qa*]

7′. IM.MAR.TU *li-zi-qa-am-ma* ḪUL-*šú-nu a-a i-zi-qa*

8′. *ina qí-bi-ti-ku-nu ṣir-ti šá* NU KÚR-*ru*

9′. *ù an-ni*$_7$*-ku-nu ki-nim šá* NU BAL-*ú*

10′. *lu-úb-luṭ lu-uš-lim-ma* ^{d}*é-a* ^{d}UTU *u* ^{d}*asal-lú-ḫi*

11′. *dà-lí-lí* DINGIR-*ti-ku-nu* GAL-*ti ana* GISKIM *u*$_4$*-me an-nu-ti lud-*[*lul*]

12′. ^{d}UTU *šur-bi a-ši-pu-ti šá* DÙ-*šú* ABGAL DINGIR.MEŠ ^{d}AMAR.UTU

Line 6′: IM.KUR.RA = *šadû*, "east (wind)."
šadû lizīqam-ma lumuššunu ayy-izīqa

Line 7′: IM.MAR.TU = *amurru*, "west (wind)."
amurru lizīqam-ma lumuššunu ayy-izīqa

Line 8′: *Qibītu*, "command, speech." The noun bears a 2mp possessive pronoun suffix (*–kunu*). *Ṣīru*, "exalted, sublime." KÚR = *nakāru*, "to be(come) different, to change, to alter." The logogram probably stands in place of the G infinitive (see also line 9), which is attested elsewhere in phrases similar to the present one (see CAD N/1, 165).
ina qibītīkunu ṣīrti ša lā nakāru

Line 9′: *Annu*, "consent, approval." *Kīnu*, "true, authentic, reliable." The phrase *annu kīnu* occurs often, especially as the positive result of an extispicy; see CAD A/2, 135 for examples. BAL = *enû*, "to change, to alter" (see CAD E, 175 for similar phrases).
u annīkunu kīnim ša lā enû

Line 10′: *Balāṭu*, "to live, to allow to live." *Šalāmu*, "to be healthy, well." Both verbs are 1cs precatives.
lubluṭ lušlim-ma Ea Šamaš u Asalluḫi

Line 11′: *Dalīlu*, "praise." *Ilūtu*, "divinity." *Ūmu*, "day." *Annûtu*, mp demonstrative particle. *Dalālu*, "to praise." The precise meaning of the phrase *ana itti ūmī annûti* is not clear. My translation follows Maul's "zum (guten) Zeichen dieser Tage" (482).
dalīlī ilūtīkunu rabīti ana itti ūmē annûti ludlul

Line 12′: As mentioned above in footnote 13, Maul's edition omits this line. *Rabû*, "to make great" (Š ms impv.). *Āšipūtu*, "excorcism." DÙ = *epēšu*, "to do, to perform" (G preterite 1cs + subjunctive *–u*). ABGAL = *apkallu*, "sage, expert, scholar."
Šamaš šurbi āšipūti ša ēpušu apkal ilī Marduk

13′. ka-inim-ma ḫul-meš dù-a-bi nam búr-da-kam*

Line 13′: This is the rubric of the prayer which is in Sumerian, as is typical of most incantations: "It is the wording for the resolution of fate concerning all bad things." The sign NAM is usually a morpheme of abstraction in Sumerian, as it is in the term *namburbî* (literally, "its release, solution"); but it can also be understood as the logogram for *šīmtu* (written NAM or NAM.TAR, as it is in lines 2, 5–6). Here, the scribe is understanding NAM in the latter sense, playing with the name of the ritual *namburbî*, "its undoing." Thus, it becomes nam búr-da, "to resolve a (negative) destiny" (Maul, *ZB*, 12). MS B adds seven lines of ritual instruction after the rubric and before the colophon which is to accompany the prayer.

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

There are no prayers in the Hebrew Bible designated for the reversal of the negative fate foretold by an omen. As in any other ancient Near Eastern society, in ancient Israel there were a plethora of mantic practices, some of which were sanctioned by the biblical authors (cleromancy, oneiromancy and prophecy), and many which were not. In any case, we do not have from Iron Age Israel any manuals of divination (if, indeed, there ever were any). Thus, there is no formal equivalent of the namburbi-ritual in general or of our prayer here, of which it was a part. This being said, there are, in fact, several biblical passages in which the reversal (ritual or otherwise) of a negative oracular fate (delivered via prophecy, itself a form of divination) is a central theme.

2 Kings 3:4–27 recounts how Mesha of Moab, following the death of the powerful Ahab, rebels against his Israelite oppressors. In response, the new Israelite king, Jehoram, assembles a coalition which includes both Judah and Edom. The army encounters severe logistical problems due to the barrenness of the countryside during their march around the southern end of the Dead Sea, and, as a result, the kings question whether or not Yahweh is really in support of the undertaking. They decide to consult a prophet (identified as Elisha), who provides them with a reluctant but unequivocally positive oracle that includes the promise of ample supplies and utter victory over Moab (2 Kgs 3:16–19). The kings' expedition follows according to the oracle until the coalition is besieging the last urban center, Kir-hareseth. At this point, following a failed breakout attempt, Mesha, in an act of desperation, sacrifices his first born son on the city's walls. "A great wrath came against Israel" (וַיְהִי קֶצֶף־גָּדוֹל עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל) and the coalition army withdraws, leaving Mesha's Moab bloody, but independent and, therefore, victorious. While scholars have variously attempted to slither around the edges of the theological difficulties in this pericope,[1] the most honest and

[1] A few examples will suffice: the text reflects multiple sources and is therefore sloppily inconsistent (Burke Long, "2 Kings III and Genres of Prophetic Narrative," *VT* 23 [1973], 337–48); the prophecy was reversed because Israel broke the laws of conflict as set out in Deut 20:1–20 (even

straightforward reading remains that Yahweh's oracle delivered through Elisha was effectively reversed by the ritual of Mesha's sacrifice of his first-born.[2] The king of Moab appealed to his god which was undoubtedly Kemosh, though the biblical text does not acknowledge this overtly. The Israelites were fighting, we must remember, not in the land of Yahweh's inheritance, but in Kemosh's home turf. Mesha performed the most poignant and powerful cultic act available to him, and the god of Moab responded to the king's faith by intervening with the oracular fate set out by the god of Israel.[3] This is in many ways similar to the logic of the namburbi, but a fundamental difference is that Mesha is not invoking the god of the original oracle, Yahweh, in his ritual.

A further biblical passage which displays the logic of the namburbi, perhaps most strongly, is Isaiah 38:1–8 and its parallel in 2 Kings 20:1–9. When Hezekiah becomes quite ill, the prophet Isaiah comes to the king (whether he has been consulted or has come on his own accord is not stated) and offers the monarch an oracle from Yahweh. It is not propitious: כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צַו לְבֵיתֶךָ כִּי מֵת אַתָּה וְלֹא תִחְיֶה, "Thus Yahweh has said, 'Command your household, for you are about to die and you will not recover.'" Hezekiah responds to the oracle immediately and ritually: וַיַּסֵּב חִזְקִיָּהוּ פָּנָיו אֶל־הַקִּיר וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל אֶל־יְהוָה, "Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to Yahweh," reminding Yahweh how he has served him faithfully.[4] Both the supplicant of the namburbi, who admits his personal fear in formulaic terms (line 20: *palḫākū-ma adrāku u šutādurāku*, "I am scared, frightened, terrified"), and Hezekiah, who weeps while praying, attempt to show deep sincerity—and this sincerity adds to the legitimacy (and thus potency) of the ritual. Yahweh's response is almost as quick. Having heard the prayer and observed the weeping, the god of Israel reverses the oracle, which Isaiah promptly delivers: the king will live for another fifteen years and the city will be rescued from Assyria. In the account in 2 Kings 20, the prophet then applies a dressing made of fig cakes (דְּבֶלֶת תְּאֵנִים) to Hezekiah's skin condition, which is apparently what was ailing him (2 Kgs 20:7).[5] While appearing to the modern reader as a form of homeopathic medicine, we must remember that such healing procedures, especially if applied by a religious professional, were rarely devoid of religious dimensions. As in the case of Mesopotamian disease theory, the patient's illness

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though breaking these laws was part of the oracle! Joe Sprinkle, "Deuteronomic 'Just War' [Deut. 20, 10–20] and 2 Kings 3, 27," *ZABR* 6 [2000], 285–301); the prophecy was *technically* fulfilled because the army did, in fact, attack all of the cities of Moab (Raymond Westbrook, "Elisha's True Prophecy in 2 Kings 3," *JBL* 124 [2005], 530–32).

[2] Thus, John Barclay Burns, "Why Did the Besieging Army Withdraw? (II Reg 3,27)," *ZAW* 102 (1990), 187–94.

[3] Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, "Prophecy as a Way of Cancelling Prophecy—The Strategic Uses of Foreknowledge," *ZAW* 117 (2005), 345–46.

[4] The significance of the specific posturing, towards the wall, is unclear. It could be that it has some ritual importance.

[5] This act is placed after the sign of the reverse shadow in the Isaiah account (Isa 38:21).

was by no means a "natural" thing, but was, rather, the result of an angry god.[6] Thus, here changing the results of the original oracle requires multiple ritual acts, i.e., the prayer and the application of the fig cake to the affected area. In this sense, Isaiah is not only functioning as a proper diviner, but also as an *āšipu*! To confirm the results of the new, positive oracle, Yahweh offers an alternate sign: the shadow on a kind of sundial will go backwards instead of forwards.[7] This is a new sign for a new oracle and Hezekiah's repentance has literally turned back the clock on the previous prophecy. Again, this is the same logic as the namburbi: the appropriate ritual can reverse oracular fate.

In 1 Kings 22 we have another instance in which the party affected by a negative oracle takes action to prevent the oracular fate from taking effect. In this passage, the kings of Israel and Judah decide to retake Ramoth-Gilead from Aram. After agreeing to participate in the campaign, the king of Judah, Jehoshaphat, requests that the leaders invoke an oracle from Yahweh in order to determine whether or not the undertaking has divine sanction: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹשָׁפָט אֶל־מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל דְּרָשׁ־נָא כַיּוֹם אֶת־דְּבַר יְהוָה, "Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, 'Please inquire now the word of Yahweh'" (1 Kgs 22:5). The king of Israel assembles a large group of prophets who uniformly deliver the deity's blessing on the campaign. Dissatisfied with this, Jehoshaphat asks the king of Israel for a second oracle to confirm the first, and the king reluctantly sends for Micaiah ben Imlah.[8] Micaiah's first oracle delivered in the kings' presence is in agreement with that of the group (1 Kgs 22:15). Incredulous, the king of Israel demands that the prophet tell him Yahweh's true will and the chilling vision that follows contradicts the oracle delivered by the pandering group of prophets. The kings develop a plan which, to a certain degree, recognizes the legitimacy of both oracular fates—they launch their campaign, but the king of Israel (now identified as Ahab; 1 Kgs 22:20) disguises himself, eschewing his royal garment for, we presume, those of a common soldier. The battle, as Micaiah predicted, is a disaster for the coalition. Ahab's disguise does not protect him and he dies as a result of an arrow wound to the chest. The king's solution to the negative oracular fate offered by Micaiah is not a ritual one. Even so, the parallel to a well-documented namburbi, the substitute king ritual, in which a prisoner dons the garb of the king in order to absorb the ill effects of a negative omen,[9] is far too strong to

[6] JoAnn Scurlock and Burton R. Andersen, *Diagnoses in Assyrian and Babylonian Medicine: Ancient Sources, Translations, and Modern Medical Analyses* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois, 2004), 11.

[7] The sign (אוֹת) here is *not* an omen, *per se*, in that it is not an indicator of the god's will that needs to be interpreted, but is rather a confirmatory sign from the god. Nonetheless, the relationship between an omen and this kind of confirmatory sign is significant: they both indicate divine will.

[8] For a discussion of oracular confirmation in the Hebrew Bible, see Jeffrey L. Cooley, "The Story of Saul's Election (1 Sam 9–10) in Light of Mantic Practice in Ancient Iraq," *JBL*, forthcoming.

[9] For a discussion of the substitute king ritual, see Parpola, *LASEA 2*, xxii–xxxiii.

ignore.[10] In both cases, the king attempts to avoid his oracular fate by disguising himself.[11] Though the solutions are different in nature (the namburbi is a ritual, that of Israel's king is not), there is an element of logic shared by the two, even if it is not as tight as that of Isa 38:1–8/2 Kgs 20:1–9. Oracular fate is not final and can possibly be averted.

While these biblical parallels by no means comprise a single formal ritual, such as a namburbi, they nonetheless demonstrate that the god's will, as expressed through an oracle, could be changed with the suitable ritual demonstration. These demonstrations were appropriate to the nature of the oracle and the person(s) to whom it was directed.

[10] Nadav Na'aman, "Prophetic Stories as Sources for the Histories of Jehoshaphat and the Omrides," *Biblica* 78 (1997), 165.
[11] Tiemeyer, "Cancelling Prophecy," 345.

TRANSLATION:

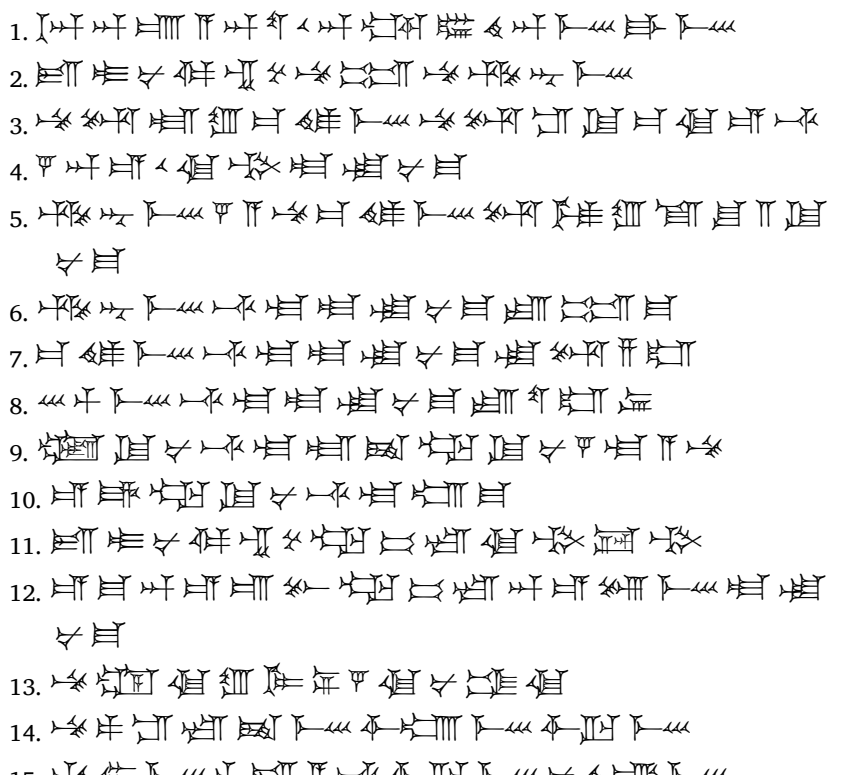
1. Incantation: O Ea, Shamash and Asalluhi, the great gods,
2. Who judge the case of the land, who decree fates,
3. Who plot designs, who distribute the lots
4. Of heaven and earth (are) you!
5. In your hands are the decreeing of fates, the plotting of designs!
6. You yourselves decree the fates of life!
7. You yourselves plot the designs of life!
8. You yourselves make the decisions of life!
9. Your incantation is life, your utterance is well-being!
10. Life itself is your command!
11. O the ones who judge the case of the land, who tread the wide earth,
12. Wherever the heavens are spread, who tread the sprawling heavens are you!
13. O the ones who remove evil, who establish good,
14. Who eliminate evil signs (and) omens,
15. Wicked, terrifying dreams that are not good,
16. Who sever the evil thread, who dispel with the apotropaic ritual,
17. Wherever there are signs, however many there are,
18. I, so-and-so, son of so-and-so, whose god (is) such-and-such (god), whose goddess (is) such-and-such (goddess),
19. To whom evil signs and omens are repeatedly occurring,
20. Am scared, frightened and terrified.
21. . . . the evil (portended) by an eclipse of the moon, by an eclipse of the sun,
22. The evil (portended) by the stars of Ea, of An, of Enlil,
23. The evil (portended) by a planet which approached the stars of the paths,

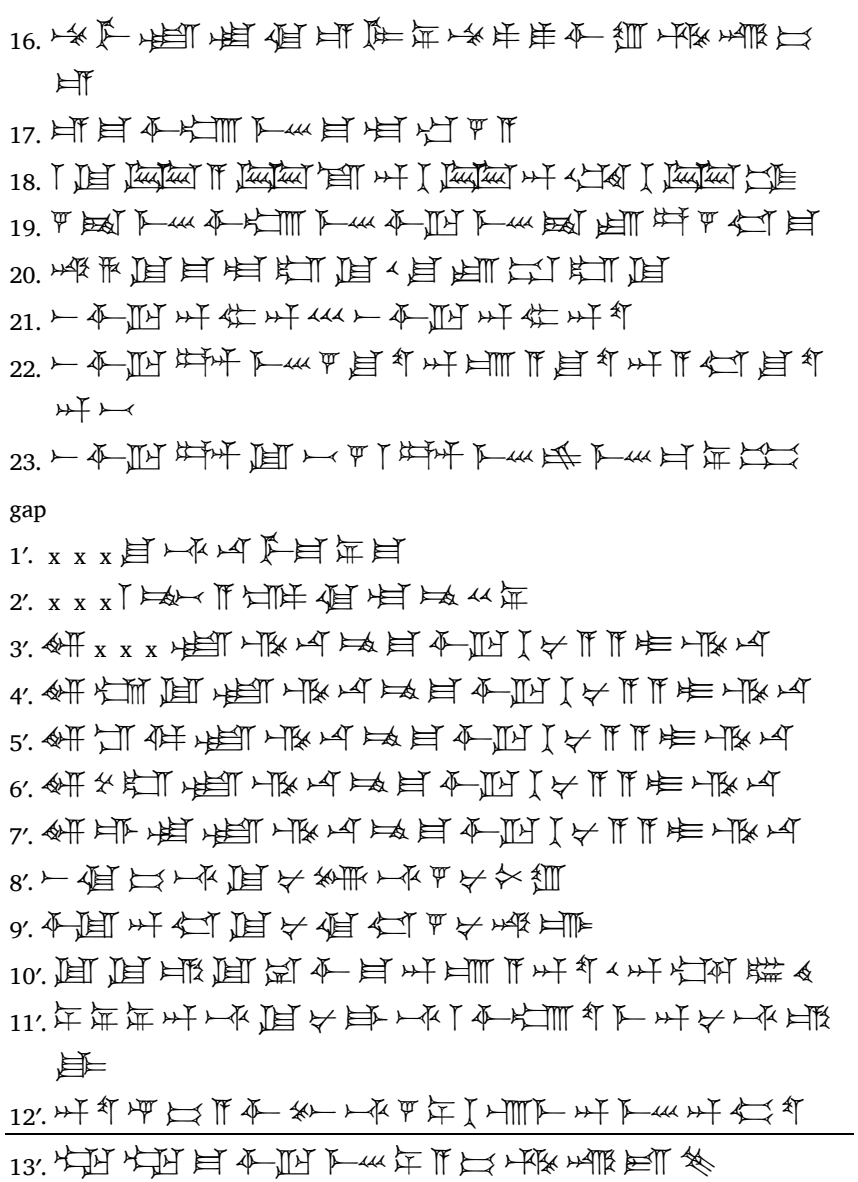
. . . .

1′. . . . make them pass by me . . .
2′. (that) I may not be turned into the flesh of the Asakku demon.
3′. May . . . wind blow by, but let not their evil blow,

4′. May the south wind blow by, but let not their evil blow,
5′. May the north wind blow by, but let not their evil blow,
6′. May the east wind blow by, but let not their evil blow,
7′. May the west wind blow by, but let not their evil blow,
8′. So that, by your sublime command, which does not change,
9′. And your reliable report, which cannot be altered,
10′. I might live and be well. So, O Ea, Shamash and Asalluhi,
11′. Let me, for a (propitious) sign today, glorify the glories of your great divinity.
12′. O Shamash, magnify the exorcism which Marduk, the gods' sage, performs.
13′. It is the wording for the resolution of fate concerning all bad things.

CUNEIFORM:





16.
17.
18.
19.
20.
21.
22.
23.

gap

1′.
2′.
3′.
4′.
5′.
6′.
7′.
8′.
9′.
10′.
11′.
12′.
13′.

A Namburbi against the Evil of a Snake: Shamash 25

DUANE SMITH

SHAMASH:

See page 197.

THE PRAYER:

This prayer is typical in structure and content of the incantation section of namburbi-rituals.[1] The intent of such rituals is to mitigate or nullify the evil portents of omens (see page 36 for more about namburbis). In the present case, the namburbi seeks to nullify the portent of an unsolicited omen, *omina oblativa*, in the form of a snake seen hunting in the supplicant's house.[2] The formal structure of Shamash 25 is as follows:

I) Invocation (1–9a)
  A) The god's name and honorific titles (1–3)
  B) Praise for the god's nature and special skills (4–9a)
    1) In terms of unalterable commands (4–6)
    2) In terms of reviving the dead and releasing the captive (7–9a)
II) Petition (9b–21)

[1] See Mayer, *UFBG*, 34–35.

[2] *Šumma ālu* Tablets 22–26 (see Sally Freedman, *If a City Is Set on a Height: The Akkadian Omen Series Shumma Alu ina mele Shakin Vol. 2: Tablets 22–40* [Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 19; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum Babylonian Section, 2006], 6–130) contain a large number of snake related omens. Of the hundreds of snake-related omens in *Šumma ālu* none exactly matches the two elements (a snake seen entering a man's house and hunting there) that one would expect in the protasis if our prayer was intended to mitigate one of these portents. The protasis of *Šumma ālu* 23:106 (ibid., 46–47) addresses a snake entering a man's house, "if a snake enters a man's house, that house will be abandoned." Several omen protases address snakes hunting specific prey in a man's house. For example, *Šumma ālu* 25–26 ii 6′-7′ (ibid., 106–7) and *Šumma ālu* 25–26:16′, 22′ (ibid., 118–19). Regarding snake omens and namburbi-rituals, see Erica Reiner, *Astral Magic in Babylonia* (TAPS 85/4; Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1995), 83, n.338.

A) Self-presentation (9b–13)
B) Acknowledgement of reverential stance *vis-a-vis* the god (14–15)
C) Lament (16–20a)
D) Plea (20b–21)

III) Conditional promise of praise for the god (22–26)[3]

The prayer begins with an invocation that not only calls upon Shamash in terms of several of his honorific titles but also in terms of the effectiveness of his commands. The invocation ends with reference to Shamash's ability to revive the dead and release the captive. The reference to these powers provides a transition to the petition, where the supplicant first introduces themselves and then, using the language of submission, "seize your hem," indicates their reverential posture. Here follows a lament in which the supplicant expresses their fears regarding the evil portent of a snake seen hunting in their house and pleas to be saved. Just as Shamash can release the captive, the supplicant desires that Shamash release them from the evil portent. Finally, the supplicant provides Shamash with motivation. If Shamash saves them, they will be able to praise Shamash and in so doing will inspire others to do the same.

Unfortunately, the one tablet that bears the text of this prayer (VAT 5) lacks ritual instructions; it only preserves the prayer. Since there are a number of namburbi-rituals against the evil of snakes,[4] it is impossible to reconstruct the precise ritual instructions that might have once been associated with our particular prayer. But another namburbi-ritual that seeks to nullify the evil portent of a snake hunting in a house incorporates a prayer very similar to ours and may shed light on the kinds of ritual actions that could have been prescribed to accompany our prayer.[5] The ritual begins with the words "*namburbî lumun ṣēri ana amīli lā iṭeḫḫe lumuššu amīla lā išakkan*, "a namburbi (that) the evil of a snake may

[3] See Mayer, *UFBG*, 35, for a summary of the more common, two-part analysis of this prayer. Mayer uses Shamash 25 as a paradigm example of the structure of a namburbi-prayer. Differing slightly from Mayer, I take the conditional offer of praise as a separate unit. See Shamash 1, page 369, for discussion. Separating the "acknowledgement of reverential stance" from the "self-introduction," I also see the structure of the petition section of the prayer as somewhat more complex than does Mayer.

[4] See the eight examples in Maul, 270–303. See also now BM 43090+ and BM 42559+, published by Irvine L. Finkel, "On Late Babylonian Medical Training," in *Wisdom, Gods and Literature: Studies in Assyriology in Honour of W. G. Lambert* (ed. A. R. George and Irving Finkel; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 137–224, here 206–7, texts 49A and 49B. Finkel has also published several Old Babylonian incantations related to snakes ("On some Dog, Snake and Scorpion Incantations," in *Mesopotamian Magic: Textual, Historical, and Interpretative Perspectives* [ed. Tzvi Abusch and K. van der Toorn; Groningen: Styx, 1999], 211–52, here 223–34). These incantations, however, are not namburbi-prayers in structure; they appear to address the direct danger of snakes rather than their ominous portents. As such, they provide a significant contrast with prayers such as Shamash 25.

[5] See Maul, 278–82, 80-7-19,88, obv. 7–rev. 15 and minor variants. While this text provides a close parallel to our prayer, it is sufficiently different to preclude it from being an alternative witness to Shamash 25.

not approach a man, (that) its evil may not affect a man." According to its ritual instructions, at sunset the practitioner draws water, mixes in various plant products (barleys, emmer, lentils) and metals (silver and gold), and sets them "under the stars." In a secluded place, they prepare a reed altar for Shamash. They place various items including bread, honey, and ghee on and around the altar. The practitioner dips various stones (carnelian, lapis lazuli, plus several others) and metals (copper, tin, silver, and gold) in oil and then makes a necklace from them for the supplicant. At this point, the exact actions of the practitioner are unclear but eventually they make the supplicant recite an incantation that is very much like Shamash 25.

ESSENTIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Shamash. See page 201.

Text. Edition: Maul, *ZB*, 296–97, 542. Translations: Foster, 729–30. Seux, 364–65. Mayer, *UFBG*, 35.

1. ÉN ^{d}UTU *šàr* AN-*e u* KI-*tim*

2. EN *kit-ti u mi-šá-ri*

3. EN *a-nun*$^{?}$*-na-ki* EN GIDIM$^{!?}$

Line 1: ÉN = *šiptu*, "incantation, spell, ritual wording." On the various uses of this word, see CAD Š/3, 86–91. ^{d}UTU = *Šamaš*. *Šarru*, "king." AN-*e* = *šamê* from *šamû*, "heaven." KI = *erṣetim*, "earth." The stock phrase *šar šamê u erṣetim*, "king of heaven and earth," has Sumerian antecedents and was applied to several gods, most notably Enlil. The sentence that begins here ends in line 9a.

šiptu: *Šamaš šar šamê u erṣetim*

Line 2: EN = *bēlu*, "lord." *Kittu*, "truth," was commonly deified, as was *mīšaru*, "justice." As such, they are the children of Shamash. See Shamash 1, lines 37–38 on page 377.

bēl kitti u mīšari

Line 3: The tablet is abraded in various parts of this line. The reading follows Maul, 296, n.8. *Anunnakkū* is a collective name from Sumerian that likely originally specified all the gods of the pantheon but later, and particularly in Akkadian contexts, may only refer to gods of earth and the underworld (see Black and Green, 34). GIDIM = *eṭemmu*, "spirit of the dead, ghosts." The *eṭemmū* were normally inhabitants of the underworld (see Black and Green, 88–89 and page 133 in this book). *Bēl anunnakkī bēl eṭemmī* is a common divine epithet for Shamash (see CAD E, 398).

bēl anunnakkī bēl eṭemmī

4. *šá an-na-šú* DINGIR *mam-ma-am*

5. NU BAL-*ú qí-bit-su*

6. *la uš-te*[!]*-pe-e-li*

7. [d]UTU LÚ.ÚŠ *bul-lu-ṭu*

8. *ka-sa-a pa-ṭa-ri*

Line 4: *Annu*, "approval, consent." The 3ms pronominal suffix on the noun is redundant with the relative pronoun; together they can be rendered "whose." The relative pronoun heads a clause that ends in line 6. Note the consonance between the first words of line 4 and *lā innû* in line 5. An *annu* is often a positive divine answer to a query. Note, for example, *ša ilum annam lā ippalūšu*, "to which the god will not give a positive answer" (cited in CAD A/2, 135). DINGIR = *ilu*, "god." *Mammam*, "somebody." The presence of *ilu* puts us in the divine realm. With a negative, *mammam* means "nobody." Thus, "no god."

ša annašu ilu mammam

Line 5: NU = *lā*. BAL-*ú* = *enû*, "to change, to revise." *Innû* is a G durative with subjunctive *–u*. *Qibītu,* "word, command." *Qibīssu* has a 3ms pronominal suffix attached; the adjacent *–tš–* becomes *–ss–*. The word should be taken as the subject of the verb in the following line.

lā innû qibīssu

Line 6: The somewhat damaged text appears to read *uš*-NU-*pe-e-li* (see CAD Š/3, 323), but Maul's emendation, used here, is certainly correct (296). *Šutepêlu* (Št pass. of *šupêlu*), "to be changed" (the root is a Š-group middle weak quadriliteral; see *GAG*, §109j). The verb is a 3cs durative. Since this line continues the relative clause started in line 4, we expect a verb in the subjunctive here, *uštepellu*. See CAD Š/3, 323 for examples of both the subjunctive and the form used here.

lā uštepêli

Line 7: LÚ.ÚŠ = *mītu*, "a dead person." In some contexts *mītu* appears to mean "gravely ill." *Bulluṭu* (D of *balāṭu*), "to revive, to bring back to life," is an inf., perhaps best rendered here as a gerund (see also the inf. in line 8). For *mīta bulluṭu*, see CAD M/2, 141. With regard to Shamash, note the personal name *Šamaš-mītam-uballiṭ*, "Shamash-Revives-the-Dead." This line and the next two bring the invocation to an end with references to those aspects of Shamash's nature that are most important to the petition that follows. Not only does this line and the next give emphasis to the invocation, they also provide a transition to the petition. The reprise of a direct call to Shamash by name lends emphasis to lines 7 and 8.

Šamaš mīta bulluṭu

Line 8: *Kasû*, "bound, a captive." *Paṭāru*, "to loosen, to release," is another inf. Notice the grammatical parallelism with *mīta bulluṭu* in line 7.

kasâ paṭāri

9. ŠU.II-*ka-ma* ^{d}UTU

10. *a-na-ku* ÌR-*ka*

11. NENNI DUMU NENNI *šá*

12. DINGIR-*šú* ^{d}AMAR.UTU *u* ^{d}15-*šú*

13. ^{d}*zar-pa-ni-tum*

14. *a-na ma-ḫar-ka* G[U]B-*iz*$^{!}$

Line 9: ŠU = *qātu*, "hand." ŠU.II, ŠU + two vertical wedges (the MIN sign), indicates the dual; *qātī* is the oblique dual form. Here "your hands" should be understood as "in your power." CAD Q, 189 restores <*ina*> before šu.II-*ka-ma*. While rare, the omission of the preposition is not unknown. No meaning is lost. See CAD Q, 192 for examples of *qātu*, meaning "in your/his power," without the preposition in constructions with verbs. The invocation of the deity's name again here provides a transition into the petition section of the prayer.

qātīkā-ma Šamaš

Line 10: ÌR = *ardu* (*wardum*), "servant." *Aradka* is the bound form with a 2ms pronominal suffix. This line begins the second major section of the prayer. Lines 10–14 form one sentence with the self-presentation formula (lines 10–13) as its subject.

anāku aradka

Line 11: NENNI DUMU NENNI = *annanna mār annanna*, "so-and-so, son of so-and-so," is a very common placeholder for the actual name of the supplicant.

annanna mār annanna ša

Line 12: ^{d}AMAR.UTU = Marduk. ^{d}15 = *ištaru*, personal goddess.

ilšu Marduk u ištaršu

Line 13: Zarpanitum is the consort of Marduk. In private communications Alan Lenzi speculated that "Marduk" and "Zarpanitum" are not placeholders but possibly indicate that this ritual may have been copied for a particular family or, more likely, the [office of the] king of Babylon; thus the copyist could assume "Marduk" and "Zarpanitum" were his personal gods.

Zarpānītum

Line 14: *Maḫru*, "before, in the presence of." *Maḫarka* is a bound form of the word plus a 2ms pronominal suffix. GUB-*iz*$^{!}$ = *azziz* from *i/uzuzzu*, "to stand, to appear," specifically before a person or god. The reading is difficult. Maul, 297, reads G[U]B-*ka*. Mayer, *UFBG*, 139, citing the common expression *maḫarka azziz*, suggests the reading adopted here. It is possible that the scribe confounded *ana maḫarka azziz* and simply added *ka* (See Maul, 297, n.12; Mayer, *UFBG*, 139; and Seux, 364, n.4).

ana maḫarka azziz

15. TÚG.SÍG-*ka aṣ-bat*

16. *ina* ḪUL MUŠ *šá ina* É-*ia*

17. [*e*]-*ši-ru-ma bu-ru*

18. DÙ-*šú a-mu-ru-ma*

19. *pal-ḫa-ku ad-ra-ka*

Line 15: TÚG.SÍG = *sissiktu*, "hem, fringe." *Sissiktu* here is the hem of a garment. *Aṣbat* from *ṣabātu*, "to seize, to take hold of." On *sissikta* with *ṣabātu* as a gesture of supplication to a god, see CAD Ṣ, 18. *Ṣabātu* is also used in legal contexts and as an indication of submission to a king or someone else in authority. *Sissiktaka aṣbat* can also mean "to swear an oath." See further, André Finet, "Les symboles du cheveu, du bord du vêtements et de l'ongle en Mésopotamie," in *Eschatologie et Cosmologie* (ed. Armand Abel; Annales du Centre d'Études des Religions 3; Bruxelles: Éditions de l'Institut de sociologie de l'Université libre de Bruxelles, 1969), 101–30; Shalom M. Paul, "Gleanings from the Biblical and Talmudic Lexica in the Light of Akkadian," in *Minḥah le-Naḥum: Biblical and Other Studies Presented to Nahum M. Sarna in Honour of his 70th Birthday* (ed. Marc Brettler and Michael Fishbane; JSOTSup 154; Sheffield: JSOT, 1993), 244–48, here 248; Hayim Tawil, "Hebrew נֶפֶשׁ יָד = Akkadian qāta napāṣu: A Term of Non-Allegiance," *JAOS* 122.1 (2002), 79–82, here 80–81; and Foster, 675, n.1.

sissiktaka aṣbat

Line 16: With this line and the next, we come to the central petition of the prayer: a bad omen in the form of a snake pursuing prey in the house. This subsection begins with a lament that continues through the first part of line 20. Here *ina*, in expressions like *ina lumun* X, has a causative or instrumental meaning, "because, by means of, on account of." Contrast this with the meaning of the second *ina* in our line. ḪUL = *lumnu*, "evil, misery." MUŠ = *ṣerru* (*ṣēru*), "serpent, snake." É = *bītu*, "house." The relative pronoun *ša* begins a clause that describes which snake the supplicant is talking about. The clause ends with the subjunctive verb *amuru* in line 18.

ina lumun ṣerri ša ina bitīya

Line 17: Maul reads [ ]-IGI-*ru-ma* at the beginning of the line (297). The text above follows CAD E, 205 ([*e*]-*ši*(IGI)-*ru-ma*). *Ešēru*, "to make straight, to proceed." This infinitive and the one in line 18 describe what the supplicant saw the snake do. The *–ma* functions as a marker of continuity of activity, "and then." *Bu'(')uru* (*bûru*) "hunting; game, prey" (see CAD B, 366 and *CDA*, 51).

ešērū-ma bûru

Line 18: DÙ-*šú* = *epēšu*, "to do, to make," but with *bu'(')uru*, "to hunt." On this idiom, see CAD E, 205 and B, 366. *Amāru*, "to see."

epēšu amurū-ma

Line 19: All the verbs in this line and the next are 1cs predicatives. *Palāḫu*, "to fear, to be afraid." *Adāru*, "to be afraid (of), to fear." We expect *adrāku* rather than *adrāka* (see

20. *u šu-ta-du-<ra>-ku ina* ḪUL BI

21. *šu-ti-qa-an-ni-ma*

22. *nar-bi-ka lu-šá-pi*

23. *dà-lí-lí-ka lud-lul*

24. *a-mi-ru-a a-na*

25. *da-ra-a-tú dà-lí-lí-<ka>*

Mayer, *UFBG*, 73). *Palḫāku adrāku* (*u*) *sutādurāku* is a stock expression in prayers.
palḫāku adrāka

Line 20: *Šutādurāku* is a Št 1cs predicative (from *adāru*). It means "I am constantly in fear." See CAD A/1, 109 for a discussion of *šutādurāku* and related words. BI = *šuāti*, a gen. 3ms independent demonstrative pronoun.
u šutādurāku ina lumni šuāti

Line 21: *Šūtuqu* (Š of *etēqu*), "to make pass by, to avert." The form is a ms impv. plus 1cs acc. pronominal suffix. See CAD E, 394 for this stock phrase. This plea, the only one in the prayer, ends the petition section of the prayer.
šūtiqannī-ma

Line 22: *Narbû*, "greatness." *Šāpû* (Š of [*w*]*apû*), "to proclaim, to announce." *Lušāpi* is a 1cs precative. This line begins the prayer's final section, the conditional promise of praise. The first two lines are stock phrases (see CAD A/2, 202–3).
narbīka lušāpi

Line 23: *Dalīlīka* from *dalīlu*, "praise, glory, fame." It is common for *dalīlu* to be in the plural, particularly when referring to gods or kings and always when used with *dalālu* (see CAD D, 50). *Dalālu*, "to glorify, to proclaim." *Ludlul*, like *lušāpi*, is a 1cs precative. Those who read or heard this very common doxological phrase would have been well aware of the binding consonance within and between these two words. While clumsy as a translation, "your praises, let me praise" is a reasonable representation of the vocabulary, grammar, and to some extent consonance.
dalīlīka ludlul

Line 24: *Āmirūya* (from *amāru*, see line 18) is a G mp participle plus a 1cs pronominal suffix. The preposition *ana* governs the noun in the next line.
āmirūya ana

Line 25: *Dārītu*, "eternity," is in the plural here, *darâtu*, though we expect a gen., *darâti*. *Ana darâti* means "forever, eternally." Maul (297, n.13) notes that one expects *dalīlī* with a 2ms pronominal suffix (*–ka*). The above notation indicates the scribe has mistakenly omitted it. Note the alliteration between *darâtu* and *dalīlīka* that binds these words together in much the same way as *dalīlīka ludlul* are bound together by consonance both here

26. *lid-lu-lu* TE.ÉN

and in line 23. The whole phrase, *darâtu dalīlīka lidlulū*, is bound tightly by both alliteration and consonance.

ana darâtu dalīlīka

Line 26: Although Maul adopts LID as the best reading, he suggests that the first sign in the line might be read NI (297). In other words, the first sign may be an example of the poorly attested *líd* reading. One's decision on this does not affect the meaning. Maul's copy appears to favor reading *lid* (542). *Lidlulū* is a 3mp precative from *dalālu*. The subject of *dalālu* has changed from the supplicant, line 23, to those who see the supplicant here. TE.ÉN follows the prayer just as ÉN precedes it. Together they form an inclusio, delineating the beginning and the end of the prayer.

lidlulū TE.ÉN

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

Shamash 25 deals with dispelling the evil portent of snakes, *ṣerru*, hunting in one's house. While there are several different words for "snake" and "serpent" in Hebrew, נָחָשׁ is the most frequently used and is likely the closest semantic equivalent to Akkadian *ṣerru* (*ṣēru*). Jer 8:17 and Qoh 10:11 both mention spells (לָחַשׁ) against snakes. However, unlike the underlying assumption of Shamash 25, the Qohelet passage highlights the uselessness of the charmer after the snake bites. In the Jeremiah passage, it is Yahweh himself who will send uncharmable snakes.[1]

In much the same way as Shamash 25, biblical Psalms frequently contain petitions followed by vows of praise. For example, Ps 7 begins with an invocation followed by a rather complex petition, including a lament, and ends with a vow of praise. Other psalms ending with vows or vow-like elements include Pss 13, 14, 21, 22, 35, 53, 54, 56, 57, 59, 61, 69, 79 and 109.

Although *šar šamê u erṣetim* in line 1 may be echoed in Jdt 9:12, and later theology clearly identified the Judean and Israelite monotheistic god with the king of heaven and earth, surprisingly the Hebrew Bible does not contain a precise parallel to *šar šamê u erṣetim*, "king of heaven and earth." 1 Chron 29:10–12 may well provide an extended paraphrase of the divine epithet. Zech 14:9 and Dan 4:34 separately reflect the two halves of the epithet: Zech 14:9 proclaims Yahweh, מֶלֶךְ עַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ, "king over all the earth," and Dan 4:34 (in Aramaic)

[1] Two incantations tablets treated by Finkel, "Incantations," 223–29, may provide closer parallels to Jer 8:17b than does Shamash 25 (See CBS 7005:13 and IM 5192:2, cited in note 4 above). On snakes that cannot be conjured, see also the Sumerian Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Netherworld version A, lines 42, 85, 129, and 140 (ur_2-bi-a muš tu_6 nu-zu-a-e gud_3 im-ma-ni-ib-us_2, "At its roots, a snake immune to incantations made itself a nest." [ETCSL trans.]).

has Nebuchadnezzar acknowledge Yahweh as מֶלֶךְ שְׁמַיָּא, "king of the heavens."[2] For the more general juxtaposition of "heavens" and "earth" in BH and Akkadian prayers, see page 379.

1 Sam 15:27 attests BH's semantic equivalent of *sissiktaka aṣbat*: וַיַּחֲזֵק בִּכְנַף־מְעִילוֹ וַיִּקָּרַע, "and he [i.e., Saul] took hold of the hem of his [i.e., Samuel's] cloak and it tore." (Old Aramaic, אחז בכנף, and Ugaritic, *ʿḫd bsin*, also reflect the expression.) To take hold of the hem is an act of both submission and allegiance. Tearing the hem implies rejection.[3]

[2] Most MSS of Jdt 9:12 read δέσποτα τῶν οὐρανῶν καὶ τῆς γῆς but Codex Alexandrinus reads βασιλευς. The larger context of Judith is Assyrian hegemony but it is hard to know the extent to which, if at all, the passage echoes the Akkadian divine epithet. G. Brooke Lester noted this possible parallel in a private communication. Of interest in this regard is Ps 103:19 where Yahweh is said to have "established His throne in heaven and His sovereign rule is over all" (JPS).

[3] On the tearing of a hem in an Akkadian prayer, see page 184, line 8 and related discussion there. Tawil, "Hebrew נפץ יד," 79–82 argues that נפץ יד in Dan 12:7, reflecting Akkadian *qāta napāṣu*, "to thrust away the hand," also has this negative connotation.

TRANSLATION:

1. Incantation: O Shamash, king of heaven and earth,
2. Lord of truth and justice,
3. Lord of the Anunna-gods, lord of the spirits of the dead,
4.–5a. Whose consent no god can change,
5b.–6. Whose command cannot be altered,
7. O Shamash, reviving the dead,
8. Releasing the captive,
9. Is in your hands. O Shamash,
10. I, your servant,
11. So-and-so, son of so-and-so, whose
12. Personal god is Marduk and (whose) personal goddess is
13. Zarpanitum,
14. Stand before you.
15. I seize your hem.
16.–18. On account of the evil of a snake,
    Which I saw enter my house and hunt (there),
19. I am afraid, anxious,
20. And constantly in fear. From this evil
21. Save me, that
22. I may proclaim your greatness,
23. (And) praise your glories,
24. (And that) those who see me may sound your praises,
25.–26a. (And) forever praise your glories!
26b. End of incantation.

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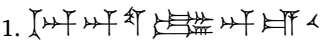
1. 
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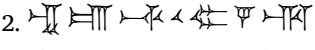
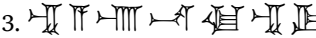
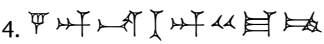
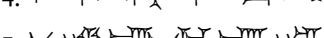
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
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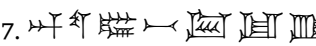
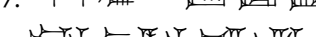
9. 
10. 
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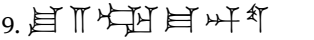
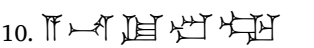
12. 
13. 
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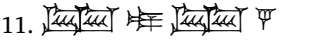
15. 
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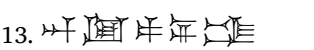
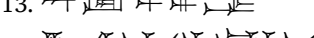
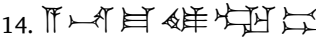
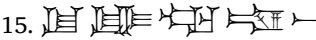
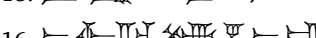
17. 
18. 
19. 
20. 
21. 
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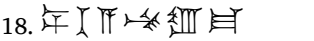
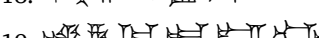
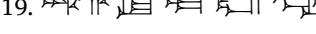
24. 
25. 
26. 

Dingirshadibbas to Personal Deities

ALAN LENZI

THE PERSONAL GOD / GODDESS:

Personal deities, both gods and goddesses, were generally minor deities in the Mesopotamian pantheon that, as the name implies, had special significance to an individual (henceforth, the protégé).[1] The personal deities were the creator (*bānû*) and protector (*nāṣiru*) of the protégé. They cared (*rāʾimu*) for the protégé, sustained their well-being (*balāṭu*), secured and maintained their social position (via a *šumu damqu*, "a good name"), and generally granted the protégé success in their varied endeavors, both personal and professional (*ila rašû*, "to obtain a god" means "to have success, good fortune," see CAD R, 194). In many respects, the personal god was a kind of projection of the protégé's parents onto the divine sphere. Given the function and importance of the personal gods, people owed them reverence and respect (*ila palāḫu*, "to fear the god," and *ila karābu*, "to bless the god, to greet the god in an honored manner"[2]). If the individual did something wrong, the personal deity could become angry and abandon the protégé. Or, if the protégé was experiencing difficulties of some kind, they might believe these to be the result of the personal god's anger and abandonment. In any case, the anger and/or abandonment of the personal god left the protégé without protection, open to further hardships or afflictions. The protégé would therefore pray to the deity directly (as in dingirshadibba-prayers) or ask another deity to intercede on their behalf (as in many shuilla-prayers) in order to soothe the god's anger and renew amicable fellowship.

Although personal deities had a special relationship to individuals, they were not conceived in strictly individualistic terms like present-day imaginings of guardian angels. Rather, the veneration of the personal god always took place in a familial or communal context. In many respects, the personal god is more like a family god. As such, the personal god could act as a witness to legal settlements and an enforcer in family disputes or problems. The choice of one's

[1] This section is especially indebted to van der Toorn's work, which is the best treatment of the personal god currently available.

[2] For more on this ritual act, which is more complicated than the English word conveys, see van der Toorn, 113 and the general introduction, page 30.

personal god—or rather the god's identity since there was little choice normally—was typically restricted to the personal deity of one's parents. This is evidenced at times by the same theophoric element in personal names from generation to generation within a family. But the selection of a personal deity may also have been contingent upon other factors: local (e.g., a nearby temple or shrine) or occupational (e.g., many scribes took Nabu or Nisaba as their personal deity). A woman, upon marriage, would give up revering the god of her father (*ili abīša*) for that of her husband (*ili bēlīša*), showing again the familial association of the personal god.

Although personal gods were usually minor or tertiary deities within the Mesopotamian pantheon (e.g., Ninshubur, Ishtar's vizier, was a common personal god, whereas Ishtar herself is never attested as a personal god nor is Anu), there are exceptions. For example, Enlil, one of the chief gods of the pantheon, on occasion took the role of an individual's personal god. It seems, however, that this practice was generally limited to kings.

THE PRAYER:

This treatment includes two brief examples of dingirshadibba-prayers. In fact, the division of the Akkadian text into two rather than three incantation-prayers is not unanimous among the textual witnesses. The issue revolves around the division of the material in lines 18–31 of this treatment. Some MSS in Lambert's edition preserve a rule line between our lines 21 and 22, suggesting lines 18–21 and lines 22–31 be counted as two prayers instead of one. (Thus, the material treated here would contain three prayers: 1–17, 18–21, and 22–31.) Two MSS leave this ruling out and therefore see the material in lines 18–31 as one prayer. (Thus, we have two prayers in the material treated here: 1–17 and 18–31.) Lambert's MS K *rearranges* the material we identify as lines 18–31 as if it were dealing with two blocks of text, two prayers: our lines 22–31 occur *before* lines 18–21 on the tablet and a rule line separates the two textual blocks. In another vein of support for dividing lines 18–31 into two prayers, Lambert's MS B includes (a broken) ÉN (*šiptu*) at the head of line 22, indicating the start of a new incantation. But this is ambiguous evidence since MS B skips line 32 (the rubric) and continues uninterrupted into what the other textual witness to this material considers a separate prayer (i.e., Lambert's MS K has a ruling after its placement of our line 21, indicating a break before the next incantation-prayer on the tablet [not included here]). This textual diversity should come as no surprise to anyone working with incantation-prayers. As a matter of convenience, the present treatment follows previous translators in treating the following thirty-one lines of Akkadian as two prayers.

The first prayer begins with a brief invocation of the personal god and a statement of the supplicant's ignorance of the severity of the god's punishment (note the predicative verb, *dannat*). The supplicant's ignorance, commonly found in penitential contexts, is a theme throughout the first half of the prayer. In the next five lines the supplicant confesses their sins using mostly Gtn preterites or G

perfects—the forms are ambiguous. This confession culminates in line 7, which summarizes the supplicant's sins (using a predicative verb, *mādū*) and reiterates their ignorance, though this time the ignorance refers to what they actually did. Line 7 recalls the first line of the prayer in its use of a predicative and its reprise of the supplicant's ignorance. Lines 8–10 contain the first wave of petitions. These are directed only to the personal god (not the goddess) and are centered on forgiveness of sins. Lines 11–12 are another confession of sorts but not of sin. Rather, in words that recall line 1 (again) the supplicant confesses in line 11, or rather *professes*, to understanding and having experienced (*amāru*) the severity (note the predicative, *dannat*) of the god's punishment (*šēretka*). This, they assert in line 12, makes them a model from which other sinners should learn (*amāru*). Having made this profession, the supplicant renews their attempts in lines 13–16 to reconcile with their deities via a series of petitions. The first two petitions are directed separately to each of the personal deities, one to the god and one (the first in the prayer) to the goddess (line 13). The remaining petitions are addressed to both deities (lines 14–16). The prayer concludes with a long and emphatic promise of praise (line 17).

The second prayer begins with an invocation that is rather long for a dingirshadibba-prayer. Five different phrases over two lines (18–19) invoke the deity. All of these epithets are related to the supplicant in a personal manner, which is quite unlike the epithets in the hymnic introduction to shuilla-prayers. Following this invocation are two formulaic petitions addressed to the personal god and goddess, respectively. Since only the god was invoked in lines 18–19 and the remainder of the text is addressed to him alone (note the 2ms pronominal suffixes), this couplet creates a disjunction in the text. Lines 22–23 describe human ignorance, both generally and the supplicant's particularly, with regard to the divine abode in preparation for the prayer's only expression of lament in line 24. Without the divine presence, the supplicant complains in line 24, they are helpless. The prayer concludes with a series of petitions in lines 25–31 (and a ritual meal in line 26). In these lines the supplicant tries to convince the god to relent from his anger and restore the supplicant's life (*balāṭu*, see lines 28, 30, 31)—*long* life, according to line 31. The first four lines of this block (lines 25–28) sequentially mention four parts of the god's body associated with the head (i.e., neck, face, lips, and mouth). The last of these is the means for carrying out the supplicant's requests in lines 27b, 28b, and 30 (note the verbs: *qabû* twice and *šâmu*). Unlike the previous example, this prayer does not conclude with a promise of praise.

As Lambert has noted, both of these dingirshadibba-prayers are known to have been used in specific ritual complexes. KAR 90, rev. 4 cites the incipit of our first prayer (among eight other cited incipits) in the course of the ritual it calls "my god I did not know" (*nēpeši ilī ul īde*, 269), and both prayers' incipits are cited in the first tablet of the ritual series *Bīt rimki* (in Zimmern, *BBR*, no. 26 v 81; see Lambert, 268).

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Text. Edition: W. G. Lambert. "DINGIR.ŠÀ.DIB.BA Incantations." *JNES* 33 (1974), 267–322.[i] Translations: Foster, 722, 721. Seux, 203–5. von Soden, 352–53.

[i] Margaret Jaques at the University of Zurich is publishing a fuller edition and study of the dingirshadibba-prayers with their rituals. She also addresses their reception history and reuse.

1. ÉN DINGIR.MU *ul i-de še-ret-*[*ka dan*]*-na-at*

2. *niš-ka kab-tu qa-liš* [*a*]*z-za-kar*

Line 1: ÉN = *šiptu*, "incantation, ritual wording," indicates to the user of the tablet that a prayer or incantation follows. It is not part of the prayer proper. DINGIR = *ilu*, "god." MU = 1cs pronominal suffix, "my." Unlike the shuilla-prayers, the invocation in dingirshadibba-prayers is always short; they are typically limited to a vocative and perhaps an epithet or two (contrast lines 18–19 in the second prayer). *Edû*, *idû*, "to know." The supplicant admits ignorance several times in the course of the prayer (see lines 6 and 7). *Šērtu*, "guilt, punishment." *Danānu*, "to be(come) strong."

šiptu: *ilī ul īde šēretka dannat*

Line 2: *Nīšu*, literally, "life," but idiomatically "oath." *Kabtu*, "heavy, grave, important." *Qalliš*, "lightly, slightly," seems in this context to denote a lack of respect for the deity invoked, which brings the traditional language of the Decalogue to mind: "in vain." *Zakāru*, "to speak, to name, to invoke," with *nīšu*, "to swear an oath" (lit. "to invoke the life [*nīšu*] of" a deity, king, or someone). The 2ms pronominal suffix in our line replaces the expected *ili*, "god," because the supplicant is addressing the one on whom they have sworn. See CAD Z, 19–20 for the idiom. The verb may look like an N stem (*azzakkar*), but a passive would not make sense in this context. Rather, the verb can be either a G perfect (*azzakar*) or Gtn preterite (*azzakkar*; see also lines 3a, 4, and 5 but note the simple preterite in line 3b). One's decision about these verbs will affect one's translation and under-

3. *me-e-ka am-te-eš ma-gal al-lik*

4. *ši-pir-ka ina dan-na-ti áš-te-ʾ-er*

5. *i-ta-ka ma-gal e-te-te-eq*

standing of the nature of the supplicant's sin. (Previous translations vary. See, e.g., Foster, 722, who reads perfects throughout, and Seux, 203, who reads a perfect in line 2 but Gtn preterites in lines 3–5.) The *–zz–* is a result of the assimilation of the infixed *–t–* to the sibiliant (*z*) first radical of the root. The line is a stock phrase found elsewhere (Lambert, 294). See, e.g., line 87 in Lambert's edition of the dingirshadibba-prayers (278) and *Ludlul* II 22.

niška kabtu qalliš azzakkar

Line 3: *Mû*, "divine decree, cultic ordinance, cosmic rule," comes from the Sumerian word me (see Gertrud Farber-Flügge, *Der Mythos "Inanna und Enki" unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Liste der me*. [Studi Pohl 10; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1973], 116–64). *Mêšu*, "to disregard, to neglect" (see CAD M/2, 41–42 for other examples of this verb with reference to the gods). *Magal*, "(very) much, exceedingly," also appears in lines 5 and 6. CAD M/1, 31 notes that this word, when it is used in SB Akkadian, typically occurs several times in the context. *Alāku*, "to go." Given the other verbs in context (and depending on one's decision about them), one might expect a perfect here rather than the preterite. A Gtn form of the verb would not make sense in this context, "I walked about all the time" (see CAD M/1, 29 for attestations). The last half of the line seems to be a metaphorical restatement of the first. (For another use of *magal* with *alāku* in the dingirshadibba-prayers, see Lambert, 280, line 127: *magal allak*.)

mêka amtêš magal allik

Line 4: *Šipru*, "task, work, product, mission, message, action, affliction." The context does not allow an easy decision about this word's precise meaning here. *Danna/ātu* has a spectrum of meanings in the semantic domain of "hard, difficult." Meanings range through "difficulty, distress, famine," "fortified place," "foundation," "binding (agreement)," and "strict or harsh (words)," among other, more technical meanings (see CAD D, 87–91 and *CDA*, 56). The meaning of the last word in the line, certainly a 1cs verb, is unclear. *AHw*, 1208, s.v. *šeʾēru* suggests the verb might be a denominative from *šeʾru*, "pock-marked." But this suggestion does not provide a sensible translation in our context. CAD Š/2, 259 does not give a meaning, but it may be significant for other interpretive decisions in our context that the one unbroken attestation of the verb occurs in the Gtn stem. Foster guesses the verb means "I skirted" (722). Without a clear meaning for the verb, it is difficult to know how to translate the other two, rather general terms in the line. My translation therefore must be considered *very* tentative. In any case, given the surrounding lines, we may assume the line conveys a negative act committed by the supplicant.

šipirka ina dannati ašteʾʾer

Line 5: *Itû*, "boundary, border." *Etēqu*, "to cross over, to pass through." Idiomatically, *itâ etēqu* means "to trespass, to transgress."

itâka magal ētetteq

6. *ul i-de-ma ma-gal* A[N . . .]

7. *ma-a-du ár-nu-u-a e-ma e-pu-šú ul i-de*

8. DINGIR.MU *pu-us-sa pu-ṭur pu-šur ki-ṣir lìb-bi-k*[*a*]

9. *me-e-šá gíl-la-ti-iá le-qé un-ni-ni-ia*

10. *šu-kun ḫi-ṭa-ti-iá a-na dam-qa-a-ti*

Line 6: See line 1 for *ul īde*, which occurs again in line 7. The partially preserved AN sign allows us to infer that the last part of this line also begins with a 1cs verb (as in lines 2–5). But no likely restorations have been suggested.

ul īdē-ma magal an[. . .

Line 7: *Mâdu*, "to be(come) many, to be(come) numerous." The form is a 3mp predicative. *Arnu*, "guilt, fault, sin." *Ēma*, usually means "wherever," but in our context it seems to mean "what." *Epēšu*, "to do." The 1cs verb *ēpušu* ends with the subjunctive *–u* because it is in a relative clause (starting with *ēma*). The verb *īde* is formally a preterite but context must determine its tense. (There is no durative form.)

mādū arnūya ēma ēpušu ul īde

Line 8: The petition section of the prayer begins with the repetition of the invocation (*ilī*, "my god") and a series of imperatives. *Pasāsu*, "to cancel, to annul." We expect a ms impv. here (as with the following two verbs); thus, *pusus*. Three MSS inexplicably read the fs impv., *pussī*, instead. The two MSS, however, that we are following, add the ventive to a ms impv.: *pussa*. *Paṭāru*, "to loosen, to undo, to release." *Pašāru*, "to loosen, to undo, to release." Both *pašāru* and *paṭāru* (less often *pasāsu*) are used in contexts dealing with the forgiveness of sins or the release from sickness/demonic oppression (CAD P, 219, 237–39, 290–92). *Kiṣru* is literally a "knot, bond, lump," but it is often used with *libbu* as a metaphor for anger. *Libbu* is literally the "heart," but it also means "seat of emotions and/or volition." The anger of the deity must be assuaged before the supplicant can ask for anything further (see lines 9 and 10).

ilī pussa puṭur pušur kiṣir libbīka

Line 9: The supplicant asks the deity here to *mêšu* their sins just as the supplicant had done with the deity's ordinances in line 3. *Gillatu*, "sin, sacrilege." *Leqû*, "to take, to receive." *Unnīnu*, "prayer, petition." This line encapsulates the desires of the supplicant in terms of negative and positive acts: the deity's forgetting (–) of the supplicants past acts (–) and the deity's acceptance (+) of the present plea (+).

mēša gillātīya liqe unnīnīya

Line 10: *Šakānu*, "to place, to set, to put." With *ana* the verb means "to turn X (the verb's object) into (*ana*) Y." *Ḫīṭu*, "error, sin, crime." *Damqu*, "good, favor, virtue." The supplicant now asks for the past sins to be transformed into virtues, rather than simply disregarded, as in line 9.

šukun ḫiṭātīya ana damqāti

11. *dan-na-at* ŠU-*ka a-ta-mar še-ret-ka*

12. *la pa-liḫ* DINGIR-*šú u* ^{d}15-*šú ina* ŠU.II-*ia li-mur*

13. DINGIR.MU *si-lim* ^{d}15.MU *nap-ši-ri*

14. *a-na te-nin niš* ŠU.II.MU *suḫ-ḫi-ra-ni pa-ni-ku-nu*

15. *ag-gu lìb-ba-ku-nu li-nu-ḫa*

Line 11: The text harks back to the opening line of the prayer with the words *dannat* and *šēretka*. But now the words are distributed across the two halves of the line rather than placed together, as in line 1. ŠU = *qātu*, "hand;" ŠU.II indicates both hands (see lines 12 and 14). *Amāru*, "to see," but can also mean "to experience."

dannat qātka ātamar šēretka

Line 12: *Palāḫu*, "to fear, to reverence." ^{d}15 = *ištaru*, "goddess." "God and goddess," as one might suppose, often appear together in Akkadian prayers and rituals and can be treated as one grammatical unit. *Pāliḫ* is bound to both genitives. The idiom *ina qātīya amāru*, literally, "to see in or by my hands," means "to learn from." The volitional form of the verb changes to a precative since a third party (not the deity) is in view. The idea contained in this line is also expressed in *Ludlul* III, line p.

lā pāliḫ ilīšu u ištarīšu ina qātīya līmur

Line 13: The supplicant calls on the god (see also lines 1 and 8) and the goddess (here for the first time). They direct a nearly synonymous petition in the form of a command (impv.) at each one individually. *Salāmu*, "to be(come) at peace, to be(come) reconciled." Our text follows Lambert's MS A here (*si-lim*). *Napšarī* is an N-stem fs impv. from *pašāru* (see line 8).

ilī silim ištarī napširī

Line 14: The supplicant now addresses the personal deities as a unit, again with an impv. *Tēnīnu*, "prayer, supplication" (see CAD T, 343), is better than *CDA*'s "weeping, lamentation" (404). *Nīšu*, "lifting," is to be distinguished from the homonym in line 2. Here we see the up-lifted hands as a gesture for prayer. *Suḫḫuru* (D of *saḫāru*), "to turn (away, toward)." *Pānu*, "face." One might experiment with more idiomatic renderings of the line. What does it mean to ask someone to turn their face toward a person in a time of need?

ana tēnīn nīš qātīya suḫḫirā pānīkunu

Line 15: *Aggu*, "Furious." The adjective precedes the noun that it modifies, *libbu*. This is not unusual in Akkadian poetic texts. *Nâḫu*, "to be at rest, to calm down, to relent." The verb is 3fp. The subject, *libbakunu*, is grammatically singular but must be taken as a collective, as the 2mp pronominal suffix suggests. See likewise *kabattakunu* in line 16. Lambert's MS K reads *libbaka* (note the 2ms suffix) in the first half of the line and then adds *ištaru zenītu silmī* (SILIM-*me*) *ittīya*, "O angry goddess, be at peace with me"; see line 21 below.

aggu libbakunu linūḫā

16. *lip-pa-áš-ra ka-bat-ta-ku-nu* SILIM-*mu šuk-na-ni*

17. *šá la ma-še-e dà-lí-lí-ku-nu lu-uš-tam-mar ana* UN.MEŠ DAGAL.MEŠ

* * * * *

18. ÉN DINGIR.MU *be-lí ba-nu-u* MU-*ia*

19. *na-ṣir na-piš-ti-iá mu-šab-šu-ú* NUMUN-*ia*

Line 16: The N-stem of *pašāru* is also used in line 13. *Kabattu*, literally, "liver," often has the sense of "mood, temperament," especially in a context that also attests *libbu*. SILIM = *salīmu*, "peace, reconciliation, favor." For *šakānu*, see line 10. Here the verb must mean something like "order, grant." Lines 15 and 16a utilize the precative, as they express wishes about the deities' moods and attitudes. Line 16b returns to the dominating imperative (see lines 8, 9, 10, 13, and 14).

lippašrā kabattakunu salīmu šuknāni

Line 17: *Ša lā*, "without." *Mašû*, "to forget." *Dalīlū*, "praises." *Šitammuru* (Gtn of *šamāru*), "to praise, to extol (constantly ?)." See CAD Š/1, 297–98 for the slippage between the Gt and Gtn forms. UN.MEŠ = *nišū* (f), "people, populace." DAGAL = *rapšu* (m), *rapaštu* (f), "wide." On an interesting twist to the common "promise of praise" formula at the end of many Akkadian prayers, our text explicitly mentions not forgetting to fulfill the promise and indicates that the praise will be public.

ša lā mašê dalīlīkunu luštammar ana nišī rapšāti

Line 18: The second incantation (ÉN) begins here. *Bēlu*, "lord." *Banû*, "to build, create." MU = *šumu*, "name." "To create someone's name" means to engender them, to give them existence. A prescriptive grammatical approach to the text might lead us to expect *bāni šumīya*; that is, we might expect the participle to be bound to the genitive and not in the nominative case. See likewise the second half of line 19. In SB Akkadian, however, a participle from a III-weak root in construct with a following substantive often ends with *–û* (see Brigitte R. M. Groneberg, *Syntax, Morphologie und Stil der jungbabylonischen „hymnischen" Literatur*, 2 Vols. [Freiburger Altorientalische Studien 14/1–2; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1987], 1.95). The first two lines of this prayer begin with five epithets of the personal god—more than usual for dingirshadibba-prayers. Each epithet directly and personally relates to the supplicant. Compare the shuilla-prayers, where the epithets tend to relate to the deity's position within the pantheon or to the deity's temple.

šiptu: *ilī bēli bānû šumīya*

Line 19: *Naṣāru*, "to guard, to watch." *Napištu*, "life." *Šubšû* (Š of *bašû*), "to cause to be, to create." *Mušabšû* is a participle, parallel with the epithet at the beginning of the line (*nāṣir*). NUMUN = *zēru*, "seed, progeny." This prayer shows just how closely *šumu* ("name"), *napištu* ("life"), and *zēru* ("seed") were associated in ancient Mesopotamia.

nāṣir napištīya mušabšû zērīya

20. DINGIR *ag-gu lìb-ba-ka li-nu-ḫa*

21. ^{d}15 *ze-ni-tum si-il-mi* KI-*ia*

22. *man-nu i-de* DINGIR.MU *šu-bat-ka*

23. *man-za-az-ka el-lu ku-um-ma-ka ma-ti-ma ul am-ra-ku*

24. *ki-ma gi-na-a šu-ʾ-du-ra-ku* DINGIR.MU *me-e-eš at-ta*

Line 20: See line 15 above. In the prayer's first petitions (lines 20 and 21), the supplicant's personal deities—god as well as goddess, in contrast to the prayer's invocation in lines 18 and 19—are invoked (again).
ilu aggu libbakunu linūḫā

Line 21: *Zenû* (m), *zenītu* (f), "angry." KI = *itti*, "with."
ištaru zenītu silmī ittīya

Line 22: *Mannu*, "who." *Šubtu*, "dwelling, seat." In some MSS a new prayer starts with this line, indicated by the rule line that comes before it (lacking in two MSS). Though lacking in the majority of the MSS, ÉN is partially present in one MS. See the introduction to the prayer above. The (reprised) invocation is a simple vocative, *ilī*, "my god." The question is rhetorical, intended indirectly to place the supplicant within general human ignorance of divine things.
mannu īde ilī šubatka

Line 23: *Mazzāzu* (*manzāzu*), "position, abode, location." *Ellu*, "clear, clean, (ritually) pure," sometimes translated "holy." *Kummu*, "cella, shrine, innermost room." *Matīma*, "at any time, ever, never." *Amrāku* is an active stative (or, a "transitive *parsāku* construction," in Huehnergard's grammar) from *amāru* (see line 11). *Manzāzu* and *kummu* further define the more general term *šubtu* in line 22. Now the supplicant directly admits personal ignorance of the divine abode. Lines 22 and 23 move from the general to the particular in terms of both the location of the deity and those ignorant of it. Both lines begin with the same syllable, which binds the two together phonologically.
manzāzka ellu kummaka matīma ul amrāku

Line 24: *Kīma ginâ*, "constantly, always." *Šuʾduru* (Š of *adāru*), "to cause annoyance, to frighten;" the verb is used to convey something about mood or state of mind, such as fright, despondency, or gloominess (see CAD A/1, 105). In contrast to the sublime divine abode, the supplicant is in utter misery. *Mêš*, "where?" The final question in this line is not so much rhetorical (as in line 1) as petitioning. But the supplicant is not actually interested in where the deity has gone, of course; rather, the supplicant really wants to know why the god is not nearby.
kīma ginâ šuʾdurāku ilī mêš attā

25. *ter-ra ki-šad-ka šá taš-bu-su* UGU-*ia*

26. *suḫ-ḫi-ra pa-ni-ka ana* KÙ *ma-ka-le-e* DINGIR *ú-lu-u šam-ni*

27. *šap-ta-ka ṭu-ba lim-ḫu-ra qí-bi-ma lu-šir*

28. *ina pi-i-ka* KÙ *qí-bi* [T]I.LA

Line 25: *Turru* (D of *târu*), "to turn (a part of the body)," see CAD T, 273–75; with *kišādu*, "neck," as object, the verb means "to turn back, to relent" (see 275, with other examples). The *–a* on the end of the imperative form is the ventive. *Šabāsu*, "to be angry," also has *kišādu*, the referent of the relative *ša*, as object (see CAD Š/1, 5), in which case the idiom means "to turn away in anger." UGU = *eli*, "against, on, upon." The line, therefore, means literally, "turn back your neck which you turned away in anger against me." Like the one preceding it, this line is both a description of the sufferer's plight as well as a petition to change it, though the latter is foregrounded.

terra kišādka ša tašbusu elīya

Line 26: *Suḫḫuru*, (D of *saḫāru*), see line 14. Used with *pānu*, the verb can denote a positive or negative action (see CAD S, 49–50). The ventive on the verb confirms what the context requires, a turning toward. In parallel with line 25, the supplicant petitions the deity for favor using the language of turning. KÙ = *ellu* (see line 23). The adjective again precedes the noun that it modifies (see also line 15). *Mākālû*, "meal, food," with reference to a deity (note the genitive *ili*, which may be translated as an adjective here, "divine") means "offering." *Ulû šamni*, "the best oil" (see *AHw*, 1411 and *CDA*, 421 s.v. *ulû*), is in apposition to *mākālê ili* and defines the items presented in the offering. Here the text of the prayer gives us a window onto the ritual action that accompanied it: the setting out of an offering of choice oil.

suḫḫira pānīka ana elli mākālê ili ulû šamni

Line 27: *Šaptā*, "lips" (nom. dual). *Ṭūbu*, "goodness," is the object of the transitive verb *maḫāru*, "to receive." *Qabû*, "to speak, to command." *Ešēru*, "to be straight, to go well, to be well, to prosper." The first part of the line describes the result of the supplicant's petition for the deity to turn toward the offering in line 26: so he may receive it. The end of the line, paralleling the syntax of imperative + precative of the previous two phrases, shows what the supplicant wants (expects ?) in exchange for the offering: they want a divine decree that will result in prosperity.

šaptāka ṭūba limḫurā qibī-ma lūšir

Line 28: *Pû*, "mouth." TI.LA = *balāṭu*, "life, health, well-being." The petition for a divine decree (*qibī*) is repeated, though this time with a more direct request (imperative + object rather than imperative + precative): the supplicant wants life. The deity's mouth becomes the instrument of action rather than the beneficiary of the supplicant's offering (i.e., the deity's lips received the offering in line 27).

ina pīka elli qibi balāṭa

29. *ina* Á MUNUS.ḪUL *šu-ti-qa-an-ni-ma lu-un-né-ṭir it-ti-ka*

30. *ši-man-ni-ma ši-mat ba-lá-ṭi*

31. UD.MEŠ-*ia ur-ri-ka ba-la-ṭa qí-šá*

32. ka-inim-ma dingir-[šà-di]b-ba gur-<ru>-da-kam

Line 29: Á = *idu*, "side, arm, strength." Literally, *ina idu* means "on the side of," but it functions as a preposition meaning "from" and need not be translated literally (see CAD I/J, 14). MUNUS.ḪUL = *lemuttu*, "wickedness, evil." *Šūtuqu* (Š of *etēqu*), "to make X pass by." N of *eṭēru*, "to be rescued, to be saved." The reading of the two verbs adopted here comes from Lambert's MS B (see 277, n.51). *Itti*, "with." What does it mean to be rescued "with" the deity? The deity's renewed attention and presence will give protection to the supplicant as they escape the evil that has beset them (see CAD E, 403, which explains the preposition with "i.e., protected by"). The syntagm imperative + precative (as result) returns in this line. The *ina* phrase at the head of our line grammatically parallels the one in line 28 (*ina* + body part + modifier); semantically, however, the two are quite distinct. The deity's mouth was an instrument of salvation; the evil power is that from which the supplicant needs saving.

ina idi lemutti šūtiqannī-ma lunneṭir ittīka

Line 30: *Šâmu*, "to decree, to appoint, to ordain." *Šīmtu*, "fate, destiny." The first two words form a cognate accusative. Like line 28, the supplicant asks for life or health (*balāṭu*). Here, however, the use of *šâmu* and its cognate *šīmtu* seems more emphatic.

šīmannī-ma šīmat balāṭi

Line 31: UD.MEŠ = *umū*, "days." *Urruku* (D of *arāku*), "to lengthen." *Qâšu*, "to give, to grant." The first phrase helps us understand the full meaning of *balāṭu* in this and the preceding lines. The supplicant is not only asking for health but also an extension of their days. The prayer's petitions are firmly rooted in the mortal life of the supplicant. They wish that life to be longer.

ūmīya urrika balāṭa qīša

Line 32: The scribe inadvertently omitted the RU sign. This line is the rubric, that is, it tells something about the classification of the preceding lines. In this case, the rubric identifies the kind of prayers on the tablet. As is typical, the rubric is written in Sumerian. It may be translated, "it is the wording for appeasing the angry heart of a god."

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

Before delving into a broader comparative point about the prayer's form, I first note a few parallels between the language of our Akkadian prayer and what is found in the Hebrew Bible. First, the use of the phrase *itâ etēqu* in the sense of "to trespass, to transgress" in line 5 is similar to the semantic range of the BH root עבר. I discuss this parallel on page 308. The phrase *nāṣir napištīya*, "the one who guards my life," in line 19 finds an etymological equivalent in BH נֹצֵר נַפְשֶׁ. In Prov 24:12 we read about the deity as נֹצֵר נַפְשְׁךָ, "the one who guards your

life" (see Tawil, *ALCBH*, 244). Finally, in the second line of our prayer the supplicant confesses "I repeatedly swore a solemn oath on your life in vain (lit., lightly)" (*niška kabtu qalliš azzakkar*). Semantically, this is very close to the Decalogue's commandment about pronouncing (literally, lifting [נשׂא])[1] the divine name לַשָּׁוְא, "in a worthless or groundless manner, in vain" (Exod 20:7, Deut 5:11).[2] Although the biblical text does not explicitly mention swearing, the idiom "to lift a name" may have originally been its equivalent or, rather, a broader action that subsumed it. In any case, earliest interpretations seem to have identified the commandment with a prohibition on swearing falsely.[3] These similarities in language once again suggest the conceptual proximity of Mesopotamian and ancient Israelite religious worldviews.

Shuilla-prayers typically begin with a long hymnic introduction, which, as argued in the general introduction, is part of the formal greeting appropriate for addressing a high god in the pantheon. We have seen how this formal greeting is also reflected in some of the prayers of the Hebrew Bible on page 238. In contrast to shuillas, the dingirshadibba-prayers attest very brief invocations, sometimes as brief as one word, "my god" (*ilī*, see line 1). When epithets are used, they are few and always reflect the personal nature of the relationship between the personal god and the supplicant (see, e.g., lines 18–19). As I have argued elsewhere,[4] one need not formally address one's personal god in a dingirshadibba as one would a high god in a shuilla because one is already on intimate, informal terms with the personal deity. This same mode of brief and informal address may be seen in the Psalter's laments of the individual (3; 5; 6; 7; 13; 17; 22; 25; 26; 27:7–14; 28; 31; 35; 38; 39; 42; 43; 51; 54; 55; 56; 57; 59; 61; 63; 64; 69; 70; 71; 86; 88; 102; 109; 120; 130; 140; 141; 142; and 143).[5] In most laments of the individual the invocation is simply יְהוָה, "O Yahweh" (see, e.g., Pss 3:2 and 6:2), or אֱלֹהִים, "O God" (see, e.g., 43:1 and 51:3 in the Elohistic Psalter). Other invocations are just as short, consisting of a single word (Ps 59:2, אֱלֹהָי, "O my god"), or only slightly longer with brief invocations in parallelism with one another in the opening verse or two (see Pss 28:1, יְהוָה / צוּרִי, "O Yahweh / my rock"; 70:2, יְהוָה / אֱלֹהִים, "O God / O Yahweh"; 25:1–2, יְהוָה / אֱלֹהָי, "O

[1] The BH use of נשׂא in the phrase שֵׁם נשׂא, "to pronounce a name," is similar to the Akkadian use of the cognate verb *našû* in the phrase *šipta/šuʾillakka našû*, "to recite an incantation/a shuilla" (see Tawil, *ALCBH*, 249–50 and CAD N/2, 108–9). An even closer equivalent to the Akkadian phrase is BH's תְּפִלָּה נשׂא in, e.g., 2 Kgs 19:4.

[2] See *HALOT*, 1425–26. The word was not originally equivalent to "falsely," though it was eventually understood in that way. See the next note.

[3] See Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster Press, 1974), 410–12 for a brief and useful discussion.

[4] This comparative point is developed more fully in Alan Lenzi, "Invoking the God: Interpreting Invocations in Mesopotamian Prayers and Biblical Laments of the Individual," *JBL* 129 (2010), 303–15.

[5] This listing follows Hermann Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel*, completed by Joachim Begrich (trans. James D. Nogalski; Mercer Library of Biblical Studies; Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998), 121.

Yahweh / my god"; and 130:1–2, יְהֹוָה / אֲדֹנָי, "O Yahweh / my lord"). The longest invocations consist of only three words: Ps 5:2–3, which places יְהֹוָה in parallel with מַלְכִּי וֵאלֹהָי, "my king and my god"; Ps 22:2–3, showing אֵלִי אֵלִי, "my god, my god," in parallel with אֱלֹהָי, "O my god"; and Ps 88:2 and its questionable formulation, יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהֵי יְשׁוּעָתִי, "O Yahweh, god of my salvation."[6] In light of the similar mode of address between the dingirshadibba-prayers and the laments of the individual and in light of what others have suggested about the familial *Sitz im Leben* and personal content of the biblical laments of the individual,[7] it seems reasonable to understand the Israelite deity addressed in these psalms as occupying a role akin to the Mesopotamian personal god.

[6] For suspicions that the text is corrupt, see *BHS*, 1169, 2[a-a].
[7] See Albertz, *Persönliche Frömmigkeit und offizielle Religion*, 23–49.

TRANSLATION:

1. Incantation: My god, I did not know your punishment was (so) severe!
2. I repeatedly swore a solemn oath on your life in vain.
3. I repeatedly neglected your ordinances. I went too far.
4. I repeatedly skirted(?) your work in (times of) difficulty.
5. I repeatedly trespassed well beyond your boundary.
6. I did not know, I . . . in excess.
7. My sins are (so) many! I do not know what I did.
8. O my god, annul, release, relax the anger of your heart.
9. Disregard my transgressions, accept my prayer.
10. Turn my errors into virtues.
11. Your hand is (so) severe! I have experienced your punishment.
12. Let the one who does not revere his god and goddess learn from me.
13. My god, be at peace, my goddess, be reconciled.
14. Turn your faces toward (i.e., take notice of) the petition of my upraised hands.
15. Let your furious hearts calm down.
16. Let your feelings be soothed, grant me reconciliation,
17. (That) I may without forgetting constantly sing your praises to the widespread people.

* * * * *

18. Incantation: My god, my lord, who created my name,
19. Who guards my life, who creates my progeny,
20. O (my) furious god, let your furious heart calm down.
21. O (my) angry goddess, be at peace with me.
22. Who knows, O my god, your dwelling?
23. Your holy abode, your shrine I never saw.
24. Constantly I am despondent. My god, where are you?
25. Turn back your anger against me.

26. Turn your face toward the pure divine meal of choice oil,
27. That your lips may receive the goodness. Speak that I may prosper.
28. With your holy mouth speak (long) life!
29. Take me away from the evil that I may be rescued with you (i.e., under your protection).
30. Decree for me a destiny of (long) life!
31. Lengthen my days, give to me (long) life!

32. It is an incantation for appeasing the angry heart of a god.

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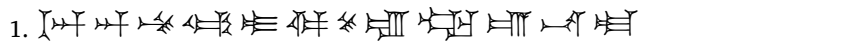
1. 
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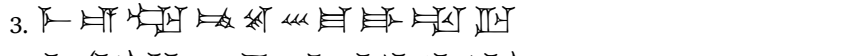
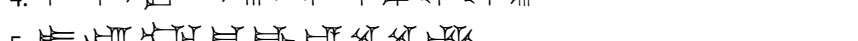
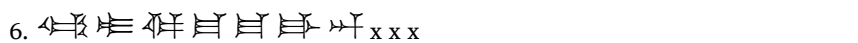
3. 
4. 
5. 
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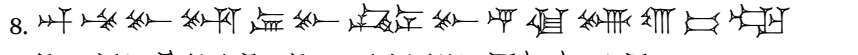
7. 
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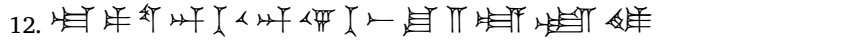
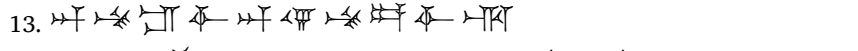
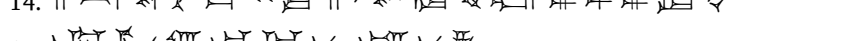
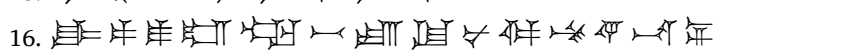
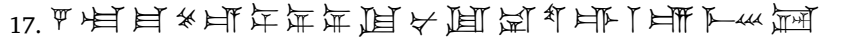
10. 
11. 
12. 
13. 
14. 
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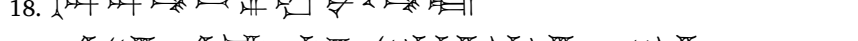
16. 
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18.
19.

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21. [illegible]
22. [illegible]
23. [illegible]
24. [illegible]
25. [illegible]
26. [illegible]
27. [illegible]
28. [illegible]
29. [illegible]
30. [illegible]
31. [illegible]
32. [illegible]

An Ershaḫunga to Any God

CHARLES HALTON

THE DEITY ADDRESSED:

Unlike other prayers from Mesopotamia this prayer is not addressed to a specific, named deity. This suggests the petitioner did not know which god or goddess they had offended, so they went to great lengths to frame the supplication in an inclusive manner. For instance, almost every plea is repeated in order to include both genders, and the petitioner even included supplications to account for an unknown deity. Although the petitioner did not direct their prayer to a specific deity, the prayer was nonetheless intended for the particular god or goddess that was offended. Early translations of this prayer, such as in *ANET*, titled it "Prayer to Every God," as if the plea was directed at every deity. However, as Morton Smith rightly observes,

> The composition entitled "Prayer to Every God" should have been entitled "Prayer to Any God"—it is not addressed "to all gods in general," [Smith refers to the introduction to this prayer in *ANET*], but to that one god or goddess whom the petitioner supposes to be punishing him or her and it is significant that the petitioner takes it for granted that this unknown deity is singular.[1]

Since Smith's critique, most editors have adopted the interpretation and title he suggested.

THE PRAYER:

The colophon of this text identifies it as an ershaḫunga-prayer, "lament for appeasing the heart (of a deity)."[2] Generally, these prayers do not include a specific request such as relief from a disease or demon; instead, they seek reconciliation with an angry deity. Furthermore, ershaḫunga-prayers avoid mentioning particular sins or transgressions as the petitioner recounts a more generic confession.

A full picture of the rituals associated with the ershaḫunga-prayers is not available, but a few details are known. In contrast to balags, ershemas and Su-

[1] "The Common Theology of the Ancient Near East," *JBL* 71 (1952), 137, n.9; repr. in *Studies in the Cult of Yahweh*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 15–27.

[2] For a discussion concerning the complexities of colophons and genre of prayer, see Piotr Michalowski, "On the Early History of the Ershahunga Prayer," *JCS* 39/1 (1987), 37–48.

merian shuilla-prayers, ershaḫunga-prayers were never sung (*zamāru*). Rather, the ershaḫunga-prayers were made (*epēšu*), spoken (*dabābu*), recited (*manû*), and lifted up (*našû*).[3] Even though ershaḫunga-prayers were not sung, kettledrums often accompanied their recitation. Furthermore, ershaḫunga-prayers were recited along with other forms of laments and prayers during rituals such as for a substitute king.[4] (See page 43 in the general introduction for more about ershaḫunga-prayers.)

Originally, the present prayer was composed in Sumerian, but at some point most lines were furnished with an interlinear Akkadian translation, which will be the focus of this treatment. A handful of lines or parts of lines were left untranslated, but this primarily occurs in sentences that repeat something or contain only a minor change from the previous line that was translated (such as shifting the gender of the subject). In these cases, the scribe apparently assumed the translation would be self-evident. I have filled in these assumed translations with an approximated Akkadian text and placed them inside {braces}. The last seven lines of the prayer appear only in Sumerian and do not follow the above rationale. They are not analyzed in this treatment.[5]

The prayer begins with what Maul has labeled the "type C" introductory litany in which the supplicant seeks with a series of precatives to move the deity to act on their behalf.[6] The first line of the prayer is one of the few petitions within the bilingual section that is not repeated to a female deity. It should be seen as an introductory statement summarizing the request that the deity be reconciled to the petitioner. Lines 2–10 repeat the plea that the deity's anger subside so that the relationship may return to status quo and by implication alleviate whatever hardship the petitioner is suffering. Although lines 11–16 are broken, the lament section of the prayer probably starts here and continues through line 38. Based on the scant clues that remain in lines 11–16, the supplicant seems to mention their sin and something related to a favorable name, a common Mesopotamian concern.[7] In lines 17–20 the petitioner confesses deep anguish and remorse concerning the sins that they committed in ignorance. They confess that

[3] Maul, *HB*, 25–26.

[4] See Parpola, *LASEA* 2, nos. 259 and 351.

[5] It may be interpretively significant that the end of the prayer consists of seven lines of untranslated Sumerian since the number seven is central to the petitioner's plea within this section:

My god, though my sins are seven times seven, forgive my sins.
My goddess, though my sins are seven times seven, forgive my sins.
Whichever god, though my sins are seven times seven, forgive my sins.
Whichever goddess, though my sins are seven times seven, forgive my sins.
Forgive my sins, let me sing your praise.
As if you were my mother, let your heart be reconciled to me.
As if you were my mother or my father, let your heart be reconciled to me.

[6] Maul, *HB*, 18 and n.45.

[7] Foster, following Falkenstein (226), reasonably suggests lines 11–12 are a confession of ignorance of sin and lines 13–16 are a lament that neither god nor goddess called or pronounced the supplicant's name with favor (763).

their sins were many and great in lines 21–25. This confession is followed with a series of four statements that assert the petitioner's ignorance of the offence (26–29). In line 30 the supplicant begins a description of the woes that have lead up to the current plight. The supplicant starts with the initial anger of the deity (lines 30–32) and then moves on to the bodily consequences of this anger (lines 33–34): the supplicant became sick. Lines 35–37 recount the supplicant's attempts to seek aid. But the futility of these attempts has left them in the current condition of misery (line 38). Lines 39–46 are identified by Maul as a transition between the lament and the petition section proper.[8] In these lines the supplicant describes their current actions in turning to the deity for help.[9] Lines 47–55 comprise the petition section proper. A series of "how long" questions (lines 47–50) are followed by the petitioner again reiterating their ignorance in committing the offence (lines 51–53). The petition section culminates with two final, self-referential pleas (line 54–55). The last three lines of Akkadian (lines 56–58) and the first four of the final seven lines in Sumerian (see n. 5 above) replace the typical intercessory litany often found in ershaḫunga-prayers with a litany for the removal of sin.[10] The fifth line of Sumerian transitions, with its mention of praise, into the two-line conclusion formula (Maul's *Schlußformel*),[11] which is the final structural feature of an ershaḫunga-prayer.

[8] See ibid., 21, n.60.
[9] This kind of transitional section is sometimes referred to as the *Hinwendung*, "turning" (see Maul, ibid., 21 and Mayer, *UFBG*, 122–49).
[10] See Maul, *HB*, 24 and n.68
[11] See ibid., 24–25.

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1. *šá be-lim nu-ug*[l]*-gat* ŠÀ-*šú ana aš-ri-šú li-tu-ra*

Line 1: The *ša* indicates possession (see *libbīšu*). *Bēlu*, "lord." *Nuggat*, "wrath, anger," related to the verb *agāgu*, "to be angry" (see CAD A/1, 139–40), is in construct with ŠÀ = *libbu*, "heart." (See the commentary on this line in Maul, 244 for the reading *ug*[l].) The 3ms pronominal suffix on *libbu* is resumptive, referring back to *ša bēlim*, "that of the lord." The phrase *ana ašrīšu litūra* literally means "may it return to its place." Idiomatically, the phrase means "to return to normal" (see CAD T, 255), which in this case means the suppli-

2. *i-lum ša la i-du-ú {ana aš-ri-šú li-tu-ra}*

3. *{d}iš-tar ša la i-du-ú {ana aš-ri-ša li-tu-ra}*

4. *i-lum i-du-u la i-du-ú {ana aš-ri-šú li-tu-ra}*

5. *{{d}iš-tar i-du-u la i-du-ú ana aš-ri-ša li-tu-ra}*

cant wants the anger of the deity to subside and the deity's disposition toward the petitioner to return to status quo. *Litūra* is the precative form of the verb *târu* "to return," with a ventive suffix. The "anger" of a god is only mentioned in line 1 (in fact, the only time it is the subject of the refrain's verb, *litūra*). Lines 2–10 each simply identify a deity (or a deity's heart, as in lines 6–7). We should probably assume that these deities are also considered angry (see the next note and the restoration in lines 9–10). As indicated in the introduction, line 1 is distinguished from the following lines, which are all paired to incorporate both genders. It provides a summary of the intent of the prayer: to placate the god(dess).

ša bēlim nuggat libbīšu ana ašrīšu litūra

Line 2: *Ilum*, "god." *Ša* marks a relative clause. *Lā* is a negative particle used in subordinate clauses, questions, and prohibitions while *ul* is used in independent declarative sentences. *Edû* (*idû*), "to know." The form is a 1cs preterite, *īde*, with a subjunctive = *īdû*. The petitioner begins the prayer by addressing the god and goddess that they do not know, indicating their ignorance of the offence committed. Since the petitioner does not know how or whom they offended, they must "cover the bases" and make sure to include every possible deity. While the scribe left the second half of lines 2–7 and probably 9–10 blank, *ana ašrīšu/ašrīša litūra* is implied (see line 8). The gender (and number) of the pronominal suffix on *ašru* will vary according to the grammatical gender of the deity/item named in subsequent lines.

ilum ša lā īdû ana ašrīšu litūra

Line 3: Ishtar, the goddess of love and war, was a major deity during the Neo-Assyrian empire (see Tzvi Abusch, "Ishtar," *DDD*, 452–56 and Black and Green, 108–9). However, in this text *ištar* is used generically to indicate a "goddess." This line begins a typical construction seen in this prayer in which consecutive lines repeat the phrase with a divine subject of the opposite gender.

ištar ša lā īdû ana ašrīša litūra

Line 4: *Idû lā idû* is rendered "known or unknown, i.e., whatever" according to CAD I/J, 29b. Notice the assonance in the first half of the phrase as well as the fact that three of the first four words contain two syllables providing a quickly moving rhythm.

ilum idû lā idû ana ašrīšu litūra

Line 5: There is no Akkadian translation of the Sumerian line, ama-{d}innin ì-zu nu-un-zu ki-bi-šè; however, the assumed translation is easily provided since the only difference between lines 4 and 5 is the shift in subject: from "god" to "goddess."

ištar idû lā idû ana ašrīša litūra

6. *lìb-bi* DINGIR-*ia* {*ana aš-ri-šú li-tu-ra*}

7. {*lìb-bi* ^{d}*iš-ta-ri-ia ana aš-ri-šú li-tu-ra*}

8. *i-lum u* ^{d}*i*[*š-tar ana aš-ri-šú-nu*] *li-tu-rù*

9. *i-lum š*[*a e-li-ia is-bu-su*] {*ana aš-ri-šú li-tu-ra*}

10. ^{d}*iš-ta*[*r ša e-li-ia is-bu-su*] {*ana aš-ri-ša li-tu-ra*}

Lines 11-16 are poorly preserved

17. *a-kal* [*ut-tu-u ina ra-ma-ni-ia ul*] *a-kul*

Line 6: DINGIR = *ilu*, "god." The sign IA marks the 1cs suffix and is a combination of the I and A signs but is commonly normalized as *ya* (*MesZL*, #260). This line recalls the petition in the first line; however, the pronouns have switched from third to first person (though, the Sumerian version contains the 3ms suffix as seen in line 1). In lines 6 and 7 the petitioner addresses their own personal god/goddess.
libbi ilīya ana ašrīšu litūra

Line 7: As in line 5, there is no Akkadian translation of the Sumerian line, šà-ama-^{d}innin-mu ki-bi-šè. The provided translation into Akkadian is based on the previous line.
libbi ištarīya ana ašrīšu litūra

Line 8: *Litūrū* is a 3mp precative form of *târu*, "to return." Masculine plural nouns are used to indicate mixed gender plurals as well as strictly male plurals. This line is unique in that both genders are mentioned within the same line.
ilum u ištar ana ašrīšunu litūrū

Line 9: The reconstruction is based on line 32. *Isbusu* is a 3cs preterite from *šabāsu* (*sabāsu*), "to be(come) angry" (see CAD Š/1, 4b–5a); the *–u* suffix is the subjunctive, marking this as the verb of the clause beginning with *ša*. This line is similar to the previous lines; however, a verb marks the divine anger explicitly, assuming a correct reconstruction.
ilum ša elīya isbusu ana ašrīšu litūra

Line 10: This line is fragmentary, but presumably it is identical to the previous except for the change of subject: from "god" to "goddess."
ištar ša elīya isbusu ana ašrīša litūra

Line 17: The noun, *akal* (*akalu*), "bread, food," is in the construct state and introduces the relative clause that follows; this syntactical unit forms the object of the line's main verb (*akālu*). *Uttû* is a 3cs durative verb (with a subjunctive suffix) from (*w*)*atû*, "to find, to be present." *Ramānīya* is formed from the noun *ramānu*, "self," with a 1cs suffix, yielding "myself." *Ul* negates (see the note on line 2) *ākul* which is the 1cs preterite form of *akālu*, "to eat." The petitioner tells the deity that they did not eat the food and drink "by themselves," i.e., they did not neglect to invite the deity to be present and share the meal with them (Maul, 245). This line marks the beginning of a new strophe. The subject changes

18. *me-e ut-tu-*[*u ina ra-ma-ni-ia ul*] *áš-ti*

19. *ik-kib* DINGIR-*ia ina la i-*[*de-e*] *a-kul*

20. *an-zil* ^{d}*iš-ta-ri-ia ina la i-de-e ú-kab-bi-is*

21. *be-lum an-nu-u-a ma-aʾ-da ra-ba-a ḫi-ṭa-tu-u-a*

from a god or goddess to the petitioner themselves. In this section (lines 17–25) the supplicant highlights their grief and anxiety over this situation (17–18), asserts their ignorance in the hopes that the deity will show them mercy (19–20), and finally, admits that their sins are many (21–25).

akal uttû ina ramānīya ul ākul

Line 18: *Mû*, "water." *Mê* is the construct form. *Šatû*, "to drink." The construction, *mê uttû*, is similar to the first phrase of line 17, *akal uttû*. Like the previous line the petitioner says that they invited the deity to be present and share in the meal.

mê uttû ina ramānīya ul ašti

Line 19: *Ikkibu*, "abomination, taboo." See the note on line 17 for a discussion of the construct form's function here. CAD (I/J, 57) notes that the idiom formed with the verb *akālu*, "to eat," must not always be translated literally; however, this usage might be an instance of wordplay. The two previous lines describe acts of eating and drinking while lines 19 and 20 depict transgression in a more abstract manner. Line 19 links lines 20 and 21 with lines 17 and 18 and indicates that this section refers to the same event. The supplicant admits guilt, which indicates a deterministic and retributive perspective regarding evil and suffering. The petitioner believes that they "reap what they sow." In other words, since they are suffering they assume that they committed an offense of some kind. However, they do not know for which sin they are suffering. Notice the assonance throughout this line, which heightens the emotional impact.

ikkib ilīya ina lā idê ākul

Line 20: The use of *anzil* (construct of *anzillu*), "abomination, taboo, boundary" and *ukabbis* (1cs preterite of *kubbusu* [D of *kabāsu*], "to tread") is semantically equivalent to the idiom in line 19. The supplicant again rephrases the same plea in order to get the god's attention and to make sure that every potentially offended deity is addressed.

anzil ištarīya ina lā idê ukabbis

Line 21: *Annu* (*arnu*), "guilt, misdeed." *Mâdu*, "to be(come) much, many." *Rabû*, "to be(come) great." *Maʾdā* (see CAD M/1, 24) and *rabâ* are both 3fp predicatives. (Compare the attributive use of the feminine plural form of *mādu* [*maʾdu*] in line 58 with the predicative used here.) *Ḫiṭītu*, "error, crime, sin"; the plural is *ḫiṭâtu*. This line is the first to mention the quantity and severity of the petitioner's offence. In addition to recognizing transgression, the supplicant confesses the grave nature of it. Likely, since the sufferer is in extreme discomfort (see lines 32–33) they assume that their transgression was proportionally offensive to the deity.

bēlum annūya maʾdā rabâ ḫiṭâtūya

22. {*ì-lí an-nu-u-a ma-aʾ-da ra-ba-a ḫi-ṭa-tu-u-a*}

23. {^{d}*iš-ta-ri-ia an-nu-u-a ma-aʾ-da ra-ba-a ḫi-ṭa-tu-u-a*}

24. {*i-lum i-du-u la i-du-ú an-nu-u-a ma-aʾ-da ra-ba-a ḫi-ṭa-tu-u-a*}

25. {^{d}*iš-tar i-du-u la i-du-ú an-nu-u-a ma-aʾ-da ra-ba-a ḫi-ṭa-tu-u-a*}

26. *an-ni e-pu-šu ul i-*[*de*]

27. *ḫi-iṭ aḫ-ṭú* {*ul i-de*}

Line 22: As in lines 5 and 7, lines 22–25 do not have an Akkadian translation. They essentially repeat the lament of line 21, except the vocative there, *bēlum*, is replaced by the supplicant's personal god and goddess in lines 22–23 and "whichever" god and goddess in lines 24–25.

ilī annūya maʾdā rabâ ḫiṭâtūya

Line 23: This line is identical to the previous one except for the change in gender for the personal deity.

ištarīya annūya maʾdā rabâ ḫiṭâtūya

Line 24: This line continues the pattern of repeating the same address while replacing the vocative at the beginning of the line.

ilum idû lā idû annūya maʾdā rabâ ḫiṭâtūya

Line 25: This line is identical to the previous one except for the change in gender for "whichever" deity.

ištar idû lā idû annūya maʾdā rabâ ḫiṭâtūya

Line 26: *Epēšu*, "to do." This form is a 1cs preterite with a subjunctive suffix. Lines 26–29 are similar in structure: the line begins with a noun in the construct state that introduces a relative clause and is then followed by a 1cs preterite verb ending with a subjunctive suffix (see line 17). This syntactical construction forms the object of the main verb (*edû*). Each line ends with *ul īde*, "I do not know." The petitioner lists different synonyms for "crime, sin, and taboo" in order to underscore the fact that they are completely ignorant of their offence.

anni ēpušu ul īde

Line 27: *Ḫīṭu*, "error, sin." Compare this with the form in line 56. *Ḫaṭû*, "to commit an error, crime, sin." *Aḫṭû* is a 1cs preterite with a subjunctive suffix. The second half of this line is supplied from the previous line according to the pattern of repeating a similar idea with different terminology.

ḫīṭ aḫṭû ul īde

28. *ik-kib a-ku-lu$_4$ {ul i-de}*

29. *an-zil ú-kab-bi-su {ul i-de}*

30. *be-lum ina ug-gat lìb-bi-šú ik-kel-man^{an}-ni*

31. *i-lì ina uz-zi lìb-bi-šú ú-šam-ḫi-ra-an-ni*

32. ^{d}*iš-tar e-li-ia is-bu-us-ma mar-ṣi-iš ú-še-man^{an}-ni*

33. *{i-lum i-du-u la i-du-ú} ú-ṣar-rip-an-ni*

Line 28: See the note to line 19 for the idiom in the first half of this line.
ikkib ākulu ul īde

Line 29: See the note to line 20 for the phrase in the first half of this line.
anzil ukabbisu ul īde

Line 30: *Uggat* is the construct form of *uggatu*, "rage, fury." *Nekelmû*, "to glower, to frown, to regard malevolently." The preterite form here, *ikkelmânni*, has a ventive and 1cs suffix (as do all the final verbs in lines 30–33). Lines 30–34 attribute the supplicant's affliction to divine anger. This section begins merely stating that the deity is angry (30–31) while lines 32–34 describe the supplicant's condition as "sick" (*marṣu*), "burning" (*ṣarāpu*), and "afflicted" (*ašuštu*), respectively.
bēlum ina uggat libbīšu ikkelmânni

Line 31: *Uzzu*, "anger." *Šumḫuru* (Š of *maḫāru*), "to cause to confront." The petitioner presents their suffering as a product of divine confrontation. This line includes yet another synonym for divine anger. In light of the nominative, *bēlum*, that begins line 30 we could interpret *i-lì* as a so-called nominative absolute therefore translating this line as, "My god—he had made me confront the anger of his heart." However, the Sumerian, dingir šag$_4$ šur$_2$-ra-bi, speaks against this interpretation.
ili ina uzzi libbīšu ušamḫiranni

Line 32: *Isbus-ma* bears the enclitic *–ma*, "and," which is used to join the line's two clauses together. *Marṣiš* (based on *marṣu*, "sick") has the terminative-adverbial ending *–iš* but is not to be confused with the adverb *marṣiš*, "bitterly." *Šūmû* (Š of *emû* [*ewûm*]), when used with *–iš*, means "to turn, change into" (see CAD E, 415). The deity's anger is not merely causing external duress but is even affecting the petitioner's health.
ištar elīya isbus-ma marṣiš ušēmânni

Line 33: The beginning of lines 33–34 were left blank by the scribe. The translation was apparently assumed. The assumed Akkadian translation is based on the Sumerian: dìm-me-er ì-zu nu-un-zu. *Ṣurrupu* (D of *ṣarāpu*), "to burn." Foster translates this verb idiomatically ("excoriated me") but *ṣarāpu* can also indicate physical pain such as a burning sensation in the intestines and/or epigastrium (CAD Ṣ, 103). This reading fits better with the previous line that says a goddess made the petitioner sick.
ilum idû lā idû uṣarripanni

34. *{^{d}iš-tar i-du-u la i-du-ú} a-šu-uš-tú iš-ku-na*

35. *áš-ta-né-ʾe-e-ma mam-ma-an qá-ti ul i-ṣa-bat*

36. *ab-ki-ma i-ta-te-ia ul iṭ-ḫu-u*

37. *qu-bé-e a-qab-bi mam-ma-an ul i-še$_{20}$-man^{an}-ni*

38. *uš-šu-šá-ku kàt-ma-ku ul a-na-ṭa-al*

Line 34: The assumed Akkadian translation is based on the Sumerian: ama-^{d}innin ì-zu nu-un-zu. *Ašuštu*, "affliction, grief." *Iškuna* is a 3cs preterite of *šakānu* with a ventive. This line concludes the section that attributes the supplicant's affliction to the unknown deity. The nominative form, *ašuštu*, is an example of the fact that in Standard Babylonian the nominative case ending often occurs where we expect an accusative.

ištar idû lā idû ašuštu iškuna

Line 35: *Aštaneʾêma* is a Gtn durative of *šeʾû*, "to seek out," with an enclitic *–ma*. As the supplicant is still lamenting their situation, the duratives in lines 35 and 37 should be understood as referring to habitual action in the past. *Mamman*, "someone, somebody." The phrase *qāta ṣabātu*, lit. "to seize the hand," is an idiom meaning "to help," but it can also mean "to lead" and possibly both connotations are meant here. The petitioner is alone and without help because no one—not even a human much less a god—would guide them as they searched for answers (see CAD Ṣ, 30–32). In lines 35–37 the supplicant claims that no one responded to their cries for help. The laments build until line 38, where the petitioner concludes the lament section of the prayer by describing their present state of misery.

aštaneʾêma mamman qātī ul iṣabbat

Line 36: *Bakû*, "to cry." *Itâtēya* is the plural of *itû*, "boundary, environs," with a 1cs pronoun. *Iṭḫû* is a 3mp preterite of *ṭeḫû*, "to approach." Not only would no one give the petitioner guidance but they would not even come near them.

abkī-ma itâtēya ul iṭḫû

Line 37: *Qubû*, "lament." *Qabû*, "to speak." *Šemû*, "to hear." This lament extends the idea of the previous line—no one cared about the supplicant enough to listen to their suffering let alone attempt to help them.

qubê aqabbi mamman ul išemmânni

Line 38: *Uššušu,* "distress, worry." *Katmu* literally means "hidden," but in the context of this prayer the petitioner likely means that their plight is hidden from the gods; i.e., they are alone in their troubles with no one to help. In concert with the previous two lines, this phrase could indicate the fact that other humans have abandoned them as well. The *–āku* endings on the two substantives indicate the 1cs predicative. *Naṭālu*, "to see."

uššušāku katmāku ul anaṭṭal

39. *ana* DINGIR-*ia réme-ni-i at-ta-na-as-ḫar un-ni-ni a-qab-bi*

40. *ša* ^{d}*iš-tar-ia še-pa-šaʾ* [*ú-na-áš-šaq ina* IGI-*ki*] *ap-ta-na-ši-il*

41. *ana* {DINGIR *i-du-u la i-du-ú*} [*na-ás-ḫi-ra-an-ni un-ni-ni a-qab*]-*bi*

42. {*ana* ^{d}*iš-ta-ri i-du-u la i-du-ú*} [*na-ás-ḫi-ra-an-ni un-ni-ni a-qab-bi*]

43. [*b*]*e-lum n*[*a-ás-ḫi-ra-an-ni un-ni-ni a-qab-bi*]

Line 39: *Rēmēnû*, "merciful." *Attanasḫar* is a Ntn durative of *saḫāru*, "to search constantly." *Unnīnu*, "prayer, petition." To speak (*qabû*) a prayer or petition (*unnīnu*) to a divine being is to implore them. The description of the god as "merciful" contains an implied request that the deity act in accordance with this characteristic. Lines 39–46 comprise a transition section between the lament and the petition section in which the supplicant turns to the deity for help. The duratives should now be translated as referring to the present.

ana ilīya rēmēnî attanasḫar unnīni aqabbi

Line 40: *Šēpā* is a dual form of *šēpu*, "foot." *Nuššuqu* (D of *našāqu*), "to kiss." The restoration in the middle of the line is suggested by the Sumerian mu-un-su-ub-su-ub; see Maul, 239, 245 and Langdon, 42. *Aptanaššil* is a Gtn from *pašālu*, "to crawl." The repeated use of *š* heightens the emotional thrust of this line and possibly imitates a crawling sound. The pronominal suffix on *šēpāša* is redundant with the *ša* at the head of the line.

ša ištarīya šēpāša unaššaq ina maḫrīki aptanaššil

Line 41: *Nasḫuru* (N of *saḫāru*), "to return, to show favorable attention, to repent." After an initial *ana*, the first half of line 41 is blank (an assumed translation) and most of the rest of the line is broken. The Sumerian suggests the Akkadian translation for the first half of the line: dìm-me-er ì-zu nu-un-[zu . . .] (see likewise lines 42 and 44–46). The second halves of lines 41–46 take their cue from Langdon's conjectural restorations (42). These are reasonable but quite uncertain. If the reconstruction is accurate, the supplicant tries to get the deity's attention with the use of direct imperatives here and in the next several lines in order that the deity might pay attention to the supplicant's plight.

ana ili idû lā idû nasḫiranni unnīni aqabbi

Line 42: Presumably, this line follows the pattern of repeating the previous plea with a goddess as the subject. The Sumerian suggests the Akkadian translation: ama-^{d}innin ì-zu [nu-un-zu . . .].

ana ištar idû lā idû nasḫiranni unnīni aqabbi

Line 43: Lines 43 and 44 address a particular deity whereas lines 41–42 and 45–46 are addressed to "whichever god/goddess." The Akkadian reconstruction of this line follows Langdon's conjecture tentatively (42), but see Maul's reservations, particularly concerning the reading of the GUR sign (239, 246). Even if the reading of the GUR sign is valid, it is doubtful that the Akkadian analogue would be *saḫāru* since there is only one

44. {^{d}*iš-tar*} *nap-l*[*i-si-in-ni un-ni-ni a-qab-bi*]

45. {DINGIR *i-du-u la i-du-ú*} [*na-ás-ḫi-ra-an-ni un-ni-ni a-qab-bi*]

46. {^{d}*iš-tar i-du-u la i-du-ú*} [*nap-li-si-in-ni un-ni-ni a-qab-bi*]

47. *a-di ma-ti i-lì* [ŠÀ-*ka* . . .]

48. {*a-di ma-ti* ^{d}*iš-ta-ri*} *k*[*a-bat-ta-ki* . . . *lip-ša-ḫa*]

49. {*a-di ma-ti i-lum i-du-u la i-du-ú*} *uz-za-k*[*a* . . . *li-nu-uḫ*]

clear instance in which gur = *saḫāru* (*Erimhuš* VI 12). Furthermore, in this text *saḫāru* has already been equated with nigin.

bēlum nasḫiranni unnīni aqabbi

Line 44: The Sumerian suggests the assumed Akkadian translation for this line: ama-^{d}innin. *Naplusu* (N of *palāsu*), "to look at, to gaze at, to consider." *Naplisīnni* is a 2fs N imperative with a 1cs suffix.

ištar naplisīnni unnīni aqabbi

Line 45: The Sumerian suggests the assumed Akkadian translation for this line: dìm-me-er ì-z[u nu-un-zu . . .].

ilum idû lā idû nasḫiranni unnīni aqabbi

Line 46: Again, the Sumerian suggests the assumed Akkadian translation for this line: ama-^{d}innin ì-zu [nu-un-zu…].

ištar idû lā idû naplisīnni unnīni aqabbi

Line 47: The phrase *adi mati* is composed of two particles: *adi*, "until," and *mati*, "when." The phrase is typically rendered, "how long (until)?" With line 47 the prayer begins the petition section (lines 47–55). After attempting to get the deity's attention (lines 41–46), the petitioner now asks a series of "how long . . ." questions (lines 47–55).

adi mati ilī libbaka . . .

Line 48: The Sumerian suggests the Akkadian translation for the first half of the line: me-en-na ama-^{d}innin-mu. The second half is partially restored conjecturally by Maul (240). *Kabattu*, "innards, liver, mind, mood," is frequently found in parallelism with *libbu* (see line 47). *Lipšaḫa* is a 3cs precative of *pašāḫu*, "to cool down, rest, abate," with a ventive suffix.

adi mati ištarī kabattaki . . . *lipšaḫa*

Line 49: The Sumerian suggests the Akkadian translation for the first half of the line: me-en-na dìm-me-er ì-zu nu-un-zu. *Linūḫ* is a 3cs precative of *nâhu*, "to calm down, to relent."

adi mati ilum idû lā idû uzzaka . . . *linūḫ*

50. {*a-di ma-ti* ^{d}*iš-tar i-du-u la i-du-ú*} ŠÀ-*ki a-ḫu-u ana aš-ri-šú li-*[*tú*]*r*

51. *a-me-lu-tu su-ku-ka-at-ma mim-ma ul i-de*

52. {*a-me-lu-tu*} *ma-al šu-mu na-bu-u mi-i-nu i-de*

53. *lu-u ú-gal-lil lu-u ú-dam-mì-iq mim-ma ul i-de*

54. *be-lum* ÌR-*ka la ta-sa-kip*

Line 50: The Sumerian suggests the Akkadian translation for the first half of the line: me-en-na ama-^{d}innin ì-zu nu-un-zu. *Ahû*, "foreign, different" (to be differentiated from *aḫu*, which means, "side, arm"). In this line *ahû* describes the disposition of a goddess's heart that is not in its normal condition, i.e., it is estranged from the petitioner. This final question in the series recalls the beginning of the prayer with the plea that the fury of the deity's heart subside (see line 1: *nuggat libbīšu ana ašrīšu litūra)*; however, in line 50 the petitioner asks that the deity's estranged heart might be reconciled (*libbīšu aḫû ana ašrīšu litūr*).

adi mati ištar idû lā idû libbīki aḫû ana ašrīšu litūr

Line 51: *Amēlūtu* (*amīlūtu*, *awīlūtum*), "humanity." *Sukkuku*, "deaf, mentally handicapped," is a 3fs predicative here. *Mimma*, "anything, something." This line begins a section in the petition (lines 51–55) in which the supplicant reiterates their ignorance in committing the offence. They stress the finite nature of humanity—in comparison to the gods, humans are deaf and unknowing. The supplicant implies that the deity should take the human condition into consideration and provide them mercy.

amēlūtu sukkukat-ma mimma ul īde

Line 52: The Sumerian suggests the Akkadian translation of the line's first word: namlú-u$_{18}$-lu. *Mal(a)*, "all, as many as." *Mala / ša šuma nabû*, is an idiom for "everything, everyone" (see CAD N/1, 35 for other examples with *amēlūtu*). *Mīnu*, "what?" The supplicant has gone out of the way to describe the deity in multiple ways to include every contingency. In like manner, the supplicant says that no matter how humanity is described or what terms are used for them, the results are the same—humans lack knowledge.

amēlūtu mal šumu nabû mīnu īde

Line 53: *Gullulu* (D), "to sin, to do wrong." *Dummuqu* (D of *damāqu*), "to do good, to make pleasant." The syntagm, *Lū . . . lū* means, "either/whether . . . or" (*CDA*, 184 and CAD L, 226–27). Not only should humanity not be held responsible for misdeeds due to ignorance, similarly, good deeds are not meritorious.

lū ugallil lū udammiq mimma ul īde

Line 54: ÌR = *ardu* (*wardum*), "servant." *Sakāpu*, "to repulse, to turn away" (see CAD S, 73). Lines 54–55 present an emotionally compelling plea. The petitioner imagines themselves as stuck in a swamp and unable to extricate themselves—they must rely upon external help. Therefore, the supplicant puts their well-being into the hands of the deity. For the *aradka*-style and change of person from first to third, see Maul, 19.

bēlum aradka lā tasakkip

55. *ina me-e ru-šum-ti na-di qa-as-su ṣa-bat*

56. *ḫi-iṭ-ṭi aḫ-ṭú-u ana da-mì-iq-ti te-er*

57. *an-na e-pu-uš šá-a-ru lit-bal*

58. *gíl-la-tu-u-a ma-aʾ-da-a-ti ki-ma ṣú-ba-ti šu-ḫu-uṭ*

Rubric: ér-šà-ḫun-gá 65-àm mu-bi-im dingir-dù-a-bi-kám

Line 55: *Rušumtu,* "swamp." *Qassu* is formed from the noun *qātu*, "hand," and a 3ms suffix. *Nadi* is a predicative from *nadû*, "to throw down, lay down." See line 35 for the idiom *qāssu ṣabat.*

ina mê rušumti nadi qāssu ṣabat

Line 56: *Ḫiṭṭu* = *ḫīṭu*, "error, sin." For *ḫaṭû*, see line 27. *Tēr* is an imperative from *turru* (D of *târu*), which means "to turn something into something else" when used with *ana* (this text exhibits occasional Assyrianisms such as *ēpuš* and accordingly this word could be read as *ti*$_7$*-ir* > *tīr*). As mentioned in the introduction to the prayer, the last three lines of Akkadian (lines 56–58) and the first four of the final seven lines in Sumerian (see footnote 5 above) replace the typical intercessory litany often found in ershaḫunga-prayers with a litany for the removal of sin. The fifth line of Sumerian transitions with its mention of praise into the two-line conclusion formula (Maul's *Schlußformel*), the final structural feature of an ershaḫunga-prayer.

ḫiṭṭi aḫṭû ana damiqti tēr

Line 57: For *annu*, see line 21. *Šāru*, "wind." We expect a subjunctive on the verb *ēpuš*, as in the previous line, but it is lacking. *Litbal* is a precative from *tabālu*, "to carry off, to take away," a verb closely related to (*w*)*abālu*. In the last two lines the petitioner asks that the sins they have repeatedly acknowledged throughout this prayer be carried away in the wind and stripped off of their body. Misdeeds are not merely actions that disappear with time but they are pictured as objects that stick to the offender.

anna ēpuš šāru litbal

Line 58: *Gillatu*, "sin, sacrilege," is the object of the verb despite the nominative case ending. *Ṣubātu*, "textile, garment." *Kīma*, "as, like." *Šaḫātu*, "to strip off, to cast off."

gillātūya maʾdāti kīma ṣubāti šuḫuṭ

Rubric: The rubric is in Sumerian. It may be translated: "An ershaḫunga of sixty-five lines to any god." The rest of the tablet contains the colophon, stating that this tablet was faithfully copied at Ashurbanipal's palace.

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

There are many constructions in the Prayer to Any God that have semantic or lexical analogues to BH. The phrase in line 1, *nuggat libbīšu*, "anger of his heart," is semantically similar to several expressions in BH; however, instead of using a bound phrase, Hebrew normally uses verbs with לֵב to indicate anger.[1] For example, Prov 19:3: "a man's folly subverts his path and his heart rages against Yahweh (עַל־יְהוָה יִזְעַף לִבּוֹ)"; Ezek 32:9: "I will provoke the heart (וְהִכְעַסְתִּי לֵב) of many peoples when I bring (news) of your defeat among the nations"; and Deut 19:6: "lest the redeemer lynch the killer when his heart burns (יִחַם לְבָבוֹ)." There are also a few lexical analogues. A BH analogue to the word *sukkuku*, "deaf, mentally handicapped" (line 51), appears once albeit in a verbal form in Deut 27:9: הַסְכֵּת וּשְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, "Silence! Listen, Israel!"[2]

This prayer contains many sentiments that are similar to those found in biblical prayers. For example, when Job brings his case against Yahweh he commands, "take your hand and forearm far away from me—stop terrorizing me!" (13:21). Although Job is more forceful and blunt than the petitioner of our Akkadian prayer, both prayers share the view that the offended deity is bringing trouble upon the supplicants. Job also asks Yahweh, "why are you hiding your face from me and regarding me as your enemy?" (13:24). This question parallels lines 35–39 of this prayer in which the petitioner says that they kept seeking help but no one came to their aid. However, there are differences between Job and Prayer to Any God. In contrast to Prayer to Any God, Job does not admit guilt. In fact, Job maintains his innocence and challenges Yahweh to make his offenses known (13:23).

Psalm 51 contains a humble confession of sin that is similar to the tone of our prayer; however, the psalmist knows his offense (פִּשָׁעַי אֲנִי אֵדָע) and he is continually aware of his sin (וְחַטָּאתִי נֶגְדִּי תָמִיד; v. 5), whereas our petitioner committed their offense in ignorance and they do not know what they did that offended the deity (lines 19–20). The psalmist also implores God, "wash away my vice and cleanse me from my sin" (כַּבְּסֵנִי מֵעֲוֹנִי וּמֵחַטָּאתִי טַהֲרֵנִי; v. 4), which parallels lines 57–58 of Prayer to Any God. Lastly, Psalm 40:3 recounts a time when God pulled the psalmist out of a pit of destruction (בּוֹר שָׁאוֹן) and the miry mud (טִיט הַיָּוֵן), which is similar to the imagery in line 55 where the supplicant is stranded in swamp water (*mê rušumti*).

Finally, the anguish seen in Lamentations 1:16, 20–21 parallels that in Prayer to Any God. In Lamentations 1:20 the lamenter describes his grief in terms of distress (צַר), a burning belly (מֵעַי חֳמַרְמָרוּ; this is similar to the imagery

[1] Tawil (*ALCBH*, 182, §37) translates the bound phrase לֵב רַגְז in Deut 28:65 as "a raging heart" under the gloss "furious, raging." He links this with the Akkadian phrase *libbu aggu/ezzu*. However, רַגְז merely means "agitated quivering" and the context indicates that the phrase should be rendered "fluttering heart," referring to fear or anxiety instead of anger.

[2] See Chaim Cohen, *Biblical Hapax Legomena in the Light of Akkadian and Ugaritic* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978), 111:12.

in line 33), and a heart doing somersaults (נָהֲפַךְ לִבִּי בְּקִרְבִּי). Both texts try to get the deity's attention by underscoring the petitioner's contrition. Furthermore, the lamenter echoes the cry of Prayer to Any God in lines 35–38 in that no one is present to give comfort (Lam 1:16, 21).

TRANSLATION:

1. May the anger of the lord's heart relent.
2. May the god who I do not know relent.
3. May the goddess who I do not know relent.
4. May whichever god relent.
5. May whichever goddess relent.
6. May the heart of my god relent.
7. May the heart of my goddess relent.
8. May (both) god and goddess relent.
9. May the god who is angry with me relent.
10. May the goddess who is angry with me relent.

Lines 11–16 are poorly preserved.

17. The food that I would find I did not eat by myself.
18. The water that I would find I did not drink by myself.
19. I broke my god's taboo in ignorance.
20. I crossed my goddess's bounds in ignorance.
21. O lord, my wrongs are many, great are my sins.
22. O my god, my wrongs are many, great are my sins.
23. O my goddess, my wrongs are many, great are my sins.
24. O whichever god, my wrongs are many, great are my sins.
25. O whichever goddess, my wrongs are many, great are my sins.
26. The wrong which I did, I do not know.
27. The sin which I committed, I do not know.
28. The taboo which I broke, I do not know.
29. The bounds I crossed, I do not know.
30. A lord glowered at me in the rage of his heart.
31. A god has made me confront the anger of his heart.
32. A goddess has become angry with me and has made me sick.
33. Whichever god has caused me to burn.
34. Whichever goddess has set down affliction (upon me).
35. I would constantly seek (for help) but no one would help me.
36. I cried but they (i.e., no one) did not approach me.
37. I would give a lament but no one would hear me.
38. I am distressed; I am alone; I cannot see.
39. I search constantly for my merciful god (and) I utter a petition.
40. I kiss the feet of my goddess, I keep crawling before you.
41. To whichever god, return to me, I implore you (lit., I speak a petition)!
42. To whichever goddess, return to me, I implore you!
43. O lord, return to me, I implore you!

44. O goddess, look at me, I implore you!
45. Whichever god, return to me, I implore you!
46. Whichever goddess, return to me, I implore you!
47. How long, my god, until your . . . heart . . .
48. How long, my goddess, until your . . . mood will rest?
49. How long, whichever god, until your . . . anger subsides?
50. How long, whichever goddess, until your estranged heart relents?
51. Humanity is deaf and does not know anything.
52. Humanity—by whatever name—what do they know?
53. Whether (a person) does wrong or good they are ignorant.
54. Lord, do not turn away your servant.
55. They are (lit. he is) lying in swamp water—help them (lit. him)!
56. The sin that I committed turn into good.
57. The wrong (that) I did let the wind carry away.
58. My many sins strip away like a garment.
Lines 59–65 do not have an Akkadian translation (see footnote 5 above).

Rubric: An ershaḫunga of sixty-five lines to any god.

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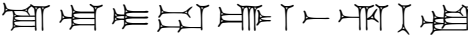
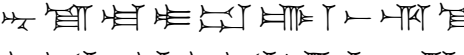
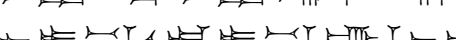
2. 
3. 
4. 
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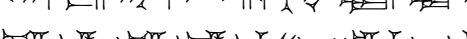
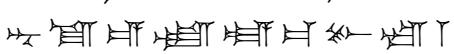
8. 
9. 
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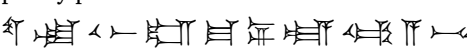
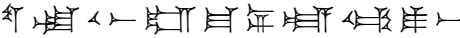
17. 
18. 

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24. [illegible]
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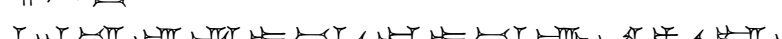
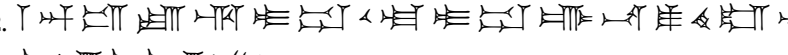
43. 
44. 
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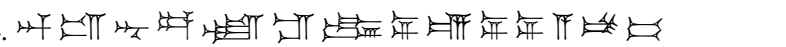
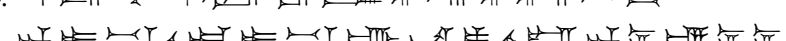
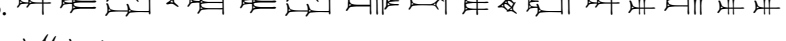
47. 
48. 
49. 
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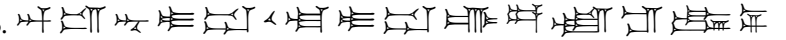
51. 
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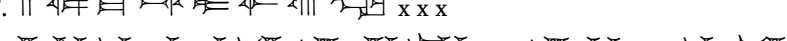
54. 
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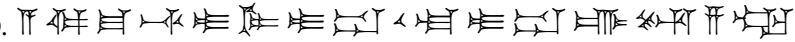
56. 
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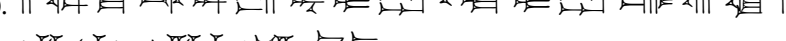
Rubric: 

A Tamitu to Shamash and Adad

ALAN LENZI

SHAMASH AND ADAD:

See pages 197 and 85.

THE PRAYER:

Tamitu-prayers are essentially long yes-or-no questions posed to the gods of extispicy, Shamash and Adad. The answer was received via extispicy. As described in the general introduction, after the invariable invocation and epithets (see our line 1), tamitus are quite varied in their content but show a number of common structural features, all or several of which may appear in any given tamitu-prayer. Our prayer includes a formal presentation of the person for whom the diviner is making the inquiry (lines 3–5a)—a guard responsible for a particular section of the city's fields; an attempt to persuade the deities to respond via flattery (line 5b); a stipulated term during which the inquiry was applicable (lines 6–7); the question (lines 8–21), about which we will say more below; and one technical qualification in the form of an *ezib*-clause (line 22). The prayer does not include one of the endings identified in Lambert's structural outline (14).

The question comprises the majority of the text. It may be divided into three parts, the last two of which are marked by a re-introduction of the person for whom the diviner is inquiring (see lines 13 and 20). The first part (lines 8–12) describes the potential preparations and attack of an enemy army. The second (lines 13–18) describes what the enemy may potentially harm among that which the concerned person is guarding. And the third part (lines 19–21) describes how the person for whom the diviner is inquiring might be affected by the enemy's potential actions.

The main MS used in Lambert's edition of this prayer, ND 5492 (= IM 67692), was a compendium tablet that contained six tamitus. Its colophon indicates that this tablet was Tablet VII of the Nimrud series of tamitus. Its copyist was an exorcist, not a diviner, as one might expect.

ESSENTIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Shamash and Adad. See page 201 and 88.

Text. Edition, Translation, and Study: W. G. Lambert. *Babylonian Oracle Questions*. Mesopotamian Civilizations 13. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007, 21–41, especially 30–33.[i]

[i] Lambert passes over the text of the present prayer without any comments or notes (148).

1. ^{d}UTU EN *di-nim* ^{d}IŠKUR EN *bi-ri*

2. *šá a-šal-lu-ku-nu-ši an-na ki-na*

3. *ap-la-in-ni* EN SÍG *u* TÚG.SÍG *an-nu-ú*

Line 1: The diviner opens with an invocation to the gods of extispicy. ^{d}UTU = *Šamaš*, the sun god, god of justice. EN = *bēlu*, "lord." *Dīnu*, "decision, judgment." ^{d}IŠKUR = *Adad*, a storm god. For Adad's role in divination, see page 86. *Bīru*, "divination" (both the act of extispicy and the answer received). The epithets *bēl dīnim* and *bēl bīri* are typical for Shamash and Adad when they are invoked for divinatory purposes. See the OB ikribu-like prayer on page 85 and the ikribu-prayers generally (see Zimmern, *BBR*, nos. 75–101 [pp. 190–219]).

Šamaš bēl dīnim Adad bēl bīri

Line 2: *Ša*, a relative pronoun ("who, which"), refers to both Shamash and Adad as the object of the first verb, thus "whom." *Šâlu*, "to ask." The verb is a 1cs durative with a 2mp dative pronominal suffix. The pronominal suffix is resumptive. As the verb indicates, the body of the text should be understood in an interrogatory mode. *Annu*, "consent, approval, 'yes'." *Kīnu*, "firm, reliable, true." These last two words belong with the following imperative; they describe the kind of answer the diviner is requesting the gods give him.

ša ašallūkunūši anna kīna

Line 3: *Apālu*, "to answer, to reply." The verb is a cp impv. with a 1cs accusative pronominal suffix. The phrase in lines 2–3b is only attested here on the Nimrud MS that preserves this tamitu. The other five tamitus in this Nimrud compendium move directly into the identification of the person for whom the diviner is inquiring or into the stipulated term. SÍG can be read as both *šīpātu*, "wool," or *šārtu*, "hair." TÚG.SÍG = *sissiktu*, "hem, fringe." Lambert argues that the phrase SÍG *u* TÚG.SÍG may have originally been understood as "hair and fringe," offering OB and MB parallels for support; but such an understanding, he notes, leaves the ms *annû*, "this," unexplained since we expect a fs, *annītu*. Thus, he suggests that although the phrase originally meant "hair and fringe" it was misunderstood in the MB period, when scribes read the first SÍG as *šīpātu*, "wool," and took the phrase as a hendiadys: "wool and fringe" = "woolen fringe" (see Lambert, 15–17). In any case, the item(s) referred to by the phrase is to be understood conceptually as a metonymic substi-

4. *š[á]* TA A.ŠÀ NENNI EN A.ŠÀ NENNI

5. [E]N.NUN *ina-ṣa-ru-ma* DINGIR-*ut-ku-nu* GAL-*tum*

6. ZU-*ú* TA u_4-*me* NE DÙ-*ti ba-ru-ti*

7. [E]N UD.30.KÁM UD.NÁ.A *šá* ITI *an-ni-i*

8. ÉRIN KÚR *ma-la ba-šu-ú* TA *qal-la-ti*

tute for its owner. Lines 3–5 introduce this owner, for whom the diviner is making the divinatory inquiry, as one on guard duty in the fields, which were outside the city walls.

aplā'inni bēl šipāti u sissikti annû

Line 4: TA = *ištu*, "from." A.ŠÀ = *eqlu*, "field." NENNI = *annanna*, "so-and-so." Usually used as a placeholder for the supplicant's name, in this case *annanna* stands for the particular field being guarded by the person introduced in line 3. EN = *adi*, "until, as far as."

ša ištu eqli annanna adi eqli annanna

Line 5: EN.NUN = *maṣṣartu*, "watch." *Naṣāru*, "to guard, to watch, to protect." The verb is 3cs durative. The *–u* on the end is the subjunctive (due to the *ša* in line 4). The verb and its object require an idiomatic rather than literal translation. DINGIR-*ut-ku-nu* = *ilūtkunu*, "your divinity." GAL-*tum* = *rabītum* (fs), "great." In a parenthetical expression in the second half of this line and the first word of the next the diviner flatters the gods' superior knowledge.

maṣṣarta inaṣṣaru ilūtkunu rabītum

Line 6: ZU = *edû* (*idû*), "to know." The form *īdû*, although formally preterite, has no tense. One must provide it from context. *Ūmu*, "day." NE = *annû*, "this." Idiomatically, *ūme annî* means "today." The day of the actual inquiry marks the start of the inquiry's stipulated term (often called *adannu* in Akk., see line 22), that is, the time period during which the divinatory action is applicable. The duration is indicated in the next line. DÙ-*ti* = *nēpeštu*, "activity, procedure, ritual performance." *Bārûtu*, "divination." The diviner specifies how he will discover the answer to his inquiry.

īdû ištu ūme annî nēpešti bārûti

Line 7: UD.30.KÁM = the 30th day of the month. ITI = *arḫu* (*warḫum*), "month." The stipulated term is less than a month (see also line 22). UD.NÁ.A = *bibbulu* (*bubbulu*), "the day of the disappearance of the moon." A lunar month is usually 28 or 29 days. The day of the moon's disappearance would mark the end of the previous month and the beginning of the next.

adi UD.30.KÁM *bibbuli ša arḫi annî*

Line 8: ÉRIN = *ummānu*, "army, troops." KÚR = *nakru*, "foreign, strange; enemy" In its substantival usage, as here, *nakru* refers to enemies. *Mala*, "as many as, as much as." *Bašû*, "to be, to exist." The form is predicative. *Mala bašû* means "as many as there are." *Qallu* (m), *qallatu* (f), "small, light." As applied to an army, perhaps "light forces" (see CAD Q, 62). This line introduces the concern about which the diviner is inquiring for the person introduced in lines 3–5. *Ummān nakri* is the subject of the verbs that follow in lines 9–20.

9. [E]N *ka-bit-ti la uš-ta-gap-pa-šu*

10. [*l*]*a uš-ta-paḫ-ḫa-ru la uš-ta-dan-na-nu*

11. *re-ṣi u til-la-ti la* TUKU-*ši-ma*

12. *ti-ba ši-iḫ-ṭa la i-šak-ka-nam-ma*

13. *i-na* EN.NUN *šá* EN SÍG *u* TÚG.SÍG *an-ni-i*

Some of the verbs are 3cs and others are 3mp. Lines 8–12 describe the potential preparations and attack of the enemy.

ummān nakri mala bašû ištu qallati

Line 9: *Kabittu*, "main body, main forces of the army." *Lā*, "not." The following four verbs describe the preparations an enemy army might make before an attack, which is finally mentioned in line 12. The verb *uštagappašū* and the two morphologically similar verbs in line 10 are difficult. Although probably to be derived from the Št stem, none of these verbs is attested in this stem outside of the present text. Tentatively, *šutagappušu* (Št of *gapāšu*) is understood here to mean "to cause oneself to be enlarged, swelled"(?). The form is a 3mp durative, utilizing the long form of the durative typical of the Št lexical (likewise with the verbs in line 10).

adi kabitti lā uštagappašū

Line 10: *Šutapaḫḫuru* (Št of *paḫāru*), "to cause oneself to be gathered in force"(?) (alternatively, see CAD P, 32, whose analysis leaves the infixed *–ta–* unexplained). *Šutadannunu* (Št of *danānu*), "to cause oneself to be strengthened"(?).

lā uštapaḫḫarū lā uštadannanū

Line 11: *Rēṣu*, "helper, ally" (see CAD R, 268–70). *Tillatu*, "reinforcement, support." TUKU = *rašû*, "to acquire, to gain." Notice that the verb here and the one in the next line are 3cs.

rēṣi u tillati lā iraššī-ma

Line 12: *Tību*, "attack." *Šiḫṭu* (*šeḫṭu*), "attack, raid." *Šakānu*, "to put, to place," but in this context a more idiomatic rendering is required: "to make," "to inflict," etc. Notice the ventive marker on the verb, indicating the action lies in the direction of the speaker.

tība šiḫṭa lā išakkanam-ma

Line 13: *Ina* usually means "in," but "during" is contextually more appropriate. For EN.NUN = *maṣṣartu*, see line 5. For the remainder of the line, see line 3. This line breaks the rhythm of the previous few and begins a section (lines 13–18) that describes the possible results of the enemy's attack. Notice that the person for whom the diviner is inquiring is mentioned again here at a structural turning point in the inquiry.

ina maṣṣarti ša bēl šipāti u sissikti annî

14. *i-na* EDIN MÁŠ.ANŠE *i-na* URU *šal-la-ta*

15. *i-na mi-ṣi mi-ṣa i-na ma-aʾ-di*

16. *ma-aʾ-da šá da-a-ki la i-duk-ku*

17. *šá ḫa-ba-a-ti la i-ḫab-ba-tu*

18. *šá šá-la-li la i-šal-la-l*[*u*]

19. *ù bu-su-ra-a-ti šá* MUNUS.ḪUL

Line 14: EDIN = *ṣēru*, "steppe, hinterland." MÁŠ.ANŠE = *būlu*, "animals, livestock." URU = *ālu*, "city." *Šallatu*, "booty." The diviner inquires whether the enemy will inflict losses (see lines 16–18 for the verbs) inside and outside of the city, that is, anywhere, so as to affect the herds and the possessions of the person for whom the diviner is inquiring. *Šallatu* is not limited to moveable property; it includes human captives or prisoners, too. This line stands in parallel with line 15. Thus, the two specific nouns here stand in parallel to the two that indicate generic quantity in line 15. All four nouns in the acc. case in lines 14–15, *būla*, *šallata*, *mīṣa*, *maʾda*, comprise the grammatical objects of the verbs used in lines 16–18.

ina ṣēri būla ina āli šallata

Line 15: The *ina* has the sense of "with respect to" here. *Mīṣu* (*wīṣum*, *īṣu*), "little, few." *Maʾdu* (*mādu*), "much, many, abundant, numerous." The phrase *ina mīṣi mīṣa ina maʾdi maʾda* (see the first word of the next line) specifies how much the enemy may take, which depends on how much there is available for the taking. Lambert translates it, "little where there is little, much where there is much" (33).

ina mīṣi mīṣa ina maʾdi

Line 16: The first word here belongs with the previous line. Lines 16–18 contain the following syntagm: relative pronoun *ša* + inf. + durative verb, where the inf. and durative verb are from the same root. The *ša* plus inf. defines that which is potentially available among the objects of the verbs to suffer from the action of the verbs, thus "they will not kill livestock . . . booty . . . a little . . . a lot, which can be killed, will they?" This is the meaning of Lambert's "as appropriate" (33).

maʾda ša dâku lā idukkū

Line 17: *Ḫabātu*, "to rob, to plunder."
ša ḫabāti lā iḫabbatū

Line 18: *Šalālu*, "to carry off, to plunder."
ša šalāli lā išallalū

Line 19: This line begins the last section of the inquiry; it centers on the potential aftermath of the enemy's raid. *Bussurtu*, "news, report, tidings," does not necessarily designate good news, though that is its most common use. It is often bound to other nouns, such

20. *ana* EN SÍG *u* TÚG.SÍG *an-ni-i la ú-pa-as-s*[*a-ru*]

21. ŠÀ-*šú la* GIG-*ṣu la i-lam-me-nu*

22. *e-zib ana* EGIR *a-dan-ni šá* ITI *e-ri-bi*

23. *ta-mit ana* SILIM-*um* EN.NUN

as *ḫadû*, "joy," *dumqu*, "favor," or *lumnu*, "evil," to specify its meaning (see CAD B, 346–47 for attestations). The noun is fem. pl. here. MUNUS.ḪUL = *lemuttu*, "evil, wickedness."

u bussurāti ša lemutti

Line 20: The person for whom the diviner is inquiring appears yet again at this structural junction, the start of the last section of the inquiry, as one who might receive bad news resulting from the enemy's violent actions. *Ana*, "to, for." *Bussuru* (*pussuru*), "to deliver, to send, to receive news." Although often used for good news, the verb does not necessarily have this connotation (see CAD B, 347–48).

ana bēl šipāti u sissikti annî upassurū

Line 21: *Libbu*, "heart." GIG = *marāṣu*, "to be(come) sick." *Lemēnu*, "to be(come) bad, to fall into bad times." Both verbs, however, when used with *libbu* as subject can mean "to be(come) angry, displeased" (see CAD M, 274 and L, 117). Lambert therefore renders the verbs as "be distressed or distraught." Since *libbu* must be the subject of the verbs, the final *u* on both are superfluous, perhaps added by dint of the fact that the verbs in lines 16–18, 20 end with the 3mp *–ū*. The query concludes with the potential reaction of the person for whom the query is being made. There is no praise offered or promised to the deities invoked.

libbašu lā imarraṣ(*u*) *lā ilammen*(*u*)

Line 22: The only *ezib*-clause reinforces the stipulated term, *adannu* (*adānu*), "time limit, fixed time, deadline" (see lines 6–7). *Ezib* is a ms impv. from *ezēbu*; the impv. means "leave aside, ignore, disregard." *Ana arkat* (*warkat*; = EGIR), "after." *Ēribu*, "entering, incoming," refers here to the coming month, the one after the stipulated term during which the inquiry was applicable. Presumably the person for whom the diviner was inquiring was on guard duty for one month and only interested in that period of time.

ezib ana arkat adanni ša arḫi ēribi

Line 23: This line is the rubric to the text. It is not part of the diviner's prayer. *Tamītu*, "inquiry, oracle-inquiry" (see page 49). SILIM = *šulmu*, "well-being, peace, safety."

tamīt ana šulum maṣṣarti

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

The suggestions offered in the OB Prayer to the Gods of the Night (see page 79) supply a broad comparative view on the issue of extispicy and divination and are relevant to developing a comparative perspective on this prayer, too. The suggestions made here will focus on two particular issues: the use of binary oracles and the BH equivalent of the term *bussurtu*.

Although the present prayer involved extispicy to discover the will of the gods, the format of the entire operation was essentially binary: the gods answered a query by selecting one or the other possible reply, positive or negative. Biblical narratives occasionally exhibit a binary oracular method in use.[1] For example, in 1 Sam 14:9–14 Jonathan and his armor bearer contrive an either-or situation to determine how they should engage an enemy they have encountered. If the enemy answers one way, the two men will stay where they are; if the other, they will take it as a sign that Yahweh has given them victory and will go up to fight the enemy. A similar oracle is invented by Gideon in Judg 6:37–40 with the use of a fleece. These are *ad hoc* oracles used by individuals.

The best biblical parallel to the institutional *system* used in the tamitu-prayers is the official oracular means of the Levitical high priest (Deut 33:8), the biblical Urim and Thummim, which was kept in the high priest's ephod (Exod 28:30; Lev 8:8) and used to give guidance to the leader of the people (Num 27:21). Its binary format is suggested by the manner in which people framed questions when inquiring of Yahweh in narrative contexts that suggest the Urim and Thummim's use. See, for example, 1 Sam 23:9–12 and 30:8. Perhaps the best evidence for how the Urim and Thummim worked comes from the Greek rendering of 1 Sam 14:41, a context in which the MT has become garbled: εἰ ἐν ἐμοὶ ἢ ἐν Ιωναθαν τῷ υἱῷ μου ἡ ἀδικία, κύριε ὁ θεὸς Ισραηλ, δὸς δήλους · καὶ ἐὰν τάδε εἴπῃς Ἐν τῷ λαῷ σου Ισραηλ, δὸς δὴ ὁσιότητα, "if the wrongdoing is in me or in Jonathan, my son, O Yahweh, god of Israel, give Urim (lit., clear), but if you say, '(it is) in your people Israel,' give then Thummim (lit., holiness[2])." Although not a yes-no question, the framing of the question here suggests a binary opposition between which the Urim and Thummim would be used to decide.[3] If we take the immediate context of this particular inquiry into consideration, it seems that the oracle could sometimes be inconclusive (1 Sam 14:37; see also 1 Sam 28:6). The same held true with Mesopotamian extispicy, which explains why we see the diviners petition Shamash and Adad to give a sure reply (*kittam šuknam*) in the ikribu- and associated prayers.

The Akk. term *bussurtu*, "news, report, tidings," in line 19 is derived from the same root as the verb *bussuru* (*pussuru*) in line 20. The BH cognates to these are בְּשֹׂרָה and בשׂר, the latter of which, like the Akk. verb, is found only in the D or piel stem (see Tawil, *ALCBH*, 61–62). The BH terms are quite similar in meaning to the Akk. words. Both BH words can be used to describe goods news with or without further modification (see *HALOT*, 163–64). Compare, for example, 2 Sam 18:19, where the context of the verse provides the clue that the news is

[1] I leave aside the practice of casting lots, which may or may not have been binary in nature. See Anne Marie Kitz, "The Hebrew Terminology of Lot Casting and Its Ancient Near Eastern Context," *CBQ* 62 (2000), 207–14 for a recent summary of what we know about the practice (reference courtesy of Jeffrey Cooley).

[2] The translator has probably read תְּמִים rather than תֻּמִּים here.

[3] See Moshe Greenberg, "Urim and Thummim," *EJ*[2] 20:422–23.

considered good (אָרוּצָה נָּא וַאֲבַשְּׂרָה אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי שָׁפָטוֹ יְהוָה מִיַּד אֹיְבָיו, "let me run so I can report to [אֲבַשְּׂרָה] the king that Yahweh has delivered him from the hand of his enemies"),[4] with v. 27, where David explicitly assumes the news is good on the basis of the messenger (וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אִישׁ־טוֹב זֶה וְאֶל־בְּשׂוֹרָה טוֹבָה יָבוֹא, "the king said, 'he is a good man, he will bring good news'").[5]

Since good news is not inherent in the meaning of the words, one will also find attestations of these words for the delivery of bad news (determined from context). For example, upon hearing the news of Israel's defeat, the capture of the ark, and the death of his sons from a messenger (מְבַשֵּׂר, lit. "one who bears news") in 1 Sam 4:17–18, Eli falls backwards, breaks his neck, and dies![6] Jer 20:15 exemplifies well how the speaker's attitude toward that which was reported shaped its reception as good or bad news. Jeremiah curses the man who brought news (בִּשַּׂר) of Jeremiah's birth to his father (Jer 20:15). What was intended to be good news to the father is presented in an entirely negative light by the despairing Jeremiah. Likewise holds for the news of the death of Saul. David's response to the news was anger—even killing the messenger of the supposed good tidings(!)—and lamentation (2 Sam 1:1–16, read with 2 Sam 4:10), whereas the Philistines cut off Saul's head and sent it with his armor throughout the land to herald the news of his defeat (1 Sam 31:9 ‖ 1 Chron 10:9; compare this to David's poetic lament in 2 Sam 1:20). This last act finds an interesting parallel in a Neo-Assyrian caption-inscription found on a relief. After the defeat of the Elamite king Teumann, the officers in the field sent the Elamite king's head to Ashurbanipal to inform him of the good news (*ana bussurat ḫadê*).[7]

[4] See also vv. 31–32. But note v. 20, where Joab seems to believe the news will not be welcomed by its intended audience (David) and tries to keep the messenger from going. For other contexts that use our words without טוֹב to describe good news (determined from context) or to announce something positive, see, e.g., 2 Kgs 7:9, Isa 40:9, 60:6, 61:1, Nah 2:1 (compare with Isa 52:7), Pss 40:10, 68:12–14, and 96:2 (‖ 1 Chron 16:23).

[5] See similarly 1 Kgs 1:42.

[6] See David's reaction to the news of Absalom's death in 2 Sam 18:32–19:1. Although not attesting the words under discussion, Gen 37:31–35 and Job 1:13–21 also illustrate the severe impact of unexpected bad news upon its hearers.

[7] See Streck, VAB VII, 2.312, γ line 3. See conveniently the citation in CAD B, 347.

TRANSLATION:

1. O Shamash, lord of the decision, and Adad, lord of divination,
2. Whom I am asking, with a reliable "yes"
3. Answer me! Concerning the owner of this woolen fringe,
4. Who from field so-and-so to field so-and-so
5. Is keeping watch, (your great divinity
6. Knows!) from today, by means of the procedure of divination,
7. Until the 30th day of this month, the day of the moon's disappearance:
8. The enemy army, as many as there are, from the light troops
9. To the main forces, will not cause themselves to be enlarged,

10. Will not cause themselves to be gathered, (and) will not cause themselves to be strengthened,
11. Will not acquire allies (and/or) reinforcements,
12. And will not inflict an attack (and/or) raid, will they?
13. And during the watch of the owner of this woolen fringe,
14. In the steppe, livestock, (and) in the city, booty,
15. Little with respect to little and much with respect to
16. Much, will not kill, that which can be killed,
17. Will not rob, that which can be robbed,
18. Will not plunder, that which can be plundered, will they?
19. And bad news
20. To the owner of this woolen fringe they will not bear,
21. (so that) his heart becomes displeased and distressed, will they?
22. Disregard (the time period) after the stipulated term of next month.

23. An oracle-query for the well-being of the watch.

CUNEIFORM:

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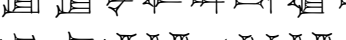
3. 
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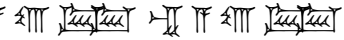
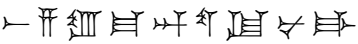
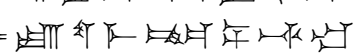
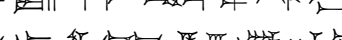
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 
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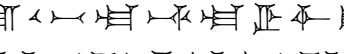
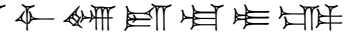
14. 
15. 
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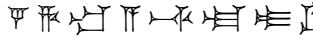
17. 
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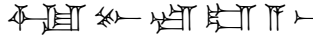
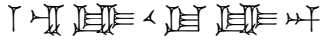
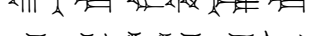
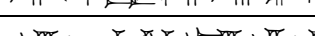
19. 
20. 
21. 
22. 

23.

A NB Royal Prayer to Nabu

ALAN LENZI

NABU:

See page 325.

THE PRAYER:

Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions typically conclude with a prayer, sometimes also called a blessing (*Segenswunsch*). The deity to whom the prayer is directed is always chosen on the basis of the building project being commemorated in the inscription. In the present text Nabu is invoked by Nebuchadnezzar II because the royal inscription commemorates his restoration of É-ur$_5$-(me)-imin-an-ki, "the house that gathers the seven (me's) of heaven and earth," the ziggurat of Nabu's E-zida temple in Borsippa.[1]

The prayer is quite simple in structure. The first two lines contain an invocation and four epithets. The remainder of the prayer consists of a series of petitions (lines 3–16). Although several of the epithets in the opening two lines are common, they seem to correspond rather closely with the petitions in the second part of the prayer. The first and last of the four epithets, *aplu kīnim*, "true heir," and *narām Marduk*, "beloved of Marduk," foreshadow Nebuchadnezzar's petition for Nabu to intercede with Marduk on his behalf (see lines 11–12). The second, *sukkallam ṣīri*, "exalted vizier," hints at Nabu's role as divine scribe in the assembly of the gods, mentioned in lines 8–10, and establishes him as one with official access to commend the supplicant to Marduk (lines 13–16). The third epithet, *šitluṭu*, "triumphant, pre-eminent one," has martial overtones and connects to Nebuchadnezzar's request for dominance over his enemies in lines 6–7.

Lines 3–16 contain four petitions. The first petition, in lines 3–7, is the most extensive. Based on his pious deeds (*epšētūya*, line 3), Nebuchadnezzar asks for long life, a stable reign, and the defeat of his enemies as a gift (line 7). Lines 8–10 repeat the request for long life but this time Nabu is asked to decree and in-

[1] See A. R. George, *House Most High: The Temples of Ancient Mesopotamia* (Mesopotamian Civilizations 5; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1993), #1193.

scribe it on his true writing board (line 8). In a culture that knows well the prestige and permanence of the written word, this request is more than a repetition of the first petition. Nebuchadnezzar seems to be asking Nabu, the scribal god, to put this particular gift "in writing," that is, to make his long life official in the heavenly accounts. In lines 11–13 Nebuchadnezzar asks Nabu to commend his good deeds (*epšētūya*, which harks back to line 3) and decree his well-being before Marduk. As the high god's son, Nabu would have had special access to the figure head of the pantheon and would therefore have been a very powerful intercessor. Lines 14–16, the final petition, provide the actual content, the specific words, Nabu is to speak while in Marduk's presence: "Nebuchadnezzar is indeed the king, the provider!"

Alongside the obvious theme of long life, one will note the predominance of the written and spoken word throughout the prayer. As a king, Nebuchadnezzar would have known very well the power of his own decree over his subjects and the permanence of that which he put into writing. It seems this prayer is constructed on analogy to the king's own power: it is hoped that a divine written record and oral testimony would insure the fulfillment of the petitions.

ESSENTIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Nabu. See page 327.

Text. Edition: Langdon, VAB IV, 20–21, 98–101 (no. 11, ii 16–31).[i] Translations: Beaulieu, *COS* 2.122B:310. Foster, 846. Seux, 511–12. von Soden, 286.

[i] Langdon's edition is out-dated. His sign indices are often incorrect compared to modern usage. I have adjusted these in consultation with the published copy of Langdon's MS A, Norris I R 51, no. 1 (= BM 91121). The text is known from four exemplars (BM 91121, BM 91122, BM 91123, and Bab. 21165), some of which preserve the text in an archaizing script. See Rocío Da Riva, *The Neo-Babylonian Royal Inscriptions: An Introduction* (Guides to the Mesopotamian Textual Record 4; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2008), 77, n.236 and 120.

1. ^{d}*na-bi-um* IBILA *ki-i-nim su-uk-ka-al-lam ṣi-i-ri* 2. *ši-it-lu-ṭu na-ra-am* ^{d}AMAR.UTU

Line 1: ^{d}*Na-bi-um* is an archaizing spelling for *Nabû*. After the invocation, the introduction to the prayer consists of a string of epithets that hymn Nabu. IBILA = *aplu*, "son, heir." *Kīnu*, "true." Here, the word denotes legitimacy, as in the "true heir." *Sukkallu* (*šukkallu*), "vizier, court official, minister." Langdon's edition omits the AL sign (see Norris I R 51, no. 1 ii 16). *Ṣīru*, "exalted, supreme, outstanding." Case endings in NB Akkadian had fallen out of use. The case endings as they appear in the text are basically irrelevant to grammatical analysis.

Nabium aplu kīnim sukkalam ṣīru

Line 2: *Šitluṭu*, "triumphant, pre-eminent," is an epithet used only for Nabu and Ninurta (see CAD Š/3, 130). For the martial tone of the epithet, see the related verb, the Gt

3. *e-ep-še-tu-ú-a a-na da-mi-iq-tim ḫa-di-iš* 4. *na-ap-li-is-ma* 5. *ba-la-ṭam da-rí-a še-be-e li-it-tu-ú-tim* 6. *ku-un* GIŠ.GU.ZA *la-ba-ri pa-le-e šú-um-qú-tu na-ki-ri* 7. *ka-ša-dam* MA.DA *a-a-bi a-na ši-ri-ik-tim šu-úr-ka-am*

stem of *šalāṭu* (CAD Š/1, 240). *Narāmu*, "beloved, loved one." ^{d}AMAR.UTU = Marduk, the father of Nabu and high god of the Babylonian pantheon (see page 325).

šitluṭu narām Marduk

Line 3: *Epištu*, "work." *Epšētūya* is the direct object of the verb in the next line. *Ana*, "to, for." *Damiqtu*, "favor, goodwill." *Ana damiqti* as a prepositional phrase works adverbially, expressing the manner in which the supplicant wishes the god to look (see line 4) upon his works. "Favorably" is a good English equivalent. *Ḫadîš*, "joyfully, happily." Nebuchadnezzar bases his first petition (lines 3–7) on his good deeds.

epšētūya ana damiqti ḫadîš

Line 4: *Naplusu* (N of *palāsu*), "to see, to look upon."

naplis-ma

Line 5: *Balāṭu*, "life." *Da-rí-a* is a pseudologogram for *dārû*, "eternal, lasting" (see Hanspeter Schaudig, *Die Inschriften Nabonids von Babylon und Kyros' des Großen samt den in ihrem Umfeld enstandenen Tendenzschriften: Textausgabe und Grammatik* [AOAT 256; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2001], 103). *Šebû*, "to be full, to be replete, to be satisfied with." The inf. is in construct with the following noun (see the same syntagm in line 6). *Littūtu*, "extreme old age." Lines 5, 6, and half of 7 contain the direct object of the verb in line 7.

balāṭam dārâ šebê littūtim

Line 6: *Kūnu*, "firmness." GIŠ.GU.ZA = *kussû*, "throne, chair." *Labāru*, "to be(come) old, long-lasting." *Palû*, "reign." *Labār palê* means "long-lasting reign." *Šumqutu* (Š of *maqātu*), "to cause to fall, to cause someone's downfall or ruin." *Nakru, nakiru* means "strange, foreign," but as a substantive, "enemy, foe."

kūn kussî labāri palê šumqutu nakiri

Line 7: *Kašādu*, "to reach, to arrive, to accomplish, to conquer." MA.DA = *mātu*, "land, country." MA.DA, rather than KUR, is used frequently in NB royal inscriptions for *mātu*. *Ayyābu*, "enemy." *Širiktu* (*šeriktu*), "gift, present." *Šarāku*, "to give, to bestow." The imperative bears a 1cs dative suffix, showing who is to be given the gift (namely, the supplicant, Nebuchadnezzar).

kašādam māti ayyābi ana širiktim šurkam

8. *i-na* GIŠ.LI.U$_5$.UM-*ka ki-i-nim mu-ki-in pu-lu-uk* 9. *ša-mi-e ù er-ṣe-tim* 10. *i-bi a-ra-ku* UD-*mi-ia šu-ṭù-ur li-it-tu-ú-tim* 11. *ma-ḫa-ar* ^{d}AMAR.UTU LUGAL *ša-mi-e ù er-ṣe-tim* 12. *a-bi a-li-di-ka e-ep-še-tu-ú-a šu-um-gi-ri* 13. *qí-bi du-um-qú-ú-a*

Line 8: *Ina*, "on, in." GIŠ.LI.U$_5$.UM = *lē'u*, "writing board." Writing boards were flat boards made of wood, ivory, lapis lazuli, gold, or silver which were covered with wax. (Only the first two materials are attested among discovered artifacts.) The scribe would inscribe a text into the wax, which could then be erased by heating. For the discovery, restoration (including Agatha Christie's role), and description of the 32 examples found at Nimrud, see Joan and David Oates, *Nimrud: An Assyrian Imperial City Revealed* (London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 2001), 97–99, 104 (fig. 62), and 219–20. *Kunnu*, "to establish firmly, to define, to fix." The participle modifies *lē'u.* It is bound to the following noun, *pulukku*, "boundary, limits." As a scribal god, Nabu holds a writing board that has power over the cosmos as well as individuals' fates (see line 10).

ina lē'īka mukīn puluk

Line 9: *Šamû*, "heavens." *U,* "and." *Erṣetu*, "earth." In this common word pair, the "earth" refers to the netherworld, forming a cosmic merism.

šamê u erṣetim

Line 10: *Nabû*, "to name, to decree." *Arāku*, "to be long, to last long." UD = *ūmu*, "day." *Šaṭāru*, "to write, to inscribe." Lines 8–10 comprise the second petition. The two imperatives with their objects are parallel, describing sequential action Nebuchadnezzar wants the god to do on his behalf: he wants the god to pronounce long life and then inscribe that decree on his tablet.

ibi arāku ūmīya šuṭur littūtim

Line 11: *(Ina) maḫar*, "before, in the presence of, in front of someone." LUGAL = *šarru*, "king."

maḫar Marduk šarri šamê u erṣetim

Line 12: *Abu*, "father." *Alādu*, "to give birth to" (female subject), "to engender" (male subject). Note that *epšētūya* harks back to line 3, where "my good deeds" formed the basis of the first petition. Now in the third petition (lines 11–13) Nebuchadnezzar requests Nabu to commend his good deeds to Marduk. *Šumguru* (Š of *magāru*), "to cause to be acceptable, agreeable, to induce a deity to accept a prayer, pious deed" (on the latter meaning, see CAD M/1, 42). The final vowel on the imperative, which we expect to be *šumgir*, is superfluous.

abi ālidīka epšētūya šumgir(i)

Line 13: *Qabû*, "to say, to speak, to command." *Dumqu*, "favor, goodness." Idiomatically, *dumqī* (pl) *qabû* means "to decree one's well-being" (see *CDA*, 62). Nebuchadnezzar requests Nabu to give him general well-being. The two imperatives are again sequential:

14. [d]*na-bi-um-ku-du-úr-ri-ú-ṣu-úr* 15. *lu* LUGAL *za-ni-na-an* 16. *li-iš-ša-ki-in i-na pi-i-ka*

he wants the god to commend Nebuchadnezzar's good deeds and then decree his well-being. Note the grammatical parallelism between the second and third petitions: a prepositional phrase begins each (lines 8a, 11a); an epithet or two describing the item/person identified in the prepositional phrase follows (lines 8b–9, 11b–12a, both including the words *šamê u erṣetim*); then each conclude with two imperatives and their object (lines 10, 12b–13).

qibi dumqūya

Line 14: The last three lines of the prayer form its final petition. Lines 14–15 contain the direct speech that the supplicant, in line 16, wishes to be placed in the mouth of the god. [d]*Nabû-kudurri-uṣur*, "Nebuchadnezzar," means "O Nabu, protect the eldest son!" *Kudurru* in the sense of "eldest son" is almost exclusively used in proper names. See *CDA*, 165 (*kudurru* III) and CAD K, 497 (*kudurru* C).

Nabium-kudurri-uṣur

Line 15: *Lū* is a particle expressing a wish, "may it be, let it be," or affirmation, "indeed, verily." It is related to the precative. One's translation will be determined by how one understands the purpose of the deity's direct speech (expressing the deity's wish or the deity's asseveration) within the final petition of the prayer (line 16). *Zāninānu*, "provisioner, provider" (only attested here), is related to the more common *zāninu*. See CAD Z, 45–46. Note the lack of a case ending on the noun. Nebuchadnezzar's role as king is directly related to his ability to provide for his subjects.

lū šarru zāninān

Line 16: *Naškunu* (N of *šakānu*), "to be placed." In keeping with the characteristics of a petition, the verb is a precative. *Pû*, "mouth." Nebuchadnezzar expresses the desire that Nabu would utter the words in lines 14–15, apparently before Marduk.

liššakin ina pīka

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

Nebuchadnezzar's first petition is a series of requests: for a long life, a stable throne, an enduring reign, and the conquest of his enemies. These desires are quite typical of ancient Near Eastern kings, including those in Israel and Judah as depicted in the Hebrew Bible. An interesting example from the Bible is Solomon in 1 Kgs 3. When given the opportunity to ask Yahweh for anything (v. 5), Solomon chose wisdom to govern his people (vv. 7–9) rather than long life,

great wealth, or security from enemies.[1] His choice so pleased Yahweh that the deity decided to grant Solomon all of the other things that he did not request (see vv. 12–14). These additional gifts look very similar to what Nebuchadnezzar requests in our prayer. Solomon's choice may look somewhat distinctive upon first glance, but it should be kept in mind that wisdom was often characterized as a gift of the gods in descriptions of ancient Near Eastern kings.

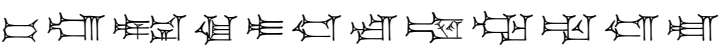
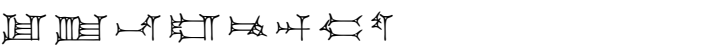
The idea of a heavenly ledger, sometimes referred to as the tablet of destiny and in line 8 of our prayer as "the true writing board, which establishes heaven and netherworld," is found throughout Mesopotamian literature and corresponds to the Hebrew Bible's heavenly scroll (סֵפֶר). Shalom Paul has listed a great many relevant texts from Mesopotamian literature as well as fourteen that name or allude to the heavenly scroll in the Hebrew Bible (Exod 32:32–33, Isa 4:3, 34:16–17, 65:6, Jer 17:13, 22:30, Mal 3:16, Ps 40:8, 56:9, 87:6, 139:16, Dan 7:10, 10:21, and 12:1).[2] Despite the common mythological notion of a heavenly ledger, the Hebrew Bible differs, as we would expect in light of its monotheistic editing, in that there is no separate scribal god that serves Yahweh's court. Either Yahweh writes in this book himself (see, e.g., Exod 32:32–33) or some other divine being must do it, though one is never actually named (see, e.g., Mal 3:16).

[1] One might compare this request and its purpose to the characterization of Hammurabi in the prologue and epilogue of his Code. See Martha Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor* (2d ed.; SBLWAW 6; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 76–81, 133–40.
[2] Shalom Paul, "Heavenly Tablets and the Book of Life," *JANES* 5 (1973), 345–53.

TRANSLATION:

1. O Nabu, true heir, exalted vizier, 2. pre-eminent one, beloved of Marduk, 4. look upon 3. my deeds favorably (and) joyfully and 7. give to me for a gift 5. lasting life, the fullness of extreme old age, 6. the firmness of (my) throne, the longevity of (my) reign, the ruination of (my) foes, 7. (and) the conquest of (my) enemy's land. 8. On your true writing board, which establishes the boundary 9. of heaven and netherworld, 10. pronounce the long-lasting of my days, inscribe extreme old age (for me). 11. Before Marduk, the king of heaven and netherworld, 12. the father who engendered you, make my deeds acceptable, 13. decree my well-being. 16. Let (the following phrase) be placed in your mouth: 14. "Nebuchadnezzar 15. is indeed the king, the provider!"

CUNEIFORM:

1. 
2. 

3. [illegible]
4. [illegible]
5. [illegible]
6. [illegible]
7. [illegible]
8. [illegible]
9. [illegible]
10. [illegible]
11. [illegible]
12. [illegible]
13. [illegible]
14. [illegible]
15. [illegible]
16. [illegible]

A Hymn to Marduk: *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* I 1–40

ALAN LENZI

MARDUK:

See page 291.

THE HYMN:

The present hymn forms the introduction to a sophisticated literary poem called *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*, "I will praise the Lord of wisdom." The lord in the title is of course Marduk. The poem was written in four parts ("tablets") of one hundred-twenty lines each and comes down to us today on over four dozen tablets and fragments in various conditions of preservation.

The opening hymn in *Ludlul* I 1–40 expatiates upon Marduk's anger and mercy. These contrasting attributes are praised thematically but the hymn also sets up a serial relationship between the two, especially clear in lines 2 and 4: Marduk's wrath is followed by his mercy. We may read this expatiation as evidence of divine caprice or a god's twisted malevolence, but Shubshi-meshre-Shakkan, the sufferer who speaks in the first person here (and speaks for the poem's anonymous author, we presume), apparently did not. Rather, the opening hymn reflects this man's personal experience of Marduk, which the rest of the poem retrospectively recounts. The god who became angry with him—precisely why remains unclear—inflicted suffering upon him both socially (Tablet I) and physically (Tablet II) and then subsequently healed his body (Tablet III) and restored him to his previous social standing (Tablet IV). The poem ends as it began: with praise for Marduk (see IV 120). Despite our modern objections, therefore, Marduk, according to *Ludlul*, is not the divine equivalent of the cat that toys with its mouse before devouring it. Rather, he is a deity that ultimately shows mercy to frail and imperfect humans who have angered him. Shubshi-meshre-Shakkan has experienced this mercy and is intent upon telling others what Marduk has done for him (see line 39).

The hymn, like *Ludlul* as a whole, employs rare words, complex grammar, and a sophisticated poetic style. Antithetical couplets dominate the hymn, a

handful of which comprise two four line strophes (see lines 9–12 and 29–32) that recall Sumerian hymnic style.[1] But the hymn is also punctuated by lines that do not conform to this dominant style. For example, lines 2, 4, 33, and 34 all attest a semantic antithesis *within* their lines and lines 19–20 form a couplet with *synonymous* parallelism (see also lines 39–40, possibly).

The hymn's structure may be analyzed in various ways. For example, one might see the placement of Marduk's name as a structuring principle. It appears in lines 3, 11, and 31, each of which is the third line of a four-line strophe (1–4, 9–12, and 29–32). But it is not clear how this informs our reading of the text, since the segments thus delineated do not evince a clear thematic coherence or progression.

Albertz has proposed a detailed structure in which a double frame (lines 1–4, 29–36, 37–40) announces the theme of the hymn while the hymn's core (lines 5–28) develops it. Lines 1 and 37–40 correspond in their use of the first person voice and form the first, hortatory frame of the hymn. Lines 1–4 correspond to lines 29–36 thematically and form the second frame, presenting the initial praise for Marduk's anger and relenting (lines 1–4) and his paramount position among the gods with regard to the same (29–36). Only here, as noted above, does one find both anger and mercy mentioned within the same line (lines 2, 4, 33, and 34). The core of the hymn, according to Albertz, may be divided into three equal parts: lines 5–12, 13–20, and 21–28. Each of these develop the theme of Marduk's anger and relenting with regard to the deity's character (lines 5–12) or the impact of Marduk's anger and relenting on humanity (lines 13–20 and 21–28). Albertz sees each of these core parts breaking down further into two antithetical couplets followed by a four line strophe (of varied structure: A, B, A′, B, as in lines 9–12, or A, B, C // D, as in lines 17–20 and 25–28[2]). Although one may balk at interpreting the final twelve lines of the hymn (nearly a third of it) as part of its frame, Albertz's analysis brings out several important features of the text. Moreover, the remainder of the article shows how the introductory hymn orients the interpretation of the entire poem.

Moran presents a much simpler structure. As he reads it, the hymn consists of three parts, each of which starts with a 1cs precative verb. Part one begins in line 1, two in line 37, and three in line 39. The first part he calls "objective, "for it hymns the wrath and mercy of Marduk without specific reference to the speaker." The second part tells of the speaker's experience; and the third "announces his intention to provide the people with instruction in the worship of Marduk."[3] Although one might hesitate to see *three* parts so distinguished, the use of first person precatives at the beginning and then again only at the end of the hymn is surely significant (as Albertz would affirm, too). On the one hand, the absence of the first person from lines 2–36 practically hides the speaker for

[1] This style is also evidenced in lines 1–4, but this strophe does not employ antithetical couplets.
[2] His understanding of line 27 differs significantly from the text presented below.
[3] See Moran, 255.

most of the hymn and thereby emphasizes the hymn's central concern, Marduk's character. On the other hand, despite its limited usage, the first person voice turns the hymn into a testimonial account, and the precatives generate a perlocutionary effect of exhortation and instruction—common in hymnic discourse. Despite presenting Marduk as its prominent theme, therefore, the hymn is actually quite personal and intends to expand Marduk's claim over the lives of those who hear it.

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Marduk. See page 296.

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[i] The text used by Moran and Albertz differs in details from the present edition, which benefited from the new duplicate from Sippar, published in George and Al-Rawi.

1. *lud-lul* EN *né-me-qí* DINGIR *muš*-[*ta-lum*]

Line 1: *Dalālu*, "to praise." As many of the prayers in this volume have shown, the 1cs precative form of *dalālu*, *ludlul*, is frequently found in the closing line(s) of prayers as part of the common "promise of praise" motif. Here the word *ludlul* opens the text and marks its hymnic tone. The initial first person verb signals that the hymn is uttered by the sufferer in the poem, a man named Shubshi-meshre-Shakkan (see III 44, IV 111, and IV 119). But the first person voice fades completely from view with the second word of the line. The large majority of the remaining hymn is centered on describing and praising the object of the initial verb, Marduk, the "lord of wisdom." The first person voice only returns in the hymn's closing lines (I 37 and 39). EN = *bēlu*, "lord." *Nēmequ*, "wisdom." *Bēl* X is a common construction in Akkadian. When referring to humans *bēl* can designate, among other things, a person responsible for or possessor of the noun that follows, whether an office, object, or something more abstract (see CAD B, 198; e.g., *bēl šutummi*, "steward of the storehouse," *bēl narkabti*, "charioteer," or *bēl dabābi*, "adversary" [lit. "owner of a law-

2. *e-ziz mu-ši mu-up-pa-šîr ur-ri*

3. ^{d}AMAR.UTU EN *né-me-qí* DINGIR *muš-ta-lum*

4. *e-ziz mu-ši mu-up-pa-šîr ur-ri*

5. *šá ki-ma* UD-*mi me-ḫe-e na-mu-ú ug-gat-su*

suit"]). Similarly with deities (see CAD B, 193). For example, Ea is called *bēl pirištim*, "lord of the secret council," in an OB text from Malgium. *Bēl nēmeqi*, "lord of wisdom," here and in line 3 identifies Marduk as the divine possessor and distributor of wisdom. DINGIR = *ilu*, "god." *Muštālu*, "thoughtful, deliberate, circumspect." As mimation had disappeared in SB Akkadian, one may also read the word as *muš-ta-lu*$_4$. In any case, we expect an acc. case here, since *ilu muštālum* is in apposition to the object of the verb, *bēl nēmeqi*. *Muštālum* is also used to translate one of Marduk's names in *Enūma eliš* VI 137 alongside *eziz* (see our line 2). See also AN = ^{d}A-nu-um (Richard L. Litke, *A Reconstruction of the Assyro-Babylonian God-Lists*, AN : ^{d}an-nu-um *and* AN : anu ša amēli [Texts from the Babylonian Collection 3; New Haven: Yale Babylonian Collection, 1998], 90: 192).

ludlul bēl nēmeqi ilu muštālum

Line 2: *Ezēzu*, "to be(come) angry, to rage." The form of the word is a 3ms predicative. (Participles of stative verbs occur only rarely outside of proper names, see *GAG* §85d.) *Mūšu*, "night." *Napšuru* (N of *pašāru*), "to be released, to become reconciled, to forgive." *Urru*, "daybreak, day." Note the use of the participle in parallel to the predicative *eziz*. The alternation in this line between negative and positive attributes or images of the deity sets the pattern for the remainder of the hymn, with only a few exceptions.

eziz mūši muppašir urri

Line 3: Adopting the typical Sumerian hymnic style, the opening couplet is repeated nearly verbatim in lines 3–4. The major difference, of course, is that the deity's name, ^{d}AMAR.UTU = *Marduk*, replaces the initial verb in line 1. This is a slight variation from the norm. See lines 9–12. For similar uses of this hymnic form *in prayers*, see Mayer, *UFBG*, 40.

Marduk bēl nēmeqi ilu muštālum

Line 4: In a society that relied on oil lamps and the moon for light after sundown, the night would be an apt association with negative emotions such as anger and fear. The first light of dawn would have been a welcomed relief from the darkness.

eziz mūši muppašir urri

Line 5: The opening relative pronoun (*ša*) indicates the line is dependent on an earlier noun, namely, Marduk. Since the subject of the nominal clause that follows, *uggatu*, "fury, rage," has a resumptive 3ms pronominal suffix on it (*–šu*, indicated in the writing as *–su* since the cluster *–tš–* becomes *–ss–*), the relative particle is best translated as "whose." *Kīma*, "like, as." UD = *ūmu*, "day," but the word can also be read as the homonymous *ūmu*, "storm," often used to describe demons. *Meḫû*, "storm." Based on equivalencies found in lexical and bilingual texts (see the citations in *AHw*, 642, 1420 and CAD M/2, 4–5), it seems most likely that *ūmi meḫê* in construct means something like "very violent storm." *Namû*, "steppe, deserted area, pasture lands." Marduk's anger is likened to a powerful natural force that leaves destruction in its wake.

ša kīma ūmi meḫê namû uggassu

6. *ù ki-i ma-nit še-re-e-ti za-aq-šú ṭa-a-bu*

7. *uz-zu-uš-šu la ma-ḫar a-bu-bu ru-ub-šú*

8. *mu-us-saḫ-ḫir ka-ra-as-su ka-bat-ta-šú ta-a-a-rat*

9. *šá nak-bat qa-ti-šú la i-na-áš-šu-ú šá-ma-aʾ-ú*

Line 6: *U*, "and." Given the fact that the statements in lines 5 and 6 are antithetical, one might translate the conjunction as an adversative, "but." *Kī* (*kî*), "like, as." *Mānitu*, "breeze, gentle wind." *Šērtu*, "morning," pl. *šērētu*, "morning hours." *Zâqu*, "to blow, to waft, to gust." The inf. is being used as a gerund here. *Ṭābu*, "sweet, good." The adj. is 3ms predicative (*ṭāb*) with the subjunctive *–u* (line 7 is still part of the relative clause begun in line 6). Notice the grammatical parallelism between lines 5 and 6. In a land known for its scorching temperatures, the morning breeze must have been an especially comfortable and enjoyable part of the day, thus making it an apt simile for Marduk in a favorable mood.

u kī mānit šērēti zâqšu ṭābu

Line 7: *Uzzu*, "anger, rage." The form includes the locative-adverbial suffix *–um* (= *ina*) before the 3ms pronominal suffix (*–šu*); the *m* of the former has assimilated to the *š* of latter (*–mš–* becomes *–šš–*). *Maḫāru*, "to confront, to face, to oppose." *Lā maḫār*, a negated inf. in the absolute form, literally means "not confronting," thus "unstoppable, irresistible, not opposable." *Abūbu*, "flood," is often used metaphorically to characterize the inexorable power of a deity's anger, a king's military actions, or either's weapons (see CAD A/1, 78–79). *Rūbu*, "anger, turmoil, fury." Juxtaposing the words *abūbu* and *lā maḫār* in this line conveys the overwhelming power of Marduk's anger. Like water breaking through a levee, it cannot easily be stopped.

uzzuššu lā maḫār abūbu rūbšu

Line 8: *Mussaḫḫiru*, "merciful," probably based on the Gtn participle of *saḫāru*, "to turn back/towards someone with concern, favor," is a 3ms predicative (note the lack of a case ending). See CAD M/2, 235 (s.v. *mussaḫru*) for the one other known instance of this word, also used predicatively. *Karšu*, lit. "stomach," but here it means "mind, mood." The form of the word used with suffixes, *karaš–*, puts the final consonant adjacent to the *š* of the 3ms pronominal suffix. The resulting *–šš–* becomes *–ss–*. *Kabattu* (also *kabtatu*, see line 36), lit. "liver," but here it means "mood, temper, emotions." *Târu*, "to return, to turn back, to relent." This form is also predicative (3fs).

mussaḫḫir karassu kabattašu târat

Line 9: *Nakbatu*, "weight, combat power, main force." *Qātu*, "hand." *Nakbat qātišu* is the object of the verb in this line. *Našû*, "to lift, to carry, to bear." *Šamāʾū* (*šamāmū*), "heavens," is a poetic term synonymous with the more common *šamû*. Marduk's overwhelming power is unbearable even at the cosmic level.

ša nakbat qātišu lā inaššû šamāʾū

10. *rit-tuš rab-ba-a-ti ú-kaš-šu mi-i-ta*

11. ^{d}AMAR.UTU *šá nak-bat qa-ti-šú la i-na-áš-šu-ú šá-ma-aʾ-ú*

12. *rab-ba-a-ti rit-ta-a-šú ú-kaš-šu mi-i-ta*

13. *šá i-na lib-ba-ti-šú up-ta-at-ta-a qab-ra-a-tum*

Line 10: *Rittu*, "hand, palm." The final vowel of the 3ms suffix has been elided. Compare line 12. *Rabbu* (m), *rabbatu* (f), "soft, gentle." Given the fact that two Assyrian MSS read *rabbat* here (MSS AA and ff, partially restored), it is probably best to understand *rabbati*, attested in two late Babylonian MSS (MSS gg and ii), as a 3fs predicative with a superfluous vowel attached—not atypical in late manuscripts. *Mītu* means "dead." "Dead" is probably not to be understood here as the cessation of all bodily functions but as "moribund, dying, as good as dead." *Kuššu* (D of *kâšu*) is problematic. Formally, it is a 3cs durative with subjunctive. Semantically, however, one can take it to mean "to help" (*CDA*'s *kiāšu*; CAD's *kâšu* B) or "to delay" (*CDA*'s *kâšu*; CAD's *kâšu* A). If one accepts the latter verb, one must take the phrase to mean "it delays (the death of) the dying" (see, e.g., CAD K, 295). If one accepts the former verb, one faces the problem that the CAD offers no certain attestations of this verb in the D stem (K, 295). This issue has been mollified slightly by the fact that new material in *Ludlul* IV 26 (according to the line numbering of Annus and Lenzi) does attest it in a broken line that occurs in a context of the sufferer recounting his salvation: [. . .] *ukaššu Zarpān*[*ītu*], "whom Zarpanitu helps." Given this attestation and the fact that "help" or "rescue" makes contextual sense in line 10, this rendering seems to be the most likely understanding of the verb (see likewise Foster, 395; George and Al-Rawi, 194). Marduk, this line states, can also be tender and caring, rescuing those destined for the grave.

rittuš rabbat(*i*) *ukaššu mīta*

Line 11: Lines 9–12 employ the Sumerian hymnic style by repeating a couplet, first without the deity's name and then with it. Unlike lines 1 and 3, which also employ this literary form, the insertion of the deity's name in line 11 does not replace a word in line 9. This is the typical execution of the form.

Marduk ša nakbat qātīšu lā inaššû šamāʾū

Line 12: The line varies from its mate in line 10 in that the initial pair of words has switched places. Notice also that the 3ms pronominal suffix on *rittu* shows its final vowel in this line.

rabbat(*i*) *rittušu ukaššu mīta*

Line 13: *Ina*, "in, on, by, among, from," is best understood here as "on account of." *Libbātu*, pl. "wrath, fury." *Putattû* (Dt of *petû*), "to be opened." *Qabru*, "grave." The opening (i.e., digging) of graves suggests the need to bury the dead, the apparent result of Marduk's anger.

ša ina libbātīšu uptattâ qabrātum

14. *i-nu-šú ina ka-ra-še-e ú-šat-bé ma-aq-tú*

15. *ik-ke-lem-mu-ma i-né-es-su-ú* ^{d}LAMMA *u* ^{d}ALAD

16. *ip-pal-la-as-ma a-na šá is-ki-pu-šú* DINGIR-*šú i-saḫ-ḫur-šú*

Line 14: *Inūšu* (Assyrian, *enūšu*, rendered *enuššu* in MS ff from Nimrud, for which see George and Al-Rawi, 197), "at that time, then." *Karaštû* (*karāšu*), "disaster, catastrophe." Generally, *maqtu* indicates a destitute person or a fugitive—one who has fallen through the social safety net, so to speak (see CAD M/1, 254–55). Lines 13 and 14 indicate that many people will die when Marduk is angry, but he also has mercy on the devastated survivors of his wrath.

inūšu ina karašê ušatbi maqtu

Line 15: *Nekelmû*, "to frown at." The form of the word is N 3cs durative. *Nesû*, "to withdraw, to be distant." *Lamassu* (= ^{d}LAMMA) and *šēdu* (= ^{d}ALAD) are anonymous tutelary deities of individuals, temples, gates, or cities, who are, as line 16 shows, distinct from but conceptually related to one's personal god (*ilu*). *Lamassu* and *šēdu*, female and male respectively, appear together frequently in inscriptions and texts (see CAD L, 63–64 and Š/2, 257–58). *Lamassū* are depicted in iconography as female deities in a human form leading devotees before a seated god. Acquiring (*rašû*) a divine guardian is a stroke of good fortune for a person. One benefits from their divine protection as these deities walk at one's side (*ida alāku*, see *Ludlul* I 45) or go before and behind (*pāni u arki alāku*) their ward. But when these agents of protection withdraw (*nesû*), leave (*ezēbu*), re-deploy themselves (*šanâ saḫāru*, "to turn to another," *šanâ še'û*, "to search for another"; see *Ludlul* I 46), get angry (e.g., *ezēzu*), or the like, one is exposed to danger because the divine hedge of protection is removed. In our line Marduk simply glowers and these protective agents dismiss themselves, leaving their ward open to harm. Clearly Marduk's displeasure is enough to scare off the lowly tutelary deities. Conversely, a mere glance of concern from Marduk as line 16 says, and one's divine protectors return. The hierarchy of the divine world closely parallels human social interaction: the human and divine kings' decisions trump all lower-level contracts or agreements. Even the terseness that relates Marduk's mood in these lines (*ikkelemmû-ma* and *ippallas-ma*) suggests he need only speak a single word and others scramble to fall into line. This is precisely how one expects peons to behave under an absolute ruler.

ikkelemmû-ma inessû lamassu u šēdu

Line 16: *Naplusu* (N of *palāsu*), "to see, to look at," often though not exclusively implies a benevolent intent. *Ana* begins a prepositional phrase in which a subordinate clause (starting with *ša*) is embedded. *Sakāpu*, "to push away, to reject, to forsake." The subject of this verb must be the personal god, mentioned next in the line. The pronominal suffix on this verb is resumptive, referring to the same person as does the initial *ša*, that is, the human ward of the god. There is some question, however, about the subject of the final verb *isaḫḫuršu*, from *saḫāru*, "to turn (back) to, to show favor to." Some take Marduk as the subject (e.g., D. J. Wiseman, "A New Text of the Babylonian Poem of the Righteous Sufferer," *AnSt* 30 [1980], 105; von Soden, *TUAT* III/1, 115, and W. Horowitz and W. G. Lambert, "A New Exemplar of Ludlul Bēl Nēmeqi Tablet I from Birmingham," *Iraq* 64 [2002],

17. *ak-ṣa-at a-na sur-ri en-nit-ta-štú ka-bit-ti*

18. *ik-ka-riṭ-ma za-mar-ma i-tar a-lit-tuš*

19. *id-du-ud-ma ri-ma-šu ú-kan-ni*

245), which is grammatically possible. If, however, one reads the previous line in parallel with line 16, then a pattern emerges in which Marduk's action is followed by the divine protectors' reaction. In this case, *ilšu*, "his god," is the most likely subject of *isaḫḫuršu* (thus the personal god is the subject of both verbs after the *–ma*). The pronominal suffix on the verb is therefore 3ms dative (*–šum*, with the loss of the final *m*) and refers to the same person as the *ana ša* phrase in the middle of the line (see likewise George and Al-Rawi, 197 and others listed there).

ippallas-ma ana ša iskipūšu ilšu isaḫḫuršu

Line 17: *Akṣu*, "dangerous, overbearing, terrible." The adjective is a 3fs predicative. *Ana surri*, "immediately, soon." *Ennettu* (*ennittu*), "punishment." *Kabtu* (m), *kabittu* (f), "heavy, important, grave, grievous." Marduk's terrible wrath is quick to strike.

akṣat ana surri ennittašu kabitti

Line 18: *Nakruṭu* (N of *karāṭu*), "to be merciful, to show pity." (This part of the hymn was not known to CAD K [1971], 215 or N/1 [1980], 196. One may wish to add this reference.) *Zamar*, "quickly, immediately." *Târu*, "to turn, to return, to turn into, to become." Several NB MSS read a final vowel on the verb here. As George and Al-Rawi explain on the basis of a study in NB grammar (198), NB has a tendency to add such final vowels to duratives of middle weak roots (sometimes in II-*y* roots and very often in II-*w* roots, like *târu*). *Ālittu*, "mother, one who gives birth." The *š* on the noun may be an apocopated 3ms suffix. Or, as George and Al-Rawi believe, the *–uš* ending is a late form of the adverbial *–iš* and *ālittuš* should be translated "like a mother" (see likewise Foster, 395). In either case, line 18 shows that Marduk in a merciful mood can quickly turn "motherly" toward humans. The semantic contrast in the couplet of lines 17–18 is complemented by the phonological similarities between them. Compare the *k* and *t* sounds in *akṣat* and *ikkarriṭ*, the sibiliant (*s*, *z*) and *r* sounds in *surri* and *zamar*, and the *t* and *š* sounds in *ennittašu kabitti* and *ālittuš*.

ikkariṭ-ma zamar itâr alittuš

Line 19: Lines 19–20, as presently understood, break the pattern of alternating negative and positive images. *Edēdu* is difficult. All extant MSS read the verb as *iddud*, a G durative. Normally, the verb in the G stem means "to be(come) pointed." But this makes no sense in context. The D stem's meaning, on the other hand, when in hendiadys (as our verb seems to be with *kunnû*), is quite suitable to our context, "to do something quickly, to hasten to" (see CAD E, 24; note the adverbs *ana surri* and *zamar* in lines 17 and 18). But our verb is clearly a G stem. If, however, the alternative restoration of *Ludlul* II 81 is correct ([*i*]*-du-ud*), there may be another attestation of the G stem with the meaning "to hasten" (see Annus and Lenzi, xxvii, n.50, correcting the Akkadian there to [*i*]*-du-ud*, and Moran, 260). Given this possibility and the propensity for our author to use rare verbs or verbs in otherwise rarely attested stems (see Annus and Lenzi, xxvii), translating the G with the D stem's meaning "to hasten to" is the only reasonable and viable alternative at present. *Rîmu* (*reʾmu*, CAD R, 259), "beloved." Though it is a rarely attested word, it makes

20. *ù ki-i a-ra-aḫ bu-ú-ri it-ta-na-as-ḫa-ra* EGIR-*šú*

21. *za-aq-ta ni-ṭa-tu-šú ú-saḫ-ḫa-la zu-um-ra*

22. *pa-á*[*š*]*-ḫu ṣi-in-du-šú ú-bal-la-ṭu nam-ta-ra*

better contextual sense than *rīmu*, "bull." As Foster notes (395, n.2), *rîmu*, "beloved," may be punning on *rīmu*, "bull," given the bovine references in line 20. MS gg personalizes this noun with a 1cs pronominal suffix, "my beloved," against MS ff's 3ms suffix accepted here (see the next line, too). But MS gg's reading seems less satisfactory from a literary perspective. *Kunnû* (D of *kanû*), "to care for, to treat kindly."

iddud-ma rîmašu ukanni

Line 20: *Arḫu*, "cow." *Būru*, "calf." In keeping with the "motherly" language of line 18, Marduk is compared to a cow with a calf. *Arkīšu*, "behind it/him." In light of the meaning of verb, the "him" is probably best understood as a reference to the cow/Marduk. *Itasḫuru* (Ntn of *saḫāru*), "to keep turning back/around, to be constantly in attendance." *Ittanasḫara* is a 3cs durative with the ventive. Just as a cow keeps turning around behind it to look at its calf, so Marduk does to his ward. The variant in MS gg, *arkīya*, "behind me," does not fit this imagery. Instead, it would seem to be working with the analogy of a cow turning around to get physically behind the calf, perhaps to direct it. The variants may correspond to two different stages of cow behavior in relationship to her calf. "When the calf is first born, the cow will nudge the calf from behind, encouraging it to walk. After that, the calf follows the mother, and she will look back to check on it" (personal communication from Ms. Jauson King, a bovine expert). Moran notes that the "cow looking back," especially as the calf nurses, is a common motif in ancient Near Eastern art ("The Babylonian Job," in *The Most Magic Words: Essays on Babylonian and Biblical Literature* [ed. Ronald S. Hendel; CBQMS 35; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2002], 194).

u kī araḫ būri ittanasḫara arkīšu

Line 21: *Zaqtu*, "pointed, barbed." The adjective is a 3fp predicative. *Niṭâtu*, pl. "beatings." *Saḫālu*, "to prick, to pierce." *Zumru*, "body." MS gg, in keeping with its previous two lines' 1cs suffixes, preserves *zumrī*, "my body." Lines 21 and 22 renew the antithetical couplet pattern observed earlier in the hymn. Despite the semantic antithesis, the two lines show very close grammatical parallelism (but note the alteration between feminine [line 21] and masculine [line 22] grammatical gender).

zaqtā niṭâtūšu usaḫḫalā zumra

Line 22: *Pašḫu*, "soothing, resting." The adjective is a 3mp predicative. *Ṣindu* (*ṣimdu*), "bandage." *Bulluṭu* (D of *balāṭu*), "to revive, to restore to health, to cure, to support." *Namtaru*, "death, fate, (name of a demon)." The object of the verb is always the person receiving care, not the thing for which they need a cure. Since it is unlikely that Marduk heals or revives a demon or death, one should probably supply some words for sense: "the one afflicted by" or the like. The hymn once again affirms Marduk's compassionate nature as do many other texts. Note, e.g., this phrase from *Šurpu* VII 77: *Marduk bēlu rēmēnû ša mīta bulluṭa irammu*, "Marduk, the merciful lord, who loves to heal the dying" (CAD M/2, 140).

pašḫū ṣindūšu uballaṭū namtara

23. *i-qab-bi-ma gíl-la-ta uš-raš-ši*

24. *ina* UD *i-šar-ti-šú up-ta-aṭ-ṭa-ru eʾ-il-tum u an-nu*

25. *šu-ú-ma ú-tuk-ka* [*r*]*a-ʾi-i-ba ú-šar-ši*

26. *ina te-e-šú uš-d*[*ap*]*-pa-ru šu-ru-up-pu-ú u ḫur-ba-šú*

Line 23: *Qabû*, "to speak." *Gillatu*, "sin." *Ušrašši* is a ŠD durative from *rašû*, "to acquire." According to Moran, this is the first attestation of *rašû* in this stem (258). Its meaning here is causative, "to cause someone to acquire something." In light of *gillatu*, "to impute" seems a contextually appropriate definition. Marduk need only speak and he reckons sin to someone's account. The offending party is not even mentioned. Whatever one's actions may be, it is the judgment of Marduk that determines one's guilt. This shows another side to Marduk's absolute sovereignty.

iqabbī-ma gillata ušrašši

Line 24: *Išartu*, "prosperity, righteousness, justice." *Putaṭṭuru* (Dt of *paṭāru*), "to be released, to be forgiven." *Eʾiltu*, "bond, liability, sin." *Annu* (*arnu*), "guilt, penalty, fault, sin." The couplet in lines 23–24 shows several structural and grammatical parallelisms to the one in lines 25–26.

ina ūmi išartīšu uptaṭṭarū eʾiltum u annu

Line 25: *Šū-ma* is the 3ms independent pronoun, "he," with the enclitic *–ma*. It emphasizes the implied subject of the verb, Marduk. *Utukku*, "demon," is in apposition to the following noun: *raʾību*, "shivering, cramp," also known to be the name of the demon behind the medical condition (see *qāt Raʾību*, CAD R, 81). *Šuršû* (Š of *rašû*), "to cause someone to acquire (something)." This is the more common causative stem for *rašû*. One's translation must supply the second object, the person on whom the disease is imposed. Although Marduk imputes guilt and causes illness, the hymn is (apparently) free of cynicism or bitterness. Marduk's capricious disposition is simply accepted. Apart from some very poignant but passing protest in Tablet II (lines 10–47), *Ludlul*'s author seems resigned to the will and ways of Marduk (see II 48).

šū-ma utakka raʾība ušarši

Line 26: *Tû*, "incantation." Marduk and his father Ea were famous for their effective incantatory word (see, e.g., *Enūma eliš* IV 19–28, 61; VI 153; VII 11, 26, 33–34 and the prayer to Ea in this volume, page 227). *Šuruppû*, "frost, chills." *Ḫurbāšu*, "frost, shivering, cold tremors." The verb *uštapparu* is another ŠD stem durative from the root *duppuru* (so CAD D, 186–88, defended by William Moran, "*duppuru* [*dubburu*] — *ṭuppuru*, too?" *JCS* 33 [1981], 44–47) or *ṭuppuru* (D of *ṭapāru*, so *AHw*, 1380 and *CDA*, 413). The meaning of the ŠD, attested only here to my knowledge, follows the D stem, "to drive away." The final *–u* on the verb (in all three MSS attesting this line, MSS gg, ff, and JJ, from Babylon, Nimrud, and Nineveh, respectively) presents a problem with regard to the subject of the verb. If *šuruppû* and *ḫurbāšu* are the subjects (and the final *–ū* is the 3mp suffix on the verb), we would expect the verb to be passive, "they were driven away." We might even expect this grammatical understanding given the other parallels between lines 23–24 and 25–26 (note especially the compound subject at the end of line 24 and the passive, plural verb in its

27. *muš-man-ṭi* [*ri-ḫi-iṣ*]*-ti* ^{d}IŠKUR *mi-ḫi-iṣ-ti* ^{d}*èr-ra*

28. *mu-sal-lim* DINGIR *u* ^{d}15 *šab-ba-su-ti*

29. *be-lum* [*mi*]*m-ma* ŠÀ-*bi* DINGIR.MEŠ *i-bar-ri*

30. *ma-na-m*[*a ina* DINGIR.M]EŠ *a-lak-ta-šú ul i-de*

middle). But the verb clearly is *not* passive—at least, if the decipherment is correct. That leaves Marduk as the subject and the unnecessary final *–u* on the verb, which cannot be explained as a subjunctive. Given this impasse, perhaps we could explain the *–u* as a scribal mistake, the result of an early scribe understanding *šuruppû* and *ḫurbāšu* as the subject of the (rare) verb due to the false expectation generated by the parallelisms between lines 23–24 and 25–26. But this is only a conjecture. When the textual basis for this line improves, a clearer answer may arise.

ina têšu uštapparu šuruppû u ḫurbāšu

Line 27: *Riḫiṣtu*, "flooding." George and Al-Rawi, 198 disagree with this restoration but offer no alternative. *Miḫiṣtu*, "strike, blow, wound." Notice the consonance between the two words. ^{d}IŠKUR = *Adad*, a storm god. *Erra* was a god associated with war, plague, and destruction (see page 85). The first word of the line is very problematic. The signs that comprise the verb are securely attested (in one MS) but there is widespread disagreement about how to understand them (see George and Al-Rawi, 198 for several options). *Mušmanṭi* is here assumed to stand for *mušmaṭṭi*, a proposed ŠD participle of the root *maṭû*, "to be(come) small." A very tentative understanding of the verb as "who makes slight" (see the meaning of the D stem) aligns itself with Foster's "who dwarfs(?)" (395). On this rendering, the line suggests that Marduk's rage is so severe that it makes the destruction of Adad and Erra seem small. This understanding stands in contrast with the mercy Marduk effects in I 28. But like so many other translation problems in *Ludlul*, this solution must remain tentative.

mušmanṭi riḫiṣti Adad miḫiṣti Erra

Line 28: *Sullumu* (D of *salāmu*), "to soothe, to reconcile, to create peace." *Ištaru*, "(personal) goddess." *Šabbasû*, "very angry." The adj. is mp and modifies both *ilu* and *ištaru*.

musallim ilu u ištaru šabbasûti

Line 29: A renewed invocation begins the line. Lines 29–32 underline Marduk's absolute inscrutability and therefore superiority even among his peers, the other gods. *Mimma*, "everything, anything, all." ŠÀ = *libbu*, "heart, mind." *Barû*, "to see." Marduk sees, which implies he knows, everything the gods are doing.

bēlum mimma libbi ilī ibarri

Line 30: *Manāma*, "someone," with negative, "no one." *Alaktu*, "way, course," refers to Marduk's decisions. No one among the gods can determine Marduk's intent (see line 32.) *Ul*, "not." *Edû* (*idû*), "to know." *Īde* is preterite in form but the tense of the verb must be derived from context.

manāma ina ilī alaktašu ul īde

31. ^{d}AMAR.UTU [*mi*]*m-ma* ŠÀ-*bi* DINGIR.MEŠ *i-bar-ri*

32. DINGIR *a-a-um-ma ul i-lam-mad ṭè-en-šú*

33. *a-na ki-i kab-ta-at* ŠU-*su* ŠÀ-*ba-šú re-me-ni*

34. *a-na ki-i gaṣ-ṣu* GIŠ.TUKUL.MEŠ-*šú ka-bat-ta-šú muš-neš-šat*

35. *ša la* ŠÀ-*bi-šú man-nu mì-ḫi-iṣ-ta-šú li-šap-ši-iḫ*

36. *e-la kab-ta-ti-šú a-a-ú li-šá-lil* ŠU.II-*su*

Line 31: This line repeats line 29, replacing *bēlum* with Marduk's name.
Marduk mimma libbi ilī ibarri

Line 32: Line 32 repeats the sense of line 30 in different words. *Ayyumma*, "any," with negative, "none, no one." *Lamādu*, "to learn." *Ṭēnu* (*ṭēmu*), "(fore)thought, plan, instruction, understanding." The *n* of this noun assimilates to the following *š* in the pronominal suffix (see the normalization).
ilu ayyumma ul ilammad ṭēššu

Line 33: The unusual construction *ana kī* (von Soden, *TUAT* III/1, 117) prepares for a contrastive comparison of Marduk's nature in the first and second halves of each of the following two lines. This intra-line contrast (rather than contrasting adjacent lines) has not appeared in the hymn since lines 2 and 4. For *kabtu*, see line 17. For *qātu*, see line 9 and note that *–tš–* (at the junction of the noun and suffix) changes to *–ss–*. *Rēmēnû*, "merciful." In lines 33–34, the first half of the line concerns instruments on the exterior of the body that are capable of violence (hand, a bodily agent, and weapons, the hand's instrument). The second half describes internal body parts, representing positive intentions and/or emotions.
ana kī kabtat qāssu libbašu rēmēnî

Line 34: *Gaṣṣu*, "cruel, murderous." GIŠ.TUKUL = *kakku*, "weapon." For *kabattu*, see line 8. *Šunuššu* (Š of *nêšu*), "to keep alive, to sustain." The form of the word is a participle used predicatively (3fs). Marduk is called an *ilu mušneššu* in *Enūma eliš* VI 151.
ana kī gaṣṣū kakkūšu kabattašu mušneššat

Line 35: *Ša lā*, "without." "Without his heart, mind" seems to refer to a lack of Marduk's consent. *Mannu*, "who?" *Šupšuḫu* (Š of *pašāḫu*), "to cause to rest, to pacify, to calm." Without Marduk's consent, no one can avert what he inflicts.
ša lā libbīšu mannu miḫiṣtašu lišapšiḫ

Line 36: This line restates the idea in line 35 in different words. *Ela*, "apart from, in the absence of." *Ayyu*, "which (person)?" *Šūlulu* (Š of *alālu*), "to cause to hang," with *qātu* as object, "to stay one's hand." The line makes clear that no one can thwart what Marduk intends to do. Obviously, lines 35–36 are not internally contrastive as lines 33–34 were nor do they form an antithetical couplet as many of the previous lines do. Rather, the couplet seems to end this part of the hymn on a negative note, emphasizing Marduk's unstop-

37. *lu-šá-pi ug-gat-su šá ki-ma nu-ú-ni a-ku-lu ru-šum-tú*

38. *i-nu-nam-ma za-mar ki-i ú-bal-li-ṭu mi-tu-tu*

39. *lu-šal-mid-ma* UN.MEŠ *qit-ru-ba gu-ma-al-šin*

pable prerogative to punish. *Miḫiṣtu* (as in line 27) and *qātu* are the objects of the verbs in each of these lines. Just as *qātu* the agent was paired to *kakkū* the instrument in line 33, *qātu* the agent is here paired to *miḫiṣtu* the agent's action.

ela kabtatīšu ayyu lišālil qāssu

Line 37: *Šūpû* (Š of [*w*]*apû*), "to make manifest, to make glorious, to proclaim." Lines 37 and 39 return to the first person voice, which has been absent in the poem since line 1. Like line 1, both verbs are in the precative and, conspicuously, commence their respective lines. *Uggatu*, see line 5. The rest of line 37 is a subordinate clause that further describes the first person speaker. *kīma*, see line 5. *Nūnu*, "fish." *Akālu*, "to eat." *Rušumtu*, "mud, silt." Fish and birds are attested in rituals describing the most distant removal of an unwanted item, e.g., sin (see the examples cited in CAD N/2, 339). The two animals have access to the extremes of the cosmos in that birds fly to the heavens and fish swim into the depths. Here in line 37 the sufferer is using the fish simile, I think, to state that he was at the lowest point to which a creature could descend. The simile probably reflects the fact that a common fish in the Euphrates, carp, was a bottom dweller that would scour the riverbed for food.

lušāpi uggassu ša kīma nūni ākulu rušumtu

Line 38: A pair of couplets (lines 37–40) closes the hymn, though they are not strongly antithetical as in previous lines. There is, however, a clear antithesis in terms of agents. In the first member of each couplet the (first person) speaker of the hymn is the subject of the verbs (see the first person verbs in lines 37 and 39). In the second member of each couplet (lines 38 and 40), Marduk or one of his attributes is subject. *Enēnu*, "to grant favor." The *–am* ending on the verb is the 1cs dative suffix, showing to whom favor was granted. *Enēnu* here is an *a/u* verb whereas the homonymous root used in *Ludlul* I 41, meaning to "punish," is *i/i*. *Zamar*, see line 18 (compare the use of *arḫiš* in *Ludlul* III 50 and the problematic IV 28, according to Annus and Lenzi's numbering, to describe the sufferer's rapid recovery). *Kī* here probably means "when," "like," or "just as" (compare line 6). *Bulluṭu* (D of *balāṭu*), see line 22. *Mītūtu* could be understood as the abstract noun "(state of) death." In this case, we would need to supply, as in line 22, "the one afflicted by." More likely, one could understand *mītūtu* as a pl. substantival use of the adj. *mītu*, "dead" (see similarly line 10). In any case, the idea in the line is that the sufferer eventually becomes the object of Marduk's mercy, which he has extolled earlier.

īnunam-ma zamar kī uballiṭu mītūtu

Line 39: *Šulmudu* (Š of *lamādu*), "to teach." UN.MEŠ = *nišū*, "people." On the sufferer's role as teacher, see also *Ludlul* II 18, 32, and III line p. *Qitrubu* (Gt of *qerēbu*), "to come close up," in the pred. means "is imminent." *Qitruba* is a 3ms pred. with the ventive. *Gumālu* is a *hapax*, according to George and Al-Rawi (198), and may mean something like "mercy, clemency" (see the *CDA*'s online archive at http://www.trin.cam.ac.uk/cda archive/lemmata.htm). It is currently not in any of the dictionaries. MS ff, though bro-

40. *ḫi-is-sa-as-su* SIG$_5$-*tu*[*m*] [*ar*$^{?}$]-*na*$^{?}$-*ši-na lit-bal*

ken (*gi*-[*mil-šin*]), probably used the more common cognate *gimillu*, "favor, a turn in kind (both requested and bestowed)," here. Since the *purās*-noun formation is often used with prayer-words (see *GAG* §55k sub 15b), we might place *gumālu* in this semantic field; thus, the word could be specifically defined as "a plea for favor, mercy, clemency (something both requested and bestowed)." The 3fp pronominal suffix on the noun associates *gumālu* with *nišū* (fp), mentioned earlier in the line. This antecedent to the pronoun creates a parallel with the noun to which *–šina* is attached in line 40.

lušalmid-ma nišī qitruba gumālšin

Line 40: The term *ḫissatu* is used elsewhere to indicate intelligence, understanding, remembrance, or thought for someone (see CAD Ḫ, 201 and *CDA*, 117). There are only a couple of instances in which the term is used with deities, the most important of which for our purposes describes a person "who recovered on account of the *ḫissatu* of Marduk," [*ša ina*] *ḫissat Marduk ibluṭu* (cited in CAD Ḫ, 202). The CAD translates *ḫissatu* here with "grace." However one chooses to translate the term, it ought to convey the general idea that Marduk shows benevolent consideration for people. SIG$_5$ = *damqu* (m), *damiqtu* (f), "good, favorable, kind." *Arnu*, see line 24. This reconstruction is highly questionable in light of a re-examination of MS ff, which is the only tablet that preserves any hint of the word that once lay before the pronominal suffix. *Tabālu*, "to carry off, to take away." The sufferer ends his hymn with a wish that builds on the optimistic statement in line 39: that Marduk, having heard the people's plea, will take away their sin. This is the only time in the entire opening hymn that we see an explicit statement attributing sin to humans.

ḫissassu damiqtum arnašina litbal

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

Our hymn offers many points of departure for the reader inclined to compare it with biblical literature. Divine anger and its impact on human experience are probably the most obvious and broadest thematic issues communicated in the hymn. But space does not allow even a foray into this vast and complex subject.[1] Rather, the comparative suggestions here are limited to two more manageable issues: the use of BH's cognate to *bēlu*, בַּעַל, and the cultural-literary associations of the morning hours of the day.

The Akkadian construction *bēl X*, "lord of X," has an etymological equivalent in BH's X בַּעַל, "lord of X." Like its Akkadian mate, this phrase can refer to a person responsible for or possessor of the noun that follows. Compare *bēl šutummi*, "steward of the storehouse," with בַּעֲלֵי הָעִיר, "lords of the city, citizens" (e.g., Jud 9:51); *bēl narkabti*, "charioteer," with בַּעֲלֵי הַפָּרָשִׁים, "horsemen" (2 Sam 1:6); and *bēl dabābi*, "adversary" (lit. "owner of a lawsuit") with בַּעַל מִשְׁפָּטִי, "my adversary" (Isa 50:8; lit. "owner of my dispute").

[1] Compare, e.g., the very different attitudes about and contexts for divine anger in Nah 1:2–8 and Job 9:2–24. The latter passage is remarkable for its bitterness, quite in contrast to what we see in *Ludlul*'s opening hymn. For a broad treatment of theodicy in the biblical world, see Antti Laato and Johannes C. de Moor, ed. *Theodicy in the World of the Bible: The Goodness of God and the Problem of Evil* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

Just as Akkadian *bēlu* came to be a proper name for Marduk (*Bēl*), the Biblical Hebrew term בַּעַל was used as an epithet and/or name of an important Canaanite storm-deity, Baal (Northwest Semitic, *Baʿlu*), who may be related to the Syrian and Mesopotamian Ḫaddu/Adad.[1] Some of Baal's local manifestations are attested in the Bible: Baal-Peor (see, e.g., Num 25:3, 5), Baal-Berith (god of Shechem, see Judg 8:33, 9:4), and Baal-Zebub ("Lord of the flies," god of Ekron in 2 Kings 1, though this title is probably a distortion of the original Baal-Zebul, "Lord Prince");[2] still other local manifestations are preserved in nine biblical toponyms (e.g., Baal-Gad in Josh 11:17, 12:7, and 13:3).[3] Although some of Baal's features were appropriated into the mythology of Yahweh by biblical authors,[4] the use of the originally generic term בַּעַל for the Canaanite deity motivated other biblical authors to reject the term for Yahweh altogether (see especially Hos 2:18, but note the PN בְּעַלְיָה, "Yahweh is lord," in 1 Chron 12:5). Apparently, so hated was the epithet/god that early scribes changed attestations of the god's name in the Bible to the derogatory הַבֹּשֶׁת, "the shame" (see Jer 3:24, 11:13, and Hos 9:10), even going so far as to replace the appellation with בֹּשֶׁת when it appears as a theophoric element in personal names (compare, e.g., Ish-boshet in 2 Sam 2:8, etc. with Eshbaal in 1 Chron 8:33, 9:39).[5] Of course, the biblical authors called Yahweh lord, but they did so with the term אָדוֹן.[6]

This Levantine religious polemic may have made the Judean's encounter with Marduk's related title, *Bēl*, during the Babylonian crisis of the sixth century all the more bitter. In several predictions of Babylonian destruction Judean

[1] Opinions vary on the identity of Baal and Adad. See the treatments of the issue in J. C. de Moor and M. J. Mulder, "בַּעַל *baʿal*," *TDOT* 2:192–99; J. Day, "Baal (Deity)," *ABD* 1:543; and W. Herrmann, "Baal," *DDD*, 132. For fuller treatments of the storm god, see Alberto R. W. Green, *The Storm-god in the Ancient Near East* (Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California, San Diego 8; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), who treats the biblical material, too, and the encyclopedic tome from Daniel Schwemer, *Die Wettergottgestalten Mesopotamiens und Nordsyriens im Zeitalter der Keilschriftkulturen* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2001). See also the literature for Adad on page 88.

[2] See K. Spronk, "Baal of Peor," *DDD*, 147–48; M. J. Mulder, "Baal-Berith," *DDD*, 141–44; and W. Herrmann, "Baal Zebub," *DDD*, 154–56.

[3] See the other eight toponyms in *HALOT*, 144 and N. Na'aman, "Baal Toponyms," *DDD*, 140–41 (and related entries). The plural form of the noun, הַבְּעָלִים, appears 18 times in the Hebrew Bible but its meaning is not entirely clear. The term may have been used for various local manifestations of Baal or a more generic term for Canaanite gods in general (see J. Day, "Baal (Deity)," 547).

[4] See the convenient précis in Day, "Baal (Deity)," 548–49. A classic essay on this issue is Frank Moore Cross's chapter "Yahweh and Baʿl" (pp. 147–94) in *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973). See also Reinhard Muller, *Jahwe als Wettergott: Studien zur althebraischen Kultlyrik anhand ausgewahlter Psalmen* (BZAW 387; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008). The use of storm imagery for Yahweh, of course, brings up a topic that intersects with our hymn (see line 5).

[5] See de Moor and Mulder, "בַּעַל *baʿal*," 193, who note these changes are limited to the book of Samuel.

[6] See K. Spronk, "Lord," *DDD*, 531–33 for more about this title, which eventually became a pious substitute (אֲדוֹנָי) for the Tetragrammaton.

prophets seem to relish the idea of the great Babylonian Bel's (בֵּל) defeat and putting to shame (see Jer 50:2, 51:44, and Isa 46:1–2).

The opening several lines of our hymn associate Marduk's favorable nature (i.e., relenting from anger) with the morning (see line 2, 4, and 6). This manner of speaking recalls passages in the Psalter that associate the morning with divine help or hope for divine mercy.[7] Interestingly, several of these passages also occur in the context of a person lamenting divine displeasure. See, for example, Pss 46:6, 59:17 (and contrast the psalmist's enemies who are depicted as dogs roaming about in the evening in vv. 7 and 15), 90:14 (with vv. 5–6), and 143:8. In Ps 130:6 the psalmist describes themselves waiting on Yahweh's favorable answer to their cry with more anticipation than the watchmen awaiting the appearance of the morning. Such a comparison confirms rather explicitly the expectation and hope associated with the morning hours. In light of our Akkadian hymn, Ps 30:6 provides a particularly interesting example of the contrast between night/divine anger and morning/divine favor. In the context of thanksgiving for deliverance (vv. 2–4), the psalmist calls on others to praise Yahweh (v. 5), offering the following as further support for the exhortation to praise: כִּי רֶגַע בְּאַפּוֹ חַיִּים בִּרְצוֹנוֹ בָּעֶרֶב יָלִין בֶּכִי וְלַבֹּקֶר רִנָּה, "although (one is) a moment in his anger, (there is) a lifetime in his favor; weeping lodges in the evening, (but) jubilation belongs to the morning." The Psalter also presents the morning as an appropriate time to request Yahweh's favor (see Pss 5:4 and 88:14) and indicates in Ps 101:8 that judgment of the wicked (i.e., vindication for the psalmist) occurs every morning (לַבְּקָרִים; see also Zeph 3:5). Clearly, the morning was often associated with good things for those in distress. This might make us read the lament in Ps 73:14 as especially bitter, for there the psalmist complains that every morning brings new afflictions (see also Ps 55:10, where the psalmist complains morning, noon, and night).

Why exactly the morning was so often associated with expectation of or requests for Yahweh's favor has elicited several creative explanations.[8] Joseph Blenkinsopp may be closest to understanding the issue when he explains the association as "simply the feeling that morning puts an end to night as a time of danger and fear; it is a time for new beginnings."[9]

[7] The most famous passage in the Bible in this regard may be the optimistic statement in Lam 3:22–23, where the kindnesses of Yahweh (חַסְדֵי יְהוָה) are said to be new every morning (חֲדָשִׁים לַבְּקָרִים).

[8] See, e.g., a summary of Joseph Ziegler's article on the topic ("Die Hilfe Gottes 'am Morgen'," in *Alttestamentliche Studien Friedrich Nötscher zum 60. Geburtstag gewidmet* [ed. Hubert Junker and Johannes Botterweck; Bonner Biblische Beiträge 1; Bonn: Peter Hanstein Verlag, 1950], 281–88) with criticisms of his proposal in Ch. Barth, "בֹּקֶר *bōqer*," *TDOT* 2:226–28.

[9] *Isaiah 1–39: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 437. His comment is made in reference to Isa 33:2.

TRANSLATION:

1. I will praise the lord of wisdom, the circumspect god,
2. Angry at night (but) relenting at daybreak.
3. Marduk, the lord of wisdom, the circumspect god,
4. Angry at night (but) relenting at daybreak.
5. Whose fury, like a violent storm, is a wasteland,
6. But whose blowing, like a breeze of the morning hours, is pleasant.
7. (Who) in his anger is irresistible, his fury a flood,
8. (But) his heart is merciful, his mood relenting.
9. The brunt of whose hand the heavens cannot bear,
10. (But) whose palm is (so) gentle it aids the dying.
11. Marduk, the brunt of whose hand the heavens cannot bear,
12. (But) whose palm is so gentle it aids the dying.
13. On account of whose wrath, graves are opened,
14. At that time he raises up the fallen from catastrophe.
15. He frowns: the divine guardian and protective spirit withdraw.
16. He takes notice: his god turns back to him whom he had rejected.
17. His grievous punishment is immediately overbearing,
18. He shows pity and instantly becomes motherly.
19. He hastens to treat his beloved kindly,
20. And like a cow with a calf, he is ever attentive.
21. His beatings are barbed, they pierce the body,
22. (But) his bandages mollify, they restore (the one afflicted by) the Namtar-demon.
23. He speaks, and he imputes sin,
24. (But) on his day of justice liability and guilt are absolved.
25. He makes (one) acquire the demon shivering,
26. (But) with his incantation he expels chills and cold tremors.
27. Who makes slight(?) the flood(?) of Adad, the blow of Erra,
28. (But) who reconciles (one's) enraged god and goddess.
29. The Lord, he sees everything in the heart of the gods,
30. (But) no one among the gods knows his way.
31. Marduk, he sees everything in the heart of the gods,
32. (But) no god can learn his counsel.
33. As heavy as is his hand, his heart is merciful.
34. As murderous as are his weapons, his intention is life-sustaining.
35. Without his consent, who may assuage his striking?
36. Apart from his intention, who may stay his hand?
37. I, who ate mud like a fish, will extol his anger.
38. He quickly bestowed favor on me, just as he restored the dead.
39. I will teach the people that their plea for favor is near.
40. May his sympathetic concern carry off their sin.

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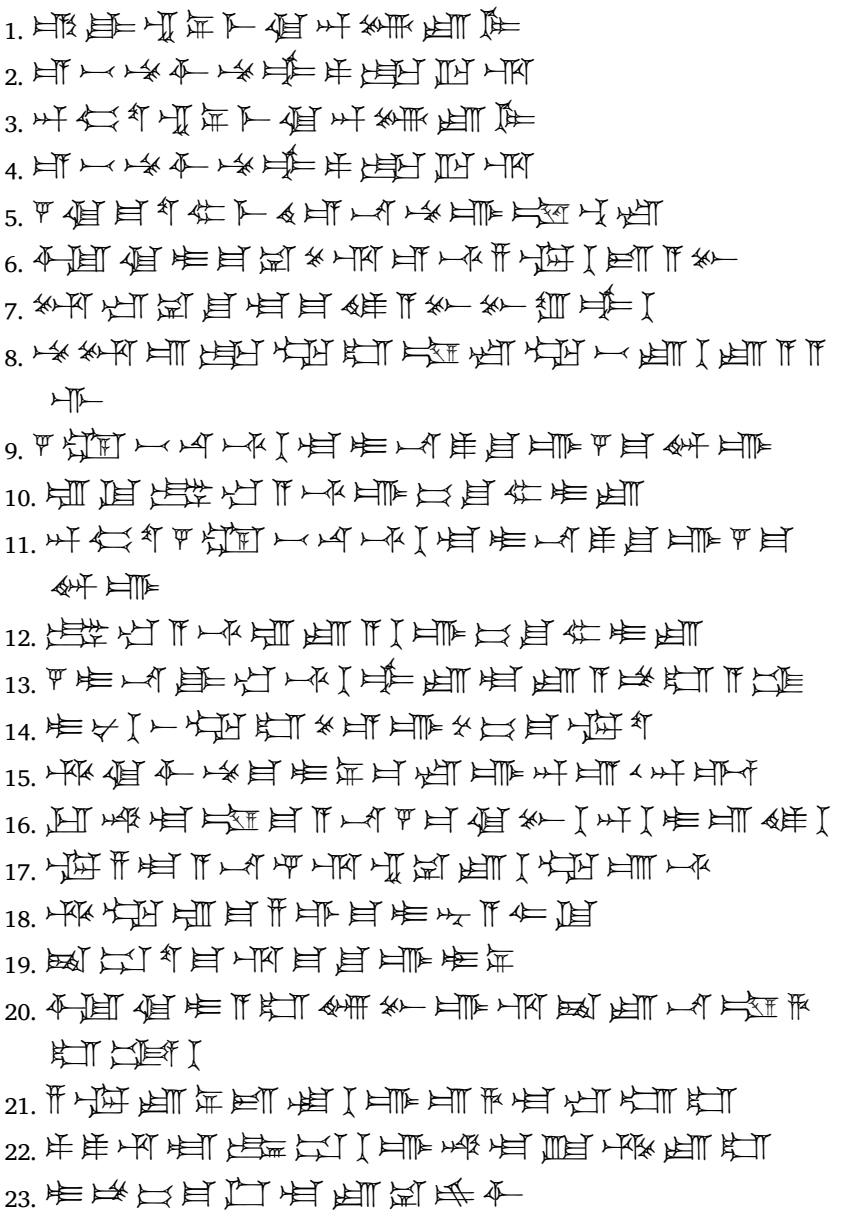

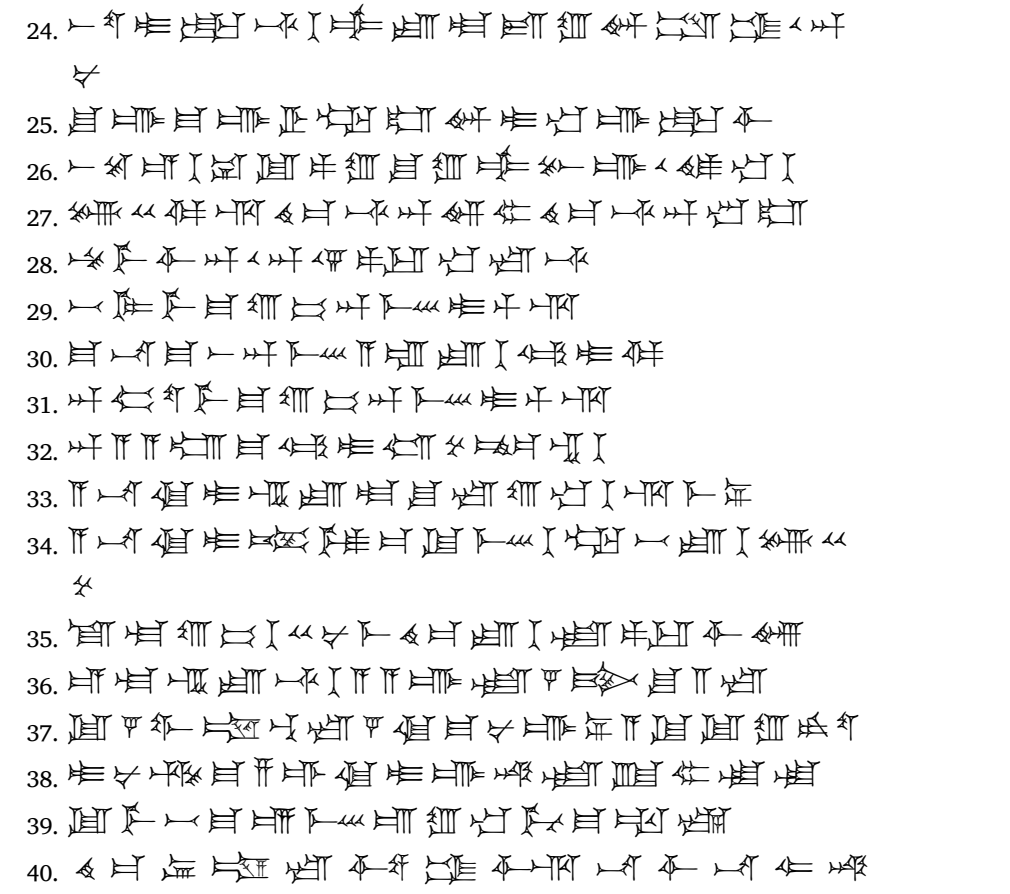

Contributors

TZVI ABUSCH

Rose B. and Joseph Cohen Professor of Assyriology and Ancient Near Eastern Religion, Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies, Brandeis University (Waltham, MA). Nergal 2; Gods of the Night 1

JEFFREY L. COOLEY

Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible, Theology Department, Boston College (Chestnut Hill, MA). To the Gods of the Night; Ea, Shamash, and Asalluḫi 1

CHRISTOPHER FRECHETTE

Assistant Professor of Old Testament, Boston College School of Theology and Ministry (Chestnut Hill, MA). Nisaba 1

KYLE GREENWOOD

Assistant Professor, School of Theology, Colorado Christian University (Lakewood, CO). Anu 1; Marduk 2

CHARLES HALTON

Instructor of Old Testament Interpretation, Southern Seminary (Louisville, KY). An Ershaḫunga to Any God; Girra 2

ALAN LENZI

Assistant Professor, Department of Religious and Classical Studies, University of the Pacific (Stockton, CA). An Ikribu-Like Prayer to Shamash and Adad; A Letter-Prayer to Ninmug; A Royal Hymn to Ishtar; Ghosts of My Family 1; Ea 1a; Gula 1a; Marduk 4; Nabu 1; Sin 1; To Personal Deities; A Tamitu to Shamash and Adad; A NB Royal Prayer to Nabu; A Hymn to Marduk: *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* I 1–40

DUANE SMITH

Independent Scholar (Pomona, CA). Nusku 12; Shamash 1; Shamash 25; Shamash 73

JEFFREY STACKERT

Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible in the Divinity School, University of Chicago (Chicago, IL). An Incantation-Prayer to the Cultic Agent Salt

ANNA ELISE ZERNECKE

Department for Old Testament and Biblical Archaeology, Faculty of Protestant Theology, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz (Germany). Ishtar 2: "The Great Ishtar Prayer"; Ishtar 24

Index

Selected Subjects

Acrostics, 60
Adad, introduction to, 85ff.
Ammiditana, 111, 121
Anu, introduction to, 217–18
Asalluḫi, introduction to, 403–404
Baal, 496–98
Calling the name, 234, 240
Cuneiform font, xvii
Cupid, Babylonian, 114
Curses, 154, 406
Deity (see Supra-human being)
Dingirshadibba, introduction to, 40ff.; relation to biblical literature, 442–43
Divination, Mesopotamia, 36, 86–88, 465; Israel, 81, 471–72
Divine assembly, 125, 320, 393, 398–99
Divine meal, 34, 38, 99–100, 192, 194
Dreams, 180ff.; in biblical literature, 186–87, 381
Ea, introduction to, 227–28
Enlightenment, European, 4
Ershaḫunga, introduction to, 43ff., influence on a shuilla, 293ff., relation to dingirshadibbas, 41
Extispicy, Mesopotamia, 72–73, 86–88, 465; Israel, 79
Fire incantation, 15
Flour, ritual use of, 355–56, 362–63
Fumigation, 193
Ghosts, benevolence invoked, 134ff.; illness and, 197ff.; introduction to, 133; in Israel, 142; provisioning, 142
Girra (Gibil), introduction to, 145ff.
Gods of the night, introduction to, 71ff.
Good news, 471–72
Gula, introduction to, 243–44
Hand-raising, 30–35, 238–39, 353
Heavens, 223–25
Hem, 184, 426, 429, 466
Hinwendung (“turning”), 45, 150, 244, 394, 449
Honey, 124
Hymns, introduction to Akkadian, 56ff., in biblical literature, 123–124
Idāti ittāti lemnēti, 359, 409
Ikribus, introduction to, 46ff.
Images, biblical ideas of, 210–11
Inclusive language, xvi n.12
Incomparability trope, 124–25
Interlinear translation, 448
Ishtar, introduction to, 169ff.
Kultmittelbeschwörung, 29 n.75, 32 n.84, 190ff., 352ff.,
Lamashtu, 19 n.48
Letter-prayers, introduction to, 53ff.; Sumerian, 43 n.157; and biblical literature, 108
Libation, 137, 140
Line numbering, xiv
Marduk, introduction to, 291–93
Mimation, 137, 220, 246, 408
Morning, 498
Nabu, introduction of, 325
Namburbi, equivalent in Israel, 415–17; introduction to, 36ff., ritual actions, 38–39; shuillas and, 30, 38 n.113, 368;
Neo-Assyrianism, 407
Nergal, introduction to, 339; relation to Resheph, 347
Nisaba, introduction to, 351–52
Normalization, Akkadian, xv (see also mimation)
Nusku, introduction to, 179–80; relation to Nisroch, 185;
Old age, 335
Omens, 36, celestial, 405–406
Opening the ear, 328
Oracle, 465, 471–72 (see also tamitus)
Paths, celestial, 411
Personal god, 41, 193, 195, 319, 321–22; introduction to, 431–32

Prayer, Akkadian words for, 19 n.48; and incantation, 13–21; and magic, 16–18, 28, 61; and scribal rubrics, 8, 13–20, 27ff., 41, 46–47, 51, 57, 414; as discourse, 6, 11, 12; as communal, 7, 20–21; as practice, 7, 11; as institutional, 7, 22; extemporaneous in Mesopotamia, 24 n.60; general content of, 12; general definition of, 6; in relation to hymn, 6; initial Mesopotamian definition of, 9; prayer names, 24 n.60; general ritual aspects, 13
Protective spirits, 489
Queries to Shamash, Neo-Assyrian, 52ff.
Raising the head, 234, 240
Reductionism, metaphysical, 3; methodological, 5
Religion, and culture, 5 n.13; defining, 2; definition of, 6
Returning a kindness, 335
Ritual instructions, 13, 32ff., 38ff., 46, 47ff., 190 n.4, 199–200, 201–204, 205, 210, 238, 252, 278–79, 306, 327, 333–34, 355, 361–62, 397–98, 422–23
Ritual purity, 98–99
River ordeal, 40
Royal inscriptions, 54–56, 475–76
Royal prayers, introduction to, 55ff.
Salat prayer, 10
Salt, introduction to, 189
Shamash, introduction to, 197–98
Shaziga, 14
Shepherd, 389
Shigu-prayers, 41 n.139
Shuilla, "audience" concept, 31, 33ff., 280; in relation to biblical literature, 61ff., 279–81, 364, 428 (incantation-prayer); in second millennium BCE, 257; introduction to, 25ff.; Sumerian, 26
Sin, introduction to, 385–86
Snakes, 421ff.
Standing before, 153, 303
Supra-human being, as father, 307; as judge, 379–80; astral aspects of, 252–54, 411; definition of in Mesopotamia, 9; solar imagery of, 379
Tablet of destiny, 480
Tamitus, introduction to, 49ff., relation to Neo-Assyrian queries, 52ff.
Transgress, 308, 441
Transliteration, Akkadian, xiii
Urim and thummim, 471
Votive, texts as, 55, 281
Witchcraft, 146ff., 157ff., 170ff., 190ff., 229ff.; in Israel, 165, 176–77
Writing board, 478

Authors

Abusch, Tzvi, vii, 20, 23, 24, 29, 59, 66, 71, 134, 135, 136, 146, 147, 149, 150, 151, 152, 157, 158, 161, 165, 169, 170, 171, 179, 191, 194, 231, 291, 292, 296, 299, 313, 314, 315, 317, 356, 369, 403, 407, 450, 503
Achenbach, Reinhard, 67
Albani, Mattias, 253
Albertz, Rainer, 24, 65, 434, 443, 484, 485
Albright, William F., 347
Al-Rawi, F. N. H., 58, 72, 73, 485, 488, 489, 490, 493, 496
Altman, Charles B., 56
Ambos, Claus, 18, 33, 34, 35, 198, 219, 245, 246, 355, 367, 370
Andersen, Burton R., 201, 208, 416
Anderson, Gary, 100, 362
Annus, Amar, 18, 190, 228, 299, 412, 485, 488, 490, 495
Arnal, William, 3, 4
Asad, Talal, 3, 4
Avalos, Hector, 243, 245, 246
Bar, Shaul, 182
Barth, Ch., 498
Bayliss, Miranda, 135
Beaulieu, Paul-Alain, 26, 351, 476
Begrich, Joachim, 27, 62, 63, 67, 81, 123, 279, 442
Beinert, Richard A., ix
Ben Zvi, Ehud, ix
Berger, Paul-Richard, 55

Berlejung, Angelika, 27, 105, 230, 245
Biggs, Robert D., 14, 30, 189
Black, Jeremy, xii, xv, 10, 19, 72, 73, 112, 201, 205, 232, 260, 351, 356, 358, 403, 423, 450
Blenkinsopp, Joseph, 239, 498
Bloch-Smith, Elizabeth, 141, 142
Böck, Barbara, 43, 54, 55
Bongenaar, A. C. V. M., 371
Borger, R., 18, 36, 53, 54, 56, 87, 315, 358, 360
Bottéro, Jean, 26, 37, 147, 189, 201
Braun-Holzinger, Eva, 352, 356
Brichto, Herbert Chanan, 142
Brown, David, 412
Burns, John Barclay, 415
Butler, Sally A. L., 29, 43, 181, 182, 185, 363, 376, 388, 390, 392, 393, 396
Butz, Kilian, 191
Cagni, Luigi, 72, 73
Caplice, Richard I., 24, 36, 38
Castellino, G. R., 58, 63
Cavigneaux, A., 105, 106
Charpin, Dominique, 112
Childs, Brevard S., 442
Cohen, Chaim, 460
Collins, Billie Jean, 189
Collon, Dominique, 11, 197, 388
Cooley,, Jeffrey L., 72, 416
Coulter, Charles Russell, 182
Cross, Frank Moore, 497
Cryer, Frederick, 80
Cunningham, Graham, 15
Da Riva, Rocío, 55, 476
Dalglish, Edward R., 64
Dalley, Stephanie, 72
Danti, Michael D., 227
Davidson, Richard M., 154
Day, J., 497
de Moor, Johannes C., 497
Dever, William G., 124
Di Vito, Robert Anthony, 434
Dick, Michael, 27, 105, 191
Dietrich, M., 78, 79
Diewert, David, ix
Dobbs-Allsopp, F. W., 151
Dossin, G., 73, 76
Durkheim, Emile, 3, 4
Ebeling, Erich, x, xi, xiii, 24, 60, 63, 64, 134, 201, 219, 230, 235, 259, 315, 327, 334, 390
Edzard, Dietz O., 56, 57, 73, 112, 219, 351, 352
Eising, H., 194
Eliade, Mircea, 4
Espak, Peeter, 230
Falkenstein, Adam, xiii, 236, 448, 449
Farber, Walter, 134, 171, 173, 189
Fensham, F. Charles, 194
Finet, André, 426
Finkel, Irving, 37, 133, 135, 197, 422, 428
Fischer, Claudia, 198, 201
Fitzgerald, Timothy, 4
Foster, Benjamin R., xiii, 16, 20, 23, 46, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 71, 72, 73, 88, 89, 91, 94, 95, 106, 112, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 121, 123, 136, 147, 151, 158, 171, 179, 182, 201, 207, 208, 210, 219, 221, 231, 233, 235, 246, 259, 262, 263, 267, 272, 293, 296, 298, 300, 315, 327, 370, 385, 388, 390, 396, 404, 407, 423, 426, 434, 435, 448, 449, 454, 476, 485, 488, 490, 491, 493
Fox, Michael V., 124
Foxvog, Daniel, 115
Frame, Grant, 353
Frankena, R., 55, 73, 147, 246
Frankfort, Henri, 56
Frechette, Christopher, vii, 24, 26, 27, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 66, 230, 257, 356, 386, 388
Freedman, Sally, 421
Freud, Sigmund, 3, 4
Fuchs, Andreas, 56
Füglister, Notker, 281
Gabbay, Uri, 43
Galter, Hans D., 230
Gay, Peter, 4
Geertz, Clifford, 3, 4
Geller, M. J., 37, 43, 197
George, Andrew R., xv, 37, 57, 58, 114, 139, 145, 293, 316, 317, 475, 485, 488, 489, 490, 493, 496
Gerstenberger, Erhard S., 65, 281
Gill, Sam, 6, 7

Glassner, J. J., 87
Goetze, Albrecht, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 96, 97
Goodrich, Richard J., ix
Gössmann, Hugo, 73, 77, 78
Grayson, A. Kirk, 37, 57
Green, Alberto R. W., 497
Green, Anthony, xii, 10, 19, 112, 201, 205, 232, 260, 351, 356, 358, 403, 423, 450, 497
Green, Tamara M., 385
Greenberg, Moshe, 186, 471
Greenfield, Jonas C., 232
Greenwood, Kyle R., 320
Groneberg, Brigitte, 57, 58, 169, 171, 173, 268, 328, 370, 438
Gruber, I., 239, 331
Gunkel, Hermann, 62, 81, 123, 442
Güterbock, Hans G., 257, 258, 259
Guthrie, Stewart, 9
Hageneuer, Sebastian, 179, 182
Hallo, William W., 43, 54, 108, 147
Hancock, Maxine, ix
Hanks, William F., 23
Harris, J. Gordon, 335
Hartenstein, Friedhelm, 31
Hecker, Karl, 55, 58, 59, 60, 88, 112, 115, 293
Heeßel, Nils, 33, 43
Heimpel, Wolfgang, 115
Hendel, Ronald, 194, 211
Herrmann, W., 497
Hopkins, David, 362
Horowitz, Wayne, 73, 75, 79, 489
Hrůša, Ivan, 356
Hruška, Blahoslav, 263
Huehnergard, John, xv, 112, 148, 192, 318, 357, 439
Hunger, Hermann, 73, 406, 411
Hunt, Joel, 229, 231, 232, 294, 295, 296, 298, 302, 303, 304, 326, 327, 330
Hurowitz, Victor, 191
Hutter, Manfred, 219, 223, 380
Jacobsen, Thorkild, 56, 201, 434
Janowski, Bernd, 66, 177, 279
Jaques, Margaret, 41, 42, 434
Jeffers, Anne, 80
Joannes, Francis, 189
Johnston, Sarah Iles, 9
Jones, Peter, ix
Karrer, Martin, 380
Katz, Dina, 341
Kienast, Burkhart, 267
Kilian, Rudolf, 66
Kilmer, Anne Draffkorn, 115
King, Jauson, 491
King, Leonard W., 61, 259, 315
Kitz, Anne Marie, 471
Klingbeil, Gerald A., 154
Köcher, Franz, 368
Kramer, Samuel Noah, 230
Kraus, F. R., 53, 54
Kraus, Hans-Joachim, 165
Krebernik, M., 57, 58, 105, 106, 388
Kunstmann, Walter G., 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 63, 64, 65
Labat, René, 198
Labuschagne, C. J., 124
Læssøe, Jørgen, 230
Lambert, W. G., 9, 16, 18, 30, 37, 40, 41, 42, 44, 46, 47, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 58, 59, 60, 72, 73, 77, 86, 87, 90, 124, 194, 197, 244, 291, 292, 293, 296, 298, 339, 353, 393, 432, 433, 434, 435, 437, 441, 465, 466, 469, 470, 489
Landsberger, Benno, 27, 31, 63
Langdon, Stephen, 449, 456, 476
Lee, Tae-Hoon, 66
Leichty, Erle, 54
Leick, Gwendolyn, 198, 201
Lelli, F., 253
Lenzi, Alan, 18, 20, 22, 41, 67, 125, 135, 148, 184, 190, 228, 299, 393, 398, 405, 412, 442, 485, 488, 490, 495
Levenson, Jon D., 335
Levine, Baruch A., 194
Lewis, Theodore J., 141, 142
Limet, Henri, 12
Lincoln, Bruce, 3, 5, 6, 8, 14
Litke, Richard L., 292, 404, 486
Livingstone, Alasdair, 53, 60, 74, 291, 341
Löhnert, Anne, 351, 434
Long, Burke, 414
Loretz, Otto, 79, 80, 246, 315, 327, 370

Loud, Gordon, 56
Luckenbill, Daniel D., 54
Maier, John, 230
Mallul, Meir, 184
Martin, Luther H., 186
Marx, Karl, 3, 4
Maul, Stefan M., 18, 30, 32, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 87, 294, 352, 359, 361, 362, 368, 386, 392, 405, 406, 407, 409, 410, 411, 413, 414, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 448, 449, 451, 456, 457, 458, 459
Mayer, Werner, xii, xiv, 15, 18, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 39, 41, 45, 47, 48, 64, 65, 87, 137, 140, 150, 173, 175, 182, 193, 218, 219, 222, 230, 231, 232, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 244, 245, 246, 248, 249, 252, 258, 260, 268, 269, 272, 274, 276, 280, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 315, 321, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 341, 343, 344, 354, 359, 360, 361, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 386, 388, 390, 391, 392, 394, 395, 396, 398, 410, 421, 422, 423, 425, 427, 449, 486
McCutcheon, Russel T., 4, 6
Meier, Gerhard, 147, 158, 191, 315
Meyer, L. de, 47, 53
Michalowski, Piotr, 44, 147, 351, 356, 447
Milano, Lucio, 355, 361, 362
Milgrom, Jacob, 99, 194
Millard, A. R., 86, 327, 386
Moran, William, 484, 485, 490, 491, 492
Mowinckel, Sigmund, 66, 80, 165, 176
Muilenburg, James, 64
Mulder, M. J., 497
Müller, G., 72
Muller, Reinhard, 497
Mullo-Weir, Cecil, 356
Na'aman, Nadav, 417, 497
Niehr, H., 253
Noegel, Scott, 183, 186
Nougayrol, Jean, 48
Oates, David, 325, 478
Oates, Joan, 325, 478
Oppenheim, A. Leo, 71, 73, 87, 181, 182, 185, 186, 224
Oshima, T., 292, 296
Pals, Daniel, 3, 4, 17
Parpola, Simo, 138, 179, 228, 411, 416, 448
Patton, Kimberley C., xvi
Paul, Shalom, 252, 381, 426, 480
Perlitt, Lothar, 66
Pinches, Th. G., 58
Pingree, David, 73, 77, 411
Pomponio, Francesco, 327, 351
Pongratz-Leisten, Beate, 53
Porter, Barbara Nevling, 9, 197
Postgate, Nicholas, xv
Potts, Daniel, 191
Ray, Benjamin C., xvi
Reiner, Erica, 56, 59, 73, 77, 78, 87, 90, 253, 257, 258, 259, 411, 421
Reynolds, F., 72
Robson, Eleanor, 50
Rochberg, Francesca, 386
Rochberg-Halton, Francesca, 386, 410
Röllig, W., 23
Rosengarten, Yvonne, 449
Roth, Martha, 198, 357, 480
Rouillard, H., 141
Rouillard, Hedwige, 322
Ruppert, Lothar, 65
Sallaberger, Walther, 29, 34, 86
Sasson, Jack M., 54
Sayce, A. H., 185
Schaudig, Hanspeter, 146, 292, 477
Schmidt, Brian, 141
Schoenfeld, Devorah, 186
Schroeder, Christoph O., 380
Schulz, Hermann, 65
Schwartz, Baruch, 363
Schwemer, Daniel, 86, 88, 134, 136, 158, 170, 171, 172, 177, 191, 231, 497
Scurlock, JoAnn, 133, 134, 135, 136, 139, 151, 189, 194, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 204, 207, 208, 209, 210, 416
Seidl, Ursula, 171, 246, 327
Selz, Gebhard, J. 169, 170, 171

Seux, Marie-Joseph, xiii, 41, 43, 46, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 73, 88, 90, 91, 95, 112, 115, 116, 117, 136, 147, 158, 171, 174, 182, 201, 207, 208, 209, 210, 219, 221, 231, 234, 235, 246, 259, 293, 294, 295, 296, 298, 302, 315, 316, 327, 341, 357, 359, 370, 372, 378, 388, 390, 392, 393, 396, 423, 425, 434, 435, 449, 476
Shibata, Daisuke, 26
Sjöberg, Åke, 388
Smith, Jonathan Z., xvi, 3, 4, 5
Smith, Mark S., 198, 379
Smith, Morton, 447
Soden, Wolfram von, xiii, xv, 23, 24, 46, 49, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 73, 112, 115, 116, 117, 147, 171, 201, 207, 208, 210, 231, 246, 259, 293, 296, 315, 341, 357, 370, 373, 388, 390, 396, 434, 476, 485, 489, 494
Soldt, W. H. van, 53, 106
Sommerfeld, Walter, 78, 291, 292, 296, 403, 407
Sparks, Kenton L., 23
Spiro, Melford E., 3
Sprinkle, Joe, 415
Spronk, K., 497
Stackert, Jeffrey, 191
Starr, Ivan, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 86, 87, 88, 91, 92
Steinkeller, Piotr, 72, 73, 86, 87, 88, 198
Stol, Marten, 53, 112, 351, 388
Stolz, Fritz, 281
Streck, M. T., 182
Strong, S. A., 60
Stummer, Friedrich, 27, 61, 62, 64
Sweet, R. F. G., 60
Tallqvist, K. L., 158
Talon, Philippe, 56, 293
Tambiah, Stanley, 15, 17
Tawil, Hayim ben Yosef, 124, 148, 210, 239, 381, 398, 426, 429, 442, 460, 471
Thureau-Dangin, F., 112, 116, 118, 123
Tiemeyer, Lena-Sofia, 415, 417
Toorn, Karel van der, 21, 41, 42, 43, 53, 54, 55, 59, 87, 89, 99, 106, 135, 141, 170, 201, 295, 298, 307, 322, 331, 431, 434
Tropper, J., 141, 322
Turner, Patricia, 182
Uehlinger, Christoph, 171, 185
Ungnad, Arthur, 61
van Seters, John, 223
Vanséveren, Sylvie, xvii
Veldhuis, Niek, vii, 5, 36, 40, 50, 386
Verderame, Lorenzo, 385
Vorländer, Hermann, 65, 176
Walker, Christopher, 27, 71, 73, 105, 191
Wasserman, Nathan, 57
Watson, W. G. E., 147,153
Weidner, Ernst, 72
Weiher, Egbert von, 341
Weinfeld, M., 320
Westbrook, Raymond, 415
Westenholz, Aage, 114
Westenholz, Joan Goodnick, 114, 380
Westermann, Claus, 64, 82, 176
Widengren, Geo, 63
Wiggermann, F. A. M., 77, 341, 347, 368
Wilcke, Claus, 29, 169, 170, 171, 194
Williamson, H. G. M., 239
Wiseman, D. J., 489
Wohlstein, Herman, 219
Wolters, Al, 381
Worthington, Martin, 407
Wright, Charlotte Ann, 171, 259
Wright, David P., 99, 194
Zernecke, Anna Elise, vii, 25, 61, 67, 165, 257, 258, 259, 260, 266, 267, 269, 272, 276, 279, 281, 503
Zettler, Richard L., 227
Zevit, Ziony, 211
Zgoll, Annette, 25, 30, 31, 33, 34, 66, 67, 257, 258, 259, 261, 262, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 270, 271, 272, 274, 275, 276, 277, 280, 281, 351, 434
Ziegler, Joseph, 498
Zimmern, Heinrich, 46, 47, 59, 61, 87, 90, 93, 230, 433, 466
Zuckerman, Paul, 5

Mesopotamian Texts

MAYER'S INCANTATION-PRAYERS
(besides main treatments)

Adad 8 · 15
Ea 1a · 500
Enlil 1b · 335
Ghosts of My Family 1 · xii
Girra 2 · xiv
Gula 1a · 18, 108
Ishtar 1 · 34
Ishtar 2 · 33, 173, 174, 176
Ishtar 3 · 287
Ishtar 28 · xvi
Ishtar 29 · xvi
Marduk 2 · 335
Marduk 4 · 13, 18
Marduk 9 · 303
Marduk 18 · 335
Marduk 19 · 335, 371
Nabu 1 · 12, 335
Nabu 2 · 335
Nergal 2 · 362, 368
Nisaba 1 · xiii, 28, 30
Nusku 7 · 34
Nusku 12 · xii, 13
Salt · xii, xiv, 9, 30
Shamash 1 · xii, 430
Shamash 1, ll. 37–38 · 431
Sin 1 · xiv, 39, 239
Sin 9 · 335

OTHER TEXTS

I R 51, no. 1 ii 16 · 484
79-7-8, 77
  rev. 1′–18′ · 186
  rev. 3′–17′ · 188
80-7-19,88
  obv. 7–rev. 15 · 430
A Cow of Sin · 394
AbB
  6, 135 · 57
  9, 141 · 55
  12, 99 · 55
  13, 164 · 55
ABL 716 · 302
ABRT I 32–34 · 62
AEM I/1,
  191 · 56
  193 · 56
AfO 23, 39–45 · 16
Agushaya Poem · 60, 122, 268
An = Anum
  II 186, 187 · 412
  II 192 · 494
AO 6035 · 60
AO 7032 · 50, 94
AOAT 34
  22 · 378
  23 · 378
  73 · 335
  19–20 · 252
  26–30 · 323
ARM 1 3 · 56
Ashur Dream Ritual Compendium
  iv, 21–30, 31–41b · 45
Assyrian Dream Book · 187
Astrolabe B · 226
  B1:14–16 · 79
Atram-ḫasīs · 223, 234
  II i 11–16, 30–33 · 88
  III ii 48–55 · 88
Bab. 21165 · 484
BAM
  3:28′–32′ · 376
  322:64 · 376
  323: 1–38 · 204
  332 · 376
Biggs, *Šà.zi.ga*
  15 · 14
  23 · 14
Bīt mēseri · 323
Bīt rimki · 34, 44, 236, 323, 364, 394, 441
Bīt salāʾ mê · 33, 35, 224, 251, 363, 364, 370, 375, 376

BM 122647 · 361
BM 26187 · 263, 268, 287
BM 29632 · 46
BM 42559+ · 430
BM 43090+ · 430
BM 65454+ · 62
BM 78219 · 361
BM 91121 · 484
BM 91122 · 484
BM 91123 · 484
BRM 4 50:20 · 398
CBS 7005:13 · 436
Code of Hammurabi · 300, 488
  ii 68 · 365
  xxiv 85–86 · 204
  xxvii 10–13 · 239
CT
  17 36 · 19
  26 45:16–18 · 74
  51 211 · 225
  58 70 · 45
CTN IV · 333
  168 · 359
CUSAS 10
  7 · 59
  8 · 116
Cyrus Cylinder · 300
Enki and the World Order · 234
  line 406 · 107
Enlil and Ninlil · 350
Enūma Anu Enlil · 37, 413
Enūma eliš · 62, 300
  I · 233
  I 62–63 · 239
  I 71 · 237
  I 79–108 · 301
  I 141 · 80
  I 143 · 79
  IV 19–28 · 500
  IV 28 · 300
  IV 61 · 500
  V 110 · 300
  VI 39–44 · 114, 238, 266
  VI 69 · 114, 238, 266
  VI 82–91 · 79
  VI 101 · 411
  VI 102–104 · 412
  VI 121–VII 162 · 58
  VI 137 · 494
  VI 147 · 412
  VI 151 · 412, 502
  VI 153 · 412, 500
  VI 155 · 412
  VI 156 · 412
  VII 11 · 500
  VII 26 · 500
  VII 33–34 · 500
  VII 115 · 73
  VII 115–118 · 149
Epic of Gilgamesh
  I 181,189,237 · 115
  I 241 · 204
  III 43–119 · 204
  IV 189–198 · 204
  XI · 94, 234
Eridu Genesis · 323, 324
Erimhuš VI 12′ · 465
Erra and Ishum · 74
  III D 3 · 79
Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Netherworld · 223, 436
Girra and Elamatum · 73, 78
Gray, *Šamaš*,
  pl. 12: 2′–15′ · 204
Great Hymn of the Queen of Nippur · 223
Great Hymn to Marduk · 61
Great Hymn to Nabu · 61
Great Prayer to Ishtar · 61
Great Prayer to Marduk · 61
Great Shamash Hymn · 60
Gula Hymn of Bulluṭsa-rabi · 61, 127, 250
HS 1884 · 59
HSM 7494 · 50
Hunger, *BAK*
  199 · 249
  203[k] · 249
  233 · 333
  235 · 335
  318 · 333
  353 · 333
  380 · 249
  395 · 335
IM 5192:2 · 436
IM 67630 · 361
IM 67692 · 473
Inana and Enki · 234

Ishtar Queen of Heaven · 61
JNES 33
278:87 · 443
280:127 · 443
280–283:132–134 · 306
K.2067 · 74
K.2132 · 204
K.2798+ · 361
K.2836+ · 349
K.3286 · 371
K.3333 + · 186, 188, 371
K.3392 · 361
K.3433 · 335
K.6028 · 361
K.9272:14 · 19
K.17009 · 378
KAR
23 · 328
25 + · 335
25 ii 19 · 371
25 ii 3–24 · 62
44, obv. 4 · 43
44, rev. 6 · 38
59 · 241, 323, 327, 328
72, obv. 1–25 · 376
72, obv. 24 · 376
74: 16–20 · 204
90 · 44
90, rev. 4 · 441
102+ 328 · 62
158 · 59
252 iii 4 · 188
253, rev. 8 · 376
267 · 155
KAV 218 · 79
King, *BMS*
11 · 310
53 · 155
6: 1–16 · 225
9 · 328
Labbu Myth · 79
Lambert, *Babylonian Oracle Questions*
1, 183 · 53
1, 26–94 · 52
15 · 52
21, 9 · 53
8, rev. · 18
9, ll. 15–27 · 9
Laws of Ur-Namma A
i 1–30 · 204
iii 104–113 · 204
Laws of Lipit-Ishtar, xxi 5–6 · 204
LKA
16 · 62
30 · 351
50 · 225
89 · 140
Ludlul bēl nēmeqi · xiv, 18, 22
I 1–4 · 113
I 1–40 · 58, 372
I 2 · 304
I 41 · 503
I 41–104 · 22
I 45 · 497
I 46 · 497
I 73–98 · 384
II 1–22 · 196
II 1–48 · 18
II 8 · 328
II 10–47 · 500
II 18 · 503
II 22 · 443
II 34–36 · 307
II 48 · 500
II 49–120 · 22
II 81 · 498
III 44 · 493
III 50 · 503
III 68–line m · 22
III line p · 445, 503
IV · 372
IV 26 · 496
IV 28 · 503
IV 32 · 420
IV 38ff. · 22
IV 69–82 · 311
IV 70–82 · 22
IV 111 · 493
IV 119 · 493
M.10591: 9 · 195
MAD V 8 · 116
Maqlû · xiv, 13, 73, 74, 161
I 1–14 · 197
I 1–72 · 161
I 36 · 20
I 38 · 142
I 73ff. · 161

I 76 · 188
I 122,126–132 · 185
I 135–143 · 199
II 69–90 · 188
II 76–103 · 150
V 51ff., 95–97 · 199
VI 111–119 · 196
IX 118–120 · 196
Marduk's Address to the Demons · 61
Maul, *HB*
6, rev. 14′,16′ · 46
Mīs pî · 26, 35, 107, 197, 376
Mul.apin
I i 1–33 · 419
I i 16–17 · 74
I i 34–ii 18 · 419
I ii 7 · 79
I ii 19–35 · 419
ND 5492 · 473
ND 5493 · 361
Nergal and Ereshkigal · 347
OIP 38 3–7 · 58
OIP 40 1 · 58
Parpola, *LASEA* 2
259 · 456
351 · 448
PBS 1/2 119 · 351
Poor Man of Nippur · 34, 68
RA 38, 87 · 94
SAA 2
6 · 333
6, §52 · 249
SAA 3
2, rev. 1, 3, 6, 8 · 299
SAA 10
278 · 414
381 · 414
SAA 11
17:28–29 · 149
SAA 18
181, rev. 25 · 302
Sm.1118 · 204, 207, 210
SpBTU
II 11 · 323
II 18 · 378
II 18, rev. 27 · 236
III 78, rev. · 323
Streck, VAB VII
2.274, no. 11 · 58
2.312, γ l. 3 · 480
STT 55 · 335
Sumerian King List · 323
Šumma ālu · 37, 413
22–26 · 429
23:106 · 429
25–26 ii 6′-7′ · 429
25–26:16′, 22′ · 429
Šumma izbu · 37
Šurpu · 44
VII 77 · 499
VIII 6–7 · 80
TLB 4 22:29 · 385
Tukulti-Ninurta Epic · 223
VAS 10
213 · 61
215 · 60
VAT 5 · 430
Verse Account of Nabonidus
vi 23′–24′ · 150
W 22730/3 · 378
YOS 11
2:2 · 94
22 · 90
22:19 · 94
23 · 48, 50
23:1 · 50
23:16 · 89
Zimmern, *BBR*
1–20, l. 105 · 95
26 iii 45 · 236
26 + · 364
26 v 81 · 441
95 · 49
96: 6–10 · 50
75–78 · 87
75–78: 22–29 · 48
75–101 · 46, 92, 474
Ziusudra Epic · 324

Scriptural Texts

HEBREW BIBLE

Genesis
1:16, 253
1:26–27, 211, 399
2:1, 253
3, 307
3:5–7, 380
3:22, 399
5:3, 211
6–7, 363
6:1–4, 399
8:20–22, 363
8:21, 99
11:1–9, 225
11:7, 399
18:25, 186, 211, 379
24:3, 223
24:3,7, 223
24:7, 223
24:40, 322
25:8, 141
25:17, 141
28:17, 225
28:21, 322
31:19, 322
35:29, 141
37:9, 253
37:31–35, 472
40:13, 240
40:19, 240
40:31, 240
41:8, 381
41:46, 398
48:15, 322
49:18, 321
49:29, 141
49:33, 141

Exodus
3:16, 322
9:29,33, 239
15:2–19, 398
20:7, 442
20:12, 142
22:17, 165
24, 154
28:30, 471
29:18, 99
29:25, 99
29:41, 99
30:35, 194
31:2, 240
32:32–33, 480
35:30, 240

Leviticus
1, 363
1–3, 363
1:9, 99
1:13, 99
1:17, 99
2, 363
2:1–16, 362
2:2, 99
2:9, 99
2:12, 99
2:13, 194
3, 363
3:5, 99
3:11, 99, 194
3:16, 99, 194
4:31, 99
5:11, 363
6:7–11, 362
6:15, 99
6:21, 99
8:21, 99
8:28, 99
8:8, 471
9:22, 239
14:4, 99
14:6, 99
14:49, 99
14:51, 99
14:52, 99
17:16, 99
19:26, 165
19:26–28, 142
19:31, 165
20:6, 142, 165
20:27, 142, 165
21:6, 99, 194
21:8, 99, 194
21:17, 194
21:21, 99, 194
21:22, 99, 194
22:25, 194
23:13, 99
23:18, 99
25:4, 154
26:34, 154
26:40, 154
28:2, 99
28:24, 99

Numbers
2:8, 253
5:11–31, 154
6:25, 335
14:41, 308
15:3, 99
15:7, 99
15:10, 99
15:13, 99
15:14, 99
15:24, 99
16:9, 153
18:17, 99
18:19, 194
19:6, 99
20:24, 141
22:18, 308
25:3,5, 497
27:13, 141
27:21, 471
28:2, 99, 194
28:6, 99
28:8, 99
28:13, 99
28:24, 99, 194
28:27, 99
29:2, 99
29:6, 99
29:8, 99
29:13, 99
29:36, 99
31:14, 253

Deuteronomy
4:19, 253
5:11, 442
5:16, 142
6:4–9, 7
7:13, 362
13:2–6, 186
17:2, 308
17:2–5, 253
18:9–11, 142
18:9ff., 165
18:10–11, 81
18:21–22, 81, 186
19:6, 460
20:1–20, 414
26:13, 308
26:14, 142

27:9, 460
28:51, 362
28:65, 460
29:20–26, 194
29:28, 398
32:6, 307
32:8–9, 399
32:24, 347
32:43, 380
32:43 LXX, 380
33:2–3, 399
33:8, 471

Joshua
7: 11,15, 308
11:17, 497
12:7, 497
13:3, 497
21:9, 240
23:16, 308

Judges
2:10, 141
2:20, 308
5:20, 253
6:37–40, 471
8:33, 497
9:4, 497

1 Samuel
2:10, 211
4:17–18, 472
9:15, 334
14:9–14, 471
14:24–30, 124
14:37, 471
14:41 lxx, 471
15:24, 308
15:27, 186, 429
20:2, 334
20:12, 334
20:13, 334
22:8, 334
22:17, 334
23:9–12, 471
24:5, 186
28, 142
28:6, 81, 471
28:13, 142
30:8, 81, 471
31:9, 472

2 Samuel
1:1–16, 472
1:20, 472
2:8, 497
4:10, 472
5:7, 321
7:14, 307
7:22, 124
7:27, 334
18:19, 471
18:20, 472
18:27, 472
18:31–32, 472
18:32–19:1, 472
22, 185
22:19, 321
22:29, 185

1 Kings
1:21, 141
1:42, 472
2:10, 141
3, 479
3:5, 479
3:7–9, 479
3:12–14, 480
8:22, 239
8:23, 125
8:23–24, 239
8:25ff., 239
8:38, 239
8:46, 307
8:54, 239, 398
11:21, 141
11:43, 141
14:20, 141
14:31, 141
18:15, 398
18:19, 80
22, 81, 416
22:5, 416
22:6, 80, 81
22:15, 416
22:16, 81
22:19, 125, 253, 399
22:19–23, 399
22:20, 416
22:21, 125
22:22–23, 81

2 Kings
1, 497
2:20–22, 194
3:4, 80
3:4–27, 414
3:16–19, 414
7:9, 472
8:22, 108
10:19, 80
16:15, 80
17:16, 253
17:24, 347
17:30, 347
19:14, 108
19:14–19, 108
19:16, 108
19:37, 185
20:1–9, 415, 417
20:7, 415
21:3,5, 253
21:6, 142
23:4–5, 253
23:11, 379
23:24, 142
25:27, 240

Isaiah
1:2a, 82
1:2–20, 82
1:11, 100
1:11–14, 100
2:4, 380
4:3, 480
6, 399
6:1, 399
6:1–2, 125
6:3, 398
8:19–22, 142
9:6, 321
10:17, 379
13:10, 253
14:12–15, 253
14:13, 253, 398
18:7, 321
19:3, 142
22:14, 334
24:5, 308
24:21, 399
29:7–8, 186
29:11–12, 381
33:2, 498
34:16–17, 480
35:5, 380
37:38, 185
38:1–8, 415, 417
38:9, 108
38:10–20, 108
38:18, 280
40:1–11, 399
40:9, 472
40:13, 398
40:18, 125
40:25, 125
40:26, 240, 253, 254
43:1, 240

44:2, 195
44:7, 125
45:3,4, 240
45:9, 195
45:11, 195
45:12, 253
45:18–19, 142
45:21, 125
46:1–2, 498
46:4, 195
46:5, 125
48:8, 334
49:1, 240
50:5, 334
51:13, 195
52:7, 472
57:6, 142
60:2–3, 379
60:6, 472
61, 380
61:1, 472
61:1c, 380
63:16, 307
64:7, 307
65:4, 142
65:6, 480
66:6, 335

Jeremiah
2:8, 80
3:19, 307
3:24, 497
7:18, 253
7:21–13, 100
8:17, 428
8:17b, 428
10:6–7, 125
11:13, 497
16:19, 321
17:13, 480
19:13, 253
20:15, 472
22:30, 480
23:13, 80
23:18, 399
23:18–22, 399
23:22, 399
23:24, 398
27:2 LXX, 291
29:10, 154
31:35, 253
31:9, 307
34:18, 308
39:3,13, 347
44:17–19, 253
50:2, 291, 498
51:6, 335
51:44, 498
52:31, 240

Ezekiel
1:1–3:15, 399
7:20, 211
8:16, 379
14:6, 335
16:4, 194
21:26, 80
28:14,16, 399
32:7, 253
32:9, 460
43:4, 225
43:7–9, 142
43:15, 347
43:24, 194
44:16, 194
44:7, 194

Hosea
2:18, 497
8:4, 195
9:10, 497

Joel
2:10,15, 253
4:16, 321
4:17, 321
4:4, 335

Amos
1:1, 80
5:8, 253
5:15, 153
5:21–25, 100
5:26, 211, 252

Obadiah
15, 335

Jonah
1:9, 223

Micah
1:4, 165
6:1, 82
6:1–8, 82
6:6–8, 100
7:7, 321
7:18, 125

Nahum
1:2–8, 123
1:7, 321
2:1, 472

Habakkuk
3:5, 347

Zephaniah
1:5, 253
3:5, 498

Zechariah
3, 399
14:9, 428

Malachi
1:6, 142
1:6–12, 194
1:7, 99
1:12, 99
2:10, 307
3:16, 480
3:17, 307

Psalms
2:7, 307
3, 442
3:2, 442
3:5, 398
3:8, 165, 321
4, 81
5, 442
5:2–3, 443
5:4, 498, 80
6, 164, 307, 442
6:2, 442
6:6, 280
7, 380, 442, 428
7–14, 442
7:2, 380
7:9, 186, 380
8, 123
8:4, 253
8:7–9, 347
9:9, 321
9:12, 321
9:14–15, 364
13, 428, 442
14, 428
13:2, 335
13:5, 176
16, 108
16:2, 153
16:11, 322
17, 442
18:2, 321
18:18, 321
19, 308
19:8–12, 307
19:13, 307

19:14–15, 307
19:15, 308
21, 428
22, 223, 281, 322, 428, 442
22:2–3, 443
22:2–22, 281
22:3, 398
22:13–14, 176
22:17, 176
22:22, 176
22:23,26, 281
22:23–27, 281
22:24–25,27, 281
25, 442
25:1–2, 442
26, 442
26:1, 380
27, 442
27:9, 335
28, 442
28:1, 398, 442
28:2, 239
28:4, 335
29, 123, 399
29:10, 399
30:10, 280
30:2–4, 498
30:5, 498
30:6, 498
31, 442
31:3, 321
31:17, 335
31:18, 398
32, 307
35, 428, 442
35:1, 165
35:10, 125
38, 307, 442
38:20–21, 176
39, 442
40, 153
40:3, 460
40:8, 480
40:10, 472
40:18b, 153
41:2, 321
42, 442
43, 322, 442
43:1, 186, 442
43:4, 322
44:2–9, 239
44:9, 195
44:25, 335
46:6, 498
50, 194
50:2, 321
50:4–5, 380
50:6, 186
50:12–13, 194
50:12–14, 99
51, 307, 460, 442
51:3, 442
51:4, 165, 460
51:5, 307, 460
53, 428
54, 428, 442
55, 442
55:10, 498
56, 428, 442
56:9, 480
57, 428, 442
57–60, 108
58:1, 399
59, 428, 442
59:2, 442
59:7, 498
59:15, 498
59:17, 498
60, 81
61, 428, 442
61:3, 398
63, 442
63:1, 165
63:2, 153
63:5, 239
64, 442
65:9–13, 362
66:3, 398
67:2, 335
68:3, 165
68:12–14, 472
69, 428, 442
69:18, 335
70, 153, 442
70:2, 442
70:6b, 153
71, 335, 442
71:10–11, 335
71:12, 335
71:17, 335
71:18, 335
71:18a, 335
71:20, 335
71:22–24, 336
71:5, 335
71:6, 335
71:9, 335
71:9a, 335
71:9b, 335
73:14, 498
74:4, 80
74:9, 80
76:3, 321
79, 428
80:20, 335
80:4, 335
80:8, 335
82:1, 186, 380, 398
82:1–8, 399
82:2, 380
82:3, 186
82:8, 186, 379
84:12, 379
86, 442
87:6, 480
88, 442
88:2, 443
88:10, 398
88:11–12, 280
88:14, 498
88:15, 335
89:2–19, 239
89:6, 398
89:6–9, 254
89:7, 307
89:8, 399
90:5–6, 498
90:8, 307
90:14, 498
94:2, 211, 335, 379
95:6, 195
96:2, 472
96:11, 380
101:8, 498
102, 307, 442
102:3, 335
103:13, 307
103:19, 253, 429
103:19–21, 254
103:20–21, 254
107:26, 153
108, 81
109, 165, 428, 442
115:18, 195
119, 81
119:64, 195
119:103, 124
119:135, 335
120, 442
121:7, 321
130, 307, 442
130:1, 398
130:1–2, 443
130:3, 307

130:6, 498
134:1–2, 239
136:9, 253
137:8, 335
139:16, 480
140, 442
141, 442
142, 442
143, 81, 307, 442
143:7, 335
143:8, 498
145:2, 195
146:9, 321
147:4, 253
148:2, 254
148:2–4, 253
149:2, 195

Job
1–2, 399
1:6, 125, 399
1:13–21, 472
2:1, 125, 399
5:7, 347
6:6, 194
7:13–15, 224
9:4, 321
9:7, 253
9:9, 253
13:21, 460
13:23, 460
13:24, 460
14:6, 308
14:21, 142
15:18, 399
20:8, 186
21:22, 186
22:12, 253
25:5, 253
28:12–23, 321
31:26, 253
31:26–28, 379
33:16, 334
35:10, 195
36:10, 334
36:15, 334
38:7, 254
38:31–32, 253

Proverbs
2:6, 321
3:6, 398
3:12, 307
4:14, 398
8:4–36, 124
8:29, 308
14:31, 195
15:19, 398
17:5, 195
19:3, 460
19:17, 335
24:12, 441
24:13, 124
24:14, 124

Ruth
4:4, 334

Song
4:11, 124

Qohelet
1:13–15, 307
5:6, 186
9:4–6,10, 142
10:11, 428
12:2, 253

Lamentations
1:16,20–21, 460
1:16,21, 461
3:22–23, 498
3:59b, 186

Esther
3:3, 308

Daniel
2:1, 381
2:18, 223
2:37, 223
2:44, 223
4:34, 428
5:6, 381
7:10, 480
9, 239
9:4, 239
9:11, 308
10, 399
10:21, 480
11:18, 335
12:1, 480
12:7, 429

Ezra
1:2, 223
4:14, 194
5:11, 223
6:9, 194
7:12, 223
7:21, 223
7:23, 223
9:5, 239

Nehemiah
1:2, 223
1:4, 223
1:5, 223
2:20, 223
2:4, 223
9, 239
9:5, 239
9:5b–32a, 239
9:6, 239, 253, 254
9:32b–37, 239
9:37, 239

1 Chronicles
6:50, 240
8:33, 497
9:39, 497
11:5, 321
10:9, 472
12:5, 497
16:23, 472
17:20, 124
17:25, 334
18:18–22, 399
29:10–12, 428

2 Chronicles
6:14, 125
16:9, 321
18:18, 125, 254
18:20, 125
20:6, 398
24:20, 308
32:25, 335
36:21, 154
36:23, 223

OTHER SCRIPTURES

Judith
9:12, 428, 429

Ben Sira
50:7, 379

1 Maccabees
3:18, 224
3:19, 224
3:50, 224
4:24, 224

2 Maccabees
7:11, 224
8:20, 224

4Q521
2 ii 8, 380

4QDeut[q]
32:43, 380

Matthew
6:5–13, 7

Luke
11:1–13, 7
4:18, 380

1 Timothy
2:8, 239

Barnabas
14:9, 380

Quran
1, 7
2.62, 385
5.69, 385
22.17, 385

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ALAN LENZI is Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East at University of the Pacific. He is the author of *Secrecy and the Gods: Secret Knowledge in Ancient Mesopotamia and Biblical Israel* (The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project).

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