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## ENTRUSTING THE WITCHES TO ḪUMUṬ-TABAL: THE *UŠBURRUDA* RITUAL BM 47806+

By DANIEL SCHWEMER

The hitherto unpublished Late Babylonian fragment BM 47806+ adds another example to the group of rituals which counteract witchcraft by banning sorcerers to the netherworld. Šamaš is asked to hand them over, on his journey to the netherworld, to Ḫumuṭ-tabal, the ferryman of the dead. The edition of BM 47806+ is preceded by a brief overview of rituals of this type, including a discussion of the relationship between ritual burial of figurines — symbolising the dismissal of sorcerers to the netherworld — and their ritual burning, the other single most important technique of figurine magic deployed to kill warlock and witch.

### 1. *Burn or bury? Two ways to kill a witch\**

Most Babylonian anti-witchcraft rituals aim at a simple reversal of the patient's and the witches' fates. The ritual returns the witchcraft to its originators, thereby imposing on the evildoers themselves the deadly fate they had intended for the patient. This reversion is neatly summed up by the final line of an *ušburruda*-incantation that was recited over an amulet necklace: *e-piš-ti lu-u ana qab-rim-ma ana-ku lu-u ana nūr(zálag) elâti(an.ta)*<sup>meš</sup> “May my sorceress (descend) to the grave, but may I (rise) to the light of the upper world!”<sup>1</sup> An Old Babylonian anti-witchcraft incantation puts the idea that the sorcerers perish of their own deeds into words reminiscent of wisdom texts:

*e-pi-iš le-em-né-ti le-em-né-tu-šu ú-ul i-še-et-ta-šu<sup>1</sup>(ša) (// -šu)  
lu-mu-un-šu pi-ri-iḫ-šu ú-ul ú-wa-aš-šar  
za-a-ri (// za-ri) lum-nim (// lu-um-nim) i-iṣ-ši-da (// i-ši-da) qá-ta-šu  
ka-a-ad uṣ-ši-a (// uṣ-ši-a-am) ú-ša-an-nu-ú ap-lu-šu*

YOS 11, 15 obv. 1–4 // 29 rev. 6–7

The evildoer<sup>2</sup> — his evil deeds will not fail to catch him,  
his evil will not release his offspring.  
The one who sows evil, his hands will harvest (it),  
the . . . from which he escapes, his sons will *double* (it).<sup>3</sup>

Burning and burial are the two methods of figurine magic that the sorcerers are most commonly accused of and also, as to be expected within the logic of ritual reversal, the two most prominent

\*Thanks are due to Mark Weeden for correcting my English.

<sup>1</sup>K 8933(+) obv. II 11'–12' // Sm 352(+) obv. II 21' // *KAL* 2, 36 rev. V 16' (broken). *KAL* 2, 36 has recently been joined to VAT 13628 by W. Meinhold; as a result the line counted as rev. V 16' in *KAL* 2 should now be counted as rev. V 17', assuming three entirely broken lines after rev. V 13', rather than two. For the full text of the incantation, see provisionally *KAL* 2, 36; note that I have since overcome my hesitation to interpret *šab-tim* in the third line of the text as *šabī* (see commentary on *KAL* 2, 36, p. 97 ad ll. 12'–13') and would translate the whole text as follows: “I am equipped with *ru'tītu* sulphur, the daughter of the great gods, who undoes witchcraft on the day of the new moon and curses on the eve of the seventh day. Curse, curse, I purify you, curse! Seize (*šabī*) the ewe's young one, the nanny goat's twins, the bitch's puppies, pick up my warlock's and witch's seed! May the curse (go) downstream, but may I (go) [*upstream*], may my sorceress (descend) to the grave, but may I (rise) to the light of the upper world!”

<sup>2</sup>Note that *epēšu* has a special meaning “to practise (witchcraft)”, “to bewitch”; since the present incantation is used within an anti-witchcraft ritual *ēpišu* may well have this more specific connotation here.

<sup>3</sup>The meaning of this line hinges on the interpretation of the problematic *ka-a-ad*, which must be a construct-state noun followed by a relative clause; the lexical ambiguity of *ušannū* produces further uncertainty. If *ka-a-ad* is taken as a form of *kādu* “guard” (otherwise not so far attested in OB, though underlying *kuddu* “to watch” is), it is difficult to see how it can be a meaningful object of *ušannū* “they alter” or “they repeat”. *CAD* K 35a tentatively proposes to regard *a-ka-ad* in the OB “Cuthean Legend” as derived from an otherwise unattested *kādu* “to be distressed” (cf. *AHw* 1565a, but see Westenholz 1997: 318 ad l. 88). If one accepted the existence of this verb, one could assume a corresponding noun *kādu* “distress”. Then the meaning of the line could be that any evil from which the perpetrator himself escapes will afflict the following generation twice over.

techniques employed to kill one's witches ritually. A short witchcraft diagnosis preserved on the small fragment K 9046 brings the two methods together in a few words: *amēlu(na) šū(bi) šal[mū(n[u]meš-šū) ana ḡira ù gul-gul-li paq-du* "Figurines of that man have been handed over to Girra and to a skull" (rev. III<sup>2</sup> 6'-7'). One figurine representing the patient has been burnt or melted by exposing it to the voracious appetite of the fire god Girra, while another figurine has been entrusted to a ghost (represented by a human skull) who is asked to take the patient with him to the netherworld.

### 1.1. *Burning as a symbol of complete annihilation*

In a culture like that of Mesopotamia, where the bodies of the deceased were not cremated, the burning of figurines representing fellow-humans not only symbolised a horrible and painful death, but also deprived the victim's body of burial and thereby prevented his ghost from entering the netherworld, where the miserable lot of the dead was at least alleviated by the supplies provided by the living in the form of funerary offerings. This concept is nowhere as clearly expressed as in the Sumerian narrative *Gilgameš, Enkidu and the Netherworld*, when Enkidu's ghost replies to Gilgameš's question about the afterlife fate of someone burnt to death: "I did not see him. . . . His ghost does not dwell in the netherworld, his smoke went up into the sky."<sup>4</sup> The final sentence of Enkidu's reply resonates in the formulaic wish of many anti-witchcraft incantations that the smoke of the sorcerers' figurines steadily rise into the sky,<sup>5</sup> and burning evidently served as a powerful symbol of the total annihilation of the evildoers.

It is worth noting that burning rites are employed in only a few groups of Babylonian rituals: (a) anti-witchcraft rituals that use burning for the destruction of figurines of the sorcerers; (b) rituals against curses resulting from the transgression of a taboo (*māmitu*) in which materials representing the patient's sins are burnt;<sup>6</sup> (c) rituals for undoing evil omens (*namburbi*) that occasionally use burning to destroy the concrete object that was interpreted as a bad omen for the client;<sup>7</sup> (d) finally, rituals against field pests in which representations of vermin are burnt.<sup>8</sup> All these rituals focus on a complete elimination of the evil; the special position of anti-witchcraft rituals results from the fact that there the burning rites themselves are supposed to have been used against the patient, who then responds by reflecting the same rites upon his evildoers. Many of the materials used for figurines of warlock and witch, like wood, reed, tallow, wax, bitumen and sesame pomace (to name only the most common ones), would, when set on fire, present the observer with a striking demonstration of what it meant to annihilate someone; other materials like clay or dough would burst or be charred, but apparently the destruction of their original form was regarded as a sufficient symbol of their obliteration. All remains of such burning rites, whether ashes, a smudge of wax or the fragments of a burst clay figurine, had to be disposed of at the end of the ritual. Usually they were either thrown into a river<sup>9</sup> or taken out into the uninhabited steppe.<sup>10</sup> While both actions, sinking objects in a river and removing them to the

<sup>4</sup> Abusch 2002 (first published 1990): 129, 1998: 375, 2002: 67-9, 229 drew attention to the importance of this passage with regard to ritual burning in anti-witchcraft rituals. For the text, see now George 2003: 769, 776: t 1-2; most manuscripts have "his ghost is not there" instead of "his ghost does not dwell in the netherworld" (so in *UET* 6/1, 58).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. already Abusch 2002 (first published 1990): 129 and 2002: 68; for the phrase, see *Maqlū* I 141, V 146, 161 (cf. also V 47 [all quotations from *Maqlū* follow the line count established in Abusch and Schwemer 2008]), *KAR* 80 = *KAL* 2, 8 rev. 23, *AMT* 21/2 + K 3648 + 15966 + Sm 1280 rev. 4' // K 431 + 1853 + 6262 + 6789 + 11260 + 13358 + 13813(+) K 9216 + 17321 rev. IV 8' // K 10353 + 11159: 13' (here with regard to witchcraft); cf. also Lambert 1957-8: 294: 75, 299: 43. The same motif is already attested in a Sumerian *ušburruda*-incantation from the Old Babylonian period (*VS* 17, 31 obv. 6).

<sup>6</sup> The prime example is, of course, *Šurpu*; but cf. also the use of the motif of the rising smoke and the extinguished embers in the *Lipšur* litanies (Reiner 1956: 140-1, ll. 7', 10', 23', 26').

<sup>7</sup> See Maul 1994: 92 with reference to burning a scorpion (see *ibid.* 345: 5'-6') and ants (see *ibid.* 352: 22). The prescription to burn a person suffering from a seizure of the "Spawn of Šulpae" in *STT* 89 rev. IV 180-6 has to be understood along the same lines: his frightening symptoms were interpreted as a serious bad portent for his family, and he, as the physical manifestation of this omen, had to be obliterated; note that the same could be accomplished by burying the "patient" alive (*ibid.* 174-9; for both passages, see Stol 1993: 15, 96).

<sup>8</sup> See the article by George and Taniguchi in this volume [Ed.].

<sup>9</sup> So explicitly in *BAM* 317 rev. 8 // *KUB* 4, 99: 13'-14' // *KAL* 2, 43 m. col. 7' (variant) // *KAR* 275 = *KAL* 2, 45 r. col. 5'-6': *hupā adi qilū[t]i ana nāri [tanaddi]* "[you throw] the disposable pot together with the burnt remains (of the sorcerers' figurines) into the river".

<sup>10</sup> So explicitly in *Maqlū* (ritual tablet 91', cf. 123', 139') and in Lambert 1957-8: 297: 11, where I read: *dikmēn(dē)-šū-nu telegqe(ti) ina ḡarbatu tanassuk* "you take their ashes, you discard them in a deserted place" (*PBS* 10/2, 18 rev.

wilderness beyond the borders of human habitation, could symbolise a transfer to the netherworld,<sup>11</sup> it is significant that the relevant burning rituals do not dwell on these associations.<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, a few texts seem to allude to an exclusion of the witch's ghost from the netherworld: *Maqlū* VIII 121'''–2''' may be restored as [d<sup>er</sup>]eš-<sup>f</sup>ki-gal<sup>1</sup> ana eršeti(ki)<sup>im</sup> a-a ú-š[e]-r[i-da-ki<sup>2</sup>], [ana p]agrī(a)dda-ki erū(tig)<sup>mušen</sup> u zību(nu.um.ma)<sup>mušen</sup> li-in-na-ad-ru “May Ereškigal prevent [you]<sup>13</sup> from descending to the netherworld, may eagle and vulture prey [on] your corpse”.<sup>14</sup> Within the ritual *Bīt rimki* the king addresses various parts of the body of a slaughtered goat with requests for well-being and prosperity. In two of the relevant paragraphs, unfortunately both only fragmentarily preserved, the king asks for the destruction of his enemies; the second of these two paragraphs refers to a female adversary, probably a witch; the king asks that she be killed, but that the earth not accept her blood:

šarru(lugal) <sup>f</sup>ana<sup>1</sup> [x x x x] x [(x x) ki-a-am]<sup>15</sup> iqabbi(du<sub>11</sub>.ga)  
 lu paris(ku<sub>5</sub>)<sup>i</sup> [s<sup>f</sup> lemm]u(ḫu)l<sup>2</sup> a-<sup>f</sup>a<sup>1</sup>-[bu-um]-<sup>f</sup>ma<sup>1</sup>  
 lit-ta-k[i-r]a mi-na-tu-šú [lis-sa]-<sup>f</sup>pi-ih<sup>1</sup>  
 ṭé-em-šu-m[a] mi-<sup>f</sup>lik<sup>1</sup>-[šu] liš-ni<sup>16</sup>

šarru(lugal) ana nik-s[i] šá dām(úš) udu x x x [x x]-ma  
 ki-a-am iqabbi(du<sub>11</sub>.ga) <sup>f</sup>lu<sup>1</sup> tab-<sup>f</sup>ku<sup>1</sup> dām(úš) lemutti(ḫul)<sup>ti</sup> k[aš<sup>2</sup>-ša]p<sup>2</sup>-<sup>f</sup>ti<sup>2</sup>  
 dāmī(úš)<sup>mes</sup>-šá eršetu(ki) <sup>f</sup>a-<sup>f</sup>a<sup>1</sup> im-ḫur li-šap-šēr [x x-šá]  
<sup>d</sup>id ubānātī(š[u.s]i)<sup>mes</sup>-šá li-šak-sis-[si<sup>2</sup>]  
 lišān(eme)-šá l[i-t]e-eṭ-ti <sup>d</sup>gira liq-lu-[šī<sup>2</sup>]

BBR 26 + K 10131 (Læssøe 1955: 21) + K 8194 + 8921 obv. II 6'–14' (collated, preserved on K 8194 + 8921) // *SpTU* 2, 12 obv. I 32'–8' (requires collation)

The king speaks [thus] to [...]: “Let the [evil] enemy be kept away, and let his limbs be changed, [let] his understanding [be] disturbed, let [his] mind become deranged!”

The king [...] to the cut *from* which the *goat's* blood ... and speaks thus: “Let the blood of the evil *witch* be poured out. May the earth not accept her blood, may the River undo [her ...], may he have [her] *gnaw off* her fingers, let her tongue [turn] dark, may Girra burn [her]!”

## 1.2. Burial as symbol of eternal imprisonment in the netherworld

The dismissal of the witches to the netherworld is the main concern of another group of anti-witchcraft rituals:<sup>17</sup> in BM 47806+, edited and discussed below, the patient asks the sun god to take warlock and witch with him on his cosmic journey and hand them over to the powers of the netherworld. *LKA* 44 // applies the myth of Ištar's descent to the netherworld to the patient and his evildoers.<sup>18</sup> The patient, represented by a figurine, returns to the upper world together with Ištar, whose imprisonment in the underworld, like the disappearance of Venus, lasts only for a limited time. Meanwhile warlock and witch are sent on their journey to the “Land of No Return” together with Dumuzi who, according to the myth, is held captive in the underworld as a substitute for Ištar. In the ritual the patient squashes their figurines with his feet before they are finally buried in the wilderness (*ina šēri iqebber*, 1. 76'). Other rituals use funerary rites for entrusting sorcerer and sorceress to a ghost who will carry them off to the netherworld. In the fragmentary

39', coll.); the duplicate Bu 91-5-9, 143+ obv. 12 omits *teleqqe*(ti).

<sup>11</sup> For sinking in a river as symbolic burial, see §1.2; for the uninhabited wilderness and the mountains as a haunt of demons that is associated with the netherworld, especially within the framework of a “horizontal” conception of the netherworld (kur), see Wiggermann 1996 and Katz 2003, esp. 102–12.

<sup>12</sup> But see *infra*, §1.3, for references to banning the witches to the netherworld by burning in *Maqlū* and the text published in Lambert 1957–8.

<sup>13</sup> I.e., the witch; of course, we cannot exclude a restoration *-ni* “me”; this would reverse the sense of the sentence.

<sup>14</sup> The text is preserved in K 11990: 3'–4', K 2981 + 3991

rev. IV 1 and K 9575 + 82-3-23, 52 rev. III 1'.

<sup>15</sup> *SpTU* 2, 12 obv. I 32': *kam*.

<sup>16</sup> *liš-ni* is only preserved in *SpTU* 2, 12 obv. I 34'.

<sup>17</sup> Just as not only the sorcerers, but also their witchcraft could be burnt (see *supra*, fn.5), so not only the sorcerers themselves, but also the witchcraft they had sent could be transferred to the netherworld: see the discussion of *BAM* 449(+) obv. I 10'–II 10 in Schwemer 2007b: 222–4 (note that p. 223, l. 24' *ikammas*(du<sub>10</sub>.gam) must be corrected to *tušakmas*(du<sub>10</sub>.gam)-*su-ma*). For the use of burial rites within therapeutic rituals generally, see Tsukimoto 1985: 125–45 and Nasrabadi 1999: 34–67.

<sup>18</sup> Edited by Farber 1977: 226–59 (“Hauptritual B”); for the interpretation of the ritual, see Schwemer 2007b: 215–17.

ritual *BBR* 52, figurines of sorcerer and sorceress receive funerary offerings in the presence of Šamaš together with the ghosts of the ancestors of the patient's family.<sup>19</sup> In *KAR* 227 // the warlock, witch and the personified "Any Evil" are handed over to Namtar, the demon of death.<sup>20</sup> Prayers invoke Šamaš, as the judge of the upper and lower world, Gilgameš, as ferryman and judge of the dead, and the Anunnakki, as gods of the netherworld. Finally the patient's deceased ancestors and a foreign ghost (represented by a skull) are addressed and asked to take the evildoers with them. Actually the figurines of the sorcerers were probably sunk in the river at whose bank one performed the ritual in a clay pit. That sinking figurines in a river could symbolise a transfer to the netherworld should not be surprising; the dead had to cross the subterranean waters (in mythological cosmology the river Ḫubur)<sup>21</sup> to get to the underworld, which was located deep in the clay beneath the groundwater. Naturally the subterranean ocean (*apsû*) and the underworld were regarded as neighbouring cosmic realms, and in a number of texts the inhabitants of the *apsû* are associated with the underworld and vice versa.<sup>22</sup> The ritual *KAR* 227 // mentions the sinking of the figurines in the river only in a short address to the personified clay pit that was spoken after the symbolic purchase of clay at the very beginning of the proceedings. While the incantation addresses the clay pit, the reference to the clay pit's water shows that the river is here considered to be part of the clay pit as the ritual's locale.<sup>23</sup>

[kul-l]a-tu 'ba-na-at' ili(dingir) u amēli(lú) tamannu(šid)  
 [kul-l]a-tu 'ba-na-at' ili(dingir) u amēli(lú) at-ti-ma  
 [x x] šīm(NÍNDA × ŠE)-'ki' an (x x) ak nu sum<sup>in</sup> ur-tum<sup>24</sup>  
 [x] x x-'ki' kul-la-tu kasap(kù.babbar)-ki mah-ra-ti  
 [qāš]ta([nig.b]a)-ki le-qa-ti šu-bat-ki ta-ri-iš  
 'ki-ma' mû('a)'<sup>rmeš</sup>-ki māhira(gaba.rim)<sup>25</sup> lā(nu) tšû(tuk)<sup>ú</sup> libba(šà)-ki rap-šú itti(ki) mē(a)<sup>meš</sup>-ki  
 ú-'ri-šú<sup>1</sup>  
 itti(ki) mē(a)<sup>meš</sup>-ki liqê(ti)-šú itti(ki) mē(a)<sup>meš</sup>-ki liṭ-ṭa-rid ana mahṛī(igi)-ki saḫ-ḫi-'ri-šú<sup>1</sup>  
 a-na mahṛī(igi)-ki ter-ri-šú li-qê-'šú'-ma li-na-siḫ<sub>4</sub> 'liṭ-ṭa-rid'<sup>1</sup>  
 a-na arkī(egir)-šú a-a itūra(gur)<sup>ra</sup> a-a isniqa(dim<sub>4</sub>) a-a iḫā(te)<sup>a</sup> a-a iqriba('ku'.nu)<sup>ba</sup>  
*LKA* 89+90 obv. I 11'-19' // *KAR* 227 obv. I 14-22 (coll.)

You recite (the incantation) "[Clay] pit, (you are) the creator of god and man."  
 "[Clay] pit, you are the creator of god and man,  
 [. . .] your price . . . command,<sup>26</sup>  
 your . . . (or: . . . you), clay pit, you have received your silver,  
 you have taken your gift, your garment has been spread out.  
 Since your water has no rival (and) your inside is wide, guide it<sup>27</sup> (away) with your water,  
 take it (away) with your water, let it be expelled with your water! Restore it into your presence,  
 take it back again into your presence so that it may be removed (and) expelled!  
 Let it not return to me, not approach me, not come near me, not come close to me!"

A number of other anti-witchcraft rituals use either a river or a hole in the ground to bury figurines of warlock and witch without elaborating on the transfer to the netherworld implied by these actions. In *UET* 6/2, 410 obv. I 1'-27' models of the sorcerers' slanderous tongues (and in

<sup>19</sup> *BBR* 52 was edited most recently by Tsukimoto 1985: 167-70 and Scurlock 2006: 543-5 (cf. also Schwemer 2009: 176-7 and Scurlock 2002: 3-4).

<sup>20</sup> First edited by Ebeling 1931: 122-33; for an overview of the manuscripts known today and a summary discussion of the text, see Abusch 1986: 150-1 and 2002: 76-8.

<sup>21</sup> For this function of the Ḫubur river, and sometimes the Ulaya river, in Babylonian cosmology, see Horowitz 1998: 355-8 and Wiggermann 1996: 211-12. The reference to the Ulaya (in Elam) within these contexts shows that this journey to the end of the world and, ultimately, to the land of the dead could be conceptualised as a journey on the earth's surface (the same is true for Ḫubur, if it is really to be connected with the Ḫubur).

<sup>22</sup> See Horowitz 1998: 342-4 for a discussion of the

mutual relationship between the *apsû* and the netherworld; cf. also Schwemer 1998: 72-3.

<sup>23</sup> For a similar incantation addressed to the clay pit, see Wiggermann 1992: 12, ll. 151-7, and the comments *ibid.* 26 ad 145 with further literature; cf. also Mayer 1976: 433.

<sup>24</sup> *LKA* 89+ obv. I 13': [x x] NÍNDA × ŠE-'ki' an x ('ak'<sup>1</sup> not excluded) [(x) x su]m<sup>in</sup> ur-tum; *KAR* 227 obv. I 16: [. . .] ak nu sum<sup>in</sup> ur-tum.

<sup>25</sup> In *LKA* 89+ obv. I 16': [gim' a<sup>meš</sup>]-'ki gaba.ri<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> The exact reading of sum<sup>in</sup> remains unclear; possible readings include *nādin*, *i(na) dđin*, *a(na) dđin* and *innad(d) in*.

<sup>27</sup> Here and in the following lines referring to *mimma lemnu* "Any Evil", which includes the sorcerers; for a discussion of the relationship between "Any Evil" and the sorcerers within the present ritual, see Abusch 2002: 76-7.

a variant ritual instruction also figurines of the sorcerers themselves) are put in a clay boat and sunk in a river or well; the ritual is to be performed at the end of the month Abu, when the ghosts of the deceased come up to receive their provisions.<sup>28</sup> A fragmentary ritual prescribes enclosing figurines of sorcerer and sorceress in a hollow reed (*takkussu*) which is then thrown into a river; the accompanying incantation indicates that by doing this the witches were handed over to Namtar and sent to the netherworld.<sup>29</sup> In another *ušburruda* ritual, to be performed before Scorpius, the patient washes(?) over dough figurines of warlock and witch which are then dissolved in a bowl of water and discarded in a river.<sup>30</sup> In *KAL* 2, 13 rev. IV 3'–13' a group of figurines representing warlock and witch is beaten<sup>31</sup> and mistreated, before some of them are disposed of in a river and others buried under a washer's mat or in a lavatory. Several rituals prescribe the washing of the patient over the sorcerers' figurines, which are then buried in the ground.<sup>32</sup> Sometimes the figurines are simply buried without any prior treatment,<sup>33</sup> but one ritual emphasises the funerary connotations of the ritual burial by covering a representation of the witch's slanderous tongue with cobwebs.<sup>34</sup>

### 1.3. *Burn and bury: combining the two motifs*

Tzvi Abusch (2002: 69–76) drew attention to the fact that incantations recited during the performance of two burning rituals (*LKA* 154 + = *KAL* 2, 24 // and Lambert 1957–8) refer to the fire god Girra as the one who entrusts the witches to the netherworld, thereby combining the motifs of burning and banning to the netherworld in a way that “is, in and of itself, a mixed metaphor, a conflation, as it were, of two ideas that are mutually exclusive” (p. 71). In the case of *KAL* 2, 24 this combination of the two motifs is also reflected in the fact that the ritual prescribes some figurines to be burnt, but others to be submerged in the river, to be buried (*qebēru*) in the house and to be interred (*qebēru*) in a hole, probably dug in the “steppe” and oriented towards sunset (rev. 47–51); it seems likely that this hole also served as the recipient of the remains of the figurines that had been burnt. In Lambert 1957–8 the burnt remains are to be discarded (*nasāku*) outside the city in a deserted place (see *supra*, fn. 10).

To these two examples a few more can be added.<sup>35</sup> In *Maqlû* II 219–20 the “fire of the grave” is mentioned in a short invocation of the deified oven: *utūnu*(udun) *elletu*(kū)<sup>um</sup> *mārat*(dumu. munus) <sup>d</sup>*a-nim rabītu*(gal)<sup>ti</sup>, *ša ina lib-bi<sup>1</sup> šá na-an-ḫu-za-at i-šat qab-<sup>1</sup>rim<sup>1</sup>* “Pure oven, great daughter of Anu, inside whom the fire of the grave flares up”.<sup>36</sup> In *Maqlû* III 29–30 the fire god is asked to send the witch on a journey with no return, an unambiguous allusion to a descent to the netherworld: *ḫar-ra-an la ta-a-ri li-šá-aš-bit-ki* <sup>d</sup>*gira ḫa-bil-ki*, <sup>d</sup>*gira ez-zu zumur*(su)-*ki li-iḫ-muṭ* “May Girra, who harms you, send you off on the Road of No Return, may fierce Girra burn up

<sup>28</sup> The text was edited by Gurney 1960; a fragmentary parallel was published as *CTN* 4, 121. For the role of Abu as month of the dead, see Abusch 2002 (first published 1974): 107–10, Tsukimoto 1985: 48–56 and Scurlock 1995.

<sup>29</sup> *SpTU* 5, 241. For the enclosure of the figurines in the reed tube, see obv. 3 and 7, for its disposal in the river, see rev. 5'–6'. For Namtar, see obv. 14: [<sup>d</sup>*nam*]-*tar sukkal* (sukkal) *eršeṭi*(ki)<sup>im</sup> x x *du-š[i]* [<sup>d</sup>*na*]-*m-tar*<sup>1</sup> *sukkal* (sukkal) *er[šeṭi](k[i])<sup>im</sup>* *ṭè-en-šú lis-pu-uh<sup>19</sup>* (copy: *ù*) “[*May*] Namtar, the vizier of the netherworld, ... *her*, may Namtar, the vizier of the netherworld, *thwart her plan*”; a transfer to the netherworld is mentioned in obv. 17', at the very end of the incantation: *u<sup>2</sup> eṭe[mmu](gid[im]<sup>27</sup>) lir<sup>d</sup>ṣ<sup>2</sup>(uš)-šī ana kur-nu-gi<sup>4</sup>* “and let a ghost guide her to the Land of No Return”.

<sup>30</sup> Th 1905-4-9, 72+73 obv. II 7'–16' // 80-7-19, 146 + K 10559+11993 + Sm 1330 obv. I 6'–12' // BM 38635 rev. 1–8 // K 10358(+) l. col. 2'–10'; for a full edition, see Abusch and Schwemer, forthcoming, text 7.8, 4.

<sup>31</sup> *ta-da-ki-šú-nu-ti* in rev. IV 9' probably for *tadākšunūti*, cf. Farber 2008: 255.

<sup>32</sup> See Maul 1994: 446–52, no. VIII.20, ll. 40–3; *LKA* 156 = *KAL* 2, 23 rev. 12'–18' // *KAL* 2, 22 rev. V 1'–11'; it is likely that sprinkling with fish-oil and washing was also

followed by a burial of the figurines in Th 1905-4-9, 93 (Meeke 1918–19: 141–2).

<sup>33</sup> See *AMT* 21/2 + K 3648 + 15966 + Sm 1280 rev. 28' (Abusch and Schwemer, forthcoming, text 8.6), but note that the instruction to pour water from the holy water vessel over the patient's head may implicitly refer to washing over the sorcerers' figurines. Figurines of warlock and witch are also buried during the rites of the sixth house of *Bī rimki* (*PBS* 1/2, 15 rev. 27–35); their prior treatment remains unclear due to the fragmentary state of the text.

<sup>34</sup> See *PBS* 1/2, 120 rev. 11–14, cf. obv. 14 // K 8933(+) obv. I 8' // Sm 275 + Rm 329(+) obv. I 15'; for a full edition, see Abusch and Schwemer, forthcoming, text 7.8, 2.

<sup>35</sup> In some cases the relationship between the burial and the burning rite and the exact function of the latter remain unclear. The fragmentary passage *KAL* 2, 34 obv. I 12 gives instructions to burn something on top, as it seems, of the figurines of warlock and witch, which have been enclosed and locked up beforehand. Subsequently the figurines are buried (obv. I 15–16).

<sup>36</sup> The reconstruction of the text is based on Sm 695(+) rev. IV 6'–7' // K 7561 + 8451(+) rev. IV 30' // BM 42386 obv. 2–3 // BM 44144 rev. 2'–3' (all manuscripts collated). Minor orthographic variants are not recorded here.

your body!”<sup>37</sup> More importantly, during the opening section of *Maqlû*, right before the long series of burning rites that fill the first half of the night, the patient turns to the gods of the netherworld and asks them to imprison his witches forever for their crimes.<sup>38</sup>

Apart from *Maqlû* two other rituals must be mentioned here. *BAM* 231(+)<sup>2</sup> //, an extensive anti-witchcraft ritual, a digest of which is preserved as K 888, involves the burning of a number of pairs of figurines representing warlock and witch in various ovens. Within the same ritual another pair of figurines of the sorcerers is entrusted to Lamaštu and to a ghost represented by a skull. The whole lot is then sent to the netherworld, as is most evident from the following adjuration of the ghost towards the end of the ritual.<sup>39</sup>

[ana ma-ḥa]r <sup>d</sup>Šamaš(utu) dayyāni(di.ku<sub>5</sub>) qīšta(ṛnīg<sup>2</sup>.ba<sup>2</sup>) m[ah-r]a-ṛa<sup>1</sup>-[t]a  
 [nu-d]un-nu-u na-ṛad<sup>1</sup>-[n]a-ṛka<sup>1</sup>  
 [tak-l]i-ma-tū si-mat eršeti(ki)<sup>tim</sup> ṛkúl<sup>1</sup>-lu-ṛmat-ka<sup>1</sup>  
 [šalmī(nu)<sup>(meš)</sup> ka]š-šá-pi-ia u kaš-šap-t[i-i]á  
 [ana ma-ḥ]ar <sup>d</sup>Šamaš(utu) ka-a-šá ap-qid-ṛsu<sup>1</sup><-nu-ti>  
 [a-n]a kur-nu-gi<sub>4</sub> ú-ru it-ti-ka  
 [l]a tu-maš-šar-šú-nu-ti  
 [nīš(zi)] <sup>ṛd<sup>1</sup></sup>Šamaš(utu) ṛmur<sup>1</sup>-te-di-ka tum<sub>4</sub>-ma-ta  
 [nīš(zi)] <sup>d</sup>t-gi-gi ilī(ṛdingir)<sup>(meš<sup>1</sup>)</sup> e-la-ti min  
 [nīš(zi)] <sup>d</sup>a-nun-na-k]i ilī(ṛdingir)<sup>(meš)</sup> šap-lu-ti min  
 [nīš(zi)] <sup>d</sup>lugal-ir<sub>9</sub>-ra] <sup>ṛd</sup>nin-a-zu <sup>d</sup>nin<sup>1</sup>-giš-zī-da min  
 [nīš(zi)] <sup>d</sup>ereš-ki-ga]l šarrat(gašan) erš[eti](k[i])<sup>(ti)m</sup> min  
 [šum-ma tum-maš]-šar-šú-nu-ti

*BAM* 332 rev. IV 5'–17' (coll.)<sup>40</sup>

[Before] Šamaš, the judge, you (ghost) [have] received a present,  
 [a] gift has been given to you.  
 [The funerary] display, fitting for the netherworld, has been arranged for you.  
 [The figurines of] my warlock and witch,  
 [before] Šamaš I have entrusted them to you.  
 Take (them) with you to the Land of No Return,  
 do not release [th]em!  
 You are adjured [by] Šamaš, your constant companion,  
*ditto* [by the Igigi], the gods of the upper world,  
*ditto* [by the Anunnakki,] the lower gods,  
*ditto* [by Lugalirra], Ninazu (and) Ningišzida,  
*ditto* [by Ereškigal,] the queen of the nether[world] —  
 [if you] release them, (you shall be cursed)!

A fragment from Nineveh partially preserves a ritual whose basic structure seems to resemble *BAM* 231(+)<sup>2</sup>.<sup>41</sup> First a series of pairs of warlock and witch figurines are burnt before Šamaš, then a skull is prepared for funeral rites; unfortunately the text breaks off at this point so that the exact function of the ghost represented by the skull remains unclear for the time being. Also in *KAR* 80 = *KAL* 2, 8 // <sup>42</sup> burning and burial go hand in hand: figurines of tallow, wax, bitumen,

<sup>37</sup> The reconstruction of the text is based on K 2728 + 8055 + 11541 + 19917 + Sm 1768 + 1776 obv. I 29–30 // BM 30426 obv. I 4'–5' // *STT* 82 obv. I 16'–17' // K 9188 + 11971 + 12916 + 13910 + 18609 + Sm 1866 obv. I 6'–7' // *SpTU* 3, 74A obv. I 22–3 // *SpTU* 3, 74B obv. I 10'–11' // K 13450 obv. I 1'. Minor orthographic variants are not recorded here. For the various terms referring to the road to the netherworld, see Horowitz 1998: 353–5.

<sup>38</sup> For this interpretation of the opening section of *Maqlû*, see Schwemer, forthcoming a, especially with regard to the incantations *Eršetu eršetu eršetumma* and *Akla nēberu aktali kāru*.

<sup>39</sup> For K 888, see Schwemer 2006; the following manuscripts of the extensive library version have been identified:

*BAM* 231 (+)<sup>2</sup> *KAL* 2, 26 (+)<sup>2</sup> *KAL* 2, 27, *BAM* 332, CBS 1498 and O 193. For a brief overview of the ritual and an edition of O 193, see Abusch and Schwemer 2009. For a full edition of the text, see Abusch and Schwemer, forthcoming, text 8.7.

<sup>40</sup> The restorations in ll. 11'–17' follow the parallel passage in *KAR* 227 rev. III 44–50 // *LKA* 89 + 90 rev. IV 1–4.

<sup>41</sup> K 3292 + 7788 + 7798 + 17984 (Abusch and Schwemer, forthcoming, text 8.8).

<sup>42</sup> For a list of the duplicates and an edition of the main text, see *KAL* 2, pp. 31–6; in the meantime W. Meinhold has identified among the unpublished Assur texts another small fragment whose reverse (?) duplicates *KAR* 80 (VAT 11567).

cedar and tamarisk wood are burnt, while figurines of clay and dough are put in water, squashed underfoot by the patient<sup>43</sup> and then buried in the wilderness (probably together with the burnt remains of the other figurines).

In his discussion of the texts that combine burning and burial rites Abusch comes to the conclusion that “the sending of the witch to the netherworld is one further consequence and indication of the incorporation of anti-witchcraft responsibilities into the duties of the exorcist” (2002: 78). Originally, at a stage before anti-witchcraft rituals became part of *āšipūtu*, the destruction of the witches would have been achieved only by burning their figurines; the motif of sending warlock and witch to the netherworld and the pertinent burial rites represent — so Abusch — a secondary development, owed to influences from other exorcistic ritual genres. Thus an originally coherent concept that focused on the annihilation of the witch became conflated, and while the tension between the burning and the burial motif was never resolved, the introduction of the latter led to the creation of new forms of anti-witchcraft rituals that systematically integrated elements of anti-ghost rituals (2002: 65–78). While Abusch is certainly right to regard texts such as *KAR 227* // and *BAM 231(+)*<sup>7</sup> //<sup>44</sup> as the product of a combination of different ritual genres by well-educated exorcists and scholars, the observation of a joint use of the burning and the burial motif outside such cross-genre rituals gives rise to the question whether a diachronic model — the interpretation of logical tensions as the result of a secondary contamination of an originally coherent concept — provides the most plausible explanation of the evidence, especially when, as in this case, the hypothesised coherent stage of development remains vague and is not represented in the preserved corpus of sources. If one further takes into account that all burning rituals against witches include the disposal of the burnt materials in places associated with the netherworld (see *supra*, §1.2) and that ghosts of persons burnt to death were feared as roaming the upper world deprived of any funerary care,<sup>45</sup> one must ask whether the relationship between the two motifs is not better described as additive and supplementary than as conflated — one action symbolising complete annihilation, the other eternal imprisonment.

If so, it becomes unnecessary to regard the combination of the two motifs as the result of a secondary development, and it is worth noting that both motifs are already attested in the earliest known anti-witchcraft rituals. In a Sumerian incantation from the Old Babylonian period the sorcerer is accused of having performed funerary offerings for the patient, thereby banning him to the underworld.<sup>46</sup> Another incantation from the same period states, in all probability with reference to figurines representing the witch:

saḫar-bi id-da ṛšub<sup>1</sup>-ba  
i-bi-bi an-na ṛb-e<sub>11</sub>

*Its* (or: *this*) earth is thrown into the river,  
*its* (or: *this*) smoke went up into the sky.

*VS 17, 31 obv. 5–6*

An Old Babylonian Sumerian incantation, partially preserved on a Persian period fragment,<sup>47</sup> contains ritual instructions by Enki to his son Asalluḫi which are in their essence, despite all differences in language and style, strikingly similar to those of the first millennium Akkadian ritual *KAR 80 = KAL 2, 8* (cf. *supra*): figurines representing warlock and witch are made of clay, dough, tallow, bitumen and wax. After offerings to the sun god have been made, the exorcist burns the figurines of tallow, bitumen and wax (rev. 6), while the patient squashes the figurines of clay and dough with his foot (rev. 5). The instructions for the disposal of the squashed figurines and the

<sup>43</sup> For this interpretation of *ina mē ina šēpīšu isa*”*eršunūti* in rev. 18 //, see Schwemer, forthcoming b, commentary on BM 40568 rev. 5 (for *sēru*, see now also George 2009: 91–2).

<sup>44</sup> Abusch 2002: 76–8 discusses only *KAR 227*; the reconstructed text of *BAM 231(+)*<sup>7</sup> was not known to him at the time of writing.

<sup>45</sup> See *LKA 84 obv. 27*, ed. Scurlock 2006: 503–6. The fact that ruthless kings disinterred the bones of their enemies’ forefathers and left their slain opponents unburied on the battlefield does not invalidate this general notion. They act from a position of superior power, whereas the patient of an anti-witchcraft ritual is only just in the process of being delivered from the hands of his powerful evildoers

and naturally seeks to rule out any possibility of a further aggression from their side (differently Abusch 2002: 234 fn. 57).

<sup>46</sup> *CT 58, 79 obv. 9–10* //, ed. Cavigneaux and Al-Rawi 1995: 21: *ḏutu an-na-šē a im-ma-na-an-zī, erigal<sup>sa1</sup>-la a-pap gāl-tag<sub>4</sub>-ga-a a ba-ni-in-dé* “For him he presented water to Utu in the sky, he poured the water into a grave, into the open libation pipes” (cf. also Schwemer 2007b: 104).

<sup>47</sup> BM 40568 (Sumerian with a partial Akkadian translation); see Geller 1995–6: 247–8 for a copy and a provisional transliteration; for a full edition and commentary, see Schwemer, forthcoming b.



burnt remains are lost, but there can be little doubt that they were buried in the ground as in the later Akkadian ritual.

Overall the evidence points to a continuity of the basic gestures and symbols used in anti-witchcraft rituals from at least the Old Babylonian period onwards, a continuity that persisted over centuries, despite major changes in the composition of individual rituals and in the language and format of the texts.<sup>48</sup> It seems therefore unlikely to me that such a basic concept as banning the evildoers to the netherworld and the ritual gestures that symbolise this act (burial, sinking in a river) should have been introduced only secondarily into anti-witchcraft rituals; but of course we can say little about developments that would have to predate the earliest sources available. A passage from yet another Sumerian anti-witchcraft incantation from the Old Babylonian period shows how the obvious tension between the annihilation of the witch through burning (which, as seen in the quoted passages from *Maqlû VIII* and *Bīt rimki*, in some cases may have implied an actual exclusion from the netherworld) and her being banned to the netherworld could be resolved in the image of an extraordinary, terrible fate of the witch's ghost in the netherworld:

<sup>d</sup>utu di-ku<sub>5</sub> an-ki-a<-ke<sub>4</sub>> [n]a[m] gig-ga h̄e-ni-tar  
<sup>r</sup>d<sup>1</sup>nè-eri<sub>11</sub>-gal lug[al er]igal-la-ke<sub>4</sub> [gid]im-ma-ni gi[di]m nu-šid-dè  
<sup>[d</sup>ni]n-giš-zi-da gu-[za]-lá kur-ra-ke<sub>4</sub>  
<sup>r</sup>gidim<sup>1</sup>-ma-ni-šè a-sed<sup>17</sup>(bur) <sup>r</sup>h̄e<sup>1</sup>-ni-in-ku<sub>5</sub>-ku<sub>5</sub>-dè

JRL 1059 (formerly Box 24 P28) rev. 36–9<sup>49</sup>

May Utu, the judge of heaven and earth, decide a harsh fate for her,  
 so that Nergal, the lord of the underworld, may not reckon her ghost as a ghost!  
 May Ningišzida, the throne-bearer of the netherworld,  
 cut off the *cold* water from her ghost!

The ghost of the witch suffers a horrible fate assigned to her by the sun god who judges the newly arrived dead when he visits the netherworld at night.<sup>50</sup> Her ghost, though imprisoned in the netherworld, is excluded from the normal status the deceased acquire when entering the city of the dead; it is deprived of the few comforts that other ghosts are entitled to. A ghost, yet not a ghost, imprisoned in the netherworld, yet deprived even of the reduced form of existence of the deceased: a fitting image of someone burnt *and* buried.<sup>51</sup>

## 2. *The ušburruda Ritual BM 47806 + 48445 + 48977 + 49040*

The Late Babylonian fragment BM 47806 + (see Figs. 1–2) forms part of the British Museum's Babylon collection;<sup>52</sup> though the text itself offers no clue that could confirm its provenance, its collection context (81-11-3) indicates that it was excavated at Babylon or Borsippa.<sup>53</sup> The single-column tablet, the upper half of which is missing, contained the text of probably only one anti-witchcraft ritual. The beginning of the text is now lost, but it seems likely that the prayer addressed to Ea, Šamaš and Asalluḫi, whose second half is partly preserved in obv. 1'–14', was preceded by a short section indicating the ritual's purpose, possibly including a description of symptoms and a witchcraft diagnosis. The final plea of the prayer, which is fittingly characterised by its rubric

<sup>48</sup> Another example for the continuity of such a gesture is the piercing of the witch's figurine with a thorn of the date-palm, see Schwemer 2007b: 209–14.

<sup>49</sup> Ed. Wilcke 1973: 10–13, Geller 1989: 196, ll. 37–40 (the transliteration given here follows Geller). Note that Abusch 2002: 67 adduces the very same passage as evidence for an exclusion of the witch's ghost from the netherworld. But I cannot see how the text supports the assumption that “here the speaker asks that Gilgameš not integrate the witch into the netherworld, that Nergal ... not reckon her ghost to those of the ghosts of the dead”. In my view the lines referring to Gilgameš ask for exactly the opposite: <sup>d</sup>G<sup>1</sup>š<sup>bit</sup>-ga-mes<sup>1</sup>e<sup>2</sup> ka-kéš<sup>1</sup>-bi ù-me-du<sub>8</sub>, ki-ma[h<sup>7</sup> t]úm-ma-na [ba]r<sup>2</sup>-[š]è<sup>2</sup> 'na-an-ši-in<sup>1</sup>-te-ge<sub>26</sub> “When Gilgameš will have broken that bond, in her grave, in which she is buried, she must not approach (*the patient's*) [*body*].” (rev. 30–1,

ll. 31–2 in Geller's edition).

<sup>50</sup> See Heimpel 1986: 146–9 with the relevant attestations.

<sup>51</sup> Enki's ritual instructions to Asalluḫi refer only to the cleansing and washing of the patient. It seems that within the present ritual no substitute figurine representing the witch was used, even though the witch herself is accused at the beginning of the incantation of having buried a figurine of the patient.

<sup>52</sup> All joins were made by I. L. Finkel; I owe knowledge of this fragment to M. J. Geller. A photograph of BM 47806 + has been published online as part of the British Museum's online collection database. I thank the trustees of the British Museum for permission to publish the text here.

<sup>53</sup> For the provenance of tablets in the 81-11-3 collection, see Reade 1986: xxxii, xxxiv.

as a recitation for undoing witchcraft (obv. 15'), asks for the witchcraft affecting the patient to be returned to warlock and witch and for the evildoers themselves to be handed over to the deities of the netherworld. The following ritual instructions prescribe this prayer to be recited three times before Šamaš (rev. 7), which may suggest that a major section of this recitation, possibly the whole text up to obv. 6', addresses Šamaš alone. The recitation is preceded by the usual offerings which are set up for Ea, Šamaš and Asalluḫi, the gods in charge of exorcistic rituals (rev. 16'–18');<sup>54</sup> less common, though not entirely unparalleled, are the libations of water scented with aromatic substances which follow upon fumigations for each of the three gods with the same aromatics (rev. 18'–20'). A fourth censer is then strewed with an aromatic for the client's personal god and goddess, who also receive a libation of beer; since the prayer calls upon the protective deities for their support (obv. 8'), their provision with offerings is not unexpected (obv. 21').

The instructions then turn to deities of the netherworld that are not mentioned in the preserved parts of the *ušburruda*-prayer. For Gilgameš, judge and ferryman of the netherworld,<sup>55</sup> a full offering arrangement is set up (obv. 22'–rev. 2); if our restoration of obv. 22' is correct, he also receives hot soup, a typical provision for the dead. Gilgameš is not mentioned elsewhere in the preserved portions of the text, and his precise function within the proceedings must remain undetermined for the time being. Since all other inhabitants of the netherworld that are named in the present texts are supposed to imprison warlock and witch (obv. 11', rev. 10), Gilgameš's role must have been the same, whether he was asked to render his judgement over them or ferry them across the river ̒ubur, the waters of death.<sup>56</sup>

The following passage is badly broken, but it seems that beside Gilgameš a figurine of ̒umuṭ-tabal was set up and provided with water and beer flavoured with roasted barley — proper offerings for an underworld creature (rev. 2–3). This ̒umuṭ-tabal ("Carry-off-quickly") is as yet attested in only one other text, the Assyrian "Underworld Vision of an Assyrian Prince" that recounts how a certain Kummâ visits the netherworld in his dream. Among the horrible gods and demons he encounters is the monstrous ̒umuṭ-tabal, who is identified as a "ferryman of the netherworld";<sup>57</sup> a function that other sources associate with Gilgameš and probably also with Uršanabi.<sup>58</sup> Here the sun god Šamaš, who passes through the underworld during the night, is asked to take the warlock and witch with him to hand them over to ̒umuṭ-tabal, who will then, it is understood, carry them off across the ̒ubur to the Land of No Return (rev. 9–13). Šamaš takes on a similar role in rituals which entrust in his presence figurines of the warlock and witch to a ghost whom the sun god then accompanies on his way to the netherworld.<sup>59</sup> Here, several pairs of figurines representing warlock and witch are set up before Šamaš when the offerings have been completed (rev. 4–7). When all these figurines have been arranged, one recites three times the first incantation with its plea for banning the witches to the netherworld; then the patient addresses Šamaš again and asks that he hand over his evildoers to ̒umuṭ-tabal (rev. 9–13).

The conclusion of the ritual is lost, but we expect the figurines of warlock and witch to be symbolically buried in one way or another; the patient probably had to undergo final purification rites at the very end of the proceedings.

<sup>54</sup>For this triad of gods and their function in magical rituals, see Bottéro 1987–90: 228–31.

<sup>55</sup>See George 2003: 127–32.

<sup>56</sup>For the use of Gilgameš's role as ferryman of the dead in anti-witchcraft rituals, see Abusch and Schwemer 2009: 107, commentary on O 193 obv. II 5; for the use of Gilgameš's role as netherworld judge within this genre, see Schwemer, forthcoming a, commentary on *Maqlû* I 37–41.

<sup>57</sup>Livingstone 1989: 71, no. 32 rev. 5.

<sup>58</sup>George 2003: 500–1; note that in the Neo-Assyrian burial ritual K 164 tables are set up before Gilgameš and

the ferrymen of the netherworld; the latter, unfortunately, remain anonymous (rev. 44, ed. von Soden 1939, Nasrabadi 1999: 36–8).

<sup>59</sup>Note that Šamaš is called *murteḏdika* "your (i.e. the ghost's) guide" within these contexts, see *KAR* 227 rev. III 44 and *BAM* 332 rev. IV 12' (Köcher's copy incomplete); for a new copy and full edition of the latter, see Abusch and Schwemer, forthcoming, text 8.7: *BAM* 231 (+)<sup>3</sup> *KAL* 2, 26 (+)<sup>3</sup> 27 // *BAM* 332 // CBS 1498 // O 193 (*RIAA* 312) with the parallel memorandum version K 888 (cf. Schwemer 2006).

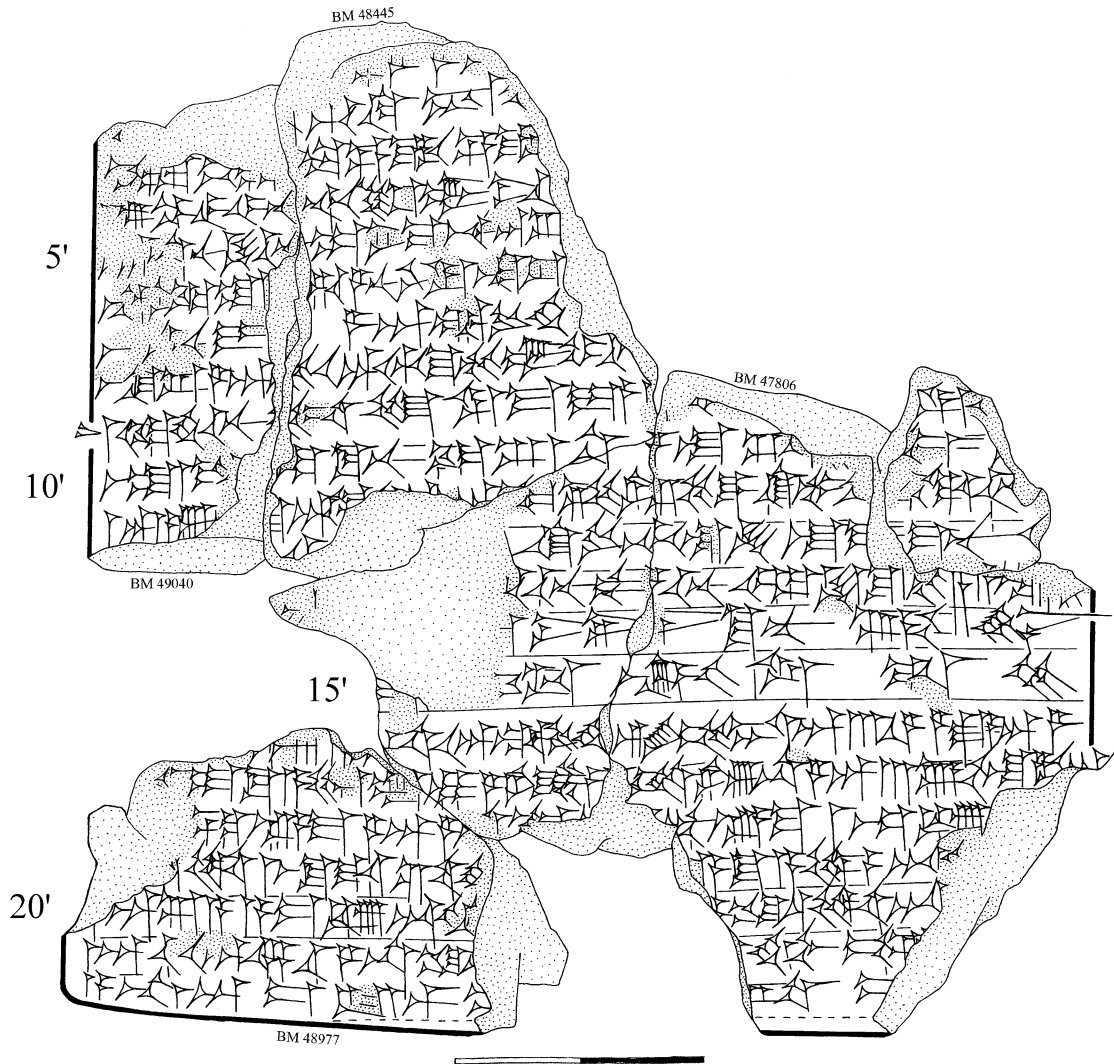


Fig. 1 BM 47806 + 48445 + 48977 + 49040 obv.

## 2.1. Transliteration

obv.

- 1' [x x x x] x-šá šá<sup>1</sup> x [ . . .  
 2' x [x x (x)] x ḥu di du x [ . . .  
 3' kaš-šap<sup>1</sup> kaš-šap<sup>1</sup>-te e-piš e-pi[š-te<sup>2</sup> . . .  
 4' šá<sup>1</sup> ú-pi-ši lem-nu-ti šar-qiš ipušū(dù)<sup>šú</sup>-[ni . . .  
 5' ina-an-na<sup>1</sup> šalmī(nu)<sup>meš</sup>-šú-nu ab-ni-ma ina maḥar(igi) <sup>d</sup>rél-[a . . .  
 6' ina di-ni<sup>1</sup>-ka ši-[(i)-ri šá lā(nu) uttakkaru(kúr)<sup>ru</sup> ina qi-bīti<sup>1</sup>-[ka širti(?) ša lā innennū]  
 7' ina ti<sup>1</sup>-i šá<sup>d</sup>asal-lū-ḥi [ina šipti ša Ea(?)]  
 8' ina qí-bīti šá ilīya(dingir-<sup>1</sup>mu<sup>1</sup>) u <sup>d</sup>ištarīya(ištar-mu) kiš-pi-šú<sup>1</sup>-n[u ruhēšunu rusēšunu  
 ( . . . )(?)]  
 9' KÚR \ ana muḥ-ḥi-šú-nu li<sup>1</sup>-tu-ru-ma ia-<sup>1</sup>a-ši<sup>1</sup> [lip-paṭ]-ru-i[n-ni]  
 10' ina ši-<sup>1</sup>it<sup>1</sup> pi<sup>1</sup>(ka<sup>1</sup>)-ku-nu ka-bit-tú šá la uš<sup>1</sup>-t[e-p]el-l[u]  
 11' ana <sup>d</sup>a-nun-n[a-k]i <sup>d</sup>ereš-<sup>1</sup>ki-gal <sup>d</sup>bi<sup>1</sup>-du<sub>g</sub>(GAB) idugal(i.GAB.gal) eršeti(ki)<sup>tim</sup> p[i-i]q-da-šú-  
 n[u-ti]  
 12' [x x x x] x [x x x x] itti(ki) <sup>1</sup>ubalṭūti(ti.la)<sup>meš</sup> la i<sup>1</sup>-ma-nu-u  
 13' [x x x (x)] kiš-[pu-šú-nu ru-ḥ]u-šú-nu up-šá-šú-<sup>1</sup>šú-<sup>1</sup>nu lemnūti(ḥul)<sup>meš</sup> ana zumrīya(<sup>1</sup>su-mu<sup>1</sup>)  
 a-a<sup>1</sup> iḥā(<sup>1</sup>te<sup>1</sup>)<sup>a</sup>-ni<sup>1</sup>

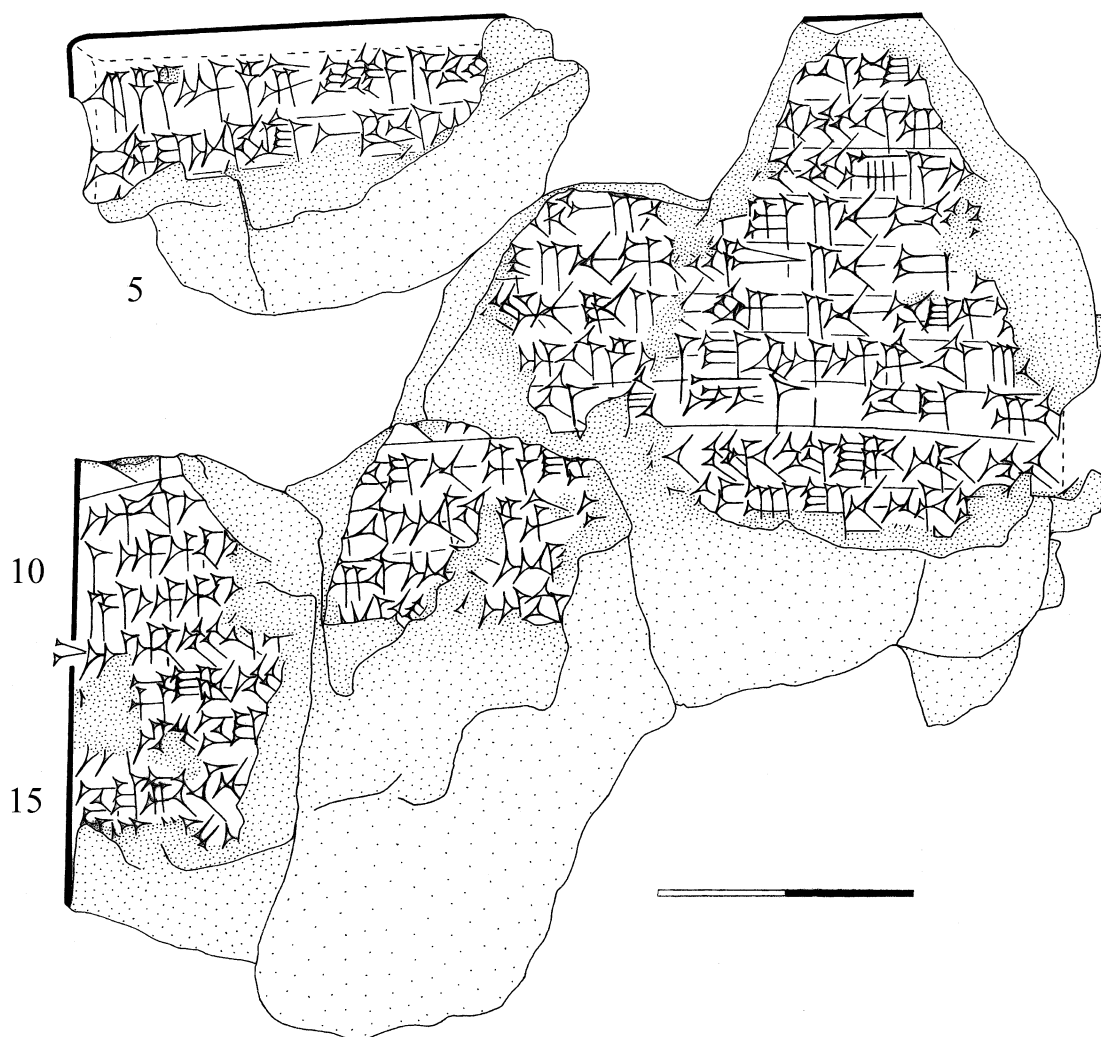


Fig. 2 BM 47806 + 48445 + 48977 + 49040 rev.

14' [x x x x x x x x-m]a dā-lí-[l]i-ku-nu lud-lul

15' [ka.inim].<sup>1</sup>ma<sup>1</sup> uš<sub>11</sub>.búr.ru.da.kam

16' [dù.dù.bi ana maḥar(igi)] <sup>1</sup>dé-a <sup>1</sup>šamaš(utu) u <sup>d</sup>asal-lú-ḫi paṭīra(gi.du<sub>8</sub>) tukān(gin)<sup>an</sup>  
šalāš(3) kurummāti(kurum<sub>6</sub>) akal(ninda) kunāši(zíz.àm) tašakkan(gar)

17' [sul]uppī([zú].<sup>1</sup>lum<sup>1</sup>.ma) <sup>zi</sup>sasqâ(eša) tasarraq(dub)<sup>aq</sup> miris(ninda.i.dé.<sup>1</sup>a<sup>1</sup>) dišpi(làl)  
ḫimēti(i.nun.na) tašakkan(gar)<sup>an</sup> šalāšat(3) <sup>du</sup>glaḫannī(1a.ḫa.an)

18' [mê(a)(?) šī]kara(kaš).sag tumallā(sa<sub>5</sub>)-ma tašakkan(gar)<sup>an</sup> nignakka(níg.<sup>1</sup>na<sup>1</sup>) pēmti(NE)  
<sup>g</sup>[š<sup>1</sup>aš]āgi(ki)šī<sub>16</sub> tumallā(sa<sub>5</sub>)-ma ištēn(1) ina <sup>gi</sup>šerēni(eren) [(x x x)]

19' [ištēn(1) ina <sup>si</sup>m<sup>1</sup>burāši(li) ištēn(1) ina qēmi(zì.da) ta-sá[r-raq ana <sup>d</sup>šamaš(utu)] mê(a)  
<sup>zi</sup>sasqâ(eša) tanaqqi(bal)<sup>aq</sup>

20' <sup>1</sup>ana<sup>1</sup> <sup>dé</sup>-a mê(a) <sup>gi</sup>šerēni(eren) tanaqqi(bal)<sup>aq</sup> [<sup>1</sup>ana <sup>d</sup>asal-lú-ḫi] mê(<sup>1</sup>a<sup>1</sup>) <sup>si</sup>m<sup>1</sup>burāši(li)  
tanaq[qi(ba[l]<sup>aq</sup>]

21' ana ilī(dingir)-šú u <sup>d</sup>ištari(15)-šú nignakka(níg.na) <sup>si</sup>[<sup>m</sup>x x x t]a-sár-raq šikar[a(kaš.sa[g]  
tanaqqi(bal)<sup>aq</sup>

22' a-na <sup>d</sup>gilgāmeš(GIŠ.GÍN.MAŠ) um[mara(t[u<sub>7</sub>]<sup>2</sup>) baḫra(kúm)(?) t]a-tab-[bak]

rev.

- 1 12 *akal*(ninda) *kunāši*(<zíz.>λM<sup>1</sup>) *miris*(ninda.i.dé.a) *dišp*[i(là[1] *hīmēti*(i.nun.na)  
*tašakkan*(gar)<sup>an</sup> *nig*]nak(níg].na) <sup>š</sup>[<sup>m</sup>*burāši*(li) *tašakkan*(gar)<sup>an</sup>]
- 2 *šikara*(kaš.sag) *tanaqqi*(bal)<sup>q</sup> *ina šumēl*(gùb) <sup>r</sup>d<sup>1</sup>[*gīlgāmeš*(GIŠ.GÍN.MAŠ) *šalam*(nu)(?)  
<sup>d</sup>h]u-mu-ut-t[a-bal *tašakkan*(gar)(?)]
- 3 x [x] x [x x] x [*mē kašūti*(?) *ši*]kar(k)aš] *labti*(še.sa.a) *tanaqqi*(ba[1]<sup>q</sup>)
- 4 [*šalam kaššāpi u kaššāpti zikari*(nita)] <sup>r</sup>u<sup>1</sup> *šimmišti*(munus) *šina*(2) *šalmī*(<sup>r</sup>nu<sup>1</sup>) *lipē*(i<sup>1</sup>.udu)  
*šina*(2) *šalmī*(nu) *iškūr*[i](DUḪ.LÀ[L])
- 5 [*šina*(2) *šalmī*(nu) *kupsi*(duḪ.še.giš.i)(?) *šina*(2) *šalmī*(nu) *it*]tē(es]ir) *šina*(2) *šalmī*(nu)  
*bīni*(šinig) *šina*(2) *šalmī*(nu) <sup>g</sup>is e[*rēni*](e[ren])
- 6 [*šina*(2) *šalmī*(nu) *līši*(nig.sila<sub>11</sub>.gá) *šá qēm*(zi)(?) <sup>(še)</sup>]inninni(in.nu.ḪA) *šina*(2) *šalmī*(<sup>r</sup>nu<sup>1</sup>)  
*īdi*(im) *šina*(2) *šalmī*(nu) *bappiri*(báppir)<sup>r</sup>im<sup>?</sup>
- 7 [x x x x x *ana maḥar*(igi)] <sup>d</sup>šamaš(utu) *tašakkan*(gar)<sup>r</sup>am<sup>1</sup>-ma *šiptu*(én) *an-ni-tú šalāšī*(3)-  
<sup>r</sup>šú<sup>1</sup> [*tamannu*(šid)(?)]
- 8 <sup>r</sup>ki<sup>1</sup>-[*ma tamtanū*(šid)<sup>u</sup>(?) *ina*] *maḥar*(<sup>r</sup>igi<sup>1</sup>) <sup>r</sup>d<sup>1</sup>šamaš(utu) *kām*(ur<sub>5</sub>.gim) *iqabbi*(du<sub>11</sub>.ga)
- 
- 9 <sup>d</sup>šamaš(utu) *aš*-[*kun maḥar*(igi)-*k*]a *šalam*(nu) *e*-<sup>r</sup>piš<sup>1</sup>-[i]a<sub>5</sub> *u muš-te-piš-ti-ia*<sub>5</sub>  
10 *ana* <sup>d</sup>hu-m[u-ut-t]a-bal *šá qaq-q*[á<sup>??</sup>-r]i<sup>??</sup> *pi-qid-su-nu-ti* x x [(x)]  
11 *mē*(a) *ana* <sup>d</sup>hu-m[u-ut]-ta-<sup>r</sup>bal<sup>1</sup> *aqq*[i(ba[1]<sup>q</sup> x x x x] x x [x x]  
12 KÚR \ <sup>d</sup>hu-mu-<sup>r</sup>ut<sup>1</sup>-t[a]-<sup>r</sup>bal<sup>1</sup> x x <sup>d</sup>šamaš(utu) [ . . .  
13 *ša*[lam](n[u]<sup>?</sup>) *e-piš-ia*<sub>5</sub> [u *muš-te-piš-ti-ia*<sub>5</sub> . . .  
14 <sup>r</sup>an-nam<sup>1</sup> *iqabb*[i(du<sub>11</sub>.ga) . . .  
15 du<sub>11</sub>.ga-šú-nu-*š*i/ti . . .  
16 x x x x [ . . .  
*The tablet breaks*

## 2.2. Translation

obv.

1'–2' too fragmentary for translation

- 3' (My) warlock (and) witch, (my) sorcerer (and) sorcer[ess . . . ],  
4' who secretly performed evil witcheries [against me . . . ] —  
5' now I have made figurines representing them and [ . . . ] before Ea, [ . . . ].  
6' (O Šamaš), by your supreme ruling which cannot be changed, at [your *supreme*] command  
[which cannot be altered],  
7' through the spell of Asalluḫi, [*through the incantation of Ea*],  
8' at the command of my god and my goddess let their witchcraft, [*their magic, their sorceries*  
( . . . )]  
9' return to them so that they<sup>60</sup> [may be] removed from me.  
10' (O Ea, Šamaš and Asalluḫi), by your respected order, which cannot be overturned,  
11' hand them over to the Anunnakki-gods, to Ereškigal, to Bidu, the chief doorkeeper of the  
netherworld!  
12' [ . . . ] . . . [ . . . ], let them not be counted among the living.  
13' Let [ . . . , their] witch[craft], their [magic,] their evil machinations not come near my body.  
14' [ . . . ] then I will sing your glory!"

15' It is the [wording] (of an incantation) to undo witchcraft.

16' [Its ritual]: You set up portable altar(s) [before] Ea, Šamaš and Asalluḫi. You put three offering portions — emmer bread — (on them).

17' You strew dates (and) *sasqu*-flour; you put *mirsu*-confection (made) of syrup (and) ghee (on the altars).<sup>60</sup>The witchcraft and sorceries.

- 18' You fill three *lahannu*-jars [with *water (and)*] beer and put (them on the altars). You fill censer(s) with *ašāgu*-thorn coal; then you strew one with cedar (shavings),  
 19' [one with] juniper (and) one with flour. [For Šamaš] you pour a libation of water with *sasqû*-flour,  
 20' for Ea you pour a libation of water with cedar (shavings), [for Asalluḫi] you pour a [libation] of water with juniper.  
 21' For his god and his goddess you strew a censer with [ . . . ,<sup>61</sup> you pour a libation of ] beer.  
 22' For Gilgameš you pour [out *hot soup*].

rev.

- 1 [You place] twelve emmer breads (and) *mirsu*-confection (made) of syrup [and ghee (before Gilgameš). You place a] censer with [juniper (next to it)],  
 2 you pour a libation of beer. To the left of [*Gilgameš you place a figurine of* Ḫ]umuṭ-t[abal].  
 3 . . . [ . . . ] . . . , you pour a [libation of *cold water (and)*] beer (flavoured) with roasted barley.  
 4 You place [figurines of warlock and witch, of a man] and a woman — two figurines of tallow, two figurines of wax,  
 5 [two figurines of *sesame pomace*, two figurines of ] bitumen, two figurines of tamarisk-wood, two figurines of cedar-[wood],  
 6 [two figurines of *dough (made)*] of *innimu*-barley [*flour*], two figurines of clay, two figurines of *beer-bread*  
 7 [ . . . before] Šamaš. Then [*you recite*] this incantation three times.  
 8 *W[hen you have recited (the incantation)]*, he shall speak thus before Šamaš:

- 9 “O Šamaš, I have [placed before] you the figurines of my sorcerer and my sorceress.  
 10 Hand them over to Ḫumuṭ-tabal *of the ea[rth]* . . .  
 11 I have poured a [libation of ] water for Ḫumuṭ-tabal, [ . . . ] . . . [ . . . ]  
 12 Ḫumuṭ-tabal . . . Šamaš [ . . . ]  
 13 *figurines* of my sorcerer [and my sorceress . . . ].”  
 14 This he say[s. . . .  
 15 he/you tell(s)/order(s)/call(s) the[m . . .  
 16 *too fragmentary for translation*  
*The tablet breaks*

### 2.3. Commentary

Obv. 4': For this motif, see Schwemer 2007b: 149–50.

5': The second half of the line describes the presentation of the figurines in the presence of the deities. In its closing lines (obv. 10'–14') the prayer addresses a group of gods, and the ritual instructions show that these must be Ea, Šamaš and Asalluḫi (obv. 16'). Within the presentation formula one would expect these gods to be directly addressed; cf., e.g., *ēpuš šalam kaššāpīya u kaššāpīya . . . aškun ina šaplīkunuma* (*Maqlū* I 15–17), *Šamaš šalam kaššāpīya kašš[āpīya] ušēpišma ina maḫrika aškunšunūti* in K 3196 + 3344 obv. 9'–10' (Abusch and Schwemer, forthcoming, text 8.1) or *Šamaš šalmī annūti ša ina maḫar ilūtika rabīti našāku* (*KAR* 80 = *KAL* 2, 8 obv. 26–7 with duplicates). Instead of the expected *ina maḫrikunu* or *ina maḫar ilūtikunu* the present text refers to the gods in the third person. A restoration *ina maḫar E[a Šamaš u Asalluḫi aškunšunūti]* seems most plausible, even though Šamaš (alone) is directly addressed in the following lines.

6': Ea is probably named in the second half of the following line in parallelism to Asalluḫi. If so, the god addressed in the present line must, by default, be Šamaš.

7': Cf. *ina tē ša Ea ina šipti ša Asalluḫi* in *Maqlū* VII 41 and its parallels *KAL* 2, 7 obv. II 5'–6', K 11725: 10' and Rm 2, 480: 6'–7'.

9': The significance of the KÚR sign in the margin (cf. rev. 12) remains unclear here; usually it marks scribal mistakes, see Lambert 1982: 216, Farber 1989: 22 fn. 21, Maul 1994: 191, 440 fn. 13, Borger, *MesZ*, p. 264 (cf. p. 269). With passive forms of *paṭāru* and *pašāru* the accusative of relation often has a separative meaning: *a-a-ši lu paṭrū* (du<sub>g</sub>)<sup>mes-ni</sup> “may (the sorceries) be removed from me” (*KAL* 2, 15 obv. I 18'), *i[a-a-ši] lu paṭ-ra-an-ni a-na ia-a-ši lu pa-aš-ra-a-[ni]* “let it (i.e. witchcraft) be released from me, let it be undone with regard to me” (*ABRT* 2, 18 r. col. 12–13), *kišpū ruḫū rusū . . . lippašrannima ana muḫḫišunu u ramanīšunu litūr* “may witchcraft, magic, sorcery . . . be removed from me and return to them, themselves” (*KAL* 2, 22 rev. V 4'–9' // *LKA* 156 = *KAL* 2, 23 rev. 15'–17'), cf. also *KUB* 37, 55 obv. II 27' // *LKA* 160 = *BAM* 140 = *KAL* 2, 46 rev. 9, Lambert 1974: 284: 8, *Šurpu* VIII 47.

<sup>61</sup> The name of an aromatic plant is to be restored.

11': For the reading <sup>d</sup>*bī-du*<sub>8</sub>, see Lambert 2002: 209 and Borger, *MesZ*, p. 314, both with further references.

13': The phonetic complement in *te<sup>a</sup>-ni* indicates an incorrect fem. plural form where one would have expected *iḫūni* or, perhaps, *iḫānni* (lists of witchcraft types such as the present occasionally show singular agreement, cf., e.g., *KAL* 2, 22 rev. V 4'-9' //, quoted *supra*).

16': An offering arrangement for Ea, Šamaš and Asalluḫi should include a portable altar for each deity. That the singular *gi.du*<sub>8</sub> indeed refers to three altars, rather than one, is proved by obv. 18', where simple *nig.na* clearly stands for three censers which are then loaded with different aromatic substances (obv. 18'-19'). The food portions provided for the gods consist of breads, usually made of emmer, which are placed on the offering tables in bundles of twelve (cf. here rev. 1) or sometimes seven (Maul 1994: 49-51, Scurlock 2006: 44; for anti-witchcraft rituals, cf., e.g., *PBS* 10/2, 18 rev. 33': three portions of twelve emmer breads each for Šamaš). Here the quantity of bread is not specified; probably each god received one (or three?) bundle(s) of twelve breads.

17'-18': Drinks for the gods are provided in *lahannu*-jars, probably one jar for each god. At the beginning of obv. 18' there is room for one further sign preceding *kaš.sag*. Since *mullū* demands two accusatives, another liquid rather than a preposition must be restored. Rituals for banning ghosts to the netherworld prescribe beer and water to be provided in separate *lahannu*-jars (*CT* 23, 15-22 + obv. II 37' //, ed. Scurlock 2006: 206, no. 14 A: ii 37', *KAR* 267 obv. 32, ed. Scurlock 2006: 359, no. 120 A: 32), but the mixing of water and beer in one jar is also attested: <sup>du</sup>*lahan*(*la.ḫa.an*) *mē(a)*<sup>mes</sup> *u šikari*(*kaš.sag*) *tukān*(*gin*)<sup>am</sup> "you set up a jar with water and beer" (Farber 1977: 129, l. 20). It seems that each god received one (or three?) jar(s) of diluted beer.

18': At the end of the line one could restore [*ta-sār-raq*], but then one would also expect *tasarraq* after *ina burāši* in obv. 19'.

18'-20': The fragmentary text suggests that for incense and libation the same substances are employed for each god. The restoration of Šamaš in obv. 19' and of Asalluḫi in obv. 20' (rather than the other way round) is based on the observation that the latter break offers slightly more space. If these restorations are correct, the libations associate Ea with cedar, Asalluḫi with juniper and Šamaš with flour. The text does not specify which censer belongs to which god, but probably the same correlations apply, even though the substances are named in a different order. The use of cedar shavings, juniper and flour as successive fumigations is not restricted to the present text; cf. especially *BBR* 75-8: 62 (cedar), 68 (*maḫātu*-flour and juniper), 75 (*maḫātu*-flour). Juniper-scented water is otherwise used for washing and sprinkling (see the attestations collected in *CAD* B 327b), cedar-scented water seems to be attested only here (but note that cedar wood is one of the additives used for preparing the "holy water", see Maul 1994: 42); the libation of water flavoured with *sasqū*-flour is better known, especially from rituals of the diviner, see Mayer 1976: 488-9 (add *OECT* 6, pl. xii, K 3507 obv. 25, ed. *CAD* S 194a).

22': The restoration of *tatabbak* at the end of the line is fairly certain. Within the context of offerings for the dead *tabāku* is used with reference to hot soup that is poured out, see *KAR* 32 obv. 15, ed. Scurlock 2006: 510, no. 219 A: 15, and *KAR* 184 = *BAM* 323 rev. 83 //, ed. Scurlock 2006: 537-8, no. 228 A: 83; cf. the same offering for Lamaštu in Myhrman 1932: 164 rev. IV 6 // *KAR* 239 rev. III 7' (together with a libation of water and beer) and for Ereškigal and a kid buried as a substitute for the patient in *LKA* 79 obv. 22 (Ebeling 1931: 68). It seems very likely that Gilgameš as judge and boatman of the netherworld here received the same funerary offering.

Rev. 1: Or did the scribe really intend 12 *ninda gar<sup>am</sup>* "You set out twelve breads"?

3: For the libation of cold water and beer flavoured with roasted barley as part of funerary offerings, cf. Farber 1977: 129, l. 29. That water formed part of the libation for *Ḫumuṭ-tabal* is shown by the statement in rev. 11. Beer flavoured with roasted barley was a typical element of funerary offerings and is used as such in anti-ghost rituals (see Scurlock 2006: 45 with fn. 682, cf. also Nasrbadi 1999: 65 with references). In view of *KAR* 184 = *BAM* 323 obv. 7 one could argue that *šikar labti* refers to beer to which one added flour made of roasted barley: *qēm*(*zī*) *labti*(*še.sa.a*) *ina mē(a) u šikari*(*kaš*) *tamahḫaš*(*sig*)<sup>as</sup>-*ma tanaqqī*(*bal*)<sup>ai</sup>-*šū* "you stir flour made from roasted barley into water and beer, then you libate (it) for him" (ed. Scurlock 2006: 530). On the other hand a very dark beer made of roasted barley would seem a very appropriate beverage for the inhabitants of the netherworld.

6: *innimmu*-barley was hardly used as such for the fabrication of figurines. Dough is one of the standard materials for figurines of sorcerers and not mentioned elsewhere in the preserved text. It therefore seems most likely that the present line refers to dough made of *innimmu*-barley. For figurines made of beer bread, see K 888 obv. 6 (ed. Schwemer 2006) and the parallel text *KAL* 2, 26 rev. III 5. Alternatively one could of course read 2 *nu šimx*, but figurines made of an aromatic plant are otherwise unknown.

7: Since the traces at the beginning of rev. 8 cannot be reconciled with the *tamannu* that certainly followed *šalāšišu*, one is forced to assume that the scribe squeezed in *tamannu*(*šid*) at the end of rev. 7; note that the scribe did write on the margin elsewhere (obv. 17', rev. 10).

10: An epithet *ša qaqqari* "of the earth" is not attested elsewhere, and the reading remains quite tentative (hardly *šakin*(*gar*) *qaqqari* "governor of the earth"); for *qaqqaru* as one of the designations of the underworld, see Horowitz 1998: 292. It is unclear whether the undeciphered traces at the end of rev. 10 belong syntactically to the preceding or the following sentence. A reading *kaš še.sa.a* (cf. rev. 3) is excluded, but a restoration

*t[a-b]a[l]* seems worth considering. The line would then have to be translated “Hand them over to Ḫumuṭ-tabal of the earth (saying) ‘Carry off!’”.

12: The traces between Ḫumuṭ-tabal and Šamaš are unclear to me. They seem to be written in a slightly smaller script; therefore perhaps *h[i-p]* “break”? Note that the line is marked by a *kūr* sign in the margin (see note on obv. 9’).

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- Abbreviations follow *CAD* and *AHw*; *KAL 2* = Schwemer 2007a; *MesZ* = Borger 2004.
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