

Alan Lenzi

Suffering in Babylon

Ludlul bēl nēmeqi and the Scholars,
Ancient and Modern

PEETERS

SUFFERING IN BABYLON

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Ludlul bēl nēmeqi and the Scholars, Ancient and Modern

by

Alan Lenzi

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To Tzvi Abusch,
Who opened a world of scholarship to me,
Who changed my life, and
Who once told me,
“The worst you can be is wrong.”

To Simo Parpola,
Who set me on this path,
In 2007, in Moscow.

May I not have wandered too far astray,
And may I not be entirely wrong.

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sixteenth wedding anniversary and the kids were really kids, ages twelve, nine, and six. This year, we celebrated our thirty-first anniversary and our kids are adults, twenty-seven, twenty-five, and twenty-two. What will we talk about at family get-togethers now that my work on *Ludlul* is finished?

December 2022

Alan Lenzi

INTRODUCTION

Ludlul bēl nēmeqi is the title of a Babylonian narrative poem that recounts the divinely-imposed suffering and divinely-initiated restoration of a socially-prominent man named Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan. The ancient poem, whose title means “I will praise the lord of wisdom,” likely comprised six hundred lines of Akkadian poetry equally divided over five parts, each called a *tuppu* in Akkadian (henceforth “Tablet”).¹ This monograph presents a series of studies on this ancient poem, to be introduced more fully below. The meta-theme of these studies is this: Although *Ludlul* was the work of an ancient scribal scholar, it is only known today from the work of modern Assyriological scholars. And thus, when reading the ancient poem today, whether in Akkadian or a modern language, one is reading the product of *both* ancient and modern scholars—a point that is true for many studies in Assyriology, but a point that I have built quite self-consciously into the studies on *Ludlul* that comprise this monograph. Part One elaborates on the work of modern scholarship surrounding the textual reconstruction of the poem (chapter one) and the establishment of the precise wording of the Akkadian text and its translation into modern languages (chapters two and three). Part Two explores the ancient historical contexts that influenced the ancient scholar who composed the poem and the many other scribes and scholars after him who learned it, taught it, memorized it, copied it, and used it to make sense of their world, even many centuries after its composition (chapters four through ten). Part Three (chapter eleven) is a comparative study that bridges the ancient and modern scholarly contexts.

As chapter one demonstrates in its historical survey, *Ludlul* exists today only as a composite reconstruction, pieced together by modern scholars over the last 180 years from more than five dozen incomplete cuneiform tablets and fragments that come from a variety of ancient sites. No full manuscript exists of the poem. By means of these disparate textual sources, Assyriologists have reconstructed about three-quarters of the poem’s original Akkadian text (see chapter two). The reconstructed poem as it is known today is accessible to most people only in translation thanks again to Assyriologists. As chapter three illustrates in great detail, these modern scholars have exerted a tremendous amount of labor to establish the precise wording of the text in Akkadian and to

¹ Modern editions of the poem give a Roman numeral to each Tablet and an Arabic number to each line within each Tablet. Thus, the first line of the poem is designated *Ludlul* I 1 and the last is *Ludlul* V 120. The line numbering in this monograph follows that given in Oshima’s edition (2014) unless otherwise indicated in the notes to the text and translation in chapter three.

translate into a variety of modern languages the ancient poem's high, poetic register of Standard Babylonian, an Akkadian dialect used in literary and scholarly works. I should emphasize that Part One does not offer a critical text edition and philological commentary. That work has been done recently by Takayoshi Oshima (2014). And Aino Häntinen will soon publish a new text edition of the poem for the Electronic Babylonian Literature project. Both works lay out the entire poem in partitur or score fashion so that one may see all the textual witnesses in one place on the page. My textual and philological notes in chapter three are intended to justify the Akkadian text and translation I use in this monograph (see chapter two) and to engage other modern scholars' ideas in the on-going conversation about the precise wording of the text and its proper translation. As Part One shows, when we read *Ludlul* today, we are reading an unfinished project of modern Assyriological scholarship.

Although there are still many unknowns and disagreements among modern Assyriologists in the textual reconstruction and translation of *Ludlul*, the poem's main narrative contours are mostly clear. After an opening hymn that alternates between praise of Marduk's wrath and his mercy (I 1–40),² Tablet I describes the divine anger against Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan and the resulting social alienation he experienced. Tablet II takes up the physical suffering he endured at Marduk's hand. Tablet III and the still fragmentary Tablet IV recount the protagonist's salvation and describe the reversal of his physical suffering. Tablet V shows the reintegration of the man into his community and offers concluding praise to Marduk.

The more interpretive overview that follows fills out the sketch above and provides a starting point for discussing several important issues about the poem in its ancient contexts. These issues are foundational to the studies in Parts Two and Three of this monograph, where I read *Ludlul* as a cultural product of ancient Mesopotamian scribal-scholars.

The protagonist, speaking in a retrospective, first person voice, establishes the doxological and didactic intent of the poem in his opening hymnic introduction (I 1–40, see especially I 39–40), which also underlines thematically the sovereignty and incomprehensibility of Marduk's prerogative to distribute wrath and mercy. In the lines immediately following this hymn, the protagonist recounts how Marduk's anger toward him resulted in his loss of divine protection and in his receiving of evil or obscure signs and terrifying dreams. Expelled from his house, he lost favor with the king and suffered professionally from courtiers who schemed against him. Terrified, the protagonist fell further

² The next several paragraphs are taken—with modifications—from my previous description of the poem in Lenzi 2019, 176–77.

out of social favor among his community, family, and friends and found himself completely without help. His possessions were seized, his property ruined, and his office occupied. Utterly grief-stricken, afraid, and alone, the protagonist describes at the end of Tablet I how he hoped for relief in the near future.

But at the start of Tablet II, the second year of his trials, Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan is disappointed; he was still surrounded by evil and without help from his personal deities and the ritual experts. He wondered why he was being treated as though he were impious when in fact he honored the divine rites and the king. In reaction to his perceived unjust treatment, the protagonist describes his temporary lapse into a deep agnosticism about the knowability of the gods, followed by his musings on the frailty and vacillations of human existence. Having given voice to his doubts, the protagonist then turns to recount a litany of demonically delivered physical afflictions that he experienced. As his condition worsened, he explains how he was confined to his bed; he found no help from the ritual experts; and he received no mercy from his personal deities. Burial preparations and lamentation were completed. All that remained for him was to await death. But salvation was at hand.

In a series of dreams at the beginning of Tablet III, the protagonist relates how several divine beings visited him; they spoke his deliverance and healed him. Marduk's wrath was appeased! In a broken passage, it seems the protagonist admitted to his sins and acts of negligence, which were then removed from him. In the remainder of Tablet III, the ending of which is still unknown, the protagonist narrates the reversal of his physical afflictions, which seems to continue into the very fragmentary and incompletely reconstructed Tablet IV. Among the broken lines there is mention that the protagonist underwent the river ordeal and (likely) performed a penitential prayer. At the opening of Tablet V we meet a refreshed Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan, restored to health and praising Marduk's healing powers. He recounts how he entered the Esagil temple complex, home to Marduk in Babylon. As he entered twelve different temple gates, he states, he received various items related to his restoration (e.g., abundance, life, clear signs, release from guilt, relief of lamentation, etc.).

After the protagonist relates some of the rites he performed at the temple, the poem shifts subtly away from his first person voice to a narrator's third person voice, who describes a crescendo of praise that progressively expands its scope from the citizens of Babylon to all of humanity. The conclusion to the poem is not entirely recovered, but it is clear that the narrator twice refers to the protagonist by name (V 111, 119), and the poem ends as it begins, with praise for Marduk. Except now, the narrator addresses Marduk in the second person, describing the protagonist's praise to the deity as a completed action: "He sang [your] prai[ses ...], your [p]raise is sweet" (V 120).

Most biblically-literate people today hear echoes of the more familiar story of Job in the poem's description. And those with even an amateur philosophical interest can identify the poem's thematic relevance to the issue of theodicy. Indeed, studies focused on how *Ludlul* contributes to these intellectual concerns, comparison with Job and relevance to theodicy—sometimes treated separately and sometimes together,³ far outnumber the fewer studies that have tasked themselves exclusively with the literary and socio-cultural interpretation of *Ludlul* in its ancient context.⁴ And, many of the latter focus on situating *Ludlul* in the religious history of Marduk's cult or mine the poem for information about religious practice or morality.⁵ Although I have learned a great deal from these studies, the focus of the present monograph, especially in Parts Two and Three, lies elsewhere, namely, on interpreting *Ludlul* as a literary and socio-cultural artifact of the milieu in which it originated, which raises the question of the poem's authorship.

As noted already, *Ludlul* utilizes the protagonist's own first person voice for most of the text but shifts to a third person perspective in the last third of the final Tablet, indicating clearly a difference between Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan and an unnamed narrator. The former is the retrospective speaker of the internal story that comprises most of the poem; the latter, I believe, can safely be

³ The first major monograph on the question of genetic relationship between the two texts is (to the best of my knowledge) Landersdorfer 1911. Comparative treatments of Job and *Ludlul* (typically along with other cuneiform texts) have been very thoroughly reviewed in Uehlinger 2007, who cites an enormous amount of secondary literature. A relatively recent comparative monograph is Gerhards 2017. Two of the chapters revised for this book originally took an explicitly comparative perspective with Job, see Lenzi 2012 and Lenzi 2015c. Yoram Cohen (2015) provides a recent and very thorough treatment of theodicy in ancient Mesopotamia, with extensive secondary literature not reproduced here. Importantly, he dismantles the evolutionary approach used in several previous treatments of the issue and shows that retribution theology (divine punishment for human misdeed), divine inscrutability, and the malleability of human fate were all very ancient themes in ancient Mesopotamian sources, consistently appearing in texts across the millennia. See also Ziegler 2015 (in the same volume), who develops a useful taxonomy of texts addressing divine anger and human suffering; and Fink 2012, who situates his discussion of theodicy in ancient Mesopotamia explicitly within the European philosophical tradition.

⁴ By "literary," I mean studies devoted to understanding *Ludlul*'s poetics, imagery, and themes (and not simply focused on philology, that is, the textual reconstruction and translation of the poem). Some noteworthy examples of literary studies on *Ludlul* include Moran 1983 and Piccin / Worthington 2015 on the opening hymn (I 1–40); Noegel 2016 on paronomasia in Tablet I; Reiner 1985, 101–18 on Tablet II; Abusch 2017 on the structure and development of *Ludlul* II 12–32; and Lenzi 2015b on the names of the twelve gates in V 42–53.

⁵ See most importantly Albertz 1988; Spieckermann 1998; Moran 2002; and the extensive introduction to Oshima's edition of the poem, 2014, 34–73, where he develops a very specific argument that *Ludlul* may have been "used as an expression of criticism directed against the Kassite dynasty by the Babylonian priesthood" (70), in addition to its use as Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's personal thanksgiving hymn (see below). For a study that utilizes *Ludlul* (among other texts) to think about ancient Mesopotamian moral philosophy, see Oshima 2017.

conflated with the voice of the poem's author.⁶ We do not know the name of this individual, which is typical for Akkadian literary texts.⁷ But, there is now widespread agreement, based on what we know about ancient Mesopotamian scholars in the late second and first millennia BCE generally and on internal analysis of the poem specifically, that he was a learned individual, a scholar, and likely from the ranks of the exorcists.⁸ These men were the ritual experts tasked with expelling demons, placating angry gods, and turning away the harmful effects of evil omens via a divinely revealed corpus of ritual material.⁹ In Parts Two and Three of this monograph I will strengthen the case for this authorial socio-cultural background and explore its literary implications for our understanding of the poem itself as well as for our understanding of the literate elite who read, copied, and re-used *Ludlul* well into the first millennium BCE.

Because we cannot know the actual author of the poem, because there are no definitive internal clues for dating the poem precisely, and because my present focus is on the scholarly socio-cultural milieu in which it arose, I leave the date of the poem's composition open within the parameters of the *terminus post quem*, provided by the mention of king Nazimarutšaš (1301–1277 BCE)¹⁰ in V 100, and the *terminus ante quem*, set by the many Neo-Assyrian manuscripts of the poem (c. 9th–7th centuries BCE). I think it more likely that the

⁶ Likewise, Oshima 2014, 13, but note that he does not entirely rule out Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan as the poem's author on p. 18: "we cannot rule out such a remote possibility with certainty." The conflation of narrator and author is very likely in my opinion since there are no clues that the narrator is some individual, such as a well-known sage or ancient luminary, named outside the frame of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's story (at the end of Tablet V) but still within the narrative universe of the poem.

⁷ On notions of authorship in ancient Mesopotamia, see, e.g., Lambert 1962; Foster 1991; Lenzi 2008, 119–20; van der Toorn 2007, 42–49; Lenzi 2019, 26–33; Foster 2019; and Helle 2020.

⁸ See especially Beaulieu 2007, whose basic idea I build on in Lenzi 2012 (now revised in chapter seven) and Lenzi 2015c (now revised in chapter eight). Others who have noted or elaborated on the scholarly (though not necessarily exorcist) background of the poem's author include Lambert 1960, 26–27; Reiner 1985, 102; Foster 2005, 394; Pongratz-Leisten 2010; SAACT 7, xxviii, xxxv–xxxvi; Steinert 2012, 39; Noegel 2016, 613; Oshima 2014, 18–19, 33; and Häntinen forthcoming. For another line of evidence to support the institutional origins of the poem among scholars, see Lenzi 2015b, where I argue that the Sumerian name of each of the twelve gates through which the protagonist passes in *Ludlul* V 42–53 is related in the same lines to the Akkadian descriptions of what the protagonist receives at each gate by way of traditional, scholarly hermeneutical methods, for which see Livingstone 1986, Frahm 2011, Gabbay 2016, Wee 2019, 2019a, and Bennett 2021.

⁹ For a brief introduction to the five most important ritual/divinatory experts (exorcists, seers [*bārūš*], physicians, lamentation singers, and astrologers) in late second and early first-millennium Babylonia and Assyria, see Lenzi 2015; for the divinely revealed and secret character of their ritual corpora, see Lenzi 2008, 68–103.

¹⁰ For this date and the role of Nazimarutšaš in later Mesopotamian literary tradition, likely due to his mention in *Ludlul*, see Frazer 2013, 187.

poem was composed closer to the former period than the latter, but this opinion is unprovable at this time.¹¹

Some scholars would prefer, however, to *equate* the time of the poem's composition with the *terminus post quem*. That is, they suggest the poem was composed during the reign of Nazimaruttaš because the name Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan, which appears three times in *Ludlul* (III 44, V 111, and V 119),¹² has turned up in a couple of administrative documents dated to the fourth and sixteenth years of that regent's reign.¹³ The former document comes from Ur (U.30506), in which the man bears the title *šakin māti*, "the administrator of the land," indicating some social prominence;¹⁴ and the latter document comes from Nippur (CBS 3657), in which grain is given to the man's messenger.¹⁵ On the basis of this evidence, Lambert concludes, "this man was an historical figure under Nazimaruttaš, important enough as an official in the fourth year of the king to have a messenger of his fed at state expense, and attested as a provincial governor in the sixteenth year" (1995, 34). Lambert goes on to wonder whether this man actually experienced the trauma described in *Ludlul*. "There is, of course, no evidence on this point," he admits, "but it is surely likely that an historical figure chosen to be the speaker in this long monologue (*sic*) would be chosen because something of the kind had actually happened to him" (34). Half a millennium after these documents, there is another document in Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian copies, K.9952 and BM 38611, respectively, that describes a legal dispute involving a Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan and the document's complainant, who had the text written. This document also names Nazimaruttaš as the complainant's "lord," implying Nazimaruttaš was king at the time of the document's composition.¹⁶ Although the text is still quite fragmentary, Oshima interprets what we have to suggest the document, which he identifies as "most probably a letter" (2014, 465), reflects a scenario very much like the one we read in *Ludlul*. Fadhil and Jiménez wonder if the text "might

¹¹ My position has not altered significantly since my statement on this issue in 2010 in SAACT 7, xviii–xix.

¹² The orthography of the name varies only slightly between ^mšub-ši-meš-re-e-^dŠAKKAN and ^mšub-ši-meš-ra(-a)-^dŠAKKAN among witnesses.

¹³ See Oshima 2014, 16–17 and Lambert 1995, 33–34 for discussions of these documents.

¹⁴ See Gurney 1983, no. 76, lines 9 and 14 and Gurney 1986.

¹⁵ See Clay 1912, no. 20, line 31.

¹⁶ Lambert only knew this text via the smaller Kuyunjik fragment, which he took cautiously to be a "historical epic" (see 1960, 296–97 and 1995, 33). See now Oshima 2014, 465–69 for an edition of both fragments, who also makes the point about Nazimaruttaš as the complainant's lord on p. 465. Frazer has also edited the text in her unpublished dissertation (2015, 18–36); she is less certain about the epistolary genre than Oshima and prefers simply to consider it a legal document (10). Fadhil and Jiménez (2019, 162, n.24) mention that BM 38339 (unpublished) has been identified as an indirect join to BM 38611.

have been transmitted as the prose version of the same event narrated in ‘Ludlul’, and might perhaps speak in favor of its historicity.”¹⁷ Oshima accounts for the poem’s literary artifice and scholarly sophistication by suggesting Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan commissioned a scholar to write *Ludlul* for him as a means of expressing thanks to Marduk for restoring him to health after his personal trauma.¹⁸ Thus, *Ludlul*, these scholars suggest, *may be* a literary reflection on real events involving a real guy named Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan who really suffered and was really restored during the reign of king Nazimarutša.

Does *Ludlul* reflect the protagonist’s actual biography? “It is possible,” van der Toorn concedes, “that this man has stood a model for the central personage of *Ludlul*.”¹⁹ But even if so, any such historical person’s experiences would have undergone a literary transformation into an instantiation of what van der Toorn calls the “emblematic sufferer,” someone, he writes, “who has absorbed the many fragmentary manifestations of misery; all possible aspects of human hardship are displayed in his life history.”²⁰ Spieckermann likewise denies “die rein biographische Deutung” of the poem, which is rather the result of theological reflection and has the intention to present the protagonist’s story as exemplary to others.²¹ Similarly, Bottéro sees the use of “personnes concrètes” in *Ludlul* as a means of inserting the story into “‘history’” (his scare quotes), not so much to relate actual events; rather, the named individual, acting something like the biblical Job, “accentuait la vérité d’exemple du récit.”²² Although van der Toorn, Spieckermann, and Bottéro, among others, rightly emphasize the sophistication and artifice of the poem in my view, and, indeed, its presentation of the sufferer as exemplary (quite deliberately so, as I will argue in chapters eight and ten), it must be admitted that historical events and thus actual human biographies can take the form of a highly accomplished literary text, even in ancient Mesopotamia, as in, for example, Sargon II’s report to Aššur on his

¹⁷ 2019, 162.

¹⁸ 2014, 14–19; see similarly, e.g., Ziegler 2015, 241.

¹⁹ 2003, 77.

²⁰ See van der Toorn 1985, 58–61, here 58 and see the endnotes on pp. 186–87, where *Ludlul* provides many of the references for his generalizations. The litany of suffering may not be *just* to help others identify with the sufferer. It may also have been part and parcel of the scholarly propensity for inclusiveness and completeness as evidenced in the corpora of omens but also evidenced in other long lament-laden prayers. For the influence of incantation prayers on the structure and content of *Ludlul*, see chapter eight.

²¹ Exemplary “so daß alle, die von einem Leidensgeschick betroffen sind, sich in dieser Gestalt wiederfinden können” (332). He cites von Soden 1990, 113 to the same effect (and see already von Soden 1965, 56 for the same viewpoint). Note along the same lines Moran, who calls the protagonist “a Mesopotamian Everyman” (2002, 186), and Sitzler, who sees in the protagonist an “Idealtyp mesopotamischer Normerfüllung” (1995, 93).

²² 1977, 10.

eighth campaign, to which I will return presently.²³ One thing that seems rather clear with regard to the debate surrounding the historicity of the poem's protagonist and the poem's (possible) use of his actual individual biography is that we modern scholars bring our own intellectual and cultural categories—such as 'historicity,' 'historicism,' and 'individualism'—to bear in reading ancient texts, an issue that will resurface multiple times in the course of this monograph (see especially chapters six and eleven).²⁴ In addition, the preoccupation with the administrative texts that name Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan has mostly blinded us to any substantive discussion about the meaning of his name for the poem, to which I return at the end of chapter eight, with appendix, and, more speculatively, in the appendix to chapter nine.

I mention *Sargon II's Eighth Campaign* because the high literary register of this text—a letter, the most quotidian of literary forms in ancient Mesopotamia!—is well-known, and because it presents an important example of how an Assyrian scholar cast the king and his historical accomplishments not only in a literary form highly artificial—as in showing great artifice—but also in one that draws on the dual focus pattern of Assyrian royal epic as analyzed by Beate Pongratz-Leisten. As she shows, Sargon II is portrayed through two traditional tropes, both as the warrior king who embodies the Ninurta combat myth on campaign and the just king who adheres to the stipulations of international treaties. In Pongratz-Leisten's analysis, this highly tendentious text played an important role in legitimizing the king's actions in the eyes of the Assyrian elites by way of its deployment and development of these tropes. To read the text only as a literary account of a historical battle misses much of the text's ideological importance and completely ignores the political role and ideological argument of the court scholar who composed it.²⁵

Pongratz-Leisten's treatment of this text provides a theoretically informed analogy for my own approach to Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan in *Ludlul*. Whether the protagonist in *Ludlul* is the historical Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan of the administrative texts or not, I approach *Ludlul*'s representation of the protagonist's experiences *as data for understanding the worldview and concerns of the ancient scholars among whom the poem's author was counted*. The author as an individual is

²³ For an edition, see Frame 2021, no. 65; for an edition and study, see Mayer 2013. Hurowitz 2008 offers literary observations and Foster 2005, 790–813 provides an English translation.

²⁴ See similarly Veldhuis with regard to "recent discussions around the figure of the Middle Babylonian scholar Esagil-kin-apli and the question of the historical reality of the achievements ascribed to him in much later texts" (2014a, 22, n.1).

²⁵ See Pongratz-Leisten 2015, 290–321 (especially 298–99), 322–34. In fact, the same point is developed for Assyrian royal inscriptions and other texts throughout the book. Note especially her final chapter, "Texts as Voices of the Scholars" (448–67).

not my concern—he is unknowable; rather, the focus is on the ancient group of scholars to which the author belonged and whom he represented in producing *Ludlul*. Pongratz-Leisten again points the way: “Instead of adhering to a Western notion of authorship,” she writes, “treating the literary qualities and cultural sophistication of ancient Mesopotamian texts as witnesses to the voice of the scholar appears to me to be a legitimate means of bringing the *producers* of ideological discourse into the foreground.”²⁶ I agree. Thus, the protagonist’s experience of and frustration with divine revelation in *Ludlul* sheds light on the scholars’ divinatory worldview that gave rise, at the broadest level, to the poem itself (see chapter five). The poem’s use of anatomical and pathological vocabulary to describe the afflictions the protagonist endures can profitably be compared to the vocabulary in texts associated with exorcism (chapter six). The ritual failures the protagonist experiences reflect elements of the poem’s and thus the scholars’ institutional agenda (chapter seven). And his first person account, including its structure and specific language, shows intertextual connections with incantation prayers, a genre distinctive to exorcism (chapter eight), which has important implications for how the poem intended to affect its ancient readers.

These four chapters in Part Two that seek to understand the poem itself as a product of ancient scholarship are framed by three others that deal specifically with the much later scholarly reception and uses of *Ludlul*. Chapter four, using material features of the cuneiform tablets attesting the poem, examines the use of *Ludlul* in scribal curricula and the information that can be gleaned from the handful of tablets bearing a colophon. This chapter provides a foundation for establishing the poem’s literary prominence among first-millennium scholars, particularly exorcists and their students. Chapter nine presents an edition of the ancient Commentary to *Ludlul*, a thorough evaluation of the scholarly techniques by which lemma from the poem are explained in the Commentary, and, more briefly, a review of the use of *Ludlul* in other commentaries of the first millennium. This chapter shows the poem’s on-going importance among the

²⁶ Pongratz-Leisten 2015, 464. Pamela Barmash utilizes a similar approach to understand the scribes who composed the Laws of Hammurabi and to explore their sense of justice and equity. She writes, “what is crucial to note about the statutes of the Laws of Hammurabi is that *the statutes reflected how a scribe assessed what was just and legally fair because scribes were trained in legal cases, terminology, and concepts and served as legal functionaries* [emphasis original]. The statutes were not purely academic.... The authority of the Laws of Hammurabi was based on the nature of scribal activities in the legal realm, not on the king’s domination over his territory or over the court system.... The Laws of Hammurabi manifests how a scribe articulated justice in a repertoire of traditional cases, and its authority lies in how it highlights the factors that need to be taken into account in remedying a wrong and how a wrong or dispute should be adjudicated” (2020, 11).

scholars and their students. Chapter ten presents three readings of first-millennium texts that draw on the protagonist in *Ludlul* to cast another person in another situation in the role of the poem's sufferer. This chapter shows the poem's success—centuries later—in presenting the protagonist as a model for others when enduring divinely-imposed suffering.

As Part Two demonstrates, reading *Ludlul* with the ancient scholars enriches our understanding of both the poem and the scholars themselves.

Chapter eleven, the only chapter in Part Three, bridges the ancient and the modern contexts of scholarship. In this chapter I read the ancient protagonist's experience of the *alû* demon in *Ludlul* II 71–85 comparatively with the common experience clinically known today as sleep paralysis. Drawing on both ancient and modern scholarship, this final chapter demonstrates this passage's importance for our understanding of the poem and also the significance it can have for us not just as historical investigators, as scholars, but also as modern *readers* of this ancient literary gem.

PART ONE: *LUDLUL* AND MODERN SCHOLARS

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Unlike many texts that originated in antiquity—the Bible, the Rigveda, the Mishnah, or the works of Plato, Homer, and Sophocles, Akkadian literary texts such as *Ludlul* do not have a continuous tradition of transmission, oral or written, by which they have come down to us from ancient times into the present. As with the literature of ancient Egypt, the origins of Akkadian literature are both ancient and modern: ancient, in that the texts were written before the Common Era; and modern, in that these literary texts have only come to light in the course of the last 180 years of archaeological exploration in Western Asia and philological labor of hundreds of scholars in museums, universities, and private studies. As interesting as is the ancient scholarship reflected in *Ludlul* and surrounding its various uses (see Part Two), our initial point of departure is an examination of the modern scholarship surrounding the poem, how we have come to know the text, why it exists in the form that it does today, and how we translate it into our own languages.

Rare is the Akkadian composition pulled from the ground in a pristine state of preservation. *Ludlul* is no such rarity. Rather, like many Akkadian literary texts, *Ludlul* came to light in bits and pieces (literally) over time. In fact, although a supermajority of the poem is now available to modern readers, its text and translation are still not so well-established that they are beyond substantive future improvement, recent and the present work notwithstanding. Just as the modern history of the Akkadian literary corpus broadly conceived is characterized by textual growth, so too is *Ludlul*'s. For the present purposes, we can distinguish three kinds of modern textual growth in Akkadian literature. First, the corpus as a whole grows in that contemporary scholars still discover literary works previously unknown to us that ought to be counted among the compositions in the corpus. The growth in the number of compositions in the corpus was rapid in the early years (i.e., 1850–1950) and has slowed in more recent times; yet new works are still occasionally registered.¹ Second, the texts of individual Akkadian literary works grow in that scholars often identify new copies of literary works that we already know, and, as most of these texts remain only partially recovered, these new copies often add to the actual wording of the compositions as pieces in a puzzle. In this way, the text of a literary work grows as new discoveries are made. Finally, the translations of individual

¹ See, e.g., George 2009; Guichard 2014; and Foster / George 2020.

Akkadian literary works grow in that scholars continue to refine the grammatical knowledge of the ancient language in which the compositions are written and thus our translations of individual compositions have changed—matured—over the decades since their first discovery. This growth in understanding the language was especially evident in the twentieth century, when many important language-related projects (e.g., dictionaries and grammars) put Akkadian on a firm philological foundation. Still, substantive growth in the quality of our translations continues to this day.

The chapters in Part One explore the second two senses of growth described above. The first chapter provides a detailed account of the archaeological discovery and textual reconstruction of the poem along with a catalog of all published textual witnesses known to me up to July 2022. The second chapter presents the actual text of the poem in Akkadian transcription and English translation. The notes in the third chapter demonstrate and participate in the modern scholarly conversation that this poem has initiated among philologists. Whether I agree or disagree with these previous scholars on particular details, I have benefited tremendously from and respect their work. Of course, the notes also show just how much more work there is to do as we carry *Ludlul* with us into the future.

CHAPTER 1:
LUDLUL'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECOVERY
AND TEXTUAL RECONSTRUCTION

This first chapter considers the archaeological recovery and textual reconstruction of *Ludlul* as a means to understand how it is that we even *know* the poem in this century we call the twenty-first. The story unfolds in a site-by-site survey of the poem's manuscripts, highlighting their archaeological discovery and how scholars used them to reconstruct the form of the poem as it is known today. As one will see below, the ancient poem that is *Ludlul* is very much the product of modern scholarship.

The rather detailed account is intended to serve three purposes. First, although many specialists will be familiar with the archaeological sites, persons, and processes that factor into the following account, many students and non-specialists will not be. This historical account of the modern reconstruction of *Ludlul* illuminates significant features in the historical development of the field, gives insight *pars pro toto* into the nature of modern Assyriological scholarship, and describes the difficulties modern scholars encounter in undertaking the study of an ancient Mesopotamian literary text.¹ Second, and of more interest to specialists, examining the modern historical growth of the text of *Ludlul* reveals a common theme in the scholarly reconstruction of the poem that provides historical precedent and supporting evidence to Oshima's proposal (2014) that the poem contains five rather than four Tablets, with the newly proposed Tablet occupying the penultimate position (Tablet IV). And third, as a historical account of the modern reconstruction of *Ludlul* must begin with early European archaeological discoveries of ancient Assyria and Babylon in the nineteenth century Ottoman-controlled Near East, this chapter also touches briefly upon the varied interests and concerns—colonial, intellectual, nationalist, and/or religious—that motivated European dilettantes and scholars to recover Babylonian literature. Although such matters could easily fill a monograph and Nineveh receives here a much larger treatment than other sites, the following account illustrates, if only briefly and superficially, that the modern scholarship surrounding the ancient poem is inextricably tied to the recent past; it is part and parcel of what I have described elsewhere as comprising our intellectual and cultural genealogies to the ancient Near East that provide a

¹ For this audience, I have included some explanations in the course of the narrative that Assyriologists will consider too basic to mention.

collective impetus for our contemporary academic work—our modern scholarship on *Ludlul*.² Thus, the account of the modern recovery of *Ludlul* provides historical context for understanding and examining the various questions and concerns *we* bring with us as modern scholars when we turn to interpret this poem in its ancient context (see Part Two)—and again *pars pro toto*, Babylonian literature generally.

1.1. EUROPEAN EXPLORATION, ARCHAEOLOGY, AND THE BEGINNINGS OF ASSYRIOLOGY

Prior to the nineteenth century a number of European travelers and explorers brought home reports of Mesopotamia and its enigmatic mounds (*tells*), ancient ruins, and nail-like writing (i.e., cuneiform), the last inscribed on pieces of stone, tablets of dried clay, and baked bricks.³ These reports and material revelations, as few as they were, added fuel to a European literary and religious imagination already fascinated with Babylon due to its infamous character in classical and especially biblical texts.⁴ As imperial aspirations pushed European powers across the globe in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, governments and businesses realized a need to appoint personnel to represent their diplomatic, military, and economic interests in far flung lands. It was in this manner that the major characters involved in the early archaeological exploration of ancient Mesopotamia in the nineteenth century found themselves in the Near East. Among these were:

Claudius Rich (1786–1821): The British East India Company’s Resident in Baghdad (1808–1821), who surveyed the area and gathered a small collection of artifacts that his widow would sell to the British Museum in 1825,⁵ the exhibition of which along with his posthumous memoir (1836) inspired several of those to follow.⁶

Henry Creswicke Rawlinson (1810–1895): Who started his career as a British East India Company soldier in Persia and India and political agent in

² Lenzi 2019, 194–96. This background sheds light on aspects of what motivates not only the author of the present work but I dare say most of his readers.

³ Pallis 1956, 19–93 provides a detailed survey of the early exploration of ancient Mesopotamia.

⁴ See, e.g., Scheil 2016, Thelle 2019, and Seymour 2022 for recent treatments of Babylon in the Biblical and Western traditions with reference to much previous literature and Foster 2008, whose treatment of “Assyriology and English Literature” includes much from before and after the archaeological exploration under discussion here.

⁵ See Leichty / Finkel / Walker 2019, 17.

⁶ Noted by Larsen 1994, 9.

Afghanistan (1927–1842) and eventually became Resident in Baghdad and British Consul General (1843–1849, 1851–1855). He was a central figure in the decipherment of cuneiform and the early publication of Babylonian texts.

Paul-Émile Botta (1802–1870): French Consul in Mosul (1841–1845), who excavated Sargon’s palace at Khorsabad and sent back to the Louvre the first major shipment of excavated artifacts to go on display in a European museum (1847).

Victor Place (1815–1875): Botta’s eventual successor (1852–1855), who made even more extensive excavations at Khorsabad but lost nearly as much as he found in a tragic shipping incident of artifacts down the Tigris.

And William Kennett Loftus (1820–1858): Appointed a British governmental naturalist and geologist in the Near East, who between the years 1849 and 1855 excavated at Nineveh, several sites in southern Mesopotamia, and Susa in Iran before his untimely death.

Although these came east to serve their employers’ interests—both commercial and political—within the Ottoman Empire’s regional administrative cities of Mosul and Baghdad,⁷ their intellectual curiosity—and in some cases, their religious devotion—led them to take up archaeology in their spare time, often in competition with each other on both the individual and national levels.⁸

Unlike these men, the singular Austen Henry Layard (1817–1894) initiated his experience in the Near East as a youthful adventurer *en route* overland to Ceylon, where he was to take a position in law. He journeyed circuitously in the Near East through Jerusalem, Petra, Amman, Damascus, Beirut, and Aleppo before arriving in Mosul in May 1840. The romance of archaeology was beckoning but practicalities dictated otherwise; he had little personal income and no funding for archaeological excavations. His accumulated knowledge and life experiences in the Near East led to his appointment in

⁷ “These Came East” is the title of the opening chapter of Lloyd’s history of Mesopotamian archaeology (1980), where he introduces the major figures of nineteenth century archaeological exploration.

⁸ Recounting the fascinating history of Mesopotamian exploration and archaeology in any depth would take us too far afield. In addition to Lloyd 1980 mentioned previously, see Pallis 1956, 266–384 for an encyclopedic survey, and Larsen 1996, whose detailed and engaging narrative recounts the personal and professional biographies of archaeologists who worked between 1840–1860, especially Botta, Rawlinson, Place, Loftus, Layard, and Rassam (the last two to be introduced momentarily). Thelle 2019, 60–87 offers a compact but substantive account. The details presented in this and the following paragraphs are drawn from these works. The nationalist motivations and competitions between imperial powers are interspersed in varying degrees throughout all four books. For the role of archaeology in the years leading up to the creation of Iraq on through its early history (to 1941), including the imperial meddling in its archaeological exploration, see Bernhardsson 2005.

Istanbul to a secretarial position under the British Ambassador, Sir Stratford Canning, in late summer 1842. Using Botta's (i.e., the French) archaeological success at Khorsabad adroitly to fan the flames of English jealousy and pride, Layard, who had met and corresponded with Botta and was himself itching to excavate, eventually convinced Canning to station him in Mosul for the express purpose of archaeological discovery, which he undertook with great success in 1845–1847 and then again with support from the British Museum in 1849–1851. He is most famous for his striking discoveries at Nimrud and Nineveh.⁹ Layard's assistant during these years, Hormuzd Rassam (1826–1910), another unique character among the early explorers, was a man of the East who came west. Born in Mosul to an Assyrian Christian family, Rassam adopted English culture and society as his own, though that culture never fully accepted him. He continued Layard's work at Nineveh and explored a number of important sites in southern Mesopotamia.¹⁰

What all of these men¹¹ initiated was nothing less than the rediscovery of ancient Mesopotamian civilizations, which radically expanded the documentable history of humanity in the Fertile Crescent. Their discoveries also provided historical precedent for contemporary imperial aspirations and stoked the Victorian fascination for the East.¹²

In the first decade of exploration (up to the early 1850's), the great majority of archaeological explorers were interested primarily in statuary, monumental architecture, and the coveted Assyrian palace reliefs. This was, after all, what their sponsors had demanded of them since such treasures were easily viewed by the public and bolstered the prestige of their respective national museums (especially the British Museum and the Louvre).¹³ Only a handful of curious minds attempting to decipher the cuneiform script and Babylonian language

⁹ See Layard 1849, 1849–1853, 1853. For a variety of perspectives on his life and work, see the essays in Fales / Hickey 1987 in addition to the coverage in Larsen 1996.

¹⁰ Rassam 1897. Essential reading on Rassam is Reade 1993; see also the lively details in Larsen 1996, especially 306–32, 353–56.

¹¹ The early explorers were all men. The first woman to be involved substantively in the archaeology of the Near East, to my knowledge, was Gertrude Bell, whose first trip east occurred in the 1890's. Bell is a popular figure among biographers. See, e.g., Wallach 1996; Lukitz 2006; and Cooper 2016, who emphasizes her archaeological contributions (mostly of the Islamic period); see also the collection of essays about her life and work in Collins / Trip 2017. As Bell was the director of antiquities during the British Mandate, she appears extensively in Bernhardtsson's account of archaeology and nation building in Iraq (2005).

¹² For an exhaustive treatment of the appropriation of Egyptological and Assyriological archaeology and scholarship as it unfolded into the cultural *Zeitgeist* of the nineteenth century, see the three volume work by Kevin McGeough (2015).

¹³ The visual element in the public curation of ancient Mesopotamia remained important in later periods, as Thelle 2019, 142–66 demonstrates for Berlin between the world wars.

gave inscribed objects, especially cuneiform tablets, the same enthusiastic attention as do Assyriologists today.

When the Crimean War broke out in the fall of 1853 and excavations in Mesopotamia were suspended shortly thereafter, this attitude changed. Attention shifted decisively to the tablets, and this for reasons that progressively unfolded beyond simply the war and the concomitant inability to excavate. First, already in the late 1840's and early 1850's Rawlinson and his main competitor, Edward Hincks, a country parson in Ireland, had made significant progress on the decipherment of cuneiform inscriptions preserving the Babylonian language.¹⁴ The tablets were thus becoming increasingly meaningful in terms of their content around the time the war broke out. Second, after another official stint in Baghdad, Rawlinson permanently returned to London in 1855. Interested in inscriptions and tablets for decades already, Rawlinson spearheaded efforts to organize, catalog, and publish the tablets that had come to the British Museum by that time.¹⁵ And third, in 1857, W. H. Fox Talbot, a mathematician, inventor, and cuneiform autodidact, sent a translation of a historical inscription of the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser (III) to the Royal Asiatic Society with the request that other scholars offer their own translation and a comparison be made of the results to verify that the principles of decipherment were in fact established. The Society invited three other scholars, Rawlinson, Hincks, and Jules Oppert (a French scholar of German extraction), to submit independent translations of the same text. The four translations were similar enough when compared that the Society declared the language officially deciphered.¹⁶ As these events unfolded, the value of cuneiform tablets rose considerably in the minds of all involved in the study of things Mesopotamian.

1.2. THE DISCOVERY OF ANCIENT TABLET COLLECTIONS AND THE MANUSCRIPTS OF *LUDLUL*

Many of the archaeological sites dating to the first millennium BCE that have yield cuneiform tablets have also yielded witnesses to the text of *Ludlul*. (The most important exceptions are Uruk and Nippur. See, however, chapter nine,

¹⁴ For the story of the decipherment of cuneiform and the Babylonian language, see Larsen 1996, especially 115–24, 177–88, and 293–305, and, more briefly, Walker 1987a, 48–52. An older account is found in, e.g., Pallis 1956, 94–187. For the recent re-assessment of Hinck's contributions to the decipherment of Akkadian, which were not properly credited by Rawlinson in his own work, see, e.g., Larsen 1997 and Cathcart 2011.

¹⁵ Larsen 1996, 356, 359.

¹⁶ See Talbot / Hincks / Oppert / Rawlinson 1861 for the published account.

page 384 for the former site.) The following account surveys these locations on a site by site basis, and it does so in such a way that the story of the text's reconstruction unfolds *roughly* in a chronological manner. I know of no similar presentation for an Akkadian literary text,¹⁷ which may be due to the fact that reading such an account may be considered too detailed or tedious. Perhaps there is little demand. But, I think there is much to be learned about the field in such a presentation and much to be learned about *Ludlul*—and by example, the problems of reconstructing Babylonian literature in general. Moreover, understanding the history of *Ludlul's* reconstruction offers historical precedent for and lends plausibility to Oshima's proposal (2014) about the existence of what he calls (and is accepted here) as Tablet IV of the poem. As the reconstruction of this Tablet is the most recent piece of the puzzle, its discussion is reserved for last. We start in Nineveh.

1.2.1. *Nineveh (seventh century BCE)*

The first major tablet find in Mesopotamia coincides with the final years of decipherment and remains one of the most important finds for the field of Assyriology to this day: the discovery of a huge cache of tablets in Sennacherib's South-West palace in the Assyrian city of Nineveh (modern Kuyunjik). It was early May of 1850. Layard was returning to Kuyunjik from a brief expedition to the Ḥabur region. His workmen, who had continued excavations during his absence, conveyed him through the deep trenches and tunnels they had opened on the mound to a series of chambers they had uncovered while he was away. As with many of the palatial rooms, these were covered with bas reliefs and some of the doors were flanked by statues. The new discoveries were welcome but hardly unusual at this point in the work at Nineveh. Then came the rooms that would be known as XL and XLI. The floors of these two rooms were literally covered with clay tablets to a depth of nearly one foot—a find unparalleled at the time.¹⁸ The rooms were probably a secondary context for the tablets, which might have fallen from a floor above—now a disputed idea—or dumped there for some reason.¹⁹ In any case, the tablets lay for more

¹⁷ But see Farber's brief history of the discoveries related to the Lamaštu series (2014, 37–44) and Schwemer's treatment of the same for *Maqlû* (2017, 23–26, 43–58).

¹⁸ For Layard's account of his discovery, see Layard 1853, 295–99, cited at length in Finkel 2019, 368–69 (from the edition published in London, thus, pp. 344–47).

¹⁹ On rooms XL and XLI, see Russell 1991, 65–66, who cites George Smith's idea that the tablets fell into the rooms from above. Likewise, Reade 2000, 421. See now George 2015, 75, who notes recent doubts about the existence of an upper story in the palace and thinks the tablets

than 2000 years in chaotic disposition on the floors of rooms XL and XLI. Layard and his workmen exhumed tablets and fragments numbering into the thousands. Before this discovery inscriptions were mostly known from those carved into stone or onto the soft gypsum surface of the bas reliefs lining the palace walls. Tablets were relatively isolated finds. This new discovery offered nothing less than an imperial archive and library, the first installment of several caches of tablets that we now call the Library and Archives of King Aššurbanipal (668–627 BCE) at Nineveh.²⁰

Only a few years later, in late December 1853 Hormuzd Rassam began discrete excavations in a northern area of the Kuyunjik mound that all had agreed “belonged to” the French archaeological team, led by Victor Place. Rassam had a hunch that some extraordinary find lay under the surface. After three nights of clandestine digging—his only hope to avoid detection—his hunch proved correct: he discovered Aššurbanipal’s North Palace. In what would be labeled Room C, whose walls were decorated with Aššurbanipal’s great lion hunt reliefs,²¹ Rassam found another part of Aššurbanipal’s imperial tablet collection.²² As with Layard’s cache, the tablets and fragments were in disarray, no doubt tossed into this room secondarily by looters when the palace was razed in 612 BCE during the final sack of Nineveh.²³

The more than 22,000 tablets and fragments found in both locations were simply labeled “K.” for Kuyunjik by the staff of the British Museum during accession, so it is difficult to determine which tablets came from which location in Nineveh.²⁴ Be that as it may, the point remains that among this first

arrived in these rooms secondarily for reasons and via means unknown. Russell suggests room XL was originally a lavatory (66).

²⁰ See Larsen 1996 for a broader context of the discovery, especially pp. 255–65. Robson 2013, 41–45 and Pedersen 1998, 158–65 provide a brief characterization of the libraries and archives (plural) at Nineveh collected on behalf of Aššurbanipal; Finkel 2019 goes into greater depth. For a brief summary of the archaeology of the site, see Stronach / Codella 1997 and, with more depth, Reade 2000.

²¹ See Barnett 1976 for an extensive report with photographs and, more briefly, Reade 1999, 72–79. See also the British Museum’s video, *The Assyrian Lion Hunt Reliefs* (2006).

²² Rassam 1897, 31.

²³ Walker 1987, 184. See Larsen 1996, 306–32 for the broader context of discovery, especially emphasizing the competition between the English (Rassam) and the French (Place) archaeological teams. The Babylonians and Medes sacked Nineveh in 612 BCE, dealing a blow to the Neo-Assyrian empire that would lead to its final collapse a few years later in Ḫarran, where the Assyrians made their final stand.

²⁴ The matter is considerably more complicated than the above implies, as some tablets that came to the British Museum from other sites were mistakenly registered with those from Kuyunjik and thus bear a K. number. Walker estimates that this affects about 1–2% of the K.-collection (1987, 186). Moreover, later archaeologists digging at Nineveh excavated tablets belonging to the archives that Layard and Rassam had found but these tablets were given different labels, as is

great mass of cuneiform tablets from a late seventh century BCE collection we have witnesses to nearly every genre of the Babylonian textual tradition. Layard wrote about the tablets a few years after his discovery in superlative terms: "We cannot overrate their value. They furnish us with materials for the complete decipherment of the cuneiform character, for restoring the language and history of Assyria, and for inquiring into the customs, sciences, and, we may perhaps even add, literature, of its people."²⁵ Rawlinson's examination of the tablets during his second residency in Baghdad led to a similar assessment in a letter to Layard: "They contain a perfect Cyclopaedia of Assyrian science and are enough to occupy all the students of Europe for the next twenty years."²⁶ This has proven to be an understatement of massive proportions; Assyriologists have worked on these and related finds from Nineveh *continuously* since their discovery and will likely do so for generations to come.

The initial excitement of these great tablet finds, however, did not compel the British to return to Nineveh immediately after the Crimean War. For that to happen, it seems a motivation of biblical proportions was required, which a young man named George Smith (1840–1876) supplied.²⁷

Smith was apprenticed in his teen years to a bank note engraver but his passion was for "Oriental studies" and "Eastern explorations and discoveries, particularly in the great work in which Layard and Rawlinson were engaged."²⁸ He was especially interested in how the new discoveries might have some bearing on biblical history. Motivated by this curiosity, he frequented the British Museum to study cuneiform tablets as time and access allowed until the self-taught Assyriologist attracted the staff's attention and that of Rawlinson, who secured for the young man a job sorting and joining tablets. In time, Smith was

mentioned below (e.g., Sm. and DT for tablets found by Smith and Rm. for those found by Rassam some twenty-five years after his find of 1853). See Fincke 2003/2004, 114–15 for a brief statement of the archaeological and museological challenges one faces with the tablets from Nineveh. Reade 2000 is the best attempt yet to sort the tablets by find spot (see earlier Reade 1986). See <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/asbp/index.html> for a major project, headed by Jonathan Taylor, assistant keeper of the cuneiform collection at the British Museum, to organize all of the tablets from the various excavations at Nineveh (over 31,000) online, and eventually to give the text of each tablet in both the original Akkadian (and/or Sumerian) and in English translation.

²⁵ Layard 1853, 298.

²⁶ Cited in Larsen 1996, 320.

²⁷ Damrosch 2006, 9–80 tells Smith's story engagingly, with an emphasis on his role in the recovery of the *Epic of Gilgameš*. The following paragraph relies on Damrosch's account. Reade 1993, 51 mentions another factor in the renewed interest in tablets: the development of the antiquities trade, which was bringing tablets from southern Mesopotamia to Europe by the hundreds. Many of these tablets were economic in nature (e.g., contracts, sales, loans, etc.) while others were religious, historical, astronomical, and literary. It soon became clear that southern Mesopotamia was an untapped textual resource for the recovery of Mesopotamian civilizations.

²⁸ Smith 1875, 9.

appointed Rawlinson's assistant to the on-going work of *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*,²⁹ which led to his permanent employment at the museum in 1867. For many years Smith sifted through the collection avidly looking for connections to the Bible, which he in fact found.³⁰ But these were all rather small and paled in comparison to his discovery in November of 1872, when he found a tablet (K.3375), fragmented and thus incomplete, that recounted the story of a great flood.³¹ The episode occurred near the conclusion of what we now call the *Epic of Gilgameš*. The parallel to the flood accounts in Genesis 6–9 was unquestionable. The excitement for the find was so intense that even the Prime Minister at the time, William Gladstone, attended Smith's lecture at the Biblical Archaeology Society in the month following his discovery. For years Smith had hoped that such a find would purchase him an opportunity to excavate at Nineveh. But his hopes were dashed—at least initially; financial support could not be secured for such a mission from the museum or the government. Sensing a good story and the interest of the general public in Smith's find, a newspaper, the *Daily Telegraph*, offered him £1000 to go to Nineveh and find the missing piece of the tablet, which he promptly did—or so he thought. He arrived on site in early May 1873 and within a week he had found a tablet (DT 42) that bore what Smith took to be the missing lines. (In fact, we know now that it was a different, but related version of the flood story in a text we now call *Atram-ḫasīs*.) Smith communicated his success via telegraph to his sponsor, who called him back to London, mere weeks after his arrival. He brought about 300 more Kuyunjik tablets with him (labeled with DT numbers in honor of the sponsor),³² many of which literally join to K. tablets like pieces of a puzzle. The British Museum sent Smith to Nineveh on two more expeditions, the first in 1873–1874, which yielded a haul of some 2300 tablets (labeled with Sm. numbers for Smith).³³ The second in 1875–1876 turned a late arrival into tragedy. Due to various delays in travel, Smith reached Mosul in the full heat of summer. Having decided to abandon

²⁹ The work appeared in five volumes, some of which also received revised editions or reprintings (Rawlinson *et al* 1861–1909). These volumes are typically referred to by volume number followed by a capital letter R. A superscripted number refers to the edition. Thus, IVR² is the revised fourth volume in the series. It should be noted that although Rawlinson supervised the project, much of the work was done by other scholars employed at the British Museum, notably Edwin Norris (IR, 1861; IIR, 1866), George Smith (IIIR, 1870; IVR¹, 1875), and Theophilus Pinches (IVR², 1891; VR, 1884; VR², 1909).

³⁰ He enumerates these in Smith 1875, 9–13.

³¹ See Smith 1875, 13–14 and Smith 1876.

³² Walker 1987, 185. Some DT tablets were purchased by Smith and are from Babylonia rather than Nineveh (so Reade in Leichty 1986, xiv).

³³ Walker 1987, 185.

any attempt to excavate at Nineveh under such conditions, he set out for home. Unfortunately, he fell sick on the way and died in Aleppo, August 19, 1876.

Yet Nineveh continued to beckon the British. By early 1879 a much older Hormuzd Rassam, who had occupied himself in her majesty's diplomatic corps, found himself again in Mesopotamia under the employ of the British Museum. He oversaw excavations at Nineveh and many sites in the south between 1879 and 1882.³⁴ His work resulted in the excavation of some 3000 more tablets from the ancient Assyrian imperial archives, which made their way back to the contemporary imperial archives of the British Museum (labeled with Rm. and Rm-II numbers).³⁵

The British Museum sponsored several other expeditions to Nineveh, the last of which took place under the leadership of R. Campbell Thompson between 1927 and 1932.³⁶ These excavations all added to the number of tablets from that ancient site, which now totals over 31,000 tablets and fragments.³⁷

Ludlul is well-represented among the tablets from Nineveh, considered as a whole. Of the sixty-four published manuscripts of the poem (as of this writing in July 2022), fifteen, or just under one quarter of all manuscripts, are from this city, the last Assyrian capital.

MSNin	Museum No.	Year Found ³⁸	Year Published	Contents
I.H	K.1757 + K.18963	1850 or 1853	2014 (Oshima) ³⁹	I 51–55
LI	K.9237	1850 or 1853	1953 (von Soden)	I 47–84

³⁴ As Reade notes (1986a, 105–6; with more detail, see Reade in Leichty 1986, xvii–xxv), Rassam was not actually on site in person or even in Mesopotamia during this entire time between these years. Rather, he appointed overseers, who often worked in his (frequent) absence.

³⁵ Walker 1987, 186. Some of the tablets and fragments in the Rm. collection are Babylonian, acquired via purchase. See Reade in Leichty 1986, xxviii–xxix and Leichty / Finkel / Walker 2019, 194.

³⁶ Walker 1987, 189.

³⁷ The Aššurbanipal Library Project lists 31,261 separate tablets and fragments in their project database (<http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/asbp/corpus/>, accessed June 6, 2022, two less than the previous count when I checked the URL on May 13, 2019).

³⁸ In some instances, tablets that appear in these tables in this chapter were not found; rather, a museum representative or collector purchased them from a dealer (see the end of this chapter). Also, for tablets bearing a BM number: The accession year, i.e., when it was registered at the museum, is taken as the year it was discovered. In fact, the tablets were typically found (or purchased) many months before they arrived in London. Establishing a precise date is not necessary for the present purpose. Similarly, given the difficulty of sorting the Kuyunjik tablets (K.) by findspot and year of discovery, I have followed the British Museum's own practice of simply indicating the year of discovery as "1850 or 1853."

³⁹ In many cases, W. G. Lambert copied tablets in personal notebooks and identified them as containing text from *Ludlul* many years (sometimes decades!) prior to their actual publication, often by other scholars. For example, he announced the joining of these two tablets that comprise

I.J	<u>K.9392</u> + K.9810	1850 or 1853	1906 (Hehn) / <u>2002 (Horowitz / Lambert)</u>	I 1–12, 120, II 1
I.K	K.10503 + <u>Sm.2139</u>	1850 or 1853 / <u>1874</u>	1960 (Lambert)	I 43–52, 75–81, 86–91
I.L	1879-07-08, 225	1879	2014 (Oshima)	I 25–30, 97–100
I.M	Sm.89	1874	2014 (Oshima)	I 26–31
II.G	K.2518 + <u>DT</u> <u>358</u>	1850 or 1853 / <u>1873</u>	1888 (Evetts) / <u>1891 (IVR², 60*, only variants)⁴⁰</u>	II 1–47, 96–120, III 1
II.H ₁ ⁴¹	K.3323 + <u>Rm.941</u> + K.18186 + <u>Rm.444</u>	1850 or 1853 / <u>1878</u>	1891 (IVR ² , 60*, only variants of K.3323) ⁴²	II 18–23, 105– 120, III 1
II.H ₂	K.8396	1850 or 1853	1923 (Langdon)	II 44–90
II.I	K.3972 + <u>K.9973</u> + <u>DT</u> <u>151</u>	1850 or 1853 / <u>1873</u>	1875 (IVR ¹ , 67, 2) / <u>2020</u> <u>(Hätinen) / 1891</u> <u>(IVR², 60A*)</u>	II 1–48, 98–120, III 1
II.J	K.6935	1850 or 1853	1960 (Lambert)	II 90–99
II.K	Sm.1745	1874	1923 (Langdon) ⁴³	II 3–9
IV.C	K.9724	1850 or 1853	1960 (Lambert)	IV §B
IV.D	BM 123392 (1932-12-10, 335) ⁴⁴	1932	1972 (Walker)	IV §C
Com	K.3291	1850 or 1853	1884 (VR, 47)	See p. 60.

Table 1: Manuscripts from Nineveh.

MS I.H_{Nin} and their belonging to *Ludlul* in 1992 (Lambert 1992), though they were not properly published until 2014 (by Oshima). See note 55 below. These notebooks are now part of Lambert's *Nachlass*, some of which has been published in George / Taniguchi 2019 and George / Taniguchi 2021. (W. G. Lambert died in 2011; see George 2015a for an obituary.) Those copies relevant to the text of *Ludlul* are cited in the catalog of textual witnesses in the appendix to this chapter; a few are cited in the narrative when deemed relevant.

⁴⁰ K.2518 is printed with other *Ludlul* witnesses as IVR², 60*B. The variants from DT 358 are published in IVR², p. 12 of the “Additions and Corrections” section of the book but the tablet was not properly published there. Jastrow (1906) knows about the tablet in his 1906 edition, but the tablet is finally published in full only in Langdon's edition (1923; see pl. IV for the copy).

⁴¹ II.H₁ and II.H₂ likely belong to the same tablet (see Lambert 1960, 37 and Oshima 2014, 378). They do not currently join directly to each other.

⁴² The variants from K.3323 were published in IVR², no. 60* in 1891 but the entire tablet was not published until Langdon's edition in 1923 (pl. III). For the history of the joins, see below.

⁴³ IVR² identified the piece as part of the poem in 1891 (p. x) but does not otherwise treat it.

⁴⁴ The number in parentheses is the accession number, that is, the number assigned to the object when the museum received it into its collection. For many of the tablets in the British Museum this number manifestly indicates the date of accession. Tablet 1923-12-10, 335 was the 335th item accessioned on December 10, 1923. MS I.L_{Nin}, 1879-07-08, 225, was the 225th item accessioned on July 8, 1879. The date element of the accession number (e.g., 1879-07-08) is the consignment number for the group of tablets accessioned on the same day.

As the table above indicates,⁴⁵ when a tablet was taken from its earthen matrix is never the same as when the tablet was actually published, which here is understood to mean when its Akkadian text was made available to the interested community of scholars and students for study in the form of a line drawing of the tablet and/or an edition of the text.⁴⁶ In fact, with the tablets from Nineveh the dates of discovery and publication may lie a century or more apart. These two dates represent important milestones in the modern history of the individual tablets that bear Babylonian literature. Another milestone is related to the joining of tablet fragments. Tablets are often found in pieces rather than whole at the time of excavation so scholars and curators have to piece them back together, a time-consuming and difficult process. As fragments are joined to one another from the same original tablet, indicated by a plus sign between museum accession numbers (e.g., K.1757 + K.18963 in the first row of the table) our knowledge of the composition written across its surface grows, sometimes resulting in a fuller text of the composition(s) it bears.⁴⁷ Another milestone in the modern history of a tablet is when its inscribed text was identified (not listed in the table above). Since literary works are often incompletely known and tablets are often broken and/or abraded, the inscribed words on a tablet are not always easily identified as containing the text from a particular composition. In principle, when a tablet is identified as part of a particular composition, for example, *Ludlul*, which may happen before or after the tablet is published, our knowledge of that composition increases, even if the newly identified tablet simply offers another parallel witness, a duplicate. In fact, however, such identifications are not always announced in print right away for various reasons endemic to academia. Thus, the field may not know about a scholar's identification for decades. It is not always possible to specify each of these milestones with certainty (or, sometimes, at all) in the life of a tablet since the quality of records has varied throughout the history of the discipline and across museums.⁴⁸ But they are important for understanding the slow

⁴⁵ A fuller presentation of information and bibliography for each witness is available in the appendix to this chapter.

⁴⁶ It is possible, of course, for unpublished tablets to be used in the edition of a literary text, as was the case with several tablets in SAACT 7, whose purpose and format did not permit the proper publication of the new textual witnesses that the edition used. (And, due to a regrettable miscommunication between co-authors, the textual apparatus did not present all of the textual variants of these new MSS.)

⁴⁷ Sometimes joins offer new text and sometimes they simply offer new parallels to parts of a composition already attested on other witnesses.

⁴⁸ Sorting and confirming these various dates is a kind of subfield within the modern history of Babylonian literature.

growth of Babylonian literature over the last 180 years and thus important to a historical understanding of the modern reconstruction of *Ludlul*.

The first tablet bearing witness to *Ludlul*, K.3972 (part of MS II.I_{Nin}), came from Layard's discoveries at Nineveh (1850/1853). It was published in 1875 in the fourth volume of *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia* (= IVR¹, plate 67, no.2), presented in that series' distinctive typeset cuneiform.⁴⁹ This tablet contains what we presently identify as *Ludlul* II 21–48 and 98–120. As luck would have it, the tablet's colophon gives the poem's incipit (MS II.I_{Nin}, rev. 25') and thus the ancient title of the poem.⁵⁰ Immediately, the text aroused considerable interest. In 1884 seven lines of its text were found paralleled on another tablet, K.3291 (= VR, plate 47 = MS Com_{Nin}), whose format suggested it was some kind of commentary to the poem rather than just a copy of its text since this tablet cited isolated lines of K.3972 and then gave explanations of various words from those lines. The Commentary was quite long (98 preserved lines),⁵¹ which allowed the inference, made rather early on, that the poem, known at that time only from its second Tablet, was undoubtedly much lengthier than the text of its first published witness (K.3972).⁵² The key assumption in this inference was that all of the isolated lines cited in the Commentary were from the same composition. Later discoveries have proven this assumption not only correct (though there are still lines in the Commentary that are without parallel in other tablets) but of fundamental importance to the reconstruction of the poem, as demonstrated below. By 1888 a duplicate to K.3972 was identified in the Kuyunjik collection, K.2518 (part of MS II.G_{Nin}), which, most significantly, added the opening twenty lines of Tablet II for the first time.⁵³ In 1891 the second edition of volume four of *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia* (IVR²) announced several more witnesses attesting the poem (see witnesses labeled IVR², 60* in the table above), all bearing text from Tablet II. The poem was growing, but progress was slow and often only incremental, illustrated well by two witnesses from Nineveh, MS II.H_I_{Nin}, composed of K.3323 + Rm.941 + K.18186 + Rm.444, and MS I.J_{Nin}, to which K.9392 + K.9810 belong.

⁴⁹ The heading at the top of the page reads "Assyrian Prayers," which is completely understandable given the influence of prayers and laments on the text of *Ludlul*. See chapter eight.

⁵⁰ This and other colophons on witnesses to *Ludlul* are treated in chapter four.

⁵¹ See chapter nine for a new edition of the Commentary, which is also available at the Yale Cuneiform Commentaries Project: <http://ccp.yale.edu/P394923>.

⁵² See already implicitly in Pinches 1888 and explicitly in Jastrow 1906. For the lines of *Ludlul* attested in the Commentary, see MS Com_{Nin} in the catalog of textual witnesses.

⁵³ See Evetts 1888, who can already cite four studies of K.3972.

In 1891 K.3323 was identified as a part of *Ludlul* in IVR². Carl Bezold, the amazingly industrious Assyriologist and initial cataloger of the Kuyunjik Collection, identified Rm.941 as a join to K.3323 in August of 1895,⁵⁴ which he documented in the fourth volume of his mammoth *Catalogue of the Cuneiform Tablets in the Kouyunjik Collection of the British Museum* (1896, viii). The two joined pieces appear as witnesses to *Ludlul* II in both Langdon's (1923) and Lambert's (1960) text editions of the poem. Lambert added a tiny fragment, K.18186, to these in May of 1977, which he announced in a supplemental catalog to the Kuyunjik collection in 1992.⁵⁵ Finkel's joining of Rm.444 to the other fragments was recorded in museum records in September of 1979 and seems only to have been announced in print in Annus and Lenzi's handbook edition of *Ludlul*, published in 2010 (SAACT 7). The lack of urgency about announcing the final join is easy to understand since Rm.444 only added text to the formulaic colophon on the tablet and nothing to the actual poem.

MS I.J._{Nin} also has a complicated modern history. The fragment K.9810 was published in 1906 but was not identified in print as being a part of *Ludlul* until 1959 by Erle Leichty, just in time for Lambert's new edition of the poem in 1960.⁵⁶ According to museum records, Lambert joined K.9810 to K.9392 in June 1960, just a few months too late to be included in his edition, but few Assyriologists even knew about the join until Lambert published the fact in 2002.⁵⁷ The fragment added only incrementally to our knowledge of the text since it mostly duplicated or provided variants to a part of the poem's text that was already known by that time. These kinds of tablet histories are quite typical in Assyriology.

Providing the details of how every tablet from Kuyunjik helped reconstruct the text of *Ludlul* would be much too tedious here.⁵⁸ Two more observations will demonstrate the centrality of these tablets to the field of Akkadian literature. The first observation arises from the modern history of some of the tablets bearing witness to *Ludlul*, which illustrates the extent to which Rawlinson

⁵⁴ The British Museum tablet curators keep information about joins, which is now available for the Kuyunjik tablets on the Aššurbanipal Library Project website (see <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/asbp/index.html>), my source for such information unless otherwise indicated.

⁵⁵ Lambert 1992, 19. He also announced there (p. 29) that K.1757 joined to K.18963 (= MS I.H), a join he made in May 1990, and identified its contents as lines from *Ludlul*.

⁵⁶ Hehn 1906, 389–90, no. XVIII (published); Leichty 1959 (identified, see Lambert 1960, 343). For the significance of this witness, see below at the end of the section on tablets from Aššur.

⁵⁷ Horowitz / Lambert 2002, 237, 240.

⁵⁸ There are a few more examples of Ninevite tablets mentioned below in conjunction with tablets from other sites.

understated the importance of the tablets from Nineveh. A full 140 years after Smith's excavations in Nineveh, Takayoshi Oshima placed Sm.89, a tiny fragment bearing only six unbroken signs, into *Ludlul* I 26–31. Oshima discovered the piece while searching for unidentified witnesses to the poem in the thousands of unpublished tablet drawings and transliterations amassed in notebooks by Frederick Geers in 1924 and 1929 to 1939 for the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary, a project of the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago.⁵⁹ Given the size of this tiny fragment and the few preserved signs (see Oshima 2014, pl. VI), Oshima's identification is quite remarkable, the discovery of a needle in a haystack, so to speak.⁶⁰ Searching tablet collections in this manner is the stock and trade of many Assyriologists concerned with Babylonian literary, religious, and scholarly texts. They are always on the lookout for duplicates that may fill in missing lines or signs in an incomplete composition. Rawlinson suggested in April of 1853 that the tablets from Nineveh would "occupy all the students of Europe for the next twenty years."⁶¹ In fact, searching the tablets from Nineveh still produces results some 170 years later.

And now, computers have come to our aid. The Electronic Babylonian Literature project headed by Enrique Jiménez, is in the process of creating a huge fragmentarium for Assyriology, that is, a searchable repository of transliterations of cuneiform tablets. Those in the British Museum's collections are especially well-represented. Using advanced search capabilities, the eBL team has identified hundreds of duplicates to known compositions and discovered new compositions as well. An especially interesting example for *Ludlul* comes from the little fragment K.9973. Jiménez identified bits and pieces of *Ludlul* II 14–23 on the obverse of this very abraded fragment; the reverse contains a formulaic Aššurbanipal colophon. Using this textual information and physical characteristics of the fragment itself (especially the presence of the so-called firing holes), Aino Häntinen found that this fragment forms a bridge between K.3972, the first-ever published tablet containing *Ludlul* (IVR¹, 67 in 1875), and DT 151, another of its earliest witnesses, published in IVR², 60* in 1891.⁶² Thus, one of the most recently identified and published witnesses to *Ludlul* has

⁵⁹ Geers' copies are available freely for download in PDF with index in 20 separate files here: <http://cdli.ucla.edu/?q=downloads>. For more on the twenty-six volume Chicago Assyrian Dictionary (Oppenheim *et al* 1956–2010), see Reiner 2002 and Roth 2010. It is also available freely for download at the following URL: <https://oi.uchicago.edu/research/publications/assyrian-dictionary-oriental-institute-university-chicago-cad>.

⁶⁰ I thank Takayoshi Oshima for relating to me in an email correspondence precisely how he found Sm.89. My brief account does not in any way capture the hours of work this identification required of him.

⁶¹ See above and Larsen 1996, 320.

⁶² See Häntinen in Jiménez *et al* 2020, 246–48, 251. Note now the final footnote in the appendix.

joined two of its longest known witnesses—both of which were literally printed on the same page in 1891!

The second observation about the importance of tablets from Nineveh is that an Assyrian city, ironically, was the first fount of evidence in the modern recovery of *Babylonian* literature. *Ludlul* is representative of this fact. In 1906, when Marcus Jastrow published the first thorough-going attempt to reconstruct *Ludlul*, he had only six witnesses to the poem. Five of these six were from Nineveh (MS II.G_{Nin}; two fragments from MS II.I_{Nin} [K.3972 and DT 151, which were not yet joined]; MS II.K_{Nin}; and MS Com_{Nin}).⁶³ It is worth noting at this point in our narrative that aside from the Commentary's isolated citations across the entire poem and the catchline to Tablet III,⁶⁴ the tablets Jastrow used in his edition only bear witness to the text of Tablet II, allowing partial recovery of II 1–47 and 90–120. (Remarkably, from the little information he had at hand, Jastrow surmised that *Ludlul* originally had four Tablets of 120 lines each, an idea that persisted for over a hundred years.⁶⁵) Langdon would use another Nineveh tablet, K.8396 (MS II.H_{2Nin}), to fill the gap between II 47 and II 90 in his 1923 edition of *Ludlul*, though many lines remained only partially recovered.⁶⁶

1.2.2. *Sippar (mid-seventh to mid-fifth centuries BCE)*

Another important archaeological site for the modern recovery of the text of *Ludlul* is the Babylonian city of Sippar during the Neo-Babylonian and early Achaemenid periods, from which come nineteen more witnesses to the poem, not quite one third of the total number of manuscripts.⁶⁷

MSS _{Sip}	Museum No.	Year Found	Year Published	Contents
I.C	BM 66345 (1882-09-18, 6338)	1882	2014 (Oshima)	I 6–21
I.D	BM 68444 (1882-09-18, 8442)	1882	2014 (Oshima)	I 38–53

⁶³ Jastrow 1906, 141–48. The sixth is from Sippar (the reverse of Si.37, part of MS II.F_{Sip}), discussed below.

⁶⁴ Three of these witnesses give a part of the opening line of Tablet III as a “catchline.” A catchline cites the first line of the next tablet in the series in order to provide the reader with an indication of what tablet to read next. The Commentary also cites III 1, though it does not indicate the line's position in the poem.

⁶⁵ 1906, 146.

⁶⁶ Langdon 1923, 4.

⁶⁷ See Pedersén 1998, 193–97 for an overview of the various archives at Sippar and Gasche / Janssen 1997 for a succinct summary of the archaeology of the site.

I.E	BM 73592 (1882-09-18, 13603)	1882	2014 (Oshima)	I 20–39, 85–101
I.F	IM 132669	1986	1998 (George / Al-Rawi)	I 1–50, 62–120, II 1
I.u	BM 61433 (1882-09-18, 1407)	1882	1977 (Leichty)	I 88–92
I.v	BM 93079 (1882-09-18, 5555)	1882	2014 (Oshima)	I 55–59
I.z	BM 71949 (1882-09-18, 11952)	1882	2019 (Lam- bert) ⁶⁸	I 78–84
II.C	BM 54794 (1882-05-22, 1123)	1882	2014 (Oshima)	II 49–59, 60–71
II.D	BM 65956 (1882-09-18, 5948) + BM 67872 (1882-09-18, 7870) + BM 93047 (1883-01-21, 1783)	1882 / 1883	2014 (Oshima)	II 1–23, 94–120
II.E	BM 82957 (1883-01-21, 120)	1883	2014 (Oshima)	II 16–25, 103– 109
II.F	Si.37 + Si.881	1894	1952 (Williams)	II 8–29, 37–48, 76–120, III 1
III.B	BM 54821 (1882-05-22, 1150)	1882	1960 (Lambert)	III 29–45, 85–99
III.D	Si.55	1894	1910 (Campbell Thompson)	III 22–55, 67– 103
III.g	BM 68435 (1882-09-18, 8433)	1882	2001 (Gesche)	III 68–78
III.H	BM 77093 (1883-01-18, AH.2472)	1883	2014 (Oshima)	III 42–62
III.i	BM 99811 (1883-01-21, 2173)	1883	2014 (Oshima)	III 9–13
III.J	IM 124581	1986	2019 (Fadhil / Jiménez)	III 9–34
IV.B	Si.728	1894	2014 (Oshima)	IV §A
V.i	BM 74201 (1882-09-18, 14220)	1882	2001 (Gesche)	V 54–55, 57–60

Table 2: Manuscripts from Sippar.

Fourteen of these nineteen tablets came to the British Museum (labeled BM) as a result of Rassam's last period of work in Mesopotamia (1879–1882), when, in addition to working at Nineveh, he oversaw excavations at southern sites such as Babylon, Borsippa, Kutha, and Sippar.⁶⁹ Walker estimates that Rassam delivered more than 100,000 tablets from Babylonia to the British Museum during these years,⁷⁰ with an estimated 60,000–70,000 tablets coming

⁶⁸ In George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 207.

⁶⁹ See Walker / Collon 1980; Reade 1986a; Reade in Leichty 1986, xiii–xxxvi; and Reade 1993.

⁷⁰ Walker 1987, 186.

from Sippar alone.⁷¹ Unfortunately, due to the manner of their excavation as well as the concurrent practice of purchasing (illicitly excavated) tablets from antiquity dealers and local people (by Rassam and other agents of the British Museum), it is sometimes difficult to ascertain whether a tablet in the Sippar Collection is actually from Sippar.⁷² Two tablets mentioned in connection with the Sippar Collection below, MS III.C_{Bab} and MS V.C_{Bab}, are likely from Babylon and treated with the discussion of that site in this narrative. (Both tablets were purchased. See below.)

The task of registering the artifacts—never mind cataloging, deciphering, and publishing them—far exceeded the capacity of the staff at the British Museum.⁷³ Nearly eighty years later, Lambert's edition of *Ludlul* (1960) could only draw on one tablet from the British Museum's Sippar Collection (BM 54821 = MS III.B_{Sip}), which he included in the edition at the last moment.⁷⁴ (Of course, he could use two other Sippar MSS from a collection in Istanbul that had already been published, MS II.F_{Sip} and MS III.D_{Sip}, discussed below.) Matters changed with the publication of the British Museum's catalogs of the Sippar Collection in the 1980's, primarily the work of University of Pennsylvania Assyriologist Erle Leichty.⁷⁵ Leichty's catalogs identify in print eleven more tablets bearing the text of *Ludlul* in the Sippar Collection, one of which Leichty published.⁷⁶ George and Bongenaar identified another in 2002.⁷⁷ (Lambert apparently had already identified some of these tablets as belonging to *Ludlul* in his personal notebooks, though few were privy to this information.) Although Annus and Lenzi incorporated ten of these new tablets into their

⁷¹ Reade 1993, 56.

⁷² See Reade in Leichty 1986, xiii–xxxvi and Walker in Leichty / Finkelstein / Walker 1988, xi–xxv. For Sippar as the likely provenance of the consignment of tablets designated 1882-09-18, see Reade in Leichty 1986, xxxiii; for the consignment 1882-05-22, pp. xxxii–xxxiii; for 1883-01-18, pp. xxvii, xxiv; and note how little is known about consignment 1883-01-21, pp. xxxiv.

⁷³ Stated in Walker / Collon 1980, 95.

⁷⁴ Lambert 1960, 344–45 (in an addenda).

⁷⁵ See Leichty 1986; Leichty / Grayson 1987; and Leichty / Finkelstein / Walker 1988.

⁷⁶ See Leichty 1986, 156 (BM 54794 = MS II.C_{Sip}); Leichty / Grayson 1987, 39 (BM 61433, published as Leichty 1977 = MS I.u_{Sip}), 165 (BM 65956, now joined to BM 67872 and BM 93047 to form MS II.D_{Sip}), 175 (BM 66345 = MS I.C_{Sip}), 233 (BM 68435 = MS III.g_{Sip}), 233 (BM 68444 = MS I.D_{Sip}), 367 (BM 73592 = MS I.E_{Sip}), 383 (BM 74201 = MS V.i_{Sip}), 155 (BM 93079 = MS I.v_{Sip}); Leichty / Falkenstein / Walker 1988, 93 (BM 77253 = MS V.C_{Bab}; treated with the material from Babylon), 326 (BM 82957 = MS II.E_{Sip}).

⁷⁷ See George / Bongenaar 2002, 76 under BM 55481, which is now joined indirectly to BM 39523. Together they form MS III.C_{Bab}. These fragments are likely from Babylon and treated below.

handbook edition of the poem (SAACT 7),⁷⁸ full publication of most of these new Sippar tablets from the British Museum containing *Ludlul* had to await Oshima's critical edition in 2014,⁷⁹ when he added two more to the list, MS III.H_{Sip} and MS III.i_{Sip} from Lambert's unpublished copies.⁸⁰ And in 2019, yet another tablet from Sippar (MS I.z_{Sip}) attesting *Ludlul* was identified among Lambert's copies.⁸¹

Despite their large number, most of these Sippar tablets are only fragments, bearing a dozen or two lines of broken text,⁸² and six are school exercise tablets, attesting only short excerpts of the poem.⁸³ (Exercise tablets are indicated by lower case letters in the sigla.) Of course, having more pieces to the puzzle is always welcome. And sometimes such pieces provide a small bit of information that proves very important. For example, MS III.B_{Sip} decisively proved for Lambert the existence of a line in the poem (now III 31) that either was lacking or not clearly present in the other witnesses known to him at the time (1960).⁸⁴ Another example: MS II.C_{Sip} (rev. 3) is still the only witness to the first word of *Ludlul* II 62.⁸⁵ One more: the school tablet MS III.g_{Sip} (obv. 2') was a key witness to finding the proper reading of the last half of *Ludlul* III 68, recognized as such only in 2019.⁸⁶ Still, by and large the Sippar Collection in the British Museum has not contributed as much to the recovery of *Ludlul*—and so soon after their discovery—as tablet finds from Sippar by others, the first of whom is Father Vincent Scheil at the turn of the twentieth century.

Father Scheil excavated at Sippar in the early months of 1894 on behalf of the Imperial Museum, located in Istanbul.⁸⁷ The report of his findings, published in 1902, included a catalog of tablets from Sippar in the holdings of the museum,⁸⁸ in which he identified another tablet that duplicated material

⁷⁸ The photographs of the very abraded BM 77253 (now MS V.C_{Bab}) we had were not legible enough to use, and I overlooked George and Bongenaar's identification of BM 55481 (MS III.C_{Bab}) in their bibliographic essay.

⁷⁹ Gesche 2001, 558–59, 614 also offered editions of two of the school tablets, BM 68435 (MS III.g_{Sip}) and BM 74201 (= MS V.i_{Sip}), in her study of first-millennium Babylonian scribal curricula.

⁸⁰ See Oshima 2014, 379. The copies were finally published in George / Taniguchi 2019, nos. 157 and 62, respectively.

⁸¹ See George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 207.

⁸² MS III.B_{Sip} and MS II.D_{Sip} are exceptions with over thirty and forty lines, respectively.

⁸³ For more on the school tablets, see chapter four.

⁸⁴ See Lambert 1960, 345. This discovery made his line numbering in Tablet III one number too low, starting at III 31.

⁸⁵ See Oshima 2014, 404.

⁸⁶ See Fadhil / Jiménez 2019, 159, n.9 and see the notes in chapter three at III 68.

⁸⁷ Scheil calls the museum "Musée impérial de Constantinople." The city's name was not officially changed until 1930.

⁸⁸ Scheil 1902, 95–141. Not all of the tablets are described. The highest museum number assigned to a tablet is Si.1022. Tanret 2002, 163–64 discusses the difficulty of matching Scheil's

from *Ludlul* Tablet II (Si. 37, now part of MS II.F_{Sip}). In addition to duplicating previously known lines in Tablet II Si.37 also expanded the text of the poem by seven lines, witnessing to *Ludlul* II 90–96 for the first time (see Jastrow 1906, 169–170). This was the only non-Ninevite tablet used in Jastrow's reconstruction of the poem in 1906, mentioned above.⁸⁹ Every little bit helps. But this discovery would soon be eclipsed by Campbell Thompson's, published in 1910. While making copies of some of the tablets from Scheil's excavations, Campbell Thompson noticed that eight lines on a tablet labeled Si. 55 (MS III.D_{Sip}) parallel lines in the Commentary to *Ludlul* (MS Com_{Nin}), and these lines occur *after* the material cited from Tablet II of the poem. This, he reasoned, "proved conclusively" that Si.55 was the first witness to attest connected text of *Ludlul*'s Tablet III.⁹⁰ This was an important leap forward. This one tablet advanced the poem by seventy-one lines (what is now known as III 22–55, 67–103),⁹¹ which hint at the protagonist's dreams at the beginning of Tablet III and describe his recovery in detail. All of this was known previously only from the excerpted, disconnected lines in the Commentary. Still, Sippar had not yet revealed all of its treasures.

One of the most important Sippar tablets attesting *Ludlul* is also the most recently excavated (1986), MS I.F_{Sip}, which to contextualize properly requires a discussion of both the tablets from Huzirina (modern Sultantepe) in Turkey and the only witness from Kalḫu (modern Nimrud). Only after we discuss these sites will we return to Sippar below, where we will discuss MS I.F_{Sip} and MS III.J_{Sip}. (MS IV.B_{Sip} will be discussed with the material for the reconstruction of Tablet IV.) But, before we can move ahead to Huzirina and Kalḫu, excavated in the middle of the twentieth century, a visit to Aššur, the first capital and

inventory of tablets to specific locations on site at Sippar and the problem of distinguishing tablets he excavated and sent to Istanbul from those that came to Istanbul via purchase and illicit excavation.

⁸⁹ Scheil only gave a transliteration of the lines on Si.37 that were unparalleled by previous witnesses (1902, 105). In his attempt to reconstruct *Ludlul*, Jastrow used only the reverse of Si.37, which he knew only from a private copy supplied to him by Dr. L. Messerschmidt (1906, 142, n.22). Langdon likewise used the reverse in his edition (1923, 4, 46) without providing a full transliteration or copy. Full publication would have to await R. J. Williams (1952, 4–7, including photographs). Williams also published the tablet's join to Si.881 (credited to F. Geers), but by this time the text on the new join was already known from other witnesses in Langdon's edition (1923). See Lambert 1960, pls. 6–7 for a copy.

⁹⁰ See 1910, 18. M. François Martin is not so sure: "il serait peut-être plus exact de dire: à une des tablettes qui suivaient la II" (1910, 79), though later on the same page he notes the Sippar tablet is "de la III^c (?) tablette" of the poem.

⁹¹ The first two lines on the reverse show mere traces of what is III 65–66 and are not counted here. Also, eight of these lines were known from the Commentary. Thus, sixty-three lines were new, strictly speaking.

most important religious center of the Neo-Assyrian empire, is necessary. With the tablets from Aššur, we return to tracing the growth of the text of *Ludlul* at the beginning of the twentieth century, a time when only parts of Tablets II and III (and isolated lines from the Commentary) were known.

1.2.3. *Aššur (Neo-Assyrian period, c. 911–614 BCE)*

Like the Americans,⁹² the Germans arrived on the Mesopotamian archaeological scene rather late compared to the British and the French, though no less motivated by cultural, economic, and religious interests.⁹³ Robert Koldewey started excavations at Babylon in 1899 on behalf of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft and appointed his assistant, Walter Andrae, to carry out the work at the Assyrian site of Aššur in 1903. Both excavations were long-lasting efforts (Aššur: 1903–1914; Babylon: 1899–1917), marked by a methodology more careful than previous archaeologists.⁹⁴ Fifty three archives and libraries were found throughout Aššur from the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods,⁹⁵ which taken as a whole have yielded a significant number of tablets attesting Babylonian literary and religious texts.⁹⁶ Currently, there are fourteen Neo-

⁹² The first major American expedition was to the city of Nippur from 1888–1900. The Americans found a huge number of tablets, many of which bore Sumerian rather than Akkadian texts (see Kuklick 1996, whose narrative highlights how the religious, political, and cultural motivations that propelled the study of ancient Mesopotamia at the time intersected significantly with the development of the modern American research university). There are no tablets bearing the text of *Ludlul* from this important city.

⁹³ See, e.g., Marchand 1996, 188–227; Bernhardsson 2005, 52–55, 65–68; and Thelle 2019, 142–66.

⁹⁴ Lloyd 1980, 174–79. For a succinct overview of the archaeology of Aššur, see Lamprichs 1997. Koldewey appointed another assistant, Julius Jordan, to excavate at Uruk (modern Warka) in 1912–1913. Though interrupted almost immediately by the First World War, German excavations resumed in 1928 and have continued on and off for decades, producing some of the earliest and latest cuneiform tablets in modern possession. For an overview of the archaeology, see Boehmer 1997. To date, there are no tablets from Uruk that bear the continuous text of *Ludlul*, though a commentary to *Šumma izbu* VII cites the poem twice in the course of its exposition (see chapter nine). This is clear evidence that the poem was known at Uruk at some point in the last centuries before the Common Era.

⁹⁵ Pedersén 1986 is the fundamental study for the first-millennium archives and libraries at Aššur. Pedersén 1998, 132–43 provides a survey of the Neo-Assyrian materials. For the Middle Assyrian materials, see Pedersén 1985 and Pedersén 1998, 81–88.

⁹⁶ The number of tablets and fragments found at Aššur from 1903 to 1914 is estimated at 11,000 (Maul 2010, 189). This material includes a variety of genres (historical inscriptions, administrative documents, literary texts, and religious rituals), only a portion of which was published as line drawings soon after the completion of Andrae's excavations. Stefan Maul headed the Assur-Forschungsstelle der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, which undertook the publication of many of these tablets between 2004 and 2022. For a list of publications, see

Assyrian tablets from Aššur attesting *Ludlul*—about one fifth of all the witnesses to the poem. Unfortunately, only a few of these (MS III.E_{AS}, MS I.X_{AS}, and MS I.y_{AS}) can be situated archaeologically within one of the libraries or archives of the city.

MS _{AS}	Museum No.	Year Found	Year Published	Contents
I.N	VAT 10522	1903-1914	1953 (Ebeling)	I 1–13, 119–120 ⁷
I.O	VAT 11100	1903-1914	1923 (Ebeling)	I 66–86, 92–112
I.P	VAT 11565	1903-1914	1922 (Ebeling)	I 110–120
I.X	VAT 10071	1903-1914	1960 (Lambert)	I 82–83
I.y	VAT 10756	1903-1914	1960 (Lambert)	I 84–85
II.L	VAT 10569	1903-1914	1960 (Lambert)	II 50–61, 117–120, III 1
II.M ₁ ⁹⁷	VAT 10601	1903-1914	1960 (Lambert)	II 63–74
II.M ₂	VAT 10657	1903-1914	1919 (Ebeling)*	II 82–94
III.E	VAT 9954	1903-1914	1919 (Ebeling)*	III 1–30, 32–46, 48–62
III.F	VAT 11179	1903-1914	1960 (Lambert)	III 11–25, 95–110
V.D	VAT 9303	1903-1914	1919 (Ebeling)*	V 39–61, 64–86
V.E	VAT 9442	1903-1914	1919 (Ebeling)*	V 1–5, 7–16, 50–64
V.F	VAT 10538 + VAT 10650	1903-1914	1953 (Ebeling) / 2014 (Oshima) ⁹⁸	V 68–69, 71–90, 105– 120
V.G	VAT ?? ⁹⁹	1903-1914	1919 (Ebeling)	V 25–39, 91–103

Table 3: Manuscripts from Aššur.

Erich Ebeling published just over half of these tablets between 1919 and 1923 in copy (as line drawings) in a series of fascicles under the title *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*.¹⁰⁰ His catalog identified four of them as part of *Ludlul* (marked * above), three of which were quite significant to the on-going recovery of the poem's text.¹⁰¹ VAT 9954 (MS III.E_{AS}) was likely

<https://www.hadw-bw.de/forschung/forschungsstelle/edition-literarischer-keilschrifttexte-aus-assur/publikationen>.

⁹⁷ MS II.M₁ and MS II.M₂ likely belonged to the same tablet originally (see Lambert 1960, 37 and Oshima 2014, 378). They do not currently join directly to each other.

⁹⁸ Lambert identified the second fragment (Oshima 2014, 379, citing Lambert Folio, no. 1555).

⁹⁹ Ebeling labeled the tablet VAT 11245 in his copy, but the staff at Heidelberg informs me that this is incorrect. The correct number is unknown, so the tablet is effectively lost in the collection.

¹⁰⁰ Ebeling 1919–1923, often referred to as simply KAR. (Ebeling copied hundreds of other Aššur tablets in several other volumes during his career, including some referred to as LKA, for which see Ebeling 1953.)

¹⁰¹ Ebeling thought one other tablet might belong to the poem (KAR 138 = VAT 9959). But his tentative suggestion has not turned out to be correct. See Heft I's Zusammenstellung on the

discovered in the prince's palace, Aššur-muballissu, son of Sennacherib (ruled 704–681 BCE).¹⁰² It bears lines 1–30 of Tablet III on its obverse and III 32–46, 48–62 on its reverse,¹⁰³ and thus provided the beginning of Tablet III for the first time and nearly filled the hole in the middle of the Tablet left by the tablet from Sippar discovered by Campbell Thompson (MS III.D_{Sip}, which contains III 22–55, 67–103). Having MS III.E_{Aš} and MS III.D_{Sip} at his disposal (along with the disconnected lines from the Commentary), Langdon's edition reconstructed Tablet III in 1923 *nearly* to its present day extent (in terms of length),¹⁰⁴ even though we now have four times the number of witnesses.¹⁰⁵

Another important discovery for *Ludlul* at Aššur was two witnesses to the last Tablet of the poem (Tablet V), VAT 9442 (MS V.E_{Aš}) and VAT 9303 (MS V.D_{Aš}). MS V.E_{Aš}, obv. 13–15 preserves portions of lines that Landsberger by 1918 had identified with two lines in the Commentary (what is now V 14–16), suggesting the obverse of MS V.E_{Aš} preserved the opening stanzas of the final Tablet of the poem. Because some of the text on MS V.D_{Aš} (attesting V 39–61, 64–86) overlapped with text on MS V.E_{Aš} (attesting V 1–5, 7–16, 50–64), the former was also identified as part of *Ludlul*.¹⁰⁶ These two Aššur tablets and the Commentary comprise all of Langdon's material for the last Tablet of *Ludlul* (still considered Tablet IV) in his 1923 edition.¹⁰⁷ The basis for including these tablets in the poem was very slim at the time and their proper ordering was disputed—and remained so for decades.¹⁰⁸ (In 1953, when Ebeling tentatively identified VAT 10538, now part of MS V.F_{Aš}, as a witness to the final Tablet of *Ludlul*, the new evidence did not contribute substantively since the fragment,

first (unnumbered) page after the Preface for his catalog and compare this to his list of manuscripts used in his translation of *Ludlul* (in Gressman 1926, 273), where he has removed KAR 138 and added KAR 326 (= VAT 11100 = MS I.O_{Aš}).

¹⁰² It may also have come from a house nearby to the west of the palace. See Pedersén 1986, 76–81 (N5; 1A9II area); for the present tablet, see specifically pp. 77 and 79.

¹⁰³ The scribe skipped line 31 when he flipped the tablet to begin writing on its reverse and also skipped line 47 by mistake.

¹⁰⁴ Subsequently discovered duplicates have filled some of the gaps in lines that were more fragmentary in Langdon's day. And, of course, more recent editions have significantly improved upon his readings of signs and translation.

¹⁰⁵ See Langdon 1923, 4–5, 49–58.

¹⁰⁶ See Landsberger's comment, cited in Zimmern 1918, 45, n.2 and discussed in Lambert 1960, 24; note also Landsberger's translation of the last Tablet of *Ludlul* in Lehmann / Haas 1922, 315–16.

¹⁰⁷ Langdon 1923, 5, 61–66.

¹⁰⁸ Compare, e.g., the ordering of the material by Lambert (1960, 58–61), von Soden (1991, 131–35), and Foster (2005, 406–8), summarized in Lenzi / Annus 2011, 198–200. Vogelzang's one page note on the ordering of the material as known at the time (1979) was basically correct, though the key piece of confirming evidence, MS A_{Bab}, still lay in disconnected fragments at the British Museum in 1979.

attesting V 76–90, only provided a few new lines.) Indeed, Lambert objected to the evidence in his edition in 1960 and placed a question mark after the title of the last Tablet in his edition because he doubted that it really belonged to the poem.¹⁰⁹ Future evidence would remove this uncertainty (see below).

By the time Lambert published his edition of *Ludlul* in 1960, he could use nine more tablets from Aššur in the poem.¹¹⁰ Although these added here and there to the text, the most interesting story comes from the three that contributed to the recovery of *Ludlul* Tablet I, MS I.N_{Aš}, MS I.O_{Aš}, and MS I.P_{Aš}. (MS I.X_{Aš}, and MS I.Y_{Aš} are also part of Tablet I, but they are school exercise tablets and merely duplicate lines that were already known by the time Lambert incorporated them into his edition. Among the few Aššur tablets with a known find-spot, they are discussed in chapter four.)

If one were to go by Langdon's 1923 edition, Tablet I was *terra incognita* beyond the scant, disconnected lines attested in the Commentary.¹¹¹ Landsberger, however, had already placed VAT 11100 (MS I.O_{Aš}) into the poem's first Tablet, a connection that must have been made by way of the eight lines VAT 11100 shares with the Commentary. Landsberger's discovery was made public in his German translation of *Ludlul*, which came out in 1922, likely while Langdon's edition was in press.¹¹² With this find, a third of the lines in Tablet I were suddenly revealed (I 66–86, 92–112), if only fragmentarily. In 1953, von Soden extended the text of Tablet I with a tablet from Nineveh (K.9237 = MS I.N_{in}) that attests on its obverse parts of what we now know to be I 47–65.¹¹³ Although about half the lines of *Ludlul* I were now represented in two witnesses (I 47–86, 92–112), most of these lines were incompletely recovered, some were too fragmentary for translation,¹¹⁴ and the Tablet's begin-

¹⁰⁹ 1960, 24–26 and 57 for the title page of the last Tablet. Lambert's objection was based on what he called "[a] minute examination of the two passages" (24 with n.1; see also already Lambert 1959a, 145–46). Note, however, in a last minute addendum to his edition that he entertains the possibility that what he called Tablet IV(?) might in fact be a fifth Tablet of *Ludlul* (1960, 30), which has now turned out to be correct.

¹¹⁰ The last one to find a place in the poem was MS V.G_{Aš}, which Lambert identified as *Ludlul* in 1995 (Lambert 1995, 33).

¹¹¹ Langdon 1923, 3.

¹¹² See Lehmann / Haas 1922, 312 for Landsberger's translation; note also Ebeling's in Gressmann 1926, 274 (VAT 11100 = KAR 326). Landsberger, unlike Ebeling, did not cite the source for these lines. Pfeiffer in 1950 seems unaware of this material for Tablet I in his English translation of the poem, despite the fact that he notes both German translations in his bibliography. See Pritchard 1969, 434.

¹¹³ The tablet (MS I.N_{in}) preserves on its reverse *Ludlul* I 66–84, which duplicates most of those on the obverse of MS I.O_{Aš} (I 66–86). Because the pristine bottom edge of the tablet is preserved, von Soden could be sure that the last line on the obverse continued with the first line of the reverse. See <https://cdli.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/dl/photo/P397986.jpg>.

¹¹⁴ This is easily confirmed with a glance at von Soden's translation (1953, 10).

ning and ending were still missing. A number of other discoveries in the 1950's would put Tablet I on a significantly better textual footing; two of these involve tablets from Aššur (MS I.N_{Aš} and MS I.P_{Aš}).

First, the beginning. In the late 1950's, Erle Leichty, a graduate student at the time, serendipitously discovered "in the course of other work" that K.9810 (part of MS I.J_{Nin}) duplicates lines of the poem preserved on VAT 10522 (MS I.N_{Aš}). Because the former preserved the poem's incipit (fragmentarily) in both the first line of text and in the tablet's colophon he could conclude that "[t]he long sought-after beginning of the famous Akkadian composition *Lulduḫ Bēl Nēmeqi* has finally come to light."¹¹⁵ His discovery was just in time to appear in Lambert's edition as an addendum.¹¹⁶

As for the ending, Lambert, while making the final preparations for the publication of his edition, found a place at the end of Tablet I for VAT 11565 (MS I.P_{Aš}), which Ebeling had published in copy decades earlier. VAT 11565, Lambert discovered, overlaps at its beginning with a few lines in VAT 11100 (MS I.O_{Aš}); the overlap is at what is now I 110–112.¹¹⁷ He also found that the last several lines on VAT 11565 overlap with lines on what was then a tiny Babylonian fragment previously identified by Gurney in 1937, BM 32214.¹¹⁸ The very last line on VAT 11565 appears just before the bottom edge of the tablet. Its parallel on the Babylonian fragment appears before a double rule line, indicating a major break in the text, which is then followed by the opening line of Tablet II. By fitting this piece from Aššur into the existing textual puzzle, Lambert filled the gap at the end of Tablet I—even if so fragmentarily that he gives no translation—and established Tablet I's length at 120 lines.¹¹⁹

1.2.4. *Huzirina (late eighth to seventh centuries BCE)*

Although Lambert had some other pieces that belonged to Tablet I at his disposal, a couple each from Nineveh and Babylon,¹²⁰ most crucial to the restoration of Tablet I in his edition was a large tablet from a site known today as Sultantepe, which during the seventh century was the Assyrian provincial

¹¹⁵ Leichty 1959, 361.

¹¹⁶ See Lambert 1960, 343. As mentioned above, Lambert joined K.9810 to K.9392 in June 1960, too late to include in his edition.

¹¹⁷ See Oshima 2014, 394.

¹¹⁸ His MS j (see Lambert 1960, pl. 4). See note 120 below.

¹¹⁹ Lambert 1960, 30.

¹²⁰ The two from Babylon, Lambert's MSS j and k, would eventually be incorporated into the large tablet now labeled MS A_{Bab}, comprising a dozen joined fragments. See below.

capital Ғузирина. Seton Lloyd and Nuri Gökçe excavated Sultantepe in 1951–1952.¹²¹ Of primary interest here is the collection of 572¹²² tablets and fragments they found that belonged to a temple official named Qurdi-Nergal and his family.¹²³ The tablets were found in what is probably to be interpreted as a secondary context, since they were piled up outside of the house against one of the walls.¹²⁴ Dates on the tablets indicate that they were written in the late eighth to the late seventh centuries (718–612 BCE). Based on the poor quality of the writing and the naming of numerous “(junior) apprentices,” *šamallû* (*sehrûtu*), in their colophons, Robson thinks this collection might be the remnant of a provincial scribal school.¹²⁵ Religious and literary texts comprise a conspicuously disproportionate number of tablets in the collection. In all, fifty tablets bear witness to classic Babylonian literary and religious compositions.¹²⁶ Of these fifty, three attest the text of *Ludlul*.¹²⁷

MSҒуз	Museum No.	Year Found	Year Published	Contents
I.R	SU 1951,10	1951	1954 (Lambert / Gurney)	I 38–72, 73–104
II.N	SU 1951,32 + 103A (+) 15A + 46 ¹²⁸	1951	1954 (Lambert / Gurney)	II 1–56, 61–83, 85–120, III 1
V.H	SU 1952,212 + 291 with 302	1952	1957/1964 (Gurney / Finkelstein; Gurney / Hulin)	V 71, 73–82

Table 4: Manuscripts from Ғузирина.

¹²¹ See Lloyd / Gökçe 1953. For an overview of the site and tablet finds, see Gurney 1998.

¹²² See Gurney 1952, 30 for the number; compare Gurney 1998, 170. Many of the smallest fragments were never published due to size, content or lack thereof, and/or damage (see Gurney / Hulin 1964, 21–22). The published texts come to about 400.

¹²³ For an overview of the tablet collection from this site, see Robson 2013, 48–50. Gurney / Finkelstein 1957 (STT I) and Gurney / Hulin 1964 (STT II) provide line drawings of nearly all of the tablets.

¹²⁴ See Lloyd / Gökçe 1953, 30, fig. 2. For summaries of the archaeological context of the tablets, see Pedersén 1998, 178–79; Gurney / Finkelstein 1957, iv; and Robson 2013, 48–49.

¹²⁵ Robson 2013, 49–50; Robson 2019, 137–38.

¹²⁶ See Robson 2013, 49; Robson 2019, 135.

¹²⁷ Gurney announced that these tablets belong to the poem in 1952 (see Gurney 1952, 28, 32). As an illustration of the volatility in making such identifications, Gurney attributed SU 1952,212 without joins (see MS V.HҒуз), to *Ludlul* Tablet III (1952, 32); Lambert and Gurney noted this as an error in their article in 1954 (65, n.3); but both then accepted the piece as part of the last Tablet of the poem, “*Ludlul* IV(?),” at a later time (Gurney / Hulin 1964, 1, SU 1952,212 + 291 only; Lambert 1960, 57, SU 1952,212 + 291 with 302).

¹²⁸ The museum number was given incorrectly in STT I and corrected in the corrigenda for that volume in STT II (see Gurney / Hulin 1964, 25; see also Gurney 1952, 28).

MS II.N_{Huz} provides an almost continuous witness to the entirety of Tablet II (II 1–56, 61–83, 85–120), which had been known rather well for decades since Langdon’s 1923 edition. Manuscript MS V.H_{Huz} is a meager fragment of material in the final Tablet of the poem. The witness of most significance in the mid-twentieth century for the reconstruction of *Ludlul* was SU 1951,10, our MS I.R_{Huz}, which preserves *Ludlul* I 38–104. Because the tablet is so well-preserved (the large majority of its lines are complete), it provided a solid textual foundation for the greater part of the opening Tablet of the poem, which had previously been riddled with lacunae. Combining this witness with all of the others he knew about for Tablet I, including those from Aššur mentioned above, Lambert’s edition in 1960 includes text for *Ludlul* I 1–13, 38–120. Some of these lines were only partially recovered (13, 38–42, and 110–120), but most were completely or nearly completely established (1–12 and 43–109).

1.2.5. *Kalḫu* (mid-ninth to late seventh centuries BCE)

A tablet from the Assyrian city of Kalḫu, what is now modern Nimrud, could have filled the gap between lines 13 and 38 of Tablet I. But it was not yet available to Lambert in 1960. Archaeologist Max Mallowan, husband to the famous author Agatha Christie,¹²⁹ was excavating a temple dedicated to the scribal deity Nabû at the former Assyrian capital in 1956 when he came upon a cache of some 300 tablets dating to the Neo-Assyrian period in a room across from the main cella of the deity.¹³⁰ One of these tablets was identified in 1960 as a witness to *Ludlul*, but the tablet required conservation, performed in 1970, before it was finally published in 1980.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Christie’s archaeological connection comes out in several of her novels; especially noteworthy is *Murder in Mesopotamia* (1936). Interestingly, the scholar who published the *Ludlul* tablet from Kalḫu, Donald J. Wiseman, dedicated an essay to Mallowan with the same title (Wiseman 1974).

¹³⁰ See Mallowan 1966, 1.232–78 for an early discussion of the archaeological context of the tablets found at Kalḫu. Pedersén 1998, 143–54 identifies seventeen archives and libraries at the site, discussing the one in question here on pp. 151–52. For a more recent discussion of the archaeological context and contents of the tablets from the temple, see Oates / Oates 2001, 111–23, 203–9 (from whom I take “some 300 tablets,” p. 207). Wiseman / Black 1996 publish 259 of the tablets. Robson 2013, 45–48 provides an overview of the Ezida collection, arguing that it was a royal Assyrian library similar to Aššurbanipal’s in scope but smaller in size. Likewise, Robson / Stevens 2019, 336–37.

¹³¹ See Wiseman 1980 for the publication of the *Ludlul* tablet, especially p. 101 where he mentions that the tablet was identified as belonging to *Ludlul* in 1960 and conserved in 1970.

MSK _{al}	Museum No.	Year Found	Year Published	Contents
I.Q	ND 5485 + 5497/20	1956	1980 (Wiseman) / 1996 (Wiseman / Black)	I 1–85, 91–120

Table 5: Manuscript from Kalḫu.

In 1980, before the join listed above,¹³² ND 5485 attested Tablet I 1–46 and 91–120. And with this, the text of *Ludlul* Tablet I was nearly complete.

1.2.6. *Sippar Again (mid- to late sixth century BCE)*

In the 1985–1986 season, the eighth of their excavations, Dr. Walid al-Jadir and his team of Iraqi archaeologists discovered a cache of about 800 tablets in Sippar near the areas previously excavated by Rassam and Scheil. These tablets were found “on the shelves” so to speak in a late Babylonian temple library; that is, they were stacked and organized in recessed, mud-brick niches on three of the four walls in the room.¹³³ Among these tablets was MS I.F_{Sip} and MS III.J_{Sip} already mentioned above. When George and Al-Rawi published the former witness in 1998, they could use it to fill almost all of the remaining gaps in *Ludlul* I—partial lines or missing signs. The latter tablet, which Fadhil and Jiménez published in 2019, attests III 9–34 in a fuller manner than other witnesses. Thus, they could use it to fill in many lacunae in the protagonist’s series of dreams recounted at the beginning of Tablet III and to suggest several improvements in the reading and restoring of these previously broken and disputed lines. A perusal of the notes in chapter three on these lines shows this witness’s importance in some detail.

1.2.7. *Kish (seventh century BCE)*

Before moving on to the final group of tablets, those from Babylon/Babylonia, I mention briefly as an aside the only *Ludlul* tablet from the southern Mesopotamian city of Kish, probably excavated in 1924 and published in 1989, MS

¹³² The join was published in Wiseman / Black 1996, no. 201 (see pp. 29–30 for the catalog description).

¹³³ See *Iraq* 49 (1987), 248–249, with plate 47 for a photograph of the library shelves, and Pedersén 1998, 194–97 for a brief description with many references. Al Jadir 1998 describes the discovery and Hilgert 2013 provides a brief analysis of the collection. The publication of these tablets is on-going.

I.w/V.j_{KiS}.¹³⁴ The tablet likely belongs to a seventh century BCE tablet collection that Eleanor Robson has reconstructed on the basis of scant archaeological and museological records.¹³⁵ The collection includes a large number of scholarly and literary texts as well as many exercise tablets. The present tablet does not factor much in the reconstruction of the poem, but it is a unique witness because its obverse contains *Ludlul* I 48–52¹³⁶ and its reverse V 49–50, 53–54. Aside from an important tablet from Babylonia mentioned below (MS A), this is our only witness to *Ludlul* that contains material from more than one Tablet of the poem. It is treated further in chapter four.

1.2.8. *Babylon/Babylonia (late eighth century BCE and later)*

Twelve tablets—just under one fifth of the witnesses to the poem, come from the final locale for our consideration, Babylonia, which is something of a miscellaneous geographical designation.

MSBab	<i>Museum No.</i>	<i>Year Found</i>	<i>Year Published</i>	<i>Contents</i>
A	BM 32208 (1876-11-17, 1935) + BM 32214 (1876-11-17, 1941) + BM 32371 (1876-11-17, 2103) + BM 32378 (1876-11-17, 2110) + BM 32449 (1876-11-17, 2186) + BM 32659 (1876-11-17, 2427) + BM 32694 (1876-11-17, 2463 + 2478) ¹³⁷ + four unnumbered fragments	1876	1937 (Gurney) / 1960 (Lambert) / 2011 (Lenzi / Annus)	I 117–120, II 1–40, 84–86, V 25–53, 101–119
I.B	BM 37695 (1880-06-17, 1452)	1880	2014 (Oshima)	I 12–22, 104–113
I.G	1982.A3115	1982	2002 (Horowitz / Lambert)	I 6–18, 112–120, II 1
I.s	BM 36386 (1880-06-17, 112) + BM 36716 (1880-06-17, 449)	1880	2001 (Gesche) ¹³⁸	I 74–81
II.B	BM 38067 (1880-06-17, 1896)	1880	2014 (Oshima)	II 31–48

¹³⁴ Gurney 1989, 8 and no. 48 (Lambert’s copy, see p. 1). For the excavations at Kish between 1923 and 1933, see Moorey 1978.

¹³⁵ See Robson 2004, 46–49.

¹³⁶ Gurney did not identify the obverse as *Ludlul*, and we did not recognize it as such in the SAACT 7 handbook edition. I learned of its identification by way of a personal communication from Enrique Jiménez; see also Streck 2013, 219.

¹³⁷ BM 32694 is actually two joined fragments, 1876-11-17, 2463 and 1876-11-17, 2478 (see Lambert 1960, pl. 4).

¹³⁸ Clancier (2009, 452, 465) includes BM 36386 + BM 36716 in a list of tablets from the Es-agil temple in Babylon, though he prefaces the list with cautions and caveats that preclude certainty about this provenance (2009, 409).

II.p	BM 37576 (1880-06-17, 1333) + BM 37655 (1880-06-17, 1412)	1880	2014 (Oshima) / 2020 (Hätinen) ¹³⁹	II 25–30
II.q	BM 33861 (Rm-IV 422 + 423)	1879	2014 (Oshima) ¹⁴⁰	II 34–39
III.C	BM 55481 (+) <u>BM 39523</u> (1882-07-04, 54 (+) 1880-11-12, 1409)	1882 / 1880	2014 (Oshima) / 2019 (Fadhil / Jiménez)	III 8–36, 90–108
V.B	BM 34650 (Sp-II, 133)	1879	2011 (Leichty)	V 1–22, 107–120
V.C	BM 77253 (1883-09-28, 4)	1883	2014 (Oshima)	V 8–27, 85–101
V.k	VAT 17489	1899-1917	1987 (van Dijk)	V 14–15
V.m	BM 38002 (1880-06-17, 1831)	1880	2014 (Oshima)	V 16–22

Table 6: Manuscripts from Babylon/Babylonia.

All but one of these tablets (MS V.k_{Bab}) are housed in the British Museum's collections, and thus the issues discussed earlier with the Sippar Collection are also relevant here for its Babylonian Collection.¹⁴¹ In addition, for all of these tablets but the same one exception (MS V.k_{Bab}; though see the notes in the table above on MS I.s_{Bab} and MS II.p_{Bab}) we cannot determine a more precise location due to poor excavation methods and/or inadequate museum records or because the tablets came to the museum as a purchase from a dealer (about which, see below). Thus, although all of the tablets listed above are from Babylonia, that

¹³⁹ About BM 37655: I thank Prof. Enrique Jiménez, who identified this fragment as containing a few incomplete lines of *Ludlul*, for alerting me to its existence (personal communication, July 2016) and the further information (personal communication, April 2020) about Aino Hätinen's joining it to BM 37576.

¹⁴⁰ Clancier (2009, 463) includes BM 33861 in a list of tablets from the Esagil temple in Babylon, though he prefaces the list with cautions and caveats that preclude certainty about this provenance (2009, 409).

¹⁴¹ For the issues generally, see the introduction to the new Babylonian Collection catalog in Leichty / Finkel / Walker 2019, 1–15. For the Babylonian provenance of the consignment 1876-11-17, purchased by George Smith, see Leichty / Finkel / Walker 2019, 52 and note 169 below. The following consignments originate with Hormuzd Rassam: for 1880-06-17, see Reade in Leichty 1986, xxx and Leichty / Finkel / Walker 2019, 316; for 1880-11-12, see Reade in Leichty 1986, xxx and Leichty / Finkel / Walker 2019, 381; for Rm-IV, see Reade in Leichty 1986, xxix–xxx and Leichty / Finkel / Walker 2019, 208; for what little we know about the purchased consignment Sp-II, see Leichty / Finkel / Walker 2019, 250. For the other purchased consignments that are likely from Babylon(ia): 1883-09-28, see Reade in Leichty 1986, xv and Walker in Leichty / Finkelstein / Walker 1988, xiii; and 1882-07-04, see Reade in Leichty 1986, xxxvi.

is, from the southern area of Mesopotamia, it is not always possible to define their provenances more precisely.

The exception, MS V.k_{Bab} now held at the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin, was excavated during Koldewey's work in the city of Babylon. And thanks to the records of the excavators and the archival work of Olaf Pedersén, we know this tablet's precise find spot. It was discovered in an archive in the city of Babylon that dates back to the late eighth to early seventh centuries BCE. The archive was stored in two jars, holding a total of forty-nine tablets. MS V.k_{Bab} was the only non-administrative tablet among what was otherwise an archive of documents.¹⁴² It is unique among our witnesses to *Ludlul* in that it takes the shape of a regular tetrahedron (a triangular pyramid) and has writing on all of its sides.¹⁴³ It is likely that this interesting tablet was a prized possession, a keepsake from the owner's school days. Like other school tablets, it preserves formulaic phrases from administrative documents and excerpts from literary or religious texts (see further in chapter four).¹⁴⁴ By the time the tablet was published (1987), its value for reconstructing the poem was rather limited. It only preserves two lines in Tablet V that were already fully preserved in the Commentary and thus known since the late nineteenth century (1884). In fact, the same could be said for many of the tablets from Babylon/Babylonia, since they are fragmentary and mostly duplicate parts of the poem that had already been recovered by the time they were incorporated into the poem or published.¹⁴⁵

But there are some exceptions, one of which is the most remarkable of all tablets currently known to preserve text from *Ludlul*. All of these exceptions come from the British Museum's Babylonian Collection and three of them were important to the proper ordering of the material in the final Tablet of *Ludlul*, which until 2010 was quite disputed.¹⁴⁶ (All four tablets discussed below were also bought on the antiquities market, discussed later in the chapter.)

In many respects, the tablets from the British Museum's Babylonian Collection represent the next frontier in the recovery of Babylonian literature, since the collection is quite large and has been a recent source of many dupli-

¹⁴² Pedersén 2005, 203–8, especially 206.

¹⁴³ See <https://cdli.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/dl/photo/P347243.jpg>.

¹⁴⁴ Van Dijk 1987, 15, s.v. no. 124.

¹⁴⁵ All but four of the witnesses and new joins to two witnesses listed in the chart above were incorporated into SAACT 7's handbook edition (2010) as unpublished tablets. Oshima's new edition provided full editions for most of these, offering many improved readings; he also added several new pieces from the British Museum's Babylonian Collection that had not yet been used in an edition (i.e., MS III.C_{Bab} without the new join, MS II.q_{Bab}, MS V.C_{Bab}, and V.m_{Bab}).

¹⁴⁶ See note 108 above.

cates for a variety of compositions.¹⁴⁷ The tablets that deserve our brief attention in the story of the reconstruction of the text of *Ludlul* are MS III.C_{Bab}, MS V.B_{Bab}, MS V.C_{Bab}, and, at more length, MS A_{Bab}. MS III.C_{Bab}, first incorporated into an edition of the poem in 2014 by Oshima, expanded our knowledge of the ending of Tablet III incrementally and placed two disconnected lines in the Commentary (Lambert's lines a and b) properly into the text at III 104 and 106.¹⁴⁸ MS V.C_{Bab}, also first used in Oshima's edition, bridged a gap—the existence of which was uncertain—left by previously known sources in the first twenty-seven lines of Tablet V.¹⁴⁹ And MS V.B_{Bab}, first used in SACT 7's handbook edition (2010), preserves *Ludlul* V 1–22 on its obverse and 107–120 on its reverse, confirming both the beginning and end of Tablet V.

MS A_{Bab} is even more important. This witness is a remarkable example of how a tablet can “grow” and expand our knowledge of the ancient composition it bears. In 1937, O. R. Gurney in a short note identified BM 32214 as attesting some lines of *Ludlul* II (and a few words from what is now *Ludlul* I 117–120 but was then the unknown end of Tablet I) and provided a copy of the fragment (Gurney 1937, pl. IV). In 1960, Lambert used this piece to reconstruct the end of Tablet I (described above with the Aššur material) and associated the fragment with two others (comprising BM 32694).¹⁵⁰ Most of the poetic lines bore only a few signs; not a single line of text was complete on these fragments. At the time, Lambert suspected that these fragments were originally from the same large tablet.¹⁵¹ Ten additional fragments, joined by Irving Finkel, have proven him right. These comprise the current composition of MS A_{Bab}, making it the fullest single witness to the poem.¹⁵² In fact, it is the only tablet in our possession that carried the entire poem, probably in eight columns, four to a side, when it was complete.¹⁵³ Unfortunately, today it only preserves

¹⁴⁷ See Leichty / Finkel / Walker 2019 *inter alia*.

¹⁴⁸ See Oshima 2014, 421–22, specifically at the score of *Ludlul* III 103–107.

¹⁴⁹ The gap was discussed only as a possibility in 2011 (Lenzi / Annus 2011, 202) between the portions of the poem attested on the witnesses now labeled MS V.B_{Bab} and MS A_{Bab}. With the publication of MS V.C_{Bab} it was confirmed that we were in fact missing a couple of lines (see Oshima 2014, 431 at V 23–24).

¹⁵⁰ He called these MSS j (BM 32214) and k (BM 32694), for which see Lambert 1960, pl. 4.

¹⁵¹ Lambert 1960, 31.

¹⁵² Finkel made all of these joins between 1980 and 1982, according to notes in his private join book that Andrew George made available to me in an email (dated December 6, 2011; Finkel was copied). Correct Lenzi / Annus 2011, 182, n.4 accordingly. A map of the fragments comprising MS A_{Bab} is provided in Lenzi / Annus 2011, 184.

¹⁵³ Lenzi / Annus 2011, the *editio princeps*, assumed the tablet bore only six columns. But this was based on the idea that *Ludlul* had only four Tablets rather than five, as Oshima 2014 has now shown. His treatment of MS A_{Bab} provides several improvements in its decipherment.

Ludlul I 48–62 (col. i), I 117–120, II 1–40 (col. ii), and II 84–86 (col. iii)¹⁵⁴ on its obverse and Tablet V 25–53 (col. i') and V 101–119 (col. ii') on its reverse.¹⁵⁵ Combining MS V.B_{Bab} and MS A_{Bab} to the material from Aššur for Tablet V (especially MS V.D_{Aš} and MS V.E_{Aš}), Lenzi and Annus (2011) established the proper ordering of the material in the final Tablet of the poem and correctly surmised its length, 120 lines. With Oshima's incorporation of MS V.C_{Bab} into the poem for the first time, a new join to a fragment from Aššur (MS V.F_{Aš}), and his improved readings of the very difficult MS V.G_{Aš}, he has attempted to fill several of the remaining gaps so that only one line of the 120 lines in Tablet V remains entirely lost: V 91, represented by illegible traces on both MS V.C_{Bab} and MS V.G_{Aš}.¹⁵⁶

1.3. THE TEXTUAL BASIS FOR TABLET IV

As the story reveals up to this point, the reconstruction of the text of *Ludlul* has proceeded slowly and piecemeal. In this respect, it is fully representative of the other compositions comprising the Babylonian literary corpus. If we step back to consider the big picture that arises from the details above, we see that Tablets II and III were recovered first (see the editions of Jastrow 1906 and Langdon 1923, respectively), Tablet I followed bit by bit (see especially Lambert 1960, and more fully with Wiseman's study, 1980), while the last Tablet, Tablet V, came together slowly (Langdon 1923, Lambert 1960, who doubted it actually belonged to *Ludlul*) and conclusively only recently (SAACT 7; Lenzi / Annus 2011; and Oshima 2014). What is missing so far in the story is the reconstruction of Tablet IV, the very existence of which Oshima has relatively recently posited.

As the above narrative shows, past scholars have relied on the disconnected lines of *Ludlul* attested in the Commentary to provide what we might call textual anchoring points for the placement of witnesses that were thought to bear connected text of the poem. This *modus operandi* was especially important for the reconstruction of *Ludlul* Tablets I, III, and V and is precisely the kind of reasoning that Oshima uses to expand the text of the poem into the previously unidentified Tablet IV. Oshima sought a solution to a long-standing problem in the textual reconstruction of the poem. The issue turned on what to do with all

¹⁵⁴ Identified by Oshima 2014, 378.

¹⁵⁵ A hand copy or line drawing of the tablet is provided in Oshima 2014, pls. 1–2 with a photograph on pls. XXXV–XXXVI. See also Lambert's copy in George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 149.

¹⁵⁶ Oshima 2014, 435–37. See, however, the notes in chapter three for the obstacles and difficulties in the reconstruction of V 91–100, which is based on precarious evidence and must be viewed as tentative.

of the (unparalleled) lines in the Commentary after those that parallel the material in Tablet III.¹⁵⁷ These lines existed in textual limbo between Tablet III and the final Tablet of the poem in Lambert's edition.¹⁵⁸ And even when some of these lines were identified as parallel with material in what we now call Tablet V, there still seemed to be too many unparalleled lines remaining in the Commentary to fit in the relatively small gap at the end of Tablet III—if, in fact, Tablet III has only 120 lines.¹⁵⁹ Oshima convincingly makes the case that these lines should be placed in the previously unknown penultimate Tablet of the poem, Tablet IV. He suggests that this Tablet is fragmentarily represented by a few broken manuscripts, all of which contain parallels to lines in the Commentary. He notices for the first time that two lines from the Commentary that had no known parallel at the time are in fact attested on Si.728 (MS IV.B_{Sip}) in the same order as they appear in the Commentary, though these lines are separated on Si.728 by other lines of text. He tentatively posits that this tablet contains a dozen previously unrecognized lines of *Ludlul* and comprises one of just a few witnesses to Tablet IV. Oshima uses two other witnesses (cautiously) to reconstruct Tablet IV, MS IV.C_{Nin} (K.9724) and MS IV.D_{Nin} (BM 123392), both of which contain parallel lines from the Commentary (MS IV.C_{Nin} contains two such lines; MS IV.D_{Nin} only one). Other scholars had previously identified these parallels, but Oshima goes further and suggests that all of the lines on these tablets (not just the ones parallel to the Commentary) are also part of *Ludlul*. If this is correct, these three fragments offer three “chunks” of *non-overlapping* text that belong to the poem's penultimate tablet—thirty-nine lines total. Oshima calls these discrete sections A, B, and C. He sets them into narrative sequence by the order of the lines they share with the Commentary. MS IV.B_{Sip} attests twelve lines of text with parallels to the Commentary's lines f and g in lines 3' and 7'; it is Section A. MS IV.C_{Nin} bears seventeen lines of the poem with parallels to lines k and o in its lines 10' and 16'; it is Section B. MS IV.D_{Nin} shows a mere ten lines of text with a parallel to the Commentary's line p in its line 6', comprising Section C. (Some of the remaining unparalleled lines in the Commentary, namely, lines a–e, may have been part of *Ludlul* IV. And lines h–j, coming between Sections A and B, are certainly part of Tablet IV.) If the history of the text's recovery is any indica-

¹⁵⁷ See already Lambert 1960, 25 and 30.

¹⁵⁸ Lambert 1960, 54–56.

¹⁵⁹ See SAACT 7, xii and Lenzi / Annus 2011, 204–5, where we very reluctantly placed the unparalleled lines in the last (otherwise unknown) lines of Tablet III, despite the lack of room. As we noted, “As unlikely as it may seem, we simply see no alternative” (2011, 205).

tor, Oshima's expansion of the text to this posited Tablet IV will bring new discoveries of parallels to this rather fragmentary portion of the poem.¹⁶⁰

1.4. CONCLUSION

Recovering Babylonian literature is something like putting together a jigsaw puzzle that has an unspecified number of pieces and lacks an image of the finished product. Evidence is uneven, and progress is often slow. As matters stand today, *Ludlul* is still less than three-quarters recovered.¹⁶¹ A Tablet by Tablet survey will refine this picture, showing that we know a great deal of the text of all the Tablets save the new Tablet IV.

Tablet I: Tablet I is nearly fully recovered. Only three or four signs remain unattested in its reconstructed text as of this writing.¹⁶² Two of these are in the first line of the poem and can be restored with certainty from the repeated text in line 3. The others, frustratingly, form what is likely a missing word that is definitive to the interpretation of line 40, the conclusion to the opening hymn of the poem.¹⁶³

Tablet II: As matters stand today, about 100 lines are completely recovered and the remaining twenty lines in the Tablet are typically missing less than three signs, many of which (though not all) can be confidently restored. Tablet II is therefore more than 95% recovered.

Tablet III: This is the second most poorly recovered Tablet of the poem, behind Tablet IV, due to fragmentary lines. Only about twenty-six lines are

¹⁶⁰ When I drafted this chapter for the first time in 2017, I thought one of the most likely places to find more material for Tablet IV would be among the 2610 Babylonian tablets and fragments accessioned in the British Museum as consignment 1876–11–17. All of the fragments comprising MS A_{Bab} come from this consignment. Since MS A_{Bab} originally contained all of *Ludlul*, 1876-11-17 may still hold fragments that will expand our knowledge of the poem's text, especially in Tablet IV now that some of its text is known from other sources. A personal communication (dated February 3, 2020) from Enrique Jiménez, director of the Electronic Babylonian Literature project, informs me, however, that his team's search of this collection has not yet yielded any new fragments of *Ludlul*.

¹⁶¹ In 1977, Bottéro also estimated that a little less than three-quarters of *Ludlul* had been recovered (1977, 10), and this at a time when there were fewer than half the number of manuscripts for the poem. Despite great strides in our recovery of Tablets I and V, Tablet IV, which was completely unknown to Bottéro, brings the estimated amount of textual recovery down substantially. As a point of comparison, Andrew George estimated twenty years ago that only about two-thirds of the Standard Babylonian version of the *Epic of Gilgameš* was currently recovered (George 2003, 418–19). Subsequent manuscript finds push that fraction slightly higher now.

¹⁶² I am not counting some partial or half-broken signs that have been restored.

¹⁶³ See the notes in chapter three at I 40. Although we have signs in the first half of I 27, we still do not understand how to make sense of them.

fully recovered, and twelve are entirely lost (III 63–64 and 111–120). Six are represented by mere traces on the tablets that yield no sense at all (III 65–66 and 107–110). Fifteen lines (III 2, 4, 33, 56–60, 62, 67, 100–103, 105) are probably less than half recovered. And the remaining lines are somewhere between more than half but less than fully recovered. Given this state of the text and assuming it is 120 lines long like Tablets I, II, and V, I estimate that more than two-thirds but less than three-quarters of the original text of Tablet III is recovered.¹⁶⁴

Tablet IV: Assuming this Tablet is also 120 lines long and given the fragmentary condition of some of its preserved lines, I estimate that we have recovered less than one fifth of its text.

Tablet V: About forty-five lines of Tablet V are fully recovered¹⁶⁵ and maybe another fifty-five (or so) lines are half complete or better. One line is represented by mere traces (V 91) and another yields no sense at all (V 94).¹⁶⁶ The remaining lines are damaged variously, showing (likely) less than half of their text recovered. A very rough estimate suggests we possess just under three quarters of the text of the final Tablet of the poem.

Recovering the text of *Ludlul* is a great humanistic achievement—a testament to countless hours of dedicated scholars. We turn next to the modern translation of the poem, a process that works hand in hand with textual reconstruction. But before we do, I want to consider an important aspect of the cultural and economic contexts of the modern scholarship surrounding *Ludlul*, the commodification of cuneiform tablets. Although this is not the place for a full treatment, raising the topic provides an opportunity for drawing attention to the ethical complications that surround the very data that makes Assyriology possible.

As noted above, in addition to sharing text from Tablet V, MS A_{Bab}, MS V.B_{Bab}, and MS V.C_{Bab} all came into the possession of the British Museum by way of nineteenth century antiquities dealers. Spartali & Co. (London) sold MS V.B_{Bab} to the British Museum,¹⁶⁷ Joseph M. Shemtob (London) sold MS V.C_{Bab} to the British Museum,¹⁶⁸ and George Smith purchased MS A_{Bab} (or rather, the

¹⁶⁴ I avoid definite percentages with Tablets III–V due to the nature of the estimating.

¹⁶⁵ This includes some lines that are missing a few signs that can be confidently restored based on context.

¹⁶⁶ *Ludlul* V 89 may be included in this category, too.

¹⁶⁷ For more on Spartali & Co., see http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/term_details.aspx?bioId=92900.

¹⁶⁸ For more on Shemtob, see http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/term_details.aspx?bioId=92919.

2627 tablets and fragments from which MS A_{Bab} would arise) from a certain Michele Marini in Baghdad.¹⁶⁹ Given the important role MS A_{Bab} has played in the reconstruction of *Ludlul* V, it is not inaccurate to say George Smith *purchased* in 1876 the essential evidence for our reconstruction of Tablet V; we just didn't realize it for over a hundred years.

The antiquities trade in the Near East began as soon as Westerners showed their willingness to pay for artifacts. Sometimes Western dealers mediated the transactions (e.g., the Italian Spartali & Co. and Marini) while at other times the sellers were locals looking for a profit or simply subsistence. Times of crisis and warfare (e.g., recently the First Gulf War, the American invasion to topple Saddam Hussein, and the ISIS campaign to take Iraq) have exacerbated the problem of illicit digging and fueled the antiquities market.¹⁷⁰ Although laws and policies are now in place to undermine demand for looted or unprovenanced artifacts in some countries, many countries do not have strong laws on the books.¹⁷¹ Thus, the market for such items continues, unfortunately, and in some cases has financed groups that wish to destroy the pre-Islamic cultural heritage of Iraq, such as ISIS,¹⁷² a group that arose in the wake of a long-term American military intervention in the region.¹⁷³

I can only determine that two other tablets bearing the text of *Ludlul*, also acquired by the British Museum in the nineteenth century, were purchased rather than excavated (MS I.L_{Nin} and MS III.C_{Bab}). There may be other purchased *Ludlul* manuscripts (e.g., MS I.G_{Bab}, held at the City Museum and Art Gallery in Birmingham, UK),¹⁷⁴ but records either do not exist or are not accessible to me to make the determination. All of the purchased tablets except MS I.L_{Nin}, a Kuyunjik tablet purchased from Rassam, came from Babylonia and were secured via antiquities dealers.¹⁷⁵ Unfortunately, the British Museum is

¹⁶⁹ The purchasing of Babylonian tablets is discussed by Reade in Leichty 1986, xiv–xvii. George Smith visited Baghdad and purchased these tablets in 1876 before his fateful trip home (see Reade in Leichty 1986, xiv and Leichty / Finkel / Walker 2019, 158). For a very brief outline of a biography of Marini, see http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/term_details.aspx?bioId=23490.

¹⁷⁰ See, e.g., Stone 2008, Robson 2008b, and Casana 2015.

¹⁷¹ Myers / Kulish 2016.

¹⁷² See, e.g., Loveluck 2015 and Rose-Greenland 2016. See also the Modeling the Antiquities Trade in Iraq and Syria project at University of Chicago's Oriental Institute (<https://oi.uchicago.edu/research/projects/mantis>).

¹⁷³ For an astute reflection on ISIS and its media-savvy iconoclasm of ancient Mesopotamian artifacts, see Tugendhaft 2020, who also demonstrates well the inextricably political nature of studying the past and presenting the results to contemporary audiences, especially in public museums.

¹⁷⁴ See also note 88 above.

¹⁷⁵ MS III.C_{Bab} was purchased from Spartali & Co.

not unique in this regard; commercial acquisition of tablets figures in many other cuneiform tablet collections to varying degrees. Most notably in recent years is the Museum of the Bible and its illicit import of antiquities, including thousands of cuneiform tablets, in support of its highly tendentious religious agenda,¹⁷⁶ a particularly robust, twenty-first century version of the religious impetus that fueled the early decades of Western exploration in Mesopotamia and exploitative acquisition of its archaeological artifacts.

In the final analysis, the modern commodification of cuneiform tablets has complicated the modern history of many Babylonian literary works.¹⁷⁷ Although this commodification of tablets deprives modern scholars of important archaeological information, it also serves as a reminder that we do not work in an ivory tower cultural vacuum. The work of Assyriologists, no less than the ancient scribes', exists in cultural, economic, and ethical contexts that were we the object of our own study we would not allow ourselves to ignore.

¹⁷⁶ See, e.g., Shortland / Klerman 2021. On the tendentious agenda of the museum, see Moss and Baden 2017.

¹⁷⁷ Note, for example, the situation with *Enūma eliš*: Of the ninety-five tablets from southern (Babylonian) sites used in Lambert's critical edition, all but seven were acquired via dealers (2013, 4).

APPENDIX:
CATALOG OF PUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS OF *LU DLUL*

Since I refer extensively in chapters one and three to the various textual witnesses to *Ludlul*, that is, the various manuscripts attesting to the poem's text, I provide this catalog, which builds on and updates Oshima's (2014, 377–79), for the reader's easy reference. The catalog is current only up to July 2022. See page 61 below for an important note about unpublished manuscripts. The edition of a particular witness is only indicated if it was not fully incorporated (i.e., as known today) into Lambert's edition of the poem in 1960. A lower case letter in a MS siglum indicates an exercise or school tablet. The CDLI "P-number" is a unique identifier to locate the tablet in the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative database, now at <https://cdli.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/>.

TABLET I

- A_{Bab} BM 32208 (1876-11-17, 1935) + BM 32214 (1876-11-17, 1941) + BM 32371 (1876-11-17, 2103) + BM 32378 (1876-11-17, 2110) + BM 32449 (1876-11-17, 2186) + BM 32659 (1876-11-17, 2427) + BM 32694 (1876-11-17, 2463 + 2478) + four unnumbered fragments.¹⁷⁸ Part of a multi-column tablet from Babylon. Copy of BM 32214 and 32694: Lambert 1960, pl. 4. Initial edition and photo of the reconstructed tablet: Lenzi / Annus 2011. See now Oshima 2014 with copy on pls. I–II and photos on pls. XXXV–XXXVI. Lambert's copy: George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 149. This is the only extant manuscript that once contained the entire poem. It now preserves on the obverse Tablet I 48–62 (col. i), Tablet I 117–120, Tablet II 1–40 (col. ii) and 84–86 (col. iii); on the reverse, Tablet V 25–53 (col. i') and Tablet V 101–119 (col. ii').¹⁷⁹ CDLI: P404893.
- I.B_{Bab} BM 37695. Fragment likely from Babylon. Edition: Oshima 2014; copy, pl. III. Lambert's copy: George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 147. Tablet I 12–22 (obv.), 104–113 (rev.). CDLI: P404901.
- I.C_{Sip} BM 66345. Fragment from Sippar. Edition: Oshima 2014; copy: pl. IV. Lambert's copy: George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 145; p. 8 notes this fragment is from the same tablet as their text no. 146, see MS I.E_{Sip}. Tablet I 6–21. CDLI: P404916.

¹⁷⁸ The 1876-11-17 collection (see Reade in Leichty 1986, xivff.) may have other fragments belonging to this tablet (1876-11-17, 1–2610 = BM 30281–32838). But see note 160 above.

¹⁷⁹ This is the only witness, aside from the Commentary, that preserves substantive sections of more than one Tablet of the poem. The tiny fragment MS I.w / V.jk_{is} preserves very few lines from both Tablets I and V.

- I.D_{Sip} BM 68444. Fragment from Sippar. Edition: Oshima 2014; copy: pl. III. Lambert's copy: George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 148. Tablet I 38–53. CDLI: P404918.
- I.E_{Sip} BM 73592. Fragment from Sippar. Edition: Oshima 2014; copy: pl. IV. Lambert's copy: George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 146; p. 8 notes this fragment is from the same tablet as no. 145, see MS I.C_{Sip}. Tablet I 20–39 (obv.), I 85–101 (rev.). CDLI: P404919.
- I.F_{Sip} IM 132669 (Sippar 415/351).¹⁸⁰ A single column tablet from Sippar. Edition, copy, photo: George / Al-Rawi 1998, 187–201 (identified as Si.1.D.4). Tablet I 1–50 (obv.), 62–120 (rev.). The catchline to Tablet II is preserved.¹⁸¹ CDLI: P225263.
- I.G_{Bab?} Birmingham 1982.A3115. Fragment in Babylonian script. Edition, copy, photo: Horowitz / Lambert 2002, 237–245. Oshima 2014, pl. XXXVII reprints the same photo. Tablet I 6–18 (obv.), 112–120 (rev.). The catchline to Tablet II and colophon are preserved. CDLI: P382252.
- I.H_{Nin} K.1757 + K.18963. Fragment from Nineveh. Edition: Oshima 2014; copy: pl. V. Lambert's copy: George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 144. Tablet I 51–55. CDLI: P394033.
- I.I_{Nin} K.9237. Part of a single column tablet from Nineveh. Copy: Lambert 1960, pl. 3. Tablet I 47–65 (obv.), 66–84 (rev.). CDLI: P397986.
- I.J_{Nin} K.9392 + K.9810. Fragment from Nineveh. Copy of K.9810: Lambert 1960, pl. 74; copy of K.9392: Horowitz / Lambert 2002, 240. Photo of the joined tablets: Horowitz / Lambert 2002, 240 and Oshima 2014, pl. XXXVIII. Tablet I 1–12, 120. The catchline to Tablet II and colophon (Hunger 1968, no. 318) are preserved. CDLI: P382529.
- I.K_{Nin} K.10503 (obv.) + Sm.2139 (rev.). Fragment from Nineveh. Copy: Lambert 1960, pl. 3. Photo: Oshima, 2014, pl. XXXIX. Tablet I 43–52 (obv.), 75–81, 86–91 (rev.). CDLI: P398719.
- I.L_{Nin} 1879-07-08,225. Fragment from Nineveh. Edition: Oshima 2014; copy: pl. V. Lambert's copy: George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 143. Tablet I 25–30 (obv.), 97–100 (rev.). CDLI: P404878.
- I.M_{Nin} Sm.89. Fragment from Nineveh. Edition: Oshima 2014; copy: pl. VI. Tablet I 26–31. CDLI: P425230.

¹⁸⁰ For the museum number, see Fadhil / Jiménez 2019, 156, n.5.

¹⁸¹ The first editors of this tablet use round parentheses in their edition to designate text that was seen when the tablet was first transliterated but later, after its baking, was no longer visible on a photograph from which they made their copy (George / Al-Rawi 1998, 187, 192). In my working score I follow that convention and my transliteration usually follows the editors, who had at least seen the tablet at one time. But, there are several places where the editors' copy indicates the presence of signs that are restored in their transliteration. If the photo does not support the copy or transliteration, I give the photo priority. But the photo may be misleading, since its quality is not as high as one would like for collation. Thus, one should be cautious. Working under less than ideal circumstances, the editors have produced an extremely useful treatment of the tablet, but their transliteration remains tentative, as George and Al-Rawi themselves state (1998, 192). Collation is required but has been impossible.

- I.N_{As} VAT 10522. Fragment from Aššur. Copy: LKA 24; photo: Horowitz / Lambert 2002, 239. Tablet I 1–13 (obv.), 119–120² (rev.). There seems to be room for a catchline and lengthy colophon, but nothing is preserved.¹⁸² CDLI: P382528.
- I.O_{As} VAT 11100. Part of a single column tablet from Aššur. Copy: KAR 326 and Lambert 1960, pl. 3. Tablet I 66–86 (obv.), 92–112 (rev.). CDLI: P404976.
- I.P_{As} VAT 11565. Fragment from Aššur. Copy: Lambert 1960, pl. 74, which reproduces Ebeling's copy of KAR 279. Photo: Horowitz / Lambert 2002, 239. Tablet I 110–120. An illegible colophon is preserved on the bottom edge. CDLI: P404980.
- I.Q_{Kal} ND 5485 + ND 5497/20. Part of a single column tablet from Kalḫu (modern Nimrud). Edition and copy of ND 5485: Wiseman 1980, 101–107. Copy with a new fragment (ND 5497/20) and photo (only of ND 5485): Wiseman / Black 1996, no. 201. Tablet I 1–68 (obv.), 69–85, 91–120 (rev.). Both pieces show traces of glue on their edge. Apparently, other fragments, now lost, were once joined to these (see Wiseman / Black 1996, 29–30). CDLI: P363615.
- I.R_{Huz} SU 1951,10. Part of a single column tablet from Ḫuzirina (modern Sultan-tepe). Copy: STT 32 and Lambert 1960, pls. 1–2. Tablet I 38–72 (obv.), 73–104 (rev.).¹⁸³ CDLI: P338349.
- I.S_{Bab} BM 36386 + BM 36716. Fragment of an exercise tablet from Babylon. Edition and copy of BM 36386 only: Gesche 2001, 246–48. Edition of both: Oshima 2014; copy: pl. VI. Obv. 8'–15' excerpt Tablet I 74–81. CDLI: P349431.
- 𒌷 Not *Ludlul*.¹⁸⁴
- I.u_{Sip} BM 61433. Fragment of an exercise tablet from Sippar. Edition: Leichty 1977 (no copy). Copy: Oshima 2014, pl. VII. Lines 8'–12' excerpt Tablet I 88–92. CDLI: P404913.
- I.v_{Sip} BM 93079. An exercise tablet from Sippar. Edition: Oshima 2014; copy: pl. VII and Lambert 2013, pl. 8 (obv. only). Obv. 10'–14' excerpt Tablet I 55–59. CDLI: P247823.
- I.w / V._{JKis} 1924.1795. Fragment of an exercise tablet probably from Kish. Copy: OECT 11 48. See also Lambert Folio no. 1552 (unpublished/unconsulted; see Oshima 2014, 379). Its obverse (= I.w) contains Tablet I 48–52; its reverse (= V.j) contains Tablet V 49–50, 53–54. CDLI: P348934.

¹⁸² Lambert suggested that this piece may join back-to-back with VAT 11565 = MS I.P_{As} (Lambert 1960, 344).

¹⁸³ This tablet was not available in Ankara to collate and to photograph in June 2015. It was on loan to a regional museum in Urfa.

¹⁸⁴ Oshima's MS I.t (= BM 37596; CDLI: P499552) is a fragment of an exercise tablet. It was identified as *Ludlul* by Gesche 2001, 680, but I (still) do not see any connection to the text (so also SAACT 7, xlvi). Copy: Oshima 2014, pl. VI. He does not suggest a placement in the poem (2014, 378 and n.5).

- I.X_{Aš} VAT 10071. An exercise tablet from Aššur. Copy: Lambert 1960, pl. 73. Rev. 3–4 excerpt Tablet I 82–83. CDLI: P381770.
- I.Y_{Aš} VAT 10756. An exercise tablet from Aššur. Copy: Lambert 1960, pl. 73. Rev. 5–6 excerpt Tablet I 84–85. CDLI: P381794.
- I.Z_{Sip} BM 71949. An exercise tablet probably from Sippar. Lambert's copy: George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 207. Obv. 6'–12' excerpt Tablet I 78–84. CDLI: Unassigned.

TABLET II

- A_{Bab} (see above under Tablet I)
- II.B_{Bab} BM 38067. Fragment from Babylon. Edition: Oshima 2014; copy: pl. VIII. Lambert's copy: George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 152. Tablet II 31–48. CDLI: P404902.
- II.C_{Sip} BM 54794. Fragment from Sippar. Edition: Oshima 2014; copy: pl. IX. Lambert's copy: George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 153. Tablet II 49–59 (obv.), 60–71 (rev.). CDLI: P404910.
- II.D_{Sip} BM 65956 + BM 67872 + BM 93047.¹⁸⁵ Fragment from Sippar. Edition: Oshima 2014; copy: pl. X. Lambert's copy: George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 150. Tablet II 1–23 (obv.), 94–120 (rev.). CDLI: P404915.
- II.E_{Sip} BM 82957. Fragment from Sippar. Edition: Oshima 2014; copy: pl. VIII. Lambert's copy: George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 151. Tablet II 16–25 (obv.), 103–109 (rev.). CDLI: P404920.
- II.F_{Sip} Si.37 + Si.881. Part of a single column tablet from Sippar. Copy: Lambert 1960, pls. 6–7. Photo: Williams 1952, pls. I–II. Tablet II 8–29, 37–48 (obv.), 76–120 (rev.). The catchline to Tablet III is preserved. CDLI: P404961.
- II.G_{Nin} K.2518 + DT 358. Single column tablet from Nineveh. Copy: Lambert 1960, pl. 4. Tablet II 1–47 (obv.), 96–120 (rev.). The catchline to Tablet III and colophon (Hunger 1968, no. 318) are preserved.¹⁸⁶ CDLI: P394482.
- II.H_{Nin}
II.H₁ K.3323 + Rm.941 + K.18186 + Rm.444. Part of a single column tablet from Nineveh, perhaps from the same tablet as II.H₂ (see Lambert 1960, 37 and, with more certitude, Oshima 2014, 378). Edition: Oshima 2014; photo: pl. XL. Copy: Lambert 1960, pl. 6 (without K.18186 and Rm.444). Tablet II 18–23 (obv.), 105–120 (rev.). Catchline to Tablet III and colophon are preserved. CDLI: P394941.

¹⁸⁵ SAACT 7, xlvi only listed BM 65956, though it used all three joined fragments in its edition.

¹⁸⁶ I have not found or been able to take a photograph of the tablet. It is on a long-term loan to the Louvre, according to a personal communication from Jonathan Taylor.

- II.H₂ K.8396. Part of a single column tablet from Nineveh, perhaps from the same tablet as II.H₂. Edition: Oshima 2014; photo: pls. XLI–XLII. Copy: Lambert 1960, pl. 5. Tablet II 44–65 (obv.), 66–90 (rev.). CDLI: P394941.
- II.I_{Nin} K.3972 + K.9973 + DT 151. Part of a single column tablet from Nineveh. Copy: Lambert 1960, pl. 5 (K.3972) and pl. 6 (DT 151). Photos: Oshima 2014, pls. XLIII–XLV (K.3972 and DT 151; his MSS II.I and II.O). Enrique Jiménez identified lines of *Ludlul* on K.9973. Aino Häntinen made the join of the three fragments. Edition and new copy of the result: Häntinen in Jimenéz *et al* 2020, 248–49, 251. Tablet II 1–48 (obv.), 98–120 (rev.). The catchline to Tablet III and colophon (Hunger 1968, no. 319d) are preserved. CDLI: P395335.
- II.J_{Nin} K.6935. Fragment from Nineveh. Copy: Lambert 1960, pl. 7. Photo: Oshima 2014, pl. XLVI. Tablet II 90–99. CDLI: P396913.
- II.K_{Nin} Sm.1745. Fragment from Nineveh. Copy: Lambert 1960, pl. 4. Photo: Oshima 2014, pl. XLVI. Tablet II 3–9. CDLI: P404880.
- II.L_{AS} VAT 10569.¹⁸⁷ Fragment of the reverse of a (likely) four-column tablet from Aššur. Copy: Lambert 1960, pl. 74. Tablet II 50–61 (col. i'), 117–120 (col. ii'). The catchline to Tablet III is preserved. A colophon was written but apparently erased. CDLI: P404881.
- II.M_{AS}
- II.M₁ VAT 10601. Fragment from Aššur, likely from the same tablet as II.M₂ (see Lambert 1960, 37; Oshima treats these as indirectly joined [2014, 378]). Copy: Lambert 1960, pl. 6. Tablet II 63–74. CDLI: P369089.
- II.M₂ VAT 10657. Fragment from Aššur, perhaps from the same tablet as II.M₁. Copy: Lambert 1960, pl. 6. Tablet II 82–94. CDLI: P369089.
- II.N_{Huz} SU 1951,32 + 103A (+) 15A + 46.¹⁸⁸ Single column tablet from Huzirina (modern Sultantepe). Copy: STT 33 and Lambert 1960, pls. 8–11. Tablet II 1–56, 61–72 (obv.), 73–83, 85–120 (rev.). The catchline to Tablet III and colophon (Hunger 1968, no. 351) are preserved. CDLI: P338350.
- ~~II.O_{Nin}~~ See MS II.I_{Nin} above.
- II.p_{Bab} BM 37576 + BM 37655.¹⁸⁹ Fragment of an exercise tablet from Babylon.

¹⁸⁷ When visiting the Vorderasiatisches Museum in March 2013, I found this tablet with seven other fragments—all without an accession number on the physical tablets—stored in a box bearing the label VAT 10569. The fragment copied by Lambert was in a separate box within the larger one and had a handwritten note beside it identifying its contents as *Ludlul* (signed, Stefan Maul, dated June 5, 1993). One of the unnumbered fragments has been identified as part of the *Mīs pī* ritual (Walker / Dick 2001, 28). I have not attempted to identify the others.

¹⁸⁸ The full museum number is provided only in the corrigenda to the first volume of the Sultantepe tablets (see Gurney / Hulin 1964, 25). I collated the obverse in person on June 18, 2015, though the separate fragment at the bottom of the obv. / top of the rev. was not available at the museum. (They couldn't find it.) The remainder was collated by photo in January of 2017. In some cases the copy shows extant text that the tablet no longer bears.

¹⁸⁹ I learned about this fragment from Enrique Jiménez (personal correspondence, July 12, 2016), who also sent a transliteration of the text. See <http://ccp.yale.edu/P461156>, which includes

Edition of BM 37576: Oshima 2014; copy: pl. IX. Lambert's copy: George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 154 (obv. only). Edition and copy of the joined fragments: Häntinen in Jimenez *et al* 2020, 248–50, 252. Obv. 4'–9' excerpt Tablet II 25–30. CDLI: P404900.

- II.q_{Bab} BM 33861. Fragment of an exercise tablet from Babylon.¹⁹⁰ Edition: Oshima 2014. Lambert's copy: George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 155 (obv. only). Obv. 16'–21' excerpt Tablet II 34–39. CDLI: P491225.

TABLET III

- III.B_{Sip} BM 54821. Fragment from Sippar. Copy: Lambert 1960, pl. 74. Photo: Oshima 2014, pl. XLVII. Contains Tablet III 29–45 (obv.), 85–99 (rev.). P404911.
- III.C_{Bab} BM 55481 (+) BM 39523. Fragment probably from Babylon. Edition: Oshima 2014 (BM 55481 only); copy: pl. XI. Lambert's copy: George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 156 (BM 55481 only). The indirect join was announced in Fadhil / Jiménez 2019, 160 with copy on p. 161.¹⁹¹ Tablet III 8–36 (obv.), 90–108 (rev.). CDLI: P491226 and unassigned.
- III.D_{Sip} Si.55. Part of a single column tablet from Sippar. Copy: Lambert 1960, pls. 13–14. Tablet III 22–55 (obv.), two lines of traces (III 65–66) and then III 67–103 (rev.).¹⁹² CDLI: P404964.
- III.E_{As} VAT 9954. Single column, half-length tablet from Aššur. Copy: Lambert 1960, pl. 12. Tablet III 1–30 (obv.), 32–46, 48–62 (rev.). The scribe seems to have left out line 31 when he turned the tablet over and continued copying the text. Why he skipped line 47 is unclear. Line 62 is ruled off from the previous text, functioning as a catchline. CDLI: P369143.
- III.F_{As} VAT 11179. Fragment from Aššur. Copy: Lambert 1960, pl. 74. Tablet III 11–25 (obv.), 95–110 (rev.).¹⁹³ CDLI: P404977.
- III.g_{Sip} BM 68435. Fragment of an exercise tablet from Sippar. Edition and copy: Gesche 2001, 558–59; Oshima 2014 and pl. XI. Lambert's copy: George /

a high resolution photo of BM 37655. See also Gesche 2001, 681 (catalog only). This tablet was not included in Oshima's edition. In April 2020, I learned about Aino Häntinen's joining of BM 37655 to BM 37576 from Enrique Jiménez (personal correspondence). Between July 2016 and April 2020, I referred to BM 37655 as a separate MS of *Ludlul* (see, e.g., my review of Oshima's edition in Lenzi 2017, 181, n.7).

¹⁹⁰ Oshima did not identify this fragment as an exercise tablet; and thus he assigned it the siglum II.Q—an upper case letter rather than a lower case one (2014, 378). See MSL 11, 22, 68, 78.

¹⁹¹ They state on p. 160: “BM 39523 certainly belongs to the same tablet as BM 55481 (82-7-4, 54).”

¹⁹² I thank Alrun Gutow for providing access to two old photographs of the tablet (PhK 395 and 396), mentioned in Fadhil / Jiménez 2019.

¹⁹³ Oshima places these lines here (2014, 379). See my earlier remarks in SAACT 7, xlv: “The signs on the reverse are not at all clear. One might place the lines in Tablet III 95–120 somewhere. Note the congruence of rev. 6' with III 100 and line 10' with III line a” (now III 104). Compare Lambert 1960, 344, who did not place the lines at all.

- Taniguchi 2019, no. 158. Obv. 2'–7' excerpt Tablet III 68–78. CDLI: P349702.
- III.H_{Sip} BM 77093. Fragment from Sippar. Edition: Oshima 2014. Lambert's copy: George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 157. Tablet III 42–62. CDLI: P491227.
- III.i_{Sip} BM 99811. Fragment of an exercise tablet in Babylonian script. Edition: Oshima 2014. Lambert's copy: George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 62; p. 4 states "probably from Sippar." Obv. 6–10 excerpt Tablet III 9–13. CDLI: P491228.
- III.J_{Sip} IM 124581 (Sippar 8, 114/2277). A single column tablet from Sippar. Edition, copy, and photo: Fadhil / Jiménez 2019, 155–162. Tablet III 9–34. CDLI: Unassigned.

TABLET IV

- IV.B_{Sip} Si.728. Fragment from Sippar. Edition: Oshima 2014. Copy: Geers Copies Ac 43a. Lambert's copy: George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 159. MS IV.B_{Sip} contains a twelve line section of text belonging to Tablet IV §A (including a duplicate to lines f and g; see MS Com_{Nin} below), according to Oshima's reconstruction (2014, 426–27). CDLI: P491229.
- IV.C_{Nin} K.9724. Fragment from Nineveh. Edition: Oshima 2014; photo: pl. XLVI. Copy: Lambert 1960, pl. 17. MS IV.C_{Nin} contains a seventeen line section of text belonging to Tablet IV §B (including a duplicate to lines k and o; see MS Com_{Nin} below), according to Oshima's reconstruction (2014, 427–28). CDLI: P398276.
- IV.D_{Nin} BM 123392. Fragment from Nineveh. Edition: Oshima 2014; photo: pl. XLVIII. Copy: CT 51 219. Lambert's copy: George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 160. One side of this fragment contains a ten line section of text belonging to Tablet IV §C (including a duplicate to line p; see MS Com_{Nin} below), according to Oshima's reconstruction (2014, 428). The other side is too poorly preserved to determine its contents. Previously, this tablet was thought to be a commentary, containing what Lambert labeled line p (see SAACT 7, xlvi, n.86 with the literature cited there). Oshima and Lambert disagree about which side is the obverse and which the reverse. CDLI: P286080.

TABLET V

- A (see above under Tablet I)
- V.B_{Bab} BM 34650. Fragment in Babylonian script. Edition: Oshima 2014; copy: pl. XII. Lambert's copy: George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 163. Pinches' unpublished copy is labeled SP.II.133. Tablet V 1–22 (obv.), 107–120 (rev.). Three very broken lines of a colophon are preserved. CDLI: P404897.

- V.C_{Bab} BM 77253. Fragment probably from Babylon.¹⁹⁴ Edition: Oshima 2014; copy: pl. XIII. Lambert's copy: George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 164. Tablet V 8–27 (col. i'), 85–101 (col. ii'). CDLI: P491231.
- V.D_{As} VAT 9303. Part of a single column tablet from Aššur. Copy: KAR 10 and Lambert 1960, pl. 18.¹⁹⁵ Tablet V 39–61 (obv.), 64–86 (rev.). CDLI: P369002.
- V.E_{As} VAT 9442. Part of a single column, half-length tablet from Aššur. Copy: KAR 11 and Lambert 1960, pl. 18. Tablet V 1–5, 7–16, (obv.), 50–64 (rev.). CDLI: P369003.
- V.F_{As} VAT 10538 + VAT 10650. Fragment from Aššur.¹⁹⁶ Copy: LKA 67 and Lambert 1960, pl. 18 (VAT 10538 only). Lambert's copy of VAT 10650: Lambert Folio, no. 1555 (unpublished/unconsulted; see Oshima 2014, 379). Edition of joined fragments: Oshima 2014. Tablet V 68–69, 71–90 (obv.), 105–120 (rev.).¹⁹⁷ CDLI: P404972.
- V.G_{As} VAT ??.¹⁹⁸ Fragment of a tablet from Aššur. Copy: KAR 116. Tablet V 25–39 (obv.), 91–103 (rev.). See note 195 for the possibility of an indirect join to MS V.D_{As}. CDLI: P369096.
- V.H_{Huz} SU 1952,212 + 291 with 302. Fragments from Huzirina (modern Sultantepe). Copy: STT 117 with STT 27 and Lambert 1960, pl. 18. Tablet V 71, 73–82. CDLI: P338437.
- V.i_{Sip} BM 74201. Fragment of an exercise tablet from Sippar. Edition: Oshima 2014. Copy: Gesche 2001, 614 and Oshima 2014, pl. XII. Lambert's copy: George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 162. Obv. 2'–7' excerpt Tablet V 54–55, 57–60. CDLI: P349786.
- V.j / I.w_{Kis}
See MS I.w / V.j_{Kis} above.
- V.k_{Bab} VAT 17489. Clay regular tetrahedron excerpt tablet from Babylon. Edition: Oshima 2014. Copy: VAS 24 124. Face 1, lines 6–8a excerpt Tablet V 14–15. CDLI: P347243.
- ~~V.l_{Nih}~~ Not *Ludlul*.¹⁹⁹ See Lenzi 2020.

¹⁹⁴ SAACT 7, xlvi could not place this fragment in the poem. Oshima 2012 announced its current placement.

¹⁹⁵ Lambert's identification of the tablet's obverse and reverse must be switched (see Lenzi / Annus 2011, 191, n.42). Oshima thinks this tablet may have originally been from the same tablet as MS V.G_{As}. Unfortunately, due to an incorrect accession number given on the copy of that tablet (KAR 116), it cannot be located to check this hypothesis (2014, 9, n.32).

¹⁹⁶ Lambert suggests this fragment may be from the same tablet as MS V.E_{As} (see 1960, 57), but our textual reconstruction of Tablet V (Lenzi / Annus 2011) casts doubt on this idea. Oshima seems to concur (2014, 379). Oshima added the second fragment in his edition, based on Lambert's unpublished copy.

¹⁹⁷ My readings of VAT 10650 are taken directly from Oshima since I have not been able to collate (or photograph) the fragment and the copy is not yet published, as far as I can determine.

¹⁹⁸ Ebeling labeled the tablet as VAT 11245, but the staff at Heidelberg indicates this number is incorrect. The correct number is unknown and therefore the tablet is practically speaking lost.

V.m^{Bab} BM 38002. Fragment of an exercise tablet in Babylonian script. Edition: Oshima 2014. Lambert's copy: George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 161. Lines 3'–9' excerpt Tablet V 16–22. CDLI: P491232.

COMMENTARY

Com^{Nin} K.3291. Part of a single column tablet from Nineveh. Copy: Lambert 1960, pls. 15–17. Commentary to Tablets I–V. Edition: Chapter nine.²⁰⁰ CDLI: P394923. The Commentary provides a textual witness to the following lines of the poem:

Tablet I 24, 26, 47, 48, 61, 69, 71, 78, 86, 87, 89, 93, 105, 106

Tablet II 3, 7, 9, 11, 21, 24, 43, 44, 53, 57, 61, 69, 70, 88, 90, 96, 97, 98, 100, 101, 107

Tablet III 1, 25, 35,²⁰¹ 41, 61,²⁰² 84, 85, 96, 97, 99, 104, 106²⁰³

Commentary, lines a–e²⁰⁴

Tablet IV §A 3' (= f), 7' (= g), h, i, j, §B 10' (= k),²⁰⁵ §B 16' (= o), §C 6' (= p)

Tablet V 14–15 (= q), 16–17 (= r), V 23' (= s), t,²⁰⁶ u, v (= V 64')²⁰⁷

¹⁹⁹ K.8576 (P397684) was considered a possible witness to the poem and incorporated into Oshima's edition at a late stage in its preparation (2014, 114). The fragment has subsequently been excluded from the textual witnesses to *Ludlul*.

²⁰⁰ See also Lenzi 2015a (<https://ccp.yale.edu/P394923>).

²⁰¹ Rather than III 38, as Lambert 1960, 50 (his line 37) and SAACT 7, 24 have it. See Mayer (2014, 278) and Oshima (2014, 416, 282).

²⁰² This line may belong at III 66 instead, according to Oshima (2014, 418, 294). See the notes in chapter three at III 66.

²⁰³ In Lambert's edition, lines in the Commentary that were unattested in other witnesses and thus could not be securely placed in the poem were labeled with lower case letters. This practice has continued in editions of the poem since that time (SAACT 7 and Oshima 2014), though now a few of Lambert's lettered lines have been identified with numbered lines in the poem (his line a = III 104; line b = III 106; line q = V 14–15; line r = V 16–17; s = V 23). Lambert did not assign a letter to the last two fragmentary lines on the tablet (1960, 56). SAACT 7 labels them lines v and w; I have continued that here (compare Oshima 2014, 424). Oshima also continues the practice of assigning letters to lines in the Commentary, though he identifies a couple of more lines of the Commentary with lines in Tablet III (as mentioned above: Lambert's line a = III 104 and his line b = III 106). For this reason, Oshima relabels all of the lines so that Lambert's line c is now his line a. Oshima also found congruency between Commentary lines and the lines from witnesses that belong to the newly posited, penultimate Tablet IV of the poem. Due to the fact that Lambert did not label missing lines on the Commentary, Lambert's lettered lineation and Oshima's converge again at line n (see 2014, 423–24).

²⁰⁴ It is unclear where Tablet III ends and Tablet IV begins so these lines cannot be assigned to one or the other.

²⁰⁵ Lines l and m are entirely broken. Line n only seems to bear witness to commentary.

²⁰⁶ See the notes in chapter three at V 24.

²⁰⁷ For the possible placement of line v at V 64, see chapter nine. If the last sign on line v is the last sign of *Ludlul* V 64, then line w must contain commentary only.

Other manuscripts will no doubt appear before this volume is in print. In fact, in a personal communication in March 2022, Aino Härtinen informed me that the Electronic Babylonian Literature project had identified five more fragments of the poem from the British Museum's Babylonian collection, three in Tablet I, one in Tablet III,²⁰⁸ and one in Tablet IV. These, she tells me, will be published in *KASKAL* 19 (2022). Since *KASKAL* 18 only appeared in 2022, these new fragments will not be published before the present monograph is submitted for publication (early August 2022).²⁰⁹ Moreover, I am confident, given the comprehensiveness of the eBL project, that there will be many other textual discoveries in the near future. One can only hope that these will eliminate many of our textual uncertainties, confirm and correct our textual restorations (some of which are quite conjectural!), and amplify our understanding of the text.

²⁰⁸ It is unclear to me if this is BM 54633 +, an unpublished duplicate of part of *Ludlul* III mentioned in Fadhil / Jiménez 2019, 159, n. 9.

²⁰⁹ While indexing this book in mid-November 2022, I received an offprint from Enrique Jiménez (Jiménez *et al* 2021) in which he informs readers of the development at the Electronic Babylonian Literature project of “an algorithm for automatically matching transliterations of cuneiform texts, developed by J. Laasonen. The algorithm has enabled the identification of several fragments that had hitherto escaped notice. The first fragment identified by the algorithm – to our knowledge, the first automatic identification of any piece of cuneiform literature – was the piece K.17700, entered into the Fragmentarium [at eBL] from a draft transliteration by W. G. Lambert,” folio 11484 (p. 160, with copy). The algorithm identified the lines as *Ludlul* I 1–11. The fragment will be used in Härtinen's forthcoming edition.

CHAPTER 2:
COMPOSITE TEXT IN TRANSCRIPTION
AND ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the Akkadian text of *Ludlul* as I understand it, and to offer an English translation of the poem as I think it ought to be translated. The Akkadian text presented here, its translation, and its philological justification (see chapter three) are assumed in the remainder of the book, where citations of *Ludlul* are typically only given in English without philological notes (unless the argument requires the Akkadian or further philological explanation is demanded by the context).

As stated in the Introduction, the present monograph does not present a critical edition of the text of *Ludlul*. Some Assyriologists may be surprised that the Akkadian text of the poem is presented here only in transcription rather than transliteration and that I have not included a full partitur or score of all the known witnesses. Given my socio-cultural and literary purposes in chapters four and following and especially given the facts that Oshima (2014, 380–438) has provided a score and Aino Häntinen's new critical edition of the poem for the Electronic Babylonian Literature Project is in an advanced stage of preparation, I have not provided a transliteration and score of the text here. I have tried to mitigate this omission to some extent by citing in transliteration my readings of various MSS when necessary or relevant to the textual arguments I make in the textual notes in the following chapter. But, of course, scholars will likely want to see the evidence in full array on the page before them. Although it will be an inconvenience to consult another book or web page for this full presentation of evidence, I ask for the reader's forbearance. It has been my understanding during the last several years of work on the present monograph that Aino Häntinen will produce the next edition of *Ludlul*. I am very happy with this division of labor. And I suspect the field will be the better for it.

A word, however, about the composite text offered below in transcription: It is based on my own unpublished working score of the poem, which incorporates all known, published witnesses up to July 2022. (For a list of these MSS, see the appendix to chapter one.) The score has been in a continuous process of revision since 2010, when SAACT 7 was published, in light of a) reviews of SAACT 7 (especially Streck 2013 and Mayer 2014); b) Oshima's new edition (2014), which offered many improved readings of previously unpublished witnesses; and c) my own collations of all but one of the MSS from the British

Museum,¹ all but two of the MSS from the the Vorderasiatisches Museum,² and all but one of the MSS in the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations.³ I could only consult published copies and/or photographs of tablets kept in Istanbul,⁴ Baghdad, Birmingham, and Oxford due to safety concerns (both before and during the pandemic), denial of access, and/or lack of funding.

As is typical, the [] indicates restored text; < > indicates text the ancient scribe omitted; and << >> indicates a sign I think the ancient scribe accidentally inserted. The * indicates a conjectural reading or emendation to the text, which is explained in the notes.

The translation presented here is a revision of my previous translation, published in SAACT 7, 31–44. The following full translations of the poem have been my constant counsellors while revising my own for this monograph: Lambert 1960, 32–61; von Soden 1990, 114–35; Foster 2005, 394–409; and Oshima 2014, 78–113. For Tablet I, George and Al-Rawi's translation has been especially helpful (1998).⁵ For Tablet II, I have benefited from Reiner's work (1985, 114–16). For the opening lines of Tablet III, Fadhil / Jiménez 2019 has been indispensable. I have also benefitted from many anonymous translations of specific lines or phrases in the CAD, that great treasure trove of collective Assyriological knowledge. Other studies are mentioned throughout in the notes that follow in the next chapter. It is inescapable that when one is translating *Ludlul*, one is doing so with the many other scholars who have come before.

In the translation, text within square brackets [] is restored, text in *italics* is supplied for sense, text within parentheses () is either explanatory or, in one case, reflects a variant (see V 117).

¹ MS II.G_{Nin} = K.2518 + DT 358.

² The part of MS V.F_{AS} that comes from VAT 10650 and MS V.G_{AS}, which is lost in the museum.

³ MS I.R_{Huz} = SU 1951,10.

⁴ In one case, MS III.D_{Sip}, I had access to an old, unpublished photograph held at the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin.

⁵ A great many translations of the poem exist in a wide variety of languages. For a full (though not exhaustive) list of translations since the publication of Lambert's edition in 1960, see SAACT 7, xxxix, to which add Castellino 1977, 478–92 (Italian); Labat 1970, 328–41 (French); Seri 1998 (Spanish), and Shifra and Klein 1996 (Hebrew; unavailable to me). Note also the poetic paraphrase of the poem by David Ferry (1999, 45–52).

TABLET I

- ludlul bēl nēmeqi ilu muš[tālu]*
eziz mūši muppašir urri
Marduk bēl nēmeqi ilu muštālu
eziz mūši muppašir urri
- 5 *ša kīma ūmi mehē namû uggassu*
u kī mānit šērēti zāqšu ʔābu
uzzuššu lā maḥār abūbu rūbšu
mussaḥḥir karassu kabattašu tayyārat
- ša nakbat qātīšu lā inaššû šamā`ū*
 10 *rittuš rabbat ukaššu mīta*
Marduk ša nakbat qātīšu lā inaššû šamā`ū
rabbat rittašu ukaššu mīta
- ša ina libbātīšu uptattâ qabrātu*
inūšu ina karašê ušatbi maqtu
 15 *ikkelemmū-ma inessû lamassu u šēdu*
ippallas-ma ana ša iskipūšu ilšu isahḥuršu
- akṣat ana surri ennittašu kabitti*
ikkarriṭ-ma zamar itâr ālittuš
iddud-ma rīmāniš uganna
 20 *u kī araḥ būri ittanašhara arkīšu*
- zaqtā niṭātūšu usaḥḥalā zumra*
pašḥū šindūšu uballaṭū namtara
iqabbī-ma gillata ušrašši
ina ūm iširtīšu uptaṭtarū e`iltu u annu
- 25 *šū-ma utukka ra`ība ušarši*
ina tēšu ušdapparū šuruppû u ḥurbāšu
muš-MAN-DI [riḥ]iṣti? Adad miḥiṣti Erra
musallim ili u ištari šabbasûti
- bēlu mimma libbi ilī ibarri*
 30 *manāma i[na] ilī alaktašu ul īde*
Marduk mimma libbi ilī ibarri
ilu ayyumma ul ilammad tēnšu
- ana kī kabtat qāssu libbašu rēmēnī*
ana kī gaššū kakkūšu kabattašu mušneššat
 35 *ša lā libbišu mannu miḥiṣtašu lišapših*

TABLET I

- I will praise the lord of wisdom, the con[siderate] god,
 Angry at night *but* relenting at daybreak.
 Marduk, the lord of wisdom, the considerate god,
 Angry at night *but* relenting at daybreak.
- 5 Whose fury *is* like a violent storm, a wasteland,
 But his blowing is pleasant, like a breeze at dawn.
Who is unstoppable in his anger, his fury a flood,
But his disposition is merciful, his emotions relenting.
- The brunt of whose hands the heavens cannot bear,
 10 *But* whose palm is *so* gentle it rescues the dying.
 Marduk, the brunt of whose hands the heavens cannot bear,
But whose palm is *so* gentle it rescues the dying.
- On account of whose wrath, graves are dug,
 Then he raises up the fallen from disaster.
 15 *When* he frowns: the divine guardian and protective spirit withdraw,
When he takes notice: his god turns back to the one he had rejected.
- His grievous punishment is immediately overbearing,
 But *then* he shows pity and instantly becomes motherly.
 He is (i.e., his horns are) pointed and butts like a wild bull,
 20 But like a cow with a calf, he is ever attentive.
- His beatings are barbed, they pierce the body,
But his bandages mollify, they revive the doomed.
 He speaks and imputes guilt,
But on the day of his offering liability and guilt are absolved.
- 25 He is the one who afflicts with demonic shivering,
But with his incantation chills and cold tremors withdraw.
 The one who ... the [flo]od[?] of Adad, the blow of Erra,
But who reconciles *one's* enraged god and goddess.
- The Lord, he sees everything in the heart of the gods,
 30 *But* no one a[mong] the gods knows his way.
 Marduk, he sees everything in the heart of the gods,
But no god can learn his counsel.
- As heavy as is his hand, his heart is merciful,
 As murderous as are his weapons, his intention is life-sustaining.
 35 Without his consent, who could assuage his striking?

- 1 *ela kabtatīšu ayyu lišālil qāssu*
lušāpi uggassu ša kīma nūni ākulu rušumtu
īnunam-ma zamar kī uballiṭu mītūtu
lušalmid-ma nišī qitruba gamālšīn
40 *ḥissassu damiqtu [...]šīna litbal*
ištu ūmi Bēl īninanni
u qarrādu Marduk isbusu it[ī]ya
iddanni ilī šadāšu īli
ipparku ištārī ibēš aḥītu
- 45 *[i]slit šēdu dumqi ša idīya*
īprud lamassī-ma šanām-ma iše [e]
[i]nneṭir bālī dūtī ūtammil
*simtī ipparis tarānī šaḥī**
iššaknānim-ma idāt piritti
50 *uštēši bītīya kamāti arpud*
dalḥā tērētīya nuppuḥū uddakam
itti bārī u šā`ili alakī ul parsat
ina pī sūqi lemun egirrūya
attīl-ma ina šāt mūši šuttī pardat
55 *šarru šīr ilī šamaš ša nišīšu*
*libbuš ikkašir-ma paṭārūš <i>lemmin**
nanzāzū taslītu uštanaddanū elīya
paḥrū-ma ramānšunu ušaḥḥazū nullāti
šumma ištēn-ma napištašu ušatbakšu
60 *iqabbi šanū ušatbi tērtūšu*
ša kīma šalši qīptašu atammaḥ
errub bītūššu rebū ītammi
ḥaššu pī ḥanšē šubalkut
šeššu u sebū ireddū šēduššu
- 65 *ikšurūnim-ma rikis sebet illassun*
ūmiš lā pādū utukkiš mašlū
u ištēn šīršunū-ma pā iteddu
innadrūnim-ma nanḥuzū išātīš
tuššu u napraku ušamgarū elīya
70 *muttallu pīya appatiš īteš`ū*
šaptāya ša ittašbarā ḥašikkiš ēme
šapūtu šagimmātī šaqummiš ipparšid

- 1 Apart from his intention, who could stay his hand?
 I, who ate mud like a fish, will extol his anger,
 He quickly bestowed favor on me, just as he revived the dead.
 I will teach the people their rescuing is near,
 40 May his favorable invocation carry off their [...].
- From the day Bel punished me,
 And the hero Marduk became angry wi[th] me,
 My god rejected me, he disappeared,
 My goddess left, she departed.
- 45 The protective spirit of good fortune who *was* at my side [sp]lit off,
 My divine guardian became afraid and was seeking o[ut] another.
 My dignity [w]as taken, my masculine features eclipsed,
 My characteristic manner was cut off, my protection stripped away.
- Portents of terror were established for me,
 50 I was expelled from my house, I wandered about outside.
 My omens were confused, equivocal⁷ every day,
 My situation could not be decided by seer and inquirer.
- What I overheard in the street *portended* evil for me,
When I lay down at night, my dream was terrifying.
 55 The king, the flesh of the gods, the sun of his people,
 His heart was angry *with me*, too vexed to forgive.
- Courtiers were plotting slander against me,
 They gathered themselves, they were inciting calumny.
 If the first *was saying*, “I will make him pour out his life,”
 60 The second was saying, “I made *him* vacate his post.”
- Likewise the third: “I will seize his office,”
 “I will take over his household,” pronounces the fourth.
 The fifth overturned the opinion of the fifty,
 The sixth and the seventh were following on his heels.
- 65 The gang of seven gathered their pack,
 They were *as* relentless as a devil, equal to a demon.
 And their flesh was one, but each had a mouth,
 They unleashed *their* rage against me, they were set ablaze like fire.
- They set slander and obstruction in alliance against me,
 70 My eloquent speech they hindered as with reins.
 I, whose lips chattered constantly, turned into a mute,
 My resounding cries trailed off into silence.

- 1 *šaḡātu rēšāya iknuš qaqqaršun*
libbī kabbara pirittu ūtanniš
- 75 *rapaštu iratī agašgū itte`e*
šaddihā aḡāya kutattumā ūtaḡzā
- ša etelliš attallaku ḡalāla almad*
šarraḡāku-ma atūr ana rēši
ana rapši kīmati ēteme ēdāniš
- 80 *sūqa aba`a-ma turrušā ubānāti*
errub ekalliš-ma iṣamburā īnāti
ālī kī ayābi nekelmanni
tušāma nakratu nandurtu mātī
ana aḡī aḡī itūra
- 85 *ana lemni u gallē itūra ibrī*
nalbubu tappū unamgaranni
kinatī ana naq dāmi umarraš kakka
rū`a ṭābi ukarraša napišī
- 90 *šūpīš ina puḡri īruranni ardī*
amtu ina pān ummāni ṭapilti iqbi
īmuranni mūdū šaḡāti īmid
ana lā šīrīšu iškunanni kimtī
- ana qāb damiqṭīya petassu ḡaštu*
mūtamū ṭapiltīya šakin ana rēši
- 95 *dābib nullātīya ilu rēšūšu*
ana ša iqbū aḡulap ḡamussu mūtu
- ša lā kāšim-ma īteme balāṭu šēduš*
ul arši ālik idī ḡāmelu ul āmur
ana šindi u birti uza`izū mimmāya
- 100 *pī nārīya umanṭīṭū sakīka*
ina qerbētīya ušassū alāla
kīma āl nakiri ušqammimū ālī
paršīya ušalqū šanām-ma
u ina pilludēya aḡā ušzizzū
- 105 *ūmu šutānuḡu mūšu gerrānu*
arḡu qītayyulu idirtu šattu
kīma summi adammuma gimīr ūmīya
zammāriš qubīya ušaṣrap

- 1 My proud head bowed to the ground,
Terror weakened my stout heart.
- 75 A lad turned back my burly chest,
My arms, *once* far-reaching, were continually closed, they clutched
each other.
- I, who walked about as a lord, learned to slink,
I was *once* dignified, but I turned into a slave.
I became alienated from *my* extensive family,
- 80 *When* I walked through the street, fingers were pointed *at me*.
When I entered the palace, eyes would squint *at me in disapproval*,
My city glared at me as an enemy.
My country seemed hostile *and* foreign,
My brother became a stranger.
- 85 My friend became an enemy and a demon,
My furious comrade would denounce me.
My colleague dirtied *his* weapon for bloodshed,
My best friend would slander me.
- My male slave openly cursed me in the assembly,
90 *My* female slave slandered *me* before the crowd.
When an acquaintance saw me, he hid,
My family rejected me as their own flesh *and blood*.
- A grave lay open for one speaking well of me,
The one uttering slander against me, promoted.
- 95 The one speaking calumny against me, a god *was* his helper,
For the one who said “mercy!” death was hastened.
- The one who did not help: his protective spirit became well-being,
I had no one walking at my side, I experienced no one offering
They distributed my belongings to the worthless rabble, mercy.
- 100 They ruined the opening of my canals with silt.
- They drove out the work song from my fields,
They silenced my city like an enemy city.
They handed my cultic offices to another,
And they installed an outsider in my cultic obligations.
- 105 The day *was* sighing, the night lamentation,
Every month endless silence, the year misery.
Like a dove I would moan all my days,
Like a singer I would give voice to my dirge.

- ¹ *ina bitakkī šubrā īnāya*
¹¹⁰ *ḥaššiš ina dimāti šurruḫpā usukkāya*
uṣṣallim pānīya adirat libbīya
šīrīya ūtarriqū pirittu u ḥattu
unāti libbīya ina gitalluti irtūbā
dannā-ma kīma ṣarāp iṣāti
¹¹⁵ *kīma nabli muštaḥmiṭi ešāt teslītu*
kīma ṣāltu puḥpuḥḫu supūya
uṣṭīb ṣaptīya kī da `imu aṣṭā
ṭābtīš ātamu napraku nāpalūya
tušāma ina urri iṣṣira damiqtu
¹²⁰ *arḫu innammaru inammira šamšī*

TABLET II

- šattam-ma ana balāṭ adannu īteq*
asaḥḥur-ma lemun lemun-ma
zapurtī ūtaṣṣapa iṣartī ul uttu
ila alsī-ma ul iddina pānīšu
⁵ *usalli ištarrī ul uṣaqqā rēšīša*
bārū ina bīri arkat ul iprus
ina maššakki šā `ilu ul ušāpi dīnī
zaqīqu abāl-ma ul upatti uznī
āšīpu ina kikiṭṭē kimilti ul iptur
¹⁰ *ayyītu epsetu šanāt mātitān*
āmur-ma arkat ridāti ippīru
kī ša tamqītu ana ili lā uktinnu
u ina mākālē ištarrī lā izzakru
appi lā enū šukenni lā amru
¹⁵ *ina pīšu ipparkū suppē teslīti*
ibṭīlu ūmū ili iṣēṭu eššēšu
iddū aḥšū-ma mēšunu imēšu
palāḫu u it `udu lā ušalmidu nišīšu
ilšu lā izkuru ikulu akalšu
²⁰ *īzib ištartašu maṣḥata lā ubla*
ana ša imḫū bēlšu imšū

- ¹ With perpetual weeping my eyes ... ,
¹¹⁰ My cheeks burned with tears for a fifth time.
 The apprehension of my heart darkened my countenance,
 Terror and panic turned my flesh pale.
 My guts trembled in perpetual fear,
 They were hardened as *with* the burning of fire.
¹¹⁵ My supplication was *as* confused as a blazing flame,
 My entreaty *was* like discord *and* dispute.
 I sweetened my lips, *but* they were *as* fierce as a spear,
 I spoke kindly, *but* my conversation *was* a crossbar.
 “Perhaps good fortune will arrive at daybreak,” *I hoped*,
¹²⁰ “*Or, when the new moon appears, maybe then my sun will shine.*”

TABLET II

- One year to the next, the allotted time passed.
 I turned about and misery *abounded*,
 My bad luck was increasing, I could not find my prosperity.
 I called to *my* god, but he did not pay attention to me,
⁵ I implored my goddess, *but* she paid me no heed.
 The seer (*bārū*) could not determine the situation with divination,
 The inquirer (*šā'ilu*) could not clarify my case with incense.
 I prayed to the dream god, but he did not reveal anything to me,
 The exorcist did not release the divine anger *against me* with *his*
 ritual.
¹⁰ *Whatever* the deed, it is inimical everywhere!
 I looked behind *me*, harassment *and* trouble!
 Like one who had not made a libation for *his* god,
 And did not invoke *his* goddess with food,
Who did not humble himself, was not seen bowing down,
¹⁵ From *whose* mouth prayers *and* supplication had ceased,
Who had abandoned the days of the god, disregarded the festival,
 Had become negligent and despised their rites,
Who had not taught his people to fear and pay heed to *the gods*,
Who did not invoke his god *when* he ate his food,
²⁰ *Who* had abandoned his goddess, *and* did not bring a flour-offering,
Like the one who had gone mad *and* forgotten his lord,

II nīš ilīšu kabti qalliš izkuru anāku amrāk

aḥsus-ma ramānī suppû u teslītu
 teslītu tašīmat niqû sakkûya
 25 ūmu palāḥ ili ṭūb libbīya
 ūmu ridūti ištār nēmeli tattūrru
 ikribi šarri šī ḥidūti
 u niġūtašu ana dameqti šumma
 ušāri ana māṭīya mē ili našāri
 30 šumi ištari šūqur nišīya uštāḥiz
 tanadāti šarri iliš umaššil
 u puluḥti ekalli ummānu ušalmid
 lū īdi kī itti ili itamgur annāti
 ša damqat ramānūš ana ili gullultu
 35 ša ina libbīšu mussukat eli ilīšu damqat

ayyu ṭēm ili* qereb šamē ilammad
 milikša anzanunzē iḥakkim mannu
 ēkâma ilmadā alakti ili apāti
 ša ina ammat ibluṭu imūt uddeš
 40 surriš uštādir zamar uḥtabbar
 ina šibit appi izammur elēla
 ina pīt purīdi ušarrap lallareš
 kī petē u katāmi ṭēmšina šitni

immušā-ma immâ šalamtiš
 45 išebbâ-ma išannanā ilšīn
 ina ṭābi ṭammâ elī šamā`ī
 ūtaššašā-ma idabbubā arād erkalla

ana annāti ušta[d]-x qerebšina lā altand[a]
 [(x)] yāti šūnu[ḥu] innamdi[?] meḥ[ū[?]]
 50 muršu munnišu elīya innešra
 imḥullu i[štu išid] šamē izīqa
 ištu irat eršeti ištīḥa di`u
 šūlu lemnu ittašā apsuššu
 utukku lā [nē]`i ušâ ultu ekur

- II *Who* had invoked the solemn oath of his god in vain, *that is how* I
 was treated.
 But I was in fact attentive to prayers and supplication,
 Supplication was common sense, sacrifice my rule.
 25 The day to fear the god *was* a delight to my heart,
 The day of the goddess's procession *was* wealth *and* weal.
 The king's prayer: it *was* a pleasure,
 And his fanfare truly a delight.
 I taught my land to observe the rites of the god,
 30 I instructed my people to revere the name of the goddess.
 I made *my* praises of the king like *those of* a god,
 And taught the masses fear for the palace.
 Would that I knew these things were acceptable to the god!
 That which is good to oneself *may be* a sacrilege to the god,
 35 That which is wretched to one's heart may be good to one's god!
 Who *can* understand the decree of the god, the interior of the heavens?
 Who *can* apprehend her decision, the subterranean deep?
 Where has humanity understood the plan of the god?
 The one who lived in strength died in distress.
 40 In one moment *a person* is worried *then* suddenly becomes exuberant,
 In one instant he sings with jubilation,
 The next he groans like a mourner.
 The *divine* decree about them changes in the blink of an eye.
When they are hungry, they turn into corpses,
 45 *When* they are sated, they rival their god.
 In the good times they speak of ascending to the heavens,
When they become distressed, they talk of descending to the
 netherworld.
 I have ... these things, *but* I have not learn[ed] their meaning.
 As for me, the wear[ied one], a storm[?] was cast[?] upon me.
 50 Debilitating sickness advanced against me,
 An evil wind f[rom the hor]izon blew against me.
 Ague cropped up from the surface of the netherworld,
 A wicked demonic cough came forth from its Apsu.
 An un[rel]enting demon came forth from Ekur,

- 11 55 *Lamaštu u[ri]da ultu qereb šadī*
itti mē mīli šuruppū inūšu
itti urqītu eršetu ipešši lu`tu
inne[ndū-ma p]uhuršunu ištēniš iḫūni
- inēr[ū qaqqad]u itē`ū muḫḫī*
 60 *pūtu³ ṭkīlu ina`ilū ṭnāya*
labānī ṭteqū urammū kišādu
irtu imḫašū tulē iḫterū
šērī ilputū ra`ṭba iddū
ina rēš libbīya ippuḫū išātu
 65 *qerbīya idluḫū unātīya utti[kū]*
šūlu ḫaḫḫu ula``ibū ḫa[šēya]
mešrētīya ula``ibū uniššū pitrī
lānī zaqra ṭbutū igārīš
gattī rapšata urubā`iš ušnullū
- 70 *kī ulilti annabik buppaniš annadi*
alū zumrī ṭtediq šubāti
kīma šuškali ukattimanni šittu
- bašā-ma ul inaṭṭal ṭnāya*
petā-ma ul išemṃa uznāya
 75 *kal pagrīya ṭtaḫaz rimūtu*
mišittu imtaqut eli šīrīya
mangu iṣṣabat idīya
lu`tu imtaqut eli birkīya
mašā-ma namuššiša šēpāya
- 80 *[mi]ḫṣu² šukšudu unappaq maqtiš*
[ṭ]dud¹ mūtu ṭterim pānīya
[iḫa]ssasannī-ma šā`ilu ul appal
[ū]¹ a² ibakkū ramān ul ṭši
- ina pīya naḫbalu nadi-ma*
 85 *u napraku sekir šaptīya*
bābī edil peḫi mašqūya
arkat bubūti katim ur`u[d]ṭ
ašnan šumma daddariš ala``ut
siraš nablāṭ nišṭ elīya imtaršu
- 90 *appūnāma ṭterik silētu*
ina lā mākalē zīmūya itta[krū]

- 11 55 Lamaštu c[am]e down from the midst of the mountain.
 Chills streamed in[?] with the waters of the inundation,
 Debility broke through the earth with the vegetation.
 They jo[ined] their forces, they approached me as one.
 They stru[ck *my* hea]d, they covered my skull,
 60 *My* face[?] darkened, my eyes welled-up.
 They strained my neck muscles, they made *my* neck slack,
 They struck *my* chest, they beat *my* breast.
 They attacked my back, they cast tremors *upon me*,
 They kindled a fire in my chest.
 65 They roiled my innards, they twist[ed] my guts,
 They afflicted [my lun]gs with coughing *and* phlegm,
 They afflicted my limbs, they made my belly feel queasy.
 My high stature they demolished like a wall,
 My broad build they leveled like rushes.
 70 I was thrown down like an *uliltu*-plant, cast down on *my* face.
 An *alû* demon clothed my body *as* a garment,
 Sleep covered me like a net.
 They were staring, but my eyes could did not see,
 They were open, but my ears could not hear.
 75 Numbness had seized my entire body,
 Paralysis had fallen upon my flesh.
 Stiffness had apprehended my arms,
 Debility had fallen on my legs,
 My feet forgot mobility.
 80 [A bl]ow[?] overtook *me*, I choked like one fallen,
 Death [has]tened[?] to shroud my face.
 [He took] notice of me, but I could not answer *my* inquirer,
 “[Wo]je!”[?] they were crying, *but* I could not control myself.
 A net was laid on my mouth,
 85 And a bolt barred my lips.
 My [g]ate was locked, my watering place sealed up,
 My hunger prolonged, my thr[oa]t constricted.
 If *it were* grain, I would swallow *it* like stinkweed,
 Beer, the sustenance of people, had become displeasing to me.
 90 Indeed, *my* sickness stretched on.
 Through lack of food, my countenance chan[ged],

- II *šīrī ištahḥa dāmī izzū[ba]*
eṣettum ussuqat armat maš[kī]*
šer`ānūya nuppuḥū uriqta maḥ[šū]
- 95 *āḥuz erši mēsiru mūšē tānēḥ[u]*
ana kišukkīya itūra bītu
illurtum šīrīya nadā idāya
maškan ramānīya muqqutā šēpāya
niṭātūya šumrusā miḥiṣti danna[t]
- 100 *qinnāzu iṭṭanni malāt šillātu*
paruššu usaḥḥilanni ziqāta labšat
kal ūmu rēdū iredḏā[nni]
ina šāt mūši ul unappašanni surriš
ina itablakkuti puṭturū riksūya
- 105 *mešrētūya suppuḥā ittaddā aḥītu*
ina rubšīya abūt kī alpi
ubtallil kī immeri ina tabāštānīya
sakikkīya išḥuṭu mašmaššu
u tērētīya bārū ūtešši
- 110 *ul ušāpi āšipu šikin muršīya*
u adanna sili`īya bārū ul iddin
ul irūša ilu qātī ul iṣbat
ul irēmanni ištari idāya ul illik
peti kimaḥu ersū šukānūya
- 115 *adi lā mītūtī-ma bikītī gamrat*
kal mātīya kī ḥabil iqbūni
išmē-ma ḥādūya immerū pānūšu
ḥādūtī ubassirū kabattaša ipperdu
īṭi ūmu ša gimir kimīya
- 120 *ša qereb mūdē šamassun īkil*

TABLET III

- kabtat qāssu ul ale`i našāša*
[a]trat puluḥtašu u[...]
[en]nessu ezzeta abūba-ma [...]
[da]pna[?] tallaktašu i[...]
- 5 *[dan]nu murša kabta ramānī lā i[...]*

- II My flesh had wasted away, my blood drain[ed].
 My bones became visible, covered *only by* [my] sk[in],
 My tissues were inflamed, affli[cted] with jaundice[?].
- 95 I took to a *sick-bed* of confinement, going out *was* a hards[hip],
 My house became my prison.
 A fetter for my flesh—my arms were useless,
 A shackle to my person—my feet were done for.
 My afflictions were severe, the wound grav[e].
- 100 The whip *that* beat me was full of thorns,
 The goad *that* pricked me was covered with spikes.
 All day long a persecutor would pursue [me],
 At night he would not let me rest at ease for a moment.
 Through constant turning my sinews were loosened,
 105 My limbs were splayed, *just* hanging apart.
 I would spend the night in my own filth like an ox,
 I would wallow in my own excrement like a sheep.
 The exorcist was scared by my symptoms,
 And the seer (*bārû*) was confused by my omens.
- 110 The exorcist could not reveal the nature of my illness,
 And the seer (*bārû*) did not give the duration of my sickness.
 My god did not rush in to help, he did not take my hand,
 My goddess did not have mercy on me, she did not walk alongside.
 My grave lay open, my funerary goods prepared,
 115 Before my death, mourning for me was completed.
 My entire land said about me, “How wronged is he!”
 When my ill-wisher heard, his face brightened,
 When they informed my nemesis, her mood became radiant.
 The day grew dark for my entire family,
 120 For those among *my* friends, their sun darkened.

TABLET III

- His hand was *so* heavy I could not bear it,
 My dread of him was [ov]erwhelming, I/it [...].
 His furious [pun]ishment [...] flood,
 Whose advance was [aggres]sive[?], it [...].
- 5 [Sev]ere, serious illness does not ... [my] perso[n],

- III *ērūti mašāku ušarpadūni[nni]*
 [u]rra u mūšu ištēniš ana[ssus]
 šuttu munattu malmališ šumr[ušāni]
- ištānu eṭlu atir šikitt[a]*
- 10 *mināta šurruḥ lubušta udduḥ*
aššu ina munatti ṭdūšu gatta zuqqur
melammē ḥalip labiḥ pulḥa[t]i
- ṭrubam-ma ittaziz elīya*
 [āmur]šū-ma iḥḥamū šīrūya
- 15 *[iqbī]-ma bēlka išpuranni*
 [...]mi šumrušu liqá⁹ šulumšu
- [a'ū]ram⁹-ma ātammā ana mukīl rēšīya*
 [ša] šarrum-mi išpuru amēlu [ma]nnu
- iqūlū-ma ul ṭpulanni mamman*
- 20 *šūt išmūninni ana ripittu iššabt[ū]*
- aš[n]ī-ma šunata ana[ṭṭal]*
ina šutti aṭṭulu mūšī[t]īya
ištānu ramku nāš mē šipti
bī[n]u mullilu tamiḥ rittuššu
- 25 *Laluralimma āšip Nippur*
ana ubbubīka išpuranni
mē našū elīya iddi
šipat balāṭi iddā umašši' zumrī
- ašluš-ma šuttu anaṭṭal*
- 30 *ina suttu aṭṭulu mūšīṭīya*
ištiē[t] ardatu banū zīmūšu
nesiš lā ṭuḥḥati iliš mašlat
- šarrat nišī [...] MA [...]*
ṭrubam-ma itta[šba⁹ ina⁹ idīya⁹]
- 35 *iqbā aḥulap magal šūnuḥ-ma*
lā tapallah iqbā uša[...]
u ina mimma šutti aṭṭul [...]*
iqbī-ma aḥulap magal šum[rus]
- ayyumma ša ina šāt mūši ibrū bī[ra]*
- 40 *ina šutti Ur-Nintinugga [B]ābi[li aṭṭul⁹]*

- III I forgot alertness, [I] became delirious.
 [D]ay and night alike I would m[oa]n,
 Dreams *and* waking hallucinations both aff[licted] me].
- There was* a singular man, extraordinary in for[m],
 10 Magnificent in physique, wrapped in a garment.
 Because I became aware of him in a waking hallucination, he was a
 towering figure,
 He was clad in radiance, clothed in a[w]e.
- He entered and stood over me,
When [I saw] him, my flesh was paralyzed.
 15 [He said], “Your lord sent me.”
 [...] ..., “let the distressed one await² his recovery.”
- “[I wok]e up and spoke to my servants,
Saying, “[w]ho *is* the man [whom] the king sent?”
 They were silent, no one answered me,
 20 Those who heard me were dumbfound[ed].
- I s[aw] a dream a sec[ond t]ime.
 In the dream that I saw at nig[h]t:
There was a singular purification priest bearing the water of
 incantation,
 He was holding in his hand purifying t[ama]risk.
- 25 “Laluralimma, exorcist of Nippur,
 Has sent me to purify you,” *he said*.
 He cast the water that he was carrying over me,
 He pronounced the incantation of life *and* massaged my body.
- I saw a dream for a third time,
 30 In the dream that I saw at night:
There was a singul[ar] young woman, whose appearance *was* beautiful,
Even at some distance, she looked divine.
- Queen of the people [...],
 She entered and sat² [down² beside² me²].
 35 She said, “Mercy! He is utterly exhausted,
 “Do not fear,” she said, “I will² [...].”
 And throughout² the dream, I* saw [...],
 She said, “Mercy! He is greatly distr[essed].”
- Someone who performed div[ination] in the night,
 40 Ur-Nintinugga of [B]abyl[on, I saw²] in *another* dream,

- III *eḫlu ṭarru apir agāšu*
mašmaššum-ma nāši lē'um]
- Marduk-ma išpuran[ni]*
ana Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan ubilla ši[mda]
- 45 *ina qātīšu ellēti ubilla ši[mda]*
ana muttabbilīya qātuššu ipq[id?]
- ina munatti išpura šip[irta]*
ittuš damqatu nišīya ukt[allim]
ina sili'tu iriku ṣerra i[t-...]
- 50 *muršī arḫiš iggamir iḫḫepi U[D x]*
- ultu ša bēlīya libbašu i[nūḫu]*
ša Marduk rēmēni kabattašu ipp[ašru]
[ilq]û unninnīya ersāta [...]
[nash]uršu ṭābu uka[l]i[mu ...]
- 55 *[iqb]û aḫulap m[agal šūnu]ḫ-ma*
- [...]-x-su ana šūpē IK-x-[...]-x-te*
[...]-x-šu ana šuklulu u ki-[...]
[...] ṛx¹.MEŠ arnī x [...]
[...] x KIS ennetta ṛx¹ [...]
- 60 *[...] x MAR šērtī x [...]*
[u²] egātīya ušābil šāra
[... T]I arratī ṛx¹ [...]
[...]
[...]
- 65 *[...] x [...]*
[...] x x [...]
[...] kīma? TE x [...] x [...]
- [uṭte]ḫḫam-ma tāšu ša balātu u šulum*
[udda]ppir imḫulla ana išid šamē
- 70 *ana irat erṣeti ubi[l] di'i*
[uštē]rid apsuššu šūlu lemnu
- utukku lā nē'i utīr ekurriš*
iskip lamaštu šadā uštēš[ir]
agû tāmātu šuruppû ušamḫir
- 75 *išid lu'tu ittasaḫ kīma šamm[i]*
- šitti lā ṭabtu reḫā šalāla*
kīma qutru immalû šamē uštābil

- III A bearded man, crowned by his diadem,
An exorcist, carrying a writing-[board].
- He said, “Marduk sent m[e].*
I brought *this* band[age] to Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan.”
- 45 He brought the band[age] in his pure hands,
He entr[usted?] *it* to the hand of my servant.
- He (i.e., Marduk) sent the mess[age] in a waking hallucination,
He rev[ea]led his favorable sign to my people.
In the protracted² illness, a snake [...],
- 50 My sickness came to an end quickly, [...] was broken.
- After the heart of my lord was st[ill]ed],
And the mind of merciful Marduk was app[ea]sed],
After [he accept]ed my prayers, [...] *my* requests,
And re[ve]al[ed] his sweet [benevolent a]ttention [...].
- 55 [*After* he sai]d “Mercy! He is ut[terly exhaust]ed”:
- [*Then* ...] ... to make manifest ... [...].
[...] ... to complete and ... [...]
[...] ... my sin [...]
[...] ... *my* iniquity [...]
- 60 [...] ... my transgression [...]
[And?] he caused the wind to carry off my acts of negligence,
[...] my curse [...].
[...]
[...]
[...] ... [...]
[...] ... [...]
- 67 [...] like² ... [...]
- [He a]pplied his spell of life and well-being,
[He dr]ove the evil wind back to the horizon.
- 70 He carri[ed off] ague to the surface of the netherworld,
[He se]nt the wicked demon/cough *back* down to its Apsu.
- He turned back the unrelenting ghost to Ekur,
He overthrew Lamaštu, he made *her* ta[ke to] the mountain.
He made the current of the waters receive *my* chills,
- 75 He tore out the root of debility like a plan[t].
- Unpleasant sleep, the pouring out of slumber,
He sent *it* away like smoke with which the heavens were filled.

- III *ina ū`a ayya nē`u nīšiš*
ušatbi imbariš eršeta uš[mallū]
- 80 *lazzu muruṣ qaqqadi ša [s]ú`iš kabt[u]*
issuḥ kīma nalši mū[š]i elīya uštes[si]
tē`āti īnāya ša uštešbiḥ šibiḥ mū[š]i²
ušatbi šār bēri unammir niḥ[lī]
- uznāya ša uḥtammimā ussakkikā ḥašikkīš*
- 85 *itbal amīršin iptete nešmāya*
appī ša ina redī ummi unappiqu ni[pissu]
upašših miḥištašu-ma anappuṣ [surriš]
- šaptāya ša illabbā leqā* lapl[apta]*
ikpur pulḥāssina-ma kiširšina ip[tur]
- 90 *pīya ša uktattimu šabā[r]iṣ aš[tu]*
imšuš kīma qē rūšašu uš[massi²]
- [š]innāya ša ittašbatā ištēniš inne[btā]*
ipte birīssina-ma irdāšin ušpar[rir²]
lišānu ša innēbta šutābulu [l]ā i[le`u]
- 95 *imšuš ṭupuštaša-ma iḥdad atmū[ya]*
- ur`udu ša innisru unappiqu lagabbiš*
*ušṭibba iratī ša malīliš uḥtell[ū]š²**
lu`ī ša ūtappiqu lā [ima]ḥḥaru [akla²]
lagāša ṭšir-ma idiltaš ipte
- 100 [x-x-x]-ēya <ša²> šāšū² zunnīšu ú-^rx¹-[x x x] ^rx¹ [x (x)]
 [x x] ^rx¹ kitmurtu eliš ušapp[ik² x x x] ^rx¹ x [(x)]
 [x x (x) ša] ūtammilu ḥa-ra-`i-iš² x [...] ^rTA ŠI¹ [x]
 [...-n]itašu zamār[u ...]
- šammāḥu ša ina unši ittarrū kīma pisanni irraksu*
- 105 [...] A x saḥḥašu [...]
imaḥḥar iptenni ubbala mašqīta
 [...] UZ ZA ^r1- [...] AD ḤU ^r1
- [...] ^rx¹ IB BA [...]
 [...] A A ^rx¹ [...]
- 110 [...] ^rx ŠI² x¹ [...]

Lines 111–120 are still missing.

- III When turning back *my* “woe” *and* “alas” like an *evil* curse,
He lifted *them* like a fog that co[vered[?]] the earth.
- 80 Constant headache, which was as hea[vy] as a [grind]ing stone,
He withdrew like the dew of ni[gh]t, he dro[ve] *it* away from me.
My blurred eyes, which were cov[er]ed with a haze[?] of ni[gh]t[?],
He lifted *the haze* far, far away, he brightened [my] vis[i]on.
- My ears, which were clogged, stopped up like a deaf man’s,
85 He removed their wax, he opened my hearing.
My nose, [who]se breat[hing] was blocked with the onset of fever,
He relieved its condition so that I could breathe freely [at once].
- My lips, which were parched[?] *and* stricken with th[irst[?]],
He wiped away their blisters, he rel[eased] their deformation.
- 90 My mouth, which was closed up *and too* st[iff] for spea[k]ing,
He polished like a vessel, he w[ip]ed clean] its dirt.
- My [tee]th, which were clenched, bo[und] together, foundations.
He opened the space between them and sprea[d out[?]] their
My tongue, which was bound *so that* it c[ould no]t move about,
95 He wiped away its thickness so that [my] speech became clear[?].
- My throat, which was constricted, blocked as with a lump,
He healed my chest, which he made as cheer[ful[?]] as a reed flute.
My gullet, which was swollen *and* would not [acc]ept [food[?]],
Its swelling subsided, and he opened its stoppage.
- 100 My [...], <which[?]> was disturbed[?] *and* its provisions[?] ... [...],
The heaped up [...] high [...] he poured o[ut][?].
[... which] was darkened, so that[?] ... [...]
Its [...], a son[g ...]
- The large intestine, which was always empty[?] due to hunger *and* woven
105 [...] ... its swelling[?] [...]. together like a basket,
It accepts food, it takes drink.
[...] ... [...] ...
- [...] ... [...]
[...] ... [...]
110 [...] ... [...]

Lines 111–120 are still missing.

Lines from the Commentary

- a *kišādī ša irmū ernama ikka[p]pu*
 b *upattin kinnē amališ izqup*
- c *ana gāmir abāri umāšī umaššil*
- d *kīma nakimtu šūšī ušappira šupurāya*
- e *itbuk mā[na]htašin ʿx x¹-šašin ušīb*

TABLET IV

Section A

- 1' *[k]īma dimt[i ...]*
qerbī[u] RI ʿx¹ [...]
- f *birkāya ša uktassā būšī[š ubbuṭ]ā*
[x]-ʿx¹-šir purīdu k[ī ...]
- 5' *[šē]pāya ša innamū x [...]*
[d]un<nī> qaqqaru² ú-[...]*
- g *šuklultu pagrīya ištat-x [x x] ʿx¹*
[m]ešrētīya [...]
[zu]mru minātīya [...]
- 10' *[i]hlup kīma mu[š-...]*
[m]ūšē ša a[r²-...]
[...] ʿx x¹ [...]

Lines from the Commentary

- h *imšus mammē r[ū]šūšu uzakki*
- i *dūtu ummultu ittaperdi*
- j *ina itē nāri ašar dēn nišī ibbirrū*

Section B

- 1' *[...] ʿx x¹ [...]*
[...] ŠÁ KIL [...]
[... i]ū² ... [...]

Lines from the Commentary

- a My neck, which was loose *and* twis[t]ed at *its* base?²,
 b He made *as* firm *as* the mountains, he planted *it* erect like a tree?².
- c He made my physique like a wrestler's.
- d Like expelling *nakimtu*-disease², he trimmed² my nails.
- e He dispelled their fa[ti]gue, their ... he made well.

TABLET IV

Section A

- 1' [... l]ike a towe[r ...]
 Interi[or ...] ... [...]
- f My knees, which were bound *and* [restrain]ed li[ke] a *būṣu*-bird's,
 My leg ... li[ke ...].
- 5' My [fe]et, which had become a ruin, [...]
 He [...] on [fi]rm² ground².
- g The form of my body ... [...]
 My [l]imbs [...]
 My [bo]dy, my members [...]
- 10' [He cl]othed like ... [...]
 [What ca]me out, which [...]
 [...] ... [...]

Lines from the Commentary

- h He wiped clean the dirt, he cleaned its f[i]lth.
- i My eclipsed masculine features have become brilliant *again*.
- j On the bank of the river, where the case of the people is decided.

Section B

- 1' [...] ... [...]
 [...] ... [...]
 [...] god[s]² ... [...]

- IV B [...] *ištarātu eni* [...]

5' [...] *išk*unūšunu NAG ᵀx¹ [...]

[...] ᵀx x¹ RA NU *kilallān* [...]

[...] -x-anna *šumruṣāk*[u ...]

[...] *itt*īšu *bulluṭu šakin i*[t-...]

[...] *uball*īṭanni *šērēss*[u ...]

10'k *muttutu ammašid abbuttu appaši*[r]

[...] LA BIŠ E RI x [...]

[...] ᵀx¹ ME *šib-bu* [...]

[...] ᵀx x¹ *qaddadā*[niš ...]

[...] ᵀx x¹ *šig*[ū ...]

15' [...] ᵀx x¹-ia *šig*[ū ...]

° [*Kunuš-k*]adru *ina pišerti aba* 'a

[...] ᵀx x¹ [...]

Section C

- 1' *ana Zarpa*[nītu ...]

ana ilīy[a ...]

ana išartīy[a ...]

lā pāliḥ i[līšu ...]

5' *lā pāliḥ i*[šartīšu ...]

P *ša ana Esagil egū ina qātīya līmur*

ša amāt Bābili [...]

maruṣ[t]u *epš*[ētu ...]

šērēt[-su? ...]

ᵀx¹ [...]

TABLET V

- [*bē*]ī [*up*]aššihanni

[*bē*]ī ušammidanni

[*bē*]ī upaṭṭiranni

[*bē*]ī uballiṭanni

5 [*ina ḥašt*]i ekimanni

[*ina qabri īs*]ipanni

[*ina kara*]šē idkanni

ina nā[ri] *ḥubur išdudanni*

ina dannati qātī iṣbat

- IV B [...] goddesses ... [...]
 5' [... they pl]aced² them ... [...]
 [...] ... both [...]
 [...] ... I was distresse[d ...]
 [... wit]h him restoring to health, [...] is established
 [... he rest]ored me, h[is] penalty ... [...]
 10^k I was struck on the forehead, I was release[d] from slavery.
 [...] ... [...]
 [...] ... belt/snake² [...]
 [...] ... bowed dow[n ...]
 [...] ... a *šigû* pray[er]
 15' [...] my ... *šigû* pray[er ...]
 ° I walked along *the street called* [Kunuš-k]adru a free man.
 [...] ... [...]

Section C

- 1' To Zarpa[nitu ...]
 To m[y] god [...],
 To m[y] goddess [...].
 The one who does not fear [his] g[od...],
 5' The one who does not fear [his] g[od]dess [...].
 P Let the one who was negligent of Esagil learn from my example,
 The one who [...] the word/matter of Babylon [...].
 Distress, de[eds ...]
 [His²] penalties² [...]
 10' ... [...]

TABLET V

- My [lord hea]led me,
 My [lord] bandaged me.
 My [lord] removed *afflictions* from me,
 My [lord] revived me.
 5 [From the pi]t he rescued me,
 [From the grave he g]athered me up.
 [From disas]ter he raised me up,
 From the Hubur Riv[er] he pulled me out.
 He held my hand through adversity.

- V 10 *imni[š] imḥaṣanni*
šumēl[u] ušaqqi rēšī
imḥaṣ rittī māḥiṣīya
ušaddi kakkīšu Marduk
- ina pī girri ākilīya*
 15 *iddi napsama Marduk*
Marduk ša mukaššidīya
īkim aspašu assukkašu usaḥḥir
ina qātī qēbirīya marra īkim
ina qātī bākīya ušaddi surrī
 20 *pī bakkītīya qubē ušaklū*
pī ḥādīya ū [a] umall[i]
pī ḥādī[tī]ya [...]
iddi kiḥullū [...] -bir
ú-nam-^rx¹ - [...]
 25 *tar-r[a- ...] ^rE²¹ [...]*
rebīt āli [... i]eqqan[ni]
a[na] maḥri [... u]šēribann[i]
[x (x)] IŠ[?] A A [...]-^rx¹ Marduk
... [... ša[?]] ukaššū / ukaššu Zarpāni[tu]
- 30 *lū mannu bēlu umašširann[i]*
napištu arḥiṣ ibtelī-ma ann[i]
ana irkalla lā urrad ann[i]
eṭemmūta attalak ann[i]
- lū mannu Marduk īzibbann[i]*
 35 *ana šīr asakki ammann[i]*
šallamta ... attalak MA [x x]
ina messē malē utall[ilanni[?]]
rimkī tēdištu <<Ù>> ītapp[uš[?]]
u itma ša ina teslīti išmū [...]
- 40 *ana labān appi u utnenni ana Esagil [ēli[?]]*
anā<ku> ša ištu qabri atūru ana ká-^dU[tu-è-a] ēterub*
ina ká-hé-gál ḥegallu inne[šram[?]]
ina ká-^damma-ra-bi lamassu iṭṭeh[anni]
ina ká-silim-ma šulmāna appal[is]
 45 *ina ká-nam-ti-la balātu ammaḥir*

- V 10 He struck me on the righ[t],
And raised my head on the lef[t].
 He struck the hands of my striker,
 Marduk made *him* throw down his weapon.
- On the mouth of the lion eating me,
 15 Marduk put a muzzle.
 Marduk, that of my pursuer,
 He snatched his sling, he turned back his sling stone.
 He snatched the shovel from the hands of my grave-digger.
 He forced the harp[?] from the hands of the male-mourner,
 20 He made the mouth of my female-mourner cease lamentation.
 He fille[d] the mouth of my male-gloater with wo[e],
 The mouth of my [female]-gloater [...].
 He recited a mourning rite [...] ...
 ... [...]
 25 ... [...] ... [...]
- As [he] took m[e ...] the city square,
 [He] brought m[e] in[to] the presence of [...].
 [...] ... Marduk,
 ... [...] whom[?]] Zarpani[tu] helped[?].
- 30 Who might it have been? The lord released m[e].
 Had *my* life quickly come to an end? Ye[s].
 Was I not descending to the netherworld? Ye[s].
 Had I turned into a ghost? Ye[s].
- Who might it have been? Marduk spared m[e].
 35 I was reckon[ed] as the flesh of an *asakku* demon.
 A corpse ... I walked ... [...].
- He pur[ified me[?]] with the washing of *my* matted hair,
 He repeatedly perf[ormed[?]] my ablution *and* renewal,
 And he swore that he heard in *my* supplication [...].
- 40 [I went up[?]] to Esagil for submission and prayer,
 I, who returned from the grave, entered the U[tu-e-a]-gate.
 In the He-gal-gate, prosperity adv[anced toward me[?]].
 In the Lamma-ra-bi-gate, a divine guardian appro[ached me].
 In the Silim-ma-gate, I loo[ked upon] well-being.
 45 In the Nam-ti-la-gate, I was granted life.

- V *ina ká-^dUtu-è-a itti balūti ammani*
ina ká-u₆-de-babbar-ra iddātūya immerā
ina ká-nam-tag-ga-du₈ e`ilti ippaṭir
ina ká-ka-tar-ra ištāla pīya
- 50 *ina ká-šèr-du₈-ù-da uptatṭara tānēhī*
ina ká-a-sikil-la mē tēlilte assaliḫ
ina ká-silim-ma itti Marduk annamir
ina ká-ḫi-li-sù šēp Zarpānītu annašiq
ina suppē u tēmēqi maḫaršunu ūtannin
- 55 *qutrinna ṭābūti maḫaršunu ušašli*
ušaḫhir erba ṭa`ti igisē etandūte
upalliḫ lē mare uṭṭabiḫ šapṭi
attanaqqi kurunnu duššupa karāna ellu
šēdu lamassu angubbū libit Esagil
- 60 *[in]a tamqūti kabattašun ušpardī*
[ina mākā]lē deššūti libbašun ušāliš
- [sippu ši]garri mēdil dalāti*
[ušarmi]k² ella ḫimatu ṭuḫdi ašnan
[x] ṛx TI x¹ [E]zida² mē parši bīti
- 65 *[šika]r ašnan rušša [aqqišunu]*
[u]ltappit ḫašurri ṭāba elīšu[n]u² [x x x]
- [qe]rrēti mār Bābili mu-ṛx¹-[x x (x)]*
bīt qebērīšu ēpušū ina qerrēti [ni]šū²
īmuru-ma <mār> Bābili kī uballaṭu [arass]u²
- 70 *pātu kalšina ušāpā narbē[šu]*
- mannum-ma iqbi amār šamšīšu*
ina libbi manni ibbaši etēq sūqīšu
ša lā Marduk mannu mītūtašu uballiṭ
ela Zarpānītu ištartu ayyītu iqīša napšassu
- 75 *Marduk ina qabri bulluṭa ile`i*
Zarpānītu ina karašē eṭēra amrat
- ēma šaknat eršetī ritpāšū šamē*
šamšu uštappa girra innaphu
mū illakū iziqqū šārū

- V In the Utu-e-a-gate, I was counted among the living.
 In the U-de-babbar-ra-gate, my signs became clear.
 In the Nam-tag-ga-du-gate, my sin was released.
 In the Ka-tar-ra-gate, my mouth inquired.
- 50 In the Šer-du-u-da-gate, my sighing was released.
 In the A-sikil-la-gate, I was sprinkled with water of purification.
 In the Silim-ma-gate, I was seen with Marduk.
 In the Ĥi-li-su-gate, I kissed the feet of Zarpanitu.
- I continually prayed before them with entreaties and intense supplication.
- 55 I offered fragrant incense before them,
 I presented an offering, a gift, heaped up donations.
 I sacrificed fattened bulls, slaughtered prime sheep?,
 I continually poured out sweet *kurunnu*-beer and pure wine.
- As for* the protective spirit, the divine guardian, the divine attendants,
and the brickwork of Esagil,
- 60 [Wit]h a libation I brightened their mood,
 [With] opulent [mea]ls I made their heart rejoice.
- [The door jamb, the b]olt, *and* the bar of the doors,
 [I doused wi]th? sesame oil, ghee, *and* the abundance of grain.
 [...] ... [E]zida?, the rites *and* ordinance of the temple,
- 65 [I libated bee]r *made of* red-gold grain [to them],
 [I c]ontinuously sprinkled fragrant conifer oil on th[e]m [...].
- [The fe]ast of the citizens of Babylon ... [...],
 [The peop]le? made/performed the ‘house of his burying’ at the feast.
 The <citizens> of Babylon saw how he (i.e., Marduk) revived [hi]s
 [servant?],
- 70 Every one of their mouths extolled [his] greatness, *saying*:
- “Who thought he would *again* see *the light of* his sun?
 “Who imagined he would *again* stroll along his street?
 “Who but Marduk could restore him from death?
 “Which goddess but Zarpanitu could give *him* his life?
- 75 “Marduk is able to restore from the grave,
 “Zarpanitu is experienced at sparing from disaster.
- “Wherever the earth is established, the heavens stretched out,
 “The sun shines *and* fire blazes,
 “*Wherever* water flows *and* wind blows,

- v 80 *šūt Aruru ikrušu kirissin*
 [š]akittu napšatu petâ purīdu
 [ap]ātu mala bašâ Marduk dullā
 [x x] A TA BUL ¹x x¹-[t]u⁴? *šūt pá ku[nnā]*
 [... k]al nišī libēl-ma
 85 [... r]ē'ī kal da[dmē]
 [...] mīlī ina n[ag]be [...] -lik
 [... pa]rak ilī ¹x x¹
 [...] sihip šamē u [eršetī]
 [...] rišša ¹x x¹ [(x)]
 90 [...] -¹ut² -su-nu liššūšū?
 [...] ¹x x x x¹ [...] ¹x¹
 [...] ¹x¹ nannāra-ma li-¹x¹-[...] ¹x¹
 [...] u tamāti ¹x¹ [...] ¹x¹
 [...] PAD SAG.GÁ ŠI ¹x¹ [...] ¹x¹
 95 [liškun?] ūme palīšu ¹x¹ [...] ¹x¹
 [šakitt]u? napšatu ¹x¹ [...] -¹x¹(-)UD-šú
 [...] ¹x¹ x ūmū [...] ¹x¹ balātu
 [...] Esagi[la ...] -¹x¹-li-pu šuršūšu
 [... A]N lišarriš papallu
 100 [... Nazi]muruttaš [...] ... namšat
 [šakitt]u? napšat[u ...] ¹x x DU²-šú¹
 [...] [i]-nap-[...] -t]u⁴ it[ū]rū alīšu
 [...] ¹x¹ [...] nišū šalmat qaqqadi libēl-ma
 [... Zarpā]nītu rēmu ša Marduk
 105 [...] ¹x¹ [...] -ta]š u Bābili nūr / šāb šarri šarhu
 [... ahrāt]uš linnabi ana damiqti
 [... l]alē balāti lišbu
 [...] ¹x¹ x šamē liršū
 [... lišt]īb nizmāssu
 110 [...] eli ba'ulātīšu
 [...] Šubši-mešrē-Šakkan
 [... Šum]eri u Akkadī muma'ir mātu
 [ša maru]štu īmuru lippaṭir aranšu
 [...] manaḥtašu lištapših
 115 [ilšu ...] ištartašu likabbissu
 [... n]išū l[īm]u'ā² šulmāniš

- v 80 “Those whose lump of clay Aruru pinched off,
 “[Li]ving beings, *who* walk about,
 “As many [peo]ple as there are, praise Marduk!”
- [...] ... [...], those which were esta[blished] by testimony,
 [...] may he rule over [a]ll the people.
- 85 [... she]pherd of all the inhabi[ted world],
 [...] the floods from the d[ee]p [...]
- [... san]ctuary of the gods [...]
 [...] the extent of the heavens and the [earth]
 [...] help[?] ... [...]
- 90 [...] their [...] may[?] they[?] carry[?] him[?].
 [...] ... [...]
 [...] light, may [...]
 [...] and the seas ... [...]
 [...] ... [...]
- 95 [May he establish[?]] the days of his reign ... [...]
 [Livin]g[?] beings [...] ...
 [...] ... days [...] life
 [...] Esagi[la ...] ... its roots
 [...] ... may he spread *his* offspring
- 100 [... Nazi]maruttaš [...] ... was forgotten?
 [Livin]g[?] bein[gs ...] ...
 [...] ... they[?] t[ur]ned his city [...]
 [...] may he rule over the [peo]ple, the black-headed ones.
 [...] Zarpa]nitu, mercy of Marduk
- 105 [...] ... and Babylon, the splendid light[?]/army[?] of the king,
 May [...] be called to goodness [forever af]ter.
 May [...] enjoy [...] happ]iness of life,
 May [...] ... of the heavens possess [...].
- [... may he s]atisfy his desire,
 110 [...] over his subjects.
 [...] Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan,
 [... Sum]er and Akkad, who governs the land.
- [The one who] experienced [troub]le, let his sin be released,
 [...] may his fatigue be put to rest.
- 115 [... his god ...], may his goddess treat him with honor,
 [...] may [*his* pe]ople be[co]me[?] healthy/at peace.

- ^v [ilšu ... ištart]ašu (šarrašu) likabbi[tūšu]
 [ina ...] u ḥūd libbi libā'a ūmišam
 [...] zamār[u ...] Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan
¹²⁰ idlula dalī[līka ... t]anittaka ṭābat
- ^v [... his god ...], may his [goddess]s (and his king) treat [him]
 with honor,
 May he stroll along [in ...] and happiness of heart daily.
 [...] the son[g ...] Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan,
¹²⁰ He sang [your] prai[ses ...], your [p]raise is sweet.

CHAPTER 3:
SELECTED NOTES ON THE AKKADIAN TEXT
AND ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The extensive textual and philological notes that follow in this chapter demonstrate the lively conversation among Assyriologists about the precise wording of the text of *Ludlul* and its proper translation. As one will see, *Ludlul* today is very much an on-going and unfinished project of modern Assyriological scholarship. Reading *Ludlul* today means reading *with* these modern scholars. It cannot be otherwise.

The notes offered here do not comprise a full commentary; rather, they highlight and discuss the issues of textual reconstruction and translation that are important and interesting to me for various reasons in light of the scholarly conversation surrounding the reconstruction and translation of *Ludlul*. The use of the word “selected” in the title of this chapter may seem ridiculous in light of the fact that the notes extend to over forty thousand words. But, having worked on *Ludlul* for over a decade, I am fully aware, even humbled by the fact, that there is *so much more* to do to improve the reconstruction and translation of the text. A colleague in the English department once told me that writing is never finished; one simply stops working on it. And so it is with these notes. I hope the following will help others as they work on the poem—to build on what has been done and thus to advance our understanding.

3.1. TABLET I

I: For a detailed poetic analysis of the opening hymn, I 1–40, see Piccin / Worthington 2015. For elements of lyricism in I 1–16, see Groneberg 1996, 72–74, 79–80. The older treatments of the opening hymn’s structure in Moran 1983 and Albertz 1988 (summarized in Lenzi 2011, 484–85), though dated due to new textual finds, retain value. For a close reading of Tablet I to discern a variety of wordplays and textual allusions to learned texts, see Noegel 2016. Some of the notes that follow on I 1–40 borrow material used in my annotations on the hymn in Lenzi 2011, 485–96. And some of the notes here reflect how my thoughts have changed since 2011.

I 1–4: As Moran states, “[t]he opening quatrain is, *in nuce*, the entire composition” (Moran 2002, 192; similarly, Albertz 1988), by which I think he means that Marduk’s wrath always gives way to mercy (see Moran 2002, 194; likewise, Albertz 1988, 36–37), as it does in the protagonist’s story. There is “a

serial relationship” between wrath and mercy (Lenzi 2011, 483),¹ so that what is actually praised in the hymn is “Marduk’s propensity to *calm* his anger” (so Piccin / Worthington 2015, 115).

I 1: *lord of wisdom*: For the various meanings of *nēmequ*, see Galter 1983, 95–96. (Piccin 2021 analyzes all of the terms for wisdom used in the poem.) For possible implications of the epithet for the interpretation of the poem, see chapter eight, note 156.

I 1, 3: *considerate*: Piccin and Worthington make a compelling case for translating *muštālu* within the semantic domain of ‘mercy, care’ (2015, 116).

I 2: *muppašir*: MS I.N_{AŠ} shows a variant: *mu-pa-áš-š[ir]*. Following Worthington (2012, 119), I think the D participle here (and in line 4) is simply a mistake, contrary to Moran’s stylistic explanation of the variant (1983, 256).

I 5: In 1960, Lambert read MS I.N_{AŠ} as ¹*la¹-mu-u* (343); others have subsequently noted the broken sign should read ¹*na¹*- (see, e.g., *AHW*, 771; Moran 1983, 257; Oshima 2014, 380; and especially Horowitz / Lambert 2002, 238, who provide a photograph of the tablet on p. 239). If Lambert hadn’t suggested LA in the Aššur MS before there were clear parallels, we probably wouldn’t even have this reading. | As for the translation: Following Foster (2005, 394), SAACT 7 translates the line, “Whose fury, like a violent storm, is a wasteland” (31). I now think it is better to put the simile and metaphor in apposition (as does George / Al-Rawi 1998, 194) in order to bring out the implied causal relationship between the two: Marduk’s anger is like a violent storm that turns the cultivated land into steppe (*namû*). Compare von Soden’s translation (1990, 115), which supplies the verb “bewirkt” at the end of the line.

I 6: There is a question of what to do with the readings of MS I.N_{AŠ}, obv. 6, *meš-re-¹ti¹*, and MS I.Q_{Kal}, obv. 6, *eš-re-ti*. Although each reading produces a sensible word, “riches” and “shrines,” respectively, neither makes good sense in context with the preceding *mānit* “breeze of.” I follow Horowitz and Lambert in their judgment that both cases are best interpreted as scribal errors (2002, 245). Both MEŠ and EŠ could easily have arisen via a graphic or aural mistake for ŠE, the reading of other extant witnesses.² George and Al-Rawi (1998, 197) entertain the idea that the reading is not corrupt (citing CAD M/2, 41) but offer no translation; see Oshima’s evaluation (2014, 174).

I 8: *karšu* / *kabattu*: Like *libbu* later in the opening hymn, these two words are associated with the center of the self. As Steinert states, “Gedanken und

¹ Gerhards states it nicely: “[s]o gewiss die Nacht immer wieder dem Tag weicht, so gewiss ist Marduks Zorn nicht von Dauer” (2017, 59).

² With Streck, it is possible that EŠ is part of a Sandhi spelling, *ma-nit eš-re-ti* < **manīti=šērēti* (2013, 219); or, as Oshima notes, EŠ is simply an inverse writing for ŠE (2014, 380).

Emotionen, Bewußtsein und Intellekt, Wissen, Willen, Absichten werden in diesen ‘Organen’ lokalisiert oder aktiv durch sie hervorgebracht” (2012, 133; similarly, 518–19). As Piccin and Worthington point out well, these “inner” elements of the self are always only associated with mercy and benevolence in the opening hymn (2015, 116–17).

I 9: *nakbat qātīšu*: *Nakbatu* means “main force” (CAD N/1, 181) or “weight, combat power” (CDA, 233). Although typically used of an army, the martial imagery is quite appropriate in context. MS I.J_{Nin} reads *nagbi qātīšu*, “the entirety⁷ of his hand” (likewise line 11; Streck adopts this reading, *nagbi/nagbe*, in all MSS [2013, 219]). It is likely that this reading is corrupt. Von Soden notes the MS contains a scribal error without sense (1990, 115, n.9a, n.11a); see also Worthington 2012, 120. As proposed to me by John Carnahan (personal communication), somewhere in this MS’s genealogy a scribe could have read *nak*-BAT (the reading in all of the other extant MSS) as *nag*-BE, mistook it for an Assyrianism, and then “corrected” it to BI.

I 10: *palm*: Several other translators adopt “palm” as their translation of *rittu* (e.g., Oshima 2014, 79; Foster 2005, 395; George / Al-Rawi 1998, 194). *Rittu* probably doesn’t mean “palm” precisely in an anatomical sense. Rather, the English rendering “palm” for *rittu* helps convey (via a subjective connotation) the gentleness of Marduk’s rescuing hand as described in the line. | *rescues*: I derive the verb from the D stem of *kāšu*, “to help” (with, e.g., Moran 1983, 258; George / Al-Rawi 1998, 194; Foster 2005, 395; and Piccin / Worthington 2015, 122) rather than that of *kāšu*, “to delay” (as does, e.g., Oshima 2014, 176; Lambert 1960, 344; and von Soden 1990, 115). As Moran notes, the lexica “derive *ukaššu* from *kāšu*, ‘to tarry,’ but not only does the claim for Marduk’s power that it delays the death of a man, with the unavoidable connotations of simply putting off the inevitable, sound flat and clinically rational rather than lyrical and uncritically celebratory (the hand that the heavens themselves cannot bear can only delay death), but *šu-bar-zi* = *kāšu*, and *šu-bar-zi* belongs to the tops of the rescue *in extremis*” (1983, 258).

I 13: *are dug*: Literally, “opened.”

I 14: *fallen*: *Maqtu* here is not someone who has died in battle. Rather, *maqtu* is a destitute person or a fugitive—one who has fallen through the social safety net, so to speak (see CAD M/1, 254–55). If war was total in the ancient world, the aftermath of a conflict would include orphans, widows, and refugees alongside the wounded (and slain). Lines 13 and 14 indicate that many people will die when Marduk is angry, but he also has mercy on the devastated survivors of his wrath.

I 15–16: Marduk’s actions are characteristic ones, not one time events, thus I have supplied “when” at the head of each line. | *ippallas*: The deity’s look indicates an act of mercy and renewed favor, as evidenced by the verb’s use

both in hymnic and petitionary expressions in prayers. Note, e.g., the *Great Ištar Šuila-Prayer* (Ištar 2), lines 26 (*tappallasī ḥablu u šagšu*, “you look upon the wronged and oppressed”), 40 (*ašar tappallasī iballuṭ mītu iṭebbi maršu*, “wherever you look, the moribund lives, the sick arises”), and 44, 54, 92 (all containing the petition *kiniš napolisīni*, “look upon me truly”). See Zgoll 2003, 41–67 for an edition and Zernecke 2011, 265 for the verb’s use in the prayer.

I 17: *kabitti*: The composite text follows MS I.F_{Sip}, obv. 17. The only other text that preserves the end of the line, MS I.Q_{Kal}, obv. 17, is uncertain. Wiseman reads: *x ta²-x ru/qa-tum* (1980, 101); Horowitz / Lambert (2002, 242): *ina ta-x-tum*; and Oshima: *AŠ TA [K]AB² TUM* (2014, 382). Collation in person has not been possible.

I 18: *itâr*: The reading follows MS I.Q_{Kal}, obv. 18, which Oshima reads *i-t[a-ri]* (2014, 382); but, ^r*i¹-tar* seems justified, based on the photo. See likewise George / Al-Rawi 1998, 197 and Horowitz / Lambert 2002, 242. The late MS I.C_{Sip} 13', MS I.F_{Sip}, obv. 18, and MS I.G_{Bab?}, obv. 13' read *i-ta-ri* or *i-ta-r[i]*, showing a superfluous final vowel, for which see George / Al-Rawi 1998, 198 with reference to Woodington 1984, 132f.

I 19: *iddud*: The verb is to be derived from *edēdu*, “to be or become pointed.” Only in the D does it mean “to act quickly,” occurring several times in hendiadys (CAD E, 24, which actually indicates its use in OB only). Thus, if we were to translate *iddud* as “he hastens,” as I did in SAACT 7 (31; see similarly, George / Al-Rawi 1998, 195 and Foster 2005, 395), then we should likely expect the use of the D (*uddad*) rather than what is clearly a G stem of the verb. Oshima translates the verb with “he becomes pointed (i.e., becomes angry?)” (2014, 79, with discussion on pp. 177–78) and Piccin and Worthington paraphrase it with “he looks sharp” (2015, 122), but note p. 115, where they render it “he hastens.” Although our poet sometimes “uses scantily attested verbs or little known stems of otherwise well-known verbs” (SAACT 7, xxvii with examples) and this may be one of them (if not here, then in II 81; see below), the issue comes to a sharper point with the re-consideration of the derivation of the final verb in the line. | *uganna*: Previous translators derived *ú-KAN-ni/na* at the end of the line from the D of *kanû*, “to treat kindly,” but Oshima suggests we derive the verb from *gunnû*, “to butt” (2014, 179–80; note also Piccin / Worthington’s discussion of the same idea, which they arrived at independently; 2015, 114–15). In light of this, the verb *iddud*, which can refer to the horns of the moon in the G stem—a metaphor based in associations of the crescent moon with a bull’s horns, should be understood literally, “he is pointed,” referring to Marduk’s bearing sharp horns like a bull (see also Oshima 2014, 177). | *rīmāniš, like a bull*: MS I.F_{Sip}, obv. 19 reads *ri-ma-a-MU* and MS I.Q_{Kal}, obv. 19, *ri-ma-šu*. Following Piccin and Worthington (2015, 115), the MU could be read as *-niš_x*, yielding *rīmāniš*, “like a bull.” They reasonably suggest that the

reading in the Nimrud (Kalḫu) MS is an orthographical variant of what was originally a mistaken reading of a ŠÚ for NIŠ; thus, *-niš > -šú > -šu*.

I 20: *like a cow*: The mapping of Marduk’s wrath and mercy to a binary understanding of gender—masculine : wrath :: feminine : mercy—is clearest in the couplet in I 19–20, though already implied in the previous couplet (I 17–18) of the present quatrain. | *he is ever attentive*: Literally, “he keeps turning around behind him.” The “him,” it seems to me, is Marduk. Just as a cow keeps turning around to look at its calf, so too does Marduk. The variant in MS I.F_{Sip}, obv. 20, *elīya*, “after me,” does not fit this imagery. Instead, it would seem to be working with the image of a cow turning around to get physically behind the calf, perhaps to direct it. The variants may correspond to two different stages of cow behavior in relationship to her calf. “When the calf is first born, the cow will nudge the calf from behind, encouraging it to walk. After that, the calf follows the mother, and she will look back to check on it” (personal communication from Ms. Jauson King, a bovine expert).

I 21: *barbed*: *Zaqtā* modulates the imagery of the sharp horns in I 19 to a barbed whip or rod that delivers blows.

I 22: *the doomed*: Perhaps, we are to understand the word to mean “the one afflicted by the *Namtar* demon” (so, e.g., SAACT 7, 31; Oshima 2014, 180; von Soden 1990, 116, n.22a; George / Al-Rawi 1998, 195). Piccin and Worthington think the word may simply mean “dead person” (2015, 118, n. 29). Foster’s rendering of it with “doomed” (2005, 395), which I have adopted, is especially appropriate in light of *namtaru*’s association with the unavoidable fate of mortals.

I 23: *imputes guilt*: Literally, “he makes *someone* acquire sin.” According to Moran (1983, 258), this is the first attestation of the ŠD of *rašû*; he characterizes the poetic usage in a well-turned phrase: “the uncommon language befits the uncommon and startlingly bald statement of Marduk’s responsibility for sin.”

I 24: *iširtīšu*: Oshima (2014, 383, with discussion on pp. 180–81) reads MS I.F_{Sip}, obv. 24 as ^r*i*¹-šir-ti-šú, “(the day of) his offering,” instead of [*i-š*]ar-ti-šú, “(the day of) his justice” (as does George / Al-Rawi 1998, 192, essentially followed in SAACT 7, 15, among others). Oshima correctly points out that NB script, unlike NA, distinguished between ŠAR and ḪIR(= šir) and thus the MS from Sippar with NB ductus, which shows the latter sign, should steer the reading of the ambiguous NA MS I.Q_{Kal}, obv. 24, *i-ŠAR-ti-šú*.

I 25: *demonic shivering*: Although *utukku* and *ra’ibu* are often translated “demon” (and/of) “illness, disease, shivering,” both terms reference non-obvious, demonic entities (see Böck 2014, 179 for the general issue of names of demons and illnesses; and note *qāt* ^d*ra’ibi* in Sa-gig XVII 59 [Heeßel 2000, 201]). Whether the two terms should be construed in apposition (Oshima 2014,

181) or as two separate entities, connected by an assumed conjunction (as in von Soden 1990, 116), they are working in tandem to describe a demonic attack that brings on ill health characterized by tremors or shivers, if we can rely on the root *ra'ābu* as a guide (see CAD R, 81).

I 26: *ušdapparū*: The reading is based on MS I.F_{Sip}, obv. 26, *uš-d[ap]-pa-ru*, and MS I.Q_{Kal}, obv. 26, *uš¹-dap¹-pa-ru*. Wiseman's copy of the latter shows KÜ IB. Based on the photograph, George and Al-Rawi (1998, 198) suggest convincingly that the signs are a "poorly written *uš-ṭāp*"; see also Oshima 2014, 183, n.90 (and thus delete KÜ from his composite text, p. 78, and score, p. 383). Contrary to Lenzi 2011, 492–93 and Oshima 2014, 183, if the ŠD form of the verb derives from *duppuru*, "to go away, withdraw" (see CAD D, 186 and CDA, 62), rather than *ṭapāru*, "to drive away" (CDA, 413 and AHw, 1380), the verb need not be passive for *šuruppū* and *ḫurbāšu* to be its subject.³

I 27: This line is very problematic. | *muš-MAN-di*: This first word, clearly a participle, is only fully preserved in MS I.Q_{Kal}, obv. 27. George and Al-Rawi review a number of older alternatives to make sense of it (1998, 198), but none of them is satisfactory to them. SAACT 7 reads *mušmanṭi* for *mušmaṭṭi*, a ŠD participle from *maṭū*, "to make small," an idea that takes its lead from Foster's "to dwarf(?)" (2005, 395; see SAACT 7, xxvii, n.51).⁴ As Piccin and Worthington note, however, this reading requires the nasalization of an unvoiced consonant, which is rare in Akkadian (2015, 115, citing GAG §32c). Oshima reads *muš-mid-di*, which (reasonably) assumes a scribe mistook MAN for BE (= *mid*) (2014, 184, 383); he identifies the resulting reading as a ŠD participle from *mādu* and translates it "the one who multiplies" (79). Also deriving the participle from *mādu*, Piccin and Worthington read the signs as *muš-min-di*, "one who magnifies" (2015, 115). Finally, Oshima mentions that Streck suggested via a personal communication that one might read *muš-naṭ-ṭi* (which assumes a scribe mistook KUR(= *naṭ*) for MAN), derive it from *naṭū*, and translate the result "the one who makes (the flood of Adad) strike" (2014, 184). This seems like a viable option. Perhaps a new duplicate will one day provide a decisive resolution to the matter. Until then, whatever translation is adopted, it should make the movement from negative to positive explicit within

³ See Piccin 2015 and Piccin / Worthington 2015, 122.

⁴ My explanation there (repeated essentially in Lenzi 2011, 493) states: "[t]he line suggests, possibly, that Marduk's raging is so severe it makes the destruction of Adad and Erra seem small. This understanding stands in contrast with the mercy Marduk effects in I 28. But the verb remains problematic." However, upon reconsideration, there is no other instance, as best as I can determine, in which *maṭū* has the meaning "to make something seem small (in comparison)." And thus, even if the derivation were permitted, *maṭū*, as Piccin / Worthington observe, "would make Marduk one who, in in his mercy, diminishes the afflictions wrought by Adad and Erra" (2015, 115), which doesn't fit the pattern of wrath in the first line of a couplet and mercy in the second.

the present couplet, I 27–28. | [*riḥ*]*iṣti*[?]: MS I.Q_{Kal}, obv. 27 reads [R]A-^rti¹ (= *riḥiṣti*; see von Soden 1990, 116, n.27b). MS I.F_{Sip}, obv. 27 may read the same, though this is less certain due to damage (see Oshima 2014, 383, who reads [R]A-^rti¹, and compare George / Al-Rawi 1998, 198, who do not offer a decipherment of the sign before TI).

I 30: *manāma*: Only I.Q_{Kal}, obv. 30 attests the initial word in the line. Wiseman’s copy shows LA for the second sign. The photo suggests NA; see likewise George / Al-Rawi 1998, 193, 198 and Oshima 2014, 185 (where he notes alternatives) and 383.

I 36: *lišāilil*: The reading follows MS I.F_{Sip}, obv. 36, *li-šá-lil* (likewise George / Al-Rawi 1998, 198 and Oshima 2014, 186). The phrase *lišāilil qāssu* is literally “(who) could cause his hand to hang.” My translation is indebted to Foster 2005, 395. MS I.Q_{Kal}, obv. 36 reads *liqallil*, “(who) could diminish/discredit (his hand).” It seems to me this reading could have arisen simply through a copyist’s error, *li-ša-lil* > *li-qal-lil*.

I 37: *I, who ate mud like a fish*: Fish and birds are attested in rituals describing the most distant removal of an unwanted item, e.g., sin (see the examples cited in CAD N/2, 339). The two animals have access to the extremes of the cosmos in that birds fly to the heavens and fish swim into the depths. Here in line 37 the sufferer is using the fish simile, I think, to state that he was at the lowest point to which a creature could descend. The simile probably reflects the fact that a common fish in the Euphrates, carp, was a bottom dweller that would scour the riverbed for food.

I 39: *gamālšin*: This final word in the line, attested fully only in MS I.F_{Sip}, obv. 39, was previously understood as a posited *gamālu**, which would be a *hapax* according to George and Al-Rawi (1998, 198, based on their reading *guma-al-šin*); SAACT 7, 32 follows suit. This was a reasonable suggestion since the *purās*-noun formation is often used with prayer-words (see *GAG* §55k sub 15b; and Lenzi 2011, 496). MS I.Q_{Kal}, obv. 39 only shows the first sign, which has been read *gi*-[since Wiseman’s edition (1980, 105). Aino Häntinen (in Jiménez *et al* 2019, 77–79) has since collated both MSS with new photographs. The supposed GU and GI are in fact GA. Thus, Häntinen corrects the reading and recognizes the final word as simply an infinitive *gamālu* with pronominal suffix.

I 40: *hissatu*: Following Piccin / Worthington (2015, 121) and Oshima (2014, 187), I take *hissatu* in the sense of “invocation” here. Compare SAACT 7, 32, “concern”; Foster, “thought” (2005, 396); von Soden, “Gedenken” (1990, 117); and George / Al-Rawi, “grace” (1998, 195). Piccin and Worthington (2015, 121) suggest the protagonist’s invocation may be the poem itself. | [...] *-šina*: The pronominal suffix is only attested in MS I.F_{Sip}, obv. 40. MS I.Q_{Kal}, obv. 40 *might* preserve what precedes the suffix. The photograph in

CTN 4, pl. 153 suggests there are more traces in MS I.Q_{Kal} than is represented on Wiseman's copy (1980, 103). After reconsidering the traces carefully, I now think reading ¹ar¹-na-[...] in this manuscript (the basis for the reading in SAACT 7, 16) was overly optimistic (see also Lenzi 2017, 183). I would suggest, tentatively, since collation with the tablet has been impossible, that we read ¹x¹-na²-. But, I hesitate to include this in the text and translation here. I would like to think the x is an AR, perhaps partially smudged (?). Only a duplicate, however, will decisively provide the proper reading of this word.⁵ (I thank Takayoshi Oshima for corresponding with me about this matter in July 2015.)

I 41–50: For a close reading of these lines that highlights the self-reference of the speaker, see Foster 1983, 127.

I 41: *Bel*: Reading with MS I.Q_{Kal}, obv. 41, ¹d⁺EN¹, I see an intentional reference to Marduk's name Bel. Oshima objects to this translation (2014, 188) and prefers to see the Nimrud MS as an error because we have one Babylonian MS (I.F_{Sip}, obv. 41) with a case vowel, *be-li*, perhaps “my lord” (though the final vowel may simply be superfluous in this late MS) and a Neo-Assyrian MS, I.R_{Huz}, which reads *be-lu₄*, “lord,” in obv. 4' (note also MS I.D_{Sip}, obv. 4', *b[e*...]). But, considering the matter in terms of the unfolding narrative of the poem, I stand by what I wrote previously: “the best readings of I 41 cohere with the idea that Marduk is not recognized explicitly as the sufferer's lord until the announcement of the sufferer's imminent, Marduk-initiated deliverance” in Tablet III (Lenzi 2012, 43, n.18).

I 42: *Marduk*: Interestingly, both MS I.R_{Huz} and MS I.D_{Sip} use the divine name Bel (^dEN) here in I 42 rather than Marduk (^dAMAR.UTU), as do MS I.F_{Sip} and MS I.Q_{Kal}. See the previous note on I 41.

I 43–45: Just as the opening hymn states (I 15–16, I 28), Marduk has power over a person's divine protectors.

I 43: *he disappeared*: Literally, “he ascended his mountain.”

I 44: *she departed*: Literally, “she moved away outside.”

I 46: *became afraid*: See similarly Oshima's rendering “took fright” (2014, 81; likewise, George / Al-Rawi 1998, 195). As I have noted elsewhere (Lenzi 2012, 43, n.20), Lambert in 1960 without the benefit of the CAD P volume derived *iprud* from a root that he believed means “to flee, to leave,” and translated the verb here with “has taken to flight” (33, with justification in 283–84; see likewise, Foster 2005, 396, “retreated”). Although this produces a fitting parallel with the verb in line 45, the text here and the parallels Lambert adduces are probably better understood by the well-attested Akkadian verb *parādu*,

⁵ For an AR and NA in proximity on MS I.Q_{Kal}, see the second signs in rev. 8' and 9'.

“to be fearful, disturbed, restless, upset” (see CAD P, 141, 143). The root to which Lambert appeals only seems to occur in the N stem in Akkadian, “to separate oneself,” is (maybe) attested once during the Neo-Babylonian era, and almost certainly entered the language (if it did at all) under West Semitic influence (see *CDA*, 264). (See chapter ten, note 52 for a discussion of the root in Nabonidus’s Ḫarran Stele, its one possible attestation.) CAD P, 144, however, emends Lambert’s root away.

I 47: *eclipsed*: *Ludlul* uses forms derived from the D stem of *wamālu* three times in its text: here, III 102 (*ūtammilu* in a broken context), and IV, line i (*ummultu*, which refers to the protagonist’s *dūtu* again). The lexica disagree about the meaning of *wamālu*. For the D stem,⁶ according to *CDA*, 433 (following *AHw*, 1459), the verb means to “veil; darken, eclipse,” and in the stative is used of stars in the sense of them being “obscured.” CAD U/W, 401 takes the verb to mean in both the G and D stems “to be agitated, nervous” and with reference to stars, “to scintillate,” that is, “to twinkle” (which is a kind of iterative darkening). The other verbs in *Ludlul* I 47–48, all of which describe a major deprivation or separation (*eṭēru*, *parāsu*, *šaḫāṭu*), clearly place the meaning of *ummulu* here within the same semantic domain. Thus, however we render it, we must understand the protagonist’s *dūtu* as no longer functioning. CAD’s rendering “confused” (U/W, 401) just doesn’t capture this idea. *Ludlul* IV, line i supports the “total loss” understanding of *ummulu* in I 47 by way of contrast. In that line, Marduk’s restoration of the protagonist’s *dūtu ummultu*, “eclipsed masculine features,” is described with the verb *ittaperdī*, a form of *napardū*, “to shine brightly.”

I 48: *characteristic manner*: There is a good deal of variability among translations of the word *simtī*: CAD S, 280 has “my decorum”; von Soden, “mein Wesen” (1990, 117); George / Al-Rawi, “my rank” (1998, 195); Foster, “my dignity” (2005, 396; likewise, Lambert 1960, 33); Oshima, “my honour” (2014, 81, with a full discussion on p. 188, where he refers to Steinert 2012, 421–22). Whatever the preferred rendering, *simtu* should be recognized as a human quality that can be lost, just as one can lose personal gods and protective spirits (see Oshima 2014, 189). | *ipparis*: MS I.R._{Huz}, obv. 11’ reads *ip-pa-ri-ṾIŠ*!, whereas other witnesses read *ip-pa-ri-is-ma* (MS I.D._{Sip}, obv. 11’), *ip-<pa>-ri-is* (the school tablet MS I.W._{Kiš}, obv. 1; the reading follows Streck 2013, 219), [...-r]i-is-ma (MS I.F._{Sip}, obv. 48), and [...-r]i-is (MS I.K._{Nin}, obv 6’).

⁶ The only example of the G stem, a line from the *Great Prayer to Ištar* (Lambert 1959/1960, 52, obv. ii 155), is similar to the present line in *Ludlul*. It reads *amlat kabattašu düssu eṛe[t]*, “his mood is ..., his manliness is taken aw[ay].” Lambert (and others) translate *amlat* as “darkened” (see also, e.g., Foster 2005, 608 “is grim”); CAD U/W, 401 renders it “is nervous.”

Either MS I.R._{Huz} provides a variant text, *ippariš*, which Lambert translates “(my dignity) has flown away” (33; incidentally, this was the only extant witness to the verb at the time of his edition and thus appears in his main text, p. 32). Or, the more likely explanation to my mind: the young copyist at Ĥuzirina has made a mistake, reading or hearing IŠ for IS. | *tarānī šaḥiṭ**: See Lenzi 2020a for my statement of the textual problem at the end of I 48 and my resolution of it, which requires emending *išḥiṭ*, the verb attested in all MSS, to *šaḥiṭ*. | *my protection*: The Commentary (MS Com_{Nin}, obv. 7') explains *tarānu* with *šillu*, which can mean divine protection (see CAD Š, 190–191). Note especially the parallelism in the OB lament *Ištar Baghdad*, obv. 24: *taḥtaššī šillī tuṭappirī šēdīya*, “you have snapped off my protection (lit. shade); you have driven away my protective spirits” (see Streck 2003, 306 and my treatment at <http://akkpm.org/P520346.html>). Moreover, “protection” seems the most appropriate translation in light of the divine protectors mentioned in I 43–46.

I 51: *nuppuḥū*: Literally, *nuppuḥū* means “swollen” (CAD N/1, 268), the precise meaning of which in this context is somewhat disputed (see Oshima 2014, 191–92 for a brief discussion). I follow George and Al-Rawi’s idea that the term probably denotes contradictory or unclear omen results (1998, 198), and thus extends the meaning of *dalḥā*, “confused,” earlier in the line, rather than especially negative omens (so Oshima). For the role of the etymologically related *nipḥu* in extispicy, which is sometimes characterized as having a “joker” effect, see, e.g., Koch 2005, 10–21 and Maul 2018, 73–77. | *every day, uddakam*: Worthington (2009, 67) reads UD.DA.KAM = *adanna*, which he understands to mean “on the appropriate day,” citing Stol 1991–1992, 58. This word also occurs in II 1 with regard to the duration of the protagonist’s suffering and II 111, where the diviner is unable to determine the term (*adannu*) of the protagonist’s illness. See the comments on those lines below with further references.

I 52: *by*: Literally, “with.” Lambert takes the word to mean “sign” and thus “omen” (1960, 33), but this is unlikely syntactically (see the following). | *seer (bārū), inquirer (šā’īlu)*: Both are diviners in a general sense of the word. The former often worked in extispicy, but not exclusively so (for a brief introduction to the *bārū*, see, e.g., Koch 2015, 21–23). The latter term, typically translated “dream interpreter,” refers to another kind of diviner who sometimes appears alongside the *bārū* and did more than interpret dreams (see Zgoll 2006, 405–11). | *alakṭī ul parsat*: For the translation of *alakta parāsu*, see Oshima 2014, 192–94, with references to the relevant literature. A similar phrase with *itti* is attested in the diagnosis section of some therapeutic texts; see, e.g., Abusch 2002, 31, citing BAM 316 ii 12’ (see now Abusch and Schwemer 2016, 36, line 8); p. 39, citing BM 64174: 6 // STT 95 + 295 iii 136’ (Abusch

and Schwemer 2016, 40, line 6), and p. 41, citing BAM 315, rev. iii 7 // Bu. 1891-05-09, 214, obv. ii 9' (Abusch and Schwemer 2016, 32, line 23).

I 53: Literally, “according to the mouth of the street my *egirru* was evil.” | *egirru*: See Oshima 2014, 194–95 and Lenzi 2012, 45, n.24 for arguments that the word has an oracular sense here (likewise, Lambert 1960, 33; George / Al-Rawi 1998, 195; and Foster 2005, 396) rather than purely a social one (e.g., “reputation,” or “Ruf,” as von Soden translates [1990, 117]; see also Butler 1998, 151). For a recent discussion of *egirru*, see Rendu Loisel 2016, 298–309. Her treatment includes a discussion of a ritual to provoke an *egirru* (LKA 93), a ritual lament that mentions the role of the *šā ilu* (see I 52) in provoking an *egirru*, and a full presentation of the textual witnesses of *Šumma ālu* XCV, in which a man prays to his personal god and awaits an *egirru*, the manner of delivery of which is variously portentous.

I 55: *the sun*: All extant witnesses read ^dUTU or ^dšá-maš; thus, the line intends to create a metaphor; the king is Šamaš, the sun god and god of justice, for his people.

I 56: *ikkašir*: Literally, “his heart was knotted.” MS I.Q_{Kal}, obv. 56 reads the G stem of the verb, *ik-šu-r[a]*; thus, “he knotted his heart.” | The second half of the line presents difficulty. MS I.R_{Huz}, obv. 19' reads *pa-ta-ru* UŠ LEM NIŠ and the school tablet MS I.V_{Sip}, obv. 11' reads *pa-ta-ri* UŠ LI 'IM NI⁷. As indicated, the last sign of the latter is unclear. Lambert copies it as GIŠ (2007, pl. 8); Oshima as MA (2014, pl. VII; see also p. 387). As it is written on the edge of the tablet, it could be a malformed NI (so SAACT 7, 16 and Streck 2013, 219), a reading supported by the late Babylonian MS A_{Bab}, obv. i 9', *le-e]m-^rni¹*. Following George and Al-Rawi's reappraisal of the textual situation (1998, 199), SAACT 7 (16, with discussion on p. xxvii, n.52) and Oshima (2014, 80, 208) read the final word in the line (based on MS I.R_{Huz}) as *ušlemmin*, an otherwise unattested ŠD of *lemēnu*. SAACT 7 translates the result “(His heart was angry *with me*) and made forgiving me(*sic*)⁷ difficult” (32); George and Al-Rawi (1998, 195) render, “and changed pardon to malevolence” (similarly, Foster 2005, 396). It may be better, however, to read *pa-ta-ru-uš* <i>-lem-mìn, “(his knotted heart) became *too* angry for its releasing,” in MS I.R_{Huz} or, with von Soden, *pa-ta-ru-uš lem-mìn*, “zu böse, um zu verziehen” (1990, 117) and to read MS I.V_{Sip}, as Streck suggests, *pa-ta-ri-iš¹ le-em-ni¹*, with the understanding that *lemni* is “a Neo-Babylonian orthography for *lemun*” (2013, 219; Lambert explained the reading in MS A_{Bab} as a form of *lemun* also but due to *metri causa* [1960, 284]). In any case, the king was too angry to forgive our protagonist.

⁷ The word “me” should have been italicized as it is supplied for sense.

I 57–65: See Groneberg 1996, 74–75 for a poetic analysis, and compare the series in these lines in *Ludlul* to the series in *Erra and Išum* I 31–38 (for which, see Cagni 1969, 60–63, with a discussion of that series in Hecker 1974, 153). See also Foster’s analysis of I 59–64 (1983, 128–29), which demonstrates the liveliness of the conspirators’ speech to one another.

I 57: *taslītu*, *slander*: CAD T, 282–83 understands the word to be *taslimtu*, “malicious talk” (see likewise Oshima 2014, 208). Lambert reads *teslītu*, “hostility,” which is “not attested elsewhere” (1960, 284). George / Al-Rawi (1998, 199): *teslītu* from *šelū*, “to be dishonest, cheat.” I follow *AHw*, 1337: *taslītu* from *salā’u*, “to slander.”

I 62: *take over*: Literally, “enter.”

I 63: *overturned the opinion of the fifty*: That is, the opinion of the fifty changes from good to bad with regard to the sufferer. For this idiom and its use here, see George / Al-Rawi 1998, 199 and Foster 2005, 396. Noegel suggests the poet has chosen *ḥanšē*, “fifty,” here “not only to create alliteration [with *ḥaššu*, ‘fifth,’ at the head of the line], but to underscore the ultimate source of” the protagonist’s “suffering, namely Marduk, who possessed fifty names, one of which was ‘Fifty’” (2016, 623 with reference to *Enūma eliš* VII 143–144).

I 64: *on his heels*: Literally, “like his *šēdu*.” The translation “on his heels” follows Foster (2005, 396) and George and Al-Rawi (1998, 196). The semantic import of following someone as a *šēdu*, sometimes translated “protective spirit” but perhaps an evil spirit here (Oshima 2014, 212), is to follow that person extremely closely.

I 67: *each had*: Literally, “was equipped with” (Gtn predicative 3ms from *nadū*); see George / Al-Rawi 1998, 199. Oshima understands this phrase to mean that each spoke for himself, which makes good sense in the broader context (2014, 83, 213).

I 68: The head of the line in MS I.I_{Nin}, rev. 3 reads [*i*]n-na-ad-^rru¹-nim-ma. See George / Al-Rawi for this reading (1998, 199), citing von Soden (1990, 118, n.68a). Collated. See likewise, Oshima 2014, 388. If this reading is correct, there is no “heart” in this line (compare Lambert 1960, 34–35 and Foster 2005, 396).

I 69–83: For a close reading of these lines, see Foster 1983, 127–28. His delineation of the poetic unit reflects the problem interpreters have had with the placement of I 84 (see the note on that line below).

I 69: *set ... in alliance*: The translation follows George and Al-Rawi’s rendering of *šumguru* (1998, 196).

I 70: *my eloquent speech*: Literally, “my noble mouth.”

I 72: MS I.Q_{Kal}, rev. 4 reads ^rrim¹-ma-ti, “my cries,” fem. pl. of *rimmu* (*CDA*, 305; *AHw*, 986) rather than *šagimmāti* (so MS I.I_{Nin}, rev. 7) or *šagimmātu* (so MS I.F_{Sip}, rev. 11’).

I 73: *to the ground*: Following George and Al-Rawi (1998, 200) and Oshima (2014, 213), I understand *qaqqaršun* to be a form of the adverb *qaqqaršum*.

I 76: *kutattumā*: MS I.F_{Sip}, rev. 1' reads *ku-te-et-tu-ma*, for which see George / Al-Rawi (1998, 200) and Oshima (2014, 214). MS I.R_{Huz}, rev. 4 and (probably) MS I.Q_{Kal}, rev. 8 both attest a variant, whose meaning is unclear to me: *ki-ta-[a]t-ta* and *ki-ta¹-[...]*. The citation of *Ludlul* I 76 in the *Izbu* commentary published by Finkel (2006, 143) attests the same form as MS I.F_{Sip}, *ku-ta-at-tu-mu* (obv. 17); see chapter nine, page 385. | *far-reaching ... closed ... clutched*: I think the meaning here is that his arms are not exposed or open as they would be when active. Perhaps we should envision the literal sense something along the lines of his arms being under his mantle (so, e.g., George / Al-Rawi 1998, 200). Or, perhaps we should think, in light of *ūtaḥzā*, his arms simply being “closed,” as in not open, actively engaging the world. For an appropriate anatomical analogy, note that closed lips in *Enūma eliš* II 89 indicates silence (i.e., inactivity; so CAD K, 301).

I 77: *as a lord*: I read MS I.I_{Nin}, rev. 12 *e-<te^l>-liš*. Rather than positing an error, Streck (2013, 220) suggests simply reading *eliš*, “high above” (likewise Oshima 2014, 389). The BAD and LIŠ signs, however, are both only two wedges. And thus the chances that we have a scribal omission based on similar looking signs seems high to me.

I 79: *alienated*: Literally, “alone.” | I am following George and Al-Rawi, who translate this line, “[t]o my numerous family I became a man without kin” (1998, 196). See likewise Foster’s “[t]o my vast family I became a loner” (2005, 397) and Lambert’s “[t]o my many relations I am like a recluse” (1960, 35). Oshima translates: “[f]rom (a man of) a large family, I became (someone) alone” (2014, 83; similarly, CAD E, 27).

I 83: *My country seemed hostile and foreign*: The particle *tušāma* at the head of the line sets up the description of an irreal situation, which further describes our protagonist’s social alienation. A more literal rendering might run as follows: “*It was* as though my country were a foreign *and* hostile country.”

I 84: George and Al-Rawi suggest “[a]s an experiment” that we reposition line 84 so that it follows line 79 “in order to maintain the composition’s regular succession of quatrains” (1998, 196, n.12). Their experiment, even if not accepted here, raises an important point about the lingering difficulties in poetic analysis of Akkadian verse. See the note on I 97 below for an example of how poetic analysis might influence grammatical analysis and translation.

I 87: MS I.R_{Huz}, rev. 15 reads *kak-dā-a* instead of *a-na na-aq da-mu*, as does MS I.F_{Sip}, rev. 26', which is the only MS to preserve the full phrase. Might *kakdā*, “constantly,” be an aural mistake?

I 88: *me*: The Akkadian is *napišti*, “my life-force” or the like. | *ukarraša*: MS I.F_{Sip}, rev. 27' has a variant, *ú-šar-ra-ša*, which is obscure and difficult to explain; see George / Al-Rawi 1998, 200 for an attempt to salvage meaning from it. More likely, the copyist has simply made a mistake, which would be relatively easy to do with KAR and ŠAR in NB ductus (likewise, Oshima 2014, 216).

I 90: *slandered*: Literally, “spoke slander.”

I 91: *šahāti imid*: The idiom means something like “he took refuge” or “he went into hiding” (CAD Š/1, 83).

I 92: More literally, the line may be rendered “my family treated me as not its flesh (i.e., a non-blood relation).”

I 94: *promoted*: Literally, “placed at the head/top.”

I 96: *mercy*: See the note to III 35 below.

I 97: *did not help*: The alternative to this rendering is to derive the verb from the homonymous *kāšu*, “to be late, to tarry,” as does, e.g., CAD K, 295, s.v. *kāšu* A and von Soden 1990, 119, among others (see George / Al-Rawi 1998, 200 and Oshima 2014, 217 for discussions). If the present line were coupled with I 96 (note, e.g., that von Soden recognizes a tercet in I 95–97 [1990, 119]), this alternative derivation may be tempting because of the use of *hamātu*, “to hasten,” in that line. But, I think I 97 should be read as a couplet with I 98, which argues in favor of the present translation (likewise, Oshima 2014, 217). | *well-being*: MS I.Q_{Kal}, rev. 7' shows a pronominal suffix on the noun, “his well-being.”

I 98: *worthless rabble*: For the expression *šindi/šiddu u birti*, see CAD Š, 172.

I 100: *umanṭiṭū*: Wasserman (2006) derives the verb in this line from a proposed root *maṭāṭu*, “to collapse, demolish, ruin,” which is well-known in West Semitic. | It seems the (likely junior) scribe who copied MS I.R_{Huz} was nodding off when he inscribed this line. The published copy (STT 32, see Lambert 1960, pl. 2) shows ŠI AD AK MU for the first four signs in the line; other witnesses clearly read (*ina*) *pi-i* ÍD-*ia/na-ri-ia*. The ŠI is almost certainly a simple mistake for PI. Then it seems the scribe combined the I on his tablet with the first vertical of the A-component of ÍD (A-ENGUR) and inscribed AD. The remaining stacked verticals of the A-component were then simply ignored or rendered with a horizontal. In any case, the scribe transformed the ENGUR component of ÍD into AK via *lapsus styli*, using Worthington’s terminology (2012, 95–96). In light of this rather poor start, I do not think we should give too much credibility to the scribe’s subsequent rendering of the verb in the line: *ú-man-ṭi-lu* (compare Streck 2013, 220). The final sign is almost certainly another mistake: LU for the rather similar ṬU.

I 102: *silenced*: The protagonist's city has been silenced, like a foreign city that has been destroyed. MS I.F_{Sip}, rev. 41' reads *uš-qa-mi-im*, "(my city) fell silent."

I 105: The translation adopts George and Al-Rawi's rendering (1998, 197).

I 106: *endless silence*: Contrary to SAACT 7, 33 and CAD Q, 281, I think *qitayyulu* means something more like "a constant state of silence due to despair or grief" rather than "daze." See Oshima 2014, 217 for a similar idea.

I 107: MS I.B_{Bab}, rev. 4' and MS I.F_{Sip}, rev. 45' read *sim-mu* instead of *su-um-mi/e*, as do MS I.Q_{Kal}, rev. 17' and MS I.O_{Aš}, rev. 16'. Perhaps we are to understand the former as a skin condition (so George / Al-Rawi 1998, 200) or, as Oshima suggests, as a Sumergram SIM.MU for *sinuntu*, "swallow" (2014, 218). In any case, as both point out, the moaning of a dove fits the context best.

I 108: *like a singer*: Only MS I.Q_{Kal}, rev. 18', reads *zammāriš*, which I think creates the best parallelism with I 107. The other three witnesses attesting this line read *za-am-ma-(a)-ru* (MS I.B_{Bab}, rev. 5'; MS I.F_{Sip}, rev. 45'; and MS I.O_{Aš}, rev. 17'). George and Al-Rawi suggest *zammāru* bears the locative ending *-u(m)*, which should be understood to have a comparative force here (1998, 200). If so, there is no semantic variation in the line among MSS. If that explanation is unacceptable, then the line should be rendered in these three MSS "I would make singers wail my lamentation" (similarly, Oshima 2014, 85).

I 109: *šubrā*: Lambert leaves the word untranslated (1960, 36, 287). George and Al-Rawi translate it as "were occupied" without explanation (1998, 197); Foster renders it "endure(?)" (2005, 398); and Oshima, "are made (to) see through" (2014, 218 and 85), which von Soden (1990, 120, n.109 a) rejects, though without an alternative. Streck suggests the word "is a Š-stem of *parū* 'to vomit', a vivid metaphor for 'to weep': 'Through constant weeping my eyes were made to vomit'" (2013, 220). This doesn't seem likely to me since *parū* is never used with eyes, according to the CAD. I think it is best left untranslated for the time being.

I 110: *for a fifth time*: MS I.B_{Bab} rev. 7' reads *ḥa-šiš*, providing the proper reading of MS I.F_{Sip}, rev. 46' and MS I.Q_{Kal}, rev. 20', both written TAR-šiš. Contrary to Oshima's "fifty" (2014, 218) and "up to fifty times" (85), the word *ḥaššiš*, standing for *ḥamšiš*, should be rendered "fifthly" (CDA, 104) or "fifth time." And in fact, line 110 marks the fifth time the poet describes the sufferer's lamentation (see lines 105, 107–109).

I 112: *flesh*: Against MS I.B_{Bab}, rev. 9' and MS I.F_{Sip}, rev. 47', which read UZU.MEŠ-*ia* = *šīrīya*, MS I.Q_{Kal}, rev. 22' probably reads *ṛmaš-ki-ia*¹, "my skin" (see likewise Horowitz / Lambert 2002, 243 and Wiseman 1980, 106; compare Oshima, who reads *š[i]-ṛu-ia*¹ [2014, 394]).

I 113: *unāti*: George and Al-Rawi read *ṛ¹-na-a-ti* at the head of the line of MS I.F_{Sip}, rev. 48' (1998, 194, with their explanation on p. 200 of the resulting

“eyes of (the heart)” as ventricles of the heart); see also Oshima (2014, 394, without half-brackets) and note Foster’s “wellsprings of my heart,” which reflects this reading (2005, 398). Although collation with the tablet has been impossible, I think it likely that the reading is $\text{ʾ}u^1\text{-na-a-ti}$ (see the photograph in George / Al-Rawi 1998, 191). Horowitz and Lambert (2002, 243, 245) also read $\text{ʾ}u^1\text{-na-a-ti}$ in MS I.F_{Sip} and appeal for support to MS I.B_{Bab}—their “unpublished duplicate,” which reads $\text{ʾ}u\text{-na}^{\text{?1}}\text{-}[\dots]$; see Lambert’s copy in George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 147 and compare Oshima 2014, pl. III. Though following George and Al-Rawi’s reading, Streck supports deriving the word from *unūtu*, which he thinks “is probably a by-form *inūtu* (note that in Late Babylonian *unūtu* also has the by-form *enūtu*)” (2013, 220). | *trembled*: My reading follows MS I.Q_{Kal}, rev. 23’, *ir-tu-ba*, which is also (likely) preserved in MS I.G_{Bab?}, rev. 2’, $[\textit{i}]\textit{r-t}\ddot{u}\textit{-ba}^1$ (Horowitz / Lambert 2002, 243 and Oshima 2014, 394 both read *tú-* in the verb but the copy shows a DU sign; the final sign, which Horowitz and Lambert mark with an exclamation point looks like a LU). With Oshima (2014, 394, with explanation on pp. 218–19) I read *ir-tu-bu-ú* in MS I.F_{Sip}, rev. 48’ and understand the following *dan-na* to be the first word of I 114. Compare George and Al-Rawi who read the \dot{U} , accidentally printed as U, with the following signs, producing *ú-tan-na* at the head of I 114, for which they offer no translation (1998, 194; Horowitz / Lambert read *ú-x-x*; 2002, 243).

I 114 *dannā*: Following Oshima (see note on I 113), I understand I 114 to begin with *dannā*, “they are hardened,” referring back to *unāti* (see CAD D, 93b for a couple examples of the adjective being used with internal organs). In his translation, however, Oshima renders the word “it was harsh” (85). This papers over the problem of the following simile, *kīma šarāp išāti*, “like the burning of fire.” What does it mean for something to be hardened like the burning of fire? Perhaps we should render the phrase “as *with* the burning of fire.” Thus, the *unāti* are being hardened with fire as would be done by a smith—a painful process indeed.

I 115: *confused*: Oshima has convinced me that *ešāt* is the preferred reading (2014, 219) for the line (see *e-šá-ti* in MS I.F_{Sip}, rev. 49’). Compare SAACT 7, 18, which prioritizes the reading in MS I.G_{Bab?}, rev. 4’, *e-ma-a-tu₄*, “it became,” and then reads the other two witnesses as *e-mat* rather than *e-šat* (see MS I.P_{AS}, rev. 6’, *e¹(A)-šat* and MS I.Q_{Kal}, rev. 25’, *e-šat*).

I 117: The second half of this line has been translated two very different ways. George and Al-Rawi suggest the second word of the phrase, written *da-i-i-mu* in MS I.F_{Sip}, rev. 50’ and MS I.G_{Bab?}, rev. 6’ and *da-i-mi* in MS I.Q_{Kal}, rev. 27’, is a *parīs* nominal formation, *da`īmu*, “gloom,” from *da`āmu*, “to be dark,” yielding *kī da`īmu ašīā*, (my speech, lit. my lips) “was impenetrable as the dark” (1998, 197, 201; see Foster 2005, 398 and SAACT 7, 34). This proposed *da`īmu* (see now *CDA*, 53) is a *hapax*. The rendering of *ašīā* with “impenetra-

ble” or “obscure” (so SAACT 7, 34), while implying cognitive difficulty (as in some texts, see CAD A/2, 476), would seem to be—due to the darkness in our line—an extension of the adjective’s use in royal inscriptions to describe the difficulty of navigating rough terrain: *ḥuršāni bēriiti ša nērebšunu aštu*, “distant mountains whose passes are difficult to navigate,” and *urhū aštuṭi padānī peḥūti*, “difficult paths, closed off roads.”⁸ On this reading, the protagonist’s attempt to speak sweetly is ineffective, as difficult as navigating a dark place, and perhaps related causally to the obstruction (*napraku*) in I 118. Others render the phrase *kī da’imi aštā*, “stiff like a spear(?)” (Wiseman 1980, 107) and “hard as a lance” (Oshima 2014, 85, 219; similarly, von Soden 1990, 121). Although the adjective does mean “stiff” when used of body parts (see CAD A/2, 475–76 for several examples and note *Ludlul* III 90 and the Commentary’s explanation in III 96 [MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 11]), it can also refer to strength and to the fierceness of enemies—their obduracy. On this reading, the protagonist’s attempt to speak sweetly comes off as an aggressive attack, as if his lips were a fierce, brutalizing weapon.

I 118: *ṭābtīš*: Previous translations take *ṭābtīš* to mean “like salt” and then render it into something more sensible, for example, “I spoke sharply” (SAACT 7, 34; similarly, George / Al-Rawi 1998, 197 and Foster 2005, 398). Nicola De Zorzi suggests the word derives from *ṭābu*, as does the verb in the previous line (*uṣṭīb*), because I 117–118 should be understood to stand in synonymous rather than antithetical parallelism (2022, 370–71). She suggests translating the adverb “like a friend” or such. I render it “kindly.” Support for De Zorzi’s idea may be found in the two bilinguals cited in CAD N/1, 277, s.v. *nāpalū*. In the two texts *nāpalū* is described as *ṭīb kabatti*, “pleasant, pleasing.” | *napraku*: De Zorzi’s idea to read I 117–118 in synonymous parallelism gives good reason to understand *napraku*, like *da’imu* in I 117, as another “concrete object” (371), a rigid physical instrument used to obstruct advance; thus, a bolt or crossbar. The protagonist’s attempts to speak kindly in I 117–118 come across as aggressive and defensive just as his entreaties in I 115–116 are chaotic and divisive.

I 119: With George and Al-Rawi (1998, 197; likewise, Foster 2005, 398), I think these last lines should be understood as the sufferer’s internal speech, spoken at the time of his suffering (in the past from the poem’s perspective).

⁸ The former phrase occurs many times in Sargon II’s inscriptions (see Frame 2021, nos. 1: 7 [p.53], 7: 14 [p. 140], 43: 10 [p. 226], 76: 2’ [p. 340], 105 i’ 2’ [p. 413], and 129: 10 [p. 471]). The latter phrase occurs twice in the inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar II, nos. 2 ii 17–18 (see <http://oracc.org/ribo/Q005473/>) and 23 i 22 (see <http://oracc.org/ribo/Q005494/>).

I 120: This line may not be setting a deadline (as George / Al-Rawi 1998, 201 suggest; likewise, Oshima 2014, 220) so much as wishing for a reprieve at meaningful moments of time: if not tomorrow, i.e., the next day (so line 119), then the next month (i.e., the next significant unit of time). Interestingly, II 1 then takes us to the next larger unit of time, a year. Thus, the protagonist's suffering lasts much longer than he had expected (or had hoped).

3.2. TABLET II

II: Reiner 1985, 101–18 provides an insightful structural and poetic analysis of Tablet II as well as an English translation (114–16). On the repetition of the negative particle(s) and the structure of II 1–22, see Vogelzang 1996, 175–76.

II 1: *allotted time*: The protagonist's suffering extends into the next year, past the time that he had expected it to last (*adannu*). For further discussion of *adannu* in this context, see my comments in chapter five. It is worth noting that a very long *tamītu*, comprising a thorough and imaginative litany of potential personal illnesses, accidents, and sundry forms of suffering, queries Šamaš and Adad to determine the personal well-being of the supplicant (i.e., the person for whom the query was performed) in the coming year. The rubric of the text reads *tamīt ana šulum balāṭi ana adan šatti*, “a *tamītu*-query for the wholeness of life up to the year's stipulated term (*adannu*)” (see Lambert 2007, 40–41, line 345).

II 2: *asahhur-ma*: As Hättinen points out (in Jiménez *et al* 2020, 247), MS II.N_{Huz}, obv. 2, which reads *a[s-...-m]a*, may indicate an N durative here, *a[ssahhur-m]a*. Lambert (1960, 38) restores a G preterite, *a[s-ḥur-m]a*, though there is room for two signs and we expect a durative (see the verbs in II 3). MS II.G_{Nin}, obv. 2 and MS II.I_{Nin}, obv. 2, both of which read *a-sah-ḥur-ma*, likely indicate a G durative (so Lambert 1960, 38; SAACT 7, 19; and Oshima 2014, 86). | *misery* abounded: Literally, “it is evil, it is evil.”

II 3: *ul uttu*: MS A_{Bab}, obv. ii 7' shows a variant: *ú-šar-tú ul ú-š[u]*, “prosperity did not come fo[rth],” in which *ú-šu* occurs rather than *uš-ši*, the expected form of the 3cs durative of *ašû*. Did the copyist make an (internal) aural mistake (*/uttu/* > */ušû/*)?⁹ Oshima prefers to read the last two signs *ú-tá[m]* (2014, 396). Lambert's copy of this witness supports the reading here (see George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 149).

II 4: *pay attention to me*: Literally, “he did not give his face to me.”

⁹ By “internal aural” mistake I mean what Worthington calls *dictée intérieure* (2012, 98–99).

II 5: *she paid me no heed*: Literally, “she did not lift her head to me.” Jiménez makes the observation that god and goddess are often paired in *Ludlul*, forming a kind of merism “that signifies the totality of the gods or the divine essence itself” (Jiménez *et al* 2019, 80).

II 6: *arkat ul iprus*: The idiom (w)*arkat parāsu* is often used in contexts of divinatory inquiry; see CAD P, 174.

II 7: MS II.G_{Nin}, obv. 7 and MS II.K_{Nin} 5' attest the conjunction *u* between *maššakku* and *šā'ilu*, thus yielding a variant understanding of the entire line: “With incense and inquirer (*šā'ilu*) I did not clarify my case.” | *with incense*: For the view that this refers to libanomancy, see Oppenheim 1956, 222 (on libanomancy generally, see Finkel 1983–1984; Koch 2015, 138; and Maul 2018, 129–33). For a broader discussion of *maššakku* in relation to the *šā'ilu*, see Butler 1998, 229–30 and Zgoll 2006, 325–26. Butler mentions the possibility that the incense was rather used in aleuromancy (divination via the scattering of flour) or that the incense smoke was inhaled by the *šā'ilu* to induce a vision. The latter possibility is also discussed by Zgoll (2006, 326). In contrast to all of the above, Oshima develops a convincing alternative understanding based on several similar incidents in a variety of texts (see 2014, 222–28). His conclusion: “[T]he protagonist here is said to have experienced the nocturnal vision as a result of a successful dream incubation ritual conducted by the *šā'ilu*-priest using *maššakku* and the priest is said to have interpreted the dream based on the dreamer's memory of it. Thus *Ludlul* II, 7 probably refers to the fact that, because of Marduk's wrath, the *šā'ilu*-priest had failed to induce a dream with a clear message and thus failed to determine the nature of the protagonist's troubles and the source of his adversities, or at least that the priest failed to induce a favourable dream, which would have signalled the approaching end of the afflictions” (228). | *clarify*: Literally, “make manifest.” | *my case*: MS A_{Bab}, obv. ii 10' reads anomalously *di-in-šú-nu*, “their case.” The two signs forming the pronominal suffix, ŠÚ and NU, occur at the end of the line on the tablet's right margin. Perhaps the two signs, comprising only four wedges, arose in an earlier copy via a misidentification of the four wedges comprising NI. The preceding IN, in *di-in*, could then be explained as a later correction of the earlier mistake's results: *di-(i)ni* > *di-(i)šú-nu* > *di-in-šú-nu*.

II 8: *dream god*: For the meaning of *zaqīqu/zīqīqu*, including its use as the name of a dream god/spirit, see Butler 1998, 78–83 and a nuanced proposal in Zgoll 2006, 299–307. Butler discusses the possibility that the *zaqīqu* mentioned here in *Ludlul* II 8 designates a human ritual functionary rather than a spirit or a deity. Given the presence of ritual specialists in the adjacent lines (II 6–7 and 9) and other texts that seem to support the existence of such a functionary, this is a plausible understanding of our line (and Butler's preference [81]). Against this interpretation, however, is the fact that the verb *ba'ālu*, “to pray to, to be-

seech,” is almost exclusively used with reference to deities. The one exception has a human king as the object of the verb, but ritual functionaries are never attested with it (see CAD B, 2). We know from the opening of the Assyrian Dream Book that at least one incantation was directed to a being called *Ziqīqu* (see Butler 1998, 321–24 for the text). We also have a prayer to *Sîn* in which a supplicant mentions the use of *Anzagar*, another dream deity, as an intermediary between the high god and the supplicant. Thus, dream gods were invoked or used at times by people (see Butler 1998, 392 and Lenzi 2011, 396, s.v. line 32; note also my restoration in the *Great Prayer to Nabû*, rev. i 4' [<http://akkpm.org/P394371.html>]). As for the present context, the sufferer describes calling out to his personal deities in II 4–5, but this probably would have required the assistance of a ritual specialist. The same kind of explanation could apply to II 8: the sufferer mentions the deity/spirit he called upon (*Zaḳīqu*), which implies some ritual activity involving a specialist. In light of all of this, and without dismissing the possibility that there was a ritual functionary called a *zaḳīqu* attested elsewhere, it seems likely that a non-human, non-obvious being is meant here in *Ludlul* II 8 (see likewise Zgoll 2006, 326 and Oshima 2014, 229). (The substance of this note follows Lenzi 2012, 47, n.35.) | *he did not reveal anything to me*: Literally, “he did not open my ear.” The same phrase, אָזַן פָּתַח, is used in Biblical Hebrew for a revelation (Tawil 2009, 9).

II 10: *ayyītu epšetu šanât mātītān*: The text of this line follows Häťinen’s proposed reading (in Jiménez *et al* 2020, 248), which is (almost) attested in MS II.N_{Huz}, obv. 10: (ʾa-aʾ)¹⁰-it ep-še-ti šá-na-at ma-ti-tan. On her reading, “*epšetu* is understood as a poetic form of the noun *epištu* and *šanât* as a corresponding stative” (248). Other MSS attesting to the words in question would suggest a plural noun and adjectival modifier (see MS A_{Bab}, obv. ii 14': ep-še-e-t[u₄] šá-na-tu₄; MS II.D_{Sip}, obv. 10': [...] -ti [šá]-ʾx¹-tu₄; MS II.F_{Sip}, obv. 3': [...] ep]-ʾše-e¹-[x] šá-na-ti; MS II.G_{Nin}, obv. 10: ep-še-e-ti šá-na-a-ti; MS II.I_{Nin}, obv. 10: ʾep¹-[še]-ʾe-ti¹ [...], following Häťinen’s reading, p. 247), which informed previous translations of the line (e.g., Lambert 1960, 39 and SAACT 7, 35, “What strange conditions everywhere!”; see also the many similar translations cited by Häťinen, p. 248). If a plural noun were present, however, we would expect *ayyātu* (feminine plural; see CAD M/1, 411, which reads *ajēti*) rather than *ayyītu* (feminine singular; see MS II.G_{Nin}, obv. 10, *a-a-i-te*, and MS II.I, obv. 10, *a-a-it*, in addition to MS II.N_{Huz}, cited above) at the head of the line (see Mayer 1992, 39, cited by Häťinen). | *inimical*: In light of the parallelism with II 11,

¹⁰ The published copy shows parts of the A signs. But I did not see them on the tablet in 2015.

šanû here goes beyond “strange” or “incongruent,” which II 12–32 might suggest; rather, the word conveys in context the protagonist’s perception of hostility.

II 12–48: These lines, sandwiched between the protagonist’s enumeration of social and physical deprivations, are central to understanding the protagonist’s unfolding experience of suffering and his lamentation in response to it. The passage falls into four sections: II 12–22, 23–32, 33–38, and 39–48. See below.

II 12–22: The protagonist describes how he feels he is being treated, that is, as an impious person.

II 12: his *god*: MS A_{Bab}, obv. ii 16’ and MS II.D_{Sip}, obv. 12’ read the plural DINGIR.MEŠ rather than the singular, as in the other MSS. The MEŠ is probably not marking the plural; see Mayer 1976, 464–465 with much literature; note also Lambert 1960, 67; and Worthington 2012, 284–87, who suggests the MEŠ could have been an aid to reading. Several other examples of this phenomenon, some not so easily classified as such, appear in the following lines.

II 13: *mākālû*: As Oshima has discussed, this noun may refer to both a human meal and a food offering to a deity with translators rather divided on which is meant here (2014, 232). My rendering “with food” is an attempt to preserve the ambiguity. | Recognizing the synonymous parallelism between II 12–13, Abusch notes that “the different aspects of service are split between the god and goddess in these two passages as a way of presenting a picture of the whole service, and not because each of the two deities receives only one or another part of the service” (2017, 52, n.4).

II 14: *humble himself / appi lā enû*: Literally, “did not change *his* nose.” The phrase is quite rare, and the lexica are hesitant to provide a meaning (see CAD E, 176, which states the meaning is unknown, and *AHW*, 221, which glosses the idiom with “sich prosternieren,” but notes this is unclear). Lambert’s appeal (1960, 289) to the Biblical Hebrew root *הנה* to support the meaning “to bow down, bend” is weak. It seems that he got the idea from *BDB*, the old standard lexicon of Biblical Hebrew in English (Brown, Driver, and Briggs 1906, 333), which actually gives no clear example of this meaning of the verb. The verb normally means to “lay siege” or “encamp.” See now *HALOT*, which does not give the meaning “to bend” anymore (Koehler, Baumgartner, and Stamm 2001, 1.332). Moreover, if *enû* means “to bow,” this is a completely unique instance of this proposed semantic aspect of the verb, which normally means “to change.” It is better, I think, to take the idiom here at face value and attempt to penetrate its meaning the best we can. One option for attempting this—beyond a guess based on context—is to look to cognate languages, as Lambert did. An expression similar to Akkadian *appa enû* occurs in Biblical Aramaic in Daniel 3:19. In a context in which king Nebuchadnezzar is angry with the three Hebrew boys, the text reads “the image of his face (אנפודה) changed against PN, PN, and PN” (PNו, PN, PN-על-אשתנו וצלם אנפודהי אשתנו), indicating quite clearly a

change (negative, in this case) in the king's attitude or disposition. (אֲנַפְוּהָ is a plural form of אָנַ, אָנַ [with a 3ms suffix], which is cognate to Akk. *appu*.) A similar change occurs with Belshazzar in Daniel 5:9, where the context is that of his growing fear, though here the noun is Aramaic זִי (cognate to Akk. *zīmu*, “appearance, countenance”; see *HALOT*, 2.1864). Akkadian attests the idiom “to change one's appearance,” expressed by both *zīma enû* and *zīma nakāru* (see *CAD Z*, 120–121 and *Ludlul* II 91, for the latter). The present context is the only attestation of *appa enû* outside the lexical tradition (for which, see just below). On the basis of the Aramaic evidence, one might tentatively suggest that *appa enû* is a near approximation to *zīma enû* / *nakāru* and, like the Aramaic idiom in Daniel 3:19 and 5:9, also means something like “to change one's disposition.” The context would then indicate the change. In the present context of *Ludlul*, the change of disposition might be that a person was expected to have a certain attitude or humility (see *CAD A/2*, 187) about them before engaging in or during prostration. This accords well with what might be inferred from the lexical attestation of the idiom in *Erimḫuš* IV 13, which translates the Sumerian phrase *kiri lú silim-ma*, “nose of the peaceful man,” and is preceded in lines 11–12 by *šà šu kīri = labān appi*, “heart that is willing or intent”¹¹ to touch the nose = stroking of the nose” (see the note to *Ludlul* V 40 below), and *šà šu gid.gid = suppû*, “heart that is willing or intent to receive = to supplicate” (see *MSL* 17, 57 and <http://oracc.iaas.upenn.edu/dcclt/Q000206/html>). The evidence is tentative and the idiom quite rare in Akkadian, but I think this explanation is a better option than Lambert's.

II 16: *of the god*: MS A_{Bab}, obv. ii 20' and MS II.D_{Sip}, obv. 16' read DINGIR.MEŠ against three other MSS that have the singular. The MEŠ may be explained as above in the note to II 12. Some scholars prefer to read the plural here (e.g., Abusch 2017, 52, who takes *ūmu* to be singular and thus the MEŠ provides a number-appropriate referent for the plural possessive pronominal suffix in the following line). Abusch thinks the deities (pl.) in II 16–17 refer to city gods (2017, 55).

II 17: *had become negligent*: Literally, “threw down his arm.” MS II.G_{Nin}, obv. 17 reads *aḫšunu*, “their arm.” | *their rites*: All the MSS read *mēšunu* except for MS A_{Bab}, obv. ii 21', which reads *me-^fe-šu* DINGIR.MEŠ¹. The resulting *mēšu ilu* / *ilū*, “his rites, the god(s),” does not make good sense. One might suggest the scribe meant to write *mēsū ilī*, “the rites of the gods” (the same phrase occurs in MS A_{Bab}, obv. ii 33' = II 29), which makes much better sense in con-

¹¹ The translation follows the lead of the one at Digital Corpus of Cuneiform Lexical Texts. See the URL cited above.

text.¹² But I think parablepsis provides a better explanation. My hypothesis is the following: The tablet from which the scribe of MS A_{Bab} was copying read *me-e-šu-nu*. When the scribe got to NU, his eye jumped (due to the graphic similarity with AN) to the previous line's DINGIR.MEŠ, which he copied into the present line. His eye then returned to the proper line to copy the verb that brings II 17 to a close. This posited parablepsis is strengthened by the fact that the verb that follows DINGIR.MEŠ in II 16, *išētu*, and the verb that follows (the presumed) *mēšunu* on the scribe's *Vorlage*, *imēšu*, in II 17 both begin with the same sign, I. Thus, MS A_{Bab} likely does not preserve a variant text; rather, simply a scribal lapse.

II 19: *his food*: There is some disagreement about whose food is being eaten: the deity's or the protagonist's; see Oshima 2014, 235 and Lambert 1960, 289 for brief discussions. If Abusch is correct in noting that II 19–20 states a similar idea as presented in II 12–13 (2017, 52, n.4), then the pronoun's referent here is closely tied to determining to whom the food in II 13 belongs. See the note there.

II 18: *to fear and pay heed to the gods*: I supply “to the gods” based on the surrounding context (likewise, Oshima 2014, 87 and von Soden 1990, 122). Abusch, in light of his analysis of the passage's structure and evolution, prefers to see here a reference to the respect given a human king (2017, 55).

II 21: *his lord*: This could be the protagonist's human king, though such seems foreign to the context (see differently Abusch 2017, 56, n.13). I think it is rather a reference to his personal god, who is mentioned explicitly in the following line of the couplet (II 22).

II 22: The line is a tricolon, used to mark emphatically the closure of the poetic unit (II 12–22). | *invoked the solemn oath of his god in vain*: For a parallel line in a *dingiršadabba* prayer, see Jaques 2015, 67, line 24 with comment on p. 97; see also her comparative discussion on p. 156. | *amrāk*: As I have stated elsewhere (see Lenzi 2015c, 84, n.82), I think the final verb is to be read *amrāk*, a shortened form of the 1cs predicative *amrāku*, instead of *amšal*, “I became like, equal to” (as was used in SAACT 7, 19). Although *amrāk* was printed in the CAD a couple of times (CAD Z, 20 and M/1, 355), suggested previously in Borger's review of Lambert 1960 (1964, 51, where he asked “[g]ehört *mašālu* wirklich zur *a*-Klasse?”), and adopted by Foster without comment (1983, 124; perhaps behind his later rendering “I, indeed, seemed” [2005, 399]), Moshe Held made the persuasive philological case for it in an

¹² Note that the scribe wrote a SU where we expect ŠU in obv. ii 23' (see Oshima 2014, 398 at II 19). He might very well have sometimes confused the two signs. But I think a better explanation exists for the present line. See above.

unpublished paper presented to the American Oriental Society in 1981.¹³ Held makes the point that if a preterite from *mašālu* was in fact intended, the text would have *amšul*. (Note that even CAD M/1, 355, which suggests *am-šal* as a possibility, also wavers and suggests both *am-rak* and *am-<ta>-šal* as alternatives; see also Borger’s question above.) Among other reasons, Held also argues that a preterite is inappropriate here whereas the predicative is expected. Relevant to my treatment of *The Lament of Aššurbanipal* in chapter ten, Held, on page 5 of the typescript, connects the usage of *amrāk* here in *Ludlul* II 22 to the use of *epšāku* in that text (rev. 13), citing a line from the the *Great Ištar Šuila-Prayer* (Ištar 2) as a parallel (see Zgoll 2003, 46, line 68): *kī lā pāliḥ ilīya u ištarīya anāku epšēk*, “I am treated like one who does not fear my god and my goddess.”

II 22c–23a: *anāku amrāk / aḥsus-ma ramānī*. As Foster astutely points out, these words at the end of one poetic unit and beginning of another (II 23–32) are “the greatest concentration of self-reference in the poem” (1983, 124).

II 23–32: The protagonist describes how he perceives his own piety in contrast to how he is being treated (II 12–22). He states confidently here that he is in fact a very pious person. There seems to be no hint of doubt about that at this point in the retrospective narrative. Also, there is no hint or self-awareness of his sin, neglect, misdeeds, or mistakes, though he fully understands that Marduk is angry with him, which may imply guilt, but could potentially be explained by way of other etiologies (see chapter five). For this experience of ambiguity, which is very much like a supplicant’s in a prayer, see Steinert 2012, 37–40.

II 24: The seven MSS attesting this line (see Oshima 2014, 399) yield a number of minor variants, which I discuss briefly in Lenzi / Annus 2011, 186.¹⁴ As I have stated elsewhere (Lenzi 2015c, 85, n.83), *tašīmat*, the reading selected here and found only in MS II.G_{Nin}, obv. 24, is a 3fs predicative, from the substantive *tašīmtu*, which the CAD renders with “practical intelligence, prudence, common sense, wisdom, judgment” (CAD T, 287–88). I think the first

¹³ I thank the late Victor Hurowitz for a copy of the typescript (that also included Held’s handwritten notes). Prof. Hurowitz informed me in 2011 via email that this and another paper on *Ludlul* would be published in a collection of Held’s papers that Hurowitz was editing. At that time, he asked that I not share it since he intended to collect and publish Held’s collected papers properly. But this project was not realized, as far as I know, before Hurowitz’s death in January 2013.

¹⁴ I now read (what is labeled there) MS *i* = MS II.N_{Huz} here (obv. 24) as follows: *tés-li-tú ta-ši-ma-tú n[i]-¹qu¹-u ¹sak¹-[k]u-¹ú¹-a*, though the tablet is quite abraded (collation in person, 2015). Oshima reads MS A_{Bab}: *tés-/[i-ti ta]s-si-ma-tú* (2014, 398), though see now Lambert’s copy in George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 149, obv. ii 28’, which supports reading *ÍA* (with what comes before) rather than *TAS*.

half of this line means something like “prayer simply made sense—of course I did it.” *Sakkû* in the second half of the line designates “rites, ritual regulations” (CAD S, 78). Although it may take a third person pronominal suffix at times, this instance in *Ludlul* is the only case to my knowledge where it has a first person pronominal suffix. This distinctive usage signifies, in my opinion, that sacrifice was more than a rite the sufferer did; rather, the rite was important to his religious identity (thus, “my rule”). The line as a whole, therefore, seems to indicate that the sufferer attached personal importance to his piety. We may even say that this manner of presentation shows his piety as heartfelt. Compare the CAD’s rendering of the line, with which I agree in substance: “to me prayer was the proper attitude, sacrifice was my rule of conduct” (S, 79).

II 25: *the god*: DINGIR.MEŠ in some manuscripts (see MS A_{Bab}, obv. ii 29’ and MS II.G_{Nin}, obv. 25) is probably not marking a plural noun; see the note on II 12 above. Abusch suggests the deities mentioned in II 25–26 are city gods rather than personal gods (2017, 54–55).

II 26: *weal*: Contrary to the reading in Lenzi / Annus 2011, 185, MS A_{Bab}, obv. ii 30’ should read [n]é-me-ru (see Oshima 2014, 400 and Lambert’s copy in George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 149). Other witnesses attest a form of *nēmelu*. The orthographic variant must have arisen through an interchange of the liquid consonants, which is rather rare in Akkadian words (see *GAG*, §34b).¹⁵

II 28: *truly a delight*: Note Urad-Gula’s similar expression in his famous letter affectionately known as *The Forlorn Scholar*: [ša šarru bēl]īya amārka dameqtu nashurka mašrū, “[O king] my [lord], seeing you is happiness, your attention is a fortune!” (Parpola 1993, no. 294, rev. 33).

II 29: *I taught*: See CAD Š/3, 370 for the derivation of the verb *ú-šá-ri* (MS II.F_{Sip}, obv. 22’; MS II.I_{Nin}, obv. 29; MS II.N_{Huz}, obv. 29) / *ú-šar* (MS II G_{Nin}, obv. 29) from *šūrū*; the CAD lists *Ludlul* II 29 as the verb’s only attestation (but see the comment on II 48 below). As Oshima notes, this understanding of the verb creates a fitting parallel for *uštāhiz*, “I instructed,” in II 30. | *the rites of*: MS A_{Bab}, obv. ii 33’ attests *mēsū* (see CAD M/2, 35) rather than *mē* as in the other MSS. | *the god*: DINGIR.MEŠ in some manuscripts (see MS A_{Bab} and MS II.p_{Bab}, obv. 8’) is probably not marking a plural noun; see the note on II 12 above. Abusch suggests the deities mentioned in II 29–30, as in II 16–17 and II 25–26 above, are city gods (2017, 54–55).

II 31: *like those of a god*: MS A_{Bab}, obv. ii 35’ and MS II.I_{Nin}, obv. 31 read *iliš*; MS II.G_{Nin}, obv. 31 and MS II.N_{Huz}, obv. 31 read *eliš*, “on high, loudly” (CAD E, 97).

¹⁵ Presumably it is aural in origin in this case, whether through dictation from someone or an internal aural mistake.

II 33–38: In light of his experiences recounted in II 12–32, the protagonist voices his frustrated reflections on what he perceives, at the moment, as a rupture between deity and humanity. See further chapter five.

II 33–36, 38: *the god*: How many gods are being discussed in each of these lines? Should we understand the orthography DINGIR.MEŠ in the various MSS as indicating a genuine plurality of gods or should we invoke the explanation mentioned in the note on II 12 above and see only one god? As my translation indicates, I think a singular deity in all of the lines is the best reading. Here is the evidence as I see it:

MS	II 33	II 34	II 35	II 36	II 38
A _{Bab} , obv. ii 37'–40', 42'	[DINGIR.M]EŠ [?]	[DIN]GIR.MEŠ	DINGIR.MEŠ-šú	ᵀDINGIR.MEŠ ¹	DINGIR.ME[Š]
II.B _{Bab} 3'–6', 8'	[...]	[DINGIR].MEŠ	[...]-šú	[...]	[DIN]GIR.MEŠ
II.F _{Sip} , obv. 2''	—	—	—	—	DINGIR[...]
II.G _{Nin} , obv. 33– 36, 38	ᵀDINGIR ¹	DINGIR	DINGIR-šú	DINGIR.MEŠ	[...]
II.I _{Nin} , obv. 33– 36, 38	DINGIR	DINGIR	DINGIR-šú	DINGIR.MEŠ	DINGIR
II.N _{Huz} , obv. 33– 38	DINGIR.MEŠ	DINGIR	ᵀDINGIR [?] - <<DIŠ>>-šú ¹⁶	[...]	DINGIR.MEŠ ¹⁷
II.q _{Bab} , rev. 16'– 18', 20'	—	[...]	ᵀDINGIR-šú ¹	[...]	[DINGIR].ᵀMEŠ ¹

MS A_{Bab} and MS II.B_{Bab} consistently use the plural marker, which may not indicate the plural at all. I understand these MSS to be too ambiguous for further help with the questions before us. We also must set aside MS II.F_{Sip}, which is too incomplete to be of assistance. Aside from the Babylonian MS A_{Bab} and MS

¹⁶ Oshima restores [UGU DINGI]R-šú (2014, 401), but there is no room for UGU. This MS omitted it (see Lambert 1960, 41, who wonders the same). The DINGIR—if that is the sign—is flush left with the caesura's margin. As for DIŠ: There is a vertical wedge that is separate from the preceding sign. I suggest the young scribe started to write a MEŠ or a ŠÚ but didn't finish it. (Collated.)

¹⁷ Although not in the copy (see Lambert 1960, pl. 9), the MEŠ is on the tablet. (Collated.)

II.B_{Bab}, all other MSS preserving a reading in II 34–35 recognize a single deity, which makes the best sense contextually. Speaking of context, it seems to me that the context of II 33 and II 38 could easily be construed as making general statements about all of the gods, and thus the plurals in MS II.N_{Huz} in both lines likely preserve actual variants to the preferred singular deity. The same applies to MS II.q_{Bab} in II 38. It is telling that the Nineveh MSS use the singular in all of the lines except II 36. Despite my preferred translation of that line (see the note on II 36–37 below), these two MSS construe II 36 as making a general statement about a plurality of gods, too, though not in II 33 and, at least for MS II.I_{Nin}, not in II 38. Perhaps the Nineveh MSS were simply inconsistent and the MEŠ does not indicate the plural in II 36. If so, how could we ever know?

If there is only one deity here, a question remains: Who is this deity? In II 12–32 the deities mentioned seem most likely to be the personal deities and/or perhaps the city god. But here in II 33–38, it seems, the protagonist’s thoughts broaden to encompass a general reflection on divinity, even if the deities (see the note to II 37 below) mentioned in the lines remain singular.

II 35: The *Great Prayer to Marduk, no. 1*, line 108 also uses forms of *masāku* and *damāqu* to express a related idea: *ša damqat u [mas]kat ilu muškallim*, “The god is the one who reveals that which is good and that which is [ba]d” (see Oshima 2011, 150).

II 36–37: My translation of these lines follows the recent suggestion of Enrique Jiménez (Jiménez *et al.* 2019, 79–81). Noting the grammatical, lexical, and metrical difficulties with the standard translations, which he enumerates thoroughly (79–80), Jiménez suggests the *šá* that follows *milik* in MS II.G_{Nin}, obv. 37 and MS II.I_{Nin}, obv. 37 is the feminine possessive suffix, referring to an implied goddess’s *milku*. As he points out, *Ludlul* often pairs god and goddess in adjacent lines, “a merismus that signifies the totality of the gods or the divine essence itself” (80). He then takes *qereb šamê* and *anzanunzê* as predicative complements. The result is, as he states, that “[n]o god or set of gods is said to dwell in heaven or in the abyss,” as is often assumed in previous translations. “[R]ather, the divine intention is *like* the heaven and *like* the abyss. The implicit *tertium comparationis* is their remoteness” (81). I think this is a compelling idea that explains these two lines very nicely. But, the problem is that there is no single MS that preserves DINGIR rather than DINGIR.MEŠ in II 36. Jiménez explains away the plural in the two MSS from Nineveh (MS II.G_{Nin} and MS II.I_{Nin}) by way of the explanation mentioned several times previously (see the note on II 12 above). But when we look at their use of DINGIR across the lines in II 33–38 (see the chart above), II 36 stands out as their only use of the plural. The conclusion, I think, is that *Ludlul*’s subtle poetic point that Jiménez has recovered was lost on subsequent copyists. The best poetic reading of II 36,

which requires a singular deity in the line, is not currently attested among its witnesses.

II 36, 38: Note how II 36, 38 parallels the use of *tēmu* and *alaktu* in I 32 and I 30, respectively, both lines of which describe Marduk's inscrutability.

II 38: *humanity*: Lit., “numerous, teeming ones” (see CAD A/2, 168), a common descriptor of people (see also Oshima 2014, 89; Foster 2005, 399; Reiner 1985, 115). Although humanity is described in this passage as unable to grasp the divine mind, I do not think, as Spieckermann contends (1998, 334; likewise, Gerhards 2017, 52), following von Soden's translation (1990, 123; see also *AHw*, 62), that they “erfahren sich gegenüber den Göttern als ‘Umwölkte’,” that is, as “clouded ones” (see CAD A/2, 169, which rejects such an etymology).

II 39–48: My translation and interpretation of this passage is indebted to Stol 1996, who argues persuasively that the main theme in these lines is not the vacillation and variability of human moods or situations but the protagonist's reflections on the human experience and reaction to the instability of the divine will decreed for them (as described in II 33–38). At this point in his unfolding narrative, one might think the protagonist has hit rock bottom. But then begins a litany of demonic attacks in II 50, resulting in nearly fatal physical deterioration.

II 39: *am-mat*: Lambert (1960, 40–41) reads *am-šat* and renders the result with “the one who was alive yesterday” (likewise, Reiner 1985, 115). See CAD A/2, 79, where it indicates this line is the only attestation of this word and is probably a scribal error for *amšali*, “yesterday.” This seems unlikely. Von Soden's reading, *am-mat*, is to be preferred (1990, 123, n.39a); see likewise, Oshima 2014, 88–89 and Foster 2005, 399, who translates the word “brawn.”

II 41: *in one instant*: Literally, “in the seizing of the nose” (i.e., a sneeze).

II 42: *the next, in a pīt purīdi*: Literally, “in the opening of the leg,” which Lambert explains as the time it takes to take one stride while walking (1960, 291).

II 43: *in the blink of an eye, kī petē u katāmi*: Literally, “as opening and closing.” Von Soden asks if the eyes or lips are meant here (1990, 123, n.43a). With Oshima (2014, 248) and Stol (1996, 179–80 with n.2 for the opening and closing of the eyes in medical texts), I think it is the eyes that are opening and closing (see also CAD K, 299 and Foster 2005, 399, who renders the phrase “in a twinkling”). Lambert suggests it is the legs that are opening and closing (1960, 291). In any case, the imagery is of something that happens relatively quickly. | *the divine decree about them*: Stol (1996) has persuasively argued that *īmšina* in II 43 means the divine decision about the course of human lives. Line 43 summarizes in a general fashion for all of humanity what lines 39–42, focused on the individual, describes more particularly.

II 48: ... : The first verb in the line remains a crux. MS II.N_{Huz}, obv. 48 provides the signs comprising the beginning of the verb, which Lambert reads *uš-ta-x* (1960, 40). Following von Soden (and now after collation of the tablet in person in 2015), I think it may read *uš-ta-a[d^l]-x*. Von Soden restored the verb to *uš-ta-a[d-din^l]* (1990, 123, n.48a, though see *AHW*, 703a, which reads *uš-ta-ad^l-d[in]*), a Št from *nadānu*, and renders the first half of the line: “Über dieses (alles) dachte ich nach.” Foster follows this reading (2005, 399), “I have ponde[red] these things.” Oshima reads *uš-ta^l-r[a]* in MS II.N_{Huz} (2014, 403). He finds support for this reading in MS II.B_{Bab}, 18', which provides new evidence for the ending of the verb. SAACT 7, reading this MS [...] *-di*, restores the verb to *ušta[d]di*, “I have reje[ct]ed these things” (20, 36). I now see that the better reading is [...] *-ru*, as Oshima indicates (2014, 403 and see Lambert’s copy in George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 152). Oshima finds further support for this reading of the verb in two very poorly preserved witnesses: first, in MS II.H_{2Nin}, obv. 5', where he sees *[u]š-[te-r]i²* (403; on p. 249 he reads *u[š-te-r]a*) in this very abraded part of the tablet (see his collation, pl XXXIII, which seems to be more certain of the reading); and second, in MS II.I_{Nin}, obv. 48, which preserves only traces of the heads of signs, where he sees *uš-ta-ru²* (his obv. 28'). These readings are quite uncertain. Oshima adopts *uš-ta-ra²* as the reading of the verb in his composite text (88), rendering it “I am *accustomed* (lit.: instructed) to these (i.e. such things)” (89, 249). He derives the verb from *šūrū* (see p. 535 and note the comment above on II 29). Even if we were to assent to its derivation, I am not sure this verb works in context. In any case, the basis for this reading is too fragile to view it as anything more than a possibility. As I have stated elsewhere, we really must await a duplicate to establish the reading of the verb here (Lenzi 2017, 184).

II 49: [(x)] *yāti*: MS II.C_{Sip}, obv. 1' begins the line with *ia-a^l-[ti]*. Presumably, for reasons of space on MS II.N_{Huz}, obv. 49, Lambert restores *[u]*, “and,” at the head of the line (1960, 40); similarly, Oshima: *u²* (2014, 88, 249, 403; see also CAD Š/3, 310), which, in my opinion, is too large. The copy (Lambert 1960, pl. 9) hints at only a trace of the head of a vertical, which I previously took as a hint for restoring *[ana]* (SAACT 7, 20; Mayer 2014, 277 is skeptical). Collation in person shows nothing at the beginning of the line; there may not even be room for a sign. | *innamdi² meh[ū²]*: The last half of the line, comprising two words, is only attested in MS II.N_{Huz}, obv. 49 and MS II.H_{2Nin}, obv. 6', neither of which is clear; thus, readings vary. All agree that the first word is a verb. Proposed forms are derived from *redū*, *nadū*, and *nasāku*. Lambert’s reading of MS II.N_{Huz} in his composite text, *i-<ri>-id^l-di*, influenced my reading of MS II.H_{2Nin} used in SAACT 7, *i-^lred^l-di* (20), which I now hold to be unlikely. The verb in this line is not a form of *redū*. It may be the case that what Oshima suggests as an alternate reading of MS II.N_{Huz}, *i-n[am-d]i* (2014,

249), fits the traces here in II.H_{2Nin}, thus $\text{r}^i\text{-nam}^{\text{?}}\text{-di}$ from *nadû*. As for the verb in MS II.N_{Huz}, CAD Š/3, 310 reads it *i-na-sak* without translation, citing Gurney’s collation as its authority. Oshima adopts this reading in his composite text (*i-n[a-s]ak*, 88, 403), rendering it “(seizure) was h[url]ed” (89).¹⁸ Oshima’s alternative reading of MS II.N_{Huz}, *i-n[am-d]i*, lies behind my own suggestion for reading the very abraded signs in the MS: *i-<na>-r¹am¹-di* for *innamdi*, “(it) was thrown.” As for the last word, the alternatives are *mehû*, “storm,” and *miqtu*, “seizure.” Arguments can be made for both from the context. Epigraphically, matters are undecided. MS II.H_{2Nin} reads *me-r¹x¹-[x]*. The second sign is congruent with both H[U] and I[Q]. In MS II.N_{Huz}, Gurney’s copy (Lambert 1960, pl, 9) shows *mi-hu* followed by a gap until the end of the line where there is a small trace of a sign. Lambert reads the three signs as *mi-hu-u* (1960, 40). CAD Š/3, 310, citing Gurney’s collation, reads the final word *mi-iq-ti*. Collation of the tablet, however, shows a clear H[U] as the second sign. The final sign is (now?) too abraded to decipher but it does not look like the remnants of TI. My adopted reading and translation are tentative.

II 51–57: For the reversal of the demonic attacks in II 51–57, see III 69–75.

II 51: *f[rom the hor]izon*: Literally, “from the foundation of the heavens,” for which see Horowitz 1998, 233. The “from the foundation” part of the expression is based on Lambert’s restoration of MS II.N_{Huz}, obv. 51, [*iš-tu i-šid*] (1960, 40). Oshima reads the same MS *i[š-t]u r¹i-šid¹* (2014, 403). Collation in 2015 suggests this is possible but not certain. SAACT 7 “found” the $\text{r}^i\text{-šid}^1$ part of the expression in MS II.H_{2Nin}, obv. 8’ (20), but I now read [...] $\text{r}^i\text{x x}^1$ AN-*e*. In any case, the reversal of this line in III 69 commends reading *istu išid šamê* here. One can only hope that we find a clear textual witness to confirm or correct this reading.

II 53: *demonic cough*: For the meaning of *šūlu*, see my comments in chapter six. *Di’u* (in II 52) and *šūlu* in the present line occur together in *Šumma ālu* LXI 130 (Freedman 2017, 148): *šūlu u dihu : haḥḥu*, the last word, “phlegm,” is an explanation of the two, suggesting their close connection. (See also *Ludlul* II 66, where *šūlu* and *haḥḥû* occur together.) The *Ludlul* Commentary (MS Com_{Nin}, obv. 36’) suggests with its explanation, *eṭemmu*, “ghost,” that *šūlu* is demonic.

II 56: *with the waters of the inundation*: I now follow Oshima’s reading at the head of the line *it-ti* A.MEŠ ILLU; compare SAACT 7, 20. | *streamed in*²: Foster renders the verb “set forth” (2005, 400) and Lambert, “set out” (1960, 43); Oshima prefers “*surged*” (2014, 89). Only Lambert explains the derivation

¹⁸ Streck translates *i-na-sak*, “(the *miqtu*-disease) constantly threw (me) down” (2013, 220). I cannot determine how he parses the form.

and translation explicitly (1960, 291): he thinks *nāšu* is a verb of motion—note von Soden’s translation, “setzte sich in Bewegung” (1990, 123)—and is equated with *namāšu*, “to depart, set out” (CAD N/1, 220). CAD defines *nāšu* as “to quake,” “to become shaky,” and “to give way” (CAD N/2, 113), but does not translate our context (114). The verb’s precise meaning here remains uncertain.

II 57: *broke through*: For potential explanations of the form *ipešši* from *pēšu* (the expected preterite is *ipēš*), see Oshima 2014, 255–56. He and Lambert (1960, 291) both note the parallel to this line in *Šurpu* VII 5–6. The Akkadian in line 6 reads: *ahhāzu kīma urqūti eršeta ipešši*, “the seizing-demon was breaking through the earth like the vegetation” (see Reiner 1958, 36). Drawing on this text, Lambert writes, “[t]he idea is that these demons come up out of the underworld through a crack in the ground, just as plants grow” (1960, 291, see likewise p. 168).

II 58: *they joined their forces*: The same expression, *innendū puḥuršunu*, occurs in Sennacherib’s account of the battle at Ḫalulê (see Grayson and Novotny 2012, no. 22 v 55 [p. 186] and no. 23 v 46 [p. 199]).

II 59: *they struck*: MS II.LA₈, rev. i’ 10’ reads *i-né-ᵝx¹* [...]. The last sign is barely visible—a single partial horizontal on the copy (Lambert 1960, pl. 74) and in my photographs. Von Soden suggests the reading *i-ni-r[u]* (1990, 123, n.59a) rather than *i-ni-r[u²]* (so Lambert 1960, 344); SAACT 7, 20 follows von Soden and derives the verb from *nētu*, “to surround.” But *i-né-r[u]*, deriving it from *nēru*, “to strike,” is the better reading on present evidence, as Streck argues cogently (2013, 220; see also CAD T, 377 and Oshima 2014, 89, 404). | *[qaqqad]u*: The restoration follows Lambert 1960, 42 (see already Langdon 1923, 42). | *they covered*: There is a general consensus among translations that *i-te-’u-ú*, only attested in MS II.H₂Nin, obv. 16’, derives from *tē’u*, “to cover” (see also CAD T, 377); Streck suggests it derives from *nē’u*: “they turned (my skull) back and forth” (2013, 220).

II 60: *pūtu²*: Literally, “forehead.” This first word in the line is only attested by MS II.C_{Sip}, rev. 1, which is badly abraded here on its top corner, and by MS II.LA₈, rev. i’ 11’, which is of little help: BU-ᵝx¹-[...] (compare Lambert 1960, 344: *bu-n[a-ia]*). The copies by Oshima (2014, pl. IX) and Lambert (George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 153) both suggest MS II.C_{Sip} reads ᵝ*pu-ú¹-tu* (compare Mayer: *bu²-ni²* [2014, 277]). But the tablet is quite rough, commending caution.

II 63: *tremors*: For *ra’ibu*, see the comments on I 25 above.

II 64: *chest*: Literally, “in the head of my heart,” which is typically taken to be the epigastrium.

II 65: *utti[kū]*: The restoration follows von Soden 1990, 124, n.65a (see likewise, Oshima 2014, 88).

II 66: *ḥa[šēya]*: The restoration follows Lambert 1960, 42. For *šūlu* and *ḥaḥḥu*, see the note on II 53 above.

II 66, 67: *they afflicted*: *La`ābu* and the noun from which it is formed, *li`bu*, designate an undetermined condition or illness (see CAD L, 6, 181–82). Given the interest pursued in chapter six, I note that both the verb here in these lines and its related noun, which does not occur in *Ludlul*, are commonly—though not exclusively—attested in the exorcists’ texts. | *belly*: For the meaning of *pitru*, see chapter six. I have translated the word less clinically here.

II 69: *ušnillū*: Oshima derives the verb from *na`ālu*, “to moisten, flood” (2014: 91, 528), but this seems incongruent with the context. I prefer a Š of *nālu*, “to lay out, flatten” (*CDA*, 235; *AHw*, 784); see likewise, Lambert 1960, 43; von Soden 1990, 124; and Foster 2005, 400.

II 70: *uliltu*: This is an unknown, unidentified plant (see CAD U/W, 73), and probably not a dried fig (so SAACT 7, 36, following Foster 2005, 400; *CDA*, 420; and *AHw*, 1408, which von Soden corrects in his translation notes; see 1990, 124, n.70a). MS II.C_{Sip}, rev. 11 likely attests a variant, ^r*mul*^l-*lil*-*t*[*i*] (see CAD U/W, 73; Mayer 2014, 277; and Oshima 2014, 405).

II 71–85: These lines are the subject of a detailed interpretation in chapter eleven. A point that should be mentioned here that is not developed in chapter eleven: The poetic structure within this passage changes noticeably at II 73–79, lines in which the protagonist describes the demonic impact on his body in an intimate, blow-by-blow fashion. In this litany of demonic devastation, the first colon of each verse has a kind of staccato feel because it has only one beat. The second colon then elaborates on the first with a colon of two beats.

II 71: *clothed*: Lambert takes the verb, *ītediq*, as a Gt preterite, translating the line “[t]he *alū* demon has clothed himself in my body as with a garment” (1960, 43). This implies demonic possession. Reiner agrees. She writes, “[t]he man’s body is no longer his own: a demon has taken it over and dwells in it, as easily as it if were a mere outer garment, a covering under which the ego, the personality, is no longer itself but an alien, a demonic being” (1985, 109; see likewise, e.g., Foster 2005, 400). Whether the man is actually possessed or not is disputable (see, e.g., Stol 1993, 52–53], who argues against any form of possession in Babylonia), since the idea relies on understanding *edēqu* as a Gt preterite. Although this is a possible morphological analysis, I think the verb is better analyzed as a G perfect, which brings the idea of the demon wrapping itself around the sufferer here in *Ludlul* (as would a garment) into line with many similar expressions, as well-argued by Waldman 1989, 163–65; so also Oshima 2014, 91, 257; CAD E, 29 (compare CAD A/1, 376); and *AHw*, 186.

II 73: *bašā*: The form is to be derived from *bašāšu*, “to stare,” as Lambert (in substance) understood it (1960, 42, though he transliterated *pal-ša-a*; see

CAD B, 45; *AHw*, 98; von Soden 1990, 124; Foster 2005, 400; and Mayer 2014, 277), rather than from *palāsu* (so SAACT 7, 53 and Oshima 2014, 529).

II 77–78: These lines have an identical parallel in an Akkadian *dingir-šadabba* prayer, see Jaques 2015, 67, lines 10–11 with comments on p. 95. They also appear in *Gilgameš* V 29–30 (with third person pronouns), suggesting the phrases are a traditional formulation for describing terror. See Al-Rawi / George 2014, 76, 84 with George 2003, 2.820.

II 78: *legs*: Literally, “knees.” Previously, I translated “[i]mpotence had fallen on my loins” (SAACT 7, 36), but this sounds too much like the protagonist has a sexual dysfunction. Rather, I think his legs, like his arms, were immobilized (see II 79).

II 79: *mobility*: *Namuššišu* is an infinitive (see CAD N/1, 223) not the adjective *nammuššišu*, “mobile, agile,” as listed in the glossary of SAACT 7, 52.

II 80: *[mi]h̄su*: Oshima reads G[1]G²-*su* here in MS II.H₂N_{in}, rev. 15 (2014, 406, 258 with a collation on plate XXXIII), though he thinks M[U]R is also possible. I do not see this on the tablet. In any case, he adopts *muršu*, “illness,” at the head of the line as his reading in the composite text (90). Having the protagonist state at this point in the narrative that an illness had arrived seems rather late to me, anticlimactic and thus out of place. I follow Lambert (1960, 42), who reads *[mi[?]]-ih[?]-su*, “a stroke,” in MS II.N_{Huz}, rev. 8, the only other MS to preserve the head of the line. Still, it must be recognized that there is very little to go on epigraphically speaking in both MS II.H₂N_{in} and MS II.N_{Huz} and thus all reconstructions are tentative. | *like one fallen*: CAD M/1, 254 (with a question mark), *CDA*, 196 (with a question mark), *AHw*, 608, and Oshima (2014, 91) translate *maqtīš* as “suddenly,” but Lambert (1960, 43) and Foster (2005, 400) translate the word as “like someone prostrate” and “like one fallen,” respectively. The latter fits contextually and so is tentatively adopted here. See I 14 for a similar use of *maqtu*. Alternatively, one could understand the second half of the line as “it blocked *me* suddenly” (similarly Oshima 2014, 91). (Von Soden does not translate the line because “ist hier zuviel unklar” [1990, 124, n.80a].)

II 81: *[ī]dud*: There is no agreement on the first word of the line. The present, tentative reading understands the initial word as a verb from *edēdu*, “to hasten,” in hendiadys with the verb in the second half of the line, *īterim*.¹⁹ As mentioned in the note to I 19 above, *edēdu* in hendiadys with another verb typically occurs in the D stem; the present case may be an exception for the reason cited there. Note also how death “hastens” (*hamātu*) in I 96. Others suggest

¹⁹ This idea was suggested as an alternate reading in SAACT 7, 21, though printed incorrectly as *[ī]-du-ut* (see Mayer 2014, 277).

restoring [šū]dūt, “signs” (von Soden 1990, 124, n.81a; Foster 2005, 400 and 409; and SAACT 7, 21, 37, which translates it “edict,” following CAD Š/3, 195). CAD Š/3, 196 is explicitly set against restoring šūdūt here in *Ludlul* II 81. Oshima now suggests reading the first sign as q[a¹]-, thus reading qadūt, “mud of (death),” at the head of the line (2014, 91, 258, 406, plate XXXIII). Epigraphically, this is uncertain, and semantically I don’t think it provides a better sense than other suggestions. The matter must remain open until a duplicate can inform us.

II 82: [iḫa]ssasannī-ma: The restoration follows Lambert 1960, 42. | my *inquirer*: Some prefer to understand šā’ilu here as reference to a šā’ilu-diviner, mentioned previously in I 52 and II 7 (so Oshima 2014, 91; von Soden 1990, 125; and Lambert 1960, 43). I do not see the relevance of the divinatory official in this particular context. Rather, the line simply describes a generic inquirer, who is trying to get the protagonist’s attention (so SAACT 7, 37; Foster 2005, 400; and Reiner 1985, 116). See chapter eleven for how this understanding fits the context well. (CAD does not list *Ludlul* II 82 under its šā’ilu, “dream interpreter” entry, Š/1, 110–12; rather, it likewise takes the word as a participle of šālu, Š/1, 275.)

II 83: [“wo]e!/: The restoration follows von Soden 1990, 125 and Foster 2005, 400. Oshima reads the initial word as [ba-ku]-[u¹]-a, “my professional wailers” (2014, 406 and 91) tentatively. I am not convinced there is room in MS II.F_{Sip}, rev. 7’ and MS II.H_{2Nin}, rev. 18 for three signs before the A, as he suggests. Oshima rejects the suggestion in SAACT 7, 21 to restore the opening of the line as [u₈]-a, since he thinks there is *too much* room for just this one sign (2014, 258). Restoring [u₈-u/ú]-a instead would address this objection. But he also notes that ū’a always takes a verb of speaking, especially qabū and šasū. This objection cannot easily be set aside since he is correct that these two verbs are the typical verbs used with the interjection. But bakū, the verb in II 83, sometimes occurs with direct speech. Note ARM 2 32: 13–14: kīma šeḫrim irṭup bakām umma šū-ma adi, “he continued crying like a baby, saying, ‘until [...]’” (see Jean 1950, 74–75) and the following physiognomic omen: šumma amēlu ibtanakki u ana ili amahḫarka, “If a man is constantly complaining with tears and says to his personal god, ‘I appeal to you!’ (see Böck 2000, 16; both texts are cited in CAD B, 36–37). Also, in at least one text, bakū is used in synonymous parallelism with šasū in an Akkadian translation of a late Sumerian liturgical text (VAT 227+, rev. 5, cited in CAD B, 36 as SBH p. 101): ibakki bēltu ina rigim maršiš išassu, “The lady weeps, she cries out laboriously.” Finally, *Ludlul* is a poetic text and sometimes shows idiosyncratic or unusual usages. In the final analysis: The present restoration, although tentative, is plausible. | *I could not control myself*: My translation follows Lambert (1960, 43) and von Soden (1990, 125), who understand ramān ul tīsi as loss of self-

control. Reiner's "I am not *conscious*" (1985, 116; see similarly Foster's "I have lost consciousness," 2005, 400), I think, goes too far. For the implications of the present translation, see chapter eleven.

II 84–89: For parallels to the theme of II 84–89, see Jaques 2015, 179 and Oshima 2014, 259.

II 86: *gate ... watering place*: As far as I can tell, translators typically understand these words to refer to the mouth (see, e.g., Lambert 1960, 293). However, when *bābu* is used physiologically—always qualified with another noun—it typically refers to the anus (*bāb šuburri*) or vagina (*bāb ūri*); see my comments in chapter six. If we were to understand *bābu* here as a reference to the orifice for vacating solid waste, i.e., the anus, then *mašqû* could refer to the orifice for vacating liquid waste.²⁰ Such an understanding of II 86 would work well with II 84–85, not through synonymous repetition (mouth, lips ≈ gate, watering place) but through a kind of physiological merism: sustenance could not come in through the protagonist's mouth and waste could not go out at the other end. One wonders therefore if II 86 could refer to the protagonist's experience of hunger-induced constipation and infrequent urination. One might take the presence of *ur'udu*, "throat," in II 87 as a strike against this "lower G.I. interpretation" of II 86. But one could also view that physiological feature as what connects the upper and lower parts of the body. Even if one sees the two terms in II 86 as primarily a reference to the mouth, the fact that both terms are being used metaphorically allows for this alternative understanding, in my opinion, even if only as a secondary connotation.

II 87: *constricted*: Literally, "covered" (*katim*). My rendering follows CAD K, 301 (see likewise, Foster 2005, 401 and Reiner 1985, 116).

II 88: *šumma*: Lambert takes this as a D predicative of *šāmu*, "to fix" (1960, 293), and renders it "(When grain) is served" (45). Oshima translates it as an emphatic, "indeed" (2014, 91; likewise, von Soden 1990, 125). My translation of it as a conditional follows Foster (2005, 401). | *daddaru*: This plant was something of a classic image of despair in contexts of lament, also occurring in the (SB) *Prayer of Aššurnaširpal to Ištar* (rev. 17, for which see von Soden 1974/1977, 42, line 66 and my treatment at <http://akkpm.org/P451997.html>); the (SB) *Great Prayer to Nabû* (rev. ii 7, for which see von Soden 1971, 58, line 179 and my treatment at <http://akkpm.org/P394371.html>); and the OB Akkadian *Man and His God* (obv. 29, for which see Lambert 1987, 190 and my treatment at <http://akkpm.org/P492288.html>).

²⁰ This metaphorical use of *mašqû* as a reference to the genitals would be unique; however, so is its use to refer to the mouth (CAD M/1, 384)!

II 89: *nablāt*: Lambert argues for reading *napšat*, “the life of” (1960, 293; see also Oshima 2014, 90–91, 407). For *nablāt*, see von Soden 1990, 125, n.89a. This reading probably also stands behind Reiner’s rendering, “sustenance” (1985, 116). A suggestive parallel in the *Prayer of Aššurnaširpal to Ištar*, rev. 17 tips the scale in favor of *nablāt*: *kurunnu ša nablāṭi (nab-la-ṭi) ana daddari <īmi>*,²¹ “*kurunnu*-beer, sustenance itself, <became> stinkweed to me.”

II 91–93: The restorations at the ends of these lines follow Lambert 1960, 44.

II 93: *became visible*: I derive *ussuqat* from *esēqu*, “to incise, carve (G), etch (D),” which I take to mean the outline of the bones are visible on or etched onto the skin (see *AHW*, 249). For parallels to II 93, see Jaques 2015, 207. | *covered*: Lambert prefers “covered (only) with my skin” here (1960, 45), which requires *armat*, a predicative, rather than a participle *ārimat*, as he notes (294). But MS II.F_{Sip}, rev. 15’, our only witness to the word, has a participle: *a-ri-ma-at*. So it seems the line as currently known communicates that the sufferer’s skin is covered by the etchings made by his bones. But, it may very well be—and, indeed, I assume it to be the case here—that MS II.F_{Sip} is corrupt. One can imagine a copyist looking at an AR(= ŠI-RI) and writing A-RI. Thus, the best reading, although not currently preserved in our MSS, is *armat*, adopted here.

II 94: *uriqta*: The word is a *hapax legomenon* (see CAD U/W, 227, which defines it as “yellow color” and renders it “jaundice” in the present line). Following Lambert, I suspect *uriqtu* is some kind of illness or malady (1960, 294). Oshima understands *uriqtu* as a body part, the nape of the neck, rather than a condition in this line (2014, 259–60). He also thinks the word is the subject of the second verb (260) and therefore restores *mah[šat]* at the end of the line, “the *nape*² was stri[cken]” (91). | *mah[šū]*: Lambert restores *mah[rū]*, “(my tissues) have caught” (1960, 44, 45). My restoration takes its lead from Foster’s rendering, “afflicted with” (2005, 401).

II 96: See Jaques 2015, 158 and Oshima 2014, 260–62 for the imagery here and similar expressions in other religious texts.

II 97: *useless*: My translation of *nadâ* follows CAD N/1, 93 (“my arms are inactive”) and Foster, “my arms being useless” (2005, 401).

II 98: *done for*: More literally, “collapsed” (see CAD M/1, 248).

²¹ Von Soden suggests restoring [*i²-mi²*] here (1974/1977, 42) or [*ma-šil*] (p. 45), though the remainder of the line is blank, as is the case in a number of lines (rev. 11–21) in this portion of the tablet, which must have been copied from a defective *Vorlage*. There might be enough room to add UGU-MU or something similar at the line’s end.

II 101: *labšat*: The final word of the line is only fully attested in MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 1, which I read *lab-šat* (likewise, von Soden 1990, 125, n.101a; Oshima 2014, 92; and implied in Reiner 1985, 116). Lambert prefers to read the signs *dan-nat*, “is severe” (1960, 44, 45). I think *labšat* makes for a more compelling parallelism with II 100.

II 108: *was scared*: Four MSS attest the main verb in the line with the same orthography, *iš-ḫu-tu* (MS II.D_{Nin}, rev. 15'; MS II.F_{Sip}, rev. 29'; MS II.H_{INin}, rev. 4'; and MS II.I_{Nin}, rev. 11'). Despite the expectation of a plural subject, I take the (singular) exorcist to be the subject of the verb, derived from a by-form of the root *šahātu*, “to fear, to become afraid” (see CAD Š/1, 86–88). Others have taken it in a similar manner: “shied away from” (CAD Š/1, 87; likewise, Reiner 1985, 116); “scheute” (von Soden 1990, 126, n.108a, where he notes that the verb should be understood as having a singular subject despite the final vowel); “recoiled from” (Foster 2005, 401); and “*was frightened off by*” (Oshima 2014, 93, 264). We can explain the orthography *iš-ḫu-tu* (for *išḫut*) as a CV-CV writing for /CVC/.²² In contrast, Lambert (1960, 45) makes the symptoms the subject, “[m]y complaints have exposed the incantation priest,” and apparently derives the verb from *šahātu*, “to strip, to tear away, to flay” (CAD Š/1, 92). This rendering would be the only attestation of a metaphorical use of the verb *šahātu*. This may not be a significant argument against the derivation, since *Ludlul* likes to use words in unusual ways (see SAACT 7, xxvi–xxviii). Although one might admit this alternate translation, “my symptoms ‘removed’ (lit. stripped away) the exorcist,” is possible, the metaphorical meaning of the verb would be quite ironic, since the same verb is often used when some kind of evil or disease is removed from one’s body (see CAD Š/1, 94). In my view, it is for precisely this (secondary) ironic effect that we should recognize *šahātu*, “to fear,” as the proper derivation of the verb in the line and see its usage as a subtle, ironic wordplay with *šahātu*, “to remove” a disease, as Worthington suggests (2009, 69, n.93). In any case, on either understanding, the sufferer is left without help.²³

II 109: *was confused*: Given the preterite in the previous line, I understand the verb *ūtešši*, attested in MS II.I_{Nin}, rev. 12' and MS II.N_{Huz}, rev. 37, to be a Dt preterite from *ešū*, with an ingressive sense, “became confused” (see CAD E, 379, where it prefers to parse the verb as a D perfect, as does, e.g., Oshima 2014, 93). Others (e.g., Foster 2005, 401; von Soden 1990, 126; and Lambert 1960, 45) prefer to make “omens” the subject, though the verb is singular. (Note a similar problem in the previous line.) MS II.D_{Sip}, rev. 16' shows the

²² See Worthington 2012, 183, 188 for this phenomenon.

²³ Much of the substance of this note follows Lenzi 2012, 50, n.45.

variant *imtašu*, “(the diviner) has forgotten (my omens).”²⁴ The verb in MS II.F_{Sip}, rev. 30’ is disputed. Williams (1952, 5) reads *ú-teš-šu(?)*, and Lambert (1960, 45), *ú-t[a]š-š[ám]-ma* (see similarly SAACT 7, 22). Neither reading produces a substantive variant. But, looking only at the photograph (Williams 1952, pl. II), neither reading seems epigraphically compelling.²⁵ Oshima (2014, 410) reads *ú-t[a]š-šir* (though he must have meant *-šir* for the final sign), which he translates “(the diviner) has looked over; abandoned” (93). This is epigraphically possible, though collation is required.

II 110: *ušāpi āšipū*: Note the alliteration here (see also Worthington 2009, 63, n.93).

II 111: *duration*: For *adannu*, see the note on II 1 above and further in chapter five. Worthington suggests a deliberate wordplay between *adannu* and the final verb in the line, *iddin* (2009, 69, n.93), since the “normal verb used to set an *adannu* is *šakānu*.”

II 114: *my grave lay open*: Although the language is different, the phrase here, *peti kimāhu*, recalls the same idea expressed in the opening hymn, “(On account of whose wrath,) graves are dug (lit. opened)” (I 13).

II 116: *how wronged is he*: The protagonist does not seem to be the only person confused by the apparent incongruence of the protagonist’s character or behavior and his suffering.

II 117–120: The solar imagery at the end of Tablet II (line 120) recalls the hopeful solar imagery at the end of Tablet I (line 120). Rather than fulfilling the protagonist’s earlier optimistic hopes for a change of fortune, Tablet II concludes with his situation having worsened and, what’s more, having spread to his friends and family so that even they now experience darkness. The hoped for light (I 120) belongs to the protagonist’s nemeses (II 117–118).

II 117: *ill-wisher*: The word *hādūya* literally means “one who rejoices on my account,” which in this context must be taken as a kind of gloating over the news of the protagonist’s severe physical debilities. “Ill-wisher” follows Foster’s rendering (2005, 401).

II 118: *brought the good news*: Akkadian *bussuru* means “to report pleasant news” (CAD B, 347). The report of the protagonist’s suffering is received by his nemesis as good news. One might even say that the story of Marduk’s suffering servant is received as a kind of “gospel” in that word’s etymological sense. Isaiah 52:7 uses a form of the Biblical Hebrew root בשר, cognate to

²⁴ SAACT 7, 22 reads this MS [...] *téš-ša’(TA)-a-ma*, but this seems unlikely to me now. As *mašū* is an *i*-class verb, we expect *imtaši* for the G perfect rather than *imtašu*, but note the by-form of the durative, *imaššu*, for the more typical *imašši* (CAD M/1, 397).

²⁵ The space for Williams’s ŠU is too large. Additionally, the traces do not commend reading ŠU. And, the space looks too small for Lambert’s reading.

Akkadian *bussuru* (Tawil 2009, 61–62), to describe messengers with pleasant news. That word was translated in LXX Isaiah 52:7 with a form of εὐαγγελίζομαι. This Greek rendering of Isaiah 52:7 is cited in Romans 10:12 with reference to the proselytizing preaching of the early Christian *kerygma*. The related Greek noun εὐαγγέλιον was taken into Latin, *euangelium*, which is the etymological basis for “Old English *godspel*, doubtless originally *gód spel* ... good tidings” (see *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. *gospel*, n.). The Old English words *gód spel* were eventually interpreted to mean *gód-spel*, “story about God.”

II 119: *grew dark*: Cooper (1975, 248–49) has persuasively revived Landsberger’s suggestion to read the first word as *īī* rather than *īdi* (see also Reiner 1985, 116; von Soden 1990, 126; Foster 2005, 401; and Oshima 2014, 92, 271), as Lambert did (1960, 46, 295). | *my entire family*: Literally, “(the day) belonging to all of my family.”

II 120: *among*: CAD Q, 215 takes *qereb* (in MS II.G_{Nin}, rev. 25'; MS II.N_{Huz}, rev. 48 reads *qerbi*) as a substantive, translating the beginning of the line “for my relatives and friends,” an interpretation defended by Oshima (2014, 272; see likewise Lambert 1960, 295). I follow Cooper’s idea (1975, 249) to take the *ša* as an anticipatory genitive, providing the antecedent to the pronominal suffix in *šamassun*, and to see the phrase *ša qereb mūdē* as a parallel to the previous line’s *ša gimir kimīya*. | *īkil*: The final verb is a crux. Two MSS, MS II.I_{Nin}, rev. 23' and MS II.N_{Huz}, rev. 48, have the ambiguous orthography *i-LAGAB*; MS II.L_{As}, rev. ii' 4' reads *i-ri-im*. My reading, which derives the verb from *ekēlu*, “to become dark,” is defended in chapter four (see page 216), where I explain the alternative, which derives the verb from *arāmu*, “to cover,” in light of the young scribe responsible for copying MS II.L_{As}.

3.3. TABLET III

III 1: MS II.N_{Huz}, rev. 49, the catchline for Tablet III in this witness, begins the line with EGIR-*šú*, *arkīšu*, “after it, later,” absent in all of the other MSS. It seems likely to me that the word is a scribal notation rather than evidence of a variant text. | As Moran (1985, 259, n.18) and Albertz (1988, 38) recognize, this line harks back to the description of Marduk’s hand in the opening hymn (see I 9, 11 and I 33).

III 2: *overwhelming*: The only MS to attest this line, MS III.E_{As}, obv. 2, reads [A]D-*rat*. I understand this to be *atrat*, “excessive,” thus, “overwhelming” (see likewise von Soden 1990, 126, n.2a and possibly Foster 2005, 402, “oppressive”). Others read *adrat*, “fearsome” (so Oshima 2014, 94–95, 413) or “alarming” (Lambert 1960, 48–49).

III 3: [*en*]nessu: The restoration follows Moran 1983, 259, n.18 (see also Oshima 2014, 94), which Foster adopted (and noted) in his translation (2005, 402, 409). | As Albertz recognizes (1988, 38), this line harks back to the description of Marduk’s anger as a flood in the opening hymn (see I 7).

III 4: [*aggres*]sive?: MS III.E_{AS}, obv. 4 is currently our only witness to the line. The suggestion to begin the line with [*da*]pnat ([*da*]p-na-at) is my own (see SAACT 7, 23, 38 and Lenzi 2017, 185). The adjective in the form *dāpinu* (so CAD D, 104–105; *dapīnu* in *CDA*, 56; *dapīnu* in *AHW*, 162) is associated with both Marduk and his planet, Jupiter.

III 5: [*Sev*]ere: I follow von Soden’s restoration at the head of the line (1990, 126, n.5a; likewise, Oshima 2014, 413): [*da*]n-nu, only attested in MS III.E_{AS}, obv. 5.

III 6: alertness: I read ^re¹-ru-ti in MS III.E_{AS}, obv. 6 at the head of the line with von Soden (1990, 127, n.6a; likewise, Oshima 2014, 94). | *I became delirious*: Literally, “they made [me] wander,” following Oshima’s restoration of the pronominal suffix, *ú-šar-pa-du-ni-[in-ni]* in MS III.E_{AS} [2014, 413]). For *rapādu* and mental wandering, see Lambert 1960, 295.

III 7: The restorations follow Lambert 1960, 48.

III 8: *šumr[ušāni]*: The restoration follows von Soden 1990, 127, n.8a. Lambert (1960, 48) restores *šum-r[u-ša-ku]*, rendering it “I am equally wretched” (likewise, Foster 2005, 402). | *munattu*: There is some disagreement about the precise meaning of this word. Streck, who briefly reviews scholarly opinion, contends that *munattu* designates a period of time (in the night); but, the word’s frequent parallel with *šuttu* suggests it “designates the part of the night in which one has meaningful dreams ... the last part of the night towards morning” (2017, 601; see, e.g., *Erra and Išum* V 43 [Cagni 1969, 126]). Oshima argues that *munattu* designates “a stage of sleep, probably just before waking up in the morning, or a dream seen in this state” (2014, 274). Whether a designation of time or sleep, the protagonist is clearly troubled by what happens during *munattu*. The technical designation for dreams that occur in waking moments is hypnopompic hallucinations (as opposed to hypnagogic hallucinations, which occur as one falls asleep). My translation, “waking hallucinations,” attempts to capture this idea.

III 9: *šikitt[a]*: This reading (already suggested in Lambert 1960, 48) follows the new MS published in Fadhil / Jiménez 2019, IM 124581 = Sippar 8, 114/2277 = MS III.J_{Sip}. This single column tablet from Sippar contains Tablet III 9–34 and supplies several new readings in the lines that follow.

III 10: *udduḥ*: Fadhil and Jiménez have shown that all three MSS attesting the end of this line, MS III.E_{AS}, obv. 10, MS III.i_{Sip} 7, and MS III.J_{Sip} 2’, support the present reading (2019, 159).

III 11: *I became aware*: More literally, “I recognized” or “I knew.” | *zuqqur*: The new MS III. J_{Sip} ended the debate about how to restore the final word of this line (see Fadhil / Jiménez 2019, 156, 159, with collation photos of MS III.E_{Aš}, obv. 11, the only other witness to the word, on p. 161). | *he was a towering figure*: The translation, more literally rendered, would be something like “his stature was elevated, built up high.” Fadhil and Jiménez translate it “he was of tremendous stature” (2019, 157).

III 13: *he entered*: MS III.J_{Sip} 4b' now provides a clear reading of the first word in the line, *irubam-ma* (Fadhil / Jiménez 2019, 156).

III 14: [*āmur*]šū-*ma*: The restoration takes its lead from von Soden’s suggestion but takes its present form in light of MS III.F_{Aš}, obv. 4', which reads [...]x¹-šū-*ma* (see already Lambert 1960, 344; Fadhil and Jiménez think the traces may support reading MUR in place of x [2019, 159, 161]). | *my flesh*: Langdon’s old restoration of the end of the line, UZU-*u*-[*a*], based on MS III.E_{Aš}, obv. 14 (1923, 50; also Lambert 1960, 48), is now confirmed by MS III.J_{Sip} 5', UZU.MEŠ-ú-*a* (Fadhil / Jiménez 2019, 156).

III 15: [*iqbt*]-*ma*: The restoration follows von Soden’s suggestion (1990, 127, n.15a); likewise, Oshima (2014, 94). Mayer (2014, 278) sticks with Lambert’s restoration at the beginning of the line ([*um*]-*ma*), claiming there is not enough room for two signs in MS III.F_{Aš}, obv. 5' (see also Lambert 1960, 344). Fadhil and Jiménez likewise think there is not enough room for two signs (specifically, *iq-bi*); they posit a restoration [šū]-*ma*, “he (said)” (2019, 156, 159). I think two signs would be tight, but there is probably enough room. If so, we might also consider [*e-nu*]-*ma*, “when (your lord sent me),” and put a verb of speaking at the head of the next line (see the note on III 16). Perhaps a duplicate will soon end the guessing. | *your lord*: I understand “lord” here to be a reference to Marduk rather than the human king, as Fadhil and Jiménez assert (2019, 156). See Oshima 2014, 275–76 for an exploration of the issue. Because the protagonist does not explicitly recognize Marduk as his lord in the unfolding events of the poem until III 51, it is not surprising that he mistakes “your lord” mentioned here with the king in III 18. See the comments to III 18.

III 16: There are four witnesses to this line, each of which contributes a segment to our reconstruction; none preserves the whole or the head of the line clearly. | *the distressed one*: The word is clearly attested only on MS III.C_{Bab}, obv. 9', the first part of which reads [...]x¹ šum-*ru*-šū. | *his recovery*: The last word of the line is only preserved in the new MS III.J_{Sip} 7': [...]a šu-*lum*-šū (Fadhil / Jiménez 2019, 156, 159) | *let ... await*: The verb is quite uncertain. The second half of the line in MS III.C_{Bab} reads [x (x)]-*qa*-*a* [...]. The only other witness to this word is on the very abraded MS III.E_{Aš}, obv. 16, which Oshima reads in its entirety: [... i]z-*ziz* [šum]-*r*[*u*-šū] x-*q*[*a*-...] (2014, 414). My reading follows Fadhil and Jiménez (2019, 156, 159), tentatively, who state

their own caution in the following: “[t]he very damaged traces of a line in VAT 9954 (= MS III.E_{AS}) ... seem, upon collation, compatible with a reading [o o (o)-m]a ṣum-ṣ[r[u]-ṣ^ou? l^oi-qa₁-^oa₁ ṣ[u-lum-ṣú], whence the tentative reading *li-qa-a* (< *qu’ú*) adopted here.” (159). | Restoring what came before *šumruṣu* is difficult. Oshima sees *iz-ziz* in both MS III.E_{AS} (cited previously) and MS III.F_{AS}, obv. 6’, which he reads: [x]-ṣ¹x¹-mi i[z]-zi[z ...] (2014, 414). I am inclined to read [x]-ṣ¹x¹-mi ṣum^ṣ-ṣ¹x¹. Thus, I do not think we have a form of *izziz* in the line. Might we restore the beginning of the line in MS III.F_{AS} [*i-t*]^a-mi to introduce the direct speech in the line (variant in MS III.E_{AS}: [*i-ta-m*]a)? This would not be necessary if we restore a verb of speaking or some other introductory formula at the head of the previous line, as I and others have done. But if we do not restore a verb of speaking in III 15, restoring *ūtami* may be a viable idea for the beginning of this line.²⁶ In any case, we must await a duplicate to resolve the uncertainties.

III 17: *ana mukīl rēšīya*: The ending of the line is clearly attested on the new MS III.J_{Sip} 8’ (Fadhil / Jiménez 2019, 156), requiring a reconsideration of the previous, broken readings of MS III.C_{Bab}, obv. 10’, which I now read [*a-n*]a mu- [...], and MS III.E_{AS}, obv. 17: [*ana*² / *a*²-na² m]u-k[il ...]. As Fadhil and Jiménez note, *mukīl rēšīya* should be understood as a plural (2019, 160 with references there). | [*I wok*]e up: Previous translators have posited an imperative from various verbs at the head of this line. But, with the discovery of the end of the line in MS III.J_{Sip}, as Fadhil and Jiménez state, a verb indicating the protagonist awakening is to be expected here; not an imperative (2019, 160). Even if the semantic content of the restored verb is settled, its precise morphology is quite uncertain. Fadhil and Jiménez tentatively suggest restoring a verb from the root *ēru*, either [*a-n*]ar-ram-ma (an irregular N stem; see already Lambert 1960, 345) or ([a]-ṣ¹ú¹-ram-ma, perhaps a G stem (2019, 160), “I woke up” (157). They think the latter is more likely of the two. As they note: We must await a duplicate to establish the reading with certainty.

III 18: [ṣa]: There is room for one or two signs in MS III.F_{AS}, obv. 8’ at the head of the line. In light of the subjunctive verb now fully attested in MS III.C_{Bab}, obv. 11’, *išpuru*, and the new reading for the end of the line, *a-me-lu* [ma]n-nu in MS III.J_{Sip} 9’ (Fadhil / Jiménez 2019, 156; see also MS III.C_{Bab}: [*a*]-me-lu [x x]), Oshima’s restoration at the head of this line is certainly correct (2014, 94, 414). | *the king*: Fadhil and Jiménez presume the unidentified king in this line is the same person called “your lord” in III 15 and both should be

²⁶ The other dreams to follow do not always have a verb of speaking or some other introduction before direct speech (see III 25–26, III 43–44). It may be then that neither III 15 nor III 16 has one. On the other hand, it is not impossible that both lines should have one (see III 35–36).

identified with the human king Nazimaruttaš (2019, 156), who is described as having become angry with the protagonist in Tablet I but who is not named in the poem until V 100. I assume, however, that the protagonist awakens confused, and his identification of the messenger's sender as the king here in this line is mistaken. Awakening from a dream and not understanding its meaning is a ubiquitous trope in Akkadian literature (see, e.g., the series of dreams in SB *Epic of Gilgameš* IV)—so ubiquitous that we really should expect Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan *not* to have understood what he saw in his initial dream, especially since there is no interpreter available. His confusion also explains very well why his servants do not answer him in III 19. What could they say without contradicting him? In addition, this confusion of identity may not have been intended to affect only the protagonist. Nearly every time *bēlu* occurs in *Ludlul* it refers to Marduk (see I 1, 3, 29, 41 [*Bēl*], III 51, V 1, 2, 3, 4, and 30). The instance of *bēlu* in II 21 is the only case in which the word *might* refer to a human lord, though in fact according to my scanning of the lines, *bēlu* in II 21 is in synonymous parallelism with *ilu* in II 22 and therefore does *not* refer to a human lord. Given this previous usage of the word in the poem, a reader of *Ludlul* has very good warrant for assuming that *bēlu* in III 15 refers to Marduk—at least until the protagonist himself causes the reader to call that identification into question with *his* question here in III 18. This question signals the protagonist's own uncertainty about the identity of the man who appeared in the dream—a man who is never identified for the protagonist or the reader. Given all of this, I think our poet intends to evoke ambiguity and uncertainty with this initial dream *in the reader* just as he presents the same in the protagonist himself.

III 19: *no one*: The new reading in MS III.J_{Sip} 10' (Fadhil / Jiménez 2019, 156) confirms, in essence, Oshima's previous conjectural restoration at the end of the line (2014, 94, 414).

III 20: *became unsettl[ed]*: MS III.J_{Sip} 11' now clearly attests the end of the line to be *ana ripittu iššabtū* (see Fadhil / Jiménez 2019, 156). *Ripittu* is a poorly attested word (see CAD R, 365) that means something like “unrest, commotion” or “errancy, straying” (CDA, 305), derived from *rapādu*, “to run, to run around, to roam” (CAD R, 147). Fadhil and Jiménez translate the last half of the line with “they took to their heels” (2019, 157). I wonder if the “straying” or “unrest” is cognitive rather than literal, though. In *Babylonian Theodicy* 212 *ripitta* has a cognitive meaning: *ripitta nakla šurraku tušarša*, “you make your clever mind acquire straying/errancy” (Oshima 2014, 160; see also the comment on III 6 above). Perhaps those who hear the protagonist's dream report are perplexed. If so, then I take the line to mean that when the protagonist awakens and asks about the content of his dream to his servants, they didn't know how to answer him (III 19) because they were taken aback and so wor-

ried about their master's well-being that they appear dumbfounded. In addition to their emotional reaction, we probably ought to infer from their lack of response (III 19) that they are unqualified to answer his question and/or to offer an interpretation of his dream.

III 22: *at nig[h]t*: Literally, “of my night.” For the pronominal suffix on this noun in the context of dreaming, see CAD M/2, 271 and, more generally, Mayer 2016, 206 *apud* Fadhil / Jiménez 2019, 160.

III 23: *the water of incantation*: MS III.J_{Sip} 14' provides the ending of the line, A.MEŠ *šip-ti* (Fadhil / Jiménez 2019, 156).

III 24: *in his hand*: MS III.J_{Sip} 15' (Fadhil / Jiménez 2019, 156) confirms Langdon's old restoration (1923, 51; see also Lambert 1960, 48) at the end of this line.

III 25: *Laluralimma*: For this figure, see Oshima 2014, 279. | *exorcist*: For over a hundred years—at least as early as Jastrow (1906, 149, n.46)—translators interpreted the ambiguous orthography *a-ŠIB/ŠIP* in MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 4 and MS III.D_{Sip}, obv. 4' (see Campbell Thompson 1910, 18) as *āšib*, “resident of” (see, e.g., Langdon 1923, 51; Lambert 1960, 48; von Soden 1990, 127; Foster 2005, 402; and SAACT 7, 23). Oshima (2014, 279, 415) suggests the reading *a-šip*, “exorcist of,” in light of (the then new) MS III.C_{Bab}, obv. 18', which preserves the first half of the word's logographic writing: MAŠ.[...]. MS III.J_{Sip} 16' (Fadhil / Jiménez 2019, 156) now confirms this reading unambiguously, ^{hi}MAŠ.MAŠ.

III 27: *he cast*: MS III.J_{Sip} 18' (Fadhil / Jiménez 2019, 156) now confirms Langdon's restoration of the end of this line (1923, 51).

III 28: *my body*: MS III.J_{Sip} 19' (Fadhil / Jiménez 2019, 156) now confirms Lambert's restoration of the end of this line (1960, 48).

III 31: *whose appearance*: MS III.J_{Sip} 22' (Fadhil / Jiménez 2019, 156) now confirms Lambert's restoration of the end of this line (1960, 48, which is based on Langdon 1923, 51). Note, however, that the MS reads ^rzi¹-mu-šú (i.e., with a third masculine singular pronominal suffix) rather than the expected ^rzi¹-mu-šá, a reading that could easily have arisen through scribal error.

III 32: Even *at some distance*: Literally, *nesiš lā tuḥḥati* means “not approaching from afar,” which Fadhil and Jiménez render “standing aloof” (2019, 158). Previous reconstructions for the first half of this line (e.g., SAACT 7, 24, following von Soden 1990, 128, n.31a, and Oshima 2014, 94, 281)—basically guesses—can be set aside now in light of the new indirect join of BM 39523 to MS III.C_{Bab} (= BM 55481; see Fadhil / Jiménez 2019, 161), which gives a clear reading to resolve what was previously disputed in MS III.D_{Sip}, obv. 11'. MS III.C_{Bab}, obv. 25' (= BM 39523: 4') reads *tuḥ-ḥa-a-ti*, thus providing the key to the idiom under discussion. See Fadhil / Jiménez 2019, 160. | *mašlat*: MS III.J_{Sip}

23' (Fadhil / Jiménez 2019, 156) now confirms Lambert's restoration of the end of this line (1960, 48).

III 34: *itta[šba' ina' idīya']*: The full restoration of the line was first suggested in SAACT 7, 24, which originates with Amar Annus,²⁷ and is based on MS III.E_{A5}, rev. 3, *i-TA[Š-...]*, which Lambert suggested reading *i-ta[š-ba' ...]* (1960, 345). Oshima prefers to restore *ittaz[ziz elīya]*, “she stood over me” (2014, 94, 416; see also Oppenheim 1956, 189 and Lambert's objection, 1960, 296), which parallels III 13 closely. In any case, this female figure in the third dream enters and is (likely) bodily proximate to the protagonist, perhaps standing over him or sitting beside him.

III 35: *aḫulapi*: For the meaning of *aḫulap* in supplicatory contexts, see Oshima 2014, 282–84, where he cites many examples. Both MSS that preserve the word fully show the final *i*-vowel in their orthography (MS III.E_{A5}, rev. 4, *a-ḫu-la-pi*; and MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 6, *a-ḫu-la-pi*), which SAACT 7, 39 takes as the first person pronominal suffix (see also Oppenheim 1956, 250; Lambert 1960, 51; Foster 2005, 403; and note Zgoll 2006, 71, 323 on III 38). But the orthography *a-ḫu-lap-ia* is the typical manner of indicating the first person singular suffix on this word (see CAD A/1, 213–14), and beginning the direct speech of the female figure with the pronouncement of mercy seems best contextually (see Oshima 2014, 95), which would preclude a reference in the first person to the protagonist. Note also the similar pronouncement in III 38, where MS III.D_{Sip}, obv. 17' has *a-ḫu-lap*.²⁸

III 36: Oshima (2014, 285, 416) tentatively suggests restoring, *uša[rḫiṣanni libbu]*, “she ma[de me confident],” but there may not be enough room in MS III.E_{A5}, rev. 5 for so many signs.

III 37: *u ina mimma šutti*: The phrase is preserved in MS III.B_{Sip}, obv. 9', *ù ina mim-ma*, and MS III.D_{Sip}, obv. 16', *ù¹ i-na mim-ma*. MS III.E_{A5}, rev. 6 reads *mì-mu-u* MÁŠ.GE₆. Although *ina mimma šutti* may be translated “in every dream” (e.g., Oshima 2014, 97) or “in any dream,” I wonder if we should render it in terms of the total content of the dream, “in all the dream,” with the inference that this essentially means “throughout? the dream.” A full restoration of the context will likely shed more light on this rather odd opening phrase. | *I** saw: Only MS III.E_{A5}, rev. 6 attests the verb, *i-ṭul* for *iṭṭul*. I wonder if our As-

²⁷ Anomalously, it was somehow attributed in our textual apparatus to von Soden 1990, 127, n.34—a note that does not exist!

²⁸ MS III.D_{Sip} does not attest *Ludlul* III 35. The same variation in orthography, i.e., between witnesses that show the final *i*-vowel vs. the one that does not, is attested in the MSS of I 96 (MS I.F_{Sip}, rev. 35', *a¹-ḫu-lap*; MS I.O_{A5}, rev. 5', *a-ḫu-[a-p]i*; MS I.Q_{Kal}, rev. 6', *a-ḫu-la-pi*; MS I.R_{Huz}, rev. 24, *a-ḫu-lap*) and III 55 (MS III.E_{A5}, rev. 24, *a¹-ḫu-la-pi*, and MS III.H_{Sip}, obv. 14', *a¹-ḫu-lap*).

syrian scribe has written an I when he should have written an AT, which differs from an I sign only in the addition of a final vertical wedge. The scribe of MS III.E_{AS} left out a line when he flipped his tablet from obverse to reverse; he also seems to have messed up in rev. 4 (= III 34), writing *qi-ba-a* for *iq-ba-a*. Might the third person verb here be a mistake? I assume it is. Perhaps a duplicate will soon confirm or correct this assumption.

III 39: *div[ination]*: The restoration at the end of the line follows Lambert (1960, 50), *bi-[ra]*. See already Campbell Thompson, who restored *bi-[i-ri]*, “the vision” (1910, 19, 21). | Unlike most recent translators, including SAACT 7, 39 (see also, e.g., Lambert 1960, 51; Butler 1998, 40; Foster 2005, 403; Zgoll 2006, 71, 323; Lenzi 2012, 58; and Oshima 2014, 97), I no longer think III 39 is direct speech from the female figure in the third dream. After reconsidering the dream sequence in light of the new readings in Fadhil and Jiménez’s article (2019), where they mention (on p. 161) a fourth dream beginning at III 39 (without specifying or translating the line), I started to look over the possibility.²⁹ Given the way the couplets fall out up to this point in the Tablet, we should expect the beginning of a new couplet here to be formed with line 40. On this line of reasoning, perhaps we are to see *bīru* in parallelism with *šuttu* in the next line; if so, it would be an unusual—apparently, unique—way of referring to a dream (see Zgoll 2006, 71). Instead, I think *ibrū bīra* describes the action of the fourth figure, named in III 40, Ur-Nintinugga, an exorcist (III 42). This phrase is a very well-known idiom for an act of divination (note *Lud-lul* II 6, *bārū ina bīri*) or the results obtained thereby (CAD B, 264–65). Given that the rest of the quatrain describes Ur-Nintinugga, it stands to reason that this line also describes him—via his action. *Ayyumma* is a vague way to introduce him, to be sure. But, the vagueness may be appropriate initially as the dream’s description commences.

III 40: *Ur-Nintinugga*: For this figure and the reading of his name, see most recently Oshima 2014, 285–86. | [*B*]aby[on]: Oshima, building on Lambert (1960, 50–51), suggests MS III.E_{AS}, rev. 9 reads [T]IN.T[IR^{ki}] (2014, 416), which would provide an appropriate locale for Ur-Nintinugga, who delivers Marduk’s message. | [*I saw*?]: Oshima suggests the restoration [*a-na-aṭ-ṭal*] at the end of the line (2014, 96, 416), but I am not convinced that there is room for four more signs on the line in MS III.E_{AS}. There may only be room for three, thus, [*aṭ-ṭu-ul*], which is also the expected preterite. Although a form from *naṭālu* is

²⁹ Oppenheim (1956, 250) and Zgoll (2006, 16, 148, 269, 365, 552) likewise identify four dreams in the context. Oppenheim attributes the last one not to the protagonist but to someone else (introduced in what is now III 39). Langdon (1923, 52) seems to have a similar understanding of III 39.

in the expected semantic domain of seeing, the line may have ended with *a-mur*. It is also possible that there was no verb of seeing here at all. In any case, only a duplicate with resolve the matter.

III 42: *writing-[board]*: The restoration follows Lambert 1960, 50, likely based on Langdon 1923, 52. Whatever the actual content of the writing board (see Oshima 2014, 286–89 for a review of various suggestions—all speculative, and note Foster 1991, 28, where he wonders if the text of *Ludlul* itself is the implied inscription), the association of exorcism here with a writing board, and thus scholarly literacy, certainly intends to elevate the authority and prestige of the craft and thereby also Ur-Nintinugga. A similar association for *asûtu*, “the craft/corpus of the physician,” occurs in the *Gula Hymn of Bulluṣarabi*, lines 145–146: *qan tuppu ina qātēšu išruka / asûtu pirištu ilī ana qātēya umanni*, “He (i.e., Ea) gave me (i.e., Gula) the tablet stylus from his hands, the physicians’ corpus, the secret of the gods, he made my responsibility” (Lambert 1967, 124–25; see also Lenzi 2008, 98–100 for my interpretation of these lines with regard to the cluster of associations between Ea, Gula, *asûtu*, writing, and secrecy).

III 43–46: These lines have provoked a variety of translations due to the ambiguity of the verb *ubilla* in III 44 and III 45 (i.e., is it a first person or a third person verb?), the uncertainty of the antecedents to the pronominal suffixes in III 45–46, and the lack of any indication of where Ur-Nintinugga’s direct speech ends. My translation here (compare SAACT 7, 39) is based on the assumption that these lines form a quatrain of two couplets. In good Akkadian narrative poetic fashion, the first couplet announces an action, and the second couplet provides the description of the fulfillment of the action. Ur-Nintinugga speaks in the first couplet in a first person voice. The protagonist, resuming his own first person voice, then describes the figure’s subsequent actions in the third person. These two men are the central actors, each of whom mentions another, secondary actor associated with them in the first and fourth lines of the quatrain, respectively: Marduk, who sends Ur-Nintinugga (III 43), and Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan’s servant, who receives the bandage (III 46), presumably to apply it. In the second couplet, the bandage moves from Ur-Nintinugga’s hands (III 45) to the servant’s (III 46).

III 44: *Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan*: The protagonist of the poem is finally named. He is also named in Tablet V 111 and 119. For an overview and brief discussion of the administrative texts that associate Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan and king Nazimaruttaš, named in V 100, see the Introduction. For discussions of the meaning of the protagonist’s name in and for the poem, see the appendices in chapters eight and nine.

III 44–45: *ṣi[mda]*: The ends of MS III.D_{Sip}, obv. 22’ and 23’ read *ṣi-i[m-x]*. Restoring these lines with *ṣi[mda]*, thus completing III 44 and III 45, follows

von Soden 1990, 128, nn.43b and 44a. See likewise, Foster 2005, 403; SAACT 7, 24; and Oshima 2014, 96, 291. Campbell Thompson (1910, 19) suggests *šī[mra]*, “prosperity,” followed by Langdon (1923, 52) and Lambert (1960, 50, 51), which looks more like a Joban parallel than a contextually plausible restoration. Here Marduk delivers his healing bandage, which was praised in the opening hymn (I 22).

III 46: *he entr[usted²]*: The restoration *ipq[id]*, as best as I can discern, goes back to Landersdorfer (1911, 17) and has been widely adopted ever since (see, e.g., Langdon 1923, 53; Lambert 1960, 50; SAACT 7, 24; Oshima 2014, 96). It is a plausible but not certain restoration. Mayer suggests *ipš[ih]* with Marduk as the subject, which forms the basis for his novel interpretation of III 46 (2014, 279). | *my servant*: MS III.D_{Sip}, obv. 24' has [*a-n*]*a mut-tab-bi-li-ía* and MS III.H_{Sip}, obv. 5', [*a-na m*]*ut-tab-bi-le-e*. Mayer takes the reading in MS III.H_{Sip} as definitive evidence that both MSS must be understood as attesting a plural form of the substantivized participle rather than a singular form. If he is right, this plural would create an incongruence for my translation, which takes *muttabbilu* as the antecedent of the pronominal suffix on *qātuššu*, “his hand”; thus, one servant (see also Lambert 1960, 51; von Soden 1990, 128; Foster 2005, 403; and Oshima 2014, 97). If, however, we give the reading in MS III.D_{Sip} the definitive role, then we can explain the reading in MS III.H_{Sip}, written in a Neo-Babylonian ductus, as a copyist's error. (Perhaps the scribe mistook a IA as E.) One can hope that future duplicates to this line will clear away the uncertainties.

III 47: *he sent*: The subject of the verb is Marduk, the one who sent the messenger bearing the message (see III 43).

III 49: This line is poorly understood with a variety of interpretations and restorations (see Oshima 2014, 291), none of which is entirely compelling. We must await a duplicate for a more certain understanding of the line. | *protracted²*: Lambert reads MS III.D_{Sip}, obv. 27' *i²1-ri-ku*, “protracted,” apparently a poetic by-form of the adjective *arku*. Following von Soden (1990, 128, n.48a), SAACT 7, 24 reads *e-re-ku*, “I was awake” (39; see also Foster 2005, 403). But, the new MS III.H_{Sip}, obv. 8' unambiguously reads *i-ri-ku*, first noted by Mayer (2014, 278; see now also Oshima 2014, 417). Oshima interprets these signs as *i-tal-ku*, “departed” (97; in the subjunctive). | *a snake [...]*: SAACT 7, following von Soden (1990, 128, n.48b), restores *i[t-taš-lal]* at the end of the line, “(a snake) slithered by” (pp. 24, 39; see likewise Foster 2005, 403). Oshima restores the final word as *et-[gu-ru]*, “intertwined” (291–92, 417) and translates the line as a subordinate clause: “(When,) *from* the illness, the intertwined snake departed ...” (97). For now, I leave the lacuna unfilled. However, in the spirit of speculation, one may very well wonder if the role of the snake at this post-deliverance moment in the narration intends to provide a

good omen. In this regard, note the opening line to *Šumma ālu* XCVI: [*šumma amēlu*] *ūm ana ili utennu sūqa ina alākīšu šerru ana pānī[šu ...]estlissu šemat aranšu pa[tir]*, “[if] a snake [...] in front of a man when he is walking in the street on the day he prayed to his personal god, [...] his [p]rayer was heard, his guilt is forg[iven]” (see Rendu Loisel 2016, 301, line 44’–45’ for the text).

III 50: [...]: Oshima (2014, 96, 292, 417) tentatively suggests restoring S[AL.LAGAB] = *b[irītu]*, “fettters,” at the end of both MS III.D_{Sip}, obv. 28’ and MS III.H_{Sip}, obv. 9’, which is based on Lambert (1960, 51). But the old photograph of MS III.D_{Sip} (Ph395) shows what looks to be U[D x].

III 51–52: This couplet reverses the anger expressed in I 41–42. In I 41–42 *Bēl* and *Marduk* are in synonymous parallelism; in III 51–52, in contrast, it is *bēlī*, “my lord,” and *Marduk* that are in synonymous parallelism. See the note on I 41 above.

III 51: *was st[illed]*: The restoration of the final verb in the line, *i-[nu-ḥu]* (so Lambert 1960, 50), goes back to Langdon (1923, 52; see similarly, Landersdorfer 1911, 18). | *my lord*: It is only here in the poem that the protagonist explicitly accepts the lordship of Marduk as his own (see Lenzi 2012, 43, n.18 and Haubold 2019, 217, 221, n.37; see also the notes on I 41, III 15, and III 18 above).

III 52: *ipp[ašru]*: MS III.D_{Sip}, obv. 30’ reads *ip-p[a-...]* and MS III.H_{Sip}, obv. 11’, *i[p-...]*. I follow von Soden in restoring a form of *pašāru* (1990, 128, n.51a). Lambert (1960, 50; see already Langdon 1923, 53) restores a form from *pašāhu* (likewise, Oshima 2014, 96, 417). There is no substantive difference between these two options.

III 53: [...]: The partial sign in MS III.H_{Sip}, obv. 12’ precludes restoring a form of *maḥāru* (e.g., *i[m-ḥu-ru]*), as might seem likely from the content of the first half of the line. See Lambert’s copy in George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 157.

III 54: *his ... [benevolent a]ttention*: The restoration [*nashu*]r_{šu} at the head of the line (in MS III.D_{Sip}, obv. 32’; MS III.E_{Aš}, rev. 23; and MS III.H_{Sip}, obv. 13’) follows von Soden’s suggestion (1990, 128, n.53a; see likewise Foster 2005, 403 and Oshima 2014, 96, 417). If correct, the word harks back to the opening hymn’s use of the N-stem of *saḥāru* to describe Marduk’s mercy: “like a cow with a calf, he is ever attentive (*ittanashāra*)” (I 20). | *he re[ve]al[ed]*: Following Oshima’s suggestion, I read *ú-ka[l-l]i-[mu]* in MS III.H_{Sip}. I restore a subjunctive because I think III 51–55 may form one long chain of subordinate clauses. The translation of the line is, however, tentative and open to other interpretations (see Oshima 2014, 293–94).

III 55: [*iqb*]ú: The restoration at the head of the line modifies von Soden’s suggestion (1990, 128, n.54a) in light of the reading [...]ú in the new MS III.H_{Sip}, obv. 14’. This suggests the verb at the head of the line is in the subjunctive. | “*Mercy! He is uf[terly exhaust]ed*”: See III 35 for the same expres-

sion. Strictly speaking, Marduk did not utter this expression that the protagonist attributes to him; it is the female dream figure who does in III 35. In any case, the protagonist clearly sees his announced deliverance here as the equivalent of Marduk's relenting of his anger (III 51–52), receiving of the protagonist's prayers (III 53), and turning toward the protagonist with benevolence (III 54).

III 57: *šuklulu*: The reading follows MS III.H_{Sip}, obv. 16', *šuk-lu-lu*. MS III.E_{Aš}, rev. 26 reads *du-lul*, which must be an error (see Oshima 2014, 294), though it is unclear to me how one might explain its origin.

III 58–61: Finally, here in these broken lines we find the protagonist's first explicit mention of his sin.

III 61: See the note to III 66 below.

III 62: It is unclear how MS III.E_{Aš}, rev. 31 fits into this line: [...] 'MI ID' [...].

III 63–64: These lines are not currently preserved in any published witnesses.

III 65–66: In my reconstruction of the text, these lines are only represented by traces in MS III.D_{Sip}, rev. 1'–2'.

III 66: Oshima reads MS III.D_{Sip}, rev. 2' as [...-t]i-i[a ...] (2014, 418) and aligns this with MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 8, thus restoring the text I have placed in III 61 above (without the conjectural conjunction at its head) here at III 66. Others place MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 8 at III 61, as above (see Lambert 1960, 50, where his line 60 should have been line 61 [see p. 345]; von Soden 1990, 129; Foster 2005, 403; and SAACT 7, 24). Oshima's objection to placing the line at III 61 is also based on the perceived available space in MS III.E_{Aš}, rev. 30 and MS III.H_{Sip}, obv. 20', both of which have room for at least one wide sign or two regular signs at the beginning of the line. This gap is the reason Lambert proposes a conjunction at the head of III 61, written *ù* for MS III.E_{Aš} and which now must also be restored in MS III.H_{Sip}. If MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 8 is to align with them at III 61, then we must posit the conjunction's absence in that witness.

III 68: [*he a*]pplied: The reconstructed text, [*utte*]h^ham-ma (see Lambert 1960, 52, which is based on Langdon [1923, 54]), literally means "he brought (his spell) near." A school tablet, MS III.g_{Sip}, obv. 2'—unavailable to Lambert in 1960—may provide confirming evidence for the restoration, but its reading is quite difficult. A conservative reading of what remains yields: 'x x¹-(x)-e]h-¹ha-am¹-ma. Gesche, the first to publish the tablet, reads [*ut*]-[*tè-eh-ha-am*]¹-ma (2001, 558), which SAACT 7 follows (24). Oshima, who thinks the first traces in the line belong to III 67,³⁰ reads [*ut-tè-e*]h-¹ha-am¹-[m]a (2014, 418). And Mayer reads [*ù-tè-e-h-ha-am*]¹-ma (2014, 279). Perhaps it is best to understand

³⁰ The excerpt of *Ludlul* puts two poetic lines on each line of the tablet.

the first x in the conservative reading as the last sign of III 67. The second x might be read $\text{r}\acute{u}^1$. A missing sign, the [(x)] above, could then be restored as $\text{t}\acute{e}$ (or similar value). The resulting verb would be $\text{r}\acute{u}^1\text{-}[\text{t}\acute{e}\text{-e}]\text{h-}^1\text{h}\text{-am}^1\text{-ma}$. In any case, we are all still looking to confirm the older restoration in one way or another. Lambert's new copy of the tablet (George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 158), unfortunately, does not resolve the issue. | *his spell of life and well-being*: The reconstruction of the second half of this line has caused considerable disagreement, even after the publication of MS III.g_{Sip}, rev. 2', which Gesche (2001, 558) reads *ta-a-šú šá ŠE ŠU GÚM* (?) (see Lambert 1960, 52–53 and von Soden 1990, 129, n.77b; and, subsequent to Gesche, SAACT 7, 24,³¹ Mayer 2014, 279, and Oshima 2014, 99, 418). Fadhil and Jiménez (2019, 159, n.9) provide the best reading of the school tablet, *šá DIN u šu-lum*, which they also find in a collation of MS III.D_{Sip}, rev. 4': $\text{r}\acute{š}\acute{a}^1\text{ b}[\text{a}]\text{-}^1\text{la}^1\text{-}^1\text{tu}^1$ *³² *u š[ul-mi]* and in an unpublished duplicate, although the nouns are transposed: BM 54633 +, obv. 8': *te-e šul-mi ù ba-la-tu*.³³

III 69–75: These lines reverse the demonic attacks described in II 51–57.

III 69: [*he dro*]ve: The restoration at the head of the line follows Lambert 1960, 52.

III 70: *he carrie[d off]*: The Sippar school tablet MS III.g_{Sip}, obv. 3' clearly reads *ú-kaš-šid <<di>> di-i* in the second half of this line (see Gesche 2001, 558; compare Oshima 2014, 419), indicating that the verb is *ukaššid*, “he expelled.” See the copies in Gesche 2001, 558; Oshima 2014, pl. XI; and Lambert's in George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 158. MS III.D_{Sip}, rev. 5' reads *ú-bi[l ...]* (so Lambert 1960, 52, which goes back to Campbell Thompson 1910, 19; see Lambert's copy [1960, pl. 14] and the old photograph PhK396). Because the school tablet preserves the full verb clearly, its reading was adopted in the composite text of SAACT 7 (24). However, it may very well be that our young scribal student has made a mess of things in his exercise tablet, mistaking *ú-bi-il* in his *Vorlage* for *ú-kaš-šid <<di>>*. In any case, my preferred reading now is in MS III.D_{Sip}.

III 71: [*he se*]nt: The restoration follows Lambert 1960, 52.

III 73: *uštēš[ir]*: Our only legible witness to the final verb is MS III.D_{Sip}, rev. 8', which reads *uš-te- $\text{r}\acute{x}^1$ [...]*. SAACT 7, 25, following von Soden's suggestion

³¹ My reading of the school tablet, which was not registered in the apparatus of SAACT 7, posited some errors, *šá <ú>-še-su¹(ŠU) lum-<nu>*, in an attempt to harmonize it with Lambert's copy of MS III.D_{Sip}. The error lay with me, of course, who did not differentiate the four wedges—which I read ŠE (and Oshima reads KAM; 2014, 418)—comprising DIN and *u*.

³² Lambert's copy has SU U (1960, pl. 14).

³³ I have not had access to this duplicate, which I assume will be published in Häntinen's new edition.

(1990, 129, n. 82 a), restores (*šadâ*) *uš-te-l[i]*, “he made *her* disap[pear] (39). Lambert restores *uš-te-e[š-šir]*, *ušteššir*, a durative from *ešēru*. Similarly, Oshima: *uš-te-e[š-šir]* (2014, 419). Given how little room there is in the break at the end of the line, perhaps it is best simply to restore *uš-te-š[ir]* (see Langdon 1923, 54), which I think is compatible with the traces and the typical shape of the BU (= *šir*) sign on this tablet.

III 74: *the current of the waters*: For an explanation of the cosmographical understanding behind the image in this line, see Oshima 2014, 295–96.

III 77: *like smoke*: Contrary to previous translations and specifically my translation in SAACT 7, 39, Streck argues that at the head of this line “*kīma* introduces a comparative clause: ‘He removed unpleasant sleep, as if the heavens were filled with smoke’. Note that *šamē* is a Late Babylonian nominative” (2013, 220; compare also von Soden’s translation [1990, 129]). Given, however, the other simple comparatives in the first half of III 79 (*imbariš*) and III 81 (*kīma našī mūšī*) and the similar syntax III 77 shows with III 79, I think a simple comparison makes the best sense here.³⁴ | *uštābil*: MS III.g_{Sip}, obv. 7’, which reads [...]-*bil*, establishes the proper reading of the final verb in the line (see Mayer 2014, 279 and Oshima 2014, 419), contrary to Gesche (2001, 559) and SAACT 7, 25, who read *uš-ta-riq*. (MS III.D_{Sip}, rev. 12’ provides the first two syllables clearly.)

III 78–79: *Ludlul* III 78 is only attested on MS III.D_{Sip}, rev. 13’ and MS III.g_{Sip}, obv. 7’. The former reads: *ina u₈-ú-a a-a né-’u-u ni-še-eš*; the latter: *u₈-ú-a a-a né-’u-ú(-?)(<<?)u(>>?) ni-šī-iš*. (Note the assonance and alliteration.) The part of the line after (*ina*) *ū’a ayya* has presented problems for translators. In fact, Lambert left it untranslated, despite having a clear reading of MS III.D_{Sip} (1960, 53; see CAD N/2, 199–200). SAACT 7, 25 follows Gesche (2001, 559) in reading the *u* in MS III.g_{Sip} as part of the previous word, rendering the phrase (like Gesche), “[*m*]y turning to the people³⁵ (with ‘woe’ and ‘alas’)” (39; see also Foster 2005, 404, with less certainty). Despite providing a clear object (the infinitive *nē’u*) for the verb in III 79 (*ušatbi*), this understanding is no longer compelling to me. Alternatively, perhaps the *u* in MS III.g_{Sip} is the conjunction (see Oshima 2014, 419, presumably left out in MS III.D_{Sip} due to the preceding U), in which case we have two coordinated words at the end of the line. Oshima takes the first word as the infinitive of *nē’u*, “to turn back” (see p. 529), and the second as the same from *našāšū*, “to shake” (Oshima 2014, 296). He renders the line “[i]n *the cries of pain* (lit.: woe and grief),

³⁴ If we had other MSS preserving this phrase beyond MS III.D_{Sip}, rev. 12’, which reads *ki-ma qut-ru*, the issue may not have even arisen.

³⁵ Compare von Soden, who understands the *-iš* as having a comparative sense (1990, 129).

pushing and shaking (*me*)” (99), which seems unclear to me; and this understanding provides no object for the verb in III 79. (It seems likely to me that the *u* in MS III.g_{Sip} is simply another scribal mistake by our somnolent(?) student scribe.) The rendering of the line adopted here takes its lead from a few lines in an incantation against *māmītu* in *Bīt Rimki* (Mayer’s Šamaš 44; 1976, 415–16),³⁶ which resonate with the present context in *Ludlul* III.

[*lis*]si šār bēri ina zumrīya (compare III 83)
 [*kīma*] qutri litelli šamē (compare III 77)
 [*kī*]ma imbari linē’a ugāršu (compare III 79)

[May it (i.e., the curse) with]draw far, far away from my body,
 May it continuously ascend to the heavens [like] smoke,
 May it turn back like fog to its field (i.e., whence it came).

These lines do not describe (wished-for) actions that are completely congruent with those of Marduk in *Ludlul* III 78–79, but they are nevertheless suggestive. Marduk’s turning back (*nē’u*) of the protagonist’s groans and laments in III 78 is likened to (the turning back of) a (broken) oath that brings evil.³⁷ In III 79 Marduk lifts (*ušaṭbi*) them (i.e., the elided object of the verb in III 79 is the same as the stated object of the infinitive in III 78) like a fog. | *that co[vered]*: Only MS III.D_{Sip}, rev. 13’ preserves this line, and it breaks before the line’s completion. It reads: *ú-šat-bi im-ba-riš* KI.TIM *uš-[x (x)]*. Streck (2013, 220) suggests restoring *uš-[taṣ-bit]*, citing a similar phrase in line 261 of *Sargon’s Eighth Campaign*: *quturšunu ušaṭbī-ma pān šamē kīma imbari ušaṣbit*, “their smoke rose and covered the face of the heavens like a fog” (Mayer 2013, 122 and Frame 2021, no. 65, line 261 [p. 295]). However, the first verb in III 79, *ušaṭbi*, suggests the fog is rising so we do not expect the *erṣetu* to be the thing covered in *Ludlul*.³⁸ And, in his posited parallel, it is the heavens that are covered. Taking a different tack: The context here in *Ludlul* emphasizes putting distance between the protagonist and his former afflictions (note the use of the Š preterite of *nesū* in III 81 and the use of *šār bēri* in III 83), which might

³⁶ See Læssøe 1955, 58, lines 86–88 for the text and the parallels from Aššur in Maul 2019, 1.233, lines 36–38.

³⁷ Note that *māmītu* and *nīšu* appear together in many texts related to the evils associated with broken oaths and curses. See simply CAD M/1, 192–194. For legal and socio-religious aspects of *māmītu* and how it fits into the Mesopotamian worldview and therapeutic repertoire, see Maul 2019, 1.9–24 (German), 33–46 (English).

³⁸ In addition, CAD Q, 326 notes that the verb *ušaṣbit* in line 261 of the Sargon text, is likely an error for *ušaṣip* or *ušaṣtim*. The phrase at the head of line 216—just before the citation above—uses *ušaṣbit* to describe setting fire to houses. Thus, it may very well be the case that the scribe mistakenly repeated the verb at the end of the line to describe the smoke.

commend a restoration in the second verb of III 79 that does the same. In keeping with this idea, Oshima restores the verb as *uštariḏ*, “made them descend” (2014, 419, 99), that is, to the netherworld (*eršetu*). But this seems somewhat incongruent with the first verb in the line. And, we would likely expect a preposition before *eršetu* if the verb is from *arādu*. Because there only seems to be room enough for one more sign on the tablet in this line (see the restorations in the several lines previous to and following III 79 in MS III.D_{Sip} [Oshima 2014, 419]), we might consider restoring the verb to a Š preterite of *rēqu*, *ušrīq*, used elsewhere in describing the banishment of *nīšu* (Reiner 1956, 136, line 71). If so, I think we should expect a preposition indicating the direction of the removal, e.g., *ana eršeti*. (Since only one MS attests this line, perhaps the preposition has fallen out of it. But, this is a desperate measure to save what is essentially a guess.) What if, however, we are looking in the wrong direction for the restoration? All three of the above proposals assume that III 79 has a syntax something like III 81 and III 83, that is, the two verbs in the line describe Marduk’s actions. But, what if the syntax in III 79 parallels III 77, that is, one verb describes Marduk’s action (*uštābil* / *ušatbi*—note the homophony) and the other is part of a subordinate phrase that modifies the noun in the comparison (*qutru* / *imbaru*). This parallel syntax would also create a merism between the heavens in III 77 and the earth/netherworld in III 79, indicating the complete banishment of evils in the quatrain (III 76–79). The problem is finding a verb that fits with the preserved initial sign (*uš*[...]), the imagery of the fog, and the available space. *Sahāpu* and *katāmu* stand out as likely candidates among verbs commonly used with *imbaru* (CAD I/J, 107–108), but I do not see any way to make sense of the line with a causative form of either, which, in any case, would require several signs fitting into the break. The only other real possibility that I can imagine is a ŠD form of *malū* (CAD M/1, 188), *ušmallū* (*uš*-[*mal-lu*]).³⁹ This is my tentative best guess, which likely requires us to imagine the scribe violating his right margin on the tablet. Only a duplicate, of course, will resolve the uncertainties.

III 80: [*s*]ū’iš *kabt[u]*: The restorations follow von Soden (1990, 129, n.89a).

III 81: *uštes[si]*: The restoration follows Lambert (1960, 52).

III 82: *šibih mū[šī’]*: The restoration revives an old suggestion from Campbell Thompson 1910, 20 and Langdon 1923, 55, tentatively. Lambert (1960, 52) prefers *šibih mū[ti]*, “deathly shroud” (53), which has been widely adopted in translations and editions ever since (e.g., SAACT 7, 25 and Oshima 2014, 98). Given the verb *unammir*, “he brightened,” in III 83 with reference to

³⁹ See already Campbell Thompson (1910, 20), who restored *uš*-[*mal-li*(?)].

the protagonist's vision, however, which reverses the description in the present line, an image of darkness here rather than death would seem to fit the context very well. As for *šibḫu*, the word is a *hapax* and may not mean "shroud" at all, as CAD Š/2, 377 indicates—a meaning that may very well have been influenced by Lambert's restoration (cited in the entry). In *AHw*, von Soden assigns the meaning "Ablagerung" (1227) to the word, based on the meaning of the (rather poorly attested) verb from which it is derived, *šabāḫu* (*AHw*, 1118, s.v. *šabāḫu* I; CAD Š/1, 3, s.v. *šabāḫu* B), "to settle, be deposited" (so *CDA*, 341), though von Soden translates it here in the poem with "Schorf" (1990, 129). Another noun derived from the same verb may help us discern the meaning of *šibḫu* here, namely, *šabīḫu*. Aside from a couple of broken lexical texts, this word occurs exclusively in celestial omens and a couple of *tamītu*-queries (CAD Š/1, 11), suggesting *šabīḫu* may be something of a technical term. When a *šabīḫu* covers the moon or Venus, it changes its appearance. The CAD suggests the word denotes "some atmospheric phenomenon resembling dust or mist" (11). I suggest with my translation "haze" that *šibḫu* may also be some kind of atmospheric phenomenon. Such a meaning for the word compliments well the blurry eyes at the head of the line. Further support may be found in the last line of the previous couplet (III 81), where we have the image of the "dew of night" (*nalši mūši*), a feature within the same semantic sphere as suggested here for *šibih mūši*.

III 83: *niṭ[li]*: The restoration follows Lambert (1960, 52) but see already Campbell Thompson 1910, 20.

III 86: *ni[pissu]*: The restoration follows Lambert (1960, 52).

III 87: [*at once*]: Oshima (2014, 98, 420) reasonably suggests restoring *zamar*, "immediately," in the gap at the end of MS III.D_{Sip}, rev. 21'. (There is room for at least two signs.) One might also consider *sur-riš*, "quickly, at once," as I have tentatively restored. Note the similarities to the *Great Prayer to Marduk*, no. 1, line 60, *rumme maksīšu lippuš surriš*, "loosen his shackles that he may breathe freely at once" (Oshima 2011, 160 and CAD N/1, 288).

III 88: Aside from the opening two signs in the line in MS III.B_{Sip}, rev. 4', MS III.D_{Sip}, rev. 22' is our only textual witness here, which reads *šap-ta-a-a šá il-lab-ba il-qa-a KAL-ṛx¹-[x]*. Despite having all but the last sign or two, translators do not agree on the line's meaning. | *which were parched*⁷: The precise meaning of *illabbā* here with reference to the protagonist's lips is disputed. Lambert translated "[m]y raving lips" (1960, 53); von Soden, "[m]eine Lippen, die ausgedörrt waren" (1990, 130); Foster, "[m]y babbling lips" (2005, 404); SAACT 7, "[m]y lips, which were raging" (40); and Oshima, "my lips, which had been grumbling (lit. was raging)" (2014, 99, 298). If the form is to be derived from *labābu* A, "to rage" (CAD L, 7), then we expect something along the lines of the protagonist's lips exhibiting anger (thus, "raging") or, perhaps

better, showing some other sign of his being in a heightened emotional state (“raving,” “babbling,” etc.), all of which, however, would seem to require some kind of speech or utterance (see Oshima’s completion of the line below). But, the following lines in the poem describe the protagonist’s mouth, teeth, and tongue as tightly shut and unable to function properly (III 90–95). Whatever *illabbā* means, I no longer think it involves articulation. Unlike the other lexica, the CAD recognizes a homonymous *labābu* B (L, 7), attestations of which are limited to here in *Ludlul* III 88 and an OB letter. The entry bases the meaning of the proposed root on the adjective *labbu* A, “withered(?)” (CAD L, 23), which is exclusively used in lexical contexts describing unhealthy date palms (e.g., *Nabnitu* C, 160–166; see MSL 16, 268–69).⁴⁰ If we follow this admittedly precarious etymological connection, we might understand the protagonist’s lips in *Ludlul* as somehow dried out or, as with von Soden’s contextual inference (1990, 130, n.97a), parched (so CAD L, 94). | *stricken*: I suggest MS III.D_{Sip} should read *le¹(IL)-qa-a*, providing another passive form to describe the condition of the protagonist’s lips. Note the similar expression in *Gilgameš* XI 127: *šabbā šaptāšunu leqā buhrēti*, “their lips were parched, being stricken with fever” (George 2003, 1.170–71; his translation). With what are the protagonist’s lips stricken? We can only make an educated guess. | *th[irist[?]]*: Oshima suggests the line ends with *dan-n[a-ti]* and renders the result: the protagonist’s lips “(had) been speaking (lit.: took) harsh [words]” (2014, 99, see also 298, 420). But this does not work in context, as pointed out above.⁴¹ Campbell Thompson suggests the line be restored *dan-[nu-ti-ši-na(?)]*, “(he took) their strength” (1910, 20, 23). But there is only room for two signs in the break. My guess adopts the CAD’s restoration of the line (see CAD L, 7, 94), *lapl[apta]*. It works in context but, of course, is uncertain.

III 89: *their blisters*: Previous translations take *pul-ḥat-si-na* in MS III.D_{Sip}, rev. 23’ to mean “their fears” or some other emotion of distress (Lambert 1960, 53, Oshima 2014, 99, “their terror”; SAACT 7, 40, Langdon 1923, 56, “their fear”; Foster 2005, 404, “their distress”; von Soden 1990, 130, “das Furchtbare”). I now think we should derive the word from *pulḥātu*, pl. *pulḥātu*, “sore, blister,” as does CAD P, 503. This makes much better sense in context. | *deformation*: This translation of *kišru* follows Foster 2005, 404. | *ip[tur]*: The restoration at the end of the line follows Langdon 1923, 56.

⁴⁰ Landsberger treated this passage in his work on the date palm (1967, 15). Note in his comments there that he entirely disallows the verb in our passage to be derived from *labābu* A.

⁴¹ Also, I do not think the copy or photograph (PhK 396) of MS III.D_{Sip} will support reading the second sign as NA (see Lambert 1960, pl. 14). The horizontal is too low.

III 90: *ṣabā[r]iṣ aš[tu]*: The restoration follows Lambert 1960, 52. For the translation, see CAD Š, 3 and Oshima 2014, 99. For *aštu* with *ṣaptān*, “lips,” see I 117. Note also forms of *uššuṭu* with *sikru*, “speech,” in Nabû-šuma-ukīn’s long prayer to Marduk, rev. 23 and 26 (see Finkel 1999, 327, lines 68 and 71 and my treatment at <http://akkpm.org/P499184.html>; differently, Oshima 2011, 322).

III 91: *he w[ip]ed clean*: MS III.D_{Sip}, rev. 25’ is the fullest witness to this line, which breaks off before revealing the final verb clearly. The restoration *uš-[mas³-si²]* follows Oshima’s alternative suggestion for the restoration of this line (2014, 301). Oshima prefers to follow the suggestion in CAD M/1, 360, *uš-[tam-biṭ]*, “he w[ip]ed away,” in his composite text (99, see also 301, 420). Streck suggests we restore *uš-[tak-kil]*, which has a similar meaning (2013, 220, citing a parallel in CAD Š/3, 219, lexical section). The problem I see with both of these suggestions is one of space. Lines before and after the present line in MS III.D_{Sip} only show one sign missing, suggesting we only have enough room in rev. 25’ for one sign or perhaps two small signs, such as MAS and SI. In any case, we must await a duplicate for certainty.

III 92: *ittasbatā*: MS III.D_{Sip}, rev. 26’ reads *it-ta-aṣ-ba-ta*. MS III.C_{Bab}, rev. 3’: [...]-[x¹-taṣ-bi (see Lambert’s copy in George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 156). Perhaps the BI is a mistake for BAD, which could be read *-bata*. | *inne[bā]*: The restoration at the end of the line follows Lambert 1960, 52.

III 93: *birīssina*: Most previous translators have understood *birītu* here in its fetter-related sense (CAD B, 254–55), including SAACT 7, 40 (“their binding”). But the present context is the only booked metaphorical usage of the term, and it is unclear how this “fetter” usage fits with the other noun + pronominal suffix in the line, *irdāšin*, “their foundations.” Also, I know of no case in which the release of some kind of binding or manacle is described with a form of *petū*, a term often used with reference to body parts. For these reasons, I think von Soden’s translation, “(er schuf wieder) Raum zwischen ihnen” (1990, 130), is to be preferred. Thus, *birītu* in III 93 is to be understood in its more typical sense as “the area between,” which in this context means the space between the upper and lower teeth when the mouth is open. | *ušpar[rir²]*: Oshima suggests restoring *uš-tam-[ma-a]* at the end of MS III.D_{Sip}, rev. 27’, our fullest witness to the line (2014, 98; compare p. 420), and translates, “[h]e ... let their jaws (lit. their roots) [speak]” (99). Bottéro (1977, 20) translates the second half of the line “et libère les mandibules,” followed and noted by Foster (2005, 404, 409), but I have no idea how to retrovert the French verb to an Akkadian one that begins *uš-UD*[...]. Building on the above understanding of the first half of the line, I think restoring *ušpar[rir]*, “he spread out (their foun-

dations),” is worth consideration. Although I can find no instance of the verb used with *išdu* (*irdu*),⁴² the action of the verb makes sense in the anatomical situation if we understand *išdu* as a reference to the foundation or seat of the teeth, i.e., the jaw, as Bottéro (1977, 20), Foster (2005, 404), and Oshima (2014, 99) do. For *išdu* with other anatomical features (human and animal), see CAD I/J, 240.

III 94: [I]a i[le’u]: The restoration follows Campbell Thompson 1910, 20.

III 95: *became clear*?: The second verb in the line is only attested in MS III.D_{Sip}, rev. 29’, *ih¹-da-ád*. If it is to be derived from *hadādu* I, “to rustle, roar” (CDA, 100), its meaning in this context is uncertain. Lambert renders it “*became plain*” (1960, 53); Foster, “*became fluent(?)*” (2005, 404; likewise, CAD T, 164); Oshima, “*become clear* (lit.: sharp)” (2014, 99 with discussion on pp. 301–302). Von Soden does not translate the verb and offers another possible reading, *id²-da-gir*, though this too evades his understanding (1990, 130 and n.104a) and does not seem compatible with the traces on the tablet.

III 97: *he healed*: Literally, “he made ... good.” Lambert read this first verb in the line as *uš-tib-ma*, which is the clear reading in the Assyrian MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 12. The verb is also attested in MS III.D_{Sip}, rev. 31’ and MS III.B_{Sip}, rev. 13’, both of which we must assume Lambert read similarly because he does not provide any indication of a variant in his apparatus (1960, 54 or addenda for the latter). However, I think the final sign in both should be read BA rather than MA; thus, MS III.D_{Sip}: [x]-*tib-ba*, and MS III.B_{Sip}, *uš-tib-ba*. For MS III.D_{Sip}, see already Campbell Thompson 1910, 20 and now Oshima 2014, 421. For MS III.B_{Sip}, compare the sign in question with the unequivocal BA in obv. 6’ and obv. 7’ (see Lambert 1960, pl. 74 and Oshima 2014, pl. XLVII [obv. is on the right]). The Commentary’s text is likely a mistake that goes back to a Babylonian *Vorlage*. | *iratī ša*: The question at issue here is whether the ŠÁ after *i-ra-tu/ti* (MS III.D_{Sip}, rev. 31’ and MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 12) is a feminine pronoun referring back to the typically masculine *ur’udu* in the previous line (thus, *iratīša*, “its songs”) or a relative pronoun at the head of a subordinate clause modifying *iratu*, understood as “chest” (*iratī ša*, “my chest, which”). Most translators opt for the former; Oshima chooses the latter (2014, 100, 302, 421), though on his reading the second verb in the line, which he reads *uḫ-tal-^rli¹*, has no subjunctive (as there is in his cited parallel, p. 302; see also Lambert 1960, 298). In favor of the relative pronoun reading, note that the ŠÁ is set

⁴² The verb is used, however, with other anatomical features, namely, the wings of a bird in a gloss on Sumerian *ba-búr-búr* (CT 42 42 iii 5) and human ears (KAR 130 + KAR 131, 4: *lušparrira uzunka*, “may (Anu) increase your understanding”), both cited in CAD Š/3, 317 (lexical section), 318.

apart from the preceding *i-ra-tu* on MS III.D_{Sip}. The obverse of this witness tends to align the second half of each poetic line (or what it perceives as the second half) vertically on the tablet (see Lambert 1960, pl. 13). Space matters to this scribe. Also, note how this MS separates the relative pronoun *ša* in previous lines in the immediate context of III 97 (e.g., its rev. 26'). Although taking *ša* as a relative pronoun is the better reading, perhaps we should consider a double entendre; *iratu* is primarily the protagonist's "chest" but has a secondary resonance with "song" in light of the relative clause that ends the line. | *uḫtel[ū]šī**: Literally, "he made it constantly bright." The form is a Dtn preterite. MS III.D_{Sip} reads *uḫ-ta[l-x-x]*. Only MS Com_{Nin} provides evidence for the full verb, but its reading is contested. Lambert (1960, 54) reads *uḫ-ta[l]-x-ša* (see his note on p. 298, line 31). Von Soden (1990, 130, n.106b) reads *uḫ-ta[l-l]i*, "it was brightened (like a flute)," but doesn't do anything with the following ŠÁ. SAACT 7, 25, following a suggestion in CAD M/1, 164 and U/W, 268, reads *uḫ-ta[l]-l[i]-ša* (similarly, Oshima 2014, 421, without the pronominal suffix),⁴³ except the *-ša* remained attached to the verb without noting it as a mistake for *-ši* ("and c[aus]ed it to sound its songs like a reed flute," p. 40). In the Sjöberg Festschrift, Lambert reads MS Com_{Nin} as *iḫ-tel-lu⁴1-ša*, "where," he writes, "*-ša₂* (confirmed by collation) must be an error for *-ši*, referring back to *ur-u₂-du*, unless the form is corrupt" (1989, 335). This would seem to align with von Soden's reading in some ways. My idea here builds on Lambert's but takes *iratu* to mean "chest" (as with Oshima), to which the pronominal suffix on the final verb (*-ši*) refers.⁴⁴ It is admittedly without precedent for an *iratu* "to be brightened" (various verbs) but this seems the best reading on present evidence. A duplicate is required to confirm or correct our readings.

III 98: *lu ṽi*: The reading follows MS III.B_{Sip}, rev. 14'. MS III.D_{Sip}, rev. 32' may have read [*mal*]-*'a-ti*, "my windpipe" (see Lambert 1960, 54 and Oshima 2014, 302, 421). | [*akla*?]: The restoration at the end of the line tentatively follows von Soden (1990, 130, n.107b; likewise, Foster 2005, 405). Lambert (1960, 54) suggests *šāra*, "wind," instead; Langdon's suggestion, *nipša*, "breath" (1923, 57), is semantically similar. Oshima, taking both *lu 'u* and *ma'latu* as having something to do with breathing, prefers Lambert's restoration (2014, 421, 99 with notes on p. 302), to which we should remain open until a duplicate resolves the matter.

III 99: *its swelling went down*: *Lagā'u* means "scales, matter formed on parts of the body, slag from a kiln" (CAD L, 37; see Lambert's comments

⁴³ Langdon explicitly rejects this reading (1923, 57, n.5).

⁴⁴ For further explanation of the ŠÁ, see my textual note on MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 12 in chapter nine.

[1960, 298] and chapter six). *Ešēru* means “to be straight, normal, well.” In this context, the two together indicate that the swelling described in III 98 diminished.

III 100: <which?> was disturbed?: MS III.D_{Sip}, rev. 34' is our best witness to the beginning of the line, which reads: [x-x-x]-e-a šá-šu. Given the syntactical pattern of the first line of the previous couplets, namely, a body part is followed by a subordinate clause headed by *ša* (see III 80, 82, 84, 86, 88, 90, 92, 94, 96, 98), I wonder if MS III.D_{Sip} has left out the expected ŠÁ; thus, we could read <šá> šá-šu-[x]. MS III.C_{Bab}, rev. 11' reads [...š]u²-ú (see also MS III.F_{As}, rev. 6: [...š]u) before supplying the following noun clearly (see the next comment on this line). Based on this evidence, we could reconstruct a composite text that reads <šá> šá-šu-ú, “which was disturbed” (see CAD Š/2, 177), which I have tentatively adopted here.⁴⁵ What part of the body was so affected is unclear, though it most likely is something in the lower gastro-intestinal region. | *its provisions?*: Although *zunnīšu* is clearly attested on MS III.C_{Bab}, rev. 11' (see Oshima 2014, pl. XI and Lambert's copy in George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 156), it is difficult to imagine how translating the term with “its rain” (so Oshima 2014, 101) could fit into this (broken) context as a description of a body part. I wonder then if we have here another attestation of the little-known homonymous *zunnu* (CAD Z, 162), derived from *zanānu*, “to provide food.” Perhaps adding support for this idea is the next line's (probable) use of *šapāku*, a verb often used with reference to storing up grain (CAD Š/1, 415–16).

III 101: *kitmurtu*: The reading of this word follows the suggestion in CAD K, 466; see likewise Oshima (2014, 100, 303, 421); see MS III.D_{Sip}, rev. 35': *kit-mur-tu*. | *ušapp[ik]*: Only two witnesses provide evidence for this verb, MS III.D_{Sip}, rev. 35', which reads ú-^fšap¹-[x x x] ^fx¹ x [(x)], and MS III.C_{Bab}, rev. 12', *i-šap-^fx¹-[...]*. Oshima reads the latter witness *i-šap-p[a-ak ...]* (421), which is precisely what we expect for a G durative derived from *šapāku*. However, I think we must expect a preterite verbal form as is typical in the second line of previous couplets in the immediate context. Also, MS III.D_{Sip} indicates that the verb is a form of the D rather than G stem. Thus, I suggest MS III.C_{Bab} should be read *ú'(I)-šap-p[i-ik ...]*. For PI, compare the traces on the tablet (see Lambert's copy in George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 156 vs. Oshima's, pl. XI) with the PI in rev. 15' of the same witness.⁴⁶ Of course, until a duplicate clarifies the matter, the restoration must remain uncertain.

⁴⁵ Compare Oshima, who reads [x-x]-e-a šá-q[ú] in MS III.D_{Sip} (2014, 421), and then reads the partial signs in MS III.C_{Bab}, rev. 11' and MS III.F_{As}, rev. 6' in light of this, rendering the result, i.e., *šaqú*, with “are high” (101).

⁴⁶ I have collated the tablet with photographs.

III 102: [... *which*] *was darkened*: We expect some part of the body at the head of the line, which the subordinate phrase then describes. For the meaning of *ummulu*, see the note on I 47 above. | *ḥarā`iš*²: MS III.C_{Bab}, rev. 13' reads *ḥa-ra-¹x¹*. Oshima reads the last sign as *-i[š]* (2014, 421; and see his pl. XI) while Lambert's copy suggests he reads *-r[i]* (see George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 156); MS III.D_{Sip}, rev. 36' (with the benefit of MS III.C_{Bab}), reads *'ḥa-ra-¹-i-iš* (see Oshima 2014, 421). Oshima renders it "like being buried" without comment (2014, 101). I wonder if we rather have an infinitive with a terminative adverbial *-iš* as in III 90. In any case, the word's meaning is unclear to me, though it most likely refers to some incapacity of the body.

III 103: Only MS III.C_{Bab}, rev. 14' provides text: [...-*n*]i-ta-šú za-ma-r[u ...].

III 104: *was always empty*²: The meaning of the verb is uncertain. With Lambert (1960, 55), I tentatively understand *it-tar-ru-ú* in MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 14 as *ūtarrú*, a Gtn preterite from *erú*. Oshima (2014, 303) offers several alternatives. For his composite text, Oshima (2014, 100) adopts the variant reading in the new MS III.C_{Bab}, rev. 15', *ut-tar-ru-ú*, which he derives from the D stem (not in the lexica, as he admits) of *tarú* and translates "which had *cramped* (lit.: been raised)" (101)—a kind of hunger pain (303). Perhaps MS III.C_{Bab} preserves a real variant. On the other hand, I wonder if the form on the tablet may be the result of a scribal error (somewhere in the textual transmission behind this tablet): A copyist could have conflated the horizontal wedges on the right side of the preceding ŠU (of *un-šú*) with the horizontal wedges on the left side of what should have been copied as an IT, leaving wedges on the right side of the IT that could then have been (mis)construed as UT. In any case, the meaning of the verb is unclear.

III 105: Only MS III.C_{Bab}, rev. 16' provides text: [...] A x *sah-ḥa-šu* [...]. Oshima reads the x as MEŠ, thus, A.MEŠ, "water" (2014, 100, 101). The sign, however, looks like a combined ŠÁ and ŠÚ (see Lambert's copy in George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 156). He renders the following signs *sahḥašu*, "his/its meadows," which seems unlikely in what little context we have. I suggest, rather, that *sahḥu* designates an anatomical disfiguration, perhaps "swelling, scar" (so *CDA*, 312, s.v. *sahḥum* II; see similarly *CAD* S, 56, s.v. *sahḥu* B), or the nodule of a tumor (so *AHw*, 1009, s.v. *sahḥû(m)*, "Geschwulstknoten"). It is this disfiguration that the line (if it were complete) likely reverses.

III 107: AD ḤU Ṿ¹: This is the likely reading of the last three signs in MS III.C_{Bab}, rev. 18'; see Lambert's copy (George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 156). We might interpret these to be *aḥû*, "I approached." Oshima, on the other hand, reads the last sign as UD (2014, 422) and translates the resulting *aḥud* with "I became flourishing" (101). Both interpretations assume that the three signs form a complete word. But, neither seems particularly compelling since we do

not expect a first person verb in this litany of recovery (III 67ff.), which, apart from one verb in III 87, uses third person verbs to describe both Marduk's actions and the response of the protagonist's body. Perhaps there is a causative of *teĥû* here at the end of the line. Or, perhaps, a form of *šatāĥu*, "to become long, elongated" (CAD Š/2, 184–85), which might be just the remedy for a cramped up gastro-intestinal organ. These are guesses. Only a duplicate will provide clarity.

III 108: MS III.F_{AŠ}, rev. 14' offers only a few broken signs. The heads of a couple of signs in MS III.C_{Bab}, rev. 19' are undecipherable.

III 109–110: MS III.F_{AŠ} (rev. 15'–16') is our only witness to these lines.

III 111–120: The remainder of Tablet III, presumably lines 111–120, are not yet attested on a published tablet.

COM, LINES A–E

Com, lines a–e: These lines are only attested on MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 16, 18, 19, 21, and 23. It is unclear which among these belong to Tablet III and which to Tablet IV. It is highly unlikely that they all belong to Tablet III.⁴⁷ It is possible, though (I suspect) not likely, that they all belong to Tablet IV. We do not know how many lines are missing between these lines.

Com, line a: *ernama*: The lexica are baffled by *erna(ma)* (see CAD E, 302, *AHW*, 242, and *CDA*, 79). Lambert understands the signs via *erinnu*, which he thinks is something that could be worn around the neck, a kind of collar or stock or article of clothing (1960, 298–99); he renders the word with "(my neck, which was ... slouched) in the collar" (55). Oshima, basing himself on the Commentary's understanding of the text, reads the signs *ere-na-ma*, translating the word as the Sumerian loanword *erēnu*, "root" (2014, 102–3). Similarly, von Soden, who translates the word as an adverb, "am Ansatz," states "[g]emeint ist hier wohl eine krankhafte Verdickung am Halsansatz" (1990, 131, n.a on line c). On present evidence, I do not see a better option.

Com, line b: It is not certain that line b forms the second line of a couplet. Von Soden, for example, couples this line with the following one (1990, 131, his lines d and e). Others do not attempt to pair the lines in the Commentary at all. | *amališ*: The meaning of this word is unclear. The translation "like a tree" (see also Foster 2005, 405; similarly, von Soden 1990, 131 and Oshima 2014,

⁴⁷ Oshima's idea that *Ludlul* consists of five rather than four Tablets with the newly posited one occupying the penultimate place renders my previous puzzlings over the placement of some of these lines obsolete (Lenzi / Annus 2011, 205).

103) relies on the Commentary's explanation, *ašūḫu*, "fir tree" (see MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 18). Lambert (1960, 55, see also 299) renders the term with "pillar."

Com, line c: *wrestler's*: *Gāmir abāri*, literally, "one who has total or perfect strength," designates a wrestler (*CDA*, 2).

Com, line d: The line is obscure and the words poorly understood. | *expelling*: *Šūši* may not be the infinitive here (so von Soden 1990, 131, n.b on line f). It may be a name for a disease or a person with a disease, as the Commentary implies (see MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 22 and my comments on this issue in chapter nine). | *nakimtu-disease*²: See Oshima (2014, 304–5) for a round-up of the possible meanings of this obscure term, perhaps to be derived from *nakāmu*, "to heap up, pile up." (Differently, *CAD* N/1, 335–36, s.v. *naqmu*.) Whatever its derivation or precise meaning, the word must designate some kind of unpleasant physical condition. | *trimmed*³: Following *CAD* Š, 133, I take *šepēru* here to indicate the paring or trimming back of the fingernails; see likewise von Soden (1990, 131), Foster (2005, 405), and Oshima (2014, 103). What the paring of nails means in context is not entirely clear. Oshima reasonably suggests it is a symbol of the protagonist's restored health and return to normal social life (2014, 305).

Com, line e: *their* ...: Oshima interprets MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 23 as *r[u¹]-uš¹-šá-šin*, "their filth" (2014, 103) and develops two differing interpretations of the line. On the one hand, *mānaḫtu*, "fatigue," and *ruššu*, "filth," could refer to the removal of negative effects of illness, which is how all previous translators have understood it. On the other, the terms might refer to "cultivated land" and "soil," respectively, and thus the line could be translated "'[h]e (Marduk) heaps up their cultivated land and improves their soil'" (306). In the latter case, the commentator's explanations are simply misunderstandings. See the textual notes on rev. 24 in chapter nine. In light of the uncertain reading, I leave the matter unresolved.

3.4. TABLET IV

Section A: Unless otherwise stated, all restorations follow Oshima 2014, 102, 426–27 with reference to Lambert's copy of MS IV.B_{Sip} (George / Tani-guchi 2019, no. 159), which is the only available witness for this section of the poem, aside from two lines attested in the Commentary (lines f and g; see MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 25–26).

IV §A 3' (line f): [*restrain*]ed: Following Lambert, I restore a stative form of *ebētu*, [*ub-bu-ī*]a, in MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 25. Oshima prefers either [*in-ni-ib-ī*]a, as in his reconstructed text (2014, 102), or [*ú-teb-bi-ī*]a (307).

IV §A 4': [x]-¹x¹-šir: Oshima (2014, 102, 426) reads [uš-t]e²-šir, “[he has made] ... straight” (103) tentatively (307) here. Lambert’s copy (George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 159) does not show the final sign clearly, though Geers’ older copy does (see Geers’ Notebook Ac, p. 43, s.v. Si.728).

IV §A 5': ša: Lambert’s copy shows traces of the ŠÁ (George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 159); compare Oshima 2014, 102, 426.

IV §A 6': Oshima reads and translates the few signs on this line as follows: [d]u-un-[n]i² qa-ru-ú¹, “[m]y strength (which had) been ta[ken a]way” (2014, 102–3). However, if the pattern of previous couplets in this context holds, we would expect something positive to be expressed here about the protagonist’s feet, introduced in the previous line. I conjecture restoring the line [d]u-un-^{<ni>}⁴⁸ ¹qaq¹-qa-¹ru¹ ú- [...], “he (Marduk) ... on firm ground,” which would supply something both positive and foot appropriate.

IV §A 7' (line g): ištat-x: The end of MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 26 reads iš-ta-at-x [x x] ¹x¹. Oshima restores this to iš-ta-ad-l[u¹] with the result that the form of the protagonist’s body “has become wider” (2014, 425, 426, 103).

IV §A 12': [...] ¹x x¹ [...]: See Lambert’s copy in George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 159 and Geers’ copy, Notebook Ac, p. 43, s.v. Si.728.

IV, line h: dirt: The lexica define the poorly attested *mammû* as “frost, ice,” based on lexical lists (CAD M/1, 202 and *AHw*, 601, which hesitantly gives a second meaning, “ein Kupfermineral”), but the Commentary explains the word with *šuhtu*, “rust, patina” (see MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 28). Like other translators (e.g., Lambert 1960, 55 and Foster 2005, 405), I give preference to the Commentary’s definition here. Lambert recognizes the word means “frost,” but writes “the commentator’s *šuhtu* ‘verdigris, rust(?)’ ... must be approximately correct” (1960, 300). See also Oshima’s remarks (2014, 307).

IV, line j: *On the bank of the river*: As the ancient Commentary explains it (MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 31), this is a reference to a river ordeal, *hursānu*. Oshima offers extensive discussion of this juridical procedure (2014, 307–14), arguing that in this particular situation, “if indeed *itê nāri* in *Ludlul* IV, line j means the river ordeal, it is very plausible that this section of the poem actually refers to something like a river ordeal ceremony to officially grant pardon to the sufferer after he had admitted his sins before Marduk” (314; see III 51–62).⁴⁹

Section B: This section of the poem is currently only attested on MS IV.C_{Nin}, aside from two lines also attested in the Commentary (lines k and o; see MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 32, 36). Lines l and m in the Commentary (MS Com_{Nin}, rev.

⁴⁸ The NI could have been skipped due to its similarity to QAQ.

⁴⁹ Earlier in his discussion, he states, “the aim of this procedure was not to prove his innocence or righteousness but rather to demonstrate the absolution of his sins by Marduk” (309).

33–34) are not preserved.⁵⁰ Line n (rev. 35) only preserves a partial explanation. The placement of these three lines is uncertain, but they must somehow fit in Section B between IV §B 10' [= line k] and IV §B 16' [= line o], if MS IV.C_{Nin} in fact preserves part of *Ludlul* IV.⁵¹ Unless otherwise stated, all restorations follow Oshima 2014, 104, 427–28, collated with my own personal photographs (see also Oshima 2014, pl. XLVI for a photograph and Lambert's copy, 1960, pl. 17).

IV §B 4': *eni*-[...]: Oshima tentatively suggests restoring *e-ni*-[*ni* ...] or *e-ni*-[*it-ti* ...], “pen[alties]” (2014, 104, 105, 314, 427).

IV §B 5': NAG 'x1: Oshima suggests restoring *naq-b*[*a*ʔ], “utter[ance]” (2014, 104, 105).

IV §B 10' (line k): *I was struck*: Lambert reads the verb *am-ma-riṭ* (1960, 54; likewise, Langdon 1923, 60), deriving the verb from *marāṭu*, “to scratch, to scrape off” (CAD M/1, 276; CDA, 197), though he translates “shaved” (55). I follow von Soden's reading of the verb, *am-ma-šid* (1990, 132, n.a on line m; see likewise CAD M/1, 352; M/2, 311; Foster 2005, 406; and Oshima 2014, 104), taking the verb as an N preterite from *mašādu*, “to be stricken,” though its precise meaning here is uncertain. Given the fact that *abbuttu* in the second half of the line can designate a distinctive hair style associated with slavery, we might better consider translating *mašādu* as having to do with removing that hair style. Does “to strike” here mean the hair, situated on the forehead (see next note), was chopped off? The verb can also be used in the sense of “to comb out” (CAD M/1, 352); thus, “I was combed on the forehead,” though this is awkward sounding in English. Whatever its precise meaning, the action of the verb contributes to the protagonist's release, as described in the second half of the line. | *forehead*: *Muttutu* (an Assyrian spelling of *muttatu*) usually means “half” but also seems to mean “headband” in NB sources (so CAD M/2, 312 with a question mark) and may mean “forehead” here (so Lambert 1960, 55; Foster 2005, 406; CAD M/1, 352; and Oshima 2014, 105). Von Soden translates the term literally, “an der Hälfte,” leaving open the possibility that the protagonist is actually struck on his torso (1990, 132). | *slavery*: lit., “the slave hair style,” which metonymically stands for slavery. For more on *abbuttu*, see my comments in chapter nine, page 381. | Although there are uncertainties in the details, what the protagonist experiences in this line is part of his restoration back into the community.

⁵⁰ These lines are unlabeled in Lambert's edition, noted only as “two lines missing” (1960, 54).

⁵¹ Given the five lines available in which to fit these three lines from the Commentary, I think it likely that one of these three lines only preserved explanations. Thus, we should expect to fit only two lines of poetic text into the five lines available between *Ludlul* IV §B 10' and 16'.

IV §B 14': Oshima reconstructs the line [... *ina é-sag-í*l(a) *ši-g*[*u al-si*], “[... in Esagi]l [I recited] a *šigû*-prayer” (2014, 104, 105, 428; note also the mention of a *šigû* prayer in the following line). He wonders if perhaps this line should be identified with line n in the Commentary, that is, MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 35 (104, 425, where he reads [(x) *ši*²-g]u² before the explanation, ‘*re-e-mu*’, “mercy”). For more on this idea, see my textual note to line n in chapter nine. Lines l and m (MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 33–34) are not extant. | *šigû* prayer: Although the context of this and the following line is extremely fragmentary, it seems likely that the protagonist mentions that he engaged in offering a *šigû* prayer (a penitential prayer) and its associated ritual actions. See Hättinen (forthcoming) for a round-up of texts related to this kind of ritual-prayer. She suspects one of the central themes of Tablet IV revolves around the ritual performance of a *šigû* in the temple, though without more context it is difficult to be more precise (see also the comments at V 37–66 below). For my comments on the public role of the river ordeal and the *šigû* prayer after Marduk’s anger had abated (mentioned already in III 51–52), see chapter seven, page 298.

IV §B 16' (line o): [*Kumuš-k*]adru: The restoration follows Lambert (1960, 56). The street’s name means “bow, fierce one” (Lambert 1960, 300; Oshima 2014, 316). See chapter nine, page 382 for further comments about this street’s name, its explanation in the Commentary (MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 37), and its connection to *Tintir* V 63. The street has not yet been located precisely (see George 1992, 358 and Pedersén 2021, 201–2). | *I walked along* the street: For walking along the street as an indication of full recovery of health, see CBS 12578, obv. 7, *sūq ālīšu šalmeš ikabbasu*, “will he walk along his city’s street in full health?” (see Lambert 2007, 101), part of a *tamītu*-query for a person lying on their death bed. See also V 72. And note Zisa’s explanation of the open path/way metaphor (2012, 25–26), cited in the appendix of chapter nine (note 175). | *a free man*: The CAD lists the present use of *pišerti* as obscure (CAD P, 428, s.v. *piširtu*). Since the term can refer to releasing via ritual exorcism, the poet likely intends to state that the protagonist is now in such a state, which I have rendered loosely with “a free man.” See similarly Lambert (1960, 56, “released”); von Soden (1990, 132, “als Erlöster,” which he explains means “[w]örtlich »im Zustand der Erlösung«,” [132, n.b on line o]); Foster (2005, 407, “in a state of redemption”); and Oshima (2014, 105, “in freedom”).

Section C: This section of the poem is currently only attested on MS IV.D_{Nin}, aside from one line also attested in the Commentary (line p; see MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 38). Again, unless otherwise stated, all restorations follow Oshima 2014, 104, 428, collated with my own personal photographs (see also Oshima 2014, pl. XLVIII for a photograph and Lambert’s copy in George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 160).

IV §C 1'–3': After the divine being at the head of each of these lines, Oshima suggests restoring either *at-(ta)-kil-ma* or *e-gi-ma* in the gap (2014, 104, 428, with a brief comment on p. 316). While reasonable, we must await a duplicate to confirm or correct the suggestion. In any case, the poem makes explicit reference here in lines 2'–3' to the protagonist's personal gods for the first time since Tablet II.

IV §C 6' (line p): *learn from my example*: Literally, “let him see by my hand.” See CAD A/2, 22 for the idiom. For the implications of this line in terms of the pedagogical purpose of the poem, see chapter eight, page 336.

IV §C 7': *ša amāt Bābili*: Oshima reads *ša a-na*(DIN¹) KA.DINGIR.RA[^{ki} ...], “the one who to Babylon” (2014, 104, 428), which would make the beginning of this line parallel in syntax to the previous. The third sign may instead simply be read KUR, so that the phrase reads *ša amāt Bābili*, “The one who [...] the word/matter of Babylon,” which is how Härtinen takes it (forthcoming).

IV §C 8': *epš[ētu]*: The copy of MS IV. D_{Nim}, rev. 8' in CT 51 219 indicates the whole ŠE and another wedge after it are on the tablet; similarly, Lambert's copy (George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 160). The tablet seems to have suffered damage since its copying. The former sign is now only half on the tablet and the latter wedge, likely a partial E, is completely missing.

IV §C 9': [*his*?]: Given the context, perhaps we have a pronominal suffix after the break that refers back to the unnamed person whom the protagonist addresses in a general manner in the context.

3.5. TABLET V

V 1–4, 5–8: Poetically, these eight lines look like individual cola rather than full verses. In my view, the terse, two beat lines are a deliberate attempt to draw attention to the lines' content. In the first quatrain, V 1–4, each line comprises only two words. The first beat of each line emphasizes the protagonist's recognition of Marduk's lordship and in the second Marduk's action to restore the health of the protagonist. Notice also that *each word* in the lines moves from Marduk, represented with a noun or as the subject of a verb, to the protagonist, expressed by a first person pronominal suffix: lord – my / Marduk's restorative action – me. In the second quatrain, V 5–8, a prepositional phrase designating the location of the protagonist's previous peril (all images of the grave) comprises the first beat of each line, replacing the epithet *bēlī* in V 1–4. In continuity with V 1–4, the second beat of each line again has Marduk as the subject of verbs, which now describe his *redemptive* actions on behalf of the protagonist—how Marduk delivered the protagonist from death. The protagonist is the beneficiary of all of Marduk's actions in V 1–8, represented by the

accusative pronominal suffix on each of the eight verbs, *-anni*. (The poet is slow to resume the typical four beats to a verse. He seems to build up to it, attaining and sustaining it only from V 17 onward.)

V 1–4: *my [lord]*: Lambert’s restoration (1960, 58) at the head of these four opening lines to Tablet V, [*be-l*]*i*, although based only on the partial NI signs on MS V.E_{AS}, obv. 1–4, is almost certainly correct. The verbs in the opening lines of Tablet V (lines 1–21 at least and perhaps farther) all share the same subject; Marduk is (first) named as that subject in V 13. He must, therefore, be the subject of the verbs in V 1–4. Given this, *bēlī* is the most likely restoration in these lines—one that I think contributes significantly to the interpretation of the poem (see just below). The only other semi-viable alternative, given the context, is to restore [*i*]*lī*, “my [god]” ([*i-l*]*i*). This may be particularly tempting if one subscribes to the idea that in *Ludlul* Marduk essentially replaces the personal god⁵²—an idea that I do not think the poem posits or, in its present (and fuller) form (than was available previously) can sustain. As already developed in notes to I 41, III 15, III 18, and III 51 above, the protagonist only recognizes Marduk as his lord after his recovery is announced and commenced (see specifically III 51–52, “after the heart of my lord was st[illed], and the mind of merciful Marduk was app[eased]”). Here at the beginning of Tablet V, the beginning of the end of the poem, the protagonist emphatically recognizes his lord Marduk as the source of his deliverance.

V 3: *removed* afflictions: What is being removed from the protagonist is left unexpressed.⁵³ (Note, CAD P, 299, which lists the present context as an elliptical use of the verb.) Oshima translates the verb “absolved me (of my sins)” (2014, 107). Although sin and physical affliction are closely bound with one another in the cultural context and thus his idea makes good conceptual sense, I think the literary context of the opening quatrain suggests the verb has a meaning more explicitly connected with the protagonist’s restored health (note V 4, *uballīanni*, “he revived me” in the second line of the couplet formed with V 3). Thus, I supply “afflictions” rather than “sins.”

V 5: [*from the pi*]*t*: Following Lambert (1960, 58), I restore [*ina ḥaš-t*]*i* at the head of the line. Alternatively, as noted by Oshima (2014, 317), one might consider [*ul-tu pi-i mu-t*]*i*, “[from the mouth of dea]th,” attested in *Ugaritica* 5, no. 162, line 40’ (see Nougayrol 1968, 268; Dietrich 1993, 65; Kämmerer 1998, 162; Oshima 2011, 210; and Cohen 2013, 168), a text that offers several

⁵² See Albertz 1988; Moran 2002, 182–200 (first presented as a public lecture in 1992 and published posthumously in 2002); and Sitzler 1995, 90–91.

⁵³ Contrary to SAACT 7, 42 where “affliction” should be in italics as supplied text (and the misspelling should be corrected, too!).

similar lines as found in the present context of *Ludlul*.⁵⁴ But there is probably not enough room in MS V.EA_S, obv. 5 for more than two signs in the break.

V 6: [*from the grave*]: This line is only attested on MS V.BBab, obv. 6. MS V.EA_S omits it, probably on accident (see the note on V 8 below). *Ugaritica* 5, no. 162, line 38' (see the note on V 5 above) offers this potential parallel to our MS V.BBab: *it-bu-ka-an-ni ù i-si-pa-an-ni*, “he cast me aside but gathered me up again” (see Nougayrol 1968, 268; Dietrich 1993, 65; Kämmerer 1998, 162; Oshima 2011, 210; and Cohen 2013, 168). But, there is (likely) insufficient room for so many signs in the break at the head of *Ludlul* V 6. Oshima suggests restoring *i-na pi-i qab-ri* at the beginning of our line (2014, 317–18; he also restores the verb in the D rather than G stem). Again, we likely do not have room for so many signs, especially if the restored text was in the *Vorlage* of MS V.EA_S (and thus should fit in a break the same size as the ones in its obv. 5 = *Ludlul* V 5 and obv. 6 = *Ludlul* V 7, namely, two to three signs). But, the essence of Oshima’s idea, i.e., that we likely have a reference to the grave, is sound. Thus, I restore tentatively *ina qab-ri*.

V 7: [*from disas*]ter: I follow Lambert’s restoration of MS V.EA_S, obv. 6, [*ina ka-ra*]-še-e (1960, 58). As Oshima notes, *karašû* here is likely a reference to the netherworld or grave (2014, 318).

V 8: *from the Ħubur Riv[er]*: Oshima (2014, 429) reads *ina* í[D ...] in MS V.CBab í' 1' (compare Lambert’s copy in George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 164) and [*i-na* í]D *ĥu-bur* in MS V.EA_S, obv. 7. The former seems possible based on the remaining traces; I do not see any hint of ÍD in my photographs of the latter witness from 2013, though see Lambert’s copy (1960, pl. 18) and reading of the line: [x x x] *ina ĥu-bur* (58).⁵⁵ In any case, we definitely have a line that begins with the preposition *ina*, which is likely followed by *nāri*, which is definitely followed by *ĥubur*, another reference to the netherworld. It seems to me that if the restorations of V 5–8 are correct, then all four lines of the quatrain begin with the preposition *ina* (see also V 9). And if this is the case, it seems to me that the omission of V 6 in MS V.EA_S is best explained as a case of parablepsis: the scribe got lost in the *ina*’s.

V 9, 18: If my poetic analysis is correct, Tablet V opens with two quatrains (V 1–4, 5–8), followed by a single line (V 9), then two more quatrains (V 10–13, 14–17), followed by a single line (V 18).

V 9: Although the first beat of V 9 follows the pattern of V 5–8 in that we have a prepositional phrase, the second half of the line breaks the pattern of V

⁵⁴ For a discussion of the similarities between this text and *Ludlul*, see Cohen 2013, 171–74 and Oshima 2014, 25, n.104, both of whom also offer an introductory discussion of the text with further references.

⁵⁵ What Lambert took as *ina* could have been the tail of the last horizontal wedge in an ÍD.

1–8 in two ways. First, there are two beats in the second half of the line. And second, Marduk’s action is described in a completely different manner. In V 9 Marduk does not act to restore (V 1–4) or redeem (V 5–8) the protagonist; rather, he is described as being present for the protagonist or guiding him: “He held my hand through adversity.” That the poet could assert this and then immediately state that Marduk struck him in V 10 (and then raised him back up in V 11) encapsulates the divine-human dynamic that pervades the poem (and characterizes its religious worldview generally).

V 14–17: These four (rather short) poetic lines occupy only two lines in MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 39, 41, the only case in this witness of putting two poetic lines on one line of the tablet.

V 18: This line has a verbatim parallel in line 43’ of *Ugaritica* 5, no. 162 (see Nougayrol 1968, 268; Dietrich 1993, 65; Kämmerer 1998, 162; Oshima 2011, 210; and Cohen 2013, 168; see the note on V 5 above): *i-na ŠU qé-bi-ri-ia mar-ra i-ki-im*. For the place of V 18 in the structure of Tablet V’s opening lines, see the note on V 9, 18 above. Marduk’s action against those who would have buried the protagonist here provides another perspective on Marduk’s deliverance described in V 5–8.

V 19–22: The quatrain utilizes two couplets that alternates between male and female members of two groups, mourners (V 19–20) and gloaters (V 21–22).

V 19: *harp*[?]: For a brief discussion of the meaning of *surrû* here, see Oshima 2014, 319–20, who argues that it is a Sumerian loan from *sur*₉, meaning “harp.”

V 23: *he recited*: The identification of the subject of this verb is unclear. I think it is unlikely to be the protagonist. Perhaps it is Marduk or a ritual official, who is named in the break. | [...] *-bir*: Only attested in MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 43, I assume this sign forms the end of the poetic line. But, it could be part of an explanation. See the edition of the Commentary in chapter nine.

V 24: *ú-nam-ʽxʽ* [...]: Only MS V.C_{Bab} i’ 17’ preserves the beginning of this line. Oshima restores the text to read *ú-na[m-mir ...]*, “he brightened.” Compare Lambert’s copy in George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 164. MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 44 (line t) belongs somewhere between V 23 and perhaps V 64. Oshima tentatively suggests it belongs with V 24 (2014, 424, 431). He reads the very fragmentary first sign as *ʽúʽ*.

V 25: MS V.C_{Bab} i’ 18’ provides the opening two signs of the line. MS V.G_{AS}, obv. 1’ shows what looks to be an E sign somewhere in the middle of the line. Tablet V 25 is the first line attested on the reverse of the important MS A_{Bab}, though the text is illegible, [...] *ʽx xʽ* [...].

V 26: *rebîr*: The textual basis for the first word is precarious. The first syllable, *re-*, comes from MS V.C_{Bab} i’ 19’ (see Lambert’s copy in George /

Taniguchi 2019, no. 164); the second comes from MS V.G_{AS}, obv. 2', *-bit*. This reconstruction assumes there is only one sign missing in the break at the head of the line in MS V.G_{AS}. | *he took*: MS A_{Bab}, rev. i' 2' likely is to be read [... *i-l]e-qa-^ran¹-[ni]* (see SAACT 7, 27; similarly, Oshima 2014, 431). If so, the identification of the subject of the resulting verb, *ileqqanni*, here is again unclear. Although it may be Marduk, it seems likely that we should imagine a human subject since the protagonist in the following context is entering a ritual sphere in which we expect human agents (see V 37). It is possible, of course, that we have rather an imperative, *leqanni*, "take me."

V 27: *a[na] mahri*: Again, the text comes from combining the fragmentary head of the line in MS V.C_{Bab} i' 20', *a-[na]* with what is preserved after a short break at the head of the line in MS V.G_{AS}, obv. 3', *mah-ri*.

V 28–29: In his reconstruction of these lines, Oshima reads [*ha-d*]u²-*a-a* [... *ú-hal-li-q*]u ^dAMAR.UTU [(x)] / *ha-d*[i]-*t[um ...]* *ú-kaš-šú* ^dzar-pa-ni-[*tum*] (2014, 106, 431 with note on p. 320). The textual basis for the first word in each line, which Oshima understands to be the male and female gloaters (already mentioned in V 21–22), is rather sparse. MS V.G_{AS}, obv. 4' is the only source for V 28; it reads: [x (x)] IŠ⁵⁶ A A. The same witness reads [x (x)] DI TI in obv. 5' (= V 29) while MS A_{Bab}, rev. i' 5' shows *ha-^rx x¹* at the head of the line (see Lambert's copy in George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 149). Only a duplicate will confirm or correct his suggested reconstruction.

V 29: *ukaššú* / *ukaššu*: MS A_{Bab}, rev. i' 5', ^rú¹-*kaš-šú*, is our only witness to the verb, whose derivation is uncertain. If it is from the D stem of *kašú* B (CAD K, 294), then we may translate "([whom] Zarpanitu) made strong." If from the D of *kâšu* A (CAD K, 294), "([whom] Zarpanitu) delayed." And if from the D of *kâšu* B (CAD K, 295), "([whom] Zarpanitu) helped" (see the note on I 10 above), which is my preferred guess. Only a fuller context will determine the proper translation.

V 30–36: The translation of these lines is quite difficult and tentative. As I state in my review of Oshima's edition of *Ludhul* (2014): "V 30–36 (= SAACT 7 IV 27–33) continues to confound efforts at a convincing translation. If Oshima is correct that the final *an-ni* in lines 31, 32, 33, and 36 are in fact a form of *anna*, 'indeed,' then its syntax is highly unusual since the particle normally stands at or near the head of the clause and not at the end. Of course, its position in these lines may be intended to create sonority with the verbs ending in a first person singular pronominal suffix in lines 30 and 34 (at least). Oshima has to make two emendations to line 32 (see p. 431) to wring sense from it

⁵⁶ Ebeling's copy of MS V.G (KAR 116) does not support reading DU. Unfortunately, the tablet is lost and cannot be collated.

within his understanding of the passage. And line 36 is still obscure, though Oshima considers all of the known options (322–23). In personal correspondence, Oshima now suggests that we read LU MAN NU at the head of lines 30 and 34 as *lūman lā*, ‘if it weren’t (for Marduk)...’ (see likewise Mayer, *Or* 83, 280 [= 2014]). Although this may be an improvement to this line, I think we must still await a duplicate to shed light on the many difficulties in the passage” (Lenzi 2017, 186). The present translation builds on my first attempts on these lines in SAACT 7, 42–43 and Lenzi / Annus 2011, 188–89 (s.v. IV 27–33) in light of the ideas in Oshima (2014, 321–323) and Mayer (2014, 280).

V 30, V 34: *who might it have been?*: The same phrase appears at the head of lines V 30 and V 34, creating an explicit, if somewhat distant parallelism between the two lines. Mayer suggests reading *lu-man* NU = *lūman lā*, “if it weren’t for (the lord who released me),” (2014, 280) rather than *lū mannu*, which stands behind my translation (see also SAACT 7, 27, 42; Lenzi / Annus 2011, 187–88; and Oshima 2014, 431, 106, translating “who might it be?” [107]). However, as Mayer recognizes, the resulting syntax of his suggestion is not quite right: “[d]aß die Negation sofort auf *lūman* folgt, statt vor dem Prädikat zu stehen, müssen wir wohl hinnehmen” (2014, 280). | *bēlu umašširann[i]* (V 30) / *Marduk izibbann[i]* (V 34): Note the interchange of *bēlu* in V 30 with *Marduk* in V 34, which reinforces the pairing of these two lines. The verb in the second part of each line may construct a positive view on the protagonist’s recent recovery, “(the lord) released me” (V 30) / “(Marduk) saved me” (V 34), as I have taken them for now (see also Oshima 2014, 107).⁵⁷ In this case, V 30 and V 34 create a contrast with the lines that follow each (V 31–33, V 35–36), which clearly relate to the protagonist’s past suffering. On the other hand, the verbs could be construed as providing a negative perspective on the protagonist’s pre-recovery past, “(the lord) neglected me” (V 30) / “(Marduk) abandoned me” (V 34). Such negative expressions would essentially repeat the point the protagonist made at the very beginning of the poem in I 41ff. This negative reading of V 30 and V 34 would create a consistent retrospective on the protagonist’s past condition with the lines that follow each. Such a recap of his past suffering might be appropriate here in light of the many lines at the beginning of the tablet that recount his recovery and the many lines following V 30–36 (V 37ff.) that recount his purification and incorporation back into the community.⁵⁸ In fact, the ambiguous possibilities with these two verbs in V 30 and V 34 may very well have been deliberate!

⁵⁷ In SAACT 7, 42 and Lenzi / Annus 2011, 188 I take the first in a positive sense and the second in a negative one.

⁵⁸ Could V 30–36 be part of the mourning ritual (*kihullū*) mentioned in V 23?

V 31: *ibtelī-ma ann[i]*: The end of the line is only attested in MS A_{Bab}, rev. i' 7', which reads *ib-te-li-ma an-n[i]*. SAACT 7, 27, 42 (likewise, Lenzi / Annus 2011, 187–88) reads these signs as *lik-te-li-ma-an-n[i]*, “be shown / offered back to me (?)” (a Dt precative + 1cs from *kullumu*). Oshima’s reading, *ib-te-li-ma an-n[i]*, is an improvement (2014, 431 and 321). His idea to understand the last two signs as an adverbial *anni*, “indeed,” citing CAD A/2, 121, s.v. *ani*, however, seems unlikely to me since the lexeme only occurs in Old Akkadian and Old Assyrian texts. Rather, *anni* may be a variant orthography of *anna*, “yes” (CAD A/2, 125; see the glossary in Oshima, p. 518), but the syntax is odd. Perhaps the previous clause is a question with the answer provided by the sufferer himself.⁵⁹ This is my tentative solution here and in V 32–33. One wonders why we have a *-ma* attached to the verb. It may simply separate the verb from *anni* to indicate that *anni* is not a pronominal suffix as in the previous line. Or, more speculatively, perhaps the MA is a mistake. Looking at the tablet (see the copy of MS A_{Bab}, rev. in Oshima 2014, pl. II and Lambert’s copy in George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 149, rev.), the MA in the present line is almost directly below the RA in obv. 6'. Perhaps the scribe started to copy the RA from the previous line and corrected his mistake before completing the sign, resulting in a would-be RA that became a MA. (There is no *-ma* attached to verbs in the following two lines, which parallel the present one.)

V 32: I have adopted Oshima’s idea, mentioned as a possibility but not accepted in his translation, that the line is a question (2014, 321). As in V 31 and V 33, I suggest the protagonist himself supplies the answer, *anni*. | *lā urrad*: MS A_{Bab}, rev. i' 8' is the only witness to the end of the line. SAACT 7, 27 (likewise, Lenzi / Annus 2011, 187–88) reads *la ur5-ra-ad-an-[ni]*⁶⁰ and translates the verb in the third person (with *-anni* serving as a first person object), “[h]e would not let me go down” (42). But, I now think the verbs in V 32–33 are best understood in the first person. Oshima reads the LA as a dittography (from the preceding *ir-kal-la*) and emends the verb to read *at-<ta>-ra-ad* (2014, 106, 431), translating the result with “I might have descended to the netherworld, indeed” (107). Although we might expect a perfect verb here (as in V 31 and V 33), I think the first sign comprising the verb is more angular than the other AT signs nearby (compare the present sign with the AD signs later in this line of MS A_{Bab}, rev. i' 8' as well as those in lines 9' and 12') and should be read UR₅ or UR₅!

⁵⁹ This idea was inspired by Oshima’s comments on V 32 (2014, 321).

⁶⁰ Of course, we do not expect the addition of the first person suffix in this manner (i.e., *-anni* following a sign that ends in a consonant), but this is not unattested. See, e.g., MS V.EA₈, obv. 2–5 (V 2–5) in Oshima 2014, 429.

V 33: *I turned into a ghost*: See Mayer (2014, 280) for X-ūta alāku, “to become an X” (likewise Oshima 2014, 107, 322). Previously, I parsed the verb as a Gtn preterite (Lenzi / Annus 2011, 188), but I think a G perfect works better here, given my revised understanding of the passage. As with the previous two lines *an-ni* is not a first person ending, previously identified as a mistake (Lenzi / Annus 2011, 189), but the affirmative particle.

V 34: *īzibann[i]*: From *ezēbu*, though we expect *īzibanni*.

V 35: *flesh of an asakku demon*: Oshima translates *ana šīr asakki* with “as a victim (lit. to a body) of the *asakku* demon” (2014, 109), explaining this to mean that the protagonist had fallen quite ill (p. 322). One might also suggest that the sufferer is himself being associated with the *asakku* demon as if kin (CAD Š/3, 118), which fits with the idea that he had become a denizen of the netherworld. | *ammann[i]*: Rather than reading MS A_{Bab}, rev. i’ 11’ *am-ma-an-niš-š[u]* (so Oshima 2014, 432) or *am-ma-an-niš-šú* (so Lenzi / Annus 2011, 187), I follow our alternative reading of the verb, articulated on p. 189 as *am-ma-an-^{man}-[ni]*, but now think it more likely that *ma-an* provides a syllabic spelling of the ambiguous MAN; thus, *am-^{ma-an}-man-n[i]* (for the final sign, see Oshima’s copy, 2014, pl. II and Lambert’s copy in George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 149). | For the various possibilities of understanding the expression *ana šīr asakki* with the N-stem of *manû*, see Mayer 1976, 269, n.70. Lenzi and Annus (2011, 189), Oshima (2014, 322), and Mayer (2014, 280; 1976, 270) offer parallels.

V 36: *a corpse ... I walked ... [...]*: Our best witness to this line is MS A_{Bab}, rev. i’ 12’, which reads *šal-lam-ta NIM MA at-ta-lak MA [x x]*.⁶¹ The other witness, MS V.G, obv 12’, reads *[x]-[x] UR MAḪ [...]*. Oshima (2014, 322–23) discusses the various ways one may go about finding coherent sense from this textual data, none of which, as he also affirms, is satisfactory. Perhaps a duplicate will make things clearer.

V 37: *ina messē malē*: I take *me-es-se-e* in MS A_{Bab}, rev. i’ 13’ as the G infinitive of *mesû*, “to wash.” (Note the unexpected double consonant in the same witness to V 34 above: *īzibanni*.) And since dirty hair was a sign of mourning (CAD M/1, 174) and washing it a requisite act of reintegration into normal life (see *Gilgameš* XI 250–261, especially 254: *malēšu ina mē kīma elli limsi*, “let him wash his matted hair in perfectly pure water”; see George 2003, 1.718), it makes sense that the protagonist would need his hair to be washed after his recovery. Oshima translates the first three words “in a full *mēsû*-ritual” (2014, 109). The word *mēsû* does refer to ritual acts. But, these are rites typically done for the gods rather than for humans (see CAD M/2, 35). | *utall[ilanni²]*: Oshima

⁶¹ Oshima restores *[an-ni]* (2014, 108, 432).

restores the final verb as *ú-tal-l[i-lu-nin-ni]* (2014, 108–109). I have adapted his restoration to a singular subject, *ú-tal-l[i-la-an-ni]*. In either case, there may not be enough room for so many signs in the break.

V 38: *tēdištu*: Although a bath (*rimku*) may make sense in light of V 37, we do not expect the word *tēdištu*, “renewal,” to be used with reference to the protagonist because the word typically—though not exclusively—applies to cultic places and divine images. I wonder if we should connect *tēdištu* here to I 120, where the protagonist hopes his fortune will change with the new moon (*arḫu*). Since *tēdištu* can refer to the renewal of the moon, i.e., the new moon (CAD T, 323), perhaps it is appropriate to apply the word to the protagonist at this point of washing and reintegration into normal life. Note also that the word occurs one time in a broad, general sense of the renewal brought about by the light of the sun in the hymnic introduction of an incantation prayer to Šamaš (Mayer’s Šamaš 79 [1976, 420]): *nūr elāti u šaplāti šākinu tēdiš[ti]*, “O light of the upper and lower regions, who establishes renewal” (AMT 71/1: 28 and 30, cited CAD T, 323).⁶² Given the fact that both V 37 and V 38 remain fragmentary (and their restorations tentative) this idea must remain hypothetical. | *ītapp[uš]*: The second half of the line is only attested in MS A_{Bab}, rev. i’ 14’, which I read: <<ú>> *i-tap-p[u-x (x x)]*. Given the verb in V 37, we may want to restore a form of *ebēbu* here to create a parallel, though the signs do not agree. Oshima restores the final verb to *i-tap-p[u-šu]* (2014, 108, 432), a Gtn of *epēšu*, which I have adapted here to a singular subject, *i-tap-p[u-uš]*. But what is one to do with Û? Although not his preferred explanation, Oshima suggests it could have been displaced from between the two nouns in the first half of the line (2014, 324). Or, perhaps the scribe mistakenly copied it into the present line from the head of the next one. In any case, its presence is currently anomalous and so I delete it. Perhaps a duplicate will renew our understanding of the line.

V 37–66: Although this entire section of Tablet V shows a high degree of literary artifice and scribal sophistication (especially V 42–53, which features the twelve temple gates), the underlying religious/ritual act of coming to the temple to give thanks likely reflects genuine practices, as Oshima argues.⁶³ His citation from the *Great Prayer to Marduk, no. 1*, lines 157–166 is especially illuminating in this regard (see 2014, 325–26, 330–31 and 2011, 166–67). Aino Häntinen argues in a forthcoming paper that the protagonist’s visit to the Esagil reflects a previous ritual performance of a *šigû* prayer (see IV §B 14’–15’) in

⁶² A transliteration of the entire tablet is available online at the Babylonian Medicine Project: <https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/AMT-2/AMT-71-1/index.html>.

⁶³ This is not to say that *Ludlul* itself was part of any ritual practices; rather, I suggest simply that the text here may very well reflect genuine practices.

the same temple, which may also provide a clue for the ordering of the gates in V 42–53.

V 40: [*I went up?*]: I follow Oshima (2014, 326) here, who suggests restoring a verb of movement, either [*e-li*] or [*a-lik*]. | *submission*: Literally, “for the stroking of the nose,” which is probably a gesture of submission, perhaps prostration or other reverential gesture (see Oshima 2014, 233–34; Frechette 2011, 46–48).

V 41: MS A_{Bab}, rev. i' 17' reads *a-^rna¹-<ku> šá iš-tu qab-ri a-tu-ru a-na ká-^rdu[tu-è-a] / e-te-ru-ub*,⁶⁴ “I, who returned from the grave, entered the Gate named U[tu-e-a].” The restoration of the first person pronoun follows Mayer’s suggestion (2014, 280; see already Langdon 1923, 63). MS V.D_{As}, obv. 3' reads differently: [*a(-)na-ku a]-ri-du qab-ri a-tu-ra ana ká-^du[tu-è-a e-te-ru-ub]*, “[I, who was desc]ending to⁷ the grave, [entered] the Gate named U[tu-e-a] again.” I have adopted the former into my composite text. Although we may have a genuine recensional difference here between a Babylonian MS (A_{Bab}) and an Assyrian one (MS V.D_{As}), I think the difference likely arose accidentally. The variation (probably) involves only three signs in both witnesses, and each sign gives some reason (graphic or syllabic) for why it might be mistaken for the other.⁶⁵ Thus, I assume one set of three (probably *šá iš-tu*) gave rise to the other (*a-ri-du*) in the iterative process of copying.⁶⁶ | *ká-^dutu-è-a*: The gate’s name means “the gate of the rising sun.”

V 42–53: In this section the protagonist enters twelve gates in or near Marduk’s temple complex called Esagil. For general comments on this section, the cultic topography it reflects, and the association of each gate with particular temples within the larger Esagil complex, see Oshima 2014, 324–26 and George 1992, 90–91. As I have argued elsewhere (Lenzi 2015b), this section utilizes the learned hermeneutics employed in commentary, explanatory, lexical, and divinatory texts to connect the name of each gate to the positive item the protagonist receives at the gate. (I have not repeated those arguments here in the present notes.) | My translation follows the order of the gates in the Aššur manuscripts (MS V.D_{As}, obv. 4'–15' = V 42–53; MS V.E_{As}, rev. 1'–4' = V 50–53), which were the first witnesses discovered for this section of the poem (see the early editions of Langdon 1923, 64–65 and Lambert 1960, 60, his MSS t and u). The order of the gates is different in MS A_{Bab}, rev. i' 18'–29'. In this manuscript, its rev. i' 18'–24' = V 42–48 (in my translation), rev. i' 25' = V 51,

⁶⁴ The last four signs occupy a separate, indented line on the tablet. I follow Oshima in not assigning it a line number.

⁶⁵ The IŠ / RI (graphic) interchange may be the most difficult one to imagine.

⁶⁶ Moreover, the transformation from one reading to the other could have taken place over a series of copies, rather than all at one time.

rev. i' 26'–27' = V 49–50, and rev. i' 28'–29' = V 52–53. This differing order may simply be a scribal error (so Oshima 2014, 329, n.772). But, given the fact that MS V.jkiš 1'–3' represents V 49–50, 53 sequentially (i.e., this MS attests yet another order of the gates),⁶⁷ we should not entirely exclude the possibility that these differing orders could reflect different local versions of this passage in the poem (for reasons that are unclear). Thus, the order given in my translation should not be taken as the absolutely “correct” or “most original” order.⁶⁸ For topographical reasons, Aino Häntinen (forthcoming) prefers the order of MS A_B-ab, which will be reflected in her new edition of the poem.

V 42: *ká-hé-gál*: The gate’s name means “the gate of prosperity.” | *inne[šram?]*: The word after *hegallú* in MS A_Bab, rev. i' 18' reads *in-ni-šá*⁷¹-[x x]. (Oshima [2014, 432] reads *in-tan*-[...], but see Lambert’s copy, which shows a clear NI and probably a broken ŠÁ following it [George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 149]). In MS V.D_{Aš}, obv. 4', we have *in-ni*⁷²-x x (x).⁶⁹ Most everyone expects the verb that is to be restored here to be derived from *nadānu* (see, e.g., Langdon 1923, 64; CAD H, 168 [published in 1956]; Lambert 1960, 60; and Oshima 2014, 327),⁷⁰ but I do not see how to square that with what we have on our two witnesses. Moreover, there is precious little room on both tablets for the signs required for proposed restorations from *nadānu* (e.g., Lambert’s *in-n[a-ad-na-an-ni]* or Oshima’s *in-tan-[di-na-an-ni]*⁷¹) without violating the margin. Whatever the form of the verb (and its derivation), it seems unlikely to me that the accusative *-anni* will fit in the available space on both witnesses after the verb form. Given the use of learned hermeneutics in V 42, one might think the verb is somehow related to the components of the gate’s name. The most obvious candidate would be *bašú* (GÁL), but this cannot be squared with the current evidence from our witnesses. I speculate—and I use that word advisedly—that the poet may have used a form of *ešēru*, *innešra(m)*, “(prosperity) advanced toward me,” which would fit in the available space in both MSS. (In May 2022 I learned through personal correspondence with Aino Häntinen that she has come to the same restoration independently. She suggests the ŠÁ

⁶⁷ Or, this manuscript’s order parallels the order of MS A_Bab and also accidentally skipped a line (V 52).

⁶⁸ I am aware that following the order attested in the Aššur manuscripts is privileging the order of the “oldest modern,” i.e., “earliest discovered,” manuscripts attesting the passage. But, some order must be followed.

⁶⁹ Others read the second sign as N[A (Langdon 1923, 64, without brackets; Lambert 1960, 60; Oshima 2014, 432), though it seems to me, based on my photographs, more likely to be N[I.

⁷⁰ The same is likely implied in the translations of von Soden (1990, 132) and Foster (2005, 407).

⁷¹ This form, he suggests, may be “a scribal error for *it-tan-[di-na-an-ni]* or *in-nam-[di-na-ni]* or *in-nad-[di-na-an-ni]*” (2014, 327).

in the Babylonian manuscript is a CV-CV writing for a closed syllable, /neš/. This restoration would provide a verb of movement here in parallel with *teḥû* in V 43; and both verbs would have a third person subject moving toward the protagonist.⁷² Also, the GÌR sign, used in the logographic writing of *ešēru*, has some resemblance to 𒄩 in Babylonian scripts, providing some basis for a (reverse engineered) traditional, scribal hermeneutical derivation. Of course, we will have to await a duplicate for confirmation of this suggested restoration.

V 43: *ká-damma-ra-bi*: The gate's name means "the gate of the ... divine guardian." The *-ra-bi* element of the name remains unclear (see George 1992, 392). | *iṭṭeh[anni]*: The restoration follows Langdon (1923, 64).

V 44: *ká-silim-ma*: The gate's name means "the gate of well being." See also V 52. | *well-being*: MS V.D_{Aš}, obv. 6' uses *šulmāna* here whereas MS A_{Bab}, rev. i' 20' has the longer form of the word, *šullumānu* (see also the note on this witness in V 116), with a terminative adverbial ending, *šullumāniš*.

V 45: *ká-nam-ti-la*: The gate's name means "the gate of life."

V 46: *ká-dutu-è-a*: MS A_{Bab}, rev. i' 22' preserves the common spelling of the name of the gate, *ká-dutu-è-a* (see likewise the Esagil Tablet in George 1992, 114, line 12 [text no. 13] and George's comment on p. 391). The writing in MS V.D_{Aš}, rev. 8', *ká-dutu-UD-è*, likely contains a dittography. Lambert, assuming the name of the gate here is the same as in V 41, restores the name of the gate in V 41 on the basis of the spelling here in MS V.D_{Aš}, which was the only witness available to him at the time (1960, 60; see his lines 78 and 83). But *ká-dutu-u₄-è* would be a unique spelling, if the writing were not a mistake (see the spellings in George 1992 *inter alia*). Oshima entertains the possibility that V 41 and 46 preserve the names of two different gates (2014, 326–27, though not indicated on p. 432 [his score] since an UD/U₄ has been omitted in V 46). For the meaning of the gate's name, see the comment on V 41.

V 47: *ká-u₆-de-babbar-ra*: The gate's name means "the gate of brilliant astonishment." MS A_{Bab}, rev. i' 23' leaves out an element of the gate's name, *ká-u₆-<de>-babbar*.

V 48: *ká-nam-tag-ga-duš*: The gate's name means "the gate of the releasing of guilt."

V 49: *ká-ka-tar-ra*: The gate's name means "the gate of praise."

V 50: *ká-šer-duš-ù-da*: Although the orthography of the name varies among witnesses (MS A_{Bab}, rev. i' 27', as given; MS V.D_{Aš}, obv. 12': *ká-a-še-er-duš-ù-da*; MS V.j_{Kis} 2': [k]á-šer-duḥ-ḥu-du), the gate's name means the same in all of them, "the gate of the releasing of sighing."

⁷² An implication, if the restoration holds: The onset of illness in II 50 is described as advancing (*innešra*) against the protagonist. It would be appropriate, if the restoration is correct, to have prosperity advance toward him at the first gate where he receives something.

V 51: *ká-a-sikil-la*: The gate's name means "the gate of pure water." | MS A_{Bab} places this line after V 48. As in the spelling of the gate in V 47, the scribe of MS A_{Bab} has again left out an element of the gate's name, *ká-<a>-sikil-la*, in its rev. i' 25'.

V 53: *ká-ḫi-li-sù*: The gate's name means "the gate sprinkled with luxury" (see George 1992, 90 and 394–95 for the variant in MS V.E_{AS}, rev. 4', *ká-ḫi-li-gar*). | *annašiq*: The verb is only attested in MS V.D_{AS}, obv. 15', *an-na-šiq* (likewise, Lambert 1960, 60 and Oshima 2014, 108 with the note on p. 330). Others prefer to render these signs *an-na-bik*, "I fell face down" (so, e.g., CAD A/1, 9; von Soden 1990, 133, n.60a; and Foster 2005, 407).

V 55: *I offered*: Literally, "I made burn."

V 57: *prime sheep*⁷³: The precise meaning of *šap̄tu*, typically an adjective meaning "strong" or "thick," at the end of the line is uncertain in this context. CAD Š/1, 482 spells the term *šapsu* but also recognizes the by-form *šap̄tu* based on this line in *Ludlul*. The present context is the only attestation of the word used to describe an animal outside of lexical lists. I assume, building on the known meaning of *marû* in the first half of the line, that the word designates high quality sheep, designated as such perhaps for their size and musculature.

V 59: *šēdu lamassu angubbû libit Esagil*: Contrary to SAACT 7, 43 (so also, e.g., Lambert 1960, 61⁷³ and Foster 2005, 407), I think we may have four entities listed here (see CAD A/2, 118 and Oshima 2014, 108) rather than two, *šēdu (u) lamassu*, with a title in apposition, *angubbû libit Esagil*. | MS V.i_{Sip}, obv. 6' shows an interesting scribal mistake on this school tablet: After AN.GUB.BA.MEŠ the student seems to have miscopied *libit(ti)*, beginning with the second sign (BIT), and then, rather than fixing his mistake, he simply wrote SIG₄ (only part of the sign is extant, SI[G₄]). Alternatively, the misplaced sign is the first (É) in Esagil. See Lambert's copy in George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 162.

V 60: [*in*]a: As von Soden suggests (1990, 133, n.67a; see already Langdon 1923, 66), the line likely begins with the preposition *ina*. A hint of the head of a vertical is on both Lambert's copy (1960, pl. 18) and photographs of the tablet, which Oshima quite reasonably takes to be part of the NA, [*i-n*]a (2014, 108, 434).

V 61: [*ina mākā*]lê: The restoration follows Lambert (1960, 60).

V 62: [*sippu ši*]garrī: The restoration follows Langdon (1923, 66). | *mēdil dalāti*: Here I think the list comprises three separate items related to the entry-way: the door jamb, the bolt, and the doors' bar (see von Soden 1990, 133;

⁷³ However, see his note on line 96 (p. 301), where he considers the possibility that the *angubbû* are entities distinct from the *šēdu* and the *lamassu*.

Oshima 2014, 109) since MS V.E_{AS}, rev. 13' (our only witness to the line) shows the third noun in construct with the final one: *me-di-il* GIŠ.IG.MEŠ. Lambert translates the final noun as a separate item (1960, 61; so also Foster 2005, 407). For all four items as recipients of an offering, see Nabonidus's Eabbar Cylinder ii 13 (see Schaudig 2001, 387; Weiershäuser and Novotny 2020, 123), where we have *me-de-lu u* GIŠ.IG.MEŠ.

V 63: [*ušarmi*]k[?]: SAACT 7, 28 follows von Soden's suggestion (1990, 133, n.70a) and reads [*as-lu*]h, but this restoration may be too short for the size of the break—it could easily accommodate three signs—in MS V.E_{AS}, rev. 14', which is our only witness to this line. Oshima prefers to restore [*ú-šar-mi-i*]k (2014, 108, 434; and see the note on pp. 332–33, where he states that his examination of the tablet confirms the remnants of a required second *Winkelhaken* for IK; compare Lambert's copy [1960, pl. 18]). I have not been able to confirm this with the photographs I have. He also entertains the possibility of restoring [*ú-šap-pi-i*]k, “[I poured o]ut” (333). Both suggestions are reasonable. I have adopted the first one tentatively until a duplicate can confirm or correct it. | *the abundance of grain*: As Oshima points out (2014, 333), this is likely a liquid such as beer rather than actual grain.

V 64: It is not certain that the last extant line of MS V.E_{AS} (rev. 15': [x x (x)]-zi-da ¹mé¹-e GARZA É) and the first extant line of MS V.D_{AS} (rev. 1': [x] ¹x TI x¹ [...]) meet at *Ludlul* V 64, as Oshima suggests (2014, 434), though it seems as though they must if Tablet V is to have 120 lines. In the reconstruction of SAACT 7, 28 (see also Lenzi / Annus 2011, 195), there is a two line gap between the two sources (comprising what is labeled in those works as IV 61, a gap of two lines, and then IV 64). But, Oshima has found three more lines near the beginning of Tablet V (his V 23–25) that must be accommodated in some way for the total lines to remain 120 for Tablet V. Closing the two line gap here and equating SAACT 7's IV 61 with V 64 here would provide this accommodation. There are a number of reasonable assumptions built into the reconstruction of this last Tablet of the poem on current evidence that a duplicate could easily dismiss as incorrect. | [... *E*]zida² *mê parši*: The restoration follows von Soden (1990, 133 n.71b). Oshima rejects this restoration⁷⁴ and believes what I have taken to be ZI (only in MS V.E_{AS}, rev. 15') is NAM (2014, 333, 434). This is not impossible. That there is a NI before this sign, as he indicates (434), looks less likely to me. He reads the signs following these as *ta-mé-e*, “experts,” which is an extremely rare noun (see CAD T, 46). Following

⁷⁴ SAACT 7, 28 restores [*a-na é*]-zi-da, as von Soden suggests. But, if MS V.D_{AS} is to meet up with MS V.E_{AS}, as suggested in the note above, then we must abandon the preposition.

von Soden, it seems to me *mê parši*, “the rites *and* the ordinance (of the temple),” makes a lot of sense in context.⁷⁵

V 65: [*I libated bee*]r ... [*to them*]: Oshima restores [KA]Š at the beginning of MS V.D_{Aš}, rev. 2', which would fit the gap and the context well. He restores the verb *aqqīšunu* at the end of the line (2014, 108, 333, 434). Both are reasonable restorations that I have tentatively adopted until a duplicate confirms or corrects them.

V 66: Although the text is not entirely clear due to breaks, Foster understands the present line as referring to the protagonist in the third person, a point of view that I think may begin rather at V 68 (the meaning of the line is obscure) or V 69 (the key word is restored) but certainly by V 71 with the praise placed in the mouths of the Babylonians and directed to Marduk for the protagonist's recovery. Wherever the third person references begin precisely, I agree with Foster's comment that “[t]his distancing is the result of the attention now focusing on the Babylonians' view of the sufferer and culminates in the Babylonians singing a hymn of praise to Marduk” (2005, 408, n.1). For my interpretation of this distancing, see chapter eight, page 338. My interpretation is influenced by Foster's insightful reading of *Ludlul* in his early article “Self-Reference of an Akkadian Poet” (1983). | *ḥašurri*: My translation “conifer oil” is purposefully vague. Lambert (1960, 59) and Foster (2005, 408) understand *ḥašurru* as some kind of cedar extract (see also SAACT 7, 43 and CAD H, 147) while von Soden (1990, 134) and Oshima (2014, 109) treat it as something derived from cypress (see likewise *CDA*, 112 and *AHw*, 335). As with so many issues surrounding flora and their derivatives (see, e.g., Jursa 2003–2005, 336 on aromatics), the precise identification of *ḥašurru* remains uncertain (see Streck 2016–2018, 371). | *elīšu[n]u*²: Oshima suggests reading the final trace of a sign in MS V.D_{Aš}, rev. 3' (our only witness to the line) as NU, likely to complement his restoration in V 65 (thus adopted here with the caveat noted above on V 65); compare Lambert 1960, 58.

V 67: [*qe*]rrēti: The restoration follows Lambert (1960, 58).

V 68: [*The peop*]le² made/performed: Utilizing the only sign on MS V.F_{Aš}, obv. 1' (MEŠ), Oshima suggests we restore [UN].MEŠ at the end of V 68 (2014, 110, 434), which would fit in the gap at the end of MS V.D_{Aš}, rev. 5' (a gap of two or at most three signs) and provide the subject of the verb in the line, *ēpušū*, which must be understood as standing for *īpušū*, “they made” (so also von Soden 1990, 134). Others translate the verb as a first person (Lambert 1960, 59) or third person singular (Foster 2005, 408) subjunctive. | *bīt qebērīšu*:

⁷⁵ I wonder if GARZA in MS V.E_{Aš} is explanatory for the relatively rare *mū*, “rites.” Perhaps a duplicate will shed light on this in the future.

The meaning of “house of his burying” is unclear here.⁷⁶ Perhaps it is simply a reference to the protagonist’s grave. After a brief discussion of the options, Oshima suggests it is “an offering to dead people or simply a ritual performed in the course of bringing offerings” (2014, 334), though it would be inappropriate for the protagonist, who is very much alive. In any case, his idea that there may be a ritual performance mentioned in this line is provocative and should be considered a viable hypothesis to be tested as more evidence accumulates.

V 69: *The <citizens> of Babylon*: With Lambert (1960, 58) and Oshima (2014, 110), I assume MS V.D_{AS}, rev. 6', our only witness to the head of the line, has left out DUMU before the toponym (see V 67). | [*hi*]s [*servant*?]: Lambert restores [^d*Marduk*] at the end of the line (1960, 58), which SAACT 7, 29 follows. In light of the joining of VAT 10650 to VAT 10538 (= MS V.F_{AS}), the line likely ends with SU.⁷⁷ Oshima suggests we use this to restore [*a-rad-s*]u² at the end of the line (2014, 110, 434), which would likely fit the available space (two to three signs) in the break at the end of MS V.D_{AS}, rev. 6'.

V 70: *every one of their mouths*: Literally, “the mouths, all of them.” See likewise Foster (2005, 408) and von Soden (1990, 134). Differently, Lambert (1960, 59) and Oshima (2014, 111) interpret *pa-a-tu* in MS V.D_{AS}, rev. 7' as a form of *pātu*, “boundary, district.” For *pātu* as the plural of *pû*, see CAD P, 453. | *narbē[šu]*: The restoration at the end of the line follows Lambert (1960, 58). Oshima (2014, 434) restores [*-šû-nu*], “their (greatness),” in keeping with his interpretation that both Marduk and Zarpanitu are praised in V 69 (334). MS V.D_{AS}, however, has room for only one small sign (such as ŠÚ) in the break.

V 71: *thought*: Literally, “said.” The internal element of the verb here is made clear in the second line of the couplet (V 72), *ina libbi manni*, “in the heart of whom?” | *he would again see the light of his sun*: Literally, “the seeing of his sun.” The line is quite laconic, but “seeing his sun” is a reference to the protagonist’s recovery and thus his continued life under the light of the sun (i.e., above ground). See Lambert (1960, 301) and Oshima (2014, 334) for further interpretations. Hurowitz (2010, 90) is certainly correct to see a pun on Marduk’s name, ^dAMAR.UTU, in *amār* ^d*šamšīšu*.

V 72: Literally, “in the heart of whom did the crossing of his street come into being?” For walking along the street as an indication of recovery, see the comment at IV §B 16' (line o) above.

V 73–76: The first couplet, couched as two questions, is focused on the particularity of the protagonist’s recovery. The second, containing two bold asser-

⁷⁶ Oshima suggests reading the BI sign in *qé-bé-ri-šu* (in MS V.D_{AS} only) as “a Neo-Assyrian inverse-writing for *leb*!” with a resulting *bīt qebrīšu*, “house of his grave” (2014, 333).

⁷⁷ Collation of VAT 10650 has not been possible.

tions, is focused on the general principle of the divine couple's capability to rescue people from the gravest of circumstances. With regard to V 73–74: Note how the opening words of each line harks back to I 35–36: *ša lā* (I 35, V 73) and *ela* (I 36, V 74). See already Albertz 1988, 40.

V 73: *mītūtašu*: I understand the word to be *mītūtu*, “state of being dead, death” (CAD M/2, 143), as does von Soden (1990, 134; likewise, CAD M/2, 144), and thus a reference to the protagonist's demise. This provides the perfect contrast with *napšassu*, “his life,” in V 74. Others take the word to be a plural adjective, “his dead” (Lambert 1960, 59) or “his dead ones” (Oshima 2014, 111), in which case the pronominal suffix must refer to Marduk—awkwardly, in my opinion—and thus the line implies a general principle about Marduk's capabilities to restore life, which, in my view, is expressed rather in V 75.

V 75–76: *grave ... disaster*: See V 6–7.

V 77–79, 80–82: The lines are poetically arranged into two tercets (see also von Soden 1990, 134–35 and n.107a). The first establishes the terrestrial habitation; the second its inhabitants.

V 78: *fire*: Literally, “Girra (the fire god).”

V 81: [*š*]akittu *napšatu petâ purîdu*: Literally, the line means something like “endowed with life, the opening of the leg.” The latter phrase is typically taken to be an idiom for bi-pedal mobility (i.e., walking or running); see, e.g., CAD Š/1, 179, which renders the present line “living beings walking on (two) legs.” The idiom occurs in the *Great Prayer to Marduk*, no. 2, line 15' (see Oshima 2011, 246). In a context of the supplicant's reversal of illness and misfortune, we read: *šalmeš ikbus qaqqaram-ma purîssu ipti*, “In well-being, he tread the ground, he opened his leg,” which clearly supports the idea of bi-pedal mobility.

V 82: [*ap*]âtu: The restoration follows Lambert (1960, 60).

V 83: [x x] A TA BUL ¹x x¹-[t]u⁴? The reading comes from MS V.D_{AS}, rev. 20', the only witness to the first half of this line. SAACT 7, 29 (likewise, Lenzi / Annus 2011, 195) follows von Soden's restorations (1990, 135, n.115a), [*aš-šu*] *a-ta-pul* [DÜ-*ši-na*], and translates “[because] I have answered(?) [everything]” (SAACT 7, 44). But we expect *ātapal* rather than *āta-pul* for the 1cs G perfect of *apālu*, an a-u verb.⁷⁸ I can imagine a scribe making an aural mistake of this kind (/pul/ for /pal/), but for now I rescind my previous translation and remain uncertain about a coherent reading. Also, given the traces

⁷⁸ Von Soden translates *a-ta-pul* (he reads *a-tap-pul* by mistake, n.115a) in the phrase as a Gtn infinitive: “[damit] stets antworten können [alle]” (1990, 135).

of what I now think is likely a TUM,⁷⁹ I no longer think the restoration [DÜ-ši-na] is viable after A TA BUL. Perhaps a duplicate will clarify matters in time. | *šūt pá ku[nnā]*: The restoration at the end of the line follows Lambert (1960, 60), a reading that is based on MS V.D_{Aš}, *šu-ut pa-a ku[n-x]*. MS V.F_{Aš}, obv. 15' contains a variant: *š[u-u]t pa-a taš-ta-pa*, “th[os]e which you have made manifest aloud (lit. by the mouth).” Until the first half of the line is restored, the meaning of the second half will remain unclear.

V 85: The restoration at the end of the line follows Lambert (1960, 60).

V 86: *ina n[ag]be [...]-lik*: MS V.F_{Aš}, obv. 18' places *ina n[ag]-be* right up against the right margin of the tablet, which suggested to Lambert (1960, 60) and SAACT 7 (29; likewise, Lenzi / Annus 2011, 196) that the line ends there. But, the new MS V.C_{Bab} ii' 2' reads at the end of this line [...]-lik, suggesting some form of *alāku*, perhaps, concludes the line; see Oshima (2014, 336–337) for suggested restorations.

V 87: *san[ctuary]*: I follow von Soden's suggestion to read [... *p*]a-rak in MS V.F_{Aš}, obv. 19' (1990, 135, n.117a; similarly, Oshima 2014, 110, 436). | ʿx x¹: Both MS V.C_{Bab} ii' 3' (see Lambert's copy in George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 164) and MS V.F_{Aš} end the line with two broken signs. Oshima reads the traces in both as evidence for *libil(a)*, “may he bring” (2014, 436, 111). We must await a duplicate to confirm or correct his idea.

V 88: The restoration at the end of the line follows Lambert (1960, 60).

V 90: [...]-ʿut⁷¹-su-nu liššūšu[?]: Our only witness to this lines (aside from some traces on MS V.C_{Bab} ii' 6') is MS V.F_{Aš}, obv. 22', which Lambert reads [...] šī zu ? nu šú šú šú (so also SAACT 7, 29). Oshima suggests the first three signs may be [...]-ut-su-nu, which seems a reasonable idea in light of my photographs of the tablet. As for the last three signs, Moran suggests we read Lambert's three ŠÚ signs as *itenerrup(ū)šu*, “it/they will get darker and darker for him” (1983, 257, n.12), but this seems unlikely in (the admittedly broken) context and especially because we don't expect such an orthography for a verb in the poem. Oshima (2014, 110, 337, 436) adopts von Soden's idea—which von Soden rejects (1990, 135, n.120a)—to read *liš-šú-šú*, which I have adopted here tentatively, because upon closer examination of the first of the three signs, it seems possible that the sign is LIŠ rather than ŠÚ. Perhaps a duplicate will shed new light on the correct reading.

V 91–100: The text in these ten lines is quite fragmentary, and there are only two witnesses that *may* contain textual evidence, MS V.C_{Bab} ii' 7'–16' and MS

⁷⁹ After BUL, there is a badly abraded sign, the head of another sign, and then the sign I have suggested is TUM (-tu). I don't think there is room for four signs after BUL and before ŠU (so Oshima 2014, 110, 435).

V.G_{A5}, rev. 1'–10' (see Oshima 2014, 436–437 for his score of the witnesses).⁸⁰ To make matters worse, MS V.G_{A5}, was assigned a mistaken museum number when published in copy (Ebeling's KAR 116) and now cannot be located for collation (SAACT 7, xlv, s.v. MS xx with n.84; Lenzi / Annus 2011, 191, n.45; and Oshima 2014, 337, 379). To complicate matters even more, due to the nature of their fragmentation, MS V.C_{Bab} and MS V.G_{A5} do not show any overlap in the text they bear, except possibly at *Ludlul* V 99. In that line, both witnesses (MS V.C_{Bab} ii' 15' and MS V.G_{A5}, rev. 9') show a broken RI sign,⁸¹ which may be a point of contact—a most precarious point of contact, if in fact it is one.⁸² As best as I can discern, this is the only basis for Oshima's alignment of the textual content of MS V.C_{Bab} and MS V.G_{A5} relative to one another. His basis for anchoring this combined material in the poem is the possible intersection of MS V.C_{Bab} with MS A_{Bab} at *Ludlul* V 101. This, too, is precarious as the proposed point of contact is again one sign, DU, which is relatively clear in MS V.C_{Bab} ii' 17' (see Lambert's copy in George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 164), and quite broken in MS A_{Bab}, rev. ii' 1' (see Lambert's copy in George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 149).⁸³ If MS V.G_{A5} is correctly aligned and placed, its rev. 11'–13' should overlap with MS A_{Bab}, rev. ii' 1'–3' at *Ludlul* V 101–103. Unfortunately, the breaks in both prevent any point of contact. In my transcription and translation of these line here, I have very tentatively followed Oshima's stitching together of MS V.C_{Bab} and MS V.G_{A5} and placement within the poem. I have not adopted all of his suggested restorations. Only new textual witnesses will clarify matters, which will likely require revision to the current reconstruction of these lines.

V 92: *nannāra-ma*: Alternatively, Oshima suggests we could divide the signs to read [...] *-nan narāma*, [...] ... “beloved” (2014, 337).

V 95: [*liškun*?]: The restoration is a surmise from context. See Oshima 2014, 110 for this and an alternative. | *ūme palīšu* 'x¹ [...]: Oshima suggests reading MS V.G_{A5}, rev. 5': *u₄-me BALA-šú* and then restores *á[r-ku-ti ...]* (2014, 436).

V 96: [*šakitt*]*u² napšatu*: Oshima (2014, 110, 436) suggests restoring [*ša-ki-it-t*]*u₄* in MS V.G_{A5}, rev. 6' (see V 81 and V 101). | 'x¹: Oshima reads *l[īš-...]*

⁸⁰ For my previous attempt to reconstruct these lines—without MS V.C_{Bab}—see Lenzi / Annus 2011, 196.

⁸¹ In fact, in Ebeling's copy of MS V.G_{A5}, there is only the smallest hint of a horizontal wedge.

⁸² This point of contact places the most important line on MS V.G_{A5}, rev. 10', the one that names King Nazimaruttaš, at *Ludlul* V 100 in Oshima's edition. In my previous attempt to reconstruct these lines, I aligned that line in MS V.G_{A5} with MS A_{Bab}, rev. ii' 5' at line 105 on the basis of a broken TAŠ sign and the possibility that the ŠAR in the previous line of MS V.G_{A5} (rev. 9') was the first sign of the goddess's name, as reconstructed in line 104. Despite textual advances, there are many uncertainties in the ending of Tablet V.

⁸³ SAACT 7, 29 reads the sign as UD (likewise, Lenzi / Annus 2011, 196).

(436). | -r^xl(-)UD-šú: The signs are only preserved in MS V.C_{Bab} ii' 12'; see Lambert's copy in George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 164.

V 98: [...]-r^xl-li-pu: Oshima suggests restoring [... li-iš-t]e²-li-pu, “[... may] (its roots) [str]etch down,” in MS V.C_{Bab} ii' 14' (2014, 110, 436).

V 99: [... A]N: Oshima suggests restoring [*kīma kakkabī ša*]mē, “[like the stars of hea]ven,” at the head of the line in MS V.G_{Aš}, rev. 9' (2014, 110, 338, 437), but we would expect AN-e for *šamē* rather than simply AN. | MS V.C_{Bab} ii' 15' and MS V.G_{Aš}, rev. 9' may have a point of contact in this line. The former reads [... li²-šar²-r]i-iš pa-pal-lu₄, and the latter, [... A]N li-šar-r[*i²-iš²* ...].

V 100: [Nazi]maruttaš: For this Kassite king in the literary tradition of ancient Mesopotamia, see Frazer 2013, who suggests the king's role in *Ludlul* may have been the catalyst for his later appearance in scholarly and wisdom texts (205). Nazimaruttaš likely reigned from 1301–1277 BCE (see Frazer 2013, 187, n.2), which is thus the *terminus post quem* for the composition of the poem. For a brief discussion of a few documents that mention this king in conjunction with a person named Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan, see the Introduction.

V 101: [*šakitt*]u² napšat[u]: Oshima again suggests restoring this phrase (2014, 110, 437; see V 81 and V 96), which is only partially attested for this line in MS V.G_{Aš}, rev. 11'. | r^x x DU²-šú¹: This is the reading at the end of the line in MS A_{Bab}, rev. ii' 1'. MS V.C_{Bab} ii' 17' shows r^x DU¹. If these readings are correct, then there is a possibility that MS A_{Bab} and MS V.C_{Bab} have a point of contact here.

V 103–107: These lines are best represented in MS A_{Bab}, rev. ii' 3'–7'. A look at the copies (see Oshima 2014, pl. II; for Lambert's, see George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 149) and published photographs of this part of the tablet (Oshima 2014, pl. XXXVI; Lenzi / Annus 2011, 183) will indicate that the scribe struggled to fit these lines within the column. As a result, the signs are sometimes written closely together, “out of bounds,” and/or smaller than normal. (This is the clearest indication that the scribe was growing weary as he copied this very large tablet. Further indications of this weariness—i.e., several likely scribal mistakes in subsequent lines—are noted below.)

V 103: *šalmat qaqqadi*: Only MS A_{Bab}, rev. ii' 3' preserves the phrase. Its precise reading is difficult, though the phrase itself is not in doubt. SAACT 7, 29 reads *šal-mat qà-qa-du* (likewise, Lenzi / Annus 2011, 196), which I now think is incorrect; Oshima reads *qaq-qa-di* (2014, 437). Lambert's copy, however, suggests we might better read SAG with something like IZ overlapping its right most vertical (see George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 149). Is this a mistake for DU (thus, SAG.DU)? | r^xl: There is only one broken sign in MS V.G_{Aš}, rev. 13', on the basis of which Oshima restores [x x x *be-l*]u₄, “the lord,” which he takes as the subject of the verb in MS A_{Bab}, *libēl*, “may he rule” (2014, 110–111, 437). (He does not conjecture what might have come before *bēlu*.)

Although a reasonable idea, it must be considered tentative without a duplicate (and without the possibility of collating MS V.G_{As}). | *libēl-ma*: The MA is written directly above the EL in MS A_{Bab}.

V 104: [... *Zarpānītu*: Oshima prefers [... *ki-i pa-n*]i-tum, “as before” (2014, 112, 339, 437).

V 105: [...-ta]š: Oshima suggests reading GÍL and restores [... *é-sag-gi*]ʹ (2014, 437). | *lighʹ/army*ʹ: It is unclear how to read the ERIM sign logographically: ZÁLAG, *nūr*, “light of,” or ÉRIN, *šāb*, “army of.” The former is perhaps more likely (see Oshima 2014, 112, 339).

V 106: The difficulty in deciphering this line in MS A_{Bab}, rev. ii' 6' (the only witness to *Ludlul* V 106 until Oshima's edition) is perhaps best illustrated by an anecdote. Before the publication of SAACT 7, graduate students, post-docs, and professors gathered around a seminar table in an Assyriology department with me one evening and argued over this line's reading for about a half hour. It was difficult to achieve a consensus. In any case, my previous published readings of this line (SAACT 7, 29 and, slightly improved, Lenzi / Annus 2011, 190, 196) interpreted the signs between UŠ and SIG₅ as *li-li-is*, a reference to the *lilissu*-drum. Oshima reads these same signs as a precative verb, *li-in-na-du*, and reads the entire line as follows: [... *šap-t*]u-uš *li-in-na-du* SIG₅.MU (437), “may he *command* my goodness” (113) or more literally “may my goodness be *said* (lit.: cast) by his [*lips*]” (339). I owe the reading of MS A_{Bab} adopted here ([... *aḥ-ra-t*]u-uš *li-in-na-bi ana* SIG₅-tī) to Enrique Jiménez (personal correspondence, April 18, 2014), which aligns well with MS V.F_{As}, rev. 2', [...]-ʹxʹ-ʹnaʹ-bi *ina* SIG₅-tī. In support of this reading, Jiménez cited CAD N/1 38, *zikir šumīya ina ahrāti linnaba ina damqāti*, translated there as “let my name be mentioned favorably forever,” as a parallel.

V 107: [... *ljalē balāṭi lišbu*: I follow Oshima's restoration and reading here (2014, 437). As the new material in MS V.F, rev. 3' shows (despite a scribal error), the proper reading of the logogram in MS A_{Bab}, rev. ii' 7' is TIN (so Oshima 2014, 339–40, 437) rather than KUR (as in SAACT 7, 29 and Lenzi / Annus 2011, 196, 188, and n.23). For parallels to the present expression, see Oshima (2014, 339–40).

V 108: *šamē*: MS A_{Bab}, rev. ii' 8' shows AN followed by a malformed E (with two extra horizontals; see Lambert's copy in George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 149 and Oshima 2014, pl. II). Oshima suggests restoring [... *te*]knit, “[ca]re of,” in front of the word (2014, 340). | *liršû*: The final verb is clearly attested in the new material in MS V.F_{As}, rev. 4', *li-ir-ši*. MS A_{Bab} probably reads *li-irʹ-šû* (compare SAACT 7, 29: *li-x-šû*; and Lenzi / Annus 2011, 188, 196: *li-tur-šû*), with the IR perhaps written over an erasure, as noted by Oshima (2014, 437). See Lambert's copy.

V 109: [... *lišī*]īb: I follow Oshima's suggested restoration here (2014, 112, 437). | *desire*: Both witnesses, MS A_{Bab}, rev. ii' 9' and MS V.F_{As}, rev. 5', have *ni-IS-KUR-su*, which may be read *nizmassu*, "his desire," or *nissassu*, "his grief, worry." Oshima prefers the latter word, rendering the line as follows: "may he (Marduk) e]ase his (Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's) wailing" (2014, 113, 340). Without more context, it is difficult to know which reading is best.

V 111: *Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan*: This is the clearest sign that the poem continues to refer to the protagonist in the third person (which begins at V 71, if not sooner). MS A_{Bab}, rev. ii' 11' writes the last element of the name with a GÌR sign that may be written over an erasure (so Oshima's copy, 2014, pl. II; compare Lambert's in George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 149). Note also that there are misplaced wedges on the tablet before the GÌR. It may very well be the case that the scribe began writing MU from the next line here and then abandoned it to write GÌR. Also, as noted elsewhere (Lenzi / Annus 2011, 191), we expect ^dGÌR here, as in the other witnesses; thus, the AN that follows GÌR in MS A_{Bab} may have been misplaced.

V 113: [*ša māru*]štu: Oshima's restoration, [*e-nu-ma ep-še-ta-šú ma-ru-u*]š-tú *i-mu-ru*, "[Once] he (Marduk) witnesses [*his painful*] [*be*]haviour" (2014, 113, 341, 438), requires the gap at the head of the line in MS A_{Bab}, rev. ii' 13' to have originally contained about nine signs. I do not think there is room for all of those signs. At most, there may be room for five, if one assumes consistent column width on the tablet. Since, however, the scribe writes into the margin in a fair number of lines in this final column of the tablet and even resorts to putting the last word on a separate, indented line in two cases, the column may have been a bit tighter than the others. My shorter restoration may be incorrect. But it fits the (likely) available space much more easily. In any case, a duplicate would go a long way to solving many of the difficulties in these last lines of Tablet V. | *experienced*: Literally, "saw." | [*the one who*] *experienced* [*trouble*]e: The general description given here at the head of the line seems to expand the applicability of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's experience and thus the poem's theological import to all who have experienced suffering.

V 115–119: Oshima's suggestion that V 115–119 are a call for the sufferer's personal deities to praise Marduk is interesting (2014, 341). His restorations of the verb at the beginning of V 115 and V 117 in light of this suggestion (*li-na-ad-su*, "let him [i.e., the personal god] praise him [i.e. Marduk]" or *lišar-riḫ-šú*, "let him glorify him"), however, must be considered tentative (2014, 112, 341, 438). It is also possible that these lines intend to call the personal deities to honor the suffering person (not limited to the protagonist, if I understand V 113 correctly) in their post-recovery context. I am inclined more toward this latter interpretation.

V 116: *be[co]me²*: According to Oshima (2014, 438), only MS V.F_{A^s}, rev. 12' attests the verb, *[[i-m]u-*' (MS V.B_{Bab}, rev. 10' only reads [...]-*im* before the final word in the line.) Oshima derives the verb from *emû* (2014, 113 [implied by translation], 521 [listed in glossary]) but *lîmu`ā* is not at all a typical orthography (see CAD E, 413–15, s.v. *ewû*; *AHW*, 266–67). Nowhere else in the poem is the verb spelled with the final *alef* and a vowel between the second radical and the weak third one, which is usually elided (see I 71, I 79, I 97, and II 44). Although this derivation makes sense in context, there may be some other explanation that eludes us that better accounts for the signs. Presently, however, I have no better solution. It may well be that the reading is incorrect or the witness corrupt. (Note the reading in MS V.B_{Bab}.) Or, perhaps we should restore a sign in the break between LI and MU. Unfortunately, I cannot collate the reading or assess the size of the gap without a photograph or copy of this part of MS V.F_{A^s}. Hopefully, a duplicate will bring greater clarity in time.

V 117: Oshima's suggestion that the head of the line contained a precative verb with the personal god as its subject is very likely, in my opinion (2014, 111–13), even if we cannot be certain of the verb. | *his [goddess]s* (and *his king*): I follow the reading of MS V.F_{A^s}, rev. 13' in this line, which provides the two nouns here as subjects of the precative verb, and thus restore a plural verb, *li-kab-bi-[tu-šû]*. MS V.B_{Bab}, rev. 11' reads *li-kab-bit-su*; see also MS A_{Bab}, rev. ii' 17': [... *li-ka*]b-bit-su; thus, both likely only had the personal goddess as the subject of the verb.

V 118: [*ina ...*]: Oshima reasonably suggests we restore *ina ri-ša-a-ti*, “with gladness,” or *ina tu-ub še-ri*, “in health,” in the break at the head of the line (2014, 112, 341, 438). Though the precise restoration is unknown, he is surely correct in terms of the general gist of the first half of the line.

V 119: *son[g]*: This must be a reference to the protagonist's song, which is essentially a reference to the poem itself. | MS A_{Bab}, rev. ii' 19' and MS V.F_{A^s}, rev. 16a' end with the last element of the protagonist's name, ^dGîR; MS V.B_{Bab} has a fragmentary sign after his name, perhaps *-m[a]* (see Mayer 2014, 280). There is room for maybe one more sign in this witness, though it is more likely, in my opinion, that the remainder of the line was blank. I don't think there is enough room on the tablet for Oshima's restoration, *i-[da-la-la]* (2014, 438), which he only posits for MS V.B_{Bab}.

V 120: Only MS V.F_{A^s}, rev. 16b' attests the first half of the line: *id-lu-la dà-lî-[lî-x]*. The second half of the line is attested in both MS V.B_{Bab}, rev. 14' and MS V.F_{A^s}, rev. 17'. The former reads [... *t*]a-nit-ta-ka *ta-bat*; the latter, according to Oshima (2014, 438), [... *t*]a-nit-ta-šû *ta-a-[bat]*. Thus, MS V.F_{A^s} likely read the third person pronominal suffix in the first part of the line, too. In any case, the second person pronominal suffix on both nouns in the line is the better reading, which, as Oshima notes, must refer to Marduk (2014, 342).

PART TWO: *LUDLUL* AND ANCIENT SCHOLARS

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As important as are the textual reconstruction and translation of *Ludlul*, these are not ends in themselves, not for this monograph. They are, rather, the beginning of the interpretive process, providing a base camp of sorts from which modern scholars may venture forth to explore the ancient socio-cultural contexts that influenced the scholar who composed the poem and the many other scribes and scholars after him who learned it, taught it, memorized it, copied it, and used it to make sense of their world, even many centuries after its composition. These ancient scholars are the unifying element in the studies presented in Part Two. Yet, the contextualizations and interpretations in the following studies are deeply indebted to several generations of modern scholars who have labored in the field of Assyriology and several other disciplines, providing me with companions—I use the word deliberately—from whom to learn and with whom to argue. We modern scholars, living in an age of individualism, name names. We give credit where credit is due. We point out each other's mistakes. And sometimes we admit our own. Even though the ancient scholars are front and center in the following chapters, these chapters would not be possible without the enormous labor of modern scholars who have invested their lives in the study of ancient Mesopotamia. The goal in Part Two is to read *Ludlul* with the ancient scholars, but one cannot do so—I cannot do so—without reading *Ludlul* with the modern ones, too.

CHAPTER 4:
LUDLUL AND THE SCRIBAL CURRICULA AND TABLET
COLLECTIONS OF THE FIRST MILLENNIUM

The time of *Ludlul*'s composition is not the first ancient context I invoke to begin interpreting *Ludlul* in the literate cultures of ancient Mesopotamia. Rather, I start with first-millennium scribes, who, depending on their time of flourishing, were (likely) removed by at least several centuries on the near side and as much as a millennium on the far side of the poem's compositional origins. One might think intuitively that the time of *Ludlul*'s original composition would be the better period in which to begin our consideration of the poem in its ancient contexts. But, as mentioned in the Introduction, the time of the poem's composition is difficult to establish. So I look to the later socio-historical, scribal milieu of the first millennium for a more secure *initial* ancient interpretive context—a context that is inextricably tied to the people who actually copied the *Ludlul* manuscripts currently in our possession, and a context that arises not from literary interpretive inference (internal evidence from the poem) but empirical evidence of the very materiality of the tablets themselves. The two features of first-millennium scribal culture that will attract our attention and create our first ancient interpretive context are scribal exercise tablets bearing an excerpt of *Ludlul* and the manuscripts of *Ludlul* that bear a scribal colophon. In addition to establishing a first ancient context for thinking about the poem among the ancient scholars, examining these scribal features among our witnesses to *Ludlul* also produces a couple of observations about the witnesses to the poem and thus the textual foundation of the poem itself.

4.1. THE SCRIBAL CURRICULA AND EXERCISE TABLETS
PRESERVING EXCERPTS OF *LUDLUL*

The identification of scribal exercise tablets is based on both the textual content inscribed on the tablets, with excerpts of syllabary and lexical lists being the most tell-tale sign, and the empirical, material features of the tablets themselves, their shape and especially layout. The materiality of the tablets and their distinctive content is so consistent across the first millennium that Petra Gesche could identify thousands of Neo- and Late Babylonian scribal exercise tablets as data for her dissertation, *Schulunterricht in Babylonien im ersten Jahrtausend v. Chr.* (2001), which remains the most important synthetic study of

first-millennium scribal education even two decades after its publication.¹ A brief summary of her work here sets out the broader curricular contexts (plural) for studying the exercise tablets attesting *Ludlul*.² It is important to keep in mind that Gesche's study presents a general synthesis of an entire region over many centuries. As discoveries and publications advance this area of research, her broad synthesis will, of course, require revision and nuance, especially as local variations in the various curricula become more clearly discernable.³

4.1.1. *Gesche's Synthesis of Babylonian Scribal Education*

According to Gesche, Babylonian scribal education in the first millennium followed a two-tiered system.⁴ The first level trained students for institutional administration; the second prepared students for scholarly pursuits, especially though not exclusively exorcism. The first level of the curricula started with students copying very simple sign lists and lexical texts to teach the basics of the cuneiform script. For example, scribes began their studies by copying the signs DIŠ BAD (𒀭 𒀪) repeatedly because each of the three main components of cuneiform is represented. Students then moved on to copying basic sign lists such as *Syllabary A*, the first three tablets of the bilingual lexical list *Urra*, and the so-called Weidner God List. These exercises gave students some basic skills on which later stages of training would build. Eventually, first level students advanced to copying model letters, historical inscriptions, and selected literary texts, such as the *Epic of Gilgameš*, the *Cuthean Legend of Narām-Sîn*, and *The Sargon Legend*, among others. These texts, as Paul-Alain Beaulieu notes, "present a consistent and distinctive image of the monarchy, ... de-

¹ Gesche states that there are nearly 5000 exercise tablets known from Neo- and Late Babylonian sites (2001, 37). (The evidence from Assyrian sites is comparatively speaking quite scarce.) She was limited to those in the British Museum (36) and thus her study reflects an evaluation of about half as many tablets (37), which is still more than enough to present a representative picture for southern Mesopotamia in the first-millennium, even if evidence from some sites is not as robust as from others. (For example, Uruk and Nippur have produced little evidence for the period in question and Borsippa none in contrast to the sizeable body of evidence from Sippar.) For a treatment of tablet types, see Gesche 2001, 44–52. For an important, critical review of Gesche's work, see Veldhuis 2003a.

² The summary that follows draws on my earlier summary of Gesche's work in Lenzi 2015.

³ See Veldhuis 2014, 406 generally. For hints at some local variation among NB school tablets, see, e.g., Veldhuis's observations on exercise tablets from Ur that contain a list of shrines from the local Ekišnugal temple (2014, 414–15) and Robson's brief observations on the geographical distribution of the lexical list Um-me-a = *ummānu* (2011, 564).

⁴ See Gesche 2001, 61–171 for her in-depth treatment of the first level of training and pp. 172–98 for the second. Pages 210–12 present a summary of her findings while pp. 213–18 discuss the scribes' further professional training.

pict[ing] the king always in the same role; not as conqueror, administrator, or provider of social justice but as religious leader and teacher of wisdom.”⁵ In addition to acculturating the students to the ideological values befitting future royal administrators, the first level of the curricula also taught students practical knowledge such as personal and place names, the proper forms of contracts, weights and measures, mathematics, land surveying, and other skills necessary for administrative activities. For most students, the completion of this first level led to an administrative job.⁶ Only a small fraction of the students would have continued with their studies to the second level.⁷

The students in the second level of training continued their work on lexical lists and also copied classic Babylonian literary works such as *Enūma eliš* and *Ludlul* among other religious texts, as well as texts associated with the craft of exorcism, especially incantations, some of which were bilingual (Sumerian-Akkadian). The texts in the second level of scribal training are linguistically more difficult than those in the first level and the literary texts would have provided a basis for the exploration of the Babylonian worldview. For example, *Enūma eliš* describes theogony, cosmogony, and anthropogony;⁸ and *Ludlul* explores divine sovereignty, human suffering, and the role of exorcism in healing, as later chapters demonstrate. The religious texts found on second level tablets also include the so-called *Great Prayer to Marduk, no. 1*,⁹ the *Great Hymn to Marduk*,¹⁰ the *Great Šamaš Hymn*,¹¹ and the theologically significant topographical text Tin-tir = *Bābilu*.¹² These texts along with the god list An = *Anum*¹³ and others would have acquainted students with essential information about important Babylonian deities. As second level students prepared for potential careers in exorcism and scholarship, they had to be conversant in a variety of incantations series, such as *Udug-ḫul* (bilingual), *Šurpu* (bilingual), and *Maqlū*, among several others.¹⁴ In addition to these texts, students advanced to

⁵ Beaulieu 2007a, 142.

⁶ This likely would have been especially true for students of mediocre scribal ability. See the comments in Finkel 2000, 141.

⁷ Perhaps only ten percent (Pearce 1995, 2274–75).

⁸ See Lambert 2013 for a recent edition.

⁹ Oshima 2011, 137–90 for the most recent edition, with literature on pp. 85–86. A recent English translation is in Foster 2005, 611–16.

¹⁰ See Lambert 1959/1960, 61–66 for the most recent edition, with updates in Oshima 2011, 88–90. A recent English translation is in Foster 2005, 617–20.

¹¹ An outdated edition is in Lambert 1960, 121–38, 318–23, 346. A recent English translation is in Foster 2005, 627–35. The Electronic Babylonian Literature Project will produce a new edition of the text.

¹² See George 1992, 1–71, 237–382.

¹³ See Litke 1998.

¹⁴ See Geller 2016, Reiner 1958, and Abusch 2015, respectively, for critical editions.

copying more sophisticated lexical and sign lists, such as *Ea*, *Diri*, *Erimḫuš*, and *Malku*.¹⁵

When a student completed the second level of scribal education, they would have still needed to gain professional training within their chosen field, whether in administration or scholarship.¹⁶ Young scribes would begin their career as an apprentice at the bottom of the scribal hierarchy and, if they were lucky and from a respected family, work their way up to a more prominent position.¹⁷ Several lines of evidence suggest that a scribal apprentice was sometimes responsible for copying whole compositions for another scribe (e.g., the apprentice's father or a scholar) who then became the owner of the copy.¹⁸ In addition to providing copies for others, the work of copying whole compositions or whole sections (Tablets) of large literary or scholarly works would have afforded apprentices a more connected view of the various compositions that they had copied only in excerpts on exercise tablets. With regard to literary texts, such work would have advanced the developing scribe's literary competence (e.g., their understanding of poetics) and their conceptual understanding of the composition as a whole.¹⁹

¹⁵ Editions, many of which are in the process of being updated, are presented in the (now outdated) series *Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon* (cited below by volume as *MSL*), except for the synonym list *Malku*, which is edited in Hrůša 2010. For a critical treatment and overview of lexical lists, see Veldhuis 2014.

¹⁶ Gesche 2001, 213–18.

¹⁷ For an example of a scribal career, see Pedersén's brief treatment of an Assyrian conjurer named Kišir-Aššur (1986, 45), who is the focus of Arbøll's recent microhistorical study (2021).

¹⁸ As Worthington states, “[f]ully-fledged manuscripts of entire Tablets (i.e. ‘chapters’) of compositions are generally suggestive of advanced competence. However, they were not necessarily written by expert scholars. Indeed, writing out tablets was very likely a chore, and one can imagine it being delegated to underlings” (2012, 29). Worthington cites in the same context (2012, 28–32) a number of studies that suggest this practice occurred in a variety of situations in the first millennium. Note especially Robson 2008, 253–55 (Seleucid Uruk), Clancier 2009, 222–29 (late Babylonia, with many examples from Seleucid Uruk), and George 2003, 37 (first-millennium literary texts). See now also Robson 2019, *passim*.

¹⁹ A statement Robson makes in her social history of Mesopotamian mathematics seems quite applicable for understanding how scribes might have achieved an advanced literary competence after their first and second levels, as Gesche conceives them, of scribal training. Drawing on the work of anthropologist Jean Lave and educational theorist Etienne Wenger, she writes, “learning takes place most effectively when it is situated in the social and professional context to which it pertains, through interaction and collaboration with competent practitioners, rather than through abstract, decontextualized classroom learning. Learners become part of a ‘community of practice’ that inculcates not only the necessary technical skills but also the beliefs, standards, and behaviours of the group. Through gains in competence, confidence, and social acceptance, the learner moves from the periphery towards the centre of the practice community, in due course becoming accepted as a fully fledged expert” (2008, 52–53).

4.1.2. *Exercise Tablets Bearing Excerpts of Ludlul*

Gesche described the curricular situation in first-millennium Babylonia as a whole and from a bird's eye view. (Just as there was local variation in OB scribal curricula,²⁰ there very likely was local variation in the curricula used in first-millennium Babylonia, but the available evidence makes this variation difficult to determine.)²¹ In the following I give a perspective on the whole from the position of a particular, namely, those tablets bearing a literary excerpt of *Ludlul*. How might the big picture help us understand *Ludlul*'s use within the curricula? And what might we learn about the big picture with a focus on one particular detail of it? The results from the following catalog and synthesis mostly confirm Gesche's results with a few additional details. As valuable as that may be, the present purpose for exploring *Ludlul*'s presence in the first-millennium scribal curricula is to lay an initial ancient social and cultural foundation for the interpretive forays in later chapters. Thus, the full implications of the present chapter will unfold in the following ones.

According to the most recent textual evidence, fourteen²² scribal exercise tablets preserve a portion or excerpt of *Ludlul*. It is worth noting again, as was mentioned in chapter one, that the use of exercise tablets in the reconstruction of the text has increased enormously in the last several decades thanks to a number of scholars who have worked on tablets in the British Museum, especially W. G. Lambert and the cataloging efforts of Erle Leichty, Irving Finkel, and Christopher Walker.²³ In 1960, Lambert could only draw on two exercise tablets in his edition of the poem. In 2010, SAACT 7 utilized ten. Just a few years later (2014), Oshima could include a few more, many of which were identified by Lambert.²⁴ Shortly after the publication of Oshima's edition, Enrique Jiménez added another exercise tablet to the catalog of those bearing *Ludlul*,²⁵ now joined by Aino Häntinen to MS II.p^{Bab},²⁶ and in 2019 the posthumous publication of some of W. G. Lambert's notebook copies revealed yet another (MS I.Z^{Sip}).²⁷ There is no reason to believe this will be the last. Although exercise tablets contain only small snippets of text from the poem,

²⁰ See Veldhuis 2014, 202–15 for a discussion with literature.

²¹ See note 3 above.

²² I do not count Oshima's MS I.t^{Bab} among the MSS of *Ludlul*. See SAACT 7, xlvi and the comments just below.

²³ See Leichty 1986; Leichty and Grayson 1987; Leichty, Finkelstein, and Walker 1988; Leichty, Finkel, and Walker 2019.

²⁴ See Oshima 2014, VIII–IX. The count excludes MS I.t^{Bab}.

²⁵ Personal communication, July 2016.

²⁶ Häntinen in Jiménez *et al* 2020, 248–50, 252.

²⁷ George / Taniguchi 2019, no. 207.

they do occasionally plug a gap in a line or two or provide confirmation for a conjectured restoration. As stated in the first chapter, each and every piece to the textual puzzle is welcome no matter how small in size. However, the value of the exercise tablets, as this chapter demonstrates, goes beyond simply reconstructing the text of the poem. In order to think about this value with all of the evidence in plain view, a descriptive catalog of all of the exercise tablets that bear the text of *Ludlul* along with, as is typically the case, other content, is provided below.

Before rolling that catalog out, a few caveats are in order.²⁸ Because exercise tablets typically are broken and fragmentary—sometimes very fragmentary, we usually do not know the entirety of the tablets' original contents. In fact, among the tablets described below, we have no completely preserved exercise tablets. If these exercise tablets are ever completely restored, the picture drawn from the present evidence would almost certainly change. Likewise, we still cannot identify some textual passages attested on the exercise tablets, even in well-preserved contexts, with a known composition, lexical or literary, due to our still incomplete knowledge of the first-millennium textual repertoire. Finally, as is typical in Assyriology, future discoveries of exercise tablets will require reconsideration and revision of the findings presented here. We see through a glass darkly.

4.1.2.1. *Ludlul* I

– MS I.S_{Bab}: BM 36386 (1880-06-17, 112) + BM 36716 (1880-06-17, 449).²⁹ The fragment is from the middle left side of a larger tablet; neither the top nor bottom edge of the tablet is presently preserved. The fragment contains the left side of three registers of text on both the obverse and reverse. The first on the obverse (1'–7') contains an excerpt of a bilingual incantation, *Muššu 'u* II 36–39;³⁰ the second shows *Ludlul* I 74–81 (8'–15');³¹ the third (16'–19') is a very fragmentary and unidentified excerpt.³² The reverse contains material from the sign list *Ea*. The first register (1'–6') holds *Ea* III 116–121; the second (7'–12')

²⁸ See similarly, Gesche 2001, 173, writing specifically about the texts used in the second level of scribal training.

²⁹ For identification of the tablet's contents, see Leichty, Finkel, and Walker 2019, 321.

³⁰ Böck 2007, 122–23.

³¹ Oshima 2014, 389–90.

³² See Gesche 2001, 246 and MSL 14, 301, which describes the bilingual incantation as being similar to incantations against headache (*saġ-gig-ga-meš*).

Ea IV 138–143; and the third (13'–18') *Ea* V 52–57.³³ The tablet is an example of Gesche's Type 2a exercise tablet.³⁴

– MS I.tbab: BM 37596 (1880-06-17, 1353).³⁵ The fragment is from the middle left edge of a larger tablet; neither the top nor bottom edge of the tablet is presently preserved. The reverse of this fragment contains, presumably, part of a syllabary or lexical list (BI in lines 1'–4' and the similar looking GA in lines 5'–7'); I cannot identify the passage more precisely.³⁶ Gesche identified the obverse as attesting material from *Ludlul*, though she did not specify the details and the traces of the signs are so few that other scholars have yet to confirm her identification.³⁷ The tablet may be an example of Gesche's category Type 2a.³⁸ Due to the fact that the text on the obverse is not actually a confirmed attestation of *Ludlul*, I exclude this fragment from further consideration.

– MS I.usip: BM 61433 (1882-09-18, 1407). Only one side is preserved, which is divided into four registers, the middle two of which are set off by rule lines and contain five lines each. The tablet is written in a confident, neat hand. Leichty (1977) provided the initial edition of the fragment, identifying the second section (3'–7') as *Enūma eliš* V 8–12 and the third (8'–12') as *Ludlul* I 88–92.³⁹ Lambert (1980a, 173) identified the first section (1'–2') as something from *Udug-hul* (in fact, the lines match II 78–79 in Geller's edition)⁴⁰ and the last section (13'–17') as an excerpt of physiognomic omens, identified now as (likely) from the subseries *Nigdimdimmu*.⁴¹ The tablet is probably an example of Gesche's category Type 2a, though without the other side of the tablet (presumably the reverse) we cannot be certain.⁴²

³³ See Gesche 2001, 246, slightly adjusted here, with reference to MSL 14. For an edition, see <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/dcclt/signlists/P349431/html> and Gesche 2001, 246–48, who mistakenly leaves out *Ea* IV 140 in her edition of the middle section of the reverse.

³⁴ 2001, 50, 673.

³⁵ A copy is available in Oshima 2014, pl. 6.

³⁶ BI/KAŠ and GA are not sequential in *Ea*, *Syllabary A* (*S^a*), or *Syllabary B* (*S^b*), as those are reconstructed in MSL 14 (*Ea*) and MSL 3 (*S^a* and *S^b*). GIŠ.KAŠ and GIŠ.GA are sequential in *Diri* II 293–294 (MSL 15, 130).

³⁷ Compare Gesche 2001, 680 with Oshima 2014, 378, n.5 and SAACT 7, xlvi.

³⁸ 2001, 50, 673.

³⁹ Oshima 2014, 391–92.

⁴⁰ See Geller 2016, 87.

⁴¹ I learned of this identification using eBL's Fragmentarium (Oct 21, 2020), where a search led me to parallels on other, already transliterated texts in the database. (BM 61433 was not yet transliterated.) Eric Schmidtchen (personal correspondence, October 26, 2020) confirmed the likely identification and informed me that he is working on a new edition of the subseries.

⁴² 2001, 50, 717.

- MS I.v_{Sip}: BM 93079 (1882-09-18, 5555).⁴³ The obverse of this exercise tablet contains four registers of literary excerpts. The first register attests hymnic material.⁴⁴ Note: $\text{r}^{\text{x-x}^1}\text{-taḥ-ḥa-an}$ in line 2',⁴⁵ *ta-bi-nu*, “stall, shelter,” in line 3' and *tu-šar-bi-ši bu-ú-lu₄*, “you (fem.) caused the livestock to lie down,” in line 4'; the second (5'–9') contains *Enūma eliš* I 117–121;⁴⁶ the third register (10'–14') has *Ludlul* I 55–59;⁴⁷ and the fourth remains unidentified. About the fourth section: There seems to be mention of “his calling out” ([GÙ].DÉ-šú), “he always keeps silent” (*iq'*(IŠ)-*ta-na-al*), and “he will attain long life” (T.LA *ur-rak*) in line 15'. Line 16' contains the phrase “(his) house will be diminished” (É¹ *ul-ta-ma-at- \langle ta \rangle*) and “his days will be long” (UD.MEŠ-šú $\text{r}^{\text{GÍD.DA.MEŠ}^148}$).⁴⁹ I suspect the material comes from an omen collection or diagnostic text, perhaps Sa-gig, but I cannot make a more definite identification. The reverse (see CT 14 11) contains four excerpts from the lexical list *Urra*, the last three of which are identifiable: 3'–8' is from *Urra* XVII 102–107; 9'–14' is from *Urra* XVIII 68–73; and 15'–19' is from *Urra* VIII 186–190.⁵⁰ The tablet is an example of Gesche's category Type 2a.⁵¹
- MS I.w/V.j_{Kis}: 1924.1795. This small fragment is probably from a seventh-century tablet collection discovered on Mound W at Kish, which included a number of scholarly and literary texts, including *Maqlū*, *Šurpu*, *Udug-ḥul*, and

⁴³ The fragment was cataloged in Leichty and Grayson 1987, 155 (the second volume of the Sippar catalogs), who provide most of the identifications. What they call “bilingual extracts” must refer to the first and last sections of the obverse, though neither is bilingual. For a copy of the obverse, see Oshima 2014, pl. 7 and Lambert 2013, pl. 8; the reverse is published in CT 14 11.

⁴⁴ Enrique Jiménez (personal communication, April 4, 2022) informs me that the excerpt has been identified as part of a previously unknown text of some 250 lines “that describes the exaltation of Marduk, the Esagil, Babylon, and the Babylonians, in that order,” which he and Anmar Fadhil are reconstructing with a tablet from the Sippar library and a number of manuscripts from the British Museum. It is slated to be published in the fifth installment of their Sippar Library series.

⁴⁵ The reading follows Lambert's copy. Oshima copies RI for the final sign rather than AN, suggesting perhaps a 2fs verbal form. My photographs of the tablet, taken in 2008, only include the material from *Ludlul*; thus, I have not been able to collate this section of the tablet.

⁴⁶ See Lambert 2013, 48.

⁴⁷ Oshima 2014, 387.

⁴⁸ See Lambert's copy (2013, pl. 8) for distinctive traces of the last three signs.

⁴⁹ Lines 15'–16' are paralleled in K.10611 i 6'–7', which I found with the help of eBL's Fragmentarium.

⁵⁰ Identifications tentatively follow the reconstructions in MSL. For *Urra* XVII 102–7, see MSL 10, 81, 86; for *Urra* XVIII 68–73, MSL 8/2, 95, 107; and for *Urra* VIII 186–190, MSL 7, 6, 19–20. See <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/dcclt/P247823/html> for an edition of the reverse of this tablet, which also updates the line numbers, according to its own reconstruction of the lexical series.

⁵¹ 2001, 50.

Enūma eliš, as well as many other school tablets.⁵² The obverse (= MS I.W_{Kiš}) contains *Ludlul* I 48–52 and the reverse (= MS V.j_{Kiš}) has *Ludlul* V 49–50, 53–54,⁵³ making the tablet a rare example of an exercise tablet containing more than one excerpt from the same literary text⁵⁴ and the only one in our catalog to attest nothing but *Ludlul*. Because I 48 is the first line on the obverse (we know this because the top edge of the tablet is preserved) and on the reverse there is no damage or ruling—which is unusual—between the non-sequential lines copied from *Ludlul*, the tablet likely comprised a catena of excerpts from various literary texts or, perhaps, excerpts only from *Ludul*. A ruling follows the inscribed lines on the reverse and then there is a date: UD.22.KAM*, “the twenty-second day,” a common element in exercise tablets, especially Type 2a.⁵⁵ Gesche categorizes the tablet as Type 2a.⁵⁶ But Type 2a tablets show lexical material somewhere *after* the literary excerpts are completed on the obverse. This tablet ends with a literary excerpt on its reverse and shows no sign of lexical material. Thus, it may be best to judge this tablet as an outlier in the current categories of tablet format. Perhaps this tablet is not an exercise but a list of literary excerpts something like BM 32574, which comprises quotations from literary texts though it adds various explanatory comments to the lines, absent in the present tablet from Kish. The texts cited in BM 32574 include a line from *Enūma eliš*, a Marduk hymn, and an explanation of the name Lalurallimma, who also makes an appearance in *Ludlul* III 25, among others.⁵⁷

– MS I.X_{AS}: VAT 10071 and MS I.y_{AS}: VAT 10756. These two excerpt tablets are the only ones in our catalog of exercise tablets from Aššur; indeed, they are the only Assyrian exercise tablets in the catalog. And since, as Veldhuis notes, “[t]he few Neo-Assyrian exercises that we have are not enough to create a consistent picture of how lexical texts were used in scribal education,”⁵⁸ I treat

⁵² See chapter one, page 42. For a fuller list of scholarly and literary texts that Robson has placed at the “core” of this collection, see Robson 2004, 48–49.

⁵³ Oshima 2014, 385–86, 433.

⁵⁴ Gurney was the first to identify the reverse as containing an excerpt of *Ludlul* (1989, 8). The identification of the obverse (missed in SAACT 7, xlv) first appeared in print, as far as I can determine, in Streck’s review of that work (2013, 219). For the rare occurrence of more than one excerpt from the same literary text on an exercise tablet, see Gesche 2001, 176.

⁵⁵ See Gesche 2001, 50, 56.

⁵⁶ See Gesche 2001, 786.

⁵⁷ See Lambert 2013, 8 and Jiménez 2015c (<https://ccp.yale.edu/P469976>) for an edition of BM 32574.

⁵⁸ Veldhuis 2014, 372; see similarly Livingstone 2007, 113. Making the most of what little Neo-Assyrian evidence we have: See Arbøll 2021, especially chs. 3–5, for a recent micro-history of Kišir-Aššur, an Assyrian scribe, and his education with special attention to how this young man might have learned anatomy and various therapies. Stefan Maul is preparing a study of the scribal exercise tablets from Aššur.

these two tablets separately from the Babylonian material in the synthesis below, while noting their similarities and differences to that material here.

Both tablets have ten registers of excerpts, identified initially by Lambert, who treated these two tablets as one witness in his edition of *Ludlul*.⁵⁹ Pedersén locates the former tablet (MS I.XAš) in the seventh-century N₂ (hB4V area) library and archive in Aššur and suggests the latter (MS I.yAš) may also have been found there.⁶⁰ According to Pedersén's analysis, the N₂ library and archive "belong[ed] to a family of Assyrian scribes attested by Nabu-aḥa-iddina and his son Šumma-balaṭ"⁶¹ and included, in addition to the many lexical and a few administrative texts, a number of tablets bearing scholarly materials, some of which are closely associated with exorcism. Among the latter are, for example, a hemerology, omens from *Šumma ālu*, an incantation from *Šurpu* IV, and a ritual with an incantation prayer to Marduk against witchcraft.⁶² Luis Sáenz has edited VAT 10071 (MS I.XAš) recently and identifies the precise excerpts on that tablet. He also suggests the tablet may have ended with a date.⁶³ The content of both are laid out synoptically below for easy comparison.

MS I.XAš	MS I.yAš
Obv. 1–2: <i>Erimḫuš</i> II 234–237	Obv. 1–3: <i>Erimḫuš</i> II 238–240 ⁶⁴
3–5: <i>Erimḫuš</i> III 12–17	4–7: <i>Erimḫuš</i> III 18–21 ⁶⁵
6–8: <i>Diri</i> I 247–249	8–10: <i>Diri</i> I 247–253 ⁶⁶
9–11: Principal Commentary to <i>Šumma izbu</i> III 8–10 ⁶⁷	11–13: Lexical ?
12–14: <i>Murgud</i> I 12a, 13, 17 ⁶⁸	14–17: Lexical ?
15–16: <i>Maqlû</i> IV 139–141	Rev. 1–2: <i>Maqlû</i> IV 142–145 ⁶⁹

⁵⁹ See 1960, 357 for Lambert's identifications and p. 31 for his treatment of the two tablets as one witness. Plate 73 of the same work presents copies of both tablets.

⁶⁰ 1986, 30–31 and n.3.

⁶¹ Pedersén 1986, 30.

⁶² See Pedersén 1986, 31–33 for a catalog that includes content identification when known. For the above listed examples, see numbers 10, 29 and 30, 4, and 8, respectively.

⁶³ See Sáenz 2017 (<https://ccp.yale.edu/P381770>) for an edition. See his note 3 in the edition for his suggestion of reading the last line as a date. See also Veldhuis 2014, 370–72 for a discussion of these exercise tablets.

⁶⁴ See MSL 17, 39.

⁶⁵ See MSL 17, 47.

⁶⁶ See MSL 15, 112, 105.

⁶⁷ Tablet and line numbers follow the edition in De Zorzi 2014, 2.409.

⁶⁸ See MSL 5, 81.

⁶⁹ Line numbers from *Maqlû* follow Abusch's edition (2015, 112).

Rev. 1–2: <i>The Great Šamaš Hymn</i> 138–139	3–4: <i>The Great Šamaš Hymn</i> 140–141 ⁷⁰
3–4: <i>Ludlul I 82–83</i>	5–6: <i>Ludlul I 84–85</i> ⁷¹
5–6: <i>Enūma eliš I 22–23</i>	7–8: <i>Enūma eliš I 24–25</i> ⁷²
7–8: <i>Erra I 73–74</i>	9–10: <i>Erra I 75–76</i> ⁷³
Date?	

Table 1: Assyrian Exercise Tablets.

Note that these Assyrian exercise tablets more or less reverse the format found in Gesche’s Type 2a Babylonian exercise tablets, which typically have literary excerpts on the obverse and lexical excerpts on the reverse (though sometimes beginning at the bottom of the obverse). MS I.X.Aš is also one of the very few exercise tablets that contains an excerpt from a commentary.⁷⁴ Finally, it is noteworthy that the excerpts on both tablets follow a nearly identical sequence of compositions and that the lines excerpted from each composition follow sequentially from one exercise tablet to the other. Thus, MS I.X.Aš has an excerpt of *Ludlul I 82–83* and MS I.y.Aš has an excerpt of *Ludlul I 84–85*. These two Assyrian tablets display two features Gesche has found in first-millennium Babylonian scribal education, namely, that scribes proceeded through individual compositions tablet by tablet, from beginning to end—though she makes this point in the context of lexical lists,⁷⁵ and that there was likely a general sequence to the compositions the scribes copied.⁷⁶ We will return to these ideas below.

– MS I.z.sip: BM 71949 (1882-09-18, 11952).⁷⁷ This is an exercise tablet from Sippar. Lines 1’–5’ of its obverse contains an excerpt of *Marduk’s Address to*

⁷⁰ See Lambert 1960, 134.

⁷¹ Oshima 2014, 390–91.

⁷² See Lambert 2013, 50.

⁷³ See Cagni 1969, 64.

⁷⁴ Sáenz (2017), citing Frahm 2011, 206, notes that it is the *only* one to contain a commentary. As Häntinen indicates, BM 37655 (see below on MS II.p.Bab) was at first thought to contain commentary material; but that identification has been rescinded (in Jiménez *et al* 2020, 248, n.25).

⁷⁵ See Gesche 2001, 180–81, where she makes this point specifically (and only) about the lexical lists.

⁷⁶ See Gesche 2001, 183.

⁷⁷ See George / Taniguchi 2019, 12 for identifications of the material on the tablet. The tablet was listed in the catalog of Sippar tablets in the British Museum as “[t]emporarily missing” (Leichty and Grayson 1987, 325). There is no indication of this in the British Museum’s online collection

the Demons (Udug-ḫul XI 75–79);⁷⁸ lines 6'–12' bear witness to *Ludlul* I 78–84.⁷⁹ The final broken line (13') is unidentified. The reverse has two excerpts from the god list An = *Anum* (1'–5' = I 27–31; 6'–12' = III 1–7),⁸⁰ which is a specific kind of lexical list. This tablet is an example of Gesche's Type 2a.⁸¹

4.1.2.2. *Ludlul* II

– MS II.p_{Bab}: BM 37576 (1880-06-17, 1333) + BM 37655 (1880-06-17, 1412). This tablet has two registers on the obverse and three on the reverse. The obverse preserves an excerpt of Udug-ḫul XIII–XV 133–134, identified by Aino Häntinen,⁸² and then an excerpt of *Ludlul* II 25–30 in lines 4'–9'.⁸³ The three registers on the reverse attest excerpts of lexical lists: rev. 1'–3' reflects *Erim-ḫuš* V 126²–131²;⁸⁴ rev. 4'–9' contains *Diri* I 185², 188–194;⁸⁵ and rev. 10'–12' excerpts material from around *Diri* II 135–142.⁸⁶ The exercise tablet is an example of Gesche's category Type 2a.⁸⁷

– MS II.q_{Bab}: BM 33861 (Rm-IV 422 + 423).⁸⁸ This fragment is quite poorly preserved on the obverse, where there are presumably three registers of literary excerpts, the last being *Ludlul* II 34–39 (in 16'–21').⁸⁹ The reverse attests excerpts of *Urra*: rev. 2'–9' = *Urra* XXII §5:1–8; rev. 10'–17' = *Urra* XXIII, frag.

(https://research.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=272468&partId=1&searchText=71949&page=1).

⁷⁸ Geller incorporated the material into his edition of Udug-ḫul XI (2016, 340, 357).

⁷⁹ This tablet was not used in Oshima's edition; for the other MSS attesting *Ludlul* I 78–84, see Oshima 2014, 390–91.

⁸⁰ See Litke 1998, 24–25, 66–67, following George / Taniguchi 2019, 12 (with corrections).

⁸¹ Likewise, Gesche 2001, 744. Although in Gesche's catalog, she did not recognize the specific contents of the tablet.

⁸² Personal communication, October, 2020. See now Häntinen in Jimenez *et al* 2020, 248. For the lines in Udug-ḫul, see Geller 2016, 472–73.

⁸³ Oshima 2014, 399–400.

⁸⁴ Häntinen credits T. Mitto with the identification (in Jimenez *et al* 2020, 249, n.28). See MSL 17, 72–73.

⁸⁵ See MSL 15, 110.

⁸⁶ See MSL 15, 126.

⁸⁷ 2001, 50.

⁸⁸ See Leichty, Finkel, and Walker 2019, 222 for preliminary identification of the tablet's contents. Lambert's notebook folio 010138 gives a very partial transliteration. The tablet's poor preservation is a major obstacle to decipherment. Given the format of Gesche's type 2a exercise tablet, in which literary excerpts occur on the obverse and lexical material on the reverse, it may be best to switch the obverse-reverse identification given in Lambert's transliteration.

⁸⁹ Oshima 2014, 401–2. The identification probably goes back to Lambert (see George / Taniguchi 2019, 9 and Oshima 2014, VIII, 378).

f 4'–11'; rev. 18'–24' = *Urra XXIV* 78–84.⁹⁰ Line 1' likely comes from *Urra XXI*. The fragmentary exercise tablet is likely an example of Gesche's category Type 2a.⁹¹

4.1.2.3. *Ludlul* III

– MS III.gsip: BM 68435 (1882-09-18, 8433). This exercise tablet preserves only traces of a line on its obverse and then in lines 2'–7' a register of excerpted material from *Ludlul* III. Since each of these six lines contained two poetic verses from *Ludlul*, the register bears witness to *Ludlul* III 67–78.⁹² Its reverse looks to preserve two registers of a god list, separated by a ruling: Lines 1–3 attest An = *Anum* I 1–3 and lines 4–5 have An = *Anum* I 4–5.⁹³ This is the only tablet in Gesche's catalog that she identified as containing a god list, though see now I.z above.⁹⁴ It is a Type 2a exercise tablet.⁹⁵

– MS III.isip: BM 99811 (1883-01-21, 2173).⁹⁶ The obverse of this exercise tablet preserves four registers. Lambert identifies the first one (1–5) as lines 58–62 of the *Gula Hymn of Bulluṣsa-rabi*;⁹⁷ the second register, lines 6–10, attest *Ludlul* III 9–13.⁹⁸ Two other registers (11–12, 13) probably contain other literary excerpts, but they remain unidentified.⁹⁹ The still unpublished reverse is inscribed with three rule lines that form a square with the tablet's bottom edge. There may be a sign inscribed near the upper left corner of the square,¹⁰⁰ the rest of which is blank. Given the typical layout of Gesche's Type 2a exercise tablet, it seems likely that the rule lines are part of the layout for copying lexical excerpts.

⁹⁰ For *Urra XXII* §5:1–8, see MSL 11, 22, 26; for *Urra XXIII* frag. f 4'–11', MSL 11, 68–70; for *Urra XXIV* 78–84, MSL 11, 78, 80.

⁹¹ 2001, 50.

⁹² Oshima 2014, 418–19.

⁹³ See Litke 1998, 20–21.

⁹⁴ See Gesche 2001, 733, 807; compare the entry for BM 71949 (MS I.zsip) on 744.

⁹⁵ Likewise, Gesche 2001, 733. For a likely scribal error in its excerpt of *Ludlul*, see the notes in chapter three at III 70.

⁹⁶ Leichty and Grayson only identify the tablet's contents as “literary” (1988, 380).

⁹⁷ Lambert 1967, 118.

⁹⁸ Oshima 2014, 413–14; see also George / Taniguchi 2019, 4.

⁹⁹ Line 12 seems to read: [...] 'x¹ NU *pi-it* [...]. Line 13 reads: [...] NIM x NA [...].

¹⁰⁰ What I am identifying as a potential sign falls on a crack, making positive identification difficult. If it is indeed a sign, perhaps it is to be read 'MAN' or the number '20' (?), which might suggest the box is part of a mathematical problem. The sign could also be read 'KAM*', and thus the end of a date formula, which coheres well with the idea stated above: The box is part of the layout for copying lexical material on the reverse, which was then followed by a concluding date.

4.1.2.4. *Ludlul* IV

To my knowledge, as of July 2022, there are no exercise tablets of *Ludlul* IV.

4.1.2.5. *Ludlul* V

– MS V.iSip: BM 74201 (1882-09-18, 14220). This Type 2a exercise tablet's obverse has a trace of a line, a ruling, and then there is an excerpt from *Ludlul* V, lines 54–55, 57–60 in obv. 2'–7'.¹⁰¹ A double ruling follows.¹⁰² The reverse has two registers of unidentified lexical material.¹⁰³

– MS V.kBab: VAT 17489. As described in chapter one (see page 44), this piece was discovered in an archive in the city of Babylon that dates back to the late eighth to early seventh centuries. The archive was stored in two jars, holding a total of forty-nine tablets. MS V.kBab was the only non-administrative tablet among what was otherwise an archive of documents.¹⁰⁴ It is unique among our witnesses to *Ludlul* in that it takes the shape of a regular tetrahedron (a triangular pyramid) and has writing on all of its sides. Like other exercise tablets, it preserves formulaic phrases from administrative documents and excerpts from literary or religious texts.¹⁰⁵ It is likely this interesting tablet was a prized possession, a keepsake from the owner's scribal training days. The contents were mostly identified by van Dijk with additions from Jaques.¹⁰⁶ The literary excerpts are inscribed on side i: lines 1–3 come from a prayer to Šamaš; lines 4–5 are from a *dingiršadabba* prayer;¹⁰⁷ lines 6–8a are *Ludlul* V 14–15;¹⁰⁸ lines 8b–11 are *Enūma eliš* IV 17.¹⁰⁹ Jaques suggests there may be a kind of internal logic for the arrangement of the literary excerpts: the first two are linked by the word *arnu*, “sin,” and in the last two “le dieu est nommé dans un contexte de louange.”¹¹⁰ The other sides of the tetrahedron (ii–iv) contain phrases from administrative documents.

– MS V.mBab: BM 38002 (1880-06-17, 1831). This fragment is only inscribed on one side. The first register has two lines of an unidentified excerpt: 1'. [...]

¹⁰¹ Oshima 2014, 433–34.

¹⁰² For the identification of the contents, see Leichty and Grayson 1987, 383 and Gesche 2001, 614, 760.

¹⁰³ For an interesting scribal mistake in the text, see the notes in chapter three at V 59.

¹⁰⁴ Pedersén 2005, 203–8, especially 206.

¹⁰⁵ Van Dijk 1987, 15.

¹⁰⁶ Van Dijk 1987, 15 and Jaques 2015, 64.

¹⁰⁷ Section B 10, according to Jaques's new edition (2015, 84).

¹⁰⁸ Oshima 2014, 430.

¹⁰⁹ Lambert 2013, 86.

¹¹⁰ Jaques 2015, 64, n.48.

ʿx¹ MA ŠAR ʿx x¹ [...]; 2'. [... M]A DA ME E *ši-it* ʿx¹ [...].¹¹¹ Lines 3'–9' attest *Ludlul* V 16–22,¹¹² identified by Lambert.¹¹³

4.1.3. Summary and Generalizations

4.1.3.1. Tablet Format

Looking only at the twelve Babylonian exercise tablets, seven tablets are clearly what Gesche called Type 2a tablets in that they preserve literary excerpts on the obverse and lexical material, sometimes starting on the obverse, but certainly present on the reverse: MS I.S_{Bab}, MS I.V_{Sip}, MS I.Z_{Sip}, MS II.p_{Bab}, MS II.q_{Bab}, MS III.g_{Sip}, and MS V.i_{Sip}. Two tablets preserve material on only one side, MS I.u_{Sip} and MS V.m_{Bab}, attesting literary excerpts. It is likely that the missing side, presumably the reverse, bore lexical or related material originally, making these Type 2a tablets as well. MS III.i_{Sip} is similar to these two in that it preserves literary excerpts on its obverse, but it may also preserve hints on its reverse of the layout for lexical material and a partial date, putting it among Type 2a tablets, also. Thus, in all, ten of the twelve Babylonian tablets (more than 80%) can be counted as examples of the most common format for Babylonian exercise tablets. The outliers in form are MS I.w/V.j_{Kis} and MS V.k_{Bab}. The former does not seem to fit Gesche's categories at all. The latter, having the shape of a regular tetrahedron, is extraordinary in form and might best be considered a trophy or keepsake tablet from the owner's scribal training days. The evidence, including some tablets that were not used or whose contents have been identified since Gesche's study,¹¹⁴ confirms Gesche's point about the use of *Ludlul* in the Babylonian scribal curricula of the first millennium: *Ludlul* was an assigned text in the second level of scribal training in first-millennium Babylonia and thus was part of the scribal training of future exorcists.

Given how little we know about the scribal curricula (plural, as training took place at multiple sites) in first-millennium Assyria, we cannot determine how representative the exercise tablets from Aššur, MS I.x_{Aš} and MS I.y_{Aš}, are for our understanding of Assyrian scribal training. Thus, caution is in order. It would not be going too far, however, to say that the two exercise tablets from Aššur are *similar* in form to the Babylonian Type 2a tablets, except they switch obverse for reverse, putting the lexical material on the obverse and literary ex-

¹¹¹ See likewise Leichty, Finkel, and Walker 2019, 377.

¹¹² Oshima 2014, 430–31.

¹¹³ George / Taniguchi 2019, 9 and Oshima 2014, VIII, 379.

¹¹⁴ Among those not in Gesche's catalog: Note especially MS I.v_{Sip}, MS II.p_{Bab}, MS II.q_{Bab}, and MS III.i_{Sip}, all of which are Type 2a exercise tablets.

cerpts mostly on the reverse.¹¹⁵ Despite this similarity, we do not know what this *form* might mean for our understanding of *Ludlul* within the Assyrian scribal curricula.

4.1.3.2. Tablet Origins

As stated above, of the fourteen known exercise tablets, only two derive from a northern, Assyrian city, Aššur (MS I.xAš, MS I.yAš). The remaining twelve hail from the south: five from Babylon/Babylonia (MS I.sBab, MS II.pBab, MS II.qBab, MS V.kBab, MS V.mBab), six from Sippar (MS I.usip, MS I.vSip, MS I.zSip, MS III.gSip, MS III.isip, MS V.isip), and one from Kish (MS I.w/V.jKiš). The paucity of exercise tablets from Assyria in comparison to the relative density of the material from Babylonia reflects our current knowledge about the general distribution of Akkadian exercise tablets as a whole in the first millennium: Exercise tablets from the South far and away outnumber those (published) from the North.¹¹⁶

The relatively widespread distribution of exercise tablets containing *Ludlul* supplies warrant for an implication that the site by site review of all the manuscripts of the poem in chapter one did not. Namely, *Ludlul* was not simply a widely revered but dead classic that existed in textual repositories and libraries, perhaps considered an arcane interest of an adventurous, literate few (as is, e.g., the *Epic of Gilgamesh* today); rather, *Ludlul* was a text actively shaping contemporary scribal curricula of the first millennium (comparable to Shakespeare, e.g., in English today) and thus actively forming the inner libraries¹¹⁷ of (second level) scribes who would enter the highest echelons of elite, literate culture. This is not a new realization, of course. But, the implications of this point have not been explored, something that later chapters begin to remedy.

4.1.3.3. Content: Size of Excerpts of *Ludlul*

As for their contents, we cannot be sure of all that the tablets may have originally contained since most of the tablets are fragmentary. Keeping that caveat in mind, if we look only at the tablets from the South and exclude the “trophy

¹¹⁵ MS I.xAš does have a couple of lines of a literary excerpt (*Maqlū*) in its final two lines of the obverse, which otherwise contains lexical material.

¹¹⁶ Gesche 2001, 23–24.

¹¹⁷ I owe the terminology to Frank 2010, 54–58, who picks up the idea from Bayard 2007. The “inner library” is developed briefly in chapter ten in the context of *Ludlul*'s use in other texts.

tablet” due to its extraordinary form, we find that the exercise tablets excerpt an average of about six lines of *Ludlul*. The numbers in a gray box in the chart below reflect excerpts that are bounded by rule lines on the tablet and thus the size of the excerpt is certain.

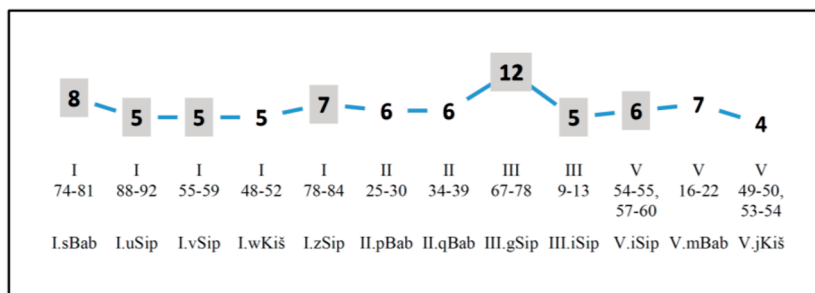


Fig. 1: Lines of Excerpted Text from *Ludlul* (Southern Tablets).

The one outlier in size, MS III.gSip, actually excerpts twelve poetic lines on six lines of the exercise tablet. If we were to adjust for that oddity by counting six lines on the exercise tablet (rather than twelve from the poem), the average number of excerpted lines among these eleven exercise tablets is still almost six. Note also in the above chart that the two excerpts of *Ludlul* on MS I.w/V.jKiš are treated as separate instances of an excerpt. If we were to count that tablet as one instance of nine lines, the average would go up to almost seven lines of excerpted text. If we only look at the tablets with *excerpts bounded by rule lines* (counting MS III.gSip as excerpting twelve poetic lines), the average is still almost seven lines of text. All of the above calculations point to an excerpt of about six to seven lines. Based on a perusal of Gesche’s study, this does not seem out of the ordinary for a second level scribal exercise tablet’s literary excerpts.¹¹⁸ Further, the chart shows that the length of the excerpt is not tied to the student’s advancement through the text of *Ludlul*; that is, the excerpts do not get significantly longer when the position of the excerpt occurs later in the poem, as if the curricula assumed that the student’s progress through the poem conveyed greater capability or facility for handling longer pericopes from literary texts. Again, I do not think this offers anything new from what we would expect based on Gesche’s study.

¹¹⁸ See, also, the size of the excerpts of the other literary compositions noted in the catalog above. Gesche does make the point that excerpts get longer as students advance through the curriculum, but this observation is only related to lexical materials, citing *Urra* as the key example (2001, 83). See 4.1.3.4. below.

4.1.3.4. *Ludlul* Excerpts and Lists

Gesche notes that first level students copied excerpts from the early Tablets of the lexical series *Urra* (I–III), often times exhibiting an awkward and uncertain script.¹¹⁹ The excerpts from these early Tablets are short whereas excerpts from the higher numbered Tablets in the same series, which second level students continued to copy, are longer and thus, according to Gesche, demonstrate the student’s growing capability.¹²⁰ Given her impression from the evidence that scribal students proceeded Tablet by Tablet through *Urra* in the course of their curriculum,¹²¹ she draws the inference that one can establish the perceived difficulty of a literary text copied on an exercise tablet and thus that literary text’s position in the curriculum (early vs. late) on the basis of which Tablets from *Urra* were copied with it.¹²² The higher the Tablet number of the lexical excerpt, the more advanced the literary composition copied on the same school tablet. Although admitting this is not a hard and fast rule, she uses this presupposition to reconstruct the level of difficulty of various literary texts that appear on exercise tablets and thus their position in the Babylonian scribal curricula of the first millennium. She positions *Ludlul* at the penultimate position of difficulty; only the *Aluzinnu* text, filled with parody and satire, is later, in her ordered reconstruction.¹²³

My review of the evidence substantiates this position for *Ludlul*. However, it is interesting to note that Gesche’s evidence *could not have* because none of the six exercise tablets in her catalog bearing an excerpt of *Ludlul* also bears an excerpt of *Urra*, the series that she uses as an index!¹²⁴ In any case, among the eight exercise tablets identified as bearing an excerpt of *Ludlul* since the publication of Gesche’s study, two have excerpts from *Urra*: MS I.vSip and MS II.qBab. In MS I.vSip the excerpts come from Tablets XVII, XVIII, and VIII. (Having an excerpt from a lower Tablet after the excerpts from higher num-

¹¹⁹ See Gesche 2001, 180, 183, for example. For cautions on the use of script to determine the abilities of a scribe, see Worthington 2012, 29.

¹²⁰ Gesche 2001, 183.

¹²¹ See Gesche 2001, 180, e.g., where she uses the word “impression” (Eindruck).

¹²² Gesche 2001, 183.

¹²³ Gesche 2001, 178, 183. For the role of *Aluzinnu*’s satire and parody in scribal education, see Jiménez 2017, 101–3, 107–8.

¹²⁴ Her catalog of exercise tablets with an excerpt of *Ludlul* includes BM 36386 (our MS I.SBab; Gesche’s catalog has a typographical error in the catalog for this tablet: Hh V [her siglum for *Urra*] should read *Ea V*), BM 37596 (MS I.tBab; not *Ludlul*), BM 61433 (MS I.uSip), BM 68435 (MS III.gSip), BM 74201 (MS V.iSip), and 1924.1795 (MS I.w/V.jkis). Some of the exercise tablets now identified as containing excerpts of *Ludlul* are present in her catalog but not identified as attesting the poem (e.g., MS I.zSip).

bered Tablets is not typical but also not unprecedented.¹²⁵) In MS II.qBab the excerpts come from Tablets XXII, XXIII, and XIV. If we take an average of these six Tablet numbers, the result comes to XVII. Since there are only twenty-four Tablets in the series, I think these two exercise tablets, if Gesche's idea is correct, place *Ludlul* among those literary texts copied later in a student's curriculum.

Other Babylonian exercise tablets bearing excerpts from both *Ludlul* and a lexical list are MS I.sBab, MS I.zSip, MS II.pBab, and MS III.gSip. The first tablet, MS I.sBab, which was used in Gesche's study substantively,¹²⁶ has three excerpts from the advanced sign list *Ea*, Tablets III, IV, and V (in a series possessing eight Tablets). The complexity of this list and the relatively high numbers of the Tablets excerpted from the series in this exercise tablet may have been one of the reasons for Gesche's giving *Ludlul* such a late position in the scribal curricula. Two of the exercise tablets listed above, MS I.zSip and MS III.gSip, have excerpts both from *Ludlul* and the advanced god list *An = Anum*. To my knowledge, these are the only two tablets containing an excerpt from this god list.¹²⁷ The presence of this advanced list on MS III.gSip, included in Gesche's catalog, may have also influenced her decision to place *Ludlul* late in her reconstruction of the Babylonian curricula. The fact that *Ludlul* and the god list also appear together on MS I.zSip, which appears in Gesche's catalog but not identified as containing *Ludlul* and the god list,¹²⁸ at least confirms that the two texts were coordinated in the curriculum (at least in Sippar!) and thus were likely perceived as being around the same level of difficulty. MS II.pBab, not used substantively in Gesche's study,¹²⁹ contains excerpts from the fifth Tablet of the bilingual group vocabulary *Erimhuš* (which may have consisted of six or perhaps seven Tablets in some first-millennium recensions)¹³⁰ as well as from *Diri*, a list that explains compound signs. These lists are likewise advanced and might also be offered as a reason for placing *Ludlul* at a relatively late stage in Babylonian scribal education.¹³¹

¹²⁵ See Gesche 2001, 182.

¹²⁶ That is, the tablet has secure identifications of its contents and could thus factor into Gesche's conclusions. See Gesche 2001, 246–48.

¹²⁷ Gesche's catalog lists two other Type 2a exercise tablets that bear an unidentified god list, BM 54195 and BM 68434 (2001, 702, 733).

¹²⁸ Gesche 2001, 744.

¹²⁹ Gesche's catalog includes BM 37655 (2001, 681), part of MS II.pBab, but not the other fragment, BM 37576. The identifications she provides for the tablet's content are very general and uncertain, thus the exercise tablet could not have provided substantive evidence for her study.

¹³⁰ See MSL 17, 4–5 and Veldhuis 2014, 235–36.

¹³¹ See Gesche 2001, 186, where she lists *Erimhuš*, *Ea*, and the god list *An = Anum* as positioned "ganz spät in den Unterricht der zweiten Stufe" (186). I assume *Diri* should be included among these, which only occurs on a few of the tablets in her catalog (808). This may be inferred

Although not a lexical list, there is another item in the contents of MS I.ZS_{ip} that is worth noting at this point for its value in considering *Ludlul*'s position in the scribal curricula: MS I.ZS_{ip} contains an excerpt from *Marduk's Address to the Demons* (Udug-ḫul XI), though it was not identified as such in Gesche's catalog. According to Gesche, *Marduk's Address to the Demons* occupied a late position in the Babylonian scribal curricula, too, alongside *Ludlul*.¹³² MS I.ZS_{ip} therefore provides new, corroborating evidence for this association and thus also for the idea that scribes studied *Ludlul* in the advanced stage of their education.

The Assyrian MS I.XA_s and MS I.YA_s both attest excerpts from *Erimḫuš* and *Diri*. The former exercise tablet also contains an excerpt from the principle commentary on *Šumma izbu*, which shares the same purpose as a lexical list in that this commentary coordinates lexemes on the basis of semantics. Given the complexity of *Erimḫuš* and *Diri* as well as the advanced hermeneutical techniques sometimes employed in commentaries, the association of these texts with *Ludlul* on exercise tablets suggests that *Ludlul* was likely copied at a relatively advanced stage of Assyrian scribal education.¹³³ But, without further Assyrian curricular evidence, this conclusion should only be considered a hypothesis to be tested against future data.

4.1.3.5. Marduk, *Enūma eliš*, and *Ludlul* in the Exercise Tablets

Gesche's study of Babylonian scribal education in the first millennium clearly demonstrates in the second level of the curricula the use of a number of texts from several different genres in which Marduk plays a major role: *Enūma eliš*, two so-called *Great Prayers to Marduk*, *Marduk's Address to the Demons* (Udug-ḫul XI),¹³⁴ and of course *Ludlul*. Of the twenty-eight exercise tablets in Gesche's catalog that bear an excerpt of *Enūma eliš*, only one also includes an

in the way she lists these series together in a separate paragraph after the other lexical lists on p. 180. (Gesche is no longer in the field, and I am unable to find an address with which to contact her to ask questions.)

¹³² Gesche 2001, 183. In Gesche's catalog four exercise tablets are listed as attesting an excerpt of this composition: BM 36646, the identification is in question; BM 37927, also attesting *Enūma eliš*; BM 37937+, also attesting *Enūma eliš*; and BM 55305, the only one also attesting a clearly identified excerpt of *Ur-ra*, specifically, from Tablet XXIV, suggesting an advanced student copied the tablet.

¹³³ Note, however, that Gesche puts a couple of the other literary excerpts on these exercise tablets, from *Maqlū* and *The Great Šamaš Hymn*, in a middle position of the second level of the Babylonian curricula (2001, 187). And two others that occur on the school tablets, *Enūma eliš* and *Erra and Išum*, are not mentioned or positioned at all in her scheme.

¹³⁴ As mentioned above, MS I.ZS_{ip} has an excerpt of *Marduk's Address to the Demons* and *Ludlul* (Tablet I), connecting the two in terms of curriculum.

excerpt from *Ludlul*, MS I.usip (*EE V*; *LL I*).¹³⁵ In the present catalog, we have five exercise tablets bearing both texts. In addition to MS I.usip, just mentioned, two, MS I.vsip (*EE I*; *LL I*) and MS V.kBab (*EE IV*; *LL V*), bring the total number of exercise tablets from Babylonia with both texts to three. (The other two, MS I.xAš and MS I.yAš [both *EE I*; *LL I*], known since Lambert's edition of *Ludlul*, are from Aššur.) In Gesche's attempt to order the literary compositions in Babylonian scribal education, she does not mention the specific position *Enūma eliš* might occupy.¹³⁶ We should be careful, as Gesche warns, not to press this matter of order too rigidly. Yet the fact that these two texts were copied on the same exercise tablets suggests, in addition to their obvious and completely expected thematic interest in Marduk, a perceived similarity in their level of difficulty and thus, as Gesche hypothesizes with other texts, their close position to one another within the curriculum. As a check on the latter inference, we might consider how the excerpt tablets with both *Enūma eliš* and *Urra* compare to those with both *Ludlul* and the same list. Gesche identifies nine exercise tablets with excerpts from both *Enūma eliš* and *Urra*: BM 33824 (Tablets XIX, XX), BM 54569 (XII), BM 36417 (XXIII, XXIV), BM 36726 (VII, VIII, IX, X, XI), BM 37395 (XIV²), BM 37969 (XI), BM 38864 (XVI), BM 54847 (XXII), BM 66956 (XIV). The average of the Tablet numbers excerpted from the lexical list is a third under XV (n = fifteen excerpts on nine tablets). This is fairly close to the number XVII for *Ludlul* (n = six excerpts on two tablets). One wonders how the averages would change if there were more exercise tablets with excerpts from both *Ludlul* and *Urra*.¹³⁷

Two further observations about exercise tablets attesting both *Enūma eliš* and *Ludlul*. The first is about MS V.kBab, which is the pyramid-shaped tablet. In addition to Jaques's idea, cited above, that the citations from *Enūma eliš* and *Ludlul* are connected by virtue of the fact that both excerpts praise Marduk, these two excerpts also come from later Tablets in their respective compositions, suggesting—perhaps—that this “trophy tablet” commemorates an advanced stage of scribal accomplishment. Of course, this is only speculation.

The second observation is about the Assyrian exercise tablets, MS I.xAš and MS I.yAš, which join excerpts from the first Tablet of *Erra and Išum* to excerpts from the initial Tablets of *Ludlul* and *Enūma eliš*. Although Marduk is not the

¹³⁵ Gesche 2001, 808 for a list (note also 177, n.683) and p. 717 for MS I.usip, s.v., BM 61433.

¹³⁶ Note its absence on p. 183. For the narrative poem's role in the second level of Babylonian scribal education generally, see Gesche's comments, e.g., on pp. 177–78.

¹³⁷ In addition to *Urra*, one tablet bearing *Enūma eliš* also has an excerpt from the advanced list *Erimhuš* (BM 50711), two also have an excerpt from the Akkadian synonym list *Malku* (BM 36387, BM 72046), and another also has an excerpt from an unidentified god list (BM 68434). These also suggest an advanced position in the curriculum.

focus in *Erra and Išum*, he does play a significant role in the opening Tablets.¹³⁸ The various lists copied on the obverse, as mentioned earlier, are rather advanced. Perhaps in Aššur a student had to advance to this level in the lists before beginning these three sophisticated literary works. But again, this should be treated only as a hypothesis to be tested when we have acquired better evidence of the various Assyrian scribal curricula.

4.1.3.6. *Ludlul* and Incantations

Given Gesche's conclusion that the second level of scribal training in the Babylonian curricula had a special interest in exorcism, it is not surprising to see that five of the twelve Babylonian exercise tablets in the present catalog contain both excerpts of *Ludlul* and of an incantation (MS I.S_{Bab}, MS I.U_{Sip}, MS I.Z_{Sip}, MS II.p_{Bab}, and MS V.k_{Bab}). Specifically, MS I.S_{Bab} contains an excerpt from *Muššu'u*, MS V.k_{Bab} an excerpt from a *dingiršadabba*, and MS I.U_{Sip}, MS I.Z_{Sip}, and MS II.p_{Bab} contain excerpts from Udug-hul. The same juxtaposition of *Ludlul* and incantatory material also exists on the two Assyrian exercise tablets, MS I.X_{Aš} and MS I.Y_{Aš}. In their case, the material is excerpted from the anti-witchcraft series *Maqlû*. In all, therefore, precisely half of the exercise tablets bearing *Ludlul* place an incantation excerpt alongside one from the poem. Even if this curricular connection in the Babylonian tablets tells us first and foremost something about the training of advanced scribes and potential future exorcists, I think it raises an interesting question about how or why *Ludlul* might have been perceived to serve this pedagogical end. Of course, one may simply point to the central role of Marduk in *Ludlul* for its perceived appropriateness in the curricula (as above). In addition to this suggestion, I think the curricular juxtaposition of *Ludlul* with incantation materials suggests the scribal masters saw something especially significant about *Ludlul* in terms of its *content and composition* that made it especially suitable for their pedagogical goals. In the following chapters, I show that the poem itself connects to exorcism via its content and themes (see chapter five), its vocabulary (see chapter six), its professional and institutional implications for ritual experts (see chapter seven), and even its innovative literary form (see chapter eight).

The information gleaned so far in this chapter is in part confirmed by the kind of information we gain from a close look at the colophons on the tablets attesting *Ludlul*. In addition to matters pertaining to scribal training, the colo-

¹³⁸ Machinist 2005 and Wisnom 2020 have seen a connection between *Anzû*, *Enûma eliš*, and *Erra and Išum*. Perhaps the excerpts of the latter two in sequence on these tablets from Aššur supports this idea in a broad way.

phons also give insight into the scribal copyists of the poem, student or otherwise, and their socio-institutional settings, adding to our initial ancient interpretive context for understanding *Ludlul* among the scholars and providing further support for examining *Ludlul* in subsequent chapters through the lens of the professional competencies and concerns of the exorcists.

4.2. SCRIBAL COLOPHONS AND THE EXTANT MANUSCRIPTS OF *LUDLUL*

As is well-known, when scribes copied literary, religious, divinatory, political, poetic, and other non-quotidian (i.e., legal, administrative, or personal epistolary) texts, they often included a brief statement at the tablet's conclusion that conveyed information such as the name of the composition copied, the fidelity with which the tablet was copied from its original, the person who copied the tablet (often including their filiation and profession), for whom the tablet was copied (again, including their filiation and profession), the location from which the original derives and/or the location the copy was made, and perhaps the date the tablet was copied, among other items.¹³⁹ As the following catalog demonstrates, the content and length of colophons varies significantly. Aside from the fact that colophons always occur at the conclusion of a tablet, usually in the lower part of the tablet's reverse, colophons were also typically set apart from the main text being copied by a rule line (or two) across the clay above the colophon. And sometimes the colophon is written in lines spaced farther apart vertically from one another, i.e., a kind of double spacing, as opposed to the single line spacing of the main composition. If there is a colophon on a tablet, the presence of one or more of these material features make its presence absolutely certain. Looking to tablets attesting both the text of *Ludlul* as well as a colophon provides the second feature of scribal culture with which to contextualize *Ludlul* among first-millennium scribes. Our driving question here, similar to the first section is, What can we learn about *Ludlul* among first-millennium scribes from the colophonic evidence on tablets attesting the poem?

Among all the manuscripts of *Ludlul* only ten preserve a colophon:¹⁴⁰ MS I.G^{Bab?}, MS I.J^{Nin}, MS I.P^{Aš}, MS I.Q^{Kal}, MS II.G^{Nin}, MS II.I^{Nin}, MS II.H^{Nin}, MS II.L^{Aš}, MS II.N^{Huz}, and MS V.B^{Bab}. As one can see, the Babylonian evidence for

¹³⁹ The fundamental work on Akkadian colophons of the first millennium BCE remains Hunger 1968.

¹⁴⁰ This count does not include dates at the end of exercise tablets, as clearly preserved on MS I.w/V.j^{Kis} and perhaps to be found on MS I.x^{Aš} and III.i^{Sip}.

this material feature of tablet witnesses is quite paltry compared to the Assyrian evidence, making the geographical focus of this second section the exact opposite of the previous. As the colophons of the currently known manuscripts of *Ludlul* have never been published in one place, the following presents a catalog of the evidence. Unlike the previous section, the material is presented here by geographical region, Babylonia first, then Assyria, and, in the case of the latter, city by city: Nineveh, Kalḫu, Aššur, and finally the Assyrian provincial town Ḫuzirina, which lies outside of Assyria proper. Rather than offering a synthesis at the conclusion of the catalog, I comment on the significance of each site in its subsection as the amount and kinds of information that can be gleaned from each colophon varies significantly. Although the results will not be surprising to anyone who knows these sites, creating this contextualization for *Ludlul* among first-millennium scribes will again, as stated in the first section, provide an important social and cultural foundation for further interpretive forays in later chapters.

4.2.1. Babylonia

The two tablets from Babylonia bearing a colophon offer, as best as I can determine, little substantive evidence to exploit for the purposes of the present chapter. For the sake of completeness, the colophons are presented below.

MS V.B_{Bab}.¹⁴¹

r15'. [DUB.5.KAM *lud-l*]ul EN *né-me-ṛqí* ZAG¹.TIL.B[I].ṚŠÈ¹⁴²

r16'. [...]Ṛ^{d1}AMAR.UTU A¹⁴³ [š]á m^rx¹-[(x)]-Ṛx¹ A m^rx¹-Ṛx¹-[(x)]

r17'. [...] ŠI[?] ŠU[?] Ṛx¹ [x x]

{bottom edge}

[The 5th Tablet of *Ludl*]ul *bēl nēmeqi*. Com[p]lete.

[...]-Marduk, son [o]f ... from the ... family,

[...] ... [...]

MS I.G_{Bab?}.¹⁴⁴

r11'. [...] I]M.DUB m^{d+}EN-DÜ-*uš* A *šá* mⁱina-É-*sag-gíl*-NUMU[N]

r12'. [...] m^{d+}EN.SUR-*ru* A¹ m!¹⁴⁵ *da-b*[*i-bi*]

r13'. traces

¹⁴¹ See Leichty 2011 and Oshima 2014, 438.

¹⁴² Leichty reads the last several signs differently: GIM LIBIR-š[ú] SAR (2011, 134).

¹⁴³ Leichty includes -šú here (2011, 134).

¹⁴⁴ See Horowitz / Lambert 2002, 244 for text and translation.

¹⁴⁵ The scribe has confused the order of the DIŠ and A signs. See Horowitz / Lambert 2002, 244, n.16.

{breaks off}

[... ta]blet of Bēl-īpuš, son of Ina-Esagil-zēr[u],
 [... son of] Bēl-ēṭir, from the Dābi[bī] family.

According to the Prosopography of Babylonia (c. 620–330 BCE) project (ProsoBab),¹⁴⁶ there is a Bēl-īpuš, son of Ina-Esagil-zēru from the Paḥāru family attested in two documents from Borsippa, BM 29066 (dated 05.VI.00 Nbn = 556 BCE) and BM 29523 (dated 04.VIII.01 Nbn[?] = 555[?] BCE), both from the Ibnāya A archive; the man is designated a scribe in the latter document.¹⁴⁷ There is no way to be sure that this man is the same man named in our colophon. ProsoBab shows that 238 individuals bore the Dābibī family name. Of these, there is a certain Lābāši, son of Bēl-ēṭir from the Dābibī family attested as a witness in one document from Babylon, BM 77300 (dated 05.X.00 AM = 561 BCE), from the Ea-eppēš-ilī A archive.¹⁴⁸ (The scribe in BM 77300 is named Šamaš-šarru-ušur, son of Bēl-šumu-iškun, descendant of the Paḥāru family.) There is again no way to know that this is the same person (partially) named in our colophon. More-over, I find no connection between any of these identified individuals. Thus, the statement that Horowitz and Lambert made in their edition of MS I.G_{Bab}? remains true to this day: “The provenance of the Birmingham *Ludlul* fragment is uncertain as the tablet arrived in Birmingham without any documentation and the persons named in the colophon cannot be identified with any particular city” (2002, 237).

4.2.2. Assyria

4.2.2.1. Nineveh

The numerically greater evidence from Assyria compared to that from Babylonia is mitigated substantially by the facts that one of the eight Assyrian MSS of *Ludlul* bearing a colophon is completely illegible (MS I.P_{AS}) and four attest a version of one of the highly formulaic Aššurbanipal colophons.¹⁴⁹ The latter tells us little about the use of *Ludlul* among first-millennium scribes generally,

¹⁴⁶ I thank Laurie Pearce for pointing me to this project and for the initial references to the first two individuals named in this paragraph.

¹⁴⁷ See <https://prosobab.leidenuniv.nl/individual/20763> for the man and <https://prosobab.leidenuniv.nl/tablet/t6830> and <https://prosobab.leidenuniv.nl/tablet/t6832> for information about BM 29066 and BM 29523, respectively. Jursa 2005, 83–84 provides an overview of the archive.

¹⁴⁸ See <https://prosobab.leidenuniv.nl/individual/10244> for the man and <https://prosobab.leidenuniv.nl/tablet/t4399> for information about BM 77300. Jursa 2005, 62–64 provides an overview of the archive.

¹⁴⁹ See Streck 1916, I.LXXI–LXXXII and II.354–75; Hunger 1968, nos. 317–345; and the new editions that are forthcoming through the Electronic Babylonian Literature project.

though it confirms for us something that we already know very well about the literate royal scribal-scholar himself: Aššurbanipal was very interested in the wide spectrum of texts in the cultural repertoire of the learned scribes and scholars of his day, among whom he counted himself,¹⁵⁰ and had several copies of the poem in his library. The colophons also confirm something quite specific about the poem: *Ludlul* was not simply another text at Nineveh; *Ludlul* was certainly a part of Aššurbanipal's specific intellectual scribal activity.¹⁵¹ In fact, every witness for *Ludlul* from Nineveh that preserves the end of its reverse also preserves an Aššurbanipal colophon.¹⁵² This, of course, is neither proof of Aššurbanipal's *unique* interest in the poem nor other Assyrian royals' neglect. As mentioned in chapter one, MS III.E_{Aš} may have been discovered in the palace of Sennacherib's son, prince Aššur-muballissu.¹⁵³ And as described below, MS I.Q_{Kal} was found among a working royal tablet collection housed in Nabû's Ezida temple. Still, the fact that *Ludlul* was so well represented in Aššurbanipal's collection gives warrant to consider how the text may have influenced this scribe-cum-king, for which see chapter ten.

The colophons are formulaic and well-known and so, as with the Babylonian ones, are presented in the following for the sake of completeness. As they offer no surprises in their formulation, they are presented with only selected restorations supplied and without full translation. A few phrases are translated to highlight selected features. Annotations are intended to do the same.

MS I.J_{Nin}: (Aššurbanipal colophon b)¹⁵⁴
 r3'. [... *lud-lul* E]N *né-me-qí* ^m*aš-šur*-D[Û-...]
 r4'. [...]-*na* LUGAL ŠÚ [...]
 r5'. [...-*t*]u LUGAL ŠÚ [...]
 r6'. [... GI]Š.LL.U₅.UM.MEŠ [...]
 r7'. [... *ina tap-ḥur*]-*ti um-ma-a*-[*ni* ...]

¹⁵⁰ Lieberman 1990; Villard 1997; Livingstone 2007; Frahm 2011a; and Zamazalová 2011.

¹⁵¹ The presence of a commentary to *Ludlul* among the tablets at Nineveh may also support this statement, though we cannot be sure it was in Aššurbanipal's collection since the bottom reverse of the tablet is missing and thus we do not know the content of its colophon, if it bore one originally.

¹⁵² For a recent summary of the contemporary scholarship on (and debate about) the Aššurbanipal colophons as evidence of the Assyrian king's interest in the content on the tablets bearing the colophons (as opposed to, e.g., a collector's interest), see Robson 2019, 124–27.

¹⁵³ Pedersén 1986, 76–81 (N₅; IA9II area); for the present tablet, see specifically pp. 77 and 79. The tablet was found among more than seventy-six other tablets, many of which attest an incantation of some kind, including *sag.ba sag.ba*, *namburbi*, and *Maqlû* types. One of the tablets is an exercise tablet with an excerpt from *Erimḥuš* and *Malku*. The evidence is too fragile for firm conclusions (Pedersén 1986, 78; likewise, Robson 2019, 129), but if these tablets belonged to the prince, might they reflect the prince's scribal training?

¹⁵⁴ See Hunger 1968, no. 318.

r8'. [...] *qé-r[eb ...]*
 {breaks off}

r7'. [...] among the compa]ny of schola[rs ...]¹⁵⁵

MS II.G_{Nin}: (Aššurbanipal colophon b)¹⁵⁶

r27'. DUB.2.KÁM [*lud-lul EN né-me-qí ...*]

r28'. ^m*aš-šur*-DÜ-DUMU.UŠ [...]^k_i

r29'. DUMU ^m*aš-šur*-ŠEŠ-[-...]^k_i

r30'. DUMU ^{md}30-PAB.MEŠ-[-...]^k_i-*ma*

r31'. *ki-i pi* DUB.MEŠ GIŠ.L[...]¹ URU^{ki}

r32'. *tup-pu šu-a-tu ina tap-ḥur-t[*i um-ma-a-ni ...-n*]iq* IGI.KÁR-*ma*

r33'. [*a-n*]*a ta-mar-ti LUGAL-ti-i[*a qé-reb É.G*]AL-ia ú-kin*

r34'. [*ša š*]*u-mi šaṭ-ru i-pa-áš-ši-tu MU-šú i-šaṭ-ṭa-ru*

r35'. [^dN]_{A4} DUB.SAR *gim-ri MU-šú lip-ši-iṭ*

{bottom edge}

r32'... among the compan[y of scholars ...] ...

r33'. I deposited *the tablet* [in] my [pal]ace [fo]r my royal reading.¹⁵⁷

MS II.H_{Nin}: (Aššurbanipal colophon a)¹⁵⁸

r18'. [...] DUB.¹2.KÁM.MA¹ *lud-lul be-lum né-me-q[í ...]*

r19'. [...] AN.ŠAR-DÜ-¹A²¹ [...]

r20'. [...] KUR ^rd¹[...]

{bottom edge}

The last two lines of the colophon on MS II.H_{Nin}, that is, the lines that belong to the actual Aššurbanipal colophon, were scratched into the dried clay rather than pressed into the clay while it was wet, suggesting perhaps that the tablet was accessioned into the collection well after it had been copied. This method of attaching the colophon may also account for its brevity.

II.I_{Nin}: (Aššurbanipal colophon d)¹⁵⁹

r25'. [...] *lud-lul EN né-me-^rqí¹*

¹⁵⁵ The phrase *ina taphurti ummāni*, “among the company of scholars,” only occurs in Aššurbanipal colophon b. (My translation of *taphurtu* with “company” follows *CDA*, 398, “assembly, company”; see also *AHW*, 1320 and Lieberman 1990, 319. Compare *CAD T*, 180, “collection, completion(?)”.)

¹⁵⁶ See Hunger 1968, no. 318.

¹⁵⁷ For the technical meaning of *tāmartu* as indicating an act of acquiring knowledge, see Arboell 2021, 101, who notes previous literature. For the phrase among other similar phrases in the Aššurbanipal colophons, see Lieberman 1990, 318–19.

¹⁵⁸ See Hunger 1968, no. 317.

¹⁵⁹ See Hunger 1968, no. 319d. The complete colophon was published by Aino Häntinen in Jiménez *et al* 2020, 247, thanks to her joining of K.9973 to DT 151 (Oshima’s MS II.O) and K.3972 and thereby filling in the missing lines.

r26'. [...] LUGAL ŠÚ LUGAL KUR aš-[...]
 r27'. ša ^r1NA4 u ^drtaš^r-me-tu4 GEŠ[TUG.MIN ...]
 r28'. [i-h]u-uz-zu IG[1.MIN ...]
 r29'. š[a ina L]UGAL.MEŠ ^ra^r-[lik ...]
 r30'. nē-me-eq ^dNA4 [...]]
 r31'. ina DUB.MEŠ áš-ṭ[ur ...]
 r32'. a-na ta-mar-[ti ...]
 r33'. qé-reb É.GA[L ...]
 {bottom edge}

4.2.2.2. Kalḫu

MS I.Q_{Kal}:¹⁶⁰
 r32'.¹⁶¹ DUB.1.KÁM lud-lul ^rEN^r [ne-me-qi ...]
 {three blank lines to the bottom edge}

The 1st Tablet of *Ludlul bēl* [nēmeqi ...]

Like the Babylonian tablets bearing a colophon, there is little to say specifically about this one tablet from the royal Assyrian tablet collection in Nabû's Ezida temple at Kalḫu, which bears a rather meager colophon.¹⁶² The dearth of data in its colophon is unusual since, as Robson notes, "almost all" of the colophons from this collection "give vital information about the men who worked there," who were, as she characterizes them, royal scribes and scholars from prominent families with long pedigrees as Assyrian court scholars.¹⁶³ Yet the very presence of MS I.Q_{Kal} among tablets belonging to such men within a royal Assyrian tablet collection demonstrates again that *Ludlul* was not simply some obscure, mostly-forgotten text, pushed on scribal students during their pedagogical "captivity." Rather, at Kalḫu it was part of a working library similar in nature, if smaller in scope, to what Aššurbanipal created at Nineveh. Thus, *Ludlul* ought to be understood as part of the broader and *current* cultural ethos among literate elites in Assyria during the seventh century BCE.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁰ See Wiseman / Black 1996, pl. 121 for a copy of the colophon.

¹⁶¹ This line is preceded by a blank space the size of about two lines.

¹⁶² The tablets from the Ezida in Kalḫu were not yet published (see Wiseman / Black 1996) when Hunger completed his study on colophons (1968). For comments on the thirty colophons preserved on the tablets, see Robson 2013, 46.

¹⁶³ See Robson 2013, 46.

¹⁶⁴ For a general characterization of the tablets from the Ezida at Kalḫu as a royal Assyrian collection, see Robson 2013, 45–48 and Robson 2019, chs. 3–4, and see especially pp. 114–16 for the collection's contents by genre/text type.

4.2.2.3. Aššur

MS I.P_{AS}
 b.e. [...] ṽx x x x x¹ [(x)]

The colophon on the bottom edge of this fragment is illegible (see Lambert 1960, 30 and pl.74).

MS II.L_{AS}¹⁶⁵
 r ii' 6'. [...] x ṽLÚ.ŠÁMAN¹.LÁ TUR
 r ii' 7'. [...] ṽx x x x¹
 {breaks off}
 [...] ... young scribal apprentice
 [...] ...

The colophon on this tablet is quite fragmentary, attesting only the ends of its two lines. In addition, what little remains was actually erased in antiquity! I can offer no reason beyond speculation for this treatment. Despite these epigraphic obstacles, the first line of the colophon clearly shows the words *šamallû šehru*, “young scribal apprentice,” proving that an advanced scribal student, having graduated from exercise tablets, made this copy of *Ludlul* II at Aššur.¹⁶⁶ Since this witness preserves a catchline to Tablet III 1 (rev. ii' 5'), it may be that the scribe continued his work to the next tablet in the composition.

This tablet shows two *Winkelhaken* ten lines apart in the left margin of the column on the right (col i')—only two such marks are preserved;¹⁶⁷ presumably, the fully-preserved tablet had such a mark every ten lines, an occasional feature one finds on a variety of tablets.¹⁶⁸ Since the mark was written over the margin line (clearly visible in the lowest of the two), this mechanism seems to

¹⁶⁵ See Lambert 1960, pl. 74 (VAT 10569) for a copy of the tablet that includes the erased colophon. Also available at https://cdli.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/dl/lineart/P404973_1.jpg.

¹⁶⁶ There are a number of colophons from Aššur attesting this rank, some of which also preserve the name of the individual holding it. See, e.g., Hunger 1968, nos. 197, 199, 200, 222, 223, 232, 235, 236, 238, 239, 246, 250, 253, 255, 260, 261, and 269. For general remarks about apprentices, see Robson 2019, 131–32 with reference to Maul 2010. For a study following the history of one such named individual, Kišir-Aššur, see Arbøll 2021 and pages 34–98 specifically for the young man as a *šamallû šehru*. (Arbøll uses several texts unavailable at the time of Hunger's work on colophons.) Our nameless young scribe here in MS II.L_{AS} might have been named among the other Aššur colophons. Future digital approaches to the material may be able to match him to one of them via paleography, orthography, or some other feature.

¹⁶⁷ In Lambert's copy the decade markers are in the center margin just under lines numbered 50 and 60 (see 1960, pl. 74 [VAT 10569] and the image at https://cdli.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/dl/lineart/P404973_1.jpg).

¹⁶⁸ See, e.g., Hunger 1968, 2.

have been a way either to check that the copyist had included the correct number of lines (after inscribing the tablet) or to provide guidance for approximate line spacing (before inscribing the tablet but after laying out the margin lines). Might this have been necessary in the present case specifically because of the inexperience of our *šamallû šeḫru*?

Overall, the young scribal student did a good job copying his text. What little we have of it reveals no obvious mistakes. There is one word in the text, however, the final verb in II 120, that some may count as a mistake. The verb has been the centerpiece of a long-standing interpretive crux on the proper translation of II 120. Seeing the present MS's reading in comparison to the two others that attest the end of the line will clarify the issue:

MS II.I_{Nin}, rev. 23': [...] *mu-de-e* ^dUTU-*su-un i-LAGAB* (-*rim* / -*kil* ?)

MS II.L_{Aš}, rev. ii' 4': [...-s]*u-un i-ri-im*

MS II.N_{Huz}, rev. 48: *šá qer-bi mu-de-e* ^dUTU-s[*u*]-*un i-LAGAB* (-*rim* / -*kil* ?)

As one can see, the question is: Should we read the LAGAB sign in MS II.I_{Nin} and MS II.N_{Huz} as -*rim* or -*kil*?¹⁶⁹ Is the verb *īrim* from *arāmu*, “to cover (something) over,” or *īkil* from *ekēlu*, “to be(come) dark”? Setting aside the reading in MS II.L_{Aš} for a moment, interpreters have disagreed about which of the two verbs provide a better sense in context. Jerrold Cooper provides the best argument for reading *īrim* from *arāmu*; he translates II 119–120 as follows:

The day has darkened for my whole family, *and*
Of those among my friends, it has eclipsed their sun.¹⁷⁰

A composite text of the Akkadian reads:

īī ūmu ša gimir kimtīya
ša qereb mūdē šamassun īrim

The subject of *īrim*, according to Cooper, is a nameless “it,” which he clarifies as “either the general suffering of the man described throughout the tablet, or more specifically, the words of doom uttered by his countrymen in 116.”¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ The substance of the following discussion, with adjustments and additions, comes from SAACT 7, xxiii, n.38, which I wrote. The matter is also discussed in Worthington 2012, 65–66 with a similar conclusion as here.

¹⁷⁰ Cooper 1975, 249. See also von Soden (1990, 126, n.120a) and Oshima 2014, 93, 271–72. Similarly, Reiner 1985, 104, though she makes the sun the subject of the verb: “For all my acquaintances their sun became covered over.” This rendering is unlikely since *arāmu* is transitive (see CAD A/2, 228–29).

¹⁷¹ 1975, 249.

Oshima, who likewise reads *īrim*, prefers to see Marduk as the subject of the verb under the influence of Marduk's anticipated role in III 1.¹⁷² Though identifying the subject of the verb is a weakness for it, Cooper's reading of II 120 is sensible and creates a better parallelism with II 119 than Lambert's discarded reading.¹⁷³ It also accounts for the reading *i-ri-im* in MS II.LA₅, which presents an unambiguous orthography of the verb. But, deriving the verb from *ekēlu* makes equally good—perhaps slightly better—sense and provides an even stronger parallelism both lexically and grammatically. Lexically, the verbs *ēṭū* in II 119 and *ekēlu* in II 120 are both from the semantic domain of “darkness.” Grammatically, the two subjects in the lines (“day” and “their sun”) are clearly parallel and the three grammatical elements of II 119 and II 120 are arranged in a chiasm: verb, subject, *ša*-clause // *ša*-clause, subject, verb.¹⁷⁴ According to this understanding, II 119–120 may be translated:

The day grew dark for my entire family,
For those among *my* friends their sun darkened.

If the reading from *ekēlu* is accepted, the variant in MS II.LA₅ might be explained as a true semantic variant, in which the scribe mistook Marduk (see III 1) as the subject¹⁷⁵ or it may simply be a mistaken clarification of an ambiguous sign: KIL was mistakenly read as RIM and disambiguated with RI-IM.¹⁷⁶ Given the slight superiority of *īkil* contextually and the fact that MS II.LA₅ was written by a young scribal apprentice, the possibility of a mistaken reading in this MS should not be too quickly dismissed.

¹⁷² 2014, 93, 271–72. See also note 175 below.

¹⁷³ Lambert derived the verb from *rēmu*, “to show mercy” (1960, 295 and 344; as did Langdon 1923, 49). He translates II 119–120 as follows: “But I know the day for my whole family, When, among my friends, their Sun-god will have mercy” (46).

¹⁷⁴ For others who read *īkil*, see, e.g., Moran 1983, 257, n.11; Foster 2005, 401, 409, who attributes the reading back to Landsberger; and CAD E, 64.

¹⁷⁵ See, e.g., Moran 1983, 257, n.11; this is apparently how von Soden reads the line since “er” is the subject (1990, 126); likewise, Oshima 2014, 93, 271–72.

¹⁷⁶ It is possible, perhaps likely that the scribe writing *i-ri-im* did not actually know how the text was supposed to read because he did not yet know the text very well or at all. See Worthington 2012, 125–26 for this possibility.

4.2.2.4. Һuzirina

Of the three known manuscripts of *Ludlul* from the Assyrian provincial city of Һuzirina, MS I.R._{Һuz}, MS II.N._{Һuz}, and MS V.H._{Һuz}, only one, MS II.N._{Һuz}, preserves a colophon.¹⁷⁷

- r50. GIM SUMUN-šú GIŠ-ma bà-rì GIŠ ^mi-di-^dmes-^rlam¹-t[a]-^rè¹-a
 r51. LÚ.ŠAB.TUR li-g[i-m]u-u š[a] ^mA.ŠÚ.U LÚ.SANGA
 r52. ša IR ^dNU.DÍM.MUD lit-bal-šú ša ina šur-qu i-šá-ri-qi šá ina dan-^rna¹-nu
 e-kim
 r53. ^dLU[GAL].GÍR.RA dan-dan DINGIR.MEŠ kaš-kaš DINGIR.MEŠ muš-mit
 DINGIR.MEŠ
 r54. ina GIŠ.TUKUL.MEŠ-š[ú ez-z]u-[t]u liš-gi-iš
 r55. ina LAL-ši ^{md}30.PAB.M[EŠ].TU MAN KUR aš-šur ina ⁱⁱⁱAPIN UD.3.KAM
 r56. lim-m[e ^mha-na-nu ^{lú}šá-ki]n ^{uru}[t]l'-bar-s[i]-bi
 r57. NER.GÁL.Z[U NA.(A)N.UR]¹⁷⁸ ^dTU.[TU]

Written according to its original and checked. Written by Iddi-Meslam-[t]aea, scribal apprentice, offs[pr]ing of[f] Ašu, the *šangû*. May Nudimmud (i.e., Ea) carry off the one who carries *this tablet* off. The one who steals *it* by theft, the one who removes *it* by force, may Lu[gal]girra, all-powerful of the gods, the mighty one of the gods, the murderous one of the gods, slaughter *that person* with hi[s fur]io[u]s weapons. *Copied* during the reign of Senna[ch]-erib, king of the land of Assyria, on the third of the month Arašsamna, *limm*[u of Һananu, govern]or of [Ti]l-Bars[i]p. (701 BCE)¹⁷⁹
 The one who trusts in yo[u], Tu[tu] (i.e., Nabû), [shall not be] shamed.

As with the tablet from Aššur above, the presence of the word *šamallû*, “scribal apprentice,” proves that an advanced scribal student, having graduated from exercise tablets, made this copy of *Ludlul*.¹⁸⁰ Unlike the anonymous apprentice in Aššur, our scribal apprentice at Һuzirina has a name, Iddi-Meslam-taea,¹⁸¹ and appears in several other tablets from the Assyrian provincial town:

- STT 2 (undated) contains part of *Enūma eliš* II, obverse and reverse, then the colophon.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁷ See Hunger 1968, no. 351 (STT 33) and previously Lambert 1960, 62.

¹⁷⁸ When I examined the tablet in the summer of 2015, there was only empty space where the two signs should have been according to the copy. The small fragment which bore these two signs must have dropped off the tablet.

¹⁷⁹ For this individual, see Streck 2000, 449–50 (#5).

¹⁸⁰ On the scribal students at Һuzirina, see Robson 2008a, 227–60; 2011, 564–65; 2013, 48–50; 2019, 135–38; and Robson / Stevens 2019, 326.

¹⁸¹ For this individual, see Kessler 2000, 501.

¹⁸² See Hunger 1968, no. 377 for the colophon. The material has been worked into Lambert’s edition of the narrative poem (see 2013, 62, MS L).

- STT 159, dating to 701 BCE, contains a dozen broken lines of Uduḡ-ḫul IX on the obverse and only part of the colophon on the reverse.¹⁸³

The word *šamallû* does not appear in the colophon of either STT 2 or STT 159 as they are preserved today, though there is room for the word in the breaks.

- STT 174 (undated), the second *nishu*, contains Sumerian incantations on the obverse and reverse, then a colophon.¹⁸⁴
- STT 177 (undated), the fourth *pirsu*, contains Sumerian incantations on the obverse and reverse, then a colophon.¹⁸⁵

The word *šamallû* does not appear in the colophon of either STT 174 or STT 177, neither of which have gaps or breaks where the rank might have occurred.

- STT 390 (undated) is a fragment with one sign of text, a double ruling, and then a three line, broken colophon that ends with the bottom edge of the tablet. Iddi-Meslamtaea's name is mostly restored.¹⁸⁶

Although the words *šamallû šeḫru* occur in the colophon, they appear in the second line of the colophon, a line prior to Iddi-Meslamtaea's name, suggesting the rank does not apply to him and that he is more likely the one for whom the junior scribal apprentice made the copy.

Even a casual perusal of the texts associated with Iddi-Meslamtaea's name shows they are the same texts the second level scribal students in Babylonia were excerpting: *Enūma eliš*, *Ludlul*, Uduḡ-ḫul, and Sumerian incantations. Although we cannot be sure that all of these tablets were copied by Iddi-Meslamtaea during his apprentice days, the constellation of texts around this one scribe is broadly suggestive of what Gesche stated already two decades ago, namely, that the scribal curricula in Babylonia and Assyria were likely rather similar during the first millennium BCE.

How well did Iddi-Meslamtaea copy *Ludlul* II? He made mistakes in obv. 5 (suffix *-šu* for *-ša*), obv. 8 (BA-BI for BAL and an erasure), obv. 11 (improperly formed TA), obv. 33 (KU-RA instead of GUR), obv. 35 (an extra DIŠ), obv.

¹⁸³ See Hunger 1968, no. 352 for the colophon. The material has been worked into Geller's edition of the incantation series (see 2016, 302, MS C).

¹⁸⁴ See Hunger 1968, no. 383 for the colophon with Schramm's note (2008, 152). The material is worked into Schramm's edition of a compendium of bilingual incantations (2008, 91, MS C4).

¹⁸⁵ See Hunger 1968, no. 384 for the colophon with Schramm's note (2008, 160). (Gurney [1997] suggests the name in the colophon is to be understood rather as Qurdi-Nergal.) The material is worked into Schramm's edition of a compendium of bilingual incantations (2008, 91, MS C6).

¹⁸⁶ See Hunger 1968, no. 387.

44 (IM for LAM),¹⁸⁷ obv. 48 (poorly formed TAN?), obv. 49 (omits a sign?),¹⁸⁸ rev. 8 (adds PA), and rev. 24 (KU for KI). Also, Iddi-Meslamtaea made metrical division errors on average in about one out of every four lines.

How does this compare to his other copy of an Akkadian literary text, which is unfortunately not dated, namely, Tablet II of *Enūma eliš*? There Iddi-Meslamtaea made six mistakes in the space of some twenty-nine lines: He wrote the preposition *ana* with AN in obv. 3'; he wrote the pronominal suffix *-šu* for *-ša* in obv. 14'; he made three word division mistakes (in obv. 14' and 15', writing the final sign of a word farther away from the rest of the word and very close to the next; and in rev. 2', writing the first sign of a word as though it were the last sign of the previous one); and he skipped entirely *Enūma eliš* II 25 (see Lambert 2013, 64, MS L).¹⁸⁹ He did not attempt to arrange the text metrically, as he did in MS II.N_{Huz}.¹⁹⁰

How does Iddi-Meslamtaea compare to the nameless scribe who copied *Ludlul* I (MS I.R_{Huz})? This scribe made several mistakes or created some irregularities in his copy: a Sandhi writing in obv. 8'; IŠ for IS (an aural mistake?) in obv. 11'; a poorly formed IŠ in obv. 22'; a RI for TUK in obv. 29'; ŠE for PAR[?] in obv. 35'; QU[?] for GU in rev. 3; ZU for BA in rev. 8; *kakdā* for *naq dāme* in rev. 15 (an aural mistake?),¹⁹¹ ŠI AD AK for *pi-i* ĪD in rev. 28,¹⁹² and LU for TŪ again in rev. 28.¹⁹³ The scribe, apparently, did not understand metrical division very well since he frequently divides up the second half of poetic lines improperly. In fact, he gets just over half of the metrical divisions wrong.

MS I.R_{Huz} does not have a colophon, but it is almost certain that it bore one. The obverse is lacking *Ludlul* I 1–37, suggesting the reverse is lacking about the same number of lines at its end. The text on the reverse breaks off at *Ludlul* I 104, indicating that it would have had at least another sixteen lines of poetry. Subtracting that number from thirty-seven gives us an estimate of the space available at the end of the tablet for a colophon: twenty-one lines. Given the fact that the lines on many colophons are spaced farther apart (nearly double)

¹⁸⁷ The two are easily confused in NB script, suggesting such a *Vorlage* somewhere behind this copy; see Lambert 1960, 291.

¹⁸⁸ See the notes in chapter three at II 49.

¹⁸⁹ Notice also that twice our young scribe puts two poetic lines on one line of the tablet. Obverse 19' attests *Enūma eliš* II 18–19, which do not create a couplet according to Lambert's scanning of the lines, and obv. 21', attesting *Enūma eliš* II 21–22, which does form a couplet.

¹⁹⁰ Note, however, the vertical alignment of words in obv. 1'–9'.

¹⁹¹ See the notes in chapter three at I 87.

¹⁹² See the notes in chapter three at I 100.

¹⁹³ We may also wish to count <Ī>-*lem-min* in obv. 19' as a mistake. But our understanding of the end of this line is too problematic to be certain this is a mistake. See the notes in chapter three at I 56.

than the normal text, we have just enough space for a double rule line (as in MS II.N_{Huz}) and a colophon of some nine to ten lines. (Note that MS II.N_{Huz} has a colophon of nine lines.)

One wonders if MS I.R_{Huz} could have been copied by a slightly less experienced Iddi-Meslamtaea, certainly one less experienced in Babylonian poetry. It is interesting in this regard that of all the literary texts among the Huzirina tablets, only these two tablets attesting *Ludlul* show consistent attempts at metrical division of the poetic lines.¹⁹⁴ Perhaps this aspect of literary training occurred in the very latest of stages in a scribe's curriculum at Huzirina. In any case, if Iddi-Meslamtaea did copy MS I.R_{Huz}, the evidence suggests that he had improved his understanding of Akkadian metrical division significantly by the time he made a copy of *Ludlul* II in what is now our MS II.N_{Huz}.

4.3. CONCLUSIONS

First-millennium scribal students copied *Ludlul* during their time in training; scribes, royal scholars, and kings kept copies of the poem in their working tablet collections. This initial socio-cultural context tells us something about the significance and importance of the poem among Babylonian and Assyrian scholars, their students, and other literate elites in the first millennium BCE. The remainder of this book defines this “something” from a variety of perspectives. We begin within the narrative world of the poem itself, reading with the protagonist, whose first person voice throughout most of the poem—a personal testimony of sorts—provides an ancient experiential reflection of the scholars' divinatory worldview from which the poem arose.

¹⁹⁴ Note, however, that Iddi-Meslamtaea is not the only scribe to show some interest in spacing signs across lines. Another scribe at Huzirina, a certain Nabû-aḥḥē-šallim, displays a propensity to use a specific, idiosyncratic spacing of signs in a poetic text. In STT 3, a copy of part of *Enūma eliš* IV, he wrote all of the signs in the line close together and then wrote the last sign on the far right margin (for the colophon of this tablet, see Hunger 1968, no. 392; the name is half restored). We see something similar in Nabû-aḥḥē-šallim's copy in STT 10, preserving part of *Enūma eliš* VII, especially on the obverse (see Hunger 1968, no. 393 for the colophon). STT 4, preserving part of *Enūma eliš* IV, is somewhat similar in its line spacing as these two, though there is no name in the colophon to identify the scribe with Nabû-aḥḥē-šallim (see Hunger 1968, no. 403). See also STT 11 (*Enūma eliš* VII) and STT 12 (a mythological creation account), though neither has a preserved colophon. Nabû-aḥḥē-šallim's copy of some celestial omens in STT 330 (see Hunger 1968, no. 394 for the colophon) shows his propensity for alignment, though here it is meaningful rather than idiosyncratic, as the spacing follows the structure of the omen in each line. He aligns the DIŠ at the head of each line/protasis, the GUR near the middle of the line, which forms the end of the protasis, and the final sign at the end of each line, though the reverse is a bit ragged on the right margin.

CHAPTER 5:
READING REVELATIONS WITH THE PROTAGONIST:
THE DIVINATORY CONTEXT OF *LU DLUL*

“If literature is a ‘representation of life,’ then representation is exactly the place where ‘life,’ in all its social and subjective complexity, gets into the literary work.”¹

This first foray into the narrative world of *Ludlul* explores the ancient divinatory and thus scholarly context of the poem as it is reflected in the protagonist’s experience of suffering. These experiences, according to the text itself, generated the poem. The reading of the poem offered here is not to be equated with the actual experiences of a historical man named Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan, though it cannot be entirely discounted or completely disproved that such a man experienced *something like* what the poem recounts.² Nor are the experiences explicated in this chapter to be identified simply with the creative genius or imagination of a scholar who invented, reported, or arranged specific experiences of his protagonist at a specific historical moment, though the experiences I delineate to explain the origin of the poem, of course, informed or at least influenced the scholar who composed *Ludlul*—who certainly did have a specific agenda to advance (see chapter seven). The interest here is greater than any one individual character or composer.³ The poem’s origin described in the following exposition comprises a constellation of the protagonist’s narrated experiences, situated and interpreted within an ancient Mesopotamian socio-cultural sphere⁴ that reflects the prevailing divinatory ethos of the scholars and

¹ Mitchell 1995, 15.

² See the Introduction.

³ With van der Toorn (1985, 58), I think our “emblematic sufferer” in *Ludlul* “does not constitute an instantaneous literary creation; he represents a cultural product which existed independently of its literary framework” in *Ludlul* and elsewhere and which was tacitly available for specific literary instantiations, which is precisely why his experiences can inform us of the worldview and concerns of the scholars.

⁴ It is my working assumption that all experiences are socially and culturally conditioned, that there is no such thing as raw, unmediated, unadulterated, pre-interpreted experience (see Proudfoot 1985). As Timothy Fitzgerald notes, “*the semantic context for having and interpreting an experience is necessarily also a social, institutional context* (emphasis original).... [T]he experience is meaningful (i.e., the experience counts as significant to the devotee) in light of the actual ritual and political context in which the participant is located” (2000, 129). See likewise van der Toorn 1985, 92–93 on the “emblematic sufferer.”

thereby provides a broad basis for *Ludlul*—why the story *could* exist and why it unfolds as it does.⁵ Understanding the origin of the poem within the divinatory worldview of the scholars adds another layer to the ancient cultural context for our interpretation of the poem and provides one of the most salient reasons for its importance among the first-millennium literate elite, established in chapter four in terms of curricula and tablet collection, and explored further from an institutional perspective in chapter seven. Though we could discuss many aspects of the protagonist's experiences of suffering as represented in the poem—social, medical, emotional, etc., some of which will be touched upon below, the focus in the following is on the protagonist's constellation of experiences related to supra-human beings, gods and demons—what we may anachronistically call his religious experience. More specifically, the focus is on how the protagonist understands his suffering in light of these beings' construed signals, communications, and manifestations; in other words, we will focus on how he understood his suffering via divination, or, to adapt a theological term more familiar to modern readers, revelation, including, at times, its disconcerting absence and malevolence.⁶ The reading offered here shows that at the heart of *Ludlul* is an ancient narrative reflection on the experience of suffering through the divinatory lens of the scholars.

5.1. SIGNS AND THEIR INTERPRETATION AMONG ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIAN SCHOLARS: AN ESSENTIAL BACKGROUND

The existence of the gods and their active role in the world were the most fundamental assumptions of ancient Mesopotamian scholars who produced, among a great many other works, the poem with which we are concerned.⁷ The gods revealed themselves to humans through signs—both favorable and unfavorable—*within the created order* that humans inhabited. According to scholars, anyone might witness a sign, though determining that something was in fact a sign and not just a benign happenstance required scrutiny and judgment, in other words, expertise. The learned scribes, the temple and court scholars who most concerned themselves with revelatory signals, actively watched for

⁵ In addition to her work briefly discussed in the Introduction, see Pongratz-Leisten 2010, especially 142–43, 146–47, 156–57 for a similar approach to *Ludlul*, which she articulates within a literary theoretical framework of cultural discourse and intertextuality informed by the work of Gérard Genette.

⁶ For another reading of the revelatory aspects of *Ludlul* within a comparative and normative theological monograph, see Gerhards 2017, 39–75.

⁷ See, e.g., Rochberg 2004, 45–46.

signs in the heavens (i.e., celestial divination) and elicited them through a variety of active divinatory techniques (e.g., extispicy). The scholars also found signs inadvertently, observed by themselves or reported to them by others, in quotidian circumstances (e.g., a lizard on the wall of a house) and embedded in the panoply of human experiences (e.g., physical illness, dreams, social distress, economic hardship, etc).⁸ However the scholars might have come to know and identify them, the signs were merely raw data that became sensible only through the application of elaborate and varied means of interpretation; these also required the exercise of scholarly expertise. These means of interpretation are represented for us in sizeable corpora of learned texts that scholars developed within their various professions and brought together slowly through editorial and curatorial activities in the late second millennium and on into the first. In time, the scholars attributed the resulting textual patrimonies of their professions to Marduk's father, Ea, god of wisdom, and Ea's seven sages (*apkallū*), who passed these authoritative texts down by way of a kind of scribal succession through the generations to scribal scholars.⁹ The scholars continued to use and develop these collections of texts, sometimes described as *nēmequ*, "wisdom,"¹⁰ throughout the first millennium until the end of the cuneiform tradition around the turn of the eras. The most important among these learned materials were related to extispicy, exorcism, and celestial divination but the scholars also possessed large diagnostic and therapeutic corpora to treat diseases and a ritual lamentation corpus to appease angry gods.¹¹ The contents and precise texts of these learned materials varied across Mesopotamian geography and over its long history as did the materials' availability to scholars and perceived value.¹² Despite this historical flux, these learned mate-

⁸ See Koch 2015 and Maul 2018 for the most authoritative overviews of Mesopotamian divination. For a broader view of the intellectual expertise of the scribal scholars in the areas of language, divination, and law, see Van De Mieroop 2016. For an important perspective on divine communication that emphasizes its multiplicity, built-in redundancy, and lack of systematization, see Richardson 2017.

⁹ On attributing their work to Ea and the *apkallū* and thereby creating authority for themselves as custodians of these divinely revealed texts, see Lenzi 2008. "Scribal succession" is intended to evoke the mythology of apostolic succession in the Roman Catholic Church, the transmission of the Oral Torah from Moses to the Great Assembly as recorded in *Mishnah Avot* 1, and the succession of Imams in Twelver Shiite Islam.

¹⁰ For a characterization of the lamentation corpus (*kalūtu*) as wisdom, see Aššurbanipal colophon type o in Hunger 1968, no. 328; for the characterization of the physicians' corpus (*asūtu*) as the same, see lines 144–146 in the *Gula Hymn of Bulluša-rabi*, most recently edited in Lambert 1967. (A new edition is in preparation at the Electronic Babylonian Literature project.)

¹¹ For an overview of these textual materials, their historical development, and their use, with extensive bibliography, see Lenzi 2015.

¹² For a rich presentation of the development of scholarship in first-millennium Mesopotamia, see Robson 2019.

rials, considered broadly, guided the scholars variously in determining how best to respond to the easily angered gods (through a ritual, a therapeutic procedure, a lament, etc.) on behalf of people—most often but not exclusively the king—affected by an unfavorable sign.¹³ One might say scholars were readers of signs to learn the divine will and executors of exclusive, divinely-revealed means to understand and act upon it so that the divine-human relationship could be properly maintained and, if disrupted, restored. The two sides of this professional coin are perhaps best illustrated in a saying that appears several times in scholarly materials: “the god Ea has done, and the god Ea has undone,”¹⁴ which means Ea has given a sign and he has provided the ritual means to deal with it.

5.2. *LUDLUL* AND REVELATION

Signs were revelations. When we moderns think about this rather loaded term “revelation,” we inevitably filter it through one (or more) of the contemporary monotheistic religions and thus think of a deity communicating something to a human—Yahweh to Moses on Sinai or Allah to Muhammad via Jibra’il. And, that “something” is typically considered good in some way or other, as is the Torah and the Quran in our familiar examples. Thus, when it comes to ancient Mesopotamia, we may bring an expectation of benevolence surrounding the gods’ revelatory activities: a fortuitous sign, a benevolent oracle, a favorable dream, divine guidance for well-being, or a dire prophecy, which may be construed as bad to those who are receiving the news but good for those who understand that the addressees had it coming to them. (About the last, think of prophecies against idolatrous Israelite kings or the oracles against the nations in the Hebrew writing prophets.) *Ludlul* contains favorable revelations, especially in Tablets III and V. But it begins with a large dose of two unfavorable kinds of revelation. The first I call negative revelation; the second, malevolent revelation. After defining these and examining their use in the first half of the poem, I turn to the positive forms of revelation more briefly toward the chapter’s end. Both the favorable and unfavorable, the good and the bad, forms of revelation are essential for understanding how our protagonist’s experiences generated the poem within a divinatory worldview.¹⁵

¹³ The relationship of these written materials to actual day-to-day practice of interpreting revelatory signs is more complicated than the above presents. See, e.g., Lenzi 2015, 185.

¹⁴ See Parpola 1983, 41 for attestations of the phrase.

¹⁵ For my argument that the poem itself becomes a kind of literary revelation, see the conclusion to chapter nine.

5.2.1. *Defining Unfavorable Revelations*

“Negative revelation,” for the present purpose, is understood in both evaluative and quantitative senses. In evaluative terms, negative revelation is received when an unwanted, that is, an unfavorable sign is revealed. In quantitative terms, negative revelation occurs when a desired sign is absent, that is, no sign is granted despite efforts to secure one. In some cases, an unwanted sign, if properly identified, could be countered via ritual means (e.g., a *namburbi* ritual) so that the evil that the sign forecasted would not, ideally, at least, reach the person to whom it was revealed.¹⁶ An absent sign, on the other hand, would be demoralizing for reasons discussed below. “Malevolent revelation” is understood here as *post hoc* in nature, thus it could only be assessed and diagnosed as such after its appearance *and* its effect was felt by the receiver. One was already experiencing the evil when circumstances could allow its proper identification.¹⁷ So, for example, an illness could be understood as malevolent revelation. Feeling its effect is how malevolent revelation is distinguished from the evaluative aspect of negative revelation, the announced evil of which could potentially be averted *before* it affected the person to whom it was attached. Malevolent revelation could be exacerbated by quantitative negative revelation since the absence of a *wanted* sign about the nature of the evil being experienced disabled important elements of the experts’ diagnostic apparatuses (the ritual and divinatory corpora) that could determine the etiology, duration, and proper treatment of the sufferer’s problems, as happens in *Ludlul*.

An important element to keep in mind for understanding both of these unfavorable kinds of revelation in *Ludlul* is its *personal* impact upon the individual, who in *Ludlul* is of course the protagonist, Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan. Despite the fact that the poem arose in the institutional context of scribal scholarship and bears an institutional, ideological stamp in its presentation of the sufferer’s story (see chapter seven), *Ludlul*, on the most obvious level of reading, presents a person’s experience. This, I contend, is important to keep in view for understanding how the poem intends to shape its readers’ *own* experience of divine revelation. In other words, alongside any institutional concerns in the poem, there is an anticipated existential concern of would-be readers, who, as already established in the previous chapter, included scribal students, royal scribes, and perhaps kings, too. I will return to this matter in the conclusion to chapter eight.

¹⁶ On *namburbi*’s see Maul 1994 (texts and commentary), 1998 (overview) and the important critical review of the former in Veldhuis 1995–1996.

¹⁷ Note Koch’s statement about ill health in the context of her discussion of Sa-gig as a divinatory treatise: “The illness is in itself a sinister sign” (2015, 275).

5.2.2. *Revelations in Ludlul*

In the first lines immediately after the opening hymn (I 1–40), the protagonist begins his tale of unfavorable revelations. Lines 41–46 read:

From the day Bel punished me,
 And the hero Marduk was angry wi[th] me,
 My god rejected me, he disappeared,
 My goddess left, she departed.
 The protective spirit of good fortune who *was* at my side [sp]lit off,
 My divine guardian became afraid and sought of[ut] another.

Although an ancient reader would have understood these kinds of events well, the passage raises a couple of related questions immediately for the modern reader, namely: How did the sufferer know the actions of the gods here? How could he have divined their abandonment? The clearest answers to these questions come later in Tablet I but the protagonist hints already at the basis for this understanding in the next two lines, I 47–48, in which he states:

My dignity [w]as taken, my masculine features eclipsed,
 My characteristic manner was cut off, my protection *now* stripped away.

The protagonist's dignity (*bāštu*), masculine features (*dūtu*), characteristic manner (*simtu*), and protection (*tarānu*) are elements of his self, collocated here (and variously elsewhere)¹⁸ with agents of divine protection enumerated in I 43–46: the personal god (*ilu*), the personal goddess (*ištaru*), the protective spirit (*šēdu*), and the divine guardian (*lamassu*). Ulrike Steinert in her wide-ranging treatment of *bāštu*, “dignity,” and its opposite term *būštu*, “shame,” has explicated the relationship between divine protection and the human self as presented in I 43–48 as follows:

Es fällt als kompositorisches Prinzip der Anordnung die Komplementarität der Termini auf. *Ilu*, *ištaru* sowie *šēdu*, *lamassu* sind personal vorgestelltte,

¹⁸ See also *Erimhuš* II 15–18, where *dūtu*, *bāštu*, *šēdu*, and *lamassu* occur together (MSL 17, 27, lines 15–18), and the OB Lú lexical list, where *ilu*, *šēdu*, *lamassu*, and *bāštu* occur together (MSL 12, 159, lines 61–68 and 179, 18–26 with Steinert's exposition [2012, 458–60], in which she argues *būštu* in the list should be understood as *bāštu*). Note also the opening lines of the last incantation in *Maqlū* VIII (lines 129'''–131'''), in which the patient addresses various features of the self while looking at the reflection of his face in the water of a ritual vessel (see Ritual Tablet 175'–177'): *attā šillī attā bāšī / attā lamassī attā gattī / attā padattī attā dūt[ī]*, “you are my likeness, you are my dignity; you are my divine guardian, you are my form; you are my figure, you are [my] masculine features” (Abusch 2016, 202, 366 for the lines in the incantation and pp. 224–25, 378 for the relevant lines in the Ritual Tablet).

anthropomorphe Instanzen (sie handeln selbst; Verwendung aktiver Verbalformen). Demgegenüber erwecken *bāštu*, *dūtu*, *simtu* den Eindruck nicht-personifizierter Konzepte, welche die Außenwirkung einer Person beschreiben (kombiniert mit passivischen Verbalformen im N-/Dt-Stamm). So bilden *bāštu* und *dūtu* Aspekte der vitalen körperlichen Ausstrahlung, die zu einer unversehrten Person gehören. *Simtu* „Wesensart“, das zu einer Person Gehör-ige, steht für individuelle Aspekte der Person, für das ihr Eigene an Charakter und Wesenszugehörigkeit, während *tarānu* „Schutz(dach)“ ein konkreter Terminus ist, der hier wahrscheinlich in einer idiomatischen Wendung gebraucht wird, jedoch semantisch auf die persönlichen Schutzgottheiten verweist. In dieser Textstelle wird *bāštu* neben den Schutzgeistern genannt, die eine schützende Hülle um den Körper der Person bilden, und zugleich neben Termini, welche die physische Erscheinung und die Wirkung der Person nach außen beschreiben. *Bāštu* bildet gleichsam eine Brücke zwischen körperlichen Bestandteilen und den Schutzmächten, die sich in physischer Nähe zur Person aufhalten.¹⁹

Returning to answer our earlier question: How did the protagonist know he had been abandoned by his divine protectors? He knew because he could feel something amiss in his person—something was “off” and, apparently so, through no action of his own (note the passive verbs in I 47–48).²⁰ The protagonist provides evidence for this understanding of his person, in my view, in the latter half of Tablet I in his description of his loss of standing in the community.²¹ In any case, after his intuitions of I 43–48, the sufferer asserts that he

¹⁹ Steinert 2012, 420–21. The basis for her understanding of these terms and the passage in *Ludlul* as a whole is rooted in her wide-ranging discussion of *bāštu*, “dignity,” and *būštu*, “shame,” in pp. 405–509 and cannot be judged properly apart from the mass of evidence she cites from a variety of time periods and genres. See also Jaques 2015, 307–14 for a similar perspective based on the evidence of the *dingiršadabba* prayers; and the comments in Livingstone 2013, 258–60, focused on hemerologies.

²⁰ Oshima summarizes the role of these divine protectors well: “[A]t the personal level, the personal gods (designated by the Akkadian word *ilu* or *iltu*, later period *ištar*) and the protective spirits (*šēdu* and *lamassu*) were the final line of defence of the people from calamities brought on by the gods and against the attacks of demons and evil spirits that manifested themselves as illness, loss of property, or even death.... [T]he Mesopotamians believed that one would remain healthy and prosperous as long as his personal gods were content with him. On the other hand, this person would fall victim to illness or loss of property when his gods became angry with him and abandoned him” (2011, 75). Note the followings line in the *Great Prayer to Marduk*, no. 1, lines 108–110, in which the possession of the personal deity is causally related to a person’s moral capability: *ša damqat u [mas]kat ilu muškallim / ša išū ilšu [ku]ššudā hiātūšu / ša ilu lā išū ma’dū arnūšu*, “The god *is* the one who reveals that which is good and that which is [ba]d (see *Ludlul* II 35), the misdeeds of the one who has his god are removed, the sins of the one who does not have his god are many” (see Oshima 2011, 150–51).

²¹ The social element of *bāštu* is discussed explicitly in Steinert 2011, 427–28, 436

began receiving signs that scared him, no doubt because they were negative, unfavorable, or otherwise undesirable:

Portents of terror were established for me, (I 49)

And then he states in I 50–54:

I was expelled from my house, I wandered about outside.
 My omens were confused, equivocal² every day,
 My situation could not be decided by seer (*bārū*) and inquirer (*šā'ilu*).
 What I overheard in the street *portended* evil for me,
 When I lay down at night, my dream was terrifying.

Having been forced out of his household, the sufferer receives no sign from the specialists about his condition and a terrifying sign by way of what is overheard in the street.²² (The experts' failure in these lines is treated in chapter seven.) Instead of a helpful or reassuring revelatory dream, the protagonist receives a nightmare.

In what follows this passage in Tablet I the sufferer loses his social position, professionally and personally, to such an extent that he is maligned without sanction even by his slave girl (I 90).²³ Although I 50 already hints at the protagonist's social problems, his loss of status by the end of Tablet I is total. It is my contention that this total loss of social status and standing lies behind the concerns articulated in I 41–48 cited just above. In other words, as Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan lost his social status, he felt something amiss in his person (I 47–48), which pointed back to his loss of divine favor, as inscribed in lines 41–46. The loss of divine favor, in this line of interpretation, was *retrospectively* posited as the root cause of his social misfortunes. The only way the sufferer could know that Marduk was angry with him and that his personal deities and protective beings had abandoned him—all forms of what I have defined as malevolent revelation—was, in fact, to feel the abandonment in his person, in this case, his social person. Only then could he recognize, through a kind of *a*

²² In a brief discussion of the protagonist's consulting two experts in this context, Worthington cites as a parallel the OB letter AbB 6 22, in which a woman similarly mentions her intention to consult a diviner and a female inquirer (*šā'ilu*) to discern the nature of an ill-portending sign (2009, 67–68).

²³ In terms of malevolent revelation, it is interesting to note that the band of seven who gang up on the sufferer in I 57–66 is explicitly likened to a demonic attack. For the development of this idea, see Noegel 2016, 628–34, where he posits a number of connections in this passage to the incantation series Udug-ḥul (see Geller 2016 for the series), which prominently features the *Sibitti*, “the seven (demons).” (Noegel credits von Soden 1990, 118, n.65 for the initial observation [see p. 629, n.108].)

posteriori line of reasoning,²⁴ what had happened to him and why. Subjective malevolent experiences as he observed them in his social context became revelatory of his falling out of favor with the gods, especially his personal gods, an experience well-documented in diagnostic texts, the tools of ritual experts.²⁵

Further, his inability to discover the means to bring these ill fortunes to an end by consulting the ritual specialists, as the passage indicates (I 51–52), is a kind of quantitative negative revelation, which exacerbated his problems. How could he remedy his social alienation rooted in divine anger if he could not find the correct way to respond to the angry gods?

Noticing the portents of terror in line 49, the negative portent in the streets mentioned in line 53, and the terrifying dreams in line 54 all would have added evaluative negative revelation to this toxic situation. None of these things was good! The sufferer's anxiety would only have grown.

Thus, the sufferer's personal experience of social marginalization in Tablet I lies at the root of his theological interpretation of his situation as a form of malevolent revelation, compounded by his experience of negative revelation, both quantitative (its absence) and evaluative (when present, it was unfavorable and undesirable). We want to read the poem sequentially as it is presented to us. But in fact, the social alienation described in the last half of Tablet I would have been first in the protagonist's experience and the theological, narrative account that is the poem could only have been constructed retrospectively—a kind of reverse engineering—once the protagonist's experience of these circumstances had been processed as revelatory information. This is why the protagonist's revelatory experiences are generative of the poem itself. The same kind of *post hoc* interpretation of his experience occurs in Tablet II.

In the opening lines of Tablet II we have another passage that describes our sufferer's revelatory misfortunes. This passage re-iterates the sufferer's divine abandonment (II 4–5) and the ritual experts' diagnostic and therapeutic failure (II 6–9) in terms similar to I 43–52, discussed above. *Ludlul* II 1–9 reads as follows:

One year to the next, the allotted time passed.
I turned about and misery *abounded*,
My bad luck was increasing, I could not find my prosperity.
I called²⁶ to *my* god, but he did not pay attention to me,

²⁴ See Bottéro 1977, 3.

²⁵ See, e.g., the generalizations and examples from the therapeutic texts in Couto-Ferreira 2021, 263–68.

²⁶ As Mayer notes, the verb *šasû*, “to call to,” is commonly used in prayers, including several *dingiršadabba* prayers to the personal god (1976, 129–31). *Sullû*, “to beseech, to pray to,” in line

I implored my goddess, *but* she paid me no heed.
 The seer (*bārū*) could not determine the situation with divination.
 The inquirer (*šā'ilu*) could not clarify my case with incense.
 I prayed to the dream god, but he did not reveal anything to me,
 The exorcist did not release the divine anger *against me* with *his* ritual.

The precise meaning and significance of *adannu* in II 1, translated as “the allotted time” above, is unclear.²⁷ It is, however, likely significant for the present context, where the *bārū* makes a prominent appearance (II 6), that the word had a technical meaning in extispicy. As Nils Heeßel explains, “the *adannu* not only indicates the time period of validity of the extispicy result, but it also determines the maximum time period that will elapse until a certain dreaded or hoped for event will happen.”²⁸ Whether revelatory or simply chronological in connotation, the *adannu* had passed and yet the protagonist’s hopes for a better future (I 119–120) are thoroughly unrealized as a second year of misfortune begins.

Realizing his downward spiral was continuing (II 2–3), Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan again actively seeks to understand why evil and misfortune surround him, but to no avail. His personal deities offer no help or reply (II 4–5), implying their continued abandonment and divine anger, which the exorcist cannot appease (II 9).²⁹ The dream god, whether angry or simply uninterested, would not send a revelatory dream. Both diviners the sufferer consulted, the *bārū* and *šā'ilu* (II 6–7), produce nothing of use for the protagonist to make sense of his situation. Negative revelation—divine “radio silence”—prevails. And so the protagonist becomes deeply confused by what is happening to him:

Whatever the deed, it is inimical everywhere!
 I looked behind *me*, harassment *and* trouble! (II 10–11)

A long passage in II 12–32 follows these opening lines, a passage in which the sufferer laments what seems to him to be the dissolution of the traditional divine-human relationship, which was predicated on *do ut des*: You give to the gods and the gods give in return.³⁰ How then can a scrupulously pious man (II

5, on the other hand, is less common in incantation prayers, occurring, according to Mayer, only in the *šula* prayer Istar 2 (1976, 131; for the prayer, see Zgoll 2003, 41–67).

²⁷ See the discussion in Oshima 2014, 221 with several alternatives, including reference to Heeßel 2010 (see below).

²⁸ Heeßel 2010, 167.

²⁹ *Kimiltu*, the word used in II 9 for anger, is used exclusively for divine anger against humans. See CAD K, 372–73.

³⁰ See, e.g., *Counsels of Wisdom* 135–147 (Lambert 1960, 105) with my comments in Lenzi 2018, 66–67; note also Haubold 2019, 208, who points out that the protagonist’s mindfulness

23–32)—indeed, a zealously pious man (see II 29–32)—be treated as a reprobate (II 12–22)?³¹ If piety does not bring blessing, then something is wrong, something is amiss in the world. There must be some mistake.³² Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan’s experience of cognitive dissonance bursts out in II 33–38:³³

Would that I knew these things (in II 23–32) were acceptable to the god!
 That which is good to oneself *may be* a sacrilege to the god,
 That which is wretched to one’s heart may be good to one’s god!
 Who *can* understand the decree of the god, the interior of the heavens?
 Who *can* apprehend her (the goddess’s) decision, the subterranean deep?
 Where has humanity understood the plan of the god?

These lines participate in an old traditional motif about the inscrutability of the gods,³⁴ though the lines in *Ludlul* here are especially pessimistic since they call into question humanity’s ability to understand what the gods require of them—whether morally or in terms of cultic obligation. Rather than interpreting these lines as making some kind of (new) theological statement or normative principle on how to relate to the gods properly,³⁵ I think it is important to recognize them as part of the protagonist’s unfolding dilemma. In other words, they are part of his lament. The lines relate to his perplexity surrounding his unexplainable experience of ill treatment and not so much to some normative agenda of the poem’s author or some group to which the author belongs within the cultic or scribal establishment.³⁶ At this stage in his experience, Šubši-

(*ḥasāsu*, see II 23) reflects the language of Babylonian didactic literature. “The ultimate test of mindfulness,” he writes, “comes with worshipping the gods, as the sufferer of *Ludlul* knows well.”

³¹ For a close reading of the passage with a critical eye on its poetics, thematic development, and a proposal for its diachronic evolution, see Abusch 2017; for elements of self-reference, see Foster 1983, 124.

³² Note the petition in an incantation prayer to Ištar that seems to imply just such a mistake (Mayer’s Ištar 21; 1976, 391) in K.2550+, obv. 39 (and parallels): [*piqđī mur*]šī *bēltī ana lā pāliḥī[ki]*, “[Assign] my [ill]ness, O my lady, to one who does not fear [you]!” See Farber 1977, 58, lines 66–67.

³³ Bottéro calls it “torture intellectuelle” (1977, 15).

³⁴ See SAACT 7, xxi, n.35 for references to a sample of other texts attesting a similar sentiment of divine inscrutability (add BM 38486, rev. 7–8, for which see Lambert 1960, 265–66). For an OB example, see, e.g., the lament *Ištar Baghdad*, rev. 5, for which, see Streck 2003, 307, line 51 and my treatment, <http://akkpm.org/P520346.html>.

³⁵ See, e.g., van der Toorn 2003, 79–80; Moran 2002, especially 189–91; Spieckermann 1998, 334–37 (similarly, Spieckermann 2008, 6–8); and Uehlinger 2007, 144–45. The passage has attracted the attention of many more interpreters.

³⁶ Gerhards states the situation well: “Einfacher und damit angemessener scheint es, II 33ff. als Ausdruck der Ratlosigkeit zu verstehen, von der der Leidende betroffen ist, weil es ihm entgegen seinem Lebenswandel wie jemandem ergeht, der die Götter nicht verehrt hat. Dabei

mešrê-Šakkan does not know what he has done to deserve his suffering and so feels unjustly treated. He *knows* he is experiencing divine anger—which may suggest sin—but he is ignorant of its cause.³⁷ He will later mention, in a very fragmentary passage his sin and its removal. But at this point, he is not aware of his sin. And, to be fair to him, there were other ways to account for evil. In addition to sin, his suffering could be attributed to witchcraft, since a witch could turn personal deities against their protégé.³⁸ And there was also the possibility of accounting for his suffering by way of intergenerational sin, that is, his suffering was due to the sin of a family member.³⁹

The protagonist's agnostic-like expression in II 33–48 has deep implications for his unfolding story. As stated in SAACT 7, “[t]he sufferer has been frustrated when trying to understand his past via divination (‘why is this happening?’); so he cannot re-orient his confusing and undeserved present via accepted means (‘how can I know what ritual or pious act to do to appease the god’s wrath?’); and thus his future is completely insecure. The whole divinatory, exorcistic apparatus of the Mesopotamian religious system is called into question here, if only briefly” (xxi), which causes him to reflect rather gloomily on human experience and the varied human reactions to the instability of the divine will decreed for them (II 39–47). His revelatory ignorance gives birth to despair.

Giving up hope of rightly divining these matters (II 48), the protagonist launches into another long lament centered on the deterioration of his physical condition (II 49–107).⁴⁰ The initial, proximate cause of his physical misfortunes, as the plot of the story unfolds, is attributed to an onslaught of seven

wirken die Aussagen nicht wie ein Vorwurf, sondern wie eine Klage oder eine Feststellung aus existentieller Betroffenheit” (2017, 53).

³⁷ See similarly Oshima 2011, 182. For the ambivalence of a supplicant’s claims of innocence and yet perception of divine anger (and similarly the protagonist’s in *Ludlul*), see Steinert 2012, 37–40.

³⁸ The principle argument for this possibility is laid out in Abusch 1999, reprinted 2002, 27–63.

³⁹ For witchcraft and intergenerational sin as etiologies of evil—among others—in ancient Mesopotamia, see Fink 2012. Note also the occurrence of both alongside a denial of personal sin in the *Righteous Sufferer’s Prayer to Nabû*, treated in Lenzi 2019b.

⁴⁰ Haubold has captured the protagonist’s response in this passage well. After conceding the philological difficulties in II 48, he writes “the emphasis on personal learning (*lā altanda*, ‘I have not learned’) seems clear: while it may be true that all human beings suffer sudden reversals, the protagonist in *Ludlul* is not ready to let go of his need to understand his own individual case. Here, it seems to me, we see an important difference with other texts of the ‘critical’ Mesopotamian tradition. While the *Theodicy*, for example, responds to the failure of didactic by defaulting to abstract truths (human life is flawed and only the gods who made it so can grant relief), the protagonist of *Ludlul* seems unwilling to resolve his experience into generalities of this kind. Instead he resumes the narrative of his afflictions in a more violent key” (2019, 213).

demons (II 50–70), who according to II 51–57 bring illnesses with them from the netherworld and associated regions.⁴¹ This long lament begins as follows:

As for me, the wear[ied one], a storm⁷ was cast⁷ upon me.
 Debilitating sickness advanced against me,
 An evil wind f[rom the hor]izon blew against me.
 Ague cropped up from the surface of the netherworld,
 A wicked demonic cough came forth from its Apsu.
 An un[re]l[ent]ing demon came forth from Ekur,
 Lamaštu c[am]e down from the midst of the mountain.
 Chills streamed in⁷ with the waters of the inundation,
 Debility broke through the earth with the vegetation.
 They jo[ined] their forces, they approached me as one. (II 49–58)

The seven demonic illnesses here recall the attack of the seven courtiers in *Ludlul* I 59–68, where they are likened to demons explicitly (I 65–66).⁴² The work this demonic gang begins is continued with the *alû* demon who clothes himself with the protagonist in a terrifying passage (II 71–83), which I treat at length in an ancient-contemporary comparative manner in chapter eleven. We moderns may ask how the protagonist knows he has come under demonic attack, but the passage makes clear that the matter was easily divined—a word I use deliberately—by the protagonist (and his audience): The arrival of illness is identified as, indeed, equated with an attack of demons—note the plural subject of the verbs in II 59–69, who wrack the sufferer’s body with a litany of pain and, in the case of the demon described in II 71–83, who overwhelms Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan’s body. Like the divine abandonment described in Tablet I, these corporeal maladies could only be interpreted as a demonic attack after our sufferer felt their effects in his person, which in this case, is centered on his physical body. Although the poem requires us to read its text sequentially as it is presented to us, in fact, the physical misfortunes and bodily deterioration described here are prior to the theological, narrative account that is the poem and could only have been constructed retrospectively, once the protagonist’s experience of his unfortunate physical circumstances had been processed as malevolent revelation, i.e., a demonic attack. This is again why we can understand the protagonist’s revelatory experiences as generative of the poem itself.

⁴¹ For brief discussions of several of the demon/illnesses here and their place of origin, see Oshima 2014, 249–56.

⁴² Noteworthy in this regard, as Noegel observes, is that “[e]ach of the seven illnesses [in *Ludlul* II 51–57] appears in *Utukkū-Lemnūtu* [Udug-ḫul] in connection with demons” (2016, 633, n.137).

We may think Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's subsequent physical deterioration in II 84–107 is simply the outcome of the initial demonic attacks since II 84–94 describe the effects of the loss of appetite on the sufferer while II 95–107 depict how his confinement to the sickbed weakened his body to a humiliating and, as his expression would suggest, dehumanizing degree.⁴³ And yet both of these passages place the blame for the sufferer's continued physical misfortune beyond the sufferer's control, and in so doing, as I interpret the passages, assume the sufferer knows *who* to blame—at least most proximately: demons. In II 84–85 an agent seems to be implied: “A net was laid on my mouth, and a bolt barred my lips.” Is this simply a metaphor or is this net a parting “gift” from the demon described in II 71–83, who causes and thus accounts for the sufferer's prolonged loss of appetite described in II 84–94?⁴⁴ The context points to this latter interpretation, which finds some support in II 100–103, a quatrain that explains the outcome of the sufferer's prolonged confinement to the sickbed:

The whip *that* beat me was full of thorns,
 The goad *that* pricked me was covered with spikes.
 All day long a persecutor (*rēdû*) would pursue [me],
 At night he did not let me rest at ease for a moment.

If the sufferer is describing his time confined to bed in II 95–107, then we must understand II 100–101 as a metaphor for his physical maladies. Who wields these weapons of illness? *Ludlul* II 102–103 clearly represent the agent of attack, a *rēdû*, “a persecutor.” Although we moderns may be inclined to think of this person as simply more metaphor, I do not think that is a viable explanation in light of the earlier equation of the arrival of illness with an attack of demons in both II 50–70 and II 71–83 and the common use of *redû* as describing the action of demons.⁴⁵ The demon, it seems, wields the whip night and day, causing more physical decline in the sufferer. If demonic agents are behind the

⁴³ Note II 106–107: “I would spend the night in my own filth like an ox, I would wallow in my own excrement like a sheep.” Whether this couplet should be taken literally, i.e., the sufferer could not lift himself out of his own filth that polluted his bed, or metaphorically, i.e., he could not rise to relieve himself and required assistance, the lines occupy the final couplet of his long lament and represent a kind of de-humanizing capstone to the sufferer's humiliation: he is no better than an animal. For more on this passage, see chapter seven, note 24. For the similarities and differences between humanity and the animals as perceived in various ancient Mesopotamian traditions, see Steinert 2012, 22–28.

⁴⁴ I discuss the transitional character of II 84–85 in chapter eleven, page 461.

⁴⁵ For this point with regard to *ridûti* (derived from *redû*) in *Ludlul* II 11, see Noegel 2016, 625. See also CAD R, 233, for pursuing (*redû*) demons and 235a, which cites a Kassite period cylinder seal prayer describing the same (see Limet 1971, 111–12 = no. 9.7).

descriptions in II 84–94 and II 95–107 as they are in II 50–70 and II 71–83, then malevolent revelation permeates Tablet II, accounting both for the initiation of the sufferer’s physical misfortunes and their prolongation.

Given the plague of demons and illnesses, the protagonist would need to be diagnosed in order for him and the ritual experts to figure out how to counteract them. His personal revelatory experiences require expert institutional interpretation. But diagnosis poses a problem yet again in II 108–113: The professionals were still confounded by the sufferer’s experiences. Again, we see a negative form of revelation. Just when the sufferer sought help from the ritual specialists and the gods, when he looked for *and needed* a sign, he received none. II 108–113 reads as follows:

The exorcist was scared by my symptoms,
 And the seer (*bārū*) was confused by my omens.
 The exorcist could not reveal the nature of my illness,
 And the seer (*bārū*) did not give the duration (*adannu*) of my sickness.
 My god did not rush in to help, he did not take my hand.
 My goddess did not have mercy on me, she did not walk alongside.

By the end of Tablet II, the sufferer is all but ready to give up the ghost, “my grave lay open, my funerary goods prepared, before my death, mourning for me was completed” (II 114–115). Since the ritual experts could not help him, he has “nothing to look forward to, but endless suffering,” as Heeßel observes.⁴⁶ But then comes Tablet III.

Less than a dozen lines into Tablet III, the sufferer is granted a series of dreams in III 9–48, in which four different figures appear and enact his deliverance from harm. These dreams, discussed in more detail in chapter seven, are clearly revelatory—in a positive sense—and present two figures (the second and fourth of the four figures) who are members of one of the groups of ritual specialists who were unable to help the sufferer in Tablet I and II: an unnamed purification ritual functionary (*ramku*, III 23), who was sent by Laluralimma, exorcist of Nippur (III 25); and Ur-Nintinugga, an exorcist from Babylon (III 40, 42). It is only after the therapeutic ministrations of the dream figures that the protagonist mentions—in a still fragmentary section of Tablet III—his sins (III 58–62), which clearly affirms his recognition at this point of the most common and traditional explanation for divine anger and suffering.⁴⁷

After several broken lines (III 63–67), the protagonist’s promise of deliverance is systematically described in a long litany of reversal as his various phys-

⁴⁶ 20007, 129.

⁴⁷ See my previous statement on his sins in SAACT 7, xxii.

ical afflictions are removed or alleviated. This reversal occupies the remainder of Tablet III (in fact, II 51–57, the attack of demonic illnesses, are clearly reversed in III 69–75) and on into at least part of Tablet IV (see lines a–e, IV §A, and IV, lines h–i). Related in some way to his forgiveness of sin, the protagonist successfully undergoes a river ordeal in IV, line j, which is a positive form of revelation—the deity communicates an acquittal officially—and the protagonist likely performs a ritual involving a *šigû* prayer (IV §B 14'–15'), both of which are briefly discussed in chapter seven, page 298. In Tablet V, the protagonist recognizes Marduk's sovereignty, is cleansed ritually (V 37–38), and re-integrated into proper society as he passes through a dozen temple gates (V 42–53), at each of which he receives some divinely-bestowed benefit (including the release of his sins at V 48). Most important for the present purposes, the sufferer in V 47 is brought through the Gate of Brilliant Astonishment, where, it is written, his “signs became clear” (*iddātūya immerā*). In a context overwhelmingly positive, this must be understood as a revelation that indicates Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's renewed favor with the gods. After Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan makes several thanksgiving offerings (V 54–66), the poem recounts how the denizens of Babylon praise Marduk and Zarpanitu, his wife, for restoring the protagonist's life (V 69–76). This initial exultation touches off the poem's long, praise-laden conclusion, whose purpose I discuss further at the conclusion of chapter eight.

Throughout this thematic reading of the poem, revelation plays an important, perhaps even dominant role in the poem's narration and plot. Malevolent and negative forms of revelation dominate in Tablets I and II and then positive revelation occurs from Tablets III to the end. I think it is important to recognize that personal experience and observation of one's life in ancient Mesopotamia were intertwined with malevolent revelation inextricably. One could only know that an illness or social crisis was the result of divine anger and/or demonic oppression *after* these things were manifested in one's experience. And, when such things arose, the attempts to solicit information through the typical institutional channels may have been blocked for some reason, resulting in negative revelatory results, which, of course, compounded the problems and frustrated one's experiences.

One may argue that I am confusing religious experience with revelation. But I would merely reply that there is no reliable way to disentangle those two conceptual domains in ancient Mesopotamia. We may classify direct means of divine communication such as prophecies and dreams (what the field has called intuitive divination) as one kind of revelation and others that rely on the observation of a sign (what the field has called deductive divination), further classified into provoked and unprovoked signs, as some other kind of revelation. This is a useful taxonomy. But, it is *our modern* taxonomy, and adhering to it

too rigidly could lead to misunderstandings.⁴⁸ If the gods could put a message in a dream or write a message in a sheep's liver to be found during an extispicy, why should we consider these signs any different than when a god sends a message in the behavior of a lizard on a wall that one "happens" to observe or in the infliction of illness upon a human being? To be clear: Not all personal experiences were revelatory in ancient Mesopotamia; rather, all personal experiences were *potentially* revelatory, as many Neo-Assyrian royal letters suggest. For example, in SAA 10 33 (Parpola 1993, 24–25) the royal scholar replies to a query from the king about a mongoose that had run out from under his chariot. Was it a sign or not? And if so, what does it mean? He has an answer for him—it was a sign and he suggests a course of action in light of it. In another letter, SAA 10 42 (Parpola 1993, 32–33), the king anxiously writes to a scholar to learn the meaning of a lightning strike that resulted in burned crops in a town outside the capital. Is it portentous? His scholar assures him that it is not, not for him at least. In other letters the king responds to what he fears to be malevolent revelation in the form of illness. In one, SAA 10 236 (Parpola 1993, 188), his scholar writes back and says he has nothing to worry about; the illness is just seasonal. In another, SAA 10 315 (Parpola 1993, 254–55), his scholar sends back an answer, in which he admits his former failure to diagnose the king but now has prepared for him a lotion (*marḥuṣu*) and a salve (*napšaltu*) to be applied to the king and a poultice (*mêlu*) for the king to put around his neck in order to overcome the illness. These letters give us a clear sense of how scholars treated an individual's experiences as potentially revelatory, especially the king's experiences. The letters also show us the importance the scribal scholars and ritual experts occupied in providing the proper interpretations of the revelations and the appropriate remedies. Without their professional skills, the non-expert (whether king, noble, or other) would be in a worrisome position of not knowing precisely what to make of their experiences—as exemplified in Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's story—a story written by a scholar!

⁴⁸ For example, misunderstandings could arise if we rigidly map the domains of deductive and intuitive divination to our contemporary metaphysical bifurcation of the cosmos into natural and supernatural domains. No such bifurcation existed in ancient Mesopotamian conceptions of the world; see Rochberg 2016. In addition, our own desire for clean taxonomy and conceptual boundaries may impose a unified system—or rather, our perception of a unified system—on the varied and redundant ancient methods of divine-human communication, where one did not exist (see Richardson 2017).

5.3. CONCLUSION

Understanding the origin of *Ludlul* within the divinatory worldview of the scholars adds an important layer to the ancient cultural context for our interpretation of the poem. Before turning to the next chapter, I want to reflect briefly about how this reading may relate to the poem's pedagogical uses described in the previous chapter. Of course, divination was a major scholarly concern and its presence in the poem provides one of the most salient reasons for its importance among the first-millennium literate elite and their students. But there is another reason I want to suggest for the poem's perceived pedagogical pertinence.

At the beginning of the previous section of this chapter, after citing the opening lines of the protagonist's account of suffering in I 41–46:

From the day Bel punished me,
 And the hero Marduk was angry wi[th] me,
 My god rejected me, he disappeared,
 My goddess left, she departed.
 The protective spirit of good fortune who *was* at my side [sp]lit off,
 My divine guardian became afraid and sought o[ut] another.

I asked: How did the sufferer know the actions of the gods here? How could he have divined their abandonment? I answered those questions from the perspective of the protagonist himself within the unfolding narrative frame. But this needn't be the only way to look at the questions. Ziegler asks the same questions and very usefully analyzes them by coordinating social and physical maladies in the diagnostic section of two (representative examples of) therapeutic texts with those in *Ludlul* I and II, noting both the many similarities and a few differences as well.⁴⁹ From a look at such texts (see chapter six for more detail), it is rather easy to see that *Ludlul* I and II enumerate *in narrative form* many of the same kinds of maladies the exorcist, looking back retrospectively with his patient, would look for to make a diagnosis of, for example, divine anger or witchcraft. We know the ancient scribes had no aversion to lists. But, I suggest *Ludlul*'s narrative presentation of many of these symptoms and maladies so fundamental to the exorcist's work made the poem a perfect pedagogical preference. And the fact that the ritual experts could not help the protagonist in Tablets I and II would have provided a plot twist that made the story and

⁴⁹ Ziegler 2017, 229–40. Others have also seen the same similarity between the ills in *Ludlul* and the diagnostic sections of these texts. Note, e.g., Noegel 2016, 627, citing a witchcraft diagnosis, and Fink 2012, 73–75.

its content all the more memorable.⁵⁰ Thus, we may say that the protagonist's experience of revelation in *Ludlul* accounts compellingly for the generation of the story and generates a compelling personal account of the protagonist, both of which would have served an ancient scribal teacher and his students very well.

⁵⁰ Understanding the experts' failure as a plot twist here need not exclude the other functions I think ritual failure has in the poem. See chapter seven.

CHAPTER 6:
ŠUBŠI-MEŠRÊ-ŠAKKAN'S AFFLICTED BODY:
THE EXORCIST LEAVES LEXICAL MARKS

As chapter four discussed, *Ludlul* was used centuries after its time of composition in various scribal curricula of the first millennium, the second stage of which was largely concerned with the training of exorcists. Given this reception of the text and the thematic reading of the poem offered in chapter five, one might ask whether or not the poem further reflects in a significant manner the intellectual milieu of the exorcists, what we may label *āšipūtu* in both its professional and textual senses. Lambert, basing himself on the poem's rich vocabulary, gave an affirmative answer to the question in 1960: "The range of vocabulary [in the poem] is far wider than in most religious texts, and *hapax legomena* or meanings not otherwise attested occur frequently. The author has certainly not coined these rare words himself. He was steeped in the magic literature [i.e., exorcism] and seems to have culled from it all the obscure phrases and recondite words. Even the extensive lexical work *Harra* [*scil. Urra*] does not know so many terms for parts of the body" (1960, 26). An affirmative answer also arises from a moment's reflection on various thematic elements in the poem besides the divinatory element already discussed in the previous chapter. To focus on one obvious theme: It is manifestly clear from a casual reading of the poem that *Ludlul* concerns itself significantly with the protagonist's body and the various demonically- and divinely-caused maladies that afflict it in the second half of Tablet II and are subsequently removed from it in the second half of Tablet III. These same thematic concerns pervade the diagnostic, therapeutic, and incantatory corpora associated with exorcism, as mentioned at the end of the previous chapter.¹ For these reasons and others, scholars have good reason to think the poem originated among scholars and specifically the exorcists. The present chapter provides further support for this idea by examining the anatomical and pathological vocabulary—what we may perhaps somewhat anachronistically call the medical terminology²—in *Ludlul*

¹ These influences are not limited to Tablets II and III, however. Note, e.g., Noegel 2016, who finds a great many intertextual connections with *Udug-hul* and anti-witchcraft texts, both closely associated with exorcism, in Tablet I; and see chapter nine, where I argue that the language, tropes, and structure of incantation prayers, the exorcist's most important genre, pervade the entire poem.

² I have largely avoided the word "medical" in this chapter *not* because I think it is inappropriate to talk about medicine in ancient Mesopotamia but because that term may cause confusion since it typically connotes a cluster of ideas in our modern cultures that would prohibit the inclu-

as compared to scholarly texts, with an emphasis on determining the extent to which such terms occur specifically in texts related to exorcism.³

The study proceeds from an assumption that I think is reasonable but is not without methodological obstacles (described below): If the common themes of “body” and “illness” are developed in *Ludlul* via a significant amount of shared anatomical and pathological vocabulary well-known to and in some cases especially well-attested or exclusively so among the texts associated with exorcism, then we will have an additional warrant for placing not just the poem’s curricular reception but also its compositional *Sitz im Leben* among scholar-scribes with a deep interest in exorcism, which in turn provides further support for contextualizing the poem within that socio-cultural, intellectual, and institutional milieu.⁴

It is not at all controversial to recognize the involvement of scholar-scribes, including exorcists, in the production of the Akkadian textual patrimony in the late second through the late first millennia. In fact, the scholar-scribes themselves have left us lists that collocate the title of various texts—literary and technical—with their putative authors, many of whom are identified as one kind of scholar or another. For example, the famous putative author of the *Epic of Gilgameš*, Šîn-leqi-uninni, was probably an exorcist.⁵ Furthermore, we know in the Neo-Assyrian court that the chief scribe, himself a scholar, was involved in the production of royal inscriptions.⁶ Given this, we should not be surprised to find in *Gilgameš* or *Etana* or a Sargonid royal inscription some vocabulary that is more commonly attested in technical and learned texts asso-

sion of ritual and therapeutic actions against non-obvious beings such as demons, ghosts, or witches (among others), all of whom were recognized as etiologies of illness and suffering—along with sin—in ancient Mesopotamia and dealt with by the exorcist. Just as I would suggest that we may use the term “religion” for ancient Mesopotamia when properly problematized and theorized (see Lenzi 2019a, drawing on similar justifications as articulated by Francesca Rochberg in her studies of applying the term “science” to ancient Mesopotamia; see, e.g., Rochberg 2004, 2016), we may also use the word “medicine” for ancient Mesopotamia (likewise, e.g., Robson 2008, 463–64).

³ My first published foray into the significance of the many anatomical and pathological terms in *Ludlul* was in the introduction to SAACT 7. The list I compiled there from Tablets I and II of the poem—which requires additions and corrections—was only intended to illustrate the fact that *Ludlul* often uses rare and learned words (see p. xxvii).

⁴ Labat asserts that the purpose for the various “clinical terms,” as he calls them, in the poem is a matter of literary effect: “L’affectation des termes cliniques, pour décrire les symptômes et les maladies, ajoute moins de pathétique à l’évocation des souffrances subies qu’elle n’accuse la recherche de l’effet littéraire” (1970, 329). Although he does not further exposit this idea, I suggest one of the literary effects of these terms in the poem is to evoke the ethos of professional exorcism.

⁵ See Lambert 1962, 66 VI, line 10 and George 2003, 28, n.74.

⁶ See Tadmor 1997, 328; Luuko 2007, 228; and Frahm 2011a, 521–22.

ciated with scholarship.⁷ After all, scholars who consulted, for example, *Šumma ālu* for divinatory purposes were also involved in crafting, curating, and copying myths, epics, rituals, and royal inscriptions, all of which were utilized in service to the king.⁸ The point of the present study is to substantiate what has up to now been only an impression that *Ludlul's* anatomical and pathological terminology shows a *pervasive* and *distinctive* connection to the professional vocabulary of the exorcist, which provides further support for a particular socio-cultural contextualization for the composition of the poem within that specific professional milieu.

6.1. REFLECTIONS ON METHODOLOGY

Before looking at the anatomical and pathological terms used in the poem, there are several methodological issues that must be addressed. First among these issues is the matter of the method for determining which lexemes count as anatomical and pathological. Caution is in order since taxonomy always bears the imprint of our own cultural context—often tacit and thus potentially prejudicial, since we cannot help but be a product of our own place, time, social formation, and taxonomies.⁹ Despite the challenges, we can hardly proceed without some kind of heuristic to circumscribe our data. Even if we intuitively center a category “anatomical vocabulary” or “pathological vocabulary” on the physical body of the poem’s protagonist, medical anthropologists have demonstrated repeatedly that we cannot simply identify one culture’s concept(s) of

⁷ As a random example, note the use of the descriptions of stones from *Abnu šikinšu* in Senacherib, no. 49: 8ff. (see Grayson / Novotny 2014, 91, and 94, note on lines 8', 12'–13').

⁸ See Pongratz-Leisten 2015, who rightly emphasizes the continuity and intertextuality of scribal scholarship across various genres (and media) in service to the Assyrian king.

⁹ For general reflections on classification/taxonomy, see Smith 2000, in which he discusses the taxonomy of religions in a historical survey and religions as taxonomy generators, and Lincoln’s chapter entitled “The Tyranny of Taxonomy” (2014, 131–41), where he criticizes the so-called “epistemological” understanding of taxonomy, whose practitioners claim is simply “a means of gathering, sorting, and processing knowledge about the external (especially the natural) world” (136). Although taxonomy has such uses, “placing primary emphasis on them obscures the fact that all knowers are themselves *objects* of knowledge as well as subjects insofar as they cannot and do not stand apart from the world that they seek to know. One consequence of this (and far from the least important) is that categorizers come to be categorized according to their own categories. Taxonomy is thus not only a means for organizing information, but also—as it comes to organize the organizers—an instrument for the classification and manipulation of society” (137). For body-related examples of the tyranny of taxonomy, see Thomson’s discussion of various theoretical approaches to disability (1997, 19–51) and Bowker and Star’s discussion of race classification and reclassification in Apartheid South Africa from an information infrastructure perspective (1999, 195–225).

the body with another culture's.¹⁰ Was the *napištu* a part of the body in ancient Mesopotamia?¹¹ We may readily agree that *napištu* in its sense of "throat" is anatomical. But what about *napištu* in its "life-force" sense? Is it part of the body?¹² In our modern cultures, do we consider dental implants and surgically-implanted pins in one's knee a part of one's body?¹³ The same culturally-contingent issues surround pathology.¹⁴ Recognizing the methodological obstacles, we might consider defining the physical body using ancient Mesopotamian sources as the final adjudicator of the semantic domain's lexical denizens. Following this line of reasoning, we might look, for example, to the physiognomic omens and the diagnostic treatise Sa-gig and/or the OB lexical list Ugu-mu, all of which deal extensively with the human body.¹⁵ Leaving aside the OB lexical list for chronological reasons,¹⁶ there is a problem with using the former

¹⁰ This is a basic concept in introductory textbooks in the field. See, e.g., Singer *et al* 2019, 88, "[a]lthough the body is generally viewed as a biological entity, particularly within biomedical circles, it also in large part is a sociocultural construction." Further in their discussion (p. 94), they cite anthropologist Mary Douglas's classic work *Purity and Danger* to make the point: "the human body is always treated as an image of society [and therefore] ... there can be no natural way of considering the body that does not involve at the same time a social dimension" (see Douglas 1973, 98; similarly, e.g., Kleinman 1988, 11–13). In Assyriology, see Steinert 2012, 134–36, who situates her discussion within a broader cultural anthropological context.

¹¹ For a very extensive discussion of the Mesopotamian conception of personhood with careful attention to the body, see Steinert 2012, especially her chapter length studies of *bāštu*, "dignity," *ramānu*, "self," and *napištu* (pp. 405–509, especially 420–21, cited in chapter five; 257–70; and 271–93, respectively). For an interesting perspective on extra-dimensional aspects of the Mesopotamian concept of the body, see Assante 2009.

¹² See Steinert 2012, 271–93 for a discussion. She understands *napištu* as "ein den Körper belebendes Element, das zugleich ein Teil des Körpers ist, d.h. der Form nach eine Körper- und der Funktion nach eine Lebensseele" (271).

¹³ The military imagery sometimes used to describe a cancerous tumor in a person's body (e.g., an invasion) or one's attempts to get rid of it (e.g., battling cancer) suggests we do not consider such an entity really to be "part of us," even though one's own body is in fact growing and supporting it.

¹⁴ For example, Harvard medical anthropologist Arthur Kleinman states "[i]t is not just that certain symptoms are given particular attention in certain cultural and historical settings, but that the meanings of all symptoms ... are dependent on local knowledge about the body and its pathologies" (1988, 23).

¹⁵ Extensive lists of body parts occur in the second sub-series of Sa-gig, for (lists of) which see Heeßel 2000, 24–30 and Schmidchen 2021, 661–67; in physiognomic omens, for which see Böck 2000, 47–54, where she lists the terms by region of the body, and 327–29, where she lists them in alphabetical order; and in the lexical series Ugu-mu, for which see Couto-Ferreira 2009, who also provides a brief introductory discussion of the problems (and history) of the lexicography of anatomical terminology in Sumerian and Akkadian sources (1–9). For the practice of listing body parts "from head-to-toe" (*a capite ad calcem*) in various Mesopotamian texts and its metaphorical and cultural significances, see Couto-Ferreira 2017.

¹⁶ As discussed in the Introduction, *Ludlul* could not have been composed earlier than the reign of the Kassite king Nazimarutáš, c. 1301–1277 BCE (for these dates, see Frazer 2013, 187, n.2).

two treatises for this Mesopotamian-centered resolution to defining the physical body: The physiognomic omens and Sa-gig both come from the sphere of the ancient exorcists themselves. Letting these scholars and their treatises determine the dataset for what potentially counts as a relevant term to our comparative study of vocabulary related to the body in *Ludlul* and *āšipūtu* would prejudice our inquiry toward the scholars' viewpoint and cause us, at least potentially, to overlook terms that are relevant to the semantic domain but not included in the scholars' treatises for perhaps a socio-linguistic reason (e.g., because the terms were poetic, literary, or vulgar) or due to the fact that the terms were simply not relevant to their purview (note, e.g., that *ḥašū*, "lungs," does not occur in the physiognomic omens, which is not unexpected given the interest of that corpus in visible anatomy; see below). We don't want to exclude evidence that could count against the hypothesis. In addition, the intention here is not to produce a treatise on the Mesopotamian conceptions of the body *per se* or what features, attributes, and/or capabilities characterized a person in ancient Mesopotamia.¹⁷ Rather, the goal is to discern whether terms in specific semantic domains in *Ludlul* intersect significantly with the terms in the same semantic domains in scribal materials associated with the exorcists. Given this specific goal, I think the best way to create a dataset of terms in *Ludlul* free from the overt influence and limitations of the ancient exorcists themselves is for me to utilize my own ideas about the body to include what seems to me clearly anatomical and to exclude what seems to me clearly not anatomical. When the matter is not so clear cut, I have erred on the side of inclusion. The results are presented in the first list of words below, which includes terms that describe the body in part or whole. I also included bodily excretions.¹⁸

To illustrate how this method of compiling the list provides results more inclusive than if I had used the anatomical terms in, for example, the physiognomic omens—selected because they are comprehensively available in a single-volume, critical edition—I have indicated with a dagger (†) the anatomical words that occur in *Ludlul* but do not show up among the anatomical terms compiled in Böck's text edition. A superscripted dagger (†) indicates that the term occurs somewhere in the physiognomic omens but not in Böck's list of anatomical terms.¹⁹

¹⁷ On the latter, see Steinert's impressive work (2012).

¹⁸ Note that I have also included body parts when used in an idiom or non-corporeal sense (e.g., *aḥa nadū*, "to neglect," in II 17 and *irat eršeti*, "surface of the netherworld," in II 52 and III 70) for the sake of completeness of coverage.

¹⁹ See Böck 2000, 47–54, where she lists the terms by region of the body, and 327–29, where she lists them in alphabetical order. For an illustrated version, see Böck 2001.

Having created the dataset of terms associated with the human body in the poem, I then developed a second list of substantives for pathologies, broadly construed, including any terms that I consider to name a negative condition in relationship to the protagonist's body:²⁰ a loss, a problem, a symptom, an unfavorable condition, an illness, etc. that is experienced in the protagonist's body. Although not without problems since what counts as health, pathology, or disability in one's body is culturally defined,²¹ I have also drawn on my experience with Mesopotamian texts to err on the side of inclusivity in compiling this list by including terms that describe a bodily condition that I think the Mesopotamians themselves would consider negative. Thus, in addition to hunger and paralysis, for example, I have included expressions of emotional trauma and disturbance that may manifest itself bodily (e.g., fear and vocalized grief; see, e.g., the terms used in I 105–109) as well as terms associated with lost bodily functions or capabilities. I have also included names of non-obvious beings (e.g., a personal god or a demon) who could allow or inflict bodily harm. My own cultural bias in this list shows through very clearly in that I do not include in my list of pathologies many of the social problems the protagonist experiences in Tablet I (e.g., slander, loss of reputation, etc.), even though similar misfortunes occur in the list of symptoms in various laments and therapeutic texts,²² and some of these have an effect—a non-pathological effect, I think—on the protagonist's bodily comportment (see, e.g., I 77, “I, who walked about as a lord, learned to slink”). Since I am undertaking a comparative lexicographical study centered on the body rather than a study of Mesopotamian pathologies and their social impact, I think this bias is methodologically admissible.²³

Having acquired two lists of lexemes in this manner, one still has to decide how to locate the relevant attestations of each term to study their textual distri-

²⁰ I have not included finite verbs that describe a pathological process or state to keep the present chapter within a manageable length. Limiting the work to substantives provides a good representative sample of lexemes for the comparison.

²¹ Again, this is a basic concept in medical anthropology; see Singer *et al* 2020, 65–101. In the Assyriological literature, see Steinert 2021a, 140. The former work's treatment of “ethnomedicine” states that “[i]n reality, all medical systems,” including modern biomedicine, “constitute ethnomedicines in that they developed from and are embedded in particular sociocultural systems, regardless of whether they are small-scale or state societies” (161). For an example related to biomedicine, see Bowker and Star's discussion of the development of the International Classification of Diseases in service to the information infrastructure needs of the modern nation-state (1999, 107–33).

²² For representative examples of such in therapeutic texts, see Abusch / Schwemer 2016, 13–14 and Farber 1977, 56. Many, many other examples could be cited.

²³ For the absence of a dichotomy between the physical and social aspects of personhood in ancient Mesopotamia (similarly, between the individual and the social collective), see Steinert 2012, 121–36.

bution and then how to assess this distribution. For locating the attestations of each term, I have relied primarily on the lexica. Given the CAD's user-friendly and thorough, if not comprehensive presentation, I looked first to its entry of each term to determine a word's distribution in the texts and then consulted *AHW* for additional help, which was especially evident vis-à-vis the older CAD volumes.²⁴ The search capabilities of ORACC (<http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/>) were also very useful, especially when it came to looking for attestations of words in the labyrinthine royal inscriptions. Given the present chapter's purpose, which is centered on contextualizing *Ludlul* rather than on the lexicography of all of the Akkadian anatomical and pathological terms attested in *Ludlul* in light of every possible context outside of it, this practical approach for finding lexical attestations seems sensible to me and provides what I think is a representative sample of attestations from which to generalize with the understanding that all such generalizations are provisional and mutable in light of new or unused evidence.

The attestations of each term were examined to discern the term's distribution and to assess its prominence in post-OB texts with a special attention to its distribution, if any, in scholarly texts, especially those texts closely associated with exorcism.²⁵ (I focused on post-Old Babylonian attestations of the terms since that is likely the broadest timeframe for our poem's composition.) Although not an exhaustive listing of *āšipūtu*, the following comprise the most important texts and kinds of texts in the corpus: The diagnostic treatise *Sa-gig*; the omen series *Šumma ālu*, *Šumma izbu*, and the physiognomic omens; the panoply of laments, hymns, prayers, incantations, and incantation prayers used often in concert with ritual actions to appease an angry god or repel an evil being, e.g., a witch, a ghost, etc., including *šuilas*, *dingiršadabbas*, and/or *namburbis*; and the great diversity of other therapeutic texts.²⁶ When a term's

²⁴ Because the evidence accumulates in an on-going fashion, the lexica, of course, do not represent all attestations of a word at the time of this writing; moreover, we should note, they did not intend to or could not have offered such even at the times of their publication. Statements about a word's frequency mentioned in the assessment below must be considered provisional.

²⁵ Lenzi 2015 provides an overview of scholarship and inquiry in post-Old Babylonian times.

²⁶ There is an on-going discussion about how *precisely* to divide up the work between the *asū*, "physician," and *āšipu*, "exorcist." One's understanding of this matter will determine how one delineates the respective crafts' textual corpora (see Steinert 2018, 178n. 111 for bibliography on this issue, to which add her own study as well as Johnson's [2018] and Geller's [2018] in the same volume). One might suggest that the so-called *Vademecum of the Exorcist* (KAR 44 and duplicates; see Geller 2018 for the most recent edition, commentary, interpretation, and secondary literature) allows a precise delineation of the exorcist's professional purview. I would agree that it does *in principle*. I would also exercise caution in using it in this manner since this text, despite its duplicates found in various first-millennium sites, may not represent the division of labor between the two professions for all times and places in post-Old Babylonian Mesopotamian history. Note

attestations are predominantly (not necessarily exclusively) attested in these kinds of texts (and other learned texts, e.g., those related to the work of the *kalû* or *bārû*) I discuss the term's distribution in the relevant assessment section below. The more a term's attestations appear in letters, myths, epics, royal inscriptions, and/or other non-technical, non-learned materials the less likely I deemed that term to contribute to establishing a distinctive connection between *Ludlul* and *āšipūtu*, though there are exceptions to this rule (e.g., *qātu*). Such broadly-attested terms typically do not receive comment in the relevant assessment section below. This manner of quantification is of course impressionistic and thus open to interpretation. Others may judge the same evidence differently than have I. And, certainly, the evidence will change as new attestations of each term accumulate. My results are provisional and will require revision in the future. Still, it is hoped that the present study will offer a basic, suggestive insight on *Ludlul*'s anatomical and pathological vocabulary that further study, and, when all the relevant texts are digitized, genuine statistical analysis can refine in the future.²⁷

in this regard, for example (and for an entry into the secondary literature), Geller's recent interpretation of the exorcist's curriculum (curricula?) in the text as an expanded one, expanded to cover areas traditionally covered by the physician (2018, 95–96); Steinert's reflections on the text's relationship to that of the *Aššur Medical Catalog* and how this informs (or rather, blurs) our understanding of the two professions (2018, especially pp. 178–91); and Arbøll's exploration of the possibilities and limitations of using the *Vademecum* for understanding the scribal training and textual output of one particular exorcist from Aššur itself, Kišir-Aššur (2021, 245–53, especially pp. 252–53). A precise resolution on the matter of the boundary between the two professions is not necessary for the purposes of this chapter because I have relied on texts and series that most Assyriologists would agree are within the sphere of the exorcist's professional domain when identifying a term as appearing in materials belonging to the exorcist. The attestation of a word in what the field has labeled "medical texts" may add weight to a term's being considered a learned one. But, I do not rely on such attestations as providing determinative warrant for evaluating the term as one that intersects significantly with the exorcists' corpus.

²⁷ Of course, a statistical study of *all* of the vocabulary in *Ludlul* vis-à-vis the vocabulary in *āšipūtu* would be ideal. When the digitization of Akkadian texts has proceeded a little farther, such a study will be simple. The Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (<https://cdli.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/>) and the Open Access Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus (<http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/>) are providing the foundation for this work. The work of the Babylonian Medicine Project (<https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/en/e/babmed/index.html>), under the direction of Prof. Markham Geller and Prof. Cale Johnson at the Freie Universität in Berlin, is rapidly making the relevant medical texts available in a digital format. The Electronic Babylonian Literature project (<https://www.ebl.lmu.de/>), under the leadership of Enrique Jiménez at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich, and the Sources of Early Akkadian Literature project (<https://seal.huji.ac.il/>), under the leadership of Nathan Wasserman (The Hebrew University, Jerusalem) and Michael Streck (Universität Leipzig), will do the same for a wide variety of literary and technical texts. These and other digital projects will vastly expand the possibilities of lexical and intertextual studies in the coming years.

There are important socio-linguistic issues that should temper the results of this kind of study and the significance we give to the distribution of the terms under consideration. Despite hundreds of private letters coming down to us from ancient Mesopotamia, our textual sources are still severely biased toward not just the literate but the institutionally-connected literate. We cannot know how often certain words were used in the general populace since our sources do not give us as much access to that aspect of the language as we would like. A word that is deemed “rarely attested” in our sources may or may not have in fact been rare. And even if we limit our interpretation of the data to the literate, text-producing fraction of society, a term that seems to be “learned” or “exclusively attested in texts related to exorcism” may appear that way in our textual data simply due to the nature of the themes and the related semantic domains under examination. As Martin Worthington asked me in his comments on an earlier draft of this chapter, “Where would one expect to see references to ear wax?” The significance of the present study lies not in showing that certain terms are “learned” or “exclusively related to exorcism,” though that is the result in some lexical cases. Rather, the results here are a kind of constellation of lexemes, points of data that we may connect to imagine a recognizable though incomplete picture, within the two semantic domains under examination. And that constellation is, if not determinative, suggestive for our understanding of the poem’s composition among the socio-cultural, intellectual, and institutional sphere of exorcists, the ideological implications of which I explore in the following chapter.

Line numbers in parentheses indicate the term is not associated with the protagonist’s own body. Line numbers in square brackets indicate the term occurs in a conjectured restoration. The terms highlighted in gray are those that I found interesting for the present purpose and comment on in 6.4.

6.2. ANATOMICAL (AND RELATED) TERMS IN *LUDLUL*

Because many of the terms in this list occur several times in the poem, the words are presented in alphabetical order.

<i>aḥu</i> , arm	I 76, (II 17)
<i>amīru</i> , ear wax †	III 85
<i>ammatu</i> , forearm	(II 39)
<i>appu</i> , nose	(II 14, 41), III 86, (V 40)
<i>bābu</i> , opening †	II 86
<i>birku</i> , knee	II 78, IV §A 3'
<i>dāmu</i> , blood †	(I 87), II 92

<i>eṣemtu</i> , bone †	II 93
<i>gattu</i> , build, stature †	II 69, (III 11)
<i>ḥašū</i> , lungs †	[II 66]
<i>idu</i> , arm, side †	I 45, 98, II 77, 97, 113, [III 34]
<i>īnān</i> , eyes	(I 81), 109, II 60, 73, III 82
<i>irtu</i> , <i>iratu</i> , chest	I 75, II 52, 62, (III 70), III 97
<i>išdu</i> (<i>irdu</i>), base/jaw?	[(II 51)], (III 69), 93
<i>kabattu</i> , liver, ‘mood’ †	(I 8, 34, 36, II 118, III 52), (V 60)
<i>karšu</i> , stomach, ‘heart’	(I 8)
<i>kišādu</i> , neck	II 61, Com, line a
<i>labānu</i> , neck tendon	II 61
<i>lānu</i> , stature †	II 68
<i>libbu</i> , heart	(I 29, 31, 33, 35, 56), 74, 111, II 25, (35), (III 51, V 61, 72), 118
<i>lišānu</i> , tongue	III 94
<i>lu’u</i> , gullet	III 98
<i>malū</i> , matted hair †	V 37
<i>mašku</i> , skin †	II 93
<i>mešrētu</i> , limbs †	II 67, 105, IV §A 8’
<i>minātu</i> , limbs, physique †	(III 10), IV §A 9’
<i>muhḥu</i> , skull	II 59
<i>muttutu</i> , ²⁸ literally, ‘half’, but perhaps ‘fore-head/-lock’ †	IV §B 10’
<i>napištu</i> , life, throat	I 59, 88, V 31, 74 (<i>napšatu</i>), (81, 96, 101, <i>napšatu</i>)
<i>pagru</i> , body †	II 75, IV §A 7’
<i>pānū</i> , face	I 111, (II 4), 81, (117)
<i>pītru</i> , stomach (lining)? †	II 67
<i>pū</i> , mouth †	(I 53, 63, 67), 70, (II 15), 84, III 90, (V 14, 20, 21, 22), 49, (70, 83)
<i>purīdu</i> , leg	(II 42), IV §A 4’, (V 81)
<i>pūtu</i> , forehead	II 60
<i>qaqqadu</i> , head	[II 59], III 80, (V 103, <i>ṣalmat qaqqadi</i>)
<i>qātu</i> , hand	(I 9, 11, 33, 36), II 112, (III 1, 45, 46), IV §C 6’, V 9, (18, 19)
<i>qerbū</i> , innards †	II 65
<i>ramānu</i> , self (corporeal*) †	(I 58), II 23, (34), 83, 98*, III 5*
<i>rēš libbi</i> , epigastrium	II 64
<i>rēšu</i> , head ²⁹	I 73, (II 5, III 17), V 11

²⁸ See *muttatu* in the lexica.

<i>riksū</i> , joints † ³⁰	II 104
<i>rittu</i> , hand †	(I 10, 12, III 24, V 12)
<i>rubṣu</i> , dung †	II 106
<i>ṣēru</i> , back ³¹	II 63
<i>ṣupru</i> , nail	Com, line d
<i>šalamtu</i> , corpse †	(II 44), V 36
<i>šammāhu</i> , paunch	III 104
<i>šaptān</i> , lips	I 71, 117, II 85, III 88
<i>šēpu</i> , foot	II 79, 98, IV §A 5', (V 53)
<i>šer'ānu</i> , sinew ³²	II 94
<i>šikittu</i> , form †	(III 9)
<i>šinmu</i> , tooth	III 92
<i>šīru</i> , flesh †	(I 55, 67, 92), 112, II 76, 92, 97, III 14, (V 35, <i>šīr asakki</i>)
<i>šuklultu</i> , (complete, shapely) form †	IV §A 7'
<i>tabāštānu</i> , excrement †	II 107
<i>tulū</i> , chest	II 62
<i>tēmu</i> , mind, plan †	(I 32, II 36, 43)
<i>ubānātu</i> , fingers	(I 80)
<i>umāšu</i> , physique †	Com, line c
<i>unāti libbi</i> , guts †	I 113, II 65 (w/o <i>libbu</i>)
<i>ur'udu</i> , throat	II 87, III 96
<i>usukku</i> , cheek	I 110
<i>uznu</i> , ear	II 8, II 74, III 84
<i>zīmu</i> , countenance †	II 91, (III 31)
<i>zumru</i> , body †	(I 21), II 71, III 28, IV §A 9'

6.3. PATHOLOGICAL (AND RELATED) TERMS IN *LUDLUL*

The terms are listed in the order in which they first appear in the poem.

²⁹ *Rēšu* does not appear in the anatomical terms used in the physiognomic omens as a separate body part; it does occur, however, in construct with some six other body parts (e.g., *rēš appi*); see Böck 2000, 328.

³⁰ If Kraus's proposed reading for GI is accepted, then *riksu* does appear in the physiognomic omens; see Böck 2000, 281, n.860.

³¹ *Šēru* only occurs in the construction *ṣēr naglabi*, "back of the hip," in the physiognomic omens; see Böck 2000, 328.

³² *Šer'ānu* only occurs in the construction *šer'an īni*, "cord of the eye," in the physiognomic omens; see Böck 2000, 329.

<i>lamassu</i> , divine guardian	(I 15), 46 (loss of)
<i>šēdu</i> , protective spirit	(I 15), 45 (loss of)
<i>ilu</i> , personal god	(I 16, 28), 43, II 4 (rejection, anger, loss of)
<i>utukku</i> , demon/ghost	(I 25, 66), II 54, III 72
<i>ra`ibu</i> , tremors/demon	(I 25), II 63
<i>šuruppû</i> , chills	(I 26), II 56, III 74
<i>hurbāšu</i> , cold tremors	(I 26)
<i>ištaru</i> , personal goddess	(I 28), 44, II 5 (rejection, anger, loss of)
<i>mītu</i> , dead (person)	I 38
<i>dūtu</i> , manliness	I 47 (loss of), IV, line i
<i>bāštu</i> , dignity	I 47 (loss of)
<i>simtu</i> , characteristic manner	I 48 (loss of)
<i>pirittu</i> , terror	(I 49) (<i>idāt piritti</i>), 74, 112
<i>hašikkiš</i> , like a deaf-mute	I 71, III 84 {only occurs in <i>Ludlul</i> }
<i>mūtu</i> , death	(I 96), II 81
<i>šutānuhu</i> , sighing	I 105
<i>gerrānu</i> , lamentation	I 105
<i>qitayyulu</i> , despairing/grieving silence	I 106
<i>qubû</i> , lamentation	I 108
<i>bitakkû</i> , constant weeping	I 109
<i>adirtu</i> , apprehension	I 111 (<i>adirat libbi</i>)
<i>hattu</i> , panic	I 112
<i>gitallutu</i> , perpetual fear	I 113
<i>kimiltu</i> , divine anger	II 9
<i>muršu</i> , sickness	II 50 (<i>muršu munnišu</i>), 110 (<i>šikin muršīya</i>), III 5 (<i>dannu murša kabta</i>), 50, 80 (<i>lazzu muruṣ qaqqadi</i>)
<i>imḥullu</i> , evil wind	II 51, III 69
<i>dī`u</i> , ague	II 52, III 70
<i>šūlu</i> , cough/demon	II 53, II 66, III 71
<i>Lamaštu</i> , name of demon	II 55, III 73
<i>lu`tu</i> , debility	II 57, II 78, III 75
<i>haḥḥu</i> , phlegm	II 66
<i>alû</i> , kind of demon	II 71
<i>rimûtu</i> , numbness	II 75
<i>mišīttu</i> , paralysis/stroke	II 76
<i>mangu</i> , stiffness	II 77
<i>namuššišu</i> , moving	II 79 (loss of)
<i>miḥṣu</i> , blow	[II 80]
<i>naḥbalu</i> , snare, net	II 84 (on mouth)

<i>napraku</i> , bolt	II 85 (on lips), I 69, I 118 ³³
<i>bubūtu</i> , hunger	II 87
<i>sili'utu</i> , sickness	II 90 (<i>silētu</i>), II 111, III 49
<i>uriqtu</i> , 'jaundice'	II 94 {only occurs in <i>Ludlul</i> }
<i>tānēhu</i> , distress, sighing	II 95, V 50
<i>ništātu</i> , afflictions	II 99 (<i>ništū</i>)
<i>mihīštu/mihištu</i> , wound	II 99 (see I 27, 35), III 87
<i>sakikkū</i> , symptoms	II 108 (<i>tērētu</i> , omens, in II 109)
<i>mītūtu</i> , death	II 115, V 73
<i>puluhtu</i> , fear	III 2
<i>ērūtu</i> , alertness	III 6 (loss of)
<i>šittu lā ūbtu</i> , unpleasant sleep	III 76
<i>šalālu rehū</i> , pouring out of sleep	III 76
<i>tē'āti mīn</i> , blurred eyes	III 82 {only occurs in <i>Ludlul</i> }
<i>ummu</i> , fever	III 86
<i>kišru</i> , bond	III 89
<i>pulhātu</i> , sores, blisters	III 89
<i>tuštu</i> , thickness	III 95 (of tongue) {only occurs in <i>Ludlul</i> }
<i>lagā'u</i> , scales, swelling?, blisters?	III 99
<i>idiltu</i> , stoppage	III 99 {only occurs in <i>Ludlul</i> }
<i>unšu (umšu)</i> , hunger	III 104
<i>saḥḥu</i> , swelling?	III 105
<i>nak/qimtu</i> , a disease?	Com, line d
<i>mānahtu</i> , fatigue	Com, line e, V 114
<i>maruštu</i> , distress	IV §C 8'
<i>eṭemmūtu</i> , state of being a ghost	V 33
<i>šīr asakki</i> , flesh of a kind of demon	V 35

6.4. ASSESSING THE TERMS

The following (rather tedious) assessment does not attempt to present or discuss every attestation of the words identified for comment in the two lists above. Rather, I have tried to present a synthesis of my findings after surveying the various attestations. And I (typically) use representative examples to give warrant for counting a word as especially interesting and worthy of our atten-

³³ The term in *Ludlul* I 69, used in conjunction with *tuššu*, "malicious talk," and in I 118, as a metaphor describing *nāpalū*, does not literally affect the protagonist's body as it does in II 85.

tion for the comparison at hand. In some cases, there are so few attestations of a word that even a brief exposition can cite them all. I have also commented on rarely attested words not so much to show the connection to exorcism (since such a connection cannot always be discerned) but to underline in passing the clustering of such rarely attested words in *Ludlul* specifically in the semantic domains under scrutiny. (This provides some confirmatory evidence, perhaps, for why *Ludlul* was copied in such a late stage of the scribal curricula surveyed in chapter four.) To be clear, the purpose in the following is very much centered on illuminating *Ludlul*'s institutional and intellectual context rather than contributing to Akkadian anatomical and pathological lexicography, an endeavor for which I do not have the requisite scientific training. I am a doctor but not that kind of doctor.

6.4.1. *The Anatomical Terms*

Amīru, “ear wax,” in *Ludlul* III 85 is a very rarely attested word, a fact that may provide confirming evidence of the poem’s high linguistic register. Aside from some lexical lists and the attestation in *Ludlul*, the term is attested as far as I can determine in only two other Akkadian texts, one each in its meanings “stoppage of the ear” and “deaf person,” namely, the *Great Prayer to Ištar* (K.225 + K.9962, obv. i 65) and the fragment 1879-07-08, 168, obv. 11'. Both texts are sophisticated prayers,³⁴ which might suggest a lexical connection to exorcism, but prudence prohibits a firm conclusion. It is interesting that the Commentary to *Ludlul* explains *amīru* as *zê uzni*, “ear feces” (MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 10), a phrase that is only attested one other time, as far as I can discern, in an explanatory text that associates parts of a god’s body with some other non-corporeal material item (e.g., a tree) or substance (e.g., a metal).³⁵ See further below under *tabāštānu*.

Ammatu is the general word for “cubit,” a linear measurement based on the typical length of a man’s forearm, which is the word’s anatomical meaning. The attestations of the word in its anatomical sense are limited to physiognomic omens and Sa-gig and thus clearly within the sphere of the exorcist. For

³⁴ For K.225+, see Lambert 1959/1960, 50, line 65 (a new edition, with additional fragments, will be published by Geraldina Rozzi). The fragment 1879-07-08, 168 looks to be a section of complaint from a larger text. Several of the lines on the tablet resonate with *Ludlul* Tablet II. The word may also be attested in the late synonym list *Maliku* IV 14, if a scribal error is accepted ([*a*]-*pi-r*[*u*] > [*a*]-*mi-r*[*u*]), as noted in Oshima 2014, 298. See the edition in Hrůša 2010, 380 with comments on 239, where he seems to reject the suggestion. See also <https://cdli.ucla.edu/P345996> for an image of the only *Maliku* source preserving the word (MS B₁ = K.11773, obv. 13) and notes on the transliteration of the line.

³⁵ See Livingstone 1986, 94–95, line 14.

example, in Sa-gig XIII 10 we read: *šumma rēš libbīšu iššanabbassu qerbūšu ammātūšu kinšāšu u šēpāšu ikkalāšu qāt ilīšu iballuṭ*, “If his epigastrium continually hurts him, his innards, his arms, his shins, and his feet irritate him, it is the hand of his god. He will recover.”³⁶ If we follow von Soden’s lexicographical treatment (*AHw*, 44), *ammātu*’s metaphorical sense, “strength,” is limited to *Ludlul* (II 39) and an incantation prayer to Marduk (BMS 11, obv. 5),³⁷ which likewise supports (admittedly, on thin evidence) a connection to the vocabulary of exorcism.

Bābu, “opening,” in *Ludlul* II 86: This term is very commonly used to designate openings of various kinds, especially architectural openings. When used to describe an opening of the human body,³⁸ it is typically qualified in such a manner that it clearly refers to the anus or vagina; in *Ludlul* most see it as a reference to the mouth.³⁹ In its human anatomical sense outside of *Ludlul*, *bābu* seems only to occur in texts used for healing, including texts used by the exorcists. For example, note KAR 70, rev. 29, part of an incantation in a *šaziga*: *lidūk bāb šuburri ša annanūtūya*, “may it strike the anus of my rival so-and-so,”⁴⁰ and BAM 222: 13', a prescription (perhaps?) against the hand of a ghost: *bāb šuburrīšu ḫimēta tapaššaš*, “you smear his anus with ghee.”⁴¹ It may be that *Ludlul* is simply using the word as a metaphor, as is clearly the case with *mašqū* later in the line. But, the term’s other anatomical uses in therapeutic texts—which are always qualified by another body part—may provide a hint that the term connects to a usage found in exorcistic texts.

Hašū, “lungs,”⁴² in *Ludlul* II 66 is another term that, when used of human physiology in post-OB texts, occurs mostly in therapeutic texts; note especially its multiple occurrences in BAM 558, a group of procedures against respiratory illnesses,⁴³ and BAM 1 (obv. ii 21–26), a list of medicinal plants.⁴⁴ Given these

³⁶ See Schmidtchen 2021, 517, 529.

³⁷ See Mayer 2004 and my treatment at <http://shuilas.org/P393803.html>.

³⁸ When used of an animal’s body, it typically refers to the liver; note especially the technical extispicy term, *bāb ekalli*, “the palace gate” (Maul 2018, 54), though it can also refer to a cut of meat in a few sources (*bāb urkāti*, see CAD B, 25 and U/W, 231).

³⁹ See my comments on *bābu* and *mašqū* in the notes in chapter three at II 86.

⁴⁰ See Zisa 2021, 341 and previously Biggs 1967, 41.

⁴¹ See http://geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/BAM-3/BAM-3_-222 for the transliteration at the Babylonian Medicine project (BabMed). I infer the purpose of the prescription on the basis of the previous section of the tablet (see line 7', *annū marḥaš ša qāt eṭemmi*, “This is an enema against the hand of a ghost”).

⁴² See Couto-Ferreira 2009, 253–56 for a brief lexicographical treatment.

⁴³ For the transliteration at BabMed, see https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/BAM-6/BAM-6_-558/index.html. See also Scurlock 2014, 480–83.

⁴⁴ The nature of BAM 1 and what one should properly call it is somewhat disputed. Attia and Buisson review the various points of view (2012, 22–23). See <https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de>

data, the term clearly intersects with learned materials associated with the physician and perhaps to exorcism.⁴⁵

Labânu occurs in *Ludlul* II 61. In its technical and better attested meaning “neck tendon, muscle,” *labânu* is predominantly used to refer to the human body. Its attestations in this sense are almost exclusively in learned materials, especially in therapeutic texts, physiognomic omens, and Sa-gig, and thus it would have been a term well-known to exorcists. For example, it appears in a list of symptoms in a couple of anti-witchcraft rituals: *labân[šu] ūtanakkalšu*, “[his] neck tendon keeps irritating him.”⁴⁶ And, a physiognomic omen in the subseries *Šumma kittabru* reads: *šumma kittabru ina labâni amēli šakin libbašu iṭâb*, “If a *kittabru* (mole or growth?) is located on the neck tendon of a man, his heart will be content.”⁴⁷ The word’s more general sense of “neck” occurs less frequently: in a couple of rituals, a royal inscription from Tiglath-Pileser I’s reign, and a handful of letters (see CAD L, 12). In any case, *labânu* intersects clearly with the exorcist’s professional vocabulary.

Lu’u, “gullet, throat,” in *Ludlul* III 98 is a rather rarely attested word.⁴⁸ Aside from *Ludlul* and just a couple of lexical lists, there are only a few post-OB attestations, including its presence in a couple of physiognomic omens (*Alamdimmû* VI §2: 45 and the subseries *Šumma tirku* §2: 32)⁴⁹ and the famous incantation against toothache (BAM 538 ii 54’).⁵⁰ Although poorly attested, the present evidence indicates the term was part of the exorcist’s professional vocabulary.

Pitru, when used as a term for a human body part, may mean “stomach (lining)” (so *CDA*, 276 and *AHw*, 870).⁵¹ It is infrequently attested in this sense⁵² and occurs only in post-OB scholarly contexts, namely, incantations (e.g., *Muššu’u* I 12),⁵³ the diagnostic text STT 89 (obv. ii 40),⁵⁴ a physiognomic

/e/babmed/Corpora/BAM/BAM-1_-001 for the transliteration of BAM 1 at BabMed; Attia and Buisson (2012, 27) also provide an introduction and edition with notes.

⁴⁵ When used of animal lungs, the term occurs frequently in extispicy texts, as expected (see CAD H, 144 and *AHw*, 335).

⁴⁶ See Abusch / Schwemer 2011, 319, line 3 and 337, line 7.

⁴⁷ Böck 2000, 213, line 8 with p. 327 in the index of body parts.

⁴⁸ CAD L, 258 uses less than a dozen attestations of the word in all periods in its entry.

⁴⁹ See Böck 2000, 102 and 206, respectively.

⁵⁰ For the transliteration at BabMed, see https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/BAM-6/BAM-6_-538/index.html.

⁵¹ CAD books the anatomical sense of the word under *piṭru* (CAD P, 449–50), a term that is most commonly, though not exclusively used for a feature of the liver. Oshima, citing a personal communication from Leonid Kogan, suggests *pitru* may be cognate to Hebrew פֶּדֶר (2014, 257).

⁵² CAD P, 450 lists about a dozen attestations, but others have come to light.

⁵³ See Böck 2007, 96.

⁵⁴ See Abusch / Schwemer 2011, 437, line 99.

omen in an excerpt tablet (K.105+, obv. 1),⁵⁵ and some therapeutic texts, for example, BAM 87, rev. 3, 8 (in a context of treating a liver malady attributed to *qāt māmiṭi*) and BAM 174, obv. 14' (in a context of treating a problem with the lungs).⁵⁶ In an incantation that is part of an anti-witchcraft ritual the supplicant laments, *šer'ānīya iksū pitrīya utabbikū*, “(a witch and warlock) have bound my sinews and ‘poured out’ my stomach” (KAR 80, rev. 27 with duplicates).⁵⁷ The term also appears in several other anti-witchcraft contexts as part of the diagnostic list of symptoms.⁵⁸ On present evidence, the anatomical sense of *pītru* appears to be especially prominent in the exorcism corpus.

The extremely common word *qātu*, “hand,” occurs a dozen times in *Ludlul*. Although the word is attested all across the spectrum of Akkadian texts, its use in *Ludlul* III 1 is worthy of comment. The line reads *kabtat qāssu ale' i našāša*, “his hand was so heavy I could not bear it.” As Nils Heeßel states, “[i]t is instantly recognisable to anyone familiar with Mesopotamian medical texts that the words of the righteous sufferer [in *Ludlul* III 1] allude to the phrase ‘*qāt(ŠU) DN*—hand of the god(s)’, which occurs sometimes in therapeutic texts and is ubiquitous in diagnostic texts.”⁵⁹ The phrase *qāt DN*, as he argues, signifies a kind of technical term to indicate the divine agent responsible for a person’s physical ailments rather than a particular disease.⁶⁰ If this proposed allusion in *Ludlul* III 1 is accepted, then we have a very important connection to the technical vocabulary of *āšipūtu*.

Rēš libbi, “epigastrium,” in *Ludlul* II 64 is typically used of the human body and found extensively in learned contexts, especially in the diagnostic Sa-gig (e.g., XIII 1–41)⁶¹ and therapeutic texts (e.g., AMT 49/4, obv. 1, a part of Tablet III in the Ugu subseries *Šumma amēlu appašu kabit*, and AMT 48/2, obv. ii 1, an anti-witchcraft text).⁶² It also appears in the exorcist’s major anti-

⁵⁵ See Böck 2000, 288.

⁵⁶ For BAM 87 and 174, see the transliterations at BabMed, https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/BAM/BAM-1_-087/index.html and https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/BAM-2/BAM-2_-174/index.html, respectively. See Scurlock 2014, 483 (iv 7–11) for a translation of the relevant section in the latter.

⁵⁷ Abusch / Schwemer 2011, 299, line 70.

⁵⁸ See, e.g., Abusch / Schwemer 2011, 215, line 41”; 257, line 4; Abusch / Schwemer 2016, 250, line 2; Abusch, Schwemer, Luukko, and van Buylaere 2020, 28, line 3. STT 89, cited above, is also related to witchcraft.

⁵⁹ 2007, 120. The line also clearly echoes the general statement about Marduk’s hand in *Ludlul* I 33 in the opening hymn.

⁶⁰ See Heeßel 2000, 49–54 and 2007.

⁶¹ See Schmidtchen 2021, 516–19. For other attestations, see CAD R, 284 and Heeßel 2000, 420, s.v. *rēš libbi*.

⁶² See <https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/AMT/AMTX49-4/index.html> for a transliteration of the former and Abusch / Schwemer 2011, 231 for the latter.

witchcraft ceremony, *Maqlû* (IX [Ritual Tablet] 166').⁶³ Given these data, *rēš libbi* clearly connects to the anatomical vocabulary of the exorcists.

Riksu is a very common term with several different meanings (see CAD R, 347–55). But, as a human body part (CAD R, 349), as in *Ludlul* II 104, it occurs in just a couple of other non-lexical texts, both post-OB: a diagnostic entry (Sa-gig XIII 112') and its commentary, which equates the term with *še'rānu*, “tendon.”⁶⁴ Although sparsely attested, *riksu* in its anatomical sense occurs, as far as I can determine, only in *Ludlul* and the exorcism corpus, providing a distinctive lexical intersection.

Ruḅṣu has several meanings: bedding place, lair, or shelter; dung; womb; and a cut of meat (see CAD R, 395). Rather rarely is the term used to mean “dung,” as in *Ludlul* II 106, a semantic value supported by its parallel in II 107, *tabāštānu* (see below). The only other post-OB attestations of the term in this sense occur in a few therapeutic texts, where the term signifies *materia medica* (e.g., AMT 98/3: 17', *eper ruḅṣ kalbi eper ruḅṣ šaḥī*, “dried, ground [lit. dust of] dog feces, dried, ground pig feces”), which may indicate a connection to exorcism.⁶⁵ Incidentally, *Ludlul* II 106 is, as far as I can determine, the only instance in which the term refers to human rather than animal feces, thus perhaps reinforcing via word choice the protagonist's dehumanization in that context (see chapter five, note 43).

Šammāḫu, “large intestine, paunch,” a Sumerian loanword, is very rarely attested (see CAD Š/1, 314). Aside from its appearance in *Ludlul* III 104 and two lexical lists, *šammāḫu* is attested only a couple of other times—all post-OB: in two related physiognomic omens (*Alamdimmû* X 45–46)⁶⁶ and *Muššu'u* (I 23),⁶⁷ placing it squarely within the anatomical vocabulary of the exorcist.

Šer'ānu in *Ludlul* II 94 is very well-attested (see CAD Š/2, 308–13).⁶⁸ When used to refer to some part of the human body, the term rarely shows up

⁶³ Abusch 2016, 224, 378.

⁶⁴ See Schmidtchen 2021, 525 for Sa-gig and Jiménez 2015a (<http://ccp.yale.edu/P294665>) for the commentary, obv. 7. (See also note 30 above.) The commentary 11N-T3, cited in CAD R, 349, equates *abunnatu*, “umbilical cord,” with the phrase *riksi ša amēli šī*, “it is the bond of a man” (see Civil 1974, 332, line 13 and Jiménez 2014 [<https://ccp.yale.edu/P459066>]). I think this attestation might be better placed elsewhere in the word's lexicographical entry rather than under the meaning “joint, ligament, sinew.” Frahm cites this example as an entry in a commentary that “explain[s] a term by specifying a set of properties characterizing it” (2011, 65). For a brief discussion of *riksu* in her treatment of the OB lexical list Ugu-mu, see Couto-Ferreira 2009, 341.

⁶⁵ See the transliteration at BabMed, <https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/AMT-2/AMT98-3>. An incantation is likely prescribed in line 19'. For the proper reading of the line cited from the *Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta I* in CAD B, 44, see Machinist 1978, 112, line 46'.

⁶⁶ See Böck 2000, 120 for an edition.

⁶⁷ See Böck 2007, 98 for an edition.

⁶⁸ See Couto-Ferreira 2009, 331–35 for its varied meanings in Akkadian texts.

outside of scholarly texts in the post-OB periods. It occurs, for example, very frequently in Sa-gig⁶⁹ and regularly in a wide variety of other learned texts, including many therapeutic texts, incantations (see KAR 80, rev. 27, cited above), ritual texts, and commentaries, a few examples of which would hardly do justice to its widespread usage. I find few attestations of the word in this sense in non-technical materials. Note the *Epic of Gilgameš* X 256, where Gilgameš uses the word to refer to his own body: *šer'ānīya nissata umtalli*, “I have filled my sinews with grief”;⁷⁰ one of Sargon II's royal inscriptions, where, in a context of royal provision for human well-being, oil is described as *bālī amēlūti mupašših šer'ānī*, “a defining feature⁷¹ of humankind that soothes the sinews”; and LKA 62, a text that celebrates Tiglath-Pileser I's military prowess, where human enemies are likened to weak, confused animals, whose “tendons are like chaff”⁷² (*ma-a-<la> piš-<i> šir'ānšunu*).⁷² In any case, when used of human physiology, *šer'ānu* is predominantly found in the learned texts of the scholars, many of which fall within the sphere of exorcism.⁷³

Šukultu occurs in extant sources infrequently, attested only about a dozen times and all in SB texts. When used of the human body, “(complete, shapely) form,” as in *Ludlul* IV §A 7', rather than a non-human object, the term occurs only a few times and always in exorcist-related contexts, providing another distinctive lexical intersection. Note, for example, its use in the *šuilu* prayer Marduk 5: *šukulti pagrīya la'bū-ma litbušāku kīma* [...], “They (i.e., an illness, an oath, and a curse) have afflicted the shapely form of my body so that I

⁶⁹ See the glossary in Heeβel 2000, 424 for nearly thirty attestations in Tablets XV to XXXIII and the glossary in Schmidtchen 2021, 664 for almost sixty attestations in Tablets III, IV (about 50 times), V, and XIII.

⁷⁰ George 2003, 1.692. Uta-napišti repeats the line back to Gilgameš in X 299 (696).

⁷¹ A more typical translation of *bāštu* with “pride,” “dignity,” or “privilege” does not quite seem appropriate in context (compare Frame 2021, 228 and CAD B, 143). My translation assumes oil is being described here as a fundamental and defining staple of human civilization. See, e.g., Liverani's structuralist exposition of the offering of food and drink, clothing and oil in *Adapa* for this idea (2004, 3–23).

⁷² See Hurowitz and Westenholz 1990, 46–49 and more recently Pongratz-Leisten 2015, 252–54, 468–75 (citing previous literature), whose reading I am following.

⁷³ Of course, *še'rānu* can also refer to animal physiology in extispicy and to the sinew of an animal used to manufacture various objects (see CAD Š/2, 312). Even in its non-human use, the term is found (in post-OB periods) in but a few non-learned contexts, all of which are literary: a half dozen times in *Anzu* II, referring to a sheep's tendon as a bow string (see Annus 2001, 48, s.v. *šer'ānu* for references), and once in the dispute between Ox and Horse, in the context of manufacturing weaponry (Lambert 1960, 178, rev. 12). Otherwise, the “non-human sinew” attestations are mostly in learned texts (e.g., comparing a man's penis to a lyre string in a *šaziga*, see Zisa 2021, 233, line 36; previously, Biggs 1967, 35, line 15); and the use of an animal's sinew in therapeutic necklaces, as in BAM 237 i 47'–48', which treats a woman who is suffering from a hemorrhage of some sort [see Schuster-Brandt 2008, 140].

am clothed *with them* as [...].⁷⁴ The word also appears a few times in Sa-gig in the phrase *qaqqassu ana/adi šuklultišu*, “(from) his head to the rest of him,”⁷⁵ and in a broken list of symptoms in AMT 48/4, obv. 6’, which is part of Tablet II in the Ugu subseries *Šumma amēlu appašu kabit*.⁷⁶ The *Ludlul* Commentary explains the poorly attested term with the much better attested *lānu* (MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 26).

Tabāštānu in *Ludlul* II 107 is the only monolingual Akkadian text to attest this word. In addition to a small number of lexical texts (see chapter seven, note 19), it is also found in some bilinguals, for example, a *balaḡ* (K.5150+) and a fragmentary *eršaḡuḡa* (IVR 22, no. 2: 19’), both within the *kalû*’s bailiwick. The relevant line in the latter text, cited in chapter seven, page 290, resonates strongly with *Ludlul* II 106–107.⁷⁷ Although there is little to go on, I think the present evidence suggests the term was not widely used. Note, for example, that the first-millennium scribes felt the need to define it in commentaries: The *Ludlul* Commentary (MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 3) and another late commentary (LBAT 1577) explain the term as *zû šīnātu*, “feces and urine.”⁷⁸ The same explanation occurs in *Malku* III 137 (Hrůša 2010, 84). It seems to me that *tabāštānu* and *amīru*, “ear wax,” were both terms for bodily discharges that people typically referred to (as the Commentary shows) via other terms. But, we have little to go on in terms of finding a strong connection to the anatomical vocabulary in the textual materials closely associated with exorcism.

In SB contexts, *umāšu*, when used of the human body or its strength rather than as a tool (see CAD U/W, 97–98),⁷⁹ occurs only in scholarly texts.⁸⁰ Leaving the lexical materials aside, the term is used as part of a divine epithet (*bēl umāši*) in several texts, as in an incantation prayer to Enmešara, embedded in a *namburbi* (K.48+, rev. 6); in the long SB *Gula Hymn of Bulluṣa-rabi*; and in the *Marduk Ordeal* (SAA 3, nos. 34: 12 and 35: 43).⁸¹ The term refers to

⁷⁴ See Abusch / Schwemer 2016, 235, line 53 and my treatment of BMS 12+ at <http://shuilas.org/P393775.html>.

⁷⁵ See, e.g., Sa-gig III 37–38, 81; see Schmidtchen 2021, 249–50, 254.

⁷⁶ See <https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/AMT/AMTX48-4/index.html>.

⁷⁷ Maul 1988, 332.

⁷⁸ For the commentary, see CAD T, 24; an edition will eventually appear on the Yale Cuneiform Commentaries project at <https://ccp.yale.edu/P364325>.

⁷⁹ Even when the term refers to a tool, there are about a half dozen OB references in mundane contexts but the remaining attestations occur in SB materials related to exorcism (see CAD U/W, 98).

⁸⁰ See Oshima 2014, 304 and De Zorzi 2014, 2.825 for brief lexicographical discussions in light of lexical texts and commentaries.

⁸¹ See Ambos 2004, 120, line 47; Lambert 1967, 122, line 94; and Livingstone 1989, 82, 89, respectively. (A new edition of the *Gula* hymn is in preparation at the Electronic Babylonian Literature project by Zsombor Földi.) See also the same divine epithet for Ninurta in both *Angim* and

human strength in a couple of bilingual texts, including a hymn to Ninurta, *eḫlūtu bēl emūqi ina umāši u abāri intaḥḥaṣ[ūnikkum]*,⁸² “the young men, endowed with force, fight each other [for you] with strength and might,” and Astrolabe B §A ii 14–15, where it is also paired with *abāru* to describe the physical activities of young men.⁸³ In addition to the *Ludlul* Commentary’s explanation of the word (MS COM_{Nin}, rev. 20, equating the term with *šalmu*), an *Izbu* commentary also explains the term, providing *lānu*, *rittu*, and *emūqu* as equivalents.⁸⁴ Although the term appears in a royal inscription of Nabonidus,⁸⁵ *umāšu* is predominantly a word found in learned materials, some of which fall within the sphere of exorcism.

Unāti libbi, “guts, internal organs,” in *Ludlul* I 113 (and without *libbi* in II 65), is poorly attested, with less than ten attestations in the word’s entry in the CAD (U/W, 178). All but one of these (a *kudurru*, which is listed as “difficult”)⁸⁶ occur in scholarly contexts and most of them refer to animal (rather than human) organs, as in *Šumma izbu* XVII 15’;⁸⁷ in ND 1120, rev. 14’, a descriptive ritual mentioning a *kalû*, who carries [a carcass?] away, and a cook, who eats the internal organs of an animal;⁸⁸ and in BAM 497 ii’ 18’, a prescription against *ašû* (with duplicate).⁸⁹ The term occurs in a couple of fragmentary dream omens in *Zaqīqu*, where a human’s guts are at issue, as is the case in *Ludlul* I 113 and II 65.⁹⁰ Although rarely used of a human, the term was certainly a part of the exorcist’s professional vocabulary.

Lugal-e, cited in the lexical section of CAD U/W, 97.

⁸² See Lambert 1960, 120, line 7 with CAD U/W, 97 for the restoration.

⁸³ See Kolev 2013, 159. Another pairing of *umāšu* and *abāru* occurs in the cultic explanatory text TIM 9 60 iii 25’ (the text is described briefly with a transliteration of parts of column iii in van Dijk 1976, s.v. no. 60 in the summary catalogue on the fourth unnumbered page), but it seems likely, given the context, that the words are describing deities.

⁸⁴ See De Zorzi 2014, 2.825; new editions of both witnesses (VAT 9718 and BM 38588) will appear at the Yale Cuneiform Commentaries project, <https://ccp.yale.edu/P461322> and <https://ccp.yale.edu/P461133>, respectively.

⁸⁵ See Schaudig 2001, 364 at i 15 and Weiershäuser / Novotny 2020, no. 19, i 15 [p. 108].

⁸⁶ The text is the famous Šamaš Tablet from Sippar (BBSt 36), which in its recounting of a royal grant to Nabû-nadin-šumi, *šangu*-priest of Sippar and diviner, also mentions several matters related to a cult image. See Woods 2004; Slanski 2003, 196–221; Paulus 2014, 650–59 (with many references to previous literature); and <https://cdli.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/artifacts/472680>.

⁸⁷ De Zorzi 2014, 2.750. The term also occurs in an *Izbu* commentary as an equivalent of *ta-kaltu*, “stomach,” and *gabīdu*, “liver” (see De Zorzi 2014, 2.501 and eventually <https://ccp.yale.edu/P461275>).

⁸⁸ See van Driel 1969, 202.

⁸⁹ See the transliteration at BabMed, https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/BAM-5/BAM-5_-497/index.html.

⁹⁰ Oppenheim 1956, 318, lines y + 17, 18 (Sm. 2073+: 17–18).

Ur'udu, “throat, trachea,” in *Ludlul* II 87 and III 96 is a rather well-attested word (see CAD U/W, 268–69), most frequently used with reference to animals in extispicy texts from the OB period on.⁹¹ When used to refer to a human throat, the small number of post-OB attestations (aside from the two in *Ludlul*) occur in a diagnosis (*šumma amēlu ur'ussu nuppuḥ*, “if a man’s throat is swollen,” UET 4 178, obv. 1) and several physiognomic omens and entries in Sa-gig (e.g., *Šumma kittabru* 41–43 and Sa-gig X 26–27, 33, respectively).⁹² *Ur'udu* also appears in two commentaries, in BRM 4 32, obv. 4 to explain *napšāršu*, “his uvula,”⁹³ and in BAM 401, obv. 5 to specify the anatomical sense of *napšatu*.⁹⁴ Although better attested in extispicy texts, we have clear evidence of the term’s currency in materials related to exorcism.

Usukku, “cheek,” found in the dual in *Ludlul* I 110 (*usukkāya*, “my cheeks”), sometimes designates the side of an object, but its better attested use is anatomical, to designate the sides of a human face (see CAD U/W, 283–85).⁹⁵ The CAD lists several attestations of the term in “literature,” but all of these in the post-OB periods⁹⁶ occur in materials closely associated with exorcists and *kalûs*: incantations (e.g., *Muššu'u* V 58),⁹⁷ an incantation prayer (LKA 142: 25 || *lētu*),⁹⁸ an *eršaḥuḡa* (K.4623, obv. 10'),⁹⁹ and a hymn to Nergal (AO 17642: 9, 11 || *lētu*).¹⁰⁰ In several of these texts, the cheeks are described in association with tears, as in *Ludlul*.¹⁰¹ Most of the other attestations of *usukku* occur in SB texts, predominantly Sa-gig and physiognomic omens.¹⁰²

⁹¹ The word can also take on a technical, non-anatomical sense in extispicy, designating a part of various organs, and in celestial divination as a pathway in the sky (see CAD U/W, 269).

⁹² See Böck 2000, 217–18 and Schmidtchen 2021, 436, respectively.

⁹³ See the edition in Frazer 2017 (<https://ccp.yale.edu/P296515>).

⁹⁴ See the BabMed transliteration at https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/BAM-4/BAM-4_401/index.html and eventually the Yale Cuneiform Commentaries project edition at <https://ccp.yale.edu/P285472>.

⁹⁵ See Couto-Ferreira 2009, 206–7.

⁹⁶ One OB attestation occurs in *The Scholars of Uruk*, line 5, a bilingual text in which a father berates his errant son, a scribe in training. Although its purpose is still debated, this text evinces a highly learned scribal virtuosity; see George 2009, 78–112. George considers two options for interpreting the text’s highly artificial and learned content: It may be a genuine example of scribal virtuosity, “in which a master teacher shows off to his pupils the fullness of his scholarship and, in particular, his mastery of the bilingual lexical and grammatical texts,” or it was intended to lampoon and satirize such learning (112).

⁹⁷ Böck 2007, 195.

⁹⁸ See Mayer 1976, 80 for a translation of the relevant lines and p. 426 for the text’s genre among incantation prayers.

⁹⁹ See Maul 1988, 296, line 15.

¹⁰⁰ See Ebeling 1953a, 118 and Nougayrol 1947, 39.

¹⁰¹ Likewise, Couto-Ferreira 2009, 207.

¹⁰² See Heeßel 2000, 426; Schmidtchen 2021, 667; and Böck 2000, 329 for references.

Of the sixty-six terms in *Ludlul* that I identified as anatomically-related, the textual attestations and distribution of sixteen of them¹⁰³ provide distinctive evidence for a connection to the professional vocabulary of the exorcists. That is almost one out of every four terms.

6.4.2. *The Pathological Terms*

Utukku in *Ludlul* I 25, II 54, and III 72 is a very well-attested word designating a demon (CAD U/W, 339–42). In the post-OB periods, most of the attestations of *utukku* occur in learned texts, especially in lists of demons in the incantations in Udug-ḫul¹⁰⁴ but also making appearances in, for example, *Maqlû* V 60, *Šurpu* III 85, IV 45, and several times in *Muššu'u* (IV 77, V 41, VII 33, 61).¹⁰⁵ The term has only a few attestations outside such exorcist-related material, for example, in the *Epic of Gilgameš* XII (lines 83 and 87)—which is not surprising, given its netherworld content—and as a part of the last curse in the standard curse section of the *Succession Treaty of Esarhaddon* (SAA 2 6: 493).¹⁰⁶ Given these data, *utukkū* in *Ludlul* provides a clear lexical connection to exorcism.

Ra'ibu, “tremors” in *Ludlul* I 25 and II 63: In the post-OB periods, the term occurs only in learned texts, such as *Maqlû* VIII 43' (where it is associated with *bennu*, “(something like) epilepsy,” and *tēšû*, “confusion”),¹⁰⁷ *Šammu šikinšu* (STT 93, rev. 106', *qāt ra'ibu*),¹⁰⁸ Sa-gig (XVI 26 and XXXI 43'),¹⁰⁹ and the astral magico-medical text BRM 4 20: 26 (with commentary in line 58; see the related BRM 4 19: 26),¹¹⁰ among a few others. *Ra'ibu* thus seems to be a learned term that is very much associated with the sphere of the exorcist.

Šuruppû, “chills,” in *Ludlul* I 26, II 56, III 74 is sometimes used of the weather (i.e., “cold weather”) but also to describe an illness or symptom of an illness (see CAD Š/3, 372). Aside from lexical lists and a few instances in *Atra(m)-ḫasīs* (SB and OB),¹¹¹ the pathological meaning of the word appears in mostly learned materials in the post-OB periods, such as incantations (e.g.,

¹⁰³ Specifically, *ammatu*, *bābu*, *ḫašû*, *labānu*, *lu'u*, *pitru*, *qātu*, *rēš libbi*, *riksū*, *šammāḫu*, *šer'ānu*, *šuklultu*, *umāšu*, *unāti libbi*, *ur'udu*, and *usukku*.

¹⁰⁴ See Geller 2016.

¹⁰⁵ See Abusch 2016, 140; Reiner 1958, 21, 26; and Böck 2007, 163, 193, 249, 254.

¹⁰⁶ See George 2003, 1.732 and Parpola / Watanabee 1988, 49, respectively.

¹⁰⁷ See Abusch 2016, 197.

¹⁰⁸ Stadhouders 2011, 13; translation in Stadhouders 2012, 7.

¹⁰⁹ HeeBel 2000, 175, 344.

¹¹⁰ See Geller 2014, 29, 32, 40.

¹¹¹ Lambert / Millard 1969, 106, 108, rev. iv 9, 12, 13, 16, 28 in the Assyrian version; see I 360 in the OB version (66).

Maqlû VII 37 and the bilinguals CT 17 20: 57, in the series Saġ-gig-ga-meš, and STT 192 (+) 195, obv. 14),¹¹² Sa-gig (XVII 14),¹¹³ and other therapy-related texts. Among the latter, note, for example, its appearance alongside *bennu* in BAM 183: 32, BAM 377 iii 7, and STT 273+ iii 6', which list various stones for healing.¹¹⁴ The term also occurs in a list of demonically-delivered maladies, *di'u šuruppû mungu lu'tu li'bu ahhazu*, in Udug-ḫul (II 69).¹¹⁵ The term is clearly well-known in the exorcists' textual materials.

Ḫurbāšu may refer to physical chills, shivers of fear, or a literal frost caused by the weather (see CAD H, 248–49 and *AHW*, 358). The term appears in *Ludlul* I 26 as a physical symptom alongside *šuruppû*.¹¹⁶ The word's other attestations in the same sense are mostly learned texts associated with extispicy and especially exorcism, including Sa-gig (e.g., III 79, XVI 65', XVII 77),¹¹⁷ the diagnostic text STT 89 (obv. ii 41),¹¹⁸ incantation prayers (e.g., KAR 23 + 25, rev. i 3'),¹¹⁹ and several therapeutic texts (e.g., BAM 445, obv. 14, part of a prescription against *ḫūš ḫīp libbi*, “depression” due to witchcraft).¹²⁰ It also appears in a cylinder seal inscription, which states *Gula muballiḫat ḫurbāši*, “Gula who heals *one* from the chills.”¹²¹ When *ḫurbāšu* refers to shivers of fear or literal frost, the term may be found in similar texts (e.g., *Maqlû* VIII 44' and Udug-ḫul V 1, following *šuruppû*)¹²² but also in a couple of poetic literary texts

¹¹² See Abusch 2016, 172 for *Maqlû* and Schramm 2008, 96, line 26 for STT 192 (+) 195. John Wee is editing Saġ-gig-ga-meš, which does not yet exist in a modern version. In the bilingual texts, *di'u* precedes *šuruppû*. In *Maqlû* VII it is the incantation of Ea that the exorcist uses to expel *šuruppû*, among other maladies; Marduk also uses an incantation—his own—to do the same in *Ludlul* I 26.

¹¹³ See Heeßel 2000, 196.

¹¹⁴ See Schuster-Brandis 2008, 131. For the BabMed transliteration of BAM 183, see https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/BAM-2/BAM-2_-183/index.html; for the transliteration of BAM 377, see https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/BAM-4/BAM-4_-377/index.html. The word also appears in lists of stones in BAM 344: 6 (see https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/BAM-4/BAM-4_-344/index.html) and CT 51 89 ii 18' (for which, see the edition in Schuster-Brandis 2008, 335).

¹¹⁵ Geller 2016, 84. The list occurs several times in the text but is only attested once in an Akkadian translation. Several of these terms occur in *Ludlul* as well. See below.

¹¹⁶ The two terms appear together elsewhere; note, e.g., Lambert 2007, 36, line 247 (no. 1) and 70, line 14 (no. 5), both in a *tamītu*. Incidentally, both *tamītu*'s were owned or copied by scholars. The first by a certain Banuna, an exorcist, from Nimrud (Lambert 2007, 41, line 349); the second by the famous scholar Nabû-zuqap-kēna (73, line 50; see Baker and Pearce 2001).

¹¹⁷ See Schmidtchen 2021, 254 and Heeßel 2000, 178, 202, respectively.

¹¹⁸ See Abusch / Schwemer 2011, 437, line 100

¹¹⁹ This is the only extant witness of this line to the Akkadian *šuilā* Sîn 9 in Mayer's numbering (1976, 409); see my treatment at <http://shuilas.org/P369009.html>.

¹²⁰ See Abusch / Schwemer 2011, 154, line 51.

¹²¹ See CAD H, 249.

¹²² See Abusch 2016, 197 and Geller 2016, 175, respectively.

(e.g., the *Cuthean Legend of Narām-Sîn*, line 95, in the context of a litany of misfortunes)¹²³ and royal inscriptions (e.g., in descriptions of Sennacherib in battle).¹²⁴ The *Ludlul* Commentary (MS Com_{Nin}, obv. 4') and the late commentary SpBTU 2 39, obv. 1 both explain *ħurbāšu* with the more common synonym *kuššu*.¹²⁵ Although not exclusively learned, the term is most often found in scholarly texts and very clearly had a place in the professional vocabulary of the exorcist.

Piritu (in I 49, 74, and 112) is treated below, after *adirtu* (in I 111).

Ĥašikkiš, “like a deaf-mute,” occurs only in *Ludlul* I 71 and III 84. The word without the adverbial ending also occurs in the *Ludlul* Commentary (MS Com_{Nin}, obv. 13') and *Malku* IV 12,¹²⁶ where it is equated in both texts with the more common term for an absence of aural capability, *sukkuku* (see CAD S, 362–63). The term's rarity may provide confirming evidence of the poem's high linguistic register; but, without other attestations of the term we cannot determine its distribution among the various learned texts of the scholars.

Qitayyulu in *Ludlul* I 106 designates apparently an emotional or psychological state, translated variously as “daze(?)” (so CAD Q, 281, s.v. *qitajulu*) and “anxious silence” (so *CDA*, 283 and *AHw*, 895, booked under the Gtn stem of *qālu*). Perhaps we should understand the term to indicate a constant state of silence due to despair or grief.¹²⁷ Its few known attestations beyond *Ludlul* all fall within materials associated with exorcism. It appears among a list of other symptoms in *Ištar and Dumuzi* IA 9,¹²⁸ in several hemerology apodoses in *Iqqur ĩpuš*,¹²⁹ and in an *Izbu* commentary, where it is explained with the more common term *bikītu*, “weeping.”¹³⁰ The *Ludlul* Commentary equates the term with the much more common (and etymologically related) *qūlu*, “stupor” (MS Com_{Nin}, obv. 23').

Aside from one other literary attestation in the *Series of the Fox* II iv 16),¹³¹ the term *adirtu* in *Ludlul* I 111 occurs almost exclusively within learned texts associated with the haruspex and the exorcist: prayers (e.g., the *Great Prayer*

¹²³ Westenholz 1997, 318, 351.

¹²⁴ See, e.g., Grayson / Novotny 2012, no. 15 iv 21' (p. 97), no. 16 iv 45 (p. 116), no. 17 iii 89 (p. 134), etc. See also in a few contexts the comparison of the fear that Sennacherib instills to the *alū* demon (references below, note 187).

¹²⁵ For an edition of SpBTU 2 39, see Jiménez 2015 (<https://ccp.yale.edu/P348644>).

¹²⁶ Hürša 2010, 92.

¹²⁷ See similarly Oshima 2014, 217.

¹²⁸ Farber 1977, 56.

¹²⁹ See §37: 8 and §38: 8 in series A (Labat 1965, 102) and VIII §I: 19–20 and §II: 15–16 (Labat 1965, 220, 222).

¹³⁰ De Zorzi 2014, 2.440, line 32.

¹³¹ Kienst 2003, 44.

to *Marduk*, no. 2, line 90),¹³² incantations (e.g., *Maqlû* V 71–72),¹³³ incantation prayers (e.g., BMS 30, obv. 13'),¹³⁴ and texts related to extispicy. Note, for example, the lament in the opening of a *dingiršadabba*: *anāku akū adirtū ma'dat*, “I am powerless! My fear is *too* great!”¹³⁵ and the demonic-sounding mythology of fear’s birth, as described in a prayer to Šin: [*kīm*]a *šammi eršetu adirtu uldu*, “the earth gave birth to my fear like a plant.”¹³⁶

Pirittu occurs in *Ludlul* I 49 as a negative descriptor of the protagonist’s signs, *idāt piritti*, as well as in *Ludlul* I 74 and I 112, where it describes the protagonist himself (as does *adirtu* in I 111). Although the term appears in a couple of SB literary contexts (e.g., *Gilgameš* VII 72 to describe a disturbing dream),¹³⁷ in the post-OB periods *pirittu* overwhelmingly appears in scholarly contexts, such as laments (e.g., K.1296, obv. 19', an *eršaḥuḡa*),¹³⁸ prayers (e.g., the *Great Prayer to Marduk*, no. 1, line 127),¹³⁹ incantations (e.g., *Maqlû* V 71–72, see above), incantation prayers (e.g., KAR 234: 21, a prayer to Šamaš in a ritual against the appearance of a ghost),¹⁴⁰ omens (e.g., in *Zaqīqu*),¹⁴¹ and the NA queries to Šamaš (nearly two dozen times in SAA 4).¹⁴² *Pirittu* is frequently paired with *ḥattu* (as in *Ludlul* I 112), but the latter term seems to have had a broader distribution, appearing, aside from learned contexts, also in a variety of NA royal inscriptions (see CAD H, 150–51, *AHw*, 336, 1560, s.v. *ḥātu(m)*). The other term that occurs frequently with *pirittu* is *gilittu*, “fright, terror” (see CAD G, 71–72, *AHw*, 288, 1556; CAD P, 402–3; and the NA queries to Šamaš in SAA 4). *Ludlul* eschews this term in I 113 and uses instead the cognate and rather sparsely attested Gtn infinitive *gitallutu*. According to the attestations booked in *AHw* (274), all but one of the finite forms of the Gtn stem occur in scholarly texts, all omens of one kind or another.¹⁴³ The infini-

¹³² Oshima 2011, 230.

¹³³ Abusch 2016, 141.

¹³⁴ See Zgoll 2003, 185, line 18' and my treatment at <http://shuilas.org/P395021.html>.

¹³⁵ See Jaques 2015, 74, line 56.

¹³⁶ See Jaques 2015, 233 (VAT 13630 ii 4'); the disposal of the supplicant’s fear is described in lines 5'–7'. For a discussion of the variants in this line among the related tablets of this prayer to Šin, which is labeled a *dingiršadabba* in some texts and a *šūila* in others, and the demonic nature of the description, see Jaques 2015, 239 (and note the synopsis of sources on pp. 346–47).

¹³⁷ George 2003, 1.636.

¹³⁸ Maul 1988, 113, line 17.

¹³⁹ Oshima 2011, 151.

¹⁴⁰ See Scurlock 2006, 208.

¹⁴¹ See Oppenheim 1956, 318, x+10 and 319, x+20–21.

¹⁴² Starr 1990, 345, s.v. *pirittu* for references.

¹⁴³ The exception is an Aššurbanipal royal inscription (Aššurbanipal 186: 28; see provisional-ly <http://oracc.org/rinap/Q007594/>).

tive, as in *Ludlul*, occurs in an *eršaḫūga*.¹⁴⁴ Given these data, *pirittu* and *gitallutu* are both connected to the professional vocabulary of the exorcists.

The vast majority of the attestations of *kimiltu*, which appears in *Ludlul* II 9, occurs in learned texts related to healing, exorcism, and divination. Note, for example, the many instances of the term in diagnosis sections of STT 95+295¹⁴⁵ and a similar use in STT 280 (and duplicates) in a context that contains a number of *šaziga* incantations (see ii 2 and 26).¹⁴⁶ The term also appears in anti-witchcraft texts, where divine wrath is closely associated with witchcraft,¹⁴⁷ and apodoses of *Šumma ālu* omens (see XXII 47, LIV 12', and LV 60'),¹⁴⁸ among other texts.¹⁴⁹ According to *Šurpu* VII 18,¹⁵⁰ demons are attracted to divine wrath in order to wreak havoc upon the one affected, *ašar kimilti ili šunu iḫiššū-ma qūla inam[dū]*, “they (the demons) hurry to the place of divine wrath and ca[st] a stupor.” Despite its use in many learned contexts, *kimiltu* also appears in a couple of royal inscriptions¹⁵¹ and *Babylonian Theodicy* 51.¹⁵² Though the word does not appear exclusively in learned contexts, dealing with *kimiltu* was very clearly a major concern of the scholars, especially the exorcists.

Although *di'u*,¹⁵³ “ague,” in *Ludlul* II 52 and III 70 is not rare, its attestation in literary texts (e.g., SB *Atra-ḫasīs*)¹⁵⁴ and royal inscriptions is.¹⁵⁵ The word is found predominantly in learned texts—ritual, divinatory, and therapeutic. Note especially its use in the Akkadian translations of the bilingual incantations against headache in CT 17,¹⁵⁶ its presence among other maladies in *Šurpu* IV 84, 95,¹⁵⁷ its many instances in Sa-gig,¹⁵⁸ the references to it in scholarly letters

¹⁴⁴ See Maul 1988, 332, line 7' (cited in chapter seven).

¹⁴⁵ See Scurlock 2014, 650–53 with duplicates noted on pp. 735–36.

¹⁴⁶ See Zisa 2021, 391, line 58 and 393, line 70; previously Biggs 1967, 8, 67.

¹⁴⁷ See, e.g., Abusch / Schwemer 2016, 250, line 13 and 382, line 36.

¹⁴⁸ Freedman 2006, 14; 2017, 96, 101.

¹⁴⁹ For example, in a *dingiršadabba* prayer; see Jaques 2015, 79, line 118.

¹⁵⁰ Reiner 1958, 36.

¹⁵¹ See, e.g., Schaudig 2001, 516 i 21' (Nabonidus's Babylon Stele; see also Weiershäuser / Novotny 2020, no. 3 [p. 62]) and Frame 1995, 26 (Nebuchadnezzar I, no. 8: 17); in the latter, Nebuchadnezzar I is made a descendant of Enmeduranki.

¹⁵² See Oshima 2014, 445.

¹⁵³ For a round-up of potential translations of *di'u*, see Oshima 2014, 251 with literature. My translation follows Robson's suggestion (2008, 462).

¹⁵⁴ Lambert / Millard 1969, 106, 108, rev. iv 12, 16, 28 in the Assyrian version.

¹⁵⁵ Note, e.g., Nabonidus's Harran Stele (Schaudig 2001, 488–89, i 21; Weiershäuser / Novotny 2020, no. 47 [p. 189]), a text that cites *Ludlul* (see chapter ten), and Aššurbanipal, nos. 6 (ix 5''), 7 (viii 73'), and 8 (viii 32'''), which lists misfortunes associated with war while recounting the same incident (see Novotny / Jeffers 2018, 133, 159, 175).

¹⁵⁶ See CAD D, 165, s.v. *di'u* lexical section for several citations.

¹⁵⁷ Reiner 1958, 28.

(see SAA 10, nos. 296, obv. 11 and 351, rev. 14),¹⁵⁹ and its presence in the *Vademecum of the Exorcist* (KAR 44 and duplicates).¹⁶⁰ Although not exclusive to exorcism, *di`u* clearly had a place in the exorcist's professional vocabulary.

Šūlu, “demon” and/or “cough” in *Ludlul* II 53, II 66, and III 71 is a very rarely attested term for some kind of demon and also a cough (see CAD Š/3, 259, *šūlu* A and *šūlu* D).¹⁶¹ The two meanings are distinguished from one another in the CAD on the basis of a couple of lexical equations, but I am not so sure the author of *Ludlul* made the same distinction, especially since many physical maladies were also associated with a demon of the same name.¹⁶² In any case, beyond *Ludlul*, the word occurs in two bilingual incantations, one of which is from *Muššu`u* (III 41)¹⁶³ and the other from a *zi-pà* incantation, and in only one or two unilingual Akkadian texts, namely, an omen in *Šumma ālu* (LXI 130, with *di`u* and *ḥaḥḥū*)¹⁶⁴ and perhaps an OB prayer to Anuna.¹⁶⁵ In post-Old Babylonian materials and aside from its appearance in *Ludlul*, *šūlu* appears to be limited to texts associated with the exorcist. The *Ludlul* Commentary explains the term with reference to the general word *eṭemmu*, “ghost” (MS Com_{Nin}, obv. 36’).

Lamaštu in *Ludlul* II 55 and III 73 is a well-known demon.¹⁶⁶ Although she was likely well-known among the general populace,¹⁶⁷ in the great mass of scribal textual production her name occurs almost exclusively in scholarly materials, especially in incantations used in the ritual series aimed at expelling her (Farber 2014)—but also in *Maqlû* (I 137 and IV 42)¹⁶⁸ and *Šurpu* (IV 52);¹⁶⁹ in the diagnostic Sa-gig (e.g., XV 91’, *miḥiṣ Lamašti*; XIX/XX 112’, *qāt Lamašti*; XL 51, *šibit Lamašti*);¹⁷⁰ and amulets, often bearing an inscribed in-

¹⁵⁸ See Heeßel 2000, 408 s.v. *diḥu/di`u* in the glossary.

¹⁵⁹ Parpola 1993, 238, 287.

¹⁶⁰ Geller 2018, 299, line 20.

¹⁶¹ Compare the more common term *su`ālu*, “phlegm, cough with phlegm,” which is likewise found in learned contexts (see CAD S, 340).

¹⁶² See, e.g., Böck 2014, 179.

¹⁶³ Böck 2007, 141, but note that the word only occurs in MS D; MS G simply has *šunu*, “they,” perhaps under the influence of the previous line.

¹⁶⁴ Freedman 2017, 148.

¹⁶⁵ The conjectured restoration *šu-ú-[lim(?)]* in PBS 1/1 2: 27b (= CBS 19842, obv. ii 12), an OB prayer to Anuna/Ištar, is not accepted in Lambert's edition of the text (1989, 326; see also my treatment: <http://akkpm.org/P269974.html>).

¹⁶⁶ See Wiggermann in Stol 2000, 217–49 for a thorough survey of the demon.

¹⁶⁷ For the folk vs. learned version of the demon, see Wiggermann in Stol 2000, especially 248–49.

¹⁶⁸ Abusch 2016, 47, 119.

¹⁶⁹ Reiner 1958, 26.

¹⁷⁰ See Heeßel 2000, 155, 233; and Scurlock 2014, 260, respectively.

cantation.¹⁷¹ Dealing with *Lamaštu* was clearly a major concern among the exorcists in the post-OB periods.¹⁷²

Lu'tu, “debility,” occurs in *Ludlul* II 57, II 78, and III 75. The relatively infrequently attested term (see CAD L, 256–57) shows up alongside *mangu* (and the related *mungu*) in several texts (compare *Ludlul* II 77–78 and see below), most of which are learned—including several bilinguals (e.g., Udug-ḫul II 69, cited above)¹⁷³ and incantations in anti-witchcraft ritual texts.¹⁷⁴ Although, the word is also attested once in *Gilgameš* (IV 242).¹⁷⁵ In addition to these, *lu'tu* occurs in several other scholarly texts, including in a few omens (e.g., CT 41 20: 7 and perhaps Sa-gig XXII 24)¹⁷⁶ and in incantations against *Lamaštu* (*Lamaštu* I 106, 137), among others.¹⁷⁷ The *Ludlul* Commentary equates *lu'tu* with the much more general and common word *muršu* (MS Com_{Nin}, obv. 38'). The term is strongly connected to the professional vocabulary of the exorcists.

Ḥaḥḫu, “phlegm,” occurs in *Ludlul* II 66. Aside from a few lexical texts and *Ludlul*, all of the post-OB attestations booked in the lexica (see CAD H, 28–29; *AHw*, 308) occur in scholarly materials, including some closely associated with exorcism: in lists of maladies in incantations (e.g., KAR 226 i 8' and *Šurpu* VII 88),¹⁷⁸ lists of symptoms in therapeutic texts (e.g., AMT 51/2: 4, BAM 548 iv 14'),¹⁷⁹ in the name of a medicinal plant (e.g., STT 92 ii 12–14), and in the apodoses of omens (e.g., *Šumma ālu* LXI 123, 130).¹⁸⁰

¹⁷¹ For the amulets, see the brief discussion in Farber 2014, 29–34 with references to previous literature.

¹⁷² As Wiggermann states, “[t]he *Lamaštu* of the Iron Age is a product of the more general process of canonization, a scholarly version of the Bronze Age folk demoness” (in Stol 2000, 248). For incantations and rituals against *Lamaštu* as part of the exorcist's repertoire (with the caveats stated in n.26 above), see the *Vademecum of the Exorcist* (KAR 44 and duplicates), line 15 (Geller 2018, 298, line 15).

¹⁷³ See CAD L, 257, s.v. *lu'tu* lexical section for several citations. For KAR 333, see now Panayotov / Geller 2014, where *mangu* is restored.

¹⁷⁴ Abusch / Schwemer 2011, 275, line 31; 310, line 104"; 377, line 21; Abusch / Schwemer 2016, 161, line 7'; and in *Maqlû* I 102 (Abusch 2016, 42).

¹⁷⁵ George 2003, 600.

¹⁷⁶ There is disagreement about the term's appearance in Sa-gig XXII 24, cited in CAD as “Labat TDP 180: 24.” Heeßel reads the signs in question as *lu-'a-ti* (2000, 253), translating it with “Beschmutzung” (259, 413; likewise, Scurlock, who renders the term “dirty substances” [2014, 186, 189]). Labat reads the same but translates the term “faiblesse(?)” (1951, 180–81), which may have suggested to the staff of the CAD to read *lu-u'-ti* and book the attestation under *lu'tu* (likewise *AHw*, 565, s.v. *lūu(m)*, *lu'tu*).

¹⁷⁷ Farber 2014, 82, 85. *Lamaštu* I 106 is paralleled in the “non-canonical” incantation that Farber labels “RA,” line 3 (see Farber 2014, 268).

¹⁷⁸ Abusch / Schwemer 2016, 161, line 8' and Reiner 1958, 39.

¹⁷⁹ For the BabMed transliteration of AMT 51/2, see the following: <https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/AMT-2/AMT51-2/index.html>. For BAM 548, see this link: https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/BAM-6/BAM-6_-548.

¹⁸⁰ Freedman 2017, 148. For LXI 130, see my comments in the notes in chapter three at II 53. I have not found an edition of STT 92.

Alû, a demon, in *Ludlul* II 71: In the post-OB periods, most of the attestations of *alû*, as was the case with *utukku*, occur in scholarly texts, especially in lists of demons in the incantations throughout the series Udug-hul¹⁸¹ but also making appearances in *Maqlû* V 61, *Šurpu* IV 46, and several times in *Muššu ʾu* (IV 78, V 39, 40, VII 34, 61).¹⁸² The term also appears, for example, in the diagnostic series Sa-gig XXVII 20, 22–23, *qāt alî*,¹⁸³ in therapeutic texts (e.g., BAM 311, obv. 47', with ki.min, "ditto," in 48'–50': *šumma amēla alû lemmu išbassu*, "if an evil *alû* demon has seized a man"),¹⁸⁴ and omens (e.g., *Šumma ālu* XCIV alt.),¹⁸⁵ among others. *Alû* makes only a couple of appearances in non-learned texts, namely, in the *Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta I*¹⁸⁶ and a repeated section in the royal inscriptions of Sennacherib.¹⁸⁷ In both cases, the *alû* demon is used as a point of comparison for the might and fright of the king. Although not exclusively learned, dealing with the *alû* demon was very clearly a major concern among the exorcists. (For more on the *alû* demon, see chapter eleven.)

Rimûtu, "paralysis," occurs, aside from *Ludlul* II 75, exclusively in learned contexts associated with the exorcist (see KAR 44 and duplicates, line 32),¹⁸⁸ especially in lists of symptoms (e.g., BAM 228: 26 and duplicates, in the context of a man plagued by a ghost)¹⁸⁹ and remedies (e.g., in a summary of a list of stones used to heal *šimmatu* and *rimûtu*).¹⁹⁰

Mišittu, "stroke," in *Ludlul* II 76: Aside from its occurrence in *Ludlul* all of its other attestations are learned. The term is especially prevalent in therapeutic texts (e.g., AMT 76/5: 4', 9', and 11' and BAM 138 ii 1, 9, where it occurs in context with *rimûtu*).¹⁹¹ It is also found in Sa-gig many times,¹⁹² *Šumma ālu*

¹⁸¹ See Geller 2016.

¹⁸² See Abusch 2016, 140; Reiner 1958, 26; and Böck 2007, 164, 193, 249, 254. Note also the demon's appearance among others in a nam-êrim-bûr-ru-da incantation (see Maul 2019, 1.212, line 37 and 1.214, line 51).

¹⁸³ See Heeßel 2000, 298–99.

¹⁸⁴ For the BabMed transliteration, see https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/BAM-3/BAM-3_-311.

¹⁸⁵ See CAD A/1, 376 for CT 39 42 o ii 9', 11' (= K.2238+, obv.) and Koch 2015, 254 for the identification within the series.

¹⁸⁶ See Machinist 1978, 92, line 24' (cited in chapter eleven).

¹⁸⁷ See Grayson / Novotny 2012, no. 22 vi 26 (p. 184); no. 23 vi 22 (p. 201); Grayson / Novotny 2014, no. 230: 96 (p. 334). All three texts recount the same incident: The overwhelming of Umman-menanu in battle. Note also the scholar Bêl-ušēzib's letter to the king, SAA 10 109, rev. 6 (Parpola 1993, 87).

¹⁸⁸ See Geller 2018, 301 with comments about *rimmûtu* on p. 309.

¹⁸⁹ See Scurlock 2006, 305.

¹⁹⁰ See Schuster-Brandis 2008, 382, A IV 6 and H 13'/14'.

¹⁹¹ For the BabMed transliterations, see <https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/AMT-2/AMT-76-5/index.html> (with new joins) and https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/BAM-2/BAM-2_-138/index.html, respectively.

(VII 94'),¹⁹³ in a list of maladies and misfortunes in a *tamītu*,¹⁹⁴ and in a Babylonian chronicle's report of an Elamite king suffering from it.¹⁹⁵ The term is firmly rooted in the texts belonging to the learned corpora, many of which are associated with exorcism.

Mangu, "stiffness," in *Ludlul* II 77, as noted above, occurs in several anti-witchcraft texts alongside *lu'tu*, though also once in *Gilgameš* IV 242 (see the discussion of *lu'tu* above). In addition to those texts, *mangu* occurs in a variety of other learned texts: as a symptom in AMT 58/2: 12,¹⁹⁶ as the outcome of an evil omen several times in the apodoses of gall bladder omens (*Šumma martu*),¹⁹⁷ and as a bodily condition to be lamented in the *Great Prayer to Ištar*, obv. ii 86.¹⁹⁸ This is another term that is heavily attested among texts belonging to the sphere of the exorcist.¹⁹⁹

The two terms *naḥbalu* (*Ludlul* II 84) and *napraku* (II 85, I 69, I 118) are very rarely attested outside of lexical lists and *Ludlul* (see CAD N/1, 134, 313, respectively; see also *AHW*, 714, 740). *Naḥbalu* occurs several times in the Late Babylonian version of *Atra-ḫasīs* and once in the Assyrian version in the name of a cosmological feature associated with Ea, a deity very closely affiliated with exorcists: *šigaru naḥbalu tâmti*, "the bolt (named) 'snare of the sea.'"²⁰⁰ Aside from this, we find it in only a couple of other texts, both incantations: CT 17 25: 15, against headache, and STT 230: 17, directed at Bēlet-šēri.²⁰¹ Given the fact that *Ludlul* describes *naḥbalu* laid on the mouth of the protagonist, the word's use in CT 17 25: 15 is especially interesting. In that text *naḥbalu* is used as a metaphor to describe a demon's hand: [*qās*]su [*n*]aḥbalu šēpšu nardappum-m[a], "his [hand] is a net, his feet a shackle." *Napraku*, in addition to *Ludlul* and lexical texts, only occurs in a very short *namburbi* ritual

¹⁹² See Heeβel 2000, 415, s.v. *mišittu* in the glossary for more than a dozen references in Tablets XV to XXXIII. There are only two in Tablets III–XIV (Schmidtchen 2021, 680).

¹⁹³ Freedman 1998, 136.

¹⁹⁴ See Lambert 2007, 36, line 264. It should be noted that an exorcist was the owner of one of the witnesses containing this *tamītu* (see Lambert 2007, 41, line 349).

¹⁹⁵ See Grayson 1975, 80, iii 20.

¹⁹⁶ See Geller 2005, 158.

¹⁹⁷ See Jeyes 2000, 348, obv. 10; 350, obv. 29–30. In obv. 10, an "omen of Sargon," *man-gu* (var. *man-gi*) puns on a logographic writing of the king's name, MAN.GI.

¹⁹⁸ Lambert 1959/1960, 51, line 86. Note that *mangu* is in parallel with *ḫurbāšu* in the previous line. A new edition of this prayer will be published by Geraldina Rozzi.

¹⁹⁹ The related *mungu* is also predominantly attested in learned materials, especially those of the exorcist (see CAD M/2, 202–3).

²⁰⁰ See Horowitz 1998, 326–27. For the specific lines, see Lambert / Millard 1969, 184, s.v. *naḥbalu*.

²⁰¹ See CAD N/1, 135.

in which words are directed to Ea.²⁰² Though the evidence is rather sparse, these two terms do seem to connect distinctively to the exorcist's professional vocabulary.²⁰³

Silētu (*sili'tu*), "sickness," occurs three times in *Ludlul*, II 90, II 111, and III 49.²⁰⁴ Although appearing in several OB letters, the word in post-OB periods occurs predominantly in learned contexts, including texts associated closely with exorcism. For example, the word occurs frequently in Sa-gig (VIII 22, XIII 4, 130', XIV 64, XVII 3, 9, 101, 103, XXII 70, XL 49),²⁰⁵ in diagnoses (e.g., BAM 3 iii 42, 47, 50, iv 1, 3, 7, 9, 10, 11),²⁰⁶ and a list of maladies in an anti-witchcraft text.²⁰⁷ A *tamītu* aiming for comprehensive coverage of potential maladies uses the word in what looks to be a very general manner: *sili'ti asūti sili'ti āšipūti*, "a sickness of the physicians (or) a sickness of the exorcists."²⁰⁸ In contrast to the frequent learned uses,²⁰⁹ *sili'tu* is attested only rarely in non-learned texts: once in a wish for life and health in a royal inscription (Shalmaneser III, no. 12: 40)²¹⁰ and once as part of a curse in a *kudurru* (IM 90585 vi 10).²¹¹ The *Ludlul* Commentary explains *sili'tu* with the much more common word *muršu* (MS Com_{Nin}, obv. 45').

Uriqtu, "(something like) jaundice," in *Ludlul* II 94: The word only occurs here, according to CAD U/W, 227, which defines it as "yellow color." Its presence in *Ludlul* may be confirming evidence of the poem's high linguistic register. But, without other attestations, we cannot know anything more about the distribution of the term among the various learned texts of the scholars.

Niṭātu, "afflictions," only occurs in *Ludlul* II 99 and in a fragmentary context of one bilingual (see CAD N/2, 302, s.v. *niṭū*; *AHW*, 799, s.v. *niṭūtu*). Although, as with *uriqtu*, its presence in *Ludlul* may provide confirming evidence of the poem's high linguistic register, without other attestations of the term we cannot determine its distribution among the various learned texts of the scholars.

²⁰² The ritual is embedded in a witness to *Šumma ālu* IX. See Freedman 1998, 158, s.v. Ritual 4, r.12.

²⁰³ The *Ludlul* Commentary (MS Com_{Nin}, obv. 11') explains *napraku* in the context of I 69 with *pirku*, "fraud." For the probable logic of this lexical explanation, see chapter nine, note 48.

²⁰⁴ For a full lexicographical discussion of *sili'tu* and the related verb *salā'u*, see Stol 2009.

²⁰⁵ For Sa-gig VIII and XIII, see Schmidtchen 2021, 403, 516, and 526; for Sa-gig XVII and XXII, see Heeßel 2000, 195, 205, 257; and for Sa-gig XL, see Scurlock 2014, 260.

²⁰⁶ See Worthington 2006, 24 for an edition.

²⁰⁷ See Abusch / Schwemer 2011, 262, line 114.

²⁰⁸ Lambert 2007, 40, line 336. One of the witnesses to this *tamītu* was owned by an exorcist (see Lambert 2007, 40, line 349). Two OB letters also mention *sili'ti asūti*, see Stol 2009, 33.

²⁰⁹ Note also its appearance in an Aššurbanipal colophon, Hunger 1968, no. 339 with comments from Borger 1970, 188.

²¹⁰ Grayson 1996, 61.

²¹¹ Paulus 2014, 558.

Sakikkū, “symptoms,” in *Ludlul* II 108 (|| *têrētu* in II 109): When the term is used to describe symptoms of an illness²¹² rather than the diagnostic series Sa-gig, the word is very rarely attested (see CAD S, 75),²¹³ occurring only in one omen (CT 39 44: 3, *Šumma ālu* CIV), two incantations/prayers directed to Marduk (*Ugaritica* 5, no. 17: 15 and the *Great Prayer to Marduk*, no. 2, line 32'),²¹⁴ and two NA letters from Esarhaddon's chief physician Urad-Nanaya (SAA 10, nos. 315, obv. 12 and 320, obv. 11).²¹⁵ The term is clearly associated with scribal scholarship and with the textual material associated with exorcism.

Erūtu, “alertness,” occurs in just a few contexts, including *Ludlul* III 6, confirming *Ludlul*'s penchant for rare words. But, the term does not look to be especially connected to the vocabulary of exorcism (see CAD E, 327; *AHW*, 248).²¹⁶

The use of *tē'u* in the phrase *tē'āti ināya*, “my blurred eyes,” in III 82 is the term's only attestation (see CAD T, 377). Like other rarely attested words in the list, this may provide confirming evidence of the poem's high linguistic register; but, without other attestations of the term we cannot determine its distribution among the various learned texts of the scholars.

Ummu, “fever,” in *Ludlul* III 86: As “fever”²¹⁷ rather than a reference to the heat of summer (CAD U/W, 131–32), the word is well-attested. Almost all of the attestations occur in learned texts, especially in Sa-gig²¹⁸ and in diagnostic

²¹² For *sakikkū* as “symptoms” rather than some kind of illness here, see Oshima's discussion with literature (2014, 264–67).

²¹³ CAD S, 75 (see also *AHW*, 1012) lists a couple of references, “Labat TDP 108: 18” and “ibid. 140: 38,” where the logogram Sa-gig occurs in the apodoses of omens in the diagnostic series Sa-gig. (The former reference now refers to Sa-gig XII 139' in Schmidtchen 2021, 492 and the latter to Sa-gig XIV 163' in Schmidtchen 2021, 573.) With Heeβel (2000, 373), Scurlock (2014, 101, 133), and Schmidtchen (2021, 511), I read these as a reference to the disease *maškadu* (see CAD M/1, 368). The references to ND 4358 and ND 4366 (now joined) in CAD S, 75 are to the series Sa-gig rather than an illness. The joined tablets form Esagil-kīn-apli's now famous catalog of Sa-gig and *Alamdimmū*. For editions, see Finkel 1988 and Schmidtchen 2018. The term *sakikkū* in reference to the series occurs in lines 1, 50, 61, and 70.

²¹⁴ See Nougayrol 1968, 31 and del Olmo Lete 2014, 49 for the former and Oshima 2011, 234 for the latter. In the text from Ugarit (RS 17.155), the incantation in which our line occurs (lines 12–45) shows parallels with *Muššu'u* V (see Böck 2007, 25, 42–43, 182).

²¹⁵ Parpola 1993, 254, 258.

²¹⁶ See Westenholz 1997, 66, line 40 for *Sargon, the Conquering Hero* (OB) (= RA 45 173: 40) and <http://oracc.iaas.upenn.edu/blms/P373791/html> for Jeremiah Peterson's edition of the bilingual K.2015+ (SB) (= RA 17 121 ii 5).

²¹⁷ For a lexicographical study of Akkadian terms for fever, see Stol 2007. For therapeutic texts against fever and related matters (Akkadian *ummu*, *išātu*, *ummu dannu*, *li'bu*, and *šētu*), see Bácskay 2018. For six amulets from Nippur against fever, all of which contain a therapeutic inscription, see Finkel 2018.

²¹⁸ See Heeβel 2000, 426, s.v. *ummu* for almost fifty references in Sa-gig XV to XXXIII and Schmidtchen 2021, 694–95 for almost sixty references in Tablets III to XIV.

sections of therapeutic texts (e.g., BAM 520 ii' 9', when a man has been seized by the *mukīl rēš lemutti* demon)²¹⁹ as well as remedies (e.g., BAM 171, rev. 49).²²⁰ But the term also appears in, for example, several incantations against Lamaštu,²²¹ in *Šurpu* V–VI 124,²²² and in the *šuilā* Nergal 1 (Si. 2, obv. 5).²²³ The term does occur in one NB and four MB letters (see CAD U/W, 132a; the MB letters are likely written by a healer),²²⁴ but its attestations occur predominantly in scholarly texts and confirm that *ummu* was a major professional concern among the exorcists.

Ṭupuštu, “thickness (of tongue),” only occurs in *Ludlul* III 95 (see CAD Ṭ, 164). Again, this may provide confirming evidence of the poem’s high linguistic register; but, without other attestations of the term we cannot determine its distribution among the various learned texts of the scholars.

Lagā'u, “scales, swelling(?),²²⁵ blisters(?),” in *Ludlul* III 99 is rarely attested (CAD L, 37). Aside from a few lexical texts (in one of which the term refers to slag in a kiln) and *Ludlul*, the word is only attested otherwise in an *eršahūga* (*ina šapīišu ša lagā'a nadā*, “on his lips that are covered with blisters?”)²²⁶ and Sa-gig VII 50' (*šumma līq pīšu šābul lagā'a ittanaddī* ..., “if the palate of his mouth is dry and completely covered with blisters?”).²²⁷ Although the evidence is slim, admittedly, the term seems to be a learned one with some connection to the exorcism corpus. The *Ludlul* Commentary explains the word with *šiktu* (CAD: *šiqtu*), “scales, slag” (MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 13).

The word *idiltu*, “stoppage,” in *Ludlul* III 99 occurs nowhere else in Akkadian (*AHw*, 364). This fact again may provide confirming evidence of the poem’s high linguistic register; but, without other attestations of the term we cannot determine its distribution among the various learned texts of the scholars.

²¹⁹ See the BabMed transliteration at https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/BAM-6/BAM-6_520/index.html.

²²⁰ See the BabMed transliteration at https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/BAM-2/BAM-2_171/index.html.

²²¹ See Farber 2014, 360, s.v. *ummu* for several references.

²²² Reiner 1958, 33.

²²³ See Ebeling 1953a, 8 and my treatment here: <http://shuilas.org/P480755.html>.

²²⁴ The letters are from a certain Šumu-libši (previously read Mukallim), who was associated with the Gula temple; see Parpola 1983, 492–96 for the most recent edition of the letters, Worthington 2009, 58–59 for a brief discussion with literature, and Plantholt 2014 for a reassessment of the corpus, an addition, and discussion of medical matters. (I thank Martin Worthington for bringing the final reference to my attention.)

²²⁵ See Lambert 1960, 298.

²²⁶ See Maul 1988, 296, line 16.

²²⁷ See Schmidtchen 2021, 385.

The term *unšu* (*umšu*), “hunger,” in *Ludlul* III 104 is very rarely attested (see CAD U/W, 136–37), occurring elsewhere, aside from a few lexical lists, in a prayer/hymn to Nabû (STT 71, obv. 35)²²⁸ and in the final curse section (rev. iii 52) of the famous Šamaš Tablet from Sippar (BBSt 36), which in its recounting of a royal grant to Nabû-nadin-šumi, *šangu*-priest of Sippar and diviner, also mentions several matters related to a cult image.²²⁹ Given these attestations, we cannot establish a clear, strong connection to exorcism, though the term’s relative rarity may provide confirming evidence of *Ludlul*’s high linguistic register. The word occurs twice in the Commentary to *Ludlul* (MS Com_{Nin}): first in obv. 35', where it is equated with the more common *bubūtu*, “hunger, starvation,” to explain the verb *immuša*, “they are hungry” in II 44; and second, in rev. 14, explaining the appearance of *unšu* in *Ludlul* III 104, with the same lexical equation.

Sahḫu, “swelling, scar,” in III 105 occurs in a broken context and its reading is uncertain. If we assume on present evidence the correctness of the reading and identification of the term, we may observe that *sahḫu* is only attested a couple of other times in post-OB materials beyond its use in *Ludlul* I 105 (see *AHw*, 1009²³⁰), namely, in the diagnostic section of the therapeutic text AMT 22/2, obv. 8²³¹ and in STT 108: 65, which is part of *Abnu šikinšu*.²³² Although the evidence is slim, it seems this term too has a place in the pathological vocabulary of the exorcist.

The obscure term *nakimtu* (*naqimtu*, CAD N/1, 335–36, s.v. *naqmu*)²³³ in *Ludlul* Com, line d may designate some kind of disease or bodily defect whose precise description is unknown.²³⁴ Beyond a few lexical lists and its presence in *Ludlul*, the term only occurs in two other contexts, namely, the *Great Prayer to Nabû* (obv. ii 3'), in a context of lament and petition,²³⁵ and in an incantation to Kilili in the series *Ištar and Dumuzi*, again in the context of petition: *lišēši nakma u nakimti ša zumrīya*, “may he (the *assinnu*) expel my body’s *nakmu*

²²⁸ See van Buylaere 2011 for an edition (<http://oracc.org/cams/gkab/P338388>).

²²⁹ For which see Woods 2004; Slanski 2003, 196–221; Paulus 2014, 650–59 (with many references to previous literature); and <https://cdli.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/artifacts/472680>.

²³⁰ Note that the second sense of the word in *AHw* is unclear, and its third sense is separated into its own entry in *CDA*, s.v. *sahḫū* (312).

²³¹ See Geller 2005, 258.

²³² See Schuster-Brandis 2008, 29.

²³³ The CAD distinguishes a *nakmu* (N/1, 189), “heaped up, amassed,” which occurs in various royal inscriptions to describe possessions, and a *naqmu*, discussed above. Compare *AHw*, 722–23, s.v. *nakmu*, which books both meanings under *nakmu*.

²³⁴ See the thorough treatment of options in Oshima 2014, 304–5.

²³⁵ See von Soden 1971, 52 and my edition at <http://akkpm.org/P394371.html>. A new edition is forthcoming from Geraldina Rozzi.

and *nakimtu*.²³⁶ Although the data is limited, it seems that this term shows a distinctive connection to the exorcists' materials.

The word *eṭemmūtu* in *Ludlul* V 33 is only attested, as far as I know, in one other context outside of *Ludlul*, the British Museum fragment 1879-07-08, 137: 11 (see *AHw*, 264), which seems to be a literary text of some kind.²³⁷ The term is clearly quite rare and may therefore provide more evidence for the high literary register of *Ludlul*; but, without further attestations, it is unclear if this term is to be considered learned and/or predominantly associated with exorcism, though ghosts, of course, were a major concern of the exorcists.²³⁸

The *asakku* demon (and the illness it brought) was a major concern in the learned scribal corpora in the post-OB periods.²³⁹ The demon appears frequently in learned texts, such as *Udug-ḫul*,²⁴⁰ many other incantations (e.g., *Muššu 'u* II 26, 30, IV 19, 72, etc., *Šurpu* IV 103, *Maqlû* VII 37, and CT 17 34–36, obv. 11 against an oath),²⁴¹ an incantation prayer to *Tašmetu*,²⁴² *tamītus*,²⁴³ and omens (e.g., *Šumma ālu* VII 94' with a parallel in CT 40 3: 62),²⁴⁴ among others. Literary attestations include the Assyrian version of *Atra-ḫasīs*, which lists *asakku* alongside *di'u* and *šuruppû* (as noted above),²⁴⁵ and in *Gilgameš* XII 52, 60, 68, 76.²⁴⁶ The phrase that appears in *Ludlul* V 35 in conjunction with this demon, *ana šīr asakki ammann[i]*, "I was reckon[ed] as the flesh of an *asakku* demon," has a negative parallel in other incantatory contexts, for example, in the ending of the so-called "universal *namburbi*," which reads: [...

²³⁶ Farber 1977, 58, line 37.

²³⁷ See Kinnier-Wilson and Beaulieu 1990 for a description (88) and copy (90) of this fragment and Oshima 2014, 472–73 for an edition (with a new copy on pl. XIII). George 2003, 409, n.85 reports that this fragment is not part of the *Epic of Gilgameš*, as was suspected by Kinnier-Wilson. Oshima labels the text a prayer. The term *eṭemmūtu* was also booked in the addenda of *AHw* (1555) as attested in KAR 116, which is now recognized as part of *Ludlul* (MS V.GAS; VAT number unknown).

²³⁸ See Scurlock 2006.

²³⁹ For reflections on possible connections between the *asakku* demon and the homonymous word *asakku*, "taboo," see Geller 2018, 293, n.7.

²⁴⁰ See Geller 2007, 264, s.v. *ā-sāg* = *asakku* in the glossary for its many attestations.

²⁴¹ See Böck 2007, 121, 122, 154, 161; Reiner 1958, 29; and Abusch 2016, 172. Peterson's edition of CT 17 34–36 is available at <http://oracc.iaas.upenn.edu/blms/P395106/html>. For a wish in the context of a *nam-érim-búr-ru-da* incantation that *asakku* be removed by way of a fish eating it and taking it to the *Apsu*, see Maul 2019, 1.216, line 68.

²⁴² See my treatment of CTN 4 168 at <http://shuilas.org/P363582.html>. This witness to the incantation prayer contains a long and a short version of *Tašmetu* 1. *Asakku* is mentioned in rev. i 35 and rev. ii 29.

²⁴³ See Lambert 2007, 36, line 266 and 70, line 14.

²⁴⁴ Freedman 1998, 136–37.

²⁴⁵ See Lambert / Millard 1969, 106, 108, rev. iv 12, 16, and 28.

²⁴⁶ George 2003, 1.730, 732. *Asakku* also appears in the name of a wind in *Gilgameš* III 90 (^mĀZAG); see George 2003, 1.578.

ana] *šīr asakki lā amman[ni]*, [...] “that I may not be reckon[ed as] the flesh of the *asakku* demon,”²⁴⁷ and an anti-witchcraft text.²⁴⁸ We should also note that *šīr asakki* appears in Sennacherib’s royal inscriptions as the name—the official name, at least—of the step gate (*mušlālu*) in Nineveh: *mušēšat šīr asakki abul mušlālim*, “The one who exorcises the flesh of the *asakku* demon’ is the name of the Step Gate.”²⁴⁹ Even if the term is not exclusively learned, like Lamaštu, the *asakku* demon was very clearly a concern among the exorcists, and its name finds a prominent place in that professional’s textual materials.

Of the sixty-three terms for diseases, illnesses, or negative symptoms and conditions, the textual attestations and distribution of twenty-seven of them,²⁵⁰ about two out of every five terms, provide distinctive evidence for a connection to the professional vocabulary of the exorcists.

6.5. CONCLUSION

Deciding how much evidence is enough to warrant the conclusion that a literary composition arose from within an intellectual context suffused with technical anatomical and pathological terminology, such as the exorcist’s was, is a matter of interpretation. I think the results produced here lend further support, if not absolute proof, for what other factors have already suggested, namely, that *Ludlul* was composed by someone who was an exorcist or who was quite familiar with the learned traditions of the exorcists and its professional vocabulary. This recognition provides additional warrant for reading the poem for hints of its institutional agenda, a reading I develop in the following chapter based solely on internal features and the content of the poem. This recognition also gives another reason, as demonstrated in chapter four, for *Ludlul*’s use in the second level of scribal training, which was especially concerned with exorcist materials: The text would have introduced students to a number of im-

²⁴⁷ See Maul 1994, 475, noted by Oshima 2014, 322.

²⁴⁸ See Abusch / Schwemer 2011, 326, line 91’ (*apud* Mayer 2014, 280).

²⁴⁹ See Grayson / Novotny 2012, no. 15 vii 4’, restored (p. 103), no. 16 vii 48 (p. 122), no. 17 vii 80 (p. 143), no. 18 vii 20’ (p. 158). The *asakku* also appears twice in an inscription of Esarhad-don (no. 33 ii 3 and 24; see Leichty 2011, 82, 83). Gates obviously could be named in a learned manner, especially if they bore a Sumerian name in the first millennium, as in, e.g., the temple gate names in *Ludlul* V 42–53. The gate in question above, though in Akkadian, might still reflect a scholarly-scribal concern since this may have only been the name of the gate that the palace (and its chief scribe) gave to the gate in this inscription and thus may not have been used by the general populace.

²⁵⁰ Specifically, *utukku*, *ra`ibu*, *šuruppū*, *ḫurbāšu*, *pirittu*, *qitayyulu*, *adirtu*, *gītallutu*, *kimiltu*, *dī`u*, *šūlu*, *Lamaštu*, *lu`tu*, *ḫaḫḫu*, *alū*, *rimūtu*, *mišittu*, *mangu*, *naḫbalu*, *napraku*, *sili`tu*, *sakikkū*, *ummu*, *lagā`u*, *sahḫu*, *nak/qintu*, *šīr asakki*.

portant specialized anatomical and pathological terms in a narrative context, perhaps, as mentioned at the end of the last chapter, making them more memorable in the process.

CHAPTER 7:
PROFESSIONAL FAILURE AND THE POEM'S SCHOLARLY PURPOSE:
THE INSTITUTIONAL AGENDA OF *LUDLUL*

As chapter five demonstrates, the vagaries of individual human experience, things such as illness, social troubles, and dreams, could take on revelatory significance, providing a person with important clues about one's current standing with the gods. And yet interpreting revelatory signs properly was a scholarly undertaking in ancient Mesopotamia, reserved for ritual experts such as seers, exorcists, and dream-interpreters. These professionals were responsible for interpreting the signs they and others received, whether provoked or unprovoked.¹ The reading of *Ludlul* in chapter five raises, however, an important series of questions about these scholars. What happened when the individuals normally responsible for identifying revelatory signs as such and interpreting them properly failed in their task? What happened when those charged with performing the divinely revealed rituals to mediate between troubled humans and the divine realm were frustrated by uncooperative gods? What happened when individuals trusted the divinatory and ritual experts and

¹ Of course, as chapter five shows, regular individuals could receive revelations from the gods via a variety of experiences such as illness or unfortunate circumstances. They could also receive visions, prophetic messages, dreams and other signs. Despite this, an expert was usually required to interpret such revelations and take appropriate ritual actions, if necessary. For an example of (apparent) non-specialists receiving visionary or prophetic revelations, see the intriguing situation in the Neo-Assyrian period discussed in Nissinen 1998, 108–53. In a series of three letters a certain Nabū-rehtu-ušur delivers a prophecy he received, describes a vision he had, and reports to the king that a “slave girl” was prophesying against him in Harran (though Nissinen believes that this latter prophecy was a politically motivated fabrication). The OB Mari letters also contain several examples of non-specialists having revelatory dreams; see, e.g., the report of Šimātum, the daughter of king Zimri-Lim (Durand 1988, no. 239), and the report of a certain Timlu (no. 240), an otherwise unknown young woman. (For a general discussion of dreams in the Mari documents and a proposed *Sitz im Leben* that would have included a specialist's assistance, see Zgoll 2006, 157–88 and 169 for the *Sitz im Leben*.) The so-called Assyrian Dream Book existed to interpret the ominous dreams of non-specialist individuals such as the king, his court, and probably others. See Oppenheim 1956 for an edition. Finally, the ritual corpus of the exorcist assumes that people encountered ill-boding signs in their daily life and needed releasing from the impending evil via *namburbi* rituals. See Maul 1994 for a study of *namburbi* rituals with numerous examples. Clearly, therefore, non-specialists could receive revelation. Yet the documentation that we have at our disposal indicates that such revelations usually needed the assistance of specialists, i.e., scholars, to be understood and acted upon. Of course, this is not all that surprising, since our sources are mostly official documents from the institutional spheres in which the scholars worked. For an important discussion of the multiplicity and heterogeneity of forms of communication between humans and divinities as well as the lack of a coordinated system among the scholarly professions, see Richardson 2017.

the experts simply could not live up to people's expectations? And perhaps most importantly, what happened when, after the failed attempts of the experts, people resolved their problems outside the normal ritual means? What did the experts have to say for themselves to the people—and to themselves—in such a case? Such is precisely the situation in *Ludlul*: in Tablets I and II of the poem the ritual experts *completely* fail the protagonist, whose relief came—no thanks to them—by way of a series of dreams at the beginning of Tablet III. In this chapter, I argue that an examination of the poem from the thematic perspective of ritual failure reveals the institutional agenda of the poem's scholarly author. As discussed in the Introduction, although Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan recounts his own story in a first person voice, his voice gives way to a third person narrator near the end of Tablet V. This narrator's voice may be conflated with the poem's anonymous author, a scholar, who has folded the protagonist's voice and experiences into the poem for a variety of literary purposes. One of these purposes, I argue, relates to the author's institutional agenda.

Given that the poem opens with a hymn (I 1–40) lauding Marduk's wrath and mercy (I 1–28, 33–34) as well as his sovereignty and inscrutability (I 29–32, 35–36) and ends with an entire Tablet (V) dominated by praise (see especially V 69–82 and 120), the poem is, on the one hand, very clearly doxological and hortatory in character. Marduk, the lord of wisdom and sovereign god, the poem asserts, may inflict evil upon whom he will, but he also brings deliverance in due time.² As the sufferer says of Marduk, referred to as “my lord,” in the opening lines of the final Tablet:

My [lord hea]led me,
 My [lord] bandaged me.
 My [lord] removed *afflictions* from me,
 My [lord] revived me.
 [From the pi]t he rescued me,
 [From the grave he g]athered me up.
 [From disas]ter he raised me up,
 From the Hubur Riv[er] he pulled me out.
 He held my hand through adversity.
 He struck me on the righ[t],
 And raised my head on the lef[t].
 He struck the hands of my striker,

² By appealing to time and divine sovereignty/inscrutability, *Ludlul* provides a very traditional answer to the problem of divinely-imposed or -allowed suffering. See, e.g., the synthetic conclusion to Bottéro's general treatment of the “problem of evil” in ancient Mesopotamia (1977, 42, specifically, his point #3; note also p. 25). For an explicit example of Marduk's anger abating with time, see Esarhaddon's “Babylon B” inscription (Leichty 2011a, no. 116, 18'–19' [p. 245]).

Marduk made *him* throw down his weapon.
 On the mouth of the lion eating me,
 Marduk put a muzzle.
 Marduk, that of my pursuer,
 He snatched his sling, he turned back his sling stone.
 He snatched the shovel from the hands of my grave-digger. (V 1–18)

The one who hears *Ludlul*, perhaps especially those in the midst of suffering, the poem asserts, ought to learn from the poem's words (IV §C 6') and join the protagonist in praise of Marduk (see I 39),³ an idea developed in chapter eight.

Given its preoccupation with human suffering at the hand of a deity, the poem is, on the other hand, also thematically coupled to the issue of theodicy—a theme that has dominated the interest of many previous interpreters, as the Introduction notes. When the deity becomes angry and inflicts suffering upon people, what is their proper response to such suffering? The poem very clearly shows that Marduk does as he wants. People must accept his sovereignty, understand that he will respond to their entreaty in time, and thus patiently await Marduk's inevitable display of mercy, which will come to them when he forgives their sin, the root of the divine anger. Although this is the poem's fundamental understanding of suffering, to its credit it presents this traditional answer in a manner that takes into account human emotional and existential reactions. Lamentation and even religious doubt may be voiced in the course of one's troubles, as explicated in chapter five (see also chapter eight); but suffering will end, and praise for the deity is the appropriate expression of one's gratitude.

In what follows I develop the idea that these two intertwined literary themes—Marduk's divine sovereignty and human resignation to endure divinely-sanctioned suffering—combine to support *Ludlul*'s institutional rhetorical purpose, serving the interests of the official ritual experts—the scholars—among whom this poem originated. That purpose plainly stated: *Ludlul* accounts for the occasional failure of the experts' ritual and divinatory apparatus and provides both a literary salve—hope—to mollify the attendant emotional and existential toll such failure may have taken upon the ritual participants (the scholars' clients) and an ideological tool—damage control—to avert any potential professional consequences of such a failure from their

³ See also V 69–82, where people praise Marduk after seeing the deliverance he brought to Šubši-mešrê-šakkan. These people, I suggest, are introduced to exemplify the audience's proper response to the events recounted in the poem.

clients or among their own ranks.⁴ If, as discussed in the Introduction, the author of *Ludlul* was an exorcist, we would expect that branch of ritual expertise to have a distinctive place in this reading of the poem. And this, in fact, turns out to be the case. This chapter's reading of the poem's institutional agenda, therefore, connects the curricular use or reception of the poem in the training of future exorcists, an interpretation developed in chapter four, and the protagonist's experience as an emblematic sufferer, developed in the reading offered in chapter five.

The interpretation I develop here, it should be noted, does not necessarily imply any impugning of the ancient author's intentions or integrity. At the same time, however, the author should not be insulated from criticism. The author, perhaps acting on behalf of the ritual experts more broadly, may have been acting in good faith, but maybe not. We will probably never know. In any case, it is likely that the person(s) responsible for *Ludlul* was doing what needed to be done to uphold the divinely-sanctioned divinatory and ritual practices, of which the ritual experts were the primary custodians (and among its greatest beneficiaries, socially and materially).

The suggested purpose of *Ludlul* is realized through several interlacing rhetorical and thematic elements. First, it is realized in the poem's theologically expedient appeal to Marduk's inscrutable, sovereign prerogatives in all matters, both human and divine, essentially denying the experts any control over their professional failures. Second, it is realized in the poem's condoning (via example) of the ritual client's emotional reaction to the experts' failure, thereby allowing a vent for potentially explosive frustrations and devastating doubts with regard to the competence of the experts. And third, it is realized through the incorporation of the sufferer's personal revelation, that is, dreams initiated by Marduk himself, into the conceptual operations of the ritual experts. The form and content of the dreams offer hope to the sufferer but also revalorize the very experts—especially the exorcists—who had initially failed him. According to *Ludlul*, when the official diagnostic and therapeutic rituals do not work one may lament and even question the status quo but ultimately, the poem exhorts, one must resign oneself to the divine prerogative, which supersedes the experts' efforts, while holding firmly to the expectation that the deity will, even-

⁴ For a survey of ritual failure in cuneiform sources from Mesopotamia, including comments on *Ludlul*, see Ambos 2007, especially pp. 28–30. Ambos makes very clear that the experts' ritual failure in *Ludlul* is due to Marduk's prerogative to do as he pleases. If my reading of *Ludlul* developed here is accepted, then we do in fact have a source for understanding the fallout of ritual officials' unsuccessful treatments—at least initially. Compare Arbøll 2021, 112, who has only exorcists in view.

tually and in his own way, reveal his plan for deliverance.⁵ After Marduk's intervention in the dreams, it can be no accident that the protagonist finds the services of the ritual experts effective and finds himself in the temple precincts a whole man, the foil for the community's praise of Marduk.

7.1. MARDUK'S SOVEREIGNTY

Ludlul's opening hymn sets the tone for the remainder of the poem. Set apart from the narrative beginning in I 41 by its hortatory style, the hymn is Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's present response to his past suffering. As the hymn is dominated by praise for Marduk's contrasting moods of anger and mercy, vividly exemplified here in its opening quatrains, the hymn makes perfectly clear that Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's response to his suffering—and thus the audience's proper response—is doxological.

I will praise the lord of wisdom, the con[siderate] god,
 Angry at night *but* relenting at daybreak.
 Marduk, the lord of wisdom, the considerate god,
 Angry at night *but* relenting at daybreak.
 Whose fury *is* like a violent storm, a wasteland,
 But his blowing *is* pleasant, like a breeze at dawn.
Who is unstoppable in his anger, his fury a flood,
But his disposition *is* merciful, his emotions relenting.
 The brunt of whose hands the heavens cannot bear,
But whose palm *is so* gentle it rescues the dying.
 Marduk, the brunt of whose hands the heavens cannot bear,
But whose palm *is so* gentle it rescues the dying. (I 1–12)

The emotional contrast developed throughout the opening hymn is not proof of Marduk's capricious character. Rather, Marduk's quickly changing dispositions, which are to be understood sequentially (i.e., mercy always follows

⁵ The idea for this suggestion came from the questions Bruce Lincoln asks in the fourth thesis of his article "Theses on Method" (1996, 225), which reads as follows:

The same destabilizing and irreverent questions one might ask of any speech act ought be posed of religious discourse. The first of these is "Who speaks here?," i.e., what person, group, or institution is responsible for a text, whatever its putative or apparent author. Beyond that, "To what audience? In what immediate and broader context? Through what system of mediations? With what interests?" And further, "Of what would the speaker(s) persuade the audience? What are the consequences if this project of persuasion should happen to succeed? Who wins what, and how much? Who, conversely, loses?"

anger),⁶ are attributed in I 29–36 to his sovereign and inscrutable prerogatives as the unrivaled high god of the pantheon.

The Lord, he sees everything in the heart of the gods,
But no one a[mong] the gods knows his way.
 Marduk, he sees everything in the heart of the gods,
But no god can learn his counsel.
 As heavy as is his hand, his heart is merciful,
 As murderous as are his weapons, his intention is life-sustaining.
 Without his consent, who could assuage his striking?
 Apart from his intention, who could stay his hand? (I 29–36)

In this most explicit statement of Marduk's inscrutable sovereignty the poem asserts that no one can plumb the depths of Marduk's counsel, not even the other gods. And no one can alter his disciplinary decisions unless the high god himself gives his personal consent (I 35–36).

Taken as a whole, the hymn presents Marduk as powerful, inscrutable, and without peer; he does as he wishes. Sometimes he is angry, but he is also in the end forgiving and tender. No one can discern his reasoning and no one can overrule his punishments. Cynicism and bitterness have no place in this hymnic confession. Rather, as the sufferer confidently asserts in I 37–40, Marduk's ultimate intention towards humanity is benevolent; one need only be patient.

Reflections on divine sovereignty do not arise explicitly in the poem again, but V 73–74, placed in the mouths of the Babylonian citizenry, are generally relevant to the discussion since they form a kind of conceptual *inclusio* with the statements in I 35–36.⁷

“Who but Marduk could restore him from death?
 “Which goddess but Zarpanitu could give *him* his life?”

Where I 35–36 is concerned with punishment, V 73–74 centers on deliverance (and include Marduk's spouse). In both cases it is Marduk (and his spouse, in V 74) who acts decisively and effectively. This conceptual framing of the poem is significant for understanding the failure of divinatory and ritual experts to help the sufferer, a theme that the poem brings up in several structurally

⁶ See the comments in chapter three at I 1–4.

⁷ Note also the clear parallel in the opening words of each pair of lines: *ša lā* (I 35, V 73) and *ela* (I 36, V 74). See already Albertz 1988, 40. One could say more broadly that Tablets III–V are the sufferer's coming to terms with Marduk's sovereignty. See especially V 1–4 and V 37–86 (perhaps farther).

significant places, all of which have already been discussed in chapter five. We re-examine these passages now from the angle of ritual failure.

7.2. PROFESSIONAL RITUAL FAILURE AND HUMAN RESPONSE

We begin with *Ludlul* I 41–46, the lines immediately following the opening hymn (I 1–40). Just as these lines were crucial for understanding the protagonist's perspective on his misfortunes, as examined in chapter five, they play a similar role for understanding the ritual experts' failure to help him.

From the day Bel punished me,
 And the hero Marduk became angry wi[th] me,
 My god rejected me, he disappeared,
 My goddess left, she departed.
 The protective spirit of good fortune who *was* at my side [sp]lit off,
 My divine guardian became afraid and was seeking o[ut] another.

Marduk's anger lay at the root of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's troubles. The first consequence of this anger was the abandonment of the protagonist's protective deities. The opening hymn affirms Marduk's ability and prerogative to command personal gods and protective spirits to leave or to return to their wards (I 15–16). In I 43–44 Marduk exercises that prerogative against the sufferer. As we have seen in chapter five, the divine abandonment changed the sufferer's entire disposition (I 47–48) and had catastrophic effects for him both socially, as described in I 50, 55ff., and physically, as depicted in II 49ff. Of particular interest for our purposes here, however, is how the divine anger and attendant abandonment negatively affected the sufferer's ability to assess and to take action against his problems via the usual divinatory and ritual techniques employed by experts, especially the *bārû*, the exorcist, and the *šā'ilu*, all of whom worked together for their clients' well-being. In chapter five I called this lack of a sign quantitative negative revelation. Marduk's anger, it seems, superseded the ritual experts' means for discerning the appropriate actions to help the troubled man.

The ritual experts are first mentioned in I 49, 51–54, at the very start of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's problems.

Portents of terror were established for me,
 ...
 My omens were confused, equivocal⁷ every day,
 My situation could not be decided by seer (*bārû*) and inquirer (*šā'ilu*).

What I overheard in the street *portended* evil for me,
 When I lay down at night, my dream was terrifying.

Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan had experienced terrifying omens (I 49), but when he consulted the divinatory experts (here, the *bārû* and *šā'ilu*) they could not clearly diagnose his problem.⁸ The determination of the kind of evil afflicting the sufferer would have allowed the experts to prescribe the appropriate apotropaic or therapeutic ritual to dispel it. Unclear omens left them with complete uncertainty and thus without actionable information (I 51–52). The description in I 53–54 leaves the reader with the impression that the homeless sufferer (see I 50) was hounded night and day by what he perceived to be evil. This framing of the ritual experts' failure in I 51–52 by Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's perception of ubiquitous evil omens in I 49 and 53–54 highlights how the sufferer's experiences with the ritual experts had only exacerbated his dilemma. He had problems, but those best suited to help could offer him no clear answers. As Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan would later learn and then express in the opening hymn (I 35–36), until Marduk changed his mind and relented from his anger no one, including the ritual experts, could avert the consequences of his anger. But where else could the sufferer turn for help in his time of need if not to the experts?

Given his situation and powerlessness, the sufferer understandably has only one thing to do: give vent to his emotions through lamentation. In I 55–114, therefore, the sufferer laments the events that transpired in the wake of Marduk's anger, the protective spirits' abandonment, and the ritual experts' inconclusive diagnoses. From his recounting of it, his entire social world fell apart around him bit by bit. Although I have suggested in chapter five that these social misfortunes in the protagonist's unfolding experience would have *preceded* the protagonist's recognition of divine anger, we ought also to read the poem as a theological interpretation of the protagonist's experience and thus recognize that the poem implicitly authorizes lament in the face of divine anger.

Near the end of Tablet I the sufferer takes matters into his own hands and attempts to initiate communication with the gods since they were not "speaking" to him. Despite somewhat opaque similes and metaphors (they seem to imply a long-standing, emotion-laden struggle), it is clear that his attempts at prayer were to no avail.

⁸ More details about their methods are mentioned at II 6–7, discussed below. For a parallel to consulting these two particular professionals, see AbB 6 22, cited and discussed by Worthington 2009, 68–69.

*My supplication was as confused as a blazing flame,
My entreaty was like discord and dispute. (I 115–116)*

The following two lines do not refer explicitly to the protagonist's attempts at prayer. But, in context they may very well be intended both to state his attempted persuasiveness in such efforts while also broadening the poetic purview to all of his vocal attempts to find emotional and social support in his time of duress from a person, whether deity or human.

*I sweetened my lips, but they were as fierce as a spear,
I spoke kindly, but my conversation was a crossbar. (I 117–118)*

Even with these setbacks, the first Tablet of the poem ends with the sufferer holding out hope for the future (I 119–120).

But Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's hopes were dashed. With the passing of time (II 1) his misfortune only increased (II 3), besetting him on every side (II 2 and II 10–11). Situated between these two assessments of his continuing problems (II 2–3, 10–11) lies a passage similar to I 43–46, 51–52 wherein the protagonist describes his divine abandonment (II 4–5) and the ritual experts' failure to provide him a diagnosis or appropriate therapeutic remedy (II 6–9).

*I called to my god, but he did not pay attention to me,
I implored my goddess, but she paid me no heed.
The seer (bārû) could not determine the situation with divination,
The inquirer (šā'ilu) could not clarify my case with incense.
I prayed to the dream god, but he did not reveal anything to me,
The exorcist did not release the divine anger against me with his ritual.*

Because Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan believed his personal deities to have abandoned him (I 43–44), he needed to find a way to appease them (II 4–5) and thus renew their protection and enjoy the prosperity that they could bring him. He probably would have employed the *dingiršadabba* prayers in consultation with an exorcist for this purpose.⁹ But as he recounts it, these were of no avail (II 9). In II 6–7 the sufferer again turned to the divinatory specialists (see I 52), hoping they might discover an omen that would clarify his situation. The *bārû* would have used extispicy to obtain an omen for his client, reading the will of

⁹ See Jaques 2015 for the most recent edition and study of all the relevant prayers and associated rituals. KAR 44, obv. 4 (and duplicates) lists *dingiršadabba* prayers as part of the curriculum of the exorcist. See Geller 2018 for the most recent edition. A person might also have used an *eršahuğa* lament to turn away divine anger, administered by a *kalû*, "lamentation-singer." For these texts, see Maul 1988.

the gods from the sheep's liver, the tablet of the gods.¹⁰ The *šā'ilu*'s precise actions are debated but not their outcome: He could not help the protagonist. Unfortunately for our protagonist, the experts failed once again; neither could shed light on the sufferer's problem. Finally, there is the sufferer's effort mentioned in II 8. In one reading of this line, Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan sought the help of a minor dream deity, perhaps invoked as an intermediary between the sufferer and a higher god, to discover the cause of the sufferer's problems. The results of the god's activity might then have been manifested to the sufferer via a revelatory dream.¹¹ If this were the case, a ritual specialist would have likely been needed, perhaps a *šā'ilu* or an exorcist to perform the ritual.¹² In another reading of the line, the *zaqīqu* is not a deity but a human ritual functionary (see note 11) employed to help the sufferer alleviate his problems. In either case, here again the sufferer's attempts to utilize the official ritual apparatus of the experts yielded nothing. The ritual failure mentioned here in II 8 is particularly interesting since the sufferer will eventually have a series of dreams at the start of Tablet III that effectively announce his deliverance. So why is this dream-related activity ineffectual here in Tablet II? The answer is simple: Marduk does as he pleases, and he is not pleased to use dreams just yet. When it is time, he will initiate a series of effective, salvific dreams; until then, no expert can force his hand.

Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's response to ritual failure in Tablet II is two-fold. First, he complains that he is being unfairly treated by the gods: he feels as though he is being treated like an impious clod even though he knows himself to be quite the opposite (II 12–22, 23–32). This cognitive dissonance leads Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan to question humanity's ability to discern the divine will accurately (II 33–38).¹³ Coming as it does between two accounts in Tablet II of the ritual experts' inability to do their jobs (II 6–9 and II 108–113, see below), this statement in II 33–38 should be read as calling the entire divinatory and exorcistic ritual apparatus into question, even if only temporarily. These insti-

¹⁰ See, e.g., Steinkeller 2005.

¹¹ See the discussion in chapter three at II 8.

¹² In one understanding of an incantation prayer to Sîn, lines 25–26 (see Butler 1988, 379–98, specifically 288), the supplicant sends Anzagar to Sîn in order to gain forgiveness for his sins, which were the cause of his personal deities' anger. As this prayer is a *šūila*, an exorcist would have been present to guide the supplicant through it. See Lenzi 2011, 396. For a different understanding of this prayer, utilized as a parallel to the dream experience in *Ludlul* III 40–45, see Pongratz-Leisten 2010, 153–54.

¹³ Given the fact that Marduk's inscrutability is already praised in I 29–33 in the opening hymn, the sufferer's angst described here must be read within the past unfolding of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's suffering. The opening hymn represents the later, post-trauma setting during which the poem is recited, that is, after Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan had been delivered and gained insight into the events that befell him.

tutions had failed to do precisely those things that are their primary tasks. The contradiction between expectation and actual experience also leads Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan to reflect on the vacillating and unstable character of human existence in light of the divine decrees that order it (II 39–47). As much as the protagonist of the poem vents his emotions and angst in these lines, his existential and philosophical musings and rants provide no reprieve from his trouble (II 48). Thus Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan turns again in II 49ff. to lamentation, his second response to ritual failure. In this long lament he enumerates a wide array of physically debilitating maladies that leave him on the very brink of death (II 114–115), as explicated in chapter five.

Toward the conclusion of this second lament Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan once more drags up the failure of the ritual experts to help him (II 108–113). Here he names the *bārû* and the exorcist, who, as Worthington states, “perform complementary activities. The *āšipu* observes bodily signs (*sakikkû*) and is supposed to provide a diagnosis (i.e. identify the deity responsible for the symptoms?), the *bārû* observes divinatory omens (*têrêtu*) and is supposed to produce a forecast of duration”¹⁴ (*adannu*; see *Ludlul* III 1). But, they do not come through.

The exorcist was scared by my symptoms,
 And the seer (*bārû*) was confused by my omens.
 The exorcist could not reveal the nature of my illness,
 And the seer (*bārû*) did not give the duration of my sickness.
 My god did not rush in to help, he did not take my hand,
 My goddess did not have mercy on me, she did not walk alongside.
 (II 108–113)

This final instance of the experts' failure completes the pattern of broken communication between the divine and human realms (I 51–52, 115–118; II 4–9). Inability to communicate effectively with or receive positive, helpful revelation from the divine realm occurs near the start and conclusion of the sufferer's complaints and laments in both Tablets I and II, and divine abandonment is close by in three of these four places. Just as his life was surrounded by evil in the narrative's reality, his laments are surrounded by ineffectual professional ritual and divinatory experts in the narrative's literary presentation of that reality. It seems to me one must draw the conclusion that no one could help the protagonist but Marduk, the lord of wisdom, whose anger (and inscrutable plan for

¹⁴ Worthington 2009, 69.

the protagonist's suffering) would have to run its course before deliverance could occur.¹⁵

Before advancing to the account of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's deliverance in Tablet III, we should consider the fact that the ritual and divinatory failures described several times in *Ludlul* I and II are not unique to the poem. Evil signs, equivocal or confused omens, troubling dreams, and inability of ritual experts to help are all lamented in various Akkadian and Sumerian texts.¹⁶ Due to its remarkably similar language to that in *Ludlul*, the (bilingual) *eršahuġa* IVR 22, no. 2, lines 6'–19', directed to Marduk, is worth citing at length as an example of such texts.¹⁷

- 6'. ù ma-mú-da-ta bu-bu-luġ-e in-na-mar
 7'. u ina šutti gitallutum šakiššu
 8'. azu-e máš-a-ta si nu-mu-ni-íb-sá-e
 9'. bārû ina bīri ul ušteššeršu
 10'. ensi-e še-e-ta i-bí-a nu-mu-un-na-an-bad-dè
 11'. šā'ilu ina muššakka¹⁸ ul ipettēšu
 12'. [ám]-gig-ga-bi-šè^{10g}ám-lá-a-ta nu-sed-dè
 13'. [an]a maruštīšu ina šindi ul ināġ
 14'. š[im-mú-e] ka-kug-ga-aš nu-mu-ni-íb-te-en-t[e]-en
 15'. āšipu ina š[ipt]i ul upaššahšu
 16'. gu₄-gin₇ kar-mud-d[a]-[...] e-da-šub
 17'. kīma alpi [ina] idiptīšu nadī-ma
 18'. udu-gin₇ murgu-ba e-[d]a-lù-lù
 19'. kīma immeri i[na tabāš]t[ā]nīšu¹⁹ bullul-ma

¹⁵ See likewise the conclusion of Ambos's discussion of *Ludlul* in his general treatment of ritual failure. He writes, "Ritual could never work against the will of the gods or even force the gods to an action desired by the ritual's human participants. As long as Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan was exposed to Marduk's wrath and abandoned by his own protective deities, all the said efforts [of the experts] were doomed to failure" (2007, 30).

¹⁶ For an instance of such motifs in another Akkadian so-called wisdom composition from Ugarit, see *Ugaritica* 5, no. 162, lines 1'-8' (Nougayrol 1968; Oshima 2011, 205–15 is the most recent edition; see also Cohen 2013, 165–75 and the translation in Foster 2005, 410–11). For attestations in incantation prayers, see Mayer 1976, 103–6 and note the examples cited in chapter eight; see also Abusch 1987, 28, who cites a relevant therapeutic text (BAM 316 iii 12'–16'); and Ambos 2007, 30, who cites several relevant lines from Sumerian laments (for which see Cohen 1988, 1.123: 14, 1.124: 35ff. and 1.277: b+100, with translations on pp. 136–37, 294). Note also the Sumerian letter-prayer of Sîn-iddinam, cited by Oshima (2014, 191). Even the diagnostic handbook used by exorcists occasionally admits that a diagnosis is simply not possible. For examples, see Heeßel 2000, 74 with note 29, where he cites Sa-gig XVI 74' (p. 178), XXII 3 (p. 251), and XXVII 13 (p. 297), each of which read: *āšipu (ana bulliīšu) qiba lā išakkan*, "the exorcist should not give (for his recovery) a diagnosis."

¹⁷ For the text, see Maul 1994, 332.

¹⁸ *Muššakka* is used here for the expected *muššakki* (see Maul 1994, 333).

- 6'–7'. And in *his* dreams constant anxiety is inflicted on him.
 8'–9'. The *bārū* could not give him the correct decision with divination.
 10'–11'. The *šā'ilu* could not reveal *anything* to him with incense.
 12'–13'. He could not get relief [fo]r his affliction via medicine.²⁰
 14'–15'. The exorcist could not relieve him with an inca[ntation].
 16'–17'. He is laid up (i.e., sick)²¹ like an ox [in] his “wind.”²²
 18'–19'. He is sullied like a sheep b[y]²³ his *own* [excreme]nt.²⁴

Although this and other texts demonstrate that the complaint about ritual and divinatory failure in *Ludlul* is not unique, *Ludlul* is unique in the frequency with which this motif comes up and in the highly developed lamentation and religious doubt that are expressed in conjunction with the protagonist's undiagnosed, untreatable suffering. This particular feature of *Ludlul* deserves a more prominent place in any attempt to understand the poem's broader institutional purpose.

¹⁹ The term *tabāštānu* is very rare, occurring only in a few bilingual texts and in *Ludlul* II 107 among monolingual texts. OB Lú A 225 (also OB Lú D 138 and OB Lú Frag. I 5) attest the equivalency *lú mur7.ba.ná.a = ša ina tabāštānīšu bullulu*, “the one sullied by (lit. coated, smeared with) his *own* excrement,” see CAD T, 24 and MSL 12, 164, 206, and 201, respectively. For the term in the *Ludlul* Commentary (rev. 3) and a late astrological commentary, see chapter nine.

²⁰ Lit. “with a bandage.” See *Ludlul* III 44–45.

²¹ *Nadū* (= Sumerian *šub*) sometimes has the sense of “laid up, ill” in the stative; see *CDA*, 230 and CAD N/1, 92; the latter provides examples.

²² “Wind” seems to be some kind of cattle illness; see CAD I/J, 9. The word is rarely attested as a disease.

²³ Lit. “coated with.”

²⁴ These last two lines resonate with *Ludlul* II 106–107, which occur just before the experts' failure is mentioned near the end of Tablet II:

ina rubšīya abūt kī alpi
ubtallil kī immeri ina tabāštānīya

I would spend the night in my own filth like an ox,
 I would wallow in my own excrement like a sheep.

Although one can interpret the imagery in these lines in various ways (e.g., as an indication of the sufferer's utter misery), it seems to me that one could (also?) view these lines as an indication that the chasm between human knowledge about the causes of suffering (e.g., sin) and the knowledge of the gods is as wide as that between the ways of civilized humans (the proper way to act) and ignorant animals (the way the sufferer feels he is acting). For ignorance of sin being likened to animal behavior elsewhere in Akkadian religious literature, see, e.g., Section B, lines 3–4 and 12–13 in the *dingiršadabba's* edited by Jaques (2015, 83–84).

He said, "Marduk sent m[e].

I brought this band[age] to Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan."

He brought the band[age] in his pure hands,

He entr[usted?] it to the hand of my servant.

So-called message dreams were an accepted form of personal revelation in ancient Mesopotamia that was believed to be divinely initiated and could occur without any kind of professional presence or assistance.²⁵ According to Butler, "[t]he main criterion of a Mesopotamian message dream is that a figure (usually divine) gives an unequivocal message to a dreamer."²⁶ Since Marduk needed to be the one to initiate the sufferer's deliverance, the message dream was the best medium of revelation for the poem to use; it was perfectly suited to the author's theological needs. Furthermore, because dreams are private and impossible to verify objectively—especially when the dreamer is a literary character—the author of *Ludlul* could shape the sufferer's experience of the dream—the dream's content—to suit his purposes. Finally, although one revelatory dream might easily be overlooked or dismissed, a series of similar dreams with explicit claims about their divine origin was undeniably and emphatically portentous.²⁷ In other words, including a series of dreams in the poem gave the author of *Ludlul* an opportunity to use, in a highly artificial,

²⁵ Of course, there was professional assistance available, as even I 52 and II 7 shows. Such assistance may have been typical, though apparently not required. One could suggest that prophecy and visions were forms of revelation that did not require specialist assistance, but such revelations were generally not personal; rather, they were received by individuals (acting as a deity's messenger) in order to deliver them to others. On message dreams, see Butler 1998, 15–18, who builds on Oppenheim's work (1956, 186–206) and refines the category with its constituent elements. Zgoll has proposed a completely new classificatory scheme based on a thorough review of the relevant data in the second chapter of her book *Traum und Welterleben im antiken Mesopotamien* (2006, 55–257, but see especially 87–95 [critique of old schemes] and 237–40 [summary of her new scheme]). Her scheme is based on the predominance of two kinds of dream content: images and speech. There are image-dreams (*Bildträume*), speech-dreams (*Redeträume*), and some dreams that combine these two kinds of content. The location of the addressee clarifies the classificatory situation of dreams in the latter, mixed group. That is, if speech in a dream addresses someone within the dream, the speech is considered intrarelatational. If speech is directed to someone outside the dream, the speech is extrarelatational. Intrarelatational speech remains within the world of the dream. Zgoll therefore categorizes this sub-group with image-dreams. The resulting scheme is as follows: 1. intrarelatational image-dreams; 1a. image-dreams entirely comprised of images; 1b. image-dreams comprised of both images and intrarelatational speech; 2. extrarelatational speech-dreams; 2a. speech-dreams entirely comprised of speech; 2b. speech dreams comprised of both extrarelatational speech and images (238). As pointed out in note 28, Zgoll's system is helpful for understanding the dreams in *Ludlul* by grouping them with similar examples.

²⁶ Butler 1998, 18.

²⁷ On the issue of multiple dreams as a sign of authentic revelation, see Oppenheim 1956, 208 and Zgoll 2006, 365.

tendentious, and emphatic manner, an acceptable medium of revelation that could occur outside of professional ritual expertise.²⁸

In the lines following the dreams the sufferer understands that his sickness has ended (III 50), Marduk's anger has been still (III 51–52), and his sins forgiven (III 58–61). He then begins a litany, one that runs from III 68 (at least) to the end of Tablet III and on into Tablet IV (as best as we can tell), in which the protagonist describes how Marduk actively reversed all of the physical maladies mentioned in Tablet II.²⁹ There are hints of some ritual activity in the remainder of Tablet IV, to which we will return. And Tablet V is largely concerned with praising Marduk for deliverance and the sufferer's reintegration into society at various temple gates. Clearly, the dreams are the turning point in Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's fortunes.

Although several obscurities remain in III 9–46, enough can be understood about the dreams to suggest that their literary function offers the final conceptual element to understanding the poem's broader institutional purpose.

An important initial point to raise about these dreams is that although the poem has prepared us for Marduk's display of mercy, the actual actions attributed to the god to implement that mercy are atypical. The use of representatives appearing in dreams to perform ritual actions is not at all the usual manner in which gods effected healing in the broad scheme of the Mesopotamian ritual practices. Rather, as already mentioned, the gods normally worked through human divinatory and ritual experts, and these experts performed rituals on people in waking life. From a very broad corpus of texts we know that the experts' rituals frequently employed prayers to the gods, included divinely-empowered incantations against malevolent forces, and exhibited a rich mythology in which the gods cooperate with the specialists to reveal signs or effect change for human clients like Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan. Moreover, there are

²⁸ Oppenheim has already noted the artificiality of the dreams. Although each of the dreams in *Ludlul*, taken individually, are examples of what he identifies as message dreams the series as a whole, more typical of what he calls symbolic dreams (208), defy his categorization (see likewise, Butler 1998, 16 and Noegel 2001, 48; contrast Zgoll, whose classificatory scheme would place these dreams with others from the group "image-dreams comprised of both images and intrarelatational speech" [2006, 241]; see note 25 above). The dreams in *Ludlul*, Oppenheim opines, "seem to be the product of a somewhat learned imagination guided by literary aspirations, and show the influence of individual artistic creativeness" (1956, 217). Toward the end of his comments about the dreams in *Ludlul* he states that "[n]o reference ... is made to the several dream-appearitions, which thus remain unconnected with the story. They are apparently not used functionally but only for stylistic reasons" (217). Contrary to Oppenheim's opinion in this matter, I suggest the inclusion of dream-figures was a very important rhetorical element to achieving the purpose of the poem. Pongratz-Leisten, although offering a different interpretation than the present one, agrees that the dreams and dream figures have an important function in the meaning of the poem (2010, 146).

²⁹ Marduk is the subject of nearly all of the verbs in III 61–IV, line h.

good reasons to believe that from the late second millennium on many ritual experts (i.e., exorcists, *bārîs*, lament-singers, physicians and astrologers)³⁰ recognized the divine origins of their crafts and traced their professional ancestries back through the *apkallus* to Ea, Marduk's father.³¹ The intermediation of these ritual experts was therefore the accepted and, perhaps more importantly, divinely-authorized channel for bringing divine assistance to the people.

Why therefore are dreams and dream-figures used by Marduk in *Ludlul* III rather than allowing the divinely-sanctioned human experts to do their work in waking life? The answer is at least two-fold. The first part of the answer lies in the previous section of this chapter. The experts mentioned earlier in the poem had repeatedly failed to do their job. The divinatory and ritual apparatuses in their hands had not helped the sufferer. Others were needed, and the dream figures fit the bill.

As *Ludlul*'s opening hymn makes clear, the reason for the human experts' failure was divine, inscrutable sovereignty. Without Marduk's cooperation the experts were powerless (I 35–36).³² This was a tenable answer for professional ritual failure; the poem could have left matters there.³³ But it doesn't. Why? The answer to this question forms the second part of the answer to why dream figures rather than human experts in waking life are used to effect the sufferer's deliverance.

The poem does not stop its theological exploration of ritual failure with the assertion of divine sovereignty because sometimes people actually recovered from their suffering outside the normal channels of assistance, that is, despite the (failed) attempts of the ritual experts. This is presumably also why the poem does not simply have Marduk lift his uncooperative attitude and allow the human ritual experts finally to diagnose and treat the sufferer successfully. There was another institutional agenda at work. On the one hand, such a possibility could offer hope to the suffering patient. On the other, such cases could have been perceived as a threat to the experts and their professional ritual practices (even as it demonstrated Marduk's sovereignty in matters of mercy—also lauded in the opening hymn). I suggest that the poem's use of dreams in *Ludlul* III accounted for the possibility of healing outside of the normal ritual

³⁰ To the best of my knowledge there is no evidence for *šā'ilus* in this matter.

³¹ See Lenzi 2008, 67–134.

³² Note Lambert's comments on the dreams: "As dreams they are most curious. The writer has inserted them like the Classical *deus ex machina*. The abandoned sufferer would not be touched in actual life by the priests. Thus a supernatural means had to be used, and this provided the opportunity of giving the message of grace from Marduk himself" (1959a, 147).

³³ Despite the critical presentation of ritual experts in Tablets I and II, I do not agree with Pongratz-Leisten's assessment that *Ludlul* is anti-institutional (2010, 147, 150). As will be shown below, it is quite the opposite (see likewise Oshima 2014, 231).

channels, and its manner of presenting rituals in the dreams helped shape the potential reactions to such healing from both the ones healed as well as the human ritual experts excluded from the process. In more general terms, the author utilized a common revelatory means in an unusual manner to address an anomalous situation in order to incorporate the anomaly into the professional ritual sphere to support the perception of its coherence.³⁴ Since gods do not normally perform rituals, the author utilized the dream figures as Marduk's ritual agents.³⁵ Who then are these dream figures, and how does their presence advance the agenda of the poem?

The male figure in the first dream and the female figure in the third, as far as we can tell from the preserved text, do not perform any ritual functions. Based on their descriptions and namelessness/lack of association (contrast the other two figures), they are probably lower-level divine beings. The male figure has extraordinary features (III 9b–10a) and towers over the protagonist (III 11). The poem attributes a radiance (*melammû*) and an awe (*pulḥatu*) to him that are typical of divine beings (III 12). As for the female figure, she is described as beautiful in appearance (III 31) and, even at a distance, divine (III 32). Moreover, she utters words in III 36 often found in the mouth of divine beings, especially goddesses speaking to humans, *lā tapallaḥ*, “fear not!”³⁶ Although there is no way to be sure, I am inclined to tentatively identify these two low-level divine figures with the sufferer's personal deities.³⁷ Since Marduk has the power to expel and call back the personal gods (I 15–16) and

³⁴ Note Richardson's comment on the didactic potential in the varied forms of communication between the gods and humans: “the multiplicity of forms not only tolerated, but also bounded and dissipated the intellectual and religious contradictions that arose within the cultural arena—one that in turn provided a didactic framework for their resolution” (2017, 188; similarly, p. 193).

³⁵ Note Lambert's comment in his edition of the poem: “A god may appear in a dream, but gods themselves did not perform ritual curing. This was the task of priests, and they did not normally practice their rites in other people's sleep. So the writer resorts to a succession of none too convincing dreams as a means of bringing the necessary priests to the sick man's bedside” (1960, 24). As suggested above, casting two of the dream-figures as ritual experts was a very important rhetorical element to achieving the purpose of the poem.

³⁶ See the references provided in CAD P, 40.

³⁷ The fragmentary description of the female figure in III 33 as “a queen of peoples” (*šarrat nišī*) remains difficult for this identification, but we do not yet know how this line concluded. The queen (Zarpanitu?) may have been the person who sent the female figure; she is, after all, the only figure of the four in the dreams without a sender. And this would prepare the reader for Zarpanitu's role in Tablet V (see lines 29, 53, 76, and, in my own reconstruction, 104 [compare Oshima 2014, 112]). Pongratz-Leisten proposes to identify the female figure as Ištar (2010, 151; see also Groneberg 1997, 108). Zgoll sees an ascending hierarchy among the senders of the four dreams, culminating with Marduk (2006, 150, 285). I agree that Ur-Nintunugga's mention of Marduk as his sender in III 43 is climactic. But my present understanding of the first dream's sender (i.e., “your lord” in III 15 is Marduk; see the comments in chapter three at III 15 and III 18) preclude the idea of an ascending hierarchy among the senders of the dreams.

he has already sent these deities away (I 43–44), it seems reasonable to think, in a kind of reversal of the logic in I 41–44, that he would compel their return when his anger subsided (see III 51–52) so the sufferer could recover from his woes. (The woes enumerated in Tablets I and II followed directly upon the divine abandonment described in lines I 43ff., so it seems logical to think the healing would require the return of the personal gods.) If this identification is correct, the poem's use of a dream to signal the return of personal gods is unusual. A supporting reason for understanding these two figures as returning personal gods comes from the ritual actions attributed to the second and fourth figures in the dreams, the purification priest sent by the exorcist Laluralimma and the exorcist named Ur-Nintinugga.

These two named figures and their significance were presumably known to the author and the assumed audience, but we have very little to go on beyond what is described in the text.³⁸ Both appear to be humans, from Babylonia (the first, from Nippur, a city well-known for its physicians; the second, from Babylon), and famous for their prowess in the healing arts. According to the text Laluralimma sent a representative who appears in the second dream as a *ramku* or purification ritual expert. In the last dream Ur-Nintinugga appears, claiming to be the representative of Marduk. If the sufferer's personal gods were still angry, this purification ritual expert and Ur-Nintinugga, the exorcist, would need to perform some kind of appeasement ritual on behalf of the sufferer to quell their anger. But they do not. Rather, they both perform therapeutic ritual acts, suggesting thereby that the divine anger and abandonment were already past.³⁹ The first purifies Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan, speaks an incantation over him, and performs a therapeutic ritual. Ur-Nintinugga delivers a bandage from Marduk. The most significant feature to recognize for our purposes here is that both of these figures are presented as from among the very experts who had failed the sufferer.⁴⁰ And, significantly, they are either identified with or related to exorcism.

The dreams display Marduk's sovereign power to show mercy when and as he sees fit, offering hope to the sufferer who had slipped through the cracks of the official divinatory and ritual practices. Yet the means by which the dream-figures achieve the sufferer's healing belong to the professional sphere of the ritual experts, notably and explicitly the exorcists. Thus, even when Marduk acted independently of the divinely-sanctioned human ritual experts, he main-

³⁸ See the notes in chapter three at III 25 and III 40.

³⁹ For the two-track healing process in which divine appeasement worked along with therapeutic means, see, e.g., Heeßel 2000, 82, 95 and 2007, 129.

⁴⁰ See likewise Pongratz-Leisten 2010, 152.

tained the authority and integrity of the ritual practices the human experts oversaw.⁴¹ This would have quelled the sufferer's concerns about the competence of the divinatory and ritual experts and the general effectiveness of their divinely-sanctioned rituals.

As mentioned already, by III 51–55 we read that Marduk's wrath had abated and the protagonist's sins carried off (III 61). And the remainder of Tablet III and part of Tablet IV describe the reversal of the protagonist's physical woes. It would seem our story should end at this point. And yet it does not. It is important to recognize that the protagonist's recovery has taken place entirely in private by way of subjective dreams. Even if the poem admits to this kind of extraordinary, Marduk-induced recovery, it still describes the protagonist's experience of the river ordeal in IV, line j and his removal of the mark of slavery in IV §B 10' (line k); and there seems to be a two-fold mention of the protagonist's performance of a *šigû* prayer—perhaps in Marduk's temple, if Oshima's restoration is correct⁴²—in IV §B 14'–15'. Why are these things included if Marduk has delivered the protagonist? All of these ritual activities are *public* demonstrations of the protagonist's penance and renewed standing with Marduk and his personal gods through *official* channels, which would have required the assistance of ritual experts in waking life. And, despite the fragmentary context, we can see that they are effective (IV §B 16', line o). Further, Tablet V also describes a public element of his recovery as the protagonist enters Marduk's temple complex (V 40–66), where at one of the gates his sin (*e'iltu*) is released (V 48), and celebrates his well-being at a feast with his fellow citizens (V 67–70). Thus, the poem brings the sufferer back into the ambit of the ritual experts and temple institution and thereby affirms again the normal means and agents of ritual healing.

7.4. CONCLUSION

The above reading has assumed that the lamentation and doubt that may have arisen due to ritual failure would have done so among people in the midst of suffering who had actually experienced (or were experiencing) such a ritual

⁴¹ In support of this idea, one might appeal to Lambert (as I did previously in Lenzi 2012, 62, n.97), who, while identifying parallels to *Ludlul* in the incantation literature, noted that “[a]t the point where, if *Ludlul* were an incantation, the prescriptions for the ritual would be found, the dreams occur in which the ritual is performed and an incantation priest presents himself;” even if—quite extraordinarily—in a dream (1960, 27). See now chapter eight for a different understanding.

⁴² See Oshima 2014, 104, 105, 428 and my comments in chapter three at IV §B 14'.

failure and not the ritual specialists themselves. *Ludlul* would have assured the disappointed ritual patients that there was hope even when the experts failed. This hope, although extraordinary when it came, should not be understood as undermining the normal ritual practices, as it indicates that even in an extraordinary circumstance of divine intervention the experts' rituals would be employed and would still be required subsequent to recovery. Yet, we actually do not know to what degree non-scribes would have known (or understood) *Ludlul*. (The texts examined in chapter ten are all written by professional scribes.) The one group that we are certain would have known and understood the poem was the *ummânū*, the scholars, who comprised a significant group among Mesopotamian ritual experts. We might entertain for a moment therefore the idea that the sufferer's situation in the poem also spoke to ritual experts or experts in training, since, as chapter four demonstrates, scribal students copied the poem in the second stage of their curricula, the stage that focused especially on exorcism.

Mesopotamian scholarship circumscribed a very exclusive group with extremely strong ideological notions about their value and importance to the king, society and cultural tradition broadly considered.⁴³ As with any group, a crack in its ideological foundation would need to be patched carefully to guarantee the perpetuation of the group's social position and cultural significance. *Ludlul* would have effectively achieved this purpose with regard to ritual failure, by assuring scholars that their rituals did indeed work even in extraordinary cases. Their occasional failures or frustrations were not due to their incompetence or the inadequacy (or falsehood) of their ritual practices, the poem assured. Rather, Marduk, the lord of their crafts—all of which were designated *nēmeqi*, "wisdom"⁴⁴—and his sovereignty simply superseded their ritual actions. Without his cooperation their hands were tied. It might have been some consolation, however, that when Marduk did act without their involvement he did so, the poem reassures, in a way that would do them proud and would still leave them a role to play afterwards.⁴⁵

⁴³ See, e.g., Pongratz-Leisten 1999; 2013; 2015; Lenzi 2008, 67–122, 136–49.

⁴⁴ See Beaulieu 2007, 12 and SAACT 7, xxxiv–xxxv.

⁴⁵ Of course, this suggestion does not exclude the possibility that the poem, even if never heard by non-experts, could (also) have had other pedagogical value for the ritual experts. For example, it could have taught them how to explain to their patients why some problems were unable to be diagnosed while offering them hope.

CHAPTER 8:
THE LANGUAGE OF AKKADIAN INCANTATION PRAYERS
IN *LU DLUL* AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

“[W]enn Leben überhaupt einen Sinn
hat, dann muß auch Leiden einen Sinn
haben.” —Viktor Frankl¹

As previous chapters have shown, *Ludlul* was the product of a scholar who was very likely an exorcist and provided ideological support for the professional credibility and institutional concerns important to such ritual experts. The present chapter expands upon one facet of this learned background through an intertextual, comparative literary reading. Specifically, I argue that *Ludlul* weaves into its poetic text the form, themes, and language of incantation prayers, one of the most important genres used by the exorcists, and thereby shapes its religio-literary agenda in a distinctive manner. Ultimately, I argue, the poem offers its readers a viewpoint on suffering and restoration that is both a subjective, vicarious literary experience as well as an objective, exemplary guide, making *Ludlul* a unique composition within the Akkadian literary repertoire.²

8.1. IMPETUS AND BACKGROUND

In a study from 2007 Paul Alain-Beaulieu made a statement that gave the impetus to my interest in this comparative matter.³ He wrote:

[t]he feelings expressed in the prayers are very much the same as the ones we find in compositions about pious sufferers, that is to say, praise of the deity, sense of guilt, ignorance of the fault committed, feelings of dejection, paranoia, abandonment, bodily ailments and disease, and especially a desperate longing for the deity to relent.... The two great wisdom texts from Mesopotamia, *Ludlul* and the Theodicy, both created in the milieu of the exorcists, only present more sophisticated philosophical expositions of the religious emotions expressed in the *šu'illas*.⁴

¹ Frankl 1947, 94.

² This chapter builds on Lambert's fundamental insight that “[a]s literature the originality of the work lies in the overall design rather than in its parts. Much of the material, even complete couplets, and the themes are traditional” (1960, 26; see van Rensburg 1995 for a short survey).

³ See SAACT 7, xxviii, n.54.

⁴ Beaulieu 2007, 10–11. *Ludlul*'s resonance with Akkadian prayers was recognized at least as

In 2010, I took up Beaulieu's idea briefly in my introduction to the SAACT edition of *Ludlul* in an attempt to interpret the first person voice used in the poem. For the sake of background I cite my original comparative idea here at length.

Perhaps the most significant and easily detected contribution of the first person voice to *Ludlul* is that it works in tandem with the poem's content to activate an analogy between the text and a well-known corpus of religious literature: the *šuil*la-prayers. The first person voice along with the hymnic introduction, the extensive lamenting of personal suffering, including the loss of divine protection, and the praising of the deity for deliverance all recall in one way or another the form and content of the *šuil*la-prayers....⁵

But *Ludlul* is not actually a *šuil*la for several reasons. First, there are some glaring differences. *Ludlul* lacks any hint of petition ...—an essential element of the *šuil*las, and the praise offered in *Ludlul* is rooted in both the past and the present. Praise in *šuil*las is always future, promised in anticipation of future divine intervention. Both of these differences are tied to the fact that *Ludlul* is a retrospective account. The suffering had already passed so petition was not necessary; the deliverance had already come so praise is not anticipated but already (being) offered. Second, *Ludlul* devotes a large section of the poem ... to not only praising the deity for deliverance but to actually describing how the deliverance was announced and implemented. This is a significant departure from what is found in *šuil*la-prayers. Finally, *Ludlul* differs from *šuil*las in that the sufferer in *Ludlul* II 12–48 protests his undeserved suffering, questions the knowability of the gods, and reflects upon the human condition generally. This is not standard *šuil*la material.⁶

early as 1875, when its first known textual witness was printed in IVR¹, 67 under the heading “Assyrian Prayers.” That heading was changed to “Legend” in the second edition of 1891 (IVR², 60*; but see p. x, which reads “Legend (?)”), likely due to the new textual discoveries made in the intervening years. See chapter one. More explicitly, before the publication of his edition of the poem in 1960, Lambert wrote the following in a brief note entitled “The Literary Structure, Background and Ideas of the Babylonian ‘Poem of the Righteous Sufferer’”: “The general plan of *Ludlul* is very much like an acted incantation. In ordinary life, at least in theory, when a disease afflicted a man the exorcist performed rites over him and expelled the demon. Many incantations tell a simple story of this kind. This is exactly what happens in *Ludlul*, except that the scale is more grandiose” (1959a, 147). Van Rensburg 1995: 234–36 briefly makes a similar point.

⁵ At this point in the quotation I cite Nabû 1 as a representative example. See Mayer 1976, 469–72 for an edition and German translation; Foster 2005, 697 and Seux 1976, 301–2 provide English and French translations, respectively; see also Lenzi 2011, 325–37 for an introduction, notes, and translation. When referring to Akkadian incantation prayers (and therefore also Akkadian *šuil*la prayers, which are a subset of incantation prayers), I follow the system laid out in Mayer's catalog (1976, 375–437), which was adopted by Frechette 2012, 249–75 (for *šuil*la prayers only), and is now utilized in my online catalog of *šuil*la prayers (<http://www.shuilas.org/catalog.html>). Namely, each distinct incantation prayer is identified by the divine addressee followed by a number (e.g., Nabû 1, Ištar 3, Šin 3, etc.).

⁶ I would formulate this statement differently now: “*Ludlul* differs from *šuil*las in that the suf-

Even if *Ludlul* is not actually a *šuilīa*, the first person voice in *Ludlul* (in tandem with its content) is one way the author has connected his rather unique composition to a much more common and thus better known literary-religious genre. The first person voice is, in short, one way to orient the reader to the text's genre. It tells the reader, "Think *šuilīa*!"⁷

After further consideration, I look back on this statement as inadequate. It does not fully appreciate the potential of the literary comparison between *Ludlul* and the genre of Akkadian incantation prayers broadly construed.⁸ A fuller exploration reveals more to this literary comparison, which is the present chapter's primary undertaking.

The method I have adopted here is to compare the elements in the literary structure of incantation prayers with the text of *Ludlul*, using both thematic affinities and shared vocabulary between the two to support and interpret these broad structural comparisons. Since Werner Mayer has analyzed the form, themes, phrasing, and vocabulary of Akkadian incantation prayers so fully in his published dissertation (1976), I use his work as the main source of data on the incantation prayers. And since incantation prayers are attested among tablets from Hattusa (Adad 1a is attested in KUB 4 26A, and Ištar 2 in KUB 37 36+37), I assume this genre has chronological priority to *Ludlul*, which, as mentioned several times already, I assume was composed sometime in the late second millennium. After demonstrating that *Ludlul* in fact does reflect the form, themes, and language of the Akkadian incantation prayers in the first section of this chapter, I will take up the interpretation of this fact more briefly in the second.

I wrote most of the preceding words for a study published in 2015 (Lenzi 2015c). At the time that I submitted the study for publication there was a consensus that *Ludlul* had only four Tablets—what is now recognized as Tablets I, II, III, and V. Oshima's idea that the poem in fact comprises *five* Tablets, with the new Tablet to be inserted as the poem's penultimate one, had been announced but was not yet available to me in print for scrutiny and thus did not

ferer in *Ludlul* II 12–48 protests his undeserved suffering, questions the knowability of the gods, and reflects upon the human condition generally. This is not standard *šuilīa* material." These ideas do come up in *šuilīa* prayers on occasion (see, e.g., Marduk 4, cited below; edited by Mayer 2004 and Oshima 2011, 346–53; see Foster 2005, 680–82 for an English translation and Lenzi 2011, 291–311 for introduction, notes, and translation), but they are not presented in such an elaborate or pointedly-formulated manner as they are in *Ludlul*.

⁷ See SAACT 7, xxviii–xxvix.

⁸ Therefore, I do not limit myself to *šuilīa* prayers, i.e., those incantation prayers that are marked with the *šuilīa* rubric explicitly. For this definition of *šuilīa* prayer, see Frechette 2012.

factor into the article.⁹ This chapter is a revision of that previous study and thus utilizes the new understanding of the textual basis for the poem, an idea I endorse and an idea that I think has solid precedent in the history of the reconstruction of the text (see chapter one). Just as Akkadian compositions may grow over (our contemporary) time in terms of their textual basis (again, see chapter one), we must also of course hold our contemporary interpretations of these texts tentatively, always being open to the possibility that new textual materials (as well as questions and perspectives) will prove our interpretations false, incomplete, incoherent, etc. In the course of revising this chapter, I had an opportunity to test my original hypothesis laid out in the previous paragraphs above. Although the (relatively meager) new material in Tablet IV has required some expansion and nuance in my interpretation, I believe my original hypothesis stands up to scrutiny. But, such was not a foregone conclusion. Thus, in addition to its contribution to our understanding of *Ludlul*'s ancient scholarly context and literary background, the present chapter also offers a case study of the inevitable professional "hazard" (or opportunity) of interpreting Akkadian literature in our modern scholarly setting, too.

8.2. THE LITERARY STRUCTURE OF INCANTATION PRAYERS AND *LUDLUL*

I take it as a methodological given that comparison is not identification. *Ludlul* is not an incantation prayer. The purpose of comparing items A and B, *Ludlul* and Akkadian incantation prayers, is not to equate the two or even to posit a direct genetic relationship. Rather, it is to learn something new about one or both comparanda by interpreting their similarities *and* their differences.¹⁰

8.2.1. *Basic Structural Elements of Incantation Prayers*

Although variously construed and numbered, we may posit six basic structural elements in the outline of an ideal Akkadian incantation prayer: 1) invocation/hymnic introduction, 2) self-presentation, 3) lament, 4) description of the supplicant's acts, 5) petition, and 6) concluding praise.¹¹ As with most formal

⁹ See Lenzi 2015c, 67, n.1, which cites Oshima 2012 and 2012a.

¹⁰ See Jonathan Z. Smith's famous essay on the comparative method entitled "In Comparison a Magic Dwells" (1982, 19–35; reprinted, Patton and Ray 2000, 23–44).

¹¹ See Mayer 1976, 34–35 for the basic outline with reference to previous studies and 36–37 for his more nuanced discussion of the prayers' structural features (elaborated in the following chapters of his book) in light of the variety of actual texts—which vary in their inclusion of the identified structural elements and the number of lines given to each. See also Frechette 2012,

generalizations, we should recognize the limitations of this list. These structural features do not occur in every single incantation prayer; they do not always occur in the listed order; and when they do occur (in whatever order), they do not always occur with the same content, level of development, etc. Despite these limitations, the list is a useful heuristic for studying incantation prayers. And as such, they will form the starting point for our comparison with *Ludlul*.

8.2.1.1. Invocation/Hymnic Introduction and Concluding Praise

It is obvious from the poem's opening hymn (I 1–40) and concluding paeans to Marduk (see especially V 69–82, 120)¹² that the poem's structure fits well—if only generally—with the first and the last structural features of the incantation prayers, namely, invocation/hymnic introduction and concluding praise. A couple of features within the poem's opening and concluding praise supports this general similarity. First, as is often the case in the hymnic introductions of incantation prayers, the several attributes celebrated in *Ludlul*'s opening hymn are relevant to the concerns of the rest of the text.¹³ The hymn lauds both Marduk's brutal but temporary anger as well as his soothing and inevitable mercy. Moreover, he exercises these attributes, the hymn explains, in an inscrutable manner; no one can gainsay his will, an idea explored in chapter seven. These attributes are the theological foundation for the events that unfold in the life of the poem's protagonist. Second, though the praise in *Ludlul* is not anticipatory as it is in the incantation prayers,¹⁴ it does demonstrate a future

129–31 for a review and discussion. I leave aside for the present purpose the fact that most incantation prayers bear both a rubric and the (oft neglected) fact that they also frequently have associated ritual instructions.

¹² The conclusion to the poem is still incompletely recovered. It must be admitted that non-doxological text occurs in the material after V 82 and before V 120. But the point remains that a major section in the last part of the poem's final tablet concerns itself with praise. And the very last line of the poem clearly praises Marduk. On a side note, the final twenty lines (or thereabouts) of the poem may function similarly to the concluding lines of various hymns, in which the one on whose behalf the hymn is written is explicitly named (V 111, 119) and various wishes are stated (see V 113–118; I owe the insight originally to Takayoshi Oshima via a personal communication), though the latter, I believe, are addressed to anyone who has experienced suffering (see the notes in chapter three at V 113 and in the concluding section of this chapter). For the general point about the conclusion to hymns, see Oshima 2011, 34 and with regard to *Ludlul* specifically, Oshima 2014, 13–14, 31–32, where he argues that *Ludlul* is a thanksgiving hymn (with much previous literature cited in n.132).

¹³ See Hunt 2010 for a thorough treatment of this issue in *šuilā* prayers and the more concise statements in Abusch 2003 (treating incantation prayers) and Abusch 2005 (treating *šuilā* prayers).

¹⁴ That is, the opening hymn is not preparatory for some petition expressed later in the poem; there are no petitions in the poem (see note 88 below). And the concluding praise is not looking to

orientation and universal extent that may be viewed as a kind of variation on the theme of future praise one sees in the conclusions of incantation prayers.¹⁵ One might compare phrases in incantation prayers such as *āmīrūya ana dārāti dalīlīka lidlulū*, “may all who see me resound your praises forever,” and *āmīrūya narbiki lišāpū ana nišī rapšāti*, “may all who see me make your greatness manifest to the expansive peoples.”¹⁶ Note especially *Ludlul* V 77–82 in this regard:

Wherever the earth is established, the heavens stretched out,
The sun shines *and* fire blazes,
Wherever water flows *and* wind blows,
Those whose lump of clay Aruru pinched off,
[Li]ving beings, *who* walk about,
As many [peo]ple as there are, praise Marduk!

We see then how both the beginning of *Ludlul* and its conclusion reflect generally the structural positioning of praise within incantation prayers.

But two specific discourse markers indicate that this general structural congruence between *Ludlul* and incantation prayers requires some adjustment. The first discourse marker is the use of the first person precativ of *dalālu* (*ludlul*) for the opening word of the poem, as one finds in hymns (e.g., the hymn to Gula in LKA 17).¹⁷ In contrast to this usage, the verbal form *ludlul* is typically found in the concluding praise of many incantation prayers (compare, e.g., the often attested *dalīlīka ludlul*).¹⁸ This usage signals that our poem from the very start characterizes itself as a text offering thanksgiving, that is, the fulfillment of the final promise of future praise that a sufferer would have expressed when he engaged in the ritual recitation of an incantation prayer.¹⁹ The second discourse marker is the concluding words of the poem, [*l*]anittaka *tābat* (V 120), the Sumerian equivalent of which (zà-mí-zu dùg-ga[-àm]) forms the concluding praise in a large number of Sumerian texts, many of which are classified as

a time of post-recovery thankfulness as in incantation prayers; obviously, the protagonist is already recovered.

¹⁵ See the conclusion to this chapter for further reflections on this aspect of the text.

¹⁶ See Mayer 1976, 329–30, who cites these and other examples.

¹⁷ The text is edited in Ebeling 1954. See Foster 2005, 668–70 and Seux 1976, 103–6 for translations.

¹⁸ See Mayer 1976, 321–23.

¹⁹ See likewise, e.g., Oshima 2014, 14, 32 (with further literature in n.132); Ziegler 2015, 218–21; van der Toorn 2003, 76; Albertz 1988, 47–53; Moran 2002, 191; Weinfeld 1988; and Röllig 1987, 57.

hymns.²⁰ Thus, *Ludlul* announces from its inception and in its conclusion that its primary concern is doxological. That is, *Ludlul* begins and ends as would a hymn of thanksgiving.²¹ This recognition, however, does not negate our comparison with incantation prayers. As was stated earlier, *Ludlul* is not an incantation prayer. Even a quick perusal would show enough differences to support that conclusion. Still, the general point remains: The poem opens and concludes with words of praise, which shows a general congruence with the form of incantation prayers. In light of the comparison of other structural features noted below, this general congruence with modification is worthy of recognition and interpretation.

8.2.1.2. Self-Presentation

As is well-known, the supplicant's self-presentation in incantation prayers occurs in structural terms somewhere after the introductory praise—often directly after it.²² The language used for the self-presentation is rather formulaic. Variations exist, of course, but the following represents what one will commonly find.²³ Simple personal identification:

- *anāku annanna mār annanna*, “I, so-and-so, son of so-and-so”
- *anāku PN (aradka / ardu pāliḥka / dušmû pāliḥka)*, “I, PN, (your servant / the servant who fears you / the servant who fears you)”

Personal identification with gods:

- *anāku PN mār ilīšu*, “I, PN, son of his god”
- *anāku annanna mār annanna ša ilšu annanna ištaršu annannītu*, “I, so-and-so, son of so-and-so, whose god *is* so-and-so *and* goddess *is* so-and-so”
- *anāku PN ša ilšu DN ištaršu DN*, “I, PN, whose god *is* DN *and* goddess *is* DN”

²⁰ This is readily verified with an advanced search of “zà-mí-zu” at The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (<http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/>).

²¹ Note that I have not identified *Ludlul* as a *hymn*. I do not believe this generic classification does full justice to the complexity and sophistication of the poem. The poem is *hymn-like*. See below.

²² See Mayer 1976, 47 for the variation in position vis-à-vis the other elements in the prayer: before the lament, before the description of the supplicant's acts, and, rarely, before the petition and even before the concluding praise (e.g., Šamaš 76, see Mayer 1976, 512–13).

²³ See Mayer 1976, 48–52.

Although none of these formulae occurs in *Ludlul* verbatim, we do find a point of structural comparison between the self-presentation and *Ludlul*, which builds on the use of the first person voice in the poem (noted above).

After the first word of the poem, *ludlul*, which is of course a first person precative verb, we do not find another first person reference until near the end of the introductory hymn, that is, in lines 37 and 39, where we find two more precatives, *lušāpi*, “I will extol, make manifest,” and *lušalmid*, “I will teach.” Although these precatives probably serve a role in structuring the opening hymn,²⁴ and they certainly re-introduce the protagonist, whose story is about to unfold in I 41ff., and thus create a bridge between hymn and narration, the re-introduction of the first person voice directly after the large block of introductory praise evokes a structural parallel with incantation prayers, which often place the self-presentation directly after the hymnic introduction.²⁵ Furthermore, just as self-presentations in incantation prayers often include references to the supplicant’s personal gods (see the formulae above), *Ludlul* likewise introduces the supplicant’s personal gods in I 43–44, that is, very shortly after the use of the first person forms in lines 37 and 39.²⁶

My god rejected me, he disappeared,
My goddess left, she departed.

Although the purpose of introducing the personal gods in the incantation prayers differs from the purpose in *Ludlul*—in fact, their purposes are quite opposite in that incantation prayers often appeal to a high god to *help resolve* the supplicant’s alienation from the personal deities, whereas in *Ludlul* it is explicitly stated that the anger of a high god (I 41–42) *has caused* the supplicant’s personal deities to abandon him—the structural point remains: Following the

²⁴ See Moran 1983 and Albertz 1988, summarized in Lenzi 2011, 484.

²⁵ The following examples should provide sufficient evidence to confirm this common structural order: Damkina 1 (Mayer 1976, 441); Ea, Šamaš, Marduk 1a (Maul 1994, 469); Girra 2 (Abusch 2016, 62); Gula 1a MS H (Mayer 1976, 452), Ištar 10 (Zgoll 2003, 110); Ištar 27 (Zisa 2021, 308–9); Marduk 5 MS A (see Abusch / Schwemer 2016, 234); Marduk 24 (Oshima 2011, 405); Ninurta 1 (Ebeling 1953, 26 and my treatment of several manuscripts at <http://shuilas.org/Q006135.html>); Nusku 5 (Panayotov 2016, 49); Nabû 1 MS B (Mayer 1976, 470); Nabû 3 (Mayer 1976, 474); Nabû 4 (Mayer 1976, 476); Nergal 2 (Mayer 1976, 479); Šamaš 1 MSS D, G, I (Mayer 1976, 506–7); Šamaš 2 (Ebeling 1953, and my treatment at the following: <http://shuilas.org/P369037.html>); Šamaš 25 (Maul 1994, 296); Šamaš 73 (Ambos 2013, 150); Šamaš 88 (Mayer 1976, 515); and Šin and Šamaš 1 (Ebeling 1949, 179–81). See also the incantation to Girra and the incantation to Šamaš in Abusch / Schwemer 2016, 280 and 298, respectively. There are others.

²⁶ I will also treat these same lines as part of the sufferer’s lament below. I do not think it is necessary to assign each line to one and only one structural feature. See likewise my treatment of the opening lines of Tablet II below.

poem's opening praise, the supplicant (re-)introduces himself and mentions his personal gods, just as we often find in incantation prayers.²⁷

This is the second time a structural feature of the incantation prayer genre is adopted but also adapted.

8.2.1.3. Lament

As already mentioned in earlier chapters, *Ludlul* contains very sizeable blocks of lament material. The first block begins immediately after the introductory hymn (I 41) and continues without relief until just before the end of Tablet I (I 118). After brief descriptions of Marduk's anger (I 41–42), loss of personal divine protection (I 43–48), and ill-boding and confused omens (I 49, 51–54), the lion's share of the material in Tablet I describes the protagonist's loss of social position (I 55–104) and then concludes with a description of his misery (I 105–114) and of his inability to communicate with the divine realm (I 115–118). Lamentation begins again immediately at the start of Tablet II and continues through III 8. This material also falls into several thematically coherent sections: the protagonist's alienation from divinity and divine communication (II 4–9), a two-part description of his perceived "unmerited disfavor" (II 12–22, 23–32),²⁸ his complaints about human ignorance and the vagaries of the human condition (II 33–48), the very extensive description of the protagonist's physical suffering (II 49–107)—which dominates Tablet II (just as his social alienation dominated Tablet I's lament material), a reprise of divine anger and failed communication with the divine realm (II 108–113), and a description of the sufferer's imminent death (II 114–120). This kind of lament material has good thematic precedent in other hymns and prayers.²⁹ I suggest below that

²⁷ For another perspective on the self-reference of the protagonist in I 41ff., see Foster 1983, 127.

²⁸ "Unmerited disfavor" is the term I use to characterize the existential contradiction felt by the sufferer. (It plays on a pious definition of "grace" one finds in American Christianity, "unmerited favor." See, e.g., the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 3rd ed., s.v., "grace," <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/80373>.) Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan believes himself to be pious (II 23–32) but he feels as though he is being treated like an impious person—without cause (II 12–22), though he later admits to sin (III 58–61). See Lenzi 2012, 64 for this term applied to the biblical Job.

²⁹ See, e.g., OB *Ištar Baghdad* (Streck 2003 and my treatment of the prayer at the following, <http://akkpm.org/P520346.html>); OB *Prayer to Anuna* (Lambert 1989 and my treatment of the text, <http://akkpm.org/P269974.html>); the *Great Prayer to Marduk, nos. 1 and 2* (Oshima 2011, 137–90 and 216–69); the SB *Great Prayer to Nabû* (von Soden 1971 and <http://akkpm.org/P394371.html>; Geraldina Rozzi will soon publish a new edition); and the NA *Righteous Sufferer's Prayer to Nabû* in STT 65 (see Lenzi 2019b and <http://akkpm.org/P338383.html>), among others. Note Gronenberg's statement concerning the thematic similarities between *Ištar Baghdad* and *Ludlul*: "Diese Parallelen zwischen jenem ausführlichen Klagegebet des ersten Jahrtausends

much of the lament material in *Ludlul* Tablets I and II also has both thematic and lexical connections to the laments of incantation prayers. In terms of the structural comparison, I simply note at this point that this lament material follows both the opening praise and the sufferer's self-presentation in the text of the poem. Structurally, this is precisely what we would expect in an incantation prayer. And unlike the two previous structural features, the lament material in *Ludlul* is quite similar to what one finds in the incantation prayers generally, as a few examples will suggest.³⁰

The sufferer's descriptions of divine anger / loss of personal divine protection (I 41–48, II 4–5, II 112–113),³¹ on the one hand, and of his ill-boding or confused omens / general inability to communicate effectively with the divine realm (I 49, 51–54, I 115–118, II 6–9, II 108–111),³² on the other, take up common motifs in the incantation prayers. As chapter five demonstrates, these laments are the fountainhead from which all other laments pour forth; without divine benignity and revelation one is adrift and exposed in a world of chaos, full of evil and misfortune. Though vocabulary and phrasing vary from prayer to prayer, there is some shared vocabulary in the incantation prayers and the lines in *Ludlul* that evince these motifs. For example, compare this phrase from an incantation prayer directed to a personal god, attested in K.2425 and K.9252 + Sm.1068:³³

ultu ūmi bēlī tēninanni
*ilī bānīya tašbusu eīya*³⁴

und diesem aB *Istar*-Gebet bestärken meine Ansicht, daß das jüngere Werk, *Ludlul*, eine ungewöhnlich kunstvolle Kompilation auf der Basis von älteren Klagegebeten ist, von denen nun zufällig eines auf uns gekommen ist" (1997, 105).

³⁰ Since a full catalog of parallels is beyond the scope of the present study (and likely of little utility ultimately), a few examples under each theme will have to suffice.

³¹ See Mayer 1976, 82, 93–98 for these themes in the incantation prayers and p. 93, n.55 for their parallel in *Ludlul*.

³² See Mayer 1976, 99–106 for these themes in the incantation prayers and p. 104, n.75 for their parallel in *Ludlul*.

³³ Previously, I stated that K.2425 and K.9252 were unpublished (Lenzi 2015c, 76, n.38). But, in fact, Langdon published a copy of K.2425 already in 1910 (32), Seux gave a transcription and translation of K.2425 in his article on *šigū* (1981, 434–35), and van der Toorn provides a transliteration and translation of both fragments (1985, 137–36). Both tablets are now given in score fashion and discussed in Jaques's work on *dingiršadabba* prayers (2015, 227–31). Jiménez (2014a, 111–12) joined Sm.1068 to K.9252 and found a parallel in K.11682 to the version of the prayer in K.2425.

³⁴ Mayer (1976, 97) identified this text as a *dingiršadabba* prayer, a kind of prayer that Mayer did not include as part of his primary data in his treatment of incantation prayers, though he cites them occasionally for comparative purposes (Mayer 1976, 16–17). Van der Toorn (1985, 137) and Jaques (2015, 230) both mention the fact that the text is listed as a *dingiršadabba* prayer in a catalog of prayers (BMS 19 = K.2832 + K.6680 i 5, for which see Mayer 1976, 399); but, accord-

From the day, O my lord, that you punished me,
 Since you, O my god who created me, became angry with me,

with *Ludlul* I 41–42:

ištu ūmi bēl īninanni
u qarrādu Marduk isbusu it[ti]ya

From the day Bel punished me,
 And the hero Marduk became angry [wi]th me, ...

The personal gods (see *ilī* and *ištari* in *Ludlul* I 43–44) are the most common divine being mentioned in the incantation prayers' divine alienation motif, though one also finds the protective spirit (*šēdu*) alienated from the supplicant as well (compare *Ludlul* I 45).³⁵ It is significant, I think, that *Ludlul* has not chosen to use typical “anger” verbs with the personal gods, though they are mentioned several times in the poem (and their anger is implied in II 9). *Ludlul* describes the personal gods as having abandoned (*nadû*, *šadâ elû*, *naparkû*, *bêšu*) the sufferer, leaving him without protection, due to *Marduk*'s anger.

As for evil and confused signs, note the following phrases from incantation prayers that share vocabulary with *Ludlul*. Just after lamenting the anger of his personal deities, the supplicant complains:

pardâ šunātūya lemnā ḥaṭâ idātūya tērētūya dalḥā-ma ul iṣâ purussê kitti
 (Marduk 5, lines 57b–58)³⁶

My dreams are terrifying. My signs are evil, malignant. My omens are so
 disturbed that they produce no dependable prediction.
 (Compare *Ludlul* I 51: *dalḥā tērētūya*, I 54: *šuttī pardat*)

aḥulap tērētūya nassāti ešâti u dalḥāti (Ištar 2, line 48)³⁷

Mercy! For my wretched, confused, and disturbed omens!
 (Compare *Ludlul* I 51: *dalḥā tērētūya* and II 109: *tērētūya barû ūtešši*)

ing to Jaques, it appears in neither the bilingual nor the “standard Assyrian” versions as known today (230).

³⁵ See Mayer 1976, 94.

³⁶ See Abusch / Schwemer 2016, 235 for the text; also, Mayer 1993, 319 and Oshima 2011, 358 (lines 41–42).

³⁷ Zgoll 2003, 44.

[ep]er sūqi abā¹-ma egerrūya lā damqū (Ištar 10, line 13)³⁸

When I stroll along the dusty street, my *egerrū* are unfavorable.
(Compare *Ludlul* I 53: *ina pī sūqi lemun egerrūya*)

The loss of social standing, family, and livelihood as described in *Ludlul* I 55–104 is the most prominent theme in the lament material in Tablet I. Although the incantation prayers never match *Ludlul*'s extended meditation on these themes, they do very clearly convey the same thematic concerns succinctly. Note, for example, the lament in *Sin* 3, lines 56–60:

enūma ilī zenū ittīya
ištari nesāt elīya
ištu ulla ašaddad ilū tamḫāti idi iškunū elīya
šītu ḫuluqqū butuqqū nušurrū magal šaknūnim-ma
*ītašuš libbī ikturu napīšī*³⁹

When my god became angry with me,
My goddess became distant from me,
I endured *it* (i.e., the resulting hardship) patiently for a long time. The gods
imposed a reduction of strength⁴⁰ upon me.
Expenses, losses, shortfalls, *and* diminutions are severely besetting me,
So that my heart has become distressed, my life cut short.

Šamaš 6, lines 18b–22a express a similar sentiment within an incantation prayer (*šūila*) that is concerned with dispelling the evil of a curse and oath (*šib-it māmūti u šibit tullīya*),⁴¹ which may have been put into effect by some friend, servant, sibling, or kinsman (see obv. 6–10).

³⁸ See Zgoll 2003, 111. Mayer 1976, 77, n.20 lists Si.59, the only source that preserves the whole line (so far), as attesting Ištar 8; Zgoll's edition places the tablet among the witnesses to Ištar 10, where it follows the duplicates rather closely. See my transliteration of Si.59 at <http://shuilas.org/P480760.html>. All transliterations known to me are based on Geers' copy (Heft AC, 14–16). Collation has not yet been possible.

³⁹ See Mayer 1976, 78 and pp. 498–99 for an edition of the text, which prefers the Ḫuzirina witnesses in line 58 (his MS D, E, and F, which are STT 57, 58, and 59, respectively; for the last, see my transliteration at <http://shuilas.org/P338377.html>) over BMS 6 (MS A) and LKA 52 (MS C). Mayer's MS A, BMS 6, is also edited in Ambos 2013, 203–11, here 206 for the relevant lines. My transliterations of BMS 6 and LKA 52 are available at <http://shuilas.org/P394195.html> and <http://shuilas.org/P413964.html>, respectively.

⁴⁰ The meaning of this phrase is unclear. Mayer translates "Minderungen der Kraft" (1976, 501).

⁴¹ For "seizure of the breast" as an action related to oaths, see CAD S, 165–66.

ēma allaku lā magir
*ina bīti šaltu ina sūqi puḥpuḥḥū šaknā*⁴²
eli āmirīya maršāku urra u mūša nazāqu
šaknam-ma irteneddīni ḥūs ḥīp libbi
*ittīya raksū-ma lā paṭrū*⁴³

Wherever I go, it is disagreeable.
 At home strife besets me; in the street, a brawl.
 I am sickening to my onlookers; night and day worry
 besets me and continually pursues me; depression
 is bound to me and will not let go.

Note also the short statement in Ištar 2, line 78:

sapḥat illatī tabīnī purrur
 My family is dispersed, my shelter scattered.⁴⁴

The protagonist's fear (see I 49 [*pirittu*], 54 [*šuttī pardat*], 74 [*pirittu*], 111–113 [*adīrat libbīya; pirittu u ḥattu; ina gitallutī*], but also III 2 [*puḥpuḥḥū*]), on the one hand, and the gossip, slander, and malicious talk against the protagonist (see I 57–58 [*taslītu, nullātu*], 69 [*tuššu, napraku*], 86 [*nagāru*], 88–90 [*napišī kurrūšu; arāru; ṭapiltu*], 94 [*ṭapiltu*], 95 [*dābib nullātīya*]), on the other, appear repeatedly in the lament material of *Ludlul*. The former is so ubiquitous in the incantation prayers that examples are unnecessary.⁴⁵ As for the latter, note, for example, Ištar 2, lines 56–58:

adi mati bēlī bēlū dabābīya nēkelmū`innī-ma
ina surrāti u lā kīnāti ikappudūni lemnēti
*rēdūya ḥādūya ištammārū elīya*⁴⁶

How long, my lady, will my adversaries scowl at me?
 With lies and untruths they conceive evil things against me!
 My persecutors *and* ill-wishers rampage against me.

⁴² The words *šaltu* and *puḥpuḥḥū* occur together elsewhere in incantation prayers (e.g., Marduk 25, for which see Mayer 1976, 79 with note 21 and the full edition of the prayer with duplicates in Abusch / Schwemer 2011, 323–26, here 324, line 62). They also occur in *Ludlul* I 116 to describe the sufferer's failed supplication.

⁴³ The lines are only attested on KAR 228 (= VAT 8885), for which see Ebeling 1955, 146 and my transliteration at <http://shuilas.org/P369192.html>. Note that KAR 228 has a partial duplicate in Sm.1155 (noted in CAD § [1962], 166 and Mayer 1976, 411).

⁴⁴ See Zgoll 2003, 46 for the text.

⁴⁵ See Mayer 1976, 72–75.

⁴⁶ See Zgoll 2003, 45 for the text.

The same is presented in Šamaš 43, an incantation prayer embedded in an anti-witchcraft ritual. The supplicant draws an image of those who performed sorcery against him and describes them as follows:

*ša kišpū īpušūni ikpudūni nullā[ti]
itgur libbašunū-ma malū tuššāti*

Those who performed witchcraft against me, have schemed calumn[y]
against me,
Whose hearts are *so* twisted that they are full of slander.⁴⁷

Some incantations make the issue of slander and malicious gossip their thematic focus and are explicitly directed against the tongues of persecutors.⁴⁸ Note the following lines in BM 36310 + BM 36468, obv. 9'–13', part of an incantation prayer to Ea:

*[yāšī² ar]du pāliḫka raddā`inni lišānātu ilu šarru kabtu u rubū zenū ittīya
[lišānātu² raddā`]inni ḫā`iru u ardatu šumruqu⁴⁹ pānīya
[bulliṭa]n[n]ī-ma² bēl nēmeqi dalīlika ludlul usuḫ mimma lemnu ša zumrīya
[puṭur ḫiṭ]ātīya² Ea šar apsi mimma lemni ma[la i]kpuḏū pussa⁵⁰ attā
[kipdī² ša i]kpuḏū tēri ana muḫḫišun[u lemmūt]īya² šūbir nāra⁵¹*

[As for me,² the ser]vant who reveres you, tongues are pursuing me. God,
king, nobleman, and prince are angry with me,
[Tongues² are pursuing] me, so that young man (lit. husband) and maidser-
vant cause my face to turn pale (lit. greenish-yellow).
[Save m]e, O lord of wisdom, that I may sing your praises! Remove any evil
in my body.
You, O Ea, king of the Apsu, [release] my [sins], erase for me any evil, as
much [as] they [pl]anned *against me*.
Turn back against the[m the schemes² that they pla]nned *for me*. Make my
[evil]s² pass over the river.

Note how the malicious talk results in the supplicant's social superiors being angry with him (a relatively common motif in incantation prayers) and his social inferiors (presumably) causing some kind of negative emotion in him, if

⁴⁷ See Abusch / Schwemer 2011, 309–10, lines 89'–90'' for the text, following MS E.

⁴⁸ See the two incantations edited in Abusch / Schwemer 2016, 176–77.

⁴⁹ Abusch / Schwemer 2016, 181 associate *šumruqu* with *šūruqu*, suggesting (tentatively) that the pre-consonantal /w/ of the root (*wrq*) has changed to /m/ (as they put it: “-uwC- > -umC-”), though, as they recognize, this is not a typical phonetic development for Akkadian.

⁵⁰ I have followed Abusch and Schwemer's alternative understanding of the line here (see 2016, 181).

⁵¹ See Abusch / Schwemer 2016, 176 for the text; a copy of the tablet appears on plate 28.

we are understanding the difficult *šumruqū* somewhat adequately.⁵² This social stress from above and below very much parallels the situation in *Ludlul* I.

The laments in Tablets I 41–III 8 also present a broad description of the sufferer’s misery that includes his relentless moaning, complaining, weeping, sighing, and despairing. These occur throughout the material but form an especially strong constellation in *Ludlul* I 105–114. Several examples could be cited among the incantation prayers. Marduk 24, lines 39–40 are especially relevant. These lines occur in a context in which the supplicant explains that witchcraft has turned Marduk and the supplicant’s personal deities against him (lines 35–38) so that a series of demonic illnesses, lamentation, and poor health cause his social alienation.⁵³ Lines 39–40, which are almost like *Ludlul* I–II in miniature with witchcraft added into the mix, read:

an.ta.šub.ba ⁴lugal-ūr.ra qāt ili qāt ištari qāt eṭemmi qāt namerimburrudī qāt
amēlūti nissatu u lā tūb šīri iṭhūnim-ma anassus ūmišamma
ila šarra kabta u rubā ušāširūninni⁵⁴

“Fall of Heaven,” “Lord of the Roof,” “hand of a god,” “hand of a goddess,” “hand of a ghost,” “hand of a curse,” “hand of humanity,” lamentation, and ill health⁵⁵ draw near to me, so that I moan day after day.

They have turned god, king, nobleman, and prince against me.

Ištar 2, 46–50, 64–66 offer a longer example. Note here how confused signs in line 48 are also embedded within the lamentation over personal misfortunes:

aḥulap zumrīya nassi ša malū ešāti u dalḥāti
aḥulap libbīya šumrušu ša malū dimti u tānēḥi
aḥulap tērēṭīya nassāti ešāti u dalḥāti
aḥulap bīṭīya šudlupu ša unassasu bikāti
aḥulap kabtaṭīya ša uštābarrū dimti u tānēḥi

...

⁵² The metaphorical use of *arāqu* (if that is the proper derivation of *šumruqu*) may be intended to convey an emotion of anger or feeling of being appalled (see Streck 1999, 71 for a similar use of the root in Akkadian epic).

⁵³ See the similar though more expansive lament in Šamaš 52, lines 49–53 (see Abusch / Schwemer 2011, 297 for the text), which occur within a much longer lament centered on witchcraft.

⁵⁴ See Abusch / Schwemer 2016, 218 for the text (also available in Mayer 1999, 150–51 and Oshima 2011, 406 (his lines 29–30). See *Ludlul* III 7 for *nasāsu*.

⁵⁵ Mayer (1999, 157) and Oshima (2011, 407) render *lā tūb šīri* as unfavorable omen results (Mayer: “übles Befinden”; Oshima: “unpleasant omens” in his line 29). Given the previous lines’ concern with illnesses, I think the above rendering is contextually more appropriate. See likewise Abusch / Schwemer 2016, 255; CAD Š/3, 117; and CAD T, 119 (despite mistakenly listing the reference among omen apodoses).

*adammum kīma summatu mūši u urra*⁵⁶
nangulākū-ma abakki šarpiš
*ina ū 'a ayya šumrušat kabattī*⁵⁷

“Mercy!” (*ahulap*) for my miserable body, which is full of confusion and turmoil.

“Mercy!” for my afflicted heart, which is full of tears and sighing.

“Mercy!” for my miserable, confused, and troubled omens.

“Mercy!” for my sleepless household, which moans from weeping.

“Mercy!” for my emotions, which persist in tears and sighing.

...

I moan like a dove night and day.

I burn(?) and weep bitterly.

My emotions are in agony with “woe” and “alas.”⁵⁸

One also finds parallels in the incantation prayers for the long sections in Tablet II that I have called laments of “unmerited disfavor” (II 12–22, 23–32), complaints about human ignorance (II 33–38), and the vagaries of the human condition (II 39–48). Such laments are rooted in the finite understanding humans have of their own experience in the world. A few examples follow. *Ištar* 2, lines 67–68 compare very well to *Ludlul* II 12–22:

mīnā ēpuš ilī u ištarī anāku
*kī lā pālih ilīya u ištarīya anāku epšēk*⁵⁹

What did I do against my god and my goddess?

I am treated as though I *am* one who does not revere my god and goddess!

Note also the existentially poignant words of *Marduk* 4, lines 8–15:

amēlūtu mala šuma nabât
anna ramānīša mannu ilammad
mannu lā išēṭ ayû lā ugallil
alakti ili mannu ilammad
lutta 'id-ma gullultu lā arašši
ašrāt balāṭi lušte 'v-ma
ina arrati ittabbula ina ilī qabât
*qāta ša ili ana amēli babālu*⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Note *Ludlul* I 107: *kīma summi adammum gimir ūmīya*, “Like a dove I would moan all my days.”

⁵⁷ See Zgoll 2003, 44–45 for the text.

⁵⁸ For close parallels to lines 64–66, see lines 12–14 in the Assyrian series of *dingiršadabba* prayers (Jaques 2015, 67).

⁵⁹ See Zgoll 2003, 46 for the text.

Human beings, by whatever name—
 Who *among them* can ascertain their own sin?
 Who has not been negligent; what *person* has not sinned?
 Who can understand the way of a god?
 I ought to be vigilant lest I acquire sin.
 I ought to search out relentlessly the sanctuaries of life.
But it is decreed by the gods to go about *tasks* under a curse,
 For a man to bear the hand of the god.

One could likewise look to the *dingiršadabba* prayers for several other relevant lines.⁶¹

In line 49 of Tablet II the poem begins a very long description of the protagonist's physical suffering (II 49–120).⁶² This too finds a parallel in many incantation prayers.⁶³ The lament in prayers that include this element may be a single formulaic line, such as *ša ina zumrīya šīrīya u šer'ānīya bašū*, "(some evil) which is in my body, flesh, and sinews."⁶⁴ Or, the lament may consist of a series of complaints about the body. Such a series may be focused on one body part (e.g., the eyes, as in LKA 142: 24b–27)⁶⁵ or, as in *Ludlul*, on many parts affected by the evil. Some of the longest of the latter—too long to cite here—are found in incantation prayers embedded in anti-witchcraft rituals.⁶⁶

The sufferer's lamentation of his imminent death (II 114–120) is likewise paralleled in the incantation prayers.⁶⁷ For example, Nabû 1, line 15 reads:

⁶⁰ See Mayer 2004, 202 for the text. See also Oshima 2011, 348.

⁶¹ See Jaques 2015, 68, line 29; 72, lines 44–46; 74–75, lines 71–87; 80, lines 132–134; 83, lines 1–6; 84, lines 10–17.

⁶² It is worth noting that just as this listing of physical maladies begins we find in II 49 an emphasis on the first person voice ([*(x)*] *yāti*) and the supplicant referring to himself as the "weary one" or "exhausted one" (*šūmu[hu]*), a term often used in incantation prayer laments to describe the supplicant. The term is used again in the dreams of Tablet III (lines 35 and 55 [partially restored]) to describe the protagonist. According to Mayer (1976, 71–72), the term occurs thirteen times in incantation prayers. Among the adjectives used in laments listed by Mayer, only the related *anhu*, "tired," occurs more often (14 times).

⁶³ See Mayer 1976, 85–86. The vocabulary of physical maladies is also similar to those listed in a variety of therapeutic and diagnostic texts, as demonstrated in chapter six.

⁶⁴ See Mayer 1976, 86 for many of the attestations.

⁶⁵ Translated in Mayer 1976, 80.

⁶⁶ See, e.g., Abusch / Schwemer 2011, 259–60 (Šamaš 67, lines 53–69; with a new duplicate in Abusch / Schwemer 2020, 264–68), 274–75 (Šamaš 102, lines 27–32; with new fragments in Abusch / Schwemer 2020, 269–74); Abusch / Schwemer 2016, 195 (an incantation prayer to Gilgameš, lines 106–113); and 234–35 (Marduk 5, lines 49–56).

⁶⁷ For the recurring use of *ikturu/takturu napišīl*, "my breath has become short", which probably means the person has come near to death, in several incantation prayers, see Mayer 1976, 83.

*ittatlakū ūmūya šanātūya iqtatā*⁶⁸

My days have passed, my years have come to an end.

Another good example is found (again) in the long lament in Ištar 2. Lines 74–76 read:

ukallanni mūtu u šapšāqu
šuharrur sagēya šuharrurat aširtī
*eli bīti bābi qarbatīya šaqummati tabkat*⁶⁹

Death and hardship have a hold on me,
 My shrine is deathly still, my chapel is deathly still,
 Deathly silence is poured out over my house, gate, and fields.

It would be possible to belabor this point and compile a much longer litany of parallels, but the above suggests rather strongly, I think, that the laments in *Ludlul* share a great many features with the laments of Akkadian incantation prayers.⁷⁰

One might wish to argue that the above only proves that the lament material in both the incantation prayers and *Ludlul* derives from a common source within the exorcists' religious world. I would not oppose such a view in principle. However, the results from comparing other structural features of incantation prayers to *Ludlul* support the more specific claim made here: *Ludlul* is following the form and language of incantation prayers.

8.2.1.4. The Description of the Supplicant's Acts

Although not recognized by previous interpreters of incantation prayers, Mayer identifies a structural feature that he calls "the description of the supplicant's acts" ("Schilderung des Tuns des Beters"). Mayer defines this feature of incantation prayers in the following manner:

Wenn der Mensch sich mit einem Anliegen an die Gottheit wendet, tut er das in den Formen, in denen sich auch sonst ein Bittsteller an einen Mächtigen wendet, und bedient sich der Mittel, die ihm für diesen Zweck zustatten kommen. 1. Er sucht den Gott dort auf, wo dieser 'Audienz' gibt, er drückt in Körperhaltung und Gesten aus, dass er als Hilfesuchender

⁶⁸ See Mayer 1976, 470 for the text.

⁶⁹ See Zgoll 2003, 46.

⁷⁰ This is not to suggest, of course, that there are no parallels to other kinds of texts.

kommt; er spricht den Gott an, bittet ihn um Gehör und um Hilfe für das jeweilige Anliegen. 2. Er begleitet und unterstützt seine Bitte dadurch, dass er dem Gott Gaben (Nahrung, Kleidung usw.) darbringt, die diesen erfreuen, ehren, ‘erhöhen’ und ihn so bereit machen, dem Beter zu willfahren. 3. Wenn der betreffende Ritus es verlangt, stellt er ausserdem bestimmte medizinisch oder magisch wirksame Dinge her (z. B. eine Salbe, ein Amulett, eine Figur) und führt damit die entsprechenden Verrichtungen durch (z. B. Analogiezauber mit den Figuren der Schadensmächte).⁷¹

Mayer labels these three categories of the petitioner’s acts as 1. “turning” (“Hin-wendung”) to the deity, 2. ritual actions, and 3. magical-medical enactments, all of which are positioned variously with regard to other structural features of incantation prayers.⁷² Magical/medical enactments are absent from *Ludlul*;⁷³ the other two of Mayer’s categories, however, turning to the deity and ritual actions,⁷⁴ seem comparable to what we see in the first third of Tablet II.⁷⁵

a) *Turning to the Deity*

Four verbs commonly found in “turnings” within incantation prayers occur in the first dozen lines of *Ludlul* II. I suggest these be read as markers that we are in fact dealing with a “turning” of sorts in this part of the poem. In lines 2 and 11, which surround the lines dealing with the loss of divine presence and communication, the protagonist turns about literally (*saḥāru*)⁷⁶ only to find evil

⁷¹ Mayer 1976, 119. On the notion of “audience” in *šuilā* prayers and the associated actions, especially hand-raising, see Zgoll 2003a and Frechette 2012, who argues that hand-raising was a specific form of greeting that was utilized to characterize the function of and to give a name to the *šuilā* prayers.

⁷² Mayer 1976, 120–22. Mayer only explicitly discusses the position of the first sub-category, the turning, in incantation prayers (Mayer 1976, 124–26). A perusal of the incantation prayer corpus will show, however, that the other two sub-categories, ritual actions and (what Mayer calls) magical-medical enactments, are typically found somewhere after the introductory hymn and before the closing praise (i.e., in the body of the prayer). See Zgoll 2003a, 190–97 for ritual elements in the *šuilā* prayers as compared with a kind of ideal-type of audience ceremony, which she reconstructs with special reference to *The Poor Man of Nippur*, among other texts.

⁷³ That is, the protagonist does not describe his utilizing, e.g., an image or an amulet or his undertaking some kinesthetic or verbal action to expel the malevolent forces that have attacked him. If such magical-medical enactments are present in *Ludlul* it is the protagonist who is their recipient, as he is in the dream sequence at the beginning of Tablet III.

⁷⁴ See Mayer 1976, 122–49 (turning), 150–61 (ritual actions), 161–65 (magical-medical enactments) for his full exposition of these issues; see also pp. 165–83, 201–9 for circumstantial elements surrounding the supplicants actions (e.g., reason, purpose, time, place, etc.).

⁷⁵ I realize that I have also labeled this material as lamentation. I do not think the overlap is a major concern.

⁷⁶ See Mayer 1976, 136–37 for this verb in incantation prayers.

(*lemun lemun-ma*; line 2) and looks (*amāru*)⁷⁷ behind him only to find harassment and trouble (*ridāti ippīru*; line 11). In lines 4 and 5 he calls out (*šasū*)⁷⁸ and implores (*sullū*)⁷⁹ his personal gods, though they do not respond.

A close examination of this “turning” in light of what we expect in incantation prayers raises a major difference between the purpose of incantation prayers and the purpose of *Ludlul*. In an incantation prayer the supplicant would normally turn or look to the deity to whom he is praying. The protagonist in *Ludlul* turns and looks in lines 2 and 11 but not to Marduk, in fact, never to a high god anywhere in the poem, for help. Why not? This question becomes even more important when one considers the fact that the sufferer’s supplications to the personal gods in lines 4 and 5 proved fruitless (II 9: *āšipu ina kikiṭṭê kimilti ul iptur*, “the exorcist did not release the divine anger against me with his rituals”). An appeal to a high god to remedy just such a situation is very common in *šuila* prayers.⁸⁰ As an example, note how the supplicant in the *šuila* prayer Gula 1a requests that she help the supplicant restore his broken relationship with his personal gods and then later in the same prayer asks that she intercede on his behalf with Marduk.⁸¹ We see nothing like this in *Ludlul*.

I do not think we can blame this “oversight” on the protagonist’s impiety, as though he were not pious enough to consider looking to Marduk to resolve his problems. As II 6–9 indicate (and elsewhere in the poem), the sufferer did look to the officially approved ritual methods for dealing with unfavorable conditions in his life. It may be that we are to assume that the experts’ ritual failures in lines 6–9, especially the statement in line 9, imply a failed appeal to Marduk to quell his anger. But I think this line relates to the alienated personal gods (as do II 12–22) rather than to Marduk. Thus, the answer to why the sufferer does not make an explicit appeal to Marduk (or any high god) in the narrative might simply lie in the cynical quip one hears to “explain” holes in the plot of movies: “It wasn’t in the script.” As chapter seven shows, Marduk’s inscrutable sovereignty is a major theme in the ideological purpose of the poem. His inexplicable anger is both a prerogative of this sovereignty and a precondition for the poem’s theological agenda. Marduk is not a slave to the ritual apparatus; he is above it. He will restore people to health. But he will do so when-

⁷⁷ See Mayer 1976, 133 for this verb in incantation prayers. Note the use of *amāru* with *saḥāru* in the same line in Nusku 4, line 45b (cited by Mayer and available in his edition of the text on p. 485; see also Panayotov 2016, 39–40, line 7).

⁷⁸ See Mayer 1976, 129–31 for attestations in incantation prayers.

⁷⁹ Again, see Mayer 1976, 131 for this verb in incantation prayers.

⁸⁰ See Frechette 2012, 137–40 for an overview with statistics.

⁸¹ The most recent edition is in Mayer 1976, 450–54, but note the new witness published in Lenzi 2013.

ever he pleases. A direct or even an indirect supplication to Marduk (e.g., in a *šuilā* prayer), which would have to be denied at this point in the unfolding of events (at least, as the poem would have us understand them), would speak against the god's mercy, which though inevitable is only distributed on his timetable. The beginning of Tablet II is not the time for mercy. The supplicant cannot turn or look to Marduk—not yet. The script will not allow it.

Despite this difference, I think the two verbs used in *Ludlul* II 2 and 11 along with the two appeals to the personal gods in lines 4 and 5 indicate the sufferer's "turning" here in the poem—even if in an ironic manner. And I think this has structural significance. Mayer suggests a "turning" could function as a transitional element within the text of an incantation prayer. I think this also applies to *Ludlul* II 1–11. This passage forms a transition at a structurally significant point in the poem, so that the "turning" described in lines 1–11 carries the reader from laments in Tablet I that are largely socially-oriented to the laments of Tablet II, centered on his "unmerited disfavor" (II 12–32), cynical musings about human ignorance (II 33–38), complaints about the vagaries of the human condition (II 39–48), and especially his physical suffering at the hand of demons, most proximately, but ultimately due to Marduk's anger (II 49–120).

b) *Ritual Action*

The other relevant category Mayer includes in what he calls the "Description of the Supplicant's Acts" is ritual action. Some examples from incantation prayers that he lists include:⁸²

- *mê nadû*, "pouring out water"
- *qaqqara ullulu*, "purifying the ground"
- *kussâ nadû*, "placing a throne"
- *riksa rakâsu*, "setting out a cultic arrangement"
- *unîqa nasâqu*, "selecting a kid"
- *niqê / kukkalla ṭabâḫu*, "slaughtering a sacrifice / sheep"
- *adagurra / tilimta zaqâpu*, "setting up a cultic vessel / jar"
- *kispa kasâpu*, "bringing a *kispu*-offering"
- *serqa / saskâ*, etc. *sarâqu*, "scattering a flour offering, etc."
- *mê / šikara / dašpa / karâna naqû*, "libating water / beer / honey / wine"
- *qâšû*, "giving" various things, *simat ilūtika / bēlūtika*, "fitting of your divinity / lordship"
- *gizillâ našû*, "lifting a torch"

⁸² See Mayer 1976, 150–58 for these and other examples.

In addition to Mayer's list, I would also include various ritual gestures here such as the raising or opening of hands in prayer (*qāta našū, upna petū*) and prostrating oneself (e.g., *šukēnu*, "to bow down," and *labān appi*, "the touching of the nose"), which supplicants ask the gods to receive.⁸³ We may compare, or perhaps it is better to say compare and contrast, these ritual acts to the material in *Ludlul* II 12–38.

In lines 12–22 the sufferer describes how he felt he was being treated by listing acts of negligence, most of which center on ritual actions that only an impious person would commit (or omit).⁸⁴

kī ša tamqītu ana ili lā uktinnu
u ina mākālē ištarrī lā izzakru
appi lā enū šukenni lā amru
ina pīšu ipparkū suppê teslīti
ibṭīlu ūmū ili išētu eššēšu
iddū aḥšū-ma mēšunu imēšu
palāḥu u it'udu lā ušalmīdu nišīšu
ilšu lā izkuru ikulu akalšu
izib ištartašu maṣḥata lā ubla
ana ša imḥū bēlšu imšū
nīš ilīšu kabti qalliš izkuru anāku amrāk

Like one who had not made a libation for *his* god,
 And did not invoke *his* goddess with food,
 Who did not humble himself, was not seen bowing down,
 From *whose* mouth prayers *and* supplication had ceased,
 Who had abandoned the days of the god, disregarded the festival,
 Had become negligent⁸⁵ and despised their rites,
 Who had not taught his people to fear and pay heed to *the* gods,
 Who did not invoke his god *when* he ate his food,
 Who had abandoned his goddess, *and* did not bring a flour-offering,
 Like the one who had gone mad *and* forgotten his lord,
 Who had invoked the solemn oath of his god in vain, *that's how* I was treated.

As we have seen in earlier chapters, lines 23–32 follow immediately upon this complaint and form the sufferer's rebuttal to this charge of negligence and im-

⁸³ For opening of the hands, see, e.g., Šamaš 3 (Ebeling 1953a, 52, rev. 3 with my re-evaluation of the line's reading at <http://shuilas.org/P413962.html>), Gula 1b, line 21 (Mayer 1976, 456), and Nabū 1, line 12 (Mayer 1976, 470). For prostration, see, e.g., Ištar 2, line 91 (Zgoll 2003, 47), Nabū 1, line 13 (Mayer 1976, 470), and Nisaba 2, line 46 (Lambert 1999–2000, 154).

⁸⁴ I provide the transcription of the lines of this and the following passage to make comparison of vocabulary easier.

⁸⁵ One might say that the impious person here has literally "dropped his arm" instead of "raising his hand" (in a prayer).

piety. The protagonist contests that he had behaved with attentive piety and scrupulous care with regard to ritual actions, which should have won him favor from the gods rather than his current unmerited disfavor. He laments:

*aḥsus-ma ramānī suppû u teslîtu
 teslîtu tašîmat niqû sakkûya
 ûmu palāḥ ili ṭûb libbîya
 ûmu ridûti ištari nēmeli tattûrru
 ikribi šarri šî ḥidûti
 u niġûtašu ana dameqti šumma
 ušāri ana mātîya mē ili našāri
 šumi ištari šûqur nišîya uštāḥiz
 tanadāti šarri iliš umaššil
 u puluḥti ekalli ummānu ušalmid*

But in fact, I was attentive to prayers and supplication,
 Supplication was common sense, sacrifice my rule.
 The day to fear the god *was* a delight to my heart,
 The day of the goddess's procession *was* wealth *and* weal.
 The king's prayer: it *was* a pleasure,
 And his fanfare *was* truly a delight.
 I taught my land to observe the rites of the god,
 I instructed my people to revere the name of the goddess.
 I made *my* praises of the king like *those of* a god,
 And taught the masses fear for the palace.

Clearly, the ritual acts culled from the incantation prayers—which are themselves quite varied—and those listed in this passage from *Ludlul* do not share a significant amount of vocabulary. But, conceptually, in terms of describing various ritual acts, the two are congruent. Both *Ludlul* and various incantation prayers mention food offerings and libations, ritual gestures of prostration, as well as prayer, either as ritual speech or associated ritual gestures.

Mayer's analysis shows that after the mention of some ritual acts there may also be requests for the deity to come alongside and accept the supplicant's offering, which may or may not have been explicitly described before such a request. A few examples from the incantation prayers are:

- *qīštu leqe*, “accept the gift”
- *ilûtka limḥur*, “may your divinity accept”
- *akul akalšu ... šiti šikaršu*, “eat his food ... drink his beer”⁸⁶

⁸⁶ See Mayer 1976, 158–61 for these examples. We see the same kind of requests with ritual gestures of supplication and prostration. See the examples cited in note 83 above.

Although II 33–38 have various functions in the poem (e.g., they hark back to the expression of Marduk’s inscrutable will mentioned in the opening hymn, I 29–32), I think they can also be viewed as corresponding to this feature of incantation prayers generally. However, instead of wishing the gods to accept his ritual practices, Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan expresses doubt that his acts could garner divine approval. Thus, again, we see a structural feature appropriated into the poem but filled with content that differs from what is used in incantation prayers. The lines read:

Would that I knew these things were acceptable (*magāru*)⁸⁷ to the god!
 That which is good to oneself *may be* a sacrilege to the god,
 That which is wretched to one’s heart may be good to one’s god!
 Who *can* understand the decree of the god, the interior of the heavens?
 Who *can* apprehend her (i.e., the goddess’s) decision, the subterranean deep?
 Where has humanity understood the plan of the god?

This modulation into the key of doubt is precisely what we should expect. As discussed in earlier chapters, the sufferer consulted the ritual experts for assistance to no effect (and will do so again with the same results at the end of Tablet II). His suffering does not jibe with his perception of his own personal piety. Thus, his situation is inexplicable both officially and existentially. Doubts about the efficacy of his piety and the concern of the gods are in order. And these doubts are the perfect introduction for the sufferer’s further lamentation in which he takes up the topics of the vagaries of the human condition (II 39–48) and the protagonist’s divinely-induced, physical suffering (II 49–120), both of which were discussed above. We come then to Tablet III.

8.2.1.5. Petition

Ludlul Tablet III is the Tablet of reversal. The sufferer receives divine visitation in a series of dreams and experiences the reversal of his physical afflictions. Due to these events, we find no petitioning of the deity for relief in *Ludlul*.⁸⁸ Although this absence contrasts sharply with the incantation prayers, it is not an insuperable problem for our comparative project since we expect to find

⁸⁷ *Magāru* is frequently used in speaking of the acceptance of a ritual-prayer. See CAD M/1, 38–39 generally and Mayer 1976, 218 for the verb in incantation prayer petitions.

⁸⁸ One may wish to see I 115–118, II 4–5, and/or II 33 as petitions. But these are part of the protagonist’s lament. He laments that the gods were not responding to his inquiries (I 115–118), that his personal deities had abandoned him (II 4–5), and that he was no longer sure about what the gods wanted of him (II 33).

differences, especially since it has been clear from the start that the poem is not an incantation prayer. Moreover, when other structural features from incantation prayers were compared to *Ludlul*, we noted that the content of the structural feature was usually adapted to the sufferer's situation. Thus, instead of asking that his ritual acts be accepted as would have been the case in incantation prayers, for example, the sufferer questioned whether his acts would curry the deity's favor. Given this tendency to modulate content, we might be warranted to consider the lengthy description of the sufferer's recovery as an adaptation of the petition section of the incantation prayers. That is, rather than requesting the deity's assistance in the form of petitions, as would be expected after such a lengthy lamentation, the sufferer describes—from his post-recovery, retrospective position—how in fact the deity had assisted him. In other words, the reversal we see in *Ludlul* Tablet III, which continues on into Tablet IV and Tablet V, might be usefully understood as the supplicant's *petitions granted*.⁸⁹ This view is made initially plausible by the vocabulary in the dream sequence of III 9–46, which resonates strongly with the lexicon of petition in incantation prayers. After a close look at that material, I will consider the use of incantation prayer language as well as the reversal of the laments in Tablets I and II to argue that Tablets III and IV and the beginning of Tablet V may be usefully viewed as “(implicit) petitions granted.”

The opening of Tablet III sums up the sufferers lamentable situation (III 1–8) and then moves on to describe Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's dreams of deliverance (III 9–46). In the context of the poem, the dream sequence as a whole might be viewed as a positive response to the sufferer's lament in I 54, “my dream was terrifying” (*šuttī pardat*). Moreover, the dreams can be considered the answer to an unstated, implicit petition for a favorable dream, a well-attested petition in incantation prayers.⁹⁰

After a brief description of the figure in the first dream (III 9–12), the text says the figure “entered and stood over” (*īrub-ma ittaziz elīya*) the sufferer (III 13), who was lying down in bed (implied in III 11; see also II 95). The incantation prayers frequently attest the petition for a deity to stand near the peti-

⁸⁹ Lambert suggested that “[a]t the point where, if *Ludlul* were an incantation, the prescriptions for the ritual would be found, the dreams occur in which the ritual is performed and an incantation priest presents himself” (1996, 27). This is an interesting structural perspective on the dream sequence in *Ludlul* III. But, contrary to my previous judgment on the matter (Lenzi 2012, 62, n.97), I think it is more useful to compare the dreams in terms of structural placement and content as a response to the kinds of petitions one finds in incantation prayers.

⁹⁰ See Mayer 1976, 279–80 for attestations.

tioner—a desire for divine presence.⁹¹ In fact, this petition “to stand” is often the first one from supplicants in incantation prayers, which shows that it serves as a transition from the previous section of the prayer to the petition section proper.⁹² It therefore seems significant for our comparison that this verb appears at the start here in the first dream.

Several other lexical items in the first dream resonate with the vocabulary of petition found in incantation prayers. Soon after the first figure arrives, he speaks to the sufferer, announcing that he had been sent by “your lord” (III 15, [*iqbī*]-*ma bēlka išpuranni*). The verbs *qabū* and *šapāru* strongly resonate with incantation prayer petitions, in which the supplicant often asks the deity to speak (*qabū*) in some way to their benefit⁹³ and to send some entity to help in their deliverance (*šapāru*).⁹⁴ Incidentally, the figure in the first dream addresses, and thus identifies, our protagonist as “the distressed one,” *šumrušu* (III 16), a descriptor that occurs in supplicants’ self-presentations in incantation prayers. See also the related predicative *šum[rus]* in III 38 and the semantically similar *šūnuḥ* in III 35 (and III 55 [mostly restored], just after the conclusion of the dream sequence).⁹⁵

In the remaining dreams, the language of petition from incantation prayers is activated again in several ways. In the second dream, there are two examples (in addition to the sending in III 26): the mention of purification (*ubbubu*)⁹⁶ and the pronouncement of the incantation of life (*balātu*) in III 28. The latter is a very common general request in incantation prayers.⁹⁷ (The pronouncement of life is put into action with the reversals described in Tablets III and IV, discussed below; note also the several subsequent verbal forms of *bulluṭu* used to describe the protagonist’s recovery in IV §B 8’–9’ and V 4, 69, 73, and 75.) There are at least two more examples in the remainder of the dream sequence as well (in addition to the sending in III 43): the ordering of the sufferer’s deliverance (*iqbā/iqbī-ma aḥulap*, “she said, ‘Mercy!’” in III 35, 38)⁹⁸ and the

⁹¹ See Mayer 1976, 211–13. See also the petition for other benevolent powers to stand with the petitioner (Mayer 1976, 246–47). For (possibly) another standing figure in the dream series, see *Ludlul* III 34 with the comments in chapter three at III 34.

⁹² See Mayer 1976, 212.

⁹³ Speaking is used in petitions for mercy (*aḥulap qabū*), for favor (*damiqta qabū*), and for the intercession of another divine being (various constructions with *qabū*). See Mayer 1976, 226, 229, and 232–34, respectively. (On the tentativeness of restoring *iqbi* at the head of the line in III 15, see the comments in chapter three at III 15.)

⁹⁴ See Mayer 1976, 236–39.

⁹⁵ See Mayer 1976, 71 for these descriptors in self-presentations.

⁹⁶ For this language in the incantation prayers, see Mayer 1976, 255–57.

⁹⁷ Mayer 1976, 280–81 (and note pp. 281–83 for the use of the related verb *balātu* in various constructions).

⁹⁸ For this language in the incantation prayers, see Mayer 1976, 226.

entrusting (*paqādu*, if the restoration is correct) of the bandage—the means of the sufferer’s healing—to the hands of the protagonist’s servant, who, presumably, would apply it to him (*ana muttabbīlīya qātuššu ipq[idʿ]*, “he en[trusted?] it to the hand of my servant” in III 46). About this “entrusting”: Typically, the supplicant in an incantation prayer requests that he himself be entrusted to the hands of a deity: *ana qātē damqāti ša ilīya ana šulmi u balāṭi piqdanni*, “entrust me to the good hands of my *personal* god for well-being and life!”⁹⁹ In *Ludlul*, it is the bandage that is handed over (*paqādu*) to a servant rather than the supplicant himself to a deity. In any case, the transfer has the same effect: Relief from suffering through divine intervention.

The same language of petition, modulated to show its fulfillment, occurs in the material that immediately follows the dreams (III 47–55). In III 48 Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan mentions the revelation of “his favorable sign” (*ittuš damqatu*), a request that occurs among the petitions in incantation prayers.¹⁰⁰ And, every line of III 51–55—lines that clearly reverse the opening lines of the lament in Tablet I 41ff.—reflects the language of petition:

ultu ša bēlīya libbašu i[nūḫu]
ša Marduk rēmēni kabattašu ipp[ašru]
 [ilq]ū unninnīya ersāta [...] [*nash*]uršu ṭābu uka[ll]i[mu ...]
 [iqb]ū aḫulap m[agal šunu]ḫ-ma

After the heart of my lord was st[illed] (*nāḫu*),
 And the mind of merciful Marduk was app[eased] (*pašāru*),¹⁰¹
 After [he accept]ed my prayers (*unninna leqū*), [...] my requests,¹⁰²
 And he re[ve]al[ed] his sweet [benevolent a]ttention (*nashuru*) [...],¹⁰³
 [After he sai]d “Mercy! (*aḫulap qabū*)¹⁰⁴ He is ut[terly exhaust]ed”:

After a few broken lines, three of which contain words in the semantic domain of “sin” (III 58–60), the sufferer mentions in III 61 that Marduk had removed his sin (*egātīya ušābil šāra*, “he caused the wind to carry off my acts of negli-

⁹⁹ For this language in the incantation prayers, see Mayer 1976, 235–36.

¹⁰⁰ Mayer 1976, 279–80.

¹⁰¹ See Mayer 1976, 240–41 (both *nāḫu* and *pašāru*) for this language in several incantation prayers.

¹⁰² See Mayer 1976, 217 for this language in the incantation prayers.

¹⁰³ *Nashuru*, literally, “turning”, is recognized as a substantive in the lexica (see CAD N/2, 25–26, *CDA*, 243, and *AHW*, 754), but it is clearly derived from the N of *saḫāru*, which is commonly used in incantation prayer petitions (Mayer 1976, 242). Note also that *saḫāru* occurs three times in the opening hymn (I 8, 16, 20), always to describe a positive, caring element of Marduk’s disposition.

¹⁰⁴ Mayer 1976, 226 for this language in the incantation prayers.

gence”). And after several more broken or lost lines, he introduces in III 68 the reversal of the lamentation in II 51–57 (compare III 69–75) with the following words: [uṭṭe]hḥam-ma tâšu ša balātu u šulum, “[He a]ppplied his spell of life and well-being.” The former statement about the wind carrying off sin (III 61) is not directly paralleled in the incantation prayers treated by Mayer,¹⁰⁵ but the release from sin is an attested theme in some petitions, even if a minor one.¹⁰⁶ The role of the wind carrying off sin is similar to several statements in *Maqlû* in which the wind carries sorcery away from a bewitched person.¹⁰⁷ The verb in *Ludlul* III 68, the statement about Marduk’s drawing near with an effective, remedial incantation, reflects the formulaic language of a negative petition in incantation prayers, namely, *ay-iṭhâ / lā iṭehhâ*, “may it (i.e. some evil) not draw near / it shall not draw near.”¹⁰⁸ The use of *ṭehû* in *Ludlul* III 68, I suggest, turns the formulaic petition around (i.e., answers it), stating that it is the drawing near (*ṭehû*) of Marduk’s incantation that brings life rather than evil.

With the statement in III 68, the poem begins a litany in which the protagonist recounts how Marduk restored his body to health. This section reverses the lamentation in Tablet II 49ff. in essence. This intent is clearly signaled by the very close parallel between III 68–75 and II 51–57: The demonically-inspired things about which the sufferer once lamented are the things from which he has now been delivered. This deliverance is the exact opposite of petition. The implicit petitions in his lament have been granted.

The description of deliverance (and thus fulfillment of petition) continues in III 76ff. Though the language in this passage does not always parallel II 58–105 closely, the two are comparable in that they both deal with physical ailments: the ailments’ onset through demonic activity in Tablet II and their removal through Marduk’s merciful application of his efficacious incantation in Tablet III. There are, however, a few parallels in the material that suggest the broad intent in Tablet III as well as the new material in Tablet IV, to the extent that it is known, is to record the reversal of the sufferer’s laments in Tablet II—

¹⁰⁵ For petitions involving the wind blowing (*šārka tābu lizīqam*, “may your pleasant wind blow”), see Mayer 1976, 228–29 and note, too, the acrostic prayer to Nabû, K.8204, obv. 9’ (see Strong 1895, 139, line 4).

¹⁰⁶ Mayer 1976, 115–18. Note the use of the related *tabālu* in a couple of petitions (pp. 117–18).

¹⁰⁷ See, e.g., *Maqlû* IV 114, V 92, and VII 21 (Abusch 2016, 125, 143, and 169, respectively). The idiom *šāru x libal*, “may the wind carry off x,” is also used a couple of times in *eršahuḡa* prayers. See Maul 1988, 240, lines 41–42 and 321, lines 5–6. Similarly, although not an incantation prayer, the wind carries off the schemes (*niklātu*) and binding (*riksu*) of the wicked in Nabû-šuma-ukīn’s long prayer to Marduk in obv. 2, 6, and 8 (see Finkel 1999, 325; Oshima 2011, 318; and my treatment at <http://akkpm.org/P499184.html>).

¹⁰⁸ Mayer 1976, 265–69.

while not being enslaved to the precise wording in Tablet II. Note the following:

- III 76–77 deals with the sending away of unpleasant sleep, which is explicitly mentioned earlier in II 72 (“sleep covered me like a net”).¹⁰⁹
- III 78–79 mentions “woe” (*ū`a*), which is likewise mentioned earlier in II 83.¹¹⁰
- The un-blurred eyes and un-clogged ears mentioned in III 82–85 may reverse the protagonist’s problems with his eyes and ears mentioned in II 73–74.
- The release of the sufferer’s lips and mouth, described in III 88–91 (see also III 95b), reverses the trap and bolt laid upon them in II 84–85.
- The healing brought to the sufferer’s teeth, tongue, throat (*ur`udu* occurs in both II 87 and III 96), and gullet in III 92–99 and belly in III 104–106 would have allowed him to eat, reversing his lament about his inability to eat and drink in II 86–89.
- The strengthening of the sufferer’s neck in Com, lines a–b reverses the pains described in II 61.
- The debility (*lu`tu*)¹¹¹ of the sufferer’s “legs” (*birkū*, literally, “knees”) mentioned in II 78 may be reversed in IV §A 3’, which mentions *birkīya*. (Most of the lines in Tablet IV are broken and fragmentary so all intratextual connections must be considered tentative.)
- The immobility of his feet described in II 79 may be reversed in IV §A 5’.
- The form or completeness of the protagonist’s body (*šuklulti pagrīya*) in IV §A 7’ (line g) recalls the only other line in the poem that uses *pagru*, II 75, where paralysis (*rimūtu*) had seized his “whole body” (*kal pagrīya*).
- The use of *mešrētīya* in IV §A 8’ harks back to the problems mentioned in II 67 and 105. It may also connect back to the problems described in II 77–79.
- The use of *zumru* in IV §A 9’ likely connects back to the only other line in the poem where that word refers to the protagonist’s body, II 71. This is where the *alū* demon is described as clothing the protagonist’s body

¹⁰⁹ See chapter eleven for a fuller discussion.

¹¹⁰ Admittedly, the speakers are different in each case. In III 78–79 it is the protagonist’s woe that is being turned back, probably (the line is not entirely understood). In II 83, it is the people who cry “woe” after seeing the suffering of the protagonist. See my comments on all of these lines in chapter three.

¹¹¹ *Lu`tu* is also mentioned in II 57 and reversed in III 75.

like a garment. It is interesting in light of this that the next line in IV §A 10', may contain a verb in the semantic domain of "clothing," *ḫalāpu* (partially restored) and thus perhaps reverses the previous demonic donning with some other (metaphoric?) garb that is presumably positive.

- The positive "striking" (*mašādu*) of the protagonist's forehead (*muttu*) so that he is released from slavery in IV §B 10' (line k) may be a reversal of the demonic gang's assault on his head in II 59–60 ([*qaqqad*]u and *pūtu*), the first in a series of demonic attacks in Tablet II that resulted in the protagonist's confinement (*mēseru*) to his bed and imprisonment (*kišukku*) in his house (II 95–96).

There are also parallels between the reversal in Tablets III and IV and the lament material in Tablet I.

- Tablet IV, line i mentions the restoration of the sufferer's "manliness / masculine features" (*dūtu ummultu*, "eclipsed masculine features"), which is described earlier negatively in I 47 with the same root (*ūtammil*).
- Tablet IV §B 16' (line o) describes the protagonist walking about the streets of Babylon positively, which contrasts his lamentable street situation in I 80 (as well as his immobility in II 79).

Something else worthy of note in Tablet III 69ff. when viewed as "answered petitions" is the conspicuous use of verbs that appear in incantation prayer petitions dealing with the removal of evil or evil signs:¹¹² *duppuru* in III 69, *abālu* in III 70, *tāru* in III 72, *sakāpu* in III 73, *maḥāru* in III 74, *nasāḫu* in III 75, *tebū* in III 79 and 83, *tabālu* in III 85, *pašāḫu* in III 87, and *paṭāru* in III 89. Similar verbs and a few others denoting rescue also occur in the opening lines of Tablet V (1–11), where the subject in every case is Marduk: *puššuḫu* (V 1), *puṭṭuru* (V 3), *bulluṭu* (V 4), *ekēmu* (V 5), *esēpu* (V 6), *dekū* (V 7), *šadādu* (V 8), *qātī šabātu* (V 9, which reverses the complaint about the personal god in II 112), *rēšī šuqqu* (V 11, which reverses the complaint about the personal goddess in II 5).

As the last paragraph indicated, "answered petitions" continue into Tablet V. Incantation prayers dealing with witchcraft sometimes attest a theme of turning the evil intended for the supplicant back upon the one afflicting him. At the most general level, one finds a petition that runs as follows: *šū limūt-ma anāku libluṭ*, "may he die, but I live!"¹¹³ Although witchcraft is not explicitly

¹¹² See Mayer 1976, 257–80.

¹¹³ See Mayer 1976, 275. For a few other examples (many could be cited) of this and conceptually similar phrases, see, e.g., Abusch / Schwemer 2011, 262, 279–80, and Abusch / Schwemer

named in *Ludlul*, this general theme (though not the vocabulary used in incantation prayers) of turning evil back upon the evil doer occurs in four couplets in Tablet V 12–17, 21–22, the first and third of which are the clearest.¹¹⁴ In the first (V 12–13), Marduk strikes (*imḥas*) the hand of the striker (*māḥiṣu*). In the second (V 14–15), he muzzles the mouth of a lion eating (*ākilu*) the sufferer. In the third, (V 16–17), he snatched the pursuer’s sling and turned back (*usahḥir*) his sling stone. And in the fourth (V 21–22), he put woe in the mouths of those who gloated over the protagonist’s misery.

After a break and some newly recovered but still rather unclear lines, we find the supplicant performing a few ritual acts (V 37–40, see below) and then entering twelve gates in the vicinity of Marduk’s Esagil (V 41–53), where he obtains something beneficial to his recovery.¹¹⁵ The description of the benefits that he receives resonates strongly with the language of petition in incantation prayers: *ḥegallu*, “prosperity” (V 42), *lamassu*, “divine guardian” (V 43), *šulmānu*, “well-being” (V 44), *balātu*, “life” (V 45), *itti balḫūti*, “among the living” (V 46),¹¹⁶ *iddātūya immerā*, “my signs became clear” (V 47),¹¹⁷ *e’iltī ippaṭir*, “my bond was released” (V 48),¹¹⁸ *ištāla pīya*, “my mouth inquired” (V 49, which may imply an effective oracular or petitionary request, though the precise meaning is still unclear to me),¹¹⁹ sighing “was released”, *uptaṭṭara* (V 50),¹²⁰ and *tēlilte*, “purification” (V 51).¹²¹ The events that unfold at the final two gates (V 52–53) should be understood as the climactic point in the passage, since it is here that the sufferer experiences the divine presence that he has

2016, 176. Note also the variations on this theme in the incantations of *Maqlū* (edition: Abusch 2016; see, e.g., I 19, II 94–96, I 126–130, II 197, III 72–73, III 123, V 5–8, 25ff., etc.). Noteworthy is *Maqlū* V 57–75, an incantation that is given almost entirely over to the reversal of evil onto the witch.

¹¹⁴ These lines are introduced rather ironically, since the same deity who turned back the sufferer’s oppressors also caused both the sufferer’s pain as well as his deliverance (V 10–11).

¹¹⁵ I have examined the learned hermeneutics that connect the names of each gate with what the protagonist receives at them in Lenzi 2015b. Häntinen (forthcoming) interprets the sequence of gates in light of rituals associated with *šigū* prayers. For an interpretation of this section of *Ludlul* as evidence of a more general idea in a couple of other religious texts, namely, that entering or being allowed to enter Babylon or the Esagil was an act symbolizing the sufferer’s redemption, the end of suffering, see Oshima 2011, 66–68.

¹¹⁶ The first five revolve around issues of life, prosperity, luck, and welfare. See Mayer 1976, 280–83, 287–89 for this language. On *lamassu* in petitions, see also pp. 244–48.

¹¹⁷ See Mayer 1976, 278–79.

¹¹⁸ See Mayer 1976, 115–18.

¹¹⁹ Supplicants in incantation prayers often want their words to be heard and responded to (Mayer 1976, 216–18).

¹²⁰ The verb occurs in a number of different kinds of petitions, including the release of divine anger and other evils (Mayer 1976, 240–42, 260–61).

¹²¹ Mayer 1976, 255–57 for the theme generally and the cognate verb *elēlu* in petitions.

lacked up to this point. This, one might suggest, reflects supplicants' common request for the abolition of estrangement and enmity between the deity and himself in incantation prayers.¹²²

The items the sufferer receives at each gate also contribute to the reversal of the sufferer's laments in Tablet I and II. He receives a divine guardian in V 43 (compare I 46). He is granted well-being and life in V 44–46, which reverse much of the language of lament in Tablets I and II. His signs become clear and his inquiries do not go unheard(?) at the gates in V 47 and 49 (compare I 49, I 115–118, II 6–9, and II 108–111). His sins are forgiven in V 48 (which seems to have been the root of Marduk's anger, see I 23–24, I 41–42, and note III 58–60 and especially III 61). His sighing (*tānēḥu*) is released in V 50 (compare II 95, and see I 105, *šutānuḥu*). In V 51 he is sprinkled with pure water, preparing him for the divine presence (compare II 12–22), which he experiences in V 52–53 (and had lacked since the very beginning of his lamentation).

V 37–41 and 54–68 frame the gates section and present a positive reprise of the sufferer's negative "turning" and ritual activities noted earlier in the lamentation sections of the poem (Tablets I and II). Although a few of these activities are somewhat unclear due to small breaks that remain in the text, I think we are warranted in viewing the ritual acts in general as a positive answer to (and thus a reversal of) the sufferer's earlier frustration for and cynicism about the ritual system (see II 1–38). That is, they should be viewed as part of the sufferer's ritual thanksgiving. The positive reception of the sufferer's food and drink offerings in V 59–61 at the Esagila provides an important clue about the effectiveness of the sufferer's ritual actions. More importantly for our comparative project, however, is the fact that some of the language used in this section of the poem reflects the language of "turning" and ritual action used in the incantation prayers.¹²³ The words *ana labān appi u utnennu* in V 40 and *ina suppē* in V 54 reflect the language of "turning" in incantation prayers¹²⁴ as does the verb *erēbu* in V 41.¹²⁵ Ritual language shared with incantation prayers includes the sufferer's incense (*qutrinnu*) he offered in V 55, his offering (*uṣamḥir*) of various gifts in V 56, his slaughter (*uṭṭabbih*) of an animal in V 57 (*šapṭu*), his con-

¹²² See Mayer 1976, 239–43.

¹²³ The hearing of the sufferer's prayer in V 39 also recalls the language of petition in incantation prayers, of course. See Mayer 1976, 216.

¹²⁴ Mayer 1976, 142 and 132.

¹²⁵ See Mayer 1976, 112, 139, always with *šigū* prayers. In light of this, note Oshima's reconstruction of Tablet IV §B 14': [... *ina Esagi]la šig[ū als]*, "[... in Esagi]la [I said] a *šigū* pray[er]."

tinual pouring out (*naqû*, Gtn) of beer and wine in V 58, and his sprinkling about (*lupputu* \approx *sarāqu* in the incantation prayers) of cedar oil in V 66.¹²⁶

The sufferer's passage through the different gates and his ritual activities at the temple may also be viewed as part of the sufferer's reintegration into his community, from which he was previously alienated—again, reversal of lament functions as petition granted. This is probably supported in the hint about a feast for the citizens of Babylon in V 68 and most certainly supported in the words of praise put in the mouths of the people in V 71–82. The latter words reverse the reproach and anger the sufferer's community had previously cast upon him (see I 80–83 for their collective opinion) and begin what I have called the concluding praise of the poem, discussed earlier and considered from another angle below.

8.3. INTERPRETING THE COMPARISON

If *Ludlul* was produced within the ranks of the exorcists, for whom the incantation prayer was a central genre in the fulfillment of their professional duties, then the results of the above literary comparison are not very surprising; indeed, one might be tempted to consider them simply as providing confirmation and documentation for what scholars had already suspected. Of course exorcists used incantation prayers in their literary endeavors! This is indeed gratifying. But the results from this extended comparison may contribute more if we step back and scrutinize them against the broader context of Mesopotamian literary production.

First, we should recall that the literary structure and content of the incantation prayer genre was adapted rather than simply adopted at several points in *Ludlul*. The poem begins and ends with praise. But this praise was adjusted to reflect the poem's circumstance of thanksgiving—as something begun (I 1) and then as something explicitly marked as completed (V 120)—rather than the circumstances of incantation prayers, namely, the offering of praise to prepare for petition. The self-presentation was more subtle than incantation prayers¹²⁷ and included a description of the abandonment of the personal gods rather than simply their identification. The lament material was quite comparable to incan-

¹²⁶ See Mayer 1976, 150–58 for the language of ritual acts in the incantation prayers. See also Oshima 2011, 69–71, who compares the ritual activities in these lines of *Ludlul* with those in the *Great Prayer to Marduk*, no. 1 and a couple of incantation prayers.

¹²⁷ Indeed, the protagonist/supplicant never names himself. It is one of the dream-figures who first names him (III 44), and the mention of his name in V 111 and 119 is from a narrator rather than the voice of the protagonist himself.

tation prayers but far exceeded anything found in them in terms of the length and severity of lamentation. The material in *Ludlul* that I compared to the “turning” and the ritual actions described in incantation prayers turned these elements on their heads, despite thematic and lexical connections with the incantation prayers. The sufferer “turned” but not to the deity; he described ritually appropriate actions but doubted their efficacy (rather than asking for their acceptance). The incantation prayers’ element of petition, lacking in *Ludlul*, is reflected in the poem as though the petitions were implicitly granted and as though they were the reversal of the laments uttered earlier. And finally, *Ludlul*’s whole chronological framework is retrospective, quite unlike the prospective stance of incantation prayers. So we see many structural similarities between *Ludlul* and the structural elements of the incantation prayer genre. But, each element incorporated into the text of *Ludlul* has also been modified in some way. I would suggest that it is precisely in the way that *Ludlul* has adapted the incantation prayer genre to a new circumstance that we see much of the significance of our literary comparative results. They provide another perspective on Mesopotamian novel (as in new) literary production via incorporation and transformation of older, well-known material.¹²⁸

Transformation by incorporation is not uncommon in Mesopotamian literary history. In fact, it may be a hallmark of literary creativity in ancient Mesopotamian textual traditions, especially in the post-Old Babylonian periods.¹²⁹ Perhaps the best known example is the incorporation of the flood story from (some version of) *Atram-ḥasīs* into Tablet XI of the Standard Babylonian *Epic of Gilgameš*. Although an older story was essentially taken from one context and adapted into another—sometimes showing word for word correspondences, the new (epic) context transformed the purpose of the old flood story, making it something entirely different from what it had previously been (an Old Babylonian myth) in its oldest known context.¹³⁰ This process of incorporation and transformation of the old flood story produces a novel literary result (that is, it transforms the literary horizons of the text incorporating the older material): Gilgameš, ready to take immortality from Uta-napišti by force, is stopped in his tracks by the appearance of an old man, armed with nothing more than an

¹²⁸ Lest I be understood as suggesting my observations as somehow the hermeneutical key to the entire poem, this particular instance of intertextuality that I have explored is but one example of *Ludlul*’s adaptation of older material to create something new. See Häätinen (forthcoming) for the poem’s use of *šigū* prayers and associated ritual activities.

¹²⁹ See Foster’s treatment of “intertextuality,” very broadly construed in Foster 2005, 22–26 and his briefer treatment of “allusions and quotations of Akkadian literature” in 2007, 113–14. See also my treatment of the same topics in Lenzi 2019, 44–43, 64–67.

¹³⁰ See George 2003, 1.18.

arcane story—which also provides, as we learn in the story itself, the reason that Gilgameš’s personal quest is futile.

Elnathan Weissert has noticed a rather different, more subtle example of a specific text being used in a later one with a transformative result. Weissert finds five literary allusions to *Enūma eliš* in Sennacherib’s account of the battle at Ḫalulê as it is attested in the Chicago Prism. “[T]heir role within the account of the events,” he believes, “suggest[s] that Sennacherib’s scribe consciously referred to this composition in order to enhance his anti-Babylonian propaganda.”¹³¹ More specifically, to quote a heading in his paper, the allusions are “a means to transfiguring the battle’s reality into mythic spheres,” creating a homology between the Assyrian enemy and Tiamat’s demonic horde, whose complete destruction (and thus the Assyrian enemy’s destruction) is imperative. Weissert finds no explicit citation in the text of the campaign; rather, a few words merely provide hints to the reader that another text is being appropriated in the context to generate the desired literary result. In this case, the old myth is transformed into history, and history into myth.¹³²

A final example will bring us back to our literary comparison between incantation prayers and *Ludul*. The so-called *Aluzinnu* text draws upon scholarly and literary language—from genres such as god lists, hymns, omens, and monologies—with parody and mockery as the end goals.¹³³ In this case the text uses neither a block of material nor phrasing / wording from one specific text that is re-contextualized in a new literary context. Rather, the author of the *Aluzinnu* text creates signals to the reader that intend to bring whole formulaic genres to mind. The author purposefully deploys these in the new literary context for a quite different purpose from those of the original, rather serious genres, namely, parody and mockery.

Unlike the author of the *Epic of Gilgameš*, who borrowed the flood account from an earlier source and re-contextualized it to effect a literary transformation, the authors of Sennacherib’s account of the battle at Ḫalulê, the *Aluzinnu* text, and *Ludlul*—to invoke the technical terminology of literary criticism—*allude* to specific texts or genres and thereby create a specific kind of

¹³¹ Weissert 1997, 192.

¹³² For a perspective that sees much more extensive intertextuality in the episode, see Pongratz-Leisten 2015, 306–21, who illustrates her treatment of the tropological discourse of the combat myth in Assyrian royal inscriptions with a detailed discussion of Sennacherib’s battle at Ḫalulê. She finds a cluster of intertextual connections to *Enūma eliš*, *Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta I*, *Erra and Išum*, and other Middle Assyrian texts.

¹³³ See Veldhuis 2003, 23–27 and Jiménez 2017, 101–3, followed here. Foster provides a provisional translation of the text, which he calls “The Jester” (2005, 939–41). Old editions are now outdated. Jiménez is working on a new edition that will include many unpublished manuscripts (2017, 102, n.273).

intertextuality that achieves their literary transformations.¹³⁴ Allusions in such literary texts are generally understood to be intentional acts of the author.¹³⁵ The allusion to earlier material occurs by way of specific markers (i.e., words, phrases, themes, typical forms, etc.)¹³⁶ in the alluding text and intends to *bring about some rhetorically desired effect in the literary context in which the allusion is used*.¹³⁷ What then is the desired effect of alluding to the incantation prayer genre in *Ludlul*?

The answer, I think, lies in two distinct passages in *Ludlul* in which the poet has the protagonist express his pedagogical intention in recounting his story. The first of these is in the final quatrain of the opening hymn. If we were to expect a major theme of the poem to be announced somewhere, we might very well expect it at the end of the introduction. Tablet I, lines 37–40 read:

¹³⁴ Weissert discusses intertextuality and the definition of allusion briefly in the opening remarks of his article (1997, 192, noting some literature). Among other Assyriologists, see the more recent discussions in Jiménez 2017, 79–82 and Wisnom 2020, 1–4, 9–19, who draws on Classical scholarship in her discussion. Hays 2008, although primarily concerned with the methodological issues of identifying allusions to non-biblical, ancient Near Eastern texts within the text of the Hebrew Bible, provides an overview and conclusions that are easily and usefully adapted to intra-Mesopotamian intertextuality. Hays, harking back to Julia Kristeva, an early theorist of intertextuality, ably defends the historical uses of intertextuality for historically-oriented scholars (such as are most Assyriologists and Biblicists). Mettinger 1993, although older, is another useful resource for an entrée into the literature of intertextuality. Finally, I have found Sommer 1998, 6–20 an extremely useful exposition of the differences between the broader category of intertextuality and the narrower ideas of influence, allusion, echo, and exegesis. Sommer builds on the work of Ben-Porat 1976, which also informs Weissert's work (1997, 192, n.8).

¹³⁵ Making a plausible case for authorial intent to allude to another text is very difficult (to say nothing of making a case for absolute certainty; see the caveats, cautions, and conclusions of Hays 2008, 34, 42–43 and Wisnom 2020, 16–19). I therefore do not deny the possibility that the author of *Ludlul* may have been unconsciously affected by important texts within his (i.e., the exorcist's) profession (incantation prayers) because he was so completely immersed in that material. As Moshe Seidel, in a discussion of parallels between biblical books (1955–1956, 149), explains: “(t)he words a person reads and hears and repeats become his own, enter his verbal storehouse. When needed they become, even if he does not know it, the clothing for the thoughts to which he gives birth” (דברים שאדם קורא ושומע וחוור עליהם נעשים קנינו, נכנסים לאוצרו, ובשעת הצורך הם) (the translation is Sommer's [1998, 208, n.17]). But in light of the extensive use of the general form, themes, and language of incantation prayers in *Ludlul* I think it is highly probable that their use was deliberate.

¹³⁶ See Sommer, 2008, 11–12 for a brief review of what may constitute such a marker.

¹³⁷ Despite differences in terminology and favored theorists, all of the authors cited in footnote 134 agree on this point. If we accept that the author of *Ludlul* deliberately alluded to incantation prayers, we need not accept that this meant he did so with an explicit understanding of the form of the prayer (as I have worked from) or that he was self-conscious about the process. Even if the decision to allude to the form, themes, and language of the incantation prayers was deliberate, the actual process of doing so may have been organic and intuitive.

I, who ate mud like a fish, will extol his anger,
 He quickly bestowed favor on me, just as he revived the dead.
 I will teach the people their rescuing is near,
 May his favorable invocation carry off their [...].¹³⁸

Here the sufferer announces his intention to teach the people that Marduk is merciful; his salvation simply has not yet arrived for them. When it does, Marduk will restore them, just as he did the sufferer. A second passage, paralleled in a few incantation prayers,¹³⁹ occurs in *Ludlul* IV §C 6' (line p), which reads, "Let the one who was negligent of Esagil learn from my example." Here, the sufferer clearly offers himself as an example, not for his virtue—indeed, he assumes in a very traditional manner that he was at fault somehow for his suffering¹⁴⁰—rather, for his enduring a difficult circumstance as one who bore divine anger.¹⁴¹ With these two passages the poem presents the sufferer as an example to the reader. As Johnston notes, the sufferer, "assuming a position of authority and knowledge based on his direct experience of Marduk's wrath and mercy, shares his wisdom with his audience by presenting himself to them as a man who exhibits the correct attitude to the god."¹⁴² Thus, it is through the act of reading the protagonist's story of suffering that the reader learns how humans ought to respond to their own suffering and understand their suffering's proper and propitious conclusion.¹⁴³ Given this pedagogical intent, what better

¹³⁸ The protagonist insists pedagogy was not new to him but was his normal habit with the people around him prior to the onset of his suffering recounted in the poem (see II 29–32). The poem itself, however, is evidence that his experience of suffering at the hand of Marduk has changed him.

¹³⁹ For parallels in a few incantation prayers, see Mayer 1976, 118.

¹⁴⁰ See *Ludlul* III 58–62, an incompletely recovered context that suggests the protagonist's misdeeds and faults that had formed an obstacle between him and the gods are removed. As noted in the previous chapter, this private confession is then dealt with appropriately in an official ritual manner in the river ordeal (IV, line j) and the (likely) ritual performance of a *šigū* prayer (IV §B 14'–15'). Note also that his previous sin (*e'iltu*) is released at one of the temple gates (V 48).

¹⁴¹ I admit that the line may most obviously function as a warning to readers not to neglect Marduk, and thus Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan may function as a negative example in the immediate context. Taken in the context of the entire poem, however, the line also contributes to the poem's broader purpose as developed above.

¹⁴² Johnston 2019, 70. For the instructional character of the protagonist and thus *Ludlul*, see also Denning-Bolle 1992, 62.

¹⁴³ It is worth mentioning in this regard that the protagonist's favorable invocation in I 40 may very well be the poem itself, as Piccin / Worthington (2015, 121) suggest, "so that the very act of reciting it would be beneficial," though this need not be construed in a ritualistic sense (see Johnston 2019, 70, 79, n.72). For the embodied teaching of the sufferer, i.e., teaching that is rooted in his bodily experience of Marduk's wrath, see Haubold 2019; note especially the following: "Through his illness and isolation, the sufferer feels Marduk's hand on his body, and that means

way for the author to encourage those who may be currently or potentially suffering divine disfavor than to present this story—the protagonist’s post-recovery thanksgiving story—in the form of, and to fill it with allusions to the themes and language of incantation prayers, the very kind of prayer a suffering person would recite to regain wholeness? In other words, just as the *Aluzinmu* text transformed entire genres for parody and mockery *Ludlul* has re-purposed the incantation prayer genre for the protagonist’s thanksgiving. As pointed out above, the first word of the text of thanksgiving, *ludlul*, is the last word of many incantation prayers. *Ludlul* (the poem) picks up in the sufferer’s own voice of praise where these prayers left off and thereby commends to the reader to engage in what I will call proleptic thanksgiving, that is, to appropriate the protagonist’s story as their own and to offer a kind of vicarious thanksgiving in advance of their own relief, because, although Marduk is angry at night, he is relenting at daybreak (I 2); their “rescuing is near” (I 39). Like Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan, one need only be patient.

This reading finds support within *Ludlul* via the very issue that suggested this literary comparative study in the first place: The fact that the poem is couched in a first person voice for most of the text, the same voice used in incantation prayers. From the perspective of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan, this first person perspective gives the poem a kind of religious autobiographical feel. For the reader, however, who enters the narrative world of the poem, especially a reader for whom suffering is a current affair rather than a thing of the past, the first person voice significantly alters the experience of the poem. Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan’s words become for this reader a forward-looking or, as I have called it, a proleptic thanksgiving. That is, the reader confesses in anticipation of its actual arrival that which he or she is hoping to experience—recovery or salvation from harm, but they do so *vicariously* through the entextualized experience of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan.¹⁴⁴ (Such an experience need not have taken place in a ritual to be beneficial. There is no evidence that *Ludlul* was used in any kind of ritual performance.) This interpretation, I believe, finds objective support from later texts that use *Ludlul* to cast *their own* protagonists in the mold of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan, the topic of chapter ten.

also that he learns something about the heart of Marduk that not even the gods can know.... [I]t is precisely the embodied experience of Marduk’s wrath, rather than the cognitive feat of understanding his heart, that forms the core of the sufferer’s teachings in *Ludlul*” (216). See also Johnston 2019, 74–78 in an explicit comparative perspective.

¹⁴⁴ On this reading of *Ludlul*, the ancient reader/hearer of the poem could potentially experience something like the “book encounter” described in Pasulka 2019, 100–106; that is, a person who has had an experience that is something of an anomaly picks up a book (or movie or documentary) that suddenly makes sense of what the person has experienced.

Before concluding our comparative reading, I return to an idea mentioned earlier about the nature of praise at the end of Tablet V to suggest how the poem supports the protagonist's own announced pedagogical intent in its narrated concluding scenes, where the poem gently leads the reader from reflecting *with* the protagonist about his experiences *through* the text via his first person voice, as discussed above, to reflecting *on* the protagonist and his experiences *in* the text via the narrator's third person voice, concluding with a self-reference to the poem itself. With this shift in the reader's perspective the poem authorizes the reader to stand back from the protagonist, to see him objectively, and to understand the particularity of his experiences as paradigmatic in character, generalizable and thus applicable to their own life experiences.¹⁴⁵

In the first two thirds of Tablet V the protagonist enters a temple complex where he undertakes several ritual acts. His publicly-recognized recovery and re-entry into social life then elicit a doxological response from his onlookers in *Ludlul* V 69–70, which read:

The <citizens> of Babylon saw how he (i.e., Marduk) revived [hi]s [servant?],
Every one of their mouths extolled [his] greatness, *saying*:

In the lines that follow, the Babylonians praise Marduk and exhort others—in fact, exhort everyone universally—to join them in lauding the deity for his magnanimous treatment of the sufferer (V 71–82, partially cited earlier in this chapter). By virtue of the situation, the sufferer is referred to in the third person throughout this passage. Significantly, this third person mode of referencing the sufferer seems to continue, though the text is variously broken in the lines that follow, until the end of the poem.¹⁴⁶ In light of this manner of presentation, I think the final third of Tablet V intends to create conceptual distance between the sufferer and the reader by progressively uncoupling the reader from the particularity of the sufferer's experience. Up to V 69–70, the sufferer's story provides the reader with a kind of vicarious reading experience via the sufferer's first person voice, as mentioned already above. Now the poem moves the reader back a step from the protagonist's immediate experience to see his experiences as viewed from the perspective of the Babylonians in their praise of Marduk (V 71ff.) and then moves the reader back yet another step to see the protagonist's story—at an even greater conceptual distance—from the omniscient perspective of the narrator, whose words in V 105–120 slip between an objective description of the protagonist (V 105–112), to a generalized exhor-

¹⁴⁵ The thoughts I develop here have their roots in Foster's early article on self-reference in *Ludlul* (1983).

¹⁴⁶ There may be an exception in *Ludlul* V 83.

tation for anyone who has experienced suffering (possibly,¹⁴⁷ V 113–118), to a doxology directed at Marduk.¹⁴⁸ The concluding lines even refer to the protagonist by name (see V 111 and 119, both incomplete lines), explicitly moving him from the role of *subject of expression* to the poem's explicit *object of reflection*. It must be significant, in this regard, that the poem begins with an exhortational and implied performative form of *dalālu*, *ludlul*, "I will (now commence) praise," from the perspective of the sufferer himself (I 1)—a point of entry for the reader into the protagonist's experience, and that it concludes with the simple preterite of the same root, *idlula*, "he praised," indicating the completion of the action as judged from the narrator's omniscient perspective (V 120), which has also become the reader's. Given this framing of the poem, it seems to me that *Ludlul* concludes in V 120 with an implicit reference to the poem itself,¹⁴⁹ a feature of a number of other Akkadian literary compositions (e.g., *Enūma eliš* and *Erra and Išum*). In distancing the reader from the protagonist in this manner at the end of the text and referencing itself in its very last line, the poem commends itself, even if only subtly, as an authoritative reflection on and interpretation of the protagonist's experience. His thanksgiving has been completed, and his story has concluded with him in right standing with Marduk. If one were to consider a comparison of this ending with incantation prayers, one might suggest that what we have here is a thematic adaption of the assurance found in ritual instructions attached to various incantation prayers (and always detached from the supplicant's first person voice in the actual text of the prayer), which authoritatively state in an institutionally-embedded and omniscient third person voice, "your/his prayer will be heard" (*teslītka/teslīssu iššemmi*) or simply "it will be heard" (*šemāt*).¹⁵⁰

Thinking more broadly: Given these observations of the protagonist's pedagogical exhortations and the poem's reflective interpretations of his experience, one might be inclined to call *Ludlul* a sermon. But it cannot be a sermon; there are no sermons from Mesopotamia. One might be tempted to call it a hymn or a prayer, since the poem, as we have seen, is infused with the language from these genres.¹⁵¹ But such genre categories do not capture what is going on in

¹⁴⁷ See the notes in chapter three at V 113.

¹⁴⁸ Albertz describes the entire final Tablet of the poem as "eine schrittweise Erweiterung des Personenkreises, der in das Marduklob einbezogen wird" (1988, 43).

¹⁴⁹ Just as the opening hymn may conclude with such a self-reference (so Piccin / Worthington 2015, 121).

¹⁵⁰ See, e.g., STT 59, obv. 33 and rev. 26; STT 132, rev. 7; CTN 4 168, rev. ii 56; BMS 21 + AOAT 34 52, rev. 25; BMS 36, rev. 8'; SpBTU 3 76, rev. 22 (restored); BM 54654, rev. 5.

¹⁵¹ As important as is Oshima's point that *Ludlul* is similar to hymns in that both shift near their conclusions to a third person voice and offer pleas for the person for whom the text was

this narrative poem, since the prolonged and detailed presentation of the sufferer's recovery in Tablet III and following is foreign to the content of hymns and would make the generic identification of prayer incomprehensible.¹⁵² What are we to make of *Ludlul* then?

Might it not make sense to take the sufferer's life experiences described in the poem *as a whole* as a kind of sign or omen? And, following this idea, could not the poem then do for these experiences—these signs—considered collectively the same thing the diviner's omen series do for manifested omens?¹⁵³ *Ludlul* deciphers the meaning of the sufferer's experiences in terms of the most relevant divine attributes, wrath and mercy. And it does this for the benefit of a general audience, whomever they may have been beyond the scribal students and professional scribes who copied the tablets. Unlike the scholarly corpora that were believed to be revelatory in nature (Lenzi 2008), *Ludlul* is not secret. And, there is no evidence in the way the poem constructs its audience that its audience was to be restricted to the king or a group of elites or some other specific group (despite what we know about its actual circulation among the literate and the elite); rather, the poem addresses the people, everyone (see I 39), and may more specifically identify this audience in V 113 as anyone who has experienced suffering. (Of course, the high literary register of the poem's language may have made such a constructed audience more of a fiction than a genuine possibility. But the point remains: The poem is directed at everyone.) In this respect, the poem is similar to the *Epic of Gilgameš*. The *Epic of Gilgameš* promises its readers the opportunity to learn the wisdom that Gilgameš discovered and to read the very secrets of the gods, which in some

created (Oshima 2014, 18, 342), I do not think that observation provides a full explanation for what is going on in *Ludlul*. As hymn-like as it is, *Ludlul* is not simply a hymn.

¹⁵² Note Ziegler 2015, 218–29, who considers several laments, hymns, and prayers traditionally treated in discussions of “theodicy,” including *Ludlul*. She makes a very useful distinction between texts that treat human suffering retrospectively (i.e., after healing), which she calls “action de grâce,” and those that treat it amidst current suffering, “situés avant la remission du souffrant” (222). Of the four in the former category (Sumerian *Man and His God*, OB Akkadian *Man and His God*, *Ludlul*, and *Ugaritica 5*, no. 162), *Ludlul* is far and away the one that most develops the protagonist's recovery. In other words, *Ludlul* has parallels but none is developed in the manner and to the degree to which *Ludlul* is. I am drawn back to Brigitte Groneberg's assessment of *Ludlul* in the context of her treatment of *Ištar Baghdad* (see note 29 above). She states that her study of the latter text strengthened her view that “*Ludlul*, eine ungewöhnlich kunstvolle Kompilation auf der Basis von älteren Klagegebeten ist,” which is not the same as identifying *Ludlul* with such texts.

¹⁵³ Along similar lines, note Foster's summary of the final section of *Erra and Išum*: “The poet introduces himself by name, and explains that the text, or ‘sign’ of the god, was approved by Erra himself after it was revealed to the author in a half-waking state. Having become a sign, the text acquires prophylactic powers” (2005: 910).

sense, it asserts, are contained in the lines of its poem.¹⁵⁴ If one accepts the parallel, then *Ludlul* might be viewed as also offering a kind of wisdom, rooted in the experiences of *another* man, who has come to know in a *lived* manner the attributes of Marduk,¹⁵⁵ the lord of wisdom (*bēl nēmeqi*)—an epithet that activates ideas of divine revelation¹⁵⁶—and high god of Babylon. Like Gilgameš, Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan is thus paradigmatic, on some level—he is the emblematic sufferer, as van der Toorn calls him.¹⁵⁷ And thus his story could be anyone’s story, including those suffering (V 113), if they heed his example.

APPENDIX:
ŠUBŠI-MEŠRÊ-ŠAKKAN’S NAME AS PETITIONARY PRAYER
AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN *LUDLUL*

Interpreters have been so concerned with finding Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan in history (see the Introduction) that they have hardly considered the role his name plays in the poem, which is the interpretive concern of this short appendix.

The protagonist’s name is, of course, a prayer, “O Šakkan, create wealth.” By the time *Ludlul* was written, Šakkan was a third tier deity, associated with the steppe and the various animals who graze there and with prosperity and abundance.¹⁵⁸ The fact that the protagonist’s name has Šakkan as its theophoric element indicates clearly that the protagonist had no prior, special connection or obvious devotion to Marduk. Whether his name was given to him by his parents or contrived by the poem’s author, a protagonist named “O Šakkan, create wealth” would not be construed by readers of the poem as coming from a family particularly devoted to Marduk—or any other high god in the pantheon, for that matter.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴ See Lenzi 2013a.

¹⁵⁵ See Haubold 2019, especially 216.

¹⁵⁶ See SAACT 7, xxxv–xxxvi and Lenzi 2018, 60–61. Marduk’s primary expertise was related to dispelling evil demons through incantations, which would be quite appropriate in the context of *Ludlul* (see Lambert 1995, 32; Noegel [2016, 625, n.81] includes witchcraft). Note also Johnston’s suggestion for the implication of the epithet in the opening line of the poem: “one may argue that when the speaker praises Marduk as *bēl nēmeqi*, he is referring not only to the god’s superior wisdom, but also to his ability or propensity to bestow it upon humans. In that sense, we might read the opening lines as alluding to the speaker’s own claim to *nēmequ*.”

¹⁵⁷ 1985, 58.

¹⁵⁸ See Frayne and Stuckey 2021, 319–20 for a recent, brief round-up of references to the deity. Wiggermann 2021 lays out all of the evidence for the deity in great detail.

¹⁵⁹ Of course, we must exercise caution in using a person’s birth name to discern their religious devotion as an adult. Nabonidus (*Nabû-na`id*, “Nabû is praised”), treated at length in chapter ten, and his special devotion to Šin springs to mind as a famous example of onomastic-

What if the protagonist were named *Ētir-Marduk*, “Marduk is my Savior,” or *Adi-mat-Marduk*, “How long, O Marduk?,” or *Rabâ-ša-Marduk*, “Great are the deeds of Marduk”? These are all actual names attested in various Middle Babylonian documents, listed in Sommerfeld’s study of the rise of Marduk.¹⁶⁰ The last was a well-known physician (*asû*) from Nippur, who can be placed in that city between the eleventh and seventeenth years of king Nazimaruttaš and who spent his later years at the Hittite court.¹⁶¹ Would the poem read any differently if the protagonist bore a name with a Marduk-theophoric? Yes. Upon reading or hearing a Marduk-name in *Ludlul* III 44 instead of “Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan” I think readers would be inclined to reprocess everything in the poem that came before the dream sequence in Tablet III and likely re-evaluate their previous level of empathy for the protagonist. His inability in Tablets I and II to figure out what he had done to deserve his misfortunes and to determine a way to remedy them might be construed as disingenuous. And his neglect of Esagil, which he admits in *Ludlul* IV §C 6’ (line p), might not be viewed charitably as a thoughtless omission—corrected after discipline—but as a very grave offense, a sin of commission and a derelict of duty. In many ways, I think, the poem’s poignancy and impact would fall apart if the protagonist had a name with a Marduk-theophoric. Thus, the protagonist’s name, or rather, the protagonist’s non-Marduk name, is important to the poem’s literary success.¹⁶²

Another thing that should not go overlooked in a discussion of the protagonist’s name is the middle term, *mešrû* or, as booked in the lexica, *mašrû*.¹⁶³ The word means “wealth, riches,” that is, material surplus over one’s practical needs, and in some contexts is correlated, as is still true today unfortunately, with a high position in the social hierarchy.¹⁶⁴ Moreover, in addition to being paired with words of abundance (e.g., *nuššu*, *hegallu*, *tuḥdu*, see CAD M/1, 386), *mešrû* is also paired with *dumqu*, “favor.” *Dumqu* can be social in character—favor in the community—as it is in a Middle Babylonian letter’s greeting: *ša Anu Enlil u Ea u Bēlet-ilī qīpti dumqi u mešrê išrukūšu*, “to whom Anu, Enlil, and Ea, as well as Bēlet-ilī have given an office which will provide favor

religious mismatch. Still, in terms of a name creating a specific perception in a literary text, the point remains.

¹⁶⁰ 1982, 204–5, 207; see also Hölscher 1996, 21 and 173 for the last two names cited.

¹⁶¹ See Heeßel 2009. If one wants to speculate about who might have written *Ludlul* during this king’s reign, Rabâ-ša-Marduk should be on the short list of candidates.

¹⁶² This, by the way, is not an absolutely compelling argument in favor of taking the name as something contrived by the poet.

¹⁶³ See CAD M/1, 285–86; *AHW*, 629; *CDA*, 203.

¹⁶⁴ See, e.g., the *Babylonian Theodicy* 20 and 282 (Oshima 2014, 150, 166) and the proverb in K.7674+, rev. iii 23–24 (Lambert 1960, 252).

and wealth.”¹⁶⁵ In the *šuilu* prayer Ištar 1 such communal favor is recognized as coming from the deity and from the acquisition and thus maintenance of divine protectors. The relevant lines of petition read:

*ašhur bēlutki lū balāṭu u šulmu
lurši šēd dumqi ša pānīki
ša arkīki ālikat lamassi lurši
ša imnukki mešrā luššip
dumqa lukšīda ša šumēlukki*¹⁶⁶

I hereby turn to your (i.e., Ištar’s) sovereignty; may there be life and wholeness for me.

May I acquire the protective spirit of good fortune (*šēd dumqi*) who is before you.

May I acquire the divine guardian who follows after you.

May I add wealth (*mešrā*) that is on your right side.

May I achieve favor (*dumqu*) that is on your left side.

A similar cluster of favor, wealth, and life is attested in a prayer directed to Marduk, inscribed on a Kassite cylinder seal, the last two lines of which read:

dumqu mašrū u balāṭu lištātū ittīya

May favor, wealth, and life converge on me.¹⁶⁷

Finally, an omen apodosis is even more direct about the connection between divinity, favor, and wealth (which is here represented by a verbal form of the same root from which *mešrū* derives): *ilu ana amēli dumqa ippeš amēlu šū išarru*, “a god will show favor to the man; that man will become wealthy” (*Šumma ālu* LV 23’).¹⁶⁸ As mentioned above, Šakkan was associated with prosperity and abundance, which comes out very clearly in a Kassite cylinder seal prayer that describes the deity as “lord of abundance and plenty” (en ḫé-nun ḫé-ḡál).¹⁶⁹ Even more apropos for our discussion is the Kassite name ^dŠakkan-*mušešri*, “Šakkan is the one who makes *one* wealthy.”¹⁷⁰ Of course, the protagonist in *Ludlul* loses both his considerable material well-being and high social status in Tablet I of the poem so that he ends up homeless and openly slandered even by a slave girl (I 90), all of which is attributed from the

¹⁶⁵ BE 17, no. 24 = CBS 19793, lines 6b–8; see CAD Q, 260.

¹⁶⁶ Zgoll 2003, 195–96, lines 30–32.

¹⁶⁷ Limet 1971, 96 (no. 7.9).

¹⁶⁸ Freedman 2017, 99.

¹⁶⁹ Limet 1971, 65 (no. 3.5). Note also no. 8.1 (p. 102), which praises the deity’s ability to increase grain, multiply living creatures, and provide a man with an heir and a name (ibila ù mu tuku-bi).

¹⁷⁰ Cited in Wiggermann 2021, 604.

outset of his story to divine anger—Marduk’s—and the loss of divine protection (I 41–48), including a *šēd dumqi* (I 45). Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan had clearly become a man without favor, divine or human. We may therefore see that the word *mešrû* in the protagonist’s name indicates an irony: although Šakkan has given the protagonist *mešrû*, Marduk has taken it away. The word also implies a renewed supplicatory urgency in light of his losses recounted in the poem. Yet, the poem makes one thing quite clear: contrary to his appellation’s appeal, the god Šakkan, whom I presume to be the protagonist’s personal or familial god, had no power to help Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan until Marduk permitted it (I 16).

For a much more speculative suggestion on the meaning of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan’s name, see the appendix to chapter nine.

CHAPTER 9:
LUDLUL AND THE COMMENTARY TRADITIONS:
FIRST-MILLENNIUM SCHOLARS AND SCRIBAL HERMENEUTICS

In the last several chapters (five through eight) I have used an internal approach to shed light on some element of *Ludlul* as a work of ancient scholarship. Chapter five followed the theme of revelation in the poem to understand the protagonist's experience of divine revelation as it unfolds in the poem; chapter six analyzed the poem's anatomical and pathological vocabulary to illuminate the poem's intersection with texts associated with exorcism; chapter seven interpreted the pervasive theme of ritual failure to gain insight into the poem's institutional, ideological purpose; and chapter eight examined the poem's intertextuality with incantation prayers, arguably the most important genre in the exorcist's textual repertoire. Each of these approaches have provided a perspective on the socio-cultural background of the poem, as a text originating among exorcists.

The present chapter returns to the external approach of chapter four, in which I gathered and interpreted the data from school tablets containing excerpts of *Ludlul* and extant colophons on tablets preserving the poem. I started with the external approach in chapter four in order to demonstrate objectively that *Ludlul* was used to train future exorcists. The present chapter builds on these findings through a close examination of *Ludlul*'s role in the ancient Mesopotamian commentary traditions of the first millennium, which reflect pedagogical elements of an advanced stage in a young scholar's education and professional development. The primary focus here is on a thorough investigation of the commentary that ancient scholars produced for *Ludlul* itself, henceforth simply referred to as "the Commentary." As of this writing, no such study has appeared in print. In the last section of the chapter, I consider (much more briefly) how *Ludlul* was cited in the commentaries on other texts. Despite their differing foci, the goal of each section is one and the same: To examine the ancient socio-literary contexts in which the scribes read and interpreted *Ludlul* centuries after its composition.

9.1. INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMENTARY¹

Ludlul is one of the few Akkadian literary texts that attracted the exegetical attention of ancient scholarly commentators.² The present Commentary may be the same *mukallimtu*-commentary that the literary inventory tablet Rm.618 refers to in line 18.³ In any case, the only known witness to the Commentary to *Ludlul* presented in this chapter is K.3291, which is a finely formed tablet written in a neat Neo-Assyrian script. Given the fact that the tablet was found in the libraries and archives at Nineveh, the tablet is likely a copy of the Commentary rather than an original creation.⁴ One of the scribal mistakes on the tablet may likewise suggest K.3291 is a copy: the scribe wrote an I for Ú in obv. 26,⁵ a mistake that was likely graphic in nature.

When the tablet was complete, it contained commentary on selected lines from all five Tablets of *Ludlul*. Unfortunately, the tablet is broken and now missing the top of its obverse and thus the bottom of its reverse. It is difficult to know how many lines are actually missing from each side due to the break.⁶ Recognizing that the Commentary currently begins with a citation of *Ludlul* I 24 (probably), we might expect it to have cited and explained lemma from perhaps five earlier lines from the poem,⁷ sometimes using one and at other times

¹ This chapter draws on the edition of the Commentary that I first published on Yale University's Cuneiform Commentaries Project, headed by Eckart Frahm, in collaboration with Mary Frazer, Enrique Jiménez, and Klaus Wagonsonner; see Lenzi 2015a (<https://ccp.yale.edu/P394923>). Enrique Jiménez made several suggestions on that page, indicated in the notes there as [EJ]. When adopted here, I indicate those suggestions in the notes with (CCP) after his name. My research into the Commentary since 2015 has led to several revisions being incorporated into the present edition, translation, and analysis. In time, these will be worked into the online edition.

² For other commentaries on literary texts, see <http://ccp.yale.edu/catalogue?genre=3>. As one will notice from a perusal of the list, Marduk is an important actor and Babylon an important cult center in most of the literary texts that have a commentary (e.g., *Enūma eliš*; *Lugal-e* is the exception); see Gabbay 2016, 6–7 and Horowitz 2009.

³ As noted in Frahm 2011, 119; see already Lambert 1960, 26, Lambert 1954–1956, 320, and Meier 1937–1939, 239, n.23. Sayce's edition (1884, 190–94) has been updated by Jiménez (2017, 117–21). A *mukallimtu*, listed on the line below *Ludlul*, is also mentioned in the literary inventory SEM 1092 (rev. i' 4'), published by Groß (2012: 34–38, perhaps from Nineveh).

⁴ Though we cannot be sure that K.3291 is identical to or a copy of the *mukallimtu*-commentary of *Ludlul* mentioned in Sm.618: 18, we do know the other compositions listed in that inventory were copied by scribes, thus suggesting that the listed *mukallimtu* of *Ludlul* was also copied. See Gabbay 2015, 58–66 for a full discussion of the copying of commentary tablets.

⁵ If the reading of rev. 12 is correct (see below), our Assyrian copy of the Commentary may also have misunderstood a Babylonian BA as MA and incorrectly interpreted a crowded ŠI followed by a colon as ŠÁ. See also my note on *dannu* in rev. 7 below as a potential case of parapsis.

⁶ See Lambert 1960, 25 for his estimation.

⁷ If we use Lambert's ratio of one line commented on for every seven lines of poetry in Tablet

two lines on the tablet to do so. I suspect therefore that we are likely missing about ten lines from the top of the obverse and about the same from the bottom of the reverse. In its current condition, there are fifty-one extant lines (in various conditions of preservation) on the obverse and forty-seven on the reverse. Thus, originally, the tablet may have had about sixty lines or so to a side and been about 120 lines long in total.⁸ If that is the case and line v of the Commentary should be identified as a citation of *Ludlul* V 64—which admittedly is based on very slim evidence (see the note on rev. 46 below), then the Commentary cited fewer lines from Tablet V of the poem than it did from the other Tablets. (It cites twenty-one lines of the poem from Tablet II, all relevant lines of which are known both in the base text and in the Commentary.) Given this assessment of the space at the end of the reverse, if our copy contained a colophon, it was unlikely to have been a long one—as are most of the Aššurbanipal colophons.

The Commentary follows the typical Assyrian *mukallimtu* form:⁹ a line of the base text (*Ludlul*) is cited and then a lemma (or two; rarely, three) from the cited text is equated with another word (or words), thereby providing an explanation. In twenty-eight cases, the commentary cites a line from *Ludlul* and uses the following line for commentary (e.g., obv. 12'-13'). In thirty-five cases, the cited text from *Ludlul* is immediately followed on the same line by an explanation of a lemma (or two); only a colon separates the citation from the explanation (e.g., obv. 14'). (Line n and the last four lines of the tablet are not counted in these totals.) When the beginning of a line comprising only commentary is preserved, the line is always indented (twenty times; e.g., obv. 16' and 23').¹⁰

The colon (or *Glossenkeil*), ubiquitous in commentaries, is used for a few different purposes in K.3291. Every time there is text and commentary on the same line and the transition is preserved, a colon separates the citation from the commentary. (The transition at rev. 12 seems to be an exception, though the tablet is somewhat broken where we would expect the colon.¹¹ And, as I have suggested in the textual note on rev. 12, there may be a copyist's error in the

I (1960, 25), we should estimate only three or four lines commented on in the break.

⁸ Compare the presumed size of the tablet as presented in the typeset copy, VR, no. 47 (61 lines to a side).

⁹ On the typology of commentary tablets, see the section "Cuneiform Text Commentaries: A Typology" at <http://ccp.yale.edu/introduction/typology-commentaries#form>.

¹⁰ I do not include obv. 18' and rev. 37 in this count. Rev. 37 is missing one sign at the beginning of the line, [(indent) *ku*]-*nu*¹-*uš*-*kād*-*ru*. The placement of the first preserved sign, NU, likely indicates an indentation at the line's head. The textual situation in obv. 18' is similar.

¹¹ Also, the transition in rev. 14 occurs on a crack in the tablet. Although the colon is not represented on Lambert's copy of the tablet (1960, pl. 16), it is printed in the typeset cuneiform of the copy in VR, no. 47. I do not see the colon in my photographs of the tablet.

text.) The colon is also used to separate different comments on the same line. When there is more than one comment in succession, a colon usually separates the comments. See obv. 13', 45' (first colon), 51', rev. 18, 20, 28 (second and fifth colons), and 42. Exceptionally, the colon is absent between two comments on the same line in rev. 40. Finally, when two lemma are being equated in the commentary, a colon sometimes (not always) separates the equated lemma. See obv. 31', 38', 39', 40', 45' (second colon), 49', rev. 3, 17 (the first one is a triple *Winkelhaken* rather than a normal colon), 22, 24, 25, 26, 28 (first, third, and fourth colons), 29, 37, and 40.

The Commentary repeats the explanation of three lemma from the base text of *Ludlul* in the course of its text:¹²

- *dūtu* = *bunnannū* in obv. 6' (I 47) and rev. 29 (IV, line i)
- *ḥašikku* = *sukkuku* in obv. 13' (I 71) and rev. 9 (III 84)¹³
- *unšu* = *bubūtu* in obv. 35' (II 44) and rev. 14 (III 104)

And some of its explanations are not attached to the poem's first use of the word being explained. For example, *mašāšu* occurs in III 91, III 95, and IV, line h, where it is finally explained (see rev. 28); and *aḥulap* occurs first in I 96 but is explained in conjunction with the Commentary's entry for III 35 (see rev. 6). (The word appears twice more in *Ludlul* III 38 and III 55.) It is unclear what to make of these facts.¹⁴

If K.3291 is a copy, which seems likely, then one may well wonder about the Commentary's actual origin as a composition. Enrique Jiménez suggests (CCP) that rev. 42 may provide evidence that the Commentary is an Assyrian creation: the Commentary explains the lemma *aspu* with *uspu*, which simply looks to be an Assyrian orthography of *aspu*. The Assyrian orthography of *muttutu* for *muttatu* in rev. 32 may point to the same general place of origin. As best as I can determine, there is no evidence to narrow the place of origin to a more specific locale. Yet an Assyrian origin for the Commentary is significant for the present study.

As Gabbay has shown in his work on the Akkadian terminology associated with commentaries, the *Sitz im Leben* of the production of ancient Mesopota-

¹² See also rev. 24 (on Com, line e), where the lemma *mānaḥtu* is explained with *mursu*. Both terms occur together as the explanation for the lemma *ippiru* in obv. 31' (on II 11).

¹³ In III 84, the base text has *ḥašikkiš*; the commentator removes the adverbial suffix and simply cites *ḥašikku* as the lemma.

¹⁴ One might be tempted to entertain the idea that the Commentary on K.3291 is a composite of commentaries on two distinct portions of *Ludlul*, for example, on Tablets I–II and on Tablets III–V. Although this would explain the repeated explanations neatly, it cannot explain why *mašāšu* is not commented on until its third attestation in the poem (in Tablet IV), unless we multiply the putative sources to at least three.

mian commentaries was the collaborative study of texts among senior scholars and their younger colleagues/advanced students. As he writes, “[m]any of the terms related to commentaries, either as genre designations, scribal remarks, or hermeneutical terms, point to this study environment.” He continues:

The picture that arises from an examination of this language is that of the joint scholarly study of canonical (and divine) texts in the form of a lesson (*malsûtu*) during which the base text was read, probably by a young scholar (or a few young scholars) who offered interpretations in response to questions posed by a senior scholar (*maš’altu ša pī ummāni*), the latter adding his expositions and further teaching. These oral explanations were later combined with written sources by the young scholar, who was responsible for composing the commentary tablet itself.¹⁵

Previous chapters have confirmed that *Ludlul* originated among scholars and was transmitted to scribes/scholars-in-training, both in the form of excerpts on school tablets and, according to some colophons, *in extenso* on full tablets found in various ancient tablet collections. According to Gabbay’s reconstruction of the socio-cultural situations in which commentaries were produced, the existence of *Ludlul*’s Commentary provides further evidence for the importance of *Ludlul* as a culturally authoritative text in mid-first-millennium Assyria.

9.2. EDITION OF THE COMMENTARY

In the Akkadian transliteration below citations from *Ludlul* are in normal print. The commentary material is marked in **bold**.

obverse

(*Ludlul* 124)¹⁶

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1'. [... <i>an</i>]- <i>nu</i> | [... gu]ilt. |
| 2'. [... <i>an-nu ar</i>]- <i>nu</i>
(126) | [... Guilt <i>means</i> gu]ilt. |
| 3'. [... <i>hur-b</i>] <i>a-šú</i> | [... col]d tremors. |
| 4'. [... <i>hur-ba-šú ku-u</i>] <i>š-šu</i> | [... Cold tremors <i>means</i> ch]ills. |

¹⁵ Gabbay 2016, 14; similarly, 51.

¹⁶ Oshima thinks this line may be a commentary to either I 19 or I 24 (2014, 382). The latter seems more likely to me.

(147)

5'. [... *du-ú-ti ú*]-^r*tam*¹-*mil* [... my masculine features ec]lipsed.6'. [... *du-ú-tu bu-un-n*]*a-nu-ú* [... Masculine features *means* outer] appearance.

(148)

7'. [...] x : *ta-ra-nu šil-lu* [...] ... Protection *means* covering.

(161)

8'. [...] *a-tam-maḥ* [...] I will seize [...].9'. [... *ta*]-*ma-ḥu ṣa-ba-tu*₄ [... To se]ize *means* to seize.

(169)

10'. [... *ú*]-^r*šam*¹-*ga-ru* UGU-MU They [s]et [...] in alliance against me.11'. [...] *nap-ra-ku pe-er-ku* [...] Obstruction *means* fraud.

(171)

12'. [*šap-ta-a-a šá it-ta-aš*]-*ba-ra ḥa-šik-kiš e-me* I, [whose lips chatt]ered constantly, turned into a mute person.13'. [(indent) *ša-ba-ru da-b*]*a-bu : ḥa-šik-ku suk-ku-ku : e-mu-u ma-šá-lu* [To chatter *means* to sp]eak. Deaf *means* deaf. To become *means* to be like.

(178)

14'. *šar*-^r*ra-ḥa-ku-ma*¹ *a-tur a-na re-e-ši : re-e-šu*¹⁴ ARAD I was *once* dignified, but I turned into a slave. Head *means* slave.

(186)

15'. *na-al-bu-bu tap-pe-e ú-nam-ga-ra-an-ni* My furious comrade would denounce me.16'. (indent) *na-al-bu-bu še*₂₀-*gu-ú* Furious *means* raging.

(187)

17'. [*ki-n*]*a-a*[*t-ti a-na na-aq*]^r*da-me ú*¹-[*mar*]-^r*ra-áš*^{giš}¹[TUKUL] [My coll]ea[gue] di[rt]ied *his* weapon [for] blood[shed].18'. [(indent) *ana*]^r*na-aq* [*d*]*a-mi ta-bak da-mi*¹⁷ [For] spilling [bl]ood *means* pou[ring out blood].

(189)

19'. *š*[*u*]-*piš ina pu-uḥ-ri e-ru-ra-an*-^r*nī*¹ [My] sla[ve] o[p]enly cursed me in the assembly. [...]
a[*r*²-*di : x x x (x)*]¹⁸

¹⁷ The present reading of the line follows George / Al-Rawi 1998, 200, as suggested by Enrique Jiménez (CCP).

¹⁸ Given the few attestations of *šūpiš* (CAD Š/3, 323), the Commentary likely chose that word in the line for comment. And given the small available space in the break at the end of the line, the word was likely explained by another comprising only one or two signs. The only word that comes to mind is *petiš*, “openly²,” though this is even more rarely attested than *šūpiš* (CDA, 273; CAD P, 337); thus [*šu-piš pe-tiš*]. Both instances of *petiš* occur in astrological commentaries to explain the obscure *salṭiš* (see CAD P, 337 and S, 106); it is always written *pe-ti-iš*. In any case, filling the break at the end of this line is mere speculation.

(I 93)

20'. *a-na qa-ab* ^{munus}SIG5-*ia pe-ta-as-su* A grave lay open for one speaking well
ḥaš-tu₄ : ḥa-áš-tu₄ šu-u[t-ta-tu₄] of me. Grave *means* gra[ve].

(I 105)

21'. *u₄-mu šu-ta-nu-ḥu mu-šu ger-ra-a-* The day *was* sighing, the night lamenta-
ni : ger-ra-a-ni bi-[ki-tu₄] tion. Lamentation *means* we[eping].

(I 106)

22'. ITI *qí-ta-a-a-ú-lu i-dir-^rtu¹* Every month endless silence, the yea[r]
 MU.AN.[NA] misery.

23'. (indent) *qí-ta-a-a-ú-lu qu-ú-[lu]* Endless silence *means* stupo[r].

(II 3)

24'. *za-pur-tu₄ ú-ta-aš-ša-pa ^ri-šar-tu₄¹* My bad luck was increasing, I could not
ul u[t-tu] fi[nd] prosperity.

25'. (indent) *za-pur-tu₄ ^rru¹-ub-[bu[?]]¹⁹* Bad luck *means* wra[th].

(II 7)

26'. *i-na maš-šak-ki ^{lú}rENSI¹ ul ú¹²⁰-šá-pi* The inquirer could not clarify my c[as]
d[i-n]i with incense.

27'. (indent) *maš-šak-ku sur-qé-nu šá* Incense *means* offering of the dream
^{lú}rENSI¹ interpreter.

(II 9)

28'. ^{lú}MAŠ.MAŠ *ina KÌD.KÌD-ṭe-e ki-mil-ti* The exorcist did not release the divine
ul ip-tur anger *against me* with *his* ritual.

29'. (indent) *KÌD.KÌD-^rtu-ú¹ né-pe-ši* Ritual *means* ritual procedure.

(II 11)

30'. *a-mur-ma ár-ka-t[u₄] ri-^rda¹-a-t[u₄]* I looked behin[d] *me*, harassmen[t] *and*
ip-pe-e-ri trouble.

31'. (indent) *ip-pi-ri : [m]a-na-aḥ-tu₄ :* Trouble *means* [f]atigue *and* illness.

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¹⁹ The restoration follows Lambert 1960, 38 (likewise, Oshima 2014, 396). CAD S, 55 reads the first word in the line and the lemma being explained as *ša-bur-tum*, “falsehood, malice,” which is equated with what it reads as [ša]-*ru-ub-tum* in the comment (untranslated). There may be room for the ZA sign but that assumes the scribe spaced his explanations equidistant from the lemma being explained from line to line. This is simply not the case, as a perusal of the tablet will show. Also, the TUM is not on the tablet. *AHw*, 998 reads the comment lemma as *ru-ub-[tu[?]]* for *ru'ubtu*, “Zorn.” This is possible. One could also consider the comment in light of I 7 and restore it as *ru-ub-[šu]*, “his wrath.” But, this is not likely, given the fact that the Commentary typically removes pronominal suffixes from the lemma before citing it. (*Aḥulapi* in rev. 6 could be an exception, but see the comments in chapter three at III 35.) Whatever the exact restoration of the final word, it seems likely that it belongs to the semantic domain of “anger.”

²⁰ The text has I instead of Ú, as in the duplicates. I suspect the copyist saw the first two horizontals of the sign following *ul* and simply assumed the sign was I, the most common verbal prefix, rather than the required Ú.

(II 21)

32'. *a-na šá im-ḥu-ú be-la-š[ú] im-šu-ú* : Like the one who had gone mad *and* forgotten hi[s] lord. He went mad *means* to be lethargic.

im-ḥu-ú ka-ba-tu₄

(II 24)

33'. *tés-li-tu₄ ta-ši-ma-tu₄ ni-qu-ú sak-ku-ú-a* : *sak-ku-u par-ši* Supplication *was* common sense, sacrifice my rule. Rule/rites *means* custom/ritual regulation.

(II 43)

34'. *ki-i pe-te-e ù ka-ta-me ṽṽè-en¹-ši-na šit-ni* : *u-mu ù mu-ši* The *divine* decree about them changes in a blink of an eye. *It changes like* day and night.

(II 44)

35'. *im-mu-ša-ma im-ma-a šá-lam-ṽṽtīš¹* When they are hungry, they turn into corpses. [Hu]nger *means* starvation.
[: *u*]n²¹-*šu bu-bu-tu₄*¹

(II 53)

36'. *šu-ṽṽlu₄ lem-nu it-ta-ša-a ABZU-uš-šú¹* : *šu-lu₄ e-ṽṽm-mu* A wicked demonic cough came forth from its Apsu. *Šulu* demon *means* ghost.

(II 57)

37'. *it-ti ur-qīt KI-tu₄ i-pe-eš-šu lu-u' tu₄* Debility broke through the earth with the vegetation.

38'. (indent) *lu-u' tu₄* : *mur-šu* Debility *means* illness.

(II 61)

39'. *la-ba-ni i-ti-qú ú-ram-mu-ú ki-šá-du* : *i-ti-qú* : *ra-mu-u* : *še-bé-r[u]* They strained my neck muscles, they made *my* neck slack. To cross over/strain *and* to loosen *mean* to brea[k].

(II 69)

40'. *gat-ti rap-šá-tu ur-ba-ti-iš uš-ni-il-lu₄* : *ur-ba-tu* : *gīš-ur-ba-nu* My broad build they leveled like rushes. Rushes *means* papyrus.

(II 70)

41'. *ki-i ú-lil-tu₄ an-na-bi-ik bu-up-pa-niš an-na-di* I was thrown down like an *uliltu*-plant, cast down on *my* face.

²¹ I follow Lambert's reading (1960, 40). Oshima reads [*i*]m-*šu*, "hungry" (2014, 402), which, given the nature of the break at this point on the tablet, is possible though not very likely since the word is so rarely attested, and it is never attested in an SB context. According to the lexica (CAD E, 153, *AHW*, 215, 1553), *eṣu* appears only in OB Akkadian *Man and His God* (AO 4462, rev. 25; see my treatment with literature at <http://akkpm.org/P492288.html>) and OB Lú (MSL 12, 185, vi 18).

- 42'. (indent) **ú-lil-tu₄ su-un-gir-tu₄** *Uliltu-plant means sungirtu-plant.*
(II 88)
- 43'. **áš-na-an šum-ma da-ad-da-riš a-la-ut : da-da-ru bu-u³-šá-nu** *If it were grain, I would swallow it like stinkweed. Stinkweed means bu³šánu-plant.*
(II 90)
- 44'. **ap-pu-na-ma e-te-rik si-le-e-tu₄** *Indeed, my sickness stretched on.*
- 45'. (indent) **ap-pu-na-ma ma-a³-diš : si-le-e-tu₄ : GIG** *Indeed means very much. Sickness means illness.*
(II 96)
- 46'. **a-na ki-šuk-ki-ia i-tu-ra bé-e-tu : ki-šuk-ku ki-lu₄** *My house became my prison. Prison means captivity.*
(II 97)
- 47'. ^{giš}**il-lu-ur-tu₄ ši-ri-ia na-da-a i-da-a-a** *A fetter for my flesh—my arms were useless.*
- 48'. (indent) ^{giš}**il-lu-ur-tu₄ iz-qa-tu₄** *Fetter means handcuff.*
(II 98)
- 49'. **maš-kan ram-ni-ia muq-qu-tú še-pa-a-a : maš-kan : bi-ri-tu₄** *A shackle to my person—my feet were done for. Shackle means fetter.*
(II 100)
- 50'. **ṛqin¹-na-zi iṭ-ṭa-an-ni ma-la-a šil-la-a-tu₄** *The whip that beat me was full of thorns.*
- 51'. (indent) **qin-na-zu is-tuḥ-ḥu : šil-la-a-tu₄ ka-ta-a-tu₄** *Whip means whip. Thorns means needles.*
reverse
(II 101)
1. ^{giš}**pa-ru-uš-šú ú-saḥ-ḥi-la-an-ni zi-qa-tu₄ lab-šat : ṛpa-ru-uš-šú** *The goad that pricked me was covered with thorns. Goad means staff.*
^{giš}**GIDRU**
(II 107)
2. **ub-tal-lil ki-i UDU.NÍTA ina ta-ba-áš-ta-ni-ia** *I would wallow in my own excrement like a sheep.*
3. (indent) **ta-ba-áš-ta-nu : zu-ú ši-na-tu₄** *Excrement means feces and urine.*
(III 1)
4. **kab-ta-at šu-su ul a-le-³i na-šá-šá :** *His hand was so heavy I could not bear it. Heavy means strong.*
kab-tu dan-nu
(III 25)
5. **lál-úr-alim-ma a-šip NIBRU^{ki} : ṭa-a-bi-ú-tu-ul-^dIDIM** *Laluralimma, exorcist of Nippur means Ṭabi-utul-Enlil (i.e., “sweet is the lap of Enlil”).*

(III 35)²²

6. *iq-ba-a a-ḥu-la-pi ma-gal šu-nu-uḥ-
ma : a-ḥu-la-pi a-di ma-ti* She said, “Mercy! He is utterly exhausted.” Mercy *means* how long?

(III 41)

7. *eṭ-lu ṭār-ru a-pir a-ga-šú : ṭār-ru
dan-nu*²³ A bearded man, crowned by his diadem. Bearded *means* strong.

(III 61)²⁴

8. *e-ga-ti-ia ú-šá-bil IM : e-ga-a-ti ḥi-
ṭa-a-ti* He caused the wind to carry off my acts of negligence. Acts of negligence *means* sins.

(III 84)

9. GEŠTU-MIN-a-a šá uṭ-tam-me-ma us-
sak-ki-ra ḥa-šik-kiš : ḥa-šik-ku
suk-ku-ku My ears, which were clogged and stopped up like a deaf man’s. Deaf *means* deaf.

(III 85)

10. *it-bal a-mir-ši-na ip-te-te neš-ma-a-
a : a-mi-ra ze-e uz-ni* He removed their wax, he opened my hearing. Wax obstruction of the ear *means* ear feces.

(III 96)

11. *ur-ú-di šá in-ni-is-ru ú-ṣap-pi-qu
la-gab-biš : la-gab-biš šá a-šaṭ
pag-ri*²⁵ My throat, which was constricted, blocked as with a lump. Like a lump *refers to the man whose* body is stiff.

²² SAACT 7 identified this line as III 38 (24) with Lambert (1960, 50, line 37). Mayer (2014, 278) and Oshima (2014, 416, 282) place it correctly at III 35.

²³ This lexical equation is unique and unexpected. We would rather expect *ṭarru* to be equated with *ziqnu*, a very common word for “beard,” as it is in, e.g., the series An = *šamû* 361 (see <http://oracc.iaas.upenn.edu/dcclt/Q002278/html> for an edition and CAD D, 115 for other references. Several of the sources for An = *šamû* are presented in copy by von Soden 1933; see Hrůša 2010, 1, n.2 for other duplicates.) It may very well simply be that *dannu* is the commentator’s interpretation; but, I think we should also hold out the possibility that *dannu* has been mistakenly copied here in rev. 7 from the end of rev. 4. This possibility is made more plausible by the fact that the beginning left sides of ZI (assuming *zi-iq-nu*) and DAN are graphically somewhat similar: ZI begins with one horizontal followed by two verticals and DAN begins with two horizontals followed by two verticals (before the final, stacked verticals). (Note also that if *ziqnu* were written *ziq-nu*: ZIQ begins just as does DAN, with two horizontals.) Additionally, both words, *ziqnu* and *dannu*, end with the same final syllable/sign, NU.

²⁴ Oshima identifies rev. 8 as III 66 (2014, 418, 294), which causes him to restore III 66 as above rather than III 61 as here.

²⁵ SAACT 7, 25 reads *ša a-mat pag-ri*, “pertaining to a corpse,” as does Lambert 1960, 52 and CAD P, 12. Enrique Jiménez suggests the present reading, explaining it as “a construction of the *rapaš uzni* type” (CCP); see also Gabbay 2016, 142, n.67, where he entertains the possibility that *ša amāt* might have been construed as exegetical terminology (though he rejects the reading).

(III 97)

12. *uš-tib-ba*²⁶ *i-ra-ti šá ma-li-liš uḫ-
tel-^llu₄-šr^l :[?]127 **ma-li-lu₄ em-bu-bu***
- He healed my chest, which he made as cheer[ful[?]] (lit. bright) as a reed flute. Reed flute *means* flute/windpipe.

(III 99)

13. *la-ga-a-a-šá i-šír i-dil-taš ip-ti : la-
ga-ú ší-ik-tu₄*
- Its swelling subsided, *and* he opened its stoppage. Scales *means* scales.

(III 104)

14. *šam-ma-ḫu šá ina un-ši it-tar-ru-ú
ki-ma pi-sa-an-ni ir-rak-su [:[?]]²⁸
un-šu bu-bu-tu₄*
- The large intestine, which was always empty[?] due to hunger *and* woven together like a basket. Hunger *means* starvation.

(III 106)

15. *i-maḫ-ḫar ip-te-en-ni ub-ba-la maš-
qí-ta : ip-te-en-n[í]²⁹ ma^l-ka-lu-u*
- It accepts food, it takes drink. Meals *means* food.

(Com, line a)

16. *kí-šá-di šá ir-mu-ú er-na-ma ik-
ka[p]-pu*
- My neck, which was loose *and* twis[t]ed at *its* base[?],

17. (indent) *e-re-e-na : šur-šu : e-ri-
na-ti*
- Root³⁰ *means* root *and* ...

(Com, line b)

18. *ú-pat-tin kin-né-e a-ma-liš iz-qu-up
: kin-nu-u KUR-ú : a-ma-lu
g^šr^lÚ.SUH₅¹*
- He made *as* firm *as* the mountains, he planted *it* erect like a tree[?]. Mountain *means* mountain. Tree *means* pine tree.

²⁶ The text has a clear MA but the mistake may go back to a copyist mistaking a Neo-Babylonian BA for MA. See the discussion in chapter three at III 97.

²⁷ The tablet and Lambert's copy (1960, pl. 16) show ŠÁ; see also the typeset copy in VR, no. 47 and Lambert 1989, 335, where he mentions a collation of this line and confirms the presence of ŠÁ. (See the discussion in chapter three at III 97 for more on the reading of the preceding verb.) I wonder, however, if perhaps the scribe miscopied a very crowded ŠI followed by a colon. As matters stand, there is no colon preserved for this line, separating the citation from the commentary (as there is in almost every other case). A crack runs through the middle of the sign. Oshima (2014, 302) reads the ŠÁ with the commentary's explanation, translating the resulting *ša malīlum imbubu* as "which he played the flute." The root *nabābu* meaning "to play the flute" is, however, quite uncertain with only one potential attestation (restored); see CAD N/1, 8 and *AHw*, 694. Also, on his reading, there is no lemma from the base text cited before the explanation. Having only an explanation after the citation of the line without citing a lemma from the base text is highly unusual in the Commentary. The only cases are in obv. 34' (on II 43) and rev. 5 (on III 25).

²⁸ The colon is present in the typeset copy of VR, no. 47.

²⁹ Oshima prefers to read *-n[u]²* (2014, 422).

³⁰ The commentator takes the adverb *erna* in the base text as *erēna*, a Sumerian loanword (see CAD E, 279, 302 and *AHw*, 242).

(Com, line c)

19. *a-na ga-mir a-ba-ri ú-ma-ši ú-maš-šil* He made my physique like a wrestler's.

20. (indent) *a-ba-ri e-mu-qu : ú-ma-ši šal-mu* Strength *means* strength : Physique *means* image.

(Com, line d)

21. GIM¹ *na-kim-tu₄ šu-ši-i ú-šap-pi-ra šu-pur-a-a* Like expelling *nakimtu*-disease[?], he trimmed[?] my nails.

22. (indent) ¹⁴*šú-^ršú-ú¹ : šá⁴iš-tar ana IZI È-a* One who expels *means* one whom Ištar expels to the fire.

(Com, line e)

23. *it-bu-uk ma-[na-a]ḫ-ta-ši[n] ^rx-x¹-šá-šin uš-ṭib* He dispelled their fa[ti]gue, their ... he made well.

24. (indent) *ma-na-aḫ-t[u]³¹ : GIG [x-x]³²-šá-šú : SAG.DU* Fatigue *means* illness. [...] ... *means* head.

(IV §A 3', line f)

25. *bir-ka-a-a šá uk-tas-sa-a bu-ši-[iš ub-bu-ṭ]a ^r:¹³³ bu-ši : iṣ-šur ḫur-ri* My knees, which were bound *and* [restrained]ed li[ke] a *būšu*-bird. *Būšu*-bird *means* partridge.

(IV §A 7', line g)

26. *šuk-lul-tu₄ pag-[ri]-ia iṣ-ta-at-x [x x] ^rx¹ : šuk-lul-tú : la-a-nu* The form of my bod[y] ... [...] ... Form *means* stature.

(IV, line h)

27. *im-šu-uš {eras.} ma-am-mé-e r[u]-šú-uš ú-zak-ki* He wiped clean the dirt, he cleaned its f[i]lth.

28. (indent) *ma-ša-šú : ka-pa-ru : ma-am-mu-u : š[u]-uḫ-tu : ru-ši-iš³⁴ : eb-bi* To wipe *means* to wipe. Dirt *means* r[u]st *and* like dirt. *The line means* clean.

³¹ Oshima reads *-t[a]* (2014, 425, 426). He also suggests that the commentator mistook the sense of *mānaḫtu* here, taking it as a reference to fatigue induced by illness rather than as a reference to cultivated land (305). He bases this on his restoration of the noun in the second half of the line, *r[u¹]-uš¹-šá-šin*, “their filth” (103, 306), which the commentator also misunderstood (see the next note and my comments in chapter three at Com, line e).

³² Oshima reads *[ru-u]š-šá-šú* here and suggests the Commentary takes the word to be West Semitic *rūšu*, “head” (2014, 426, 306); thus, SAG.DU in the explanation. Although a clever solution, Oshima's idea requires the final ŠÚ to be a pronominal suffix, which does not have a counterpart in the base text. Adding a pronominal suffix would be rather strange since the Commentary typically *removes* pronominal suffixes from the lemma it cites from the base text before defining the lemma; see, e.g., rev. 10 (on III 85). Thus, on present knowledge, it seems best to leave this explanation unexplained until our understanding of the line is better established.

³³ Lambert's copy (1960, pl. 17) does not show the dividing colon, but it is partially present (collated with photograph; see also the typeset copy of VR, no. 47).

(IV, line i)

29. *du-ú-tu₄ um-mul-tu₄ it-ta-per-di :* *My eclipsed masculine features have become brilliant again. Masculine features means outer appearance.*
du-ú-tu : bu-un-na-nu-u

(IV, line j)

30. *i-na i-te-e* ^dÍD *a-šar de-en* UN.MEŠ *On the bank of the river, where the case of the people is decided,*
ib-bir-ru

31. (indent) *i-te-e* ^dÍD ***hur-šá-an*** *Bank of the river means ordeal.*

(IV §B 10', line k)

32. ^r*mut-tu-tu am-ma-šid ab-bu-ut-tu₄* *I was struck on the forehead, I was re-*
ap-pa¹-ši[r : ab-bu-ut-t]u³⁵ bi-ri-tu *lease[d] from slavery. [:] [abbutt]u-hair clasp means fetter.*

33. [...]

34. [...]

(IV, line n)

35. [...] x [...] ^x36 *re-^re-mu¹* [...] ... [...] ... mercy.

(IV §B 16', line o)

36. [*ku-nu-uš*]-^r*kàd¹-ru i-na pi-^ršèr-ti¹* *I walked along (the street) [Kunuš]-*
a-ba-¹a *kadru released.*

37. [(indent) *ku*]-^r*nu¹-uš-kàd-ru : sú-qi* *[Ku]nuš-kadru means narrow street.*
qat-nu

(IV §C 6', line p)

38. [*šá*] *a-na É.SAG.ÍL e-gu-u ina šU-ia* *Let [the one who] was negligent of Es-*
li-mur : e-gu-u ha-¹tu-u *agil learn from my example. To be negligent means to do wrong.*

(V 14–15)

39. *i-na pi-i ger-ra* GU^r-*ia id-di nap-sa-* *On the mouth of the lion eating me,*
ma ^dAMAR.UTU *Marduk put a muzzle.*

³⁴ The scribe may have left out *rūšu* from the base text immediately before *rūšiš*, the explanation. If so, he has interpreted the pronominal suffix in the base text as an adverbial suffix.

³⁵ This is a universally accepted restoration that goes back to, at least, Langdon's edition of *Ludlul* (1923, 60, n.1). See the discussion of *abuttu* = *birītu* in rev. 32 below for the alternative, restoring [*muttu*]u.

³⁶ Oshima suggests reading *š^r-g]u^r* (2014, 425). Line n's conclusion must be part of an explanation rather than a fragment of poetic text from *Ludlul* because rev. 36 (= IV §B 16', line o) begins with poetic text. If *šigū* precedes *rēmu*, as Oshima suggests, then the commentator explains the word, I think, as a kind of cry for mercy. This is a plausible idea, especially in light of Mayer's suggestion that *šigū* may have its origins as an exclamatory interjection like *aḫulap* (Mayer 1976, 112, n.90 and CAD Š/2, 414). But, the epigraphic evidence for reading GU amounts to a partial head of a sign. Thus, I suspend judgment on the matter for now.

40. (indent) *ger-ra* : UR.MAḤ *nap-sa-mu* : *ma-ak-ša-ru šá KA*
ANŠE.KUR.RA
(V 16–17)
Lion *means* lion. Muzzle *means* a bit for a horse’s mouth.
41. ^dAMAR.UTU *šá mu-kaš-ši-di-ia i-kim as-ḫpa¹-šú as-suk-ka-šú ú-saḫ-ḫir*
Marduk snatched my pursuer’s sling, he turned back his sling stone.
42. (indent) ^r*as-suk-ku¹ [a-ba]t-tu³⁷* : *šs-pu šs-pu*
(line s = V 23³⁸)
Sling stone *means* [slin]g stone. Sling *means* sling.
43. *id-ḫdi¹ [...]-bir* : KI.ḫUL-u *bi-ki-tu⁴*
(line t = V 24³⁹)
He recited [...] ... Mourning rite *means* weeping.
44. ^rx¹⁴⁰ [...] -^rx¹⁴¹ *i-na-an-na*
(V, line u)
... [...] ... *means* now.
45. [...] ^rx TUM x¹ RU
(V, line v = V 64⁴²)
[...] ...
46. [...] ^rÉ¹
(V, line w)
[...] temple.
47. [...] ^rx¹
[...] ...

9.3. REFLECTIONS ON THE COMMENTARY’S EXPLANATIONS

9.3.1. *The General Tendency: Explaining Less Common or Obscure Words with More Common Synonyms*

In terms of its hermeneutical technique, the Commentary is mostly concerned with what Uri Gabbay has labeled “interpretation through definition” in the

³⁷ Lambert restores *[ku-u]b-tu*, “lump, clod” (1960, 56, his line r); likewise, Oshima (2014, 430). CAD A/1, 39 and A/2, 342, s.v. *assukku* suggest *[a-ba]t-tu*. After careful reconsideration of the tablet photos, I think the latter is better (compare SAACT 7, 27). While UB is possible, the traces on the tablet are more congruent with a BAD sign.

³⁸ Oshima suggests placing line s of the Commentary at V 23 (2014, 424, 431), based on his reading of the first two signs of the line.

³⁹ Line t from the Commentary belongs somewhere between V 23 and perhaps V 64. Oshima tentatively suggests V 24 (2014, 424, 431).

⁴⁰ Oshima suggests ^r*ú-¹* here (2014, 431).

⁴¹ Oshima restores [...] *ul-ḫi* here (2014, 431).

⁴² The only witness to the end of V 64 reads: *[x x (x)]-zi-da ḫmē¹-e* GARZA É (MS V.E, rev. 15’; see my comments in chapter three at V 64 and compare Oshima’s reading [2014, 434]), making my suggestion for the placement of the line here at least possible. Lines v and w are unlabeled in Oshima’s edition (2014, 424). If rev. 46 (line v) does in fact attest the end of V 64, then the next line (line w) would likely contain commentary.

Mesopotamian commentaries, which, as he describes it, answers “the question ‘What?’ by focusing on the meaning of individual words and phrases.”⁴³ As such, this broad technique shows a strong affinity with the lexical tradition, an affinity explored throughout this section of the chapter. In more specific terms for the present text, the *Ludlul* Commentary explains less common or obscure words (and spellings) with better known or more common synonyms in order “to clarify the literal meaning of the text,” as Eckart Frahm states.⁴⁴

A very clear case of this propensity occurs in rev. 15, where the Commentary uses the much better attested term *mākālū* to explain *iptennu*, a *hapax* that occurs in *Ludlul* III 106. There are a number of other *hapax* terms explained in this manner, indicated in the notes below. The Commentary, however, is not *only* interested in explaining words that we think, based on attestations available to us, were obscure or rare. *Tamāḥu*, for instance, in obv. 9' is a well-attested, fairly common word that occurs in a variety of genres in the first millennium (see CAD T, 107–9), but *ṣabātu*, the lemma used to explain *tamāḥu* in the Commentary, was, based on its attestations in our sources, much, *much* more common.

Of course, estimating how rare or how common or how obscure a word was is not easy. We are limited by our written sources, which are not evenly distributed. Even if we assume that our sources provide a large enough representative sample with which to generalize (as I have done with *tamāḥu* vs. *ṣabātu*), a count of attestations in the lexica, even taking into consideration time period and genre, etc., can *never* give us definitive evidence for how common or obscure all of the various terms chosen for comment in the Commentary were to the perception of those involved in studying *Ludlul* at the time of the Commentary's production, the senior scholar and those engaged in learning with him. Given, however, the large number of cases like *tamāḥu* vs. *ṣabātu* in the Commentary, which I have identified below using the attestations in our lexica judiciously,⁴⁵ I think we have good warrant to presume that the words selected for comment were perceived as obscure or less common words and thus we

⁴³ Gabbay 2016, 84.

⁴⁴ Frahm 2011, 39. Likewise, Frahm writes “[t]he main purpose of this commentary is to clarify rare words” (2011, 119; he uses the more precise “rarely attested” on p. 39). See similarly Horowitz 2009, 46.

⁴⁵ Despite their most thorough efforts up to the time of their publication, the lexica cannot be counted on to be one hundred percent complete decades after their publication. Finding new texts and new attestations of words is one of the joys of Assyriology and Akkadian lexicography; it is also one of the major occupational hazards for those wishing to generalize about lexical distribution. The publication of one new text could double a word's attestations, as it nearly did for *as-sukku* in 2006 (see below). All of the caveats expressed in chapter six (on anatomical and pathological terms) apply in this chapter, too. Our findings must always be considered provisional.

have good reason for identifying the Commentary's general interpretive propensity mentioned above, namely, that the Commentary is mostly concerned with explaining less common or obscure words (and spellings) with better known or more common synonyms.⁴⁶

The following are the entries that I think clearly exhibit this characteristic. (There may be additional reasons for these lexical equations, for which see below.)

annu = *arnu*⁴⁷ in obv. 2' (I 24)
ḥurbāšu = *kuṣṣu* in obv. 4' (I 26)
dūtu = *bunnannū* in obv. 6' (I 47) and rev. 29 (IV, line i)
tarānu = *ṣillu* in obv. 7' (I 48)
tamāḥu = *ṣabātu* in obv. 9' (I 61)
napraku = *pe/irku*⁴⁸ in obv. 11' (I 69)
ṣabāru = *dabābu* in obv. 13' (I 71)
*ḥašikku*⁴⁹ = *sukkuku* in obv. 13' (I 71) and rev. 9 (III 84)⁵⁰
emū = *mašālu* in obv. 13' (I 71)
rēšu ("slave") = *ardu* in obv. 14' (I 78)⁵¹
ḥaštu = *ṣuttatu*⁵² in obv. 20' (I 93)
gerrānu = *bikītum* in obv. 21' (I 105)
qitayyulu = *qūlu*⁵³ in obv. 23' (I 106)

⁴⁶ For a definition of "synonym" and the issues surrounding the precise delimitation of what counts as a synonym, I follow the pragmatic approach noted by Frahm 2011, 60, n.272.

⁴⁷ The equation explains the less common orthography of the word used in the base text of *Ludlul* I 24, *annu*, with the more typical one, *arnu*. See similarly *aspu* = *uspu* in rev. 42. According to Frahm, phonological variants of the same word occur rarely in commentaries (2011, 66).

⁴⁸ *Napraku*, "crossbar, bolt, obstruction," is taken as a synonym of *pirku* B, "transversal, chord," "(a part of a gate)," or "region, area" in CAD P, 407. But the better attested, homonymous *pirku* A, "fraud, wrong, harm" (note the presence of *tuššu*, "malicious talk, slander," earlier in *Ludlul* I 69), is quite appropriate contextually. There is no lexical evidence in the CAD for either *pirku* being equated with *napraku*. It seems likely to me that the two *pirku* homonyms were not conceived as two separate lexemes by the commentator; see *AHw*, 855, which treats all the meanings of *pe/irku* under one entry.

⁴⁹ *Ḥašikku* is very poorly attested; see CAD H, 141 and *AHw*, 334.

⁵⁰ In III 84, the base text has *ḥašikkiš*; the commentator removes the adverbial suffix and simply cites *ḥašikku* as the lemma.

⁵¹ Note that *rēšu* first occurs in *Ludlul* I 73 and is without comment in the Commentary probably because it is used in its common anatomical sense in that line.

⁵² Both terms are relatively infrequently attested in connected Akkadian texts. But taking into account the lexical lists, *ṣuttatu* is the better attested of the two terms; see CAD Š/3, 404–5.

⁵³ *Qitayyulu* is only attested a handful of times, all SB texts (see CAD Q, 281, s.v. *qitajulu*). Interestingly, a *Šumma izbu* commentary equates it with *bikītum* (De Zorzi 2014, 2.440, line 32; see the lexical equation in the previous line of the Commentary: *gerrānu* = *bikītum* in obv. 21', commenting on I 105).

maššakku = *surqēnu* (*ša šā`ilu*) in obv. 27' (II 7)
kik(k)itūtu = *nēpešu* in obv. 29' (II 9)
ippīru = *mānahtu* = *muršu* in obv. 31' (II 11)⁵⁴
imhū = *kabātu* in obv. 32' (II 21)
sakkū = *paršu* in obv. 33' (II 24)
uṣu (*umṣu*)⁵⁵ = *bubūtu* in obv. 35' (II 44) and rev. 14 (III 104)
šūlu = *eṭemmu* in obv. 36' (II 53)
*lu'tu*⁵⁶ = *muršu* in obv. 38' (II 57)
uliltu = *sungirtu* in obv. 41' (II 70)⁵⁷
daddaru = *bu'sānu* in obv. 43' (II 88)
silētu (*silītu*, *sili'tu*) = *muršu* in obv. 45' (II 90)
kišukku = *kīlu* in obv. 46' (II 96)
*illurtu*⁵⁸ = *izqātu* in obv. 48' (II 97)
*paruššu*⁵⁹ = *haṭtu* in rev. 1 (II 101)
*tabāštānu*⁶⁰ = *zū šīnātu* in rev. 3 (II 107)
ṭarru (*darru*) = *dannu* in rev. 7 (III 41)
egāti = *hiṭāṭi* in rev. 8 (III 61)
*amīru*⁶¹ = *zē uzni* in rev. 10 (III 85)
*iptenni*⁶² = *mākālū* in rev. 15 (III 106)
*erēna*⁶³ = *šuršu* in rev. 17 (Com, line a)
*kinnū*⁶⁴ = *šadū* in rev. 18 (Com, line b)
amalu = *ašūḫu*⁶⁵ in rev. 18 (Com, line b)

⁵⁴ See also rev. 24, where *mānahtu*, occurring in Com, line e, is explained with GIG, *muršu*.

⁵⁵ *Umṣu* is only attested a couple of times in the lexical tradition and about the same in connected Akkadian texts, aside from *Ludlul*; see CAD U/W, 136–37.

⁵⁶ *Lu'tu* is attested in numerous SB texts that an exorcist should know (see chapter six). But, *muršu* is far and away the better attested term.

⁵⁷ *Uliltu*, a *hapax*, is some kind of plant (see CAD U/W, 73). *Sungirtu* is only marginally better attested than *uliltu*, having only two other attestations aside from the *Ludlul* Commentary (see CAD S, 384).

⁵⁸ *Illurtu* is attested only about four times in our sources; see *AHw*, 373 and CAD I/J, 87.

⁵⁹ *Paruššu* is quite poorly attested, having only three attestations in connected Akkadian texts and four in lexical lists; see CAD P, 211.

⁶⁰ *Ludlul* II 107 is the only attestation of this word in a unilingual connected Akkadian text. Counting attestations in lexical lists, bilinguals, and commentaries, the word is still attested less than a dozen times; see CAD T, 24.

⁶¹ This term is very rarely attested. Aside from *Ludlul* III 85 and its commentary, the term is attested only about three times in the lexical tradition and two other times in connected Akkadian texts; see CAD A/2, 64.

⁶² *Iptennu* is a *hapax*; see *AHw*, 385 and CAD I/J, 171.

⁶³ *Erēna* is a Sumerian loanword, attested only in *Ludlul*'s commentary and in *S^b* I 124 in Akkadian texts (Sum. *arina*; see *AHw*, 238, CAD E, 279, and MSL 3, 106).

⁶⁴ *Kinnū* (CAD G, 82–83, s.v. *ginū* B; *AHw*, 480, 1568) is attested in SB and NB texts less than a dozen times.

abāri = *emūqu* in rev. 20 (Com, line c)
umāši = *šalmu* in rev. 20 (Com, line c)
mānahtu = *muršu* in rev. 24 (Com, line d)
*būši*⁶⁶ = *iššūr hurri* in rev. 25 (IV §A 3', line f)
*šuklultu*⁶⁷ = *lānu* in rev. 26 (IV §A 7', line g)
mašāšu = *kapāru* in rev. 28 (IV, line h)⁶⁸
egū = *haṭū* in rev. 38 (IV §C 6', line p)
*gerru*⁶⁹ = *nēšu* in rev. 40 (V 14–15)
napsamu = *maksāru* (*ša pī sīsē*) in rev. 40 (V 14–15)
*assukku*⁷⁰ = *abattu* in rev. 42 (V 16–17)
aspu = *uspu*⁷¹ in rev. 42 (V 16–17)
kiḫullū = *bikītu* in rev. 43 (line s = V 23?)

⁶⁵ The commentator again removes the adverbial suffix from the lemma and provides an explanation for the resulting noun, *amalu*, which, only occurs in *Ludlul* and its commentary (so CAD A/2, 1, s.v. *amālu* B). Its meaning is not known. *Ašūhu* is a fairly common word for “fir, pine” (see CAD A/2, 478–79).

⁶⁶ *Būšu* is very poorly attested, appearing a handful of times in lexical lists and personal names; see CAD B, 349.

⁶⁷ *Šuklultu* is used of a human body only about three times. Other uses (objects, etc.) are also rare. See CAD Š/3, 220.

⁶⁸ *Mašāšu* is attested a few times in bilinguals and only a handful of times in other texts, including three times in *Ludlul* (III 91, 95, and IV, line h); see CAD M/1, 360. It is odd that the commentator waits to the last time the word is used in *Ludlul* to define it. The verbal form is the same in all three lines, *imšuš*.

⁶⁹ *Gerru* is better attested in the lexical tradition than in connected Akkadian texts; see CAD G, 94, s.v. *girru* and *AHw*, 285, s.v. *gerru* II. In any case, it is not nearly as well attested as *nēšu* (see CAD N/2, 193–97).

⁷⁰ *Assukku* is a Sumerian loanword and rarely attested with only two attestations in connected Akkadian texts and three each in the lexical and commentary corpora, according to CAD A/2, 342, published in 1968. The word is now attested seven more times—nearly doubling its previous total number of attestations in the lexica—in a LB commentary to *Šumma izbu* VII (for which see Finkel 2006, 140, obv. 7–11; Besnier 2010; De Zorzi 2014, 2.525–28; Frazer 2016 [https://ccp.yale.edu

/P415763]; and below). The Commentary’s equation of *assukku* with *abattu* is also found in two commentaries to *Šumma izbu* VII: *as-suk-[ku]* = [*a*]-*bat-ti as-pu* (see De Zorzi 2014, 2.523, line 10—there is a typographical error in the first sign of *abattu*: [*as*]- should read [*a*], and similarly 2.524, line 22). If the Commentary equates *assukku* and *kubtu* rather than *abattu* (see note 37 above), the equation could be explained by way of Sumerian homophony; both terms are written IM.DUGUD (see, e.g., *Urra* X 503–504 in MSL 7, 105).

⁷¹ The term is rarely attested, with as few as three attestations in connected SB Akkadian texts and a couple of attestations each among lexical and commentary texts (CAD A/2, 339 and *AHw*, 1475, s.v. [*w*]*ašpu*; see also now the LB commentary to *Šumma izbu* VII in Finkel 2006, 140, obv. 10; Besnier 2010; De Zorzi 2014, 2.525, and Frazer 2016 [https://ccp.yale.edu/P415763]). This equation is like the first one preserved in the Commentary (*annu* = *arnu*) in that the two lemma are the same word, only spelled differently. *Uspu* is the Assyrian spelling.

A few cases need closer scrutiny to see how they follow the same interpretive *modus operandi*.

Zapurtu = *rubbu* for *rūbu* in obv. 24' (II 3): Technically, if we do a simple count, *zapurtu* is the better attested term in our lexica, occurring almost a dozen times in sources known to us (see CAD S, 55, s.v. *šaburtu*), whereas *rūbu* has only four booked attestations (CAD R, 400). Several attestations of *zapurtu*, however, are from peripheral Akkadian sources (from Egypt and Boghazkoi), though the term also occurs in Assyrian sources, including a few attestations in the *Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta I*,⁷² a composition that is attested on tablets from Nineveh in both MA and NA paleography, according to Machinist (1978, 7–16). In contrast to this, all of the attestations of *rūbu* are in SB or NB sources, including a royal inscription of Aššurbanipal and *Ludlul I* 7, where context makes the meaning of the term manifestly clear. It seems therefore that *zapurtu* had likely become rather obscure, if not entirely obsolete (as CAD S, 55 asserts), by the time our commentator set to work. Thus, explaining *zapurtu* with *rūbu* is a likely case of our commentator updating an older, obscure term with a term more current in his own linguistic context.

Updating is also likely behind the following equation: *maškanu* = *birītu* in obv. 49' (II 98). *Maškanu* with the meaning “fetter” is not all that rarely attested in our sources (see CAD M/1, 372), but it occurs most often in older (OB) texts. *Birītu* in the meaning “fetter” may be as commonly attested as *maškanu* with the same meaning if we do a simple count of attestations in our sources (see CAD B, 254–55); but, *birītu* is much more common in first-millennium texts than *maškanu* in this sense. Thus, this equation is likely another case of updating a relatively obscure term with a more current one.

These are probably not the only cases of such updating. Further scrutiny may lead to the identification of other such cases, especially as our textual sources become more numerous, our lexicography more nuanced, and our digital analytics more comprehensive.

Urbatu = *urbānu* in obv. 40' (II 69): *Urbatu* is much better attested in first-millennium sources (see CAD U/W, 211–12) than the latter term (see CAD U/W, 211), which occurs in two commentaries⁷³ and only a few other texts.

⁷² The attestations listed in CAD S, 55 are “ii” 16, “v” 20, and “vi” 29, which correspond to Machinist’s rev. v A 24’, obv. ii A 20’, and obv. i A 29’, respectively (Machinist 1978, 116, 76, 70). The word also occurs once in the bilingual prayer of Tukulti-Ninurta I (KAR 128 (+) 129 obv. ii 27’ [see Chang 1981, 178]).

⁷³ In BRM 4 32, a medical commentary from Uruk, *urbānu* is used to explain *šuppatu*, another fairly well-attested term for a reed in obv. 27, cited in CAD U/W, 211 and Š/3, 326. The text is likely a commentary on the series *Qutāru* (see Frazer 2017 [https://ccp.yale.edu/P296515] for an edition).

The explanation in the Commentary may reflect the material conditions of scribes living in the Neo-Assyrian period, when papyrus came into use as a writing material, as is clearly evident in an oracular query Esarhaddon put to Šamaš in SAA 4 108 (see obv. 3, 8, rev. 8, and 10; Starr 1990, 123–24).⁷⁴ Thus, even if the term is infrequently attested in our sources, its referent may have been a well-known material to our commentator and his interlocutors. In addition to the scribes' material culture, it is worth noting that the more commonly attested term for papyrus in our sources, very frequently used in the same NA queries to Šamaš mentioned above, is *niāru* (see CAD N/2, 200–201 and Starr 1990, 343) not *urbānu*. It may very well be the case that our commentator chose *urbānu* to explain *urbatu* not simply based on its material presence in scribal life but also under the influence of the phonological similarity of the two terms.

Qinnazu = *istuhhu* (usually *ištuḥhu*) in obv. 50' (II 100): If we bracket out peripheral Akkadian attestations of *ištuḥhu* (see CAD I/J, 288 and *AHw*, 402), *qinnazu* is the better attested term of the two (see CAD Q, 256–57). Aside from the Commentary here, *ištuḥhu* occurs in only about a half dozen other SB texts, including the *Epic of Gilgameš* V 105 and VI 54⁷⁵ and an entry in *Malku* II 202.⁷⁶ *Qinnazu* does not appear in either. The equation *qinnazu* = *ištuḥhu* is also attested in the lexical-commentary text *Murgud* (A II 179 in MSL 7, 151), which is well-attested in Assyrian sources, especially those from Nineveh.⁷⁷ These sources might suggest that the commentator chose *ištuḥhu* to explain *qinnazu* because *ištuḥhu* was perceived to be the better known term to his interlocutors at that point in their scribal professional development.

9.3.2. Exceptions? Explaining Words in the Base Text with Equally or Less Frequently Attested Words

The Commentary's general propensity noted above may have exceptions because there are several cases in which the commentator explains a word in his base text with what looks to be, on present knowledge, an equally rarely attested or even less frequently attested synonym. It may be that we simply cannot ascertain that the term used in the explanation was better known to our commentator. Or, there may have been some other motivation.

⁷⁴ For papyrus in general, see Kottsieper 2003–2005.

⁷⁵ See George 2003, 1.606 and 1.620.

⁷⁶ See Hrůša 2010, 66.

⁷⁷ See Veldhuis 2014, 363–67, 378.

The most extreme case is *šillātu* (pl. of *šillū*) = *katātu*⁷⁸ in obv. 50' (II 100). *Šillū* is relatively well-attested (see CAD Š, 193–194) whereas *katātu* is a *hapax* (CAD K, 304). I can find no connection such as a common Sumerian lexical equation or a creative reading of cuneiform signs used to write both words (see below) to shed light on the commentator's choice for this lexical equivalency. We must presume he had his reasons and the lexical equation worked well for his pedagogical purposes. But, this entry in the Commentary (apparently) defies the above generalization and remains completely opaque to us.

We encounter something like the same problem in *erēna* = *šuršu e-ri-na-ti* in rev. 17 (Com, line a). Obviously, *šuršu* is a clear explanation of the Sumerian loanword *erēna*, “root,” which only occurs in two Akkadian contexts, here and S^b I 124 (see note 63 above). Note also the gloss *e-ri-in* in the Sumerian column of *Urra* III 493, where *šuršu* is the Akkadian translation (MSL 5, 137). But what are we to make of the commentator's further explanation, *e-ri-na-ti*? The word is completely obscure to us. The commentator must have thought it provided a useful explanation, but how that explanation worked is entirely lost to us.⁷⁹

A case not quite so extreme but similarly opaque occurs with *lagā'u* = *šiktu*⁸⁰ in rev. 13 (III 99). *Lagā'u* is poorly attested, occurring only about a half dozen times in lexical and other texts (see CAD L, 37), and its meaning is not at all clear to us. Proposed definitions seem to be based on the Commentary's lexical equation and *šiktu*'s use with lips, ears, and kilns elsewhere; thus, proposed definitions include “slag” or “blisters” or some kind of swelling.⁸¹ In any case, *šiktu* is actually attested even fewer times than *lagā'u* in our lexica (see CAD Š/3, 100, which lists attestations in only two therapeutic texts and two technical texts). Why these poorly known terms were equated in the Commentary is unclear. Yet, we must presume that the explanation the commentator used worked for him and his discussants. It may be that the commentator used *šiktu* not because he thought they would know the word already and thus understand *lagā'u* easily from the posited equivalency but because he wanted to introduce the obscure “medical” term to them. Of course, this is only speculation.

⁷⁸ See CAD K, 304, s.v. *katātu*.

⁷⁹ The lexica offer no assistance. The CAD cites the word twice (E, 279 and Š/3, 363) without explanation. As best as I can determine, *AHW* does not cite the commentary to this line at all. See Lambert 1960, 298–99 for his attempt to connect the word to *erimnu*, “neck stock.”

⁸⁰ So *CDA*, 372 and *AHW*, 1235; *šiqtu* (A) in CAD Š/3, 100.

⁸¹ See Lambert 1960, 298 in addition to the lexica.

A couple of other entries in the Commentary show this characteristic of explaining relatively rarely attested words in the base text (according to our lexica) with other rarely attested words (according to our lexica). Although we cannot ascertain the commentator's reasoning with any certainty in such cases, we can posit plausible factors that may have suggested the lexical equations in question.

Consider *nalbubu* = *šegû* in obv 16' (I 86). Neither of these words is common in our sources. *Nalbubu* is rarely attested, with about six attestations in lexical lists, one in a commentary (*Ludlul*'s), and only two in connected Akkadian texts, both SB (see CAD N/1, 202). *Šegû* is equally rarely attested, with some half dozen attestations in lexical lists (two are OB), four in commentaries, and only two in connected Akkadian texts, one of which is from OB Mari (see CAD Š/2, 259–60). A look at the lexical list *Malku*, where our terms are closely associated though not equated,⁸² and a couple of other first-millennium commentaries may provide some insight as to why our commentator chose to equate these two words in the *Ludlul* Commentary. *Malku* I 75–76 reads:⁸³

nadru = *šegû*
nalbubu = *nanduru*

Is it significant that the two words from the *Ludlul* Commentary are in adjacent lines here in a context of other words within the semantic domain “anger”? Note the similar phonological shape of *nadru* and *nanduru*, which may have encouraged a kind of “vertical” reading of the list, allowing a user to equate *nalbubu* and *šegû* via a kind of phonological transitive principle in addition to the terms with which they are actually equated (on the same line). The logic might have gone something like this: *nadru*, which means *šegû*, sounds like *nanduru*, which means *nalbubu*, thus, *nalbubu* = *šegû*. A look at the commentaries provides another perspective. In addition to its use in *Malku* to explain *nadru*, *šegû* is used twice to explain *nadru*, the better attested of the two terms (see CAD N/1, 65), in a late *Šumma ālu* commentary to Tablet XLIX (CT 41 30–31, obv. 1 and 26)⁸⁴ and in a commentary to *Enūma Anu Enlil* VIII (TCL 6 17, rev. 31),⁸⁵ which equates the logogram ŠU.ZI with both terms: ŠU.ZI: *nadri* :

⁸² See Hrůša 2010, 201 for his reasoning that *Malku* I 76 does not attest the equation *nalbubu* = *šegû* (despite Kilmer's claim [1963, 426, 430]). Kilmer reads lines 76 and 77 on the basis of the equation in the *Ludlul* Commentary (as she explains on p. 430). This has been rejected in her internet edition and by Hrůša.

⁸³ See Hrůša 2010, 34.

⁸⁴ See Jiménez 2016 (<https://ccp.yale.edu/P461298>).

⁸⁵ See Frazer 2016a (<https://ccp.yale.edu/P363690>).

MIN (= ŠU.ZI) : *šegû*. It is noteworthy that *nalbubu* is an Akkadian translation for Sumerian *zi* in the lexical tradition (see *Aa* III/1 88 in MSL 14, 320). Thus, in addition to equivalency by way of proximity in *Malku*, there may have also been a chain of Sumerian etymological inference, based on Sumerian *zi*, behind our commentator's use of *šegû* as an explanation of *nalbubu*.

But why did the commentator not just explain *nalbubu* with *nanduru*, as in *Malku* I 76? *Nanduru* is not exceedingly rare, occurring in several SB texts that the scribe could have known (e.g., *Maqlû*, *Epic of Anzu*, some prayers, etc.; see CAD N/1, 258). In fact, the feminine form of the adjective (*nandurtu*) occurs in *Ludlul* I 83, just a few lines back. Also, *Malku* I 72 equates *nalbubu* with *ezzu*, a very common word within the same semantic domain. Why choose *šegû* rather than one of these words that look to be more common? I don't know. But, one may well wonder if the orthography used in the Commentary provides a significant clue for the commentator's use of the term. The *Ludlul* Commentary is the only (currently booked) attestation of *šegû* that is written with an initial ŠI rather than ŠE (or ŠA at Mari). *Šigû*, "lamentation, plea for pardon" (see *Ludlul* IV §B 14'–15') is typically written with an initial ŠI.⁸⁶ Was the commentator trying to connect *šegû* and *šigû* for some exegetical reason?⁸⁷ It would be quite in keeping with the theme of *Ludlul* to associate anger and lament. But, of course, this must remain within the realm of speculation.

Another example is *malīlu* = *embūbu* in rev. 12 (III 97). Both terms are rather infrequently attested. *Malīlu* may be a little more commonly attested as a term for flute in connected Akkadian texts (CAD M/1, 164) than *embūbu*, which is slightly more often attested in reference to the windpipe (in therapeutic texts) than to a flute (see CAD E, 138 and *AHW*, 180, s.v. *ebbūbu*).⁸⁸ In any case, these are the two most commonly attested words for flute in Akkadian and one might think the commentator had no other good option for his explanation. But why choose to explain the term at all? It is noteworthy that *Ludlul* III 96–97 uses two anatomical terms: *ur'udu*, "throat," and *ir(a)tu*, "chest." The anatomical connection that *embūbu* could make to these other terms in the context of the base text may have been an important element in the commentator's explanation.

⁸⁶ This typical orthography moved me to translate *ši-gu-ú* as "lamentation" in SAACT 7, 17.

⁸⁷ See Oshima 2014, 216 for a similar suggestion.

⁸⁸ This assessment assumes the lexica have placed attestations with logographic writings—both can be written GI.GID—in the proper dictionary entry.

9.3.3. *Reasons for the Commentary's Lexical Equations*

The commentator never cites sources, if in fact he used any, to support his lexical equations. Many of the equations may very well have been based on oral teachings he knew, or they could have been his own *ad hoc* and independent creations.⁸⁹ Keeping this possibility in mind, it is still worth exploring how the terms in his lexical equations could have been associated, especially in light of the various resources in the lexical tradition at his disposal and the various techniques scribes used explicitly in other cuneiform commentaries.⁹⁰ The results of my exploration are presented below.

Caveat: In the course of presenting my findings below, I do not intend to suggest that this source or that technique were *in fact* how our commentator related his lemma from the base text to his chosen explanatory term or terms unless I explicitly state such to be the case. Rather, in most cases I present possibilities, which must be evaluated—for the time being—on a spectrum of plausibility.

I begin with several sections that lump lexical equations together by the means they might have been associated. In the final section, I discuss selected equations serially. These studies simply explore possibilities that I have found. The following should not be considered exhaustive.⁹¹

9.3.3.1. Akkadian Synonyms in Common in the *Ludlul* Commentary and *Malku*

During the course of researching the various explanations in the Commentary, I was struck by the number of times the Commentary's pairing of synonyms also occurred in the first-millennium Akkadian synonym list *Malku* (Hrůša 2010).⁹² This list may have been a source for our commentator's work, though *Malku* is, of course, never explicitly cited as such. In any case, our Commentary certainly

⁸⁹ Note Frahm's comment in a discussion of oral lore in commentaries: "Mesopotamian commentaries contain numerous examples of lexical equations (and more elaborate explanations) that are not attested in other texts" (2011, 87).

⁹⁰ For studies on the hermeneutical techniques used in the commentaries, see Frahm 2011, Gabbay 2016, Wee 2019, 2019a, and the systematic summary in Bennett 2021, 64–157.

⁹¹ Frahm's proviso on the sources for commentarial explanations still applies over a decade later: "the background of many explanations remains at present unclear, and it continues to be difficult to estimate the percentage of *ad hoc* explanations, commentarial remarks not based on any other texts. The observations provided in this chapter on the sources Babylonian and Assyrian scholars used to elucidate the meaning of the texts they commented on must be regarded as preliminary; the topic deserves further study" (2011, 86–87).

⁹² Note that Hrůša has argued that *Malku* may have been influenced in its compilation by obscure words in literary texts, including *Ludlul* (Hrůša 2010, 16–18; see also Veldhuis 2014, 361).

shows a strong similarity with *Malku* when it comes to identifying Akkadian synonyms. I have identified a dozen common instances of synonyms, listed below. If we count the explanations in the list below that occur twice in the Commentary, we have fourteen total instances. Given the seventy preserved or confidently restored explanations in the *Ludlul* Commentary, almost one in five of the explanations in *Ludlul*'s Commentary are shared with *Malku*.

- *arnu* = *annu* in obv. 1' (I 24) and *Malku* IV 62a (Hrůša 2010, 96).⁹³
- *tamāhu* = *šabātu* in obv. 9' (I 61) and *Malku* IV 238 (Hrůša 2010, 108, see also 250).⁹⁴
- *šabāru* = *dabābu* in obv. 13' (I 71) and *Malku* IV 103, *tišburu* = *dabābu* (Hrůša 2010, 98).
- *hašikku* = *sukkuku* in obv. 13' and rev. 9 (I 71, III 84) and *Malku* IV 12 (Hrůša 2010, 92).
- *rēšu* = *ardu* in obv. 14' (I 78) and *Malku* I 176 (Hrůša 2010, 42).
- *haštu* = *šuttatu* in obv. 20' (I 93) and *Malku* VI 206 (Hrůša 2010, 134), where *haštu* is equated with a variant of *šuttatu*, *šuttu* (CAD Š/3, 407).⁹⁵
- *ippīru* = *mānahtu* in obv. 31' (II 11) and *Malku* IV 205 (Hrůša 2010, 104).
- *sakkū* = *paršī* in obv. 33' (II 24) and *Malku* II 265 (Hrůša 2010, 72).⁹⁶
- *unšu* (*umšu*) = *bubūtu* in obv. 35' and rev. 14 (II 44, III 104) and *Malku* VIII 12 (Hrůša 2010, 138, see also 272).
- *illurtu* = *izqāti* in obv. 48' (II 97) and *Malku* I 94 (Hrůša 2010, 36, see also 203).
- *tabāšitānu* = *zū šīnātum* in rev. 3 (II 107) and *Malku* III 137 (Hrůša 2010, 84).
- *kinnū* = *šadū* (KUR-*ū*) in rev. 18 (Com, line b) and *Malku* II 33 (Hrůša 2010, 52).⁹⁷ In light of the fact that logograms are few in the Commentary, it may be significant that the two words *as written* in the Commentary begin with the same sound, /k/.

⁹³ The scribe squeezed both terms into the right column's right margin. See Hrůša 2010, 242 and LTBA 2, no. 1, xii 92b.

⁹⁴ See also An = *šamū* 235 (<http://oracc.iaas.upenn.edu/dcclt/Q002278/html>).

⁹⁵ The two terms are also proximate in *Malku* IV 137–139 (Hrůša 2010, 100), a sequence of lines devoted to “pits, holes”: *hubullu* = *šuttatu*; *maḥdu* = ditto; *haštu* = *naḥallu*.

⁹⁶ Perhaps the connection was made (in *Ludlul* and/or *Malku*) via *Erimḫuš* VI 9–10, mentioned by Hrůša 2010, 224. In both lexical contexts (i.e., of *Erimḫuš* and *Malku*), several of the same words appear together. *Erimḫuš* VI 9–10 reads: sag-me = *me-e-su*; saḡ-ki = *sak-ku-u* (MSL 17, 81). ME is, of course, a logogram for *paršū*.

⁹⁷ As noted by Hrůša (2010, 212), the same lexical equation occurs in a NB school text. See also *ginnū* = *šadū* in *Malku* VIII 22 (Hrůša 2010, 138) and in An = *šamū* 6 (<http://oracc.iaas.upenn.edu/dcclt/Q002278/html>).

Several entries in the *Ludlul* Commentary are not listed as synonyms in *Malku* but their pairing in the Commentary may nonetheless suggest a connection to *Malku*. The first is *nalbubu* = *šegû* in Commentary obv. 16' on I 86. As noted in the discussion above, the terms occur on adjacent lines in *Malku* I 75–76 (Hrůša 2010, 34). The second is *lu'tu* = *muršu* in Commentary obv. 38' on II 57. Although the equation *lu'tu* = *muršu* is not attested in *Malku* (or any other lexical list), it is worth noting that *lu'tu* is found with *mangu* in several contexts (see, e.g., *Ludlul* II 77–78, where each term heads their respective lines⁹⁸), and *mangu* is equated with *muršu* in *Malku* IV 58 (Hrůša 2010, 94). A chain of inference for this lexical equation is therefore possible, based on a later context in the base text (*mangu* // *lu'tu* in II 77–78) and a lexical equation in *Malku* (*mangu* = *muršu*). Of course, this explanation may not be necessary. *Muršu* seems to be a kind of “go-to” general term to explain various undesirable physical states in the Commentary, occurring three other times (obv. 31' on II 11, obv. 45' on II 90, and rev. 24 on Com, line e).⁹⁹ Thus, the lexical equation here in the Commentary may be a simple case of explaining a specific physical malady with a general term, an explanation that may have been traditional since it also occurs in K.5872: 9' (according to Enrique Jiménez, CCP; unpublished) and the very late *Šumma ālu* commentary (on Tablet XLIX) in CT 41 30–31: 33.¹⁰⁰ Finally, the two terms selected from the base text for comment in Commentary rev. 20 (on Com, line c), *abāri* and *umāši*—explained with *emūqu* and *šalmu*, respectively—are equated in *Malku* IV 226 (Hrůša 2010, 106).¹⁰¹ This may be a case in which the text of *Ludlul* influenced the compiler of *Malku*, though a similar equation is also attested in An = *šamû* 398¹⁰² and thus may simply be a traditional pairing.¹⁰³

9.3.3.2. Akkadian Words That Translate the Same Sumerian Term in the Lexical Tradition

Many of the words equated with one another in the Commentary are also Akkadian translations of the same Sumerian word in the lexical tradition, suggest-

⁹⁸ This would of course put them in the same physical arrangement on the tablet as they would be if they were on adjacent lines in a lexical list.

⁹⁹ Unlike the present instance (*mur-su*), all other instances of *muršu* in the Commentary are written logographically, GIG. One wonders what significance the unique syllabic orthography of *muršu* may have in the present line's explanation, if any.

¹⁰⁰ For an edition, see Jiménez 2016 (<https://ccp.yale.edu/P461298>).

¹⁰¹ As Hrůša presents it: *apāru* [*abāru* II] = *emāšu* II [*umāšu*].

¹⁰² *Bēl abāri* = *bēl umāši* (see <http://oracc.iaas.upenn.edu/dcclt/Q002278/html>).

¹⁰³ See CAD A/1, 38 and Hrůša 2010, 249.

ing their synonymy. This connection via Sumerian may have been a factor, in addition to others, in the Commentary's lexical equations. I cite lexical (and sign) lists selectively in the following only to illustrate the Sumerian connection between the terms in question within the lexical tradition. My citing a specific list does not intend to imply that the commentator used *that specific* text as a reference or necessarily drew inspiration from it for his own work. I have been able to identify the following instances.¹⁰⁴

Hurbāšu = *kuššu* in obv. 4' (I 26): Both are equated with Sumerian *sed*, "cold," in *Aa* VIII/1 (= Tablet XXXIX), lines 174 and 177 (MSL 14, 493) and *še*₄ in *Idu* II 270 and 272 (cited in CAD K, 594). (Both *sed* and *še*₄ are written MÜŠ×A-DI.)

Tamāhu = *šabātu* in obv. 9' (I 61): Although appearing in various lists,¹⁰⁵ the two terms are adjacent in *Erimhuš* VI 90, 91 (MSL 17, 84), where *šabātu* is equated with Sumerian *dab-ba* (its common logogram is DAB) and *tamāhu* with *tab-ba*.

Hašikku = *sukkuku* in obv. 13' (I 71) and rev. 9 (III 84): Both are equated with Sumerian *ĝeštug-la*, "to be(come) deaf," in CTN 4 216 iv 17'–18' (= ND 4373), an unplaced Lú fragment from Nimrud (MSL 12, 142). In addition to the Sumerian connection, one might consider the phonological similarity (i.e., a sibilant followed by velar /k/) between the two terms as playing a role in their lexical equation.

Haštu = *šuttatu* in obv. 20' (I 93): Both terms are equated with Sumerian *sidug*, "cavity, pit," in the lexical tradition: in *Erimhuš*, *haštu* = *si-dug*₄ in II 52 (MSL 17, 29) and *šuttatu* = *si-dug*₄-*ga* in VI 36 (MSL 17, 82); in *Aa* I/2 249–250, *si-dug* = *šuttatu*, *haštu* (MSL 14, 215).

Gerrānu = *bikītu* in obv. 21' (I 105): Both are equated with Sumerian *er*, "weeping." See *Aa* I/1 134, 140 (*garrānu*) (MSL 14, 205) and *Diri* III 150, 152 (MSL 15, 144).

Unšu (*umšu*) = *bubūtu* in obv. 35' (II 44) and rev. 14 (III 104): Both translate Sumerian *šaĝar*, "hunger" in *Erimhuš* II 283, 285 (MSL 17, 42): *ša-ĝar* = *bubūtu*; *ša-ĝar-tuku* = *umšu*.¹⁰⁶ (It is worth noting that the lemma as cited in

¹⁰⁴ My primary tools in finding these connections were the lexical section of each word's entry in the CAD and the various volumes of MSL. There are likely other examples to be found in *Ludlul's* Commentary, which will be made much easier as the Digital Corpus of Cuneiform Lexical Texts, headed by Niek Veldhuis at University of California–Berkeley (see <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/dcelt/>), advances.

¹⁰⁵ See, e.g., *Idu* II 292, 295 (as cited by CAD S, 6 and CAD T, 107).

¹⁰⁶ *Emšu*, Oshima's preferred reading in obv. 35' (2014, 402), has nearly the same translation in OB Lú: *lú ša-ĝar-tuku* (MSL 12, 185, vi 18).

obv. 35' is a noun whereas the base text in *Ludlul* II 44 contains a verbal form, *immušā*, from *emēšu*.)

Kišukku = *kīlu* in obv. 46' (II 96): The terms are never equated, as far as I can determine, in lexical lists. But, *kišukku* is a Sumerian loanword, and *kīlu* is written logographically with its Sumerian counterpart, KI.ŠÚ.

Egātu (pl. of *egītu*) = *hiṭāti* (pl. of *hiṭītu*) in rev. 8 (III 61): The terms can be connected via Sumerian *šebida*, “to disdain.” Both *egītu* and *hiṭītu* translate *šebī-da* in bilingual contexts: the former in a Hellenistic liturgical text (VAT 431+, rev. 5–6) and the latter in a couple of *eršahuḡa* laments.¹⁰⁷

Malīlu = *embūbu* in rev. 12 (III 97): Both lexemes can be written logographically, GI.GÍD, and translate Sumerian *gigid*, “reed,” in other texts. See, e.g., OB Lú A 243: *lú-gi-gíd* = *ša enb[ūbim]*, “flute player” (MSL 12, 165) and a bilingual lament in which *malīlu* translates *gi-gíd* (see Maul 1988, 296–97, line 18).

Būši = *iššūr hurri* in rev. 25 (IV §A 3', line f): The lexical equation is also used in *Murgud* B IV 263 (MSL 8/2, 168) in reference to Sumerian [bu]ru₅.us mušen.

9.3.3.3. A Sumerian Etymological Connection between Akkadian Synonyms

Some of the Commentary's lexical equations may have been made or reinforced by a perceived common Sumerian etymological connection.¹⁰⁸ The following are relatively clear possibilities.

Šabāru = *dabābu* in obv. 13' (I 71): The commentator could have connected these terms via Sumerian homonyms pronounced /du/. *Nabnitu* IX (= X) 47 shows *šabāru* as the Akkadian equivalent of Sumerian *dù* (MSL 16, 119: [()]-*dù* = *ša-ba-ru*). *Nabnitu* IV 98 (MSL 16, 80) shows *dabābu* equated with *du₁₁.du₁₁*, a logographic writing for the term.

Emū = *mašālu* in obv. 13' (I 71): The commentator could have connected these terms via Sumerian homonyms pronounced /si/. In *Nabnitu* IV 46, *si* = *emū* (MSL 16, 78), and in *Nabnitu* XVII (= J) 240, SUM (read sig₁₀ or si) = *mašālu* (MSL 16, 162).

¹⁰⁷ See Jeremiah Peterson's edition of the liturgy at <http://oracc.iaas.upenn.edu/blms/P414329> and Maul 1988, 238 (for IVR², no. 10, obv. 36–37) and 291 (for K.4931, rev. 7–8) for the laments.

¹⁰⁸ For a basic statement of the scribes' working principles of etymology, see Frahm 2011, 70–74. Frahm provides a multitude of examples in his work *inter alia*. See Bennett 2021, 49–157 for a thorough summary of various techniques the scribes used, some of which go beyond etymology.

Qitayyulu = *qūlu* in obv. 23' (I 106): *Qitayyulu* is not attested in the lexical tradition as a lemma, according to CAD. *AHw*, 895 books the word as a Gtn infinitive of *qālu*, “to be silent.” *Qālu* is written ME.ME logographically and *qūlu*, NÍG.ME.GAR. The shared /me/ could have provided the etymological basis for their connection. Note also that both terms appear as Akkadian translations of Sumerian *me* in *S^b* II 134–135 (MSL 3, 140) and *Izi* E 5–6 (MSL 13, 185).

Ippīru = *mānahtu* = GIG (*mursu*) in obv. 31' (II 11): *Mānahtu* is used to explain *ippīru* elsewhere.¹⁰⁹ And *mursu* explains *mānahtu* in rev. 24 (Com, line e). The point of interest presently is the connection between *ippīru* and *mursu*, which the commentator could have connected via Sumerian words that share the syllable pronounced /gig/. As mentioned previously, *mursu* is used as an explanation for an infirmity or undesirable physical state four times in the Commentary (obv. 31', 38', 45', rev. 24 on II 11, 57, 90, and Com, line e, respectively), and in all but one instance (rev. 38', on II 57), it is written logographically, GIG. It is clear that the commentator always uses *mursu* as a generic or common term to explain the (more specific or less commonly attested) lemma selected for comment from the base text. The present line, however, is the only place where *mursu* occurs as the second lexical equation in the commentator's explanation. Its inclusion here, written logographically in Sumerian, may have been to make a phonological connection back to *ippīru* via Sumerian *gigam*, “conflict” (see *Diri* VI B 29 in MSL 15, 190; *Ea* VII 86 [restored] in MSL 14, 450: 6'; and *S^b* II 321 in MSL 3, 149, all of which show *ippīru* as a translation of *gigam*).

9.3.3.4. Explanations That May Have an Etymographical Basis

Some of the commentator's explanations may have been rooted in a creative exploitation of the cuneiform signs used to write the explanations. Frahm calls this hermeneutical technique etymography.¹¹⁰

Tarānu = *šillu* in obv. 7' (I 48): *Šillu* can be written logographically as GIŠ.MI. The MI may have provided an etymographical connection to *tarānu*. Note that both terms appear in *Diri* and both appear as Akkadian translations in entries that use the MI sign in the explanation of a compound sign. *Diri* I 255 reads: ku-uk-ku MI.MI = *tarā[nu?]*,¹¹¹ “the compound sign KUKKU₍₂₎ is writ-

¹⁰⁹ See *Malku* IV 205 (Hrůša 2010, 104) and a commentary to *Šumma izbu* V (De Zorzi 2014, 2.464, line 41).

¹¹⁰ See Frahm 2011, 73–74 for the basic principle; he provides numerous examples *inter alia*. See Bennett 2021, 147–55, who uses several different terms to categorize graphic interpretive techniques.

¹¹¹ The text is *ta-ra-[nu]*, according to CAD T, 206.

ten with MI-MI and means tarānu, ‘canopy’” (MSL 15, 112). *Diri* III 58 reads: gi-is-su GIŠ-MI = *šillu*, “the compound sign GISSU is written with GIŠ-MI and means *šillu*, ‘shade’” (MSL 15, 138).¹¹²

Rēšu = *ardu* in obv. 14' (I 78): The commentator has chosen to comment on *rēšu* here instead of at I 73, where the word first appears in the poem, because it is used here in its less common meaning, “servant.”¹¹³ The two terms appear together in lexical lists as Akkadian translations of Sumerian saġ, “head.” See, e.g., *Urra* I 127–128 (MSL 5, 17–18), and *Idu* I 117, 123 (according to CAD A/2, 243 and R, 277). Although we should not discount this synonymy via the Sumerian lexical tradition entirely, the commentator wrote *ardu*, his explanation of *rēšu*, logographically, ^{lū}ARAD, which I assume is significant. The logogram ARAD can also be read nita. In *Murgud* I 11 (MSL 5, 44) we see saġ-nita = [r]ēšu = *ardu*.¹¹⁴ Thus, the connection in the Commentary here may have been made through etymology and homonymy.

Kik(k)iġtū = *nēpešu* in obv. 29' (II 9): *Kik(k)iġtū* is typically written, as in the Commentary, logographically, KĪD.KĪD, especially as part of the superscript for ritual instructions, KĪD.KĪD.BI, “its ritual.” The CAD cites no lexical evidence for the term (K, 353). *Nēpešu* is a very common noun, but likewise has almost no presence in the lexical tradition according to the CAD (N/2, 168–170). As best as I can discern, *kik(k)iġtū* and *nēpešu* are never equated in extant materials, lexical or commentarial. The verb *epēšu*, however, is sometimes written logographically as AK and translates Sumerian ak, “to do,” in several lexical/sign lists, including *S^h* II 291 (MSL 3, 147), *Ea* VIII 23 (MSL 14, 476), and *Aa* VIII/1 54 (MSL 14, 490). AK can also be read kid. Thus, the commentator could have made the connection between the two terms in the commentary via *epēšu*, that is, *kik(k)iġtū* is written KĪD, which can be read ak, which means *epēšu*, which sounds like *nēpešu*.

Paruššu = *haġtu* in rev. 1 (II 101): The commentator wrote *haġtu* logographically, ^{giš}GIDRU, in his explanation of *paruššu*. Thus, the two signs he used to write *haġtu*, GIŠ and PA (= GIDRU), are the same as the first two signs he used

¹¹² In *Proto-Izi* I, ġissu-lá-a and ġissu-ġi₄-a are both glossed with *ta-ra-a-nu* (MSL 13, 26–27, lines 284b, 284c). This entry is not currently attested in the later recension of *Izi*, which is not surprising, given the state of its reconstruction.

¹¹³ See likewise, Horowitz 2009, 48–49.

¹¹⁴ See also *Urra* I 129–130, which reads according to MSL 5, 18: saġ-arad = *ardu*; saġ-nita = *rēšu*. CAD A/2, 243 reads saġ-nita in the Sumerian column of both lines. In fact, the only witness to these lines (used in MSL 5), K.5434 + K.6012 + K.10684, does not preserve the Sumerian column in line 129 and has only a very broken sign in line 130. See the photograph posted on CDLI: <https://cdli.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/dl/photo/P238446.jpg>.

to write *paruššu*: ^{giš}*pa-(ru-uš-šu)*, perhaps providing all the connection the commentator needed to equate the terms.¹¹⁵

Iptenni = *mākālū* in rev. 15 (III 106): As noted already, *iptennu* is a *hapax*¹¹⁶ and thus does not appear in the lexical lists in relation to the common word *mākālū*. *Mākālū*, however, is equated with Sumerian *únu*, written TE-UNU, in several sources; see *Diri* VI A₁ 14 (MSL 15, 184), *Idu* II 97 (according to CAD M/1, 123), and *Ea* IV 158 (MSL 14, 361). The pronunciation of that grapheme, /te-unu/, may have suggested equating *iptennu* with *mākālū*. This explanation is not necessarily at odds with the facts that words related to and sound similar to *iptennu* are equated with *mākālū* in lexical/sign lists. For example, in *Diri* VI A₁ *naptanu* is the translation of *únu* (TE-UNU) in line 13, the line just above *mākālū*. Note also the equation *patānu* = *mākālū* in An = *šamū* 183.¹¹⁷ These or similar equations might also have been suggestive or supportive of our commentator's decision to equate *iptennu* with *mākālū*.

Abāru = *emūqu* in rev. 20 (Com, line c): *Emūqu* can be written logographically, Á.KAL. The same writing is used in *Diri* VI B 55–56 (MSL 15, 192) to explain the compound signs *ú-su*, which it translates *emūqu*, and *li-ru*, translated *abāru*.¹¹⁸

9.3.3.5. Discussions of Selected Lexical Equations

Dūtu = *bunnannū* in obv. 6' (I 47) and rev. 29 (IV, line i): The two terms appear in proximity in *Erimḫuš* II 13, 15, but they are never equated. Interestingly, *bāštu*, “dignity,” which is in parallel to *dūtu* in *Ludlul* I 47, appears next in the list, *Erimḫuš* II 16. *Šēdu* and *lamassu*, also in the *Ludlul* context in I 45 and 46, respectively, appear in *Erimḫuš* II 17–18 (MSL 17, 27). It seems likely, given the cluster of terms appearing in *Erimḫuš* and *Ludlul*, that our commentator was drawn to *Erimḫuš* to explain *dūtu* with another term in the same context.¹¹⁹ In other words, this section of *Erimḫuš* was likely his inspiration or source for the lexical equation in his commentary.

¹¹⁵ The equation ^{giš}*illurtu* = *izqātu* in obv. 48' (II 97) may show a similar play with the initial sign of each term: the determinative GIŠ in the lemma can also be read iz, providing the initial syllable of *izqātu*. (Four MSS of the poem attest *illurtu* at the head of the line in *Ludlul* II 97: MS II.F_{Sip}, rev. 19'; MS II.G_{Nin}, rev. 2'; MS II.N_{Huz}, rev. 25; and MS Com_{Nin}, obv. 47'. The Commentary is the only one that uses the determinative with the word.)

¹¹⁶ Note the equally rare NA word *pitennu*, which may be a variant of *iptennu* (see CAD P, 434–35).

¹¹⁷ See <http://oracc.iaas.upenn.edu/dcclt/Q002278/html> for an edition.

¹¹⁸ See also *Diri* V 106–107 where the two terms translate the writing ŠU-KAL. The first column of the text is not preserved. See MSL 15, 170.

¹¹⁹ As Cavigneaux notes in his introduction to the edition of the series: “The way *Erimḫuš* is

Ana naq dāmi = tabāk dāmi in obv. 18' (I 87): The commentator's equation here seems rather clearly to be a case of replacing a well-attested verb that sometimes has a specialized meaning ("to pour out" but also "to libate" and "to sacrifice"; see CAD N/1, 336) with a common, more generic synonym.

Imhū = kabātu in obv. 32' (II 21): Lambert comments: "The explanation of the Commentary may take it as a loan from the Sum. *maḥ*" (1960, 289). In this regard, note that K.4404 (= IIR 44, no. 7), a commentary on (perhaps) *Enūma Anu Enlil*, equates *maḥ* with *kabtu* (i 13').¹²⁰ It is worth noting that the commentator cited the lemma here in the morphological form in which it appears in the poem and not, as is typical, in the infinitive. Perhaps he did not know the verb's infinitive. In any case, *kabātu* seems to be his attempt to assign a negative meaning that is contextually appropriate: One who forgets his lord (as in II 21b) is one who has become lethargic or apathetic about or burdened by his responsibility.

Ūmu u mūši in obv. 34' (II 43): This comment (see also rev. 5 on III 25) in the Commentary is unusual because it is not preceded by a lemma repeated from the base text, though clearly the relevant base text is *kī petê u katāme*, "like opening and closing." The explanation here is a clear case of the commentator providing a paraphrase rather than an explanatory lexical equation.¹²¹ The paraphrase, interestingly, is itself metaphorical in nature rather than a literal paraphrase of the line's intended meaning—if, that is, the line means to assert that human fate can change in an instant, a meaning the context clearly supports. Perhaps the commentator understood the line differently or, better, he wanted to extend the line's interpretation to include the extreme variability of human fate and not simply its rapid mutability.

Šūlu = eṭemmu in obv. 36' (II 53): The comment in *Ludlul* seems to be based on a general explanatory rather than etymological or etymographical reasoning. Though a rarely attested word (CAD Š/3, 259), *šūlu* in *Ludlul*'s context is clearly a demonic entity that causes physical disease. (Note the use of *utukku* and *lamaštu* in II 54–55. All three substantives head their respective lines.) The commentator makes the demonic understanding of the word clear by simply attributing the disease to a ghost, using the most generic term

quoted in a commentary to *Šumma Izbu* (Leichty, TCS 2 232f.) with the Sumerian and Akkadian columns quoted successively (S₁ S₂ S₃ A₁ A₂ A₃)—resulting in what can be called a vertical reading as opposed to the usual horizontal reading (S₁ = A₁, S₂ = A₂, etc.)—shows that for the commentator it is the relationships of the Akkadian entries within a section, not the bilingual equations per se, that are important" (MSL 17, 3; see also Frahm 2011, 88).

¹²⁰ An edition of the text will be presented at <https://ccp.yale.edu/P395530> eventually. For a few other equations of *maḥ* with *kabtu*, see CAD K, 25.

¹²¹ See Frahm 2011, 69.

available for such an entity. Incidentally, the two terms are closely associated in K.11807: 6',¹²² which reads: [bu-ur] [búr] = *šu-lu-u šá e-tém-me*, “bur₍₂₎, pronounced /bur/ means ‘a cough from a ghost’.”

Itīqu (= *etēqu*) and *ramû* = *šebēru* in obv. 39' (II 61): I think this entry is unique in the Commentary in that the first two terms, which are separated by a colon, both represent lemma cited from the base text, and only the last term, also separated by a colon, is the explanation. Assuming this to be the case, *šebēru* seems to be a general explanation for the verbs' combined results.

Daddaru = *bu'sānu* (*būšānu*) obv. 43' (II 88): *Būšānu* is better attested (CAD B, 350–51) than *daddaru*, which occurs fewer than ten times in connected texts and even fewer times in lexical lists (CAD D, 17–18; *AHw*, 148–149; see also now the commentary on *materia medica* in Finkel 2005, 281, obv. 4–7). Both words occur in the plant list *Uruanna*, but the plant names are never equated in the lexical tradition, as best as I can determine. According to its booked attestations, *daddaru* tends to appear in literary contexts and a royal inscription. Examples of the former: the term is found in the *Prayer of Aššurnasirpal to Ištar* (rev. 17) and a bilingual proverb (K.4347 + K.16161, rev. i 19–24), both on tablets found at Kuyunjik.¹²³ In fact, three of its attestations, aside from the one in *Ludlul*, occur in the context of a literary lament very much like the one in *Ludlul*.¹²⁴ As for the royal inscription: the term occurs twice in Sargon II's Nimrud Prism, where it is part of a description of overgrowth in remote and neglected land (vii 45–76, specifically, lines 53 and 69; see Frame 2021, 335). I see no clear use of the plant in a “medical” or therapeutic text among the attestations listed in CAD or *AHw*. And even in the commentary on *materia medica* published by Finkel (2005), the term is always used to explain other terms and appears twice in illustrative citations of proverbs from the *Series of Sidu* (see Finkel 2005, 281, obv. 4–7). *Būšānu*, however, is frequently used in such texts as the name of both a disease and a plant (CAD B, 350–51). The equation in the Commentary may therefore be based on the commentator's desire to elucidate *Ludlul* in a manner that introduces an

¹²² Cited in CAD E, 397 and (*passim* in CAD) as an “unpub. text similar to Idu.” Typically, when the CAD cites lines from the fragment, it indicates the text is coming from column iii, but K.11807 has only one very broken column of text; see <https://cdli.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/dl/photo/P399458.jpg>.

¹²³ See Lambert 1960, 244 for the proverb, which Finkel argues is part of the *Series of Sidu* (1986, 253). For the prayer, see von Soden 1974/1977, 42, line 66 and my treatment at <http://akkpm.org/P451997.html>.

¹²⁴ In addition to the (SB) *Prayer of Aššurnasirpal*, see also the (SB) *Great Prayer to Nabû* (rev. ii 7, for which see von Soden 1971, 58, line 179 and my treatment at <http://akkpm.org/P394371.html>) and the OB Akkadian *Man and His God* (obv. 29, for which see Lambert 1987 and my treatment at <http://akkpm.org/P492288.html>).

important “medical” term to those reading the text with him. By equating *daddaru* with a known medicinal plant used in first-millennium prescriptions/rituals, the Commentary exemplifies what we know from other avenues of investigation: *Ludlul* was used in the training of exorcists.

Appūnāma = *ma'diš* in obv. 45' (II 90):¹²⁵ *Appūnāma* is well-attested in older and peripheral Akkadian texts but is attested rather rarely in connected SB texts—less than ten times. Notably, five of the SB attestations occur in *Enūma eliš* (CAD A/2, 189–190, s.v. *appūna*), a text students often copied with *Ludlul*. The term, meaning “moreover, indeed, furthermore,” is attested in a variety of lexical lists, including *Malku* (see CAD A/2, 189), but is never, as best as I can determine, equated with *ma'diš*. Aside from the fact that both are adverbs, the words have little in common. The two differ significantly in semantic range. *Appūnāma* indicates an addition, something that goes beyond the previous. *Ma'diš*, “greatly, very,” is quantitative, indicating abundance or magnitude. *Ma'diš* therefore seems to be an explicit attempt at interpretation in this line, indicating that the illness was severe.

Silētu = *muršu* (GIG) in obv. 45' (II 90): The two terms appear in parallel in *Ludlul* II 110–111 and III 49–50. To the best of my knowledge, they are never equated in lexical lists. This equation seems to be a simple replacement of a less attested term for illness with a more commonly attested one. (I can discern no special purpose in the use of the logographic writing.)

Tabāštānu = *zū šinātum* in rev. 3 (II 107): The very same equation is made in another commentary text, LBAT 1577 iv 13, a late commentary perhaps related to *Enūma Anu Enlil* (see CAD T, 24)¹²⁶ in addition to *Malku* III 137 (see above). The equation seems to be a straight forward case of exposition, substituting the common words for excretions in place of the rarely attested one.

Kabtu = *dannu* in rev. 4 (III 1): Two *Šumma izbu* commentary entries attest this equation (see De Zorzi 2.341: 70, in the context of commenting on Tablet I, and 2.464: 7, on Tablet V); the lexical tradition does not, as far as I can determine. This seems to be a straight forward semantic equivalency of two common words. Marduk's heavy (*kabtu*) hand is a strong (*dannu*) hand. However, if these words are so common, one may well wonder why the commentator has decided to make a comment at all. Perhaps it was to make clear that the

¹²⁵ *Ludlul* II 88, the previous line from the poem to receive comment in the Commentary, and the present line (commenting on II 90) share vocabulary with the proverb in Lambert 1960, 244, lines 19–24 (*daddaru* and *appūnāma*, which are adjacent). I don't know if or how this may be significant.

¹²⁶ An edition will eventually appear on the Yale Cuneiform Commentaries project at <https://ccp.yale.edu/P364325>.

predicative *kabtat* used in the base text was in fact an adjective. (If so, one wonders why the commentator passed over the same form in *Ludlul* I 33.)

Làl-úr-alim-ma = *Tābi-utul-Enlil* in rev. 5 (III 25): This is another unusual comment in the Commentary because the explanation is not preceded by a lemma repeated from the base text (see also obv. 34' on II 43). The Akkadian explanation of the name, which means “Sweet is the lap of Enlil,” is clearly rooted in Sumerian etymological reasoning, which is made explicit in two other texts. The first is an Achaemenid period “cento of literary texts,” BM 32574, rev. 2', which reads: làl' : *ta-a-bi* : úr : *ut'-lum* : a[lim : ^dBAD ...].¹²⁷ The second is a list of names (the *Name Book*) VR, no. 44 obv. ii 17 from Kuyunjik (K.4426 + Rm.617), which equates the alim-ma element of the name clearly with Enlil: làl-úr-alim-ma = DÜG.GA-*ut-li-^den-lil*.¹²⁸

Ahulapi = *adi mati* in rev. 6 (III 35): Both sides of the lexical equation here are well attested in our sources (see CAD A/1, 213–15 for *ahulap* and CAD M/1, 407 with A/1, 119 for *adi mati*), and are especially well-attested in laments and prayers.¹²⁹ Both were also used in personal names in various times and places (CAD A/1, 214–15, 119). Although *ahulap* was not rare or obscure, its rather specialized meaning might have been lost on those reading *Ludlul* with the commentator. Thus, the equivalency he makes here, unparalleled in the lexical lists as best as I can determine, might be understood as simply providing a more transparent meaning. Oddly, *ahulap* actually occurs four times in total in *Ludlul* (I 96, III 35, III 38, and III 55), each instance of which is paired with the verb *qabû*, as is typical. One wonders why the commentator didn't explain the term at its first occurrence.

Tarru = *dannu* in rev. 7 (III 41): The former is a rarely attested word, which is most often equated with *ziqnu* in lexical lists (see CAD D, 115, s.v. *darru*). *Dannu* is never equated with *tarru* in the lexical tradition, as best as I can determine. And, I see no etymological or etymographical connections between the terms. If *dannu* is not a mistake (see the textual note on III 41 in the edition above), the equation could simply be the commentator's attempt to indicate that the bearded man who appeared in the dream was intimidating. See *kabtu* = *dannu* in rev. 4 (III 1).

¹²⁷ See Jiménez 2015c (<https://ccp.yale.edu/P469976>) for an edition. The explanation was already cited as relevant to this line in *Ludlul* by Lambert (1960, 296; see also Lambert 2013, 8).

¹²⁸ See Cooley (forthcoming) for an edition of the text and a study of the various names in light of scribal hermeneutics.

¹²⁹ See simply the bilingual sections of the cited entries in the CAD. Both *ahulap* and *adi mati* occur multiple times in Ištar 2, a very long *šuilu* prayer (see lines 27–30, 45–50 for *ahulap* and 56, 59, 93, and 94 for *adi mati* in Zgoll 2003, 43–45, 47).

Amīru = *zê uzni* in rev. 10 (III 85): As with *tabāštānu* = *zû šīnātum* in rev. 3 (II 107), this comment seems to be a clear case of an explanatory gloss. The same phrase for ear wax occurs in a mythological explanatory text (see Livingstone 1986, 94–95, line 14).

Lagabbiš = *ša ašaṭ pagri* in rev. 11 (III 96): Unlike his treatment of *ḥašikkiš* in I 71 (see obv. 13'), III 84 (see rev. 9) and *amāliš* in Com, line b (see rev. 18), the commentator does not remove the adverbial suffix from the lemma in the base text before citing it. *Lagabbiš* only occurs in *Ludlul* III 96 and its commentary. The related noun, *lagabbu*, is also rarely attested, aside from its use as the name of a cuneiform sign (CAD L, 36–37). This comment is probably best understood as a paraphrase like “night and day” in rev. 34' (II 43).

Amalu = *ašūḫu* in rev. 18 (Com, line b): This lexical equation is not attested elsewhere, leading CAD A/2 to doubt the “correctness of the explanation” (1). We might consider, however, this equation to be a case of mixing Sumerian etymology and Akkadian phonology. *Ašūḫu* is associated with *lammu*, “almond tree, sapling” (CAD L, 67 with qualifying note on 68), both of which translate Sumerian ḡiš.ù.suḫ₅ (tur) in *Urra* III 74–75 (MSL 5, 99). *Lammu* sounds similar to *amālu*. Thus, the commentator might have inferred the equation *amalu* = *ašūḫu* via *lammu*.

^{lú}*Šūšū* = *ša Ištar ana išāti šūšā* in rev. 22 (Com, line d): The whole line is very difficult, both its original meaning and its commentary. The commentator’s orthography of the cited lemma makes clear that he takes *šū-ši-i* in the base text as an agent (note that the determinative *lú* is not actually in his base text), which is not the case in my translation.¹³⁰ The equivalency of *LÚ* = *ša* and the concluding *šūšā* in his comment are simple enough to relate to the base text. The remainder of the explanation must be an exposition of the obscure (and uncited) *nak/qimtu*, which is some kind of disease.¹³¹ That *Ištar* should be identified as the agent involved may have derived simply from the assumption that *nak/qimtu* was a venereal disease (so Lambert 1960, 299). As for the fire, could the commentator have derived it from the phonological similarity between *nak/qimtu* and *naqmītu/naqmūtu*, “burning, conflagration,” which is itself rarely attested (CAD N/1, 336)?

Mammū = *šuḫtu* = *rūšiš*; the whole line = *ebbi* in rev. 28 (IV, line h): Recent translators have followed the Commentary here in understanding *mammū* as some kind of dirt or filth rather than frost (see my comments in chapter three at IV, line h).¹³² *Šuḫtu*, “verdigris, patina, rust” (so CAD Š/3,

¹³⁰ I take it as an infinitive, see likewise Oshima 2014, 305.

¹³¹ See the discussions with literature in Lambert 1960, 299–300 and Oshima 2014, 304–5.

¹³² *Mammū* is equated with *kuššu*, “winter,” in *Malku* III 174B (Hrūša 2010, 86).

209), is the more common of the two terms, which are never equated elsewhere. As I understand it at present, *rūšiš* is a second explanatory term for *mammū*.¹³³ As mentioned in the textual note to this line in the edition above, the scribe may have left out *rūšu(š)* from the base text before writing the explanatory *rūšiš*, in which case *rūšiš* intends to explain (a now missing) *rūšu* (sans the apocopated pronominal suffix). Contrary to both ideas, Lambert (1960, 300) and CAD (R, 432) believe the commentator has confused *rūšu* A, “dirt,” with *rūšu* B, “red sheen, shining.” Thus, Lambert explains “like a red sheen” (*rūšiš*, standing for the base text’s *rūšuš*) as “clean” (*ebbi* or *ebbi*<š>). This is not impossible. But, *rūšu* B, aside from this potential attestation here in *Ludlul*, is only found in an OB lexical list (see CAD R, 432). *Rūšu* A, “dirt,” on the other hand, was already used properly in *Ludlul* III 91 (in terms that have to do with wiping the mouth and polishing copper).¹³⁴ Also, we have other entries in the Commentary where one word from the base text is equated with two explanatory ones (see, e.g., obv. 31’ on II 11, rev. 3 on II 107, and rev. 17 on Com, line a). Perhaps this is another instance. In any case, on my understanding, *ebbi* remains alone at the end of the line, i.e., without a term from the base text to explain. It may very well be the case that this last term in the line sums up the meaning of the entire line. If so, using this one word as a summary of the entire meaning of the line after other explanatory comments is unique in the Commentary.

Itē nāru = *huršānu* in rev. 31 (IV, line j): This seems to be a case of simple interpretation, drawing out and making explicit in the Commentary what is only implied in the text.

Abbuttu = *birītu* in rev. 32 (IV §B 10’, line k): *Abbuttu* is not very rare and is attested in several SB texts (see CAD A/1, 48–50). The word does not actually mean “slavery”; rather, it seems to have been a characteristic hairstyle of slaves (the hair itself, the part of the head in which the hair grew, and the metal clasp that held the hair there, according to CAD A/1, 48) and thus denoted slavery by way of association (i.e., metonymy).¹³⁵ The use of *pašāru* here in *Ludlul* may point to *abbuttu* in its meaning “clasp holding the *abbuttu* hair.” If so, one can imagine that *birītu* in its meaning “fetter” makes sense as an explanation. *Birītu* is used similarly to define *maškanu* in obv. 49’ (II 98).

Given the fact that *abbuttu* is almost entirely restored in the Commentary and that *muttutu* could just as easily fit within the gap and with the partially

¹³³ Alternatively, suggested by John Z. Wee (personal communication): *ebbi* is an antonym to the preceding explanation *rūšiš*, “like dirt.”

¹³⁴ Of course, one could also suggest that III 91 is an attestation of *rūšu* B, too!

¹³⁵ For a brief discussion of *abbuttu*, see Oshima 2014, 314–15.

preserved final sign *-tu*, is it possible to understand *birītu* as explaining *muttutu* rather than *abbuttu*? As far as I can determine, no one has ever entertained this possibility in print. I offer the following as an exploration of the possibility, even though I have not adopted the restoration in my edition above. *Muttutu* (an Assyrian spelling of *muttatu*) usually means “half” but also seems to mean “headband” in NB sources (so CAD M/2, 312 with a question mark) and may mean “forehead” here. *Birītu*, in addition to its meaning “fetter,” can also mean “in-between terrain, alley (between houses), central, median area” and the like (so CAD B, 252) and is used in compound expressions for areas between paired body parts such as nostrils, arms, and eyes (e.g., *birīt nāḥirī*, “the area between the nostrils”; CAD B, 254). The body part is typically specified in this compound usage and so, if the Commentary is using it in this anatomical sense, it would be unusual. (See also my comments in chapter three at III 93.) But, what if the commentator was puzzling through how to make sense of *muttutu*, which he understood as meaning “half”; and he knew the word could refer to some part of the human body, as we know it does (see CAD M/2, 311 for attestations); and he could discern from the context of the poem that the word *must* refer to some part of the body but he didn’t know what precisely? Given the body’s symmetry, *birītu* in the sense of “the area between” (some paired body parts) could make good sense as an explanation of *muttutu*, “half.” In this regard, it is worth noting that several of the booked attestations of *birītu* in the sense “central, median area” (between body parts) occur in physiognomic omens (see CAD B, 254 and Böck 2000, 325–26, s.v. *birīt x*). For these reasons, it may be prudent to hold out the possibility that our commentator chose the lemma *muttutu* rather than *abbuttu* for comment in this line.

Kunuš-kadru = *sūqi qatnu* in rev. 37 (IV §B 16’, line o): Lambert cites *Tintir* as the source of this explanation already in 1960 (300; likewise, George 1992, 358, identifying it as *Tintir* V 63; Frahm 2011, 93–94; and Oshima 2014, 316). *Tintir* V 63 (George 1992, 66) reads almost identically to the Commentary:

SILA *ku-nu-uš kád-ru* SILA SIG-*nu*

“Street: ‘Bow down, O Haughty One!’ means the narrow street”

As George explains, “in the present line *sūqu qatnu* probably appears as the everyday name of *Kunuš-kadru*, which is thus the ‘Narrow Street’ par excellence” (358).

Gerru = *nēšu* in rev. 40 (V 14–15): *Nēšu* is equated with *gerru* in *Murgud* A II 255: [ur-dib] *ger-ru* [*ne-e-šu*] (MSL 8/2, 44). The Commentary may be based on this or a similar tradition for the terms’ synonymy. We might also consider etymography: *nēšu* sometimes translates Sumerian *piriḡ* in the lexical

tradition (see, e.g., *Urra* XIV 125 in MSL 8/2, 16 and *S^b* I 205 in MSL 3, 114). The sign read *piriḡ* can also be read *gir*, which could in turn suggest *gerru*.

One wonders if the logographic writing used for *nēšu* is significant in the Commentary. If we read UR.MAḤ as UR = *amēlu*¹³⁶ and MAḤ as *šīru*, as is typical, then we could also see here, in addition to the synonymic explanation, a metaphorical interpretation of *gerru*, “lion,” as an important or high-ranking man. This is, of course, precisely the kind of men who had ruined the protagonist in *Ludlul* I 55–65. As stated above, the general interpretive propensity in the Commentary is to define the selected words in their plain or literal sense. Perhaps this entry is an exception.

Napsamu = *makšāru ša pī sīsē* in rev. 40 (V 14–15): *Napsamu* is a very poorly attested term with only a couple of attestations in lexical lists and three in connected Akkadian texts, one of which is from OB Mari (CAD N/1, 315, where it misidentifies the *Ludlul* attestation as from the *Theodicy*). *Makšāru* is used as a technical mathematical term and in NB texts in reference to a bundle or bale of straw, etc.; it occurs only here in the sense of “snaffle bit” (see CAD M/1, 139–140). Despite its poorly attested meaning in this sense, the noun’s clear connection to *kašāru* and the attached phrase *ša pī sīsē*, “belonging to a horse’s mouth,”¹³⁷ likely conveyed the general meaning to the commentator’s discussants more transparently than *napsamu*.

9.4. LUDLUL CITED IN OTHER COMMENTARIES

Several late Babylonian commentaries cite *Ludlul* in the course of providing an explanation of lemma selected for comment. The following focuses on these commentaries’ specific uses of *Ludlul*—as best we can determine them—in the interpretive situations for which they invoked the poem.

Enrique Jiménez has identified a (broken) citation of *Ludlul* I 105 in BM 48736, a tiny late Babylonian fragment of a commentary perhaps written to elucidate *Šumma ālu* sleep omens. There is very little context with which to interpret the citation. But, Jiménez’s comments are likely the most one can hope to conclude, given the present state of our knowledge: “The purpose of the quotation could have been to explain the word *šutānuḫu*, ‘sighing’ (a verb attested in medical and physiognomic omens, but apparently not in *Šumma ālu*,

¹³⁶ As in *S^b* II 6 in MSL 3, 132; see CAD A/2, 48 for other instances.

¹³⁷ Similarly, see obv. 27’ (II 7), where the phrase *ša* ¹⁴ENSI—in this case, essentially taken over from the base text—helps explain the equation *maššakku* = *surqēnu* (*ša šā’ilu*).

see *CAD* A/2 105a), or else *gerrānu*, ‘lamentation,’ a word attested in *Šumma Ālu* XI alt 10.’¹³⁸

BM 41286, a late Babylonian commentary on the sixteenth Tablet of the lexical list *Aa*,¹³⁹ cites *Ludlul* I 86 in its explanation of words from *Aa* XVI 87–88.¹⁴⁰ It reads ‘zi’ *la-ba-bu* : *na-a*[*l-bu-bu* : ...] *na-al-bu-bu tap-pa-a ú-nag-gar-an-ni* : *nu-ug-gu-ru* : *a-k*[*al kar-ši*]. “The Sumerian word *zi* means ‘to rage’ and ‘en[raged]’ [...] as *Ludlul* says: ‘my enraged comrade would denounce me’; ‘to denounce’ means ‘to sl[ander]’.” In the following line, the commentator uses *Enūma eliš* III 129 to exposit other words selected for comment, demonstrating once again the close association of these two compositions. In any case, *Ludlul* I 86 provides a very nice illustrative example of the lexical issue at hand in *Aa*.

Another late Babylonian commentary, known only from a tablet in a private collection,¹⁴¹ uses citations from *Ludlul* I 76–77 and V 17 to explain terms from two unplaced omen apodoses in *Šumma izbu* VII.¹⁴² Although illicitly excavated and thus without a proper archaeological context, the tablet almost certainly was unearthed in Uruk because the colophon identifies its owner as the exorcist Iqīša (or Iqīšāya), a well-known Urukean scholar.¹⁴³ There are a number of elements in the text indicating the tablet is a copy of the commentary it bears rather than an original creation (see Finkel 2006, 139–140 and Frazer 2016). Thus, we cannot be one hundred percent certain that the commentary copied on this tablet originated in Uruk. Whoever created it, the commentator was well-versed in Babylonian literature, citing from a variety of sources in his explanations in addition to *Ludlul*.¹⁴⁴ In obv. 7b–11, the text cites an unplaced omen apodosis (obv. 7b) and then provides several explanations of *assukku*, “sling stone,” in the course of which (in obv. 11) it cites *Ludlul* V 17. The text reads:

7b. GIM *as-suk-ku kup-pu-ut-ma* GAR
8. *as-suk-ku ze-er-pi* : *as-suk-ku* : *ṭi-id kup-pu-ut*

¹³⁸ See Jiménez 2015b (<https://ccp.yale.edu/P470052>).

¹³⁹ For an edition, see MSL 14, 323–26. A new treatment will eventually appear at the following: <https://ccp.yale.edu/P461201>.

¹⁴⁰ I thank Klaus Wagensohn for bringing this reference to my attention.

¹⁴¹ See Finkel 2006, 139, n.1 for the tablet’s modern history among collectors and auction houses.

¹⁴² The tablet has enjoyed quite a bit of popularity. Editions include Finkel 2006; Besnier 2010; De Zorzi 2014, 2.525–28; and Frazer 2016, who provides copious bibliographical references to studies that treat particular lines of the commentary.

¹⁴³ For this scholar in the context of his contemporary intellectual and social setting, see Robson 2019, 229–32.

¹⁴⁴ See Frazer’s introduction (2016), which provides the fullest identification of cited texts.

9. IM.DUGUD : *as-suk-ku* : IM : *ṭi-id* : <<*ṭi-id* :>> DUGUD : *kab-tú*
 10. *šá-niš as-suk-ku* : *kur-ban-nu* : *as-suk-ku* : *ab-nu aš-pi*
 11. *lib-bu-u i-kim-šú aš-pa-šú as-suk-ka-šú ú-saḥ-ḥi-ir*

“If the izbu’s head is compacted into a ball and situated like a sling stone” : “sling stone” means “lumpy swelling”¹⁴⁵ : “sling stone” means “clay compacted into a ball” : the writing “IM.DUGUD” means “sling stone” : in which “IM” means “clay” and “DUGUD” means “heavy.” Alternatively, “sling stone” means “lump of dirt” ; “sling stone” means “stone for a sling shot,” as in “he snatched from him¹⁴⁶ his sling, he turned back his sling stone.”

As others have pointed out, the quotation from *Ludlul* is mistaken or purposefully truncated or just freely cited from the poem because the commentator’s citation leaves out the elements that identify the subject of the verb and the owner of the sling, which, according to all of the extant manuscripts’ lineation, are found in the previous line of the poem (*Ludlul* V 16): *Marduk ša mukaššidiya*, “Marduk, that of my pursuer.”¹⁴⁷ Frahm wonders if the elision of Marduk from the citation was politically motivated. He writes, “[t]he cities of Uruk and Babylon, after all, were ancient rivals, and the city-god of Babylon may have been a symbol of foreign domination for the commentator that he wished to suppress. If so, the entry would represent an interesting case of intentional misquotation.”¹⁴⁸ Misquoted or not, the original commentator—whoever he was—clearly assumed a shared knowledge of the poem with his discussants and must have believed that an unidentified citation from *Ludlul* would be recognized and would bring clarity to the selected lemma.

The commentary returns to *Ludlul*, citing it explicitly as its source, in its explanation of another omen apodosis a few lines later (obv. 16–19a). The text reads:

16. *ši-pir* GABA¹ DU.DU : *ši-pi-ir ṭu-uḥ-du il-lak* : *šal-ṭiš*
 17. *lib-bu-u šá-ad-dī-ḥu <a>-ḥa-a-a ku-ta-at-tu-mu i-ta-ḥa-az*¹⁴⁹
 18. *šá e-ti-li-iš at-tal-la-ku ḥa-la-liš*¹⁵⁰ *al-ma-du*¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁵ My translation of the rarely attested term *zerpu* tentatively follows Frazer 2016.

¹⁴⁶ Neither of the two extant MSS attesting to *Ludlul* V 17 show the pronominal suffix on *ṭkim* as does this commentary’s citation. See MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 41 (see above) and MS V.C_{Sip} i’ 10’, which reads *i-ṭkim*¹.

¹⁴⁷ See Frazer 2016 (“the author seems to reproduce – or himself to perpetrate – an error in his quotation”); De Zorzi 2014, 2.527 (“una citazione libera”); Frahm 2011, 102 (it “takes some liberties with its source”).

¹⁴⁸ Frahm 2011, 103.

¹⁴⁹ The two extant MSS bearing the final verb of this line read *i-taḥ-za* (see MS I.F_{Sip}, rev. 1’ and MS I.R_{Huz}, rev. 4), a third feminine plural form of the verb, which corresponds to the verb’s subject, *aḥāya*, “my arms.”

19a. *ina lud-lul* EN <<É>> *né-me-qa qa-bi*

“He will walk about with success” means “a message of abundance comes,” which means “triumphantly,” as in “my arms, *once* far-reaching, were continually closed, they¹ clutched each other; I, who walked about as a lord, learned to slink,” said in *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* (I 76–77).

There is some discussion among the various modern editors of the commentary as to whether the commentator has misunderstood the base text from *Šumma izbu* here, reading (mistakenly) *ši-pir tuḥ-du* DU rather than *ši-pir GABA* (= *irti*) DU.DU, “he will walk about with success,” a phrase attested elsewhere in commentaries to *Šumma izbu*.¹⁵² Several of the editors mention the possible confusion and/or occasional conflation of the signs GAB and DUḪ, which are typically distinguished in the Neo-Babylonian script, as the culprit behind our commentator’s supposed misunderstanding. Although the precise resolution of this issue is not central to the present purpose, it is worth noting that the line in *Ludlul* just before the two cited lines reads *rapaštu iratī agašgū itte’ē*, “A lad turned back my burly chest” (I 75). This may have drawn the commentator to the context of *Ludlul* as providing an appropriate example to explain the apodosis before him, which likely read *šipir irti ittanallak* (which was subsequently miscopied by our present copyist or some previous copyist). The commentator’s explanation may have involved etymography, playing with GAB/DUḪ, and *notarikon*, redividing the logogram DU.DU, to arrive at the interpretation *šipir tuḥdu illak*, which the commentator makes explicit with syllabic orthography: *ši-pi-ir tu-uḫ-du il-lak*.¹⁵³ This result offers a very nice interpretation of the idiomatic *šipir irti alāku* as a good omen, a harbinger of abundance.¹⁵⁴ The second explanation he provides, *šaltiš*, connects via a general synonymy with *etelliš* in the following citation of *Ludlul*.¹⁵⁵ Overall, I think *Ludlul* I 76–77

¹⁵⁰ The commentator’s citation bears the terminative adverbial ending *-iš* on the infinitive, as does MS I.F_{Sip}, rev. 16’.

¹⁵¹ If the final vowel in *al-ma-du* is to be construed as morphologically relevant, then the commentator or copyist has written the verb incorrectly with the subjunctive, *almadu*, which Finkel identifies as likely a hypercorrection (2006, 143).

¹⁵² See Finkel 2006, 143; Frahm 2011, 102; De Zorzi 2014, 2.527; and Frazer 2016, n.13 (in the edition), the last of whom is cautious about attributing a mistake to the commentator.

¹⁵³ If De Zorzi’s restoration of *tuḥdu* as the explanation for *šipir irti* in the principal commentary of *Šumma izbu*, line 270 is accepted (see De Zorzi 2014, 2.523, line 16; compare Leichty 1970, 219, line 270), then our commentator’s explanation may not have been unique.

¹⁵⁴ For the use of *šipru* as a message from the gods, see CAD Š/3, 73–74.

¹⁵⁵ Concerning the fact that the commentator does not use *etelliš* here to make a lexical connection to the citation of *Ludlul*, note Gabbay’s comment on the purpose of the exegetical formula *libbū ... ina ... qabi*: “the citation itself serves as the contextualization of the cited base text; often

here offers a compact proof text that demonstrates well the commentator's interpretation of the apodosis by showing both a positive example of success and, by contrast, its subsequent loss.

9.5. CONCLUSION

Ludlul was not only taught to students in excerpts or copied as some dusty old classic. No. The Commentary shows us that *Ludlul* was actively rendered comprehensible through discussion and interpretation among scholars and their students in first-millennium Assyria. And the commentaries that cite *Ludlul* show us that the poem was actively used as a well-recognized exemplum for the same purpose with other texts in Babylonia. One may be tempted to see the *Ludlul* Commentary as the more important evidence of the text's cultural value since the poem itself is the Commentary's object of study and interpretation. As important as the Commentary is, *Ludlul*'s illustrative use in the interpretation of other texts is perhaps of greater value for the present purpose because it shows us clearly that the poem was still part of the shared textual and cultural repertoire of the scribes—their internalized library—in the latest stages of the cuneiform tradition—even in places like Uruk, which does not (yet) attest a copy of the poem itself. However we wish to weigh these two kinds of evidence, the *Ludlul* Commentary and the commentaries citing *Ludlul* provide objective evidence for the currency of *Ludlul* among scribes in the first millennium and amplify the warrant for the investigation in chapter ten, in which I consider the intertextual use of *Ludlul* in other, non-commentary texts. These texts prove once again the currency of the poem and its cultural cachet. Moreover, as I will argue, *Ludlul*'s protagonist, the emblematic sufferer (see chapter eight), became mythically paradigmatic for actual individuals who lived many centuries after the poem's composition.

APPENDIX:

A SPECULATION ON THE MEANING OF ŠUBŠI-MEŠRÊ-ŠAKKAN'S NAME

If the literal meaning of the protagonist's name is significant (see the appendix to chapter eight)—what the Rabbis called the *pešaṭ*, might it be worthwhile also to consider its possible symbolic meanings—its *deraš*? It may very well be

the relationship between the base text and the new citation is purely circumstantial or situational and not lexical" (2016, 227, citing the present commentary as an example).

the case that naming the protagonist in the poem simply follows the prayer tradition of ancient Mesopotamia,¹⁵⁶ in which the supplicant (in prayers) or the celebrant (in the case of hymns) is sometimes named. This appeal to prayers and hymns may help to explain the final two instances of the protagonist's name in V 111 and V 119, as they both occur close to the end of the poem.¹⁵⁷ But, it leaves unexplained, at least to my mind, the first time the protagonist is named in the poem, namely, in III 44. Here the protagonist describes in a first person voice what Ur-Nintinugga, an exorcist from Babylon (III 40, 42), said to him in the final dream. The protagonist states: “*He said to me, ‘Marduk sent m[e]. I brought this band[age] to Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan’*” (III 43–44). The protagonist never identifies himself by name in the poem in his own first person voice, as we might expect if we are looking to the prayers for a parallel.¹⁵⁸ And when he does finally introduce himself by name here in III 44, it is through the protagonist's quotation of a scholar speaking in the first person,¹⁵⁹ who just prior to naming the protagonist also pronounces Marduk's name. (“Marduk” is literally right above “Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan” on the tablets bearing witness to III 43–44.¹⁶⁰) This is the first mention of Marduk's name since the beginning of the protagonist's narrative (I 42), where he identifies Marduk as being angry with him.¹⁶¹ In addition to all of the above, very shortly after both Marduk and the protagonist are named in III 43–44, the protagonist calls the deity “my lord” in III 51 for the first time in the poem¹⁶² and himself pronounces Marduk's name (III 52). III 51–52 form a couplet in which the protagonist recognizes the abatement of Marduk's anger. All of this suggests the naming of Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan in III 44 has more significance than what we have given it simply on the basis of his name's appearance at the end of the poem and a literal understanding of its meaning (see the end of chapter eight with appendix).

We know that the poet who composed *Ludlul* used learned hermeneutics in V 42–53 to connect the Sumerian names of each gate mentioned in these lines to the benefit that the protagonist receives at them, described in Akkadian

¹⁵⁶ See, e.g., Ziegler 2015, 241, n.64; Oshima 2011, 34; and Oshima 2014, 13–14, 31–32.

¹⁵⁷ See Oshima 2014, 13.

¹⁵⁸ Consider the ubiquitous *anāku* NENNI A NENNI, “I, so-and-so, son of so-and-so,” in incantation prayers, where the supplicant is to insert their own name. As mentioned in chapter eight, there is no explicit self-presentation of the protagonist after the opening hymn. In terms of self-reference, the poet has used rather subtle means for the protagonist to refer to himself, even though the account is couched in the first person (see Foster 1983).

¹⁵⁹ I agree with Foster, who states “this is the most remote modulation of self-naming to be found in all Mesopotamian tradition” (1983, 124).

¹⁶⁰ Both names appear at the heads of their respective lines, though Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's is preceded by the preposition *ana*.

¹⁶¹ So already Foster 1983, 124.

¹⁶² See chapter three *passim*.

(Lenzi 2015b). We know that Laluralimma's Sumerian name, mentioned in III 25, was the object of translation/interpretation in the *Ludlul* Commentary (MS Com_{Nin}, rev. 5) and two other texts (including the *Name Book*, VR, no. 44, obv. ii 16'; see above). The same is also true of the two other proper names in the poem, the Kassite name Nazimaruttaš and the Sumerian name Urnintinugga (again, see VR, no. 44, obv. i 19 and ii 8').¹⁶³ Admittedly, none of these names were written in Akkadian, as is Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's, though we should not discount the possibility that Akkadian names—not just Sumerian ones—could bear significance in a literary text.¹⁶⁴ And, admittedly, it is unusual to see scribes explain an Akkadian name (see, however, *Hunzu'u* in the *Name Book*, VR, no. 44, rev. i 12).¹⁶⁵ Still, it is worth considering what Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's name could mean if ancient scribal hermeneutical techniques were applied to it.

There is an obstacle to doing this, however, because in the cases mentioned above, we already have both the non-Akkadian name and its Akkadian explanation. The interpretive task for contemporary scholars was simply to discern how the connections were made between the two via ancient hermeneutical techniques known elsewhere. With Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's name, we only have

¹⁶³ See Cooley (forthcoming). Given the fact that three of the four proper names in *Ludlul* appear in the still incompletely recovered *Name Book*, one wonders if Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's did, too, before the fullest copy of the text was damaged.

¹⁶⁴ In light of this, I think of Kabti-ilāni-Marduk, who received the *Erra and Išum* poem via a dream (V 42–44; see Cagni 1969, 126). Here we have an Akkadian name without explanation. And yet the passage in which this naming occurs is highly unusual—unique—in Akkadian literature because it provides both an etiology for the poem itself and the name of its composer (*kāširu*). I agree with Wisnom who has observed that “Marduk is respected among the gods” would be an odd choice of name for an invented author given Marduk's negative portrayal in the poem” (2020, 25, n.56). But what if the name should be understood ironically? This may at first seem unlikely, but note the filiation of Kabti-ilāni-Marduk, *mār Dābibī*, “descendant of the Dabibi-family” (V 42), and the use of the root *dabābu* again in the next line, *ša ... idbubu*, “which ... he spoke” (V 43). The action that *dabābu* describes in this latter instance is, on its most obvious reading, the recitation of the poem—whoever the subject may be. In other texts, the meaning of *dabābu* runs the gamut from benign to adversarial; it can mean “to speak” or “to recite” but also “to litigate,” “to complain,” and even “to conspire” (see CAD D, 4–14). And of course *bēl dābibi* can be an adversary in court or a sworn enemy. In light of this, perhaps we can understand Kabti-ilāni-Marduk's filiation as more than a family name. Perhaps we can understand it (also) to indicate his membership to a group of complainers, accusers, or protesters (*mār dābibī*) against Marduk, whom the poem implicates and derogates. If this idea is accepted, then Kabti-ilāni-Marduk's filiation might be understood as providing commentary, steering the understanding of his name away from that of a devotee and indicating him rather to be a defector, who had turned from honoring to accusing the high god in the poem, which was divinely prompted and approved upon Erra's hearing of it (V 45).

¹⁶⁵ See Cooley (forthcoming).

the base text. Thus, the following ideas should only be taken as a speculation, a possibility to consider.

I start with *mešrû*. At first I thought there might be something to the fact that /meš/ and /maš/ are nearly homonymic to /mes/, and ^dMES is one of the ways Marduk's name is written on Kassite cylinder seals.¹⁶⁶ But, there is a better way, I think, to see Marduk in the protagonist's name. The logographic writing for *mešrû* is NÍG.TUKU. The last sign is so tantalizingly close to the sound of the second syllable of Marduk's name that I looked to see if NÍG = GAR had any readings pronounced /mar/. There is one, *mâr*, which occurs in K.4209, a late god list that is similar to An = *Anum*.¹⁶⁷ In an entry (obv. i 16') that is part of a series of names for Ea, we have ^dzû^{zu}-*lum-mâr*^{mar}.¹⁶⁸ The second gloss, *mar*, reflects the nasalization of the initial consonant of GAR, /ġar/. (See likewise, for example, the use of MU for -ġu₁₀, the Sumerian first person possessive suffix.) This gloss provides clear evidence that one of the phonological values of NÍG, /ġar/, approximated the sound /mar/ to Akkadian ears. The same /m/ : /ġ/ correspondence exists between Emesal Sumerian and regular Sumerian,¹⁶⁹ which is relevant to the ancient interpretation of Zulummar in the commentary to the *Babylonian Theodicy* 277.¹⁷⁰ In rev. 33'–34' of the commentary the ancient interpreter explains this name of Ea, written ^dsu-[*um-ma*]r here, as *Ea ša šalummatu našû*, “Ea, who bears awe-inspiring radiance.” As the commentator explains, he derives *šalummatu* from Sumerian *su-lim* (for the *su-lum-* part of the name), a typical equation; and he derives *našû* via associating *-mar* from the name with Emesal *mar*, which is equated with *ġar* in regular Sumerian, which is then taken to mean *našû* (rather than the typical *šakānu*).¹⁷¹ It is possible then that NÍG = GAR in NÍG.TUKU could be equated with /mar/ simply by way of an attested Emesal-Sumerian lexical equivalency, *mar* = *ġar*. Whether via syllabic homophony or lexical equivalency (itself a reflection of a phonological correspondence), the phonological point is established. Thus, we may formulate the following interpretative hypothesis: *mešrû*, written NÍG.TUKU, can be read /mar-tuk(u)/, i.e., Marduk.¹⁷²

As for the final element, *šakkan*: The ĠİR sign could be read as homonymic ĠİR, which is the logogram for *padānu*, “path.” This word occurs in literary

¹⁶⁶ See Sommerfeld 1981, 7.

¹⁶⁷ See Litke 1998, 83 (note to line 129), who suggests that K.4209, obv. i 6'ff. can be compared to An = *Anum* II 129ff., though the former is not a witness of the latter.

¹⁶⁸ See <http://oracc.iaas.upenn.edu/dcclt/nineveh/P365789/html>.

¹⁶⁹ See Edzard 2003, 17, 172.

¹⁷⁰ See Oshima 2014, 462 and Hurowitz 2004 (reference courtesy of John Carnahan).

¹⁷¹ See Lambert 2013, 165; Oshima 2014, 369; and Bennett 2021, 90.

¹⁷² Note the various spellings of Marduk's name discussed in Lambert 2013, 161–63, many of which suggest a pronunciation /martuk(u)/ or /marduk(u)/.

texts and prayers as an image of release, freedom, or liberty (see CAD P, 3), with a deity often as the one clearing the path for a person or being asked to do so in a petition. As an example of the latter, note *urhī lidmiq padānī līšir*, “may my path be favorable, may my way be straight,” which occurs in some *šuilā* prayers.¹⁷³ Perhaps the best example of the “clear path” image for our purposes occurs in the OB Akkadian *Man and His God*. After the personal god has announced the sufferer’s forgiveness, the deity states, *padānum petīku išratku tūdum u šakinku rēmum*, “the path is clear (lit. open) for you, the way is straight for you and mercy is established for you” (rev. 16b–17).¹⁷⁴ This image of the clear or open path is precisely what the protagonist in *Ludlul* needs. He needs Marduk to open a way for him so he can once again walk along in public a free and healthy man (see IV §B 16’, line o and V 72).¹⁷⁵

This brings us to the first element in the protagonist’s name, the verb *šubši*. Marduk is, of course, a god associated with creating (Š of *bašū*) things (e.g., humanity in *Enūma eliš* VI 5 and abundance in VII 21). And we have Marduk-theophoric proper names attested in Middle Babylonian times that use the Š of *bašū*, *mušabši-Marduk* (and vice-versa).¹⁷⁶ Perhaps the imagery of Marduk “creating a path” makes sense: Instead of petitioning Marduk to create wealth for the protagonist, the interpreted name asks Marduk to create a path, that is, freedom and release, for the protagonist so that he could walk the streets a free and healthy man. However, we don’t find the Š of *bašū* used with *padānu*. Rather, the image is typically constructed with some form of *ešēru* (in the G or Š stems) or *petū*, as in *Man and His God*, cited above (see CAD P, 3 for other examples). Interestingly, some lexical lists show *petū* as one of the translations of Sumerian *ġál*,¹⁷⁷ which is also the normal logogram for *bašū*. This common Sumerian connection provides an appropriate verb for the path imagery, suggested by the last element of the protagonist’s name.

The result of this speculation is that using known scribal hermeneutical techniques we can arrive at an interpretation of the protagonist’s name that not

¹⁷³ As in, e.g., *Sin* 1 (Mayer 1976, 494, line 24b) and *Nabû* 4 (Mayer 1976, 477, line 18).

¹⁷⁴ See Lambert 1989, 192, lines 54b–55 and my treatment at <http://akkpm.org/P269974.html>.

¹⁷⁵ Note Zisa’s exposition of the path/way metaphor in OB Akkadian *Man and His God*: “La metafora della strada e della porta della vita, che vengono aperte dal dio per essere percorse dall’uomo guarito, la si ritroverà anche nel *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*. Pare che, almeno da un punto di vista letterario, la condizione dello sventurato sofferente sia quella di un uomo stretto dal suo dolore, colpevole (consapevolmente o non), privo di contatto sociale, e dunque solo. Viceversa l’*eqlum* guarito, al massimo del suo vigore, può tornare sulla scena pubblica, può passeggiare sulla via della giustizia etico-religiosa e del benessere” (2012, 25–26).

¹⁷⁶ See Sommerfeld 1982, 207.

¹⁷⁷ See *Idu* II 48 (^{ga}-al-ġál = *petū*, cited in CAD P, 341); *S^c Voc.*, Fragment T, 11’ (IG = *petū*; see MSL 3, 73); and *Antagal* D 63 (^{ga}-al-ġál = *petū ša mē*, line 61: BAD = *petū*, see MSL 17, 204).

only includes Marduk but also a meaning appropriate to the protagonist's situation: *Peti-padāna-Marduk*, "open a path *for me*, O Marduk!"¹⁷⁸ Given the fact, however, that the protagonist's name is spoken to him first by a representative of Marduk, who is delivering the very remedy the sufferer needs in order to recover, we might better translate this contrived name not as a petition but as thanksgiving, that is, a confident announcement of the god having come through for him, thus: *Ipte-padāna-Marduk*, "Marduk opened a path *for me*!"

Until Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's name is explained in a new fragment of the *Name Book* or a similar text, the above exposition is unfalsifiable and thus can only be considered a speculative possibility.

¹⁷⁸ On the free ordering of various elements in scribal hermeneutics, see Bennett 2021, 75–77.

CHAPTER 10:
BECOMING THE PROTAGONIST:
THE PARADIGMATIC FUNCTION OF *LUDLUL*

As I have argued in chapter eight, *Ludlul* presents the suffering of its protagonist as a means to help the reader or hearer of the poem make sense of their own suffering and to anticipate their eventual relief. Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan is a kind of paradigmatic or emblematic sufferer for individuals who find themselves in the confusing and confounding situation of perceived unmerited disfavor. In this chapter, I demonstrate that later scribes picked up on this paradigmatic role and took it seriously enough to utilize *Ludlul* in the creation of new texts that treat another person's suffering and eventual or hoped-for relief. As demonstrated in chapter four, we know very well that scribal teachers required their students to learn *Ludlul* in the scribal curricula of first-millennium Babylonia and Assyria. And, as we saw in chapter nine, scribal scholars created a commentary to explain the poem's difficult words and sometimes used the poem illustratively in commentaries on other texts to explain difficulties in them. These scribal facts demonstrate beyond any dispute that *Ludlul* was well-known among the highly educated scribes who would go on to become scholars and play important roles in creating texts in service to the royal courts. We have good warrant therefore to believe that *Ludlul* was well-integrated into a scribal version of what socio-narratologist Frank Arthur calls "narrative habitus," which, as he defines the idea:

- "involves a *repertoire* of stories that a person at least recognizes and that a group shares,"
- "provides the *competence* to use this repertoire as embodied and mostly tacit knowledge,"
- "disposes a person's *tastes* in stories,"
- and "predisposes a sense of the right and fitting resolution toward which a half-told story should progress."¹

Narrative habitus is a kind of internalized library.² What I intend to capture in the term "paradigmatic" in this chapter is a cultural phenomenon that takes Arthur's idea of narrative habitus one step farther because, as I have argued, the anonymous author of *Ludlul* set out to create a story in which his protagonist was intended to be a model, an exemplum for how one ought to behave

¹ Frank 2010, 53–54.

² See Frank 2010, 54–58 with reference to Bayard 2007.

toward the gods and *ought* to respond to unfavorable situations that arise in life. *Ludlul* was intended to be “mythically paradigmatic” in that the text doesn’t *happen* to provide but in fact *intended* to provide a normative model or pattern for proper human behavior in the face of deity-inspired and deity-directed suffering.³ The sufferer, one might suggest, has become a poster child of Marduk’s mercy for the entire world to see and emulate. The clear message is that such is typical of Marduk’s divine character. No one should expect anything less from the deity.

Given our dependence upon the textual record for the reconstruction of ancient Mesopotamian social history, there is only one methodology available to us to measure the poem’s success in commending its protagonist as a model for others to use to understand their own situations of misfortune, namely, we must look for uses of the poem in other texts and then interpret how those uses shape the rhetoric of said texts.⁴ The following presents three such cases. We begin with a brief review and discussion of a previously identified allusion to *Ludlul* in a Neo-Assyrian letter known as *The Forlorn Scholar*. This first example of a text using *Ludlul* forms a kind of primer for a fuller discussion of a previously identified citation of *Ludlul* in the Ḫarran Inscription, a Neo-Babylonian royal inscription from the reign of Nabonidus (555–539 BCE). The chapter concludes with an examination of a royal inscription from the Neo-Assyrian king Aššurbanipal (668–627 BCE) that, I argue, draws on *Ludlul* in a more subtle fashion. In all three texts, I consider: Why is *Ludlul* invoked in this text? How does this invocation serve the text’s rhetorical purpose? And how does this invocation exemplify what I call the paradigmatic purpose of *Ludlul*? In sum, this chapter provides another perspective on the ancient reception of *Ludlul* (see chapters four and nine) with a view to determine how these three texts adopted the protagonist’s charge to “learn from my example” (IV §C 6’, line p).⁵

³ For the definition of “myth” as providing a paradigmatic and authoritative narrative for social formation and mobilizing groups, see Lincoln 2014, 13–52. On the formative role of classic texts such as *Ludlul*, Niek Veldhuis notes, that they, “by their position as valued parts of the cultural tradition, are involved in the creation of new texts, either as the model to follow or as the model to avoid. They thus score high on intertextuality” (1998, 81).

⁴ For issues surrounding literary allusion and intertextuality, see chapter eight, page 335 (with references there).

⁵ These three texts are not, of course, the only texts to allude to *Ludlul*. Jiménez (2017, 82–83), for example, argues that the *Series of the Fox* §Z, rev. 4’ alludes to *Ludlul* I 43–44 for parody. Lambert noted that SAA 8, no. 333, obv. 4–rev. 6, part of the salutation of a scholar writing to his king, sounds similar to *Ludlul* I 1, 3 (1995, 34). And Paulus finds similarities between *Ludlul* I 79, 80, 84, 85, 88, and 92, in which the protagonist experiences social isolation, in the curses of a *kudurru* that dates to the Isin II period, her text MŠZ 2, iv 11–12, 14–16, 18 (2014, 267–68). There are likely many, many others that will be identified as our digital tools advance.

10.1. AN ALLUSION TO *LUDLUL* IN *THE FORLORN SCHOLAR*

The first text to be considered comes down to us in the form of a long letter now designated SAA 10, no. 294 (Parpola 1993). In the letter, the author, a scholar named Urad-Gula,⁶ writes to his former employer, the king of Assyria, Aššurbanipal, to complain about his unemployed situation and to ask for support. Simo Parpola studied the letter, which he affectionately named *The Forlorn Scholar*, in an article published in 1987, where he noted the letter's literary artifice and a number of allusions to Babylonian literary texts.⁷ Years later, Victor Hurowitz (2002–2005) noted a subtle allusion to *Ludlul* II 32 in lines 29–31 on the obverse of the letter. Here Urad-Gula writes:

*kanāšu kadāru u puluḫtu ša ekalli urdē ša ziqni u ša rēši ussammid
mīnu ina [i]bbi aḫzāku*

I have taught the servants, *both* courtiers and eunuchs, prostration, deference⁸ and respect for the palace. What did I gain from it?

⁶ See Parpola 1987, 269–71 for a reconstruction of his career and Jas 2011, #6 for a brief summary.

⁷ Parpola 1987. See also Hurowitz 1993, who points out several literary topoi in the letter that also occur in the Hebrew Bible. For a couple of other letters that deal with Urad-Gula's plight, see SAA 10, nos. 224 and 226.

⁸ Parpola argues that *kadāru* means “toil,” “a denominative from *kudurru* B ‘corvée service’ purely on the basis of this context” (1987, 276). He correctly identifies that the verb is a problem, but I think this solution unlikely. Von Soden suggested “Unterwerfung” (*AHW*, 419, s.v., *kadāru* II), “submission, subjection,” which fits the context, too, but seems to be the opposite of the verb's general meaning, “sich aufbäumen” (*AHW*, 419) and “to be overbearing, arrogant, spirited” (CAD K, 30, s.v., *kadāru* A), and thus another unlikely solution to my mind. The last sense given in the CAD is somewhat misleading to the context under consideration (e.g., the English “spirited” might imply the verb denotes enthusiasm in the context of Urad-Gula's letter). The one context in which the CAD uses the gloss “spirited” for *kadāru* is a line in the *Series of Ox and Horse*, in which the ox asks the horse *attā-ma edukka takdira* [...] (see Lambert 1960, 178 for the text). Both Lambert and Jiménez translate this phrase as a query about the horse's ferocity in battle: “[a]re you alone fierce?” (Lambert 1960, 179) and “are you perchance the only one who is ferocious [in war]?” (Jiménez 2017, 60). Thus, it seems unlikely that the verb in our letter should be derived from *kadāru* A (CAD K, 30) / *kadāru* II (*AHW*, 419). Although something of a desperate measure, we might take the meaning of the verb from Aramaic, in which there is a root KDR with the meaning “to be wearied, to be made thin” in Syriac with a related noun in Mandaic meaning “febleness.” (A root KDR also has the meaning “to be heavy, burdensome” in Mandaic.) For attestations, one need only search the Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon for the root KDR (<http://cal.huc.edu/>). The Neo-Assyrian dictionary recognizes similar meanings for a root *kadāru* in the NA dialect, indicating with a + sign that such meanings are added from Aramaic (Parpola 2007, 44): “to become weak, become sickly, be wearied.” From these data I suggest a meaning for *kadāru* in the present context along the lines of “compliance” or “deference,” an attribute requiring a person to acquiesce to the strength, will, or wishes of another.

The first sentence, Hurowitz argues, contains an allusion to *Ludlul* II 32, which records the sufferer's pious actions with these words:

u puluḫtu ekalli ummānū ušalmid

And I taught the masses fear for the palace.

As Hurowitz notes, Urad-Gula's letter and *Ludlul* II 32 are the only two places in Akkadian literature where we have *puluḫtu ekalli* as well as the only two places (booked in the lexica) where that phrase is used with the Š-stem of *lamādu*. In fact, the only place we find *palāḫu*, the root of the noun *puluḫtu* in *Ludlul* II 32, with the Š-stem of *lamādu* is also in *Ludlul* (see II 18). Hurowitz notes that the only real difference between Urad-Gula's allusion to the poem and the poem itself is the specification of the people being taught.⁹ In *Ludlul* the noun is simply *ummānu*, "a mass of people"; in the letter, we find *urdē ša ziqni u ša rēši*, "the servants, both courtiers and eunuchs," that is, people in the king's court. Rather than disqualifying the phrase in the letter as an allusion to *Ludlul*, this difference may in fact be a deliberate modification: *ummānu*, "the mass of people," is a near homonym to *ummānū*, "scholars," who were in fact among the king's courtiers—Urad-Gula was one.¹⁰ Thus, Urad-Gula's citation of the line from *Ludlul* may have been an adaptation of the phrase to the author's social context. Aside from the verbal allusion, Hurowitz also points out that the entire letter recounts the author's unjust suffering as does the sufferer in *Ludlul*. (It is worth noting that Urad-Gula never confesses to misstep or misdeed, unlike the protagonist in *Ludlul* III 58–61.) Hurowitz interprets the allusion in the letter as follows:

Urad-Gula is essentially casting himself as the protagonist of *Ludlul* whom modern readers rightly call the "righteous sufferer", and emphasizes that he has been done wrong. Since the king is clearly to blame for Urad-Gula's woes, the out of favor servant is essentially equating the king with whatever capricious powers caused the suffering of the protagonist in *Ludlul* [Marduk—ACL]. But, by appealing to the king for succor Urad-Gula simultaneously elevates him to the role of Marduk who in *Ludlul* is the preferred address for appeals and ultimate source of the sufferer's salvation.¹¹

⁹ The verb in *Ludlul* II 32 is Š preterite, indicating the protagonist caused people to learn, and D perfect (Neo-Assyrian D-stem perfect of *lamādu*: *ultammid* > *ussammid*) in the letter, which indicates the author did the teaching himself. The difference is rather small and certainly an artifact of the author's accommodation of the action to the letter's particular context.

¹⁰ Noted by Hurowitz 2002–2005, 130, n.4.

¹¹ 2002–2005, 131.

For this literary ploy to be effective, both men must have known *Ludlul* (and the plight of its protagonist);¹² the poem had to exist for both in their narrative habitus.¹³ Moreover, the king, in this scenario, should have understood himself as the sovereign power able, if he were willing, to save Urad-Gula in his desperate situation. It seems clear to me that the paradigmatic function of the sufferer in *Ludlul* has not only been absorbed by the author and, so he hoped, the receiver of the letter, it has also been adapted to apply to a different servant-master relationship in the human sphere, that of court scholar and king. When one finds oneself in a desperate situation, Urad-Gula may have reasoned, suffering under the wrath of a superior, one may lament and complain, just as the protagonist in *Ludlul* did, but then also hope, as the protagonist of *Ludlul* instructed, that the sovereign who has power over you will relent and have mercy—all in good time—just as Marduk did the protagonist of *Ludlul*.

From this reading of the letter, we see that Urad-Gula had paid attention to the message of *Ludlul* and appropriated its protagonist as a paradigm for understanding his own suffering.

10.2. THE ḪARRAN INSCRIPTION'S USE OF *LUDLUL*

The next example comes to us in the Ḫarran Inscription, a Neo-Babylonian royal inscription attested on two exemplars—that is, on two stelae—found in Ḫarran in 1956. Gadd published the text in 1958.¹⁴ Shortly thereafter, Lambert in his book *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (1960, 284) recognized in the mid-

¹² So also Hurowitz 2002–2005, 131.

¹³ Did Aššurbanipal know *Ludlul* or at least—at bare minimum—have some knowledge of the poem so that it occupied a place in his narrative habitus? The evidence makes an affirmative answer to this question very likely. First of all, Aššurbanipal claimed to be a literate scribe himself, one, in fact, who could discuss the most technical treatises in the assembly of scholars (see, e.g., Lieberman 1990; Villard 1997; Livingstone 2007; Frahm 2011a; and Zamazalová 2011). Even if this is hyperbole, if the king had gone through the scribal curriculum, he very likely would have known *Ludlul*, assuming the scribal curriculum at Nineveh was something like the curricula in Babylonian cities. Second, about a quarter of all known manuscripts of *Ludlul* come from the royal archives and libraries of Nineveh, where Aššurbanipal lived and ruled (see chapter one). The poem was on the shelf, ready at hand, so to speak. And third, four of these manuscripts also attest one of the “Aššurbanipal colophons,” which state they were copied and stored in Aššurbanipal’s palace (see chapter four). Without exploring the full ramifications of this last point (see Finn 2017, 78–85 and Robson 2019, 124–27 for recent discussions), these three facts make it highly probable that Aššurbanipal knew or at least knew of *Ludlul*.

¹⁴ Gadd 1958. The stelae were designated H 2, A and B, see pp. 56ff. The most recent critical editions are Weisershäuser / Novotny 2020, no. 47 [pp. 187–92] and Schaudig 2001, no. 3.1 [pp. 486–99]. (In Beaulieu’s catalog, this is inscription #13 [1989, 32]). An outdated English translation appears in *ANET*³, 562–63 (translated by A. Leo Oppenheim in Pritchard 1969).

dle of its text a verbatim citation of *Ludlul* I 52 and 54 (see iii 1–2 / iii 12–14):¹⁵

itti barī u šā`ili alakī ul parsat attīl-ma ina šāt mūši šuttī pardat

My situation could not be decided by seer and inquirer.
When I lay down at night, my dream was terrifying.

Since the citation's identification, little has been made of this datum.¹⁶ Taking this explicit citation as warrant to look for other connections, the following offers a brief tour through the Ḫarran Inscription to point out other intertextual connections with *Ludlul* in order to demonstrate how *Ludlul* is woven into the text from its very beginning to end, even if only subtly. Many of these connections, I think it is important to note, would likely only have been recognized and reprocessed as such after the verbatim citation of *Ludlul* in the last column of the text, which provides a kind of hermeneutical key for the reader. In light of these intertextual connections, I think the Ḫarran Inscription intends to present king Nabonidus, the last and most controversial king of the Neo-Babylonian dynasty, in the role of the sufferer of *Ludlul*.¹⁷ Rather than abasing the king, this manner of presentation in the text, I argue, intends to magnify the king's piety since throughout his period of suffering, following the example of the protagonist in *Ludlul*, Nabonidus relies and trusts in the absolute authority of his divine benefactor, who in Nabonidus's case, of course, is the moon god Šin. If this reading is persuasive, then we have another example of a scribe who picked up on the paradigmatic character of the sufferer in *Ludlul* and applied it to a new context.

¹⁵ I cite from the fullest exemplar (Gadd's H 2 B; Schaudig's witness 2; Weiershäuser and Novotny's ex. 1), following Schaudig's line numbers. When the two exemplars agree, I give only one lineation. When they diverge, I give the lineation of each exemplar, separated by a slash. As textual variants between the two exemplars are quite minor, I do not take note of them here.

¹⁶ See, e.g., Schaudig's matter of fact recognition of the citation in his edition (2001, 493, n704 with a brief comment on p. 20) and the similar treatment in Beaulieu (1989, 152, n.2) and Oshima (2014, 192). But see now Schaudig 2021 (and context in the next note below), which is the first published study of this citation of *Ludlul* in the Ḫarran Inscription. The citation of *Ludlul* is also found in the very fragmentary Larsa Stele (see Schaudig 2001, no. 3.5 and Weiershäuser / Novotny 2020, no. 17), which parallels passages in the Ḫarran Inscription (specifically, ii 11–18 / ii 18–26; iii 1–9 / iii 12–19; and iii 34–37 / iii 46–49).

¹⁷ Schaudig offers a similar interpretation of the Ḫarran Inscription's citation of *Ludlul* in an article published in summer 2021, which was based on a conference paper he delivered in 2007 at the international meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Vienna—unknown to me. It seems we have arrived at similar conclusions independently, though we develop the basic idea differently. I thank Prof. Schaudig for corresponding with me about these matters.

The text of the Ḫarran Inscription, translated in full in the appendix to this chapter,¹⁸ recounts the events surrounding Nabonidus's reconstruction of Sîn's temple in Ḫarran, named Eḫulḫul. We know from other texts that he announced this project very early in his reign but could not complete it until at least ten years later.¹⁹ Beaulieu dates the inscription to the last years of Nabonidus's reign, "certainly after the thirteenth year," he writes, "most likely to the fourteenth or fifteenth year."²⁰ Before Nabonidus's first person retrospective account begins, the inscription announces its doxological purpose in the third person voice, setting out the ultimate goal of the text: To extol the moon god Sîn as uniquely supreme among the gods, an idea Nabonidus promotes in a number of his late inscriptions.²¹ The opening passage reads (i 1–5a):²²

This is Sîn's great deed (epišti)²³ that none of the other gods and goddesses could comprehend (ZU = lamādu),²⁴ that had not happened in the land since olden days and the people of the land had <never> seen, written on tablets, and recorded for ever after:

This introduction to the deity is akin to the manner in which Marduk is presented in the eighth quatrain of the opening hymn to *Ludlul* in I 1–40, the goal of which is to praise Marduk's volatile disposition, sovereignty, and uniqueness among the gods.

The lord, he sees everything in the heart of the gods,
But no one a[mong] the gods knows (from *edū*) his way (*alaktu*).
 Marduk, he sees everything in the heart of the gods,
But no god can learn (from *lamādu*) his counsel (*tēmu*). (*Ludlul* I 29–32)

It is not so much the precise language here as it is the *theme* that is similar to the opening lines of the inscription. Proclaiming the deity's inscrutability vis-à-vis all of the other gods in the opening passage of each text sets the doxological

¹⁸ Philological notes (with some exceptions) are attached to the translation in the appendix rather than to the citations from the text in the body of the chapter.

¹⁹ Several inscriptions and related texts describe this activity. For a synthesis of the material, see Beaulieu 1989, 205–9.

²⁰ 1989, 32, 42. See likewise, Schaudig 2001, 48 and Weiershäuser / Novotny 2020, 188.

²¹ See Beaulieu 1989, 43–65 for a synthesis of the material and a historical account of the exaltation of Sîn above all other deities, including Marduk, under Nabonidus.

²² I follow Schaudig's line numbers (2001, 486–99).

²³ For the interpretation of *Sîn epišti* in Nabonidus's inscriptions, see Beaulieu 1989, 33–34, 212–14.

²⁴ I follow Schaudig in understanding the logogram ZU as standing for a form of Akkadian *lamādu* rather than *edū* here (2001, 487, n.694), though either verb would provide a lexical connection to the passage in *Ludlul* I 29–32, cited just below.

tone in both and shows clearly—and in opposition to one another—that the deity in focus (Marduk vs. Sîn) is uniquely capable; other gods cannot fathom his acts or plans.

In addition to the other gods' inability to understand it, Sîn's great deed is also characterized as something unique in human experience, a statement that was certainly intended to exalt Sîn. The text confidently asserts that "the people of the land had never seen" (*nišū māti lā ippalsū-ma*) such an event, and "written *it* on tablets, and recorded *it* for ever after" (*ina tuṣṣī lā išṣurū-ma lā ištakkanū ana ūmū šāti*). This formulation brings to mind how *Ludlul* describes the people of Babylon near the end of the poem in *Ludlul* V 69: "The <citizens> of Babylon saw how he (i.e., Marduk) restored [hi]s [servant?]" (*īmūrū-ma <mār> Bābili kī uballaṭu [arass]u²⁵*), an act the next line characterizes as exemplifying divine *narbū*, "greatness" (V 70; compare *epišti Sîn rabīti*, "the great deed of Sîn" in the Ḥarran Inscription, i 1). Is the Ḥarran Inscription trying to one-up *Ludlul* from its start by stating that no other people had ever seen such a thing recounted in its text and established in writing forever as the stele itself is doing? This is a subtle point that an ancient reader might not consider—if ever—until the citation of *Ludlul* provoked a reprocessing of the entire text. If the author of the Ḥarran Inscription, however, was influenced by *Ludlul* in his entire presentation from its very beginning, as I suggest, then such a subtle reading is well within the realm of plausibility.

After its initial boast of uniqueness, the inscription offers a few lines of praise specifically addressed to Sîn and finally introduces Nabonidus (i 5b–7a):

O Sîn, lord of the gods and goddesses who dwell in the heavens, you *are the one* who, at the time of Nabonidus, king of Babylon, came from the heavens.²⁵

Only after this doxological introduction does Nabonidus begin to speak, and then he does so in the first person voice, just as our protagonist does in *Ludlul*. Almost immediately and quite briefly, we learn with what Sîn, his controversial tutelary deity, has tasked Nabonidus and how Sîn will reward him if he completes the task (i 7b–14a):

I *am* Nabonidus, an only son, who had no one, who had no conception of kingship. The gods and goddesses interceded for [m]e and Sîn called me to

²⁵ It should not be missed that the time Sîn "came from the heavens" (*ša ultu šamē talliku*) is closely aligned with the deed of Sîn "that had not descended to the land *from heaven* from olden days" (*ša ultu ūmū ruqūtu ana māti lā turīdu*) mentioned in the lines previous. For the development of this and related themes in the opening section of the Ḥarran Inscription, see Beaulieu 2007a, especially 142–48.

kingship. He showed me a dream at night *saying* thus: “Rebuild Eḫulḫul, the house of Sîn in Ḫarran, immediately, and I will put all of the lands in your charge.”

It is fairly simple to see for anyone who knows *Ludlul* that this characterization of Nabonidus does not show any *obvious* parallels to the poem. But, there are two items that may hint at a connection. The first is this statement that Nabonidus “had no one” (*ša mamman lā iṣū*, i 8). By the time one finishes reading *Ludlul* Tablet I, the sufferer is likewise completely abandoned by colleagues, family, friends, and even his lowly slaves. He exclaims in the second half of I 79: “I became alone” (*ēteme ēdāniš*) and in I 98: “I had no one walking at my side” (*ul arši ālik idī*). Before making too much of this, we should note Schaudig’s caution regarding the interpretation of Nabonidus’s epithets in the text. As he points out, in the style employed in the stele-inscriptions there are few epithets used for Nabonidus because these stelae are dedicated to exalt Sîn and thus the king takes a back seat, so to speak, to the deity. The few epithets that do appear should be examined carefully before accepting them as a genuine reflection of the king’s personal biography. He suggests the present passage is part of a long-standing, traditional *topos* in the construction of Mesopotamian kingship, namely, that the king was born in the mountains, raised with little human help, and called to kingship by the gods.²⁶ The Akkadian examples he cites in support of this *topos* describe in one case the mountains of Aššurnaširpal’s origin as unknown, “I was born in the mountains, *in a place* that no one knows” (*abbanī-ma ina qereb šadī ša lā idūšunu mamma*, obv. 22),²⁷ and Aššurbanipal’s lack of human parents in another, “I knew no father or mother. I grew up on the knees of my goddesses” (*ul idī abe u umme ina burkī ištārātīya arbā anāku*).²⁸ In both cases, the texts use the verb *edū*, “to know.” The Ḫarran Inscription’s phrase is much broader in scope—it is not a matter of an unknown locale or unknown parents, and it is unparalleled in the rest of Nabonidus’s royal inscriptions. Nabonidus had *no one*, it states. This is a lack of possession (*eṣū*) in the social sphere, as in *Ludlul*, not a lack of knowing (*edū*) something. Moreover, it is noteworthy that Beaulieu’s discussion of Nabonidus’s origins establishes the historical basis for the claim in our inscription,

²⁶ Schaudig 2001, 60.

²⁷ See von Soden 1974/1977, 39, line 22, in the *Prayer of Aššurnaširpal to Istar*. See also my edition of this prayer at <http://akkpm.org/P451997.html> and Lenzi (forthcoming) for my exegetical study of the text. For various ways of construing this line, see Seux (1976, 498, n.14). Foster (2005, 328), following a suggestion attributed to Lambert (330), reads the final two signs as one, NIN, and translates, “I was formed in mountains unknown to you, lady.”

²⁸ See von Soden 1974/1977, 46, line 13 and Livingstone 1989, 12, line 13 for the most recent edition of Aššurbanipal’s hymn to the Istars of Nineveh and Arbela.

namely, that Nabonidus was an only son and had no prominent groups to support him in his rise to power.²⁹ Thus, while I agree that the phrase may participate in the identified *topos* about kingship to some degree (e.g., that it was the deity not a pre-existing status among people that gave him the kingship), Nabonidus also really did not have anyone to help him. This statement's precise and unique formulation of the epithet makes Nabonidus from the beginning of the Ḥarran Inscription as broadly without human help as the sufferer in *Ludlul*, which sets the stage for Nabonidus's complete reliance on the deity for whatever may transpire to his boon.

The second hint to *Ludlul* may be found in the phrase "he showed me a dream at night" (*ina šāt mūši šutta ušabrann[i]*, i 11). This first dream report offers a promise of reward for obedience to Sîn's request to rebuild his temple. But, what begins as a dream of promise turns into a problem due to the poor reception of the dream's import among the Babylonians, stated in what follows directly

(i 14bff.). We know from several other royal inscriptions that Nabonidus was a dreamer; he is, in fact, the only Neo-Babylonian king to report dreams in his inscriptions.³⁰ On first glance, Nabonidus's depiction of his dream here in the Ḥarran Inscription is not very distinctive as a dream report in terms of its phrasing and syntax.³¹ It may very well be the case that this first report of a dream, when considered in this early stage of the unfolding story of the inscription, is nothing to invest with great intertextual meaning. But, its significance must be re-considered or re-processed in light of the inscription's explicit citation of *Ludlul* I 54, *ina šāt mūši šuttī pardat*, "at night my dream was terrifying," in iii 1–2 / iii 12–14,³² which by virtue of its phrasing harks back to the

²⁹ Beaulieu 1989, 67–86.

³⁰ See Schaudig 2001, 22 for the general point and Beaulieu 1989, 218 for Nabonidus's uniqueness among Neo-Babylonian kings. Zgoll 2006, 217–31 provides an inventory and taxonomy of the attestations of dreams. She finds mention of dreams nine times in five different royal inscriptions, including an inscribed votive object (a sword). Oppenheim 1956, 202–5 offers a discussion of a few of the texts, with translations of two on p. 250. See also Beaulieu 1989, 108–15 for translations and a discussion of several relevant passages.

³¹ For example, it closely resembles a phrase in *Erra and Išum* V 43, *ina šāt mūši ušabrīšūma*, "he showed *it* to him at night" (Cagni 1969, 126). See Zgoll (2006) for lists of dream reports in Nabonidus's royal inscriptions (220–21) and similar reports in Akkadian literature (130–31, 135) and Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions (192).

³² Dreams are explicitly associated with terror in *Malku* VI 207, which equates *šuttu* with *pirittu*, derived from *parādu*, the same root as *pardat* in *Ludlul* I 54 (see Hrůša 2010, 420). For the general point that most people experience dread after a dream in Mesopotamian texts, see Butler 1998, 67–68. One dream Nabonidus is recorded to have had is atypical on this point: he states the dream brought him joy (see Schaudig 2001, no. 2.14, ex. 1 iii 17'–18' / ex. 2 iii 36–38 [p. 457]; see also Weiershäuser / Novotny 2020, no. 27, iii 36–38 [p. 138]).

inscription's earlier dream report. Moreover, having invoked *Ludlul* explicitly in this manner in its third column, the inscription at this more advanced point in its presentation of Nabonidus invites the reader to recall how the sufferer later in *Ludlul* has several more dreams, and in those cases the dreams announce his deliverance (III 9–46). Clearly, the protagonist in *Ludlul* is a dreamer, very much like Nabonidus.³³ And Nabonidus's dreaming in this inscription is similar to the sufferer's in *Ludlul*—though in reverse order—in that his dreams were both a source of anxiety (as in *Ludlul* I 54 and III 8) and of relief/promise (as in *Ludlul* III 9–46).

As mentioned just above, the citizens of several important southern Mesopotamian cities did not respect Šin's wishes and resisted Nabonidus's dream-inspired plan to rebuild the Eḫulḫul.³⁴ As the text says, the people of Babylonia (i 16b–18 / i 16b–19a):

did wrong, spurned, sinned against his great divinity. They did not know the terrifying anger of the king of the gods, Nannar.

To my knowledge, this is the only place that mentions Šin's "terrifying anger" in Nabonidus's royal inscriptions.³⁵ The anger of Marduk, of course, is a matter of much exposition in *Ludlul*'s opening hymn (I 1–40) and the basis for the protagonist's problems (I 41–42). The people of Babylonia, the inscription continues,

³³ In fact, Nabonidus's dreaming is a source of derision in the *Verse Account of Nabonidus* (Schaudig 2001, 569, v 11' and see Beaulieu 1989, 217–18). Nabonidus's penchant for dream reports in his inscription may have been one of the reasons *Ludlul* was drawn upon here to present Nabonidus's delay in building the Eḫulḫul temple for Šin.

³⁴ On the sin of the people, see Beaulieu 1989, 63–65 and 2007a, 142–48. Incidentally, the rebuilding of Šin's temple in Ḥarran is presented strikingly different (without obstacles) in an inscription meant for a Babylonian rather than Syrian audience (see Schaudig 2001, no. 2.12 [pp. 409–40] and Weiershäuser / Novotny 2020, nos. 28–29 [pp. 140–57]) and note Beaulieu's interpretation of this fact: "It is known that the rebuilding of the Eḫulḫul was one of the earliest projects of Nabonidus, since it is already mentioned in inscription 1 [Schaudig's no. 3.3^a; Weiershäuser and Novotny's no. 3], but that, for reasons which escape us, he was unable to carry it out until late in his reign. Being aware that this long delay could undermine his credibility among his Babylonian subjects, especially as this particular project had been publicized by him already in his first regnal year, Nabonidus would have given a somewhat distorted account of the rebuilding of the Eḫulḫul in inscription 15 [Schaudig's no. 2.12; Weiershäuser and Novotny's no. 28], which was intended for Babylonia, while inscription 13 [our inscription], intended for Ḥarran, fully acknowledges that the rebuilding of the Eḫulḫul took place after the return from Teima" (1989, 207).

³⁵ Šin does get angry in another inscription and punish the land. But the presentation there is different. See Schaudig 2001, no. 2.12, i 10–12 (p. 416) and Weiershäuser / Novotny 2020, no. 28, i 10–12 (p. 147).

disregarded their ritual obligations (*parṣīšunu*) and were speaking lies and untruths. (i 19–20a / i 19b–20)

We read something similar to this in *Ludlul* when the sufferer complains that his opponents “handed my cultic offices / obligations to another” (*parṣīya ušalqū šanāmma*, I 103); moreover, he is beset with gossip, slander, and malicious talk throughout the first Tablet of the poem (see I 57–58, 89–90, 94–95). The inscription continues (i 20b–22b / i 21–23a):

Like dogs, they continually devoured one another.³⁶ Ague (*di`u*) and famine (*sugū*) appeared in their midst, and *thus* he (Sîn) reduced the people of the land.

The same disease named here in the inscription, *di`u*, occurs in *Ludlul* II 52 in the sufferer’s catena of physical ailments. He also complains of prolonged hunger in II 87 (*bubūtu*).

Nabonidus, on the other hand, says this about himself after the Babylonians’ refusal to build the temple (i 22c–27a / i 23b–29a):

As for me, he caused me to flee from my city Babylon, *taking* the route to the cities Tema, Dadanu, Padakku, Ḫibra, Yadiḫu as far as Yatribu. For ten years I roamed among them (i.e., these cities); I did not enter my city Babylon.

Note how Nabonidus calls Babylon “my city Babylon” (*ālīya Bābil*) in this passage whereas in the other two places in this inscription where he refers to Babylon as his city it is designated in light of his royal status, namely, “the city of [my] lordshi[p]” (*āl bēlū[tīya]*, iii 5, only in exemplar #1) and “the city of my kingship” (*āl šarrūtīya*, iii 23 / iii 34). Although it is Sîn who makes Nabonidus flee his city, the result of this exile brings *Ludlul* I 82–83 to mind: “**My city** glared at me as an enemy, my country seemed hostile *and* foreign” (*ālī kī ayābi nekelmanni / tušāma nakratu nandurtu mātī*). In any case, Sîn punished the Babylonians for their stubbornness and he removed Nabonidus from the land, taking the king abroad for ten years in Tema—an infamous and mysterious period of his reign.³⁷

³⁶ CAD A/1, 250 sees this statement as a reference to cannibalism, which the people brought upon themselves by way of their disobedience. It may, however, rather be a statement intended to intensify the results of the lies described in the previous sentence.

³⁷ On the Tema years, see, e.g., Beaulieu’s synthesis (1989, 149–85, especially 184–85) and note also the more recent round up of opinions on the matter and the new suggestion (Nabonidus was fleeing disease and famine) in Finkel and Kinnier Wilson 2007 with criticisms in Schaudig 2021, 360.

One may object at this point that the above exposition applies some of *Ludlul*'s language of suffering to the Babylonians for their rejection of Šin and some of it to Nabonidus himself after their rejection. I do not think this is a problem since both the Babylonians and Nabonidus need to be depicted as suffering: one on account of sin, the other on account of the Babylonians' rejecting him. Both are described in a manner that recalls suffering in *Ludlul*, if only loosely. In any case, this opening section is surely an odd situation to see in a royal inscription: The deity tasks a king with a cultic project and the people reject both the king and the divinely-revealed task!

In an attempt to explain these peculiarities, Beaulieu has suggested that the Ḥarran Inscription has adopted and combined motifs related to cultic profanation and divine abandonment attested in older texts still current in the Neo-Babylonian period, namely, the *Letter of Samsuiluna* (Al-Rawi and George 1994; Schaudig 2019, 508–11), the *Letter of Nebuchadnezzar I to the Babylonians* (Frame 1995, no. 7 [pp. 21–23]), and the text entitled *Seed of Kingship* (Frame 1995, no. 8 [pp. 23–28]). These texts, according to Beaulieu, variously informed or influenced the inscription's literary presentation of Šin's previous absence (implied in his coming from heaven during Nabonidus's reign), Nabonidus's call to kingship, his divinely-revealed task to rebuild Šin's Eḥulḥul temple, and the Babylonians' sinful resistance to this task. Given Nabonidus's promulgation of a novel cultic role for Šin, and "for the new deity to be accepted," Beaulieu contends that

Nabonidus must emphasize his role as religious leader, as teacher of rituals and cultic prescriptions. Therefore, the sacrilegious behavior of his subjects must not only be attributed to the long absence of Šin from his temple, which in itself would be a sufficient cause, but also, and especially, to their inherent shortcomings in religious matters, especially when it comes to the god Nannar (Šin), and this is perhaps why the stele specifies that the people "did not know the great wrath of the king of the gods, Nannar." The land will return to a harmonious state only when the people learn the proper rituals and behavior from their king and when the new representation of the god Šin that has been revealed to him comes down from heaven and takes up residence in the Eḥulḥul temple. Nabonidus relied on a solid tradition to make these claims, a tradition that was still very alive in Babylonia.³⁸

Given the ramified nature of literary influence, one need not see these suggested connections as being mutually exclusive to reading the Ḥarran Inscription in light of *Ludlul*. In fact, I think the present reading supplements Beaulieu's

³⁸ Beaulieu 2007a, 147–48; compare Schaudig 2021, 355, who accepts the general topical similarity but does not accept a close intertextual connection.

since both readings suggest a kind of pedagogical role for the king as a model of pious patience in the face of tribulations, thus raising his religious *bona fides*.

In the following section, Nabonidus, looking back on his exile, states that both Mesopotamia and the lands he lived in while away enjoyed enough divinely-provided fecundity during these years to support the absent king, and the gods granted both places peace from hostile neighbors (i 27b–ii 2 / i 29b–ii 9a). Even in exile, the text implies, even when his revealed task seemed thwarted by his sinful subjects, the king carried out his royal duties and the lands flourished.³⁹

At this point one might object, “so much for suffering. Nabonidus is not reflecting the situation of the protagonist in *Ludlul* much at all.” Admittedly, he does not suffer physically. Indeed, his health and well-being were put under divine protection, according to the text (i 30b–31a / i 33b–34a). Physical suffering, it seems, is reserved for the description of the sinning Babylonians. Moreover, there is no explicit, detailed lamentation attributed to Nabonidus in the Ḫarran Inscription as in *Ludlul*, though the account of the Babylonians’ rejection is itself an implicit lament. And Nabonidus does suffer the rejection of the very people he was supposed to lead—the people he needed to fulfill Šin’s order to rebuild the temple in Ḫarran. Forced to flee his own city, Nabonidus suffers a similar kind of social alienation as does the protagonist in *Ludlul* Tablet I. And this rejection is divinely-imposed because it is a direct consequence of Šin’s command delivered to Nabonidus via that initial dream, though the more proximate reason is laid at the feet of the Babylonians’ refusal. In any case, one has to wonder at this point in the inscription: Was the initial dream really all that promising for Nabonidus? Rather than a promise of future blessing, the dream seems to have brought about his present testing.⁴⁰ It is this course of testing, however, that would provide the perfect foil for presenting Nabonidus’s piety as tried-and-true. He’s no fair-weather devotee.

An oracle from Šamaš provides a turning point in the Ḫarran Inscription’s narrative and in the fortunes of Nabonidus:

³⁹ It is an open question in my mind as to whether the punishment in Babylon had been lifted and thus the text indicates a return to prosperity (so Beaulieu 1989, 33) or the section does not address this matter so much as intends to exonerate Nabonidus of accusations of dereliction of duty or oppression (so Oppenheim in Pritchard 1969, 562, n.4). Of course, there may be other options.

⁴⁰ Beaulieu’s intertextual reading (see above) comes to the same conclusion: “It seems as if the king must undergo the same ordeal of absence and exile experienced by the god, to earn the privilege of taking his hand and restoring him to his sanctuary” (2007a, 147).

Šamaš, the lord of the oracle, without whom nothing can be predicted, the one who carries out the command of Nannar, the father, his progenitor, established in the people of the land of Akkad and the land of Ḫatti, whom he (i.e. Sîn) put in my charge, a faithful mouth and heart toward me so that they served me and carried out my command in the distant mountain regions and inaccessible paths where I roamed for ten years. (ii 3–ii 11a / ii 9b–ii 18a)

Whenever this might actually have happened in the chronology of his Tema sojourn, in this inscription Nabonidus recounts this divinely-induced change of heart among his subjects just before the most momentous occasion in the inscription, his return to Babylon. That event is introduced with a modified stock phrase for announcing something important, *ikšudam-ma adannu imlû umû ša iqbû šar ilî, Nannāri*, “the appointed time arrived, the days that Nannar, the king of the gods ordered⁴¹ had elapsed,”⁴² and then an exact date is given, the 17th of Tašritu, early fall (ii 11b–13a / ii 18b–20). This was the date for the celebration of Sîn’s *Akitu* festival in Ḫarran, which marks the return of Nabonidus from Arabia in his inscriptions.⁴³ Rather than elaborate on what one might think to be the culminating point in Nabonidus’s account of revelation, rejection, and return, the text breaks from its unfolding plot, centered on Nabonidus’s experience, and has Nabonidus pause to praise Sîn for the remainder of the second column (ii 14b–42 / ii 22–iii 3). Like *Ludlul*’s stated purpose, the Ḫarran Inscription is ultimately doxological. Here Nabonidus exclaims Sîn’s universal lordship and entirely ignores Marduk, very much like his other inscriptions dated to the post-Tema years, when Nabonidus began to implement his religious reform with zeal.⁴⁴

Although there are no clear citations of *Ludlul* in the hymn, its presentation of Sîn recalls aspects of *Ludlul*’s presentation of Marduk. The hymnic section opens with these lines:

O Sîn, the lord of the gods, whose name on the first day *of the month is*
 “Weapon of Anu,”
 You strike the heavens and split open the earth (i.e., netherworld).

⁴¹ Oppenheim suggests translating *qabû* with “predicted” rather than “commanded” or “said” (in Pritchard 1969, 563). His translation is interpretive but warranted if one takes the larger context into consideration. His translation connects (rightly, in my opinion) what Sîn “commanded” here with the earlier mention of a dream, the dream which went unfulfilled due to Babylonian intransigence to follow the king’s desire to rebuild Eḫulḫul.

⁴² For the keyword in this phrase, *adannu*, “appointed time, specified term,” in Nabonidus’s royal inscriptions, see Schaudig 2001, 23, 599.

⁴³ See Beaulieu 1989, 152–53 and Schaudig 2001, 23.

⁴⁴ Beaulieu 1989, 54–65.

You are the one who concentrates *in yourself* the rites of Anu-ship,
 Who controls the rites of Enlil-ship, who takes over the rites of Ea-ship,
 Who wields in his hands the sum total of the rites of the heavens,
 Enlil of the gods, the king of kings, the lord of lords,
 Whose command cannot be rescinded,
 And whose order is not spoken twice,
 The fear of whose great divinity fills the heavens and earth,
 Just as his appearance envelops the heavens and earth.
 (ii 14b–25a / ii 22–34a)

The hymn presents Sîn as an all-powerful,⁴⁵ all-encompassing god, who pulls into his being the sum total of the rites attributed to the gods of the three celestial paths.⁴⁶ His power overwhelms the cosmos just as does Marduk's in *Ludlul* I 7 and 9: "The brunt of whose hands the heavens cannot bear." It is at Sîn's discretion that lands flourish or fall.

The land in which you decide to dwell,
 You place the fear of your great divinity in its heart,
 And its foundation is firm in perpetuity.
 The land that you decide to destroy,
 You remove your fear from its heart,
 You overthrow it in perpetuity. (ii 26b–32a / ii 35b–41)

Their fate is entirely in the hands of Sîn, very much like the fate of an individual in Marduk's, as mentioned in *Ludlul* I 23–26:

He (Marduk) speaks and imputes guilt,
But on the day of his offering liability and guilt are absolved.
 He is the one who afflicts with demonic shivering,
But with his incantation chills and cold tremors withdraw.

The polarity between Sîn's favor and wrath in the inscription's hymn has the same intent as the contrastive statements throughout the opening hymn to *Ludlul*. Everything is in the hands of the lauded deity. And, ultimately, nothing happens apart from the deity decreeing it. In the lines between the two sections cited above (ii 25b–26a / ii 34b–35a), the hymn asks Sîn: "Without you who

⁴⁵ Indeed, Sîn's all-powerful sovereignty is underlined throughout the text by the frequent use of the command formula *ina qibū Sîn* and the similar *ina amāt Sîn*, which provide authorization for almost everything that happens in the text.

⁴⁶ For the "Theology of the Moon" tradition, in which these lines participate, see Beaulieu 2007a, 148–52.

can do anything?” (*ša lā kâšu mannu minâ ippuš*).⁴⁷ In *Ludlul* I 35–36 the audience is asked near the conclusion of the opening hymn: “Without his consent, who could assuage his striking? Apart from his intention, who could stay his hand?” (*ša lā libbīšu mannu mihištašu lišapših / ela kabtatīšu ayyu lišālil qāssu*).⁴⁸ Although we have no citations or explicit allusions, the thematic similarities between the two texts are unmistakable.

The inscription becomes illegible for eight lines before the hymn’s completion. When the text resumes in its final column, it cites (in iii 1–2 / iii 12–14) *Ludlul* I 52 and 54 exactly as they are found in the poem:

*itti barī u šā`ili alakāt ul parsat attīl-ma ina šāt mūši šuttī pardar*⁴⁹

My situation could not be decided by seer and inquirer.

When I lay down at night, my dream was terrifying.

It is unfortunate that we do not know what is missing in the break before this citation and thus how these lines are related to the hymn. But, it is clear that they *at least* mark Nabonidus’s experience of revelatory obfuscation from the period before “the fulfillment of time” announced earlier, that is, the period before Sîn called Nabonidus back to Babylon. We know this because right after the citation of *Ludlul* the inscription repeats the earlier “fulfillment of time” formula, though now its order is inverted: *imli šattu ikšudu adannu ša [iqbū Nannā]ri*, “the time had elapsed. The appointed time that [Nanna]r [had ordered] arrived.” Something like a *Wiederaufnahme* in biblical literature,⁵⁰ the nearly repeated phrase brings the reader back to the moment of the “fulfillment of time.” The lines that immediately follow help us see the citation from *Ludlul* as describing a negative experience (just as the lines are for the protagonist in the poem) because the disfavor implied—using the language from chapter four—by his evaluative negative revelation (i.e., the terrifying dream) is reversed immediately in the wake of Sîn’s decision to let Nabonidus return to this land.

⁴⁷ Interestingly, this statement of absolute power occurs in one of Nabonidus’s earlier inscriptions verbatim as part of a prayer to Marduk. As Beaulieu has stated (1989, 61), it seems that our text intends to overturn the earlier opinion.

⁴⁸ Schaudig 2021, 358 compares the same lines in the Harran Inscription to the praise offered to Marduk at the conclusion of the poem, specifically, *Ludlul* V 73: “Who but Marduk could restore him from death?” (*ša lā Marduk mannu mūtūtašu uballit*).

⁴⁹ Though the lines are part of a poem, it is interesting to note that these two lines have the verb in the final position of the line, much like one would expect in prose. Nabonidus’s inscription, of course, is in prose, except for the hymnic material, which I think is likely in verse.

⁵⁰ See Long 1987.

Although the next few lines are broken, it is clear that Nabonidus receives gifts from envoys. He and Šin are both honored by kings near and far. And perhaps most crucial to our understanding of the citation of the lines from *Ludlul* is Nabonidus's well-preserved statement which reads: "the *personal* god and goddess who had deserted me and were distant⁵¹ turned back to me and spoke good things *for me*. An omen of my favor was placed in the mouth of the seer" (*ilu u ištaru ša ipparkū*⁵²-*ma irēqa issahrūnim-ma iqabbū banīti ina pī bārī iššakin šīr damqīya*; iii 11–13a / iii 21–23a). These lines strongly resonate with and reverse those the sufferer in *Ludlul* utters just two lines into the description of his misfortune. He says that after Marduk became angry with him (I 41–42), "My god rejected me, he disappeared, my goddess left, she departed" (I 43–44, *iddanni ilī šadāšu īli / ipparku ištarī ibēš aḥītu*).⁵³ Shortly thereafter we read in I 49–51: "Portents of terror were established for me (*iššaknānim*), I was expelled from my house, I wandered about outside. My omens were confused, equivocal⁷ every day." Then comes the section containing the lines cited in the Ḥarran Inscription, which skips I 53:⁵⁴ "My situation could not be decided by seer and inquirer. What I overheard (my *egerrū*) in the

⁵¹ *Rēqu* is a close synonym of *nesū*, used in *Ludlul* I 15 to describe the distance of the *lamassu* and *šēdu*. See the lexical section of *nesū* in CAD N/2, 186.

⁵² I read *ip-par-ku'*(text: DU, in both copies) here rather than *ip-par-du*, which requires a derivation of *ipardu* from the N stem of the questionable root *parādu*, "to separate oneself" (so Schaudig 2001, 313, 499, and 655; he identifies the root as a loanword from Aramaic). This putative root occurs here uniquely (*AHW*, 827; see also *CDA*, 264) and has been rejected by the CAD (P, 144). The latter emends the texts to *ip-par-<ši>-du*, deriving the verb from *naparšudu*, "to escape, flee" (CAD N/1, 283). (About this root, see my comments in the notes in chapter three at I 46.) I think, rather, that the Ḥarran Inscription is picking up language from *Ludlul* I 44, *ipparku ištarī*, "my goddess left." Alternatively, if we accept the reading of the text, one might argue that the scribe has simply used a more familiar Aramaic semantic equivalent to *narkū* in order to express the idea conveyed in *Ludlul*.

⁵³ Note also the sufferer's inability to gain help from his personal deities in II 112–113.

⁵⁴ This line, even if its broader context is invoked implicitly (see presently), may have been left out of the explicit quotation since the king would not have been literally wandering the street like a regular citizen and thus could not be present to hear a revelatory *egerrū*. Schaudig understands the matter differently. He translates *Ludlul* I 53 as "[p]eople do slander me in the streets" (lit. "[i]n the mouth of the street my reputation is bad"), rejecting explicitly the portentous meaning of *egerrū*, which I think the context in *Ludlul* requires, in favor of its social definition, "reputation" (2021, 358, n.32). Commenting further about the omission of I 53, he writes, "[t]he silence in which Nabonidus passes over this verse screams: Slandering the mad or heretic king was exactly what was going on in the street of Babylon at that time." Perhaps the issue is best framed in terms of how the scribe who wrote the Ḥarran Inscription understood *egerrū* in *Ludlul* rather than its meaning in the poem itself. In any case, however that matter is to be resolved, I agree with Schaudig that the citation of I 52, 54 and the further description of Nabonidus that follows it in the inscription intends to invoke the fuller context of the passage in *Ludlul* (358). Schaudig also notes that *Ludlul* I 50, either lost in the break or perhaps contextually activated/implied by the citation of I 52, 54, would have been quite appropriate in a description of Nabonidus (358).

street *portended* evil for me, *When* I lay down at night, my dream was terrifying” (I 52–54). I think the citation from *Ludlul* in the Ḫarran Inscription intends to invoke this broader context from the poem in the mind of the reader in order to cast Nabonidus rather clearly at this point in the inscription as *Ludlul*’s protagonist, whose suffering was the result of divine anger—caused in Nabonidus’ case by the Babylonian rejection of his temple building plan—and whose expulsion from his own household—royal household, in Nabonidus’ case—has now come to an end. It may be that such a role for Nabonidus in this inscription *could not really be fully understood* until this point in the narrative, where we have something like a hermeneutical shove in the right direction. This “shove” forces the reader to reprocess the narrative, at least partially, in light of Nabonidus’ testimony. Immediately after his personal deities “turn back” (*saḫāru*, see *Ludlul* I 16 where the verb is used of the personal gods)⁵⁵ and he receives a good omen, Nabonidus takes the road home, where he musters the people of his empire to build the Eḫulḫul. Upon its completion, he, like the delivered protagonist in *Ludlul* (Tablet V), offers a great many offerings to the gods.

Something like the third person narration at the conclusion of *Ludlul*, Nabonidus explicitly ends his inscription in a didactic or “wisdom” mode with his address to the (royal) reader, *mannu attā*, “whoever you are,” called to kingship by Sîn. This manner of ending the inscription is similar to the ones in the *Cuthean Legend of Narām-Sîn* and the *Stele of Adad-guppi* (Nabonidus’ mother),⁵⁶ among others. Its purpose is to announce the passing on of acquired wisdom from the speaker on the stele to future generations.⁵⁷ Although the ending breaks off and thus its full content unknown, the extant text suggests its thematic center: Nabonidus warns future kings not to neglect the cult centers of Sîn. It is almost as if he says, in a twist on the statement of the protagonist in *Ludlul*: Let the ones who were negligent of Eḫulḫul learn from my example.

Having moved through the inscription section by section, I summarize here the key points: Although Nabonidus is not presented as suffering great physical pain in this text, he does experience social alienation as does the sufferer in *Ludlul*. The king very clearly suffers rejection in that he could not carry out the

⁵⁵ The ability to scare off and bring back the personal gods is attributed to Marduk’s sovereignty in the opening hymn: “He (Marduk) frowns: the divine guardian and protective spirit withdraw, he takes notice: his god turns back to the one he had rejected” (I 15–16).

⁵⁶ One of the exemplars of the latter text (Gadd’s H 1 B), interestingly, was found near the two exemplars of Nabonidus’ stele in Ḫarran (Gadd 1958, 35).

⁵⁷ As Beaulieu notes: “Such formulas are normally found at the end of pseudo-autobiographies, and generally aimed at teaching wisdom.... This also seems to have been one of Nabonidus’ goals in his late inscriptions, insofar as ‘wisdom’ could be acquired through awareness of the ‘deed of Sin’” (1989, 213).

task initially revealed to him in a dream. The Babylonians frustrated his plan, which led to the king's divinely-orchestrated removal from the land. Despite divine support and protection during his sojourn in Tema (a necessary apologia), Nabonidus laments his frustration while there because he could not get a proper sign from the gods—a problem the sufferer in *Ludlul* mentions three times in the poem (I 51–54, II 6–9, II 108–111). The sign presumably would have clarified when Nabonidus could return and carry out his task of rebuilding the temple. Just as Marduk acts in *Ludlul*, the high god in the inscription, Šin, acts in his own good time to orchestrate events to carry out his plan. In fact, the moon god changes people's hearts to submit to Nabonidus so he can mobilize them for his project. When the appointed time arrives, Nabonidus's personal deities return, he receives clear oracular pronouncements, and the people join Nabonidus to rebuild the Eḫulḫul. The point is clear: The time of Nabonidus's alienation had come to an end; his subject's proper obedience to him was restored. And all of this was Šin's doing, the deity without whom nothing can happen. Just as with the ending of *Ludlul*, Nabonidus goes to the temple, in fact, builds the temple, and brings lavish offerings.

Casting Nabonidus in the mold of the protagonist in *Ludlul* would not only be culturally understandable or appropriate, given the poem's distribution in society, but also powerful for representing the king's personal piety and political acumen. The inscription's adoption and adaptation of *Ludlul* is essentially a propagandistic presentation of the king, attributing the long delay in building the temple for Šin—a potential royal embarrassment—to the Babylonians' impious refusal, Šin's own sovereignty, and Nabonidus's pious long-suffering. The poem was readily at hand for any well-trained scribe—it was part of his narrative habitus, who could in deploying the poem in his inscription expect in turn other literate members of society to pick up on its presence and significance. The *Ludlul* adaptation in the inscription is surrounded by Nabonidus's divine election and protection in that the king is chosen to complete an initial, divinely revealed task, which he does only after a long stretch in a divinely-imposed exile. This intervening period, rather than abasing the king, actually amplifies his piety since throughout the period he relies, indeed must rely, on the generosity of his divine benefactor, just as *Ludlul* suggests for its readers.

If the above reading is accepted, we have another example of a scribe who has taken *Ludlul*'s paradigmatic protagonist to heart and cast the king in the protagonist's literary and symbolic mold.

10.3. AŠŠURBANIPAL'S LAMENT: A HALF-TOLD TALE OF HEALING AN ASSYRIAN KING

The final example is a little discussed text known only from one tablet, cataloged as K.891 in the Kuyunjik Collection of the British Museum. Based on its content, Foster has dubbed it *The Lament of Aššurbanipal*.⁵⁸ In the short span of its twenty-six lines, the Assyrian king enumerates his pious acts and laments his unmerited disfavor in a manner that is, to my knowledge, unique in the Assyrian royal inscription corpus. As in many royal inscriptions and literary texts, the king speaks in the first person voice. Unlike many royal inscriptions, the king lists his pious acts (obv. 1–rev. 2) and then laments his misfortunes in a most personal manner (rev. 3–13). Although its presentation is subtle, *The Lament* also casts Aššurbanipal and his suffering in the mold of the protagonist of *Ludlul*, as the Ḥarran Inscription does Nabonidus. Unlike the protagonist in *Ludlul*, however, and unlike Nabonidus in the Ḥarran Inscription, Aššurbanipal's *Lament* ends—oddly—without resolution or redemption of any kind. In fact, *The Lament* concludes rather abruptly and for this reason its interpretation is difficult. Recalling ideas from Frank's narrative habitus mentioned above and drawing on studies in medical anthropology, I argue *The Lament of Aššurbanipal* is a half-told story and its very expression was intended to elicit or hasten the story's completion, that is, to bring relief and healing to Aššurbanipal.

Novotny and Jeffers provide the most recent critical edition of *The Lament of Aššurbanipal* in their work related to RINAP 5 on the Open Access Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus (ORACC) online platform.⁵⁹ The translation of the text printed below is based on the Akkadian text of Novotny and Jeffers with only one modification in the restoration at the end of obv. 10, noted below.

Before presenting a translation, however, there are a few features observable on the physical tablet itself that ought to be registered here. (Some of these

⁵⁸ 2007, 43. Streck labeled the text L³ (1916, 2.248); see likewise, Novotny 2014, no. 19, who dates the text to c. 668 BCE (pp. ix, xxv).

⁵⁹ The edition is available at <http://oracc.iaas.upenn.edu/rinap/rinap5/Q007593> (copyright Jamie Novotny, Joshua Jeffers, the Official Inscriptions of the Middle East in Antiquity (OIMEA) Project, and the Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period (RINAP) Project, 2015–17. Lemmatized by Jamie Novotny, 2015–16, for the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation-funded OIMEA Project at the Historisches Seminar - Abteilung Alte Geschichte of Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München. The annotated edition is released under the Creative Commons Attribution Share-Alike license 3.0). See previously Novotny's handbook edition (2014, 45, 80–81, 99). I collated the text from a photo available at the Cuneiform Digital Library (<https://cdli.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/dl/photo/P237924.jpg>). The text and translation as presented here are incorporated into my online project Akkadian Prayer Miscellany. See <http://akkpm.org/P237924.html>.

features have implications for the interpretation of the text, developed later; the implications of others remain unclear and/or invite speculation, noted as such immediately below.) The tablet is laid out in the so-called “landscape” format, that is, the tablet is wider than it is long (9 × 5.1 cm). There is no colophon or other meta-textual scribal features on the tablet. Although, there is an odd-looking sign on the left margin of the tablet, situated between obv. 5 and 6. The sign looks like a slashed equals sign (≠), except the transversal line runs in the opposite direction, i.e., from the top left to bottom right. The mark is certainly ancient, but its purpose or meaning is unclear. Seven times the scribe used a second, indented line to complete the previous line on the tablet (see obv. 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, rev. 1, and 3). Despite having been found in an Assyrian royal library and archive in Nineveh, and despite bearing content that describes an Assyrian king’s experience in the first person voice, the tablet is actually inscribed in *Babylonian*, not Assyrian ductus. We know, of course, that there were Babylonian scribes working for the Assyrians in Nineveh. There are, in fact, several thousand tablets written in Babylonian ductus from Nineveh (Fincke 2003–2004). Yet, curiously, there are numerous erasures in the cuneiform of our tablet, suggesting whoever inscribed it did not do so very carefully. I see the following on the tablet photograph:⁶⁰

- In obv. 10: The ŠAR in *at-ta-šar* is written over another sign, perhaps an AB, according to Pinches (1882, 17).
- In obv. 11: The *ana* (= DIŠ) between *ta-li-me* and LUGAL-*ut* seems to have been erased on the tablet.
- In rev. 2: There is an erasure after *a-me-lu-tu*. Later in the same line, there are a few signs between MEŠ and TI in the phrase ÚŠ.MEŠ *u* TI.MEŠ that have been erased and written over.
- In rev. 3: The first three signs, *am-mi-ni*, are written over an erasure.
- In rev. 6: The UZU in the line is followed by two vertical wedges and a horizontal (MIN AŠ), which must be a mistake of some kind. Perhaps it is a malformed attempt to write MEŠ.

In light of these, one might speculate that the scribe responsible for this tablet was a student or a non-Babylonian scribe, i.e., an Assyrian scribe using the Babylonian script. The latter idea may find some support in the fact that there are at least two Assyrianisms in the text: *adi immat* in rev. 12⁶¹ and *epšāku* in

⁶⁰ Although I had funding to collate this tablet in the summer of 2020, the pandemic canceled my plans. Funding was unavailable in the summer of 2022, when this monograph was completed.

⁶¹ The same form appears in STT 65, rev. 6, a NA prayer to Nabû, treated recently in Lenzi 2019b and see here: <http://akkpm.org/P338383.html>.

rev. 13.⁶² (Perhaps three, if *ūmē* in rev. 7 qualifies.) Also in light of several of these features, one might wonder if (i.e., speculate that) the tablet was a first draft.

The following translation is my own, though indebted to several predecessors.⁶³

obv. 1 *Concerning* Arbela, the dwelling of Ištar, the house of festivals and [merrymaking], whose *inner* wall had not been built since ancient times *and* o[uter wall] had not been completed, I built its wall and completed its outer wall. I [filled] *the city* with grandeur. I made the house of my lady Ištar as radiant as the day with silver, gold, *and* copper. I adorned the emblem of the gate of Ištar's house with silver *and* gold and erected *it*. *As for* Milqia, the palace of the steppe, the dwelling of Ištar, I renovated its ruins. I built its *Akitu* house. I completed the city in its entirety. I set my hands *to work* in depression and with weeping on that which the enemy had attacked. I completed *the work* with rejoicing. I myself erected the emblem of Nergal's house, which *is in* Tarbišu *and* which did not exist in previous days.

¹⁰ After I had done this *and* finished the work, the word of *my* father, my progenitor, was not annu[lled],⁶⁴ *rather* I obeyed *it*. I entrusted Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, my favorite brother, with the kingship of Karduni[aš] (i.e., Babylon). I devoted Aššur-mukīn-pale'a, my younger brother, to the *šešgallu*-priesthood of Aššur. I devoted Aššur-etel-šamê-eršeti-muballissu, my youngest brother, to the *šešgallu*-priesthood of Šin, who dwells in Ḫarran.

rev. 1 Along with⁶⁵ the funerary offerings, I re-established the pouring out of water to the ghosts of kings who came b[efore me], which had ceased.

⁶² See Hämeen-Anttila 2000, 103, 149.

⁶³ The translations I have consulted include Streck (1916, 2.248–53), Luckenbill (1927, 2.376–78), Novotny (2014, 99), and Novotny / Jeffers. (Bottéro 1977, 26–27 provides a French translation of rev. 2–13 in his very brief discussion.)

⁶⁴ I restore the end of obv. 10 as follows: *amāt abi bānīya ul paṭ-r[at]*, which builds on a suggestion that goes back to Streck (1916, 2.250), who suggests *ul paṭ-rum* or *paṭ-ru*. The wedges on the tablet support reading PAT. I see little more than the head of a horizontal wedge in the photo for the second sign. Novotny and Jeffers provide a discussion of various possibilities for the restoration in a note to their edition online but decide to leave the matter unresolved, reading PAD AŠ?

⁶⁵ Novotny (2014, 99) renders *adi* here with “concerning,” but this is mostly an Old Assyrian usage (CAD A/1, 120–21). Other translators take *adi* as a conjunction standing at the head of two subordinate phrases, the verbs of which are found in *arku* at the end of rev. 1 as well as *ēpuš* at the end of rev. 3. See Luckenbill 1927, 2.377–78, who renders rev. 1–3 in this manner: “Since (lit., while) I have instituted offerings and the pouring of water for the ghosts of the kings who lived (lit. went) before me, which had fallen into disuse (been neglected), (and) so have done good to god and man, to the dead and the living, why is it that disease, heartache, distress and destruction are clinging (lit. are bound) to me?” Novotny / Jeffers (RINAP 5, accessed in December 2021): “While I reinstat[ed] the funerary offerings (and) libation offerings for the spirits of the kings who came be[fore me] that had been discontinued (and) I performed good deed(s) for god

- ² Thus, I honored god and humanity, the living and the dead.
- ³ Why *then* are illness, sorrow, expenses, and loss permanently bound to me?
Discord in the land, strife in the house are not withheld fr[om me].
- ⁵ Disturbances *and* evil words are constantly set out against me,⁶⁶
Emotional and physical distress have bent my frame.
- ⁷ I have spent *my* days *sighing* “woe” *and* “alas,”
I am distressed on the festival day, the day of the god of the city.
- ⁹ Death holds me fast, I am in dire straits!
I moan day and night on account of depression *and* lamentation.
- ¹¹ I am exhausted, O god; give *these things* to the one who shows *you* no
reverence so I may see your light.
- ¹² How long, O god, will you treat me in this manner?
Like one who does not revere *his* god and *his* goddess I am treated.

When viewed in terms of its macro-structure, Aššurbanipal’s *Lament* has a relatively simple rhetorical contour. In the first half of the text, the king describes in three subunits of decreasing length in obv. 1–rev. 1, first, his renovation of three different cultic sites (obv. 1–9); second, the installation of three of his brothers to important posts, one royal and two priestly (obv. 10–13); and third, the re-establishment of the funerary offerings for past kings (rev. 1). Note that in almost every sentence in this section,⁶⁷ the main verb is first person active indicative, and Aššurbanipal is the subject of each. *He* is the one responsible for all of the acts enumerated.

and man, for (both) the dead and the living, why are illness, misery, expenses, and losses bound to me?” However, neither verb is marked with the subjunctive. Compare the verbs after *ultu* in obv. 10. Also, the temporal sense of *adi* here at the head of two clauses followed by a question does not make good sense. Streck also saw a problem with *adi* (1916, 2.251, n.12), but he rejected the term entirely and instead understood *a-di* as the plural of *adū*, which he rendered “Vorschriften” (“instructions, specifications”). This is not a viable solution in light of our better understanding of that term (see CAD A/1, 131–34). Instead, I think we should recognize *adi* as a preposition, “together with x” (CAD A/1, 121–25). This understanding clears the way to give the question in rev. 3 its proper due in the rhetoric of the text. Thus, I think this understanding of *adi* yields the best translation and understanding of the text as a whole. (By early May 2022, Novotny and Jeffers had revised their translation on RINAP: “Together with the funerary offerings, I reinstat[ed] the libations for the spirits of the kings who came be[fore (me)] that had discontinued (and) I performed good deed(s) for god and mankind, for (both) the dead and the living. (So) why are illness, misery, troubles, (and) loss bound up with me?”)

⁶⁶ If rev. 3–13 are verse, as I argue below, then we expect a trochee at the end of each line. Rev. 5 is the only line in the poetic section of the text that lacks a trochee. It may very well be the case that the AN at the end of the line is a mistake for NA; thus, one could read: *ka-a-a-na*(AN). The two signs are not that dissimilar and, as noted already, there is a rather large number of erasures in the text. If the case for a mistake here is convincing, then we have a trochee at the end of this line, too.

⁶⁷ The exception is the first main clause in obv. 10, *amāt abi bānīya ul paṭr[at]*.

Aššurbanipal then states in rev. 2, “I honored god and humanity, the living and the dead.” This line, I think, recapitulates briefly the king’s previous actions described in the text—note again the first person active indicative voice—and thus provides a kind of summary. The king honored the gods in his three construction projects in Arbela, Milqia, and Tarbišu for Ištar and Nergal in obv. 1–9. He honored living human beings in his appointment of three of his brothers to important posts in Babylon, Aššur, and Ḫarran in obv. 10–13. And he honored deceased human beings by re-establishing the funerary rituals for past kings in rev. 1. I think rev. 2 should be understood as a summary, a kind of rhetorical signal that the first section of the text has come to an end. It is worth recognizing, however, that this summary is not simply a quick review of the particulars of the king’s past acts. Rather, rev. 2 is a summative statement that constructs by way of two merisms the sum total of all possible beneficiaries of pious acts and thus suggests the king’s past actions enumerated in obv. 1–rev. 1 to be exhaustive in nature: Aššurbanipal has honored both deity and humans, and among the latter, he has honored both the living and the dead. To whom else might one direct acts of piety?

Moreover, each section’s length in obv. 1–rev. 1 may also be an indicator of each of the three groups’ importance. The gods are first and given the longest description, namely, nine lines, with the cult sites arranged in order of prestige. Then, the pious acts that honor living human beings come next in four lines, which also show a hierarchical construction. The men are appointed to positions at decreasingly prestigious cult sites, Babylon in the south, Aššur in the north, and Ḫarran on the periphery. And then finally we read about Aššurbanipal’s pious acts directed to the now deceased kings in one line. Rev. 2 therefore signals in the formulation of its summary that Aššurbanipal has checked all the boxes, so to speak, when it comes to acts of piety. And, his very act of enumeration rightly recognizes the cosmic order of things. What more could one do to impress the gods?

The transitional character of rev. 2 is immediately reinforced for the reader or hearer by the first word of rev. 3, the interrogative *ammīni*, “Why.” With that word, the text moves in terms of subject matter from a report of the king’s past behavior to an interrogation into his present treatment—or, rather, mistreatment. Rev. 3, like rev. 2, is therefore a kind of transition. Two other indicators support this idea: First, the subject matter of rev. 3 makes the transition in the text immediately clear because the line lists classic indications of divine disfavor: illness, sorrow, expenses, and loss, all matters frequently associated with lament as a glance at the lexica will indicate.⁶⁸ And second, Aššurbanipal

⁶⁸ See CAD M, 226 (*muṣṣu*), L, 251 (*lumun libbi*), Ḫ, 233 (*ḫuluqqū*), and S, 220 (*ṣītu*).

is no longer the subject of an active verb. Instead, the bad things enumerated in the line “are bound” (*ritkusā*) to him. The lament language continues to the end of the text as does Aššurbanipal’s passivity, except in two cases where he is the subject of two active verbs, both describing acts of lament, in rev. 7 and 10. Note also that the confidence that Aššurbanipal exudes in obv. 1–rev. 2 gives way to a section that not only begins with a question of *why* Aššurbanipal is receiving such treatment but also queries in rev. 12 as to *how long* such treatment will last. The tone is one of uncertainty and exasperation, but I would not go so far as to say despair because, as noted above, Aššurbanipal does exhibit agency in the act of lamentation. In any case, oddly, the lament continues to the very end of the text. There is no petition and promise of praise or any indication of reply, restoration, or redemption.

There is one more thing to note about rev. 3–13, which to my knowledge has gone unnoticed in previous treatments: This second half of the text is in fact written in verse, the typical form of lamenting to the gods.⁶⁹ Several lines of evidence support this. First, each of the lines in rev. 3–13 contain complete thoughts in a grammatically complete manner, exactly what we would expect in a line of a lament in, for example, an incantation prayer. This conceptual and grammatical self-containment of each line stands in stark contrast to the first half of the text (obv. 1–rev. 2), which comprises sixteen sentences. Looking superficially at the most recent critical edition’s lineation of the text, we have complete sentences that fill only one line on the tablet in ten of the sixteen cases: obv. 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, rev. 1, and 2. In fact, however, a look at the tablet⁷⁰ shows that of these ten, obv. 9, 10, 11, 13, and rev. 1 actually occupy two physical lines on the tablet, as noted already, with the second line indented substantially to indicate that it is a continuation of the previous one.⁷¹ (Compare rev. 3, where the scribe uses a second line of the tablet to finish the phrase but only to write two signs under the end of the main part of the line.) Taking the indented lines into consideration, only five lines in the first half of the text, obv. 4, 5, 6, 12, and rev. 2, present sentences that begin and end on one physical line of the tablet. Thus, only five of sixteen sentences in the first

⁶⁹ Streck recognized the lines as being related to the lament tradition, inserted here due to the temple renovations. He writes: “Schluß ist ein Klagelied (*šigû*), das stilistisch und inhaltlich sich eng mit den sogen. Babylon. Bußpsalmen berührt. Die Anfügung desselben an den historischen Bericht ist vielleicht ... so zu erklären, daß hier der offizielle Text eines *šigû* vorliegt, wie solche bei den Sühneriten, die bei Tempelrenovationen üblich waren, rezitiert wurden” (1916, 252, note 1) on “Z. 4”). But, he did not translate the lines as verse (253) and he did not think the lament belonged in the mouth of Aššurbanipal (as Delitzsch, he reports, apparently understood it).

⁷⁰ See <https://cdli.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/dl/photo/P237924.jpg>.

⁷¹ Novotny and Jeffers indicate the continuation of the lines onto another with a forward slash (/) in their edition.

half of the text occupy one line on the tablet. We also have sentences in the first half of the text that extend beyond a single line (obv. 1–3a) or use only a fraction of a line on the tablet, including obv. 3b, 7a, 7b, 8a, and 8b.

Related to sentence length: There are no complex syntactical constructions in rev. 3–13. There are no subordinate phrases preceding the main clause or nested within it, as is the case in the first half of the text; see obv. 2, 8a, 9, 10, and rev. 1. The most complex syntactical construction in the second half of the text is in rev. 11 with its use of the imperative followed by a first person precative, a common syntagm in incantation prayers.

Finally, in the sixteen sentences that comprise the first half of the text, the verb is either in final position (eleven times) or, as is well-known in Sargonid royal inscriptions, in the penultimate slot (five times; see the sentences in obv. 1–3a, 4, 10, 11, and 12). In contrast, in the eleven lines in rev. 3–13 the main verb occurs in the final position only five times (rev. 8, 9 [the second verb in the line], 10, 12, and 13) and in penultimate position six times (rev. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 11 [the second verb in the line]). But in rev. 9 and 11, we find the first of *two* verbs in each line in the initial position, which would be highly unusual in prose.

Although an appeal to meter is not without problems,⁷² it is worth observing that although the lines in rev. 3–13 range in length from seven beats in a line (rev. 3) to as little as three (rev. 9) most have four or five beats (rev. 5–8, 10, 12–13). And all but one of the lines ends in a trochee, a common-place in Akkadian verse. (The exception is in rev. 5. But, as note 66 above indicates, there may be a scribal error in the last sign of the line. If the mistake is accepted, then this line also ends in a trochee.) I scan the lines as follows:

³ *am-mīni muršu lumun libbi sītu u huluqqū ritkusā ittīya* (7 beats)

ina māti salta ina bīti puhpuhū lā ipparrasū idāya (6 beats)

⁵ *duluḥḥū amāt lemutti suddurūni kayyān* (or, *kayyāna*) (4 beats)

lā ṭūb libbi lā ṭūb šīri iktapap lānī (4 beats)

⁷ *ina ū'a ayya agdamar ūmē* (4 beats)

ina ūm il āli ūm iššinni anāku dalhāku (4 beats)

⁹ *ukallanni mītu ušapšaq* (3 beats)

ina kūri nissati urra u mūša anassus (5 beats)

¹¹ *atanah ilu ana lā pāliḥi idin lūmur nūrka* (6 beats)

¹² *adi immat ilu annā teppušanni* (4 beats)

kī lā pāliḥi ili u ištari anāku epšāku (4 beats)

⁷² See Lenzi 2019, 47–53 for a recent summary of the matter.

The longest lines are the first two in the section, which one might argue eases the reader into the transition from prose to poetry, and rev. 11, which, in my scanning, does not form a couplet with another line whereas all of the others seem to pair up well. The first two couplets form a quatrain centered on what has happened to Aššurbanipal (rev. 3–6); the second two couplets form a second quatrain centered on Aššurbanipal’s reactions (rev. 7–10), framed by verbs of lament, *agdamar* (rev. 7) and *anassus* (rev. 10). And then after the long line in rev. 11 there is a final couplet showing Aššurbanipal’s uncertainty and perception of impiety (rev. 12–13). In light of this poetic analysis, we might revisit the issue of Aššurbanipal’s questions to note that the lament’s opening and closing couplets each contain a question in their first line (rev. 3 and 12, respectively).

In addition to the above analysis, I note that two of the eleven lines in the second half of the text have two close parallels in the *Great Ištar Šuila Prayer* (Ištar 2), which is, of course, a universally accepted poetic text. Reverse 9 is very close to line 74 and rev. 13 is nearly *identical* (save the pronominal suffixes and Assyrianism) to line 68 in that long incantation prayer:

The Lament, rev. 9:

ukallanni mūtu ušapšaq, “Death holds me fast; I am in dire straits!”

Great Ištar Šuila Prayer, line 74:

ukallanni mūtu u šapšāqu,⁷³ “Death holds me fast, and severe hardship!”

The Lament, rev. 13:

kī lā pāliḫ ili u ištari anāku epšāku, “Like one who does not revere *his* god and goddess I am treated.”

Great Ištar Šuila Prayer, line 68:

kī lā pāliḫ iliya u ištariya anāku epšēk,⁷⁴ “Like one who does not revere my god and goddess I am treated.”

There is also a near parallel between rev. 7, which reads *ina ū’a ayya agdamar ūmē*, “I have spent *my* days *sighing* ‘woe’ and ‘alas’,” and the Akkadian translation of a line in an incantation against headache in CT 17 20: 72: *ina ū’a ayya ūmīšam uštabarri*, “he persists *sighing* ‘woe’ and ‘alas’ daily.”⁷⁵ These three

⁷³ See Zgoll, 2003, 46, who translates the line, “[e]s hält mich fest Tod und äußerste Pein” (52). It is noteworthy that the verb is singular and yet we have two nouns in the line that could serve as subject. One wonders if the line is in fact corrupt and at some earlier point in its textual history read at its conclusion exactly as does *The Lament: ušapšaq*.

⁷⁴ See Zgoll, 2003, 46.

⁷⁵ Cited in CAD A/1, 220; see also Udug-ḫul VII 8 (Geller 2016, 251), reading CT 16 24 i 16 with CAD U/W, 2: *ina ū-<a> a-a*.

close parallels strongly support seeing these lines as a traditional lament presented in verse. Although *The Lament* seems to be addressed to Aššurbanipal's personal god, the parallels to the *Great Ištar Šuila Prayer* (Ištar 2) seem especially apt, given the well-known relationship between the Assyrian kings and that goddess, and perhaps worthy of further consideration. But, the intertextual relationship to be explored here in the remainder of this section is focused on *The Lament* and *Ludlul*.

Unlike the Ḫarran Inscription, *The Lament* does not quote *Ludlul* and thus there is no obvious indicator or hermeneutical key that signals explicitly that the text was drawing on the poem for its inspiration. *The Lament's* use of *Ludlul*, I think, is more subtle than the Ḫarran Inscription's, which means the interpretation proposed here is more tenuous. I believe the few matters pointed out below provide reason enough to posit a probable relationship between the two texts. In such literary matters, this is the best we can expect.

First, the entire *Lament* contains themes and is structured in such a way that the text brings to mind *Ludlul*, especially Tablet II 12–32, in a general way.⁷⁶ In this passage, the protagonist of *Ludlul* complains about his unjust treatment and then enumerates his pious acts toward his personal deities as evidence against what I have called previously his perception (at that point in the narrative) of his unmerited disfavor. The text of *Ludlul* II 12–22, 23–32 reads:

Like one who had not made a libation for *his* god,
 And did not invoke *his* goddess with food,
Who did not humble himself, was not seen bowing down,
 From *whose* mouth prayers *and* supplication had ceased,
Who had abandoned the day of the god, disregarded the festival,
 Had become negligent and despised their rites,
Who had not taught his people to fear and pay heed to *the gods*,
Who did not invoke his god *when* he ate his food,
Who had abandoned his goddess, *and* did not bring a flour-offering,
Like the one who had gone mad *and* forgotten his lord,
Who had invoked the solemn oath of his god in vain, *that's how I was treated.*

But I was in fact attentive to prayers and supplication,
 Supplication was common sense, sacrifice my rule.
 The day to fear the gods *was* a delight to my heart,

⁷⁶ Novotny 2014, xxv and Finn 2017, 83 mention the thematic connections between the two texts and Sanders invokes K.891 as proof of Aššurbanipal's "divine persecution complex" (2009, 165, n.37). Bottéro discusses the present text immediately after his treatment of *Ludlul* and thus one wonders what he might have meant by "literary reminiscences" in the following statement, after a quotation of the lament section: "Même si ça et là l'on subodore quelques reminiscences littéraires, comment ne pas être touché par la sincérité profonde de cette complainte?" (1977, 27).

The day of the goddess's procession *was* wealth *and* weal.
 The king's prayer: it *was* a pleasure,
 And his fanfare truly a delight.
 I taught my land to observe the rites of the god,
 I instructed my people to revere the name of the goddess.
 I made *my* praises of the king like *those of* a god,
 And taught the masses fear for the palace.

In thinking about how this text compares to *Ludlul* and to Tablet II 12–32 more specifically, we should note, obviously, that Aššurbanipal's lament reverses the thematic order attested in *Ludlul*, putting the pious acts first and the lament second. This, I think, is precisely what one would expect in the opening lines of a stand-alone royal inscription—a genre that typically boasts of the king's great acts. We might also keep in mind in thinking about the ordering of the material that in *Ludlul* we have a retrospective account in which the sufferer describes his trauma from the standpoint of deliverance. It makes sense for him to add to the description of suffering he had begun in Tablet I and will continue in Tablet II after what in context is a brief intervening objection about his uprightness in lines 23–32 of Tablet II. In Tablets III to V the sufferer describes his redemption, that is, how he came to the point when he can now look back on his suffering at some distance as a well man. Aššurbanipal, on the other hand, has yet to receive his redemption. He is in the midst of his suffering. His story is, he hopes, only half-told. It makes sense for him, then, to use the opposite ordering of his material: pious acts first, lamentation second.

As mentioned earlier, *The Lament* does not explicitly cite *Ludlul*. Might there be hints to the poem in *The Lament*? Are there similarities in vocabulary or phrasing in *The Lament* that would invoke *Ludlul* in the mind of someone who knew the poem well? A close comparison of the vocabulary and phrasing in *The Lament* with that in *Ludlul* yields little to go on. There are similarities to be sure. Reverse 8, for example, *ina ūm il āli ūm iššinni anāku dalḥāku*, “I am distressed on the day of the god of the city, the festival day,” is similar to *Ludlul* II 16, *ibḫilu ūmu ili išētu eššēšu*, “Who had abandoned the day of the god, disregarded the festival.” But such similarities are likely the result of the common theme in both *Ludlul* and *The Lament*; that is, both deal with lamentation and do so by drawing on stock vocabulary and phrases (some of which are noted above).

There is one phrase in *The Lament*, however, that may qualify as an allusion to *Ludlul*. A phrase in rev. 10 occurs nearly verbatim in *Ludlul* III 7. Reverse 10 reads: *ina kūri nissati urra u mūša anassus*, “on account of depression and lamentation I moan day and night.” *Ludlul* III 7 reads: *[u]rra u mūšu išṭēniš ana[ssus]*, “[d]ay and night alike I would m[ooan].” One might be disposed to consider *urra u mūša anassus* a stock phrase, a statement too generic

to be considered an allusion. However, the verb in this phrase, *nasāsu*, is not very commonly attested in Akkadian literature, at least not according to the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*'s entry of the verb.⁷⁷ There are only about fifteen texts (not counting lexical lists) that utilize the verb. Only two of these texts use the verb in the first person and in relation to the preceding phrase “day and night”: *The Lament* and *Ludlul*. I find it interesting that this phrase occurs near the end of *The Lament* in reverse 10, with only three more lines to the text's end. In *Ludlul* the line occurs in Tablet III 7, just one line before the end of the protagonist's lamentation in the poem; that is, it occurs just before he receives a series of dreams that announce his coming healing and restoration, starting in III 9.

There may be one more hint of a connection to *Ludlul* in *The Lament*; namely, both the lamentation in *Ludlul* II 12–22 and Aššurbanipal's *Lament* end in the same way syntactically speaking, with a first person singular predicative verb. *Ludlul* uses *amrāk* (II 22); *The Lament*, *epšāku* (rev. 13).⁷⁸ Although the phrase in rev. 13 of our lament is not a verbatim parallel to any line in *Ludlul*, the fact that *The Lament* ends with the predicative as does *Ludlul* II 12–22—and both are intensely negative—is suggestive.⁷⁹ Unlike the sufferer in *Ludlul*, who continues to lament in *Ludlul* II 33ff. and then goes on to recount his restoration in *Ludlul* III 9ff., Aššurbanipal has nothing more to say. Aššurbanipal, the text implies, is still in the throes of his unmerited disfavor. It seems fitting therefore to end his entire text with a protest that he is being treated as though an impious man, despite his initial presentation of pious acts.

Admittedly, the connection is subtle. But, if we draw on the idea of narrative habitus it seems quite likely that *Ludlul* is somewhere in the literary background of Aššurbanipal's lament, even if not exclusively so. If this seems reasonable, how should we interpret *Ludlul*'s impact on the rhetoric of *The Lament*?

If *Ludlul* was as popular and well-known as our manuscript evidence suggests, and if the text was used in the training of scribal elites as the school tablets indicate, we should not be surprised to see others filtering their experience of unmerited disfavor, inscribed in their own texts, through the suffering and restoration of *Ludlul*'s protagonist. Just as we cry out when physical pain racks

⁷⁷ CAD N/2, 23–24.

⁷⁸ Incidentally, note that Urad-Gula's question in *The Forlorn Scholar* immediately following his allusion to *Ludlul* also ends with a 1cs predicative: *aḫzāku* (see Parpola 1993, no. 294, obv. 31).

⁷⁹ See Vogelzang 1996, 176, who briefly contrasts the negative implication of the syntax at the end of *Ludlul* II 22 (*anāku amrāk*) with other texts and/or passages, especially royal inscriptions, which foreground *anāku* but always for a positive purpose.

our bodies, we humans are also driven to cry out in emotional distress and intellectual confusion as that pain calls our understanding of the world into question. Anthropologist Byron Good in his study *Medicine, Rationality, and Experience* notes that when pain and suffering “threaten to systematically deconstruct or subvert the lifeworld, this dissolution is countered by a human response to find or fashion meaning, to reconstitute the world.” Putting the pain and suffering in a narrative, he claims, “is a process of locating suffering in history, of placing events in a meaningful order in time. It also has the object of opening the future to a positive ending, of enabling the sufferer to imagine a means of overcoming adversity and the kinds of activities that would allow life experience to mirror the projected story.”⁸⁰ We do this today with our own suffering, as Byron demonstrates in his study of the narrativization of illness and pain, and it seems to be the case that people in the ancient Near East did it as well. *Ludlul*, however, did not supply such a narrative serendipitously; rather, the text actively commends itself to its readers as such when its protagonist exhorts its readers to “learn from my example.”

In *The Lament* Aššurbanipal bears witness to what constitutes “the unmaking of his world,” to invoke Elaine Scarry’s phrase from her book *The Body in Pain* (1985). Aššurbanipal must somehow make sense of this topsy-turvy world in which piety does not bring blessing. So he has cast his experience in the mold of *Ludlul*’s protagonist, as the poem suggests its readers do, but in a profound if also more subtle manner than we might have expected. His lament dwells within the orbit of *Ludlul*, we might say. One of the things Arthur Frank says narrative habitus does is that it “predisposes a sense of the right and fitting resolution toward which a half-told story should progress.” He continues: “People’s sense of how plots will probably go reflects and generates their everyday common sense of which actions lead to which consequences, whether in stories or in life. People’s habitus of expected plot completions is nothing less than their sense of life’s possibilities.”⁸¹ If Aššurbanipal’s experience is being guided by the example of the sufferer in *Ludlul*, as I suspect it is, he knows not only what he is supposed to do when he suffers—complain, protest, lament, and wait—but also what is to happen afterwards, which is the arrival of divine mercy and the return of divine favor. It may be in fact that the very writing of this half-told story was intended to elicit or hasten its completion—to bring relief and healing. Aššurbanipal has done his part; now he can expect the deity to do the rest. If this subtle intertextual interpretation of *The Lament of Aššurbanipal* is convincing, then we have found evidence that one more person

⁸⁰ Good 1994, 128.

⁸¹ Frank 2010, 54.

has taken *Ludlul*'s paradigmatic intention to heart and used the poem to process his own suffering, even as that suffering confounds him.

10.4. CONCLUSION

These three case studies show us the active reception of *Ludlul* in Assyrian and Babylonian literate production. Scribes were reading and interpreting the poem actively and reusing it thoughtfully in other texts to shape their own experiences or the experiences of others (i.e., their royal employers)—and this centuries after the poem's creation. *Ludlul* was clearly a Mesopotamian classic, transcending its own time of composition and speaking to others centuries later in ancient Mesopotamia. As we enter a new stage of reading Akkadian literature—a digital age, searching for intertextual connections such as I have discussed in this chapter will become easier and easier. Many other uses of *Ludlul* in other texts are likely to be discovered in the near future, and these will further enrich our appreciation of the social aspects of Akkadian literary history.

APPENDIX:

TRANSLATION OF NABONIDUS'S HARRAN INSCRIPTION⁸²

¹ *This is* Sîn's great deed (*epištu*) that none of the *other* gods and goddesses could comprehend, that had not happened in the land⁸³ since olden days and the people of the land had <never>⁸⁴ seen, written on tablets, and recorded for ever after:

^{5b} O Sîn, lord of the gods and goddesses who dwell in the heavens, you *are the one* who, at the time of Nabonidus, king of Babylon, came from the heavens.

^{7b} I *am* Nabonidus, an only son, who had no one, who had no conception of kingship.⁸⁵ The gods and goddesses interceded for [m]e and Sîn called me to kingship. He showed me a dream at night *saying* thus: "Rebuild Eḫulḫul, the

⁸² Column identifications and lineation follow exemplar 1.

⁸³ Lit., "had not descended to the land (from heaven)."

⁸⁴ Both exemplars lack the negative particle *lā* at this point, which Oppenheim (1969, 562), Schaudig (2001, 487), and Weiershäuser and Novotny (2020, 189) insert as an inadvertent omission; compare Gadd 1958, 56–57, who understands the text to communicate that the people saw the deed but did not write it down.

⁸⁵ Lit., "for whom kingship did not exist in my heart."

house of Sîn in Ḫarran, immediately, and I will put all of the lands in your charge.”⁸⁶

^{14b} *However*, the people—the citizens of Babylon, Borsippa, Nippur, Ur, Uruk, and Larsa, the temple administrators and people of the cult centers of the land of Akkad—did wrong, spurned, sinned against his great divinity. They did not know the terrifying⁸⁷ anger of the king of the gods, Nannar. They disregarded their ritual obligations and were speaking lies and untruths. Like dogs, they continually devoured one another. Ague and famine appeared in their midst,⁸⁸ and *thus* he (Sîn) reduced the people of the land. As for me, he caused me to flee⁸⁹ from my city Babylon, *taking* the route to the cities Tema, Dadanu, Padakku, Ḫibra, Yadiḫu as far as Yatribu. For ten years I roamed among them (i.e., these cities); I did not enter my city Babylon.

^{27b} On order of Sîn, the king of the gods, the lord of lords, whose command—Sîn-Nannar’s—the gods and goddesses dwelling in the heavens carried out, Šamaš, Ištar, Adad, and Nergal appointed for me a watch over my health and well-being. In that year, in *the month of* Nisannu and Tašritu, the people of the land of Akkad and the land of Ḫatti received for me the plentiful yield of the mountains and sea, and in the severity of the summer heat, *in* Simanu, Du’uzu, Abu, Elulu, and Tašritu, throughout these months and in all of these years without fail, at the command of Sîn, Adad, the irrigation controller of the heavens and earth, provided them with rain water *so that* their goods and their stuffs came in to me without a problem.⁹⁰ On order of Sîn,⁹¹ Ištar, the lady of battle, without whom neither aggression nor peace can exist in the land and battle cannot be waged, laid her hand over them *as protection*⁹² *with the result that* the king of Egypt, the la[nd of] the Medes, the land of the Arabs, and all of the hostile kings were sending me conciliatory gestures and *messages of*

⁸⁶ Lit., “I will fill your hands.”

⁸⁷ With Schaudig (2001, 488, 497) I read GAL TÚ here as *galtu*, “terrifying,” rather than GAL-tú, *rabītu*, “great” (so Weiershäuser / Novotny 2020, 189).

⁸⁸ My translation follows Beaulieu’s understanding of the syntax here (2007, 145, n.1); namely, *ušabšū* is understood as an impersonal third person plural verb (“they caused x and y to come into existence” > “x and y were caused to come into existence” > “x and y appeared”). Schaudig takes a different approach that results in an equally reasonable translation. In contrast to his earlier translation (2001, 497), Schaudig now sees the verb written *ú-šab-šú-ú* in both witnesses as a third person singular verb with Sîn as the subject, “[h]e caused *di* ‘u-disease and famine to appear among them,” and explains the writing on its end as a “*sandhi*-spelling with the conjunction *u*” (2021, 354, n.21).

⁸⁹ The verb is derived from *erēqu*, “to flee,” an Aramaic loanword (Schaudig 2001, 312).

⁹⁰ Lit., “in peace.” See Oppenheim 1969, 562, n.4 for the idiomatic sense I have adopted here.

⁹¹ With Oppenheim (1969, 562) and Beaulieu (1989, 173, n.17), I think the conjunction *u* between the two deities’ names is superfluous.

⁹² See CAD P, 156.

friendship. As for the people of the land of the Arabs, who the weapon ... [...] of the land of Akkad, [...] they stood *ready* to rob and take *its* possessions,⁹³ on order of Sîn, Nergal smashed their weapons and all of them bowed down at my feet. Šamaš, the lord of the oracle, without whom nothing can be predicted,⁹³ the one who carries out the command of Nannar, the father, his progenitor, established in the people of the land of Akkad and the land of Ḫatti, whom he (i.e. Sîn) put in my charge, a faithful mouth and heart toward me so that they served me⁹⁴ and carried out my command in the distant mountain *regions and inaccessible paths* where I roamed for ten years.⁹⁵

^{11b} The appointed time arrived. The days that Nannar the king of the gods ordered had elapsed. *It was* on the seventeenth day of Tašritu, a day whose meaning is “Sîn will grant *your prayer*.”

^{14b} O Sîn, the lord of the gods, whose name on the first day *of the month* is “Weapon⁹⁶ of Anu,”

You strike the heavens and split open the earth (i.e., netherworld).
You are the one who concentrates *in yourself* the rites of Anu-ship,
 Who controls the rites of Enlil-ship, who takes over the rites of Ea-ship,
 Who wields in his hands the sum total of the rites of the heavens,
 Enlil of the gods, the king of kings, the lord of lords,
 Whose command cannot be rescinded,
 And whose order is not spoken twice,
 The fear of whose great divinity fills the heavens and earth,
 Just as his appearance envelops the heavens and earth.
 Without you who can do anything?
 The land in which you decide to dwell,
 You place the fear of your great divinity in its heart,
 And its foundation is firm in perpetuity.⁹⁷

⁹³ Lit., “a mouth is not opened and a mouth is not covered.” See *Ludlul* II 43 for a similar use of *petû* and *katāmu* in a context dealing with the variability of human fate, recognized already by Gadd (1958, 67).

⁹⁴ Lit., “they guarded my watch.”

⁹⁵ I follow Schaudig (2001, 498) and Weiershäuser and Novotny (2020, 191) in taking the ten years as the conclusion to this sentence rather than as the specified length of the term (*adannu*), as Oppenheim (1969, 563) and Beaulieu (1989, 151) translate. The *adannu* is rarely specified in Nabonidus’s inscriptions; the one time that it is, its length follows rather than precedes *adannu* (see Schaudig 2001, 599 for a list of attestations and the Babylon Stele x 18’–19’ for a specified *adannu* [p. 521]). Given such a slender basis for judgment, however, the alternative should not be ruled out.

⁹⁶ For a discussion of the interpretation of KU here, see Schaudig 2001, 491, n.700.

⁹⁷ More idiomatically, “You place the fear of your great divinity in the heart of the land in which you decide to dwell, and its foundation is firm in perpetuity.”

26b The land that you decide to destroy,
 You remove your fear from its heart,
 You overthrow it in perpetuity.
You are the one all of the gods and goddesses dwelling in the heavens,
 Obey the utterance of his mouth.
 They carry out the command of Nannar, the father, their progenitor,
 Who controls the rites of the heavens and earth.
 Without whose august command, which he speaks in the heavens daily,
 The land is not overthrown and the light in the land does not exist.
 The gods tremble like a reed, the Anunnaki shake,
 Who [...] before the command of his great divinity,
 Which cannot be changed,
 [...] mountains ...

8 lines of broken, illegible text

III “My situation could not be decided by seer and inquirer. *When* I lay down at night, my dream was terrifying” {*Ludlul* I 52, 54 verbatim} until the order of [Sîn (arrived)].

³ The time⁹⁸ had elapsed. The appointed time that [Nanna]r [had ordered] arrived.

⁴ He l[ed] me [away] from⁹⁹ Tema.¹⁰⁰ [I determined¹⁰¹ *to return*]¹⁰² to Babylon, the city of [my] lordshi[p]. They (i.e., the people) saw [...] they came up into my presence with greeting-gif[ts] and presents. The nearby kings came up to me and kissed my feet, and those far off heard *and* feared his great divinity. The *personal* god¹⁰³ and goddess who had deserted¹⁰⁴ me and were distant¹⁰⁵

⁹⁸ Lit., “the year.” It is obvious that this phrase *imli šattu* (*im-li* MU) parallels the earlier, similar phrase in ii 12 (exemplar 1): *imlû ûmû*, “the days elapsed.” As an aside: One wonders if exemplar 1, the only one to preserve this line, has left out an UD, in which case we could read *im-li* <u>-mu, *imli ûmu*, “the day elapsed,” the more common phrase). The purpose of the parallel is to return the narrative to Sîn’s fortuitous command, which was left undefined previously and is now specified: Nabonidus’s return to Babylon. The intervening material is mostly hymnic verse (I think; no one previously has translated it as such), though the citation of *Ludlul* after the eight line gap would suggest that the text had returned to the autobiographical voice recounting trials and tribulations at some point in the break.

⁹⁹ Lit., “he caused me to go out of.”

¹⁰⁰ This translation follows Schaudig’s new restoration of the line (with help from the Larsa Stele parallel), which provides the verb (2021, 356, [*ú-še-ša*]-[*an*]-[*ni-ma*]).

¹⁰¹ Lit., “I set my face.”

¹⁰² This translation follows Schaudig’s new restoration (with help from the Larsa Stele parallel), which again provides the verb (2021, 357, [*áš-kun pa-nu-ú-a*]).

¹⁰³ The text has DINGIR.MEŠ but I think this must be understood as a singular deity.

¹⁰⁴ See note 52 above for this reading.

turned back to me and spoke good things *for me*. An omen of my favor was placed in the mouth of the seer. I led my people from the distant mountains in plenty, abundance, and bounty. In peace I set out on the path to my land.

^{16b} I constantly observed the order of his great divinity. I was not negligent. I was not careless. I was not inattentive. I summoned *for work* the people of the land of Akkad and the land of Ḫatti, from the border of Egypt, on the upper sea to the lower sea, whom Sîn, king of the gods, had put in my charge. Eḫulḫul, the temple of Sîn, I built anew. I completed its work. I led in procession¹⁰⁶ Sîn, Ningal, Nusku, and Sadarnunna, from Babylon, the city of my kingship, and with celebration and rejoicing I brought *them* into *the temple*. I seated *them* on an everlasting cultic dais. I presented splendid offerings before them and lavished presents *on them*. I filled Eḫulḫul with jo[y] and I caused the heart of its staff¹⁰⁷ to rejoice. I carried out the command of Sîn, king of the gods, the lord of lords, who dwells in the heavens, whose name in the heavens *is* “God of Gods,” who exceeds¹⁰⁸ Šamaš—whose designation *is also* Nusku—Ištar, Adad, and Nergal, who carried out the command of Nannar, who exceeds them. When I arrayed myself with weapons and decided to do battle, *it was* to carry out the command of Nannar.

^{32b} Whoever you are, who Sîn summons to kingship and calls you “my son,” the *cult* places of Sîn, who dwells in the heavens, who[se] comm[and cannot be ch]anged and whose order is not sp[oken] twice....

5 more illegible lines

¹⁰⁵ For *i-re-qa* as a form of the third person masculine plural verb, ending in *-a*, see Schaudig 2001, 187–88.

¹⁰⁶ Lit., “I took the hands of.”

¹⁰⁷ Lit., “his people.”

¹⁰⁸ There is some question about how to understand *šūtuq* in this context. I am following the suggestion of Schaudig 2001, 499, n.726 (similarly, Weiershäuser / Novotny 2020, 192).

PART THREE: AN ANCIENT POEM AND A MODERN READING

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A truly classic literary text has a way of transcending both time and space. Native readers of Akkadian literature have long ago perished. And now the context of reading Akkadian literature has been radically transformed. As we saw in chapter one, the recovery of Akkadian literature (and thus of *Ludlul*) was motivated by political and religious impulses, and these impulses, we must admit, continue to play a role to this day in our reading of Akkadian literature (and thus of *Ludlul*) to one degree or another, depending on the specific context.¹ Moreover, those impulses are not easily disentangled from the academic and humanistic motivations behind our reading of Akkadian literature in our modern contexts, motivations that have fueled this book, the many studies it cites, and, I dare say, your interest in reading it. At our dispassionate best, we read and study these texts as modern intellectuals curious to understand our ancient forebears—note the metaphorical genealogical connection. But, can *Ludlul* speak to us as something more than an antiquarian curiosity to be used for propagandistic, apologetic, or academic purposes? Can the experience of the protagonist in the poem, as removed as it is from us culturally, still connect with us on a human level so that we learn something *about the human experience* from his story when we read it in our modern contexts? It seems impossible to disentangle this question from the other impulses and motivations that I have mentioned above. And yet the question remains. It is this question that the final chapter of this study pursues, a chapter that once again uses a comparative method (see chapters six and eight previously) to shed new light on the poem and hopefully *our experience* of reading it today.

¹ See Lenzi 2019, 194–96 for a brief statement where I discuss this in terms of connecting Akkadian literature to our religions' nivities and institutional and intellectual cultural genealogies.

CHAPTER 11:
LUDLUL II 71–85, DEMONIC OPPRESSION, AND SLEEP PARALYSIS:
A CASE STUDY IN BRIDGING THE ANCIENT
AND MODERN CONTEXTS

The previous chapters have interpreted *Ludlul* as an ideological product of the institutional concerns of scribal scholars and ritual experts, especially exorcists. In expositing the poem from these perspectives, especially in chapters five and seven, we learned a good bit about how the protagonist’s revelatory experiences were inextricably interlinked with both his social embeddedness in a variety of relationships—personal, professional, and institutional—as well as his physical embodiment as one who suffered severe illness and nearly fatal bodily deterioration (see also chapter six). Although both the social and the physical matters recounted in the poem bear a specifically ancient Mesopotamian cultural imprint and thus required some exposition to make the details understandable, we as modern readers have a variety of *general* points of contact with the protagonist’s experience recounted in the poem that make an empathetic reading of our protagonist’s story possible, despite the cultural distance between us and ancient Mesopotamia. For example, we have familial relationships just as did Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan. We know what it means to lose reputation and suffer the loss of important social relationships, though perhaps not as catastrophically as our protagonist, if we have been fortunate. We may not attribute a soured friendship to the anger of a god, but we can imagine the protagonist’s anguish. Likewise, we know how it feels to suffer through an illness and to experience bodily pain, and we have some idea of how a body can deteriorate—if not yet experientially in one’s own body then perhaps observationally in a loved one’s—under distress and disease, even if not as severely or as thoroughly as our protagonist’s did. We may not associate a physical illness with sin or a demonic attack,¹ but we can easily imagine Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan’s agony. We can

¹ We should keep in mind, however, that the use of a shared name (in some cases) for a physical illness and the demon that ancient Mesopotamians held responsible for it (e.g., *di’u* or *šūlu* and note the demon-diseases named in, e.g., the El Amarna version of the myth *Nergal and Ereškigal*, lines 68–73, for which see Izre’el 1997, 52) blurs what looks like a clear distinction in my description between physical illness and demonic attack (likewise, e.g., Böck 2014, 179 and 182). As Rochberg 2016 has demonstrated thoroughly, there was no “Nature” and thus no natural / supernatural divide in ancient Mesopotamian ontologies. I am also overgeneralizing about our contemporary cultures since there are very clearly contemporary people—neighbors, family members, and work-place colleagues—who associate physical maladies with sin and/or a demonic attack.

do these things because of our common, embodied humanity with the ancient sufferer. It bears emphasizing that such a commonality is constrained significantly by the chronological, geographical, and cultural distance between him and us; but commonality exists nonetheless.

Addressing the reader on both an academic and existential level, this chapter attempts to mediate between the protagonist's ancient and our modern experiences related specifically to our common physical embodiment while simultaneously advancing the interpretation of the poem. It does this through a comparative reading of the *alû* demon's attack on the protagonist in Tablet II 71–85 and modern clinical and anthropological studies related to sleep paralysis. I interpret the attack of the *alû* demon in comparison with this neurophysiological sleep disorder that we as moderns may have experienced ourselves—and, in fact, that we as moderns *still* attribute sometimes to a demonic (or alien) attack—in order to understand the passage in *Ludlul* and its ancient significance in the poem *and also* in order to connect this passage to our modern, contemporary contexts. In the conclusion, I explore the implications of this contemporary connection for us not just as historical investigators (scholars) but also as modern readers of this ancient poem to answer this question: Can the experience of the protagonist in the poem, as removed as it is from us culturally, still connect with us on a human level so that we learn something *about the human experience* from his story when we read it in our modern contexts? Thus, I offer this chapter as a case study in bridging the ancient and modern contexts of reading *Ludlul* with scholars. As the following shows, this mode of reading *Ludlul* across time shares in many ways the challenges and rewards of reading a medical ethnography, a genre that translates suffering across space, from one culture to another, in order to portray the frailties and vulnerabilities of being human.²

11.1. A (RELATIVELY) CONTEMPORARY DEMONIC ATTACK

Late one night in the early 1980's a Pentecostal Christian boy was asleep in bed. He awakened suddenly to an eerie, evil presence in the room. As the presence moved closer to the boy's bed, he grew increasingly certain the presence

² See, for example, Fadiman 1997, which presents a heart-wrenching account of competing interpretations, those of the members of the medical establishment in Merced, California (USA) vs. those of a traditional Hmong religious outlook, of a little girl's experiences, which the doctors diagnosed as epilepsy and the family identified as a shamanistic gift. As will be shown below, recent medical ethnographic work among the Southeast Asian Hmong immigrant communities in California has resulted in important findings on sleep paralysis, upon which this chapter draws.

was a demon or the Devil himself. The boy had learned all about the Prince of Darkness and his minions at church. He knew that the world was filled with angels and demons constantly warring over humanity—even his own soul. He had heard God speak through messages in tongues and prophecies almost weekly at church, which confirmed the fact that supernatural activity was in fact real. But he had never experienced the demonic until now. And he was absolutely scared out of his wits.

The boy's immediate reaction to the evil presence was to jump out of bed and run for help, for prayer. But when he tried to get up, he could not move. His eyes were closed and he could not open them. He tried to yell for help but his mouth would not speak. He was paralyzed—apparently, by the terror. Meanwhile, the presence moved closer. The terror was overwhelming. Breathing was difficult. It occurred to him that he might suffocate. He might die. The boy did the only thing he knew to do: He called on the name of Jesus. Though he could not speak, he incanted mentally over and over the only words that could repel a demonic presence: “In the name of Jesus! In the name of Jesus! In the name of Jesus!” But this did not stop the presence.

By the time the evil presence was standing over him, its face almost touching his own, the boy could move his fingers ever so slightly, then he could wiggle his toes. Within seconds he could rock his body back and forth at the shoulders. The rocking, slight initially, quickly grew until the movement jolted him out of his paralysis. He was awake! And the presence was gone.

Since that day, the boy, now a man, has regularly experienced a similar phenomenon. His interpretation of it has changed over time, especially after rejecting his religious cosmology. But the terror of the experience has never gone away. In college, a well-meaning Christian counselor told the young man it was probably not a demonic attack but an anxiety attack, perhaps brought on by stress. The naturalistic explanation helped reduce the terror of the experiences a little. I was in graduate school when I learned of a clinical explanation for my suffering by way of an online survey by James Allan Cheyne of University of Waterloo (now retired). In clinical terms, the condition is called sleep paralysis.³

³ For two other examples of Christian religious interpretations of a similar experience, see Adler 2011, 19 and 29. In both accounts, the person involved in the experience invokes the name of Jesus as an apotropaic measure.

11.2. SLEEP PARALYSIS: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

According to Cheyne, a clinical pioneer in the study of sleep paralysis and related disorders,⁴

[s]leep paralysis is a condition in which someone, most often lying in a supine position, about to drop off to sleep, or just upon waking from sleep realizes that s/he is unable to move, or speak, or cry out. This may last a few seconds or several moments, occasionally longer. People frequently report feeling a ‘presence’ that is often described as malevolent, threatening, or evil. An intense sense of dread and terror is very common. The presence is likely to be vaguely felt or sensed just out of sight but thought to be watching or monitoring, often with intense interest, sometimes standing by, or sitting on, the bed. On some occasions the presence may attack, strangling and exerting crushing pressure on the chest. People also report auditory, visual, proprioceptive, and tactile hallucinations, as well as floating sensations and out-of-body experiences.⁵

Shelley R. Adler, a medical anthropologist at University of California–San Francisco, studied the phenomenon in the Hmong immigrant community in Stockton, California (Adler 2011), the location of my academic institution and personal residence since 2006. She found the same features consistently reported among those who suffer from the condition. Adler organizes her description around nine foci, which I paraphrase here to complement Cheyne’s succinct definition.

1. The victim feels awake during sleep paralysis.
2. The victim, lying down in bed usually, perceives their environment, whether they remember their eyes as being open or closed.
3. Victims always recall their inability to move.
4. There is almost always a severe sense of dread, an overwhelming fear associated with this condition.
5. The victims very often feel an evil presence while they are paralyzed.
6. They feel pressure on their chest, sometimes explained as due to a malevolent being sitting or pressing down on their chest.

⁴ See, e.g., Cheyne, Rueffer, and Newby-Clark 1999, Cheyne 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2010, 2012, Cheyne and Girard 2004, 2007, 2009, Cheyne and Pennycook 2013.

⁵ Cited from http://watarts.uwaterloo.ca/~acheyne/S_P2.html, last accessed April 18, 2014. The link is now dead. According to the Internet Archive’s “Way Back Machine,” the link went dead sometime between May 22, 2017 and July 22, 2017 (https://web.archive.org/web/20170701000000/http://watarts.uwaterloo.ca/~acheyne/S_P2.html).

7. Victims report difficulty in breathing, whether from the chest pressure or from a feeling of being strangled.
8. The great majority of victims who experience the condition do so while lying on their back—the supine position.
9. Sometimes there are auditory hallucinations (e.g., footsteps, one’s name being called out, a creaking door, etc.), experiences of floating, being lifted, etc. (which are not always considered scary or evil), and occasionally there are unpleasant smells associated with the experience.⁶

These characteristics are not always present in every occurrence of the condition for every person who suffers from sleep paralysis. But, these are the various traits one will hear over and over from those who suffer from sleep paralysis in contemporary interviews, surveys, online discussion boards,⁷ and various other kinds of personal accounts, which have been the primary means researchers have used to gather data on this sleep disorder.

Although pinning down precise numbers is difficult, according to some scholarly estimates about one in four humans will experience sleep paralysis at least *once* during their lifetime—and many will not recognize it as anything more than an anomalous experience.⁸ A small portion of these people will experience it regularly or sporadically for weeks, months, and even years (perhaps throughout an entire lifetime).⁹ Some groups have higher ratios of the condition than others. For example, in Japan about one third of the population has experienced it.¹⁰ And among the Stockton, California (USA) community of Hmong immigrants, a population group that Adler studied extensively for more than a decade, the condition occurs in over half of the community (58%).¹¹

⁶ Adler 2011, 9–13. See also Sharpless and Doghramji 2015, 71–92 and Sharpless and Kliková 2019. Sharpless and Doghramji 2015 is the most recent monographic treatment of sleep paralysis known to me. It is written for clinicians by clinicians. Its historical claims should be treated with caution since the authors rely on questionable sources at times to substantiate their claims (e.g., “Time-Life Books” on p. 42). On matters Assyriological, I do not know of any “vampire myths” from ancient Assyria or Babylonia, as they claim existed (2015, 25, 185).

⁷ See, e.g., <https://www.reddit.com/r/Sleepparalysis/>, a subreddit with nearly 50,000 members (as of May 2022).

⁸ The estimate comes from Adler (2011, 2 and 74), where she notes the fact that studies may vary—sometimes rather widely—on the issue of prevalence. See likewise, Sharpless and Doghramji 2015, 93–101.

⁹ For issues surrounding accurate rates of recurrent sleep paralysis, see Sharpless and Doghramji 2015, 97–98 with extensive literature.

¹⁰ Adler 2011, 20. For an ethnography of sleep paralysis and its relationship to *kanashibari* in Japan, see now Yoshimura 2015; for prevalence in Japan (based on the previous month at the time of the survey), see Otsuka *et al* 2018. For a very brief treatment of lifetime prevalence rates by ethnicity and gender, see Sharpless and Doghramji 2015, 94–97.

¹¹ Adler 2011, 98.

Ninety-seven percent of all community members interviewed had heard of the non-obvious being responsible for the condition, the demon named *dab tsoq* (/dɒ tʃɔ/).

Although sleep paralysis is not fully understood and continues to elicit research, many scholars think worry, anxiety, exhaustion, and trauma (PTSD) may be considered precipitating factors of an episode, which often seems more like an attack.¹²

As interesting as the clinical research is, the fieldwork of folklorists and anthropologists surrounding the non-clinical and non-biomedical explanations of this constellation of experiences is what will bring us back to *Ludlul*.

In 1982 in a ground-breaking study David J. Hufford compared the Newfoundland folkloristic tradition of the Old Hag to sleep paralysis. Since then, other researchers have investigated many cultures across the globe and throughout history and found some non-obvious being like a ghost, a demon, a witch, or, recently, an extra-terrestrial associated with an experience that is comparable to the clinical characteristics described above.¹³ As varied in name and form as the cultures themselves, these non-obvious beings provide the etiology for the experience, against which people—ritual specialists or laymen—contend via a variety of remedies and apotropaia. Although a victim's culture may shape their understanding of the experience, their individual reports about the experience, as Adler notes, are “strikingly similar around the globe, even in societies with no commonly accepted beliefs or traditions to offer cultural models for the experience.”¹⁴ For this reason, she argues that a cultural hypothesis alone cannot account for the varied etiologies;¹⁵ rather, the etiologies are rooted in a cross-cultural, neuro-physiological experience that Adler calls “night-mare.”¹⁶

¹² See, e.g., Adler 2011, 107; Hinton, Pich, Chhean, and Pollack 2005; and Yeung, Xu, and Chang 2005. Sharpless and Doghramji 2015, 129–46 survey the full spectrum of etiologies.

¹³ Adler 2011, 8–58 for a discussion of the cross-cultural patterns (with many examples) and a historical survey. Note especially her chart on pages 14–16. See also the (sometimes problematic) historical survey of Sharpless and Doghramji 2015, 17–92, 129–31, and 217–28 (the last pages provide terms for sleep paralysis around the world and through history). There are several culture-specific or sub-culture-specific studies in *Transcultural Psychiatry* 42 (2005), a special issue dedicated to sleep paralysis.

¹⁴ Adler 2011, 9.

¹⁵ Adler 2011, 24.

¹⁶ For a brief overview of how the research on folklore and sleep paralysis have unfolded in relation to the scholarly interpretation of “religious experience,” see Taves 2009, 131–40 (note especially pp. 138–40, where she assesses how several scholars, including Hufford, to be mentioned just below, in a neo-Tylorian mode, Cheyne, William Barnard, William James, and Rudolph Otto, have interpreted sleep paralysis in terms of religious experience). The danger in utilizing such apparently cross-cultural experiences is to overextend one's claims, as did E. B. Tylor,

Recognizing that English has no widely recognized term for the experience, Adler chooses “night-mare” as a kind of technical term in her study to refer to “a nocturnal visit of an evil being that threatens to press the very life out of its terrified victim” (2011, 3). “Night-mare” is not to be confused with a bad dream or “night terrors,” in which “the sleeper seems to awaken in fear and agitation, screaming and thrashing about, but then falls back asleep and remembers little or nothing of the incident in the morning” (2011, 3–4). In choosing the term “night-mare,” Adler intends to avoid, on the one hand, using one particular culture’s term as *the* definitive term for the experience, which could be construed as “conflat[ing] local representations with broader understandings” (2011, 3). And, on the other hand, she eschews using the biomedical, clinical term “sleep paralysis” to avoid imposing or privileging “the scientific explanation as the ‘true’ account of the event” (3). As my intention is to offer a comparative reading of the *alū* demon’s attack in *Ludlul* and modern clinical research on sleep paralysis in order to bridge the cultural divide between the ancient Mesopotamian and our own contemporary settings, I will utilize “sleep paralysis” when referring to clinical research related to the experience.

But, in some ways my use of the clinical term “sleep paralysis” is prejudicial because not everyone in the contemporary world agrees that the neurophysiological or biomedical etiology that such a term indicates *entirely* explains the experience. There are contemporary people for whom the experience of sleep paralysis—a label they often accept—channels something or acts as a conduit for something supernatural or extra-terrestrial. When I experienced sleep paralysis as a boy, for example, I drew upon my Pentecostal theology of spiritual warfare to understand my experience as a demonic attack. Of course, I was naïve and uneducated. But even well-educated individuals living in a modern, industrialized country will not always accept the clinical, neurophysiological explanation as fully sufficient for understanding their experience when there are other culturally-available models to explain it, models that may involve alien abduction, demons, or ghosts.¹⁷ Take, for example, folklorist Ayako Yoshimura’s ethnography of *kanashibari*, the Japanese term for a state of immobility or paralysis that scientific clinicians may explain in terms of sleep paralysis (if the diagnosis fits in with other presenting symptoms) but is attributed by some in the general public to the effects of supernatural beings

who suggested that “ancient savage philosophers” formed the nascent ideas of religion on the basis of observations about the universality of death and dreaming (see Pals 2015, 23), or Ludwig Laistner, who suggested sleep paralysis gave rise to all mythology (see Adler 2011, 37).

¹⁷ On alien abductions and sleep paralysis, see briefly Adler 2011, 31–35.

such as spirits or ghosts. In the course of her study Yoshimura conducted in-depth interviews with two well-adjusted, well-educated, and non-religious professionals¹⁸ in Japan to understand how they explained their experience of *kanashibari*. Despite their familiarity with both scientific and traditional supernatural explanations of the phenomenon, the two professionals came to entirely different understandings of it: one explained the experience in purely scientific terms while the other explained it in terms of supernatural origins.¹⁹ While recognizing that some people resist supernatural explanations and prefer to view the experience through the lens of science, Yoshimura concludes that the supernatural understanding of the experience, despite scientific educational efforts against it, has not faded away.²⁰ Adler comes to a similar conclusion in the context of a broader contemporary survey: “naturalistic and supernatural explanations for night-mare causes coexist.”²¹ Likewise, Hufford: “[c]urrent scientific knowledge about the night-mare, and the acceptance of that knowledge, does not impede spiritual interpretations.”²²

The contemporary persistence of supernatural understandings of the experience clinicians call sleep paralysis provides a remarkable point of contact with the ancient Mesopotamian scholarly worldview wherein angry deities, evil demons, disgruntled ghosts, and anti-social witches were primary agents of malevolent experiences and misfortune. *Ludlul* II 71–85 offers an excellent example of a demonically-caused misfortune. In this passage, the protagonist reports in his own words how “an *alû* demon clothed my body as a garment, sleep covered me like a net” (71–72) and then describes the resulting effects upon his body in the following lines 73–85:

They were staring, but my eyes could not see,
 They were open, but my ears could not hear.
 Numbness had seized my entire body,
 Paralysis had fallen upon my flesh.
 Stiffness had apprehended my arms,
 Debility had fallen on my legs,
 My feet forgot mobility.
 [A bl]ow² overtook *me*, I choked like one fallen,
 Death [has]tened² to shroud my face.
 [He took] notice of me, but I could not answer *my* inquirer,
 “[Wo]e!” they were crying, *but* I could not control myself.

¹⁸ She seems to go to some lengths to establish that these are normal people in every respect.

¹⁹ Yoshimura 2015, 159–68.

²⁰ 2015, 168.

²¹ Adler 2011, 23.

²² Hufford 2005, 30, also cited in Adler 2011, 36.

A net was laid on my mouth,
And a bolt barred my lips.

I suggest the demonic oppression recounted in this passage can be fruitfully read in comparison with the modern clinical understanding of sleep paralysis.

Interpreting this account of demonic oppression in this comparative manner is not simply an antiquarian curiosity. Rather, the interpretation of the passage presented here will shed new light on the literary context in which the passage occurs and ultimately help us recognize the passage's pivotal position and narrative contribution to the dynamic of the poem's second Tablet, which I have already explicated briefly in chapter five. But, setting the two different understandings of the sufferer's trauma side by side—the ancient demonic alongside the modern clinical—yields more than just ancient literary information. This comparative reading also pays dividends for the modern reader in the contemporary context, a topic I explore in the conclusion.

11.3. METHODOLOGY MATTERS

I have refrained quite deliberately so far in the discussion from using the words “diagnosis” and “identification” in relating the experience recounted in *Ludlul* II 71–85 to the (suggested) modern clinical perspective I wish to bring into comparison with it. Medical anthropologists and historians of medicine have presented important and cogent reasons to tread carefully or to avoid entirely cross-cultural and retrospective diagnoses.²³ So allow me to state here as clearly as possible that I am not equating the *alû* demon in the passage under examination with sleep paralysis and I am not making a sleep paralysis diagnosis of the protagonist. My interest is in furthering our understanding of the *poem* in its ancient context and our reading of it in the modern one.

²³ Among medical anthropologists, see the introductory textbook Singer *et al* 2019, chapter 3; and note Leven 2004, a historian of medicine, though he goes too far in offering a psychologizing diagnosis of his own to explain the motivations of modern interpreters who attempt to diagnose “famous people” from the past (see p. 383). Among Assyriologists, see, e.g., HeeBel 2004 and, more briefly, 2000, 11–12; Robson 2008, 460–64; Attia 2015, 4 (also an ophthalmologist); and especially the thorough and interdisciplinary introductory discussions in Zisa 2021, 19–36 and Steinert (with Hsu) 2021, 1–18 along with both her own (Steinert 2021a, 140) and Couto-Ferreira's (2021, 261–63) contributions in the same volume.

11.3.1. *The Alû Demon ≠ Sleep Paralysis*

As mentioned in chapter six, it is a truism in anthropology that cultural taxonomies can differ from culture to culture. And, of course, classification of disease is a kind of taxonomy, a field of study called nosology. We cannot and should not expect ancient Mesopotamian diagnoses/classifications of disease to map easily and congruently onto our own diagnoses/classifications of disease, especially not our modern biomedical or psychiatric systems that are rooted in an experimental, naturalistic epistemology.²⁴ Moreover, and perhaps more importantly to Assyriological readers: the ancient texts themselves likely held the *alû* demon responsible for a larger domain of human maladies than could potentially be explained by our modern understanding of sleep paralysis.²⁵

Relevant to this issue are three entries in Tablet XXVII of the exorcist's diagnostic treatise Sa-gig (lines 20, 21–22, and 23) in which the agent responsible for the maladies described is identified as “hand of the evil *alû* demon” (*qāt alî lemni*).²⁶ The first entry in line 20 is difficult to understand but seems more differentiated from the second and third entries than are the latter two from each other. The first entry reads: [*šumma amēlu ...*]-*ḥa-šu-šu išdud-ma em u ramānišu lā ide ina šipti inīšu izqup qāt alî lemni*, “[if a man] drags³ his [...] ... and is hot; and he is unconscious (lit. does not know himself), yet raises/rolls²⁷ his eyes at the recitation of an incantation:²⁸ *It is* the hand of the evil

²⁴ For a thorough discussion of Mesopotamian classifications of disease (including developments in that classification), see Steinert 2021a, which includes an extensive bibliography. See also Couto-Feirera's discussion in the same volume (2021) on the problems in using biomedical or psychiatric taxonomies for explaining matters that we perceive as related to mental health in ancient Mesopotamian sources. Specifically with regard to sleep, note Guinan's statement in the opening section of her very useful survey of sleep in ancient Mesopotamia: “Mesopotamian and modern conceptions of s.[leep] are products of different socio-cultural and intellectual contexts. Therefore there can never be a one-to-one congruence between Mesopotamian terminology and modern clinical definitions. Nevertheless shared physiology may point to common elements” (2009, 195). In addition to Guinan's encyclopedic article, see Steinert 2010 for another useful survey of sleep and things sleep-related.

²⁵ For a similar criticism of equating the Akkadian term *bennu* with epilepsy, see Avalos 2007, 134–35, reviewing Stol 1993.

²⁶ For an edition of the relevant lines, see Heeßel 2000, 298–99 with translation on 302. See also Stol 1993, 78 and Scurlock and Andersen 2005, 339 for citations of the texts and Scurlock 2014, 209 for another translation. For the idea that *qāt DN* signifies the divine agent responsible for a person's physical ailments (rather than a particular disease), see Heeßel 2000, 49–54 and 2007.

²⁷ The precise meaning of *inīšu izqup* is disputed. Labat rendered the phrase, “il fixe ses yeux” (1951, 191); Stol 1993, 78 and Heeßel 2000, 302 take it in a general sense, “he raises (his eyes)”; whereas Scurlock suggests a technical rendering: “he constricts (the pupils) of his eyes” (2014, 209; see Scurlock and Andersen 2005, 300). CAD Z, 53 suggests the phrase denotes the rolling of the eyes back into the head; see, likewise, Fincke 2000, 183–84.

alû demon.” The second entry in lines 21–22 reads: [šumma kīma] ʿkūri iṣṣanabbassu¹ minātūšu iṣṣappakā uznāšu iṣtanassā pīšu ṣabit-ma lā idabbub qāt alī lemni, “[if something like] a stupor continually seizes him, his limbs are tense,²⁹ his ears keep ringing, and his mouth is seized so that he cannot speak: *It is the hand of the evil alû demon.*” The third entry in line 23 is very similar to the second: [šumma kīma] ʿkūri iṣṣanabbassu enūma iṣbatūšu uznāšu iṣtanassā pīšu ṣabit-ma lā idabbub qāt alī lemni, “[if something like] a stupor continually seizes him, and when it seizes him, his ears keep ringing, and his mouth is seized so that he cannot speak: *It is the hand of the evil alû demon.*” Scurlock and Andersen engage in a retrospective diagnosis, identifying the condition described in these entries as the early stage of a coma (2005, 339). Applying a similar methodology, Stol, although treating these lines in a section dealing with the *alû* demon as a “terror of the night” (which sounds like what Adler calls “night-mare”),³⁰ suggests these lines may be describing some kind of stroke (1993, 41). Leaving aside for the moment the problems of retrospective diagnosis, we need not assume, in my opinion, that the *alû* demon is always only associated with what we recognize as one disease, disorder, or problem today. So either one or both of these suggestions is possible, *in principle*, though I find neither identification problem free. On the other hand, I do not think the second and third entries are necessarily incompatible with the characteristics of sleep paralysis. The entries both mention a kind of “stupor,” which *could* be an attempt to describe the sleep paralysis victim’s experience between full waking consciousness and sleep—though *this is highly interpretive*. The tense limbs—a disputed translation—*might* reflect the immobility typical of sleep paralysis, though there are other words the text could have used to make this clearer. The victims’ ears ring, which is reported by some sleep paralysis sufferers.³¹ And finally the victim’s mouth is “seized,” making him unable to speak, which is also a common experience during sleep paralysis. These two

²⁸ Stol’s suggestion to consider taking ÉN as a mistake for ŠÚ.ŠÚ in the only extant witness to this entry seems very reasonable to me, especially since, as Stol notes (and is borne out by examples below), *saḥāpu* is used elsewhere with the *alû* demon (1993, 78, 41). If this reading were accepted, it would allow us to read an Ntn infinitive, *ina itaṣḥupī*, “when being overwhelmed,” instead of *ina ṣiptī*.

²⁹ I am following Scurlock 2014, 209 and Scurlock and Andersen 2005, 293 and 339 for the translation of *šapāku* as “tense.” Guinan translates the word “limp” (2009, 200); Heeßel 2000, 302, “krafftlos”; Stol 1993, 78, “hangs down.”

³⁰ I think Stol’s description of “terrors at night” is similar to what Adler calls a “night-mare.” Note that in his discussion of “terrors at night” and their relation to the Greek *Ephialtes* (1993, 38–41) Stol cites an older work by Roscher (1900); Adler cites the same work (as published in translation) in her comparison of the Greek *Ephialtes* to what she calls “night-mare” (2011, 40–42).

³¹ See Adler 2011, 19.

entries *might* be describing what clinicians would call a bout of sleep paralysis, but it must be pointed out that other important factors are unmentioned, making such a retrospective diagnosis uncertain *at best*.³² Note that the person's bodily disposition (supine or not?) and level of fear are not mentioned at all (though fear may be tacit in the mere mentioning of the *alû* demon; see below). These omissions cannot be ignored. But, even if we *were* to identify the description in the second and third entries with the modern diagnosis of sleep paralysis, the first (imperfectly understood) entry in Sa-gig XXVII 20 does not seem so congruent with sleep paralysis, at least, not in its present state of preservation. This, in my opinion, suggests that the *alû* demon, according to Sa-gig at least, may have been responsible for a larger repertoire of human suffering than could be (even potentially) captured conceptually by *identifying* the demon *with* sleep paralysis.

Furthermore, Eleanor Robson warns against facile identifications of ancient maladies using disparate sources across the span of Mesopotamian history.³³ We should not assume that the effects of the *alû* demon on a person were always and everywhere the same in ancient Mesopotamia as its effects are described in *Ludlul* II 71–85. Even as we give due attention to the cultural and generic differences between the ancient, poetic description in *Ludlul* and the modern, clinical description of sleep paralysis in our comparative reading, we must also be attentive to the genres and chronology of the ancient sources brought to bear in the interpretation of the passage in *Ludlul* as well as the social groups who produced, utilized, and transmitted them. If *Ludlul* was a product of post-OB scribal scholarship associated with exorcism, then the ancient sources brought to bear to understand its presentation of the protagonist's *alû*-induced experience in II 71–85 should likewise come from the same sphere. And even then sources may still have different purposes. In the present case, *Ludlul*, though most likely written by an exorcist, describes one person's single subjective experience of the *alû* demon in a narrative poem whereas Sa-gig, which is definitely within the exorcist's bailiwick, attempts to describe common, observable symptoms organized into three distinct situations in order to make a common diagnosis that could then be generalizable from one patient to another.³⁴

³² See likewise Guinan 2009, 197.

³³ 2008, 461–62. See likewise, e.g., Steinert 2021a and others cited in note 23 above.

³⁴ We might also wonder if *alû* in *Ludlul* should be distinguished from Sa-gig's *alû lemnu*, "evil *alû* demon," and whether one or both of these should be distinguished from the *alê šadi*, "*alû* demon of the mountain / netherworld(?)," mentioned in several omens of *Šumma ālu*, for which see note 44 below.

11.3.2. *On Not Making a Diagnosis*

Taking all of the above into account, one may be rightfully reticent to read the ancient *alû* demon as specifically presented in *Ludlul* II 71–85 in comparison with modern, clinical descriptions of sleep paralysis. What was relevant to an exorcist for understanding a person’s condition may not be relevant at all to a modern physician and vice-versa. Note as a representative example of this issue Wiggermann’s statement concerning the ancient exorcist’s identification that Lamaštu was the cause of an infant’s illness: “[T]he conjuror [i.e., *āšipu*] bases his diagnosis not only on medical symptoms like fever, but also on psychosomatic (crying) and circumstantial (dappled ox) indications [observed on the way to the patient’s house—ACL], so that a one to one correspondence with a modern ‘scientific’ [i.e. biomedical] disease is not to be expected.”³⁵ I agree completely.

Then why proceed at all? My answer is two-fold. First, rather than seeking a biomedical identification of a “disease,” I have adopted a methodological stance from the “Harvard School” of medical anthropology and approached the passage in *Ludlul* as a first person account of a subjective experience of “illness,” that is, as a culturally-embedded, subjective experience of physical dis-ease.³⁶ In understanding the literary passage in this manner, I have taken the protagonist’s own explanation of the cause of his experience—the *alû* demon—at face value, and used other Mesopotamian sources (advisedly) to shed light on the activity and nature of the demon to understand its activity in the passage in *Ludlul*, which I have treated as the protagonist’s illness narrative. In other words, my interpretation is first rooted in understanding the *alû* demon as the ancient Mesopotamian etiology of the protagonist’s experience.³⁷ Second, in reading comparatively I have adapted the techniques other researchers have used to gather appropriate data for studying sleep paralysis. Personal reports of experiences, collected via surveys, internet discussion boards, and formal interviews, have been the primary means among modern investigators for collecting data relevant to sleep paralysis and an important element in diagnosing the disorder.³⁸ It is essential to note, however, that as important as these reports

³⁵ In Stol 2000, 238.

³⁶ Kleinman 1988 is the classic study, see especially chapters 1 and 2.

³⁷ In this respect, I am following Couto-Ferreira 2021. For an example of applying this perspective to the OB Akkadian *Man and His God*, see Zisa 2012 (with important modifications to Kleinman’s general perspective).

³⁸ Both Hufford 1982 and Adler 2011 use self-reporting and interviews in their study. Cheyne conducted a wide-ranging survey in his undergraduate classes as well as online to collect data (see Cheyne, Rueffer, and Newby-Clark 1999, 323). The same method remains relevant (see, e.g., Sharpless and Kliková 2019). Many other studies could be cited.

are for identifying various subjective elements of sleep paralysis (e.g., fear, felt presence, immobility, pressure on the chest, etc.), the reports alone are not sufficient for a clinician to make a diagnosis, since the clinician must also rule out drug-induced experiences and any other medical or psychiatric issue that could lie at root of the experience.³⁹ Thus, treating *Ludlul* II 71–85 as a first person account of a subjective experience of illness within its ancient Mesopotamian cultural milieu and comparing several features of the protagonists experience to various elements people experience during sleep paralysis are not sufficient to diagnosis Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan’s experience as “fearful isolated sleep paralysis disorder”—one of several variations of the disorder.⁴⁰ In fact, as I will discuss below, the passage in *Ludlul* would not have been sufficient for an exorcist using Sa-gig to make an *ancient* diagnosis either! Instead of making a diagnosis, my comparative reading, as stated above, intends to translate and shed new light on the protagonist’s experience as reported in the poem for the purpose of increasing *our* understanding of the poem and *our own experience* of reading it.⁴¹ As modern individuals removed from our object of study by place, time, language, and culture, translation is our only hope for understanding.⁴² As an aside: As much as one may try to understand something so foreign from one’s own experience, there is always something lost in the process. For most modern readers, the greatest loss in the translation I undertake below will likely be in their understanding of the protagonist’s fear, which, although unstated in the passage, almost certainly permeates every single line.

³⁹ For diagnosis, see Sharpless and Doghramji 2015, 150.

⁴⁰ Sharpless and Doghramji 2015, 150.

⁴¹ I should note that there is a small body of research that posits descriptions of sleep paralysis in well-known works of fiction (whose authors are no longer living). See, e.g., Sharpless and Doghramji 2015, 45–51, who discuss passages in the writings of Erasmus Darwin, Herman Melville, Guy de Maupassant, Thomas Hardy, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Ernest Hemingway that, in their view, likely describe a sleep paralysis experience. Note also Stefani, Iranzo, Santamaria, and Högel 2017, who interpret a scene in Dostoevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov* (1881) as an account of sleep paralysis. It is important to note that these literary accounts are closer in time and place to these researchers than is *Ludlul* to us and these (prose) accounts provide greater detail than does the passage in *Ludlul*. For these and the anthropological reasons stated above, my approach is more cautious.

⁴² For the fundamental issues involved in cultural translation, see Tambiah 1990, 111–39, especially 121ff.

11.4. *LUDLUL* II 71–85, DEMONIC OPPRESSION,
AND SLEEP PARALYSIS

Lines 71–85 occur just after the middle of the second Tablet of *Ludlul*. As expounded in chapter five, the protagonist describes at the beginning of Tablet II how his personal gods offered him no aide when he called upon them (II 4–5) and the ritual experts were of no use in determining the nature of his problems recounted in Tablet I (II 6–9). Surrounded by misfortune (II 10–11), our protagonist laments that he is treated as an impious person (II 12–22), though he knows himself to be pious (II 23–32). In a moment of frustration and confusion, he wonders whether the will of the gods is even knowable (II 33–38). And he muses on the variability and frailty of the human condition (II 39–47). Giving up hope of understanding his experiences (II 48), he describes a seven-fold demonic attack responsible for the atrophy of his physical well-being (II 50–58). The demons gang up on the sufferer until his body is in excruciating pain and utterly enfeebled (II 59–70). At the conclusion of this initial attack the protagonist states:

My high stature they demolished like a wall,
My broad build they leveled like rushes.
I was thrown down like an *uliltu*-plant, cast down on *my* face. (II 68–70)

Here then is the immediate context for our passage, where Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan is bowled over, laid out by his illness. What follows in lines 71–85, I believe, may be profitably read in a comparative manner with what modern clinicians call sleep paralysis. This reading allows us to interpret his preceding social (I 41–120), emotional (II 1–49), and physical stress (II 50–70) as bringing on the experience with the *alû* demon (the causes) as well as to see this specific demonic attack as a *catalyst* for his continued demise, described in the remainder of Tablet II. In other words, the passage describing the *alû* demon's attack should be understood as playing a pivotal role in the protagonist's presentation of suffering.

The opening lines of the passage under discussion introduce the *alû* demon, who is set apart from the seven demons described previously in II 51–57 by the lengthy description given to his effect on the sufferer in subsequent lines (II 72–85). Line 71 is the only place this demon is mentioned in the poem by name.

An *alû* demon clothed/wrapped (*ītediq*, from *edēqu*) my body as a garment,
Sleep covered me (*ukattimanni*, from *katāmu*) like a net. (II 71–72)

These two lines provoke several comments that lay the foundation for my comparative interpretation. First, we should recall that *Ludlul*'s narrative perspective is retrospective; the sufferer recounts his story from a chronological standpoint later than the events themselves (i.e., from the point of view after his recovery). We need not understand everything in the text as though it were in precise chronological order—a point already made in chapter five. Thus, although the sufferer identifies the *alû* demon as the being responsible for his experience from the outset in II 71–72, we should understand this etiology as one that potentially arose in the course of the experience as described in the lines that follow.⁴³

Second, the mention of sleep in line 72 is reason to reprocess our understanding of the previous lines in II 68–70. Line 72 gives us good contextual warrant to infer that the protagonist lies sick in bed at the time of the *alû* demon's attack. In fact, when a location of the *alû* demon's attack is mentioned in other texts, the attack invariably occurs in a person's bed. Note, for example, CT 39 42 (K.2238+), obv. ii 9', which bears witness to a late Tablet in *Šumma ālu* (XCIV alt.[?]):

*šumma amēlu ina mayyālīšu alû ishup[šu]*⁴⁴...

If the *alû* demon overwhelmed a man in his bed ...

And similarly in a litany of demons in the first incantation of the Third House of *Bit Rimki*:⁴⁵

[lú] [a₁-lá-ḫul-ḡál-e ki-ná-a-na ši-in-dul-la
ša alû lemnu ina mayyālīšu iktumūšu

⁴³ This does not mean that the protagonist or author of *Ludlul* was the first to identify the *alû* demon with this constellation of experiences. As I show below, the *alû* demon is similarly depicted in other texts. Moreover, as Proudfoot notes in his classic study of religious experience, when there is expectation of a possible supernatural experience in a given situation, “the explanatory scheme is firmly in place prior to the experience” (1985, 104).

⁴⁴ See Koch 2015, 254 for the identification within the series. The interpretation of the (broken) apodosis in line 10' is uncertain. The preserved text reads: *ḫa-DI* ⁶⁸NA-šú [...]. One might read “his bed is felicitous” or “his bed is faulty/portends evil.” The use in the apodosis of *eršu*, which is more or less synonymous with *mayyālu* in the protasis, may suggest the apodosis is playing on the meaning of a homonymous word, such as *eršu*, “(what is) desired,” for its implied significance. Lines 11'–14' present omens related to the *alê šadî*, “the *alû* demon of the mountain / netherworld?” The verb used here is also *saḫāpu*. Apparently, the exorcists compiling the omen series distinguished the two kinds of demons, even explaining the *alê šadî* as a “strong *alû* demon” (*alû dannu*) in a commentary (CT 41 33, rev. 6–7; see Labat 1933, no. 7 for an edition [pp. 70–75]; a new edition will eventually appear at <https://ccp.yale.edu/P237784>).

⁴⁵ See Borger 1967, 4, line 22 for the text (with variants noted there).

(Akk.) Whom the evil *alû* demon covered in his bed.

See likewise Udug-ḥul VIII 10, cited below. The same location for an attack can be inferred in a particularly touching example of an apotropaic attempt to keep the *alû* demon away. A rubric following two incantations attested on K.3628+ reads: 2 KA.INIM.MA LÚ.TUR A.LÁ ḤUL ŠÚ.[ŠÚ-šú], “two incantations for a small child, when an evil *alû* demon overw[helms him].” According to the ritual instructions that follow, the incantations were to be written on a clay cylinder seal, subsequently fired, and then hung by a string around the child’s neck (presumably at bedtime) or at the head of his bed to prevent anything evil (*mimma lemnu*) from approaching him.⁴⁶ These few texts do not prove that the *alû* demon always attacked a person in bed. But, they certainly do support our contextual inference about the sufferer’s location at the time of his attack.

A third foundational comment: Although lines 71–72 do not mention the protagonist’s fear, we should almost certainly presume it simply based on the presence of the *alû* demon, who, according to other texts, was very well-known for covering (*katāmu*), enveloping (*saḥāpu*), or binding (*kasû*) its victims with fear.⁴⁷ Note, for example, the following similes that invoke the fearful demon in martial contexts:

- In a description of the god Ninurta’s martial prowess in the bilingual myth *Lugal-e*, line 8:

ur-saḡ ní ùlu-gin₇ kur-ra dul-lu⁴⁸
qarrādu ša puluḥtašu kīma alê māti katmat⁴⁹

(Akk.) The hero, whose terror covers the land like the *alû* demon.

⁴⁶ See Farber 1989, 28 for information about the other contents of the source and pp. 128–29 for the text. One wonders if the string of six stones prescribed against the *alû* demon in various therapeutic texts (see Stol 1993, 41 and a fuller list of witnesses in Schuster-Brandis 2008, 150, s.v. Kette 171) and the four prescribed medicinal leather pouches listed in BAM 311, obv. 47’–50’ were similarly deployed (see https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/babmed/Corpora/BAM-3/BAM-3_311 for a transliteration). It is worth noting about the string of stones: In four of the sources for “Kette 171” (BAM 183: 30, BAM 364 i 4, BAM 370 iva 11’–12’, and BAM 376 ii 27’–28’) there is another string of stones, “Kette 89” (see Schuster-Brandis 2008, 120), placed adjacent to it on the tablet—either before or after “Kette 171” (see BAM 183: 31, BAM 364 i 5, BAM 370 iva 8’–10’, and BAM 376 ii 29’–30’). “Kette 89” is prescribed for someone who constantly screams in his bed (*šumma amēlu ina maḡyālīšu igdanallut*).

⁴⁷ For the use of these and other verbs of wrapping, covering, and overwhelming, see Waldman 1989, 161–70.

⁴⁸ The Sumerian is cited according to the text at ETCSL (1.6.2). Compare van Dijk 1983, 27 and Seminara 2001, 45.

⁴⁹ The Akkadian is cited from Seminara’s composite text (2001, 45) in consultation with van Dijk 1983, 27.

The Akkadian translation of the line is attested in full in only one late witness, VAT 17012, a NB tablet from Babylon.⁵⁰ About the translation of Sumerian *ulu*, “wind,” with Akkadian *alû*, Geller noted already in 1985 that the translation is likely based on the homonymous Sumerian name of the *ulu* demon (*u₁₈-lu*), a translation found in *Udug-ḥul*.⁵¹

- In a description of the ferocity and destructive power of the demonic *Sibitti* (the Seven) in *Udug-ḥul XIII–XV*, line 23:

ní su-zi *u₁₈-lu-gin₇* mu-un-da-ru-uš me-lám dul-la-meš
*puluḥtu šalummatu kīma alē ramû melammu katmû šunu*⁵²

(Akk.) They are invested with terror *and* awful splendor like the *alû* demon; they are covered with god-like radiance.

- In the royal *Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta I* in the context of the king’s demand for justice via battle:⁵³

šaḥit-ma ana šišīt Šamaš u meḥerti ilī adir u ḥussus
urti šarri danni kīma alē zumuršu iksi

He was scarred; he was afraid and concerned at *his* invocation of *Šamaš* and appeal to the gods *for justice*,
The order of the mighty king bound his body like the *alû* demon.

Here, the body of the treaty-breaking enemy, the Babylonian king *Kaštiliaš*, is described as paralyzed with fear when he heard the king’s plan to exact justice on the battlefield.

- In the royal inscriptions of *Sennacherib* the thrice repeated incident recounting the overwhelming of *Umman-menanu* and allies in battle against the Assyrian king:⁵⁴

⁵⁰ See van Dijk 1983, 19 for the text and Pedersén 2005, 138 for its precise findspot in the *Ninmah* temple.

⁵¹ Geller 1985, 216 *apud* Seminara 2001, 220. See now Geller 2007, 299, 303 for the translation and attestations in *Udug-ḥul* and note also the next cited example.

⁵² See Geller 2016, 441. Geller takes the *melammu* in this line to refer to the *Sibitti*’s victim rather than the *Sibitti* themselves (2016, 441, n.23).

⁵³ See Machinist 1978, 92, lines 23’–24’.

⁵⁴ See Grayson / Novotny 2012, no. 22, vi 26–27 (p. 184); no. 23, vi 22 (p. 201); Grayson / Novotny 2014, no. 230, 96 (p. 334). Note also the scholar *Bēl-ušēzib*’s letter to the king, SAA 10 109, rev. 6 (Parpola 1993, 87). Pongratz-Leisten argues that this detail in *Sennacherib*’s account of the battle at *Ḥalulê* alludes to the *Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta I* (2015, 311–12).

*ḥurbāšu tāḥāzīya kīma alē zumuršunu ishup*⁵⁵

The terror of my combat overwhelmed them (lit. their body) like the *alû* demon.

These passages from texts known in the first millennium and representing several genres written by scholars (myth, incantation, and royal inscriptions) suggest that terror was such a well-known characteristic of the *alû* demon that it need not even be mentioned in *Ludlul*; terror could be assumed because terror was one of the *alû* demon's hallmarks. Terror is also the typical emotional response in those experiencing sleep paralysis.

Fourth, likening a demon to a garment as in *Ludlul* II 71 is attested elsewhere. Note, for example, the *šūila* prayer Mayer calls Marduk 5. The supplicant confesses that he does not know the sickness (*muršu*) that besets him, though he recognizes that it has enveloped (*saḥāpu*) and covered (*kuttumu*) him like a net (*ša saḥpanni kīma šēti kuttumanni kīma sapāri*, lines 49–50; compare *Ludlul* II 72 and see just below). He then lists various afflictions, starting with the *alû* demon (lines 51–52). These, he says a couple of lines later, have afflicted the form of his body so that he is clothed with them as with a garment (line 53, *šuklulti pagrīya la' bū-ma litbušāku kīma šubāi*).⁵⁶ Udug-ḥul III 32 is much more straightforward in this regard. The Akkadian translation reads: *alû lemnu ša kīma šubāti ikattamu*, “the evil *alû* demon which covers his victim like a garment.”⁵⁷ This garment imagery is quite similar to *Ludlul* II 71, which describes the *alû* demon covering or clothing (*edēqu*) the sufferer's body as if he (i.e., the demon) were a garment on the outside of the man.

Fifth, the net imagery in the next line, *Ludlul* II 72, is also known elsewhere but not, as far as I can determine, explicitly with sleep (though note Udug-ḥul VIII 1–23, cited below). The *šuškallu*-net, which occurs in our line, was frequently used as a weapon against enemies (see CAD Š/3, 382–83) and thus seems an appropriate simile for demonic entrapment of human victims. For example, after a list of demons in a bilingual nun-urra incantation, the Akkadian translation reads: *amēlu šuātu kīma šuškalli ikt[umūšu]*, “they (i.e., the demons) have co[vered] that man like a *šuškallu*-net.”⁵⁸ One can see something

⁵⁵ For understanding *ki-ma-le-e* as a Sandhi writing of *kīma alē* instead of *kīma lē*, “like bulls,” see Grayson / Novotny 2012, 184, note to vi 26 (notwithstanding the reading GIM-*le-e* in Grayson / Novotny 2014, no. 230: 96 [p. 334]).

⁵⁶ See Abusch / Schwemer 2016, 235 for the text; also, Mayer 1993, 318 and Oshima 2011, 358.

⁵⁷ Geller 2016, 96.

⁵⁸ See Knudsen, 1965, 165, lines 45–46 (for the bilingual text) and 167 (for his translation).

similar in the use of the hunting/fowler's net (*šētu*) to describe malevolent forces such as witchcraft, illness, and demons, as noted already in the citation of the incantation prayer Marduk 5.⁵⁹ Both of these “net” words often occur alongside the verbs *katāmu* and *saḥāpu*, as would, of course, be appropriate (note Marduk 5 above). As these are the same verbs often found with the *alū* demon, I think we may read II 71–72 as an example of two lines in synonymous parallelism, that is, the *alū* demon is closely aligned here with sleep, an alignment that can be supported with two lines of evidence. The first is internal to the poem: *Ludlul* III 76–77. These lines occur right after III 69–75, which describe the reversal of the seven demons that attacked the sufferer in II 51–57. After the sending away of these seven demons, we find the two lines that describe the exorcism of the sufferer's unpleasant sleep (III 76–77):

Unpleasant sleep, the pouring out of slumber,
He sent *it* away like smoke with which the heavens were filled.

The “pouring out of slumber” (*reḥā šalāla*) here certainly has a negative sense. Although the verb is commonly used to describe sleep,⁶⁰ it may also be intended to play with the meaning of the lines that III 76–77 were intended to reverse, i.e., II 71–72,⁶¹ since the *alū* demon, as the fullest description we have indicates very clearly, was thought to “pour out” (*reḥū*)—perhaps to be understood as “ejaculate” or “inseminate”⁶²—over people in their sleep. This full description occurs in Tablet VIII of *Udug-ḥul*, lines 1–23, which also offers our second line of support—external to the poem—for understanding a close relationship between the *alū* demon and sleep. (Note also the “net” imagery in the passage.) The text reads:⁶³

His two witnesses were published in CTN 4, nos. 107 and 108 (Wiseman / Black 1996). The result, stated in the next line, is that the victim can neither eat bread nor drink water, ¹u[_n]u-un-da-ab-kú-e a nu-un-da-ab-naḡ-¹e' / ¹a'[*kala u*]l *ikkal mē ul išat'ri* (47–48). Note also Farber 1977, 131: 69–70: *mimma lemnu ša išbatannī-ma ... kīma šēti kuttumanni kīma šuškali saḥpani*, “the evil that has seized me ... covers me like a *šētu*-net, envelops me like a *šuškallu*-net” (see 144–45 for transcription and translation).

⁵⁹ See CAD Š/2, 340–41 for attestations.

⁶⁰ See CAD R, 253–54, where diseases are also listed among things that can be poured out.

⁶¹ It seems clear that III 76–77 intend to reverse II 72 (unpleasant sleep), at least, if not also II 71 (the *alū* demon). If the *alū* demon is not implicitly exorcized in III 76–77 with the sending off of unpleasant sleep, then the demon may not be exorcized at all in *Ludlul*, as it does not occur again by name. The reversal of the demonic donning of the protagonist may, however, be mentioned in the very fragmentary lines of Tablet IV §A 9'–10', where it seems his body may be clothed (*ḥalāpu*, partially restored) in something—presumably, positive.

⁶² CAD R, 253.

⁶³ The composite text follows Geller 2007, 143–44 in consultation with his critical edition, 2016, 288–93.

- ¹ én hu[l-ġál] h́e-me-en hul-ġ[ál] h́e-me-en
 lū [le]mnu attā lū [em]nu attā
- ² a-lá hul-ġál h́e-me-en
 lū alū lemnu att[ā]
- ³ a-lá hul é-gar₈ diri-ga-gin₇ lú-ra in-gu[l]-u₈-a h́e-me-en
 MIN (= alū lemnu) ša kīma igāri iquppū-ma eli amē[li i']abbatu attā
- ⁴ a-lá hul ka lál šu ġiri kēs-kēs-bi h́e-me-en
 MIN (= alū lemnu) ša pā ihaṭṭ[imu qāti] u šēp[i] ikassū attā
- ⁵ a-lá hul ka nu-tuku-[a] h́e-me-en
 MIN (= alū lemnu) ša pā lā īšū attā
- ⁶ a-lá hul me-dím nu-tuku-a h́e-me-en
 MIN (= alū lemnu) ša bināt[i l]ā īšū attā
- ⁷ a-lá hul ġiš nu-[tu]ku-a h́e-me-en
 MIN (= alū lemnu) <ša>⁶⁴ lā [š]emū attā
- ⁸ a-lá hul igi-kir₄ nu-tuku-a h́e-me-en
 [MI]N (= alū lemnu) ša zīmi lā īšū attā
- ⁹ [a-l]á hul ku-^dutu-kam igi na-an-du₈-ru-u₈-a h́e-me-en
 [MI]N (= alū lemnu) ša itti Šamaš lā inammaru attā
- ¹⁰ [a-lá hu] ki-ná ġe₆-a lú-ù-sá-ta in-úr-ra-u₈-a h́e-me-en
 MIN (= alū lemnu) ša ina mayyāl mūši amēla ina šitti irehḫū attā
- ¹¹ a-lá hul ù-sá kar-kar-re lú-a túm-mu-dè in-gub-gub-u₈-a h́e-me-en
 MIN (= alū lemnu) ēkim šitti ša amēla ana tabāli izzazzu attā
- ¹² a-lá hul diġir ġe₆-a du-du šu pil-lá ní-nu-te-ġá-dè h́e-me-en
 MIN (= alū lemnu) ilu muttallik mūši ša qātī lu'āti lā išahḫutu attā
- ¹³ a-lá hul lú-ra nú-a anše-gin₇ kaš₄-u₈-a h́e-me-en
 MIN (= alū lemnu) ša eli amēli rabšū-ma kīma imēri išannū attā
- ¹⁴ a-lá hul siskur nu-un-zu-a ²¹mad-ġá nu-tuku-a h́e-me-en
 MIN (= alū lemnu) ša nīqā lā īdū maṣḫata lā īšū MIN (= attā)
- ¹⁵ a-lá hul lú-ra ^{ġis}m[á-g]in₇ u₅-[a] h́e-me-[en]
 MIN (= alū lemnu) ša amēla kīma [eleppi] rakbu attā
- ¹⁶ a-lá hul lú-ra ġiš-nú-[d]a-g[in₇ nú-a] ¹h́e-me¹-[en]
 MIN (= alū lemnu) ša amēla kīma erši nīlu at[īā]
- ¹⁷ a-lá hul lú-ra ma-mú-da-gin₇ šu bí-in-ra-ra-e-a h[é-me-en]
 MIN (= alū lemnu) ša amēla kīma šutti ušar[p]idu [attā]⁶⁵
- ¹⁸ [a-lá] hul su-din^{mušen}-gin₇ ki-in-dar-gin₇ ġe₆-a in-dal-le-e-da h́e-[me-en]
 [MIN (= alū lemnu) š]a kīma suttinnu ina niġišši ina mūši ittanaprašu
 [attā]
- ¹⁹ a-lá hul mušen-ġe₆-a-gin₇ ki-kúkku-ga ì-dal-dal-e-a h́e-[me-en]
 [MIN (= alū lemnu)] ša kīma iššurru mūši ašar iklēti ittanap[ra]šu a[ttā]
- ²⁰ a-lá hul lú-ra sa-dul-gin₇ ab-dul-u₈-a h́e-[me-en]

⁶⁴ Only one witness, K.4661+ (Geller's MS A), attests the beginning of this line in Akkadian (Geller 2016, 289). Perhaps it left out the expected relative particle. (There is a gap the size of several signs between the MIN and the LA on the tablet.)

⁶⁵ For this expected restoration, see Geller 2016, 291 (not present in Geller 2007, 143).

- MIN (= *alû lemnu*) *ša amēla kīma kātīmti ikattamu attā*
²¹ a-lá ḥul lú-ra sa-al-ḥab-gin₇ ab-šú-šú-u₈-a ḥé-me-en
 MIN (= *alû lemnu*) *ša amēla kīma alluḥappi isahḥapu attā*
²² a-lá ḥul ḡe₆-ù-na-gin₇ igi-du₈ nu-tuku-a ḥé-me-en
 [a]lû lemnu *ša kīma mūši niṭla lā tīšû attā*
²³ a-lá ḥul ka₅-a uru si-ga-gin₇ ḡe₆-a ì-du₉-du₉-u₈-ú-a ḥé-me-en
alû lemnu ša kīma šēleb āli šaqummiš ina mūši idullu att[ā]

- ¹ Whether you are evil, whether you are evil,⁶⁶
² Whether you are the evil *alû* demon,
³ Whether you are the evil *alû* demon, who like a wall (*igāri*) falls down and collapses (*i'abbatu*) upon a person (lit. man),⁶⁷
⁴ Whether you are the evil *alû* demon, who muzzles the mouth and binds (*kasû*) hand and foot,
⁵ Whether you are the evil *alû* demon, who does not have a mouth,
⁶ Whether you are the evil *alû* demon, who does not have limbs,
⁷ Whether you are the evil *alû* demon, who does not hear,
⁸ Whether you are the evil *alû* demon, who has no visage,
⁹ Whether you are the evil *alû* demon, who is not seen with Šamaš (i.e., is not visible during the day),
¹⁰ Whether you are the evil *alû* demon, who in bed at night pours over (*ireḥḥû*) a person (lit. man) in *their* sleep,⁶⁸

⁶⁶ The translation is my own, though indebted to Geller's (2016, 288–93; compare his earlier translation in Geller 2007, 225–26). It generally follows the Akkadian and does not indicate restorations.

⁶⁷ Compare *Ludlul* II 68: *lānī zaqra iḥutū igāriš*, “my high stature they demolished like a wall.”

⁶⁸ As Geller notes, *Udug-ḥul* VIII 10 “is the clearest evidence for an incubus/succubus relationship, well attested in later magic, such as in Aramaic incantation bowls and in medieval magic, in which the demon can take the form of either man or woman. In UH 8, this would require that the LÚ in this line be generic for ‘victim’, without any gender affiliations, assuming that the Alû-demon could adapt itself to the appropriate sex as required” (2016, 289). See also Butler 1998, 51, 62–63, which relies on a personal communication from Geller. (For incubus/succubus as a “night-mare,” see Adler 2011, 45–47.) Scurlock and Andersen object to Geller's idea (via Butler) that the *alû* demon is an incubus/succubus. Commenting on the above cited passage, they write: “As this passage clearly indicates, the stupor produced by an *alû* is different from ordinary sleep, but more on the order of being knocked flat than pleurably stimulated” (2005, 740, n. 218). I think they are correct to see a very negative kind of sleep being described in the *Udug-ḥul* passage. Their phrase “pleurably stimulated,” apparently a reaction to Geller's idea that *reḥû* can mean “to copulate” (see now 2016, 289), misunderstands the nature of the activity that is being described, it seems to me. The *alû* demon “pours out” or “copulates” with the person in this passage when the person is asleep and thus not clearly a willing participant; thus, this is a case of demonic sexual assault rather than pleasurable sexual intercourse. (See the use of *rakābu* in line 15 for further echoes of sexual activity in the passage.) In comparison, some sufferers of sleep paralysis report being sexually assaulted by the “felt presence” (see, e.g., Adler 2011, 47 with note 6 [p. 139] and Cheyne 2001, 12, 14). Sharpless and Kliková note that less than 5% of their subjects report “erotic/sexual feelings” during sleep paralysis (2019, 104).

- 11 Whether you are the evil *alû* demon, the depriver of sleep, who stands ready to carry a person off,
 12 Whether you are the evil *alû* demon, a divine being (lit. god) who wanders the night, who does not wash his soiled hands,
 13 Whether you are the evil *alû* demon, who is bedded down (*rabšu*) on a person and “runs”⁶⁹ like a donkey,
 14 Whether you are the evil *alû* demon, who does not know sacrifice, does not have a flour-offering,
 15 Whether you are the evil *alû* demon, who is mounted (*rakbu*) atop a person⁷⁰ like a boat,
 16 Whether you are the evil *alû* demon, who lies on a person like a bed,
 17 Whether you are the evil *alû* demon, who causes a person to “wander”⁷¹ like a dream,
 18 Whether you are the evil *alû* demon, who flutters about in the night like a bat from a crevice of the earth,
 19 Whether you are the evil *alû* demon, who flutters about at night like a bird from dark places,
 20 Whether you are the evil *alû* demon, who covers (*ikattamu*) a person like a fowler’s net (*kātimti*),⁷²
 21 Whether you are the evil *alû* demon, who overwhelms (*isahḥapu*) a person like a hunter’s net (*alluḥappi*),⁷³
 22 Whether you are the evil *alû* demon, who like the night has no sight,⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Geller (2016, 290) notes that the verbs in the second half of the line in both Sumerian and Akkadian make a pun in their respective languages. Sumerian *kaš4*, “to run,” puns on *kāš*, “to urinate,” and Akkadian *šanû*, “to run,” puns on *šānu*, “to urinate” (or *šātānu*).

⁷⁰ I assume the Akkadian *amēla* should be understood as an adverbial accusative; see likewise line 16.

⁷¹ The verb *rapādu* in the Š-stem is also used in *Ludlul* III 6, a few lines before the protagonist reports his series of dreams: *ērūti mašāku ušarpadūn[inni]*, “I forgot alertness, [I] became delirious.” For the root’s use to describe an unfocussed, “wandering” mental state, see Lambert 1960, 295.

⁷² We may also recognize that *kātimtu* in the Akkadian puns on *katimtu*, “hidden thing,” here to describe the *alû* demon’s stealth or hiddenness, which the passage repeatedly emphasizes.

⁷³ This word for “net” occurs elsewhere in lists of demons and diseases (CAD A/1, 359), perhaps due to its similarity in sound to the word *alû*. In fact, *alluḥappu* is attested with the *alû* demon in K.9875, obv. ii 13–14, which are lines in an incantation for safe travels. The text reads: *kīma alluḥappu tashḥapāninni / kīma alē tašaggumā elīya*, “like the hunter’s net you overwhelm me, like the *alû* you make noise over me.” The CAD takes *alû* here to be a kind of drum (see CAD A/1, 359 and CAD Š/1, 64). But I think Meier’s idea in his brief edition of the text is contextually better: He took the word to refer to the *alû* demon (see Landsberger and Meier 1937–1939, 143; likewise, Vanstiphout 1977, 53). Given this understanding, it is worth noting that although *šagāmu* can refer to the loud noise of Adad’s thundering and the like (CAD Š/1, 63–64), the verb can also refer to the internal “noise” in one’s head or to the ringing of the ears (CAD Š/1, 64–65), the last of which brings to mind the constant ringing of the ears (*uznāšu ištānassā*) mentioned in Sa-gīg XXVII 21–23 as a symptom of *qāt alī lemmi*.

⁷⁴ It is unclear to me that this line simply intends to convey the demon’s inability to see, as a translation such as “(he) has no vision at night” conveys (so Geller 2016, 293; likewise CAD N/2,

²³ Whether you are the evil *alû* demon, who prowls around like a fox in (lit. of) the city.

Given the closeness with which the *alû* demon is associated with sleep in this passage, in *Ludlul* II 71–72, and implied in other texts, it seems reasonable that the *alû* demon’s attack in *Ludlul* (and at least in some other texts) may be compared with what we might call a sleep disorder. The effects of this attack upon the protagonist as described in the following lines, *Ludlul* II 73–85, support the idea that this experience as described—as presented through the scholarly lens of the poem’s author—can be plausibly and profitably compared with sleep paralysis to aid in our understanding of the protagonist’s experience.⁷⁵

Several features in these lines deserve close comparative consideration. First, the victim’s eyes and ears do not function properly.

They were staring, but my eyes could did not see,
They were open, but my ears could not hear. (II 73–74)

These lines suggest that the sufferer’s eyes and ears appear to be working, but in fact they do not perceive anything. This may be seen as a problem for the comparison with sleep paralysis since those experiencing sleep paralysis often describe seeing and hearing things during their bouts of the disorder. But it should be recalled that not all characteristics of sleep paralysis are experienced by everyone every time. In fact, most victims describe their eyes as being open, while others say they could not open their eyes at all, despite their efforts.⁷⁶ Some will describe sounds very clearly, while others hear little to nothing.⁷⁷

301). Given the context, it may very well be that we should recognize, perhaps in addition to(?) the demon being blind, that the demon has no appearance, which is also an attested meaning of *niġlu* (CAD N/2, 301), if poorly so. “Sight” in my translation attempts to convey this ambiguity.

⁷⁵ I am not the first to make this association. Reiner associated the *alû* demon here in *Ludlul* with a “night-mare,” a term often used to describe sleep paralysis (so, e.g., Adler 2011 *passim*). Reiner writes: The description in *Ludlul* II 71–83 “is a sleep that is in fact one of those nightmares in which you are unable to move in order to escape from danger, a sleep that holds fast and paralyzes like the net thrown over the enemy or the hunted game” (1985, 109). Adler also briefly noted that the Mesopotamian *alû* demon was probably associated with what clinicians would call sleep paralysis (2011, 37–38). She appeals to R. Campbell Thompson’s early works, *The Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia* (1903) and *Semitic Magic: Its Origins and Development* (1908), though her citations of the cuneiform texts seem to be mistaken. Stol 1993, 41–42 has argued that the *alû* demon is to be associated with night terrors, but his definition and discussion suggests he is describing what Adler calls “night-mare.”

⁷⁶ See, e.g., Sharpless and Doghramji 2015, 74. For brief comments on the types of visual hallucinations people experience, see pp. 79–80, 82–83.

⁷⁷ For a discussion of auditory hallucinations, see Sharpless and Doghramji 2015, 76–78.

If, however, a close parallel in *Udug-ḥul* VII 37–38 is brought to bear upon our lines here in *Ludlul*, then we may be pursuing the wrong idea entirely.⁷⁸ The passage in *Udug-ḥul* describes the stealth of various demons, listed at the beginning of the incantation (VII 27–28) as including the evil *utukku* demon, the evil *alû* demon, the evil ghost, and the evil *gallû* demon (*udug ḥul / utukku lemnu*, *a-lá ḥul / alû lemnu*, *gedim ḥul / eṭemmu lemnu*, and *gaš-lá ḥul / gallû lemnu*). Lines 37–38 read:⁷⁹

igi-bi bad-bad lú igi nu-un-bar-re
 īnāšu *petâ-ma manma ul ippallas*
 ḡēštu-ga-ni ḡál-tag₄-a lú-a-šè <ḡiš> nu-tuk-tuk
 uznā [*petâ-ma*] *manma ul išemme*

(Akk.) His (i.e., a human's) eyes are open, but he sees no one,
 His ears are open, but he hears no one.

Given this description, perhaps *Ludlul* II 73–74 is not describing the protagonist's visual and auditory impairment so much as describing the fact that the sufferer could not perceive the agent responsible for his suffering. This would be in accord with other descriptions of the *alû* demon, who is described as incorporeal and stealth-like, especially in *Udug-ḥul* VIII 1–23 cited above. The *alû* demon's imperceptibility compares well with one of the most common experiences during sleep paralysis, the “felt presence”—typically malevolent, which may or may not be visually verified during a bout of sleep paralysis.⁸⁰ Contemporary sleep paralysis sufferers report this felt presence as typically (although not always) causing tremendous fear, something for which the *alû* demon was apparently famous in ancient Mesopotamia, as illustrated above.

The next demonic effect on the sufferer occurs in II 75–79, where the sufferer describes the immobility of his body and limbs.⁸¹

⁷⁸ This highlights the dangers of allowing a modern clinical disease or disorder to dictate how we should interpret an ancient text. As the above illustrates, interpreting the ancient text within its own context first before making a comparison (of any kind) is essential to a well-formed comparison.

⁷⁹ See Geller 2007, 137 with Geller 2016, 259.

⁸⁰ Sharpless and Doghrāmji 2015, 80–82. Sometimes the merely sensed presence transitions into a visual hallucination.

⁸¹ Three lines, obv. i 48–50, in the *Great Prayer to Ištar* (K.225 + K.9962) hint that it may have recounted a similar experience, but the context is now broken. According to Lambert's edition (1959, 50), the text reads: [... *is*] *ḥup lānī* / [...] *x idīya* / [...] *x iklanni*, “[... he ove]rwhelmed my frame, / [...] ... my arms, / [...] ... he bound me.” Geraldina Rozzi is preparing a new edition of the text with duplicates.

Numbness had seized my entire body,
 Paralysis had fallen upon my flesh.
 Stiffness had apprehended my arms,
 Debility had fallen on my legs,
 My feet forgot mobility.

This kind of experience is quite familiar to those who suffer from sleep paralysis. In fact, paralysis or atonia is often treated as the core symptom, as the name would suggest, of the sleep paralysis disorders.⁸² Clinically, such immobility is probably to be explained in relation to REM sleep, when the body is immobilized to keep it from acting upon dreams. In any case, for the passage in *Ludlul* it should be noted that the four Akkadian words in II 75–78, *rimûtu*, *mišittu*, *mangu*, and *lu'tu*, respectively, are also found in a variety of therapeutic texts and laments (alongside many other words) to describe various maladies (see chapter six). Moreover, the very lines in *Ludlul* II 77–78 are paralleled in two lines of a *dingiršadabba* prayer.⁸³ We should expect nothing less from our poet who draws extensively from the reservoir of the traditional language and tropes of prayer (see further chapter eight). Yet, these particular Akkadian words and phrases likely would not have been individually or collectively determinative for an ancient exorcist or physician to diagnose our protagonist as suffering from the *alû* demon in *Ludlul* any more than are the English words “paralysis,” “stiffness,” or “immobility” or the phrase “I couldn’t move” determinative for a modern clinician to make a diagnosis of sleep paralysis. For the ancient reader of the poem, however, the concept of paralysis or immobility might have been expected after seeing that the *alû* demon was involved in the protagonist’s experience. (We may compare the widely-attested, supernatural agent named responsible for the bodily experience of immobility, *kanashibari*, in Japan.) As the above citation from the *Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta I* illustrates, the *alû* demon’s power to bind was infamous (noted also in *Udug-hul* VIII 4); that is, it was so well-known it could be used without explanation in a simile for the king’s power to instill paralyzing fear. (We might note that the reader’s reason-

⁸² See Sharpless and Dhogramji 2015, 73–76. “The essential and ‘minimal’ criteria required for diagnosis of an episode are the presence of conscious awareness in conjunction with temporary atonia” (Sharpless and Dhogramji 2015, 72, referencing the second edition of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine’s *International Classification of Sleep Disorders: Diagnostic Coding Manual* (2005)). They go on to note in a chapter on clinical diagnosis of the disorder that a proper diagnosis also requires ruling out other etiologies and other potential factors that could have brought the bout on (e.g., the use of drugs); see pp. 149–50.

⁸³ Noted already by Lambert 1973, 294; see likewise, Jaques 2015, 67, lines 10–11 and p. 95, noted also by Oshima 2014, 258. Proving they are a traditional description of terror, the same lines also appear in *Gilgameš* V 29–30. See Al-Rawi / George 2014, 76, 84 with George 2003, 2.820.

ing and expectations as they progress through this passage would have been precisely the inverse of the potential reasoning of a person living through the attack, in this case, our protagonist. That is, the sufferer's experience of immobility might have been one of the major initial factors that suggested the involvement of the *alû* demon. As chapter five suggests, the retrospective account in *Ludlul* presents the retrospective *interpreted* experience of the sufferer.)

As an aside on the matter of diagnosis: Given how the exorcists' incantations (especially in Udug-ḥul) describe the *alû* demon, what we are taking as a self-report of an *alû* demon attack in *Ludlul* could, I think, have presented to an exorcist the verisimilitude of an *alû* demon attack even if the demon was not named in the poem. But, contrast this with the second and third cases of "hand of evil *alû* demon" in Sa-gig XXVII 21–23, as examined earlier. Even if an exorcist using Sa-gig to examine our protagonist in *Ludlul* equated his reported "paralysis" terms as qualifying as a "stupor" (*kūru*), the exorcist might also have asked if he experienced ringing ears (among other symptoms) before giving his professional diagnosis. In other words, even for an ancient therapeutic specialist, the account in *Ludlul* might not have been more than suggestive. The passage's verisimilitude with the accounts in the incantations might have been construed as a clue but not a definitive one in terms of making an "*alû* demon" diagnosis, at least, as Sa-gig construes such a diagnosis. This, I think, highlights the genre issue raised in the section on methodology earlier in this chapter. *Ludlul* as a narrative poem has more affinities with incantations and incantation prayers (see chapter eight)—all of which are written in verse and often have a kind of narrative element to them—than the "if-then" case-law/omen structure of Sa-gig. And thus it is no surprise that the incantations offer more help in illuminating the *alû* demon's attack in *Ludlul* than does Sa-gig.

The effects of the demonic attack continue in *Ludlul* II 80–81, both of which have small gaps at the beginning of the line, creating some uncertainty in the description of the sufferer's experience.

[A bl]ow[?] over took *me*, I choked like one fallen,
Death [has]tened[?] to shroud my face.

When compared with the experience of sleep paralysis, these lines may describe something similar to the pressure people feel on their chest during a bout, the difficulty they often experience with breathing, and the feeling that

they may die as a result of asphyxiation.⁸⁴ With regard to pressure on the chest, it is worth noting that the *alû* demon is paired with the chest (*irtu*) in a list of demons who approach various parts of a man's body—proceeding head to toe—in the opening incantation of Tablet XI of the bilingual incantation series Saġ-gig-ga-meš:

- ¹ én á-sàg lú-ra saġ-bi mu-un-na-[te]
asakku ana amēli ana qaqqadīšu ittehi
² nam-tar lú-ra zi-bi mu-un-na-te
namtaru ana amēli ana napištīšu ittehi
³ udug ħul gú-bi mu-un-na-te
utukku lemnu ana k[išādī]šu ittehi
⁴ a-lá ħul gaba-bi [mu]-un-na-te
alû lemnu ana irtīšu ittehi
⁵ gidim ħul íb-bi mu-un-na-te
eṭemmu lemnu ana qablīšu ittehi
⁶ gaš-lá ħul šu-bi mu-un-na-te
gallû lemnu ana qatīšu ittehi
⁷ diġir ħul ġiri-bi mu-un-na-te
*ilu lemnu ana šēpīšu ittehi*⁸⁵

Incantation: The evil *asakku* demon has drawn near to a man, to his head,
 The evil *namtaru* demon has drawn near to a man, to his throat,
 The evil *utukku* demon has drawn near to his n[eck],
 The evil *alû* demon has drawn near to his chest,
 The evil ghost has drawn near to his waist,
 The evil *gallû* demon has drawn near to his hand,
 The evil god has drawn near to his foot.

In a nam-érim-búr-ru-da incantation that contains a similar listing of demons seizing specific body parts we find the *alû* demon again associated with the chest of a person.⁸⁶ In any case, the paralysis and choking in sufferers of sleep paralysis combine, forcing a sense of helplessness upon the person. They may want to call out for help, but they often can do nothing more than utter faint moans.⁸⁷ *Ludlul* II 82–83 may represent a similar futile experience of calling out for help:

⁸⁴ See Sharpless and Dhogramji 2015, 74–75, 84.

⁸⁵ This is my own transliteration/transcription of CT 17 9: 1–14, which is itself a composite text of various tablets. John Wee at University of Chicago is in the process of producing a critical edition of this series.

⁸⁶ See Maul 2019, 1.214, line 51.

⁸⁷ Sharpless and Dhogramji 2015, 75.

[He took] notice of me, *but* I could not answer *my* inquirer,
 “[Wo]e!”⁸⁸ they were crying, *but* I could not control myself.⁸⁸

As our passage comes to an end, I think its final couplet, II 84–85, has a transitional, Janus-like character:

A net (*naḥbalu*) was laid on my mouth,
 And a bolt barred my lips.

On the one hand, this couplet looks back in that it describes the sufferer’s inability to breathe and answer to those calling to him, as described in the previous lines, which I think are direct results of the demon, since, as noted in chapter six, in one of only a few other attestations of *naḥbalu* the term is used as a metaphor to describe a demon’s hand.⁸⁹ *Ludlul* II 84–85, also, on the other hand, looks forward as it introduces the results of the demonic attack: the protagonist’s oral cavity had become blocked so that it would not take in food, as described in II 86–94. Thus, we might view the sufferer’s loss of appetite or inability to eat as a kind of *nocebo*—the alter-ego of *placebo*—stemming from the demonic experience.⁹⁰ This may be compared with the way sleep paralysis can induce fear and anxiety and even worries of impending death.⁹¹ This comparison becomes all the more interesting in light of Cheyne and Pennycook’s findings in contemporary cases of sleep paralysis that “[t]hose reporting some level of supernatural belief regarding the causes of SP [*scil.* sleep paralysis] reported increased intensity of both fear and threat/assault experiences as well as increased postepisode distress relative to those who reported weaker or no

⁸⁸ It is worth noting that the last phrase in II 83, *ramān ul īši*, literally, “he does not have (him)self,” is somewhat akin to the phrase *ramānīšu ul īde*, “he is unconscious (lit. he does not know himself),” in Sa-gig XXVII 20, the first entry dealing with *qāt alī lemmi*.

⁸⁹ See CT 17 25: 15: [*qās*]su [*n*]aḥbalu šēpšu nardappum-m[a], “his [hand] is a net, his feet a shackle.”

⁹⁰ Note Adler’s cross-cultural generalization: “The gaunt, drawn appearance of the night-mare sufferer, particularly on the morning after an attack, is commonplace in folk tradition” (2011, 42). See also Hufford who speculates on the etymological connection between “hagrid” (one who has been ridden by a hag) and the English word “haggard” (1982, 54–55).

⁹¹ As Sharpless and Dhogramji note, the likelihood of experiencing sleep paralysis may be closely related to a traumatic event but sleep paralysis *itself* may also be experienced as traumatic: “a sufferer could experience episodes as ‘actual’ assaults and threats to bodily integrity. This would be even more likely if the hallucinations were not seen as hallucinations, but as real-world happenings” (2015, 119); thus, the sufferer’s condition is exacerbated. For the *nocebo* effect in general and in relation to sleep paralysis, see Adler’s medical anthropological discussion (2011, 117–33). She cites several Southeast Asian cultures in which the beings responsible for night-mares could take the life of their victims.

supernatural beliefs regarding SP.”⁹² One’s contemporary worldview influences the effects of the experience upon the body. In any case, I think the text here supports understanding the sufferer’s immediate post-episode trauma with the *alû* demon as precipitating his long term illness, described in the rest of Tablet II, which drove him to the grave’s edge, despite renewed efforts to discover ritually the source of his problem and seek help from his gods (II 108–113). By the end of Tablet II, the sufferer seems resigned to die.

The above reading suggests the attack of the *alû* demon in this passage is the sufferer’s turning point from incidental illness to terminal condition. The demonic gang-attack that he experienced in II 51–57 may have afflicted and weakened him, making him susceptible to further harm. But it was the assault of the *alû* demon in II 71–85 that paved the way for the sufferer’s long-term debility that would lead to his brush with death. Reading Tablet II in this manner transforms what may at first glance seem to be a flat litany of physical maladies and suffering into a dynamic narrative of illness.

11.5. FINAL REFLECTIONS

In addition to a new perspective on this passage in *Ludlul* II, the comparative reading I have developed above provides the modern reader a unique point of contact that offers an opportunity for self-reflection *through* the narrative situation under discussion in various ways depending on one’s own life circumstances and worldview. For example, this juxtaposition may be especially helpful for the academician who gives no credence to the demonic or the supernatural in the contemporary world. Comparing the sufferer’s reported experience with clinical studies of sleep paralysis permits a kind of translation of the experience into terms that cannot be dismissed as mere superstition, nonsense, or, more generously, ignorant imagination. For those who have experienced sleep paralysis themselves (however they may explain it) the juxtaposition may draw attention to the terror in the passage in a unique manner because they can imagine the sufferer’s experience via analogy with their own. One’s personal experience and worldview will affect the experience of reading the passage in *Ludlul* comparatively. In this respect, Adler’s point about the interconnection between cultural beliefs and biology is as relevant to *us as readers* as it is for us as historical investigators of ancient Mesopotamia:

⁹² Cheyne and Pennycook 2013, 142.

Although these commonalities [*scil.* of the night-mare experience] seem to point to a shared biological framework, individual experiences can also contain distinctive details that prompt local, cultural interpretations. The night-mare experience, therefore, presents a unique opportunity to study the reciprocal influence of culture and biology by providing a lens through which to view the interconnectedness of mind and body; the night-mare illustrates the dynamics and consequences of the interaction between cultural beliefs and human physiology.⁹³

Including our own, we may add. The comparative reading I have offered is not just about the ancient sufferer of the poem; it is about us, too. This opportunity for self-reflection challenges us to take into account how much our contemporary viewpoint influences our reading (or understanding) of the past, literary or otherwise. This is a truism in literary criticism and historiography but not one that is commonly explored (or acknowledged) in Assyriology.⁹⁴

The comparative reading in this chapter also offers an opportunity to foster empathy in our reading of *Ludlul*. When we read literature, the possibility of empathizing with what is written is the most important contributing factor for drawing us in. We in some ways are living through the text vicariously, even if only temporarily. Without the ability to discern what is going on in the narrative, our ability to empathize is diminished. Would we understand the *Epic of Gilgameš* if we had not also experienced some futile course of action, however small or trivial? Could we understand the conflict in *Enūma eliš* if we could not feel the alarm raised by an imminent and fatal threat? Would we have even a trace amount of empathy with the participants of *namburbi* rituals, if we ourselves did not also know the effects of an impending or at least a potentially-impending worry over our well-being?

Our own experiences, perceived if not as identical to then at least as analogous with those described in the texts, are what make us empathetic readers. But discerning an experience or the emotional situation in a story or narrative is not always easy. This is, of course, why small children find so many “grown-up” movies boring. And understanding experiences described in poetic literature so far removed from our own time and place is even more difficult.

Bringing a modern clinical perspective explicitly into comparison with this ancient passage provides that emotional point of contact necessary to cultivate our empathy in the passage’s reading. And empathy is one of the best reasons

⁹³ Adler 2011, 2.

⁹⁴ For the importance of this acknowledgment in Assyriology, see Veldhuis 2014, 21–23.

to read any story, including ones in Akkadian like *Ludlul*.⁹⁵ The words of literary critic Robert Waxler are worth citing at length in this regard. He writes:

[T]he imaginative language of story offers us sensuous experience, an embodied language shaped into narrative (or poetic forms), expressing personal knowledge open to reflection. Literary language binds us to that experience, but also inspires us to movement and agency. It grants us both sensuous experience to immerse ourselves in and the perspective to distance ourselves from that experience so that we can make sense of the experience and begin to create our own story. It allows us to acknowledge that we are mortal bodies experiencing the world and that we can reflect on that embodied experience. In this way, we recognize how the story we are reading is similar to our own story and so we are able to recognize how we are connected to other mortal human beings. Another's story is our story as well. But we also recognize our difference from this story, our difference from others. Another's story is not quite our story after all. In this way, we know what we are and what we are not. We acknowledge the self and the other, our life and our death. (2014, 12)

The ancient and modern contexts for reading *Ludlul* will never be identical; but, detailed contextualizations and comparative readings can call to the text and draw it closer, enhancing our understanding and interpretation of the poem while enriching our experience—of the poem, of course, but also of our own place and time in the world.

⁹⁵ See Lenzi 2019, xx–xxi, 194–96.

CONCLUSION

This monograph does not offer a step-by-step argument so much as a series of studies that provides a variety of perspectives on *Ludlul*. The underlying goal all along has been to demonstrate on one particular composition the potential of a multi-perspectival, interdisciplinary approach to Akkadian literature that takes seriously the cultural contexts of both the ancient and modern scholars involved in producing meaningful readings of the text. Chapter one uses a kind of historical and to some degree biographical chronicle to describe the way modern scholars, with their varied motivations, interests, and concerns, pieced together the textual puzzle that is *Ludlul*. After chapter two presents the text in Akkadian and English, chapter three uses a traditional philological approach to think through the textual data and justify my readings and translation but also to illustrate the conversation the ancient text has elicited among modern scholars. Chapter one is somewhat unusual in Assyriology; chapter three is its bread and butter. The remainder of the book, using a variety of perspectives, attempts to contextualize *Ludlul* in its ancient socio-cultural contexts as a product of ancient Mesopotamian exorcist-scholars. Chapters five and seven engage in broad thematic readings of the poem to explore both its underlying divinatory context and its ideological use among these ritual experts who were also divinatory practitioners. Chapters six and eight use intra-Mesopotamian comparisons, one lexical and the other intertextual, to understand two prominent semantic fields in the poem and to interpret the poem's generic connection to incantation prayers, a key genre in exorcism. Chapter eleven uses an explicit intercultural comparison to read one passage in the poem closely and to translate the demonic attack described therein to modern readers via a clinical analogy. Explorations of relevant contexts for understanding the poem itself (chapters five, six, seven, and eight) are surrounded by examinations of various perspectives on its reception: curricular (chapter four), hermeneutical (chapter nine), and intertextual (chapter ten). And detailed lexical studies (chapter six and nine) work together with a close reading of one short passage (chapter eleven). Although these studies are not definitive and will likely be outdated sooner than I might hope, they open a vista onto the ancient scholars and scribes who produced and used this poem in ancient Mesopotamia to further their interests and to make sense of their world. We modern scholars, if we are honest with ourselves, are doing the same, even if with different methods and questions. And so many questions remain.

“I call on you from afar, hear me as though nearby.”¹ With this phrase, attested in a number of incantation prayers directed to both male and female deities, the ancient supplicant wishes their voice to be clear so that their petitions may be heard and granted. In many ways, this phrase succinctly captures the supplicant’s hope and anxiety. Hope, because the phrase is uttered with the assumption that the gods, if willing and convinced to stir into action, were capable of providing help. Anxiety, because the gods apparently were not always favorably inclined to pay attention to a supplicant. The phrase is rooted in a tacit recognition of the obstacles to effective communication with the gods due to the distance between humanity and divinity, whether conceived quantitatively as the cosmological expanse between heaven and earth or qualitatively as the ontological differentiation between humans and the gods. Though the phrase is an ancient supplicatory petition, it is also an apt metaphor, imperfect as it may be, for the very difficult cross-cultural task that confronts modern, would-be readers of *Ludlul* and other ancient Mesopotamian texts.

We modern readers call upon the text from afar as we read—from a great chronological and cultural distance—in the hopes of understanding it as though nearby, as though it could communicate something relevant to us—something we want to know—in the here and now. As Part One of this monograph demonstrates—almost a monograph in itself, a great many modern scholars have labored over the hard bits of inscribed clay bearing witness to *Ludlul* and have managed to make accessible to us today this sophisticated poem from the milieu of ancient Mesopotamian scribal scholars. They have called from afar and we may read the text as though it is near. Likewise, in Parts Two and Three of this monograph I have called upon the text in a variety of ways to bring near various aspects of the poem and the voices of the ancient scholars who composed, copied, taught, and re-used it. The reader will judge the extent to which I have brought the text near. The more important question in these final paragraphs is: In what other ways might we call upon the text, to query the poem in the hopes of bringing near something we want to know? In other words, what lies ahead for studies on *Ludlul*?

I think the future is bright. The philological labors to reconstruct the remainder of the text and to refine or, invoking the metaphor from the introduction to Part One, to grow and to mature our translations will continue. By the time this book is published, this task will likely have already received a boost

¹ The Akkadian text is rendered in two ways: *rūqiš alsīka qerbiš šimanni*, when addressed to a god; *rūqiš alsīki qerbiš šiminni*, when addressed to a goddess. For attestations of the phrase in incantation prayers, see Mayer 1976, 130. A paraphrased-rendering of the line into English might run as follows: “even though I’m calling from far away, I hope you hear my calling clearly, as if I am nearby.”

in the form of Aino Häntinen's new edition of the poem for the Electronic Babylonian Literature project. It seems to me that new editions spur scholarly activity. And thus we should expect a spate of new philological notes in the coming years, calling into question established readings and translations. Assyriology is very good at this. And we should look forward with anticipation at what lies just over the horizon.

In addition to this, as Assyriologists are becoming increasingly comfortable with interdisciplinary approaches, we should hope for a proliferation of humanistic and social scientific perspectives brought to bear on *Ludlul*. For example, there is a great deal of work to be done on the rhetorical devices in *Ludlul*, its imagery, comparisons, and metaphors,² as well as its poetics, at both the level of individual verses and couplets as well as at larger units, which my translation has delineated intuitively, for the most part. I think there is also a great potential to explore *Ludlul* via intertextual methodologies. How does the poem work with or, perhaps more interestingly, *alongside of*, *against*, or *despite* other ancient Mesopotamian texts and the human interests behind them?³ If the poem was the classic that I think it was, allusions and echoes to its text are likely embedded in a great many more texts than I have stumbled upon. For what ends did the actors citing it put it to use? Comparative literary studies present another fertile area of inquiry. *Ludlul* has most often been compared to the biblical book of Job;⁴ no doubt we have not seen the last of such studies. And there is already a small contingent of Classicists reading *Ludlul* for comparative purposes.⁵ We will likely see more of this kind of work. We should also hope for comparative literary studies on *Ludlul* from disciplines much farther afield.

Critical theory also opens new channels to call upon the text. In this monograph, I read *Ludlul* with the scholars. But what if we read *Ludlul* against the scholars? That is, what would we learn if we read *Ludlul* not to understand empathetically the protagonist or the scholars among whom the text arose but as a means to discover what their ideas and worldview ignored, dismissed, or attempted to erase? After all, these men were only one fraction—a very small fraction—of ancient Mesopotamian societies that happens to be well-

² I think back to Michela Piccin's very interesting paper on various rhetorical features in *Ludlul* and the *Babylonian Theodicy* at the Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale in Philadelphia, July 2015.

³ An increased ability to identify intertextual references need not lead to an inference of systematization and coherence in Mesopotamian cultural discourse; rather, as Richardson argues, it provides an opportunity "to reconstruct a cultural field that not only permitted, but *depended on*, flexibility and multiplicity of practice to tolerate and resolve internal contradictions" (2017, 193).

⁴ See Uehlinger 2007 for a round-up of studies.

⁵ See, e.g., Haubold 2019 and Johnston 2019.

represented in our sources. As soon as we raise this question, many more questions come to mind. How, for example, might we read *Ludlul* from the perspective of those who did not have the benefits of the social hierarchy that Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan enjoyed prior to his experience of divine anger? I have treated the protagonist of the poem throughout this book as the one with whom to empathize, but how might we imagine his story, for example, from the perspective of the slave girl in *Ludlul* I 90? We get a glimpse of how the protagonist's enemies gloat over his misfortune in the poem (e.g., II 117–118). Would she have felt something similar against the man who did not recognize her body as her own? One may suggest that such a reading imposes a value on the text that is not present in the literate fraction of society. But, reading against the grain of the text, so to speak, is one way to consider the poem as an ideological product of the literate elite, who had a vested, material interest in the worldview that the poem exhibits and applies to understand Šubši-mešrê-Šakkan's social experiences. Querying Tablet II from the perspective of Disability Studies, for example, raises a similar series of (disruptive) questions regarding the protagonist's bodily experiences.

I wrote in the introduction to Part Three that a truly classic literary text has a way of transcending both time and space. A classic text also, I think, has a perennial ability to challenge its ever-changing readership. Along these lines, Johannes Haubold offers the following as a concluding observation of his reading of *Ludlul* and Babylonian didactic literature for what Classicists might learn. He writes, “the properly humanist project, it seems to me, is to read, and respond to, the Babylonian texts that most powerfully spoke to ancient readers and continue to raise challenging issues today, such as the relationship between justice and suffering, the limits of human knowledge, and the (at best) partial capability of human beings to determine their own fate. Such issues do not allow for simple narratives of literary, ethical, or indeed didactic progress (we do not necessarily know better now), but they do point to the richness and diversity of human attempts to learn and teach.”⁶ It is difficult to divine how scholars farther afar from *Ludlul* than us will call upon the text. But they would do well to take Haubold's concluding observation as something more like a motivating agenda as they call upon *Ludlul*—and other Akkadian texts—in the hopes of bringing them near.

⁶ 2019, 219.

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