

## MEDICAL TABLETS FROM THE ARCHIVE OF THE EGIBI FAMILY? AN EDITION OF BM 30918 AND BM 31071

By KRISZTIÁN SIMKÓ AND ANDRÁS BÁCSKAY

Building on recent advances in the field of Neo- and Late Babylonian medicine, this paper presents the edition and thorough analysis of two unpublished medical tablets from the collections of the British Museum (BM 30918 and BM 31071). In the first part, the archival and social context of these tablets will be explored, while also reporting on findings about how they might fit into the larger corpus of Late Babylonian medical texts. The two tablets are published in the second part of the paper. The aim of this paper is to illustrate that the discussed tablets contribute a lot to our understanding of how medicine as a scientific field worked in the latter half of the first millennium B.C.E. It advances further and draws up more comprehensively the thesis about the “personalisation” of medical knowledge, put forward only recently in the scholarly literature. In addition, it also collects evidence that ties Itti-Marduk-balāṭu, an important member of the Egibi family, to the craft of incantation priests (*āšipūtu*); this person has so far been known mostly for his activity as a businessman.

### *The tablets and their archival context*

The two tablets presented in this paper are part of the British Museum’s collections, accessioned under the museum numbers BM 30918 and BM 31071 (see [figs. 1](#) and [4](#)). Both tablets have a portrait format and are preserved in an excellent condition, with the exception of a few abrasions and cracks affecting mostly small areas of the surface near the edges, and in the corners.

BM 30918, the larger of the two tablets, measures 7.6 centimetres in length and 5 centimetres in width. It contains two therapeutic prescriptions and a three-line-long scribal remark, with single horizontal rulings separating each text unit from the next. The other tablet, BM 31071, has smaller dimensions, measuring 4.6 centimetres in length and 2.3 centimetres in width. This tablet gives the description of a single therapy, followed by a colophon resembling the one on BM 30918. The two colophons are especially similar in that they both identify a certain Itti-Marduk-balāṭu as the owner of the tablets. Furthermore, both texts describe this person as a descendant of the Egibi family:

*giṭṭi Itti-Marduk-balāṭu mār Egibi mašmašši Marduk-ēṭir išṭur*

Long tablet of Itti-Marduk-balāṭu, descendant of Egibi, incantation priest. Marduk-ēṭir wrote it down.

Colophon 1

*giṭṭi Itti-Marduk-balāṭu mār Egibi pālih Marduk [m]ādīš lišāqir*

Long tablet of Itti-Marduk-balāṭu, descendant of Egibi. May the one who reveres Marduk value (this tablet) greatly.

Colophon 2

These colophons provide a possible link between the two tablets and the archive of the Egibi family. Equally important, the same archival context can be inferred from the acquisition history of the tablets. Registered as lot 645 and 798, respectively, both BM 30918 and BM 31071 entered the British Museum as part of the 76–11–17 collection, which George Smith acquired during his last journey to Baghdad in 1876. Originally, Smith bought 800 tablets from an antiques dealer named Michael Marini; and several weeks later he followed up with a second purchase of around 2,600 objects.<sup>1</sup> The exact provenance of the tablets is unknown, except that they were discovered by locals searching among the ruins of private houses somewhere in the vicinity of Babylon. The tablets were found in sealed jars, constituting an archive,<sup>2</sup> which has turned out to be the largest

<sup>1</sup> For an extensive discussion of Smith’s activity during his time in Baghdad, see now Panayotov and Wunsch 2014: 191–199; briefly also Evers 1993: 107–108.

<sup>2</sup> See most recently Geller 2018, for a discussion of what might have constituted an archive as opposed to a library in Mesopotamia.

tablet collection from the Neo-Babylonian and early Achaemenid periods, recording the business activities of the Egibi family. Of the three to four thousand tablets that are said to have been found at the site after the first discovery of the sealed jars, 1,700 documents have been attributed with certainty to the archive of the Egibi family.<sup>3</sup> While Egibi tablets entered sporadically the collections of the British Museum as parts of various purchases, the bulk of the archive is still made up of the 76–11–17 collection, to which also the two medical tablets BM 30918 and BM 31071 belong.<sup>4</sup> Thus, even if the tablets do not provide concrete filiation, there seems to be some indirect evidence for the person mentioned in their colophons to be identified with Itti-Marduk-balāṭu, an important member and archive holder of the Egibi family.<sup>5</sup>

#### *Itti-Marduk-balāṭu of the Egibi family*

As mentioned above, the archive of the Egibi family is the largest and most important private tablet collection from the Neo-Babylonian and early Achaemenid periods. It covers more than 100 years, with a sum total of around 1,700 identified documents, which record the business activities of five generations of family members.<sup>6</sup> The texts mainly reflect the activities of the eldest sons who took over the family business after their fathers' death. Itti-Marduk-balāṭu was the chief actor of the third generation; he followed his father, Nabû-ahhē-iddin, who, in turn, took over from the head of the family of the first generation, Šulaja. While the administrative documents attest to several aspects of Itti-Marduk-balāṭu's business enterprise, his apparent occurrence in the colophon of the hitherto known two Egibi tablets with medical contents<sup>7</sup> suggests that he may also have functioned in another capacity. In addition to being trained as a scribe, like his father, he probably became involved with cuneiform scholarship for a time, especially what constituted the craft of healing specialists.<sup>8</sup> In this respect, an important piece of information is provided by the colophon of BM 30918, portraying Itti-Marduk-balāṭu as an incantation priest (*mašmaššu*).

The reference to Itti-Marduk-balāṭu as an incantation priest in this medical context attests to the high esteem of this scholarly profession, which also granted a privileged status to the person

<sup>3</sup> Wunsch 2007: 236. See also Wunsch 2000a: 1, quoting Boscawen's (1878) account of the circumstances surrounding the discovery of the tablets. On the other hand, following Koldewey's reconstruction, Pedersén (1998: 187–188) suggests that the findspot of the archive is probably in the southern part of Babylon, southeast from the temple of Ninurta. For the sealed jars see Walker 1980; Wunsch 1999: 345.

<sup>4</sup> The 76–11–17 collection has now been catalogued in CBTBM vols. IV–V pp. 52–158; for the two medical tablets see especially p. 83 (BM 30918) and p. 91 (BM 31071), with the incorrect identification of the latter as “account of silver”. It has already been pointed out by Wunsch (1999: 346; 2000b: 102 with n. 19) that BM 31071 may probably be a (medical) recipe, and thereby this tablet could indicate the presence of non-administrative or “literary” tablets in the Egibi archive. For the 76–11–17 collection, see also CBTBM vol. VI p. xiv.

<sup>5</sup> See also Wunsch 2000b: 102 n. 19, drawing attention to the fact that BM 31071 “aus einem stark Egibi-haltigen Ankauf der Babylon-Sammlung des Britischen Museums stammt”.

<sup>6</sup> Abraham 2004: 9–16; Jursa 2005: 65–66; Nielsen 2011: 49–50; Spar and von Dassow 2000: 83–92; Wunsch 2000a: 12–19; Wunsch 2000b. On the basis of those texts that had been identified until 1970, the archive of the Egibi family was reconstructed and the main characteristics of their business extensively discussed in Krecher's unpublished habilitation thesis “Das Geschäftshaus Egibi in Babylon in neubabylonischer und achämenidischer Zeit” (Münster, 1970).

<sup>7</sup> Note that BM 59623 mentions a certain Šulaja, son of Nabû-mudammiq of the Egibi family, as the author of a “tried and tested” recipe to stop diarrhoea. Because of the different patronym, however, this person cannot be identical with the first generation Šulaja, son of Nabû-zēra-ukīn of the Egibi family. For BM 59623 see Leichty 1988; Stadhouders 2018a: 128; Steinert 2015: 127 with n. 79.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Jursa 1999: 29 n. 78, as well as Wunsch 2000b: 102 with n. 19, drawing attention to the sale document BM 30704 (Camb. 384) of Itti-Marduk-balāṭu, where he is said to be a <sup>lu</sup>*a-ši-BU*, which could be understood to mean “incantation priest” (l. 9). However, the ambiguous spelling also allows for the reading <sup>lu</sup>*a-ši-bu* “resident, inhabitant”, and therefore the corresponding passage of BM 30704 cannot be seen as confirmation for Itti-Marduk-balāṭu's activity as incantation priest. The reading <sup>lu</sup>*a-ši-bu* has first been suggested by Jursa (1999: 29 n. 78, 103 n. 437), and followed by Abraham (2004: 351). Wunsch (2021) publishes documents that clearly relate to the conscription of free, urban people for state-imposed duties that are structured in a parallel way to temple rosters of *širkus*. One of these documents (BM 31912) starts with <sup>lu</sup>*a-ši-bu*.MEŠ šá i-na ŠU.MIN <sup>m</sup>*ši-rik* DUMU šá <sup>m</sup>KL.<sup>d</sup>AMAR.UTU-TIN DUMU <sup><m></sup>*e-gi-bi* “residents subjected to (the authority) of Širik, son of Itti-Marduk-balāṭu from the Egibi family”. The usage of stative forms and verbal expressions of *ašābu* in the same context confirms the meaning “resident” in this case. The lack of context thus far renders BM 30704 (Camb. 384) inconclusive.

with adequate training in the craft. More important than its social perception, such a designation also implied an educational background extending far beyond the conventional learning of a scribe; it meant specialised training and intimate knowledge of a set of traditional texts. Moreover, as the case of several Neo- and Late-Babylonian businessmen demonstrate, there were no sharp boundaries separating the field of business and entrepreneurship from someone's ability to become involved with temple activities in the capacity of an incantation priest. This is best illustrated by the examples of Bēl-rēmāni, Ninurta-ahhē-bullit, and Iqīša, whose archives also contained a large amount of literature (e.g., therapeutic prescriptions, amulet stone lists, and ritual texts) reflecting their interests and specialised knowledge as incantation priests.<sup>9</sup>

As for Itti-Marduk-balātu, there is no extensive literature that would reflect such a specialised interest or such a specific curricular context. However, an interesting piece of information is provided by a small sale document, which presumably portrays Itti-Marduk-balātu acquiring a writing board labelled <sup>gis</sup>DA (*lē'u*). As this administrative text seems to indicate, the purchased writing board represents a manuscript of the incantation series *bīt rimki*:

A writing board of the (incantation series) *bīt rimki*, which Iqīšaya, son of Būnnānu, descendant of Rabbanē, gave to Itti-Marduk-balātu, son of Nabū-ahhē-iddin, descendant of Egibi, for 2 *kur* of barley. Iqīšaya has been paid the (total of) 2 *kur* of barley from the hands of Itti-Marduk-balātu.

BM 30626 (Nbn. 289) 1–7<sup>10</sup>

Alongside the two medical texts, this small administrative tablet also demonstrates Itti-Marduk-balātu's connection to the profession of incantation and healing specialists. In addition, there is indirect evidence that might indicate that Itti-Marduk-balātu received formal training as an incantation priest. One of the prescriptions in BM 30918 highlights his knowledge of the traditional therapeutic corpus, having been composed by reusing an earlier Neo-Assyrian version as its prototype. As will be argued, the recipe in question can be traced back to a Neo-Assyrian version known from two manuscripts, both of which belonged to the library of a family of incantation priests.<sup>11</sup> While the prescriptions are similar enough to be considered parallels,<sup>12</sup> BM 30918 seems to reflect an editorial process resulting in a new version of the prescription, which is considerably shorter than its Neo-Assyrian prototype, both in terms of the number of necessary drugs, as well as the instructions accompanying the drug list.

Itti-Marduk-balātu's apparent knowledge of the therapeutic corpus is an important link that ties him to the healing crafts. His name also appears to be associated with one of the core texts of incantation priests, featuring in the fragmentary colophon of a manuscript that represents the twelfth tablet of the medical-diagnostic series Sa-gig.<sup>13</sup> However, in the absence of filiation, it is

<sup>9</sup> See especially Jursa 1999: 26–31, drawing attention to three characteristic features that Bēl-rēmāni, Ninurta-ahhē-bullit, and Iqīša had in common: “Die soziale Schicht, der diese Personen angehören, ist in allen drei Fällen dieselbe, ebenso wie die (mehr oder weniger enge) Bindung an einen Tempel und das Pfründenwesen für jede Familie eine wesentliche Rolle spielt. (...) Diese Regelmäßigkeit macht wahrscheinlich, daß diese Faktoren einander bedingen und der eine ohne den anderen nicht denkbar ist – schließlich war es auch Aufgabe (vielleicht die Hauptaufgabe) der Beschwörungspriester, im Kult (vor allem bei Reinigungszeremonien) zu agieren” (p. 29). See also more recently Reynolds 2019: 111–120, for colophons of scientific texts mentioning members of the Mušēzib family.

<sup>10</sup> <sup>gis</sup>DA šá É rim-ki šá <sup>m</sup>BA-šá-a / A-šú šá <sup>m</sup>bu-na-nu A <sup>l</sup> GAL-DŪ / a-na MIN<sub>6</sub> GUR ŠE.BAR a-na <sup>m</sup>KI-<sup>d</sup>AMAR.UTU-TIN / A-šú šá <sup>m</sup>dAG-ŠEŠ.MEŠ-MU A <sup>m</sup>e-gi-bi / id-di-nu ŠE.BAR-<sup>7</sup> MIN<sub>6</sub> GUR / <sup>m</sup>BA-šá-a ina ŠU.MIN <sup>m</sup>KI-<sup>d</sup>AMAR.UTU-TIN / e-tir (reference courtesy of C. Wunsch). For the reading <sup>gis</sup>DA šá É rim-ki, see CAD L s.v. *lē'u*, p. 158. On the other hand, this passage is also discussed by Læssøe (1955: 83 n. 163), with the emended reading <sup>gis</sup>NA<sub>5</sub> (*pitnu*), which the author explains

in the ritual context of building a house in the open country in preparation for the *bīt rimki* ceremony: “wooden *pitnu* (‘chest, box’) for a *br.*” (cf. AHw II s.v. *pitnu*, p. 870). See also Reiner 1958: 207, excluding the possibility that BM 30626 could refer to the ritual *bīt rimki*, alongside such a high purchase price as two *kur* of barley. In this respect, one must also consider the fact, however, that the wage of a specialist preparing the copy of the *bīt rimki* tablet must have been much higher than the average wage of an (unskilled) worker, earning so much barley with approximately two months of work (Jursa 2010: 143 n. 836, 673–681).

<sup>11</sup> This private tablet collection is commonly referred to as the library of Kišir-Aššur, but the texts attest to several generations of family members, most of whom were employed by the Assur temple as incantation priests. For an overview see Jean 2006: 147–153; Pedersén 1986: 44–45. For a more comprehensive study see Maul 2010.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. CBTBM vols. IV–V p. 83. See also Geller 1990: 122, in connection with the tablet BM 66942.

<sup>13</sup> LKU 83 + LKU 85 (Heefel 2000: 144 ms. G; Labat 1951: 100–111 mss. D and E). The colophon is also cited by Hunger (1968: 37 no. 81).

difficult to decide, whether this Itti-Marduk-balāṭu, who must have been the scribe of this particular manuscript, is a namesake, or the actual member of the Egibi family. The matter is further complicated by the provenance of the tablet, since it does not come from the main Babylonian archive of the Egibis, but from Uruk, where the largest private archive in the late Neo-Babylonian and early Achaemenid periods belonged to a different branch of the Egibi family. It remains possible that the Sa-gig manuscript was transferred from Babylon to Uruk through a network connecting the archives of the two Egibi branches;<sup>14</sup> however, this assumption would also have to account for the discovery of the manuscript in the Eanna temple complex, with a larger collection of literary texts.<sup>15</sup> At the moment, it is not possible to establish a direct link between the Egibis and the Eanna temple complex, and therefore the question of authorship of the Sa-gig manuscript must remain open.

Even without the Sa-gig connection, there seems to be enough evidence to suggest that, at least for some time, Itti-Marduk-balāṭu of the Babylonian branch of the Egibi family was active as an incantation priest. In addition to purchasing scientific texts from the realm of these specialists, he is named as such in the colophon of the tablet BM 30918, which also attests to his knowledge of the traditional therapeutic corpus.

### *The prescriptions*

Two prescriptions are recorded on BM 30918. There is no medical incipit in this text; nor is there any specific medical condition mentioned for which either of the two prescriptions might have been employed. In fact, the first prescription on the tablet highlights a long and quite unconventional procedure without making a single remark on the corresponding medical condition. Accordingly, a variety of healing substances were collected in amounts ranging from less than half a shekel to up to six shekels. The whole batch was crushed, sieved and consumed in small dosages weighing either a half or one shekel. No other information is given as to the preparation of the medicine, whereas a brief reference to liquids is made at the end, instructing the patient to drink beer or wine as the final step after the medicine has been taken.<sup>16</sup>

The second text unit is congruent with the usual therapeutic prescriptions: a bandage is made to treat rather unspecific problems, such as stiffness, suppurations, fractures, and torn tendons affecting, most probably, the lower extremities.<sup>17</sup> The same prescription is also known from the unpublished Late Babylonian tablet BM 66942, which appears to be a complete duplicate, since it exhibits only small orthographic and grammatical differences, and a few additions and omissions of lesser importance. BM 66942 has a landscape format, and contains only this one prescription. The left edge of the tablet contains the illegible remnants of a three-line-long inscription, presumably a library filing notation. However, any attempt to read this inscription has been unsuccessful so far, and resulted only in some uncertain suggestions as to the reading of the passage.<sup>18</sup> Despite this lacuna in the text, so much is evident that the duplicate prescription ends on the reverse side of BM 66942, and it does not continue on its edge.

The prescription starts by listing 36 types of powder made of a great variety of healing substances. Cereals, legumes, different aromatics, and various trees, like cedar and cypress, are listed alongside more unconventional materials, including such rarely attested drugs as the powder of slag from a kiln or the powder of an old tree trunk. The drug list is followed by the summary section of the prescription and the description of the pertinent medical condition, enumerating a series of rather unspecific symptoms that probably affected the leg. Then, the

<sup>14</sup> See Jursa 2005: 147, noting in connection with the archive of the Uruk branch that in the “same house some texts were found that have to be attributed to relatives of the holders of the main archive”. On the other hand, according to Abraham (2004: 9), it is not possible to establish a link between the Babylonian and Uruk branches of the Egibis.

<sup>15</sup> LKU p. 1. For the various tablet finds that originate in the main courtyard of the Eanna temple complex, see also

Clancier 2009: 33–37; Pedersén 1998: 205–209; Robson 2019: 213–214.

<sup>16</sup> BM 30918 obv. 1–17 = §1.1.

<sup>17</sup> BM 30918 obv. 18–rev. 35 = §1.2.

<sup>18</sup> BM 66942 is published here as Text 1a. Note that only a preliminary transliteration will be offered there with respect to the problematic inscription on the edge of the tablet. For a photo of this inscription, see Fig. 3 below.

text gives the necessary instructions with respect to the preparation of the medicine and its subsequent application: the different powders were kneaded either with old barley beer or with the juice of the plant called *kasû*, depending on the season the medicine was to be made. Finally, the paste or dough thus prepared had to be applied in the form of a bandage put, probably, on the legs.

As mentioned above, the second prescription in BM 30918 may have been composed by drawing on an earlier Neo-Assyrian version as its prototype. The Neo-Assyrian version is known from two manuscripts. Although they differ from one another in format, one being a single-column excerpt tablet (BAM 125), the other a compilation of recipes arranged in two columns (BAM 124), both manuscripts contain therapeutic material dealing with the diseases of the feet and legs. As already stated, the relevant passages in these two tablets run parallel enough to the corresponding part of BM 30918 and its duplicate, BM 66942. However, the Neo-Assyrian parallel also represents a considerably longer version of the prescription, so much so, that important remarks, such as the one about the outcome of the procedure, are missing from BM 30918.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, the instruction addressed to the healer to smear the dough with ghee (*ina himēti tušalpat*) is only attested in the Neo-Assyrian version. These omissions might attest to a kind of editorial process, which resulted in an abbreviated version of the prescription. The same process had an even greater impact on two other sections of the prescription, namely, the summary and the preceding drug list. The summary section of the late texts simply says “in total 36 (types of) flour”.<sup>20</sup> In comparison, the Neo-Assyrian tablets render the very same passage as “in total 46 (types of) flour, plants and aromatics, large (amount of) powder for a bandage (used both in) the medical and exorcistic lore”.<sup>21</sup>

The apparent differences between the two versions of the drug list demonstrate the editorial process behind the abridged version of the prescription, as it is presented by the two Late Babylonian tablets BM 30918 and BM 66942. Table 1 outlines the structure of the two lists, pointing out that the overall composition of the drugs has not changed in these late texts. Several items have been removed from the late version of the prescription, but only one has been added without a corresponding Neo-Assyrian parallel. Although mostly plants and trees from the middle part of the list appear to have been deleted, it is yet to be determined exactly what principles played a role in the elimination process. At the same time, the relative order of drugs presents another difficulty, as it differs in the individual drug lists. In fact, compared to the earlier Neo-Assyrian version, more than half of the remaining content in the late texts seem to have been rearranged in one way or another. As indicated in Table 1, sometimes there is little deviation from one version to the other, as in the case of the *ennēnu*-barley, which is enumerated fifth in the Neo-Assyrian and sixth in the Late-Babylonian texts. On the other hand, there are examples of considerable divergencies, too, like the roasted *sahlû*-cress, which is seventeenth in the Neo-Assyrian and twenty-third in the Late Babylonian drug list. Consequently, any attempt at a more comprehensive understanding of the pertinent editorial process is hindered by the absence of any discernible patterns concerning both the selection of the drugs, as well as the ways in which they are represented in the individual drug lists. Even if these details must be left unexplained for the time being, the prescription in BM 30918 and BM 66942, along with the one that precedes it in the former tablet, has much to add to our knowledge of the Neo- and Late Babylonian therapeutic corpus (see below).

<sup>19</sup> Note the prognostic term *iballuṭ* (“he will live”) in BAM 124 iii 59 // BAM 125: 33. This verb also occurs in BM 66942 rev. 18’.

<sup>20</sup> BM 30918 rev. 29: *naphar šalāša u šeššet qēmū*.

<sup>21</sup> BAM 124 iii 54–55 // BAM 125: 22–23: *naphar erbā u šeššet qēmū [šamm]ū u riqū siku rabū naš[ma]tti mašmaššūti asūti*.



TABLE 1 Comparison of drug lists (the orthographic differences are in bold type)

<i>BAM 124 (cf. BAM 125)</i>			<i>BM 30918 (cf. BM 66942)</i>		
<i>Name of drug</i>	<i>Position in the drug list</i>		<i>Name of drug</i>	<i>Position in the drug list</i>	
	<i>No. in BAM 124</i>	<i>Concordance BAM 124→BM 30918</i>		<i>No. in BM 30918</i>	<i>Concordance BM 30918→BAM 124</i>
1. ZÌ šib-ri	1	=	ZÌ šib-ri	1	=
2. ZÌ LAGAB MUNU <sub>6</sub>	2	=	ZÌ MUNU <sub>5</sub>	2	=
3. ZÌ 'LAGAB' <sup>1</sup> ŠE.EŠTUB	3	=	ZÌ ŠE.EŠTUB	3	=
4. ZÌ ŠE.MUŠ <sub>5</sub>	4	=	ZÌ ŠE.MUŠ <sub>5</sub>	4	=
5. ZÌ <sup>še</sup> NU.HA	5	5→6	ZÌ GIG.BA	5	5→6
6. ZÌ GIG	6	6→5	ZÌ <sup>še</sup> IN.NU.HA	6	6→5
7. ZÌ GÚ.GAL	7	7→9	ZÌ ŠE.SA.A	7	7→10
8. ZÌ GÚ.[TUR]	8	8→10	ZÌ <sup>še</sup> sa-hi-in-du	8	8→11
9. [ZÌ] GÚ.NÍG.ÀR.RA	9	9→11	ZÌ GÚ.GAL	9	9→7
10. ZÌ ŠE.SA.A	10	10→7	ZÌ GÚ.TUR	10	10→8
11. ZÌ <sup>še</sup> sa-hi-'in-dī' <sup>1</sup>	11	11→8	ZÌ GÚ.NÍG.ÀR.RA	11	11→9
12. ZÌ ZÍZ.A.AN	12	=	ZÌ ZÍZ.A.AN	12	=
13. 'ZÌ' <sup>1</sup> pu-ud-ri	13	=	ZÌ pu-ud-ri	13	=
14. ZÌ ŠE <sub>10</sub> TU <sup>mušen</sup>	14	=	ZÌ ŠE <sub>10</sub> TU <sup>mušen</sup> MEŠ	14	=
15. ZÌ NUMUN GADA	15	=	ZÌ NUMUN GADA	15	=
16. ZÌ GAZI <sup>sar</sup> BÍL.MEŠ	16	16→19	ZÌ DUH.ŠE.GIŠ.Ì	16	16→19(20)
17. ZÌ Z[À.HI].LI BÍL-te	17	17→23(25)	ZÌ GIS.ÛR SUMUN	17	17→20(21)
18. 0	-(18)		ZÌ ŠE.BAR SUMUN	18	
19. ZÌ IM.BABAR	18(19)	18(19)→22(23)	ZÌ GAZI <sup>sar</sup> BÍL	19	19→16
20. ZÌ DUH.ŠE.GIŠ.Ì HÁD.DU-ti	19(20)	19(20)→16	ZÌ ŠIKA NINDU SUMUN	20	20→22(23)
21. ZÌ GIŠ.ÛR SUMUN	20(21)	20(21)→17	ZÌ ha-he-e šá UDUN	21	21→24(25)
22. ZÌ GI gi-sal BĀD SUMUN	21(22)		0	-(22)	
23. ZÌ ŠIKA IM.ŠU.RIN.NA SUMUN	22(23)	22(23)→20	ZÌ IM.BABBAR	22(23)	22(23)→18(19)
24. ZÌ MUNU <sub>6</sub>	23(24)		0	-(24)	
25. ZÌ ha-he-e šá UDUN	24(25)	24(25)→21	ZÌ sah-lé-e BÍL-tú	23(25)	23(25)→17
26. ZÌ di-ik-me-ni šá <sup>duš</sup> UTUL <sub>7</sub>	25(26)		0	-(26)	
27. ZÌ <sup>ú</sup> sa-da-ni	26(27)		0	-(27)	
28. ZÌ <sup>giš</sup> si-hi	27(28)		0	-(28)	
29. ZÌ ar-ga-ni	28(29)		0	-(29)	
30. ZÌ <sup>giš</sup> LUM.HA	29(30)		0	-(30)	
31. ZÌ <sup>ú</sup> áp-ru-še	30(31)		0	-(31)	
32. ZÌ <sup>ú</sup> ak-tam	31(32)		0	-(32)	
33. ZÌ A.GAR.GAR MAŠ.DÀ	32(33)		0	-(33)	

34.	ZÌ <sup>ú</sup> <i>ša-šu-um-te</i>	33(34)	
35.	ZÌ <sup>giš</sup> EREN	34(35)	=
36.	ZÌ <sup>giš</sup> ŠUR.MÍN	35(36)	=
37.	ZÌ <sup>giš</sup> <i>dup-ra-ni</i>	36(37)	=
38.	ZÌ <sup>šim</sup> GÚR.GÚR	37(38)	=
39.	ZÌ <sup>šim</sup> LI	38(39)	=
40.	ZÌ <sup>šim</sup> GAM.MA	39(40)	=
41.	ZÌ <sup>šim</sup> ŠEŠ	40(41)	40(41)→31(42)
42.	ZÌ <sup>šim</sup> GÍR	41(42)	41(42)→33(44)
43.	ZÌ ŠIM.[ŠAL <sup>?</sup> ]	42(43)	42(43)→34(45)
44.	[ZÌ <sup>šim</sup> MUG <sup>?</sup> ]	43(44)	43(44)→35(46)
45.	ZÌ <sup>šim</sup> GIG	44(45)	44(45)→32(43)
46.	[ZÌ] GI DU <sub>10</sub> -GA	45(46)	45(46)→36(47)
47.	ZÌ <sup>giš</sup> MAN.DU	46(47)	46(47)→30(41)

PAP 46 (altogether 46 listed drugs)

0		-(34)	
ZÌ <sup>giš</sup> EREN		24(35)	=
ZÌ ŠUR.MÍN		25(36)	=
ʾZÌ <sup>giš</sup> <i>dup-ra-nu</i>		26(37)	=
ZÌ <sup>ršim</sup> GÚR.GÚR		27(38)	=
ZÌ <sup>šim</sup> LI		28(39)	=
ZÌ <sup>šim</sup> GAM.MA		29(40)	=
ZÌ <sup>ršim</sup> MAN.DU		30(41)	30(41)→46(47)
ZÌ <sup>šim</sup> ŠEŠ		31(42)	31(42)→40(41)
ZÌ <sup>šim</sup> GIG		32(43)	32(43)→44(45)
ZÌ <sup>šim</sup> GÍR		33(44)	33(44)→41(42)
ZÌ ŠIM.ŠAL		34(45)	34(45)→42(43)
ZÌ <sup>šim</sup> MUG		35(46)	35(46)→43(44)
ZÌ GI DU <sub>10</sub> -GA		36(47)	36(47)→45(46)

PAP 36 (altogether 36 listed drugs)

Turning now to BM 31071, the only prescription presented by this small tablet has the same characteristics as the previously discussed text, including the complete absence of a medical incipit.<sup>22</sup> BM 31071 also starts with the drug list, and mentions rarely attested substances like the rather obscure *tušru*-plant. Then, the preparation of the medicine is described in an unusual detail. Accordingly, the drugs must be kept boiling in twelve litres of water until the volume of the mixture reduces to four litres; such a technical detail is otherwise rare in the more mainstream therapeutic corpus.<sup>23</sup> As the last step, pressed oil is to be poured over the mixture, after which a brief reference follows with the instruction to repeat the procedure.

#### *BM 30918 and BM 31071: personalised therapies?*

In recent years, a relatively large number of Neo- and Late Babylonian therapeutic tablets have been identified with very similar characteristic features. These tablets fall outside the scope of the more traditional or mainstream therapeutic corpus, exemplified by such compendia as the 45-tablet-long series from Uruk<sup>24</sup> or the numbered extract tablets which usually collect material from several parts of standardised therapeutic texts.<sup>25</sup> The recently identified tablets seem to represent a separate category within the Neo- and Late Babylonian therapeutic corpus, displaying a series of formal and material features that have led researchers to consider them to be personalised therapies or the possible experiments conducted by innovative physicians within the confines of their own professional practices. As such, these prescriptions were not meant to be part of fixed and more conventional compendia.<sup>26</sup>

Considering the formal characteristics first, all tablets in this category are relatively small. They are inscribed with one or only a few prescriptions, mostly in a landscape format, although the portrait format is by no means exceptional. The prescriptions are distinguished by a less common terminology, as they mention rare substances, and describe unusual healing practices, sometimes to the extent that interesting technical details hardly attested elsewhere in the corpus can be inferred from these texts. The regular use of detailed drug measurements is another typical trait.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, it is uncommon to find complete duplicates of these prescriptions, whereas distant parallels or variants do occur among the mainstream medical texts. In several cases, a brief colophon is also appended to the text, referring to the person who authored, owned or copied the tablet. As noted in this respect, “whenever a colophon of the type is crediting a physician with the authorship of the text, that person should be assumed to have had his floruit in or shortly prior to the time when the physical manuscript was produced”.<sup>28</sup>

The two medical tablets BM 30918 and BM 31071 have very similar features in terms of format and content, which makes their attribution to the above-discussed category of therapeutic texts a highly reasonable assumption. They are of small dimensions and record only a few quite unusual medical procedures, while also using less common terminology. According to the tablets’ colophons, they may have belonged to the archive holder Itti-Marduk-balāṭu of the Babylonian branch of the Egibi family. Based on the accepted premise, it can be postulated that Itti-Marduk-balāṭu not only owned, but also

<sup>22</sup> BM 31071 obv. 1–rev. 18 = §2.1.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Finkel 2000: 147. See also below the philological commentary on BM 31071 rev. 15–16.

<sup>24</sup> Frahm 2019: 31; Heeßel 2010: 33–34; Salin 2016. Note that only fragments of tablets 41 and 45 (SpTU 1 59 and 48, respectively) are known from this compendium, and therefore it is not possible to establish with any certainty how much this version and the one from Nineveh actually overlap. See also Steinert 2018: 176 n. 105, with the important remark that the Uruk series might have differed considerably from the Neo-Assyrian version with regard to its overall structure and length.

<sup>25</sup> See, e.g., SpTU 1 nos. 44 and 46 (9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> *pirsu* of the series *šumma amēlu muhhašu umma ukāl*); BM 42272 (30<sup>th</sup> *pirsu* of the same series; see Abusch and Schwemer 2011: 204–245 no. 7.10 ms. j; Abusch and Schwemer 2016: 48–63

no. 7.11 ms. n; Bácskay 2015; Scurlock 2014: 412–417, 631–633); BAM 403 (19<sup>th</sup> *nishu* of the same series); BM 35512 (34<sup>th</sup> *nishu* of the same series; see Bácskay 2018b); BM 78963 (2<sup>nd</sup> *nishu* of a series that probably deals with various forms of internal fever; see Stadhouders and Johnson 2018). For the extant *pirsu* and *nishu* tablets see also Panayotov 2018: 115; Steinert 2018: 176 with n. 105.

<sup>26</sup> The following discussion is based on Stadhouders 2018a. However, as the author has pointed out, similar conclusions were drawn also by Heeßel in a presentation delivered at the BabMed Workshop “Medical Commentaries and Comment(aries) on Medicine” (Berlin, Freie Universität, 26–27 September, 2017).

<sup>27</sup> Finkel 2000: 146–147; Stadhouders and Johnson 2018: 564–565.

<sup>28</sup> Stadhouders 2018a: 126.



authored these tablets.<sup>29</sup> He appears as an incantation priest in BM 30918 and, as illustrated by the above-discussed administrative tablet, he also seems to have collected incantation-related texts, which suggests him having some formal training in the craft of healing specialists.<sup>30</sup>

As a person with such an educational background, Itti-Marduk-balātu must have been familiar with the more standardised therapeutic corpus, to the extent that he may even have used earlier prescriptions as prototypes for his medical experiments. According to the hypothesis presented above, the distant Neo-Assyrian parallels BAM 124 and BAM 125 might indicate such an editorial process that has resulted in an abridged version of an otherwise lengthy prescription. It is difficult to explain, on the other hand, how the apparent duplicate BM 66942 fits into this context, unless it is one of those pieces in the 82–9–18 collection which was purchased as coming from Babylon rather than Abu Habbah (Sippar).<sup>31</sup> In this case, it might be possible to argue, although not without a certain degree of speculation, that BM 66942 is a stray tablet from the archive of the Egibi family<sup>32</sup> and that it represents another copy of the prescription otherwise known from BM 30918.

### Conclusion

Recent research in Neo- and Late Babylonian medicine has already yielded some important preliminary findings regarding the ways in which therapeutic knowledge had been transmitted and reorganised after the end of the Neo-Assyrian era. Based on these new results, it was possible to argue that the two tablets BM 30918 and BM 31071 (and perhaps BM 66942) belong to a separate category of texts, containing what may be best described as personalised therapies or proof of experiments conducted by innovative physicians. It must be noted, however, that the study of the Neo- and Late Babylonian therapeutic corpus is in its early stages, and therefore the conclusions drawn in this paper must remain provisional. Facilitated by the systematic edition of the great number of unpublished tablets, a deeper understanding of therapy as it was exercised in these late periods could eventually lead to the revision of our hypotheses.

### Text edition<sup>33</sup>

Before proceeding with the edition of BM 30918 and BM 31071, it is worth taking a look at the orthographic and linguistic peculiarities of the texts, since they are typical of the Neo- and Late Babylonian medical corpus. In this respect, it is noticeable that case endings are used irregularly: drug names are mostly written in the nominative case, while sometimes the accusative case (e.g., <sup>u</sup>*kur-ka-nam* and <sup>u</sup>*biš-šá*; BM 30918 obv. 2 and 5) or the genitive case (e.g., <sup>giš</sup>*šur-mi-ni*; BM 31071 obv. 7) is used instead. Similarly, in a construct chain or with prepositions, where the genitive is expected, the case ending is nominative (e.g., *ZI* <sup>se</sup>*sa-hi-in-du* and *ana ke-ši-ru*; BM 30918 obv. 20 and rev. 32); the loss of the final case-marking vowel is also attested (e.g., <sup>u</sup>*kam-kád*; BM 30918 obv. 10). Another characteristic feature of these medical texts is the presence of unconventional orthography, such as MUN *sal-lim* instead of MUN *eme-sal-lim* (BM 31071 obv. 5), and *qà-lap* instead of *qí-líp* (BM 30918 obv. 10–11). Moreover, healing plants not known from the Neo-Assyrian therapeutic corpus also occur in these texts (e.g., the plants called *zūpu* and *biššu*; BM 30918 obv. 5).

A typical feature of the Neo- and Late Babylonian therapeutic texts is the use of exact drug measurements. In BM 30918 and BM 31071 the sequence of half, one, and two shekels were used, but the subdivision of the shekel into smaller units, such as 1/4 shekel (*rebūtu*), is also attested.

<sup>29</sup> See Geller 2010: 141–160, for important remarks on the “likelihood of actual authorship” in the context of the late medical commentaries.

<sup>30</sup> The colophon of BM 30918 also refers to a person named Marduk-ētir, who probably acted as the copyist of the tablet. Several people with this name are attested among the administrative documents of the Egibi family, usually functioning as scribes or witnesses. A possible candidate for the scribe copying BM 30918 might be the one in BM 30451 (Dar. 156) rev. 10–11, described as “Marduk-ētir, son

of Mūrānu, descendant of Egibi” (Abraham 2004: 377–378 no. 93).

<sup>31</sup> See Reade’s introduction to the Sippar collection of the British Museum, especially CBTBM vol. VI p. xxxiii: part of the 82–9–18 collection came from Babylon.

<sup>32</sup> See Wunsch 2000a: 2 n. 5, where the 82–9–18 consignment is listed among those collections in which Egibi tablets have been identified.

<sup>33</sup> The tablets are published here by the permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

*Text 1*

Museum No. BM 30918<sup>34</sup>  
 Accession No. 1876-11-17, 645  
 Measurements 7.6 × 5 cm  
 Provenance Babylon  
 Date 550-500 B.C.E.

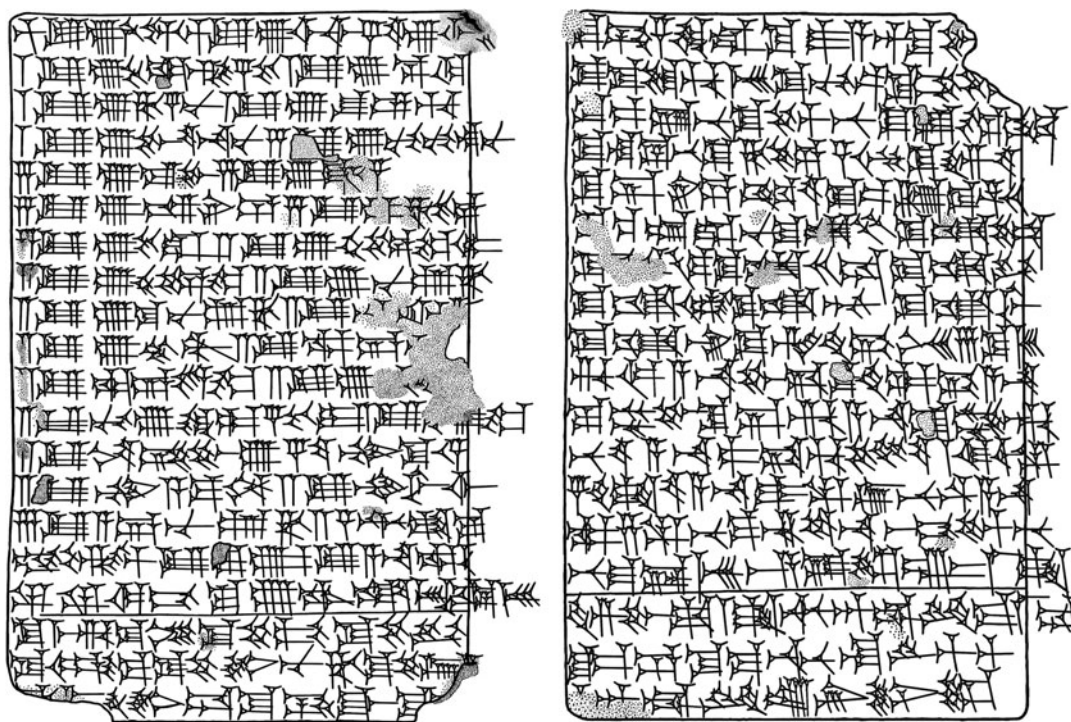


Fig. 1 BM 30918 (British Museum), copy by K. Simkó.

## Obverse

1. 1/2 GÍN <sup>ú</sup>tar-muš 1/2 GÍN <sup>ú</sup>IGI-lim 4-ut <sup>úr</sup>IGI.NIŠ<sup>1</sup>
2. 1 GÍN <sup>ú</sup>kur-ka-nam šá KUR 1 GÍN <sup>ú</sup>SI.SÁ
3. 1 GÍN <sup>ú</sup>ha-šá-nu 1 GÍN <sup>ú</sup>šu-un-hu
4. 1 GÍN <sup>ú</sup>bu-ut-na-nu 5 <sup>1</sup>GÍN<sup>1</sup> <sup>ú</sup>qul-qul-la-nu
5. 5 GÍN <sup>ú</sup>zu-pu 5 GÍN <sup>úr</sup>biš<sup>1</sup>-šá
6. 5 GÍN <sup>ú</sup>úr-né-e 5 GÍN <sup>1</sup>ha<sup>1</sup>-še-e
7. <sup>5</sup>1 GÍN <sup>ú</sup>KUR.RA 2 GÍN <sup>ú</sup>GAMUN<sup>sar</sup>.GE<sub>6</sub>
8. <sup>2</sup>1 GÍN <sup>ú</sup>GAMUN<sup>sar</sup> 2 GÍN <sup>ú</sup>NU.LUH.HA
9. 2 GÍN <sup>ú</sup>DÚR.NU.LUH.HA 2 GÍN <sup>1</sup>NUMUN<sup>?</sup>1 x x
10. <sup>2</sup>1 GÍN <sup>ú</sup>kam-kád 2 GÍN qà-lap x [x]
11. <sup>2</sup>1 GÍN qà-lap SUM<sup>sar</sup> 2 GÍN <sup>ú</sup>x [x x]
12. 2 <sup>1</sup>GÍN<sup>1</sup> NUMUN <sup>ú</sup>HUR.SAG šá KUR-i 2 GÍN <sup>1</sup>NUMUN GAZI<sup>1sar</sup>
13. <sup>2</sup>1 GÍN <sup>na4</sup>gab-bu-ú 4-ut MUN KU.PAD
14. 2 <sup>1</sup>GÍN<sup>1</sup> MUN a-ma-nim 2 GÍN MUN <eme>-sal-lim
15. 6 GÍN ILLU NU.LUH.HA 2 NINDA <sup>1</sup>ti-it-ta<sup>1?</sup>

<sup>34</sup> For photos of the tablet see [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W\\_1876-1117-645](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1876-1117-645), last accessed 23.09.2021.

16. GAZ SIM 1/2 GÍN 'lu<sup>1</sup>-ú 1 GÍN a-na KA-šú  
 17. ŠUB.ŠUB-di KAŠ lu-ú GEŠTIN EGIR.MEŠ-šú NAG.MEŠ
- 
18. ZÌ šib-ri ZÌ MUNU<sub>5</sub> ZÌ ŠE.EŠTUB ZÌ ŠE.MUŠ<sub>5</sub>  
 19. ZÌ GIG.BA ZÌ <sup>še</sup>IN.NU.HA ZÌ ŠE.SA.'A'  
 20. 'ZÌ <sup>še</sup>sa<sup>1</sup>-hi-in-du ZÌ GÚ.GAL 'ZÌ' G[Ú.TUR]

Reverse

21. 'ZÌ' GÚ.NÍG.ÀR.RA ZÌ ZÍZ.A.AN ZÌ 'pu<sup>1</sup>-[ud-ri]  
 22. ZÌ ŠE<sub>10</sub> TU<sup>mušen</sup>.MEŠ ZÌ NUMUN GADA ZÌ DUH.ŠE.G[ÍŠ.Ì]  
 23. 'ZÌ' GIS.ÜR SUMUN ZÌ ŠE.BAR SUMUN ZÌ 'GAZI<sup>tsar</sup> 'BÍL'  
 24. ZÌ ŠIKA NINDU SUMUN ZÌ ha-he<sup>1</sup>(šE)-e šá UDUN ZÌ IM.BABBAR  
 25. ZÌ sah-lé-e BÍL-tú ZÌ <sup>gis</sup>EREN ZÌ ŠUR.MÌN  
 26. 'ZÌ' <sup>gis</sup>dup-ra-nu ZÌ <sup>ršim<sup>1</sup></sup>GÚR.GÚR ZÌ <sup>šim<sup>1</sup></sup>LI  
 27. 'ZÌ' <sup>šim<sup>1</sup></sup>GAM.MA ZÌ <sup>ršim<sup>1</sup></sup>MAN.DU ZÌ <sup>šim<sup>1</sup></sup>ŠEŠ  
 28. ZÌ <sup>šim<sup>1</sup></sup>GIG ZÌ <sup>šim<sup>1</sup></sup>GÍR ZÌ ŠIM.ŠAL  
 29. ZÌ <sup>šim<sup>1</sup></sup>MUG ZÌ GI DU<sub>10</sub>.GA PAP 36 ZÌ.MEŠ  
 30. ri-di a-na pu-uš-'šú<sup>1</sup>-hi šag-ga a-na  
 31. lu-ub-bu-ku sah-ri a-na 'su<sup>1</sup>-up-pu-hu  
 32. LUGUD a-na pa-ta-hu še-bir-tú ana ke-ši-ru  
 33. šá-hi-it-tú a-na tur-ru SA bat-qa a-na  
 34. ka-ša-ru šum<sub>4</sub>-ma EN.TE.NA ina KAŠ ŠE.BAR SUMUN  
 35. šum<sub>4</sub>-ma AMA.MEŠ ina A GAZI<sup>tsar</sup> SILA<sub>11</sub>-aš LÁ-id
- 
36. <sup>im</sup>GÍD.DA <sup>m</sup>it-ti-<sup>dr</sup>ASAL<sup>1</sup>.LÚ.HI-ba-lá-tù  
 37. DUMU <sup>m</sup>E.GÍ<sub>7</sub>.BA.TI.LA <sup>lu</sup>MAŠ.MAŠ  
 38. <sup>rm.d<sup>1</sup></sup>ASAL.LÚ.HI-KAR-ir IN.SAR

Bound transcription

Translation

§1.1  
 1zūz tarmuš zūz imhur-līm rebūt imhur-ešrā  
 2išten šiqil kurkanām ša šadī ištēn šiqil šurdunū 3išten šiqil  
 hašānu ištēn šiqil šunhu 4išten šiqil butnānu hamšat  
 šiqil qulqullānu 5hamšat šiqil zūpu hamšat šiqil bišša  
 6hamšat šiqil urnē hamšat šiqil hašē 7hamšat šiqil nīnū šinā  
 šiqil zību 8šinā šiqil kamūnu šinā šiqil nuhurtu 9šinā šiqil  
 tīyatu šinā šiqil zēr xx 10šinā šiqil kamkad šinā šiqil qalap  
 x[x] 11šinā šiqil qalap šūmī šinā šiqil x[xx] 12šinā šiqil zēr  
 azupīri ša šadī šinā šiqil zēr kasī 13šinā šiqil gabbū rebūt  
 tābat kupad 14šinā šiqil tābat amānim šinā šiqil tābat  
 emesallim 15šeššet šiqil hīl nuhurti šinā akal tītta<sup>(?)</sup>  
 16tahaššal tanappi mišil šiqu lu ištēn šiqu ana pišu  
 17tattanaddi šikaru lu karānu arkatišu ištanatti

§1.1  
 1-15A half shekel of tarmuš-lupin, a half shekel of imhur-līm-plant, a quarter shekel of imhur-ešrā-plant, one shekel of mountain kurkanū-plant, one shekel of šurdunū-plant, one shekel of hašānu-thyme, one shekel of šunhu-plant, one shekel of butnānu-plant, five shekels of qulqullānu-cassia, five shekels of zūpu-hyssop, five shekels of biššu-rue, five shekels of urnū-mint, five shekels of hašū-thyme, five shekels of nīnū-plant, two shekels of black cumin, two shekels of kamūnu-cumin, two shekels of nuhurtu-plant, two shekels of tīyatu-plant, two shekels of xxx seed, two shekels of kamkadu-plant, two shekels of x[xxx] skin, two shekels of garlic skin, two shekels of x[xxx] plant, two shekels of mountain saffron seed, two shekels of kasū seed, two shekels of alum, a quarter shekel of kupad-salt, two shekels of amānu-salt, two shekels of emesallu-salt, six shekels of nuhurtu resin, two akal of clay<sup>(?)</sup> — 16-17You crush, sieve (and) repeatedly put (the drugs in dosages of) half a shekel or one shekel in his mouth. He keeps drinking beer or wine afterwards.

Continued

(Continued)

Bound transcription	Translation
<p>§1.2  <sup>18</sup>qēm šibri qēm buqli qēm arsuppi qēm šigūši <sup>19</sup>qēm kibti qēm ennēni qēm labti <sup>20</sup>qēm sahindu qēm hallūri qēm k [akki] <sup>21</sup>qēm kiššani qēm kunāši qēm p[udri] <sup>22</sup>qēm zē summāti qēm zēr kitē qēm ku[psi] <sup>23</sup>qēm gušūri labīri qēm uṭṭati labīri qēm kasī qalūti <sup>24</sup>qēm hašab tinūri labīri qēm hahē ša utāni qēm gašši <sup>25</sup>qēm sahlē qalātu qēm erēni qēm šurmīni <sup>26</sup>qēm duprānu qēm kukuri qēm burāši <sup>27</sup>qēm šumlalī qēm suādi qēm murri <sup>28</sup>qēm kanakti qēm asi qēm šimiššalī <sup>29</sup>qēm ballukki qēm qanī ṭabi naphar šalāšā u šeššet qēmū <sup>30</sup>rīdi ana puššuhi šagga ana <sup>31</sup>lubbuku sahiri ana suppuhu <sup>32</sup>šarku ana patāhu šebirtu ana kešīru <sup>33</sup>šahītu ana turru šēr āna baṭqa ana <sup>34</sup>kašāru šumma kuššu ina šikar uṭṭati labīri <sup>35</sup>šumma ummātu ina mē kasī talāš tašammid</p>	<p>§1.2  <sup>18–29</sup>Coarsely ground flour, malt flour, <i>arsuppu</i>-grain flour, <i>šigūšu</i>-barley flour, wheat flour, <i>ennēnu</i>-barley flour, roasted grain flour, <i>sahindu</i>-barley flour, pea flour, l[entil] flour, <i>kiššanu</i>-grain flour, emmer flour, d[ung cake] powder, dove’s dung powder, linseed flour, ses[ame bran] flour, an old tree-trunk’s powder, old barley flour, flour of roasted <i>kasū</i>-plant, powder from the sherds of an old oven, slag powder from a kiln, gypsum powder, flour of roasted <i>sahlū</i>-cress, cedar flour, cypress flour, <i>duprānu</i>-juniper flour, <i>kukuru</i>-aromatic flour, <i>burāšu</i>-juniper flour, <i>šumlalū</i>-aromatic flour, <i>suādu</i>-aromatic flour, myrrh flour, <i>kanaktu</i>-aromatic flour, myrtle flour, <i>šimiššalū</i>-aromatic flour, <i>ballukku</i>-aromatic flour, sweet reed flour — <sup>29–34</sup>In total 36 (types of) flour for undoing the <i>expected action</i> (of the illness): for making supple what is stiff, <i>stretching</i> what is bent, piercing what is purulent, repairing what is broken, putting back what is torn off (and) tying together the damaged tendon. <sup>34–35</sup>You knead (the drugs) with old barley beer when it is winter (and) with the juice of <i>kasū</i>-plant when it is summer, then you bind it on.</p>
<p>Colophon 1  <sup>36</sup>giṭṭi Itti-Marduk-balātu <sup>37</sup>mār Egibi mašmašši  <sup>38</sup>Marduk-ēṭir ištur</p>	<p>Colophon 1  <sup>36–38</sup>Long tablet of Itti-Marduk-balātu, descendant of Egibi, incantation priest. Marduk-ēṭir wrote it down.</p>

## Notes

2. *kurkanū* ša šadī: The plant called “mountain *kurkanū*” is rare in medical texts; the CAD lists only four attestations in the therapeutic corpus, to which another attestation was added from the pharmacological text Uruanna.<sup>35</sup> The plant name is spelled syllabically in the commentary text BRM 4 32, which also makes a distinction between two varieties, respectively labelled as coming “from the mountain” (*ša šadī*) and “from the land” (*ša māti*);<sup>36</sup> the difference between the wild and indigenous variety of the *kurkanū*-plant must have been meant this way.<sup>37</sup> While in BAM 92 iii 5–6 *kurkanū* was applied on its own in the form of a potion, BAM 311 obv. 17’ mentions it alongside cedar and *mūšu*-stone as part of a phylactery. Moreover, *kurkanū* also served in BAM 7 38 i 17’–18’ together with several other plants as ingredient for fumigation.

3. *šunhu*: The healing plant *šunhu* (with its alternative spelling *šun’u*) is defined by the CAD as “a bulbous plant”. In therapeutic prescriptions this plant occurs frequently together with another “bulbous plant”, *andahšu*, which could be attributed to the alliteration of the consonants /š/ and /h/ in both words. The *šunhu*-plant was used mostly in potions for lung problems and kidney diseases.

5. *zūpu*, *biššu*: With respect to the two plants called *zūpu* and *biššu*, no other attestations could be found in any other therapeutic text. However, spelled *biš-šū*<sup>sar</sup> and *zu-ū-pu*<sup>sar</sup>, respectively, the same plant names are attested next to each other in the Late Babylonian tablet BM 46226, which is a list of plants that could be found in the royal garden of Marduk-apla-iddina.<sup>38</sup> The plant *biššu* is also mentioned in the broken tablet 83–1–18, 727 from Nineveh (*bi-ši*): although the passage is in a fragmentary condition, so much can be determined with confidence that *biššu* serves there as the

<sup>35</sup> Uruanna II 25: <sup>4</sup>kur-ka-nam ša KUR-ma : <sup>4</sup>kur-ka-nu-u (CAD K s.v. *kurkanū*, pp. 560–561).

<sup>36</sup> BRM 4 32: 16–17 (Frazer 2017; Geller 2010: 168–173). Unfortunately, the corresponding part of the source text (TCL 6 34) has not been preserved.

<sup>37</sup> Stol 2003–2005: 503.

<sup>38</sup> BM 46226 obv. 35–36 (CT 14 50; Brinkman 1964: 52; Dalley 1994: 46; Finkel 1988: 47–48; Finkel 2008: 110; Seymour 2014: 276 n. 80; Wiseman 1983: 142–143).



equivalent of a now illegible term. Interestingly, the text was written in Babylonian script, without one of determinatives Ú or SAR being assigned to the name of the plant.<sup>39</sup>

9–11. Due to the fragmentary condition of the passage, the words at the end of these lines remain obscure. Based on the available space, there appears to be two to three signs in each of these lines.

10–11. *qalap, kamkad*: The form *qalap* is interpreted here as an unusual spelling for the well-known term *qilpu* “rind, skin”; by the same token, *kamkad* may probably stand for the plant called *kamkadu*. Note, however, that no other example of either of these irregular forms is known to us.

14. *ṭābat emesallim*: The form MUN *sal-lim*, used instead of the more regular MUN *eme-sal-lim*, can also be found in BM 42272 obv. 6.<sup>40</sup> Other unusual spellings of this word are MUN *me<sub>5</sub>-sal-lim* (BAM 18: 3<sup>41</sup> and BAM 548 i 12<sup>42</sup>) and MUN *mē-sil* (BM 32277+ i 21). Note, furthermore, that in the commentary text BRM 4 32, the *emesallu* salt is explained as “salt from the river” (MUN *eme-sal-lim* : MUN *šá lib-bi* ÍD).<sup>43</sup>

15. *ṭittu*<sup>(?)</sup>: The reading *ṭi-ṭi-ṭa*<sup>1?</sup> for “clay” is hypothetical. Alternatively, the term could be understood as an incorrect rendering of *tittu* “fig”. It should be noted that clay, especially canal clay, occurs as a magical ingredient in the medical rituals against *ummu kayyamānu* “permanent fever”,<sup>44</sup> and that clay from both banks of a river was used in making an amulet against another feverish condition called “seizure of the mountain”.<sup>45</sup>

21. *pudru*: The “dung cake” *pudru* occurs together with other types of dung (e.g., gazelle and dove) in medical texts,<sup>46</sup> and it can be connected especially to the dung of oxen with the help of a lexical passage.<sup>47</sup> The drug was used in *namburbi* rituals, as well as in Old-Babylonian rituals as an ingredient of a poultice for broken legs and dog-bite.<sup>48</sup>

24. *qēm hahē ša utūni*: The ingredient called “slag powder from a kiln” is used as a drug in various therapeutic prescriptions.<sup>49</sup> It can be suggested that, similarly to the drug “sherd from an old oven”, the healing effects of these drugs were based on the magico-medical characteristics of the oven used to heat or macerate the remedies.<sup>50</sup>

30. *rīdi ana puššuhi*: The translation “for undoing the *expected action* (of the illness)” is based on a somewhat specific meaning of the word *rīdu*, as it can be gathered from a short series describing the magico-medical properties of cylinder seals with respect to the raw materials of which they are made. Here, it is said that by wearing a carnelian seal, “common sense (or proper attitude) will not be released from the man’s body”.<sup>51</sup> The meaning “proper attitude” or, in transferred meaning, “expected action” of an illness might also be meant in *Ludlul* III 86–87, where this word is connected to breathing problems and fever. For this passage, the following translation is suggested: “My nose whose breathing has become blocked due to the *expected action* of fever (*ina rīdi ummi*) – He soothed its affliction and now I breathe [freely]”.<sup>52</sup> Thus, in this context, *rīdu* may probably refer to the expected action or proper attitude of fever, that is, to make breathing difficult by attacking the respiratory system.<sup>53</sup>

37. Egibi: For a collection of the various forms in which the name Egibi can be rendered, see Spar and von Dassow 2000: LXXIII; Wunsch 2000a: 290. For the writing <sup>m</sup>E.GI<sub>7</sub>.BA.TI.LA see especially Lambert 1957: 4; Wunsch 2000a: 2 n. 5.

<sup>39</sup> See Jiménez 2015, arguing that two other fragments from the K-collection (83–1–18, 722 and 83–1–18, 725) belong to the same tablet.

<sup>40</sup> Abusch and Schwemer 2011: 204–245 no. 7.10 ms. j; Abusch and Schwemer 2016: 48–63 no. 7.11 ms. n; Bácskay 2015; Scurlock 2014: 412–417, 631–633.

<sup>41</sup> Attia 2015: 31; Parys 2014: 21.

<sup>42</sup> Scurlock 2014: 466.

<sup>43</sup> BRM 4 32: 13 (Frazer 2017; Geller 2010: 168–173).

<sup>44</sup> BAM 147 obv. 25–33 // BAM 148 obv. 25–33 // BM 35512 rev. 12’–15’ (Bácskay 2018a: 147–148, 153; Bácskay 2018b: 103–104, 108).

<sup>45</sup> K 64526 obv. 10–17 (Finkel 2018: 261–262; Stadhouders 2018b: 164–166).

<sup>46</sup> CAD P s.v. *pudru*, p. 474.

<sup>47</sup> UR<sub>5</sub>-ra II 316: SI.ŠURUN.GUD = *pu-ud-ru* (MSL 5 p. 75).

<sup>48</sup> For the use of *pudru* dung cake in *namburbi* rituals, see Maul 1994: 66, 99. For the Old-Babylonian rituals, see George 2016: 139–140 (II.F.3).

<sup>49</sup> See CAD U s.v. *utūnu*, p. 347.

<sup>50</sup> Bácskay 2018a: 63.

<sup>51</sup> BAM 194 viii’ 14’: <sup>na</sup>4KIŠIB <sup>na</sup>4GUG GAR *ri-du-um ina SU LÚ NU DU<sub>8</sub>-ár* (Simkó 2015).

<sup>52</sup> *ap-pa šá ina ri-dī um-mi ú-<sup>na</sup>ap-pi-qu ni-[pi-is-su] / ú-pa-āš-šī-ih mi-hi-iš-ta-šu-ma a-<sup>na</sup>ap-pu-uš* [xxx]; the translation follows Annus and Lenzi 2010: 25, with some modifications.

<sup>53</sup> Simkó 2015: 206–207. Note that as a derivative of the Akkadian verb *redū* ‘to follow’, one could also explain this difficult word as a way of describing the pathological condition called ‘sequela’ (courtesy of J. Scurlock).

*Text 1a*

Museum No. BM 66942<sup>54</sup>  
 Accession No. 1882–09–18, 6935  
 Measurements 2.86 × 5.08 cm  
 Provenance Sippar or Babylon  
 Date Late Babylonian

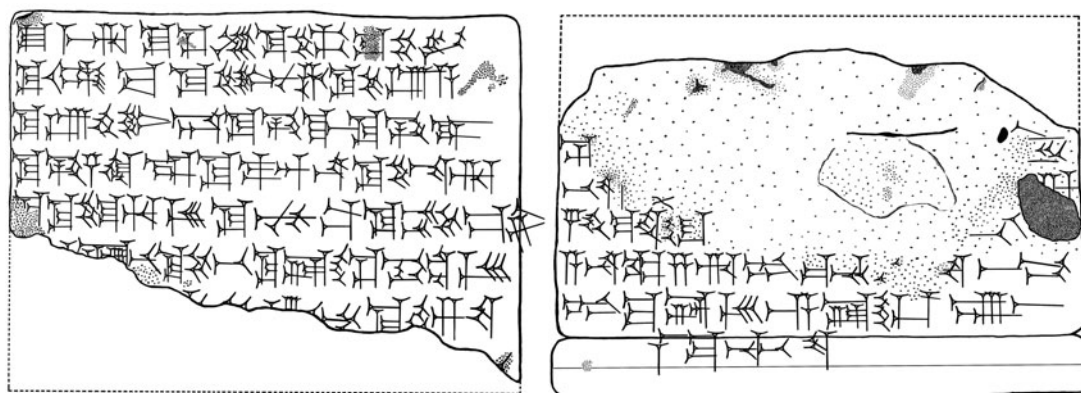


Fig. 2 BM 66942 (British Museum), copy by K. Simkó

## Obverse

1. ZÌ *šib-ri* ZÌ **LAGAB** MUNU<sub>5</sub> ZÌ ŠE.EŠTUB 'ZÌ' ŠE.MUŠ<sub>5</sub>  
 ⇒ ZÌ *šib-ri* ZÌ **0** MUNU<sub>5</sub> ZÌ ŠE.EŠTUB ZÌ ŠE.MUŠ<sub>5</sub>

2. ZÌ GIG.BA ZÌ <sup>še</sup>IN.NU.HA ZÌ ŠE.SA.A  
 ⇒ ZÌ GIG.BA ZÌ <sup>še</sup>IN.NU.HA ZÌ ŠE.SA.'A'

3. ZÌ *sa-hi-in-du* ZÌ GÚ.GAL ZÌ GÚ.TUR  
 ⇒ 'ZÌ' <sup>še</sup>*sa*<sup>1</sup>-*hi-in-du* ZÌ GÚ.GAL 'ZÌ' G[Ú.TUR]

4. ZÌ GÚ.NÍG.ÀR.RA ZÌ ZÍZ.AN.NA ZÌ *pu-ud-ri*  
 ⇒ 'ZÌ' GÚ.NÍG.ÀR.RA ZÌ ZÍZ.A.AN ZÌ 'pu'<sup>1</sup>-[*ud-ri*]

5. 'ZÌ' ŠE<sub>10</sub> TU<sup>mušen</sup>.MEŠ ZÌ NUMUN GADA ZÌ DUH.ŠE.GIŠ.Ì  
 ⇒ ZÌ ŠE<sub>10</sub> TU<sup>mušen</sup>.MEŠ ZÌ NUMUN GADA ZÌ DUH.ŠE.G[ÌŠ.Ì]

6. [ZÌ GI]Š.'ÙR' SUMUN ZÌ ŠE **0** SUMUN ZÌ GAZI<sup>sar</sup> BÍL.MEŠ  
 ⇒ 'ZÌ' GIS.ÙR SUMUN ZÌ ŠE.BAR SUMUN ZÌ 'GAZI'<sup>1sar</sup> 'BÍL'<sup>1</sup> **0**

<sup>54</sup> For photos see [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W\\_1882-0918-6935](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1882-0918-6935), last accessed 23.09.21.



7. [.....] <sup>1</sup>ha-he-e šá UDUN ZÌ IM'.BABBAR  
 ⇒ ZÌ ŠIKA NINDU SUMUN ZÌ ha-he'(šE)-e šá UDUN ZÌ IM'.BABBAR

8. [..... ŠUR.MÌ]N?  
 ⇒ ZÌ sah-lé-e BÍL-tú ZÌ <sup>giš</sup>EREN ZÌ ŠUR.MÌN

Reverse  
 (circa four lines missing)

13'. ša[g-ga ..... su-up-p]u<sup>2</sup>-**hi**<sup>2</sup>  
 ⇒ šag-ga a-na / lu-ub-bu-ku sah-ri a-na <sup>1</sup>su<sup>1</sup>-up-pu-**hu**

14'. LUGUD <sup>1</sup>a<sup>1</sup>-[na ..... ke-ši]-<sup>1</sup>ri<sup>1</sup>  
 ⇒ LUGUD a-na pa-ta-hu še-bir-tú ana ke-ši-**ru**

15'. šá-hi-it-<sup>1</sup>tu<sup>1</sup> [.....ba]t<sup>2</sup>-q[a<sup>2</sup>]  
 ⇒ šá-hi-it-**tú** a-na tur-ru SA bat-qa

16'. a-na ka-ša-ri **šum**-<sup>1</sup>ma EN<sup>1</sup>.T[E.N]A ina KAŠ 0 0  
 ⇒ a-na / ka-ša-**ru** **šum**<sub>4</sub>-ma EN.TE.NA ina KAŠ ŠE.BAR SUMUN

17'. **šum**-ma AMA.MEŠ ina A GAZI<sup>sar</sup> SILA<sub>11</sub>-aš  
 ⇒ **šum**<sub>4</sub>-ma AMA.MEŠ ina A GAZI<sup>sar</sup> SILA<sub>11</sub>-aš

18'. LÁ-ma TI-**u**  
 ⇒ LÁ-**id** 0

Left edge

1. [.....] <sup>giš</sup>NU.ÚR.MA
2. [.....] x x x sa da nu<sup>2</sup>
3. [.....] x ú<sup>2</sup> x di nu



Fig. 3 BM 66942, inscription on the left edge (© The Trustees of the British Museum).

## Text 1b

Publication No. BAM 124 (A)  
 BAM 125 (B)  
 Provenance Assur (N4)  
 Date Neo-Assyrian

A<sub>iii44</sub> ZÌ šib-ri ZÌ LAGAB MUNU<sub>6</sub> ZÌ 'LAGAB<sup>2</sup> ŠE.EŠTUB ZÌ ŠE.MUŠ<sub>5</sub> ZÌ še<sup>se</sup>NU.HA  
 B<sub>1-2</sub> [.....] ZÌ LAGAB MUNU<sub>6</sub> 'ZÌ' [.....] / [.....] ZÌ še<sup>se</sup>[NU.HA]

A<sub>iii45</sub> ZÌ GIG ZÌ GÚ.GAL ZÌ GÚ.[TUR ZÌ G]Ú.NÍG.ÀR.RA ZÌ ŠE.SA.A  
 B<sub>2-4</sub> [.....] / [.....] ZÌ GÚ.[TUR .....] / [ZÌ Š]E.SA.A

A<sub>iii 46</sub> ZÌ še<sup>se</sup>sa-hi-<sup>f</sup>in-di<sup>1</sup> ZÌ ZÍZ.A.AN 'ZÌ' pu-ud-ri ZÌ ŠE<sub>10</sub> TU<sup>mušen</sup>  
 B<sub>4-5</sub> ZÌ še<sup>se</sup>sa-hi-<sup>f</sup>[n-di .....] / [ZÌ] pu-ud-ri ZÌ ŠE<sub>10</sub> TU<sup>mušen</sup>

A<sub>iii 47</sub> ZÌ NUMUN GADA ZÌ GAZI<sup>sar</sup> BÍL.MEŠ ZÌ ZÀ.HI].LI BÍL-te ZÌ IM.BABAR  
 B<sub>5-7</sub> [.....] / [ZÌ] GAZI<sup>sar</sup> BÍL.MEŠ ZÌ Z[A<sup>?</sup>.HI.LI .....] / [ZÌ] IM.BABBAR

A<sub>iii 48</sub> ZÌ DUH.ŠE.GIŠ.Ì HÁD.DU-ti ZÌ GIŠ.[ÙR SUMUN ZÌ] GI gi-sal BÀD SUMUN  
 B<sub>7-8</sub> ZÌ DUH.ŠE.GIŠ.Ì [.....] / [ZÌ] ÙR SUMUN ZÌ GI gi-sal BÀD SUMUN

A<sub>iii 49</sub> ZÌ ŠIKA IM.ŠU.RIN.NA SUMUN ZÌ M[UNU<sub>6</sub> ZÌ] ha-he-e šá UDUN  
 B<sub>9-10</sub> [ZÌ] ŠIKA IM.ŠU.RIN.NA SUMUN / [ZÌ] MUNU<sub>6</sub> ZÌ ha-he-e šá UDUN

A<sub>iii 50</sub> ZÌ di-ik-me-ni šá <sup>duš</sup>UTUL<sub>7</sub> ZÌ ú<sup>u</sup>ša-<sup>r</sup>da<sup>1</sup>-[ni ZÌ giš<sup>si</sup>-hi ZÌ ar-ga-ni  
 B<sub>11-13</sub> [ZÌ] di-ik-me-en-ni šá <sup>duš</sup>UTUL<sub>7</sub> / [ZÌ] ú<sup>u</sup>ša-da-ni ZÌ giš<sup>si</sup>-i-hi / [ZÌ] ar-gá-ni

A<sub>iii 51</sub> ZÌ giš<sup>LUM</sup>.HA ZÌ ú<sup>u</sup>áp-ru-še ú<sup>u</sup>ak-tam ZÌ 'A'.[GAR.GAR MAŠ.DÀ] ZÌ ú<sup>u</sup>ša-šu-un-[te]  
 B<sub>13-15</sub> ZÌ giš<sup>LUM</sup>.HA / [ZÌ] ú<sup>u</sup>áp-ru-še ZÌ ú<sup>u</sup>ak-tam / [ZÌ] A.GAR.GAR MAŠ.DÀ ZÌ ú<sup>u</sup>ša-šu-un-te

A<sub>iii 52</sub> ZÌ giš<sup>EREN</sup> ZÌ giš<sup>ŠUR</sup>.MÌN ZÌ giš<sup>dup-ra-ni</sup> ZÌ š<sup>[im]</sup>GÚR.GÚR ZÌ šim<sup>r</sup>LI<sup>1</sup>  
 B<sub>16-18</sub> [ZÌ] giš<sup>EREN</sup> ZÌ giš<sup>ŠUR</sup>.MÌN / [ZÌ] giš<sup>dup-ra-ni</sup> ZÌ šim<sup>GÚR</sup>.GÚR / [ZÌ] ršim<sup>r</sup>LI

A<sub>iii 53</sub> [ZÌ] šim<sup>GAM</sup>.MA ZÌ šim<sup>ŠEŠ</sup> ZÌ šim<sup>GÍR</sup> ZÌ ŠIM.[SAL<sup>?</sup> ZÌ šim<sup>MUG</sup><sup>?</sup> ZÌ šim<sup>GIG</sup>  
 B<sub>18-20</sub> ZÌ šim<sup>GAM</sup>.MA / [ZÌ] šim<sup>ŠEŠ</sup> ZÌ šim<sup>GÍR</sup> / [ZÌ] ŠIM.SAL<sup>?</sup> ZÌ šim<sup>MUG</sup><sup>?</sup> ZÌ šim<sup>GIG</sup>

A<sub>iii 54</sub> [ZÌ] GI DU<sub>10</sub>.GA ZÌ giš<sup>MAN</sup>.DU PAP 46 ZÌ.DA.MEŠ [Ú.H]I<sup>2</sup>.A  
 B<sub>21-22</sub> [ZÌ] GI DU<sub>10</sub>.GA] ZÌ ú<sup>u</sup>MAN.DU / [PAP 46 ZÌ].DA.MEŠ [Ú.H]I<sup>2</sup>.A<sup>1</sup>

## B

A<sub>iii 55</sub> [u ŠI]M<sup>2</sup>.HI.A si-ku GAL-ú na-aš-[ma]-<sup>r</sup>ti<sup>1</sup> A.<sup>r</sup>ZU-ti<sup>1</sup>  
 B<sub>22-23</sub> u ŠIM.HI.A / [.....] GAL-[ú .....] MAŠ.MAŠ-ti A.ZU-ti

A<sub>iii 56</sub> [ri-di] 'ana' šup-šu-hi áš-ta ana lu-ub-bu-ki sah-ra 'ana' [nu<sup>2</sup>-uh<sup>2</sup>-hi]  
 B<sub>24-26</sub> [ri-d]i<sup>2</sup> a-na šup-šu-hi / [áš-t]a<sup>2</sup> a-na lu-ub-bu-ki / [sah-r]a a-na [nu<sup>2</sup>-uh<sup>2</sup>]-hi

A<sub>iii 57</sub> [LUGUD ana p]a-ta-hi še-bir-<sup>r</sup>te ana ke-še-ri<sup>1</sup> šá-hi-it-<sup>r</sup>te ana<sup>1</sup> [tur-ri]  
 B<sub>27-29</sub> [.....] a-na pa-ta-hi / [.....] a-na ke-še-ri / [.....] a-na [tur]-ri

A<sub>iii 58</sub> [SA bat-q]a 'a<sup>1</sup>-[na ka]-ša-ri šum<sub>4</sub>-ma EN.TE.NA ina KAŠ.[SAG]  
 B<sub>30-31</sub> [.....] a-na ka-ša-ri / [.....] ina KAŠ.SAG

A<sub>iii 59</sub> [.....] SILA<sub>11</sub>-a]š Ì.NUN TAG.TAG LÁL-id-m[a TI-ut]  
 B<sub>32-33</sub> [.....] 'A GAZI<sup>sar</sup> SILA<sub>11</sub>-aš / [.....] TAG.TAG [LÁL]-id-ma TI-ut

Text 2

Museum No. BM 31071<sup>55</sup>  
 Accession No. 1876-11-17, 798  
 Measurements 4.6 × 2.3 cm  
 Provenance Babylon  
 Date 550-500 B.C.E.

Obverse

1. 1 NINDA <sup>ú</sup>A.ZAL.LÁ
2. 1/2 GÍN KA A.AB.BA
3. 4-ut <sup>ú</sup>LAL
4. 1/2 GÍN <sup>ú</sup>tuš-rú
5. 1/2 GÍN MUN <eme>-sal-lim
6. 1 1/2 GÍN <sup>ú</sup>ha-šá-nu
7. 1 GÍN <sup>giš</sup>šur-i-ni
8. 1/2 GÍN <sup>ú</sup>KUR.KUR
9. 1/2 NINDA NAGA.SI
10. 1 GÍN <sup>giš</sup>EREN.SUMUN
11. 1/2 GÍN <sup>ú</sup>tar-muš
12. 1 GÍN <sup>ú</sup>UTU

Reverse

13. <sup>3</sup> NINDA <sup>šim</sup>LI
14. 1 GÍN GI DU<sub>10</sub>.GA
15. 1 (BÁN) 2 SÍLA A a-di
16. ana 4 SÍLA GUR ŠEG<sub>6</sub>-šal
17. Ì.GIŠ hal-ša a-na
18. IGI ŠUB 2-šú DŪ-su

19. <sup>im</sup>GÍD.DA
20. <sup>m</sup>KI-<sup>d</sup>AMAR.UTU-ba-la-tu
21. A <sup>m</sup>e-gi-bi
22. pa-li-ih <sup>dr</sup>AMAR.UTU<sup>1</sup>
23. <sup>m</sup>a-diš li-šá-qir



Fig. 4 BM 31071 (British Museum), copy by A. Bácskay.

Bound transcription

§2.1  
<sub>1</sub>ištēn akal azallū <sub>2</sub>zūz imbu' tām̄ti <sub>3</sub>rebūt ašqulālu <sub>4</sub>zūz  
 tušru <sub>5</sub>zūz t̄abat emesallim <sub>6</sub>ištēn šiqil zūz hašānu <sub>7</sub>ištēn  
 šiqil šurmīni <sub>8</sub>zūz atā'išu <sub>9</sub>mišil akal uhūlu qarnānu  
<sub>10</sub>ištēn šiqil šupuhru <sub>11</sub>zūz tarmuš <sub>12</sub>ištēn šiqil šammi  
 Šamaš <sub>13</sub>šalāšat akal burāšu <sub>14</sub>ištēn šiqil qanū t̄abu  
<sub>15</sub>ištēat sūt šinā qa mē adi <sub>16</sub>ana erbet qa iturru tušabšal  
<sub>17</sub>šamna halša ana <sub>18</sub>pāni tanaddi šinišu teppessu

Translation

§2.1  
<sub>1-14</sub>One akal of azallū-plant, a half shekel of imbu' tām̄ti mineral, a quarter shekel of ašqulālu-plant, a half shekel of tušru-plant, a half shekel of emesallu-salt, one and a half shekels of hašānu-thyme, one shekel of cypress, a half shekel of atā'išu, half an akal of horned alkali, one shekel of šupuhru-cedar, a half shekel of tarmuš-lupin, one shekel of sunflower, three akal of burāšu-juniper, one shekel of sweet reed – <sub>15-16</sub>You boil (the drugs) in twelve litres of water until it reduces to four litres. <sub>17-18</sub>You pour pressed oil over it. Do this twice.

Colophon 2

<sub>19</sub>giṭṭi <sub>20</sub>Itti-Marduk-balātu <sub>21</sub>mār Egibi <sub>22</sub>pālih  
 Marduk <sub>23</sub>[m]adiš lišāqir

Colophon 2

<sub>19-23</sub>Long tablet of Itti-Marduk-balātu, descendant of Egibi. May the one who reveres Marduk value (this tablet) greatly.

<sup>55</sup> For photos see [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W\\_1876-1117-798](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1876-1117-798), last accessed 23.09.2021.

## Notes

4. *tušru*: The *tušru*-plant is rarely mentioned in therapeutic texts, whereas in Uruana I 459 and in the medical commentary 11N–T4: 19 it is equated with another type of plant called *ḫallappānu* and *ḫaltappānu*.<sup>56</sup>
  5. *ṭabat emesallim*: See the notes to Text 1 l. 14.
- 15–16. Reducing the volume of liquids by boiling before their application must have been a usual praxis in Babylonian medicine. Probably the more concentrated liquids could be used in the form of ointments or lotions.<sup>57</sup> This method was understood by Finkel as a possible characteristic feature of *asūtu* in Late-Babylonian medicine.<sup>58</sup>

## Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the valuable comments offered by the reviewer of our paper, JoAnn Scurlock. We are also indebted to Cornelia Wunsch, Mark Geller, Michael Jursa and Henry Stadhouders for their remarks on a draft version of this paper, as well as to Lee Beaudoen and Gabriella Juhász for their help in improving its English. Needless to say, we solely bear responsibility for any remaining errors and imperfections.

## Bibliography

- Abraham, K. 2004. *Business and Politics Under the Persian Empire: The Financial Dealings of Marduk-nāšir-apli of the House of Egibi (521–487 B.C.E.)*. Bethesda, Maryland: CDL Press.
- Abusch, T. and D. Schwemer. 2011. *Corpus of Mesopotamian Anti-Witchcraft Rituals*. Vol. 1. Ancient Magic and Divination 8/1. Leiden / Boston: Brill.
- 2016. *Corpus of Mesopotamian Anti-Witchcraft Rituals*. Vol. 2. Ancient Magic and Divination 8/2. Leiden / Boston: Brill.
- Annus, A. and A. Lenzi. 2010. *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi: The Standard Babylonian Poem of the Righteous Sufferer. Introduction, Cuneiform Texts, and Transliteration with a Translation and Glossary*. State Archives of Assyria Cuneiform Texts 7. Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project.
- Attia, A. 2015. “Traduction et commentaires des trois premières tablettes de la série IGI”. *Le Journal des Médecines Cunéiformes* 25: 1–120.
- Bácskay, A. 2015. “Magical-medical prescriptions against fever: an edition of BM 42272”. *Le Journal des Médecines Cunéiformes* 26: 1–32.
- 2018a. *Therapeutic Prescriptions against Fever in Ancient Mesopotamia*. Alter Orient und Altes Testament 447. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag.
- 2018b. “The 34th Extract of the UGU Series from Babylon: An Edition of the Tablet BM 35512” in S.V. Panayotov and L. Vacin, eds., *Mesopotamian Medicine and Magic: Studies in Honor of Markham J. Geller*. Ancient Magic and Divination 14. Leiden / Boston: Brill, pp. 93–115.
- Brinkman, J. A. 1964. “Merodach-Baladan II” in R.D. Biggs and J.A. Brinkman, eds., *Studies Presented To A. Leo Oppenheim June 7, 1964*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 6–53.
- Civil, M. 1974. “Medical Commentaries from Nippur”. *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 33: 329–338.
- Clancier, Ph. 2009. *Les bibliothèques en Babylonie dans la deuxième moitié du I<sup>er</sup> millénaire av. J.-C.* Alter Orient und Altes Testament 363. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag.
- Dalley, S. 1994. “Nineveh, Babylon and the Hanging Gardens: Cuneiform and Classical Sources Reconciled.” *Iraq* 56: 45–58.
- Evers, S. M. 1993. “George Smith and the Egibi Tablets.” *Iraq* 55: 107–117.
- Finkel, I. L. 1988. “The Hanging Gardens of Babylon” in P.A. Clayton and M.J. Price, eds., *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*. London / New York: Routledge, pp. 38–58.

<sup>56</sup> For the attestations in therapeutic texts, see CAD K s.v. *kušru* B, p. 600; CAD T s.v. *tušru*, p. 496; now also add SpTU 1 44 rev. 5 with its parallels that describe a therapy against *bušānu* disease. Here, the plant name is spelled <sup>u</sup>*tu-uš-ru*, as well as <sup>u</sup>*tuš-ru* (Scurlock 2014: 719). For the edition of the medical commentary 11N–T4, see Civil 1974: 336–337; Frazer 2015.

<sup>57</sup> Similar methods are described in the following therapeutic texts: BAM 391 (Finkel 2000: 155 no. 4) obv. 16–17, BM 42507 (Finkel 2000: 157 no. 5) obv. 7–8, BM 42576+ (Finkel 2000: 159 no. 6) obv. 8–9, BM 42617 (Finkel 2000: 164 no. 11) obv. 3–4 and SpTU 1 63: 15–16. See also Köcher 1978: 21–22, for further examples.

<sup>58</sup> Finkel 2000: 147.

- 2000. “On Late Babylonian Medical Training” in A.R. George and I.L. Finkel, eds., *Wisdom, Gods and Literature: Studies in Assyriology in Honour of W. G. Lambert*. Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, pp. 137–223.
- 2008. “The search for Hanging Gardens” in I.L. Finkel and M.J. Seymour, eds., *Babylon: Myth and Reality*. London: The British Museum Press, pp. 109–111.
- 2018. “Amulets against Fever” in S.V. Panayotov and L. Vacin, eds., *Mesopotamian Medicine and Magic: Studies in Honor of Markham J. Geller*. Ancient Magic and Divination 14. Leiden / Boston: Brill, pp. 232–271.
- Frahm, E. 2019. “Textual Traditions in First Millennium BCE Mesopotamia between Faithful Reproduction, Commentary, and New Creation” in W. Bühner, ed., *Schriftgelehrte Fortschreibungs- und Auslegungsprozesse. Textarbeit im Pentateuch, in Qumran, Ägypten und Mesopotamien*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, pp. 13–47.
- Frazer, M. 2015. “Commentary on Therapeutic (šumma amēlu qablāšu ikkalāšu biltu bīt Dābibi 24) (CCP 4.2. B)”. *Cuneiform Commentaries Project* (E. Frahm, E. Jiménez, M. Frazer, and K. Wagensonner), 2013–2020; accessed October 29, 2020, at <https://ccp.yale.edu/P459065>. DOI: 10079/8cz8wpc.
- 2017. “Commentary on Therapeutic (Qutāru) (CCP 4.2.M.a)”. *Cuneiform Commentaries Project* (E. Frahm, E. Jiménez, M. Frazer, and K. Wagensonner), 2013–2020; accessed October 29, 2020, at <https://ccp.yale.edu/P296515>. DOI: 10079/v41nsdr.
- Geller, M. J. 1990. Review article: Catalogue of the Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum. Vols. VI–VIII: Tablets from Sippar 1–3. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 53: 121–123.
- 2010. *Ancient Babylonian Medicine: Theory and Practice*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Geller, M. J. 2018. “Library or Archive in Qumran? The View from Mesopotamia”. *Henoch* 40: 8–14.
- George, A. R. 2016. *Mesopotamian Incantations and Related Texts in the Schøyen Collection*. Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology 32. Bethesda, Maryland: CDL Press.
- Heeßel, N. P. 2000. *Babylonisch-assyrische Diagnostik*. Alter Orient und Altes Testament 43. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag.
- 2010. “Einleitung zu Struktur und Entwicklung des Corpus der therapeutischen Texte” in B. Janowski and D. Schwemer, eds., *Texte zur Heilkunde*. Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments Neue Folge 5. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, pp. 31–35.
- Hunger, H. 1968. *Babylonische und assyrische Kolophone*. Alter Orient und Altes Testament 2. Kevelaer / Neukirchen-Vluyn: Verlag Butzon & Bercker / Neukirchener Verlag.
- Jean, C. 2006. *La magie néo-assyrienne en contexte. Recherches sur le métier d'exorciste et le concept d'āšipūtu*. State Archives of Assyria Studies 17. Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project.
- Jiménez, E. 2015. “Commentary on Uncertain (CCP 7.2.u8)”. *Cuneiform Commentaries Project* (E. Frahm, E. Jiménez, M. Frazer, and K. Wagensonner), 2013–2020; accessed October 29, 2020, at <https://ccp.yale.edu/P237396>. DOI: 10079/jdfn3b2.
- Jursa, M. 1999. *Das Archiv des Bēl-rēmanni*. Publications de l’Institut historique et archéologique néerlandais de Stamboul 86. Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut.
- 2005. *Neo-Babylonian Legal and Administrative Documents: Typology, Contents and Archives*. Guides to the Mesopotamian Textual Record 1. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag.
- 2010. *Aspects of the Economic History of Babylonia in the First Millennium BC: Economic Geography, Economic Mentalities, Agriculture, the Use of Money and the Problem of Economic Growth*. Veröffentlichungen zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte Babyloniens im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr. Band 4. Alter Orient und Altes Testament 377. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag.
- Köcher, F. 1978. “Spätbabylonische medizinische Texte aus Uruk” in C. Habrich, F. Marguth and J. H. Wolf, eds., *Medizinische Diagnostik in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Festschrift für Heinz Goerke zum sechzigsten Geburtstag*. München: Werner Fritsch, pp. 17–39.
- Labat, R. 1951. *Traité akkadien de diagnostics et pronostics médicaux*. Collection de travaux de l’académie internationale d’histoire des sciences 7. Leiden: Brill.
- Læssøe, J. 1955. *Studies on the Assyrian Ritual and Series bīt rimki*. Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard.
- Lambert, W. G. 1957. “Ancestors, Authors, and Canonicity”. *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 11: 1–14.
- Leichty, E. 1988. “Guaranteed to Cure” in E. Leichty, M. de J. Ellis and P. Gerardi, eds., *A Scientific Humanist: Studies in Memory of Abraham Sachs*. Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 9. Philadelphia: The University Museum, pp. 261–264.
- Maul, S. M. 1994. *Zukunftsbewältigung. Eine Untersuchung altorientalischen Denkens anhand der babylonisch-assyrischen Löserituale (Namburbi)*. Baghdader Forschungen 18. Mainz: Philipp von Zabern.
- 2010. “Die Tontafelbibliothek aus dem sogenannten ‘Haus des Beschwörungspriesters’” in S.M. Maul and N.P. Heeßel, eds., *Assur-Forschungen. Arbeiten aus der Forschungsstelle “Edition literarischer Keilschrifttexte aus Assur” der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, pp. 189–228.



- Nielsen, J. P. 2011. *Sons and Descendants: A Social History of Kin Groups and Family Names in the Early Neo-Babylonian Period, 747-626 BC*. Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 43. Leiden / Boston: Brill.
- Panayotov, S. V. 2018. "Notes on the Assur Medical Catalogue with Comparison to the Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia" in U. Steinert, ed., *Assyrian and Babylonian Scholarly Text Catalogues: Medicine, Magic and Divination*. Die babylonisch-assyrische Medizin in Texten und Untersuchungen 9. Boston / Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, pp. 89–120.
- Panayotov, S. V. and C. Wunsch. 2014. "New Light on George Smith's Purchase of the Egibi Archive in 1876 from the Nachlass Mathewson" in M.J. Geller, ed., *Melammu: The Ancient World in an Age of Globalization*. Max Planck Research Library for the History and Development of Knowledge Proceedings 7. Berlin: Max-Planck-Gesellschaft, pp. 191–215.
- Parys, M. 2014. "Édition d'un texte médical thérapeutique retrouvé à Assur (BAM 159)". *Le Journal des Médecines Cunéiformes* 23: 1–88.
- Pedersén, O. 1986. *Archives and Libraries in the City of Assur: A Survey of the Material from the German Excavations*. Part II. *Studia Semitica Upsaliensia* 8. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell.
- 1998. *Archives and Libraries in the Ancient Near East 1500-300 B.C.* Bethesda, Maryland: CDL Press.
- Reiner, E. 1958. "The Series Bit rimki: A Review Article". *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 17: 205–207.
- Reynolds, F. 2019. *A Babylonian Calendar Treatise: Scholars and Invaders in the Late First Millennium BC, Edited with Introduction, Commentary, and Cuneiform Texts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Robson, E. 2019. *Ancient Knowledge Networks: A Social Geography of Cuneiform Scholarship in First-Millennium Assyria and Babylonia*. London: UCL Press.
- Salin, S. 2016. "Transmission and Interpretation of Therapeutic Texts. *Šumma amēlu muhhašu umma ukāl*: a Case Study". *Distant Worlds Journal* 1: 117–131.
- Scurlock, J. 2014. *Sourcebook for Ancient Mesopotamian Medicine*. Writings from the Ancient World 36. Atlanta, Georgia: SBL Press.
- Seymour, M. J. 2014. *Babylon: Legend, History and the Ancient City*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Simkó, K. 2015. "The Magical Potential of Stones Used for Cylinder Seals: New Manuscripts of the Text Known from BAM 194 viii' 9'–14'". *Iraq* 77: 203–213.
- Spar, I. and E. von Dassow. 2000. *Private Archive Texts from the First Millennium B.C.* Cuneiform Texts in the Metropolitan Museum of Art 3. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Stadhouders, H. 2018a. "A posological curiosity: the date stone as a unit of measurement (being an edition of BM 59626; ft. BM 40051, 54914, 59623, 64526)". *Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires* 2018/3: 125–129 (no. 81).
- 2018b. "The Unfortunate Frog: On Animal and Human Bondage in K 2581 and Related Fragments with Excursuses on BM 64526 and YOS XI, 3". *Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale* 112: 159–176.
- Stadhouders, H. and J. C. Johnson. 2018. "A Time to Extract and a Time to Compile: The Therapeutic Compendium Tablet BM 78963" in S.V. Panayotov and L. Vacić, eds., *Mesopotamian Medicine and Magic: Studies in Honor of Markham J. Geller*. Ancient Magic and Divination 14. Leiden / Boston: Brill, pp. 556–622.
- Steinert, U. 2015. "'Tested' Remedies in Mesopotamian Medical Texts: A Label for Efficacy Based on Empirical Observation?" in J.C. Johnson, ed., *In the Wake of the Compendia: Infrastructural Contexts and the Licensing of Empiricism in Ancient and Medieval Mesopotamia*. Science, Technology, and Medicine in Ancient Cultures 3. Boston / Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, pp. 103–145.
- 2018. "Catalogues, Texts and Specialists: Some Thoughts on the Assur Medical Catalogue, Mesopotamian Medical Texts and Healing Professions" in U. Steinert, ed., *Assyrian and Babylonian Scholarly Text Catalogues: Medicine, Magic and Divination*. Die babylonisch-assyrische Medizin in Texten und Untersuchungen 9. Boston / Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, pp. 158–200.
- Stol, M. 2003–2005. "Pflanzenkunde. A. Nach schriftlichen Quellen". *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie* 10: 503–506.
- Walker, C. B. F. 1980. "Some Mesopotamian Inscribed Vessels". *Iraq* 42: 84–86.
- Wiseman, D. J. 1983. "Mesopotamian Gardens". *Anatolian Studies* 33: 137–144.
- Wunsch, C. 1999. "Neubabylonische Urkunden: Die Geschäftsurkunden der Familie Egibi" in J. Renger, ed., *Babylon: Focus mesopotamischer Geschichte, Wiege früher Gelehrsamkeit, Mythos in der Moderne*. 2. Internationales Colloquium der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 24–26. März 1998 in Berlin. Colloquien der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 2. Saarbrücken: SDV, pp. 343–364.
- Wunsch, C. 2000a. *Das Egibi-Archiv I. Die Felder und Gärten*. Band I. Cuneiform Monographs 20A. Groningen: STYX.
- Wunsch, C. 2000b. "Neubabylonische Geschäftsleute und ihre Beziehungen zu Palast- und Tempelverwaltungen: Das Beispiel der Familie Egibi" in A.C.V.M. Bongenaar, ed., *Interdependency of Institutions and Private Entrepreneurs. Proceedings of the Second MOS Symposium (Leiden 1998)*. Publications de l'Institut historique-archéologique néerlandais de Stamboul 87. Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, pp. 95–118.



- 2007. "The Egibi Family" in G. Leick, ed., *The Babylonian World*. New York/London: Routledge, pp. 236–247.
- 2021. "Summoning People: *ašbu* Lists from the Egibi Archive" in L.I. Feliu and A. Millet, eds., *TBA. Barcelo Monographica Orientalia 16*. Barcelona: Edicions de la Universitat de Barcelona, pp. 591–622 (in press).

Krisztián Simkó  
Assyrian Medicine Project  
Department of the Middle East  
British Museum  
Great Russell Street  
London  
WC1B 3DG  
[KSimko@britishmuseum.org](mailto:KSimko@britishmuseum.org)

András Bácskay  
Department of Ancient History  
Pázmány Péter Catholic University  
Piliscsaba – Budapest  
[bacsokay.andras@btk.ppke.hu](mailto:bacsokay.andras@btk.ppke.hu)

رُقْمٌ من أرشيفات عائلة إيجيبي

نسخة من مجموعات المتحف البريطاني رقم BM 31071 و BM 30918

بقلم: أندراس باكسكي و بازمانى بيتير من الجامعة الكاثوليكية في بودابست و كريستيان سيمكو من المتحف البريطاني في لندن

بناء على التطورات الحديثة في مجال الطب البابلي الحديث والمتأخر، يقدم هذا البحث الإضافة والتحليل الدقيقين لثلاثة لم يتم نشرها سابقاً من الرُقْم الطبية من مجموعات المتحف البريطاني رقم (BM 31071 و BM 30918). يتم في الجزء الأول استكشاف السياق الأرشيفي والاجتماعي لهذه الرُقْم، وفي نفس الوقت الإبلاغ أيضاً عن اكتشافات حول كيفية تناسقها مع المجموعة الأكبر للنصوص الطبية البابلية المتأخرة. هذا وتم نشر كلا الرقمين الإثنيتين في الجزء الثاني من البحث. هدف هذا البحث هو التوضيح بأن الرُقْم التي هي موضوع هذا البحث قد ساهمت الكثير في فهمنا عن كيف تم استخدام الطب كمجال علمي في النصف المتأخر من الألف الأول قبل التاريخ. ويتقدم البحث أكثر ويضع بشكل أكثر شمولاً الأطروحة حول إضفاء الطابع الشخصي "على المعرفة الطبية، والتي تم طرحها مؤخرًا فقط في الأدبيات العلمية. إضافة إلى ذلك يقوم البحث بجمع الأدلة التي تربط" إتي مردوخ بالاطو، وهو عضو مهم من عائلة إيجيبي Egibi، إلى حرفة كهنة التعويذات (أسيبوتو *āšipūtu*)؛ حيث ان هذا الشخص يعرف لحد الآن فقط بفضل فعالياته كرجل أعمال.