

UTUKKŪ LEMNŪTU (UDUG-HUL) IN A NEW TEXT FROM THE IRAQ MUSEUM

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A small tablet fragment acquired by the Iraq Museum raises interesting questions, although at first it appeared to be a simple duplicate manuscript from the large bilingual incantation series Uduḡ-hul. Publishing this fragment has drawn attention to an interesting feature of Mesopotamian incantations, in which the *āšīpu*-exorcist protects himself first, before addressing the patient. Although this practice has been known from Tablet 3 of Uduḡ-hul incantations, it turns out that Assur exorcists occasionally inserted their own names into otherwise anonymous incantations and prayers, in order to ensure their own protection, which is a practice not known from other sites.

Introduction

The text edited in this paper (IM 183624)¹ was acquired by the Iraq Museum in 2002.² This fragment, from the large incantation series Uduḡ-hul = *Utukkū Lemnūtu* (meaning “Evil Demons”) measures (7.2 × 6–7.5 × 1 cm) and originally belonged to a much larger tablet. The fragment represents the end of the second column and a very small part from the third column.

This text is the only fragment from Uduḡ-hul Tablet 3 to be found in the Iraq Museum until now.³ Duplicates in the British Museum (K 224+; K 4665+; BM 38594; BM 47852; BM 35611+) were previously published (CT 16, plates 1–8), with new copies and an edition and translation by M. J. Geller.⁴ The text is dated to the Late Babylonian period, judging from the sign forms, but there is no possibility of a join with published tablets.

Transliteration of IM 183624 Coll. ii (Uduḡ-hul 3 ll. 60–69)

- 1' *pi*-[*i*-*šu*₂ *el-lu ana pi-ia iš-ku-ni*]
 ṽu₁₁¹ ku₃-ṽga¹-n[*i* uš₁₁-ḡu₁₀ ḡal₂-la-a]-ni
 ṽi¹-mat-ṽsu¹ [*el-le-tu*₂ *ana im-ti-ia iš*]-ṽkun¹
 ṽšu₁₂¹ ku₃-ga-a-ni ṽšu₁₂¹-ḡu₁₀ ḡal₂-la-a-ni
- 5' *ik-rib-šu*₂ *el-lu ana ik-ri-ṽbi*¹-*ia iš*-ṽkun¹
 zag-meš ṽhe₂¹-em-ma-an-ṽhul¹-a lu₂-t[u-r]a su-na / ḡal₂-la-a-na
mu-šal-pi-it eš-re-tu ṽša₂ *ina su mar-ši ib-šu-u*₂
 tu₆-dug₄-ga inim^den-ki-ga
ina MIN-e a-mat^de₂-a
 e-ne-ne-ne hul-meš he₂-em-ma-an-zi-zi
- 10' *šu-nu lem-nu-tu*₂ *li-in-na-as-hu*
 [ḡi]š^{ma-nu} ḡi^štukul-mah an-na-ke₄ ṽsu mu-da-ḡal₂
e-ra kak-ki ši-ru ṽša₂^da-nim *ina qa-ti-ia na-ša*₂-*ki*
^dmes-sag-unuḡ^{ki} (ṽšu₂) nimgir₂ kul-aba^{ki}₄-ke₄ nam-ti-la
*silim-ma-ḡu*₁₀ *egir mu-un-DU.DU-de*₃
- 15' ^dMIN *na-gi-ir kul-la-bi ana ba-la-ṽti*-{erased}-*ia*

¹ A preliminary version of this tablet appeared in Geller 2016: 102–105 (courtesy of Munther Ali) with some errors which are now corrected in the present article. Abbreviations in this text are those used in the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*.

² This unprovenanced fragment came to the Iraq Museum via Mr. Riadh Huta Salih, sold to the Iraq Museum on 14/02/2002 and registered as document No. 219 / 2002.

³ This fragment is the only one known to Munther Ali in the Iraq Museum. Geller refers to another fragment (IM 21180, see Geller 2016: 174) belonging to the series, but when Ali examined this text number in the Iraq museum, he found some 28 fragments from different texts, most of them being economic with none from the UH series.

⁴ Geller 2016: 89ff.; 2007: 103f.

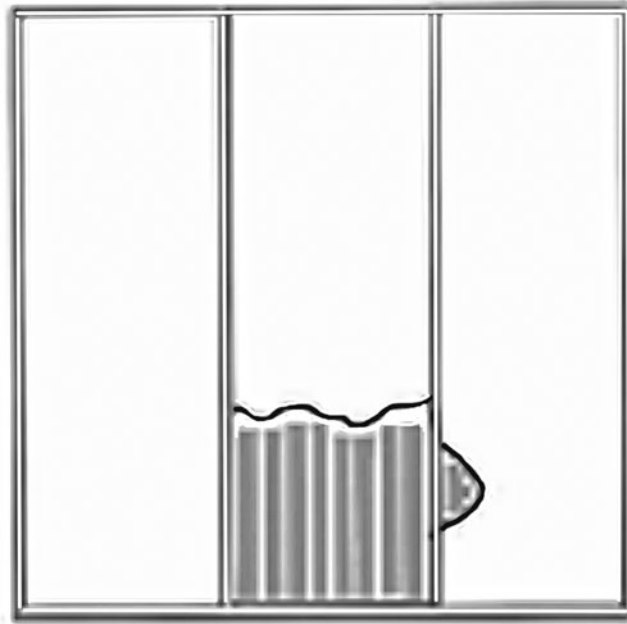


Fig. 1 Reconstruction of fragment's position on original tablet.

- u ša₂-la-me-ia ar₂-ki-ia lit-tal-lak*
 udug sig₅-ga a₂-zi-da-ĝu₁₀ mu-un-da-an-ĝen-na
še-ed dum-qi₂ ina im-ni-ia ina a-la-ku
 'd'lama sig₅-ga a₂-gub₃-bu-ĝu₁₀ mu-un-da-an-ĝe[n-na]
 20' [I]a-mas-si dum-qi₂ ina šu-me-li-ia ina a-la-ku
 [the rest is missing, but traces are erased on bottom of tablet]

Coll. iii (Udug-hul 3 ll. 94–98)

- 1' 'su¹-l[u₂-u₁₈-lu pap-hal-la-ke₄ a ba-an-zi-zi]
ina s[U LU₂ mut-tal₂-li-ki li-in-na-si-ih]
 su-ĝu₁₀ n[am-ba-te-ge₂₆-de₃ bar-še₃ he₂-em-ta-gub]
ana su-ī[a a-a iḫ-hu-ni ina a-ha-a-tu₂ li-iz-ziz]
- 5' egir-ĝu₁₀ n[am-mi-ni-in-us₂-e-de₃]
ana ar₂-[ki-ia a-a ir-du-nī]
 zi dingir [gal-gal-e-ne-ke₄ he₂-pa₃]
niš [DINGIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ lu-u₂ u₂-tam-mi-ka]
 n[a-an-gub-be₂-en ka-keš₂-bi he₂-du₈]

Translation

Coll. ii = lines 60–69

- 1' [He (Ea) superimposed his pure] mouth [upon mine],
 2'–3' he superimposed [his pure] spittle [upon mine],
 4'–5' he superimposed his pure prayer upon mine.
 6'–7' Since a (demon) attacking limbs is (already) in the patient's body,
 8'– through an effective incantation – the word of Ea –
 9'–10' may those evil ones be uprooted.
 11'–12' I hold Anu's exalted *e'ru*-wood scepter in my hand.

13'–16' May Mes-sanga-unug, Kullab's herald, go behind me for my own health and well-being.
 17'–18' In order for the good spirit to go on my right,
 19'–20' and for the good genius to go on my left,

Coll. iii = lines 94–98

1'–2' [(May the demons) be removed from the distraught] man's body.
 3'–4' [May they not approach] my body [(as well) but stand aside]
 5'–6' [nor may they follow] behind me.
 7'–8' [I adjure you by] the great gods [that you may go away].
 9' [May they not be detained but let their bond be broken!].

Commentary

Col. ii

4'. The signs are clearer on the copy than on the photograph, which shows considerable damage to the surface of this line.

6'. Geller 2016: 103, l. 63, should read zag-meš (not zag.meš).

9'–10'. This new manuscript deviates from other duplicates in the verbal form /zi-zi/ corresponding to Akk. *nasāhu*, in contrast to other variants with more a conventional verb /bu(r)/ in this position. One other manuscript (CBS 13905) has the variant /su₃/, which is in a similar phonetic range to /zi/, but all three of these Sumerian forms can correlate with Akk. *nasāhu*.

11'. Geller 2016: 103, l. 65, should read *šu-nu* (not *šu₂-nu*).

12'. The reading *šu mu-da-ġal₂* (corresponding to *ina qa-ti-ia na-ša₂-ku*) is a variant from the more usual reading, *šu-ġu₁₀ mu-un-da-an-ġal₂* ('I hold in my hand'), but lacking the possessive suffix or dimensional infixes.

14'. Variants to this line all read: *egir-ġu₁₀ DU.DU-de₃ // arkiya littallak*, "may GN go behind me." The scribe misunderstands the Sum. as a finite verbal form (mu-un-DU.DU-de₃), although the Akk. translation conforms to other duplicates.

Col. iii

4'–5'. The sigla for these lines in Geller 2016: 109, ll. 95–96 should read hh and not ii.

General comments

This manuscript fragment from Uduġ-hul, one of the longest and important bilingual incantation series from Mesopotamia, comes from Tablet 3, probably the first tablet of Uduġ-hul known from Old Babylonian libraries. Since this section may well have been the original beginning of the composition, it deals with the *āšipu*-incantation priest speaking on his own behalf, in the first person, asking the gods to protect him even before he tries to heal the patient. This may be because of the recognized dangers of visiting a sick person and coming into possible contact with demons, or simply because the exorcist had to first demonstrate that he himself was pure and free of disease or demonic attack, in order to be able to heal someone else. In order to do this, the exorcist had to claim that he was the representative of the gods of exorcism, *Ea* and *Marduk*, and that he was sent by them, so that whatever spells the exorcist recited were actually coming from the gods, rather than from himself.⁵ For this reason, according to our tablet, the healing god had placed his mouth, spittle and words into the exorcist's mouth, so that whatever incantation the *āšipu* recited came directly from healing gods. The question is how unusual or exceptional this

⁵ See Maul 1994: 41.

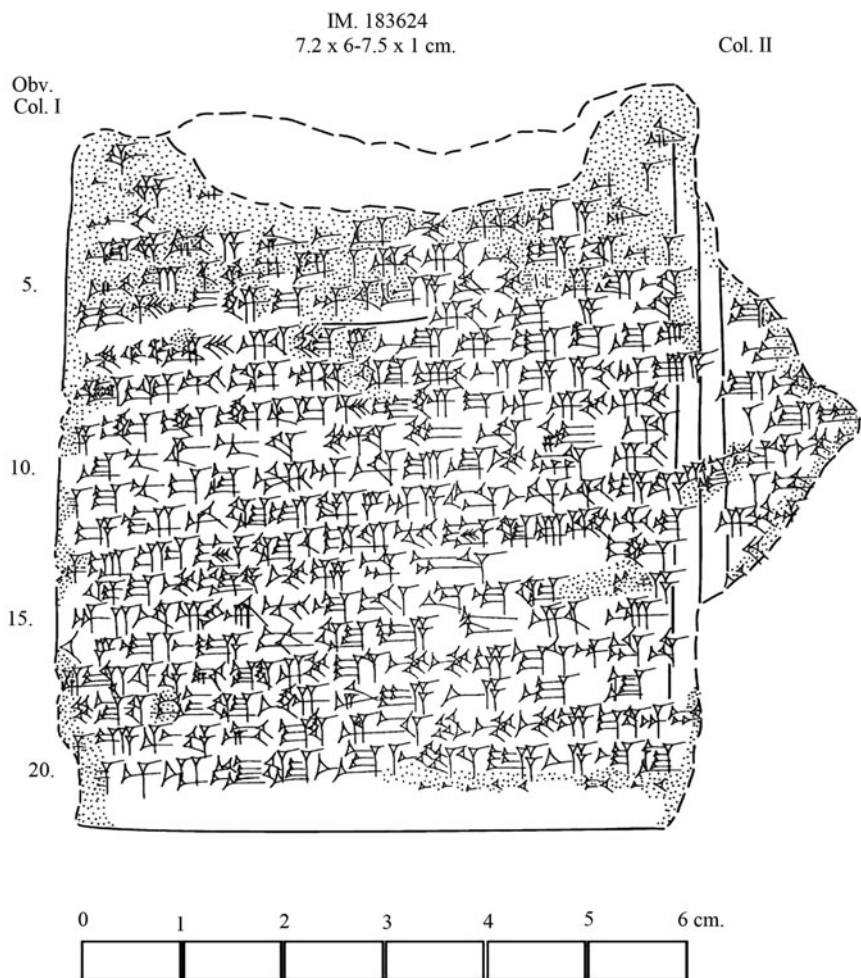


Fig. 2 copy of IM 183624 by Munther Ali

may be, since other incantations occasionally use a formulaic expression, *kāam iqabbi*, “he should say thus,” meaning that the client rather than the exorcist should recite the incantation.⁶ In this tablet of Udug-hul, however, it seems that the exorcist is speaking rather than the patient.

The question is whether one finds any parallels in other incantations, and the obvious place to look is *Maqlû*, the text of which has recently been published by Tzvi Abusch⁷ and Daniel Schwemer.⁸ *Maqlû* incantations are predominantly in the first person, but who is speaking, the exorcist or patient? According to Abusch, the speaker is not an *āšipu* but actually “a member of the laity, not a priest”, who acts as if he is a messenger of the gods and claims to be so.⁹ Here is a sample text of the speaker in *Maqlû* I 61:

Incantation. I have been sent and I will go; I have been commissioned and I will speak. Asalluhi, lord of exorcism, has sent me against my warlock and witch. (Translation T. Abusch).

The incantation goes on to explain that the witches have “seized my mouth, made my neck tremble, pressed against my chest, bent my spine, weakened my heart, taken away my sexual drive, made me

⁶ See Maul 1994: 67. A parallel expression *kāam taqabbi*, “you should say thus” appears more frequently in Namburbi incantations, and this refers presumably to the exorcist.

⁷ Abusch 2015; id. 2016.

⁸ Schwemer 2017. This volume contains autograph copies of *Maqlû* tablets.

⁹ Abusch 2002: 274–275.

IM. 183624

Obv



Fig. 3 Photo of IM 183624

turn anger against myself, sapped my strength” (Maqlû I 97–100, translation Abusch). Abusch argues that it is the client or victim who makes these statements, and just as he claims to be suffering from witches, the patient also claims to be sent by Marduk (like an *āšipu*). Evidence supporting this point of view comes from Old Babylonian Sumerian incantations, known by the rubric *ka-inim-ma e-sír-dib-bé-da-kam*, “incantations for passing along the street”, and these incantations were collected and copied by scribes together with Old Babylonian Uduḡ-hul incantations, although not incorporated into the late bilingual Uduḡ-hul Series. The passage cited by Abusch follows the well-known ‘Enki-Asalluhi dialogue’, and reads as follows:

nig₂-ĝa₂-e i-zu-mu u₃ za-e in-ga-e-zu
 ĝen-na dumu-mu ^dasal-lu-hi
 lu₂-ulu₃ lu₂-didli lu₂-ge₆-sa₂-a sila-a ĝen-a-n[a]
 ĝa₂-e lu₂-kin-gi₄-a ^den-ki-ga me-en he₂-eb-[be₂]
 ĝa₂-e lu₂-kin-gi₄-a ^ddam-gal-nun-na me-[en]
 ĝa₂-e lu₂-kin-gi₄-a ^dasal-l[u₂-hi me-en]
 ĝa₂-e lu₂ eridu^{ki}-ga me-en he₂-[eb-be₂]

What I (Enki) know, you also know.
 Go my son Asalluhi.
 If a man, a lonely man, is one who walks at night in the street,
 then let him [say], 'I am Enki's messenger,
 I am Damgalnunna's messenger,
 I [am] the messenger, Asalluhi.'
 Let [him say], 'I am the man of Eridu.'¹⁰

It would be correct to surmise that this passage is not unusual, in that the victim who walks along the street at night (always a dangerous thing to do because of demons) has to recite a special incantation, in order to keep the demons away (and probably keep his spirits up). However, it seems that this Esirdibbeda incantation advises the victim to mimic a standard type of incantation, in which he declares that he – the patient – is Enki's emissary, in effect *pretending* to be an *āšipu*. This reflects Udug-hul Tablet 3, in which the *āšipu* speaks directly to the demons and declares, "I hold Anu's exalted *e'ru*-wood scepter in my hand;"¹¹ in other words, claiming that he (the speaker) is a personal representative of the gods. Nevertheless, the logic behind the Esirdibbeda magic is that in order to frighten off the demons at night, the victim should recite this type of incantation *as if he were* an incantation priest and had the power to chase away demons. This deviates from Udug-hul incantations normally meant to be recited by the *āšipu* in order to protect *himself*, when he goes to see the patient or victim; healing can be dangerous, just as was walking in the streets at night.¹²

This brings us back to the question of *Maqlû* incantations and who was reciting them. Who is "I" in these incantations? This question is similar to the problem of identifying the "you" addressed in medical recipes, when the text says, "you take, you grind up, you crush", etc. We assume this "you" to refer to the professional healer, the *asû*, and not the patient himself, and by analogy the "I" in *Maqlû* incantations could potentially refer to the professional healer, in this case the *āšipu*.

There is some evidence in *Maqlû* incantations to support the idea that it is the *āšipu* himself who is to be identified with the speaker. In *Maqlû* Tablet 2, 170–171 we find an interesting variant. The text reads:

anāku ina qibīt ^d*marduk bēl nubatti u* ^d*asalluhi bēl āšipūti*¹³

I (am) under the command of Marduk, lord of the evening offering, and Asalluhi lord of exorcism.

One significant variant manuscript from Aššur (VAT 10009 = KAL 4 No. 26) inserts a proper name, reading:

ana-ku ^m*aš-šur-šā-liṭ ina qī-bit* ^dAMAR.UTU ...

I, Mr. Assur-šāliṭ, am under the command of Marduk

This is surprising, since *Maqlû* incantations do not normally refer to specific individuals by name, and this personal reference contrasts with the standard pattern of three other manuscripts from Nineveh and Sultantepe (K 24555+, K 2947+, SU 52/38). Two other intriguing references to this same Aššur-šāliṭ appear in the same *Maqlû* Tablet 2 manuscript (VAT 10009). The first mention occurs in an incantation to Girra, god of the torch, which has the incipit, ^{ÉN}*dgirra āriru bukur* ^d*anim*, "Spell. Blazing Girra, first born of Anu".¹⁴ After praising this god as capable of countering the effects of witchcraft, incantation soon introduces the intended object of the witchcraft:¹⁵

anāku [annanna mār annan]na ša ilšu annanna ^d*ištaršu annannītu*¹⁶

I am [N.N. son of] N.N., whose personal god is N.N., whose personal goddess is N.N.

¹⁰ Geller 1985: 30. This passage was cited in Abusch 2002: 275, n. 10.

¹¹ Lines 11'-12' in the fragment edited above.

¹² The distinction made here between "usual" and "unusual" incantations reflects the fact that the Esirdibbeda incantations from OB Udug-hul incantations were not incorporated into the canonical bilingual series known from first millennium libraries and archives.

¹³ *ana-ku ina qī-bit* ^dAMAR.UTU EN *nu-bat-ti* ^ù*asal-lū-hi* EN *a-ši-pu-ti*, see Abusch 2016: 72.

¹⁴ *Maqlû* II 77 (see Abusch 2016: 58). The Girra incantation covers ll. 77–104.

¹⁵ *Maqlû* II 86 (see Abusch 2016: 62).

¹⁶ *ana-ku* [NENNI A NEN]NI *ša*₂ NENNI-*šu*₂ NENNI ^d15-*šu*₂ NENNI-*tu*₄. One Ms. has another variant reading: *ana-ku* ^rARAD¹-*k*[a NENNI A NENNI etc., "I am your servant (N.N.)". See Abusch 2016: 62 n. 21. See also Oshima 2011: 25,

At first glance, this looks like the standard designation of a victim or patient, since it follows the pattern found in Uduḡ-hul incantations, which refer to the patient as lu_2 - ulu_3 *dumu dingir-ra-na / amēlu mār ilišu*, “a man son of his god”.¹⁷ However, the same Aššur manuscript of *Maqlū* (VAT 10009) varies the text of the entire line as follows:

anāku ^mAššur-šāliṭ *mār ilišu* ^dNabū *ša ištāršu* ^dTašmētu¹⁸

I am Aššur-šāliṭ, whose personal god is Nabū, whose personal goddess is Tašmētu.

The same manuscript again takes the opportunity to identify the first-person protagonist as Mr. Aššur-šāliṭ, further giving the names of his personal or favoured god and goddess, rather than the general designation of being “man son of his god”.

An intrusion occurs once more in *Maqlū* Tablet 2, 98–100, in a passage which reads:

^dGirra *šarḡu šīru ša ilī / kāšid lemni u ayyābi kušussunūtima anāku* (var. ^maššur-šāliṭ) *lā aḥḥabbil / anāku aradka lubluṭ lušlimma maḥarka luzziz*¹⁹

Resplendent Girra, august among the gods, vanquisher of evil and enemies, vanquish them that I (var. Aššur-šāliṭ) not come to harm that I, your servant, should live and be safe and stand before you.

The Aššur scribe of VAT 10009 has again inserted the name Aššur-šāliṭ into the text of l. 99, after *anāku*, “I”, in the standard edition.

The pressing question, then, is who this Mr. Assur-šāliṭ is likely to be. One possibility is that he would be a client or patient, since we know that such persons can be referred to in other witchcraft incantations by a general designation of “N.N. son of N.N.” (*annanna mār annanna*). The second question is why this particular scribe would insert a proper name into the text. Was this manuscript of *Maqlū* Tablet 2 personalized for some reason, in contrast to all other manuscripts of *Maqlū* which are known to us? An alternative possibility is that whoever wrote this Aššur tablet (probably an *āšipu*) took the initiative to insert his own name, to afford himself the protection offered by the relevant incantations.

If this were the only case of a personal name being inserted in place of the usual anonymous reference to ‘N.N. son of N.N.’, there would be little grounds for choosing between the two options, i.e. the proper name designating either the patient or the scribe. Fortunately, there are several other cases, exclusively from Aššur, of personal names being inserted into a similar genre of incantation-prayers, and these offer precise comparisons with the inserted name Aššur-šāliṭ in *Maqlū* Tablet 2. The first of these insertions in another Aššur manuscript is found in a Šuilla prayer to Nabū (CMAwR 2 No. 9.7: 14),²⁰ which has the same structure as many other Šuilla texts.²¹ The prayer offers praise to Nabū, ending with the pious wish, *liktarrabāka gimir tenēšēti*, ‘may all the population keep praying to you’ (l. 13). The following line (14), based on a Nineveh manuscript from Assurbanipal’s Library (K 6644), reads:

[*anāku annanna mār*] *annanna ša ilšu annanna ištāršu annannītu*²²

I am N.N. son of N.N., whose personal god is N.N. and personal goddess is N.N.

noting that in place of “Somebody son of Somebody”, the name of a king (Aššurbanipal or Šamaš-šuma-ukīn) is attested, but one cannot generalise from royal names being inserted, since this may be a matter of royal patronage and privilege, allowing for the prayer to be recited specifically for the king. Oshima also provides examples of this phrase with the variation *anāku aradka* (ibid. 355, 358, 360).

¹⁷ However, in one instance in UH Tablet I, the patient is referred to in the following way: [NENNI A NEN]NI $ša_2$ NENNI- $šu_2$ NENNI ^d15- $šu_2$ NENNI-*tu_4*, “N.N. son of N.N., whose personal god is N.N., whose personal goddess is N.N.”, see Geller 2016: 23 n. 42, and 56: 29. The phrase is recognisable in *Maqlū* II 86.

¹⁸ *a-na-ku* ^mAššur-šāliṭ ^dDUMU DINGIR- $šu_2$ $ša_2$ DINGIR- $šu_2$ ^dAG ^{dr}iš¹-*tar-šu_2* ^{dr}PAPNUN¹ (see Abusch 2016: 62).

¹⁹ ^dGIŠ.BAR *šar-hu ši-ru* $ša_2$ DINGIR.MEŠ / *ka-šid lem-ni u a-a-bi ku-šu_2-su-nu-ti-ma ana-ku* (var. ^maššur-šāliṭ) *la aḥ-hab-bil / ana-ku* ARAD-*ka lu-ub-luṭ lu-uš-lim-ma ma-har-ka lu-uz-ziz* (see Abusch 2016: 64).

²⁰ Abusch and Schwemer 2016: 343, 347. See online at <https://www.phil.uni-wuerzburg.de/cmawro/cmawro-online/> (last accessed 19.08.2020).

²¹ For the general structure of Šuilla prayers, see Lenzi 2011: 27–28.

²² [*ana-ku* NENNI DUMU] NENNI $ša_2$ DINGIR- $šu_2$ NENNI ^d15- $šu_2$ NENNI-*tu_4*. The restoration is based upon exact parallels, nor would it be likely for an Assurbanipal Library tablet to insert a proper name, as in the Assur exemplars noted here. One other fragmentary duplicate to this line (VAT 13633) also appears to make mention to Tašmētu (if the reading is correct), since it ends with [^d]15- $šu$ [^d]PAPNUN]; see the copy

Crucially, one Assur duplicate (A 138 = *LKA* 40a) has a variant reading for this entire line, which corresponds verbatim (except for the proper name) to *Maqlû* II 86 cited above:

ana-ku^m*ba-la-si* DUMU DINGIR-*šu*₂ *ša*₂ DINGIR-*šu*₂ ^dPA ^d15-*šu*₂ ^{dr}PAPNUN¹
I am Balassi son of his god, whose god is Nabû, whose goddess is Tašmētu

The correspondence between this phrase and *Maqlû* II 86 can hardly be coincidental, especially since the proper name is again associated with the god Nabû and his spouse Tašmētu. The fact that Nabû was a patron god of scribal arts lends credence to the suggestion that the proper name inserted here, Balassi, refers to an Assur *āšipu* or scribe who actually wrote this tablet (A 138). Abusch and Schwemer comment on Balassi, that since several Aššur individuals are known by this name, we cannot be certain of the identity of this person.²³ It is true that Balassi was popular at Aššur. Nevertheless, among the references to the name Balassi at Aššur associated with various professions (see *PNA* I / II 254–256), there are also clear references to a court *ummānu* and astrologer by this name, which raises the possibility that the name could refer to the scribe who copied this *Maqlû* tablet. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the Aššur tablet containing Balassi's name (A 138) was found in Aššur's Haus des Beschwörungs priesters,²⁴ which might be relevant information, as we will see shortly.

This is not the only case in which the proper name Balassi is inserted into a Šuilla prayer, but this second case is more difficult to track down, since key information has been omitted from the edition of the text. The prayer is addressed to Marduk's spouse Zarpanitu, first edited in 1896 (*BMS* 9 rev.),²⁵ with a partial duplicate published later from Aššur (VAT 13487 = *LKA* 48).²⁶ The Assur manuscript includes lines of text not found in *BMS* 9, which contain the following reference on the reverse of the tablet (cf. Ebeling 1953: 72a: line 11) now possible to reconstructed fully, based on parallels:

[*ana-ku*^m]*ba-la-si* A DINGIR-*šu*₂ *ša*₂¹ DINGIR-*šu*₂ ^dPA ^d15-*šu*₂ ^dPAPNUN]
[I am] Balasi son of his god, [whose personal god is Nabû, whose personal goddess is Tašmētu].

Confirmation of this restoration can be found on the obverse of this same tablet, which duplicates the Nineveh manuscripts edited in *BMS* 9, although two relevant lines were omitted in Ebeling's edition of the tablet (1953: 68), which can be seen clearly on *LKA* 48 obv. 8–9.²⁷ The lines read:

[*ana-ku*^m]*ba-la-si* DUMU DINGIR-*šu*₂ [*ša*₂ DINGIR-*šu*₂ ^dPA ^d15-*šu*₂ ^dPAPNUN]
[I am] Balassi son of his personal god, [whose personal god] is Nabû, whose personal goddess is Tašmētu.

Once again, it appears that a Šuilla prayer has inserted a proper name into the text which cannot be found in the Nineveh duplicate. Moreover, this Aššur manuscript (like others cited above) was found in the Haus des Beschwörungspriesters in Aššur.²⁸

A similar case of intrusion of a personal name in an Aššur manuscript occurs in a Šuilla prayer to Nuska,²⁹ the god who lights up the night with his lamp, thematically resembling the God Girra and his torch in *Maqlû* Tablet 2. The same pattern appears among the four known manuscripts of this prayer, two from Nineveh and two from Aššur, namely that a proper name appears in an Aššur duplicate in place of the usual reference to "Somebody son of Somebody" at Nineveh. The relevant lines occur in a prayer with the incipit, ^{ÉN}*nuska šurbû ilitti Duranki*, "Sublime Nuska,

in Abusch and Schwemer, 2016: pl. 73. One possibility is that the line actually ends with *an-[na-ni-tu₄]*, although the orthography for the term *annanna* ('somebody') is consistently written with the logogram NENNI throughout the anti-witchcraft corpus (see van Buylaere and Luuko 2020: 15–16). The other possibility is that this Assur tablet also cited a private name.

²³ Abusch and Schwemer 2016: 348.

²⁴ Pedersén 1986: 50, 65.

²⁵ King 1896: 44–47, plates 19–20.

²⁶ For an edition of the relevant passages, cf. Ebeling 1953: 68–70, 72a.

²⁷ VAT 13487. Lines 8–9 on the tablet are actually a single line of text widely spaced and written over two lines.

²⁸ Pedersén 1986: 50.

²⁹ The comparison with *Maqlû* was noted by Fadhil 2012: 15 n. 1, and for the edition of the text, see Panayotov 2009: 24–35.

offspring of Duranki”.³⁰ The first seven lines of this prayer praise Nuska as beloved of Enlil, without whom Anu and Enlil cannot offer proper advice.³¹ The petition to the god which follows this section begins with the standard formulation, attested in two manuscripts from Nineveh and one from Aššur:³²

anāku annanna mār annanna ša ilšu annanna^d ištāršu annannūtu³³

I am N.N. son of N.N., whose personal god is N.N., whose personal goddess is N.N.

However, a second Aššur manuscript (VAT 13632) inserts several new lines into this section, beginning with a variant for the above passage reading:

anāku Aššur-mudammīq mār ilišu [ša] ilšu Nabû ištāršu Tašmētu³⁴

I am Aššur-mudammīq son of his god, whose personal god is Nabû, whose personal goddess is Tašmētu

Again, the personal name – this time Mr. Aššur-mudammīq – replaces the usual formulaic expression, but with a difference. The colophon of this Aššur tablet adds the important detail that the tablet was written on the 19th day of Ayyār, done at night-time, by Mr. Aššur-mudammīq himself.³⁵ This is the first known case that the name inserted into the text matches the name of the tablet’s scribe, reinforcing the idea that the scribe sought the protection of the incantation-prayer for himself, and that he was identical with the suffering client or patient referred to in the text. Moreover, we are relatively well informed about Mr. Aššur-mudammīq’s career. His father, Mr. Nabû-mušēši, was known as a scribe of the Aššur Temple,³⁶ as was his grandfather and other members of his family.³⁷ His son Nabû-eṭiranni was mentioned as being an apprentice exorcist,³⁸ and it is likely that Aššur-mudammīq was himself an *āšipu*, which was why he wrote the tablet incorporating his name.³⁹ Moreover, as in the other examples cited above, the Aššur tablet with Aššur-mudammīq’s name (VAT 13632) was also found in the Haus des Beschwörungspriesters.⁴⁰ Finally, Mr. Aššur-mudammīq’s name appears in the colophon of a *mukallimtu* astrological commentary (K 872), probably written in Assur but found in Nineveh, now edited by the Yale Cuneiform Commentaries Project, CCP 3.1.u83 (see <https://ccp.yale.edu/P393842>).

The obvious inference to be drawn from this evidence is that all these manuscripts from Aššur, containing *Maqlū* or Šuilla incantation-prayers, reflect the exclusive practice of Aššur scribes to insert their own names into a text where one usually finds reference to “Somebody son of Somebody”. The personal names inserted follow the same pattern in all cases: proper names have no patronymic but take the traditional form known from Udug-hul incantations, designating the prospective client as “man son of his god” (lu₂-ulu₃ dumu dingir-ra-na). Furthermore, all cases from Aššur associate the proper names with the god and goddess Nabû and Tašmētu, suitable patron gods for scribes. The likelihood, therefore is that in all cases cited above, the names inserted into the text also identify the scribe who copied the tablet.⁴¹

What justification would there be for a scribe or an *āšipu* to do this? The unique character of *Maqlū* is that this was actually a ceremony to be performed on a certain night of the year, according to Abusch.⁴² If this is the case, who would be performing this ceremony? Would it be the patient, as

³⁰ Panayotov 2009: 25, giving the manuscripts as K 2106+, K 3285, and VAT 9030.

³¹ This conforms to the general structure of Šuilla prayers, see Lenzi 2011: 27–28.

³² Panayotov 2009: 27.

³³ Ms. VAT 9030 (KAR 58: 33) reads: *a-na-ku NENNI A NENNI ša DINGIR-šu₂ NENNI^d 15-šu₂ NENNI-tu₄ ša₂-pal-ka ak-mis.*

³⁴ Ms. VAT 13632 (LKA 51: 10–11) reads: *[a-na-ku^m] aš-šur-SIG₅-iq DUMU DINGIR-šu₂ [š]a₂ DINGIR-šu₂^d PA^d 15-šu₂^d PAPNUN.*

³⁵ VAT 13632 rev. 3–5 reads: *ayyār ūm 19-kam [...] ina nubatti innepeš ša Aššur-mudammīq.* The appearance of Aššur-mudammīq’s name in both the text and commentary was already noticed by Maul 2010: 213 n. 82.

³⁶ Panayotov 2009: 64.

³⁷ As charted in Fadhil 2012: 41.

³⁸ Ibid. 40.

³⁹ See Lenzi 2011: 26–27 for a discussion of Šuilla prayers composed by the *āšipu*-exorcist.

⁴⁰ Pedersen 1986: 50.

⁴¹ It is a matter of speculation whether these presumed scribes from Aššur could have been playing fast and loose with scribal protocols by inserting their names into incantations or prayers.

⁴² Abusch 2002: 97, explaining that the *Maqlū* series “was not a collection of incantations, but rather the script of a single long ceremony”.

Abusch believes, acting like an *āšipu*, or would it be the incantation-priest himself, reciting the *Maqlû* incantations, e.g. Mr. Aššur-šāliṭ, Mr. Balassi, or Mr. Aššur-mudammīq? And if the latter, why would the incantation-priest claim to be bewitched and behexed and troubled by demons?

The answer may be quite straightforward. In a *Maqlû*-like ceremony, the priest recites prayers – even for himself – which are also meant for anyone present who is listening. An incantation-priest, like everyone else, is just as likely to get ill or be attacked by demons, or even be behexed by a witch. Like in Udug-hul incantations, the *āšipu* had to protect himself in the same way that he protects his patients. So it seems more likely that *Maqlû* incantations were not recited by a patient acting like a messenger of the gods, but rather by the *āšipu* himself, with his own personal worries and troubles, including fear of witchcraft. In fact, as we know from Udug-hul incantations, the usual role of the incantation-priest acting in a ceremonial capacity was first to recite the incantations on behalf of himself and by extension for anyone else also present.⁴³

We can find other later evidence to support the idea that the speaker in magical texts may have been the exorcist rather than the patient. Interesting parallels can be found in later Syriac incantation bowls from Mesopotamia, which frequently refer to someone ‘speaking’ in these spells in the first person. The client is usually mentioned by name as the object of the demonic attack, but in the course of his duty to protect the client, the exorcist speaks directly to the demons in the first person. Here are a few citations from Syriac bowls (published by M. Moriggi, with bowl citations): “I am speaking” (*n’ mṛn*, no. 22.4) or “I declare” (*n’ qryn*, no. 14: 24), or “I will show you” (*lkwn mhwyn* no. 10.6), and to remove any doubt, in one case the bowl reads, “I wrote (it) but God heals” (*n’ ktbt’y lh’ n’s*, no. 28: 13).⁴⁴ In these spells, the speaker is none other than the writer or performer of the incantation, not the client mentioned in the bowls.

In conclusion, this small fragment of a tablet from the Iraq Museum raises interesting questions, simply by making us think about the larger framework into which this tablet fits. The idea that the incantation priest himself is subject to possible attack by demons is of central importance, since he must protect and heal himself before he can do so for others. This means that the incantation priest himself was not thought of as blameless or perfect or even worthy to act on behalf of others, and therefore he was entitled to ask for the same protection and divine favor as for his clients. But the *āšipu* had an advantage over ordinary individuals, since he knew the rituals and the incantations and he could act as Marduk’s messenger, because of his priestly status and training. It is likely, therefore, that just as Udug-hul incantations began with a request to protect the *āšipu* who was reciting the text, in a similar way the speaker of *Maqlû* incantations was this very same *āšipu*, who was now acting out his role as messenger of the gods, on his own behalf and on behalf of everyone else who may have been present at the *Maqlû* ceremony.

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⁴³ Elyze Zomer (2018: 63) arrives at a similar conclusion based on other evidence.

⁴⁴ Moriggi 2014.

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نص أوتوكي لمنوتي (أودوك - خول) في نص جديد من المتحف العراقي

وهو عبارة عن كسرة صغيرة لنص مسماري موجود حالياً في المتحف العراقي ، الذي حمل تساؤلات عدة ومثيرة ، ففي البداية أنه ظهر بكونه نسخة بسيطة لنص مسماري كبير الحجم ، وهو من سلسلة التعاويذ ثنائية اللغة من ضمن سلسلة (UDUG.HUL) التي تعني: (إبعاد الشر عن جسم الإنسان) ، إن نشر هذه الكسرة من النص قد جذبت الانتباه إلى ظاهرة مميزة ومثيرة في التعاويذ من بلاد الرافدين ، التي فيها كاهن الأشيبو عليه أن يحمي نفسه أولاً قبل أن يشافي المريض ، على الرغم من أن هذه الممارسة قد عرفت من اللوح الثالث لسلسلة التعاويذ (UDUG.HUL) ، فقد اتضح أن المعوذين من مدينة آشور يقومون أحياناً بإدخال أسماؤهم الخاصة في التعاويذ والصلوات غير المعروفة والمحددة ، وبطريقة أخرى من أجل الحماية وضمان حمايتهم الخاصة من الشر ، وهذه الممارسة كانت غير معروفة من مواقع أخرى.