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L u g a l - š à - l á - t u k u : Glimpses into the Career of an Old Sumerian Chief Sea Fisherman from Lagaš and his Work Environment

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Abstract This paper examines the professional career of the fisherman Lugalšalatuku in Presargonic Lagaš as it is traceable in the nearly 1800 economic records from the institution É-munus 'house(hold) of the lady' renamed by IriKAgina to é-^{d}Ba-Ú 'temple of the (goddess) Ba'U' in the wake of his reforms. Basing on instructive examples from this corpus, it is attempted to outline his specific career during the reigns of the rulers Enentarzid, Lugalanda and IriKAgina (c. 2336-2314 BC) in his role as a prominent overseer of a group of sea fishermen. Specifically, the economic and social relevance of professional fishing will be considered in the context of its internal structure and organisation as well as the involved professional fields and sub-groups.

Keywords Old Sumerian fisheries. Lugalšalatuku. É-munus. Economic network. Fish taxes.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Previous Research and Scholarship. – 3 The Institutional Network of Old Sumerian Fisheries. – 4 The Overseers of Fishermen: A Conspectus. – 5 The Overseers of Fishermen in Presargonic Lagaš/Ĝirsu. – 6 The Professional Career of Lugalšalatuku. – 7 Conclusion.

In memory of my parents Irmgard and Kurt Balke

1 Introduction

Even though fishing and thus the profession of a fisherman indubitably commenced in proto-/prehistoric times[1] as an individual cyclical seasonal activity, it evolved in some regions of the Ancient Near East from the late fourth Millennium BCE onwards into a highly professional field of activity with considerable social esteem and economic importance that even accelerated within the institutional milieu of Ur III economy. The economic relevance of fishing can be eventually inferred from the use of the metrological Bi-Sexagesimal System B*, derived from the standard Bi-sexagesimal System B for discrete goods as barley, cheese, fresh fish as established in the Uruk IV/III-period presumably adapted to counting allocations of a certain type of fish. The economic importance of fishing is especially true and traceable in the detailed documentation of the activities and transactions of the personnel of fishermen contextually assigned to the institution of the É-munus "house(hold) of the (ruler's) wife" in Presargonic Lagaš. In the following, the present author will comprehensively examine the specific socio-economic relevance of the Old Sumerian fishermen, including an evaluation of their proportionate contribution to the economy of the Lagaš/Ĝirsu city-state, visualized through the plethora of written evidence of the archive of the Emunus. However, primarily the career of the prominent fisherman Lugalšalatuku, well

1 See Potts 2012, 221-4 and Van Neer et al. 2005, 143-9.

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known in his role as an overseer of a team of sea fishermen, will be taken into meticulous consideration in his work environment's broader context. He is amply attested in our corpus comprising nearly 1,800 documents,[2] largely originating from the reigns of the rulers Enentarzid, Lugalanda(nuḫuĝa) and IriKAgina, as illustrated in table 1 **[tab. 1]**. His working career will be illuminated and illustrated by means of conclusive examples from the core corpus of fish-texts consisting of c. 130 records,[3] and then further supplemented through elaborate textual evidence. Hereinafter, his working career as it is verifiable according to the economic sources from the É-munus[4] will be portrayed in more or less chronological order from the earliest tangible evidence during the reign of Enentarzid (c. 2336-2331 BC) until the latest securely datable evidence during the reign of IriKAgina (c. 2324-2314 BC). This virtually biographic approach will be complemented by the inclusion of significant phrases that cover the fishermen's regular institutional commitments and deliveries if necessary.

Before starting with an in-depth analysis of the eminent role of Lugalšalatuku, it is essential to pinpoint the fundamental significance of professional fishing and fish as a commodity of exceptional nutritional value in the hydraulic landscape of southern Mesopotamian alluvium, respectively.[5] This landscape is characterised in its hydrological and geomorphological nature among other things by the encompassing main rivers of the Tigris and Euphrates, once running nearer together in central southern Mesopotamia, as well as a network of irrigation channels in southernmost Mesopotamia.[6] Accordingly, it is hardly surprising then that professional fishing evolved into a most relevant economic factor for food supply and (cultic) nourishment in the region of the city-state of Lagaš (al-Hiba). This development eventually resulted in a wide-ranging professional specialisation adapted to the sphere of activity, the fishing ground, or the applied fishing method, manifesting through the plethora of textual records about the prolific economic activities of the Emunus institution.

2 Previous Research and Scholarship

Englund in his both seminal works[7] significantly contributed to the understanding and scholarly evaluation of Early Dynastic fisheries from the late Uruk period, namely Uruk III (ca 3200-3000 BC), until the Ur III period including the socio-economic implications as well as (palaeographic) aspects of fish, fish products and its specific lexical terminology. J. Bauer[8] provided a concise and still highly useful outline of the fish texts from Presargonic Lagaš according to the level of knowledge at that time, whereas R. Prentice[9] in her highly valuable study included the organisation of the various groups of fishermen only in a scanty manner.[10] D.T. Potts,[11] on the other hand, provided a general detailed overview about fish in the ancient Near East from a predominantly archaeological point of view, however, also considering third-millennium BC cuneiform sources. A. Salonen,[12] being part of his lexical and historic-cultural investigations, examined the written evidence from all periods, but his study contains a large amount of misinformation and thus represents no coherent reliable source. Currently, N. Borrelli[13] has considerably addressed the important role of fishing and further processing of its by-products in third-millennium BC Mesopotamia as well as its crucial involvement into the institutional Ur III economic network.

2 Cf. Balke 2017, for significant essential addenda and corrections on single onomastic entries see Balke 2021.

3 This corpus comprises all those administrative documents dealing with the affairs of the fishermen in the broadest sense.

4 See Balke 2021, 1 for arguments in favour of a reading é - m u n u s instead of conventional é - m í .

5 See Wilkinson et al. 2015, and Nadali, Polcaro 2016.

6 For details on the surrounding ecosystem of the Early Dynastic city-state of Lagaš including the localities: Ĝirsu, Lagaš, Niĝin (Tell Zurghul) and the outpost Gu'abba as well as the Lower Mesopotamian alluvial and deltaic landscape in general see Nadali 2021 and Iacobucci et al. 2023.

7 Englund 1990; 1998.

8 Bauer 1998.

9 Prentice 2010.

10 See Prentice 2010, 125-7.

11 Potts 2012.

12 Salonen 1970.

13 Borrelli 2021.

3 The Institutional Network of Old Sumerian Fisheries

On this large-scale textual basis two main groups of fishermen can generally be differentiated in the corpus under consideration: the šu-ku$_6$(-ĝ)[14] ab-ba(-k) 'sea fishermen' concerned overwhelmingly with the open water area, presumably the Persian Gulf, and the class of šu-ku$_6$(-ĝ) e$_4$ du$_{10}$-ga 'freshwater fishermen' primarily concerned with the numerous canals, lakes and lagoons in the city-state of Lagaš.[15] In addition, further sub-groups of fishermen appear in the administrative corpus, in each case distinguished according to their fishing ground or the applied fishing technique: šu-ku$_6$(-ĝ) e$_4$ dun 'coastal fishermen (lit. 'fishermen of the water ditches')', šu-ku$_6$(-ĝ) e$_4$ ses 'fishermen of brackish water' and šu-ku$_6$(-ĝ) sa šu ba$_9$-ĝá 'net fisher (lit. 'who cast out a net')'.[16] The classification according to the varying fishing grounds and fishing techniques roughly remained a distinctive feature until the Ur III period, see, for example, a list of the personnel of the household of the goddess Nindar(a) (AAS 178 rev. ll. 4-5) enclosing freshwater fishermen and fishermen of the brackish water among other professions.

Nonetheless, the two core groups are classified differently according to administrative terms depending on the documents' specific transactional characteristics. Therefore, both groups commonly appear by name next to each other in so-called conscription lists, for example, in DP 135 (Ukg 1), which mentions 15 sea fishermen (rev. iv 15) and 18 freshwater fishermen (rev. ii 18) close together due to their professional adjacency with the overseers Nesaĝ and Udu in charge. Otherwise, the numerically larger group of sea fishermen received barley allocations, see, for example, TSA 19 from the fourth regnal year of IriKAgina. This record mentions barley allocations to 44 fishermen along with their supervisors, among them Lugalšalatuku and Nesaĝ as in charge of the two largest groups consisting of 15 and 12 individuals, respectively (see below). On the other hand, the group of freshwater fishermen apparently constitutes a separate section among the persistent personnel that has taken over subsistence land (lú šuku dab$_5$-ba), for example, in RTC 54 (Lugalanda 6) rev. col ii 4-iv 3 mentioning 14 freshwater fishermen supervised by é-ì-gára-sù and é-sig$_4$-zi-dè as overseers.

TSA 19 (IriKAgina L4)	
obv. col. 1	
1. 13 lú še-ba 1(barig)	13 individuals each 60 Sila
2. še-bé 3.1 (barig) gur saĝĝal	the respective barley: 960 Sila
3. ne-saĝ	(for) Nesaĝ,
4. 15 lú 1(barig)	15 individuals: each 60 Sila
5. še-bé 3. 3 (barig) lugal-šà-lá-tuku	the respective barley: 1080 Sila (for) Lugalšalatuku
rev. col. 1	
1. šu-niĝín 44 lú 1(barig)	Total: 44 individuals: each 60 Sila
2. še-bé 10.1 gur saĝĝal	the respective barley: 3060 Sila
3. še-ba šu-ku6 ab-ba	the barley rations for the sea fishermen
4. ^{d}ba-Ú-ke$_4$-ne	of (goddess) Ba'u

DP 135 (IriKAgina L 6)	
rev. col. ii	
8. šu-niĝín 20 lá 2 lú	Total: 18 individuals
9. ú-du	Udu (is)
10. ugula-bé	the respective foreman
11. šu-ku$_6$ a du$_{10}$-ga me	Freshwater fishermen they are
rev. col. iii	

14 The phonemic nature of the final consonant /ĝ/ probably pronounced as a voiceless aspirated alveolar affricate [ts^h] has been dealt with in detail by Jagersma 2006.

15 Their specific social role and economic impact on the Old Sumerian fishery is beyond the scope of this little study but will be elaborated elsewhere with particular focus on families engaged in freshwater fishing and sea fishing.

16 Later, the administrative evidence from Girsu/Lagaš during the Lagaš II dynasty also mentions the professional class of šu-ku$_6$ sa-par$_4$-me 'they are net fishermen', see, for example, Maiocchi, Visicato 2020, 239 no. 386 (AO4303) ii 5'. This specific tablet is particularly noteworthy, for it documents extremely large quantities of fish deliveries by several overseers – nearly 480,000 sea fish – that surpasses the known scope of supply as documented in the Early Dynastic corpus of fish texts from this site by far.

13. šu-niĝín 15 lú	Total: 15 individuals
14. ne-saĝ	(under) Nesaĝ
15. ugula-bé	the respective foreman.
rev. col. v	
1. šu-ku$_6$ ab-ba-me	Sea fishermen they are.

RTC 54 (Lugalanda 6)	
rev. col. li 4-8	
8 lú 1 (barig)	8 individuals 1 (barig) each
še-bé 2 é-ì-gàra-sù	the barley: 2 (barig) for E'igarasu
6 lú 1 (barig)	6 persons with 1 (barig) each
[še-bé] 1 2 (barig) é-sig$_4$-zi-dè	[the barley] 1 2 (barig) for Esigzide.
šu-ku$_6$ e$_4$du$_{10}$-ga-me	They are freshwater fishermen.
rev. col. Iv 3	
še-ba lú šuku dab$_5$-ba-ne	Barley rations for those who have taken over subsistence land.

Further qualifications, but without occupation-specific denotation are šu-ku$_6$(-ŝ)[17] (aša$_5$) gú-edinna 'fishermen of the Gu'edinna (fields)', šu-ku$_6$(-ŝ) i$_7$-maḫ 'fishermen of the Imaḫ-canal' or šu-ku$_6$(-ŝ) zú-lum-ma 'fishermen of the (grove) of date palms', šu-ku$_6$(-ŝ) ĝír-su^{ki} 'fishermen of Ĝirsu',[18] šu-ku$_6$(-ŝ) é-munus 'fishermen of the Emunus', led by the ruler's wife, and šu-ku$_6$(-ŝ) é saĝĝa(-k) 'fishermen of the temple administrator's household';[19] notably, the last classifying feature is only attested during the reign of Lugalanda, specifically in the following records: VS 27, 93 (Lugalanda 6), RTC 31 (Lugalanda 4), RTC 35 (Lugalanda 2) and DP 279 (Lugalanda 2); in RTC 35, for instance, a certain Lugalpiriĝ delivers 10 tortoises as his individual share to the regular mandatory fish taxes (ku$_6$ dusu). Nevertheless, as DP 174 clearly proves, these professional categories are unmistakably linked to the group of freshwater fishermen in large part, see DP 174 col. i 1-col. ii 3 enumerating a freshwater fisherman named é-gar$_8$-zi-dè, further on gu-ú, a fisherman of the grove of dates, ur-^{d}igi-ama-[šè], a fisherman of the Imaḫ-canal, and a fisherman of the Gu'edinna named ur-^{d}nin-ĝír-su. Interestingly, the fishermen are brought up together with a fowler (mušen-dù^{mušen}) among those provided with wool allocations (lú siki-ba). This is probably due to the morpho-semantic closeness of both classes of animals, as according to the Early Dynastic lists of Fish and Birds their designations occupy closely related categories with quite overlapping boundaries. Moreover, this becomes evident by the occurrence of homophonous nominations such as a fish named gam-gam^{ku_6} (EDFi 8) and a bird called gàm-gàm^{mušen} in line 36 of EDB-A[20] though written with different cuneiform signs. Furthermore, it holds true for the fish ubi^{ku_6}, a type of barb according to the characteristic whisker-like barbel,[21] written with the sign RSP 179 (ŠE+SUḪUR) and the /ubi/-bird, usually written ub-bí in our corpus. This morphological nearness and overlap as well as the common habitat shared by both groups of animals

17 The Sumerian lexeme šu-ku$_6$(-ŝ) 'fisherman', written with the sign sequence ŠU+ḪA, likely refers to archaic traditional fishing by hand, is not regularly attested before the late Early Dynastic Period. In our corpus its final voiceless aspirated affricate /ŝ/ (/ts^h/) mainly occurs in form of the spelling šu-ku$_6$-e "fisherman-e$_{ERG}$" attested ten times (see: DP 322 rev. ii 3, 325 obv. ii 2, TSA 7 obv. iii 1, VS 27, 51 obv. ii 3, 53 obv. i 4, 90 rev. i 2, VS 25, 28 obv. ii 3, VS 14, 64 rev. iii 3, 139 obv. i 4, 156 obv. iv 4, 64 rev. iii 3), but once in the plural CV-spelling šu-ku$_6$-re$_6$(DU)-(VS 25, 62 rev. I 2), too. Here, the first more frequent spelling already witnesses the gradual loss of its independent phonemic status and final reduction to mere zero in standard cuneiform writing. Furthermore, the fact, that the Sumerian noun enku(-ŝ) 'inspector of fisheries' written with the signs ZAG.ḪA equally contains this phoneme strongly suggests that Sumerian ku$_6$ 'fish' originally contained /ŝ/ as final consonant (=/ku(a)ŝ/) being lost and merged with other consonants, respectively from the late Early Dynastic period onwards. Both terms appear together in the Fara document TSŠ 78 col. iv 5-7: niĝir-nite$_x$-na šu-ku$_6$ enku (ZAG.ḪA) 'Niĝirnitena, the tax-collector's fisherman'; yet, the majority of the attested Fara writings for ŠU.ḪA cannot be securely linked with the occupation as a fisherman due to the given context.

18 See VS 25, 10 col. v 1, and in Ur III times see also PPAC 4, 266 col. i 9 and rev. i 12.

19 See DP 278 rev. ii 5, DP 279 rev. ii 10; RTC 31 col. i 6, RTC 35 rev. i 3 as well as VS 27, 93 col. ii 4 all datable to the reign of Lugalanda.

20 Cf. Englund 1998, 88-90 with an overview about the various Early Dynastic lexical sources concerning lists on Fish and Birds.

21 The different characteristics of the fish barbels mirror the slightly palaeographic discrepancies as manifesting in the third-Millennium cuneiform signs RSP 178, 178bis and 179 representing distinct types of the Cyprinidae family commonly designated as carps; see Englund 1998, 133-5 for the sign sequence SUḪUR KU$_6$ and its palaeographic implications in the archaic text corpus from Uruk and Jemdet Nasr. Consequently, due to the similar basic palaeographic prototype of the signs RSP 178, 178bis and 179 all three cuneiform signs likely derived from the underlying pictogram of processed dried fish with varying types of barbels as distinctive feature. The palaeographic genesis of KU$_6$ as a classifier and prototypical designation of a small marine species will be dealt with in detail in Balke (forthcoming).

surely brought about the transactional adjacent classification of both professions. It is noteworthy that wool allocations, solely intended for fowlers, are usually documented on small(er) tablets, see, for example, VS 25, 49, a tablet only inscribed on the obverse that mentions rations for three fowlers and the prominent official Šubur linked to the reign of Enentarzid.[22]

When assessing the number of Old Sumerian fishermen connected with the Emunus' economic organisation, the given evidence results by conservative estimation, contrary to the reckoning of Deimel,[23] in a total of securely identifiable 151 fishermen differentiated according to the specific categories and the classifying appositions in each case; yet, a certain level of fluctuation among the individual groups has been included and taken into account in the following scheme's evaluation:

Table 1 Classes of Old Sumerian fishermen in the ED IIIb Lagaš corpus

Classification	Profession	Number
šu-ku$_6$(-r̂) ab-ba(-k)	Sea fishermen	56
šu-ku$_6$(-r̂) e$_4$du$_{10}$-ga	Freshwater fishermen	41
šu-ku$_6$(-r̂) sa šu ba$_9$-r̂á	Net fishermen	15
šu-ku$_6$(-r̂) e$_4$ dun	Coastal fishermen	13
šu-ku$_6$(-r̂) e$_4$ses	Brackish water fishermen	18
šu-ku$_6$(-r̂) zú-lum-ma	Fishermen of the date palm (groves)	8
Total		151 (≈120)

Notwithstanding, in spite of this conservative reckoning resulting in 151 (≈120) individuals classified as fishermen basically identified by personal name and further contextual specifics, changes of their name or occupational field though rather improbable cannot be entirely excluded.[24] Actually, there is clear evidence for cases of fishermen switching from one occupational field into another, as it is apparent, for example, in the case of Amar-^{d}NÁM-nun-na, a fisherman of brackish water, as well as Lugal-me-gal-gal, attested as a coastal fisherman and a net fisher **[tabs 5-6]**, who in all likelihood represent the same individual according to the contextual specifics. The same holds true for E'igarasu, an overseer of freshwater fishermen, who is explicitly classified as freshwater fisherman (šu-ku$_6$ e$_4$ du$_{10}$-ga) in DP 331 ii 1, but as net fisher (šu-ku$_6$ sa šu ba$_9$-r̂á) in DP 547 vii 3 and even as fisherman of the date palm (groves) in DP 335 I 3 (šu-ku$_6$ zú-lum-ma). The given evidence relating three professional categories to one singular individual might well indicate to a reduced number of fishermen, as a matter of fact, probably 120 individuals in our corpus at least.

In addition, a couple of documents, e.g. DP 177 (IriKagina L 3), thankfully provide detailed information about the intra-group relationships of the listed fishermen and exhibit a partially familial structure of the core units. Accordingly, the fishermen's core group regularly consisted of 2-3 workers (cf. DP 177 col I 4-8), a fully-fledged fisherman named Enku, categorised as saĝ-dub (lit. 'top of the tablet'), his brother Il (ses-sa-né) and his son Eta'e (dumu-né) as supporting staff and substitutes respectively but with lower rations, that is to say half of the saĝ-dub ration. Remarkably enough, two paleographically different number signs are used in this account, the round curvilinear sign AŠ (RSP 24) designating the full-fledged saĝ-dub – worker, but the angular DIŠ (RSP 1) to specify the amount of wool rations.[25] Furthermore, details of the team members' origin or provenance are only seldom mentioned in the administrative corpus, chiefly by means of classifying appositions such as PN$_1$ lú-dun-a PN$_2$ 'PN$_1$ subordinate of PN$_2$', for example, VS 27 55 (Enentarzid 5) listing the following fishermen: ur-^{d}nin-mar^{ki}, saĝ-ḫáb and lugal-piriĝ as subordinates (lú dun-a) of the bustling sea fisherman Nesaĝ. Sometimes, apart from the professional assignment, the local origin (šu-ku$_6$ Ĝír-su^{ki}-me) is even specified as in VS 25 10 (col. i 2-v 2) probably from the reign of Lugalanda, listing the individuals: lugal-šà(-lá-tuku), lugal-me(-gal-gal),[26] lugal-piriĝ,

22 For those external tablet-specific features as well as further contextual peculiarities see Balke (forthcoming).

23 See Deimel 1926, 26.

24 See Balke 2017, 45-8.

25 See also Selz 2011, 285.

26 This reference – the copy by Marzahn in VS 25 clearly shows the signs lugal-ME – was incorrectly assigned to the personal name ^{m}lugal-mè-tur-šè-nu-še-ga in Balke 2017, 255, but obviously represents the short form of the fisherman Lugalmegalgal due to the given context; generally, the mechanism of shortening of personal names are not always entirely clear (cf. Bal-

é-sig$_4$-zi-de, lugal-GÁNA(-zú-lum-ma-túm), ur-igi(-ama-šè), ur-$^{(d)}$mes(-an-du), gu-ú, é-ì-gára-sù, lugal-ĝeš-búr, amar-^{d}saĝ-ku$_5$ and ur-túl subsumed as 'fishermen from Ĝirsu' (šu-ku$_6$ Ĝír-su^{ki}-me). In addition, we also find elucidating adjuncts as e$_4$-dun umma^{ki}-kam 'coastal (fisherman) from Umma' (AWAS 20 xiv 14-16)[27] and lú unug^{ki} 'Man from Uruk' (AWEL 135 ii 4-5)[28] for Nesaĝ and Lugalša(latuku), respectively, where Lugalša certainly represents a shortened form of the full name form Lugalšalatuku.[29] The personal identity between long and short name form is unquestionably corroborated by the record DP 191 from the first regnal year of Lugalanda, for it lists 44 fishermen of various groups as recipients of regular wool allocations among them a certain Lugalša together with the prominent fisherman Nesaĝ.[30] Notably, this text belongs together with DP 172 (Enentarzid 3) and DP 177 (IriKAgina L 3) to the small group of wool allocation records that were passed on. Unfortunately, the plenty of institutional records from Early Dynastic Lagaš provide only few information about the technical equipment and working facilities, especially the specific fishing boats that are used on canals, rivers and on the open sea (i.e. Persian Gulf).[31] Aside from the telling record DP 334 that will be discussed in due course, two records merely allude to the delivery of four (wooden) rowing rods for boats of the fishermen (4 gi-muš má šu-ku$_6$) in VS 27, 76 (IriKAgina L 4) col. ii 3, made of pine wood, and a list of various recipients of (wooden) rowing rods for (fishing) boats in AWL 88 (n.d.), among them the fishermen Šubur and Nesaĝ (col. i 5-ii 4: 10 igi-si$_4$ 2 šubur má é-gal-ka-kam, 1 šubur, 3 nesaĝ, šu-ku$_6$-me "10 (poles) for Igisi, 2 (poles) for Šubur, belonging to the boats of the palace, 1 (pole) for Šubur, and 3 (poles) for Nesaĝ: they all are (sea) fishermen". Nonetheless, the singular document DP 360 (IriKAgina n.d.), presumably a kind of administrative excerpt or *aide mémoire*, records the transport of 50 reed bundles from the field adjacent to a watercourse (GÁNA e$_4$-ús) by the sea fishermen Lugalšalatuku and Nesaĝ (col. i 1-ii 1: šu-ku$_6$ ab-ba-ke$_4$-ne... mu-íl) and its subsequent counting and committal into the storehouse of the garden (col. ii 5-6: ĝanun kiri$_6$-ka ì-ku$_x$(DU)) by the general inspector Eniggal (col. ii 2-4: ì-šid). One may infer from the given purport that the institutional fishermen took charge of manufacturing their reed boats or further equipment themselves including the provision with necessary working materials. The document eventually breaks off with an isolated subscript on the tablet's reverse that reads: á u$_4$ 2-kam 'wages (i.e. reed bundles) of the second day'.[32] To the best of my knowledge, DP 360 represents the only archival document dealing with affairs of fishermen showing these contextual characteristics before the Ur III period.

4 The Overseers of Fishermen: A Conspectus

The publication of a comprehensive onomastic study on the Old Sumerian personal names[33] enables us to identify and retrace the specific names of those individuals in charge of each team of enlisted fishermen as well as to detect the concrete size and each group's personnel structure. Yet, the contextual evidence only sparsely reveals details about their potential residential origin,[34] familial relationships or specific intra-group linkages, see, for example, DP 177 from IriKagina's third regnal year. Generally, it should be noted that the work field of fishing has obviously been a male sphere due to absence of women

ke 2015), but as regarding the short name forms lugal-šà and lugal-me purely pragmatic reasons, e.g. the given space within the tablet's arrangement of separated cases, seem to be pivotal to these contextual abridgements.

27 See AWAS 19 col. iv 7-9 (Ukg. Ensí 1), 20 xiv 14-16 (Ukg. Ensí 1), 123 rev. 20-2 (Ukg. L 1?); CT 50, 33 rev. iv 2-4 (Ukg. Ensí 1); DCS 3 rev. vi 11-13 (Ukg. L 2), DP 112 (Ukg. L 2) col. iv 2-4; TSA 10 iv 20-v 2 (Lugalanda 6).

28 This passage from the eighth regnal year of IriKAgina likely represents the latest contextual mention of our protagonist that will be discussed below at length.

29 See Balke 2017, 267 for additional examples of the name's short form.

30 See also DP 582 (IriKAgina L 2, col. i 1-5) featuring the sea fishermen Lugalša(latuku) and Nesaĝ as recipients of identical sizes of soggy subsistence field plots (aša$_5$ šuku / aša$_5$ šuku ki-duru$_5$) as an additional income in contrast to the ordinary fishing personnel.

31 This also holds true for specific details on the use and manufacture of the fishing gear, for example, the fishing nets or transport containers used by Early Dynastic fishermen. In contrast, fish records from the Ur III period provide further relevant particulars, for example, about the manufacturing of reed baskets (^{gi}ḫal) by the fishermen themselves, see the Umma record SNAT-BM 260 (Š32) rev. ii 11: ^{gi}ḫal ku$_6$ dím-ma "(self-)fabricated reed baskets (for the transport) of fish".

32 The mention of 63 reed bundles from the freshwater fisherman Damdiĝirĝu in col. ii 8 clearly identifies Nesaĝ and Lugalša(latuku) as the renowned sea fishermen.

33 Cf. Balke 2017 with addenda in Balke 2021.

34 In this regard the administrative institutional records provide information about the overseer Nesaĝ(anedug), previously from the end of Lugalanda's reign until IriKAgina's second regnal year who is also characterised as a "coastal fisherman from Umma" ([šu-ku$_6$] e$_4$-dun-am$_6$ umma^{ki}-kam), e.g. AWAS 21 (IriKAgina E 1) rev. col. iv 7-9.

in the relevant lists of fishermen. This situation clearly contrasts with other professional fields with both male and female representatives, for example, the groups of Old Sumerian doorkeepers and barbers.[35]

5 The Overseers of Fishermen in Presargonic Lagaš/Ĝirsu

The following individuals are attested in the corpus of Old Sumerian records from Presargonic Lagaš in their capacity as overseers of regular teams of fishermen assigned to the sub-groups mentioned above. These persons are commonly identified by explicit designation as ugula 'overseer, foreman'[36] or by the transactional context with a fisherman in charge of delivering compulsorily taxes, for example, the monthly duty ku$_6$ banšur 'fish (for the) offering table'[37] or ku$_6$ dusu (ÍL) 'fish basket', a festival-specific duty.[38] In some cases the overseers of squads of fishermen have been obligated to deliver the 'Lu$_5$-gu'-tax,[39] a kind of repayment only imposed on shepherds, gardeners, and fishermen occurring in the contextual phrases: lu$_5$-gu è-a 'issued L.-taxes' and lu$_5$-gu AK 'accomplished L.-payment'.[40] In addition, the overseer Lugalšalatuku even fulfilled the obligation to render a certain amount of fish as part of the regular festival provisions called mašdari'a, see, for example, DP 333 (IriKAgina L 5) rev. ii 1-iii 4: 120 ubi^{ku_6}, 5 nu-TAR^{ku_6}, maš-da-re-a-am$_6$, lugal-šà-lá-tuku, šu-ku$_6$ ab-ba-ke$_4$ iti 8 til-la-a-a, mu-ku$_x$ (year) 5 '120 U. fish, 5 non-porcupine fish(?) is the mašdare'a-duty of Lugalšalatuku, the sea fisherman, when 8 months had ended, has brought it in',[41] a particular duty that commonly affected high-ranking officials.[42] Regarding the 'LUL-gu' deliveries, this levy might have been well imposed complementarily to the mašdari'a-delivery affecting only institutional personnel of lower-rank, but of essential importance for the supply of the Emunus. Equally structured records as AWEL 189 (Lugalanda 2) that mention mašdari'a deliveries of temple chief administrators and AWEL 190 (Lugalanda 4) dealing with the delivery of the L.-repayment by an animal fattener seem to support this hypothesis. If the assumption that both regular duties can be interpreted – at least roughly – as closely connected complimentary means of contributions to communal feasting incorporating a larger portion of the population is correct, Prentice's general appraisal of the mašdari'a institution as return gift in the broader context of economic exchange mainly restricted to a social elite cannot be unquestionably adhered to. Returning now to the role of the Old Sumerian fishermen in the city-state of Lagaš, the administrative records from the Emunus, the ruler's wife institution, evince an unexpected high number of chief overseers strengthening the role of fishing as a crucial economic factor. Apart from Lugalšalatuku, the following individuals are attested in varying frequency as overseers of fishermen squads in the corpus under consideration presented in the following overview:[43]

Lugal-šà-lá-tuku / šu-ku$_6$ ab-ba(-k) / ugula-bé
Ne-saĝ / šu-ku$_6$ ab-ba(-k) / ugula-bé
Šubur / šu-ku$_6$ ab-ba(-k) / ugula-bé

35 See Karahashi 2016 for further details and relevant textual references.

36 For the rare attestation of a 'commanding official, superior overseer' (gal-ùĝ) as in charge of fishermen see AWL 3 col. iv 2-4, reading: 1 (bùr) en-zi, gal-ùĝ, šu-ku$_6$-e-ne '6.48 hectares (for) Enzid, the commanding official of the fishermen', datable to the Lugalanda's first regnal year. The same official also occurs in this role in DP 462 (Lugalanda 6) ii 6 as superior overseer of carriers of trunks (gal-ùĝ íl-ne).

37 Instead, texts about official fish deliveries from Lagaš II Ĝirsu mention levies for the 'table of the king' (banšur lugal), e.g. Maiocchi, Visicato 2020, no. 385 (BM 88527) obv. 6'.

38 As is clearly shown by the pisaĝ-dub-ba tag AWEL 275 (IriKAgina L 4), the term ku$_6$ sa numun$_x$(ZI&ZI)-a-ka 'fish of weir baskets' (col. ii 1) delivered by the freshwater fishermen designates a kind of container and no special obligation fulfilled by the freshwater fishermen comparable to the sea fishermen's regular duties ku$_6$ banšur or ku$_6$ dusu (ÍL). It is noteworthy that the record VS 25, 52 from Lugalanda's fourth regnal year mentions the mandatory delivery of 3,900 pieces of sumaš fish by the chief sea fishermen Nesaĝ, Lugalša(llatuku) and Galatur classified as dusu(ÍL) sumaš^{ku_6}-kam (obv. i 5-rev. i 1).

39 See in detail Pomponio 1982 and Rosengarten 1960, 56-60.

40 In contrast to Pomponio, I consider this compensation (re)payment as an institutional means of balancing the seasonally fluctuating revenues of certain relevant professional groups, possibly intended complementary to the mašdari'a-duty of high-ranking officials. The phrase itself is probably derived from the verbal stem /lug, lug$_x$[LUL]/ 'to dwell, pasture (of animals)' as a deverbal noun with suffixed /u/ as in later daḫ-ḫu 'added' (< daḫ 'to add') copiously attested in Ur III texts.

41 See also TSA 50 (IriKAgina L 6) col. iii 1-4: maš-da-re-a-am$_6$, lugal-šà-lá-tuku, šu-ku$_6$ ab-ba-ke$_4$, mu-ku$_x$ 'It is the mašdare'a-delivery; Lugalšalatuku the sea fisherman has delivered it hither'.

42 For detailed discussions of the term itself and its economic and social implications at Early Dynastic Lagaš/Ĝirsu see Rosengarten 1960; Selz 1995; and especially Prentice 2010, 187-203, including an overview about the history of research (see p. 188).

43 For concrete textual evidence see the various tables below; however, there is no explicit designation as an overseer (ugula) in each case, but rather structural criteria in some cases such as the acting role in delivering and fulfilling the catch obligations.

Lugal-me-gal-gal /[44] šu-ku$_6$ e$_4$ dun, šu-ku$_6$ e$_4$ du$_{10}$-ga / ugula-bé
Nam-maḫ-né / šu-ku$_6$ ab-ba(-k) / ugula-bé
Ú-du / šu-ku$_6$ e$_4$ du$_{10}$-ga /ugula-bé
É-ì-gára-sù / šu-ku$_6$ e$_4$ du$_{10}$-ga /ugula-bé
É-sig$_4$-zi-dè / šu-ku$_6$ e$_4$ du$_{10}$-ga /ugula-bé
Amar-^{d}nám-nun-na / šu-ku$_6$ e$_4$ ses / ugula-bé
Gala-tur / šu-ku$_6$ e$_4$ ses / ugula-bé
É-úr(-bé-du$_{10}$) šu-ku$_6$ gána gú-edin-na(-k) / ugula-bé[45]
Lugal-tigi$_x$(É.BALAĜ)-né-du$_{10}$ / šu-ku$_6$ ab-ba(-k) / [ugula-bé]

As the given charts below (see tables 1-7) clearly show, the included overseers cover all the known professional categories and sub-categories even though not providing the same range of contextual evidence, as in the case of Lugalšalatuku and Nesaĝ(anedu).[46] The former's textual evidence is given below (see the scheme below) in chronological order with additional notes regarding his administrative involvement:

Table 2 Scheme of the chronological evidence of Lugalšalatuku in the archive of the É-munus

Rulership year	Textual evidence	Commodity / transaction
Enentarzid 2	DP 283	Sea fish, tortoises, fish oil
Enentarzid 3	DP 172	Allotment of wool to his squad of 5 subordinates
Lugalanda 1	DP 284, 334; VS 14, 20	Sea fish and seaweed(?) as fish tax
Lugalanda 2	DP 278; RTC 35	Filleted fish, moistened fish
Lugalanda 3	DP 279, 282, 290	Sea fish, tortoises, fish oil
Lugalanda 4	VS 14, 158 (= AWL 186)	Moistened fish (as) deficit of his monthly delivery for the offering table (ku$_6$ banšur)
Lugalanda 5	VS 25, 29, 53[i]	Sea fish, filleted carp fish as tax for the malt-eating festival of Nanše
Lugalanda 6	----------	----------
IriKAgina E	----------	----------
IriKAgina L 1	VS 25, 70	Distribution of plots of land to overseers of fishermen
IriKAgina L 2	DP120	Mention of his brother and his father
IriKAgina L 3	DP 280, 281, 318; VS 14, 24; VS 27, 83	Mention of deficits (fish and fish oil) of the prior and current year concerning the dusu-taxes of L. and Nesaĝ; subscript: sar-ru-am$_6$ "it is a duplicate"
IriKAgina L 4	AT 1	Delivery of fish taxes by several sea fishermen on the festival of Nanše
IriKAgina L 5	DP 333	Delivery of sea fish for the offering table and a second delivery as fulfillment of maš dare'a duty
IriKAgina L 6	VS 25, 17; TSA 50	Monthly delivery of sea fish for the offering table
IriKAgina L 8	AWEL 135	Mention of lugal-š[à][ii] lú Unug^{ki}; attribution uncertain

i Both records mention him as the fisherman solely responsible for the delivery of sea fish.

ii According to the photograph (cf. https://cdli.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/P221904) the rhomboid shape of the sign ŠAG$_4$ is nearly certain though an absolute identification with the same-named fisherman cannot be ascertained due to the lack of any professional attribution.

44 Among this group only Lugalmegalgal consistently occurs as a fisherman throughout his contextual evidence albeit with occasional transition into one of the sub-groups.

45 See AWL 148 col. iii 3-5: é-úr ugula e-da-de$_6$ "E'ur, the overseer, has brought it (i.e. 310 filetted carps as catch of the Gu*edinna fishermen) along".

46 The contextual evidence identifies him as a coastal fisherman from Umma and the son of a certain Piriĝkura (DP 120 iv 1); see Balke 2017, 306-7 for details of his professional career.

6 The Professional Career of Lugalšalatuku

Hereafter, the specific career of the reputable sea fisherman named Lugalšalatuku shall be largely illuminated in chronological order of the datable textual evidence. His personal name contains the well-known Old Sumerian name-pattern denoting 'The King feels pity for him (i.e. name-bearer)' and belongs to the most popular proper names within the Old Sumerian onomasticon borne by more than 9 individuals.[47] Apart from the name's full form the overseer under consideration also appears, as has been already illustrated in the preceding section, more than 15 times as shortened Lugal-šà.[48] The earliest secure evidence for a fisherman named Lugalšalatuku comes from the second regnal year of Enentarzid, see, for example, DP 283.

DP 283 (Enentarzid 2): the record mentions in col. i 1-5 Lugalšalatuku, the sea fisherman, as the deliverer of the following commodities: 18 gún ubi^{ku_6}(RSP 179), 5 gir^{ku_6}, 30 ba, 1 dug ì-ku$_6$ lugal-šà-lá-tuku '540 kg carp fish, 5 pig fish, 30 turtles, 1 jar fish oil (from) Lugalšalatuku, (the sea water fisherman)'; further textual evidence from Enentarzid's reign also mentions him, but either without definite assignment to the sphere of fishing, such as in ITT 5, 9230 (undated) or ITT 5, 9231 (Enentarzid 3) or with diverging profession as in DP 172 (Enentarzid 3) designating him as gal-nar 'chief musician'.
If we trace back the relevant evidence in the context of fish deliveries in chronological order, the sea fisherman Lugalšalatuku appears in the following specific telling records.

DP 284 (Lugalanda 1); VS 14, 20 (Lugalanda 1): particularly, the latter text contains a crucial key information about the nature of fixed supply obligations for the Old Sumerian fishermen and the way, possible deficiencies were administratively managed, see col. i 1-ii 3: 15 giĝ$_4$ kù Ne-saĝ, 10 Šubur, 10 Lugal-šà-lá-tuku, 5 Nam-maḫ-né, šu-ku$_6$ ab-ba-me; ku$_6$ pisaĝ$_x$ ĝar-ra-šè nu-mu-de$_6$-a-ka-nam '15 shekel silver (at the expense of) Nesaĝ, 10 [shekel silver] Šubur, 10 [shekel silver] Lugalšalatuku, 5 [shekel silver)] Nammaḫne: they are sea fishermen; because they had not sufficiently delivered fish according to the fixed (amount of) boxes, (it was placed on their debit account by the general inspector)'.[49] A similar expression referring to a fixed obligation of supply is mentioned as du-su gub-ba 'fixed D.-tax (of the sea fishermen)' in the record DP 294 from IriKagina's second regnal year that lists specified numbers of fish varieties to be delivered as individual catch quotas. Passing on to the remarkable text VS 14, 158 from Lugalanda's fourth regnal year which contains both terms of fixed taxes for the sea fishermen together, ku$_6$ banšur and ku$_6$ dusu.

VS 14, 158 (Lugalanda 4):[50] the text records the current arrears of Lugalšalatuku relating to these mandatory regular deliveries, see col. ii 3-iii 3: 1410 ku$_6$ dar-ra, 60 ba, lá-u$_x$ ku$_6$ dusu-ka-kam, 1740 ku$_6$ e$_4$ dé, lá-u$_x$ ku$_6$ banšur-ka-kam, lugal-šà-lá-tuku '1410 filleted fish, 60 tortoises, is the deficiency of the dusu fish tax; 1740 moistened fish, is the (explicit) deficiency of the fish delivery for the banquet table from Lugalšalatuku'; his (and Nesaĝ's) accounting shortfall was then placed on their debit account by Eniggal, the general inspector (see col. ii 2-7) and principally acknowledged by the ruler's wife Baranamtara (see col. iii 1-4).

VS 25, 29 (Lugalanda 5): in this record Lugalšalatuku, the sea fisherman, delivers the fish taxes ku$_6$ dusu (ÍL) for the malt-eating festival of Nanše consisting of 5 porcupine fish and 9 1/6 loads of filleted carp fish;[51] see col. ii 1-iii 3: lugal-šà-lá-tuku, šu-ku$_6$ ab-ba-ke$_4$, ku$_6$ dusu(ÍL) ezem munu$_4$ gu$_7$ ^{d}nanše-ka 'Lugalšalatuku, the sea fisherman, delivered the dusu fish tax for the festival 'malt-eating' of Nanše' (year) 5; this record as well as VS 25, 53 from the same regnal year mentioning his delivery of the regular taxes for the offering table represent brief transactional memoranda as indicator of the obligation's completion by the supervising overseer. As regarding its content both documents differ from one

47 See Balke 2017 for an exhaustive list of attestations and related patterns as well.

48 See Balke 2017, 267 for the specific evidence; however, the attestations of shortened Lugal-šà, the surveyor, have surely to be assigned to Lugalšalatuku as its full form and not to Lugalšàsù to be corrected in Balke 2017, 267 s.v. "^{m}lugal-šà-sù" "King with a far-reaching heart".

49 See Balke 2006, 214 with fn. 935 and Balke 2015, 96-7 for the dimensional morpheme sequence -/akanam/ <$/ak_{GEN}$ + (a)na-na-(à)$m_{INDEF-PRO}$/ whose full form is attested with the personal name ĝá-ka-na-nam-ḫé-tìl "May he live because of me".

50 Published by Bauer 1972 as no. 186.

51 According to DP 283 (Enentarzid 2) 6 éšeban (lit. 'thread-ban') is equivalent to 1 gú(-n) (= 30 kg) that results in 1 éše-ba-an = ca 5 kg; for this relation see also Selz 1995.

another by referring to different kinds of taxes and relating festivals (ezem munu$_4$ gu$_7$ ^{d}nanše vs. iti ezem ^{d}li$_9$-si$_4$-na) as well as the supplemented acknowledging subscript of queen Baranamtara. Due to the absence of contextual evidence from Lugalanda's last regnal year and IriKAgina's initial year as Ensi(k) the next datable trace of Lugalšalatuku appears in the year IriKAgina L 1 exemplified by the record **VS 25, 70** (IriKAgina L 1).

VS 25, 70 (IriKAgina L 1): this document records the distribution of plots of land to various groups of professional designations of low-ranking and high-ranking social status, among them Lugalša(latuku) and Nesaĝ as overseers of the sea fishermen and Udu, an overseer of the freshwater fishermen (col. iii 1-8) who receive plots from the field (named) 'narrow hillock' (du$_6$ sír). Another noteworthy document from the same regnal year, DP 334 (Irkagina L 1), though disregarding our main protagonist, represents a sparse piece of evidence about fishing boats as equipping for the staff of fishermen. Therefore, seven fishermen including Kitušlu, a 'blinded' employee (igi-nu-du$_8$),[52] have four boats at their disposal (7 lú, má-bé 4-am$_6$) and are subsequently classified as 'fishermen of the Emunus' (šu-ku$_6$ é-munus-me) temporarily living with Elu, a city administrator (ugula iri(-k)). From the absence of Lugalšalatuku one can surely infer that he was not directly linked to the branch of the net fishermen or the fishermen of the Gu'edinna in his daily working scheme.

DP 120 (IriKAgina L 2): in this remarkable record we find the rare contextual reference to the descent and family relationships of Lugašalatuku; accordingly, the text mentions a certain Urtulsaĝ designated as a brother of L. (ses lugal-šà-lá-tuku, rev. col. i 3-4) and, in addition, Enkisalsi[53] and Šubur[54] as two possible fathers of a person named lugal-šà-lá-tuku. Due to his professional assignment to the category of sea fishermen and fishermen of brackish water, respectively,[55] the latter one may well represent the more likely candidate. Interestingly, he is classified as a fisherman in our corpus,[56] and thus can be possibly linked with Lugalšalaku. Consequently, there is convincing evidence for the assumption that fishing might well have represented a permanent traditional profession in his family. Accordingly, this familial connection would identify the fisherman E'eana'AK, the son of Urtulsaĝ, attested in AWL 139 (IriKAgina L4)[57] as the nephew of Lugalšalatuku and thus support the hypothesis of fishing as a tradition-related occupation.

DP 280 (IriKAgina L 3):[58] this record, according to the subscript an acknowledged transcript and duplicate (sar-ru-am$_6$) of the original DP 281 (IriKAgina L 3), endorses ample deficits of the prominent sea fishermen Lugalšalatuku and his colleague Nesaĝ from the last, the previous and the current year (lá-u$_x$ im im-ma-kam, lá-u$_x$ im-ma-kam, lá-u$_x$ mu-a-kam); after the transfer to a separate accounting tablet, the deficits were booked to their unbalanced account (gú-ne-ne-a e-ne-ĝar) and then pooled together (téš-téš-a e-ĝar) by Eniggal the general inspector. The reason for the accumulation of such an enormous shortfall is not explained in detail, but worsened catch quota, for example, by adverse weather conditions might play a crucial role. The significant copular subscript sar-ru-am$_6$ contains the de-verbal noun /sar-ru/ 'duplicate' from verbal sar 'to write' with the rare derivational suffix -/'u/[59] and denotes a specific archival note referring to a textual duplicate and/or a draft.[60] Moreover, a further relevant document, BIN 8, 357 (IriKAgina L 3), particularly records the rare obligatory delivery of an oil levy for the festival 'malt-eating' of Nanše by Lugalša(latuku), the sea fisherman, comprising 7 sila of fish oil (col. i 1-2: 7 silà ì-ku$_6$ ì dusu). Afterwards this oil is (addi-

52 See Balke 2017, 221 for a detailed overview, but add the complete reference.

53 See Balke 2017, 158-9 s.v. "^{m}en-KISAL/ĝipar$_x$-si" for contextual references.

54 See Balke 2017, 390-2 s.v. "^{m}šubur-tur and šubur", respectively, regarding his professional career as a fisherman.

55 See Balke 2017, 391-2 for specific references.

56 See Balke 2017, 448-9 for specifics on his career as a fisherman.

57 AWL 139 rev. i 1-3: é-e-a-na-a$_5$ dumu ur-túl-saĝ-ke$_4$ mu-de$_6$ "E., son of Urtulsaĝ, has brough it (i.e. fish) in".

58 Further relevant documents from IriKAgina's third regnal year are DP 318, VS 14, 24 (AWL 133 and VS 27, 83, each featuring the sea fisherman Lugalšalatuku.

59 Further examples for this rare noun formation are: lá-u$_x$(NI) "deficit, shortfall" derived from verbal lá 'to be short", lu$_5$-gu from the plural verbal lu$_5$(-g) "to pasture, to live (of animals)" and daḫ-ḫu "added" from verbal daḫ "to add", the latter exclusively attested in Ur III documents, e.g. MVN 13, 618 rev. col. ii 18; AS 07).

60 See also AWEL 91 (Lugalanda 2) rev. ii 4, 129 i 4, 298 (IriKAgina L 4) rev. iii 1, VS 27, 9 (IriKAgina E 1) rev. iii 1, DP 194 (IriKAgina E 1), rev. ii 9, 246 (Lugalanda 3) rev. i 2, 248 (Lugalanda 5) rev. i 1, 330 (IriKAgina L 3) rev. ii 1; this interesting archival phrase will be discussed in detail by the present author in a forthcoming study on aspects of a physical kind of accounting.

tionally) poured out by Eniggal, the general inspector, onto a boat caulked with turnip exudate at the shipyard (col. iii 2-iv 2: má lu-úb du_8-a ki umum-ma ì-dé).[61]

AT 1 (IriKAgina L 4): this exceptional and unique administrative record is the only example of a so-called Hüllentafel, a clay tablet with an envelope, in the Early Dynastic archive of the Emunus mentioning fish deliveries (ku_6 dusu-kam) by the sea fishermen: Nesaĝ, Lugašalatuku, Amar-^{d}Namnun, Galatur and Saĝḫaba; the seals reads: "On the [festival] of Nanše (from) the sea fishermen" and "Eniggal, scribe of the Emunus". Since the use of an envelope usually served the purpose of confidentiality and authentication, its use for an administrative transaction regarding the sea fishermen may well indicate the economic importance of fishing in general and its contribution to the cultic festivals in particular. From the same regnal year comes the instructive document TSA 47 that lists two large groups of fishermen, 21 sea fishermen and 23 freshwater fishermen who both (?) were removed from the accounting data of the palace (dub é-gal-ta e-ta-sar)[62] and then certainly transferred to the institutional accounting of the é-munus. This transaction fits in with the findings already made by Maekawa[63] who noticed minor changes in the institutional organisation of the Emunus during the reigns of Lugalanda and IriKAgina. Although the senior chief sea fishermen Lugalšalatuku and Nesaĝ are usually on equal terms as regarding their status, it is strikingly Nesaĝ who appears in the role of the overseer in charge of the group of sea fishermen.[64]

DP 333 (IriKAgina L 5): this record uniquely covers the joint delivery of fish of various differently prepared fish species for the offering table (ku_6 banšur), more precisely 527 pieces (col. i 1-iii 1), as well as the mašdare'a-duty (maš-da-re-a-am_6) amounting to 175 pieces of fish; both obligations are delivered and thereby fulfilled by Lugalšalatuku, the sea fisherman, after 8 months had elapsed (rev. col. i 3-iii 4: lugal-šà-lá-tuku, šu-ku_6 ab-ba-ke_4 iti 8 til-la-a-a, mu-ku_x (DU)). It is noteworthy to point out that on the one hand the quota of his mašdare'a tithe roughly corresponds to one third of the regular amount for the offering table and, on the other hand, an adequate time limit to accomplish his obligations had been granted to him. From the same regnal year of IriKAgina comes the instructive text DP 313 (IriKAgina L5) that records a two-part delivery of filleted and moistened sea fish by Lugalšalatuku designating him on the reverse as 'fisherman of (the goddess) Bawu' (col i 1: šu-ku_6 ^{d}Ba-Ú-ka-kam) whose regular levy is taken over by an unnamed deputy fish inspector (col. i 2-3: enku-ús-ke_4 ba-de_6).[65]
The same distributional pattern as in DP 333 but with reference to the dusu-duty (ku_6 dusu[ÍL]) is mentioned in the following record, TSA 50, from IriKAgina's sixth regnal year.

TSA 50 (IriKAgina L 6): the present text lists loads of filleted carps, sickle fish, U.-fish, barbels and further marine species (obv. col. i 1-ii 1) as the amount of the fishermen' dusu-obligation followed by loads of filleted U.-fish, and 250 moistened and salted pieces of fish spawn(?) as Lugalšalatuku's individual mašdare'a donation (col. ii 3-iii 1); due to the different types of measures and scale units used within the fish corpus very often the total amounts given in the respective documents cannot be proper-

61 In contrast to Selz 1993, 574 and Selz 1995, 60 fn. 271 who connected ki umum(DÉ)-ma "place of lament for the dead" with the Early Dynastic funerary cult, an interpretation as "workshop, shipyard" (see CAD M/2, 195-7 s.v. "*bīt mummi*") seems equally plausible; otherwise the caulking of boats by means of plant fibres or vegetable exudates is well-known in the history of ancient boat building techniques.

62 A similar transfer of 71 individuals is recorded in DP 140 (IriKAgina L 1); as for this restructuring process within the Emunus see Balke 2021 referring to groups of female wool workers.

63 Cf. Maekawa 1973-74, 114-17.

64 Another interesting document from the same regnal year, AWEL 52 (IriKAgina L 4), records barley rations for those holding plots of subsistence land among them Lugalšalatuku and several other fishermen (rev. col. ii 5), and furthermore shows visible examples of the peculiar archival check mark kúr (PAP) "ticked off, changed" subsequently added by the scribes during the final verification of the recorded transaction; for this aspect of a physical kind of accounting see Balke 2023 (forthcoming).

65 The rare Old Sumerian profession enku(-ĝ) ús "deputy fish inspector, tax collector" is also attested in DP 321 ii 2-3 (IriKAgina n.d.) mentioning a certain Alulilla, who gathered various marine species from (lit. with) the acting fishermen Urniĝar, Kine and Lugaligi (rev. col. i 3-ii 1:ur-niĝar-da ki-né, lugal-igi-bé ba-da-kar). For this specific context and the involved dimensional comitative construction see Balke 2017, 248 and fn. 739 and 2006, 102 with fn. 434. Regarding the administrative role of the enku(-ĝ) in Early Dynastic Mesopotamia, the textual evidence clearly suggests that he played a major role in the transactional procedures of fishing acting as an intermediate official between the institutional fishermen as suppliers and official storage facilities linked with the Emunus.

ly compared to one another and thus incorporated into an internal equivalence[66] or value relation for all species of fish, whether sea fish or freshwater fish.[67] Since fish was usually measured by capacity units or piecewise, the use of gún 'load' or its sub-unit eše-ba-an 'rope-ban' as in DP 283 implies a kind of reed container as means of transport. At any rate, the plausible interpretation of ŠÈ-ba-an = /ešé-ba-an/ "rope-ban (measure)" by Selz would establish an Early Dynastic ratio between weight and capacity units as 6 sìla = 10 mina[68] whereby 1 ešé-ba-an is equivalent to 1 bán and thus 6 sìla at Presargonic Ĝirsu/Lagaš.
A further document, VS 25, 17, from the same regnal year is of special interest in this context, especially from a syntactic point of view and its diverging contextual structure.

VS 25, 17 (IriKAgina L 6): this record features both most prominent sea fishermen, Lugalšalatuku and Nesaĝ, who accomplish the obligatory delivery of various fish species for the offering table (ku_6 banšur), 1,065 pieces by Lugalšalatuku and 1,089 pieces by Nesaĝ to be precise, respectively. Interestingly, the transaction is not specified by a finite verbal construction as the usual mu-ku_x(DU) 'he has delivered, brought in it' but by a copular clause consisting of a nominal predicate and suffixed genitive case as well as enclitic copula (/PN-(a)k-am/ 'These (i.e. fish) are of Lugalšalatuku' (col. iii 4); only afterwards the finite verbal form appears in the temporal adjunct: iti siki-ba-a mu-ku_x(DU) 'in the month of the wool allocations they have delivered it'. The final section (rev. col. i 4-ii 2) contains the infinite verbal complement /á è-è-dè/: en-na-u_4-ĝu_{10} á è-è-dè e-na-šid '(Eniggal, the general inspector) has counted out it (i.e. the fish) to Enna'uĝu to pay out the wages(?)'.[69] The official Enna'uĝu[70] who is classified as a sea fisherman as well (e.g. DP 300 ii 4), but is overwhelmingly assigned to the group of lú igi níĝin 'municipal controllers'[71] usually representing members of the upper social stratum, for example, in the telling records AWL 143 (IriKAgina L 5) and especially DP 341 (IriKAgina L 4). The latter one explicitly mentions him (i.e. Enna'uĝu) as the official in charge of holding the fish (meant) for paying out the wages (?) in custody (col. ii 3-rev. i1: ku_6 á è-è, en-na-u_4-ĝu_{10} am_6-da-ĝál-la-am_6). This text is also remarkable in other respects because both ruler (i.e. IriKAgina) and empress (i.e. Sasag) are introduced by their official titles (énsik: munus) as responsible for having concertedly established 1,260 pieces of (moistened) fish as food offering (nidba[!]-šè ì-kéše) subsequently to be transferred to Enna'uĝu for temporary keeping.
Passing on to the probably latest evidence of the protagonist Lugalšalatuku, the record AWEL 135 from IriKagina's eighth regnal that mentions the reception of barley grits (dabin) by him.

AWEL 135 (IriKAgina L 8): this record represents to the best of my knowledge the latest datable evidence for the prominent fisherman Lugalša(latuku), even though the context itself does not evince any direct reference to the sphere of fishing. On the contrary, a certain lugal-šà is designated as a 'man from Uruk' (lú unu^{ki}) who receives a certain amount of barley grits (col ii 3: 2 barig, 4 bán dabin). If we hypothesise an identity with the prominent overseer of sea fishermen in this case, he came from the same city as his equally prominent colleague Nesaĝ. However, due to the documentary decrease towards IriKagina's end of reign the traceability of his individual career as well as transactions regarding fisheries is mostly petering out. The similar but undated record AWEL 130 (IriKAgina L n.d.) equally mentions the cupbearer Šešludug in his role as bailiff (maškim) together with two distinct individuals named Lugalša(latuku) who consumed the amount of barley grit and who are classified as "elite guards" (aga-ús), a kind of military squad very likely directly subordinated to the ruler (i.e IriKAgina).[72] Unfortunately, we can only speculate whether one of these individuals is the prominent

66 An exception is the equivalence relation between the scale units ÈŠ-ba-an and gú(-n) "load capacity", for which according to DP 283 an equivalence relation 6 (ÈŠ-ba-an) corresponds to 1 gú (i.e. 30 kg); see Selz 1995a for further details.

67 See already Bauer 1998, 545 for the problem of an exact precise appraisal of the institution's revenues based on delivered fish.

68 However, this interpretive approach may well conflict with the later emergence of gún 'talent, load' as an official standardised weight unit from the Sargonic period onwards. See the overview given by Powell 1990.

69 For an overview about the suggested explanations of this specific phrase see Bauer 1998, 549.

70 See Balke 2017, 164-5 for an exhaustive list of his contextual references.

71 The fact that Enna'uĝu frequently appears without an explicit professional attribute on one side, and on the other side is consequently attributed to the social class of 'controllers' (lú igi-níĝin) might well indicate to an original professional designation that developed into a more general social class term. Accordingly, Enna'uĝu is also included in those documents, namely, AWL 68 (Lugalanda 4), DP 132 (Lugalanda 5), DP 133 (IriKAgina L 1), DP 226 (Lugalanda 4), MLVS 8 (IriKAgina L 6) and TSA 50 (IriKAgina L 6), listing a large group of 40 till 50 of the highest officials who are obliged to deliver cultic pure milk and malt.

72 See Prentice 2010, 71.

fisherman of the same name, actually,[73] who may have been drafted into military service at the end of IriKAgina's reign. Nevertheless, it remains a quite conceivable assumption against the background of the political developments towards the end of IriKAgina's reign.

7 Conclusion

If we pursue now the collected evidence of Lugalšalatuku's professional career as an overseer of fishermen in the ancient city-state of Ĝirsu/Lagaš in chronological order according to the elaborated given evidence in the preceding section, we can securely cover a period from the second regnal year of Enentarzid till the sixth, possibly the eighth regnal year of IriKAgina comprising a period of 15 years at the minimum and 18 years at most. Regarding his contextual occurrences, the frequency extremely increased during the reign of IriKAgina in contrast to Lugalanda from previously 18 to 54 (or 55) attestations with peaks in IriKAgina's fourth and sixth regnal year slightly declining during the fifth regnal year.[74] This development might well be connected to the grown economic and social importance of fishermen and fishing in general, particularly during the culminating border conflict between Lagaš and Umma and, as a result, the grown supply of the population in the end of IriKAgina's rulership. To sum up, his enduring career identifies him, together with his colleague Nesaĝ, as the most prominent and, presumably, most senior sea fisherman linked to the institution of the Emunus. However, the increased involvement of Lugalšalatuku as an acting overseer of the sea fishermen during IriKAgina's sixth regnal year obviously points to his enhanced importance by contrast with his colleague. His prominence and social esteem are distinctively underlined by two essential characteristics, his affiliation to the group of holders of sustenance land (lú šuku dab$_5$-ba), and his contribution of catch quota as the fishermen' (or his own) maš dare'a donation. However, it is not evident in each case and documented transaction, whether he generally acted representative for all sea fishermen and the squads supervised by himself, particularly when they are not explicitly mentioned by name, or if he acted independently as a private individual in several matters, for example, when delivering the maš dare'a donation. The documents DP 120 and AWL 139, the latter one from IriKAgina's fourth regnal year, reveal insights into his closer relatives, namely about his brother Urtulsaĝ, a freshwater fisherman, whereas the latter in col. iv 1-3 mentions his nephew É-e-a-na-a$_5$, a freshwater fisherman likewise. This evidence certainly allows the reliable conclusion that Lugalšalatuku originated from a family environment characterised by a deep professional fishing tradition. Furthermore, he presumably started his professional career as an ordinary 'fisherman from Ĝirsu' (šu-ku$_6$ ĝír-su^{ki}), as it is evident from the text VS 25, 10 (Lugalanda 1?),[75] which reports the catch quotas of several fishermen for two days (u$_4$ 1-kam; u$_4$ 2-kam). Lugalša(latuku) himself delivers the following items: 15 gi agargara^{ku_6} ab-ba, 20 zà ubi^{ku_6}, lugal-šà (col. i 1-3) '15 gi (i.e. 45 metres)[76] sea fish-spawn, 20 slices(?) U.-fish (from) Lugaša(latuku)'.

Unfortunately, because of the drastic decline of the written institutional documentation towards the end of the Early Dynastic Period in the city-state of Lagaš, we are incapable of tracing back the professional career of Lugalšalatuku beyond the limited textual evidence from the archive of the Emunus and the fish corpus, respectively. Moreover, there is no further evidence from other than administrative transactions that illuminate his career in detail. Although there are cogent textual references for fishermen switching from one sub-category to another, conclusive evidence for a change of profession[77] or even a change of name is lacking in his case. In addition, there exists no textual reference that would securely connect him with a different professional attribution than as a fisherman, as it is well-known, for instance, from Eniggal, the institution's renowned general inspector (nu-bànda),

73 Alternatively, an identification with a cook or scribe of the same name is equally suitable in this case.

74 This observation completely accords with the general increase of the institutional personnel since Enentarzid's second regnal year during IriKAgina's reign, particularly, during this specific period; cf. the data collected in Selz 1995c, 50-63.

75 According to the mentioned individuals and the onomastic evidence from similarly structured records (e.g. DP 174; AWEL 276) as well the collective involvement of fishermen and fowlers this record most likely comes from the very beginning of Lugalanda's reign.

76 The use of length measures when dispensing fish levies may be based on the length of the fish body itself, particularly, if only one piece of a specific species is delivered, e.g. a-dar-tún^{ku_6}, or on smaller fish species lined up in a row for the purpose of being sized.

77 However, in RTC 35 (Lugalanda 4) he is exceptionally assigned to the class of net fisher (col. ii 6-iv 2: šu-ku$_6$ sa šu ba$_9$-ĝá-me).

who is designated in some records from the reigns of Lugalanda and IriKAgina[78] as 'scribe of the Emunus' (dub-sar é-munus) and 'scribe of the (temple of) Bawu' (dub-sar ^{d}Ba-Ú), respectively. Coming back to the unique record AT 1, the only example of a sealed tablet with its envelope, a so-called 'Hüllentafel' from Early Dynastic Lagaš, it becomes not instantly clear, why this specific administrative transaction should require a sealed envelope, a feature usually meant as means of confidentiality. Therefore, this singular practice might have served either the purpose of verification by Eniggal, the prominent scribe of the Emunus, or directing the focus on the dusu-tax (ku$_6$ dusu-kam) consigned for the 'festival 'malt-eating of Nanše'' by 5 sea fishermen, among them Lugalšalatuku.[79] The noticeable involvement of fishermen elucidates by all means their principal role within the institutional personnel even though the transaction's exact background remains obscure after all. Nevertheless, it underscores the importance of fishery as an economic branch in general and Lugalšalatuku as one of its outstanding representatives.

Notwithstanding the still existing obstacles, for example, the scarce textual reference to the further processing of freshwater fish and sea fish, the fishermen' technical equipment or the storage facilities,[80] biographic approaches as undertaken by the present author constitute valuable baselines for further studies. Thereby, the extension of the textual evidence to the administrative text corpora from other Early Dynastic sites, especially from Umma and Adab, might well turn out as even more fruitful. A meticulous study on the nearly 50 marine species from freshwater, brackish water and marine habitats attested in the Old Sumerian administrative text corpus, which remains a major desideratum, supplemented by contextual references and accurate palaeographic classification[81] will provide further insights into the administrative bookkeeping and procedures of the Old Sumerian fishing branch and the involved fishermen.[82]

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78 See AT 1 (IriKAgina L 4) (seal) 1:1-2; DP 15 (seal) 1-2, DP 16 (seal) 1-2, DP 17 (seal) 1-2, DP 18 (seal) 1-2; AWL 138 (IriKAgina L 4) col. ii 1-2 (Delivery of fish by himself?); AWEL 324 (seal) 1-3 (dub-sar ^{d}ba-Ú), AWEL 325 (seal) 1-3 (dub-sar é-munus).

79 The two seals read: 'On the (festival of 'malt-eating') of Nanše, (delivery) of the sea fishermen', and 'Eniggal, the scribe of the Emunus'.

80 Four storage locations are chiefly mentioned in connection with deliveries of fish: é-ùr-ra(-k) 'attic storage structure' (DP 323 iii 5), é-ùr-ku$_6$(-k) 'attic fish storage structure' (DP 308 iii 1), é é-bar ^{d}bilgames-šè ĥú-a 'warehouse built along the exterior of the Gilgames temple' (DP 286 iii 5) and é-níĝ-gur$_{11}$-ra(-k) 'depot' (DP 300 ii 1, iii 7); the third one is obviously an interim storage location for the fishermen of the Imaḫ-canal, the latter generally meant for various goods and direct consignments by Eniggal.

81 Attempts of classification and identification will primarily rest on the collected data on the marine fauna in Heckel 1843 and Freyhof et al. 2021.

82 See Balke, forthcoming.

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Tables

Table 1 Chronology of the Late Early Dynastic period in the city-state of Lagaš/Ĝirsu

	Ruler	Queen	Years	Kinship	General Administrator
1	Enentarzid c. 2336-2331$^{\pm 30}$	Dìm-tur	5 (6?)	Son of Dudu(?) (saĝĝa ^{d}Ninĝirsu)	Šubur-tur
2	Lugalanda c. 2331-2324 $^{\pm 30}$	Bára-nam-tar-ra	6	Son of no. 1	Šul-me-šár-ra-DUEn-ig-gal |
3	IriKAgina c. 2324-2314 $^{\pm 30}$	Sa_6-sa_6	8 (+2?)	Father-in-law of no. 2	|||↓

Table 2 Chief sea fishermen

Overseer sea fishermen	Date	Team size (ses)	References
Lugal-šà-lá-tuku	Ukg. L 3 / L 4 Lugalanda 1	Ses-bé: 7	DP 177 (Ukg. L 3) TSA 47 (Ukg. L 4)
Ne-saĝ	Ukg. L 3 / L 4 Lugalanda 1	Ses-bé: 9	DP 177 (Ukg. L 3) TSA 47 (Ukg. L 4)
Šubur	Ukg. L 3 / L 4 Lugalanda 1	Ses-sur_x-ra: 5[i]	DP 177 (Ukg. L 3) TSA 47 (Ukg. L 4) DP 191 (Lug. 1)
Nam-maḫ-né	Lugalanda 1	----------	AWL 183 ii 1[ii]
Lugal-$tigi_x$(É.BALAĜ)-né-du_{10}	Enentarzid 2	----------	DP 283

i The phrases ses-bé and ses-sur_x(ERIM)-*ra* 'team(-brother), squad' are used synonymously here, ses-bé representing the abbreviated form; alternating ses-sa-né vs. dumu-né in DP 177 col. i 6-8 indicates that Íl and Eta'e must be related here and not just working team members.

ii Nammaḫne only appears once in this specific role, otherwise mainly attested as maltster, gatekeeper, and messenger (see Balke 2017, 301-2 for additional instances), but in AWL 183 (VS 14, 20) in a leading role together with other securely identified overseers who were obviously incapable of fulfilling the strict delivery commitments; this is explicitly expressed by the phrase: ku_6 pisaĝ$_x$ĝar-ra-šè nu-mu-de_6-a-ka-nam 'because they (i.e. sea fishermen) have not delivered the determined (amount) of fish in accordance with the boxes (supplied)' (col. ii 3). For the Old Sumerian suffixed construction /(a)kanam/ later replaced by the suffixed morpheme sequence -/akeš/ see Balke 2006, 212-14 and fn. 935.

Table 3 Chief freshwater fishermen

Overseer freshwater fishermen	Date	Team size (ses)	References
Lugal-me-gal-gal	Ukg. L 3/L 4	4[i]	DP 177 (Ukg. L 3) TSA 47 (Ukg. L 4)
Ú-du	Ukg. L 3/L 4	11	DP 177 (Ukg. L 3) TSA 47 (Ukg. L 4)
É-ì-gára-sù	Ukg. L 3/L 4	8	DP 177 (Ukg. L 3) TSA 47 (Ukg. L 4)
É-sig_4-zi-dè	Lugalanda 6	6	RTC 54 (Lug. 6)

i In TSA 47 the rubrum ses-bé or ses-sur_x-ra is missing, but the context clearly identifies these individuals as overseers who, according to the given onomastic evidence, are to be ascribed to the reign of IriKAgina in all probability.

Table 4 Chief brackish water fishermen

Overseer: brackish water fishermen	Date	Team size (ses)	Reference
Amar-^{d}nám-nun-na	Ukg. L 3	5: lugal-KA-gi-na é-igi-íl é-ki ur-zú-si amar-^{d}nám-nun-na	DP 177 (Ukg. L 3)
Gala-tur	Ukg. L 3	2: ur-ki gala-tur	DP 177 (Ukg. L 3)

Table 5 Chief coastal fishermen

Overseer: coastal fishermen	Date	Team size (ses)	Reference
Lugal-me-gal-gal	Ukg. L 3	6: šubur lugal-mu-šè-ĝál ur-^{d}nin-dara ne-saĝ lugal-Lagaš^{ki} lugal-me-gal-gal	DP 177 (Ukg. L 3)

Table 6 Chief net fishermen/fishermen of the Gu'edinna

Overseer: net fishermen/ fishermen of Gu'edinna	Date	Team size (ses)	Reference
Lugal-me-gal-gal	Ukg. L 3	6: šubur lugal-mu-šè-ĝál ur-^{d}nin-dara ne-saĝ lugal-Lagaš^{ki} lugal-me-gal-gal	DP 177 (Ukg. L 3)
Lugal-me-gal-gal	Ukg. L 3	4: ur-^{d}nin-ĝír-su ur-^{d}igi-ama-šè lugal-á-na šubur	DP 139 (Ukg. L 3) Summarised as 10 šu-ku$_{6}$ ganá gú-edin-na-ka in rev. col. ii 1
Nir-ĝál	Lugalanda 1	----------	DP 191 (Lug.1)
É-ùr(-bé-du$_{10}$)[1]	Ukg. L 6	----------	AWL 148 col. iii 3-5: é-ùr ugula e-da-de$_{6}$

i The overseer E'ur, a short form of E'urbedu written é-úr-bé-du$_{10}$, is probably identical with a shipbuilder bearing the same name (see Balke 2017, 145), and, according to the given onomastic evidence, only indirectly linked to the branch of fishing. The record itself refers to four separate deliveries of fish without explicitly naming those individuals included into this squad of fishermen.

Table 7 Chief fisherman of the date palm (groves)

Overseer: fishermen of date palm (groves)	**Date**	**Team size (ses)**	**Reference**
G u - ú	Ukg. L 3	7: l u g a l - ĝ e š - b ú r š à - n u - ĝ á l é - ì - g á r a - s ù á - n u - k ú š u r - š u - í l - l a l u g a l - i g i g u - ú	DP 335 (Ukg. L 3)

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The Burial Pit of the e n s i $_2$ of Gizuna (ŠID.NUN^{ki}) and the Cemetery of Ur Between the Late Early Dynastic and Early Sargonic Periods

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Abstract This article examines the available textual evidence from late Early Dynastic/Early Sargonic Ur concerning an unnamed e n s i $_2$ of the northern Babylonian city of Gizuna (ŠID.NUN^{ki}). Based on a new interpretation of UET 2, Suppl. 44 and U 32450+U 32457, it is argued that a seven-day burial ceremony in honour of the ruler/governor of Gizuna was held, during which animals were sacrificed at his grave (s u r $_3$-m a ḫ). It is suggested that the body of the e n s i $_2$ was interred at Ur, either in the Early Dynastic 'Royal Cemetery' or in the later 'Akkadian Cemetery'. A careful review of the late Early Dynastic/Early Sargonic cuneiform tablets from Ur further reveals the existence of an organisation called Ekisa(g) ('pleasant-place house'), which probably handled the funerary offerings presented to the men and women buried in the city necropolis. If this is correct, then Ekisa(g) may have been the Sumerian name of the burial complex commonly known as the 'Cemetery of Ur'.

Keywords Late Early Dynastic/Early Sargonic Ur. e n s i $_2$ of ŠID.NUN^{ki}/Gizuna. Cemetery of Ur. Burial ceremony.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Funerary Offerings at the 'Great Pit' of the e n s i $_2$ of Gizuna. – 3 Who Was King? Who Was not King? – 4 Who Was Buried in the Cemetery of Ur? – 5 Conclusions. – 6 Appendix: Synoptic edition of UET 2, Suppl. 44 and U 32450+U 32457.

Dedicated to the memory of Giuseppe 'Pino' Visicato

1 Introduction

In a recent article, Abather Saadoon and Nicholas Kraus published two large fragments (U 32450 and U 32457) of what was originally a single cuneiform tablet palaeographically dated to the late Early Dynastic/Early Sargonic period.[1] The fragments were discovered during Sir Leonard Woolley's third season of excavations at the city of Ur, and are now housed at the British Museum in London.[2] The text of this fragmentary tablet provides new evidence for an unnamed ruler/governor (e n s i $_2$) of ŠID.NUN^{ki} whose existence is also known from UET 2, Suppl. 44 (IM 49817), a four-column tablet kept at the Iraq Museum in Baghdad; the latter tablet was found by Woolley in a secondary context, beneath the floors of the Edublamaḫ, in the same findspot as U 32450, U 32457, and other Sargonic and Ur III tablets.

I am deeply grateful to Gianni Marchesi and Manuel Molina, who read drafts of this study and offered numerous comments and helpful suggestions. Text abbreviations used here are those of the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (http://cdli.ucla.edu).

1 Saadoon, Kraus 2024.

2 Saadoon and Kraus did not realise that the fragments belong to the same tablet and published them as separate texts (nos 6 and 10). I am grateful to Manuel Molina for drawing my attention to the entry descriptions of U 32450 and U 32457 in the catalogue of the *Ur Online* project: http://www.ur-online.org/subject/54213/; http://www.ur-online.org/subject/54219/.

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The toponym ŠID.NUN^{ki}, which occurs in the *Early Dynastic List of Geographical Names* found at Abu Salabikh (OIP 99, no. 94 iv 10') and Ebla, has been interpreted as a logographic spelling of Gizuna (MEE 3, no. 56 iv 20 = gi-zu$_2$-na). In the Ur III period, a town by the same name (gi-zu$_{(2)}$-na) was situated in northern Babylonia, in the general area of Tiwa, Urum, and Malgum.[3] The spelling ŠID.NUN^{ki} is not to be confused with ŠID.NUN-tab^{ki}, to be read as Giritab, a toponym also occurring in the Early Dynastic geographical list. This northern locality is attested in another pre-Sargonic text from Ur as a supplier of bitumen (UET 2, Suppl. 16 rev. ii 4'-5'), a piece of information that demonstrates the wide geographical reach of the city of the god Nanna at this stage in Mesopotamian history.[4]

UET 2, Suppl. 44 and U 32450+U 32457 belong to a dossier of ca 40 documents concerning cattle, sheep and goats, fowl, and canebrake mice expended by an unnamed institution for religious and secular purposes.[5] The animals were:

1. destined for the Palace[6] and its cultic needs (e.g. he worship of the king's (lugal) personal god);[7]
2. offered (ĝeštag) for the Great Festival of Ninazu by an unnamed king (lugal), who also provided cattle[8] for the GAL.UNKEN[9] and for Enki's temple at Eridu;[10]
3. delivered to local institutions (e.g. the cloister of Nanna);[11]
4. presented to gods at local shrines and donated for local festivals and ceremonies (e.g. as *mašdaria* contributions for the NE-um(-NE-ĝar));[12]
5. gifted to visitors (e.g. to the unnamed son of the ensi$_2$ of Šuruppag);[13]
6. supplied to local officials (e.g. to a cook);[14]
7. disbursed for the sur$_3$-maḫ of an unnamed ensi$_2$ of Gizuna.

This brief contribution concerns the last item on this list.

3 On the possible reading of ŠID.NUN^{ki} as Gizuna, see the relevant literature collected by Schrakamp 2015, 222 fn. 255. On the location of Gizuna, see most recently Steinkeller 2022, 7-8. A reference to a man of Gizuna(ŠID.NUN^{ki}) in pre-Sargonic texts from the Umma region can be found in CUSAS 14, 74. My proposal to read obv. 4 as lu$_2$ saĝĝa$^{!}$ IB$^{!ki}$ (Notizia 2019, 99) must be rejected; although the function of the three isolated wedges under the sign ŠID remains obscure to me, the line can plausibly be interpreted as lu$_2$ ŠID.NUN$^{!ki}$ (see already Schrakamp 2015, 220 fn. 235).

4 On the geographical horizon of Ur in the pre-Sargonic and Early Sargonic periods, see Schrakamp 2015, 222.

5 For a detailed discussion of this dossier based on the texts known at the time, see Visicato, Westenholz 2005. The name of the urban organisation that produced and kept these documents is unknown; according to Visicato, Westenholz 2005, 67, it may have been the temple of Nanna.

6 I follow Visicato and Westenholz's interpretation (2005, 66, 68) that the e$_2$-gal refers to the residence of the lugal and not to the temple of the city's patron deity (Nanna), as may have been the case in contemporary Girsu-Lagaš (Lafont, Lecompte 2020, 29).

7 For this interpretation of diĝir-lugal, see Visicato, Westenholz 2005, 65.

8 It should be noted that the king (lugal) only made offerings of grain-fed oxen, the more prestigious – and more expensive – sacrificial animals.

9 The meaning of GAL.UNKEN in the (pre-)Sargonic tablets from Ur remains unclear (Visicato, Westenholz 2005, 64; cf., e.g. Marchesi, Marchetti 2011, 103 fn. 53). For an interpretation of GAL.UNKEN as a high official responsible for the mobilisation of labourers, see most recently Steinkeller 2024, 4 fn. 2. As Visicato and Westenholz have correctly pointed out, in the context of the livestock dossier from Ur, it makes little sense that a labour recruiter – or any other high-ranking local official – would be offered cattle by the lugal. It is far more likely that in these texts, rather than a title or office, GAL.UNKEN designates an institution or a place. Cf. Saadoon and Kraus's (2024, 7) translation 'great assembly', without discussion.

10 The god Enki played a prominent role in (pre-)Sargonic Ur. On the sanctuary established for him at Ur by Aya'anepada, see Kraus 2024 and the remarks by Keetman (2004) and Zólyomi (2024). Interestingly, one of Aya'anepada's successors – Elili, father of Enšakušu'ana – states, in the only royal inscription ascribed to him (RIM E1.13.9.1), that he (re)built Enki's Abzu temple at Eridu.

11 See CUSAS 26, 228 obv.? i' 4': GA$_2$×GI$_4$-a ^{d}nannaše$_3$. This is the only attestation of this term in third-millennium sources. In Old Babylonian times, the *gagûm* is known to have been a residential institution reserved for the *nadītum* women serving a god (see CAD G, 10-11 s.v. *gagû*). The most famous *gagûm* in second-millennium Mesopotamia was the one located in the city of Sippar, where the *nadiātu* of Šamaš resided (Stol 2016, 587-604).

12 On the pre-Sargonic Ur month ne-UM, see Cohen 2015, 74-6, who proposes to read ne-gir$_x$ with the possible meaning '(the month) of all braziers' or '(the month) of torches and braziers'.

13 See UET 2, Suppl. 45 rev. i 3.

14 UET 2, Suppl. 46 rev. i 7-ii 2.

2 Funerary Offerings at the 'Great Pit' of the e n s i$_2$ of Gizuna

According to UET 2, Suppl. 44, a total of seven goats (two female kids and five male kids) were supplied (i$_3$-g i d$_2$)[15] for the s u r$_3$-m a ḫ of the e n s i$_2$ of Gizuna by an official whose name is difficult to read. The scribe Lugalšuluḫku'ana acted as a m a š k i m, supervising the transaction, which took place in the seventh month (i t i a$_2$-k i-t i) of the pre-Sargonic Ur calendar.[16] The animals, collectively designated as u d u, came from those in the care of Šubur(tur), a fattener (k u r u š d a) attested in other texts in the dossier. UET 2, Suppl. 44 also specifies that the goats were delivered to the s u r$_3$-m a ḫ of the e n s i$_2$ of Gizuna in seven transactions (n-k a m-m a-k a), probably on consecutive days (one animal per day), a unique detail in the texts of this dossier.

The newly published tablet U 32450+U 32457, which originally had the same two-columns-per-side format as UET 2, Suppl. 44, apparently duplicates the information contained in this text, although in a slightly different way:[17]

1. The total differentiates between female and male kids;
2. The destination of the animals is expressed with the terminative case marker {š e}, which is preceded by a double genitive;[18]
3. The professional title of the fattener Šubur(tur) is explicitly recorded.

The operative verb denoting the transfer of animals (g i d$_2$), however, is the same in both texts. Either the two records refer to the same seven-day event, as I suspect, or they document different events that required the same number of sacrificial animals but took place at different times, probably in the same year.[19] Since the month name in U 32450+U 32457 is unfortunately not preserved and therefore cannot be used to clarify this point, both options are possible.

Although many scholars have dealt with UET 2, Suppl. 44 over the years, no consensus has been reached on its interpretation, particularly that of lines obv. i 2, rev. i 8-ii 1, corresponding to U 32450+U 32457 rev. i 4'-5'.

UET 2, Suppl. 44 obv. i 2, rev. i 8-ii 1	**U 32450+U 32457 rev. i 4'-5'**
LU SUR$_3$(ḪI×AŠ) MAḪ e n s i$_2$ ŠID.NUN^{ki}([-k a-š e$_3$])	LU SUR$_3$(ḪI×AŠ) MAḪ e n s i$_2$ ŠID.NU[N^{ki}]-˹k a-š e$_3$˺

The various proposals can be grouped as follows:

1. The sequence LU SUR$_3$ MAḪ represents a personal name, read as LU.SUR$_3$.MAḪ[20] or LU.SUR$_3$-m a ḫ;[21]
2. The sequence LU SUR$_3$ MAḪ combines the term u d u as a collective designation for 'small cattle' – as suggested by Alberti and Pomponio[22] – and the personal name s u r$_3$-m a ḫ;[23]
3. The sequence LU SUR$_3$ MAḪ combines the terms u d u and s u r$_3$-m a ḫ, the latter denoting a type of large vessel used for a special type of offering made by the e n s i$_2$ of Gizuna.[24]

My interpretation[25] of LU SUR$_3$ MAḪ e n s i$_2$ ŠID.NUN^{ki}(-k a-š e$_3$) follows Alberti and Pomponio's line of reasoning – and, implicitly, that of Steinkeller and Postgate – that u d u is a general term for livestock,[26] but departs from their conclusions on the meaning of s u r$_3$-m a ḫ, which I understand as 'great pit', i.e., the burial place of the e n s i$_2$ of Gizuna.

15 For the meaning of g i d$_2$ as 'to pass along, to transfer' in third-millennium economic texts, see Steinkeller, Postgate 1992, 46.

16 Saadoon, Kraus 2024, 8.

17 Strong similarities in content between some texts in the dossier have already been pointed out by Saadoon, Kraus 2024, 5, 9.

18 According to Alberti and Pomponio's (1986) edition of UET 2, Suppl. 44, the only lost sign in rev. ii 1 was the semantic indicator following the toponym ŠID.NUN. However, the break in the lower part of the case is wide enough even to restore -k a-š e$_3$, as in U 32450+U 32457.

19 For the hypothesis that the livestock dossier covers one year of activity, see Visicato, Westenholz 2005, 63.

20 Marchesi 1999, 109.

21 Visicato, Westenholz 2005, 69; Marchesi, Marchetti 2011, 120; Saadoon, Kraus 2024, 5.

22 Alberti, Pomponio 1986, 97.

23 Steinkeller, Postgate 1992, 18. To the best of my knowledge, no interpretation of the alleged personal names LU.SUR$_3$.MAḪ, LU.SUR$_3$-m a ḫ, and s u r$_3$-m a ḫ has ever been suggested.

24 Alberti, Pomponio 1986, 97.

25 Cf. Saadoon, Kraus 2024, 5 fn. 17.

26 In UET 2, Suppl. 46 rev. iii 2, u d u is used as a collective designation for both cattle and sheep.

In a recent contribution, Manuel Molina presents an overview of the third-millennium terms for 'tomb', 'grave', and '(burial) pit'.[27] Among the Sumerian words discussed by Molina, sur$_3$ ('burial pit') features alongside ki-maḫ ('exalted place') and e$_2$-ki-sa$_6$ ('pleasant-place house') as those most commonly attested in pre-Ur III and Ur III textual corpora.[28] The noun sur$_3$-maḫ ('great/exalted pit') is a hapax, clearly modelled on ki-maḫ, a euphemistic expression to describe burial places;[29] it also represents the only occurrence of sur$_3$ used in this meaning in Early Dynastic IIIb documents.[30]

The new interpretation of sur$_3$-maḫ as 'great pit' allow us to translate udu sur$_3$-maḫ ensi$_2$ ŠID.NUN^{ki}(-ka-še$_3$) as follows: 'livestock for the great pit of the ensi$_2$ of Gizuna'. If this is correct, then the texts UET 2, Suppl. 44 and U 32450+U 32457 either record the presentation of funerary offerings to the dead ruler/governor of Gizuna on the occasion of the Akiti festival, or attest to the performance of a seven-day burial ceremony, during which a goat was sacrificed every day at the grave of the foreign ensi$_2$.[31] Since the geographical scope of the animal deliveries documented in the livestock dossier is limited to Ur and Eridu and does not include distant destinations,[32] the offerings must have taken place in the city of Ur, with all probability in the burial ground known as Area PG, at a grave or mortuary chapel located in either the 'Royal Cemetery' or the 'Akkadian Cemetery'.[33]

Interestingly, another tablet from the livestock dossier (UET 2, Suppl. 17) provides evidence for an institution operating at Ur and possibly involved in funerary rites, which received the second largest single allocation of animals in the dossier: sixteen assorted sheep and goats for the Festival of the First Gift (ezem saĝ igi-kara$_2$).[34] The name of the institution that consumed these animals is Ekisa(g) (e$_2$-ki-sa$_6$-e i$_3$-gu$_7$),[35] a term commonly employed for 'tomb, grave' in third-millennium sources,[36] as mentioned before. Was Ekisa(g) the name of the urban institution in charge of the regular offerings presented to the dead at the necropolis of Ur? Did this name also refer to a specific cultic place or to a funerary facility of sorts?

The considerations outlined above lead us to the obvious questions of (1) who the ensi$_2$ of Gizuna was, whether an independent city ruler or a governor installed by the unnamed overlord (lugal), and, most importantly, (2) why a foreign ensi$_2$ would be buried at Ur or receive his funerary cult there. The first issue will be addressed in the next section, while the second will be discussed in § 4 below.

27 Molina 2019.

28 Add to these terms the verb ki tum$_2$ 'to bury, to be buried', attested in an Early Dynastic IIIb sale document from Adab (Mesopotamia 8, 67-75 obv. iv 1). For ki-tum$_2$ 'tomb, grave', and saĝ-ki-tum$_{2/3}$ 'grave digger', in later Sumerian texts, see Attinger 2021, 623, 879-80.

29 Molina 2019, 696.

30 The term sur$_3$ with the meaning '(burial) pit' is attested in an Early Dynastic IIIa tablet from Fara recently published by Balke 2014 (reference courtesy M. Molina). In this text, sur$_3$ followed by the anthroponym al-lu$_2$ represents the name of the topographic feature identifying the location of a parcel of land; cf. the field name a-ša$_3$ sur$_3$-ad$_7$ ('field of burial(s)') in Ur III texts (Molina 2019, 695). Both sur$_3$ al-lu$_2$ and a-ša$_3$ sur$_3$-ad$_7$ clearly refer to extramural burials.

31 On funerary cults and burial ceremonies involving offerings of foodstuffs and livestock in pre-Sargonic and Ur III Ĝirsu-Lagaš, see Jagersma 2007, with references to previous literature.

32 *Pace* Saadoon, Kraus 2024, 4-5. Their restoration of UET 2, Suppl. 46 rev. i 1 as a-ʳgaˀ-[de$_3^{ki}$-še$_3$], is questionable: first, the fragmentary sign after A looks more like NE than GA, and secondly, there is hardly enough room for NE KI ŠE$_3$ in the broken part of the line. Also, why was one single sheep sent(?) – operative verb ba-gid$_2$ – to Akkade? And on what occasion?

33 For the use of these labels in distinguishing different layers of burials in Area PG, see most recently Hafford 2019. According to Woolley 1934, 110, who based his hypothesis on the position of the skeletons by a doorway, sheep and goats were sacrificed in the early stages of a burial ritual performed in tomb PG/1232. Other possible examples of burial ceremonies involving caprines are (1) PG/1631, where the skull of a sheep or goat was found on the broken tray of an offering table by the entrance of the tomb chamber (Woolley 1934, 132); (2) PG/1648, where bones of sheep or goats lay in the forecourt in front of the door of the tomb chamber (Woolley 1934, 134). On animal bones and other comestibles found in the cemetery of Ur, see Baadsgaard et al. 2012, 149-50. On animal remains from royal and non-royal burial contexts at Early Dynastic Ur, see most recently Greenfield 2024.

34 For the meaning of igi-kara$_2$ and the translation of ezem saĝ igi-kara$_2$ as 'Festival of the First Gift', see Zettler, Sallaberger 2011, 5 and fn. 13; Cohen 2015, 72.

35 Other institutions that 'ate' animal offerings were the Palace (UET 2, Suppl. 13 rev. ii 2-3: e$_2$-gal-le i$_3$-gu$_7$) and the Great Festival of Nanna (UET 2, Suppl. 45 obv. ii 8-rev. i 1: ezem-maḫ ^{d}nanna-ke$_4$ i$_3$-gu$_7$). The same expression can be found in some Early Dynastic IIIb texts from Ĝirsu-Lagaš. See, e.g. VS 25, 56 obv. i 5: ki-utu-e i$_3$-gu$_7$ 'the Place of Utu (= a cultic place) consumed it (= one bull)'.

36 Molina 2019, 695-6.

3 Who Was King? Who Was not King?

The precise dating of the livestock dossier is of paramount importance for determining the identity of the ensi$_2$ of Gizuna and the unnamed lugal; however, reconstructing the chronology of the late Early Dynastic/Early Sargonic tablets from Ur remains a seemingly impossible problem to solve.[37] Various suggestions have been made concerning the identity of the king presenting offerings in the texts of the dossier: Visicato and Westenholz indicate either Lugalkišarešdudu, or Lugalkisalesi, or Enšakušu'ana;[38] according to Schrakamp, Lugalzagesi and Sargon would also be plausible candidates.[39] Other scholars remain more cautious: Alberti and Pomponio propose either a king of Akkade, an independent ruler of Ur, or the chief administrator of the city;[40] Saadoon and Kraus believe that the tablets date to the Early Sargonic period and that the lugal should be identified with an early king of Akkade.[41]

Although a special connection between Ur, Gizuna, and its ensi$_2$ must certainly have existed, too little is known about the political history of the late Early Dynastic and Early Sargonic periods to date the occurrence with more precision; nor should it necessarily be assumed that the influence of the unnamed lugal extended to northern Babylonia, where Gizuna was most likely located.[42] Therefore, it cannot really be determined whether in this specific context ensi$_2$ denotes an independent ruler of Gizuna, or a governor subordinate to an overlord who exercised hegemony over both Gizuna and Ur; nor can it be established with certainty whether this lugal was a late Early Dynastic or an Early Sargonic king. However, new information can be found in recently and previously published archival records from Ur that add to the discussion on the identity of the unnamed king.

The first piece of evidence to be considered is the late Early Dynastic/Early Sargonic tablet Saadoon, Kraus 2024, 9 no. 13, which lists an unnamed ensi$_2$ (obv. ii 2) among the providers of flour received by an individual, perhaps a local official.[43] It can be assumed that here the title ensi$_2$ identifies the highest authority of Ur at a time of political weakness, when a non-native lugal exercised control over the city.[44] This reconstruction finds support in the fact that the independent Early Dynastic rulers of Ur always used the title lugal uri$_5^{ki}$ in their royal inscriptions, even when their fathers bore the more prestigious epithet lugal kiš^{ki} (i.e., king of Uruk),[45] as in the case of Mes'uĝedu and his son Mes'anepada (RIM E1.13.5.1).[46] Again, a scenario involving an ensi$_2$ of Ur subject to a lugal would fit well with any of the possible candidates (i.e., Lugalkišarešdudu, Lugalkisalesi, Enšakušu'ana, Lugalzagesi, and Sargon).

Another aspect that has been entirely ignored are the occurrences of the title lugal in the tablets from Ur datable to the Early Dynastic IIIb period. The first attestation is in UET 2, Suppl. 25, perhaps a letter or legal text, in which a 'cowherd of the king' (unu$_3$ lugal) is mentioned (rev. i 3). This finding may be significant in light of the fact that the lugal of the late Early Dynastic/Early Sargonic dossier

37 On the difficulty of establishing a precise dating for the texts of this dossier, see Saadoon, Kraus 2024, 4-5. They date the tablets to the Early Sargonic period based on their physical appearance and palaeography, and on the alleged occurrence of the toponym Akkade in UET 2, Suppl. 46 rev. i 1 (see above, fn. 32).

38 Visicato, Westenholz 2005, 64.

39 Schrakamp 2015, 222.

40 Alberti, Pomponio 1986, 17-18, 53.

41 Saadoon, Kraus 2024, 4-5.

42 I disagree with the general view that in Early Dynastic IIIa-b documents from a Babylonian city, the mere presence of foreign city rulers designated as ensi$_2$, their family members, their servants, or of emissaries from foreign places indicates the subordinate relationship of these individuals to the local ruler or to a supra-regional overlord, regardless of the chronological framework and the context in which they are mentioned. Likewise, the reception of goods from a particular locale (i.e., a toponym) does not necessarily imply territorial control over it by the receiving party (i.e., a city-state or territorial kingdom).

43 According to the photograph of the tablet, the recipient's name (obv. ii 8) could be read as ur-^{r}tul$_2$-saĝ^{1}. Collation of the tablet is necessary to corroborate this reading.

44 Cf. the case of Meskigala, governor (ensi$_2$) of Adab, under King (lugal) Lugalzagesi (BIN 8, 26 vi 4-8; on this text, see Marchesi, Marchetti 2011, 112-13). Note that Meskigala bears the title ensi$_2$ also in a dedicatory inscription incised on a statue fragment probably from Adab (RIM E1.1.9.2001). On variation in royal titles in pre-Sargonic and Early Sargonic Adab, see Pomponio 2015, 191-2.

45 See Marchesi 2015, 145. For a different interpretation, see Sallaberger 2021, 353, who rejects this equation.

46 However, one cannot rule out the possibility that a different use of this title applies to administrative texts, in which Mes'anepada may have been referred to as ensi$_2$ of Ur; cf. the case of the rulers of Umma (Marchesi, Marchetti 2011, 110). At the time when Enšakušu'ana – son of Elili, king of Ur – unified southern Mesopotamia under his rule, the presence of two 'kings' (lugal) would have been simply unimaginable.

made offerings exclusively of cattle (see above, fn. 8), which could potentially come from royal herds.[47]

The second attestation, hitherto unrecognised, is in UET 2, Suppl. 3. I propose to read lines obv. i' 1'-3' as u$_4$ lugal-le / u$_8$ siki / ˹e˺-u[r$_4$?-ra], 'when the king plucked? the wool ewes'.[48] This formulation illustrates the city ruler's control over the circulation of a valuable commodity such as wool, as was also the case in pre-Sargonic Ĝirsu-Lagaš, Nadaba, and Ebla.[49] However, unlike the Ĝirsu-Lagaš texts, which record the name of the ruler and the place where the plucking took place (i.e., mainly at the Palace),[50] the Early Dynastic IIIb tablet from Ur omits this information. Looking at the Early Dynastic IIIb and Early Sargonic administrative texts from Ur as a whole, it seems as if local scribes did not deem it necessary to write down the names of their political leaders (lugal, ensi$_2$), which also applies to foreign rulers (ensi$_2$ ŠID.NUN^{ki}) and to their sons (e.g. dumu ensi$_2$ šuruppag^{ki}).[51]

4 Who Was Buried in the Cemetery of Ur?

The last major point that remains to be addressed is the reason why the ensi$_2$ of Gizuna would be buried at Ur or receive funerary offerings there. Unfortunately, the currently available sources from Ur fail to provide any conclusive answers to this question. In the following, I will put forward some hypotheses that might be worth considering; until further evidence is found, however, any reconstruction must necessarily remain in the realm of conjecture.

Examination of the surviving archival documents, some of which have been published only recently, shows that, besides military confrontations and competition for access to wealth and valuable resources, the southern Mesopotamian city-states of the Early Dynastic IIIb period could maintain peaceful relations with each other.[52] Diplomatic and commercial exchanges shaped inter-city interaction, while instances of military cooperation against common enemies are scarcely documented.[53] Personal relations among the urban elites of northern, central, and southern Babylonia were further reinforced through the exchange of gifts[54] and mutual participation in major cultic events and local festivals. No doubt, with the emergence of the first territorial states in the so-called 'Proto-Imperial' period, the circulation of goods and people within these socio-political networks must have intensified considerably.[55]

Administrative records from the Umma region dating from the reign of the Early Dynastic IIIb ruler Ur-Lumma offer ample evidence of official journeys undertaken for diplomatic, economic, and cultic reasons. Emissaries (lu$_2$), shipping agents (lu$_2$-u$_5$-a), and high dignitaries (ensi$_2$-gal; šeš ensi$_2$)[56] from localities such as Kiš, Akšak, Irisaĝrig, Nippur, Adab, Šuruppag, Uruk, and Ur – just to name the most important ones – receive animals and foodstuffs in documents that record mainly offerings for the deities of the Umma pantheon and for local festivals.[57] One of these texts, CUSAS 14, 74,[58] demon-

47 Interestingly, recent isotopic analyses of bovine teeth have shown that at least one animal found in a royal grave of Ur was not raised locally and could have come from beyond the southern Mesopotamian alluvium (Greenfield et al. 2022).

48 The verb is reconstructed on the basis of rev. i' 1', which reads e-u[r$_4$(-ra)]. Admittedly, the visible traces in obv. i' 3' may also point to a different sign and thus to a different action performed by the lugal. Collation of this line is required.

49 Sallaberger 2014, 103.

50 Cf., e.g. VS 14, 73 rev. ii 2-4: ensi$_2$-ke$_4$ e$_2$-gal-la e-ur$_4$.

51 The only exception is UET 2, Suppl. 25, in which a servant of the ensi$_2$ of Lagaš is mentioned by name and profession (rev. i 4-5); however, the nature of the record (a letter or legal text) may account for this inconsistency.

52 See, for instance, the brotherhood pact established between Enmetena of Lagaš and Lugalkišarešdudu of Uruk (RIM E.1.9.5.3).

53 Military alliances are known from the Early Dynastic IIIa period; cf. the case of the expedition against Kiš undertaken by a coalition of southern Babylonian city-states, documented in some texts from Šuruppag (Steinkeller 2024, with references to previous literature). For a different interpretation of these texts, see Sallaberger, Schrakamp 2015, 63 and Marchesi 2015, 140. The only example known to me from the Early Dynastic IIIb period is the campaign against E'annabtum of Lagaš by a coalition of northern Babylonian cities led by Zuzu, king of Akšak (Marchesi 2015, 154).

54 Bartash 2020.

55 See Schrakamp's (2015, 197-222) comprehensive discussion of the distribution of toponyms in pre-Sargonic and Early Sargonic archives.

56 The titles ensi$_2$-gal ('chief *steward*') and šeš ensi$_2$ ('brother of the ensi$_2$') were borne by individuals coming from Uruk (Notizia, Visicato 2016, 7 fn. 10). Note that the scribes of Umma use the word ensi$_2$ here to refer to the ruler of Uruk – whom they would never call lugal. Cf. the case of Lugalsila(si), who bears the title ensi$_2$ unu^{ki} in an inscription on a vessel fragment found at Ĝirsu (RIM E1.9.10.2).

57 Schrakamp 2015, 212-21; Notizia, Visicato 2016, 6-7.

58 See above, fn. 3.

strates that Gizuna was among the northern polities that had contacts with the southern city-states, in a period chronologically not too distant from that covered by the livestock dossier from Ur.

While Gizuna seems to have played only a limited role in the network of cities interacting with Umma in the Early Dynastic IIIb period, its ensi$_2$ appears as a prominent figure in the slightly later livestock dossier from Ur. What matters here is not the absolute number of attestations in the respective textual corpora, but the context in which Gizuna and its political leader are documented.

At Ur, the ensi$_2$ of Gizuna is the beneficiary of one of the largest allocations of sacrificial animals and the only distribution spanning multiple consecutive days. He was not a mere visitor, like the son of the ensi$_2$ of Šuruppag, who had probably come to the city to attend the Great Festival of Nanna, and for that reason had received a couple of fat-tailed sheep as a gift to take away with him (ba-laḫ$_4$) after the event (UET 2, Suppl. 45 rev. i 2-4).[59]

The scribe Lugalšuluḫku'ana, who supervised the disbursement for the sur$_3$-maḫ of the ensi$_2$ of Gizuna, acted in the same capacity (maškim) in Visicato, Westenholz 2005, 57-58 no. 2. This text lists goats to be sacrificed to the king's personal god (diĝir-lugal), a monthly offering that fell within the cultic activity of the Palace.[60] The precise duties of the maškim officials mentioned in the livestock dossier are unclear. However, since these officials are almost exclusively associated with deliveries made to the Palace, it can be inferred that they served as collectors of animals from local institutions on behalf of the royal organisation. Therefore, one can conclude that the Palace (i.e., the king) was the main sponsor of the offerings for the tomb of the ensi$_2$ of Gizuna. Since post-burial funerary offerings and the mortuary chapels where they were presented would be more correctly described by the Sumerian term ki-a-naĝ 'libation place',[61] the event recorded in UET 2, Suppl. 44 and U 32450+U 32457 must refer to the ceremony performed at the interment of the foreign ensi$_2$ in the Cemetery of Ur.

The strong connection with the city of Ur evidenced by the funerary rite in his honour does not help to clarify the obscure background of the ensi$_2$ of Gizuna: either he was a native of Ur or he had foreign origins. Both options can lead to several different reconstructions.

I find it an unlikely scenario that a citizen of Ur would be installed as governor of a distant city over which the unnamed lugal of the livestock dossier would extend his authority. None of the possible candidates could have made such a decision for a variety of reasons, the most obvious of which is that, with the exception of Sargon and perhaps Enšakušu'ana, the other kings would not have been able to exert control over Gizuna. The possibility that the ensi$_2$ of Gizuna was an independent ruler with direct kinship ties to elite families of Ur, and that such ties explain the location of his tomb, cannot be ruled out, of course, but such a scenario is equally difficult.

Regardless of the ensi$_2$'s origins and status, other possible motivations for choosing not to be buried in his home city are:

1. A special devotion to the moon-god and a desire to place his grave in close proximity to Nanna's main temple;
2. The prestige of the burial ground, i.e., the necropolis of Ur, where royalty and high-status individuals of the city's recent past were laid to rest,[62] and where local citizens wished to place their tombs as close as possible to their kings and queens.

However, it is difficult to say with certainty whether the god Nanna of Ur enjoyed supra-regional importance in the pre-Sargonic and Early Sargonic periods, and whether his cult transcended the boundaries of the city of Ur at this time, giving rise to widespread worship and pilgrimages to his main sanctuary in Sumer.[63] Likewise, it is impossible to establish whether the Cemetery of Ur had become a burial site of pan-Babylonian relevance in the Early Dynastic IIIb period and in the years of the Sargonic domination, nor is there any archaeological or textual evidence to determine whether – and by whom – access to the necropolis was granted only by birth or also by status and achievements of the deceased.

59 It goes without saying that the presence of the son of the ensi$_2$ of Šuruppag at Ur does not prove, *per se*, his subordinate status to the lugal.

60 Visicato, Westenholz 2005, 66.

61 This is the case, at least, in the coeval documentation from Ĝirsu-Lagaš; see Jagersma 2007, 294-7.

62 For the identification of some of the occupants of the Early Dynastic cemetery, see Marchesi 2004. See also Marchesi, Marchetti 2011, 64-5, who argue for an Early Dynastic IIIb date for the royal tombs of Ur.

63 According to Foster 2016, 137, 140, there was a special relationship between the Sargonic royal family and Nanna/Suen, which went beyond the practice of appointing Sargonic princesses as high priestess of the moon god at Ur. Note that in the Ur III period, there existed a high priestess of Nanna at Urum (Steinkeller 1999, 126), a city located in the same area as Gizuna.

A final scenario to consider is that the ensi$_2$ of Gizuna did not voluntarily choose to be buried in Ur, but that this happened out of necessity, due to external circumstances. It may well be that he lived in exile in the city under the protection of the lugal. Upon his death, he received a funerary ceremony worthy of a foreign dignitary and his body was placed in a grave prepared for him in the great necropolis of Ur.

5 Conclusions

In this contribution, I have examined the available textual evidence from late Early Dynastic/Early Sargonic Ur concerning an unnamed ensi$_2$ of ŠID.NUN^{ki}, a toponym identified with the northern Babylonian city of Gizuna. My new interpretation of UET 2, Suppl. 44 and U 32450+U 32457 has revealed that a seven-day burial ceremony in honour of the ruler/governor of Gizuna took place at Ur, during which animals were sacrificed at his 'great pit' (sur$_3$-maḫ), i.e., his grave. Although the exact date and circumstances of his death are impossible to reconstruct, it is fair to assume that the body of the ensi$_2$ was interred in the necropolis of Ur, either in the Early Dynastic 'Royal Cemetery' or in the slightly later 'Akkadian Cemetery'.

The questions regarding the precise status of the ensi$_2$ of Gizuna – an independent ruler or a governor subordinate to a regional overlord – and the identity of the lugal of the late Early Dynastic/Early Sargonic tablets from Ur remain unanswered and unanswerable with the data currently available. This fact precludes a full understanding of the significance of the burial ceremony and of the reason why it took place in the city of Ur.

Finally, a careful re-examination of the texts of the livestock dossier has revealed the existence of an organisation called Ekisa(g) ('pleasant-place house') possibly involved in the care of the dead. If this term also had a collective meaning and could refer to multiple graves, then Ekisa(g) may have been the Sumerian name of the burial complex commonly known in archaeological and Assyriological literature as the 'Cemetery of Ur'.

6 Appendix: Synoptic edition of UET 2, Suppl. 44 and U 32450+U 32457

UET 2, Suppl. 44			**U 32450+U 32457**		
obv.	i	1. 1 ^{munus}aš$_2$-gar$_3$	obv.	i	*Beginning lost*
		2. udu sur$_3$-maḫ ensi$_2$ ŠID.NUN^{ki}			
		3. ba-gid$_2$			
		4. 1 ^{munus}aš$_2$-gar$_3$			
		5. 2-kam-ma-ka			1'. 1 [ ]
		6. ba-gid$_2$			2'. [ ]-kam-ma-k[a]
		7. 1 maš$_2$			3'. [b]a-˹gid$_2$˺
	ii	1. 3-kam-ma-ka		ii	*Column lost*
		2. ba-gid$_2$			
		3. 1 maš$_2$			
		4. 4-kam-ma-ka			
		5. ba-gid$_2$			
		6. 1 maš$_2$			
		7. 5-kam-ma-ka			
		8. ba-gid$_2$			
		9. 1 maš$_2$			
rev.	i	1. [6-kam-ma-ka]	rev.	i	*Beginning lost*
		2. [ba-gid$_2$]			
		3. 1 [ma]š$_2$			
		4. 7-kam-ma-ka			
		5. ba-gid$_2$			1'. ba-˹gid$_2$˺
		-----			-----
		6. šu-niĝen$_2$ 7 maš$_2$			2'. šu-niĝen$_2$ 2 ^{munus}aš$_2$-gar$_3$
		7. udu sur$_3$-maḫ			3'. 5 maš$_2$
	ii	1. ensi$_2$ ŠID.NUN[^{ki}-ka-še$_3$]		ii	4'. udu sur$_3$-˹maḫ˺
		2. [lugal$^{?}$]-˹x˺-na-[ ]			5'. ensi$_2$ ŠID.NU[N^{ki}]-˹ka-še$_3$˺
		3. ˹i$_3$˺-gid$_2$			6'. l[ugal$^{?}$-]
		4. ˹lugal˺-šu-luḫ-ku$_3$-an-na dub-sar			*Rest lost*
		5. maškim-bi			1'. ˹lugal˺-šu-luḫ-ku$_3$-an-na dub-sar
		6. udu šu šubur-kam			2'. maškim-b[i]
		7. iti a$_2$-ki-ti-ka			3'. ˹udu šu˺ [šub]ur [kuruš]da-kam
					=====
					Rest lost

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Sngr/Samḫarû/Sanḫara/Šinʿār and the Implications for Early Kassite History

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Abstract This is a detailed review (date, context and usage) of the use of the Old Testament toponym *Šinʿār* = Babylonia and its cognate terms in Akkadian (Samḫarû/Samḫara) in Babylonian and Hittite sources, and *Sngr* in Egyptian documents. The study demonstrates that the earliest use of the term across the various sources should be linked to the arrival of the Kassite peoples in seventeenth-sixteenth centuries BCE on the middle-Euphrates from where they entered Babylonia – the evidence for which is reviewed including a possible link between the Kassite royal name 'Agum' and a late third-millennium BCE Eblaite deity.

Keywords Early-Kassite history. Middle Euphrates. Shinar. New Kingdom.

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Introduction

This paper seeks to address two questions – why the sixth/fifth century BCE authors of the Old Testament refer to Babylonia as *Šinʿār,* and whether the suggestion that a Kassite entity on the middle Euphrates eventually took control of Babylonia and founded the Kassite Dynasty is correct.

The method I use to test both issues is an examination of the source material in which the toponyms and ethnonyms *Samḫarû*, *Sanḫara*, *Sngr* and *Šinʿār* in Babylonian, Hittite, Egyptian and Old Testament sources are used. The wider objective being to establish whether there is a link between the use of the terms in the various countries across the 1600 years of its use, and its link to the Kassite Dynasty of Late Bronze Age Babylonia.

The review is organised in six sections. Section 1 summarises the identification of *Šinʿār* with *Samḫarû*. Section 2 reviews the occurrences of *Samḫarû* and its cognates in Hittite (Table 1, H.1-6), Babylonian (Table 2, B.1-7) and Egyptian texts (Table 3, E.1-31) from their earliest appearances in the seventeenth century BCE to the mid-fifteenth century BCE. The use of the toponym and related cognates in documents mainly from Egypt, a few Hittite texts and a letter from Mittani dated between the mid-fifteenth century BCE until the first century BCE, including the Old Testament references, is cov-

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ered in Section 3 (Tables 4 and 5, eM.1-2 and Bib. 1-8). Section 4 examines the implications of the use of *Šinʿār* and its cognates in pre-sixteenth century BCE Egyptian, Babylonian and Hittite sources. Section 5 is a review of the evidence for a Kassite presence on the middle Euphrates in the late Old Babylonian period. The conclusions are presented in Section 6.

There have been a number of discussions of the *Samḫarû*, primarily focused on their activities in Ammiṣaduqa year 15, 1632.[1] Key conclusions of these studies are that the *Samḫarû* were part of the greater Kassite community. It is for this reason that the *Samḫarû* are of particular interest to any study of early Kassite history in the Late Old Babylonian period.

1 The Identification of *Sngr*/*Samḫarû*/*Sanḫara*/*Šinʿār* as Cognate Terms

There are eight references in the Old Testament to the land of *Šinʿār*. The context in which the term is used clearly indicates that it referred to the 'land of Babylon'. In 1858 Brugsch suggested that *Šinʿār* should be identified as a late form of the toponym *Sngr* that appears in inscriptions of the New Kingdom pharaohs of Egypt and should be read as 'Babylonia'.[2]

The fact that of the various cognates of *Samḫarû*, *Šinʿār* was the first to be studied is a product of the progress of Egyptian and Assyriological studies. Whereas the languages of the Old Testament had never been lost, reliable decipherment of hieroglyphics and cuneiform was only achieved in the mid-nineteenth century. Brugsch's identification in 1858 of *Sngr* with *Šinʿār* in the newly deciphered hieroglyphic texts was a remarkable achievement in early hieroglyphic studies that has been accepted by subsequent scholarship.[3]

While the identification of *Sngr*/*Sangar* with Babylonia was accepted in hieroglyphic studies, the earliest detailed review was only published in 1928 with Gauthier's *Dictionnaire* of geographical terms in hieroglyphic texts. This was followed in 1937 by the publications of the gazetteers of ancient Egyptian toponyms prepared separately by Jirku and Simons. These works were followed in 1947 by Gardiner's review of Egyptian onomastica.[4]

In 1966 Astour identified *Šinʿār* as a cognate of *Sngr* in Egyptian texts, *Šanḫār* in the Amarna letters and *Šanḫara* in Hittite documents.[5] In 1984 Zadok developed the proposal further and additionally identified as cognates of *Sngr* the *Samḫarû* found in late Old Babylonian letters and *Sanḫara* in contemporary Hittite records of military activity in north Syria.[6] These identifications have been accepted in Hittite and Late Old Babylonian studies.[7]

The Egyptian and Biblical forms of the words *Sngr* and *Šinʿār* are standard throughout their usage. The Egyptian records always refer to a 'people', and the Biblical to a 'land'. However, in Babylonian and Hittite documents neither the spelling nor the grammatical form of the word is constant. In the Babylonian references the usage is as follows: -ÉRIN *Samḫaru* (B.1 and B3), ÉRIN *Samhari* (B.2, B.4 and

I am grateful to the comments on drafts of this paper by persons who attended my British Institute for the Study of Iraq lecture, 15 February 2023; and to colleagues at the RAI 68 in Leiden, July 2023 after my presentation. I owe an especial thanks to Professors John A. Brinkman, Amanda Podany and Michael Roaf for their helpful comments and suggested corrections and changes. All errors that undoubtably remain are my responsibility.

The regnal dates in this study follow Bryce 1998, xiii-xiv, for the Hittite kings; Shaw 2003, 484-5, for the Egyptian Pharaohs; and Brinkman 1977, for the kings of Babylonia. See, however, the study by Wasserman, Bloch 2023, 119-20 which concludes that the Lower Middle Chronology in which Samsu-ditana's final year was 1587/6 BCE was 'preferable' to other options.

1 See Nashef 1980, 165 and 167-8; van Lerberghe 1995, 384-5; de Graef 1999, 10-12; Sassmannshausen 2004b, 289-90; van Koppen 2004, 22 fn. 78; van Koppen 2017, 54-6.

2 Brugsch 1858, 31, 40 and Tafel XV. Brugsch 1858, 40 located *Sngr* at Beled Sinjar.

3 See for example Sayce 1895, 67-9; Meyer 1897, 63-4; Pinches 1902; Breasted 1906, 204 fn. b; Jirku 1923, 40-1, 10.10.d; Albright 1924; Gauthier 1928, 6; Gardiner 1947, 209-12, no. 286; Helck 1962, 286; Astour 1966, 76-7; Forlanini 1999, 13-14; Marín 2001, 264-5; Edel; Görg 2005, 3-4; Forlanini 2005, 114-16; Wilhelm 2009; Day 2015, 143-4; van Koppen 2017, 68; Beaulieu 2019, 34; Clancier 2021, 289-90. A strand of scholarship developed suggesting that 'Shinar' was derived from the Sumerian toponym, 'Sumer' (e.g. Lenormant 1873, 1: 27) is now discounted.

4 Gauthier 1928, 6; Jirku 1937, 27-8, fig. 4; Simons 1937, 213; Gardiner 1947, 209-12. no. 286.

5 Astour 1966, 76. Schaeffer 1954, 103 fn. 3 noted that Hans Güterbock believed 'that *Šanḫara* is Babylon, in spite of all discussions and arguments to the contrary'.

6 Zadok 1984, 242.

7 See del Monte, Tischler 1978, 344; Pientka 1998, 262; Forlanini 2005, 114-15; Marín 2001, 263-4; Wilhelm 2009; van Koppen 2017, 68. Sassmannshausen 2004b, 289-90 fn. 17 argues for caution in identifying the *Samḫarû* as a Kassite tribe, but does accept Zadok's thesis on the derivation of *Šinʿār* from *Samḫarû*.

B.6), and as a designation for a women (B.5 and B.7). The word is never qualified as a country (KUR) or city (URU). The usage would appear always to designate a defined ethnic identity.

In Hittite texts differences to how the term(s) is used in Babylonian documents may be seen. Of the six instances in which the word is used two refer to "KUR URU *Šanḫara*" (H.2 and H.4), one to "LU-GAL KUR *Šanḫara*" (H.6), one to "URU *Šanḫaraz*" (H.5) and one to "ÉRIN.MEŠ *Šamḫari/ru*" (H.1). This group of references suggest that the Hittites recognised a city, kingdom and king of 'Šamḫara'. Francia notes that it is unclear whether the use of *m* or *n* in the words designates two entities.[8] Forlanini observes that in H.2 *Šamḫara* is written with the sign *SA* instead of the usual *ŠA*. He suggests that the copiest did not understand the archaic 'accadogramme'.[9]

For the purposes of this study, while the different use of the words is noted in the tables, the general term 'Samḫaru' is used. In doing so the existence of an ethnic entity is recognised whose name is linked both to a city and a country. I recognise that this proposition is open to discussion as more evidence emerges, and hope that this paper goes some way towards demonstrating that it was the case.

2 *Samḫarû*/*Šanḫara*/*Sngr* in Hittite, Babylonian, Egyptian and East-Mediterranean Texts from their Earliest Appearance in the Mid-seventeenth Century BCE Until the Mid-fifteenth Century BCE

2.1 Hittite References (Table 1)

In this period there are two references in two Hittite texts – H.1 and 2. The earliest (H.1) dates to the mid-seventeenth century BCE and records key events of Hattusili I campaigns against Aleppo in north-western Syria. The text records that the ÉRIN.MEŠ *Ša-am-ḫa-ri/ru* – "the troops of Šamḫari/u" fought in the wars Ḫatti fought against northern Syrian kingdoms and the Hurrians. Records (including the reference to *Samḫarû* forces) only survive of Hattusili's first two campaigns in Syria which took place early in his reign – perhaps the 1640s BCE.

Hattusili's successor, Mursili I continued the military action against Aleppo and its kingdom in north-western Syria. The *Samḫarû*, in some association with troops from Emar were involved and feature in the account of the campaign (H.2). While "The record of Mursili's Syrian enterprises is frustratingly brief",[10] we do know that the key outcomes were the destruction of Aleppo and thus the end of the kingdom of Iamḫad,[11] and an attack on Babylon.[12] It is unclear when the attack on Babylon was made. Traditionally it has been assigned to 1595 BCE at the end of the reign of Samsuditana, but could, as Richardson has pointed out, have occurred at any point in his rule.[13]

2.2 Babylonian References (Table 2)

Samḫarû appear in five letters dated to Ammiṣaduqa year 15, 1632 BCE (B.1-5). Given the uncertainty about the absolute dates of the Hittite kings, these Babylonian references and the early Hittite texts discussed above may be regarded as near, if not absolute, contemporaneously dated. The Babylonian references appear to provide details around a single event (see discussion below). A sixth document (B.6) is a neo-Assyrian compendium of oracle questions to the gods Šamaš and Adad. It includes a section (ll. 26-94) detailing a rebellion, including by, among others, Kassite and *Samḫarû* troops (ll. 32 and 36 respectively) against Samsu-ditana. On the historical value of the document Lambert notes that there is "no adequate reason to suspect their genuineness and reliability save for scribal corruption

8 Francia 2020, 178.

9 Forlanini 2005, 115 fn. 18.

10 Bryce 1998, 102.

11 Wasserman, Bloch 2023, 396 and 478-83.

12 See Tavernier 2010, 174-83, section 2.2 for a review (including editions of the relevant Hittite and Akkadian texts) of the "conquest of Babylon".

13 Richardson 2016, 108-9.

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down the centuries, for which there is no real evidence save for orthography and minor scribal errors".[14]

In southern Babylonia a document of Ayadaragalama of the First Sealand Dynasty ca 1550 BCE[15] includes the appearance of a woman in a list of grain issues recorded as a "female of Samḫari[tum]" (B.7). There is no further detail, but it apparently there was recognition that the polity existed at that point and was regarded as being a separate and identifiable entity. There is also evidence for the presence of persons identified as, or bearing Kassite names in the Sealand texts.[16] There is even a reference to a *bīt kaššī*, and to a deity who lived there.[17] There are no references to the *Bimatû* charioteers or *Samḫarû* troops.

Boivin highlights the evidence for contacts between the Sealand kingdom and the northern Levant.[18] This contact may have been through intermediaries, but the presence of a *Samḫarû* person in the very south of Babylonia suggests that there was direct contact as well.

2.3 Egyptian References (Table 3)

In Egyptian inscriptions and documents, thirty references to *Sngr* have been identified (E.1-30). The earliest dates to the middle of the fifteenth century BCE in the annals of Thutmosis III (1479-1425 BCE), while the latest appears a temple inscription dated to Cleopatra VII (51-30 BCE) over 1400 years later.[19]

The earliest references to *Sngr* in Egyptian records present the entity as one whose diplomatic gifts are worthy of recording, and whose people worked in the palace as servants – positions of trust (E.1, E.2 and E.3).

In Thutmosis III's account of his eight campaign in 1446 BCE (E.1) he records that he advanced northwards as far as the Euphrates, which he crossed.[20] As one of the measures of the success of the campaign, Thutmosis recorded the presentation to him of gifts by the "chief of *Sngr*", along with those of the Hittites and Naharin. Traditionally these gifts have been translated as 'tribute'. However, it is clear that the word *jnw*, used in the annals to describe the nature and meaning of the items presented by the Hittites, Assyrians and representatives of *Sngr*, should be translated as diplomatic gift with no sense of subservience.[21] Thutmosis III did not conquer *Sngr*, but he clearly valued the act of the diplomatic gift.

3 Samḫarû/Šanḫara/Sngr in Hittite, Babylonian, Egyptian, East Mediterranean and Biblical Texts from Mid-Fifteenth Century BCE Until the First Century BCE

There is a distinct break between the sixteenth/fifteenth century BCE use of the terms *Sngr*, *Samḫarû* and *Šanḫara* and their use from the mid-fifteenth century BCE onwards. For a start the term is not used at all in Babylonian documents where at the period contemporary with Thutmosis III and Amenophis II, the political situation in Babylonia had changed. The Kassite Dynasty was gaining the ascendancy and at, or about, 1450 BCE had conquered the First Sealand Dynasty and was master of northern and southern Babylonia.[22] Kara-indaš commemorated the earliest known temple construction for the dynasty at the southern city of Uruk. In his inscriptions recording his work, Kara-indaš accords himself the title 'king of Babylon, King of Sumer and Akkad, king of the Kassites, king of Karduniaš'.[23]

14 Lambert 2007, 20. Richardson 2019a, 226 fn. 74 accepts Lambert's reconstruction of *sà-am-(ḫa)-ri-i* as opposed to van Koppen 2017, 84 who noted his reservations.

15 Date given by Boivin 2022, 571, Table 18.1.

16 Dalley 2009, 13 and 305, index; Boivin 2018, 107-11.

17 Dalley 2009, 7.

18 Boivin 2018, 142; 2022, 642.

19 In an early study of Amherst Papyrus 63 (probably from Aswan and dated to the fourth century BCE), Nims 1950, 256 suggested that at Column VIII, l. 9 the Aramaic text, once transcribed out of the Demotic script used in the document, 'Babylon' might have been written as '*Šnk*^{3}*r* or *Snk*^{3}*r*' – an echo of the earlier Egyptian word *Sngr*. Subsequent study of the text has demonstrated that this is not the case (van der Toorn 2018, 56). It has also been suggested that the Kassites feature in the document (Column XI, l. 18), but van der Toorn 2018, 63 has shown that the word should be read 'Kush' as in the country to the south of Egypt.

20 Redford 2003, 75, I and 220-8.

21 See *inter alia* Hartwig 2004, 73-6; Redford 2006, 336-7; and Panagiotopoulos 2006, 372-3.

22 See Clayden 2020, 99; Boivin 2022, 643-4 for a summary of the process (with references).

23 Schott 1930, 53, no. 12, 6-9.

From this point on the country ruled by the Kassite dynasty was identified in documents of the dynasty – 'Karduniaš'.[24] We know from the Amarna correspondence (EA 10) that Kara-indaš and the Egyptian Pharaoh had established diplomatic relations – indeed the suggestion is that it was the point at which friendly diplomatic relations were established between the two countries.

Evidence from the sixteenth century BCE Babylonia as to how it termed itself is utterly lacking. But there is no later evidence to suggest that it had changed from being *Samḫarû* to Karduniaš. In the two references to *Sngr* from the reign of Thutmosis III's successor, Amenophis II (1427-1400 BCE), the status of *Sngr* as an independent entity continues. At the end of his campaign in Syria, chiefs of Ḫatti and *Sngr* present diplomatic gifts to Amenophis (E.2). In the second reference from the reign of Amenophis women from *Sngr* are present in the palace retinue of Amenophis II, but not as slaves (E.3). It was also to this period that Burna-buriaš II (1359-1333 BCE) traced the opening of correspondence between Egypt and Babylonia during the reign of Kara-indaš (last quarter of the fifteenth century BCE).[25]

However, the representation of *Sngr* as an unconquered country changed in the reign of Thutmosis IV (1400-1390 BCE). This is despite Kurigalzu (?-1375 BCE) having refused to join a Canaanite alliance against Egypt and declaring his allegiance to friendship with Egypt.[26] From this point on in the hieroglyphic record *Sngr* is predominantly represented as a conquered people. In topographical lists (E.4, 6-12, 14-20, 22-5 and 27-8 and 29) *Sngr* is placed among the supposed peoples conquered by the Pharaoh. This practice continued into the first millennium BCE Taharqa (690-664 BCE, E.28), Ptolemy III (246-222 BCE, E.29) and Cleopatra VII (51-30 BCE, E.30).

We should note Kitchen's cogent guidance to anyone using the evidence of the topographical lists of the New Kingdom who stresses that "topographical lists are NOT exclusively lists of physical conquests".[27] The lists were not intended to be a reflection of political reality, rather they are a depiction of one of the key aspects of the ideology surrounding the person of the pharaoh – the man who destroys 'universal disorder (e.g. *jsf.t*) represented by these defeated, humiliated or even slain foreigners, the king – once again restores order (e.g. *mȝʿt*) on earth'.[28] This means that although many of the lists post-Thutmosis IV are almost certainly simply copies of earlier inscriptions,[29] it did not matter to the contemporary Egyptians as the key purpose of the inscriptions was to depict a key aspect of the iconography of the ideology surrounding the function of the pharaoh.

From the reign of Thutmosis III (1479-1425 BCE) onwards, the lists of countries are almost invariably represented in a series as 'name rings', but in a small number of instances fuller representations of a stereotypical head or figure from each country is given.[30] A good example appears on the side panel of a chariot found in the tomb of Thutmosis IV (1400-1390 BCE, E.4). It shows the side view of the head of a male figure identified as a man from *Sngr*. A second example of the depiction of *Sngr* 'prisoners', is part of a painting in Tomb 120 at Thebes dated to Amenophis III (1390-1352 BCE). In a panel below the throne of the pharaoh a series of kneeling and bound captives including a man from *Sngr* are shown. The man wears a series of beautifully coloured robes. He is bearded with long hair and a fillet about his head holding the hair in place.

Few depictions of human figures survive from Kassite Babylonia. However, the Egyptian depictions of men from *Sngr* may be compared with the terracotta head excavated at Dūr-Kurigalzu, the city founded by Kurigalzu (?-1375 BCE) in Iraq.[31] The figure was found in the uppermost levels of the palace building which date to the twelfth century BCE. The head bears a number of similarities to the Egyptian images particularly the beard, hair and fillet.

24 Nashef 1982, 150-1.

25 EA 10, ll. 8-9, Rainey 2015a, 96-7.

26 EA 9, ll. 19-29, Rainey 2015a, 92-5. The change in status accorded to *Sngr* is seen in the lists dated to Thutmosis III onwards which tabulate 102 'conquered' countries (including *Sngr*) (Wilson 1969).

27 Kitchen 2009, 133 (the emphasis is Kitchen's).

28 Mynářová 2019, 9.

29 Kitchen 2009. See also Evian 2016, 165. Note, for example, the Medinet Habu lists of Rameses III (1184-1153 BCE), based on earlier lists (possibly composed during the wars of Thutmosis III, 1479-1425 BCE, or Amenophis II, 1427-1400 BCE, Astour 1968, 749. The list includes locations in northern Syria (736-7); the Upper Euphrates (737-9); the area between the Euphrates and the Ḫabur (739-40); the Ḫabur basin (740-3); the area between the Ḫabur basin and the Tigris (743-4); and the Arrapḫa region (744-7). A separate inscription of Rameses II includes the towns Uruk (*Irk*) and Babylon (*Bbr*), Kitchen 1996, 75, no. 56, 217:5, nos 88-9. Both suggest Egyptian awareness of Babylonian toponyms in the thirteenth century BCE.

30 Peirce 2019, 106, and 121-9 for the depiction of peoples of the northern localities. See Janzen 2013 for a study of the iconography of the humiliation of prisoners in name rings of the New Kingdom.

31 Baqir 1946, 90, DK4-72/ IM 50922, pl. XV, fig. 9.

3.1 East-Mediterranean References (Table 4)

Two texts (eM.1-2) written in two separate parts of the east-Mediterranean – Cyprus and Ugarit (?) – contain references to *Samḫarû*. The first (eM.1) is a letter from the Amarna archive (EA 35) dated to the reign of Akhnaten.[32] The letter is from the un-named king of Cyprus. At the end of the letter, the king of Cyprus states that "you (i.e. the pharaoh) have not been put with the king of Ḫatti or the king of Šanḫar" (ll. 49-53). Moran included the clarification "on the same level", and Rainey "ranked with".[33] Even with this modifying phrase the meaning of the section is unclear.

The second is a hieroglyphic inscription on a cylinder seal found at Metsamor in Armenia which accords the title 'great overseer of *Sngr*' on Kurigalzu (eM.2).[34] The seal is clearly not the product of a Babylonian workshop and was manufactured within the Egyptian sphere of influence. Given the use in the Amarna correspondence of Karanduniaš to designate the name of the country ruled by the kings in Babylon in the fourteenth century BCE, it is unlikely that a royal present from Egypt to Babylonia would use the term '*Sngr*'. It is possible, therefore, that the seal was made in one of the lesser kingdoms bordering the east coast of the Mediterranean, and under Egyptian control.[35] Defining which of the two Kurigalzus who ruled Babylonia is the subject of the inscription is difficult to define. Based on iconographic evidence, Collon has argued that the seal may have been made at Ugarit to celebrate the marriage of Kurigalzu II to a princess of Syria.[36] However, EA 9:19-31 records that during the reign of Kurigalzu I the 'Canaanites' offered an alliance against the Egyptians – an offer Kurigalzu I rejected the approach. [37] Undoubtedly the Canaanite approach would have been supported by a package of gifts in which the Metsamor seal may well have featured.[38]

3.2 Hittite (Table 1)

Internal documents from the Hittite kingdom of the fourteenth and early thirteenth centuries BCE still occasionally refer to *Šamḫara* in the reigns of Tudhaliya III (1360-1344 BCE) (H.3), Suppiluliuma I (1344-1322 BCE) (H.4) Mursili II (1322-1295 BCE) (H.4) and Muwatalli II (1295-1272 BCE) (H.6). In parallel, however, in a range of documents variants of the Kassite word Karduniaš is used when referring to the area ruled by the Kassite Dynasty.[39] The reasons behind this parallel use of a word that was at some point assimilated in meaning to refer to Babylonia, may be found in the contexts in which it was used in the Hittite texts.

The Tudhaliya II (H.3) reference appears in an as yet unpublished letter, but the summary suggests that it deals with matters in western Syria as other toponyms in the area appear in the document. H.4 dated to the reign of Suppiliuma I (1344-1322 BCE) is a ritual text in which a series of lands are listed. The list includes *Šanḫara* listed between the lands of Babylon and Egypt. *Šanḫara* appears in the 'Prayer of Mursili II' (1321-1295 BCE) in which the Hittite king alleges that his stepmother, a Babylonian, somehow benefited *Šanḫara* (possibly Babylonia itself in this text) with wealth that belonged to her husband the king (H.5).[40] The clearly negative linkage between a Babylonian princess turned Hittite Tawana ('queen') and *Šanḫara* is clearly deliberate and may indicate a further slur against the woman with an inference that we now do not understand.

32 Rainey 2015b, 1380.

33 Moran 1992, 188; Rainey 2015, 343.

34 See Clayden 2024a, for a discussion of Kassite objects found beyond Babylonia, including the Metsamor cylinder seal.

35 Seidle 2017, 316 suggests, without specific reasons, that the carver of the seal was Egyptian.

36 Khanzadlan, Piotrovskii 1992, 73; Collon 2011, 32-5. Collon 2011, 30, looks to Kassite seal iconography for the symbolic meaning of the locust/grasshopper in the seal scene as representation for wealth. She suggested (33) that use of the symbol in Ugarit may have indicated a 'contract attending an act of succession'. Cherpion 2012, 199-200 has examined the dual nature of the symbolism of the locust in Egyptian art – as uncounted multitudes of conquered enemy soldiers, or fecundity and the renewal of life. It is perhaps the latter aspect of the locust that best fits a wedding gift.

37 Rainey 2015, 92-5.

38 I am grateful to Professor Roaf for this suggestion.

39 See del Monte, Tischler 1978, 185-7; del Monte 1992, 68; Francia 2020, 178-87.

40 Tawanna was also accused of misappropriation of the silver of Aštata (from the cult based at Emar) to a rock-sanctuary of the god of nature, Archi 2014, 150.

The last reference to *Šanḫara* in Hittite documents (H.6) appears in a treaty with the western Anatolian king Alaksandu of Wilusa (Troy)[41] dated to the reign of Muwatalli II (1295-1272 BCE). The treaty lists the king of *Šanḫara* as being of equal rank as the kings of Egypt, Hanigalbat and Assyria (there is no mention of Babylon or Karduniaš). It would appear that the Hittite scribe used the term *Šanḫara* rather than Karduniaš because that was the term used in the east Mediterranean/Aegean. It is an example of diplomatic language skills. A similar example of diplomatic language is the use of *Šanḫar* in an Amarna letter from the Mitanni king Tušratta to Amenophis III.[42] In Nuzi texts the term used to indicate the lands south of Arraphe and thus possibly Babylonia, were ^{KUR}*Akkadî*[43] and ^{KUR}Kuššu.[44] However, the Mitanni scribe, aware of the Egyptian use of *Sngr* to refer to Babylonia, used the cognate *Šanḫar*. It is not evidence of the common use of the word in Mitanni texts.[45]

Francia concludes that the use of the term *Šanḫara* by the post-seventeenth century BCE Hittite scribes was partially the result of a loss of understanding of the precise relevance of the terms, and may also have reflected Egyptian influence.[46] Francia does not address the origin of the toponym, but by inference her suggestion that the Hittite use of the word reflected an Egyptian influence may provide a possible solution to the question.

3.3 Biblical References (Table V)

References to *Šinʿār* appear in five books of the Old Testament (Table V) – Genesis, Joshua, Daniel, Isaiah and Zechariah. The dates and authorship of composition vary for each of the books and each reflect a slightly different context for the use of *Šinʿār*.[47] In general, however, the references all date to the first millennium BCE and all infer a defined territory akin to a kingdom, though never named as such. It is invariably translated as 'Babylonia', but the term was not used by Babylonians themselves and comes to us from Greek writers who may have 'borrowed' the term from the Persians who created a province of Babylon "comprising most of the lands between the Tigris and the Euphrates".[48] During the first millennium BCE the neo-Babylonian kings referred to themselves as the "King of Babylon" – they identified their power and legitimacy with rule over the city.[49]

In the commercial documents of the exiled Judeans, written by "exclusively Babylonian" scribes,[50] Babylon was used to identify the city.[51] Isa. 2:48 and 49 refers to the "province of (the city) of Babylon" suggesting recognition of the administrative structure of neo-Babylonian Babylonia. In his study of the origins of Judaism, Adler concludes that the evidence argues that a "Judean way of life governed by the Torah never predates the second century BCE".[52] The emergence of the Torah as the governing document for Judean society became pre-eminent probably as a result of the Hasmonean revolt in 167-63 BCE.[53] Up to that point only the cultural elite would have been fully cognisant of the Torah – its rules and text. It is against this background that we must examine the references to *Šinʿār* in the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible.

Genesis is one of the books of the Pentateuch which "came into existence no earlier than the end of the fifth century BCE".[54] However, elements of the work, including Genesis, were composed as early

41 See Bryce 1998, 394-6 for a discussion of this ruler and kingdom.

42 Marín 2001, 263; Rainey 2015a; EA 24:95, 238-9.

43 Fincke 1993, 3-4.

44 Fincke 1993, 160-2. See also Clayden 2024b, for a discussion of references to Babylonia in Nuzi texts.

45 Nuzi and Khabur ware pottery found in the level of the palace at Dūr-Kurigalzu (Baqir 1945, pl. XXIV) is evidence not just for links between Kurigalzu I and the two regions, but given their discovery in the treasury store-rooms, the value placed upon them as objects (or containers of precious material from both areas).

46 Francia 2020, 188 and 189.

47 The Aramaic Bible (final redaction third century CE, Grossfeld 1988, 32) follows the Talmudic tradition and also uses the term '*Šinʿār*' – see for example Genesis 10:10 and 11:2, Grossfeld 1988, 60-1 and 61 fn. 2.

48 Beaulieu 2019, 34.

49 See the brief discussion by Zadok 1985, 57.

50 Wunsch 2022, 9.

51 Pearce, Wunsch 2014, 312.

52 Adler 2022, 234-5.

53 Adler 2022, 223.

54 Brettler 1999, 6; Clines 1993, 580.

as the ninth century BCE and up until the mid-seventh century BCE – in Judah. The final compilation in the sixth century BCE after the Exile preserved this older material. The Book of Isaiah is also an early composition dating to the late eight century BCE written during the time of Assyrian aggression against Judah and Israel.[55] The Books of Joshua and Zechariah were probably composed in the mid-late sixth century BCE during the Exilic period.[56] The Book of Daniel dates to 164 BCE.[57]

Jer. 52:30 recorded that in 587 BCE Nebuchadnezzar "carried away captives of the Jews [...] 4600 persons". This group, which include the royal family, "represented the cream of the country's (i.e. Judah) political, ecclesiastical and intellectual leadership".[58] The scholars who were responsible for the writing and compilation of the books of the Bible in which *Šinʿār* is used, would have been deeply steeped in the scholarly traditions of the eastern Mediterranean.

There are four references to *Šinʿār* in Genesis. They all relate to the early history of Assyria and Babylonia. Bib.1 refers to the achievements of Nimrod, grandson of Noah and the foundation of Babylonian and Assyrian cities after the flood.[59] The events in Bib.2 are undated, but would appear to refer to events at or about the same period as Bib.1. It records the movement of peoples from 'the east' who all spoke the same language and who settled in *Šinʿār* and where they built a city, Babel (i.e. Babylon), and a tower of baked brick and bitumen mortar in an effort to achieve fame. But their god took umbrage and "scattered them from there across the face of the whole earth, and they stopped building the city (and tower)" (Gen. 11:8).

The other two references to *Šinʿār* in Genesis relate to the same event in the lifetime of Abraham – a military campaign between a coalition of kings including 'Amraphael of *Šinʿār* (Bib.3 and 4) and an alliance of five kings of the area between Qadesh and the Dead Sea.

Isa. 11:1-12:12 "is a messianic and eschatological prophecy" outlining a time when a "perfect Davidic king will reign in Jerusalem and all the world will enjoy peace".[60] The "new world" will, the prophecy maintains, also herald the return of Jewish exiles from all the countries abroad where they were being held – including from *Šinʿār* (Bib.5). In the case of Assyria the lord of Israel will break the Euphrates into seven streams so that the exiles can cross the river dry-shod as they did when fleeing Egypt under Moses (Isa. 11:15).

The Book of Joshua recounts the events in the life of Joshua, an attendant of Moses, and his leadership of the people of Israel across the Jordan and of the campaigns they fought. The account includes an incident following the successful storming of Jericho. The compact the Israelites had with their god was that the booty from the city was to be dedicated to him. But one man broke the deal and kept a number of precious items including a good quality '*Šinʿār* mantle' (Bib.6). This suggests a link (unclear) between Judah and Babylonia, or to the region known as *Samḫarû* which was originally on the middle Euphrates.

Šinʿār features in the seventh of Zechariah's visions (Bib.7). The vision describes a 'tub' in which a woman designated 'wickedness' is seated is carried by two winged being to *Šinʿār* where 'a shrine for it' will be built. The negative implications for Babylonia are clear.

The final reference to *Šinʿār* is a description of events that occurred over 400 years earlier than the date of final redaction in 164 BCE. It records that when Nebuchadnezzar sacked Jerusalem in 586 BCE took precious vessels from the temple and deposited them in the temple of 'his god' in *Šinʿār* (Bib.8). This would almost certainly have been the temple of Marduk (the É.SAG.GÍL) in Babylon.

Šinʿār had a long 'afterlife' in a range of influential texts. Josephus (d. ca 100 CE) refers to *Šinʿār* in two instances. The first is in Josephus' retelling of Genesis in which he notes that "the plain in which they first settled is called Senaar" (direct transcription from the Greek Σεναάρ).[61] Josephus drew on the text of Genesis in Hebrew, so the use of *Šinʿār* in this instance is not terribly significant.[62] However, Josephus also cites the historian Hestiacus, whose works are now lost – "And as concerning the plain called Senaar in the region of Babylon, Hestiacus speaks as follows: 'Now the priests who escaped took

55 Sawyer 1993, 32; Sommer 1999, 781-2.

56 See Mason 1993, 826-7; Meyer 1999, 462; Tucker 1993, 386; Zvi 1999, 1249.

57 Towner 1993, 151; Wills 1999, 1640.

58 Bright 1966, 325. See also Dalley 1998, 63.

59 Burrell 2020, 171 and 174-5 argues that "Babylon and Shinar represent rebellion and idolatry", and that therefore Nimrod is associated with rebellion against the will of Yahweh.

60 Berlin, Brettler 1999, 807.

61 Josephus 1961, § 110.

62 Shutt 1971.

the sacred vessels of Zeus Enyalius and came to Senaar in Babylonia'".[63]

The Babylonian Talmud, composed ca 500 CE advances two suggested etymologies for *Šinʿār* – both based on a doctrinal view of Babylonia.[64] The Midrash Rabbah Deuteronomy, composed four centuries later poses six further etymological suggestions.[65] Neither text proffer solutions that relate to a people or toponym.

The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius was written ca 685-692 CE, had 'immense' influence throughout the Christian world – an influence that continued until the seventeenth century when extracts were printed in Vienna during the siege of the city in 1683.[66] The Syriac version of the document preserved the tradition that 'the sons of Noah' built a tower in the land of Shinar'.[67]

4 Implications for Early Kassite History

Van Koppen has proposed that the Kassites entered Babylonia in three waves – *Kaššû* (second and third quarter of the eighteenth century BCE), *Bimatû* (fourth quarter of the eighteenth century BCE) and *Samḫarû* (third quarter of the seventeenth century BCE).[68] The ultimate geographical origins of the Kassite peoples is not considered in this study.

The evidence demonstrates that individuals bearing identifiable Kassite names appeared in texts before the use of the designating term *Kaššû* is used. Eniš-Agum, who appears in documents dated to Puzriš-Dagan is a good example – see the discussion of 'Agum' below.[69] A man bearing the name 'Agum' features in a text from Sippar, almost certainly dated to Sin-muballiṭ (1812-1793 BCE), engaged in trade with Susa.[70] Subsequently persons bearing Kassite names appear more frequently.[71]

The first group identified in Old Babylonian texts as *Kaššû* appear as an enemy force in 1742 BCE in the year names for year 9 (recording an event in year 8) of Samsu-iluna and year 2 (b) of Rim-Sîn II, rebel king of Larsa.[72] In 1710 BCE Abi-ešuḫ defeated a body of Kassite troops – year name 3 (recording the main event in year 2).[73] It is possibly to the events of this period that the late Old Babylonian literary text describing repeated serious attacks by very hostile Kassite forces should be ascribed.[74] Following the appearance of the *Kaššû* as a hostile force, there are numerous references to fellow Kassites employed largely in military capacities within Babylonian society in late Old Babylonian texts.[75] At the same time people bearing Kassite names without being identified as *Kaššû* continue to appear in late Old Babylonian texts.[76]

63 Josephus 1961, §119. The meaning of the reference is unclear and its relationship to the Genesis narrative is not obvious. Curiously Enyalius may originally have been a deity that came to Greece from Anatolia and had an ancient near eastern genesis, Yakubovich 2021. There is no suggestion of there being any link to the Kassites. Eusebius and Jerome both cite Josephus in their Onomasticon, Freeman-Grenville et al. 2003, 83.

64 Epstein 1948, 560.

65 Rabbinowitz 1951, 36.

66 Garstad 2012, vii, ix and x.

67 Garstad 2012, 9, Section 3:3.

68 Van Koppen 2017.

69 The epithet 'galzu' would appear to be a Kassite word, Balkan 1954, 131-2. It might, therefore, be taken as an indicator of a Kassite person in the name of someone predating the Kassite period. In Sumerian GAL-ZU is translated as "wise, omniscient, intelligent, skilful", Cohen 2023, 424. Therefore although 'gal-zu' appears in a number of names with a theophoric element in documents from the Ur III to Old Babylonian period, see for example ^{d}Damu-galzu, Tanret 2010, 89-91, the element is almost certainly to be read as a Sumerian word and not Kassite and therefore not as evidence of early Kassites.

70 Al-Rawi, Dalley 2000, 121-3, no. 115, obv. 4.

71 See Harris 1975, 88-9, 248, 265 and 287; Clayden 1989, Catalogue C; de Smet 1990; Nashef 1980, 167-8; van Lerberghe 1995; de Graef 1999, 5-15; Sassmannshausen 2000, 410-13; Sassmannshausen 2004b, 296-301; Richardson 2005, 275-6; van Lerberghe, Voet 2009, 118, no. 57; van Lerberghe, Voet 2010; Paulus 2011, 2-4; Sassmannshausen 2014, 169; and Abraham, van Lerberghe 2017, 188 (references).

72 See Stol 1976, 44-5 and 53-5; Horsnell 1999.2, 192-3, no. 154; van Koppen 2017, 53; Zomer 2019, 3-4; Michalowski 2019, 673-6; and Wasserman, Bloch 2023, 459.

73 Horsnell 1999, 245, 186.

74 Michalowski 1981.

75 Harris 1976, 146; Stol 2004, 799 fn. 1086; Arnaud 2007, 43-4; van Lerberghe, Voet 2010; Földi 2014 and 2017, 17, nos 7, 9 and 12; Brinkman 2017, 3-4; and van Koppen 2017, 47-9. See fn. 29 for references to Kassites.

76 See for example the 'Kassite' names identified at Tell Muhammed (late-, or immediately post-, Old Babylonian period) by Sassmannshausen 2000, 423 (see also Clayden 1989, Catalogue C).

The second group of Kassites were referred to as the *Bimatû* and appeared in the last years of Samsu-iluna's reign/early years of Abi-ešuḫ's in the last two decades of the eighteenth century BCE.[77] This period coincides with the rather abrupt when the Babylonia kingdom appears to have lost contact with the wider middle east. It is of course also the period when southern Babylonia had apparently fully disengaged from the northern part of the kingdom.[78]

Van Koppen has suggested that the appearance of the *Bimatû* might be linked to the movement in Samsu-iluna year 30 (1720 BCE) of a body of Kassite troops under the command of two individuals termed 'king' together with the very rare term – DUMU.É.DUB.BA.A *ša mu-na-ab-ti* ('scribe of refugees).[79] A study of mercenaries at Dūr-Abi-ešuḫ shows that 'Bimati Kassites' made up the core of the local defence systems at the city.[80] However, this needs to be seen within the context of mercenaries in late Old Babylonian society being drawn from a wide range (at least 23) of foreign lands and when mercenaries were evidence of activity by the Babylonian kings and not of foreign interference.

It is the association with the *Bimatû*, explicitly identified as Kassite in a number of instances, that urges the conclusion that *Samḫarû* were a third Kassite element.[81] The *Samḫarû* appear in the record about 80 years after the *Bimatû* in the records of year 15 of Ammiṣaduqa in 1632 BCE (B.1-4), and a fifth document (B.5) should probably be similarly dated.[82] At that point the *Samḫarû* appear near the north-western Babylonian city of Sippar in an alliance of ca 1500 men consisting of *Bimatû* charioteers and *Samḫarû* troops.[83] The fact that the *Samḫarû* infantry appear in an alliance with the *Bimatû* charioteers clearly indicates that they had been present sufficiently long enough in the region prior to 1632 BCE to have formed the relationship – and to have refined military tactics using chariots with infantry in large numbers. We may conjecture that the point at which this relationship may have formed, and which may indicate when the *Samḫarû* entered Babylonia, was between one or two generations (ca 40-50 years) of 1632 BCE late in the reign of Abi-ešuḫ (d. 1684 BCE) or in the time of Ammiditana (1683-1647 BCE), but we do not know.

5 Evidence for a MBA Kassite Presence on the Middle Euphrates

The evidence suggesting that there was a Kassite presence in the middle Euphrates area in the Middle Bronze Age after the reign of Hammurabi (1792-1750 BCE) falls into twelve areas: i. the Hittite material; ii. Kaštiliašu of Ḫana; iii. Abbirattaš on the middle Euphrates; iv. Kassite features in Ḫana texts; v. *Sngr* in Egyptian material; vi. Agum on the middle Euphrates; vii. 'Houses of the Kassites'; viii. The toponym Ḫana associated with *kaššû*; ix. Kadašman-Ḫarbe I kudurru; x. A Neo-Assyrian omen; xi. Kassite personal names and toponyms; and xii. Cush and the Kassites.

77 Pientka 1998, 262; van Koppen 2017, 51, and 54-9. Bimatû references: -ÉRIN *ka-aš-ši-i bi-ma-ti-i* ('Kassite Bimatî soldiers'): CUSAS 29, 16, no. 4 obv. l. 6; 18, no. 6, obv. l. 4; 25, no. 10 obv. l. 5; 105, no. 76 obv. l. 2; 107, no. 82, obv. ll. 2-3; 108-16, nos 85-106, obv. ll. 2-3; BE 6/2, 136, obv. 18-19; BM 78309, obv. 19-20; Földi 2017, 17, no. 8 and ÉRIN ^{giš}GIGIR.ḪI.A *bi-ma-ti-i* ('Bimatî charioteers'): MS 3218/05, obv. ll. 1-3 (CDLI P342688).

78 Richardson 2019b, 317.

79 Van Koppen 2017, 53 fn. 33.

80 Van Lerberghe, Voet 2010, 182.

81 Note, however, the views expressed by de Graef 1999, 11 who argues for the existence of two separate groups; and of Sassmannshausen 2004b, 289 fn. 17 who argues for caution in identifying the *Bimatû* and *Samḫarû* as Kassite entities but does accept Zadok's thesis on the derivation of *Šinʿār* from *Samḫarû*.

82 Pientka 1998, 261-2; Charpin 2004, 380 fn. 1982; van Koppen 2017, 84-91. Harris 1975, 88-9 and 1976, 146-7 noted the preponderance of Kassites in the mercenary forces of Sippar in the late Old Babylonian period. Földi observed that at Dūr-Abi-ešuḫ 'Kassites appear to have made up the core of the garrison troops', 2014, 46. Charpin 2018, 192-3 and 194; Richardson 2019b, 324 and fn. 58 and Béranger 2019, 116 have identified troops from 24 cities or nationalities, including Kassites, serving in armies of the Late Old Babylonian kingdom. Note, however, the caution by van Lerberghe, Voet 2016, 560, that in addition to 'foreign' mercenaries, 'a great number came from Babylonian towns and villages'.

83 See van Koppen 2017, 54-9 and 84-92 for a reconstruction of events during this period. Van Koppen 2017, 47 notes that he is unaware of any reference to *Bimatû* infantry. A corpus of 29 texts records the issue of rations to '*Bimatû Kassite*' military personnel at Dūr-Abi-ešuḫ texts in the short period of the 20th of month IV until the 20th of month V (mid-June to mid-August) in Abi ešuḫ year 20 (Abraham, van Lerberghe 2017, 105, 76-108). At the same time 5 texts in the same collection also from Dūr-Abi-ešuḫ record the issue of rations to military personnel designated just as '*Kassites*' (Abraham, van Lerberghe 2017, texts 77-80, year 20, month IV, 13-19). See also Földi 2017, 14 for a text recording the issue of rations to Kassite soldiers. The text may be dated by the appearance of the commander Samsuiluna-kāšid who features in 5 documents dated in the reign of Abi-ešuḫ, years 13-21, see Abraham, van Lerberghe 2017, 181. Whether the omission of *Bimatû* in these texts was deliberate, or a clerical oversight is unknown. Equally Abraham, van Lerberghe 2017, 25, no. 10:5 records rations being issued to *Bimatû* only, also in Abi-ešuḫ year 20, month IV, 26. In any event the texts provide evidence for state supported *Kassite* and Kassite *Bimatû* troop movements in the area in mid-summer 1692 BCE.

5.1 The Hittite Material

Three references to *Šanḫara* and, in one instance, its soldiers appear in Hittite records. The first (H.1), dated to the 1640s records the actions of a force of *Samḫarite* soldiers, in one case in association with military personnel from the middle Euphrates kingdom of Emar, in a military campaign in north-western Syria.[84]

The reference to the "[lan]d of the city of *Šanḫara*" in a broken section of a document recording elements of Mursilis I's campaign (H.2), establishes a further link between both the *Samḫarû* and the middle Euphrates.

A letter (H.3, unpublished) excavated at Šapinuwa addressed to Tudhaliya III (1360-1344 BCE) would appear to cover diplomatic issues involving a number of locations including *Šanhara*, Ugarit and Niya. Ugarit (modern Ras Shamra) is located on the coast of the Mediterranean in modern western Syria. Niya was the capital of a small state in the area of the plains on the east bank of the middle Orontes and south of Aleppo.[85] Given the known locations of Ugarit and Niya, it is possible that *Šanhara* was if not contiguous with one of those entities, it was close to them.

Taken as a whole, Hittite references to the term clearly indicate a middle-Euphrates/ western Syria location for *Šanḫara*.

5.2 Kaštiliašu of Hana

The entity that later became known as the kingdom of Ḫana came into existence after Hammurabi's conquest of Mari in 1761 BCE. While the precise details are not known 'the kingdom ranged across approximately the same territory as Zimri-Lim's Mari', and while tablets dated to the kingdom have been found at Terqa, Harradum (90 km south of Mari) and Ṭabatum (on the middle Khabur) the capital of the kingdom may have been Mari itself.[86]

In year 28 of his reign (1712 BCE) Samu-iluna defeated Ḫana's ruler Yadiḫ-abu.[87] At this point Samsu-iluna's kingdom consisted of Babylon, Dilbat, Sippar and Kiš, north up the Euphrates to Ḫana and east to the Diyala and Ḫabur triangle.[88] Yadiḫ-abu's successor bore the Kassite name Kaštiliašu which is found in texts at Terqa and Tell Sakka.[89] The prosopographic evidence demonstrates that officials who served Kaštiliašu witnessed documents in the reigns of his predecessor and successor suggesting that Kaštiliašu was on the throne by the 1700s and was thus broadly a contemporary of Abi-ešuḫ of Babylon (1711-1684 BCE).[90] Kaštiliašu of Ḫana lived almost 50 years after the earliest appearance of Kassites in northern Babylonia, and at least a generation earlier than those seen in the Hittite and Hurrian sources noted below.

The discussion as to whether or not Kaštiliašu of the Ḫana and Sakka texts should be identified with Kaštiliaš (not Kaštiliašu) of Kassite dynasty remains unresolved.[91] As noted above, the Ḫana Kaštiliašu ruled at the end of the eighteenth/early seventeenth century BCE after Samsu-iluna's conquest of Ḫana in 1721 BCE. No other Kassite names appear in the Ḫana texts of this period. Three explanations might be offered to explain this. Firstly that Kaštiliašu the king was the only person bearing a Kassite name in the city. Secondly that the name was simply adopted by the Hanean ruler possibly to honour the Kassite king who was not actually based at Ḫana.[92] And finally that archives other than those recovered recorded the activities of persons bearing Kassite names. None of these possibilities may be definitively proved or disproved. However, the Kassite character of the name cannot be denied. Indeed we should note the prestige, the nature of which is not understood, attached to it with four kings of the Kassite dynasty using a very similar name.

84 Forlanini 2005, 115 fn. 18.

85 Grandet 2022, 371.

86 Arkhipov 2022, 382.

87 Charpin 2002, 70; Wasserman, Bloch 2023, 369.

88 Zomer 2019, 7. See Shibata 2019, 967-9 for a review of the continued influence of Babylon at Terqa, illustrated through the veneration of Marduk at the city, from the late Old Babylonian period and into the post Old Babylonian period. The Babylonian calendar was also adopted in the region in the late Old Babylonian period, Yamada 2019, 1201 fn. 38.

89 See Podany 2019, 132-4 for the most recent discussion of Kaštiliašu; and Abdallah, Durand 2014, 234-7 for the Tell Sakka text.

90 Podany 2002, 44. Podany 2019, 133 later suggested that Kaštiliašu ruled ca 1681-1600 BCE (following Brinkman 1976, 30). However, in his more recent study of early Kassite history, Brinkman 2017 has been less definitive on dates for the early Kassite kings.

91 For the discussion see van Koppen 2017, 54; Zomer 2019, 17; Podany 2019, 133-4 and Paulus 2022, 813.

92 Podany 2002, 46 and fn. 118; Grandet 2022, 371.

Documents from Haradum, in the land of Suḫû south of Terqa suggest that the town was sacked in year 17+b (1630+b BCE) of Ammiṣaduqa and no evidence of Babylonian control after that date is known from the site.[93] Given the evidence for a Kassite influence (and presence?) in the Ḫana kingdom during this period, it is curious that no individuals bearing Kassite names feature in the Haradum texts. By contrast the discovery at Terqa of texts (in a jar) dated to Ammiṣaduqa and Samsuditana suggests that while Haradum was lost to Babylonia, Babylonian control of Terqa was re-established.[94]

5.3 Abirattaš on the Middle Euphrates

Abirattaš features in the Babylonian kinglist as eighth in the sequence of Kassite kings following Kaštiliaš, and in the Agum-kakrime text is stated to have been an ancestor of his (i.e. Agum-kakrime).[95] Forlanini, suggests that the toponym *Á-bí-ra-t-š* found in the great list of Syrian toponyms in an inscription of Thutmosis III (1479-1425 BCE), should be associated with Abirattaš of the early Kassite dynasty.[96] The suggestion, which cannot be substantiated, being that the town was named after the early Kassite king of that name. If correct the toponym would have survived for ca 150 years after Abirattaš ruled.[97]

Balkan identified the name Abirattaš in a document from Alalakh.[98] The usage of the name in these texts suggests that it had a northern-Syrian link. In the Kassite period Abirattaš does not appear to have been used. However, in the two centuries after the end of the Kassite Dynasty at least 16 land owning individuals (they all feature in *kudurru* texts which are all about property) state that they are descendants of Abirattaš.[99] There is even reference to a 'Bīt-Abirattaš' in a *kudurru* dated to Marduk-šāpik-zēri (1081-1069 BCE).[100] This kudurru was found near Balad-Ruz east of the Tigris, and the land grant bordered on Bīt-Sîn-māgir somewhere near Dūr-Kurigalzu. Neither of these points necessarily have relevance to where Bīt-Abirattaš lay.

5.4 Kassite Features in Ḫana Texts

Podany has reviewed the limited corpus of documents from the Early Ḫana period – Samsu-iluna until the end of the dynasty in the early sixteenth century BCE.[101] Though restricted the texts do display features that might suggest a Kassite influence in the Kingdom of Ḫana:

a. Cylinder seal impressions on the Ḫana tablets (though not of any dated to Kaštiliašu) appear to "show similarities to Kassite glyptic traditions".[102]
b. The practice of the king making land grants is not a feature of Old Babylonian rulers, but appears in Ḫana texts and is richly demonstrated in Kassite period *kudurru*s in appear earlier in texts from Ḫana.[103]
c. The use of legally imposed penalties using hot bitumen poured on a convicted person's heads or in their mouth appears in texts from Ḫana and in Kassite records.[104]

93 Joannès 1992, 25.

94 Charpin 2004, 357-8; Rouault 2021, 153-4. Van Koppen's 2004, 23 fn. 83 review of the slave trade shows the extent of Babylonian control of the business on the middle Euphrates at this point. See also Clancier 2021, 286-9 for a summary of events at this period.

95 Brinkman 1976, 85-6 and Sassmannshausen 2014, 171-2.

96 Forlanini 2009, 56. See Helck 1962, 145, no. 206.

97 Abirattaš/Abiradda features in documents from Syria and Ḫatti dated to the mid-fourteenth century BCE (O'Callaghan 1948, 59, no. 40; Mayrhofer 1966, 140; 1968, 54-7 and 1974, 78; Laroche 1966, 36; Klengel 1992, 152, 154 and 155, Bryce 1998, 216-17. See Brinkman 1968, 249-50, and Sassmannshausen 2001, 145 for discussions of the 'House of Abirattaš' in Babylonian documents.

98 Balkan 1954, 45; Wiseman 1953, 126 and 129.

99 Brinkman 1968, 250. For a similar situation see the case of Tunamis-Saḫ below.

100 Nashef 1982, 53; Paulus 2014, 576, col. I.31.

101 Podany 2002, 19-55.

102 Podany 1997, 419.

103 Podany 1997, 419-23; Brinkman 2017, 5 fn. 22.

104 Podany 2002, 234-6; Brinkman 2017, 5 fn. 22.

d. Though a later feature, the name of a canal, *Ḫa-bur-i-ba-al-bu-ga-aš*, built in the reign of Ḫammurapiḫ (fourteenth/thirteenth century BCE), contains the Kassite element '*bugaš*'.[105] This suggests a continued relevance and respect for the term existed in the area three centuries after Agum of the time of Samsu-ditana.

5.5 *Sngr* in the Egyptian Material

It is apparent that the word *Samḫarû* fell out of use in Babylonia (north and south). When the Kassite Dynasty appears in the written record in the late fifteenth century BCE the kings claimed the title "king of Karduniaš"[106] and the term became widely used in the international correspondence of the Egyptian, Babylonian, Assyrian and the Hittite kingdoms. However, in internal documentation in Egypt the cognate form of *Samḫarû* – *Sngr* – appeared for the first time in the mid-fifteenth century BCE in the annals of Thutmosis III recording his campaign in northern Syria and east of the Euphrates in 1446 (E.1). This gives rise to three questions. Firstly how the term survived for over a century, secondly where did the Egyptians judge *Sngr* to be, and finally why the term became synonymous with Babylonia in the Levantine tradition.

The answer to the first of these questions may lie in the later Middle Kingdom (Dynasties 12, 13 and 14 Dynasties) and Second Intermediate Period 15 – 'Hyksos' – Dynasty. The Hyksos were an Amorite Dynasty whose origins can be traced to Amorite incursions into northern Egypt beginning in the second half of the third millennium BCE.[107] Material evidence from the Second Intermediate Period displays "traits typical of populations settling along the eastern Mediterranean coast and further east appear in the material culture of Tell el-Dab'a' in the eastern Delta".[108] In a period of a "continuous process of interaction and exchange between the delta and the neighbouring regions to the east" a degree of familiarity and contact grew between the two areas.[109]

Unfortunately, the dating of these dynasties and of one of the key pharaohs of the Hyksos Dynasty – Khyan – is uncertain and under discussion. Conventional dating placed the fifteenth Dynasty to ca 1650-1550 BCE. However, recent revaluation of the archaeological and radiocarbon data urges a date ca 100 years earlier for the start of the fifteenth Dynasty and Khyan in particular, while further confirming the middle chronology for Mesopotamia (destruction of Mari by Hammurabi 1762 BCE, and the sack of Babylon by the Hittites 1595).[110] The transition into the seventeenth Dynasty and the New Kingdom period remains in the early sixteenth century BCE.

Not with-standing the issues around precise dating, the general principal that the period saw close links between the Levant and the eastern Delta remains true. Ryholt notes that there was 'extensive trade' between the two areas,[111] while Forstner-Müller suggests there were "reduced contacts" by comparison with those of the Middle Kingdom.[112] Certainly, there was an "intense trade" between fifteenth Dynasty Egypt and Cyprus.[113] That being said Forstner-Müller notes that the "extent of fusion between Egyptian and foreign elements in the Hyksos culture is without precedent in Egypt's earlier history".[114] The inscribed objects of Khyan that were found abroad – a basalt lion bought in Baghdad; a jar lid at Knossos; and stone vessel fragment from Ḫattuša, may indicate the international connections northern Egypt had at that point.[115]

105 Podany 2002, 136, Text 13, l. 29; Brinkman 2017, 5 fn. 22. The dissenting views are summarised by Podany 1997, 419 with references. Also note the suggestion that a dedication to Duzugaš or Duzabi might not, as earlier suggested, be identified as a Kassite god, Podany 1997, 419 and fn.s. 14 and 15.

106 For the sense of what was meant by the term Karduniaš see Richardson 2009, 25 and 30 fn. 8. See also van Koppen 2017, 76.

107 Burke 2021, 144-9, 270 and 338-42.

108 Vilain 2019 and Forstner-Müller 2022, 4.

109 Forstner-Müller 2022, 5. See also Schneider 1998, 169-70 and 178-80; 1998a, 5-81 for the extent of the evidence of semitic words and names in the prosopography of the middle Kingdom and Hyksos periods.

110 Höflmayer 2022, 19 and 20, fig. 13. For the sense of what was meant by the term Karduniaš see Richardson 2009, 25 and 30 fn. 8. See also van Koppen 2017, 76.

111 Ryholt 1997, 139.

112 Forstner-Müller 2022, 33.

113 Ryholt 1997, 142.

114 Forstner-Müller 2022, 6. See also the review by Mourad 2021 (especially 95-112) of Egyptian/Levantine (and beyond) relations during the period of the sixteenth-eighteenth dynasties.

115 Bietak et al. 2012-13, 25-6.

Against the background of the Hyksos Dynasty with its established trade, cultural and even personal familial/tribal links between the eastern Delta and the Levant and eastern Mediterranean, the Hittite kings Hattusili I and Mursili 1 conducted military campaigns in the northern Levant. Both Hittite kings recorded contact with the *Samḫarû* (H.1 and H.2). It is, of course, conjecture, but it is possible that the Hyksos with their background in the Levant would have been aware of the *Samḫarû* as well. Further, that though written material for the Hyksos dynasty is sparse, that it was at this point that the term *Sngr* entered the Egyptian lexicon.

If this proposition is correct, the term had to have remained in use, if not archival memory, for a century when it appears for the first time in a surviving Egyptian document in the annals of Thutmosis III's eight campaign in 1447 BCE, in the northern Levant (E.1). The main enemy for the Egyptians in this campaign – and indeed for many subsequent conflicts, were the *Mitanni* and *Retenu*. The first contact with *Sngr* was in the context of that war but was not hostile. After Thutmosis crossed to the eastern side of the Euphrates representatives of the polities not involved in the war – *Sngr*, Hatti and Naharin – presented gifts to the pharaoh.[116] A similar presentation of gifts from *Sngr* occurred in the reign of Thutmosis' successor, Amenophis II in 1418 BCE (E.3). Amenophis also recorded that among his retinue of women there were women from *Sngr* (E.2). This is the last representation of *Sngr* as a land that was not hostile to Egypt. The location of *Sngr* is not defined in either attestation. However, a century later the association between *Sngr* and the kingdom of Babylonia is explicitly made in the cylinder seal, almost certainly made in the Levant, which accords Kurigalzu (I/ II) the title 'chief of *Sngr*' (E.13).

What is unclear is why the people who had been present on the middle Euphrates in the eighteenth to early sixteenth centuries should have become identified with Babylonia. Indeed, identified to such an extent that the term *Sngr* should have been used in Egyptian and east-Mediterranean documents (and *Sanḫara* occasionally in Hittite texts) to designate Babylonia, while using the Babylonian self-identifying term 'Karduniaš'. The answer is unclear, but it is possible that if *Sngr* was just to the north-west of Babylonian territory on the middle Euphrates the link between Babylonia and *Sngr* would have been more easily made. The strategic point is that the Egyptians did make the link between the peoples who once lived and were active on the middle Euphrates with Babylonia. As far as the Egyptians were concerned the link was clear. This suggests that the Egyptian understanding of events in the sixteenth and early fifteenth centuries BCE was that an ethnically identifiable element of the peoples that lived on or near the middle Euphrates went on to establish the Kassite kingdom in Babylonia.

5.6 Agum on the Middle Euphrates

There are three elements to the question of whether or not Agum may be shown to have a link to the middle Euphrates. The first is the very origin of the name 'Agum'; the second Agum-bukāšu; and lastly the Agum-kakrime text.

Before the detailed discussions on each of these areas, the evidence, such as it is, of the three kings of the Kassite Dynasty who bore the name Agum should be summarised as it provides a framework in which to place the three elements noted above.[117] In this discussion I have identified the three Agum kings in three separate groups of texts:

- Agum I. The second king of the dynasty is only known from the kinglist and in a reference in the Agum kakrime inscription (identified here as Agum II).[118] I also tentatively assign to Agum I the very broken text in which 'Agum' appears to feature as a contemporary of Damiq-ilišu of the Sealand Dynasty.[119] A fort built by Damiq-ilišu's forces appears in Ammiditana's year name 37 (1647 BCE).[120] Obviously, the fort was built before 1647 BCE, but when is unknown so all we can say is that Agum I reigned before that date but may have been alive when Ammiditana destroyed the fort.

116 Sassmannshausen 2004a, 62-3 suggested that Kara-indaš may have been the Kassite ruler who presented the gifts. In this Sassmannshausen based his dates on a shortened chronology (2004, 65). This does present difficulties as would appear to suggest a regnal span of over 40 years for Kara-indaš and leave little time for the Kassite dynasty conquest of the Sealand.

117 Balkan 1954, 45-6 provided a brief summary of the appearance of the name. See Brinkman 1976, 95-9 for a summary of the source material for the 'Agums' of the Kassite dynasty.

118 See Brinkman 1976, 95 fn. 3.

119 Stein 2000, 177-8, Kc1.

120 Horsnell 1999, 319-20, no. 248.

- Agum II. Probably the most important of the three kings bearing the name as according to the Agum-kakrime inscription he restored the statue of Marduk to Babylon after it had been removed to the Land of Ḫana in the wake of the Hittite attack in the latter years of the reign of Samsuditana (1625-1595 BCE) – see discussion below.[121]
- Agum III. I identify this ruler with the Agum in whose name at least one economic text, found at Bahrain, was dated.[122] The Kassite Dynasty rule in the Gulf probably began in the third quarter of the fifteenth century BCE.

With this 'division' in mind, we can now turn to the detail of the issues noted above and the possible linkage between 'Agum', the Kassites and the middle Euphrates.

5.7 The Name 'Agum'

Leaving aside the kings bearing the name, very few instances of the name 'Agum' appear as a personal name. Agum does not feature in the 'dictionary' of Kassite name lists, nor in the Kassite-Akkadian vocabulary.[123] The origin of the name is obscure. Early attestations of the name might provide evidence for its origin, but they are rare. A person named Eniš-Agum appears three Ur III texts from Puzriš-Dagan dated to Šu-Sîn (2037-1029 BCE).[124] A person bearing the same name is listed as the father of a person living in Kisurra in the early Old Babylonian period.[125]

In Old Babylonian texts the name Agum appears twice, neither have the DINGIR determinative. Firstly, in a document from Sippar and dated to Samu-la-El (1880-1845 BCE) the activities of a linen merchant named Agum involved in trade with Susa are recorded.[126] A partnership contract from Kish (lacking a precise date) includes details of a man called Agum.[127] In the Kassite period, the name does not appear as an element in personal names. It does, however feature in five texts as the name of a fortress probably located near Nippur.[128] Three of the texts date to the reigns of Kurigalzu II (1332-1308 BCE), the earliest of which is dated to Kurigalzu II year 9 indicating that the fort was built before 1324 BCE. This further suggests that the fort was probably founded by Agum III a century earlier.[129]

None of the instances noted above provide clues to the origin of the name Agum. It is, however, possible that material from Ebla might help. In the Ebla documents dated to the twenty fourth century BCE there are references to ^{d}Agum in various contexts.[130] ^{d}Agum featured as an important deity in the ritual and structures associated with the royal burial ground at Nenaš/Binaš 20 km northwest of Ebla, just south of Aleppo.[131] ^{d}Agum also had a temple/shrine inside the royal complex, Saza, at Ebla.[132] The characteristics of ^{d}Agum suggest that it was a deity closely associated with dynastic religion and royal ideology.[133]

The few Middle Bronze age documents excavated at Ebla have yet to be published,[134] but it is apparent that some elements of the third millennium BCE Eblaite religious culture did survive into the sec-

121 See Paulus 2022, 815-17 for the most recent discussion of Agum II.

122 For what information is available see André-Salvini, Lombard 1997, 167; André-Salvini 2000, 113, no. 168. See also Clayden 2020, 96 fn. 18.

123 Balkan 1954, 2-11.

124 CDLI P104279, AUAM 73.0803: obv. 2; CDLI P107439, HE006: obv. column II:6 and CDLI P124926, VAT 6946: obv. 8. These references may be identified with the person noted by Balkan, citing Gelb, without text references, Balkan 1954, 46.

125 CDLI P502971, BM 23783: rev. 4.

126 Al-Rawi, Dalley 2000, 121-3, no. 115: 4 and 8. See also al-Rawi, Dalley 2000, 17-19 for a discussion of the Sippar/Susa trade relationship.

127 Dalley, Yoffee 1991, 17, no. 179, 21.

128 Nashef 1982, 88, supplemented by Sassmannshausen 2001, 462.

129 Sassmannshausen 2001, 370-1, no. 301.

130 Pomponio, Xella 1997, 19-23; Archi 1999, 149 (Agum) and 150 (Agu); Feliu 2003, 14 and fn. 52; Lönnqvist 2014, 254; Archi 2020, 17.

131 Bonechi 1993, 78; Fronzaroli 1993, 12, Text 1, (55), l. 15; Ludovico et al. 2020, 437-8.

132 Pomponio, Xella 1997, 21-2.

133 Pomponio, Xella 1997, 23.

134 Charpin 2004, 376 fn. 1966.

ond millennium BCE in the middle Euphrates area.[135] It is possible that the cult, or a form of the cult, of ^{d}Agum also survived into the second millennium BCE on the middle Euphrates, an area where ca 78% of the "designated inhabitants of cities or region … bear an Amorite name".[136] The association of this Amorite deity from north-western Syria with royalty and/ or possibly also through colocation with the site of Nenaš/ Binaš might have made the name attractive to early Kassite leaders.[137]

5.8 *Agum bukāšu*

A text dated to Samsu-ditana year 19 (1607 BCE), just 11 years before the end of his reign (VAT 1429 +150),[138] is particularly interesting as it includes a reference to 'Agum' and to the 'house of Agum',[139] and to Agum's title – *bukāšū* (chief, leader or a similar position).[140] The letter reports that messengers from the ruler in Aleppo en route to Babylon have been detained by Agum in the 'Houses of Agum'. Agum also sent the escort of the Aleppine messengers back.[141] In his discussion of the letter, van Koppen suggests two things. Firstly, that Agum was on friendly terms with Babylon but as "an ally, albeit of inferior rank, than that of commander-in-chief of its northern army".[142] Secondly that Agum and his encampment were located between Aleppo and Sippar. The route the messengers would have travelled would have been along the course of the Euphrates which strongly suggests that Agum must have been somewhere on that route north-west of Babylonia. Whether the settlement continued into the fifteenth century when Thutmosis III campaigned in Syria 140 years later (see E.1) is unknown.

5.9 The Agum-kakrime Text

Crucial to any discussion of Agum-kakrime is, of course, the one text we have that may be attributed to him.[143] The discussion as to whether the text should be treated as a genuine copy of an earlier document, or a latter forgery has apparently been settled by Paulus in favour of it being genuine.[144] There are two aspects to Agum-kakrime that are of interest in the context of this discussion. The first are his origins and the second his return of the statue of Marduk to Babylon.

In the opening lines of his inscription, Agum-kakrime records his conquest of Padan and (Ḫ)alman and resettlement of Ešnunna.[145] The possibility that these statements refer obliquely to the conquest of the Kassite centric 'kingdom' at Tell Muhammad at this period is not discussed here. Rather the point of interest is that the Agum of the B.5 document is a chronologically feasible candidate to have been Agum-kakrime for whom movement into northern Babylonia would have been his logical route.[146]

135 Biga 1998, 84. For other examples note the cults of Dagan, Feliu 2003, 62-277; Kura, Younger 2009; Stieglitz 2002, 212 (note however the argument by Sallaberger 2018, 111-14 that the deity Kura did not survive into the second millennium BCE); Ishara, Archi 2020, 17-30. See also the Eblaite deity Wadaʿān(u) which may be the 'ancestor' of a Canaanite concept known in the Bible as *yidʿônî* (Stieglitz 2002, 213).

136 Streck 2021, 1031, 7.2.4.

137 A manifestation of ^{d}Agum, ^{d}Agum of Saza, is the recipient of a key indicator of Amorite identity, an 'Amorite dagger', Lönnquist 2014, 254, further underlying the Amorite background to the deity. It is difficult to establish conclusively, but it is possible that the name Agum had a homophonic association with the word *agû* – a crown of gods and kings (Chicago Assyrian Dictionary A, 153-7).

138 Van Koppen 2017, 66 and 69.

139 Frankena 1974, 18-19, no. 24, 4', 5' and [9'].

140 Frankena 1974,18-19, no. 24 [9']. See van Koppen 2017, 49, 67 and 69 for a discussion of the term.

141 Van Koppen 2017, 69.

142 Van Koppen 2017, 69.

143 Brinkman 1976, 97, D^{b}.3.1.

144 Paulus 2018, 122-42. Podany 2002, 58-9 and van Koppen 2017, 65 argue that the inscription is a copy of an authentic second millennium BCE document. Brinkman (e-mail 11 December 2023) suggests that the case remains to be demonstrated conclusively. He argues that the text may "reflect genuine earlier history" but notes similarities in terminology in the text with the Kadašman-Ḫarbe I *kudurru* discussed below – which he has argued is an eleventh century BCE copy of an earlier text.

145 Fuchs 2011, 236-8 for a discussion of Agum II's move into the east-Tigris region (note Fuchs uses the short chronology), Paulus 2018, 128 and 2022, 815-16. The publication of the full corpus of Tell Muhammad tablets – the 30 tablets covered in the thesis of al-Ubaid 1983 (al-Ubaid, Clayden, forthcoming); and the much wider corpus of excavated tablets planned by Professor N. Laneri and Professor A. Rositani (announced at the RAI 68 2023, Leiden) will considerably inform this discussion.

146 See van Koppen 2017, 66 and Paulus 2022, 816.

The Agum-kakrime text also states that the king returned the statue of Marduk from Ḫana to Babylon after it had been taken from Babylon.[147] This document is plausibly (traditionally) linked to the raid on Babylon in or about 1595 BCE by Mursilis I.[148] In his discussion of the text Oshima demonstrates that "the land of the Hittites did not mean the Anatolian mountain regions, the territories of the former Hittites, but modern eastern Syria".[149] Equally the land of Hana was a territory that covered "a large section of the Middle Euphrates and the banks of the lower and middle Khabur".[150] Yamada has defined the region of Hana before it became a kingdom as "a tribal-geographic term denoting a branch of the Amorite people living mainly in upper Mesopotamia".[151] The statement that the statue was returned from Ḫana and not Ḫatti is striking and should be taken as written and not as a scribal error. As such the return for the Marduk statue from Ḫana urges a further link between the early Kassite dynasty and the middle Euphrates. It also has a political subtext in that the statement that the statue was returned from Ḫana is a reference to the Amorite kingdom(s) of the middle Euphrates.

We should also note that the Hittite texts recording the actions and outcomes of Muršilis' raid post-date the events, and do not explicitly state that the statue of Marduk – the key deity of the city of Babylon – was removed to Ḫatti.[152] Given the importance of a state deity, it might be expected that the Hittite texts would have noted its removal to Ḫatti. The clue as to why this is not the case may rest in the reasons behind the Telepinus' (1525-1500 BCE) creation of the Hittite source document for the attack on Babylon – the Edict of Telepinus.[153] In his study of the document Mõttus, who accepts that the attack on Babylon did happen, has argued that Telepinus' key motivation for compiling the document was to emphasise the importance to Ḫatti of stable royal succession and was not a historical record.[154] It is the interpretation of the event by Telepinus that Mõttus argues is open to question.[155] In other words there is little doubt that an attack by the Hittites on Babylon took place, but the details of the outcome are unclear.

5.10 'Houses of the Kassites'

The 'House of the Kassites'[156] feature in seven texts (Table V, H.1-7) and have been the subject of considerable discussion.[157] Contrary to the views of Brinkman and Charpin that the 'houses of the Kassites' are evidence for Kassite societal structure in Babylonia, van Koppen argues that they are direct references to Kassite settlements on the middle Euphrates.[158] More specifically van Koppen suggests a location for the 'houses' at Baṣ near modern Fallujah and Ramadi.[159] The earliest references to the 'Kassite Houses', and the arrival of the *Bimatû* in the late eighteenth century BCE[160] urges the conclusion that the establishment of the 'Kassite Houses' was linked to the arrival of the *Bimatû* who lived in them. The settlements would have had as a key focus the provision of mercenary forces to the kings of Babylon. The requirement for an interpreter to act as in Babylonian meetings with persons from the 'Kassite Houses'[161] suggests that as late as year 15 of Ammiṣaduqa (1635 BCE) the Kassites retained their own language – a key indicator of a separate ethnic identity.[162]

147 Oshima 2012, 242; Paulus 2018.

148 The precise date in Samsu-ditana's reign is unclear, see Richardson 2016, 108-9. The Late Old Babylonian evidence for Babylonian-Hittite contact is sparse. However, a text excavated at Babylon and plausibly dated to Samsu-ditana includes a reference to *ina* KASKAL-*ša maḫriti* ERIM *Ḫatti*, Kraus, Klengel 1983, 54-5, no. 3, 11; Klengel 1990, 185 fn. 15.

149 Oshima 2012, 246-7.

150 Arkhipov 2022, 382.

151 Yamada 2019, 1195 fn. 20 for full bibliography of previous studies.

152 See Richardson 2016, 108-10, Source 2 and 111-12, Source 4.

153 Hoffmann 1984, 18-19, §9.

154 Mõttus 2018, 41-50 and 57-60.

155 Mõttus 2018, 41.

156 See van Koppen 2017, 49 and 50 for the translation of the term in singular and plural form.

157 For example, Landsberger 1954, 62-3; Postgate 1994, 87; Pientka 1998, 259; Podany 2002, 49; van Koppen 2017, 49-51 and 55-6.

158 Brinkman 1976; 1980, 465; Charpin 1977, 68 fn. 27; van Koppen 2017, 49 and fn. 16.

159 Fallujah, Ramadi 2017, 49 fn. 17; see also Podany 2002, 50 who suggests a location north of Terqa.

160 See above, van Koppen 2017, 51.

161 Kraus 1977, 34-5, no. 47, 13.

162 Van Koppen 2017, 56.

The appearance of a 'House of Kassites' in a text dated to the Sealand Dynasty over a century after the reign of Ammiṣaduqa suggests that the generic identification of the Kassites was still in currant usage.[163] The specific toponym is not found in Kassite period texts, but there are nearly a hundred toponyms with the form '*Bīt*-name' are known.[164] This is a five-fold increase in the form seen in the earlier Old Babylonian period.[165] It is interesting to note that half of the Old Babylonian toponyms using the format '*Bīt*-name' appear in texts from Mari pre-dating its conquest by Hammurabi in 1760 BCE.[166] There is no evidence of a Kassite presence in the Mari texts, but the appearance of this toponym format in such concentration suggests that the Kassites might have adopted the format from the middle Euphrates practice.[167] However, a cursory examination of the references to 'Bīt-name' place names in Mari texts listed by Groneberg and subsequent publications show some indications of a link to Hana.[168] But the evidence is slight and further study is required.

A further link between the format appears in a Hana kingdom middle period[169] document dated to king Isiḫ-Dagan in which a royal land grant is recorded in the district of *Bīt*-Bidda.[170] The appearance of royal land grants in the Hana documentation as possible indicator of a Kassite influence in the region is noted above. *Bīt*-Bidda was an important city as Isiḫ-Dagan commemorated the foundation of a palace there in one of his year names.[171]

5.11 The Toponym Ḫana Associated with Kaššû

Of possible relevance to the issue of the return of the Marduk statue, is the ḪAR.GUD E tablet III commentary on ḪAR-*ra ḫubullu* tablets XVI-XX.[172] This document provides quadrilateral entries 'not only on the Akkadian entry but also on the Sumerian one'.[173] At l. 9 the document unambiguously identifies KUR *ḫa-ni-ì* with *ka*[*š*]-*šú*:

ku-ur-ḫa-an kur.ḫé.a.˹na˺ ki KUR *ḫa-ní* *ka*[*š*]-*šú-u* LUGUD$_2$.DA.MEŠ[174]

The tablet was excavated at Aššur and does, of course, date to the Neo-Assyrian period. However, the ḪAR-*ra ḫubullu* was composed in the Old Babylonian period (with later recensions) and the commentary does, therefore relate directly to a second millennium understanding of the toponym. This indicates that there was an understanding that the territory of Ḫana was in some manner linked to the Kassites.

5.12 Kadašman-Ḫarbe I *kudurru*

The Kassite involvement in events (including an 'uprising of the Ḫaneans' and a Kassite force) at the end of Samsu-ditana's reign and of the Amorite kingdom was recorded in a *kudurru* inscription of Kadašman-Ḫarbe I.[175] The Haneans were a 'clan' within the Amorite Conglomerate.[176] The genealogy of the Hammurabi dynasty also refers to "Amorite groups and Hanean soldiers".[177] Placing the Kassites in

163 Dalley 2009, 25-6, no. 7: 17' and 20'.

164 Nashef 1982, 53-74 and van Soldt 2015, 575.

165 See Groneberg 1980, 42-5.

166 See Groneberg 1980, 42-5.

167 Less than ten toponyms using the '*Bīt*-name' format feature in Syrian documents dated to the second millennium BCE, Marín 2001, 57-9.

168 E.g. *Bīt*-kapān, Groneberg 1980, 43; Durand 1988, 186 fn. 24.

169 Ca sixteenth century BCE, Podany 2002, 58.

170 Podany 2002, 130-2, no. 12, obv. 1.

171 Podany 2002, 131, no. 12, rev. 6'-9'.

172 Schroeder 1920, 102, no. 183.

173 Vedeler 2002, 21.

174 Kupper 1957, 41-2; 1972-75, 76; Clayden 1989, 51; Vedeler 2002, 22, fig. 2.2 and 101; Oshima 2012, 246.

175 Paulus 2014, 296-7, KḪI 1, lines I.1-13. Brinkman 2015 disputes the dating and suggests a twelfth/eleventh century BCE dating for the writing of the text while leaving open the possibility that it was based on an earlier document.

176 Burke 2021, 265.

177 Burke 2021, 300.

conjunction with the Haneans may suggest a linkage in geographical terms – that is a north-western origin of the forces hostile to Samsu-ditana. A similar list of forces is found in a text dated to Ammiṣaduqa year 18 (1629 BCE).[178] The document is a list of Amorite men provided by Ḫanean, Elamite, Kassite and Iamutbal military – a group of nationalities drawn from the north and east of Babylonia.

Richardson has noted that there are at least thirteen versions of the 'Fall of Babylon'.[179] There is broad agreement between the accounts that a variety of hostile forces brought about the collapse of Samsu-ditana's rule in Babylon. The accounts vary according to the perspectives of the various writers as to who was specifically responsible. In the case of the Kadašman-Ḫarbe I *kudurru* inscription the Kassite king appears anxious to align the Kassite involvement with Samsu-ditana's fall with two powers based on the middle Euphrates and beyond. This again suggests an association between the Kassites and that region.

5.13 Neo-Assyrian Omen

A Neo-Assyrian oracular text (B.6) lists the forces ranged against Samsu-ditana in a rebellion against himself and Marduk (l. 42). The list of enemies is extensive – Elamites (l. 31); Kassite (l. 32); Idamaraṣ and "the foreign troops that are with them" (ll. 33-4); "Ḫanigalbat and the foreign troops that are with them" (ll. 35-6); "the *Samḫarû* army and the foreign troops that are with them" (ll. 36-7); the Edašuštu[180] army and a host of un-named other forces. Richardson argues that the text characterises the situation in Samsuditana's reign as one involving "rebellious foreign mercenaries, the potential for civil revolt, and Samsuditana as the hapless victim", none of which are positive.[181] This suggests a post Samsuditana date for the composition of the text, but just how late after the reign of Samsu-ditana cannot be defined.

The account of Gulkišar's defeat of the troops of Samsu-ditana is broken but would appear to confine the conflict to the forces of Babylon and the Sealand Dynasty with no mention of Kassites, *Samḫarû* or any other nationality.[182] This confirms the Sealand authorship of the document even if the copy is early Kassite.[183]

5.14 Kassite Personal Names and Toponyms

A number of individuals bearing identifiable Kassite names appear in documents from two cities in north-western Mesopotamia. One, possibly two, Kassite names may be identified in the texts from Alalakh VII.[184] Given the complete absence of any evidence for Kassites in the extensive Mari archive, it seems improbable that the Alalakh individuals predated Hammurabi's conquest of Mari in 1761 BCE.[185] Further to the north in the Hurrian city of Tikunani on the upper Ḫābūr,[186] two persons (and possibly 10 further) with Kassite names appear in a long document listing 438 workers and dated to the time of Hattusili I.[187]

Forlanini argued that there are toponyms that might be associated with an early Kassite presence in the area.[188] In the Thutmosis toponym list discussed above, the names *'U-ra-ma*, *Ší-na-ra-ka-ya* and *Ší-nù-ra-g-an-na*, which Forlanini notes, might contain the term Šina/ura, which could recall Šinᶜar (the later form of Samḫara> Šamḫara>Šanḫara). Further study is required to confirm this suggestion.

178 Richardson 2010, 29 and 31, no. 44.

179 Richardson 2016. See Paulus 2022, 813-15 and Wasserman, Bloch 2023, 477-81 for a summary of the salient points of the fall of the Old Babylonian Dynasty.

180 See Richardson 2015 for a discussion of the significance of this term which Richardson translates as "an unidentifiable mob or militia" (56).

181 Richardson 2016, 118.

182 Zomer 2019, 3-37.

183 Zomer 2019, 26-8.

184 See Brinkman 1976-80, 466; Zeeb 2001, 543, AI T 238: 20, 33; 585, AI T 248: 9; Oliva 2005, 21; Dietrich, Loretz 2006, 91, AI T 412: 6-7 and Zomer 2019, 3 fn. 2. Sassmannshausen 2004a, 287-8 fn. 5 argues that there is only one certain Kassite name (Luttukinda, AIT 248:9), and a possible second individual, Nunigiyāšu, who he notes was "interestingly [...] in charge of horses".

185 This feature of the texts may help support a dating range of 1760-1680 for Alalakh VII to 1760-1680 BCE.

186 See Miller 2001, 413-14 and figure 1 for the location of Tikunani.

187 Salvini 1996. See also Richter 1998, 127; Zadok 1999-2000, 354-5; Brinkman 2017, 5; van Koppen 2017, 65.

188 Forlanini 2009, 56.

Van Koppen has noted the possibility that the toponym '*Samḫara*' (URU *sa-ˀam?ˀ-ḫa-ra-a-a*) appears in a Neo-Assyrian land grant of properties in the Tille region, north-east of the Jebel Sinjar.[189] The identification of *Sngr* with (Jebel) Siṇjar is on the face of it relatively straight forward. However, the region was identified in texts from Mari as Saggar (^{d}SAGGAR$_2$).[190] This urges the conclusion that *Sngr* is not a cognate of Sinjar.[191]

In the middle of the eight century, Ninurta-kudurrī-uṣur, governor of Suḫû on the middle Euphrates stated that he was a "distant descendant of Tunamis-Saḫ, son of Hammurapi, king of Babylon".[192] 'Tunamis-Saḫ' is a Kassite name which was used by individuals in Kassite period texts.[193] The Kassite period toponym Bīt-Tunamis-Saḫ may indicate a specific location for the family at that time – north of Apsû-Ištar and Bīt-Pere'-Amurru, and west of Bīt-Ḫabban.[194] Bīt-Pere'-Amurru was one of the northern provinces of Kassite Babylonia that 'marked the border with Assyria'.[195]

Clancier has reviewed the link between the eight century BCE ruling house of Suḫû on the lower middle Euphrates and Tunamis-Saḫ of the Kassite period.[196] He argues that the link, including to Hammurabi, was not meant literally, but as symbolic and added prestige to the Suḫû rulers.[197] It also established a resonance with Adad-šuma-uṣur (1216-1187 BCE) who was from Suḫû where he may have served as governor before becoming king and who ousted the Assyrian rule established a decade earlier by Tukulti-Ninurta I.[198] In summary, though Tunamis-Saḫ has a clear Kassite link, and lower middle Euphrates link, there is no evidence of an eighteenth century BCE link to the middle Euphrates region.[199]

5.15 Cush and the Kassites

In 1884 Delitzsch proposed that "Cush, father of Nimrod' found in the Old Testament should be identified with the Kassites and located in northern Mesopotamia".[200] This view was followed in early studies by Haupt, but swiftly refuted by others – e.g. Brown.[201] The debate has continued ever since and remains unresolved.[202]

In 2003 Goldenberg stated: "the Kush who is the father of Nimrod is to be associated with the Mesopotamian Kassites".[203] The evidence for this assertion is drawn from Bib.1 in which Nimrod is identified as the founder of Babylon, Uruk, Akkad and 'Calneh' in the land of *Šin'ār*, and Nineveh, Nimrud and 'Rehoboth-Ir'.

189 Kataja, Whiting 1995, 60, no. 60, obv. 12' and van Koppen 2017, 84, Appendix 1, g.1. Note that the other two toponyms highlighted by van Koppen 2017, 84, Appendix 1, g.2 and g.3 date to texts of Assurbanipal and Sennacherib and to places very much east of the Tigris.

190 Ziegler, Langlois 2016, SAGGAR.

191 The oral history of the inhabitants of the village of Sinjar at Babylon preserves two points of interest. Firstly, the tradition is that they are descendants of people who emigrated from an area on the middle Euphrates in the Ḫit/Ramadi area; and secondly that 'Sinjar' was the name of one of Hammurabi's wives (Haider Almamori, verbal communication 25 August 2023).

192 Frame 1995, 295, S.0.1002.2, col.i, ll. 3-4.

193 Kassite period – Clay 1912, 139; Balkan 1954, 84; Limet 1971, 81, 6.3 and 96-7, 7.11; Hölscher 1996, 222; Sassmannshausen 2001, 150; Stiehler-Alegria 2004 (Christies 2001); Devecchi 2020, 378; post-Kassite period – Brinkman 1968, 254, no. 54.

194 Nashef 1982, 73.

195 Paulus 2022, 844.

196 Clancier 2021, 267-70 and 302-6.

197 Clancier 2021, 269.

198 Clancier 2021, 300-2. See Clayden, Schneider 2015, 356 for an example of a similar case of a later ruler establishing a link with an earlier ruler see the example of Assurbanipal mimicking a building inscription of Adad-šuma-uṣur.

199 Edmonds 2024 argues that Clancier's reconstruction of the Iron Age history of Suḫû is seriously flawed to the point of being incorrect. However, the argument Clancier advances regarding the Tunamis-Saḫ/Hammurapi link stand, and no firm link between Tunamis-Šaḫ and the eighteenth century BCE middle Euphrates region can be demonstrated. Clancier 2024 has also refuted Edmonds' arguments.

200 Delitzsch 1884, 51-5, no. 27; 127-9, no. 22.

201 Haupt 1884, 88-9; Brown 1884, 9-11.

202 For a summary of references see Burrell 2020, 148 fn. 46. For further references see also Goldenberg above, and Vlaardingerbroek 2014, 218 fn. 79.

203 Goldenberg 2003, 25 and 221 fns. 31, 32.

Balogh notes that the Egyptians used the terms 'Meluḫḫa' and 'Magan' for all "southern countries whether on the east beside the Persian Gulf or on the west in Africa".[204] Burrell, who refutes the link between Cush and the Kassites, agrees.[205] However, Burrell concludes that it is "highly probable that these easterners (i.e. the Kassites) were part of the continuum of Cushite peoples […] and it could be plausibly argued that the Cushan-Rishathaim (Judg. 3:8),[206] king of Aram-naharaim, is to be identified as a Kassite king".[207] The "main redaction of the book of Judges" was made in the late eight or early seventh century BCE.[208] However, the events in Judges in which Cushan-Rishathaim feature are generally dated to some point in the latter half of the second millennium BCE. Biblical Aram-naharaim is clearly identified as the area on and around the great bend of the Euphrates in Syria.[209] In Genesis 24:10 it is referred to as the homeland of Abraham's family.[210] Of course Naharain is very well known from Egyptian texts.[211]

If Burrell's suggested link between Cushan(= Kassite)-Rishathaim and the Kassites is correct (though the link must be considered doubtful), then it suggests an association in the writers of the Old Testament between the middle Euphrates and the Kassites in the second half of the second millennium BCE.

6 Conclusions

The history of the term *Šinʿār* shows a link to the earliest appearance of the Kassites in Mesopotamia. The peoples who bore the name *Samḫarû* first appear in north-western Syria in the middle of the seventeenth century and were part of the third wave of Kassite peoples who had begun to arrive in Babylonia in the late nineteenth century. The co-ordination in 1632 BCE outside Sippar of *Samḫarû* and *Bimatû* (an earlier wave of Kassite intruders into Babylonia) military forces in an operationally complex manner – a joint cavalry and infantry operation – suggests that the two had co-existed for a considerable period prior to that.

The abrupt appearance of the *Sngr* (i.e. *Samḫarû*) in Egyptian sources in 1446 BCE as envoys of a foreign power bearing diplomatic gifts, and the continued use of the term suggests two points. First that there was a retained memory in Egypt of the *Samḫarû* transmitted through the close contacts between the Delta and Levant during the Second Intermediate and Hyksos periods. Secondly that by the middle of the fifteenth century the transformation of a newly arrived people on the middle Euphrates in the eighteenth century – *Kaššû* – into the ruling dynasty in Babylonia was complete. The international community in the Late Bronze Age were aware of the relationship between the *Samḫarû* and the Kassite kings and their kingdom and. In internal records they continued to use the old term (exonym), while in international correspondence they used the toponym defined by the Kassites as the name of the land they ruled – Karduniaš (endonym).

What also emerges from this study is that while the origin of the Kassite tribes was from east of Mesopotamia, the foundation for the Kassite dynasty – the longest in Babylonian history – was on the middle-Euphrates in modern Syria in the second half of the eighteenth century.[212] It was from the middle-Euphrates that the Kassite rulers moved south-east to northern Babylonia and eventually rulership of the entire region. This was a process of integration and not invasion. The transformation of the Kassite mercenaries, widely in use in the late Old Babylonian period, into a ruling group as the Babylonian kingdom collapsed was not a single event, but took several centuries to happen. The archaeological evidence confirms this interpretation and suggests that rather than Kassite settlement coming west down the line of the Diyala, the reverse was true from the first half of the sixteenth century BCE.[213]

204 Balogh 2011, 162 fn. 111; Burrell 2020, 151.

205 Paulus 2022, 844.

206 The name may be symbolic and translated as 'Dark double-wickedness', Berlin, Brettler 1999, 514. O'Callaghan 1948, 122-3 suggests that the element 'Kushan' should be linked to tribes in the east and southeast of Israel.

207 Burrell 2020, 320.

208 Amit 1999, 509-10.

209 Andrews 2000a.

210 Paddan-Aram, a variant name for Aram-Naharaim, is also identified as the homeland of Abraham's family, Andrews 2000b. For references to Aram-Naharaim in Egyptian sources see O'Callaghan 1948, 131-42.

211 Gardiner 1947, 1: 171-80, no. 260.

212 It is possible that some of the very earliest Kassite forces in the region were subsumed within the *habbātum* forces that served in the wars in the Ḫabur and Sinjar states in the time of Hammurabi and later. See Eidem 2011, 18-22 for a discussion of *ḫabbātum*.

213 See Clayden 2024b for a review of the archaeological evidence for Kassite settlement east of the Tigris.

A possible viable model for how the Kassites entered and became integrated into, and finally ruled over Babylonia may be provided by the Amorites whose early history and rise to power is far better documented than it is for the Kassites. Burke's review of the Amorites shows clear parallels with the fragments we have of early Kassite history in terms of their gradual appearance in Mesopotamia in the late third millennium BCE and early second millennium BCE indicated by personal names; their early role as a military resource; the tribal structure of the society; language known only through names and adoption of the local culture with some modifications (but not many).[214] Prilinger has summarised the mechanisms and drivers that lie behind the movement of peoples (plausibly including the Kassites) in western Asia in the late third and early second millennium BCE.[215]

I believe that the two questions identified at the outside of this paper have been answered. The sixth century BCE compilers of the Old Testament referred to Babylonia as *Šin'ār* because that was the term used in the original compositions three centuries earlier, as well as in contemporary eastern Mediterranean circles reflecting the Egyptian usage that began a millennium earlier. Secondly that the proposition that the *Samḫarû* were part of the Kassite entity on the middle Euphrates who eventually took control of Babylonia and founded the Kassite Dynasty, is correct.

7 Tables

Table 1 Samḫarû in Hittite Sources

No	Ruler	Date	Text	Context	Reference
H.1	Hattusili I	1650-1620	Account of deeds in the reign of Hattusili I.	An account of a war between Aleppo/ Hurri and the Hittite kingdom includes a references to ÉRIN.MEŠ *Ša-am-ḫa-ri/ ru*, and another in association with Emar.	CTH[216] 14-15, KUB 36.103 + KBo 22.3', obv. II l. 3' and rev. II l. 7'; de Martino 2003, 100 and 106-7; Francia 2020, 178.
H.2	Mursili I	1620-1590	An edict which includes acts in the reign of Mursili I.	A broken section includes a reference to '[KU]R ^{URU}*ša-an-ḫa-ra*', but the context is unclear.	CTH 10.1; CTH 148; KUB 26, 74 i 10; Guterbock 1956, 103 fn. 3; del Monte, Tischler 1978, 344; de Martino 2003, 206-7, rev. l. 10; Tavernier 2010, 178-9; Francia 2020, 176, no. 1; Gander 2022, 543-5, 13.1.12.
H.3	Tudḫaliya III	1360-1344	An unpublished letter excavated at Šapinuwa addressed to the Great King and Queen covering diplomatic issues in western Syria.	The context is unclear but the cities of Šanḫara, Ugarit and Niya (situated on the Orontes) appear.	Or. 90/1766. Süel, Süel 2017, 31; Süel 2017, 636.
H.4	Suppiluliuma I	1344-1322	Ritual for summoning the 'male gods of the cedar'.	In a list of toponyms, and appear in the sequence – KUR ^{URU}*A-aš-š*[*ur*], KUR ^{URU}*KÁ*.DINGIR.RA (Babylon), KUR ^{URU}*ša-an-ḫa-ra* and KUR ^{URU}*Mi-iṣ-ri* (Egypt)'.	CTH 483; KUB 15.34, I, 57; Del Monte, Tischler 1978, 344; Forlanini 1999, 10; Groddek 2012, 37; Francia 2020, 176-7, no. 2.
H.5	Mursili II	1321-1295	Prayer of Mursili.	Mursili II accuses his stepmother, a Babylonian, of spending the king's wealth and importing items (unspecified) from ^{URU}*ša-an-ḫa-ra-az*.	CTH 70, KUB 14.4, ii 6'; del Monte, Tischler 1978, 344; Francia 2020, 177, no. 3.
H.6	Muwatalli II	1295-1272	Treaty between Ḫatti and Wilusa.	Text notes that LUGAL.KUR ^{URU}*ša-an-ḫa-ra* – 'the king of the city Šanḫara' – was a king of equal rank in the sequence - Egypt, *Šanḫara*, Hanigalbat and Assyria.	CTH 76, KUB 21 1 + 3, 10-12; Friedrich 1930, 1: 68-9 § 14, l. 11; Beckman 1996, 85, §11; Francia 2020, 177, no. 4.

214 Burke 2021, see especially 261-8, 270-6, 300-2 and 334-5.

215 Priglinger 2019, 210-14.

216 CTH = Laroche, E. 1971, Catalogue des Texte Hittite.

Table 2 Samḫarû in Babylonian Documents

No	Ruler	Date	Text	Context	Reference
B.1	Ammiṣaduqa	1646-26	Letter from Ammiṣaduqa, the king, dated year 15, month 6, day 18 (1632 BCE)	Report of Samḫarû troops – ÉRIN *sa-am-ḫa-ru-ú* érin-*um ma-du-um-m[a],* 'the Samḫarû, a large army'.	Kraus 1977, 34-5, no. 47, l. 6 (= AbB 7: 47); Richardson 2005, 273 (trans) and 274, no. 1; van Koppen 2017, 82 a.1.
B.2			Letter from Ammiṣaduqa, the king, dated year 15, month 9, day 16 (1632 BCE)	Report of a large force (1500 men) of Samḫarû and Bimatû troops in the Sippar region apparently intent of stealing cattle and sheep – *kaʾ-šiʾ-ʿxʾ-[d]a-ga-al sa-am-ḫa-ru-ú ù k[a]-ʿašʾ-[t]i-il* DUMU *be-[e]l-šu-nu pa-ni* 1500 ÉRIN *sa-am-ḫa-ri-I [ù]* ʿÉRIN *biʾ-m[a-t]i-i*, '… Dagal, the Samḫarû, and Kaštil, the son of Bēlšunu, at the head of 1500 Samḫarû and Bimatû troops …'	Kraus 1964, 2-3, no. 2, ll. 6-8 (= AbB 1: 2); Richardson 2005, 274, no. 2; van Koppen 2017, 82 a.2.
B.3			List from Sippar dated year 15, month 9, day 24 (1632 BCE).	List of beer expenses including beer for Samḫarû troops – 2 *pīḫu* ʿÉRIN *sa-am-ḫa-ru-ú* – '2 *pīḫu*-jugs (issued to) Samḫarû troops'	BM 86452, l. 5; van Koppen 2017, 82 b.
B.4			Letter from Ammiṣaduqa, the king, dated year 15, month 12, day 21 (1632 BCE)	Report of a body of Samḫarû and Bimatû chariots and troops – ^{giš}GIGIR.ḪI.A *ù* ÉRIN GÌR *ma-dam-ma ša* ÉRIN *bi-ma-ti-I ù* ÉRIN *sa-am-ḫa-ri* – 'chariots and much infantry of the Bimatû and Samḫarû'.	Kraus 1985, 132-5, no. 150, l. 11 (+ AbB 10: 150); Richardson 2005, 274, no. 4; van Koppen 2017, 82 a.3.
B.5			Letter from Sippir-Amnānum, but possibly written by a scribe educated in eastern Mesopotamia (?) dated Ammiṣaduqa year 18, month 6 (1629 BCE).	A letter including reference to Samḫarû women – *ša-am-ḫa-ra-a-ti an-na-ti*.	van Lerberghe, Voet 1991, 32, no. 12, ll. 7-8;[217] van Koppen 2017, 82 c.
B.6	Samsu-ditana	1625-1595	A Neo-Assyrian oracle text concerning events at the time of Samsu-ditana.	In a list of at least seven enemies Samsu-ditana faced, Kassite and Samḫaru forces are mentioned - *kaš-ši-ʿtiʾ* and *sà-am-*(*ḫa*)*-ri-i.*[218]	Lambert 2007, 24-5, ll. 32 and 36.
B.7	Ayadaragalama, First Sealand Dynasty	ca 1500	List of grain issues, dated year 21.	List of women of the palace to whom grain was issued for grinding including to ᶠ*sa-am-ḫa-ri-*[…] – a Samḫari[tû] woman.	Dalley 2009, 197, no. 372, l. 13; Zadok 2014, 227; van Koppen 2017, 83 d.

217 van Lerberghe, Voet 1991, 33 did not read the word as an ethnonym, whereas van Koppen 2017, 82 c did.

218 van Koppen 2017, 84 f. has doubts as to the restoration.

Table 3 *Sngr* in Egyptian texts

No	Ruler	Date	Text	Context	Reference
E.1	Thutmosis III	1479-1425	Annals of Thutmosis' 8th Campaign, year 33 (= ca 1446)	Gifts brought by the 'chief' of S*ngr* (together with those of the Hittites and Naharin) after a successful campaign (including a crossing of the Euphrates) against forces of Retenu (western Syria) and Mitanni.	Breasted 1906, 173, 204, no. 484; Sethe 1907, 700-1, k; Redford 2003, 75.
E.2	Amenophis II	1427-1400	Stele of Usersatet, Qasr Ibrim.	In the praise section listing the female servants Amenophis II has in his retinue including women from *Sngr*, Byblos, Alalakh and Arrapha.	Darnell 2014, 250-1.
E.3			Stela from Memphis, 2nd campaign, year 9 (ca 1418).	Record of Amenophis II's campaign in Syria, and a note that the 'chiefs' of *Ḫatti* and *Sngr* delivered gifts to the pharaoh and sought peace.	Helck 1961, 32-41, no. 375; Cumming 1982, 32, § 1309; der Manuelian 1987, 227, para 33.
E.4	Thutmosis IV	1400-1390	Interior left panel of a chariot in Thutmosis' tomb.	A topographical list in the form of name rings surmounted by images of captive figures of different regions.	Carter, Newberry 1904, 32, fig. 10; Simons 1937, 46-47 and 131, VIII (l.) 2; Helck 1961, 150, no. 1560.
E.5	Amenophis III	1390-1352	Scarab	A short text according Amenophis the title 'capturer of *Sngr*'.	Fraser 1899, 155, no. 34; Petrie 1917, xxxii, no. 17, pl. XXXII, no. 17; Gardiner 1947, 211, no. 286; Edel, Görg 2005, 4.
E.6			Medinet Habu inscription.	Topographical list of captives including one from *Sngr*.	Edel 1966, 2, no. 1, Tafel I.
E.7				As above.	Edel, Görg 2005, 141-2, Tafel X, D_N, l. 1.
E.8			Temple of Amun at Soleb.	Topographical list of bound captives on the temple columns including *Sngr*.	Simons 1937, 47-9 and 132, no. IX, l. 6; Jirku 1937, 27, V. (l.) 5; Giveon 1964, 245, col. V, A.1.
E.9			Temple of Amun at Karnak (debris).	Topographical list of bound captives on temple columns including *Sngr*.	Simons 1937, 49 and 133, no. X, l. 3.
			Temple of Amun at Karnak, south side of the pylon on the base of the statue of Amenophis III.	Topographical list of which only 3 names survive.	Jirku 1937, 30, no. VI (l.) 1.
E.10			Kom el-Ḥeiṭan (nw. of the Colossus of Memnon).	Fragment of a topographical list with part of a name ring preserved reading '*Sngr*'.	Varille 1935, 175-6, II.A, fig. 3; Simons 1937, 191; Kitchen 1965, 4, B.
E.11			Tomb 120 at Thebes, brother of Queen Tiy (wife of Amenophis III).	Wall painting showing the pharaoh on his throne with a line of bound captives on the dais including one identified as *Sngr*.	de Garis Davies 1929, 38, fig. 2.
E.12	Horemheb	1323-1295	Karnak, Temple of Amun, colossi at pylon X.	List of foreign captives identified in name rings including one from [*Sn*]*gr*.	Simons 1937, 52 and 135-6, no. XII, Series a, (l.) 1.
E.13	Seti I	1294-1279	Anastasi IV, papyrus	A set of instructions on what to prepare in advance of the arrival of the pharaoh including a special oil and horse-teams and young steeds of *Sngr*.	Gardiner 1937, 51, ll. 15.3 and 54, ll. 17.9-10; Caminos 1954, 200, l. 15.3 and 201, l. 17.8-9.
E.14			Karnak, Temple of Amun, triumph scene and topographical list, west side.	Inscription celebrating the pharaoh's conquests and a list of the pharaoh had over 'southern and northern foreign countries' and list of captives, including one from *Sngr*, identified in name rings surmounted by heads.	Simons 1937, 53-9 and 141, XIV, (l. 24); Epigraphic Survey 1986, 54, (l.) 27, pl. 15c; Kitchen 1993, 25, 31:5, no. 26.

No	Ruler	Date	Text	Context	Reference
E.15			Karnak, Temple of Amun, triumph scene and topographical list, east side.	Inscription celebrating the conquests the pharaoh has had over 'southern and northern foreign countries' and list of captives, including one from Sngr, identified in name rings surmounted by heads.	Simons 1937, 53-9 and 137, XIII, (l.) 26; Jirku 1937, 37, no. X (l.) 26; Epigraphic Survey 1986, 63 (l.) 26, pl. XX; Kitchen 1993, 23, 28:5, no. 27.
E.16			Qurnah, South sphinx, temple of Seti.	A topographical list of 31 or more toponyms.	Simons 1937, 59-60 and 144-5, XV; Kitchen 1993, 28, no. 14, 34:10. No. 10.
E.17			Temple at Wadi Abbâd.	Set of reliefs depicting the pharaoh killing prisoners, with a list of captives, including one from *Sngr*, identified in name rings surmounted by heads.	Simons 1937, 61-3 and 147, XVII (l.) 1; Jirku 1937, 37, no. XI (l.) 1.
E.18	Rameses II	1279-1213	Temple at Abydos.	Relief depicting the pharaoh killing a prisoner, with a list of captives, including one from *Sngr*, identified in name rings surmounted by a head.	Simons 1937, 75-6 and 162, no. XXV, (l.) 3; Kitchen 1996, 57, no. 32, 192:5 (l.) 3.
E.19			Temple at Aksha.	Topographical list.	Kitchen 1996, 71, no. 50, 211.1, no.4; Edel 1980, 65.
E.20			Temple at Amarah West.	Topographical list in a campaign record in which [*Sn*]*gr* features.	Kitchen 1996, 74, no. 55, 215:10, no. 4. and 75, no. 56, 217:5, no. 89.
E.21			Stela at Aswan.	Record of events in Rameses II's year 2 (ca 1277) including the presentation of 'gifts' by the kings of Ḫatti and *Sngr* following the pharaoh's military successes in Syria.	Kitchen 1996, 182, no. 121, 345:1.
E.22			Bubastis.	Fragment of a monumental inscription bearing a list of captives, including one from *Sngr*, identified in name rings surmounted by a head.[219]	Simons 1937, 77 and 163, XXVI, (l.) b. 4; Kitchen 1996, 58, no. 35, 194:10, no.5.
E.23			Karnak, Temple of Amun.	Relief depicting the pharaoh killing prisoners before Amon, with a list of captives, including one from *Sngr*, identified in name rings.	Simons 1937, 73 and 160-1, no. XXIV, no. 15.
E.24			Karnak, Temple of Amun.	Topographical list.	Jirku 1937, 42, no. XIX, l. 6.
E.25			Temple at Luxor, statue bases in forecourt (at south doorway).	Topographical list showing the name rings with captive figures, including *Sngr*.	Simons 1937, 70-1 and 155-6, no. XXII, l. g.3; Jirku 1937, 40, no. XVI, l. 3; Kitchen 1996, 52, no. 26, 184:5, nos 10 and 54, no. 27, 186: 10, no. 3.
E.26			Luxor, Temple of Luxor.	An element in a procession of figures each representing a mineral producing region, one of which, no. 24, is identified as *Sngr* bringing silver and precious stones.	Kitchen 1996, 411, 620:10, no. 24; Kitchen 1999, 418.
E.27			Serreh, Nubia.	Topographical list.	Kitchen 1979, 210-1.
E.28	Taharqa	690-664	Karnak, Temple of Mut.	Statue base bearing a list of Asiatics, including one from *Sngr*, in name rings, but not surmounted by heads. It is a copy of the list Horemheb (see above).	Simons 1937, 103 and 187, XXXVI (l.) 1.
E.29	Ptolemy III	246-222	Hieroglyphic-Demotic.	Account of Ptolemy III's campaign against Se(n)ger (Babylon) in 246/24 BCE, including a record of tribute.	Altenmüller 2010, 34 and 37-8, l. 42.

219 The section of the fragment bearing the name *Sngr* would appear to have been lost before it arrived at the British Museum and cannot now be located (Bierbrier 1982, 12, no.3).

No	Ruler	Date	Text	Context	Reference
E.30	Cleopatra VII	51-30	Denderah, Temple of Hathor	East stairway, Chamber W. Words to be spoken by an attendant of Re in a ceremony including a list of items from various locations including *Sngr*.	Rickert, Dil 2022, D7 l. 183.5.

Table 4 *Sngr* in East-Mediterranean texts

No	Ruler	Date	Text	Context	Reference
EM.1	Akhnaten	1352-1336	Letter (EA 35) from Tell el-Amarna.[220]	Letter from the king of Cyprus to Akhnaten in which the relative status of regional kings, including 'LUGAL *šа-а-ḫа-ar*', is noted.	Rainey 2015, 342-3, ll. 49-50.
EM.2	Kurigalzu I/ II (?)	?-1375/1332-1308	An inscribed cylinder seal found at Metsamor, Armenia.	Scene and an inscription describing Kurigalzu (II) as the 'great overseer of *Sngr*'.	Khanzadlan, Piotrovskii 1992; Collon 2011; Brinkman 2017, 11.

Table 5 *Šinʿār* in the Bible

No	Reference	Text
Bib.1	Gen. 10:10	'And in the beginning of his (i.e Nimrod) kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of *Šinʿār.*'
Bib.2	Gen. 11:2	'And it came to pass, as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of *Šinʿār*; and they dwelt there'.
Bib.3	Gen. 14:1	'And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of *Šinʿār*, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim'.
Bib.4	Gen. 14:9	'Against Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim, and Amraphel king of *Šinʿār*, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings against five'.
Bib.5	Josh. 7:21	'When I saw among the spoil a goodly *Šinʿār* mantle, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it'.
Bib.6	Isa. 11:11	'And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from *Šinʿār*, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea'.
Bib.7	Dan. 1:2	'And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his (i.e. Nebuchadnezzar) hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God; and he carried them into the land of *Šinʿār*, to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god'.
Bib.8	Zech. 5:11	'And he (i.e. and angel) said unto me, to build her a house in the land of *Šinʿār*, and when it is prepared, she shall be set there in her own place'.

220 On the basis of a reference to a plague in the letter, Rainey (2015a, 1380) argues that the letter was addressed to Akhnaten.

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The Philia *facies* and the Interaction Between Cyprus and Cilicia
The Transformations in the Architectural Structures

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Abstract The Philia facies marks the transition between the Late Chalcolithic and the Early Bronze Age in Cyprus (2400-2350/2200 BC). This crucial period witnessed significant changes in architecture, craftsmanship, funerary practices, and the economy, attributed to groups from southern Anatolia, particularly Cilicia. This analysis focuses on the study of architectural remains and planimetric changes, specifically comparing structures from certain Cypriot sites with architectural remains found at some Anatolian sites, with the aim of exploring the Cyprus-Anatolia connection through an innovative approach to architectural evidence.

Keywords Protohistoric Archaeology. Cyprus. Anatolia. Philia facies. Architecture.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 The Philia *Facies*. – 3 Architectural Changes and Philia's Contexts. – 3.1 Kissonerga-Mosphilia. – 3.2 Kissonerga-Skalia. – 3.3 Marki-Alonia. – 3.4 Sotira-Kaminoudhia. – 4 The Cilicia Region. – 4.1 EB IVA-B Contexts in Cilicia. – 4.2 Kilise-Tepe. – 4.3 Kinet-Höyük. – 4.4 Mersin-Yumuktepe. – 4.5 Tarsus-Gözlü Kule. – 5 Analysis of the Architectural Elements in Cyprus and Cilicia. – 5.1 Discussion. – 6 Conclusions.

1 Introduction

This paper has two primary goals. To begin with, it seeks to thoroughly examine the architectural structures found in various Cypriot settlements attributed to the Philia *facies* (Kissonerga-*Mosphilia*, Kissonerga-*Skalia*, and Marki-*Alonia*), dating approximately from 2400-2350/2200 BCE,[1] along with evidence from the subsequent Early Cypriot (EC) I-II periods (Marki-*Alonia*, and Sotira-*Kaminoudhia*), dated approximately 2350/2200-2100 BCE. This examination aims to observe how architectural changes during the Philia period persisted into later phases. Concurrently, the architectural features of the contemporary Early Bronze (EB) IVA-B period in the Cilician region (Kilise-Tepe, Kinet-Höyük, Mersin-Yumuktepe, and Tarso-Gözlü Kule), situated in the southeastern part of Anatolia, will be analysed.[2]

Secondly, this study aims to explore the relationship between Cyprus and the Anatolian peninsula during this era, with a specific emphasis on identifying any Anatolian influences that manifested during the Philia period in Cyprus.

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1 Crewe 2015; Dikaios, Stewart 1962; Frankel, Webb 1999; 2013; Harris 1990; Knapp 2008; 2013; Papacostantinou 2013; Peltenburg 1982; 1993.

2 It is important to emphasise the difficulty in correlating different chronologies. In Anatolia, the Early Bronze Age is divided into three phases, while in Syria it is divided into four periods. As for Cyprus, the island has its own separate chronology. Consequently, when attempting to correlate these different chronologies, it may occur that the dating does not perfectly align.

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The study analyses the Philia *facies* focusing specifically on architectural remains. The investigation into architectures both in Cyprus and Anatolia examines several elements: a) the arrangement of structures and rooms, b) the construction techniques employed, with particular attention to walls and floor preparations, and c) the presence and positioning of various domestic installations, such as hearths and workbenches.

A final comparison of the evidence from Cyprus and Anatolia will be presented. This approach aims to deepen the understanding of the level of integration and interaction between Anatolian groups and Cypriot culture during the Philia period.

2 The Philia *Facies*

The Philia *facies* correspond to a brief transitional phase, ranging from 2400-2350/2200 BCE, marking the shift from the Late Chalcolithic period to the onset of the Early Bronze Age in Cyprus.

The first definition of this phase was introduced by Porphyrios Dikaios in 1946 following his archaeological investigations at Philia-*Laksia tou Kasinou* site,[3] located in the northern part of the island. These investigations led the scholar to identify several similarities, characteristic of a *facies* that would later be named after the homonym site, Philia, and interpreted as the initial manifestation of the Bronze Age in Cyprus.[4]

Despite the brevity of this chronological period, several significant and innovative changes are evident in technologies, economy, and society, in various archaeological sites, primary located in the northern part of the island, within a specific region known as Vasilia.

However, the identification of the Philia archaeological sites within Vasilia region has not always been straightforward. A major challenge in the study of Philia architecture is its poor preservation. The Philia *facies* represents a very brief phase, posing difficulties in identifying archaeological levels that can be attributed to this period. In fact, many settlements established during Philia endured for a considerable period, leading to the obliteration of older levels by subsequent phases, and architectural structures were often modified over time. Furthermore, due to the political situation in Cyprus following the Turkish occupation in 1974, archaeological investigations in the northern part of the island and the Vasilia region are impossible. Therefore, this situation makes it very difficult to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the *facies*.[5]

In recent years, research on the Philia *facies* has made significant progress, with a focus on the investigation of settlements located in the central and southern areas of Cyprus. Thus far, 20 sites,[6] comprising both settlements and necropolises, have been confidently attributed to the Philia *facies*. An additional 14 sites of uncertain attribution,[7] can also be considered. Among these archaeological sites, the majority are necropolises, whereas evidence related to settlements is limited and often incomplete. Only six settlements[8] are conclusively linked to the *facies*, among which Kissonerga-*Mosphilia*, Kissonerga-*Skalia*, and Marki-*Alonia* boast the most well-preserved architectural structures **[fig. 1]**.

3 Dikaios 1946.

4 Dikaios, Stewart 1962, 269-70; Frankel, Webb 1999-2006. For more information about the definition of the *facies* and the ongoing debate regarding chronological subdivision, refer to Bachhubber 2014, 142-4; Bolger 2007, 164-70; Bombardieri, Graziadio 2019, 41-6; Crewe 2014, 138-9; 2015, 133-5; Frankel 2000, 179-80; Frankel, Webb 2008, 288-90; 2011, 31-5; 2013; Harris 1990, 16-19; Swiny 1985, 115; Swiny, Rapp, Herscher 2003, 3; Webb 2013, 135-7.

5 Crewe 2015, 131-3.

6 The settlement and necropolis of Bellapais-*Vounourouthkia*, necropolis of Dhenia-*Kafkalla*, necropolis of Episkopi-*Bamboula*, necropolis of Khrysiliou-*Ammos*, settlement and necropolis of Kissonerga-*Mosphilia*, settlement of Kissonerga-*Skalia*, settlement of Kyra-*Alonia*, necropolis of Kyra-*Kaminia*, settlement of Marki-*Alonia*, necropolis of Marki-*Davari*, necropolis of Vounaros/*Pappara*, necropolis of Nicosia-*Ayia Paraskevi*, settlement of Philia-*Drakos B*, necropolis of Philia-*Laksia tou Kasinou*, settlement of Philia*Vasiliko*, necropolis of Philia/Vasiliko-*Kafkalla*, necropolis of Sotira-*Kaminoudhia A-B*, necropolis of Vasilia-*Kafkallia* and *Kilistra*, necropolis of Vasilia-*Loukkos Trakhonas* and the necropolis of Vasilia-*Alonia*. Frankel, Webb 1999, 7-13.

7 Settlement of Ambelikou-*Ayios Georghios*, necropolis of Anoyira-*Trapezi*, necropolis of Arpera Chiflik-*Mosphilos*, necropolis of Kalavasos-*Arkangelos*, necropolis of Kalopsidha-*Tsaodhi Chiflik*, Lefka/Peristerona, Orga-*Palialonia/Ambelia*, necropolis of Polis*Kokkina*, settlement of Sotira-*Kaminoudhia*, necropolis of Tokhni-*Latones*, settlement of Vasilia-*Klaodomandra*, settlement of Vasilia*Koukkoulina*, necropolis of Vasilia-*Myliades* and *Yala*. Frankel, Webb 1999, 7-13.

8 The other three settlements are: Bellapais-*Vounourouthkia*, Kyra-*Alonia* and Philia-*Vasiliko*. Additionally, there are five more Philia settlements that are less certain but should be considered for inclusion in the list: Ambelikou-*Ayos Georghios*, Philia-*Drakos B*, Sotira*Kaminoudhia*, Vasilia-*Klaodomandra* and Vasilia-*Koukkoulina*. Crewe 2015, 133; Frankel, Webb 1999, 7-13.

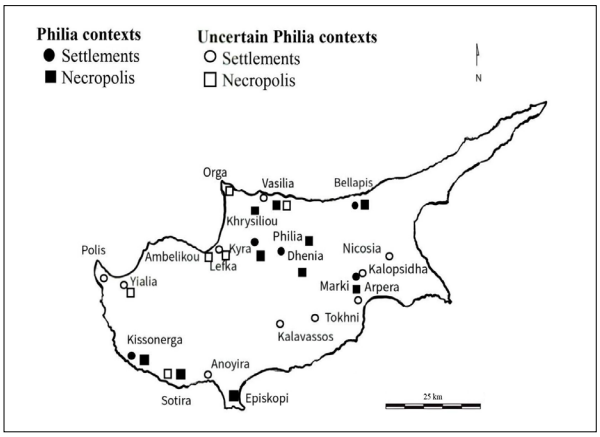


Figure 1
Map of Cyprus indicating Philia and uncertain Philia contexts

One of the most noticeable changes occurring during the Philia *facies* is evident in the appearance of rectilinear architectures replacing the monocellular circular houses characteristic of the Late Chalcolithic period. Along with the introduction of these new architectural layouts, domestic features such as hearths and workbenches also undergo some modifications, which will be further analysed in the article. Other innovative elements in the material culture of Philia encompass such as ceramic production, metallurgy, the creation of ornamental objects, changes in the economy, and shifts in funerary practices.

The pottery production of the Philia *facies* has garnered considerable scholarly interest,[9] with recent contribution by Frankel and Webb delving into the diffusion of pottery classes associated with Anatolian productions.[10] The most significant ceramic ware in terms of diffusion and variety of repertoire is the Red Polished Ware. From this class, other variants develop, including the *Red Polished Coarse*, the *White Painted*, the *Black Slip* and the *Combed Ware*. The Red Polished Ware,[11] characterised by its long spouts and geometric patterns, bears resemblance to materials from EB III–IV at the Karataş[12] site and EB II-III fragments from Tarsus.[13] Because of this, its features can be tracked back to a southwestern Anatolian influence. This ceramic exhibits a shiny red surface with engraved (rarely applied) geometric decorations filled with white chalk paste, creating a striking chromatic contrast with the red-polished background.

The Philia period witnesses the emergence of innovative metal[14] and ornamental objects,[15] suggesting the presence of a copper trade network within the island, as well as connections with Cycladic islands[16] and the rise of dominant groups within local communities. The most precise comparisons are found in south/western and central Anatolia, particularly at the Karataş-Semayük site, with materials dating to the beginning of EB II through the end of EB III in the local periodisation.[17]

Economic changes during Philia are most noticeable in agriculture and weaving activities. The most significant modifications are observed in agricultural production, including the introduction of the ox-drawn plough[18] and the arrival of new animal species in Cyprus, which led to the advent of animal husbandry.[19] The new agricultural tools resulted in a substantial increase in production and, con-

9 Dikaios, Stewart 1962.

10 Refer to Webb, Frankel 1999; 2008; 2013.

11 Bolger 2007, 177-9; Dikaios, Stewart 1962, 223-5; Frankel, Webb 1999, 14-31; 2008, 288-90; 2013, 64-70; Knapp et al. 1990, 149-55; Manning 1993, 48-9. For additional information regarding the other pottery classes, refer to Swiny 1985.

12 Frankel, Webb, Eslick 1996, 42; Mellink 1991, 170-2.

13 Knapp 2013, 270; Mellink 1991, 170-2.

14 Including spearheads, daggers, axes, spiral-shape earrings, hollow axe-shaped items, and ring-shape ingots. Frankel, Webb 1999, 31-3.

15 The more commonly attested types of objects are annular pendants (mostly made of picrolite), copper rings, and spiral-shaped earrings. Crewe 2015, 137; Frankel, Webb 1999, 34; 2004, 2-7; Dikaios, Stewart 1962, 274-7; Swiny, Rapp, Herscher 2003, 3-5.

16 For one dagger found in Karmi-*Palealona*, its Cycladic provenance has been confirmed. Regarding the hollow axe-shaped items and ring-shaped ingots, they can be compared to objects originating from the Milyes deposits on Kythnos.

17 Frankel, Webb, Eslick 1996, 43; Mellink 1991, 173.

18 Dikaios, Stewart 1962, 288-9; Frankel, Webb 1999, 39; Kouka 2009, 36.

19 Crewe 2015, 144-5; Frankel 2000, 176-7.

sequently, major changes in labour and social organisation. Similarly, the widespread use of biconical spindle-whorls[20] reflects the introduction of a new method of weaving known as *low whorl spinning*, underscoring the importance of textile production within Cypriot communities. Affinities between samples from Cyprus and Anatolia are not entirely precise, nonetheless, they suggest a considerable transformation in textile production on the island, possibly involving the exchange of both new technologies and textile fibres already known in Anatolia.[21]

Finally, changes are evident in funerary activities and burial practices, particularly in the elaborate chamber tombs of the Vasilia region. These tombs differ significantly from the simple Chalcolithic graves,[22] and are characterised by long *dromoi* providing access to rectangular chambers, often surrounded by lateral niches. During this period, burial kits include not only personal items belonging to the deceased but also *status* manufacts, such as new ceramic typologies, weapons, and metal objects. These changes may be associated with internal social shifts.[23]

3 Architectural Changes and Philia's Contexts

With the advent of the Philia *facies*, the emergence of linear architectural structures, replacing the circular single cell houses typical of the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods,[24] marks a significant shift from the previous era.[25] Other structural characteristics that define the organisation of these buildings involve alterations in construction techniques, such as the widespread use of mud-brick walls supported by stone plinths. Additionally, domestic features such as hearths undergo a complete transformation in shape and positioning compared to the previous period, now characterised by a rectangular shape and typically situated near the walls. The presence of workbenches, typically situated in a separate room from where the hearth is located, appears to suggest a functional separation of domestic activities within the household, an organisational strategy markedly different from that of the preceding Chalcolithic period.[26]

Given the circumstances, only few settlements have been identified, and three of them – Kissonerga-*Mosphilia*, Kissonerga-*Skalia*, and Marki-*Alonia* – boast the best-preserved architectures, forming the focus of the forthcoming discussion.

To provide a clearer understanding of the changes occurring during Philia, which frequently persist into the immediately subsequent phases, evidence related to the succeeding EC I-II periods will also be presented, where architectural evidence permits. Accordingly, the architectural structures dated to EC I-II found at Marki-*Alonia* (Phases C and D) will be discussed, along with, the EC I structures recovered from Sotira-*Kaminoudhia*, although not classified as a Philia settlement. This aims to gain a clearer understanding of the transition to the beginning of Bronze Age in Cyprus **[tab. 1]**.

20 The spindle-whorls are typically adorned with engraved spiral patterns. These items have been found at several Cypriot sites, including Philia-*Laksia tou Kasinou*, Philia/Vasiliko-*Kafkalla*, Sotira-*Kaminoudhia*, Nicosia-*Ayia Paraskevi*, Dhenia-*Kafkalla*, Kissonerga-*Mosphilia* and Marki-*Alonia*. Frankel, Webb 1999; Frankel, Webb, Eslick 1996, 43-4.

21 Frankel 2000, 172-6.

22 Most found at Aya Paraskevi, pit burials are the most prevalent burial type during the Chalcolithic period. Dikaios, Stewart 1962, 216.

23 Frankel, Webb, Eslick 1996, 46.

24 These houses were constructed using a combination of mud and reeds, resulting in mudwall structures. Peltenburg 1998, 54-6.

25 Dikaios, Stewart 1962, 269-70; Frankel 1998, 244-6; 2000, 180-3; Frankel, Webb 1996, 45-6; 2011, 32-3; Gordon 2005, 122-3; Kouka 2009, 33-7; Kozal 2016, 53-5; Paraskeva 2017, 73-5; Schaar 1985, 40-4; Steel 2004, 128-32; Swiny 1985, 115-16; Swiny, Rapp, Herscher 2003, 3; Webb 2009.

26 Frankel, Webb 2011, 31-2; Frankel, Webb, Eslick 1996, 44-5. During the Chalcolithic period, circular houses featured a single large, rounded hearth positioned at the centre of the dwelling, which served multiple purposes (including lighting, heating, and cooking).

Table 1 Chronological correspondence between Philia settlements considered

	Kissonerga-*Mosphilia*	**Kissonerga-*Skalia***	**Marki-*Alonia***	**Sotira-*Kaminoudhia***
Middle/Late Chalcolithic	Period 4a-b			
Philia *facies*	Period 5	Area D	Phases A-B	
EC I			Phase C	Area A-B-C
EC II			Phase D	

3.1 Kissonerga-Mosphilia

The extensive settlement is located in the western part of the island and spans a considerable chronological range, from its foundation during the Neolithic phase (late seventh millennium BC) with a major occupation during the Late Chalcolithic and Philia period, when it appears to have been abandoned around 2400/2300 BCE.[27] The site covers an area of 12 hectares, and the excavations explored 1600 m^2 densely populated by structures organised into two sectors (Main Area and *Upper Terrace*).

Edgar Peltenburg[28] identified five distinct periods, with only Period 5 associated with the Philia *facies*. This period exhibits a strong continuity of occupation and a peaceful transition from the Chalcolithic era.

During the preceding Period 4, Kissonerga underwent a significant reorganisation, which can be divided into two phases, 4A and 4B. Within the older Phase 4A, the Main Area underwent transformation, and various complexes suggest the presence of a more hierarchical society.[29] The most notable building from this period is the *Pithos House* (Structure 3),[30] a circular space containing a substantial amount of storage containers (58 *pithoi*), as well as tools and instruments related to olive oil production.

As Phase 4B approached, dominant architectures vanished – the *Pithos House* is destroyed by a fire – and the community appeared to regress into a more egalitarian and simplified organisation.[31]

Kissonerga appears to transition into the Philia *facies* and Period 5 without any violent disruptions; instead, several elements suggest continuity:

1. the settlement retains its previous clustered arrangement of houses;
2. on the ruins of the *Pithos House*, two new structures, 706[32] and 86,[33] emerge;
3. many structures built during Period 4 continue to be used during Period 5, even though none of them is well-preserved.[34]

However, some differences can be observed: the lack of storage buildings raises the hypothesis that the community was egalitarian during the Philia period; fire installations, especially ovens, during Philia are predominantly located outdoors; plaster is frequently used as covering for workbenches, floor preparations, platforms, and hearths. Notably, in Period 5, there is a hearth (78) positioned on a circular plastered platform, reminiscent of a typical Chalcolithic type observed at Kissonerga-*Mosphilia* during Periods 3 and 4.[35]

During the excavations, an irregular surface (187) was discovered above Structures 3 and 86, which hosted oven fragments (116), a plastered surface (880) and a section of a platform (2103)[36] **[fig. 3]**. Additional ovens (133-5) were found on Surface 132.[37]

27 Crewe 2015, 133; Frankel, Webb 2011, 31-3; Manning 1993, 39; Papacostantinou 2013, 131-4; Peltenburg 1991, 19-20; 1998, 52.

28 Peltenburg 1998.

29 Papacostantinou 2013, 133.

30 Peltenburg 1998, fig. 41.

31 Peltenburg 1998.

32 Structure 706 appears to be a reoccupation of the earlier *Pithos House*, and probably most of the activities carried out inside were related to metalworking. Peltenburg 1998, 53, fig. 44.

33 Structure 86, characterised by stone walls (Stone House), experienced two phases of occupation, Level 222, and Level 90. Peltenburg 1998, 53, fig. 44.

34 Peltenburg 1998, 53.

35 Peltenburg 1998, 58-9.

36 In addition to the aforementioned discoveries, a substantial quantity of *Red Polished* fragments, basins (114-15, 2129) and numerous *pits* (2133, 50/63) were uncovered on Level 187. Another *pit* was located adjacent to Platform 2103.

37 Within the quadrant, a *pithos* grave (504) was discovered.

Throughout Period 5, the presence of Philia *markers*, such as fire installations, plastered platforms, and floor preparations, is better understood through comparisons of Kissonerga-*Mosphilia* with other Philia contexts, particularly with Marki-*Alonia*.

3.2 Kissonerga-Skalia

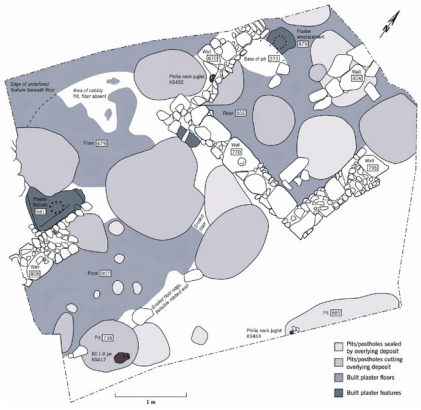
The site is situated on a hill near the coastline, a bit further south of Kissonerga-*Mosphilia*.[38] Recent excavations[39] have unveiled a stratigraphy ranging from the Philia *facies* to the Early – Middle Cypriot period (2500-1650 BCE).

The Philia structures are in Area D **[fig. 2]** and exhibit five levels of floor preparations with some wall foundations, although their preservation status is poor. Originally, these structures had a north-south orientation, but towards the end of the *facies*, they adopted a different orientation, running northwest/southeast, before being eventually abandoned around 1750 BCE.

The initial buildings, oriented from north to south, had irregular limestone and pebbles foundations with fragments measuring approximately 40-50 cm. These structures featured well-defined rooms with plastered floor preparations, suggesting enclosed environments.[40]

Two elements can be attributed to the Philia period: Structure 681, which originally seemed to have walls developing in elevation, while Structure 879 appears to constitute a typical *emplacement* element, likely a support for a ceramic container or mortar[41] **[fig. 3]**.

Deposits of materials overlying floor preparations, dated to the Philia period, are found sealed by subsequent levels. These include ceramic fragments and remnants of small objects.[42]



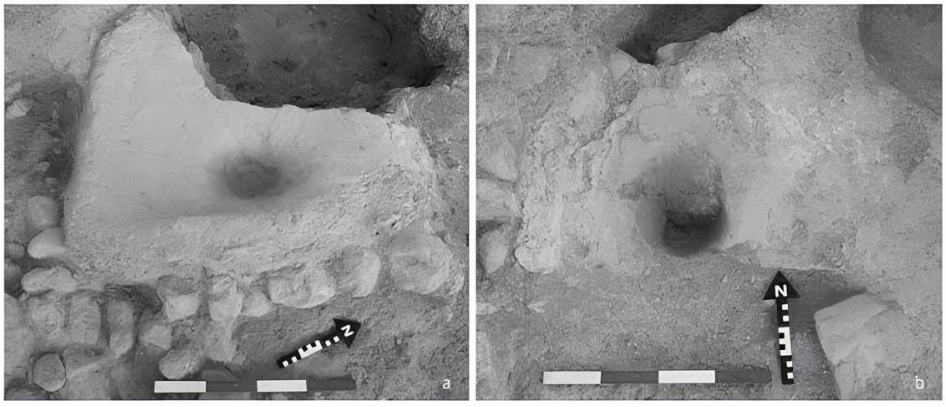


Figure 2 Kissonerga-*Skalia*, Area D at the end of the excavation campaign in 2014. Crewe 2015, 138, fig. 6

Figure 3 Kissonerga-*Skalia*, Area D: a. Structure 681; b. Structure 879. Crewe 2015, 139, figs 7a-b, p. 139

38 Crewe 2015, 132.
39 Crewe 2015, 131.
40 Crewe 2015, 140.
41 Crewe 2015, 140.
42 Crewe 2015, 141.

3.3 Marki-Alonia

Marki-*Alonia* stands as a significant settlement from the latter half of the third millennium BC, notable not only for its extensive excavation[43] but also for the continuity of its stratigraphical sequence, spanning from the Early Bronze Age to the Middle Bronze Age.[44] Located in the central plain of the island, at the northeastern foothills of the Troodos massif, the site reached a maximum extension of approximately 5 hectares over its 500 years of occupation.[45]

Among 33 identified architectural units, only three are attributed to the Philia *facies* (Phases A and B) **[figs 4a-b]**, which have suffered damage from subsequent constructions, excavation of *pits*, and post holes.

Phase A, dating around 2300 BCE, follows the settlement's foundation. The two oldest structures in the southwest area of the settlement, Compounds 1 and 2, suffered significant damage. Some postholes, in the northeast portion of the site, suggest temporary structures which likely included workspaces.[46]

In Phase B, single-story buildings with mudbrick walls on stone plinths surround courts[47] or *open spaces*. Communal activities, indicated by large ovens and storage containers, suggest shared use of food and beverages among a large group of people.[48] Compound 1 remains unaltered, while Compound 2 is replaced by a structure associated with Compounds 3 and 4, featuring a two-rooms plan and a shared court,[49] suggesting a close relation among these houses. They formed a larger nucleus and shared the *open space* for domestic tasks, primarily centred on cooking, as probably indicates a hearth or bread oven (2468) found adjacent to close to wall 2340.[50] Additionally, evidence of artisanal production is attested, such as the working of shells and flint, the crafting of bone tools, and ceramic production.

The subsequent phases (Phases C and D), corresponding to EC I and II, are better preserved and crucial for understanding the appearance, continuity, and potential reuse of Philia elements **[figs 4c-d]**.

With the onset of EC I (Phase C), there is an increase in population, leading to the expansion or reorganisation of previous structures and to the construction of new compounds, such as Compounds 6 and 7.[51]

Major changes concerning circular hearths and communal space occur in EC II (Phase D). The circular hearths, some of which are already attested during Phase C, complement the rectangular ones. The courts or *open spaces*, which appeared during Phase B, now seem to be divided and enclosed on at least three sides by structural walls. The absence of communal spaces and the appearance of houses with well-defined rooms may suggest social differentiation or a greater emphasis on private property.[52] This is probably also linked to an increased social complexity within Cypriot communities, which can be associated with greater productivity and perhaps the emergence of increasingly extensive trade networks, particularly related to the circulation of metals. The architectural indicators of the Philia *facies*, including, rectilinear architectures, specific construction techniques, hearths distribution, and workbenches, imply that a range of activities previously shared and carried out outdoors now took place within each home or involved a smaller number of people.[53]

43 The initial research in the region were conducted in 1900 by the Australian Cyprus Expedition, which involved some surface reconnaissance in the Alykos' river valley. Frankel 1998, 243-4.

44 Papacostantinou 2013, 139-40.

45 Frankel 1998, 244; Papacostantinou 2013, 139.

46 Frankel, Webb 2006, fig. 3.41; Webb 2009, 257-8.

47 The courts were likely defined by fences or other informal structures.

48 These activities likely involved working with stone, bone, horns, and shells. Frankel, Webb 2000, 486-91; Papacostantinou 2013, 139.

49 Frankel, Webb 2006.

50 Other indicators point towards the working of shells and flint, the crafting of bone tools, and ceramic production.
In the southeastern area, the presence of four pairs of postholes suggests the existence of small fences, and a pithos embedded in the floor contained the burial of a child. Frankel, Webb 2006, fig. 3.42; Knapp 2013, 274; Webb 2009, 258.

51 New structures (Compounds 6 and 7) were built above earlier Compound 3. Compound 4 is now an enclosed area to the west (Compound 8) and a courtyard to the east, which belongs to Compound 9, imposing on the previous Compound 1. Frankel, Webb 2006, figs 3.43-3.58.

52 Frankel, Webb 2000, 483-9.

53 Papacostantinou 2013, 152-3.

3.4 Sotira-Kaminoudhia

The site of Sotira-*Kaminoudhia*, situated in southern Cyprus, spans nearly one hectare on the southern slope of a hill to the south of the modern city of Sotira-*Kaminoudhia*.[54] Excavations in three areas (A, B and C) **[figs 9-10]** revealed a settlement with a brief occupation during the Middle Chalcolithic, a significant expansion during EC I, and a tragic end, likely due to a fire possibly triggered by an earthquake.[55] The settlement's architecture has a peculiar aspect, with rectangular units found next to square and triangular rooms and others that even incorporate curvilinear walls.

In Area A **[fig. 5]**, a complex of 25[56] adjoined rooms was discovered in the northern part of the site. Each unit seems to be equipped with a rectangular hearth and low, elongated workbenches along the walls in the adjacent room.[57] Communal spaces between rooms were narrow, suggesting most activities occurred inside. Notably, two hearths were uncovered, one rectangular plastered hearth in the northwest corner of Unit 6,[58] and a double rectangular hearth in the southeast corner of Unit 7.[59]

In Area B **[fig. 6 left]**, located to the west/southwest of Area A and to the northwest of Area C, significant insights into the site's abandonment were obtained.[60] Of note are two rooms uncovered within this area: Unit 12, and Unit 14.[61] Unit 12 comprises a wide, unroofed area with a delimited rectangular court. Interestingly, a copper spiral earring diagnostic of the Philia *facies* has been unearthed within it, providing evidence of the use of this space during this period. Due to the notable absence of domestic features, such as hearths or workbenches, this space has been interpreted as a ritual space.[62]

Unit 14 notable for its spacious dimensions and triangular shape, featuring a double hearth in the northern corner.[63] The later room represents a particularly unique example due to its distinctive construction technique in one of its walls (WS), which utilises ceramic fragments instead of the typically observed mudbricks.[64] Area C **[fig. 6 right]** revealed five environments: Units 2 and 25, Unit 8, Units 21 and 26. Unit 2 is the largest room with an area of 34 m^2 and a slightly quadrangular shape with a cardinal points orientation. In the northern corner of Unit 2, a hearth was found, being the sole one recovered in this area.[65]

Unit 8 revealed significant discoveries in the northern corner, including a stone platform,[66] a thick lime plaster layer[67] likely used as a floor preparation, two platforms and two *pits* indicating grain grinding/refining and storage of small quantities of food.[68]

In the western portion of the area the units exhibit variations in wall thickness. This discrepancy appears to be associated with the functional roles of the walls, distinguishing load-bearing walls from partition walls.[69]

54 Swiny 1985, 118.

55 Papacostantinou 2013, 140; Swiny 2003, 51; 2008, 44-8. Evidence of a tragic end is found in the skeletal remains discovered within the *Kaminoudhia* settlement. Specifically, in reference to Unit 44 in Area A, the discovery of a female skeleton, coupled with its position and the absence of grave goods, suggests that she may have been a victim of a catastrophic event, such as an earthquake. Swiny 2008, 45-7.

56 Among all the units, the best-preserved are Unit 1 and 3, 4, 19 and 20, 6, 7, 40 and 35. Papacostantinou 2013, 156-7; Swiny, Rapp, Herscher 2003, 10-34.

57 In Unit 1, there is the longest workbench, running along three walls. Near the benches, plaster basins (mortars) and coarse pottery, likely used for baking bread, are frequently found. Swiny 1989, 20.

58 The hearth within Unit 6 featured a plaster base capable of hosting a fire measuring 33 × 46 cm.

59 The hearth in Unit 7 was built into the middle of wall WAH, measuring nearly 18 × 32 cm and associated with a working area, indicated by an alignment of stones, which are preserved to a height of 2 metres and a width of 0.50 metres. Swiny, Rapp, Herscher 2003, 23.

60 Papacostantinou 2013, 157; Swiny, Rapp, Herscher 2003, 34-9.

61 The room was 5.5 × 3.3 × 6.3 m.

62 Swiny 2008, 48-50.

63 The fire next to wall WN was initially 26 cm wide and 38-40 cm deep, and it appears to be slightly separated from the other hearth, which measures 23 cm wide, 22 cm deep and 20 cm in length.

64 Swiny, Rapp, Herscher 2003, 39-42.

65 Swiny, Rapp, Herscher 2003, 39-42.

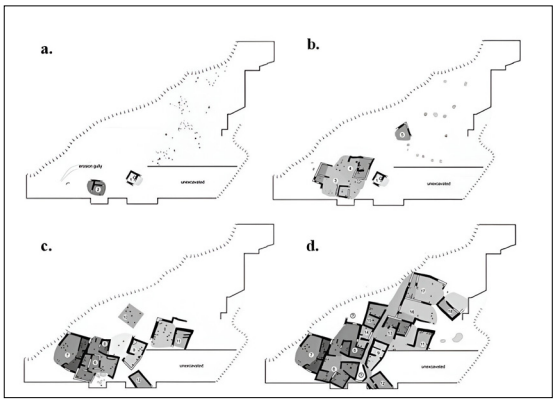
66 The stone platform is 30 cm high and 60 cm thick.

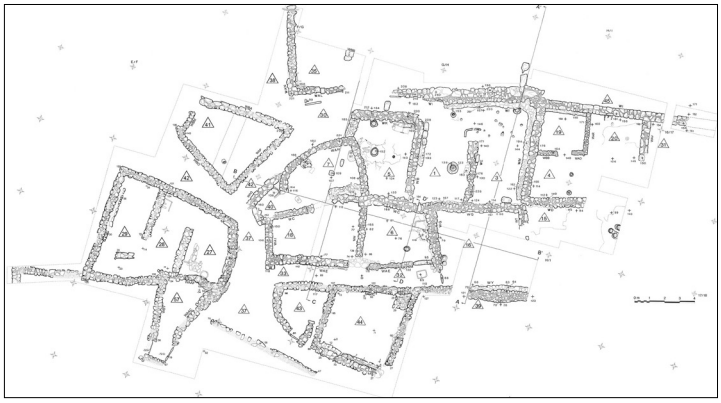
67 The lime plaster layer is 33 cm thick and 60 cm long.

68 Papacostantinou 2013, 157; Swiny, Rapp, Herscher 2003, 42-4.

69 WAR appears like a partition wall in relation to Unit 8 (50 cm thick). The other two walls, WAF and WAJ are 60 cm thick, while the partition wall delineating Unit 26 is narrower, measuring 40 cm in width. Swiny, Rapp, Herscher 2003, 64-6.

In summary, during the Philia period, architectures are characterised by rectilinear organisation and the presence of *open spaces* between houses for communal activities. With the advent of EC I, these communal spaces appear to lose their significance, likely due to a social reorganisation and increased complexity. During the same period, structures in Sotira-*Kaminoudhia* housed various domestic installations, such as hearths and workbenches, whose placement suggests that food preparation and cooking took place in different rooms within the house. The main change in Sotira-*Kaminoudhia* relates to building techniques, featuring stone foundations and walls constructed from stone or ceramic fragments, differing from the typical mudbrick walls found at Marki-*Alonia*. This variation is attributed to a combination of ancient techniques, innovative technologies, and a focus on structure thickness (see above).[70] Analysing the better-preserved EC I structures at Sotira-*Kaminoudhia*, following the Philia *facies*, reveals similarities with elements from the Philia period observed in Marki-*Alonia* and Kissonerga-*Mosphilia*. These similarities include as well rectilinear rooms, rectangular hearths, workbenches, and plaster floor preparations, all of which are common Philia *markers*.





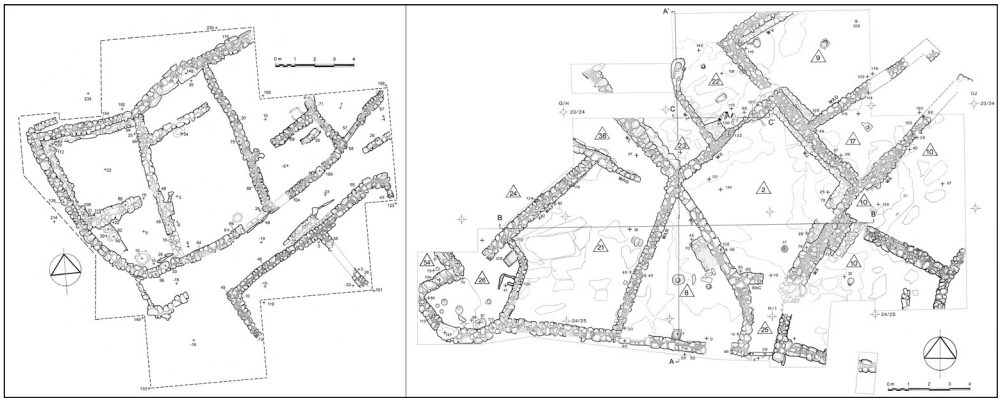


Figure 4
Marki-*Alonia* settlement phases: a. Phase A (= Philia facies); b. Phase B (= Philia facies); c. Phase C (=EC I); d. Phase D (=EC II). Webb 2009, 258, figs 6a-b; 259, figs 7a-b

Figure 5
Sotira-*Kaminoudhia*, Area A. Courtesy of the Sotira Archaeological Project

Figure 6
Sotira-*Kaminoudhia*, Area B (left) and Area C (right). Courtesy of the Sotira Archaeological Project

4 The Cilicia Region

The southeastern Anatolian region, known as Cilicia, is a key focus of this study, which is surrounded by mountains on three sides[71] and crossed by three major rivers: Cidno, Seyhan, and Ceyhan. This region is naturally divided into two parts by the Limonlu Çayı: Cilicia Tracheia and Cilicia Pedias.[72]

Cilicia Pedias, to the east, comprises a vast alluvial plain of approximately 8,000 km^2, including portions of the Taurus Mountains and a coastal plain irrigated by the Cidno, Seyhan, and Ceyhan rivers.

70 Swiny, Rapp, Herscher 2003, 64-6.

71 French 2013, 479.

72 The boundary between Cilicia Pedias and Tracheia is also marked by the Göksu River and a major communication route leading toward the Konya plain, further inland. French 2013, 479; Mellink 1991, 170; Novák et al. 2017, 150-1.

It is well-known for its fertility[73] and plays a pivotal role as a crucial crossroads for north-south and east-west commercial and communication route.[74] Additionally, it is known for hosting various settlements located on *tells*,[75] many of which were initially documented by Veronica M. Seton-Williams in the early 1950s.[76] Cilicia Tracheia, to the west, includes a substantial portion of the Taurus Mountains,[77] and is also known for its historically significant forests supplying Phoenicia and Egypt.

The southern Anatolian coast is situated no more than 75-100 km from the northern coast of Cyprus, with the closest point between Anamur and Silifke. Settlements in this area date back to the Neolithic Aceramic period,[78] with early use of obsidian from the Anatolian hinterland, transported to Mersin and Tarsus, and likely exported to Cyprus.[79] However, obsidian popularity waned rapidly, being supplanted by copper from the Upper Tigris region. This change led to increased copper extraction in the Taurus Mountains during the fourth-third millennia BCE and the spread of new metallurgical technologies in various parts of Anatolia. Combined with a growing demand for metal resources and craftsmanship, this led Anatolia to establish connections with various external entities, including Cyprus.[80]

The first archaeological investigations in these areas began in the 1930s with Einar Gjerstad, who conducted surveys between Anamur and Misis. Subsequently, John Garstang directed the analysis of settlements like Mersin-Yumuktepe[81] and Sirkeli-Höyük.[82] In the same period, Hetty Goldman[83] began studying Tarsus.

More recently, between 1994 and 1998, Nicholas Postgate[84] initiated archaeological investigations at the Kilise Tepe site. Between 2004 and 2005 studies in Cilicia Pedias have intensified thanks to scholars Mustafa H. Sayar and Oyman Girginer. However, only few projects have focused on new contexts, and there is an increasing need to establish a chronological correlation among the Cilician archaeological sites. To address this, the first *Cilician Chronology Workshop* took place in the summer of 2014 at Sirkeli-Höyük, followed by subsequent editions in 2015 at Tatarli and Sirkeli, and in 2017 at the Tarso-Gözlü Kule archaeological research centre.[85]

4.1 EB IVA-B Contexts in Cilicia

The Philia *facies* in Cyprus corresponds to the Early Bronze Age (EB) IVA-B horizon in Cilicia, dated between 2500-2000 BC **[tab. 2]**.[86] It's noteworthy that at Tarsus a slightly different chronology and nomenclature is used, initially proposed by Goldman **[tab. 2]**: EB IIA-B is dated between 2700-2400 BCE, and EB IIIA-B between 2400-2000 BCE, in accordance with the periodisation used by Anatolian archaeologists.[87] However, for a better correlation between stratigraphies related to the Early Bronze Age in Anatolian contexts, the chronology proposed by Paolo Matthiae will be adopted here.[88] This chronology, applied by the scholar in the study of Northwestern Syria, is chosen due to its reliability and the

73 Seton-Williams 1954, 121-3.

74 Ancient commercial routes had key settlements located along pathways. Among these, Mersin, Tarso, Adana and Misis. French 2013, 479; Mellink 1972, 165-6; Seton-Williams 1954, 123-4; Wawruschka 2010, 579-80.

75 Artificial mounds of various sizes and heights.

76 Studies by Seton-Williams in 1951 identified eight additional settlement contexts in the Cilicia region. See also French 2013, 480; Seton-Williams 1954, 125-6. Recent investigations have been carried out by Erhan in 2005 and Konyar in 2006. Wawruschka 2010, 579.

77 McMahon, Steadman 2015, 228-9.

78 Mellink 1991, 172.

79 The amount of obsidian found in Cyprus dated to the Neolithic Aceramic is limited. Nevertheless, it serves as an indicator of searoutes from Cilicia to Byblos, occasionally extended to Cyprus. However, it does not suggest the complete inclusion of the island within the Syro-Cilician *koiné*. Mellink 1991, 173-4.

80 Mellink 1991, 173-4; Yener, Vandiver 1993, 237-8.

81 Garstang 1953, 1-10.

82 Garstang 1937.

83 Goldman 1956.

84 Postgate 1998, 127-9.

85 Novák et al. 2017, 170.

86 Matthiae 2013, 181.

87 Goldman 1956; Novák et al. 2017, 162; Perello 2011, 42-3, 288-93. See also Mellink 1965.

88 Matthiae 2013, 181. Refer also to Novák et al. 2017, 182.

geographical proximity of Cilicia to the latter area. Therefore, it has been decided to adopt Matthiae's terminology in the analysis of the Early Bronze Age Cilician settlements considered **[tab. 3]**.

In the preceding EB II period at Tarsus there was a notable increase in economic prosperity, marked by the establishment of wide-range relations[89] which endured into EB III. However, when viewed across the broader Anatolian mainland during the EB IV period, a less optimistic picture emerges.[90] During the EB IV, as highlighted by Bachhubber,[91] there was a dramatic decrease in the number of settlements, contrasting with the preceding EB I-II-III periods (3100-2500 BC).

Many scholars have formulated theories regarding the causes of this crisis on Anatolian land. James Mellart,[92] during surveys in the Konya plain, interpreted the decreased number of the settlements as the outcome of a potential migration.[93] According to Frankel, Webb and Eslick this period of crisis is believed to have been primarily determined by overexploitation of resources in the Anatolian territory,[94] which likely forced many agricultural communities to relocate elsewhere. It was precisely following this period of decline that the relation with Cyprus intensified, in fact, the island would have been a choice motivated by its geographical proximity and the previous relationships established as early as EB II-III.[95] Initially, this relationship would have been more occasional and likely involved adult males exploring the island, as evidenced by the discovery of metal weapons and objects. However, with the advent of the EB IV, it would have intensified with the arrival of entire Anatolian family groups in Cyprus, which would have settled on the island, leading to the emergence of the Philia *facies* and the transmission of knowledge concerning metalworking and craftsmanship.[96] Within Cilicia, 43 settlement contexts provide evidence of occupation dating back to the Bronze Age.[97]

However, in many of these contexts, the stratigraphy yields only faint traces of the beginning of the Bronze Age, primarily represented by ceramic fragments. Analysis of architectural remains dating to the EB IVA-B phase is possible in only four settlements: Kilise-Tepe, Kinet-Höyük, Mersin Yumuktepe, and Tarso-Gözlü Kule. For each context, when possible, structures related to the EB III and EB IVA-B period (corresponding to Philia in Cyprus) will be presented[98] **[tab. 3]** **[fig. 7]**.

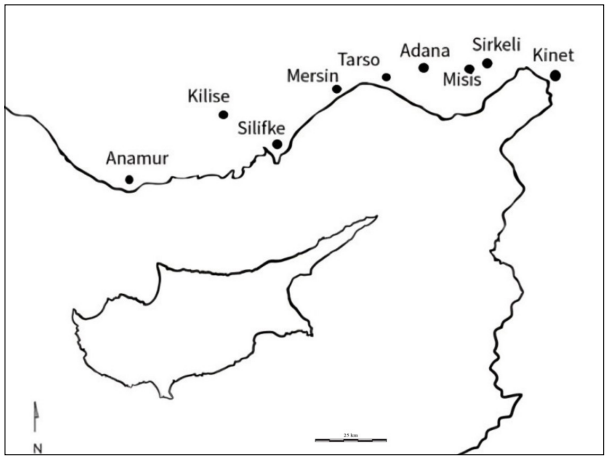


Figure 7
Map showing the position of the mentioned Early Bronze Age Cilician contexts

89 These relations included the Amuq region, the trans-Amanus area in northern Syria, and centres in the Taurus Mountains and the plains of Konya and Aksaray. Mellink 1991, 170.

90 Refer to Mellaart 1962.

91 Bachhubber 2014, 143-5.

92 Mellaart 1962; Paraskeva 2017, 87-9.

93 Mellaart 1962 suggests that Indo-European populations moving from the Balkans caused the destruction and abandonment of settlements during EB II, leading to a displacement of Anatolian populations from western coastal areas to the eastern part of the peninsula.

94 Webb, Frankel and Eslick support the theory that a combination of natural events, human activities, and social-economic changes contribute to depopulation and land overexploitation to meet growing community demands. Frankel, Webb, Eslick 1996, 47-50.

95 Bachhubber 2014, 139-42, 144-5.

96 Frankel 2000, 179-84; 2005, 22.

97 Alyahanun, Anberinharki, Boz Höyük, Çavuşlu, Dervişli, Domuz I, Domuz Tepe, Eşkiler, Geçemey Höyük, Haci Bozan, Hamzali Buran Çiftlik, Hesigin Tepe, Höyük, Imam Oğlu, Kabarsa, Kara Höyük, Kazanli, Kilise-Tepe, Kinet-Höyük, Kizil, Kürkçüler, Mersin Yumuktepe, Minareli Höyük, Misis, Molla Ahmet, Mustafa Alinin Hüyügü, Nerğis, Pascu Hüyügü, Sirkeli, Sultan Tepe, Tarmil Höyük, Tarso, Tenevardi I, Tepesidelik, Tilan Höyük, Tirmil Tepe, Velican Tepe, Talaközü Hüyük, Yaşil Höyük, Yenice Höyük, Yeniköy II e Zeytinli. Seton-Williams 1954, 147-74.

98 Matthiae 2013, 181. Refer also to Novák et al. 2017, 182.

Table 2 Chronological correspondence between Cyprus and Anatolia

Approximates dates BC	Cyprus chronological terminology	Anatolia chronological terminology	
		Matthiae 2013	Tarsus-Gözlü Küle*
2700	Late Chalcolithic	EB III	EB IIA
2600			
2500		EB IVA	EB IIB
2400	Philia *facies*		EB IIIA
2300		EB IVB	
2200	EC I		EB III
2100	EC II		
2000		MB I	MB I

* Goldman 1956; Novák et al. 2017; Perello 2011.

Table 3 Chronological correspondence between Cilician settlements considered

	Kilise-Tepe	Kinet Höyük	Mersin Yumuktepe	Tarsus-Gözlu Küle
EB III	Phase Vf	Phase VI.3, Period 24	Level XIIb	EB IIA
EB IVA	Phase Ve	Phase VI.2, Periods 23-22	Level XIIa	EB IIB-IIIA (Phases A-B)
EB IVB		Phase VI.1, Periods 21-19		EB IIIB (Phase C)

4.2 Kilise-Tepe

Kilise-Tepe, located in the Göksu plain, overlooked the main ancient trade route connecting Anatolia with the eastern Mediterranean.[99] Initial investigations were carried out by Postgate[100] between 1994 and 1997 in collaboration with the Silifke Museum. Subsequent excavations, led by Postgate and Tevfik E. Šerifoğlu from 2007 to 2013 with a team from Konya Selçuk University, focused on quadrants H20 c-d[101] and G19-20.[102]

These last excavations revealed two significant phases: Phase Vf (=EB III) and Phase Ve (= EB IV).

Phase Vf, following visible destruction in the previous EB II, indicates uninterrupted occupation with new structures regularly built over the previous ones.[103] Two large *pits* affect a substantial portion of Phase Vf deposit. Four subphases are identified, and Phase Vf4, the latest, is better preserved and yields the remains of six rooms: Rooms 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, and 55.[104] Rooms 51, 52, 54 and 55 feature well-constructed mudbricks walls oriented and set on stone foundations,[105] with entrances facilitating the passage between the various rooms,[106] pink-plastered walls[107] and plastered floors[108] suggesting enclosed spaces. Rooms 50 and 53, on the other hand, appear to be outdoor spaces.

Within quadrant G19d, a large circular fire installation (FI 11/14), likely an oven, dates to the later phase of Phase Vf4. After the abandonment of this area at the end of EB III, it became primarily used for waste disposal in the succeeding phase.

99 Postgate 1998, 128-9.

100 Postgate 1998, 128-41.

101 Postgate 1998, 137-40.

102 Greaves, Helwing 2001, 501-2; Novák et al. 2017, 152-3; Šerifoğlu 2019, 69-70.

103 The structures are set on the floor or on ancient foundations. Postgate, Thomas 2007, 80-1.

104 The first three subphases, Levels Vf 1-3, lack evidence of defined spaces. They contain remains of walls set on stone foundations Phase Vf-1: W248 and W247; Phase Vf-2: W245; Phase Vf-3: W243), often with a specific orientation and occasionally with clay floorings (such as a green clay floor, 5373, related to Phase Vf-2). Postgate, Thomas 2007, 97-9, 825, fig. 483.

105 W239 and W232 in Room 51; W735 and W736 in Rooms 54 and 55. Postgate, Thomas 2007, 98.

106 In Room, 52 a door 1.30 m wide allows passage from Room 50 to the north to Room 53 to the south. W735 appears to end with a jamb near a probable doorway, suggesting access to Rooms 55 and 50. Postgate, Thomas 2007, 98.

107 W232, between Room 51 and Room 52, has its northern portion plastered. Walls W735 and W736 (Rooms 54 and 55) have pinkish plaster traces on their western facades. Postgate, Thomas 2007, 98.

108 Room 52 had a plaster floor along the south portion of W240. Postgate, Thomas 2007, 98.

During Phase Ve (=EB IV), remains are poorly preserved and affected by numerous *pits* and subsequent structures, hindering the identification of intact rooms. However, elements of significant domestic nature were recovered.[109] The oldest structure is a fire installation (FI 97/7), forming an oblong platform.[110] The central part of Phase Ve is marked by large *pits*,[111] suggesting an *open space* for waste disposal. An imposing wall (W8012) separates a hearth area (FI 11/5) from a northern section, indicating multiple uses. Near the hearth, a ceramic container and a basalt mortar suggest food preparation, while loom-weights imply a nearby textile processing area.[112] The final part of Phase Ve reveals two walls (W224 and W229) using cornered stones, oriented north-northwest to south-southeast. The foundations are sealed by deposits related to at least three consecutive levels, marking the transition to the Middle Bronze Age (=Phase IVa).[113]

4.3 Kinet-Höyük

Kinet is located on the coast of the Bay of Iskenderun (Alexandretta) near Yeşikoy, at the extreme eastern end of Cilicia.[114] The site has been occupied since the sixth millennium BCE, and until the mid-first century BCE, followed by a long abandonment until the late twelfth century when Kinet was reoccupied until the fourteenth century.[115] The site was first investigated by Bilkent University (Ankara), from 1992 to 2012, under the direction of Marie-Henriette Gates.

The settlement is situated on a triangular-shaped elevation, covering an area of 3.3 hectares and 26 metres high.

Remains dating back to the Early Bronze Age (mostly EB III) were investigated through the opening of three trenches – referred to as M, M2, and M3397 – within the same Area M, which revealed a stratigraphic sequence composed of 14 phases.[116] EB III corresponds to Phase VI.3 (Period 24), EB IVA corresponds to Phase VI.2 (Periods 23-2), and EB IVB corresponds to Phase VI.1 (Periods 21-19). Those levels provide architectural evidence preserved in a very fragmented state due to subsequent reuse phenomena.

With the onset of EB III (Phase VI.3, Period 24), there is a reorganisation of the structures originally built during EB II (Phase VI.4, Periods 29-5). Interestingly, EB II architectures[117] were characterised by rooms overlooking a central court or *open space*, which appeared to either disappear or be encompassed within the houses.[118] In the EB III, the architecture organisation becomes more irregular, and the walls rise above stone foundations located within excavated ground enclosures, often reused to support buildings from subsequent epochs.

Subsequently, in the EB IVA (Phase VI.2, Periods 23-22), the structures feature stone plinth foundations with walls made of two or three stone alignments preserved.[119] Also attributable to this period are evidence of food storage, often strongly associated with imposing structures, suggesting a redistribution on a larger scale, and elite residences positioned on either side of a cobbled alley across the settlement.

Finally, during the EB IVB phase (Phase VI.1, Periods 21-19), there is evidence of architectures with walls entirely made of stone, preserved up to a 1 m height. Additionally, there is a proliferation of new ceramic types, such as goblets, seemingly influenced by Tarsus, and ceramics of Canaanite typology.[120]

109 Postgate, Thomas 2007, 99-101.

110 The hearth has a diameter of 1.85 metres and has 8 alternating layers of clay and small pebbles, forming a 30 cm thick conglomerate. Šerifoğlu 2019, 72; Postgate, Thomas 2007, 100, fig. 81.

111 In total 13 *pits* have been excavated in quadrant H20d.

112 Šerifoğlu 2019, 72.

113 Postgate, Thomas 2007, 100.

114 Gates et al. 2015, 157; Greaves 2001, 490-2.

115 Gates et al. 2015, 157.

116 Gates et al. 2015, 159.

117 In EB II architecture, mudbrick walls were constructed upon thickly plastered surfaces, lacking foundations. Gates et al. 2015, 159; Novák et al. 2017, 176-81.

118 Gates et al. 2015, 159 ; Novák et al. 2017, 176-81.

119 Novák et al. 2017, 178.

120 Novák et al. 2017, 178.

4.4 Mersin-Yumuktepe

The site, just northwest of Mersin, stands on a partially eroded mound along the Soğuksu River, with a height of 23 metres and an extension of 5 hectares.[121] Initial investigations by Garstang in 1936 identified a stratigraphic sequence from the Neolithic to the Middle Ages, organised into Levels from XXXIII to I. According to Garstang, Late Chalcolithic (3500-2900 BCE) corresponds to Levels XV-XIIb.[122] Following this, Level XIIa is associated with the Early Metal (or Copper) Age (2900-2500 BCE),[123] and Levels XI-VIII are associated to the Bronze Age (2000-1500 BCE).[124]

During subsequent investigations in 1993, new discoveries have called into question this initial chronological sequence.[125] Therefore, the chronology adopted by Mirko Novák,[126] proposes that the Late Chalcolithic period (4500-3800 BCE) corresponds to Levels XV-XIV. There is then a gap in the stratigraphic sequence corresponding to EB I.[127] Subsequently, EB II is attributed to Level XIII, EB III to Level XIIb, and EB IVA-B to Level XIIa.

Level XIIb (=EB III) is in precarious condition, impacted by subsequent Level XIIa structures. Four rooms (110,[128] 111, 112 and 113) from this period lie beneath the Hittite fort of Level VII (Late Bronze Age I). Room 111 exhibits traces of an extensive workbench leaning against the walls that delineate its northwest and southwest limits, with ash layers, and burnt ceramics.[129]

The original floor of Room 112 reveals impressions, indicative of a vertical loom, supported by loom weights findings.[130] In the northeast corner of the room, evidence of a clay oven and andirons fragments with burning traces were discovered, with a central hearth surrounded by ash deposits[131] **[fig. 15]**.

Level XIIa (=EB IV), like the previous Level XIIb, suffers disturbance from *pits* excavation and subsequent inhabitants attempting to clear space for new structures,[132] accompanied by signs of destruction and conflagration. The identified architectures have walls, extensively destroyed later, which seem to be attributable to two closely related but distinct phases, lacking distinct flooring. In elevation, these structures likely featured walls nearly 1 m thick, constructed with high-quality, large and dark-coloured bricks. The construction of a fortification wall, extensively destroyed by subsequent structures, likely protected a settlement with rectangular structures on mudbrick foundations.[133]

Despite significant damage in Mersin from reutilisation and overlay of subsequent structures, a shared construction technique involving mud bricks walls set atop stone plinths is evident in EB II and EB IV.

However, mudbrick foundations are uniquely identified in Level XIIa (EB IV).

Although domestic artifacts are limited, a noteworthy discovery within Room 112 is an oven with spits, suggesting a clear culinary function for the installation.

121 Novák et al. 2017, 157.

122 Garstang 1953, 155-9, 167-9.

123 Garstang 1953, 181-2.

124 Garstang 1953, 209-10, tab. 2.

125 Novák et al. 2017, 156.

126 Novák et al. 2017, 158.

127 According to Garstang, the occupation gap, spanning a significant period of 1000 years (3800-2800 BCE), didn't exist. Garstang 1953, 1-10; Novák et al. 2017, 159.

128 Room 110 revealed a 60 cm thick deposit of ashes, containing Chalcolithic pottery. Other discoveries include a stone object, a miniature cup, and two daggers measuring 16 and 19 cm in length. Garstang 1953, 168-72, 181-2, fig. 117.

129 Garstang 1953, 168-73, 181-2, fig. 117.

130 The loom weights in Room 112 have a flat base, conical shape, and each weight about two pounds. Garstang 1953, 171-2.

131 Garstang 1953, 167, fig. 106; 173, figs 110-12.

132 Garstang 1953, 181-2.

133 Novák et al. 2017, 159.

4.5 Tarsus-Gözlü Kule

Tarsus, near the coast in southwestern Cilicia, exhibits evidence of occupation from the Neolithic period to the final phase of the Early Bronze Age.[134] Initial investigations by Hetty Goldman[135] (1935-39 and 1947-49) aimed to establishing a prehistoric chronological sequence in Cilicia and explore connections with the Aegean and Near Eastern areas. Recent excavations (2007, 2008-2010, 2012, 2014, and 2017), sponsored by Boğaziçi University,[136] focused on Tarsus' southern outskirts.

The correspondence between Matthiae's chronology and Tarsus periodisation is as follows: EB III corresponds to Tarsus EB IIA, EB IVA corresponds to Tarsus EB IIB-IIIA (= Phases A and B), and EB IVB corresponds to Tarsus EB IIIB (= Phases C-I, C-II, C-III, and C-IV) **[tabs 2-3]**.[137] The architectures will be presented following Matthiae's chronology.

During the EB III two roads intersect perpendicularly[138] with four structures facing them.[139] The houses appear to have two types of layouts: bipartite or tripartite. Bipartite structures[140] feature a square room with a hearth and a smaller rear space, while tripartite houses have a front portico in addition to these features.[141] The structures appear well-built, with mudbrick walls following a fixed orientation.[142] Each of them has a hearth, which could be circular or rectangular, centred or off-centred within the main room.[143] Some houses also feature squared workbenches made of plaster near walls and close to the hearth (TAR 2) **[fig. 8]**[144] or located in the back room.

Despite earthquakes, cultural continuity remains during EB III, albeit with minor adjustments, such as the abandonment of porticos and the relocation of hearths, which are generally placed centrally within the main room facing the entrance. The period ends with the erection of a defensive wall and the introduction at the beginning of EB IVA of new architectural layouts, notably the appearance of a central *hall* and an open front portico.[145]

EB IVA reveals the impact of the preceding destruction, with earlier structures persisting as ruins[146] (Phase A).

In subsequent Phase B, structures (TAR 14-15)[147] and independent spaces (TAR 12-13) are found. The scarcity of stone material leads to stone foundations being reserved only for larger structures,[148] while most architectures use clay.[149]

134 Blue 1997, 39.

135 Goldman 1956.

136 Novák et al. 2017, 161.

137 Goldman 1956, 21-4, 34-40; Perello 2011, 42-3, 288-93.

138 The north-south street is 32 metres long, and the east-west road is 23 metres long and 2 metres wide. Schaar 1985, 37.

139 Three additional structures (TAR 5-7) have been discovered north of a northwest/southeast-oriented street. Next to the hearth in TAR 5, there is a small workbench. Perello 2011, 289. The structures that face the roads are TAR 1 and 2 to the north, TAR 3 and 4 to the south. Goldman 1956, 14-20.

140 TAR 2 and TAR 3. Schaar 1985, 38.

141 TAR 1 and TAR 4. Schaar 1985, 38.

142 The walls are generally 50-60 cm thick. Perello 2011, 289.

143 TAR 2-1 and TAR 4-3 both had off-centre hearths. A bit south of TAR 3-4 and TAR 4-4, a burned area probably indicates an oval hearth with two elevated projections resembling spits. The preparation of the hearth stood at approximately 20.75 cm. Nearby another oval hearth, measuring 80 × 60 cm, is identified above a yellow clay preparation. Goldman 1956, 14-20; Perello 2011, 289.

144 Goldman 1956, 16; Schaar 1985, 38. These houses have been compared to those of Alambra (sector A) in Cyprus. However, there is a divergence in the use of space: in Tarsus, the front room is dominant, whereas in Alambra, it is the rear space. Perello 2011, 289.

145 Schaar 1985, 40. The defensive wall provides evidence of the presence of a higher authority capable of commissioning extensive works. Structures dated to the latest stage of EB III are TAR 8-10, located to the north of the street, and TAR 11 to the south. Perello 2011, 290, fig. 159.

146 Goldman 1956, 32.

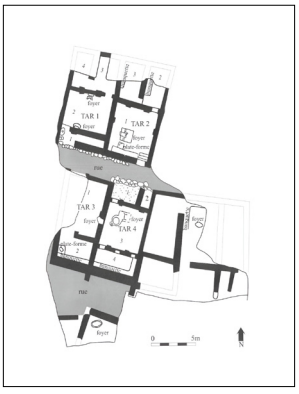
147 TAR 12, 13, and 15 cover an area of 34 square metres. TAR 14, with its four spaces, has an area of 73 square metres. Perello 2011, 290.

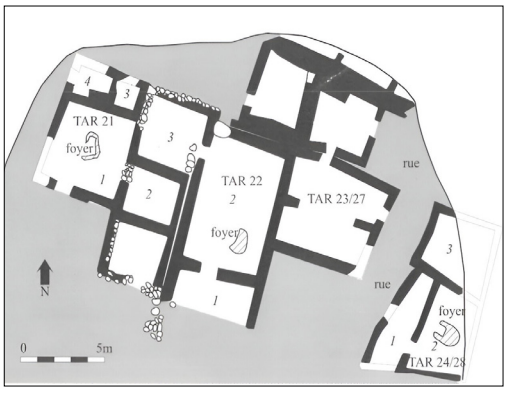
148 TAR 15 stands out for foundations made of particularly large stones, about 75 cm wide. The walls, made of raw bricks, had a stone base. Goldman 1956, 32; Perello 2011, 290.

149 Goldman 1956, 32; Perello 2011, 289.

EB IVB, divided into four subphases (= C-I, C-II, C-III, C-IV) sees architectural changes. In Phase C-I, some houses (TAR 15/20,[150] 21, 22,[151] 23/27) and a north-south-oriented road persist.[152] TAR 21 notably features a large semicircular hearth (1.50 × 1.30 m) accompanied by andirons fragments. Between Phases C-II and CIII, conglomerates of rooms emerge, with four structures coming to prominence in Phase C-II (TAR 25, 26, 27/23, 28/24),[153] which remain in use during phases C-III and C-IV with minimal modifications.[154] Notably, in Phase C-II, within TAR 24/28 a semicircular hearth is discovered **[fig. 9]**, which continues to be in use in the subsequent phases (TAR 28/24) **[fig. 10]**.[155] In Phase C-IV the remaining rooms evolve into autonomous spaces, with TAR 26 featuring a central hearth with a parapet. TAR 27/23, also possess an oblong-shaped hearth, and TAR 25 exhibits a clay staircase with at least nine steps.[156]

The architectural analysis of the four Cilicia contexts presents a relatively uniform picture. The structures feature rectilinear plans, consisting of few rooms, generally two or three, delimited by walls constructed using the same building technique involving mudbricks and stone foundations. Structural elements exhibit the same characteristics, while fire installations present a more varied panorama, particularly in terms of shape, with circular/semicircular, or oval hearths being commonly observed. Workbenches made of plaster are discovered at Tarsus in EB III and appear to have a close association with the hearth or are located in an adjacent, albeit separate, room. During the EB II period, the Kinet-Höyük settlement shows a distinctive architectural organisation, with houses arranged around a court. However, this organisation gradually diminishes during the EB III. This arrangement is not observed in the other Cilician contexts, although this could also be attributed to the poor preservation of the archaeological remains.





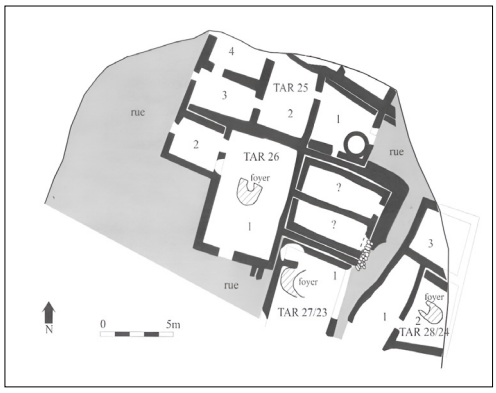


Figure 8 Tarsus-Gözlü Kule, EB III structures. Perello 2011, fig. 156

Figure 9 Tarsus-Gözlü Kule, EB VIB, Phase C-II. Perello 2011, fig. 161

Figure 10 Tarsus-Gözlü Kule, EB VIB, Phases C-III/IV. Perello 2011, fig. 162

150 TAR 15/20 is the only one in use from the preceding phases. Goldman 1956, 34-5.

151 TAR 22 had a rectangular floor plan of 4 × 6.50 metres. Two entrances have been identified: on in the north-western corner leading to an open space, and a second one to the south. Goldman 1956, 34.

152 Goldman 1956, 35.

153 Goldman 1956, 35-7; Perello 2011, 291-2.

154 Phase C-III structures are TAR 25, 26, 28/24. Phase C-IV presents the same structures with the addition of TAR 27/23. Goldman 1956, 37.

155 The semicircular heart found within TAR 24/28 resembles EB II types. Goldman 1956, 36-7; Perello 2011, 291-2.

156 The staircase probably led to a second floor, as evidence in Kültepe suggest. Goldman 1956, 38; Perello 2011, 292.

5 Analysis of the Architectural Elements in Cyprus and Cilicia

The significance of analysing the architectures and domestic elements distinctive of the Philia *facies* in Cyprus lies in the possibility that these elements may have been influenced by Anatolian culture. This examination helps to understand the interaction between Anatolian groups and the local components. The following elements will be considered: a) the organisation of the structures; b) the construction techniques; c) the presence and location of fire installations and workbenches.

The better-preserved Philia architectures are found at Marki-*Alonia* (Phase B), and at Sotira *Kaminoudhia*. There is interesting evidence concerning the post-Philia evolution, with structures referred to period EC I. Both at Marki (Phase B) and Sotira (EC I) architectures are rectilinear,[157] clustered and closely spaced. At Marki two or three rooms surround a court, likely used for food preparation, where *pits*[158] and fire installations are visible. In Phase B courts are not delimited, only in the following periods (EC I-II, Phases C and D) there is a wall delimitation of the space. No open spaces can be identified at Sotira, and rooms are collectively accessible.[159]

In Cilicia, Kinet-Höyük and Tarsus-Gözlü Kule provide key insights. Kinet's EB II structures (Phase VI.4) resemble Marki Phase B, featuring rooms arranged around a court. However, this layout appears to gradually diminish in significance during EB III (Phase VI.3, Period 24), with a reduced emphasis on *open spaces*.[160] Limited EB IVA evidence suggests a shift towards imposing residential structures in EB IVB, indicating social changes.

Tarsus EB III structures are tripartite or bipartite (see above), and have precise rectangular plans, which no change in EB IVA (Phases A and B), but only a reduced room hierarchy. In EB IVB (Phase C), Tarsus structures cluster randomly, with some open spaces lacking communal features.

Construction techniques employed in Cyprus and Anatolia appear to be very similar. The evidence of walls consists of a stone plinth upon which the mudbrick walls were constructed. In Cyprus, residential structures primarily exhibit plaster floors[161] with stone foundations supporting the mudbrick walls.

During the EC I period, changes are observed in Sotira, particularly in the emergence of a distinct construction technique and a different functionality associated with walls thickness (see above). Similarly, Cilician contexts provide a homogeneous picture and with greater evidence of the use of plaster for wall coverings.[162] Plaster could serve various functions: structural, functional, and aesthetical.[163] Regarding floor preparations, only some contexts (Kilise-Tepe, Kinet-Höyük, and partially Tarsus) have provided information on these elements. Only at Tarsus during the EB IVA preparations made of stones were found as support to more imposing structures.

The analysis of domestic elements, including hearths/ovens and workbenches in Cyprus and mentioned Anatolian contexts reveals similarities. In Cypriot contexts, fire installations generally have rectangular or circular shapes. Circular hearths are consistently found across the examined periods (Late Chalcolithic, Philia, and EC I-II), while rectangular fire installations are distinctive of the Philia *facies*.[164] This shift in form is seen as an adaptation to rectilinear plans,[165] emphasising the functional aspect and diminishing the symbolic value as a family gathering point. At Kissonerga-*Mosphilia* (Periods 4 and 5), there is a notable shift of hearths from the interior to the exterior of structures. This change

157 At Sotira more extravagant plans are present as well. For Example, Unit 6 and 40 (Area A), trapezoidal, and Unit 8 (Area C), triangular.

158 *Pits* were probably used both for waste disposal and for storage. Papacostantinou 2013, 139-40.

159 Most units are single rooms; some divided later into interconnected rooms with a single entrance, such as Units 1-3 and 40-7-18.

160 The court was likely abandoned due to a greater need to define private property, as it constituted a communal space.

161 These architectural elements are often subject to later alterations for the construction of other domestic features such as hearths, ovens, and *pits*.

162 The plaster used in these contexts is not always the same, varying based on the locally available materials, typically consisting of a gypsum or calcite-based mixture. An evolution of this trend is evident at the site of Kinet-Höyük, Phase VI.1 (=EB IVB), where walls entirely constructed from local stone are found.

Similar to Cyprus, the floorings have a plaster coating, which is often more explicitly connected to the plaster on the walls, especially at Kinet.

163 The structural function is seen especially where wall covering is closely connected with flooring, creating a more compact and solid structure. This functional aspect makes the structure more impermeable. The aesthetic of plaster coverings is enhancing the visual appeal of the wall itself.

164 Only sporadic findings are attributed to EC I-II at Marki and Sotira.

165 There is a shift of installations towards the walls during the Philia *facies*, in contrast to the central position occupied by circular hearths during the Late Chalcolithic period.

may be linked to a difference in use during Period 5, when installations accommodate larger groups, leading to their placement in more accessible areas.

Cilician hearths, especially in Tarsus, exhibit a heterogeneous character during the EB III. Unlike Cypriot contexts, Tarsus hearths vary in shape[166] and location within houses: 1) close to walls; 2) centrally positioned; 3) slightly off-centre near entrances. Those located near walls are often associated with workbenches, suggesting a domestic focus on food preparation. Centrally placed hearths suggest a primary function for illumination and warmth. The third placement, slightly off-centre and near the entrance, facilitates a continuous passage between the main room and the rear chamber.[167] In Tarsus (EB III), some hearths with shoulders are discovered, designed to support spits for food preparation and suggesting a different use of the hearth itself.[168]

At Tarsus in EB III workbenches made of plaster are found, which appear to be in close relation with the hearth or in an adjacent, but separate, room. This latter solution and the placement of workbenches along the walls, resemble the evidence found at Sotira-*Kaminoudhia* during EC I.

5.1 Discussion

Following the comparison of architectural elements, the markers of the Philia *facies* found in Anatolia include rectilinear plans, the presence of open spaces, the use of mudbricks, the application of plaster coatings, and the presence of hearths and workbenches **[tab. 4]**. The arrangement of rooms around a court is observed at both Marki-*Alonia* and Kinet-Höyük. Open spaces are later delimited, possibly due to the emergence of dominant groups. Structures at both areas exhibit rectilinear plans, composed of two or three rooms with a single entrance, typically located in the corner, facing the main road of the settlement (if existing) and identifiable by the presence of a step. Tarsus reveals some tripartite structures, preceded by a portico, representing a distinctive variant which is entirely absent in Cyprus. Both areas feature mudbricks walls with stone plinths, while the use of plaster coatings for walls and floor preparations is more pronounced in Cilicia (Tarsus), while in Cypriot contexts, only fragments of such coverings are found (Marki-*Alonia*). Regarding fire installations, a notable distinction is evident: rectangular hearths appear to be characteristic of the Philia *facies* in Cyprus whereas, on the contrary, at the beginning of EC I, only few samples are found within Sotira structures.

In Anatolian contexts hearths are best preserved in Tarsus. However, no modifications in their shape are identified, with the majority characterised by a circular shape, and only few rectangular examples. A consistent feature in Cilicia concerns the placement of hearths inside the rooms: they are generally leaning against the walls and associated with workbenches located in the same or in adjacent rooms for domestic activities. In Cypriot contexts, the position of workbenches is more challenging to analyse, and only Sotira provides some evidence from the beginning of EC I.[169] The separation and yet strong proximity between hearths and workbenches, observed in both Cyprus and Cilicia, may suggest a functional distinction within the house. The room with the hearth was likely designated for cooking and heating, while the space with the work bench was used for more practical activities, probably focused on food preparation for subsequent cooking on the hearth.

166 Hearths in Cilicia generally have circular shapes, with only one rectangular hearth (FI 98/5) identified in the levels corresponding to Phase Vg at Kilise-Tepe.

167 The hearth, positioned along an imaginary path, was accessible without hindering movement within the dwelling.

168 The presence of the shoulder meant that only a portion of the hearth was 'open' and accessible to individuals.

169 In most cases, workbenches are placed in the adjacent space to the room with the hearth, and they may have the same extension as the wall to which they are attached (Units 1-3, Unit 19), a feature also observed in Tarsus during EB II (Rooms 116, 117, and 115).

6 Conclusions

Architectural evidence in Cyprus and Cilicia reveals notable similarities in rectilinear plans and external architectural features, particularly room organisation, and construction techniques for walls and floors.

It can be hypothesised that the Philia period, marked by the arrival of Anatolian groups, likely influenced architectures in Cyprus. Significant external changes occurred in Cypriot houses, and internal domestic elements also evolved, notably with the introduction of 'Philia-style' rectangular hearths. These hearths moved from central positions, typical during the Late Chalcolithic period, to locations next to walls during the Philia period. This shift reflects local adaptations to changes in the house plans. Interestingly, these transformations (shape and placement of hearths) do not directly align with Anatolian origins, evident in the shape and placement variability in Cilician hearths.[170] Tarsus, however, presents a relevant analogy with Cyprus, notably in the separation of hearths and workbenches,[171] suggesting functional distinctions within houses in both areas. Building upon Frankel, Webb, and Eslick's hypothesis[172] (see above), it is proposed that first Anatolian adult males arrived in Cyprus exploring the island.[173] With the beginning of EB IVA in Anatolia and the emergence of the Philia *facies* in Cyprus, newcomers became part of Cypriot communities and established relationships with local women. This integration led to the development of innovative floor plans[174] while still maintaining traditional Cypriot internal organisation. As the Cyprus-Cilicia relationship solidified, it is possible that some Anatolian families settled on the island, allowing the transmission of artisanal knowledge, particularly metalwork, ceramic production, and wheelmaking (see above). This contributed to the emergence of characteristic elements of Philia material culture. The arrival of family groups from Cilicia could account for the presence of Anatolian female individuals, further suggested by the appearance in Cyprus of biconical spindle whorls and a new spinning technique, *low whorl spinning*, already documented in Anatolia (see above). Significant changes are evident in external architectural features, typically built by men, compared to minimal alterations in internal elements, more closely related to feminine (Cypriot) activities.[175]

Cypriot communities demonstrated receptiveness to change in material culture, but preserved traditions, especially in domestic activities and food preparation. Funerary and sacred practices, influenced by Anatolian components, were evident in necropolises, notably in the frequent occurrences of Red Polished pottery which strongly resembles Anatolian shapes.[176] This concentration of status symbol objects within the tombs of Philia culture suggests the establishment of an Anatolian elite class, asserting power through acquiring and redistributing copper objects and agricultural surplus.[177] A greater social complexity emerged later, with the need to define private property – a phenomenon visible both in Cyprus and in Cilicia – highlighted by the delimitation of *open spaces*.

With the transition from Philia to EC I, Anatolian influence decreased, leading to regionalism and distinct solutions within the same island. Generations later, Anatolian groups became less connected to the mainland, integrating more into Cypriot communities.

Only later, with the beginning of the Middle Cypriot period, Cyprus will open up to trade and re-establish relations with Anatolia and other regions of the eastern Mediterranean and Aegean, to become, between the Middle Cypriot III and the Late Cypriot I, one of the major copper exporters.

The comparison of architectural structures in Cyprus and Cilicia, respectively associated with the Philia *facies* and the EB IV, allows the examination of a somewhat neglected category of evidence. The Philia *facies*, in spite of being a rather elusive period, proves to be of significant relevance in under-

170 Only one example of a rectangular hearth is found in Kilise-Tepe, Phase Vg.

171 Rarely do work benches appear in proximity to hearths; instead, they are mostly situated in an adjacent space near the room with the hearth.

172 Frankel, Webb, Eslick 1996, 37-41; Frankel 2000, 170-9; 2005, 19-24.

173 Frankel 2000, 179-84; 2005, 22.

174 Frankel, Webb, Eslick 1996, 45-6; Frankel 2000, 175; 2005, 22.

175 The ethnographic study by B.J. Parker and M. Bariş between 2000 and 2007 proposes that domestic features (hearths, ovens, *tannur*s) are generally constructed by women, given the fact that these domestic activities are carried out by the female part of the community. They conducted studies in some villages of Eastern Turkey, examining the construction of hearths and *tannur*s to compare modern evidence with Turkish archaeological remains (Parker 2011).

176 Bachhuber 2014, 142-3; Peltenburg 2007, 142-51.

177 Especially ceramics, metal items, and ring pendants. The agricultural surplus was possible thanks to the introduction of the plough.

standing the transition to the Bronze Age on the island. It is hoped that future opportunities for in-depth investigations into these findings will arise.

Table 4 Comparison of domestic elements found in Cyprus and Cilicia

	Site	Phase/Area	Building techniques	Domestic features
Cyprus	Kissonerga-*Mosphilia*	Period 4a-b		Inner circular hearths
		Period 5	Plaster floors	Inner circular hearths + oval oven
	Kissonerga-*Skalia*	Area D	Stone plinths walls + plaster floors	
	Marki-*Alonia*	Phase A-B	Mudbricks walls on stone plinths	Rectangular hearths
		Phase C	Plastered floors	Circular hearths + plaster workbenches
		Phase D		Circular hearths + plaster workbenches
	Sotira-*Kaminoudhia*	Area A	Stone plinths walls + plaster floors	Rectangular hearths + plaster workbenches
		Area B	Stone plinths walls	Double hearth
		Area C	Stone plinths walls	Plaster workbenches
Anatolia	Kilise Tepe	Phase Vf	Mudbrick walls on stone plinths + plaster floors	Circular hearth
		Phase Ve	Stone plinths walls	Circular hearths
	Kinet-Höyük	Phase VI.3, Period 24	Stone plinths walls	
		Phase VI.2, Periods 23-22	Stone plinths walls	
		Phase VI.1, Periods 21-19	Stone walls	
	Mersin Yumuktepe	Level XIIb		Central hearth with spits + oval oven
		Level XIIa	Mudbricks walls	
	Tarsus-Gözlu Küle	EB III		Circular hearths + oval oven + workbench
		EB IVA	Mudbricks walls on stone plinths	
		EB IVB	Mudbricks walls on stone plinths	Circular hearths

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Phonetic Classifiers in the Anatolian Hieroglyphic Script

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Abstract The Anatolian hieroglyphic script has number of signs, which have not been studied in a systematic manner, the so-called 'phonetic indicators' or 'phonetic complements'. This category comprises a small group of phonetic signs, which occur in combination with semantic signs and seem to hint at part of their phonetic realisation. The following article offers a study of phonetic complements in hieroglyphic inscriptions. It shows that clear rules govern the use of these signs, and it is suggested that this group should be called 'phonetic classifiers', analogous to 'semantic classifiers'.

Keywords Phonetic classifier. Semantic classifier. Anatolian hieroglyphic. Writing system. Sign function.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 What Do Phonetic Classifiers Do?. – 3 Structures and Enhancement Locations. – 4 Attestations. – 4.1 First Syllable. – 4.1.1 Identical Syllable. – 4.2 Different Vowel. – 4.3 Final Consonant of Initial CVC-. – 5 Last Syllable. – 5.1 Identical Syllable. – 5.2 Different Vowel. – 6 Results.

1 Introduction

It has long been known that certain phonetic signs add phonetic information to semantic signs without being part of a full or partial phonetic writing of the word in question. Well-known examples include the personal name Suppiluliuma, written PURUS.FONS.*MI*, or the writing OMNIS.*MI* for *tanima-*. In both instances, the sign *MI*, transliterated in cursive capitals, is understood to hint at an /m/ of the logographically written word without representing the full syllable /mi/, as this is not present in the lexemes. Despite attempts to read such signs with alternative values – in this instance as ma_x –, neither the operating principles nor the range of signs used have been systematically studied so far.

The following analysis is based on data generated for the iClassifier project[1] but extends that scope in considering not just signs traditionally considered classifiers but also combinations of logogram plus phonetic indicator. In the context of "The Luwian iClassifier",[2] new data has emerged which leads me to propose a new scheme for classifiers in the Anatolian Hieroglyphic script.[3] Limitations of space necessitate to separate the discussion of this scheme from the topic addressed here, so that the following will be dedicated to the category of what I would like to call "phonetic classifiers", formerly known

1 This study is made possible through the application of the iClassifter digital research tool: Orly Goldwasser (Conceptualisation and classifier theory), Haleli Harel (Computational realisation and research coordination), Dmitry Nikolaev (Programming). The tool was developed in the ArchaeoMind Lab, PI Orly Goldwasser, ISF grants 735/17 and 2408/22. iClassifier enables and facilitates digital data collection, classifier annotation, detailed classifier analysis, robust computer-assisted lexical and statistical reports, and diverse network modelling.

2 Payne, Olina forthcoming.

3 Payne forthcoming.

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variously as phonetic indicators or phonetic complements. In fact, two phonetic classifiers were already known and have raised no interest, as they classify phonetically written words, just like semantic classifiers, and are transliterated accordingly. These are *MÁ*, classifying *mashunalli-*,[4] and SA_4, classifying *sanna*(*i*)-,[5] *sazza-*,[6] *liliya-*[7] and *kwananala-*.[8] (SA_4)*liliya-* and (SA_4)*kwananala-* inexplicably do not contain any part of the classifier within the host word. These are either rare, single exceptions to the scheme laid out here or instances where the classifier sign, L402, should be analysed as having a semantic value. All other examples for *MÁ* and SA_4 show the classifier repeating the first syllable of its host word. Note that these classifiers are homophone signs that differ from the phonetic sign chosen for the beginning of the word.[9] This choice may serve both to emphasise the syllable and to aid the reading as a phonetic classifier. These two phonetic classifiers follow the general pattern of semantic classifiers in that they attach to a phonetic writing, and will therefore be excluded from the discussion here. The single instance, where SA_4 classifies a semantic sign, meanwhile, will be discussed below.

Anatolian hieroglyphic signs are traditionally differentiated in a tri-partite system as either logogram, determinative or phonogram. I argue that the differentiation is rather bi-partite, i.e. between semantic or phonetic sign, of which the semantic signs can be used in two functions, either as logogram or as determinative/classifier.[10] The difference between these two functions lies in whether the signs are to be realised linguistically, i.e. are they to be read out or are they silent? Adapting a scheme developed by Stéphane Polis to describe the functions of Egyptian hieroglyphic signs,[11] I offer the following scheme for the functions of Anatolian hieroglyphs:

Table 1 Hieroglyphic Sign Functions

	INDEPENDENT	**DEPENDENT**	
SEMANTIC SIGNS	Logogram	Semantic classifier	**+ MEANING** **– SOUND**
PHONETIC SIGNS	Phonogram	Phonetic classifier	**– MEANING** **+ SOUND**
	LINGUISTIC REALISATION	**SILENT**	

Signs can be independent and have a linguistic realisation, either as logograms, encoding meaning but not sound, or as phonograms, encoding sound but not meaning. These voiced signs are complemented by two types of silent signs, which serve to aid the reading process but are not intended to be converted into language and read out. These silent signs need to combine with independent signs, and serve to aid their reading by offering additional information, either towards the meaning or sound of the signs on which they depend. The group of semantic classifiers equates to the signs traditionally called determinatives/classifiers, and I propose that the group formerly called phonetic indicators/complements should be called phonetic classifiers, as they share the characteristic of being dependent, silent signs that serve to aid the reading process. Also, like semantic classifiers, the use of phonetic classifiers is optional and alternates with writings that omit them. Note that while semantic classifiers mainly classify phonetic writing and phonetic classifiers mainly classify semantic signs, this relationship is not exclusive and there are some examples of phonetic classifiers with phonetic writing (cf. below) and of semantic classifiers with semantic signs.

4 ADANA 1 §§ 2; 6.

5 TELL AHMAR 5 § 16; BOYBEYPINARI 2 § 12; ADIYAMAN 1 § 5; ANCOZ 7 § 12; KULULU 2 § 5a; ANKARA 1 § 5; KARKAMIŠ A1a § 4; KARKAMIŠ A18e § 5; KARKAMIŠ A 29d+i l. 2; MARAŞ 14 § 12; KARKAMIŠ A11a §§ 23, 24; BABYLON 1 § 13.

6 TELL AHMAR 6 § 27.

7 TELL AHMAR 5 § 12a.

8 İVRİZ fr. 2. A further instance of SA_4 in a fragmentary context analysis (TELL AHMAR fr. 4) cannot contribute to the analysis.

9 Furthermore, the sign sa_4 is almost never used to begin a phonetically written word (the only exception is AIMEE GIRON l.1), but dominates the word-final position. In view of the arguments brought forward in this article, it would be worth considering whether this sign has a predominant function as marking word edges, and in this function, its position differentiates between use as phonogram (word-final) and phonetic classifier (word-initial). The sign *má* is altogether very rare and limited to Cilicia (KARATEPE 1 §§ 24 (Ho); 71 (Ho.); ADANA 1 §§ 2; 6).

10 Payne forthcoming.

11 Polis 2018, 301 fig. 8.

The group of phonetic classifiers studied for this paper takes into account hieroglyphic inscriptions but not seals, on the basis that this is dominantly a practice of linear writing contexts. The two most relevant parameters for the study of phonetic classifiers are: which phonetic sign is used as classifier, and what is indicated by it. The stock of signs used as phonetic classifiers is small, and shows a significant preference of the *i*-series; this stands in contrast to the more significant role played by the *a*-series for both writing superfluous vowels and as regards the general number of variants. The following signs are used as phonetic classifiers:

HI, *LA*, *LA/I/U*, *LI*, *MA*, *MÁ*, *MI*, *MÍ*, *NA*, *NI*, *NÍ*, *PA*, SA_4, *+RA/I*, *TU*.[12]

2 What Do Phonetic Classifiers Do?

Anatolian hieroglyphic phonetic classifiers can be described to mark, respectively, two word-initial and one word-final position. Two of these options are straight forward, serving to enhance (1) the first or (2) last syllable of a word stem – excluding the grammatical ending. The third is slightly more complex: in certain cases, (3) the phonetic classifier indicates the second consonant of the closed first syllable (CVC-). It is only in this position, that the phonetic classifier indicates a single consonant rather than a full, open syllable. For options (1) and (2), one uses either a phonetic sign repeating the exact syllable[13] or one which shows the correct consonant but the wrong vowel, i.e. the vowel needs to be adjusted towards the correct reading.[14] Option (3) raises the question of the scribes' awareness of closed syllables despite the fact that the script uses almost exclusively open syllable phonograms.

Analysis of the phonetic classifier signs, discussed below, shows that they serve to enhance the reading of the beginning or the end of a word stem. The fact that enhancement rather than disambiguation was the intention can be further argued by the structures revealed below, as well as the writing of L45A.*NI* to classify both *niwaranni*- 'child' and *nimuwizza*- 'son'.[15] If disambiguation would have been intended, the identical first syllable should not have been chosen as a classifier.

A practice which emphasises or repeats word edges, while seemingly superfluous, finds an explanation from modern neuro-psychological studies. For instance, studies of modern alphabetic writing have shown that for word recognition, first and last letters are more important in the perception of a word than the letter in between.[16] Moreover, the importance of word edges is not just important in writing but also for speech. A recent study has shown that already newborns are better at encoding word edges than internal components.[17] In experiments, the researchers have shown that newborns are sensitive to the position of syllables at the beginning and end of a multisyllable sequence, in contrast to sequence-internal syllables. This edge bias is interpreted as an innate human ability for encoding the order of syllables in sequence, and this in turn is an essential skill for understanding language. In the context of ancient writing systems, it is quite possible that the preferential enhancing the beginning or end of a word stem were motivated by a pragmatic understanding of these locations as specifically important both in written and oral contexts. That this additionally aligns with our recent understanding of cognitive processes involved, adds a further layer to the understanding of such graphemic practices.

12 I exclude ZÚ, as I consider its examples – with Hawkins 2024 but contra eDiAna – to be purely phonetic. There is no reason to prefer (L187.ZÚ)*mila*- with an unknown stem *mila*- over the simpler (L187)*zúmila*- (ASSUR letter a § 8, letter c § 8; KIRÇOĞLU l.2).

13 Analogous to semantic classifiers that show identity with the phonetically written word, one might call these repeaters.

14 This may sound worse to users of alphabetic writing with fixed orthography. Taking into account the large number of hieroglyphic signs which are indifferent between vowels *a* and *i* – probably as a reaction to the linguistic phenomenon of *i*-mutation –, it would be surprising if the ancient reader viewed a phonetic indicator with a different vowel as strongly as the modern counterpart.

15 From the point of view of writing systems research, it is unfortunate that the sign is variously transcribed as INFANS, FILIUS and FRATER, according to the analysis of the word represented with it, as this obscures the fact that the graphic shape is identical. Furthermore, alternating transliteration between FILIA and FEMINA.MANUS.FEMINA for the female variant of the sign are inconsistent, and the latter would only make sense if the male variant was transliterated VIR_2.MANUS.VIR_2. To clearly identify the two graphic shapes, I use the transliteration L45A for INFANS/FILIUS/FRATER and L45B for FILIA/FEMINA.MANUS.FEMINA.

16 Johnson, Perea, Rayner 2007.

17 Ferry et al. 2015.

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3 Structures and Enhancement Locations

The following table shows the signs used to enhance the beginning of a word, with dates referring to centuries BC; as a particularly productive period for the development of the script,[18] the late tenth-early ninth century BC is listed separately (L10/E9):

Table 2 Enhancement of First Syllable

Category	Sign	For	Date
Identical syllable	*LA*	/la/	13, L10/E9
	TU, *TÚ*	/tu/	13
	NI, *NÍ*	/ni/	11, L10/E9
	MÍ	/mi/	11, L10/E9
	NA[19]	/na/	13
Different vowel	*MI*	/mu/	13, 9
	HI	/ha/	13
Final consonant of initial CVC-	*+RA/I*	/r/	9, 8
	SA_4	/s/	8
	MI	/m/	11, L10/E9, 8
	LA	/l/	8

As can be seen from this table, the first syllable is primarly classified with a sign repeating the exact syllable, and this practice uses signs from all three vowel series. The practice is moreover attested early, and continues into the main period of script productivity. Using a phonogram with a different vowel from the first syllable is limited to signs from the *i*-series, which can fill in for the two other vowels. This is predominantly an early, empire period practice, the only later attestation consists of a personal name. Of particular interest is the enhancement of just a consonant, closing a word-initial CVC-sequence. It is not a highly productive category: the use of *+RA/I* for /r/ is both the most common and easily explained classifier in this group, its addition recalling the numerous ligatures of phonograms with *+ra/i*, which can be realised as CVr. The use of *MI* for /m/ is limited to just one, albeit frequent lexeme, and the use of SA_4 for this is a rare outlier with a single example.

Table 3 Enhancement of Last Syllable

Category	Sign	For	Date
Identical syllable	*LI*, *LA/I*	/li/	9, 8
	MI	/mi/	8
Different vowel	*MI*, *MÍ*	/ma/	13, 12, L10/E9, 8
	LA	/li/	8

The fact that the enhancement of the last syllable does not contain many repeaters has an obvious explanation: how can we tell the phonetic writing of a final syllable apart from the use of a phonetic classifier? In fact, this is only possible under two circumstances: (1) when the classifier cannot be analysed as the ending of the stem because this is written as well, or (2) in the case of late inscriptions that would not plausibly write the last syllable of the stem phonetically but omit a case ending. Instances are very few. Where a phonetic sign could be analysed as either phonogram or phonetic classifier, the former has been preferred.[20] The use of *MI* to indicate /ma/ is the most wide-spread example for a phonetic classifier with a different vowel. It is interesting that while this structure occurs both marking first and last syllables, the latter outnumbers the former by far. The use of *LA* for /li/ is limited to a single inscription.

18 Payne 2018.

19 This rests on a single lexeme which is not undisputed, cf. discussion below.

20 E.g. DOMINUS-ni-ia-za rather than DOMINUS.NI-ia-za (BOYBEYPINARI 2 § 17a), as per Hawkins 2024, 240, contra *eDiAna*.

Table 4 Problematic Cases

Classified	Sign	Problem
hamsi-	*NI*	word not beginning with /ni/
nimuwizza-	*WA/I*	penultimate syllable
tuwa-	*MI*	word without /mi/
asa-, *isnuwa-*	*MI*	word without /mi/
zallaniya-	*PA*	word without /pa/

A small group of problematic cases cannot be incorporated into the structures discussed above. Of these, the first has a possible explanation, the classification of *hamsi-* with *NI* (versus the unproblematic classification of the same word with *MI*; cf. below), written L45A.*NI*.NEPOS.[21] Given the chronology of the attestations for L45A with phonetic classifier, a simple scribal error, either mishearing or misremembering *MI* for *NI* seems more likely than interference from *NI* being used with the same logogram L45A to classify *nimuwizza-* and *niwarann(i)-*.

WA/I for *nimuwizza-* could be construed as using this otherwise unattested phonetic classifier for the penultimate syllable of the stem, but in view of the very many attestations for L45A.*NI*/L45A.*NÍ*, I would prefer to analyse this single instance as a scribal mistake, writing L45A.*NÍ-wa/i-za*<*-za*>, i.e. omitting the second *-za* needed for the dat.pl. *nimuwizzanza*.[22] A deliberately endingless form would not be likely in this period.

I can offer no explanation for the use of *MI* and *PA* to classify lexemes that do not contain these syllables or even just the consonant. However, it is worth noting that PONERE.*MI* for *tuwa-*, 'to put',[23] and LITUUS+*PA* for *zalaniya-* 'to turn',[24] are statistically not very relevant, as they pertain to single inscriptions. More puzzling and likewise without explanation is why *MI* would classify SOLIUM in *asa-* 'to sit',[25] and *isanu-* 'to seat'.[26] Note that it involves the most frequent phonetic classifier, *MI*.[27]

21 GÜRÜN § 1b.

22 CEKKE § 8.

23 MARAŞ 7 Side A.

24 TELL AHMAR 1 § 17.

25 KARAHÖYÜK § 4; ÇALAPVERDİ 1 § 2; ÇİFTLİK §§ 8, 9, 10; KARATEPE 1 § 24 (Ho.); KARATEPE 1 §§ 24, 36, 37, 54 (Hu.); KARKAMIŠ A2+3 § 17e.

26 KARAHÖYÜK § 8; KÖRKÜN § 5; KARKAMIŠ A1a §§ 16, 17e; KÖRKÜN § 5.

27 Three further instances of *MI* cannot be analysed as the underlying stems of the host word are unknown. These are: (VIR$_2$) URBS.*MI* (KARAHÖYÜK §§ 9, 13, 22), DEUS.CRUS.*MI* (ANCOZ 9 §2) and DEUS.DOMUS.*MI* (HAMA 4 § 10).

4 Attestations

The following section discusses the attestations studied in order of their structural analysis. Reference to the chronological spread will only be made where this is significant, the chronological development as such will be discussed amongst the results, below.

4.1 First Syllable

4.1.1 Identical Syllable

The syllabic sign *LA* is used as a phonetic classifier in combination with L45A, traditionally transliterated FRATER.*LA*, to write the word for 'brother'.[28] Following Yakubovich that this should be read **lani-*, dissimilated from *nani-*,[29] the choice of the phonetic classifier is easily explained as repetition of the first syllable. Of particular interest are the attestations, where L45A.*LA* forms part of a compound personal name.[30] Here, it is worth noting that of the attestations where this forms the second part of the compound, the sequence is additionally introduced by the marker for the beginning of a word (L386). The marking of the name at the beginning with a personal name marker (L380) shows a similar frequency.

An awareness of the separate components of compounds can be clearly seen in the script, in particular in the use of classifier signs, and not just in the category of personal names. A striking example comes from the ASSUR letters, and is thus even more relevant to the discussion of linguistic awareness because of the more colloquial, every-day register of the source. It marks the first component of a compound noun with a classifier indicating that this element was visualised in its own right and not simply taken for granted within the compound: the writing ("L481")*wa/i+ra/i-mu-ta-li-zi*,[31] which eDiAna translates as "a type of dog"[32] can be analysed as *war=mu*(*wa*)*talli-*,[33] meaning "mighty (in) water", i.e. describing a hunting dog trained for hunting waterfowl. As not all dogs take equally to water, such a hunt requires a trained animal which performs well in water. Note that the classifier sign L481 depicts a vessel shape, thus clearly interacting with the element 'water' on its own. If referring to the real-life environment such as a lake or a river as the hunting ground, one might have expected an animal sign depicting any type of waterfowl or, for instance, FLUMEN as a classifier. The relationship between water and pitcher thus stays on an abstract, linguistic level, excluding the concrete waters one might find as the work environment of a *warmutalli*-dog.

The same structural pattern as for L45A.*LA* can also be observed for IUDEX.*LA*, *Labarna*.[34] The new transliteration *LABARNA* for the compound serves to emphasise its unchangeable reading in this combination, and possibly imitates the instinctive contemporary reading. As it obscures the use of a phonetic classifier for the discussion of writing systems structures, it is not adopted in this article. Similarly, the writings MONS.*TU* and MONS.*TÚ* indicate the first syllable of the royal name Tudhaliya.[35] With inverted order, i.e. phonetic classifier first, semantic sign second, *MÍ*.REGIO repeats the first syllable of *mizri-*, 'Egypt'.[36] Despite the few attestations, a case might be made for a deliberate choice of *MÍ* instead

28 AKSARAY § 10; ALEPPO 2 §§ 3, 9; CEKKE §§ 17c, 17d, 17m; EĞRİKÖY § 3; JISR EL HADID 4 § 2; JISR EL HADID fragments 1 l.2; KARATEPE 3 § 1; KARKAMIŠ A4a § 2; KARKAMIŠ A5a §3; KARKAMIŠ A6 § 13; KARKAMIŠ A7 §2; KARKAMIŠ A15b § 15; KARKAMIŠ A18j; KARKAMIŠ A22c (+A20b6+B35b) l.4; KIRÇOĞLU § 4; KULULU 4 § 15; KULULU lead strip 1 §§ 3 (13), 4 (17), 7 (38; 44); MARAŞ 6 l.1; TELL AHMAR 1 § 16; TELL AHMAR 2 § 18; TÜNP 1 § 1.

29 Yakubovich 2010, 387.

30 AKSARAY § 10; CEKKE §§ 17c, 17d; KARATEPE 3 § 1; KARKAMIŠ A18j; KULULU lead strip 1 § 3 (13), 4 (17); TÜNP 1 § 1.

31 ASSUR letter b § 9.

32 https://www.ediana.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/corpus.php.

33 For cun. Luw. *wār-* 'water': Rieken, Opfermann (2024), Cuneiform Luwian *wār-* (eDiAna-ID 971), in *eDiAna* (https://www.ediana.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/dictionary.php?lemma=971); for hgl. Luwian *muwatalli-*, 'mighty': Bauer, Rieken, Billing (2024), Common Luwian */muwattalla/i-/* (eDiAna-ID 3529), in *eDiAna* (http://www.ediana.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/dictionary.php?lemma=3529).

34 YALBURT block 1 § 1, block 2 § 2; KARAKUYU l.1; KÖYLÜTOLU YAYLA § 2; BOĞAZKÖY 3 l.1; BOĞAZKÖY 18 l.1; DELİHASANLI l.2; SÜDBURG §§ 8, 10, 11; NİŞANTAŞ A1 § 1; BOĞAZKÖY 11 [frag.]; ANKARA 2 § 2; possibly without phonetic indicator on KARKAMIŠ fr. a/b; as a personal name, KULULU 4 § 5; also attested on Hittite royal seals, not discussed here.

35 With L88/89, *TU*: YALBURT block 1 § 1; KARAKUYU ll.1, 2; BOĞAZKÖY 3 l.1; BOĞAZKÖY 18 ll.1, 3; BOĞAZKÖY 19; TELL AÇANA 1; NİŞANTAŞ A1 §§ 1, 2; A2 § d; EMİRGAZİ 1 § 33; fragmentary ANKARA 2 § 2; DELİHASANLI l.2. Also attested on Hittite royal seals, not discussed here. With L325, *tú*: KARKAMIŠ fragments a/b; KELEKLİ § 2 (MONS.*TÚ-sa*$^{-a}$).

36 ALEPPO 7 § 7; KARKAMIŠ A6 § 4.

of *MI*, given that the latter is never attested as a phonetic classifier repeating the word-initial syllable.

As a repeater of the first syllable, we encounter both *NI* and *NÍ* for /ni/ in combination with the logogram L45A and two host words.[37] Of these, there are few attestations for *niwaranni-* 'child',[38] whereas *nimuwizza-* 'son',[39] is well attested. Of the latter, we also have the adjectival derivation *nimuwiyaya-* 'son's'.[40] In one inscription, the two *ni*-signs alternate without obvious difference.[41] Another Karkamiš inscription, meanwhile, uses *NÍ* in the writing of *nimuwiza-*,[42] and *NI* to write *niwaranni-*.[43] Whether these two instances are deliberate or accidental cannot be judged in light of the free alternations in CEKKE.

If we accept a reading *nani-*[44] 'lord', for DOMINUS.*NA*, this would likewise repeat the first syllable of the host.[45] Note that it would then be the logogram DOMINUS, not the phonetic indicator which disambiguated this from homophone *nani-* 'brother', thus supporting the argument made here, that phonetic classifiers are not used to disambiguate but to enhance word edges. However, if one did not accept the reading *nani-*, 'lord', these cases could not be discussed as the stem of the host would be unknown.

4.2 Different Vowel

There are two phonetic classifiers that point at the host's first syllable yet do not use the correct vowel. Noticeably, both signs used come from the *i*-series. Attestations are limited to few lexemes. The addition of *MI* to BOS to write *m+u*(*wa*) has its origin in the writing of the Hittite royal name Muwatalli.[46] This is a ligature sign in the making which can be observed still as two separate signs in the relief of Muwatalli II at Sirkeli, but becomes a closed ligature before the Empire period is over.[47] It also occurs without phonetic classifier for the value *mu*(*wa*).[48] Such an alternation supports the analysis of *MI* as a classifier, as discussed above. In this shape, it should be understood as a simple phonogram *mu*.[49] Whether the ox head with internal *mi*-sign in the writing of names should be understood as representing the original complex ligature BOS.*MI* or a simpler phonogram *mu*(*wa*) is a matter of personal interpretation. Contemporary to common use of the sign as a phonogram, I would prefer the latter but one could argue for the former on the basis of conservative name writing practices.[50] I am inclined to analyse the compound L414.OVIS as *HI*.OVIS, indicating the first syllable of *hawi-*, 'sheep'.[51] It would find a parallel in the use of the *i*-series for a different vowel in the slightly earlier introduction of BOS.*MI* – likewise a classified animal sign – and for the less frequent position of a phonetic classifier before a semantic sign, it finds a parallel in *MÍ*.REGIO.

37 Uncertain interpretation: KARKAMIŠ A15c § 2a; POTOROO 7b.

38 KARKAMIŠ A6 § 30; TELL TAYINAT 2 frag. 2a § iii. With Hawkins 2024, 127 and contra eDiAna, the *-ni* in TELL AHMAR 6 § 14 is a phonogram. The uncertain inclusion of the sign L282 to write *niwaranni-* (TELL AHMAR 1 § 2; TELL AHMAR 6 § 2) remains puzzling and for want of an assured phonetic value for L282 cannot be further analysed. Contra Hawkins 2024, 424, the sign does not appear in TELL AHMAR 2 § 2.

39 ADANA 1 § 1a; ALEPPO 6 § 7; ARSUZ 1 §§ 1, 18; ARSUZ 2 § 1; ŞARAGA § 2; BOR § 2; CEKKE §§ 14, 16, 17a-j, 17l-o; HAMA 1 § 1; HAMA 2 § 1; HAMA 3 § 1; HAMA 6 § 1; HAMA 7 § 1; HAMA 4 § 1; KARKAMIŠ A11b+c § 1; KARKAMIŠ A4a §§ 1, 2; KARKAMIŠ A4b §§ 1, 6; KARKAMIŠ A6 § 8; KÖRKÜN § 8; KÖTÜKALE §1b; KARKAMIŠ A15b § 16; KARKAMIŠ A27e § 1; KIRÇOĞLU § 1; KULULU 4 § 15; TELL AHMAR 1 § 23; TELL AHMAR 2 §§ 14, 18, 23; SULTANHAN § 1.

40 ANCOZ 7 § 13; BOYBEYPINARI 2 § 17c.

41 CEKKE.

42 KARKAMIŠ A6 § 8.

43 KARKAMIŠ A6 § 30.

44 Cf. Hawkins 2024, 28 with lit.

45 ALEPPO 7 § 11; EMİRGAZİ 1 § 21; EMİRGAZİ 2 §§ 1, 3, 6, [14]; YALBURT block 10 § 4; block 4 § 3; block 8 § 2; block 11 § 1; block 12 § 4; KARKAMIŠ A30h § 2.

46 SİRKELİ 1.

47 HATİP; HANYERİ.

48 EMİRGAZİ 1 §§ 34, 36; EMİRGAZİ 2 §§ 3, 9; also KIZILDAĞ 4 §§ 2b, 2c. YALBURT seems to prefer the *MI*-less variant but for two instances, block 11 § 2, block 13 § 1.

49 E.g. KÖYLÜTOLU YAYLA § 2.

50 Thus in the ninth-century personal name *Immaramuwa-* as ^{l}L463.BOS.*MI* (DÜLÜK BABA TEPESİ 1 § 1).

51 EMİRGAZİ 1 §§ 19, 21, 22.

4.3 Final Consonant of Initial CVC-

A third category of phonetic classifier hints at the second consonant in a word-initial CVC- sequence. The origin of what seems like an unnecessary complex writing practice might lie in the dependent sign *+ra/i*, which attaches itself to other signs in phonetic writing to form various CVC syllables, such as the first syllable of the city name Karkamiš. The same principles seems to be at play when *+RA/I* acts as a phonetic classifier, whether or not the possible alternative vowels *-a/i-* are relevant for the stem of the host word. Note that the writing SCALPRUM+*RA/I.LA/I/U* for *warpalli*(*ya*)- 'warrior',[52] has not one but two phonetic classifiers; the second is discussed below (§ 2.1). The phonetic classifier *+RA/I* attaches to the semantic sign CORNU in the writing of *sur*(*i*)-, abundance,[53] related *suraTi*(*ya*)-, satiated.[54] Of L357+*RA/I* classifying *zarzami-*, 'the desired one', the phonetic classifier is more readily accessible to us than the semantic sign L357.[55] Two different examples can be cited for the use of *MI* to signal CV*m*-. The first is AUDIRE.*MI* in the writing of *tummanti-* 'to hear',[56] and related *tummantar*(*a*)- 'to let hear'.[57] Note that AUDIRE.*MI* alternates with rare attestations of AUDIRE without phonetic classifier.[58]

The sign *MI* in the writing L45A.NEPOS.*MI* for *hamsi-* indicates CV*m*-. It is interesting that a phonetic classifier of a different structure was chosen when one might have disambiguated this from other L45A writings with word-initial *HA*. The writing with the phonetic classifier is rare, attested only twice,[59] in contrast to multiple attestations without. A single example using SA_4 to indicate initial CVs- survives in Cilicia, in the writing DEUS.SA_4-*zi* for *massaninzi* 'gods'.[60] The compound *SARMA+RA/I* functions similarly, also taking a second phonetic classifier (*SARMA+RA/I.MI*) for the final syllable in one instance.[61]

While the final entry in this category could be interpreted differently, for structural reasons, it seems best to add the first of the two phonetic classifiers in TERRA.*LA.LA* for *walilid(a)-*, 'territory',[62] here. But one could also interpret is as a syllable with different vowel (1.2) or even as a simple doubling of the final syllable (2.2), albeit without any parallels within the corpus.

5 Last Syllable

5.1 Identical Syllable

Emphasis of the final syllable of the host word shows fewer structural examples. A repetition of the ultimate syllable is attested with two signs expressing /li/, both with very few attestations, thus a marginal category. SCALPRUM+*RA/I.LA/I/U* for *warpalli*(*ya*)-, 'warrior',[63] has already been discussed above, its most notable feature is the occurrence of two rather than one phonetic classifier. The second example marks an otherwise semantographic writing, SERVUS.*LA/I* for *hudarl(i)*- 'servant'.[64] Phonetically classified SERVUS is much rarer than the alternative without classifier. Also the frequent phonetic classifier *MI* contributes to this group, classifying ORIENS[65] and DEUS.ORIENS[66] for *kistami*- 'east'.

52 MARAŞ 1 § 1d.

53 CEKKE §§ 25, 26, 27; KARATEPE 1 §§ 6 (Hu.), 36 (Hu.).

54 TELL TAYINAT 2 fr. 3 § i.

55 Possibly a bread offering on a standard? KARKAMIŠ A7 § 14.

56 BOHÇA § 1; BOSSERT seal; HİSARCIK 2 § 1; KARKAMIŠ A6 §§ 1, 4, 5, 6; AFŞİN+KARKAMIŠ A31 § 17; KARKAMIŠ A27, fr. ff, ff2*; MARAŞ 3 § 2; TELL AHMAR 1 § 25.

57 ASSUR letter e § 7; KARKAMIŠ A11b+c § 32.

58 Certain: BABYLON 2 § 3; possibly also TULEIL 1 l.2; HİSARCIK 2 § 1.

59 DARENDE § 1. Also in the compound DOMUS-*ni*-NEPOS.*MI-i-sá*, *parni-hamsi-*, 'domestic grandson' (BOYBEYPINARI 1 § 11).

60 KARATEPE 1 § 51 (Ho.).

61 KULULU 4 § 5.

62 KARATEPE 1 §§ 5, 12 (Ho.); ANDAVAL § 3; KARKAMIŠ A11b+c § 8; KARKAMIS A25a, §2; ÇINEKÖY § 2.

63 MARAŞ 1 § 1d.

64 KARKAMIS A21b+a §7; ÇİFTLİK §1; BEIRUT stone bowl § 1; CEKKE § 6a; ADANA 1 § 1b.

65 BOHÇA § 1.

66 TELL AHMAR 1 § 9.

5.2 Different Vowel

The use of *LA* for *LI* to mark the final syllable shows the same double phonetic classifier, indicating the same syllable in CVC- and stem-final position: TERRA.*LA.LA* for *walilid(a)-* 'territory'.[67] Note that the presence of rhotacism as attested in the phonetic writing does not affect the presence of the classifier, which emphasises its classificatory function.

The most prolific phonetic classifier is *MI* for /ma/ in stem-final position. Without doubt the most well-known examples for *MI* as stem-final are OMNIS.*MI*, *tanima-* 'all',[68] and the verb AEDIFICARE.*MI*, *tama-* 'to build'.[69] The former has rare alternative OMNIS.*MÍ*,[70] and might also form part of a compound personal name, Tanima/i-lani, OMNIS.*MI*-L45A.*LA*.[71] The phonetic classifier is further attested in the name Suppiluliuma, written PURUS.FONS.*MI*.[72] Similarly, PURUS.*MI* hints at *kumma(ya)-* 'pure'.[73] I exclude the name Allumali which is more easily analysed as mixed logographic-phonetic writing, PUGNUS-*mili-*.[74] *MI* likewise occurs in the different writings of divine name Sarma, e.g. SARMA+*RA/I*.*MI*[75] and (DEUS)*SARMA*$_2$+*MI*,[76] and derived personal names such as *TAL*(*A*)-*mi*-SARMA$_2$+*MI*, Talmi-Šarruma.[77]

Further, the classifier is used in (DEUS)LUNA.*MI*, Arma,[78] as well as homonymous *arma-* 'month'.[79] Interesting is the single attestation GENUFLECTERE.*MI*, in which the phonetic classifier indicates the last syllable of, unusually, a Hittite reading, *halpuma-*.[80] In this instance, the unexpected presence of *MI* – GENUFLECTERE is otherwise always written without – indicates a different language; although the presence of the classifier, if not understood, would not hinder the reading of the semantic sign in Luwian.

6 Results

As the discussion above has shown, we can identify a group of phonetic classifiers, used mainly to classify semantic signs – without or without additional phonetic writing –, rarely to classify purely phonetic writing. Their use is optional and may alternate with not classified variants. In contrast to semantic classifiers, phonetic classifiers do not ever serve to disambiguate writings. Instead, they emphasise word edges, i.e. they mark the beginning or end of a word-stem. There are presumably two reasons, why the emphasise lies on the stem-final and not the word-final syllable: firstly, the practice was introduced during the Empire period when the writing of grammatical endings was only slowly introduced. Secondly, grammatical endings differ and if one wanted to indicate them, the number of signs needed to mark word ends would be much higher, making them less easily accessible, and not be word-specific.

It is, furthermore, possible to have not one but two phonetic classifiers, one for each position. This occurs both with purely logographic writing and when the semantic sign itself acts as a classifier to

67 KARATEPE 1 §§ 5, 12 (Ho.); ANDAVAL § 3; KARKAMIŠ A11b+c § 8; KARKAMIŠ A25a, §2; ÇINEKÖY § 2.

68 ASSUR letter e § 22; ASSUR letter f+g § 19; KARATEPE 1 §§ 6, 15, 48, 50, 52, 73, 74 (Hu.); KARATEPE 1 §§ 6, 10, 15, 18, 48, 50, 73, 74 (Ho.); KARKAMIŠ A19 frag. m* l.2; SULTANHAN § 5; TOPADA §§ 8, 26; VELİİSA § 2.

69 AFŞİN+KARKAMIŠ A31 § 6; ÇALAPVERDİ 2 § 3; HAMA 1 § 2; HAMA 2 § 2; HAMA 3 § 2; HAMA 6 § 2; HAMA 7 § 2; HAMA 4 § 6; KARATEPE 1 §§ 23, 38, 66, 72b (Hu.); KARATEPE 1 § 72b (Ho.); KARATEPE 2 § 1; KARKAMIŠ A1a § 23; KARKAMIŠ A11a § 14; KARKAMIŠ A11b+c §§ 6, 15, 34; KARKAMIŠ A26a1a+2 § c; KARKAMIŠ A6 §§ 8, 24; KARKAMIŠ A15b § 10; KARKAMIŠ A19 fr. p, p* l.2; MARAŞ 14 § 3; RESTAN § 2; QAL'AT EL MUDIQ § 2; TALL ŠṬĪB § 2.

70 KAYSERİ § 21.

71 CEKKE § 17m. Or phonetic OMNIS-*mi*-?

72 ANCOZ 4 § 2; ANCOZ 7 §§ 6, 13; ANCOZ 13 § 3; BOYBEYPINARI 1 §§ 1, 4, 11; BOYBEYPINARI 2 §§ 1, 2, 7, 17a, 19; YALBURT block 1 § 1; NİŞANTAŞ AI § 1, AII § d, A6 § b, AVII; SÜDBURG §§ 3, 6, 9, 14. With the marker for personal names: ANCOZ 8+5 §§ 7, 8; ARSUZ 1 §§ 1, 18; ARSUZ 2 §§ 1, 18; TELL TAYINAT 4 § 4.

73 ANCOZ 1 § 1; KARKAMIŠ A11a § 14; TÜNP 2 § 2.

74 The attestation in CEKKE § 17g with additional *la/i/u* may be a separate name altogether.

75 KULULU 4 § 5. Note that the *mi*-sign consists of only one bunch of two strokes, the antithetical second one is missing.

76 HANYERİ.

77 ALEPPO 1 § 1. Note that not all *SARMA*-writings are presented or discussed here, since an article on this subject is in preparation (Lovejoy forthcoming).

78 ALEPPO 2, §§ 2, 14; BULGARMADEN § 15; CEKKE § 24; KARABURUN § 12; KARATEPE 1 § 75 (Hu.); KARKAMIŠ A4a § 13; KULULU 5 § 1; MARAŞ 11 § 7; TELL AHMAR 1 § 2; TELL AHMAR 2 § 2. Once without DEUS: KAYSERİ § 16.

79 TOPADA § 22.

80 ALEPPO 5.

phonetic writing. Thus, one may find two different levels of classification marking a single word.

Table 5 Chronological Development of Phonetic Classifiers

Sign	For	Century	Category
TU, *TÚ*	/tu/	13	1.1 identical syllable
NA	/na/	13	1.1 identical syllable
HI	/ha/	13	1.2 different vowel
LA	/la/	13, L10/E9	1.1 identical Syllable
MI	/mu/	13, 9	1.2 different vowel
MI, *MÍ*	/ma/	13, 12, L10/E9, 8	2.2 different vowel
NI, *NÍ*	/ni/	11, L10/E9	1.1 identical Syllable
MÍ	/mi/	11, L10/E9	1.1 identical Syllable
MI	/m/	11, L10/E9, 8	1.3 final consonant of initial CVC-
+RA/I	/r/	9, 8	1.3 final consonant of initial CVC-
LI, *LA/I*	/li/	9, 8	2.1 identical Syllable
SA_4	/s/	8	1.3 final consonant of initial CVC-
LA	/l/	8	1.3 final consonant of initial CVC-
MI	/mi/	8	2.1 identical Syllable

The table above shows the chronological development of phonetic classifiers. During the Bronze Age, word-initial classification dominates, and several classifiers from this period do not continue into the Iron Age. This aligns with some other writing practices affected by the caesura that marks the change between these historical periods. Meanwhile, we also note that certain other signs and their usage have clear chronological limits. The most frequent phonetic classifier is *MI* (with variant *MÍ*) is attested for all positions and categories. The second most frequent, *LA* (with variant *LA/I*), is only attested for some word-initial and stem-final positions.

Both word edges are commonly marked with repeater classifiers, carrying the same phonetic information, yet often using a different, homophone sign variant to the one used in the accompanying phonetic writing, if present. Repeaters are the primary category for word-initial position, with signs from all three vowel series being attested. It is practiced in all periods, whereas stem-final repetition is a late phenomenon. A lesser frequency for this practice is partially down to analysis: in most cases, stem final classification with a repeater would be indistinguishable from phonetic writing, and for reasons of simplicity, this interpretation should be preferred. Thus stem-final repetition only becomes possible in special circumstances, namely if additional phonetic writing of the stem-final syllable is present, or if the ending following the stem-final syllable is missing in late inscriptions, where one would not expect such writing.

The use of syllabic signs with a different vowel to mark the frontal word edge is less frequent and predominantly an early practice. Notably, classifiers of this category are used in different positions, both preceding and following their host. Their counterpart, the use of a syllabic sign with the wrong vowel to mark the end of the word stem is the category which includes the most productive classifier, *MI* for /ma/. The balanced structures for phonetic classification, as discussed above, should put any attempts to analyse this sign as having a value /ma/ finally to rest. An important new insight is that this classifier also appears in the context of a Hittite writing, thus showing that this practice is not language bound. One might even wonder whether it could be indicative of a much wider spread of Hittite hieroglyphic writing than can be seen from the surviving corpus, even if direct evidence is missing. Marking the beginning of the word with the final consonant of a closed CVC syllable is a curious practice, probably originating from the used of the dependent sign *+RA/I*. Note that this sign is never used in any of the other structural categories as a classifier.

The use of classifiers in compounds shows a level of linguistic awareness that may supersede reference to real life context, thus differing from choices made regarding a sign's iconicity, which frequently serves to make reference to real life events or objects. Phonetic classification always functions with the unadulterated word stem in mind, regardless of whether the actual word form preserves all indicated syllables in this manner in the respective written forms.

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Kleine Beiträge zu den unpublizierten Bo-Texten (IV)
Eine Festschreibung aus dem Kultkreis von Zippalanda (Bo 2689 = CHDS 5.1)

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Abstract The large, six-column tablet Bo 2689 to be discussed here is partially burned. The text has recently been edited as Unpublished Bo-Fragments in Transliteration IV (= CHDS 5) no. 1 and classified as "Spring Festival in Zippalanda". Although the script is Late New Hittite, the tablet exhibits many Old Hittite linguistic features. The main scene of the festival in Bo 2689 is Zippalanda, and the cult visits of the Hittite royal couple in this town are described in detail. The narrative of the tablet focuses on the chariot journey of the royal couple to the *ḫalentuwa*-palace complex. The king passes an architectural structure like a bridge or ramp before reaching the *ḫalentuwa*-palace complex.

Keywords Hittite festival. Royal cult travel. Hittite pantheon. Zippalanda. Cult of Zippalanda. Hattian cult song.

Die hier zu behandelnde große, sechskolumnige Tafel Bo 2689 ist teilweise verbrannt und an der Oberfläche durch die extreme Hitze eines Feuers aufgequollen und verformt. Die Zeilen der Vorderseite II[?] 1'-5' (gänzlich) und 6'-7' (teilweise) sind heutzutage verlorengegangen bzw. nicht mehr lesbar. Daher werden diese Zeilen von einer älteren Umschrift von einem der Schüler H. Ehelolfs unkritisch übernommen. Die Zeilen 22'-28' von Bo 2689 III[?] sind Duplikate von oder parallel zu KUB 53.47 Vs. 2'-11' (nach *Konkordanz* CTH 635 *„Fragmente der Feste von Zippalanda und dem Berg Daḫa"*). Andererseits können die Zeilen 10'-19' von Bo 2689 III[?] mit KUB 41.46 II 5'-11' (CTH 592.2.I[?])[1] in enge Verbindung gebracht werden. Dabei sollte auch Beachtung finden, dass Bo 2689 inzwischen als *Unpublished Bo-Fragments in Transliteration IV* (= CHDS 5)[2] Nr. 1 ediert und als CTH 592 *„Frühlingsfest in Zippalanda"* klassifiziert wurde.[3]

Das Manuskript wurde im November 2023 abgeschlossen. Das Projekt der unveröffentlichten Bo-Texte wird seit 2020 von der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft gefördert.

1 Auf die inhaltlichen Ähnlichkeit zwischen Bo 2698 und KUB 41.46 hatte bereits Popko 1994, 170 Anm. 1 und 174 aufmerksam gemacht; vergleiche z.B. die Textangaben [^{GIŠ}*ar*]*mizziyaš*, [^{LÚ}AGRIG ^{URU}*Ānk*]*uwa* und [^{LÚ}AGRIG ^{URU}*Š*]*anaḫḫuitta* in KUB 41.46 II 5', 9'-10' mit denen in Bo 2698 V[?] 10', 17'-18'. Die von Popko 1994, 162 und 171, hierfür herangezogene weitere Textstelle KBo 11.50 II 4'-7' sollte dagegen als unsicher gelten, solange die beiden Ortsnamen dort als Ganzes auf den freien Ergänzungen beruhen.

2 Als *Preprint*-Version erhältlich über `http://www.hethport.adwmainz.de/preprints/baende/CHDS_5_preprint.pdf` oder `https://www.academia.edu/104057701/CHDS_5_preprint_version_`.

3 Dabei sollte auch die Tatsache ins Auge gefasst werden, dass als Schauplatz der kultischen Handlungen im erhaltenen Text von Bo 2689 (Vs. II[?], III[?], Rs. V[?]) hauptsächlich die Stadt (= Zippalanda) erscheint, und von einem Besuch des Berges (= Taḫa) oder irgendeiner Festaktivität dort nicht die Rede ist. Der verlorengegangene Inhalt der Kolumnen Vs. I[?], Rs. IV[?] und VI[?] würde freilich dieses Urteil ändern. Der Kult von Zippalanda und der dazugehörige Textkorpus wurden von Popko 1994 und 2004 behandelt.

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Abbildung 1 Bo 2689 (= CHDS 5.1) Vorderseite[7] Foto: Oğuz Soysal

Abbildung 2 Bo 2689 (= CHDS 5.1) Rückseite[7] Foto: Oğuz Soysal

1 Umschrift und Übersetzung des Textes

Vorderseite I[?] (nichts erhalten)

Vorderseite II[?]

§ 1' 1' ...
2' *ši-in-di-i-in le-e-ma le-e-*[*ek-ta-a-al-u͗a*$_a$[?]*-a*[?]*-al*[?]]
3' *u͗a*$_a$*-a-li-na-aḫ*(-)*ti-ip-ti-ip-*[*pé-e ar-ra-aḫ*(?)]
4' *ši-in-di-i-in le-e-ma le-*˹*e*˺*-*[*ek-ta-a-al-u͗a*$_a$[?]*-a*[?]*-al*[?]]
5' *le-e-ek-ta-al u͗a*$_a$*-a-al ti-ip-ti-ip-pé-*[*e ar-ra-aḫ*(?)]
6' *ši-in-di-i-in le-e-*˹*ma*˺ *le-e-ek-ta-a-*˹*al*[?]˺*-*[*u͗a*$_a$[?]*-a*[?]*-al*[?]]
7' *ti-ip-ti-ip-pé-e ar-ra-aḫ*

---

§ 2' 8' I[?] *ta-az-zi-il*[?]*-li*[?]*-aš*[?] [1)] LÚ*ḫa-ru-*˹*x*[?]˺*-*[...[?]]*-* ˹*x*[?]˺*-za*
9' *IŠ-TU* É*-TI-ŠU* V NINDA*mu-ri-i͗a-a-lu-uš*
10' XII NINDA.GUR$_4$.RA *me-e-ma-al* Ì.ŠAḪ *ú-da-i*
11' *nu mu-ú-ri-i͗a-lu-uš* GU$_4$.ḪI.A*-an ka-ra-ú-ni-iš-mi*
12' *kán-kán-zi ka-ra-a-uš-me-ta ša-kán-ta i-iš-kán-z*[*i*]
13' NINDA*ḫar-ša-uš x-x-x-x pár-ši-an-ta*
14' *me-e-ma-al šu-ú-ni-an- zi*
15' MUNUS.MEŠ*zi-in-tu-ḫi-at-te-eš* SÌR- *RU*
16' *Ù* LÚ.MEŠ[ ]*-x-ḫa-an-*˹*x*˺*-*[ ]*-*˹*x*˺*-a-an-zi*

---

§ 3' 17' XII LÚ.MEŠSANGA [... NINDA.GU]R$_4$.RA(?)
18' *IŠ-TU* É*-TI-ŠU-NU* ˹*ú-da*(?)˺*-an- zi*
19' LÚ*ḫa-mi-ni pa-ra-a ap-pa-an- zi*
20' LÚ*ḫa-mi-na-aš QA-TAM da-a-i*
21' *ta ku-iš-ša* NINDA.GUR$_4$.RA*-ŠU pár-ši-i͗a*
22' *tu-uš-za* LÚ ^{d}U*-aš Ù* MUNUS ^{d}U*-aš šar-ra-an-zi*

---

§ 4' 23' LÚSANGA ^{d}*I-na-ar* LÚSANGA <d>*Ḫu-ri-an-ze-e-pa*
24' LÚSANGA <d>UR.SAG>*ḪTa-a-ḫa* LÚSANGA ^{d}*U͗a-at-ta-ru-aš*
25' LÚSANGA ^{d}*Ḫa-ša-am-mi-i-la- aš*
26' LÚSANGA ^{d}*Te-le-e-pí-nu* LÚSANGA ^{d}*Pu-uš-ku-ru-nu-u͗a-*[*aš*[?]]
27' LÚSANGA ^{d}*Me-i͗a-ta-an-ze-e-pa*
28' LÚSANGA ^{d}*Ḫa-an-na-ḫa-an-na* LÚSANGA ^{d}U
29' LÚSANGA ^{d}*IŠTAR* LÚSANGA ^{d}*Ḫal-ki-aš*
30' *ta* GIŠ*e-i-e ši-ú-na-aš pár-na pé-e-ta-an-zi*
31' MUNUS.MEŠ*zi-in-tu-ḫi-at-te-eš a-ap-pa-an-ša-mi-it*
32' *iš-ḫa-ma-iš-kán- zi*

---

§ 5' 33' ⌞LÚ*ḫa*⌟*-mi-na-aš* ^{d}*Ḫa-lu-u-i-in-ka-at-ta-an*
34' [*I-NA*] ⌞É⌟.DINGIR*-LIM a-ar-ri i-iš-ki-iz- zi*
35' *-i*]⌞*t*[?]⌟ *ka-re-e-ez- zi*
36']-⌞*x*⌟ *da-a-i*
37']-⌞*x pí*⌟*-da-i*
(bricht ab)

Vorderseite III[?]

§ 1'
1' ...
2' II[?] [
3' II[?] NINDAᵀ*x*¹-[
4' LÚAGRIG [URU*A-an-ku-u̯a* ...[?]]
5' *Ù* LÚAGRIG [URU*Ša-na-a-ḫu-it-ta* ...[?]]
6' ᵈ*Kur-ša-an ku-u̯*[*a-a-pí-it-ta*
7' *nu a-pé-e-da-ni* ᵀ*x*¹-[
8' *I-NA* ŠÀ-*BA* XX [
9' I NINDA*ka-ḫa-re-e-et* ÉᵀxT-[
10' ᵈ*Kur-ša-an ku-u̯a-a-pí-i*[*t-ta*
11' *nu a-pí-i̯a ti-i̯a-a*[*n-zi*]

---

§ 2'
12' III NINDA I NINDA*tu-ni-ik* I NINDA*ka-ḫa-ri-iz*
13' *I-NA* É ᵈ*Kur-ša-aš ku-u̯a-a-pí-it-*ᵀ*ta x*[?]¹-[
14' *nu a-pí-i̯a ti-an-zi*
15' III NINDA *I-NA* É <ᵈ>*Kur-ša-aš iš-ta-na-a-n*[*a-aš*]
16' GIŠBANŠUR-*i da-a-i*

---

§ 3'
17' I NINDA ᵈ*Ḫal-ki-aš pí-ra-an da-a-i*
18' I NINDA ᵈ*I-na-ra-aš* <*pí-ra-an da-a-i*> VII NINDA.Ḫ*I*.A
19' *iš-ta-na-a-na-aš* <*pí-ra-an*> *da-a-i*
20' <I NINDA> ᵈ*Kur-ša-aš pí-ra-an da-a-i*
21' I NINDA ᵈ*Mi-i̯a-ta-an-zi-pa-aš pí-ra-an da-a-i*
22' I NINDA ᵈ*Ḫa-ša-am-mi-la-aš pí-ra-an da-a-i*
23' I NINDA ᵈ*Te-le-e-*[4]*pí-nu-aš pí-ra-an da-a-i*
24' I NINDA *ḫar-ši-i̯a-al-li-aš pí-ra-an da-a-i*
25' I NINDA ᵈ[5]*Ḫa-lu-u-i-aš pí-ra-an da-a-i*
26' III NINDA *ku-e-lu-u̯a-na-aš še-e-*[6]*er da-a-i*
27' I NINDA *a-mi-an-ta-aš* ᵈ*Kur-ša-aš pí-ra-an da-a-i*
28' I NINDA LUGAL-*i me-na-*[7]*ḫa-an-ta pé-e-da- i*
29' *I-NA* ŠÀ-*BI* XXXII NINDA.Ḫ*I*.A XX NINDA.Ḫ*I*.A
30' *A-NA* LÚ*ḫa-mi-ni pa-a-i*

---

§ 4'
31'] *x* NINDA.Ḫ*I*.AII NINDA*tu-ni-ik*
32' [... NINDA*ka*]-*ḫa-re-e-et* ᵈ*Kur-ša-an ku-iš kar-pí-iz-zi*
33'](-)⌞*x*⌟ *ŠA* DINGIR-*LIM ta-az a-pa-aš da-a-i*
34'] XX-*iš*
35' LÚ.MEŠ]⌞*z*⌟*i-iš-ḫa-pu-na-a-i-le-eš*
36']-⌞*x*⌟-*zi*
37']-⌞*x ḫu-u*⌟-*pár-aš*
(bricht ab)

4 KUB 53.47 Vs. 3' lässt -*e*- aus.
5 KUB 53.47 Vs. 6': <ᵈ>*Ḫa-lu-u-i-i̯a-aš*.
6 KUB 53.47 Vs. 8' lässt -*e*- aus.
7 KUB 53.47 Vs. 10': *me-na-a*[*ḫ-...*].

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Rückseite IV[?]

§ 1' 1' ⌜I[?] *ta-az*[?]⌝-[
2' *ta-aš-ša-an* [
3' LÚ.U$_{19}$.LU.MEŠ ⌜*x*⌝(-)[
4' *ta-an A-NA PA-*⌜*NI*⌝ [
5' *na-aš* … (unleserliche Zeichen) [

---

§ 2' 6' *ma-a-an-kán* … (unleserliche Zeichen) [
7'-8' (unleserliche Zeichen)

---

§ 3' 9'-13' (unleserliche Zeichen)
(bricht ab)

Rückseite V[?]

§ 1' 1' ⌜*x*⌝(-) *ta*(-) *li-az-ta-az*[?](-)[ ]- *z*⌜*i*⌝
2' *ta-aš-ša-an* GIŠ*ḫu-lu-ka-a-an-ni e-ša*
3' *ma-a-an* MUNUS.LUGAL-*aš ar-ḫu-uz-na-aš a-a-ri*
4' II-*e e-uk- zi*
5' ^{d}U ^{URU}*Zi-ip-la-an-ta*
6' ^{d}*Ta-a-ḫa-an- na*
7' GIŠ.^{d}INANNA.TUR.TUR SÌR-*RU* $^{LÚ.MEŠ}$*ḫal-li-i̯a-ri-ša* NU.GÁL

---

§ 2' 8' MUNUS.LUGAL-*aš* GIŠ*ḫu-lu-ka-a-an-ni-*⌜*i*[?]⌝*-pát a-ru-u̯a-iz-zi*
9' MUNUS.LUGAL-*aš* LUGAL-*aš a-ap-pa-an i-i̯a-an-na-i*
10' *ma-a-an* LUGAL-*uš* GIŠ*ar-me-ez-zi-aš a-a-ri*
11' ^{LÚ}*ḫa-mi-na-aš* ^{LÚ}GUDU$_{12}$
12' ^{d}*Kur-ša-an pé-e-ta-an- zi*
13' *ta-an I-NA* ^{É}*ḫa-le-e-en-ti-u kán-kán-zi*

---

§ 3' 14' LUGAL-*uš* ^{d}*I-na-ra-aš* GIŠ-*aš ka-at-ta*
15' *na-a-ú-i a-a-ri* KASKAL-*ši-ma*
16' ^{MUNUS}AMA *ŠA* ^{LÚ}SANGA ÌR.MEŠ LUGAL
17' ^{LÚ}AGRIG ^{URU}*A-an-ku-u̯a*
18' *Ù* ^{LÚ}AGRIG ^{URU}*Ša-na-a-ḫu-it-ta*
19' LUGAL-*i ḫi-i-in-kán- ta*

---

§ 4' 20' *pa-ra-a-ma nam-ma* KASKAL-*ši* $^{MUNUS.MEŠ}$ŠU.⌜GI⌝ […?]
21' $^{MUNUS.MEŠ}$KI.SIKIL ^{URU}*Zi-ip-la-an-ta a-ra-*[*an-ta*]
22' *ta* SÌR-*RA*

---

§ 5' 23' *ma-a-na-aš-ta* LUGAL-*uš ḫa-an-ta-a-it-*⌜*ta*⌝ […?]
24' $^{MUNUS.MEŠ}$ŠU.GI […?] ^{URU}*Zi-ip-la-*⌜*an*⌝*-ta* […?]
25' LUGAL-*i ḫi-*⌜*i*[?]⌝*-in-*[*kán-ta*]

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§ 6' 26'-27' (unleserliche Zeichen)
(bricht ab)

Rückseite VI[?] (nichts erhalten)

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1.1 Vorderseite II?

§ 1' (1'-7') *Ein Kultlied in hattischer Sprache.*

§ 2' (8'-16') Der Haus[wa]rt des *tazzilli*-Priesters bringt aus seinem (= des *tazzilli*-Priesters) Haus fünf *muriyala*-Brote, zwölf Brotlaibe, Grütze (und) Schweineschmalz her. Sie hängen die *muriyala*-(Brote) an die Hörner der Rinder. Sie schmiere[n] ihre Hörner mit Fett ein. Sie tauchen die zerbröckelten … Brotlaibe (und) Grütze (in das Schweineschmalz) ein. Die *zintuḫiyat*-Frauen singen und [die …]-Männer […]en.

§ 3' (17'-22') Zwölf Priester bringen? […Brotla]ib(e) aus ihren (eigenen) Häusern (und) händigen (sie) dem *ḫamina*-Mann aus. Der *ḫamina*-Mann legt seine Hand (auf die Brotlaibe). Wer auch immer seinen Brotlaib bricht, der Mann und die Frau des Wettergottes teilen es auf.

§ 4' (23'-32') Die Priester von Inar, Ḫuriyanzipa, Taḫa, Wattaru, Ḫašamil, Telipinu, Puškurunuwa, Miyatanzipa, Ḫannaḫanna, dem Wettergott, der *IŠTAR* (und) Ḫalki bringen den *eya*-Baum in den Tempel hin. Die *zintuḫiyat*-Frauen singen hinter ihnen.

§ 5' (33'-37') Der *ḫamina*-Mann wäscht (und) salbt die Gottheit Ḫaluwi(nkatta) [im] Tempel [und bedeckt sie mi]t [einem Tuch?]. Er nimmt/legt […], schafft […] hin.

1.2 Vorderseite III?

§ 1' (1'-11') […] zwei […], zwei? […]-Brote […] der Verwalter [von Ankuwa?] und der Verwalter [von Šanaḫuitta?] die heilige Jagdtasche üb[erall in …] und jenem […] darunter zwanzig […] ein *kaḫaret*-Brot [im?/des? …]-Haus(es) […] die heilige Jagdtasche übera[ll in …] und m[an] legt dort.

§ 2' (12'-16') Drei Brote, ein *tunik*-Brot, ein *kaḫariz*-Brot: (Diese) […t man] überall im Haus der heiligen Jagdtasche und legt (sie) dort hin. Er legt drei Brote im Haus der heiligen Jagdtasche auf den Tisch [des] Altar[s].

§ 3' (17'-30') Er legt ein Brot vor Ḫalki hin. (Er legt) ein Brot (vor) Inar hin. Er legt sieben Brote (vor) den Altar hin. Er legt (ein Brot) vor die heilige Jagdtasche hin. Er legt ein Brot vor Miyatanzipa hin. Er legt ein Brot vor Ḫašammil hin. Er legt ein Brot vor Telepinu hin. Er legt ein Brot vor den Pithos hin. Er legt ein Brot vor Ḫaluwi hin. Er legt drei Brote auf *kueluwana* hin. Er legt ein kleines Brot vor die heilige Jagdtasche hin. Er bringt ein Brot gegenüber dem König hin. Von den zweiunddreißig Broten gibt er zwanzig Brote dem *ḫamina*-Mann.

§ 4' (31'-37') […] Brote, zwei *tunik*-Brote, […*ka*]*ḫaret*-[Brot(e?)]: Wer die heilige Jagdtasche hebt, [ist der …] des Gottes, und jener nimmt (diese) für sich. […] zwanzigmal […] Die *zišḫapuna*-[Männer …]en. […] der Schale (G.) […].

1.3 Rückseite IV?

§ 1' (1'-5') Der *taz*[*zili*-Priester …] und [...] Menschen […] und ihn vor […] und er […].

§ 2' (6'-8') Wenn/als […]. […]

§ 3' (9'-13') […].

1.4 Rückseite V?

§ 1' (1'-7') […] aus? … […]t sie. (Die Königin) setzt sich in den Kultwagen und als sie den *arḫuzna*-Hain erreicht, verehrt sie zwei (Gottheiten) durch das Kulttrinken: Den Wettergott von Ziplanta und den heiligen (Berg) Taḫa. (Dabei) spielt man das kleine *Ištar*-Musikinstrument, aber es gibt keine (Gesangsvorführung der) *ḫalliyari*-Männer.

§ 2' (8'-13') Die Königin verbeugt sich gerade im Kultwagen und folgt dem König. Wenn der König die Brücke erreicht, schaffen der *ḫamina*-Mann und der gesalbte Priester die heilige Jagdtasche hin und hängen sie im *ḫalentuwa*-Palastkomplex auf.

§ 3' (14'-19') Unterwegs, bevor der König unter dem Baum der Schutzgöttin Inar ankommt, verbeugen sich die Mutter des Priesters, die Königsdiener, die Verwalter von Ankuwa und Šanaḫuitta vor dem König.

§ 4' (20'-22') Weiter auf dem Weg stehen die Greisinnen [und] die Mädchen von Ziplanta und sie singen.

§ 5' (23'-25') Wenn der König fertig/bereit ist, verbeugen sich die Greisinnen von Ziplanta vor dem König.

§ 6' (26'-27') […].

2 Sprachliche und sachliche Kommentare

Allgemein zur Datierung des Textes: Die vorliegende Tafel weist eine Reihe von (typisch-)althethitischen Spracheigenheiten auf, obwohl die Schrift spätjunghethitisch ist. Es ist anzunehmen, dass der Schreiber von Bo 2698 aus der zweiten Hälfte des 13. Jh. v. Chr. Mühe hatte, eine der althethitischen Vorlage getreu wirkende Abschrift zu schaffen. Die Charakteristika der ah. Sprache spiegeln sich in den folgenden Schreibweisen wider:[8]

Pleneschreibung (-*ā*-): *ḫa-an-ta-a-it-ta* (V? 23'), GIŠ*ḫu-lu-ka-a-an-ni* (V? 2', 8'), *iš-ta-na-a-na-aš* (III? 19'), *ka-ra-a-uš-me-ta* (II? 12'), *ku-u̯a-a-pí-it-ta* (III? 10', 13'), NINDA*mu-ri-i̯a-a-lu-uš* (II? 9'), *na-a-ú-i* (V? 15'), URU*Ša-na-a-ḫu-it-ta* (V? 18'); **(-*ē*-)**: É*ḫa-le-e-en-ti-u* (V? 13'), NINDA*ka-ḫa-re-e-et* (III? 9', 32'), *me-e-ma-al* (II? 10', 14'), *še-e-er* (III? 26'), <d>*Ḫu-ri-an-ze-e-pa* (II? 23'), d*Me-i̯a-ta-an-ze-e-pa* (II? 27'), d*Te-le-e-pí-nu*(-*aš*) (II? 26', III? 23'); **(-*ī*-)**: d*Ḫa-ša-am-mi-i-la-aš* (II? 25'), *ḫi-i-in-kán-ta* (V? 19'); **(-*ū*-)**: *ḫu-u-pár-aš* (III? 37'), *mu-ú-ri-i̯a-lu-uš* (II? 11'), *šu-ú-ni-an-zi* (II? 14')

Anlautschreibung: *a-a-ri* (II? 34', V? 15'), *i-iš-ki-iz-zi* (II? 34'), *i-iš-kán-z*[*i*] (II? 12'), URU*A-an-ku-u̯a* (V? 17')

Ohne Gleitlaut: *a-mi-an-ta-aš* (III? 27'), *ḫar-ši-i̯a-al-li-aš* (III? 24'), *pár-ši-an-ta* (II? 13'), *šu-ú-ni-an-zi* (II? 14'), *ti-an-zi* (III? 14'), MUNUS.MEŠ*zi-in-tu-ḫi-at-te-eš* (II? 15', 31'), d*Ḫal-ki-aš* (II? 29'), d*Ḫa-lu-u-i-aš* (V? 8'), <d>*Ḫu-ri-an-ze-e-pa* (II? 23'), d*Te-le-e-pí-nu-aš* (III? 23'), d*U̯a-at-ta-ru-aš* (II? 24')

Tenues-Schreibung: *a-mi-an-ta-aš* (III? 27'), *ḫa-an-ta-a-it-ta* (V? 23'), GIŠ*ḫu-lu-ka-a-an-ni* (V? 2', 8'), *me-na-ḫa-an-ta* (III? 28'), *pár-ši-an-ta* (II? 13'), *pé-e-ta-an-zi* (II? 30', V? 12')

Syllabische Schreibung: *a-ap-pa-an* (II? 31', V? 9'), *ka-at-ta* (V? 14'), *ši-ú-na-aš pár-na* (II? 30')

Fehlen des Determinativs: *ar-ḫu-uz-na-aš* (V? 3'), *ḫar-ši-i̯a-al-li-aš* (III? 24'), *mu-ú-ri-i̯a-lu-uš* (II? 11'), *Ḫu-ri-an-ze-e-pa* (II? 23'), *Kur-ša-aš* (III? 15'), UR.SAG>*Ta-a-ḫa* (II? 24')

Alte (bzw. seltene) Graphik: GIŠ*ar-me-ez-zi-aš* (V? 10'), GIŠ*e-i-e* (II? 20'), *e-uk-zi* (V? 4'), *ḫu-u-pár-aš* (III? 37'), NINDA*ka-ḫa-ri-iz* (III? 12'), *ka-re-e-ez-zi* (II? 35'), *ka-at-ta* (V? 14')

Alter Dativ (Allativ) auf -*a*: *pár-na* (II? 30')

Genitiv vor Postposition: LUGAL-*aš a-ap-pa-an* (V? 9'), GIŠ-*aš ka-at-ta* (V? 14'), *ḫar-ši-i̯a-al-li-aš pí-ra-an* (III? 24'), d*…-aš pí-ra-an* (III? 17', 20'-23', 25', 27'), *ku-e-lu-u̯a-na-aš še-e-er* (III? 26')

Instrumental auf -*ta*-: *ša-kán-ta* (II? 12')

Possessivpronomen -*šmi(t)*-: *ka-ra-a-uš-me-ta* (II? 12'), *ka-ra-ú-ni-iš-mi* (II? 11'), *a-ap-pa-an-ša-mi-it* (II? 31')

8 Kurzgefasst vgl. auch Kloekhorst 2014, 421-2.

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Konjunktion *ta*: *ta* (II? 21', 30', V? 22'), *ta-aš-ša-an* (IV? 2', V? 2'), *ta-az* (III? 33'), *ta-an* (IV? 4', V? 13'), *tu-uš-za* (II? 22')

Temporales *mān*: *ma-a-an*(*-kán*) (IV? 6', V? 3', 10'), *ma-a-na-aš-ta* (V? 23')

Lexika: NINDA*kaḫarēt/kaḫariz* (III? 9', 12'), *karaun-* (Sekundär- bzw. Obliquusstamm von *karawar*) (II? 11', 12'), *MUNUS*zintuḫi*(*ya*)*tt-* (statt MUNUS*zintuḫi*(*ya*)-) (II? 15', 31'), [LÚ.MEŠ]*zišḫapunāileš* (Pl.) (III? 35'), SÌR-*RA* (= *izammarā*; hyperkorrekte Form für 3. Pl. Fem. im Akkadischen) (V? 22').

Kommentare: II? 2'-7' enthalten ein hattisches Kultlied, das von den an dieser Stelle nicht näher zu bestimmenden Personen gesungen wird. Da sich die Tontafel jetzt in einem schlechteren Zustand befindet, werden die entsprechenden Zeilen aus den älteren Umschriften aus den 1930er Jahren (vgl. *supra*), und zwar nur mit Vorbehalt, übernommen. Abgesehen vom Possessivelement *lē=*, bleiben fast alle der Wörter in den dreimal harmonisch wiederholten hattischen Sätzen, nach gegenwärtiger Kenntnis des Hattischen, unbekannt; sie lassen sich jedoch versuchsweise morphologisch folgendermaßen analysieren:

šindi=n lē=ma lē=ktal wa$_a$al (7)
wa$_a$l(*=in=aḫ*) *ti=p=tip=ē* (7)
arra(*=*)*ḫ* (1 oder 2)

Davon sind *šindi* (Maskulinum), *ma*, **ktal* und *wa$_a$l* als Nomina zu klassifizieren, während *ti-ip-ti-ip-pé-e* entweder als eine nominale *ti=p=tipe* oder (prekativ-)verbale Form *ti=p=tip=e* interpretiert werden kann. Unklar bleibt weiterhin *arraḫ* bzw. *arra=ḫ*.

II? 8' (auch **IV? 1'**) könnte sehr wohl auch als PN mTazzilli interpretiert werden, denn die älteren Texte (Ah. und Mh.: KBo 20.2 + KBo 25.15 I? 6', IBoT 1.29 Rs. 12', 18', KBo 16.49+ I 3', KBo 16.78+ IV 12) verwenden für die Bezeichnung *tazelli-* (Priesterart) das Determinativ ‚m' statt ‚LÚ'. Dabei handelt es sich weniger wahrscheinlich um die Zahl ‚1', wie ein vergleichbarer Gebrauch auch bei der Priesterbezeichnung LÚ/m*taḫpurili-* zeigt.[9] In den meisten Belegen erscheint der Beruf *tazelli-* mit LÚSANGA „(*šankunni-*)Priester" und wird nach ihm genannt. Einzige Ausnahme ist IBoT 1.29 obv. 25-6, wo ein LÚ*tazelli-* den Priestern vorangestellt ist. Die Textangabe „dem (*šankunni-*)Priester geben sie ein Gewand erster Qualität, dem tazelli- geben sie ein Gewand zweiter Qualität" aus KBo 25.176 Rs. 8-10 ist wichtig, um seinen niedrigeren Status gegenüber dem (*šankunni-*)Priester auszudrücken. LÚ*tazelli-* scheint eine besondere, d.h. regionale Art von Priester zu sein, dessen kultisches Auftreten vor allem mit dem Kult der Stadt Zippalanda verbunden ist, und er daher sicherlich dem hattischen Milieu angehört.

II? 8': lässt sich möglicherweise als LÚ*ḫa-ru-u*̯[*a-a*]*n-za* ergänzen und auf den weiblichen Berufsnamen MUNUS*ḫarwan*(*dan*)*za* ‚Wärterin, Pflegerin' sowie dem maskulinen Pendant davon LÚ*ḫarwantašš=a* ‚Wärter' in KBo 22.205:5 beziehen. Die Orthographie MUNUS*ḫa-ru-*o liegt auch noch in KUB 33.59 II? 6' (Ah.) und Bo 4498 r. Kol. 7' (Jh.?) vor. Der Kontext unseres Textes lässt zusätzlich den Bedeutungsansatz ‚Hauswart' zu, der aus dem Haus des *tazzilli*-Priesters Proviant für die Kulthandlungen ausliefert.

II? 9': Die revidierte Lesung dieser Zeile gegenüber CHDS 5.1 folgt Groddek 2023, 131-2.

II? 11', 12': Die seltsamen Nominalbildungen mit Possessiva *ka-ra-ú-ni-i*(*š-mi*) (Sg. D.) und *ka-ra-a-u*(*š-me-ta*) (Pl. A.) gehören zum Stamm *karāwar/karaun-* ‚Horn';[10] wobei aber die angebliche Form *ka-ra-a-uš-me-‚ša'* jetzt zu revidieren ist; die Lesung *‚ta'* statt *‚ša'*[11] wurde nach einer Kollation auf dem Foto nunmehr bestätigt.

II? 15', 31': *MUNUS*zintuḫi*(*ya*)*tt-* ist die Sekundärform von MUNUS*zintuḫi*(*ya*)- und tritt nur als pluralisch [MUNUS].MEŠ*zi-in-tu-ḫi-it-te-eš* in Bo 3456:7' (Jh.) und möglicherweise [MUNUS.MEŠ*zi-in*]-*tu-ḫi-i̯a-te-eš* in KBo 41.95 lk. Kol. 4' (Mh.?) sowie [MUNUS.MEŠ*zi-in-tu*]-*ḫi-at-te-eš* in Bo 6734:2' (Jh.) auf. Die vowrliegende Endung -(*a*)*t* ist formal mit keiner der gängigen heth. Nominalsuffixe zu identifizieren. Daher wäre bei MUNUS*zintuḫi*(*ya*)*tt-* in unserem Text eher eine hyperkorrekte (alte) oder, weniger wahrscheinlich, redundante (junge) Femininbildung auf *-t* im Hattischen zu vermuten. Das sprachgeschichtliche Alter (alt- oder spätjunghethitisch wie in diesem Fall) lässt sich nach der dürftigen Beleglage nicht mehr bestimmen.

9 Neu 1980, 27-8 Anm. 72.

10 Vgl. Rieken 1999, 349-50 Anm. 1724.

11 Groddek 2023, 131-3.

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II? 18'-20': Die Zeilenenden, die jeweils Prädikate enthalten, sind durch Einwirkung von hoher Hitze auf die Tafeloberfläche miteinander verschmolzen. Die fragliche Lesung *IŠTU É-TI-ŠUNU udanzi* für II? 18' stützt sich auf den Inhalt von II? 9'-10'.

II? 30': Die Schreibweise GIŠ*e-i-e* ist nochmal im unveröffentlichten Fragment Bo 3716:6' bezeugt. Es lässt sich jedoch nicht endgültig beurteilen, ob sie eine sprachwirkliche Bildung darstellt.[12] Ein späterer Abschrift-Fehler für die letzten zwei Zeichen ‚*i*+*e*' für ‚*i*+*a* → *i̯a*' käme ebenfalls in Betracht.[13] Der Satz, wonach das GIŠ*eya-* von den Priestern in den Tempel gebracht wird, lässt die Vermutung aufkommen, dass der Baum tragbar war. Demnach wäre GIŠ*eya-* ein mobiler (Plantations)baum, der von Ort zu Ort getragen und auch zu religiösen Zwecken eingesetzt wird. Der in einer Festbeschreibung bezeugte Ausdruck GIŠ*eyanit unuwant-* „mit GIŠ*eya-* geschmückt/dekoriert" (Bo 5549 = CHDS 6.194:6')[14] würde diese Auffassung unterstützen. GIŠ*eya-* soll aber an einer anderen Stelle gesondert behandelt werden.

II? 33' überliefert einen problematischen Götternamen im Akkusativ d*Ḫa-lu-u-i-in-ka-at-ta-an*,[15] der sich in dieser Gestalt nur unbefriedigend bezeugen lässt. Denn die Gottheit heißt anderswo dḪal(u)wi, wie sie hier obv. III? 25' als d*Ḫa-lu-u-i-aš* (G.), auch <d>*Ḫa-lu-u-i-i̯a-aš* (G.) in KUB 53.47 Vs. 6', d*Ḫa-l*[(*u-u-i*)]*n* in KBo 25.24 Vs.? 3' // KBo 46.207:3' und d*Ḫal-ú-i-in* (A.) in KBo 23.68 Vs. 4' auftritt. Nach bisherigen Textzeugnissen (CTH 592, 635) ist die Gottheit mit dem Kultbereich von Zippalanda eng verbunden. Eine der Textpassagen in drei Duplikaten (alle gehören nach *Konkordanz* zu CTH 635) mit der Nennung dieser Gottheit lautet:

> [*ma-a-an* d]ʳ*Ḫ*ˀ*a-lu-u-in*(-)*ka*-[*at-ta*(-) …]/[*ši-ú-na*]-*aš pár-na pé-e-da*-[*i* …] (KBo 42.46 Rs. 1-2; Jheth.)
> [… *m*]*a-a-an* d*Ḫa-l*[*u*-…] (KBo 25.24 Vs.? 3'; Aheth.)
> [… d*Ḫa-lu-u-i*]*n kat-ta ši-ú*-[*na-aš* …] (KBo 46.207:3'; Jheth. Dieser Beleg könnte übrigens auf einer Fehlinterpretation späterer Zeiten beruhen).[16]

Aus der Kombination dreier Textabschnitte lässt sich die dürftige Auskunft [*m*]*ān* d*Ḫaluwin*(-)*katta šiu*[*n*] *aš parna pēda*[*i*] „[W]enn er die Gottheit Ḫaluwi(nkatta) in den Tempel schaff[t]" gewinnen. Auch eine kultische Behandlung der Statue von Ḫaluwi(nkatta) in einem Tempel, wo sie gewaschen, gesalbt und [mit einem Tuch?] verhüllt wird, ist unserem Text II? 33'-35' zu entnehmen.

II? 35' ist ungefähr mit [*ta-an* GADA-*i*]*t ka-re-e-ez-zi* „[und m]it [einem Tuch] bedeckt er [es]" zu ergänzen.

III? 4'-5': Die Ergänzung beider Ortsnamen erfolgt nach Vorkommen in V? 17'-18'.

III? 13', 15': Mit É d*Kuršaš* ist hier sicher nicht ein Tempel, sondern eine Kammer davon gemeint.[17]

III? 26': Die Phrase *kueluwanaš šēr dāi* „Er legt auf *k.* hin" ist auffällig, da die Brotopfer in diesem Textabschnitt sonst vor (*piran*; III? 17' ff.) oder gegenüber (*menaḫanta*; III? 28') den Opferempfängern gelegt oder gebracht werden. Die enge sachliche Beziehung von *kueluwana-* zum Wasserspeicher ergibt sich in besonders eindeutiger Weise aus der Beschreibung in KUB 9.1 III 14'-22'. Die bisherigen Deutungsversuche ‚Waschbecken?'[18] sowie ‚Abflussbecken, Brauchwasserbehälter'[19] sind angesichts unserer Textstelle nicht mehr haltbar, da es sich hier offensichtlich um eine heilige oder mindestens kultisch wichtige Lokalität handelt, worauf das Brotopfer dargebracht wird. Die Bedeutung ‚Wasserbecken, Zisterne?'[20] scheint dagegen akzeptabler zu sein. Man könnte vielleicht mutmaßen, dass *kueluwana-* mit dem kürzlich aus den Kayalıpınar-Texten bekannt gewordenen ≀ *witeyant-* ‚Wasserbecken/-trog?'[21] sachlich etwas gemein hat, und sogar sprachlich die hethitische Entsprechung dieses Glossenkeilwortes wiedergibt. Da man in KUB 9.1 III 17'-18' (// KUB 58.77 Vs. 5') das zu einem magischen Zweck vorbereitete

12 Oettinger 1984, 47 m. Anm. 16; Puhvel, HED 1-2 (1984) 254; ablehnend aber HW2 Bd. II: E, Lfg. 9-10 (1988) 26-7.

13 Eine weitere Fehlschreibung GIŠ*a-e-i̯*[*a*(-)…], bedingt durch die Zeichen ‚*a*' und ‚*e*', liegt in KBo 34.187:3' vor. Dass dieser Fall von Cotticelli-Kurras 2007, 187, unter „apophonische Verben" zitiert wird, beruht auf einem Irrtum.

14 Als *Preprint*-Version erhältlich über `http://www.hethport.adwmainz.de/preprints/baende/CHDS_6_preprint.pdf`.

15 Bereits Otten 1972-75, 63.

16 Damit kann man Popko 2004, 259 zustimmen, dass dḪalwi eine verkürzte Form von dḪalwinkatta darstellt. Die hattische Namenstypologie *dḪalwi=n=katta entspräche den männlichen Gottheiten d*Šuli=n=katte* und d*Wur=un=katte*, die im Hinterglied gelegentlich auch *katta* statt gängigem *katte* ‚König' zeigen (Soysal 2004, 287).

17 Zur Interpretation von ‚É' im Sinne von ‚Cella, Kultraum' vgl. Soysal 2022, 192 mit Lit.

18 Seit Holt apud Friedrich, HW 3. Erg. (1966) 20; zuletzt Puhvel, HED 4 (1997) 205 und wiederholend Kloekhorst 2008, 484-5 ‚washbasin'.

19 Tischler, HHw2 (2008) 90; ähnlich Miller 2013, 193 ‚sewage pool'.

20 Ünal 1990, 219-20; 2007, 353.

21 KpT 1.39 IV 24', KpT 1.56 I 87; Soysal 2022, 192-3.

Wasser in ein *kueluwana-* hineinfließen lässt, kann hier wohl von einem natürlichen ‚Brunnen' oder einer ‚(Wasser)quelle' nicht die Rede sein, obwohl seinerzeit zwischen *kueluwana-* und ‚Quelle' eine attraktive Etymologieverbindung erwogen wurde (Anschluß an IE-Wurzel **gu̯el(ə)-* ‚herabträufeln, quellen'; Neumann *apud* Tischler, HEG I [1983] 604). In KUB 31.100 IV? 11'-13', einem Anweisungstext von Arnuwanda I. für Bürgermeister, ist vorgeschrieben, dass die architektonische Wartung von *kueluwana-* sorgfältig durchgeführt werden soll, indem man es auskratzen und glätten muss.[22]

III? 35': [LÚ.MEŠ]⌊*z*⌋*i-iš-ḫa-pu-na-a-i-le-eš* (Pl. N. com. von *LÚ*zišḫapunaili-*) weist auf eine bestimmte Art von Kultbediensteten oder Priesterklasse, die vom Götternamen Zišḫapuna abgeleitet ist. Daher gehört diese Gruppe ausschließlich dem Kultkreis dieses Gottes an. Kein weiterer Beleg ist dazu verfügbar. Diese Bezeichnung bildet sich nicht identisch, aber immer noch semantisch ähnlich zu LÚ*zilipuriyatalla/i-* (ein Kultfunktionär, Priester des Gottes Zilipuri).

IV? 1': Zur Lesung und Interpretation vgl. Kommentar zu II? 8'.

V? 1': Die Lesung nach dem digitalen Foto ⌜x⌝(-)*ta*(-)*li-az-ta-az*?-[…] lässt keine vernünftige Interpretation zu. Es könnte sich um eine Lokalität handeln. Das Zeichen ‚*zi*' am Ende der Zeile gehört wohl zu einem Prädikat im Präsens 3. Person Singular.

V? 3': *arḫuzna-* ist in HW² Bd. I: A (1975-84) 289 als Pl. Tantum – allerdings mit einer falschen Annahme „Gebäudebezeichnung" – bestimmt,[23] so dass die Pl. Dat. Form *arḫuznaš* hier morphologisch in die gleiche Kategorie wie *armeziyaš* (V? 10') fällt. Das Nomen (GIŠ)*arḫuz(a)na-* wird mit (GIŠ)*warḫu(i)zna-* (zu heth. *warḫui-* ‚dichtbelaubt') gleichgesetzt, so dass wir vor uns ein heth. Erbwort haben können.[24] Das *a* ~ *wa*-Verhältnis im Anlaut erinnert an *aḫra* – *waḫra*, *ain* – *wain* und *arḫa* – *warḫa* (alle als Wortpaare in Reimbildung) sowie (UZU)*appuzzi* gegenüber UZU*wappuzzi* (nur einmal belegt), und bei den letzten zwei Beispielen bilden *arḫa* und (UZU)*appuzzi* die sprachwirklichen Formen. Sollte auch in unserem Fall (GIŠ)*arḫuz(a)na-* die Primärform darstellen, dann wäre (GIŠ)*warḫu(i)zna-* eher eine Umbildung nach Volksetymologie[25] als das Erbwort. Für (GIŠ)*arḫuz(a)na-*/(GIŠ)*warḫu(i)zna-* wird allgemein die Bedeutung ‚Wald, heiliger Hain' angenommen, und laut bisheriger Beleglage soll es sich bei (GIŠ)*arḫuz(a)na-*/(GIŠ)*warḫu(i)zna-* um ein Gelände von religiöser Relevanz handeln, das das Königspaar während der Kultreisen in verschiedene Städten (Arinna, Kulilla, Matilla, Taḫurpa) mit dem leichten Kult- (GIŠ*ḫuluganni-*) oder Reisewagen (GIŠ-GIGIR) besucht. Dort finden nicht selten auch die Kulthandlungen sowie die Gottesverehrungen statt.[26]

V? 5': Der Stadtname Zippalanda[27] ist in unserem Text in seiner verkürzten Form Ziplanta vertreten, wofür man in den schriftlichen Zeugnissen noch mehrere Varianten findet:

Zi-ip-pa-la-an-da/ta ist mehrfach bezeugt [Primärform]
Zi-pa-la-an-da/ta und *Zi-ip-la-an-da/ta* sind mehrfach bezeugt [Sekundärformen]
Zi-ip-pa-la-da/ta (KBo 56.65 Vs. 1 bzw. KBo 13.58 I 17'), *Zi-ip-la-da/ta* (VSNF 12.113 Rs. 8' bzw. KBo 2.12 II 7') [nasallose Formen]
Zi-ip-pal-an-da (KBo 13.90:2) *Zi-pal-an-da* (KBo 21.81 Vs. 10), *Zi-pal-da/ta* (KUB 60.63:5' bzw. KBo 44.203 Rs. 5') [mit gebrochenen bzw. unregelmässigen Schreibungen]
Zi-ip-pa-an-da (KUB 20.92 I 10'), *Zi-ip-an-da* (KUB 5.7 Vs. 12'), *Zi-pa-da* (VSNF 12.33 Vs. III 11, 14), *Zi-pa-la* (KUB 49.1 I? 12) [defektive Formen vorwiegend durch Weglassung der Zeichen ‚*la*' bzw. ‚*da*'/‚*ta*']

21 *Archäologische Bemerkungen von Andreas Müller-Karpe*: Die Übersetzungen ‚Wasserbecken' und ‚Quelle' müssen sich nicht widersprechen. Wir können interessanterweise bislang bei den Hethitern, im Gegensatz zu anderen Kulturen, keine senkrecht eingetieften Brunnen nachweisen, aus denen Wasser etwa mit einem Eimer heraufgezogen und dann in ein Becken od. Ä. gefüllt worden wäre. Für Hethiter war das fließende (‚lebendige') Wasser wichtig. Quellen wurden mit Steinen gefasst, sodass das Wasser kontrolliert in ein Becken floss, von dem aus es dann geschöpft werden konnte, wie das noch heute auf dem Lande in Anatolien üblich ist. Hatte man in der Stadt keine ausreichenden Quellen, wurde Quellwasser über lange Tonrohrleitungen (in Šarišša fast 1 km) in die Stadt geleitet und dann dort wohl in einem *kueluwana-* aufgefangen. Dieses Becken musste immer besonders sauber gehalten werden. In das Becken konnte man dann auch noch zusätzlich „magisch vorbereitetes Wasser' hineinfüllen. Heute wird in diesen Wasserbecken, in die das Quellwasser läuft, durchaus auch die Wäsche gewaschen. Es sind für das Leben sehr wichtige Plätze, die entsprechend auch ‚gesegnet' werden konnten.

23 Konträr zu dem in HW² Bd. I: A (1975-84) 289 aufgeführten *E*arḫu(i)z(a)na-* (anlehnend an H.A. Hoffners Vermutung) existiert eine solche Baustruktur mit diesem Namen nicht. Alle Belege dort sollen unter (GIŠ)(*w*)*arḫu(i)zna-* verbucht werden.

24 Oettinger 2002.

25 Popko 1986, 178.

26 KBo 20.76 + KBo 24.87 Rs. 10'-15' (// KBo 21.80 + FHG 7 IV 15'-19'), KBo 22.181 lk. Kol. 3', 11', KBo 30.54 I 20', KUB 34.124 I? 3'-4', KBo 34.153 lk. Kol. 6', KBo 52.161+ Vs.? 9'-12', KBo 56.72 IV 4-10, KUB 34.124 I? 4'-6', KUB 44.31 Vs. 4' und 11', KUB 53.16 VI 12'-14', KUB 58.40 II? 1'-2'.

27 Popko 1994, 10-11.

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Die hier beobachtete Vielfalt und Unsicherheit in der Schreibung lässt sogleich eine nicht-hethitische Herkunft des Ortsnamens vermuten, die auch mit dem religiösen Fakt, nämlich der dominant-hattischen Tradition von Zippalanda in der hethitischen Gesellschaft, gut harmonieren würde. In diesem Zusammenhang wäre eine Stadtbezeichnung im hattischen Reinigungsritual von Ḫattušili für das Königspaar (KBo 21.82 IV 6') zu nennen, die in der Sekundärliteratur ^{URU}*Zi-i-pa-*at*-ta* verlesen wurde, aber in Wirklichkeit -den obengenannten nasallosen Beispielen entsprechend- ^{URU}*Zi-i-pa-*la*-ta* heißen müsste und in dieser Form den Originalnamen der Stadt wiedergeben soll.[28] Das Wort im Hattischen wäre strukturmäßig als *zi≥pilat(≥a)* oder noch mit kleineren Bildungselementen *zi≥pi≥lat(≥a)* zu analysieren, ohne aber eine sinnvolle Bedeutung dafür zu erzielen. Zippalanda ist daher einer der unter dem heth.-luw. Einfluss gebildeten geographischen Namen auf ‚fiktive' *-anda*, wie es bei Purušḫanda (Heth.) < Burušḫat(t)um (Kültepe) und Kappurnanda (Heth.) < Kuburnat (Kültepe) der Fall ist.

V? 10': Aufgrund der Erwähnung von ^{GIŠ}*armizzi-* (hier mit der auffälligen Grafik ^{GIŠ}*armezzi-*) wurde diese Zeile in der älteren Sekundärliteratur öfters zitiert.[29] Ausschlaggebend ist die Tatsache, dass dieses Wort mit dem geläufigen Bedeutungsansatz ‚Brücke' in der Beschreibung des Reisewegs des Königspaares in engem Zusammenhang mit dem *ḫalentuwa*-Palastkomplex steht. Das Verhältnis eines ^{É}*ḫalentuwa-* zu natürlichen Gewässern wie Flüssen, Seen, Teichen usw. wäre nur für Kuşaklı (heth. Šarišša) nachweisbar, weil die Baustruktur (dort ‚Gebäude B') innerhalb eines kultisch wichtigen Geländes am Berg nach Ansicht des Ausgräbers in enger Beziehung zum *ḫuwaši*-Heiligtum und Šuppitaššu-Quellteich gelegen haben soll.[30] Andernfalls ist ^{GIŠ}*armizzi-* an unserer Textstelle im Sinne von ‚Rampe; Überführung?'[31] zu interpretieren, da hier anscheinend von keinem Gewässer die Rede ist.

V? 14': Beachte die unökonomische Schreibweise *ka-at-°* statt *kat-°* bei *katta*; weitere Belege aus Boğazköy sind KBo 11.36 V 13, KUB 20.4 VI 4', KUB 20.43 r. Kol. 9', Bo 2692 V 6' usw. Ein ähnlicher Fall könnte bei *kattan* in unserem Text II? 33' vorliegen, falls es sich dort nicht um das zweite Glied des Götternamens Ḫaluwi(nkatta) handeln sollte.[32]

V? 14': Mit ‚GIŠ' in ^{d}*I-na-ra-aš* GIŠ-*aš* wird in diesem Fall nicht nur ein Holz oder hölzerner Gegenstand,[33] sondern auch ein Baum gemeint sein (vgl. ^{GIŠ}*eya-* in II? 30'), unter dem der König während seines Reiseverlaufs ankommt. Als einen weiteren, mit einem Götternamen verbundenen Baum kennt man ^{d}*Ḫašamiliyaš* GIŠ (KUB 25.18 III 33', IV 29', V 22'; KUB 54.81 Vs.? 6'). ^{d}*Inaraš* GIŠ ‚Baum der Schutzgöttin' lässt sich außer in unserem Text, und in der Schreibung ^{d}LAMMA-*aš* GIŠ-*ru-*, noch in Bo 3339 II? 8' bezeugen (s. Anm. 44). Ikonographisch wäre hierzu relevant, dass im Hirschrhyton aus der Schimmel-Sammlung[34] der Kurunti und ein Hirsch, das Tier dieser männlichen Schutzgottheit, zusammen mit einem (Lebens)baum dargestellt sind.

V? 16': Es ist fragwürdig, ob mit ^{MUNUS}AMA *ŠA* ^{LÚ}SANGA ‚die Mutter des Priesters' schlicht ein weibliches Familienmitglied wie DAM ^{LÚ}SANGA ‚die Gattin des Priesters' oder eine besondere Kultfunktionärin gemeint ist. Ein Emendationsversuch ^{MUNUS}AMA.<DINGIR-*LIM*> *ŠA* ^{LÚ}SANGA ‚<Gottes>mutter des Priesters'[35] dürfte wohl hinfällig sein, weil diese Bezeichnung auch in KBo 20.3+ Rs. 16' als ^{MUNUS}AMA ^{LÚ}SANGA auftritt und aufgrund dieses zweimaligen Vorkommens in beiden ah. Belegen KBo 20.3+ (Original) und Bo 2689 (originalgetreue Abschrift) tatsächlich zu existieren scheint. Ebenso

28 Die genauere Angabe hierzu lautet ^{URU}*Zi-i-pa-la-ta* KUR ^{URU}*Za-al-pu-ua* „die Stadt Zipalata des Landes Zalpuwa", woraus zu erschließen wäre, dass Zippalanda sich geographisch bzw. verwaltungsmäßig unter dem Wirkungsbereich des Landes Zalpuwa befindet.

29 Vgl insb. Otten 1983.

30 Müller-Karpe 2017, 126; dazu ausführlich Arroyo 2022, 19-23 (betrachtet diesen Bereich in Kuşaklı als ein Open-Air-Kultkomplex). Doch lassen die dürftigen archäologischen Befunde und Daten eine endgültige Entscheidung dafür nicht zu.

31 Damit versteht man eine Gewölbeverbindung in Form eines Halbkreises oder einer flachen Kurve, die zwei Säulen oder Pfeiler von oben miteinander verbindet, was für einen Baukomplex wie einen *ḫalentuwa-* oder dessen Eingang theoretisch vorstellbar wäre.
Archäologische Bemerkungen von Andreas Müller-Karpe: Peter Neve hat in Boğazköy Reste einer monumentalen Struktur ausgegraben, die er ‚Viadukt' nannte und die eine ursprünglich schräge Rampe darstellte, die über ein kleines Tal hinauf auf die Büyükkale führte. Es ist gut vorstellbar, dass die Hethiter diese Konstruktion (von der nur die Fundamente erhalten waren) ^{GIŠ}*armizzi-* genannt haben, auch wenn sie nicht ein Gewässer überspannte. Falls Zippalanda tatsächlich mit Uşaklı bei Sorgun zu identifizieren ist, wären durchaus einige Bachläufe zu queren, um die Stadt zu erreichen. Die italienischen Ausgräber haben ein großes, öffentliches Gebäude ausgegraben, zu dem vielleicht auch ein *ḫalentuwa-* gehörte. Es liegt oberhalb der Ebene und zumindest eine Rampe musste es gegeben haben.

32 Vgl. *supra*.

33 Popko 1994, 20, 150, 332.

34 Zuletzt van den Hout 2018.

35 Diese Idee ließe sich von einem ähnlichen Kontext in KBo 11.50 II 4'-7' (CTH 592.2.I.A; Jh.; Popko 1994, 162-3; vgl. auch oben Anm. 1) überlegen, der zuerst eine ^{MUNUS}AMA.DINGIR-*LIM* und dann zwei ^{LÚ}AGRIG erwähnt. Die inhaltliche Alternation bzw. Parallelität zwischen ^{MUNUS}AMA.DINGIR-*LIM* in KBo 11.50 und ^{MUNUS}AMA *ŠA* ^{LÚ}SANGA in Bo 2689 wäre natürlich nicht beweiskräftig, ein sachliches bzw. funktionelles Verhältnis zwischen ‚Mutter des Priesters' und ‚Gottesmutter' zu mutmaßen.

problematisch ist die Interpretation des etwas allgemein wirkenden Begriffs ÌR.MEŠ LUGAL ‚die Königsdiener' in der gleichen Zeile, die auch im Sinne von ‚Königsgefolge' verstanden werden kann. Ein ähnlicher Passus der Festbeschreibung mit den identischen Kultpersonen in KUB 41.46 II 8'-11' (vgl. Anm. 1) nennt aber ÌR.MEŠ DINGIR-*LIM* „die Diener der Gottheit"[36] anstelle von ÌR.MEŠ LUGAL. Daher könnte man überlegen, ob in unserem Text etwa ein mechanischer Schreibfehler LUGAL für DINGIR(-*LIM*) vorliegt.

V? 23': Zum besseren Verständnis des kurzgefassten und daher schwer zu interpretierenden *mān≈ašta* LUGAL-*uš ḫantāitta* findet sich in KUB 41.46 Vs. III 6-7 der jh. Satz mit einem zusätzlichen Dativobjekt *maḫḫan≈ma≈kan* LUGAL-*uš ANA* LÚ.MEŠ[EŠSANGA]/*ḫandait<ta>*, der eine ähnliche Kultszene beschreibt. Gegenüber der Übersetzung von Popko 1994, 172-3, 174-5, LUGAL-*uš ḫandait<ta>* „der König wendet sich zu"[37] habe ich Bedenken, da *ḫandāi-* (Medium) nicht in die Kategorie der Verben der Bewegung fällt. Ich verstehe unseren Satz eher „Wenn der König fertig/bereit ist" und jenen in KUB 41.46 Vs. III 6-7 mit indirektem Objekt „Sobald aber der König für di[e Priester] (*Dativus sympathicus/commodi*) bereit ist". In mehreren Kultszenen verhält sich die Lage andersherum, weil diesmal das Kultpersonal für den König bereit/fertig ist, damit die darauffolgenden Aktionen durchgeführt werden können.[38]

V? 25': Die Ergänzung des Prädikats folgt der Form in V? 19'.

3 Zum Textinhalt

An den Festaktivitäten nehmen neben dem reisenden Königspaar eine Reihe von einheimischen Priestern (LÚ.MEŠSANGA) teil, deren Anzahl in II? 17' als zwölf angegeben ist. Genau entsprechend dieser Anzahl werden sie in II? 23'-29' als Priester der namentlich genannten (rein-)hattisch-hethitischen Gottheiten einzeln aufgezählt (s. unten). Auch die religiöse Affiliation der weiteren Funktionäre entsprechen den Charakteristika der ‚rein-anatolischen' Kultschicht: Der gesalbte Priester (LÚGUDU$_{12}$; V? 11'), der *tazzilli*-Priester? (II? 8', IV? 1'?), der Mann des Wettergottes (LÚ ^{d}U-*aš*) und die Frau des Wettergottes (MUNUS ^{d}U-*aš*; II? 22'), die Mutter des Priesters (MUNUSAMA *ŠA* LÚSANGA; V? 16'), die Männer des Gottes Zišḫapuna ([LÚ.MEŠ]*zišḫapunaileš*; III? 35'). Ferner werden LÚ*ḫaruwant-* (II? 8') und öfter LÚ*ḫamina-* (II? 19'-20', III 30', V? 11') als Kultbedienstete erwähnt. Als weibliche Kultmusikanten oder singende Personen beim zeremoniellen Empfang des Königs begegnet man MUNUS.MEŠ*zintuḫiatteš* (II? 15', 31'), MUNUS.MEŠŠU.GI URU*Ziplanta* (V? 20'?, 24') MUNUS.MEŠ KI.SIKIL URU*Ziplanta* (V? 21'). LÚ.MEŠ*ḫalliyariš* sind in V? 7' zwar mit ihrer Abwesenheit hervorgehoben, ihre Erwähnung kann aber in einem nicht erhaltenen Teil des Textes erwartet werden. Obwohl ihre genaue Funktion innerhalb des Festivals nicht näher zu bestimmen ist, scheinen die Verwalter (LÚAGRIG) der Städte Ankuwa und Šanaḫuitta (V? 17'-18'; womöglich als unvollständig auch in III? 4'-5') gemeinsam mit den Königsdienern (ÌR.MEŠ LUGAL; V? 16') am zeremoniellen Empfang des Königs beteiligt zu sein. Ihre örtliche Zugehörigkeit könnte mit einem engen geographischen Verhältnis von Zippalanda zu den beiden Städten, als handele es sich um drei Nachbarstädte, zu erklären sein.

Von den Gottheiten in II? 23'-29' sind Ḫalki, Ḫannaḫanna, Ḫašamil, Ḫuriyanzipa, Inar, *IŠTAR*, Miyatanzipa, Puškurunuwa, Taḫa, Telepinu, Wattaru und der Wettergott lediglich durch ihre ‚zwölf' Priester erwähnt, die ausschließlich dem hattisch-hethitischen Kultmilieu angehören.[39] Im Vergleich zu diesen Priestern stellt sich die geringe Anzahl der im Text unmittelbar behandelten ‚acht' Gottheiten heraus. Dabei müssen freilich die in den verlorengegangenen Teilen der Tafel erwähnten Gottheiten einkalkuliert werden. Die Erhaltenen sind: Ḫalki (III? 17'), Ḫaluwi(nkatta) (II? 33', III? 25'), Ḫašammil (III? 22'), Inar (III? 18'), Miyatanzipa (III? 21'), Taḫa (V? 6'), Telepinu (III? 23') und der Wettergott von Ziplanta (V? 5'). Darunter bedeutet nur Ḫaluwi(nkatta), die zweifelsfrei als eine Gottheit hattischen Ursprungs mit unbestimmtem Geschlecht (wohl doch männlich [s. Anm. 16]) und aus dem Götterzyklus von Zippa-

36 Popko 1994, 71, 172.

37 Anlehnend an Otten 1991, 308.

38 LUGAL-*i ḫandāētta* (Ah.)/*ḫandaitta* (Jh.): KBo 25.31 II 11' (Agens: NIN.DINGIR-Priesterin), KBo 25.34 + KBo 20.26 Vs. 18' (Agens: Oberster der LÚ.MEŠ*ḫāpeš*-Funktionäre), KUB 56.46 II 8'-9', 16'-17' (Agens: Oberster der [...]-Funktionäre) usw. Zudem ist eine relevante Szene in IBoT 1.36 IV 18-23 zu beachten, wobei Güterbock und van den Hout (1991) mit der von ihnen gewählten Bedeutung *ḫandaitta* ‚is present' (35), bzw. *ḫandāi-* (with *-ašta/-kan*) ‚to be available' (70) das Richtige getroffen haben.

39 Darunter sind Ḫalki, Ḫuriyanzipa, Miyatanzipa und Wattaru innerhalb des Hethitischen fass- bzw. deutbar. Die Gottheit (präziser: Göttin) Wattaru, die nur in unserem Text (II? 24') mit einem Götterdeterminativ versehen auftritt, sollte hier – wie der heilige ‚Berg' Taḫa in der gleichen Zeile – vielmehr die heilige ‚Quelle' repräsentieren.

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landa zu klassifizieren ist, einen Zugewinn für die Kenntnis des heth. Pantheons. Der Wettergott der Stadt, der anderswo mit seinem hattischen Epitheton Ziplantel bekannt ist, und der vergöttlichte Berg Taḫa repräsentieren die wichtigsten Gottheiten des regionalen Pantheons der Stadt Zippalanda. Die Schutzgottheit tritt im Text in der Schreibung mit konsonantischem Auslaut Inar (II? 23'; auch Genitiv *Inar≥aš* in III? 18', V? 14') auf und nicht einmal als logographisches ^{d}LAMMA. Dies schließt die Möglichkeit der Anwesenheit einer weiteren Schutzgottheitsgestalt (wie heth.-luw. Kurunti) im Textkontext aus. So haben wir in der gesamten Darstellung von Bo 2689 ausschließlich die hattische Schutzgöttin Inar vor uns. Es ist bemerkenswert, dass auch der Gott Ḫašamili die hatt. Form mit konsonantischem Auslaut Ḫašamil (im Genitiv *Ḫašamil≥aš* III? 22') wie Inar aufweist. Die Schreibung des Namens Telepinu mit Plene ^{o}-*le-e*-^{o} im Inlaut ist seltsam, entspricht aber gut der althethitischen Tradition. Für die einzige mit ihrer mesopotamischen Bezeichnung genannte Gottheit *IŠTAR* (II? 29') ist wiederum eine lokale *IŠTAR*-Gestalt aus dem hattischen Kultmilieu zu vermuten.[40]

Die vergöttlichten Gegenstände und Örtlichkeiten, für die neben den Gottheiten gleichfalls Brotopfer dargebracht werden, sind *ḫaršiyalli-* ‚Pithos' (III? 24'), *ištanana-* ‚Altar' (III? 19'), *kueluwana-* ‚Wasserbecken/-bassin' (III? 26'; vgl. Kommentar) und ^{d}*Kurša-* die ‚heilige Jagdtasche' (III? 20', 27'; auch in III? 6', 10', 32', V? 12'). Der erhaltene Textabschnitt des Festivals (Vs. II? und III?) erwähnt mit einer Ausnahme in II 10' (*mēmal* und Ì.ŠAḪ) nur Brotopfer und -lieferungen von ^{NINDA}*kaḫaret*, $^{(NINDA)}$*muriyala-*, ^{NINDA}*tunik* und NINDA.GUR$_4$.RA/^{NINDA}*ḫarši-*, während von Fleisch- und Trankopfern keine Rede ist. Die Brotlaibe werden vornehmlich von den Priestern besorgt und dem ^{LÚ}*ḫamina*-Funktionär ausgehändigt.

Was den geographischen Raum des Festivals betrifft, so geht aus dem Geschilderten recht klar hervor, dass es sich beim Schauplatz in Bo 2689 wohl um die Stadt Zippalanda selbst handelt – und nicht etwa um eine die Stadt Zippalanda vertretende kultische Einrichtung in Ḫattuša –, wobei ein kultischer Besuch des hethitischen Königspaares in dieser Stadt detailliert beschrieben wird. Der rekonstruierte Inhalt der Tafel lässt sich trotz mehrerer Lücken im Text schematisch wie folgt darstellen:

Vorderseite I? (nichts erhalten)
Vorderseite II? 1'-37': Vorbereitungsphasen und frühere Ausführungen zum Fest in Zippalanda
[Lücke]
Vorderseite III? 1'-37': Vorbereitungsphasen und frühere Ausführungen zum Fest in Zippalanda
[Lücke]
Rückseite IV? 1'-13' (nur wenig Text erhalten)
[Lücke]
Rückseite V? 1'-25': Wagenfahrt des Königspaars zum *ḫalentuwa*-Palastkomplex, die Route verläuft folgendermaßen:
(unbestimmter Startpunkt)
→ *arḫuzna*-Hain
→ *armizzi*-Brücke/Überführung?
→ ein Weg, auf dem erst die Kultfunktionäre und Bedienstete den König begrüßen und dann die weiblichen Kultfunktionäre stehenbleiben und singen
→ eine Lokalität mit dem Baum von Inar in der Nähe oder am Eingang des *ḫalentuwa*-Palastkomplexes
[→ *ḫalentuwa*-Palastkomplex; mögliche Endstation für die Wagenfahrt des Königspaars]
[Lücke]
Rückseite VI? (nichts erhalten)

Auf den Vorderseiten II? und III? wird vornehmlich von den Vorbereitungsphasen des Festes berichtet, wie z.B. der Aufführung der Kultlieder, Auslieferungen der Vorräte aus dem Haus des Priesters, Transport des *eya*-Baums in den Tempel, Pflege der Götterstatuen, Vorbereitung der heiligen Jagdtasche und Auslieferung der Brotopfer in ihren Tempelraum, Platzierung der Brotopfern vor den Göttern und heiligen Plätzen, wobei das Königspaar persönlich nicht in Erscheinung tritt. In Vs. III? 28' ist zwar von einer Szene der Brotdarbringung für den König die Rede, es ist aber möglich, dass es sich hier um ein Kultbild, wie das der Götter in diesem Textabschnitt, handelt. Dagegen steht aber in der Erzählung auf der Rückseite V? das Königspaar durch seine Wagenfahrt im Vordergrund.[41] Darüber berichtet ein langer

40 Vgl. die hattische Gottheit ^{d}*Timmet* in KUB 28.75 III 10', die in KUB 8.41 II 9' anscheinend mit ^{d}*IŠTAR* gleichgesetzt wird; Soysal 2004, 817.

41 In der Texterzählung ist die Phase nicht erhalten, wann und wie das Königspaar in die Stadt gekommen ist. Dies dürfte in der unvollständigen Kolumne IV? gestanden haben. Die Wagenfahrt des Königspaares bis zum Eintritt in den *ḫalentuwa*-Palastkomplex erfolgt übrigens nicht gemeinsam, sondern getrennt, wobei die Königin dem König folgt.

Passus im Text (V? 2'-25') das Folgende: (Die Königin) erreicht mit ihrem Kultwagen den *arḫuzna*-Hain und verehrt den Wettergott von Zippalanda und den heiligen Berg Taḫa durch ein Kulttrinken. Dabei wird das kleine *Ištar*-Musikinstrument gespielt, aber kein Kultgesang durch die ^{LÚ}*ḫalliyari*-Funktionäre aufgeführt. Weiterhin erbietet die Königin beiden Gottheiten ihre Reverenz und folgt dem König in ihrem Kultwagen. Wenn der König die ‚Brücke' erreicht, schaffen der ^{LÚ}*ḫamina*-Funktionär und der gesalbte Priester die heilige Jagdtasche herbei und hängen sie im *ḫalentuwa*-Palastkomplex auf. Unterwegs, bevor der König unter dem Baum der Schutzgöttin Inar ankommt, erweisen die Mutter des Priesters (des Wettergottes), die Untertanen des Königs, die Verwalter von Ankuwa und Šanaḫuitta dem König ihre Reverenz. Ein Stück weiter auf der Straße stehen die singenden Greisinnen und die Mädchen von Zippalanda. Während der König für weitere Kulthandlungen breit ist, erweisen die Greisinnen von Zippalanda dem König gleichfalls ihre Reverenz.

An diesem Punkt bricht der Text ab, daher sind die nachfolgenden kultischen Aktivitäten des Königs, die nunmehr innerhalb des *ḫalentuwa*-Palastkomplexes stattgefunden haben werden, nicht überliefert. Es werden dabei jedoch zwei wichtige Auskünfte über den *ḫalentuwa*-Palastkomplex gegeben: Demzufolge passiert der König, bevor er diese Anlage erreicht, einen speziellen Bau, eine Brücke oder rampenartige Überführung. Diese Angaben bieten wichtige Informationen zur Topographie und Bebauung der Stadt Zippalanda.[42] Weiterhin scheint sich die heilige Jagdtasche, die von den Bediensteten im *ḫalentuwa*-Palastkomplex aufgehängt wird,[43] und später der Baum der Schutzgöttin Inar in dieser Baustruktur oder mindestens innerhalb ihres Areals befunden zu haben. Soweit der Text erhalten ist, scheint die Endstation der Wagenfahrt des Königs (und womöglich auch ihm nachfolgend der Königin) der *ḫalentuwa*-Palastkomplex zu sein. Es ist zu erwarten, dass die weiteren Kulthandlungen dort den räumlichen Kontext der verlorengegangenen Kolumne VI? bilden. Eine etwaige, entsprechende Szenerie könnte in Bo 3339 (= CHDS 6.9) II? 7'-12' vorliegen,[44] obwohl man hier den Schauplatz nicht sicher als Zippalanda bestimmen kann.

Abkürzungen

Bo	Inventarnummern der Boğazköy-Tafeln aus den Grabungen der Jahre (1906-12).
CHD	Güterbock, H.G.; Hoffner, H.A.; van den Hout, Th.P.J. (1980-). *Chicago Hittite Dictionary*. Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.
CHDS	*Chicago Hittite Dictionary Supplements* (Chicago: Chicago Hittite Dictionary Supplements, 2011-).
CTH	Laroche, E. (1971). *Catalogue des textes hittites*. Paris: Éditions Klincksieck. Études et commentaires 75.
HED	Puhvel, J. (1984-). *Hittite Etymological Dictionary*. Berlin; New York: De Gruyter.
HEG	Tischler J. (1983-2016). *Hethitisches etymologisches Glossar*. Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachwissenschaft.
HHw2	Tischler, J. (2008). *Hethitisches Handwörterbuch. Mit dem Wortschatz der Nachbarsprachen*, 2. Aufl. Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachen und Literaturen der Universität Innsbruck.
HW 3. Erg.	Friedrich J. (1966). *Hethitisches Wörterbuch*, 3. Ergänzungsheft. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter.
HW2	Friedrich J.; Kammenhuber A. et al. (1975-). *Hethitisches Wörterbuch. Zweite, völlig neubearbeitete Auflage auf der Grundlage der edierten hethitischen Texte*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter.
IBoT	Istanbul Arkeoloji Müzelerinde Bulunan Boğazköy Tabletleri (1944-88).
KBo	Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi (1916-).
KpT 1	Rieken, E. (Hrsg.) (20197). *Keilschrifttafeln aus Kayalıpınar 1: Textfunde aus den Jahren 1999-2017*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz. Documenta Antiqua Asiae Minoris 1.
KUB	Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi (1921-90).

42 Dazu vgl. Popko 1994, 18-22.

43 Es gibt hierzu keine nähere Angabe, wo die heilige Jagdtasche genau im *ḫalentuwa*-Palastkomplex aufgehängt wird. Es kann ein Bauteil oder heiliger Raum dieses Gebäudes sein. Man möchte auch die Möglichkeit eines Baums (wie etwa ^{GIŠ}*eya*-) nicht ausschließen. Das wäre nämlich eine Szene, die im Telipinu-Mythos KUB 17.10+ IV 28 schriftlich bezeugt ist, und möglicherweise auch auf dem Hirschrhyton aus der Schimmel-Sammlung (s. oben) bildlich darzustellen versucht wurde: Die heilige Jagdtasche befindet sich dort indes, wohl aus künstlerisch-technischen Gründen, nicht an einem Ast, sondern neben dem (Lebens)baum.

44 Popko 1994, 20, 148-51. Der Text gehört nach *Konkordanz* zu CTH 635 und lautet folgendermaßen: **§ 1'** (7') […] LUGAL-*uš a-ra-aḫ-za ú-i*[*z-zi* …] (8') *ma-a-na-aš* ^{d}LAMMA-*aš* GIŠ-*ru-aš kat-ta a*-[*ri* …] (9') LUGAL-*uš* ^{GIŠ}*ḫu-lu-ga-an-na-az kat-t*[*a ú-iz-zi/ti-i̯a-zi*]

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§ 2' (10') *ta-aš* GÌR-*it A-NA* ^{É}*ḫ*$_{ḪA}$*a-le-en-tu*$^{?}$*-u*$^{?}$*-u̯*$_{UA}$[*a*$^{?}$ *pa-iz-zi* ...$^{?}$] (11') *tu-un-na-ak-ki-iš-n*[*a pa-iz-zi* ...] (12') *ḫal-zi-i*$_{ḪA}$*a x-x*$_{UA}$(-)[...] (der Text bricht hier ab) „Der König kom[mt] von draußen. Wenn er unter dem Baum der Schutzgottheit an[kommt, steigt] der König von der Kutsche ab. Er geht zu Fuß in den *ḫ*.-Palastkompl[ex. Er geht] i[n] das Innengemach (weiter). (Man) ruft ['...']"; zur Textwiederherstellung vgl. KBo 21.70 I 5'-7', KBo 53.153 IV 1-4 und KUB 20.94 VI$^{?}$ 6'-9'; etwas abweichend, Popko 1994, 150-1.

Papers Presented at the International Workshop
Hygiene in the Ancient Near East: Power, Privilege, Inequality

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Introduction

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The papers in this collection were first presented at a workshop entitled *Hygiene in the Ancient Near East: Power, Privilege, Inequality* at the *68th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale in Leiden* (July 20th, 2023). The purpose of the workshop was to present the current knowledge on hygiene and cleanliness practices in the ancient Near East, with a particular focus on re-constructing the effects that these practices had at the social level. The workshop was part of the project *GALATEO - Good Attitudes for Life in Assyrian Times: Etiquette and Observance of Norms in Male and Female Groups*, which has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie (grant agreement No. 101027543).

The papers present both interpretations of the ancient data and reflections upon the central *vexata quaestio* whether notions of hygiene and purity overlapped in antiquity. The authors address this topic from different angles. Nevertheless, all papers relate to common questions and issues that revolve around a basic idea: hygiene, whether religious or lay in character (however this distinction is understood), can be a tool of power just like policy and war. Hygiene can become an exclusionary weapon to banish unclean or impure individuals and bring about a kind of ostracism (Yitzhaq Feder), whereas it can also be a beneficial instrument for those few who are deemed inherently cleansed and pure and who merit distinguishing from the masses (Evelyne Koubkova). Hygiene can also serve as a powerful religious instrument, to the point that it cannot be distinguished from daily cleansing acts. The rituals which ensure the 'purity' of some individuals have clear religious connotations although they also covertly bring about good health (Saki Kikuchi). But hygiene, like literacy, comes in various degrees, which can translate to levels of social phenomena of inequality. This is demonstrated by the fact that practices and rituals conducive to very high levels of hygiene, and thus good health and cultic purity, may require ingredients (Aino Hätinen) and facilities (Svende Bielefeld, Ludovico Portuese) which are expensive and not affordable for many. In this sense, hygiene becomes the 'secret ingredient' to health, success, and power. Finally, since the lack of hygiene could pose a threat to the wider social group, hygiene can be a tool to strengthen group identity and protect it from those individuals and things that may pollute or defile its integrity. As a result, it can also affect social rules and conventions, manners and modes of etiquette, social behaviours and relationships (Ludovico Portuese).

What emerges from all the papers in this collection is the core notion that hygiene in antiquity could be used to create power, confer privilege, and generate inequality. It is hoped that this volume will stimulate new research paths in the future which can capture the daily life of past individuals and groups who, before being political leaders and warriors, were human beings.

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Exclusionary Practices in Ancient Mesopotamia: Steps Towards a Bio-Cultural Approach

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Abstract This paper applies an embodied, biologically-grounded approach to analyze exclusionary practices related to notions of impurity in ancient Mesopotamia. It argues that these behaviors derive from innate cognitive responses designed to protect against environmental threats like disease, which were then culturally elaborated to serve additional social functions. Evidence is examined for the avoidance of infectious diseases, the stigmatization of menstruating women and parturients, and the enigmatic 'gate of the unclean' at the city of Nippur. The analysis highlights the continuity between biologically-prepared tendencies and their cultural articulations, showing how an embodied perspective can shed new light on long-standing issues in the humanities by grounding abstract concepts in the shared experiences of the body.

Keywords Hygiene. Purity. Disgust. Menstruation. Disease. Contagion. Stigma.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Exclusionary Practices Related to Infectious Disease. – 3 Banishment of 'Unclean' Women? – 4 The "Gate of the Impure People" on the Nippur Map. – 5 Conclusion.

1 Introduction

While the notion of impurity might strike many modern Westerners as an obscure and primitive idea, it remains necessary to come to terms with the fact that some variation of the notion of pollution seems universal to traditional societies. Why would such a seemingly irrational concept have emerged in disparate cultures around the world? Upon further consideration, however, this question turns out to be based on a misconception. Not only is impurity based on a psychological phenomenon that is eminently familiar even to a modern person living in a mostly secular society, closer investigation reveals that it is based on a set of intuitions that fulfill important biological and social functions.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a brief sketch of how an embodied approach to impurity building on evolutionary principles can provide insight into exclusionary practices from ancient Mesopotamia. It will show how behavioral avoidance based on fear and disgust could serve as a valid strategy for protection against environmental dangers, but also how these innate tendencies could be co-opted by culture to serve additional social functions. The purpose of this analysis is not to justify the various types of exclusionary practice (e.g. by claiming that they are 'natural') but simply to provide a theoretical framework for understanding how these ideas and practices emerge and develop.

Since 'embodiment' has become quite a buzz-word in contemporary academic discourse, it is necessary to state more specifically the meaning of this concept in the present context.[1] Put simply, the embodied approach as briefly sketched here will offer a biological account for understanding the emer-

1 This theoretical overview is by necessity very abbreviated. For a fuller presentation, see Feder 2022, 20-6.

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gence of pollution and related concepts and then to explain how they could then acquire additional social functions in cultural discourse. These two aspects can be viewed as successive logical steps:

1. Based on the evolutionary assumption that humans for all of their uniqueness share a common biological – and neurological – origin with 'lower' mammals, the unique cognitive capacities of humans are outgrowths of the biological needs and resources that govern the evolution of cognition in other creatures. Human brains developed to pursue physiological needs such as food and reproduction and avoid environmental threats such as predators and disease. The extension of this observation is that ostensibly 'religious' ideas (such as impurity) may often serve an underlying physiological function. Put simply, the human brain did not evolve to play chess.[2]
2. In the evolution of human languages – both historically and in individual human development – direct experience provides the necessary scaffolding for the emergence of more abstract (experientially distant) modes of discourse. In contrast with structuralist approaches to language which treat linguistic systems as independent from actual experience, cognitive linguistics has emphasized that the 'digital' (conventional) aspects of language are grounded in 'analog' images, based on embodied experience.[3] For example, the acquisition of understanding regarding the meaning of the word 'dog' will be based to a large extent on accumulating experience of meeting actual dogs. Embodied concepts, grounded in concrete experience, provide the raw materials for abstract modes of social discourse.[4]

For our purposes, let it be summarized that the discourse on pollution is rooted in concerns that are thoroughly embodied, pertaining to affective processes of sense-making that enable the organism to survive and thrive in its environment. This embodied repertoire of meanings provided the raw materials for extending this imagery into the socio-moral domain.

This point of departure should be contrasted with the very influential approach of Mary Douglas to pollution, who famously equated impurity with "dirt", which she defined as "matter out of place".[5] As scholars have pointed out, this framework is based on type of Cartesian dualism that privileges the mind (intellectual explanations) over the body.[6] Of course, Douglas' symbolic approach was a step forward from the alternative view, still held by many today, that purity practices are primitive and irrational.[7] Both of these approaches fail to appreciate the deeply biological roots of purity practices, which find expression in the high level of continuity between physiological and social forms of contagion.

Applying Premise 1, let us note that pollution and associated exclusionary practices derive from one of the two basic opposing drives that motivate behavior, approach and avoidance. In cognitive psychology these two drives are viewed as expressions of two distinct neurological systems: the Behavioral Activation System (BAS) and the Behavioral Inhibition System (BIS).[8] Exclusionary practices relate to the BIS, which is responsible for avoiding harm and generally involves distancing oneself from potential threats. The emotions that serve as the primary gate-keepers in threat avoidance are disgust and fear. Whereas fear responds to perceived threats, disgust is elicited by stimuli that would, under other circumstances, arouse one's Behavior Activation System, such as food and sex. To a large degree, disgust is the inversion of desire, causing us to reject the same types of entities that usually attract us.[9]

This emphasis on the biological background of avoidance practices has helped filled a lacuna in modern analyses of impurity. Mary Douglas' emphasis on pollution as an abstract symbolic system never directly explained the obvious fact that they remain situated in the body, specifically those less pleasant aspects of it, and that it is in precisely these details one discovers a surprising degree of

2 Semin, Smith 2009, 1.

3 Dor 2015, 34-59

4 A useful analogy is the emergence of human writing systems, including Egyptian hieroglyphics, Mesopotamian cuneiform and even the alphabet. The visual signs on which all of these systems are based originated as iconic symbols (pictures), which were only secondarily appropriated to 'represent' sounds (syllables and phonemes) by virtue of convention (Michalowski 2002).

5 Douglas 1966, 35.

6 Lemos 2013.

7 Smith 2007, 29-30.

8 See Carver, White 1994; Corr 2008. For the application of this distinction to moral psychology, see Janoff, Bulman, Sheikh-Hepp 2009.

9 Fleischman et al. 2015.

commonality between disparate cultures. In the past few decades, evolutionary psychologists have sought to understand this phenomenon by exploring the origins of bodily revulsion.

> According to these accounts, disgust serves an adaptive function in protecting individuals against pathogen threats.[10] This evolutionary explanation offers a plausible account for the universality of disgust elicitors, such as disease, vermin, corpses and the like.[11]

In recent years, Thomas Kazen's ground-breaking work should be recognized for "applying these insights to pollution in the Hebrew Bible and ancient Judaism, arguing compellingly that naturalistic (evolutionary) and cultural modes of explanation need not be viewed as contradictory".[12]

While the emphasis on disgust in these studies makes an important advancement, one cannot fully appreciate the notion of impurity without addressing the specific psychological phenomenon known as contagion (or contamination) appraisals, the perceived transfer of a negative essence from a source to a target.[13] Everyday instances readily demonstrate that the transmission of an imperceptible quality is not inherently mysterious. We routinely encounter genuine transmission of characteristics across various contexts: touching a smelly item spreads its odor, contact with a sick person can result in disease transmission, and so on. Psychological research on contagion demonstrates that people respond differently to different perceived sources of contamination, and these responses are guided by one's personal experience as well as culturally-transmitted knowledge (e.g. germ theory) about how an unwanted essence is transmitted. In an analogous manner, different sources of impurity are distinguished in the manner of their transmission, the perceived effects of contact and the means by which one can be purified.

Turning to Premise 2, if the emphasis thus far has been on the roles of disgust and fear of contagion in protecting the animal from physiological threats, here it is necessary to add an additional layer of analysis in recognizing that these emotions are frequently co-opted to apply to social stimuli. The philosopher Dan Kelly explored this phenomenon in his treatise on disgust, appropriated called *Yuck!* (2011). One of his basic claims, which he calls the "co-opt thesis", asserts that once the emotion of disgust was formed by evolution, it was co-opted to play a number of additional roles in regulating human social interactions, most notably those related to social norms and group membership. Not only do social conventions guide social learning and influence what stimuli are perceived as disgusting (e.g. culture-specific attitudes regarding eating specific animals), they also associate disgust with the violation of certain norms and values. Through this process, cultures often develop norms of avoidance (i.e. prohibitions) that pertain to phenomena that are not necessarily dangerous.[14]

2 Exclusionary Practices Related to Infectious Disease

The discussion will now attempt to apply some of these theoretical insights to the Mesopotamian evidence. While this evidence lacks a clearly articulated notion of impurity compared with other such as ancient Hatti or Israel,[15] it nevertheless provides robust documentation of the perception of contagion and associated avoidance practices.

Indeed, Mesopotamian texts provide the earliest unambiguous testimony regarding an awareness of the infectiousness of disease and the enactment of various measures of quarantine. Aside from the dedicatory inscriptions of Gudea (twenty-first century BCE) where he praises himself for banishing the (m)uzug from the city, to be discussed below, the letters from Mari (eighteenth century BCE) testify to a clear awareness of contagion in response to the plague which afflicted the region. Here is just one example:

10 Cf. Schaller, Park 2011.

11 Feder 2022, 6. Cf. Curtis, de Barra, Aunger 2011; Curtis 2013.

12 Feder 2022, 6. Cf. Kazen 2010; Levavi Feinstein 2014, 11-41.

13 Carol Nemeroff and Paul Rozin pioneered the research on the 'contagion' response in the 1990s (summaries: Nemeroff, Rozin 2000; 2002).

14 Feder 2022, 175-206.

15 Feder 2016.

ARM 26/1 17 ll. 16-30

Šanītam ilum ina ḫalṣ[*im el*]*im u*[*l*]*appat-ma*
qātam ana qātim-ma ētiq
u bēlī liwa''er-ma
mārū ālāni ša kīma laptū
ana ālāni lā laptūtim lā irrubū
assuri mātam kalaša ulappatū
u šumma gerrī bēlīya ana ḫalṣim elim ibašši
bēlī ina Terqā-ma likkali
ana Sagaratim lā īttiqam
mātam lupputat

The god is striking in the upper district, so I without delay took a bypass. Furthermore, my lord should give orders that the residents of the cities that have been touched [*laptūtu*] not enter cities that are not touched, lest they touch [*ulappatū*] the whole land. And if there will be a campaign of my lord to the upper district, my lord must stop in Terqa. He must not move on to Saggaratum. The land is 'touched' (i.e., infected).[16]

On the background of the recent COVID-19 pandemic, these extreme measures seem strikingly familiar. Even the apparently strange idiom 'touched' (Akkadian *lapātu*) for infected cities is in fact an exact semantic parallel of the word 'contagion', from Latin *com-tangere* (touched with). Semantic parallels can also be found in biblical Hebrew (*n-g-'*) and ancient Greek *epaphe*, all with the concrete meaning 'touch' used to describe the spread of disease. Such semantic parallels demonstrate unequivocally the basis of these concepts in shared conceptual processes, ultimately grounded in universal human experience.[17]

Additional evidence pertaining to quarantine pertain to the person suffering from the *saḫaršubba* skin disease. This ailment covered the body of its victim 'like a garment' and led to stigmatization and banishment from the community, reflecting a perception that it was contagious. Like biblical *ṣara'at* (often translated 'leprosy'), it was often viewed as a divine punishment or curse.[18] Often the victim was forced to literally roam the steppe, as in the following boundary-stone (*kudurru*) inscription from the eleventh century BCE: "May Sîn clothe his whole body in *saḫaršubbû* which will never abate so that all the days of his life he will be impure and, like a wild ass, wander outside his city".[19]

Similar points can be made about the dangers of physical contact with a sick person. The Mari letters warn against eating and drinking from the vessels of an infected individual, and a similar concern finds expression in the Šurpu incantation series in relation to a 'cursed' (*tamû*) individual, as has been noted by several scholars.[20]

3 Banishment of 'Unclean' Women?

The evidence reviewed thus far dealing with the avoidance of sick people has been straightforward. A more controversial issue pertains to how the Mesopotamians treated women during their time of menstruation or following birth. Many Assyriologists have taken it as almost self-evident that the Mesopotamians separated these women from their households.[21] However, Erica Couto-Ferreira and Agnes Garcia-Ventura (2013) challenged these assessments, arguing that "the relationship between menstruation and impurity is assumed by most scholars to be universal and self-evident, through a process that transforms what is a social and cultural category into something biological and natural" (515). This formulation provocatively accuses scholars of imposing their 'cultural' biases on the data, thereby naturalizing the concept of menstrual impurity.

16 My translation. For further discussion, see Farber 2004, 119-22; Feder 2022, ix, 67-8.

17 Feder 2022, 59-75.

18 For a detailed analysis of these curse formulas attested in documents from the fourteenth to seventh centuries BCE, see Watanabe 1984; also Feder 2022, 61-3.

19 Slanski 2003, 225-6; Kitz 2014, 148-9.

20 Sigerist 1951, 446; Geller 1980, 188; Farber 2004, 126.

21 E.g. Lafont 1987; Durand 1988, 110-12.

To a large degree these latter scholars are correct in stressing the 'cultural' origins of menstrual separation. There is no physiological danger caused by contact with a menstruating woman, and hence it is not surprising that no other primate observes this practice. Nevertheless, one cannot ignore the fact that the segregation of menstruants is nearly universal in traditional societies.[22] Just to give an indication, the following heat-map generated by the eHRAF database represents mentions of menstrual lodges or huts, clearly one of the most extreme expressions of a menstrual taboo, within the ethnological literature:

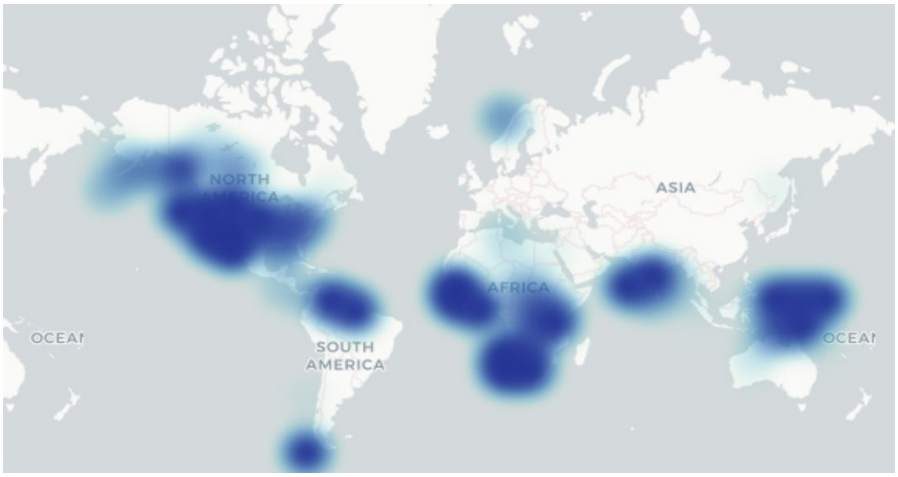


Figure 1
Mentions of Menstrual Lodges or Huts in Ethnographic Literature (eHRAF)

Accordingly, one can hardly be blamed for expecting to find a menstrual taboo in the ancient Mesopotamian evidence. More importantly, this expectation is borne out by the evidence, as reflected in the typical terms that are employed to describe these groups of women. For example, the term *urruštu*, derived from *(w)aršu* (filthy), designates a woman perceived to be unclean, apparently as a result of menstruation or childbirth.[23] Specifically, it is likely that *urruštu* reflects a substantivized usage of the D verbal adjective: "the stained (one)", referring directly to the sullied garments of these women.

Another term with similar pejorative connotations is *musukkatu*, which was employed to refer to a menstruating woman as well as a parturient (*ḫarištu*). Contact with a *musukkatu* was considered contaminating, rendering individuals and objects unfit for ritual performances. Healing rituals requiring pure water specify that it must not come from a place where a *musukkatu* has washed or laundered her clothes.[24] Scholars have further argued that these women were isolated,[25] thought the archival evidence for Mari is open to alternative interpretations.[26]

The corresponding masculine term *musukku* was used to designate an outcast, whether due to the violation of a taboo or a contagious disease such as *saḫaršubbû*. Apparently, these terms are cognate with the verb *masāku* (to be ugly, bad), whose usages in the D form include "to spoil, to make disgusting, to revile".[27] These negative associations parallel those of the biblical Hebrew term for a menstruant, *nidda*. Derived from the root *n-d-d*, this term refers to the need to distance oneself, bearing negative connotations related to disgust and abhorrence.[28] The pejorative connotations of this term are represented in its metaphoric usages, such as Lam. 1:8-9: "Jerusalem has greatly sinned, therefore she has become a *nidda*. All who admired her despise her, for they have seen her disgraced…Her uncleanness clings to her skirts".[29] In short, the lexical evidence in Mesopotamian texts suggests that

22 Ford 1964, 17-18; Montgomery 1974; Meyer 2005, 128-9.

23 CAD A 309-10; CAD U-W 248; Feder 2016, 104-5.

24 CAD M/2 239; e.g. a ritual for the treatment of *būšānu* (SpTU I 44, ll. 72-3; Hunger 1976, 53), which refers to the *musukkatu* alongside the *urruštu*.

25 See Stol 2000, 205-6; 2016, 438-9; also fn. 21 above.

26 Couto, Ferreira, Garcia-Ventura 2013, 519-22.

27 CAD M/1 322; M/2 239-40. For discussion of this term's etymology and its connection with Sumerian u z u g / k, see Feder 2016, 112-16.

28 Greenberg 1995.

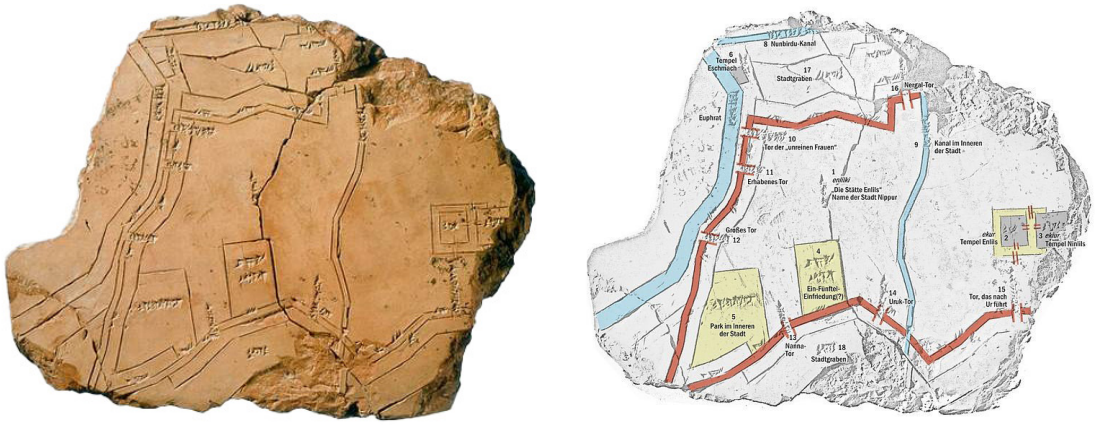
29 For further analyses of the semantic field of this term, see Levavi Feinstein 2014, 81-3; Goldstein 2015, 51-61; Feder 2022, 218-21.

menstruants and parturients were stigmatized and avoided. These perceptions are represented in the Mesopotamian evidence itself, such that they cannot be written off as reflections of some of kind of modern scholarly bias.

4 The "Gate of the Impure People" on the Nippur Map

The final topic for discussion is the enigmatic name of a gate to Nippur, which according to l. 4 of the OB Proto-Kagal lexical list could be rendered as "the gate of unclean persons" (abul muzug$_2$-ene).[30] What is implied by this toponym? Does it refer to a site to which impure people were banished, or perhaps to a place where they underwent purification? A possible analogy might be the "the lepers' chamber" (*liškat ha-meṣoraʿim*) mentioned in rabbinic sources as a separate division in the 'women's court' on the Temple mount in Jerusalem.[31] In this location, severe impurity bearers underwent purification following the instructions in the book of Leviticus. Though suggestive, this comparison is far from conclusive.

This toponym is also mentioned on a Middle-Babylonian (ca twelfth cent. BCE) annotated map[32] of Nippur:[33]



However, the expression in question appears with a significant variation. Instead of the masculine term (m)uzug which appears in single and plural forms in the lexical lists, we find on the Nippur map abul *musukkātum*: "the gate of the unclean women".[34] Yet, the question remains: what was the significance of this gate?

30 Landsberger 1971, 66 (MSL XIII; Proto-Kagal); https://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/dcclt/Q000048.4.

31 For attestations from the Mishna, see m. Middot 2:5; Negaim 14:8. The latter describes the purification of the person with the *ṣaraʿat* skin disease.

32 Photo: https://images.app.goo.gl/bL5Picckgz381Ee18; diagram with German translations based on Kramer 1967: https://images.app.goo.gl/kgdzmxmvjBEwYipa7. The gate in question is #10 on the diagram. See also Petersén et al. 2010, 131 for published versions.

33 Kramer 1956, 271-5; Oelsner-Stein 2011.

34 The plural reading *musukkātu* is preferable to the singular, especially considering that the corresponding term (abul muzug$_2$-e-ne) in Proto-Kagal is also (common gender) plural. The canonical version of Kagal includes the feminine Akkadian term *musukkātu* (Landsberger 1971, 228) corresponding with the Nippur map.

A path towards a solution can be found in an additional text which mentions this place, a bilingual hymn that apparently describes Ninurta's entry into the Nippur, which probably was related to a procession in which his statue was carried into the city:[35]

5'. dumu nibru^{ki} ildu$_2$-ildu$_2$-ba he$_2$-ĝal$_2$-ta u$_4$ m[u-un-zal-zal-e-n]e	5'. The citizens of Nippur, clan by clan, spend the day in plenty,
dumu.meš *ni-ip-pu-ru ina il-la-ti-šu-nu ḫi-in-gál-la uš-*[*ta-bar-ru*]	
6'. šir$_3$-zu un sag gi$_6$-ga me-teš$_2$ im-i-i-[ne]	6'. The black headed people sing songs in praise of you.
zi-im-ri-ka ni-šu ṣal-mat qaq-qa-di ut-ta-<na>-`-a-d[*a*]	
7'. ki-bi-ta igi-zu ĝar-ra-[zu-ne]	7'. As soon as you direct your glance to this place,
iš-tu aš-ri šu-a-tu$_4$ pa-ni-ka ina ša-ka-ni-[*ka*]	
8'. abula u$_2$-zug$_2$ bar-šeĝ$_3$-ĝa$_2$-bi ku$_4$-ra-[zu-ne]	8'. Enter like a cold draft through the Gate of the Unclean,
ina a-bu-ul ú-suk-ki šar-bi-iš ina e-re-bi-i-k[*a*]	
9'. sila dagal abula u$_2$-zug$_2$ asil$_3$-la$_2$ ĝal$_2$-la dib-be$_2$-da-zu-[ne]	9'. Promenade down the broad street leading from the Gate of the Unclean that is filled with jubilation,
ina re-bit a-bu-ul ú-suk-ki šá re-šá-ti ma-la-a-at ina ba-i-k[*a*]	
10'. ⌜e$_2$⌝-šu-me-ša$_4$ e$_2$ an ki-da la$_2$-a bal-e-da-zu-[ne]	10'. Cross over into Ešumeša, the temple that stretches from the upper to the lower regions,
[*ana é-šu*]-⌜*me*⌝-*ša$_4$* E$_2$ *šá ana* AN^e *u* KI^{tim} *tar-ṣú ina e-*⌜*re*⌝-[*bi-*(*i*)*-ka*]	
11'. [nitala]m ⌜ki⌝-aga$_2$-zu igi la$_2$-e-d[a-zu-ne]	11'. Cast your eyes on your beloved s[pouse (Nin-Nibru/Šarrat-Nippuri)],
[*ḫi-ir-ti na-r*]*a-*⌜*am-ti-ka ina*⌝ *n*[*a-ṭa-li-ka*]	

This text describes Ninurta's triumphant entry to the city through the "gate of the unclean" (abula uzug / *abul usukki*). At face value, this does not sound like the most venerable place for a god to make his entrance! A rather prosaic explanation has been given by scholars, namely that Ninurta entered through the most northern of the western gates to the city. In other words, this gate may have been the main point of entry to the city, at least to someone coming from the West (Michalowski 2017, 209-10).[36]

Yet, the peculiar name of this gate demands explanation, and this riddle has in fact attracted the attention of some the greatest minds in the history of Assyriology. Nearly a century ago, Benno Landsberger suggested that the name of this gate derives from the incident in the myth of Enlil and Ninlil, in which Enlil seduces the maiden Ninlil while the latter is bathing in the Nunbirdu canal. This illicit sexual act leads the divine council to stigmatize Enlil as a (m)uzug and banish him from the city.[37] It is also possible to suggest that the myth provided a secondary aetiology for the name of the gate, which was not understood. This ostensibly attractive line of explanation is not free of difficulties. From a geographic perspective, the Nunbirdu canal (#8 in the diagram of Nippur above) is in the vicinity but not immediately adjacent to the gate in question (#10). Moreover, it fails to explain why the Nippur map and corresponding entry in the canonical Kagal list employs the feminine plural form *musukkāti*.

In probably the most elaborate discussion of this question to date, Géza Komoróczy makes a bold proposal that the term *musukkātu* reflects an abstract noun (employing the morpheme *-āt-* instead of the more usual *-ūt-*) and refers to the sanctity of the gate, designating it "Heiligistor" or "Kulttor" (344).[38] Despite his sophisticated analysis, this suggestion is untenable. This explanation bases itself on the purported ambivalence of the notion of 'taboo', which can refer to sacred or proscribed status, at least in its original Polynesian context.[39] While this ambivalence may characterize terms for 'taboo' in many languages,[40] this analysis does not fit the lexical evidence for *musukku*/*musukkatu*. Firstly, this term always bears a strongly pejorative connotation, such that the rendering "sacred" finds no textual support. Secondly, this term appears without exception as a designation for a certain type of person, such that it cannot be interpreted as a general concept.

Most recently, Marten Stol has suggested that the "gate of unclean women" relates to purification: "[This gate] opened on to the Euphrates and it could have been the place where ritual washing took

35 Text and translation: Michalowski 2017. Earlier edition: Lambert 1960, 120.

36 Michalowski 2017, 209-10.

37 See Landsberger 1928, 2102, followed by Falkenstein 1948, 164.

38 For abstract nouns in *-ātum*, see GAG § 61n.

39 Duhamel 2021; François 2022.

40 I am currently working on an analysis of Sumerian azag that does seem to fit this pattern.

place".[41] While this observation is clearly true based on the topography of the map, it should be pointed out that the ka-gal list also refers to a "gate of pure water" (abul á-sikil) in l. 10.[42] It would appear that this site would be more likely a place for purification than the gate in question.

Building on the topographical observation made above, an alternative interpretation may present itself. The name of the gate may imply that 'impure' people were forced to live in installations at the borders of the city. In other words, they were banished from the city itself but allowed to live at the margins, so that they would not die of starvation.

This inference is corroborated by the dedicatory hymns of Gudea, who takes pride in the fact that he banished the 'unclean' person as part of his 'purification' of Lagash. The Cylinder A inscription reads (xiii 12-15):[43]

énsi-ke$_4$ iri mu-kug
izi im-ma-ta-lá
ùzug-ga ní-ĝál lú-GI.AN
iri-ta ba-ta-è

The ruler cleansed the city, he let fire loose over it. He expelled the unclean person (uzug), *the fearsome one*,[44] and .....[45] from the city.

Admittedly, this passage is obscure, but it can be further illuminated by the parallel in Cylinder B (xviii 1-3)[46]

iri-na ú-si$_{19}$-ni zag-bi-a mu-da-a-nú-àm nud
eme níĝ-ḫul-da inim ba-da-kúr
níĝ-érim é-ba im-ma-an-gi$_4$

His unclean one[47] could sleep (only) at the border of his city. (Gudea) changed the word of the evil tongue, and returned evil to its home.[48]

Here it says explicitly that the 'outcast' (uzug) "slept at the border of the city".

Analogies to the practice of banishing impure people to the margins of the city can be found in the Hebrew Bible and elsewhere. Consider the story of four "lepers" from 2 Kings 7:

> [3]There were four men, lepers, outside the gate. They said to one another, "Why should we sit here waiting for death? [4]If we decide to go into the town, what with the famine in the town, we shall die there; and if we just sit here, still we die. Come, let us desert to the Aramean camp. If they let us live, we shall live; and if they put us to death, we shall but die".

Taken together, these sources raise the possibility that Mesopotamian cities, or at least Nippur, banished certain types of 'impure' people to their outskirts. While this interpretation might seem farfetched from a practical perspective, it finds support in the widespread existence of such installations attested in ethnographical studies and more importantly in the Mesopotamian textual evidence cited above. Needless to say, this interpretation will remain tentative pending further evidence.

41 Stol 2016, 440.

42 This gate does not appear on the Nippur map.

43 Text according to ETCSL 2.1.7.341-4. Translation and discussion: Feder 2016, 106-7.

44 The usage of ni$_2$-ĝal$_2$ here is exceptional and may imply a monstrous-looking person. For discussion of this idiom, see Cunningham 2007, 92.

45 lú GI.AN is left untranslated by nearly all translators. Averbeck proposes "the man inflamed (with venereal disease)" (Averbeck 1987, 637 and fn. 253). Cf. GÌŠ.BÍR in the comparable passage, Statue B iii 15-iv 4, interpreted as a gonorrheic by Behrens 1978, 155 fn. 324 or (man with a) "flaccid penis" (PSD B 157).

46 Text: ETCSL 2.1.7.1221-3. Translation and discussion: Feder 2016, 106-7.

47 For ú-si$_{19}$ as an orthographic (and phonetic) variant of ú-zug, see Falkenstein 1949, 32. ETCSL interprets the suffix -ni as a variant of the plural suffix -(e)ne, rendering: "ritually unclean ones".

48 For é ...gi$_4$ as an idiom for "send back to its place", see Hirsch 1966. Nevertheless, Hirsch takes é in the present text as a reference to the Eninnu temple, and this view has been followed by numerous translators, including Edzard: "he had anything disharmonious turned away from the House" (1997, 81), against his own translation of the parallel expression in Statue B 36-7: "I had anything disharmonious turned back 'to its house' (where it belongs)" (36), giving the expected locative sense to é-bi-a.

5 Conclusion

This paper has sought to apply an embodied approach to understand purity-related exclusionary practices in ancient Mesopotamia. This approach involves an appreciation of how notions of impurity and contagion are rooted in the Behavioral Avoidance System, a set of cognitive responses designed to protect against environmental threats. This premise finds corroboration in the abundant evidence for the use of exclusionary practices to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. This function is evident already in the Gudea inscriptions and finds more explicit development in relation to the plagues which struck Mari, banishment of individuals bearing *saḫaršubbû* disease and in healing rituals such as *Šurpu*.

The second premise dealt with how cultures co-opt these biologically based responses to serve additional social functions. Within the constraints of this short paper, it is difficult to do justice to this subtle point, but the evidence regarding attitudes towards impure women provides a partial illustration. Contrary to some more skeptical views, it has been shown how the avoidance of women during menstruation or following childbirth is expressed in the pejorative terms used to describe them such as *urruštu* and *musukkatu*, deriving from the semantic domains of filth and disgust, which connect them with the analogous term *nidda* in the Hebrew Bible. Moreover, an even more extreme degree of seclusion has been suggested in relation to the "gate of the unclean" (which finds male and female iterations) from Nippur. Against alternative interpretations, it has been argued that the existence of this gate may suggest that people of *musukku* status were banished to the outskirts of the city, along the lines of the Gudea inscriptions.

The subtlety of this point lies in the fact that it is not possible to draw a sharp line between the physiological and social functions of pollution discourse. On one hand, there is no reason to view either menstruation or birth as posing a biological threat via contact. On the other hand, the near-universality of some form of menstrual taboo in traditional societies indicates that there is some underlying psychological aversion that finds expression in these practices. Indeed, here it is important to stress that the distinction between 'nature' and 'culture' is a false dichotomy. The purpose of an evolutionary approach is to trace the line of continuity between biologically-prepared tendencies and their variable cultural elaborations.[49]

It is important to keep in mind that technological changes have transformed the embodied experiences of people in modern affluent countries compared with those existing in ancient or less developed societies. The widespread availability of hygienic products, not to mention running water, have made it easier for us to pretend that menstruation does not exist and that life goes on as usual – at least in the public sphere. Ironically, we are all privy to a modern "taboo": instead of being horrified by menstruation, it is next to forbidden to acknowledge that it exists. Like other less convenient or pleasant aspects of our bodily conditions, modern technologies have made mind-body dualism seem like it is a valid option. Nevertheless, the taboo of speaking about menstruation shows that our innate discomfort with menstrual blood still has its say, even if it is through a repressed silence.

Unfortunately, these aversions have often become inextricably connected with misogynous attitudes and practices. Here it may be interesting to raise a difficult question that has troubled feminist scholars at least since Simone de Bouvoir: why have women been complicit in their subjugation throughout history? The bio-cultural approach advanced in the present article may raise a possible solution as it relates to menstrual practices, though a full evaluation of this suggestion is beyond the scope of the present article. In particular, a bio-cultural approach may shed light on two widespread forms of exclusion: the prohibition of sexual relations and physical banishment of 'impure' women to distinct living quarters (e.g. huts). While both of these practices are often expressed in misogynous terms, a biological perspective might suggest why they would be willingly adopted by women. Regarding the prohibition on sexual relations, it is readily understandable why menstruation would present a less than ideal time for romance, though it does not explain why more extreme modes of separation (spatially and temporally) are often practiced. Here it is worth noting that hormonal changes during this period can inhibit the female's sex drive, which reinforce the inclination of women to separate themselves from men.[50] As for seclusion practices, many women in traditional societies have expressed the sentiment that seclusion provides a welcome respite from their demanding domestic labors during their time of

49 In modern research, the synthesis of scientific and humanities-based approaches to human phenomena has been designated "vertical integration" or "conscilience" (Slingerland, Collard 2011; Slingerland 2012). For further discussion, see Feder 2022, 263-70.

50 Roney, Simmons 2013.

infirmity.[51] In sum, a biological perspective raises the possibility that women may actually be the initiators, at least in part, of these separationist practices, even if they are often articulated in misogynous terms within male society. This suggestion shows how a biological dimension can provide a new perspective for addressing vexed questions in the humanities. Yet, a proper evaluation of this hypothesis must await a comprehensive integration of biological and historical sources of evidence.

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51 E.g. Karki 2021.

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The Exorcist's Purity

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Abstract This article examines how the exorcist (*āšipu*/*mašmaššu*), the main purification expert in first-millennium Mesopotamia, established and maintained his purity, despite frequent exposure to pollution in the performance of his job. Juxtaposing his self-presentation with that of the diviner (*bārû*) reveals the unique confidence the exorcist projects about his purity. I show how the exorcist's self-presentation in his ritual speech shifts attention away from the process of self-purification to establish his purity as absolute owing to his close relationship with the gods. The unquestioned nature of his purity has further implications for the exorcist's social status, as the one with unlimited access to the gods and in control of the rules to approach them.

Keywords Exorcist. Purity. Purification. Mesopotamia. Ritualisation. Ritual. Protection. Self-presentation.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Confidently Pure. – 3 Purity for Access. – 4 Exposure. – 5 Becoming Pure. – 6 Purity and Protection. – 7 Conclusion.

1 Introduction

The exorcist (*āšipu*/*mašmaššu*) was the main purification expert in first-millennium BCE Mesopotamia.[1] Although anyone could perform regular self-purification, only with the help of this ritual specialist could more serious impurities be removed. Essential for the performance of this profession was the exorcist's own purity. Without being perfectly pure himself, he could not purify others, nor could he act as a mediator between his clients and the gods. Yet his very professional activity exposed him daily to serious pollution that he could not avoid.

Therefore, we need to ask how the exorcist established and maintained his exceptional purity under such difficult circumstances. If the exorcist's perfect purity was the result of a rigorous self-purification routine, there is little evidence for it. The few extant references to his self-purification do not seem any different from those purifications that he prescribed for his clients. Instead, the exorcist presents his purity as an assumed, unquestioned reality. The task at hand, therefore, is to show how this

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1 In this article, 'the exorcist' refers to the generic, idealised exorcist as constructed by ritual texts from the first millennium BCE, not to any single individual exorcist. I use exclusively male pronouns for the exorcist, since no female exorcists are attested (May 2018).

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purification expert presents himself as pure in ritual contexts. This, in turn, will shed a new light on the Mesopotamian concept of purity at large.[2]

2 Confidently Pure

In his ritual speech, the exorcist regularly refers to his exceptional purity to establish his ability to purify others. An incantation from the ritual *Šurpu* provides a typical example of the exorcist's self-presentation:

ramku ellu ša Ea mār šipri ša Asalluḫi anāku

I am the bathed, the pure one of Ea, the messenger of Asalluḫi.[3]

Here, as in other ritual contexts, the exorcist presents his purity as an established fact. Although the passive adjective *ramku* 'bathed' refers to the end result of a self-purification process, the exorcist's statement shifts attention to the result (*ramku* 'bathed') and immediately connects it with the achieved quality (*ellu* 'pure'), thus not admitting any doubt as to the efficacy of this self-purification. Finally, associating the exorcist's pure state with his close relationship with the gods cements the perfect nature of his purity.

Sometimes, the exorcist's self-presentation singles out the purity of his mouth, which was essential for his ability to recite the pure words of incantations, often claimed to be of divine origin. The following quote describes the exorcist's mouth with another passive adjective, *mesû* 'washed', without providing the details of the purification process:

ka-piriĝ ka šu luḫ-ḫa eridu^{ki}-ga-me-en
āšipu Eridu ša pīšu mesû anāku

I am the exorcist of Eridu whose mouth is washed.[4]

This and other similar first-person proclamations about the exorcist's purity should be understood as *performatives*:[5] they do not simply describe the exorcist's purity but actualise it. By stating his purity out loud, the exorcist overcomes any potential doubts, both his and his clients', about the perfect purity he needs to achieve to be able to practice his craft.

In comparison with other Mesopotamian ritual specialists, the exorcist's expressed certainty about his purity seems remarkable. To show that not all ritual practitioners expressed such confidence, we may juxtapose the exorcist's statements with the diviner's *ezib*-formulas; in his ritual performance, the diviner (*bārû*) preemptively used apologetic language, in case something was amiss with his purity or the correct performance of the ritual:[6]

2 For the Mesopotamian concepts of purity and impurity see van der Toorn 1985; 1989; Sallaberger 2006-08; 2011; Guichard, Marti 2013; Feder 2014. Most scholars agree that two different kinds of impurity can be distinguished in Mesopotamian sources, variously described as 'religious etiquette' versus 'religious ethics' (van der Toorn 1985; 1989), or 'superficial' versus 'provoked' impurity (Guichard, Marti 2013). Whereas superficial impurities could be washed away through regular self-purification, provoked impurities were more pernicious and required the assistance of an expert, typically the exorcist. However, Sallaberger 2011 has denied this distinction: in his understanding, purification always removes only superficial impurities to enable divine acceptance. Rather than provoked impurity, we should speak of evil that the exorcist can remove, although this expelling of evil needs to be framed by purifications to enable supplication with the gods. His analysis shows a close relationship, and even overlap, between pollution and evil, or purification and protection, in Mesopotamian sources that will be relevant for this paper. Note, however, that my study focuses on purity and argues that it is more than the absence of pollution. In this sense, classifications of impurity are not relevant for this study.

3 *Šurpu* V-VI 175; see Reiner 1958, 35.

4 Udug-ḫul III 127; see Geller 2016, 115.

5 Referring to Austin's theory of speech acts (Austin 1962).

6 The diviner expresses concern about his purity after, supposedly, already conforming to rules prescribed for diviners-to-be in a text known as the *Qualification of Babylonian Diviners*, published by Lambert (1998). Apart from a foundational myth of the diviner's profession, this text prescribes physical, mental, and moral perfection as well as an appropriate education for those who wish to be admitted into the diviner's profession. There is no known comparable text regarding requirements for the exorcists.

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ezib ša anāku mār bārê aradka ṣubāt ginē'a aršāti labšāku
mimma lu''û ākulu aštû apšušu ulappitu ukabbisu[7]
miḫḫa maṣḫata mê ḫaṣba u išāta ulappitu
kūn qāti ēnû ušpēlu
ulū tāmītu ina pîya uptarridu uḫtaṭṭû

Disregard if I, the diviner your servant, (a) am dressed in my ordinary soiled garments, (b) have eaten, drunk, anointed myself with, touched or stepped upon anything unclean, (c) have touched the libation beer, the *maṣḫatu*-flour, the water, the container, or the fire, (d) have changed or altered the ritual proceedings, (e) or the oracular query became jumbled in my mouth (and) I misspoke.[8]

The diviner is openly concerned about the possibility of pollution, mistake, or any kind of interference with the ritual procedure. The exorcist, by contrast, voices no worry or doubt about purity during his ritual speech.[9]

In a more elaborate passage from the Mouth Washing Ritual for the induction of a new cultic statue, the exorcist draws attention to the constituent parts of his ritual performance and qualifies most of the mentioned items, and thus also most of his ritual actions, as pure:

anāku šangammāḫu / ša parṣī ellūti ša Eridu / addi mê qaqqara ullilkunūši / kussê ellēti ana ašābīkunu addi / ṣubāt ḫuššê ebbūtu aqīškunūši riksa ella arkuskunūši / niqâ ella aqqīkunūši adagurra našpa azqupkunūši / karāna u šikara rēštâ aqqīkunūši / aššu parṣī ilāni rabûti šuklulu / gišḫura šuluḫḫa šutēšuru ittīkunu bašû / ina ūmi annî izizzānimma

I am the great priest of pure rites of Eridu. I have poured out water, I have purified the ground for you, I have placed pure thrones for you to sit on, I have given you clean red garments, I have set up the pure offering arrangement for you, I have offered you a pure offering, I have set up for you an *adagurru*-vessel with *naš*pu-beer, I have libated for you wine and best beer. Because the perfect performance of the rites of the great gods (and) the carrying out of the prescriptions for the purification rite rest with you, be now present here.[10]

The sequence of items qualified as *ellu* 'pure' in this passage includes physical objects (thrones, offering arrangements) as well as procedures (rites, offerings). Purity is here implicitly compared to cleanliness on the one hand (clean garments) and best quality[11] (of beer) and perfect performance on the other. While purity derives from the embodied experience of cleanliness, it cannot be reduced to that alone. Here, as in the diviner's *ezib*-formulas, the purity of ritual actions goes beyond absence of pollution to imply a perfectly correct performance that has followed all the established rules to the letter. Such rules govern access to the gods.

7 The parallel standard *ezib*-formula 6 adds at this point: *ina mūši gilitta piritta īmuru* 'if he (the assistant) has seen fear and terror at night' (Starr 1990, xxiv).

8 This is the reconstructed full version of standard *ezib*-formula 7; see Starr 1990, xxiv.

9 There are other ritual contexts, in which the exorcist expresses uncertainty, such as the so-called divine dialogues, in which his divine mirror image, Asalluḫi, asks his divine father Ea for advice and reassurance (see Cunningham 1997, 24-5, 79-80, 120-1, 167; Rudik 2011, 46-63). Similarly, the exorcist expresses concern about his safety and asks the gods for protection (see below). However, the exorcist never voices doubts regarding his purity.

10 Incantation tablet 3, ll. 26-35; see Walker, Dick 2001, 133-4.

11 For the connection between good quality and purity see Feder 2014, 108.

3 Purity for Access

If personal cleanliness was a necessary condition for social acceptance in Mesopotamian society, purity served a similar purpose in relation to the gods, who were themselves ultimately pure. A section of the divinatory series *Šumma ālu* lists activities that make a man pure (*el* 'he is pure') or impure (*ul el* 'he is not pure') when going to the temple.[12] As one of the lines suggests, his state would have implications for the man's ability to face the deity.[13]

Purity was a godlike state: the only truly pure beings were the gods, whose radiance in the form of a luminous aura (me-lám/*melammu*) became closely associated with purity.[14] To approximate divine purity was, of course, an impossible task, yet purity was the necessary condition for any ritual activity, including regular cult. As in other religions and cultures, ancient Mesopotamians developed a system of rules to follow to purify themselves, subsumed under the Akkadian term *qutaddušu*, lit. 'to sanctify oneself'.[15]

To use a term from ritual studies coined by theorists such as Catherine Bell and Ronald Grimes,[16] purification is a ritualised form of hygiene. The process of ritualisation transforms an everyday action, such as eating, sitting, or in this case personal hygiene, into a formalised, rule-bound behavior that does not directly serve its original practical purpose. As an example, consuming the eucharist does not serve the same purpose as eating a meal and yet, the action involved is the same. Similarly, ritual ablution does not have much to do with actual hygiene – it is a symbolic, rule-bound action that establishes one's purity and therefore one's ability to access the gods.[17]

For human beings, it is virtually impossible to maintain a state of purity at all times, since sooner or later, they necessarily come into contact with a source of pollution or, as fallible human beings, make a mistake. As we have seen, even a prominent ritual specialist, such as the diviner, openly admits his imperfections. However, in our example from the Mouth Washing Ritual, the exorcist claims that all parts of his ritual performance are pure and therefore that his ritual is always correctly performed.

4 Exposure

The unquestioned nature of the exorcist's purity is even more remarkable when we consider that he performed most of his rituals outside of the temple: he walked through the streets of the city, notoriously rife with pollution and demons, he entered houses of seriously ill patients, and even journeyed to the uninhabited space beyond the city limits, known as the steppe (EDIN/*ṣēru*). Of all the ritual specialists in first-millennium BCE Mesopotamia, the exorcist was most exposed to pollution.

In fact, we know that the exorcist could indeed be concerned about his purity and his perfect performance of his rituals, but this concern was only rarely expressed in writing. A long colophon appended to the last tablet of the ritual series Zuburudabbeda against field pests includes the following injunction:

> *ūma kikiṭṭê annûti ana epē*[*ši šaknāta*] *utallil utabbib u*[*ṣur ramānka*] *it'id pitqad lā teggi lā temê*[*š* …] *nipiḫ Šamaš u kakkabi uṣurma* […]
>
> When [you set about(?)] to per[form] these rituals, make yourself pure and clean and wa[tch yourself!] Be attentive, be careful, do not be negligent, do not ignore […!] Watch the rising of the sun and stars and […!][18]

12 This section is known from the excerpt tablet K.4057, available in CT 39, pl. 38, rev. 8-15, paralleled by K.4097, available in CT 39, pl. 36, rev. 93-111. The latter is also included in Nötscher 1930, 205-8. These passages have been quoted in previous discussions of Mesopotamian purity (Sallaberger 2011, 29-30; Guichard, Marti 2013, 83-4). Boddy et al. 2022, 15 identified these passages as the 'SIKIL section' of the divinatory compendium *Šumma ālu*. A compilation of therapeutic prescriptions published by Schwemer 2013 includes parallels with this section (obv. ii 38-rev. iii 9), applied to purification from witchcraft.

13 DIŠ NA KIMIN *ina* MÁŠ.GE$_6$-*šú ana* MUNUS TE-*ma la ir-ḫi* NA BI *e-eb ḫi-ṭam* NU TUK *i-ta-ti* DU.DU *ana* IGI DINGIR NU GIL 'When a man ditto [sets out to the house of his god] (and) in his dream he approaches a woman (sexually) but does not ejaculate, that man is pure, he did nothing wrong, he can keep walking in the area, nothing prevents him from facing the god' (CT 39, pl. 38, rev. 13).

14 For a different explanation of the widespread association of purity with luminosity in the ancient Middle East, which is not mutually exclusive with the one presented here, see Feder 2014.

15 Maul 1994, 39-41.

16 Bell 1992, 88-93; Grimes 1982, 36-9.

17 Purity is therefore different from cleanliness. Compare Michaels 2015, 136-41 for an illuminating analysis of ritual ablutions in India as well as the Buddhist critique thereof.

18 George et al. 2010, 110, no. 18, iii 21'-24'.

However, our evidence for the exorcist's self-purification measures is far from abundant and even these references do not seem to differ in either quality or intensity from those self-purifications that the exorcist prescribed for his clients, such as washing and bathing, anointment, putting on clean clothes, fumigation, and temporary abstention from certain foods.[19] In comparison to the abundance of the exorcist's ritual texts, there are few written instructions for the expert's purification. While this need not reflect actual infrequency of these procedures, what the exorcist emphasised in his self-presentation is his state of purity, rather than his ritualised process of self-purification.

5 Becoming Pure

It is only in the third tablet of the incantation series Udug-ḫul that the exorcist describes the process of becoming pure, invoking his interaction with the god Ea, who prepares the exorcist to receive the divine words of incantation in his mouth. However, Ea does not purify the exorcist or even his mouth; rather he completes the exorcist's body and perfects his performance, namely his speech and ritual actions:

tu$_6$-ĝu$_{10}$ tu$_6$ ku$_3$-ga-zu ĝar-ra-ab
tâka ella ana têya šukun
ka-ĝu$_{10}$ ka ku$_3$-ga-zu ĝar-ra-ab
pīka ella ana pīya šukun
inim ku$_3$-ga-ĝu$_{10}$ sig$_5$-ga-ab
amātī ellēta dummiq
inim-ta ka-ga-ĝu$_{10}$ ḫe$_2$-en-silim-ma-ab
qibīt pīya šullim
me-ĝu$_{10}$ sikil-e-de$_3$ du$_{11}$-ga-ab
parṣīya ullulu qibi

Place your pure spell over my spell,
place your pure mouth over my mouth,
perfect my pure word,
complete my pronouncement,
command that my rite remain pure.[20]

The exorcist's purity is therefore constructed through divine intervention. Only a divine body is intrinsically pure, notwithstanding the recurrent exposure to pollution. The human and divine bodies do not seem to become identical; rather, the divine perfects and completes the human body and performance of the exorcist, thereby making the exorcist pure. This results in a paradox: the very state of purity required to interact with the gods is, in the exorcist's case, granted by the gods themselves.

Another incantation from the Mouth Washing Ritual suggests that this merging of the human and the divine guarantees the exorcist's resistance to pollution. The passage first describes the god Asalluḫi walking down the street and becoming repeatedly exposed to various polluting substances:

[en$_2$ e-]sir$_2$ ra [ĝe]n-a-ni-ta
sūqa ina alākīšu
[^{d}a]sal-lu$_2$-ḫi e-sir$_2$-ra ĝen-a-ni-ta
Marduk sūqa ina alākīšu
[?] AŠ sila-dagal-la dib-ba-a-ni-ta
rebīta ina bâ'īšu
[till]a$_4$ sila-a ĝen-na-a-ni-ta
sūqa sulâ ina alākīšu
[a-t]u$_5$-a bal-e-da mu-un-da-zukum-ma
rimka tabka ikbusma

19 The fullest preserved instruction for the exorcist's self-purification includes a bath, clean dress, washing of the head, fumigation, and abstention from certain foods (Ambos 2004, 168-9, ll. 1-3). My dissertation discusses evidence for the exorcist's self-purification measures in detail.

20 Udug-ḫul III 182-6; see Geller 2016, 128-9.

a si nu-sa$_2$-a ĝir$_3$-ni ba-ni-in-ĝar
ina mê lā išarūti šēpšu ištakan
a šu nu-luḫ-ḫa igi im-ma-an-sum
mê qāti lā mesâti ītamar
munus šu nu-sig$_5$-ga gaba im-ma-an-ri
sinništa ša qātāša lā damqā uštamḫir
ki-sikil šu nu-luḫ-ḫa igi im-ma-an-sum
ardata ša qātāša lā mesâ ittaplas
[munus] ˹uš$_{11}$˺-ri-a šu mu-ni-in-tag
sinništa ša ruḫê qāssu iltapat
[lu$_2$ š]u-˹ni˺ nu-sig$_5$-ga gaba im-ma-an-ri
[*ša*] ˹*qātā*˺*šu lā* ˹*damqu uštamḫir*˺
˹lu$_2$ šu˺-[ni nu-luḫ-ḫa] ig[i im-ma-an-sum]
ša qāt[*āšu*] *lā me*[*sâ ītamar*]
lu$_2$ su-na si nu-[sa$_2$]-˹a˺ šu mu-ni-[in-tag]
ša zumuršu lā ˹*i*˺*šaru qāssu ilt*[*apat*]

As he went down the street,
as Asalluḫi/Marduk went down the street,
as he passed through the square,
as he went down street (and) alleyway,
he stepped in poured-out bathing water!
He has set foot in improper water,
he has seen water (from) unwashed hands
He has encountered a woman whose hands were not clean,
he has looked at a young woman whose hands were unwashed,
his hand has touched a bewitched woman.
He has encountered someone whose hands were not clean,
he has seen someone whose hands were unwashed,
his hand has touched someone whose body was improper.[21]

Although it is Asalluḫi who is presented as encountering all these impurities, when he reports the problem to his father Ea in a traditional divine dialogue formula in the following lines, he repeats it with a change of subject: this time he speaks about the exorcist being exposed to impurities in the streets.

^{d}asal-lu$_2$-ḫi [igi im-ma]-an-sum
Marduk ippallissūma
a-a-ni ^{d}en-ki-ra engur-ra-ke$_4$ šu-a ba-an-ni-gi
ana Ea abīšu ina apsî ušanna
a-a-mu maš-maš a-tu$_5$-a bal-e-da mu-un-da-zukum-ma mu-un-da-zukum-ma
abī mašmaššu rimka tabka ikbus ikbusma

Asalluḫi/Marduk saw it and reported to his father Ea in the *apsû*: "My father, the exorcist stepped in poured-out bathing water, he stepped in it".[22]

The original editors of this text saw the unexpected change of subject from Asalluḫi to the exorcist as a mistake, but, in my understanding, this change is intentional. The incantation conflates the two subjects, the god and the ritual expert, and thus dispels any doubts surrounding the exorcist's purity, for the original subject, Asalluḫi, cannot become polluted.

What follows this enumeration of polluting encounters is Enki's advice not on how to purify the exorcist, but the city. The exorcist is supposed to prepare the 'holy water' in an *egubbû*-vessel and bring it through all the squares, streets, and alleyways. Although the incantation tablet is slightly fragmentary towards the end, the exorcist's purity does not seem to be at stake. He remains pure, even though he has not only encountered and looked at sources of pollution, but has even touched them or stepped

21 Incantation Tablet 6/8, ll. 1-13; see Walker, Dick 2001, 211-12.

22 Incantation Tablet 6/8, ll. 14-16; see Walker, Dick 2001, 212-13.

on them. Once again, the incantation shifts attention away from the possibility that the exorcist's purity might have been disturbed.

6 Purity and Protection

Although the exorcist's close relationship with the gods was essential to maintain his purity, we never find the exorcist asking the gods to purify him – instead his rhetoric exploits various semantic overlaps between purity and other related concepts. We have already mentioned the exorcist's request for the completion of his body and the perfection of his rituals, suggesting a close link between the notion of purity and integrity. Even more prominent and noticeable are the exorcist's requests for divine protection, drawing on the overlap between pollution and danger, expressed in the Mesopotamian notion of evil (ḫul/*lemnu*). Building on previous studies of the exorcist's self-protection,[23] we may draw attention to its importance in maintaining the exorcist's purity.

A striking example can be found in Udug-ḫul VIII 35-6, where the exorcist describes himself as putting on his red sash and a red cloak, an attire that is supposed to be terrifying and protect him against demons:

túggu_2-e_3 sa_5 ni_2-te-na-ke_4 gu_2-$ĝa_2$ bi_2-in-mu_4
naḫlapta sāmta ša puluḫti aḫḫalipka
tug_2 sa_5 tug_2 ni_2-gal-la-ke_4 bar ku_3-ga bi_2-in-mu_4
ṣubāta sāma ṣubat namrirri zumru ellu ulabbiška

Sum.: I wrapped a terrifying red sash around my neck
/ Akk.: I wrapped myself against you (the evil demon) in a terrifying red sash and I dressed (my) pure body (Akk.: against you) in a red cloak, a cloak of fearsomeness.[24]

As argued by Uri Gabbay, this passage draws directly on *Enūma eliš* IV 57-8, where Marduk is described dressing himself in a terrifying attire before approaching Tiamat's army:[25]

naḫlapta apluḫti pulḫāti ḫalipma
melammi rašubbati apir rāšuššu

He was wrapped in a sash, an armor of terror,
wearing radiance and awe on his head.[26]

One crucial difference between these passages is the qualification of the exorcist's body being dressed as pure. Where purity would be superfluous in the description of a god, it seems important to mention it regarding the ritual expert in need of protection. Again, his purity is merely stated and already assumed but also appears as a necessary condition for divine acceptance and thus protection.[27]

7 Conclusion

As the main purification expert, the exorcist needed to maintain his purity fully undisturbed, despite his constant exposure to pollution. Only absolute purity guaranteed divine acceptance and support that the exorcist needed to intercede on his clients' behalf, purify them through his rituals, and protect himself from evil forces. Such perfect purity seems to have been close to impossible to maintain,

23 Geller 2016, 34-6; Maul 2018; Heeßel forthcoming.

24 Geller 2016, 298.

25 Gabbay 2018.

26 Lambert 2013, 88-9.

27 Apart from verbal self-protection, the exorcist could protect himself by donning a red cloak and a red sash and applying a specific ointment with the *nikiptu*-plant (Maul 2018, 186, ll. 31-3; Schwemer 2019, 46, ll. 23-6 and 48, ll. 85-7). These are the same strategies used for purification, but with a twist: he dons a red dress instead of pure white linen (white clothing [*ṣubātu peṣû*]: Ambos 2004, 116, III 16'; wearing linen [*kittû*]: Ambos 2004, 168-9, l. 1; Ambos 2013, 218, VI.B.3.3 lines 27'-30') and he anoints himself with a scented ointment, not with neutral sesame oil (for a possible reference see Walker, Dick 2001, 100, incantation tablet I/2, section B, ll. 99-102).

yet the exorcist never acknowledged this difficulty in his ritual speech. The exorcist's statements proclaim his purity as an already achieved, unquestioned reality, to circumvent any doubt regarding its flawlessness. They are performatives that actualise the desired state for the exorcist himself as well as his clients. When the exorcist addresses the source and maintenance of his purity in his ritual speech at all, he presents it as a result of his close relationship with the gods, thus ultimately referring to his divine legitimation.

The exorcist's unquestioned purity had both theological and social implications. Since purity served to control and regulate access to the gods, the exorcist was the only one who could always approach them. While he was ready to admit his need for protection or his doubts about sufficient knowledge of ritual proceedings, purity was so central to his authority as a ritual expert that it could not be subject to doubt. Even in comparison with other ritual specialists, the exorcist's self-presentation as perfectly pure appears exceptional.

Although evidence for the exorcist's self-purification exists, it does not fully account for the absolute and unquestioned nature of the exorcist's purity. The exorcist's clients, on the other hand, – even the king himself – had to abide by strict rules that the exorcist himself prescribed to attain purity and be able to access the gods. The exorcist defined and controlled the rules of purity by virtue of his divine legitimation. This special status set him apart from his clients as well as from other ritual specialists.

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Personal Hygiene or Cultic Purity? Analysis of Cleansing Acts in Hemerologies of the First Millennium BC

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Abstract This paper discusses hygiene practices in ancient Mesopotamia through an analysis of hemerologies from the first millennium BC. Hemerologies are calendrical works that offer insights into daily life by providing instructions for various activities, including cleansing acts. By examining the relationship of the cleansing instructions to other instructions within hemerologies, analysing Akkadian terminologies used to describe cleansing acts, and investigating the associations of the assigned dates with the dates of cultic events in the monthly and annual cults, the study aims to determine whether the cleansing and purification instructions are motivated by a hygiene or health problem, or intended to ensure cultic purity.

Keywords Hemerology. Cleansing practices. Purity. Hygiene. Daily life.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Cleansing Instructions in the Hemerologies of the First Millennium BC. – 3 Relationship to Other Instructions and Predictions. – 4 Akkadian Terminologies for Cleansing. – 5 Relation to Monthly and Annual Cult. – 6 Conclusion.

1 Introduction

Recent pandemics have made us consciously think about hygiene and health issues, both at the individual and at collective levels. Documentation of supra-regional epidemics and diseases and the response of the ruling class were well attested in ancient Mesopotamia, but hygiene practices for the prevention of these diseases, especially at the daily level, are less well known. In this paper, I will approach this issue using hemerologies, which provide insight into the everyday lives of people across society. By studying hemerological instructions for cleansing acts, I will try to determine if there was such a thing as daily cleansing for health purposes.

Hemerologies from the first millennium BC are calendrical works that provide either a positive or negative value for a day or information about the appropriateness of various activities on a particular day.[1] Such instructions are often formulated as commands or prohibitions, and are sometimes followed by predictions. In this way, they guide readers in their daily lives. At the same time, they provide a means of controlling or systematising users' activities by providing a common understanding of what society considers appropriate or normative. The instructions cover a wide range of activities, not only cultic but also social activities, such as commercial transactions and legal matters. This sug-

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1 For the Mesopotamian hemerologies see Labat 1972-75; Marti 2010; Livingstone 2013. A study of the hemerological corpus and editions of several hemerological and calendrical works, including unpublished materials, is prepared by the author.

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gests that they were not aimed solely at members of royalty, but also at the wider population. However, the audience was not always the same, as the hemerological compilation *inbu bēl arḫi* from the royal libraries in Nineveh shows.[2] This work was deliberately compiled for the royal environment based on the pre-existing hemerological and calendrical traditions with the replacement of the undetermined subject by *šarru* 'king'.[3] Among the diverse subjects of instruction, there are several instructions on cleansing. Were they motivated by hygienic or health concerns, as is the case today, to promote personal health or prevent diseases?

In modern terminology, 'hygiene' is explained as a 'department of knowledge or practice that relates to the maintenance of health, a system of principles or rules for preserving or promoting health, sanitary science'[4] or 'the practice of keeping yourself and your surroundings clean, especially to prevent illness or the spread of diseases'.[5] The adjective 'hygienic' is explained as 'sanitary'[6] or 'promoting health or cleanliness'.[7] Thus, the concept of hygiene is directly related to health issues. On the other hand, 'clean(liness)', which is an aspect of hygiene, is not necessarily related to health issues and has moral, social, and cultural dimensions, that overlap with the concept of 'purity'.

In ancient Mesopotamia, no Akkadian terms are known to us that correspond to the modern term hygiene or hygienic.[8] This issue is occasionally treated in Assyriology as part of the study of purity or medicine. The concept of purity, especially the question of cultic purity, has received special attention in Assyriology because of the abundance of religious literature available to us.[9] In the Mesopotamian view, a lack of purity or moral transgressions were seen as the cause of the lack of divine protection, leading to physical problems, or as a direct cause of disease. Thus, the relationship between impurity and disease can be explained from both hygienic/medical and religious perspectives. This makes distinguishing between everyday cleanliness and cultic purity in the religious sphere difficult.[10] Therefore, in his study of *Körperliche Reinheit*, Sallaberger makes no distinction between oil anointing, bathing, hand washing, make-up, and fresh clothes as daily or special body care and those prescribed for offerings or feasts before the gods,[11] which are treated by other scholars as acts for (cultic) purity.[12]

Hemerologies cover various daily activities of private life, including explicitly religious ones; however, they usually provide minimal information about why a particular action is ordered on a particular day. There is no doubt that the cult underpins hemerologies. But it is only one of the various logics behind hemerologies, and the connection with a specific cult is not always clear.

In this paper, I focus on instructions for physical cleanliness. First, I examine their relationship to other instructions and predictions to gain some background and seek a connection to the disease. Next, the Akkadian terminologies used in the instructions are examined to determine whether the choice of terms reflects a particular daily or religious setting. Finally, the dates to which the instructions are attributed are compared with the monthly and annual cults to investigate their relationship with a particular cult. Thus, this paper attempts to determine whether the instructions for cleansing in hemerologies are motivated by hygienic reasons or are only intended to ensure cultic purity.

2 Hemerologies take three main forms: (1) independent works on a single tablet or a series of tablets, (2) the juxtaposition of several independent works on a single tablet (= collection tablet), (3) compilation. For the hemerological compilation see Jiménez 2016. The most recent edition of *inbu bēl arḫi* in Livingstone 2013, 199-248, with correction by Marti 2014, 181-96.

3 Jiménez, Adalı 2015, 188.

4 Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "hygiene".

5 Collins Dictionary, s.v. "hygiene".

6 Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "hygienic"; Collins Dictionary s.v. "hygienic".

7 Collins Dictionary s.v. "hygienic".

8 No Akkadian dictionaries (*Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* [AHw], *The Assyrian Dictionary of the University of Chicago* [CAD], *Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*) provide these translations.

9 Guichard, Marti 2012, 48. Studies on purity see van der Toorn 1985; Wilson 1994; Sallaberger 2006-08; 2011; Guichard, Marti 2012; Couto-Ferreira, Garcia-Ventura 2014; Feder 2014. Guichard, Marti 2012, 86-7 used hemerologies to illustrate food prohibitions concerning impurity. However, the treatment of the hemerologies is problematic. On page 86, the entry on the 7th VII is taken as an example from the compilation so-called 'Hemerology of Assur', in which prohibitions are explained as *ikkibu* 'taboo' of various gods. The author has established that these explanations are the extension in this compilation, not the original part of the instructions, see Kikuchi forthcoming. On page 87, a letter (Hunger 1992, no. 231) is quoted as they are 'precepts of hemerologies', but the lines in question have been identified as a quotation from the Lying Down Menology (Hätinen 2023, 227-40). Discussion of hygiene in studies of medicine are found in Geller 2010, 148, 155; Scurlock, Andersen 2005, 13-25, 242, 421-2.

10 Sallaberger 2006-08, 295-7; Guichard, Marti 2012, 90-1.

11 Sallaberger 2011, 92.

12 E.g., Maul 1994, 39-41, 94-6.

2 Cleansing Instructions in the Hemerologies of the First Millennium BC

In the following investigation, I will approach the question of hygiene by focusing on cleansing instructions for the body and dressing that can be directly associated with personal hygiene. Instructions for achieving cultic purity or avoiding impurities, such as food prohibitions or prohibitions for entering dangerous places, were excluded. These are only mentioned when they have a close temporal connection with the target instructions or when they support their association with specific cultic events.

Table 1 lists the cleansing instructions in the hemerologies, along with a brief description of the combined instructions, predictions, day designations, assigned dates, and their sources. The instructions are arranged according to the type of cleansing act. The following discussion is based on this table.

In the hemerologies investigated, 15 cleansing instructions are attested. They are distributed over 50 dates in a calendar year and can be grouped into four types of cleansing acts. The first type deals with the cleansing of the body and its various parts. The second type, with only one example, is an instruction on bathing. The third and fourth types concern clothing that is either cleansed or changed. In terms of positive and negative commands, types one and two concerning bodily cleansing are mostly formulated in the precative. Only foot washing is forbidden (1f). For cleaning and changing clothes, the positive and negative commands are more evenly attested. The wording of the clothing instructions is almost identical, except for the verbal form. Both types of clothing instructions are combined in the compilation *inbu bēl arḫi* (4f).

3 Relationship to Other Instructions and Predictions

Most of the instructions given alongside with the afore-mentioned cleansing show a cultic or ritual context, rather than a secular one. These include instructions for various offerings, prayer and prayeracts (*šigû* 'prostration' and 'hand-lifting'). These instructions are combined with all types of cleansing instructions. Cleansing may be required because of the need for purity when contacting gods.[13]

Table 1 Cleansing instructions in hemerologies

	Instruction(s)	Cleansing act(s)	Combined instruction(s)	Day designation	Prediction(s)	Date(s) and source(s)[i]
(1) Cleansing, washing, purifying	a. *libbib*	cleansing	calling of *šigû* (IBA 26th III: not changing a garment = 4e)		joy	16th III (ŠH and its adaption IBA) 26th III (IBA)
	b. *limtessi*[ii]	washing	no irrigation		pest damage, taboo	7th VII (HA)
	c. *lītellil lītebbib*	purification, cleansing	food offering, libation		shining like the sun	1st I (Parpola 1993, no. 74)
	d. *lītellil* (var. *limtessi*) *lītebbib*	purification (var. washing), cleansing	offerings (food, flour), libation		divine mediation	8th VII (TH, bab.)
	e. *lītebbibū qāta limtessi lītebbib*	cleansing, hand washing	filling the house with fruits; festival organisation; sexual intercourse with wife, not with a strange woman	day of joy	pregnancy	8th VII (TH, ass.)
	f. *šēpēšu lā imessi*	no foot washing	no sweeping of the house because of Baba (19th: no finishing of the building work)	(19th: wrath day of Baba/ Gula)	no disease	19th, 21st day (HI and its adaption HA, IBA[iii] on 19th, 21st I)
(2) Bath	*nūna kīma mê lirmuk*	bathing in fish (oil/ pool[?]) as if in water	prostration; eating fish		divine attention, mercy	1st II (PH)

13 Guichard, Marti 2012, 80-2.

	Instruction(s)	Cleansing act(s)	Combined instruction(s)	Day designation	Prediction(s)	Date(s) and source(s)[i]
(3) Cloth cleansing	a. *lubušta/ ṣubāssu ubbab*	cleansing a garment			joy; longevity (HA 15th XII: fulfillment of wish)	1st, 2nd, 16th I, 2nd, 10th II (HA), 15th III (HA, IBA), 3rd VII (HA), 7th, 13th VIII (HA), 3rd XI (HA, IBA), 15th XII (HA)
	b.		calling of *šigû* (IBA: liberation of slave and captive)		joy(!);[iv] longevity	6th, 16th, 26th(!)[v] I (ŠH and its adaption HA), 16th VIII (IBA)
	c. (*ṣubāssu*) *lā ubbab*	no cleansing a garment(!)[vi]	calling of *šigû*		acquisition	6th III (ŠH and its adaption HA, IBA)
	d.		no calling of *šigû*		(6th I_2: no joy)	6th I_2 (ŠH and its adaption IBA), 16th I_2 (IBA)
(4) Changing clothes	a. *ṣubāta zakâ liltabbiš*[vii]	wearing a new garment	oil anointment			11th VI (HA)
	b. *ṣubāta ešša lā iltabbaš*	no wearing a new garment			financial loss	12th IX(!)[viii] (BA and its adaption HA)
	c. *lubussu lū nakir*	changing a garment	offerings (*nindabû*, *niqû*), hand-lifting		joy	29th III (IBA)
	d. *lubušta/ ṣubāssu linakkir*	changing a garment	calling of *šigû*		fame	28th III (ŠH and its adaption HA)
	e. *lubušta/ ṣubāssu lā unakkar*	no changing a garment	calling of *šigû*(IBA: cleansing = 1a)		longevity (IBA: joy)	26th III (ŠH and its adaption HA, IBA)
	f. *ṣubāt pagrīšu ul unakkar ebbūti ul ittalbaš*	no changing a garment and wearing a new one	no eating grilled meat and baked bread, no riding, no command, no divination, no medical treatment (offerings [*nindabû*, *niqû*, food], hand-lifting)	evil day		7th, 14th, 19th, 21st, 28th day (IBA)[ix]

i Abbreviations: BA = Babylonian Almanac (Livingstone 2013, 5-82); HA = compilation Hemerology of Assur (Labat 1939; Casaburi 2003; Livingstone 2013, 103-59); HI = Hemerology for Invocation; IBA = compilation *inbu bēl arḫi*; PH = Prostration Hemerology (Jiménez, Adalı 2015); ŠH = *Šigû* Hemerology (Labat 1962; 1965, §§ 34-5; Casaburi 2003 [manuscript K]); TH = *Tašrītu* Hemerology, ass. = Assyrian version, bab. = Babylonian version (Casaburi 2000). The Hemerology for Invocation is an unpublished hemerology identified by the author (K.3765+//), which deals with the suitability of days for invocation, especially for Sîn and Šamaš. The new editions with new fragments of the Hemerology of Assur, Hemerology for Invocation, *Šigû* Hemerology, and *Tašrītu* Hemerology will appear in Kikuchi forthcoming.

ii The compilation *inbu bēl arḫi* contains the same washing and anointing instructions *šarru limtessi šaman asi lippašiš* 'The king should wash and anoint himself with myrtle oil'. On the 1st II (K.11637, obv. I 4) and 1st VIII (K.3269+, obv. I 3). They are part of entries taken from the Lying Down Menology, whose entries were systematically incorporated into the section of the 1st day of the corresponding month of this compilation (Hätinen 2023, 223-7, 228 fn. 25). Thus, they do not represent an original characteristic of the day and I therefore exclude them in this paper.

iii For the 21st I only foot washing instruction remains (K.15161, rev. I 3).

iv When the entry of the *Šigû* Hemerology for the 16th I was incorporated into the Hemerology of Assur for the day, the characteristic of the prediction was changed from joy (*ḫūd libbi*) to no joy (*libbašu ul iṭâb*). Such minor changes, resulting from textual adaptation, occur frequently in the Hemerology of Assur, see Kikuchi forthcoming.

v The adoption with the date shift to the 27th I in the Hemerology of Assur. Such shift of assigned dates is observed in the Hemerology of Assur several times, see Kikuchi forthcoming.

vi When the entry of the *Šigû* Hemerology for the 6th III was incorporated into the Hemerology of Assur, the cleansing prohibition (*lā ubbab*) was changed to the positive instruction (*ṣubsāssu ubbab*) probably by mistake, while another compilation *inbu bēl arḫi* took over this prohibition correctly (*ṣubāssu lā ubbab*).

vii In the Hemerology of Assur for the 25th V, the clean garment is mentioned: *ṣubāta zakâ tulabbissu* 'You (should) clothe him (= figure of ghost) with a clean garment'. This is a part of originally independent ritual instructions incorporated into this day section. For this ritual, see Kikuchi forthcoming.

viii The adoption with the date shift to the 10th IX in the Hemerology of Assur.

ix This entry is preserved in the following days: 7th, 14th, 19th I_2; 19th II; 7th, 19th, 21st, 28th III; 7th, 14th, 19th, 21st, 28th VI_2; 7th, 14th, 19th, 21st, 28th VIII; 7th, 19th, 21st X; 7th, 28th XI; 7th, 19th, 21st, 28th XII_2.

Among these cultic actions, the calling of *šigû* is instructed for each month of the year on the same four days (6th, 16th, 26th, and 28th) as recorded in the *Šigû* Hemerology. The *Šigû* Hemerology deals exclusively with the suitability or unsuitability of days for the invocation of the *šigû*. The *šigû* prayer is

performed in case of potential transgressions, illness, or in royal rituals.[14] It seems to have been performed at an appropriate time, as suggested by its prohibition on certain calendar days in the *Šigû* Hemerology, as well as royal rituals instructing to call a *šigû* on a 'good day'.[15] Thus, the cleansing instructions appearing together with the *šigû* instructions on these days (1a, 3b-d, 4d-e) are more likely associated with their dates due to the suitability of *šigû* rather than the significance of each date.

The instruction on bathing (2) appears together with a prostration to Ea in the Prostration Hemerology: *ina Ayyāri ūmi* 1 *ana Ea liškēn nūna līkul nūna kīma mê lirmuk tešmâ uṣṣab arḫiš iqqarrit* 'In the month of Ayyāru on the 1st day. He should prostrate himself to Ea. He should eat fish and bathe in fish (oil/pool[?]) instead of water. Then he will achieve attention (from the gods) and will quickly be granted mercy'.[16] Another instruction on eating fish is remarkable because it is normally forbidden in a cultic context to prevent contamination by odour.[17] Another problem is the role of fish in the instruction on bathing. The expression *nūna kīma mê lirmuk* is comparable to the famous curse of Gula for causing endless sickness: *dāma šarka kīma mê lirmuk* 'May he bathe in blood and pus as in water'.[18] Comparing the sentence structures, one expects some kind of liquid with fish to be used for bathing. Jiménez and Adalı suggest the translation 'fish (oil)'.[19] However, fish oil is usually written as *šaman nūni*, which does not appear here. Moreover, fish oil is used in anti-witchcraft rituals to defile the figures of sorcerers and witches, so its function is not to win divine favour.[20] Another possibility is bathing 'in (a pool of) fish (instead of [normal] water)'. But no parallels are known.[21] In both cases, the use of fish seems inappropriate for worship because of its odour, yet bathing is a common means of achieving purity.[22] Because of the positive predictions of divine favour, we expect the actions to be favourable to gods. Therefore, fish cannot be used for pollution. Jiménez and Adalı suggested that both fish instructions can be understood as a special devotion to the god of freshwater Ea, who is associated with fish.[23] Ea is the patron god of the second month Ayyāru, a fact that enforces the connection between instruction and its date.[24] This is also supported by the main interest of the Prostration Hemerology, the time of various ritual activities.[25]

The anointing with oil is ordered once, together with the changing of garments (4a), which applies to both daily and cultic cleanliness, as discussed above.

Eating prohibitions and clothing instructions only appear in *inbu bēl arḫi* with a series of prohibitions related to the dangerous character of their assigned days (4f). They are days with a multiple of seven and called *ūmu lemnu* 'evil day'. Similarly, the instructions on the festival organisation (1e) or the prohibitions on sweeping the house (1f) are strongly associated with the assigned dates' characteristics as the day of joy or of Baba/Gula, as will be discussed later in § 5.

Among the non-religious acts, irrigation (1b) and sexual intercourse (1e) are thematically closely related to their predictions: pest damage and pregnancy.

As for the predictions, joy is predicted for every type of cleansing instruction, except for the instruction on bathing, which has an obvious cultic character. The connection with diseases as expect-

14 See Maul 1994, 165; Fincke 2009, 117 for the illness, and Mirelman 2021, 48-9; Ni 2022 for the transgression and royal contexts.

15 E.g., the royal penitential ritual K.2549+// (Ni 2022, 176-86) Vs. 4: *ina* ITI *šal-me ina* UD ŠE.GA *ši-gu-ú ana* ^{d}AMAR.UTU GÙ-[*si*] 'In a favourable month, on a good day, he should c[all] a *šigû* to Marduk'; the building ritual Thureau-Dangin 1992, no. 45 (Linssen 2004, 283-92) Vs. 17: *ina* UD ŠE.GA LUGAL *li-tu-lil li-te-bi-ib ši-gu-ú a-na* ^{d}60 ^{d}EN.LÍL *u* ^{d}IDIM GÙ-*si* 'On a good day, the king should purify and cleanse himself (and) call a *šigû* to Anu, Enlil, and Ea'.

16 Prostration Hemerology (Jiménez, Adalı 2015, 157-83) 5. The translation is largely based on Jiménez, Adalı 2015, 175.

17 For foods that cause bad breath or flatulence leading to impurity, see Maul 1994, 39; Sallaberger 2011, 29-31. This is only one hemerological instruction that suggests eating fish. Eating fish is otherwise always forbidden in the hemerologies.

18 Sibbing-Plantholt 2022, 77-8; for examples see CAD R, 113, *ramāku* 1d.

19 Jiménez, Adalı 2015, 175.

20 E.g., Abusch, Schwemer 2011, text 8.1, 51'', 58''; text 8.4, 58; text 8.14, 10'; Abusch, Schwemer 2016, text 8.17, 16'; text 11.3, 42; text 11.5, 8. Cf. Fish oil is used to treat epilepsy in medical commentary (Geller 2010, 173-5), suggesting that it may have other medical functions.

21 The stone water container found in the Assur temple at Assur (VA Ass 1835) is decorated with fish-*apkallu*, probably together with Ea. Possibly, the reference to 'fish' in this instruction pertains to such fish-related decorations rather than actual fish. The fish-*apkallu* are also painted on the bathroom wall in Til-Barsip (see Portuese, in this volume). In this case, the instruction could be interpreted as referring to a special bath or bathing in the particular bathroom, rather than a regular one, which fits well with the special devotion to Ea suggested below.

22 For the ritual bath see Guichard, Marti 2012, 77. For oil anointment see Guichard, Marti 2012, 66, 68-9, 81.

23 Jiménez, Adalı 2015, 184.

24 According to *iqqur īpuš* § 105 (Labat 1965, 196-7), Ayyāru is the month of 'Ea, the lord of the living people' (*Ayyāru ša Ea bēl tenēšēti*). Cf. Jiménez, Adalı 2015, 184 fn. 49.

25 Jiménez, Adalı 2015, 154.

ed by the modern definition of hygiene is only evident in the prohibition of foot washing (1f), where it is predicted: (*amēlu šū*) *ul imarraṣ* 'He (var. this man) will not get sick'. It could be argued that the frequent prediction of longevity (3a-b, 4e) could also be understood broadly in terms of health,[26] but none of the predictions speak explicitly of purity.[27] Thus, the cleansing acts in the hemerologies are not directly associated with purity or impurity, although this could be something that exists as a layer behind the instructions.

In short, the instructions combined with cleansing instructions indicate a religious setting, while this aspect is not obvious in predictions in most cases.

4 Akkadian Terminologies for Cleansing

The acts of cleansing in the hemerologies are expressed using different verbs or adjectives. Sallaberger (2006-08) established a distinction in vocabulary between daily washing and cultic purity, although the terms are partly the same.[28]

The most frequently attested is *ubbubu* (*ebēbu* D) 'to clean' for cleaning oneself or one's clothes. The related adjective *ebbu* is also used to describe a new garment (4f). *ubbubu* can be used in physical, ritual, legal, or moral senses.[29] It is also used to 'clean' leprosy. Sallaberger (2011) thus argues that *ebēbu* refers to pathological impurities.[30] *ebbu* describes the luster of metals or precious stones, the cleanliness of clothing in everyday contexts, and the objects and materials in cultic use.[31]

In contrast, another common verb for cleansing with the cultic connotation *elēlu* 'to purify' has very limited use in the hemerologies. The related adjective *ellu*, which expresses the state of purity of objects and persons,[32] never appears in the hemerologies. In the hemerologies, *elēlu* is attested only twice, always along with *ebēbu* (1c-d). Here *elēlu* seems to be used to reinforce the shared meaning of cleansing through the lexical pairs of similar meanings rather than for cultic nuance.[33] This is supported by the replacement of *elēlu* by *mesû* 'to wash' in several manuscripts of the Babylonian version of the Tašrītu Hemerology.[34]

It is worth noting that the common verb for ritual purification *qadāšu* 'to purify (oneself), to make (ritually) clean' and the related adjective *qašdu* do not appear in the hemerologies.[35]

The verb *mesû* 'to wash' also appears alone (1b) or together with body parts: hand and foot (1e-f). It refers to the washing of body parts, clothes, objects, and (refining) metal or legal cases.[36] Unlike *ebēbu*, *elēlu*, and *qadāšu*, the use of *mesû* is restricted to the secular sphere and has no cultic connotation.[37] Foot washing in the private sphere is known from the Old Babylonian period when servants

26 *balāṭu irrik* 'the life will become long' or *amēlu šū ultabbar*/*ušalbar* 'this man will have a long life'.

27 Cf. (NU) (*e*-)*el*/SIKIL 'He is (not) pure' as apodoses of behavior omens in *šumma ālu*, as in K.40567+?Rm 452+82-5-22, 507. For the Join and the transliteration see the *electronic Babylonian Library* under the divination corpus "II.6 *Šumma Ālu* 80-120" (https://www.ebl.lmu.de/corpus/D/2/6). See also Guichard, Marti 2012, 83-4.

28 Sallaberger 2006-08, 295-6. Here I will not go into Sumerian terminologies, as Wilson 1994 points out that "Sumerian and Akkadian religions must have derived from different sources originally, and even though the Akkadian adopted many of the Sumerian religious forms, […], the vocabularies suggest disparate religious concepts. […] the Akkadians never totally adopted the Sumerian concepts" (1994, 95).

29 AHw 181, *ebēbu* D; CAD E, 5-7, *ebēbu* 2-3; Sallaberger 2006-08, 295; Guichard, Marti 2012, 84; Feder 2014, 101.

30 Sallaberger 2011, 19-20.

31 AHw 180, *ebbu* 1-5; CAD E, 1-3, *ebbu* 1; van der Toorn 1985, 27-8; Wilson 1994, 80-2; Sallaberger 2006-08, 295; Thavapalan 2020, 96-8, 103. However, *ellu* is generally preferred to *ebbu* for qualifying the purity of ritual equipment and offerings, see Mayer 1976, 153. Cf. Feder 2014 argues that radiance etymologically underlies the terms for purity. Thavapalan 2020, 97, on the other hand, argues that the '(ritually) clean' is an extended meaning built secondarily around the adjective. She also suggests that brightness and luminosity are metaphors for life and health (Thavapalan 2020, 104).

32 AHw 197, *elēlu* II 2 and 204-5, *ellu* 1-2; CAD E, 80-3, *elēlu*, 1a, 2a-c, 3 and 102-5, *ellu* 1-2; van der Toorn 1985, 27-8; Wilson 1994, 67-83, 94-5; Sallaberger 2006-08, 295; 2011, 19-20; Guichard, Marti 2012, 50-2, 63, 84; Thavapalan 2020, 96-8, 100, 103. *Ellu* never refers to physical cleanliness (CAD E, 4, *ebbu*).

33 Guichard, Marti 2012, 51, 61-2.

34 The prediction of divine mediation on these instructions, however, implies the necessity of this cleanliness for divine favour.

35 AHw 906, *qašādu* and *qašdu*; CAD Q, 46-7, *qadāšu* and 146-7, *qašdu*; van der Toorn 1985, 28; Sallaberger 2006-08, 295; Guichard, Marti 2012, 52.

36 AHw 647-8, *mesû* II 1, 4, 6; CAD M/2, 30-3, *mesû*; Sallaberger 2006-08, 295.

37 Sallaberger 2006-08, 296; Guichard, Marti 2012, 71.

customarily washed their master's feet.[38] Hand washing is widely found in rituals, often with adjectives that additionally express cleanliness, such as *ebbu* or *ellu*.[39] On the other hand, two Old Babylonian Sumerian proverbs concern washing hands at meals, suggesting an awareness of hygiene: "Putting unwashed hands in one's mouth is disgusting",[40] and "To serve beer with unwashed hands [...] are abominations to Utu".[41]

The verb *ramāku* 'to bathe, wash, soak' is attested to in daily and cultic contexts.[42] Bathing in medical texts may imply sanitary consciousness, but could also be explained in a cultic way since the conceptualisation of disease in ancient Mesopotamia is linked to supernatural powers, as mentioned in § 1.[43]

In the instructions on changing clothes, new garments are sometimes qualified by the adjectives *eššu* (4b) and *zakû* (4a). *eššu* 'new, fresh' is used in everyday contexts to refer to various objects or buildings and has no religious connotation.[44] It emphasises the newness of the clothing after manufacture, as opposed to old (*labīru*) clothing that has been in use for a while.[45] *zakû* 'clear, clean' is also an everyday term used to refer to liquids and clothing,[46] or to express the luster of metals or freedom from legal claims, as is the range of meanings of *ebēbu*/*ebbu*.[47] This can accentuate the shiny quality of the fabric, as is the case with metal.[48]

5 Relation to Monthly and Annual Cult

As seen in § 3, some instructions have a clear connection to the specific character or cult of the assigned dates.

A group of instructions for cleansing and clothing (1a, 3b-d, 4d-e) on the 6th, 16th, 26th, or 28th days of a certain month are organised alongside the *šigû* instructions as these days of the month are particularly suitable or unsuitable times for the *šigû*, the recitation of which presupposed cleanliness for contact with the gods. Similarly, the instructions for cleansing a garment (3a) on the 15th day possibly go back to an older hemerological tradition recorded in KUB 4, 46 (+) KUB 43, 1 dating from the fifteenth/fourteenth century BC Hattuša.[49] This tradition refers to the cleansing of the garments and the calling of *šigû* only on the 15th of each month, despite the fact that the garment instruction on the 15th III and the 15th XII make no mention of *šigû*.

Several prohibitions, among them the change of clothes (4f), are repeated monthly on the days with a multiple of seven (7th, 14th, 19th, 21st, 28th day), called *ūmu lemnu* 'evil day'.[50] This characteristic of the days is induced by the significance of the number seven in Mesopotamian literature as the number of groups of demons, monsters, ghosts, witches, and other supernatural beings.[51] This well-known association may have contributed to the characterisation of these days as dangerous. This is further supported by an association with the significant lunar phases of the seven-day lunar cycle: the waxing half-moon, the full moon, the waning half-moon, and the invisible moon.[52] On the day of the full moon, the moon and the sun are simultaneously present on the western and eastern horizon in the morning.

38 Guichard, Marti 2012, 75-6. Examples see CAD M/2, 31, *mesû* 1 2'.

39 Guichard, Marti 2012, 71-3. Cf. The Sumerian equivalent of the hand washing šu-luḫ denotes the lustration ritual.

40 Alster 1997, no. 3.161: šu nu-luḫ-ḫa ka-e tùm-da níg-gig-ga-àm.

41 Alster 1997, no. 3.8: šu nu-luḫ-ḫa kaš ì-dé-a [...] níg-gig ^{d}utu-kam.

42 AHw 948, *ramāku* 1-5; CAD R, 111-14, *ramāku* 1-2.

43 Examples of bathing in medical texts see CAD R, 114, *ramāku* 3 2'.

44 AHw 258 *eššu* 1-2, 4; CAD E, 374-6, *eššu* a-e.

45 Joannès 2010, 405.

46 AHw 1505, *zakû* 1, 3; CAD Z, 23-4, *zakû* 1-2; Sallaberger 2006-08, 295-6. Apart from the specification of garments, the relative noun *zakûtu* 'cleaned (barley)' (CAD Z, 32, *zakûtu* 2) is mentioned in hemerological instructions on barley processing. Feder 2014, 97, 99, 105 stresses that the use of *zakû* is not primarily for cultic purity.

47 AHw 1505, *zakû* 4, 7; CAD Z, 24-5, *zakû* 4-5; van der Toorn 1985, 28.

48 Beaugeard 2010, 285: *zakûm* "un tissu lustré ou qui brille (?)".

49 For the study and the edition of this tablet see Fincke 2009.

50 19 is a square number of seven, counted from the first day of the previous month (7×7=49–30=19), as already pointed out in Landsberger 1915, 119.

51 For a study of seven divines and demons, see Konstantopoulos 2023.

52 The manifestation of the moon should not be underestimated, as it formed the basis of Mesopotamian calendar systems and served as an indicator of temporal divisions. For a comprehensive study of the relationship between the moon god Sîn and calendars, see Hätinen 2021, 90-135. Note that the independent hemerological works and compilations are treated equally there.

This astronomical phenomenon is theologically understood as a meeting of the moon god and the sun god to make divine decisions.[53] The dark, moonless night at the end of the month was also associated with the Netherworld, giving it a negative connotation.[54] Thus, the evil nature of these days results from the interplay of several factors – the significance of the number seven, the phases of the moon, and the association with the Netherworld – which require a clean state to avoid potential dangers.

The example of the instruction on bathing (2) discussed above illustrates a case in which the timing of the instruction is inspired by the importance of the patron god for the month, in this case, Ea for the month Ayyāru.

In contrast to these entries related to the significance of days, the prohibition of foot washing (1f) may reflect a monthly cult. It is followed by the prohibition of the sweeping of the house, which explains the connection with Baba/Gula: (*amēlu*) (*aššum Ba'u*) *bīssu lā išabbiṭ šēpēšu lā imessi* 'He (var. a man) should not sweep his house (because of Baba). He should not wash his feet'. These instructions are given in the Hemerology for Invocation for the 19th and 21st day, which have been incorporated into the compilations Hemerology of Assur and *inbu bēl arḫi* under the section for the first month. According to the first-millennium monthly cultic calendar, the 19th day is the *ebbû ša Ba'u*/*Gula* 'Wrath day of Baba/Gula'.[55] Sweeping is required to clean the offering site when making offerings to gods.[56] Thus, both prohibitions of sweeping and washing can be understood as ritual preparations for invoking gods. But the 19th day seems to be an inappropriate time to appeal to Gula, since she is in an angry mood. The 21st day also contains the above explanation about Gula, but has no connection to this god in the monthly cultic calendar.[57]

The connection with the annual cult is obvious in the instructions on cleansing and hand washing (1e),[58] which appear together with the festival instruction (§ 3). A further connection is suggested by the assigned date, the 8th VII, which is called *ūm ḫidûte ša Enlil*/*Bēl* (var. *ili*) 'day of joy of Enlil/Bēl (var. god)'. In the first millennium BC, the beginning of the seventh month is known as the time for the New Year festival in autumn.[59] During this state festival, the king, other participants, and cult objects are repeatedly cleansed. The 8th day marks the climax of the festival, when the fate of the king is determined in the divine assembly. After the divine verdict, various cleansing procedures were carried out: washing and purifying the king, changing the king's clothes, and purifying cult objects.[60] This ritual procedure reflects the instructions given on cleansing. This event also is in line with the intensive cleansing instructions for the same day (1d).[61] The designation of the day as a 'day of joy' may reflect the divine satisfaction with the king or the joy of the king over the renewed assurance of his legitimacy and the continuity of his rule.[62]

The New Year festivals celebrated at the beginning of the first and seventh months are of particular importance in the annual cult.[63] In addition to the cases already mentioned, other cleansing instructions during the festival period correspond well with the course of the ceremony. The instruction for the cleansing of a garment (3a) for the 2nd I is in line with the special requirement of cleansing for the high priests called 'elder brother' on this day before they enter the presence of the gods for prayer and begin their duties in the temple on the following days.[64] The washing instruction (1b) for the 7th

53 Koch 2013, 133-4; Hätinen 2021, 92, 106-10, 126, 154. For a discussion of the connection with other prohibitions, see Kikuchi forthcoming.

54 Landsberger 1915, 141-3; Hätinen 2021, 98, 122, 124-5.

55 See Livingstone 2013, 250-4 with corrections in Marti 2014, 197-8 for the monthly cultic calendar incorporated into the hemerologies.

56 Maul 1994, 48; Linssen 2004, 149.

57 It should be noted that the offering(s) to Gula (sometimes referred to as Baba or Meme, the goddess identified with Gula) is ordered on the 19th day in *inbu bēl arḫi* and on the 21st I in the Hemerology of Assur. Possibly the offering was offered to appease the wrathful goddess. The offering on the 21st day strengthens the link between the 21st day and Gula.

58 For the annual cult and calendars see Cohen 1993; 2015.

59 For this festival see Ambos 2013.

60 Ambos 2013, 57-69.

61 This correlation between hemerological entries and this festival has already been pointed out in Ambos 2013, 69. More detailed discussion including the connection between this festival and offering instructions and prediction for the divine mediation (1d) see Kikuchi 2019, 448-9.

62 The latter argument by Ambos 2013, 69. The prediction for pregnancy (1e) possibly reflects the ascertained continuation of the rule.

63 For a recent study on the New Year festival in the first month, see Debourse 2022.

64 Debourse 2022, 21-2, 239. The purity of the priests is a general requirement for ritual participation, so the cleansing statement in the festival text is superfluous. Debourse 2022, 240-1 assumes the special (in her word 'more symbolic') form of cleansing.

VII corresponds to the sequence of the New Year festival in autumn, when various purification rituals were performed.[65]

A further comparison of the dates of the instructions with those of the annual cult shows good agreement in the following cases. Two types of instructions (1c: purification and cleansing, 3a: garment cleansing) are provided for the 1st I, which fits perfectly with the purification ritual known from the Neo-Assyrian period.[66] Its ritual text contains the same instructions for purification and cleansing, and a comparative instruction for wearing a new garment.[67] The instructions for cleaning clothes (3a) also coincide with the date of the sacred marriage of Nabû and Tašmētu/Nanaya (2nd II), or the ablutions (*rimkāni*) for Šamaš and Adad (10th II).[68] Instructions for wearing a new garment (4a) are given for the 11th VI in the Hemerology of Assur. This month is known as the time of the purification ceremony of Inanna/Ištar, whose tradition goes back to the third millennium BC and was kept until the Seleucid period. The date of the individual events varies depending on the period, yet the date of our instruction is close to the main celebrations of the Ur III period, probably between the 12th and 25th of the month.[69] The connection with this cult is supported by the repeated instruction of offering to Ištar in the Hemerology of Assur from the 10th to the 16th day of this month.

There are still six instances of instructions concerning clothing that do not coincide with the established dates of the recurring cult known so far.[70]

6 Conclusion

The instructions on cleansing in the hemerologies are scattered over 50 dates in the year, which shows the interest of the Mesopotamians in cleansing acts in private daily life (§ 2). The analysis of the instructions and predictions, combined with the instructions on cleansing, reveals that most of the cleansing has a cultic background (§ 3). This is supported by the coinciding of the dates of the instructions and religious events in the monthly or annual cult (§ 5). However, we still have some instructions for cleansing garments that do not correspond with a specific cult, so we cannot exclude the possibility that they reflect daily practices. It is worth noting that the hemerologies did not use the verbs for cleansing acts with a clear religious connotation (§ 4). Although most of the terms could be used in both daily and cultic contexts, the hemerologies preferred *ebēbu* and *mesû* to *elēlu*, which has a cultic undertone, and avoided the technical term for cultic purity *qadāšu* altogether.

The connection with health, which is the essential aspect of the modern definition of hygiene, is indicated in several predictions concerning health and longevity (§ 3). A possible connection to hygiene is also suggested by the terms *ebēbu*, *mesû*, and *ramāku*, since they have a health dimension (§ 4).

In conclusion, the results of the study of hemerologies provide new insights into the concept of private cleanliness. Although in many cases cleansing was cultic in motivation, the instructions on cleansing without a clear connection to religious events may remind us of the need for cleansing in everyday life.

65 Already argued by Ambos 2013, 48. For the purification rituals on the 7th VII see Ambos 2013, 46-8. The instruction for cleansing of a garment on the 3rd VII is also within the period of the New Year festival in autumn, but its procedure of this day includes no mention of the cleansing, see Ambos 2013, 38-41, 146-52.

66 For this ritual see Livingstone 1997, 215-17; 2000; 2017, 422-3; Cavigneaux, Donbaz 2007, 321-31.

67 K.2438+, obv. 1-3// (Cavigneaux, Donbaz 2007, 324-31): DIŠ *ina Nisanni* U[D 1.KAM *ša Anim* (u)] *Enlil ūmu magir gallābūssu* [*līpuš lītelli*]*l līteb*[*bib šaman kanakti* [*lippašiš*(?) *ṣubāta*] *ešši liltabbiš* 'In the month of Nisannu. [The first] d[ay. (It is the day) of Anu (and)] Enlil. Good day. [He should have] himself shaved, [puri]fy (and) cleanse himself. [He should anoint himself(?)] with oil (perfumed with) *kanaktu*-plant. He should clothe himself with a new [garment]'.

68 Cohen 1993, 311-12; 2015, 409-10. The 2nd is the day of the preparation of the sacred marriage, including the dressing of divine status, the contact with which required purity.

69 Cohen 2015, 141-5, 423-4. For the witness from the Seleucid period see Livingstone 2017, 427-9.

70 Instructions of the type 3a on the 16th I, 7th VIII, 13th VIII, and 3rd XI, the type 4b on the 12th IX, the type 4c on the 29th III.

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Purification, Defilement,and Privilege? An Example from the Hemerological and Menological Corpus

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Abstract This paper discusses the purity instructions found in the *Lying Down Menology*, the latest addition to the corpus of hemerological and menological literature from Babylonia and Assyria. After briefly describing the nature of this text and its instructions for incubation rituals, the discussion will focus on purity in this context, establishing that the dirtiness prescribed in some of the instructions relates to other negative aspects incorporated in the ritual, such as eating malodorous foods. Finally, I will argue that the use of luxury products in this ritual suggests that only the wealthy members of the upper social classes could adhere to the instructions of the *Lying Down Menology* throughout all twelve months of the year.

Keywords Hemerologies and menologies. Calendar. Incubation. RItual instructions. Scented oils. Anointment.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 The *Lying Down Menology*. – 3 Scented Oils as Luxury Products.

1 Introduction

Purity is a central aspect in ancient Mesopotamian rituals: purification frees the human ritual participants or ritual objects of mundane impurities, thus preparing them for an encounter with the divine.[1] This is also the case in the *Lying Down Menology*, a text presenting twelve instructions for an incubation ritual, one for each of the twelve months.[2] The unique feature of this text is, however, that it also includes instructions about defiling the body. In this paper, I argue that the prescribed dirtiness is attached to other negative actions, namely avoiding pleasant scents, eating malodorous foods, and staying silent. I will also look into the role of scented oils as luxury products in this context and suggest that apart from the king, only members of the wealthy upper class were able to regularly perform the incubation ritual described in the *Lying Down Menology*.

2 The *Lying Down Menology*

The *Lying Down Menology* presents twelve incubation rituals, one for each twelve months of the year. The incubation aims to receive positive dream messages concerning either the divine or human peers.[3]

1 See especially Maul 1994, 39-41 and Sallaberger 2007.
2 Hätinen 2023a.
3 Hätinen 2023a, 247.

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The preserved manuscripts show that this text was known in Assyria and Babylonia throughout the first millennium BCE.[4] The earliest source of this menology is an early Neo-Assyrian manuscript from the city of Ashur, and its latest attestations are found in excerpts in Late Babylonian *Kalendertexte* from Uruk, one of which preserves the year date 192 BCE.[5] The main manuscript, a tablet that contains a collection of hemerological and menological materials, comes from Babylon. The first column is completely missing in this manuscript, but the second column has the *Prostration Hemerology*,[6] followed by the *Lying Down Menology* and the *Tašrītu Hemerology*[7] on the reverse. The excerpts from the *Lying Down Menology* in the Late Babylonian *Kalendertexte* and its appearance in collections of hemerological and menological materials show that these instructions about inducing auspicious dreams were an integral part of calendrical knowledge and that, according to Mesopotamian beliefs, adhering to them contributed to leading a successful life. This idea is stated in the short concluding section that is found in two Babylonian library manuscripts of the *Lying Down Menology*:

BM 34090+ iii 31-33//BM 40232 ii' 11'-15'[8]

ūmū adānī bīri ša sîn ša sîn ša nēpesi annûti ina šatti 1 *arḫi* 12 *ippušu* […] … *kinūnšu laʾmsu ina qāt ili šarri kabti* [*u rubê* …] … *šattu* 1 *šalim*

The moon god's periods for visions (about the future). He who performs these actions during the twelve months of a year, […] his …, his brazier, its embers, [will be …] in the hand of god, king, noble man [and prince, …] … . He will remain well for one year.

Notably, the formulation "in the hand of god, king, noble man [and prince]" shows that the incubation instructions are aimed at people who wish to maintain good standing with both the divine and the earthly authorities. In this sense, they are comparable to the Egalkura rituals that prepare an individual for an audience with the authorities.[9]

More evidence comes from Nineveh, although no library manuscripts of this text are known from Ashurbanipal's royal tablet collection. Nevertheless, the *Lying Down Menology* is extensively quoted in letters to the king and hemerological/menological compilations, showing that the scholars at the Assyrian court knew it very well. In one letter to the king, a quotation from the Nisannu instructions from the *Lying Down Menology* is incorporated in the section that explains proper ritual conduct in that month.

BM 98651 (= Th 1905-4-9, 121), 3'-10'[10]

akal(NINDA) *kunāši*(ZÍZ.ÀM) *līkul*(GU_7) *šikar*(KAŠ) *kunāši*(ZÍZ.ÀM) *lišti*(NAG) *šīr*(UZU) *alpi*(GU_4) *immeri*(UDU) *iṣṣūri*(MUŠEN) *līkul*(GU_7) *šūmī*(SUM^{sar}) *karaša*($GA.RAŠ^{sar}$) *nūna*(KU_6) *lā*(NU) *ikkal*(GU_7) *ar-ka ṭūb libbi*(ŠÀ.DU_{10}.GA) *li-ir-ku-us a-na sinništi*(MUNUS) *la i-qer-ri-ib ina bīt*(É) *pár-si a-šar šēpu*($GÌR^{II}$) *par-sa-at li-*[*n*]*a-al ilū*($^{r}DINGIR^{meš1}$)-$^{r}šu^{1}$ [*kun*]-$^{r}nu^{1}$-[*šu-šu*]*m*?

He should eat emmer bread (and) drink emmer beer. He should eat beef, mutton, and bird meat; he should not eat garlic, leer, or fish. He should *strive to be happy*; he should not approach a woman. He should sleep in a secluded room, in a secluded place: his deities [*will gather for h*]*im*.

In addition to the evidence on how the Assyrian scholars referred to the instructions of the *Lying Down Menology* in their communication with the king, this menology can also be identified as one of the texts that were used to compile the royal hemerology *Inbu bēl arḫi*.[11] This means that some of the sections of

4 Hätinen 2023a, 224-7.

5 See Hätinen 2023a, 226 and Hätinen 2023b, no. 12. For the *Kalendertexte* tablets from Uruk, see also Weidner 1967, 41-8.

6 See the edition and discussion in Jiménez, Adalı 2015.

7 See Casaburi 2000 and Livingstone 2013, 181-90.

8 Hätinen 2023a, 233-4.

9 For the use of the expression 'god, king, noble man and prince' in the context of Egalkura incantations, see Stadhouders 2013, 304-7.

10 See Hunger 1992, no. 231; Livingstone 2000, 381-2; and Hätinen 2023a (MS Nin1; edition with collations).

11 For the current edition of *Inbu bēl arḫi*, see Livingstone 2013, 199-248, with corrections and additions in Marti 2014, 181-96. The relevant passages from *Inbu bēl arḫi* are included in the edition of the *Lying Down Menology* as MSS Nin4, Nin5, Nin6 and Nin7 (see Hätinen 2023a, 228).

Inbu bēl arḫi that remained undeciphered in Alasdair Livingstone's edition can now be read and reconstructed according to the *Lying Down Menology*. To give an example, the entry for 1 Araḫsamnu (VIII) contains the Araḫsamnu instructions from the *Lying Down Menology* (marked here with bold typeface):

K.3269+ i 1-8

[DIŠ *ina araḫsamni*(iti APIN)] *šá bēl*(EN) *nagbi*(IDIM) *apkal*(ABGAL) *ilī*(DINGIR^{meš}) *marduk*(^{d}AMAR.UTU) U_4 1.KAM^{v} *šá* ^{d}*a-nim u* [*enlil*(^{d}BAD$^{?}$)] / [*e-n*]*u-ma ina arhi*(ITI) *sîn*(30) *innammeru*(IGI-*ru*) *rē*$^{?}$*i*(SIPA) *nišī*(UN^{meš}) *ra-ba-a-*[*ti*] / [*nindabê*(NIDBA)-*š*]*u ṣabīta*(MAŠ.DÀ) *elleta*(KÙ-*ta*) *ana inbi*(GURUN) ‹*ú-kan*› ***šarru*(LUGAL) *lim-te-si šaman*(I.GIŠ) *asi*(^{šim}GÍR) *lippašiš*(Š[ÉŠ]) / [*lītebbib*(DADAG)] *šēna*([^{kuš}]^{r}E^{1}.SÍR) *liššakin*(GAR-*in*)** *ina šerì šarru*(LUGAL) *nindabê*(NIDBA)-*šú ana* [*šamaš*(^{d}UTU)] / [^{d}*be-let-mātāti*(KUR.KUR) *sîn*(30)] *bēlet-ilī*(^{r}DINGIR^{1}.MAḪ) *ú-kan ni-qé-e inaqqi*(BA[L-*q*]*í*) / [(X X) ***akal*(NINDA) *šegušši*(ŠE.MUŠ$_5$) *līkul*(GU$_7$)] *šikar*(^{r}KAŠ^{1}) *šegušši*(ŠE.MUŠ$_5$) *lišti*(NAG) *šīr*(UZU) *iṣṣūri*(MUŠEN) *līkul*(GU$_7$) / [*ina mayyāli*$^{?}$(KI$^{?}$.NÁ$^{?}$) *ṭābi*(DU$_{10}$.GA) *lināl*(NÁ) *ilū*(DINGIR^{meš})] *šá ana lemutti*(^{munus}ḪUL) *izzizzū*(GUB-^{r}*zu*^{1})-*šu* / [*ana damiqti*(^{munus}SIG$_5$)] *izzazzū*(GUB-^{r}*zu*^{1})-*šu***

[¶ In the month Araḫsamnu,] (the month) of the lord of underground waters, the sage of the gods, Marduk. 1st day is of Anu and [Enlil$^{?}$]. [Wh]en the moon is observed at the beginning of the month, the shepherd of the gre[at] people ‹sets up› [h]is [bread offering] (and) a pure gazelle to the Fruit. **The king should wash himself, he should anoint himself with myrtle oil, [he should purify himself]. He should wear sandals.** In the morning, the king sets up his bread offering to [Šamaš (and) Bēlet-mātāti, Sîn] (and) Bēlet-ilī; he ma[ke]s an (animal) offering. **[He should eat *šegušši*-bread]; he should drink *šegušši*-beer. He should eat bird meat. [He should sleep in(?) "good bed(?)". The gods] who wished him evil will have good intentions towards him.**

The excerpts in the Neo-Assyrian letter BM 98651 and *Inbu bēl arḫi* are good examples of the information presented in the *Lying Down Menology*. The gist of the text is that each month is associated with a particular set of instructions, the goal of which is to induce an auspicious dream.[12] Each set gives information on purification, anointment, clothing and footwear, types of food to be consumed and avoided (bread, beer, types of meat, garlic, leek, fish), the mood, sexual relations, and the place for and style of sleeping. Because eating and drinking form a central part of the instructions, it seems plausible that all the prescribed actions are associated with a meal in the household, either a simple repast or an elaborate feast. It should be noted that the household meal, or commensality in the household, can be seen as the essential form of domestic religion[13] and that, in this case, it offers a person – most likely the head of the household – the opportunity to magically gain benefits in relation to divine forces and his local community.

The instructions of the *Lying Down Menology* can be divided into three stages: before, during, and after the meal **[fig. 1] [table 1]**. The preparation for the meal involves personal hygiene and clothing, whereas the instructions for the meal involve the consumption of bread, beer, different kinds of meat, fish, garlic, and leek. A further element in the instructions on the meal is the mood: the instructions for months I, II and VII specify that one should have fun, whereas during months X and XI, one should stay gloomily silent. The post-meal instructions can involve having sex or avoiding it, but the main issue addressed in them is the place and style of sleeping. The outcome of the correct combination is an auspicious dream that can involve beneficial interaction with deities or human peers.[14] This forms an elaborate system with purity and defilement at its core, and these two aspects play a role both before and during the meal.

12 See Hätinen 2023a, 240-7.

13 Smith 2003, 26.

14 Hätinen 2023a, 240-7.

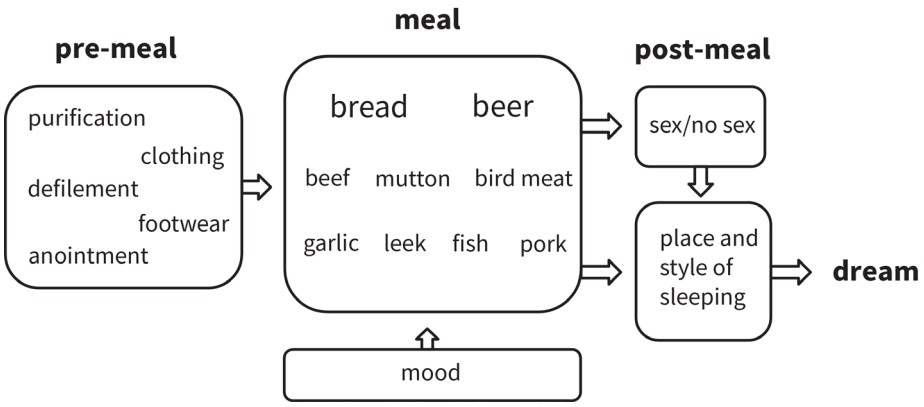

Figure 1 A schematic presentation of the ritual instructions in the *Lying Down Menology*

Most of the purity instructions in the *Lying Down Menology* that deal with the preparation for the meal prescribe a two-fold purification. The terminology that is used is *limtessi* 'he should wash himself (with water)' and *lītebbib* 'he should purify himself'.[15] An exception to this pattern is found in the instructions for months II and III, prescribing a washing without an additional cleansing. Thus, we can establish that the thoroughly cleansed state, attained through a washing and an additional cleansing, is the norm in these instructions. The interesting, and to my knowledge unique, feature of the *Lying Down Menology* instructions is found in months IV, V, X and XI: the entries for these months prescribe the complete opposite of a purification, a defilement.[16] This is expressed with the word *lītarriš* 'he should smear himself (with dirt)', derived from the verb (*w*)*arāšum* 'to be dirty' which denotes dirt that can be washed away.[17] In months IV and X, this defilement is preceded by a washing, which means that the newly washed body was supposed to be sullied by dirt.[18] In months V and XI, only a defilement is prescribed. The entries involving a defilement show that the norm of being thoroughly clean is turned upside down, insisting that the body must be made dirty before the meal. It is reasonable to define this defilement as something negative, marked with a grey background in table 1 below.

The preparation for the meal continues with the application of a scented oil.[19] Most months have a specific perfume, for example, *kanaktu* in month I and *murru* in month III (see table 1). Unfortunately, it remains unclear why a particular perfume was associated with a specific month. The selection of the perfumes corresponds to the aromatics and perfumes known from other sources, and the same kinds of oils are very often found in ritual instructions from the first millennium BCE.[20] The pattern in the use of scented and unscented oils indicates that apart from month IV, the anointment of the defiled body is either explicitly forbidden or it should be made with unscented oil. Thus, there is a connection between the purified body and a sweet smell and between the defiled body and no smell. Again, the sweet smell (attained by using a scented oil) can be defined as having positive qualities. In contrast, no smell (achieved by the anointment with an unscented oil or by the ban on anointment) has negative qualities, marked with a grey background in table 1.

The instructions for months X and XI include the order to stay 'gloomily silent' (*liqtayyal*). I interpret this to involve the mood at the meal, meaning that the ritual meal should be eaten in gloomy si-

15 For the semantic range of the Akkadian purity terminology, see Sallaberger 2007, 295-6 and Feder 2014, 94-8. In his overview of purification ("Reinigung"), Walther Sallaberger (2007, 297) notes that ritual purity includes the washing (*mesû*) of hands and a following cleansing (*ubbubu*) of the body. In the *Lying Down Menology*, no distinct body parts are mentioned, which suggests that the whole body is washed and cleansed. Still, there are no indications of a bath, suggesting that these acts could be carried out without a bathroom or a bathtub – an aspect that may support Svende Bielefeld's argument for the absence of bathrooms in excavated private houses in Babylon. For cleansing acts in the context of hemerologies, see Saki Kikuchi's contribution in this volume.

16 See Hätinen 2023a, 242.

17 See Sallaberger 2007, 296; Feder 2016, 104 and Hätinen 2023, 242.

18 The fact that the defilement ((*w*)*arāšu*) appears here instead of a purification (*ubbubu*) indicates that these actions should be understood as opposites of each other.

19 The instructions in the *Lying Down Menology* do not specify if only specific body parts were anointed. Compare here the application of scented oils specifically on the face and hands in the Egalkura incantations (see the discussion below).

20 See the discussion in Hätinen 2023a, 242 as well as Ebeling 1950, 5-14 and Worthington 2008, 574-75.

lence.[21] This certainly is a negative quality,[22] which corresponds to the dirty, unperfumed state of the body prescribed for these months. Moreover, this contrasts the instruction to be in a happy mood, which is attested for months I, II and VII (see the citation of the Nisannu instructions in the letter BM 98651 above and table 1). It seems plausible that the instructions that include negative aspects – dirtiness, smelliness, and silence – relate to the time of the year since, in both cases, they appear close to the summer and winter solstices that, according to the Babylonian ideal calendar, should occur in mid-Du'ūzu (IV) and mid-Ṭebētu (X).[23] Additionally, religious festivities featuring Dumuzi that took place in month IV and the rituals and festivities associated with the dead and the Netherworld in month V may in part explain the character of these months in the *Lying Down Menology*.[24] Month V (Abu) seems to have been the most significant month for funerary offerings during the Old Babylonian period, while month X (Ṭebētu) appears as a significant month for these offerings in the sources from the first millennium.[25] This suggests that the association with the dead and the Netherworld may have motivated the incubation instructions that prescribe a defilement and silence.

Finally, some of the food instructions in the *Lying Down Menology* can be interpreted to involve purity during the meal: the instructions for months X and XI, which have negative connotations through defilement, lack of sweet smell, and gloomy silence, encourage the consumption of foods that usually are taboos. Garlic, leek, fish, and pork were typically avoided because they were considered malodorous or unclean,[26] which suggests that the smelly fish, garlic, and leek are associated with the dirty and unperfumed human body during the meal in months X and XI.

To sum up, the gist of the purity instructions in the *Lying Down Menology* is that the person wanting to obtain an auspicious dream should usually be clean and perfumed and that he should also maintain this purity during the ritual meal. In two summer months (IV and V) and two winter months (X and XI), this norm is reversed, resulting in an unclean and unperfumed body and, in the case of months X and XI, eating malodorous foods. Thus, this reversal is most dramatic in the winter months X and XI. The instructions with negative connotations may have been motivated by the point of time (summer and winter solstices) and the association of those months with funerary rituals and the Netherworld. A more tangible aspect is the pattern of positive and negative connotations within the two halves of the year (see table 1). The positive qualities are most prominent during the festival season in months I, II, and VII, visible through consuming various kinds of meat, avoiding tabooed foods, and having a cheery mood during the meal. Moreover, the instruction to eat different types of meat in months VI and XII suggests that feasts also occurred at the end of the two six-month periods.

3 Scented Oils as Luxury Products

Using scented oils is a prominent feature in the *Lying Down Menology*. As a part of personal hygiene, fragrant oils are well-attested in cuneiform sources throughout the three millennia of Mesopotamian history, and even recipes for their production are preserved. In his edition of the perfume recipes, Erich Ebeling[27] noted that "Man darf ohne Bedenken sagen, dass in Babylonien und Assyrien jeder Mensch, der es sich leisten konnte, seinen Körper mit wohlriechenden Wässern und Salben labte" (every person who could afford it, refreshed themselves with fragrant water or ointments).[28] The ques-

21 Hätinen 2023a, 242-3.

22 Compare *Ludlul* I 105-6: *ūmu šutānuḫu mūšu gerrānu* | *arḫu qitayyulu idirtu šattu* "Sighing the day, lamentation the night | Moroseness the month, the year despair" (Hätinen 2022; transl. B.R. Foster).

23 This was suggested by Frances Reynolds during the discussion at the workshop; see also the brief notes in Hätinen 2023a, 243. Months IV-V correspond to June-August, and months X-XI correspond to December-February in the Gregorian calendar. According to the ideal Babylonian calendar presented in MUL.APIN, the summer solstice is on 15 Du'ūzu (IV) and the winter solstice is on 15 Ṭebētu (X) (see MUL.APIN II i9-13 and i 6-18 in Hunger, Steele 2019, 142-5). Note the prominence of especially the winter solstice in Late Babylonian religious festivities (Krul 2018, 130-4) and in the context of a Late Babylonian calendar treatise related to *Enūma eliš* (Reynolds 2019, 8-11).

24 See Scurlock 1995 and Cohen 2015, 414-1. Also note that the dream sought in Abu (V) in the *Lying Down Menology* concerns the Anunnakū deities, who live in the Netherworld (Hätinen 2023a, 247).

25 See Tsukimoto 1985, 51 and 123 as well as Krul 2018, 234-47.

26 See van der Toorn 1985, 33-5; Sallaberger 2007, 296; and Geller 2011, 640-2.

27 Ebeling 1950, 4.

28 See also the similar statement in Sallaberger 2011, 20: "Die Reinigung des Körpers mit Öl, dem duftende Essenzen beigemischt werden können, gehörte zum babylonischen Alltag".

tion is then: Who could afford it, and were scented oils readily available for individuals outside of palace and temple economies?

As already noted, the selection of the perfumes in the *Lying Down Menology* corresponds to the usual selection of aromatics and perfumes used in Mesopotamia and surrounding areas. They are all plant-based substances imported to Mesopotamia or cultivated there, and they can be used either as aromatics (for example, as incense) or as ingredients for scented oils. The scented oil in itself is a luxury product. To establish that, we can follow the definition of the term by Christopher J. Berry,[29] who writes that a luxury good is "a widely desired (because not yet widely attained) good that is believed to be 'pleasing', and the general desirability of which is explained by it being a specific refinement, or qualitative aspect, of some universal generic need". In our case, the generic need is purity that, in its most simple form, can be achieved by using only water. Finishing a purification by rubbing oneself with a scented oil or ointment represents the process's most elaborate and expensive form: not only does one become clean of any dirt and foul odours, but one's body also becomes sweet smelling. This is achieved in most instructions in the *Lying Down Menology*.

In comparative material from earlier and contemporary sources, scented oils are associated with religious ceremonies, feasts, and royal palaces. For the Ur III period, documents from Umma show that scented oils were used in the festivals in the city: the boat of the god Šara and the god himself were anointed with it, and the people who attended the feast or other festivities received rations of oil.[30] In Old Babylonian sources from Mari, scented oil appears as a luxury product that was reserved for the gods, the king, and other select persons at Mari, and Francis Joannés[31] has estimated that the people attending a royal banquet each received a portion of a few centilitres of scented oil. In the Neo-Assyrian period, king Assurnaṣirpal II boasts of using ten homers of 'sweet oil' in the consecration festivities of his new palace in Kalḫu, feeding, bathing and anointing the guests for ten days before sending them back home.[32] Another high-profile context in which scented oils appear is the diplomatic system in the second half of the second millennium BCE, with the rulers of the great states exchanging gifts, among them different kinds of scented oils. For example, the tablet listing the wedding presents that the Mitannian king Tušratta sent to the Egyptian pharaoh includes a section (EA 22 iii 29-36)[33] with various kinds of scented oils, among which we can also find *murru*-oil, myrtle oil, *kanaktu*-oil, and 'sweet oil' mentioned in the *Lying Down Menology*. The connection to the palace is also evident in the Middle Assyrian documentation, with the perfumers receiving rations of materials needed in their work from the palace administrator.[34] In the perfume recipes from Ashur, the finest quality of the scented oils, prepared over several weeks and resulting from 40 filtrations, is meant for the king.[35]

The connection of scented oils with the high social classes is also reflected in the Egalkura ('Entering the palace') incantations that are embedded in magical procedures meant to prepare an individual for a successful audience before the authorities, either at the palace or in other places of power, such as the 'Town Hall'.[36] The Egalkura rituals often involve anointing the face and the hands with oil (in addition to magical manipulation of clothing). This action is supposed to bring about success in the audience and is associated with a pleasant appearance.[37]

VAT 8230+, o 7-12[38]

o 7. [*šu-uš*]-ʳ*qa*ˀ¹-*an-ni šu-uš-qa-an-ni šu-mu-*ʳ*ḫa*ˀ¹-*an-ni* ʳ*šu-mu-ḫa*ˀ¹-*ni*
o 8. [*šamnu*(ì+GIŠ?) *šaman*(ì+G]IŠ) *bal-ti šaman*(ì+GIŠ) *pu-re-e šaman*(ì+GIŠ) ^{d}*a-*ʳ*nu*ˀ¹ *u* ʳ*an*ˀ¹-[tu_4]
o 9. [*ap*?]-ʳ*pa*?ˀ¹-‹*šiš*›?-*ka ša kīma*(GIM) ^{d}*iš-tar ša še-re-e-te* x [x (x x)]

29 Berry 1994, 41.

30 Brunke, Sallaberger 2010, 46.

31 Joannés 1993, 254.

32 Grayson 1991, A.0.101.30: 138, 151-4.

33 See Rainey 2015, 174-5.

34 See Jakob 2003, 476-86. The situation may have been similar in the Neo-Assyrian period (see Groß 2020, 379-80).

35 See KAR 220 iv 8' in Jakob 2003, 483 and Escobar 2023, 19-20.

36 See the definition of the Egalkura corpus by Henry Stadhouders (Stadhouders, Panayotov 2018, 627): "It [= the Egalkura corpus (AH)] is primarily contrived to secure a smooth reception by the authorities before whom the client is going to appear, and to imbue him with the power to manoeuvre them into deciding favourably on his case". A further overview of the purpose of the Egalkura rituals can be found in Stadhouders 2013.

37 In addition to the cited passage, see the similar instructions edited in Stadhouders, Panayotov 2018, 630-6.

38 Cited here after Meinhold 2017, no. 25 with minor changes.

o 10. [*d*]*i-na šá la* ˹*na*˺*-šu-u ina qātī*(ŠU^{II})*-ia liš-kun* [(TU$_6$.ÉN)]
(single ruling)
o 11. *šipta*([É]N) *an-ni-tú* ˹7˺*-šu ina muḫḫi*(UGU) *šamni*(ì+GIŠ) *elli*(KÙ) *tamannū*(ŠID)*-ma pānī*(IGI^{meš}) *qātī*(ŠU[$^{II.meš}$])*-ka*]
o 12. *tapaššaš*([ŠÉ]Š)*-ma ina maḫar*(IGI) *rubê*(NUN) *terrub*(˹KU$_4$˺)*-ma rubû*(NUN) *iḫaddū*(ḪÚL)*-k*[*a*]

[Ele]vate me, elevate me; make me flourish, make me flourish! [Oil?, o]il of dignity, oil from the bowl, oil of Anu and An[tu] – [I have anoi]nted myself with you! Who like Ištar of morning … […], may he put in my hands [a ver]dict that cannot be endured. [(Incantation formula)].
(single ruling)
You recite this [incan]tation seven times over the pure oil and then [anoi]nt [your] face[39] and hands (with it). You then enter before the prince, and the prince will be pleased with y[ou].

Thus, the prominent role of anointments in the Egalkura rituals suggests the necessity of using cosmetic products – in this case, magically enhanced ones – when encountering the king or the members of the local ruling elite.

While scented oils are associated with the royal court in Mari and Ashur and they appear as royal gifts in the Amarna tablets, the sources from Old Babylonian Larsa show that aromatic substances and scented oils were widely available and distributed in Babylonia.[40] The prices of the perfumes depended on the quality and ingredients, with some qualities being very expensive and some more affordable. Nevertheless, a person would have been able to acquire perfumes in the private market.[41] A similar situation is attested for the Neo-Babylonian period, with the production and trade of aromatic substances outside the temple or palace economies.[42] Not to be forgotten is the wide use of scented oils in many ritual therapies, such as *namburbi*-rituals,[43] which shows that scented oils were available to and used by anyone who could afford them. Moreover, as the Egalkura rituals show, the use of costly scented oils was a central aspect in being magically prepared to meet the members of the local administration so that their attitude would be beneficial.

Unfortunately, there are no sources explicitly giving prices of scented oils in the Neo-Assyrian or the Neo-/Late Babylonian periods, which means that it is not possible to ascertain the cost of some of the perfumes required in the *Lying Down Menology* at the time the manuscripts of this text were written. However, prices for some of the aromatics needed to produce the scented oils are attested, and they may give us an idea about the cost of the finished products. A price for four of the aromatic ingredients mentioned in the *Lying Down Menology* can be established.[44] For one shekel silver, one could buy 0,33 minas or ca 1 mina of *murru*, 11 minas of cypress (*šurmēnu*), 2,5 minas of myrtle (*asu*), or 2 minas of cedar (*erēnu*). Thus, *murru* is around ten times more expensive than cypress, the cheapest aromatic. It is reasonable that the finished products cost more than their ingredients, which means that a person wanting to perform the monthly incubation rituals outlined in the *Lying Down Menology* was forced to invest significant sums of money for the right scent: during the year he would have had to acquire nine different types of perfumes for the ritual. For the king and the elite members of the society, this would not have been a problem. However, for example, a worker receiving a monthly wage ranging from less than one shekel to four or five shekels of silver[45] would probably have thought it through before spending money on such ritual paraphernalia.[46] Therefore, it seems likely that the monthly ritual for having auspicious dreams was mainly practised by the people in the upper levels of society, ranging from the

39 Here IGI^{meš} = *pānū* 'face' as opposed to IGI^{II} = *inā* 'eyes' (cf. Meinhold 2017, no. 25 *passim*).

40 Middeke-Conlin 2014.

41 See Middeke-Conlin 2014, § 3.4. It is also noted in Middeke-Conlin 2014, § 3.4.4, that there are major differences in the prices of scented oils depending on their ingredients and quality: one could buy 60 *qûm* of the lower quality perfume mixture šim-ḫi-a for one shekel but only three *qûm* of the higher quality šim oil.

42 Jursa 2009, 166-71.

43 Maul 1994, 96.

44 Following Jursa 2009, 170.

45 Monthly wages ranging from fractions of shekels up to five shekels of silver are attested during the reigns of Nebuchanezzar II and Nabonidus (Jursa 2010, 674-5). Higher wages of up to ten shekels of silver per month, especially in military service but also for building work, are attested during the reigns of Darius and Xerxes (Jursa 2010, 676).

46 Compare here also the account of Jesus' anointment with a scented oil made of spikenard worth over three hundred denarii (Mark 14:3-9). Note that it has been suggested that the plant *lardu*, plausibly named in the *Lying Down Menology* as the perfume in month II, should be identified as spikenard (*AHw* 538).

wealthy citizens to the king. In particular, excluding the king, it seems plausible that the people who had the means to undergo Egalkura rituals before entering the presence of local or state officials are the most likely to form the core target group of the *Lying Down Menology*.

To conclude, the *Lying Down Menology* presents ritual instructions centred around a household meal, aiming at having beneficial dreams. The unique feature in these instructions is the inclusion of negative aspects – dirtiness, lack of a pleasant scent, consumption of malodorous foods, and gloomy mood during the meal – in the ritual during the months around the summer and winter solstices, reversing the otherwise needed thorough cleansing and anointment with scented oils. As the inclusion of these instructions in the royal hemerology *Inbu bēl arḫi* shows, the Assyrian king seems to have been expected to perform this costly incubation ritual monthly. Other members of the ruling elite may also have secured beneficial dreams throughout the year. It seems likely that the incubation rituals presented in the *Lying Down Menology* were performed by the same people who used Egalkura rituals to have successful audiences with the local or state administrators. Still, the use of various scented oils, some of which seem to have been very expensive, in the ritual suggests that the regular performance referred to in the Babylonian manuscripts of the menology was not possible for the less wealthy members of the society. They could have, however, invested the money if there was a need for a specific good omen about the future.

Table 1 The purity and mood instructions in the *Lying Down Menology*

	Month	Purification	Oil for anointing	Food to be consumed	Food to be avoided	Good mood	Silence
First half of the year	Nisannu (I)	washing + purification (*limtessi* + *lītebbib*)	*kanaktu*-oil	beef, mutton, bird meat	garlic, leek, fish, pork	yes	–
	Ayyāru (II)	washing (*limtessi*)	*lardu*-oil(?)	beef, mutton, bird meat	–	yes	–
	Simānu (III)	(no) washing (*lā umtessi*/ *limtessi*)	*murru*-oil	–	–	–	–
	Duʾūzu (IV)	washing (*limtessi*) + smearing oneself (*lītarriš*)	juniper oil	–	–	–	–
	Abu (V)	smearing oneself (*lītarriš*)	no anointing	–	garlic, leek, pork	–	–
	Elūlu (VI)	washing + purification (*limtessi* + *lītebbib*)	‘sweet reed’ oil	beef, mutton, bird meat	–	–	–
Second half of the year	Tašrītu (VII)	washing + purification (*limtessi* + *lītebbib*)	cypress oil	beef, mutton, bird meat	garlic, leek, [fish?], pork	yes	–
	Araḫsamnu (VIII)	washing + purification (*limtessi* + *lītebbib*)	myrtle oil	bird meat	–	–	–
	Kislīmu (IX)	washing + purification (*limtessi* + *lītebbib*)	cedar oil	–	–	–	–
	Ṭebētu (X)	rinsing(?) (*lištani*) + smearing oneself (*lītarriš*)	oil	fish	–	–	yes
	Šabāṭu (XI)	smearing oneself (*lītarriš*)	oil	garlic, leek	–	–	yes
	Addaru (XII)	washing + purification (*limtessi* + *lītebbib*)	‘sweet oil’	beef, mutton, bird meat	–	–	–

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Bathing Rooms in First-Millennium Assyria

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Abstract This article presents a review of the archaeological evidence relating to those spaces identified as bathrooms in the main Neo-Assyrian palaces. An examination of the primary elements – fixed features, interior decoration, position within the palace and connectivity, use of water and possible protocol rules – serves to delve into aspects of hygiene, privacy, and protection, and supports concluding that bathrooms were the most 'hygienic' locations within a building. The results also aim at paving the way for a better understanding of the extent to which bathrooms contributed to the building of an Assyrian social identity and its preservation.

Keywords Neo-Assyrian Palaces. Bathroom. Hygiene. Water. Privacy.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Terminology, Features and Functions. – 3 Decoration. – 4 Doors and Connectivity. – 5 Water and Bathtubs. – 6 Protocol. – 7 Concluding Remarks.

1 Introduction

Nowadays, the word 'bathroom' recalls an intensely private space, where the user locks the door and performs personal functions alone. It also evokes, in tangible form, ideas about sanitation, cleanliness, hygiene, and social status. An interest in bathrooms had by a society can be driven by a variety of factors: medical considerations and personal hygiene; notions of cleanliness and purity; religious factors, where a clean body mirrors a clean soul, for instance; social customs, such as gatherings in bathhouses; and pleasure, such as relaxation or regeneration. An interest in bathrooms may have important repercussions for several social aspects such as clothing, interpersonal behaviour and physical distance, social divisions, identity building and social relationships. All of this implies that research on bathrooms can shed light on multiple aspects of a society.[1]

Without aspiring to be comprehensive, this contribution presents a review of the archaeological evidence relating to those spaces identified as bathrooms in the main Neo-Assyrian palaces. This is also a preliminary study, supported by textual sources, which aims at paving the way for a better understanding of the extent to which bathrooms contributed to the building of an Assyrian social identity and its preservation.

The results presented here are part of the project *GALATEO – Good Attitudes for Life in Assyrian Times: Etiquette and Observance of Norms in Male and Female Groups*, which has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No. 101027543. The information contained in this article reflects only the author's views.

1 This is well shown by Hoagland 2018, who explores the uneven development of bathrooms through time and its revolutionary effects on European and American societies and lifestyles.

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2 Terminology, Features and Functions

The English term *bathroom* is attested in Europe from the seventeenth century to indicate a room or building provided with communal bathing facilities. Today, the term usually indicates a room for private bathing, especially in a house, containing a bath or shower, and typically also a washbasin and toilet. Other terms can be employed, depending on the elements installed. For instance, *lavatory* refers to a room containing a toilet and a sink. The names of single elements can be used to refer synecdochally to the bathroom. An example is *toilet*, which indicates the fixed receptacle used for defecation and urination. Other terms include 'powder room' and 'restroom', originally used to describe the spaces for women and for rest respectively, and today more generally for the bathroom.[2] The choice of term may depend on what they technically describe but also, interestingly, the situational context where the word is used. In the United States, for instance, one would ask for the bathroom if he or she is in someone's home; but if one is at a formal dinner or event, it could be more appropriate to ask for the powder room or the restroom. Even among friends and family, it seems preferable to avoid the word toilet and opt for 'more polite' alternative options.

Such terminological ambiguity is more complex when dealing with antiquity.[3] The word which is usually translated as bathroom in Akkadian is *bēt ramāki*, literally the 'bathhouse' or 'bathing room'.[4] We also have a legal transaction dating to the reign of Sennacherib which describes a house, whose purchase was recorded on a seal: "A built house with its beams and doors, a sleeping room, its yard, its bathroom".[5] It is uncertain whether the general term *bēt ramāki* can be applied to all the rooms that have been identified by archaeologists as bathrooms, but it is reasonable to think that it was used to describe rooms where baths were taken. Textual sources attest to the use of the term *bēt musâti*, a more specific term that probably indicates a lavatory.[6] The known installations seem to warrant the designation *bēt ramāki*, but, since lavatories are included in the same room, it is possible that the word indicated (by synecdoche) a room where a lavatory (*bēt musâti*) was also installed.[7] For practical reasons, the neutral term *bathing room* is here adopted to refer to rooms where baths were taken, and *lavatory* to refer to rooms apparently used as toilets only. The discerning element is the presence or absence of a bathtub slab. However, such a distinction does not exclude the possibility that lavatories contained washing facilities and could thus be used as bathing rooms.

A first-millennium Assyrian bathing room has been identified through specific elements which essentially have not changed over time **[tab. 1]** **[figs 1-4]**.[8] The room measures at approximately twenty square meters.[9] It is paved with baked bricks with bitumen coating and stone slabs. A drain (with a diameter of between 10 and 15 cm) is usually found within or adjacent to a niche **[fig. 1]**.[10] The drain is connected to the drainage system running underneath the palace **[fig. 4]** and could be surrounded by four circular depressions **[figs 1-2]**, which may have held a toilet, perhaps made of some perishable material. Diagonal grooves were found cut through the drain slab to ease the dumping of water.[11] Sandstone plugs to cover the drain were found in some cases, probably to protect from bad smells and animals; an arch in the niche wall, probably used to clear the drain when necessary, was also found in one instance **[figs 1-2]**.[12] Rectangular niches or loculi can be found cut in the wall, perhaps being used as cupboards to contain tools for the bath, along with ventilation shafts or vent-holes which were probably used as clerestory windows to ventilate otherwise enclosed spaces or allow in a limited amount of nat-

2 Definitions of the terms are based on those offered by the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

3 The analysis carried out by George 2015 is a good example of the complexity of terminology used in texts to refer to lavatories and sewers.

4 CAD R, s.v. "*ramāku*", 115. This is one of the few terms that provides information, tough blurred, regarding the utilitarian function of a room (Tudeau 2019, 147). Assyrian bathing rooms have been sometimes termed 'ablution rooms', for it was supposed that ceremonial and ritual washings took place in them (e.g., Mallowan 1950, 163). Another less attested term listed in the CAD (N/1, s.v. "*narmaktu*", 360-1) is *bēt narmakti* 'bath house', which includes the noun *narmaktu* 'washbowl, washbasin'.

5 SAA 6, 42, 3-5. For a similar purchase of a house in Nineveh, see SAA 14, 149.

6 George 2015, 83-90.

7 The term and its interpretation according to archaeological evidence is debated in Bielefeld in this volume.

8 For building plans, see a selection at the end of the article, and Kertai 2015a.

9 A few examples of measurements taken during excavations: the bathing room in Governor's Palace measured around 4 × 5 m (Mallowan 1950, 163); Room 12 in the Royal Palace of Dur-Sharrukin measured 6 × 8.50 m (Loud 1936, 20); Room 4 in the Southwest Palace measured 5.80 × 5.80 m (Russell 1991, 50); Room 22 in the Hadattu Palace measured 6.50 × 5.30 m; and Room 5 in the Bâtiment aux ivoires measured 4.50 × 3.10 m and was rather smaller in comparison (Thureau-Dangin et al. 1931, 25, 45).

10 For a review of textual attestations of drain in Assyria and its symbolic value, see Tudeau 2019, 88-9.

11 Thureau-Dangin et al. 1931, 25.

12 Mallowan 1950, 183.

ural light **[fig. 3]**.[13] One or two stone slabs with a depression and a curved end are embedded on the floor, where a bathtub was probably positioned **[figs 3, 5]**. Stone slabs placed next to the location of the bathtubs were probably used after having stepped in the bathtub.[14]

Figure 1 Brick floor, originally waterproofed with bitumen, drain and blocked "man-hole" from the bathing room of the Governor's Palace, Kalhu (Mallowan 1966, fig. 7)

Figure 2 Bathing room in the Governor's Palace, Kalhu (Mallowan 1950, pl. XXXI, fig. 1)

Figure 3 Bathing room (9) in the Palace of Adad-nirari III, Kalhu (Mallowan 1954b, pl. XXXVI, fig. 2)

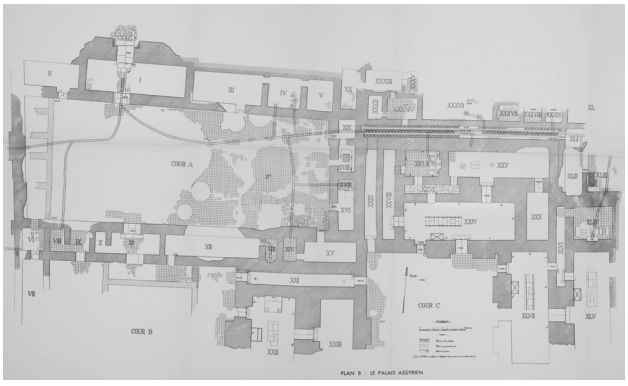

Figure 4 Floorplan of the Til-Barsip Palace (Thureau-Dangin, Dunand 1936, plan B)

Bathing rooms were once furnished, although it is likely that rooms were probably emptied and filled with furniture when necessary. This is not only clear from visual evidence, where we see attendants bringing furniture in the room, but also from textual sources.[15] Therefore, what we see archaeologically are the fixed features on which semi-fixed features were installed when needed.

As for the lack of furniture, it is not easy to identify the activities performed in these spaces. The archaeological evidence is meagre in comparison with the excavated buildings; also, not all palaces were fully excavated, nor did the first excavations pay particular attention to bathing room-like spaces when interesting findings or reliefs were not found. Therefore, the extant excavated remains give little idea of the functions which these spaces may have originally had.

In general, the significant presence of baked bricks with bitumen coating and stone slab-pavements indicates that bathing rooms were exposed to flowing liquids, and as there was no evidence that these rooms were open to the sky, the implication here is that there was intensive use of liquids.[16] The presence of a niche and, very often, a drain suggests that a toilet was probably located there, indicating that these spaces were used as lavatories. Bathtub slabs are not attested everywhere. This might be

13 These features are rarely preserved. For comments, see Russell 1998, 671-2 and Kertai 2015a, 189-90.

14 For a recent brief analysis of the architectural features of Assyrian palace bathing rooms, see Kertai 2015a, 190-4.

15 Botta, Flandin 1849a, pl. 10; SAA 20, 33.

16 Oates 1962, 14.

the result of the randomness of archaeological records, but it may also depend on a distinction in the use of bathing rooms: some were used as bathing rooms, others as lavatories only. The presence or absence of bathtub slabs does not seem to signify the importance of a bathing room. Room 4 next to the main throne-room of the Southwest Palace of Sennacherib **[fig. 11]** and room F in the North Palace of Ashurbanipal **[fig. 12]**, which were clearly of some importance, seem to have lacked bathtub slabs.[17]

No bathtubs were found in bathing rooms, but it is likely that the depressions with rounded end were used as the placement of baths **[fig. 5]**.[18] It also seems clear that the known bronze bathtub vessels used as burial containers were originally used for bathing, located on the rounded depressions, and later employed as coffins: bronze coffins and the depressions on the stone slabs are close in size and have the same shape **[fig. 6]**.[19] Furthermore, texts state that bathtubs (*narmaktu*) were listed among the booty and were made of precious materials, such as bronze, copper, or gold.[20] The presence of two locations for the bathtub in some bathing rooms may indicate that two people could take a bath or that they were intended as containers of different substances and thus had different functions.[21] Finally, the orientation of bathtubs – supposing that an individual lay down the head on the rounded side of the bath – is random.

Figure 5 Floor of the bathing room 12 in the Royal Palace of Sargon II, Dur-Sharrukin (Loud 1936, fig. 26)

Figure 6 Bronze bathtub from Zincirli (Wicks 2015, fig. 26)

Alternative containers or tubs also seem to have been used. The circular slab found in room S 3 of the Military Palace might be interpreted as the place of a round tub;[22] similarly, the small rectangular pit excavated within the pavement and coated with tiles found in room XXV in the Hadattu Palace may have been filled with liquids or used to host a container for liquids.[23] The findings reported during excavations (e.g., pieces of armour, carved ivories, and tablets) do not help us much, since they often belong to later phases of use when the space was turned into a storeroom: a common fate of bathing rooms in view of their position and because they were insulated against fluids.[24] Room S 40 in the Military Palace seems even to have been turned into a kitchen in the late seventh century.[25]

17 Russell 1991, 50-1 (room 4); Barnett 1976, 30-1; Kertai 2015b, 346 (room F).

18 Loud 1936, 23.

19 Wicks 2015, 100-11. See also Brown 2010, 15. It is interesting to observe that a ceramic sarcophagus (183 × 48 cm) was found underneath the floor of bathing room 69 in the Northwest Palace (Hussein et al. 2013, 95).

20 E.g., RIMA 2, A.0.87.1, ii30; RINAP 2, 65, 395; SAA 1, 158, 11; SAA 1, 250, r 3-4.

21 Kikuchi (in this volume) mentions that bathing could exceptionally take place in fish oil instead of water.

22 Kertai 2015a, 192. See image in Mallowan 1966, fig. 306.

23 Thureau-Dangin et al. 1931, 28, fig. 11.

24 Considerable quantities of pieces of armour in iron and copper, stone vases, and an inscribed vase of glass were found in Room I in the Northwest Palace of Ashurnasirpal II at Kalhu. The vases were inscribed with the name of Sargon II, who restored the palace and used parts of the bathing room as storage (Russell 1998, 672). Carved ivories were found in rooms V and JJ in the same palace (Mallowan 1966, 327 fn. 14; Russell 1998, 698), in rooms SE 1 and SE 9 of the Military Palace of Shalmaneser III at Kalhu, along with cylinders and tablets (Oates 1959, 108-9; 2001, 164, 212; Mallowan 1966, 558, 584, figs 496, 552), and in room 23 in Residence K at Dur-Sharrukin (Loud, Altman 1938, 67). Terracotta figurines were found in rooms S 20, S 25 and S 29, and a gold earring was found in S 46 of the Military Palace (Oates 1959, 117 fn. 29, 122; Mallowan 1966, 431, 646). Written documents were often found in bathing rooms, such as in room ZT 17 in the Northwest Palace, in rooms NW 3 and SE 1 in the Military Palace (Mallowan 1953, 36; 1966, 420-1; Oates 1962, 20; Oates, Oates 2001, 159).

25 Mallowan 1966, 439.

Other archaeological remains may be perhaps interpreted as tools used in activities related to the bathing room. Two vases, one in alabaster and one in calcite, were found in room ZT 26 in the Northwest Palace, and a water basin made of white marble stone was found in room 65 at the same site.[26] A water-jar was found in the niche behind the drain-hole in room SE 17 in the Military Palace.[27] Large clay water-jars with pointed bases were found leaning against the north and east walls of room 9 in Adad-nirari III's palace, along with a small tripod, and room 9 in Residence K at Dur-Sharrukin contained a large jar set into the floor.[28] Similarly, in room 4 of the Southwest Palace at Nineveh, the uncarved areas shaped like the profiles of large water storage jars suggest that similar containers were used in this bathing room.[29] Although their actual use remains uncertain, since it is unclear whether any of the objects lay in their original position, jars and vases can be reasonably interpreted as means to carry water or other liquids, which were perhaps used to fill in or empty bathtubs, since these were not connected to a drain.

Tools and activities that might be linked with bathing rooms can be tentatively found referred to in the texts. A razor (*naglabu*) is mentioned in a text dealing with the gate of a bathing room of the *hilānu* palace, and it is found as an object used during a bath in a Sumerian text dated to the fifth or sixth year of the reign of Sennacherib, i.e. 699 BCE: "to give a bath in pure fashion (using) the barber's knife".[30] Washing activities and references to anointments, cleanliness linked to rituals and treatment of diseases are also found in texts, where clean water is said to be contained in washbowls (*narmaktu*); this may refer to the bathtubs that once stood in bathing rooms.[31] The content of these texts mainly deals with specific rituals and incantations and therefore any possible reference to bathing rooms is framed within a cultic context. It is possible that some bathing rooms could be the location for prescribed cultic activities.[32]

3 Decoration

The walls of bathing rooms could be undecorated or decorated with floral and geometric motifs, human figures in processions or individuals involved in warfare or hunting activities. In the Northwest Palace of Ashurnasirpal II, the two outstanding rooms I and L were populated by the motif of winged divine figures flanking the stylised tree. In particular, walls of room I were lined with the so-called human and bird-*apkallū*, whereas room L was decorated with human-*apkallū* only.[33] This type of relief decoration is unique among the excavated Assyrian bathing rooms and lavatories. Other ninth- and eight-century bathing rooms could be decorated with floral, animal and geometric motifs in the form of wall paintings.[34] Complex images on reliefs begin to appear in the late eight century with Sargon II, including warfare scenes in room 1 and processions of attendants, headed by the crown prince, moving towards the king in rooms 9 and 12 **[fig. 7]**.[35] This tendency is continued and expanded under Sennacherib and Ashurbanipal: warfare scenes decorated all the bathing rooms in the Southwest Palace (4, 8e, 17, 47, 40, 32, 59);[36] similarly, room F in Ashurbanipal's North Palace was surrounded by war-

26 Mallowan 1953, 37 (ZT 26); Hussein et al. 2013, 96 (room 65).

27 Mallowan 1966, 423.

28 Mallowan 1954b, 158-9 (room 9); Loud, Altman 1938, 66 (room 9, Residence K).

29 Russell 1991, 51.

30 SAA 1, 67; CAD N/1, s.v. "naglabu" B, 120; Borger 1973. See also SAA 10, 193. See also Groß 2020, 380-1 on the figure of the barber (*gallābu*).

31 SAA 10, 318, 8-r 10. See also Kikuchi and Hätinen in this volume.

32 Russell (1998, 697) suggests that part of the *bīt rimki* ritual could take place in rooms I and L in the Northwest Palace.

33 Meuszyński 1981, pls. 14-16; Paley, Sobolewski 1987, pls. 1-2.

34 Black and white concentric circles lined the walls of the Governor's Palace bathing room (Mallowan 1950, 182); floral and geometric motifs surrounded rooms S 3 and T 22 in the Military Palace of Shalmaneser III (Mallowan 1966, 450-1, fig. 306, 433-4; Oates 1963, 26); geometric and floral motifs along with bulls were found in room 9 of Adad-nirari III's Palace (Mallowan 1954b, 155, 158-9); geometric motifs were also attested in rooms XXII and XXV of the Hadattu Palace (Thureau-Dangin et al. 1931, 28-9, pls. XVII and XLVIII). Traces of painting, whose subject is unknown, were found on the floor of room SE 1 of the Military Palace of Shalmaneser III (Oates 1959, 108-9). Painted plaster was also found in room 30 of Residence L at Dur-Sharrukin and apparently in many other suites including bathing rooms (Loud, Altman 1938, 71). In one instance, the walls of room 65 in the Northwest Palace were surrounded by baked clay orthostats inscribed with the Standard Inscription of Ashurnasirpal II (Hussein 1996, figs 30-3).

35 Botta, Flandin 1849a, pl. 48 (room 1); 1849b, pls. 121 (room 9); 138 (room 12; see also Loud 1936, 20-8).

36 Russell 1991, 50-1, 53, 57-8, 63, 64-7, 73; Barnett et al. 1998, 55, 71-2, 78-9, 92-4, 109-10, 116-17, 126.

fare and procession scenes.[37] Finally, hunting scenes seem to have been a favourite subject in the bathing rooms XXVII and XLIV in the palace of Til Barsip, the former of which could be dated to the period between Sennacherib and Ashurbanipal.[38]

Figure 7
Parade of weaponless attendants in bathing room 12 of the Royal Palace of Sargon II, Dur-Sharrukin (Loud 1936, fig. 25)

The choice of subject may have depended on several factors: personal taste, the influence of the intellectual milieu at court, and in-vogue religious perspectives. A correspondence between interior decoration and the activities of the room, however, seems unwarranted, since the subject of bathing rooms was not exclusive to this location but shared with other rooms. In the Northwest Palace there also seems to have been a preference for warfare activities in rooms and spaces that were visited by both palace-residents and outsiders, whereas rooms whose access was more controlled or less direct were decorated with otherworldly motifs.[39] Bathing rooms L and I were included in this artistic program, and, because of their remote position, they welcomed an otherworldly decoration. In a similar vein, the bathing rooms dated to the eight and seventh centuries BCE exhibited the general artistic program of each palace and were surrounded with warfare images like other non-bathing rooms. In only a few instances, one finds a well-thought-out organisation of images which seems designed to attract the viewer's attention to a specific spot within the bathing room, namely the niche. In rooms L and I in the Northwest Palace, the reliefs of the niches were carved with an atypical figure, possibly female because beardless. In room I, this was doubled and flanked the stylised tree on each side in a symmetrical way.[40] In room 9 in Adad-nirari III's Palace, the central panel of the painted murals was planned to fit into the niche opposite the entrance and the motif consisted of a design of young bulls, their heads turned back, prancing in heraldic fashion on either side of a sun-disc.[41] In room XXVII of Til Barsip palace, the niche seems to have featured the heroic confrontation, in an apparent symmetry, between the king riding a horse and a jumping lion.[42] These cases do not help us much in understanding the function of bathing rooms, but they do point to the importance of the niche as a visual target. Also, the use of symmetrical images may have been intentional: symmetry attracts the viewer's eye by evoking a sense of order, and may also have been associated with representations of the divine.[43]

Floral, animal, and geometric motifs may have had meaningful connotations and allusions to the divine (e.g., rampant bulls, rosettes) or notions of fertility (pomegranate).[44] These notions could also have

37 Barnett 1976, pls. 16-21.

38 Thureau-Dangin, Dunand 1936, pls. LII-LIII. For the dating, see Tomabechi 1983-84, 72.

39 Portuese 2020a, 161-211.

40 Meuszyński 1981, pl. 15 (L-20); Paley, Sobolewski 1987, pl. 1 (I-16). See Russell 1998, 696-7 and Brown 2010, 29-30 for a discussion of this figure.

41 Mallowan 1954b, 158.

42 Thureau-Dangin, Dunand 1936, pl. LIII (XXVIIc).

43 On symmetry, its emotional effects, and connection with the divine, see Portuese 2023. A further possible connection between niche and carved reliefs was suggested by Turner (in Barnett et al. 1998, 25) in relation to room 4 in the Southwest Palace at Nineveh. Slab 11 on the northwest wall opposite the shallow recess was carved with a figure interpreted as a priest, who stands before a tripod, identified either as an altar or a balance. Relying on this image, Turner inferred that it suggests that the room was used for ritual rather than everyday ablutions, or both.

44 Portuese 2020a, 46-7.

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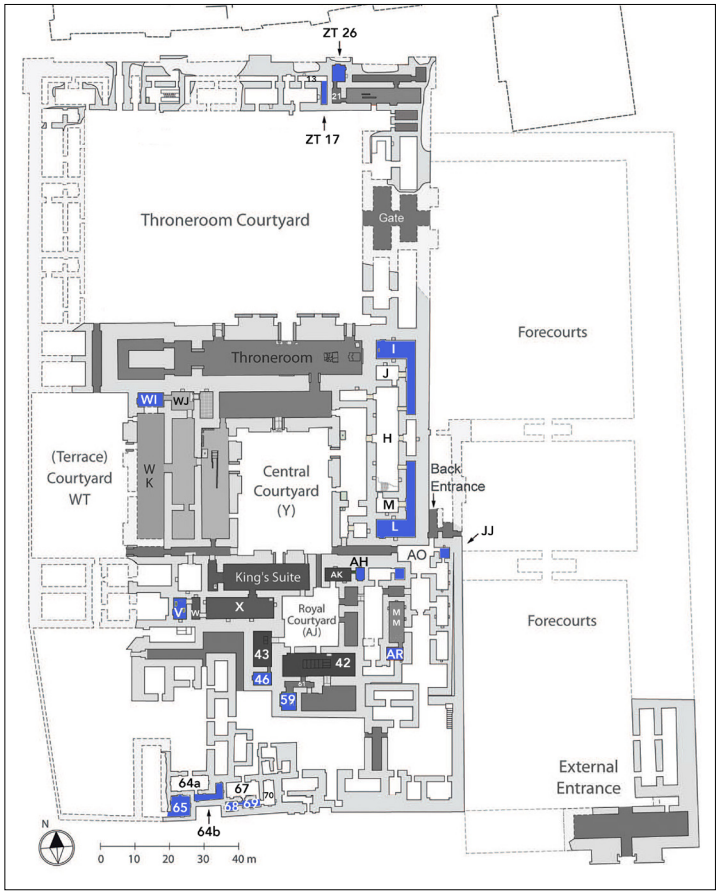

Figure 8
Floorplan of the Northwest Palace, Kalhu (adapted from Groß, Kertai 2019, fig. 3)

been further sparked by using specific colours (such as black and white, cobalt-blue, red, and green).[45] However, these types of floral, animal, and geometric designs occurred frequently elsewhere and were not exclusive to bathroom decoration.

Although further research could add more clues with respect to bathing rooms and decoration, the general impression one gets is that bathing rooms tended to be decorated and some even more than others. It seems that the most prominent bathing rooms and lavatories, which were those associated or connected with the main reception rooms in a palace, such as the throne-room, were highly decorated and in some instances their interior decoration was aligned with the one of neighboring spaces. This aspect may hint at a functional difference between bathing rooms. The only decoration that might be linked to activities performed in bathing rooms is that of rooms 9 and 12 in the Royal Palace of Sargon II at Dur-Sharrukin. In this case, the parades of attendants are headed by the crown prince and move towards the king. In room 12, the attendants are weaponless, indicating a non-military role and emphasising perhaps their auxiliary responsibilities **[fig. 7]**. The two parades may reflect movements and actions that took place in these rooms, such as during festivities or rituals.

As for the activities performed in bathing rooms, the decoration of neighboring reception rooms can be more instructive. These were often decorated with scenes of meetings between the king and other individuals. For example, bathing room 46 in the Northwest Palace was connected with room 43, whose western wall was decorated with paintings showing a line of people moving towards the king.[46] A similar decoration was found in room S 5 in the Military Palace, which was connected with the bathing room S 3, and in rooms 6 and 11 in the Royal Palace at Dur-Sharrukin, which were connected with

45 See Mallowan 1954b, 158-9 (room 9); 1966, 434 (room S 3); Loud 1936, fig. 27, pl. 1 (room 12).

46 Hussein et al. 2013, 94.

bathing rooms 9 and 12.[47] From this evidence it is possible that some activities carried out in bathing rooms were somehow intertwined with audiences and personal meetings.

An interesting aspect that is worth being underscored is the presence of protective figures carved on the walls or on the doorjambs of bathing rooms and lavatories. Their position within the interior decoration is intentional and functional. Bird-*apkallū* and human-*apkallū* surrounded rooms I and L, while the niches in the rooms were protected by the above-mentioned beardless figure; wingless protective figures, two of which likely held a ram, were stationed at the doorway of room 9 in the Royal Palace at Dur-Sharrukin. Room 27 in Residence K may have been protected by winged figures, as in the neighboring reception room 28.[48] At Til Barsip, a fish-*apkallū* was depicted on one side of the niche in room XXVII, looking into the niche, and both the vestibule and corridor (XXVI and XLVI) leading into bathing rooms XXVII and XLIV were protected by human-*apkallū*.[49] The doorways of almost all the known bathing rooms and lavatories in the palaces of Sennacherib and Ashurbanipal at Nineveh were protected by the smiting god *lulal* and the lion-demon *ugallu*, who represent the pair of protective figures chosen to protect these spaces. The same pair could even protect the vestibule of bathing rooms, as in room 32 of Sennacherib's Palace.[50] This group is expanded with the addition of the lion-centaur *urmaḫlullû* in the North Palace, particularly at the doorway of the vestibule T leading into room V. The *urmaḫlullû* seems to have been closely associated with the protection of the niche and the drain in lavatories. This association is substantiated by its presence in the niche of room F in the North Palace. Here it stood at the side of the niche facing into the room and probably protected the drain – a favoured entrance-point of demons like Šulak – within the niche.[51] More generally, some bathing rooms needed to be protected and both drain and niche were probably considered to be particularly vulnerable spots, since they received peculiar protective treatment. Such visual protection in niches should probably be linked to the risk of being attacked by demons provoking strokes and other dangerous diseases. According to Andrew George, these potential diseases were probably caused by a common human anxiety in lavatories, on the assumption that "straining too hard 'at stool' is injurious to health and can provoke the onset of stroke and other neurological problems".[52]

Most of the above-described apotropaic figures and their roles have been identified through clay and metal statuettes of protective spirits, sometimes accompanied by short inscriptions, which were buried underneath the thresholds in various buildings. Ritual texts of exorcists containing instructions to make these protective figurines also distinguish between figurines made of clay and called *bīnūt apsê* 'creatures of apsû' and figurines made of tamarisk and called *bīnūt šamê* 'the creatures of heaven'.[53] Some of these figurines resemble the types of orthostat figures which have been found in the Assyrian palaces. So far, scholars have focused on the apotropaic function that these figures performed both as figurines and as palace reliefs.[54] However, it should also be pointed out that most, if not all, the figures which populated bathing rooms and lavatories were *bīnūt apsê* 'creatures of apsû', which connect them with the *Apsû*, a pure place where the secrets of the rites of lustration are kept.[55] It should come as no surprise, then, that *apkallū* were found in the large bathing rooms L and I of the Northwest Palace and the Til Barsip Palace and that these held the *banduddû*, the ritual bucket that was filled with water.[56] Similarly, *lulal*, *ugallu*, and *urmaḫlullû*, which populate the bathing rooms and lavatories of the palaces of Sennacherib and Ashurbanipal, are all creatures of the *Apsû* and protect these spaces from evil. This implies that their presence was also connected with their power to bring cleanliness and purity to these spaces.

47 Mallowan 1966, 379-80, fig. 307 (room S 5); Botta, Flandin 1849b, pls. 103, 137 (rooms 6 and 11).

48 This is however hypothetical (Loud, Altman 1938, 67).

49 Thureau-Dangin, Dunand 1936, 62, pls. XLIII (1), XLVI, XLVII, LIII (XXVIIb).

50 For a discussion of this pair of protective figures, see Kertai 2015b, 341-3.

51 Wiggermann 1992, 52, 98, 181-2; Kertai 2015b, 346.

52 George 2015, 86-90.

53 Wiggerman 1992, 46-52.

54 See Portuese 2020b, 254-5, also for further bibliography.

55 Guichard, Marti 2013.

56 Portuese 2020b, 258-61. The connection between pure water and fish-*apkallū* is straightforward on the elaborately carved stone basin of Sennacherib found at Assur (Matthiae 1998, 41-3; see Kikuchi in this volume for further comments on this stone basin relying on texts).

4 Doors and Connectivity

There is an excellently preserved record of bathing rooms in Assyrian palaces and even the smallest type of suite contained a bathing room or a lavatory. In practical terms, a bathing room could be accessed from a single room, and it serviced one or two rooms. This suggests that each owner or occupant or group of occupants of a suite could enjoy a dedicated space for personal functions. Bathing rooms were thus not communal spaces.[57] They were located 'out of public sight', in remote locations within each suite and without direct access. Bringing bathing room functions indoors and into concealed locations can be interpreted as a first significant symptom of privacy.

The archaeological remains surprisingly show that bathing rooms usually lacked doors and thus they were spatially and functionally connected with the adjacent room, which could be a reception room, a vestibule or a corridor. These were, by contrast, often furnished with doors. This indicates that bathing rooms often formed a single architectural and functional unit with their neighboring spaces. It also implies that doors were conceived as a means to guarantee security rather than to create a sense of privacy.[58] At the same time, the size of a bathing room indicates that a large concourse of people could be welcomed in. These two aspects are at odds with a contemporary idea of privacy.

Only a few bathing rooms were furnished with doors, but their presence can be linked to their change of position within the palace, which shifts from the usual remote location inside the suite to entrance spaces. The most remarkable, perhaps, example of this is represented by bathing rooms 9 and 1 of the Royal Palace at Dur-Sharrukin, which were accessible from the outside. According to the carved reliefs surrounding the walls of room 9, it seems that many people frequented with the king here. The well-documented adjacent bathing room 12, which is similarly decorated, was around 51 square meters and could accommodate more than one hundred people standing. There are no textual records concerning the specific people who visited the king in the bathing room, but there is a reference to a lackey, a *ša-bēti-šanie*, who was in charge of controlling the container of hand-water during the royal repast; this may hint at the presence of individuals who could assist the king in pouring out water and other substances contained in the vases found in similar spaces (see above).[59] The function of rooms 9 and 1, as well as 12, remains unclear, although one can speculate that they were used during special events taking place in the courtyards onto which they opened out.

5 Water and Bathtubs

Our archaeological remains further suggest that bathing rooms and lavatories were waterproofed. Containers, pavements, and bathtub slabs indicate that liquids were essential to the functions of these spaces and that water almost certainly played a prominent role. The importance of water supply, accessibility and management for the formation, development and sustainment of Assyrian society and economy has been largely acknowledged by scholars.[60] Assyrian capitals were built on riverbanks, and water could be extracted from wells, of which there were several within the palaces.[61] Water could be associated with other substances, such as plant, perfumed oils and ointments. However, hygiene in its most simple form can be simply achieved by using only water.[62]

The textual sources mostly frame the importance of water within cleansing rituals and instructions (e.g., hemerologies),[63] but some documents hint at the use of water for hygienic and health concerns, showing that there was considerable awareness of good hygiene practices and their role in reducing the spread of disease. For example, the chief physician Urad-Nanaya gives instructions to Esarhaddon on how to take care of a rash and specifies that the 'clean water' must not be hot: "Concerning the rash about which the king, my lord, [wrote to m]e: […] The clean water (*mê zakûte*) with which the king reg-

57 A communal bathing room may have been room JJ (interpreted by Mallowan 1966, 120 as a guardroom) in the Northwest Palace at Kalhu, since it could be accessed from a courtyard and a room (Kertai 2015a, 46). So too bathing room XX in the Hadattu Palace seems to have been connected with two adjacent rooms, XVIII and XXI (Thureau-Dangin et al. 1931, 21).

58 An example is represented by the Northwest Palace, where bathing rooms I and L lack doors, but the adjacent storage rooms/treasuries M and J were closed off by doors.

59 SAA 20, 33, ii 20.

60 Morandi Bonacossi 2017; 2018; Morandi Bonacossi, Qasim 2022.

61 See, for instance, the wells excavated by Mallowan (1954a, 94-111) at Kalhu. See also Oates, Oates 2001, 90-1.

62 See Hätinen in this volume.

63 See bibliographical references in Kikuchi's contribution in this volume.

ularly washes his hands in the washbowl (*narmakte*) should not be hot. The rash will soon be gone".[64] This text highlights a peculiar interest of Esarhaddon in his health conditions, as well as the apprehensive personality that led him to adopt certain eccentric forms of behaviour.[65] However, it also hints at a few important notions: 1) the king washes his hands 'regularly' (*kajamānu*), implying some sort of habit; 2) bathtubs (*narmaktu*) could contain clean water; 3) bathing rooms were probably places where clean water (*mê zakûte*) was provided;[66] and 4) water could be heated, suggesting that braziers or portable objects might have been used in these spaces to heat water. The concern for clean water supply, which also emphasises the correlation between illness and water, is found in a letter sent by Qurdi-Ashur-lamur, governor of the Phoenician city of Simirra, who reports on the deportation of ten Iasubean families via Immiu to Kashpuna. The water in that city is apparently strong or dangerous (*dannu*) for people and they can become ill from it.[67] Similarly, other deportees are said to be brought into a city where the water is good (*ṭābūni*), according to a letter from Taklak-ana-Bel, governor of Nasibina, to Sargon II.[68] These references substantiate the importance of the supply of clean water and further highlight the role of bathing rooms as places where clean water was provided. This aspect seems to be further underscored in a letter sent from a Babylonian official, Nabu-balassu-iqbi, to Ashurbanipal, who complains about his unjust treatment, as his appeal to the king has not been heard and he has been deprived of his property. He thus states: "Since last year nobody gives me food to eat. Hunger and thirst have befallen me. I go and drink water from a well (*būrtu mê*); I wash my feet (there)".[69] These expressions may have a metaphorical meaning, but they may also hint at the lack of clean water and the proper means to wash one's body parts.

In this context, bathtubs seem to have played an important role as containers of clean and sometimes hot water which was poured in when needed **[fig. 6]**. The material they were made of (bronze, copper, and gold) probably helped to convey the impression of clean and pure water like the one of the *Apsû*. In fact, the natural radiance or shine of these materials must have transmitted a sense of purity and of the divine. In this regard, as has been observed by Yitzhaq Feder, the primary terms for cultic purity in Akkadian (*ellu*, *ebbu*, *zakû*) as well as in other languages "can be traced back to an original concrete sense related to the experiential domain of radiance".[70] In addition, purity, radiance, and being free of negative qualities or elements are associated with a "well-defined context of extra-linguistic experience, namely that of metallurgy. In the domain of metals, one finds a clear correlation between the brightness or shininess of the substance and its degree of purity. Moreover, the degree of purity was an important determinant of the quality and hence commercial value" of metals.[71] It is this latter aspect which was then transferred to the ritual and cultic spheres. Now, in the context of Assyrian bathing rooms, it seems that the semantic development of purity terms, their religious concepts and their connection to metallurgy seem to have been expressed and vividly perceived in these spaces, and this because of the presence of metal bathtubs which were originally placed in these spaces. The shininess of the metal bathtub could be further sensed and expanded by the darkness of the bathing rooms, whose internal position must have hindered the sunlight to come in. Light could have entered from ventilation shafts, but the discovery of a lamp in the well-preserved bathing room of the Governor's Palace at Kalhu suggests that other means would have provided an artificial source of light and intensified the play of dark and the brilliance of polished and sparkling metal surfaces.[72] In addition, the purity of the bathtub and the water poured in was further emphasised by the creatures protecting the bathing room which were always creatures of *Apsû*, and thus pure. The whole must have bestowed on bathing rooms a tangible sense of hygiene, cleanliness, and radiant purity.

64 SAA 10, 318: 8-r.e. 13.

65 Radner 2003; Ermidoro 2014, 85-6.

66 The Akkadian term used here to describe water as 'clean' is *zakû*, which is found in ritual but generally not in cultic contexts. Thus, it probably indicates that water is literally clean, not polluted, and free of adulterating elements (see Guichard, Marti 2013, 51; Feder 2014, 97; Kikuchi in this volume).

67 SAA 19, 22, r 16-r 22. The adjective *dannu* can have the meaning 'dangerous' (CAD D, s.v. "dannu", 96-7).

68 SAA 1, 247.

69 SAA 18, 181, 19-22.

70 Feder 2014, 99.

71 Feder 2014, 106.

72 Oates, Oates 2001, 132-3. The darkness of bathing rooms may have even affected the finishing of their interior decoration, as suggested by Reade 2022, 31 of room F in the North Palace. On the darkness of bathing rooms, Place 1867a, 92 also noted the little amount of light going in room 94 in the Royal Palace of Dur-Sharrukin.

6 Protocol

A final interesting aspect that may be inferred from archaeological evidence is the strict protocol that some activities, especially cultic ones, seems to have adhered to. As has been observed (by Koubkova in this volume), "the purity of ritual actions goes beyond" a desire to eliminate any kind of pollution and strives for "a perfectly correct performance" that must follow "all the established rules to the letter".[73] It is therefore likely that levels of hygiene and especially those of purity were kept high by adhering to strict rules of a specific protocol. From some letters one may envisage that a protocol existed for cultic acts in palace bathing rooms that was similar to the rituals performed in temples. In all these instances, what is clear is that the king was constantly kept informed about these issues. For instance, in a letter sent to Esarhaddon or Ashurbanipal, the astrologer and priest of the Assur temple Akkullanu asks whether he should attend the ablution rituals to be performed in Tarbisu.[74] In another letter, an exorcist asks: "Concerning the bath, what is it that the king, my lord, commands?"[75] Hemerologies show that even the visit to the lavatory was controlled by protocol, because of the potential attack of the demon Šulak.[76] Similar references also suggest that bathing rooms and lavatories were sometimes used with caution and under the keen guidance of the king's intellectual and religious milieu. If, as suggested by the carved reliefs of rooms 9 and 12 at Dur-Sharrukin **[fig. 7]**, a concourse of people was allowed to enter bathing rooms, one may even speculate that some individuals (e.g., the exorcist, see Koubkova in this volume) were appointed and admitted into the room to give instructions to the king for the correct performance of the prescribed actions, the good result of the cleansing ritual, and the safe success of personal functions.

7 Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, archaeological remains show that bathing rooms and lavatories defy the modern definition of private rooms, that is, as spaces in which one locks the door and is not observed or disturbed by other people. Nonetheless, their position within a building evokes a sense of privacy and indicates that bathing rooms and lavatories were not communal spaces but served the occupants of a single suite. Identifying or locating specific activities in these spaces is not simple and requires much interpretation and speculation. The available evidence indicates that bathing rooms and lavatories were 'hygienic' locations, where personal functions could be performed, and clean and hot water was provided. The interior decoration does not hint at specific activities, but strongly suggests that these spaces were deemed important, especially the niche where a toilet was located. In some instances, carved reliefs together with the size of bathing rooms and lavatories give the impression that owners were assisted by other individuals. Finally, the divine protection carved or painted substantiates that these were pure and well protected places.

The fact that every suite was furnished with a bathing room or a lavatory further suggests that hygiene, along with its religious and cultic implications, was very important. In particular, the presence of bathing rooms in all locations suggests a general equality of access to clean water and bodily cleanliness and emphasises a common sensitivity toward forms of hygiene or, at least, the impression that bathing rooms contributed to the development of a common sensitivity toward hygiene.[77] At the same time, since the lack of hygiene could be a threat to the wider social group, common hygienic rules may have contributed to the development of a common behavioural immune system, namely disgust.[78] These factors may have strengthened group identity and protected it from those individuals and things that may have polluted or defiled its integrity. All of this may have inevitably determined the quality of social relationships.[79] In this regard, one may be tempting to look at some devices, such as the long throne-rooms, the royal throne dais, the controlled accessibility of some palace rooms, and

73 See Koubková in this volume.

74 SAA 10, 93.

75 SAA 10, 312.

76 George 2015, 87.

77 Hygiene could imply access to pricey luxury substances, such as perfumed oils, to which only upper levels of society, ranging from the wealthy citizens to the king, could have access (see Hätinen in this volume).

78 Curtis 2013.

79 For an examination of the relationships between group identity and health, see Haslam et al. 2009.

even etiquette rules, as a means to keep palace occupants safe from potential invisible threats which could undermine their health and hygiene conditions. Further, the physical distance between king, his officials and attendants, and outsiders that is often represented on palace reliefs and wall paintings may have depended not only on well-established artistic conventions but also on hygiene reasons and as a reaction to disgust, which functioned to orchestrate an unconscious avoidance of pathogens and parasites.[80] In short, bathing rooms may have been one of the means through which Assyrians defined themselves and contributed to their cultural identity.

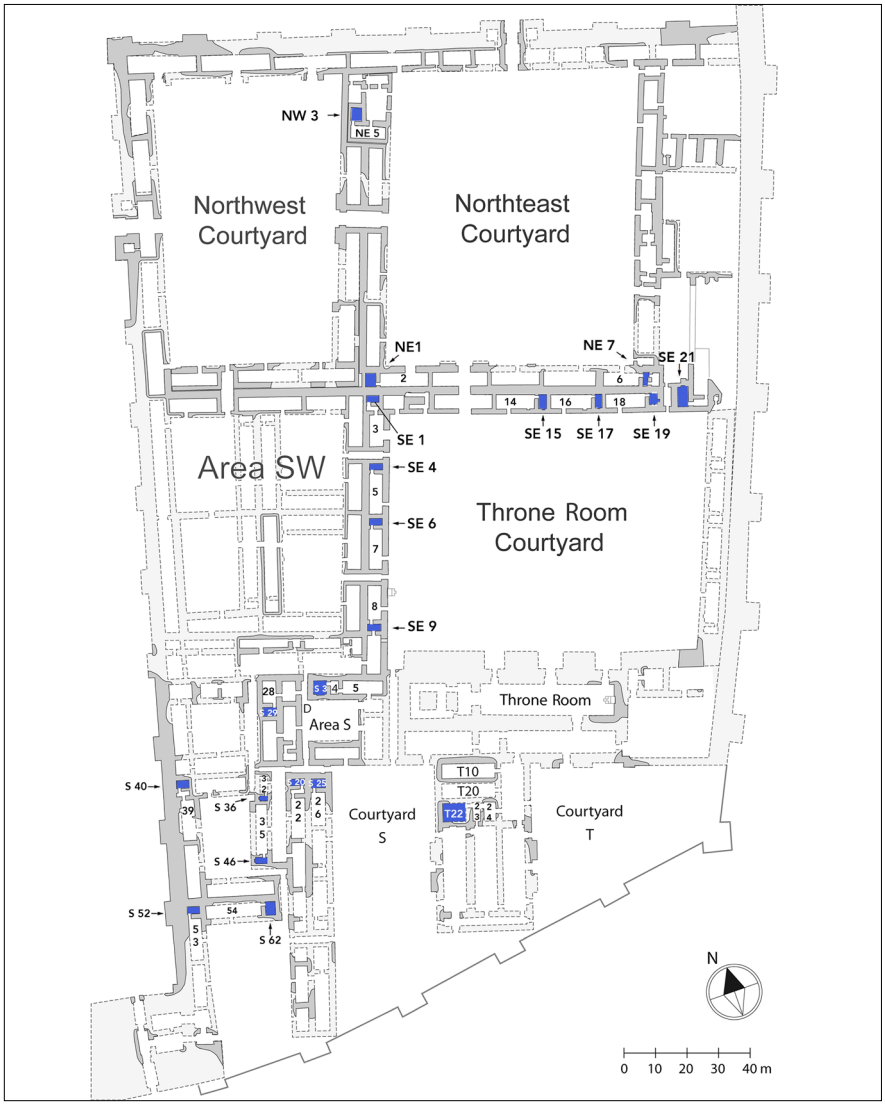

Figure 9
Floorplan of the Military Palace, Kalhu (adapted from Kertai 2015c, fig. 2)

80 Portuese 2020a, 110-22; Curtis 2013. Exclusionary practices and forms of ostracisms were often related to notions of impurity in ancient Mesopotamia (see Feder in this volume).

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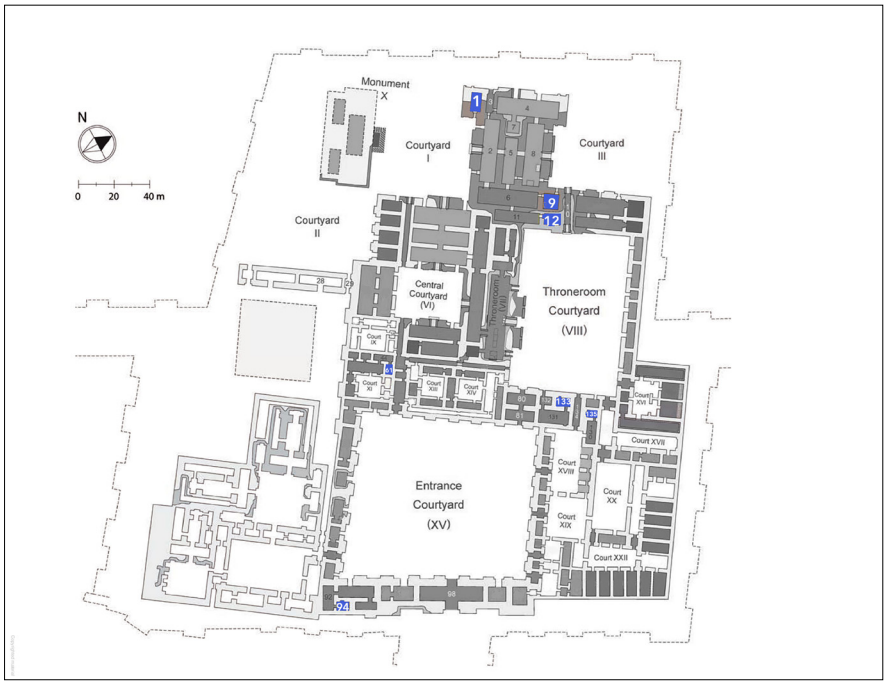

Figure 10
Floorplan of the Royal Palace, Dur-Sharrukin (adapted from Kertai 2015a, pl. 11)

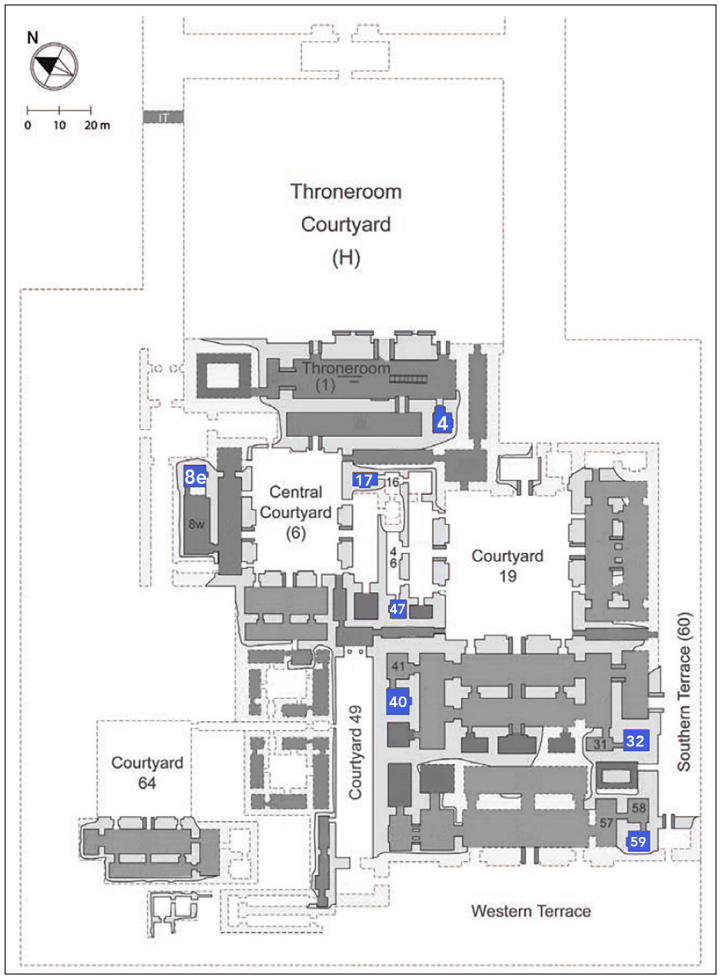

Figure 11
Floorplan of the Southwest Palace, Nineveh (adapted from Kertai 2015a, pl. 17)

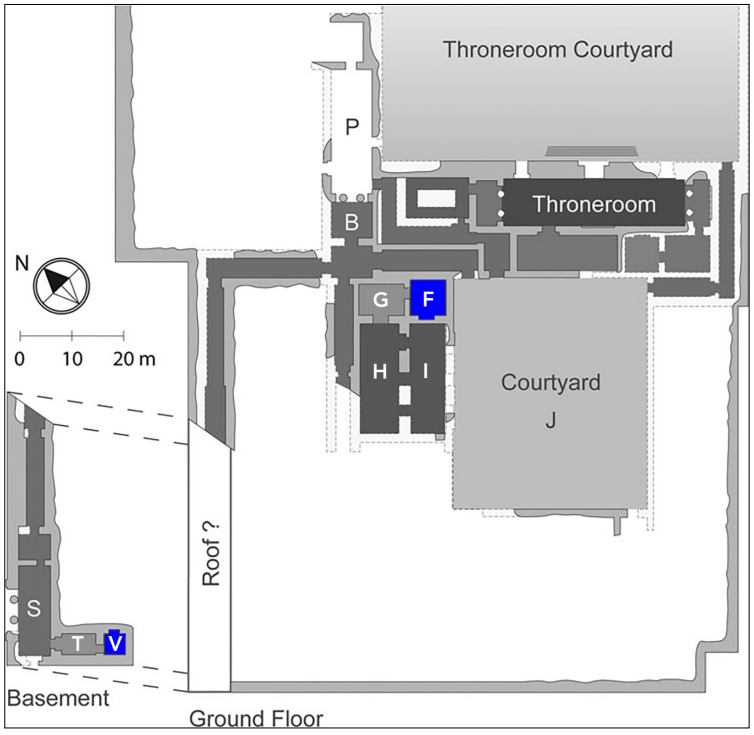

Figure 12
Floorplan of the North Palace, Nineveh
(adapted from Kertai 2017, fig. 1)

Table 1 Main features of bathing rooms and lavatories in Assyrian buildings (°=located in the adjacent room; ? = hypothetical). Numeration mainly follows the plans laid out in Kertai 2015a

Palace / Room	Paved with baked bricks / stone slabs	Niche	Drain	Bathtub slab	Ventilation shaft	Doors	Floral and Geometric motifs	Human figures	Protective figures
NW Palace (Kalhu) [fig. 8]									
ZT 17	•		•	•	°	°			
ZT 26	•	•		•	•				
L	•	•		••	•	°			•
I	•	•	•	••	•	°			•
V	•	•	•	••	•				
WI	•	•		•					
JJ	•				•				
AH	•	•		•	•				
AR	•	•	•		•				
46	•							°	
59	•	•	•	•					
68	•	•	•						
69	•	•	•						
64b	•	•							
65	•	•							
Old Palace (Assur)									
4	•								
Governor's Palace (Kalhu)									
Room	•	•	•	••			•		
Military Palace (Kalhu) [fig. 9]									
NW 3	•			•	•	°			
NE 1					•				
NE 7	•	•	•		•				

Palace / Room	Paved with baked bricks / stone slabs	Niche	Drain	Bathtub slab	Ventilation shaft	Doors	Floral and Geometric motifs	Human figures	Protective figures
SE 1	•	•	•		•		•(?)		
SE 15	•	•	•						
SE 17	•	•	•			°			
SE 19	•				•				
SE 21	•	•	•	•					
SE 4	•					°			
SE 6	•		•			°			
SE 9	•								
T 22	•		•	••			•		
S 3	•	•	•	••		°	•	°	
S 20	•	•	•		•				
S 25	•	•	•		•				
S 29	•	•	•			°			
S 36	•	•	•						
S 40	•								
S 46	•	•	•						
S 52					•				
S 62									
Adad-Nirari III's Palace (PD 5) (Kalhu)									
9	•	•	•	•	•	°	•		
Royal Palace (Dur-Sharrukin) [fig. 10]									
1	•			••		•		•	•
9	•			•		•		•	•
12	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•
61									
94		•							
133		•(?)							
135		•	•						
136[80]		•	•						
Residence L (Dur-Sharrukin)									
30							•(?)		
37		•				°			
50		•							
81		•							
82		•							
90		•							
118		•							
Residence K (Dur-Sharrukin)									
9		•							
13		•							
22									
23									
27		•	•						?•°
29	•	•	•	•					
34			•						
35			•						
43									
45									
47	•	•	•						
SW Palace (Nineveh) [fig. 11]									
4	•	•	•					•	•
8e		•						•	•
17		•						•	
32								•	•°
40		•						•	•

Palace / Room	Paved with baked bricks / stone slabs	Niche	Drain	Bathtub slab	Ventilation shaft	Doors	Floral and Geometric motifs	Human figures	Protective figures
47		•						•	•
59		•						•	•
North Palace (Nineveh) [fig. 12]									
F		•			•			•	•
V		•							◦
Til Barsip Palace [fig. 4]									
XIII	•	•	•			◦			
XIV	•	•	•						
XXVII	•	•	•	••	•(?)	◦		•	•◦
LXIV	•	•	•	•		◦		•	◦
Hadattu Palace									
IV			•						
II									
XV			•						
XIII									
20	•	•	•	•		◦			
22	•	•	•	•		◦	•		
25	•	•		•		◦	•		
48	•	•	•						
49						◦			
Bâtiment aux ivoires (Hadattu)									
5	•		•						
17	•	•	•						

80 Bathing room 136 is described and shown on the plan in Place 1867a, 99; 1867b, pl. 5.

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Bathrooms and Toilets in Babylon-Merkes: Speculation or Reality?

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Abstract This paper examines the rooms with drainage facilities of the Neo-Babylonian dwellings in Babylon-Merkes, which Reuther interprets as bathrooms or toilets in his excavation report. This interpretation will be reappraised by asking the following questions: is it possible to understand Neo-Babylonian attitudes to hygiene in dwellings in Babylon-Merkes, to identify specific rooms in which measures were undertaken influenced by such attitudes, and to link such precautions to a specific social class? If not, can another interpretation for drained rooms be proposed relying on the Akkadian words used for individual rooms and features? The final aim is to provide a comprehensive overview of the potential functions of drainage systems in residential areas.

Keywords Drainage system. Neo-Babylonian dwellings. Hygiene. Soakaway. Drained rooms.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 The Neo-Babylonian Dwellings and Reuther's Interpretations. – 3 Reuther's General Definition of the Bathroom and Its Reappraisal. – 4 Reuther's General Definition of the Toilets and Its Reappraisal. – 5 The Function of a Soakaway. – 6 An Experiment. – 7 Archives N9 and N10 of the Residential Buildings in Babylon-Merkes. – 8 Toilets & Co – The *bīt musâti*. – 9 Drainage Systems in Texts (*asurrû*). – 10 Conclusion.

1 Introduction

In the course of the excavations of Babylon's monumental buildings under the direction of Robert Koldewey, parts of the Neo-Babylonian residential area were uncovered, examined and interpreted.[1] Oscar Reuther was responsible for this work.[2] Between 1907 and 1912 Reuther documented 18 residential buildings in Babylon-Merkes, which date to the Neo-Babylonian period.[3] His findings were published in 1926 in his excavation report *Die Innenstadt von Babylon (Merkes)*.[4]

Later scholars have followed Reuther's work uncritically. The drainage of the residential buildings excavated by Reuther was catalogued by Christiane Hemker (1993). Maria Krafeld-Daughery (1994), in her work on ancient Near Eastern houses from an ethnological and archaeological perspective, adopted the definitions from the excavation reports and interpretations of the functions of the rooms.[5] Simi-

1 In 1980, further excavations were carried out in Babylon by an Iraqi team. Since the two dwellings documented during this excavation are only fragmentary and insufficiently documented in terms of their drainage for a detailed analysis, they are not considered in this article (Pedersén 2021, 251-5; Al-Bayati 1985, 71-2).

2 Reuther 1926a.

3 Pedersén 2021, 245-50.

4 In addition to the Neo-Babylonian buildings, sparse remains of the Old Babylonian and Kassite dwellings were also uncovered. As the presence of groundwater did not allow complete excavation of these earlier houses, they are not included in this article.

5 Krafeld-Daughery 1994, 94-124.

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larly, Peter Miglus (1999) published a study on dwellings in Babylonia and Assyria, in which the work of Reuther was included.[6] However, in none of these works were the room functions proposed by Reuther, in particular the functions of those spaces interpreted as bathrooms and toilets, critically scrutinised and checked for accuracy.

The aim of this paper is to reappraise Reuther's reading of the archaeological evidence and to combine all available sources to shed new light on the alleged use and presence of bathrooms and toilets in Babylon-Merkes.

2 The Neo-Babylonian Dwellings and Reuther's Interpretations

Based on Reuther's descriptions, 18 residential buildings were examined [tab. 1] [fig. 1].[7] Because four of the buildings were fragmentarily preserved and drainage facilities were not identified in them, they are not included in this analysis. The total number of residential buildings used in the following calculations is therefore 14, which contained 215 rooms. In these houses, 26 rooms had drainage. These were distributed across ten of the 14 residential buildings [tab. 1].[8] Reuther interpreted seven of these 26 rooms as bathrooms, four as toilets, four as courtyards, two as main rooms, five as side rooms, one as an entrance area and another as a kitchen [fig. 2]. For three rooms Reuther did not offer an interpretation. The interpretations of courtyard, kitchen, main room, and entrance room seem plausible and are therefore not questioned here. Reuther apparently referred to the rooms with drainage facilities, when he was unable to assign a precise function, as side rooms.

The Neo-Babylonian residential buildings in Merkes contained on average 15 rooms, of which an average of two had drainage facilities.[9] Eight of the 14 residential buildings are below the average number of rooms [fig. 3]. 9 rooms with drainage facilities were found in five of these eight houses. Reuther interpreted four of these 9 rooms as bathrooms and two as toilets. According to Reuther, rooms with both functions were attested only in House VI, three houses had a bathroom but no toilet, and House IX had a toilet but no bathroom.

Six houses had more rooms than average. In this category, significantly more houses possessed drainage systems, and only House XVI had no drainage facilities. Houses I and II, again following Reuther, had both a bathroom and a toilet. House III had one bathroom only. None of the houses examined in this category had only a toilet without a bathroom.

Looking at the distribution of bathrooms and toilets according to Reuther and taking the numbers of rooms in the houses into account, it is noticeable that these room functions are found more frequently in the houses of below-average numbers of rooms. If one further assumes that the numbers of rooms in the house is directly related to the wealth of the inhabitants and that Reuther's allocation of rooms is correct, the result is that personal hygiene would have to be associated more with a population class that did not belong to the elite. This result is surprising and invites us to re-examine Reuther's allocation of the spatial function.

6 Miglus 1999, 307-10.

7 Reuther 1926a.

8 In Houses XIII, XVI, XVII and XVIII, no drainage was documented by Reuther.

9 18 houses − 4 fragmentary houses = 14 houses suitable for investigation. 215 rooms ÷ 14 houses = 15.36 rooms. 26 rooms with drainage facilities ÷ 14 houses = 1.86 drained rooms.

Table 1 Overview of the rooms with drainage facilities in the 18 investigated dwellings in Babylon, based on Reuther's excavation report (Reuther 1926a)

House	**Rooms in total**	**Rooms with drainage**	**Reuther's interpretation of the functions of the rooms with drainage**				
			Courtyards	Bathrooms	Toilets	Kitchens	Other
I	19	3	0	1	1	1	0
II	19	4	1	1	1	0	1
III	29	4	1	1	0	0	2
IV	23	3	1	0	0	0	2
V	14	2	0	1	0	0	1
VI	12	2	0	1	1	0	0
VII	fragmentarily preserved						
VIII	fragmentarily preserved						
IX	11	3	0	0	1	0	2
X	23	3	0	0	0	0	3
XI	fragmentarily preserved						
XII	10	1	0	1	0	0	0
XIII	11	0	0	0	0	0	0
XIV	fragmentarily preserved						
XV	11	1	0	1	0	0	0
XVI	18	0	0	0	0	0	0
XVII	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
XVIII	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**215**	**26**	**3**	**7**	**4**	**1**	**11**

Figure 1 Overview of the rooms with drainage facilities in the 18 investigated dwellings in Babylon, based on Reuther's excavation report (Reuther 1926a)

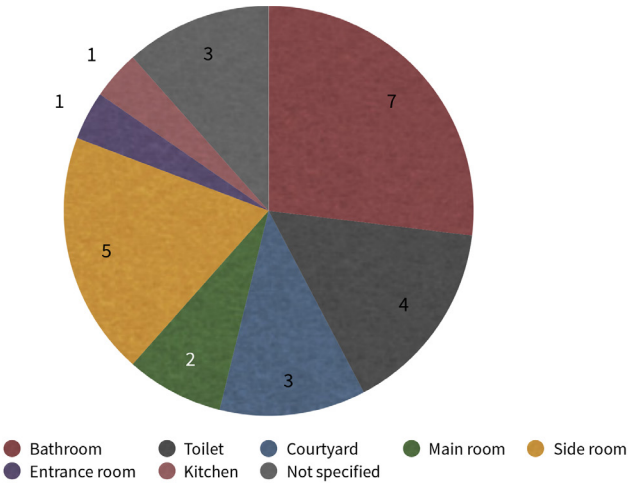

Figure 2 Functions of the rooms with drainage facilities according to Reuther (1926a)

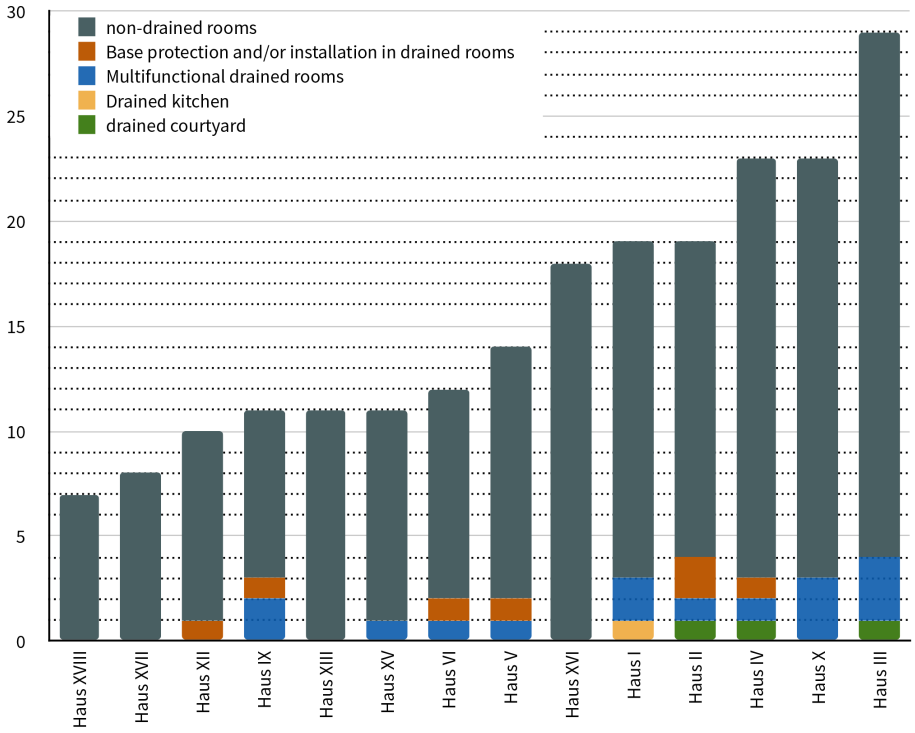

Figure 3 Overview of the rooms with and without drainage systems in the 14 investigated Neo-Babylonian dwellings in Babylon-Merkes based on Reuther's excavation report. The houses are sorted by size

3 Reuther's General Definition of the Bathroom and Its Reappraisal

Reuther used Room 10 in House I, which he referred to as a bathroom, to establish a general definition of the room's function [fig. 1] [tab. 2], according to which a bathroom is characterised by the presence of a drainage system, the walls are protected by a wall skirting and the floor is covered with bitumen.[10] Interestingly, Room 10 of House I has no such floor, nor are the bases of its walls protected.[11] Reuther also noted "daß sich gleich eingerichtete Zimmer bei einer Anzahl anderer Häuser an der gleichen Stelle im Grundriss wiederfanden". The author went on to write about the location: "Einem Badezimmer würde die etwas abgesonderte Lage in der Gruppe der Wohnräume ganz angemessen sein".[12] In his description of the bathroom in House II, there is a further criterion according to which Reuther referred to rooms as bathrooms: the floor is lowered towards the soakaway exclusively in these rooms. Reuther also imagines the activity of bathing as follows: "Das Baden wird man sich wie in Ägypten als ein Übergießen vorzustellen haben, wobei man dem vorwiegend heißen Klima gemäß wohl meist kaltes Wasser benutzte, wenigstens deuten keine Spuren auf Heizvorrichtungen in den Baderäumen".[13]

In short, according to Reuther, a bathroom is characterised by a floor with a bitumen coating, walls protected by skirting, and its position in the floor plan, located separately within the group of the living quarters. As Reuther did not elaborate on this last point, it seems that the bathroom is found at the end of a chain of rooms, and thus not directly connected to the main room or the courtyard. However, Reuther's definition of bathroom is sometimes inconsistent. In general, he does not give a conclusive reasoning as to why the features he named are supposed to be exclusive to bathrooms and not shared with other rooms in which large quantities of liquids were handled. In addition, not all of the rooms classified by Reuther as bathrooms possessed all the features he deemed typical of bathrooms. All this invites one to re-examine the available archaeological evidence.

As for the floors, six of the seven supposed bathrooms have baked brick floors with bitumen coating, as stated in the original definition [tab. 2]. In one case, the floor is plain brick (House I/Room 10). As for the skirting, only four of the seven rooms had a skirting to protect the walls, consisting of baked brick in three cases and brick and bitumen in one case (House VI/Room 7). No skirting could be detected in the supposed bathrooms of Houses I, III and XV. As for the location, a glance at figure 5 shows that only three rooms are located separately in the group of the living quarters (House I/Room 10, House VI/Room 7 and House XII/Room 10). They represent the end of a chain of rooms and are not directly connected to the main room or the courtyard. All the other supposed bathrooms are not part of the living quarters (House V/Room 9), are part of a chain but not at its end (House II/Room 12, House III/Room 15, House V/Room 9) or are directly connected to the main room (House XV/unnumbered room).[14] All seven rooms are located far away from the entrance area.

Table 2 Overview of the rooms interpreted as bathrooms by Reuther (Bielefeld, in preparation)

House/room	Floor	Base protection	Fixed installation	Connection to main room	Connection to the courtyard	Part of a room chain
I/10	brick	no	no	yes	no	yes (end)
II/12	double brick + bitumen	brick	no	yes	yes	yes (transit room)
III/15	brick + bitumen	no	no	yes	yes	yes (transit room)
V/9	brick + bitumen	brick	no	no	yes directly	yes (transit room)
VI/7	brick + bitumen	brick + bitumen	no	yes	yes	yes (end)
XII/10	brick + bitumen	brick	niche in west wall	yes	no	yes (end)
XV/no number	brick + bitumen	no	no	yes directly	no	no

10 Reuther 1926a, 89.

11 Reuther 1926a, 81.

12 Reuther 1926a, 89.

13 Reuther 1926a, 95.

14 Either the courtyard or the main room was defined as the start of a room chain, depending on which of the two rooms the room was connected to. If the room was connected to both, the courtyard was counted as the beginning and the main room as the end of the chain. A room chain was defined as having at least three rooms connected to each other.

4 Reuther's General Definition of the Toilets and Its Reappraisal

In contrast to bathrooms, Reuther did not provide detailed criteria to define a toilet. There is merely a general assumption in his report that filled drainage shafts indicate a toilet, albeit without any explanations how this filling should look like **[tab. 3]**. Reuther assumed that installations above the floor were originally present in all rooms interpreted as toilets, but these were no longer preserved in all cases. This also emerges from his description of Rooms 13 in House II and 9 in House IX, in which he used the platforms located above and draining into the soakaways in these rooms as a reason to attribute the function of a toilet to both rooms. Also, Reuther's descriptions suggest that, wherever possible, he sought a direct spatial connection between the bathroom and the toilet, assuming they would be set in adjoining rooms.[15] However, he does not include such a connection as a general point in the definition. In a supplementary article, Reuther also mentioned the criterion that the toilet was drained by a soakaway and did not necessarily need to be located in the house.[16] As the excavation report contains no archaeological evidence for toilets that were located outside the dwellings, e.g. in the form of public baths or toilet buildings, this point will not be considered further below.

In sum, to interpret a room as a toilet, Reuther stated that it had to be drained through a drainage shaft, which had a backfill, that an installation must have been in direct connection with this drainage shaft and that the bathroom and toilet were directly connected to each other.

By reviewing the evidence, it emerges that all four toilets in this investigation were drained via soakaways. However, there is no indication in the excavation report for any of the rooms when the soakaway was filled and what materials, if any, this backfill was composed of. There is also no indication of when the fill entered the soakaway. It can therefore not be ruled out that this step only took place after the seepage shaft was decommissioned. Furthermore, there is no description of the exact construction method of the individual shafts in Reuther's excavation report.

As for installations, Reuther documented a fixed installation in Room 13 of House II **[fig. 4]**, which he describes as a brick platform rising 50 cm above the floor, with an 18 cm wide slot at the top. Behind the slot, steeply inclined bricks led down into the drainage shaft.[17] According to Reuther, there was also an installation above the soakaway in Room 9 in House IX, but he did not document this in any detail.[18] None of the other rooms he mentioned as toilets had a fixed installation.

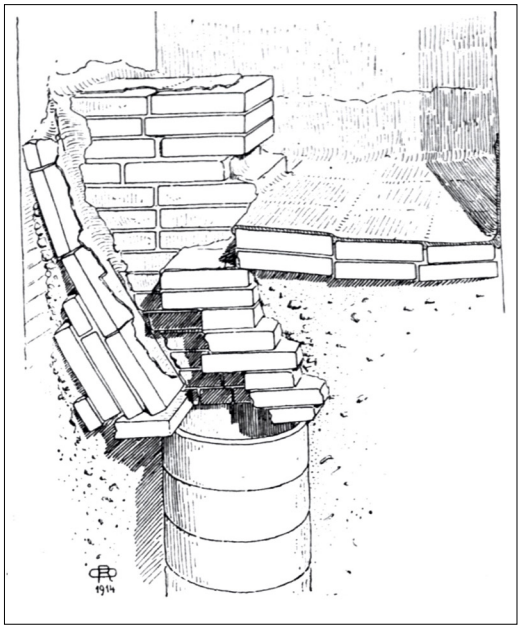

Figure 4 Installation in Room 13, House II (Miglus 1999, T. 108)

15 Reuther 1926a, 86, 95, 114.

16 Reuter 1926b, 13, 18.

17 Reuther 1926a, 95.

18 As there is no photograph or drawing of this installation, its appearance is unknown (cf. Reuther 1926a).

The connection of alleged toilets with bathrooms is also doubtful. Only Room 13 of House II is connected to a room defined by Reuther as a bathroom. In House IX, Reuther suggested that Room 8, directly adjacent to room 9, was a bathroom based on the interpretation of Room 9 as a toilet, even though no drainage facilities were recorded in Room 8. However, ultimately he did not specify this function for the room, but left the question open in his excavation report.

Notwithstanding the uncertainty of Reuther's interpretations, a clearer understanding of the drainage system and the packing of the construction pit can provide information about the function of the soakaway, and therefore of the room. The archaeological experiment described below may be of assistance in this respect.

Table 3 Overview of the rooms interpreted as toilets by Reuther (Bielefeld, in preparation)

House/room	Floor	Base protection	Fixed installation	Connection to main room	Connection to the courtyard	Part of a room chain
I13/	brick	no	no	no	yes directly	no
II13/	double brick + bitumen	bitumen	installation on soakaway	yes	yes	yes (end)
VI11/	not specified	no	no	yes	yes directly	yes (transit room)
IX9/	not specified	no	yes (appearance unknown)	no	yes directly	yes (end)

5 The Function of a Soakaway

A soakaway is a vertical drainage system that is easy to construct. It usually consists of a so-called inlet drum, several terracotta cylinders stacked on top of each other, and a drain integrated into the paving. The side walls of the terracotta cylinders can be perforated. There are also drainage shafts made from storage vessels instead of specially made cylinders. Here, the bottoms of the vessels were knocked out before they were stacked one inside the other in order to fit them into the construction pit. The construction pit was then filled with ceramic sherds or soil outside the shaft.

Most of the 26 rooms in Babylon-Merkes were drained exclusively via such a system. In Room 1 of House IV there were two additional terracotta pipes that drained into the soakaway in the entrance area, while Room 15 of House II was drained by a brick channel that broke through the south wall of the courtyard and led into a soakaway in Room 13 of the same house.[19] No other drainage systems consisting of several elements are known.

In his excavation report, Reuther did not give a general description of the dimensions and construction of the Neo-Babylonian soakaways.[20] Over the course of his detailed house descriptions, he documented three soakaways that consist of storage vessels. For four others, he specified a construction made of terracotta cylinders. He does not describe the remaining 17 soakaways in more detail. The excavation report contains no information on the type of backfill of the construction pit. However, an experiment carried out by the author, which is discussed below, shows that this has a major impact on the seepage rate and filling capacity – and therefore the function – of the shaft.

19 Reuther 1926a, 96, 106.

20 The soakaways of the Middle Babylonian-Assyrian layer present a different picture. Here Reuther 1926a, 62 noted that they consisted of "terracotta rings placed on top of each other". According to Reuther, the lowest cylinders had a height of 15-20 cm, the highest measured 48 cm in height. The diameter was only recorded for the low drums: it was 45 to 65 cm.

6 An Experiment

To answer the question of how a change in the backfill of the construction pit (diam.: 56 cm) affects the functionality of the soakaway, a 44 cm high soakaway was constructed in a flower bed in Sivas, Turkey **[fig. 5]**.

Figure 5 Reconstructed soakaway with brick (left) and soil backfill (right)

The seepage pipe consisted of three water bottles glued together, into which 36 seepage holes were melted with the help of a heated spoon. The diameter was 16 cm, the seepage holes were between 1 and 1.5 cm in size. The volume of the shaft was therefore between 8 and 9 litres.

Around the shaft the construction pit was backfilled with 38 kg of brick rubble for two trials and then with 64 kg of soil for two further trials.

In the first and third trials, 10 litres of water were poured into the shaft, in the second and fourth trials 30 litres, and the time required for the water to seep away was recorded. Between the runs, the soil was given time to completely absorb and drain off the water to counteract any falsification of the results. The results of the second and fourth runs, in each of which 30 litres were poured into the well, are discussed below.

The second trial yielded the following result: the pit was heavily soaked up to a height of approx. 24 cm. While the bricks in the upper area showed no signs of water penetration, the bricks had become increasingly saturated with water from a depth of 20 cm below the top of the shaft. At no time was there any danger of the soakaway overflowing.

The fourth trial differed from this result: the soil in the construction pit was heavily soaked up to a height of 34 cm. The soil directly around the shaft was heavily saturated with water up to the top edge. The 30 litres of water had filled the shaft to the brim - the water level then dropped rapidly.

The experiment therefore showed that the water seeps away more quickly in a soakaway that is surrounded by brick rubble. A similar result is to be expected when pottery sherds were used to fill the space around the shaft. Particularly at the beginning, more liquid is extracted from the shaft. When filled with 30 litres of water, this meant that the drainage system was only about 3/4 full, whereas it threatened to overflow in the case of the soil backfill. A shaft with brick backfill can therefore absorb uncontrolled quantities of water better than the same shaft with soil backfill. An examination of the construction pit also indicated that the soakaway works not as a purely vertical drainage system but

works due to a combination of vertical and horizontal drainage, the latter of which is achieved via the perforation in the terracotta rings. This makes the soakaway very effective, especially in small spaces, by using pressure and gravity - so it is no wonder that it was particularly popular in residential buildings in southern Mesopotamia.

As the study of the material has shown so far, the question of the potential uses of rooms with drainage facilities is hard to answer with the use of archaeological methods alone. Variations in floor configurations and skirtings and differences in the backfill of the construction pit, as shown experimentally, can affect the potential function of the room. An additional look at textual sources may therefore help to come to further conclusions about the activities carried out in the residential buildings in question that may have necessitated the use of a drainage system. They may also help to correct our modern western understanding of room functions and to understand how people in the Neo-Babylonian period organised their dwellings.

7 Archives N9 and N10 of the Residential Buildings in Babylon-Merkes

Archives found directly in residential buildings can give clues to the activities of the owners of these buildings and whether those activities necessitated the existence of rooms with drainage facilities. According to Pedersén, a total of five such archives were found in Merkes, of which archives N9 and N10 were found in the houses examined above.[21]

N9 comprises the archives of Houses XVI (25 clay tablets), XVIII (44 clay tablets) and XVII (44 clay tablets).[22] None of the houses has a room with drainage facilities. The archives provide no information about the occupations of the owners of these houses or any specialisations of the households. The situation is different in House VI, from which archive N10 (approx. 36 clay tablets) originates.[23] Here, Rooms 7 (bathroom) and 11 (toilet) had drains. The archive dates from Šamaš-šum-ukin (year 5) to Nebuchadnezzar II (663-580 BC) and names the governor Silim-Bel and his son Marduk-šuma-ukin (occupation unknown) as the main figures. Both men lived during the reigns of Nebuchadnezzar and his predecessor. The courtyard of the house and a small room to the east of the main room are named as the location of the find by Pedersén. The archive consists of 16 contracts, a process document and eight texts from a library. According to Pedersén, there is no information about the contents of the remaining clay tablets. Text 9 of the archive is interesting, as it is the only text in archives N9 and N10 that documents the purchase of a brewer's estate by Marduk-šuma-ukin. According to this, House VI can be associated with the brewery, at least temporarily.

8 Toilets & Co – The *bīt musâti*

To further the potential arguments for and against the interpretation of rooms with drains as bathrooms or toilets, let us now look at the words the Neo-Babylonians used themselves in connection with drainage systems, room functions and questions of personal hygiene.

George argues in his 2015 article that the word *bīt musâti* should be translated as 'house of rinse-water', as it is a place where hands get dirty. He believes that this indicates a toilet rather than a bathroom. The mention of *bīt musâti* in connection with the demon Šulak in post-Old Babylonian texts, who is in turn associated with dirty hands, further supports this interpretation in his opinion.[24]

The fact that this does not necessarily have to be a house in the conventional sense but can refer to a room or to a suite of rooms in a house is shown by Baker, among others, in her article also published in 2015. She points out that room designations that indicate the function of the room are rare in Neo-Babylonian texts, citing the rarity of the name of the bedroom (*bīt erši*) as an example. According to Baker, the frequently used words describing parts of a house are *tarbaṣu* referring to the courtyard and *bīt iltāni*, *bīt šūti*, *bīt amurri* and *bīt šadî* referring to suites of rooms around the courtyard. These are not functional designations as we use them today when describing buildings, but rather the cardi-

21 These are the archives N8 in the Ištar temple, N9 in House XVI-XVIII and N10 in House VI, as well as N11 and N12 in the remains of the houses Merkes 26h1 and 26g2 (Pedersén 2005, 187-226).

22 Pedersén 2005, 192-4.

23 Pedersén 2005, 199-202 (for other main characters, who are only mentioned occasionally, see also there).

24 George 2015, 86-90.

nal points from which, according to Baker, the wind flows into the rooms. As a result, the rooms were located directly opposite the cardinal point after which they were named.[25]

Although the word *bīt musâti* alone does not indicate whether it refers to an entire building, a part of a building or an individual room, it fits in remarkably well with the terms Baker uses for parts of buildings. In this case, it would belong to the category of rare functional terms used to describe parts of a building.

In addition, a building consisting of several toilets – or consisting of a single toilet – exclusively, as would be implied by assuming that the *bīt musati* was a separate building, has not yet been documented in the archaeological record.

Both Sallaberger and George also mention various words for chamber pots, such as *karpat šīnāti* and *kubarinnu*.[26] This gives an indication that a version of personal hygiene was practiced that has fallen out of favour in recent times. As a result, it is misleading to follow existing standards, which, for example, allow for a large amount of water in relation to personal hygiene. The question also arises as to whether the implementation of the hygienic procedures was room-bound or flexible. The chamber pots suggest that it was a flexible form of implementation that did not require a special room. In addition, there is a reference in an omen of *Šumma ālu*, which warns that pigs should not have access to these chamber pots. George assumes that this omen is due to the fact that the filled chamber pots were left in the courtyard, attracting pigs.[27] If we assume that there were toilet rooms, this would mean that the inhabitants of the house would have carried the filled chamber pot out of the room into the courtyard, left it there and later carried it back into the room where it was emptied. Such a procedure is not very credible. It is therefore highly unlikely that the place where the pots were used and the place where they were emptied was identical. From this it can be concluded that it is unlikely that the chamber pot was emptied in the room where it was filled.

This mobility of the place where the pots were placed, indicated by the omen, contradicts the translation of the word *bīt musâti* as a permanently assigned toilet room in which a demon dwells. Therefore, it can be assumed that this is the room where the chamber pots were emptied after use.[28]

9 Drainage Systems in Texts (*asurrû*)

According to George, in older texts one word that has to do with drainage, among other things, and that can be associated with the *bīt musâti* is the word *asurrû*. It is etymologically derived from the Sumerian a-s u r(-r a), which means 'water that is discharged' or 'water that trickles out' and is associated with *musâti* in a ritual context.[29]

Other texts state that an *asurrû* provides living and nesting space for snakes, mongooses and vermin and could attract pigs. This indicates that the word *asurrû* can be understood to mean not only the soakaway, but also pipes and channels, as the soakaway is unsuitable as a habitat for animals due to its depth and vertical construction. According to the texts, *asurrû* were also not necessarily used frequently: animals do not nest in a place where a gush of liquid is suddenly poured over their heads at regular intervals or washes away their laboriously built nest.

The *materia medica* states that an *asurrû* could absorb soil, earth, dust and feces.[30] It is therefore not a system that only drains wastewater or rainwater.

Accordingly, a translation as a *drainage system* is proposed here for the older texts as quoted by George, which can take on various tasks (both the drainage of rainwater and the absorption of the contents of the chamber pots, dust or soil) and can consist of different components (soakaway, channel, pipe). Even though that meaning had changed by the first millennium BC (i. e. the time the Neobabylonian Houses in Babylon-Merkes date to), it still shows that the concept of various drainage systems had been present in the written record for a while before.

25 Baker 2015, 376.

26 Terms that Sallaberger 1966, 55 translates respectively as 'Uringefäß' and 'das fürs Dicke'. See also George 2015, 84.

27 George 2015, 85.

28 The separation of the pots in terms of "large and small business" mentioned by Sallaberger 1996, 55 could indicate a further use of the individual raw materials, e.g. in agriculture or in (textile) crafts. In this case, a public collection point would be logistically useful.

29 George 2015, 90-102.

30 George 2015, 95.

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10 Conclusion

As explained above, Reuther specified that a bathroom typically had a floor with a bitumen coating that slopes down towards the soakaway. In addition, the walls are protected, and the room is located separately in the rooms of the living quarters. Table 4 shows that none of the rooms he designated as bathrooms fulfil this specification in all its points **[tab. 4]**. If one places his rooms labelled as bathrooms next to each other, the suspicion arises that the assignment of function is based on a Western-influenced image of a residential house, which at the beginning of the last century increasingly had bathrooms and separate toilets in the well-off houses: in this case, Reuther perhaps actively sought such a room function, which would explain the deviations in the room furnishings and construction methods shown in figure 9. However, this would mean that the rooms were identified as bathrooms first, before the general definition was made on the basis of the rooms. It is therefore completely unclear on what criteria Reuther's definition of a bathroom was based and where his certainty that Neo-Babylonian dwellings even had such a room came from.

Table 4 Overview of the individual feature of Reuther´s general definition of a bathroom matching the rooms in this study.

House/Bathroom	1) the floor has a bitumen coating	2) the floor slopes towards the soakaway	3) the room has wall protection	4) the room is located separately in the group of the living quarters
I/10	✗	✗	✗	✓
II/12	✓	✓	✓	✗
III/15	✓	✗	✗	✗
V/9	✓	✗	✓	✗
VI/7	✓	✗	✓	✓
XII/10	✓	✗	✓	✓
XV/no number	✓	✗	✗	✗

There is no doubt that he documented rooms with drains, some of which were furnished very similarly (House II/Room 12, House V/Room 9, House XII/Room 10). However, there is no archaeological evidence in these rooms that would allow us to define them as bathrooms. Rather, these are rooms with drainage systems, some of which have special furnishings whose function cannot been clarified. These rooms could be associated with personal hygiene, just as they could be linked to a craft practiced in the household. Both interpretations, however, must be regarded as speculative at the present time.

As in the case of the bathrooms, Reuther's descriptions of the toilets do not follow his own criteria. Although all four rooms are drained by soakaways, a look at the general drainage technology of the 26 rooms with drainage facilities investigated here shows that there are soakaways in all of them. Citing this as a criterion for a special room function therefore seems inadvisable.

Reuther is completely silent about the backfills of the shafts, which means that this point of his interpretation cannot be verified.

Another important point for Reuther is the presence of installations in rooms, which are interpreted as 'pedestal toilets'. This kind of installation is only securely attested in Room 13 of House II and Room 9 in House IX, without any further proof of its function. However, as there is no description of the installation in the latter room, it is not possible to compare the two. It is therefore not possible to say whether the installations in the rooms are the same, similar or completely different, nor can we conclude from a single installation with detailed documentation of its construction that toilets were somehow a regular feature in Neo-Babylonian houses.

The only toilet adjacent to a bathroom is Room 13 in House II, so this criterion is also not suitable for determining such a function, as it only appears a single time and seems therefore also to be an exception rather than a rule. In addition, Reuther does not mention why the bathroom and toilet should be adjacent to each other.

The function of the rooms interpreted as toilets in the excavation report can no longer be regarded as proven based on the lack of correspondence with Reuther's own definition and the lack of further archaeological evidence within the rooms with drains. As stated above for the bathrooms, the differ-

ent room conditions of two of the four toilet rooms mean that different uses cannot be ruled out: these two toilets but none of the bathrooms had platforms.

From an archaeological point of view, the interpretation of the bathrooms and toilets in the Neo-Babylonian dwellings of Babylon-Merkes must therefore be strongly doubted. No clear similarities can be identified between the rooms – except for the drainage system. However, the soakaway is generally used in dwellings, so no specific room function can be derived from it.

Instead, text 9 of archive N10 tentatively suggests a connection between House VI with drainage facilities and a brewery. In this case, the drainage could indicate that the household was specialised in a particular craft and not, as previously assumed, only personal hygiene or the drainage of rainwater.

The interpretation of *bīt musati* as a place where only chamber pots were emptied also speaks against a room with a function that is close to today's toilet. If a toilet had been present, it is difficult to understand why one would also need to use chamber pots, but then have a specific place to empty them. The word *asurrû* also does not help with the question of whether there were bathrooms or toilets, as it seems to refer to the drainage of rooms and buildings in general originally but had lost this meaning by the first millennium BC.

Consequently, it is not possible to locate rooms in the Neo-Babylonian dwellings in Merkes that are exclusively associated with personal hygiene. The mention of chamber pots in texts suggests that at least parts of the hygienic behaviours of the time were not dependent on fixed rooms but could be carried out flexibly in the house. Although the distribution of rooms with soakaways[31] in Babylon in houses with an above-average number of rooms indicates a connection between the wealth of the house owners and the use of a drainage system, this does not suggest that a particular form of personal hygiene was widespread in this social class. It is quite conceivable that drainage was used, among other things, because of a specialisation in craftsmanship, which made additional rooms necessary, resulting in larger houses. This would also be supported by the different room fittings of the drained rooms in terms of wall protection and installations, which suggest a different type of use for each room. The craft carried out in the house could also be an important factor in the wealth of the owners.

As the results of the experiment have shown, a precise description of the construction of soakaways can also provide additional information on how large their absorption volume was in the event of sudden, uncontrolled amounts of wastewater. This would provide a further indication of how the rooms they drained were used, since such large amounts of water are unlikely to occur during activities of daily living like emptying a chamber pot, a basin of water or similar.

Taking all these factors into account, it can be concluded that according to the data currently available, no single function can be assigned to drained rooms in Neo-Babylonian dwellings from Babylon-Merkes. Instead, the rooms could have had multiple purposes with the defining feature of the soakaway allowing for the handling of larger quantities of liquids and easy clean-up.

31 Note that these are all drained rooms, not only those interpreted as bathrooms or toilets by Reuther, which can, as stated above, be found predominantly in smaller houses.

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Papers Presented at the International Workshop
Scribes and Librarians at Work.
Making, Writing, Marking, and Handling Tablets
in 1st Mill. BC Mesopotamian Libraries

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Introduction

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The eight papers collected in this section stem from the two-days' international workshop *Scribes and Librarians at Work. Making, Writing, Marking, and Handling Tablets in 1st Mil. BC Mesopotamian Libraries*, organized by Paola Corò and Stefania Ermidoro and hosted by Ca' Foscari University Venice on the 26th-27th of April 2023.

This event originated from the activities carried out in the framework of the project LIBER: *The King's Librarians at Work. Applying Machine Learning and Computer Vision to the Study of Scribal Marks on Cuneiform Tablets*, funded by Ca' Foscari University through a Supporting Principal Investigators Measure 2 call, and directed by Paola Corò (Ca' Foscari University of Venice) in partnership with J. Taylor (British Museum; The Ashurbanipal Library Project) and in collaboration with the Centre for Cultural Heritage Technology of the Italian Institute of Technology, directed by A. Traviglia.

The goal of LIBER was to systematically re-evaluate (with the aid of AI) the function and characteristics of the so-called 'firing holes' marked on tablets from the Library of Ashurbanipal, in order to verify if and to what extent they represented scribal or librarian marks of any kind, and how they can shed light on the procedures and mechanisms underpinning the Library's formation, its ordinary management by the king's librarians and the scribes' work.[1]

The workshop *Scribes and Librarians at Work* however did not just mark the end of the project LIBER: rather, it acted as a springboard for new scholarly collaborations and ideas, to expand the original purpose of the project. This is also reflected by the articles which form the present dossier, that includes materials not only from Assyria, but also from Babylonia, in a fruitful comparative perspective. Articles focus on the physical and typological features of the tablets (Corò, Ermidoro and Schnitzlein, Taylor), on the role of scribes and colophons (Cohen; Young), and on the serialization of corpora within the Library of Ashurbanipal (Simkó; Hätinen; Rozzi). Notably, the paper given by Rocío Da Riva ("The Divine Love Lyrics in a Librarian Context") and that by Anna Baldon ("Materiality, *Firing Holes*, and Colophons in Ashurbanipal's Divination Tablets") at the 2023 workshop could not be included in the present dossier as well as Sara Ferro's and Arianna Traviglia's one ("Creating a Dataset to Train Machine Learning Models to Understand Assyriological Scribal Marks") which will be published elsewhere; on the other hand, Kristzian Simkó's contribution, which was not originally presented in Venice, is now part of it, and similarly focuses on the development of a well-defined corpus in the Library.

The materiality of tablets, specifically of those conceived, created and kept in a librarian context, represents the main topic of all the present articles. In line with the general scope of LIBER and of *Scribes and Librarians at Work*, they aim at investigating the organization of first-millennium Mesopotamian libraries and the role and functions of the professionals who worked in them, as well as to explore modern methods and techniques for reconstructing ancient libraries and manuscripts. We believe that one of the main results of the workshop, and of the present dossier of contributions, consists in of-

1 See Corò, P.; Ermidoro, S. (2020). "'Firing Holes': New Perspectives on an Old Question". *KASKAL. Rivista di storia, ambienti e culture del Vicino Oriente Antico*, 17, 303-23.

fering new ideas and suggestions on how to study the materiality of cuneiform tablets from previously unexplored or underestimated perspectives. Such methodological concern will establish a sound basis for future research and study, as well as for scholarly collaborations which will bring even forward the current research on this topic. The methodology applied for the LIBER project has been conceived as a pilot, that can be further extended to other corpora for a full investigation of materiality in tablets from all periods: focusing in particular on the significance of the connection between the hole's pattern and the layout of tablets, we have thus extended the methodology devised for LIBER to study the formats and layout of the Ashurbanipal Library texts. This has been done in the framework of a wider study aiming at exploring how the structural and visual organization of knowledge is reflected in written documents, both stemming from an administrative context (taking as a reference Kassite Babylonia), and from a library one (using the Library of Ashurbanipal as a reference).[2]

2 We refer here to the project *Exploring Scribal Minds: The Structural and Visual Organization of Knowledge in Mesopotamian Archives and Libraries*, directed by Elena Devecchi (the University of Turin) in partnership with Paola Corò (Ca' Foscari University Venice). The project received funding from the European Union Next-GenerationEU - National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) – MISSION 4 COMPONENT 2, INVESTIMENT 1.1 Fondo per il Programma Nazionale di Ricerca e Progetti di Rilevante Interesse Nazionale (PRIN) – CUP N. H53D23000390006.

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Typological Aspects of Scholarly Tablets in the Library of Ashurbanipal

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Abstract The Library of Ashurbanipal is an archetype of standardisation in cuneiform. It has been seen as a collection of compositions whose text took the form of fixed, canonical versions on which modern reconstructions can best rely. The script used in the Library is so carefully controlled and standardised that it has been described as 'typewriter' script. An aspect that has received less attention is the typology of the tablets on which the standardised texts were written in this careful Library script. As the thousands of fragments into which the Library was shattered in antiquity are gradually pieced back together, the types of tablet in that collection are becoming more apparent. These types help us understand the nature of the tablets in antiquity, as well as the functioning and vision of the Library itself.

Keywords Materiality. Typology. Standardisation. Colophons. Terminology.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Ancient Terminology of Tablet Types. – 3 The Tablets. – 4 A Comparison of Tablet Types Across Groups. – 5 Basic Typology of Tablets Produced for Ashurbanipal's Library. – 6 Literature. – 7 Lexical. – 8 Omens. – 9 Magic/Medicine. – 10 Conclusions. – 11 Appendix.

1 Introduction

The Library of Ashurbanipal is treated as a monolith; its remains are so numerous and complex that they have defied attempts to identify the component parts. Thus we remain largely ignorant of how the Library was assembled, what was in it, and what status any tablet had there. Several features will ultimately allow us to distinguish groups reflecting their time and place of creation, intended function, and ownership. One important feature is tablet typology. It is unambiguously true that tablet typologies existed in the cuneiform world, even though most still remain undocumented. For the Neo-Assyrian corpus, there are descriptions of archival document types[1] and royal inscriptions,[2] but not yet the scholarly material.[3] That is not to say that typology has gone unremarked. For example, Lambert typically

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1 See Radner 1995.

2 See the introductions to the RINAP volumes, Taylor 2018 and 2023.

3 See now Schnitzlein 2023b, 315-22 and Simkó (this volume).

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recorded typology at the level of how many columns the tablets had, at least.[4] More recently, Fincke offered an extensive treatment on the appearance of clay tablets based on manuscripts of the plant lists *Uruanna* and MÚD-UR.MAH.[5] Schnitzlein took a more generic approach, referring to both archival documents and scholarly material.[6] Special attention is paid there to tablets with Ashurbanipal colophons, taking into account ductus, format, and shape.[7] George featured a detailed study of the source tablets of *Gilgameš* from a range of perspectives including clay, script, and colophons; this extended to consideration of potential sets of tablets.[8] Schwemer undertook a similar exercise for *Maqlû*;[9] Hätinen (in this volume) does the same for *Ludlul*. All three rely on manuscripts found at Kuyunjik. Panayotov pointed out with regard to the *Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia* that "the format of Nineveh manuscripts always consisted of two-column tablets, with ca 250 lines, depending on the scribe who wrote them".[10] Böck noted that tablets of the new Library version of *Uruanna* use a format "with seemingly neatly kept measurements: they are about 11 cm broad and some 20 cm large".[11] Koch observed for divinatory texts that "There was a convention that the text of a particular tablet within a series had a certain shape, but this convention was not strictly followed. The same text may be written on manuscripts of different shapes and sizes".[12] Fincke noted this phenomenon for the astrological omens, hypothesising that the major scholarly centres retained established formatting conventions when the series was standardised, and that this might have been one reason why the series was never fully canonised.[13]

For the Hittite corpus there is a major study on both the outer appearance and colophons of around 2700 mainly scientific-literary texts stemming from Hattuša/Boğazköy. Waal described 1) the shape, size, clay of the tables as well as seal impressions and other intentional changes; 2) the writing process; 3) layout. Taking into account physical features, especially their shape, Waal identified different tablet types.[14]

It is worth noting first of all that there is no such thing as 'an Ashurbanipal Library tablet'. Nor is there 'a one-column Ashurbanipal Library tablet'. A variety is attested. For example, one-column tablets bearing *Enūma Eliš* look markedly distinct from one-column tablets bearing *Maqlû*. Secondly, there was almost inevitably a close correlation between text length and tablet size. But at the same time, tablet type was not determined by, and therefore is not predictable via, text length. Thirdly, script size is variable. It is noticeable that the script size of *Enūma Eliš* tablets is significantly smaller than those of *Maqlû*. For example, three manuscripts of *Enūma Eliš* (K.12000b, K.13299, K.13761) offer an average density of 27-31 mm per 10 lines, while three manuscripts of *Maqlû* (K.2950, K.10241, 1881-02-04, 217) offer an average density of 33-36 mm per 10 lines.

There are two ways to investigate tablet typology. Firstly, there is textual evidence. Several native designations for tablet types are of course known,[15] although these will not correlate one-to-one with the types identified here. These terms can each refer to different implementations of a concept. For example, *u'iltu* can refer to tablets in either portrait or landscape format, as well as to both scholarly and non-scholarly texts. Furthermore, the terms were applied not simply as descriptors of size/shape. They can refer to genre as well. That being said, it is worth noting when designations are applied to specific tablets, and noting to which modern type it refers in that instance.

Secondly, and most importantly, there is the evidence of the tablets themselves, to the extent that they have been reconstructed so far from the fragments in which they were found. A comprehensive analysis of the typology of Library tablets is beyond the scope of what is possible for this article. For the purposes of this study, two approaches were used to assemble an initial overview. Building on work conducted by Taylor in preparation for the *I am Ashurbanipal, King of the World* exhibition at the British Museum 2018-19, a survey was made of the Nineveh collection to identify tablets whose full original di-

4 See e.g. Lambert 1960; 2007; 2013.
5 Fincke 2021, 27-72.
6 Schnitzlein 2023a, 14-84.
7 Schnitzlein 2023a, 346-58 and *passim*.
8 George 2003, ch. 8.
9 Schwemer 2017, 26-50.
10 Panayotov 2018, 110.
11 Böck 2015, 24.
12 Koch 2015, 55.
13 Fincke 2013, 583-4.
14 Waal 2015, 1-124.
15 See Schnitzlein 2023a, 128-211.

mensions are preserved. This limited corpus was supplemented by a selection of tablets of which some full original dimension is preserved. In tandem with this collections-based survey, a literature-based survey addressed the known sources of compositions drawn from across the range of genres found in the Library. Key questions to be addressed include whether there was standardisation of the tablets used for each composition, and whether tablet types were shared between compositions.

A preliminary formal typology of Library tablets is not offered here, to avoid compromising an eventual comprehensive typology. A detailed analysis of Library tablet typology including formatting features are the focus of a project carried out at the University of Venice.[16] For this study, we limit the resolution to tablet size, shape, profile, orientation of inscription, as well as the number of text columns. Other features are relevant to the discussion, but again lie beyond the scope of the present work. No account can be taken here of features such as clay type, rulings, formatting, marginal marks, firing holes, orthography, palaeography, script size or density, or even consideration of the distribution of text for reconstructing the dimensions of partially preserved tablets. For convenience, we use the established terms 'portrait' to refer to tablets inscribed parallel to the short side and 'landscape' to tablets inscribed parallel to the long side.

It would be feasible to use a given tablet type in different ways. That is, a given tablet could potentially be inscribed in two or three columns, for example. Sultantepe tablet STT 394 even has three columns on the obverse and two on the reverse.[17] Column width varies very widely in the Library. Thus were lexical texts, for example, all written on a single tablet type appropriate to their genre, the nature of the various compositions would require different formatting. A specific example can be offered in the form of Ashur tablet VAT 10162;[18] it is labelled as an *u'iltu* – typically one-column tablets – but has two columns. A tablet could also plausibly be used in either orientation. A hint in this direction is offered by examples such as K.105, a landscape tablet with an excerpt from *Alamdimmû* **[fig. 4]**. The top and bottom edges are lightly rounded, while the right and left edges are strongly rounded and display curvature at the juncture of obverse/reverse and top/bottom. This is the opposite arrangement to what is typically seen in portrait format tablets.

Several groups of tablets came into Ashurbanipal's collection: those that belonged to him or were written for him in his younger days; the royal collection that he inherited when he became king; tablets written specifically for his Library; tablets from other scribes that were written for him, given to him, or taken by him, as king. There are also several groups visible in the modern collection that represents the partial remains of the Library: those with Ashurbanipal Library colophons except *a* (within which there may be sub-collections); those with colophon *a* (which was added secondarily); those with a colophon naming an individual scribe; those with no colophon. It is not to be expected that a 1:1 correlation exists between ancient and modern groups, but some correlation should be recoverable. Tablet typology is one component that will be necessary for answering that question.

The typology of Library tablets should reveal important information about how the Library scribes worked. The choice of type for compositions and individual manuscripts, together with consideration of the degree of standardisation, should clarify the overall vision, and the classification of material within the collection. Further, comparison with types attested on tablets with private colophons or from different sites elsewhere in Assyria and in Babylonia should indicate whether these choices are specific to the Library, a wider Assyrian practice, or a reflection of a more general convention. This in turn will be useful in interpreting tablets found at Nineveh whose attribution to the Library is not certain: those without a colophon, or those whose colophon is not preserved. Typology might help us discern between tablets in Babylonian script written in Babylonia from those written at Nineveh for the Library. It should also help us understand some colophon types. For example, it is demonstrable that Ashurbanipal colophon *a* was added secondarily to tablets; it was not planned for when the tablet was originally inscribed. In many cases, these could be understood as the collection of Ashurbanipal prior to, and immediately after, becoming king.[19] Thus the typology of these tablets would shed important light on the earliest phase of what would become the Library. Yet other functions will be served too. An outstanding desideratum is the matter of sets of tablets within the Library. Typology is one feature that will be necessary to consider in that research.

16 Corò, Ermidoro in this volume, fn. 2.

17 Cf. plant lists from Ashur VAT 10070 (Middle Assyrian) and VAT 10245 (Neo-Assyrian), noted by Fincke 2021, 49.

18 Gabbay 2015, no. 92.

19 As noted in Taylor et al. 2023; this point will be set out in detail in a forthcoming article on the typology of Library colophons. An alternative explanation would see these as evidence of a quality control process.

2 Ancient Terminology of Tablet Types

The terminology employed at seventh century BC Nineveh demonstrate that when dealing with literary-scientific texts their material support was of relevance. In addition to clay tablets, wax-filled wooden or ivory tablets were used as a writing support: in Akkadian these were known as *daltu* for a single leaf and *lē'u* for a polyptychon.[20] Almost no examples of these boards survive from ancient Iraq, whether from Neo-Assyrian times or the many previous centuries over which they had been in use. The major exception is the group of boards found at Nimrud.[21] With regard to clay tablets, the following terms were used to refer to tablet formats:

egertu these are one-column tablets in either landscape or portrait format.[22] In inventory lists from Nineveh, the so-called 'library records',[23] the term is used in juxtaposition to *ṭuppu*/*tuppu*. This latter word is the generic term for any kind of clay tablet, but in this context apparently refers to multi-columned tablets of scientific-literary content (by analogy with the *daltu* / *lē'u* contrast). *Egertu* appears there in connection with quite a number of text compositions:

- *Šumma Izbu* (SAA 7 no. 49 obv. i' 1', SAA 7 no. 50 rev. ii 1'(?))
- *Seal of Haltu-stone* (SAA 7 no. 49 obv. i' 2')
- *Day of the City God* (SAA 7 no. 49 obv. i' 3')
- 'Esoteric compositions' (SAA 7 no. 49 obv. i' 4')
- *Chariot of Ibnutu* (SAA 7 no. 49 obv. i' 5')
- *Ishur māda* (SAA 7 no. 49 obv. i' 6')
- *SI.DÙ* (SAA 7 no. 49 obv. i' 7')
- *Gilgameš* (SAA 7 no. 49 obv. i' 8')
- *Enūma Anu Enlil* (SAA 7 no. 49 obv. ii 18'–20', rev. ii 6'–8'; SAA 7 no. 50 obv. i 5', rev. ii 1'(?); SAA 7 No. 55 2'–3')
- *Šumma Ālu* (SAA 49 no. 49 rev. ii 17 (?); SAA 7 no. 50 obv. ii 11', rev. ii 1'(?), SAA 7 No. 55 6')
- *Ušburruda* (SAA 7 no. 50 obv. ii 6')
- *āšipūtu* 'corpus of the *āšipu*' (SAA 7 no. 50 obv. iii 4')

Within the remains of the Library there are indeed a number of one-columned text witnesses for most of these text compositions, although the term is not explicit in any of the colophons. The same can be said of the compositions described there as being written on DUB; that is, tablets with more than one column. A glaring entry here is the one-column tablet with *Gilgameš*, which is so ubiquitously written on three-column tablets. Only one such tablet is known, from Sultantepe. It is not clear what value such a tablet could have held to the Library scribes.[24]

u'iltu these are small one-column tablets in either landscape or portrait format. The texts written on them can include incantations, recipes, and commentaries. Some scholarly tablets found at Nineveh are labelled as *u'iltu* **[fig. 1]**:

- K.872: an almost complete landscape tablet containing a commentary to *Enūma Anu Enlil*.[25] Written by Ashur-Mudammiq, scribe of Ashur;
- K.8510: a fragment of landscape format tablet containing a commentary to *Enūma Anu Enlil* in Neo-Assyrian script.[26] Written by Ashur-Mudammiq, scribe of Ashur;
- Rm II 126: a fragment of landscape format tablet containing a commentary to *Enūma Anu Enlil* in Neo-Assyrian script. Ashurbanipal colophon *u*;
- 81-2-4, 258: a fragment of landscape format tablet containing a calculation probably in relation to *Alamdimmû*[27] in Neo-Assyrian script; written by Mušallim-DIL.

20 Compare Schnitzlein 2023a, 131-2 and 151-9.

21 See Howard 1955; a very small example was found at Ashur, Klengel-Brandt 1975.

22 The term is only attested in the Neo-Assyrian Period, where it was also used for one-column tablets of non-scientific-literary content; see Schnitzlein 2023a, 135-8.

23 See Parpola 1983.

24 The correlation between compositions in the lists and the tablet types on which they are found will be resumed in detail elsewhere.

25 Hunger 1968, no. 504.

26 Hunger 1968, no. 518.

27 Böck 2000, 20.

Figure 1 *u'iltu*s from Nineveh: K.872; 81-2-4, 258; Rm II 126; K.8510. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence)

u'iltu was also used as a description for astrological reports, which are small, landscape format tablets. Schnitzlein draws attention to a complication: VAT 8275 (KAR 44) is an incantation catalogue in landscape format labelled as an *u'iltu*.[28] It has a duplicate, also in landscape format, which is labelled instead as a *giṭṭu* (for which see below). Rm 717 is inscribed in Neo-Babylonian script; this might be the reason for not using the term *u'iltu*, which is only attested in Neo-Assyrian in connection with scientific-literary texts.

IM.GÍD.DA (*giṭṭu*; *imgiddû*; *liginnu*) 'long tablet': these are one-column tablets containing various scholarly texts, including medicine, omens, epics, and commentaries, as well as excerpts, which are sometimes serialised. They can be either portrait or landscape format. It is difficult to distinguish between *giṭṭu*, *imgiddû*, and *liginnu*. *Liginnu* can refer to canonical texts, including school tablets. Preserved Neo-Assyrian school tablets are uncommon. There are four examples from Nineveh **[fig. 2]**:

- K.90: fragment of a portrait format tablet in Babylonian script. The content is closely related to *Enūma Anu Enlil* XIV. Al-Rawi and George suggest that this tablet might be a scribal practice due to the many mistakes;[29]

28 Schnitzlein 2023a, 205.

29 Al-Rawi, George 1991-92, 66.

- K.945: an almost complete small landscape tablet in Neo-Assyrian script, containing the lexical list HAR-ra = *hubullu*;
- K.1520: small oval landscape tablet, which turns like a book. It is inscribed in Neo-Assyrian script. On its obverse is a list with measurements; the reverse contains the so-called *Practical Vocabulary of Nineveh*;
- K.2873: fragment of a portrait format tablet in Babylonian script, which turns like a book. The obverse is of magical content, while the reverse contains a prayer to Nabû.

Figure 2 School tablets from Nineveh: K.90; K.945; K.2873. For K.1520 see fig. 11. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence)

Beyond Rm 717 (mentioned above), three tablets from Nineveh are labelled as IM.GÍD.DA **[fig. 3]**:

- Sm 999: a fragment in Babylonian script;
- 1905-4-9, 88: a portrait format tablet containing magical *namburbi* texts in Babylonian script; written by Nabû-ušallim;
- K.398: a landscape format tablet containing a commentary to *Enūma Anu Enlil* in Neo-Assyrian script; written by Nabû-zuqup-kēnu.

K.398 stemmed originally from Nimrud; it is dated to 698 BC. The term IM.GÍD.DA appears in another of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu's tablets in Assyrian script: K.2164, a fragment of one-column tablet in portrait format. Within its colophon (for which see Cohen, this volume) three different expressions are used to refer to the tablet and its content. The tablet identification line refers to the text as the second division (*pirsu*) of the mystical text i.NAM.giš.hur.an.ki.a. then IM.GÍD.DA A.RÁ-*e*, after which the entire tablet is labelled as *tuppu*/*ṭuppu*. The term *arû*, which appears also on the obverse of K.2164[30] can be translated as 'product (of a multiplication)', 'numerical table', 'astronomical ephemeris'. K.2164, as far as it is preserved, contains a number of calculations. Hence, IM.GÍD.DA in connection with *arû* does not (primarily) refer to a tablet format but gives further information about the text, and could be translated with 'calculation text' or similar depending on whether it refers to the entire text or a section of it. BM 122625 is a fragmentary Middle Assyrian manuscript of literary text *Lugale*, containing chapters 13, 14, 15, and 16 of the serialised text composition. Two preserved phrases label the respective section above as 15th IM.GÍD.DA[31] and as 16th IM.GÍD.DA,[32] the latter being part of the colophon. This portrait format tablet has two columns, probably due to its length. IM.GÍD.DA-notes in the middle of the text are also attested in Neo-Assyrian tablets.

30 Livingstone 1986, 22-3 l. 15.

31 Van Dijk 1983, 173.

32 Van Dijk 1983, 181.

Figure 3 IM.GÍD.DAs from Nineveh: Rm 717; Sm 999; 1905-4-9, 88; K.398. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence)

Tablet identification lines can refer to the chapter of a serialised text composition with the terms *tuppu*/*ṭuppu*, *nisḫu* 'extract/copy', *pirsu* 'division', and IM.GÍD.DA. A chapter is usually found on one physical tablet. In Nineveh the terms *tuppu*/*ṭuppu* and *nisḫu* are the most commonly used. However, there are attestations of IM.GÍD.DA **[fig. 4]**:

- K.130: a landscape tablet containing physiognomic omens; second IM.GÍD.DA of the *Alamdimmû* excerpt series. Ashurbanipal colophon *a*;
- K.2166: a landscape tablet containing physiognomic omens; third IM.GÍD.DA of the *Alamdimmû* excerpt series. Ashurbanipal colophon *a*;
- K.3692: a fragment of a landscape format tablet containing physiognomic omens; second IM.GÍD.DA. Ashurbanipal colophon *a*;
- K.105: a landscape tablet containing physiognomic omens; sixth IM.GÍD.DA of the *Alamdimmû* excerpt series. Ashurbanipal colophon *a*.

K.130 and K.2166 seem to belong together as part of a set. They both contain the scribal process note *šá ina* ^{giš}LI.U$_5$.UM NU SAR.[33] K.105 and K.3692 seem to belong as part of another set (cf. K.3812). In addition to bearing Ashurbanipal colophon *a* in the unusual variant written while the clay was moist, they also share formatting features such as the double ruling before the colophon. Another example, K.14974, has IM.GÍD.DA and an abbreviated Ashurbanipal colophon *m*. The shape of the tablet cannot be discerned from the preserved fragment. Its content is cryptographic. Yet another fragment, Rm II 33, containing omens, refers to the text in its tablet identification line as the second IM.GÍD.DA.

33 We would like to thank Sophie Cohen for drawing this to our attention.

Figure 4 Serialised IM.GÍD.DA: K.130; K.2166; K.3692; K.105. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence)

DUB.GAL (*dubgallu*) 'large tablet': these were unusually big tablets containing large volumes of text written in small script over multiple columns.[34] Several references to DUB.GAL are known from Nineveh:

- K.3786: a one-column landscape format tablet containing an extispicy commentary in Babylonian script; third excerpt from an Assyrian DUB.GAL;[35]
- K.1315: a one-column landscape format tablet containing an extispicy commentary in Babylonian script; fourth and final excerpt from an Assyrian DUB.GAL;[36]
- K.21314: small fragment mentioning a DUB.GAL in a broken context;
- K.4349: a largely preserved Middle-Assyrian manuscript of the entire god List An: *Anum* and An: *Anu ša amēli*, copied from an old *dubgallu*.[37]

K.3786 and K.1315 might have belonged to the same tablet set of an excerpt commentary series on *Bārûtu*.[38] The series *Bārûtu* consists of a number of sub-series divided into chapters. Each sub-series had its own main commentary, which is subdivided into individual tablets. At Nineveh, two-column portrait format tablets such as K.3978 are common, but there are examples of one-column portrait format tablets (e.g. K.3948) and three-column portrait format tablets (e.g. K.3785).[39] All these examples have a Library colophon. Among the examples with non-Ashurbanipal colophons, one-column portrait format tablets are prevalent. The excerpt texts K.3786 and K.1315 comment on the sub-series *Padānu*. K.1315 has a catchline to the main commentary of the next sub-series, *Pān tākalti*. K.3787 can be as-

34 See Abusch, Schwemer 2009, 53-4.
35 Koch-Westenholz 2000, 232-3, 250-1.
36 Koch-Westenholz 2000, 232-3, 251-2.
37 See Lambert, Winters 2023, 10-12.
38 See further Cohen, this volume, fn. 46.
39 Compare Frahm 2011, 171-89.

Figure 5 'An elephant folio' (K.4349). © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence)

signed to the main commentary tablet 1, and K.1315 to the main commentary tablet 2.[40] There are attestations of two-column portrait format tablets for these main commentary tablets. Hence the term *dubgallu* might refer to such a two-column portrait tablet. Another option would be that K.3786 and K.1315 were both copied from the same *dubgallu*, which contained main commentary tablet 1 and 2.[41]

K.4349 is a largely complete six-column portrait tablet copied from a DUB.GAL **[fig. 5]**. There is a contemporary (Middle-Assyrian) duplicate, YBC 2401, which mentions the same scribe; it was copied instead from old tablets.[42] Its dimensions are 39.5 × 30.5 × 4.6 cm-1.8 cm at the sides. Both manuscripts most probably originated from Ashur.[43] Abusch and Schwemer infer that a *dubgallu* is such an 'oversized' tablet with 5-6 columns on each side, each column containing over 150 lines.[44]

Outside of Nineveh, Neo- and Late Babylonian DUB.GAL are attested as having contained lamentations, prayers, literature, and *Šumma Ālu*-omens: BM 35434,[45] BM 57532,[46] IM 77028 (SpTU 3 no. 98). According to Heinrich the ductus of BM 35434 is Old to Middle Babylonian, imitating the ductus of the *dubgallu* from which it was copied.[47] The text version itself is Middle Babylonian, and the colophon points to the tablet being written in the Neo-Babylonian or early Achaemenid period. Additionally, Neo-Babylonian tablet BM 40205,[48] with literary and lexicographic excerpts, was hastily excerpted from a DUB.GAL.

3 The Tablets

Minimum and maximum measurements of sample tablets from Nineveh are provided in the appendix. As handmade objects, there is inevitably some variation in the dimensions, even when the opposite edges are intended to be parallel; such variation is usually minimal. More significant is variation due to intentional curvature of the profile. In Library tablets, it is typically the case that the upper and lower edges are straight and parallel, while the left and right are concave; the degree of concavity can vary from so slight that it is hardly noticeable to a much more pronounced profile. The range of measurements is therefore greater in the width dimension than in the height. This applies to Assyrian tablets. Babylonian tablets can display a very different profile, closer to the abstract idea of a tablet that a modern cuneiformist carries in their head. The top and bottom edges are parallel, as often are the right and left edges, although concavity can also be seen. The obverse is flat to slightly rounded (especially near the edges), while the reverse is curved, arcing in from all edges. Late Babylonian scholarly tablets from Uruk, for example, can resemble Library tablets more closely (see e.g. AO 7661), although the 'brick' format land sale contracts are perhaps closer still with regard to the angularity of the corners and the squareness of the edges.

Looking at a tablet end-on (along the 'height'), the profile of the obverse and reverse faces are usually lightly biconvex, with both obverse and reverse appearing to be curved (despite the obverse being flat and the reverse curved overall; e.g. K.137) **[fig. 9]**. In all cases, the middle of the tablet will be thicker than the parts closer to the corners. The thickness of the middle of edges is also, as one would expect, greater than that of the middle of the top/bottom. The profile of the right and left edges is lightly curved; in some cases it can be more squared-off (e.g. K.2007) **[fig. 15]**, or less commonly very rounded (e.g. K.2323) **[fig. 12]** or even bevelled (e.g. K.156). Looking at a tablet side-on (along the 'width'), the profile of the obverse and reverse faces is typically semi-oval, with flat obverse and curved reverse.

Irrespective of type, certain conventions are observable in Library tablets.[49] When viewing the obverse face, the top and bottom edges usually appear straight and parallel; the right and left edges

40 Frahm 2011, 177.

41 Frahm 2011, 179-80.

42 See Lambert, Winters 2023, 10-12.

43 Pedersén 1985, 41.

44 Abusch, Schwemer 2009, 153.

45 Heinrich 2022.

46 Zgoll 2003, 191-203 Ms D.

47 Heinrich 2022.

48 Edited by *eBL*.

49 This is not to suggest that every single tablet displays all these features. There are even cases known where the obverse is the curved side; the reverse flat. See, for example, K.72 (anti-witchcraft); 1905,0409.4 (Izi). Cf. Babylonian tablet K.6331 (blessings for the king; noted by Mayer *apud* Watanabe 1992, 369). See further Fincke 2021, 32.

usually appear concave to a greater or lesser extent. When viewing the side, the top and bottom edges almost always appear round in profile;[50] the right and left edges can vary from lightly rounded to squared. One of the most distinctive features is the curvature visible below the top and above the bottom on the obverse and reverse faces, being more pronounced on the lower reverse (e.g. DT 1) **[fig. 13]**.[51] It is perhaps a development from an effect that would appear naturally from the other profiles. The rounded top/bottom can lead to an appearance of space being left uninscribed at those edges. Combined with a concave profile, this would produce the curving depression. This curving feature is widespread in the first millennium cuneiform world, but seems to be more pronounced in Nineveh Library tablets. This is true regardless of the size of the tablet, the number of columns, and whether the tablet is inscribed in portrait or landscape format (noting that in the latter case, the curving is present at the right/left edges instead of the top/bottom). The interface between the obverse/reverse and side edges is typically quite sharp. This goes hand in hand with the feature that text is usually only inscribed on the obverse/reverse, unlike in Babylonian tablets when the other faces are more commonly used. The text is aligned to these interfaces. The interface between the top/bottom and side edges is typically a sharp arch, with pinched-looking corners **[fig. 6]**. This contrasts with the typical Babylonian intersection, which takes the form of a rounded corner. The curving and corners of the Library tablets suggest an aesthetic based on traditional forms, but leaning towards a more rectilinear shape and sharper edges. This parallels the aesthetic shown by the rectilinear nature of the characteristic Library script.

Figure 6 The characteristic arched corner marking the juncture between top/bottom and side edges of a Library tablet (K.110). © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence)

50 See exceptionally 81-07-27, 49, a pictographic sign list, whose top edge is pointed like a roof; cf. Rm II 115 (landscape format tablet in Babylonian script with *Bārûtu*); K.253 (portrait format tablet in Assyrian script with verbal paradigms; private colophon).

51 Comparable curvature can occasionally be seen on other tablets, e.g. *Babylonian Almanac* K.106 (Assyrian script, no colophon).

4 A Comparison of Tablet Types Across Groups

The height of portrait format tablets[52] measured ranges from a minimum of 7.0 to 29.7 cm, and a maximum of 7.0 to 29.7 cm. The width ranges from a minimum of 3.6 to 19.6 cm, and a maximum of 3.8 and 20.8 cm. The thickness varies according to the place of measurement: the corners of a tablet are the thinnest part, expanding along both height and width, with the thickest part in the centre. The greatest thickness overall ranges from 1.4 to 4.0 cm. The thickness correlates with the other dimensions, bigger tablets being thicker. The minimum ratio (H:W)[53] lies between 1.3 to 3.1, the maximum[54] between 1.4 to 3.0. All the tablets with a ratio of 2.1 or larger are one-columned. The tablets with a smaller ratio are one to three-columned. Three-column tablets display a ratio maximum between 1.4-1.6, two column tablets between 1.4-2.0, and one-column tablets cover the full range. The width of a portrait format tablet is relatively fixed, with most variation taking place in the height, according to the length of the text. There are few examples of two- or three-column tablets with a maximum width below 10.0 cm (but see K.49, K.4395).

No tablets bearing a Library colophon have a height maximum under 10.0 cm. Examples of such small tablets in our sample include both tablets in Babylonian script (K.90: mentioned above, colophon absent;[55] K.888, colophon absent; K.3340, colophon area missing; K.118, colophon absent; K.2329, colophon existent, BM 98582, colophon present), and in Assyrian script (K.106, colophon absent; K.165, colophon absent; K.1908, colophon absent; K.1290, colophon absent, SAA 3 text). All of these tablets have a width under 7.0 cm (max. 3.8 to 6.3 cm). There are further examples for which the width is under 7.0 cm (max 5.2 to 6.8 cm), their height ranges between 10.8 cm to 12.1 cm. None of these bear an Ashurbanipal colophon.

For landscape format tablets, the width ranges from a minimum 7.1 to 16.7 cm to a maximum of 5.3 to 17.7 cm. The height ranges from a minimum of 3.6 to 11.7 cm to a maximum of 3.8 to 11.8 cm. The maximum thickness ranges between 1.4 to 2.7 cm. All of these examples contain one column of text. There is one exception: K.2252 (a three-column tablet containing *Gilgameš*) **[fig. 12]**, which is considerably bigger (width min and max 22.3 cm; height max 1.49 and height min 1.43 cm). The minimum and maximum ratio (H:W) both lie between 0.5 to 0.8. Calculated the other way around to allow comparison with the portrait format tablets described above, the minimum ratio (W:H) is 1.3 to 1.9, the maximum 1.3 to 2.0. These ratios show that with landscape tablets, the length of the longer side does not get as proportionally long as in portrait tablets.

If one takes into consideration only the portrait tablets with Library colophons, the height ranges between a minimum of 10.9 to 28.4 cm to a maximum of 10.9 to 28.7 cm. Nine tablets (out of 76) have a maximum height under 15 cm (K.48, K.49, K.235, K.35, K.1282, K.1284, K.2489, K.2847, K.2489, K.4045b). The width ranges from a minimum of 6.8 to 17.6 cm to a maximum of 7.0 cm to 18.3 cm. The maximum thickness ranges from 2.0 to 3.8 cm. The ratio maximum lies between 1.5 and 3.0, the minimum between 1.5 to 3.1 cm. Only tablets with two to three columns of text have a ratio maximum of 1.5.

The landscape one-column tablets with a Library colophon have a width between a minimum of 8.2 to 16.7 cm and a maximum of 8.2 to 16.7 cm, with a height between a minimum of 4.6 to 8.8 cm and a maximum of 4.9 to 9.0 cm. With K.887 the height could only be taken near the edge and is 3.9 cm. The thickness maximum lies between 1.8 to 2.5 cm. The minimum and maximum ratio (H:W) is 0.5 to 0.6. The maximum ratio (W:H) is 1.6 to 1.8 and the minimum 1.6 to 2.0 (K.3317, *Seed of Kingship*, having the ratio of 2.0). The only three column tablet is K.2252 (mentioned above); its maximum ratio (W:H) differs slightly, at 1.5.

In our sample, portrait and landscape tablets with a Library colophon fall within the general range of tablets. Yet, some interesting observations can be made. Apparently, the thickness of the tablets with a Library colophon has been standardised. Portrait format tablets are at least 10.0 cm high and 7.0 cm wide.

Nabû temple library tablets – written for that collection on behalf of Ashurbanipal – display some features divergent from the royal collection. An unusually high proportion are conspicuously flat on both sides (see 1905-4-9, 246; 1905-4-9, 412; BM 128083; Rm II 146). Similarly, they display markedly square edges, beyond what is typical for the royal collection (see BM 128083; K.9278; Rm II 199). Almost all clearly had

52 At the time of writing, it was not possible to include measurements of 'complete' tablets K.47, K.150, K.263, K.2175, K.2262, K.2354, K.2845, K.4345, K.4956.

53 In the case of 92 out of 172 'complete' tablets, the minimum ratio cannot be given, since the minimum height or width was not preserved.

54 In the case of 54 out of 172 'complete' portrait format tablets, no maximum ratio can be given, since the maximum height or width was not preserved.

55 For the purposes of this paper, 'absent' refers to the situation where neither a Library colophon nor one naming a private individual is present. Such tablets may include remarks typically found in colophons about the sources used, for example.

Figure 7 Nabû temple Library tablet (Rm II 146). © The Trustees of the British Museum.
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square[56] (or very lightly rounded) edges more akin to what is found elsewhere at Nineveh, although at a much higher frequency. They are also often among the thickest tablets found at Nineveh. K.4614 and BM 128083 have text on the top edge, which is unusual for Library tablets. Lamentation texts with Ashurbanipal colophon *o* (from the temple library) are unusual in sometimes being found on two-column tablets.

The tablets with Ashurbanipal colophon *a*, added secondarily, form a mixed group. It includes numerous tablets that have been used over the years to illustrate exemplary Library tablets, such as K.162, the famous *Descent of Ishtar* tablet, and K.2252, Tablet 11 of *Gilgameš* (the Flood Tablet, as reconstructed by George Smith) **[fig. 12]**. K.65 (*Šurpu*) **[fig. 8]** looks much like a Library tablet, although with features less like the characteristic Library ones, and the inscription less carefully executed. This can be compared with K.150 **[fig. 8]**, a *Šurpu* tablet with an unambiguous Ashurbanipal Library colophon (*c*). K.197 (*Nabnītu*) could be another example.

Figure 8 Two copies of *Šurpu*. K.65 (Ashurbanipal colophon *a*); K.150 (Ashurbanipal colophon *c*).
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Around 120 tablets from Nineveh are now known to mention Nabû-zuqup-kēnu in their colophons. These tablets originated from Nimrud. Their appearance is not as standardised as the Ashurbanipal tablets. The script height varies between 2 to 4 mm. With the shorter edges, there is a curvature visible both for portrait and landscape format tablets, although its degree is variable. With K.3068 and Rm 155 it looks slight, while with K.137, K.953, K.2171, K.2686, and K.3475 it is more pronounced **[fig. 9]**. The non-Library tablets in Assyrian script from Nineveh are a heterogeneous group. The shape of a tablet belonging to Issar-šumu-ēreš, K.2861 looks like the Ashurbanipal-style, but the layout of the text does not appear to be as carefully implemented **[fig. 12]**. Cohen (this volume) points out that the sign forms used are similar to those of the Library tablets, but this is not the case with all Issar-šumu-ēreš-tablets. For example, K.3384 shows – according to Cohen – similarities in layout and ductus to a Nabû-zuqup-kēnu tablet (K.2164). Interestingly, the shape of its upper and lower edges is different from what is seen with Library tablets.

56 Noticeably square edges are also seen in tablets containing lamentations found in other groups; e.g. K.257 (Babylonian script), K.4338a (Assyrian script, no colophon). It is not restricted to that group, however.

Figure 9 Nabû-zuqup-kēnu tablets (Rm 155; K.137). © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence)

A group of tablets from outside Nineveh that merits mention here is the four Neo-Assyrian tablets bearing colophons that name as scribe Šumma-Balaṭ (VAT 10262, VAT 9000, VAT 10143, VAT 10270).[57] These are carefully finished tablets, which are neatly inscribed.[58] Given their find spots, VAT 10262 and VAT 9000 belong to the so-called library N2 in Assur.[59] VAT 10143 and VAT 10270 presumably belong also to this same library.[60] Possible dates for the N2 tablets range between 739 B.C. to post-canonical 618* B.C.[61] The dimensions of two of these tablets have been preserved completely. Based on available photographs and the secondary literature, some preliminary remarks on the shape of these tablets are possible. VAT 9000 **[fig. 10]**[62] is a two-column tablet in portrait format. Its measurements are 26.8 × 16.6 × 2.8 cm.[63] The ratio between its length and width (26.8:16.6) is approximately 1.6. The obverse is flat and the reverse bulks slightly outwards. The longer edges bend slightly inwards towards the middle of tablet. The shorter edges form straight lines from one corner to the other and are rounded. VAT 10143 **[fig. 10]**[64] is a completely preserved three-column portrait format tablet measuring 20.9 × 13.3 × 2.2 cm.[65] The ratio between its length and width is 1.6. The obverse is flat and the reverse bulks outwards. The edges, as far as they are preserved, form straight lines from one corner to the other, the longer edges – from the images at least **[fig. 10]** – might slightly bend inwards. The upper and left edge appear to be rounded. Similar dimensions and ratios are also attested at Nineveh. There is one major difference from Ashurbanipal tablets, however: the curvature of the shorter edges. This is significant. Judging by the photographs of the incompletely preserved Šumma-Balaṭ-texts VAT 10262[66] and VAT 10270,[67] the shorter edges of these portrait tablets are rounded and form once again straight lines; no curvature is present.

57 Hunger 1968, no. 246 and no. 261.
58 We would like to thank Joachim Marzahn for suggesting these tablets to us.
59 See Pedersén 1986, 31.
60 Pedersén 1986, 33.
61 Pedersén 1986, 29.
62 Fincke 2021, pl. XXX.
63 Fincke 2021, 80.
64 Hrůša, Weiershäuser 2020, no. 185, 602-9.
65 Hrůša, Weiershäuser 2020, 211.
66 Hrůša, Weiershäuser 2020, no. 156, 538-9.
67 Hrůša, Weiershäuser 2020, no. 179, 572-85.

Figure 10 VAT 9000 and VAT 10143 tablets written by Šumma-Balaṭ.
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The tablets in Babylonian script are of course another mixed group. Some (59) bear colophons naming individual scribes. These can appear very different from Library tablets **[fig. 12]**. Other members of the group lack a colophon, and thus belong also in the next group, which is also highly mixed. Some we would not expect to have had a colophon, such as school tablets, catalogues, or labels.[68] Many are written in Babylonian script, and often look distinct from Library tablets. Some others are Assyrian, but also look distinct from Library tablets.[69] Then there are some Assyrian literary texts (published in SAA 3) or royal rituals or cultic texts (published in SAA 20), which were not canonical in the sense that a text like *Enūma Eliš* was, that lack colophons. Those tablets exhibit a wide variety of often unusual types, and offer the impression of being less carefully completed than Library tablets proper. Also conspicuous here are text compositions that were not as canonised as others, referring here to a degree of fixity in content, tablet number and sequence. As examples, the omen series *Enūma Anu Enlil*[70] and *Šumma Ālu*[71] could be cited. Many are one-column Babylonian sources, but there are also numerous one- and two-column Assyrian sources.

Other tablets contain texts that we might ordinarily expect to have been given a colophon. The tablets sometimes look indistinguishable from tablets with a Library colophon. Some could once have been marked with Ashurbanipal *a* in ink, of course. It is not yet possible to detect traces of lost ink. Various groups could be identified. A high proportion of tablets without colophon are in landscape format. Of these, some are expected: *Gilgameš*, baby incantations, excerpts, commentaries. Others are less immediately explicable. Might we see among them intermediary tablets in an editorial process?[72] This format was typical for school exercises among other ephemeral documents. The phenomenon of extispicy queries may be relevant here. While the queries – which are particularly roughly made and inscribed – are in landscape format, the subsequent reports are in portrait format. The exceptions to this pattern (that is, queries in portrait format) are actually archival copies.[73] One further tablet deserves mention here: AO 5372,[74] the famous *Eighth Campaign of Sargon*, which in many respects looks like an Ashurbanipal Library tablet.[75]

Figure 11 Unusual lexical tablets: K.4395 (*Practical Lu*); K.2839 (*Syllabary A*); K.1520 (*Practical Vocabulary of Nineveh*). All of these seem to be school tablets.
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68 Catalogues and labels are not included here.

69 See, for example, K.3846, already identified as anomalous by Koch-Westenholz 2000, 105.

70 See Al-Rawi, George 2006, 50 and Heeßel 2018, 256 with further references.

71 See Freedman 2005, 3.

72 See further two *namburbi* catalogues interpreted by Maul 1994, 196 as being witness of an editorial process. This is taken up by Steinert 2018, 163 and Schnitzlein 2023a, 313-14. For a discussion of the function of catalogues see Steinert 2018. For chains of sources, see now Simkó (this volume).

73 See SAA 4: 282 note to no. 299.

74 `https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010166028`. It is very large: 24 × 37 × 4 cm.

75 We might even consider K.3751, a royal inscription of Tiglath-pileser III.

Figure 12 A tablet of Issar-šumu-ēreš (K.2861); a tablet without colophon (K.149; *Šumma Ālu* excerpt in Assyrian script); a Library tablet in Babylonian script (K.2323; extispicy); a Babylonian tablet (K.69; balag, colophon of Itti-Marduk-balāṭu). © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence)

5 Basic Typology of Tablets Produced for Ashurbanipal's Library

The use of tablet types correlates strongly with textual types (i.e. genres) and, via both of these, with colophon types. The copies of texts clearly produced for Ashurbanipal's Library (meaning here those bearing Ashurbanipal colophons) were typically written on standardised tablet types. That is to say, tablets bearing *Gilgameš* are written on landscape format tablets in three columns. Likewise, copies of the *Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia* were written on large portrait format tablets in two columns. This is not to suggest that all such tablets were of identical proportions; certainly, there is no evidence to suggest manufacture from templates or moulds. The typology of tablets within a composition, and within and between genres, from various sites, can help reveal how a manuscript was viewed, as well as its intended function. In this section can be found a selection of examples of compositions from across the range of genres, as found at Nineveh, together with duplicates found at other sites.[76]

A notable exception to this standardisation is provided by *Maqlû*, for which copies of Tablet I (which is shorter than the others) are one-column, while the other Tablets are all two-column. Similarly, *Šurpu* is typically written on two-column tablets, except for Tablets IV, VII–IX, which are regularly written on one-column tablets.[77] This is again determined by text-length.[78] The complementary distribution of column formats for these two witchcraft-related magical compositions is a clear indication that genre or composition was not a sole determining principle in typology. *Maqlû* also illustrates another point. Schwemer noted that the dimensions of members of a set of tablets can vary from one tablet to the next.[79] *Maqlû* and *Šurpu* sources look similar to each other **[figs 8, 16]**.

6 Literature

Account of Creation K.4175 is a two-column tablet in portrait format.

Advice to a Prince DT 1 is a one-column tablet in portrait format. The Babylonian source (IM 77807) is similar.

Angim this text was written on one-column tablets in portrait format. Cooper divided the sources into three groups, based on a combination of features including tablet shape.[80] One group displays features used exclusively for *Angim* and *Lugale*. Middle Assyrian sources were either one- or two-column tablets. At Neo-Assyrian Nimrud there are one-column tablets of both *Lugale* and *Angim*.

Assyrian collection proverbs this text was written on two-column tablets in portrait format.

Atrahasīs the Standard Babylonian version is too poorly preserved at Nineveh. The only sufficiently preserved source of the Neo-Assyrian version is a three-column portrait format tablet.

Counsels of a Pessimist K.1453 is a one-column tablet in landscape format.

Counsels of Wisdom this text is found on one- and two-column tablets in portrait format. Babylonian source BM 38484 and Borsippa source BM 33851 are two-column tablets.

Enki and Ninmah most sources are two-column tablets in portrait format. K.3364 is a one-column tablet in portrait format.

Enūma Eliš Most sources are one-column portrait format tablets. BM 98909 (Babylonian script) has two columns; it contains two tablets of text (I–II). One-column tablets are the norm elsewhere too, as at Sult-

76 The following survey does not pretend to be exhaustive for compositions or genres, or sometimes for manuscripts within compositions. It should, nevertheless, be illustrative of the corpus.

77 We would like to thank Frank Simons for bringing this to our attention.

78 The phenomenon is not confined to a single genre. For example, Koch 2015, 32 notes that while Tablet 1 of *Bārûtu* chapter 5 was written on two-column tablets, Tablet 2 was written on one-column tablets, as was Tablet 15 of *Enūma Anu Enlil*. Similarly, the *Emesal Vocabulary* was two-column for the first two Tablets, but three-column for Tablet 3.

79 Schwemer 2017, 45.

80 Cooper 1978, 35.

antepe and Ashur. They are also typical at Babylonian sites. A two-column tablet is also known at Ashur.

Erra and Išum one- (K.1282) or two-column (K.2619) tablets in portrait format, both at Nineveh and at other Assyrian sites.

Founding of Eridu one-column tablets in portrait format.

Gilgameš George notes that a three-column format was standard for the Standard Babylonian version of the text;[81] this applies to manuscripts from Babylonian sites as well as Assyrian, whether Nineveh or elsewhere. A small number of exceptions are known. The author suggests that Nineveh source Sm 2122 may have had only two columns per side.[82] At Sultantepe there is a one-column tablet in portrait format containing only half a Tablet's worth of text. At Nimrud there is a four-column tablet (containing text from two Tablets) and another that was either two or four columns. Two Babylonian sources seem to have been two-column tablets.

Ludlul one-column tablets are standard at both Assyrian and Babylonian sites, although a two-column tablet and a three-column tablet also exist, at Ashur and Babylon respectively. See further Hätinen (this volume, "*Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* in Ashurbanipal's Library").

Lugale this text was written on one-column tablets in portrait format. See further under *Angim* above.

Proverbs these are found on two- or three-column tablets in portrait format.

Seed of Kingship the sources are one-column tablets in landscape format. A detailed study of the tablets containing this composition will form part of the dissertation of Tonio Mitto, University of Munich.

Šamaš Hymn the sources are two-column tablets in portrait format. Sources from Sippar follow the same format.

Slaying of Labbu Rm 282 is a one-column tablet in portrait format.

Theodicy two-column tablet in portrait format. Two-column tablets are also found at Neo-Assyrian Ashur, and Late Babylonian Babylon and Sippar.

Toil of Babylon two-column tablet in portrait format. A one-column tablet is known from Late Babylonian Sippar.[83]

Lamentations usually one-column tablets in portrait format. Gabbay discusses the tablet formats of Emesal texts.[84] In the first millennium, such texts were usually written on one-column tablets, copied for a specific use, and could be labelled IM.GÍD.DA. The occasional two-column tablets, called *tuppu*, are suggested to be reliable reference copies. *Balag*s in Babylonian script found at Nineveh can sometimes be written on two-column tablets. Old Babylonian *eršemma*s tended to be written on one-column tablets, while *balag*s could be on multi-column tablets.

81 George 2003, 394.
82 George 2003, 407.
83 Pers. comm. E. Jiménez 21 March 2024.
84 Gabbay 2014, 230-3.

K.3473
K.3182
K.133
K.2252
K.3321
K.3321
K.3321

Neo- and Middle Assyrian Ashur, and Late Babylonian Babylon, Sippar, Uruk, and Kish. One-column tablets are also attested. K.204 contains the short Tablet VII. K.52 seems to contain extracts; K.9788 is an unusual two-column extract tablet.

Ana Ittišu two-column tablets in portrait format. The same format is found at Ashur, in Middle Assyrian manuscripts (VAT 8875, VAT 9552).

Antagal two-column tablets in portrait format.

Diri two-column tablets in portrait format. The same format is found at Neo-Assyrian Ashur and Late Babylonian Babylon. One-column tablets from Late Babylonian Sippar and Babylon contain only part of a Tablet.

Emesal Vocabulary most sources are two-column tablets in portrait format. The same format is found at Middle Assyrian Ashur. Sources of Tablet 1 seem to be one-column tablets.

Erimhuš two-column tablets in portrait format. The same format is attested at Middle and Neo-Assyrian Ashur, as well as Late Babylonian Babylon, Sippar, Ur, and Uruk. Late Babylonian Uruk also knew a three-column format.

Great Star List this list is usually found on four-column tablets in portrait format, with a word list appended. A three-column tablet is also known, without the appended word list (K.250).

HAR-ra usually two-column tablets in portrait format. This format is known elsewhere, as for example at Late Babylonian Sippar. A three-column format is also common (e.g. K.4257, Rm 608), as in Late Babylonian sources from Nippur and elsewhere (AO 2131). Excerpt tablets are known as one-column tablets in either portrait (K.165) or landscape (K.945) format. Middle Assyrian sources from Ashur also attest a three-column format.

Izi most sources are two-column tablets in portrait format, but three-column tablets are also known. Two-column tablets are also known at Middle Assyrian Ashur, Neo-Assyrian Khorsabad and Nimrud, and Late Babylonian Sippar. Three-column tablets are also known at Late Babylonian Sippar. Middle Assyrian Ashur also attests a four-column arrangement.

Lu two-column portrait format. Compare K.4395, which contains *Practical Lu*, a non-canonical text. It is three-column tablet in portrait format whose size and shape differs markedly from tablets containing Lu **[fig. 11]**.

Malku two-column tablets in portrait format. Neo-Assyrian Sultantepe attests two- and three-column tablets (and even one with three on one side, two on the other), while Neo-Assyrian Nimrud attests two-column tablets in both Assyrian and Babylonian script.

MUR-gud two- and three-column tablets in portrait format. Sources of this composition follow the typology of lexical tablets rather than commentary tablets, implying that it was viewed in antiquity as a lexical text in its own right.

Nabnītu two-column tablets in portrait format. K.4314 appears to be a two-column rather than three-column tablet (pace MSL 16 267). K.4165 is, exceptionally, three-column. A three-column arrangement is also known at Neo-Assyrian Nimrud.

Syllabary A multi-column tablets in portrait format.

S^{a} Vocabulary two-column tablets in portrait format are standard; also at Middle and Neo-Assyrian Ashur.

S^{b} Vocabulary three-column tablets in portrait format.

Triple Column God List two(or more)-column tablets in portrait format.

Figure 14 *Ana Ittišu* (K.251; Ashurbanipal colophon *a*); *Antagal* (K.40); *Malku* (K.4375); *MUR-gud* (Sm 13).
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8 Omens

Alamdimmû the physiognomic omens are typically one-column tablets in portrait format, with some two-column. *Ahû* and excerpt tablets use landscape format [fig. 4]. Late Babylonian Uruk attests a two-column format.

Bārûtu most tablets are one-column tablets in portrait format, with some in two-column format. Neo-Assyrian Sultantepe attests one- and two-column tablets. Commentaries are typically two-column tablets in portrait format, with a few three-column tablets and exceptionally one-column tablets (K.2146, without colophon; K.3068, Nabû-zukup-kēnu; K.182; K.3617). Babylonian script commentaries tend instead to be one-column and usually in landscape format.

Enūma Anu Enlil celestial omens use portrait format tablets. Most are one-column, with some two-column or even three-column (e.g. K.270). Fincke notes that the three-column format was only used for *Sammeltafeln*. Interestingly, the three-column tablets from other sites are either also a *Sammeltafel* (Babylon) or treat two Tablets as a single unit (Ashur). Two-column tablets are known from other Assyrian and Babylonian sites.[86] Excerpt tablets use landscape format. Commentaries are known as one-column tablets in either portrait or landscape tablets. One-column tablets are known from other Assyrian and Babylonian sites. The serialised commentary *Šumma Sîn Ina Tāmartišu* is found on one-column tablets in portrait format.

Hemerology the *Babylonian Almanac* is found on three-column tablet K.106, in portrait format. At Late Babylonian Borsippa a four-column tablet in landscape tablet is known. At Late Babylonian Sippar, there are six-column landscape format tablets (as also at Babylon) containing the entire text, with one-column portrait format tablets containing only part of it. The *Prostration Hemerology* is found on one-column portrait format tablets. The same arrangement is known from Late Babylonian Babylon. *Inbu Bēl Arhi* is typically found on two-column tablets in portrait format, but an example of a one-column tablet is also found.

Iqqur Īpuš one- and two-column tablets in portrait are found, with a one-column landscape arrangement also known. Fincke notes that a recension from Ashur uses four-column tablets, while others from Nineveh use one- or two-column tablets.[87]

Šumma Ālu terrestrial omens (both Assyrian and Babylonian) are typically found on one-column tablets in portrait format, with some two-column. Neo-Assyrian Nimrud attests one-column format; Sultanepe one- and two-column format. This applies whether the tablet is in Assyrian or Babylonian script, and whether it bears a Library colophon or not. Excerpt tablets use landscape format.

Šumma Izbu sources are usually one-column tablets in portrait format, although landscape format is also known. Excerpts are also typically one-column tablets in portrait format. At Nimrud there are several two-column tablets in Babylonian script.

Šumma Sîn Ina Tāmartišu one-column tablets in portrait format.

Tamītu one- and two-column tablets in portrait format. K.2383 is three-column, as is the source from Neo-Assyrian Nimrud. K.2608 is landscape format.

Ziqīqu sources are typically found on two-column tablets in portrait format. K.2266 is a four-column tablet provisionally assigned to *Ziqīqu*. Similarly, Sm 801 is a three-column tablet.

86 Fincke 2013, 583-4.

87 Fincke 2013, 584.

Figure 15 *Šumma Ālu* (K.236; Ashurbanipal colophon *a*); *Šumma Izbu* (K.2007; Ashurbanipal colophon *a*); *Enūma Anu Enlil* (K.3563); *Ziqīqu* (K.25).
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9 Magic/Medicine

Bīt Mēseri the text is found on variously one- two- and three-column tablets in portrait format.

Bīt Rimki the text is found on mostly on one-column tablets in portrait format, with some two- and three-column tablets. Neo-Assyrian Sultantepe attests a one-column portrait format.

Bīt Salā' Mê the typical arrangement is one-column tablets in portrait format. Late Babylonian tablet BM 47696 is two-column.

Lamaštu tablets of the *pirsu* version (apparently created at Nineveh, and shared at Sultantepe) use two-column tablets in portrait format for Tablets 1-2 and one-column for the ritual tablet, Tablet 3. Sources containing the entire text use three-column tablets. Tablets of the *tuppu* version (Ashur and Babylonia) use mostly two-column format, with a source from Sippar in three-column.

Maqlû Most sources are two-column tablets in portrait format. Some one-column sources are known. Neo-Assyrian Sultantepe attests two-column tablets.

Mīs Pî this composition is found on one- and two-column tablets in portrait format. The difference seems to be partly one of tablets and partly different editions of the material.[88] Neo-Assyrian Sultantepe attests one-column tablets.

Muššu'u most sources are one-column tablets in portrait format. The same arrangement is found at Late Babylonian Ur, Sippar, and Babylon. A two-column format is found at Neo-Assyrian Nimrud.

Namburbi most *namburbi*s are one-column portrait format tablets, although a landscape format is also known (K.1363).

Namerimburuda most sources are one-column tablets in portrait format, although two-column tablets are known; also at Neo-Assyrian Ashur and Nimrud, and Late Babylonian Sippar.[89]

Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia all sources are unusually large two-column tablets in portrait format. The exceptional size of these tablets is remarkable. The text could instead have been distributed over a larger number of smaller tablets. Presumably, this choice implies a deeper significance. We might speculate that the size conveyed a certain special status, or maybe the size is what was required to allow the 12 treatises of the series to be contained on 50 tablets, with those numbers carrying meaning.[90] The related series of therapeutic medical texts, the very poorly preserved *Nineveh Medical Compendium*, seems to have been written on three-column landscape format tablets (see Simkó this volume). Related material in Babylonian script is found on one-column and multi-column tablets, the former of which might have been intermediate sources in the editing of the *Encyclopaedia*.

Šurpu typically two-column tablets in portrait format, with one-column tablets when the chapter is short. This applies to manuscripts in Assyrian and Babylonian script. The distribution is followed by tablets from Ashur, Nimrud, and Sultantepe too.

Udughul this composition is found in two- three- and four-column tablets in portrait format.

Uruanna Fincke identifies three groups of sources (narrow one-column tablets, broader one-column tablets, and tablets with more than one column), plus small extract tablets.[91] Most sources are on two-column tablets. The same arrangement is known from Middle Assyrian Nimrud and Ashur, as well as Neo-Assyrian Ashur. Three-column sources are known; also from Middle and Neo-Assyrian Ashur.[92]

88 See Walker, Dick 2001, 31.

89 See Maul 2019, 8.

90 As suggested by Panayotov 2018, 106.

91 Fincke 2021, 31.

92 See further Fincke 2021, 48-9.

Figure 16 *Bīt Salā' Mê* (K.2106); *Maqlû* (K.2950); *Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia* (K.61); *Udughul* (K.2507).
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10 Conclusions

It is clear from the above survey that standardisation of tablet formats was present in the Library. It is also apparent that the degree of standardisation correlates positively with the degree of canonisation of the text in question. A particular instance of this in action can be seen in the various texts seen as commentaries.[93]

Several general observations can be made. Firstly, there is a very strong preference for portrait format tablets.[94] In this regard, the corpus stands in contrast to Middle Assyrian and Middle Babylonian ones, where landscape tablets gained in popularity.[95] Secondly, there is a strong preference for tablets having two columns per face[96] when one is not suitable. This pattern seems to be stronger than at contemporary Ashur or Late Babylonian sites, where the three-column format appears to be retained more often. This feature, together with many others such as Ashurbanipal's patronage of an editorial programme covering various scholarly compositions, his implementation of a new characteristic tablet shaping, the Library script, and the consistent application of colophons, for example, suggest that his Library and its activities should be seen as innovative and cutting edge, rather than a conservative accumulation of pre-existing material. This, of course, should be understood within the relatively conservative context of cuneiform culture, and its philosophical view of practical scholarly knowledge as revealed to men by the gods rather than created by them. Great scholars could nevertheless edit material into a new form. It is noteworthy that the texts newly edited in the Library typically adopt two-column format. The *Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia* is perhaps the ultimate manifestation of this; Library scribes seem to have taken one-column Babylonian sources, reworked their content via one-column tablets into the final product – deluxe editions in the form of sets of large, two-column tablets.[97] One-column tablets seem to have been used as intermediary devices more widely in the Library.

When faced with lengthy texts, Library scribes usually preferred either to increase the number or the size of the tablets rather than the number of columns beyond two; a rare exception is presented in the case of *Lamaštu*, when it was possible to include the entire text on a single three-column tablet. The preferences for portrait orientation and two-column format make the *Gilgameš* tablets all-the-more noteworthy, characterised by their consistent use of both landscape orientation and three-column format. These two habits were traditional and apparently somewhat old-fashioned looking by the seventh century. The retention of them for *Gilgameš* suggests a special reverence for that text. *Seed of Kingship* is also unusual in this regard, being written consistently on one-column tablets in landscape format. It is further noteworthy that landscape tablets are almost always in one-column format, despite their orientation favouring multi-column use.

Many literary texts are found on one-column tablets. As a group of compositions, the lexical corpus shows a very high degree of uniformity, with a marked preference for two-column portrait format tablets. While some examples of three-column tablets are known, they cluster in certain compositions. A few are found in *Izi*, with others in HAR-*ra* and its standardised commentary MUR-*gud*. The *Great Star List* is exceptional in its favouring of four-column tablets. That text is not really part of the lexical corpus proper, however, being more of a technical tool in list format. Copies of the elementary *Syllabary A* is found on multi-column tablets; in this case, the phenomenon is probably explicable by the very brief nature of its entries. The omen corpus exhibits a noticeable tendency towards one-column tablets, which is perhaps surprising given the length of the compositions. The magical compositions often favour one-column tablets, although the pattern is mixed. Rituals are typically on one-column tablets, witchcraft and medicine more usually on two-column.

Apart from the carefully controlled script, with sign heights between 2 to 3 mm, the shape of the tablets with Library colophons is also clearly standardised, regardless of how many columns its surface is divided into. Tablets bearing Ashurbanipal colophon *a* seem to conform to this suite of features that are standard for tablets bearing the other Library colophons. The same can often be said of many tablets that lack a colophon altogether. Tablets bearing the colophons of private individuals, by con-

93 On which see Frahm 2011, 28-9.

94 We leave aside here exceptional object types such as the astrolabes or anatomical models.

95 See here Anor, Cohen 2018, 204.

96 Fincke 2021, 49 comments on the general popularity of two-column tablets in Neo-Assyrian Nineveh, Nimrud, and Sultantepe, while Ashur more often retained three- or four-column formats.

97 See Simkó (this volume) for the chain of sources in the editing process. The choice of the rare three-column portrait format for the related medical text, the *Nineveh Medical Compendium* is striking. Its explanation may become clearer when the status of that composition is established.

trast, form a more noticeably heterogeneous group. Many of them differ clearly from Library tablets. Given all of the above, this would suggest that tablets bearing colophon *a* do not represent such a highly mixed group of tablets from divergent sources. Different explanations of the type are possible. They were perhaps not originally intended for inclusion in the Library, but could plausibly have belonged to Ashurbanipal (and presumably would have been written specifically for him). In this case, the Library conventions follow standards established prior to Ashurbanipal's time on the throne.[98] Another possibility would be that this colophon type indicates an administrative process of approving tablets written by another scribe.[99] A thorough analysis of the different tablet groups, including also other features, is a desideratum.

The typology apparent among the Library tablets may also represent an answer to the unresolved question as to how scribes would find what they sought in such a large collection. One might speculate that labels of some sort were attached to the storage system. Here rough tablets K.1400 and K.1539 might be adduced:

(K.1400) '*Šumma Ālu*; collection of excerpts'
(K.1539) '*Enūma Anu Enlil*; collection of excerpts'

Figure 17 The two so-called library labels, K.1400 and K.1539. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence

However, a convincing explanation of how they would have functioned has not yet been offered (there are no perforations or traces of affixation, for example), and their status as shelf navigation labels remains unproven. Their appearance reflects that of more ephemeral documentation than library material.[100] We can plausibly assume that the scribes operating in the Library were sufficiently familiar with it that they knew roughly where to find any given text, as do modern users of academic and other libraries.[101] Typology represents a means to differentiate, and therefore locate, tablets. Texts look different from each other; anyone can distinguish even from distance a complete tablet with a lexical text from a medical compendium from a literary text. In a way roughly analogous to the difference between a series of small blue books and another of large cream-coloured books, a scribe could quickly and easily have told the difference between a long, thin one-column tablet and short, wide two-column tablet.

98 Cohen (in this volume) describes the career and scholarly impact on the Library of Ashurbanipal's chief scribe, Issar-šumu-ēreš. She notes a change between his earlier material and the later material, which resembles Library documents.

99 See here Schnitzlein 2023a, 350-1.

100 All catalogues/inventories from Nineveh look like administrative tablets rather than library tablets. The only exception is K.2529, *Kalûtu*-catalogue (Ashurbanipal colophon *o*); cf. Schnitzlein 2023a, 319 fn. 1403 for references.

101 SAA 8: no. 19 (where a specific tablet in the royal collection was requested for reference), for example, points to an administration of the Library; see Schnitzlein 2023a, 309-10.

11 Appendix

To facilitate further research, we provide here a list of all known scholarly tablets found at Nineveh whose full original height and width are preserved. After each museum number comes (text type/script type: Assyrian or Babylonian/number of columns/colophon type: Asb = Ashurbanipal, pr = private, Nzk = Nabû-zukup-kēnu, Iše = Issar-šumu-ēreš, - = absent, [ ] = broken).

80-7-19, 98 (*namburbi*/B/1/-)
80-7-19, 152 (literary/A/1/Asb d)
81-2-4, 207 (*eršemma*/A/1/Asb a)
81-7-27, 22 (*Iqqur īpuš*/A/1/-)
81-7-27, 137 (*Enūma Anu Enlil*/B/1/-)
82-3-23, 1 (witchcraft/A/1/-)
91-5-9, 213 (*Šumma Ālu*/A/1/-)
AO 7092 (Šarru/A/2/Asb d)
BM 98582 (*namburbi*/B/1/pr)
DT 1 (*Advice to a Prince*/A/1/Asb d)
DT 40 (Á = *Idu*/A/2/Asb b)
K.1 (*Šumma Ālu* commentary/B/1/-)
K.2 (*kalûtu* cat/A/1/-)
K.20 (ikrib/A/1/-)
K.25 (*Ziqīqu*/A/2/[ ])
K.32 (hemerology/A/2/[ ])
K.35 (*Enūma Anu Enlil* commentary/A/1/Asb k var)
K.39 (*Nabnītu*/A/2/Asb d)
K.40 (*Nabnītu*/A/2/Asb d)
K.43 (*Maqlû*/A/1/Asb c)
K.45 (*Šumma Ālu* /B/1/-)
K.47 (*Šumma Ālu*/A/2/Asb a)
K.48 (building ritual/A/1/Asb a)
K.49 (*Mīs Pî*/A/2/Asb b)
K.52 (*An Anum*/A/1/Asb a)
K.57 (omens/A/1/-)
K.59 (extispicy/A/1/Asb l)
K.61 (*Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia*/A/2/Asb q)
K.62 (*Syllabary A*/A/3/Asb c/d)
K.65 (*Šurpu*/A/2/Asb a)
K.72 (witchcraft/A/1/Asb c)
K.90 (*Enūma Anu Enlil*/B/1/-)
K.105 (*Alamdimmû*/A/1/Asb a)
K.106 (*Babylonian Almanac*/A/1/-)
K.110 (*Syllable Alphabet B*/A/3/[ ])
K.111 (*Udughul*/B/2/[ ])
K.116 (*Šumma Ālu*/A/1/Asb d)
K.118 (*Šumma Ālu* commentary/B/1/-)
K.128 (*ikrib*/B/1/-)
K.130 (*Alamdimmû*/A/1/Asb a)
K.135 (*Syllable Alphabet B* palaeographic/2/A/-)
K.136b (*Šurpu*/A/1/Asb c)
K.140 (*šu'ila*/A/1/Asb c)
K.148 (*Enūma Anu Enlil* commentary/B/1/-)
K.149 (*Šumma Ālu*/A/1/-)
K.150 (*Šurpu*/A/2/Asb c)
K.156 (*Zipa*/A/2/Asb a)
K.162 (*Descent Ishtar*/A/1/Asb a)
K.163 (witchcraft/A/1/Asb c)

K.164 (SAA 20/A/1/-)
K.165 (HAR-*ra*/A/1/-)
K.190 (*Šumma Ālu*/B/1/-)
K.191 (*Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia*/A/2/Asb q)
K.197 (*Nabnītu*/A/2/Asb a)
K.199 (*Ana Ittīšu*/A/2/Asb a)
K.210 (*Iqqur Īpuš*/A/1/-)
K.213 (*Enūma Anu Enlil*/A/1/[ ])
K.235 (*šu'ila*/A/1/Asb i)
K.236 (*Šumma Ālu*/A/1/Asb a)
K.241 (PNs/A/3/-)
K.249 (*Ušburruda*/A/3/[ ])
K.251 (*Ana Ittīšu*/A/2/Asb a)
K.253 (verbal paradigms/A/4/-)
K.256 (*Bīt Rimki*/A/1/Asb c)
K.257 (*balag*/B/1/[ ])
K.261 (*Sagig*/A/1/Asb d)
K.263 (*Šumma Amēlu*/A/1/-)
K.270 (*Enūma Anu Enlil*/A/3/[ ])
K.717 (extispicy/A/1/-)
K.872 (*Enūma Anu Enlil* commentary/A/1/pr)
K.879 (*kiutu*/B/1/-)
K.885 (witchcraft/A/1/Asb c)
K.887 (magic/A/1/Asb c)
K.888 (ritual memorandum/B/1/-)
K.890 (SAA 3/A/1/-)
K.953 (celestial commentary/A/1/Nzk)
K.959 (*Šumma Immeru*/A/1/Asb a)
K.1279 (*Mīs Pî*/A/1/-)
K.1282 (*Erra and Išum*/A/1/Asb b)
K.1283 (*Alannigsagila*/A/1/-)
K.1284 (*Alannigsagila*/A/1/Asb c)
K.1285 (SAA 3/A/1/-)
K.1289 (*Ušburruda*/A/1/-)
K.1290 (SAA 3/A/1/-)
K.1315 (*Padānu* commentary/B/1/-)
K.1350 (*Šumma Ālu*/A/1/[ ])
K.1352 (extispicy catalogue/A/1/-)
K.1363 (*namburbi*/A/1/Asb c)
K.1367 (*Šumma Ālu*/A/1/-)
K.1453 (*Counsels of a Pessimist*/A/1/[ ])
K.1454 (extispicy/A/1/-)
K.1520 (school/A/1/-)
K.1908 (*Ālu*/A/1/-)
K.2000 (building rituals/A/1/Asb c)
K.2001 (incantations/A/2/Asb c)
K.2003 (*balag*/A/1/Asb a)
K.2007 (*Šumma Izbu*/A/1/Asb a)
K.2021a (group vocabulary/A/2/[ ])
K.2022 (*Erimhuš*/A/2/Asb a)
K.2054 (*Šarru*/A/1/Asb d)
K.2083 (celestial/A/1/-)
K.2106 (*Bīt Salā' Mê*/A/1/Asb c)
K.2128 (*Šumma Ālu*/A/1/[ ])
K.2130 (*Multābiltu*/A/1/Asb l)
K.2166 (*Alamdimmû*/A/1/Asb a)

K.2175 (medical/A/2/[ ])
K.2187 (*Maqlû*/A/1/[ ])
K.2234 (*Enūma Anu Enlil*/A/2/-)
K.2252 (*Gilgameš*/A/3/Asb a)
K.2262 (medical/A/1/Asb r/s)
K.2263 (*Pān Tākalti*/A/1/Asb l)
K.2312 (*Šumma Ālu*/B/1/-)
K.2315 (magic/B/1/-)
K.2319 (*Šumma Ālu*/A/1/-)
K.2329 (*Enūma Anu Enlil* commentary/B/1/pr)
K.2354 (*Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia*/A/2/Asb q)
K.2355 (*Udughul*/A/2/Asb a)
K.2372 (*Šumma Ālu*/A/1/Asb a)
K.2373 (*Bīt Rimki*/A/1/Asb c)
K.2385 (*Maqlû*/A/2/Asb c)
K.2396 (*Bīt Salā' Mê*/A/1/Asb c)
K.2427 (*Šurpu*/A/1/Asb c)
K.2455 (*Maqlû*/A/2/Asb d)
K.2458 (*Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia*/A/2/Asb q)
K.2485 (*balag*/A/1/[ ])
K.2489 (hymn/A/1/Asb c)
K.2507 (*Udughul*/A/3/[ ])
K.2514 (*Inbu Bēl Arhi*/A/1/[ ])
K.2520 (glassmaking/A/1/-)
K.2529 (*kalûtu* catalogue/A/2/Asb o)
K.2535 (medical/A/1/-)
K.2541 (ritual/A/1/-)
K.2542 (*Kunuk Halti*/B/2/pr)
K.2544 (*Maqlû*/A/2/Asb d)
K.2563 (*Bīt Rimki*/A/1/-)
K.2587 (*namburbi*/A/1/Asb c)
K.2608 (*tamītu*/A/1/Nzk)
K.2647 (SAA 3/A/1/-)
K.2718 (*Alamdimmû*/A/1/-)
K.2728 (*Maqlû*/A/2/Asb c)
K.2741 (*šu'ila*/A/1/Asb c)
K.2773 (*namburbi*/B/1/-)
K.2811 (*eršahunga*/A/1/Asb a)
K.2823 (*šu'ila*/A/1/-)
K.2836 (*šu'ila*/A/1/[ ])
K.2839 (*Syllabary A* palaeographic/B/5/-)
K.2847 (*Manual Diviners*/A/1/Asb b)
K.2856 (*Udughul*/A/2/pr)
K.2861 (*šu'ila*/A/1/Iše)
K.2862 (*Lugale*/A/1/-)
K.2864 (*Mušš̆u'u*/A/1-)
K.2869 (*Mušš̆u'u*/A/1-)
K.2892 (topographical text/B/1/-)
K.2907 (*Enūma Anu Enlil* commentary/B/1/-)
K.2950 (*Maqlû*/A/2/Asb c)
K.3169 (*Saggigameš*/A/2/Asb c)
K.3182 (*Šamaš Hymn*/A/2/Asb e)
K.3227 (*Bīt Rimki*/A/3/Asb c)
K.3269 (*Inbu Bēl Arhi*/A/2/[ ])
K.3294 (*Maqlû*/A/1/Asb d)
K.3317 (*Seed of Kingship*/A/1/Asb a)

K.3340 (*tamītu*/B/1/[ ])
K.3384 (*Enūma Anu Enlil* commentary/A/1/Išе)
K.3463 (*Bīt Rimki*/A/1/Asb c)
K.3473 (*Enūma Eliš*/A/1/-)
K.3563 (*Enūma Anu Enlil*/A/1/[ ])
K.3586 (*Sagba*/A/1/[ ])
K.3671 (*Padānu*/A/1/Asb b)
K.3683 (extispicy/A/1/[ ])
K.3688 (*Šumma Izbu*/A/1/Asb a)
K.3726 (*Šumma Ālu*/A/2/-)
K.3746 (*Manzāzu*/A/2/[ ])
K.3786 (*Padānu*/B/1/-)
K.3811 (*Šumma Ālu*/A/1/Asb a)
K.3815 (*Alamdimmû*/A/1/Asb a)
K.3860 (*Alamdimmû*/A/2/[ ])
K.3867 (*Šumma Izbu*/A/1/-)
K.3945 (*Multābiltu*/A/2/Asb l)
K.3962 (*TDP*/A/1/Asb d)
K.3966 (*Šumma Izbu*/A/1/Asb d)
K.3978 (*Isru*/A/2/Asb l)
K.4001 (*Šumma Ālu*/A/1/[ ])
K.4045b (*eršahunga*/A/1/Asb a)
K.4174 (*Diri*/A/2/Asb b)
K.4243 (*Alan Lānu*/A/2/Asb b)
K.4257 (*HAR-ra*/A/3/[ ])
K.4292 (*Enūma Anu Enlil* commentary/A/1/-)
K.4319 (*Emesal Vocabulary*/A/2/Asb a)
K.4338a (*HAR-ra*/A/3/-)
K.4345 (*Uruanna*/A/2/Asb g)
K.4375 (*Malku*/A/3/Asb d)
K.4395 (*Practical Lu*/A/3/-)
K.4415 (*namerimburruda*/A/1/pr)
K.4900 (*Mīs Pî*/A/1/Asb a)
K.4918 (*Mušš'u*/A/1/Asb d)
K.4956 (*lam*/A/1/Asb a)
K.5834 (*Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia*/A/2/Asb q)
K.6313 (*namburbi*/A/1/Asb c)
K.6997 (*Enūma Anu Enlil*/A/2/[ ])
K.7749 (*Šumma Ālu*/B/1/[ ])
K.8447 (witchcraft/A/1/-)
K.8521 (*HAR-ra*/A/2/[ ])
Rm 155 (omens/A/1/Nzk)
Rm 192 (*Enūma Anu Enlil*/A/1/-)
Rm II 103 (*Manzāzu*/A/2/Asb l)
Rm II 115 (*Ubānu*/B/1/-)
Sm 954 (*eršemma*/A/1/Asb h)

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Copying from Wooden Originals? Investigating the Materiality and Rationale for Holes in the Tablets from the Library of Ashurbanipal

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Abstract This study investigates the material characteristics and potential functions of the holes found on Neo-Assyrian cuneiform tablets from the Library of Ashurbanipal. Often referred to as 'firing holes', their exact purpose has remained speculative in scholarship. By analyzing a sample of tablets with colophons, this research explores the size, shape, and distribution of these holes on the surface. We suggest that different tools were used to create holes of varying sizes, with larger holes typically found on the edges and smaller ones on the tablet's surface. The study proposes that these holes may have been added after the writing process and could represent a visual echo of holes present on wooden writing boards, which were possibly used as templates for the clay tablets. This hypothesis opens new avenues for understanding the interplay between different writing media in Assyrian scribal practices and raises questions about the production processes of the tablets in the Library of Ashurbanipal.

Keywords Firing holes. Library of Ashurbanipal. Layout. Materiality. Writing boards.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Methodological Concerns: To Join or not to Join? – 3 Holes. – 3.1 Size: Diameter. – 3.2 Size and Position. – 3.3 Holes on the Edges. – 4 Distribution Patterns. – 5 Holes and Text. – 6 Holes and Writing Boards: A New Hypothesis. – 7 Pricking Technology. – 8 Depth of the Impressions: Different Traces, Different Tools? – 9 Conclusion.

1 Introduction

The presence of the so-called 'firing holes' on the surface of some cuneiform tablets is a well-known feature of texts, especially of those from Assyria dating to the first millennium BCE. Although the existence of such holes has been noted from the early days of Assyriology, their exact features have never been accurately examined. A detailed analysis of their physical characteristics (such as shape, size, number) together with their positioning (patterns and location on the surface), and their relationship with the general layout of the tablets (paragraphs, dividing lines, etc.) is however necessary in order to address the question of what their function (or functions) were, as well as the relationship between the holes, the written texts and the materiality connected to the very making of cuneiform tablets.[1]

The Authors wish to thank Nicholas Gill for correcting the English of this paper; Jon Taylor and Sophie Cohen read a preliminary draft, offering useful suggestions: any shortcomings and the ideas expressed remain our own responsibility. P. Corò wrote §§ 1-4, 6 and 8-9; S. Ermidoro §§ 5, 7.

1 See Corò, Ermidoro 2020, 311-18.

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For the first time, this article offers a set of data obtained from the examination of a corpus of Neo-Assyrian cuneiform tablets pertaining to the so-called Library of Ashurbanipal, currently held in the British Museum.[2] The survey of the material revealed that more than 500 tablets and fragments from this collection display holes on their surface.[3] For the purpose of the present study, we have focused on a selection of these texts, i.e. those with a colophon,[4] and taken into consideration only tablets with round holes.[5] Approximately 400 tablets with colophons have clearly visible holes; among them, ca 150 specimens are so well preserved that a distributional analysis can be carried out.

2 Methodological Concerns: To Join or not to Join?

The joining of tablets, as is well-known, is an essential step in the process of reconstruction of the Library, for a better understanding of its nature, the rationale of its make-up and more in general for the proper appreciation of its extent. As Irving Finkel pointed out, the total number of "tablets, pieces, and fragments from Nineveh is conventionally put at about 31,000 items"; however, already in February 2016, more than six thousand physical joins had already been made between the extant pieces, and many indirect joins established.[6]

This figure has substantially increased in the past twelve years, although many more joins still await to be identified.[7] Important as joining undoubtedly is, it is worth noting that many of the observations that follow on the material characteristics of the holes are based on the most fragmentary and broken tablets in the collection, because they allowed us to inspect the hole's materiality from within, and to capture details that are otherwise impossible to discern from fully preserved tablets.[8]

The size of the holes and the traces left by the tool used to impress them deep into the clay can easily be observed and measured in a good number of cases and enable us to discuss specific characteristics of the pricking technology, which cannot be ascertained by looking at complete tablets.

The sample we have selected for this part of the analysis is thus made up of tablets whose only common feature, apart from belonging to the Library's collection, is represented by their housing of holes and being substantially broken, so as to display the hole's sections.[9] No coherence is to be expected in

2 The idea for this article stems from the project *The King's Librarians at Work. Applying Machine Learning and Computer Vision to the Study of Scribal Marks on Cuneiform Tablets* (acronym LIBER), which has been carried out at Ca' Foscari University of Venice in partnership with the Center for Cultural Heritage and Technology of the Italian Institute for Technology in Venice and the Ashurbanipal Library Project of the British Museum in 2020-22. The project was funded under the SPIN-2 Measure of the Ca' Foscari University Venice. For more details see Corò, Ermidoro 2020. Further research that brought to its development into written form, and in particular the connection between the hole's pattern and the layout of tablets (see below) is part of a wider study of the formats and layout of the Ashurbanipal Library texts which is being carried out by the Ca' Foscari University Venice (under the responsibility of Paola Corò) in the framework of the project *Exploring Scribal Minds. The Structural and Visual Organization of Knowledge in Mesopotamian Archives and Libraries* (PI E. Devecchi, Università degli Studi di Torino). The project received funding from the European Union Next-GenerationEU - National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) – MISSION 4 COMPONENT 2, INVESTIMENT 1.1 Fondo per il Programma Nazionale di Ricerca e Progetti di Rilevante Interesse Nazionale (PRIN) – CUP N. H53D23000390006.

3 We wish to thank Jon Taylor for providing us with a preliminary catalogue of tablets with holes in the BM collections, which formed the basis for our investigation. Numerous additions have been made to it over time.

4 This data have been collected as part of the LIBER project by Anna Baldon, in preparation for her MA thesis.

5 In the framework of the project LIBER, we have mapped all kinds of holes in addition to round ones, including triangular, square and almond-shaped. On holes see Panayotov 2016, and for a synthesis Taylor 2010, 15-17.

6 Fincke 2017; Finkel 2019, 369.

7 Thanks to the remarkable efforts of the main projects focusing on the Library of Ashurbanipal's materials (as, for example, the *electronic Babylonian Library* project based in Munich (henceforth: *eBL*, `https://www.ebl.lmu.de/`), whose results are regularly published in this journal as the "From the eBL Lab" section and the joint London and Munich *Reading the Library of Ashurbanipal* (henceforth: *RLAsb*, `https://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/asbp/rlasb/index.html`, focusing on colophons), as well as thanks to the reconstruction work carried out by the Assyriologists working on the Library texts: to quote but one example, Schwemer 2017, 43.

8 We at LIBER have thus – so to say – been working in the opposite direction to the joining process being carried out in the context of the *RLAsb* and *eBL* projects, sometimes running a race against time, to capture at least by means of photographs those details that will otherwise be forever lost. For the help received in this context, we wish to acknowledge here once again Jon Taylor's and the Department of the Middle East' staff assistance. Note also Panayotov's (2016) comment "Ironically, thanks to broken tablets we can see cross sections of the holes".

9 The preliminary selection was based on the photograph of the tablets, both in cases where specific details could be seen on the photographs and in all other cases where we suspected that details could be observed on the original, although they had not been captured by the existing photographs of the piece. Additional examples have been brought to our attention by Jon Taylor or emerged during working sessions in the Museum by Paola Corò. Team collaborators (especially Anna Baldon and Giorgia Mele) offered invaluable help to the sample's construction.

the tablets from the sample in terms of their content, shape, layout, size, genre, or whatever features other than their preserving the holes' sections.[10]

Additionally, even though holes may have different shapes (round, triangular, square, almond),[11] in this paper we will only deal with tablets housing round holes, as they are the best represented.

3 Holes

3.1 Size: Diameter

While shape is a notable characteristic of holes, and has been the main object of scholarly attention so far, their size conversely has generally gone unnoticed in previous studies.

The diameter of the holes extant on tablets from the Library varies to the extent that we can distinguish different groups of holes according to the average size of their diameter. Aiming at a classification system, we distinguish three types: the first is represented by holes whose diameter ranges from a min. of less than 1 mm to a max of 1.5 mm; we define them small holes. The second group includes holes whose diameter ranges from a min of 1.6 mm to a maximum size of 2.7 mm: these are what we call medium holes. Large holes, forming the third group, include those whose diameter ranges from a minimum size of 2.8 mm and larger. Among the larger ones, prevalent are those with an average size of 3 mm; the largest hole we have found so far in tablets from the Library reaches up to 4.1 mm.[12]

	Min	Max
Small	< 1 mm	1.5 mm
Medium	1.6 mm	2.7 mm
Large	2.8 mm	4.1 mm (or higher)

When considering a hole's diameter, one has to take into account the fact that measuring the diameter of the holes from the outside may sometimes be tricky: it is clear from the inspection of the traces of the holes left in the core of the tablet that the size of the hole's entry point (i.e. the hole's diameter itself, as we perceive it impressed on the surface of a tablet) is slightly different from what we can see from the traces left into the core of the tablet by the tool used to pierce it onto the clay. It is in fact clear that the tablet's drying process (as well as the baking process which the tablet may have undergone for conservation purposes, or the accidental baking caused by destruction fires in the past) may have shrunk the hole, to the effect that its diameter may appear slightly smaller from the outside than can be seen from the core (although the differences are minimal).[13] This warns us to be especially careful in dealing with the assumed 'regularity'/'irregularity' of the hole's shape, which (as is true for the general shape and size of a tablet) may have been affected by the drying/baking process as well as by other mechanical actions (as the twisting of the pricking tool, or the shape of the stopper).[14]

10 Examining the holes' materiality we also took into account some tablets not belonging to the Library collection, used as comparanda and to test further possible explorations of the topic in a comparative perspective. The data relating to this part is not included in this paper: it is however clear that the evolution of holes in time and their use is in fact a matter that deserves further investigation. This also confirms the significance of the LIBER project as a pilot, whose methodologies can be further extended to other corpora for a full investigation of holes in tablets from all periods (as envisaged in Corò, Ermidoro 2020).

11 See Panayotov 2016 and Taylor 2010, 15-17.

12 That the different size of the diameter is a remarkable feature of the holes, which one may also perceive at first sight, is clear from a preliminary database of tablets with holes that Jon Taylor kindly provided us for at the beginning of our research. There, holes were classified according to their size in three different groups (marked S, M, L): the average dimension of the different 'size groups' was however not further specified. In our own classification, we introduced ranges as a reference to distinguish the different types.

13 It is well known that the drying and baking processes affect clay causing shrinking, although to which extent is less clear. As Carmen Gütschow (personal communication) suggests: "The behavior of the clays depends on several factors: the composition of the clay minerals, the size of the clay particles, and thus the pore size in the clay mass. The quantity and size of the pores determine how much water they store. The amount of water used during processing must also be taken into account. Accordingly, the shrinkage of the clay mass can vary slightly when drying and later also when sintering the clay in the kiln". According to potter' instructions "All clays shrink during drying and again during firing. Depending on the type of clay, the shrinkage is 10-15%. The higher the firing temperature, the greater the shrinkage": `https://www.keramikbedarf.ch/michel/service/toepfern_anleitung.asp` (reference courtesy C. Gütschow). During firing, the shrinkage is related to the increase in temperature, a process that usually starts at around 800°-900°C: see Gütschow 2012, pls 31 and 36.

14 On traces of twisting and the impact twisting has on the shape of the holes, as well on the trace left by a possible 'stopper' (which is likely the so-called 'transversal bands' of the stylus: see Cammarosano, Weirauch 2021, 17 and 24, and the discussion below).

3.2 Size and Position

Especially interesting is the distribution of the holes on the tablet in relation to their size, a characteristic that is often not easy to appreciate on the photographs of the manuscripts. When tablets present both holes on the surface(s) (obverse/reverse) and on the edges, and the holes are not the same size, there is a clear trend for larger holes to occupy the edges, and for smaller ones to be located on the obverse/reverse. Reference to large and small is here unrelated to the classification given above and only refers to the relative size of the holes; as a matter of fact, we may have tablets housing only M-size holes, whose diameters are however different, and the same is true for tablets housing only L-size holes, or only S-size holes.

A case in point is K.2263+ **[fig. 1]**. The tablet has holes on all its surfaces, and they are all small according to our classification; however, the holes on the edges measure 1.5 mm, while those on the obverse and reverse are ca 1.12 mm large. The difference can only be noticed looking at the tablet in detail and is difficult to appreciate at first sight (or from the photograph).

In addition to tablets that house holes whose diameters range within the same size-group (e.g. all small holes, but with diameters not always measuring the same), we count numerous cases of tablets 'mixing' holes belonging to different size-groups. The pattern of distribution is the same as that observed so far: i.e. larger holes occupy the edges, while smaller ones are located on the obverse/reverse of the tablet. DT.222 **[fig. 2]** for example, features tiny holes with a diameter of only 1 mm on the obverse/reverse, while the holes housed on the edges are all on average 3 mm large.

Additionally, there is also evidence of holes of different sizes being located either on the obverse or on the reverse of the same tablet (no example is known to us of holes of different sizes being located on the edges of the same tablet, as in this position holes are usually consistently of the same size). This usually does not happen randomly, but in specific areas of the tablet, such as the intercolumnia and the colophon. Thus, for example, K.150 **[fig. 3]**, a Neo-Assyrian manuscript of *Šurpu* with many preserved holes, exhibits a clear distribution of small holes (ca 1.2-1.5 mm) on the obverse and reverse in the textual sections arranged in columns; on the same surfaces, in the marked intercolumnia separating columns 1 and 2 on the obverse, and columns 3 and 4 on the reverse, the holes are consistently M-size (reaching a diameter of about 2 mm); the edges house large holes of 3 mm.

A similar situation may be observed in K.2423+ **[fig. 4]**, which is also, to the best of our knowledge, the tablet that houses the biggest holes in the Library: those on the edges have a diameter of 4.1 mm.[15] As is clear already from the photograph, these holes are substantially larger than those on the obverse and reverse, that may be classified in the range of the M-size holes, and measure ca 2 mm. While still M-size, the holes in the intercolumnia, are slightly larger than the others on the same surface (that reach up to 2.3 mm), and the same applies to those in the colophon.

The size and shape suggests that holes located in different areas of the tablet could be produced with different tools. The possibility that a single conical (thus with two differently shaped ends) tool was used to produce both types must be ruled out in view of the fact that when holes of different size are housed on the same part of a tablet, and in particular on the obverse and reverse, the depth of the impression, which is limited by the tablet's thickness itself, is always the same. Since the impressions are usually only a little shorter than the tablets' thickness (which reaches on average 3 cm), it is impossible that a conical tool, whose section becomes larger moving from its pointed end to its upper part, produced holes of different sizes, but of the same length. To produce a hole with a larger diameter, one should have pressed the conical tool deeper into the clay, to reach the larger section of the tool itself, located upwards with respect to its pointed end. Also the possibility that the upper and lower ends, respectively, of the same tool were used for this purpose is to be discarded: in case the tool used is conical, its upper part would be larger than the other end. Using the upper end to make larger holes, would produce traces whose shape in the inner core of the tablet would appear specular to those produced using the thinner (pointed) end of the same tool; in other words, the triangular shaped traces would have the larger part (the 'base' of the triangle) located exactly on the opposite position with respect to the one that would be produced using the thinner (pointed) end of the same tool. But this is never the case in the examined sample. In addition, we have ample evidence (as we will see below) that besides conical (or partially conical) tools, straight ones were also used to produce the holes.[16]

15 Large holes occur frequently in the Astronomical Diaries; their investigation is the focus of a forthcoming article by the authors.

16 See Cammarosano 2014 on the shapes of the styli.

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Figure 1 K.2263+. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence)

Figure 2 DT.222. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence

Figure 3 K. 150. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence

Figure 4 K.2423+. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence

3.3 Holes on the Edges

Given the preference for portrait orientation of scholarly tablets in this period, it comes as no surprise that mainly portrait-oriented tablets have holes.[17]

Tablets with holes on the edges feature a very regular schematization. Although their total number is not standard, the number of holes on corresponding edges is always consistent: those on the right edge equals those on the left edge; those on the upper edge is the same as those on the lower edge.[18] Their relative distance may vary, although slightly, also on the same edge. This rules out the possibility that their function was to host a tool used to grab them from the shelves, as this we might expect had to be rigid and universally usable. There is also a trend towards a consistent positioning of holes on corresponding edges. Our mapping of this feature is not yet concluded, so it is impossible to draw any further conclusions in this respect, yet.[19]

While we may find holes of different sizes (see above) on a single tablet, so that on the obverse and reverse we may have large and small holes at the same time or a tablet may have large holes on the edges and small and/or medium ones on the obverse/reverse, the holes on the edges of a single tablet are always all the same size.

The number of holes hosted on corresponding edges is variable. Judging from fully or sufficiently preserved specimens, they can have a minimum of five on the short (upper and lower) edges, while on the long (left and right) edges, the number of holes reaches as many as nineteen.

4 Distribution Patterns

As we have seen above, holes are distributed throughout on the surface of tablets, where they can appear on the obverse, on the reverse, and on the edges. Mapping the distribution pattern of the holes on the different parts of a tablet in the Library collection is a complicated issue, especially due to the general state of preservation of the manuscripts, which are often fragmentary.[20]

Doing this in the framework of our project, we verified the hole's presence and their distribution on a sample consisting of 1112 tablets, in Neo-Assyrian script, all with colophons.[21] Of them, less than 500 do not bear holes at all. 260 are too fragmentarily preserved to be able to determine if they had holes at all in any of their parts; for approximately 400 remaining tablets, however, we could map the presence of holes in different positions, though with different degrees of reliability.

In particular, ca 150 are sufficiently well preserved for us to establish if they had or lacked holes, and, in case they did, where they were located. Conventionally, we call them 'clearly preserved tablets', in reference to the actual visibility of holes (often only some of them) on the mapped parts of the relevant

17 So far K.3983 is the only sufficiently well-preserved tablet for us to be able to say is landscape oriented with holes.

18 A single exception to this rule was known to us on the basis of the photographs. Inspection of the original (P. Corò, May 2023) revealed that the presumed missing holes belong to a modern restoration of K.4426+, only artificially recreating the original shape of the lower edge (and omitting the holes, that it is conceivable were originally present). The information provided in Corò, Ermidoro 2020, 313, has therefore to be corrected. Another example of a possible exception is K.258+. Looking at the photograph of the piece, it would seem that this is also a tablet featuring holes on one edge and not on the other. This is however due to a photograph's mistake; the right edge of the tablet photographed as part of K.258+ belongs to K.261 (not to K.258+): `https://www.ebl.lmu.de/fragmentarium/K.258`.

19 A consistency in the location of the holes on corresponding edges may be simply due to the fact that the two edges are the same size and the holes tend to be prinked at similar, though not perfectly regular, distances. It must also be noted that the irregular distance between the holes could be related to the curvature of the edge. This point needs further investigation, after taking into consideration all the measurements: the size of the holes, their relative distance, their total number on the specific edges, the size of the tablets where they are housed and their curvature. Such investigations are being carried in the framework of our ongoing project and will be included in the final publication of its results. For the time being, it is worth noting that if holes on opposite edges were located consistently in the same positions, this would raise the question of whether a special tool was used to prink them. If this were the case we shall expect it to be quite flexible, and more similar to a tool to calculate the distance between the holes than anything rigid that was applied to the sides of the tablets, otherwise we should expect tablets to house holes always equally distant.

20 For an overview of the Library, see Reade 2000 and Finkel 2019. For the fragments' significance for its reconstruction, see also Reade 2022. A numerically limited list of scholarly tablets with colophons found in Nineveh whose eighth and width are fully preserved, is provided in the Appendix of Schnitzlein, Taylor in this volume and gives an idea of the volume of fragmentary tablets versus well preserved ones.

21 Part of this data (446 tablets) was originally collected by Anna Baldon in the framework of the LIBER project and included in her MA dissertation. The test sample has since then been expanded in the framework of the project *Exploring Scribal Minds* and is being continuously updated.

tablets, but with no aim at indicating the actual state of preservation of the manuscripts themselves.[22]

On more than 200, the presence of holes on the different parts could only be mapped sparsely: we call them 'variously uncertain' as they reflect the situation of tablets that may, for example, have holes on the obverse but it is unclear whether they had them at the same time on the reverse and/or on the edges and tablets that have holes on the reverse, but we do not know whether they had them at the same time on the obverse and/or on the edges.

Of these, a particular group is especially interesting, and we take the opportunity to discuss it in more detail here. We in fact included amongst the 'variously uncertain' twenty-one tablets that we know for certain had holes on the edges but for which the contemporaneous presence of holes on the obverse and/or on the reverse is uncertain. In detail, seven tablets have holes on the edges and on the obverse, but their presence on the reverse is unclear, six have holes on the edges, have no holes on the obverse but their presence on the reverse is uncertain and eight have holes on the edges but their presence on both the obverse and reverse is unclear. This last group is noteworthy, since, as one can see from the table **[table 1]**, there is no evidence among the clearly preserved tablets in our sample of a single manuscript featuring holes on the edges only.

The emerging holes' distribution pattern for our sample is summarized as follows:

Table 1 Distribution of the holes in tablets with colophons

Holes location	Nr of tablets
Unmappable or without holes	
No holes	468
Impossible to map (due to the state of preservation)	260
Sub-total	**728**
'Clearly' preserved tablets	
Holes on obverse, reverse and edges	120
Holes on obverse and reverse only	18
Holes on obverse only	5
Holes on reverse only	4
Sub-total	**147**
Variously uncertain	
Sub-total	234
Total	**1112**

When clearly preserved tablets have holes on the edges, they also contain holes on both the obverse and reverse or at least on one of the two main surfaces. It is thus plausible that in those eight cases examined above of tablets with holes on the edges but for which it is impossible to determine if they had holes also on another of the main surfaces, this was actually the case (i.e. they had holes somewhere else as well). Conversely, the six that have holes on the edges, and appear to lack them on the obverse, in all likelihood originally had them on the reverse (although no longer visible to us due to their state of preservation).

A clear set of rules emerges from the examination of the distributional pattern of the holes on tablets with colophons (and it is conceivably applicable to any tablets with holes):[23]

1. tablets with holes represent only a small fraction of tablets with colophons in the Library;
2. there is a trend for tablets with holes to have them on all of their surfaces, more so than on single parts (of the tablet);
3. tablets that have holes only in specific parts of the tablet may have them located on the obverse and reverse only, only on the obverse or only on the reverse, on the obverse and edges or on the reverse and on the edges;
4. we have no evidence so far of tablets with holes on the edges only, which suggests that the application of holes to the edges of a tablet in isolation was either not admitted for some reason or, as we believe to be case, neither functional, nor meaningful;

22 We include here also tablets that may have visible holes on only one of two corresponding edges, as we have no single example among the well-preserved tablets, of specimens that are exceptions to this rule.

23 We have not completed the full mapping of the Library yet, so the results presented here must be considered preliminary and need refinement until the process is fully completed.

5. when a tablet has holes on the edges, their number is consistent on the corresponding edges (left/right and upper/lower);
6. as far as we can judge from tablets on which all the surfaces may be sufficiently inspected, when a tablet has holes on the edges, they appear on all four.

As our sample consists exclusively of tablets with colophons, we conclude from the above that there is no straightforward relationship between the application of holes and the presence of colophons on tablets: in other words, tablets with colophons do not necessarily bear holes. On the other hand, when tablets with holes feature them also in the colophon section, different patterns and distributional schemes can be observed.[24]

5 Holes and Text

Holes occur on single-column tablets as well as on multi-column ones, with a slight preference for the single column type over the multi-columns in our sample.

Not all the tablets with holes are regular and well-formed, nor the holes are consistently regularly distributed and spaced out on their surface. Particularly interesting are examples of holes that clearly interfere with either the written text by at least partially overlapping signs already written on the tablet, or with the layout markers, i.e. the horizontal and vertical lines used to mark paragraphs and specific areas of the written text.[25] An illustrative example is provided by K.51 **[fig. 5]**: the preserved part of the obverse of this tablet, which is subdivided into at least three columns, contains numerous holes, some of which overlap the vertical and horizontal lines used to mark columns and sections, and in a couple of cases also overlap the 'long tail' of some signs.

Figure 5 K51, Obverse (detail). © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence

24 See Baldon, Corò, in preparation, for details.

25 These details are the focus of the project mentioned above (see fn. 2 above).

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Holes also overlap a few signs in K.55,[26] whose layout substantially differs from that of K.51: the tablet is written in the Neo-Babylonian script. K.2235+ **[fig. 6]**, in Neo-Assyrian script, has holes crisscrossing the vertical column dividers, as well as, though not systematically, the long tails of some signs[27] (the same holds true, for example, in K.150).[28]

Figure 6 K2235+, obverse. © The Trustees of the British Museum.
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Although the rationale for this procedure escapes us, these examples bear witness to the fact that the holes on the obverse and reverse could be added to the tablet after writing (both text and layout) was completed, ruling out the possibility that they served to host implements used to draw lines or other elements functional to the writing process.[29]

On the other hand, it is also clear from the sample that the holes on the surface of tablets could be used to 'visualize' additional layout features, replacing missing markers, such as columns dividers and played a role in shaping the physical organization of the text in the absence of visible elements (especially vertical lines). In K.2427+ **[fig. 7]**, a vertical sequence of holes is used to mark an otherwise physically unmarked separation, roughly corresponding to a vertical line column marker characterizing

26 https://www.ebl.lmu.de/fragmentarium/K.55.

27 The complete repertoire of the manuscripts that have holes overlapping signs, parts of signs and layout markers will be published separately, as part of the results of the project mentioned in the previous footnote. To mention only a few examples, holes overlapping sign tails and vertical lines can also be observed in K.2597+; for holes overlapping sign tails, but not layout markers, see K.150.

28 https://www.ebl.lmu.de/fragmentarium/K.150.

29 This confirms our previous observation in this regard. See Corò, Ermidoro 2020, 310. For a new hypothesis on their function, see below.

Figure 7 K.2427+. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence

the single column text written on the tablet.[30] Smaller series of holes vertically aligned as to resemble a column division, as the one made up of four of them, not all perfectly aligned, visible on the obverse of the tablet between the third and fourth horizontal lines are also attested.

The reason for their use emerges from the comparison with other similar tablets: in K.2414+, K.2423+; K.2445+; K.2454+ and K.2597+ (to quote only a few), holes appear to be used as markers for 'tabulations', subdividing into smaller, otherwise unmarked, sub-columns a particular section of text. They take the shape of holes aligned as vertical (unmarked) columns when the relevant text sections are aligned with one another; conversely, they may appear as random or isolated holes when the text section they separate is right-aligned or left-aligned with respect to other following (or preceding) sub-columns (see the schematization in fig. 8 = K.2414+) **[fig. 8]**.

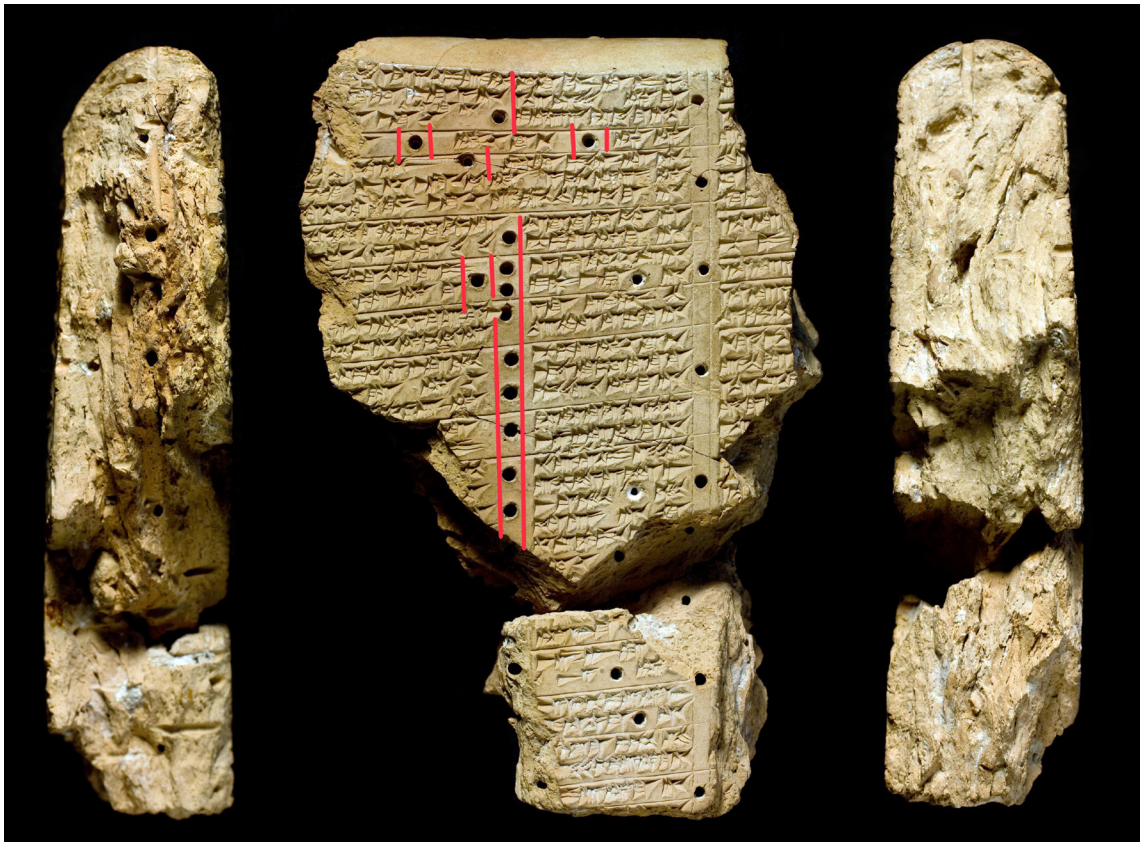

Figure 8 Schematization of the use of holes to mark tabulations in K.2414+.
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30 K.2427+ is a single-column tablet, where the scribe only used horizontal lines to mark different sections of text: the text on the obverse is clearly divided into two columns, whose division is not marked by a vertical line, but visualized by means of holes vertically placed on top of one another, as if they replaced the vertical straight divider.

6 Holes and Writing Boards: A New Hypothesis

As noted above, what remains to be explained, and complicates the overall interpretation of the function of the holes (especially those on the obverse and reverse of a tablet) is the fact that they were applied to the tablet after the writing process was completed,[31] and thus were not used for the fabrication of the tablets themselves. If holes used as tabulation markers did not have a function related to the arrangement of the text on the tablet, but at the same time appear connected to the design of its layout, the reason for their use must be sought either in the future use of the tablet, or ought to be connected to the process that led to the realisation of the tablet and its text. We think of realisation here in particular with respect to the originals from which the tablet and its corresponding text was copied.

An intriguing hypothesis is that the holes represent the visible link between the two prevalent writing media in the Library of Ashurbanipal: clay tablets and wooden writing boards.[32]

Writing boards, typically composed of wood or ivory, consisted of a single leaf or of multiple leaves tied together by means of hinges to form diptychs (two leaves), triptychs (three leaves) or polypthics (multiple leaves). These boards usually feature a recessed surface, were covered by a wax paste, made of a special admixture, and were inscribed using a special stylus.

The coexistence of clay tablets and wooden writing boards in the Ancient Near East is attested since the third millennium BCE, all throughout the second and first millennia BCE.[33] Writing boards were used in administrative contexts, as well as media for literary texts, and their importance alongside clay tablets in the Library has often been emphasized in scholarship.[34] Nevertheless, with rare exceptions, we have no surviving examples of inscribed writing boards from Assyria.[35]

31 There may be isolated cases where this is not the case, as in K.2414+, where the hole on the sixth paragraph of the obverse is partially obliterated by the last sign preceding it, which had been written after the hole was made. However, as this sign is quite squeezed into the space next to the previous one, it may have been a later addition. This is not inconceivable, especially because we have evidence in the same tablet, on the top left paragraph, of an inserted short line, written in a smaller font compared to the previous and following ones, which looks like an addition to the main text. The signs that form this short line, represent a variant for a word, in the main text, written exactly on top of it; differently from the two lines between which it is inserted, this smaller font line does not have a corresponding set of signs or short line on the right.

32 We are currently working on a combined examination of all the characteristics (related to the materiality, layout and content of these tablets) to test and verify this hypothesis, the results of which will be the subject of a forthcoming article. A different suggestion has been proposed by S. Wisnom at the Rencontre in Helsinki. We unfortunately did not have access to the paper prior to its publication, which, according to the author, is due soon. On the application of holes to Babylonian tablets in the first millennium BCE, see Young in this volume.

33 On writing boards, see the comprehensive articles by Cammarosano et al. 2019 and Cammarosano, Weirauch 2021. A recent summary of the use of writing boards in the Near East is provided by Zimmermann 2023, 208-26, also listing literature that appeared after Cammarosano et al. 2019. See also Schnitzlein 2023, 151-9. For their use in the third millennium BCE, see Molina, Steinkeller 2023 and Maiocchi 2024.

34 The total number of writing boards listed in the fragmentary inventories of confiscated tablets and writing-boards that arrived in Nineveh in 648 BC is estimated at 300 by Parpola (1983, 4); the figure is more cautiously reduced to 140 by Fincke (2004, 58). According to Postgate, the absence of large multicolumn tablets from the Nineveh collection is due to the fact that long cuneiform texts were preferentially written on writing boards: Postgate 1986, 22.

35 Examples include the ivory board from Nimrud and Assur. For recent overviews of the wooden boards from the Near East, see Cammarosano et al. 2019 and Cammarosano, Weirauch 2021, both with previous literature.

Figure 9
BM 131952: ivory writing board from Nimrud. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence

Although first invented in the Ancient Near East, wax boards were extensively used in the Greek and Roman periods, throughout the Middle Ages, and in Early Modern Europe. Extant examples come primarily from Hellenistic Egypt and Roman Britain because their respective climates lend themselves to the preservation of perishable materials, but numerous medieval exemplars are also available.[36]

The Assyrian ivory writing boards from Nimrud are likely to have represented more a paradigmatic/exemplary specimen than the type of ordinary boards used in the Library and/or in the administration; thus, to get an idea of the shape or form of the ordinary ones, we must look for possible comparanda in the extant tablets from these diverse areas and periods.[37] Among them, some of the medieval ones look especially intriguing and one in particular captured our attention because of its exhibiting holes.[38] The document to which we refer is a wax tablet, with preserved writing, belonging to the monastic accounts from Cîteaux and is part of the collection of the Archive of the Cote d'Or (Dijon). It dates to 1321-1325 CE. **[fig. 10]**.[39]

36 For a general overview, see Cammarosano et al. 2019, 123-4. On the wooden boards in the Greek and Roman world, see especially Degni 1998. An introduction to writing boards from antiquity to the modern era is found in Lalou 1992. A list of the Medieval writing boards known as of 1989 is provided in Lalou 1989.

37 It seems likely that ordinary writing boards were made of wood (not ivory), as implied by the determinative used for their name; they may have looked like the walnut boards recovered in Nimrud, and currently housed in the British Museum. While they are very fragmentary, at least two of the three pieces were larger than the ivory ones from the same location, but one was smaller (Wiseman 1955, 4, with fn. 22). Paola Corò could inspect the originals in the British Museum in March 2024, but measurements and other details could not be taken, due to their very fragile conditions. Nothing is known about the script they could have housed, how it was drafted nor on their layout: however, they apparently preserve traces of wax (Jon Taylor, personal communication). For the Nimrud writing boards, see Wiseman 1955 and Howard 1955. We wish to thank Enrica Inversi from the Department of the Middle East of the British Museum for her kind assistance during the inspection.

38 The similarity between the holes on writing boards from the Middle Ages and those on clay tablets was noticed by Paola Corò during Marc Smith's presentation at the international workshop *On the Trail of the Neverending Manuscript. Comparative Perspectives on Rewritable Media* organized by Michele Cammarosano in Naples. We wish to thank here Marc Smith for kindly answering all questions about the holes' presence on the reverse of manuscript 11 H 1154, although holes were not the focus of his presentation. Many fruitful discussions on this topic followed during the dinner and we wish to thank here also Thomas Wosniak (Tübingen) for his many clarifications and the interest he showed on the topic of holes on clay tablets. For many fruitful conversations and bibliographic suggestions, we also wish to thank Paola Degni and Paolo Eleuteri (Ca' Foscari University of Venice).

39 We refer here to the reverse of manuscript 11 H 1154 (Arch. dép. Côte d'Or, 11 H 1154, f. 8HJ verso). For an image, see Lalou 2010, 233. See also `https://www.nakala.fr/11280/8843caec`. The wax tablets of the Cîteaux abbey, belonging to the departmental archives of the Côte d'Or, are available online in Flipbook format at the following address: `http://documents.cbma-project.eu/flipbook/citeauxAD21_11H1165_tablettes/tablettes.html`.

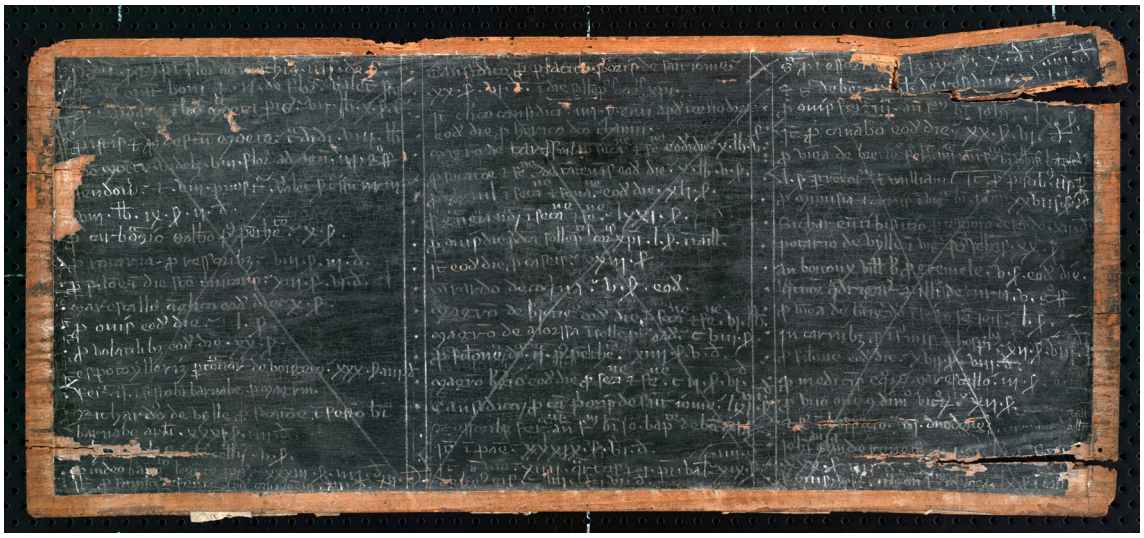

Figure 10 Wax tablet from Cîteaux (© Archive of the Cote d'Or (Dijon))

The wooden tablet is landscape oriented and has the text organized in three columns and separated from one another by two intercolumnia, each marked by two single parallel vertical lines. In the intercolumnia, small holes are arranged in vertical lines, marked at almost regular distances. The holes in the intercolumnia of the tablet from Cîteaux remind us of similar holes on clay tablets, also marked in the intercolumnia of those tablets whose layout is organized in columns. Although there is no 1:1 correspondence between the written lines and the holes, in the case of the boards from Cîteaux it is suggested that the holes are the traces left by the pegs used to hold strings that served to prepare the guidelines for writing and layout, similarly to what is known about the perforations that appear on parchments manuscripts.[40] As analogous holes in the intercolumnia of clay tablets are apparently not connected to the written lines, it seems unlikely that their function was the same.

In the case of the medieval boards, similar pegs were also added to the wooden frame. Round holes of various kinds are also found on wooden tablets from different areas and periods; in this case, it is well-known that holes located on the wooden frame, usually quite large and drilled, were used to bind together different leaves of diptychs and polyptychs.[41] A manuscript of the Greek text of Isocrates from Roman Egypt show holes in 'isolated' and unpredictable position at the tail of the board, which were added to accommodate the inserted leaf to the format of a pre-existing (different size) set of eight leaves.[42]

As we have ample evidence that clay tablets could be copied from originals on wooden boards,[43] it is tempting to see the holes as the imitation of the ones originally on the wooden manuscript. This would explain why they are apparently not functional to the writing process, could overlap writing and were added to the tablet after writing it. It may also explain why the holes are not consistently present on tablets. If the holes are imitations, it is also easier to explain their different sizes, distribution and patterns on clay. These specifications probably had functions related to the material composition of the waxed wooden tablet, which the clay tablet did not necessarily imitate in full. It is possible, for exam-

40 Describing the volume, Lalou 2011, 187 specifies "La mise en page était préparée à l'avance. Il semble que lors de la réutilisation des tablettes les mêmes paragraphes étaient écrits aux mêmes endroits. On distingue des points dans certaines colonnes, qui correspondent au début des rubriques, qui rappellent les points de réglure dans les manuscrits sur parchemin. Des «accolades» relient parfois plusieurs lignes entre elles".

41 See, for example, the Coptic writing board now at the MET: `https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/473393`. Other examples from Roman Egypt belong to the collection of the Leiden Papyrological Institute (see Hoogendijk, van Minnen 1991, esp. plates XI-VX). See also the interesting details of the manufacture of the wooden boards from the Dakhleh Oasis in Egypt, some of which preserve the Greek text of three Cyprian Orations of Isocrates and others the so-called Farm Account Book (FAB): Sharpe 1992, 138-49.

42 Sharpe 1992, 144, Fig. 27.

43 For a recent synthesis on the use of *gabarû* in colophons from the first mill. BCE, see Zimmermann 2023, 65-73. See also Schnitzlein 2023, 139-40. A comprehensive re-evaluation of the evidence of the term, in connection to parchment and wooden boards, is the subject of a forthcoming article by P. Corò.

ple, that large boards were copied into smaller clay tablets, that retained the general layout of the original, while adapting it to the new size. In addition, this hypothesis could also explain why not all tablets have holes and why tablets that house a certain type of text may sometimes look like exact copies (including holes) of other tablets and sometimes not, as this would depend on the original from which it was copied. Far from detracting from the validity of mapping the holes on clay tablets, the fact that the holes on clay tablets could be a visual echo of those on the original writing boards may pave the way to a better understanding of the – for us so far – inaccessible world of Assyrian wooden boards. At the same time, if this hypothesis proves true, it would prompt numerous questions, and suggest future investigations on the relevance and significance of writing boards for the creation of the Library, on the scribal processes and expertise involved in the production of the tablets with (and without) holes, on the implication this had for the Library, and on the relationship between tablets copied from writing boards and not. As it is well known that holes were more widespread in Assyria than in Babylonia, another question that would need further investigation is what role writing boards played in the two areas, also in connection with the formation of the Library, and how do the colophons purporting that the texts are copied from originals on writing boards relate to the presence (or lack) of holes on the tablets. Besides holes, it is conceivable that specific layouts, especially those arranged in columns or tabulated, imitate those used on writing boards.[44]

7 Pricking Technology

As mentioned above, poorly preserved tablets that originally housed holes on their surfaces offer a mine of information on the technology of hole's pricking, as they allow us to inspect the inner core of the tablet where the traces of the hole's impression are extant. The length of the traces left by the piercing tool in the clay, as well as their shape, provide a lot of information on the hole's manufacture.

One important element emerging from this part of the analysis is the possibility of reconstructing, at least partially if not in full, the order of impression of the holes. In a few examples, the traces left by the impression of the holes into the edges and those from the surface (obverse and/or reverse) crisscross. From these examples, we know that:

- holes from the obverse were impressed before holes belonging to the right edge (see K.2235+);
- holes from the reverse were impressed before those on the upper edge (see Sm.1060);
- holes from the upper edge were impressed before holes from the left edge (see DT.286).

The preserved examples do not cover the full spectrum of possibilities, and this prevents us from a complete reconstruction of the whole process. In addition, they do not all belong to one and the same tablet, so even a partial reconstruction is hampered by the fact that, in view of the reconstruction, we assume that holes were produced using a fixed and stable order in all tablets (although in the absence of a clear evidence for it).

If the examined examples bear witness to a general trend, we can tentatively suggest that the holes on the obverse and reverse of a tablet were impressed before those on the edges.

As for those on the edges we may expect that, in light of their consistency, their impression followed a regular flow, enabling the person in charge of their pricking to produce corresponding holes on opposite edges. We may therefore tentatively posit that a lower/upper and left/right order could be used, in view of the fact that DT.286 shows that holes from the upper edge were impressed before those on the left edge.[45]

When examining the development of the pricking process, one additionally has to consider that when tablets have holes all of the same size we may expect that pricking was effected using the same tool, for which a regular and continuous flow in the process is reasonable to assume. With respect to holes

44 The idea may not be too far-fetched considering that a similar observation was made on the record of a court hearing from 126/127 AD documented on a papyrus from the Egyptian village of Tebtynis (P.Mil.Vogl. I 25). In reference to the particular layout of the document which consists of two short and narrowed juxtaposed columns, Dolganov notes: "This diptych-like layout is attested in a handful of judicial records from Roman Egypt, all dating to the first century CE, and may be a visual echo of Roman waxed tablets, the typical dimension of which (ca 12 × 16 cm) correspond to the size of the two columns" (Dolganov 2022, 42). All the questions mentioned above are the object of a forthcoming publication by P. Corò.

45 Interestingly, Wunsch (2000, 564) demonstrated that on sealed court records from the time of Nabonidus, and on land sale contracts from the same period, the judges and notaries respectively impressed their seals on the edges of the tablets in the order left-right-lower-upper, showing a flow similar to the one we posit here (i.e. developing by pairs of corresponding edges). This is, however, not always the case, as shown by Altavilla, Walker 2016, 22.

of different sizes, which were in all likelihood made with different tools (see below), the pricking process was discontinuous. This is especially true for tablets that have holes of different sizes on the obverse and/or reverse.

8 Depth of the Impressions: Different Traces, Different Tools?

Another interesting feature that can be observed in broken tablets which originally contained holes is the depth of the impression, that is, how deeply into the clay the tool used to produce the holes was impressed. When examining this characteristic, we have to be aware that the collected data on the length of the traces are only reliable when these are fully preserved but are unreliable or only partially reliable when the traces are not preserved in their entirety; thus, although many tablets provide the opportunity to see traces of the hole's impression into their inner core, the number of those that are fully preserved and allow us to draw conclusion in this respect is substantially reduced. In general, there is a logical and predictable distribution of longer traces for holes located on the edges, and shorter traces from holes housed on the obverse and reverse, corresponding to the different depths of the hole's impression. This is obviously related to the tablet's thickness, and in fact, we have no evidence, to the best of our knowledge, of even a single passing hole (i.e. of any "perforated" tablet), due to a mistake.[46]

The difference in size between the length of the traces from holes on the obverse/reverse and those from holes on the edges, however, is often significant. For example, K.2235+ shows traces of holes 5.4 cm long from the right edge, and traces from the obverse that are visibly shorter (reaching a max length of 2.1 cm). The same applies to the trace of a hole from the left edge of the same tablet, which is also the same size as the one from the right edge. The hole's entry point is not preserved but it can be safely measured because part of the trace is visible until its end in the inner core of the tablet. Similar configurations may be found on other tablets in the sample (like, for example, K.2263+ and K.3967+); additionally, one can notice that both short and long traces tend to be regular in size on the same tablet **[fig. 11]**.[47]

This data prompt a few questions: how did the hole maker produce such regular traces? From a practical point of view, in terms of manufacture, this must not have been that easy to facilitate if the person who made the holes did them freehand.[48]

Additionally, what is the rationale for piercing the holes from the edges deeper into the clay than those on the surfaces? Indeed, while it is clear that those upon the surface had to be shorter because of the limited thickness of the tablet, there is no apparent reason why the other traces had to be longer; in other words, why expend time and effort pressing the piercing tool more deeply into the clay than on the surface and producing longer traces, perhaps also avoiding the risk to spoil the surface? Moreover, the deeper the tool was impressed into the clay, the more difficult it is to be certain that one presses it to a specific point. Therefore, we would expect the length of longer traces to be less regular than the length of shorter traces, but the data we collected rules this out, as the traces usually have a consistent length. We wonder whether the fact that we have no evidence of mistakes, in addition to the observation that the collected evidence shows a tendency for regularity in the length of the impressions, indicate that a specialized tool was used to pierce these holes, one that had a special shape or a stopper/indicator of some kind, which eased the production of these impressions of regular length.

In light of the extant bronze styli from Hattusa, for example, or other similar writing implements used in the Roman and Medieval periods, it seems conceivable that the (or the series of) thin horizontal 'bands'(s) that characterize their length may be used as indicators or stoppers, easing the production of the regular impressions. Transversal bands might also have been the cause of the special shape of some holes, at the entry point: they can look like signs of twisting, but are, in our opinion, too marked and 'complete' to have been produced because of the twisting of the pricking tool.[49]

46 We are not considering here those tablets or amulets that had perforations (with the appearance of passing holes), whose function was completely different from that of the holes we are examining in this context.

47 Very long traces of holes from the edges are frequently attested. The longest we have mapped so far is on K.4087. See already Corò, Ermidoro 2020, 313.

48 Another question we want to investigate is the identity of the person who made the holes: was he the scribe or a different individual? And in case they were two different persons how did their activities intersect?

49 On the 'transversal' band of the styli depicted in Neo-Assyrian wall panels, see Cammarosano, Weirauch 2021, 16. In this context they also mention a passage from a late copy of a letter to king Ashurbanipal stating that styli had to be soaked in a kettle. The authors tentatively connect this to the groove and the use of an oily mixture for writing; we wonder if this passage could hint at the need to soak the stylus in some particular mixture to ease its impression on the tablet to produce the holes. This could

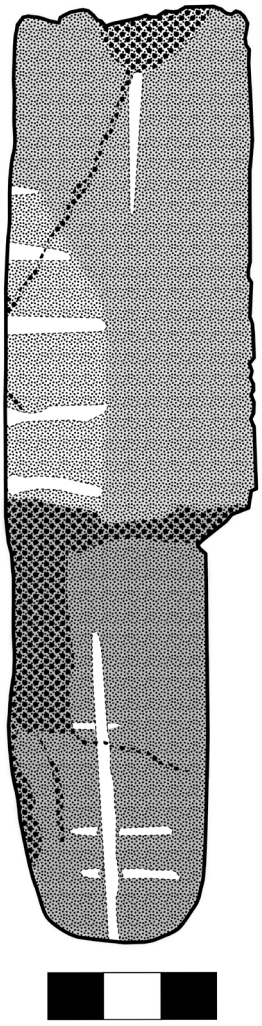

Figure 11 Detail of K.2235+. Drawing by Anna Baldon

Finally, the traces reveal various aspects about the tool's shape. This is not the place for a detailed discussion, but a few elements can be enumerated:

1. traces suggest that in many cases the tool used to produce the holes was only slightly conical. In both short and long traces, we see a quite straight initial part, which terminates into a more pointed extremity towards the end of the traces themselves;
2. against the idea that a conically shaped tool was responsible for holes of different hole sizes (the more it is pressed into the clay, the larger the hole becomes since a cone becomes larger the further it is impressed), the shape of the longer traces, especially compared to that of the shorter ones, suggests that different tools were used for holes of different sizes. Challenging as this may have been from the practical point of view, it seems the only plausible explanation in view of the available evidence. This would also explain why larger holes that we occasionally find on the surface of the tablet, for example in the intercolumnia, can be as large as those on the edges, although the tool used to make them was pressed into the clay only for a couple of centimetres as a maximum, compared to the others. The nature of these tools still escapes us. In the absence of extant specimens, should we, in view of the hypothesis on the nature of the holes we formulated above, look for them among the tools used to prepare the writing boards?

perhaps explain why the traces of the hole's impression are always so clear-cut. Unfortunately in the absence of further evidence, this remains a mere hypothesis.

9 Conclusion

Although the full mapping of holes on clay tablets is not yet complete, the evidence discussed in this paper has shed new light on many important details of the round holes, featured on manuscripts from the Nineveh collection with colophons.

Aspects of their materiality, such as the different sizes of their diameters, the length of the traces left by the impression of the tool used to make them (which we could measure in many instances when they were exposed in the inner core of the broken or fragmentary tablets to which they belonged), evidence of traces crisscrossing each other, which indicates the order of their impression, and the distribution patterns for holes of different sizes found on the same tablet (which reveals a trend for larger holes to be located in the intercolumnia and edges and for smaller ones to occupy the rest of the obverse and reverse, while holes on the edges consistently have the same size) all suggest that different tools were used for the production of holes of different sizes.

Although some crossing traces allowed us to attempt a partial reconstruction of the working flow implied in the pricking process, and though we could only offer hypotheses on the possible comparanda for a full investigation of such a complex matter, the analysis of the material characteristics of the holes raises important questions pertaining to the identity, professional skills, number and type(s) of professional(s) in charge of their production. Furthermore, the examination of the holes' main distribution patterns on the tablets' surfaces, and, especially, the relationship between the text (not only signs but also all kinds of layout markers: dividing lines, vertical divisions, etc.) and holes, reveals that in many instances holes were applied to tablets after the written text and the layout markers had been committed to clay. This laid the basis for a new hypothesis on their function: the idea that the holes may be the visual echo of originals on wooden boards. Should this be confirmed, it would open new avenues of research concerning the production chain of manuscripts that became part of the Library of Ashurbanipal. It would also enable further investigations into the mechanisms of its formation and construction, the significance of the texts it contains, the professionals involved at various levels in its management and the interoperability between different writing media.

Far from constituting the final stage in the research on the topic, our contribution aims to serve as the first step towards a series of further studies that aim to shed light on the multitude of questions and unresolved issues that still persist in the study of the Library. Future stages of our research will thus address pivotal topics such as the correlation between the materiality of holes and the contexts of the texts where they appear (i.e., the genres and sub-genres to which they belong), as well as their chronology and provenance when known. Further physical features of the holes, such as the presence of 'grids', i.e., groups of holes which are more or less precisely aligned in series, both vertically and horizontally, will be also taken into consideration to refine the analysis of the overall distributional patterns of the holes and their significance particularly in connection to the possibility that they may provide insights into the nature of the originals they represent.[50]

A diachronic analysis of the holes is also envisioned. Since it is already evident that the Middle Assyrian tablets with holes are relevant to the present study, and also those from Babylon may have connections to the data collected so far, a comprehensive understanding of the issue of the holes cannot disregard an analysis of their development over time.

50 At least two main "grid"-patterns can be singled out: small grids (made up of 4 to 9 holes in total) and large grids (formed by a minimum of 10-12 holes to as many as 50 holes). Grids appear in all types of texts: in those written continuously, as well as in those in columns and/or text boxes. Regular grids almost always coexist with isolated holes and/or with other irregular grids, made of a variable number of holes impressed next to the other but not aligned in a clearly recognizable format.

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The Scribe's Imprint: Ištar-šumu-ēreš and the Formation of Ashurbanipal's Library

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Abstract This study sheds new light on Ištar-šumu-ēreš, the chief scribe of Ashurbanipal, through an examination of his colophons. A systematic analysis of the Nineveh colophons has provided new insights into Ištar-šumu-ēreš's work beyond what is known from the royal letters. His tablets, which derive from two different periods of his life, reveal some of his activities in different contexts, including the so-called 'Ashurbanipal's Library'. This research therefore helps us to understand how an important but hitherto largely anonymous corpus came into being.

Keywords Ashurbanipal's library. Ištar-šumu-ēreš. Colophons. Chief scribe. Nineveh.

Summary 1 Ištar-šumu-ēreš's Early Colophons. – 1.1 *Enūma sippū kunnû ellûti taramuk saḫḫâ tultabbaš*. – 1.2 A Celestial Mythical Commentary. – 2 Ištar-šumu-ēreš's Later Colophons. – 2.1 Medical Prescriptions. – 2.2 *Sakkikû*. – 2.3 The Series *Udug-ḫul*. – 2.4 *Šu'ila* Prayer to Sîn. – 2.5 Babylonian Tablet. – 3 Conclusion.

Ištar-šumu-ēreš is the most prominent scholar in the correspondence of Ashurbanipal and Esarhaddon. As many as 80 letters and reports[1] bear his name. Most of these documents are concerned with astrological matters, although his competence in other subjects, such as medicine or religious topics, is also evident. He wrote some of these letters alone and composed several with colleagues, while others only mention him by name. Some of the letters and reports are attributed to him only by his title, while his name is broken or omitted.[2] Ištar-šumu-ēreš held the title of chief scribe of Ashurbanipal and was

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1 These are the known letters of Ištar-šumu-ēreš, either written by him or mentioning him: SAA 6 329 (K.317), SAA 7 1 (K.1276), SAA 8 (Bu.1891,0509.14), SAA 8 1 (1881,0727.19), SAA 8 4 (K.750), SAA 8 5 (K.731), SAA 8 6 (1880,0719.57), SAA 8 8 (1883,0118.287), SAA 8 9 (K.788), SAA 8 10 (K.696), SAA 8 15 (K.697), SAA 8 16 (DT.148), SAA 8 17 (K.773), SAA 8 18 (Rm.212), SAA 8 20 (BM.99236), SAA 8 23 (Rm.200), SAA 8 25 (K.733), SAA 8 26 (K.966), SAA 8 27 (1882,0522.55), SAA 8 28 (1883,0118.224), SAA 8 29 (K.3504), SAA 8 30 (K.728), SAA 8 32 (K.765), SAA 8 34 (K.1321), SAA 8 36 (K.124), SAA 8 38 (K.115), SAA 8 83 (K.1335), SAA 10 1 (K.13000 together with Nabû-zēru-līšir, Adad-šumu-uṣur, Nabû-šumu-iddina, and Urdu-Ea), SAA 10 4 (K.1918), SAA 10 5 (Rm.73), SAA 10 6 (1883,0118.9), SAA 10 7 (K.572), SAA 10 8 (1883,0118.10), SAA 10 9 (K.12), SAA 10 10 (K.981), SAA 10 11 (K.14964), SAA 10 12 (1883,0118.250), SAA 10 13 (K.1032), SAA 10 14 (1881,0727.29), SAA 10 15 (K.522), SAA 10 16 (1883,0118.271), SAA 10 18 (K.983), SAA 10 21 (BM.98998), SAA 10 22 (1883,0118.120), SAA 10 23 (K.1039), SAA 10 24 (K.527 together with Adad-šumu-uṣur and Marduk-šākin-šumi), SAA 10 25 (1883,0118.88 together with Urdu-Ea), SAA 10 26 (K.1049), SAA 10 27 (BM.98995), SAA 10 28 (K.2909), SAA 10 31 (BM.99003), SAA 10 32 (K.13121), SAA 10 33 (Rm-II.6), SAA 10 34 (K.1082), SAA 10 35 (K.1540), SAA 10 38 (1883,0118.713), SAA 10 232 (K.1428), SAA 16 79 (K.671 letter from Kannunāiu and Mannu-kī-Libbali), *State Archives of Assyria online*, `http://oracc.org/saao/`; for an overview see also Pearce 2000, in PNA 2, s.v. "Issār-šumu-ēreš".

2 SAA 8 35 (Rm.211), SAA 8 2 (1881,0204.144), SAA 8 3 (K.810), SAA 8 11 (Rm.203), SAA 8 12 (1904,1009.38), SAA 8 13 (1880,0719.56), SAA 8 14 (K.693), SAA 8 21 (1882,0522.81), SAA 8 19 (1883,0118.223), SAA 8 22 (BM.99201), SAA 8 33 (K.715), SAA 8 37 (K.779), *State Archives of Assyria online*, `http://oracc.org/saao/`.

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the *ummânu* 'highest scholar' of kings Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal.[3] Despite his prolific letter writing, only few tablets and fragments bearing his colophon have been discovered.[4] This seems to contrast his scribal activity in letters and his position as part of the king's inner circle.[5] One would expect to find more tablets from the highest and most important scribe in Ashurbanipal's library. For clarity, the colophons discussed in this paper are compiled in the following table:[6]

Table 1 Tablets of Ištar-šumu-ēreš

Museum Number	Text
1. K.3810	*Enūma sippū kunnû ellûti taramuk saḫḫâ tultabbaš*
2. K.3384	A celestial mythical commentary
3. 1881,0727.69	*Bronchia* II (?)
4. K.3957	*Sakikkû* V
5. K.20101+	*Udug-ḫul* IV
6. K.3054+	*Udug-ḫul* XII
7. K.2861+	*Šu'ila* prayer to Sîn
8. K.3877	Extispicy (Babylonian script)

1 Ištar-šumu-ēreš's Early Colophons

The few known colophons of Ištar-šumu-ēreš can be divided into two types, representing two phases of his life:[7] the first type is known from only two tablets in which Ištar-šumu-ēreš is identified with a genealogy, but without a specific title. While these early colophons are somewhat fragmentary, it is noteworthy that there is no mention of his father Nabû-zēru-līšir. Instead, Nabû-zuqup-kēnu is given as his father. This suggests that these colophons likely originate from the earlier educational phase in Ištar-šumu-ēreš's life, during which he may have been trained by Nabû-zuqup-kēnu.[8] A colophon of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu dated 684 BC further supports this hypothesis by stating: "For the reading(-lesson) of Ištar-šumu-ēreš, my son, for one and a half years I *strained my eyes*. I quickly *copied* and checked it" (see below).

3 This is documented in the *Synchronistic King List* KAV 216 (Ist-A.117) iv 12-13, e.g., Chen 2020, 25-6, 34.

4 Most of the individual scholars whose colophons are found, however, do not appear on more than one or a few colophons. The only exception is the collection of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu, which currently contains 125 known colophons, although many more anonymous or broken tablets are expected to be added to this total. Furthermore, the house of Ištar-šumu-ēreš has not yet been excavated. Therefore, it is possible that many more personal tablets of this scribe have not yet been found, and one might expect a mixture of personal and professional contexts, Jon Taylor (personal communication). After all, the number of Ištar-šumu-ēreš tablets with colophons is rather high compared to other individuals, see also Schnitzlein, Cohen 2024, 556.

5 Parpola 1983, XV-XXI; 1993, XXV-XXVI. Parpola divides the scholars of the kings Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal into an inner circle and an outer circle. The inner circle thus consisted of the seventeen scholars closest to the king, while the outer circle consisted of 'lesser' scholars whose correspondence was more sporadic. Brown 2000 criticizes Parpola's taxonomy for excluding scholars whose participation in the closest circle should also have been a given and suggests replacing the terms 'inner' and 'outer circle' with the term 'larger circle', which encompasses both circles and all the king's scholars. Thus, in addition to the education of the scholars, the dominant hierarchy within the circle consisted of their family affiliation and age. Brown also refers to a list of experts SAA 7 1 (K.1276) as a directory of royal scholars and criticizes Parpola for not mentioning all the names on this list, which he calls the 'best guide to the inner circle at this time' (Brown 2000, 49-50 fn. 154). As noted by Radner 2009, 222-3, the experts named in the list SAA 7 1 included not only Mesopotamians, but also scholars from Egypt (i.e. *ḫarṭibē, ṭupšarru Muṣurâyu*) and the Syro-Anatolian region (i.e. *dāgil iṣṣūri*). Hardly any traces of these scholars are preserved in the correspondence written on clay tablets, probably because they used perishable materials to write their texts. The same is likely to have been true of many Mesopotamian scribes. As can be seen from the list of experts alone, one should be cautious when drawing conclusions from the clay tablets alone about the actual circles of experts at the royal court. Furthermore, as Robson 2019, 100-12 notes, some scholars were not permanently present at the palace, but led an itinerant life within Assyria, which may explain why some of their tablets were not found in Nineveh.

6 There are two other possible colophons of Ištar-šumu-ēreš, but the tablets are in a very fragmentary state. Only the name and a few signs on the obverse in monumental Babylonian script are preserved on K.19732. K.23053 has only preserved rev. 2'. [... *ša*$_3$$^{?}$-*ṭir*$^{?}$-*ma*$^{?}$] *sa-ni*[*q ba*$^{?}$-*ri*/*ri*$_3$$^{?}$...], notes on the writing process that may point to Ištar-šumu-ēreš (see the following discussion).

7 Since none of Ištar-šumu-ēreš's colophons are dated, the phases were determined on the basis of other criteria (see discussion).

8 The idea that Nabû-zuqup-kēnu was a scholarly father (*sc.* a teacher) rather than a biological father to Ištar-šumu-ēreš and Adad-šumu-uṣur is based on the mention of other fathers by these two individuals and will be discussed in the author's forthcoming dissertation.

1.1 *Enūma sippū kunnû ellûti taramuk saḫḫâ tultabbaš*

The first tablet contains the building ritual *Enūma sippū kunnû ellûti taramuk saḫḫâ tultabbaš* 'When the doorjamb is fixed, you wash yourself with pure water and put on a linen garment'. This text was part of a sequence[9] of ritual actions used to lay the foundation of a temple.[10] Its colophon reads:

K.3810(+)[11] *Enūma sippū kunnû*[12]

1'. *tup-pi* $^{m.d}$*Iš-tar*-MU-KAM-⌜*eš*⌝ [DUMU $^{m.d}$AG-*zu-qup*-GI.NA]
2'. ŠA$_3$.BAL.BAL ^{m}*Gab-bi*-DINGIR-MEŠ-⌜*ni*⌝-[KAM-*eš* ^{lu_2}GAL DUB.SAR-MEŠ]
3'. MU ^{d}AG *u* ^{d}NISABA MU *šaṭ-ru l*[*a ta-pa-šiṭ*]
End of side

1'. Tablet of Ištar-šumu-ēreš, [son of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu],
2'. descendant of Gabbi-ilāni-[ēreš the chief scribe].
3'. By Nabû and Nisaba, you shall not [remove] the inscription!

As highlighted by Ambos,[13] Ištar-šumu-ēreš is known to have had a role in temple construction projects according to the royal correspondence. One such case was the cella of Nusku. Advised by King Esarhaddon, Ištar-šumu-ēreš was charged with determining an auspicious day to begin construction.[14] Another letter from Ištar-šumu-ēreš to the king dealt with the collapsed Amurru temple in Aššur. After the cult image had been temporarily moved to the Anu temple and the sanctuary restored, Ištar-šumu-ēreš sought further guidance from the ruler.[15] Ambos also mentions a letter to Esarhaddon that refers to the anonymous chief scribe in connection with the construction of *sippū* 'doorjambs'.[16] The king was asked to instruct the chief scribe to inscribe the king's name on a *narû* 'stele' and to determine auspicious days for placing foundational objects in the doorjambs of the house.[17]

In view of the connection between the building ritual tablet and the letters of Ištar-šumu-ēreš to Esarhaddon, it is curious that he still identifies himself as the son of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu in the colophon of this tablet. During Esarhaddon's reign, the *Synchronistic King List* indicates that Ištar-šumu-ēreš already held the position of *ummânu* 'highest scholar' for the king, and was mentioned next to the name of Nabû-zēru-līšir, whom he later refers to as his father.[18] In letters from Esarhaddon's reign, he is referred to as the 'chief scribe'. In any case, in his preserved later colophons, his affiliation with Nabû-zuqup-kēnu is no longer mentioned.[19]

The attested activities of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu, on the other hand, ended during the reign of Sennacherib. Interestingly, one of his tablets mentions the building ritual in its catchline. Surprisingly, the following rubric in this tablet shows that it belonged to the terrestrial series *Šumma Ālu*:

K.5285[20] *Šumma Ālu*; colophon of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu

1'. [...] x x [...](Single ruling)
2'. [*e-nu-ma sip-pu k*]*u-un-nu* A KU$_3$ *ta-r*[*a-muk* ^{tug_2}ŠA$_3$.ḪA MU$_4$.MU$_4$-*aš*]
3'. [DUB$^{?}$.X$^{?}$.KAM$^{?}$.MA$^{?}$ DIŠ U]RU *ina* SUKUD-*e* [GAR-*in*]
4'. [*ki-i p*]*i-i tup-pi ša* IGI.KAR$_2$-*šu*$_2$ *la šaṭ-ru* [*ušašṭir*$^{?}$]

9 The title appears as catchline in two further building rituals "Tonmännchen und Puppen" (K.2000+) and *enûma uššē bīt ili tanamdû* (O.174), Ambos 2004, 167.

10 Ambos 2004, 267.

11 Borger (1971a, 73 fn. 2) suggested an indirect join to K.2331, which contains a compilation of rituals. See Ambos 2004, 225-6.

12 Edited at https://www.ebl.lmu.de/fragmentarium/K.3810; Ambos 2004, 167-9: "Wenn der Türrahmen befestigt ist".

13 Ambos 2004, 15.

14 SAA 10 14 (1881,0727.29), http://oracc.org/saao/P334471.

15 SAA 10 21 (BM.98998), http://oracc.org/saao/P334874/.

16 SAA 16 135 (K.1103), http://oracc.org/saao/P313440/.

17 The fact that the king asked the chief scribe to inscribe a stele highlights another component of his many responsibilities.

18 KAV 216 (Ist-A.117) iv 12-13. See Chen 2020, 25-6, 34.

19 They all date from the reign of Esarhaddon's successor Ashurbanipal. In them, Ištar-šumu-ēreš appears with his title as ^{lu_2}GAL DUB.SAR-MEŠ *ša*$_2$ ^{m}*Aš-šur*-DU$_3$-A LUGAL ŠU$_2$ LUGAL ^{kur}*aš-šur*^{ki} 'chief scribe of Ashurbanipal, king of the world, king of Assyria'.

20 Edited at https://www.ebl.lmu.de/fragmentarium/K.5285; BAK 306.

5'. [*tup-pi* $^{m.d}$AG-*zu*]-*qup*-GI.NA DUMU $^{m.d}$AMAR.UTU-M[U-BA-*šá*$_2$ ^{lu_2}DUB.SAR]
6'. [ŠA$_3$.BAL.BAL ^{m}*Gab-bi*-DINGIR]-MEŠ-*ni*-KAM-[*eš* ^{lu_2}GAL DUB.SAR-MEŠ]
Broken

2'. [When the doorjamb is f]ixed, you wa[sh yourself] with pure water [(and) put on a linen garment].
3'. [*Tablet no.*[i] … If a ci]ty [is located] on a hill.
4'. [*He had it written* according to the word]ing of a tablet, the collation of which is not written.
5'. [Tablet of Nabû-zu]qup-kēnu son of Marduk-šumu-iq[īša the scribe],
6'. descendant of Gabbi-ilā]ni-ēr[eš the chief scribe].

i See fn. 23.

It is possible that the tablet once belonged to one of the *Šumma Ālu* chapters relating to the building of a house.[21] Moreover, it is not uncommon for a tablet of this terrestrial omen series to end with a ritual,[22] thus, the combination of the ritual and the omen series itself is not unexpected. What is surprising, however, is that the catchline identifies the building ritual as the next chapter of this tablet.

It is conceivable that the ritual tablet of Ištar-šumu-ēreš was in fact the following chapter, and that educational purposes may have played a role in establishing the sequence of these tablets.[23] Moreover, its colophon distinguishes this tablet from Nabû-zuqup-kēnu's other *Šumma Ālu* colophons written in 708-707 BC. While Nabû-zuqup-kēnu's colophons are all very similar – that is, the genealogy is mostly present – they can be easily differentiated by their notes relating to the scribal process. Sets can be established on the basis of the wording of these notes, and the sets match the clusters that can be created by the dates preserved in the colophons. The same is true for his *Šumma Ālu* tablets of 708-707 BC, which share the note LIBIR.RA.BI-GIM AB.SAR.AM$_3$ BA.AN.E$_3$ 'Written according to its original and then checked'. Therefore, K.5285 does not belong to this *Šumma Ālu* set of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu.

Also unclear is the use of the expression *ša* IGI.KAR$_2$-*šu*$_2$ *la šaṭ-ru*, "The collation of which is not written" in the notes on the scribal process of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu's colophon, referring to the original from which it was copied. The original therefore probably did not explicitly state that it was collated, or it emphasized that this process was missing.[24] The same expression is used in another colophon of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu with sheep omen:

K.4125 *Šumma Immeru*;[25] colophon of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu

1. [A]L.TIL *ki-i* ⌜KA⌝ *tup-pi ša* IGI.KAR$_2$-*šu*$_2$ *la* <*šaṭ*>*-ru u*$_2$-[*ša*$_2$$^{?}$-*aš*$_2$$^{?}$-*ṭir*$^{?}$]
2. *tup-pi* $^{m.d}$AG-*zu-qu-up*-GI.NA DUMU $^{m.d}$AMAR.UTU-M[U-BA-*šá*$_2$ ^{lu_2}DUB.SAR]
3. [ŠA$_3$].BAL.BAL ^{m}*Gab*-[*bi*-DINGIR-MEŠ-KAM-*eš* ^{lu_2}GAL DUB.SAR-MEŠ]
Broken

1. Finished. [*He had it written*] according to the wording of a tablet, the collation of which is not written.
2. Tablet of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu son of Marduk-šum[u-iqīša the scribe],
3. [des]cendant of Gab[bi-ilāni-ēreš the chief scribe].

There is no clear connection between these two colophons of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu other than the formulation of the notes on the writing process. This possible connection could indicate, however, that this tablet may also have played a role in the education of Ištar-šumu-ēreš.[26] Interestingly, the emphasis

21 Chapters 3-9, see Guinan 1996, 62. Nabû-zuqup-kēnu's tablets, however, differ from the later canonical version, see II.1 *Šumma Ālu* Nabû-zuqup-kēnu (Project Ālu Geneva) at www.ebl.lmu.de/corpus/D/2/1.

22 Maul 1994, 11; Freedman 1998, 12-13.

23 On the other hand, it would be exceptional to establish an artificial order of tablets from a canonical series for educational purposes (Jon Taylor, personal communication). Perhaps the expected rubric formulation DUB.X.KAM.MA was actually different, e.g., *nisḫu* 'excerpt'.

24 See Hunger 1968, 3.

25 Edited at https://www.ebl.lmu.de/fragmentarium/K.4125; Cohen 2020, 132-40; BAK 306.

26 Cohen (2020, 138) considers that this tablet might have been written around the time when Nabû-zuqup-kēnu studied extispicy tablets. Currently, extispicy texts with dated colophons are known from 712-711 BC and from 704 BC (May 2018, 122, 126-9). Of these, the tablets from 711 BC were written by an individual named Amēl-urāšliya (?) (^{m}LU$_2$-^{d}IB-*li-a*) son of Esaĝil-iddina the diviner. The patronymic suggests that they may have been Babylonians (Cohen 2020, 140). In this context, Cohen also points to three signs on the *Šumma Immeru* tablet, which he considers to be written in Babylonian script, namely l. 7'. -*i*]*l*, KUR, KU. A Babylonian writing of these signs, however, cannot be confirmed from the photograph. The preserved -*i*]*l* may rather be part of H]IR/Š]AR (Enrique

on uncollated originals in the scribal process is found also on some Babylonian copies of *Šumma Ālu* from Nineveh.[27] This gives us an idea of the knowledge transfer of this text composition, since it was apparently possible to copy it without collation, and these uncollated copies were then transmitted.

Returning to Ištar-šumu-ēreš's ritual tablet, its mention of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu's genealogy and the discovery that it was a catchline in one of his teacher's tablets suggest, that the tablet was written during the time of his education. Nevertheless, this by no means rules out Ambos's previously mentioned idea of connecting the tablet with Ištar-šumu-ēreš's letters on temple-building projects during Esarhaddon's reign. His expertise on the process probably was the reason to consult him in the first place.

1.2 A Celestial Mythical Commentary

The second tablet associated with Ištar-šumu-ēreš's early scribal activities, still under the presumed supervision of his teacher Nabû-zuqup-kēnu, is a commentary text concerned with celestial and mythical matters. Its colophon reads:

K.3384 Celestial Commentary[28]

26'. [LIBIR.RA]-BI-GIM AB.SAR.AM$_3$ BA.AN.[E$_3$]
27'. [DUB$^?$/ŠU$^?$ $^{m.d}$*Iš*]-*tar*- MU- URU$_4$-*eš* ^{lu_2}A.[BA]
28'. [DUMU$^?$ $^{m.d}$AG-*z*]*u-qup*-GI.NA ^{lu_2}⌜A⌝.[BA]
End of side

26'. Written according to its [original] and check[ed].
27'. [Tablet$^?$/Hand$^?$ of I]štar-šumu-ēreš, the scribe,
28'. [son$^?$ of Nabû-z]uqup-kēnu, the sc[ribe].

The obverse of the tablet opens with the words "[…] of the secrets of the gods/heaven".[29] The commentary focuses on names of Jupiter associated with Marduk, and also references several of Marduk's names as they appear in the *Enūma Eliš*.[30] The reverse is a Venus/Ištar section connecting the goddess with several stars and goddesses in her role as the morning star in the east and the evening star in the west.[31] Interestingly, Ištar-šumu-ēreš's commentary tablet shares some features with a tablet of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu that contains the mythical explanation work i-NAM-ĝ e š-ḫ u r a n-k i-a.[32] Its colophon reads:

Jiménez, personal communication) and neither KUR nor KI seem to point to a specific Babylonian script. If the composition of the tablet does indeed fall within the same period as the 711 BC extispicy tablets, it would be tempting to speculate that this tablet was written by the same person (Amēl-urāšliya (?)), especially if a reconstruction *u$_2$*-[*ša$_2^?$-aš$_2^?$-ṭir$^?$*] 'he had it written' in the notes on the scribal process is correct. This idea would either negate a connection between the *Šumma Immeru* and the previously mentioned *Šumma Ālu* tablet, despite the shared phrase *ša* IGI.KAR$_2$-*šu$_2$ la šaṭ-ru*, if the latter is indeed associated with the ritual tablet of Ištar-šumu-ēreš. Alternatively, a connection between Nabû-zuqup-kēnu's *Šumma Immeru* tablet and Ištar-šumu-ēreš's training would be rejected because if it was written around 711 BC, it would be too old for Ištar-šumu-ēreš's period of apprenticeship.

27 See K.2285, 1881,0204.202, K.2307, K.190. See also a group of Babylonian *Namburbi* rituals copied from uncollated originals (K.2777, 1881,0204.233, K.3664, K.2773, K.6117, K.151 and in broken condition DT.90, K.3853, K.3472, K.157, Sm.1118, K.12556). Already Fincke (2014, 270) acknowledged such a peculiar scribal note on one of these Babylonian *Namburbi* tablets (K.2773), which can now be included in this group. From these groups it can be assumed that uncollated *Šumma Ālu* and *Namburbi* tablets were in circulation more frequently. This issue will be discussed in the author's forthcoming dissertation.

28 Edited at https://www.ebl.lmu.de/fragmentarium/K.3384; Reiner, Pingree 1998, 262-3.

29 […]-MEŠ AD.ḪAL DINGIR-[MEŠ]/AN-[*e*], Lenzi 2008, 171.

30 Obv. 13.: [*iš$^?$*]-*ten$_2$* MU-*šu* ^{d}ŠA$_3$.ZU *mu-de-e lib$_3$-bi* DINGIR-MEŠ 14. [x x] MU-*šu* ^{d}*tu-tu ša$_2$ ina* IGI LUGAL GU$_3$.DE$_2$-*u$_2$* 'His first name (is) ^{d}ŠA$_3$.ZU (meaning) "The one who knows the heart of the god"; His [*second*] name (is) Tutu who shouts in the presence of the king'.

31 E.g., Renzi-Sepe 2023, 20, 50.

32 Edited and discussed by Livingstone 1986; see also K.2670+ and K.170. For a suggested reading of the phrase see Geller 2018b, 308 commentary on l. 31 of KAR 44; Compare Heeßel 2024, 297 on l. 31.

K.2164 i-NAM-ĝeš-ḫur an-ki-a;[33] colophon of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu

(Single ruling)
19'. *e-nu-ma* ^{d}ŠEŠ.KI-*ri* E_2.AN.NA *ina* DIB-*'i*-BI
20'. 2-u_2 *pir-su* i-NAM-ĝeš-ḫur an-ki-a TAB.BA-*a-ti* AN-*e* KI-ti_3 *šu-ut* ABZU *ma-la ba-aš-mu*
21'. ^{im}GID$_2$.DA A.RA$_2$-*e tup-pi* $^{m.d}$AG-*zu-qup*-GI.NA DUMU $^{m.d}$AMAR.UTU-MU-BA-$ša_2$ ^{lu_2}DUB.SAR
(bottom)
22'. $ŠA_3$.BAL.BAL ^{m}*Gab-bi*-DINGIR-MEŠ-*ni*-KAM-*eš* ^{lu_2}GAL DUB.SAR-MEŠ
End of side

19'. When Nanna passes the Eanna.
20'. Second division of i-NAM-ĝeš-ḫur an-ki-a, TAB.BA-*a-ti*[i] of heaven and earth, that (what is) from the *Apsû*, as much as exist.
21'. Oblong tablet with mathematical tables. Tablet of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu, son of Marduk-šumu-iqīša the scribe,
22'. descendant of Gabbi-ilāni-ēreš, the chief scribe.

i For an interpretation of TAB.BA-*a-ti*, see Brown 2010, 22 fn. 39; compare Livingstone 1986, 34-5.

One similarity is the use of the phrase *ki-i* DU$_{11}$.GA-u_2 'as if it (is) said'.[34] While common in commentaries, this specific logographic spelling is rare.[35] Further, the tablets have similarities in layout and ductus. For example, the colophons lack spacing, and the shape of certain signs[36] is very similar:

Figure 1 K.3384 next to K.2164.© The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence)

33 Edited at https://www.ebl.lmu.de/fragmentarium/K.2164; Livingstone 1986, 22-9; BAK 304.

34 K.3384 obv. 17; rev. 5, 13 and K.2164 rev. 18'. See Gabbay 2016, 252-3 on this expression and translation.

35 There are only three examples from Nineveh: The tablet under discussion (K.3384), Nabû-zuqup-kēnu's tablet (K.2164+), and K.4657+ (a commentary on *Enūma Eliš*). A Late Babylonian text offers another example (Gabbay 2016, 252-3).

36 E.g., KI, LU$_2$, KAM, BU.

This raises the intriguing possibility that Ištar-šumu-ēreš, who studied under the supervision of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu, might be the anonymous scribe behind K.2164+.[37] One of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu's colophons[38] supports the hypothesis, since it explicitly states that Ištar-šumu-ēreš learned i-NAM-ĝeš-ḫur an-ki-a from Nabû-zuqup-kēnu:

K.2670+ i-NAM-ĝeš-ḫur an-ki-a;[39] colophon of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu (684 BC)

4'. 3-$šu_2$ *pir-su* i-NAM-ĝeš-ḫur a [n-ki-a TAB.BA-*a-ti* AN-*e u* KI-*ti*]
5'. *šu-ut ap-si-i ma-la ba-aš$_2$-mu* i[^{m}GID$_2$.DA A.RA$_2$-*e tup-pi*]
6'. $^{m.d}$AG-*zu-qup*-GI.NA DUMU $^{m.d}$AMAR.UTU-MU-BA-*ša$_2$* ^{lu_2}DUB.SAR Š[A$_3$$^{?}$.BAL.BAL ^{m}*Gab-bi*-DINGIR-MEŠ-*ni*-KAM-*eš*]
7'. ^{lu_2}G[AL DUB.SAR-MEŠ]
8'. *a-na ta-mar-ti* $^{m.d}$MUŠ$_3$-MU-KAM-*eš* DUMU-*ia ul-tu* 1½ MU.AN.NA-MEŠ
9'. *di-ig-la u$_2$-kab-bir-ma za-mar u$_2$-ba-aḫ-ḫi-iš-ma ab-r*[*i*]
10'. *a-mi-ru la i-ṭa-ap-pil* ^{iti}AB U$_4$.30.KAM$_2$ *li-mu* ^{m}*Ma-za-a*[*r-ne-e*]
11'. ^{lu_2}GAR.KUR ^{uru}*kul-la-*^{r}*ni*^{1}*-a*
12'. MU.22.KAM$_2$ $^{m.d}$SUEN-ŠEŠ-MEŠ-*eri-ba* LUGAL $^{kur.d}$*aš-šur*^{ki}
End of side

4'. Third division of i-NAM-ĝeš-ḫur a [n-ki-a, TAB.BA-*a-ti* of heaven and earth],
5'. that (what is) from the *Apsû*, as much as exsist. [Oblong tablet with mathematical tables].
6'. [Tablet] of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu son of Marduk-šumu-iqīša the scribe,
7'. [descendant of Gabbi-ilāni-ēreš the chief scribe].
8'. For the reading(-lesson) of Ištar-šumu-ēreš my son, for one and a half years
9'. I *strained my eyes*.[i] I quickly *copied*[ii] and checked it.
10'. The reader must not damage it. 30th of Ṭebēt, Eponymy of Mazarnê,
11'. governor of Kullanīya.
12'. Year 22 of Senacherib, king of Assyria.[iii]

i See, e.g., Lieberman 1987, 214-17; Fincke 2000, 238.

ii For the word *buḫḫušu*, see Jiménez 2013, 152. Jiménez discusses a Babylonian colophon (K.6075) where the same expression *zamar buḫḫušu* appears in the scribal notes and equals it with *nasāḫu* 'to copy'. As *zamar* generally qualifies *nasāḫu* this aligns best with its expected usage. The scribal notes read: 14'. [… TA ŠA$_3$] ^{giš}*le$_9$-e ša$_2$ ki-i* KA *tup-pi$_2$* 15'. […AB$^{?}$.SAR$^{?}$ *za*]*-mar bu-uḫ-ḫuš-ma ba-ri$_3$*. Interestingly, several Babylonian extispicy commentaries and colophon fragments from Nineveh also use this phrase or a variation of it, in their notes to the scribal process. Examples are K.9872 (bottom): 1'. TA ŠA$_3$ ^{giš}*le$_9$-e* GABA.RI KUR *aš-šur na-siḫ-ma* E$_3$; K.3786 (rev.): 8. 3-$šu_2$ *nis-ḫu* TA ŠA$_3$ DUB.GAL-*li$_3$* GABA.RI K[UR *a*]š-^{r}*šur*^{1}^{ki} 9. *an* IGI.DU$_8$ ZI-*ḫa-ma ba-a-*^{r}*ri-im*^{1}; K.1315 (rev.): 5. 4-u_2 *nis-ḫu* AL.TIL TA ŠA$_3$ DUB.GAL-*li$_3$* GABA.RI KUR *aš-šur*[^{ki}] 6. *a-na* IGI.DU$_8$ *za-mar* ^{r}ZI^{1}*-ḫa-*^{r}*ma ba$_3$*^{1}*-a$_7$-ri-*^{r}*im*^{1}; s. also K.19012 (rev.): 1'. […] x GABA.[RI…] 2'. […KUR *aš*]*-šur*^{ki} ^{r}*za*^{1}*-*[*mar*$^{?}$…]. The similarity between these colophons in word and phraseology is striking. They all mention an original from Assyria, even though they are written in Babylonian script. One further Babylonian colophon with a similar note mentions an individual: Rm-II.127 (rev.): 12. TA *lib$_3$-bi* ^{giš}*le-*^{r}*u$_5$*^{1}-[*um* GABA.RI] 13. KUR *a-šur$_4$*^{ki} AN x [x x x x] 14. AMAR $^{m.d}$*E$_2$-a-pat-ta*-[*ni* x x x]. This individual, the son of Ea-pattāni, is connected to Nabû-zuqu-kēnu in K.75 (BAK 305), the only Babylonian tablet undoubtedly linked to Nabû-zuqup-kēnu. It states: 1'. *ki-i p*[*i-i* (…)GABA.RI TIN.T]IR^{ki} *ša$_2$* $^{m.d}$AG-URI$_3$*-ir* DUMU $^{m.d}$*E$_2$-a-pat-ta-ni* ^{lu_2}TIN.TIR^{ki}*-i* 2'. *a-na ta-mar-ti-šu$_2$ is-su-ḫa* AB.SAR.AM$_3$ BA.AN.E$_3$ (edited by Frazer 2016). These colophons seem to confirm both of Jimenez's ideas: that there is an equivalence between *buḫḫušu* and *nasāḫu*, and that K.6075, and now other Babylonian colophons can be classified within the circle of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu. In addition, the mention of an original from Assyria, and in the case of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu from Babylon, seems to be important, possibly referring to the transfer of knowledge between these locations. This matter will be further discussed in the author's dissertation.

iii May (2018, 132) assumes an error in the date, as it should be Sennacherib's twenty-first year. According to the colophon, his first year would be 705 BC.

As tempting as this idea is, more evidence would be needed to conclude definitively that Ištar-šumu-ēreš was indeed the scribe of K.2164+. If this idea turns out to be correct, Ištar-šumu-ēreš's early tablets could be dated to around 684 BC, the time at which his scribal career must have started, to judge from the fact that he calls himself ^{lu_2}A.BA 'scribe', in his colophon. If he was already a scribe in Sennacherib's time, we would also gain an approximate idea of his age when he served as Ashurbanipal's chief scribe, beginning 15 years later – perhaps in his 30s or early 40s.[40]

37 While the tablet is attributed to Nabû-zuqup-kēnu as owner, he is not explicitly named as the scribe. This is the case for many of the tablets attributed to him. According to a forensic handwriting analysis carried out by Washizu 2007, different hands are attested among his tablets which suggests he ran a scribal workshop.

38 K.2670.

39 Edited at `https://www.ebl.lmu.de/fragmentarium/K.2670`; Livingstone 1986, 28-9; BAK 299.

40 See Luukko 2007, 254 Appendix for the probable different stages of Išar-šumu-ēreš's career.

2 Ištar-šumu-ēreš's Later Colophons

At some point in his career, Ištar-šumu-ēreš ascended to the position of chief scribe of Ashurbanipal. Subsequently, he adopted this title in his colophons. Notably, Ištar-šumu-ēreš did not refer to himself as the son of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu anymore, but as the son of Esarhaddon's other *ummânu*, Nabû-zēru-līšir. This Nabû-zēru-līšir is entirely absent from the corpus of Nineveh colophons; moreover, the number of his letters is remarkably low for a scribe holding such a prestigious position.[41] One may assume that either his tablets remain undiscovered or, considering his role as scribe of the Ištar temple in Arbela,[42] that they are located at a different site.[43]

Ištar-šumu-ēreš's ductus as a chief scribe is very different from that known in his early days. While his early colophons resemble an older script that can also be found on tablets from Kalḫu, his later tablets show the clear, neat ductus commonly associated with the library of Ashurbanipal, described as 'Type A' by George[44] in his study on the *Gilgamesh Epic*. This suggests a deliberate writing reform of the king's scriptoria.[45] The development of Ištar-šumu-ēreš's handwriting in comparison with tablets from Kalḫu and from Ashurbanipal's library is illustrated in the following table using three exemplary signs (KI, RA, SU):[46]

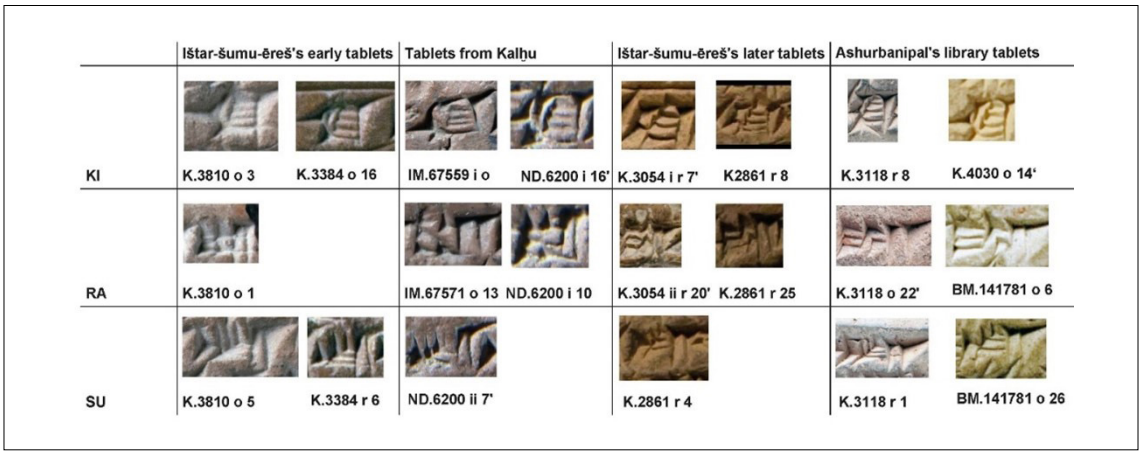

Figure 2 A change in the handwriting of Ištar-šumu-ēreš's tablets

2.1 Medical Prescriptions

Based on the correspondence, it appears that Ištar-šumu-ēreš primarily focused on celestial matters. However, the tablets he copied reveal that he was equally skilled in other fields, including medicine. One of his colophons mentions 'medical prescriptions' and 'selections':

1881,0727.69 *Bronchia* II (?)[47]

3'. [DIŠ NA GABA-*su* SAG $ŠA_3$-$šu_2$ *u*] ⌜MAŠ⌝.$SILA_3$-MEŠ-[$šu_2$ GU_7-MEŠ-$šu_2$]
4'. [x x (x) *bu*]$l_3$$^{?}$-*ṭi liq-ti ki-i pi-*⌜*i*⌝ [$^{giš?}le^{?}$-$u_5$$^{?}$-*um*$^{?}$ (/) GABA.RI]
5'. [$KA_2$$^{?}$.DINGIR$^{?}$.R]A$^{?ki}$ $ša_3$-*ṭir-ma* ba_3-ri_3 *ḫa-ṭu-*⌜u_2⌝ [GIM$^{?}$ SUMUN$^{?}$-*ma*$^{?}$]

41 SAA 10 1 (K.13000 together with Nabû-šumu-iddina, Adad-šumu-uṣur, Urdu-Ea and Ištar-šumu-ēreš), SAA 10 2 (K.112), SAA 10 3 (BM.96686 together with Adad-šumu-uṣur), SAA 16 5 (K.858).

42 This position is mentioned in some of Ištar-šumu-ēreš's colophons (see below).

43 On the other hand, an early death of Nabû-zēru-līšir, see Verderame 2004, 32, might have been the reason for his lack of visibility in the documentation. Our picture may be narrowed by the chronological distribution of the corpus, Babette Schnitzlein (personal communication).

44 George 2003, 383.

45 See Schnitzlein 2023, 293.

46 The signs were retrieved from the *eBL* sign list at `https://www.ebl.lmu.de/signs`.

47 Edited at `https://www.ebl.lmu.de/fragmentarium/1881,0727.69`; Parpola 1983, 450 fn. 5; Borger 1971b, 83.

6'. [DUB$^{?}$/ŠU$^{?\ m.d}$15-M]U-KAM-*eš* ^{lu_2}GAL.DUB.SAR-MEŠ *ša*$_2$ ^{m}*Aš-šur*-DU$_3$-^{r}A$^{\neg}$ [LUGAL ŠU$_2$ LUGAL ^{kur}*aš-šur*]
7'. [DUMU ^{md}AG-NUMU]N-SI.SA$_2$ ^{lu_2}GAL DUB.[SAR-MEŠ]
8'. [*u*$_3$ ^{lu_2}DUB.SA]R ^{r}E$_2$ ^{d}+INNIN$^{\neg}$ *ša*$_2$ *qe*$_2$*-reb* ^{ur}[^{u}*arba-il*$_3$]
9'. [x x x x x x x x]^{r}DUMU-MEŠ$^{\neg}$ ^{r}x$^{\neg}$ [x x]
Broken

3'. [If a man's chest, epigastrium and] shoulder blades [cause him pain].
4'. [...] medical prescriptions, selections.[i] Written and checked according to the wording [*of a writing board*, copy from]
5'. [Babylon]. Faulty (entries) [like the original].[ii]
6'. [Tablet/Hand of Ištar-š]umu-ēreš, the chief scribe of Ashurbanipal, [king of the world, king of Assyria].
7'. [Son of Nabû-zē]ru-līšir the chief sc[ribe]
8'. [and scrib]e of the Ištar temple in [Arbela].
9'. [...] sons [...].

i For the translation 'selection', see Geller 2018a, 49 with fn. 41, following Koch 2015, 184.
ii Comparable statements occur on further colophons; see Hunger 1968, 8; Arbøll 2021, 209 fn. 94.

Concluding from the unfortunately fragmentary catchline, this tablet was part of a series. If reconstructed correctly, the catchline matches the first line of chapter 7.3 (*Bronchia*) of the *Nineveh Medical Encyclopedia*.[48] In addition, the colophon mentions the words *bulṭu* 'medical prescription' and *liqtu* 'selection', which are reminiscent of the formulation of the colophon borne by the library's copies of the *Nineveh Medical Encyclopedia*, Asb type q:[49] *bulṭī ištu muḫḫi adi ṣupri liqtī aḫûti tāḫāzu naklu* 'medical prescriptions from head to the (toe-)nail, extraneous selections, elaborate teaching'. Given the position of Ištar-šumu-ēreš to Ashurbanipal and the Nineveh royal court, his choice of the words *bulṭī liqtī* in the colophon of a tablet that follows the *Nineveh Medical Encyclopedia*'s sequence is not likely to have been a coincidence. These words represent an abbreviated version of the formulation that also appears in the library colophon, perhaps a preliminary form of the formulation re-elaborated later for the library colophon.[50]

Another indication of Ištar-šumu-ēreš's possible involvement in the editorial work of the *Nineveh Medical Encyclopedia* can also be approached from different perspective. According to Panayotov, the *Assyrian Medical Catalogue* mirrors, albeit with variations, the serialized *Nineveh Medical Encyclopedia* and could be attributed to the Babylonian scholar Esaĝil-kīn-apli, *ummânu* of Adad-apla-iddina (1068-47 BC).[51] Therefore, it may be following a Babylonian tradition.[52] In addition, Panayotov notes the similarity between the Nineveh medical treatise *Cranium* I and therapeutic fragments from Kalḫu, as well as the inclusion of Esaĝil-kīn-aplis's editorial work in the Kalḫu catalog CTN 4.71.[53] Interestingly, Ištar-šumu-ēreš states in his colophon – although the passage is very broken – that he copied the tablet from a Babylonian original.[54] Since Ištar-šumu-ēreš learned his craft from Nabû-zuqup-kēnu, he represents a link between Kalḫu, Nineveh, and the knowledge of Esaĝil-kīn-apli's work.[55]

Moreover, according to an observation by Krisztián Simkó,[56] not only were there additional tablets of the *Nineveh Medical Encyclopedia* with a colophon of Asb type b,[57] but, a tablet of the chapter *Bronchia* were found among them.[58] Since this type of colophon explicitly emphasizes the writing, control, and

48 Panayotov 2018, 101.

49 BAK 329.

50 K. Simkó provides a detailed discussion on the serialization of the therapeutic corpus in another contribution in this issue.

51 Panayotov 2018, 114, connects the catalogue with two further catalogues on *Sakkikû* and *Alamdimmû* (CTN 4, 71) and *The Exorcist's Handbook* (KAR 44), which mention Esaĝil-kīn-apli as their editor. *Sakikkû* as well as the exorcistic lore fell among the many competences of Ištar-šumu-ēreš. See also Schmidtchen 2021, 8.

52 Panayotov 2018, 115.

53 On this catalogue, see especially Finkel 1988, 142-59; Heeßel 2000, 104-10; Schmidtchen 2018a; 2018b.

54 Only [... R]A$^{?ki?}$ remains visible. Panayotov (2018, 102) also mentions local Babylonian traditions for parts of the *Bronchia* treatise of the series, but these stem either from Middle Babylonian times (IM.202652) or from Late Babylonian Uruk (IM.74413 = SpTU 1, 44). For a discussion of the Babylonian Material in the *Nineveh Medical Encyclopedia*, see also K. Simkó (in this volume).

55 Frahm 2011, 158-9 fn. 758 notes that Nabû-zuqup-kēnu, who writes his name $^{aš.d}$I$_3$.ZU.ZU-*zu-qup*-GIN in the cryptographic colophon on K.6670+, might have known the work of Esaĝil-kīn-apli, who uses the same writing for the name of Nabû. He speculates that Nabû-zuqup-kēnu regarded this master's work even as a model for his own work. New joins make it likely that Nabû-zuqup-kēnu mentioned Esaĝil-kīn-apli in the same colophon (rev.) 15': GABA.RI ^{giš}*le-u*$_5$*-um* ^{m}E$_2$-*s*[*ag*$_2^{?}$-*il*$_2^{?}$/*gil*$_2^{?}$]-G[I$^{?}$.IN-A$^{?}$] 'According to a waxtablet of E[saĝil-kīn-apli]'. Unfortunately this part of the tablet is fragmentary.

56 Personal communication.

57 BAK 318.

58 K.3516+. See the editions at https://www.ebl.lmu.de/fragmentarium/K.3516.

collation within an assembly of scholars,[59] it is plausible that Ištar-šumu-ēreš himself may have been one of the participating scholars in this assembly, possibly even discussing and compiling the encyclopedia.

Nevertheless, the exact relationship between Ištar-šumu-ēreš's tablet and the *Nineveh Medical Encyclopedia* can hardly be determined with certainty. Currently, it remains uncertain whether the tablet had the typical two-column layout of encyclopedia tablets or whether it was an excerpt tablet.[60] This tablet, however, was not the only tablet of Ištar-šumu-ēreš that linked him to the fields of expertise of Esaĝil-kīn-apli.

2.2 *Sakkikû*

One tablet containing the series *Sakikkû* chapter V also has a colophon of Ištar-šumu-ēreš:

K.3957 *Sakikkû* V[61]

1'. [DIŠ GIG KIR$_4$-*šu$_2$* SA$_5$] TIN
2'. [... GABA.RI^{kur}]*ak^{l}-ka-de-e*
3'. [... DUB$^{?}$-MEŠ$^{?}$/ZU$^{?}$-MEŠ$^{?}$ *ma*]-*a$^{?}$-du-u$_2$-ti*
4'. [...] *ša$_2$-ṭir-*^{r}*ma^{t}*^{1} *sa-niq* ^{r}*ba-ri*^{1}
5'. [*tup-pi* $^{m.d}$15-MU-KAM-*eš*^{l}]^{u_2}GAL A.BA-MEŠ
6'. [*ša* ^{m}AN.ŠAR$_2$-DU$_3$-A LUGAL ŠU$_2$ LUGAL^{kur}]*aš-šur*^{ki}
Broken

1'. [If the nose of a patient is red:] he will live.
2'. [... *copy of*] the land of Akkad,
3'. [...] numerous [*tablets*/*writing boards*].[i]
4'. [...] written and controlled (and) checked.
5'. [Tablet of Ištar-šumu-ēreš] the chief scribe
6'. [of Ashurbanipal, king of the world, king of] Assyria.

i Another notable feature of this tablet's scribal process notes is the mention of 'numerous' [*tablets*/*writing boards*]$^{?}$ and the reference to the land of Akkad '(North) Babylonia' as localisation of the [*copy*]$^{?}$.

It is possible to reconstruct this colophon on the basis of the preserved parts of his title as well as of the expression *šaṭirma bari saniq* 'written and controlled (and) checked', typical of Ištar-šumu-ēreš's colophons. This phrase is never attested in other private colophons from Nineveh (i.e., those not from Ashurbanipal). It is, however, a very common phrase in library colophons, occurring in the types Asb types b, c, d, o, l, n and q.[62] In those colophons, it is often formulated in the first or third person and presented as the work of the king himself.

It is reasonable to assume that the chief scribe of Ashurbanipal was involved in the copying of tablets in the Nineveh library. Since the royal colophons do not mention the scribes of the tablets, or present Ashurbanipal himself as the scribe, it has not been possible before to establish who was responsible for copying the royal tablets. The medical colophons of Ištar-šumu-ēreš mentioned above and their similarity with the library colophons suggest that Ištar-šumu-ēreš, the chief scribe of Ashurbanipal, was deeply involved in the process. His involvement would also explain the surprising low number of tablets signed by him in Ashurbanipal's library.

2.3 The Series *Udug-ḫul*

Two colophons associated with Ištar-šumu-ēreš are part of the incantation series *Udug-ḫul*. The first one is a small colophon fragment which includes some few signs of chapter IV l. 168'-169'. The colophon reads:

59 See Taylor et al. 2023, 38-9.

60 The rather short length of the colophon lines could fit the shape of a two-column tablet.

61 Edited at https://www.ebl.lmu.de/fragmentarium/K.3957; Geller, Panayotov 2020, 229-44, 308; Schmidtchen 2021, 350-6; Labat 1951, 44-55; BAK 525.

62 See Schnitzlein 2023, 308. It should be noted that Asb types c and d were the predominant colophons for the series *Sakikkû*.

K.20101+ *Udug-ḫul* IV[63]

1'. [*tup-pi* $^{m.d}$15-MU-KAM-*eš* ^{lu_2}GAL *tup-šar-ri ša* ^{m}AN.ŠAR$_2$-DU$_3$-A LUGAL ŠU$_2$ LUGAL K]UR ⌜*aš-šur*^{ki}⌝
2'. [DUMU $^{m.d}$AG-NUMUN-SI.SA$_2$ ^{lu_2}GAL DU]B.SAR-MEŠ
3'. [*u*$_3$ DUB.SAR E$_2$ ^{d}INNIN$^{?}$ *ša qe*$_2$*-reb* ^{ur}]^{u}*arba-il*$_3$
4'. [...] ⌜x AN$^{?}$⌝
End of side

1'. [Tablet of Ištar-šumu-ēreš, chief scribe of Ashurbanipal, king of the world, king of] Assyria.
2'. [son of Nabû-zēru-līšir the chief scribe
3'. [and scribe of the Ištar temple in] Arbela.
4'. [...] ….

The second colophon has already been discussed elsewhere,[64] but was not attributed to Ištar-šumu-ēreš at the time. It can now be reconstructed as follows:

K.3054+ *Udug-ḫul* XII[65]

(Double ruling)
17'. [e n$_2$ i m i n - b i a n - n]a ḫ a - l a b a - a n - u s$_2$ g [u$_3$ d u$_{11}$ - g a] - b i n u - s a$_6$
18'. [DUB.12.KAM UD]UG ḪUL-A-KAM$_2$ ⌜*ki-i*⌝ [*pi-i* $^{giš?}$*le-u*$_5$*-um*] URI^{ki} GABA.RI KA$_2$.DIŠ.DIŠ^{ki}
19'. [*ša*$_2$$^{?}$ $^{m.(d)}$X-X-(X)-N]A/U]D DUMU ^{m}MU-*lib*$_2$-⌜*ši* ^{lu_2}⌝GA[L]A$^{i?}$ ^{d}AMAR.UTU
20'. [^{m}*Šul-ma-n*]*u*-MAŠ LUGAL ^{kur}*aš-šur*$^{<ki>}$ *u* $^{m.d}$AG-A-[MU] LUGAL KA$_2$.DINGIR.RA^{ki}
21'. [*ša*$_2$ (x x x) *i*]*š-ṭu-ru ša*$_3$*-ṭir-ma sa-ni*[*q ba*]*-ri*$_3$ GU$_3$^{gu_2}.ŠUM$_2$ *up-pu-uš*
22'. [*ṭup-pi* $^{m.d}$15-MU-KAM-*eš* ^{l}]^{u_2}GAL DUB.SAR-MEŠ *ša*$_2$ ^{m}*Aš-šur*-[D]U$_3$-A LUGAL ^{kur}*aš-šur*
23'. [DUMU ^{d}AG-NUMUN-SI.SA$_2$ ^{lu_2}G]AL DUB.SAR-⌜MEŠ *u*$_3$$^{?}$ DUB.SAR E$_2$$^{?}$⌝ [^{d}INNIN$^{?}$] ⌜*ša*$_2$⌝ *qe*$_2$*-reb* ^{uru}*arba-il*$_3$
24'. [...]-x
End of side[?]

17'. [Incantation: The seven of them] shared out the [heave]ns, their [clam]our is not good.
18'. [Tablet 12 of Ud]ug-Ḫul. According to the [wording of *a writing board*] from Akkad, a copy from Babylon
19'. [*of* P]N son of Šumu-libši the *kalû* of Marduk (*during the reign of*)
20'. [Shalman]eser, king of Assyria und Nabû-apla-[iddina], king of Babylon,
21'. [*that* …][ii] had written. Written and controlled (and) checked; concluded in (its) inscription/wedges.[iii]
22'. [Tablet of Ištar-šumu-ēreš,] chief scribe of Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria.
23'. [Son of Nabû-zēru-līšir,] chief scribe and scribe of the [Ištar temple] in Arbela.
24'. [...] ….

i See Gabbay 2014, 254.
ii This is an unfortunate break. Was the original written by this descendant of Šumu-libši?
iii This expression is not entirely clear, see e.g., Hunger 1968, 5. GU$_3$.ŠUM$_2$ is referenced in CAD M/2 s.v. *miḫiṣtu* 2'. The expression is also found in Ashurbanipal 220 (obv. i 18') *ḫi-ṭa-ku* GU$_3$.ŠUM$_2$ *ab-ni ša*$_2$ *la-am a-bu-bi ša*$_2$ *kak-ku sa-ak-ku bal-lu* 'I have carefully examined inscriptions on stone from before the Deluge who(se meanings are) hidden (lit. 'sealed'), muddled (lit. 'stopped up'), (and) confusing': http://oracc.org/rinap/Q007628. See also the discussion of Ashurbanipal's literacy in Livingstone 2007, 100-1, where this GU$_3$.ŠUM$_2$ *abni* is translated as 'stone inscriptions'.

Hunger connected this tablet with the famous *kalû* ancestor Šumu-libši.[66] Subsequently, Gabbay discussed the tablet together with other tablets of the Šumu-libši family, written in Assyrian script.[67] There are altogether six tablets, bearing a colophon of Nabû-zēru-iddina, son of Urdu-Ea descendant of Šumu-libši. Nabû-zēru-iddina and his father are also known from the correspondence as *kalû*s at the royal court.[68] The correspondence shows that Ištar-šumu-ēreš worked together with these experts. Nabû-

63 Edited at https://www.ebl.lmu.de/fragmentarium/K.20101; Geller 2016, 133-73; BAK 502.
64 E.g., Lambert 1957, 5 with fn. 21; Gabbay 2014, 254-5.
65 Edited at https://www.ebl.lmu.de/fragmentarium/K.3054; Geller 2016, 399-498; BAK 502.
66 BAK 502.
67 Gabbay 2014, 254.
68 Letters of/with Urdu-Ea: SAA 8 181 (K.1405), SAA 8 182 (K.853), SAA 8 183 (K.1383), SAA 10 1 (K.13000 together with Nabû-zēru-līšir, Adad-šumu-uṣur, Nabû-šumu-iddina and Ištar-šumu-ēreš), SAA 10 212 (1881,0204.58 together with Adad-šumu-uṣur), SAA 10 338 (1881,0727.30), SAA 10 339 (K.1204), SAA 10 340 (K.1148), SAA 10 341 (K.1222), SAA 10 342 (1883,0118.270), SAA 10 343 (K.1024), SAA 10 344 (K.1022).

zēru-iddina even mentions that he copied tablets from originals from the house of Šumu-libši. Therefore, it must be assumed that he had such originals in his possession or at hand. Such personal belongings could have also been the source in the case of the *Udug-ḫul* copies. A collaboration between scholars and a Babylonian tradition is clearly present.[69]

2.4 *Šu'ila* Prayer to Sîn

The next colophon of Ištar-šumu-ēreš, belonging to a *šu'ila* prayer to Sîn, may also be the result of a collaboration with Nabû-zēru-iddina and Urdu-Ea, who held the double title as '*kalû* of Sîn and the king':[70]

K.2861+ *Šu'ila* prayer to Sîn[71]

(single ruling)
41'. š u -i l$_2$-l a$_2$ 4[8-a m$_3$ m u -b i -i m ^{d}S u]e n -n a -ka m ^{var} (single ruling)
42'. a l i m -m a u m u n ĝ i r$_3$-r [a (…)]-n a -^{r}x$^{\neg}$
43'. ^{r}GIM$^{\neg}$-*ma* SUMUN-*šu*$_2$ *ša*$_3$-*ṭir*-^{r}*ma*$^{\neg}$ [*sa-ni*]*q* IGI.KAR$_2$
44'. *tup-pi* $^{m.d}$15-MU-KAM-*eš* ^{lu_2}GAL *tup-šar*-^{r}*ri*$^{\neg}$
45'. *ša* ^{m}AN.ŠAR$_2$-DU$_3$-A LUGAL ŠU$_2$ LUGAL ^{kur}*aš-šur*^{ki}
46'. DUMU ^{d}AG-NUMUN-SI.SA$_2$ ^{lu_2}GAL GI.BUR$_3$
End of side

41'. *Šu'ila* with 48 [lines of S]în.
42'. Important one, strong lord, [...]
43'. Written according to its original, controlled and checked.
44'. Tablet of Ištar-šumu-ēreš the chief scribe
45'. of Ashurbanipal, king of the world, king of Assyria.
46'. Son of Nabû-zēru-līšir the chief scribe.

This tablet, which is complete, may be regarded as the ultimate example of the work of Ištar-šumu-ēreš. It uses the clear script that is traditionally associated with Ashurbanipal's library, and which can be found in numerous tablets furnished with a library colophon. This tablet shows what one would expect from the highest scholar of the royal court.[72]

2.5 Babylonian Tablet

Another tablet of Ištar-šumu-ēreš was written in Babylonian script. It contains omens of extispicy, some of which refer to the lungs. The surface of the two-column tablet is thinly chipped on the obverse and on parts of the reverse. The underlying layer still shows some traces of cuneiform text, albeit illegibly. Therefore, it is currently impossible to restore these parts of the tablet. At least the scribe's colophon is partially preserved and partially restorable:

Letters of/with Nabû-zēr-iddina: SAA 10 345 (K.10373+K.12947), SAA 10 346 (1883,0118.193), *State Archives of Assyria online*, http://oracc.org/saao/. Nabû-zēru-iddina also appears as first named *kalû* in a list of experts at the royal court: SAA 7 1 (K.1276) rev. i 1, http://oracc.org/saao/P335693/. His father Urdu-Ea is also mentioned in a list of court personnel: SAA 7 5 (K.1359) obv. i 51, http://oracc.org/saao/P335699/.

69 On the collaboration among scholars from different cities and the transfer and networks of knowledge, Frahm 2012; Robson 2019.

70 K.4240, K.20627, 1881,0204.306, K.3238, K.14576.

71 Edited at https://www.ebl.lmu.de/fragmentarium/K.2861. Langdon 1927, 6-11; Sjöberg 1960, 167-79; Shibata 2021, 106-25 n. 6; BAK 344. For a photograph see Schnitzlein, Taylor in this volume.

72 On this tablet see also the discussion of Babette Schnitzlein and Jon Taylor in this volume, and Schnitzlein 2023, 354-5.

K.3877 Extispicy[73]

16'. 1 ME 24 MU.Š[ID.BI...]
17'. *a-na a-ma-ru na-*⌜*siḫ*⌝ [...]
18'. *tup-pi* $^{m.d}$*Iš-tar*-MU-KAM ⌜^{lu_2}⌝[GAL DUB.SAR]
19'. *šar*$_2$ $^{m.d}$AN.ŠAR$_2$-DU$_3$-IBILA ⌜LUGAL⌝ [^{kur}*aš-šur*^{ki}]
20'. DUMU $^{m.d}$AG-NUMUN-SI-SA$_2$ [^{lu_2}GAL DUB.SAR ...]
Broken

16'. 124 lin[es ...].
17'. Excerpted for reading [...].
18'. Tablet of Ištar-šumu-ēreš, [chief scribe]
19'. of Ashurbanipal, king of [Assyria].
20'. Son of Nabû-zēru-līširs [the chief scribe...].

Fincke suggested that this tablet could have been written by Ištar-šumu-ēreš himself.[74] It is easier to assume, however, that Ištar-šumu-ēreš had the tablet written for him.[75] It is clear from his letters that Babylonian scholars were part of his scholarly network.[76]

3 Conclusion

Experts at the royal court have been a recurring topic of discussion. Much of what is known about them comes from their correspondence, which is now well-edited and easy to access. In contrast, colophons have rarely received enough attention, primarily due to two reasons. First, the formulaic and repetitive nature of library colophons has resulted in them being overlooked.[77] Second, the sheer volume of private colophons, coupled with the absence of a comprehensive catalogue, has made it difficult for anyone to gain a complete overview. This problem has been overcome by the availability of photographs of the Kuyunjik collection and the *eBL* project's database, which now contains thousands of searchable transliterations. On this basis, the project *Reading the Library of Ashurbanipal: A multi-Sectional Analysis of Assyriology's Foundational Corpus* was able to collect 2,296 colophons from Nineveh.

This article has shown that the few known tablets with a colophon of the chief scribe of Ashurbanipal, Ištar-šumu-ēreš, can be divided into those belonging to an earlier phase and those belonging to a later phase in his career. In his early career, Ištar-šumu-ēreš was a student of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu. Two tablets from this first phase, found in the Nineveh library, perhaps were written in Kalḫu during the reign of Sennacherib and brought to Nineveh along with the tablet collection of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu. It seems also possible that Ištar-šumu-ēreš was responsible for transferring Nabû-zuqup-kēnu's collection to Nineveh.

Ištar-šumu-ēreš's later tablets were written during his active time as chief scribe of Ashurbanipal. It should be noted that none of the tablets bearing a colophon in his name appear to date from the reign of Esarhaddon, although he was a prolific correspondent in that period. The fact that al-

73 Edited at https://www.ebl.lmu.de/fragmentarium/K.3877. BAK 344; see Parpola 1983, 451.

74 Fincke 2014, 272.

75 New joins to K.10129+ have restored a Babylonian colophon which apparently mentions Ištar-šumu-ēreš's uncle Adad-šumu-uṣur as the owner of the tablet, following a certain Nabû-šapik-zēri, a *šamallû* 'apprentice', who was probably responsible for writing it (see the author's forthcoming dissertation). Also, in his Babylonian colophon (K.75), Nabû-zuqup-kēnu is mentioned only as 'owner', not as 'writer' of the tablet. This should be taken into account, as he explicitly designated himself as writer of some of his tablets on which a single hand, presumably his own, was identified in a forensic handwriting analysis by Washizu (2007, 255-70, 274).

76 For example, the letter SAA 10 9 (K.12) was probably addressed to Esarhaddon and concerned with the burial rituals maybe of a member of the royal family or a substitute king. The king had previously instructed Ištar-šumu-ēreš to ask Babylonian scholars whom he (Ištar-šumu-ēreš) knew for details of the ceremony, presumably because the deceased was himself a Babylonian; see Parpola 1983, 6-7. Thus, it is clear that Ištar-šumu-ēreš had a wide network, which included Babylonian scholars.

77 The palace mark colophon (Asb type a) – KUR AN.ŠAR$_2$-DU$_3$-A MAN ŠU$_2$ MAN KUR AN.ŠAR$_2^{ki}$ 'Palace of Ashurbanipal, king of the world, king of Assyria' – is a prime example of an underutilized resource. Despite appearing consistently across tablets, see Taylor et al. 2023, 28-9, its significance has often been overlooked. Yet, these tablets hold surprising diversity in their genres, scribal styles, and formatting. Studying these tablets alongside scribal notes reveals fascinating patterns. For instance, the phrase 'according to its original' appears as LIBIR.RA.BI$_2$-GIM only in tablets bearing the Asb type a colophon (K.2252, K.231) and a broken colophon (K.2774), only on tablets of *Gilgameš*. No other colophon writes the expression with -BI$_2$-; all others use BI$_{(1)}$ instead. Therefore, a colophon Asb type a for K.2774 is to be expected. Other examples include an Asb type a colophon with scribal notes that show a spelling *ba-a-ri* in, e.g., *ki-ma la-bi-ri-šu*$_2$ *ša*$_3$-*ṭir-ma ba-a-ri* 'written according to the wording of its original and then checked', which occurs in this type of colophon exclusively on lamentation texts. A further Asb type a tablet set (K.8974, K.3426, K.1451 and broken K.8282) has the distinctive form *šaṭ-ṭir* and refers to a copy from a writing board from Babylon.

most no other tablet from Nineveh furnished with a colophon is dated to the reign of Esarhaddon[78] suggests that a tablet collection with royal colophons developed first and foremost for Ashurbanipal.[79]

Lieberman pointed out that none of the Ištar-šumu-ēreš tablets were explicitly *designated* as part of this royal collection.[80] He argued that "if royal officials of this rank were involved in the acquisition of the king's library, then, they did so behind the scenes, putting the tablets into his collection(s) anonymously, without intruding any reference to themselves". In the case of Ištar-šumu-ēreš, he continued "since there is not any reason to think that these tablets were ever part of the collections of the king, they may be ignored when we consider the libraries associated with Assurbanipal".[81] Nevertheless, Lieberman acknowledges that a study of colophons was a desideratum at the time. This picture of the personal tablets in 'Ashurbanipal's Library' can now be re-evaluated on the basis of a comprehensive corpus of colophons.

An analysis of colophons attributed to Ištar-šumu-ēreš, Ashurbanipal's chief scribe, offers new insights into the construction and organization of the renowned royal library. While the anonymity of Ashurbanipal colophons was deliberate,[82] linguistic parallels connect the chief scribe's colophons with those bearing the king's name. Such parallels include textual markers like 'written and controlled (and) checked' (*šaṭirma saniq bari*) within scribal notes. Additionally, the shared designation 'medical prescriptions (and) selections' (*bulṭī liqtī*) echoes formulations within Ashurbanipal's colophons, where they might be expanded (e.g., Asb type q) to include more elaborate descriptions of content. This idea finds support also in the evolution of the ductus of Ištar-šumu-ēreš, from the more Kalḫu-like one of its first phase to the one typical of the library of Ashurbanipal on the tablets of what has been designated here as the second phase.

These findings have significant implications. They suggest that Ištar-šumu-ēreš was actively involved in the production of tablets bearing a royal colophon and may even indicate that some of his personal tablets were incorporated into the royal library. While his precise role remains a subject of inquiry, Ištar-šumu-ēreš may have engaged in editorial or compilatory activities, supervised scribes, and perhaps authored tablets directly. His distinctive library script on later works, in conjunction with his position as chief scribe, supports the latter possibility.

The presence of a Babylonian tablet among his possessions highlights Ištar-šumu-ēreš's scholarly network – a network mirrored in his correspondence. This raises the possibility that he commissioned the acquisition of Babylonian tablets.[83] This potential connection extends to both anonymous Babylonian tablets and those bearing an Asb type l colophon, including a subset of some ten tablets written in Babylonian script.

In summary, our analysis yields a fresh perspective on the function of Ištar-šumu-ēreš, the chief scribe in the court of Ashurbanipal. Recent evidence substantiates what one might reasonably have expected: the chief scholar (*ummânu*) serving under Ashurbanipal was instrumental in the establishment of the most renowned library in the Ancient Near East.

78 It must be kept in mind, as is indirectly evident from the correspondence, that tablets and writing boards were still being copied and handled for the king during this period, see Robson 2019, 122; Schnitzlein 2023, 295-303. Robson states that some of the manuscripts in Esarhaddon's collection were even copied by Ištar-šumu-ēreš, since he is the one who has the most to say about the processing of (old) tablets.

79 See also Taylor et al. 2023.

80 Lieberman 1990, 314.

81 Lieberman 1990, 316.

82 See Robson 2019, 124 who concluded from an examination of the correspondence that the "vast bulk of the colophons in Ashurbanipal's name, which unambiguously refer to him as the king, were clearly written by expert chancery scribes on his behalf".

83 The same applies to Nabû-zuqup-kēnu's collection, as indicated in fn. K.2670+ ii. This scribe's collection certainly included Babylonian tablets, which were later transferred to Nineveh.

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"Weaving Together Loose Threads" On the Serialisation of the Therapeutic Corpus at Nineveh

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Abstract This article provides an overview of the development of the therapeutic text corpus in the Ashurbanipal Library. It explores the editorial steps taken to produce new standard editions of the therapeutic texts for the Library through a systematic investigation of the layout and format of tablets with pharmaceutical remedies as well as the colophon types used in the corpus. To facilitate the study of the available source material, the texts are divided into four groups. The classification is based on ductus and the different colophons used in the Ashurbanipal Library, yielding four groups: the 'Babylonian group', 'mixed group', '*q*-group', and 'dedicatory group'. As argued here, the tablets in these four groups represent different stages of the editing process.

Keywords Cuneiform medicine. Pharmaceutical remedies. Ashurbanipal Library. Tablet layout and format. Library colophons. Scribal remarks on editing process.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 The Centrepiece of Ashurbanipal's Medical Library: The Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia. – 3 Further Texts in the '*q*-group': The Nineveh Medical Compendium. – 4 Fragment of a One-column Tablet with Colophon *q*. – 5 The 'Babylonian Group' of Therapeutic Texts at Nineveh. – 6 The 'Mixed Group' of Therapeutic Texts at Nineveh. – 7 Fragment of a Therapeutic Text with Colophon *n*.

1 Introduction

The therapeutic texts from the Ashurbanipal Library at Nineveh constitute a rich and varied corpus, with tablets which are distinguishable in terms of format, script, and the type of colophon written at the end of the text to describe the circumstances of its production. Significantly and perhaps in line with the fact that the therapeutic knowledge constituted a more fluid tradition than, for instance, the majority of the omen literature, where the colophons usually designate the place and function of a manuscript within the overall corpus, no therapeutic text from Nineveh seems to qualify as being either extraneous (*aḫû*) to or an excerpt (*nisḫu*, *pirsu*) from a well-established series.[1] This feature of the Nineveh

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1 On the different divinatory texts, see Koch 2015, 30-66 and, with a focus on the final chapter of the extispicy series, *Multābiltu*, Koch 2005, 39-45. Freedman (1998, 5-8) provides an overview of the different types of *Ālu* manuscripts, whereas a discussion of the *Izbu* manuscripts, including excerpt tablets and *aḫû*-omens, is found in Leichty 1970, 20-2 and De Zorzi 2014, 10-13. For the *aḫû* literature, see also Schnitzlein 2023, 255-8.

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therapeutic corpus may very well reflect an approach to the pharmaceutically oriented field of the Mesopotamian healing disciplines (*asûtu*), where the extant textual material as a whole qualified as part of the mainstream tradition and could be revised to produce a legitimate foundation for the discipline.[2]

The idea that pharmaceutical treatments had a relatively fluid tradition in first-millennium Mesopotamia finds support in a set of administrative documents from Nineveh registering the arrival of scholarly literature at the Ashurbanipal Library.[3] These library records provide lists of texts that had been acquired from various Babylonian and Assyrian private tablet collections, either by giving the name of the pertinent composition or by referring to the scholarly discipline in which the texts had originated, such as the lore of the exorcist (*āšipūtu*).[4] However, when it comes to the therapeutic literature, the records use the generic term *bulṭū* ('medical recipes') and never once refer to pharmaceutical remedies as part of a serialised composition, even if such compositions did exist in the field of pharmaceutical medicine.

Evidence for a compendial framework in the form of a technical series comes from the Assur Medical Catalogue, which provides information about two therapeutic compositions, each made up of a series of multi-tablet treatises.[5] This one-column tablet, written in a portrait orientation, contains a structured list of incipits corresponding to the opening lines of the tablets that make up the individual treatises. Each treatise occupies a ruled-off section, and after each section, the catalogue includes a rubric summing up the number of constituent tablets, along with the section title, *viz*. the opening line of the first tablet, which served as the designation of the entire treatise. The text then proceeds with a list of medical topics introduced with the preposition *adi* ('together with, including'), quite possibly to provide an overview of the conditions addressed in the treatise. From a structural point of view, the treatises in the two compositions follow different organising principles: the treatises in the first half of the catalogue follow a well-defined anatomical arrangement. The second composition recorded in the second half of the catalogue is not so well understood, but the treatises here are thematically linked, collecting treatments for various conditions like skin ailments, gynaecological problems, mental illness, and veterinary medicine. The Assur Medical Catalogue also designates these two compositions differently: it applies the descriptive title 'remedies (organised) from the top of the head to the (toe)nails' to the anatomically ordered first series, whereas the second composition is named after its incipit, *viz*. the opening line of its first tablet concerned with skin ailments.

> Anatomically ordered first series (Assur Medical Catalogue l. 58 = Steinert 2018a, 213, 243-4)
> [NIGIN$_2$ 50 DUB.MEŠ (. . .) *bul-ṭi*$^?$ T]A UGU EN *ṣu-up-ri sa-di-ru ša*$_2$ SUR.GIBIL *ṣab-tu*
> A total of fifty tablets (. . .) with remedies (organised) from the top of the head to the (toe)nails. Sections, which have been edited.

> Thematically ordered second series (Assur Medical Catalogue ll. 123-4 = Steinert 2018a, 218, 277-8)
> ⌜NIGIN$_2$ x+38⌝ DUB.MEŠ DIŠ GIG [*ina* SU NA E$_3$ ḪAD$_2$.DA$^?$ *la-ku*]-*ta-šu*$_2$ *um-mu-r*[*a-at*] / [*sa-di-ru*] ⌜*ša*$_2$⌝ [SUR.GIBIL] *ṣab-tu*
> A total of 38+ tablets (of the composition called) 'If a lesion breaks out on a man's skin, it is dry$^?$, (and) its . . . is reddened'. Sections, which have been edited.

That the two compositions in the catalogue are the end products of an editing process aimed at bringing together loosely connected therapeutic prescriptions into newly standardised texts is evident from the final statement in both summary rubrics. The key formulation here is the idiomatic phrase SUR.GIBIL *ṣab-tu*, which describes the production of new authoritative editions of scholarly texts through the process of serialisation.[6] As first demonstrated by Stol, the phrase employs a textile metaphor for describing this process, conceptualising the extant textual material, before serialisation, as loose and tangled threads that need to be woven into a well-organised textual fabric.[7]

2 Compare Geller 2018, 50.

3 Parpola 1983, republished in SAA 7, 49-56. The library records are discussed in more detail below.

4 Note that the library records refer to some exorcistic compositions by name, such as the *ušburruda* texts or the 'Seal of the *ḫaltu* stone', concerned with the making of chain amulets (Schuster-Brandis 2008, 192-7).

5 A partial first edition of the catalogue is found in Scurlock 2014, 295-306. For a more complete edition of the text with exhaustive apparatus and detailed discussions, see Steinert 2018a.

6 Kinnier Wilson 1956, 138, and Finkel 1988, 150. On this elusive term, see also Steinert 2018a, 278-9.

7 Stol 2007, 241-2. The best example of this imagery is Esagil-kīn-apli's editorial note in the catalogue of diagnostic and physiognomic omens, where the formulation SUR.GIBIL *la ṣab-tu* is followed by another reference from the realm of textile making, name-

The Assur Medical Catalogue thus informs our understanding of the transmission of the therapeutic literature in first-millennium Mesopotamia on two levels. Firstly, it illustrates that despite its more fluid tradition, the corpus did reach a similar degree of serialisation as other corpora of cuneiform scholarship no later than the seventh century BC.[8] Secondly, it provides us with a framework – the anatomical and thematic principles respectively applied in the two compositions – as well as the individual incipits that serve as anchor points for bringing order to a mass of loosely connected therapeutic prescriptions.

We should bear in mind that no medical tablet from Assur mirrors the structure and content of the serialised compositions outlined in the Assur Medical Catalogue. The closest parallels to these standard editions of therapeutic texts come from the Ashurbanipal Library. The exact relationship between the catalogue and the Library editions remains opaque, and we will have to leave this question aside until further evidence from Assur comes to light.[9] In this article, I will explore, instead, the corpus of therapeutic texts from Nineveh and how individual tablets within this corpus might reflect stages of an editing process leading up to the creation of standard textual products of the type recorded in the Assur Medical Catalogue. As mentioned above, in terms of their format, script, and colophon type, the Nineveh tablets with pharmaceutical remedies constitute a varied corpus, but we can divide them into four main categories:

1. The '*q*-group', named after the colophon exclusively applied to tablets in this group,[10] represents higher-level textual products, including but not limited to the Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia. A significant feature of these texts is, as we will see, that they never provide an editorial note that would qualify them as being copies of older originals. Moreover, these tablets usually have a two-column format, but recent research has yielded evidence which suggests that scribes also made use of the one- and three-column tablet formats.
2. The 'Babylonian group' are tablets written in Babylonian script, mostly of small dimensions in both one- and multi-column formats. These tablets belong to a larger corpus of mixed scholarly texts that either represent direct acquisitions from Babylonia or are the products of Babylonian scribes at Nineveh in the service of the Assyrian court.
3. The 'mixed group' mainly consists of tablets in a one-column format, with the default library colophons *c* or *d*, often in combination with an editorial note giving information about the scribal process. This group further includes texts furnished with colophon types *b* and *r*/*s*.
4. The 'dedicatory group' only contains one fragment with traces of a colophon, which may correspond to colophon *n* used in the Nabû temple library.

ly, GIM SA.MEŠ GIL.MEŠ, yielding the metaphoric description of the inherited text corpus as being 'entangled like threads' because they have never received an edition. As Wee (2019, 33) puts it, the editing process is portrayed here 'as the unravelment of 'tangled' textual threads from older compositions, in order to combine the material in new ways as a fresh edition'. For further discussions of Esagil-kīn-apli's editorial note, see Heeßel 2000, 104-10 and 2010; Frahm 2011, 326-8 and 2018, 24-6; Jiménez 2016a, 197-9; Schmidtchen 2018, 147-50; Geller 2018, 46-8.

8 No precise dating of the catalogue is possible at this stage, except that, based on the appearance of the script, it was most likely written sometime during the eighth or seventh century BC: see Panayotov 2018, 89, and Steinert 2018a, 203.

9 For the question of the transmission of therapeutic knowledge in first-millennium Mesopotamia, see Steinert 2018b, 172-8. We may mention an unpublished fragment registered under the inventory number 1924,194 in the collections of the Museum für Kunst und Gewebe, Hamburg, which Ebeling dates to the eighth century BC and considers having possibly originated from the excavations of the German Oriental Society at Assur. Preliminary investigations, based on photographs and a provisional transliteration kindly put at my disposal by Zsombor Földi, suggest that the Hamburg fragment duplicates the Nineveh manuscript K.2477+ (BAM 471+). It contains two sets of therapeutic prescriptions (one on the obverse and another one on the reverse) that recur in the same sequence in the second and third columns of K. 2477+. The fragment is currently being prepared for publication by Földi.

10 On the Ashurbanipal colophons, see Hunger 1968, 97-108, along with a detailed discussion of the history of research in Schnitzlein, Cohen 2024. A new edition of the library colophons is found on the website of the *Reading the Library of Ashurbanipal* project: see https://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/asbp/rlasb/.

2 The Centrepiece of Ashurbanipal's Medical Library: The Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia

Although we do not yet possess a catalogue of therapeutic texts from Nineveh, the therapeutic text corpus that has come down to us from the Neo-Assyrian capital includes manuscripts of a serialised composition, which is similar in structure and content to the anatomically ordered series laid out in the first part of the Assur Medical Catalogue. This composition – now called the Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia – appears to have been the centrepiece of Ashurbanipal's medical library. That it constitutes a single continuous text with twelve interconnected treatises of various lengths is evident from the catchlines and tablet designation lines that appear immediately before the colophon proper on each tablet. Combined with the evidence gleaned from the Assur Medical Catalogue,[11] it becomes clear that the focus of the Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia was on treating the head and the neck. Its first six treatises collect remedies for diseases that affect the head, in general, and different parts of the head area, including the eyes, ears, nose, and teeth. After treatments for the oral cavity, the text moves on to the rest of the body, where the individual treatises proceed systematically from the respiratory and gastrointestinal tracts, through the renal and rectal areas of the body, to the legs, feet, and toes.

Each treatise consists of a number of tablets (henceforth called chapters); some are of considerable length, with as many as eight chapters, whereas others only contain one or two chapters. The Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia had a total of fifty individual chapters corresponding to neatly written library tablets in a standard two-column format, which could contain somewhere between 250-80 lines of text.[12] The quality of the script and the outward appearance of the tablets that form this serialised therapeutic composition are of the highest standards. A thin layer of carefully levigated clay forms the outer surface, with hardly any inclusions that could interrupt the flow of the script. The extant manuscripts are large tablets with an approximate width-to-length ratio of 2 to 3; they usually measure between 15.5 to 18.3 cm in width and 25.5 to 31.2 cm in height, providing enough space for longer texts.[13] As a good indication of the scribe's expertise in assessing the size of the necessary space, the writing never runs over the edge of these tablets.

The two-column format of the manuscripts is a noteworthy feature since it allows us to estimate the original length of the Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia. Looking at the most intact part of the composition, the second chapter of the treatise on gastrointestinal ailments **[fig. 1]**, we find that the number of lines in a column can vary from around sixty to as high as seventy-five – the sum total of lines in this chapter is 269.[14] In light of further evidence provided by other parts of the Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia, which are more fragmentary but still allow for a sound reconstruction of the original length (see below), we might take a somewhat lower number as the average line count of a chapter.

The table below summarises a survey of the Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia, as currently reconstructed: Where a chapter is missing, or we could not determine its length due to the fragmentary state of the available manuscripts, we took 265 lines as the average line count. The figures presented here include likely manuscripts of the composition, without catchlines and colophons but with just enough text to allow us to establish the part of the Encyclopaedia that they most likely represent. For instance, the first three chapters of the treatise on head ailments are known from relatively well-preserved manuscripts, with catchlines and tablet designation lines that indicate their place in the series. Here, we can base our assessment on the extant manuscripts of the first three chapters, with 257, 253, and 250 lines, respectively.[15] The main manuscript representing the fourth chapter of the same treatise is only a corner piece fragment but, based on commonalities in thematic content and vocabulary, seems to correlate with another tablet in a much better state, which does not have a preserved colophon.[16] Our

11 Panayotov 2018.

12 Compare Panayotov 2018, 110, as well as Taylor, Schnitzlein in this volume.

13 Taylor, Schnitzlein (in this volume) provide a detailed discussion of the outward appearance of tablets in the Ashurbanipal Library. On the nature of clay used to make tablets and the technological aspect of tablet making, see Taylor 2011.

14 The pertinent manuscript here is K.71B+ (BAM 575), which has preserved text in almost every line, amounting to a total line count of 69 in the first, 65 in the second, 73 in the third, and 62 in the fourth columns. For an edition of the text, see Johnson, Simkó 2024, 105-58.

15 The line counts have been reconstructed based on the following manuscripts: K.2354+ (BAM 480+) for the first chapter edited in Worthington 2005, and Scurlock 2014; K.2392+ (BAM 482) and K.6066+ (AMT 19/1 etc.) for the second chapter edited in Attia, Buisson 2003; and AMT 102/1+ etc. incorporating several manuscripts into a single hand-copy for the third chapter.

16 Sm 950 (CT 23, 50) is a manuscript with preserved colophon indicating that it was the fourth chapter of the treatise on head ailments. This chapter can further be reconstructed with the help of K.6224+ (BAM 494), edited in Bácskay, Simkó 2017.

Figure 1 The best-preserved part of the Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia, a manuscript of the second chapter of the gastrointestinal treatise Stomach. Nineveh, Iraq. K.71B.
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reconstruction here suggests 294 as the total number of lines.[17] Finally, the fifth chapter of the treatise has no known manuscripts, and therefore, it has been assigned the average line count of 265.[18]

Table 1 The overall length of the treatise on head ailments

Chapter 1	MS with colophon	257 lines	9 missing	248 extant
Chapter 2	MS with colophon	253 lines	31 missing	222 extant
Chapter 3	MS with colophon	250 lines	43 missing	207 extant
Chapter 4	MS fragment, reconstructed with the help of further texts	294 lines	78 missing	216 extant
Chapter 5	MS missing	265 lines	265 missing	0 extant
Total		**1319 lines**	**426 missing**	**893 extant**

Table 2 An overview of the length of the Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia

Name of the treatise	**Number of chapters**	**Original line count**	**Number of preserved lines**	**Percentage of preserved text**
I. Cranium	5	1319	893	68%
II. Eyes	4	1076	513	48%
III. Ears	1	283	214	76%
IV. Neck	6	1596	738	46%
V. Nosebleed	1	265	67	25%
VI. Teeth	2	554	400	72%
VII. Bronchia	6	1582	505	32%
VIII. Stomach	5	1294	986	76%
IXa. Epigastrium IXb. Abdomen	8	2127	388	18%
X. Kidney	3	795	238	30%
XI. Anus	5	1325	356	27%
XII. Hamstring	4	1067	459	43%
Total	50	13,253	5,757	43%

With more than 13,000 lines, the Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia represents a substantial piece of scholarly literature, pulled together from disparate sources over the course of many years. The notion that this impressive work was assembled and edited in the Ashurbanipal Library finds support, above all, in the absence of any scribal remark that would qualify the extant manuscripts as being copies of older texts. Instead, a specific scribal notation known as colophon *q* is consistently applied to manuscripts of this serialised composition, thus setting it apart from the rest of the tablets in the Nineveh therapeutic corpus.

From a structural point of view, colophon *q* is similar to other colophon types, especially *c* and *d*. All three of these colophons include the same property mark alongside a description of Ashurbanipal's divinely endowed abilities, while at the same time highlighting the king as the most accomplished scholar from among his predecessors. They differ considerably, however, in their description of the scholarly works in the Library. Types *c* and *d* seem to have functioned as default library colophons with a wide range of applicability through their use of the phrases 'wisdom of Nabû' (*nēmeq Nabû*) and 'whatever pertains to cuneiform signs' (*tikip santakki mala bašmu*), which cover the whole spectrum of cunei-

17 Although this number seems to be somewhat higher than the total number of lines in other chapters of the treatise, the reconstruction is based on the tablet K.6224+ (BAM 494), which contains well above seventy lines in its two almost intact columns: 76 lines in the second and 78 lines in the third column. Even if we take the conservative number of 65 as the average line count in the other two columns of the tablet, the total number of lines amounts to 284.

18 Since it would go considerably beyond the limits of the present article, we cannot give further details about the reconstruction of the individual treatises here. An edition of the Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia, with all the manuscripts used to reconstruct the text as completely as possible, is available in the Fragmentarium of the *electronic Babylonian Library* (`https://www.ebl.lmu.de`), as well as on the website of the *Introducing Assyrian Medicine: Healthcare Fit for a King* (NinMed) project: see `https://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/asbp/ninmed/`.

form scholarship.[19] Colophon *q* replaces these terms with content-specific clauses pointing out that the works in question qualify as the greatest medical expertise of Ninurta and Gula and then singles out the anatomically ordered series, the Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia, with the descriptive title 'remedies (organised) from the top of the head to the (toe)nails'.

Other texts that Ashurbanipal had consulted, according to colophon *q*, are the extraneous *aḫû*-literature and all technical lore that had something to do with healthcare and the application of healing drugs. As a designation of extraneous or 'non-canonical' text material, the use of the term *aḫû* in this colophon is unique. The lack of any other evidence for texts technically designated as *aḫû* in the extant therapeutic literature was, in fact, our basis above for postulating a more fluid tradition in the field of Mesopotamian pharmaceutical medicine. The reason for adding this unique reference remains opaque but might reflect Ashurbanipal's claim that he was familiar with the entire written body of therapeutic knowledge and had not limited himself to reproducing a single composition.[20] To emphasise his aim of being all-inclusive, he might have drawn an analogy between the corpus of pharmaceutical remedies, where *aḫû* as a designation does not seem to have applied, and other scholarly literature transmitted as standard editions and also in the form of extraneous texts. Previous scholars have tried to make sense of the occurrence of the term *aḫû* in colophon *q* differently. Panayotov raises the possibility that this term describes the material introduced with the preposition *adi* in the Assur Medical Catalogue.[21] As mentioned above, this so-called *adi*-section always follows a summary rubric giving the total number of tablets that make up a treatise. The evidence presented by Panayotov in support of this argument does not seem sufficient to replace the older and more likely notion, namely that the *adi*-section was added after the summary rubric to provide an overview of the medical conditions discussed in the corresponding treatise.[22] This function of the section becomes immediately apparent if we look at the medical conditions listed in connection with Stomach, the treatise dealing with the ailments of the gastrointestinal tract:

The *adi*-section of Stomach (Assur Medical Catalogue ll. 31-5 = Steinert 2018a, 211-12, 231-2)

[NIGIN$_2$ 5 DUB.MEŠ DIŠ NA *su-a-lam* GIG *ana ki-is* Š]A$_3$ GUR-*šu*$_2$ EN TU$_{15}$ *iš-biṭ-su-*⌜*ma*⌝
[ ] U$_2$ NAG-*ma* ⌜*la*⌝ *i-ar*$_2$-⌜*ru*⌝
[*ṣe-me-er*$^?$ DIŠ NA KA]Š NAG-*ma* SUḪUŠ.MEŠ-*šu*$_2$ *pa-al-qa*
[*di-ig-la ma-a-ṭi*$^?$ GI]G *ki-ṣir* ŠA$_3$ GIG *ki-is* ŠA$_3$
[GIG DIR]I *u*$_3$ *nik-mat* TU$_{15}$ *u* UD.DA

Total of five tablets (of the treatise) 'If a man suffers from phlegm, which has turned into gastric constriction', including (prescriptions for the case that) **(1)** flatulence (lit. 'wind') has bloated him [. . .] **(2)** he took (lit. drank) a drug, and subsequently, he does not throw up, (and) he is distended [. . .] **(3)** if a man drinks beer, and then his lower extremities are impaired (lit. shattered), (and his) vision is diminished [. . .] he suffers from [. . .], **(4)** he suffers from a knotted-up belly, **(5)** he suffers from a gastric constriction [. . .] he is full of [. . .] and he **(6)** has an accumulation of flatulence (lit. 'wind') and heat.

The conditions here point to different parts of the gastrointestinal treatise but with a focus on the second chapter, where we find nos 2, 3, and 4 in the same order.[23] The rationale behind bringing together these particular symptoms in the *adi*-section is unclear, although the rather exceptional nature of some of the pharmaceutical practices might have played a role in the selection process. The second chapter of the treatise includes remedies for cases in which someone has taken an emetic drug but nonetheless cannot vomit (K.71B = BAM 575 iii 42). Another condition involving drunkenness from overconsumption of beer occurs only a few lines later in the same chapter (K.71B+ iii 49), after which the text turns to a more conventional problem called 'knotted-up belly' (K.71B+ iv 37 and 43). At the same time, the *adi*-section also refers to medical problems treated in other parts of the gastrointestinal treatise, such as gastric constriction (no. 5) and a feverish state called 'heat' (no. 6), constituting the main topics in the first and fourth chapters.

19 Although they function as default library colophons, types *c* and *d* never occur on texts about extispicy and only rarely on tablets which contain other forms of divination: see Taylor et al. 2023, 29. On the correlation between library colophons and textual genres, see Schnitzlein, Cohen 2024.

20 A parallel to this editorial effort is found in colophon *g*, which exclusively occurs on manuscripts of the pharmacological series Uruana: see Taylor et al. 2023, 31.

21 Panayotov 2018, 112-13.

22 For the *adi*-section as a content inventory, see already Scurlock 2014, 295-6.

23 Compare Johnson, Simkó 2024, 15-16.

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Steinert adopts a different approach to the question of whether extraneous texts played a role in the formation of the therapeutic corpus, focusing on the thematically ordered series in the second part of Assur Medical Catalogue. In my view, she rightly sees this second composition as incorporating a more varied material, including both core texts from the field of pharmaceutical medicine but also several intrusions from the sphere of activity of the other healing professional, the incantation priest (*āšipu*). Based on a survey of incipits in the Assur Medical Catalogue, which yielded more textual parallels to the thematically ordered series from Assur and Babylonia than from the Ashurbanipal Library at Nineveh, Steinert suggests that the reference to extraneous material in colophon *q* probably describes medical texts in the Library, "which were not organised in a series corresponding to A[ssur] M[edical] C[atalogue] Part 2".[24] This notion can now be revised in light of new evidence shedding light on a second serialised composition in the Ashurbanipal Library, which may very well correlate with the thematically ordered series outlined in the second part of the Assur Medical Catalogue.

3 Further Texts in the '*q*-group': The Nineveh Medical Compendium

Evidence for the existence of another serialised composition alongside the Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia comes from a corner piece fragment published by Campbell Thompson as K.10530 (AMT 9/3) and described a few years later as possibly dealing with ulcers.[25] The fragment has recently been joined to K.3993 (AMT 61/7) + K.4611 + K.15743, a three-column tablet with an extensive collection of treatments for dermatological problems **[fig. 2]**. This newly identified join is significant because it contains traces of an incipit, which is reminiscent of the opening line of the thematically ordered series in the second part of the Assur Medical Catalogue. The text reads as follows:[26]

K.3993+ i 1	[	*ina*] SU NA E_3 ḪA[AD_2.DA$^?$]
Assur Med. Cat. l. 59[		*la-k*]*u-ta-šu*$_2$ *um-mu-rat*
Assur Med. Cat. l. 123	DIŠ GIG [*ina*	*la-ku*]*-ta-šu*$_2$ *um-mu-r*[*a-at*]
IM 67572 rev. 34'	[	] ⌜E_3 ḪA$D_2^?$.DA$^?$⌝ *la***-ku-ta-šu um-mu-ra-at*$^!$(TA) *la-din-nu* MU.NI

If a lesion breaks out on a man's skin, it is dry$^?$, (and) its . . . is reddened: its name is *ladinnu*.[27]

While the catchline and tablet designation line are broken, the three-column tablet K.3993+ carries colophon *q*, which indicates that the text on this tablet was a higher-level textual product created for the Ashurbanipal Library. Its thematic arrangement, as opposed to the anatomical order used throughout the Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia, is apparent from the opening line, where the text remains silent about the affected body part. Its focus is on a group of dermatological problems, which convincingly anchors our tablet in a standard edition of remedies from Nineveh, which groups medical conditions according to a thematic rather than an anatomical principle. This tablet most likely represents a manuscript of what the Assur Medical Catalogue records in its second part as the first chapter of the treatise called Skin.[28]

24 Steinert 2018b, 174.

25 Campbell Thompson 1931, 55.

26 In addition to K.3993+ and the corresponding lines of the Assur Medical Catalogue (*viz.* ll. 59 and 123), the same incipit occurs in the medical tablet IM 67572 (CTN 4, 116) from Nimrud, which collects treatments for dermatological problems (Geller 2000, 337-9 and 2021, 18-20). In line with Steinert 2018a, 244, a somewhat identical incipit also seems to have found its way in the Diagnostic Handbook Sagig 33, 43, as part of an extensive collection of symptoms affecting the skin. This line is, however, in a fragmentary state of preservation and does not allow a more complete reconstruction: see von Weiher 1993, 82 and Heeßel 2000, 355.

27 The line is difficult to understand due to its use of rare expressions, such as the disease name *lad*(*d*)*innu*, which is otherwise only found in Sagig 33, 43, with the spelling *lad*$^?$-⌜*din*$^?$⌝*-nu*: see Steinert 2018a, 244 and, as a likely scribal mistake for Akk. *murdinnu* 'bramble, (an eye disease)' (CAD A/2, 90-1), Schmidtchen 2021, 119 and 185. According to CAD L, 36a, *ladinnu* is the name of an aromatic, so perhaps the word is used here in this medical context to designate a skin ailment that had a similar appearance to the plant under this name. The spelling *la-ku-ta-šu*$_{(2)}$ is not well understood, but again, a similar form recurs several times in the same context in Sagig 33 (see especially ll. 36-7, 44-7, and 51-3; Heeßel 2000, 355-6), which provides a basis for the suggested reading here. Von Weiher (1993, 88) translates the corresponding form in Sagig, *viz. ina la-ku-ti-šu*$_2$, as 'in seiner Schwäche'. We tentatively suggest that it is used both in our text and the Diagnostic Handbook as a designation for a certain part of the lesion. The verb at the end of the line is *emēru* in the D-stem which, according to AHw 214a, has the meaning 'to be reddened'. On this verb, see also Steinert 2018a, 244, and Schmidtchen 2021, 425.

28 The tablet is in a fragmentary state of preservations, but it is clear that it contained treatments for the condition *sāmānu*: see Finkel 1998, 85-93, text no. 7 ms. F.

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Figure 2 Three-column tablet, which most likely represents a manuscript of the Nineveh Medical Compendium, with colophon *q* and an extensive collection of treatments for skin ailments. Nineveh, Iraq. K.3993+. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence

The title chosen here to refer to this hitherto unknown composition, *viz*. Nineveh Medical Compendium,[29] reflects the rather varied nature of remedies that make up the series. Based on what we can infer from the Assur Medical Catalogue, the text proceeds from the first treatise on skin ailments to treatments for battle wounds and injuries caused by animal attacks or falling off a chariot or a boat. Then come two further treatises, where incantations and apotropaic rituals – healing practices more commonly associated with the exorcist – seem to play a prominent role; they probably contained treatments to defend against witchcraft and demonic attacks and to soothe divine anger. Divination in relation to healthcare-related problems is the subject of the following short treatise, after which the text turns to treatments for mental health problems. Sexuality and reproduction take up most of the latter half of the text before it turns to the last treatise, consisting of a single chapter, with a collection of treatments for domestic animals.

Due to its mixed content, it is more difficult to identify text witnesses for the Nineveh Medical Compendium in the Ashurbanipal Library. This second serialised composition is also in a much more fragmentary state of preservation than the Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia, so there have only been a few texts, among the numerous unassigned fragments in the corpus, that can be assigned to different parts of the series.[30] I would tentatively suggest, nevertheless, that these two compositions formed a twin series at Nineveh. In this regard, the three-column format of K.3993+ is a significant feature. It was presumably chosen as the standard format of the Nineveh Medical Compendium to distinguish it from the other serialised therapeutic composition in the Ashurbanipal Library, the Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia. A systematic survey of tablets in a three-column format incorporating both pharmaceutical remedies and the healing procedures of the exorcist may thus yield further textual evidence for the Nineveh Medical Compendium. A case in point is K.7815+ (BAM 580), a large fragment of a three-column tablet, which presents another extensive collection of treatments for skin ailments **[fig. 3]**. Although this fragment does not have a preserved colophon, we can reasonably assume that, as a manuscript of the dermatological treatise, it formed part of the same thematically grouped series.

Turning now to the colophon proper, we must point out the difference in how colophon *q* makes mention of the two serialised compositions. In contrast to the Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia, which *q* singles out with the descriptive title 'remedies from the top of the head to the (toe)nails', the Nineveh Medical Compendium does not seem to feature in any shape or form in this colophon – unless this series was meant by the rather vague term 'technical lore' (*tāḫizu naklu*). The lack of reference may have to do with the fact that, based on the Assur Medical Catalogue, our composition was named after its opening line and did not have a descriptive title. Without a descriptive title, there was no way of including a more specific reference to it in the colophon. If it was also the case that a consecutive chapter numbering applied throughout the Nineveh Medical Compendium, then the opening line of the composition must have occurred directly before the colophon proper to serve as the overall designation of the composition. With the series title positioned this way, there may have been no need to repeatedly refer to it in the colophon proper.

29 Note that we limit the title Nineveh Medical Compendium to the thematically ordered series and continue to refer to the anatomically arranged one, in line with the most recent literature on the subject, as the Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia. The designation Nineveh Medical Compendium was used earlier by Steinert (2018a; 2018b) to refer to the anatomical composition, *viz*. what we call the Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia.

30 For a provisional list of tablets, some of which simply present parallels to the Nineveh Medical Compendium, see Steinert 2018a, 289-91.

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Figure 3 Three-column tablet with an extensive collection of treatments for skin ailments. The tablet may represent another manuscript of the Nineveh Medical Compendium. Nineveh, Iraq. K.7815. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence)

4 Fragment of a One-column Tablet with Colophon *q*

The fragment K.7842 from the bottom of a one-column tablet measuring, in its current state, 8.5 cm in width and 6.6 cm in height, carries colophon *q* and thus demonstrates that scribes in the Ashurbanipal Library also used this smaller tablet format for their standard editions of therapeutic texts **[fig. 4]**. Since it has preserved text only from the colophon proper, it is impossible to determine the content of the composition at this stage. We can only conjecture that it was a model or practice tablet for the colophon itself[31] or, alternatively, the manuscript of a low-profile serialised composition not yet known from any other source.

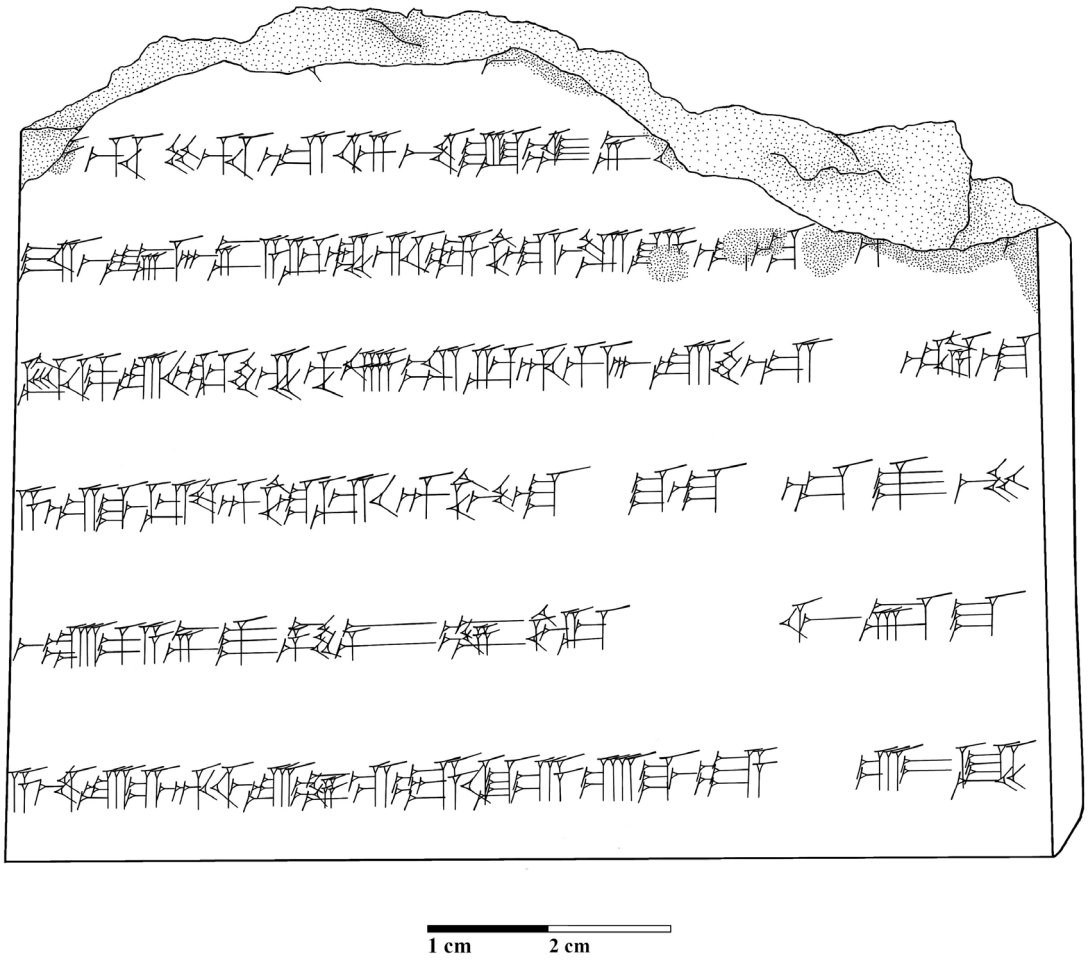

Figure 4 Fragment of a one-column tablet with colophon q. Nineveh, Iraq. K.7842. Copy by the Author

As mentioned above, the texts discussed so far most likely qualified as higher-level textual products put together in the Ashurbanipal Library to form new standard editions of the therapeutic literature. To some extent, they were modelled after earlier and more localised attempts at serialising the corpus, especially in terms of tablet incipits, which anchored individual sets of treatments in the overall therapeutic tradition.[32] In the case of the Nineveh material, however, royal sponsorship meant that

31 Personal communication, C. Johnson.

32 Compare the one-column tablet VAT 13756+ (BAM 209) from Assur, which presents the incipit of the third chapter of the treatise Neck in line 18' of its reverse, followed by further prescriptions against ghosts. A set of twelve prescriptions ending with the rubric 12 *bulṭū ša* [. . .] from this tablet recurs in the same sequence at the beginning of the corresponding Nineveh manuscript

scribes in the Assyrian capital had access to a much more substantial amount of medical information, including remedies, which had been previously available only to small circles of medical practitioners. Combining this data into structured and systematised textual products representing new authoritative editions could not have happened overnight. This must have involved a series of editorial steps from the initial assessment of incoming texts to the thorough revision of their contents and eventual reduction into their constituent parts. The scribes must have sorted through the material to identify related treatments and bring them together into interim editions, which they then used to build their final textual products.[33] From this perspective, we may consider colophon *q* as a kind of 'quality mark' devised by the scribes in the Ashurbanipal Library to indicate that the text has reached the status of a new authoritative source.

One of the scholars in charge of this complex project seems to have been Ashurbanipal's chief scribe, Ištar-šumu-ēreš, whose career is explored by Sophie Cohen in another part of this volume. In the remainder of this paper, we will direct our attention to the other three groups of texts in the Nineveh therapeutic corpus, the 'Babylonian group', the 'mixed group', and the 'dedicatory group' in order to see how these tablets mirror the stages of the editing process that led to the creation of the serialised compositions in the '*q*-group'.

5 The 'Babylonian Group' of Therapeutic Texts at Nineveh

The therapeutic tablets in the Babylonian script constitute a varied group in terms of layout and format. Some are small and rectangular, with only a few treatments written in a portrait or a landscape orientation, whereas others contain several remedies arranged in multiple columns. Compared to tablets in the other groups of the Nineveh therapeutic corpus, however, even the multi-column tablets are of a relatively small size. Another distinguishing feature of the 'Babylonian group' is that the writing quite often runs over the edge, which may highlight some level of indifference as to a precise assessment of the space needed for a given the text. The 'Babylonian group' of therapeutic texts can be enumerated as follows:[34]

Table 3 Babylonian tablets in the Nineveh Therapeutic Corpus

Tablet	Format and layout	Content	Corresponding treatise in the serialised compositions
K.10212+ (BAM 481+)	frg. of a 1-col. tablet in a portrait orientation	treatments for the head	Cranium
K.10535 (AMT 18/3)	small frg.	treatments for the head	Cranium
K.18667	small frg.	treatments for the head	Cranium
K.13242	small frg.	treatments for the temples	Cranium
K.8685 (AMT 77/8 etc.)	frg. of a 1-col. tablet in a portrait orientation	prescriptions against stroke	Neck
K.13289	small frg.	prescriptions against stroke	Neck
K.20137	small frg.	prescriptions against stroke	Neck
K.9579 (AMT 58/7)	frg. of a multi-col. tablet	incantation, and healing rituals against the feverish condition 'gnawing fire' and muscle problems	Neck[?] Hamstring[?]

of the third chapter of Neck, *viz.* K.2448+ (BAM 473+) i 1-26. For an edition of the text, see Abusch, Schwemer 2016, 356-68, no. 10.6.1. For the existence of older versions of the therapeutic series, see also Heeßel 2009.

33 For producing new editions in the Ashurbanipal Library, see also Schnitzlein 2023, 307-16.

34 Editions of tablets in the 'Babylonian group' are available in the Fragmentarium of the electronic Babylonian Library: see https://www.ebl.lmu.de.

Tablet	Format and layout	Content	Corresponding treatise in the serialised compositions
K.6572+ (BAM 536+)	frg. of a multi-col. tablet	pharmaceutical recipes, incantations, and healing rituals for ailments of the mouth, respiratory tract, and against ghosts	Teeth Bronchia
K.18980	frg. possibly from the tablet represented by K.6572+		
Sm 1283+ (BAM 7, 30)	frg. of a 1-col. tablet in a portrait orientation	treatments for the rectum, and the respiratory tract	Bronchia Anus
Sm 666+	frg. of a 1-col. tablet in a portrait orientation	healing incantation for gastrointestinal problems	Stomach
K.13405+ (BAM 7, 14)	frg. of a 1-col. tablet in a portrait orientation	treatments for the urogenital tract	Kidney
K.11295 (AMT 17/8)	frg. of a 1-col. tablet in a portrait orientation	rectal suppositories	Anus
K.8248 (BAM 7, 32)	frg. of a 1-col. tablet in a portrait orientation	treatments for rectal ailments, as well as the hip and groin	Anus
K.19131	small frg.	treatments for rectal ailments	Anus
K.8678+ (BAM 7, 44+)	frg. of a 1-col. tablet in a portrait orientation	suppositories for rectal and gynaecological problems	Anus Gynaecological treatise in the Nineveh Medical Compendium
K.18773	small frg.	prescriptions against scorpion bite	Treatise on animal attacks in the Nineveh Medical Compendium
Sm 708 (BAM 478)	frg. of a 1-col. tablet in a portrait orientation	treatments against epilepsy	Treatise on evil powers in the Nineveh Medical Compendium
BM 98613 (BAM 463)	small frg.	treatments against witchcraft	Treatise on evil powers in the Nineveh Medical Compendium
Sm 460 (Stadhouders 2016)	frg. of a 1-col. tablet in a portrait orientation	treatments against *ḫīp libbi*	Treatise on mental health problems in the Nineveh Medical Compendium
K.3350+ (AMT 62/3+)	frg. of a 1-col. tablet in a portrait orientation	treatments for increasing male potency, followed by a catchline[?] mentioning skin[?] ailment	Treatise on sex or potency in the Nineveh Medical Compendium
K.263+ (Steinert 2013)	frg. of a 1-col. tablet in a portrait orientation	treatments for gynaecological problems	Gynaecological treatise in the Nineveh Medical Compendium
K.20254	small frg.	treatments for gynaecological problems	Gynaecological treatise in the Nineveh Medical Compendium
K.1930+ (AMT 65/2)	frg. of a 1-col. tablet in a portrait orientation	incantations and therapies for pregnant women and babies	Birth-related treatises in the Nineveh Medical Compendium

Tablet	Format and layout	Content	Corresponding treatise in the serialised compositions
Sm 1991 (AMT 66/5)	frg. of a 1-col. tablet in a portrait orientation	treatments for easing difficult childbirth	Birth-related treatise in the Nineveh Medical Compendium
Sm 123	frgs possibly from the tablet represented by Sm 1991		
Sm 1138			
K.19506			
K.3550 (BAM 7, 50)	frg. of a 1-col. tablet in a portrait orientation	pharmaceutical recipes, including a healing bath of 75 ingredients for all possible diseases	?
K.2581 (Stadhouders 2018)	frg. of a 1-col. tablet in a portrait orientation	treatments for different forms of fever	?
K.16433 (AMT 52/2)	frg. of a multi-col. tablet	pharmaceutical recipes	?
K.1893	frg. of a tablet in a landscape orientation	pharmaceutical recipes	?
K.7306	frg. of a 1-col. tablet in a portrait orientation	pharmaceutical recipes	?
K.19355	frg. of a multi-column tablet	pharmaceutical recipes	?
K.10500 (AMT 50/1)	small frg.	pharmaceutical recipes	?
Sm 1442 (AMT 77/9)	small frg.	pharmaceutical recipes	?
K.18918+	small frg.	pharmaceutical recipes	?
BM 98616	small frg.	healing incantation	?
K.11513 (BAM 537)	small frg.	healing incantation	?
BM 128080	frg. of a tablet in a landscape orientation	pharmaceutical recipes?	?
K.5843	small. frg.	pharmaceutical recipes?	?
K.16132 (CT 54, no. 363)	small frg.	pharmaceutical recipes?	?

In terms of content, these Babylonian tablets are sometimes consistent in collecting treatments for a specific body part or medical problem. The relatively high number of texts dealing with conditions that frequently occur in the Nineveh Medical Compendium is an interesting but not entirely unexpected feature of the corpus, given the wide range of topics incorporated in this composition. We also find the expected anatomical principle of the Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia in texts, which exclusively collect remedies for diseases affecting, for instance, the head, the rectal-intestinal tract, or the neck. This is not to say that all Babylonian tablets adhere entirely to the structure of the two serialised compositions under discussion here. They also combine treatments from different treatises: oral illnesses with respiratory, respiratory with rectal-intestinal, or rectal-intestinal with gynaecological. Nonetheless, these tablets show clear thematic links to the serialised texts, often even at the level of textual parallels, which suggests an overall pattern of movement for the individual textual blocks within the corpus of the Nineveh therapeutic texts.

A key source closely tied to the question of Babylonian texts at Nineveh are the library records, a set of administrative documents registering the acquisition of scholarly literature for the Ashurbanipal Library.[35] These records show that therapeutic prescriptions were among the texts which arrived at Nineveh in late 648 BC. With at least six tablets and twenty-four writing boards, the medical recipe literature is a textual category represented by a higher number of copies in these acquisition records.[36] The texts came from private libraries of mostly Babylonian individuals, such as the haruspex Nabû-nādin-apli, whose contribution comprised six tablets.[37] While it is tempting, on this basis, to draw a connection between the acquisition lists and the medical tablets in the Nineveh therapeutic corpus

35 The library records are cited here according to their publication numbers in SAA 7, 49-56. For the first edition of the texts, see Parpola 1983.

36 Parpola 1983, 6; Fincke 2003-04, 124-5.

37 SAA 7, 50 i 16'.

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written in the Babylonian script, such a comparison may not necessarily be correct for three reasons.

Firstly, it is difficult to determine whether these Babylonian tablets at Nineveh were direct imports from Babylonia or the products of Babylonian scribes employed in the Neo-Assyrian royal court. Of the 177 tablets with colophons, only 59 include the name of the person who prepared the tablet, and only 26 mention the place of origin for the *Vorlage* – there seems to be only one medical tablet among these texts with a fragmentary colophon containing a reference, perhaps a catchline, to a skin ailment.[38] In the absence of reliable textual evidence, future studies focusing on the scientific analysis of the composition of clay used to produce the Babylonian tablets may bring us closer to understanding the question of provenance, perhaps to the point where we can start differentiating between imported texts and the ones written at Nineveh.[39]

Secondly, it seems unlikely that the texts in the Library Records are, without exception, in the Babylonian script. Some must have been written in the Assyrian ductus,[40] such as the ones in the personal tablet collection of the Assyrian prince Aššur-mukīn-palē'a, who held the position of *šešgallu*-priest of Assur.[41] The records register the receipt of eighteen tablets from this prince, most likely written in the Assyrian script, including the lexical series *Ura*, the menology *Iqqur īpuš*, unspecified works belonging to the lore of exorcism, as well as the obscure compositions *Ṣarrat šamê* ('Rope of Heaven'), and *Maštila*.[42]

Thirdly, the acquisition of scholarly literature in 648 BC most likely represents a single and relatively late episode in Ashurbanipal's tablet collecting activity, presumably brought about by Ashurbanipal's defeat of his brother on the Babylonian throne, Šamaš-šum-ukīn, which gave him renewed access to the private libraries in Babylonia.[43] While the tablets and writing boards listed in the records were a substantial addition to the royal tablet collections, the process of putting together the deluxe Ashurbanipal editions of scholarly texts like the Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia and the Nineveh Medical Compendium must have been well underway in 648 BC. With little dated evidence, it is impossible to establish a detailed internal chronology for the tablet collections at Nineveh (see below). Based on a Late Babylonian copy of a letter that Ashurbanipal sent to Babylonian scholars requesting tablets in the possession of the Esagil temple library, it seems that the king's library-building project started early in his reign. At one point, this letter speaks about the citizens of Babylon who gathered at the Esagil to learn about the king's message upon its arrival in the fifth year (MU.5.KAM$^{!}$).[44] With Frahm, we can take this statement as a "chronological note that must refer to the fifth regnal year of either Ashurbanipal or his brother Šamaš-šumu-ukīn, the king of Babylon, i.e., 664/663 BCE".[45]

Without further evidence, the 'Babylonian group' of the Nineveh therapeutic texts remains poorly understood. While it seems a reasonable assumption that this group represents, on the whole, the textual material acquired for the Ashurbanipal Library, where it served as the foundation for the formation of the serialised compositions, some tablets may have originated from other contexts. We can only determine the role of the 'Babylonian group' in the editing process through an in-depth analysis of the individual tablets.

38 These numbers, kindly provided to me by Sophie Cohen, reflect the current state of research conducted within the framework of the *Reading the Library of Ashurbanipal* project. For an earlier discussion of the Babylonian texts with colophons, see Fincke 2014, 272-5. The medical tablet in question is K.3350+ (AMT 62/3+), edited without the joining piece BM 98571 in Zisa 2021, 465-72. The colophon is still poorly understood but perhaps contained, in its last line, the editorial remark [IGI].KAR$_2$ 'collated'. If so, we would expect any details about the individual associated with this tablet in the preceding line. Note as well the repeated occurrence of the sign MAŠ at the end, perhaps to be rendered as *mašmaššu* 'incantation priest'.

39 The research project *Reading Beneath the Texts: Technological Aspects of Cuneiform 'Tablet' Production*, headed by Mathilde Jean in collaboration with Jonathan Taylor and Michela Spataro at the British Museum, is currently investigating the sourcing and processing of tablet clay used at Nineveh. As part of this project, the following Babylonian tablets with therapeutic prescriptions have been selected for analyses combining invasive and non-invasive techniques, such as polarised and digital microscopy, X-ray CT, RTI. SEM-EDX, and XRF: K.1930+, K.2581, K.8685, K.10500, and K.11295. On the methodology utilised by the project, see Spataro, Taylor, O'Flynn 2023.

40 Parpola 1983, 7.

41 On Aššur-mukīn-palē'a, who was presumably born around the time when Esarhaddon became king, see Radner 1998, as well as Novotny, Singletary 2009, 170-2.

42 SAA 7, 51 b.e. ii 4'-r. 1; see Parpola 1983, 7; Villard 1997, 139.

43 Parpola 1983, 11-12.

44 BM 28825, 36-8. The text was edited by Frame, George 2005, 270-7, who saw it as a "Late Babylonian copy of a transcript of a letter written on behalf of the scholars of Babylon in response to the king's request for scholarly cuneiform texts". For a different understanding of the text, *viz.* as a letter sent by Ashurbanipal to the scholars in Babylon, see Frahm 2005. On the historicity of the document, see Goldstein 2010.

45 Frahm 2011, 274. For a recent discussion of the various learned activities in and around the Ashurbanipal Library, see also Schnitzlein 2023, 294-316.

6 The 'Mixed Group' of Therapeutic Texts at Nineveh

We are on more solid ground with the 'mixed group' of therapeutic tablets, which mainly have a one-column format and are furnished with a library colophon other than type *q*. Due to the more varied nature of the colophons in this group, we use the designation 'mixed group' to underline the fact that these tablets do not constitute a uniform corpus. They must have belonged to different stages of the above-outlined editing process. In this regard, recent research has yielded significant results, postulating a likely chronology for the internal development of the Ashurbanipal Library such as the following:[46]

1. The first colophon used for texts of all kinds may possibly have been *a*, the most concise colophon type, which essentially functioned as an ownership label and was usually added after the clay of the tablet had dried.
2. Colophon *b* may signal the next stage of Ashurbanipal's library building project. This colophon describes the source of the text and then goes into detail about the editorial work that had taken place to produce it. A significant feature of this colophon is that it gives Ashurbanipal as the writer of the tablet but then points out that the king did this in the company of his scholars. It also refers to the diversity of the originals, saying that the tablet was written 'according to tablets and writing boards, copies from the land of Assur, Sumer, and Akkad'.
3. Types *c* and *d* may have replaced *b* as more sophisticated colophons meant to serve as the default library colophons in the Ashurbanipal Library. The difference between these two colophons is a four-line protective formula, which only occurs in *c*. This might indicate that *d* was an abbreviated form of the default colophon, written on tablets without enough space for the longer version. In contrast to *b*, these two colophons only mention Ashurbanipal as being involved in the production of the text.

The use of different colophons highlights the nature of the Ashurbanipal Library as a living collection, which evolved over time in line with the exponential growth of the incoming text material and the editorial choices made by the scribes turning the received material into structured textual products. The choices to create new library editions of the inherited texts must have been dependent, to some extent, on the particularities of the scholarly corpus at hand, such as the fluidity of the transmission, which affected some texts more than others.[47] It is thus necessary to point out, without disagreeing with the overall validity of the above-described diachronic aspect, that the colophons most likely served more than one purpose, and we can perhaps glean a more nuanced understanding if we engage with them on the level of individual scholarly text corpora, as well as representatives of the Ashurbanipal Library as a whole.[48]

The therapeutic texts serve as an ideal example thanks to the variety of colophons that occur in this corpus, allowing us to formulate, however tentatively, some ideas about the internal development of the corpus. Our point of departure is the notion that tablets in the 'mixed group' are interim editions; they represent the first attempts to build the mass of acquired medical prescriptions into structured textual blocks. These structured textual blocks were then position under the appropriate tablet incipits in compliance with the anatomical and thematically oriented organising principles. Here, we can only outline the general operating principles of this assumed editorial project, based on information we have gleaned from the colophons themselves. A more detailed study would require thorough text critical analyses, which lie beyond the scope of the present paper.

Although the available data does not allow us to reconstruct each individual step of the editing process, it is clear that this process involved a great deal of copying work. Upon their arrival, the texts would, most likely, have been recopied on one-column tablets in the clean and tidy script commonly used in the Ashurbanipal Library.[49] Compared to manuscripts of the serialised compositions, these one-column tablets usually employ a somewhat larger script and more generous spacing, making in-

46 Taylor et al. 2023, 36-8.

47 A case in point is the hemerological text tradition which, unlike other divinatory texts, had never been brought together into a major series: see Jiménez 2016a.

48 We may illustrate this point by drawing attention to K.4329+, a three-column tablet with colophon *a*, which contains a list of Assyrian eponymates between the years 910 and 659 BC (Millard 1994, MS A_1). Since it could not be added to this tablet earlier than the last entry in the list, we may suggest that colophon *a* – the first colophon type introduced in the Ashurbanipal Library – was still in use later in the king's reign. It may have been retained until the end of the king's reign as a property mark signalling non-scholarly tablets in the library.

49 On the standardisation of the script in the Ashurbanipal Library, see Schnitzlein 2023, 293.

dividual components of the prescriptions (e.g., names of drugs) appear as separate units within the main body of the text **[fig 5]**. The reason why scribes, whose abilities undoubtedly qualified them to practice their craft in the Ashurbanipal Library, chose to produce copies of such nature seems to be twofold. Firstly, they were trying to reproduce their *Vorlage* as closely and truthfully as possible. Secondly, these features point to a deliberate effort to make the new copies as clear and easy to read as possible, presumably to avoid misreading the text at a later stage of the editing process. This may especially have been the case with the Babylonian tablets, which they needed to render, as one of the first steps, in the Assyrian script.

These first copies usually bear one of the default library colophons (c or *d*), with a note on the editing process pointing out that the text has been written, checked, and collated according to the wording of an older tablet. Significantly, this note always refers to a single original. Some one-column tablets also present a catchline but never a tablet designation line, which is a clear indication that they were not part of more extensive serialised compositions at this stage. These catchlines quite possibly provided points of orientation for the scribes as they started to arrange the prescriptions into larger textual blocks. To give an example, K.7845+ (AMT 29/2+) anchors the recorded remedies in the first chapter of Hamstring, the anatomical treatise on leg ailments, because it presents a catchline that corresponds to the opening line of the second chapter of the same treatise. The prescriptions from K.7845+ reoccur in K.2497+ (AMT 37/5+), a tablet in a two-column format that may thus be a manuscript of the first chapter of Hamstring, even if it does not have a preserved colophon.[50] The standard two-column edition in K.2497+ mirrors the underlying process of collecting material from more than one source. While it presents the remedies in the same sequence as they occur in K.7845+, it does not keep them together as a single block within the body of the text.[51] The way the prescriptions are rearranged highlights the fact that, before reaching the status of an authoritative source, the text had undergone a series of editorial steps, in which the scribes amalgamated the contents of individual sources to form larger thematically-related blocks of text.

Tablets with a scribal remark, saying that they were written according to more than one source, were likely produced at a more advanced stage of the editing process. For example, K.2262+ (BAM 533+), including several newly joined fragments and still in the one-column format, contains a variant form of the lesser-known colophon *r*/*s*; this colophon is otherwise attached to manuscripts of *bīt rimki*. In this colophon, the scribal note says that the tablet is a copy from Assyria, followed by a more fragmentary reference to what appears to be the land of Akkad (*viz.* Babylonia). This tablet may thus represent a stage of the editing process, in which the overall outline of the standard text edition first started to take shape through the amalgamation of multiple exemplars. Since it presents an exclusive collection of treatments for oral ailments, we can regard K.2262+ as an interim edition feeding into the corresponding chapters of the serialised compositions with a focus on diseased mouth.[52]

The production of interim editions of therapeutic texts through the collation and amalgamation of multiple exemplars is even more evident in those few cases, where the therapeutic tablet bears colophon *b*. This colophon presents an elaborate description of the pertinent process, making use of the plural forms *ṭuppānu* ('tablets') and *lē'ānu* ('writing boards') to emphasise that the manuscript at hand is the result of an editorial work based on multiple texts of diverse origins. The originals used in the production of these new texts came from Assyria and Babylonia, as well as the southernmost part of the land, Sumer.[53] Colophon *b* also highlights the king's role by pointing out that he had produced the text in the assembly of his scholars – a remark which we can correlate with epistolary evidence, such as the following letter sent by the scholar Ninurta-aḫ-iddin[54] to Esarhaddon or Ashurbanipal about tablets worth preserving:

50 Steinert 2018a, 240.

51 The prescriptions in K.7845+ obv. 22'-rev. 3 reoccur in K.2497+ ii 55'-ii 58', whereas those recorded in K.7845+ rev. 4-13 are found in K.2497+ iii 10-13. The two blocks are separated from one another by a set of pharmaceutical remedies dealing with paralysed flesh and tendons.

52 In terms of contents, K.2262+ has links to two separate chapters of the Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia: treatments for the mouth condition *būšānu* reappear in the second chapter of the oral treatise Teeth, whereas those dealing with 'seised mouth' (*kadabbedû*) found their way into the fifth chapter of the treatise Neck.

53 Compare Schnitzlein 2023, 308-9. A different view on the meaning of colophon *b* is offered in Taylor et al. 2023, 29-30.

54 On Ninurta-aḫ-iddin, see Baker, Fischer 2000.

> Let me read the tablets in the presence of the king, my lord, and let me put down on them whatever is agreeable to the king; whatever is not acceptable to the king, I shall remove from them. The tablets I am speaking about are worth preserving until far-off days.[55]

This letter is instructive on more than one level. It highlights the approach Mesopotamian scholars had adopted as part of their tablet collecting activity, seeing tablets as worthy of future safekeeping even after they fulfilled their purpose. When it comes to the therapeutic literature, this approach to the textual material suggests that they did not dispose of tablets from the interim phase of the editing process, but rather preserved them in the Ashurbanipal Library alongside the finalised textual products. Moreover, the letter ties in well with what we can glean from colophon *b*, namely that producing library editions of texts was an interactive enterprise between the king and his scholars.

We are aware of four therapeutic tablets furnished with colophon *b*:[56]

1. K.3486 (AMT 97/6): corner fragment possibly of a two-column tablet, with a catchline and tablet designation line that anchor this tablet as a textual witness for the second chapter of the treatise Neck.
2. K.6545+ (BAM 7, 23): large fragment of a two-column tablet, with a catchline and tablet designation line that anchor this tablet as a textual witness for the third chapter of the rectal treatise Anus.
3. K.3516 (BAM 548): fragment possibly of a two-column tablet, with only a catchline referring to the sixth chapter of the respiratory treatise Bronchia. This catchline thus suggests that K.3516 is a textual witness for the fifth chapter of Bronchia.
4. K.8187 (BAM 551): fragment of a two-column tablet, with only a few traces left of the colophon. These traces most likely correspond to the last two lines of colophon *b*, where curses against anyone who might replace the king's name with their own occur.

These tablets have features in common with the standardised manuscripts representing the serialised therapeutic compositions in the Assurbanipal Library. One such feature is the two-column format, which is most evident in the case of K.6545+ and K.8187 due to the presence of a pair of vertical dividing lines separating the two columns. The other two examples, K.3486 and K.3516, have the right dimensions for a two-column format but are broken in such a way that we have preserved text from only the left-hand side of these tablets. Another significant feature of this group of texts is that, in two cases, they include a tablet designation line referring to the second chapter of the treatise Neck (K.3486), and the third chapter of the rectal treatise Anus (K.6545+).

Because of the fragmentary state of the available sources, it is difficult to determine what distinguishes tablets with colophon *b* from those with colophon *q*. The second chapter of Neck and the third chapter of Anus, represented by K.3486 and K.6545+, respectively, are not known from standardised manuscripts of the Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia bearing colophon *q*. The only tablet allowing for a comparative analysis is K.3516, which collects treatments for respiratory ailments. K.3516 does not have a tablet designation line but does include a catchline, anchoring the text on this tablet as a textual witness for the fifth chapter of the respiratory treatise Bronchia. The same chapter is known from K.2414+ (AMT 80/1 etc.), a fragment of a two-column tablet, which bears colophon *q* and thus qualifies as an actual manuscript of the serialised text. As far as we can judge based on textual overlaps in the first and fourth columns of the tablets, it seems that K.3516 and K.2414+ are duplicates.

We may thus reasonably assume that tablets with colophon *b* belonged to a very advanced stage of the editing process, perhaps just before the text reached the status of an authoritative source, at which point it received a quality mark in the form of colophon *q*.

55 SAA 10, 373 rev. 4-13. The translation here follows Frame, George 2005, 278. For a different understanding of the passage, *viz.* as referring to the addition or removal of a tablet to or from a library rather than to the addition or deletion of text to or from a tablet, see Jiménez 2016b, 233.

56 A further example might be K.13390 (AMT 44/7), but the colophon is in a very fragmentary state of preservation and does not allow for a more complete restoration.

Figure 5 Treatments against ghost-induced ailments, recorded on tablets in two different formats. Nineveh, Iraq. K.3243+ (left) and K.2477+ (right). © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence)

7 Fragment of a Therapeutic Text with Colophon *n*

The small corner fragment BM 98740 (AMT 42/6) differs from the previously mentioned tablets in that it includes traces of a scribal remark that most likely corresponds to the Nabû temple library colophon *n* **[fig. 6]**. The preserved signs correlate with the last two lines of the colophon, where Ashurbanipal recounts how he had written (l. 1: ˹*iš*¹-[*ṭur*]), checked, and collated the tablet and then deposited it in the library of Nabû (l. 2: *ina* IM.[GU$_2$.LA$_2$]) to secure his well-being for future days. This enterprise – also detailed in the more common temple library colophon *o* – has been described previously as serving the ideological purpose of promoting the king's claim of scholarly proficiency.[57] We may also take it as a form of offering on the king's behalf meant to show appreciation and gratitude to the divine scribe, whose support enabled the large-scale editorial works in his royal library.

The opening line of BM 98740 matches the incipit of the second chapter of the anatomical treatise that deals with illnesses of the legs and feet. This incipit, along with the remains of a short passage with treatments for the leg condition *sagallu*, anchors our fragment as a manuscript representing the final treatise of the Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia,[58] except that it did not form part of the main text series in the Ashurbanipal Library. It was a manuscript for the Nabû temple library, presumably donated by the king as an act of worship and devotion for the completion of his project on producing standard editions of therapeutic texts. We should bear in mind that the Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia and the Nineveh Medical Compendium were authoritative editions created anew from a mass of loosely connected therapeutic prescriptions and, as such, must have qualified as textual products worthy of the attention of the scribal god.

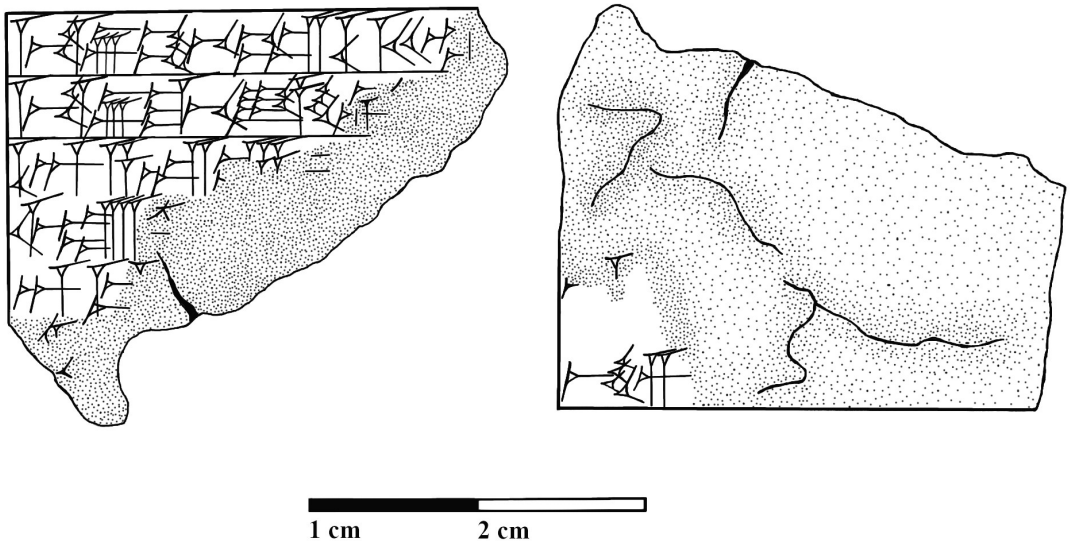

Figure 6 Fragment of a tablet with colophon n. Nineveh, Iraq. BM 98740. Copy by the author

57 Taylor et al. 2023, 35.

58 Panayotov 2018, 105-6; Steinert 2018a, 240. For an edition of the incantation in l. 3-5, with parallels, see Collins 1999, 243-9.

Appendix: Colophons and Editorial Notes in the Nineveh Therapeutic Corpus[59]

Colophon *b*

Aššur-bān-apli šarru rabû šarru dannu šar kiššati šar māt Aššur mār Aššur-aḫa-iddina šar māt Aššur mār Sîn-aḫḫē-erība šar māt Aššur-ma	Ashurbanipal, great king, mighty king, king of the Universe, king of the land of Assur, son of Esarhaddon, king of the land of Assur, son of Sennacherib, king of the land of Assur.
kī pī ṭuppāni lē'āni gabarī māt Aššur māt Šumeri u Akkade ṭuppu šuātu ina tapḫurti ummânī aṣṭur asniq abrē-ma ana tāmarti šarrūtīya qereb ekallīya ukīn	I have written, checked, (and) collated this tablet in the assembly of my scholars according to tablets and writing boards, copies from the land of Assur, Sumer, and Akkad, and deposited in my palace for my royal (consultation).
ša šumi šatru ipaššiṭu šumšu išaṭṭaru Nabû ṭupšar gimri šumšu lipšiṭ	Whoever erases my name and writes his own, may Nabû, the scribe of everything, erase his name!

Colophons *c* and *d*

ekal Aššur-bān-apli šar kiššati šar māt Aššur ša ana Aššur u Ninlil taklu ša Nabû u Tašmētu uznu rapaštu išrukūš īḫuzu īnu namirtu	Palace of Ashurbanipal, king of the Universe, king of the land of Assur, who trusts in Assur and Ninlil, on whom Nabû and Tašmētu have bestowed wisdom (and) who acquired for himself shining eyes.
nisiq ṭupšarrūti ša ina šarrāni ālik maḫrīya mamma šipru šuātu lā īḫuzū	The pinnacle of scholarship, which work none of the kings who went before me learnt,
nēmeq Nabû tikip santakki mala bašmu ina ṭuppāni aṣṭur asniq abrē-ma ana tāmarti šitassīya qereb ekallīya ukīn	the wisdom of Nabû and whatever pertains to cuneiform signs, I have written on tablets, checked, collated, and deposited in my palace for my reading and recitation.
(end of colophon d)	(end of colophon d)
tākilka ul ibâš šar ilāni Aššur mannu ša itabbalu u lu šumšu itti šumīya išaṭṭaru Aššur u Ninlil aggiš ezziš liskipūšū-ma šumšu zēršu ina māti liḫalliqū	Whoever trusts in you will not come to shame, O king of the gods, Assur! Whoever takes (this tablet) away, or writes his own name instead of mine, may Assur and Ninlil wildly and furiously reject him, and make his name and seed disappear from the land.

Colophon *q*

ekal Aššur-bān-apli šar kiššati šar māt Aššur ša Nabû u Tašmētu uznu rapaštu išrukūš īḫuzu īnu namirtu	Palace of Ashurbanipal, king of the universe, king of the land of Assur, on whom Nabû and Tašmētu have bestowed wisdom (and) who acquired for himself shining eyes.
nisiq ṭupšarrūti ša ina šarrāni ālik maḫrīya mamma šipru šuātu lā īḫuzū	The pinnacle of scholarship, which work none of the kings who went before me learnt,
bulṭī ištu muḫḫi adi ṣupri liqti aḫî tāḫizu nakla azugallūt Ninurta u Gula mala bašmu ina ṭuppāni aṣṭur asniq abrē-ma ana tāmarti šitassīya qereb ekallīya ukīn	remedies (organised) from the top of the head to the (toe) nails, gleanings from extraneous materials, technical lore (and) whatever pertains to the greatest medical expertise of Ninurta and Gula, I have written on tablets, checked (and) collated, and deposited in my palace for my reading and recitation.

59 The editions here follow, with some variations, the website of the *Reading the Library of Ashurbanipal* project: see `https://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/asbp/rlasb/`.

Colophon *n*

Aššur-bān-apli šar kiššati šar māt Aššur šakkanakku kamšu pāliḫ ilāni rabûti mār Aššur-aḫa-iddina šar kiššati šar māt Aššur mār Sîn-aḫḫē-erība šar kiššati šar māt Aššur ša Nabû u Nisaba uballiṭūšū-ma iṣṣurū šarrūssu nēmeqīšunu palkû[*te* . . .]	Palace of Ashurbanipal, king of the universe, king of the land of Assur, obedient governor, who fears the great gods, son of Esarhaddon, king of the Universe, king of the land of Assur, son of Sennacherib, king of the Universe, king of the land of Assur, to whom Nabû and Nisaba have given life and protected his kingship, . . . their vast wisdom.
ana balāṭ napšātēšu urruk ūmēšu [. . .] *kunnu palêšu* [. . .] *šuršudu kussi šarrūtī*[*šu* . . .] *bunnīšu namrūti elīšu* x *ra* x [. . .] *ana ṭūb šērē ḫūd libbi namār kabatti šalmeš itallukū maḫaršu išṭur isniq abrē-ma ina girginakki bīt Nabû bēlīšu ša qereb Ninua ukīn*	For the life of his soul, to extend his days . . . to establish firmly his rule, to fix securely his royal throne . . . his gleaming features . . . to have health, happiness, and good feeling constantly go before him in healthiness, he has written, checked (and) collated (this tablet), and deposited it in the library of Nabû, his lord, in Nineveh.

Colophon *r/s* variant (K.2262+)

ekal Aššur-bān-apli šarru dannu šar kiššati šar māt Aššur ša Nabû u Tašmētu uznu rapaštu ušaklilūšū-ma x x *urappišū ḫasīssu ša nēmeqi Ea urappišū-ma kullat ṭupšarrūti iḫsusu karassu* [(x)] x x *ti tam*[*rirti*] *išṭur ibri qereb ekallīšu ukīn*	Palace of Ashurbanipal, mighty king, king of the Universe, king of the land of Assur, for whom Nabû and Tašmētu perfected broad intelligence . . . broadened his understanding, who extended the wisdom of Ea and trained his mind in the entirety of the scribal art . . . For checking, he wrote, (and) collated (this tablet), and deposited it in his palace.

K.4609B (AMT 76/1) + Sm 353 (AMT 95/1) (+)[?] 82-5-22, 562 (AMT 81/7)

Discussion One-column tablet with prescriptions against ghost-induced ailments, including a catchline which is reminiscent of a set of symptom descriptions attested in the treatise on ear ailments. Other parts of the text seem to overlap with the treatise Neck. Both treatises present long collections of treatments against ghosts.
Colophon not preserved

[DIŠ N]A *ina* DAB ŠU.GIDIM.MA [ ]
[LIBI]R.RA.ʳBIˀ.G[IM]
(Catchline:) If a man, while seised by the 'hand-of ghost',. . .
According to its original. . .

K.7845 (AMT 91/1) + Rm 533 (AMT 29/2)

Discussion One-column tablet with different forms of treatments (salves and fumigation), as well as prophylactic measures (chain amulets) against paralysis, followed by a catchline which corresponds to the incipit of the second chapter of the treatise Hamstring, concerned with the ailments of the feet and legs.
Colophon only traces

[DIŠ NA SA [uz]]ᵘUR$_2$-*šu*$_2$ DIŠ-*niš* ʳGU$_7$.MEŠˀ-*šu*$_2$ ZI-*a u* DU.MEŠ-*ku* ʳ*la i*ˀ-[*le-ʾi*]
[(...)] SA.[GAL MU.NI]
[*ki-ma l*]*a-bi-ri-šu*$_2$ *ša*$_3$-*ṭir-ma ba-a-*ʳ*ri*ˀ
(Catchline:) If the muscles in a man's thighs cause him pain all at once, (and) he is unable to rise (and) walk: its name is *sagallu*.
Written and checked according to its original.

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K.3243+ (BAM 469) + K.21444

Discussion One-column tablet with well-preserved text on both sides. Healing incantations and pharmaceutical measures against ghosts, some of which recur in the third chapter of Cranium and the second chapter of Neck. The catchline is not known from other texts.

Colophon *c*

ana ḫa-a-a-at-ti ŠU.GID[IM.MA x x] x ^{u_2}*ta*[*r-mu*]*š* ^{u_2}IGI-*lim*

LIBIR.RA.BI.GIM AB.S[AR.A]M$_3$ BA.AN.E$_3$

(Catchline:) In order to . . . panic (caused by) 'hand-of-ghost': *tarmuš* ('lupin'), *imḫur-līm* ('faces a thousand') plant.

Written and checked according to its original.

K.3420 + K.8962 (BAM 470)

Discussion Fragment of a single-column tablet, with instructions for making phylacteries against ghost-induced illnesses.

Colophon *c* or *d*

[LIBIR.RA.BI.GIM AB.SAR] BA.AN.E$_3$

Written and checked according to its original.

K.4040 (AMT 54/2) + K.16682

Discussion Fragment of a single-column tablet including an incantation against ghosts and a catchline that ties the remedies to the treatise of the serialised composition concerned with head ailments (*viz.* Cranium).

Colophon not preserved

DIŠ NA MURUB$_4$ UGU-*šu*$_2$ *u* SAG.KI.MEŠ-*šu*$_2$ TAG.TAG-*šu*$_2$

[LIBIR.R]A.BI.^{r}GIM^{1} AB.SAR.^{r}AM$_3$ BA^{1}.[AN.E$_3$]

(Catchline:) If the middle of a man's cranium and his temples are affected.

Written and checked according to its original.

K.4054 (AMT 96/1)

Discussion One-column tablet that collects therapies for a patient suffering from stinging pain.

Colophon *c*

no preserved scribal remark on the editing process

K.6067 (AMT 98/3) + K.16439 (AMT 39/3)

Discussion One-column tablet containing pharmaceutical remedies against pulsating veins in the hands and feet. Some treatments are also recorded in the first chapter of the treatise Hamstring.

Colophon *c*

no preserved scribal remark on the editing process

K.3398 + K.6015 + K.7186 + K.14166 + K.16803 (AMT 97/1)

Discussion Single-column tablet that runs parallel with the second chapter of Neck, with a collection of incantations and ritual instructions against the influence of ghosts.

Colophon *c*$^{?}$

no preserved scribal remark on the editing process

K.2432 + Sm 1899 (+) K.2473 + K.2551(CT 23, 1-4)

Discussion One-column tablet with a collection of healing incantations and rituals for the leg condition *sagallu*.

Colophon *c*

no preserved scribal remark on the editing process

K.5409A (BAM 468)

Discussion One-column tablet with a fragmentarily preserved ritual to cure 'all illnesses of mankind'.
Colophon *c*
no preserved scribal remark on the editing process

K.11772 (AMT 94/5)

Discussion Corner fragment possibly of a one-column tablet presenting a complex set of symptoms, including ghosts, on the obverse. Based on the use of the default library colophon, the fragment does not belong to a serialised therapeutic composition but rather to an interim edition, which collects remedies for ghost-related medical conditions.
Colophon *c*
no preserved scribal remark on the editing process

K.13387 (AMT 94/6)

Discussion Corner fragment with a matching incipit to the second chapter of the treatise Neck and a default library colophon, which suggests that this fragment comes from a one-column tablet representing an interim edition.
Colophon *c*
no preserved scribal remark on the editing process

80-7-19, 349 (AMT 92/5)

Discussion Fragment possibly of a one-column tablet, which collects remedies against paralysis.
Colophon *c*[?]
no preserved scribal remark on the editing process

K.2262+ (BAM 533) + K.2429 + K.9630 + K.10269

Discussion One-column tablet with a collection of incantations and ritual instructions against ailments of the mouth, some of which recur in the second chapter of the oral treatise Teeth and the fifth chapter of the treatise Neck.
Colophon *r/s* variant
GABA.RI KUR *aš-šur*^{ki} ⌜*u* URI$^{?}$⌝^{ki} LIBIR.⌜RA-*šu*$_2$ SAR⌝-*m*[*a* IGI].KAR$_2$
Copy from the land of Assur and Akkad[?], written and checked according to its originals.

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Ludlul bēl nēmeqi in Ashurbanipal's Library

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Abstract This paper investigates the manuscripts of *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* from Ashurbanipal's Library. It concludes that five types of tablets were included in the royal tablet collections, with at least three tablet sets marked with Ashurbanipal colophons. Moreover, the inventory tablets mentioning the poem are discussed to elucidate the possible original classification of the poem among other compositions about Marduk.

Keywords Babylonian literature. Kuyunjik. Ashurbanipal's Library. Colophons. Marduk.

Summary 1 The Kuyunjik Manuscripts of *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*. – 1.1 Colophons, 'Firing Holes', and 10-Marks. – 2 The Commentary. – 3 The Inventory Fragment SEM 1092.

The royal tablet collection of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh offers the best single source of manuscripts for *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*,[1] one of the most prominent pieces of Babylonian literature in the first millennium BCE. All in all, twelve manuscripts of the poem's chapters I, II and IV come from Kuyunjik. In addition, the only preserved commentary on *Ludlul* stems from Nineveh, most likely from Ashurbanipal's Library. The poem is also mentioned in two lists that are related to the royal tablet collections. In this paper, I am investigating if we can establish sets of tablets within the extant Nineveh manuscripts of *Ludlul*.[2] Moreover, I will discuss the possible classification of *Ludlul* in the royal tablet collection.

1 The Kuyunjik Manuscripts of *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*

There are twelve manuscripts of *Ludlul*, all made up of one or more tablet fragments,[3] known from Nineveh.[4] Only four of them preserve a colophon. The fragments are unevenly distributed, with several

1 This article is a revised version of the paper "*Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* in the Electronic Babylonian Library", presented at the *LIBER Workshop*, and it stems from my work on *Ludlul* in the *Electronic Babylonian Literature project* (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München). I thank the organisers, Paola Corò and Stefania Ermidoro, for the invitation to present my work there and the other participants for enlightening discussions at the workshop. I also thank Jon Taylor for his helpful comments on this article.

2 A similar attempt to establish tablet sets for the series *Maqlû* is presented in Schwemer 2017, 43-50.

3 As established by Lenzi 2020, K.8576 is not a manuscript of *Ludlul* (included as a manuscript for *Ludlul* V in Oshima 2014, 379). Likewise, the fragment Sm.89, included T. Oshima's *Ludlul*-editions as manuscript I.M (Oshima 2014, 377; Oshima, Anthonioz 2023, 62) is not a manuscript of *Ludlul* I.

4 For the excavations at Nineveh and the locations in which literary texts were found, see Reade 1986; 2000, 421-7; Fincke 2003-04, 113-15; and Robson 2019, 12-23. It is not possible to reconstruct the provenance of the *Ludlul* manuscripts in Nineveh, but

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manuscripts of *Ludlul* I and II but only two of *Ludlul* IV. No fragments of *Ludlul* III and V have yet been identified.[5] This raises the question about whether manuscripts of *Ludlul* III and V existed at all in the royal library. The assumption here is that the royal tablet collections at Nineveh contained full sets of literary works, not just individual tablets. This would mean that the materials for *Ludlul* III and V are either so badly destroyed that they cannot be identified in the Kuyunjik Collection of the British Museum or that they are not present among the excavated materials.

The manuscripts for *Ludlul* I and II luckily offer enough information for an attempt to reconstruct possible sets of *Ludlul*-tablets in Ashurbanipal's Library. The main feature here is the use of different colophon types among the extant manuscripts. This information is complemented by physical attributes of the different manuscripts, such as the size of the tablets/fragments, the appearance of the script, the use of so-called 'firing holes' in the tablets, and the marginal notations that mark every tenth line in the composition.

1.1 Colophons, 'Firing Holes', and 10-Marks

Three different colophon types are preserved in the extant manuscripts of *Ludlul* I and II: Ashurbanipal types a, b, and d.[6] Neither of the two fragmentary manuscripts of *Ludlul* IV preserves a colophon. The only colophon type that is assuredly preserved for both *Ludlul* I and II is Asb b, extant in K.9392+ (*Ludlul* I) and K.2518+ (*Ludlul* II). The comparison of these two pieces shows that their appearance is remarkably similar to each other despite the fragmentary state of K.9392+. This is most obvious in the colophon, which in both tablets is written after a single ruling and without double spacing between the lines (as opposed to Asb a and Asb d, which use double spacing in the colophon).[7]

Colophon type Asb a[8]

Ludlul II: K.3323+[9]
(single ruling)
(catchline)

r 17'. [*kab-ta-at qās*(ŠU)*-su u*]*l e-le-e na-šá-*˹*šú*˺
(blank line)
(colophon)

r 18'. [DUB.2.KÁ]M.˹MA˺ ˹*lud*˺*-lul be-lu*$_4$ ˹*né*˺*-me-q*[*í* (x x x x)]
(blank line)

r 19'. *ēkal*([KU]R*) ˹m˺*aššur*(AN.ŠÁR)*-bāni*(DÙ)*-apli*(˹A˺) [*šar*(MAN) *kiššati*(ŠÚ)]
(blank line)

r 20'. *šar*([MA]N*) *māt*(KUR) *aššur*(A[N.ŠÁR^{ki}])[10]
(end of reverse)

Translation
(single ruling)
(catchline)

[Heavy was his hand upon me], I could [n]ot bear it!
(colophon)

it seems likely that they come from the South-West Palace and the North Palace. Most of the tablets with K. and Sm. numbers come from the South-West Palace, whereas the DT group mostly derives from the North Palace (see Reade 1986, 214; 2000, 422).

5 In the case of *Ludlul* III, the Nineveh material is restricted to the quotations of the catchline in three manuscripts of *Ludlul* II (K.2518+, K.3323+ and K.3972; NinQuo1, NinQuo2 and NinQuo3 in Hätinen 2022, respectively) and the lines quoted in the commentary tablet K.3291. No Nineveh fragments apart from the commentary tablet K.3291 attest to *Ludlul* V.

6 See Hunger 1968, nos 317-19; this typology of based on Streck 1916, LXXI-LXXXII. A recent overview of the *Ludlul* colophons is also offered in Lenzi 2023, 211-14.

7 Digital photos of both pieces can be found in *eBL* Fragmentarium (`https://www.ebl.lmu.de/fragmentarium`).

8 Hunger 1968, no. 317.

9 See Lambert 1960, pl. 6 and Oshima 2014, pl. XL.

10 Note that the proprietary note in this tablet (r 19'-20') is written in a lapidary script, indicating that it was added to the tablet after it had dried (as observed in Lenzi 2023, 213).

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Second tablet of *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*. [(...)].

[Palac]e of Ashurbanipal, [king of the world], [kin]g of A[ssyria].
(end of reverse)

Colophon type Asb b[11]

Ludlul I: K.9392+[12]
(single ruling)
(catchline)

r 2'. [*šat-tam-ma a-na b*]*a-laṭ* ⌜*a*⌝-[*dan-na i-ti-iq*]
(colophon)

r 3'. [DUB.1.KAM *lud-lul bēl*(E]N) *né-me-qí* ^{m}*aš-*⌜*šur*⌝-*bāni*(D[Ù)-*apli*(IBILA) *šarru*(LUGAL) *rabû*(GAL-*ú*) *šarru*(LUGAL) *dan-nu šarru*(LUGAL) *kiššati*(ŠÚ) *šar*(LUGAL) *māt*(KUR) *aš-šur*^{ki}]

r 4'. [*mār*(DUMU) ^{m}*aš-šur-aḫa*(ŠEŠ)-*iddina*(SU]M-*na*) *šar*(LUGAL) *kiššati*(ŠÚ) [*šar*(LUGAL) *māt*(KUR) *aš-šur*^{ki}]

r 5'. [*mār*(DUMU) ^{md}*sîn*(30)-*aḫḫē*(PAB^{meš})-*erība*(S]U) *šar*(LUGAL) *kiššati*(ŠÚ) [*šar*(LUGAL) *māt*(KUR) *aš-šur*^{ki}(-*ma*)]

r 6'. [*ki-i pi-i tuppī*(DUB^{meš}) *lē*ʾ*ī*(^{giš}L]E.U$_5$.UM^{me}[^{š}) *gabari*(GABA.RI) *māt*(KUR) *aš-šur*^{ki} *māt*(KUR) *šumeri*(EME.GI$_7$) *u akkadî*(URI^{ki})]

r 7'. [*tup-pu šu-a-tu ina tap-ḫu*]*r-*⌜*ti*⌝ *um-ma-*⌜*a*⌝-[*ni áš-ṭur as-niq abrē*(IGI.KÁR)-*ma*]

r 8'. [*a-na ta-mar-ti šarrūtī*(LUGAL-*ti*)]-⌜*ia*⌝ *qé-r*[*eb ēkallī*(É.GAL)-*ia ú-kin*]
(rest of side broken)

Translation
(single ruling)
(catchline)

[One year to the n]ext, the pre[dictable time passed by].
(colophon)

[First tablet of *Ludlul bē*]*l nēmeqi*].

Ashurb[anipal, great king, strong king, king of the world, king of Assyria, son of Esarhad]don, king of the world, [king of Assyria, (grand)son of Sennacher]ib, king of the world, [king of Assyria. I wrote this tablet according to clay tablets (and) wr]iting-board[s from Assyria, Sumer and Akkad in the assem]bly of scholar[s, checked (it) and collated (it). I then deposited (it)] i[n my palace for m]y [royal inspection].
(rest of side broken)

Ludlul II: K.2518+[13]
(single ruling)
(catchline)

r 26'. *kab-ta-a*[*t qās*(ŠU)-*su ul a-le-*ʾ*i-i na-šá-šá*]
(colophon)

r 27'. DUB.2.KAM^{v} [*lud-lul bēl*(EN) *né-me-qí*]

r 28'. ^{m}*aš-šur-bāni*(DÙ)-*apli*(IBIL[A) *šarru*(LUGAL) *rabû*(GAL-*ú*) *šarru*(LUGAL) *dan-nu šarru*(LUGAL) *kiššati*(ŠÚ) *šar*(LUGAL) *māt*(KUR) *aš-šur*^{k}]^{i}

r 29'. *mār*(DUMU) ^{m}*aš-šur-aḫa*(ŠEŠ)-[*iddina*(SUM-*na*) *šar*(LUGAL) *kiššati*(ŠÚ) *šar*(LUGAL) *māt*(KUR) *aš-šur*^{k}]^{i}

r 30'. *mār*(DUMU) ^{md}*sîn*(30)-*aḫḫē*(PAB^{me}[^{š})-*erība*(SU) *šar*(LUGAL) *kiššati*(ŠÚ) *šar*(LUGAL) *māt*(KUR) *aš-šur*]⌜^{ki}⌝-*ma*

11 Hunger 1968, no. 318.
12 See Lambert 1960, pl. 74 and Horowitz, Lambert 2002, 240.
13 See Lambert 1960, pl. 4.

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r 31'. *ki-i pi tuppī*(DUB^{meš}) *lē'ī*(^{giš}L[E.U$_5$.UM^{meš}) *gabari*(GABA.RI) *māt*(KUR) *aš-šur*^{ki} *māt*(KUR) *šumeri*(EME].^{r}GI$_7^{\urcorner}$) *u akkadî*(^{r}URI^{1ki})

r 32'. *tup-pu šu-a-tu ina tap-ḫur-t*[*i um-ma-a-ni áš-ṭur as-n*]*iq abrē*(IGI.KÁR)*-ma*

r 33'. ^{r}*a*$^{\urcorner}$-[*n*]*a ta-mar-ti šarrūtī*(LUGAL-*ti*)*-i*[*a ina qé-reb ēkallī*(É.GA]L)*-ia ú-kin*

r 34'. [*šá š*]*u-mi šaṭ-ru i-pa-áš-ši-ṭu šum*(MU)*-šú i-šaṭ-ṭa-ru*

r 35'. [^{d}*nabû*(A]G) *tupšar*(DUB.SAR) *gim-ri šum*(MU)*-šú lip-ši-iṭ*
(end of reverse)

Translation
(single ruling)
(catchline)

Heavy wa[s his hand upon me, I could not bear it!]
(colophon)

Second tablet of [*Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*].

Ashurbanip[al, great king, strong king, king of the world, king of Assyria], son of Esarha[ddon, king of the world, king of Assyria], (grand)son of Sennach[erib, king of the world, king of Assyria. I wrote] this tablet according to clay tablets (and) wr[iting-boards from Assyria, Sum]er and Akkad in the assemb[ly of scholars, check]ed (it) and collated (it). I then deposited (it) [in] my [pala]ce f[o]r m[y] royal inspection.

[The one who] erases my written [n]ame (and) writes down his own name – may [Na]bû, the scribe of everything, erase his name!
(end of reverse)

Colophon type Asb d[14]

Ludlul II: K.3972+[15]
(single ruling)
(catchline)

r 24'. [*kab-ta-at qās*(Š]U$^{r[II]\urcorner}$)*-su ul a-le-'i-*^{r}*i*$^{\urcorner}$ *na-šá-šá*
(blank line)
(colophon)

r 25'. ^{r}DUB.2.KAM$^{v\urcorner}$.M[A *l*]*ud-lul bēl*(EN) *né-me-*^{r}*qí*$^{\urcorner}$
(blank line)

r 26'. *ēkal*(É.GAL) ^{m}*aššur*(^{r}AN.ŠÁR$^{\urcorner}$)*-bāni*(DÙ)*-apli*(IBILA) *šar*(L[U]GAL) *kiššati*(ŠÚ) *šar*(LUGAL) *māt*(KUR) *aš-*[*šur*^{ki}]
(blank line)

r 27'. *ša* $^{r[d]\urcorner}$*nabû*(AG) *u* $^{d[r}$*taš*$^{\urcorner}$*-me-tu*$_4$ *uzna*(GEŠ[TUG) *ra-pa-áš-tu*$_4$ *iš-ru-ku-uš*]
(blank line)

r 28'. [*i-ḫ*]*u-uz-zu īna*(IG[I) *na-mir-tu ni-siq tup-šar-ru-ti*]
(blank line)

r 29'. *š*[*a ina šarrī*(L]UGAL^{meš}) ^{r}*a*$^{\urcorner}$-[*lik maḫ-ri-ia mam-ma šip-ru šu-a-tu la i-ḫu-uz-zu*]
(blank line)

r 30'. *né-me-eq* ^{d}*nabû*(AG) [*ti-kip sa-an-tak-ki ma-la ba-áš-mu*]
(blank line)

r 31'. *ina tuppī*(DUB^{meš}) *áš-ṭ*[*ur as-niq ab-re-e-ma*]
(blank line)

r 32'. *a-na ta-mar-*[*ti ši-ta-as-si-ia*]
(blank line)

r 33'. *qé-reb ēkallī*(É.GA[L)*-ia ú-kin*]
(end of reverse)

14 Hunger 1968, no. 319.

15 See Hätinen 2020, 251.

Translation
(catchline)

[Heavy was] his [ha]nd upon me, I could not bear it!
(colophon)

Second tablet of *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*.

Palace of Ashurbanipal, king of the world, king of As[syria], whom Nabû and Tašmētu [have given a wide understan]ding, who ha[s a sharp e]ye. [The choice scholarship, the art that no one among the k]ings, [my predecessors, had learned]; the wisdom of Nabû, [all the cuneiform signs that there is] – I wro[te (it)] on tablets, [I checked and collated (them). I deposited (them)] in my palace for inspect[ion and for my reading].
(end of reverse)

The available information about colophon types, 'firing holes', 10-marks in the margin, and the size of the pieces is presented here in table 1.

Table 1 Overview of the Ludlul manuscripts from Kuyunjik

	Museum number	**Siglum in Hätinen 2022**[i]	**Colophon type**	**'Firing holes'**	**10-marks in the margin**	**Width of the tablet × max. thickness**
Ludlul I	K.1757+K.18983 (+)K.18929[ii]	NinNA1 (K.1757+)	—	no	—	? × >16 mm
	K.9237	NinNA2	[Asb a]	no	yes	79 × 27 mm
	K.9392+K.9810	NinNA3	Asb b	no	[yes]	? × 27 mm
	K.10503+K.22794+[iii] Sm.2139	NinNA4 (K.10503+Sm.2139)	[Asb d]	yes	[no]	? × 26 mm
	79-7-8, 225	NinNA5	—	—	—	? × 31 mm
	K.17700	NinNA6	—	—	—	? × >19 mm
Ludlul II	K.3323+K.18186+Rm.444+ Rm.941+Sm.1745[iv](+)K.8396	NinNA2a (K.3323+) NinNA2b (K.8396) NinNA5 (Sm.1745)	Asb a	no	yes	74 × 25 mm
	K.2518+DT.358	NinNA1	Asb b	no	yes	n/a[v]
	K.3972+K.9973+DT.151	NinNA3	Asb d	yes	no	78 × 26 mm
	K.6935	NinNA4	—	—	—	flake
Ludlul IV	K.9724	NinNA1	—	—	—	? × 25 mm
	BM 123392	NinNA2	—	—	—	? × 31 mm

i See there for information on publications of hand-copies, photos, and editions.

ii Join K.1757+ (+)K.18929 by T. Mitto; an edition of the new fragment K.18929 is forthcoming.

iii Join K.10503+K.22794 by A. Hätinen; an edition of the new fragment K.22794 is forthcoming.

iv The join K.3323+Sm.1745, suggested by the content and the physical appearance of the pieces, was checked at the British Museum in March 2024.

v The tablet K.2518+DT.358 is on a long-term loan at the Louvre (see Thomas 2017, 292).

The overview of these features in *Ludlul* manuscripts allows the following observations:

1. For each preserved chapter of the poem, there is only one manuscript that has so-called 'firing holes'. Moreover, the combination of 'firing holes' and the colophon of the type Asb d in K.3972+ suggests that we should expect the same colophon type also in K.10503+ (*Ludlul* I).[16] A collation of both pieces shows that their 'firing holes' are of identical size.
2. There is a clear connection between the colophon types Asb a and b and the 10-marks on the left edge of the tablet, indicated by the two well-preserved manuscripts of *Ludlul* II, K.3323+ and K.2518+.[17] In addition, no 10-marks are attested in K.3972+, the manuscripts with 'firing holes'. If we can assume that the same format was used in the manuscripts of *Ludlul* I, it is possible to reconstruct the missing features of the tablets. Thus, K.9237 should belong to a tablet with a col-

16 Compare the combination of the colophon type Asb d and 'firing holes' in DT.135+, a composition with benedictions (Hätinen 2021, 227 and 233).

17 For the practice of marking every tenth line with a small *Winkelhaken*, see Bezold 1899, xvii and Hunger 1968, 2.

ophon of the type Asb a (10-marks on the left edge, no 'firing holes') and K.9392+ should belong to a tablet with 10-marks on it (colophon Asb b, no 'firing holes').

3. The (complete) width and thickness of the manuscripts, as far as it can be assessed, varies from 74 × 25 mm (K.3323+ and K.8396, colophon type Asb a, *Ludlul* II) to 78 × 26 mm (K.3972+, colophon type Asb d) and 79 × 27 mm (K.9237, colophon type [Asb a], *Ludlul* I). This shows that although they have the same format and approximately the same size, tablets bearing the same colophon type are not identical: there is a difference of 5 mm in width and 2 mm in thickness between K.3323+ (+) K.8396 and K.9237. I do not think that this variation precludes the possibility that these tablets formed a single set.[18] In the case of the smaller manuscript fragments, no tablet width can be established. Still, in these cases, the thickness of the pieces offers important information, showing that the fragments 79-7-8, 225 (*Ludlul* I) and BM 123392 (*Ludlul* IV) both must belong to tablets that are clearly thicker (≥ 31 mm) than other manuscripts (≥ 25-27 mm). Moreover, 79-7-8, 225 is written in 'type 2' script, with four (instead of three) *Winkelhakens* in the upper row of the ḪI-group, making it comparable with the commentary tablet K.3291 (see discussion below). BM 123392 uses the 'type 1' script, which suggests that these two fragments, although of similar size, do not constitute a single set.

In addition to the tablets with Ashurbanipal colophons, there is also at least one diverging specimen of *Ludlul* I, K.1757+(+)K.18929.[19] This tablet is clearly written in script that differs from the standard Kuyunjik script, as is shown by the comparison of three diagnostic signs in K.1757+ to the sign forms in the Kuyunjik tablet K.3323+ (*Ludlul* II, colophon type Asb a).[20] Notably, compared to K.3323+, the sign LI in K.1757+ is written with one extra horizontal wedge. Moreover, the comparison to the sign forms in K.1757+ shows some similarities with the Kalḫu manuscript of *Ludlul* I, IM 67628+ (*CTN* 4 201): in both tablets, some of the horizontal wedges slant slightly downwards.

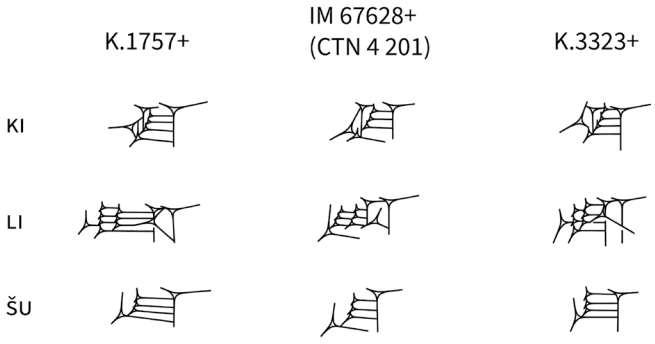

Figure 1 Overview and comparison of diagnostic signs in K.1757+

In addition to the diverging sign forms, the tablet K.1757+ seems to have been physically different from the tablets that included an Ashurbanipal colophon: its thickness is only >16 mm, with the lower edge of the tablet being only 14 mm thick. Thus, it is considerably thinner than the standard Kuyunjik tablets of *Ludlul*.[21] This suggests that K.1757+ (and the possible indirect join K.17700), having a different shape and not written in the standard Kuyunjik script, may have been brought to Nineveh from elsewhere in Assyria (possibly from Kalḫu), or that they were written in Nineveh for purposes other than their inclusion in the royal tablet collections. Unfortunately, since no colophon is preserved, there are no explicit indications about the origin or the purpose of this tablet.

Resulting from this analysis, I propose that we identify at least five different types of manuscripts among the *Ludlul* tablets from Nineveh, with at least three sets of tablets with Ashurbanipal colophons. The first set is formed by tablets that had a colophon of the type Asb a and a *Winkelhaken* marking eve-

18 Compare here one of the proposed sets of *Maqlû* tablets at Kuyunjik, SetAss1, that includes tablets with the colophon Asb c and a width ranging from 102 mm to 133 mm (Schwemer 2017, 45).

19 Despite collation of the fragments, it remains unclear if K.17700 belongs to the same tablet as K.1757+ and K.18929. Their general appearance is alike, but K.17700 is thicker (>19 mm) than K.1757+ (>16 mm). Moreover, the script in K.17700 seems to be smaller than in K.1757+, but this may be an illusion caused by the badly eroded surface of K.17700.

20 Unfortunately, due to their small size, K.1757+ and K.18929 offer a very limited number of diagnostic signs.

21 Compare the minimum thickness of 20 mm (the upper edge) of K.3323+ (colophon type Asb a) and K.3972 (colophon type Asb d).

ry tenth line of the composition. The second set was formed by tablets that had a colophon of the type Asb b, also with every tenth line of the composition marked with a *Winkelhaken*. The third set has the most elaborate colophon (type Asb d), and it is decorated with so-called 'firing holes'. Importantly, the 10-line markings are not used in the tablets of this set, supporting the idea of this set being the 'best' (that is, most carefully prepared) one among the extant *Ludlul* manuscripts. In addition, the collections at Nineveh seem to have included further manuscripts of the poem, now preserved only as small fragments. K.1757+ attests to a tablet that is smaller than library tablets with a colophon, and it also is written in a script that differs from the standard script used to write the library tablets. K.17700 may belong to the same tablet as K.1757+ or be a separate manuscript. 79-7-8, 225, which is thicker than other manuscripts of *Ludlul* I, should belong to a distinct manuscript that possibly had an Ashurbanipal colophon. Since especially K.1757+ diverges from the tablets with colophons in respect to script and size, it seems likely that it, if not a complete set of *Ludlul* tablets, may have been brought to Nineveh from elsewhere or written there for some other purpose than including them to the royal library.

Table 2 Proposed sets of Ludlul in Ashurbanipal's Library

	***Ludlul* I**	***Ludlul* II**
Set 1: Colophon type Asb a (with 10-marks)	K.9237	K.3323+K.18186+Rm.444+ Rm.941+Sm.1745(+)K.8396
Set 2: Colophon type Asb b (with 10-marks)	K.9392+K.9810	K.2518+DT.358
Set 3: Colophon type Asb d (with 'firing holes')	K.10503+Sm.2139	K.3972+K.9973+DT.151
Set 4(?): Thick library tablets, perhaps with a colophon(?)	79-7-8, 225	–
A copy with non-standard script	K.1757+K.18983(+)K.18929	–
Further fragments	K.17700 (possibly to K.1757+)	K.6935 (possibly to Set 2)[i]

i Judging by the general appearance of the fragment and the script, this flake possibly joins K.2518+DT.358 (Set 2). However, since K.2518+ is kept in the Louvre in Paris (see Thomas 2017, 292), it is not possible to verify the join.

2 The Commentary

Ludlul bēl nēmeqi belongs to the few works of Babylonian literature for which there were commentaries.[22] The commentary tablet's (K.3291) existence was recognised soon after the discovery of the first *Ludlul* fragment from Kuyunjik (K.3972), and it has been used in the following editions of the poem to understand it better and to establish the correct line sequence in the parts of the poem that remain incomplete.[23] The tablet K.3291 from Kuyunjik is the only known manuscript of the *Ludlul*-commentary, which raises the question if it was written specifically for that tablet collection's purposes. Unfortunately, the tablet is broken where the colophon would have existed, and therefore, explicit information about its origin eludes us. Looking at the script, the commentary tablet stands out from most of *Ludlul* manuscripts by its use of 'type 2' script, i.e. sign forms with, for example, an additional *Winkelhaken* in the ḪI-group; this feature is present only in one *Ludlul* manuscript, the fragment 79-7-8, 225. Even if the commentary tablet does not preserve a colophon, it is possible that the commentary was of Assyrian origin, as noted by Enrique Jiménez.[24] This is suggested by the fact that in this commentary, the Babylonian word *aspu* is explained by using its Assyrian form *uspu*.

22 In addition to *Ludlul*, also *Enūma eliš*, *Lugal-e*, *Theodicy*, and the literary prayer Marduk 2 are attested to have had commentaries (see Frahm 2011, 111-21; Jiménez 2017b).

23 The commentary is brought up already by Pinches 1885, 69, who characterised K.3972 (*Ludlul* II) to have been "considered by the Assyrians and Babylonian important enough to have a kind of running glossary, in which all the difficult and unusual words are explained by others better known". The latest full edition of the commentary tablet only is provided by Lenzi 2015; in the *eBL* edition of *Ludlul* (Hätinen 2022) this tablet appears with the siglum NinNACom.

24 See Jiménez *apud* Lenzi 2015 (fn. 7 on K.3291, rev. 42) and Jiménez 2020, 98-9.

K.3291, rev. 41-42 (*Ludlul* V 16-17)

marduk*(ᵈamar.utu) *šá mu-kaš-ši-di-ia i-kim as-ʳpa¹-šú as-suk-ka-šú ú-saḫ-ḫar
ʳ*as-suk-ku*¹ [:] ʳ*a-bat-tu*¹: *ás-pu ús-pu*

Marduk took away the sling from my stalker, he deflected his sling-stone. 'Sling-stone' (*assukku*) means 'gravel' (*abattu*). *aspu* is the same as *uspu*.

One can also argue that since *Ludlul* was an integral part of the school curriculum in northern Babylonia – attested in numerous school tablets from Babylon/Babylonia, Sippar, and Kiš –,[25] there was no need for a written Babylonian commentary on the poem: the pupils learning it would have received oral instruction about its content from their teacher. Some Babylonian commentaries even quote lines from *Ludlul* as the explanation of a difficult word, showing that the poem was well-known in the scholarly context. BM 41286, which is a commentary on Aa III/1, quotes *Ludlul* I 86 (in bold typeface in the quotation below) as an explanation for the words *labābu* 'to rage' and *nalbubu* 'to become furious'.

BM 41286, obv. 6'b-7'[26]

ʳ*la*¹-*ba-bu* : *na-a*[*l-bu-bu* : (x x x)] | ***na-al-bu-bu tap-pa-a ú-nag-gar-an-ʳni¹*** : *nu-ug-gu-ru* : *a-k*[*al kar-ṣi*]

'To rage' (*labābu*), 'to become fu[rious' (*nalbubu*) (mean …)], (as in) **"My comrade would denounce me savagely"**. 'To denounce' (*nugguru*) (means) 'to sla[nder' (*akāl karṣi*)].

Similarly, a commentary on *Šumma izbu* deriving from Uruk quotes both *Ludlul* I 76-7 and *Ludlul* V 17.[27]

Since no other commentaries on *Ludlul* than K.3291 are known from Nineveh, it is tempting to assume that this particular tablet is the *mukallimtu ša ludlul bēl nēmeqi* that is listed in a small tablet containing a list of literary works, Rm.618.[28]

Rm.618, 17-19[29]

ᵈnin-ì-si-in-na dumu-saĝ an-na-ra	"To Nin-isina, first-born of Anu".
mukallimtu ša ludlul bēl nēmeqi	*Mukallimtu*-commentary on *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*.
iškār etana	The series "Etana".

The list in Rm.618 differs from the so-called 'library catalogues' from Nineveh in that it only gives the titles of the compositions, not information about the number of tablets or writing-boards. Moreover, the compositions do not relate to each other in any obvious way. Due the ephemeral nature of this small clay note and the nature of the listed literary works, it has been suggested that it represents a group of tablets that were sent to Ashurbanipal's tablet collection, perhaps from another place in Assyria or even from within the city of Nineveh.[30]

25 See the overview of manuscript in Hätinen 2022.

26 See the edition in Civil et al. 1979, 322-3.

27 See the edition in Finkel 2006, 140 (ll. 10 and 17-19). This tablet is in a private collection but it can be associated with the well-known Urukean scholar Iqīšâ (see Finkel 2006, 139).

28 Rm.618 is edited and discussed in Jiménez 2017a, 117-21; see also Jiménez 2020, 95-101. On the term *mukallimtu* as a designation of commentaries, see Frahm 2011, 42-7.

29 After Jiménez 2017a, 117-18.

30 See Lambert 1954, 320 fn. 10; Jiménez 2017a, 119; 2020, 98-9.

3 The Inventory Fragment SEM 1092

Ludlul bēl nēmeqi does not appear in the so-called 'Assyrian Library Records' that, according to Simo Parpola's interpretation, deal with accessions to the royal tablet collections, mostly coming from private individuals.[31] It does, however, appear in a fragment of an inventory list from Nineveh, SEM 1092.[32] Unfortunately, it remains unclear what this list should represent: the fragment only preserves numbers followed by a name of a composition. The preserved section in col. i' on the reverse clearly is a list of compositions that deal with Marduk.[33]

SEM 1092, rev. i' 1'-7'[i]	
[n *enūma*] ⌜*eliš*⌝	[n of *Enūma*] *eliš*
[n] *m*[*uka*]*llimtu*	[n of (its?)] commentary.
4 *bēl apkal igigī*	4 of "Lord, Sage of the Igigi" (= "Marduk 2")
1 *eriš šummi*	1 of "He of Insightful Thinking"
4 *ludlul bēl nēmeqi*	4 of *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*
1 *mukallimtu*	1 of (its?) commentary
[n] *ē tatkal*	[n of] "Do not trust!"

i After Fadhil, Jiménez 2022, 230.

Assuming that the numbers represent clay tablets instead of writing boards, it is tempting to interpret this list as an inventory of the compositions kept in the royal tablet collections. The line "4 of *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*" corresponds to the reconstruction of the possible tablet sets (see the discussion above). Moreover, as we have seen, only one commentary tablet of *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* is attested at Nineveh. The hypothesis that SEM 1092 is an inventory of the royal library finds support in the fact that four distinct manuscripts of Marduk 2 and only one manuscript of *Eriš šummi* are attested at Nineveh.[34]

An aspect of this list that is more tangible than its nature as an inventory is the fact that *Ludlul* is included in a group of literary works about Marduk.[35] Starting with the Babylonian creation epic *Enūma eliš* and its commentary,[36] the preserved text moves on to the prayer Marduk 2[37] and *Eriš šummi*, a syncretistic hymn to Marduk. After *Ludlul*, a further piece of Marduk literature, the hymn *Ē tatkal*, is mentioned.[38] Apart from *Eriš šummi*, all these texts were regularly copied in scribal schools of northern Babylonia,[39] and they clearly are about Marduk and his abilities. Thus, it seems, at least the compiler of this list perceived *Ludlul* as a text about Marduk – or perhaps, to be more precise, as a piece of Babylonian Marduk theology among others –, not so much as a piece of "wisdom literature".[40] It remains unclear if Ashurbanipal personally engaged with *Ludlul* or the other texts named in this list,[41] but if he chose to do so, he would have had several editions to choose from.

31 See Parpola 1983; Fales, Postgate 1992, nos 49-56.

32 Published in Groß 2012; see also the new edition of the relevant section (with collations) in Fadhil, Jiménez 2022, 230. This fragment was acquired by Dr. Joseph Troll during his travels in Near East in 1886 and it most likely stems from Nineveh (see Groß 2012, 33-4).

33 See Fadhil, Jiménez 2022, 230-1.

34 See Fadhil, Jiménez 2022, 231. Also note that the *Eriš šummi* manuscript from Nineveh, BM 141782, preserves a colophon of the type Asb d (Fadhil, Jiménez 2022, 242).

35 See Fadhil, Jiménez 2022, 231.

36 For the latest edition, see Heinrich 2021.

37 See the latest edition in Oshima 2011, 216-69. A new edition is being prepared by Enrique Jiménez.

38 An edition of this hymn is being prepared by Enrique Jiménez.

39 See Fadhil, Jiménez 2022, 231.

40 Note that the Sippar manuscript of *Eriš šummi* was found in the same shelf as the Sippar manuscript of *Ludlul* I (see Fadhil, Jiménez 2022, 231).

41 For the interpretation that the phrases *ana tāmarti šarrūtīya* and *ana tāmarti šitassīya* (present in the colophon types Asb b and d) indicate that the tablets belonged to a collection meant for Ashurbanipal's personal study, see Lieberman 1990, 318-19. For a recent overview of this assertion, see Robson 2019, 124-5. See also Lenzi 2023, 212: "The colophons also confirm something quite specific about the poem: *Ludlul* was not simply another text at Nineveh; *Ludlul* was certainly a part of Aššurbanipal's specific intellectual scribal activity."

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How to Write a Hymn: Material Features in Manuscripts of Akkadian Poetry

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Abstract This paper investigates the materiality of cuneiform tablets, with a focus on paratexts in manuscripts of Akkadian literary texts, especially hymns and prayers. It explores how paratextual features, such as horizontal rulings, reflect and enhance poetic structures. Particular attention is paid to the corpus of the Great Hymns and Prayers, where couplet divisions could offer insights into their poetic form and textual evolution. By combining material and literary analysis, the study highlights the interplay between paratexts and poetry in Akkadian literature.

Keywords Materiality. Paratexts. Assyriology. Akkadian. Literature. Poetry. Hymns. Prayers.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Materiality and Assyriology. – 3 Material Features in Cuneiform Sources: Visual and Textual Paratexts. – 3.1 Paratexts in Literary Tablets. – 3.1.1 'Poetic' Paratexts. – 3.2 Paratexts in Akkadian Hymns and Prayers. – 3.2.1 Horizontal Rulings. – 4 Form Follows Function (and Convention): Material Features Within the *Great Hymns and Prayers*. – 4.1 The Great Hymn to Šamaš: Rulings and Couplets. – 4.2 Marduk1: Paratext and Text Changing over Time. – 5 Conclusion.

1 Introduction

The field of Assyriology combines epigraphy and philology. Its very name goes back to the beginning of the discipline, which emerged with the discovery of royal inscriptions in ancient Assyrian cities. Today, Assyriology encompasses the study of a wide range of languages and dialects beyond Assyrian, and involves examining sources that primarily consist of cuneiform tablets.[1] Unlike other disciplines in the Humanities, such as classics, in which the study of language is distinct from the study of material objects (e.g. epigraphy), the field of Assyriology demands that its practitioners be at once philologists, epigraphers and paleographers, deciphering cuneiform inscribed in clay or carved in stone.[2] Cuneiform tablets, the main object of Assyriologists study, can be considered manuscripts in every sense and, just as with manuscripts made from papyrus or parchment, each cuneiform tablet is a unique artefact.[3] The study of cuneiform texts cannot be divorced from the study of the medium that preserves them because, as we will explore in this article, the physical nature of the manuscript provides essential information about the text.

Following a brief overview of the current state of research on materiality in Assyriology, the present paper will outline the types of paratexts found in cuneiform tablets and their functions. Manuscripts of literary texts, particularly hymns and prayers, exhibit specific paratextual features that of-

1 Michel 2021, 90-1.

2 Michel 2021, 108-9. See also Friedrich 2024, 14 on the necessity of updating some definitions, such as the concept of 'inscription' in epigraphy, which usually includes both the material object and the text written on it.

3 On cuneiform tablets as manuscripts, see Michel 2021; cf. Matthews 2013, 71 and Friedrich 2024, 12-13, who mentions other kinds of written artefacts in ancient civilisations.

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ten relate to poetic aspects. The relationship between paratexts and poetry is especially noticeable in some tablets that preserve a group of compositions referred to as the Great Hymns and Prayers. Manuscripts of these texts are often marked by horizontal rulings that divide the text into couplets. These rulings provide clues about the poetic structure of the compositions and occasionally about changes in the text over the centuries.

2 Materiality and Assyriology

The relevance of materiality and its role in the analysis of written artefacts has long been underestimated in many disciplines devoted to the study of literatures and languages. As emphasised by Michael Friedrich, the development of textual criticism in the nineteenth century has led to a disinterest in the material aspect of textual sources, resulting in a notion of manuscripts as purely textual and independent of their physical nature and transmission.[4]

This misconception began to decline in the 1960s as it became increasingly clear that the individual reproductions of texts were essential to understanding the texts themselves. New approaches and methods investigating the materiality of texts, such as 'genetic criticism', and later in the nineties the so-called 'material philology', began to emerge.[5]

Scholars from different fields have come to realise that texts and their material form should not be treated as separate entities. Instead, there has been a growing recognition that both aspects should be considered together as integral components, with a holistic approach. In essence, the physical characteristics of manuscripts, such as their material, layout and handwriting, have been understood to provide valuable insights into various aspects, including the historical context, production process and transmission of the texts.[6]

The general tendency to overlook materiality also affected the field of Assyriology until quite recently, despite early Assyriologists' recognition of the importance of studying cuneiform texts alongside their physical features. In this respect, two separate contributions published in the same year (1896) can be cited as examples: one by George Reisner and the other by Heinrich Zimmern. Reisner demonstrated an interest in the format of manuscripts in his volume on some Sumerian-Akkadian hymns preserved in the collection of the Berlin Museum and likely originating from Babylon.[7] The author included a drawing of the profile of a cuneiform tablet and described the two most prevalent shapes of tablets observed in the corpus under examination. Differences between the obverse and reverse were also highlighted.[8] Zimmern, in a review of two studies on Akkadian meter, emphasised the importance of analysing the layout and material features of literary texts to understand certain poetic aspects. The author focused in particular on the use of rulings in some Akkadian hymns to mark poetic stanzas.[9] A few years later, in 1906, Leopold Messerschmidt published three studies on the nature of the stylus and the techniques used for impressing it on clay. He also looked at the production and shaping of tablets, reconstructing the processes involved in making smaller and larger tablets.[10]

In the following decades, the focus on these material aspects waned: the text and its content became the main object of study, a source of historical, cultural, philological and grammatical analysis, while the physical features of the tablets were treated only occasionally and for a long time as secondary elements.[11]

4 Friedrich 2024, 2-3.

5 See the summary of these new approaches to written artefacts in Friedrich 2024, 3-7 with further references; on the genetic criticism, cf. also the recent contributions Hay 2017 and Rohrbach 2019.

6 Compare on this Bremer 2020, 350, who cites a significant passage from Chartier 1990, 12: "im Gegensatz zu der Darstellung, die von der Literaturwissenschaft selbst entworfen und von einer rein quantitativ orientierten Buchgeschichte wieder aufgegriffen wurde – nach ihr existiert der Text unabhängig von seiner Materialität – muß daran erinnert werden, daß ein Text nicht ohne den Träger, der ihn zu lesen (oder zu hören) gibt, existiert und daß kein Schriftstück unabhängig von den Formen, in denen es seine Leser erreicht, verstanden werden kann".

7 For more detailed information about this corpus of Late Babylonian bilingual compositions, see Maul 2005, 11-16; Gabbay 2014, 244-55; Schwemer 2022, 62.

8 Reisner 1896; cf. Schnitzlein 2023, 51.

9 Zimmern 1896, 87-9; see also Zimmern 1893, 122. Cf. Hess 2015, 252.

10 Messerschmidt 1906, see also Messerschmidt 1907. Cf. Schnitzlein 2022, 29.

11 Schnitzlein 2023, 9.

In recent decades, however, there has been a revival of interest regarding material features in Assyriology, as may be seen by numerous research projects on the topic.[12] Recent scholarship highlights the importance of studying materiality as an aid to understanding textual as well as cultural and social contexts. This approach departs from the 'fetishistic' view of written text, which considers the text as the only element worthy of attention,[13] and instead also focuses on the physical characteristics of written sources. It places materiality and the interplay between materiality, text, and agent at the core ("Text-Anthropologie").[14]

Indeed, the material features of cuneiform tablets can provide valuable information. The tablet's shape, for example, can offer insights into the type of text it preserves and sometimes even provide a clue to its dating.[15] This is particularly true for administrative texts, legal documents, and letters.[16] Variations can also be found in the type of clay used, depending on the location and genre of the texts. For instance, Neo-Assyrian prisms may be identified by the traces of chaff in their clay.[17] School tablets often have specific shapes as well, such as the classic lenticular school tablets from the Old Babylonian periods. Administrative texts and letters are often enclosed in thin layers of clay, which serve as envelopes to seal them.[18] These are just a few examples of physical features that can provide insight into the type of cuneiform text.

3 Material Features in Cuneiform Sources: Visual and Textual Paratexts

However, it is important to consider other elements related to the physical aspect of manuscripts, beyond their shape and fabric. These elements can be referred to as 'paratexts', drawing on Genette's famous concept: "a threshold, or – a word Borges used […] – a 'vestibule' that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back. It is an 'undefined zone' between the inside and the outside, a zone without any hard and fast boundary".[19] We can therefore think of paratexts with respect to cuneiform artefacts as a set of material elements that provide us with information about the written object, but also about the text preserved on the object itself. They can in fact be considered as "the intersection between texts and materiality".[20]

Paratexts can further be divided into visual and textual. Visual paratexts are graphic elements that do not convey information through written text, such as layout, rulings, firing holes,[21] line dividers,

12 Such as, for example, *LIBER: The King's Librarians at Work*. This was led by Prof. Paola Corò at Ca' Foscari University of Venice and was recently followed by the connected project *The Structural and Visual Organization of Knowledge in Mesopotamian Archives and Libraries*. Another project, with a broader and interdisciplinary focus, is the one funded at Heidelberg University within the Collaborative Research Center (CRC) 933 called *Material Text Cultures: Materiality and Presence of Writing in Nontypographic Societies*. The cluster of excellence "Understanding Written Artefacts" is currently hosted at the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC) at the University of Hamburg, and includes more than 40 disciplines, including Assyriology, and approximately 60 research projects. In addition, *Reading the Library of Ashurbanipal: A Multi-sectional Analysis of Assyriology's Foundational Corpus* is a collaborative project based at the British Museum and Ludwig Maximilian University Munich. New publications have reinforced this focus: for example, the edited collection by Thomas E. Balke, Christina Tsouparopoulou (eds), *Materiality of Writing in Early Mesopotamia* (2016), or the comprehensive work on material features in cuneiform texts published recently by Babette Schnitzlein, *Untersuchungen zur Schreibkultur Mesopotamiens im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* (2023). The mentioned projects and publications represent only a small part of the extensive research conducted on materiality in the field of Assyriology in recent years. See the detailed history of Schnitzlein 2023, 11-38 for further studies. Publications dealing with these issues are both digital and paper-based, and often rely on innovative techniques by which the material aspects of cuneiform sources are investigated, including for instance 3D scans and prints of tablets. Cf. also Matthews 2013, 65-6.

13 Tsouparopoulou 2016, 257.

14 The term "Text-Anthropologie" was coined by Markus Hilgert (2010). 'Text-anthropology' considers written texts and their meanings as products shaped by specific cultural knowledge systems and human actions. Hilgert's use of the term emphasises an interdisciplinary understanding of the written word that transcends disciplinary boundaries.

15 Taylor 2011, 8-11; Matthews 2013, 65-6.

16 See Radner 1995. There are noticeable differences between, for example, Middle Assyrian contract tablets and later ones from the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods. The later tablets tend to be smaller and pillow-shaped, while the Middle Assyrian ones are more rectangular. Cf. Postgate 1986, 11; cf. Radner 1995 and Schnitzlein 2023, 50.

17 Taylor 2011, 7.

18 This practice dates to the Ur III period and continued through the Neo-Assyrian period, with various changes. For a detailed description of the physical characteristics of Assyrian letters, and their different types, see Schnitzlein 2023, 337-40. Cf. Radner 1995.

19 Genette 1997, 2; cf. also Genette, Maclean 1991.

20 Ciotti, Lin 2016, viii.

21 For a recent investigation on firing holes, see Corò, Ermidoro 2020.

drawings (e.g. field plans or maps), seals, fingernail impressions, etc.[22] Textual paratexts, on the contrary, include information expressed, in our case, through cuneiform signs (e.g. notations, dates, rubrics, colophons, etc.).[23]

In addition, paratexts can be categorised based on their functions. Scholars working on materiality have recently identified three possible functions of paratexts: structuring, commenting, and documenting. The structuring function helps the reader navigate a manuscript, while the commenting function provides supplementary information such as glosses or commentaries. The documenting function serves to record aspects beyond the text itself, such as dates and places.[24]

As with the tablet's physical shape, paratextual elements can also provide indications of certain textual categories. For instance, the layout – which we might consider a visual type of paratext with a structuring function –[25] provides valuable insights into the type of text. This is evident, for example, in lexical lists, which are typically organised in a tabular format with entries arranged into two or more parallel columns. Assyrian and Babylonian commentaries also exhibit distinct layouts, including the commonly used tabular format, the indented format, and other layout variations.[26]

3.1 Paratexts in Literary Tablets

While administrative texts typically offer contextual information such as names or dates, making it easier to identify their *Sitz im Leben*, literary compositions present consistent challenges in this regard. This is because often the only clear context for most literary texts is the educational setting.[27] Identifying a *Sitz im Leben* is not the only difficulty when it comes to cuneiform literary works. Determining aspects such as genre and authorship is also problematic in most cases.[28] With this respect, the study of materiality and of paratexts can prove useful, shedding light on the type of text, its use (e.g. providing insights into performative aspects) and occasionally its composition and transmission processes.

The paratexts found in manuscripts of literary compositions largely overlap with those found in non-literary sources. However, some paratexts are specifically associated with the nature of literary texts. Examples of 'visual' paratexts in literary tablets include, besides the layout: spacing, rulings, decimal markers, line dividers, musical notations. Textual paratexts are, for instance, rubrics, subscripts, colophons, catchlines.[29]

As in the case of administrative documents, the form of the tablets and the arrangement of text on manuscripts, i.e. the layout, can serve as an initial criterion when examining literary tablets. Despite variations and changes between textual traditions, even in literary compositions there is an occasional correspondence between the textual genre and the manuscript shape. This is exemplified, for example, by many Old Babylonian and first millennium Sumerian and Sumero-Akkadian compositions, such as bilingual lamentations and incantations (e.g. Balags, Eršaḫungas, Šuilas and Eršemmas), which are usually written in a single-column format, giving the manuscripts an elongated appearance.[30] Furthermore, Christian Hess has shown that this format, i.e. a long single-column tablet, is also common in ep-

22 These are only a few types of visual paratexts that can be found in cuneiform tablets. See Taylor 2011 for more about similar material features in cuneiform sources.

23 For the distinction between visual and textual paratexts see Ruokkeinen, Liira 2019, 112. These examples of paratexts applied to cuneiform texts do not always correspond perfectly with Genette's theory, which refers to the printed book and thus necessarily includes aspects that deviate from our area of interest. Genette himself was aware of the limitations of his theory when applied to 'pre-Gutenberg' ancient manuscripts (Genette 1997, 16). For further information on this aspect, see Andrist 2018, 132. However, we have decided to adopt Genette's theories and apply them to material features in a broader sense, adapting them to the cuneiform context.

24 Ciotti, Lin 2016, vii; cf. Friedrich 2023, 5.

25 The question of whether the layout qualifies as a true paratext is a subject of debate among scholars interested in the materiality of ancient manuscripts (Andrist 2018, 135). On the paratextual value of layout and other physical elements, see Andrist 2018, 135, 137 and 138.

26 Schnitzlein 2023, 251; Frahm 2012, 33-7.

27 When referring to literary compositions, I adopt the 'minimalist' definition offered by Röllig ("Literatur". *RIA*, 7, 48-66), who distinguishes between *belles-lettres* and texts of everyday life. Identifying the *Sitz im Leben* of literary texts is a well-known challenge: in most cases we have no clue about the author of a text, its use and purpose, on this see Hess 2015, 254; George 2007, 41.

28 See Lenzi 2019, 37-8 for a survey on the problem of genre in Akkadian literature, with previous bibliography.

29 This is a partial list and does not include all possible paratexts found in literary manuscripts. For a comprehensive analysis of materiality in epic texts, refer to Hess 2015. Additionally, Schnitzlein 2023, 71-81, discusses other characteristics of materiality in literary texts of various types.

30 Schnitzlein 2023, 355.

ic texts and myths, as evidenced by several Old Babylonian manuscripts of the Epic of Gilgameš, some manuscripts of *Atraḫasīs*, and all the manuscripts of the Descent of Ištar.[31]

In certain cases, the layout can offer immediate indications regarding the period and origin of a text, as seen in the earliest literary compositions written in cuneiform from Abu Salabikh, dating from the third millennium BCE. Their manuscripts come in two formats: either small and rectangular or much larger, but still identifiable due to their peculiar layout of being divided into multiple columns, which are further subdivided into smaller cases.[32]

Another example of a visual paratext with a structuring function, often found in literary manuscripts, are rulings. Horizontal rulings are regularly drawn in bilingual interlinear texts to visually structure the text and serve as guides for scribes to maintain straight writing. The horizontal rulings are positioned where the Sumerian phrases appear. The line in Sumerian is usually written on top of a horizontal guiding ruling, whereas the Akkadian line has no such graphic aid. These guiding rulings, which may be either faint or more strongly marked, give the impression that the cuneiform signs 'hang' from them.[33]

Horizontal rulings in bilingual texts can also be used as text dividers. They are traced every two lines, so that each Sumerian line is paired with its Akkadian equivalent.[34] This division can also be considered a graphic indication, rather than a poetic division as often found in Akkadian hymns (see below).

In addition, not only can certain physical characteristics be associated with particular textual genres, but also there seem to be standard, preferred forms for specific compositions, which may vary depending on place and time. For example, the manuscripts preserving the Old Babylonian version of the Epic of Gilgameš are often single-column tablets. In Nineveh, however, the preferred format for the standard Babylonian version was wider, typically spanning three columns. The Ipiq-Aja version of *Atraḫasīs* also adheres to a standard form, being characterised by a four-column layout, whereas the Late Babylonian version from Sippar is typically preserved in single-column manuscripts. The Epic of *Enūma eliš* is mainly found on single-column tablets.[35]

Nevertheless, it should be stressed that the observed characteristics are not necessarily fixed features or rules. As Hess rightly points out,[36] the manuscript tradition of epic texts is very diverse, and only a few general tendencies can be discerned. The same applies to many other literary genres. Indeed, as will be shown further in this paper, texts that may seem dissimilar, such as wisdom compositions and hymns, might share numerous physical and paratextual features. This reinforces the idea that the concept of literary genre is largely a modern construct, and that the Mesopotamians likely had a more fluid understanding of the differences between texts.

Questions of genre notwithstanding, the observation of recurring correspondences and patterns, however flexible, can be relevant for understanding some literary aspects of cuneiform compositions and for identifying differences and similarities between texts.

Moreover, scholars have identified a further correlation between the format of manuscripts and the text they contain. This correlation suggests that when material and paratextual features are standardised, there tends to be a corresponding consistency in the transmitted text. For instance, if different manuscripts share similar physical characteristics, such as tablet shape and layout, they might often exhibit a high degree of uniformity in textual variants as well.[37] This phenomenon is particularly evi-

31 Cf. Hess 2015, 261.

32 See for example IM 070263 at Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (CDLI). December 4, 2001. `https://cdli.ucla.edu/P010263`. On the materiality of Sumerian third millennium literary texts, see Jáka-Sövegjártó 2020, 322. Note, however, that the division into rectangular cases is not specific to literary texts from Abu Salabikh, but is also attested in archival texts from the same site. Therefore, in this context and period, it cannot be considered specific to any particular genre. For an overview of the Abu Salabikh tablets, see Krebernik 2009.

33 See for example K.1296. Lenzi 2019, 15; Schnitzlein 2023, 71-2 with previous bibliography. Bilingual texts are particularly well-suited for analysing physical and material elements. For instance, a common paratextual feature used in bilingual texts is indentation, which can help recognise such texts at first glance. The indentation involves only the line of text written in Akkadian, meaning the Akkadian translation is placed below the Sumerian text line and slightly indented to the right. This often results in the Akkadian signs being smaller. For an example of an indented tablet, see K.133. In another fragment of a bilingual literary text, BM 47805, a manuscript of the composition labelled by Lambert as "The seed of Kingship" (1974), it is evident that the Akkadian text is written in a slightly smaller size. On the physical features of bilingual texts, cf. Krecher 1976-80 and Heinrich 2024, 54-5.

34 This can be clearly seen in the Eršaḫunga-prayer to Enlil KAR 9+ VAT 10607 + Vat 11573, Maul 1988, Pl. 65. Cf. also for example the Lugale manuscript K.2871, ruled every two lines, available at `https://www.ebl.lmu.de/fragmentarium/K.2871`.

35 Hess 2015, 261-2.

36 Hess 2015, 273.

37 On standardisation of Akkadian texts, see Lenzi 2019, 29-33. It should be noted that the process of canonisation in the first millennium, while undoubtedly involving a systematisation and a certain homogenisation of many texts, does not completely exclude changes and different versions, cf. Lenzi 2019, 31 with fn. 75.

dent in epic texts.[38] Additionally, there are instances where paratextual features associated with poetic elements are consistent across different manuscripts of the same composition, for example, indications of meter or poetic structure.

3.1.1 'Poetic' Paratexts

In certain cases, paratexts may serve to mark both palaeographic and poetic conventions. They can indicate the standardised format for transmitting certain texts, as previously demonstrated with epic literature and myths, but they can also embody specific poetic characteristics. However, like other paratexts, even those of a 'poetic' nature, i.e. clearly associated with aspects of poetic texts, such features are not exclusive to a single literary genre; rather, they are often found across multiple genres. Nevertheless, certain genres exhibit a higher concentration of these 'poetic' paratexts. The most prominent 'poetic' paratexts include those related to meter and those that indicate the structure of the poetic text, such as horizontal rulings marking its stanzas.

3.1.1.1 Vertical Dividers (metrum)

Poetic paratexts mark meter through the representation of metrical units (feet) and the caesura on the tablet.

The Akkadian metrical system is still debated, and many different models of meter have been proposed in recent years. However, the tablets themselves provide valuable clues on this topic. The standard Akkadian meter consists of four feet, with the last being trochaic, and is divided by a caesura in the middle. Feet and caesura can be depicted through vertical rulings or blank spaces.[39]

Both material features can be considered visual paratexts serving a structuring purpose. This metrical pattern is confirmed by some manuscripts of the Babylonian Theodicy (BM 35405, BM 47745, BM 34773, BM 40124+).[40] Three of these manuscripts display vertical lines drawn across the whole tablet, marking the standard four-foot metrical structure of each line. In the case of BM 40124+, the meter is expressed through spacing, with spaces left between the metrical units in each line. Another manuscript of Theodicy (K.9290) shows spacing that sometimes coincides with the metrical caesura.

Another wisdom poem whose manuscripts show metrical breaks is *Ludlul*. In fact, in the manuscripts HuzNA1, SipLB1 (*Ludlul* I); HuzNA1 (*Ludlul* II); BabNB1a (*Ludlul* III), BabLB3 (*Ludlul* V), an anepigraphic space is visible in the middle of the tablet, marking the caesura between the two hemistichs.[41]

Manuscripts of epic texts and myths occasionally exhibit spacing that appears to correspond to the metrical caesura as well. For example, a metrical pattern can be identified in some manuscripts of *Enūma eliš*[42] and Etana.[43]

3.1.1.2 Horizontal Dividers (Larger Text Units, Strophes, Couplets)

The second type of paratext mentioned above, namely horizontal rulings drawn on the tablets, were used to indicate the structural elements of poetic texts. This practice can be observed in manuscripts of literary texts dating back to the Old Babylonian period.[44] It is worth noting that horizontal lines can

38 In this respect, Hess (2015, 273) has analysed a group of manuscripts of *Atraḫasīs* that not only share identical layouts but also appear to contain the same poetic variants.

39 It has been hypothesised that the red dots in the literary texts from Amarna might also be markers of meter, although the manuscripts preserving this physical feature are very few, and this theory remains uncertain (Izre'el 1991). For an overview of Akkadian meter, see Jiménez 2017, 72-5, with previous studies, and Lenzi 2019, 47-57.

40 For an updated edition of the Babylonian Theodicy, see the online version at Heinrich 2022.

41 For the latest edition of *Ludlul*, see Hätinen 2022 where photos of all manuscripts preserving the text can be found. I am thankful to A. Hätinen who kindly brought the manuscripts of *Ludlul* here mentioned to my attention.

42 E.g. CT 13, pls 14-15, 1882,0918.3737 (= Ee IV), Hess 2015, 267; on layout in Ee see Lambert 2013, 17-34.

43 For example, the Nineveh manuscripts K.8563 (Etana SB I, SB III) and K.2606 (Etana SB I, SB II, SB III). For an updated edition of the epic, see Földi 2024.

44 Hess 2015, 263.

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serve a dual purpose: they may indicate not only the divisions between poetic sections within a composition, such as stanzas, but also mark the tenth line of a column, functioning as decimal markers. Alternatively, decimal markers can be represented by wedges impressed in the margin.[45] Placing a marker on the tablet every tenth line likely aided scribes in manuscript consultation and copying, thus functioning as a library mark.

Horizontal rulings indicating both stanzas and decimal markers can be found in many Akkadian epic texts, although not consistently, as, for example, in some manuscripts of *Atraḫasīs* and OB *Gilgameš*.[46] In the manuscript from Sultantepe of the Myth of Nergal and Ereskigal, horizontal lines are used to mark the beginning of new sections, especially in the introduction of direct speech.[47] The Theodicy also exhibits a clear poetic structure, with horizontal rulings appearing every 11 lines. In this case, rulings denote the end of stanzas, each comprising five couplets and an odd line.[48] Rulings are also present in manuscripts of other wisdom texts. For example, RB 59 (AO 4462, The Dialogue between a Man and his God) also features the 'guiding' rulings every 10 lines.[49] Various manuscripts of *Ludlul* also appear divided by horizontal rulings every 10 lines (VAT 9954, VAT 10569), or after each individual line (BM 55481).[50]

3.2 Paratexts in Akkadian Hymns and Prayers

Within the Akkadian literary corpus, two genres stand out for their frequent use of paratextual features such as metrical break and line dividers: hymns and prayers.[51]

Akkadian hymns and prayers display distinctive elements of materiality, despite their heterogeneous nature and development over the centuries. For example, like epic texts, hymns from the Old Babylonian period are often preserved on single-column tablets. In the first millennium, however, hymns were usually written on two-column tablets, especially in Nineveh.[52] A few Old Babylonian Akkadian hymnic compositions, furthermore, are preserved on a *Sammeltafel* (i.e. the series of Old Babylonian hymns to Papulegara).[53]

In addition, Akkadian hymns and prayers frequently include textual paratexts, such as rubrics, subscripts, and catchlines. These textual paratexts serve a 'commenting' function and are invaluable to modern scholars in providing more contextual information, i.e. understanding how these texts were perceived, used and labelled by the ancients. For example, subscripts and rubrics provide information about the performance of these texts, such as whether they were sung and sometimes on which occasion. Old Babylonian hymns often have subscripts indicating their types, or defining the different sections, e.g. the annotations kirugu and ĝešgiĝal found in the manuscript of the hymn Agušaya A, already used in Sumerian hymns and lamentations.[54] Akkadian incantation prayers, on the other hand, carry the typical superscript ÉN, which identifies them as part of a ritual.[55]

45 E.g. Gilg. OB UM 29-13-570, see George 2003, 217.

46 Hess 2015, 264-5.

47 SU-1951.108, see STT I, 28 (Gurney, Finkelstein 1957).

48 See Lambert 1960, 66.

49 For the edition of the text see Lambert 1987 and more recently Oshima, Anthonioz 2023.

50 Hätinen 2022.

51 Providing a precise differentiation between hymns and prayers in Akkadian literature is challenging since the two types overlap in many aspects. Hymns generally focus on praising the invoked god, while prayers emphasise petition and supplication. For an overview of Akkadian hymns and prayers, refer to von Soden 1957-71 and 1972-75; for Akkadian hymns, cf. also Streck 2020, who also discusses the differences between hymns and prayers.

52 This is likely due to a paleographical convention resulting from the already established Sumerian tradition. Manuscripts of Sumerian hymns from third millennium typically use *Kurzzeile*, which are short lines broken into triads across multiple lines. This convention was also adopted to some extent in later hymns, including those from the Old Babylonian period (on *Kurzzeile* and their development, see Jáka-Sövegjártó 2020). For instance, in the tablet of the hymn to Agušaya A, each line contains only two metrical units out of four (see below in this paper). This structure differs from later poetry, particularly Akkadian hymnic poetry of the first millennium, where each line corresponds to an entire line (Foster 2005, 38-9).

53 Streck, Wasserman 2008; for a definition and description of *Sammeltafeln*, see Worthington 2008.

54 On the kirugu and ĝešgiĝal sections in Old Babylonian hymns, see Metcalf 2015, 56. Note, furthermore, the remarks by Metcalf regarding the partially damaged subscript preserved at the bottom edge of the Hymn to Amurru. According to Metcalf, this subscript might suggest the context in which the hymn was recited (Metcalf 2015, 54, with fn. 12). Furthermore, Old Babylonian hymns show occasionally the subscripts *pārum*, whose meaning is uncertain, *zamārum*, 'song', and šer$_5$ *tanittim*, 'song of praise'. All these terms are adapted from the Sumerian terminology (Metcalf 2015, 54-7, cf. Shehata 2009, 262-83).

55 Lenzi 2019, 165-7 with previous literature.

As for the other paratexts mentioned above, caesuras and rulings, they are particularly common in manuscripts of Akkadian hymns, but are occasionally also found in prayers. A clear example of a caesura achieved by spacing can be found in the Assurbanipal's hymn to Aššur K.3258.[56] The hymn is preserved on a single-column tablet and is entirely divided into two parts to indicate the two hemistichs.

In addition, a similar layout is found in the main manuscript of the Great Prayer to Nabû, K.2361, where the metrical caesura is represented by either a vertical line or spacing on the tablet. In the first column, spacing is used when the line is short enough to fit within the line. In longer lines, a vertical line is preferred. However, this division is not consistently applied throughout the manuscript, as the metrical marker is only visible in the first column. It appears that the scribe has overlooked it in the rest of the tablet, where no caesura is drawn.[57]

The Hymn to Ištar Queen of Nippur[58] also features spaces at the presumed metrical caesura in some of its manuscripts, most of which come from Nineveh, at the presumed metrical caesura. Taking, for example, the manuscript K.8697 (ii, ll. 10-12), it is evident that the scribe has marked the four metrical units, leaving spaces and occasionally adding firing holes. The manuscript K.9955+ Rm 613 (e.g. obv. ii, 65-7) shows a similar division. In other manuscripts, however, spaces and firing holes are placed less consistently (see e.g. Si 9, rev., ll. 68-9 and l. 76), and the scribe apparently just tried to fill the available space on the tablet evenly.[59]

Indeed, like the epic texts, hymns and prayers do not always have uniform physical characteristics, and variations are often found even between different manuscripts of the same text. However, one of the most common paratextual features in Akkadian hymns is the use of horizontal rulings to divide the texts into different sections. This practice is often consistent across different manuscripts of the same compositions (as can be observed in the corpus of the Great Hymns and Prayers, see below).

3.2.1 Horizontal Rulings

In numerous instances, Akkadian prayers employ horizontal rulings to separate sections. Rulings in prayers are typically found at the end of the composition and followed by a subscript indicating the type of prayer, or by ritual instructions. It is common for tablets to contain multiple prayers, each separated by horizontal lines and rubrics.[60]

Manuscripts of Akkadian hymns can feature horizontal rulings to mark the composition at every tenth line. This is seen, for instance, in the Acrostic Hymn to Nabû (BM 55469), which is divided into four stanzas of ten lines each.

3.2.1.1 Strophes and Couplets

However, horizontal lines are often used to indicate the poetic structure as well, dividing the text into couplets or stanzas. While for epic texts this type of paratext is highly inconsistent and seems to reflect the actual structure of the text only in a few cases, the tablets preserving Akkadian hymns appear to exhibit rulings consistent with the poetic form.[61]

Hence, as with Theodicy manuscripts, which feature a regular division into poetic stanzas and clear metrical markers, manuscripts of Akkadian hymns often show a close relationship between materiality and poetry.

This type of material feature, like other material elements, changes over time. In the Old Babylonian and Middle Babylonian periods, horizontal rulings are typically traced every 4 or more lines, while

56 Livingstone 1989, 4-6; cf. the online edition at `https://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/saao/saa03/P334930`. I am thankful to A. Hätinen, who kindly brought this hymn to my attention.

57 The *editio princeps* of this text was first published by von Soden 1961. Cf. the online edition available on the *eBL* platform, Rozzi 2022. A new, comprehensive edition of the text will be published by the Author in the next future (Rozzi 2024).

58 For an updated online edition of this text, see Földi 2021 with further references; cf. Lambert 1982.

59 Cf. Hess 2015, 68 for spacing inserted within words.

60 Lenzi 2019, 35. For an example of this kind, see e.g. IM 067630, originating from Kalhu and accessible from the Šuilla database online, at `http://shuilas.org/P363582.html`.

61 Hess 2015, 262-3; Groneberg 1971, 136.

in the first millennium manuscripts of hymns are occasionally lined every two lines.[62] The strophic division every fourth line is especially typical of poetry.[63]

Examples of this well-defined poetic structure can be found in several Old Babylonian manuscripts. For instance, in the hymn Agušaya A, the text is divided by a horizontal ruling after every eighth line. The rulings indicate distinct poetic stanzas of four lines each. This line division is due to the layout of the text, which is composed of 'short lines' (*Kurzzeilen*), that is, each line on the tablet contains only one hemistich, i.e. half a line (see fn. 37). In other words, each stanza consists of four lines, which are spread over eight lines on the tablet.[64]

Another clear example of the division into stanzas is attested in two Old Babylonian hymns: the Hymn to Ištar for Ammīditāna and a hymn to Nanaya. The remarkable state of preservation of these two texts reveals the regularity of their structure. Each hymn is divided into 14 stanzas of 4 lines each.[65]

The Hymn to Ištar for Ammīditāna is characterised by parallelism, which is closely tied to its division into stanzas. Parallelism is the most used rhetorical device in Akkadian poetry, closely interwoven with metrics and material features.[66] It can occur between two or more lines, or even within a single line. In the latter case, the two hemistichs form a parallelism.

A common type of parallelism found in Akkadian hymns, as well as in some prayers and epic poems, is known as 'lyrical repetition'.[67] This rhetorical device, inherited from Sumerian compositions,[68] involves repeating two identical couplets, which differ only in the name of the invoked deity introduced in the second set of lines. This poetic form is clearly shown in the Hymn to Ištar for Ammīditāna, e.g. ll. 1-4:

[1]*[i]ltam zumrā rašubti ilātim*
[2]*litta''id bēlet nišī rabīt igigī*
[3]*ištar zumrā rašubti ilātim*
[4]*litta''id bēlet iššī rabīt igigī*

[1]Sing of the goddess, (most) awe-inspiring of goddesses;
[2]Let the mistress of people, great(est) of the Igigi be praised;
[3]Sing of Ištar, (most) awe-inspiring of goddesses; Let
[4]the mistress of women, great(est) of the Igigi be praised.[69]

It is not surprising, therefore, that horizontal rulings divide the manuscript into groups of four lines.

The division of the tablet into stanzas and the marking of poetic breaks probably helped the scribes to copy and study the texts, as did the use of decimal markers.

It is worth noting that hymns, already from the Old Babylonian period, tend to exhibit greater linguistic complexity than other literary compositions, frequently making use of a specific literary dialect known as the 'hymno-epic dialect'.[70] These texts were typically written by a scribal elite and often lacked a ritual context.[71] A clear layout likely facilitated both the transmission and the comprehension of these challenging texts.

62 Note Jiménez 2017, 73: "The most common type of stanza is the couplet. Other stanzas, such as tercets, do occur, but they are not as common"; see also Metcalf 2015, 71; Lambert 2013, 28 points out that division into couplets is typical of the late period, with the only exception of an Old Babylonian copy of *Atraḫasīs*.

63 Compare also the remark by Groneberg 2003, 65: "Ideally a strophe is shown on the tablet by a separating line which should mark off the passage as a semantic unit. This happens in quite a number of texts, but there are other poetic texts that are underlined throughout, which is regular procedure in documentary texts of that time. Yet it has to be kept in mind that the four-line strophe in OB times is typical for poetry only and not for narrative texts".

64 See Pohl 2022, 124-34 for an updated edition.

65 For a new edition of the Hymn to Ištar for Ammīditāna, see Pohl 2022, 176-84 with previous references; see also Pohl 2022, 227-35 for the Hymn to Nanaya.

66 Jiménez 2017, 73-4.

67 Groneberg 2003, 16; cf. Metcalf 2015, 22 and 60.

68 Metcalf 2015, 22; Steinberger 2022, 295.

69 Translation borrowed from `https://seal.huji.ac.il/node/7495`.

70 Pohl 2022, 13-14 with previous literature.

71 Pohl 2022, 10-12.

4 Form Follows Function (and Convention): Material Features Within the *Great Hymns and Prayers*

Studying the relationship between poetry and materiality is certainly useful for understanding the poetic structure of texts, but it can also offer valuable insights into the processes by which they were composed and transmitted. For instance, the group of the so-called *Great Hymns and Prayers* shows how horizontal rulings may indicate the changes a text has undergone in the course of its tradition.

The *Great Hymns and Prayers* are a group of literary hymns and prayers, mostly preserved in first millennium manuscripts. They are characterised by a considerable length, often exceeding 200 lines, linguistic complexity, and use of poetic devices. At times they address themes like those found in wisdom literature. These features have led Assyriologists to identify them as a distinct group. In addition, another trait that sets the *Great Hymns and Prayers* apart from other texts concerns the aspect of many of their manuscripts: numerous tablets appear divided into distichs by horizontal rulings. This characteristic has aided in the identification of many parallels and has led some scholars to label this genre as "hymns in paragraphs".[72]

The hymns belonging to this small body of texts are nine so far, two of which (the Great Prayer to Nabû and the Hymn to Ištar Queen of Nippur) were already mentioned in the present paper. The nine Great Hymns and Prayers are:

- The literary prayer to Marduk (Marduk1)
- The hymn to Marduk (Marduk2)
- The Great Hymn to Šamaš
- The Gula Hymn of Bullussa-rabi
- The Syncretistic Hymn to Gula
- The Great Prayer to Ištar
- The Hymn to Ištar Queen of Nippur
- The Great Anūna Prayer
- The Great Nabû Prayer.[73]

Not all compositions included in this corpus[74] exhibit the same division into couplets: the Gula-Hymn of Bullussa-rabi shows irregular rulings, sometimes apparently wrongly placed;[75] the Syncretistic Hymn to Gula does not feature consistent rulings in any of its manuscripts;[76] and the Nineveh manuscript preserving the Great Literary Prayer to Ištar, K.225, exhibits a ten-line division, unrelated to the poetic structure.

A noteworthy case is represented by the Hymn to Ištar Queen of Nippur, which is divided into stanzas of 13 lines each in three of its manuscripts. The hymn's poetic structure resembles that of the manuscripts of the Babylonian Theodicy. Each stanza comprises six couplets and an odd line, which varies in position within the stanzas. The extra line can be identified because it appears 'mismatched' to the other parallel couplets, seemingly isolated among the parallel lines.

The use of rulings found in this text has significant implications for understanding the composition process of the hymn, as noted by Lambert in the first edition. Indeed, the division into strophes is only present in certain portions of the text, such as the hymnic introduction or the litany-like section (iii, ll. 1-38), but not, for example, in the section where a third-person lament unfolds (ii, ca ll. 3-30). This inconsistency in the text division, coupled with the variety in content and even style across differ-

72 Lambert 1960, 48; for the term 'hymn in paragraphs', cf. for instance Sidersky 1929, 22.

73 With the exception of Marduk1 and Marduk2, a new online edition of all these texts is available on the *eBL* platform: `https://www.ebl.lmu.de/corpus`. The *eBL* platform incorporate previous editions, updating them with new fragments, new readings and a fresh translation. The author's PhD dissertation, soon to be published, includes a comprehensive edition of the *The Great Nabû Prayer* and *The Great Prayer to Ištar*, and a study of the corpus. Marduk1 and Marduk2 will be soon published by E. Jiménez. I am thankful to Prof. Jiménez who shared with me a preliminary draft of the forthcoming edition. For the most recent edition of Marduk1 and Marduk2, see Oshima 2011.

74 The definition of the corpus is, of course, not definitive and should not be interpreted as such. New texts may be discovered that could either confirm or contradict the current interpretation of these compositions. I borrowed the name "Great Hymns and Prayers" from Foster 2005, where translations of all these texts, except for the Great Anūna Prayer, are provided.

75 Lambert 1982, 174.

76 See for example K.232+, where it is difficult to identify a clear structure, since rulings are traced sparsely at obv. 6, 16, 41 and rev. 7'; note, however, that two of the other Babylonian manuscripts, both from Sippar, BM 75974 and BM 76319 agree in putting rulings at l. 65' and l. 74'; the Assur manuscript VAT 9670 + VAT 9931 shows ruling at l. 74', but not at l. 65'. Hence, there might have been a standard layout at least for the Sippar sources.

ent sections, led Lambert to suggest that the text is a pastiche, that is, a conflation of different texts.[77]

This aspect becomes even more noticeable when one observes that, in this hymn, while the use of rulings maintains a consistent pattern across copies – indicating a consensus among scribes regarding the placement of the horizontal rulings – other material features, such as the layout (e.g. whether the text is presented in four or two columns) and the distribution of lines on the tablet, exhibit considerable variability among the individual copies.

Five texts within the Great Hyms and Prayers divide their manuscripts into couplets: Marduk1, Marduk2, the Great Anūna Prayer, the Great Prayer to Nabû, and the Great Hymn to Šamaš.

All these compositions have a structure strongly based on parallelism: they are often characterised by 'lyrical repetition', though not necessarily throughout the entire text. Examples of this can be seen in Marduk1, Marduk 2, the Great Prayer to Nabû, and the Great Hymn to Šamaš, whereas the Great Anūna Prayer, preserved in a single, considerably damaged manuscript, never shows this rhetorical device.[78] Still, the text contains numerous synonymous and antithetical parallelisms, developed in pairs of lines, which naturally led to the division of the composition into couplets.

In Marduk1, Marduk 2, the Great Prayer to Nabû, and the Great Hymn to Šamaš, the horizontal lines often match the poetic structure, meaning that parallelisms are consistently marked through rulings. However, there are also cases where parallel lines, which clearly belong together, are disrupted by rulings.

The lack of correspondence between the poetic sense and the representation of couplets on the tablet is a common occurrence in many texts, and is often considered a scribal error.[79] Although, with Groneberg, one cannot rule out a "purely formalistic treatment of underlining" and a "secondary visual poetic 'preparation' for the written text",[80] in some cases irregular lines provide clues to the history of the text, as in the manuscripts of the Hymn to Ištar Queen of Nippur (see above).

In this respect, the Great Hymn to Šamaš presents an interesting text-division in many of its ruled manuscripts.

4.1 The Great Hymn to Šamaš: Rulings and Couplets

This text provides a clear example of the use of parallelism in Akkadian poetry, as it is mostly composed of pairs of parallel lines. However, the hymn also presents some exceptions that make it sometimes difficult to decide how to divide the text, such as triplets, or pairs of lines that obviously belong to the same couplet, but are in fact separated by the horizontal rulings.[81] Indeed, in the first edition of the text, Lambert already noted that the rulings seem occasionally to be drawn mechanically, and do not agree with the parallel couplets.[82] These layout-irregularities are accompanied by a distinctive content: the composition begins with a very standard hymnic framework, but contains a long wisdom section in the middle, before ending on a hymnic note. Lambert postulated a "patchwork" composition process for the text due to its structure, akin to that proposed for the composition of the Hymn to the Queen of Nippur. According to Lambert, the Šamaš Hymn might have been composed in multiple stages, resulting in a mixture of different texts.[83]

Despite this, the text shows a general uniformity in its copies. Almost all library manuscripts preserving it are divided into couplets by rulings. It is worth pointing out that the division into couplets is also attested in the Assyrian school manuscripts of the hymn and in one school tablet from Sippar (BM 65461+)[84].

77 For pastiche in Akkadian literature, see Fadhil, Jiménez 2022, 256-7.

78 Lambert 1960a, 44.

79 Lambert 2013, 28; Hess 2015, 267, Groneberg 2003, 66.

80 Groneberg 2003, 66.

81 Lambert (1960b, 122) already noted these inconsistencies, mentioning as the most striking example of this mechanical division into couplets ll. 174-5: *ayyūtu ḫursānū (ša) lā litbušū šarūrūka | ayyātu kibrātu ša lā ištaḫḫanā namirta ṣētka*, "Which are the mountains that are not arrayed in your beams? | Which are the corners of the earth that are not warmed by the brightness of your rising?" (transl. by Foster *apud* Rozzi 2021). Other examples of improper division can be observed, for example, in ll. 176-7, which form a clear synonymous parallelism, and in ll. 182-3, which constitute a synthetic parallelism.

82 Lambert 1960b, 121-38. For the updated edition, see Rozzi 2021, where all the manuscripts here mentioned can be found. A new edition in print is in preparation and will be published by the author within the SAACT series.

83 Lambert 1960b, 122.

84 See George, Taniguchi 2019, no. 141 for the copy of BM 65461+.

Three school tablets from Assur preserve excerpts from the Great Hymn to Šamaš: VAT 10071, VAT 10756, and VAT 10174.[85] The first two contain lexical extracts, technical texts, and literary texts. Both VAT 10071 and VAT 10756 quote the same compositions, with the quotations of the extracts in VAT 10071 immediately preceding those in VAT 10756 in the original texts. VAT 10174 contains only excerpts from literary texts, including Marduk2.

These school tablets employ horizontal rulings to divide the different excerpts. VAT 10071 contains ll. 138-9 of the Great Hymn to Šamaš, while VAT 10756 contains ll. 140-1. Both library manuscripts, one from Nineveh (K.3182+) and the other from Sippar (IM 124633), that preserve this portion of the hymn feature a horizontal line between ll. 138 and 139 and between ll. 140 and 141. This indicates a different text structure than that shown in the Assur school tablets. However, upon reading the text, it becomes clear that the division into couplets as presented in the school fragments is more logical. If indeed we consider the preserved lines on the two school tablets as distichs, the passage of ll. 138-41 would be divided as follows:

Great Hymn to Šamaš, 138-41:

138 *šamaš imaḫḫarka alaktu ētiqu puluḫti*

139 *tamkāru allāku samallû nāš kīsi*

---

140 *šamaš imaḫḫarka bā'iru* (*ina*) *katimti*

141 *ṣayyādu māḫiṣu muterru būli*

138 Šamaš, there turns to you the caravan passing through danger,

139 The travelling merchant, the agent carrying (his) purse.

---

140 Šamaš, there turns to you the fisherman with his net,

141 The hunter, the beater, the one who drives the game.[86]

The repetition of identical words at the beginning of ll. 138 and 140 (*šamaš imaḫḫarka*) may suggest that this was the original structure of the text. However, in the Assur school texts, the practice of quoting together lines that belong to diverse sections in the standard versions of the cited texts was widespread. This practice was likely intended to improve learning, as it required a greater effort to recall the broader context.[87] Thus, it is highly probable that the scribes of VAT 10756 and VAT 10071 were neither copying from a manuscript of the hymn with a different layout than that of the manuscripts from Nineveh, nor independently reinterpreting the text. Rather, the scribal exercise likely involved copying lines belonging to two different couplets. It is thus impossible to verify whether the textual structure found in the two Assur school fragments mirrors an earlier and perhaps more accurate form of the hymn, although it cannot be entirely ruled out either.

The school fragment VAT 10174, which preserves ll. 143-54 of the hymn, also exhibits a division into couplets. However, unlike the other two school tablets mentioned earlier, the division here follows that attested in the library manuscripts (three manuscripts from Nineveh: K.3182+, K.3474+ – indirectly joined to K.3650 – and K.20637; four from Sippar: BM 65472+, BM 74197, IM 124633 and Si 15+). Moreover, the couplets in this school fragment are presented differently compared to the others school manuscript from Assur. The scribe of VAT 10174 copied two lines on the same line of the tablet, marking the division between them with a *Trennkeil* and tracing a horizontal ruling. As observed by Zimmern,[88] the *Trennkeil* is normally used to divide lines that semantically form a distich.

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85 For the edition of these fragments, see al-Magasees and Manasterska, no. 29, *apud* Maul, Manasterska 2023 (VAT 10071); Kikuchi *apud* Maul, Manasterska 2023, no. 30 (VAT 10756); Koubková and Maul *apud* Maul, Manasterska 2023, no. 33 (VAT 10174).

86 Rozzi 2021.

87 Maul, Manasterska 2023, 22.

88 Zimmern 1896, 88.

Interestingly, the excerpt from Marduk2 in the same fragment shows a division into couplets as well, but this is not the case in the other literary excerpts preserved in the same tablet, namely a hymn praising Babylon[89] and the Epic of Erra. Neither of these two excerpts shows rulings. In fact, the library copies of Erra do not have rulings, and accordingly, the extract on the school tablet is also unruled.[90]

The Sippar school manuscript of the Hymn to Šamaš (BM 65461+) is a 2a-type tablet, according to Gesche's classification, as it preserves excerpts from literary and lexical texts.[91] On the obverse, BM 65461 contains ll. 163-71 of the Great Hymn to Šamaš, followed by *Enūma eliš* III, ll. 64-72. On the reverse, the manuscript shows an excerpt from Ura = *ḫubullu*.[92] Similarly to the case of VAT 10174, BM 65461+ features horizontal rulings every two lines, but only in the portion of the tablet containing the excerpt from the Hymn to Šamaš. The division into couplets in this section precisely matches that found in the library manuscripts that preserve the same lines of the hymn (e.g. K.3474+(+)K.3650: lines 163-70; K.3182+: lines 163-5 and 169-71; Si 15+: lines 168-71; BM 74197: lines 169-71). However, after obv. l. 9', corresponding to line 171 of the hymn, the rulings on BM 65461+ stop abruptly. The final line of the excerpt is 'unpaired,' meaning it does not have the corresponding line it is usually paired with in library manuscripts, and remains isolated between the previous couplet and the beginning of the next excerpt. The following text, the excerpt from *Enūma eliš*, has no rulings. In this respect, it is worth noting that no known manuscript of *Enūma eliš* features a division into couplets.[93] In addition, there are no rulings on the reverse, which preserves the lexical excerpt.

Hence, the Babylonian school fragment BM 65461+ not only marks the parallel couplets in accordance with the division found in the library manuscripts, but also, like the Assyrian school manuscript VAT 10174, clearly distinguishes between the literary texts quoted, indicating which excerpt should be divided into couplets and which should not.

There are also other examples of this type of line division in two Babylonian school tablets from Sippar (also belonging to the 2a-type) preserving Marduk2.[94]

The use of rulings exclusively in the excerpts from the Šamaš Hymn and from Marduk2 in both Assyrian and Babylonian school tablets suggests that the convention of dividing these two texts into couplets was well known. These examples also highlight the close relationship between the graphic representation of a text and its form: the material characteristics of the school fragments probably reflect both paleographic conventions and the scribes' awareness of the poetic structure of the texts they copied and transmitted. Moreover, the fact that in BM 65461+ the last line quoted from the Great Hymn to Šamaš – l. 9' on the tablet, corresponding to l. 171 of the hymn – is left 'orphaned' and not copied together with its parallel line, probably reflects the same scribal practice observed in the Assur school tablets: that is, to combine in the same excerpts passages belonging to different portions of the standard text (see above). This provides further evidence supporting the hypothesis that the scribes were aware that the Great Hymn to Šamaš was structured into couplets. However, if parallel couplets were consistently represented through rulings in the manuscript tradition, how can we explain the occasional irregularities observed in library manuscripts, as well as the differences in the text-divisions both across the school fragments, and between the school fragments and the other manuscripts?

These irregularities include deviations from the expected layout, stanzas consisting of three lines instead of couplets, or lines that appear 'mismatched'. One possible explanation for this can be found in another text belonging to the *Great Hymns and Prayers*, namely the literary prayer to Marduk labelled by scholars as "Marduk1".

89 Publication Fadhil, Jiménez forthcoming.

90 Cf. Maul, Manasterska 2023, 119.

91 The 2a-type tablets were copied in the advanced stage of scribal education and are usually one-column. They comprise excerpts from literary texts and from lexical texts on the reverse or on the lower side of the obverse side. See Gesche 2001, 172-9.

92 George, Taniguchi 2019, 8.

93 Cf. the most recent edition of the text in Heinrich 2021.

94 See for instance BM 77118 (Gesche 2001, 646-7; Lambert 2013, plate 7) or BM 76640+ K.20949 (Oshima 2011, plate xix, Lambert 2013, plate 16; cf. Heinrich 2021). Both these fragments comprise several lines from Marduk2 and a passage of *Enūma eliš*: also in these cases, the excerpt from Marduk2 is divided into couplets, while the excerpt from *Enūma eliš* shows no rulings at all.

4.2 Marduk1: Paratext and Text Changing over Time

This literary Prayer to Marduk is the only one among the *Great Hymns and Prayers* to be preserved in an Old Babylonian manuscript, BM 78278,[95] as well as in first millennium copies.[96]

As in the Old Babylonian copies of the Nanaya- and Ištar of Ammīditāna-hymns, the stanzas in BM 78278 are also marked by horizontal rulings every four lines. The prayer displays 'lyrical repetition', which aligns with the division every four lines.

In addition, some late library copies of this prayer are divided into couplets, meaning a horizontal line is drawn every two lines. It appears evident, therefore, that the text was perceived as composed of sets of parallel lines as early as the Old Babylonian period, and then the scribal practice of dividing the text into couplets was retained in the later periods. The Old Babylonian manuscript contains a significant portion of the prayer, but not the complete text, so we cannot ascertain if there are substantial differences between the older version and the one that has come down to us from first millennium sources.

Nevertheless, the text layout in later manuscripts may suggest a change that occurred in the composition of the prayer.

Like the Great Hymn to Šamaš, many late manuscripts of Marduk1 exhibit an overall regular division into couplets. However, closer inspection reveals instances of irregular division. The structure of the text appears clear up to l. 60, and there is consistency even in the ruled manuscripts that preserve that portion of the prayer. There are three such manuscripts, BM 76492,[97] IM 124504+ IM 124566,[98] both from Sippar, and K.3158+,[99] all displaying rulings at the same places. Up to l. 60, the division into couplets corresponds to the meaning of the text, in which the 'lyrical repetition' interchanges with other types of parallelism (e.g. synonymous and antithetical). However, from l. 60, there is a clear break as an extra line is introduced.[100] Ll. 60-1 are very similar, which raises doubts about whether one of them was mistakenly inserted into the text. Indeed, at this point, the division into couplets no longer corresponds to the poetic sense and appears to be purely artificial. This is evident upon reading the following passage:

Marduk1, 53-65:

53 *bēlu attā-ma tukīl napištuš*
54 *ṭiṭṭiš(-ma) īteme itūru uppuššu*
55 *marduk attā-ma tukīl napištuš*
56 *ṭiṭṭiš(-ma) īteme itūru uppuššu*
57 *naplis-ma bēlu šūnuḫa aradka*
58 *lizīqa šārkā-ma zamar napširšu*
59 *lištapšiḫ šērtaka kabitta*
60 *rumme maksīšu lippuš surriš*
61 *rumme illurtašu puṭur maksīšu*
62 *ela mutim-ma qūl šitālšu*
63 *uggukka ay iššagiš gimil napšassu*
64 *marduk ana ardīka qūl šitālšu*
65 *uggukka ay iššagiš gimil napšassu*

53 O Lord! It is you who preserves his life,
54 (Of) him turned to clay, returned to his grave,
55 O Marduk! It is you who preserves his life,
56 (Of) him turned to clay, returned to his grave.
57 Regard, O Lord, your wearied servant!
58 Let your breath blow upon him, relent in an instant!

95 Oshima 2011, 137-8, cf. CT 44, n. 21 (Pinches 1963).

96 The only other composition within this corpus written on an Old Babylonian manuscript is the Great Anūna Prayer. However, this prayer was not preserved in any other manuscript, making it difficult to determine how widely known and copied it was in later centuries.

97 Oshima 2011, pl. I-II.

98 Fadhil, Jiménez 2019, 165-6.

99 Lambert 1960, pls XII-XV.

100 Fadhil, Jiménez 2019, 162.

[59]Soothe your heavy punishment!
[60]Loosen his shackles, that he breathe forthwith!
[61]Loosen his fetters, release his shackles!
[62]Heed the man, consider him!
[63]Lest in your rage he be slaughtered, spare his life!
[64]O Marduk! Heed your servant, consider him!
[65]Lest in your rage he be slaughtered, spare his life![101]

Line groups 53-6 and 62-5 clearly constitute two pairs of parallel distichs, featuring 'lyrical repetition'. Also ll. 57-8 likely form a couplet, as they are semantically very similar, and the same can be said of ll. 59 and 60. However, the structure becomes unclear at l. 61, which suspiciously resembles l. 60. Therefore, as convincingly noted by Fadhil, Jiménez,[102] it can be suggested that either l. 60 or l. 61 is an 'extra' line.

This hypothesis can be supported by the fact that the Old Babylonian copy of the prayer, BM 78278, features horizontal lines where one would expect them. Indeed, although the manuscript is partially damaged and only preserves the text from l. 64 onwards, it maintains the unity of the stanza formed by ll. 62-5, showing the horizontal ruling after l. 65. In contrast, all later manuscripts break the stanza, exhibiting the line division at l. 64.

The presence of horizontal rulings between ll. 60 and 61 in all three first millennium manuscripts suggests a possible corruption of the text during transmission, as it disrupts the previously consistent couplet structure. Hence, the extra line may serve as a clue for the history of the composition of the prayer.

This could also clarify comparable inconsistencies in the Great Hymn to Šamaš. Rulings that appear to be traced in the wrong place may, in fact, be the result of progressive changes in the text, supporting Lambert's hypothesis of a 'patchwork' composition. Moreover, the Great Hymn to Šamaš also contains lines that seem to be superfluous repetitions and compromise the overall structure and coherence of the text. For example, l. 109, which is an identical repetition of l. 104, and l. 159.[103] Both lines in question appear similarly misplaced, not fitting within their current context. It cannot be ruled out, therefore, that although we lack an Old-Babylonian manuscript of the Hymn to Šamaš to confirm these hypotheses, 'extra' lines may have been added to this hymn as well, causing a 'shift' in the division into couplets.

In sum, it is possible that the texts of the Šamaš Hymn and Marduk1 – although the latter probably to a lesser extent – underwent multiple stages of composition and modification before reaching their current form.

5 Conclusion

Materiality is a fundamental aspect of the study of cuneiform sources. It aids in determining text types, identifying provenance and dating, and can provide valuable insights into the composition of the texts. The material features found in Akkadian literary compositions, such as shape, fabric, and paratexts are diverse in nature. While not always consistent and homogeneous, they are often closely related to the poetry of the text itself. Manuscripts of Akkadian hymns and prayers frequently exhibit paratexts, both visual (such as metrical caesuras and horizontal rulings) and textual (such as colophons, rubrics, subscripts, and catch lines). The most distinctive paratext in Akkadian hymns, and the most striking material feature overall, is the division into stanzas or couplets through horizontal rulings.

This scribal practice is used especially in the corpus of literary compositions known as the Great Hymns and Prayers. In particular, horizontal rulings are found in the manuscripts of the Great Hymn to Šamaš, Marduk1, Marduk2, the Great Anūna Prayer and the Great Prayer to Nabû. Many library manuscripts preserving these texts display this form of layout. In addition, the division into couplets is also attested in several school manuscripts, both Assyrian and Babylonian.

The fact that in some Assyrian school manuscripts as well as in a few 2a-type Babylonian tablets the excerpts taken from the Great Hymn to Šamaš and Marduk2 are ruled, while excerpts from other literary texts are not, suggests that scribes in the advanced school curriculum were likely taught that these texts should be divided into couplets. It is thus possible that this type of visual paratext was un-

101 Fadhil, Jiménez 2019, 162, 165.
102 Fadhil, Jimémez 2019, 162.
103 This was already noted by Lambert 1960a, 123.

derstood to be a typical feature of the *Great Hymns and Prayers*, or at least of some of them. Hence, this can be considered an example of a paratextual aspect that is indicative of, or at least closely connected to, a textual genre.

In most cases, the horizontal rulings in the manuscripts of the Great Hymn to Šamaš, Marduk1, and Marduk2 are drawn at the same positions. However, examining instances where discrepancies appear across the manuscript tradition, or where there is incongruence between the rulings and the poetic text (as, for example, in the first millennium manuscripts of Marduk1, especially when one compares them with the Old Babylonian witness of the text), enables us to hypothesise about potential alterations or errors in the textual tradition.

This sheds light on the complexities of manuscript transmission and the evolution of literary compositions over time, including the possibility of changes being introduced to the original texts.

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Apprenticeship and the Materiality of Texts in Uruk during the Late Achaemenid and Hellenistic Periods

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Abstract This article explores the materiality of texts related to apprenticeship in Uruk during the Late Achaemenid and Hellenistic periods, focusing on the training of pupils and 'small healer' (*āšipu ṣeḫru*) in the Ue XVIII sector. The collections of texts discovered in this area belonged to two families of healers (*āšipu*). They are particularly valuable because they are among the few scholarly collections from this period that have been excavated with sufficient scientific rigour. The study also examines how the cultural transformations of Babylonian scholarship during this time impacted both the apprenticeship and the practices of the healers.

Keywords Babylonian culture. Materiality of writing. Education. Uruk. Achaemenid period. Hellenistic period.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 A Short History of the Houses of the Healers (*āšipu*) in the Ue XVIII Sector. – 2.1 The House of the Šangi-Ninurta Family. – 2.2 The House of the Ekur-zakir Family. – 3 The Education of Pupils and 'Small Healers' (*āšipu ṣeḫru*) in Ue XVIII. – 3.1 Forming Tablets. – 3.2 Learning to Write, Read and Organise Cuneiform on Tablets. – 3.3 Transition from Students to Scholars. –4 Conclusion.

1 Introduction

The making of a clay tablet and the ways of organising the text on it constituted a part of the training of future scribes. However, it is difficult to reconstruct how pupils learned to shape clay in the first millennium BCE, as no theoretical texts have been found that explicitly explain how to do it.[1] Nevertheless, indirect insights can be gleaned on the basis of school texts, some of which originated from collections belonging to scholarly families. A rare example of this is the discovery in Uruk of approximately four hundred tablets in at least two private houses,[2] inhabited from the Achaemenid to the Hellenistic periods by the descendants of Šangi-Ninurta and later by the Ekur-zakir family, whose members were healers.[3] In this article, I aim to underline the significance of these for reconstructing the curriculum of pupils and apprentice healers from the fifth to the third century BCE. I will consider the features that help identify different stages of learning: from the shaping of a tablet to the copying or writing of a work of reference intended for the collection of the student's teacher.

I would like to thank P. Clancier, T. Mitto and S. Manasterska for their kind assistance in polishing my English and revising this paper. Further thanks are due to the *eBL* team for granting me access to the photographs of the tablets from sector Ue XVIII. Needless to say, any remaining errors are my own.

1 Some scribes of the first millennium BCE mentioned the location from which they obtained the clay used for their tablets in colophons (see Maul 1998 and Gesche 2001, 154-5), but do not explain how they learned to produce a clay tablet. Only one school text from the Old-Babylonian period describes this process, see Civil 1998.

2 See for the texts and their division in genre: Hunger 1976; von Weiher 1982, 1988, 1993, 1998; Clancier 2009, 387-405. On the question of the presence of tablets from the descendants of Gimil-Sîn and Gimil-Nanāya in Ue XVIII, see Gabbay, Jiménez 2019.

3 My paper follows the translation of *āšipu* by 'healer' given by Maul 2019, 26 fn. 3 and Frahm 2020.

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2 A Short History of the Houses of the Healers (*āšipu*) in the Ue XVIII Sector

The site of Uruk in antiquity was located on the right bank of the Euphrates. Today, it is situated about 20 km north of the river. In the southeast part of the city, the German archaeological mission carried out several campaigns between 1969 and 1972 in a sector designated as Ue XVIII **[fig. 1]**.[4] Artefacts excavated there suggest that this was the location of a house where at least two different families lived between the fifth and the end of the third century BCE. The peculiarity of these households was that the members of both families practised the profession of a healer (*āšipu*).

2.1 The House of the Šangi-Ninurta Family

The analysis of the level where the tablets were found, along with the colophons of these tablets, leads to the conclusion that the Šangi-Ninurta family lived in the house of the fourth level of the Ue XVIII area.[5] For the most part, this level was excavated during the thirtieth German campaign.[6] Numerous tablets were discovered on the floor and in the fill of the level.[7] In room 4, there were several jars containing tablets. Thirty-two of the tablets found there were completed or almost completed, with numerous mathematical texts deposited in jars together with at least 23 contracts.[8] According to archaeological reports, the jars may have been treated with bitumen to make them waterproof – likely to protect the tablets stored inside.[9] Around 131 of the total of the excavated tablets belong to the Šangi-Ninurta family.[10] The main individuals attested in these tablets are Šamaš-iddin, descendant of Šangi-Ninurta, and his two sons Anu-ikṣur and Rīmūt-Anu **[fig. 2]**.[11] The last individual attested is Anu-ikṣur's son: Anu-ušallim.[12] The colophons do not mention any affiliation with a temple. Nevertheless, Anu-ikṣur several times expressed his devotion to Anu and Antu, also using rare spellings to write their names.[13] Šamaš-iddin, Rīmūt-Anu and Anu-ikṣur bore the title of healer (*āšipu*), or 'small healer' (*āšipu ṣeḫru*).[14]

Anu-ikṣur, well-attested in the assemblage as a scribe of tablets for his father and as a supervisor during his own son's apprenticeship, appears in colophons at various stages of his career **[tab. 1]**:

1. he holds the title of *āšipu agašgû* as the copist of a tablet for his father, whom Anu-ikṣur names twice an 'small healer' (*āšipu ṣeḫru*);[15]
2. he is himself referred to as an 'small healer' (*āšipu ṣeḫru*), once in a tablet written by his son;[16]
3. he later appears with the title of (fully educated) healer (*āšipu*) **[tab. 1]**.

4 Schmidt 1979; Sack 1979, 48-50; Kose 1998, 374-80; Pedersén 1998, 207; Clancier 2009, 30-1.

5 von Weiher 1979, 95; Pedersén 1998, 212; Clancier 2009, 32-3; 2024, 285-7.

6 Sack 1979, 49-50.

7 Sack 1979, 49-50; von Weiher 1979, 95.

8 Sack 1979, 49; von Weiher 1979, 95.

9 Sack 1979, 49. The jars may habe been reused to store the tablets, and the bitumen insulation may have originated from their initial context of use.

10 Clancier 2009, 406.

11 For these individuals, see Robson 2008, 227-30; Clancier 2009, 51-2, 58-9; Frahm 2011, 290-1; Robson 2019, 25, 229-32, 237-8.

12 For his father Anu-ikṣur, Anu-ušallim wrote the tablets *SpTU* 5 242, *SpTU* 3 90 and *SpTU* 4 151.

13 See the colophons of *SpTU* 2 8, *SpTU* 1 56 and *SpTU* 3 98.

14 Only Šamaš-iddin, Anu-ikṣur and Anu-ušallim bear this title. Nevertheless, Rēmūt-Anu specifies that he wrote some tablets for his apprenticeship, see for example *SpTU* 4, 174.

15 This title of *agašgu* appears elsewhere in colophons of Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian tablets, see for example the colophon of *BAM* 1 (Hunger 1968 no. 234), the Neo-Assyrian tablet is written by Nabû-lē'i, an *asû agašgû*. For Neo-Babylonian examples, see the colophons of Emesal excerpts, UET 6/2 204, written by Nabû-šum-ēṭir, *šamallû kalû agašgû* and, the tablet published by Starr and Al-Rawi 1999, written by Šamaš-ēṭir, descendant of the Šangi-Sippar family, *šamallû bārû agašgû*. It is difficult to say if this term describes another status than that of *āšipu ṣeḫru*. Indeed, the lexical lists *malku* = *šarru* (I 140ff) presents the word *agašgû* as a synonym of *ṣeḫru*. However, in the colophon of *SpTU* 3 69 written by Anu-ikṣur for his father Šamaš-iddin, Anu-ikṣur bears the title of *āšipu agašgū* and his father of *āšipu ṣeḫru* (in a broken context), which could suggest that at least here they are not equivalent. In the tablet *SpTU* 1 26+ both Šamaš-iddin and Anu-ikṣur are presented as 'small healers' (*āšipu ṣeḫru*).

16 Anu-ušallim wrote the tablet *SpTU* 3 90 for his father. He mentions his father, Anu-ikṣur, as *āšipu ṣeḫru* and refers to himself just as 'his son'.

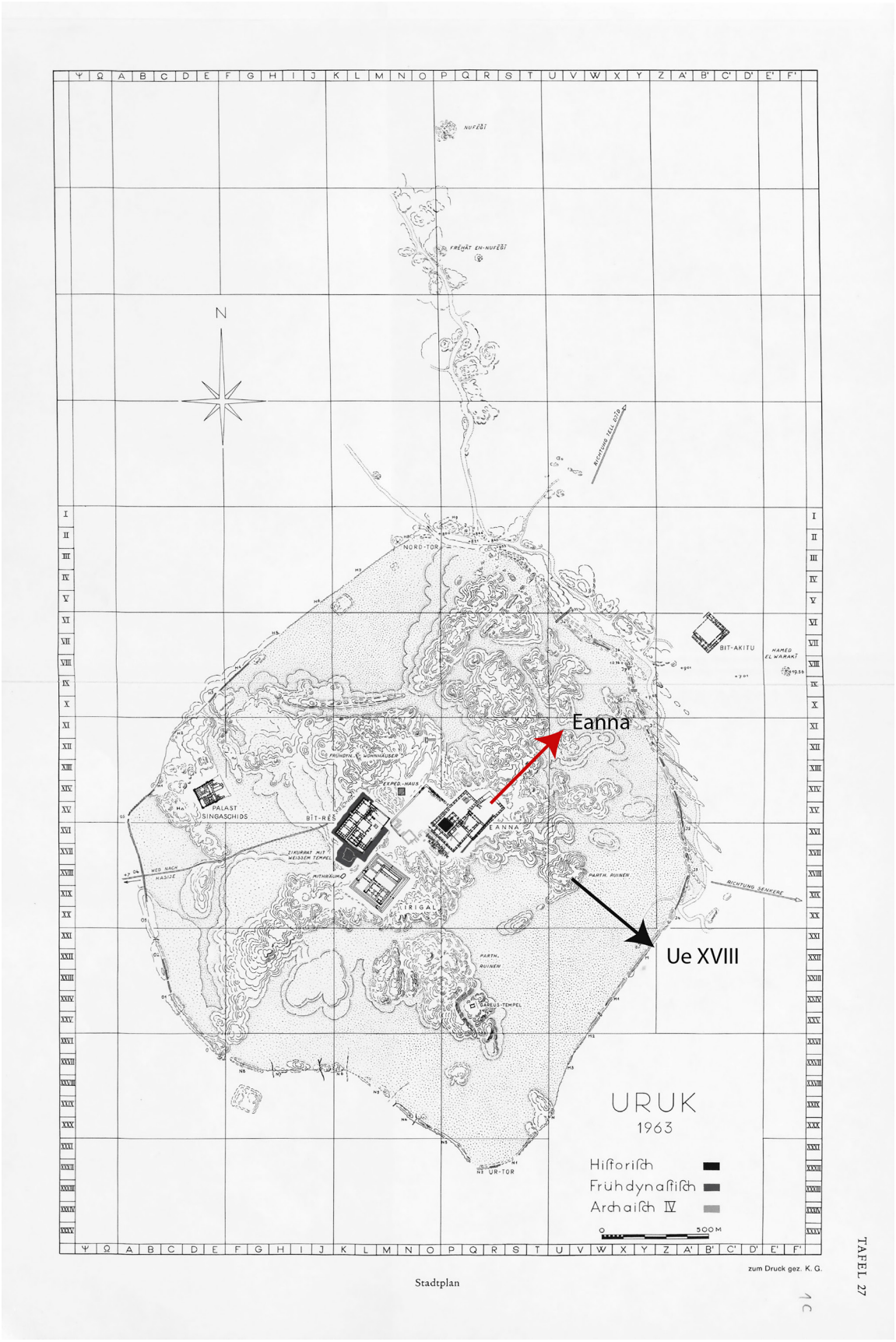


Figure 1
Plan of the city of Uruk with the localisation of Ue XVIII from Lenzen 1965, pl.27

The colophons reflect the prolonged use of the title *āšipu ṣeḫru*, which likely indicates that this title referred to a specific hierarchical rank rather than the status of a student.[17] However, this hypothesis must be approached with caution due to the exceptional use of these titles by the members of the Šangi-Ninurta family.

Table 1 The different stages of Anu-ikṣur's career

Title	Tablets
āšipu agašgû	*SpTU* 3 69
āšipu ṣeḫru	*SpTU* 1 126+; *SpTU* 1 33; *SpTU* 1 38; *SpTU* 1 50; *SpTU* 1 49; *SpTU* 3 90
āšipu	*SpTU* 1 31; *SpTU* 1 45; *SpTU* 1 47; *SpTU* 1 51; *SpTU* 1 56; *SpTU* 2 8; *SpTU* 5 241; *SpTU* 1 83

Although the members of the Šangi-Ninurta family did not bear any title showing an institutional affiliation, the colophons of their tablets show twice that they nonetheless had access to the collection of the Eanna temple. The colophons of two excerpts of the series *bīt rimki*, *SpTU* 4 127 and *SpTU* 3 66, specify that Šamaš-iddin copied them from a writing-board belonging to the Eanna temple.[18]

Only one literary tablet includes a date.[19] Rīmūt-Anu wrote it during the reign of 'Darius' (⸢¹*da-ri-ia-a-muš*⸣, probably Darius II, i.e. 423-405 BCE).[20] The house was occupied by the family in the second half of the Achaemenid period: around 445-330 BCE, if we take into account the dates of the contracts found in the house.[21] Parthian graves disrupted the site, causing a partial mix-up among the artefacts of levels II, III and IV, which makes it challenging to sort the tablets belonging to different assemblages if they do not have a colophon.

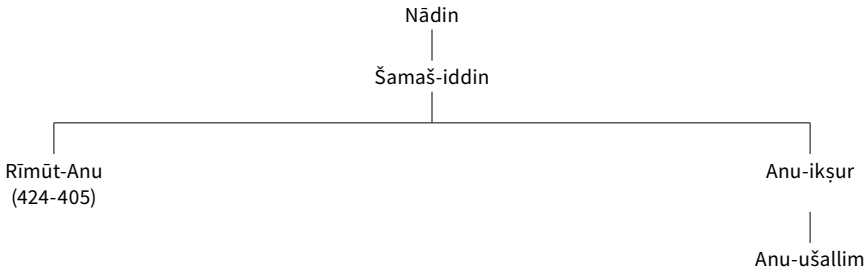


Figure 2 Family tree of the Šangi-Ninurta family

2.2 The House of the Ekur-zakir Family

About 157 tablets from Ue XVIII, found mostly in level II, belonged to the Ekur-zakir family.[22] The family is well-attested in Uruk during the Neo-Babylonian period and some of its members held significant positions as temple scribes within the administrative structure of Eanna.[23]

In room 1 of level II, the excavation report of 1979 mentions the discovery of a niche in the northwest wall that was filled with tablets.[24] The tablets were baked and placed on top of each other. Unfortunately, there is no record of the exact arrangement of the tablets with regard to each other. Further research on the tablets kept in Baghdad would also have to confirm whether the baking of the tablets happened in a secondary context or whether it was carried out by the scribes who wrote them.

17 On the question of the age of the 'small' scribes, see Jiménez 2022, 23 and the cited literature.

18 *SpTU* 3 66, l.52, see also for this text Baragli 2022, 30. Both tablets seem to have been found together in a small room of the layer IV in UE XVIII/1.

19 *SpTU* 5 231.

20 Clancier 2009, 58-9.

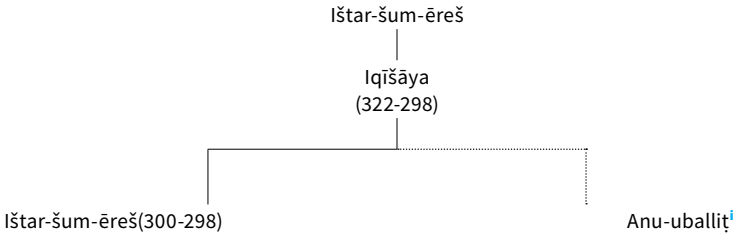
21 Oelsner 2001, 484-5; Hackl, Oelsner 2017, 75; Clancier 2024, 290-1, 296. Clancier 2009, 58-9 estimated that the house of the descendants of Šangi-Ninurta was inhabited between 445 and 385 BCE.

22 Clancier 2009, 406.

23 Kümmel 1979, 130, 156-7.

24 Hoh 1979, 30.

The most frequently attested individual of the collection of level II is Iqīšāya, son of Ištar-šum-ēreš **[fig. 4]**. Some of his tablets are dated to the end of the fourth century BCE (322-316).[25] In the colophons of literary and scholarly texts, he introduces himself as an *ērib bīti* of Anu and Antu and as a healer (*āšipu*).[26] Several tablets from his collection were written as a part of the scribal training of his son Ištar-šum-ēreš,[27] but also of a certain Anu-ab-uṣur, descendant of the Kurî family,[28] and maybe of Anu-ab-uṣur, descendant of the Gimil-Anu family.[29] Both the Kurî and Gimil-Anu families belonged to the traditional Urukean urban elite. Based on the contracts from the British Museum published by P. Corò,[30] Iqīšāya's son, Ištar-šum-ereš was involved in the network of prebend holders in the Rēš temple of Uruk. He wrote two prebend sale contracts in 300 BCE and 298 BCE for another branch of the Ekur-zakir family, which were witnessed by his father Iqīšaya.[31] Few of Iqīšāya's tablets are dated, however the dated tablets reveal that he acted as a healer from at least 322 BCE and lived until at least 298 BCE.[32] His last documented activity is his role as a witness in a prebend sale contract. If one follows the reading of the colophon of *TCL* 6 50 by K. Stevens, it is also possible that he had a second son named Anu-uballiṭ whose scholarly activities are known from the Rēš temple **[fig. 3]**. Furthermore, a tablet found in level II of Ue XVIII indicates that the descendants of Ekur-zakir still lived in the same house at the end of the third century BCE, long after the death of Iqīšāya.[33] The scribe of the scholarly text *SpTU* 2 33, Mannu-iqâp, also wrote prebend and allocation contracts for the staff of the Rēš temple.[34]



i Stevens 2013, no. 25, restores the broken colophon of *TCL* 6 50 to read 'Anu-uballiṭ' and proposes to recognises in the person a son of Iqīšāya. If her interpretation is correct, this tablet would have been at some point removed from the household of Iqīšaya/Anu-uballiṭ and taken to the Rēš temple.

Figure 3 Family tree of the Ekur-zakir family branch of Iqīšāya

25 The tablets *SpTU* 1 90, *SpTU* 2 38, *SpTU* 3 97, *SpTU* 4 162 and *RA* 12 are dated to the reign of Philip III Arrhideus (323-316).

26 For example, *SpTU* 1 94.

27 For example, *SpTU* 1 139, *SpTU* 2 6 and *SpTU* 4 147.

28 He is the scribe of the tablets *SpTU* 1 90, *SpTU* 2 44 and *SpTU* 4 162.

29 He may be the scribe of the tablet *SpTU* 4 150, r. ii 19': [...] ˹DUMU˺ ^{Id}60-ŠEŠ^{meš}-MU A ^{I}ŠU-60, and possibly the same person as the seller of the healer-prebend (*āšipūtu*) in the contract Corò 2018 no. 5.

30 Corò 2018. In both contracts Iqīšāya is the fifth witness of the transaction.

31 VDI 1955/4 no. 6 and Corò 2018 no. 2.

32 For the tablet dated see for example *SpTU* 1 90, *SpTU* 2 38, VDI 1955/4 no. 6 and Corò 2018 no. 2.

33 Mannu-iqâp, descendant of Ekur-zakir, wrote *SpTU* 2 33 around 211/210 BCE. According to E. von Weiher (1979, 102), the tablet was found in the second layer of Ue XVIII. Mannu-iqâp also wrote a hymn to Adad, *BiMes* 24 51, written in 111 S.E. (ca 201/200 BCE).

34 *YOS* 20 54 was written around 115 S.E. (197-196 BCE), and *BRM* 2 31 was written in 118 S.E. (in 194 BCE).

3 The Education of Pupils and 'Small Healers' (*āšipu ṣeḫru*) in Ue XVIII

3.1 Forming Tablets

A big part of the tablets found in Ue XVIII was the product of scribal training for pupils who studied Akkadian and Sumerian scholarly series in order to specialise in the art of the healer at a later stage.[35] Various phases of the school curriculum are evident in the assemblage, highlighting the domestic context of apprenticeship.

Although we can say with certainty that level IV was occupied by the descendants of Šangi-Ninurta and level II by the descendants of Ekur-zakir, it remains impossible to determine which family inhabited level III, as the level was significantly destroyed by a fire and subsequently disturbed by Parthian period burials.[36] To the south-west of Room 7 of the level III, a work surface covered with asphalt encircled by bricks was unearthed by the excavating team, who interpreted the installation as an area for processing clay before it was formed into tablets.[37] Around the surface were roughly formed, fine and dark clay lumps, pointed bone objects considered to be styluses, as well as unbaked anepigraphic tablets and tablets with only rulings drawn in preparation for writing.[38] According to the excavation reports, these finds were associated with the scribal activities undertaken in the healers' house. Although the bone objects may be linked to domestic activities in the house, the anepigraphic tablets and tablets with only rulings suggest that the pupils in the Ue XVIII sector may have already reached the stage of their education in which they were able to form their own tablets.[39] These finds provide intriguing evidence of the practice of preparing tablet layout prior to the writing process.

Additionally, the house of the healers also possessed ovens. In level II, remnants of a fireplace with a brick base were discovered in room 1, and a *tannūr*-oven was excavated in room 3.[40] The proximity of ovens to the pre-made tablets was interpreted by the excavators as a possible indication that they may have been used for tablet-baking.[41] However, similar to the bone objects, the possibility of a domestic use cannot be ruled out.[42] A chemical analysis of the clay objects from Ue XVIII in the future would confirm the practice of firing tablets in this private context.

3.2 Learning to Write, Read and Organise Cuneiform on Tablets

The assemblage from the houses of the healers provides insights into how scribal students familiarised themselves with holding the stylus, writing the basic elements of signs in cuneiform script, and how they progressed to memorising actual signs. Two notable examples are the tablets *SpTU* 5 276 and *SpTU* 5 277 **[fig. 4]**. The context of their discovery suggests that they were produced at the level occupied by the Ekur-zakir family.[43]

35 Clancier 2009, 81-5.

36 See Clancier 2024, 290.

37 Hoh 1979, 28-9.

38 Hoh 1979, 28, 30.

39 On the process of learning to shape clay into tablets, see Taylor 2011 and Taylor, Cartwright 2011; Maul, Manasterska 2023, 7-9. See also Charpin 2008, 98-100; Taylor 2011, 7, with literature on anepigraphic tablets.

40 Hoh 1979, 29.

41 Hoh 1979, 30.

42 See also Charpin 2008, 98-9 and the relevant literature for the bone styli found in the house of Ur-Utu in Sippar during the Old-Babylonian period.

43 Clancier 2009, 400.

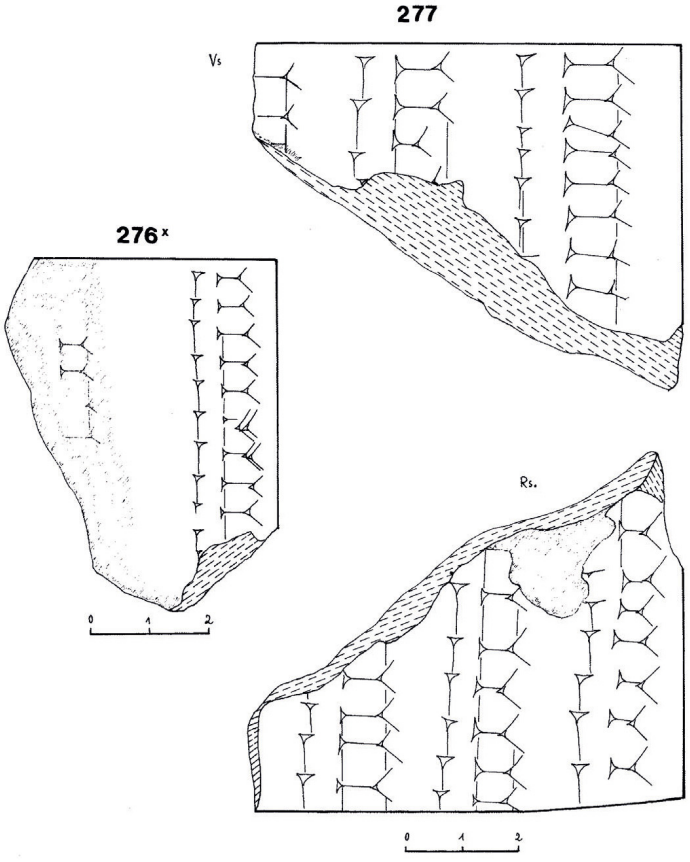


Figure 4
SpTU 5 276, 277 copied by von Weiher 1998

First, a pupil traced fine columns on the surface of a rectangular tablet, after which he progressed to write signs, or more specifically, basic elements of signs in these columns. In the two tablets mentioned above, the student wrote the signs DIŠ and BAD, which enabled him to practice writing the most basic forms of cuneiform: the vertical, the horizontal and the oblique wedges. This exercise, attested already during the Kassite period, also helped develop the basic motor skills necessary to manipulate a stylus in the desired manner.[44]

During the initial stages of the curriculum, beginners copied Syllabary A (S^a), Syllabary B (S^b) and Vocabulary S^b to learn the form of logograms, their syllabic values, and their Akkadian translation. Several such exercises were excavated in the section Ue XVIII.[45] The study of these lists comprised the first part of the curriculum (written on tablets of Type 1 in Gesche's terminology).[46] It was common practice for the pupils only to write on their tablet the signs, without explicitly indicating their names or pronunciations.[47] Furthermore, several manuscripts from the collections of Ue XVIII contained the same entries of the Syllabary A.[48]

44 For the Kassite attestations, see Bartelmus 2016, 126-7. For other parallels from the Neo-Babylonian and Late-Babylonian periods, see Gesche 2001, 58-60.

45 *SpTU* 1 103-4, *SpTU* 1 106-9 and *SpTU* 1 111 must have belonged to the Ekur-zakir family. *SpTU* 4 199, *SpTU* 4 213 and *SpTU* 5 280 must have belonged to the Šangi-Ninurta level of occupation. For most of the texts, it is difficult to know to which family/level they belonged. They were mostly discovered in the third layer (*SpTU* 1 105, *SpTU* 1 110, *SpTU* 1 112-16, *SpTU* 4 196-8, *SpTU* 4 200-11, 217, *SpTU* 5 281-2). On the importance of these series in the curriculum of pupils in Mesopotamia, see Veldhuis 2014.

46 Gesche 2001, 44-48.

47 Except for *SpTU* 1 112-16, *SpTU* 4 198, and *SpTU* 4 200, which also contain the name and pronunciation of the signs.

48 The Syllabary A entries 1-43, 69-106, 207-21, 281-4 and 333-51 are copied in tablets found in Ue XVIII.

Two manuscripts of the Syllabary B with monumental cuneiform signs and Neo-Babylonian forms come from the Ue XVIII area (*SpTU* 4 212 and 216) **[fig. 5]**.[49] The learning of archaising cuneiform signs began relatively early in the curriculum and this was likely followed in the house of the healers in Uruk.[50] The skill to write archaising form of cuneiform signs enabled future scholars to read inscriptions or older texts found during construction or renovation work or to produce texts in a monumental cuneiform style.[51] It is impossible to say to which of the collection these tablet belonged, that of the Šangi-Ninurta or of the Ekur-zakir family.[52]

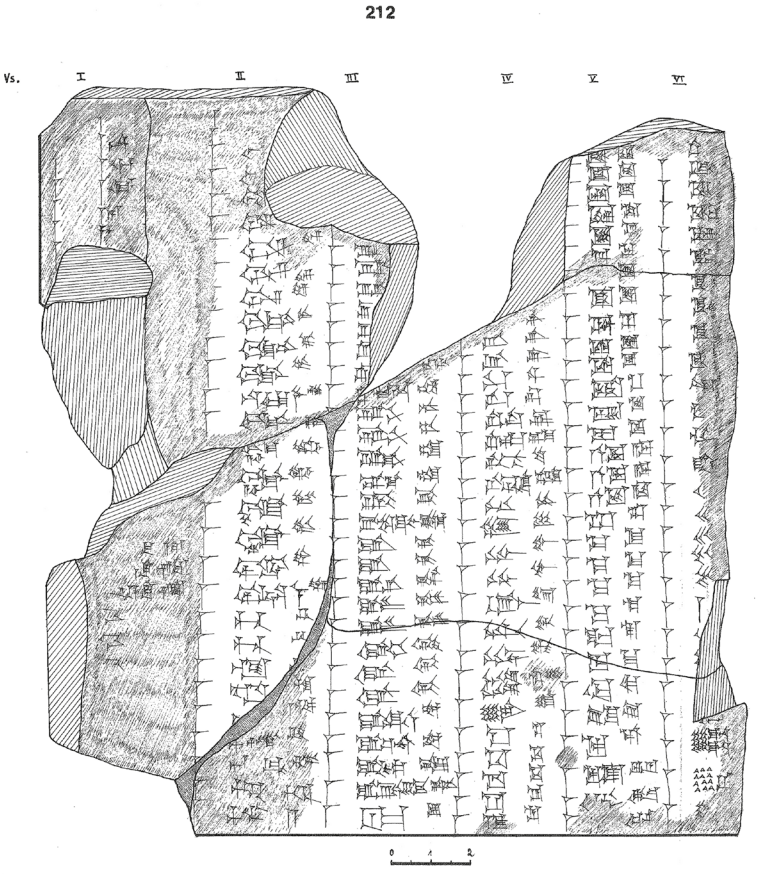


Figure 5
SpTU 4 212 (obverse) copy by von Weiher 1993

49 von Weiher 1993 and *MSL* III. Roche-Hawley 2024, 25 dated these tablets to the Seleucid or Parthian period. Nevertheless, archaeologically, they belong to Achaemenid or Seleucid contexts, see the presentation of the Ue XVIII sector at the beginning of this article.

50 Gesche 2001, 72-4.

51 For Monumental Cuneiform, see Harper 1904; Borger 1978, 5-35; 2004, 624-92; Maul 2012; Cancik-Kirschbaum, Chambon 2014, 15-16; Cancik-Kirschbaum, Kahl 2018, 256-61, Roche-Hawley 2024.

52 Clancier 2009, 398.

The tablets from the Ue XVIII sector also provide intriguing insights into how students learned to estimate how many lines they could fit on a clay tablet and how they practised considering spatial relations between the signs in order to accommodate their entire planned text in the available space.[53] The tablet *SpTU* 3 108 helps to elucidate this process **[fig. 6]**.

This manuscript of Weidner's *God List* in the first-millennium Babylonia was an introductory exercise providing instruction in writing divine names since the Kassite period.[54] The traces of rulings on the obverse and reverse of this tablet **[fig. 6]** indicate that the pupil began by drawing rulings before writing the text. The number of lines and columns in the draft of the tablet did not necessarily correspond to the number of columns and lines required to accommodate the entire copied text, so the preparation of rulings likely constituted the initial part of the exercise.[55] Horizontal rulings were drawn during the writing process with the tip of the stylus, whereas vertical rulings could also be impressed into the surface of the tablet with a length of twisted yarn.[56]

Even experienced scribes, frequently encountered difficulties in accommodating all the lines of the original composition into their copy's format. *SpTU* 2 32, a 'non-canonical' (*aḫû*) tablet of *šumma ālu* copied by Iqīšāya, who bears the title of healer (*āšipu*) in the colophon, demonstrates this challenge **[fig. 7]**. Apparently, Iqīšāya spaced the signs on the first part of the obverse too widely (see the green lines in figure 8). In the second part of the observe and in the second part of the reverse of the tablet, he had to abandon this practice, instead attempting to fit as many lines as possible on the reverse (see the red lines in figure 8), and ultimately resigning himself to writing the colophon on the lower edge and keeping it brief. He noted that he did not finish copying the original and would have to transfer the remaining text to a second tablet. The original contained a lot of broken passages that the scribe marked in his copy with *ḫepi*-glosses.[57]

53 On this phenomenon during the Neo-Assyrian period, see Maul, Manasterska 2023, 9.

54 Bartelmus 2016, 290.

55 For the drawing of rulings on student exercises in the first millennium BCE, see Gesche 2001, 57 and 206; Maul, Manasterska 2023, 9-10.

56 See Maul, Manasterska 2023, 31.

57 Worthington 2012, 25-7.

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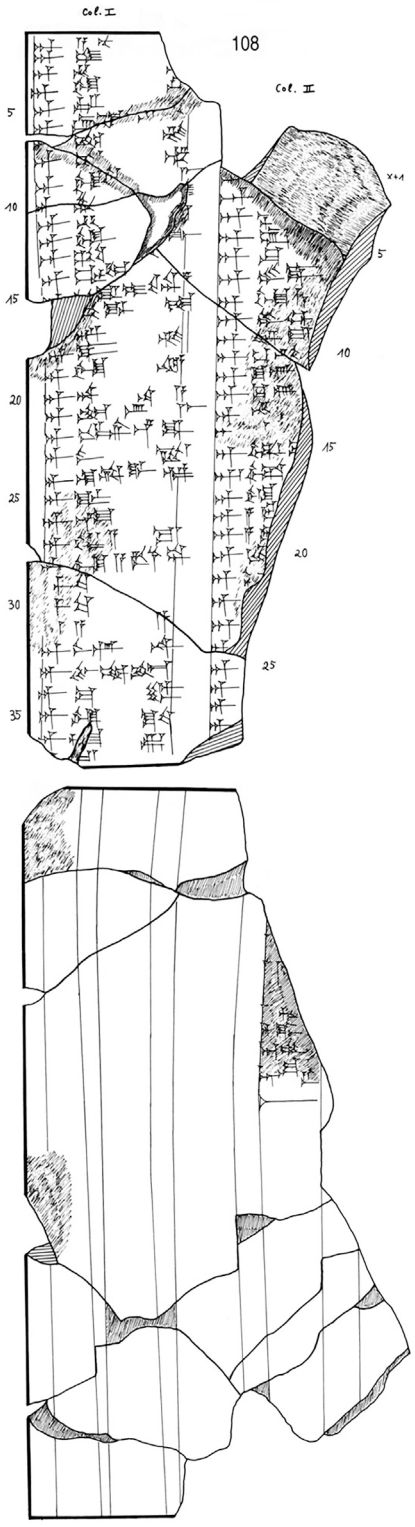

Figure 6 *SpTU* 3 108 copy by von Weiher 1988

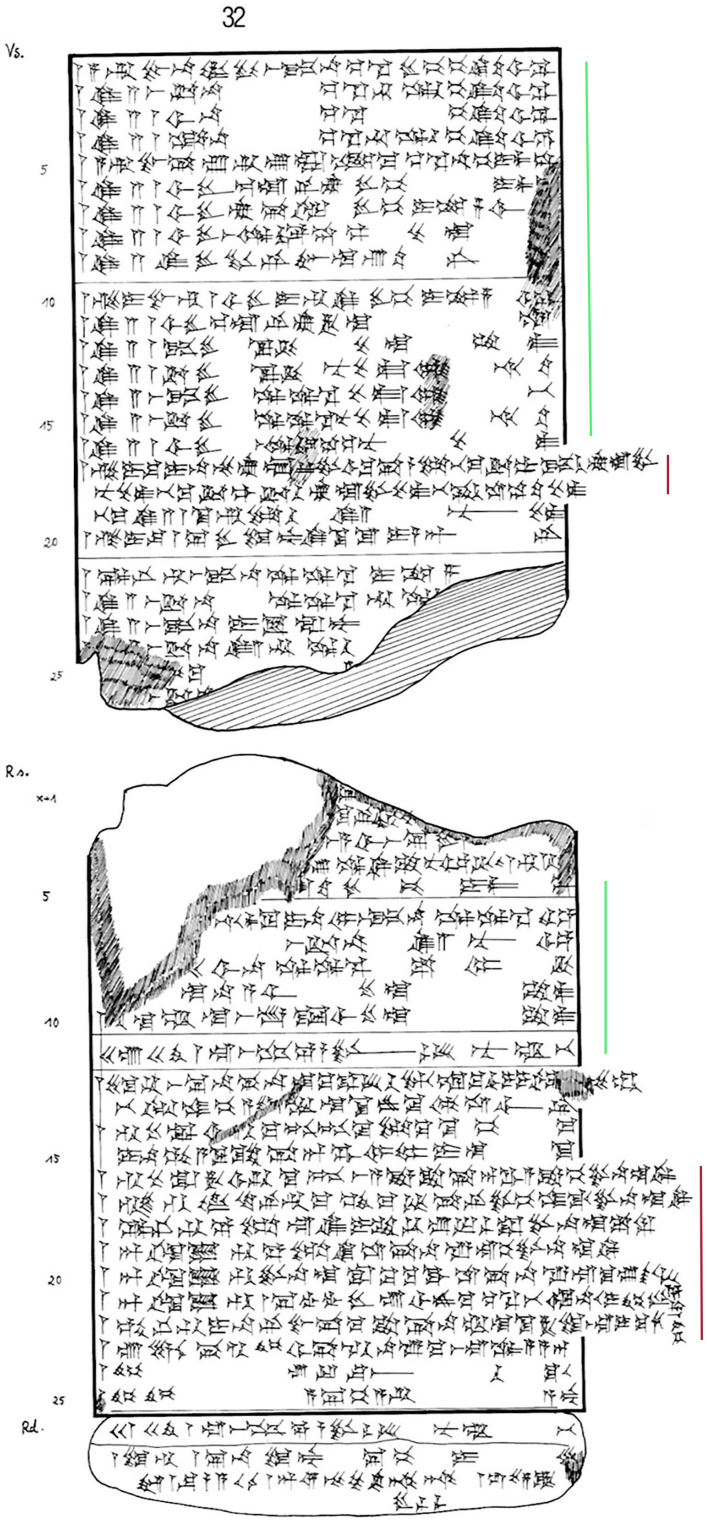

Figure 7 *SpTU* 2 32 copy by von Weiher 1982

The colophon of tablet *SpTU* 2 34 may explain why some scribes struggled to estimate the available writing space on their tablets. *SpTU* 2 34 is another instance of a 'non-canonical' (*aḫû*) tablet of *šumma ālu* copied by Iqīšāya **[fig. 8]**. In a part of *SpTU* 2 34, but also at the beginning of the obverse and of the reverse of *SpTU* 2 32, Iqīšāya did actually followed the procedure he learned during his scribal training: he aligned the text to the margins of the tablet and tried to avoid placing too few signs in the right half of the line.[58] After spacing his signs quite generously as well as leaving enough room between the protasis and apodosis of the omens separated in two quasi columns marked with the sign MIN in the middle of the obverse, Iqīšāya realised that he would not have enough space to accommodate the remaining text on the reverse unless he adjusted the spacing **[fig. 8]**. The signs on the reverse are much denser, and some of the lines end on the right edge of the tablet. In the colophon, Iqīšāya states that the original from which he copied was a writing-board from Nippur, and that he did not complete the copy.[59] The fact that the original was a writing-board may explain some of the difficulties this scribe faced in assessing the necessary space on a clay writing medium – without the panels that a writing board was likely to possess. *SpTU* 2 34 contained only the initial portion of the manuscript on the writing-board which Iqīšāya copied. The writing-board was probably designed to accommodate many more lines of the original composition than Iqīšāya's tablets.[60] As will become apparent, in many cases the authors of copies based on a writing-board manuscripts could solve the issues of space more efficiently. In any case, only eleven tablets found in Ue XVIII had colophons that indicate that their original source was a writing-board.[61] Various genres, including commentaries, are represented among these tablets. Only four of these copies exhibit any signs of the scribe's struggle to fit all the contents of the original in his tablet and the subsequent failure of planning to accommodate the text in the available space.[62]

One question that remains unanswered because of the lack of data is how and when pupils learned to apply the so-called 'firing holes' to the tablets.[63] This practice is well known in the Neo-Assyrian scholarly tradition, especially in the 'Libraries of Ashurbanipal'.[64] A certain continuity of scholarly practices existed between Nineveh and Uruk, due to the persistence of the Assyrian tradition in the southern city.[65] Nevertheless, only twenty tablets found in Ue XVIII contain 'firing holes'.[66] In two cases, the holes were clearly used to decorate a colophon. *SpTU* 2 6, containing Ardat-Lilî incantations, was written by Ištar-šum-ēreš for his father Iqīšāya, descendant of Ekur-zakir. *SpTU* 2 33 contains excerpts of *šumma ālu* and was written by Mannu-iqâp, also descendant of Ekur-zakir, at the end of the third century BCE.[67] In the colophon, he identifies himself as a healer and announces that he wrote the tablet for his father Nidinti-Anu.

Tablets with 'firing holes' from the houses of the healers encompass various genres (lexical, mathematical, divinatory, magical or historical), and their formats vary, with heights ranging between 7.8 cm[68] and 20 cm.[69] Further analysis of the tablets in Baghdad would be necessary to gain a better understanding of this phenomenon in the tablet collections of first-millennium BCE Uruk.[70]

58 On this phenomenon during the Neo-Assyrian period, see Maul, Manasterska 2023, 10.

59 *SpTU* 2 34, r. 27' and r. 29'.

60 For writing-boards, see the article of Cammarosano et al. 2019.

61 From the Šangi-Ninurta collection: *SpTU* 5 254, *BaM Beih.* 21, 483 and 545 (W.23291-x), *SpTU* 3 84, *SpTU* 1 56, *SpTU* 4 151, *SpTU* 3 66, *SpTU* 4 127. From the Ekur-zakir collection: *SpTU* 2 34, *SpTU* 3 85, *SpTU* 1 90, *SpTU* 4 162. While these tablets include explicit mentions of their originals, it cannot be ruled out that in some cases the mention of the original writing-board was simply omitted.

62 *SpTU* 2 34, *SpTU* 3 84, *SpTU* 3 85, *SpTU* 4 162.

63 On this name and on this topic, see Taylor 2011 and Corò, Ermidoro 2020 with cited literature.

64 For these multiple texts assemblages, see Robson 2019, 12-23.

65 On this topic, see especially Beaulieu 2010.

66 *SpTU* 2 2, *SpTU* 2 6, *SpTU* 2 8, *SpTU* 2 12, *SpTU* 2 13, *SpTU* 2 16, *SpTU* 2 33, *SpTU* 2 38, *SpTU* 2 46, *SpTU* 2 51, *SpTU* 3 58, *SpTU* 3 89, *SpTU* 3 91, *SpTU* 3 97, *SpTU* 3 119b + *SpTU* 4 191, *SpTU* 4 121, *SpTU* 4 127, *SpTU* 4 142, *SpTU* 4 176, *SpTU* 4 187. One tablet comes from Niniveh but was kept in Uruk: *SpTU* 2 46.

67 The colophon of *SpTU* 2 33 poses a problem: Mannu-iqâp introduces himself as A *šá* <<DIŠ>> DUMU-A.NI, 'the son of his son', but without naming his father. Pearce, Escobar 2018, 269 consider this to be a mistake and that Mannu-iqâp would be the son of Nidinti-Anu. If the identification is correct, he would be the identical with the scribe of the contracts *BRM* 2 31 and *YOS* 20 54, in which he presents himself as the son of Nidinti-Anu. See also Ossendrijver 2011, 217-20.

68 *SpTU* 2 33.

69 *SpTU* 3 119b.

70 Neither the excavation report nor the *SpTU* volumes indicate the thickness of the tablets.

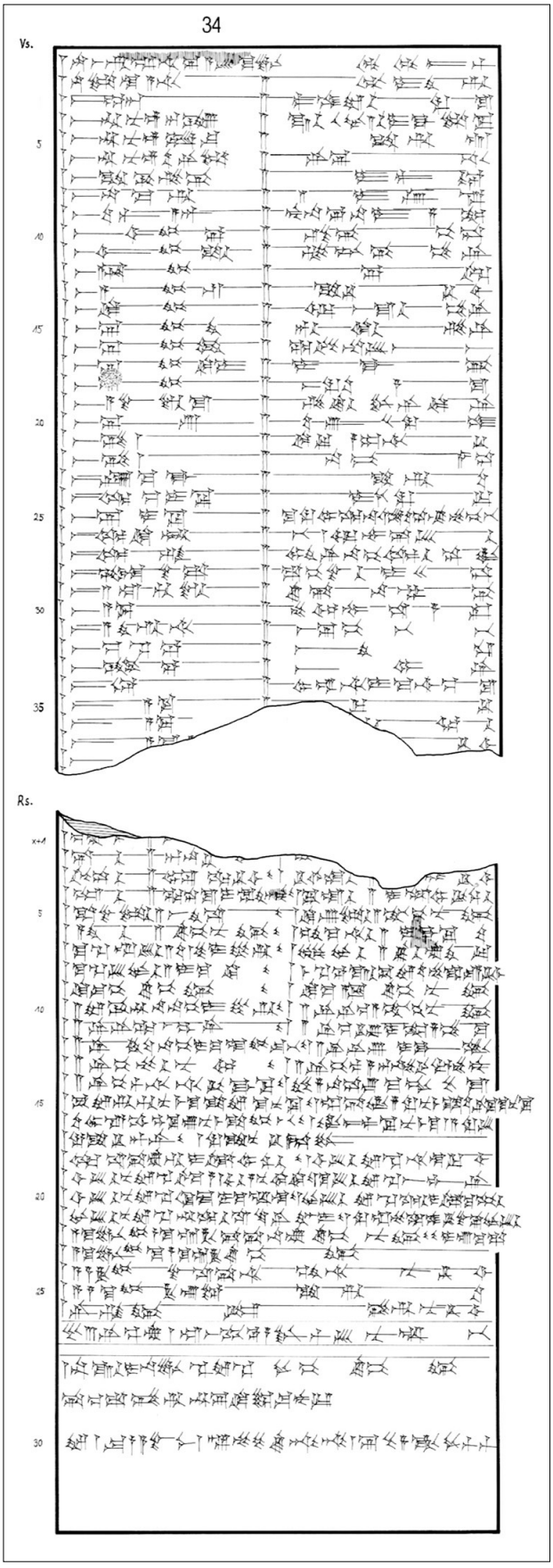

Figure 8
SpTU 2 34 copy by von Weiher 1982

3.3 Transition from Students to Scholars

Not only does the house of the healers in Uruk provide evidence of the initial stages of the school curriculum, but it also supplies exercises undertaken by advanced apprentices aiming to attain the status required for membership in the urban educated elite of Babylonian society. *SpTU* 4, 195 – discovered in Ue XVIII – contains a bilingual incantation against evil demons possibly originating from the second tablet of the sag̃-ba series (ll. 6-10) **[fig. 9]**.[71] The excerpts from these series may have been studied at the same phase as ur$_5$-ra = *ḫubullu* V. Indeed, the entries 47-56 from this lexical composition are written in the reverse of the tablet.[72] Excerpts from sag̃-ba II are also found alongside excerpts from ur$_5$-ra = *ḫubullu* V in the corpus of Neo-Babylonian school texts from Nippur.[73] Furthermore, school exercises with excerpts from both series were also found in Assur. There they seem to belong to the third stage of scribal curriculum, with the lexical excerpts copied before the literary ones.[74] In Babylonia, the series sag̃-ba and ur$_5$-ra = *ḫubullu* were often studied together with another incantation series, udug-ḫul.[75] Due to disturbances in the level in which *SpTU* 4, 195 was discovered, the attribution of this tablet to the collections of the Šangi-Ninurta or to the Ekur-zakir descendants proves a challenge.[76] In any case, it serves as an exemplary illustration of an exercise falling under type 2a, according to Gesche's classification, which represents the second phase of the pupil's curriculum.[77] It may have been the stage prior to copying complete tablets of scholarly series. Tablets of type 2a typically have a portrait format, are slender, and vary in size, with extracts from various lexical and literary series copied only once. They often end with a date, including the day and month. Completion of this second elementary phase signifies the attainment of familiarity with the ancient textual tradition.[78] Lexical lists consistently hold a central role among these exercises.

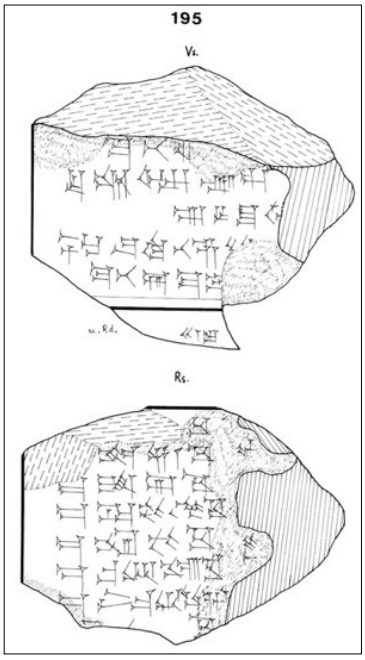

Figure 9
SpTU 4 195 copy by von Weiher 1993

71 *SpTU* 2 3 also contains an excerpt of sag̃-ba I, which was found in the layer II of Ue XVIII (see von Weiher 1979, 100).

72 The findspot of the fragment was "Ue XVIII 2, Schicht III, Füllschutt" (von Weiher 1979, 96).

73 See Jiménez 2022, no. 31 (ur$_5$-ra = *ḫubullu* V, VI and VII).

74 See Maul, Manasterska 2023, 12-20, Table 4, and the tablet no. 21 with an excerpt of sag̃-ba II and ur$_5$-ra = *ḫubullu* XVIII.

75 From Nippur, see for example CBS 8801 published by Veldhuis 2014, 411-13 and Jiménez 2022 no. 26 in which the excerpts of sag̃-ba I and II are followed by udug-ḫul X and ur$_5$-ra = *ḫubullu* VII and VIII. See BM 38657 and BM 33540 for other Neo-Babylonian school exercises with excerpts of sag̃-ba and ur$_5$-ra = *ḫubullu* (IV, V, VI). Gesche 2001, 809 offers more examples of school tablets in which excerpts of udug-ḫul, sag̃-ba and ur$_5$-ra = *ḫubullu* were learned together.

76 The tablet comes from "Ue XVIII 2, Schicht III, Füllschutt" (von Weiher 1979, 96). See about this context Clancier 2009, 398.

77 Gesche 2001, 50-2.

78 For another example, during the Neo-Assyrian Period see Maul, Manasterska 2023, 14. The tablets from Assur underlines that "es ging mehr darum, die zukünftigen Schriftgelehrten mit dem uralten Sprach- und Schrifterbe Mesopotamiens vertraut zu machen".

o. 1'	*ma-mit* ⌜*er*⌝-[*ṣe-ti ú-tam-mi-ka*]	
o. 2'	udug ḫul sil_x(EZENXA?)-lá [dalad ḫul sil_7-lá][79]	
o. 3'	*ú-tuk-ku le*[*m-nu dup-pir še-e-du lem-nu dup-pir*]	
o. 4'	saĝ-ba ki nu$^{!}$(BE)-un-t[e-a-ta$^{?}$ giš-ḫur nu-dib-ba][80]	
o. 5'	*ma-mit* e$^{!}$(É) *-ma* ⌜*i*⌝-[*ṭe-ḫu-u i-tu-šá ul in-né-ti-iq*][81]	
loE	^{itiʾ}KIN$^{!}$[82]	
r. 1'	[xxxx]⌜gigir⌝	[xxxxx]
r. 2'	[^{giš}]NE.x.(x)⌜gigir⌝	x [x x (x)][83]
r. 3'	^{giš}á-kár gigir	[*šikšu*]
r. 4'	^{giš}saĝ-kul$^{!}$-háš!-gigir	[*šikšu*]
r. 5'	^{giš}naĝ-kul-gigir	⌜*bu*⌝-[*bu-tu*$_4$]
r. 6'	^{giš}umbin gigir	⌜*ma*⌝-[*ga-ar-ru*]
r. 7'	^{giš}gag-umbin-g[igir	*sikkat magarri*]
r. 8'	⌜^{giš}⌝⌜gul⌝-⌜gigir⌝	[*ḫalmadru*]

Translation of the passage of saĝ-ba:

> o. 1' I have pronounced against you the curse of perjury on earth! o.2-3' Evil demon, disappear! [Evil spirit, begone!] The curse of perjury! Wherever it comes from,[84] [its borders cannot be crossed!]

It is conceivable that writing the excerpts of saĝ-ba and ur_5-ra = *ḫubullu* constituted two distinct exercises conducted during instruction, each with a different aim: to impart Sumerian and Akkadian vocabulary for objects of all kinds, as well as Sumerian and Akkadian verbal formulae, and to provide pupils with the basic knowledge of exorcism. The rationale behind these exercises likely involved oral transmission by the teacher, with the tablet serving as the tangible outcome of the instructions given.[85]

The presence of the school tablets in the houses of Urukean healers raises questions about their preservation and purpose. It was probably more common to throw them away after a finished exercise, unless they were recycled.[86] While reference work tablets copied by more experienced apprentices could be integrated into the collection of the teacher, it is not likely that the teacher frequently consulted school tablets.[87] If these texts were not part of a depot that was discarded, a possible reasons for their preservation could be their legal significance. It is likely that scholars, like other craftsmen, signed apprenticeship contracts with the families of apprentices outside of their own.[88] One can imagine that in certain cases, the preservation of the apprentices' tablets could serve as legal proof that their training had indeed taken place. It might partially explain why Iqīšāya retained tablets from the apprentices of the Kurî and Gimil-Anu families. Their tablets already represented the stage of copy-

79 The sign SIL_x looks like in BM 41016, o. 18': https://www.ebl.lmu.de/fragmentarium/BM.41016.

80 The scribe in this manuscript puts the Sumerian form in the negative: nu-un-te-a-[x], whereas the other manuscripts have an affirmative verb form: im-mi-in-te-a-ta (with the prefix i-) or mu-un-te-a-ta (with ventive), see Schramm 2001, 82, manuscripts A, A_3, A_4 et C_2. See also the parallel in the Neo-Babylonian school exercise BM 38657, o.1: saĝ-ba ki nu-te-a giš-ḫur$^{!}$(PÀR) nu-d[ib$^{?}$-ba$^{?}$]. May the existence of several Sumerian variants suggest that the aim of this particular lesson was for the pupils to translate the Akkadian version into Sumerian?

81 The other manuscripts have the sign E instead of É, see Schramm 2001, 82.

82 Or '21$^{?}$ UDU$^{?}$'. The passage should be collated. For an example of a school exercise with a date, see BM 38657 or BM 54197 (Gesche 2001, 382-3) and Jiménez 2022 no. 26 and 31.

83 erín (ZAB) and not erím (NE.RU) is expected here, see for example BM 33540, r. 3, another Neo-Babylonian school tablet with an excerpt of saĝ-ba I and several excerpts of ur_5-ra = *ḫubullu* (IV, V, VI). The visible remnants of the sign after NE do not resemble a RU, unless the scribe put considerable space between the vertical wedges. However, the horizontal wedge of RU is still not visible.

84 Literally, 'Wherever it comes near!'. The scribe of *SpTU* 4, 195 seems to have written *bīt* (É)-*ma*: the house, instead of the preposition *ēma*: 'whichever/whatever'. It is also possible that the sign É was preferred exactly for its double meaning and/or because the expression: 'he approaches the house', referring to demons was common in *āšipūtu* texts.

85 See about this topic in Neo-Assyrian school context Maul, Manasterska 2023, 20-2 and for the Neo-Babylonian period see Gesche 2001, 168-9 and Jiménez 2022, 26-7. The cues and errors in Jiménez 2022, no. 26 are strong arguments for affirming that excerpts on school tablets were copied from memory.

86 See also for the Neo-Assyrian school exercises from the house of the healers in Assur: Maul, Manasterska 2023, 3-5.

87 Clancier 2009, 225-9; Veldhuis 2014, 419; Jiménez 2022, 22.

88 On this topic see Hackl 2010; 2011 and Frahm 2020.

ing entire reference works, but some errors made by the apprentices demonstrate their didactic use.[89]

The activities of apprentices copying reference works have been repeatedly discussed in the edition of tablets from Uruk. What still needs to be emphasised is that the tablets collections of the descendants of Šangi-Ninurta and Iqīšāya demonstrate the interdisciplinary nature of the apprentice healers' curriculum during the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. The mathematical, astronomical and astrological texts are far more prominent than for example in the library of Kiṣir-Assur in the Neo-Assyrian period.[90] This hints at the scholarly evolutions that took place during the fifth century BCE and impacted the practices of the healers.[91]

The assemblages of the descendants of Šangi-Ninurta and Ekur-zakir include the expected genres of healers' professional literature (divinatory, magical, and medical texts) but also astronomical, astrological, literary, mathematical and cultic texts.[92] On the one hand the Šangi-Ninurta assemblage reflects the education of the healers in the house, the interests of Šamaš-iddin and Rīmūt-Anu in mathematics (but not in theoretical or mathematical astronomy)[93] and of Anu-ikṣur's in commentaries, which represented 25% of the tablets found in this group.[94] However, fewer astronomical texts seem to have belonged to the Šangi-Ninurta archive[95] and the astronomical tablets found there are observational texts.[96] Furthermore, two astrological tablets of this assemblage used the zodiac, an astrological innovation whose emergence overlaps with the period of this family's activities in the fifth century BCE.[97] On the other hand Iqīšāya's collection highlights particularly the new importance for healers of recently established celestial knowledge, such as the zodiac, used in medical texts, or mathematical astronomy.[98] As M. Ossendrijver notes, the collection of Iqīšāya is the earliest one in Uruk that contains all categories of Babylonian astral science.[99] While eight astrological tablets employing zodiacal and later astrological methods were also owned and written by Iqīšāya himself, [100] some of the astronomical tablets belonging to the descendants of Ekur-zakir appear to be the work of scribes learning to write astronomical texts and perform astronomical calculations.[101] In addition, the tablets with colophons highlight that the education provided by Iqīšāya to his apprentices possessed a marked interdisciplinarity character. Anu-ab-uṣur, who appears to have been trained by Iqīšāya, copied a tablet from the composition *Sakikkû*, a text studied by apprentice healers but also by members of the Babylonian scholarly elite who were not necessarily destined for this profession.[102] Indeed, the scribal training that the apprentices received in Iqīšāya's household not only served to teach them a profession, but also to pass on a system of values and a worldview.[103] Anu-ab-uṣur never held the title of a healer, and there is no evidence that his family practised this profession in Uruk. Nonetheless, he also copied for Iqīšāya two commentaries on the *Enūma Anu Enlil*, which contain numerous astronomical explanations. In contrast

89 See Clancier 2024, 294-5.

90 There are few examples of astronomical or astrological tablets in the collection of the healers (N4) in Assur and no mathematical texts at all. About Kiṣir-Assur and his collection see Pedersén 1986; Maul 2010; Arbøll 2021. The collection of N4 in Assur contained only one commentary on the *Enūma Anu Enlil* series (*ACh. Supp.* 2 24). However, Frahm 2011, 270 and fn. 1279, and Arbøll 2021, 178-9 suggest that Kiṣir-Assur might not have been the copyist of this tablet, and that it is uncertain if he studied astrology at all. The series MUL.APIN was taught to Neo-Assyrian pupils during the elementary phase of their scribal training, even though it is completely absent in the Neo-Babylonian and Late Babylonian school corpus, see Maul, Manasterska 2023, 18.

91 Britton 2010; Ossendrijver 2012, 1; Geller 2014; Stevens 2019, 46; Steele 2019 and Ossendrijver 2021.

92 See Clancier 2009, 83-5 for a presentation of the corpus.

93 Proust 2019, 126 suggest that the mathematical texts of Šamaš-iddin and Rīmūt-Anu betray two concerns of their authors: "on the one hand transmitting ancient mathematical knowledge, and on the other hand providing technical tools for quantifying, buying and selling land, perhaps in connection with the management of garden prebends".

94 Frahm 2011, 291.

95 Ossendrijver 2021, 331. However, as Steele 2019, 162 points out the lack of secure attribution of most of the astronomical tablets to a specific phase of the house's occupation makes it challenging to write a detailed history of the astronomical activities in the sector Ue XVIII.

96 Steele 2019, 150-4 (*SpTU* 1, 100; *SpTU* 5, 267-8, 271).

97 Ossendrijver 2021, 331-2.

98 See for an overview Ossendrijver 2021.

99 Ossendrijver 2021, 334.

100 Ossendrijver 2021, 336.

101 Steele 2019, 162.

102 Gesche 2001, 213-15. See also the tablets Labat 1951b, 1: 200-13, pl. 52-6 (BM 92694) and Labat 1951a, 2: 7-17, pl. 3 (BM 76022) copied by Nabû-kuṣuršu, the apprentice brewer.

103 Maul, Manasterska 2023, 21 remark that the excerpts were chosen for the Neo-Assyrian school exercises in order to transmit a system of values "fürs Leben".

to him, Anu-ab-uṣur, descendant of Gimil-Anu, also apprentice of Iqīšāya, came from a family in which several members were attested as healers in Uruk. He copied for his teacher one tablet of the divination series *Alamdimmû*.[104]

4 Conclusion

The insights offered by the two tablet collections are valuable in several ways. I aimed to show how, in the specific archaeological context of a house inhabited by at least two families, evidence of education conducted in a private setting is provided at various stages of apprenticeship. Even though tablets with colophons remain rare, there is information on at least three stages of a scribal curriculum:

1. learning how to prepare writing materials, practising the basics of cuneiform, and the proper way to hold a stylus, followed by the transition to learning layout organisation and the names of the gods or of cuneiform signs;
2. progressing to the introduction of the major cuneiform scholarly series;
3. copying reference works of cuneiform scholarship for the teacher's collection, likely accompanied by discussion their interpretation with the teacher, as evidenced by the presence of commentaries in these collections.[105]

Furthermore, the tablets of the Šangi-Ninurta and of the Ekur-zakir families provide rare glimpses into the cultural and political changes experienced by scholars in the Babylonian urban centres during the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, highlighting the growing importance of astronomy in scholarly education. Theirs is not an isolated example, but it remains the only one from this period coming from regular archaeological excavations and therefore possible to contextualise in concrete archaeological data. The same interest in interdisciplinary knowledge and the increasing use of astrology and astronomy are also evident in the collections of texts of other healers' families outside of Uruk. For example, Iprā'ya and his father, Marduk-per'u-uṣur, descendants of Ēṭiru, copied and wrote divinatory series, medical incantations or medical recipes, as well as commentaries, rituals, or astrological texts in Borsippa around 456-339 BCE.[106] One of their commentaries to 'Marduk's Address to the Demons' associated the epithets of Assalluḫi from literary composition with zodiacal constellations.[107] In Nippur, between the end of the fifth century and the fourth century, the descendants of Absummu also possessed a commentary of *Sakikkû*, with astrological and astronomical explications, a horoscope dated to 410 BCE, planetary observations for the years 365-364 BCE, several medical texts, and ritual texts for the temple of Ekur, presenting the beginnings of the use of the zodiac. These private collections, as the ones of the Šangi-Ninurta and the Ekur-zakir families, testify to the transformations in the practices of the healers during the fifth and fourth centuries BCE.[108]

104 *SpTU* 4 150. For the sale contract of a healer prebend by the Gimil-Anu family in the Hellenistic period in Uruk see Corò 2018 no. 5, no. 90, no. 91. In the (school?) tablet *VS* 15 1 the Gimil-Anu family is listed together with the Ekur-zakir family among the seven healer families of the Rēš temple.

105 On this question see Frahm 2011, 313-14 and Gabbay 2016, 13-24.

106 See Finkel 1988, 153-5 and Schwemer 2009, 58 for the reading of the name. The astrological texts are commentaries using the zodiac, see Rochberg 1988, 284-90, Hunger 2004, and George, Taniguchi 2019 no. 214.

107 BM 47529 published by `https://ccp.yale.edu/P461231`.

108 See about this family Joannès 1992; Rochberg 1998; Robson 2019, 219-20, and Bácksay forthcoming.

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