

## Further Studies on Mesopotamian Witchcraft Beliefs and Literature

# Ancient Magic and Divination

*Editors*

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VOLUME 17

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The Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available online at <http://catalog.loc.gov>  
LC record available at <http://lcn.loc.gov/2019050988>.

Typeface for the Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic scripts: "Brill". See and download: [brill.com/brill-typeface](http://brill.com/brill-typeface).

ISSN 1566-7952

ISBN 978-90-04-42190-5 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-42191-2 (e-book)

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*For R. C., in gratitude.  
Ben Sira, ch. 38, vv. 1-3*





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## Preface

In this volume I have collected the studies on Mesopotamian witchcraft that I have written subsequent to the appearance of my 2002 collection of studies on witchcraft and *Maqlû*, namely, *Mesopotamian Witchcraft: Toward a History and Understanding of Babylonian Witchcraft Beliefs and Literature* (AMD 5). Moreover, I have added two earlier articles that were not included in AMD 5. I have not included material that appeared in the introductions or commentaries to my editions of *Maqlû* (WAW 37, 2015; AMD 10, 2016), or material contained in my earlier *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature: Case Studies* (BJS 132, 1987).

This volume differs from AMD 5 in at least one respect. Most of the studies in the earlier volume were conceptualized as part of a single project. That was not the case for the studies collected in this volume. While several of the essays included here were written in response to requests for overviews of Mesopotamian witchcraft as part of some larger enterprise (such as a handbook), most of them address problems or issues with which I was struggling while editing or translating portions of *Maqlû*.

The order of the studies of sections of *Maqlû* reprinted here generally corresponds to the order in which those sections appear in the text. In most of these studies I take a diachronic approach and attempt to solve a problem using a literary-critical and/or text-critical approach. This is not surprising given my own disposition and philosophy of knowledge. The reader will forgive, I hope, the repetition of methodological principles that are basic to diachronic studies. The problems for which I posit historical development as a solution appear in incantations where parallels or forerunners are available for comparison as well as incantations in which internal evidence or tension is the primary source of evidence for the analyses. Problems of interpretation that result from the lack of agreement (or fit) between textual segments are what drive my analysis. Often there is no “hard” evidence for my conclusions. Rather, they are teased out from anomalies and inconsistencies in our texts. Taken together, such inferences are a valid basis for the solution of many problems and possibly for the reconstruction of the history of individual incantations and groups of incantations. Thus, I have primarily taken account of discrepancies in the text, and I acknowledge that I have not dealt with the interaction of written and oral traditions. For better or for worse, my approach is not commonly used in Assyriology; however, I believe that its application is more than justified and will produce historical, literary, or interpretive results that cannot be achieved by other methods, though I recognize the uncertainty that adheres to many of my results.

Some comments on editorial matters are in order. The text of the studies reissued here replicates, for the most part, the text of the original publications. Minor errors have been corrected, and the mode of bibliographical citation has been standardized; a comprehensive bibliography is included at the end of the volume. I have updated citations of *Maqlû* to agree with the line numbering of my edition in AMD 10. Many of the non-*Maqlû* witchcraft texts cited in this volume were subsequently edited and published in volumes of the *Corpus of Mesopotamian Anti-witchcraft Rituals (CMAwR)*. References to texts cited prior to their appearance in those volumes are not updated; when such a text is first cited in a chapter in this volume, I indicate within double brackets the number assigned to that text in *CMAwR*. Subsequent references in that chapter are not updated. Articles written subsequent to the publication of a text in *CMAwR* cite it by its number and lineation in *CMAwR*. The reader is advised to consult the volumes of *CMAwR* for up-to-date editions of the aforementioned texts. In addition, texts and translations of selected items in *CMAwR* are available online at <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/cmawro/corpus>.

This preface would be incomplete without a word of thanks to all those who have made this volume of collected essays possible. PDFs of original publications were turned into Microsoft Word versions by Jared Pfost. These versions were then corrected on the basis of the original publications by Ji Min Bang. Gene McGarry then unified the mode of bibliographical citation. This version was proofread by Justin Huguenin. Finally, Eileen Xing read through the volume in search of errors and infelicities. Requests for permission to republish were organized by Dan Berman.

I wish to thank the original publishers and editors for permission to publish my studies here. Again, I thank Gene McGarry for his invaluable help and Brandeis University (The Norman Fund) and the department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies for providing financial support for the enterprise. My sincerest thanks also go to my editor at Brill, Ms. Katelyn Chin, for her efforts.

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2. "Divine Judges on Earth and in Heaven," in *The Divine Courtroom in Comparative Perspective*, ed. A. Mermelstein and S. E. Holtz, Biblical Interpretation Series (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 6–24.
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4. "The Revision of Babylonian Anti-witchcraft Incantations: The Critical Analysis of Incantations in the Ceremonial Series Maqlû," in *Continuity and Innovation in the Magical Tradition*, ed. G. Bohak, Y. Harari, and S. Shaked, *Jerusalem Studies in Religion and Culture* 15 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 11–41.
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8. "Notes on the History of Composition of Two Incantations," in *From Source to History: Studies on Ancient Near Eastern Worlds and Beyond Dedicated to Giovanni Battista Lanfranchi on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday on June 23, 2014*, ed. S. Gaspa, A. Greco, D. M. Bonacossi, S. Ponchia, and R. Rollinger, *Alter Orient und Altes Testament* 412 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2014), 1–10.
9. "A Neo-Babylonian Recension of Maqlû: Some Observations on the Redaction of Maqlû Tablet VII and on the Development of Two of its

- Incantations,” in *Festschrift für Gernot Wilhelm anlässlich seines 65. Geburtstages am 28. Januar 2010*, ed. J. C. Fincke (Dresden: Islet, 2010), 1–16.
10. “Vetitive and Prohibitive: An Observation,” in *Mesopotamian Medicine and Magic*, ed. S. V. Panayotov and L. Vacín, *Ancient Magic and Divination* 14 (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 1–8.
  11. “Alternative Models for the Development of Some Incantations,” in *Sources of Evil: Studies in Mesopotamian Exorcistic Lore*, ed. G. Van Buylaere, M. Luukko, D. Schwemer, and A. Wagschal, *Ancient Magic and Divination* 15 (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 223–234.
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  13. “Some Reflections on Mesopotamian Witchcraft,” in *Religion and Politics in the Ancient Near East*, ed. A. Berlin (Bethesda, MD: CDL, 1996), 21–33.
  14. “The Witch’s Messages: Witchcraft, Omens, and Voodoo-death in Ancient Mesopotamia,” in *Studies in Ancient Near Eastern World View and Society Presented to Marten Stol on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday, 10 November 2005, and His Retirement from the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam*, ed. R. J. van der Spek, with the assistance of G. Haayer, F. A. M. Wiggermann, M. Prins, and J. Bilbija (Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2008), 53–68.
  15. “Illnesses and Other Crises: Mesopotamia,” in *Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*, ed. S. I. Johnston, HUP Reference Library (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 456–459.
  16. “Lists of Therapeutic Plants: An Observation,” in *If a Man Builds a Joyful House: Assyriological Studies in Honor of Erle Verdun Leichty*, ed. A. K. Guinan, et al., *Cuneiform Monographs* 31 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 1–3.
  17. “Dismissal by Authorities: *Šuškunu* and Related Matters,” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 37 (1985): 91–100.

# Abbreviations

[[ ]]	Page and note numbers enclosed in double brackets indicate (1) cross-references to articles reprinted either in this volume, or, if an abbreviation is included, in AMD 5, <i>BWiL</i> , or <i>Gilgamesh</i> ; and (2) cross-references to editions of texts in <i>CMAwR</i> .
4R <sup>2</sup>	H. C. Rawlinson, et al., <i>The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia</i> , vol. 4. 2nd ed. London: [British Museum], 1891.
A	Tablets in the collection of the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago
ABRT	J. A. Craig, <i>Assyrian and Babylonian Religious Texts</i> . 2 vols. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1895–1897.
AfO	<i>Archiv für Orientforschung</i>
AfO Beih.	Archiv für Orientforschung Beiheft
AHw	W. von Soden, <i>Akkadisches Handwörterbuch</i> . 3 vols. Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 1958–1981.
AmAnth	<i>American Anthropologist</i>
AMD	Ancient Magic and Divination
AMD 5	T. Abusch, <i>Mesopotamian Witchcraft: Toward a History and Understanding of Babylonian Witchcraft Beliefs and Literature</i> . AMD 5. Leiden: Brill/Styx, 2002.
AMD 10	T. Abusch, <i>The Magical Ceremony “Maqlû”: A Critical Edition</i> . AMD 10. Leiden: Brill, 2016.
AMT	R. C. Thompson, <i>Assyrian Medical Texts from the Originals in the British Museum</i> . London: Oxford University Press, 1923.
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANEM	Ancient Near East Monographs
AnOr	Analecta Orientalia
AnSt	<i>Anatolian Studies</i>
ArOr	<i>Archív orientální</i>
AS	Assyriological Studies
ASSF	Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicae
BaghMitt	<i>Baghdader Mitteilungen</i>
BAM	F. Köcher et al., <i>Die babylonisch-assyrische Medizin in Texten und Untersuchungen</i> . Berlin: de Gruyter, 1963–.
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BiOr	Biblica et Orientalia
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BMes	Bibliotheca Mesopotamica
Bu	Tablets in the collection of the British Museum (Budge)

- BWiL* T. Abusch, *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature: Case Studies*. BJS 132. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987.
- CAD* A. L. Oppenheim, et al., eds., *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1956–2006.
- CM* Cuneiform Monographs
- CMAwR* T. Abusch et al., *Corpus of Mesopotamian Anti-witchcraft Rituals*. 3 vols. AMD 8/1–3. Leiden: Brill, 2011–2019. Vol. 1 coauthored with D. Schwemer; vol. 2 coauthored with D. Schwemer with the assistance of M. Luukko and G. Van Buylaere; vol. 3 coauthored with D. Schwemer, M. Luukko, and G. Van Buylaere.
- DA* A. Boissier, *Documents assyriens relatifs aux présages*. 3 vols. Paris: E. Bouillon, 1894–1899.
- GAG* W. von Soden, *Grundriss der Akkadischen Grammatik*. 3rd ed. AnOr 33/47. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1995.
- Gilgamesh* T. Abusch, *Male and Female in the Epic of Gilgamesh: Encounters, Literary History, and Interpretation*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015.
- HSS* Harvard Semitic Studies
- HTR* *Harvard Theological Review*
- JAOS* *Journal of the American Oriental Society*
- JCS* *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
- JNES* *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
- K* Tablets in the collections of the British Museum from Kouyunjik
- KALI* Keilschrifttexte aus Assur literarischen Inhalts
- KALI 2* D. Schwemer, *Rituale und Beschwörungen gegen Schadenzauber*. KALI 2. WVD OG 117. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007.
- KAR* E. Ebeling, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*. 2 vols. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1915–1923.
- KBo* *Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi*. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1916–1923; Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1954–.
- KUB* Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi
- LANE* Languages of the Ancient Near East
- LKA* E. Ebeling, *Literarische Keilschrifttexte aus Assur*. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1953.
- LSS* Leipziger semitistische Studien
- MC* Mesopotamian Civilizations
- Meier, Maqlû* G. Meier, *Die assyrische Beschwörungssammlung "Maqlû."* AfO Beih. 2. Berlin: Selbstverlag E. F. Weidner, 1937.

Meier, "Studien"	G. Meier, "Studien zur Beschwörungssammlung Maqlû." <i>AfO</i> 21 (1966): 70–81.
ms(s).	manuscript(s)
MSL	Materialien zum sumerischen Lexikon
N	Tablets in the collection of the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania
NF	Neue Folge
Ni	Tablets excavated at Nippur, in the collections of the Archaeological Museum of Istanbul
NS	New series
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OPSNKF	Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund
<i>Or</i>	<i>Orientalia</i>
PBS	Publications of the Babylonian Section, University Museum, University of Pennsylvania
<i>R</i>	H. C. Rawlinson and G. Smith, <i>The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia</i> , vol. 4. 1st ed. London: Bowler, 1875.
<i>RA</i>	<i>Revue d'Assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale</i>
<i>RIAA</i>	L. Speleers, <i>Recueil des inscriptions de l'Asie antérieure des Musées Royaux du Cinquantenaire à Bruxelles: Textes sumériens, babyloniens et assyriens</i> . Brussels: Vanderpoorten, 1925.
<i>RIA</i>	E. Ebeling et al., eds., <i>Reallexikon der Assyriologie und vorderasiatischen Archäologie</i> . Berlin: de Gruyter, 1928–2018.
Rm	Tablets in the collection of the British Museum (Rassam)
RT	Ritual Tablet ( <i>Maqlû</i> 1x)
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
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
SBT	Studien zu den Bogazköy-Texten
<i>SEL</i>	<i>Studi epigrafici e linguistici sul Vicino Oriente Antico</i>
ScrHier	Scripta Hierosolymitana
Sm	Tablets in the Collection of the British Museum (Smith)
<i>SpBTU</i>	H. Hunger (vol. 1) and E. von Weiher (vols. 2–3), <i>Spätbabylonische Texte aus Uruk</i> . Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft in Uruk-Warka, Endberichte, 9, 10, 12. Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1976–1988.
StOr	Studia Orientalia

StPohl	Studia Pohl
STT	O. R. Gurney, J. J. Finkelstein, and P. Hulin, eds., <i>The Sultantepe Tablets</i> . 2 vols. Occasional Publications of the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara 3, 7. London: British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, 1957–1964.
Th	Tablets in the collection of the British Museum (Thompson)
TUAT	Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments
UET	Ur Excavations, Texts
VAT	Tablets in the collection of the Staatliche Museen, Berlin
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
W	Field numbers of tablets excavated at Warka
WAW	Writings from the Ancient World
WVDOG	Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft
ZDMG	<i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>

*Studies of the Text of Maqlû*

∴



## Witches and Demons in Ancient Mesopotamia

Some years ago I wrote an essay on the demonic image of the witch.\*<sup>1</sup> Since then I have given some further thought to the relationship of witches and demons and have noted some additional materials relevant to the topic. Here I will review some of my older findings and discuss some of the newer ones.

In the West, witches have been associated with demons and devils, especially during the late Middle Ages and early modern period; therefore, the connection of witches and demons in Mesopotamia should come as no surprise. The association of the demonic with the human in Mesopotamia is, I think, comparable to the development in Europe in which demonic notions were imposed on the human witch, a development that led to the existence alongside each other of a popular conception of sorcery and a learned one of diabolism.<sup>2</sup>

It seems to me that the association of witches and demons is not an original feature of Mesopotamian witchcraft but a secondary development. The primary opponent of the witch is the exorcist, the *āšipu*. The exorcist was an expert at dealing with supernatural forces or beings, such as demons. The task of combating witchcraft became susceptible to influences from the exorcist's other functions. The very contact of beliefs about and practices against witchcraft with the exorcist's other activities resulted in mutual interference, one set

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\* This article is a slightly revised version of a lecture presented at the International Conference on Mesopotamian Demons at Sapienza Università di Roma, February 28, 2011. It retains the structure and style of the original oral presentation. My thanks to Lorenzo Verderame for organizing the conference and for his kind hospitality. I am grateful to my student Bronson Brown-deVost for reading several drafts of this paper and for his helpful suggestions.

1 T. Abusch, "The Demonic Image of the Witch in Standard Babylonian Literature: The Reworking of Popular Conceptions by Learned Exorcists," in *Religion, Science, and Magic in Concert and in Conflict*, ed. J. Neusner et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 27–58 [[AMD 5, 3–25]]. For other discussions of Mesopotamian witchcraft, see S. Rollin, "Women and Witchcraft in Ancient Assyria," in *Images of Women in Antiquity*, ed. A. Cameron and A. Kuhrt (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983), 34–45; M.-L. Thomsen, *Zauberdiagnose und schwarze Magie in Mesopotamien*, CNI Publications 2 (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 1987); and D. Schwemer, *Abwehrzauber und Behexung: Studien zum Schadenzauberglauben im alten Mesopotamien* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007).

2 Abusch, "Demonic Image of the Witch," 39 with n. 31 [[AMD 5, 15 with n. 31]].

of beliefs and practices assimilated to the other, perhaps as part of a broad set of leveling tendencies.<sup>3</sup>

For ease of reference I shall limit my citations in this paper to material found in *Maqlû*, “Burning,” the longest and most important Mesopotamian text concerned with combating witchcraft.<sup>4</sup> *Maqlû* comprises eight incantation tablets, in which the text of almost one hundred incantations is recorded, and a ritual tablet, in which the incantations are cited by incipit together with appropriate ritual directions. *Maqlû* is a single complex ceremony; the ceremony was performed during a single night and into the following morning at the end of the month Abu (July/August), a time when spirits were thought to move back and forth between the netherworld and this world. The present form of *Maqlû* seems to be a creation of the early first millennium BCE. The standard lengthy text developed from an earlier short form by means of a series of sequential changes, and in part this explains the complexity of our present text.<sup>5</sup>

Turning now to the study of the association of witches with demons, I should say that I include nefarious ghosts in the larger group of demons; I understand demons to be supernatural forces that exist outside of human society, are somewhere between humans and gods, and act in a capricious or irrational manner. In *Maqlû* the involvement of witches with demons takes several forms: (1) addresses to demons in which there is an explicit or implicit identification of the demons with the witches; (2) the use of demons by witches to harm their victims; (3) the use of demons against witches. I shall illustrate and examine each one of these groups, try to identify a possible trigger or point of association that could have led to the creation of the group, and examine examples of each group to exemplify the literary development that led to the formation of the group. We will see, that is, how exorcists took

3 Cf. T. Abusch, “Considerations When Killing a Witch: Developments in Exorcistic Attitudes to Witchcraft,” in *The Dynamics of Changing Rituals: The Transformation of Religious Rituals within Their Social and Cultural Context*, ed. J. Kreinath et al., Toronto Studies in Religion 29 (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 191–210 [[AMD 5, 65–78]].

4 I cite the text (and line count) of *Maqlû* from my edition: T. Abusch, *The Magical Ceremony “Maqlû”: A Critical Edition*, AMD 10 (Leiden: Brill, 2016). For a German translation, see T. Abusch and D. Schwemer, “Das Abwehrzauber-Ritual *Maqlû* (‘Verbrennung’),” in *Omina, Orakel, Rituale und Beschwörungen*, ed. B. Janowski and G. Wilhelm, TUAT NF 4 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2008), 128–186.

5 For the nature of *Maqlû* and its calendrical setting, see T. Abusch, “Mesopotamian Anti-witchcraft Literature: Texts and Studies, Part I: The Nature of *Maqlû*: Its Character, Divisions, and Calendrical Setting,” *JNES* 33 (1974): 251–262 [[AMD 5, 99–111]]. For the historical development of *Maqlû*, see T. 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. T. Abusch et al., HSS 37 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 1–57 [[AMD 5, 113–162]].

incantations addressed to demons and adapted them for use in anti-witchcraft rituals (group 1), how they introduced demons into already existing incantations that described the witches' actions (group 2), and finally how they transformed demons into agents against witches (group 3).

## 1 Addresses to Demons

An incantation originally directed against demons, though now intended against witches, is *anašši dipāru*, I 135–143. It reads:

135 ÉN *anašši dipāru šalmiṣunu aqallu*  
 136 *ša utukku šēdu rābišu eṭemmu*  
 137 <sup>d</sup>*Lamašti* <sup>d</sup>*labāši aḥḥāzu*  
 138 *lilû lilîtu ardat lilî*  
 139 *u mimma lemnu mušabbitu amēlûti*  
 140 *ḥûlâ zûbâ u itattukâ*  
 141 *quturkunu litelli šamê*  
 142 *la`mikunu liballi* <sup>d</sup>*Šamši*  
 143 *liprus ḥayyattakunu mâr* <sup>d</sup>*Ea mašmaššu* TU<sub>6</sub> ÉN

135 I am raising the torch and burning their statues,  
 136 (Those) of the demon, the spirit, the lurker, the ghost,  
 137 Lamaštu, Labāšu, Aḥḥāzu (jaundice),  
 138 Lilû, Lilîtu, Ardat-Lilî,  
 139 And any evil that seizes mankind.  
 140 Melt, dissolve, drip ever away!  
 141 May your smoke rise ever heavenward,  
 142 May the sun extinguish your embers,  
 143 May Ea's son, the exorcist, cut off the terror that emanates from you.<sup>6</sup>

From the wording of the incantation it is obvious that the incantation was originally directed against demons and ghosts. That this incantation is now directed against the witch is implicit in its present context; this change is made explicit by a Sultantepe manuscript which adds [*ēpiš kiš*]p[*l lemnu*]ū<sup>r</sup>ti ruḥê lā<sup>1</sup> ṭābûti / [*ša ana lemutti*] ikpudun[*i*] yâši, “the doer of evil witchcraft, not good spells, who plotted evil against me myself,” after line 139. This understanding is confirmed by the form of the same incantation in the anti-witchcraft ritual

6 For this incantation, cf. Abusch, “Early Form,” 19–20, 51–54 [[AMD 5, 128–129, 157–160]].

*KAR* 80 and duplicates.<sup>7</sup> There the text adds *ēpiš kišpī ruḥê rusê upšašê lemnūti*, “the one who performs witchcraft, spittle, enchainments, evil machinations,” at the same point. These additions represent standard descriptions of the activities of a witch.

Originally, then, the addressee in this incantation, as in some others in *Maqlû*, was a demon. Secondly, the addressee assumed the identity of a witch. The use of this incantation against the witch is a secondary development and is part of the broader tendency to associate witches and demons. When constructing *Maqlû*, the exorcist here drew upon his general repertoire of incantations addressed to demons and ghosts and adapted them accordingly.

The secondary use of the anti-demon incantation “I am raising the torch” against a witch at this point in the ritual certainly fits with and may even have been triggered by ideas associated with the killing of the witch in this ceremony. What remained after her execution was her shade, and this shade was then treated as a ghost. Note, for example, the incantation *eršetu eršetu eršetumma*, I 37–41, earlier in the first tablet:

37 ÉN *eršetu eršetu eršetumma*  
 38 <sup>d</sup>*Gilgameš bēl māmītikunu*  
 39 *mimmû attunu tēpušā*<sup>8</sup> *anāku īde*  
 40 *mimmû anāku eppušu attunu ul tīdâ*  
 41 *mimmû kaššāpātūya ippušā ēgâ pāṭira pāšira ul irāšši*<sup>9</sup> TU<sub>6</sub> ÉN

37 Netherworld, netherworld, yea netherworld,  
 38 Gilgameš is the enforcer of your oath.  
 39 Whatever you have done, I know,  
 40 Whatever I do, you do not know.  
 41 Whatever my witches do will not secure anyone who will overlook,  
 undo, release (their oath).<sup>10</sup>

There are textual features in this incantation that suggest that the addressees are not live witches, but rather ghosts. In this incantation the “witch” is addressed not in the usual feminine singular, but rather in the masculine plural. When placed alongside the invocation in lines 37–38 of the netherworld (*eršetu*), the “oath” itself (*māmītu*), and Gilgameš its enforcer, this masculine

7 For an edition of *KAR* 80 and duplicates, see *CMAwR* 1, no. 8.4.

8 Or, perhaps, *teppušā*.

9 Variant: *lā išā*.

10 Variant: “They will not have anyone who ...”

plural suggests that the speaker here addresses the witches not as human females, but rather as, or as part of, a group of “male” ghosts, and that this address is part of an exorcistic adjuration. The witches have merged into a group of undifferentiated dead, a collective in which they lack individuality.<sup>11</sup>

Dead witches are treated as demonic, spectral beings; they are nefarious ghosts, and anti-demonic incantations are used at this point, when the witch is divested of live human form. Hence, the incantation “I am raising the torch” in I 135–143. This also explains the wording of several incantations at the end of Tablet v, the climax of the original ceremony and of the first main division of the standard ritual. I have in mind particularly v 132–141 and 158–175, both of which have a second-person masculine plural addressee and were originally addressed to noncorporeal beings. These two incantations read:

132 ÉN ezzētunu šamrātunu dannātunu gaššātunu  
 133 gaššātunu ašātunu ayyāb[ātunu] lemnētunu  
 134 ša lā <sup>d</sup>Ea mannu unāḥkunūši  
 135 ša lā <sup>d</sup>Asalluḥi mannu ušapšahkunūš[i]  
 136 <sup>d</sup>Ea linēḥkunūši  
 137 <sup>d</sup>Asalluḥi lišapšeḥkunū[ši]  
 138 p̄ya mû pikunu išātu  
 139 p̄ya pākunu liballi  
 140 tû ša p̄ya tâ ša pikunu liballi  
 141 kipdī ša libbiya liballâ kipdī ša libbikunū<sup>12</sup>

132 Incantation. Raging, furious, powerful, cruel,  
 133 Overbearing, tough, hostile, wicked are you!  
 134 Who but Ea can calm you?  
 135 Who but Asalluḥi can cool you?  
 136 May Ea calm you,  
 137 May Asalluḥi cool you.  
 138 My mouth is water, your mouth is fire:  
 139 May my mouth extinguish your mouth,  
 140 May the spell of my mouth extinguish the spell of your mouth,  
 141 May the plots of my heart extinguish the plots of your heart!

11 For this incantation, see T. Abusch, “The Socio-Religious Framework of the Babylonian Witchcraft Ceremony *Maqlû*: Some Observations on the Introductory Section of the Text, Part I,” in *Riches Hidden in Secret Places: Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Memory of Thorkild Jacobsen*, ed. T. Abusch (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 1–34, esp. 8–12 [[AMD 5, 219–247, esp. 225–228]].

12 Variant: *kipid ša libbiya kipi[d] ša libb[ikunu liballi]*.

158 *ÉN isâ isâ rēqā rēqā*  
 159 *bēšā bēšā ḥilqā ḥilqā*  
 160 *duppirā atlakā isâ u rēqā*  
 161 *lumunkunu kīma qutri lītelli šamē*  
 162 *ina zumriya isâ*  
 163 *ina zumriya rēqā*  
 164 *ina zumriya bēšā*  
 165 *ina zumriya ḥilqā*  
 166 *ina zumriya duppirā*  
 167 *ina zumriya atlakā*  
 168 *ana zumriya lā taturrā*  
 169 *ana zumriya lā teṭeḥḥē<sup>13</sup>*  
 170 *ana zumriya lā tasanniqā*  
 171 *nīš<sup>d</sup>Šamaš kabti lū [t]amâtunu*  
 172 *nīš<sup>d</sup>Ea bēl nagbi lū t[amâ]tunu*  
 173 *nīš<sup>d</sup>Asalluḥi mašmaš ilī lū tamâtunu*  
 174 *nīš<sup>d</sup>Girra qāmîkunu lū tamâtunu*  
 175 *ina zumriya lū tapparrasāma*

158 Be off, be off, begone, begone,  
 159 Depart, depart, flee, flee!  
 160 Go off, go away, be off, and begone!  
 161 May your wickedness like smoke rise ever heavenward!  
 162 From my body be off!  
 163 From my body begone!  
 164 From my body depart!  
 165 From my body flee!  
 166 From my body go off!  
 167 From my body go away!  
 168 To my body turn back not!  
 169 To my body approach not!<sup>14</sup>  
 170 On my body abut not!  
 171 By the life of Šamaš, the honorable, be adjured!  
 172 By the life of Ea, lord of the underground springs, be adjured!  
 173 By the life of Asalluḥi, the magus of the gods, be adjured!  
 174 By the life of Girra, your executioner,<sup>15</sup> be adjured!  
 175 From my body you shall indeed be separated!

13 Variant: + *ana zumriya lā teqerrebā*.

14 Variant: + "To my body draw near not!"

15 Lit., "your burner."

We can even see the transformation of the witch from a human to a demonic form in *ēpišū'a ēpišetū'a*, v 112–131. Here the images of the human and the demonic are combined—the first part treats the witch as a human, the second part as if she were a demon. This latter part forbids the witches to approach the settled community and the person of the speaker, themes that are not usual in witchcraft incantations but are found in addresses to demons and ghosts.

Before leaving this first group, I should mention that not all cases where the witch is imagined to possess a demonic form are a consequence of her having died and become a ghost. Note, for example, *Maqlû* VI 143"–151" // 152"–158": "Ha! my witch, my deceiver, (you) who sweep over all lands, who cross to and fro over all mountains."

## 2 The Use of Demons by Witches

In our second group demons are treated as forces that the witch may enlist and command. This use of demons reflects the fact that demons, although originally independent, seem to have lost their independence and to have become servants of cosmic powers—here the witch. This new position in relation to witches may have been triggered by the fact that many acts performed by the witch served to give her victim over to the dead and their ghosts, e.g., *Maqlû* IV 14–19 and again 24–29:

- 14 *ana mīti taḥīrā'inni*  
*tē(pušāni tušēpišāni<sup>d</sup>Girra lipšur)*
- 15 *ana gulgullati t[apqi]dā'i[nn]i*  
*ṽtē(pušāni tušēpišāni<sup>d</sup>Girra lipšur)<sup>1</sup>*
- 16 *ana eṭem kimtiya tapq[idā'inni]*  
*[tē(pušāni tušēpišāni<sup>d</sup>Girra lipšur)]*
- 17 *ana eṭemmi aḥī tapqidā'i[nni]*  
*[tē(pušāni tušēpišāni<sup>d</sup>Girra lipšur)]*
- 18 *ana eṭemmi murtappidu ša pāqida lā išū tapqid[ā'inni]*  
*[tē(pušāni tušēpišāni<sup>d</sup>Girra lipšur)]*
- 19 *ana eṭem ḥarbī nadūti tapqidā'inni*  
*ṽtē(pušāni tušēpišāni<sup>d</sup>Girra lipšur)<sup>1</sup>*

- 14 You have betrothed me to a dead man,  
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me:  
 may Girra release).

- 15 You have handed me over to a skull,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against me:  
may Girra release).
- 16 You have handed me over to a ghost of (a member of) my family,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against me:  
may Girra release).
- 17 You have handed me over to a ghost of a stranger,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against me:  
may Girra release).
- 18 You have handed me over to a roaming ghost who has no caretaker,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against me:  
may Girra release).
- 19 You have handed me over to a ghost in the uninhabited wasteland,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against me:  
may Girra release).
- 24 *šalmīya ana mīti tapqidā*  
*tē(pušāni tušēpišāni<sup>d</sup>Girra lipšur)*
- 25 *šalmīya ana mīti taḥīrā*  
*tē(pušāni tušēpišāni<sup>d</sup>Girra lipšur)*
- 26 *šalmīya itti mīti t[ušn]illā*  
*tē(pušāni tušēpišāni<sup>d</sup>Girra lipšur)*
- 27 *šalmīya ina sūn mī[ti tušni]llā*  
*tē(pušāni tušēpišāni<sup>d</sup>Girra lipšur)*
- 28 *šalmīya ina kimaḥ mī[ti ta]qbirā*  
*tē(pušāni tušēpišāni<sup>d</sup>Girra lipšur)*
- 29 *šalmīya ana gulgullati tapqidā*  
*tē(pušāni tušēpišāni<sup>d</sup>Girra lipšur)*
- 24 You have handed over figurines of me to a dead man,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against me:  
may Girra release).
- 25 You have betrothed figurines of me to a dead man,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against me:  
may Girra release).
- 26 You have laid figurines of me with a dead man,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against me:  
may Girra release).
- 27 You have laid figurines of me in the lap of a dead man,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against me:  
may Girra release).

- 28 You have buried figurines of me in the grave of a dead man,  
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me:  
 may Girra release).
- 29 You have handed over figurines of me to a skull.  
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me:  
 may Girra release).

There are several full-blown *Maqlû* incantations in which demons serve the witch and are used by her to harm her victim. Of these few, I choose 11 19–75 as an example, in part because it is detailed and explicit and in part because it can be demonstrated that the demon section is an addition to the incantation. It is a long text, so I will first summarize the incantation, much of which is devoted to the victim's description of what the witch has done. I will then quote and examine the section most relevant for our discussion.

The incantation begins with a hymnic invocation of the fire god Girra, followed by a statement that the victim is turning to this god for judgment and is taking hold of the fringe of his garment as well as the fringes of other gods related to the victim (lines 19–30). Then, in lines 31–69, the speaker describes what the witches have done to him. This is a rather long description and is actually made up of several lists: First, the speaker states that the witch has attacked and seized various parts of his body (lines 32–36). He then proclaims that now, in the presence of the god, he is presenting two crisscrossed statues of bronze (lines 37–38). These statues are designated as representing the witch, and here follows a long list of names of different kinds of witches (lines 39–50), each pair introduced by the relative pronoun *ša*, “of” (e.g., *ša kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya*, “of my warlock and my witch”). The list culminates in a one-line general description, line 51, of the harm to which the witches have presumably subjected the victim: “Who have given me over to a dead man, who have made me experience hardship.” Lines 52–66 form a long list of demons and illnesses that likewise culminates (lines 67–69) in a description of how evil forces have seized and held on to the victim night and day. In lines 70–71, the speaker again says that he is performing the ritual act in the presence of the divinity, and here he states that he is burning the statues in sulfur. In lines 72–73, he then asks for divine assistance, namely, that his lord look upon him and extirpate the evils from his body and release their evil witchcraft. The text ends in lines 74–75 with a final invocation and promise of praise.

The relevant section, lines (51), 52–66, (67–69), reads:

- 51 *ša ana mīti puqqudū'inni namrāša kullumū'inni*  
 52 *lū utukku lemnu lū alū lemnu*  
 53 *lū eṭemmu lemnu lū gallū lemnu*

- 54 *lū ilu lemnu lū rābišu lemnu*  
 55 *lū<sup>d</sup> Lamaštu lū<sup>d</sup> Labāšu lū<sup>d</sup> Ahhāzu*  
 56 *lū lilū lū lilitu lū ardat-lilī*  
 57 *lū liʿbu šibit šadī*  
 58 *lū bennu riḥū[t] ʿ<sup>d</sup>Šulpaʿea<sup>1</sup>*  
 59 *lū antašubbū lū ʿ<sup>d</sup>[Lugalurra]*  
 60 *lū šudingirrakku lū š[ʿuʿinannakku]<sup>16</sup>*  
 61 *lū šugidimmakku lū šu[namerimmakku]*  
 62 *lū šunamlullukku<sup>17</sup> lū lamaštu šeḥertu mārat<sup>d</sup>Ani*  
 63 *lū saḡhulḡazū mukīl rēš lemutti*  
 64 *lū dikiš šīrī šimmatu rimūtu*  
 65 *lū [mimm]a lemnu ša šuma lā nabū*  
 66 *lū [mimm]a ēpiš lemutti ša amēlūti*  
 67 *ša šabtannima mūša u urra irteneddāni*  
 68 *uḡattū šīrīya kal ūmi šabtannima*  
 69 *kal mūši lā umaššarani*

- 51 Who have given me over to a dead man, who have made me experience hardship—  
 52 Be it an evil demon, be it an evil spirit,  
 53 Be it an evil ghost, be it an evil constable,  
 54 Be it an evil god, be it an evil lurker,  
 55 Be it Lamaštu, be it Labāšu, be it Ahhāzu (jaundice),  
 56 Be it Lilū, be it Lilitu, be it Ardat-Lilī,  
 57 Be it liʿbu-illness, the seizure of the mountain,  
 58 Be it bennu-epilepsy, the spawn of Šulpaʿea,  
 59 Be it antašubba<sup>18</sup>-epilepsy, be it Lugalurra-epilepsy,  
 60 Be it Hand-of-a-god-disease, be it Hand-of-a-goddess-disease,<sup>19</sup>

16 The rendering of the Hand-group in lines 60–62 assumes that the entries refer to diseases. This construal is to be preferred; however, it is not impossible that these entries should be rendered: *lū qāt ili lū qā[t<sup>d</sup>ištari]* / *lū qāt eṭemmi lū qāt [māmīti]* / *lū qāt amēlūti*, and understood as the causes or powers behind the diseases.

17 Variant: *lū šunamerimmakku* and *lū šunamlullukku* are transposed in lines 61–62: *lū ʿšū<sup>1</sup>(nam)l[ullukku] l[ū šunamerimmakku]*.

18 Lit., “fallen from heaven.”

19 This translation reflects the reading *lū šudingirrakku lū š[ʿuʿinannakku]*, etc., in lines 60–62, which reading assumes that the Hand group represents a list of diseases. However, if we were to read *lū qāt ili lū qā[t<sup>d</sup>ištari]*, etc. (see above), we would then translate “Be it hand of a god, be it hand of a goddess, Be it hand of a ghost, be it hand of a curse, Be it hand of mankind,” for that reading assumes rather that the Hand group represents the causes or powers behind the diseases. For the problem, see N. P. Heeßel, “The Hands of the Gods:

- 61 Be it Hand-of-a ghost-disease, be it Hand-of-a-curse-disease,  
 62 Be it Hand-of-mankind-disease, be it young Lamaštu, the daughter  
 of Anu,  
 63 Be it *Saġhulhaza*-demon, the attendant who provides evil,  
 64 Be it swelling, paralysis, numbness,  
 65 Be it anything evil that has not been named,  
 66 Be it anything that causes harm to humanity,  
 67 That seizes me and constantly pursues me night and day,  
 68 Afflicts my flesh, seizes me all day,  
 69 And does not let go of me all night.

I have recently published a detailed critical analysis of this incantation,<sup>20</sup> and here I would only iterate several of my observations. The text presents a number of structural and logical difficulties. Clearly, the most notable difficulties are those caused by the list of demons and illnesses in lines 52–69. The list of demons and illnesses in lines 52–69 is set off from the previous list by the nonhuman nature of the entries and by the introduction of each entry by means of *lū*, “be it,” rather than by the relative pronoun *ša* used to introduce each pair of witches.

Moreover, the list is syntactically disconnected from its surrounding context and forms a parenthesis. The absence of a clear syntactic connection between the lists of witches and demons means that the text does not state clearly what their relationship might be. As the text stands now, the list of demons seems to provide an explanation of the nature of the evil experience that, according to line 51, the witch made the victim experience. The list was apparently inserted to explicate and enumerate *namrāšu*, “hardship,” in the line that precedes the list and seems now to stand in apposition to line 51. Line 51, too, was an insertion; perhaps it was inserted to characterize the witches, introduce the demons, and connect the witchcraft and demonic sections (line 51a = giving man over to ghosts; line 51b = giving man over to demons and the like).

The inclusion of the list of demons indicates a growth of power on the part of the witch: she is now able to control not only other human beings but also

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Disease Names, and Divine Anger,” in *Disease in Babylonia*, ed. I. L. Finkel and M. J. Geller, CM 36 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 120–130.

20 T. Abusch, “The Revision of Babylonian Anti-witchcraft Incantations: The Critical Analysis of Incantations in the Ceremonial Series *Maqlū*,” in *Continuity and Innovation in the Magical Tradition*, ed. G. Bohak et al., Jerusalem Studies in Religion and Culture 15 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 11–41, esp. 16–28 [[51–80, esp. 56–68]].

nonhuman demonic forces.<sup>21</sup> One may suggest, therefore, that the insertion of the list of demons reflects an expansion of the range of powers of the witch and serves to redefine her relationship to demons and illness.

### 3 The Use of Demons Against Witches

We have now seen (1) how the witch was identified with demonic and spectral beings, and (2) how these beings were made to serve her. In our third group, the demons are called upon to attack the witch. In our study of the first two groups, I noted the existence in each of what might be a trigger for the association of the normal witch with demons. So, too, in taking up our third group, I would first note a possible trigger.

In v 57–75, we have a text that illustrates the use of demons by witches but also introduces our third group. The relevant part, lines 60–67, reads:

60 *utukku lemnu tušašbitā'inni utukku lemnu lišbatku[nūši]*<sup>22</sup>  
 61 *alû lemnu tušašbitā'inni alû lemnu [lišbatkunūši]*  
 62 *eṭemmu lemnu tušašbitā'inni eṭemmu lemnu [lišbatkunūši]*  
 63 *gallû lemnu tušašbitā'inni gallû lemnu [lišbatkunūši]*  
 64 *ilu lemnu tušašbitā'inni ilu lemnu lišbatkunū[ši]*  
 65 *rābišu lemnu tušašbitā'inni rābišu lemnu lišbatkunūši*  
 66 <sup>d</sup>Lamaštu <sup>d</sup>labāšu <sup>d</sup>aḥḥāzu tušašbitā'inni <sup>d</sup>Lamaštu <sup>d</sup>labāšu  
     <sup>d</sup>aḥḥāzu lišbatūkunūši  
 67 *lilû lililtu ardat lilî tušašbitā'inni lilû lililtu ardat lilî lišbatūkunūši*

60 An evil demon you have caused to seize me: May an evil demon seize you.

61 An evil spirit you have caused to seize me: May an evil spirit seize you.

21 The demons' loss of autonomy vis-à-vis the witch is due to her increasing power, but it also appears to parallel (and be part of the same trend as) an increasing subordination of demons to the gods; for the subordination of the demons to the gods, see K. van der Toorn, "The Theology of Demons in Mesopotamia and Israel: Popular Belief and Scholarly Speculation," in *Die Dämonen: Die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt*, ed. A. Lange et al. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 73–76.

22 All nouns in lines 60–67 are written logographically; the first mention of each noun is in the accusative case, but note that I have rendered the accusative here in *-u* on the analogy of the explicit writings in line 71.

- 62 An evil ghost you have caused to seize me: May an evil ghost seize you.
- 63 An evil constable you have caused to seize me: May an evil constable seize you.
- 64 An evil god you have caused to seize me: May an evil god seize you.
- 65 An evil lurker you have caused to seize me: May an evil lurker seize you.
- 66 Lamaštu, Labāšu, Aḥḥāzu you have caused to seize me: May Lamaštu, Labāšu, Aḥḥāzu seize you.
- 67 Lilû, Lilitu, Ardat-lilî you have caused to seize me: May Lilû, Lilitu, Ardat-lilî seize you.

Here we see not only how witches use demons, but also how in an anti-witchcraft incantation based on the motif of reversion, the very demons that the witch originally used against her victim could be turned against her.

An incantation that describes in some detail the use of demons against witches is the last incantation in Tablet II, 205–225. Lines 205–214, the pertinent part of the incantation, read:

- 205 ÉN *attîmannu kaššāptu ša tubtana*”*înni*<sup>23</sup>
- 206 *ana lemutti teštene*”*înni*
- 207 *ana lā ṭābti tassanaḥḥurînni*
- 208 *ālki ul îde bîtki ul îde šumki ul îde šubatki ul îde*
- 209 *šêdû liba*”*ûki*
- 210 *utukkû lište*”*ûki*
- 211 *eṭemmû lissaḥrûki*
- 212 *bennu lā ṭābu eliki limqut*
- 213 *rābišû lemutti likillû rēški*
- 214 <sup>d</sup>Lu[gal]i[rra u <sup>d</sup>Meslamta]’ea *linārûki*

- 205 Whoever you are, O witch, who keeps seeking me,
- 206 Who keeps searching for me with evil intent,
- 207 Who keeps looking for me to no good purpose.

23 So the citation of the incipit in RT 41’ (*túb-ta-na-in-ni*). The text of II 205 has *túb-ta-ni-<sup>r</sup>in<sup>1</sup>-ni*, perhaps: *tubtan(a)”înni*. However, since double *alef* does not allow the phonetic change *a + i > î*, perhaps the form in Tablet II is the result of syncope of *a*” (= *tubtanînni*). For similar cases of syncope, see M. Luukko, *Grammatical Variation in Neo-Assyrian*, SAAS 16 (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2004), 122–123.

- 208 I do not know your city, I do not know your house, I do not know  
your name, I do not know your dwelling.
- 209 May spirits seek you,  
210 May demons search for you,  
211 May ghosts look for you,  
212 May not good bennu-epilepsy befall you,  
213 May lurkers for evil attend to you,  
214 May Lugalirra and Meslamta'ea kill you ...<sup>24</sup>

Several gods are then mentioned, and the text ends with a description of the fire of destruction in what seems to be a netherworld context.

In lines 205–207, the first three lines of the incantation, the victim of witchcraft describes how the witch is constantly seeking out her victim, the speaker. In lines 209–211, the speaker then requests of various demons that they seek out, afflict, and kill the witch. A close study of these lines reveals how this incantation was composed, and how in the process it incorporated a *topos* centering on demons that was originally external to witchcraft.

More specifically, lexical and grammatical features found in lines 205–211 provide a clue to the composition of this text. The first three lines describing the witch's activities use verbs in the iterative *tan* form exclusively. Almost immediately, the first three lines of the invocation of demonic forces against the witch make use of the same three verbs in the same order. Thus, it might seem that lines 209–211 were modeled on lines 205–207, and that the text was composed linearly from beginning to end.

But this conclusion is difficult to maintain. While it might seem that there is a parallelism between what the witch does to her victim and what will be done to her, as is often the case and is in fact the case in the immediately preceding incantation, this is true here only up to a point. For the introduction

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24 The rest of the incantation reads in translation:

- 215 May [D]N, lord of dest[inies], erase you[r name],  
216 May merciless Ninurta tear out your [tongue],  
217 May Gula, the great doctor, strike your cheek,  
218 May raging Girra inflame your body.  
219 O pure oven, great daughter of Anu,  
220 In whose inside the fire of the grave flares,  
221 In whose inside Girra, the warrior, set down his dwelling,  
222 Whose flame when ignited reaches heaven,  
223 Burn, scorch, burn up my witch.  
224 Quickly and speedily, may the lives of my warlock and my witch be extinguished,  
225 Thereby save me myself so that I may declare your great deeds and sing your praises.

only describes how the witch seeks out her victim, while the invocation of the demons includes not only a request that they seek out the witch, but also that they afflict and kill her. Thus, only the first three lines (II 205–207) of the invocation of the demons match the description of the witch’s activities. Perhaps even more important, the verbs in the invocation of demons and the matching verbs in the earlier part of the incantation are in different verbal stems, for in contrast to the verbs used to describe the witch’s activities, those in the invocation do not make use of the iterative *tan* form.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the sets of lines are not parallel in terms of form, and the two sections correspond only in part.

Rather than the text being composed linearly, it would appear that the curse section centering on the demons generated the text. In order to introduce the witch and have some correspondence between her actions and her punishment, the composer focuses upon the first of the three actions of the demons (seeking out the witch) and draws only upon the first three lines of the demonic invocation. But why has he invoked a group of demons and created a correspondence between demon and witch? The answer is provided by the statement in line 208 that the victim does not know the location or identity of the witch. Thus, the demons are asked to seek out the witch precisely because the victim does not know her location or identity, while they do, for demons like gods are part of the supernatural world, have become servants of the gods, and can accomplish things that a mere human cannot. Thus, the composer uses the description of the witch to prepare the way for the invocation of the demons and then introduces the demons by means of the statement that the speaker does not know the location or identity of the witch.

The composer used an invocation of demons and gods, creating his opening description of the witch on the basis of the first three invocations, but repeating these verb forms in iterative form rather than in the forms in which they occur in the invocation.<sup>26</sup> The list of demons, which may have had nothing to do with witches, would have served as a model for the composer. The use of demons here seems to be comparable to their invocation in Esarhaddon’s succession treaty; there among the curses, in line 493, we read *šēdu utukku rābišu lemnu bitātikunu liḥīrū*, “May a spirit, a demon, and an evil lurker select your houses.”<sup>27</sup> And, in this context, it is difficult not to think of the injunction to

25 Thus instead of three iterative *tan* forms, we have a D (*liba”ūki*) followed by what is either a Gt or Gtn (*lište”ūki*), followed by an N (*lissaḥrūki*) in the invocation.

26 See T. Abusch, “Maqlû Tablet II: Its Literary Frame and Formation,” in *Marbeh Ḥokmah: Essays in Memory of Victor Avigdor Hurowitz*, ed. E. S. Yona et al. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 1–12 [[38–50]].

27 S. Parpola and K. Watanabe, *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths*, SAA 2 (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1988), 49–50.

the Israelites to place blood on their doors so that the demonic “destroyer” pass over and not enter their homes (Exod 12:23).

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We have witnessed the witch assuming demonic form, making use of demons, and being attacked by demons. These are developments in the understanding of the witch and reflect the fact that the image of the witch has changed or, at least, that a new image has been added. Given the fact that many of our examples involve textual and literary change, I would suggest that these changes are the result of changes in attitude on the part of learned scribes, rather than changes in the thinking of the general population.

## Divine Judges on Earth and in Heaven

In this conference on the divine court in various cultures and historical periods, I shall draw my illustrations of the divine court in ancient Mesopotamia from a well-known magical ceremony.\* In much of the Akkadian prayer and incantation tradition, experiences originally unrelated to law or the law court are perceived through, molded by, and integrated into a view of reality generalized from the legal sphere of life and are expressed in images drawn from that sphere. This is particularly true of texts that counteract witchcraft; there, when the conflict is imagined as a dispute, the witch and her victim become legal adversaries and the conflict becomes a legal conflict.

I should begin by saying that when I started thinking about how I should approach the topic of gods sitting in judgment for this conference, I found that my thoughts kept going back and forth between the images of gods as judges here on earth and in the heavens. I kept on wondering about the relationship of the two settings and the nature of the gods in each. I thought of treating the different images and functions of the gods both phenomenologically and historically.<sup>1</sup> But in the end I concluded that I could serve the purpose of the conference best by focusing on one text that contains the several images and settings that are of interest. I will examine a few Akkadian magical incantations in which an individual god or group of gods is asked to render a judgment, but I will also survey the several settings of the divine court and trace the development from one setting to the next.

I shall draw my material from *Maqlû*, the longest and most important Mesopotamian text concerned with combating witchcraft. *Maqlû* comprises

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\* I thank the conference organizers for the opportunity to rethink some of my earlier work in the context of a conference on the divine court. I am grateful to my student Bronson Brown-deVost for his helpful suggestions and technical help in the preparation of this paper.

1 See F. Rochberg, "The Stars Their Likenesses": Perspectives on the Relation Between Celestial Bodies and Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia," in *What is a God? Anthropomorphic and Non-Anthropomorphic Aspects of Deity in Ancient Mesopotamia*, ed. B. N. Porter (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 41–91, and F. Rochberg, "The Heavens and the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia: The View from a Polytheistic Cosmology," in *Reconsidering the Concept of Revolutionary Monotheism*, ed. B. Pongratz-Leisten (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 117–136; and cf. T. Abusch, "Alaktu and Halakhah: Oracular Decision, Divine Revelation," *HTR* 80 (1987): 32 with n. 57.

eight tablets of incantations (I–VIII) and a ritual tablet (RT).<sup>2</sup> The incantation tablets record the text of almost one hundred incantations; in the ritual tablet, these incantations are cited by incipit, and alongside each citation appropriate ritual directions are prescribed. The present form of *Maqlû* is, I believe, a creation of the first millennium BCE, though a divergent proto-form may have already existed in Assur towards the end of the Middle Assyrian period.

Long thought to be a random collection of witchcraft materials, an important breakthrough in the understanding of *Maqlû* came with my discovery that it was a single complex ceremony.<sup>3</sup> The ceremony was performed during a single night and into the following morning at the end of the month Abu (July/August), a time when spirits were thought to move back and forth between the netherworld and this world. This ceremony is even the subject of a letter written by the exorcist Nabû-nâdin-šumi to King Esarhaddon in early August 670 BCE. The primary participants were the exorcist, who both organizes and participates in the ceremony, and his patient (who on occasion might be the king).

In the main, the incantations and rituals of *Maqlû* are directed against witches and witchcraft. The ceremony was intended to counteract and dispel evil magic and its effects, to protect the patient, and to punish and render ineffectual those responsible for the evil.

The series is composed of three major divisions. The first two divisions were performed during the night, and the third during the early morning hours of the following day. The ceremony took place on the estate of a member of the upper class or in the royal court.

The incantations against the witch here in *Maqlû*, specifically, and in the Mesopotamian anti-witchcraft corpus of rituals, generally, are based on various themes and take various forms. One of the most striking and important themes is the destruction of the witch in effigy. As expected in a ritual in which burning is a repetitive and central act, the destruction of this evil enemy achieves concrete literary form in various incantation types that center upon burning. The motif of the burning of the witch in various permutations and elaborations occurs in almost every incantation of I 73–IV 151. A well-known type is the address to the fire god (Girra), in which he is described and called upon to destroy the witch (e.g., II 19–149). Here,

2 I cite the text and line count of *Maqlû* from my edition: T. Abusch, *The Magical Ceremony "Maqlû": A Critical Edition*, AMD 10 (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

3 See T. Abusch, "Mesopotamian Anti-witchcraft Literature: Texts and Studies, Part I: The Nature of *Maqlû*: Its Character, Divisions, and Calendrical Setting," *JNES* 33 (1974): 251–262 [[AMD 5, 99–111]].

destruction by fire has been joined to the motifs of judgment and execution. Let us, therefore, select as our first incantations two short and simple examples of judgment featuring the fire god. Later we shall examine two more complex incantations (I 1–36 and I 73–121) that call on the gods for a judgment against the witch.

II 127–134 read:

- 127 Incantation. O powerful Girra, wild (fire-)storm,  
 128 You give correct decisions to gods and rulers,  
 129 You provide justice for the oppressed man and woman.  
 130 Stand by me in my judgment like Šamaš, the warrior,  
 131 Judge my case, render my verdict.  
 132 Burn my warlock and my witch,  
 133 Devour my enemies, consume my oppressors!  
 134 Let your raging (fire-)storm vanquish them.

Our second example is the first half of the incantation II 105–125. Lines 105–116 read:

- 105 Incantation. O blazing Girra, warlike son of Anu,  
 106 Indeed you are the fiercest among your brothers.  
 107 As you decide lawsuits in the stead of Šin and Šamaš,  
 108 Judge my case, hand down my verdict.  
 109 Burn my warlock and my witch,  
 110 Girra, burn my warlock and my witch,  
 111 Girra, scorch my warlock and my witch,  
 112 Girra, burn them,  
 113 Girra, scorch them,  
 114 Girra, vanquish them,  
 115 Girra, consume them,  
 116 Girra, consume them completely!

In these incantations, raging fire is viewed, experienced, and addressed as a judge and executioner. These addresses begin with characterizations of the god, comparable (in a somewhat attenuated way) to the statements of praise at the beginning of many Akkadian prayers, especially those of the *šuilla* type. The statements focus on those functions and characteristics that lend the fire god the ability and standing to give judgments and to wreak destruction on the evildoer. The speaker then asks the god to give a judgment and to destroy his enemy. Notice that no justification is sought. These addresses to the god have

a primitive aristocratic world as their setting. It seems to me that the god functions more as a warlord than as a civilian judge.

In this context, the fire god may act together with Ea and Asalluḫi, gods of water and magic. For example, see v 112–124:

- 112 Incantation. My sorcerers, my sorceresses,  
 113 My warlocks, my witches,  
 114 You whose heart has planned evil against me,  
 115 You keep on seeking tricky spells against me,  
 116 You have bound my knees with evil sorcery.  
 117 In order to release the witchcraft and spittle against me, having  
       (first) turned to Girra at the word of Ea and Asalluḫi, (now)  
 118 With spring water, I quench your heart,  
 119 I extinguish your mood,  
 120 I take out the ardor of your heart,  
 121 I confound your understanding,  
 122 I unravel your thinking,  
 123 I burn your witchcraft,  
 124 I cause you to abandon the plots of your heart.

In this incantation, the speaker tells us that he has gone back to Ea and Asalluḫi, now that Girra has completed the task assigned to fire, in order to make sure that the witches are completely deprived of life and power. Here, accompanying the ritual act of pouring water upon the glowing embers, Ea and Asalluḫi are seen overshadowing the judgment in the fullest sense of the word; for just as they initiated it by sending the victim to Girra (cf., e.g., *Maqlû* III 55–60, IV 1–13), so, too, do they themselves carry out the final stages of its execution.

Or, again, in v 89–97, Girra functions as part of this early grouping of gods:

- 89 Incantation. [Ea has (now) unbound] the ligaments that you have  
       bound up,  
 90 [Asalluḫi has (now) released] the images that you have twisted and  
       fettered.  
 91 The knot that you have knotted against me, the pl[ot that you have  
       plotted against me]  
 92 May blazing Girra ca[use the wind to carry off],  
 93 May Nuska, the judge, the mas[ter of exorcism],  
 94 [Turn back] up[on your head] the sorcery that you have performed  
       against me.

- 95 My witchcraft is released, [my enchainment is] c[leared],  
 96 With spring water, [I undo your “spitt]le,”  
 97 I have (now) become pure, cl[ean, and innocent in the presence of  
 Nuska] and Girra, [the (divine) judges.]

Finally, the group of gods comprising Šamaš, the sun god, Ea and Asalluḫi, gods of water, and Girra, the fire god, is invoked at the conclusion of the first division of *Maqlû* as the authority in whose name the evil force is adjured to depart and remain distant.

- 171 By the life of Šamaš, the honorable, be adjured,  
 172 By the life of Ea, lord of the underground springs, be [adju]red,  
 173 By the life of Asalluḫi, the magus of the gods, be adjured,  
 174 By the life of Girra, your executioner, be adjured!  
 175 From my body you shall indeed be separated!

Thus far, I have been treating *Maqlû* in its standard first-millennium BCE form. But that form is the final recension of a work that began with a much more limited view of the world. The long ceremony that I have described grew out of an earlier short ritual.<sup>4</sup> Actually, Šamaš, Ea and Asalluḫi, and Girra were the most important gods in that earlier version, and the last three incantations from which I have quoted here (v 112–131, 89–97, and 158–175) originate in that version.

This original short version was performed in the morning. Subsequently, the ceremony was transferred to the nighttime. The work was then adapted as a nighttime ritual and expanded significantly. The adaptation of the short morning version to nighttime use and the expansion of the ceremony and text to allow the performance to be extended throughout the night and into the following morning were decisive for the development of the text of *Maqlû* as well as for the development of the framework, orientation, and texture of the ceremony.

The polarity of day and night came increasingly to the fore and altered the concerns, images, and conception of the work. The composition is now set in a new setting and takes on a new structural form in line with this setting.

4 See T. 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. T. Abusch et al., HSS 37 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 1–57 [[AMD 5, 113–162]].

The long version has a cosmic setting and involves the participation of many gods. Each of the three newly created divisions is fitted with introductory and concluding sections, and is framed by, or moves between, a different set of opposing cosmic poles. The first night division is oriented toward the heavenly (night) court of Anu and the netherworld court of Ereškigal; the second night division, toward the heavenly court of Enlil and the chthonic Ekur; and the daytime division, toward the court of Šamaš and his retinue in the morning sky and the subterranean abyss, the Apsu, of Ea and Asalluḫi.

Whereas the original version had no astral associations and involved only a small group of earth-centered gods (among whom I reckon Šamaš, the sun god), judgment in the final version is no longer limited to an earth-centered court but now also includes the heavens. The framework of judgment has expanded from a divine terrestrial court to one which now encompasses the night sky in all its facets. It is even possible that the orientation has become wholly astral and that our three courts have been transposed into positions within what Babylonian astronomy termed the paths of Anu, Enlil, and Ea. The paths cross the sky from east to west, and the stars travel along these paths. (The three paths have twelve segments, one for each month, and each segment is characterized by the heliacal rising of a star.)<sup>5</sup>

I have reconstructed the stages of development of the ceremony and the text. I note here a few of the changes in the relative order in which they took place.

- 1) A new introduction, I 1–72, oriented to the night sky of Anu, was added. The address to the gods of the night sky, I 1–36, opens this new introduction.
- 2) The major portion of Tablets VII 55–VIII, the third division, was added for use in the morning. The incantations of this division assume an early morning setting, and many invoke Šamaš, the sun god, in addition to the gods of water, Ea and Asalluḫi.
- 3) The original opening, I 73–121, originally addressed to Šamaš, the sun god and judge par excellence, was readdressed to Nuska, the god of the protective lamp.
- 4) Nuska now even eclipsed Ea and Asalluḫi, the gods of Eridu, by the important role he assumed in the expanded first division (e.g., II 1–17;

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5 For the heavenly paths, see E. Reiner and D. Pingree, *Enūma Anu Enlil, Tablets 50–51 = Babylonian Planetary Omens: Part 2*, BMes 2/2 (Malibu: Undena, 1981), 6–8 and 17–18, and W. Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography*, MC 8 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1998), 165, 170, and 252.

v 142–144) and elsewhere (RT 134'–135'). Moreover, with his introduction, the cast of gods was even further expanded, for Nuska belongs to the Enlil circle of the Ekur in Nippur. Thus, for example, Enlil and his astral retinue now appear in the introduction and conclusion of the second division, and the temple community of the Ekur recurs in several incantations.

There is thus a shift of focus—perhaps a gradual one—from the terrestrial plane to the astral one. For while the early version has a terrestrial setting, the later version has an astral one. With the projection of the divine court into the heavens, the center of the pantheon moves from earth to heaven. But even with this change of locus, divine judgment and execution remain important images of divine activity.

The two most important pleas for judgment in this new work are I 1–36 and I 73–121, the former composed specifically for the new version, the latter carried over from the older version and revised. But before taking up these incantations, I would remind you of two factors that we should take into account when we examine any incantation or prayer, but certainly when we study these two incantations. These considerations may limit any approach that claims to treat an incantation or prayer as a stand-alone speech.

1. *History.* Incantations often undergo changes. In general terms, one may say that often the alteration of a text will reflect a change of ideas, a change of purpose, and/or a change of ritual usage. In the case of *Maqlû*, some of the incantations that were originally recited in the morning and had a daytime orientation were adapted for nighttime use. Even incantations that were taken up into the expanded text may have gone through changes either before or after their incorporation into *Maqlû*.

2. *Ritual context.* In principle, incantations and prayers (or, at least, types of incantations and prayers, if not specific texts) were created with rituals in mind. Most incantations were part of relatively simple ceremonies, and often there is a meaningful relationship between incantation and ritual, a relationship, that is, between what is said and what is done. But an incantation that is part of a long and complex liturgy, especially one that has experienced change through time, becomes more nuanced and complex in meaning and requires both logic and sensitivity in teasing out its meaning. So, while the meaning of an incantation should be determined on the basis of what the words actually say, context matters, and ancient liturgists may have set an incantation into a context in which its meaning or role is different from or has been extended beyond its original purpose (and perhaps even beyond the actual wording of the text).

Bearing these two considerations in mind, let us now examine I 1–36 and I 73–121.<sup>6</sup> The first is the new introduction that has been prefaced to the work; the second is the original introduction and judgment that has now been displaced and revised. In the context of the final long ceremony, I would treat the first incantation, I 1–36, as a preliminary hearing and the second incantation, I 73–121, as the main hearing. Accordingly, let us begin with the preliminary hearing and then continue with the main hearing.

I 1–36 read:

- 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 (Because) she has (thereby) caused my god and goddess to be  
estranged from me (and)
- 7 I have become sickening in the sight of anyone who beholds me  
(and)
- 8 I am (thus) unable to rest day or night,
- 9 (Because) 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 (Because) 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,

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6 For the analysis of these two incantations, see T. Abusch, *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature: Case Studies*, BJS 132 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), x–xii and 85–147. Much of the argumentation presented here is already found in that study.

- 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 I have (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 May her mouth be tallow, her tongue be salt:  
 32 May that<sup>7</sup> which uttered evil against me drip ever away like tallow,  
 33 May that<sup>8</sup> 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.

As stated previously, 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 73–121), which was originally addressed to Šamaš. 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, that is, the heavenly bodies that were part of the court of Anu, the god of heaven. This opening incantation is an indictment of the witches. The incantation draws together magical and legal imagery for this purpose. It should be emphasized that this incantation 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 witches during the recitation of the incantation.

The incantation 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). He first presents his plaint in the form of a description of the acts that the witch performed against him and of his resultant state (lines 4–12). These facts clearly establish that he has suffered injuries at the hand of the witch and therefore that he has

7 That is, the witch's mouth.

8 That is, the witch's tongue.

a right to a court hearing. Consequently, he asks the gods to take up his case (lines 13–14). He states that he has caused the accused witches to be present in the judgment in the form of figurines (lines 15–17) and asks that they be punished because they have sought (perhaps by means of accusations) unmotivated evil against him, and that their bewitchment be released (lines 18–20). He asks to be cleared (of bewitchment and any guilt imputed to him) 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). Having proved his innocence and having been cleared (lines 25–26), he rightfully asserts that since the witch’s utterance belongs to an evil witch, her accusation has been refuted (lines 27–28). He is now able to request that the Gods of the Night bring the witch to justice and indict her and that the Night Watches 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).

Before going any further, I should address an objection raised against one part of my interpretation of this incantation by Raymond Westbrook. Westbrook’s objection in his “Witchcraft and the Law in the Ancient Near East,”<sup>9</sup> is, in my opinion, rather narrow in its focus and does not fully take account of the grammatical and other features of the text. In his judgment, “the victim opens his case with the claim, formulated in parallelism, that the person who has caused him harm has done so by witchcraft and deceit.” He claims that my interpretation of lines 4–12 as a description of the witch’s activities but not as an accusation is wrong, and that these lines are the legal claim and that lines 18–19 are the remedy. Line 19 surely is a remedy, to use Westbrook’s terminology, but line 18 must be the accusation: “Because she has performed evil against me and has constantly conjured up baseless charges against me.” My analysis is based on structure and vocabulary, and I will not rehearse it here in any detail. Suffice it to say that the text has two claims, each introduced by *aššu*, “because” (lines 4 and 18): the first claim in lines 4–12 seeks to justify the request for a hearing in lines 13–14 and is not an accusation (hence the absence of *lemēnu*, “to do evil,” in lines 4–12), while the second claim in line 18 justifies the penalty of death requested in line 19.<sup>10</sup>

9 The article is reprinted in R. Westbrook, *Law from the Tigris to the Tiber: The Writings of Raymond Westbrook*, 2 vols., ed. B. Wells and F. R. Magdalene (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 1:289–300. For Westbrook’s objection, see 291–292.

10 I do not mean to be dogmatic. I am aware of S. E. Holtz’s observation on this text, in “Praying as a Plaintiff,” *VT* 61 (2011): 271 n. 39, and I would be willing to reconsider my interpretation of the text, were a better explanation forthcoming as to why the text has

In this context, I should also explain my use in the past of the term “neutral” regarding the witch’s behavior here, a usage that may have been misunderstood because the witch and her actions are usually (but not always) considered to be evil in Mesopotamian anti-witchcraft rituals. I argued that in lines 4–12 the plaintiff’s description of the witch “has no legal force beyond that of setting out the grounds for the ... request” that the divine court convene and hear the case.<sup>11</sup> Here, the witch’s actions are not necessarily evil and only become criminal when the victim proves both his own innocence of any accusation made against him by the witch and the evil intent of her actions. Only then does the plaintiff prove that the witch has committed a crime.<sup>12</sup>

In my earlier analysis of this incantation, I noticed that “the author of our incantation used *kaššāptu* and *kuššupu* as legally and morally (though probably not emotionally) neutral terms.”<sup>13</sup> Of course, the witch’s actions are harmful, but, as such, being harmful does not constitute a crime. To be sure, the witch is treated as an evildoer in most of our anti-witchcraft rituals. But by using the term “neutral,” I was making two claims, one somewhat general and the other quite specific: (1) In Mesopotamia, witchcraft was not always antisocial and might occasionally be supportive of the patient.<sup>14</sup> (2) I 4–12 does not constitute a legally binding accusation.

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two claims, each introduced by *aššu*, “because,” and why *lemēnu*, “to do evil,” is present in line 18 and absent in lines 4–12.

11 Abusch, *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature*, 131.

12 I thus disagree with D. Schwemer, “Empowering the Patient: The Opening Section of the Ritual *Maqlû*,” in *Pax Hethitica: Studies on the Hittites and Their Neighbours in Honour of Itamar Singer*, ed. Y. Cohen et al., SBT 51 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), 317 n. 23. I should note, however, that I agree overall with his comments about I 1–36 there, except perhaps for his claim that this incantation reflects the basic dynamic of *Maqlû* as a whole (I am not sure that it reflects the morning part of the ritual). But I do concur with his remark that “the accompanying actions” of the incantation and, by implication, the incantation itself, “represent a self-contained anti-witchcraft ritual” (318). This certainly agrees with my idea that this incantation may have existed independently in some form, that it was added to the series, and that I 73–121 was not originally dependent on it.

13 Abusch, *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature*, 133.

14 In addition to my interpretation of I 1–36, see my explication of VII 80–100 in T. Abusch, “The Demonic Image of the Witch in Standard Babylonian Literature: The Reworking of Popular Conceptions by Learned Exorcists,” in *Religion, Science, and Magic in Concert and in Conflict*, ed. J. Neusner et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 32–34 [[AMD 5, 8–10]]; T. Abusch, “Ritual and Incantation: Interpretation and Textual History: A Consideration of *Maqlû* VII: 58–105 and IX: 152–59,” in “*Sha’arei Talmon*”: *Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon*, ed. M. Fishbane and E. Tov (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1991), 370–375 [[AMD 5, 187–191]]; and T. Abusch, “Witchcraft, Impotence, and Indigestion,” in *Disease and Medicine in*

We should recall that in some societies witchcraft is morally neutral. The fact that witchcraft may sometimes be neutral is supported by comparative material, for it has been recognized in the anthropological literature that “the term ‘witch’ does not invariably have a sinister or evil connotation. There are and were societies in which she was believed on occasion to cure ailments as well as attack people, their interests or their property,” and that sometimes “terms that might conceivably be translated as ‘witchcraft’ signify in fact a morally neutral power, believed to be used sometimes legitimately for protecting the community and effecting social control; and sometimes illicitly for harming other people.”<sup>15</sup> Thus, I find objections to my use of the term “neutral” to be unjustified. As indicated above, I still maintain that lines 4–12 are a description of the witch’s activities but not an actual accusation as such.

I treat this first incantation as a preliminary hearing, which originally might have represented a stand-alone hearing. For while the incantation in its present form possesses literary unity, it seems nevertheless possible to discern two literary strata and to suggest that the composer of our incantation took an existing, but much shorter, incantation as the basis for his composition. This suggestion is based on lines 19–20:

May she die, but I live.

May her witchcraft, her spittle, her enchantment be released.

The position of lines 19–20 in the very heart of the incantation constitutes a structural anomaly, since elsewhere in the witchcraft corpus lines identical with or similar to lines 19 and/or 20 are usually found at or near the end of their respective incantations.

Since lines 19–20 are completely unexpected in the middle of the incantation and since the section containing the innovations begins in line 21, it is likely that the author responsible for the final version of our incantation took over an already existing traditional incantation more or less identical with

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*Ancient Mesopotamia*, ed. I. L. Finkel and M. J. Geller, CM 36 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 153–158 [[AMD 5, 84–87]].

15 M. Marwick, “Introduction,” in *Witchcraft and Sorcery: Selected Readings*, ed. M. Marwick, 2nd ed. (London: Penguin, 1982), 13. It is also noted there that E. E. Evans-Pritchard’s influential finding that “the Zande word *mangu* denotes an exclusively anti-social power—and should therefore be translated as ‘witchcraft’” is challenged by A. Harwood’s reexamination of the Azande materials. As Marwick explains, Harwood points out that the finding that witches and sorcerers are by definition antisocial and immoral “derives from Evans-Pritchard’s having espoused the perspective of the witch-doctor rather than that of the ordinary villager” (*ibid.*).

lines 1–20 and only composed lines 21–36. Thus, an earlier, pre-*Maqlû*, form of this incantation ended with line 20, and lines 21–36 represent an innovation and are an addition.

This expansion of lines 1–20 had as its purpose the transformation of an independent incantation into one which would serve as the introduction to a sequence of incantations and which would find its fulfillment not in itself, but in a later part of the sequence; for while the original incantation (1–20) serves to kill the witch, the incantation constructed from it (1–36) only serves to indict, incarcerate, and physically disable her. *Maqlû* I 1–36 constitutes the first stages in the trial of the witch, the final stages of which are to be found in the address to Nuska in I 73–121.

Seen from this perspective, the function of the hearing before the court of the gods of the night is as follows: The plaintiff describes the witch's behavior and establishes thereby his right to an investigation. The court undertakes this investigation and requires the submission of evidence so that it may determine (a) whether the effects of the magic on the plaintiff should be eliminated and the plaintiff cleared of the accusation leveled against him by the witch, and (b) whether the witch should be indicted and bound over and the case assigned to the court of the fire god. The evidence submitted by the plaintiff is an oath or ordeal and takes the form of a purification ceremony whereby the plaintiff establishes his innocence of charges leveled against him by the witch.<sup>16</sup> The court accepts this evidence as demonstrating the existence of a case and as constituting grounds (a) for releasing the magic's effects on the plaintiff and clearing him of the accusation (lines 34–35), and (b) for indicting the witch on a count of having practiced *kišpū* (line 29) and binding her over for trial before Nuska.

In Mesopotamia the adjudication of a case may involve a judicial procedure composed of multiple stages.<sup>17</sup> Instances are known of criminal charges being brought initially not to the court that will impose the final verdict, but to an authority whose function is to examine the charges and their factual foundations and to assign those cases judged to be sufficient to a suitable court

16 Cf. B. Ankarloo, "Witch Trials in Northern Europe, 1450–1700," in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Period of the Witch Trials*, ed. B. Ankarloo and S. Clark (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 62: "If the suspect [accused of performing witchcraft or, perhaps better, *maleficium*] could persuade eleven villagers to join him or her in an oath of purification s/he might be acquitted."

17 For example, see F. R. Magdalene, *On the Scales of Righteousness: Neo-Babylonian Trial Law and the Book of Job*, BJS 348 (Providence: Brown University Press, 2007), 65–94, for the Neo-Babylonian period.

for trial and execution. In *Maqlû* the gods of the night function as the investigating court to which the charges are first brought. These gods investigate these charges and deem them sufficient for allowing the court to rectify certain abuses committed against the plaintiff by the witch and to assign the witch to the court of Nuska for trial and execution.

This brings us to I 73–121, the main hearing. The text reads:

- 73 Incantation. O Nuska, these are the figurines of my sorcerer,  
 74 These are the figurines of my sorceress,  
 75 The figurines of my warlock and my witch,  
 76 The figurines of my sorcerer and the woman who instigates sorcery  
     against me,  
 77 The figurines of my enchanter and my enchantress,  
 78 The figurines of my male and female inseminators,  
 79 The figurines of the male and female who are enraged at me,  
 80 The figurines of my male and female enemies,  
 81 The figurines of my male and female persecutors,  
 82 The figurines of my male and female litigants,  
 83 The figurines of my male and female accusers,  
 84 The figurines of my male and female adversaries,  
 85 The figurines of my male and female slanderers,  
 86 The figurines of my male and female evildoers,  
 87 Whom, you, Nuska, the judge, know, but I do not know,  
 88 Who witchcraft, spittle, enchainment, evil machinations,  
 89 Sorcery, rebellion, evil word, love(-magic), hate(-magic),  
 90 Perversion of justice, *zikurrudâ*-magic, aphasia, pacification,  
 91 Mood swings, vertigo, and madness  
 92 Against me have performed, have had performed, have sought, have  
     had sought.  
 93 These are they, these are their figurines.  
 94 Since they are not present, I bear aloft their figurines (and say):  
 95 You, Nuska, the judge, vanquisher of the wicked and the enemy,  
     vanquish them so I shall not be wronged,  
 96 (Those) who have made my figurines, reproduced my facial features,  
 97 Seized my mouth, made my neck tremble,  
 98 Pressed on my chest, bent my spine,  
 99 Weakened my heart, taken away my sexual drive,  
 100 Made me turn my anger against myself, sapped my strength,  
 101 Caused my arms to fall limp, bound my knees,  
 102 Filled me with fever, stiffness, and debility,

- 103 Fed me bewitched food,  
 104 Given me bewitched water to drink,  
 105 Bathed me in dirty wash water,  
 106 Rubbed me with a salve of harmful herbs,  
 107 Betrothed me to a dead man,  
 108 Laid the water of my life in a grave,  
 109 Caused god, king, noble, and prince to be angry with me.  
 110 O you, Girra, it is you who are the burner of warlocks and witches,  
 111 The annihilator of the wicked, seed of warlock and witch,  
 112 The destroyer of the evildoers.  
 113 I call upon you in the stead of Šamaš, the judge.  
 114 Judge my case, render my verdict.  
 115 Burn my warlock and my witch,  
 116 Devour my enemies, consume my oppressors!  
 117 Let your raging (fire-)storm vanquish them.  
 118 May they come to an end in a trickle like water from a waterskin.  
 119 May their fingers be cut back as if smashed by stones.  
 120 By your preeminent command that cannot be altered  
 121 And your affirmative assent that cannot be changed.

As I mentioned earlier, this incantation was originally recited in the morning and was addressed to Šamaš, the sun god and judge par excellence. But with the transfer of the ritual to the night, it was readdressed to Nuska, the god of the protective lamp. In its present form, the incantation may be summarized as follows. Raising up statues to Nuska, the plaintiff identifies the statues that he holds as representations of witches who have performed acts of witchcraft against him and have harmed him unjustly. He then appeals to Nuska to find and overwhelm these evildoers and to safeguard the rights of the petitioner. The god is asked to pronounce a sentence of death by fire, and the fire god Girra is asked to execute the sentence. Girra here originally functioned as Šamaš's arm; he was the hypostatization of the destructive heat rays of the sun. The statues are then bound and placed in the brazier.

The defendant is brought before the court of Nuska in the form of a statue. This is not simply an act of sympathetic magic, for judgment in absentia and the use of images of the witch are enjoined on the victim also because of his ignorance of the identity of the culprit. Such ignorance is not surprising, since the alleged criminal is a witch. Because of his ignorance, the plaintiff can therefore not prosecute the evildoer in a regular court of law; instead he appeals to Nuska, who knows the actual identity of the witch, to decree the witch's destruction by fire.

To fully understand the legal procedure operative in the first tablet of *Maqlû* we must examine even more closely the address to Nuska in I 73–121. As I have said several times, this incantation was originally addressed to Šamaš and was readdressed to Nuska when the text was adapted for nighttime use. In this type of incantation, Šamaš is addressed and functions in his capacity of judge, and Nuska, as his replacement, carries on this function. However, it would be a mistake to infer from Šamaš/Nuska's role as judge in I 73–121 and from the law-court setting of this incantation that the submission and examination of evidence substantiating the charge against the witch and the determination of her innocence or guilt are part of the proceedings in the court of the god in this incantation. In texts belonging to the same genre as *Maqlû* I 73–121,<sup>18</sup> the core of the speaker's address to Šamaš is represented by the simple, though often long, statement by the accuser that he is presenting before the god statues of the witches who have performed witchcraft against him and by his request that the judge pronounce a verdict of death by fire and that the fire god execute the verdict.

In this regard, there is no essential difference between the address to Nuska in *Maqlû* I 73–121 and the aforementioned addresses to Šamaš. Here the accuser identifies the (statues of the) defendants as the ones who have committed acts of witchcraft against him (lines 73–109) and demands that the court of the fire god order and execute a death penalty by fire (lines 110–121). Nowhere in this incantation does the plaintiff attempt to substantiate the claim that the accused did, in fact, perform witchcraft against him, and nowhere is the court asked to determine the innocence or guilt of the accused. The accuser treats the guilt of the witch as a foregone conclusion and demands of the court that it impose the death penalty on her. For all intents and purposes, the accuser himself pronounces the death verdict on the witch. The accuser does not fear lest the court of Nuska declare the witch innocent, does not attempt to prove to the court that she is guilty as charged, and feels secure that the court will accede to his demand. The accuser's behavior assumes the court's knowledge of the witch's guilt and the accuser's belief that the court will act in accordance with that knowledge.

Although evidence was previously submitted to the court of the gods of the night in I 1–36 proving, or, at least, establishing the presumption, that the defendant had practiced witchcraft, this cannot account for the fact that in I 73–121 the facts of the case and the guilt of the witch are taken for granted. The attitude displayed by the speaker in I 73–121 and the legal procedure operative

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18 For examples, see *CMAwR* 1, nos. 8.3 and 8.4.

in this incantation must have already been present in the original version of the incantation prior to its association with I 1–36 and cannot be explained as a modification introduced into the Nuska incantation as a result of this subsequent association.

Accordingly, we cannot look to the present context of I 73–121 for an explanation of the lack of substantiation of the charges and of the assumption of the witch's guilt and must seek that explanation in some datum of the Mesopotamian criminal legal tradition. That explanation is forthcoming if we treat the legal procedure operative in I 73–121 and in similar incantations as representing a stage of development in that tradition of criminal procedure discussed by Thorkild Jacobsen in his analysis of the Nippur homicide trial and the situation underlying the tradition of criminal procedure:

[T]he record of a trial for homicide ... is the record of the formulation of a verdict only.... [T]his complete absence of a detailed establishing of the facts of the case through testimony of witnesses, confession, oath, or otherwise is most striking. Even if one would assume ... that a thorough establishing of the facts had already taken place before the king, before the case reached the assembly for trial, the lack of even the briefest presentation of those earlier findings leads again to the conclusion that the assembly was expected to reach its verdict on the basis of its members' personal knowledge and convictions rather than on facts established in court.... [We are] dealing with a separate and altogether distinct, criminal procedural tradition....

Rather different [than the situation underlying civil procedure] appears the original situation underlying the tradition of criminal procedure. The early "crime" is an act endangering the whole community, and the community, aroused and scared, is apt to deal with it along lines of lynch-justice. In the emotionally highly charged lynch situation the facts and the guilt of the accused are generally taken for granted.... At the tense moment when the community faces the accused the salient point is therefore merely the crystallization of the guilt in a precise and poignant formula that will trigger the punitive mass action. This formula fulfills the function of the later "verdict."<sup>19</sup>

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19 T. Jacobsen, "An Ancient Mesopotamian Trial for Homicide," in *Studia biblica et orientalia*, AnBib 12 (Rome: Istituto Biblica Pontificio, 1959), 141–142 (= T. Jacobsen "Toward the Image of Tammuz" and *Other Essays on Mesopotamian History and Culture*, ed. W. L. Moran, HSS 21 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970], 204–205).

The legal procedure operative in *Maqlû* I 73–121 stands in the same procedural tradition as the Nippur trial, and it is for this reason that the accuser is able to take the court’s knowledge of the witch’s guilt for granted and to base the demand that the god kill the witch simply on his own assertion that she bewitched him.



With this, we may conclude the examination of the divine courtroom in *Maqlû*. Yet in the proceedings of a conference on the divine court, sponsored by the Yeshiva University Center for Jewish Law and Contemporary Civilization at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, I feel it is more than appropriate to add one final observation about divine judgment—an observation originally precipitated by the request of the litigant in the prayer to the gods of the night at the beginning of *Maqlû*. There the litigant asked the gods to render a decision between him and his oppressor, the witch, with the words: *dīnī dīnā alaktī limdā*, “Judge my case and grant me an (oracular) decision!” I imagine that the gods of the night gave the judgment asked of them in the form of an oracle, probably an astral sign referred to by the word *alaktu*.

Starting from this passage, several decades ago I argued that in some contexts *alaktu* is not simply “path,” but rather “astral course, oracle.”<sup>20</sup> *Alaktu* is

20 See Abusch, “*Alaktu* and *Halakhah*.” I should reiterate that among the points made in my study about Akkadian *alaktu* were: (1) *alaktu* did not necessarily refer to a past situation, but rather referred to the future; in so doing I was struggling against standard translations that situated *alaktu* in the past (for examples, see Abusch, “*Alaktu* and *Halakhah*,” 16–17 n. 5); (2) *alaktu* is an oracular term and might refer to an oracle obtained by divination; (3) given the usage of *alakta lamādu* in parallelism with *dīna dānu* and *purussā parāsu*, *alaktu* could refer to a divine decision. I should also note that I took account of the literal meaning of *alaktu*, and therefore argued that it referred to an astral “course” from which one might infer the person’s future. Although my collaborator, D. Schwemer (“Fighting Witchcraft before the Moon and Sun: A Therapeutic Ritual from Neo-Babylonian Sippar,” *Or NS* 79 [2011]: 492–498), uses different translation values for *alaktu* and seeks to maintain “an interpretation that stays closer to the basic meaning” (i.e., to a more literal meaning) of the word (494), he agrees with much of the new meaning that I have advanced for *alaktu* and has incorporated much of my understanding of *alaktu* into his interpretation, albeit in parentheses (e.g., “If a man ... but his (future) condition (determined by divination) ...” [495 and again on 496]). Although Schwemer’s “condition” might sometimes be an appropriate translation for *alaktu*, some passages set this word in divinatory contexts and thus require, in my view, a translation of *alaktu* that connotes some form of oracular manifestation rather than simply “condition” (cf., e.g., BAM 316 ii 12’–16’ [[*CMAwR* 2, no. 3.6, A]], where we find the parallelism of *purussū* || *dīnu* || *šunātu* || *alaktu* || *ubān damiqti*). I note further that Schwemer translates *alaktašu* as the patient’s “condition,” yet still presumes the existence of an act of divination. He agrees with me

thus also an astrological term and refers to the manifestation, movement, or configuration of heavenly bodies. In this sense, *alaktu* refers not only to the ominous course itself but also to the divine rulings revealed by means of signs; it is an oracle made manifest by movements of the night heaven. The use of *alaktu* as an astrological term for celestial movements explains how “course” came to mean “divine decision.” Heavenly courses represent the cosmic will and provide humans with the ruling of the gods.

In that same study I then argued that Jewish *halakha/hilkhētā* in the meaning “law” is a calque derived from this usage of *alaktu* in Akkadian. The source of *halakha* is in the heavens and not in the “going” or customary behavior of humans. *Halakha*, “law,” owes its meaning to the development: courses of the stars → divine oracle → path of action. In the context of this volume, then, I would reiterate those earlier arguments as well as my continued belief in their correctness.

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that we are dealing with divination, but I do not see where he is finding the divination if it is not in *alaktu*, especially in cases where the immediate text lacks another word that can account for it (e.g., *alaktašu marṣat*). Thus, contrary to the more complicated interpretation that Schwemer gives to *alaktašu lā parsat* (497–498), I would maintain my original interpretation of that phrase (Abusch, “*Alaktu* and *Halakhah*,” 29–30).

## *Maqlû* Tablet II: Its Literary Frame and Formation

*Maqlû*, “Burning,” is the longest and most important Mesopotamian text concerned with combating witchcraft.\*<sup>1</sup> *Maqlû* comprises eight incantation tablets in which the text of almost one hundred incantations is recorded and a ritual tablet in which the incantations are cited by incipit together with appropriate ritual directions. The present form of *Maqlû* seems to be a creation of the early first millennium BCE. This lengthy standard text developed from an earlier short form by means of a series of sequential changes. Among the latest additions to the series is Tablet II.<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of this essay is to point to the existence of a literary frame in the first and last incantations of Tablet II that encircles the tablet and gives it form, to study the formation of these incantations and of the frame, and

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\* I first met Avigdor Hurowitz when he served as my assistant in Jerusalem in 1973–1974; since then I have been honored to watch Avigdor grow into a superb scholar of Bible and Assyriology. I hope that my advice to Avigdor over the years has generally been good, but I have been especially delighted to discover how misplaced my concern regarding his interest in comparative studies was: his work serves as proof of the productive results that his approach to comparative studies of the Bible and Mesopotamia can achieve and as an example and standard of excellence for future work. It was a real pleasure to write this study in honor of Professor Avigdor Hurowitz, and now, with great sadness, I rededicate it to his memory. *Yehi zikhro barukh!*

I am grateful to my student Bronson Brown-deVost for reading several drafts of this paper and for his helpful suggestions.

- 1 I cite the text (and line count) of *Maqlû* from my edition: T. Abusch, *The Magical Ceremony “Maqlû”: A Critical Edition*, AMD 10 (Leiden: Brill, 2016). For a German translation, see T. Abusch and D. Schwemer, “Das Abwehrzauber-Ritual *Maqlû* (‘Verbrennung’),” in *Omina, Orakel, Rituale und Beschwörungen*, ed. B. Janowski and G. Wilhelm, TUAT NF 4 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlag, 2008), 128–186.
- 2 For the nature of *Maqlû* and its calendrical setting, see T. Abusch, “Mesopotamian Anti-witchcraft Literature: Texts and Studies, Part I: The Nature of *Maqlû*: Its Character, Divisions, and Calendrical Setting,” *JNES* 33 (1974): 251–262 [[AMD 5, 99–111]]. For the historical development of *Maqlû*, see especially T. 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. T. Abusch et al., HSS 37 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 1–57 [[AMD 5, 113–162]]; and T. Abusch, “The Ritual Tablet and Rubrics of *Maqlû*: Toward the History of the Series,” in *Ah, Assyria ...: Studies in Assyrian History and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography Presented to Hayim Tadmor*, ed. M. Cogan and I. Eph’al, ScrHier 33 (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1991), 233–253 [[AMD 5, 163–183]]. For Tablet II as a late addition, see Abusch, “Ritual Tablet and Rubrics.”

to examine some of the compositional implications suggested by these two incantations and the frame that they embody.

## 1 Frame

The incantations recited and ritual acts performed in *Maqlū* II center on burning representations of the witch. Some of the incantations are addressed directly to the god Nuska (1–17) and to the fire god Girra (19–75, 77–103, 105–125, 127–134, 136–148); all the others, with one exception (150–159),<sup>3</sup> contain descriptions of burning and requests to Girra to burn the witches (181, 191–192, 201–203, 218–224). The tablet opens with an address to Nuska (1–17) and concludes with an incantation (205–225) in which demons, gods, and Girra, the god of fire, are invoked against the witch. Actually, these two incantations contain a literary frame around Tablet II, thus presenting the tablet as a ritual or liturgical unit.<sup>4</sup> The frame is evident from and made explicit by the final three lines of each of the two incantations, for they are nearly identical with each other:<sup>5</sup>

15 *qumi kaššāpī u kaššāptī*  
 16 *ša kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya [a]rḫiṣ ḫantiš napištašunu liblēma*  
 17 *yāši bulliṭannima narbika lušāpi dalilika ludlul (var.: + ÉN)*

15 Burn my warlock and my witch,  
 16 May the lives of my warlock and my witch quickly and speedily be extinguished,<sup>6</sup>

3 But note that the rubric (II 160) and the corresponding ritual instructions (RT 38') of this incantation are similar to those of the other incantations and center on burning a representation of the witch.

4 I earlier noted the existence of a frame in Abusch, "Early Form," 29 n. 50 [[AMD 5, 138 n. 50]].

5 The variations between the two sets of lines include the presence of *kaššāpī u kaššāptī* in line 15, but the absence of *kaššāpī* in line 223 (but note the occurrence of both *kaššāpī* and *kaššāptī* in line 224) and concurrently the occurrence of two additional imperatives for burning, *qulū ḫummiṭi*, in line 223 (thus *kaššāpī* may have been deleted to maintain the poetic line length). Note that while lines 15 and 17 are both addressed to a male god, Nuska, line 223 is addressed to the feminine oven, daughter of Anu, but line 225 is again addressed to a male god, Girra. There are some internal variants for lines 223–225: namely, the transposition of *arḫiṣ ḫantiš* and *kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya* in BM 38010, obv., which contains only an excerpt of Tablet II, and the accidental omission of *lušāpi dalilika* in BM 44144, rev.; but these are insignificant for the recognition of the frame. For a discussion of the variants, see below, n. 14.

6 A more rigid translation of lines 16 and 224 is: "... of my warlock and my witch, ... may their lives be extinguished."

17 Thereby save me myself so that I may declare your great deeds and sing your praises.

223 *ka[ššāpt]ī qumī qulī humm[īī]*

224 *arḥiš ḥantīš ša kaššāpiya u ka[ššāptiya]* (var.: [*ša kaššāpiya u kaššāptiy*]) *a arḥiš ḥantīš napištašunu li[blēma]*

225 *yāši bulliṭannima narbika lušāpi [d]alilika ludlul [T]U<sub>6</sub> ÉN*

223 Burn, scorch, burn up my witch.

224 Quickly and speedily, may the lives of my warlock and my witch be extinguished,

225 Thereby save me myself so that I may declare your great deeds and sing your praises. TU<sub>6</sub> ÉN

Lines 15–17 and 223–225 of the first and last incantations of Tablet II are a framing device; they define the tablet as a liturgical and ritual entity.

That a *Maqlû* tablet may form a ritual or literary entity (rather than simply being a scribal division) is already evident from a rather unique notice in the Ritual Tablet. Following the incipits and ritual instructions for Tablet VI (RT 96'–123'), lines 124'–126' read:

124' *qutārī ša* ÉN (var.: omitted) <sup>d</sup>*Enlil qaqqadī*

125' *mala ana* (var.: *ina*) *riksī šaṭrū*

126' *ištēniš taballalma tuqattaršu* ÉN <sup>d</sup>*Enlil qaqqadī imannu*

124' The fumigants for the Incantation(-tablet): “Enlil is my head,”

125' as many as are prescribed for the ritual arrangements,

126' you mix together and fumigate him. He recites the Incantation (-tablet): “Enlil is my head.”

ÉN <sup>d</sup>*Enlil qaqqadī* refers not simply to the opening incantation of Tablet VI but to the whole tablet. Here, Tablet VI, cited by the opening words of its opening incantation, is treated as a ritual entity. (We return to the incantation <sup>d</sup>*Enlil qaqqadī* [VI 1–15] again below.)

## 2 Formation of Incantations and Frame

Thus it is not particularly surprising that Tablet II is more than just a scribal division. But while lines 15–17 and 223–225 do create a frame around the tablet,

this frame does not seem to be original, for neither set of lines seems wholly original to its incantation. Accordingly, we must examine the first (1–17) and last (205–225) incantations in Tablet II to illustrate how neither set is wholly integrated within its incantation (that is, that the lines in their present form do not fully fit the incantations in which they are embedded) and to see how the sets were actually formed. We shall examine each incantation in turn, beginning with the opening one, and then sum up some of our results.<sup>7</sup>

- 1 ÉN <sup>d</sup>Nuska šurbû mālīk ilī rabû[ti]  
 2 pāqīd nīndab[ê] ša kala <sup>d</sup>Igīg[ī]  
 3 mukīn māḥāzī muddišu parakkī  
 4 ūmu namru ša qībīssu šīrat  
 5 sukkal <sup>d</sup>Ani šēmû pirišti <sup>d</sup>Enlil  
 6 šēmû <sup>d</sup>Enlil mālīku šadû <sup>d</sup>Igīgī  
 7 gašru tāḥāzu ša tībušu dannu  
 8 <sup>d</sup>Nuska āriru mušabriq zayyāri  
 9 ina balīka ul iššakkan naptanu ina Ekur  
 10 ina balīka ilū rabûtu ul iššinū qutrinnu  
 11 ina balīka <sup>d</sup>Šamaš dayyānu ul idāni dīnu  
 12 ḥāsis šumeka tetṭer ina dannati taḡammil ina pušqi  
 13 anāku aradka annanna mār annanna ša ilšu annanna <sup>d</sup>ištaršu  
     annannītu  
 14 ašḥurka ešēka bašâ (var.: bašâka) uznāya šapalka akmis  
 15 qumi kaššāpī u kaššāptī  
 16 ša kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya [a]rḥiṣ ḥantīš napištašunu liblēma  
 17 yāši bulliṭannima narbīka lušāpi dalīlika ludlul (var.: + ÉN)

- 1 Incantation. O Grand Nuska, counselor of the great gods,  
 2 Provider of cereal offerings to all the Igigi,  
 3 Establisher of sanctuaries, renewer of shrines,  
 4 Radiant light, whose command is preeminent,

7 Line 5: <sup>a</sup> Lit., “who hears the secret of Enlil.” Line 6: <sup>a</sup> The text has *mālīku šadû <sup>d</sup>Igīgī*, which translates literally, “the counselor, the mountain of the Igigi,” and seems to refer to Nuska. But sense suggests that *šadû* refers to Enlil and *mālīku* to Nuska, resulting in the translation “Nuska ..., the counselor of the mountain of the Igigi” and the emendation *mālīku šadû <sup>d</sup>Igīgī*. However, the full title, *mālīku šadû <sup>d</sup>Igīgī*, appears in this form in *CMAwR* 1, no. 8.13: 27, where it clearly refers to Enlil (cf. p. 371). Accordingly, the title is a frozen form, and our line should probably be translated “the one who listens to Enlil, (who is) the counselor, (and) the mountain of the Igigi.” Compare with II 137: “Offspring of the pure one, the exalted Šalaš.” Line 12: <sup>a</sup> Perhaps, better: “He who calls your name.”

- 5 Minister of Anu, confidant of Enlil,<sup>a</sup>  
 6 The one who listens to Enlil, (who is) the counselor, (and) the  
 mountain of the Igigi,<sup>a</sup>  
 7 Powerful battle, whose onslaught is overwhelming,  
 8 Blazing Nuska, who strikes down the enemy with lightning.  
 9 Without you a meal would not be set out in Ekur,  
 10 Without you the great gods would not smell incense,  
 11 Without you Šamaš, the judge, would not render judgment.  
 12 He who mentions<sup>a</sup> your name you rescue from hardship, you save  
 from distress.  
 13 I, your servant, So-and-so, the son of So-and-so, whose god is  
 So-and-so, whose goddess is So-and-so,  
 14 I turn to you, I seek you, my ears are directed to you, I kneel at your  
 feet.  
 15 Burn my warlock and my witch,  
 16 May the lives of my warlock and my witch quickly and speedily be  
 extinguished,  
 17 Thereby save me myself so that I may declare your great deeds and  
 sing your praises.

This Nuska incantation is a typical incantation of the *šulla* type. Lines 1–12 form a hymnic introduction. In lines 13–14, the speaker identifies himself and states that he is seeking the god and presenting himself before him. In lines 15–16, he asks the god to destroy the witch. The last line (17) contains an ending common to many general and specific *šullas*: a promise of praise, should the god save the petitioner.

Actually, lines 15–16 do not fit with the rest of the incantation and belong to a different register, for besides the request of the god to consume the witch in these two lines, no mention has been made of the witch or of her actions against or effects on the speaker. Rather, the incantation focuses on Nuska: it presents a description of his qualities and roles among the gods of Ekur and ends on a promise of future praise. On the face of it, the mention of witchcraft is a secondary feature of the text.<sup>8</sup>

The incantation <sup>d</sup>*Nuska šurbû* (II 1–17) was originally not concerned with witchcraft and made no mention of it. It was addressed to Nuska, who originally was not a god of destruction but, rather, a god of light. But when the incantation was introduced into *Maqlû*, it was adapted to the concerns of witchcraft and ritual destruction by fire. This was accomplished by

8 If the source of the incantation was not simply a matrix, it is possible that another evil was mentioned in the text.

introducing an approximate imitation of lines 223–224 between lines 14 and 17. Lines 15–16 // 223–224 surely state very succinctly and expressively the central themes of this section of *Maqlū*.

The repetition of lines 223–224 in the newly adapted opening incantation as lines 15–16 certainly contributed significantly to the creation of the frame and the articulation of the tablet as a ritual and liturgical entity. But for the frame to be fully formed, the last incantation also had to be changed and an imitation in the reverse direction was necessary, since lines 223–224 originally formed the end of the final incantation and of the tablet. Thus, in order that the two incantations might end in the same way, the redactor had to draw upon the first incantation and append its last line (17) to the end of the final incantation (225). In order to understand the original context of lines 223–224 and to see how the last line of the frame 17 // 225 was formed, we must examine the final incantation of the tablet. Accordingly, we now turn to lines 205–225. They read:<sup>9</sup>

- 205 ÉN *attimannu*<sup>a</sup> *kaššāptu ša tubtana*<sup>ʷ</sup>*inni*<sup>b</sup>  
 206 *ana lemutti teštene*<sup>ʷ</sup>*inni*  
 207 *ana lā ṭābti tassanaḥḥurinni*  
 208 *ālki ul īde bītki ul īde šumki ul īde šubatki ul īde*  
 209 <sup>a</sup>*šēdū liba*<sup>ʷ</sup>*ūki*<sup>b</sup>  
 210 *utukkū lište*<sup>ʷ</sup>*ūki*  
 211 *eṭemmū lissaḥrūki*  
 212 *bennu lā ṭābu eliki limqut*  
 213 *rābišū lemutti likillū rēški*  
 214 <sup>d</sup>*Lu[gal]i[rra u <sup>d</sup>Meslamta]ea linārūki*  
 215 [<sup>d</sup>*Enlī*]<sup>(?)</sup><sup>a</sup> *bēl šīm[ātī<sup>(?)</sup> šumki]i lipšit*  
 216 <sup>d</sup>*[N]in[u]rta lā pādū [lišānk]i<sup>(?)</sup> lissuḥ*  
 217 [<sup>d</sup>*G*]*ula azugallatu rabītu l[ē]tki<sup>(?)</sup> limḥaṣa*<sup>a</sup>  
 218 <sup>d</sup>*Girr[a] ezzu zumurki liḥmuṭ*  
 219 *ut[ū]nu elletu mārāt <sup>d</sup>Ani rabītu*

9 Line 205: <sup>a</sup> Var.: *att[ām]annu*]. | <sup>b</sup> Thus the citation of the incipit in RT 41' (*túb-ta-na-in-ni*). The text of Tablet II has *túb-ta-ni-<sup>l</sup>in<sup>1</sup>-ni*, perhaps: *tubtan(a)<sup>ʷ</sup>inni*. However, since double *ʾalef* does not allow the phonetic change *a + i > í*, perhaps the form in Tablet II is the result of syncope of *a<sup>ʷ</sup>* (= *tubtaninni*). For similar cases of syncope, see M. Luukko, *Grammatical Variation in Neo-Assyrian*, SAAS 16 (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2004), 122–123. Line 209: <sup>a</sup> Var.: either line 209 or 210 is absent or omitted. | <sup>b</sup> Var.: pronominal suffix *-ka* instead of *-ki* in lines 208, 209 (or 210), 211, 213, 214, and 218. Line 215: <sup>a</sup> Given the Nippur association of the gods in the surrounding lines, it is more than possible that [<sup>d</sup>x] x here should be restored [<sup>d</sup>EN.LÍ]L. Line 217: <sup>a</sup> Var.: [*iš<sup>(?)</sup>*]*lup*. Line 221: <sup>a</sup> Var.: *qarrādu*. Line 224: <sup>a-a</sup> Var.: [*ša kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya*] *a arḫiš ḥantiš* | <sup>b</sup> Var.: *li-bi-e-ma*, corruption for *liblēma*. Line 225: <sup>a-a</sup> Var.: accidentally omitted.

- 220 *ša ina lib[b]iša nanḥuzat išat qabri*  
 221 [*ina lib*]biša <sup>d</sup>Girra qardu<sup>a</sup> irmâ [šub]assu  
 222 [*ina*] n[apāhiš]a<sup>(?)</sup> šamāmī ikšudū nabl[ūša]  
 223 ka[ššāpt]ī qumī qulī ḥumm[itī]  
 224 <sup>a</sup>arḥiš ḥantiš ša kaššāpiya u ka[ššāptiya]<sup>a</sup> napištašunu li[blēma]<sup>b</sup>  
 225 yâši bulliṭannima narbika <sup>a</sup>lušāpi [d]alilika<sup>a</sup> ludlul [T]U<sub>6</sub> ÉN

- 205 Incantation. Whoever you are, O witch, who keeps seeking me,  
 206 Who keeps searching for me with evil intent,  
 207 Who keeps looking for me to no good purpose.  
 208 I do not know your city, I do not know your house, I do not know  
     your name, I do not know your dwelling.  
 209 May spirits seek you,  
 210 May demons search for you,  
 211 May ghosts look for you,  
 212 May not good bennu-epilepsy befall you,  
 213 May lurkers for evil attend to you,  
 214 May Lu[gal]i[rra and Meslamta]’ea kill you,  
 215 May [Enli]l, lord of dest[inies], erase you[r name],  
 216 May merciless [N]in[u]rta tear out you[r tongue],  
 217 May [G]ula, the great doctor, strike your ch[ee]k,  
 218 May raging Girr[a] inflame your body.  
 219 O pure ov[e]n, great daughter of Anu,  
 220 In whose ins[i]de the fire of the grave flares,  
 221 [In] whose [ins]ide Girra, the warrior, set down his [dwell]ing,  
 222 [Whose f]lame [when] ig[nited] reaches heaven,  
 223 Burn, scorch, bur[n up] my w[itch].  
 224 Quickly and speedily, may the lives of my warlock and [my wit]ch  
     be [extinguished],  
 225 Thereby save me myself so that I may declare your great deeds and  
     sing your [p]raises. [T]U<sub>6</sub> ÉN

In its present form, the incantation serves as an apt ending to the second tablet of *Maqlû*. Following the opening lines of the incantation, in which the activities of the witch are depicted, a series of demons and gods are invoked; the incantation then turns to a description of the fire of destruction in what seems to be a netherworld context and ends with a request that the fire consume the witch.

The sections of this incantation seem to be quite distinct. Let us, therefore, see how the incantation was pieced together.

In lines 205–207, the first three lines of the incantation, the victim of witchcraft describes how the witch is constantly seeking out her victim, the speaker. In lines 209–18, the speaker then requests of various demons and gods that they seek out, afflict, and kill the witch. A close study of the opening lines is quite revealing with regard to the composition of the incantation.<sup>10</sup> More specifically, lexical and grammatical features found in lines 205–211 provide a clue to the composition of this text. The first three lines describing the witch's activities use verbs in the iterative *tan* form exclusively. Almost immediately, the first three lines of the invocation of demonic forces against the witch make use of the same three verbs in the same order:

*attīmannu kaššāptu ša tubtana*”*inni* : *šēdū liba*”*ūki*  
*ana lemutti teštene*”*inni* : *utukkū lište*”*ūki*  
*ana lā ṭābti tassanaḥḥurīni* : *eṭemmū lissaḥrūki*

We notice, however, that the verbs in the invocation of demons and the matching verbs in the earlier part of the incantation are in different verbal stems, for in contrast to the verbs used to describe the witch's activities, those in the invocation do not make use of the iterative *tan* form.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the sets of lines are not parallel in terms of form, and the two sections correspond only in part.

The composer started with an invocation of demons and gods; he then created his opening description of the witch on the basis of the first three invocations but repeated these verb forms in iterative form rather than in the forms in which they occurred in the invocation. Thus, rather than the text having been composed linearly from beginning to end, it appears that the curse section centering on the demons and gods generated the text. In order to introduce the witch and have some correspondence between her actions and her punishment, the composer focused on “seeking,” the first of the three actions of the demons (seeking, attacking, killing), and drew only on the first three lines of the invocation. But why has he invoked a group of demons and gods and created a correspondence between demon and witch? The answer is provided by the statement in line 208 that the victim does not know the location or identity of the witch. Thus, the demons are asked to seek out the witch precisely

10 For a fuller description and analysis of II 205–211 as well as a discussion of the relationship of demons and witches in *Maqlū* and of the place of II 205–225 in the spectrum of treatments of the witch, see T. Abusch, “Witches and Demons in Ancient Mesopotamia,” in “Demoni mesopotamici,” ed. M. G. Capomacchia and L. Verderame, special issue, *Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni* 77 (2011): 342–356, esp. 353–355 [[3–18, esp. 15–18]].

11 Thus, instead of three iterative *tan* forms, we have a D (*liba*”*ūki*) followed by what is either a Gt or Gtn (*lište*”*ūki*), followed by an N (*lissaḥrūki*) in the invocation.

because the victim does not know her location or identity, while they do, for demons like gods are part of the supernatural world, have become servants of the gods, and can accomplish things that mere humans cannot.

Following the invocation of the demons, several gods are invoked: in lines 214–217, Lugalgirra, Meslamta’ea, Enlil(?), Ninurta, and Gula are invoked, and in line 218 the list ends with the invocation of Girra. This invocation of demons and gods is the nucleus of the incantation. The invocation of Girra in line 218 then serves as a bridge to the next section of the incantation, the address to the oven, the daughter of Anu. After a description of the infernal character of the oven<sup>12</sup> and a statement that Girra dwells in her midst, the oven is asked to burn the witch. It should be noted that no mention had been made of fire and burning prior to this section of the text (with the exception of the transitional line 218); but even though fire and burning had not figured earlier in the incantation, they are central to this last section of the incantation. Precisely for this reason, the last section (219–224) should be considered an addition to the incantation. These lines would have been added on to the invocation of the demons and gods in order to adapt the incantation to the burning ritual of *Maqlû* and, specifically, to the addresses to fire that are the focus of Tablet II.<sup>13</sup>

As with II 1–17, the final incantation in Tablet II seems originally not to have dealt with witches or with burning. But with its adaptation for *Maqlû*, the first and last sections of this final incantation were joined to the curse section: the address to the witch (205–207) was added to the original invocation of demons and gods in order to direct the invocation against witches, and the address to fire (219–224) was added to the invocation in order to describe and give expression to the very theme of the fire of destruction and to direct the fire against witches.

Lines 223–224, the first two lines of our three-line frame (15–17 // 223–225), are part of the added section centering on fire and now fit nicely into the context of the present incantation *attîmannu kaššāptu ša tubtana*”*inni* (205–225). On the other hand, line 225, the final line of our three-line frame, does not fit

12 This oven has a netherworld setting and character, for it is described as one “in whose ins[i]de the fire of the grave flares,” a description paralleled elsewhere by mention of the great oven that is lighted inside the netherworld; see P. Lapinkivi, *The Neo-Assyrian Myth of Ištar’s Descent and Resurrection*, SAACT 6 (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2010), 44–45. The infernal quality of the oven here lines up very nicely with the central part of the incantation.

13 As mentioned above, line 218 serves as a bridge to this last section. It seems to me that the line was part of the demon-god section, but it is not impossible that it was added on to the incantation together with lines 219–224.

into this incantation, for *yâši bulliṭannima narbîka lušâpi [d]alilika ludlul* is a closing line that occurs at the end of a general or specific *šulla* and not at the end of an incantation that centers on the destruction of the witch by means of demons, gods, and fire. Line 225 is simply an imitation of line 17 and is repeated here at the end of the last incantation. Thus, just as the opening two lines of the frame (15–16 // 223–224) do not fit the first incantation and came from the last one, so the closing line (17 // 225) does not fit the last incantation and came from the first one.

Before moving on to the final part of our paper, let us first sum up some of the observations made thus far, especially those observations regarding the lines that form a frame for Tablet II: The concluding three lines (15–17) of the first incantation together with the concluding three lines (223–225) of the last incantation of Tablet II articulate a secondary frame (15–17 // 223–225) for the tablet entity. The scribe drew lines from each incantation to create the frame. While the first two lines (15–16 // 223–224) were originally part of the last incantation and were borrowed from there and repeated in the first incantation,<sup>14</sup> the last line of the frame (17 // 225) was originally part of the first incantation and was borrowed from there and repeated in the last incantation.

### 3 Compositional Implications

We should now try to ascertain when and in what redactional contexts these adaptations were made.

Certainly, II 1–17 appears to be an addition to our tablet. This incantation was among the latest additions to the series. It belongs to what I have termed elsewhere the Ekur/Enlil *Tendenz* or layer of *Maqlû*.<sup>15</sup> No wonder that this incantation alone, from among the incantations of Tablet II, is addressed to Nuska and not to Girra. This Nuska incantation reflects an Ekur/Enlil frame of reference and, in this respect, shares features with VI 1–15 and

14 The identity of II 16 with a variant text of II 224 suggests that II 16 was modeled on the variant. The dependence of II 16 on the variant does not necessarily prove which of the two readings of II 224 is more original, though it does suggest that the variant (although found in an excerpt) might represent the original reading of II 224, which would then have been changed to the reading preserved in the standard text.

15 Cf. Abusch, “Early Form,” 55–56 [[AMD 5, 161]]; Abusch, “Ritual Tablet and Rubrics,” 252–253 [[AMD 5, 182–183]]; T. Abusch, “The Demonic Image of the Witch in Standard Babylonian Literature: The Reworking of Popular Conceptions by Learned Exorcists,” in *Religion, Science, and Magic in Concert and in Conflict*, ed. J. Neusner et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 47–50 [[AMD 5, 22–24]].

VII 47–54, VI 119″–126″, and RT 134′–135′. Note, for example, the incantation *attī ṭabtu* (VI 119″–126″)<sup>16</sup>—especially the address in the first four lines—which is set in the context of the household and pantheon of Enlil, a milieu comparable to that of <sup>d</sup>*Nuska šurbû* (II 1–17):

119″ ÉN *attī ṭabtu ša ina ašri elli ibbanû*  
 120″ *ana mākālê ilī rabûti išîmki* <sup>d</sup>*Enlil*  
 121″ *ina baliki ul iššakkan naptan ina Ekur*  
 122″ *ina baliki ilu šarru kabtu u rubû ul iššinû qutrinnu*  
 123″ *anāku annanna mār annanna ša kišpī šubbutū'inni*  
 124″ *upšāšê le'bū'inni*  
 125″ *pušrī kišpīya ṭabtu puššīrī ruḥê'a*  
 126″ *upšāšê muḥrīnnima kīma ili bānīya luttammarki*

119″ Incantation. You, Salt, who were created in a pure place,  
 120″ For food of the great gods did Enlil destine you.  
 121″ Without you a meal would not be set out in Ekur,  
 122″ Without you god, king, noble, and prince would not smell incense.  
 123″ I am So-and-so, the son of So-and-so, whom witchcraft holds  
     captive,  
 124″ Whom machinations hold in (the form of a skin) disease.  
 125″ Release my witchcraft, O Salt, dispel my spittle,  
 126″ Take over from me the machinations so that I may constantly praise  
     you as (I praise) my creator god.

These incantations represent a special group; they are among the very few in *Maqlû* that are oriented to Enlil and his circle and in which that god plays a leading role. (Contrast the numerous mentions of Ea and his circle.) These incantations were added, I believe, during the Sargonid period, when Nippur had been taken over by the Assyrians and was being restored and developed by them.

16 On this incantation, see T. Jacobsen, “Mesopotamia,” in H. Frankfort et al., *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man: An Essay on Speculative Thought in the Ancient Near East* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), 130–131; V. A. Hurowitz, “Salted Incense: Exodus 30, 35; *Maqlû* VI 111–113; IX 118–120,” *Bib* 68 (1987): 178–194; T. Abusch, “Blessing and Praise in Ancient Mesopotamian Incantations,” in *Literatur, Politik und Recht in Mesopotamien: Festschrift für Claus Wilcke*, ed. W. Sallaberger et al. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003), 1–14, esp. 9 [[94–109, esp. 103–104]]; and J. 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. J. Stackert et al. (Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2010), 235–252.

In this context, the Nuska incantation <sup>d</sup>*Nuska šurbû* was added to the beginning of Tablet II in order to recontextualize, in an Enlil/Ekur setting, the incantations of that tablet that centered on Girra and burning.<sup>17</sup> This addition is related to and is part of the same redaction as the addition of the Enlil incantation <sup>d</sup>*Enlil qaqqadī* (VI 1–15) to the beginning of Tablet VI. As noted above, the latter addition lent the material a new orientation and subsequently defined Tablet VI as a ritual entity.

Turning back to the issue of the frame, we would now imagine that the literary frame, II 15–17 // 223–225, was formed when the opening incantation of Tablet II (1–17) was added to *Maqlû* as part of an Enlil/Ekur layer of revision; that is, the frame was created at the same time that <sup>d</sup>*Nuska šurbû* was introduced into Tablet II to serve as its opening. The redactor responsible for the introduction and adaptation of the opening incantation in Tablet II probably thought of the tablet as forming a whole<sup>18</sup> and therefore took over material from the last incantation for his new opening in order to create a frame for the tablet.

However, we must now note that this formulation and conclusion assume that the final incantation of the tablet (II 205–225) was already part of *Maqlû* when the Nuska incantation was added and the frame created.<sup>19</sup> But we have now seen that this last incantation is also a composite in which the textual segments characteristic of *Maqlû*, the sections dealing with the witch and fire, were added to a nucleus invoking demons and gods. This type of invocation is rather unique in *Maqlû*. Actually, all the gods mentioned in II 214–218 are also members of the Enlil circle in Nippur.<sup>20</sup> Thus, rather than forming part of the *Maqlû* text to which II 1–17 was added, it is much more likely that II 205–225 also belonged to the Enlil/Ekur group. This incantation would probably have been adapted and added to *Maqlû* at the same time that II 1–17 was added. If so, both II 1–17 and II 205–225 were part of an Enlil/Ekur layer of revision and were added to the series to form the opening and closing of the ritual segment

17 I mean to include here not only II 19–148 but also the rest of the tablet and perhaps even the first incantation(s) in Tablet III. Very possibly, the Nuska incantation II 1–17 also served as a link to the three incantations in I 73–143, especially <sup>d</sup>*Nuska annûtu šalimû ēpišīya*, I 73–121, an incantation originally addressed to Šamaš but then readdressed to Nuska.

18 Note the similar way of formatting ritual instructions that was employed in the Ritual Tablet for all the incantations of Tablet II.

19 Actually, this was what I thought when I first noticed the frame.

20 Of course, several of these gods also belong to, even originate in, other localities. For the Temple of Girra in Nippur, see recently J. Tudeau, “Girra (god),” *Ancient Mesopotamian Gods and Goddesses*, ORACC and the UK Higher Education Academy, 2011, <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/amgg/listofdeities/girra/> (accessed May 15, 2012).

that became Tablet II. The frame, then, would probably have been formed when these two incantations were added to *Maqlû*.

The addition of II 1–17 and II 205–225 to the beginning and end of Tablet II, then, is similar to the phenomenon observable in the creation of division 2 of *Maqlû* (VI 1–VII 54)<sup>21</sup> by the addition of the Enlil incantations, <sup>d</sup>*Enlil qaqqadî* (VI 1–15) and <sup>d</sup>*Enlil qaqqadî* (VII 47–54), and the formation thereby of the second division.<sup>22</sup>

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21 For the divisions of *Maqlû*, see Abusch, “Mesopotamian Anti-witchcraft Literature,” 251–262 [[AMD 5, 99–111]].

22 The creation of the second division should not be confused with the creation of Tablet VI and its designation as *qutāri ša ÉN* <sup>d</sup>*Enlil qaqqadî*. That development would have taken place later than the introduction of the two Enlil incantations, <sup>d</sup>*Enlil qaqqadî* (VI 1–15) and <sup>d</sup>*Enlil qaqqadî* (VII 47–54).

# The Revision of Babylonian Anti-Witchcraft Incantations: The Critical Analysis of Incantations in the Ceremonial Series *Maqlû*

## 1 Introduction

In this paper, I shall try to shed some further light on modes of revision of Akkadian incantations.\* Individual incantations were not static and often took on more than one form. We know of the existence of these forms through several means. Sometimes, we actually have extant variant forms of an incantation that are similar enough to indicate a genetic relationship but sufficiently different to suggest that they had separate identities.<sup>1</sup> In other instances, internal tensions or inconsistencies in a text suggest that the preserved text was produced by the revision of an earlier version. In the latter instance, we establish the existence of different forms of the text by means of a critical analysis that focuses primarily upon the aforementioned internal tensions or inconsistencies.

Elsewhere, I have compared extant forms of individual incantations (and expect to do so again).<sup>2</sup> Here, I shall discuss some results obtained through critical analysis of incantations in the Akkadian magical series *Maqlû*, “Burning.” This series is the longest and most important Mesopotamian composition concerned with combating witchcraft; its text served as the script of a ceremonial performance. *Maqlû* contains a ritual tablet and eight incantation tablets that record the text of almost one hundred incantations directed against witches and witchcraft. The present form of the text seems to be a creation of the early first millennium BCE, the standard long text having developed

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\* This paper was first drafted while I was a member of the Institute for Advanced Studies, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, during the spring and summer of 2006. I am grateful to the institute and its staff for their support and hospitality, to the other members of the research group “Occult Powers and Officiants in Near Eastern Cultures” for their collegiality, and to Brandeis University for supplementary support. Versions of this paper were read at the institute’s conference “Continuity and Innovation in the Magical Tradition,” Jerusalem, July 2006, as well as at the 217th meeting of the American Oriental Society, San Antonio, 2007.

1 In some instances, we must try to determine whether the differences are no more than performance or aesthetic variants.

2 See, e.g., T. Abusch, *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature: Case Studies* (a revised version of my 1972 Harvard dissertation), BJS 132 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 9–44 (see below).

from an earlier short form by means of a series of sequential changes. A critical examination of many of the incantations in *Maqlû* (as in other Mesopotamian series, collections, and shorter rituals) would produce interesting literary and/or textual results, but those on which we focus our attention here were re-studied recently because of problems encountered during the latest stage of editing and translating the series.<sup>3</sup> In the course of this recent work, a number of incantations were subjected anew to critical analysis; this close and detailed study led to some new results as well as to the confirmation of some earlier impressions.

I shall present here only a few of these results. I shall discuss two incantations that may be said to have undergone expansion. These incantations contain interpolations that enumerate evil forces or destructive actions associated with the witch. These interpolations are in the form of lists, and their inclusion is marked off by repetitive resumptions.<sup>4</sup>

The reconstruction of stages of development of an incantation through critical analysis starts from the premise that an incantation should and will normally exhibit a coherence of thought and congruence between its parts. Such qualities are to be expected of relatively short literary works produced by a single composer. But sometimes a single incantation contains multiple motifs, sections, or just lines that are not wholly congruent, that are repetitive and/or awkward, that may even be contradictory, or that are at home in different incantation types or compositions. The mixture of noncongruent materials should usually be understood as a consequence of development or alteration.<sup>5</sup> While it is true that the incongruity of parts in an incantation may be due to the utilization of frozen traditional blocks or segments in the initial formation of the incantation, this incongruity is more often due to the revision of an already existing incantation. The revision may be part of a general tendency or development, or it may be no more than an idiosyncratic creation.

The revision of an incantation and incorporation therein of new materials (and the creation thereby of incongruence) are due to such factors as the

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3 Whereas in previous studies, I followed the line division and count in Meier, *Maqlû*, and Meier, "Studien," in this study I follow the line count of my own edition: T. Abusch, *The Magical Ceremony "Maqlû": A Critical Edition*, AMD 10 (Leiden: Brill, 2016). This new line count is also followed in T. Abusch and D. Schwemer, "Das Abwehrzauber-Ritual *Maqlû* ('Verbrennung')," in *Omina, Orakel, Rituale und Beschwörungen*, ed. B. Janowski and G. Wilhelm, TUAT NF 4 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2008), 128–186.

4 For an alternative hypothesis regarding the formation of these incantations, see the final paragraphs of this paper.

5 See T. Abusch, "Water into Fire: The Formation of Some Witchcraft Incantations," in T. Abusch, *Mesopotamian Witchcraft: Toward a History and Understanding of Babylonian Witchcraft Beliefs and Literature*, AMD 5 (Leiden: Brill/Styx, 2002), 197–198.

adaptation of a text for a new purpose; the correlation of an incantation with a new or added ritual action; the integration of a simple text into a new, more complex, and larger ideological and/or ritual framework; or the adaptation of a text to new religious beliefs or cognitive/intellectual norms. In more general terms, one may say that often the change of a text will reflect a change of ideas, a change of purpose, and/or a change of ritual usage. Overall, these changes are functions of developments in the areas of religious thought and literary norms.

Over the years I have identified many relatively simple examples of change, changes that are easily comprehensible because the revision involved no more than the insertion of a line or two.<sup>6</sup> But the two *Maqlû* incantations here considered, Tablet II 19–75 and Tablet IV 1–79, will be seen to contain expansions and interpolations of significant length. In these instances, change seems to have produced a complex text; however, because the insertions are relatively long and in list form, the revisions are often more easily identifiable than some other revisions that are also extensive but more subtle. Moreover, in these incantations, the interpolations are marked off by a repetitive resumption, a device often referred to by the technical term *Wiederaufnahme*. This term refers to the fact that when a digression of a thematic or generic nature had sundered connections in a text, a redactor might repeat in identical or similar words lines of the text that preceded the break created by the interpolation.<sup>7</sup> A *Wiederaufnahme* is a particularly useful analytic signal, for sometimes it is one of the initial indicators of an interpolation, and in the right circumstances, its existence serves to confirm the analysis that a text had been expanded by means of insertions.

But before turning to the two aforementioned incantations, I would reiterate that the evidence underlying our conclusion that incantations in *Maqlû* may

6 See, e.g., Abusch, “Water into Fire,” 198–199.

7 See, e.g., M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 84–86 (note particularly the references in 85 n. 19), as well as A. Rofé, *The Prophetic Stories: The Narratives about the Prophets in the Hebrew Bible* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988), 63 n. 13. But note that a *Wiederaufnahme* may also be an authorial feature “when an inclusio is involved. The latter is manifestly a stylistic device which frames a text and marks its own integrity: it does not mark off another literary unit” (Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 86). It is also a narrative-strategic device (see, e.g., M. Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985], 414). See also J. H. Tigay, “Evolution of the Pentateuchal Narratives in the Light of the Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic,” in *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism*, ed. J. H. Tigay (Philadelphia, 1985), 48–49, and in the same volume, “Conflation as a Redactional Technique,” 69, 74, and n. 46 for *Wiederaufnahme* as an editorial device, and *ibid.*, 74 n. 46 for *Wiederaufnahme* as an authorial device.

sometimes be revised by means of interpolation and expansion is not simply limited to the results of critical analysis; it is evident in the manuscript tradition as well. For when we examine the manuscripts of incantations that contain lists or enumerations, we occasionally find that some of the manuscripts do not contain the list or contain shorter versions thereof. Three examples suffice to illustrate this point: *Maqlû* III 1–30, v 26–35, and VII 114–140. It should be noted that like the incantations studied in this essay, the expansions in *Maqlû* III 1–30 and v 26–35 are also set off by a *Wiederaufnahme*.

The first half of *Maqlû* III 1–30 describes the actions of a witch. *SpBTU* 3, no. 74a, a Babylonian manuscript from Uruk, omits lines 8–14. By itself, this omission might be explained as a haplography, but it is more likely that the Uruk manuscript represents an early form of the text. The theme of lines 8–13 is incongruous with that of the surrounding lines. For while those lines describe the witch's attack upon commercial life by means of her spittle, lines 8–13 describe the witch's attack upon the sexuality of the young people of the town by means of her glance. Line 14, moreover, repeats three of the four words found in line 7. Given the thematic incongruity between the two sections and the repetition of line 7 in line 14, the omission of lines 8–14 in *SpBTU* 3, no. 74a attests to the fact that lines 8–13 were a later insertion and that line 14 was then added as a *Wiederaufnahme* for the purpose of reconnecting parts of the text that were sundered by the insertion, thereby resuming the commercial description of the original text.<sup>8</sup>

The incantation *Maqlû* v 19–47 contains (in lines 26–35) a list of destructive actions that are wished upon the witch and her witchcraft; each verbal action is compared to a plant because the verb is similar to the name of the plant and forms a word play. For example, line 32: *kīma ḥašê liḥaššûši kišpūša*, “Like a cress plant may her witchcraft pierce her.” This section is absent in the fragment K 18618, which probably is part of the Babylonian manuscript K 2436 + K 6006 (+) K 5349 + K 10161 (+) K 18618 (+) Sm 388 (+) Sm 741 + 2069.<sup>9</sup> And we note that in the texts in which it appears, this section is set off by a *Wiederaufnahme*, for both it and the following section begin (lines 26 and 36) with the address *epišti u muštēpišti*, “my sorceress and the woman who instigates sorcery against me.” That the absence of lines 26–35 in the Babylonian

8 For a detailed presentation of this argument, see T. Abusch, “*Maqlû* III 1–30: Internal Analysis and Manuscript Evidence for the Revision of an Incantation,” in *Of God(s), Trees, Kings, and Scholars: Neo-Assyrian and Related Studies in Honour of Simo Parpola*, ed. M. Luukko et al., StOr 106 (Helsinki: Finnish Oriental Society, 2009), 307–313 [[81–88]].

9 I am indebted to Daniel Schwemer for the knowledge of K 18618; he noticed that this fragment supported the argument presented in this paper and communicated it to me.

manuscript is not simply due to haplography is evident from the fact that in the expanded text this section disturbs the development of a theme based upon forms of the word *nabalkutu*, “to turn against” (19–25 [see 21], 36–42 [see 37–39]).

An example even more similar to those studied in this paper is provided by the expansion of *Maqlû* VII 114–140. Already in a paper presented to the American Oriental Society in 1970 and worked out in greater detail in my 1972 dissertation,<sup>10</sup> I argued that this *Maqlû* incantation was created by the insertion of a lengthy list of evils into a base incantation like K 7594: 1’–8’ (// *KAR* 165, rev. 1’–4’)—thus VII 118–129 (as well as some lines following the central ritual in line 130) were an expansion. At the time, I imagined that the development took place prior to the incorporation of the incantation in *Maqlû*, an opinion that seemed reasonable in view of the length of the insertion. What I could not know then was that K 7594 was actually part of *Maqlû*. Recently, J. Fincke joined this Babylonian fragment to a Babylonian manuscript that I had pieced together over many years (K 5350 + 5374 + 7594 + 7610 + 7476 + 7631 + 8882 + 9635 + 11567 + 19154 + Sm 798b).<sup>11</sup> Accordingly, the development must have taken place not before the composition of *Maqlû* but in the course of its transmission.<sup>12</sup>

I am not unaware that the shorter/earlier manuscript in each of the three cases just cited is Babylonian—this is almost certainly significant.

## 2 Analysis

I now turn to the analysis of *Maqlû* II 19–75 (A) and IV 1–79 (B).<sup>13</sup>

10 See Abusch, *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature*, 13–44. I there referred to this incantation as VII 119–146 in accordance with Meier’s line count.

11 Even without K 7594, this manuscript presented such a deviant and problematic text that I questioned one of the joins and was even tempted in summer 1994 to break it in order to have it retested; I was only prevented from doing so when an additional join that I made that same summer indicated that my earlier reconstruction had to be right.

12 In light of the new evidence, I have now restudied *Maqlû* VII 114–140 and subjected it and the related *Maqlû* VII 57–79 to a detailed analysis; see T. Abusch, “A Neo-Babylonian Recension of *Maqlû*: Some Observations on the Redaction of *Maqlû* Tablet VII and on the Development of Two of its Incantations,” in *Festschrift für Gernot Wilhelm anlässlich seines 65. Geburtstages am 28. Januar 2010*, ed. J. C. Fincke (Dresden: Islet, 2010), 1–16 [[122–138]].

13 For transcriptions of the Akkadian texts of these incantations, see the Excursus to this paper.

2.1 *Maqlû Tablet II 19–75*<sup>14</sup>

- 19 Incantation. O Girra, perfect lord, “You are the light,” (thus) your  
name is invoked,
- 20 You illumine the houses of all the gods,  
21 You illumine the totality of all the lands.  
22 Because you are present for me and  
23 Decide lawsuits in the stead of Sîn and Šamaš,  
24 Judge my case, render my verdict.  
25 For your bright light, all the people await you (hence)  
26 For your pure torch, I turn to you, I seek you.  
27 Lord, I seize your hem,  
28 I seize the hem of your great divinity,  
29 I seize the hem of my god and my goddess,  
30 I seize the hem of my city god and my city goddess.  
31 [...] have pity on me, O lord. The witch has (now) roared at me like  
a drum.
- 32 She has seized my head, my neck, and my skull,  
33 She has seized my seeing eyes,  
34 She has seized my walking feet,  
35 She has seized my crossing knees,  
36 She has seized my (load) bearing arms.  
37 Now in the presence of your great divinity,  
38 Two crisscrossed bronze figurines  
39 Of my warlock and my witch,  
40 Of my sorcerer and the woman who instigates sorcery against me,  
41 Of my male and female encirclers,  
42 Of my male and female poisoners,  
43 Of the male and female who are enraged at me,  
44 Of my male and female enemies,  
45 Of my male and female persecutors,  
46 Of my male and female litigants,  
47 Of my male and female accusers,  
48 Of my male and female adversaries,  
49 Of my male and female slanderers,  
50 Of my male and female evildoers,

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14 My translation assumes that a preterite form of the verb may sometimes function as a performative present.

- 51 Who have given me over to a dead man, who have made me experience hardship—  
 52 Be it an evil demon, be it an evil spirit,  
 53 Be it an evil ghost, be it an evil constable,  
 54 Be it an evil god, be it an evil lurker,  
 55 Be it Lamaštu, be it Labāšu, be it Aḥḥāzu (jaundice),  
 56 Be it Lilû, be it Lilîtu, be it Ardat-Lilî,  
 57 Be it *l'bu*-illness, the seizure of the mountain,  
 58 Be it *bennu*-epilepsy, the spawn of Šulpa'ea,  
 59 Be it *antašubba* ("fallen from heaven")-epilepsy, be it *Lugalurra*-epilepsy,  
 60 Be it Hand of a god, be it Hand of a goddess,  
 61 Be it Hand of a ghost, be it Hand of a curse,  
 62 Be it Hand of mankind, be it young Lamaštu, the daughter of An,  
 63 Be it *Saḡhulḥaza*-demon, the attendant who provides evil,  
 64 Be it swelling, paralysis, numbness,  
 65 Be it anything evil that has not been named,  
 66 Be it anything that performs harm to humanity,  
 67 That seizes me and constantly pursues me night and day,  
 68 Afflicts my flesh, seizes me all day,  
 69 And does not let go of me all night.  
 70 Now in the presence of your great divinity,  
 71 In pure sulfur, I am burning them, I am scorching them.  
 72 Look at me, O lord, and uproot them from my body,  
 73 Release their evil witchcraft.  
 74 You, Girra, are the lord, the one who goes at my side,  
 75 Keep me well, that I may declare your great deeds and sing your praises.

*Maqlû* II 19–75 is a rather long incantation. It begins with a hymnic invocation of the fire god Girra, followed by a statement that the victim is turning to this god for judgment and is taking hold of the fringe of his garment as well as the fringes of other gods related to the victim (lines 19–30). Then, in lines 31–69, the speaker describes what the witches have done to him. This is a rather long description and is actually made up of several lists: First, the speaker states that the witch has attacked and seized various parts of his body (lines 32–36). He then proclaims that now, in the presence of the fire god, he is presenting two crisscrossed figurines of bronze (lines 37–38). These figurines are designated as representing the witch; here follows a long list of names of different kinds of witches (lines 39–50), each pair introduced by the determinative-relative

pronoun *ša*, “of” (e.g., *ša kaššāpīya u kaššāptiya*, “of my warlock and my witch”). The list culminates in a one-line general description (line 51) of the harm to which the witches have subjected the victim: “who have given me over to a dead man, who have made me experience hardship.” Lines 52–66 form a long list of demons and illnesses that likewise culminates in a description (lines 67–69) of how evil forces have seized and held on to the victim night and day. In lines 70–71, the speaker again says that he is performing the ritual act in the presence of the divinity, and here he states that he is burning the figurines in sulfur. In lines 72–73, he then asks for divine assistance—namely, that his lord look upon him and extirpate the evils (lit. “them”) from his body and release their evil witchcraft. The text ends in lines 74–75 with a final invocation and promise of praise.

The text presents a number of structural and logical difficulties. The very length of the combined lists is problematic. More specifically, the following questions are among those that need to be answered: What is the function of lines 32–36, the section that describes how the witch has seized her victim? What relationship obtains between the list of witches and the act described in line 51? What relationship obtains between the list of demons and the preceding witchcraft section, generally, and line 51, specifically? What is the relationship of the list of demons to the description of activities in lines 67–69? Clearly, the most notable difficulties are those caused by the list of demons and illnesses (lines 52–66). These difficulties are of both a syntactic and a conceptual nature. The syntactic difficulty is due to the fact that the list seems disconnected from its surrounding context and forms a parenthesis. The conceptual difficulty is occasioned by the very existence of a list of demons and illnesses (lines 52–66) here in a witchcraft ritual, for witches and demons are of different natures, the former human, the latter supernatural, and the absence of a clear syntactic connection means that the text does not state clearly what their relationship might be.

It is *a priori* probable that an oral rite containing several lists—particularly lists that disrupt the logical flow of the text—has undergone significant expansion and revision and that one or more of the lists were inserted secondarily into the incantation. This seems to be confirmed by the existence in lines 37–39 and 70–71 of a structuring *Wiederaufnahme* (repetitive resumption) surrounding the lists in lines 40–69:

*enenna ina maḥar ilūtika rabīti* (37)

*šina ṣalmī siparri etgurūti* (38)

(*ša kaššāpīya u kaššāptiya*) (39)

*enenna ina maḥar ilūtika rabīti* (70)

*ina kibrīti elleti aqallišunūti ašarrapšunūti* (71)

**Now, in the presence of your great divinity,**  
 Two crisscrossed bronze figurines (of my warlock and my witch) ...  
**Now, in the presence of your great divinity,**  
 In pure sulfur, I am burning them, I am scorching them.

The existence of long lists and of a *Wiederaufnahme* indicates that the long central part of the text is made up of secondary elements. But let us first study the *Wiederaufnahme* and see its implications, leaving for later an examination of the lists. The *Wiederaufnahme* is realized by the repetition of line 37 as line 70. The inclusion of lists in lines 39–69 caused line 71 to be separated from lines 37–38—that is, the lists resulted in the separation of parts of a ritual statement from each other. Such a statement would have read:

37 *enenna ina maḥar ilūtika rabīti*  
 38 *šina ṣalmī siparri etgurūti*  
 39 *ša kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya*  
 71 *ina kibrīti elleti aqallišunūti ašarrapšunūti.*

37 Now, in the presence of your great divinity,  
 38 Two crisscrossed bronze figurines  
 39 Of my warlock and my witch  
 71 In pure sulfur, I am burning (them), I am scorching (them).

The text of II 77–103, the very next incantation in Tablet II, follows a ritual sequence comparable to the one just reconstructed for our incantation:

*enenna ina maḥar ilūtika rabīti*  
*šina ṣalmī kaššāpi u kaššāpti ša siparri ēpuš qātukka*  
*maḥarka uggiršunūtima kâša apqidka* (II 91–93)

Now, in the presence of your great divinity,  
 By your power I have fashioned two bronze figurines of the warlock and  
 witch,  
 In your presence I cross them, and to you I give them.

This later incantation is also addressed to the fire god. It thus supports the contention that lines 37–38 (and very likely line 39: *ša kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya*, “of my warlock and my witch” [but see below]) and line 71 belong together, and that such a ritual statement constituted the original kernel of the text of II 19–75.

Thus, originally, the statement “now in the presence of your great divinity, two crisscrossed bronze figurines of my warlock and witch” would have been

followed immediately by the description of ritual activity presently found in line 71: “In pure sulfur, I am burning (them), I am scorching (them).” But the insertion of various lists between lines 39 and 71 would have broken the connection (perhaps even splitting off the first part of the sentence [38–39] from its closing [71] and leaving the objects in 38–39 [*šina šalimī siparri etgurūti ...*, “two crisscrossed bronze figurines ...”] disconnected from the verbs that governed them [*aqallīšunūti ašarrapšunūti*, “I am burning them, I am scorching them”]), and the redactor would have felt the need to recreate the connection. For this reason, line 37 is repeated as line 70; this *Wiederaufnahme* refocuses the speech on the ritual and thus reconnects elements of the ritual that had been sundered by the major digressions.

It should be noted that a noncanonical or variant form of the incantation supports this analysis. In place of the form of line 38 of the canonical text, *KAR* 240 reads: *šina šalimī siparri etgurūti ušēpiš*, “Two crisscrossed bronze figurines of the warlock and witch I have had fashioned.” This version has *ušēpiš*, “I have had fashioned,” where the standard text has nothing. Regardless of whether we consider *ušēpiš* to be original or an addition, the reading *ušēpiš* supports the argument that the incantation has experienced a major interpolation that disrupted the incantation and split up the description of the ritual: Either *ušēpiš* is secondary and was added in order to provide a verb to a statement that no longer had one, or it is original and the verb in line 38 was dropped so that as the present introduction of a long list of witches, line 38 might have the proper form of a header rather than serve as a verbal expression or description of the ritual.<sup>15</sup>

Having seen that the text has experienced major expansion and structural modification by means of interpolations, we should now turn our attention to the lists themselves. Let us deal with them in order.

Immediately prior to the description of the ritual, a list (lines 32–36) describes how the witch has seized the various parts of the victim’s body. In addresses to gods, the description of the evils that the witch has done against the speaker usually precedes the statement of the ritual act that he is undertaking against the witch. Thus, for example, if we look again to the incantation that follows ours in Tablet II (an incantation which, as we have seen, evinces similarities to the incantation under study), we find that the speaker in lines 87–89 recites the foul deeds of the witch immediately prior to his ritual statement in the previously quoted lines 91–93:

15 Personally, I think that the verb is original to the text, for that form of the text is easier, even though the argument that it was needed to reconnect sundered lines might serve my analysis better.

I have been attacked by witchcraft, and so I stand before you,  
 I have been cursed in the presence of god, king, and lord, and so I come  
 toward you,  
 I have been made sickening in the sight of anyone who beholds me, and  
 so I bow down before you.

This suggests that also in our incantation, the description of the witch seizing the victim that appears prior to the ritual was part of the original text.

But if lines 32–36 are primary, the same cannot be said of the lists of witches and demons. That it is unnecessary to list a long series of witches is indicated, for example, by the ritually similar II 92, cited above: *šina šalmī kaššāpi u kaššāpti ša siparri ēpuš qātukka*, “By your power I have fashioned two bronze figurines of the warlock and the witch,” where the mention of only the *kaššāpi u kaššāpti*, “the warlock and the witch,” suffices and seems natural.<sup>16</sup> The present list in II 39–50 is an example of a standard expanded list (for which, see, e.g., *Maqlū* I 73–86<sup>17</sup> and *A/O* 18 [1957–1958], 289: 1–5 [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 8.3]]). It

16 Note, moreover, that the version of our incantation preserved in *KAR* 240 does not contain lines 40–41 and skips from line 39 to line 42. This omission further suggests that the list of witches itself was built up over time, for the sequence *kaššāpu*, “warlock,” + *rāḥū*, “poisoner” (39 + 42: *kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya + rāḥiya u rāḥitiya*) seems to be an earlier one (see, e.g., VI 127” || 135”: *e kaššāptiya lū rāḥḥātiya*, “Ha! my witch, my poisoner,” and cf. the many cases where we have just *kišpū ruḥū*, “witchcraft, spittle” [e.g., VII 161] and not the standard longer sequence). Assuming that line 39 existed in the original text (which in itself is not certain), lines 42–50 may have been added first, and only later lines 40–41.

17 *Maqlū* I 73–86 reads:

73 ÉN <sup>d</sup>nuska annūtu šalmū ēpišiya  
 74 annūtu šalmū ēpišiya  
 75 šalmū kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya  
 76 šalmū ēpišiya u muštēpišiya  
 77 šalmū sāḥiriya u sāḥirtiya  
 78 šalmū rāḥiya u rāḥitiya  
 79 šalmū bēl ikkiya u bēlet ikkiya  
 80 šalmū bēl šerriya u bēlet šerriya  
 81 šalmū bēl rīdiya u bēlet rīdiya  
 82 šalmū bēl dīniya u bēlet dīniya  
 83 šalmū bēl amātiya u bēlet amātiya  
 84 šalmū bēl dabābiya u bēlet dabābiya  
 85 šalmū bēl egerrēya u bēlet egerrēya  
 86 šalmū bēl lemuttiya u bēlet lemuttiya

73 Incantation. O Nuska, these are the figurines of my sorcerer,  
 74 These are the figurines of my sorceress,  
 75 The figurines of my warlock and my witch,  
 76 The figurines of my sorcerer and the woman who instigates sorcery against me,

is possible, therefore, that the first pair, the warlock and witch (*ša kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya*, line 39), was original and that a standard series of pairs of different kinds of “witches” drawn from a standard list was added on to it, though we cannot exclude the possibility that line 39 was also secondary and that a full list comprising the standard series of pairs was inserted as lines 39–50.<sup>18</sup> That a standard series of pairs of different kinds of “witches” was added here receives further support from the fact that whereas a description of what the witches have done follows only after the enumeration in the other texts that contain the list, here we find descriptions both before (31–36) and after (51).

Line 51 describes the harm to which the witches have subjected the victim. But let us leave for later the discussion of line 51, which is best discussed alongside lines 67–69, and turn instead to the list of demons and illnesses in lines 52–66. This list is set off from the previous list of witches by the nonhuman nature of the entries and by the introduction of each entry by means of *lū*, “be it,” rather than by the determinative-relative pronoun *ša*, “of,” that introduces each pair of witches. Were the witches and demons part of one list, we would have expected also the demons to have been introduced by *ša*, as is the case, for example, in *anašši dipāru*, “I am raising the torch,” the last incantation

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- 77 The figurines of my male and female encirclers,  
 78 The figurines of my male and female poisoners,  
 79 The figurines of the male and female who are enraged at me,  
 80 The figurines of my male and female enemies,  
 81 The figurines of my male and female persecutors,  
 82 The figurines of my male and female litigants,  
 83 The figurines of my male and female accusers,  
 84 The figurines of my male and female adversaries,  
 85 The figurines of my male and female slanderers,  
 86 The figurines of my male and female evildoers.
- 18 That *kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya*, “my warlock and my witch,” of line 39 could either have been part of the original text and have attracted the rest of the list or have been part of a list that was inserted is further supported by the observation that this pair may have formed the first entry of a standard list. This inference is strongly suggested by *Maqlû* I 73–86. That list is difficult, but it seems to point to the existence of a list with *kaššāpu* and *kaššāptu* as the first pair. *Maqlû* I 73–86 begins with *ēpišiya ... ēpištiya*, “my sorcerer ... my sorceress,” followed by *kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya*, “my warlock and my witch,” and then again *ēpišiya u muštēpištiya*, “my sorcerer and the woman who instigates sorcery against me,” etc. Why is *ēpišiya* repeated twice? An explanation would be forthcoming were we to assume that originally I 73–86 only had *ēpišiya u ēpištiya*, to which a standard list (that began with *kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya*, followed by *ēpišiya u muštēpištiya*, etc.) was added. This solution would establish the existence of a list with *kaššāpu* and *kaššāptu* as its first entry. (I should note that the existence of a list that began with *kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya* and was identical with II 39–50 would render it more likely that line 39 was also secondary in this incantation and was introduced as part of the list.)

in Tablet I (lines 135–143), and therefore for our text to have read something like “figurines of my warlock and my witch, of my sorcerer and the woman who instigates sorcery against me, of my male and female encirclers, etc. ..., of an evil demon, of an evil spirit, of an evil ghost, of an evil constable, of an evil god, of an evil lurker, etc. ...”<sup>19</sup> In addition, each list is characterized by a separate descriptive statement (line 51 and lines 67–69). Thus, the fact that the two lists are characterized by different subjects, modes of enumeration, and descriptions<sup>20</sup> demonstrates their separateness and strongly suggests their compositional independence.

Moreover, as mentioned earlier, the list of demons is syntactically disconnected from its surrounding context and forms a parenthesis. As the text stands now, the list of demons seems to provide an explanation of the nature of the evil experience that, according to line 51, the witch made the victim experience. The list was apparently inserted to explicate and enumerate *namrāšu*, “hardship,” in the line that precedes the list and seems now to stand in apposition to line 51. Thus, while the expanded list was not part of the original incantation, the list of demons and illnesses was probably only added to the incantation subsequent to the development of the list of witches. Perhaps the list of demons and illnesses was incorporated into the text in order to expand the range of the witch’s power and to (re)define her relationship to demons (cf. *Maqlû* v 57–75 and see below).

We turn now to lines 51 and 67–69. Line 51 (*ša ana mīti puqqudū’inni namrāša kullumū’inni*, “who have given me over to a dead man, who have made me experience hardship”) seems to refer backward to the previously enumerated witches. One has this impression in the first instance because also this line is introduced by means of the determinative-relative pronoun *ša* (here with the meaning “who”), the mode of introduction of each item in the previous list of witches. But actually this form of introduction in line 51 may simply be due to the fact that when the citing of an individual witch or of a series of witches is followed by a description of her/their actions, that description is often introduced by the relative *ša* even when the mention of the witch had not been introduced by *ša*. Be that as it may, it seems reasonable to assume that this line was added following the expansion of the list of “witches” as a way of drawing

19 For such a usage with demons and the like, see simply *Maqlû* I 135–139: *anašši dipāru šalmišunu aqallu / ša utukku šēdu rābišu ețemmu / lamašti labāši aḥḥāzu / lilū lilītu ardat-lilī / u mimma lemnu mušabbitu amēlūti*, “I am raising the torch and burning the figurines of the demon, the spirit, the lurker, the ghost, Lamaštu, Labāšu, Aḥḥāzu (jaundice), Lilū, Lilītu, Ardat-Lilī, and any evil that seizes mankind.”

20 This conclusion stands even if (as is done below) the descriptions (line 51 and lines 67–69) are treated together and understood to have been inserted into the text at the same time.

the list together and of describing and summarizing what the group had done. But this chronology may not be correct; we shall reexamine this impression immediately below in our discussion of lines 67–69.

We now turn to the end of the list. Lines 67–69 seem to be part of the demon section because these lines come at its end, seem to summarize it, and, on the face of it, seem better to describe activities that suit demons and illnesses,<sup>21</sup> particularly because of the phrase “that afflicts my flesh.” Thus, it would be reasonable to assume—as we did with line 51 in regard to the preceding list of witches—that lines 67–69 were added following the expansion of the list of demons and illnesses as a way of drawing that list together and of describing and summarizing the harm that these evils had done.<sup>22</sup>

But the structure of lines 67–69 raises another possibility:

67 *ša šabtannima*<sup>23</sup> *mūša u urra irteneddânni*  
 68 *uḫattû širīya kal ūmi šabtannima*  
 69 *kal mūši lā umaššaranni*

67 That seizes me and constantly pursues me night and day,  
 68 Afflicts my flesh, seizes me all day,  
 69 And does not let go of me all night.

The structure of these lines is A-B-X-A'-B', X being the phrase “who afflicts my flesh.” It seems likely that this phrase is an insertion in the middle of an otherwise closely knit parallel structure. As stated earlier, the phrase “who afflicts my flesh” suits demons and illnesses better than witches. If it is correct to regard the insertion of this phrase as part of a secondary revision, then also an earlier version of lines 67–69 might originally have referred to witches

21 Cf., e.g., W. Farber, *Beschwörungsrituale an Ištar und Dumuzi: Atti Istar sa harmasa Dumuzi* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1977), 131: 68–69 (transcribed and translated on 144–145): *mimma lemnu ša* DIB-*an-ni-ma*(*išbatannima*) UŠ.MEŠ-*ni*(*irteneddânni*) *la'bann[i] lā umaššaranni*, “Alles Böse, das mich erfasst hat und mich dauernd verfolgt, mich befallen hat, mich nicht loslässt, ...” (but see n. 23 below).

22 Accordingly, lines 67–69 would have been inserted following the insertion of the list of demons, but modeled on line 51.

23 The form of *šabātu*, “to seize,” in lines 67 and 68 is written *šab-ta/t[an]-ni-ma* and should be normalized as *šabtannima* (stative+suffix). While *šab-ta/t[an]-ni-ma* may possibly be an ancient mistake for the prefix form of the verb (*išbatannima*), it seems more likely that DIB-*an-ni-ma* in Farber, *Beschwörungsrituale*, 131: 68, should be transcribed as *šabtannima* rather than *išbatannima*.

and have continued line 51.<sup>24</sup> If so, both summary statements might have been inserted into the text at the same time. In that case, the connection between lines 51 and 67–69 would have been disrupted by the insertion of the list of demons (and the similarity of lines 51 and 67–69 would then provide further support for the secondary nature of that list).

But both line 51 and lines 67–69 are odd; they are quite different from typical descriptions of the activities of witches, and we should not treat them as we would other descriptions. Thus, while it is reasonable to suppose that both summary statements were inserted into the text at the same time, their strangeness suggests that they were inserted not prior to the insertion of the list of demons but subsequent thereto—that is, after the insertion and expansion of both lists.

Perhaps one of the reasons for the insertion of lines 51 and 67–69 was to separate the lists from each other. If so, lines 67–69 were intended to describe what demons do, while line 51 was inserted to characterize the witches, introduce the demons, and connect the witchcraft and demonic sections (51a = giving man over to ghosts; 51b = giving man over to demons and the like). In any case, the witches are the ultimate cause (i.e., they give the person over to demons) and demons the proximate cause (i.e., they cause the present suffering) of the victim's plight.

Following the enumeration of demons and illnesses, the speaker first states that he is burning the figurines in sulfur and then, in lines 72–73, asks for divine assistance. The form of this final request provides further support for our conclusion regarding the secondary nature of the demon/illness section and helps us grasp more fully how the text was revised. Here the speaker turns to the god with the request: (*naplisannima bēlu*)<sup>25</sup> *usuḥṣunūti ina zumriya / pušur*

24 The beginning of *KAR* 235, obv. 2' (now missing on photo VAN 12912a and on the tablet) does not have the opening *ša* of line 67 (the rest of lines 67–69 are on obv. 2'–3'). Obv. 1' has only traces and does not indicate what preceded line 67 in this manuscript. In view of the absence of *ša*, we may be permitted to speculate that perhaps this manuscript reflects a form of the text in which line 67 immediately continued line 51 and accordingly did not require *ša* (*'ša ana mīti puqqudū'inni namrāša kullumū'inni šabtannima mūša u urra irted-dānni kal ūmi šabtannima kal mūši lā umaššaranni*); but note the shift from the plural to the singular form of the verb.

25 It is probably not a coincidence that the god is referred to as *bēlu*, “master,” both at the beginning of the request (31) and here at the end. Alongside *bēlu* we find the use of *rēmu* (*rēmanni*, “have pity on me”) in line 31 and *naplusu* (*naplisanni*, “look at me”) in line 72. Such usages are unexpected in an incantation to the fire god as judge. These lines may form a secondary envelope construction that is intended to present the god not as a judge but as a gracious master. *Bēlu* also occurs in line 27; seizing the hem of the

*kišpīšunu lemnūti*, “(Look at me, O lord, and) uproot them from my body, release their evil witchcraft.” The two requests, lines 72b and 73, seem to stand in parallel, but they cannot refer to the same entity for the following reasons: line 72b cannot refer to the witches and must refer to the demons and illnesses previously enumerated, for it is demons and illnesses that take up residence in the body, while witches normally seize their victim externally but do not invade the body.<sup>26</sup> (One extirpates demons and illness, but kills witches.) As the text now stands, “their witchcraft” of line 73 refers back to the demons of line 72. But witchcraft is practiced by humans and not by demons, and therefore line 73 cannot refer back to line 72. Accordingly, line 72b is also an insertion, for it is meant to refer to the demons who have attacked the victim. Thus, the first request refers to disease, the second to witchcraft.

At present, then, the designations of evil in the text seem to be organized along a secondary chiasmic pattern of hysteron-proteron:

- A<sub>1</sub> Enumeration of witches (39–51)
- B<sub>1</sub> Enumeration of demons (52–69)
- B<sub>2</sub> Request to remove the illnesses and demons (72b)
- A<sub>2</sub> Request to release witchcraft (73).

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god(s) in lines 27–30 fits the representation of the god as a gracious master, and thus also lines 27–30 may possibly be part of the adaptation of the incantation or of the type.

Furthermore, note the use of a perfect form of the verb (*iltasi/u*, “has (now) roared”) in line 31. Could the use of the perfect in that line rather than the normal preterite, and in contrast to the use of the preterite in lines 32–36, reflect the later insertion of line 31 and therefore belong to a different linguistic usage/stage? Elsewhere, I shall take up the question of the use of tenses/aspects in *Maqlû* incantations (cf. AMD 10, 282–283).

26 There are exceptions, but these reflect the late merger of the witch and illness, a development that is reflected by or is taking place in our text (see, e.g., *LKA* 154 + 155 // [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 8.2, B]], and the discussion in T. Abusch, “The Internalization of Suffering and Illness in Mesopotamia: A Development in Mesopotamian Witchcraft Literature,” in “Magic in the Ancient Near East,” ed. P. Xella, special issue, *SEL* 15 [1998]: 49–58 [[AMD 5, 89–96]]).

A comparable situation may exist in *Maqlû* VII 12–16. Line 14 there reads: <sup>4</sup>*ningišzida lissuḫšunūti*, “May Ningišzida extirpate them.” Since on the face of it *nasāḫu*, “to extirpate, uproot,” seems to fit better with objects than persons, it seems to refer to the witchcraft rather than the witches. But that assumption creates problems and confusion in the text, for in the adjoining lines the third-person plural suffix (both object and possessive) refers to the witches. Perhaps, there too *nasāḫu* with the third-person plural object suffix has been added to the text. Alternatively, the usage may reflect a change in the image of the witches so that they are now demonic (this does not preclude the possibility that the line was added).

Let us now summarize some of the developments that we have noted. The original kernel of the text of lines 37–73 would have read something like:

*enenna ina maḥar ilūtika rabīti*  
*šina ṣalmī siparri etgurūti (ušēpiš)*  
*ša kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya*  
*ina kibriti elleti aqallīšunūti ašarrapšunūti*  
*nāplisannima bēlu pušur kišpišunu lemnūti*

Now in the presence of your great divinity, (37)  
 Two crisscrossed bronze figurines (38)  
 Of my warlock and my witch, ..., (39)<sup>27</sup>  
 In pure sulfur, I am burning them, I am scorching them. (71)  
 Look at me, O lord, and release their evil witchcraft. (72a, 73)

Subsequently, the incantation underwent the series of expansions and revisions that we have noted: A list of designations of different kinds of witches (39–50) was expanded in stages; then a list (52–66) of demons and illnesses was inserted.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps at this stage, line 72b was added to the request in order to cover the aforementioned demons and illnesses. Subsequent to these expansions, line 37 was repeated as line 70 in order to refocus the speech on the ritual and thus reconnect stages of the ritual that had been sundered by the major digressions.

The inclusion of the list of demons indicates a growth of power on the part of the witch. Demons were originally independent beings, but over time the witch became able to control nonhuman demonic forces in addition to other human beings. The demons' loss of autonomy vis-à-vis the witch is due to her increasing power, but it also appears to parallel (and be part of the same trend as) an increasing subordination of demons to the gods.<sup>29</sup> In any case, one may suggest that the insertion of the list of demons in this incantation reflects an expansion of the range of powers of the witch, serves to redefine

27 The translation of the version of lines 38–39 with *ušēpiš* reads: "Two crisscrossed bronze figurines of my warlock and my witch I have had fashioned."

28 Because of uncertainties, we leave lines 51 and 67–69 out of the summary.

29 For the subordination of the demons to the gods, see K. van der Toorn, "The Theology of Demons in Mesopotamia and Israel. Popular Belief and Scholarly Speculation," in *Die Dämonen: Die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt*, ed. A. Lange et al. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 73–76.

her relationship to demons and illness, and indicates her increasing control over demons.<sup>30</sup>

## 2.2 *Maqlû Tablet IV 1–79*

- 1 Incantation. Burn, burn, blaze, blaze!
- 2 Evil and wicked one, do not enter, go away!
- 3 Whoever you are—the son of whomever, whoever you are—the  
daughter of whomever,
- 4 Who sit and perform repeatedly<sup>31</sup> your sorcery and machinations  
against me myself:
- 5 May Ea, the exorcist, release.
- 6 May Asalluḫi, the exorcist of the gods, Ea's son, the sage, divert your  
witchcraft.
- 7 I am binding you, I am holding you captive, I am giving you over
- 8 To Girra, the burner, the scorcher, the binder, the vanquisher of  
witches.
- 9 May Girra, the burner, be joined to my side.
- 10 Sorcery, rebellion, evil word, love(-magic), hate(-magic),
- 11 Perversion of justice, *zikurrudâ*-magic, aphasia, pacification,
- 12 Mood swings, vertigo, madness,
- 13 You have performed against me, have had performed against me:  
may Girra release.
- 14 You have betrothed me to a dead man,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against  
me: may Girra release).
- 15 You have handed me over to a skull,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against  
me: may Girra release).
- 16 You have handed me over to a ghost of (a member of) my family,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against  
me: may Girra release).
- 17 You have handed me over to a ghost of a stranger,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against  
me: may Girra release).

30 The witch's ability to dispatch demons (and illness) against her victims is evident in other incantations as well; an excellent example is provided by *Maqlû v* 57–75, especially 60–67.

31 All verbs of bewitching in this incantation are second-person plural.

- 18 You have handed me over to a roaming ghost who has no caretaker,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against  
me: may Girra release).
- 19 You have handed me over to a ghost in the uninhabited wasteland,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against  
me: may Girra release).
- 20 You have handed me over to the steppe, open country, and desert,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against  
me: may Girra release).
- 21 You have handed me over to wall and battlement,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against  
me: may Girra release).
- 22 You have handed me over to the mistress of the steppe and open  
country,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against  
me: may Girra release).
- 23 You have handed me over to a kiln, a roasting oven, a baking oven, a  
brazier, a ... -oven, and bellows,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against  
me: may Girra release).
- 24 You have handed over figurines of me to a dead man,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against  
me: may Girra release).
- 25 You have betrothed figurines of me to a dead man,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against  
me: may Girra release).
- 26 You have laid figurines of me with a dead man,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against  
me: may Girra release).
- 27 You have laid figurines of me in the lap of a dead man,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against  
me: may Girra release).
- 28 You have buried figurines of me in the grave of a dead man,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against  
me: may Girra release).
- 29 You have handed over figurines of me to a skull,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against  
me: may Girra release).
- 30 You have immured figurines of me in a wall,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against  
me: may Girra release).

- 31 You have laid figurines of me under a threshold,  
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
- 32 You have immured figurines of me in the drainage opening of a wall,  
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
- 33 You have buried figurines of me on a bridge so that crowds would trample over them,  
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
- 34 You have made a hole in the mat (covering water) of a fuller and (therein) buried figurines of me,  
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
- 35 You have made a hole in the channel (full of water) of a gardener and (therein) buried figurines of me,  
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
- 36 Figurines of me—whether of tamarisk, or of cedar, or of tallow,  
 37 Or of wax, or of sesame-husks,  
 38 Or of bitumen, or of clay, or of dough,  
 39 Figurines, representations of my face and my body you have made  
 40 And fed to dog(s), fed to pig(s),  
 41 Fed to bird(s), cast into a river.
- 42 You have handed over figurines of me to Lamaštu, daughter of An,  
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
- 43 You have handed over figurines of me to Girra,  
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
- 44 You have laid my (funerary) water with a dead man,  
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
- 45 You have laid my water in the lap of a dead man,  
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
- 46 You have buried my water in the grave of a dead man,  
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).

- 47 You have buried my water [in<sup>?</sup> ...] of the earth/netherworld,<sup>32</sup>  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
- 48 You have buried my water [in<sup>?</sup> ...] of the earth/netherworld,<sup>33</sup>  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
- 49 You have drawn my water [in the presence of the gods of the night<sup>?</sup>],  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
- 50 You have given over [my water<sup>?</sup>] to Gilgameš,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
- 51 You have betrothed me [to the nether]world,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
- 52 *Zikurrudâ* magic in the presence of the moon (*Sîn*),  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
- 53 *Zikurrudâ* magic in the presence of Jupiter (*Šulpa'ea*),  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
- 54 *Zikurrudâ* magic in the presence of Cygnus (*Nimru*),<sup>34</sup>  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
- 55 *Zikurrudâ* magic in the presence of Lyra (*Gula*),<sup>35</sup>  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
- 56 *Zikurrudâ* magic in the presence of Leo (*Urgulû*),  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
- 57 *Zikurrudâ* magic in the presence of Ursa Major (*Ereqqu*),  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).

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32 Perhaps “[waste]land.”

33 Perhaps “[a crevice] in the earth.”

34 More precisely, Cygnus, Lacerta, and parts of Cassiopeia and Cepheus (so H. Hunger and D. Pingree, *Astral Sciences in Mesopotamia* [Leiden: Brill, 1999], 274).

35 Or Aquarius: One manuscript has <sup>d</sup>*gu-la* (Lyra), another MUL.GU.LA (Aquarius).

- 58 *Zikurrudâ* magic in the presence of Scorpio (*Zuqaqīpu*),  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
- 59 *Zikurrudâ* magic in the presence of Orion (*Šitaddaru*),  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
- 60 *Zikurrudâ* magic in the presence of Centaurus (*Ḥabašīrānu*),  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
- 61 *Zikurrudâ* magic by means of a snake, a mongoose, a dormouse<sup>2</sup>,  
a *pirurūtu*-mouse,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
- 62 *Zikurrudâ* magic by means of a corpse<sup>2</sup>, [...], *z*[*ikurrudâ* magic] by means of “spittle” (*ruḥū*),  
(You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).)
- 63 [You have fed] me bread, food, (and) fruit,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
- 64 You have given me to drink water, m[ilk], beer, and wine,  
You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
- 65 You have washed me with water and potash,  
[You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release)].
- 66 You have salved me with oil,  
[You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release)].
- 67 You have had gifts brought to me,  
[You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release)].
- 68 You have caused me to be dismissed from the presence of god<sup>1</sup>, king, noble, and prince.
- 69 You have caused me to be dismissed from the presence of courtier, attendant, and palace personnel.
- 70 You have caused me to be dismissed from the presence of friend, companion, and peer.
- 71 You have caused me to be dismissed from the presence of father and mother, brother [and] sister, wife, son and daughter.

- 72 You have caused me to be dismissed from the presence of household and city quarter, male and female servants, young and old of the household.
- 73 You have made me sickening in the sight of one who beholds me.
- 74 I have (now) captured you, I have (now) bound you, I have (now) given you over
- 75 To Girra, the burner, the scorcher, the binder, the vanquisher of witches.
- 76 May Girra, the burner, undo your bindings,
- 77 Release your witchcraft, [releas]e<sup>2</sup> your scatter-offerings.
- 78 By the command of Marduk, Ea's son, the sage,
- 79 and blazing Girra, An's son, the warrior. Incantation Formula.

The incantation begins with a call to the fire to destroy the witches (line 1). In lines 3–4, the speaker addresses his enemies in the second person and imputes to them the repeated performance of witchcraft against him. He then asks that the two gods of magic, Ea and Asalluḫi, help him—that is, that Ea release and Asalluḫi turn back whatever witchcraft the witches had performed against him (lines 5–6). The speaker then states that he is binding the witches and giving them over to the fire god Girra, “the burner, the scorcher, the binder, the vanquisher of witches,” and expresses the wish that the fire god stand at his side and aid him (lines 7–9). Then, in lines 10–73, the text specifies almost every imaginable act of witchcraft and repeats after each act the request that Girra undo whatever witchcraft the witch had performed. Finally, in lines 74–77, the speaker states that he has bound the witches and given them over to the fire god Girra, “the burner, the scorcher, the binder, the vanquisher of witches,” and expresses the wish that the fire god undo the witchcraft and the ritual paraphernalia used to perform witchcraft.

The most notable feature of this incantation is the extensive list of witchcraft activities found in lines 10–73. Most of the entries are followed by the antiphon: “You have performed against me (or) have had performed against me: may Girra release.” In the main, the entries are not unrelated items, but appear rather in blocks that contain a number of related entries describing what the witch had done. Though there is some overlapping between blocks, each block appears to be characterized by a different action or perspective: for example, handing over (usually the verb *paqādu*) the victim to various entities, most notably ghosts (*eṭemmu*) (lines 14–23); burial and other treatment of figurines (*šalmū*) of the victim (some entries are parallel to entries in the preceding group) (lines 24–43); placing water

(*mê*)<sup>36</sup> of the victim among the dead (lines 44–51); performance of *zikurrudâ* magic in the presence of various astral bodies, etc. (lines 52–62); bewitching the victim by means of food, drink, washing, salving, and messages (lines 63–67); causing the rejection (*ina maḥar ... šuškunu*) of the victim by various people and groups (lines 68–73).

This catalogue of witchcraft acts presents a relatively comprehensive account of what the witch can do. But various literary features—notably that the list can be divided into discrete blocks, that these blocks have some overlap, that some blocks are a bit disorganized, that some individual items deviate from the material with which they are grouped, and that the antiphon does not occur with all blocks<sup>37</sup>—all immediately suggest that the list is composite.<sup>38</sup> But whether composite or not, the list in its present form was not originally part of the incantation, for the length and scope of the list are disproportionate to its present setting in an incantation that centers upon the invocation of the fire and the description of the ritual burning of the witches. Perhaps more important in this regard is the fact that the list distances elements of a continuous performance from each other.

These descriptive and critical impressions are confirmed by the existence here, too, of a *Wiederaufnahme*:

*akassīkunūši akammīkunūši anamdīkunūši*  
*ana girra qāmê qālî kāsî kāsīdu ša kaššāpāti* (7–8)

*aktamīkunūši aktasīkunūši attadīkunūši*  
*ana girra qāmî qālî kāsî kāsīdu ša kaššāpāti* (74–75)

36 I had originally thought that *mê* here referred to semen (actually, or perhaps just metaphorically), but I now accept D. Schwemer's suggestion that "water" here refers to the water offered in a funerary ritual and thus represents the death (and death ritual) of the victim.

37 At the present time, I am not able to work out all the details of the blocks or of their incorporation. Some entries do not conform and deviate from their present environment. It is more than possible that not all long blocks were inserted at one time, and perhaps some entries were already present at the time of the composition of the incantation.

The following do not conform to the overall blocks. Is it possible that they are original?

14 *ana mīti taḥīrā'inni*, "You have betrothed me to a dead man."

15 *ana gulgullati tapqīdā'inni*, "You have handed me over to a skull."

24 *šalmīya ana mīti tapqīdā*, "You have handed over figurines of me to a dead man."

25 *šalmīya ana mīti taḥīrā*, "You have betrothed figurines of me to a dead man."

29 *šalmīya ana gulgullati tapqīdā*, "You have handed over figurines of me to a skull."

51 *ana<sup>1</sup> a[ra]lê taḥīrā'inni*, "You have betrothed me [to the nether]world."

38 I have not yet been able to work out the relative chronology of the incorporation of the sections.

I am binding you, I am holding you captive, I am giving you over  
To Girra, the burner, the scorcher, the binder, the vanquisher of witches.

I have (now) captured you, I have (now) bound you, I have (now) given  
you over  
To Girra, the burner, the scorcher, the binder, the vanquisher of witches.

We immediately note that lines 7–8 are repeated, with slight variation, in lines 74–75. This repetition is a consequence of the fact that several long series of actions were included in the incantation, and they thereby separate the beginning of the incantation from its end. Lines 74–75 were thus meant to reconnect the beginning and end of a text that had been disconnected by a major digression (or expansion of an element).

As noted, lines 74–75 repeat lines 7–8, but the repetition is not mechanical: the statement in line 7 is in the durative verb form (*akassīkunūši akammīkunūši*, ..., “I am binding you, I am holding you captive, ...”); that in line 74 is in the perfect (*aktamīkunūši aktasīkunūši*, ..., “I have (now) captured you, I have (now) bound you, ...”).<sup>39</sup> Because of the massive expansion of the incantation, a verbal expression that originally referred to an act taking place at the same time as the utterance now referred to an act that had already been completed and was in the past.

The repetition of elements is not limited to these lines and extends also to the short request to the fire god that follows upon the speaker’s statement that he is giving over the witches to him. In line 9, the text reads: “May Girra, the burner, be joined to my side.” This is expanded and paralleled by lines 76–77: “May Girra, the burner, undo your bindings, release your witchcraft, [releas]e<sup>2</sup> your scatter-offerings.” Thus, when the author repeated the earlier lines 7–8 in lines 74–75, he also repeated the earlier line 9 in expanded form in lines 76–77. Actually, it would appear that originally, prior to the expansion of the text and the subsequent creation of repetitive resumptions, line 9 was followed immediately by the final *ina qibūt* formula of lines 78–79: “By the command of Marduk, Ea’s son, the sage, and blazing Girra, An’s son, the warrior.” This is suggested by the fact that lines such as 9 normally occur at the end of an

39 Given the position of these lines near the beginning and end of the incantation and the use of a durative in the one and a perfect in the other, it is possible to regard this repetition as an *inclusio*. All the same, it is a *Wiederaufnahme* because of the existence of blocks of material that seem to have been inserted into the incantation. The alternative would be to imagine the (composition and) incorporation of many of the blocks at the time of initial composition. This is not impossible, but would then reflect authorship on the basis of previously existing materials. See below.

incantation. See, for example, the two incantations in *KAR* 80 and duplicates [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 8.4]], where we find our line at the end of each incantation: <sup>a</sup>*nuska šurbû ina qibītika litallil idāya*, “At your command, may grand Nuska be joined to my side” (rev. 14); <sup>d</sup>*šamaš ina pīka* <sup>a</sup>*girra tappûka litallil idāya*, “Šamaš, by your order, may Girra, your companion, be joined to my side” (rev. 35–36).

In any case, prior to the addition of the lists of lines 10–73, the earlier text ended with lines 9 + 78–79; in this earlier text, lines 3–4 functioned as the description of the witches’ actions against the victim and were followed by a request in line 5(+6) that Ea and Asalluḫi release the witchcraft. Therefore the later recurring antiphon was modeled on line 5(+6); this line takes the description of the witches’ actions in line 4 as its understood object. Thus, we may conclude our analysis by saying that the original text probably was the present lines 1–9 + 78–79 and that the lists of malevolent actions that the witch could perform were all added secondarily. Each entry served to exemplify the general statement of line 4, and each was provided with an antiphon parallel to line 5.<sup>40</sup> Finally, lines 7–9 were repeated in a modified form as lines 74–77 in order to recreate the connection sundered by the insertion of the aforementioned lists presently found in lines 10–73.

Taken together, the entries generalize the power of the witch. Perhaps, then, the expansion reflects an attempt to present a full catalogue of all malevolent ritual activities that the witch could perform and thus to present her not as the limited force that she had previously been but as an almost universally powerful being.<sup>41</sup>

40 Line 13 (*tēpušāni tušēpišāni girra lipšur*, “You have performed against me, have had performed against me: May Girra release”) is the model for the antiphon in lines 14–67 represented by *te*-. The model for lines 10–13 is lines 4–5. Both in lines 5 and 13 as well as in the antiphons in lines 14–67, *DN lipšur*, “May DN release,” does not seem to have a direct grammatical object, though clearly the witchcraft or the act of witchcraft is the functional/logical object of the verb. But whereas the antiphons in 14–67 do not take the preceding entry as their direct grammatical object, both *tēpušāni tušēpišāni*, “you have performed against me, have had performed against me,” of line 13 and *tēteneppušāni*, “you who perform repeatedly,” of the second half of line 4 do take the preceding entries (10–12 and the first half of line 4, respectively) as their direct objects. Is it possible, therefore, that line 13 may have served originally not as an “antiphon,” and that lines 10–13, like lines 3–5, may have been part of the original incantation?

41 It is probable that the types of malevolent actions attributed to the witch expanded during the first millennium BCE to include activities that were previously not part of her primary repertoire. If one assumes (as I do) that the omen-witchcraft connection and therefore the *zikurrudā* (a deadly magical practice, lit., “throat cutting”) connection are relatively late, the fact that this incantation has included such activities in prominent positions in the list would suggest that the incantation has intentionally expanded the purview of the witch’s activities by incorporating malevolent activities that were previously not associated with her.

### 3 Conclusion

In my estimation, the texts that we have examined here are the result of expansion, and the various lists were secondarily added.<sup>42</sup> But in conclusion, I would acknowledge that it is not inconceivable that texts of this sort may sometimes have been composed in the form in which we have them, the composer himself having put the disparate materials together.<sup>43</sup> For, surely, not all repetitive resumptions represent revision. Resumption may function as an authorial device,<sup>44</sup> and either serve an artistic purpose for a skilled craftsman or help a less than successful writer to deal with his own verbosity, expansiveness, listings, and digressions.<sup>45</sup> Thus, even were a lengthy composite incantation to have been put together by one hand, the mode of analysis exemplified in the present essay will have provided a model by which to understand how a composer created a long and complex incantation by assembling preexistent materials and combining disparate elements (some of his own creation) into the incantation that we now have.

But where there are other reasons to believe that the text has been redacted, then the repetitive resumption should be treated as part of a revision and not as original. Often such evidence exists, and I would therefore conclude by affirming my belief that the incantations studied here, as well as many others, are the result of expansion. The texts surely exemplify continuity and innovation in the Mesopotamian magical tradition.

#### Excursus: Transcription of *Maqlû* II 19–75 and IV 1–79 (Partial)<sup>46</sup>

##### *Maqlû* II 19–75

19 ÉN <sup>d</sup>gírra bēlu gitmālu <sup>d</sup>nannārāta nabi šumka  
20 tušnammar bītāt ilī kalāma

42 Cf. S. Shaked's observation on the structure of the Aramaic bowl incantation MS 2053/170: "One has the feeling, though, that a long text can evolve out of a fairly free juxtaposition of separate elements, that are used like building blocks." See S. Shaked, "Form and Purpose in Aramaic Spells: Some Jewish Themes (The poetics of magic texts)," in *Officina Magica: Essays on the Practice of Magic in Antiquity*, ed. S. Shaked (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 7.

43 Of the two incantations examined in this essay, this possibility is more likely to apply to the second rather than the first.

44 See above, n. 7.

45 I am indebted to Martin Worthington for nudging me to reiterate the point that not all repetitive resumptions represent revision.

46 Partially broken individual signs are represented as complete except where some uncertainty remains or where adjoining morphemes are completely broken.

- 21 [tu]šnammar gimir kal(i)šina mātāti  
 22 aššu attā [ana yâš]i tazazzuma  
 23 kīma <sup>d</sup>sîn u <sup>d</sup>šamaš tadinnu dīnu  
 24 dēnī dīn(i) purussāya purus  
 25 ana nūrika namri nišū kalīšina upaqqāka  
 26 ana elleti dipārika ašurka ešēka  
 27 bēlu sissiktaka ašbat  
 28 sissikti ilūtika [rabīt]i ašbat  
 29 sissikti i[līya u <sup>d</sup>ištariya] ašbat  
 30 [sissikti il ā]līya u <sup>d</sup>ištar ālīya ašbat  
 31 [ ]-x-ma rēmanni bēlu kaššāptu kīma lilissi iltasi eliya  
 32 išbat qaqqadī kišādī u muḥḥī  
 33 išbat inīya nāṭilāti  
 34 išbat šēpīya allakāti  
 35 išbat birkīya ebberēti  
 36 išbat aḥīya muttabbilāti  
 37 enenna ina maḥar ilūtika rabīti  
 38 šina ṣalmī siparri etgurūti  
 39 ša kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya  
 40 ša ēpišiya u muštēpišiya  
 41 ša sāḥiriya u sāḥirtiya  
 42 ša rāḥīya u rāḥītiya  
 43 ša bēl ikkiya u bēlet ikkiya  
 44 ša bēl ṣerriya u bēlet ṣerriya  
 45 ša bēl rīdiya u bēlet rīdiya  
 46 ša bēl dīniya u bēlet dīniya  
 47 ša bēl amātiya u bēlet amātiya  
 48 ša bēl dabābiya u bēlet dabābiya  
 49 ša bēl egerrēya u bēlet egerrēya  
 50 ša bēl lemuttiya u bēlet lemuttiya  
 51 ša ana mīti puqqudū'inni namrāša kullumū'inni  
 52 lū utukku lemnu lū alū lemnu  
 53 lū eṭemmu lemnu lū gallū lemnu  
 54 lū ilu lemnu lū rābišu lemnu  
 55 lū <sup>d</sup>lamaštu lū <sup>d</sup>labāšu lū <sup>d</sup>aḥḥāzu  
 56 lū lilū lū lilūtu lū ardat lilī  
 57 lū lī'bu šibit šadī  
 58 lū bennu riḥūt <sup>d</sup>šulpa'ea  
 59 lū antašubbū lū <sup>d</sup>[lugalurra]

- 60 *lū qāt ili lū qā[t <sup>d</sup>ištari]*  
 61 *lū qāt eṭemmi lū qāt [māmīti]*  
 62 *lū qāt amēlūti<sup>47</sup> lū lamaštu šeḫertu mārat <sup>d</sup>ani*  
 63 *lū saḡḫulḫaza mukil rēš lemutti*  
 64 *lū dikiš šīrī šimmatu rimūtu*  
 65 *lū [mimm]a lemnu ša šuma lā nabû*  
 66 *lū [mimm]a ēpiš lemutti ša amēlūti*  
 67 *ša šabtannima mūša u urra irteneddānī*  
 68 *uḫattû šīrīya kal ūmi sabbannima*  
 69 *kal mūši lā umaššaranni*  
 70 *enenna ina maḫar ilūtika rabīti*  
 71 *ina kibrīti elleti aqallīšunūti ašarrapšunūti*  
 72 *naplisannima bēlu usuḫšunūti ina zumriya*  
 73 *pušur kišpīšunu lemnūti*  
 74 *attā <sup>d</sup>girra bēlu ālik idīya*  
 75 *bulliṭannima narbīka lušāpi dalīlīka ludlul*

#### **Maqlû IV 1–79 (Partial)**

- 1 *ÉN bišlī bišlī qidê qidê*  
 2 *raggu u šēnu ē tērub atlak*  
 3 *attāmannu mār manni attāmannu mārat manni*  
 4 *ša ašbātunuma ipšēkunu upšāšēkunu tēteneppušāni yāši*  
 5 *lipšur <sup>d</sup>ea mašmaššu*  
 6 *lišbalkit kišpīkunu <sup>d</sup>asalluḫi mašmaš ilī mār <sup>d</sup>ea apkallu*  
 7 *akassīkunūši akammīkunūši anamdīkunūši*  
 8 *ana <sup>d</sup>girra qāmē qālī kāsī kāšīdu ša kaššāpāti*  
 9 *<sup>d</sup>girra qāmū litallal idāya*  
 10 *ipšu bārtu amāt lemutti rāmu zīru*  
 11 *dibalā zikurrudā kadabbedā šurḫungā*  
 12 *šabalbalā šūd pānī u šanē ṭēmu*  
 13 *tēpušāni tušēpišāni <sup>d</sup>girra lipšur*  
 14 *ana mīti taḫīrā<sup>d</sup>inni: tē(pušāni tušēpišāni <sup>d</sup>girra lipšur)*  
 ...

47 Perhaps the names in lines 60–62 are to be construed as Sumerian loanwords rather than ideograms read in Akkadian; if so, read: *šudingirrakku, šu'inannakku, šugidimmakku, šunamerimmakku, and šunamlullukku.*

- 74 *aktamīkunūši aktasīkunūši attadīnkunūši*  
 75 *ana <sup>d</sup>girra qāmî qālî kāsî kāsīdu ša kaššāpāti*  
 76 *<sup>d</sup>girra qāmû l[īpaṭ]ṭir rīksīkunu*  
 77 *līpaššīr kišpīkunu [līpašš]ir sirqīkunu*  
 78 *ina qibīt <sup>d</sup>marduk mār <sup>d</sup>ea apkalli*  
 79 *u <sup>d</sup>girra āriru mār <sup>d</sup>ani qardu TU<sub>6</sub> ÉN*

...

## *Maqlû* III 1–30: Internal Analysis and Manuscript Evidence for the Revision of an Incantation

In a separate study,\* I devoted a detailed analysis to the *Maqlû*<sup>1</sup> incantations II 19–75 and IV 1–79 in order to demonstrate that these incantations had undergone expansion.<sup>2</sup> I noted that major segments of the incantations were interpolated and that these interpolations were marked off by repetitive resumptions. The analysis of the aforementioned incantations was based solely upon the critical analysis of the texts and drew only upon internal evidence, for there are no known extant witnesses to the forms of these incantations without the interpolations and repetitive resumptions.

But, as I mentioned in that earlier study, the view that incantations in *Maqlû* may sometimes have been revised by means of interpolation and expansion is not simply the result of critical analysis; it is evident in the manuscript tradition as well. For when we examine the manuscripts of incantations that contain lengthy enumerations or descriptions, we occasionally find that some of the manuscripts do not contain the aforementioned sections or contain shorter versions thereof. In that study, I mentioned in passing several incantations (*Maqlû* III 1–30, V 19–47, and VII 114–140) for which we have this kind of evidence. Here, then, I should like to provide a more detailed examination of the first of these incantations. I shall argue that *Maqlû* III 1–30 contains a significant expansion that is set off by a repetitive resumption and that the

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\* It is a great pleasure to dedicate this short study of an incantation to Professor Simo Parpola. Simo has contributed more than anyone else to the reconstruction of the lives and activities of Babylonian and Assyrian scholars—including the many magicians among them—by his careful and brilliant philological analyses and has also led the way in the more speculative but no less important study of intellectual history and intercultural connections.

- 1 In previous studies, I followed the line divisions and line numbers in Meier, *Maqlû*, and Meier, “Studien.” Here I follow the line count of my own edition: T. Abusch, *The Magical Ceremony “Maqlû”: A Critical Edition*, AMD 10 (Leiden: Brill, 2016); this line count is also used in T. Abusch and D. Schwemer, “Das Abwehrzauber-Ritual *Maqlû* (‘Verbrennung’),” in *Omina, Orakel, Rituale und Beschwörungen*, ed. B. Janowski and G. Wilhelm, TUAT NF 4 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2008), 128–186.
- 2 See T. Abusch, “The Revision of Babylonian Anti-witchcraft Incantations: The Critical Analysis of Incantations in the Ceremonial Series *Maqlû*,” in *Continuity and Innovation in the Magical Tradition*, ed. G. Bohak et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 11–41 [[51–80]].

absence of the expansion and the repetitive resumption in one of the manuscripts represents an early form of the text and confirms the analysis.

The text of *Maqlû* III 1–30 reads:

- 1 ÉN *kaššāptu muttalliktu ša sūqāti*  
 2 *mūterribtu ša bītāti*  
 3 *dayyālītu ša birêti*  
 4 *ḥayyāṭītu ša rebāti*  
 5 *ana pāniša u arkiša issanaḥḥur*  
 6 *izzaz ina sūqimma usaḥḥar šēpī<sup>3</sup>*  
 7 *ina rebīti ip-ta-ra-as<sup>4</sup> alaktu*  
 8 *ša eṭli damqi dūssu ikim*  
 9 *ša ardati damiqti inibša itbal*  
 10 *ina nekelmêša kuzubša ilqe*  
 11 *eṭla ippalisma<sup>4</sup> lamassašu ikim*  
 12 *ardata ippalisma inibša itbal*  
 13 *īmurannima kaššāptu illika arkiya*  
 14 *ina imtiša ip-ta-ra-as alaktu*  
 15 *ina ruḥêša išdihī iprus*  
 16 *ušassi ilī u<sup>4</sup> ištari ina zumriya*  
 17 *ša kaššāpti<sup>1</sup> ya<sup>1</sup> ina kullati agdariš ṭiṭṭaša*  
 18 *ša ēpištīya abtani šalamša*  
 19 *aškun ina libbiki lipā ḥābilki*  
 20 *usanniš ina kalātiki ēra qāmāki*  
 21 *ēra qāmāki imatki<sup>5</sup> liprus*  
 22 *eli āli attapaḥ išātu*  
 23 *ina šupāl āli attadi tumurtu<sup>6</sup>*  
 24 *ana bīt terrubī attadi išātu*  
 25 *tēpušimma<sup>4</sup> girra līkulki*  
 26 *tušēpišimma<sup>4</sup> girra likšudki*  
 27 *takpudimma<sup>4</sup> girra lidūkki*  
 28 *tušakpidimma<sup>4</sup> girra liqmīki*  
 29 *ḥarrān lā tāri lišašbitki<sup>4</sup> girra ḥābilki*  
 30 *<sup>4</sup>girra ezzu zumurki liḥmuṭ TU<sub>6</sub> ÉN*

3 For lines 5–6, note the variant: *ša ... izzazzū... isaḥḥur šēpišu*, a composite reading drawn from two Babylonian manuscripts (BM 64514 and *SpBTU* 3, 74a).

4 I have not normalized *ip-ta-ra-as* in lines 7 and 14 because I am not certain of the grammatical form; see below, n. 8. See there, as well, for a discussion of the enclitic *-ma* in line 6.

5 Var. *amātki*.

6 Written in the manuscripts as: *tu-m[u]r-tu<sub>4</sub> / (tu)-ur-t[i] / tu-ú-ru*.

- 1 Incantation. The sorceress, she who roams the streets,  
 2 Who continually intrudes into houses,  
 3 Who prowls in alleys,  
 4 Who spies about the broad ways—  
 5 She keeps looking (lit., “turning”) around in front and in back,  
 6 Standing, in the street she turns foot (progress) around,  
 7 (And) in the square she cuts off (commercial) traffic.  
 8 She robbed the fine young man of his virility,  
 9 She carried off the attractiveness of the fine young woman,  
 10 With her malignant stare she took away her charms.  
 11 She looked at the young man and (thereby) robbed his vitality,  
 12 She looked at the young woman and (thereby) carried off her  
     attractiveness.  
 13 The witch saw me and came after me,  
 14 With her venom, she cuts off (commercial) traffic,  
 15 With her spittle, she cut off my trading,  
 16 She drove away my god and goddess from my person.  
 17 From the clay pit I have pinched off clay for my witch,  
 18 I have formed the figurine of my sorceress.  
 19 “I set in your abdomen tallow, which destroys you,  
 20 I implant in your kidneys ashwood, which burns you.  
 21 May the ashwood, which burns you, cut off your venom.  
 22 In the upper part of the city, I have set a fire,  
 23 In the lower part of the city, I have cast ashes.  
 24 To the house that you enter, I have cast a fire.  
 25 You performed sorcery against me, so may Girra consume you,  
 26 You had sorcery performed against me, so may Girra overcome you,  
 27 You plotted against me, so may Girra kill you,  
 28 You had others plot against me, so may Girra burn you.  
 29 May Girra, your destroyer, cause you to take the road of no return,  
 30 May fierce Girra burn your body.” Incantation formula.

Our concern here is primarily with the description of the witch in the first part of the incantation (lines 1–16), but let us first review the whole passage. The incantation opens with a description of the witch as one who invades the various public and private spaces of the town (lines 1–4). It then describes how she turns back and cuts off public and commercial activity (lines 5–7); how when she sees young men and women in public, she deprives them of their sexual powers and charm (lines 8–13); and how she cuts off commercial activity with her spittle (lines 14–15). She is then said to have alienated the victim’s personal

gods (line 16). In lines 17–30, the speaker describes the destructive burning ritual that he undertakes against the witch (lines 17–24) and invokes the fire god to destroy her because of her evil deeds (lines 25–30).

A close examination of the opening section of the incantation containing the description of the witch's activities reveals certain difficulties. The text first describes the witch as impeding public and commercial activity (lines 5–7); it then shifts over to a description of her attack upon the sexuality of the young people of the town by means of her glance (lines 8–13); it then shifts back to the earlier topic and describes how she impedes commercial activity by means of her spittle (lines 14–16). The descriptions of the witch's attacks on the commercial activity of the town and on the sexual energies of its youngsters are thematically incongruous. Moreover, the two themes are neither evenly balanced nor fully integrated. Rather, the sexual/evil-eye theme intrudes into the commercial/spittle theme: note that lines 14–15 resume the earlier description of lines 5–7, and thus the sexual/evil-eye section is surrounded by the commercial/spittle sections.

It is likely that one or the other section is secondary. That such is in fact the case and that the attack on commercial life is the more original theme is indicated by the existence of a *Wiederaufnahme*—a repetitive resumption—that links the textual segments that describe the attack on commercial life. For we note that lines 7 and 14 are similar and have elements in common:

*ina rebīti ip-ta-ra-as alaktu* (7)  
*ina imtiša ip-ta-ra-as alaktu* (14)

(And) in the square she cuts off (commercial) traffic (7)  
 With her venom, she cuts off (commercial) traffic (14)

Lines 7 and 14 appear, respectively, at the end of the initial description of the attack on commercial life and at the beginning of its continuation. By repeating elements/words found in line 7, line 14 serves to resume the commercial theme found in the earlier part of the text. This resumption was necessary because the description of the witch's attack on commercial activity was sundered by the insertion into it of the description in lines 8–13 of the witch's attack on sexual life. We may thus conclude that line 14 serves as a *Wiederaufnahme* and that lines 8–13 are an interpolation.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Possible additional support for the conclusion that the section describing the witch's attacks on commercial life was part of the original text may be forthcoming from the fact that the areas of activity in the lines dealing with commerce (*sūqi* and *rebīti*, lines 6–7) are identical

There is much in favor of this analysis. Further support for the interpretation of line 14 as a resumption of line 7 is perhaps provided by the occurrence of the verb *parāsu* in lines 7, 14, and 15. By itself, this recurrence is odd, but even stranger is the distribution of forms: whereas line 15 has *iprus*, lines 7 and 14 have the form *ip-ta-ra-as*. In our estimation, the desire to repeat line 7 in line 14 explains (1) the use in line 14 of the same verb as found in line 15, for otherwise two different synonymous verbs would have been used to create the present parallelism of lines 14–15; as well as (2) the use of the form *ip-ta-ra-as* of line 7 in line 14 rather than a punctual form as in line 15.<sup>8</sup> Line 14

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with and occur in the same order as the areas of activity mentioned in the description of the witch in the opening lines of the text (*sūqāti* and *rebāti*, lines 1 and 4).

- 8 We are left with a difficulty that we have not been able to resolve thus far: the grammatical form of *ip-ta-ra-as*. If line 7 parallels line 6, then *ip-ta-ra-as* in line 7 should be a present/durative, and thus would have to be a Gt present/durative: *iptarras*; if line 14 parallels line 15, then *ip-ta-ra-as* in line 14 should be a preterite, and thus would have to be a Gt preterite: *iptaras*; but note that the dictionaries do not recognize a Gt of *parāsu* except in the stative. (Is a G perfect in either line possible?) Of course, our contention that *ip-ta-ra-as* in line 14 is modeled on line 7 and not on line 15 allows us to dismiss the problem of the form of the verb in line 14, for it need not be identical with the preterite form of line 15, but we are still left uncertain how to analyze the form in line 7. And especially if we are right that the original text did not have lines 8–14, but followed the order 6–7 + 15, we are again left with the problem of how to interpret *ip-ta-ra-as* in relation to both a durative in line 6 and a preterite in line 15.

In a letter, Mikko Luukko has raised the possibility that the enclitic *-ma*, attached to *sūqimma*, might be “artificial,” and be due to the composer’s desire for assonance or rhyme (*sūqimma* being in the middle of the line, more or less at the same place as other words with *-ma* in lines 11–13, 25–28), rather than to the desire to place emphasis on the word *sūqu*. If this is correct, then *-ma* could be taken as if it were attached to one of the verbs in line 6. If *-ma* is attached to *izzaz*, then perhaps line 6 forms the background or presupposition of the situation described in these lines (the verbs in line 6 are duratives) and line 7 the foreground or focus. If so, *ip-ta-ra-as* in line 7 could well be a G perfect (*iptaras*); we would then translate: “Standing and turning around foot (progress) in the street, she cuts off (commercial) traffic in the square.” On the other hand, if *-ma* is attached to *usaḥḥar*, then the second half of line 6 and line 7 form a temporal sequence, with the action of line 7 being the consequence of the action in line 6. We would then translate: “Standing, she turns foot (progress) around in the street, and thus she cuts off (commercial) traffic in the square.” This, of course, leaves unresolved the problem of *ip-ta-ra-as*.

The suggestion to treat the enclitic *-ma* as determined by poetic sound patterning is very attractive. However, because it remains uncertain, I would not yet wish to base my analysis upon this supposition. In any case,

(*izzaz*) *ina sūqimma usaḥḥar šēpī*  
*ina rebāti ip-ta-ra-as alaktu* (lines 6–7)

are asyndetically related clauses that are synonymously parallel. In poetry, such a pair may contain two virtually identical statements that individually relate either to different parts of a situation or to the whole and a part. Synonymous parallelism serves to reiterate a statement

was meant to link the disconnected lines 7 + 15. Line 14, *ina imtiša ip-ta-ra-as alaktu*, “With her venom, she cuts off (commercial) traffic,” was thus formed on the basis of those two lines: *ina imtiša* was modeled on *ina ruḥēša*, “With her spittle,” of line 15, (and *imtu* was derived perhaps from *imatki liprus* of line 21)<sup>9</sup> and *ip-ta-ra-as alaktu* was copied from *ip-ta-ra-as alaktu* of line 7.<sup>10</sup>

The encirclement of the sexual/evil-eye theme (lines 8–13) by the commercial/spittle one and the existence of the resumptive repetition of line 7 in line 14 are surely strong indicators that lines 8–14 were secondarily inserted, with line 14 serving to reconnect parts of the original description (lines 5–7, 15–16) that had been separated by the insertion of lines 8–13. In light of this conclusion, we take note of and assess the omission of lines 8–14 in *SpBTU* 3, no. 74a, an Uruk manuscript of Tablet III. By itself, this omission might have been explained

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or to present different aspects of a situation; it is holistic in nature, and thus the distinction between whole and part or between simultaneity and sequentiality may be blurred. In poetry, unlike prose, equivalence may find expression in the combination in linear sequence of two statements that are parallel in grammatical structure (i.e., paradigmatically equivalent) and which in prose would normally be taken as temporally or causally sequential; in poetry, however, statements such as those in the couplet above need not be sequential but can be equivalent in terms of meaning or even sound. (On the different ways in which parallelism forms poetry, cf., e.g., R. Jakobson, “Linguistics and Poetics,” in R. Jakobson, *Language in Literature*, ed. K. Pomorska and S. Rudy [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987], 62–94).

I should also note that *-ma* in III 6 may serve a distinct grammatical function. It is possible that *-ma* marks the nominal phrase *ina sūqi* as the adverbial complement to the preceding verb *izzaz*. But, nonetheless, *ina sūqi* at the same time also parallels *ina rebīti* in form and meaning. *ina sūqi* would thus both adhere to the previous verb *izzaz* and be gapped with the subsequent verb *usahḥar*. It would thus be understood elliptically with *usahḥar*; thereby filling out the parallel to the clause that follows *usahḥar*. To put it differently, *ina sūqi* may function here both on a clause level and across clauses; it would therefore operate on two levels, grammatical and semantic. If this is correct, perhaps my translation of III 6–7 should be modified to reflect the adverbial function as well:

Standing in the street, she turns foot (progress) around,

She cuts off (commercial) traffic in the square.

My thanks to Stephen Geller for reviewing this note.

- 9 The innards of the witch are the source of the *imtu* // *ruḥû*, hence the destruction of her innards in lines 19–21 (*aškun ina libbiki lipâ ḥābilki / usanniš ina kalâtiki ēra qāmâki / ēra qāmâki imatki liprus*). There seems to be a correlation between the innards of the witch as a source of “witchcraft” and the digestive/respiratory system of the victim as the physical site of the witchcraft attack and symptoms. For the association of the symptoms of a witchcraft diagnosis with the stomach, lungs, and mouth, but especially the digestive tract, see T. Abusch, “Witchcraft, Impotence, and Indigestion,” in *Disease and Medicine in Ancient Mesopotamia*, ed. I. L. Finkel and M. J. Geller, CM 36 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 146–159 [[AMD 5, 79–88]].
- 10 Note that the description of the witch’s behavior in lines 14–15 is similar to that of a rabid dog; could the latter be the source of the image?

as a haplography;<sup>11</sup> but everything that we have seen thus far indicates that these lines are secondary and suggests that, here at least, this late manuscript preserves an older version of the text and thus provides further support for our contention.

The original description would have read:

- 1 ÉN *kaššāptu muttalliktu ša sūqāti*  
 2 *mūterribtu ša bītāti*  
 3 *dayyālītu ša birēti*  
 4 *ḥayyāṭītu ša rebāti*  
 5 *ana pāniša u arkiša issanaḥḥur*  
 6 *izzaz ina sūqimma usaḥḥar šēpī*  
 7 *ina rebīti ip-ta-ra-as alaktu*  
 15 *ina ruḥêša išdihī iprus*  
 16 *ušassi ilī u ʿištarī ina zumriya*

- 1 Incantation. The sorceress, she who roams the streets,  
 2 Who continually intrudes into houses,  
 3 Who prowls in alleys,  
 4 Who spies about the broad ways—  
 5 She keeps looking (lit., “turning”) around in front and in back,  
 6 Standing, in the street she turns foot (progress) around,  
 7 (And) in the square she cuts off (commercial) traffic.  
 15 With her spittle, she cut off my trading,  
 16 She drove away my god and goddess from my person.

An assault on economic life was overlaid by an assault on sexuality. And it is to be noted that the composer emphasizes that the two assaults are effected by different means: the assault on sexuality by means of the evil eye, the assault on economic life by means of spittle.<sup>12</sup> Thus we witness how a perception of

11 So the original editor of the text, E. von Weiher, in *Spätbabylonische Texte aus Uruk III, Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft in Uruk-Warka, Endberichte*, 12 (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1988), 84 ad line 7.

12 It is significant that in both the commercial and sexual sections the witch’s destructive impact could have been conveyed simply by the basic descriptions in lines 6–7 and 8–9; it seems evident therefore that the incantation wished also to explain clearly how the witch’s attack was carried out and, accordingly, expanded the basic descriptions by means of parallel formulations and added items. More specifically, in the sexual arena, line 10 essentially repeats line 9, but adds the theme of the malignant stare, thus laying the basis for lines 11–12, and these latter lines then repeat lines 8–9 but additionally serve to tell us that the sexual assault of lines 11–12 as well as of the earlier lines was achieved by means

the witch as one who harms public life by means of spittle is supplemented by a perception of her as an envious malicious being who deprives the young of their sexual powers by means of the evil eye.<sup>13</sup> The witch was able to threaten both spheres of life.

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of the witch's glance = the evil eye; in the commercial arena, lines 14–15 basically repeat line 7 (and perhaps line 6) but additionally serve to tell us that the action of the earlier line(s) was achieved by means of the witch's spittle.

But while the repetition in line 14 of elements of line 7 serves to develop the thought of line 7, line 14 functions no less as a *Wiederaufnahme*. The fact that conceptually lines 8–12 have little to do with lines 5–7 and 14–16 renders the designation of line 14 as a *Wiederaufnahme* (rather than only a device of explication) compelling.

- 13 For another occurrence in *Maqlû* of the theme of the witch's assault of the young man and woman by means of her eye, see VII 80–87.

## Mother and Child or Sexual Mates?

It is a pleasure to honor Joan Goodnick Westenholz with this modest contribution. Joan is a distinguished philologist and cultural historian. Though most of her specialized work is centered on Mesopotamia—especially on the literature and lives of elite women in that culture—her scholarship has a breadth that few attain, extending from Mesopotamia across the Near East to Egypt and the Mediterranean. Joan is also a friend; so I wish to propose a solution to a small problem that was once addressed by Joan (and Aage Westenholz) in a study of an Old Akkadian incantation. And if I have arrived at a different solution, this study is no less a mark of my respect and admiration for Joan’s philological and literary work, and it is perhaps an appropriate gift to a friend of over forty years with whom I share various interests as well as occasional disagreements.

The problem I have in mind is the meaning of *Maqlû* VII 24.<sup>1</sup> In synoptic form, line 24 reads:

K 2950+	U <sub>8</sub>	<i>im-mer-ša</i>	MAS.DÀ	<i>ar-ma-ša</i>	MÍ.ANŠE	<i>mu-ur-ša</i>
K 8968 (+)	[-]	「UDU <sup>1</sup> .NÍTA-ša	MAS.DÀ	<i>ar-ma-ša</i>	MÍ.ANŠE	<i>m[u-</i> ]
K 5350+	[ <i>lâh</i> ]-ri	UDU.NÍTA-ša	MAS.DÀ	<i>ár-m[a-</i>		]
VAT 10059	[ ]	UDU.NÍTA	MAS.DÀ	AMAR.MAS.DÀ	MÍ.ANŠE	<i>mu-ur-šu</i>
N 1423+	[					「 <i>a<sup>1</sup>-ta-nu mu-ur-ša</i>
Ni 2927+	[		M]AS.DÀ	<i>ar-ma-šu</i>	[.A]NŠE	「 <i>mu<sup>1</sup>-ur-šu</i>

This line is part of the incantation VII 22–28.

- 22 ÉN *araḥḥēka ramānī araḥḥēka pagri<sup>2</sup>*  
 23 *kīma* <sup>d</sup>Šakkan *irḥû bûlšu*  
 24 *lahru/a immerša šabītu/a armâša<sup>a</sup> atānu/a mūrša*  
 25 *epinnu eršeti irḥû eršeti imḥuru zēraša*  
 26 *addi šipta ana ramāniya*

1 The line count follows my edition of the text: T. Abusch, *The Magical Ceremony “Maqlû”: A Critical Edition*, AMD 10 (Leiden: Brill, 2016). Line 24 = line 25 in Meier, *Maqlû*, and Meier, “Studien.”

2 Line 24: <sup>a</sup> Var.: *ḥuzāla*. Line 28: <sup>a</sup> Var.: *lissuḥ* (unless *suḥ* here has the cvcv value *suḥu*) | <sup>b-b</sup> absent | <sup>c</sup> + ÉN, *te* ÉN.

27 *lirḥe ramānīma lišēši lumnu*  
 28 *u kišpī ša zumriya lissuḥū<sup>a</sup> b-ilū rabātu<sup>b</sup>|<sup>c</sup>*

22 Incantation. I impregnate you, my self, I impregnate you, my body.  
 23 As Šakkan impregnated his herd,  
 24 .....,  
 25 (As) the plow impregnated the earth, the earth received its seed,  
 26 So I cast the spell on my self.  
 27 May it impregnate myself and expel the evil,  
 28 And may the great gods extirpate the witchcraft of my body.

Scholars have been divided over the meaning of line 24, most of all as regards which member of each pair of animals is the subject of the action. One opinion holds that the male was the actor; accordingly, the male would have to have been an adult animal, not a young one, and would have impregnated the female, as Šakkan impregnated his herd: “her ram the ewe, her buck the gazelle, her donkey the jenny.” For example:

- *AHw* I, p. 73 s.v. *arwium* (“Gazellenbock”):  
 “wie befruchtet hat *šabīta ar-ma-šá* (Nom.)”
- *CAD* A/2, s.v. *armu* A, p. 293b:  
 “*kīma Sumuqan irḥū būlšu laḥra immerša šabīta ar-ma-ša* (var. AMAR-ša) *atāna mūrša* just as Šumuqan impregnated his cattle, (so did) the (lit. her) ram (impregnate) the ewe, the buck the gazelle, (and) the ass the jenny.”
- *CAD* M/2, s.v. *mūru*, p. 229:  
 “*kīma DN irḥū būlšu laḥru immerša SAL.ANŠE mu-ur-ša* just as Šakkan has impregnated his cattle, its ram, the ewe, its stallion, the she-donkey.” (*CAD* omits *šabīta armāša*.)
- Joan and Aage Westenholz:  
 As Šakan (god of the wild animals) made his herds pregnant,  
 The goat (was made pregnant by) her buck,<sup>3</sup>  
 The ewe (by) her ram,  
 The jenny (by) her donkey.<sup>4</sup>

3 Note that the authors combined *Maqlû* VII 22–24 and *AMT* 67/3, 3–5 (the latter from *MSL* 8/1, p. 31) and read: *enza kazzaša laḥra immerša atāna mūrša*.

4 J. Westenholz and A. Westenholz, “Help for Rejected Suitors: The Old Akkadian Love Incantation *MAD* V 8,” *Or* NS 46 (1977): 214–215.

- Jerrold S. Cooper:  
Like Šakkan inseminates his flock,  
The ewe its ram, the gazelle its buck, the she-ass its foal.<sup>5</sup>

The objections to this translation are as follows: (1) The order is unexpected; we expect the actor to come first, especially if we accept the parallelism of this line with the previous one (*kīma* <sup>d</sup>Šakkan *irḫû būlšu*). (2) If the male is the actor, the pronominal suffix should have been attached to the female rather than to the male. (3) Lexically, the males in two of the three pairs seem to represent a young male and not a sexual mate: young fits the meaning of *mūru*, and the variant AMAR.MAŠ.DÀ: *ḫuzālu* indicates that *armû* here represents a young gazelle.

Perhaps having some of these considerations in mind, others have concluded that the mother was the subject but have understood *reḫû* of the previous line as not denoting sexual impregnation:

- Knut L. Tallqvist:  
wie der Flurengott sein vieh lieb hat,  
wie die schaafmutter ihr lämmchen, die gazelle ihr kindchen, die  
eselin ihr füllen.<sup>6</sup>
- Antoine Cavigneaux:  
As Šamkan impregnates his herd,  
the ewe her lamb, the gazelle her young, the jenny her donkey foal.<sup>7</sup>

Cavigneaux does not take the verb *reḫû* here to mean sexual impregnation; rather, he takes “the female animals as subjects of the verb *reḫûm*” (p. 266) and understands the verb as referring to the mother licking her child, and thereby caring for it and protecting it.<sup>8</sup> The objection to this understanding of our passage is that it might not do justice to the meaning of the verb in line 23 and the

5 J. S. Cooper, “Magic and M(is)use: Poetic Promiscuity in Mesopotamian Ritual,” in *Mesopotamian Poetic Language: Sumerian and Akkadian*, ed. M. E. Vogelzang and H. L. J. Vanstiphout, CM 6 (Groningen: Styx, 1996), 50.

6 K. L. Tallqvist, *Die assyrische Beschwörungsserie “Maqlû,”* vol. 1, ASSF 20/6 (Leipzig: E. Pfeiffer, 1895), 93.

7 A. Cavigneaux, “A Scholar’s Library in Meturan? With an edition of the tablet H 72 (Textes de Tell Haddad VII),” in *Mesopotamian Magic: Textual, Historical, and Interpretative Perspectives*, ed. T. Abusch and K. van der Toorn, AMD 1 (Groningen: Styx, 1999), 266.

8 For Cavigneaux’s discussion of *reḫû*, see “Scholar’s Library,” especially 260, 269–270. Cavigneaux is thus in fundamental agreement with Tallqvist. It would appear that the first named editor of the volume in which Cavigneaux’s essay appeared probably failed to point out Tallqvist’s translation to Cavigneaux. *Mea culpa*.

context of impregnation in the surrounding lines, for *reḥû* here certainly seems to refer to sexual impregnation.

Obviously, J. Goodnick Westenholz, A. Westenholz, and J. Cooper (and others) would disagree with this translation. But, interestingly enough, they do think that this translation comes close to representing the original meaning of the text, for J. Goodnick Westenholz and A. Westenholz, followed by Cooper, are not oblivious to the fact that according to their translation the *Maqlû* text has an awkward word order (object–subject), and thus—influenced certainly by the Old Akkadian text in the service of which our *Maqlû* passage was mentioned (*ʿenzum kalūmiša laḥrum puḥādsa atānum mūraś*)—they suggest that the original text had the order and meaning mother–child and probably had *reʾû* rather than *reḥû*, but that the shift of *reʾû* to *reḥû* occasioned the replacement of the young by the male mate.<sup>9</sup> To this Cooper adds the observation that the replacement was incomplete, for the last pair retained the relationship mother–young.<sup>10</sup>

It seems to me that there is a more obvious solution to the problem under study, a solution that both preserves the normal meaning of *reḥû* (to impregnate sexually) and accords with the order of female–male, the attachment of the suffix to the male, and the occurrence of male young.

Line 24 takes its meaning from the surrounding lines, which describe Šakkan fertilizing/impregnating his Herd, and Plow fertilizing Earth and Earth receiving Seed. On the face of it, line 24 seems to complete the thought of the line that precedes it (line 23), a thought that is paralleled by the following line (line 25). Actually, line 25 provides the solution to our problem:

*epinnu erṣeti irḥû erṣeti imḥuru zēraša*

The plow impregnated the earth, the earth received its seed.

Line 25 expands and explicates lines 23 and 24; more specifically, line 25a parallels line 23, and line 25b parallels line 24. As regards 25b // 24: the earth of 25b parallels the female animals of 24; the seed of 25b parallels the male animals of 24. The latter half of line 25 indicates that line 24 treats the relationship of a mother animal to her young rather than the relationship of a male to his mate: just as the earth receives seed, so the female receives her young. This agrees with the fact that the nomenclature for the males is best understood as designating young offspring, with the female–male order, and with the definition of the male by its suffix as belonging to the female.

9 Westenholz and Westenholz, “Help for Rejected Suitors,” 215 n. 31.

10 Cooper, “Magic and M(is)use,” 51.

Still, there remains some uncertainty about how to interpret line 24, for the female animals are parallel not only to *eršetu* (earth) of line 25 but also to *būlu* (herd) of line 23. If line 24 is simply an expansion of line 23, then the female animals are representatives of the herd *būlu*, the verb *reḥû* carrying over also to line 24. If so, the mothers are the understood object of the preceding verb, i.e., the female animals stand in apposition to *būlu*, so that both the female and male animals are in the accusative case (i.e., a double accusative): as Šakkan impregnates his herd, each female mother with her young.<sup>11</sup>

Alternatively, if line 24 is to be read in the same manner as line 25b, then the mothers, rather than being the object of impregnation, are the recipients of the young: just as the earth receives the seed, so the mothers receive their young. The female animals are still in apposition to *būlu*, and just as *eršetu* occurs twice, first as an object and immediately following as a subject, so the female animals—collective *būlu*—are impregnated and then individual mothers receive the young. If so, line 24 contains an ellipsis: *maḥāru* is to be understood as the omitted verb (X [receives] her Y), and the female animals are to be construed in the nominative case and the young in the accusative case.

But we need not decide this last point. For whatever the case, we have seen that line 25 explicates the meaning of lines 23–24 and has allowed us to resolve our problem. Line 25 indicates that line 24 treats not sexual mates but rather mothers and children, but that all the same it does deal with impregnation rather than just caring. Accordingly, line 24 should be translated: “the ewe her lamb, the gazelle her young, the jenny her donkey foal.”

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11 While going over my notes for this article I noticed G. Meier’s translation and realized that probably he had already arrived at this conclusion: “wie Sumuqān befruchtet sein Vieh, das Schaf mit seinem Lamm, die Gazelle mit ihrem Jungen, die Eselin mit ihrem Füllen” (Meier, *Maqlû*, 47).

## Blessing and Praise in Ancient Mesopotamian Incantations

This paper examines some aspects of an incantation type in ancient Mesopotamia.\* It grows out of an attempt to understand blessings.<sup>1</sup> I decided to take up the topic at a basic level. Often when I begin the study of a new theme in Mesopotamian religion or literature, I first look at some of the material and literature in such other fields with which I am conversant and in which there might be a longer tradition of scholarship. And so I first turned to the Hebrew blessing, or *berakha*. It is well known that the *berakha* forms the foundation and building block of the Jewish liturgy, and thus I began to examine the *berakha* in both biblical and rabbinic literature. It became apparent very quickly that the *berakha* in the Bible as well as in later Jewish liturgy often functions as a form of praise and/or thanksgiving.<sup>2</sup>

This, then, directed my attention to the question of praise. After having read numerous unenlightening studies on the topic or theme of praise in the Bible,<sup>3</sup> I recalled that my teacher, Thorkild Jacobsen, had made a general observation that coincided with the direction my thoughts were taking. In the introduction to his translation of major works of Sumerian literature, he noted:

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\* Claus Wilcke and I have been friends for some twenty-five years, a friendship that I greatly value. Yet, even before we ever met, I admired his profound and original scholarship, and I have learned much from his work ever since I was a student in the 1960s. It is thus a great pleasure to dedicate this paper to Professor Claus Wilcke and to honor thereby his person and achievements.

1 An earlier and longer version of this paper was first delivered at a conference on “Blessings and Curses” sponsored by the American Academy in Rome in March 2001. The section of that paper that dealt with Akkadian prayers was published as T. Abusch, “The Promise to Praise the God in *Šuilla* Prayers,” in *Biblical and Oriental Essays in Memory of William L. Moran*, ed. A. Gianto, BiOr 48 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2005), 1–10.

2 See, e.g., Gen 24:27, Exod 18:10–11, and 1 Kgs 8:56.

3 One might have thought that with all the work that has been done on the topic in biblical studies, the meaning of the theme or concept of praise would have already been properly and fully thought through. And yet, with notable exceptions, I encountered pious clichés rather than humanistic scholarship, and instead of insight, devotional theology rooted in the belief that even ancient praise is to be understood as a part of an actual dialogue between modern man and god. But what of the psychological and social dimensions of the different cultural forms of praise in an ancient culture?

The strictly literary Sumerian works can be defined generally as works of praise. The praise can be for something extant and enjoyed, a temple, a deity, or a human king. It can take narrative form as myth or epic, or descriptive form as hymn.... These genres all seem to derive ultimately from incantations. The praise hymns appear to have their roots in spells meant to call up in, or lay into, the thing or person praised the innate and needed powers for proper effective functioning.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, by praising, one is

enhancing or calling into being in the object of the praise, the virtues ascribed to it. This magical dimension of praise can still be seen to be very much alive in the short hymns of praise or blessings spoken by the incantation priest to the various materials he uses in his magical ritual, the so-called *Kultmittelgebete*, blessings intended to call up in these materials the powers and virtues attributed to them in the blessing.<sup>5</sup>

This then brought me back to an examination of some Mesopotamian—especially Akkadian—incantations and prayers. In this study, I will look at some addresses to elements and materials that are used in the cult, the so-called *Kultmittelbeschwörung* or *Kultmittelgebet*; and use the opportunity to present in some detail my understanding of the ušburruda incantations. In another study, I will turn my attention to praises addressed to anthropomorphic gods in the *šulla* prayers.<sup>6</sup>

## 1 *Kultmittelbeschwörung*

In a mythological world, things may acquire their functions by a grant or decree. For example, in the early Sumerian myth Lugal-e, the young warrior-prince, Ninurta, goes out to battle against the monster Azag who has threatened the domain of the gods. After defeating Azag, Ninurta passes judgment on his defeated captives, the various stones of the mountains which had served as Azag's warriors. Ninurta's judgments, both positive and negative, render

4 T. Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once ...: Sumerian Poetry in Translation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), xiii.

5 T. Jacobsen, "Mesopotamia: Literature," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 1st ed., vol. 16 (Jerusalem: Keter, 1974), 1505m.

6 See Abusch, "Promise to Praise."

explicit the characteristics of the stones and maintain and make permanent their already existing qualities. In effect, the god determines the place of each stone within the newly organized world.

We may now examine incantations that are addressed to objects used in rituals in order to enhance and elicit their qualities. These *Kultmittelbeschwörungen*<sup>7</sup> describe the special qualities of the objects addressed; having described their function on the cosmic, divine, and natural planes, they attempt to direct and concretize this function in the human world, generally, and in this ritual moment, specifically. These addresses are not unlike incantations used in folk medicine, of which it has been said that:

Until the requisite incantation has been pronounced, the plant or animal part or any other ingredient of a mixture is dormant, awaiting the call to action by the words which will define its purpose and direct its action.<sup>8</sup>

The incantations serve as a means to activate and realize the power of the material in a specific situation.

Some well-known examples from the magical ceremony *Šurpu* make this point clear. For example, IX 42–48:

Incantation. Tall cedar, growing in the high mountain!  
Whose fate was determined in the mountain, the pure place,

7 For discussions and examples of *Kultmittelbeschwörungen*, see especially A. Falkenstein, *Die Haupttypen der sumerischen Beschwörung literarisch untersucht*, LSS NF 1 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1931), 76–82, 99–100; W. G. Kunstmann, *Die babylonische Gebetsbeschwörung*, LSS NF 2 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1932), 80–82, 114; T. Jacobsen, “Mesopotamia,” in H. Frankfort et al., *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man: An Essay on Speculative Thought in the Ancient Near East* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), 130–135; W. R. Mayer, *Untersuchungen zur Formensprache der babylonischen “Gebetsbeschwörungen,”* StPohl, series maior 5 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1976), 432–435; M. Krebernik, *Die Beschwörungen aus Fara und Ebla* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1984), 94–104, 226–232; P. Michalowski, “The Torch and the Censer,” in *The Tablet and the Scroll: Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William W. Hallo*, ed. M. Cohen et al. (Bethesda, MD: CDL, 1993), 152–161; G. Cunningham, “*Deliver Me From Evil*: Mesopotamian Incantations, 2500–1500 BC,” StPohl, series maior 17 (Rome: Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1997), 27–30, 56, 80–83, 116–117, 167–168. Additional incantations will now be found in C. Walker and M. Dick, *The Induction of the Cult Image in Ancient Mesopotamia: The Mesopotamian “Mis P” Ritual*, SAALT 1 (Helsinki: University of Helsinki Press, 2001). For a recent discussion of “cultic objects,” see G. J. Selz, “The Holy Drum, the Spear, and the Harp,” in *Sumerian Gods and Their Representations*, ed. I. L. Finkel and M. J. Geller, CM 7 (Groningen: Styx, 1997), 167–213.

8 U. Maclean, *Magical Medicine: A Nigerian Case Study* (1971; repr., Harmondsworth: Allen Lane, 1974), 83.

who from the Ḫašur-mountain reaches toward heaven,  
 whose fragrance drifts over the fields,  
 who day and night, on a resplendent day, a favorable day, fit for sprinkling  
     water, has come from the mountain,  
 you cleanse, you purify the mouth of the humans,  
 may the evil tongue stand aside!<sup>9</sup>

The incantation describes the place of cedar in the divine and natural world. But note especially how the material's hoped-for function in the cult is made explicit in the penultimate line of the incantation: "you cleanse, you purify the mouth of the humans."

The incantation that immediately precedes the address to cedar invokes salt.

[Incantation]. Table-[salt, formed in] the mine,  
 who [are imbued with life], table-salt!  
 (Partaking) in all existing rites,  
 carried in to the evening meal, carried in to the great meal,  
 passing the time at the base of heaven (and) at the lock of heaven.  
 A man with bathed head speaks (thus) to you:  
 you cleanse, you purify the mouth of the humans,  
 may the evil tongue stand aside!<sup>10</sup>

Note that in this incantation, we are told that it is the priest who makes explicit the role of the material in the cult.

## 2 *Maqlû* VII 29–46: A Development

On occasion, the *Kultmittelbeschwörung* develops into a composition in which there is an overlapping of an address to enhance and activate material and an address which emphasizes the independent force of speech. Speech is set in a mythological context and is treated as if it were capable of effecting change by itself. Thus, the speech act, in itself, takes on a force separate from the powers evoked in the address to the materials. To illustrate this, let us examine the

9 Translation: E. Reiner, *Šurpu: A Collection of Sumerian and Akkadian Incantations*, AfO Beih. 11 (Graz: Im Selbstverlage des Herausgebers, 1958), 46.

10 *Šurpu* IX 34–41 (Translation: Reiner, *Šurpu*, 46).

incantation *šamnu ellu*, “pure oil,” found in several rituals. Here I quote the text as preserved in *Maqlû* VII 29–46.<sup>11</sup>

- 29 ÉN *šamnu ellu šamnu ebbu šamnu namru*  
 30 *šamnu mullil zumri ša ilī*  
 31 *šamnu mupašših* (var. [muš]apših) *šer'ānī ša amēlūti*  
 32 *šaman šipti ša* <sup>d</sup>*Ea šaman šipti ša* <sup>d</sup>*Asalluḫi*  
 33 *uṭaḥḥidka šaman tapšuḫti*  
 34 *ša* <sup>d</sup>*Ea iddinu ana pašḫāti* (var. *tapšuḫti*)  
 35 *apšuška šaman balāti*  
 36 *addika šipat* <sup>d</sup>*Ea bēl Eridu* <sup>d</sup>*Ninšikug*  
 37 *aṭrud asakku aḥḥāzu šuruppū ša zumrika*  
 38 *ušaṭbi qūlu kūru u* (var. *ø*) *nissatu ša pagrika*  
 39 *upašših* (var. *ušaših*) *šer'ānī minātika lā ṭābāti*  
 40 *ina qibūt* <sup>d</sup>*Ea šar apšī*  
 41 *ina tē ša* <sup>d</sup>*Ea ina šipti ša* <sup>d</sup>*Asalluḫi*  
 42 *ina rikisī* (vars. *rikis, qātī*) *rabbāti* (vars. *rabābu, rabê/â*) *ša* <sup>d</sup>*Gula*  
 43 *ina qātī pašḫāti ša* <sup>d</sup>*Nintinugga*  
 44 *u* <sup>d</sup>*Ningirima bēlet* (var. *ø*) *šipti*  
 45 *id(d)išumma* (wr.: *id-dī-|ŠUB-|*[ ]-<sup>f</sup>*dī-*) *ana annanna mār annanna*  
     <sup>d</sup>*Ea* (var. *ø*) *šipatka ša balāti*<sup>12</sup>  
 46 7 *apkallū šūt Eridu lipaššihū* (var. *lišapšihū*) *zumuršu* TU<sub>6</sub> (var. *ø*) ÉN

- 29 Incantation. Pure oil, clear oil, bright oil,  
 30 Oil that purifies the body of the gods,  
 31 Oil that soothes the sinews of mankind,  
 32 Oil of the incantation of Ea, oil of the incantation of Asalluḫi.  
 33 I have coated you with soothing oil  
 34 That Ea has granted for soothing,  
 35 I have anointed you with the oil of healing,  
 36 I have cast upon you the incantation of Ea, lord of Eridu, Ninšiku,  
 37 I have expelled *asakku*, the seizer/jaundice, chills from your body,  
 38 I have removed stupor, apathy, and misery from your body,  
 39 I have soothed the sick sinews of your limbs.  
 40 By the command of Ea, lord of the deep,  
 41 By the incantation of Ea, by the incantation of Asalluḫi,  
 42 By the gentle bandaging of Gula,

11 Only lexical variants are cited.

12 Var.: [ana] *annanna mār annanna id(d)išumma*(šUB-šú-ma) <sup>d</sup>*Ea šipatka ša balāti*.

- 43 By the soothing hands of Nintinugga  
 44 And Ningirima, mistress of incantation.  
 45 O Ea, he cast your incantation of healing on So-and-so,<sup>13</sup>  
 46 That the seven *apkallus* of Eridu soothe his body. Incantation

The incantation *šamnu ellu* first addressed the oil in order to activate its power of soothing and pacification (*pašāḥu*) (lines 29–31). Subsequently, (1) the oil is said to gain its power by virtue of its being the oil of the incantation of the gods Ea and Asalluḫi (line 32); (2) the power of *pašāḥu* is ascribed to Ea (lines 33–34); (3) the oil is associated with healing (line 35); and, then, (4) independent of the oil, the incantation self-consciously or perhaps self-referentially introduces first the “incantation of Ea” (line 36) and then the “incantation of good health” of Ea (line 45) as having been cast upon the patient (not only upon the oil).

Presumably, the oil was addressed in order to activate its power of soothing and pacification (*pašāḥu*). But then an incantation (or a prototype thereof) originally intended simply to realize the power of oil (perhaps through the concrete activation of the material by means of the fusion of word and material) gave precedence and independence to the spoken word, that is, to itself, and to the god whose word it was and under whose authority it operated (thus producing our present incantation *šamnu ellu*). For, following lines 29–31, the incantation ascribes the power of the oil to Ea and fuses together the power of the oil and the power of Ea’s incantation by referring to the oil as the “oil of the incantation of Ea” and ascribing its soothing quality to Ea. Furthermore, by referring to the oil as the oil of healing, the text also suggests that the aforementioned incantation was the often cited “incantation of good health.” Having created this presumed identity, the text then separates the incantation from the oil and gives precedence to the incantation by saying that the incantation is cast upon the patient (line 36; the “you” there refers to the patient, not the oil) and by referring to this incantation as an independent entity and denoting it as “(your) incantation of good health” that was to be cast onto the patient (line 45). The text thereby identifies the incantation in line 36 (and allusions to it in preceding lines) with Ea’s “incantation of good health.”

In this incantation, perhaps, we have a transformation of a simple address to the material in order to activate it into an Ea incantation referred to here as an “incantation of Ea / Eridu / good health.” Herein, perhaps, the material becomes the medium for the speech rather than being fused with and activated by the speech. We move from a situation where materials have a force

13 Or possibly: “O Ea, cast your incantation of healing on So-and-so.”

and can be effective by themselves to one in which it is assumed that materials derive their force, or at least their effectiveness, from human/divine speech.<sup>14</sup>

### 3 ušburruda

The change of the incantation, or blessing, if you will, from an address meant to activate an object to one that emphasizes the power of the word in an anthropomorphic/mythological context is related, I think, to another development that has its roots in the type of incantation addressed to cultic objects that we have been discussing. I refer to the transformation of addresses to live but impersonal materials into addresses to materials and forces that have been given human physical, psychological, and social form. To illustrate this point but also to shed some further light on a group of incantations directed against witchcraft, I now turn to the incantation type designated ušburruda. I use this occasion as an opportunity to accomplish three things: (1) to pursue our examination of the *Kultmittelbeschwörungen*; (2) to work out the meaning of the incantation type referred to as ušburruda; and (3) to illustrate the development of incantations from addresses to materials or forces into addresses to anthropomorphic beings.

Let me begin by noting that this latter development is consonant with what I regard as general developments in Mesopotamian religion<sup>15</sup> as well as with the fact that *Kultmittelbeschwörungen* are among the earliest attested incantations in Mesopotamia. More specifically, such a development is consonant

14 I should emphasize that it is not sufficient to say that references in the incantation to the “incantation of Ea/Eridu” do no more than lend the authority and legitimation of the god to the address to the oil and do not change the nature of the address. Perhaps the usage reflects a situation such as the one presented in the following instructions (these instructions form part of an Ea-Asalluḫi dialogue in a Sumerian incantation against witchcraft): “Go, my son Asalluḫi, when you have filled a porous pot with water (var. pitch) from a pure quay, you put tamarisk, *innuš*, ‘horned alkali’, and *šulḫi* reed, juniper, and white cedar inside (the pot), as well as *girinna*, *zanir*, and *zamuš* stones, and you then cast the Eridu incantation, and pour the liquid over the head of that man, so that the magic which he has in (his) body may flow away like water, ...” (M. J. Geller, “A New Piece of Witchcraft,” in *DUMU-E<sub>2</sub>-DUB-BA-A: Studies in Honor of Åke W. Sjöberg*, ed. H. Behrens et al., OPSNKF 2 [Philadelphia: University Museum, 1989], 199: 20–27 [[*CMAwR* 2, no. 8.15, abcd]]). Other examples of this usage can be cited. Overall, they seem to indicate that “the incantation of Ea/Eridu” designates any incantation in which the aforementioned designation is found, though I would not yet rule out the possibility that it refers to, or once referred to, a separate incantation.

15 See, e.g., T. Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness: A History of Mesopotamian Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976).

with a hegemonic process whereby an earlier, more popular approach to magic that emphasizes the impersonal power of natural materials is taken over and transformed into a theistic form characteristic of the state and its religious institutions.<sup>16</sup> The development is ongoing, yet this process of transformation may recur and repeat itself at different times and places. In any case, it is not surprising that such a development also took place in that branch of exorcistic literature that treats witchcraft.<sup>17</sup> One more example of this development is provided by the usage of the term for anti-witchcraft rites, *ušburruda*, and in the development of various modalities of approach to objects and powers that serve to fight witchcraft.

*uš<sub>11</sub>.búr.ru.da*, a Sumerian term, is usually translated “the releasing of witchcraft.” Most frequently, the term occurs in rubrics as the designation of the text of an incantation or prayer against witchcraft: thus *ka.inim.ma uš<sub>11</sub>.búr.ru.da*, “a text for releasing witchcraft.” Most *ušburruda* incantations refer to and even center on materials and have among their purposes the evocation of the power in the materials. The fact that this is the most characteristic and frequent usage of the term *ka.inim.ma uš<sub>11</sub>.búr.ru.da* suggests that the term refers primarily to an address intended to evoke the powers in materials used to fight witchcraft.

While many of these incantations simply refer to the materials in the context of rhetorical forms such as addresses to witches, some of them do follow the standard format of the *Kultmittelbeschwörung*. However, in my opinion, the term *uš<sub>11</sub>.búr.ru.da*, Akkadian *ana piširti kišpi*, originally referred to something more concrete and specific than an oral rite, and designated “materials for releasing witchcraft.” Thus, it may refer to drugs against witchcraft; note, for example, that lists of medications may be labelled *ú uš<sub>11</sub>.búr.ru.da*, “drugs against witchcraft.”<sup>18</sup> In line with this, the term *ušburruda* in rubrics following

16 For this process with regard to magic, see T. Abusch, “The Demonic Image of the Witch in Standard Babylonian Literature: The Reworking of Popular Conceptions by Learned Exorcists,” in *Religion, Science, and Magic in Concert and in Conflict*, ed. J. Neusner et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 27–58, esp. 34–37 and 54–56 [[AMD 5, 3–25, esp. 10–13]]; and especially W. van Binsbergen and F. A. M. Wiggermann, “Magic in History: A Theoretical Perspective, and Its Application to Ancient Mesopotamia,” in *Mesopotamian Magic: Textual, Historical, and Interpretative Perspectives*, ed. T. Abusch and K. van der Toorn, AMD 1 (Groningen: Styx, 1999), 3–34.

17 For this development, see, e.g., Abusch, “Demonic Image of the Witch,” and T. Abusch, “Considerations When Killing a Witch: Developments in Exorcistic Attitudes to Witchcraft,” in *The Dynamics of Changing Rituals: The Transformation of Religious Rituals within Their Social and Cultural Context*, ed. J. Kreinath et al., Toronto Studies in Religion 29 (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 191–210 [[AMD 5, 65–78]].

18 E.g., *51 ú uš<sub>11</sub>.búr.ru.da* (K 249+ [*BAM* 434] iii 70' // K 3201 + K 6261 [*BAM* 435] iii 11' [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 7.10, AM]]). For examples of some of these lists, see T. Abusch, “Witchcraft,

oral rites came to designate, first and foremost, incantations in which magical materials such as amulets were consecrated for use against witchcraft. To be more precise, the rubric ka.inim.ma uš<sub>II</sub>.búr.ru.da was frequently attached to incantations in which the speaker referred to, addressed, or even identified himself with, amulets that serve to both cure and prevent witchcraft, as well as the components that make up such amulets and such other objects that are applied, fumigated, and the like; the materials include various plants and such minerals as bitumen and sulfur.<sup>19</sup>

But the term ka.inim.ma uš<sub>II</sub>.búr.ru.da was also extended to other ceremonial procedures as well, rites such as the burning of figurines of the witch; the rubric might then include the description of the rite itself. Thus, for example, some incantations to the fire god are labeled “a text for releasing witchcraft (by burning) a figurine (made) of X-material” (e.g., ka.inim.ma uš<sub>II</sub>.búr.ru.da *šalam tīti-kám*);<sup>20</sup> similarly, an incantation to the sun god may be labeled “a text for releasing witchcraft by burning figurines” (ka.inim.ma uš<sub>II</sub>.búr.ru.da.kám *ša šalmī qalī*).<sup>21</sup> In these instances, the term would usually designate incantations in which the fire god was invoked to destroy (representations of) the witch. This extension derived from the use of fire in the actual ritual.<sup>22</sup>

The cultic materials could thus be viewed either naturalistically or as ceremonial objects that possess purificatory, destructive, or protective properties; especially in the latter instance, they might also be infused with divinity and even personality. In contrast to simple material objects, dynamic forces

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Impotence, and Indigestion,” in *Disease in Babylonia*, ed. I. L. Finkel and M. J. Geller, CM 36 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 156–157 with n. 27 [[AMD 5, 85–86 with n. 28]].

19 There are many anti-witchcraft incantations that fit this description (e.g., those centering on *kukru* and sulfur in *Maqlû* VI 16–118” + III 61–76; for a detailed discussion of III 61–76 and VI 85–97, see T. Abusch, “Water into Fire: The Formation of Some Witchcraft Incantations,” in *Mesopotamian Witchcraft: Toward a History and Understanding of Babylonian Witchcraft Beliefs and Literature*, AMD 5 [Leiden: Brill/Styx, 2002], 201–211), but I limit myself here to incantations that have the ušburruda rubric: see the compositions listed in the Excursus; note, for example, Sm 275 + Rm 329 (+) Sm 352 [[CMAwR 1, no. 7.8, C]], obv. ii, Unit E (*šaknākuma ru’titu*), and rev. iii, Unit H ([*anā*]ku *ašqulālu*); K 8112 + K 9666 [[CMAwR 1, no. 7.8, A<sub>2</sub>]], right col., Units c (incipit not preserved) and d (*attā imḥur-līmu*).

20 See, e.g., the incantations with the ušburruda rubric in *Maqlû* II and III that are either addressed to or center upon the fire god; for a list of these rubrics, see T. Abusch, “The Ritual Tablet and Rubrics of *Maqlû*: Toward the History of the Series,” in *Ah, Assyria ...: Studies in Assyrian History and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography Presented to Hayim Tadmor*, ed. M. Cogan and I. Eph’al, ScrHier 33 (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1991), 240–243 [[AMD 5, 170–173]].

21 See Abusch, “Ritual Tablet and Rubric,” 245–246 [[AMD 5, 176–177]].

22 For a further discussion of ušburruda texts, see the Excursus below.

that were used in the cult, such as fire and water, were often described and addressed as gods. Thus, even addresses to the fire as a full-blown god are related to or derive from the *Kultmittelbeschwörung*.

The extension of the term *ušburruda* by the exorcist seems to parallel the increasing personification and deification of the materials, ceremonial objects, and forces used in the ritual and the development of different modalities of approach that the exorcist took to them. We may imagine the following stages of development:

1) The ingestion, application, or manipulation of medications or magical materials. The use of the materials may be accompanied by various types of utterances; the utterance may involve either the identification of the speaker with the material or a second- or third-person mention of or address to the material.<sup>23</sup>

2) The use of these and other objects and the enhancement of their powers by partial personification and prayer-invocation in second-person form. (These prayers may derive from or build upon elements in the aforementioned utterances.) As an example, let us again look at an incantation to salt, but this time from *Maqlû* (VI 119''–126'').

O Salt, created in a clean place,  
 For food of gods did Enlil destine you.  
 Without you no meal is set out in Ekur,  
 Without you god, king, nobleman, and prince do not smell incense.  
 I am So-and-so, the son of So-and-so, whom witchcraft holds captive,  
 Whom bewitchment holds in (the form of a skin) disease.  
 O Salt, break my witchcraft! Loosen my spell!  
 Receive from me the bewitchment so that, as my creator,  
 I may praise you.

This is an example of an incantation recited during a fumigation rite intended to counteract and disperse attacks of witchcraft. Note the reference to the

23 For the sake of convenience, examples are drawn in the main from the texts listed in the Excursus and from *Maqlû*. For second- and third-person references, see, e.g., Sm 275 + Rm 329 (+) Sm 352, obv. ii, Unit D and rev. iii, Unit I; K 8112 + K 9666, left col., Unit b; right col., Units c and d; *SpBTU* 2, no. 25, obv. 1–rev. 24 [[*CMAwR* 3, no. 7.35, a]]; *Maqlû* v 1–10, 48–56; vi 16–23 and parallel *RIAA* 312, rev. (!) iii, 5'–11' [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 8.7, d]]; *Maqlû* vi 24–33, 34–39, 65–68. For identifications, see, e.g., Sm 275 + Rm 329 (+) Sm 352, rev. iii, Unit H; *Maqlû* vi 69–77, 85–97; Sm 1330: 2'–7' [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 7.8, H]] (K 10341: 1–10 [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 7.8, J]] is probably a duplicate, and *Maqlû* vi 69–77 a parallel).

temple as well as the cosmic context of this address to salt. Here we clearly see the beginnings of anthropomorphism in the concluding phrase, “so that, as my creator, I may praise you.”

3) In the third stage, the force or object is addressed as a member of the pantheon, but the natural dimensions remain dominant. As an example, let us look at another incantation from *Maqlû*, II 105–125.<sup>24</sup> The incantation is one of a series addressed to the fire god that accompanies the ritual of burning images of the witch. Despite the characterization of Girra as a judge, the incantation emphasizes the natural characteristics of fire. Lines 105–116 read:

Scorching Girra, warlike son of Anu,  
It is you, the fiercest among your brothers,  
Who decides lawsuits like<sup>25</sup> Sin and Šamaš—  
Judge my case, hand down my verdict!  
Burn my warlock and my witch;  
Burn, O Girra, my warlock and my witch;  
Scorch, O Girra, my warlock and my witch;  
Burn them, O Girra;  
Scorch them, O Girra;  
Seize them, O Girra;  
Consume them, O Girra;  
Make a muddle of them, O Girra!

4) In the final stage, the natural force is fully deified and given a human form as well as a cosmic and institutional role (e.g., the sun is a judge, the fire is his executioner). During the same ritual as the preceding, *Maqlû* II 77–103, an incantation also addressed to the fire god, is recited.<sup>26</sup>

24 For our purposes, it is sufficient here to give only a translation of the first part of the incantation, II 105–116; for the latter part of the incantation, see T. Abusch, “The Socio-Religious Framework of the Babylonian Witchcraft Ceremony *Maqlû*: Some Observations on the Introductory Section of the Text, Part I,” in *Riches Hidden in Secret Places: Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Memory of Thorkild Jacobsen*, ed. T. Abusch (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 16–17 [[AMD 5, 231–233]].

25 I.e., “in the stead of.”

26 Here I quote only the first half of the incantation, lines 77–89 (the translation of lines 77–83 is taken from B. R. Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. [Bethesda, MD: CDL, 1996], 2:564); the latter half (lines 90–103) is translated and discussed in T. Abusch, “Considerations When Killing a Witch” [[AMD 5, 65–78]] and further examined in Abusch, “Promise to Praise,” and T. Abusch, “Alternative Models for the Development of Some Incantations,” in *Sources of Evil: Studies in Mesopotamian Exorcistic Lore*, ed. G. Van Buylaere et al., AMD 15 (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 223–234 [[146–156]].

O blazing Girra, firstborn of Anu,  
 You are the one to render judgment (on what is) spoken and secret,  
 You illumine darkness,  
 You set straight confusion and perturbation.  
 You make decisions for the great gods,  
 Without you, no god reaches a verdict,  
 You are the giver of instruction and direction.  
 You alone speedily capture the evildoer,  
 You speedily overcome the wicked (and the) enemy.  
 I, So-and-so, the son of So-and-so, whose god is So-and-so, whose goddess  
 is So-and-so,  
 (Because) I have been made unclean by witchcraft, I stand before you,  
 (Because) I have been cursed in the presence of god and man, I come  
 before you,  
 (Because) I am sickening in the eye of anyone who beholds me, I bow  
 down before you.

I do not mean to claim that this increased personification and deification represent necessary stages in some overall religious development. Yet we can sometimes see that materials are reworked precisely along these lines by the exorcist. This is suggested by the extension of the term *ušburruda* from natural objects in the cult to full-blown gods. And sometimes different forms of a text reveal such a change.<sup>27</sup> In any case, I believe that here and elsewhere incantations rooted in the material or natural world were transformed into, or at least served as the basis for, prayers to gods. This is part of the transformation of non-temple materials by priests who operated in the temple or at least were thinking in terms of the image of the god in the temple, for there the god had a human form, dwelled as a ruler, and assumed appropriate social roles, images, and privileges.

#### **Excursus: *ušburruda* Incantations**

There are many individual *ušburruda* units and a number of collections. Normally, the individual *ušburruda* unit contains the following elements: incantation, rubric (*ka.inim.ma uš<sub>11</sub>.búr.ru.da.kam*), and ritual instructions, though occasionally an incantation may appear without one or both of the other two elements. Looking at the textual material from Nineveh, one is able to identify or reconstruct a number of tablets which contained multiple *ušburruda* units. As an example, I would here cite one set of related tablets.

<sup>27</sup> See Abusch, "Demonic Image of the Witch," 35–36 [[AMD 5, 11–12]].

The set contains a number of *ušburruda* units that appear together in varying combinations on several collection tablets that I have been able to reconstruct. Generally speaking, the units are ceremonial rituals with incantations against witchcraft. Usually, the incantations contain references to ritual materials or are addresses to them. The accompanying ritual instructions generally prescribe the preparation of an amulet, the recitation of the incantation over the amulet, and the attachment of the amulet to the patient (usually around his neck). All rubrics are of the sort *ka.inim.ma uš<sub>11</sub>.búr.ru.da.kam*.

Editions will appear elsewhere: here I simply provide the pertinent “bibliographical” information. The presentation is in accordance with the organization of the material on the collection tablets. When individual units or series of units also appear on a more comprehensive tablet, I list the textual material in accordance with the larger (or better preserved) tablet and cite the material on the others in the form of duplicate entries. When the incantations or their order on a tablet are not identical with the material preserved on a larger tablet, I list the tablets separately and provide full cross-references. There are, of course, other groups of related tablets as well as individual tablets with unique material. The relevant tablets [[edited as *CMAwR* 1, no. 7.8]] are as follows: Sm 275 + Rm 329 (+) Sm 352; Th 1905-4-9, 72 (= BM 98566) + Th 1905-4-9, 73 (= BM 98567) (Bab.); K 8079 (+) K 8112 + K 9666 (+) K 8933 (+) K 10358 (+) K 12936; K 10559; K 13718; 80-7-19, 146; PBS 1/2, no. 120. All but K 13718 and PBS 1/2, no. 120 are presented here separately.

### Sm 275 + Rm 329 (+) Sm 352<sup>28</sup>

#### *Obv. i*

A) Sm 275 + Rm 329: 1'–7'

B) Sm 275 + Rm 329: 8'–23' // PBS 1/2, no. 120 // K 8079 (+), *obv.*: K 8933, *obv.*, left col. (i), 1'–12'

28 For the join Sm 275 + Rm 329, see T. Abusch, “Ritual and Incantation: Interpretation and Textual History of *Maqlû* VII 58–105 and IX 152–59,” in *“Sha'arei Talmon”: Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East presented to Shemaryahu Talmon*, ed. M. Fishbane et al. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1991), 373 n. 24 [[AMD 5, 190 n. 24]]. Sm 275 + Rm 329 and Sm 352 appear to belong to the same tablet, but do not form a direct join. Sm 275 + Rm 329 preserves a left column; Sm 352 preserves the text of the right column of the obverse and reverse and fragmentary vestiges of the left columns. Accordingly, Sm 352 preserves the text of the right column of the obverse and reverse; and Sm 275 + Rm 329 preserves the text of the left column of the obverse, a conclusion supported by the fact that the incantation Sm 275 + Rm 329: 8'–23' duplicates K 8079 (+), *obv.*: K 8933, *obv.*, left col. (i).

**Obv. ii**

C) Sm 352, obv., right col. (ii), 1'-4' // Th 1905-4-9, 72 + 73, obv. i, 1'-4' (conjecture)

D) Sm 352, obv., right col. (ii), 5'-15' // Th 1905-4-9, 72 + 73, obv. i, 5'-20'

E) Sm 352, obv., right col. (ii), 16'-23' [... // Th 1905-4-9, 72 + 73, obv. i, 21'-26' // K 8079 (+), obv.: K 8933, obv., right. col. (ii), 3'-14'

Break

[F) ] // K 8079 (+), rev.: K 8933, rev., right col. (iii), 1'-7' // K 13718: 1'-6'

**Rev. iii**

G) Sm 352, rev., right col. (iii), 1'-2' // K 8079 (+), rev.: K 8933, rev., right col. (iii), 8'-12' // K 13718: 7'-11'

H) Sm 352, rev., right col. (iii), 3'-12' // K 13718: 12'-18'

I) Sm 352, rev., right col. (iii), 13'-20' [... // Th 1905-4-9, 72 + 73, rev. iv, 1-9

Break

**Th 1905-4-9, 72 (= BM 98566) + Th 1905-4-9, 73 (= BM 98567)**

A) Th 1905-4-9, 72 + 73, obv. i, 1'-4' // Sm 352, obv., right col. (ii), 1'-4'

B) Th 1905-4-9, 72 + 73, obv. i, 5'-20' // Sm 352, obv., right col. (ii), 5'-15'

C) Th 1905-4-9, 72 + 73, obv. i, 21'-26' [... // Sm 352, obv., right col. (ii), 16'-23'

Bottom

D) Th 1905-4-9, 72 + 73, obv. ii, 1'-16' // K 8079 (+), obv.: K 10358, left. col. (i), 1'-10' // 80-7-19, 146: 1'-12'

E) Th 1905-4-9, 72 + 73, obv. ii, 17'-24' [... // 80-7-19, 146: 13'-16'; parallel: *Maqlû* I 63-65

Break

F) Th 1905-4-9, 72 + 73, rev. iii, 1'-9' [...

Break

G) Th 1905-4-9, 72 + 73, rev. iv, 1-9 // Sm 352, rev., right col. (iii), 13'-20'

H) Th 1905-4-9, 72 + 73, rev. iv, 10-17 [...

**80-7-19, 146**

A) 80-7-19, 146: 1'-12' // Th 1905-4-9, 72 + 73, obv. ii, 1'-16' // K 8079 (+), obv.: K 10358, left. col. (i), 1'-10'

B) 80-7-19, 146: 13'-16' // Th 1905-4-9, 72 + 73, obv. ii, 17'-24'; parallel: *Maqlû* I 63-65

K 8079 (+) K 8112 + K 9666 (+) K 8933 (+) K 10358 (+) K 12936<sup>29</sup>

*Obv. i*

Break

A) K 8079 (+): K 12936, left col. (i), 1'-7' [...

Break

B) K 8079 (+): K 10358, left col. (i), 1'-10' [... // Th 1905-4-9, 72 + 73, obv. ii, 1'-16' // 80-7-19, 146: 1'-12'

Break

C) K 8079 (+): K 8079, left col. (i), 1'-8'

D) K 8079 (+): K 8079, left col. (i), 9'-16' [...

Break

E) K 8079 (+): K 8933, obv., left col. (i), 1'-12' [... // Sm 275 + Rm 329, obv., i 8'-23' // PBS 1/2, no. 120

Break

*Obv. ii*

F) K 8079 (+): K 12936, right col. (ii), 1'-3'

G) K 8079 (+): K 12936, right col. (ii), 4'-7' [...

Break

H) K 8079 (+): K 10358, right col. (ii), 1'-5' // K 10559: 21'-24'

I) K 8079 (+): K 10358, right col. (ii), 6'-11' [... // K 10559: 25'-30'; parallel: *Maqlû* VIII 24'-34'

Break

J) K 8079 (+): K 8079, right col. (ii), 1'-21' [...

Break

K) K 8079 (+): K 8933, obv., right col. (ii), 1'-2'

L) K 8079 (+): K 8933, obv., right col. (ii), 3'-14' [... // Sm 352, obv., right col. (ii), 16'-23' // Th 1905-4-9, 72 + 73, obv. i, 21'-26'

Break

*Rev. iii*

M) K 8079 (+): K 8933, rev., right col. (iii), 1'-7' // K 13718: 1'-6' (conjecture)

N) K 8079 (+): K 8933, rev., right col. (iii), 8'-12' [... // K 13718: 7'-11' // Sm 352, rev., right col. (iii), 1'-2'

Break

29 The present tablet is a reconstruction based upon a number of indirect joins that I have identified. The linking and placement of the fragments as well as the designation of obverse/reverse is conjectural, but almost certain. K 8112 + K 9666 is part of this tablet, but its placement is uncertain. It is cited here after all the other pieces.

Unplaced fragment: K 8112 + K 9666

- a) K 8112 + K 9666, left col., 1'–11': cf. *Maqlû* III 77–87
- b) K 8112 + K 9666, left col., 12'–23' // TCL 6, 49, obv. 16–25
- c) K 8112 + K 9666, right col., 1'–16'
- d) K 8112 + K 9666, right col., 17'–24'

### K 10559

- A) K 10559: 1'–10'
  - B) K 10559: 11'–16'
  - C) K 10559: 17'–20'
  - D) K 10559: 21'–24' // K 8079 (+), obv.: K 10358, right col. (ii), 1'–5'
  - E) K 10559: 25'–30' // K 8079 (+), obv.: K 10358, right col. (ii), 6'–11'; parallel:  
*Maqlû* VIII 24'–34'
  - F) K 10559: 31'
- Break

## Notes on the History of Composition of Two Incantations

In this paper I shall note a few problems that I have encountered in two incantations: *attunu ešem kimtiya* (a part of *KAR 227* // [[*CMAwR* 2, no. 8.25]]) and *šamnu ellu* (*Maqlû* VII 29–46).<sup>\*</sup> I shall then suggest critical solutions to these problems that allow us to observe a small part of the history of composition of these incantations.

### 1 *attunu ešem kimtiya*

A rereading of the incantation *attunu ešem kimtiya* in preparation for the publication of *KAR 227* and duplicates [[*CMAwR* 2, no. 8.25]], the larger ritual of which this incantation is part, suggests that I set out a few of the problems that I encountered when I read this incantation and the conclusions regarding its composition that they suggest.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>\*</sup> It is a pleasure to dedicate this study to Professor Giovanni B. Lanfranchi, historian and Assyriologist, in honor of his scholarship and of his service to the community of ancient Near Eastern scholars. This version of the paper has benefitted from comments by my student Bronson Brown-deVost.

1 For the sake of convenience, I follow the line count of *KAR 227* iii 7'–23' [[*CMAwR* 2, no. 8.25, A]] for the incantation addressed to the *Ešem kimtiya*. There are no variants of significance in the lines that we will be examining. For citations from the incantations addressed to the Anunnaki (*attunu* <sup>d</sup>*Anunnaki*) and to the *Ešem lā mammānāma* (*attā ešem lā mammānāma*), I follow the line count of *LKA* 89 + 90 iii 12–30 [[*CMAwR* 2, no. 8.25, B]] and *KAR 227* iii 25'–48", respectively. For editions of the incantation *attunu ešem kimtiya*, see E. Ebeling, *Tod und Leben nach den Vorstellungen der Babylonier* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1931), 131–132; J. Scurlock, "Magical Means of Dealing with Ghosts in Ancient Mesopotamia" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1988), 351–354; A. Lenzi, "An Incantation-Prayer: Ghosts of My Family 1," in *Reading Akkadian Prayers and Hymns: An Introduction*, ed. A. Lenzi, ANEM 3 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 133–144; for an annotated translation, see M.-J. Seux, *Hymnes et prières aux dieux de Babylonie et d'Assyrie* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1976), 431–432. For a full edition of the complete ritual *KAR 227* and duplicates, see *CMAwR* 2, no. 8.25. For a description of the textual makeup of this ritual, see T. Abusch, "Ishtar's Proposal and Gilgamesh's Refusal: An Interpretation of the *Gilgamesh Epic*, Tablet 6, Lines 1–79," *History of Religions* 26 (1986): 150–151 n. 14 [[*Gilgamesh*, 18–19 n. 14]]. I have cited the text from my preliminary edition of this ritual; but I have also been able to consult Daniel Schwemer's collations of the two main Assur manuscripts and to incorporate several new readings. See W. Farber,

In transcription the incantation reads:

- 7' *attunu eṭem kimtiya bānū šum[ī(?)]*  
 8' *abiya abi abiya ummiya ummi ummiya aḫiya aḫātiya*  
 9' *kimtiya nišūtiya salātiya*  
 10' *mala ina erṣeti šallū kispā aksipkunūši*  
 11' *mê aqqīkunūši ukannīkunūši*  
 12' *ušarriḫkunūši ukabbīkunūši*  
 13' *ina ūmi annī maḫar <sup>d</sup>Šamaš <sup>d</sup>Gilgameš izizzānīmma*  
 14' *dīnī dīnā purussāya pursā*  
 15' *mīmma lemnu ša ina zumriya šīrīya šer'ānīya bašū*  
 16' *ana qāt <sup>d</sup>Namtar šukkal erṣeti piqdāni*  
 17' *<sup>d</sup>Ningizzida guzalê erṣeti rapašti maššartašunu lidannin*  
 18' *<sup>d</sup>Bidu idugal erṣeti panīšunu līdil*  
 19' *šabtāšuma šūridāšu ana kurnugê*  
 20' *anāku aradkunu lubluṭ lušlimma*  
 21' *aššu upšāšê šumkunu luzku[r]*  
 22' *ana arūtīkunu mê kašūti luqqi*  
 23' *bulliṭannīma dalīlīka ludlul*

- 7' You, the ghosts of my family, progenitors of the nam[es(?)]  
 8' Of my father, my grandfather, my mother, my grandmother, my  
 brother, my sister  
 9' Of my family, my kin, (and) my clan,  
 10' I make a funerary offering to as many of you as are sleeping in the  
 netherworld.  
 11' I pour out water to you, I lavish care upon you,  
 12' I glorify you, I honor you.  
 13' Stand here today before Šamaš and Gilgamesh.  
 14' Judge my case, decide my verdict.  
 15' Anything-evil that is in my body, flesh, and sinews,

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*Beschwörungsrituale an Ištar und Dumuzi: Atti Istar sa harmasa Dumuzi* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1977), 117–118, where Farber considered this incantation as well as the previous incantation in the ritual from the perspective of related incantations that he was editing as part of the ritual K 2001+ and duplicates. He concluded that the incantations to the Anunnaki and to the *Eṭem kimtiya* in KAR 227 // and in K 2001+ // go back to a common hypothetical source with which neither set is identical; rather, the two incantations in each ritual were derived from this common source by means of adaptation and through mutual influences. Note that both Seux and Lenzi noted the discrepancy in the use of the pronominal suffixes in lines 19'–20' and 23', though their explanation is different from the explanation given below.

- 16' Hand over to Namtar, counselor of the netherworld.  
 17' Let Ningišzida, throne-bearer of the wide netherworld, maintain a strong watch over them.  
 18' Let Bidu, chief gatekeeper of the netherworld, shut (the gate) before them (i.e., behind them).  
 19' Seize it and take it down to the Land-of-no-return.  
 20' May I, your servant, have health and well-being,  
 21' That I may invoke your name because of magical acts,  
 22' And libate cool water into your pipe.  
 23' Heal me that I may sing your praises.

Obvious (and related) difficulties are located in the textual segment lines 15'–19'. These lines center on the evil that is besetting the patient and on its riddance. The two problems that I would focus on are as follows:

1) Pronominal suffixes: In line 19' the evil is referred to by means of the third-person masculine singular object suffix *-šu*: *šabtāšuma šūridāšu*. But in lines 17'–18' the evil is referred to by means of the third-person masculine plural possessive suffix *-šunu*: *maššartašunu*, *panišunu*. That the plural is incorrect is indicated by the fact that the evil referred to in line 15', immediately prior to the request for riddance, was the singular subject *mimma lemnu*. Line 15' thus agrees with line 19' and disagrees with lines (16'–)17'–18'.

2) Order: In lines 16'–19', the evil is handed over to Namtar, etc., prior to being taken down to the netherworld. But the act of taking the evil down to the netherworld should occur before—not after—it was entrusted to netherworld officials whose role normally was to guard and keep the evil imprisoned in the netherworld, activities that they perform in the realm of death and not in this world.<sup>2</sup>

Lines 16'–18' are identical with lines 23–25 of an incantation addressed to the Anunnaki that immediately preceded the one to the *Eṭem kimtiya*. There, too, the suffixes are plural, but there the plural usage is correct because the immediately preceding evil (line 22) has been expanded from *mimma lemnu*, “Anything-evil,” to include *kaššāpu-kaššāptu*, “warlock and witch”: [*mimma*] *lemnu ša yāši šakna kaššāpu kaššāptu ana kurnugê urâšunūti*, “Lead Anything-evil that besets me and the warlock and witch to the ‘Land-of-no-return.’”

<sup>2</sup> But as regards Bidu, note, for example, *CMAwR* 2, no. 8.29: 108–111 (*LKA* 144 and duplicates; = Farber, *Beschwörungrituale*, 1977, 232: 65'–68'): Bidu is first addressed as the doorkeeper of the netherworld (line 108); figurines of the warlock and witch are then said to have been handed over to him in the presence of Ishtar and Tammuz (lines 109–110), and he is asked to take the warlock and witch down to the netherworld (line 111). Here, as in the Descent of Ishtar, Bidu appears to be at the gate into the netherworld.

Moreover, the placement of the lines in this incantation is correct, for they follow upon the request to take the evils down to the netherworld.

In view of the problems noted, we may suggest that in an earlier version of the incantation addressed to the *Eṭem kīmtiya* in *KAR 227 //*, lines 15' and 19' would have occurred together: *mimma lemnu ša ina zumriya širiya šer'anīya bašû šabtāšuma šuridāšu ana kurnugê*, "Seize Anything-evil that is in my body, flesh, and sinews, and take it down to the 'Land-of-no-return.'" Lines 16'–18', the offending lines, would have been drawn from elsewhere—probably from the preceding incantation to the Anunnaki. But the transfer and insertion were done in a mechanical manner, for the references to evil in lines 17'–18' were not changed to singular, and these lines were inserted incorrectly between lines 15' and 19' rather than in a proper place following line 19'.

The creation of this form of the *attunu eṭem kīmtiya* incantation and its mistakes may perhaps be explained best by means of a hypothesis regarding the development of the larger ritual whole.<sup>3</sup> I would suggest that the incantation *attunu eṭem kīmtiya* was not part of the original ritual *KAR 227 //*. Our incantation differs from all the others in the ritual: our incantation mentions only *mimma lemnu* and derives probably from a version of the incantation that dealt with *mimma lemnu* alone. To be sure, the other incantations in our ritual also mention *mimma lemnu* (and some may have originally been directed against *mimma lemnu*), but they all also include the mention of witchcraft—sometimes combined with *mimma lemnu*. For example:

[*mimma*] *lemnu ša yāši šakna kaššāpu kaššāptu ana kurnugê urāšunūti*

Lead Anything-evil that besets me and the warlock and witch to the "Land-of-no-return." (*attunu* <sup>d</sup>*Anunnaki*, line 22)

*lū mimma lemnu ša šuma lā nabû ša šabtannīma irtened[dānīni] ina zumriya širiya šer'anīya raksuma lā paṭrann[i(?)]] šalam kaššāpi u kaššāpti ša ana yāši ina maḥar <sup>d</sup>Šamaš ī[pušūni(?)] šalam mimma lemni ša šabtanni ēpuš ... šabassunūtima lā tapaššaršunūti*

Or Anything-evil that has not been named, that seizes me and constantly pursues me, and (that) is fastened to my body, flesh, and sinews and does

3 For a succinct description of the ritual, see tentatively T. Abusch, "Considerations When Killing a Witch: Developments in Exorcistic Attitudes to Witchcraft in Mesopotamia," in *The Dynamics of Changing Rituals: The Transformation of Religious Rituals within Their Social and Cultural Context*, ed. J. Kreinath et al., Toronto Studies in Religion 29 (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 206–207 [[AMD 5, 76–77]].

not let me free: I have made images of the warlock and witch who have per[formed sorcery] against me in the presence of Šamaš (and) an image of Anything-evil that seizes me.... Seize them, do not let them go. (*attā eṭem lā mammānāma*, lines 35'–40')

The incantation *attunu eṭem kimtiya* has a similar framework to an incantation found in K 2001+.<sup>4</sup> In incorporating the incantation into the ritual *KAR 227 //*, this framework was adapted and expanded. The incantation took over elements from other incantations in the larger ritual and was filled out especially by means of lines drawn from the Anunnaki incantation.<sup>5</sup> Conversely, when the *Eṭem kimti*, the ghosts of the family, became part of the ritual, mention of them was added to other incantations (e.g., *attā eṭem lā mammānāma*, line 29': *ina maḥar* <sup>d</sup>Šamaš <sup>d</sup>Gilgameš <sup>d</sup>Anunnaki *eṭem kim[ti]*, “in the presence of Šamaš, Gilgameš, the Anunnaki, and *Eṭem kimti* ...”; *attunu* <sup>d</sup>Anunnaki, line 19: [*eṭem*] [*k*]imtiya *lišbatūšunūti ayyuwašširūšu[nūti]*, “May the ghosts of my family seize them and not set them free”<sup>6</sup>). But the assimilation was incomplete—note, for example, that in *attā eṭem lā mammānāma*, line 39', the major gods involved in the ritual are enumerated, but the *Eṭem kimti* are not mentioned (*ina maḥar* <sup>d</sup>Šamaš <sup>d</sup>Gilgameš <sup>d</sup>Anunnaki *apqis[sunūti]*, “I have given [them] over (to you) in the presence of Šamaš, Gilgameš, (and) the Anunnaki.”<sup>7</sup>). Note also the incorrect form of the promise of praise at the end of the *attunu eṭem kimtiya* incantation; the *Eṭem kimti* who occur earlier in the incantation in the plural are here referred to in the singular: *bulliṭannima dalīlīka ludlul* (line 23'). This type of error is a sign, perhaps, of haste, a haste that may also explain why the composer of our incantation, *attunu eṭem kimti*, forgot to add a mention of the warlock and witch to *mimma lemnu* in the incantation, and how he erred in his choice of the form and placement of lines 16'–18' when he copied these lines from the incantation *attunu* <sup>d</sup>Anunnaki.

4 K 2001+ is edited in Farber, *Beschwörungsrituale*, 127–183. The *Eṭem kimtiya* incantation in that ritual is scored there on p. 136; it is transcribed and translated on pp. 150–153.

5 I do not know whether the ritual had already attained a fixed ritual form or whether its identity was still in the process of being shaped when the incantation was added. The incantation may have been added to the ritual because of its connection to the Anunnaki incantation elsewhere (forms of the incantations to the *Eṭem kimti* and to the Anunnaki are associated with each other in K 2001+)—but this is not certain.

6 This line seems to be out of place, but I cannot be sure of this because the next two lines are partially broken.

7 But they are mentioned in *attā eṭem lā mammānāma*, lines 29'–30'. These lines make reference to ritual acts, and the mention of the *Eṭem kimti* here may simply reflect the actual final ritual.

2 *šamnu ellu*

The text of the *Kultmittelbeschwörung šamnu ellu*, “pure oil,” is preserved in *Maqlû* VII 29–46 as well as in several other rituals.<sup>8</sup> Here I focus on the text as found in *Maqlû*. In an earlier study,<sup>9</sup> I gave a reading and interpretation of this incantation as it presently stands, but even there I presumed that the text had undergone some typological change: An incantation referred to in the text as an “incantation of Ea/healing” seems to have originated as a simple address to oil in order to activate its powers of soothing and pacification. That is, the incantation has been changed from an address meant to activate an object to one that emphasizes the power of the word of a god.<sup>10</sup>

But from a literary and textual point of view, our incantation still presents some difficulties, difficulties that probably entered the text after the transformation noted in the earlier study. Here, then, I shall go a step further: I would now point to some additional textual and literary problems and suggest a reconstructed form of the text as a way of solving these problems.

To orient the reader, I begin with a translation of the incantation:

- 29 Incantation. Pure oil, clear oil, bright oil,  
 30 Oil that purifies the body of the gods,  
 31 Oil that soothes the sinews of mankind,  
 32 Oil of the incantation of Ea, oil of the incantation of Asalluḫi.  
 33 I coat you with soothing oil

8 The incantation *šamnu ellu* is also found in K 11725, rev., Rm 2, 480, VAT 13677, W 20030/11 (*BaghMitt* 2, 16, rev.), and BM 47889, rev. (for which see below, n. 19). For the mention of this incantation by incipit in a different ritual tablet, cf. F. Köcher, “Die Ritualtafeln der magisch-medizinischen Tafelserie ‘Einreibung,’” *AfO* 21 (1966): 16, line 3 (for which, see now B. Böck, “When You Perform the Ritual of ‘Rubbing’: On Medicine and Magic in Ancient Mesopotamia,” *JNES* 62 [2003]: 3, line 3 and p. 8).

9 T. Abusch, “Blessing and Praise in Ancient Mesopotamian Incantations,” in *Literatur, Politik und Recht in Mesopotamien: Festschrift für Claus Wilcke*, ed. W. Sallaberger et al. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003), 1–14 [[94–109]]. In that study, this incantation was referred to as VII 31–49: the line count there was that of Meier, *Maqlû*. But here I cite *Maqlû* from my own edition and follow the line division and line count of that edition: T. Abusch, *The Magical Ceremony “Maqlû”: A Critical Edition*, AMD 10 (Leiden: Brill, 2015). This new line count is also used in the recent German translation of the text in T. Abusch and D. Schwemer, “Das Abwehrzauber-Ritual *Maqlû* (‘Verbrennung,’” in *Omina, Orakel, Rituale und Beschwörungen*, ed. B. Janowski and G. Wilhelm, TUAT NF 4 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2008), 128–186.

10 For the analysis upon which this observation is based, see Abusch, “Blessing and Praise,” 4–6 [[97–100]].

- 34 That Ea granted for soothing,  
 35 I anoint you with the oil of healing,  
 36 I cast upon you the incantation of Ea, lord of Eridu, Ninshikug.  
 37 I expel Asakku, Ahhāzu (jaundice), chills of your body,  
 38 I remove dumbness, torpor, and misery of your body,  
 39 I soothe the sick sinews of your limbs.  
 40 By the command of Ea, king of the Deep,  
 41 By the spell of Ea, by the incantation of Asalluḫi,  
 42 By the comforting<sup>11</sup> bandage of Gula,  
 43 By the soothing hands of Nintinugga  
 44 And Ningirima, mistress of incantation.  
 45 On So-and-so, Ea cast the incantation of the word of healing<sup>12</sup>  
 46 That the seven sages of Eridu soothe his body. TU<sub>6</sub>ÉN

The structure of this incantation is problematic both in terms of meaning and in terms of line division. First of all, why do *ina qibūt* <sup>d</sup>*Ea šar apšī*, “By the command of Ea, king of the Deep,” and *ina tê ša* <sup>d</sup>*Ea*, “By the spell of Ea,” follow right on each other in lines 40–41, thus creating an unnecessary repetition or duplication? K 2950 + 2966 + 81-7-27, 152, the best preserved individual source for Tablet VII, sets these statements out on two lines, thus accentuating their redundancy as separate statements. But before arriving at a conclusion, let us look at all the manuscripts. In synoptic form,<sup>13</sup> lines 40<sup>14</sup>–42 read:

11 Vars.: great bandage; soothing hands.

12 Line 45: Alternative translation: “O Ea, cast (imperative) ... on So-and-so”; if so, perhaps read: “your incantation of healing,” instead of “the incantation of the word of healing.” Text: *id(d)išumma ana annanna mār annanna* <sup>d</sup>*Ea šipat-ka/amāti*(INIM) *ša balāṭi*. The verb appears at the beginning of the line in all but one manuscript; in that manuscript it appears in the middle of the line: [*ana*] *annanna mār annanna id(d)išumma*(šUB-šú-ma) <sup>d</sup>*Ea šipat-ka/amāti*(INIM) *ša balāṭi*. The verb is treated as a preterite in at least one manuscript, but in the other manuscripts the writing can be construed as either *iddišumma* (preterite) or *idišumma* (imperative); but regardless of placement, the preterite form *iddišumma* seems to me to be a mistake for, or a later reading than, the imperative. If it is an imperative, Ea is certainly the addressee of the verb, and it is then probable that we should read *šipat-ka ša balāṭi* rather than *šipat amāti*(INIM) *ša balāṭi*. See below.

13 The following sigla are used here: O = K 2950 + 2966 + 81-7-27, 152; S<sub>1</sub> = K 3247; c = K 5350 + 5374 + 7476 + 7594 + 7610 + 7631 + 8882 + 9635 + 11567 + 19154 + Sm 798b; h = VAT 10059; m = A 7876; k = N 1423 + 1425 + 1426 + 1427 + 1428; m = Ni 2927 + 13079 + 13080.

14 For lines 40–42 our line division follows O, which differs from most of the other manuscripts in this regard; see below.

40	O	i	40	<i>ina qí-bit</i>	[ ] <sup>d</sup> é-a	LUGAL	ZU.AB	
	S <sub>1</sub>	i	11'	[ q ]i- <sup>d</sup> bit <sup>1</sup>	<sup>d</sup> DIŠ	LUGAL	<i>ap-si-i</i> →	
	c	i	22'	[		LUGA]L	ZU.A[B] →	
	h	obv.	20'	<i>ina qí-bit</i>	<sup>d</sup> DIŠ	MAN	ZU.AB →	
	m	viii	9'	[i]na <i>qí-bit</i>	<sup>d</sup> é-a	MAN	Z[U].AB →	
	k	obv.	10'	<i>ina qí-bit</i>	<sup>d</sup> [		] →	
	m	i	20'	[		LUGA]L	ZU.AB →	
41	O	i	41	<i>ina</i>	TU <sub>6</sub> šá <sup>d</sup> é-a	<i>ina</i>	ÉN šá <sup>d</sup> asa[l-l]ú- <i>hi</i>	
	S <sub>1</sub>	i	11'-12'	<i>ina te-e</i>	šá <sup>d</sup> [ ] / [		] <sup>d</sup> asal <sup>1</sup> -lú- <i>hi</i> →	
	c	i	22'-23'	[ ]-e.	šá <sup>d</sup> é-a / [		] <sup>d</sup> šá <sup>21</sup> [ as ]al-lú- <i>hi</i>	
	h	obv.	20'-21'	<i>ina te-e</i>	šá <sup>d</sup> DIŠ / <i>ina</i>	[É]N šá	<sup>d</sup> asal-lú- <i>hi</i> →	
	m	viii	9'-10'	<i>ina te-e</i>	šá <sup>d</sup> é-a / [i]na	ÉN šá	<sup>d</sup> asal- <sup>d</sup> lú <sup>1</sup> - <i>hi</i> →	
	k	obv.	10'-11'	[	] / [		] →	
	m	i	20'-21'	<i>ina te-e</i>	šá <sup>d</sup> é-a / [		] →	
42	O	i	42	<sup>d</sup> ina <i>ri<sup>1</sup>-kis</i>	<i>ra-ba-bu</i>	šá <sup>d</sup> g[u]- <i>la</i>		
	S <sub>1</sub>	i	12'	<sup>d</sup> ina <i>rik<sup>1</sup>-si</i>	<i>ra-<sup>d</sup>ba<sup>1</sup>-t[i</i>		]	
	c	i	24'	[	]- <i>ti</i>	šá <sup>d</sup> [	]	
	h	obv.	21'	<i>ina rik-si</i>	GAL-u	šá <sup>d</sup> gu- <i>la</i> ∴ →		
	m	viii	10'	<i>ina rik-si</i>	GAL-e	šá <sup>d</sup> ME.ME <sup>1</sup>		
	k	obv.	11'	[	-b]a- <i>ba</i>	šá <sup>d</sup> gu- <i>la</i> →		
	m	i	21'	[i]na	ŠU.II <i>rab-ba-a-ti</i>	šá <sup>d</sup> gu- <i>la</i>		

As noted above, ms. O (K 2950+) i 40–41 has a different line division from all the other manuscripts. But while ms. O separates *ina qibit* <sup>d</sup>Ea šar apšî (line 40) from *ina tê ša* <sup>d</sup>Ea (line 41a) and joins the latter (line 41a) to *ina šipti ša* <sup>d</sup>Asalluḫi, “by the incantation of Asalluḫi” (line 41b), in a bicolon, almost all the other manuscripts join *ina qibit* <sup>d</sup>Ea šar apšî (line 40) to *ina tê ša* <sup>d</sup>Ea (line 41a) in a bicolon, and *ina šipti ša* <sup>d</sup>Asalluḫi (line 41b) to *ina riksî rabbāti ša* <sup>d</sup>Gula, “By the comforting bandage of Gula” (line 42), in another. On the face of it, one is tempted to disregard the line division of ms. O and to follow those other manuscripts which link lines 40 with 41a and 41b with 42<sup>15</sup> in the hope of providing a solution to our problem. But it seems to me that even if we privilege the line

15 Three manuscripts (S<sub>1</sub>, m, and m) have lines 41b and 42 on the same line and break the line before line 43; two manuscripts (h and k) have very long lines and therefore also include line 43 (*ina qātī pašḫāti ša* <sup>d</sup>Nintinugga) on the same line as lines 41b and 42.

division of those manuscripts that set *ina qibīt* <sup>d</sup>Ea *šar apšī* and *ina tê ša* <sup>d</sup>Ea into one line, the difficulty noted above remains.

However, a different solution is suggested by the various difficulties of the text: the mention of the utterance of Ea in VII 40–41 in a repetitive fashion; the fact that while VII 40 has *ina qibīt* <sup>d</sup>Ea, VII 41a (*ina tê ša* <sup>d</sup>Ea) as well as the other lines follow the pattern *ina x ša* DN; the various problems in VII 45 (see below); and the fact that, with the exception of VII 41 (*ina tê ša* <sup>d</sup>Ea *ina šipti ša* <sup>d</sup>Asalluḫi) and VII 32 (*šaman šipti ša* <sup>d</sup>Ea *šaman šipti ša* <sup>d</sup>Asalluḫi), the god Ea stands alone throughout the incantation. These difficulties suggest that the text has been expanded and revised: we would suggest that an earlier text only had the section of text dealing with Ea plus the very end of the incantation (VII 45–46). We would treat lines 41–44 and probably the second half of line 32 as secondary.

The earlier text (with later additions marked in ⟨⟨ ⟩⟩) would have read:

- 29 ÉN *šamnu ellu šamnu ebbu šamnu namru*  
 30 *šamnu mullil zumri ša ilī*  
 31 *šamnu mupaššeḫ* (var. [muš]apšeḫ) *šer'ānī ša amēlūti*  
 32 *šaman šipti ša* <sup>d</sup>Ea ⟨⟨*šaman šipti ša* <sup>d</sup>Asalluḫi⟩⟩  
 33 *uṭaḫḫidka šaman tapšuḫti*  
 34 *ša* <sup>d</sup>Ea *iddinu ana pašḫāti* (var. *tapšuḫti*)  
 35 *apšuška šaman balāti*  
 36 *addika šipat* <sup>d</sup>Ea *bēl eridu* <sup>d</sup>Ninšikug  
 37 *aṭrud asakku aḫḫāzu šuruppû ša zumrika*  
 38 *ušaṭbi qūlu kūru u nissatu ša pagrika*  
 39 *upaššeḫ* (var. *ušaṭšeḫ*) *šer'ānī minātika lā ṭābūti*  
 40 *ina qibīt* <sup>d</sup>Ea *šar apšī*  
 41 ⟨⟨*ina tê ša* <sup>d</sup>Ea *ina šipti ša* <sup>d</sup>Asalluḫi⟩⟩  
 42 ⟨⟨*ina riksi rabbāti ša* <sup>d</sup>Gula⟩⟩  
 43 ⟨⟨*ina qātī pašḫāti ša* <sup>d</sup>Nintinugga⟩⟩  
 44 ⟨⟨*u* <sup>d</sup>Ningirima *bēlet šipti*⟩⟩  
 45 *ana annanna mār annanna idišumma* <sup>d</sup>Ea *šipatka ša balāti*  
 46 7 *apkallū šūt eridu lipaššihū* (var. *lišapšihū*) *zumuruš* TU<sub>6</sub> ÉN

- 29 Incantation. Pure oil, clear oil, bright oil,  
 30 Oil that purifies the body of the gods,  
 31 Oil that soothes the sinews of mankind,  
 32 Oil of the incantation of Ea, ⟨⟨oil of the incantation of Asalluḫi.⟩⟩  
 33 I coat you with soothing oil  
 34 That Ea granted for soothing,

- 35 I anoint you with the oil of healing,
- 36 I cast upon you the incantation of Ea, lord of Eridu, Ninshikug.
- 37 I expel Asakku, Ahhāzu (jaundice), chills of your body,
- 38 I remove dumbness, torpor, and misery of your body,
- 39 I soothe the sick sinews of your limbs.
- 40 By the command of Ea, king of the Deep.<sup>16</sup>
- 41 <<By the spell of Ea, by the incantation of Asalluḫi,>>
- 42 <<By the comforting bandage of Gula,>>
- 43 <<By the soothing hands of Nintinugga,>>
- 44 <<And Ningirima, mistress of incantation.>>
- 45 O Ea, cast your incantation of healing on So-and-so,
- 46 That the seven sages of Eridu soothe his body. TU<sub>6</sub> ÉN

This reconstruction may help us get a handle on some of the variants in line 45. In synoptic form, the line reads:

45	O	i	45	∅	[	NE]NNI	A	NENNI	
	S <sub>1</sub>	i	15'	[-d]i-šum-ma	ana	NENNI	DUMU	NENNI	
	h	obv.	22'	šUB-šum-ma	「a-na	NENNI	A	NENNI <sup>1</sup>	
	m	viii	13'	[i]d-dī-šú-ma	ana	NENNI	A	NENNI	
	k	obv.	12'	[	-m]a	ana	NENNI	A	[NE]NNI <sup>?</sup>
	m	i	24'	[					
				šUB-šú-ma	dé-a	ÉN	IN[IM	]	
				∅	d「DIS <sup>1</sup>	「ši-pat <sup>1</sup>	IN[IM	]	
				∅	∅	「ÉN <sup>1</sup>	INIM	šá TI.LA	
				∅	dDIS	ÉN	INIM	šá 「TI <sup>1</sup> .LA	
				∅	dé-a	「ÉN <sup>1</sup>	∅	∅ 「TI.LA <sup>1</sup> →	
				]	「dIDIM <sup>1</sup>	「ši-pat	INIM <sup>1</sup>	∅ [ ]	

<sup>16</sup> In this reconstructed early version, line 40 would serve as a concluding line to the previous section rather than as an introduction to the following lines, as it does in the standard form of the text containing lines 41–44 (see the introductory translation).

The variations of this line confront us with a number of difficulties and choices. The most significant of these are the position of the verb; the form of the verb (preterite 3ms or imperative ms); the role of Ea in the sentence (subject of preterite verb or second-person addressee of imperative); and the form of the final nominal phrase (*šīpat balāṭi*, *šīpatka ša balāṭi*, *šīpat amāti ša balāṭi*). In this context, I would comment on only a few issues:

*šīpat balāṭi* may well have been the original reading. It was then expanded to include *-ka/INIM ša*. The phrase *šīpat amāti ša balāṭi* seems rather clumsy, and therefore I would take *šīpat-ka ša balāṭi* to be a better and more original resolution of the signs. Taking ⟨ka⟩ here as *-ka*, the second-person masculine suffix, rather than as INIM, the logogram of *amāti*, goes best with (but does not require) a reading of the verb as an imperative; an imperative requires that Ea be the second-person addressee and that the line be addressed to him. However, there is no doubt that the verb is treated as a preterite 3ms in at least one manuscript. And when the verb is understood to be in the third person, Ea (rather than the exorcist<sup>17</sup>) would likely be the third-person subject of the verb and not the addressee of the line. But in those manuscripts in which Ea is that subject, ⟨ka⟩ could no longer be a syllabic writing for the suffix, but would have to represent the logogram for *amāti*. This last development—the replacement of *-ka* by *amāti* as the reading of ⟨ka⟩—was part of the larger tendency of emphasizing the power of the word of a god in an address to a material.<sup>18</sup> And whether Ea or his exorcist is the explicit subject of the verb, the line reports on and emphasizes the importance of the god's word and the exorcist's activity on behalf of the god.

I should reiterate that I understand “O Ea, cast your incantation of healing on So-and-so” to be an earlier (and better) reading than “On So-and-so, Ea cast the incantation of the word of healing” (or “O Ea, he cast your incantation of healing on So-and-so”). I would go so far as to suggest that perhaps the addition of the series of gods in lines 41–44 is responsible for some of the changes in the text of line 45, especially the change of the imperative to a third-person verb.<sup>19</sup>

17 The subject of the verb might be a priest, and then Ea would remain the addressee of the line (this possibility seems unlikely).

18 For a discussion of this tendency, see Abusch, “Blessing and Praise,” 4–6 [[97–100]].

19 After this study was submitted, I learned that Dr. Enrique Jiménez had identified another example of the incantation *šamnu ellu* on the reverse of BM 47889 [[CMAwR 3, no. 8.49, b]], an extract tablet now published on pl. 34 in W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013). I have not yet decided whether this form of the incantation is actually an extract from *Maqlû* itself. BM 47889 seems to contain a version somewhat different from the standard text. It may, therefore, have some bearing on

a reconstruction of the stages of the development of the incantation and may possibly affect elements of the argument presented here. For this reason, I present a transliteration of BM 47889, rev. here. I am grateful to Enrique Jiménez for sharing his identification and to Daniel Schwemer for several helpful suggestions on readings. The text reads:

- 1' [x x x x x] x [ ]  
 2' [ì.GIŠ KÙ ì.GIŠ] *eb-b*[i ì.GIŠ *nam-ri* ì.GIŠ]  
 3' [*mu-pa-ši-i*]h *šér-a-ni*[šá LÚ-ti ì.GIŠ *šip-tu*<sub>4</sub>]  
 4' [šá<sup>d</sup>IDIM] ì.GIŠ *šip-tu*<sub>4</sub> šá<sup>d</sup>[*asal-lú-ḫi ú-ṭa-ḫi-id-ka*]  
 5' [ì].<sup>r</sup>GIŠ<sup>1</sup> *tap-šu-uḫ-tu*<sub>4</sub> *ap-š*[*u-uš-ka* ì.GIŠ TI.LA]  
 6' *ad-di-ka* ÉN<sup>d</sup>IDIM [EN *eri-du*<sub>10</sub> <sup>d</sup>*nin-ši-kù*]  
 7' *aṭ-ru-ud*<sup>1</sup> [a]<sup>-r</sup>*sak*<sup>1</sup>-k[*u aḫ-ḫa-zu šu-ru-up-pu-u*]  
 8' šá<sup>1</sup> (text: a) s[U-*ka ú-šat-bi qu-ú-lu*]  
 9' *ku-ú-r*[*u ni-is-sa-tú ú-pa-áš-ši-ih*]  
 10' *šér-a-ni* <sup>r</sup>*mi-na*<sup>1</sup>-[*tí-ka* NU DU<sub>10</sub>.GA.MEŠ]  
 11' *ina qí-bit* <sup>d</sup>IDIM <sup>r</sup>d<sup>1</sup> [x x x x x x] \ <sup>d</sup>ID[IM ...]  
 end of tablet.

Textual Notes: It is possible that two of the variations are due to haplography: thus VII 30 may have been omitted between *nam-ri* and ì.GIŠ at the end of line 2', and VII 34 may have been omitted after *tap-šu-uḫ-tu*<sub>4</sub> in line 5'. However, I do not see how the omission of *ša pagrika* in line 9' can be due to a similar mechanical error. The sign on line 11' (dingir) seems to present a real variant to our text, though the first two signs in 11' b can be read as <sup>d</sup>ID[IM] and would then correspond to <sup>d</sup>Ea in VII 41.

## A Neo-Babylonian Recension of *Maqlû*: Some Observations on the Redaction of *Maqlû* Tablet VII and on the Development of Two of Its Incantations

The purpose of this paper is to describe a Neo-Babylonian recension of *Maqlû* VII contained on the Nineveh tablet K 5350 + 5374 + 7594 + 7610 + 7476 + 7631 + 8882 + 9635 + 11567 + 19154 + Sm 798b, to try to work out its relationship with the Standard Nineveh Version, and to trace a bit of the history of two of the incantations in Tablet VII.\*

In the summer of 1994, at a time when the number of fragments known to belong to this Neo-Babylonian tablet was fewer and several had not yet been physically joined,<sup>1</sup> I considered having the join K 7476 + Sm 798b broken and retested because the text that the join created seemed to deviate significantly from the Standard Version. The notable problem was that in this manuscript, a fragmentary version of VII 130–140<sup>2</sup> seemed to be located on the obverse, in column ii prior to lines 80–100, rather than in its expected place on the reverse, in column iii after lines 80–113. But that summer I identified K 19154<sup>3</sup> as a fragment of Tablet VII and joined it to the aforementioned K 7476 + Sm 798b, thus confirming the earlier join and indicating that one had to accept the existence of a deviant version.

\* It is a great pleasure to celebrate Professor Gernot Wilhelm's accomplishments and person. Gernot Wilhelm has made significant contributions to our knowledge and understanding of Akkadian, Hurrian, and Hittite linguistics, philology, and culture. Not only has he assumed the leadership of important scholarly institutions, but he has also led the way in the study of Western Asian languages and literatures through his own scholarship. On a more personal level, I would here express my deep appreciation of a friendship that began in 1977, and I wish Gernot many continued years of health and productivity.

1 At that time, the textual situation was: K 5374 + 9635 (+) K 7476 + Sm 798b (+) K 7631 + 11567 (+) K 5350 (+) K 8882, for which see Meier, "Studien," 78.

2 Whereas in previous studies, I followed the line divisions and line numbers in Meier, *Maqlû*, and Meier, "Studien," I now follow the line count of my own edition: T. Abusch, *The Magical Ceremony "Maqlû": A Critical Edition*, AMD 10 (Leiden: Brill, 2016); this new line count has already appeared in T. Abusch and D. Schwemer, "Das Abwehrzauber-Ritual *Maqlû* ('Verbrennung')," in *Omina, Orakel, Rituale und Beschwörungen*, ed. B. Janowski and G. Wilhelm, TUAT NF 4 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2008), 128–186.

3 It should be noted that K 19154 had already been described as "Bab. *Maqlû*-type incantations" by W. G. Lambert, *Catalogue of the Cuneiform Tablets in the Kouyunjik Collection of the British Museum: Third Supplement* (London, 1992), 32.

This meant that we had to deal with whatever problems a deviant version occasioned and to ascertain, first of all, what the existence of lines identical with 13off. on the obverse prior to lines 80–100 signified. More specifically, we had to decide whether the lines belong to the incantation *amsi qātīya* (VII 114–140) and thus indicate that that incantation was placed at an earlier point in the Neo-Babylonian recension or whether, as seemed more probable, they belong to the incantation *attīmannu kaššāptu* (VII 55–79) and thus indicate that that incantation had a different ending in that recension. In either case, we had to explain the meaning of the difference between the recensions and how it came about.

Matters stood thus until the early 2000s, when Jeanette Fincke joined K 7594 to K 8882.<sup>4</sup> I immediately noticed that there were several ramifications for the Neo-Babylonian recension. Here I mention just two: First, because K 7594 contained an early form of the incantation *amsi qātīya* (VII 114–140), the ending of the incantation on the obverse could not be part of *amsi qātīya* but had to be a variant ending of *attīmannu kaššāptu* (VII 55–79). This was confirmed when in the course of our work on the tablet in 2006, Daniel Schwemer noticed that the newly joined piece could be directly joined to the main tablet.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the join of K 7594 to a tablet of *Maqlû* meant that I had to rethink a solution that I had earlier proposed: in 1970, in a paper presented to the American Oriental Society and worked out in greater detail in my 1972 dissertation,<sup>6</sup> I had identified K 7594 as a precursor to the present *Maqlû* VII 114–140 and had argued that the *Maqlû* incantation was created by the insertion of a lengthy list of evils into a base incantation like K 7594: 1'–8' (// KAR 165, rev. 1'–4')—thus VII 118–129 (as well as some lines following the central ritual in line 130) were an expansion. At the time, I imagined that the development took place prior to the incorporation of the incantation in *Maqlû*, an opinion that seemed reasonable in view of the length of the insertion. But once Fincke had joined the Babylonian fragment K 7594 to a Babylonian manuscript of Tablet VII, it

4 See J. C. Fincke, "The Babylonian Texts of Nineveh: Report on the British Museum's 'Ashurbanipal Library Project,'" *A/O* 50 (2003–2004): 142. In 1997, at my request, M. J. Geller examined the various pieces of the tablet, for which I thank him; in a letter of November 14, 1997, he informed me that K 5374+, K 7476+, and K 7631+ could actually be directly joined. K 7610 was identified and joined to K 5350 by Fincke in 2003.

5 I take this opportunity to thank Daniel Schwemer for collations of K 5350+ during the preparation of this paper.

6 See T. Abusch, *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature: Case Studies* (a revised version of my 1972 Harvard dissertation), BJS 132 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 13–44. I there referred to this incantation as VII 119–146 in accordance with Meier's line count.

became apparent that the development must have taken place not before the composition of *Maqlû* but in the course of its transmission.

The existence of a version of Tablet VII that both incorporates K 7594 and shows other significant differences from the Standard Version of that tablet is a great boon. While we are now confronted by a recension that contains several serious differences from the Standard Version, these differences also provide us with a means of exploring the development of the text. For the variations can be linked together and can thereby help us to explain the differences between the versions and to trace the history of Tablet VII. Furthermore, this Neo-Babylonian Nineveh recension provides us with the possibility of furthering our understanding of the formation of some of the incantations in Tablet VII, and it suggests to me some modifications and refinements of my previous reconstruction of the history of *amsi qātīya* (VII 114–140).

The major areas of difference between the Neo-Babylonian Version and the Standard Nineveh Version relate to (1) the order of incantations, and (2) the form of the incantations *attimannu kaššāptu* (VII 55–79) and *amsi qātīya* (VII 114–140). There may have been other significant differences, but the Neo-Babylonian tablet is still not complete and the aforementioned differences are presently the main differences that are evident. I believe that the Neo-Babylonian text constitutes a separate recension and that overall it contains a text that is more original than that of the Standard Nineveh Version. This is immediately evident from the study of the order of incantations and of the text of the two incantations.

This study will be devoted to an examination of the two incantations VII 55–79 and VII 114–140. However, before taking up these incantations, I should comment on the difference in the order of incantations in the two recensions. In the Neo-Babylonian recension the incantations *ipšiki epšētiki* (lines 101–106) and *kišriki kušsurūti* (lines 107–113) do not appear between *bā'ertu ša bā'irāti* (lines 80–100) and *amsi qātīya* (lines 114–140), but come after *amsi qātīya*. Thus, rather than the order of the Standard Version, the Neo-Babylonian Version has the order:

*attimannu kaššāptu* (lines 55–79)  
*bā'ertu ša bā'irāti* (lines 80–100)  
*amsi qātīya* (lines 114–140)  
*ipšiki epšētiki* (lines 101–106)  
 [*kišriki kušsurūti*] (lines 107–113)

The order of the Neo-Babylonian Version is certainly not simply the result of scribal error. It is possible that this order makes better sense than that of the Standard Version. But, more significant, the Neo-Babylonian order is the very

order also found in the Sultantepe recension of the Ritual Tablet, a recension that usually contains an older/more original version of the text than the Neo-Assyrian Ritual Tablet found in Nineveh. *STT* 83, rev. 40' reads:

40'a [ÉN *am-si š*]U.[I]I.MU *ub*<sup>1</sup>-<sup>1</sup>*ba-ab*<sup>1</sup> SU.(MU) LUḪ ŠU.II :  
 40'b ÉN *ip-še*<sup>1</sup>*ki ep-ši*<sup>1</sup>-<sup>1</sup>*(ti)*<sup>1</sup>-<sup>1</sup>*ki*<sup>1</sup> LUḪ ŠU.II :  
 40'c ÉN KA.KEŠDA.MEŠ-*k*[*i* KEŠDA.MEŠ KI.MIN]

The order of incipits in the Sultantepe manuscript differs from that of the standard Nineveh Assyrian text of the Ritual Tablet and from the order of incantations of the standard Nineveh Assyrian text of Tablet VII. The order in *STT* 83, rev. is *STT* 83, rev. 40'a // RT 150'–151', *STT* 83, rev. 40'b // RT 148', and *STT* 83, rev. 40'c // RT 149'; that is, RT 148' // *STT* 83, rev. 40'b, RT 149' // *STT* 83, rev. 40'c, and RT 150'–151' // *STT* 83, rev. 40'a. As stated, the order agrees with that found in our Babylonian recension.

Turning now to the two incantations *attimannu kaššāptu* (55–79) and *amsi qātīya* (114–140), I shall first describe these incantations as they appear in the two versions of our text; I shall then discuss some of the differences between the forms of these incantations in the two versions.

## 1 Description

### 1.1 *amsi qātīya*

I begin with the latter incantation, because it is easier to understand the differences between the two versions of this incantation and because I have already explained many of the differences in an earlier study, an explanation that remains generally correct even though it was worked out when I still thought that the Neo-Babylonian Version was a precursor to an incantation in *Maqlû* rather than part of a *Maqlû* version. In parallel columns, the text of the two versions of *amsi qātīya* reads:<sup>7</sup>

	Standard text: <i>Maqlû</i> VII 114–140 <sup>7</sup>	Neo-Babylonian: K 5350+ iii
114	ÉN <i>amsi qātīya ubbiba zumrī</i>	[ÉN <i>amsi qātīya ubbib</i> ]a <i>zumrī</i>
115	<i>ina mē nagbi ellūti ša ina eridu ibbanū</i>	[ <i>ina mē nagbi ellūti ša ina eridu i</i> ]bbanū
116	<i>mimma lemnu mimma lā tābu</i>	[ <i>mimma lemnu mimma lā tābu</i> ] →

7 For a translation of the Standard Version of VII 55–79 and 114–140, see T. Abusch, *The Magical Ceremony “Maqlû”: A Critical Edition*, AMD 10 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 352–354 and 356–357.

117	<i>ša ina zumriya širīya šer'anīya</i> <i>bašû ... (expanded list of evils)</i>	<i>[ša ina zu]mriya širīya / [šer'anīya</i> <i>b]ašû →</i>
129	<i>lumnū kišpi ruḥê rusê upšāšê lemnūti</i> <i>ša amēlūti</i>	
130	<i>itti mē 'ša' zumriya u musāti ša</i> <i>qātīya</i>	<i>itti mē ša zumriya / [u musât]i ša</i> <i>qātīya →</i>
131	<i>liššaḥiṭma [e]li šalam nigsagilê lillik</i>	<i>liššaḥiṭma / [ana muḥḥiki u] ana</i> <i>laniki lillik</i>
132	<i>šalam nigs[agil]ê arnī dinānī lizbil</i>	
133	<i>'sūqu u' sulū lipaṭṭirū arnīya</i>	
134	<i>ēnītu līnānī māḥertu limḥuranni</i>	<i>[ēnītu līn]ānī māḥertu limḥuranni</i>
135	<i>amḥur meḥru limḥurū'inni</i>	<i>[amḥur meḥru lim]ḥurū'inni ÉN</i>
136	<i>ūmu šulma arḥu ḥidūti šattu</i> <i>ḥegallaša libila</i>	
137	<i><sup>d</sup>ea <sup>d</sup>šamaš u <sup>d</sup>marduk yāši</i> <i>rūšānimma</i>	
138	<i>lippašrū kišpi ruḥū rusū</i>	
139	<i>upšāšū lemnūti ša amēlūti</i>	
140	<i>u māmītu littasi ša zumriya</i>	

The Standard Version of *amsi qātīya* (114–140) contains some twenty-seven lines. In summary form, it runs as follows: The speaker first states that he is washing himself in the pure water of Eridu. He then expresses the wish that all evils, which are enumerated in a list that culminates in a standard enumeration of witchcraft evils, be rinsed off his body with his wash water and flow onto a figurine of a substitute, a *nigsagilâ*. The incantation ends with a series of wishes, namely, that the street release his sin, that a substitute stand in for him and receive the evil consequences of an unlucky encounter, that the day, month, and year bring goodness, that Ea, Šamaš, and Marduk assist him, and, finally, that the witchcraft be released and the *māmītu* take leave of his body.

Turning to the Neo-Babylonian Version, we note that also in that version, the speaker begins by stating that he is washing himself in the pure water of Eridu, but he then expresses the wish that unspecified evil (*mimma lemnu*)—not a list of evils—be rinsed off onto the person of an unspecified addressee. The speaker concludes with the wish that a substitute stand in for him and receive the evil consequences of an unlucky encounter. The restored text of this version reads:

[ÉN *amsi qātīya ubbib*]a zumrī  
[ina mē nagbi ellūti ša ina eridu i]bbanū

[*mimma lemnu mimma lā tābu ša ina zu*]mriya šīrīya  
 [šer'ānīya b]ašū itti mē ša zumriya  
 [u musāt]i ša qātīya liššahīṭma  
 [ana muḥḥiki u] ana lāniki lillik  
 [ēnītu līn]ānni māḥertu limḥuranni  
 [amḥur meḥru lim]ḥurū'inni ÉN<sup>8</sup>

I wash my hands, I cleanse my body  
 in the pure spring water that was formed in Eridu.  
 May everything evil, everything untoward that is in my body, my flesh,  
 and my sinews rinse off with the water of my body  
 and the washing of my hands  
 and come upon your head and your body.  
 May a substitute stand in for me, may one who encounters (me) take (it)  
 over from me,  
 I have encountered an ominous encounter; may they take (it) over from  
 me.

This version is only eight lines long, thus in this short version there is no list of evils—a list that runs some twelve lines in the Standard Version—and no mention either of witchcraft or of a *nigsagilā*.

## 1.2 *attimannu kaššāptu*

We now turn to the earlier incantation in the tablet, *attimannu kaššāptu*. To the extent that it is preserved, the text of K 5350+, the Neo-Babylonian Version, is basically identical<sup>9</sup> with that of the Standard Version through line 76

8 The actual text reads:

[ÉN *am-si* šU.II.MU *ub-bi-b*]a SU.MU  
 [ina A.MEŠ IDIM KÙ.MEŠ *šá ina eri-du*<sub>10</sub> *ī*]b-ba-nu-ú  
 [*mim-ma lem-nu mim-ma* NU DU<sub>10</sub>-GA *šá ina s*]U.MU UZU.MEŠ.MU  
 [SA.MEŠ.MU *b*]a-<sup>r</sup>šū-ú<sup>1</sup> KI A.MEŠ *šá* SU.MU  
 [*u mu-sa-a-t*]i *šá* šU.II.MU *liš-šá-ḥi-iṭ-ma*  
 [*ana muḥ-ḥi-ki u*] *ana la-ni-ki lil-lik*  
 [*e-ni-tú li-na*]-*an-ni ma-ḥir-tú lim-ḥur-an-ni*  
 [*am-ḥur mi-iḥ-ru lim*]-*ḥu-ru-ṛ-in-ni* ÉN

9 The only textual variants worth noting here are the following: Lines 67–68: The nouns in line 67 are transposed: [*me*]šrētika ubber [*m*]inātika ukassi; they, as well as the noun in the following clause (line 68: [*ma*]nānika), have a second-person masculine singular possessive suffix instead of a feminine one. Line 72: *epšētēki lemnēti* is absent. For the significance of these variants, see the section on the history of *attimannu kaššāptu* below.

(lines 75–76 are broken in K 5350+). A significant divergency sets in at line 77. The Standard Version and the variant section of K 5350+ read:

	Standard text: <i>Maqlû</i> VII 55–7*9	Neo-Babylonian: K 5350+ ii (var.)
55	ÉN <i>attīmannu kaššāptu ša īpuša šalmī</i>	
56	<i>iṭṭulu lānī ibnū<sup>d</sup> lamassī</i>	
57	<i>īm[u]ru [b]ālti ušarriḫu gattī</i>	
58	<i>uṣabbū nabnūt[ī]</i>	
59	<i>umaššilu bunnannīya</i>	
60	<i>ubbir[u m]inātīya</i>	
61	<i>ukassū mešrētīya ukannīnu manānīya</i>	
62	<i>yāši<sup>d</sup> ea mašmaš ilī uma<sup>ʾ</sup>iranni</i>	
63	<i>maḥar<sup>d</sup> samaš šalamki ēšer</i>	
64	<i>lānki aṭṭul lamassaki abni bāltaki āmur</i>	
65	<i>gattaki ušarreḫ nabnūtki uṣabbi</i>	
66	<i>ina<sup>d</sup> nisaba elleti bunnanniki umaššil</i>	
67	<i>minātiki ubber mešrētiki ukassi</i>	
68	<i>manānīki ukannīn</i>	
69	<i>ipšū tēpušīnīni ēpuški</i>	
70	<i>mīḥer tušamḥirīnīni ušamḥerki</i>	
71	<i>gimil tagmilīnīni utēr agmilki</i>	
72	<i>kišpiki ruḫēki rusēki epšētēki lemnēte</i>	
73	<i>upšāšēki ayyābūte</i>	
74	<i>našparātiki ša lemutti</i>	
75	<i>rāmki zērki dibalūki zikurudūki</i>	
76	<i>kadabbedūki dimmakurrūki likillū rēški</i>	
77	<i>itti mē ša zumriya u musāti ša qātīya</i>	<i>itti m[ē ša zumriya u musāte ša qātīya]</i>
	<i>liššaḥiṭma</i>	<i>liššaḥi[ṭma eli šalam nigsagilē lillik]</i>
78	<i>ana muḥḥiki u lānīki lillikma anāku</i>	<i>šalam nigsagi[lē arnī dinānī lizbil]</i>
	<i>lubluṭ</i>	
79	<i>ēnīta līnānīni māḥerta limḥuranni</i>	<i>sūqu [u sulū lipaṭṭirū arnīya]</i>
79A	<i>amḥur meḥru limḥurū<sup>ʾ</sup>inīni</i>	<i>ūmu šul[ma arḫu ḥidūti šattu ḥegallaša libila]</i>
		<i><sup>d</sup>ea [<sup>d</sup>šamaš u <sup>d</sup>marduk yāši rūsānimma]</i>
		<i>lippaš[rū kišpī ruḫū rusū upšāšū lemnūti ša amēlūti] \</i>
		<i>[u māmitu littaši ša zumriya É]N</i>

In its standard form, this incantation is a victim's address to a witch who is referred to in the second person. The victim first describes how the witch had formed a detailed replica of his person and has twisted and bound its limbs. He then states that he has gone before Šamaš at the behest of Ea, drawn a flour representation of the witch, and created a form of the witch by performing the same actions of formation that she had performed against him. He then states that he has caused her to experience the witchcraft that she had performed against him. He expresses the wish that her acts of witchcraft stand ready to overwhelm her and then asks that it—the evil—be rinsed off his body with his wash water and flow onto the person of his addressee. He concludes with the wish that a substitute stand in for him and receive the evil consequences of an unlucky encounter.

When we turn to the Neo-Babylonian form, we note that generally the text runs parallel to the Standard Version until we reach line 77, the wish that the water pour down upon the witch's person. Here, instead of *ana muḥḥiki u ana lāniki*, we encounter a substitute, *nigsagilê*. The restored text of this section of the Neo-Babylonian Version reads:

*itti m[ê ša zumriya u musāti ša qātīya]  
liššaḥi[ṭma eli šalam nigsagilê lillik]  
šalam nigsagi[lê arnī dinānī lizbil]  
sūqu [u sulū lipaṭṭirū arnīya]  
ūmu šul[ma arḫu ḥidūti šattu ḥegallaša libila]  
<sup>d</sup>ea [<sup>d</sup>šamaš u <sup>d</sup>marduk yāši rūšānimma]  
lippaš[rū kišpī ruḫū rusū upšāšū lemmūti ša amēlūti] \*  
*[u māmītu littāši ša zumriya É]N<sup>10</sup>*

With the water of my body and the washing of my hands  
May it rinse off and come upon a figurine of a substitute,  
May the figurine of the substitute bear my sin as a replacement,  
May street and way undo my sins,

10 The actual text reads:

KI A. [MEŠ ša zumriya u musāti ša qātīya]  
liš-šá-ḥi-i[ṭ-ma eli šalam nigsagilê lillik]  
NU NÍG.SAG.Í [L-e arnī dinānī lizbil]  
su-ú-qu [u sulū lipaṭṭirū arnīya]  
u<sub>4</sub>-mu šul-[ma arḫu ḥidūti šattu ḥegallaša libila]  
<sup>d</sup>é-a [<sup>d</sup>šamaš u <sup>d</sup>marduk yāši rūšānimma]  
lip-pa-áš-[ru kišpī ruḫū rusū upšāšū lemmūti ša amēlūti] \

[u māmītu littāši ša zumriya É]N

May the day bring well-being, the month joy, the year prosperity.  
 Ea, Šamaš, Asalluḫi, help me so that  
 Witchcraft, spittle, enchainments, evil machinations of mankind be  
 released,  
 And oath go forth from my body.

It is immediately striking that the ending of the incantation *attīmannu kaššāptu* in the Neo-Babylonian Version is all but identical with the ending of *amsi qātīya* in the Standard Version. I believe that these lines were originally part of *attīmannu kaššāptu* and were later transferred to *amsi qātīya*.

Further evidence that these lines were originally not part of *amsi qātīya* and derive instead from *attīmannu kaššāptu* is provided by *KAR 269* [[*CMAwR 2*, no. 8.21, A]], obv. ii 1–3:

[x x (x)<sup>11</sup> yâš]i rūṣ[ānimma lippašrū kišpī]  
 ʿruḫū<sup>1</sup> [r]usū u[pšāšū lemmūti ša amēlūti]  
 ʿu<sup>1</sup> [m]āmītu ša zumriya [littaši]<sup>12</sup>

These lines are identical with the last lines of the standard text of VII 114–140. But in this Assur text, these lines are not part of *amsi qātīya*; rather, in that version, just as in the Neo-Babylonian one, they are part of *attīmannu kaššāptu* and duplicate the last lines of the Neo-Babylonian Version of that earlier incantation.<sup>13</sup> This is evident from the fact that *KAR 269*, obv. ii 1–3 are separate from and precede the incantation found on rev. iii 1'–13', which incantation is the early Assur parallel to and representative of *amsi qātīya* of the Standard Version.<sup>14</sup> Thus, at least as regards the ending of *attīmannu kaššāptu*, both an early Assur text<sup>15</sup> and our Neo-Babylonian recension contain the same text.

11 Probably restore <sup>d</sup>*marduk* here and the names of <sup>d</sup>*ea* and <sup>d</sup>*šamaš* at the end of the preceding line.

12 For the identification of these lines and a transliteration of Ebeling's copy, see Abusch, *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature*, 77 and 81. I have been able to consult a new copy recently prepared by D. Schwemer, and as regards these lines, there are no textual differences between the copies.

13 Already in Abusch, *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature*, 42 n. 56, I had considered the possibility that these lines were not part of *amsi qātīya* but the ending of a different incantation. But given the evidence available at that time, I felt that it was more judicious to assume that it was the final part of *amsi qātīya*. Modify that conclusion accordingly.

14 For a discussion of that incantation, see below.

15 The Assur version comprises not only *KAR 226* [[*CMAwR 2*, no. 8.20, B]] and 269, first presented in Abusch, *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature* and touched upon in the present article, but also such texts as *KAR 240* (while Meier included *KAR 240* in his edition of

But it is not just that the concluding section of the Neo-Babylonian Version of *attīmannu kaššāptu* is now found at the conclusion of the Standard Version of *amsi qātīya* (at lines 130–133 and 136–140); in addition, the conclusion of the Neo-Babylonian Version of *amsi qātīya*—*ēnītu līnānni māḥertu limḥuranni | amḥur meḥru limḥurū'inni*—is both retained in the Standard Version of that incantation (at lines 134–135) and repeated at the end of the Standard Version of *attīmannu kaššāptu* (at lines 79–79a). Accordingly, the differences between the text of the individual incantations in the two versions are not isolated differences, and the characteristics of the individual incantations in the different versions reflect recensional tendencies.

## 2 History

It is surely significant that the major differences between the Neo-Babylonian and Standard Versions of our two incantations are interrelated. But how are we to explain the different forms of the incantations and their relationship? To answer these questions we must first understand the shared character of each of the different versions and the significance of the developments from one version to the next. The two incantations in the Standard Version are now closer in form to conventional witchcraft texts than are their versions in the Neo-Babylonian recension. But even these two incantations were originally not standard witchcraft incantations. Rather, they were rooted in and had features of the *namburbi* type or reflected a type of incantation that was intended to counter evil signs that were sent by the witch and encountered by her victim. This group of incantations—especially the earlier versions—emphasized the use of substitutes as the recipient of the evil and eventually conflated the witch and the substitute, thereby also punishing the witch and causing her to suffer the harm that she had initiated against her victim. I cannot take up all the details here, but let me sketch a bit of the development of these incantations as I understand it.

### 2.1 *amsi qātīya*

The most general of the forms is the Neo-Babylonian Version of *amsi qātīya* (VII 114–140), for here the generic evil—*mimma lemnu mimma lā ṭābu*—which adheres to the speaker is to be washed off onto the addressee (*ana muḥḥiki u ana lāniki*), presumably the substitute, who is then mentioned explicitly in the last line (*ēnītu līnānni māḥertu limḥuranni | amḥur meḥru limḥurū'inni*).

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*Maqlū*, I decided some years ago that it should not be treated as a manuscript of the Standard Version because of its high degree of divergence therefrom).

In all essentials, my earlier reconstruction of the history of the fragmentary incantation on K 7594 and of its relationship to the standard text of VII 114–140 still holds. The Neo-Babylonian Version is a form of text from which we would derive the long text found in the Standard Version.<sup>16</sup>

The Neo-Babylonian Version contains a base text that could have served as the kernel for the much-expanded Standard text. Subsequently, the incantation was expanded by the insertion of a standard general list of evils of the *namburbi* type. In addition, the witchcraft entry—*lumnū kišpī ruḥê rusê upšāšê lemnūti ša amēlūti*—that originally occurred much earlier in that list was moved to the end of the list; the concluding section presently found in the Neo-Babylonian Version of *attimannu kaššāptu*—an ending associated primarily with the *namburbis*—was transferred to our incantation; and the original ending—*ēnītu līnānni māḥertu limḥuranni | amḥur meḥru limḥurūʾinni*—was incorporated into the new ending.

These developments had two consequences and perhaps purposes. The incorporation of the list of evils and the new ending transformed the text into a general or universal *namburbi* type. But given the *Maqlū* context, perhaps a more important development is evident in the movement of the witchcraft entry to the end of the list, for the position of that entry at the end of the list accorded witchcraft special importance and probably was done for the purpose of adapting the text for use against witchcraft or enhancing that use if the text was already being used against witchcraft. This transformation was supplemented by the mention of witchcraft in line 140, the last line of the text: *lippašrū kišpī ruḥū rusū upšāšū lemmūti ša amēlūti u māmītu littāši ša zumriya*, “so that witchcraft, spittle, enchainments, evil machinations of mankind be released, and oath go forth from my body.” Still, in addition to containing segments that are related to *namburbis*, this incantation also retained features that make it anomalous and dysfunctional as an anti-witchcraft text and are pointers to its history.<sup>17</sup>

Here we should make mention of a related text that underwent some of the same developments as the Standard Version of *amsi qātīya* (VII 114–140). I have in mind *KAR 269*, rev. iii 1ʾ–13ʾ.<sup>18</sup> In *KAR 269*, the beginning of the incantation

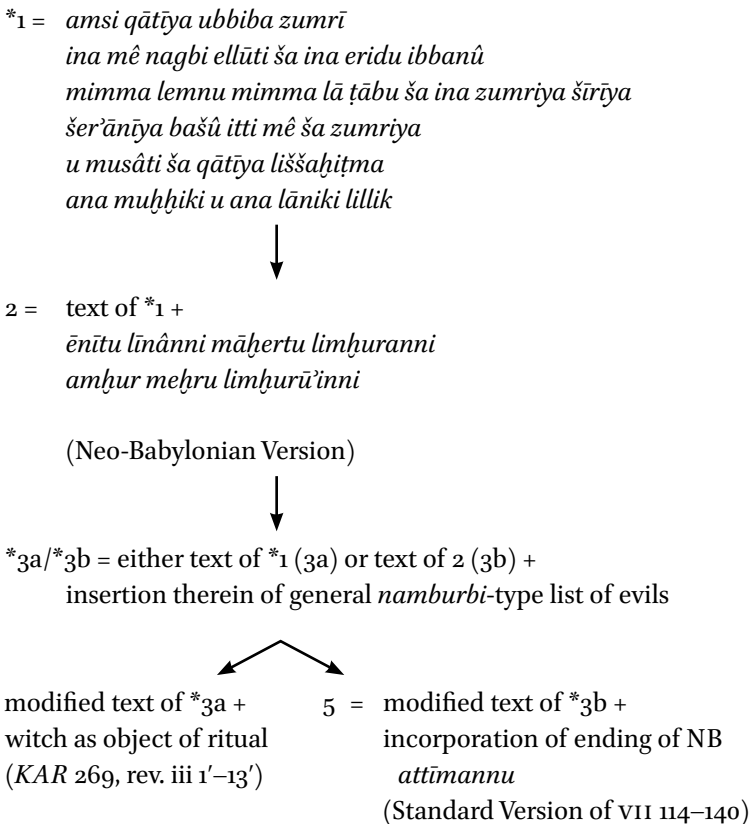
16 That the incantation would have developed from the long form of the Standard Version to the short form of the Neo-Babylonian Version is highly unlikely and almost inconceivable.

17 Most notably, the mention of a *nigsagilā* in line 132, which mention was carried over from the earlier version of *attimannu kaššāptu*.

18 For this text, see Abusch, *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature*, xv–xvi, 13–44. I noted (xv–xvi) that the piece of the tablet that contained the incantation under study was missing and that I was therefore unable to collate it or even study a photograph. Fortunately, Daniel Schwemer found the missing piece and published a copy of the whole tablet in S. M. Maul et al., *Ritual Beschreibungen und Gebete I*, KALI 4, WVDOG 133 (Wiesbaden:

is broken; the preserved text begins with a fragmentary version of the standard general list of evils of the *namburbi* type. In this version of the incantation, as in *Maqlū* VII 114–140, the list culminates in a standard enumeration of witchcraft evils, which here, however, is followed by *ša ina zumriya širīya šer’ānīya bašū*. In this version of the incantation, the list seems to have been inserted between *mimma lemnu mimma lā ṭābu* (VII 116) and *ša ina zumriya širīya šer’ānīya bašū* (VII 117). Following the list, the speaker expresses the wish that all evils be rinsed off his body with his wash water and flow upon the witch (note that our other versions do not mention the witch as the explicit object of the ritual).

The approximate development of the two versions of *Maqlū* VII 114–140 and of their Assur parallel *KAR* 269, rev. iii 1’–13’ may be set out schematically as follows:



Harrassowitz, 2011), no. 29, pp. 68–71 and 196–197. Schwemer’s copy shows some differences from the copy in *KAR* 269, reverse, and from several of my earlier readings, but these do not effect my overall conclusion that *KAR* 269, rev. iii 1’–13’ and the Standard Version of VII 114–140 are parallels and derive from the same original text.

As I have already noted elsewhere, *KAR* 269, rev. iii 1'–13' and the Standard Version of VII 114–140 are parallels and derive from the same original text.<sup>19</sup> However, *KAR* 269, rev. iii 1'–13' is less complex and represents an earlier stage of development of our incantation.

## 2.2 *attimannu kaššāptu*

The same general development, but this time starting later in the evolution of the incantation, is evident in *attimannu kaššāptu* (VII 55–79). The earlier version—the Neo-Babylonian Version—was already intended to counter evil that included omens sent by the witch, but the incantation was still centered on the transference of the evil onto a *nigsagilâ* substitute; this version ended, moreover, with a series of wishes of the *namburbi* type. A comparison of the two extant versions of this incantation shows that this earlier version was transformed by the replacement of the *šalam nigsagilâ* by a second-person referent and the replacement (that is, its transfer to VII 114–140) of the series of wishes that had opened with a wish involving the *šalam nigsagilâ* by the simpler *ēnītu līnānni māḥertu limḥuranni amḥur meḥru limḥurū'inni*. By the elimination of the original series of wishes and the replacement of the *šalam nigsagilâ* by the “you” of the figurine, the incantation takes on an increased witchcraft quality, for the “you” of the figurine was—or at least could be—construed as referring to the representation of the witch mentioned earlier in line 63 (*šalamki ēšir*). These developments in this incantation are more subtle than the changes that we can document either through manuscripts or parallels for *amsi qātīya*. In that incantation, we saw a text that was general in its approach to evil change into a *namburbi* type and then take on witchcraft qualities. Here, in *attimannu kaššāptu*, the version of the text that we have even in the Neo-Babylonian recension is a stage of development and the result of earlier transformations of a text in *namburbi* garb into one that is more like a witchcraft text.

That even the Neo-Babylonian Version of this incantation is already the result of earlier changes of a non-witchcraft incantation into one directed against witchcraft is clear from a number of anomalies in the incantation:

A. *namburbi* quality rather than witchcraft quality: The *namburbi* quality is evident from the original use of a substitute and from the original ending as well as from the centrality of the theme of the reversion of witchcraft signs encountered by the victim that were sent by the witch in lines 69–71 and 73–74:

<sup>19</sup> Abusch, *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature*, 13–44.

*ipšū tēpušīnīni ēpuški*  
*miḥer tušamḥirīnīni ušamḥerki*  
*gimil tagmilīnīni utēr agmilki*  
*(kišpīki ruḥēki rusēki epšētēki lemnēte)*  
*upšāšēki ayyābūte*  
*našparātīki ša lemutti*

The sorcery that you performed against me I perform against you,  
 The (ominous) encounter that you caused me to encounter I make you  
 take over,  
 The vengeance that you wrecked on me I wreck on you.  
 (May your witchcraft, your spittle, your enchainments, your evil  
 manipulations,)<sup>20</sup>  
 Your hostile machinations,  
 Your messages of evil, ...

B. In this incantation, the witch is accused of creating a detailed and realistic form of representation of the victim (lines 56–59); the victim, for his part, states that he is creating a similar form of representation of the witch (lines 64–66):

*iṭṭulu lānī ibnū<sup>d</sup> lamassī*  
*īmuru bāltī ušarriḥu gattī*  
*ušabbū nabnītī / umaššīlu bunnannīya*

(O witch) Who looked at my form and created my image,  
 Who saw my bearing and gave rich detail to my physical build,  
 Who comprehended my appearance and reproduced my features.

*lānki aṭṭul lamassaki abni →*  
*bāltaki āmur | gattaki ušarreh →*  
*nabnītiki ušabbi | ina<sup>d</sup> nisaba elleti bunnannīki umaššil*

I have looked at your form and created your image,  
 I have seen your bearing and given rich detail to your physical build,  
 I have comprehended your appearance and reproduced your features  
 with pure flour.

20 Line 72 was inserted at a later stage of development of the text; see below.

Yet normally in witchcraft texts, representations, both of the witch and of the victim, are generic and not specific. But the type of representation found in our incantation is like the type occasionally made to serve as a substitute in *namburbi* materials. As R. I. Caplice observed regarding substitutes, *tamšilu* “entail[s] a more realistic physical representation of the ominous object [than *šalmu*].”<sup>21</sup> Note the emphasis on the related verb *muššulu* in *attimannu* (lines 59 and 66).

C. That the figures in the early portion of the incantation were not only originally the object of witchcraft and anti-witchcraft activity and that the text experienced revision are further suggested by textual peculiarities in this section:

1. While all other lines of the corresponding descriptions of the witch’s and the victim’s ritual activities are parallel, the opening line of each is not. Whereas the witch is said to make a figurine in clay (line 55), the patient draws an image in flour (line 63):<sup>22</sup>

*attimannu kaššāptu ša ipuša šalmī*

Whoever you are, O witch who made my figurine (line 55);

*maḥar dšamaš šalamki ēšer*

And before Šamaš I have drawn your image (line 63).

2. Lines 60–61 // 67–68 read:

*ubbiru minâtīya*

*ukassû mešrêtīya →*

*ukanninu manānīya*

(O witch) Who bound my body,  
Who tied my limbs together,  
Who twisted my sinews.

*minâtīki ubber →*

*mešrêtīki ukassi*

*manānīki ukannin*

21 R. I. Caplice, “The Akkadian Text Genre Namburbi” (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1963), 83.

22 Note line 66: *ina dnisaba elleti bunnanniki umaššil*.

I have bound your body,  
 I have tied your limbs together,  
 I have twisted your sinews.

These lines (60–61 // 67–68) differ from the rest of the description in two ways:

- a. Poetic form: This poetic line is made up of three units in contrast to the preceding lines in the description, each of which contains two units.
- b. Whereas the other lines of the description simply tell how the image was conceived and fashioned, these lines describe destructive actions.

These several anomalies are explained by the hypothesis that the incantation originally told of the patient's construction of a detailed substitute and that subsequently the text was transformed into a description of the parallel activities of a witch and a victim, including the twisting of limbs. Thus, the original description was lines 62–66; subsequently, lines 55–59 and 60–61 // 67–68 were added.

Further support for the separate origin of at least lines 60–61 // 67–68 is actually provided by our Neo-Babylonian manuscript. Earlier (see above, n. 9), we noticed that in that manuscript the nouns of the first two units (line 67) are transposed (*[me]šrêtika ubber [m]inâtika ukassi*) and that their possessive pronominal suffixes are masculine rather than the expected feminine of the Standard Version. What makes this suffix variation particularly interesting is that in the same manuscript also the noun in the following clause of the three-unit sequence (line 68) has a second-person singular masculine possessive suffix (*[ma]nānika ukannin*) rather than the feminine of the Standard Version. Since this manuscript agrees with the other manuscript in having feminine suffixes in the other lines, the occurrence of *-ka* in a set of clauses that is different from the rest of the incantation also in other respects suggests that these lines formed a set that was carried over to our incantation from elsewhere. One may not doubt the significance of the variation of suffixes here, for this change to masculine occurs only in these two lines of the incantation in this Neo-Babylonian manuscript and is, therefore, not a function of this manuscript and of Neo-Babylonian disregard for final vowels.

That the text had been subjected to the kind of witchcraft transformation mentioned above would agree, moreover, with the different forms of the common witchcraft entry, line 72, in the two recensions: Whereas the Standard Version has *kišpiki ruḥêki rusêki epšêteki lemnêti*, the Neo-Babylonian Version has *[kišpik]i ruḥêki rusêki*, but not *epšêteki lemnêti*. If we assume that the standard line was introduced as part of a witchcraft overhaul, then perhaps *epšêteki lemnêti* was not included at first because the more original *upšāšêki ayyābūti* (line 73) was perceived as equivalent to *epšêteki lemnêti*. That this portion of

the text has been revised is suggested also by the fact that there is now no clear subject in either recension for the singular verbs in *itti mē ša zumriya u musāti ša qātīya liššaḥiṭma eli ... lillik* of the ritual wish in lines 77–78, for (with the possible exception of *miḥer tušamḥirīnni ušamḥerki gimil tagmilīnni utēr agmilki*) the preceding subjects are plural.

Thus, not only has the Standard Babylonian Version of *attīmannu kaššāptu* undergone change from the early Neo-Babylonian Version, but even that version already represented a transformation of a still earlier text that was originally not directed against witchcraft.



Having noticed that our Neo-Babylonian Nineveh tablet represents a separate recension, we would note, by way of conclusion, that Tablet VII is not the only *Maqlû* tablet for which a Neo-Babylonian recension is attested at Nineveh, though perhaps it is the most dramatic instance. One or two examples should suffice to illustrate this point. In the Ritual Tablet, the Neo-Babylonian Nineveh manuscript K 8879+ and the Sultantepe manuscript *STT* 83 agree in presenting ritual instructions in a more concise manner than do the Neo-Assyrian Nineveh texts of the Ritual Tablet. The Neo-Babylonian Nineveh tradition of Tablet VIII seems to contain fewer incantations than the Neo-Assyrian Nineveh Version. In Tablet VIII, the incantation *undu kaššāptu ibir nāru*, lines 35'–52', is omitted in the Neo-Babylonian Nineveh text K 10106 + 10276. That this reflects the existence of a separate Babylonian recension is indicated by the omission of the incipits of this very incantation as well as of the preceding one, *ittapha* <sup>d</sup>*Šamaš* (VIII 24'–34'), in the aforementioned Neo-Babylonian Nineveh Ritual Tablet K 8879+ and in the Sultantepe manuscript of the Ritual Tablet.<sup>23</sup>

Not surprisingly, *Maqlû* had multiple recensions. And by noticing the existence of different recensions of *Maqlû* Tablet VII, we have been able to follow the development of some *Maqlû* incantations and to see how they originally had a more general character but were transformed into anti-witchcraft incantations, thereby assuming their standard form. We have also been able to observe the development of our *Maqlû* text itself from one version to the next.

23 For the examples from the Ritual Tablet, see T. Abusch, "Ritual and Incantation: Interpretation and Textual History: A Consideration of *Maqlû* VII: 58–105 and IX: 152–59," in *"Sha'arei Talmon": Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon*, ed. M. Fishbane and E. Tov (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1991), 378–380 [[AMD 5, 193–196]]; and T. Abusch, "The Ritual Tablet and Rubrics of *Maqlû*: Toward the History of the Series," in *Ah, Assyria .... Studies in Assyrian History and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography Presented to Hayim Tadmor*, ed. M. Cogan and I. Eph'al, ScrHier 33 (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1991), 237–240 [[AMD 5, 167–169]].

## Vetitive and Prohibitive: An Observation

It is well known that the earlier attested vetitive (e.g., *ayy-iprus*) is eventually replaced by the prohibitive (e.g., *lā iparras*) in later Akkadian dialects.\*<sup>1</sup> But both forms occur in Standard Babylonian, sometimes even with the same verb.

Scholars often distinguish between the two forms by means of different general descriptions and translation values.<sup>2</sup> For example:

According to *GAG* §81i, the vetitive expresses a negative wish directed at a person of equal or higher standing. It is, however, **not a formal prohibition**.... Edzard 1973: 132 supplies a semantic explanation, thereby pointing out the semantic difference between both groups: The prohibitive (representing the directives) has to do with volition and **the power or possibility to execute the action** while the vetitive (representing the wish paradigm) is used with **wishes**, where an action or state is **not wanted but not prohibited**.<sup>3</sup>

In preparing my recently published edition of *Maqlû*,<sup>4</sup> I have generally followed the standard understanding of these forms. Thus, I have translated the vetitive as if it were a negative optative (e.g., “May he not”) and the prohibitive as if it were a negative command (e.g., “He shall not”).<sup>5</sup> But it should be noted that in

\* Professor Markham J. Geller has focused much of his scholarly work and talent on Babylonian magical texts. Thus, it is a pleasure to dedicate this modest study of grammatical phenomena in a Babylonian magical text to Mark, friend and colleague.

1 See, e.g., *GAG*, §81h–i; J. Huehnergard, *A Grammar of Akkadian*, 3rd ed., HSS 45 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), §16.3; N. J. C. Kouwenberg, *The Akkadian Verb and Its Semitic Background*, LANE 2 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 217–220; A. Sjörs, *The History of Standard Negation in Semitic* (Uppsala: Department of Linguistics and Philology, Uppsala University, 2015), esp. 100–102 and 363–364 (I owe my knowledge of the last cited work to John Huehnergard).

2 See, e.g., *GAG*, §81h–i; D. O. Edzard, “Die Modi beim älteren akkadischen Verbum,” *Or NS* 42 (1973): 131–132, 138; Huehnergard, *Grammar of Akkadian*, §16.3; E. Cohen, *The Modal System of Old Babylonian*, HSS 56 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 101; Kouwenberg, *Akkadian Verb*, 218–219.

3 Cohen, *Modal System*, 101 (emphasis as in the original publication).

4 T. Abusch, *The Witchcraft Series “Maqlû,” WAW 37* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2015); T. Abusch, *The Magical Ceremony “Maqlû”: A Critical Edition*, AMD 10 (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

5 My comments in this article are generally directed to the third person and not to the second.

terms of the conceptual distinction indicated above, the difference between the two is often not immediately apparent. Moreover, I note that occasionally ancient scribes themselves were unclear which form to use; see, e.g., I 65–66:

65 ... *ē tallik* (var.: *ē tallak*)  
 66 ... *lā tallak* (var.: *ē tallak*).<sup>6</sup>

But before reaching this conclusion we should raise the question whether or not (at least in *Maqlû*) there are specific circumstances under which one or the other form might be chosen. One way (certainly a simple way) of looking into this question is to examine the occurrences of the same verb in vetitive and prohibitive forms. Accordingly, I list the occurrences of the verb *teḥû*, “to approach,” in the order in which they occur in the text.<sup>7</sup>

In *Maqlû*, the vetitive of *teḥû* occurs in the following passages:

III 170:

*ayy-iḥûni* : *a-a* TE.MEŠ-*ni*  
*ayy-iḥûni kišpikunu ruḥêkunu lemnûti*  
 May your witchcraft (and) evil spittle not approach me.

V 129:

*ayy-iḥûni* : *ʾa-a*<sup>1</sup> TE.MEŠ-*ni*

6 The synoptic layout for these two lines reads as follows:

65 K 43+: obv. 63	[		]	<i>tur-ru-uk</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>tal-lik</i>
K 3294+ ... (+) 15229+: obv. 65	[			<i>t]ur-[r]u-uk</i>	[	
Su 51/59: ii 17	IM	<i>na-zi-qu</i>		<i>tu-ruk</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>ta-l[ak]</i>
Si 14: obv. 10'	[I]M	<i>ʾnaʾ-zi-ʾquʾ</i>		<i>tu-ʾrukʾ</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>tal-lak</i> →
BM 43826+: ii 19'	[		] x [			

66 K 43+: obv. 64	[		]	<i>tur-ru-uk</i>	<i>la tal-lak</i>	
K 3294+ ... (+) 15229+: obv. 66	[			<i>-u]k</i>	<i>l[ʾa</i> ]	
Su 51/59: ii 18	<i>šá</i>	GIŠ.PA	<i>u</i>	GIŠ.mar-te-e	<i>tu-ruk</i>	<i>e ta-lak</i>
Si 14: obv. 10'	<i>šá</i>	GIŠ.PA	<i>šá</i>	<i>mar-te-e</i>	<i>t[u-</i>	
BM 43826+: ii 20'	[					

7 I ignore variants that carry no implications for our present discussion. I include translations mostly taken from Abusch, *Magical Ceremony “Maqlû”* (note that “may” in v 18 in my edition should be changed to “shall”); they are intended for the convenience of the reader and are not meant to prejudice the present discussion.

*kišpūkunu ayy-itḥûni*

May your witchcraft not approach me.

VII 13:

*ayy-itḥûni* : *a-a* TE.MEŠ-*ni*

... *ipša bārtu amāt lemutti*

*ayy-itḥûni ayy-ibāʿûni bāba ayy-irubûni ana bīti* (12–13)

... May sorcery, rebellion, an evil word

not approach me, not pass the door to me, not enter the house to me.

VII 167:

[*ayy-it*]ḥâ : [*a-a* T]E-*a*

[*ayy-it*]ḥâ *ayy-isniqa mimma lemnu mimma lā tābu ruḥê* ... (167–168)

May anything evil, anything unfavorable, spittle ... [not rea]ch me, not touch me.

VIII 139<sup>'''</sup>:

*ayy-itḥêka* : *a-a* TE-*ka* / *it-ḥe*<sup>1-k</sup>[*a*]

... *mimma l[em]nu ayy-itḥêka*

... may no e[vil] approach you.

The prohibitive of *teḥû* occurs in the following passages:<sup>8</sup>

v 18:

*lā iteḥḥâ* : NU TE-*a* / *lā iteḥḥûni* : [NU T]E-*u-n*[*i*]

*ipša bārtu amāt lemutti lā iteḥḥâ* / *iteḥḥûni lā iqarrub[ay]âši*

Sorcery, rebellion, an evil word shall not approach me, not draw near to me myself.

8 I have not included occurrences of *teḥû* where I believe the correct negative adverb is *ul*—so III 153. *Maqlû* manuscripts generally distinguish between *lā* and *ul*: *lā* occurs with prohibitive verbs in the durative as well as in relative clauses; *ul* occurs with indicative verbs, including durative verbs conveying a modal sense of “cannot” and “would not” (for *ul*, see II 9–11, 208; III 147–153; VI 80–81, 88, 121<sup>''</sup>–122<sup>''</sup>; and *CMAwR* 1, no. 8.2: 107). To be sure, manuscripts occasionally give both *lā* and *ul* as the reading; see I 71 (and perhaps also I 41, but there a different verb is used with *lā*).

v 169:

*lā teṭeḥḥê* : NU TE-*e*  
*ana zumriya lā teṭeḥḥê*  
 To my body approach not.

VI 64:

*lā iṭeḥḥûni* : NU TE.MEŠ-*ni* / *la* TE-*ni*  
*kišpûša ruḥûša rusûša upšāšûša lemnûti*  
*lā iṭeḥḥûni lā iqarribûni yâši* (63–64)  
 Her witchcraft, spittle, enchantment, evil machinations  
 shall not approach me, shall not draw near to me myself.

VII 54:

*lā iṭeḥḥûni* : *la* <sup>1</sup>TE-*ni* / TE.MEŠ-*ni*  
*ipšu bārtu amāt lemutti ... lā iṭeḥḥûni lā iqarribûni yâši*  
 Sorcery, rebellion, an evil word ... shall not approach me, shall not  
 draw near to me myself.

VII 176:

*lā iṭeḥḥâ* : NU TE-*a*  
*ipšu bārtu amāt lemutti lā iṭeḥḥâ*  
*lā iqarriba yâši* (176–177)  
 Sorcery, rebellion, an evil word shall not approach me,  
 shall not draw near to me myself.

On the face of it, there does not seem to be any real difference in meaning between the two sets.<sup>9</sup> Can we explain why one or the other form is chosen in the different passages? Perhaps we can. A closer examination of the occurrences reveals that with one exception (v 169),<sup>10</sup> all the prohibitives are preceded by a dependent clause introduced by *kīma* (v 14–18, VI 61–64, VII 52–54, and VII 174–177).<sup>11</sup>

9 The absence of differentiation between the two forms might not be surprising in so far as one form is thought to have replaced the other generally in Akkadian.

10 But note that the exception is a second-person form.

11 In this context it is significant that not one of the vetitives is linked to a clause introduced by *kīma*.

V 14–18:

*kīma pū lā ippattil(u) utt[a]tu lā uk[t]aššaru<sup>1</sup>  
 ana šamê kišpī ana eršetī bārtu lā inneppušū  
 ana errī mā[rat] ilī rabūti  
 ipša bārtu amāt lemutt[i l]ā ʿiṭeḥḥū<sup>1</sup> lā iqarrubu  
 ipša bārtu amāt lemutt[i] lā iṭeḥḥâ lā iqarrub[a y]âši*

As chaff cannot be twined together, (as) barley cannot be knotted  
 (together),  
 (as) witchcraft cannot be performed against the Heavens, (nor) rebellion  
 against the Netherworld,  
 (as) sorcery, rebellion, an evil word cannot approach, cannot draw near  
 to Colocynth, daughter of the great gods,  
 so sorcery, rebellion, an evil word shall not approach me, not draw near  
 to me myself.

VI 61–64:

*kīma qaqqad silit kukri  
 ana aḥāmeš lā iqarribū  
 kišpūš[a] ruḥūša rusūša upšāšūša lemnūti  
 lā iṭeḥḥūni lā iqarribūni yâši*

Just as the tip(s) of a cut twig of *kukru*  
 cannot draw near to each other,  
 so her witchcraft, spittle, enchainment, evil machinations  
 shall not approach me, shall not draw near to me myself.

VII 52–54:

*kīma annak[u]^(?) parz[illu]^(?) ipšu bārtu amāt lemutti  
 [k]išpī ruḥū rusū up[šāšū lemnūti]  
 lā iṭeḥḥūkunūši lā iqar[r]ubūkunūši  
 ipšu bārtu amāt lemutti  
 k[išpī ruḥū rusū upšāš]ū lemnūti  
 lā iṭeḥḥūni lā iqarrubūni yâši*

As tin(?) (and) ir[on](?), sorcery, rebellion, an evil word,  
 witchcraft, spittle, enchainment, [evil] mach[inations]  
 cannot approach you, cannot draw near to you,

so sorcery, rebellion, an evil word,  
 wi[tchcraft, spittle, enchainment], evil [machina]tions  
 shall not approach me, shall not draw near to me myself.

VII 174–177:

[*k*]īma mē annûti ipšu bārtu amāt lemutti  
 lā iṭehḫû lā iqarribu  
 ipšu bārtu amāt lemutti lā iṭehḫâ  
 lā iqarriba yâši

As sorcery, rebellion, an evil word  
 cannot approach, cannot draw near to these waters,  
 so sorcery, rebellion, an evil word shall not approach me,  
 shall not draw near to me myself.

*kīma* is a subordinating conjunction that introduces a dependent clause. Here this conjunction has a comparative force (“as,” “like”). The dependent statement describes a natural fact or represents a socially accepted understanding of the universe (so, for example, in VII 174–175, witchcraft cannot affect water). The *kīma* clause gives expression to that which is regarded as real;<sup>12</sup> it introduces a statement that is regarded as certain. The comparison itself serves to transfer the quality or truth statement in the dependent clause to the participants in the main clause. So, while the situation in the main clause may not yet exist, it is regarded as real because of the comparison and the association of the main clause with a similar or identical situation that

12 Cf. D. P. Wright, “Analogy in Biblical and Hittite Ritual,” in *Religionsgeschichtliche Beziehungen zwischen Kleinasien, Nordsyrien und dem Alten Testament*, ed. B. Janowski et al., OBO 129 (Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 499–500: “For ritual analogy to have the foregoing effects, it requires a certain logical quality: the situation described by the phoros must be believable. Many phoroi refer to natural situations.... Other phoroi refer to acts that are performable.... A phoros occasionally may have supernatural elements which may be incredible to members of another society or cultural tradition; but for those who would use the analogical form the phoros ... must be as believable as the other[s] listed here. Nevertheless, despite the appearance of some supernatural phoroi, there is a tendency to use natural or everyday phoroi—situations or acts that could be agreed upon cross-culturally. If a phoros were not believable to the performers, the analogy would be a case of irony: ‘just as a dog flies when it jumps off a cliff, so may our king succeed in his battle’—certainly an incantation one would hope the enemy would recite!”

does exist. Hence, the use of a verb form (*iparras*) that asserts the existence of something that may be regarded as certain.

The *kīma* clause adds emphasis and a sense of greater certainty to the negative volitive; it draws the desired condition into the present and gives it a real (as opposed to an *irrealis*) context. Perhaps this observation is actually supported by the occurrence without *kīma* of a prohibitive of *teḥû* in the second person in a list (v 158–175) containing demands of evil forces that they depart and adjurations to that effect: *ana zumriya lā teteḥḥê* (v 169).

But one should not ignore the possibility that the prohibitive and vetitive might sometimes be translated the same way. For in the positive, there is a single counterpart, the precative (or wish form), to the two negative forms of volition (in the third person), the vetitive and prohibitive;<sup>13</sup> and perhaps for that reason a positive statement of volition takes the precative form even when introduced by a *kīma* clause (III 122–123).<sup>14</sup>

I hope to have expanded our understanding of the usage and function of the vetitive and prohibitive. Of course, my results are tentative, for I have examined here only a very limited data set of grammatical forms. More definitive results require the study of the vetitive and prohibitive in a broad corpus. Nevertheless, I do hope that I have provided a starting point for such a study.

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13 Admittedly, this may reflect no more than the existence of structural asymmetry between positive and negative forms of the volitive (see Sjörs, *History*, 34).

14 I would also acknowledge one further possible conditioning factor: *kīma* + *lā* introducing a predicate might have influenced the choice of *lā* in the main clause and therefore excluded the vetitive and required the prohibitive.

# Alternative Models for the Development of Some Incantations

## 1 Introduction

In this essay, I shall examine several *Maqlû* incantations that seem to be made up of discrete sections. I shall examine *Maqlû* VII 1–21, III 136–153, and II 77–103 in that order. My purpose here is to present several different, perhaps competing, modes of diachronic analysis. I begin the analysis on the presumption that the mechanism by which the aforementioned incantations were formed was the joining together of blocks of material in a linear fashion. Occasionally, this may well have been the case; but the matter here seems to have been more complex, and this will lead us to an exploration of some of these complexities and their implications. Thus, while I begin my analysis of the individual incantations by dividing them into sections that might have been joined together like beads on a string, I quickly modify this approach by arguing that the inner section of the text might actually have been an insertion. Finally, I reverse the direction of analysis and consider whether what previously had been viewed as an insertion might actually be the primary kernel of the incantation. I realize that some of the analyses in this paper are mutually exclusive and that only some of them can be correct.

## 2 Analysis

The text of VII 1–21 reads:<sup>1</sup>

- 1 [ÉN ri]tī Manzât Zuqaqīpi
- 2 [u(?)] šī kaššāptu unakkama k[išpiša]
- 3 [x (x)]<sup>a</sup> anappaḥkimma<sup>b</sup> kīma Manzât ina šamē

1 I omit most textual and translation notes alongside my transcription and translation; for full textual and translation notes see T. Abusch, *The Magical Ceremony “Maqlû”: A Critical Edition*, AMD 10 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), part 3. Line 3: <sup>a</sup> Perhaps [anāku] | <sup>b</sup> Var.: anappaḥakkimma. Line 11: <sup>a</sup> Var.: šipassu. Line 15: <sup>a</sup> Var.: ēpišātīšunu. Line 21: <sup>a</sup> Var.: tēpušinni “you” (sing.) | <sup>b</sup> Var.: <sup>†</sup>ušābil<sup>†</sup> “(The wind) has carried off.”

4 [az]iqqakkimma kīma iltāni amurri  
 5 usappaḥi urpataki uḥallaq ūmki  
 6 usappaḥ kišpīki ša takkimī mūša u urra  
 7 u našparāt zikurrudâ ša taltapparī yâši  
 8 šalil nēberu šalil kâru  
 9 mārū malāḥi kalīšunu šallū  
 10 eli dalti u sikkūri nadû ḥargullū  
 11 nadât šipassun<sup>a</sup> ša Siris u Ningiškzida  
 12 ša kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya ipša bārtu amāt lemutti  
 13 ayy-iḥḥūni ayy-ibā'ūni bāba ayy-irubūni ana bitī  
 14 Ningiškzida lissuḥšunūti  
 15 libbalkitūma epšētīšunu<sup>a</sup> libārū  
 16 ilu šarru kabtu u rubū likkelmūšunūti  
 17 ina qātī ili šarri kabti u rubê ayy-ūši kaššāptī  
 18 anāku ina qibīt Marduk bēl nubatti  
 19 u Asalluḥi bēl āšipūti  
 20 mimmu ēpušu lū kušūru  
 21 ipšī tēpušāni<sup>a</sup> lišābil<sup>b</sup> šāru

1 [Incantation]. My [ha]nd is the Rainbow, the Scorpion.<sup>2</sup>  
 2 [But(?)] she, the witch, piles up [her] wi[tchcraft] against me.  
 3 [And I(?),] I am shining forth against you like the Rainbow in the  
 heavens,  
 4 [I am b]lowing against you like the Northwest wind,  
 5 I am scattering your cloud, I am annihilating your storm,  
 6 I am scattering your witchcraft that night and day you have piled up  
 over me  
 7 And the messages of *zikurrudâ*-magic that you have repeatedly sent  
 against me.  
 8 The ford is asleep, the quay is asleep,  
 9 The sailors, all of them, are asleep.  
 10 Upon the door and bolt, locks are placed,  
 11 Cast (thereupon) is the incantation<sup>3</sup> of Siris and Ningiškzida.  
 12 May sorcery, rebellion, an evil word of my warlock and witch  
 13 Not approach me, not pass the door to me, not enter the house  
 to me.

2 "Scorpion" refers to the constellation of that name; "Rainbow" probably refers to a star.

3 Or, possibly: "sealing," in which case, the verb should be better translated "is applied."

- 14 May Ningišzida extirpate them,<sup>4</sup>  
 15 May their sorcery<sup>5</sup> turn<sup>6</sup> (on them) and capture (them),  
 16 May god, king, noble, and prince glower at them,  
 17 And may my witch not escape from the grasp of god, king, noble,  
 and prince.  
 18 As for me—by the command of Marduk, lord of the evening  
 ceremonies,  
 19 And Asalluḫi, lord of exorcism,  
 20 May what I do be successful;  
 21 May the wind carry off the sorcery that you (pl.) have performed  
 against me.

The incantation seems to be made up of three sections that are individually coherent. The three sections are (a) lines 1–7; (b) lines 8–17; and (c) lines 18–21. (a) The first section centers on clouds and other meteorological phenomena; here confirmation of our analysis of these lines is provided by the fact that versions of VII 1–7 exist as separate incantations in v 76–82 and VI 45–51 (compare especially VII 4–7 with v 79–82 and VI 49–51). (b) The second section is held together by its central lines, lines 10–11. The reason for locking the door in line 10 is explained in lines 12–13, and Ningišzida is introduced in line 11 and reappears in line 14. Lines 10–11 as well as the preceding 8–9 recur in I 50–60 (as lines 50–51 and 54–55).<sup>7</sup> (c) Finally, in the third section, the speaker calls on the authority of Marduk and Asalluḫi and asks that the wind carry off the sorcery performed against him and that he be successful in all his undertakings.

Though the sections cohere individually, as a whole the incantation does not seem to hold together. The three sections have been joined together, but

4 There is some uncertainty regarding the identity of the referent of the pronominal suffixes in lines 14–16. The pronominal suffix in line 14 may refer to either the sorcery or the sorcerers; the former seems more likely. In line 16, the suffix certainly refers to the sorcerers. The identity of the referent in line 15 depends on which of the two extant readings is chosen. Overall, it would appear that lines 14–15 refer to the sorcery while line 16 (in conjunction with line 17) refers to the sorcerers; this pattern is strange and calls for an explanation.

5 Var.: “May they (i.e., the sorcery) turn back and capture their sorceresses.” This reading is inferior.

6 Or: “clamp down (on them).”

7 For the association of the lines in Tablets VII and I, see T. Abusch, “The Socio-religious Framework of the Babylonian Witchcraft Ceremony *Maqlû*: Some Observations on the Introductory Section of the Text, Part II,” in *Solving Riddles and Untying Knots: Biblical, Epigraphic, and Semitic Studies in Honor of Jonas C. Greenfield*, ed. Z. Zevit et al. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 467–494 [[AMD 5, 249–269]].

seem to have little to do with each other; in any case, I cannot provide a convincing explanation for the joining of these sections to form the incantation.

Are there other incantations where we find the same sort of phenomenon but where we can provide a reasonable explanation for the joining of sections to create the incantation, and where we can perhaps even imagine the mechanism that was operating? For the purpose of answering this question, I suggest that we examine II 77–103 and III 136–153. We begin with III 136–153, for it seems to be the simpler of the two. The text reads:<sup>8</sup>

- 136 ÉN *ḥaṣabtu*<sup>a</sup><sup>b</sup> *sūqāti ammēni tugdanarrēni*  
 137 *ammēni našparātūki ittanallakāni*  
 138 *kaššāptu qaqdā(?)<sup>a</sup> amât[ī]ki*  
 139 *ammēni ittanakšadā ana šabātiya*  
 140 *elli ana ūri aptaki aka[ttam]*  
 141 *urrad ana qaqqarimma ušabbat kibsī[ki]*  
 142 *ina kibsīki rābišu ušēšēb*  
 143 *eṭem ridāti ḥarrānki ušašbat*  
 144 *amaḥḥaṣ muḥḥaki ušanna ṭēnki*  
 145 *adallaḥ libbaki tamašši šīrīki*  
 146 *ēpištu u muštēpištu*  
 147 *šamû anākuma ul tulappatīnni*  
 148 *eršetu anākuma ul turaḥḥīnni*  
 149 *siḫil balti anākuma ul takabbasīnni*  
 150 *ziqit zuqaqīpi anākuma ul talappatīnni*  
 151 *šadû zaqrū anākuma kišpūki ruḥûki*  
 152 *rusûki upšāšûki lemnûti*  
 153 *ul iṭeḥḥûni ul iqarribûni yâši ÉN*

- 136 Incantation. O sherd of the streets, why are you constantly hostile to me?  
 137 Why do your messages keep coming to me?  
 138 O witch, constantly(?) your words,  
 139 Why do they reach me again and again so as to seize me?<sup>9</sup>  
 140 I ascend the roof to co[ver] your window,  
 141 I descend to the ground to seize (and thereby block) [your] tracks—

8 Line 136: <sup>a</sup> Var.: *ḥašbatti* | <sup>b</sup> Var.: + *ša*. Line 138: <sup>a</sup> Var.: *qaqqad*.

9 Or, possibly (combining lines 138 and 139): “O witch, why does the head/beginning of your words reach me again and again so as to seize me?”

- 142 In your tracks I set a lurker-demon,  
 143 I cause a pursuing ghost to seize your path.  
 144 I smite your skull and make you go mad,  
 145 I disturb your mind (lit., heart) so that you forget your flesh.<sup>10</sup>  
 146 O sorceress and the woman who instigates sorcery,  
 147 I myself am heaven: you cannot besmirch me,  
 148 I myself am the Netherworld: you cannot impregnate me,  
 149 I myself am a thorn of the *baltu*-thornbush: you cannot tread on me,  
 150 I myself am the sting of the scorpion: you cannot take hold of me,  
 151 I myself am a high mountain: your witchcraft, spittle,  
 152 Enchainment, evil machinations  
 153 Cannot approach me, cannot come close to me myself. ÉN

Seemingly, this incantation is made up of two separate sections: (a) III 136–145 and (b) III 146–153. Each of these sections is able to stand on its own, and the two sections may originally have been independent entities. (a) In the first section, the speaker addresses potsherders of the street and asks them why they are hostile to him (136–139). This attitude is similar to that of *zikurrudâ*-type magic, where objects in the ken of the victim are treated as if they had been sent by a witch in order to kill her victim. The very appearance of these objects informs the victim that he is being bewitched and might die. In lines 140–145, the victim takes the offensive; he attacks the witch and neutralizes her. (b) In the second section, the speaker identifies with various forces of nature and asserts that because he has assumed the qualities of these several forces, the witch cannot harm him.

The two sections may have been brought together because the theme in lines 146–153 provides a means of protection against the threat described in lines 136–139. But, on further reflection, lines 146–153 seem unnecessary, for the witch seems already to have been neutralized by the actions described in lines 140–145. In actuality, lines 140–145 do not seem to fit the situation described in lines 136–139 (furthermore, they seem to be atypical as descriptions of witchcraft or anti-witchcraft attacks), and the actions do not seem to fit the actual context (e.g., the street of line 136 does not seem to agree with the mention of ascending the roof to cover the window). So, perhaps a better analysis would divide the incantation into three sections: lines 136–139, 140–145, 146–153, and treat lines 136–139 + 146–153 as forming the original incantation and lines 140–145 as an insertion. In the original incantation (136–139 + 146–153), the victim would have treated objects in his ken as if they had been sent

10 That is, so that you lose control over your body.

by a witch to kill him and would then have stated that she could not harm him because of his identification with various forces of nature. Lines 140–145 were (taken perhaps from an incantation against demons and) added to present the victim as one who will have acted against a demonic witch.

We turn now to II 77–103. The text reads:<sup>11</sup>

- 77 ÉN *Girra āriru bukur Ani*  
 78 *dā'in dīni atmē pirišti attāma*  
 79 *eklēti tušnammar*  
 80 *ešāti dalḫāti tušteššer*  
 81 *ana ilī rabūti purussā tanamdin*  
 82 *ša lā kâta ilu mamman purussâ ul<sup>a</sup> iparras*  
 83 *attāma nādin ūrti u ʔēme*  
 84 *ēpiš lumni attāma arḫiš takammu*  
 85 *lemnu u ayyāba takaššad arḫ[iš]<sup>a</sup>*  
 86 *anāku [annanna mār annan]na ša ilšu annanna ištaršu annannītu*  
 87 *ina kišpī lupputākuma maḫarka azziz*  
 88 *ina maḫar ilī [š]arri bēl[u]<sup>a</sup> šuzzurākuma allika ana maḫrika*  
 89 *eli ām[eriy]a murrušākuma<sup>a</sup> šapalka akmis*  
 90 *[G]irra šurbū ilu ellu*  
 91 *enenna ina maḫar ilūtika rabīti*  
 92 *šinā šalmī kaššāpi u kaššāpti ša siparri ēpuš qātukka*  
 93 *maḫarka uggeršunūtima kâša apqidka*  
 94 *šunu limūtūma anāku lubluṭ*  
 95 *šunu lītebbirūma<sup>a</sup> anāku lūšir*  
 96 *šunu liqtūma anāku lumīd*  
 97 *šunu līnišūma anāku ludnin*  
 98 *Girra šarḫu šīru ša ilī*  
 99 *kāšid lemni u ayyābi kušussunūtima anāku lā aḫḫabbil*  
 100 *anāku aradka lubluṭ lušlimma maḫarka luzziz*  
 101 *attāma ilī attāma bēlī*  
 102 *attāma dayyānī attāma rēšu'a*  
 103 *attāma muterru ša gimilliya TU<sub>6</sub> ÉN*

11 Line 82: <sup>a</sup> Var.: *lā*. Line 85: <sup>a</sup> Var.: [*a*]tā “you,” instead of “speedily.” Line 88: <sup>a</sup> We expect *ili šarri kabti u rubē* “god, king, noble, and prince.” Line 89: <sup>a</sup> Perhaps [*ma*]ršākuma. Line 95: <sup>a</sup> For a D form of the verb *abāru* with an *e*-vowel, see CH §126, line 14, cited in *AHW* s.v. *abāru* III D (and note the variant *ūtabbiri* in R. Borger, *Babylonisch-assyrische Lesestücke*, 2nd ed., *AnOr* 54 [Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1979], 27). Instead, this verb might possibly be read *liddappirūma*, “may they be driven away.”

- 77 Incantation. O blazing Girra, scion of Anu,  
 78 It is you who renders judgment, the secret speech,  
 79 You illumine darkness,  
 80 You set straight confusion and disorder,  
 81 You grant decisions for the great gods,  
 82 Were it not for you, no god would deliver a verdict,  
 83 It is you who gives instruction and direction.  
 84 You alone speedily capture the evildoer  
 85 (And) speedi[ly] overcome the wicked and the enemy.  
 86 I, [So-and-so, the son of So-and]-so, whose god is So-and-so, whose  
     goddess is So-and-so—  
 87 I have been attacked by witchcraft, and so I enter into your presence  
     (lit., stand before you),  
 88 I have been made detestable in the presence of god, king, and lord,  
     and so I come toward you,  
 89 I have been made sickening in the [sight of anyone who b]eholds  
     me, and so I bow down before you.  
 90 Grand Girra, pure god,  
 91 Now in the presence of your great godhead  
 92 Two bronze figurines of the warlock and the witch I have fashioned  
     with your power.  
 93 In your presence I cross them, and to you I hand them over.  
 94 May they die, but I live,  
 95 May they be bound, but I be acquitted (lit., be/go straight),  
 96 May they come to an end, but I increase,  
 97 May they weaken, but I become strong.  
 98 O splendid Girra, pre-eminent one of the gods,  
 99 Vanquisher of the wicked and the enemy, vanquish them so I not be  
     wronged.  
 100 May I, your servant, live and be well so that I may stand before you  
     (and declare):  
 101 You alone are my god, you alone are my lord,  
 102 You alone are my judge, you alone are my aid,  
 103 You alone are my avenger! TU<sub>6</sub> ÉN

Again, the incantation seems at first blush to be made up of two sections: lines 77–97 and 98–103, or, perhaps, lines 77–89 and 90–103. But a closer examination<sup>12</sup> suggests that the incantation should perhaps be divided into three

<sup>12</sup> My examination of this incantation has benefitted from remarks by my students, especially Molly deMarco and Jared Pfost. Noting the triple invocation, deMarco argued

sections (lines 77–89, 90–97, and 98–103), each introduced by the divine name Girra and an epithet, and that we should regard these three sections as the blocks that were brought together to form the incantation: Lines 77–89 begin with a hymnic introduction praising the fire god Girra (77–83). After identifying Girra as a god that overcomes evildoers (84–85), the speaker introduces himself (86) and states that he has come before Girra because he has been attacked by witchcraft (87–89). Lines 90–97 begin with a further invocation of the god (90). The speaker then describes the ritual action that he is performing (91–93), namely handing images of the witches over to the god so that he may destroy them, and gives expression to the wish that the witches die but that he live (94–97). Lines 98–103 begin with a further invocation of the god (98). After (again) identifying Girra as a god that overcomes evildoers, the speaker requests that the god vanquish his enemies (99). Finally, the speaker asks that he live so that he may serve the god (100) and enunciates the various expressions of praise and loyalty that he will declare (101–103<sup>13</sup>).

But the appearance of a divine invocation to Girra at the head of each section seems to be a remarkable concurrence; in any case, the occurrence of three invocations of Girra seems anomalous. At most, we expect two invocations, one at the beginning of the incantation and the second near its end—see, e.g., II 19–75, where a second invocation occurs in the penultimate line of the incantation (line 74), or II 105–125, an incantation even more similar to ours, where a second invocation occurs in line 122.<sup>14</sup> But, then, why are there three invocations of the god Girra in lines 77, 90, and 98? Assuming that the third invocation, line 98, is part of the original text and is not simply a secondary *Wiederaufnahme* of the second invocation, we may suggest that the original incantation was lines 77–89 + 98–103 and that lines 90–97 are an insertion that was marked by the introduction of an additional invocation at its head.<sup>15</sup>

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that either line 90 or line 98 was not original and that either lines 90–97 or lines 91–98 were an insertion and that, in the latter case, “line 98 functions as a *Wiederaufnahme* for the secondary insertion of lines 91–97.” Pfof’s comments regarding the structure of the incantation convinced me that it would be wrong to treat line 98 as part of the insertion.

13 For a detailed discussion of II 100–103, see T. Abusch, “The Promise to Praise the God in Shuilla Prayers,” in *Biblical and Oriental Essays in Memory of William L. Moran*, ed. A. Gianto, BiOr 48 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute Press, 2005), 1–10.

14 We do not consider examples where a series of invocations come one after the other, as in II 110–116 or IV 140–148.

15 Were we not to treat line 98 as part of the original text, we might wish to compare II 77–103 with II 1–17 and suggest that lines 77–89 + 99–103 are structurally similar to II 1–17 and may constitute an incantation. If that were the case, we might then treat lines 90–98 as an addition, that is, we might understand the second (90) and third (98) invocations of the deity and the material between them as secondary. If so, line 98 could

The differing solutions suggested thus far should convey the difficulty of even delineating the separate sections that went into the formation of an oral rite.

### 3 Alternative Analysis

Actually, the difficulty is even greater, for sometimes we are not sure of the directionality of development of an oral rite, or do not even know where to begin the analysis of the process of formation. The incantations studied here provide excellent examples of this difficulty. In the first part of our analysis, we approached the incantations under study as if they were the result of linear (or supplementary) development; but after further examination, we concluded that a part or the whole of the frame (that is, the beginning and end) of each incantation was original and reasoned our way from the outside in. However, in spite of the useful results obtained thus far, it is possible that even the second approach should be qualified, for it may sometimes be a mistake to analyze incantations as if their beginnings and ends were original and their middle sections insertions. In that case, the approach should be reversed and we should work from the inside out; that is, we should start from the center of the incantation and work our way out from there to its beginning and end.

Indeed, many incantations seem originally to have focused on—and to have started out as—first-person descriptions or declarations of ritual or symbolic actions that accompanied a ritual action; only afterwards would the introductions and endings have been added. That is to say, the middle section of the incantation—the section that presents, or focuses upon, ritual and action—was primary, and the beginning and end were added in order to provide a (rhetorical or ideological) frame of reference.

Accordingly, I suggest that we now approach the three incantations taken up in this study in this manner, for they too may have been built up from their center, a center that gave expression to the action or symbol underlying the ritual. To take the incantations in the order in which they were discussed earlier in this paper, we might now wish to understand their development as follows:

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have served as a *Wiederaufnahme* or, better, the two invocations, lines 90 and 98, would have been a secondary frame surrounding lines 91–97. (We should emphasize that a frame is the opposite of a *Wiederaufnahme*, for a *Wiederaufnahme* serves to resume the main text after an addition has been inserted, while a frame forms an inclusio and emphasizes the materials that it encloses, be they original or secondary.) An alternative approach might argue that the text has incorporated two endings: lines 90–97 and 98–103.

1) In VII 1–21, lines (8–9)–10–17 form the original center of the incantation; here the speaker describes symbolically the ritual protection of the house and its entrances against the intrusion of witchcraft.<sup>16</sup> The apotropaic force is then developed and expanded by the addition of an introduction (1–7) and conclusion (18–21) that focus on winds as the forces that will scatter and blow away the witchcraft and thus translate ritual actions into naturalistic terms. (Note that in contrast to our earlier discussion in this paper, we are now able to make some sense of the structure of this incantation.)

2) In III 136–153, lines 140–145 form the original center of the incantation; here the speaker describes his own physical attack upon the witch. This center was secondarily enveloped by lines 136–139 and 146–153: the introduction (136–139) provides the human context and describes the witch’s potential assault on the speaker (in this instance, a *zikurrudâ*-type magical attack); in the conclusion (146–153), the speaker identifies with various forces of nature in order to expand his own powers beyond those of the human and even the demonic and to assert that the witch’s attack cannot reach him because of his identification with a series of natural entities.

3) In II 77–103, lines (86/87–89–)90–97 form the original center of the incantation; here the speaker describes the ritual action (91–93) of preparing images of the witches and handing them over to the fire god so that they may be destroyed.<sup>17</sup> Subsequently, this description of ritual action was set into, or supplied with, a *šulla*-type prayer to Girra, the fire god, the opening lines providing a hymnic introduction praising the god (77–85) and the closing lines providing a form of the promise of praise to the god should he save the speaker (98–103).<sup>18</sup>

#### 4 Conclusion

I should state at the conclusion that the purpose of this study—as of all or almost all of my past studies in which I drew upon literary-textual critical methods in the examination of oral rites—has not been the reconstruction of

16 Note that this focus agrees with the ritual actions prescribed for this incantation in *Maqlû* RT 127'–129'.

17 Note that this focus agrees with the ritual action prescribed for this incantation in *Maqlû* II 104 and RT 34'.

18 But note the possibility that lines 98–99 and possibly 84–85 may have been placed as a frame around the ritual center earlier than the hymnic introduction and the promise of praise, and that the present introduction and conclusion may not have been added together.

literary history, although that may be one of the results. Rather, my purpose in approaching these texts in this manner is to try to solve difficulties for which I think a diachronic explanation provides the simplest and best (if, sometimes, not the only) solution. But I do acknowledge that such explanations often retain a degree of uncertainty, especially when a critical analysis is carried out without the support and direction of variant manuscripts, parallels, and fore-runners. I certainly recognize the tentative nature of the analyses presented in this paper. But texts occasionally exist that attest to earlier stages of development of a composition, and thus there is evidence that many of our texts have undergone changes. Knowing this allows us to construct the textual and literary history of some of our texts; but even more important, in my judgment, it enables us to interpret the texts, discern their meanings, and understand them a bit better than we would otherwise.

*Studies of Mesopotamian Witchcraft*





## Witchcraft Literature in Mesopotamia

Let us begin with simple definitions of magic and witchcraft in Mesopotamia. We classify as magical those rites that address the needs, crises, and desires of the individual. In contrast to some later western societies, magic in Mesopotamia was regarded as legitimate and as part of the established religion. Therefore, in a Mesopotamian context, witchcraft refers not to magical behavior as such, but to inimical behavior, that is, to the practice of magic for antisocial and destructive purposes (though, as we shall note later, not all behavior so labeled was, in fact, motivated by evil intentions).

Over the course of some 2,500 years (ca. 2600–100 BCE), numerous cuneiform texts written in both the Sumerian and Akkadian languages refer to personal crisis and individual suffering (e.g., letters, curses, and literary compositions that treat the problem of theodicy). By and large, however, the most important sources detailing ways to cope with illness, danger, and personal difficulties are the various types of texts that describe symptoms, provide etiological or descriptive diagnoses, and prescribe ways to deal with evil and suffering. These treatments include medical therapies, ritual prescriptions, and oral rites (prayers and incantations). Among the rituals, we find several long and complex ceremonies.

The principal agencies in the religio-magical worldview were gods, demons, personal gods, ghosts, witches, evil omens, curses, and sins. Frequently Mesopotamian traditional texts treated personal distress or illness as the result of the action or inaction of supernatural powers. In this view, the universe was understood to be hierarchically structured and to be centered on divine powers. This approach seems, however, to have emerged from, or to have drawn upon, an earlier approach that viewed the world holistically.

The changing explanations of suffering and the changing configurations of causal agents and chains of causation probably reflect different social situations and can be explained in historical terms. The earlier mechanistic magical universe reflected the social context of traditional society, the village and pre-urban settlement. A traditional worldview probably continued to remain operative for the mass of rural and urban dwellers. But alongside this worldview and based upon it, a new worldview that reflected the values and interests of the emerging urban elite arose; in this new view, the gods increasingly gained more control over the world. With the decrease in viewing society primarily in corporate terms, a relationship was developed between the citizen

and his national god(s); the individual human might now be punished by the god for his own sins. A further development in this human–divine relationship took place with the subsequent emergence of the imperial state, in which powers were further centralized and integrated. Centralization and integration caused various changes in religious outlook, including the emergence of the witch as a major force able to control personal gods, demons, and mortals.

In the later periods, man suffered not only because of sin, but also because of outside forces such as witchcraft. As an explanation for misfortune, witchcraft had the advantage of shifting much of the responsibility for one's suffering away from oneself and onto other human beings. This way of seeing oneself and others surely fits the conditions of a new and more complex urban world in which heightened social interdependence was experienced as a source of danger by an individual placed in relationship with others with whom he did not have close or traditional ties. In this world, moreover, the extended family played less of a defining and supporting role, and the individual was confronted by more extended, impersonal, and hostile social forces and felt weak, helpless, and anxious.

## 1 Witchcraft and the Witch: Historical Speculation

Actually, the case of witchcraft may serve as a useful illustration of a form of evil that seems to have changed over time. One possible reconstruction suggests the existence originally of a popular village and/or domestic witch, and the subsequent transformation of this personage or image into an evil form, first as an opponent of the emerging exorcist, and then as an enemy and threat to society as a whole.

Thus, several stages can be identified in the development of Mesopotamian witchcraft. The development begins with an early stage of "popular" witchcraft that may have taken an archaic shamanistic form. In this early popular form, the witch probably belonged to a rural, non-urban world. S/he was not, of necessity, an evil being and took the form of both a "white" and "black" witch. Not infrequently, she helped her fellows by means of magical abilities and medical knowledge; in this popular form, she occasionally exhibited behavior otherwise associated with ecstatic types of practitioners.

Originally, then, the witch was not primarily a doer of evil. Perhaps because the witch was often a woman who possessed knowledge and power, the female witch eventually became a focus of interest and even a threat to the prerogatives of the male exorcist; for this and other reasons, she was made into the evil counterpart of the exorcist. The village witch was, thus, turned into an

antisocial, malicious, evil force that was the polar opposite of the benevolent and helpful *āšīpu*. The development went even further, for the witch was even transformed into an alien and/or demonic force that threatened society as a whole; she came to represent an enemy of the state, even sometimes a foreign force that could threaten the late Assyrian empire. In the first-millennium BCE *Maqlû* ceremony, she was a representation not only of internal, but also of external, danger; as such her image could be used as an instrument of state propaganda.

The late stage during which the witch became a major force able to control the personal god represents a resurgence of a late Mesopotamian urban world and an imposition of that world upon a tribal one. Looking backward over the materials that describe the evils that beset the individual, we note that they would seem to reflect different social contexts (town/city and family) and/or evolutionary stages. Demonic attacks on the individual and the ability of the demons to chase away the personal god reflect the world of the general Mesopotamian urban (Sumerian) community of the third millennium. The centrality and power of the personal god who punishes the individual because of infractions that he has committed is a Semitic feature: it reflects the life of the Semitic (Akkadian or Amorite) tribal/rural family or clan and should probably be understood in the context of the patriarchal/tribal family culture in Old Babylonian times; as such, it is a conceptual intrusion into the Mesopotamian urban landscape. Finally, the emergence of the witch as a major force represented the re-ascendancy of an urban world, in which women had a public role, over a tribal one, where the role of women was more circumscribed.

Let us pursue this analysis from an even more explicitly gendered point of view. We notice, first, that the witch overpowered the personal god, a representation, specifically, of maleness and, more generally, of male parenthood, and second, that she was able to make the demons, the representatives of chaos and the destructive aspect of nature, subservient to her and even took their place as the primary malevolent magical force of destruction. The independent woman was a threat and may have been regarded as uncontrollable and malicious. This female was, then, seen as the source of chaos, destruction, and evil in the world. In the new urban world, where the individual had fewer familial and traditional supports, this woman—the female witch—overpowered the male gods who represented the tribe and obedience to the family and replaced demons as the power of destruction and chaos. She threatened and overpowered family rule, and in place of natural violence, she set social violence, a violence that both symbolized, and was symbolized by, her nature as a female who was both powerful as well as isolated and marginal. Not unlike Tiamat in

the *Enuma Elish* and the biblical *təhôm*, this female now came to represent and to create chaos and destruction.

## 2 Witchcraft and the Witch: Normative Description

Witchcraft in Mesopotamian sources normally refers to malevolent destructive magic performed usually, though not exclusively, by a witch, *kaššāpu* (m.)/*kaššaptu* (f.). In the main, witches are illegitimate practitioners of magic. Normally, they are regarded as antisocial and as motivated by malice and evil intent. Although lists of witches include both male and female forms, the witch is usually depicted as a woman. She is typically presented as one who uses forms of destructive magic to harm other human beings and whose purpose is essentially malevolent. She is able to control or harm her victim by means of indirect contact: she steals objects that have been in contact with and represent her victim; she makes an image in the likeness of her victim and then twists its limbs so that they suffer agony and debilitating disease; she prepares figurines and buries them in holes in a wall or in the ground; she feeds statues to animals. The witch may even open up a grave and place the representation of her victim in the lap of a dead person, thus effecting a marriage of her victim and a corpse. Contact is still indirect when she sends evil omens that augur doom; that is, the witch is also able to harm her victim by sending against him emissaries in the form of experiences, living beings, and objects. Such confrontations are perceived as bringing about harm and are interpreted as signs that result in misfortune.

There need not always be a lack of proximity between victim and witch. Somewhat closer relations seem to be implied by the claim that she causes her victim to incorporate witchcraft by means of food, drink, washing, and ointment. The witch is even described as one who can directly seize and harm the various parts of the victim's body, can even push, press, and strike his chest and back. In addition to such manipulations and activities, the witch may even form an evil word in her heart and utter an incantation.

Personal distress ascribed to witchcraft includes the individual's experience of physical, psychological, and/or social difficulties. Texts may focus on specific symptoms, such as gastrointestinal, respiratory, sexual, or psychological difficulties, on life-threatening circumstances such as childbirth and infancy, on more generalized illnesses involving systemic physical and/or psychological breakdown, or on socioeconomic situations involving loss of wealth and status as well as social isolation.

### 3 Witchcraft Literature

The Mesopotamian witchcraft corpus (or, rather, anti-witchcraft corpus, since we have no texts composed by witches) comprises hundreds of magical and medical texts that contain many different elements. These traditional texts come from the early second millennium through the late first millennium BCE. A few texts are Old Babylonian; a somewhat larger number come from late second-millennium collections, mainly those of Boghazkoi and Assur. But by far the largest number come from first-millennium collections. Pride of place goes to the royal collections of seventh-century Nineveh; but, in addition, major groups derive both from the Assyrian sites of Assur, Kalhu (Nimrud), and Ҳузирина (Sultantepe) and from the Babylonian ones of Uruk, Ur, Nippur, Babylon, and Sippar.

The constituent parts of traditional anti-witchcraft documents include oral rites (prayers, incantations, utterances), symbolic rituals (e.g., the burning of statues), medical treatments (e.g., preparation of potions), descriptions of symptoms, diagnoses, and prognoses.

Prayers and incantations may occasionally appear alone. Originally, incantations were recorded only in part, as an aide-memoire, but eventually the entire incantation was committed to writing, and instructions regarding the time, place, and manner of ritual performance as well as other types of information (particularly, an objective description of the problem, a diagnosis, and a statement of purpose) were subsequently added. Incantations are found in various written contexts: as part of short rituals; in short collections of incantations (with some ritual instructions); and in standardized scribal series—some of which were collections, while others represented complex, lengthy ceremonies, such as *Maqlû*.

The texts were composed as guides to practicing magicians and physicians; hence, the texts usually present in varying combinations the crucial elements that constitute the actual ritual activity or performance (oral and manual rites and preparation or application of ceremonial/medical materials) as well as a statement describing the circumstance and purpose of the activity. Two typical text forms are (1) the text of an incantation followed by a rubric (an ancient classificatory label) and ritual instructions; and (2) a description of the patient's symptoms followed by a diagnosis (e.g., "that man suffers from bewitchment"), ritual or medical instructions (e.g., instructions to create a sacred space such as a reed hut or altar, to prepare salves or potions, and/or to recite an oral rite, as well as the text of the oral rite itself), and finally, a prognosis (e.g., "the man will live").

Introductory and concluding scribal statements (symptoms, diagnoses, purposes, prognoses) and the oral and manual rites of the various anti-witchcraft compositions may be classified, for example, as follows:

- descriptions of symptoms: physical, psychological, and/or social;
- diagnoses: etiological or descriptive;
- oral rites: prayers addressed to gods (especially the sun god, Šamaš) or to ritual objects;
- oral rites: incantations addressed to witches or to materials;
- rituals: introductory acts—preparation of a sacred space (e.g., the erection of reed huts or altars);
- rituals: central acts—destruction of the witch by burning, burying, or drowning her representation;
- rituals: acts that counteract witchcraft (through the elimination of forms of miasma) by means of washing or wiping off the patient;
- rituals: the employment of apotropaic devices such as plants or amulets;
- medical preparations and treatments: the preparation and administration of salves, potions, or lotions.

The basic textual unit prescribes the performance of a discrete ritual; these independent rites are the fundamental units of scribal composition. In the course of time, scribes attempted to organize the vast body of magical and medical literature, generally, and the witchcraft materials, specifically, into coherent groups and collections. Scribes differed in the way they organized these materials. Tablets often contain more than one ritual unit; moreover, the same ritual unit may appear in different religious, literary, or scribal contexts. These larger literary-editorial constructs may be either canonical or ad hoc compositions and may contain either a series of units that share some commonality (e.g., the evil addressed) or the text of a complex ritual.

#### 4 Anti-Witchcraft Rituals

In almost all instances, the patients on whose behalf witchcraft rituals were performed were members of the elite. The bewitched person, normally a man, is described in the third person in the symptomologies and diagnoses, and addresses the gods or the witch in the first person in the prayers and incantations. A few rituals serve the needs of women: a woman who blames the estrangement of her husband on a witch, or a woman who is pregnant and fears that bewitchment will cause her to miscarry. Sometimes when the witch

is said to disrupt public activities or places, the public is described as comprising young men and young women. But overall, in our texts, the bewitched is male, though I have no doubt that women, too, felt themselves to be victims of witchcraft, but their cases usually did not enter the written record of the exorcist.

Procedural texts prescribe the treatment of witchcraft-induced illness either by means of various ritual or ceremonial therapies or by means of traditional herbal therapy. The traditional scribal literature contains and occasionally juxtaposes both forms of treatment.

In the witchcraft texts that preserve the lore of the herbalist (*asû*), descriptions of symptoms are followed by instructions for preparing and administering medications. For example:

If a man has repeated headaches, sleep ..., his dreams are terrifying, he is repeatedly frightened in his sleep, his knees are bound, his chest ... paralysis, he is constantly sweating; that man is bewitched. You crush tamarisk, soapwort, and leaves of the *haluppu*-tree together. You wash him with water, you rub him with cedar oil. Afterwards you put tamarisk, soapwort and potash in ..., you heat it in the oven, you wash him with it; he will then recover.

*AMT* 86/1 [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 2.3, A]]

Turning to the ritual practitioner (*āšipu*), we note that he used both oral and manual rites in his attempt to combat witchcraft. Many different kinds of incantations were recited by the *āšipu*; in the main, they address evil forces, such as the witch, as well as beneficent forces that are meant to aid in the fight against evil forces. A subgroup of these incantations are in the form of a prayer; more specifically, the prayers used in rituals against witchcraft often take the form of *Gebetsbeschwörungen*, incantation-prayers (*šuillas*), and are designated by modern scholars as “special” *Gebetsbeschwörungen*, for they have the form of a *šulla* but do not carry that designation and are often directed against a specific type of evil and are recited as part of a magical ritual.

The ritual of the *āšipu* might range from a relatively simple one to an extensively elaborated performance, and could last a few hours or continue for a day or more. The ceremony often centered on an operation directed toward significant objects or symbols (e.g., the destruction of figurines, the use of substitutes).

*KAR* 80 and duplicates [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 8.4]] may serve as an example of a relatively short ritual against witchcraft performed by the *āšipu*, which may be summarized as follows:

After a description of a patient's symptoms, a diagnosis of witchcraft, and a statement that the release of witchcraft is the purpose of the ritual, the ritual instructions prescribe the setting out of offerings to Šamaš the sun god, the preparation of statues of a warlock and witch, the raising up of these statues, and the recitation of an incantation to Šamaš. In this incantation, the statues are designated as representing the evildoers who have harmed the victim and their destruction by fire is described. Subsequent to the threefold recitation of this incantation, the statues are placed in a container, sprinkled with fish oil, and set on fire. Then, a second incantation, "I lift up the torch, I burn your statues," invoking the aid of Ea, Asalluḫi, and Girra (gods of magic and burning) and addressing the burning statues, is recited, and the burned statues are trampled in water and their remains buried. The ritual is performed either at sunrise or at sunset. In sum, statues of the witch are raised to Šamaš and burned; the burned statues are then drowned and buried.

As an example of a complex ritual against witchcraft that was performed by the *āšipu*, special mention should be made of the Akkadian magical series *Maqlû*, "Burning." This composition is the longest and most important Mesopotamian text concerned with combating witchcraft.

*Maqlû* comprises eight tablets of incantations and a ritual tablet. The incantation tablets record the text of almost one hundred incantations; in the ritual tablet, these incantations are cited by incipit, and alongside each citation appropriate ritual directions are prescribed. The present form of *Maqlû* seems to be a creation of the early first millennium BCE, the standard lengthy text having developed from an earlier short form by means of a series of sequential changes. In the main, the incantations and rituals of *Maqlû* are directed against witches and witchcraft. The ceremony was intended to counteract and dispel evil magic and its effects, to protect the patient, and to punish and render ineffectual those responsible for the evil.

The ceremony was performed during a single night and into the following morning at the end of the month Abu (July/August), a time when spirits were thought to move back and forth between the netherworld and this world. The primary participants were the exorcist and his patient (who on occasion would be the king). The series (and ceremony) was composed of three major subdivisions. The first two divisions (Tablets I–V, VI–VII 54) were performed during the night, the third (VII 55–VIII) during the early morning hours of the following day.

The ceremony itself centered on the recitation of incantations and the performance of such rites as burning of figurines, fumigation, salving, washing,

disposal, and protection against future attack. Each division centered on a different set of rites: division 1, burning and dousing figurines of the witch; division 2, fumigation and protection of the patient's house and massaging the patient; division 3, washing the patient over representations of the witch. The incantations of each division have common themes; they thus develop a set of ideas that parallel or derive from the rites of the division, thereby reiterating the central idea and ritual activity of the section. The bulk of the material of each incantation division is set out in blocks of "similar" incantations, each block reiterating a theme linked to a standard ritual act, and these blocks in turn follow one another in accordance with standard ritual patterns. The work as a whole has introductory, connecting, and concluding sections, as do the individual subdivisions. Thus, the work has both a ritual and ideational structure as well as a narrative progression that together impart a distinctive character and tone to the ceremony.

Instead of presenting a detailed analysis of the ceremony and its ideology, let us sample some of the more characteristic incantations of each of the three divisions.

#### *Division One*

This division opens with the patient's invocation of the gods of the cosmos—the powers of the night sky, of the netherworld, and of nature—to assist him in his struggle against the witch. It then turns to its main concern—the judgment, execution, and expulsion of the witch. The witch is destroyed by fire and water; these symbolic acts of burning and drowning are performed ritually on representations.

The fire-god Girra is a primary actor in this division. The incantation II 77–103 is addressed to the fire-god and is recited alongside the ritual burning of images of the witch:

O blazing Girra, firstborn of Anu,  
 It is you who renders judgment, the secret speech,  
 You illumine darkness,  
 You set straight confusion and disorder.  
 You grant decisions for the great gods,  
 Without you, no god delivers a verdict,  
 It is you who gives instruction and direction.  
 It is you who speedily captures the evildoer,  
 And who speedily overcomes the wicked (and the) enemy.  
 I, your servant, So-and-so, the son of So-and-so, whose god is So-and-so,  
 whose goddess is So-and-so—

I have been attacked by witchcraft, and so I stand before you,  
 I have been made detestable before god, king, noble, and prince, and so  
     I come before you,  
 I have been made sickening in the sight of anyone who beholds me, and  
     so I bow down before you.  
 O most great Girra, pure god,  
 Now in the presence of your great godhead  
 Two images of the warlock and witch (made) of bronze I have fashioned  
     with your power.  
 In your presence I have crossed them and to you I have given them.  
 May they die but I live,  
 May they be driven away (or perhaps bound) but I be acquitted  
     (lit., be/go straight),  
 May they come to an end but I increase,  
 May they weaken but I become strong.  
 O stately Girra, most eminent one of the gods,  
 Vanquisher of the wicked and the enemy, vanquish them so I not be  
     wronged.  
 May I, your servant, live and be well so that I may serve you (lit., stand  
     before you).  
 You alone are my god, you alone are my lord,  
 You alone are my judge, you alone are my aid,  
 You alone are my avenger!

The request to the fire-god to destroy the evildoer is continued in the next incantation (II 105–125), the first part of which (II 105–116) is here quoted:

O blazing Girra, warlike son of Anu,  
 It is you, the fiercest among your brothers,  
 Who decides lawsuits like (= in the stead of) Sin and Šamaš—  
 Judge my case, hand down my verdict.  
 Burn my warlock and my witch;  
 O Girra, burn my warlock and my witch;  
 O Girra, scorch my warlock and my witch;  
 O Girra, burn them;  
 O Girra, scorch them;  
 O Girra, vanquish them;  
 O Girra, consume them;  
 O Girra, consume them completely (lit., mix them together completely).

The witch against whom the ritual is directed is a powerful and destructive creature, as we learn from III 1–16, the opening of the first incantation in Tablet III:

The sorceress, she who roams the streets,  
 Who continually intrudes into houses,  
 Who prowls in alleys,  
 Who spies about the broad ways—  
 She keeps looking (lit., turning) around in front and in back,  
 Standing in the street she turns foot (movement) around,  
 And in the square blocks (commercial) traffic.  
 She robbed the fine young man of his virility,  
 She carried off the attractiveness of the fine young woman,  
 With her malignant stare she took away her charms,  
 She looked at the young man and (thereby) took away his vitality,  
 She looked at the young woman and (thereby) carried off her attractiveness!  
 The witch saw me and came after me,  
 With her venom, she cut off (commercial) traffic,  
 With her spittle, she cut off my trading,  
 She drove away my god and goddess from my person.

Again, the fire-god is asked to destroy the agency of evil in III 154–179:

Hand, Hand,  
 Strong hand of humankind,  
 Which, like a lion, seized a man,  
 Like a bird trap, clamped down on a young man,  
 Like a net, overwhelmed the warrior,  
 Like a battle net, caught the leader,  
 Like a trap, covered the strong one.  
 O warlock and witch, may Girra burn your hand,  
 May Girra consume, may Girra drink, may Girra wholly consume (lit., mix  
 together completely),  
 May Girra roar at your strong hand,  
 You whose hand bewitched, may he burn your body,  
 May the son of Ea, the exorcist, scatter your cohort.  
 May the smoke of Girra cover your face,  
 Like an oven through your cracks,  
 Like a pot through your mud,

May fierce Girra scatter you.  
 May your witchcraft and evil spells not approach me.  
 I rise up like fish in my water,  
 Like a pig from my mud,  
 Like a soap plant at the edge of the (inundated) meadow,  
 Like *sassatu*-grass at the canal bank,  
 Like seed of an ebony tree at the seashore.  
 By pure Ištar (Venus), who illumines fate,  
 I have been designated for the design of life (i.e., “inscribed for life”).  
 By the command pronounced by awesome Girra  
 And blazing Girra, son of valiant Anu.

Subsequent to burning, the smoldering remains of the effigies are doused with water; in v 132–141, we hear how the evil beings are thereby deprived of the power to perform evil:

Fierce, raging, powerful, furious,  
 Overbearing, tough, hostile, wicked are you!  
 Who but Ea can dampen you?  
 Who but Asalluḫi can cool you?  
 May Ea dampen you,  
 May Asalluḫi cool you.  
 My mouth is water, your mouth is fire:  
 May my mouth extinguish your mouth,  
 May the curse of my mouth extinguish the curse of your mouth,  
 May the plots of my heart extinguish the plots of your heart!

Finally, in v 158–175, the dead witches are expelled and commanded never to return:

Be off, be off, begone, begone,  
 Depart, depart, flee, flee!  
 Go off, go away, be off, and begone!  
 May your wickedness like smoke rise ever heavenward!  
 From my body be off!  
 From my body begone!  
 From my body depart!  
 From my body flee!  
 From my body go off!  
 From my body go away!

To my body turn back not!  
 To my body approach not!  
 To my body near not!  
 On my body abut not!  
 By the life of Šamaš, the honorable, be adjured!  
 By the life of Ea, lord of the deep, be adjured!  
 By the life of Asalluḫi, the magus of the gods, be adjured!  
 By the life of Girra, your executioner, be adjured!  
 From my body you shall indeed be separated!

*Division Two*

In this division, fumigation is performed to counteract and disperse attacks of witchcraft. Following fumigation, objects are set up for protection, and the patient himself is then massaged with oil.

Salt figures prominently among the materials burned. In VI 119"–126", it is addressed as if it were a god:

O you Salt, who were created in a pure place,  
 For food of the great gods did Enlil destine you.  
 Without you no meal is set out in Ekur,  
 Without you god, king, noble, and prince do not smell incense.  
 I am So-and-so, the son of So-and-so, whom witchcraft holds captive,  
 Whom bewitchment holds in (the form of a skin) disease.  
 O Salt, release my witchcraft, release my spell,  
 Receive from me the bewitchment so that, as the god my Creator,  
 I may constantly praise you.

And in VII 29–46 the oil used for salving is also addressed:

Pure oil, clear oil, bright oil,  
 Oil that purifies the body of the gods,  
 Oil that soothes the sinews of mankind,  
 Oil of the incantation of Ea, oil of the incantation of Asalluḫi.  
 I have coated you with soothing oil  
 That Ea has granted for soothing,  
 I have anointed you with the oil of healing,  
 I have cast upon you the incantation of Ea, lord of Eridu, Ninshiku,  
 I have expelled *asakku*, jaundice, chills of your body,  
 I have removed stupor, apathy, and misery of your body,  
 I have soothed the sick sinews of your limbs.

By the command of Ea, lord of the deep,  
 By the incantation of Ea, by the incantation of Asalluḫi,  
 By the gentle bandaging of Gula,  
 By the soothing hands of Nintinugga  
 And Ningirima, mistress of incantation.  
 On So-and-so, Ea cast the incantation of the word of healing  
 That the seven *apkallus* of Eridu soothe his body.

### *Division Three*

With the coming of morning the patient washes himself repeatedly; this is the primary rite in this division. Subsequently, representations of the witch in an edible form are thrown to dogs, protective amulets are then prepared, and concluding rites are performed.

The patient welcomes the day and repeatedly washes himself over representations (frequently made of flour) of the witch; this washing serves the dual purposes of cleansing the patient of evil and causing the witchcraft to return to and seize the witch (reversion), as we learn in the three incantations VII 145–152, 153–161, and 162–169:

Dawn has broken; doors are now open;  
 The traveler has passed through the gate;  
 [The messenger] has taken to the road.  
 Ha! witch: you labored in vain to (lit., you shall not) bewitch me!  
 Ha! enchantress: you tried for nought to (lit., you shall not) enchant me!  
 For I am (now) cleansed by the rising sun;  
 May [the sorceries] that you performed or had performed (against me  
     during the night)  
 Turn back and seize you yourself!

It is morning, yea, morning.  
 This is (the morning) of my warlock and witch;  
 They arose, playing their *nī'u*-instrument like musicians.  
 At my door stands Pālil;  
 At the head of my bed stands Lugaledina,  
 I am sending against you the one at my door, Pālil (and)  
 The one at the head of my bed, Lugaledina.  
 Over one whole mile your speech (extends), over the whole road your  
     word (extends)—  
 I turn back your witchcraft and your spells, they will seize you yourself!

At dawn my hands are washed.  
 May a propitious beginning begin (the new day) for me,  
 May happiness and good health ever accompany me,  
 Whatever I seek may I attain,  
 May the dream I dreamt be made favorable for me,  
 May anything evil, anything untoward,  
 The spells of warlock and witch, not approach me, not touch me.  
 By the command of Ea, Šamaš, Marduk, and the princess Bēlet-ilī.

In conclusion, I should emphasize that the study of Mesopotamian witchcraft beliefs and rituals is more than just an exposition of esoterica. It is important not least because the relevant texts address physical, psychological, existential, and social difficulties that not infrequently formed the center of concern of Mesopotamian life; the beliefs and accusations, moreover, are barometers of personal and societal tensions and indicators of problems and conflicts in that ancient society that are often not revealed as clearly, and sometimes not at all, by our more standard and official texts. But in addition to shedding light on problems that the Mesopotamians shared with general humanity, Mesopotamian witchcraft beliefs and rituals are an integral part of the larger system of religious belief and of the broader cultural cosmology of that civilization and, thus, a source of information regarding its history and culture.

## 5 Bibliography

In studying Mesopotamian witchcraft, I have found it very useful to consult anthropological literature on witchcraft as well as studies of European witchcraft. I list here a few general studies and collections. In addition to the classic works by C. Kluckhohn, *Navaho Witchcraft* (1944; repr., Boston: Beacon, 1967), and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937), see, e.g., the essays in *Witchcraft and Sorcery: Selected Readings*, ed. M. Marwick (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1970), and in *Articles on Witchcraft, Magic, and Demonology: A Twelve-Volume Anthology of Scholarly Articles*, vol. 1, *Anthropological Studies of Witchcraft, Magic, and Religion*, ed. B. P. Levack (New York: Garland, 1992); see also A. F. C. Wallace, *Religion: An Anthropological View* (New York: Random House, 1966), esp. 113–116 and 177–187, and D. L. O’Keefe, *Stolen Magic: The Social History of Magic* (New York: Random House, 1983), esp. 414–457. For European witchcraft, see, e.g., the essays in *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries*,

ed. B. Ankarloo and G. Henningsen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), and such studies as R. Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials: Their Foundations in Popular and Learned Culture, 1300–1500* (Berkeley: University of California, 1976), and R. Briggs, *Witches and Neighbors: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (New York: Viking, 1996).

For the nature of magic in Mesopotamia, see W. van Binsbergen and F. A. M. Wiggermann, “Magic in History: A Theoretical Perspective, and Its Application to Ancient Mesopotamia,” in *Mesopotamian Magic: Textual, Historical, and Interpretative Perspectives*, ed. T. Abusch and K. van der Toorn, AMD 1 (Groningen: Styx, 1999), 3–34. For recent discussions of therapy and oral rites in Mesopotamia and bibliographies on these subjects, see T. Abusch, “Prayers, Hymns, Incantations, and Curses: Mesopotamia” and “Illnesses and Other Crises: Mesopotamia” in *Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*, ed. S. I. Johnston (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 353–355 and 456–459 [[203–208]].

The present chapter on witchcraft summarizes and repeats some of the positions that I have taken in years past on this topic. See especially the essays collected in T. Abusch, *Mesopotamian Witchcraft: Toward a History and Understanding of Babylonian Witchcraft Beliefs and Literature*, AMD 5 (Leiden: Brill/Styx, 2002); and T. Abusch, *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature: Case Studies*, BJS 132 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987); for a recent discussion of the *Kultmittelbeschwörung*, see T. Abusch, “Blessing and Praise in Ancient Mesopotamian Incantations,” in *Literatur, Politik und Recht in Mesopotamien*, ed. W. Sallaberger et al. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003), 1–14 [[94–109]]. For other discussions of Mesopotamian witchcraft, see S. Rollin, “Women and Witchcraft in Ancient Assyria,” in *Images of Women in Antiquity*, ed. A. Cameron and A. Kuhrt (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983), 34–45, and M.-L. Thomsen, *Zauberdiagnose und schwarze Magie in Mesopotamien*, CNI Publications 2 (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 1987).

The translation of *Maqlû* is based on my then unpublished synoptic edition of the text. See now T. Abusch, *The Magical Ceremony “Maqlû”: A Critical Edition*, AMD 10 (Leiden: Brill, 2016); however, the translation here may not exactly match the translation in that volume. For an English translation of *Maqlû*, see T. Abusch, *The Witchcraft Series “Maqlû,”* WAW 37 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2015); for a German translation, see T. Abusch and D. Schwemer, “Das Abwehrzauber-Ritual *Maqlû* (‘Verbrennung’),” in *Omina, Orakel, Rituale und Beschwörungen*, ed. B. Janowski and G. Wilhelm, TUAT, n.F. 4 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2008), 128–186.

# Some Reflections on Mesopotamian Witchcraft

## 1 Introduction

Mesopotamian witchcraft ideas seem to have originated in the popular, private sphere and only then to have entered into official religion, where they subsequently played an ever-increasing role.\* Accordingly, it seems appropriate here to outline in preliminary form some broad historical developments that might provide a partial explanation for the emergence of witchcraft concerns in the normative religion of Mesopotamia and the increasing importance of witchcraft in official and public life. I shall first point to some developments in the interaction of witchcraft and general exorcism (*āšipūtu*), then comment on the relationship between witchcraft and divine anger, and finally speculate about some dimensions of social/religious evolution that might explain the increasing importance of witchcraft. Throughout, the relationship between witchcraft and divine anger will serve as my point of departure and touchstone. It is my hope that our discussion will enhance, even if only slightly, our understanding of the relation or interaction of public and private religion in the ancient Near East.

Before getting down to my topic, it remains for me to mention that parts of my presentation are drawn from a fuller, more detailed treatment of the topic that will be published in the volume *Mesopotamian Magic: Textual, Historical, and Interpretive Perspectives*.<sup>1</sup> There, I shall discuss some of the evidence that indicates that texts were revised to include and even highlight witchcraft; here, in the context of a broader discussion of private and public religion, I will set out my general orientation and some of the significant results.

## 2 Background: Witchcraft and Exorcism

Generally speaking, in Mesopotamian sources, witches were illegitimate practitioners of magic; their activities were limited to the performance of

\* This paper was presented at the conference “Private and Public Religion in the Ancient Near East” at the University of Maryland in 1994.

1 See T. Abusch, “Witchcraft and the Anger of the Personal God,” in *Mesopotamian Magic: Textual, Historical, and Interpretive Perspectives*, ed. T. Abusch and K. van der Toorn, AMD 1 (Groningen: Styx, 1999), 83–121 [[AMD 5, 27–63]].

destructive acts. They were regarded as antisocial and as motivated by malice and evil intent. The exorcist or incantation-priest (*āšīpu*), by contrast, was a legitimate practitioner of magic, though he operated not only constructively but also destructively on behalf of his clients. He attempted to free his clients from malevolent forces that gripped them, and occasionally he provided protective devices against future attacks. He was regarded as well-intentioned. But although witch and exorcist were opponents, they are nonetheless close mirror images of each other insofar as they use many of the same techniques, though ostensibly in the service of conflicting social goals and norms.

Such is the picture that is sketched by standard exorcistic literature. But unless I am terribly mistaken, the witch originally had a different form and witchcraft itself originally belonged to the popular level of Mesopotamian culture and only eventually became part of the domain of the temple exorcist. It is informative to realize that the work of the last thirty years has revealed for Europe that “Behind the diabolical witchcraft of the witch-hunters has been discovered a more traditional, neighborly witchcraft. Behind this in turn we are seeing glimpses of a still more archaic, shamanistic witchcraft.”<sup>2</sup> Working independently, I have found that a similar developmental scheme is discernible also in ancient Mesopotamia and have already identified several stages in Mesopotamian witchcraft.<sup>3</sup> Thus, for example, I have reconstructed for Mesopotamia an early stage of “popular” witchcraft comparable to the aforementioned archaic stage.<sup>4</sup> In the popular form, the “witch” is not of necessity an evil being and doer of illegal acts but may in fact perform various magical acts (both normative and non-normative forms of witchcraft) on behalf of others and even against “evil” witches. In this popular form, the “witch” seems to exhibit associations with ecstatic types of practitioners. Such associations may well be significant, for they recall the occasional coalescence of peripheral possession and witchcraft. In certain social circumstances, the same individual may both utilize spirit possession and be employed as an exorcist but then also be labeled as a witch.<sup>5</sup>

2 P. Burke, “The Comparative Approach to European Witchcraft,” in *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries*, ed. B. Ankarloo and G. Henningsen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 441.

3 See T. Abusch, “The Demonic Image of the Witch in Standard Babylonian Literature: The Reworking of Popular Conceptions by Learned Exorcists,” in *Religion, Science, and Magic in Concert and in Conflict*, ed. J. Neusner et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 31–39 [[AMD 5, 7–14]].

4 See, e.g., Abusch, “Demonic Image,” 32–34 [[AMD 5, 8–10]].

5 Cf. I. M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: An Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession and Shamanism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971), 121–122.

In any case, originally the witch and her activities, as well as rituals and incantations performed against her, belonged not to the main stream of exorcism but rather to other, more popular circles. As for the *āšipu*, the normal exorcist, he was a member of the clergy and represented a mainstream “white magician” whose material reflected a belief system bound up with such major gods as Enki/Ea and Asalluḫi. As the messenger of the gods, this exorcist cared for human beings and confronted the evil forces that threaten their well-being. Yet, though the exorcist did have temple affiliations and could participate in cultic activities, he generally performed his craft on behalf of private clients, most of whom belonged to the upper classes. He was an expert in dealing with supernatural forces such as demons, that is, with supernatural beings in contrast to human witches. For, initially, he was not the primary person who fought against witchcraft, though typologically, and perhaps even historically, the aforementioned ecstatic personage may be one of the progenitors of forms later associated in the standard literature with both *āšipu*<sup>6</sup> and witch.

Witchcraft and *āšipūtu*, thus, belonged to different social or cultural worlds. However, at some point, perhaps in the early second millennium, witchcraft became a concern of the exorcist. The *āšipu* now became not only the major legitimate agent of magic but, in the nature of the case, also the primary opponent of witches. Certainly, as far as the urban elites were concerned, he took over the task of combatting evil witches. At this point, the witch became the counterpart and destructive human mirror image of the *āšipu*.

But this is only the beginning. For with the incorporation of the witch into the domain of the exorcist, the original popular and normative conceptions of the witch and witchcraft as well as the literary and ceremonial forms associated with witchcraft were sometimes elaborated and reshaped by these exorcists in line with their understanding of the supernatural world. But the expansion of the exorcist’s domain to include the combating of witchcraft and the subsequent contact of witchcraft beliefs and practices with the exorcist’s other functions transformed not only the exorcist’s approach to witchcraft but also his approach to these other phenomena. Inclusion of witchcraft in his corpus both affected his general understanding of the supernatural and transformed the manner in which witchcraft was viewed and combated.

As an example, we may now take up the phenomenon of the changing image of the witch. The witch is reshaped as a consequence of her integration into *āšipūtu*, and we witness various additional changes alongside the creation

6 See T. Abusch, “Ascent to the Stars in Mesopotamian Ritual: Social Metaphor and Religious Experience,” in *Death, Ecstasy, and Other Worldly Journeys*, ed. J. J. Collins and M. Fishbane (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995), 15–39 [[AMD 5, 271–286]].

of the image of the normal witch. Positioning the exorcist and witch against each other and trying to find a place for the witch in the exorcist's worldview set in motion a process of polarization. The process seems to have moved in two separate directions, and the witch assumed two additional shapes, two images of power.<sup>7</sup> On the one hand, the witch was transformed into a supernatural demonic force, and on the other, into a powerful human figure.

The first, the demonic shape or force, is ultimately integrated into the organized divine world. Although the witch may perhaps appear more powerful than before, if anything, the exorcist has gained control over her, for she has now been made subject to divine forces, to the cosmic order, and to the rules upon which the exorcist can call. He knows the gods and their ways and can use his traditional weapons against her. (As part of this development, the general populace seems to have lost some of its ability to confront the witch independently.)

In this development, then, the witch has been transformed into a demonic member of the divine world or into a force that can control demons. Elsewhere, I have examined the emergence of a full-blown conception of the witch as a demonic force operating within a structured cosmos.<sup>8</sup> And there I noted, for example, that while the witch often exhibited the expected human form in many incantations of the *Maqlû* series, in some of them she actually assumed a demonic form. Originally, at least, the enemy in some of these incantations seems to have been a ghost or a demon. Secondarily, this opponent was understood to be the shade of the witch or the witch in demonic form. Elsewhere, the image of the human witch and that of the demon were even combined, and then we are witness to the transformation of a human witch into a demonic force that can be expelled. The imposition of a demonic form on a more popular human form is somewhat analogous to the imposition of learned notions on the image of the European witch by jurists and theologians, a process that led in Europe to the existence alongside each other of a popular conception of sorcery and a learned one of diabolism. Moreover, a clear and strong relationship developed between Babylonian demonology and witchcraft, though I must postpone for another occasion a discussion of how the demons were joined to the witch and made subservient to her.

The second shape is very different, for here the witch is transformed into a powerful human figure who introduces chaos into the social order and even intrudes on the divine world. She can compete with and even overpower the gods. She can, for example, cause a god to be angry with and distance himself

7 See Abusch, "Demonic Image," 38–39 [[AMD 5, 14]].

8 Abusch, "Demonic Image," 39–50 [[AMD 5, 15–25]].

from his human charge. The development of this image of the witch follows a different course from that of the demonic one, yet this witch, too, is eventually tamed by the priests and the gods. Thus, as part of this second image of power, the witch gains increasing power over the personal god, and it is with this form of the witch that this essay will be primarily concerned.

But we take up this form here not only for its own sake but also for an additional reason. For we cannot much longer avoid the question: Why was the witch integrated into *āšipūtu* or, rather, what is the social background for this development and for the increasing importance of witchcraft? There are various ways to get a handle on this issue, but certainly one of the best ways of doing so and of answering this question is to examine the relationship between witchcraft and the personal god and to use this relationship as a prism through which to observe the social and intellectual landscape.

### 3 Witchcraft and the Personal God

Thus, in order both to develop an understanding of the second form of the witch as well as to suggest an explanation for the growing importance of witchcraft, we now take up the aforementioned relationship and use the conjunction between the human witch and the anger of the personal god, first as a focus and then as a backdrop for our discussion.<sup>9</sup>

In Mesopotamia both witchcraft and the anger of the god are treated as two separate and independent causes of misfortune and may even represent two separate systems of thought. But, occasionally, we are told that the witch may affect the personal god and goddess and cause this deity to distance itself from its human protégé or to grow angry with him; for example, *Maqlû* III 13–16:

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

What relationship obtains between the witch and the god, between witchcraft and divine anger, and how did the Mesopotamians themselves understand the relationship of these two otherwise independent entities?

<sup>9</sup> For a detailed treatment of the relationship between witchcraft and the anger of the personal god and of some of the texts in which these two themes occur, see Abusch, "Witchcraft and the Anger of the Personal God" [[AMD 5, 27–63]].

It should be noted immediately that it is insufficient to try to fit witchcraft and divine anger neatly together simply by asserting that in all instances where witchcraft occurs together with divine anger, the witch had provoked divine anger by the imputation of sin or wrongdoing to the victim (as might be the case, for example, in *Maqlû* I 4–7). For this is simply not true—witness the *Maqlû* passage just quoted. Nor can our question be answered by a rehearsal of the information provided by those texts which attest to a connection between witchcraft and divine anger, for sometimes these entities are set alongside each other or placed together in such a way that we are not immediately able to understand or define the nature of the relationship (see, e.g., *BAM* 316 [[*CMAwR* 2, no. 3.6, A]] ii 5'–25'). Thus, while we may grant that the witch can cause the god to distance himself, we cannot simply take the picture derived from texts where witchcraft and divine anger seem to link up in what appears to be a coherent manner and apply it to texts of a more indeterminate nature.

The problem of the conjunction of witchcraft and divine anger is placed in even sharper focus when we move to a more abstract level and try to see how witchcraft and divine anger would fit together in the normative understandings or constructions of Mesopotamian religious history and thought. For we are often told that Mesopotamian religion as reflected in Old Babylonian and Standard Babylonian literature recognizes the power of the gods and their rule and ascribes suffering or misfortune to human disobedience or infraction of divine norms.

For example:

There was a subtle change in the concept of the personal god around the beginning of the second millennium. Before that time he had been thought to be powerless against demons who attacked his ward and had had to appeal to some great god for help. With the advent of the second millennium, however, the demons had lost power, so that the personal god was fully capable of protecting his human ward against them. If now they succeeded in an attack, it was because the personal god had turned away in anger and had left his ward to shift for himself. Offenses which would anger a personal god came to include, moreover, almost all serious lapses from ethical and moral standards....

Man no longer permitted his world to be essentially arbitrary; he demanded that it have a firm moral basis. Evil and illness, attacks by demons, are no longer considered mere happenings, accidents: the gods, by allowing them to happen, are ultimately responsible, for only when

an offense has been committed should the personal god be angered and turn away.<sup>10</sup>

It is not incorrect to say that in the late periods there is a strong emphasis on the nexus sin / divine anger / suffering and that this is an important theme in the late literature that treats suffering. But as we have seen, the witch, too, is able to drive away the personal god, and she is able to achieve this end even when the sufferer has done no wrong. And the statements about the power of the witch to drive away the personal god come from a corpus of texts (witchcraft literature) that in the main belongs to a late stage of Babylonian literature. Thus, while our material is late, it does not agree with and seems to contradict the notion that the personal god abandons his human charge only as a consequence of his wrongdoing. Accordingly, in addition to our previous questions, we must also ask: If sin or transgression had come to be regarded as a primary cause of divine anger, why was witchcraft believed to cause the anger and alienation of the personal god and the subsequent suffering of the god's protégé?

In my estimation, different forms of textual evidence prove that various traditional texts were rewritten to include witchcraft. These textual revisions attest to changes in thought and practice; they reflect a historical development and a growing concern or belief in witchcraft. New texts were composed for use against witchcraft and old ones were rewritten to include it.

And as far as witchcraft and divine anger are concerned, some texts which had originally treated misfortune as a consequence of the anger of the personal god give every indication of having been revised in one way or another so as to include the witch/witchcraft among the various effective forces for evil and manifestations of harm and sometimes even to present her/it as primarily and ultimately responsible for the misfortune. Thus, witchcraft beliefs had an impact on *āšipūtu* and were themselves affected by it. It is even possible that in the process new ideas could have taken shape. For example: The removal of the personal god by the witch is a notion that is original to natural witchcraft literature—a literature that perhaps draws on a more popular and vivid level of belief—and is fundamentally the primitive and infantile fear that a woman may take away a man's power and sense of being. The notion of the anger of the personal god, on the other hand, is of a higher order and draws

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10 T. Jacobsen, "Mesopotamia," in H. Frankfort et al., *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man: An Essay on Speculative Thought in the Ancient Near East* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), 212–213.

on a different type or level of personification. The insertion of witchcraft into texts that had centered upon the anger of the god, thus, represents more than just the conjunction of two complementary ideas. Rather, it constitutes the meeting and overlap of two different sets of beliefs (the power of witchcraft to distance the god, and divine anger as a cause of suffering), an encounter that would have led to the creation of a new idea, the notion that the witch or witchcraft could cause the personal god to be angry.

Revisions reflect an increase in the belief in and concern over witchcraft, and they attest to the intrusion into the mainstream of religious thought of the belief that the witch could cause misfortune and even divine alienation. In any case, these textual revisions indicate that the difficulties caused by the existence of two different forms of causality cannot be dismissed out of hand by the claim that these beliefs are not theologically contradictory or that if they are, such contradictory beliefs could exist alongside each other without causing any difficulties, etc. Nor is the selection of witchcraft as the diagnosis of choice simply the consequence of a deepening exegesis which renders explicit a belief or practice that existed all along in the thought of the circle of writers or priests responsible for our texts. The choice of witchcraft is due rather to its growing importance in the society at large and reflects the influence on *āšipūtu* of beliefs coming from different circles. But while the conjunction of witchcraft and the anger of the god created by revision is meant mainly to deal with the increasing threat of witchcraft, it results, as we have seen, in the spread or perhaps even the creation of a new construction. In any case, we are witness in these texts to a new conjunction of witchcraft and the anger of the personal god, and the primacy of witchcraft over the personal god.

The revisions suggest that we are dealing with a development or change in Mesopotamian religious thought and that there is a further stage subsequent to, or a mode of perception separate from, the two sequential stages described in the citation quoted above—to wit, even when the victim is innocent of any wrongdoing, the witch is able to distance the personal god or to cause the god to be angry and to abandon his protégé.

#### 4 Social Developments

But it is not enough to draw up a new scheme of development. We must also try to understand the nature and causes of the aforementioned developments. Certainly, we must try to answer the following question: Why did witchcraft overshadow the personal god and become more powerful than him, and how did witchcraft replace sin as a cause of divine anger? Or to put the question

somewhat differently: Given that witchcraft is a secondary development, why did the mainstream of belief that centers upon sin and the personal god accept the witchcraft component and not simply ignore it? To understand changes in the place of witchcraft and its relationship to other systems of belief, we must consider the social, psychological, and intellectual needs and forces that cause the changes as well as the effects of the changes. I have tried to take account of these several aspects and to work out detailed answers to these questions, but given the present venue, here I will do no more than present in concise form a few of my thoughts on social development. Permit me to mention the obvious, namely that my answers to these questions serve in part to explain why the witch was taken up and integrated into *āšipūtu* by providing the social background for this development.

Every society faces and has to deal with extra-human or natural, inter-human or social, and intra-human or psychological forces. The dangers are different at different stages of development. Moreover, a society attains different degrees of control over these forces at different stages of its development, but there are trends in the degree of control over these forces and an interdependence in any society between trends in its control over all three.<sup>11</sup>

In the fourth and third millennia, the relation to the external, natural world was the main problem facing Mesopotamian society. In the Sumerian incantation literature, these external threats were personified in the form of demons. Hence their importance and their power over humans and personal gods in this early literature. Eventually, with the evolution of the economy, of a complex irrigation system, and of the state, the external problems facing Mesopotamian society were overcome or, at least, kept in check. But the successful treatment of natural dangers by the development of more complex technology may bring with it changes in social relations, such as greater competition and longer chains of interdependence within the community and between communities. In turn, these changes increase the dangers that people pose for each other.<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, in this later stage, dangers are seen as coming increasingly from within society itself. Demons—nature—are perhaps placed under control, but less so the other human beings in the society. Increasingly, one's enemies are other human beings. This heightened concern with human enmity takes the form of the belief in witchcraft. Hence, the emergence, growth, and power

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11 See N. Elias, *What Is Sociology?*, trans. S. Mennell and G. Morrissey (London: Hutchinson, 1978), 156. See also N. Elias, "Problems of Involvement and Detachment," *British Journal of Sociology* 7, no. 3 (1956): 226–252, esp. 230–233, as well as S. Mennell, *Norbert Elias: Civilization and the Human Self-Image* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 169–170.

12 See the preceding note.

of witchcraft beliefs, and the dominance of the witch over the personal god. Whereas earlier the powers that could control the personal god were nonhuman, demonic, now the power that can cause the alienation of the personal god is a human power, the witch.

Till now we have talked about the personal god only as he reacts to forces that are more powerful than he is. But this god is not only the personification of the individual's powers of strength and effectiveness; he is also the personification of right and wrong action. He represents and rewards either effective/realistic actions or proper actions, or both. To be sure, the personal god is a projection of the individual's power of effectiveness and procreation. In this role, he is an aspect of ego. But in a clan context, he also represents group or clan norms as well as the responsibility to maintain them. Thus, the personal god is also an aspect of superego or conscience and punishes the self. What, then, of those situations where the personal god does not simply react but initiates punishments? Once the question is formulated in this way, it becomes clear that between the two social stages that we have just imagined there should be another stage, or perhaps, simply another mode of perception. In effect, this middle stage would be an intrusion—perhaps just a structural one—for at this stage, the family or clan, rather than the town, provides the defining structure of community. This chronology would agree, perhaps, with the tribalization of Mesopotamia by the Amorites during the early second millennium.

In any case, at this stage, familial powers and responsibilities rather than natural or state/urban ones define moral obligation and the relationship with the divine. Abiding by one's family obligations to the personal god, that is, to the family, is what determines one's value and situation. Thus, here the god, representing the family, decides whether one has fulfilled one's obligations or has sinned and whether one is to be respected and rewarded or punished and shunned by god and family. Hence the importance of sin and of the personal god as the arbiter of one's behavior, social condition, and esteem. Thus suffering because of sin confirmed the power of the group and its social mores but also expressed the power of the individual, for his deeds were powerful enough to alienate and his presence significant enough to cause the god to forgive.

Subsequently, however, responsibility was shifted from inside the individual and inside the family to external/social forces. Of course, witchcraft was not the only explanation for misfortune, but it was a suitable, even excellent choice, for it had the advantage of shifting responsibility for one's suffering from oneself onto other human beings. There may be numerous reasons for this altered mentality, but this shift in thinking and new way of seeing oneself surely fit the new urban world that we described above and suggest a movement away from family and toward assimilation to city life. The choice of an

external human cause as an explanation for failure and suffering is rendered even more understandable, then, if we posit that this development took place in an urban world where the extended family played less of a defining role and the individual was confronted by more extended, impersonal, and hostile social forces. The focus was again on the moral and cosmic concerns of an urban world that was anxious less about natural forces or about family cohesion and more about social competition and hostility, concerns reflected in the new emphasis upon such forces as witchcraft.

Witchcraft would seem to belong to the urban world of Mesopotamia and to periods of great social dependence in these urban centers. At stake in the demonic/witch model is the maintenance of urban structure and individual life in a Mesopotamian urban context; at stake in the world where the personal god rules is the maintenance of the clan/family and its norms. Of course, with the emergence of witchcraft neither demons nor family concerns or images such as the personal god disappear; rather, they now come under the control or umbrella of the witch and witchcraft.

This brings us back to religious thought. Witchcraft beliefs would seem to have originated in popular belief, but sometime during the second millennium, witchcraft was integrated into the system of *āšipūtu*. This incorporation constituted an integration of witchcraft beliefs into a belief system in which power belongs to and derives from the gods. Once incorporated, the witch had to be set into a meaningful relationship to the gods. Whatever she was before, the witch now became a human and cosmic criminal, for in *āšipūtu* the legitimacy of magic depended on its use or commission by the gods, and thus the witch who drew upon different sources of power and validation became, by definition, an opponent of the gods and an enemy of both the human and cosmic order. As noted earlier, a belief in witchcraft shifts responsibility for the individual's suffering onto other human beings; thus, an increasing belief in witchcraft and the acceptance of this belief into the mainstream of religious thought meant a loss of power for the individual. However, its integration into *āšipūtu* and into the world of the gods represented, among other things, an attempt at reasserting control. For in *āšipūtu*, the witch's growing power over gods and humans is recognized but is, then, overcome by the gods and their priestly emissary, to whom individual members of the community can now turn for justice and assistance. This, too, constituted one more way of coping with an increasingly complex and hostile world.

By way of conclusion, let me summarize what we seem to have seen under the rubric of Mesopotamian cultural development. Our material would seem to reflect different social contexts (town/city and family) and/or evolutionary stages. Whatever else it represents, the external attack or threat of

demons who can chase away the personal god reflects the world of the general Mesopotamian urban (Sumerian) community of the third millennium. The centrality and power of the personal god who punishes the individual because of the infractions that he has committed is a Semitic feature that has to be understood in the context of the tribal family culture in Old Babylonian times; as such, it is a conceptual intrusion into the Mesopotamian urban landscape. Finally, the last stage, during which the witch becomes a major force able to control the personal god, represents a resurgence of a late Mesopotamian urban world and an imposition of that world upon the (Semitic) tribal one.

## The Witch's Messages: Witchcraft, Omens, and Voodoo-Death in Ancient Mesopotamia

Some years ago, I remarked that “there is evidence for the presence in Mesopotamia of types of witchcraft involving evil signs which were encountered by the victim.\* Some of these signs can be shown to have been sent by the witch and to have been regarded as her emissaries.”<sup>1</sup> By this I meant to say that, in addition to various other means of bewitchment, the witch was also able to harm her victim by sending against him experiences, living beings, and natural and man-made objects. In themselves, some of these phenomena could be neutral in value. But their interpretation as the witch's messages meant that

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\* The final section of this paper—the section dealing with *zikurudû*-witchcraft—formed part of my presentation at a conference on diseases in Mesopotamia that took place at the Wellcome Institute, London, in December 1996. Professor Marten Stol was one of the conveners of that conference, and thus it seems appropriate now to include this paper in a volume in his honor. Marten has made many important contributions to our understanding of Mesopotamian magic and medicine, and I hope he finds some interest in this paper.

- 1 T. Abusch, “Of Omens, Witches, and *zikurudû*,” *Abstracts of Communications: American Oriental Society Meeting 1972, Chapel Hill (NC)*, 14, no. 62. Elsewhere, in a presentation of the witch's destructive activities, I mentioned this type of witchcraft and reprinted the full abstract. See T. Abusch, “The Demonic Image of the Witch in Standard Babylonian Literature: The Reworking of Popular Conceptions by Learned Exorcists,” in *Religion, Science, and Magic in Concert and in Conflict*, ed. J. Neusner et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 31 and 53 n. 10 [[AMD 5, 7 with n. 10]]. The abstract reads: “The purpose of a recently published Namburbi (see R. I. Caplice, “Namburbi Texts in the British Museum IV,” *Or NS* 39 [1970]: 134–141 [note that K 11625 might be a duplicate of *ibid.*, 136: 36–39]) is to provide protection against the evil effects of witchcraft. It has previously been assumed that omens play no role in the witchcraft process, and accordingly the function of this Namburbi has been interpreted as indicating the extension of the term ‘Namburbi’ to include Ušburuda rites. However, there is evidence for the presence in Mesopotamia of types of witchcraft involving evil signs which were encountered by the victim. Some of these signs can be shown to have been sent by the witch and to have been regarded as her emissaries. This evidence, taken together with the occurrence of witchcraft in both ‘general’ and ‘specific’ Namburbis, strongly suggests that the occurrence of witchcraft in the Namburbis is rooted in reality and is due not to literary confusion, but to a relationship between witchcraft and omens.” In addition to explaining the occurrence of witchcraft in the Namburbis and illuminating certain practical and ideational aspects of Mesopotamian witchcraft, the recognition of this relationship provides the perspective necessary for understanding a number of terms, motifs, and incantations.

an encounter with them augured doom and would bring about harm. In this respect, they are no different from phenomena of the natural and man-made world that may on occasion be perceived as ominous. It is not unnatural, then, that messages of the witch, on the one hand, and signs that were feared to result in evil, on the other, could be equated; her messages could be interpreted as evil omens while evil signs could be interpreted as her messages.

It was my intention then to study the several permutations of this phenomenon in depth. The most important topics were the presentation of several passages that demonstrate that ominous signs could be ascribed to the witch (or that a witchcraft medium could be interpreted as a sign), the relationship of witchcraft to *namburbi* (that is, apotropaic) rituals, the forms of *zikurrudâ* magic (a deadly magical practice, lit. “throat cutting”), and the use of the insight into the connection of witchcraft and omens to interpret a number of incantations and their images. I shall study these topics now, but I should remark that as regards *zikurrudâ*, much of what I had originally worked out and would have included need now not be presented in any detail, for in her publications, M.-L. Thomsen has already noted some of the same features of the *zikurrudâ* texts as I did.<sup>2</sup>

## 1 Witches and Signs

Let us commence our treatment, then, with a discussion of several explicit references that render it clear, in my opinion at least, that the association of witchcraft and signs is not simply the result of the juxtaposition of two separate sources of evil but rather that the signs are a manifestation or, better, the consequence of an act of witchcraft.<sup>3</sup> We may best begin with a simple example, a text that treats an everyday phenomenon or event as a sign indicating that witchcraft had been performed and that a ritual was to be performed so as to prevent the evil of witchcraft from affecting the patient. I refer to three units shared by UET 7, 125 and *KAR* 298, rev. 41–46. They are (a) UET 7, 125, obv. 1–8 // *KAR* 298, rev. 41–42 // K 9873 + 79-7-8, 240, iv 5’–10’ [*CMAwR* 1, no. 11.1, aBC;

2 See M.-L. Thomsen, *Zauberdiagnose und schwarze Magie in Mesopotamien*, CNI Publications 2 (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 1987), 40–47, and, in condensed form, M.-L. Thomsen, “Witchcraft and Magic in Ancient Mesopotamia,” in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe*, vol. 1, *Biblical and Pagan Societies*, ed. B. Ankarloo and S. Clark (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 41–42, 53–56.

3 It should be obvious that I am here not concerned with signs that were either elicited for the purpose of diagnosing witchcraft or were observed and interpreted as a simple portent of witchcraft.

also 3, A.27]];<sup>4</sup> (b) UET 7, 125, rev. 1–5 // *KAR* 298, rev. 43–44 // K 249+ (*BAM* 434), iii 17–20 // K 2481, rev. 10'–13' [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 11.1, aBDE and 1, no. 7.10, U; also 3, no. A.27]]; (c) UET 7, 125, rev. 6–9 // *KAR* 298, rev. 45–46 [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 11.1, a]].

All three ritual units center on witchcraft, and all three are apotropaic, that is, they are intended to protect against an attack of witchcraft and to prevent witchcraft from approaching a man and his house.<sup>5</sup> But it is the first and third units that interest us here, and since the third is still fragmentary, it is particularly the opening finding (symptom) and statement of purpose of the first upon which we base ourself. To appreciate the significance of this unit, we must first note and correct an ancient mistake: in *KAR* 298, rev. 41, the first verb was written *ub-bu-ub* and interpreted as a D-stative of *ebēbu*; accordingly the opening section (DIŠ NA KÁ É-šú *ub-bu-ub kiš-pi ana É NA BI NU TE-e*) was taken to mean “If the door of a man’s house has been cleaned (he shall perform

4 That K 9873 is a duplicate of *KAR* 298, rev. 41–42, was first noted by G. Meier (in his review of R. C. Thompson, *A Dictionary of Assyrian Chemistry and Geology*, *AfO* 13 [1939–1940]: 72), in reference to a quotation from K 9873 in R. C. Thompson, *A Dictionary of Assyrian Chemistry and Geology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), 20. For K 9873 + 79-7-8, 240, see now F. A. M. Wiggermann, *Mesopotamian Protective Spirits: The Ritual Texts*, CM 1 (Groningen: Styx, 1992), 206–207, figs. 13–14.

5 A preliminary description of the three units may prove of some use. The detailed description is taken from my unpublished descriptive catalogue of all Mesopotamian texts that record ceremonial and therapeutic rituals against witchcraft. The “outline” follows the order in which the material appears in the text.

Unit A: Ceremonial ritual with incantation. Against witchcraft.

Outline—Diagnosis (1a): If the gate of a man’s house creaks (evil omen). Purpose (1b): So that the witchcraft not approach the house of the man (omitted in K 9873+). Ritual instructions (2–3a): Sulphur, gypsum, and red paste are crushed and mixed together with *billatu* beer. The incantation *ezzētu šamrātu* is recited over the mix. (UET 7, 125 quotes the text of the incantation [3b–5], while *KAR* 298 and K 9873+ cite the incantation by incipit only.) Further ritual instructions (6–8a): Various materials are smeared on the doorpost. Outcome (8b): He will get well (K 9873+ instead has that witchcraft will not approach the house of the man). All three versions show significant textual variations from each other.

Unit B: Ceremonial ritual. Against witchcraft.

Outline—Purpose: So that witchcraft not approach the man and his house. Ritual instructions: A mixture of materials is buried at the outer gate. Outcome: Witchcraft will flee (*ihalliquā*) and will not approach the man or his house. K 249+ and K 2481 omit the second half of the outcome. Note the variation between Kuyunjik and Ashur/Ur texts.

Unit C: Ceremonial ritual. Fragmentary. Against witchcraft.

Outline—Diagnosis: If the gate of a man’s house creaks (evil omen). Ritual instructions: Includes ritual burial of some object at the door. Outcome: Witchcraft is released. (UET 7, 125, rev. 45–46 and *KAR* 298, rev. 45–46 may be duplicates but the two texts are too broken for certain determination. Note the citation of an incipit in *KAR* 298.)

the following ritual) so that sorcery may not attack this man's house."<sup>6</sup> But this translation makes little sense, for surely cleanliness should not be the cause or indicator of witchcraft. K 9873 +, iv' 5' and, more recently, UET 7, 125, obv. 1, have cleared up the difficulty with the readings *hu-up-pu-up* and [*h*]ú*p-pu-up*, respectively (cf. UET 7, 125, rev. 6: *húp-pu-up*). The text may now be read: *DIŠ NA KÁ É-šú* (var. [...] *NA KÁ-šú*) *hu-up-pu-up* (vars. (*hu*)-*up-pu-up*, [*h*]ú*p-pu-up*) *kiš-pi ana É NA BI* (var. *NA [u] [É-šú<sup>1</sup>]*) *NU TE-e<sup>7</sup>* and translated: "If the door of a man's house is smashed/creaks,<sup>8</sup> so that witchcraft not affect the house of that man (var. the man [(and)] his house), you ..."<sup>9</sup> (see also the third unit: UET 7, 125, rev. 6: [... *κ*]Á-*šu húp-pu-up* ...).

A sound that is heard and then interpreted as a sign of witchcraft is similar, I believe, to witchcraft that is said to "be seen," a phenomenon associated most frequently, though not exclusively, with *zikurrudâ* witchcraft.<sup>10</sup> See, e.g., the rubric for the incantation of the second ritual unit and the catchline on K 72 (4R<sup>2</sup> 59/1) + K 3400 + K 9648 // K 7140 (+) K 12483: 77 and 80 (= 4R<sup>2</sup> 59/1, rev. 21 and 24) [[*CMawR* 2, no. 10.7, AB]]: *KA.INIM.MA šumma upšāšē ina bīt amēli*

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- 6 So *CAD* E, 5b, translating *KAR* 298. A more sensible translation was given by O. R. Gurney: "To purify the gate of a man's house and to prevent sorcery from approaching that man's house, ..." See O. R. Gurney, "Babylonian Prophylactic Figures and Their Rituals," *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology* 22 (1935): 75.
- 7 K 9873 +, iv' 5'-10' probably did not have this statement of purpose here; instead the unit ends with the prognosis: [...] *ana É NA NU TE-ḫi*. The other mss. have *SILIM-im* (UET 7, 125) / *šá-lim* (*KAR* 298) as their final prognosis.
- 8 The breaking or creaking of the door here is not simply an indication that someone has broken in through the door and is sneaking around or into the house in order to do harm.
- 9 Cf. *CAD* H, 240-241, translating K 9873. But Wiggermann (*Mesopotamian Protective Spirits*, 124-125) still reads K 9873+ as *hu-ub-bu-ub* and translates: "When someone's gate is purified, ..."
- 10 As mentioned above, I noted this phenomenon already in 1969 on the basis of my study of texts like 4R<sup>2</sup> 59/1 and other texts that are even more closely associated with *zikurrudâ*, such as *BAM* 458 (K 3278) (+) *AMT* 87/2 [[*CMawR* 1, no. 10.3, A<sub>2</sub>]] = *BAM* 449 (K 6172 + K 8127) + *AMT* 90/1 = *BAM* 449 (K 8438) + *AMT* 14/6 = *BAM* 449 (K 10980)? [[*CMawR* 1, no. 10.3, A<sub>1</sub>]] (+) *BAM* 453 (K 5949+ + K 15999) [[*CMawR* 1, no. 10.4, C]] // *BAM* 455 (K 9523) (+) *BAM* 467 (Sm 102) [[*CMawR* 1, no. 10.3, B]] // Sm 1304 [[*CMawR* 1, no. 10.3, C]] [contrary to what I had earlier thought, Sm 1304 cannot form an indirect join to *BAM* 455 (+) 467; see D. Schwemer's note in *Rituale und Beschwörungen gegen Schadenzauber*, *KALI* 2 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007), no. 35: 2', where he also notes a duplicate section on no. 27 [[*CMawR* 1, no. 10.3, D]] in D. Arnaud, "Tablettes de genres divers du Moyen-Euphrate" (*Studi micenei ed egeo-anatolici* 30 [1992]: 195-245), 245, and *BAM* 449 (+) 458] [[*CMawR* 1, no. 10.3, A]] // *BAM* 454 (K 10487) [[*CMawR* 1, no. 10.3, B]]. I assume that this phenomenon was already apparent to *CAD* A/2, 24a, top left (N of *amāru*), though not to *CAD* Z, 117 (*zikurrudû*). See also Thomsen, *Zauberdiagnose*, 45-46, and Thomsen, "Witchcraft and Magic," 30, 41.

*ittananmarū*,<sup>11</sup> “The text for: if *upšāšē* (machinations) are repeatedly seen in the house of a man”; and *ana piširti kišpī ša ina bīt amēli innamrū*,<sup>12</sup> “To release witchcraft that was seen in the house of man.” Or, again, *BAM* 464 = Boissier, *DA* 42 (K 2572): 8’–12’ [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 10.5, A]]: *šumma ana amēli zikurrudū ša šikkī epussu ... šikkā šuātu ša ina bīt amēli innamru ... teleqqe*,<sup>13</sup> “If *zikurrudū* magic by means of a mongoose was performed against a man, ... you take that mongoose that was seen in the house of the man, ...”

That the witch brought about these signs is clear from a few texts. Perhaps most unambiguous is a passage in the incantation *PBS* 1/1, no. 13, 1–40 // *Sm* 635 + *Sm* 1188 + *Sm* 1612: 1’–14’ // *K* 16344 (+) *K* 15234 [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 9.2, aBC]].<sup>14</sup> This incantation is addressed to Šamaš and is directed against those who have performed witchcraft against the speaker. In *PBS* 1/1, no. 13, obv. 16–18, we read: *ša a[na y]āši idat* (wr. Á) *lemutti īpuša* ‘*kišpū ruḥē rusē*’ (*upšāšē lemnūti*) [*lā ṭā*] *būti* ‘*īpuša*’,<sup>15</sup> “who produced an evil sign<sup>16</sup> against me, performed witchcraft, spittle, enchantment, evil, no good machinations against me.” In the two shorter versions<sup>17</sup> of this Šamaš incantation,<sup>18</sup> we find a similar line in the same position in the text: (a) *KAR* 82 (VAT 10609) + // *ABRT* 2, 18 (K 11243) // *K* 9467: *ša yāši idat* (wr. *i-da-at*) *lemutti izzīza kišpī ruḥē ruḥtu* (*ru’tu*) *lemutte/u īpuša*,<sup>19</sup>

11 KA.INIM.MA *šum-ma up-šá-še-e ina É NA it-ta-na-an-ma-ru.*

12 a-na UŠ<sub>11</sub>.BÚR.RU.DA *šá ina É NA in-nam-ru.*

13 DIŠ a-na LÚ ZI.KUR<sub>5</sub>.RU.DA *ša* <sup>d</sup>NIN.KILIM *e-pu-us-su* / ZI.KUR<sub>5</sub>.RU.DÈ *šu-ú ša* ITI.7.KÁM / <sup>d</sup>NIN.KILIM *ina É LÚ IGI* / <sup>d</sup>NIN.KILIM *šu-a-tu<sub>4</sub> ša ina É LÚ in-nam-ru* / ŠU.TI-*qí* ...

14 For a translation of this incantation, see J. M. Seux, *Hymnes et prières aux dieux de Babylonie et d'Assyrie* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1976), 394–396.

15 *PBS* 1/1, no. 13, obv. 16–18 [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 9.2, a]]: ... *ša a[na i]a-a-ši Á ḪUL-ti i-pu-šá / kiš-<sup>r</sup>pu<sup>1</sup> r[u-ḥe]e ru-se-<sup>r</sup>e<sup>1</sup> (upšāšē ḪUL.MEŠ) / (indentation) <sup>r</sup>NU DÜG<sup>1</sup>.GA.MEŠ DÜ-[šá].*

16 Á here serves as a direct object of *īpuša* and should be interpreted here, as well as in related passages that are cited below, as a form of *ittu*, “sign.” On contextual grounds, I would have expected the form to be a plural: *idāt*, “signs” (i.e., *idāt lemutti*, “evil signs”). But I have treated it here as a singular: *idat*, “sign” (i.e., *idat lemutti*, “an evil sign”) for two reasons: first, in the examples cited in this paper, the logographic writing Á always appears alone without the plural marker MEŠ; second, the variant *it-ti* (*KBo* 9, 47 [for which, see below]) is most likely a singular and not a plural form. For a different translation of this passage and the usage, see Seux, *Hymnes et prières*, 395 with n. 11, as well as 205 n. 7.

17 For a discussion of the different versions of this text, see Abusch, “Demonic Image of the Witch,” 35–36 and notes on p. 54 [[*AMD* 5, 11]].

18 The shorter versions are (a) *KAR* 82 (VAT 10609) + VAT 11158 (+) *KAR* 259 (VAT 11207) [now = *KALI* 2, no. 11, with the additional identification of VAT 11158], rev. col. 21’–28’ // *ABRT* 2, 18 (K 11243), rev. col. 4’–14’ // *K* 9467: 8’–12’ [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 7.8, AQR]]; (b) *K* 3661: 4’–9’(?) [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 7.5, A]].

19 *KAR* 82 (VAT 10609) +, rev. col. 24’–26’ // *ABRT* 2, 18 (K 11243), rev. col. 6’–7’ // *K* 9467: 11’–12’: *ša ia-ši i-da-at ḪUL-ti GUB-za ki-iš-pi ru-ḥe-e ru-úḥ-tú* (var. *ú*) *Ḫ-ú-te* *le-mu-ut-te* [... DÜ-šá].

“who stood against me in the form of an evil sign, performed witchcraft, spittle, evil saliva against me”; (b) K 3661: *ša [yâši] idat (wr. Á) lemutti izzīza kišpī ruḥê ru-*[<sup>20</sup> ...].<sup>21</sup>

Note that in the shorter versions *īpuša* is replaced by *izzīza*. The possibility that *i-da-at/Á lemutti izzīza* here might mean “to stand on the side of evil”<sup>22</sup> should, I think, be discounted for several reasons. Given the genetic relationship of the several versions, parallel statements should probably be functionally equivalent and convey the same idea; and thus *a[na y]âši idat lemutti īpuša* and the parallel *ša yâši idat lemutti izzīza* should, at least in principle, effectively mean the same thing.<sup>23</sup>

The apparent semantic difficulty provided by the occurrence of *izzīza* rather than *īpuša* is resolved by the use of *iz-zi-za (izzīza)* in *Maqlû* v 78, where its meaning is “to stand in the form of an evil omen.” The incantation in which this line is embedded reads in translation:

Incantation. Whoever you are, O witch, who like the Southwind piled up  
 (...) for fifteen days,  
 Nine days fog, a year dew,  
 Who formed a cloud against me and stood over me (*izzīza ana/ø yâ[ši]*).  
 I rise up against you like the shearer of the heavens, the Northwind,  
 I scatter your cloud, I make your storm disappear,  
 I scatter your witchcraft that you piled up (over me) night and day  
 And the messages (*našparāt/našparāt[ī]*) of *zikurrudâ* that you repeatedly sent (*[taltapparī]*) against me. (v 76–82; cf. VII 1–7<sup>24</sup>)

In this incantation, the witch is imagined as a wind and is said to create clouds; a cloud here is a natural phenomenon that is understood both as an ominous force and as a manifestation of witchcraft (note the parallelism of *urpataki // kišpīki* in lines 80–81; note also the occurrence of *našparāt zikurrudâ* in line 82). And the witch stands over her victim in the form of the cloud that she created (line 78: *urpata ikšuramma iz-zi-za ana/ø yâ[ši]*). Thus, *idat lemutti izzīza* and *idat lemutti īpuša* may be regarded as semantically equivalent when they

20 Presumably, *ru*<sup>1</sup>-[*úh-tu*], but *ru*<sup>1</sup>-[*se-e*] is also possible.

21 K 3661: 7'–8': ... *š[a ia-ši] Á ḫUL-ti iz-zi-za kiš-pi ru-ḥe-e ru*<sup>1</sup>-[*se-e* ...].

22 For this meaning of *idat lemutti*, see CAD I–J, 15a.

23 That *i-da-at / Á* designate forms of *ittu*, “sign” is indicated not only by context but also by the writing *it-ti* in a similar passage discussed below.

24 Furthermore, compare v 79–82 and VII 4–7 with VI 49–51; accordingly, v 81–82 // VII 6–7 are synonymous with or, at least, functionally equivalent to VI 51: [*u mīmma mala*] *tēpušī utâr ana šâri*, “[and everything] that you have done I turn to wind.”

appear in similar witchcraft contexts. Still, one should try to explain the textual variation between *īpuša* in PBS 1/1, no. 13, obv. 16 and *izzīza* in the shorter (and probably older) versions. *izzīza* appears to be the less transparent and more difficult reading; perhaps, then, *izzīza* was the more original reading, whereas *īpuša* reflects an attempt by later writers to resolve a difficult reading with a simpler one.

This understanding is confirmed by the ritual prescription *KBo* 9, 47: 11'–18' // *KUB* 4, 99: 4'–14' // *KAR* 275, rev. 1'–6' // *BAM* 317, rev. 4–8 // *KALI* 2, no. 43 (VAT 14051), middle col. 1'–7'<sup>25</sup> (+) [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 1.5, ABCDE]], for here, in a ritual performed over figurines of a warlock and witch in the presence of the sun god, we find the utterance: *Šamaš upišūšunu ana (var. ina) muḥḥišunu litūrū ša ø/ana yâši idat/itti lemutt[i] izzizūni*,<sup>26</sup> “May the *upišū*-sorcery turn back/return upon the head of those who stood against me in the form of an evil sign.” Note the occurrence here of the usage under study: *ša ø/ana yâši idat/itti lemutt[i] izzizūni*. That the witchcraft is conveyed in the form of signs is strongly supported by the fact that the witchcraft act in this ritual is linked to two motifs that are often associated with forms of witchcraft involving signs: (a) the reversion of witchcraft; (b) a form of witchcraft referred to as *upišū*. Note, moreover, that the variant *it-ti* for *Ā* confirms, I believe, our understanding of *idat lemutti izzīza*.

There can be little doubt that the witch sends evil signs in order to harm her victim. And as noted earlier, these signs may be inherently threatening, but need not be. To understand the concrete forms in which signs appear, we need not limit ourselves either to statements in scribal frameworks nor to texts that define themselves as dealing with signs as such. Rather, we may cite here some incantations in *Maqlû*, where the manifestation of witchcraft comes in the form of a natural object or force. Among others, I have in mind incantations that mention (a) potsherds (III 136–153); (b) clouds (v 76–82, VII 1–7); and (c) smoke (VI 40–44, VI 45–51, VI 127"–134" // VI 135"–142"), which may perhaps be identified with clouds.

25 D. Schwemer identified VAT 14051 (*KALI* 2, no. 43), middle col. 1'–7' [(+)VAT 14052 (*KALI* 2, no. 44)] as a further duplicate of a group of texts that I had earlier identified as duplicates (*KBo* 9, 47: 11'–18' // *KUB* 4, 99: 4'–14' // *KAR* 275, rev. col. 1'–6' [now = *KALI* 2, no. 45] // *BAM* 317, rev. 4–8). I thank Schwemer for discussing the usage *idat lemutti izzīza* with me. (It should be noted that with the exception of PBS 1/1, no. 13, obv. 16–18 and, possibly, *KBo* 9, 47, the ms. that reads *it-ti*<sup>1</sup>, Schwemer does not share my opinion that the usage refers to the production of signs.)

26 *KBo* 9, 47: 16'–17' // *KUB* 4, 99: 10'–11' // *KAR* 275, rev. col. 2'–4' // *BAM* 317, rev. 6–7 // *KALI* 2, no. 43, middle col. 5'–7': <sup>d</sup>UTU ū-pi/pi-šu/šī-šu-nu ana/ina UGU-šū-nu li-tu-ru/ rù šá/š]a ana/[a-n]a/ø ia/iá-a/ø-ši it-ti<sup>1</sup>/Ā ḫUL-t[i] iz-zí-zu-ni<sub>7</sub>.

- (a) Potsherds:  
 Incantation. O potsherd of the streets, why are you constantly hostile to me?  
 Why do your messages (*našparātūka/i*) constantly come to me?  
 O witch, unceasingly(?) your words—  
 Why do they constantly reach me so as to seize me? (III 136–139)
- (b) Clouds and other meteorological phenomena:  
 Incantation. Whoever you are, O witch, who like the Southwind piled up (...) for fifteen days,  
 Nine days fog, a year dew,  
 Who formed a cloud against me and stood over me (*izzīza ana/ø yâ[šī]*).  
 I rise up against you like the shearer of the heavens, the Northwind,  
 I scatter your cloud, I make your storm disappear,  
 I scatter your witchcraft that you piled up (over me) night and day  
 And the messages (*našparāt/našparāt[i]*) of *zikurrudâ* that you repeatedly sent ([*taltapparī*]) against me. (v 76–82)
- [Incantation]. My/the hand is the rainbow, the scorpion.  
 She, the witch, piles up her witchcraft.  
 [.] I shine forth against you like the rainbow in the heavens,  
 I blow against you like the north and west winds,  
 I scatter your cloud, I make your storm disappear,  
 I scatter your witchcraft that you piled up (over me) night and day  
 And the messages (*našparāt*) of *zikurrudâ* that you repeatedly sent (*taltapparī*) against me. (VII 1–7)<sup>27</sup>
- (c) Smoke:  
 Incantation. O my witch, my informer:  
 What, did you not introduce hostility?  
 Why is smoke rising from your house?  
 I send against you [thyme, the nourishment of the lan]d,  
 I scatter your witchcraft, I turn your word back into your mouth. (VI 40–44)

<sup>27</sup> See also VI 45–51:

Incantation. Before Ningirsu cried out the “*alāla*”-work song in the mountains,  
 Before the youth went up to cut the tamarisk,  
 [...] witch who forms (hail) stones against So-and-so, the son of So-and-so,  
 You (alt. + who) constantly seek evil.  
 [I blow against you] like the north and west winds,  
 [I scatter] your cl[ouds], I make your storm disappear,  
 [and everything] that you have done I turn to wind.

Incantation. Ha! my witch, my poison-maker,  
 Who lit a fire(s) against me for one league,  
 Who repeatedly sent her messengers against me (*ištappara mār šipriša*)  
 for two leagues.

I know and so have taken precautions,  
 I have installed a guard on my roof, a (protective) emblem at my doorway.  
 (VI 127"–131" // 135"–139")

That the fire/smoke referred to at least in VI 128" // 136" are perhaps more than just the fire of a stove and the smoke from a chimney and allude to something superhuman may be inferred from the opening lines of the two incantations that immediately follow:

Incantation. Ha! my witch, my informer,  
 Who traverses (i.e., blows) back and forth over all lands,  
 Who crosses to and fro over all mountains.  
 I know and so have taken precautions,  
 I have installed a guard on my roof, a (protective) emblem at my doorway.  
 (VI 143"–147" // 152"–156")

Given the similarities (even shared lines) and juxtaposition of these four incantations, VI 127"–134" // 135"–142" are almost certainly to be interpreted in light of VI 143"–151" // 152"–158", and the fire and smoke of the former set may very possibly be identified with the forces that seem to underlie the latter, viz., wind and clouds.

It is clear from the above-cited passages that natural objects are sent by the witch against her victim, and that these objects, or omens if you will, are understood as the witch's *našparātu*, or messages.<sup>28</sup> In addition to the passages cited above, see the following passages that refer explicitly to messages, for it is probably this phenomenon that is meant when occasionally at the end of a commonplace description of a witch's bewitchment of a victim by means of food, drink, washing, and salving,<sup>29</sup> the composer adds the sending of evil:

28 So, too, Thomsen, *Zauberdiagnose*, 46 ("Dies kann bedeuten, daß die Botschaft nicht einfach nur ein Zeichen oder ein Omen ist, das auf Zauberei verweist, sondern die Zaubermittel selbst"), but in "Witchcraft and Magic," 41, she seems to treat the object as an evil portent.

29 For an interpretation of the meaning of this commonplace description of bewitching, see T. Abusch, "Witchcraft, Impotence, and Indigestion," in *Disease in Babylonia*, ed. I. L. Finkel and M. J. Geller, CM 36 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 153–158 [[AMD 5, 84–87]].

KAR 80, obv. 36 and 38 // Bu 88-5-12, 95,<sup>30</sup> obv. 25 and 27 // K 431+, obv. i, 16' and 18' [[CMAwR 1, no. 8.4, AcB]]: *ina mimma lemnu* (var. *lemni*) *ušēbilūni* / ... / ... *mimma lemnu ušēbilūni* (TUM<sup>1</sup>-ni); K 2563 + K 2820 + K 2821 + K 2843 + K 5750 + K 9601 + K 10537 + K 16716,<sup>31</sup> obv. 15 // STT 76, obv. 15 // STT 77, obv. 15 [[CMAwR 1, no. 9.1, ABC]]: *ina šubulti ušēbila*; and *Maqlū* IV (now line 67): K 2956 ii 16' // Bm 36618, obv. 3: *ina šubulāti tušēbilā'inn*[i].<sup>32</sup>

## 2 *namburbi* and Witchcraft

The primary magical text type and ritual that responds to the existence of evil omens and tries to eliminate their harmful consequences is the *namburbi*. There are several texts that are labeled as *namburbis* but seem to deal with witchcraft. Probably the best example of a text containing specific *namburbis* that deals with witchcraft<sup>33</sup> is K 2773 + 2901 + 8910 (and duplicates) [[CMAwR 2, no. 11.3, aBCdE]], edited first by R. I. Caplice and more recently, with additional duplicates, by S. M. Maul.<sup>34</sup> K 2773+ contains three separate ceremonial rituals, all dealing in one way or another with witchcraft. All three are apotropaic and are intended to provide protection against witchcraft.<sup>35</sup>

How are we to understand this association of *namburbi* and witchcraft and the use of the *namburbi* label therewith? Caplice was of the opinion that “the

30 S. Langdon, “A Babylonian Ritual of Sympathetic Magic by Burning Images,” *RA* 26 (1929), 39–42.

31 Cf. J. Laessøe, *Studies on the Assyrian Ritual and Series “bīt rimki”* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1955), pl. 1 (and pp. 36–47), and T. Abusch, “Mesopotamian Anti-Witchcraft Literature: Texts and Studies, Part I: The Nature of *Maqlū*: Its Character, Divisions and Calendrical Setting,” *JNES* 33 (1974): 258 n. 22 [[AMD 5, 107 n. 22]].

32 There are, of course, incantations where a term such as *našpartu* does not occur, but where the various images used should probably still be interpreted as *našpartu*.

33 There are several other *namburbis* that deal with witchcraft (see below).

34 R. I. Caplice, “Namburbi Texts in the British Museum IV,” *Or NS* 39 (1970): 134–141; S. M. Maul, *Zukunftsbewältigung: Eine Untersuchung altorientalischen Denkens anhand der babylonisch-assyrischen Lösrituale (Namburbi)* (Mainz am Rhein: Phillip von Zabern, 1994), 445–452. This, or a similar text/ritual, is cited in S. Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars*, SAA 10 (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1993), no. 296, obv. 18: NAM.BŪR.BI HUL *kiš-pi* (cf. already Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian Scholars to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal, Part II: Commentary and Appendices* [Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1983], 212), though rather than Parpola’s “an apotropaic ritual to counteract evil sorcery,” I would translate “... *the evil of witchcraft.*”

35 The first ritual mentions evil omens alongside witchcraft; in addition, both thematically and ritually, it seems to be a typical *namburbi* and is so labeled (line 29 and restored in line 1); the second makes no mention of omens and is similar to many standard witchcraft rituals addressed to Šamaš; the third is a short recipe to prevent the evil of cast spittle from approaching a man.

text has a particular importance in indicating that the term 'namburbi' could be extended to include such [witchcraft] rites, normally termed *uḫburuda*.<sup>36</sup> But we cannot treat the text as a generic extension. For, as noted, the first ritual makes mention of evil omens alongside witchcraft. Thus for example, in lines 10–14, we read:

... Because of the evil caused by witchcraft, s[pittle, enchain]ment, (and) machinations that have seized me and are not released,  
 Because of the evil caused by untoward signs (and) portents that have [taken] place in my house, that have [co]nfronted me,  
 Daily I am afraid, frightened, and terrified. 'Now', th[is] witchcraft that has been inflicted upon me  
 (And) the evil caused by the signs (and) portents that have taken place in my house—may that evil not approach me and my house, not press upon (me), not affect me.  
 May that evil cross the river (and) pass over the mountain. May that witchcraft distance itself 3,600 miles from [m]y body.<sup>37</sup>

To be sure, the incantation is of a *namburbi* type,<sup>38</sup> and perhaps the mention of witchcraft has been inserted alongside/imposed upon the mention of omens. But even if this is so, the revision was intended to create a connection between the two; witchcraft, moreover, was regarded as the cause of the evil omens and as the primary cause of harm and of danger. This latter point, that witchcraft was the primary cause, is evident from line 14 ("May that witchcraft distance itself 3,600 miles from my body"), from the opening line of the ritual (*[namburbî lumun kišpî ruḫê rusê upš]āšê lemnūti ša amēla šubbutūma*),<sup>39</sup> and from the fact that witchcraft is common to all three rituals on the tablet. With this observation on the conjoining in this *namburbi* text of witchcraft and omens in mind, we may again reaffirm our earlier observation (see above, n. 1)

36 Caplice, "Namburbi Texts," 140. In like fashion, R. I. Caplice (*The Akkadian Namburbi Texts: An Introduction*, SANE 1/1 [Los Angeles: Undena, 1974], 9) remarks: "The great majority of namburbi texts is [*sic*] of the type so far described, apotropaea against portended evil, but we must note a few instances in which the distinction between *genres* is blurred, with a consequent extension of the meaning of the term 'namburbi.' Thus a few texts are intended to avert, not an evil portended by a sign, but one actively caused by sorcery, though sorcery is normally dealt with by texts of the UŠ<sub>11/12</sub>.BÚR.RU.DA type."

37 Text: Maul, *Zukunftsbewältigung*, 447.

38 Cf. Maul, *Zukunftsbewältigung*, 445.

39 Text: Maul, *Zukunftsbewältigung*, 446: 1. Translation: "[*Namburbi* against the evil caused by witchcraft, spittle, enchainment], (and) evil [mach]inations that have seized a man."

that the occurrence of witchcraft in both “general”<sup>40</sup> and “specific” *namburbi*, viewed alongside the evidence for the existence of types of witchcraft that made use of evil signs that would be encountered by the victim, strongly suggests that the occurrence of witchcraft in the *namburbi* is due primarily not to literary extension or confusion (that is, to the blurring of generic boundaries), but to the existence of an organic relationship between witchcraft and omens.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, in my estimation, there is a relationship between witchcraft and omens and, subsequently, between the *namburbi* and witchcraft corpora. Yet some disagreement still remains between my approach to the problem of relationship and the approach taken by Maul; for while also seeing a conceptual relationship between *namburbi* and witchcraft, Maul is of the opinion that

At first glance it may seem surprising that also averting the consequences of witchcraft would be the object of a *namburbi* ritual, since for this sphere comprehensive independent ritual genres were developed. Above it was established that in the *namburbi* rituals after the judgment procedure before Šamaš, the guilt of the omen bearer who had brought on unjustified harm to a person would have been established in a river ordeal. In the secular world of law (according to the second paragraph of the Law Code of Hammurabi) this procedure was reserved for the demonstration of guilt in cases of witchcraft. The overall conception of the *namburbi* rituals therefore was to treat the omen bearer as a sorcerer or a sorceress who had committed acts of destructive witchcraft. When one considers this, it is not surprising that one could avoid the evil consequences of witchcraft also by carrying out a *namburbi* ritual. The role of the omen bearer can here be assumed either by the “evil-carrying substances” used by the sorcerer or by one or several figurines of the sorcerer himself.<sup>42</sup>

40 For its occurrence in a “general” *namburbi*, see *LKA* 128 (and duplicates), edited in Maul, *Zukunftsbewältigung*, 185–189; for a discussion of *Maqlû* VII 114–140 in relationship to this text and type, see T. Abusch, *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature: Case Studies*, BJS 132 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 13–44. See also *KAR* 35 (and duplicates) [[*CMAwR* 2, no. 11.4, ABCDE]], edited in Maul, *Zukunftsbewältigung*, 181–184; this latter text is an amulet meant to protect against all types of witchcraft. For the occurrence of witchcraft in a “Universal *namburbi*,” see *LKA* 115 [[*CMAwR* 2, no. 11.5, A]], edited in Maul, *Zukunftsbewältigung*, 502–504; this ritual is directed against evil that is portended by all kinds of signs seen in a man’s house. (The incantation in this ritual is directed against all types of people, including witches [*kaššāptu*] who have performed witchcraft; the incantation is similar to *Maqlû* IV 80–94.)

41 This is not to say that the blurring or extension of generic boundaries is not also involved here, but such is secondary.

42 My translation of Maul, *Zukunftsbewältigung*, 445. See also *ibid.*, 85, and S. M. Maul, “How the Babylonians Protected Themselves,” in *Mesopotamian Magic: Textual, Historical,*

Thus, Maul understands the omen bearer (“Omenanzeiger”) as the equivalent of, or the parallel to, the witch. I do not subscribe to the equation; but even if the omen bearer (“Omenanzeiger”) sometimes served the same function as the witch, I do not think that it is correct to assume that such an equation was the operative factor in creating the connection of *namburbi* and witchcraft. For here the omen is not the equivalent of the witch but rather the equivalent of that which the witch sends; the “Omenanzeiger” is not the witch but rather the tool or messenger of the witch. And I, therefore, think it more reasonable to assume that the connection of *namburbi* and witchcraft owes its existence primarily to the fact that the witch could send evil omens, that is, that the witch could control/manipulate natural and man-made objects that would bring evil onto the human, and that these were treated as if they were omens or had the same force as omens.

### 3 *zikurrudâ* Witchcraft

The *zikurrudâ* texts indicate that sometimes the destructive ritual was performed in the presence of the stars and made use of various objects that were then brought into the visual ken of the bewitched man. The aforementioned objects were meant to be seen by the victim and were designated *upišû*, *upšāšû*, and the like. It was intended that the victim know that he had been bewitched and perhaps even that he know who had performed the act. Like those rituals against the *bēl-dabābi*, an opponent whom one met in daily conflict at court, in which the said opponent was accused of resorting to witchcraft,<sup>43</sup> the *zikurrudâ* texts are late products that operate in a world where one knew one's opponent. And like the *namburbi* rituals, the rituals undertaken to save the victim of *zikurrudâ* try to direct the course of events away from the victim and/or to serve an apotropaic purpose. It seemed to have been believed that *zikurrudâ* magic would result in the death of the victim.<sup>44</sup> In any case, the texts often say that the patient will surely die if a ritual is not performed.

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*and Interpretative Perspectives*, ed. T. Abusch and K. van der Toorn, AMD 1 (Groningen: Styx, 1999), 123–129, esp. 128. But see Maul's comment in *Zukunftsbewältigung*, 181: “Man glaubte, daß das von Hexerei verursachte drohende Unheil seinerseits durch Vorzeichen zu erkennen war.”

43 For the *bēl-dabābi*'s use of witchcraft and the texts in which this appears, see Abusch, *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature*, 101–105, esp. n. 35.

44 This deadly aspect of *zikurrudâ* was correctly emphasized by F. Köcher in his short discussion of *zikurrudâ* in *BAM* 5, p. xvi, n. 26. There he states: “Ich bin der Meinung, daß ZI.KU<sub>5</sub>.RU.DA zwei Begriffe umschließt. Einmal bezeichnet Z. die Zauberpraxis, die ich ‘Anhexung einer zum Tode führenden Krankheit’ nennen möchte. Ein andermal bezeichnet Z. ‘die (durch Anhexung hervorgerufene) tödliche Krankheit’ selbst.”

Much more can be said about *zikurrudâ*. But here, we would do no more than try to understand how, in fact, an attack of *zikurrudâ* actually worked its effect on its victim. We may start by noting that neither is *zikurrudâ* necessarily a sequela to psychosis nor is the victim of *zikurrudâ* necessarily suffering from psychosis or experiencing a psychotic episode.<sup>45</sup> Like a number of other illnesses, *zikurrudâ* is to be understood in the context of Mesopotamian culture; it is as much part of Mesopotamian religion as it is of Mesopotamian medicine. A purely psychiatric approach that designates ancient patterns of behavior and belief according to modern categories and views *zikurrudâ* purely in pathological terms fails to take account of the fact that some diseases are a function of cultural beliefs that motivate behavior, behavior that may seem bizarre to us but nonetheless reflects beliefs that are rational and coherent in their own way and may be held even by sane members of society.

The *zikurrudâ* complex, then, is a complex of beliefs, but if this is so, we must certainly try to see how *zikurrudâ* might have killed. The recognition that in *zikurrudâ* magic, the object sent by the witch was meant to be seen by the victim is the key, I think, to understanding how *zikurrudâ* killed, for it is the act of seeing the omen or object that causes the victim to fall ill and threatens to lead him to an untimely death. I suspect that fear is responsible for the effectiveness of this magic and its ability to bring on death. How did fear bring about death? Here we may draw on some early work in the field of medical anthropology. I have in mind the argument of Walter B. Cannon in his classic work “‘Voodoo’ Death.”<sup>46</sup>

In that paper, Cannon explained the many documented cases of people dying as a consequence of believing themselves to have been subjected to witchcraft and the like. He demonstrated how the victim of witchcraft may indeed sicken, how stress instigated by an act of witchcraft may cause a patient to die. The victim knows or believes that he is being attacked by a supernatural force that he believes can kill. In societies that hold to a belief in the power of witchcraft (and other forces such as taboo violation), “[there] is the fixed assurance that because of certain conditions, such as being subject to bone pointing or other magic, ..., death is sure to supervene.... [W]hat has

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45 Here I find that I must dissent from the very interesting construction of J. V. Kinnier Wilson, “An Introduction to Babylonian Psychiatry,” in *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger on His Seventy-fifth Birthday, April 21, 1965*, ed. H. J. Güterbock and T. Jacobsen, AS 16 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 292. For that very reason, I would also emphasize that, in my opinion, Kinnier Wilson’s several studies on mental illness constitute pioneering and important attempts to understand quite difficult materials.

46 W. B. Cannon, “‘Voodoo’ Death,” *AmAnth* 44 (1942): 169–181.

been called 'the gravest known extremity of fear,' that of an immediate threat of death, fills the terrified victim with powerless misery."<sup>47</sup>

Having excluded the possibility that death was due to poison, Cannon proceeded to determine how "an ominous and persistent state of fear can end the life of a man," how deadly fear might itself lead to death,<sup>48</sup> and contended that fear, when roused, brings "into action an elemental division of the nervous system, the so-called sympathetic or sympathico-adrenal division."<sup>49</sup> This division triggers various physiological reactions. But "if these powerful emotions [scil. rage or fear] prevail, and the bodily forces are fully mobilized for action, and if this state of extreme perturbation continues in uncontrolled possession of the organism for a considerable period, without the occurrence of action, dire results may ensue.... [T]he rapidly fatal result is due to a persistent excessive activity of the sympathico-adrenal system."<sup>50</sup>

Though published in 1942, Cannon's interpretation of "voodoo" death has clearly stood the test of time. B. W. Lex,<sup>51</sup> for example, augments physiological explanations of "voodoo death" (Cannon's as well as C. P. Richter's) "with information about neurophysiological research on sensitization, or tuning, of the autonomic nervous system."<sup>52</sup> More recently, Cannon's interpretation has been reassessed by E. M. Sternberg,<sup>53</sup> who notes "that scientific discoveries over the last 60 years have largely filled out the details of—but not overturned—most of Cannon's proposed explanation of the physiological underpinnings of this phenomenon."<sup>54</sup> Thus, Cannon's explanation "has stood the test of

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47 Cannon, "Voodoo' Death," 175–176.

48 Cannon, "Voodoo' Death," 176.

49 Cannon, "Voodoo' Death," 176.

50 Cannon, "Voodoo' Death," 176–177. Cannon's description of the physiological reaction is summarized clearly and succinctly by W. A. Lessa and E. Z. Vogt in their introduction to an abridged version of his article (in *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, ed. W. A. Lessa and E. Z. Vogt [1958; repr., New York: Harper & Row, 1979]): "[Cannon] demonstrates that through fear the body is stimulated to meet an emergency. Through the sympathetic nervous system, muscles are prepared for action by the production of large amounts of adrenaline and sugar and by the contraction of certain blood vessels. When the emergency is not met by action, or is prolonged, a state of shock may result. The blood pressure is reduced, the heart deteriorates, and blood plasma escapes into the tissues. Lack of food and water compound this deleterious physiological state. A continuation of this condition may lead to death within a very few days."

51 B. W. Lex, "Voodoo' Death: New Thoughts on an Old Explanation," *AmAnth* 76 (1974): 818–823.

52 Lex, "Voodoo' Death: New Thoughts," 818.

53 E. M. Sternberg, "Walter B. Cannon and 'Voodoo' Death': A Perspective from 60 Years On," *American Journal of Public Health* 92 (2002), 1564–1566.

54 Sternberg, "Walter B. Cannon," 1564.

time,” though (as Sternberg notes) we now have a better understanding of the brain regions, neurotransmitters, neuropeptides, chemical signals, electrical impulses, and the hormonal stress response involved.<sup>55</sup>

In his positive assessment of Cannon’s work, A. F. C. Wallace noted in 1966 that

In more recent parlance, such victims of witchcraft are suffering from the deteriorating effects of a prolonged continuation of the General Adaptation Syndrome, or stress reaction, which if not relieved may indeed result in serious illness or death. To be sure, the effectiveness of the ritual depends entirely upon the intended victim’s awareness that it is being performed; he must be, in other words, the object of a communication from the witch, a communication of implacable and irresistible hate.<sup>56</sup>

This surely sounds like an attack of *zikurrudâ*.

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55 Sternberg, “Walter B. Cannon,” 1565. To be sure, there have been some attempts to introduce modifications into as well as objections to Cannon’s work. For example, D. Lester, in “Voodoo Death: Some New Thoughts on an Old Phenomenon” (*AmAnth* 74 [1972]: 386–390), “supplements Cannon’s physiological hypothesis by proposing a psychological theory akin to the despair of the ‘giving up—given up’ complex often found in terminally ill patients” (Lessa and Vogt, *Reader in Comparative Religion*, 367). And H. D. Eastwell argued that in his own sample from the Australian Bush, the victims often died primarily not from stress reaction but from dehydration due to deprivation of water attendant upon preparing oneself for death. But even he acknowledged in his conclusion that “what is proposed is that psychological factors are secondary to the basic physical process of dehydration, but both are involved”; see H. D. Eastwell, “Voodoo Death and the Mechanism for Dispatch of the Dying in East Arnhem, Australia,” *AmAnth* 84 (1982): 5–18, esp. 17, and cf. H. D. Eastwell, “The Forefather Needs No Fluid: Voodoo Death and Its Simulacra,” *AmAnth* 86 (1984): 133–136.

56 A. F. C. Wallace, *Religion: An Anthropological View* (New York: Random House, 1966), 178.

## Illnesses and Other Crises: Mesopotamia

Over the course of some 2,500 years (ca. 2600–100 BCE), cuneiform sources, written in both the Sumerian and Akkadian languages, refer to illnesses as well as to other personal crises and prescribe various modes of coping with illness and with personal difficulties.<sup>1</sup> The most important sources are various types of therapeutic texts that describe symptoms, provide etiological or descriptive diagnoses, and prescribe treatments. Other texts, such as the forty-tablet manual SA.GIG, are diagnostic in intent and provide descriptions of illnesses in their protases and diagnoses and prognoses in their apodoses. In addition, many nontherapeutic texts are concerned with illness; these include, for example, literary compositions that deal with the problem of theodicy, treaties and dedicatory texts that call down curses upon any who disrespect their provisions, miscellaneous texts that describe healers and patients, and letters to and from courts reporting on illness and advising appropriate treatments.

### 1 Distress

Personal distress includes the individual's experience of physical, psychological, and/or social difficulties. Texts may focus on specific symptoms, such as gastrointestinal, respiratory, sexual, or psychological difficulties; on life-threatening circumstances, such as childbirth and infancy; on more generalized illnesses involving systemic physical and/or psychological breakdown;

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1 For general background, see T. Abusch, "The Demonic Image of the Witch in Standard Babylonian Literature: The Reworking of Popular Conceptions by Learned Exorcists," in *Religion, Science, and Magic in Concert and in Conflict*, ed. J. Neusner et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 27–58 [[AMD 5, 3–25]]; T. Abusch, "Witchcraft and the Anger of the Personal God," in *Mesopotamian Magic: Textual, Historical, and Interpretative Perspectives*, ed. T. Abusch and K. van der Toorn, AMD 1 (Groningen: Styx, 1999), 83–121 [[AMD 5, 27–63]]; W. van Binsbergen and F. A. M. Wiggerman, "Magic in History: A Theoretical Perspective, and Its Application to Ancient Mesopotamia," in *Mesopotamian Magic: Textual, Historical, and Interpretive Perspectives*, ed. T. Abusch and K. van der Toorn, AMD 1 (Groningen: Styx, 1999), 3–34; E. Reiner, *Astral Magic in Babylonia* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1995); and E. K. Ritter, "Magical-Expert (= *Āšīpu*) and Physician (= *Asû*): Notes on Two Complementary Professions in Babylonian Medicine," in *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger*, ed. H. Güterbock and T. Jacobsen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 299–321.

or on socioeconomic situations involving loss of wealth and status as well as social isolation. Examples of physical difficulties mentioned in the texts are toothache, blindness, earaches, skin diseases, jaundice, epilepsy, kidney stones, infertility, miscarriage, and impotence.

An example of a description and diagnosis is provided by the following (all examples in this chapter are drawn from texts that treat problems caused by witchcraft; examples could equally have been drawn from texts that center on other evils): “If a man is bewitched, his flesh sags, he is stiff, his knees are locked, he desires a woman but upon looking at her, he loses his interest [erection?]; that man, his semen has been deposited with a corpse” (*BAM* 205 [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 2.5, A]]).

## 2 Cures

Procedural texts prescribe the treatment of illness either by means of various ritual therapies or by means of traditional herbal therapy. The traditional scribal literature contains and occasionally juxtaposes both forms of treatment. According to the 1965 analysis of Mesopotamian medical texts by Ritter (see n. 1), the ritual and herbal therapies represent the practices of two different healing professions, the *āšīpu* and *asû*, respectively. The argument has recently been advanced that one should distinguish not between ritual and herbal practitioners, but between the healer (*āšīpu*) and the pharmacist (*asû*), with the healer making use of all modes of treatment. The present exposition follows Ritter’s approach, for even if the suggested modification of her conclusions turns out to be justified, I would maintain that such a situation indicates only that the upper-class *āšīpu*, in his typical monopolizing fashion, has taken over the tasks and functions of the traditional herbalist (*asû*), who would now function as a pharmacist to the upper class while retaining his original role as a herbalist for the populace in general.

## 3 How Is a Cure Achieved?

### 3.1 *Herbal Medicine: the Practice of the asû*

In the texts that preserve the lore of the herbalist, descriptions of symptoms are followed by instructions for preparing and administering medications. The *materia medica* consisted of mineral, animal, but especially plant substances. The herbalist employed potions, lotions, ointments, bandages, suppositories, enemas, and so on. The *asû* (usually a man, but occasionally a woman)

bandaged wounds, cared for fractures, and treated external and internal illnesses. His approach was pragmatic: he was concerned with what might work, and far less with etiology. His therapy was directed toward the relief of acute and pressing symptoms. Occasionally he also utilized incantations; these tended to be secondary and random, and they served mainly as a reinforcing therapeutic measure. The treatment provided by the *asû* is seen in this example:

If a man has repeated headaches, sleep ..., his dreams are terrifying, he is repeatedly frightened in his sleep, his knees are bound, his chest ... paralysis, he is constantly sweating; that man is bewitched. You crush tamarisk, soapwort, and leaves of the *ḫaluppu* tree together. You wash him with water, you rub him with cedar oil. Afterward you put tamarisk, soapwort, and potash in ..., you heat it in the oven, you wash him with it; he will then recover.

AMT 86/1 [[CMAwR 1, no. 2.3, A]]

### 3.2 *Ritual Medicine: the Practice of the āšīpu*

The *āšīpu* was an expert in dealing with supernatural forces such as demons and was concerned with etiology and theory in addition to practice. In contrast to the *asû*, the *āšīpu* may be regarded as a member of the clergy or, at least, of the temple personnel. The activities of the more learned members of the *āšīpu* group comprised both theological scholarship and practical ministry. Yet, although the *āšīpu* did have temple affiliations and may have participated in cultic activities, he generally performed his craft on behalf of private clients who belonged to the upper classes, the central administration, and the royal family. The ritual usually involved only the *āšīpu* and his client or patient, who might be treated not only for physical, but also for psychosomatic and mental distress.

Normally, the *āšīpu* used both oral and manual rites. In the course of a ritual, the *āšīpu* recited one or more oral addresses. These addresses might be either incantations or prayers and served to legitimate the speaker, call upon the divine powers, identify the purpose of the ritual, and specify the rites that were being performed. The addresses could be directed to beneficent natural forces (which often appeared as well-rounded divine figures) and ceremonial objects, or to the evil itself. The beneficent powers would be called upon to help the client or patient; the evil would be expelled, chased away, or even destroyed. Alongside the addresses, the *āšīpu* performed accompanying rites. The ritual might range from a relatively simple one to an extensively elaborated performance and could last a few hours or continue for a day or more.

The ceremony often involved purification, food and drink offerings to the gods, the burning of incense, a central operation directed toward significant objects or symbols (e.g., the destruction of figurines, the use of substitutes), the tying and untying of knots, washing, the setting up of protective devices, the application of amulets, and the like.

An example of a short ritual performed by the *āšipu* occurs in a witchcraft ritual text (*KAR* 80 [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 8.4]]). The instructions for the ritual describe the symptoms of a victim of witchcraft and state that the purpose of the ritual is to release the victim from his affliction. The *āšipu* sets out offerings to Šamaš, the sun god, at either sunrise or sunset and prepares statues of a warlock and witch. He recites an incantation to Šamaš indicating that the statues represent the evildoers who have harmed the victim and shall thus be destroyed by fire. After the statues have been burned, the *āšipu* recites a second incantation in which he invokes the aid of Ea, Asalluḫi, and Girra (gods of magic and burning). The burned statues are trampled in water and their remains buried.

An example of a complex ritual performed by the *āšipu* is the *Maqlû* ceremony against witchcraft. This ceremony, preserved on nine tablets, centered on the recitation of one hundred incantations and the performance of such rites as the burning of figurines, fumigation, washing, disposal, and protection and was carried out throughout a night and into the following morning at the end of the month Abu (July/August).

#### 4 Causes

Why are humans struck by illness? Mesopotamian medicine certainly recognized natural events such as cold, fire, falls, blows, fractures, and wounds as causes of suffering. More frequently, however, the texts took a religio-magical view and treated distress or illness as the result of the action or inaction of supernatural powers. In this view, the universe was understood to be hierarchically structured and to be centered on divine powers. This approach seems, however, to have emerged from, or at least to have drawn upon, an earlier approach that was primarily magical and viewed the world holistically. The principal agencies and causes of illness in the religio-magical worldview were gods, demons, personal gods, ghosts, witches, evil omens, curses, and sins. Among the demons are *lamaštu* and the *lil*, *udug*, and *asag* demons.

Suffering is usually understood to be a consequence of the interaction of human and nonhuman forces. The interaction will take different forms—that is, there will be different causal agents and chains of causation. The changing configurations probably reflect different social situations and can be explained

in historical terms. The earlier mechanistic magical universe reflects the social context of traditional society: the village and pre-urban settlement. Here, illness is due partly to irregularity, disorder, and chaos. This disorder is manifested in attacks by demons on individuals who are vulnerable; vulnerability is due to the lack of protection, only occasionally to culpability. The demons are modeled upon irresistible natural forces, upon enemies and bandits, and upon the minions of newly emerging warlords or leaders trying to extend their rule.

This traditional worldview probably remained operative for the mass of rural and urban dwellers. But alongside this worldview and based upon it, a new worldview that reflected the values and interests of the emerging urban elite arose in the late fourth or early third millennium BCE; in this new view, the gods increasingly gained more control over the world. This new worldview underwent changes of its own; different, emerging sociopolitical contexts led to new ways through which to view and understand the travails of life. New contexts generated new causes of evil and placed the already existing ones into new settings and relationships. The sociopolitical contexts that underlay the new worldview were city, tribe, nation, and empire.

*City-state.* Given the personal relationship between city god and ruler, when the individual citizen is afflicted, it is generally because he or she is a member of a community that is to be punished or corrected because of failures of the ruler or the collective (in the form of the community or of its individual members) toward the god.

*Clan.* If a man does not provide necessary or proper service to the personal/family god, either by offerings and service or by proper social behavior, then the god may either become angry and strike the man or withdraw his protection and leave the man vulnerable to various forces. The alienation of the personal god need not result in an attack by demons, but may simply serve as a metaphor for the loss of vitality and energy. The centrality and power of the personal god, who punishes the individual because of infractions that he has committed, is a Semitic feature; it reflects the life of newly arrived Semitic tribal/rural clans and is a conceptual intrusion into the Mesopotamian urban landscape.

*Empire.* With the decrease in viewing society primarily in corporate terms, a relationship is developed between the citizen and the national god(s). Here, the human is punished by the god for some sin or other. The punishment will often take the form of the god ordering a demonic force or some other evil to afflict the person, or ordering the family gods to withdraw their support. A further development in this human-divine relationship takes place with the emergence of the imperial state, in which powers are centralized and integrated. Centralization and integration cause various changes in religious

outlook. For example, the personal god now comes to be regarded as simply a manifestation of the imperial god; thus, human success or failure, which depends on the beneficence or alienation of the personal god, is no more than a reflection or a manifestation of the will of the major god (especially Marduk). During these last stages, the witch became a major force and was able to control personal gods and demons. The witch even came to represent an enemy of the state, sometimes a foreign force that could threaten the late empire. Thus, in the later periods, humans suffer not only because of sin, but also because of outside forces like witchcraft.

Actually, the case of witchcraft may serve as a useful illustration of a form of evil that seems to have changed over time. One possible reconstruction suggests, first, the existence of a popular village and/or domestic witch, then the transformation of this form into the counterpart of the emerging exorcist, and finally a further transformation and use of the image of the witch as an instrument of state propaganda during the first millennium BCE. Thus, several stages can be identified in the development of Mesopotamian witchcraft. Its origins begin with an early stage of “popular” witchcraft, which may have taken an archaic shamanistic form. In this early popular form, the witch probably belonged to a rural, nonurban world. She or he was not of necessity an evil being and took the form of both a “white” and a “black” witch. Not infrequently, she helped her fellows by means of magical abilities and medical knowledge; in this popular form, she occasionally exhibited behavior otherwise associated with ecstatic types of practitioners. Originally, then, the witch was not primarily a doer of evil. Perhaps, because the witch was often a woman who possessed knowledge and power, the female witch eventually became a focus of interest and even a threat to the prerogatives of the male exorcist. This village witch was transformed into an antisocial, malicious, evil force that was the polar opposite of the *āšipu*; first she became the evil counterpart of the exorcist, and then she was even transformed into an alien and/or demonic force that threatened society as a whole.

## Lists of Therapeutic Plants: An Observation

Among the many Akkadian texts published by Professor Erle Leichty is a recipe prescribing the use of plants against witchcraft.<sup>1</sup> Thus, I hope that this modest study of the form and development of a type of prescription that also makes use of plants against witchcraft will serve as a token of tribute and thanks to Erle for the many important contributions that he has made to our knowledge of Standard Babylonian literature through his catalogs and editions.

Mesopotamian anti-witchcraft literature contains a variety of types of prescriptions and ritual instructions intended to cure or protect a person against various forms of witchcraft. Recipes against witchcraft often prescribe the use of plants for therapeutic or apotropaic purposes. An example of a tablet containing this kind of material is *BAM* 190. This tablet is a collection of prescriptions against witchcraft, all of which utilize potions and have plants as their primary medicinal element. As we shall see, from a textual point of view most of these prescriptions are based upon lists of plants. Let us look at the second prescription on *BAM* 190 and related texts, namely:

- A. *BAM* 190, obv. 9–21 // *BAM* 59, obv. 1–12 [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 7.10, FG]].
- B. K 4164 + K 11691 + Rm 352 (+) K 4176 (*BAM* 430) iv' 7'–24' // K 9684 + K 9999 + Sm 341 + Rm 328 (*BAM* 431) iv' 2–19 [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 7.10, HL]].
- C. K 6053 (*BAM* 438), obv. 1–27 // Rm 950 (*BAM* 437), obv. 1'–6' [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 7.2, AB]].<sup>2</sup>

Starting with group A, we note that the prescription on *BAM* 190, obv. 9–21 // *BAM* 59, obv. 1–12 records a list of plants totaling 36 plants for *ušburruda*, “to release witchcraft,” that have been tested (ʾ36ʾ [ú UŠ<sub>II</sub>.BÚR.RU.DA<sup>3</sup>] ʾša ana<sup>1</sup>

1 E. Leichty, “Guaranteed to Cure,” in *A Scientific Humanist: Studies in Memory of Abraham Sachs*, ed. E. Leichty et al., OPSNKF 9 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum, 1988), 261–264.

2 Rm 950 (*BAM* 437), obv. 1'–6' contains part of the list of plants (// *BAM* 190, obv. 12–17, etc.); the text is fragmentary, but in view of the fact that Rm 950, rev. duplicates material on the reverse of K 6053 (*BAM* 438), I have supposed that it should be assigned to group C along with K 6053 (*BAM* 438) obv.

3 The reading ú UŠ<sub>II</sub>.BÚR.RU.DA is attested on K 4164+ (*BAM* 430), K 9684+ (*BAM* 431), and K 6053 (*BAM* 438).

*qātē šūšū*), followed by ritual instructions to the effect that the plants are to be ingested with either beer, [wine], water, oil, or diluted beer, or in dry form (*lū ina šikari rēštī lū [ina karāni] lū ina mē lū ina šamni lū ina ḥīqāti ʿištanatti<sup>1</sup> lū tābila ana pišu tanaddi*).

But the prescription is recorded in other forms as well. For in group B, K 4164+ (*BAM* 430) iv' 7'–24' and K 9684+ (*BAM* 431) iv' 2–19 duplicate only *BAM* 190, obv. 9–19a // *BAM* 59, obv. 1–9 from group A (with the notable exception that they record 37 rather than 36 Ú UŠ<sub>II</sub>.BÚR.RU.DA) and do not contain the last two and one-half lines, that is, the statement that the plants had been tested and the ritual instructions. Thus, these two texts from group B provide only the list of plants and the numerical total of plants for ušburruda.

Finally, group C, the unit K 6053 (*BAM* 438) obv. 1–27 // Rm 950 (*BAM* 437), like group A (*BAM* 190, obv. 9–21 // *BAM* 59, obv. 1–12), records in obv. 16b–27 the list of plants, the summary total of 37 plants for ušburruda that have been tested, and ritual instructions (omitting the instruction to administer the drugs in a dry form). However, K 6053 (*BAM* 438), obv. 1–27 adds materials at the beginning of the unit. Thus, prior to the list of plants and the ritual, K 6053 (*BAM* 438), obv. 1–27 contains a lengthy symptomology (obv. 1–13a), a diagnosis (obv. 13b–14), and a statement of the purpose of the ritual (obv. 13b–14); these components serve to introduce the ritual prescription itself.

The variant forms of the text are most informative regarding the formation of this type of prescription. I should explain the existence and relationship of the different sets of related texts as follows. The basic list of plants in group B (K 4164+ [*BAM* 430] // K 9684+ [*BAM* 431]) is to be regarded as the historical kernel. To this list, first, ritual instructions were appended in group A (*BAM* 190 // *BAM* 59) to record or explicate *how* the ritual was to be performed; subsequently introductory information was prefaced in group C (K 6053 [*BAM* 438]) to record *when* and *why* the ritual was to be performed.

This hypothesis makes sense of the data and teaches us not a little about the formation of Mesopotamian therapeutic texts. Further support for this explanation is provided by an observation that I made elsewhere regarding some prescriptions that utilize stones.<sup>4</sup> I noted that in a number of cases where lists of stones are included as part of ritual instructions, the lists derive from a text-type that listed stones followed by their number and a statement of either the purpose for which or the situation in which these stones were to be used. Lists of this type were originally recorded for purposes of inventory, reference, or

4 T. Abusch, "Witchcraft and the Anger of the Personal God," in *Mesopotamian Magic: Textual, Historical, and Interpretive Perspectives*, ed. T. Abusch and K. van der Toorn, AMD 1 (Groningen: Styx, 1999), 115–117 [[AMD 5, 58–59]].

the like, and were not prescriptions. However, composers of prescriptive ritual instructions sometimes drew upon texts of this type when they wished to enumerate the items that were to be used in a ritual, sometimes just providing a bare list, at other times integrating the list into proper ritual instructions.

Not surprisingly, a similar situation obtained in the case of some texts that contained lists of plants. Making use of such lists, composers of prescriptive rituals might add ritual instructions and occasionally even information regarding the circumstances under which the ritual was to be used.

Finally, I should mention that the enumeration of 36/37 plants in the recipes studied here provides additional proof that prescriptions of this sort originally derive from lists and even tells us something about the intended use of the list in the prescription form studied here. Normally, therapeutic prescriptions against witchcraft prescribe the use of only several plants. We may infer, then, both from the large number of plants enumerated and from the textual forms, that recipes of this type did not intend the ingestion of such a large number of plants as part of one therapy. Rather, the composer intended to provide a list from which one could select the plants for the specific ritual. This, then, supports our claim that in composing these and similar therapeutic prescriptions, the composer drew upon written inventories or similar lists.

## Dismissal by Authorities: *šušunu* and Related Matters

Elsewhere I have tried to resolve some anomalies in *KAR* 26 and duplicates [[*CMAwR* 2, no. 8.27, A–Gh]] and to determine the original form of the Marduk prayer contained in that text.<sup>1</sup> Following W. Kunstmann’s suggestion that obv. lines 38b–39 were secondary,<sup>2</sup> I noted that the unity of lines 37–38a and 40 is suggested by such sequences as *Maqlû* I 4–7,<sup>3</sup> II 87–89,<sup>4</sup> *AfO* 18 (1957–1958) 293: 66–68 [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 8.3]],<sup>5</sup> *AMT* 87/1, rev. 1–5 (= K 2513 = *BAM* 434 vi 1–5) [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 7.10, A]]; cf. *BAM* 315 ii 42–44 [[*CMAwR* 2, no. 3.5, A]],<sup>6</sup>

- 1 My analysis of *KAR* 26 was first presented in a paper read before the 180th meeting of the American Oriental Society in April 1970. The present article was originally composed as part of a detailed study of that text (see T. Abusch, “Studies in the History and Interpretation of Some Akkadian Incantations and Prayers Against Witchcraft” [Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1972], 57–71 and 102–113 [[*BWiL*, 47–64]]; for the material presented here, see 59–60 and 103–109, especially n. 69 [[*BWiL*, 49–54, esp. n. 69]]). In preparing that study of *KAR* 26 for publication, it became clear that the observations on pp. 105–109 of the dissertation should be expanded somewhat and published separately.
- 2 W. G. Kunstmann, *Die babylonische Gebetsbeschwörung*, LSS NF 2 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1932), 96–97.
- 3 *aššu kaššaptu ukaššipanni* / ... / *ilī u ištari ušessû eliya* / *eli âmeriya amruš anâku*; see Meier, *Maqlû*, 7, and now AMD 10.
- 4 *ina kišpi lupputâkuma maḥarka azziz* / *ina* 1G1 *ilī šarri bêlu nanzurâkuma* GIN-*ka ana maḥrika* / *eli âmeriya maršâkuma šapalka akmis*; see Meier, *Maqlû*, 16, and “Studien,” 73; for the *-ka* after *du* in line 88 (GIN-*ka*) see *STT* 140: 87 and compare *KAR* 235: 13; see now AMD 10.
- 5 *AfO* 18 (1957–1958) 293 (incl. var. to line 68): <sup>d</sup>*šamaš ša kišpi ruḥê rusê upšâšê lemnûti* [ ... ] / *ilu šarru kabtu u rubû nekelmû’inni* / *itti ilī u ištari uzennû’inni ulammenû’inni* (var. / (+): *usahhirû* ...).
- 6 DIŠ NA <EN INIM-šû> ḪUL.GIG ZI.KU<sub>5</sub>.RU.DA DI.BALA / KA.DIB.BI.DA *ú-pi-šû* ḪUL.MEŠ / <<EN INIM-šû>> NIGIN-šû / *ina* IGI DINGIR LUGAL IDIM u NUM *šu-uškun* / UGU IGI-šû GIG *ana ú-pi-ši* ḪUL.MEŠ *šup-šu-ri*. *AMT* 87/1, rev. 3 places EN INIM-šû immediately before NIGIN-šû; this appears to be an error. Our emendation is based upon the parallel *BAM* 315 ii 42–43, which preserves the better word order: [DIŠ NA] EN INIM-šû ḪUL.<sup>1</sup>GIG<sup>1</sup> ZI.KU<sub>5</sub>.RU.DA DI.BALA / [KA].DUB.BI.DA *ú-pi-ši* ḪUL.MEŠ NIGIN-šumma. For a similar usage of NIGIN with ominous witchcraft objects/events, compare, for example, K 249+ (*BAM* 434) v 8–9 // K 3201+ (*BAM* 435 [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 7.10, M]]); I have joined K 3201 [*AMT* 87/5] and K 6261 [*AMT* 89/1] v 11–12: DIŠ NA *ú-pi-šu* ḪUL.MEŠ NIGIN-šû / *a-na ú-pi-ši* ḪUL.MEŠ *ana NA NU TE-e*; K 249+ v 14 // K 3201+ v 16: DIŠ NA EN INIM-šû/šû *kiš-pi* NIGIN-šû *ana NA NU TE-e*; K 249+ v 17 // K 3201+ v 19: DIŠ NA EN INIM-šû/šû *kiš-pi* NIGIN-šû/šû. The preservation of the dative pronominal suffix /šum/ before /ma/ in NIGIN-šum-ma (*BAM* 315 ii 43)

4R<sup>2</sup> 55/2:1–5 [[CMAwR 1, no. 8.13, A]],<sup>7</sup> and the like. For those texts depict witchcraft as having caused the victim to suffer the alienation of authority figures and social rejection, and thus present themes that are comparable to those in KAR 26: 37–38a and 40, but stand in contiguity and in a causal relationship.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, I translated lines 37–38a and 40 (*kiš-pi ru-ḥe-e ru-se-e up-šá-še-e lem-nu-ti šá a-me-lu-ti* // *ip-par<sup>9</sup>-ku-ni-ma ina IGI DINGIR-<sup>r</sup>ti<sup>1</sup>-[ka GAL-t]i / ina pa-an DINGIR u <sup>d</sup>iš<sub>8</sub>-tár <sup>r</sup>ú<sup>1</sup>-šá-áš-<sup>r</sup>ki<sup>1</sup>-nu-in-ni* // << ... / ... >>) DINGIR XX IDIM u NUN *ú-šá-as-ḥi-ru-nin-ni<sup>10</sup>*) as “witchcraft ... have come athwart of me, have caused me to be dismissed from before your great divinity and from before god and goddess << ... >> (and) have caused god, king, magnate, and prince to turn away from me.”

My translation differs in several points from standard translations; the reasons for the translation will become clear in my analysis of KAR 26. Here I wish to do no more than to comment on the translation of *šuškunu*, “to dismiss” (stative: to be dismissed), and to follow up one or two related points. The way this word is used in several of the passages cited above (KAR 26: 38; 4R<sup>2</sup> 55/2: 5; AMT 87/1, rev. 4) has presented difficulties, and other translations have been proposed.<sup>11</sup> The translation of *šuškunu* that I would follow in treating these

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suggests that we construe the suffix /šú/ after NIGIN in similar contexts in the same manner and thus take witchcraft as the direct object and the victim as the indirect object of the verb. I discuss the relation of witchcraft and omens in T. Abusch, “The Witch’s Messages: Witchcraft, Omens, and Voodoo-death in Ancient Mesopotamia,” in *Studies in Ancient Near Eastern World View and Society Presented to Marten Stol on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday, 10 November 2005, and His Retirement from the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam*, ed. R. J. van der Spek et al. (Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2008), 53–68 [[187–202]].

7 DIŠ NA EN ḤUL-ti TUK-ši ... / ... / ... UŠ<sub>12</sub> UŠ<sub>12</sub> UŠ<sub>12</sub> NÍG.AG.A.MEŠ ḤUL.MEŠ / *ina* NU ZU NIGIN-šú DINGIR LUGAL IDIM NUN TIRU *na-an-za-zu u KÁ É.GAL / KI-šú ú-šá-áš-ki-nu-ma*. For an edition of 4R<sup>2</sup> 55/2, see E. Ebeling, “Beschwörungen gegen den Feind und den bösen Blick aus dem Zweistromlande,” *ArOr* 17, no. 1 (1949): 186–190. AMT 87/1, rev. 4 and especially 4R<sup>2</sup> 55/2: 4–5 suggest a restoration for *Maqlú* IV 68–69; instead of *ina pā[n ... ]-zi u bāb bīti ma-[ ... ]* (Meier, *Maqlú*, 31); perhaps read *ina* 1G[1 DINGIR LUGAL / XX IDIM NUN (TIRU) *na-an-za*]-zi u KÁ É.GA[L *tušaškininni*(?)]. But see now AMD 10.

8 The propriety of drawing such comparisons will be further amplified in my study of KAR 26.

9 Text: BA; for the emendation see CAD A/1, 10 and AHw s.v. *parāku* N 1b).

10 Transcription: *kišpi ruḥē rusē upšasē lemnūti ša amelūti ipparkinimma ina pān ilūtika rabīti ina pān ili u ištari ušaškinū’inni* << ... >> *ilu šarru kabtu u rubū ušašhirūninni*. I construe the nouns in line 40 in the accusative case but render them with /u/ endings, for in this text /u/ may serve for both singular nominative and accusative.

11 See, for example, E. Ebeling, “Assyrische Beschwörungen,” *ZDMG* 69 (1915): 100; A. Falkenstein and W. von Soden, *Sumerische und akkadische Hymnen und Gebete* (Zürich: Artemis, 1953), 308; and M. J. Seux, *Hymnes et prières aux dieux de Babylonie et d’Assyrie*

passages as well as *LKA* 119, rev. 1–3<sup>12</sup> derives from the meaning “he is dismissed / put away from” suggested by T. Jacobsen for the Š-stative of *šakānu* in his discussion of *ba.b.ġar* : *šuškun*.<sup>13</sup> Jacobsen there even cited one of the passages in question, *AMT* 87/1, rev. 4, which he translated as “he is dismissed from (service) before god, king, magnate, and prince.”<sup>14</sup> As for the passages where the prefixed form, rather than the stative, is used, I would simply note that the grammatical direct object of the verb may be either the authorities who are depicted as being distanced (so *4R<sup>2</sup>* 55/2: 4–5; I construe “*ilu*[DINGIR] *šarru*[LUGAL] ... *na-an-za-zu* ...” in the accusative case represented by the SB morpheme /u/ and translate “they [= the witchcraft] have caused god, king, ... to move away from him”) or the victim (so *KAR* 26: 37–38a). While there may be some difference in perspective between these two uses of the prefixed form,<sup>15</sup> the difference does not appear to be substantial.<sup>16</sup> As regards the sense of motion and separa-

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(Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1976), 452, for *KAR* 26; see E. Ebeling, “Beschwörungen gegen den Feind und den bösen Blick aus dem Zweistromlande,” *ArOr* 17, no. 1 (1949): 188; *CAD* Z, 86; and J. Kinnier Wilson, “An Introduction to Babylonian Psychiatry,” in *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger on His Seventy-Fifth Birthday, April 21, 1965*, ed. H. Güterbock and T. Jacobsen, AS 16 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 290, for *4R<sup>2</sup>* 55/2; and see R. C. Thompson, “Assyrian Medical Prescriptions for Diseases of the Stomach,” *RA* 26 (1929): 84, for *AMT* 87/1. For a more recent attempt to deal with *šuškunu*, see W. R. Mayer, *Untersuchungen zur Formensprache der babylonischen “Gebetsbeschwörungen,”* StPohl, series maior 5 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1976), 109 n. 84.

- 12 For this text, cf. E. Ebeling, “Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Beschwörungsserie Namburbi,” *RA* 48 (1954): 178–179; R. I. Caplice, *The Akkadian Namburbi Texts: An Introduction*, SANE 1/1 (Los Angeles: Undena, 1974), 19; and Mayer, *Untersuchungen*, 109 with n. 84.
- 13 T. Jacobsen, “Introduction to the Chicago Grammatical Texts,” in *Materialien zum sumerischen Lexikon* 4, ed. B. Landsberger et al. (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1956), 45\*–48\*.
- 14 Jacobsen, “Introduction,” 45\*. Jacobsen’s translation of this passage seems to have gone unnoticed.
- 15 The choice of the authorities or the victim as direct object may possibly be related to a further difference between the two passages: in the former the victim is presented as the third-person patient and the description is from an outsider’s point of view; in the latter, the victim or sufferer is the first person, the speaker, and the description is from his own point of view. Grammatically the stative in *AMT* 87/1, rev. 4 and *LKA* 119, rev. 3 derives from the use in which the victim is the direct object. Note further that when the victim—the inferior—is set aside, he is separated *ina pān* the authorities—the superiors and peers (so *KAR* 26 as well as *AMT* 87/1 and *LKA* 119); but when the authorities are moved away, they are separated *itti* the victim (so *4R<sup>2</sup>* 55/2). Observing this, W. L. Moran notes that the images are slightly different: the inferior is imagined to be “before” the superiors, whereas the superiors (and peers) are imagined “alongside” the inferior (letter of March 29, 1984).
- 16 Compare perhaps the equally nonessential difference between *ilu šarru kabtu u rubū* (acc.) *ittiya uzannū* (Meier, *Maqlū*, I 109 and *KAR* 80, rev. 6 [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 8.4, A]]) and *itti ili u ištari uzennū’inni* (W. G. Lambert, “An Incantation of the Maqlū Type,”

ration of *šuškunu* in the passages just cited, we may perhaps compare the use of *šussû* (Š of *nesû*) in such passages as *ilī u ištari ušessû eliya* (*Maqlû* I 6) and *ušassi ilī u ištari ina zumriya* (III 16), though, of course, the verbs differ as to their deictic point of reference (here–there)—*šuškunu* = to set apart here<sup>17</sup> : to place hence :: *šussû* = to keep apart there : to remove thither.<sup>18</sup>

A virtual synonym of *šuškunu* seems to be *šušhuru*; certainly if lines 37a–38 and 40 of the prayer in *KAR* 26 stand in synonymous parallelism, the meaning “to dismiss” suggested for *šuškunu* in line 38 finds further support in the use of the synonym, *šušhuru*, in line 40:<sup>19</sup> DINGIR XX IDIM U NUN *ú-ša-as-ḫi-ru-nin-ni*. The opposite of this use of *šuškunu* is provided by statements indicating the active presence of the authorities, such as DINGIR XX IDIM U NUN KI-ŠÚ GUB-zu (*BAM* 316 ii 24' [[*CMAwR* 2, no. 3,6, A]]).<sup>20</sup>

Accordingly, I find Jacobsen's translation of *šuškun* convincing;<sup>21</sup> in any case, his translation allows for a meaningful interpretation of *KAR* 26: 38. However, I differ from Jacobsen in assuming that the referent of *šuškunu* is not dismissal from service<sup>22</sup> but rather the dismissal of a petitioner by the powers—authorities and peers—to whom he turns with a request and from

*AfO* 18 [1957–1958] 293: 68; it is possible that the use of *itti* in this passage is determined by the desire for stylistic contrast: 67–68a: *ilu šarru kabtu u rubû nekemû'inni, itti ilī u ištari uzennû'inni ...*).

- 17 If it is deemed advisable to exclude the sense of motion from the translation of *šuškunu*, we may consider the translation “to set apart here.”
- 18 A further difference between the verbs is of course that, at least in their root sense, the former is dynamic, the latter static.
- 19 Further support might be forthcoming from line 37 if we do not emend the verb in that line but retain the reading *ib-ba-ku-ni-ma* (*abāku*), and possibly even attach this verb to the following *ina pān ilūtika rabīti* (if this be poetry, the *-ma* would not prohibit such a construction). Note that NIGIN also appears alongside *šuškunu* in *AMT* 87/1, rev. and 4R<sup>2</sup> 55/2, obv.; the use there is different, see n. 6 above. Even if our understanding of line 37a as containing the subject of *šušhuru* in line 40 turns out to be incorrect, the suggestion that lines 38a and 40 are in parallelism and that *šuškunu* here is a synonym of *šušhuru* would find support in von Soden's translation of line 40 (*AHW* s.v. *saḫāru* Š 3a): “(Gott, König usw) *ú-ša-asḫi-ru-nin-ni* wiesen mich ab.”
- 20 Compare, for example, *BAM* 315 ii 40: [DINGIR] XX IDIM U NUN IGI.BAR-šú-[m]a.
- 21 I wonder, however, whether R. Borger, “Vier Grenzsteinurkunden Merodachbaladans I. von Babylonien. Der Teheran-Kudurru, SB 33, SB 169 und SB 26,” *AfO* 23 (1970): 22 v 1–6 might not have to be introduced into the discussion; compare *ibid.*, 15–16 iv 9'–15'.
- 22 The claim that *šuškunu* in *KAR* 26: 28, *AMT* 87/1, rev. 4, and 4R<sup>2</sup> 55/2: 5 does not refer to dismissal from service does not imply that elsewhere the rejection by god and man may not sometimes refer to loss of a position and to dismissal from service; note, for example, the consequences resulting from a communicable skin disease (compare, for example, J. Nougayrol, “Sirrimu (non \*purimu) 'âne sauvage,” *JCS* 2 [1948]: 207, and Abusch, “Studies,” 71–81).

whom he does not receive an affirmative response and satisfaction. On the human level a variant of this dismissal is É.GAL-šú u LUGAL-šú la ma-gir-šú, “his palace and his king are not agreeable to him” (*STT* 247: 2 // *BAM* 316 ii 27’).<sup>23</sup> In our own text a further example of such treatment is DINGIR LUGAL IDIM u NUN da-šu-šu i-qab-bi-ma la i-nam-di-nu-šú (*KAR* 26: 7). J. V. Kinnier Wilson has translated lines 6b–7 as “... and [sc. he] says —although (again) they will not allow it—... that god, king, his superiors and elders treat him unjustly ...”<sup>24</sup> However, line 7 is a reflex of line 40, and should in any case be compared also to line 3 (*i-qab-bi-ma* NU ŠE.GA-šú) as well as to such passages as *STT* 256: 10 [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 7.6, H]].<sup>25</sup> I would translate line 7 somewhat more conventionally: “God, king, magnate, and prince treat him unjustly; he speaks but no one grants him anything.” The situation here described is a well-known one: the loss of the goodwill of the authorities and of *qabû šemû u magāru*—the power to speak, to be heard, and to meet with the consent of authorities. These losses are frequently described and bemoaned, and their restoration sought, in therapeutic texts. Conversely, the positive involvement of the authorities and the ability to speak effectively occur together in such texts;<sup>26</sup> see, for example, *BAM* 316 ii 23’–24’.<sup>27</sup>

The power of persuasion and the good will of authorities (and the respect of one’s peers [the opposite of *eli āmirišu maruṣ*]) are of concern especially to members of the upper classes. The texts cited here deal primarily with these classes, and the descriptions and concerns found in them fit the way of life of this segment of society. The texts reflect the concerns of those who come into contact with the central administration. I therefore hesitate to treat these descriptions simply as delusions or the like, and would suggest some modification in the approach taken by Kinnier Wilson in “An Introduction to Babylonian Psychiatry.”<sup>28</sup> We are indebted to Kinnier Wilson for having provided so sharp a focus on questions of Babylonian psychiatry and mental illness. It would be

23 For a transliteration of *STT* 247: 1–14, see E. Reiner and M. Civil, “Another Volume of Sultantepe Tablets,” *JNES* 26 (1967): 190. Note that *STT* 247: 1–4 and *BAM* 316 ii 26’–28’ are duplicates. Note the similarity of usage in these texts and in 4R<sup>2</sup> 55/2; compare, for example, *kar-ši-šú* KÚ.MEŠ *dib-bi-šú* /šú *i-dab-bu-bu* (*STT* 247: 3 // *BAM* 316 ii 27’–28’) with 4R<sup>2</sup> 55/2: 2.

24 Kinnier Wilson, “Introduction,” 291.

25 See below.

26 Compare T. Abusch, “The Form and Meaning of a Babylonian Prayer to Marduk,” *JAOS* 103 (1983): 12–14.

27 DU<sub>II</sub>.GA u ŠE.GA GAR-an-šú DINGIR ... KI-šú GUB-zu.

28 Kinnier Wilson, “Introduction,” 289–298; but note his more recent statement in J. Kinnier Wilson and E. K. Ritter, “Prescription for an Anxiety State: A Study of *BAM* 234,” *AnSt* 30 (1980): 27.

foolish to contend that Mesopotamians were not subject to mental illness. Indeed, some of the pragmatic and magical therapeutic texts are concerned primarily or secondarily with psychiatric disorders, while others seek, among other things, to allay the patient's anxieties, restore his emotional balance, and help him to function effectively. However, this does not mean that the texts can be read as if they were modern, clinical descriptions of illnesses. I tend to doubt that these ancient descriptions and/or designations can be correlated successfully with modern psychiatric diagnostic categories. Certainly we must first take account of other possibilities before we can even attempt such correlations. Among other things, we must first ascertain (a) whether the text has undergone any revision and adaptation, with the consequence that the situation described in the text represents a combination of inherently unrelated phenomena rather than a set of related symptoms (so, for example, *KAR* 26<sup>29</sup>); (b) whether the situation which the text depicts is not in fact one which might befall a person of a particular occupation or class in the normal course of events (so, for example, 4R<sup>2</sup> 55/2<sup>30</sup>); (c) whether we are dealing with a culturally determined and acceptable mode of "normal" behavior rather than with individual psychopathology (so, for example, *Maqlū* 111 136–153<sup>31</sup>); and (d) whether we are dealing with a literary construct created by a learned author who has drawn together themes from various therapeutic texts and other genres in order to elaborate a story and convey a point, rather than with an accurate record of an individual case (so, for example, *Ludlu*<sup>32</sup>).

Returning to our discussion of some of the denotations and connotations of dismissal, we do well to consider *STT* 256.<sup>33</sup> The text opens with a description of misfortunates; like 4R<sup>2</sup> 55/2,<sup>34</sup> it begins with ʾDIŠ NA<sup>1</sup> EN ʾHUL-ti ʾTUK<sup>1</sup>.<sup>35</sup> In his description of the contents of that volume of Sultantepe texts, O. R. Gurney noted that text 256 is a "ritual with incantations against 'hand of man' (*qāt amēlūti*, 11) i.e. calumny and hostility on the part of neighbours and the authorities."<sup>36</sup> For Kinnier Wilson it seems likely that *qāt amēlūti* here and elsewhere is "the ancient term for 'delusions of persecution.'"<sup>37</sup> Be this as it

29 Compare Kinnier Wilson, "Introduction," 291–292.

30 Compare Kinnier Wilson, "Introduction," 290–291.

31 Compare Kinnier Wilson, "Introduction," 293.

32 Compare Kinnier Wilson, "Introduction," 296–297.

33 I thank S. J. Lieberman for collating *STT* 256 for me in 1972.

34 Already O. R. Gurney (*STT*, vol. 2, p. 12, ad no. 256) provided the following bibliographical references: "Cf. No. 247, and Ebeling in *AOr.* xvii (1) 172ff, especially [= 4R<sup>2</sup>] 55, 2 (p. 186) and photo 4129 (p. 190)."

35 *šumma amēlu bēl lemutti irašši*.

36 *STT*, vol. 2, p. 12.

37 Kinnier Wilson and Ritter, "Prescription," 29.

may, *qāt amēlūti* also refers to acts of witchcraft initiated by an adversary. This is clear, for example, from the overall context of the aetiological diagnosis in *STT* 256 (line 11: NA.BI ŠU NAM.LÚ.U<sub>19</sub>.LU<sup>1</sup> UGU<sup>1</sup>-[šú GÁL-šú] etc.). The ritual treats a situation that is attendant upon having an adversary,<sup>38</sup> and the ritual itself is directed against a warlock and witch (line 34: *te-ri-qam-ma* 2 NU.MEŠ LÚ.UŠ<sub>11</sub>.ZU u MÍ.UŠ<sub>11</sub>.ZU ša IM DÙ-[uš ...]) who are referred to as *kúr.kúr: na!-ka-ra* in one of the accompanying incantations (41–44).<sup>39</sup> The type of dismissal we have been discussing is exemplified, again on the human level,<sup>40</sup> by line 10 of this text: *i-na É.GAL GIN.<sup>1</sup>GIN<sup>1</sup>-ak NU IGI-šú i-qab-bi-ma ul i-šem-[mu-šú]*, “whenever he goes to the palace, he is not welcome (?);<sup>41</sup> he speaks but no one attends to him.” The opposite of the dismissal described in this line is found in line 16 of the statement of the purpose of the ritual of this text: Û.MA-šú *a-na ka-šá-<sup>1</sup>di<sup>1</sup> i-na É.GAL-šú šal-meš a-na GIN.GIN-ki.*<sup>42</sup>

Line 40 of this text is most revealing for our purposes. According to this line, the ritual will result in *KI-šú GI.NA.MEŠ i-tam-mu-ú*. A translation “they will speak truthfully / the truth to him” misses the mark. Since this prediction anticipates the results to be expected from a performance of the ritual, the meaning of this line must reflect the statement of purpose of the ritual (14–19) as well as the situation to be rectified by the ritual (1–11a: symptoms; 11b–13: diagnosis). This prediction should therefore be taken to mean that those to whom the patient addresses his requests will respond positively and agreeably, will grant his requests, will turn them into “established facts,” and will allow the patient to realize his needs or desires. It should be translated approximately “They will say ‘So be it’<sup>43</sup> to him.” The same prediction occurs also in line 23

38 See line 1; compare line 17: UGU EN INIM-šú GUB-zi.

39 A number of magical texts center on the activities of a *bēl lemūti/dabābi/amāti* and frequently, implicitly or explicitly, construe the victim's alienation from authorities and loss of social stature as resulting from a combination of witchcraft activities and verbal denunciations; several of these texts contain ritual and incantation parallels to *Maqlū*. Elsewhere I shall discuss these problems and some of these texts (including *STT* 256). For *STT* 256, see in the meantime Abusch, “Studies,” 202–211 with n. 35 and 230–231 with n. 115.

40 Compare lines 6 and 14.

41 The reading of IGI-šú here may probably be inferred from *BAM* 315 iii 4 [[*CMAwR* 2, no. 3.5, A]] // 316 ii 7'–8' [[*CMAwR* 2, no. 3.6, A]]: *ina É.GAL-šú<sup>1</sup>/Ø GUB-zu la maḥ-ra-šú* (cf. 315 iii 13) and *STT* 95: 133 [[*CMAwR* 2, no. 3.7, B]] // Bu 91-5-9, 214: 6' [[*CMAwR* 2, no. 3.5, B]]: *ina É.GAL-šú la maḥ-ra-šú* (note that generally Bu 91-5-9, 214 agrees with *BAM* 315 iii 1–9 and *BAM* 316 ii 5'–13' agrees with *STT* 95: 130–137); these passages suggest a restoration for *Afo* 18 (1957–1958) 298: 17 (see n. 51 below).

42 For lines 14–19 compare, for example, *4R<sup>2</sup>* 55/2: 5b–13 and Ebeling, “Beschwörungen,” 190: 3–13; see also UET 7, 121, obv. left col.

43 Compare Hebrew ׀ and Akkadian *annu kīnu* and *kī'am* in *Šamaš u Adad kī'am* (for which see W. von Soden, “Gebet II,” *RlA* 3:164, and W. G. Lambert, “The Tamītu Texts,”

of the related text 4R<sup>2</sup> 55/2, obv., an occurrence which appears to support our interpretation: there KI-šÚ GI.NA.MEŠ *i-ta-mu-u* is closely associated with, and follows immediately upon, the statement [... ŠÀ].SÈ.SÈ.KI KUR-*ad*,<sup>44</sup> “he will attain the desired ends.”

The opposite of *ittišu* GI.NA.MEŠ *itammu* seems to be *dābib*<sup>45</sup> *ittišu kitta lā idabbub*. Translations such as “(if) the one who talks to him does not speak the truth”<sup>46</sup> or “if whoever speaks to him (is supposed to) speak nothing but untruths”<sup>47</sup> for *da-bi-bi* KI-šÚ *kit-ta* NU DU<sub>II</sub>-DU<sub>II</sub>-*ub* in 4R<sup>2</sup> 55/2: 3 also miss the mark. This statement should be translated “(if) the one who speaks to him does not say ‘So be it,’” that is, does not agree to his requests or does not respond favorably. We should note especially the association of this statement with statements that superiors and/or equals are angry with the patient or hold him

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in *La Divination en Mésopotamie Ancienne et dans les Régions Voisines*, ed. J. Nougayrol [Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966], 123). Note that when a suppliant prays for *kittu* to be placed in his mouth or for his utterances to be *kittu*, he is not asking the god for moral or ethical direction. In non-divinatory contexts, he is expressing the wish that whatever he seeks be realized. See especially E. Ebeling, *Die akkadische Gebetsserie “Handerhebung”* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1953), 64: 12–14 (Marduk) and 100: 13–15 = Mayer, *Untersuchungen*, 474: 13–15 (Nabû): *ēma ušammaru/akappadu lukšud, šuškin kittu ina pīya, šubši amāt damiḫti ina libbiya* (for *kittu* || *amāt damiḫti*, cf. *AHW* 1:146 s.v. *dabābu* I, where von Soden notes that the opposite of *dabāb kitti* in P. A. Schollmeyer, *Sumerisch-babylonische Hymnen und Gebete an Šamaš* [Paderborn: Schöningh, 1912], 115: 14 is *amāt lemutti* in line 7 of that Šamaš prayer; compare my translation and discussion of Ebeling, “*Handerhebung*,” 64: 12–14 in “Form and Meaning,” 11–13). Although it is not free of difficulty, see also *KAR* 92, rev. 31 || *LKA* 144: 23 || *Rm* 247, rev. 11’ [[*CMAwR* 2, no. 8.29, EDg]] (see now W. Farber, *Beschwörungrituale an Ištar und Dumuzi: Atti Istar sa harmasa Dumuzi*, Veröffentlichungen der Orientalischen Kommission 30 [Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1977], 230: 27’): *mimma mala aqabbû kittu libši*. Note also the use of *kittu* in an address to Šamaš in his capacity of judge in an antiwitchcraft incantation patterned on a court trial, *KAR* 80: 24 and duplicates: *izzamma ina pīka lizzakir kittu*; here the petitioner is asking Šamaš to side with him and support his cause. (By what mechanism was the divine response here expressed and received?) A more apt translation of *kittu* is probably the colloquial English “right!” W. L. Moran wonders whether *kittu* in the meaning here described did not originate as an expression of agreement to a statement (“right”) and was then extended to requests, much as we might say “right” to someone asking for something (letter of March 29, 1984).

44 *šummirāti ikaššad*.

45 I prefer interpreting *da-bi-bi*, 4R<sup>2</sup> 55/2: 3, as *dābib* rather than *da-bi-bu* (so Kinnier Wilson, “Introduction,” 290 n. 7). The final /i/ vowel is due to the first /i/ of the following *ittišu* (KI-šÚ) [sandhi]; compare for example *STT* 247: 9: [d]a-bi-ib KI-šÚ; *K* 2562 (= *BAM* 446): 6 [[*CMAwR* 2, no. 3.8, A]]: *da-bi-ib* KI-šÚ; and the parallel texts *Bu* 91-5-9, 214: 4’ (F. W. Geers, unpublished hand copy): [da]-<sup>l</sup>bi<sup>l</sup>-ib KI-šÚ, *BAM* 316 ii 6’: *da-bi-ib* KI-šÚ, *STT* 95: 131: d[a]-bi-ib KI-šÚ.

46 *CAD* D, 5.

47 Kinnier Wilson, “Introduction,” 290.

in contempt; for example, *STT* 275 i 6–7 // *BAM* 370 ii b 18'–iii b 2 [[*CMAwR* 2, no. 3.4, BC]]: XII NA<sub>4</sub>.MEŠ DINGIR-ŠÚ ḏXV-ŠÚ *kám/kamlu* IGI.DU<sub>8</sub>.A/LÁ-ŠÚ [n]é-*kel-mu-šú u* DU<sub>11</sub>.DU<sub>11</sub> KI-ŠÚ *kit-tú la*<sup>48</sup> DU<sub>11</sub>.DU<sub>11</sub>-*ub*, and possibly *STT* 247: 9–10: [d]a-bi-ib KI-ŠÚ *kit-ta la* <sup>1</sup>i-da<sup>1</sup>-bu-ub UGU IGI.[DU<sub>8</sub>.A/LÁ]-ŠÚ GIG.<sup>49</sup>

In support of our understanding of *šušunu* as referring to the rejection of a petitioner or litigant and the refusal to provide a favorable response, it may be noted finally that the setting of such passages as *AMT* 87/1, rev. 1–5, 4R<sup>2</sup> 55/2: 1–5, *STT* 256, and (the original setting of) *KAR* 26: 35–42 is that of a conflict between a member of the upper class—the patient of our texts—and an adversary<sup>50</sup> who wishes to deprive him of a sympathetic hearing and cause him to be set aside, in order thereby (at least originally) to win the suit. Compare especially *Afo* 18 (1957–1958) 298: 15–17 (= pl. 15), which now reads<sup>51</sup> [DIŠ NA] *id-da-na-bu-bu-šú ina kiš-pi E*[N!] INIM-ŠÚ / [it]-<sup>1</sup>ta<sup>1</sup>-na-<sup>2</sup>dar-šú ina É.GAL GIN.GIN-ku / [la ma]ḥ-ra-šu ... Here we see a human failing to receive a positive response from human authorities because of the machinations of his enemy. The situation is presented under the figure of human litigation and hearing. Relations with human and divine authorities are presented under unified metaphors, with the result, for example, that law and divination share some terminology and that therapeutic texts draw upon this shared terminology. So when a human fails to receive divine support and there is a rupture in relations, the break and rejection may be a consequence of, or viewed as, a failure to obtain a divine hearing or to receive a favorable response

48 In the broken duplicate line *BAM* 370 iii b 2, *la* has either been misread or omitted.

49 For *kittu* in divination prayers, see recently Seux, *Hymnes*, 468 n. 9 and 471 n. 11. Here I should note that in therapeutic texts sometimes I find it difficult to decide whether to take *kittu*, “so be it,” as a simple, human response or as a positive response of ominous significance, since *kitta dabābu* occurs alongside entries which refer to acts whose significance is primarily social as well as entries referring to ominous experiences; compare for example *K* 2562 (= *BAM* 446): 6 (lines 1–4 seem to be identical with Ebeling, “Beschwörungen,” 202–203 [= *BAM* 326] ii 7'–12' [[*CMAwR* 2, no. 3.7, C]]). Thus note that while *dābib ittišu kitta lā idabbub* in *STT* 247: 9–10 is immediately followed by UGU IGI. [DU<sub>8</sub>.A/LÁ]-ŠÚ GIG (line 10), it is immediately preceded by MÁŠ.G16.MEŠ [pá]r-da-a-ti IGI.IGI-mar INIM.GAR-ŠÚ Ḥ[UL] (lines 8–9). When it occurs alongside the citation of experiences of ominous import, might *kitta dabābu* sometimes be similar to INIM.GAR: *egirru?*

50 See DIŠ NA (EN INIM-ŠÚ) ... ((EN INIM-ŠÚ)) ... (*AMT* 87/1, rev. 1–3 and *BAM* 315 ii 42); DIŠ NA EN ḤUL-ti TUK-ši (4R<sup>2</sup> 55/2: 1); <sup>1</sup>DIŠ NA<sup>1</sup> EN ḤUL-ti <sup>1</sup>TUK<sup>1</sup> ... UGU EN INIM-ŠÚ GUB-zi (*STT* 256: 1 and 17).

51 The following changes for these lines are here suggested: In line 15 read E[N!] INIM-ŠÚ instead of “(ras.) p<sup>1</sup>-šú”; cf. *STT* 89: 91 [[*CMAwR* 1, no. 12.1, A]]: <sup>1</sup>DIŠ NA<sup>1</sup> [u]z-za <sup>1</sup>i<sup>1</sup>-šu EN INIM-ŠÚ i-ta-na[m-dar-šú]. Restore *la* in line 17; cf. *BAM* 315 iii 4 // 316 ii 7'–8' (315 iii 13), *STT* 95: 133 // Bu 91-5-9, 214: 6', and *STT* 256: 10; for these passages, see above and n. 41.

in the hearing. And when all authorities are indifferent, the human and divine authorities may appear together: *ilu šarru kabtu u rubû*, and the human finds himself ignored and pushed aside: *šuškun*.

The mixture of social and ominous manifestations, of human and divine authorities, and of litigation imagery and the importance of being heard may be seen no less clearly when human success is envisioned. To end on a positive note, we may cite the following two examples:

[... DINGIR] XX IDIM [u NUN] *ana šu-tam-gu-ri*  
 [...] *ana ka-šá-dí*<sup>52</sup> DU<sub>11</sub>.GA ŠE.GA u ŠE.GA *ana NA.BI GAR-nu*  
 [*kišpū* (?) *ana N*]A NU TE-*e kip-di* EN INIM-šú *šu-ud-de-e*  
 [(...) ŠU.SI 𒄩UL-t]ì (?) EGIR LÚ u É-šú NU 𒀭LAL<sup>1</sup>-š*i*  
 [...] *ana qí-bit KA-šú ana š[e]-me-e*<sup>53</sup>

To make god, king, magnate, and prince favorable toward the man; ..., to provide the man with the power to speak, be heard, and meet with consent; to prevent witchcraft from approaching the man; to cause his adversary's plans to be dropped; to prevent a finger of derision from being pointed after the man and his household; [...] to have the utterance of his mouth heeded.

NA.BI DINGIR-šú u *díš<sub>8</sub>-tár-šú* KI-šú SILIM-*mu* INIM.GAR-šú SI.SÁ  
 MÁŠ.GI<sub>6</sub>.MEŠ-šú SIG<sub>5</sub>.MEŠ DU<sub>11</sub>.GA u ŠE.GA GAR-*an-šú*  
 DINGIR XX IDIM u NUN KI-šú GUB-*zu*  
*e-em ana di-nim* GIN-*ku di-in-šú* SI.SÁ<sup>54</sup>

That man: his god and goddess will be reconciled with him; the utterances about him will be well disposed; his dreams will become propitious; the power to speak and be heard will be his; god, king, magnate, and prince will stand with him; whenever he goes for a hearing/oracle, his judgement will be successful.

52 Perhaps read INIM.GAR SÁ; cf. *BAM* 316 ii 22.

53 *BAM* 316 v 17–21.

54 *BAM* 316 ii 22'–25'.



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