

## WITCHCRAFT AND WAR: THE RITUAL FRAGMENT Ki 1904-10-9, 18 (BM 98989)

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War, and imminent battle in particular, put any Babylonian or Assyrian king, whose rule and security very much depended on successful campaigns, in a precarious situation. While careful military planning certainly helped to defeat one's enemies, victory in the end was determined by the gods. Before entering battle, oracles were consulted to make certain that the king's decisions had the gods' favour,<sup>1</sup> and a number of other rituals could be performed to ensure that the gods supported the king's cause. These rituals — dubbed “war rituals” by modern scholarship — are not very well known, and the texts attributed to this group are a rather mixed set of royal rituals related to the king's campaign and to potential aggression by enemies.<sup>2</sup> They include traditional Babylonian rituals to be performed before setting off on a military campaign or immediately before a major battle, as well as specifically Assyrian rituals for the same purpose.<sup>3</sup> It is not surprising that two of these texts include the performance of divination rituals,<sup>4</sup> while others focus on the binding of substitute figurines representing the enemies and also use figurines representing the king himself.<sup>5</sup> In line with the general ideology of war, the rubrics of the rituals clearly indicate that the reason for the king's military action is the enemy's aggression against his land, and that the king himself only acts in defence of his own land's borders.<sup>6</sup> It seems that all these texts, apart from the Assyrian rituals in the narrow sense, were assembled in a “series ‘battle’” (*iškar tāhāzi*) that is mentioned in the famous letter of an Assyrian king demanding the collection of various scholarly texts from the Ezida and scholars' houses in Borsippa.<sup>7</sup> The same text refers to rituals (or a ritual) “So that in Battle Arrows do not Come Near a Man” that are also known from the catalogue of exorcistic texts (*KAR 44* //).<sup>8</sup> Apparently they were not thought to be part of the *iškar tāhāzi*; but in the letter the two text groups are named together within a longer list and they were certainly closely associated with each other. Special *namburbi* rituals could be performed on campaign to avert evil indicated by accidents of the king's chariot, but there is no reason to assume that they belonged to the *iškar tāhāzi* too.<sup>9</sup> Other *namburbi* rituals were used to protect the land's borders when an earthquake had signalled an imminent invasion of the enemy.<sup>10</sup>

The royal war rituals are exclusively directed against the foreign enemy and exhibit many features that clearly distinguish them from rituals to overcome one's personal adversary.<sup>11</sup> The latter group of texts, directed against the *bēl dabābi*, *bēl amāti* or *bēl lemutti* (occasionally also *bēl*

<sup>1</sup> A large proportion of the extispicy queries that were put before Šamaš during the reigns of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal address military matters (for the texts see *SAA* 4). This certainly does not reflect a situation peculiar to the Sargonid period, but common practice through all periods of ancient Mesopotamian history.

<sup>2</sup> For an overview of the relevant texts and an edition of the few better-preserved texts see Elat 1982: 5–25. Mayer 1988: 145–64 added another fragmentary war ritual, drawing attention to the Assyrian war ritual and the relevant *namburbi* texts (p. 145). To these texts *STT* 72 // 251 must be added (see Reiner 1967: 190f. and Prechel 2003: 226 fn. 7 with further duplicates).

<sup>3</sup> Most recent edition: Deller 1992; cf. also *SAA* 3, 36 and 37.

<sup>4</sup> This is the case in *PBS* 1/2, 106 (cf. *ittāt šamē u eršeti* addressing Sin and Šamaš in rev. 15, edition: Ebeling 1949: 178–83, Elat 1982: 5–7) and in Th 1905-4-9, 89 = BM 98583 (extispicy, edition: Mayer 1988: 146–9), cf. also *SpTU* 1, 12 with a hemerological appendix on when to perform the ritual.

<sup>5</sup> See Elat 1982: 21–4, Text II (*BBR* 57), *STT* 72 obv. 31ff. and *SpTU* 1, 12 obv. 7ff., rev. 6ff.; cf. for the latter Prechel 2003: 224–6.

<sup>6</sup> See Elat 1982: 11ff., Text I: 1–2 (*enūma tib nakri ū lū nakru ana pāt mātika ana lā teḫē pāssu lā enē irtašu sakāpi*), *SpTU* 1, 12 obv. 26', *STT* 72 obv. 51 // 251 obv. 16' and unpublished 81-2-4, 246 (cf. Elat 1982: 8): [ka.ini]m.ma<sup>16</sup>nakri(kūr) pāssu(zag.bi) lū(nu) enē(bal)<sup>c</sup> x [...]. For the deposition of apotropaic substances at the land's border see *infra*.

<sup>7</sup> *CT* 22, 1: 18; for a recent edition of the text that has come down to us on two Late Babylonian exercise tablets see Frame and George 2005: 280–1, with commentary discussing, among other things, the authenticity of the text *ibid.* 281–3.

<sup>8</sup> *CT* 22, 1: 21; *KAR* 44 obv. 23 // (recently re-edited by Geller 2000: 242–4).

<sup>9</sup> See Maul 1994: 387–99.

<sup>10</sup> See Mayer 1988: 150–4, Maul 1994: 76–7.

<sup>11</sup> See Elat 1982: 11–12; typical characteristics of war rituals that differentiate them from rituals to overcome one's personal enemy include: king as main ritual client, the term *nak(i)ru* as designation of the enemy, reference to the lands of the enemy and the king, plural characterisation of the enemy, references to the king's army, recitation of Sumerian prayers (*eršemma*, *eršahunga*).

*lumni* and *bēl dīni*), is closely related to anti-witchcraft rituals. In anti-witchcraft incantations the *bēl dabābi* is the male complement of the witch (*kaššāptu*), whose stereotype is primarily female.<sup>12</sup> Rituals against personal adversaries can take the form of anti-witchcraft rituals,<sup>13</sup> incantations against personal enemies can be used within anti-witchcraft rituals,<sup>14</sup> and anti-witchcraft incantations form part of rituals against the *bēl dabābi*.<sup>15</sup> The background of this overlap is obvious enough, as it certainly seemed reasonable to suspect one's adversaries and rivals of employing illegal magical means to fight their case. Typically, sorceries practised by one's *bēl dabābi* were thought to cause primarily social problems, such as falling out of favour with the king and nobles, suffering a defeat in a lawsuit, falling victim to slander, as well as the resulting depression, anxiety, agitation and restlessness.<sup>16</sup> Within this context, it makes perfect sense that rituals which could be used to strengthen oneself against one's adversary, like the *egalkura* and *šurhūnga* rituals, were thought of as being borderline between legal *āšipūtu* and illegal witchcraft.<sup>17</sup>

Just as the rituals against the *bēl dabābi* are only directed against an enemy within one's own society, witchcraft accusations — whether in incantations or in court — usually target persons who are more or less close to their victim. A well-known element of the witch's stereotype is, however, her identification with the traditional enemies of Babylonia: she is said to be an Elamite, a Ḥanigalbatean, a Gutean, a Subarean, a Lullubean or a Sutean;<sup>18</sup> her victim is overwhelmed by Elamite and Sutean as by a flood, a motif that clearly draws on the traumatic experience of enemy hordes invading Babylonia.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, proper anti-witchcraft rituals were, for all we know, never used by the king as rituals against foreign enemies, and one of the characteristics of the royal war rituals seems to be that they are free of typical witchcraft motifs, while sharing some basic techniques of figurine magic also employed in anti-witchcraft rituals.

This seemingly clear-cut dichotomy between war rituals on the one hand, and *bēl dabābi* and anti-witchcraft rituals on the other, must, however, be qualified in the light of a new, but only very fragmentarily preserved war ritual. Ki 1904-10-9, 18 (BM 98989, see Figs. 1–2) is a fragment from the lower half of a one-column tablet written in an elegant, seventh-century Assyrian library hand. Though no colophon is preserved, we can safely assume that the tablet, found in Nineveh, belonged to Ashurbanipal's library. The text was copied by F. W. Geers (G 30–31) and subsequently extracts have been cited by the *CAD* (R 426b), but in view of the fact that not a single line of the text is completely preserved a full edition was never undertaken. The present author has not been able to identify any duplicates that would provide a more complete text, and it is therefore not without hesitation that an edition of the fragment is offered here. But it seems to me that the overall content of the text, which adds significantly to our knowledge of war rituals and their relationship to anti-witchcraft rituals, justifies a full publication of the fragmentary text.

The text, written in good Standard Babylonian,<sup>20</sup> has all the characteristics of a war ritual: The

<sup>12</sup> The female resp. male counterparts of each (*bēlet dabābi* resp. *kaššāpu*) are artificial creations of incantation rhetoric, and never occur except alongside the *bēl dabābi* resp. *kaššāptu*, who both are well-attested as independent characters. For a full discussion of the role of the *bēl dabābi* in anti-witchcraft rituals and the relationship between anti-witchcraft and anti-enemy rituals see Schwemer, forthcoming, ch. IV. 1. c).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. e.g. *STT* 256, IV R<sup>2</sup> 55/2 (with duplicate BM 66627+ [coll.], see Mayer 1990: 14 fn. 1a, missing in Zgoll 2003: 287f.), A 2720 + 3022 (Ebeling 1949: 190ff.), *KAL* 2, 31, *KAR* 80 (*KAL* 2, 8), Bu 91-5-9, 143 + 176 obv. 15ff. (Lambert 1957–8: 298), *BAM* 315 obv. II 42ff., *BAM* 434 rev. V 15ff. // *BAM* 435 rev. V 16ff. and various texts in *SpTU* 2, 22 + 3, 85.

<sup>14</sup> A case in question is the bilingual incantation Kūr-kūr bil, used in *KAL* 2, 34 and other anti-witchcraft texts (see the duplicates and parallels noted in *KAL* 2).

<sup>15</sup> VAT 35 (collated and copied by the author), a ritual against the *bēl dabābi* (cf. obv. 7, rev. 18), uses an incantation addressing a 2nd sg. fem., i.e. the witch (cf. *ašbat pāki* etc. in obv. 1–6).

<sup>16</sup> See Abusch 1987: 101–5 fn. 35 and 1985: 91ff.

<sup>17</sup> These types of rituals occasionally are included in lists of evil actions performed by the witch: see Lambert 1957 8: 290: 13 // *SpTU* 2, 19 obv. 25–6, *Maqlū* I 90, IV 14, V 63, *KAR* 35 rev. 27'ff. Cf. the comments by Scurlock 1989–90: 109f.

<sup>18</sup> See *Maqlū* IV 119–23, *KAL* 2, 15 rev. III 42-3 // *KAL* 2, 20 obv. 4'–5'.

<sup>19</sup> See *Maqlū* III 78 81. The text can now be fully reconstructed (after Meier's edition the following new duplicates have become known: *CT* 51, 188 obv. II 5'–8'; *STT* 82 obv. II 1'–3'; *SpTU* 3, 74a obv. II 23–6; *UET* 7, 128: 8–9; unpubl. BM 30426 obv. II 1' 2' [comm. T. Abusch]): *la-ma-a-ni su-tu-ú e-la-mu-ú re-da<sup>1</sup>-a<sup>1</sup>-ni, kät-ma-ni a-gu-ú e-du-ú saḥ-pan-ni, <sup>munus</sup>kaššāptu(uš<sub>11</sub>.zu) su-ta-te da-a-ni ši-bit-sa, e-le-ni-tú e-la-ma-ta ši-bit-sa mu-ú-tú* (only orthographic variants between the manuscripts): "The Sutean is surrounding me, the Elamite is pursuing me, I am covered by a flood, I am overwhelmed by a wave! The witch is a Sutean, strong is her grip, the 'Deceitful one' is an Elamite, seizure by her means death."

<sup>20</sup> For the form *ta'ātunu* in obv. 16' and 17' and the spelling *si-sik-ta* in obv. 14' see the commentary below.

ritual client is the king (*rubû*, rev. 22'), the ritual is directed against enemies (*nakirû*, obv. 18', 25', 26', rev. 26'); its aim is the protection of the king's land (rev. 9') against the enemies who reside in a foreign land (rev. 26'). The text is subdivided by several rulings, and some text between obv. and rev., though not too much, is lost; more considerable portions of the text are missing at the beginning and probably also at the end. None of the subdivisions is followed by a rubric, and not all the preserved ritual instructions are marked off by rulings from the recitations which are written out in full.

Because of its fragmentary state the overall structure of the text remains largely unknown. The preserved part of the obverse begins with the very end of a prayer (1'-2'), which is immediately followed by another (?) prayer<sup>21</sup> addressing a group of gods, possibly the stars (3'-18').<sup>22</sup> A series of short recitations, maybe addressing participants of the ritual, comes next (19'-23'). Line 24' finally has the first short ritual instruction, which is again followed by a prayer mentioning Nergal and Ereškigal. Curiously, the first line of this prayer seems to have the same text as the last line of the prayer in obv. 3'-18'.

The beginning of the reverse preserves the end of a prayer, and this may be the end of the prayer beginning in obv. 25'. A short ritual instruction follows in rev. 3'; it probably only advised the exorcist to have the king recite the preceding prayer. The next short invocation addresses the deified night (4'-9') and is followed by a similar short ritual instruction (10').

Then, after a ruling, the text continues with a longer ritual instruction (11'-27'). Like the preceding prayer, this ritual was performed during the night: the standard ritual arrangement in the beginning of this section is set up before the moon god. What follows is an apotropaic rite whose basic structure is known from other war rituals. Substances are brought into close contact with the king and then deposited at the border to the enemy's land. An earthquake *namburbi* advises the exorcist to collect hair and nail clippings of the king in a porous bottle and take it to the border. In addition to this rite, a war ritual gives the instruction to carry off a girl to the border after the king has had sex with her. The purpose of these rituals is to transfer the evil threatening the king to a substitute which then can be removed to the border, where it affects the source of the evil itself, namely the enemy trying to invade the king's land.<sup>23</sup> Here, neither a bottle nor a girl serve as containers for the evil that has befallen the king; also substances from the king's body are not used. Instead, a figurine of an apotropaic demon is fabricated and identified by name. Then a white pig is slaughtered and the king spills its blood to the four cardinal directions, certainly an apotropaic rite protecting the land on all sides. Possibly the dagger used for killing the pig also receives a special name, since it shares the fate of the figurine in the further proceedings. Both the figurine and the dagger are enclosed in the pig's skin, which makes a perfect container for impurity and evil, being pure and white from outside, while holding all the contagious materials inside. The technique of enclosing contaminated substances in a pig's skin is used not only here, but also in a *zikurruda* ritual. There, the *upišû*, the magic substances and messages of witchcraft sent by the sorcerers are shut up in a pig's skin before their deposition.<sup>24</sup> Here, the "leather bag" is carefully sealed with a clay bulla, then the king puts his hand on the sealed package and orders the evil to depart. Finally, the king washes his hands over the bag, thereby transferring his impurity once more to figurine, dagger and pig skin. Now the package is ready to be deposited at the border of the enemy's land. There it protected the king's land, and an invading enemy who encountered it would inevitably be infected by the evil that had befallen the king, namely an imminent invasion by an enemy. If so, the Assyrian king was certainly only too willing to execute the evil fate that his ritual had determined for every aggressor who dared to cross over whatever had been defined as his land's border.

Apparently, the ritual did not end with the deposition of the bag at the border. But the few remaining preserved lines are quite fragmentary, and no further conclusions can be drawn. The relationship between the ritual section in rev. 11'-27' and the preceding prayers with their short ritual instructions is not entirely clear. But since there is no rubric or double ruling between the

<sup>21</sup> Possibly the same prayer is continued after the ruling, see the commentary below.

<sup>22</sup> Note that the following sections certainly have a nocturnal setting and that a prayer addressing all stars is part

of the war ritual *STT 72* // (obv. 1ff.).

<sup>23</sup> See Maul 1994: 76-7.

<sup>24</sup> *BAM* 449 (+) 458 obv. I 5: *upišû šunūti ana libbi mašak šahî takammî-[m]a* (for the indirect join see Abusch 1984: 94).

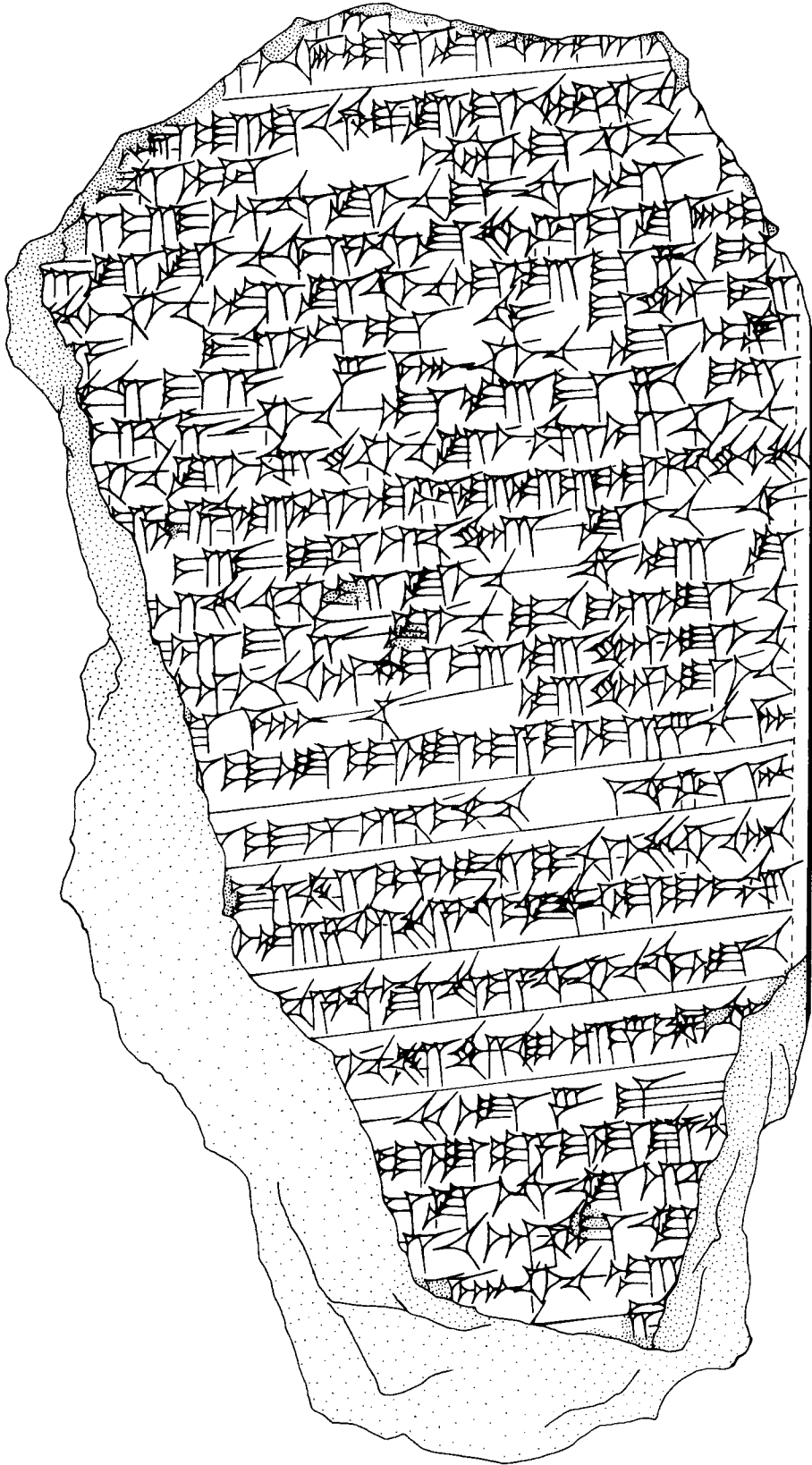


Fig. 1 Ki 1904-10-9, 18 (BM 98989) obverse.

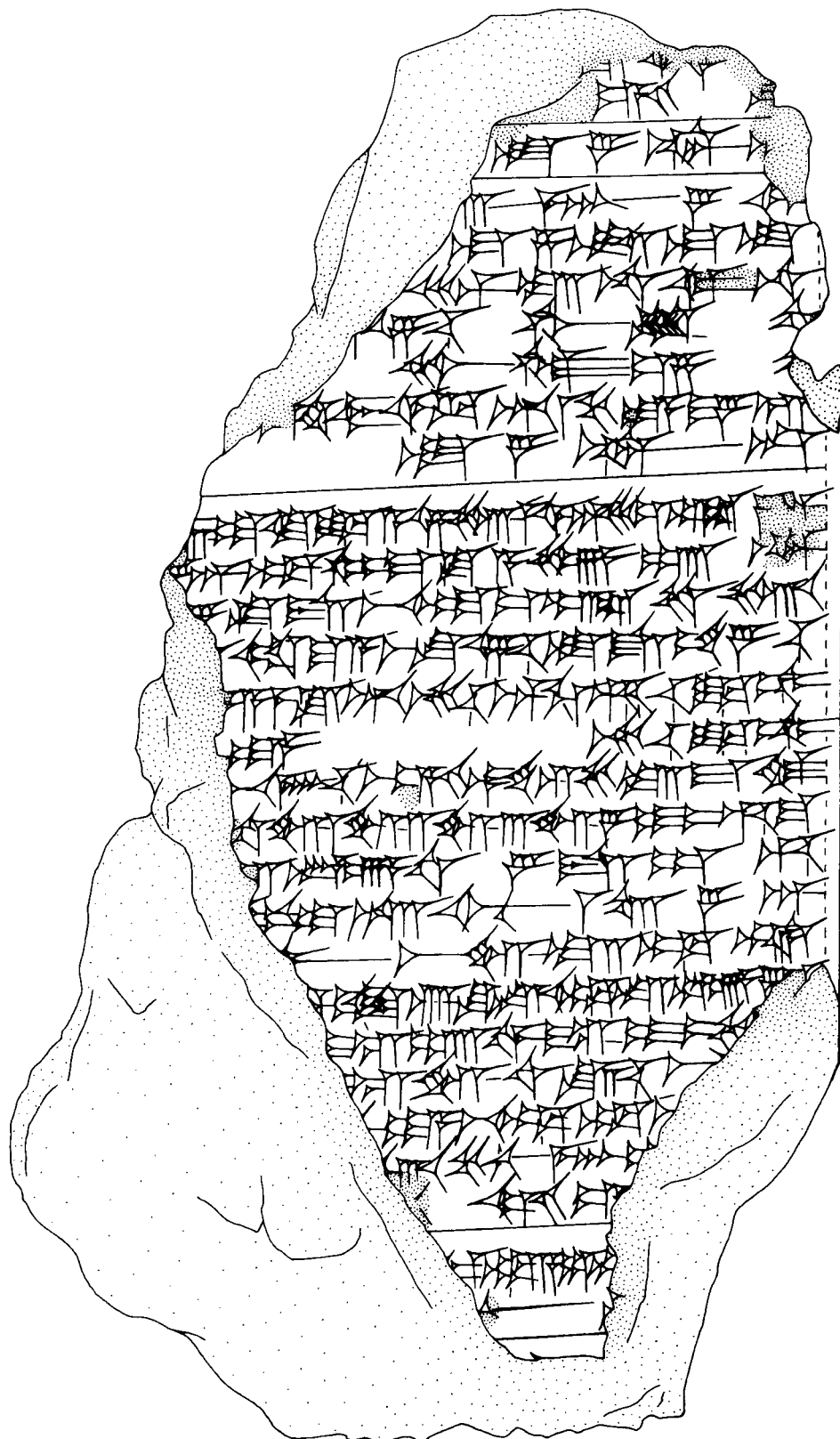


Fig. 2 Ki 1904-10-9, 18 (BM 98989) reverse.

sections, it seems natural to assume that they are all part of the same ritual. Within the longer ritual sections no instructions for the recitation of prayers or incantations can be found. This implies that the prayers were not supposed to be recited during this ritual segment, but actually preceded the final ritual, a conclusion supported by the fact that the prayers themselves are followed by short ritual instructions concerning their recitation. Probably all proceedings took place during the night, though the nocturnal setting only becomes clear from rev. 4' onwards, where the deified night is addressed.

While the latter invocation draws on standard formulas, the prayer in obv. 3'–18' is more unusual. The gods invoked, possibly the stars, are asked not to listen to the prayers of the barbarians, nor to accept their offerings. The enemies themselves are accused of using witchcraft and evil magic to bind the king's weapons, a concept that is not otherwise attested in such unambiguous terms. The text takes it for granted that the barbarians (*ummān-manda*) pray to the same gods as the Assyrian (or Babylonian) king, and that these gods can even be convinced to make common cause with the enemies. Did the Assyrians assume that the distant Medes made offerings to Assur, that they tried to bring round Ištar of Nineveh by deceitful *kišpū* rituals? Did the king of Babylon think that the Elamites called on Marduk to break the weapons of the Babylonian army? Probably not. Since we are dealing with a nocturnal ritual and a plurality of gods is addressed, it seems very likely that the divine stars are the addressees of these lines; and while the stars were regarded as the astral manifestations of their gods by Babylonians and Assyrians, it was only natural to assume that these heavenly bodies — like sun and moon — were regarded as divine beyond the borders of Mesopotamia as well.

It is important to note that the basic structure of the present war ritual — or *namburbi* ritual countering omens indicating an imminent attack of the enemy? — has some striking similarities with that of anti-witchcraft rituals.<sup>25</sup> The enemy is supposed to have set the gods against the king by prayers and offerings, but also by witchcraft and evil magic. The ritual fights this threat by returning the evil to its origin, thereby making the enemies suffer the fate they had intended for the king. The vehicle used to take figurine and dagger to the border resembles a *narūq upšāšē*, a bag filled with magically contagious material that was dangerous to encounter.<sup>26</sup> But the parallels are limited: the *kišpū*-motif is only one of many in this text, and the phraseology of the prayers is otherwise very different from what we usually find in anti-witchcraft rituals. Nevertheless, the present ritual clearly shows that the witchcraft stereotypes could be applied to a foreign enemy and that evil ritual activities of a foreign enemy had to be countered by a defensive war ritual, just as the evil machinations of the witch had to be fought off with a defensive anti-witchcraft ritual. While witchcraft suspicions, however, were mostly dealt with on a ritualistic level only, our war ritual provided the king with a ready legitimation to go ahead with an attack on the enemy's land, should foreign troops violate the border of his land.

While our text is so far the only war ritual applying witchcraft stereotypes to the foreign enemy of the king, and common anti-witchcraft rituals do not target the foreign enemy, there is one other royal ritual that accuses the foreign enemy of sorceries against the king. When the king enters the first “house” during the *Bīt rimki* ritual he washes his hands over a figurine of the enemy (*nakru*).<sup>27</sup> Accompanying these ritual actions the prayer *Šamaš dayyānu šīru ša šamē u eršetī* is to be recited (*UFBG* 415, *Šamaš* 40), parts of which are preserved on K 2380 (*ŠRT* pl. III). The incantation text identifies the figurine used in the ritual (obv. 14–15: *annū nakru . . . annū šalamšu*) and accuses the enemy of having performed witchcraft against the king (obv. 22ff.). Considering the fact that the ritual in the second “house” of *Bīt rimki* is a clear-cut anti-witchcraft ritual accompanied by washing over a figurine of the witch,<sup>28</sup> one could have assumed that the

<sup>25</sup> For the structure of anti-witchcraft rituals see Thomsen 1987: 58–63, Schwemer, forthcoming, ch. V. 3. b).

<sup>26</sup> For *narūq upšāšē* cf. Thomsen, 1987: 45 and Maul, 1994: 445 with fn. 15, 79 with fn. 77.

<sup>27</sup> For this restoration of the relevant passage of the ritual tablet (after *PBS* 1/1, 15 obv. 4) see Læssøe 1955: 29, Farber 1987: 250.

<sup>28</sup> See Læssøe 1955: 37ff. for the incantation and the following rubric (further duplicates noted in *HKL* I 263, II

154) and *ibid.* 29 for the ritual tablet (*PBS* 1/1, 15 obv. 9). The incantation identifies the evildoer explicitly as a woman: *Šamaš ša šabtanni ul īdi lū sinnišat(munus) annū šalamšu* “Šamaš, I do not know the person who seized me: for sure, it is a woman, this is her figurine!” (l. 4). Most rubrics advise washing over a figurine of the witch, but K 2563 + rev. 21 prescribes washing over figurines of warlock and witch; the ritual in *PBS* 1/1, 15 obv. 9 has washing over the warlock's figurine only (probably corrupt).

ritual of the first “house” was a standard anti-witchcraft ritual as well — apart from the usage of the term *nakru* itself there is no evidence in the preserved portions of K 2380 that the first ritual was directed against a foreign enemy (land). But given that the application of witchcraft motifs to the foreign enemy is now firmly established and the term *nakru* usually — though not always<sup>29</sup> — refers to a foreign enemy, there can be little doubt that the ritual in the first “house” of *Bīt rimki* targets the enemy (land), while the ritual in the second “house” is devoted to those who have performed sorcery against the king from within his own land.

Ki 1904-10-9, 18 (BM 98989), copy Figs. 1–2.<sup>30</sup>

obv.

1' [ ] x x x [ ]  
 2' [ ] x BAD<sup>mes</sup>-ia ana su 'pi' ka an' x [ ]

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3' [ -t]ùm ši-la u šu-lu-la ina muh̄h̄r(ugu)-šú-nu 'aš'<sup>1?</sup>-k[u'<sup>2</sup>-un'<sup>2</sup>]  
 4' [ -l]i-ka ak-la-šú-nu-t[i]  
 5' [ša ... lā ī]dū(z)u<sup>ú</sup> ilūt(dingir)<sup>ut</sup>-ku-nu rabītu(gal)<sup>ú</sup> idū(zu)<sup>r'ú1</sup>  
 6' [x x x (x x) ú-s]a-lu-ku-nu-ši a-na šu-bu-ur <sup>gis</sup>kakkī(tukul)<sup>mes</sup>-i[a]  
 7' [x x x (x x) s]u-pu-šú-nu su-lu-šú-nu la ta-ma-ḥa-r[a]  
 8' [la te-šem-ma(?)]-a da-ba-ab ummān(érin)-ma-a'-da  
 9' [x-x-šú-nu la te-š]em-ma-a akalī(ninda)<sup>mes</sup>-šú-nu la takkalā(gu<sub>7</sub>)  
 10' [mê(a)<sup>mes</sup>-šú-nu la tašattā(nag)(?) qu]t-re-ni-šú-nu la ta-ma-ḥa-ra  
 11' [x x x (x) lu ina kiš-p]i-šú-nu lu ina ru-ḥe-šú-nu lu ina ru-se-šú-nu  
 12' [<sup>gis</sup>kakkū(tukul)<sup>mes</sup> x-x-x-i]a la uš-ta-ba-rū la ur-ta-su-ú la ik-kam-mu-u  
 13' [ukannīkunuši(?)] ú-šar-ri-iḥ-ku-nu-ši  
 14' [ukabbīt-ku-nu(?)-š]i<sup>7</sup> si-sik-ta-ku-nu šab-ta-ku  
 15' [ nīš r]a-ma-ni-ku-nu zak-ra-tu-nu  
 16' [ ni]š<sup>d</sup>enlil(BAD) u <sup>d</sup>nin-lil ta-'a-tu-nu  
 17' [ nīš <sup>gis</sup>ka]kkī(tuk)ul<sup>7</sup><sup>mes</sup>-šú ta-'a-tu-nu  
 18' [ ]i-i-tu at-tu-ia-ma la-a šá nakirī(kúr)<sup>mes</sup>

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19' [ ] x i-bar-ri-qu ana lemnūti(hul)<sup>mes</sup>

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20' [ ] ša kīma(gim) nab-li i-qa-mu-šú-nu-ti  
 21' [ ] ina ta-ḥa-zi a-na arkī(egir)-šú la i-tar-ru

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22' [ -š]ú-nu a-na ša-te-e pi-šú-nu pe-tu-u

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23' [ -š]ú-nu kīma(gim) imbari(im.dugud) ú-šá-az-bi-l[u'<sup>2</sup>]

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24' [ <sup>ú</sup>imḥu]r(ig)i-ašrā(niš) tu-šá-áš-[šá]  
 25' [ li-i-t]u at-tu-ia-ma la šá<sup>31</sup> nak[irī(kú[r])<sup>mes</sup>]  
 26' [ <sup>g</sup>]is<sup>is</sup>kakki(tukul) na-ki-ri-[ia'<sup>2</sup>]  
 27' [ <sup>d</sup>ne]rgal(u.g)ur u <sup>d</sup>ereš-ki-[gal]  
 28' [ kakk]ī(tuku)l<sup>7</sup><sup>mes</sup>-šú-nu ta-[x-x]  
 29' [ n]u-u[š x x]

obv. breaks off

<sup>29</sup>The bilingual incantation *Kúr-kúr bil / Nakru aqallu* is used regularly within non-royal anti-witchcraft and *bēl dabābi* rituals (see fn. 14), where *nakru* cannot have been understood to mean a foreign enemy.

<sup>30</sup>I would like to thank Professor W. G. Lambert, who

was kind enough to read through an early version of the following transliteration and translation, for his valuable corrections and suggestions.

<sup>31</sup>Written over erased *šá* (or *a?*).

rev.

- 1' [ *l]u damiq*(<sup>1</sup>sig<sub>s</sub><sup>1</sup>)-[*ma*]  
 2' [*narbikunu*<sup>2</sup> *lušāpi datītikunu*<sup>2</sup>] *lud-lu*[*l*]
- 
- 3' [ *tu-šá-aq-b*[*a*]
- 
- 4' [(ÉN) *mūšu puluhtu līlāti šalāš*(3)(?) *mašš*] *arātu*(en.n)un<sup>meš</sup> *šá mūš*[*i*](g[e<sub>6</sub>])  
 5' [*ērātu našrātu*(?)] *la ša-li-la-tu*  
 6' [*ana ēri šalli*(?)] *purussā*(eš.bar) *ta-na-di-na*  
 7' [*anāku annanna mār annanna ša ilšu annanna*] <sup>d1</sup>*ištar*(15)-šú <sup>munus</sup>*annannītu*(nenni-t[ú])  
 8' [*mūšu kallatu*(?)] *pu-šu-un-t*[ú]  
 9' [*ina qibīt*(?) (. . .) <sup>d</sup>*išg-t*] *ár šēp*(gír) *lemutti*(hul)<sup>ti</sup> *ana mātī*(kur)-*ia pur-si*  
 10' [*annītu*(?)] *tu-šá-aq-ba*
- 
- 11' [( . . .) *ašar šēpu par-s*] *a-at qaqqara*(ki) *tašabbi*(sar) *mê*(a) *ellūti*(kù) *tasallah*(sù)  
*ana maḥar*(igi) <sup>d</sup>*šîn*(30) <sup>giš</sup>*paššūra*(banšur) *tašakkan*(<sup>1</sup>gar)<sup>an1</sup>  
 12' [*nignak*(nig.na) <sup>sim</sup>*burāši*(li)(?) *taš*] *akkan*(ga)r<sup>an</sup> *suluppī*(zú.lum.ma) <sup>zi</sup>*sasqâ*(eša)  
*tasarraq*(dub)<sup>aq</sup>  
 13' [ *š*] *á qēmi*(zì.da) *ina muḥḥi*(ugu) <sup>giš</sup>*paššūri*(banšur) *te-šer*  
 14' [*šalam*(nu) . . . *teppuš-m*] *a*<sup>2</sup> *qúl-ma-a ina qāt*(šú) *imitī*(15)-šú *tu-ša-am-šá-šú*  
 15' [ *š*] *á a-me-lu-ti šum*(mu)-šú *ina naglab*(bar.sil) *šumēlī*(gùb)-šú  
*tašaṭṭar*(sar)<sup>ár</sup>  
 16' [ *nakirī*(?)-*ia* *šum*(mu)-šú *tašaṭṭar*(sar)<sup>ár</sup>  
 17' [*šahā*(šah) *pešā*(babbar) *ina patri*(gír) *taṭabbah-ma*(??)] *dāmī*(úš)<sup>meš</sup>-šú *ina dugkāsī*(gú.zi)  
*ta-ma-ḥar*  
 18' [*rubū*(nun) *dāmī*(úš)<sup>meš</sup> *šahī*(šah)(?) *a-n*] *a šūti*(im 1) *iltāni*(im 2) *šadī*(im 3) *umurri*(im 4)  
*i-tab-bak-ma*  
 19' [ *maš*] *ak*(ku)š] *šahī*(šah) *pešī*(babbar) *šá ta-ab-ḥu*  
 20' [ *tal*] *appat*([t]ag)<sup>at</sup> *patra*(gír) *u šalma*(nu) *ana libbi*(šá)  
*tašakkan*(gar)<sup>an</sup>  
 21' [ *a*] *k*<sup>2</sup> *ina ṭīdi*(im) *ta-ka-nak*  
 22' [*ina* <sup>na4</sup>*kunuk*(kišib) . . . *ta-b*] *ar-ram rubū*(nun) *qās*(šú)-*su eli*(ugu) *mašak*(kuš)  
*šahī*(šah) *tašakkan*(gar)-<sup>1</sup>*ma*<sup>1</sup>  
 23' [ *su-uh*(?)*-r*] *a dup-pi-ra i-qab-b*[*i*]  
 24' [ *qar*] *nānū*(nag]a.si) *gaššī*(im.babbar) *qātī*(šú)<sup>min</sup>-šú *ina*  
*mê*(<sup>1</sup>a<sup>1</sup>)[<sup>meš</sup>](?)  
 25' [ *n*] *u-ia ina muḥḥī*(ugu)-*ka a*[*š-ḥu-ut*(?)]  
 26' [ *ana mi-š*] *ir māt*(kur) *nakirī*(kúr)<sup>meš</sup> <sup>1</sup>*i*<sup>1</sup>-[*zi-ib-šú*]  
 27' [ *ul* <sup>1</sup>*e*<sup>12</sup> [x x x (x)]
- 
- 28' [ *imbu*<sup>2</sup> *tām*[*ti*(ka a.ab.b[a] (sic?))  
 29' [ *t*] *im*<sup>2</sup> x [
- 
- 30' [ *imbu*<sup>2</sup> *tām*[*ti*(ka a.ab.b[a] (sic?))  
 rev. breaks off

obv.

1'f. (too fragmentary for translation)

- 3' “[ . . . *I* . . .] *ed*, protection and patronage *I ex[tended]* over them,  
 4' [ . . . ] . . . I held the[m] back.  
 5' [*What* . . . do(es) not k]now, but your (pl.) great divinity knows,  
 6' [ . . . ] they [im]plored you to smash m[y] weapons:  
 7' do not accept [*their* . . . ], their [pra]yer (and) their pleading,



8' [*do not list*]en to the words of the barbarians,  
 9' [*to their ... do not l*]isten! Do not eat their bread (offering)s,  
 10' [*do not drink their water (libations)*], do not accept their [in]cense (offering)s!  
 11' [ ... either by] their witchcraft or their sorceries or their (evil) magic  
 12' [let the weapons of m]y [ ... ] not be smashed, not be bound, not be defeated!  
 13' [*I have treated you with respect*], I have glorified you,  
 14' [*I have honoured you*], I am holding the hem (of) your (garments).  
 15' [ ... by] yourselves you are conjured,  
 16' [ ... by] Enlil and Ninlil you are conjured,  
 17' [by ... and (by)] his [*wea*]pons you are conjured!  
 18' [ ... Vic]tory will be mine, and not the enemies!"

---

19' [ ... ] ... flash(es) against the evil ones.

---

20' [ ... ] who burns them like a flame,  
 21' [ ... who] does not withdraw in battle.

---

22' [ ... ] their<sup>32</sup> mouth(s) are open for drinking [th]eir [ ... ].

---

23' [ ... ] had [ ... ] carry [t]heir [ ... ] like a fog.

---

24' [ ... ] you have (him) lift [(...) 'Heal]s-twenty'-[plant].

25' [ ... victor]y will be mine, and not the enem[ies'],

26' [ ... my] enemy's weapon

27' [ ... Ne]rgal and Ereški[gal]

28' [ ... ] you [ ... ] their [*wea*]pon]s.

29' (too fragmentary for translation)

obv. breaks off

rev.

1' [ ... , m]ay [...] be good, [then]

2' I shall [proclaim your greatness] (and) sin[g your glory]."

---

3' You have (him) recite [ ... ].

---

4' "[*(Incantation:)* O Night, terror of the evening, o (you) three wat]ches of the nig[ht],

5' [*wakeful, watchful*], never sleeping,

6' [*to wakeful and sleeping*] you provide a decision!

7' [I am N.N., son of N.N., whose god is N.N.], whose goddess is N.N.:

8' [*O night*], veiled [*bride*],

9' [*by the command of (... and) Išt*]ar exclude the evil from my land!"

10' You have (him) recite [*this*].

---

11' [(...) In a se]cluded [place] you sweep the ground (and) sprinkle pure water. You place a table before Sîn.

12' [You s]et up [a censer with *juniper*] (and) strew dates (and) *sasqu*-flour.

13' You draw [ ... ] of flour on the table.

14' [You make a figurine (of ...) of ... an]d you have it carry a hatchet in its right hand.

15' [( ... )]. You write "[ ... ] of men", its name, on its left shoulder blade.

16' [ ... ] you write "[ ... ] of my [*enemies*]", its name.

17' [*You slaughter a white pig with the/a dagger and*] catch its blood in a goblet.

<sup>32</sup> Or: "whose", see commentary.

- 18' [The ruler] pours out [the pig's blood t]o the south, the north, the east (and) the west, then  
 19' [ ... . The ski]n of the white pig that has been slaughtered  
 20' [( ... ) you sm]ear (it) [with ... ]; you place the dagger and the figurine inside (the skin).  
 21' [ ... ] ... you seal with clay,  
 22' (and) you [se]al (the clay) [with a seal of ... ]. The ruler places his hand on the pig's skin  
 23' saying: "[ ... turn] away, go away!"  
 24' [ ... the 'horned' alka]li (and) gypsum of (washing) his hands [he ... ] in w[ater ... ] (saying):  
 25' "I have [stripped off] my [ ... ] over you!"  
 26' [ ... and] he [removes it to the bo]rder of the enemies' land.  
 27'–30' (too fragmentary for translation)  
 rev. breaks off

### Commentary

Obv. 2': Apparently the end of a recitation. The signs  $\text{BAD}^{\text{mes}}\text{-ia}$  are clear enough, but the context is missing and any interpretation remains provisional. A reading  $\text{mūtanī}(\text{úš})^{\text{mes}}\text{-ia}$  seems most likely, though the dictionaries do not know of any other attestation for the possessive pronoun attached to  $\text{mūtanū}$  "deaths, epidemic, pestilence". The traces after  $\text{SU}$  suggest  $\text{PI}$  rather than  $\text{ŠI}$ , so that one could read  $\text{ana su-l}^{\text{pi}}\text{-ka}^1$  "to your supplications". Alternatively, one could read  $\text{dāmī}(\text{úš})^{\text{mes}}\text{-ia ana maški}(\text{kuš}) \text{maḥar}(\text{igi})\text{-ka}^{\text{dx}}$  [ ... " ... my blood to the skin. Before you, o god ... " (cf. the ritual instructions in rev. 17'–20'). But since  $\text{ŠI}$  cannot be excluded, a reading  $\text{ana kuš-l}^{\text{ši}}\text{-ka}^1$  "to delay you" should be taken into account as well ( $\text{kāšu}$  D, D-stem of  $\text{kīāšu}$  "to help" not attested otherwise).

3'–4': The prayer in ll. 3'–18' addresses a group of gods (cf. 2nd pl. in ll. 5ff.). Though this is not stated explicitly in the preserved part of the text, there can be little doubt that the prayer is recited by or on behalf of the king. The first line does not sound like a typical prayer incipit, and ll. 3ff. may represent a continuation of the text before the ruling (cf. the problematic rulings in ll. 19'–23'). The first two lines describe actions of the king in the past (clear 1st pret. in l. 4'). The object of these actions is a group of people (3rd pl. in ll. 3' and 4'). The only 3rd pl. referred to in the rest of the text are the enemies of the king, and the obvious conclusion must be that they are referred to by the 3rd pl. forms in ll. 3'–4' as well. The overall sense of the two lines is difficult to grasp, but l. 3' seems to refer to putting the foreign enemies under the king's patronage. The end of l. 3' is lost, but a verbal form parallel to  $\text{aklāšunūti}$  in l. 4' is expected. The traces before the break strongly suggest a reading  $\text{aš}$ , and  $\text{šakānu}$  is the obvious choice. The head of the following horizontal is very low on the line, therefore we have restored  $\text{aš-k[u-un]}$  rather than  $\text{aš-k[un]}$ . If  $\text{-t}^{\text{um}}$  in the beginning represents the end of a verbal form — and this seems to be the most likely option — one can hardly escape a restoration [ ...  $\text{ak-t}^{\text{um}}$  "I overwhelmed". Then, the first half of the line possibly refers to the king's military conquest of the foreign lands in question, the immediate result of which would have been the extension of the king's patronage over them. The exact meaning implied by  $\text{aklāšunūti}$  in l. 4' remains uncertain, and a restoration of the broken word in the beginning of l. 4' is difficult:  $\text{-ka}$  can hardly represent the 2nd sg. gen./acc. suffixed pronoun, since no 2nd sg. is addressed within the text. Therefore, the restoration of another verbal form seems most likely, and  $\text{al-l}^{\text{i}}\text{-ka}$  "I went" (or  $\text{ušā-l}^{\text{i}}\text{-ka}^?$ ) seems to make better sense than forms of  $\text{malāku}$  or  $\text{palāku}$ .

5': This stock phrase of prayer language is frequently attested in anti-witchcraft incantations and prayers. It always refers to warlock and witch (see e.g.  $\text{Maqlū}$  I 87;  $\text{KAR}$  80 [ $\text{KAL}$  2, 8] obv. 27, rev. 26 //;  $\text{LKA}$  154 + 155 [ $\text{KAL}$  2, 24] obv. 41, rev. 36 //;  $\text{KAL}$  2, 15 rev. III 38ff. //, 32 rev. 6, 58: 6' //;  $\text{BID}$ , B: 18' [cf.  $\text{KAL}$  2, 36 obv. I 36'];  $\text{K}$  2785 + 7237 + 9026: 5';  $\text{K}$  2395: 12';  $\text{K}$  7930 (+) 8326 obv. 17';  $\text{K}$  2563 + obv. 4 [Læssøe 1955: pl. 1] //  $\text{STT}$  76 obv. 4;  $\text{UFBG}$ , 512: 36 [IV  $\text{R}^2$  59/1 + //  $\text{K}$  2565 +]). Similar phrases are regularly used in the Neo-Assyrian oracular queries placed before  $\text{Šamaš}$  ( $\text{ilūtkā rabītu īde}$  "does your great divinity know it?",  $\text{ilūtkā rabītu īdū}$  "which your great divinity knows", see  $\text{SAA}$  4 *passim*, for the same phrase in the  $\text{tamītus}$  see Lambert 1997: 91). But the signs preserved in the beginning of the line must certainly be read  $\text{z[u-ú]}$ , so that a two-part formula, as in the anti-witchcraft incantations, has to be restored. This formula can hardly refer to the preceding two lines here; rather it should be interpreted as an introduction to the description of the evil activities of the king's enemies. It remains uncertain how the subject of the first half of the line is to be restored. Possible readings are  $[\text{ša anāku lā ṭ}^{\text{dū}}(\text{z})\text{u}^{\text{u}}]$  "[What I do not k]now, ..." or  $[\text{ša ilu mamma lā ṭ}^{\text{dū}}(\text{z})\text{u}^{\text{u}}]$  "[What no god k]nows, ..." (for the latter cf.  $\text{LKA}$  154 + 155 [ $\text{KAL}$  2, 24] rev. 15f. //,  $\text{RIAA}$  312 [O 193] obv. II 7f., also  $\text{PBS}$  1/2, 133 rev. 9' // [Lambert 1957–8: 288ff.]). Since  $\text{īdū}$  lacks a suffixed pronoun ( $\text{*īdāšunūti}$ ), a translation "[As to whom I do not k]now, ..." seems less likely, though it would link the phrase better to the following lines.

6': The broken sign at the beginning of the line cannot be read *ṣal* (*ú-ṣal-lu-ku-nu-ši*); traces of three vertical wedges are clearly visible. For the defective writing of a contracted final vowel in a III-weak verb cf. here obv. 20': *i-qa-mu-šú-nu-ti* (cf. also the spellings *ṣ[u-pu-šú-nu su-lu-šú-nu* in l. 7'). In the broken first half of the line a word for the enemies has to be restored, possibly followed by *ša*: "[The enemies (*who*) im]plored you to smash m[y] weapons: do not accept [their . . . ], their prayer . . .".

7': Instead of *supūšunu sulūšunu* one would rather expect *supēšunu sulēšunu*. Nevertheless the two words can hardly represent anything but the accusative objects of *lā tamahḫarā*. The forms are therefore analysed as late acc. sg. in *-u*.

8': For the restoration of the beginning cf. the following line. The unusual spelling *ummān(érin)-ma-a'-da* for *ummān-manda* occurs also in an inscription of Esarhaddon (Borger 1956: 51 variant to Ep. 8: 44). The term itself is already attested in the Old Babylonian period as a pejorative designation of enemies ("barbarian hordes"). In the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods, *ummān-manda* usually refers to the Medes as the wild, powerful and distant enemies par excellence (see most recently Lanfranchi 2003: 79–118, esp. 90–2). Since our prayer is a traditional text from Babylonia, *ummān-ma'da* has probably the general meaning "barbarians" rather than a more restricted ethnic connotation, though the ritual may well have been performed by an Assyrian king against the Medes.

11'–12': *lā uštabarū* seems to correspond with *ana šubbur kakkīya* in obv. 6', and a genitive construction is suggested by the available space and the partly preserved *-i]a*. An alternative restoration [. . . *kakku-i]a* is possible, but less likely. The verb *russū* was interpreted as "etwa (durch Wasser) aufweichen" in *AHw* 996a, while *CAD R* 425b recently opted for a broader meaning "sully". The present context rather suggests a meaning "bind". This finds further support in the translation of Sum. *lā* by *russū* in a bilingual proverb, and W. G. Lambert indeed proposed a meaning "bind" for *russū* in his edition of the text (see *BWL*, 228: 17f. with commentary *ibid.* 232). The sequence *ubbiranni ukassāni ušabbitanni urassāni* (actions of the witch, see Læssøe 1955: 39: 20 // *STT* 76 and 77 obv. 20) also suggests "bind" rather than "sully"; *šī lirtassī-ma anāku lūbih* later on in the same text admittedly makes perfect sense when understood as "let her be sullied, but let me become pure", but magical binding always has a connotation of impurity, so that this attestation by no means disproves a basic meaning "bind". The only two attestations of *russū* given by the dictionaries where a meaning "to wet, to soak" seems to be demanded by the context are both fragmentary and problematic (*AhB* 2, 4: 7 and *Gilgameš* VI 38, for the latter see George 2003: 832, reading *m[u-r]a<sup>2</sup>-sa-a[t]* "that [wets]"; note his caution that this tentative restoration is not supported by the Middle Babylonian version from Emar). But if a verb *russū* "to wet" really existed — and apart from the two passages quoted the noun *rusū* B "mud", "bad weather" (OB, see *CAD R* 426) seems to suggest so — I would prefer to keep it separate from the better-attested *russū* "bind".

13'–14': In prayers *ušarriḫkunūši* "I have glorified you" usually occurs as part of a series of similar actions (see Mayer, *UFBG* 145 with the relevant attestations including the present). Instead of *ukannīkunūši* one could of course also restore *alsīkunūši*, *ašurkunūši* or *ešēkunūši*. The spelling *šī-sik-ta-ku-nu* (or *zi-zik-ta-ku-nu*) is unusual in this period, but an orthographic archaism (possibly triggered by the original the present manuscript was based on) rather than a reflexion of Neo-Assyrian phonetics (see Hämeen-Anttila 2000: 10 for the spelling *zi-zī-ik-tū* in *ABL* 620 rev. 16).

15'–17': The use of *zakāru* in l. 15' and of *tamū* in ll. 16'–17' does not seem to imply any difference in meaning (for the usage of *tamū* and, less frequently, *zakāru* in this and related formulas see most recently Scurlock 2005: 23). Usually agents of evil are addressed in this way; they are put under an oath and thereby forced to stay away from the patient. But the preceding lines leave no doubt that a group of deities is addressed here. This is confirmed by the unusual *nīš ramānīšunu* "by yourselves" in l. 15'. Agents of evil would hardly be put under an oath by themselves. At the same time the usage of this formula indicates that a group of less important deities is invoked, and we have suggested above that the stars are the addressees of these lines. The form *ta'ātunu* recalls Neo-Assyrian *m > '* , and Esarhaddon's succession treaty has the Assyrian form *ta'ākunu* (*SAA* 2, 6: 384). If one, however, accepts the derivation of *tamītu* "oracle question, oracle, omen" from *tamū* (not *avū*), the Old Babylonian by-form *ta'ītum* suggests that the variation between *tamū* and *ta'ū* is old (see Lambert 1997: 97–8). In the beginning of l. 17' the broken sign looks very much like *κ]u*; probably another deity and his or her weapons are invoked here. The king's weapons figure prominently elsewhere in the text, but one would expect *-ia* rather than *-šu* if they were referred to here.

18': Cf. obv. 25'.

19'–23': Though separated by dividing lines the phrases in ll. 19'–23' apparently share a common structure and seem to belong to one section put between the prayer ending in l. 18' and the ritual instruction with following invocation in ll. 24' ff. Some of the motifs contained in these few fragmentary lines recall descriptions of gods or kings in battle. Line 22' certainly has a pluralic entity as the logical subject (*pīšunu*), but *ana arkīšu* in l. 21' shows that this does not have to be the case in the other lines as well; so *ibarrīqu* and *ušazbil[u<sup>2</sup>]* may well be subjunctive forms. If so, the person described in ll. 19', 20' f. and 23' is most probably the king himself, whose military virtues are extolled. The mouths of l. 22' then probably belong to the king's troops, and the possessors of what the king's troops are ready to drink could then be the enemies. If so, a restoration *dāmīš]unu* "their blood", first suggested to me orally by W. G. Lambert, would make very good sense, though usually only the earth drinks the blood of the soldiers killed in battle. The motif in l. 23' also seems to be unique so far. Comparisons with *imbaru* "fog" are common in royal inscriptions and regularly connected

with verbs meaning “overwhelm” or “cover” (*saḥāpu*, *šuṣbutu*, *katāmu* and *šuktumu*). A restoration of the present text as \**ušāšbit[u]* is, however, ruled out by the traces visible before the break, which clearly suggest a sign of the KU-type. Therefore a reading *ú-šá-az-bi-[u]* seems most likely. While the individual sentences as far as preserved are easy enough to understand, the overall meaning and function of this section within the text is far less clear. The subdivision by dividing lines could imply that the lines of this section are only incipits of longer recitations. But considering that we have two lines in one of the subdivisions (ll. 20'f.) and that the text otherwise seems to give the full text of the *recitanda*, such an assumption is rather unlikely. Short explanatory sections within a ritual text could take such a format; but they are very rare, and there is nothing in the preserved part of these lines that would support this idea. Possibly, these lines represent short addresses to the king and his troops, maybe of the structure *attā* resp. *attūnu ša* . . .

21': For *ana arkīšu tāru* “turn back, withdraw (in battle)” cf. e.g. *[ša ma]ḥar kakkī petūti u tīb tāhāzi dannī lā itūru* “[who] did not withdraw [con]fronting drawn weapons and the mighty onslaught of battle” (Borger 1956: 103, 26). The unexpected spelling *i-tar-ru* instead of *i-tur-ru* can hardly be resolved by introducing an otherwise unattested value *tur* for TAR nor can it be compared with misconstrued forms of middle weak verbs as can be found in texts written by scribes who had acquired Akkadian as a second language (e.g. *i-da-a-ak-ku* in KBo 1, 5 obv. II 13). Probably this scribal error points to a pronunciation *itorrū*, as was argued by von Soden with respect to comparable spellings (*GAG*<sup>3</sup> § 9e for *a > o* before *r*, § 104g on OB *i-ta-ar-ru*, for a critical discussion of a phonological interpretation of such deviant spellings see Kouwenberg 1997: 400 with further references).

24': The spacing of the preserved signs indicates that only one sign is to be restored in the break at the end of the line, therefore *tu-šá-ás-[šá]* rather than the expected *tu-šá-ás-[šá-šu]* (cf. also *tušaqba* instead of *tušaqbāšu* in rev. 3' and 10'). Though the following lines certainly give the text of a recitation, this line seems to be a ritual instruction. The ritual expert has the client, most likely the king, lift something, and this gesture is accompanied by the following recitation. Probably the object carried by the client immediately precedes *tušāšša*. A number of anti-witchcraft rituals prescribe that the patient carry *imḥur-ašrā* plant in his left hand (as well as lupine in his mouth and beer in his right hand, see *KAL* 2, 11 r. col. 18'–23' with duplicates and parallels indicated there), and the signs preserved at the beginning of the line suggest that a similar or the same rite is intended here. For ritual instruction and recitation text not divided by a ruling cf. rev. 9'–10'.

25': Cf. obv. 18'.

28': Though the line probably ended in a 2nd sg./pl. verbal form, the text, as indicated by the reference to *kakkīšunu* (?), seems still to be part of the recitation.

Rev. 1'–2': There is not too much missing in the break between obverse and reverse, so these lines may well be the end of the prayer beginning in obv. 25'. Though Nergal and Ereškigal are mentioned in obv. 27', the addressee(s) of the recitation remain unknown. Once the complete text is known, the *-kunu* in the (largely restored) final formula may have to be changed accordingly.

3': Possibly only (*šiptu*) *annītu* (*x-šu*) is to be restored in the break.

4'–9': The opening lines of this prayer strongly resemble a passage within a prayer addressing Nuska for auspicious dreams (*KAR* 58 rev. 1–18, most recent edition: Butler 1998: 344–8; cf. also Foster 2005: 718 with further bibliography). The relevant lines there read (11–12, 15): *mušītu puluḫtu līlāti, šalās(3) maššarāti ša mušīti ērāti našrāte dalpāte lā šalīlāti, . . . , ana ēri šalli purussā tanamdinā*. Lines 4'–6' of the present text have been restored accordingly, taking into account the space available in the break. Following the stock phrase in l. 7', the text apparently once more addresses the deified night. The epithet “veiled” can hardly refer to anybody but *mūšu* (or *mušītu*), and the space available suggests the restoration of another word, most likely *kallātu*, recalling the *kallātu kuttumtu* of *Maqlū's* opening incantation and other texts. The addressee of *pursī* in l. 9' must be the night invoked in the preceding line. The broken DAR at the beginning of l. 9' is almost certainly the end of <sup>d</sup>*iš<sub>8</sub>-tār*. An identification of the deified night with Ištar is not impossible, but note that according to the *Maqlū* commentary *KAR* 94 obv. 4'–6' // A 405 (Ass. 13955ii): 7'–9' the deified night of *Maqlū's* opening incantation was identified with Gula (see Meier 1937–9: 240 fn. 26). The restoration of another stock phrase seems to be the easier solution here.

10': The space available in the break and the spacing in the preserved part of the line suggest that only *annītu* is to be restored.

11': Restore possibly DÙ.DÙ.BI or KID.KID.BI in the beginning of the line.

12': Instead of *burāšu* the censor may have been loaded with another aromatic, but *burāšu* is attested most frequently in contexts such as the present.

13': The nature and purpose of the drawing on the offering table remain unclear to me.

14'–15': Further specifications of the figurine (material, probably also male gender) have to be restored in the break. Since the name of the figurine is written on its *left* shoulder, it must represent an evil power, within the present context probably an evil demon with apotropaic function who is supposed to act against the enemy after being placed at the border. Figurines of the warlike Sebettu used in the apotropaic ritual *Šēp lemutti ina bīt amēli parāsu* hold a *qulmū* in their right hand and a dagger in their left hand (see Wiggermann 1992: 46f., edition of the relevant text *ibid.* 1ff.). The present figurine does not hold a dagger, but a dagger is deposited with the figurine.

16': It is not entirely clear whose name is referred to in this line. Maybe the dagger, which is subsequently used to slaughter a pig, then enclosed with the figurine in the pig's skin and finally deposited at the border

together with the figurine, receives a name as well. Then one could perhaps restore [*patra teleqqē-ma ... y]a šumšu tašattar* “You take a dagger and write ‘[(... of) m]y [ ... ]’, its name, (on it)”.

17': The tentative restoration of this line is based on ll. 19'–20'. The catching of the blood of a slaughtered animal is attested elsewhere in anti-witchcraft rituals; cf. e.g. *BAM* 434 obv. III 7f. // *BAM* 445 obv. 36 // *AMT* 35/3 rev. IV 4', where the blood is used as an apotropaic ointment. The pouring of the blood to the four cardinal directions (cf. l. 18') also is best understood as an apotropaic rite protecting not only the king as the ritual client, but the whole land.

18': For the restoration of *rubû* “ruler”, i.e. the king, as the ritual client cf. l. 22'. The use of *rubû* as the term for king is rare in incantation rituals, but not without parallels; cf. e.g. the *Bīt rimki* ritual tablet (*SpTU* 2, 12 obv. 10, 17, 20 etc.), the *namburbi* concerning the king's chariot (see Maul 1994: 387–99) and the foundation ritual K 48 +, edited most recently by Ambos 2004: 117–25.

19': The restoration *mašak*(kuš) is based on l. 22'.

21'–2': The first half of the line gave instructions on how to close the pig's skin around the dagger and the figurine of the enemy, before finally sealing the opening of the package with a sealed clay bulla. Seals of different materials are used within such ritual contexts; most common are *šadānu* and *šubû* stone. The first sign preserved in the line could also be š]I or p]I.

23': The short recitation over the figurine and the dagger consisted probably of a series of 2nd pl. imperatives (hardly ventive with *duppuru*) addressing these two items.

24': Washing with (“horned”) alkali, gypsum and water is well attested in anti-witchcraft rituals (cf. e.g. *LKA* 154 + 155 [*KAL* 2, 24] rev. 36, 49 //). Here, one would expect *ina mē qarnā]ni gašši qātīšu ina m[u]hhi ... imessi* “he washes his hands with water, alkali and gypsum over ...”. But a reading U[GU is ruled out by the traces after *ina* at the end of the line. It is therefore likely that the text had a more explicit description of the ritual actions (maybe something like: “you mix alkali and gypsum (for the washing) of his hands in water, and he washes etc.”).

25': The broken sign before *ia* can hardly be anything but *nu*. We expect *mimma lemnu* or something similar within the present context. In view of the accusative plural *ḫUL-nu-u-a* in *BMS* 12: 76 (with duplicate *ār-ni-ia*, see Mayer 1993: 320: 76, therefore simply corrupt for *ar-nu-u-a*?) a restoration *lem-n]u-ia* “my evils” or rather *ar-n]u-ia* “my sins” seems likely. Alternatively, one could read *šal]mī-ia*. But the ritual does not seem to involve a substitute figurine of the king that could be mentioned here. The 2nd sg. addressed by *muhhika* is most probably the package made of the pig's skin.

26': For the restoration cf. e.g. Th 1905-4-9, 89 = BM 98583 obv. 6' (Mayer 1988: 145–7) or *PBS* 1/2, 106 rev. 29. See the full discussion of this rite by Mayer 1988: 150–3.

27': One is tempted to read *nakirū ana māt]i(ku)r ul 'e]-[er-ru-bu* “... the enemies] will not i[nvade the land]”; but the traces are too ambiguous for any confident restoration.

28': Or rather ] *x-ka* a.ab.b[a? The broken sign in the beginning could well be N]E.

## References

Abbreviations follow *CAD* and *AHw*; for *KAL* 2 see Schwemer, in press.

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