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Secrets from the Deep

Internal Structure and Systems of Interpretation in the Omen Series *Šumma izbu*

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la na-bu-ú li-in-da-har-ú-'-in-ni
May the ones without names receive (all this) from me.
(after SpTU 5, 248 obv. 9)

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FOREWORD

[To the ki]ng of the lands, the strong king, the king of the world, his lord:
your servant Marduk-šāpik-zēri, the dead body,
the *leprous* skull, the constricted breath whom the king, my lord,
raised up and appointed from among corpses. May I die as the substitute of the king, my lord!
May Nabû and Marduk bless the lord of kings, my lord!
I have now been kept in confinement for two years and, for fear of the king, my lord,
though there have been good and bad portents for me to observe in the sky,
I have not dared to report them to the king, my lord.
Now, however, afraid that it might turn into my fault,
I have decided to write to the king, my lord.

(obv. 1–10)

If Jupiter becomes steady in the morning: enemy kings will make peace,
one king will send peaceful messages to another.
If Auriga carries radiance:
The foundation of the king's throne will be everlasting.
If Jupiter stands in Pisces: the Tigris and the Euphrates will be filled with silt.
Idim (means) "silt", *idim* (means) "spring", *diri*(means) "to be full":
there will be prosperity and abundance in the land.

(obv. 11–16)

I fully master my father's profession,
the discipline of lamentation; I have studied and chanted the Series.[1]
I am competent in [...], 'mouth-washing',
and purification of the palace[...]. I have examined healthy and sick flesh. [2]

[1] *Kalûtu*, that is, the art of the lamenters *(kalû)* was an individual and renewed scholarly discipline, the experts of which were responsible for, upon reciting the laments written in the Emesal dialect of Sumerian, to communicate with the gods and (re)gain their favour. On the vast corpus of lamentations and the profession of the *kalû*s in general see the excellent introduction of Anne Löhnert (Löhnert 2011) with further literature.

[2] A reference to the so-called diagnostic omen series *Sakikkû*. Literally, *Sakikkû* (SA.GIG) means „diseased sinews" or „ill strands", as it was recently translated by U. Koch (see Koch 2015: 274), but usually it is referred to as „Symptoms" in scholarly literature—see e.g. Geller 2010: 149; de Zorzi 2011: 45; Böck 2014: 45 —as the designation of the standard, first millennium series which was consisted of 40 tablets. For a general overview of the latter's contents see Heeßel 2000: 37–40; and recently Koch 2015: esp. 279. The composition was also known as *Enūma ana bīt mar□i āšipu illaku* ("When the exorcist is on his way to the patient's house"), a title taken from the incipit of the first tablet. As it is already evident from this longer title, SA.GIG, just as the purificatory rituals mentioned together with it, and as the physiognomic series to which it was also closely connected (and thus, just as in our letter, the latter two were generally listed together: for example, in the so-called Handbook of the Exorcist—KAR 44, see recently Jean 2006: 62–72; Geller 2000: 242–254; and Frahm 2018—which was an essential work of the exorcistic lore. The

I have read the (astrological omen series) *Enūma Anu Enlil*[3] [...]
and made astronomical observations.

I have read the (teratological series) *Šumma izbu*, [*Kataduqqû* ("Statement"), *Alandî*]*mmû* ("(If a) Form"), and *Nigdimdimmû* ("(If the) appearance"),[4]
[...and the (terrestrial omen series) *Šum*]*ma ālu* ("If a city").[5]
[*All this* I lear]ned [*in my youth*].

(obv. 36–43)

treatment of illnesses, beside the physical treatment of the symptoms, which fell under the field of expertise of the *asû*, involved the determination of the underlying causes of the disease as well, which was, in turn, the task of the exorcist (on the different roles of the *asû* and *āšipu* in Mesopotamian medicine see the excellent summary of M. Geller: Geller 2010: 165–167, with further literature. One may say that the *āšipu* had to "read" the human body (visible physiological changes, various symptoms, as well as the patient's mood, mental state or appetite, just as other signs which might have appear on his way towards the patient's house, the latter were treated in Tablets I–II), searching for divine messages which referred to decisions (mainly concerning the fate of the person in question). So basically, the series SA.GIG—just as *Alamdimmû*—concerned the interpretation of the various signs of the human body which evidently fell under the *āšipu*'s expertise. The "new edition" of SA.GIG was attributed to the revered Babylonian scholar Esagil-kīn-apli, *āšipu* of the eleventh-century Babylonian king Adad-apla-iddina, who was also credited with the redaction of the material of the physiognomic series, see Finkel 1988; and in general Koch 2015: 278–279; and Frahm 2018a: esp. 25–26, with note 4 of the present work.

[3] The de-coding of the "celestial writing" *(ši□ir šamê)* was primarily the concern of the all-time state in Mesopotamia, practised during the first millennium by the □*upšarrū*, the "scribes of *Enūma Anu Enlil*", that is, of the astrological omen series, who were considered as the highest-ranking scholars in the Neo-Assyrian court (on the scribes of *Enūma Anu Enlil* see in general Rochberg 2004: 219□236; and Rochberg 2010a: 237□253 with further literature). The astrological series itself comprised some 68□70 tablets, subdivided into larger and smaller sections devoted to lunar, solar, and meteorological phenomena, as well as those of the various stars and planets. For an excellent summary on the contents and modern editions of the given sections see Koch 2015: 167□178.

[4] The canonical physiognomic series, which concerns the face and the general appearance of human beings, and the very idea that certain body characteristics may reveal a person's traits and fate, consisted of various sub-series. The first one was entitled as the whole compendium *(Alamdimmû)* and consisted of twelve tablets concerning male anatomy, another (of two tablets) referred to as *Šumma nigimdimmû* (If the appearance), and, moreover, it also comprised the sub-series *Kataduggû* (Statement), the sub-series on women's physiognomy, the sub-series of birthmarks, and the sub-series on muscle twitching. *Kataduggû* was the third chapter of *Alamdimmû*, and consisted of a single tablet. Although parts of this short composition were already edited by F. R. Kraus in 1936 (by the title *"Ein Sittenkanon in Omenform"*, see Kraus 1936) for the complete edition of *Kataduggû* see Böck 2000: 130–145. For a brief summary on the overall structure and contents of the whole series see more recently Koch 2015: 285–288. The entire handbook was arranged and edited by a single scholar named Esagil-kīn-apli, see note 2 of the present study.

[5] The standard omen compendium named after the quoted incipit *(Šumma ālu ina mēlê šakin)* covered the so-called "terrestrial omens" which concerned events from everyday life, occurring in the immediate human environment (related to human habitation, social interaction, as well as to the actions and appearance of common animals), see the general description of U. Koch: Koch 2015: 233–237. For the structure and the general contents of the (as many as) circa 120 tablets of the canonical series see Freedman 1998, with the critical review of Heeßel 2001–2002; Koch 2015: 241–256; and for the edition of Tablet 120 see Sallaberger 2000.

The above passages were quoted from a lengthy letter (SAA 10 160)[6] written by a certain Marduk-šāpik-zēri. As his very name, high literary style, and, of course, his own testimony about his situation and scholarly education reveals, he was a scholar, descendant of a Babylonian scholarly dynasty, and an expert in almost every scientific discipline of his day (celestial and other kinds of divination, lamentation, exorcism, and so on) — already practiced by his father.[7] His clear aim was to regain the favour of the Assyrian king (either Esarhaddon or Ashurbanipal, the identity of the concerned ruler is still a question), as well as to support many of his colleagues (and many foreigners among them), who may also have got into a tight corner, and who volunteered, as well, to the service of the Assyrian monarch.[8] Upon doing so, Marduk-šāpik-zēri intended to prove his own ability and expertise by quoting and consequently re-interpreting a few astronomical omens. Since he considered this new interpretations worthy to be sent to the king, and consequently apt for proving his extraordinary talents, we may assume that he considered them as real scholarly feats—especially the following one, as it was even supplemented with a short, commentary-style explanation:

[6] For the latest paper-format edition see Parpola 1993: 120–124 = SAA 10 160, for online edition: http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/saao/saa10/pager (under SAA 10 160). For the photo of the tablet see: https://cdli.ucla.edu/search/search_results.php?SearchMode=Text&ObjectID=P237220

[7] That was, however, anything but unique: as it was already noted by A. L. Oppenheim, „the same experts report on and 'interpret' celestial events as well as such ominous occurrences as the birth of abnormal animals, or incidents which are typical of the sort dealt with in the compendium called *Šumma-ālu*"—therefore, instead of referring to them „astrologers" we should rather call them „experts in all those fields of divination which are outside extispicy," see Oppenheim 1969: 99. Indeed, by the first millennium BCE the field and practise of observational-deductive divination was largely monopolised by the scribes (□*upšarrū*) of *Enūma Anu Enlil* and at times the Neo-Assyrian scribes of *Enūma Anu Enlil* may gave advice on apotropaic rituals in letters (e.g. SAA 10, 10) and in reports (e.g. SAA 8, Nos. 22□23) which suggests that the □*upšarrū* were being trained in the arts of the exorcist during the late Neo-Assyrian period. Such comprehensive divinatory knowledge may have reflected the elevated status of the □*upšarrū* at the Neo-Assyrian court, and sheds light on the fact that the borders of the disciplines were at this time, and no doubt at other times as well, not as strict as they seem to be for us at first sight. On the overlap of divinatory practices by this time see Rochberg 2004: esp. 223□224; Rochberg 2010a: esp. 239□241; and Noegel 2007: 27□35, with Chapter II.2, Introduction of the present study. Marduk-šāpik-zēri is often recalled as the role model of this accomplished scholar type (see lately Rochberg 2010: 240), although one should interject already at this point that the sense of such "universal", or interdisciplinary divinatory knowledge may have led to some hidden traps—as we will see indeed in his case.

[8] With regard to the identity of this monarch cf. Brinkman 2001 (PNA II/2): 726, with Fincke 2003–2004: 118—both authors prefer Esarhaddon, although without any further clues on the dating of this letter. M. Dietrich (Dietrich 1967–1968: 95–96), on the other hand, dates the letter to the reign of Sargon II, while H. Hunger (Hunger 1987: 162) to the time of Ashurbanipal. This latter proposal was followed by F. Rochberg-Halton (Rochberg-Halton 2000: 361) and by M. J. Geller as well (Geller 2010: 75–76), based on the considerations that several individuals mentioned in the letter are referred to as "refugee(s) *(halqu)* from Assyria" which, according to Geller, might make sense if we suppose that the scholars in question had escaped from Assyria during the revolt of Šamaš-šum-ukīn against Ashurbanipal in 652 BCE. Finally, S. Parpola does not date the text in question (see SAA 10 120–124, no. 160), however, all the letters published in SAA 10 can (or can presumably) be dated to the reigns of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal.

SAA 10 160: obv. 14–16

DIŠ MUL.SAG.ME.GAR *ina* KUN.MEŠ GUB ÍD.MAŠ.GÚ.QAR *u* ÍD. □UD.KIB.NUN.KI□

sa-ki-ki DIRI.MEŠ : IDIM : *sa-ki-ki* : IDIM : *nag-*⌈*bi* : DIRI⌉ [*ma-lu*]-⌈ *ú*⌉

NUN *u* ▪ É.GÁL.⌈LA *ina* KUR⌉ [*X*] GÁL-*ši*

"If Jupiter stands in Pisces: the Tigris and the Euphrates will be filled with silt"
IDIM (the logographic equivalent of the Akkadian noun *sakīku* means) "silt",
(But) IDIM (can also mean) "spring", (Akkadian *nagbu*) DIRI (means) "to be full" (Akkadian *malû*):
(The new interpretation is): "there will be prosperity and abundance in the land."

Actually this interpretation is based on quite simple scientific (or one might say: hermeneutic) methods: he sought for other possible Akkadian meanings of the Sumerian logograms appearing or can appear (as equivalents of the Akkadian terms) in the original text, and by means of the former, (combined with rather "free" associations, as we will see), created a new interpretation for the ominous phenomenon. Further on, as we will discuss this associative technique (and analyse this very, quoted interpretation) in detail it will become evident that it was one of the commonest and simplest methods of omen interpretation and generation—and then, it will seem rather striking, why was an (allegedly) well-trained and experienced scholar so proud of this achievement.

As all this, together with the above mentioned uncertainty regarding the identity of the Assyrian king in question foretell that his attempt remained unsuccessful. No other documents of the era mention Mardu-šāpik-zēri again. Although one may interject that this is merely accidental, in the light of exhaustive corpus of Neo-Assyrian scholarly letters and related documents, as well as his above discussed, rather ill-fated scientific demonstration, we should rather conclude that he was unable to get back to the king's favours—and get access to the scholarly circles of the Assyrian royal court.[9]

So why do we, despite all that, recalled his name and this misadventurous letter? We did, and we will do so at various points during the course of this work because it is rather

[9] Cf. Geller 2010: 75–76, who also supposes that the lack of any further data could mean that his application failed. On his short note (Geller 2010: 187, note 101), according to which he might have been identical with a wealthy land owner attested in archival records from Babylonia (see Jursa 2005: 100) see the recent contribution of E. Frahm (Frahm 2018a: 14) who convincingly clarifies that the latter man (bearing the same name) actually lived in the 3rd century BCE. On the general attitude of Mesopotamian monarch towards scholarship, and on their relationship with their scholars see the excellent summaries of C. Jean (Jean 2006, on scholars and divination in the Neo-Assyrian court) and E. Frahm (Frahm 2011b: esp. 513–514, 518–519, and 521–524 on Neo-Assyrian evidence, with further literature).

illuminative with respect the proper practice and the synthesis of the various layers (so to say: code-systems) of omen interpretation—with regard to which, as we will see, Mardu-šāpik-zēri was quite neglectful. Leaving one of the code-systems out of consideration sealed the ill-fate of such scholarly attempts.

And there is one more reason. While Mardu-šāpik-zēri boasted about finding a new, or hidden interpretation of a well-known text, there was a scholar (presumably) in the Assyrian court, whose name is lost for eternity, but who was able to create a whole, lengthy textual unit, inserted, at some point, to the teratological omen series, the structure of which was based—as we intend to prove on the following pages of this work—entirely upon the very same scientific method. In other words, he created something which seems to be at first glance an omen text which follows some kind of a thematic arrangement, and which represents, at second sight, the joint use of the code-systems of omen interpretation/generation. However, if one digs deeper, as we will, it will turn out that it is a wholly artificial construction in which every single element is generated from the former ones by means of the already mentioned associative technique. Thus far, no other such textual units were unfold—however, we may assume that it was considered as extraordinary even within the intellectual circles of its own time. While we labelled it as "artificial", they had referred to it as one of the writings of Enki/Ea, the god of wisdom[10]—not surprisingly, considering the text's strive for perfection. Bearing this in mind and taking into consideration the specific worldview and methods of thinking which can be traced back from the scientific texts (omens and lexical compositions) treated on the following pages, one may suppose that the anonymity of the author was not at all accidental in this case. According to his own concepts, he wasn't creating something, something which was conceived in his own mind, but rather, he was revealing—revealing a perfect, and thus divinely system encoded in cuneiform and originating directly from the *Apsû*, the abode of Enki/Ea.

Even so, upon unfolding this system I would like to dedicate this work to the memory of this unnamed genius, as well as to his colleagues who created the texts of the god of wisdom, and whose names are also lost forever—for letting me reveal their ingenious system of thought.

[10] Lambert 1962: 64 ("Catalogue of Texts and Authors", K 2248 Obv.1–4. (the works of Ea), the text in question was referred to as SAG ITI NU.TIL.LA "*Not completing the months*", in line 2). For a more detailed discussion of this unique Neo-Assyrian catalogue see the Introduction, below.

I. INTRODUCTION

The present study aims to analyse—actually, for the first time in Assyriology—the interpretative system and the organizing principles of a lengthy textual unit of an omen text (the introductory part of the teratological series known as *Šumma izbu*), which may originally have constituted an individual composition—and as such, was considered as a work inspired, or more properly revealed by Enki/Ea, the Mesopotamian god of wisdom. Indeed, this work proved to be unique thus far, since, as the present study intends to demonstrate, the associations of its interpretative system do not only effect the internal correlations of the omen entries, but rather, the whole structure of the text, insomuch that it can be proved that each and every entry was generated from the former by means of specific associative principles (which were formerly called "hermeneutic associations" in scholarly literature but will be labelled as "written code" in here, since in fact they are based on the "Science of Writing").[11] In other words, the present study aims to prove that this composition as a whole, although for untrained eyes or scribes seems to be an omen text listing various (rather odd) ominous phenomena, is an abstract, theoretical treatise which, as contemporary science could not be separated from religion, aims to reveal the unknown parts of the cosmic system by means of the wisdom originating from the *Apsû* (the abode of Enki/Ea). Therefore, its basic principles do not markedly differ from that of certain lexical texts—although, as representing several layers of meaning, it is much more complex.

If these assertions stand the proof, we may assume that the present study reveals a formerly unknown phenomenon, the description of which requires wholly new methods and terminology. As such, it also aims to be a starting point which marks the beginning of a different kind of structural analysis—which should concentrate, in the first place, on the other works attributed to the god of wisdom.

[11] This definition was introduced by Niek Veldhuis, see Veldhius 1991: esp. Chapter 4 ("Old Babylonian Lexical Texts and the Science of Writing), pp. 137–146. It refers to the various associative principles inherent in the characteristics of the cuneiform writing system (which will also be discussed in the present study, in Chapter 3c), and by and large, it was also adapted by others who concerned the (scientific) methods of Mesopotamian thinking, see e.g. van de Mieroop 2016: esp. p. 10 ("science of reading"), 83 ("science of writing").

Methodology and the structure of the present study

As for the former contributions in the field of omen interpretation (treated in detail in Chapter II), several minor and larger studies have been published,[12] most of them, however, concentrated on the detection of various possible types of associations between the *protasis* (sign) and *apodosis* (interpretation) of given individual omen entries— from omen series falling under various different sub-disciplines of divination, actually rived away both from their wider and immediate context. Nevertheless, these contributions were essential and necessary, since they paved the way for a paradigmatic change in the approach to the omen literature as a whole, a change which best can be hallmarked by the ground-breaking study of David Brown.[13] Upon analysing the entries of the astrological series *Enūma Anu Enlil*, Brown thoroughly demonstrated that those omens which were previously considered as actual descriptions of celestial phenomena and related, mundane events (appearing in the *apodoses*), that is, as records of empirical observations, are *in most cases* in fact "invented", or, more properly: generated (the *protases* were generated from each other on the basis of simple principles, and the apodoses, in turn, were generated from the respective *protases*). Their internal associations, as well their organization reflect and thus based on the ingenuous associative methods of Mesopotamian scientists—and these associations on the inner-omen level were in a large measure related to the peculiarities of, and the possibilities offered by the cuneiform writing system. Although this study signifies a real turning point in the approach towards omen interpretation, as a pioneering work concentrating on a defined corpus, it could not and possibly didn't even aimed to be exhaustive—although in a way it classifies the various interpretative methods which worked in the inner-omen level, it does not intend to give a synthesis and represent them as various coefficient layers of a single (but rather complex) system. Practically, it is also hold true for the more recent works on divination: the excellent overview of Marc van de Mieroop,[14] for example, although it applies the theory of omen generation and to some extent even the terminology introduced by Brown, represents the various associative methods in omen entries as individual, and in fact optional links between the *protases* and *apodoses*.

[12] See for e.g. Guinan 1989 and 1996; Noegel 1995; Greaves 2000; Bilbija 2008; Annus 2010; Frahm 2010; Noegel 2010; and also de Zorzi 2011, who, as the re-editor of the *Šumma izbu* series (for the new edition see de Zorzi 2014), also mined in the vast material for various associations within individual omens, and, as it will be demonstrated, almost exclusively treated our "simple code", and those correlations which were largely influenced by the "disciplinary code" of extispicy, see below.

[13] Brown 2000.

[14] Van de Mieroop 2016: 114–140.

Therefore, first of all the present work has to clarify the basic principles of interpretation, at first in the inner-omen level—by reconstructing a system with strict rules, and introducing a new categorization and terminology (Chapter II). After the discussion of the simplest, and so to say basic associations appearing in each sub-discipline ("simple code"), and consequently the discipline-related associatory methods ("disciplinary code", with special emphasis on that of extispicy, which, as it will also be demonstrated, made a huge impact on the interpretative apparatus of *Šumma izbu*), we will analyse those associations which were interdisciplinary in nature and based on the characteristic features of the writing system (graphic principles, homophony, polysemy, and so on, in other words, the expertise of the "Science of Writing", labelled as "written code" in the present study). After this overall summary, by means of examples and case studies we will demonstrate that in fact each and every omen entry has to contain, and indeed represented associations related to *all* these three "codes"—it was obligatory and not the matter of "either–or". Upon defining the correct interpretation of a given omen, all three of the code-systems discussed in this chapter has and had to be taken into consideration. While the simple code defines certain values, and incidentally the actors and/or the events involved, and the disciplinary code provides further clues regarding the latter, it is the written code which determines the exact meaning and even the wording of the *apodosis*.

Based on the results of Chapter II, Chapter III contains a larger case study: the analysis of a lengthy omen sequence from *Šumma izbu* Tablet V. The examination of a larger textual unit as a whole is, again, a novelty in Assyriological literature although, as Chapter III aims to demonstrate, such enterprises may prove to be rather fruitful. The sequence from Tablet V was chosen for various reasons. On the one hand, as the most archaic section of the series, Tablet V, as compared to other parts, represents rather clear associations for those who are familiar with the simple code and the disciplinary code of extispicy (and thus it confirms that the latter formed the basis of the interpretative apparatus of *Šumma izbu*). On the other hand, it illustrates the simple methods of omen generation on a vertical axis and thus provides an excellent introduction to the next chapter in which the inter-omen relations are discussed.

The latter will thus be examined in Chapter IV according the structuralist model also introduced by David Brown—although, as it will be seen, it has to be modified during the analysis of the "composition of the god of wisdom", that is, the introductory part of *Šumma izbu* (SAG ITI NU TIL.LA, "Not completing the months"), since the generative principles, working on both axes at the same time, are much more complex. As the

throughout investigation of these principles reveals, this text, which at first glance seems to be a regular collection of omens which, although the latter contain numerous phenomenon which may seem incomprehensible, follows some kind of a thematic order, and which represents the most elaborate associations in the inner-omen level discussed in this study, is actually a wholly artificial composition in which each entry was generated both from the *protasis* and *apodosis* of the previous one.

Šumma izbu — general structure and textual tradition

The teratological compendium known by the title *Šumma izbu (If an anomaly)*[15] was consisted, in its canonical form from the first millennium BCE, of 24 tablets. Among the latter, the first four deal with omens of human malformations, odd births, and other peculiarities. From tablet V, which is considered the most archaic and treated by many as an independent textual unit,[16] until tablet XVII onwards the omens are related to malformed lamb-births. Finally, tablets XVIII–XXIV concern odd, malformed births and other abnormalities among goats, cows, pigs, and other animals.[17]

The interpretation of portentous and malformed births as (spontaneous) omens is an ancient notion, presumably dating back to the very concept of messages sent by the gods, and therefore the omen literature of such nature can also be traced back to earlier textual traditions. In other words, the text of the standard *Šumma izbu* series developed over several hundreds of years. Teratological omens which can be regarded as the forerunners of the *Šumma izbu* are already known from the Old Babylonian period, when omens and respective interpretations, formerly part of an oral tradition, were written

[15] Translated as "anomaly" in Erle Leichty's publication (Leichty l970), and as "malformed birth" ("neonate malformato") in the new, Italian edition of Nicla de Zorzi (de Zorzi 2014, but cf. also de Zorzi 2017: "miscarried foetus", following the terminology of George 2013 (= CUSAS 18), see below). The remarkably important expression *izbu*, which presumably lives further in the Arabic word *'izb* (monster, distorted figure), refers to the abnormally born and the bearer or source of the abnormality, respectively (for example, the lamb which kicks about during birth, or its sound is heard in the mother's womb is also called *izbu* —Tablet XVII, lines 82 and 84–85). Therefore, since the expression can not be precisely translated with one word, the Akkadian version will be used hereinafter. For further readings on the determination and etymology of *izbu* see (among others): Stol 2000: 159; and Rochberg 2004: 89.

[16] See: Leichty 1970: 25–26; and de Zorzi 2014: 41 and 279 (English summary).

17 For the thematic division in general see: Leichty 1970: 25–26; Stol 2000: 159; Maul 2003: 62–63; Rochberg 2004: 88–90; de Zorzi 2011: 44–45; and more recently de Zorzi 2014: 38–41.

The already mentioned editio princeps of *Šumma izbu* was published by the late Erle Leichty (Leichty 1970), recently, however, the whole canonical series was re-edited by Nicla de Zorzi (de Zorzi 2014), and the latter edition contains several previously unpublished fragments as well as significant results regarding the reconstruction of certain fragmentary, and thus unclear and problematic segments.

For further reconstruction and sources of the textual tradition of the series known from the first millennium, and canonized at some point during the Middle Babylonian period, see: Leichty 1970: 20–23, for newer publications: Biggs 1996; Frahm 1998; and Maul 2003: 63; and finally for a recent summary of the textual tradition as a whole see de Zorzi 2014: 16–37.

down for the first time in Mesopotamian history.[18] Their popularity and the general cultural demand for them are well reflected by the fact that several versions, which can mostly be dated to the second half of the Middle Babylonian period, and were unambiguously imported from Mesopotamia, turned up from peripheral areas such as Ugarit, Susa, Emar, or the Hittite capital.[19]

Although the Middle Babylonian sources from Mesopotamia proper are rather scarce, it is evident from the Assyrian and Babylonian material as well as from the fragments from Emar and Ugarit that the texts from the second part of this period (13th or 12th century) were quite close to the canonical series. Thus we may suppose the compendium as a whole took a more or less stable form by the end of the second, or by the beginning of the first millennium.[20] The vast majority of our sources, however, can be dated to the first millennium and represented by tablets from Assyria (Aššur, Kalhu, Nineveh, Sultantepe) from the Neo-Assyrian period, and manuscripts from Babylonia (Uruk, Babylon, Borsippa, and Sippar), mostly from the sixth to the second century BCE. The main bulk of the first millennium sources was brought to light in Nineveh and originates from the library of Ashurbanipal.[21]

As some Neo-Assyrian scholarly letters reflect (see below), correct interpretation of the *Šumma izbu* omens required appropriate expertise, and therefore explanatory texts, commentaries accompanied the series, as it can be traced, again, from Neo-Assyrian times onwards.[22]

[18] On the publication of the texts in question see: Goetze 1947 (= YOS X) texts 56 and 12, and also: Leichty 1970: 201–207—transcription, translation and commentary, while on the recently published Old Babylonian tablet CUSAS 18 12 see George 2013 and more recently de Zorzi 2014: 19 and 288 (English summary). As for recent publications, one also has to mention the "post-Old Babylonian" compendium CUSAS 18 29 which can be dated to the period of the first Sealand Dynasty (see George 2013: 199–207; with de Zorzi 2014: 19–20 and 288), as well as the divinatory texts from the king Tunip-Teššub of Tigunānum in Northwestern Mesopotamia (ca. 1610 BCE), which contain several teratological compositions (CUSAS 18 Nos. 19–21 = George 2013: 117–128), see de Zorzi 2014: 20–21 and 288–289; and more recently, on the peculiarities of this corpus: de Zorzi 2017.

[19] See the recent, detailed summary of the peripheral sources in de Zorzi 2014: 21–24 with 289 (brief English summary).

[20] On the Middle Babylonian sources from Mesopotamia see de Zorzi 2014: 25–26 and 289.

[21] For a detailed overview of the first millennium sources see de Zorzi 2014: 26–37, and 278.

[22] For the basic and for the most part reconstructed version of the the so-called Principal Commentary see: Leichty 1970, 211–231; on the characteristics of this commentary text: Leichty 1970, 22–23; Frahm 2011, 203–210; de Zorzi 2014: 12; and see also *op.cit.* Vol. II. for the new edition of the passages of this commentary—before the respective tablets of the series.

SAG ITI NU TIL.LA, "Not completing the months" The scholarly tradition regarding the introductory section of the *Šumma izbu* series

BE-*iz-bu da-'a-[na]*
a-na pa-ra-si
ú-kal-lam ket-tú
[ša]ú-ba-nu ina pa-na-tu-uš-šú
[la] tal-li-ku-u-ni
/la]-mu-qa-a-šú
la i-ha-ak-ki-im
Šumma izbu is difficult to interpret…
Really, [the one] who has [not] had
the meaning pointed out to him
cannot possibly understand it![23]

Indeed. The teratological compendium represented the highest levels of science for the scholars of the Neo-Assyrian court, and, as we have already seen, was listed among the "works", that is, revelations of Ea, the god of wisdom.[24] According to the beginning of the famous catalogue from the library of Ashurbanipal, which is actually a list of works ascribed to named scholars, some compositions were originated from the divine sphere, and among the latter, a certain SAG ITI NU TIL.LA ("Not completing the months"), a reference to the beginning of the standard *Šumma izbu* series (see below) appears in the second line:

1 [*a-ši-pu-tu*]*m* : ^{LÚ}GALA-*ú-tum (kalûtum)* : UD AN ^{d}EN.LÍL
2 [*alam-dí*]*m-mu-ú* : SAG ITI NU TIL.LA : SA.GIG.GA
3 [KA.TA DU]G_4.GA : LUGAL.E UD ME.LÁM.BI NER.GÁL : AN.GIM DÍM.[MA]
4 [*an-nu-tum*] *šá pi-i* ^{d}*É-a*

[23] SAA 10, 60 rv. 1–2 and 10–14. On these very explicit terms of the Neo-Assyrian scholar Balasî regarding the hermeneutic challenges posed by the text of the teratological series see *inter alia* Leichty 1970:9–10; and Frahm 2004: 46.

[24] Lambert 1962: 64 (K 2248 Obv.1–4, "Catalogue of Texts and Authors", 2. line: SAG ITI NU.TIL.LA "*Not completing the months*"). See more on this text (among others): Leichty 1970, 7; Veldhuis 2010, 77–79; and Veldhuis 2014: 380. On the "authorship" (i.e. that while Ea was the source, he is not the actual author) see *inter alia*: Rochberg-Halton 1999: 419–420; and Rochberg-Halton 2000: 363. On the equation of the Sumerian expression with either *izbu* or *kūbu* ("stillborn foetus") see ASKT 11: 13–14 (Borger 1969: 4, § III): NÌGIN SAG ITI NU TIL-LA = *iz-bu ku-bu*, see also Borger 1969: 7, § III XV: 108 for the same equation, as well as SpTU 3, 67 *(Bīt rimki)* iii lines 1 and 9. Cf. already Lambert 1962: 71; Biggs 1968: 55; and recently de Zorzi 2014: 2, note 5.

The exorcist's corpus, the corpus of the lamentation priest,[25] *Enūma Anu Enlil* (the astrological omen compendium)[26]

(If) a Form (the physiognomic omen series),[27] **"Not completing the months",** *Sakikkû* (the diagnostic-prognostic omen series)[28]

(If) the Utterance of the Mouth,[29] "The King, the Splendor of whose Storm is Majestic", "Fashioned like An"[30]

These are by the word of Ea.

(K 2248 obv. 1–4, see Fig. 1)[31]

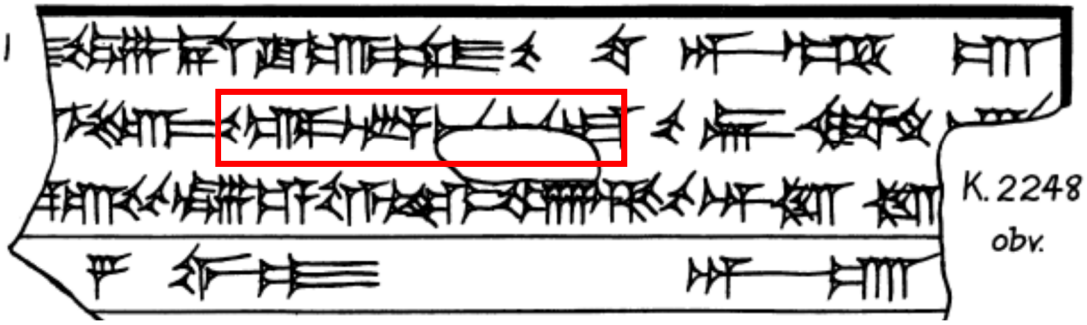


Fig. 1: The opening section of the "Catalogue of Texts and Authors", listing the works revealed by the god Ea. Detail of the handcopy of K 2248 (obv. 1–4), after Lambert 1962: 60.

Despite all that, in accordance with the above quoted words of the Neo-Assyrian scholar Balasî, certain parts of *Šumma izbu* can often seem diffuse, haphazard sets of incomprehensible, strange phenomena and even more confusing correlations in the

[25] On the art of the lamenters see already note 1 of the present work.

[26] On the astrological omen series see already note 3 of the present work.

[27] The canonical physiognomic series, which concerns the face and the general appearance of human beings, and the very idea that certain body characteristics may reveal a person's traits and fate, consisted of various sub-series, one entitled as the whole series *(Alamdimmû)* and consisted of twelve tablets concerning male anatomy, another (of two tablets) referred to as *Šumma nigimdimmû* (If the appearance), and, moreover, of the sub-series *Kataduggû* (Statement), the sub-series on women's physiognomy, the sub-series of birthmarks, and the sub-series on muscle twitching. It comprises altogether 27 chapters—22 of which are preserved (see Böck 2000; as well as Böck 2010: 199–200; for a brief summary on the overall structure and contents, and more recently Koch 2015: 285–288), see also note 4 of the present study.

[28] Literally, *Sakikkû* (SA.GIG) means „diseased sinews" (or „ill strands", as it was recently translated by U. Koch, see Koch 2015: 274), but usually it is referred to as „Symptoms" in scholarly literature (see e.g.Geller 2010: 149; de Zorzi 2011: 45; Böck 2014: 45), and it refers to the standard, first millennium series which was consisted of 40 tablets (for a general overview of its contents see Heeßel 2000: 37–40; and recently Koch 2015: esp. 279). For more detail on this compendium see note 2 of the present study.

[29] *Kataduggû* was actually the third chapter of the series *Alamdimmû*, and consisted of a single tablet, see note 4 above.

[30] The Sumerian versions of the two Ninurta narratives recalled by the text are already attested among Old Babylonian school texts. Both compositions were provided with interlinear Akkadian translations during the late second millennium, and were still regularly copied during the first millennium, in both Babylonia and Assyria—as such, they form part of the small group of Sumerian narratives which, so to say, withstood the test of time. For the compositions and their textual history in detail see Streck 2001; and Annus 2002.

[31] Cf. Lambert 1962: 64–65.

eyes of the readers inexperienced in contemporary, Mesopotamian science. This is particularly true for to first tablet of the series which forms part of a larger textual unit, a four tablet long composition which previously constituted a separate compendium, also known as the subseries *Šumma sinništu arâtma* (*If a woman is pregnant,* henceforth Šsa), dealing with human births. And perhaps it is even more true to the very beginning of its first tablet.

The latter, after the opening lines which concern the (various modes of) crying of human foetuses, contains approximately 40 omens which list possible "birth" material born of women (as it was presumed, originating from abortions, premature births, and on occasions clear-cut pathological cases, see below). Basically everyone who treated this textual unit, either in short or at length, considered it as a list of mostly real, and thus observed features which can generally be classified into the ancient, classic *mola*-category.[32] To avoid confusion, it must be emphasized that only a slight overlap exists between the ancient and modern concepts of *mola*. Today in medical science *mola* means the product of a disorder called *molar* pregnancy, a placenta manifesting anomalies and most aptly resembling a bunch of grapes. In such cases the placenta can develop in the woman's womb for months producing gravidity-like symptoms, until (in lack of treatment) it is spontaneously aborted.[33] The boundaries of the ancient concept are not that strict. In the classic gynaecological writings all shapeless or largely deformed "masses" developing in the uterus or passing through the vagina, which do not even with the best of intentions resemble a newborn, are called *mola*–thus beyond abortions showing deformities, various cysts, benign or malignant tumours, membranous formations and the like, and of course *molae* in the modern sense, can all be ranked here.[34]

[32] For comparison: Scurlock–Andersen 2005: 391: "wide variety of material delivered from a woman's uterus." On the ancient *mola*-concept: Taussig 1907: mainly 250–252 (descriptions of Hippocrates and Galenus). Also worthy of mention is the theory of Ann Kilmer, according to which the approximately 50 lines of the text discussed in the present essay deal primarily with human placentas (Kilmer 1987: esp. 212–213). Although this cannot be excluded either, in the most cases the descriptions of the *protases* (i.e. the signs themselves) allow for several different interpretations to be made–including the highly probable one according to which most entries were invented, generated ones (see below).

[33] For the general modern description of *molar* pregnancies see: Benirschke–Kaufmann 1990, 782–815.

[34] See note 23. The clarification of these differences is also essential since the original meaning of the latin word *mola* (millstone) can be misleading. With most probability, inspired by the latter, Marten Stol identifies the *lithopaedion,* i.e. the stone foetus or baby as one of the subtypes of *mola,* marking it a millstone in line 44—let's be honest, in a rather subjective manner. In reality, the *lithopaedion* has nothing to do with *molar*-pregnancy—and cannot be classified under the ancient sense of *mola* either. The fossil fetuses deriving from ectopic pregnancies, which can otherwise remain in the mother's body for decades without causing any effects that are detrimental to health, occur almost exclusively in the abdominal cavity, and can therefore, owing to their physical characteristics, never leave the body by way of the vagina and in general by natural means, respectively. The earliest knowledge about the phenomenon (16th–17th

Consistent with the brilliant observation of Marten Stol, the ominous list of such (allegedly) premature births and abortions forms a separate, well defined unit within the *Šsa* subseries, involving its beginning, just about 50 lines. The borderline is set up by the 46th omen of the first tablet, which by means of *paronomasia,* clearly signifies that from then on the handbook deals with pregnancies carried to term. [35] Henceforth—opening with the general concept of *"izbu"*—a new section begins, listing various (presumably in term) malformations, up until line 83, which is the opening entry of the next large structural unit, dealing with twins. Thus far, both Assyriology and medical history have paid little attention to this initial section of the *Šumma izbu* series. Apart from the more or less successful identification of a few possible pathological cases,[36] the passage was not considered suitable for or worthy of detailed analysis.

It was said that *Šumma izbu*, or more precisely SAG ITI NU TIL.LA is one of the foundation stones of the intellectual science archives of the Mesopotamian diviner, or more generally of the first millennium; a peak achievement by contemporary standards and an indispensable source, which, as we have seen, the most prestigious scientists of the Assyrian court could refer to. Serious scientific works do not often begin with the enumeration of absurd, out of place, worthless data, but rather, such works are very consciously edited—and it is presumed that the *Šumma sinništu arâtma* is just such a composition.

The key to the problem lies in asking the right question. On the one hand, we could ask what real content, i.e. modern scientific value could we of the 21st century attribute to the *Šumma izbu* descriptions, at the same time, however, we must seek answer to

century C. E.) derives in all the known cases from autopsies (and it must be added that the mother's death was years after and independent of the death of the foetus). For cultural history research on the phenomenon and for the earliest accounts, respectively, see: Bonderson 1996. Thus, in short, a *lithopaedion* is what a woman can never give "birth" to. There is similar confusion as regards the linkage of brick and "vesicular *mola*" which appears in line 45.

In all probability, Stol uses the *mola*-concept here in its narrow, modern sense, keeping in mind that it basically refers to the hydatid *mola* (= *lithopaedion*, in Stol's reading) and regarding the rarely used vesicular *mola* as some sort of variant. It was possibly overlooked by the author that "hydatid" and "vesicular" *mola* are in fact one and the same, the latter simply being an alternative denomination referring to the characteristic, water-filled vesicular structure of the placental material. For the general modern description of *molar* pregnancies see: Benirschke–Kaufmann 1990: 782–815.

[35] *Šumma sinništu malî ulid*: If a woman gives birth to "matted hair" (*malî*)—for comparison: the verb *malû :* „to be full, to fill, be filled," see: Stol 2000: 161. Thinking further, it cannot be excluded that the compendium's alternative denomination (SAG ITI NU.TIL.LA) refers to the same concept – and to the first section (consisting of 46 lines), respectively.

[36] Adamson 1984: note 5—contra(!) Stol 2000: note 161, 91.: dermoid cyst (I 40); Scurlock–Andersen 2005: 390 (17.27): hydatid *mola* (I 22).

why the Mesopotamian scholars ranked these descriptions among their most prestigious scientific works. In other words, we need to distinguish between the scientific values of the present and ancient times, since it is clear that the two are not the same.

The modern medical historian instinctively looks for concrete, empirical factual information among this gigantic collection of data, which would form the basis of the scientific or fictive nature of the statements and descriptions.[37] From such an approach the unrealistic, occasionally even fairytale-like omen-*protases* (i.e. the omen descriptions themselves) can at most be of cultural-historical interest only. From a scientific, and specifically, from a medical historical point of view they are completely uninteresting; it could even be said that all they testify is that there were people many thousands of years ago, as well, who excelled in wasting their time—moreover, within a formal framework.[38]

The Mesopotamian scholars, however, held a rather different view, for them, the text reflected a reality radically dissimilar to the modern scientific context. Whether these phenomena may occur in nature or may observable with the naked eye—it was actually irrelevant for them. The Mesopotamian scholars were, as we will define in the following chapters, upon using various interpretative schemes, actually *generating* interpretations and omen sequences—however, they perceived this rather differently, since their basic aim was to *reveal*. As we will see, this attitude can be traced from the very beginning of their elementary scribal education, when they had learned how to reveal what can and possibly be encoded in the writing system and again, as we might say, how to build a text. As for them, however, the text actually builds itself, and as such, unfolds something which is hidden from the eyes of the ordinary human, something which reveals an order or system—originating from the divine sphere. It is even more true for divination, since basically it concerns the revealing of the will of the gods—"written" on the sky, on the extra, or encoded in actual cuneiform. And this is exactly why the author of *Šumma izbu* could possibly never conceptualize that he is actually creating, building a text—for him, the text *built itself*. However, to clearly demonstrate all that, we should

[37] The work of Julio C. Pangas (Pangas 2000), a Spanish physician for instance, was written exactly in this spirit, pairing certain descriptions taken from *Šumma izbu* with well known pathological diseases, and thus giving the layman the feeling, that the series is in fact none other than the first pathology textbook in history that summarizes accurate medical observations.

[38] For comparison: „*It is not a waste of time to find out how other people wasted theirs*"—cites Morris Jastrow the statement of Bouché-Leclercq made in connection with Greek astrology (Jastrow 1914: 42), which he clearly adopted, since the Assyriologist of the turn of the century was mostly preoccupied with the real observations on which the extrapolations the *Šumma izbu* descriptions were based. Jastrow saw the scientific value of the work in its originality and outlined at length the seeds sown for later sciences (Jastrow 1914: 42–78).

at first, after the summary of the history of research, outline the most important “building mechanisms”, starting with the elementary units of omen texts: the individual entries.

II. INNER-OMEN ASSOCIATIONS: SYNTAGMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN *PROTASES* AND *APODOSES* IN *ŠUMMA IZBU*

> "There is nothing more natural… than the relation between divination and the classification of things. Every divinatory rite, however simple it may be, rests on a pre-existing sympathy between certain beings, and on a traditionally admitted kinship between a certain sign and a certain future event."
>
> (Durkheim–Mauss 2003 [1903]: 46)

The omens of conditional structures, subdivided as a rule into *protasis* (sign) and *apodosis* (prediction, or more properly, interpretation)[39] are not pronouncements of the logic of the *post hoc, propter hoc* ("after this, therefore because of this") argument, the *apodosis* is therefore not the consequence of the phenomena described in the *protasis*. The direction of the consequences is actually the reverse, it can thus be said that the omens are readable vice versa: in the messages or warnings referring to the future, which were worded in the *protasis* (in case of the *Šumma izbu* in the [malformed] births) the future, arising from the divine judgements relays a message, and in some form often also manifests itself. The incarnation, naturally, refers to the source, i.e. to the pronouncement of the *apodosis*.[40] This statement is essential because it predicts that the future event and the sign *always* have to represent some kind of associative bond, or, to follow A. Winitzer in the usage of semiotic terms, every individual omen represents the union of a sign and its signification[41]—and those who compiled the omens had numerous means by which they could clearly signify this correlation. In the followings we would like to overview these means, or, more properly, code-systems (with special emphasis to their use in *Šumma izbu* in the inner-omen level), beginning with the simplest, most obvious associative schemes (simple code) and moving towards the more complex correlations requiring higher qualifications from the specialists who

[39] For further details on the structure of omens in general see (among others) Maul 2003: esp. 46.

[40] For further reading on the correlation of (and the often but falsely assumed causality between) *protasis* and *apodosis* see among others Brown 2000: esp. 109–112; Hurowitz 2000: esp. 80; Annus 2010: 2–3; Rochberg 2010b.

[41] Winitzer 2006: 38–39, and recently Winitzer 2017: 28–29.

aim to decode them—either ancient or modern ones.[42] Applying the terminology introduced by David Brown, who in turn borrowed it from the sructuralist model of C. Lévi-Strauss, the correlations, or in other words the relationships between a given *protasis* and its complementing apodosis, stressing the theoretical unity of every omen entry are described here as *syntagmatic.*[43]

1. Simple code

Although the label "simple code" was borrowed from D. Brown, we should make it clear immediately that the contents of *our* simple code differs remarkably from that of Brown, since his "*Enūma Anu Enlil* Paradigm Code" covers both the simplest underlying principles of divination (in general), as well as the specific code-system of celestial divination, the decoding of which required specialised knowledge.[44] Moreover, the further rules of omen generation (and interpretation) which involve "textual play," that is, which concerned the words themselves (etymologically, graphically, phonetically, and so on) and which were drawn from the "technology of listing" (which we rather call the Science of Writing), were treated separately by him, and he called them "learned associations,"[45]—which is, as for my opinion, a slightly unfortunate term.

In contrast with the system of Brown, our simple code signifies, on the one hand, such simple, basic associations which are, so to say, evident within the cultural context of Mesopotamian intellectuals, and, on the other hand, general basic principles of divination (e.g. binary oppositions), which are largely independent from the lore of the various disciplines of divination. Nevertheless, as we have already said, we won't categorise them according to the system proposed by Brown—for two basic reasons. First of all because those interdisciplinary associations which concern the universal principles of divination science as a whole are such fundamentals which had to be *learned* by anyone who aimed to get acquainted with this science—in other words, they constitute the elementary stage of divinatory education. On the other hand, the standard and plain associations, discussed in this sub-chapter as well, how evident so ever they seem to be, are in fact based on culturally constructed ideas and as such, they also had to be *learned*,

[42] Since not only Sumerian and Akkadian expressions but even cuneiform graphemes could form the basis of the following associations (which, as a rule are set in bold type both in the transliterations and translations), the texts of the quoted omens are given both in transliteration and transcription, one after the other.

[43] Brown 2000: 130–131, after Lévi-Strauss 1966: 149.

[44] Compare Brown 2000: 139–157 and esp. 151–152.

[45] See Brown 2000: esp. 132.

even through growing up to become an adult member of a society, as part of the upbringing or home training. The underlying principle of this assumption is that those simple elements of the *protases* discussed below are in fact—to use a term borrowed from semiotics—(mostly rather simple) indexical signs.[46] That is, they concern the correlation between signifier and signified and thus they signal the presence of their objects (the signified, appearing in the apodosis). For (the most common) example, smoke is an index of fire, or dark clouds are an index of rain/storm. As it can be seen, an index doesn't resemble the object or concept being represented—it resembles something that implies the (existence of) this object or concept. As such, it requires contextualization and conventionality—thus, most correlations between signifier and signified in and index have to be learned. As we all have to learn at some point that, for example, a red stoplight is an index for stop, or that smoke indexes fire, the inhabitants of Mesopotamia had to learn as well, mostly during their childhood, that the lion or the wild bull are the strongest, fiercest animals and as such, they may signify their king, or that matted hair is the signifier of mourning—and it is perhaps the last example which reflects at best that actually all these concepts are and were cultural constructions.

Of course, upon reading the examples quoted in this chapter one has to bear in mind that at this point we'll strict ourselves to reveal only this basic code system on the inner-omen level—and thus later on, upon expanding further levels of interpretation, we will get back to some of the omens cited in here, especially to those which form part of SAG ITI NU.TIL.LA, to analyse them in detail from different angles.

Association based on binary oppositions

The most well-known divinatory principles are based on paradigmatic oppositions, such as right–left, below–above, etc., where the various localizations are given positive or negative values. For example, if a negative sign, such as an anomaly in itself appears on the left side (i.e. on the side of the enemy = *pars hostilis*), the sign is favourable, but appearing on the right side (*pars familiaris,* on „our" side) it is unfavourable.[47] Of

[46] Applying the typology of Charles S. Peirce, one of the founders of semiotics, who distinguished three types of signs on the basis of their relation to the represented object: icon, index and symbolic sign (Peirce 1955: esp. 102–103). This typology, although applied to cuneiform signs, was already used by many Assyriologists, see inter alia Michalowski–Cooper–Gragg 1996; and more recently Crisostomo 2014: 7–9.

[47] This phenomenon was discovered quite early, see e.g. Jastrow 1914: 19–20; and for a more detailed and recent discussion Leichty 1970: 24–25 (in connection with the *Šumma izbu* omens); Starr 1983: esp. 10, and 18–24; as well as Guinan 1996; and more recently Brown 2000; de Zorzi 2014: 155–164, with numerous examples and detailed analysis of such *izbu*-omens.

course, in case of omens using such binary oppositions the semantic link between *protasis* and *apodosis* is also determined by further associations, which concern the specific content, thus binary oppositions are limited to the above paradigms, giving positive or negative values to the interpretations. The following sign-pair concerning division, which has evident negative connotations, is an excellent example of the opposite meaning of left side and right side, that is, the left–right symbolism:[48]

BE *iz-bu* GEŠTU 15-*šú pa-ar-sà-at* TÙR BIR-*ah*
šumma izbu uzun ***imittišu*** *parsat* ***tarba□u šû*** *issappah*
BE *iz-bu* GEŠTU 150-*šú pa-ar-sà-at* TÙR BI DAGAL-*iš* TÙR KÚR BIR-*ah*
šumma izbu uzun ***šumēlišu*** *parsat tarba□u šû irappiš* ***tarba□ nakri*** *issappah*
If the **right** ear of the izbu is divided, **the cattle pen will scatter**,
If the **left** ear of the izbu is divided, **the cattle pen will expand**, the **cattle pen of the enemy will scatter.**

(*Šumma izbu* XI 3–4)

As it can be seen, the appearance of a negative sign (or anomaly) in "our side" was considered negative, while the same sign in the "enemy's side" generated a positive interpretation. It is an absolute principle based on the essentially binary nature of Mesopotamian divination, and detectable in each sub-branches of divination. In case of *Šumma izbu* omens, however, as E. Leicthy already observed, "a further refinement of this principle resulted in two ominous features on the right side being good and two ominous features on the left side being bad".[49]

BE SAL Ù.TU-*ma* 2 GEŠTUG^{II}-*šú ina* 15 GAR.MEŠ-*ma šá* 150 NU GÁL
šumma sinništu ulidma 2 uznāšu ina imitti šaknāma ša šumēli lā ibašši
DINGIR.MEŠ *šab-su-tu*$_4$ *ana* KUR GUR.MEŠ-*nim-ma* KUR DAG *ne-eh-ta*$_5$ TUŠ-*ab*
ilnu šabsūtu ana māti iturrūnimma mātu šubta nēhta uššab
If a woman gives birth and (the foetus) has two **ears on the right** and none on the left
The angry gods will return to the land and the land will live in peace

BE SAL Ù.TU-*ma* 2 GEŠTUG^{II}-*šú ina* 150 GAR.MEŠ-*ma šá* 15 NU GÁL
šumma sinništu ulidma 2 uznāšu ina šumēli šaknāma ša imitti lā ibašši
GALGA KUR BIR-*ah*
milik māti issappah
If a woman gives birth and (the foetus) has **two ears on the left** and none on the right
the advise of the land will be unheeded

[48] This Š*umma izbu* entry, as a classic example was already cited and treated in Guinan 1996: 8.
[49] Leichty 1970: 7; also cited by Guinan 1996: 6.

(*Šumma izbu* III 18–19)[50]

Similar principles of interpretation related to binary logic are observable in case of the above–below opposition as well, where "above" is associated with unfavourable, and "below" with favourable *apodoses*.[51] The classic example of this principle is the very beginning of the terrestrial omen series *Šumma ālu* ("If a city"):

DIŠ URU *ina me-le-e* GAR
šumma ālu ina mēlê šakin
DÚR.A ŠÀ URU BI NU DÙG.GA
āšib(ū) libbi āli šuātu ul i□ābb(ū)
If a city is set on a height,
as for the inhabitant(s), (the mood of) that city will be depressed.

DIŠ URU *ina muš-pa-li* GAR
šumma ālu ina mušpali šakin
ŠÀ URU BI DÙG.GA
libbi āli šuātu i□âb
If a city is situated in a depression
(the mood of) that city will be elevated

(*Šumma ālu* I 1–2)[52]

Accordingly, in the following sign-pair from *Šumma izbu,* if the abnormality involves the upper lip of the foetus (which basically bears negative connotation), the *apodosis* is favourable, in the opposite case however, it will be unfavourable, based on the same considerations:

BE SAL Ù.TUD-*ma* NUNDUN-*su* AN.TA KI.TA U_5
šumma sinništu ulidma šapassu ***elîtu šaplīta irkab***
SIG_5 GAR-*ši*
dumqu iššakkanši
BE SAL Ù.TUD-*ma* NUNDUN-*su* KI.TA AN.TA U_5
šumma sinništu ulidma šappassu ***šaplītu elîta irkab***
lu-úp-nu É LÚ DIB-*bat*
lupnu *bīt amēli* ***i□abbat***

[50] Also cited by de Zorzi 2011: 52.
[51] See Guinan 1989.
[52] See Freedman 1998: 26–27 (transliteration and translation with commentary), and for the discussion of this omen pair: Guinan 1989: 231.

If a woman gives birth, and the child's **upper lip covers (lit.: rides on) the lower lip,** (the woman) **will be in luck.**
If a woman gives birth, and the child's **lower lip covers (lit.: rides on) the upper lip**, that man's house **will be overwhelmed by poverty**.

(*Šumma izbu* III 40–41)[53]

Numerical symbolism

As we have already seen, even the symbolic value of the simplest numbers, such as that of the number two may vary within the various disciplines—that is, they rather form part of the disciplinary code, discussed in the next sub-chapter. For example, seemingly the doubling of the essential features or zones of the liver (also see below) has a general positive connotation in extispicy:

šum-ma na-ap-la-às-tum i-šu
šumma naplastam īšu
i-lum i-na ni-qi a-we lim i-zi-iz
ilum ina niqi awīlim izziz
If it has (ONE) View[54]
The god will accept (lit. stand) the man's sacrifice

šum-ma
šumma [šittā] naplasātum
ana awīlim ilum zanûm iturram
If it has TWO Views
The angered (personal?) god will return to the man

(AO 9066 1–4)[55]

šum-ma pa-da-nu-um ša-ki-in
šumma padānum šakin
i-lum ki-bi-is a-we-lim ú-še-še-er
ilum kibis awelim ušeššer
If the Path is there
the god will direct the course of the man

šum-ma pa-da-nu ši-na
šumma padānu šinā
a-li-ik ha-ar-ra-[nim] ha-ra-an-šu [i]-ka-aš-ša-ad

[53] See de Zorzi 2014: 135, who also cites this example.
[54] The "View" (IGI.BAR) is an alternative denomination of the Presence (*manzāzu*, see below), which occurs in the southern Old Babylonian extispicy compendia. See Jeyes 1989: 53, with the discussion of the present example.
[55] Cf. Winitzer 2006: 565, and recently Winitzer 2017: 411.

ālik harrānim harrānšu ikaššad
If there are two Paths
the one who is going on a campaign will reach its goal

(YOS X 11 I 1–4)[56]

Generally, the doubling of either zones or fortuitous marks seems to accentuate, and therefore the doubling of certain fortuitous marks (Chapter II.2.) with general negative connotation appearing on or pointing towards "our side" generates even more negative interpretations[57]—quite in contrast with the above discussed rule observable in *Šumma izbu* omens, see, for example:

šumma ina šumēl nīri kakku
butuqtum ibbattaq
If in the left of the Yoke there is (ONE) weapon
The bank will be breached

šumma ina šumēl nīri kakkū šinā šaknū
ina libbi mātim šinā nēšū innadarūma mātam ikkalū
If in the left of the Yoke there are TWO weapons
In the midst of the land two lions will go on a rampage and will consume the land

(YOS X 42 I 24–27)[58]

Here the weapon mark (see Chapter III.2.2) which symbolises warfare and thus the destructive power of armed forces is situated on the left side of a permanent feature (the Yoke which, according to the suggestion of U. Jeyes, may symbolize cities,[59] see however, Chapter III.2.2 "*nīru*" of the present study), that is, on the side of the enemy. Although the present entries are not that explicit, according to the disciplinary code of extispicy the weapon is unfavourable for the side towards it is pointed, therefore, as the negative outcome suggest, in our case they should pointed towards right.

The case of number three is even more complex—and it will be detailed in the course of the outline of the disciplinary code of extispicy. Actually, we can only define one such number which has a universal symbolic value—detectable in each discipline— it is the

[56] This omen-pair was already discussed by Jeyes 1989: 55; see also Winitzer 2006: 569, and Winitzer 2017: 413–414.
[57] See already Jeyes 1983: 23.
[58] This pair, was also discussed by A. Winitzer, however, he focused solely on the numerical sequence and associations, see Winitzer 2006: 570–571.
[59] Jeyes 1989: 71.

number four, which signifies totality.[60] It is evident, on the one hand, from the several numerical sequences of omen *protases* (in various compendia) whose final entry concerns the occurrence of four items, conveying, thereby, the sense of finality.[61] On the other hand, the interpretations of such final entries also represent the concept of totality, as in the following *Šumma izbu* omens[62] (our first entry will be treated in Chapter III as well):

DIŠ U_8 UR.MAH Ù.TU-*ma* 4 SI.MEŠ-*šú ina* 15 *u* 150 GAR.MEŠ
šumma lahru nēša ulidma 4 qarnātušu ina imitti u šumēli šaknā
NUN *kib-ra-a-tú* EN-*el* (var. BAD-*el*)
rubû kibrāti ibêl
If an ewe gives birth to a lion and it has 4 horns on the right and the left
The prince will rule the four quarters

(*Šumma izbu* V 49)

DIŠ *iz-bu* 4 IGI.MEŠ-*šú*
šumma izbu 4 īnātušu
NUN *ma-li-ki* TUK *kiš-šú-tú* EN-*el*
rubû mālikī irašši kiššūta ibêl

If an *izbu* has four eyes
The prince will have advisors, he will rule the totality

(*Šumma izbu* X 78)

Synonym-based and indexical associations

In the simplest terms, *protasis* and *apodosis* can be associated semantically, under the law of similarity, either by representing the same concept or the very same object. In the following omen the foetus of the *protasis*, riding on his brother's back is associated with struggle for the throne, the ruler's oppression of the rival, under the law of similarity:

BE *iz-bu* 2-*ma* ŠEŠ UGU ŠEŠ *rak-bu*
šumma izbu šinama ***ahu eli ahi rakbu***
taš-nin-tu AŠ.TE AŠ.TE *i-dar-ri-is*
tašnintu ***kussû kussâ idarris***

If two *izbu*s (are born), and one **brother rides on (the back of) the other**,

[60] On this association see already de Zorzi 2011: 65 (*Šumma izbu*); Winitzer 2006: 585–595, and Winitzer 2017: 420–431 (extispicy).
[61] See in more detail Winitzer 2006 and 2017: ibid.
[62] These examples were also discussed by de Zorzi 2011: 65.

rivalry; **one throne will overthrow the other**.

(*Šumma izbu* VI 31)

Similarly, in the following, Middle Babylonian liver omen the correlation between the shape of the "station" (KI.GUB, Akkadian *manzāzu*)[63] and the *apodosis* is so clear that actually there is no further need for explanation:[64]

BE [SUHUŠ? (*išid*)] ⌈KI.GUB⌉(*manzāzi*) *ki-ma* ***zi-qit zuqaqīpi*** (GÍR.TAB) *ik-pu-up*
šumma išid manzāzi kīma ***ziqit zuqaqīpi*** *ikpup*
NUN (*rubâ*) GÍR.TAB (***zuqaqīpu) i-za-qí-[su***]
rubâ ***zuqaqīpu izaqqissu***

If the [base?] of the station curves around like a **scorpion's sting**
the prince will be **stung by a scorpion**

(MS 3176/2 15)[65]

Beside such evident cases when the same animal appears both in *protasis* and *apodosis*, and as such, it can be considered as an icon in semiotic terms, there are several, culturally conditioned notions (observable in the omen corpora and in other genres, for example, in literary texts as well) which connect certain animals with definite objects or ideas. This simple "animal symbolism"[66] which appears rather prominently in *Šumma izbu* was already investigated by N. de Zorzi,[67] so here we will only recall a few, selected examples.

Perhaps the most common "iconic" animal is the lion, which can be associated with royalty, royal power, and military strength.[68]

BE SAL Ù.TU-*ma* GEŠTUG UR.MAH GAR
šumma sinništu ulidma uzun nēši šaknat
LUGAL KALAG.GA *ina* KUR GÁL-*ši*

[63] The "station" is a crease or groove on the left lobe of the liver. For the discussion of the specific terminology and discipline-related code-system of liver divination see the second part of this chapter).

[64] For similar, simple associations see also Starr 1983: 9–10; and Noegel 2002: 172.

[65] CUSAS 18 No. 33, line 15 (= George 2013: 233); for a brief discussion of this omen see already George 2010: 330.

[66] We consciously avoid to use the term "symbol" in these cases, since symbols are at the opposite end from indexes: there is no logical connection between a symbol and what it represents, see inter alia Peirce 1955: 102–103.

[67] See de Zorzi 2011: 61–62; de Zorzi 2014: 157 (discussion with examples) and 285 (English summary); and currently, regarding the Tigunānum-omens see de Zorzi 2017: 133–138.

[68] Of course, this is far from culture specific. Although lions are currently found in the wild only in Africa and India, they have been depicted in textual and visual arts all over the world, since, as considered the strongest and mightiest creatures (actually, "kings of the beasts"), they have been recognised throughout human civilisation as icons of power, strength, and kingship—regardless to historical time and space. On the king–lion association in Mesopotamia see Watanabe 2002: 42–56; and on the king-as-lion motif in the Hebrew Bible see Strawn 2005: 174–184. On lions associated with surpassing strength and power in omen texts (in general) see George 2013: 61; while for the specific leonine imagery in *izbu*-omens see de Zorzi 2014: 157–162.

šarru dannu ina māti ibbašši

If a woman gives birth and (the foetus) has the ear of a **lion**
There will be a **strong king** in the land

(*Šumma izbu* III 1)

BE *iz-bu* SAG.DU UR.MAH GAR
šumma izbu qaqqad nēši šakin
NUN LUGAL-*út kiš-su-tú* DAB-*at*
rubû šarrūt kiššūti i□abbat

If the *izbu* has the head of a **lion**
the **prince** will seize **universal kingship**

(*Šumma izbu* VII 1)

A further animal which can be connected with the notions of strength and royal power in Mesopotamia is the bull,[69] which can be associated with warfare and the defeat of the enemy as well, and which is another common protagonist in omen *protases* (especially in *Šumma izbu*):

BE SAL GU_4 Ù.TU
šumma sinništu alpa ulid
LUGAL ŠÚ *ina* KUR GÁL-*ši*
šar kiššati ina māti ibbašši

If a woman gives birth to a **bull**
the **king of the universe** will rule (lit.: will be in) the land

(*Šumma izbu* I 9)

BE U_8 GU_4 Ù.TU
šumma lahru alpa ulid
NUN ^{GIŠ}TUKUL.MEŠ-*šú* UGU ^{GIŠ}TUKUL KÚR-*šú* ŠEŠ.MEŠ
rubû kakkūšu eli kakkī nakrišu imarrirū

If an ewe gives birth to a **bull**
the **weapons of the prince will prevail** over the weapons of the enemy

(*Šumma izbu* V 123)

UD SAL *iz-ba ul-dam-ma* GÌR.MEŠ-*šu ša* GU_4 SAG.DU-*su*
šumma sinništu izba uldamma šēpāšu ša alpi qaqqassu

[69] Cf. Watanabe 2002: 57–64; with de Zorzi 2011: 62; and currently de Zorzi 2017: 135.

ša **UR.MAH** SIG_5 EN-*ni* ^{d}IŠKUR ME LUGAL-*tim iš-ši-u*
ša nēši damiq bēlni ^{d}*Adad ana šarrūtim iššiu*
ki-ma PÌRIG KUR.KUR *i-kal* GIM ^{d}IŠKUR *ir-ta-na-hi-i*□
kīma nēši mātāti ikkal kīma ^{d}*Adad irtanahhi*□

If a woman gives birth to an *izbu* and its feet are those of a bull, its head
that of a lion, it is favourable, Adad will raise our lord to kingship
like a lion he will devour the lands, like Adad he will lay everywhere waste

(CUSAS 18 20: §39, rv. 6'–8')[70]

As in case of lions, here, in fact, we are also dealing with a so to say universal concept, the traces of which are detectable in each and every culture during antiquity (and even earlier periods as well). Wild bulls were among the largest, strongest and most successfully reproductive animals with which the ancients were familiar, and thus they became primal models for male power and fertility—and these associations were above all applied to their rulers—both human and divine.[71] Our last example, originating from the specific, local corpus of the northern Mesopotamian city Tigunānum,[72] represents and interesting combination of the indexical signs of royalty: both bull and lion allude to the emergence of a victorious ruler who, since the bull was the special animal (and as such, an indexical sign) of the storm god Adad, "like Adad, will lay everywhere waste". The Akkadian verb *rahā*□*u* may denote both the typical behaviour of bulls and equids ("to trample, kick, destroy") and the destructive actions of the storm god ("to flood, devastate")—thus it is apt to describe the destruction of the enemy lands by the king, who could also be envisioned as a "goring wild bull" in literary texts.[73]

Other animals, however, bear less positive connotations. One such creature is the dog, which can be associated with pestilence, discord, strife, and death:[74]

BE SAL $UR.GI_7$ Ù.TU
šumma sinništu kalba ulid
EN É UŠ-*ma* É-*su* BIR-*ah*
bēl bīti imâtma bīssu issappah

[70] See George 2013: 124; and the brief discussion of this omen in de Zorzi 2017: 134.

[71] See the detailed, cross-cultural analysis of these concepts (with case studies and further literature on the ancient concepts associated with bulls) in Schwabe 1994: 37–47.

[72] The Tigunānum texts came to light through illicit diggings and were dispersed among various private collections (see George 2013: 101–110; and de Zorzi 2017: esp. 126–127). As for the proposed location of the city itself see George 2013: 101 ("somewhere on the Tigris downstream Dyarbakır, probably near modern Bismil"), now with George 2017: 98–100.

[73] See CAD R 69–72 (sub. *rahā*□*u*); and cf. George 2013: 62; with de Zorzi 2017: 135. For *Adad irahhi*□ in omens see Schwemer 2001: 63 with note 64 and 687–694. On the "goring wild bull" imagery see Watanabe 2002: 61–62.

[74] See de Zorzi 2011: 62; and a more detailed discussion in de Zorzi 2014: 160–162.

UŠ$_4$ KUR MAN-*ni*
☐*ēm māti išanni*
DINGIR GU$_7$
ilu ikkal

If a woman gives birth to a **dog**
The owner of the house will **die** and his house will be **scattered**,
The **political situation** in the land **will change**,
Pestilence (lit. "the god will consume")

(*Šumma izbu* I 7)

The original translation of the second element of the apodosis by Erle Leichty was: "the land will go mad", however, he also notes that the expression *'☐ēm māti išanni'* is rather problematic in this context. The above interpretation[75] is only one possible variant, the *apodosis* could also refer to some kind of defiance, rebellion, since the basic meaning of the compound ☐*ēmu šanû* is: "to change one's mind, to reconsider a decision."[76]

One also has to remark that although dogs in Mesopotamian culture were all at once the attending animals of the healing goddess Gula (as it is traditionally assumed, due to the healing effects of dogs licking wounds),[77] their association with death is again a cross-cultural phenomenon—originating, presumably, from the simple observation that wild canines kill and eat people. As such, they became "indices" of death and dismemberment[78]—and consequently, the harbingers of death.[79] It is also worthy to note that, as it is already observed by N. de Zorzi, the teratological omens from the city of Tigunānum clearly connect dogs with *habiru*s, appearing in the apodoses of dog-related omens.[80] In a variety of second millennium sources through the ancient Near East the

[75] It follows Frahm 2010: 11.

[76] Leichty 1970: 32, in note 6. According to the above, N. de Zorzi for instance translates the *apodosis* in question, appearing in other series as well, differently: "the opinion of the land will change." See de Zorri 2011: 62; and de Zorzi 2014: 160.

[77] See Böck 2014: 38 with previous literature.

[78] For example, it is highly probable that the prominent funerary role of the Egyptian god Anubis evolved from the related fear of dismemberment after death which, as it hamstrung the proper funeral, and deprived the deceased one from the possibility of an otherworldly existence and thus led to the annihilation of the soul. Cf. also the fear from the dismemberment of the dead by semi-domesticated pariah dogs in Israel, as it is reflected by the following verses which reflect the same idea—this kind of faith was considered as one of the worst kinds of death and as such it suited well with the language of curses, as in 1Kings 14: 11: The members of Jeroboam's family who die in the city will be eaten by dogs, or in 1Kings 21: 23 And regarding Jezebel, the LORD says, 'Dogs will eat Jezebel's body at the plot of land in Jezreel'.

[79] On the evolution and remarkable uniformity of the general ancient concepts about dogs see again the overview of Schwabe 1994: 47–48.

[80] de Zorzi 2017: 136–137, with further (extensive) literature on the Habiru.

term *habiru* refers, in general, to a category of people who lived in the margins of society (fugitives, exiles, and generally, outlaws)—and thus, they could be compared, again, to wild canines roaming in the steppe and lurking on the boundaries of civilised settlements. Therefore, it can be concluded that the indexical value of dogs in omen texts can be connected to the overall negative connotations of the infernal wild or semi-wild creatures—the latter are also well reflected by the use of this animal in derogatory metaphors referring to traitors, rebels, or the "enemy" in general, attested through the ancient Near East over the millennia.[81]

Although these simple associations relating to various animals may serve as the starting point upon defining the basic content/protagonist of the apodosis, one also has to bear in mind that they can be affected by other indexical signs of the simple code—as the following omen entry clearly reflects. Our next example is also a relatively often cited omen of *Šumma izbu* because it represents so to say at first glance observable, various associative methods and as such, became an illustration of "multi-valent play", that is, the joint use of differing associative techniques.[82] Of course, in the light of the present discussion of the code-systems or levels of interpretation which work all at once together and constitute a logical system, such features cannot be considered as extraordinary any more, but rather, as usual and regular, since each code-system has a specific role upon the interpretation/generation of each omen apodosis—in other words, actually each and every omen represents "multi-valent play". Anyway, at present the following example (which will also be discussed under the "phonetic similarities" which concern the written code) bears relevance because of its illustrative, culturally conditioned semantic correlation:[83]

[BE] U_8 UR.MAH Ù.TU-*ma ma-li-i na-ši*
šumma lahru ***nēša*** *ulidma* ***malî naši***
BAL *ma-li-i* KUR *ma-la-a i-na-áš-si* ZI [KÚR]
palē ***malî*** *mātu* ***malâ inašši*** *tīb* [*nakri*]

If an ewe gives birth to a **lion**, and it has **matted hair**,
It is the time of **grief**; the land will **fall into mourning**; attack of an enemy.

(*Šumma izbu* V 39)

[81] See *inter alia* Villard 2000: 246–247; and currently de Zorzi 2017: 137, with further literature.
[82] Compare Brown 2000: 138.
[83] This entry was also mentioned by Erle Leichty (Leichty 1970: 6), but only as an example of "word-play". For symbolic interpretation see Noegel 2007: 17, with note 56.

Although we may say that the appearance of the lion indicates that the *apodosis* concerns the king (as the king stands for, and thus personifies the whole country), the basic association of *Šumma izbu* V 39 was built upon the two different, but interconnected meaning of the word *malû*—since in the Mesopotamian cultural milieu "matted, uncared- for hair" counted as the unambiguous sign (index) of mourning.[84] The latter example further clarifies the already surmised difficulty in interpretation, that is, the culture-specific nature of essential conceptual associations. There may be numerous correlations between *protases* and *apodoses* which were quite clear to the inhabitants of ancient Mesopotamia (e.g. matted, uncared-for hair linked to mourning), but mean nothing to us today. This must be taken into account under all circumstances, before we state—if no point of connection is found—that the scribe "randomly" assigned an *apodosis* to a *protasis* from the "stock."[85]

This is also true in the case of the associations concerning body parts—a topic which, relating to *Šumma izbu* omens, was also throughoutly discussed by N. de Zorzi (under the sub-title "The Symbolism of the Body").[86] Here, again, one has to bear in mind that all the concepts with which we will meet, whatever self-evident they seem to be in certain cases, are culturally conditioned and learned constructions.

It is well reflected by the following example, in which the interpretation of the birth of a headless puppy concerns, conforming to the already discussed indexical value of dogs in the Tigunānum omens, the Habiru—more specifically, their chief:

ša habiri ukilšu ša ana pānišunu illaku ihalliq
A chief of the Habiru who leads them will go missing

(CUSAS 18 Appendix No. xvii § 2')[87]

As it is well reflected even by this single entry, according to the "Babylonian language of signs",[88] head and neck in an omen *protasis* allude, as the upper parts of the body, to the king, the head of the country, and royal power in general. As for *izbu* omens, the malformations of the head would thus define the protagonist(s) of the *apodosis*:[89]

[84] For comparison see the following SB commentary text from Uruk, presumably written on tablet 43 of the *Šumma ālu* series (see Weiher 1983: 158): *[... ma-la]-a* ÍL-*ši : ma-la-a : bi-ki-tu$_4$: ma-la-a :* ⌜*ki?*⌝ ☐*a-ri x* [...] wearing matted hair; **matted hair = mourning**; matted hair (is a synonym for): binding*?*... [...] (SpTU 2 36 Obv. 10). This entry was already treated by J. H. Tigay as an example of Mesopotamian "parable, allegory, or symbol," (see Tigay 1983: 178) and see also Noegel 2002: 172.

[85] For comparison: Leichty 1970: 24–25; as well as Starr 1983: 9.

[86] de Zorzi 2011: 54–59.

[87] Also discussed by de Zorzi 2017: 130.

[88] George 2010: 331.

[89] The following examples were also cited by de Zorzi 2011: 55.

BE U_8 UR.MAH Ù.TU SAG.DU-*su* NU GÁL
šumma lahru nēša ulidma qaqqassu lā ibašši
mu-ut NUN
mūt rubê

If an ewe gives birth to a lion an it has **no head**
Death of the prince.

(*Šumma izbu* V 10 = 85)

BE *iz-bu* GÚ-*su u* SAG.DU-*su e-pi-iq*
šumma izbu kiššāssu u qaqqassu epiq
NUN *ga-me-ru-tú* DU
rubû gāmirūta illak

If the **neck and the head** of the *izbu* are **solid**
The **prince** will **become powerful**

(*Šumma izbu* VII 78)

As for the various parts of the head, one may observe some further, overall principles. One should take notice, among others, of the indexical value attributed to **hair**—either on the head or on other parts of the body. The growing of body hair, as well as that of beard and moustache is a clear sign of maturity and manliness (and consequently virility, strength, and power)—it is enough to recall the famous letter of Šamši-Addu in which he brings his son to book for his , so to say, unmanly behaviour, asking: "Are you a child, aren't you an adult *(ul e□lēt)*? Don't you have hair on your cheek *(ul šārtum ina lētika)*?[90]

Accordingly, in CUSAS: Appendix No. xvi § 1 the premature growing of hair on the chest of (an otherwise normal) male foetus is connected with the acquiring of fame at war *(šumam ippeš)*. This example can be complemented with the liver omen CUSAS Appendix No. iv § 2, in which the hair grows from the top of the Shepherd (the gall bladder, a feature which can be connected with the king, see below, in the discussion of the disciplinary code of extispicy)—the interpretation of which concerns the blessing of the king by the storm god Adad. By the same token, one should also mention an unpublished omen from Tigunānum (the current whereabouts of which are unknown),[91] according to which the growing of hair on the left side of the head (that is, on the enemy's side), on the left hand, and on the left jaw of a male foetus signifies the triumph of the enemy.

[90] ARM I 73: 43–44 (= LAPO 16 29). See Recently Cooper 2017: 119; and de Zorzi 2017: 133.
[91] Courtesy P.-A. Beaulieu, encountered in de Zorzi 2017: 132 with note 72.

As for *protases* concerning the (absence, multiple presence, etc.) of **ears** one may observe that they are often linked with apodoses which concern the (broad) semantic field of hearing.[92] Such apodoses may refer to the advisors of the king, to the consequence of advises, or even rebellion (which may allude, in a broader sense, to the lack of communication or "hearing"). The following example was already cited during the discussion of the left/right opposition—now, we are able to complement it with the observation that because the doubling (which bears positive connotation) appears on the enemy's side, the omen is unfavourable for "us", and since it concerns the doubling of ears, it concerns the advise of the land:

BE SAL Ù.TU-*ma* 2 GEŠTUG^{II}-*šú ina* 150 GAR.MEŠ-*ma šá* 15 NU GÁL
šumma sinništu ulidma 2 uznāšu ina šumēli šaknāma ša imitti lā ibašši
GALGA KUR BIR-*ah*
milik māti issappah
If a woman gives birth and (the foetus) has **two ears on the left** and none on the right
the **advise** of the land **will be unheeded**

(*Šumma izbu* III 18–19)[93]

The same principles are reflected in the following omen as well:

BE *iz-bu ina* ŠÀ GEŠTUG-*šú šá* 15 GEŠTUG MAN-*ma* GAR
šumma izbu ina libbi uznišu ša imitti uznu šanītuma šaknat
NUN *ma-li-ku* TUK-*ši*
rubû mālikī irašši

If the *izbu* has a second ear inside its right ear
The prince will have **advisors**

(*Šumma izbu* XI 120)

Considering the *protases* concerning **eyes**, it can be observed that the related *apodoses* can often be connected to water management—and consequently, the prosperity of the land.[94] As it was also supposed by N. de Zorzi, one may associate on tears in these cases, however, it seems more probable that this seemingly "universal" association of the simple code is in fact related to the Akkadian designation of the eyes *(īnu)* which has a secondary meaning, namely: "spring".[95]

[92] See in more detail de Zorzi 2011: 56.
[93] Also cited by de Zorzi 2011: 52.
[94] See already Glassner 1984: 34–35; and recently de Zorzi 2011: 56.
[95] See CAD I/J 157 (sub. *īnu,* mng. e). This possibility was also raised by N. de Zorzi, although only in a footnote (de Zorzi 2011: 56 note 59). The following examples were also cited by de Zorzi 2011: 56.

BE SAL Ù.TU-*ma* IGI.MEŠ-*šú* NU GÁL.MEŠ
šumma sinništu ulidma īnāšu lā ibaššâ
KUR SU.GU$_7$ **IGI**-*mar*
mātu sunqa immar

If a woman gives birth and it has **no eyes**
The land will experience **thirst**

(*Šumma izbu* II 48)

BE SAL Ù.TU-*ma* IGI 15-*šú* NU GÁL
šumma sinništu ulidma īn imittišu lā ibašši
ÍD NUN IDIM-*ir-ma* KUR KAR DU
nakru nār rubê isekkirma mātu arbūta illak

If a woman gives birth and (the foetus) has **no right eye**
The enemy will **dam up the river** of the prince and the **land will become waste**

(*Šumma izbu* II 47)

Proceeding further (and actually downwards, according to the *ištu muhhi adi šēpē* principle), protases in which the **mouth** (or lips, teeth, or the tongue) appears can usually be connected to interpretations which concern eating (or famine) and speaking (and consequently: lying, revealing secrets, or rebellion).[96]

BE SAL Ù.TU-*ma* KA-*šú pi-hi*
šumma sinništu ulidma pûšu pehi
URU BAL-*ma* EN-*šú* GAZ KUR *a-šib-tu$_4$* KUR-*ád*
ālu ibballakitma bēlšu idâk mātu āšibtu ikkaššad
BURU$_{14}$ KUR KÚR GU$_7$ KI.MIN SU.GU$_7$ GÁL-*ši*
ebūr māti nakru ikkal KI.MIN sunu ibbašši

If a woman gives birth and the **mouth** (of the foetus) is **obstructed**
A city will **rebel** and kill its lord, the settled land will be conquered
the enemy will **consume the harvest** of the land, ditto: there will be **famine**

(*Šumma izbu* III 38)[97]

Considering some other parts of the body, further general allusions can be detected. The **abdomen (and the intestines)**, for instance, can be connected with the notion

[96] See de Zorzi 2011: 56 with note 60 (on the similar associations concerning the tongue in the physiognomical series).
[97] Also treated in de Zorzi 2011: 567.

of food, and thus signify prosperity—or, controversially, the lack of prosperity and famine,[98] as in the following examples:

BE SAL Ù.TU-*ma* ŠÀ-*šú pe-ti-ma ir-ri* NU TUK
šumma sinništu ulidma libbašu petima irrī lā īšu
KUR SU.GU$_7$ IGI-*mar*
mātu sunqa immar

If a woman gives birth and **the abdomen (of the foetus) is open** and it **has no intestines**
The land will experience **famine**

(*Šumma izbu* III 64)

BE *iz-bu* GÚ-*su ina pa-pa-an* ŠÀ-*šú* GUR-*ma ir-ri-šú ina* KA-*šú ú-kal*
šumma izbu ina kišāssu ina papān libbišu itârma irrīšu ina pîšu ukâl
KUR BI NÍG.ŠU-*šá* GU$_7$
mātu šī būšaša ikkal

If the neck of the *izbu* turns towards its belly and it **holds its intestines in his mouth**
That land will **consume its possession**

(*Šumma izbu* VII 79')

Regarding further associations connected to body parts, one should recall the **genitals**—which, not quite surprisingly, allude to sexuality, reproduction, and to fertility and prosperity on the large scale:

BE SAL Ù.TU-*ma* GAL$_4$.LA NU TUK
šumma sinništu ulidma ūra lā išu
SU.GU$_7$ *u* MÍ.KALAG.GA KUR DAB-*at* EN É NU SI.SÁ
sunqu u dannatu māta i□abbat bēl bīti ul iššir

If a woman gives birth and (the foetus) has **no vulva**
Famine and hardship will seize the land, the owner of the house **will not prosper**

(*Šumma izbu* III 73)

The following omen conforms to the same ideas (breasts can be connected with fertility), however, it reveals some further possible notions regarding the sexual organs:

šum-ma ^{F}a-wi-il-tum iz-ba-am ul-dam-ma ^{F}sí-in-ni-iš$_7$ tu-ú-le-e-ša

[98] On these associations see already George 2010: 329; with de Zorzi 2011: 57–58.

ina sú-uh-si-ša ki-la-al-tu šu-uk-ku-na ù bi-i□-□ú-ur-šu
ina ir-ti-šu ša-ak-na<-at> ù iš-ku-um i-ša-a-ru-um ina ma-aš-ka-an
bi-i□-□ú-ri-ša ša-ak-na ša-am-nu-um^{MEŠ} di-iš-pu^{MEŠ} ša ina
ma-ti-i-ni il-li-ku i-ka-al-lu-<ú> ma-at na-ak-ri-ni
ša ki-ma ^{F}si-in-ni-iš$_{7}$-ti ha-ar-wu-ú be-la-e ka-ak-ka-am
da-an-na-am a-na pa-ni-šu i-na-aš-ši

If a woman gives birth to an *izbu* and it is female, its **nipples**
are both located on its crotch and its **vulva**
is located on its **chest**, and **testicle and penis** are located
where its vulva should be: the **oil and honey** that
have been flowing in our land **will stop flowing**. The land of our enemy,
that like a woman *harwū belae* (**we are raping?),**[99]
will raise at its fore a **mighty weapon**.

(CUSAS 18 20 §5, rv. 27'–33')

Here, the abnormal location of the nipples (in the genital region) signifies the loss of fertility.[100] However, as it also turns out from other teratological omens from Tigunānum, male organs may allude to masculine power, domination (and, in a somewhat Freudian manner to mighty wheapons):

kakkašu ša ramānišuma ibbalakkassuma ibâršu
His very own weapon will mutiny and rebel against him

(CUSAS 18 Appendix No. xvii §2)

Here, the displacement of penis and testicles from their normal position towards the navel signifies a rebellion agains the king, the rise of his own weapons against him. Although it is true that, as N. de Zorzi noted, "military power deserts the king, thereby »emasculating« him,"[101] this specific omen, in which the penis is explicitly associated with the weapon, recalls the disciplinary code of extispicy (see the next sub-chapter). According to the latter, during the interpretation of weapon marks the decisive factor is their orientation, that is, to which direction they point to. In our case the weapon clearly "points" towards the head, that is, towards the king.

At the same time, the female genital may represent oppression—and literally, forced penetration or intrusion. Thus, the appearance of a vagina on the chest may allude to

[99] *ha-ar-wu*V is presumably a Hurrian word which refers to sexual intercourse, see the commentary of A. R. George (in which he cites the other occurrences of the verb): George 2013: 122.
[100] Cf. also de Zorzi 2017: 131, who only partly cites this entry.
[101] De Zorzi 2017: 131.

the open, undefended state of the country, and the appearance of the male genitals in the place where the vulva should be (thus, again, a place which can be connected with the idea of oppression, penetration and conquest) betokens the rise of the enemy's power (and weapons). Such allusions are even more evident in the following entry:

šum-ma [F]a-wi-il-tum iz-ba-am ul-dam-ma [F]sí-in-ni-ša-at bi-i□-□u-ur-ša
šumma awīltum uldamma sinnišat bi□□ūrša
ina pu-ti-ša ša-ak-na<-at> qa-as-sà ša šu-me-li a-na i-mi-it-ti
ina pūtiša šaknat qāssa ša šumēli ana imitti
i-ís-hu-ur-ma ina re-eš a-hi-šu ša i-mi-i-ti iš-ku-un
ishurma ina rēš ahišu ša imitti iškun
ka-ak-ku da-an-nu-um ina mu-uh-hi-ni i-ka-aš-ša-ad-ma ù ma-a-[tam]
kakku dannum ina muhhini ikaššadma u ***mātam***
na-ak-ru ki-ma [F]si-in-ni-iš₇-ti i-né-e-ek
nakru kīma sinništi inêk
ù ku-us-sú-um be-lu-tu-um i-ir-ru-ub-šu
u kussûm bēlūtum irrubšu

If a woman gives birth to an *izbu* and it is female, its vulva
is located on its forehead, its left hand goes around to the right
and is located at the top of its right arm
A mighty weapon will overtake us and **the enemy**
will rape the land like a woman,
and throne and power will pass to him.

(CUSAS 18 20 §6 34'–39')

As the vulva appears on the head (which signifies the king and consequently the country as a whole), it betokens the conquest of the latter (as well as the appearance of the left hand on the right arm, which may allude to the defeat of our forces), and moreover, penetration to the land (which will be "raped like a woman").

Since it is a thoroughly discussed topic, the present overview of the various elements of the simple code does not aim to be exhaustive, thus for further associations regarding body parts and their absence, misplacement, various malformations, as well as the ideas connected to various features (dryness, fat, etc.), one should consult the exhaustive summary of N. de Zorzi.[102] However, although it was already mentioned that the latter mainly concerns our simple code, we should make some brief remarks, since certain

[102] De Zorzi 2011: esp. 54–66.

elements which were connected with general associations in her work are in fact originate from a disciplinary code—namely, that of extispicy. Such elements are the perforations[103] (which, according to the latter, allude to death—and will be discussed thoroughly in the following sub-chapter), bifurcations ("branches"), which have positive value (and relate to military success),[104] are also form part of the lore of extispicy, and finally, horns. The latter are, according to de Zorzi, "well-known symbols of royal and divine power, and convey the idea of aggression and conflict."[105] As we will see, the case and the associations concerning horns, which will be discussed in the following chapters in detail, are much more complex: in fact, they are based, again, on the disciplinary code of extispicy, by means, however, of certain mechanisms of the written code.

Conclusions

As it can be seen, these simple associations provide essential guidelines to the interpretation—or, more properly, to the generation of the *apodosis*. However, their possible content is limited: they may define whether the outcome of the encoded divine decision is good or bad, to whom this decision refers to (that is, the protagonist(s) of the *apodosis*), and at times, specific events (death, war, etc.) which will appear in the interpretation. Thus, to specify the latter's contents and moreover, to define it's exact wording, we have to move further and examine the next levels of interpretation: that is, the disciplinary and the written codes.

[103] De Zorzi 2011: 63.
[104] See de Zorzi 2011: 66.
[105] De Zorzi 2011: 55, with a further reference to Glassner 1984: 30–34.

2. **Disciplinary code**

In the present sub-chapter we will briefly discuss the technical terminology and the various rules of interpretation—together, referred to with the label "disciplinary code"—relating to the two most important divinatory genres, extispicy and celestial divination. That is, those specialized code-systems will be of interest in here which go beyond the already treated simple, general associations, and which had to be learned by the one who wished to be an expert in each of these specific arts of divination—in other words, who aimed to interpret correctly what was written by the gods on the sky, or on the exta of the sacrificial animal.

By way of introduction we should note that since the art of the seer *(bārûtu)* was studied and discussed by several eminent scholars and thus many excellent summaries were published concerning the specific terminology and the hermeneutic apparatus of this divinatory genre, we will restrict ourselves to the "basics": namely, to the lore of hepatoscopy, that is, liver divination, and we will only give a brief outline. This outline is in fact essential for our case—one should only consider that the most widely known field of expertise of the *bārûs*, who left a vast textual material upon as, concerns, essentially, various forms, marks, changes or malformations, etc. detectable on this organ. Actually, this very fact may foretoken that the disciplinary code of extispicy (and more strictly, of hepatoscopy) can be highly related to the technical code-system of *Šumma izbu*. And indeed, it was already noted that a close link can be observed between the "lexicon" of *Šumma izbu* and that of extispicy—to quote David Brown: "*izbu* does use technical terms common in extispicy. It would appear, then, that *izbu* was originally part of the wide repertoire of the »examiner« (extispicer) or *bārû*."[106] As we will see, this "close link" goes well beyond terminology. Our case study in Chapter IV will clearly demonstrate that having some idea of the disciplinary code of extispicy and it's basic associations, as well as of the commonest correlations which appear in the very same discipline in the written level (see II.3 conclusions) actually enables someone to properly "read" the most archaic parts of *Šumma izbu*. I would even venture to suppose that the technical code-system of the *Šumma izbu* omens of the second millennium was, in fact, *based on* that of extispicy.

Later, however, during the first millennium, the interpretation of *izbu*-omens "came to form part of the expertise of the celestial diviner, and perhaps also of the particularly

[106] Brown 2006: 92; and cf. De Zorzi 2010: 59.

highly qualified healer-seer"[107] *(āšipu)*. Perhaps, one may add: "as well"—since by the first millennium, the borders of certain disciplines, regarding, at least, the interpretation of observed omens *(oblativa)* became rather fluid.

As it can be read in the so-called Diviner's Manual the interpretation of terrestrial omens together with celestial omens formed part of the work of the *āšipu*, especially during, and as a mean of diagnosis. According to the Manual, a combination of omens concerning celestial and *ālu*-like (terrestial) phenomena are recommended for the expert to be examined together—since "sky and earth are related".[108] At this point one may also recall the so-called "Esoteric Commentary," a much later text which explicitly associates descriptions found in the teratological compendium with astronomical phenomena.[109] According to this commentary text, the *Šumma izbu*, the Diagnostic Handbook (SA.GIG*/sakikkû*) and the Physiognomical Collection (*Alamdimmû*) can be brought into connection with certain constellations, in other words: "the secrets of heaven and earth should be observed (together)"(*ni□irtu šamê u er□eti u□ur*).[110] But back to the Diviners Manual, it is also worthy of note that hemerologies, another field of the (later) expertise of the "scribes of *Enūma Anu Enlil*", are also recommended by the same text.[111] In view of the characteristics of the calendrical data of the Manual which, for example, states that at the beginning of the year the constellation ^{MUL}AŠ.GÁN played an important part in the process of intercalation—and thus reflects the Old Babylonian style astrolabe tradition, according to which the ideal rising of ^{MUL}AŠ.GÁN took place during the first month—D. Brown convincingly argued that the text can be dated to the period *before* the evident increase of the significance of celestial divination.[112] To quote Brown again, the Diviner's Manual "is perhaps as old as the Old Babylonian period, using as it does the Old Babylonian calendar, and suggests that before the Neo-Assyrian period celestial and hemerological divination were a concern of the *āšipu*."[113] However, by the

[107] Brown 2006: ibid.

[108] The text was published by A. Leo Oppenheim (Oppenheim 1974), for the quoted passage (in line 40) see op.cit: 200 (transliteration) and 204 (translation).

[109] For the edition of the text see: Biggs 1968; and for further commentaries: Böck 2000. The text can most likely be dated to the Persian era, but the temporal distribution of the similar, i.e. 5th century copy of the "esoteric/mystic" commentaries show that it might be traced back to (at least) Neo-Assyrian forerunners (for comparison see e.g. the scientific text involving the granaries of the Ekur (= I.NAM.GIŠ.HUR.AN.KI.A): Livingstone 1986, mainly 17, and see also note 52).

[110] LBAT 1601 Obv. 4., for translation of the above see: Böck 2000: 619; as well as Lenzi 2008: 165. The text hereinafter discusses astronomical phenomena which result in the birth of defined *izbu*s.

[111] On the use of hemerologies by the □*upšarrū* see Brown 2000: esp. 121–122, although one may interpose that hemerologies may have been relevant in each divinatory discipline if we suppose that the exact date of the observation of an ominous phenomenon was also had to be taken into consideration.

[112] See already Brown 2000: 120–122; *contra* Oppenheim, who dated the composition to the Neo-Assyrian period, see Oppenheim 1974: 209.

[113] Brown 2006: 93.

first millennium things had been changed, or more properly, reversed: the field and practise of observational-deductive divination was largely monopolised by the scribes of *Enūma Anu Enlil*, while the exorcists (and the lamentation priests) also participated in it—although in a smaller way. Moreover, it seems that the scope of the professional education of exorcists and astrologers adopted a reverse course, and in this respect it is also worthy of note that at times the Neo-Assyrian scribes of *Enūma Anu Enlil* may gave advice on apotropaic rituals in letters[114] and in reports[115] which suggests that the □*upšarrū* were (still) being trained in the arts of the exorcist during the late Neo-Assyrian period (c. 670 BCE). Such comprehensive divinatory knowledge may have reflected the elevated status of the scholars at the Neo-Assyrian court, and sheds light on the fact that the borders of the disciplines were at this time, and no doubt at other times as well, not as strict as they seem to be for us at first sight.[116] The scribes of *Enūma Anu Enlil* were seemingly also competent to interpret in fields we usually connect to the lore of the *āšipu*. This assumption can further be confirmed by the fact that we know of scholars who bore both titles.[117] These observations are, in fact, not at all recent, since in his article concerning Neo-Assyrian scholar scribes, A.L. Oppenheim already called attention to the fact that "the same experts report on and interpret celestial events as well as such ominous occurrences as the birth of abnormal animals, or incidents which are typical of the sort dealt with in the compendium called *Šumma ālu*," and that this "should prevent us from talking of them as »astrologers«. They are simply experts in all those fields of divination which are outside extispicy."[118] Of course, one should interject at this point that the sense of such "universal", or interdisciplinary divinatory knowledge may have led to some hidden traps—even to the unobservance or neglect of the strict disciplinary codes, as we will see in the case of the mentioned Marduk-šāpik-zēri, who allegedly mastered ("read") each and every discipline (see the Foreword), and who is often recalled as the role model of this well accomplished scholar type.[119] Anyway, according to the above discussed assumption, and to put it in other words, while an astrologer may have been fully competent to interpret such omens which belonged, by the Neo-Assyrian times, to the field of the exorcist, it does not worked back and forth, the

[114] E.g. SAA X 10.
[115] E.g. SAA VIII Nos. 22–23.
[116] On this matter, especially on the overlap of the various divinatory practices see already Rochberg-Halton 2000, as well as Noegel 2007: 27–35.
[117] See Pongratz-Leisten 1999: 18, with note 9; and Brown 2006: 93.
[118] Oppenheim 1969: 99; also quoted by Rochberg-Halton 2000: 361, and in note 7 of the present study.
[119] Cf. *inter alia* Rochberg-Halton 2000: ibid.

āšipu (with a single title) was not qualified for the complex investigation of celestial phenomena and the related textual material.

As for the case of i*zbu*-omens, and more specifically SAG ITI NU TIL.LA, it is quite telling that it was listed among such works in the "Catalogue of Texts and Authors" (*Alamdimmû* and *Sakikkû*) which, by Neo-Assyrian times, traditionally belonged to the lore of the *āšipu*s. However, in the light of the foregoings this fact does not bring us closer to identify, at least, the possible professional title of the unnamed author, since he could easily be an astrologer as well. Thus, in this case the throughout textual analysis remains our only tool and hope, and therefore in Chapter IV we will also discuss the detectable traces of disciplinary codes within the composition.

2.1. Extispicy

Extispicy is actually the oldest demonstrable form of divination in Mesopotamia, although we have only indirect and scanty evidence regarding its exact nature before the Old Babylonian times□since we have no omen texts or records of extispicy until the early OB period. Diviners, however, appear already in Early Dynastic profession lists□ referred to as ^{LÚ}MÁŠ.ŠU.GÍD(.GÍD) "one who reaches the hand (in)to the goat" (probably "he who inspects a goat's entrails") in Lu E from Ebla (24th century BCE),[120] and Lu C from Fāra and Abū □alabikh (c. 26th century BCE).[121] This allows us to presume that (some form of) extispicy was practised in southern Mesopotamia (and in neighbouring areas) in early Sumerian times, as it is also confirmed by the several literary compositions which refer to divination□with varying emphasis. It is enough to recall the most well-known examples: the two extispicies performed by Narām-Sîn in the *Curse of Akkade*,[122] those carried out by Gudea (Cylinder A xii 16□17 and xx 5), and those recalled by Šulgi (Šulgi B 132□133).[123] It is worthy of note that none of these passages mention or allude to any kind of written textual material related to divination.[124] However, since the first attested written extispicy omens reflect, in fact, the usual encodings of written divination, it is reasonable to suppose that the discipline was already fully developed by the time of the early Old Babylonian period.

[120] Archi 1984: TM.75.G.1488.

[121] Civil 1969: 1.3, viii 63, and 1.5 130. On the question of the exact function and the cultic setting of divination during the Early Dynastic period see Richardson 2010: 227.

[122] Lines 94–97, see Cooper 1983: 54–55 and 244.

[123] Usually translated as: *„I am a ritually pure interpreter of omens. I am the very Nintu (creator deity) of the collections (gìr-gen-na) of omens",* see ETCSL 2.4.2.02; as well as Castellino 1972; and Klein 1981. On the interpretation of the term *gìr-gen-na* as "methods" or "procedures" see Richardson 2006.

[124] Cf. Richardson 2006.

Therefore, although the earliest compendia are only attested in Akkadian, we cannot suppose that the lore of extispicy was some kind of a "Semitic invention."[125] Extispicy was mainly performed on goats or sheep, but extispicy of birds is also attested.[126] The extispicer was known as ^{LÚ}HAL or ^{LÚ}MÁŠ.ŠU.GÍD.GÍD in Sumerian, however, the Akkadian designation *bārû* "examiner" or "seer" may reflect a wider field of expertise.

Accordingly, during the Old Babylonian period the *bārû*s performed not only extispicies, but undertook all other forms of deductive divination then known. These included lecanomancy,[127] libanomancy,[128] and aleuromancy,[129] but also the interpretation of *omina oblativa*. We know that *bārû*s interpreted celestial phenomena in Old Babylonian Mari, and certain allusions to *ālu*-type divination[130] indicate that this also formed part of their field of expertise. Last but not least, it was the *bārû* who interpreted *izbu*-phenomena in the Old Babylonian period. Conversely, the *bārû*s of the Neo-Assyrian period, however, did not practise observational-deductive divination any more, they restricted themselves to extispicy□which called forth, by that time, a vast technical literature including the core series *(bārûtu)*, *ahû* versions, commentary texts, and reports.[131] Of course, our knowledge about the art of extispicy can further be complemented by the well-known liver, lung, and colon models, both from the second and the first millennium.

Technical terminology and the core elements of the disciplinary code

As we learn from the liver models and the textual descriptions, the liver was divided to various zones or subsections[132]□each of them had specific name and significance. The ancients distinguished between two kinds of zones: those which were referred to as *šīru*

[125] Cf. Bottéro 1974: 146, note 1; Veldhuis 1999: note 28; with Brown 2006: 98.

[126] See Tsukimoto 1982; Durand 1997; and de Zorzi 2009: esp. 87–88 (previous literature). Old Babylonian bird-extispicies were (also) carried out by the *bārû*s, which is reflected in the *Enmeduranki Legend* as well, where birds are mentioned in connection with the "seer", see Lambert 1998: 144; with Brown 2006: 99.

[127] Pettinatto 1966; Jeyes 1989: 15.

[128] Finkel 1983; Jeyes 1989: idem.

[129] See Nougayrol 1963; with Jeyes 1989: 190, note 44.

[130] On this peculiar form of divination which concerned the observation of spots or discolorations on slaughtered and plucked fowl see *inter alia* Renger 1969: 208; Jeyes 1989: 15; and recently Brown 2006: 100, with note 102.

[131] On the textual material related to extispicy see the recent, throughout summary of U. Koch (Koch 2015: 83–134).

[132] The latter term was preferred by U. Koch, as a designation of those parts of the liver or its surface which were considered to have ominous significance, see Koch-Westenholz 2000: 38 with note 99.

("flesh"), the constituent parts of the liver (e.g. the gall bladder, the "Finger", or the "Palace Gate", see below),[133] and those which were called *u□urtu* ("drawing"). The latter are impressions made by other internal organs on the liver which appear as grooves (e.g. the "Presence" or the "Path", represented by engravings on the liver models), as well as ligaments that connect the liver to other internal organs (e.g. the "Strength" and the "Throne base", represented by engravings or applications), and parts of the vascular system (also represented by engravings).[134] According to an Old Babylonian collection of prayers *(ikribū)*, there was a concept about the ideal appearance of each zone (and those of the lung and other organs as well).[135] The changes on the appearance of these zones or features (e.g., if they were split, pierced, recessed, divided, or discoloured, etc.), their (healthy, intact) presence (Akkadian *šalim*) or their possible absence had specific significance and meaning.[136] Each zone was examined separately, in a fixed order (see below), and was usually divided into a right (our) side, and a left (the enemy's) side, according to the general simple code□and furthermore, into a "head", "middle" and "base". Consequently, as it also can be seen on the models (see Fig. 2), the liver was (virtually) covered by a grid of squares and, to quote U. Jeyes, was "not unlike a game board with squares of »rights« and »lefts«".[137] Each square had a positive or negative value, determined, to some extent, by its relative position.[138] It was also necessary because the diviners operated with a set of fortuitous marks, such as perforations, holes, spots of various colour, etc., which had specific values (positive and negative) and meanings as well, and were interpreted according to their position within a given zone. Thus, a fortuitous mark which usually had a negative value in itself was interpreted unfavourably if it appeared on the right side, but favourably on the side of the enemy.

[133] See also Koch-Westenholz 2000: 38; and the detailed discussion of Meyer 1987: 68ff, which, however, classifies the ligament as "fleshy" features, see esp. 70.

[134] See again Koch-Westenholz 2000: 38 with further literature

[135] YOS 11, 23, see Jeyes 1989: 51.

[136] See the general description of Starr 1983: 17–18.

[137] Jeyes 1989: 51.

[138] Although the right is always positive and the left is negative, but which side is "right" and which is "left" can change from zone to zone. The left/right up/down orientation was not the same regarding all the zones, it might have changed during the course of the inscpection. On this problem see the short summary of Koch-Westenholz 2000: 39. The so-called "orientation tablets" from the first millennium mapped out the zones of the liver (and of the lungs as well) and covered them with a grid of positive, negative and (probably) neutral fields and thus helped to define the orientation and the value of the subdivisions. The term "orientation tablet" was introduced by Nougayrol who made a ground-breaking study of these texts with the publication of the famous liver model BM 50494 (Fig. 2.), see Nougayrol 1968. On orientation tablets in detail see also Koch 2005: 66–72; and also the brief summary in Koch 2015: 122.

In the followings, we will make a brief review of the most important zones—which will be represented on an actual liver on Fig. 3. as well—, and the specific meanings attached to them, following the traditional order of the examination of the diviners.[139]

Fig. 2. Orientation-tablet from the first millennium (7–6th century BC) which maps out the surface of the liver, covering it with a grid of positive, negative, and neutral fields, see note 139. (BM 50494, from ancient Borsippa)

The zones of the liver

manzāzu (Old Babylonian KI.GUB, but written with NA in the first millennium compendia)[140]

[139] This order was reconstructed from the extispicy reports and corresponds to the list of zones in the second tablet of *Multābiltu* (CT 20 44 i 52–54), cf. Jeyes 1989: 53; and for a new edition of this text: Koch 2005: 114. For a brief, tabular summary of the zones cf. also Koch 2015: 78–79. On the "optional" zones of the liver which are only infrequently mentioned and were not listed in *Multābiltu* 2 see Jeyes 1989: 73–81.

[140] For a summary of the identification and significance of this zone with many textual examples see Jeyes 1989: 53–54; Starr 1990: XL; and more recently Koch-Westenholz 2000: 51–53.

The name of this zone can either be translated as “Presence” or “Station”, and it has been identified with the vertical groove on the *lobus sinister*.

The presence of this zone was indeed critical: it signified that the sacrifice had been accepted by the god and thus the examination could go ahead, as it was already seen:

šum-ma na-ap-la-às-tum i-šu
šumma naplastam īšu
i-lum i-na ni-q a-we lim i-zi-iz
ilum ina niqi awīlim izziz
If it has (ONE) View[141]
The god will accept (lit. stand) the man’s sacrifice

(AO 9066 1–4)[142]

This entry clearly reflects that, to quote U. Jeyes again: “a normal Presence symbolizes a successfully established communication with the divine”.[143]

padānu (GÍR)

The second subsection of the liver which was inspected, the “Path”, can be identified with the horizontal groove above the Presence on *lobus sinister* in the abomasal impression. As it’s synonym, *harrānum* (KASKAL) reveals, it may symbolize military campaigns□or the course of human life *(kibsu)*.[144] The first line of the *Šumma padānu* chapter in the first millennium extispicy series *Bārûtu* also clearly reflects this notion:

BE GÍR GAR *ki-bi-is* GÌR LUGAL KI DINGIR *šu-šur*
šumma padānum īšu kibis šēp šarrim ilum šūšur
If the Path is present: the step (*lit.* foot) of the king is directed by the god[145]

Consequently, the majority of Path *apodoses* concern the army (or the enemy army) and warfare.[146]

[141] The “View” (*naplastu*, Sum. IGI.BAR) is an alternative denomination of the Presence which occurs in the southern Old Babylonian compendia. See Jeyes 1989: 53, with the discussion of the present example.

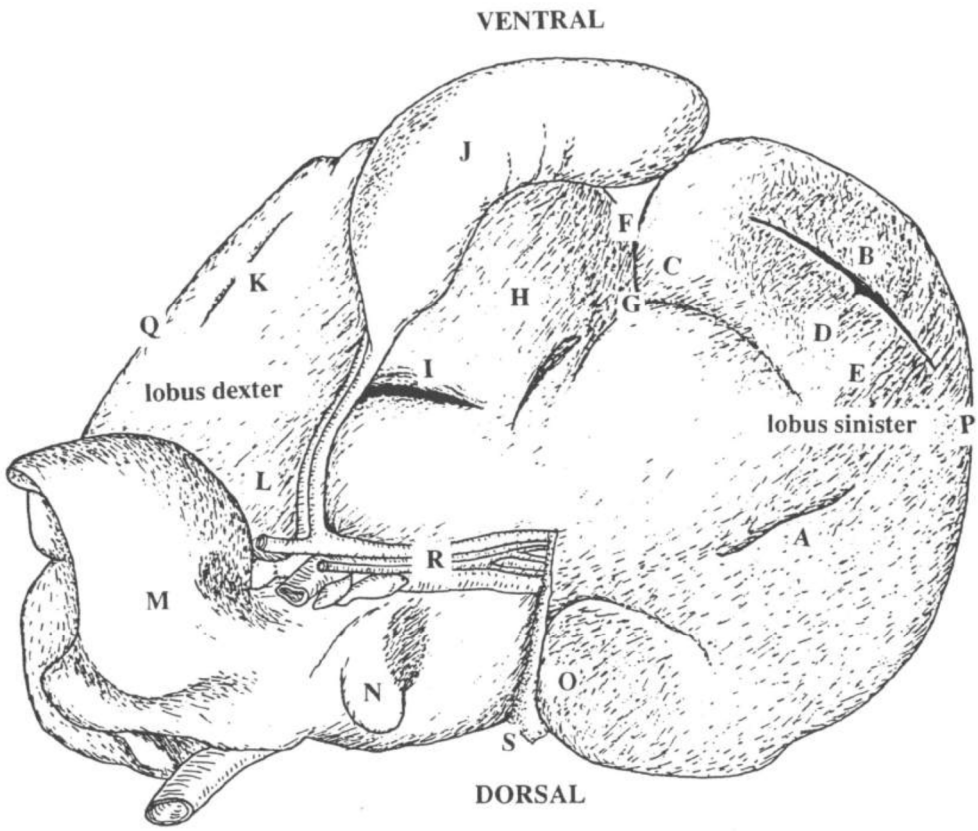
[142] Cf. also Winitzer 2006: 565, and recently Winitzer 2017: 411 (regarding the numerical values of this entry, which was paired with an omen regarding a double presence, see above, on “numerical symbolism”).

[143] Jeyes 1989: 54; and see also Winitzer 2010: esp. 186.

[144] See in detail Jeyes 1989: 54–58; Starr 1990: XL–XLI; and Koch-Westenholz 2000: 58–60.

[145] K 3846 r. 19, see Jeyes 1989: 55.

[146] Cf. Jeyes 1989: 56 (Old Babylonian omens); Koch-Westenholz 2000: 60 (first millennium).



A. *Manzāzu*, the Presence	*groove on the lobus sinister*
B. *Padānu*, the Path	*groove on the lobus sinister*
C. *Pû ṭābu*, the Pleasing Word	*groove on the lobus sinister, (part of the Path)*
D. *Naṣraptu*, the Dyeing Vat	*impressio abomasalis*
E. *Ruqqu*, the Narrow Place	
F. *Danānu*, the Strength	*ligamentum teres hepatis*
G. *Bāb ekalli*, the Palace Gate	*incisura ligamenti teretis*
H. *Šulmu*, the Well-being	*lobus quadratus*
I. *Padān imitti marti*, the Path to the right of the Gall Bladder	*groove on the lobus quadratus*
J. *Martu*, the Gall Bladder	*the Gall* Bladder
K. *Mahiṣ pān nakri*, The Defeat of the Enemy Army (*Padān šumēl marti*)	*groove on the lobus dexter*
L. *Nīdi kussî*, the Throne Base	*impressio renalis(?)*
M. *Ubānu*, the Finger	*processus caudatus/pyramidalis*
N. *Ṣibtu*, the Increment	*processus papillaris*
O. *Nīru*, the Yoke	*impressio omasica*
P. *Tīb šāri*, the Rise of Wind	*right edge of lobus sinister*
Q. *Tīb šumēli*, the Left Rise	*left edge of lobus dexter*
R. *Nār amūti*, the River of the Liver	*porta hepatis*
S. *Kiṣirti imitti*, the Right Ridge	*omentum minus*

Fig. 3. The zones of the liver (after Koch 2000: 45)

pû* □*ābu (KA DÙG.GA)

The "Pleasing word" is a groove which runs horizontally between the *padānu* and the umbilical fissure.[147] This subsection is not attested in the Old Babylonian material, it only occurs from the Middle Babylonian period onwards. It's symbolic value is a bit obscure, but the few preserved Pleasing word *apodoses* mainly concern the words of god or men, e.g.:[148]

BE KA DÙG.GA GAR-*in* KA.GI.NA *šá* DINGIR *ana* LÚ
If the Pleasing word is present: a reliable word of the god to the man[149]

danānu (KAL)

Based on the consideration that the "Strength" is a drawing *(u□urtu)*, U. Jeyes identified it with the groove which runs vertically inside the umbilical fissure to the left.[150] However, this interpretation was contested by the view that the Strength should rather be identified with the *ligamentum teres hepatis* (which is strikingly more robust than the ligamentum falciforme to which it is attached). When the lamb is quite young it still protrudes but after some months and develops into a groove□which fits well to the representation of the liver models from Boghazköy on which the Strength is either indicated by a small excrescence or by by small lines.[151] As for its symbolic value, upon considering it synonymous with the *puzrum* (secret), a term which mostly occurs in Old Babylonian compendia and can be identified with the area surrounding the Strength, again, U. Jeyes interpreted the basic meaning as "a safely guarded secret or an omen result which has not leaked, the basis for a steadfast course of life".[152] Although it seems to be correct, one should not neglect its basic allusion: it may refer to military strength and invincibility.[153]

[147] See Jeyes 1989: 58–59.
[148] Cf. Koch-Westenholz 2000: 61–62.
[149] CT 20 33 rv. 115 (the first line of the *pû* □*ābu* chapter of *Bārûtu*, according to a catchline), with duplicate KAR 423 ii 22, see Jeyes 1989: 58.
[150] See Jeyes 1989: 59–60;—however, the liagments of the liver were also included among the drawings, cf. Koch 2000: 47.
[151] That is, it was depicted in both its fresh and collapsed state, indicating that not only very young animals were used for extispicy, see in detail Koch-Westenholz 2000: 47.
[152] Cf. Jeyes 1989: 59–60 (quoting page 60).
[153] Cf. Koch-Westenholz 2000: idem.

bāb ekalli (KÁ É.GAL, later ME.NI)

The "Palace gate" refers to the umbilical fissure, which can at times also be referred to as *abullu* (KÁ.GAL, city gate).[154] The meaning attached to this zone is self-evident from the name itself: it concerns the palace, its affair, and the city gate and its incoming and outgoing traffic□as it will be illustrated by one of the case studies at the end of this subchapter.[155]

šulmu (SILIM)

The "Well-being" can be identified with the groove on the *lobus quadratus* and the lobe itself.[156] Generally, it can be associated with health, prosperity and success□especially, it concerns the outcome of military campaigns,[157] as the following example clearly illustrates:

BE SILIM GAR-*in* ÉRIN-*ka* SAG.A.ŠÀ KÚR-*ad*
If the Well-being is there: Your army will reach its goal

(KAR 423 ii 48)[158]

martu (ZÉ or EŠ)

Martu, the gall bladder is occassionally referred to as the "Shepherd" *(rē'ûm)*, and accordingly, the *apodoses* of the *martu*-omens deal mainly with the king, his family, and the throne.[159]

padān šumēl marti (GÍR 150 ZÉ)

The "Path to the left of the gall bladder" could also be referred to as *mihi□ pān ummān nakrim,* "Defeat of the Enemy's Army". It was a drawing *(u□urtu)* which can

[154] See Jeyes 1989: 60.
[155] Cf. also Koch-Westenholz 2000: 46.
[156] Cf. Jeyes 1989: 61; and Koch-Westenholz 2000: 67.
[157] Jeyes 1989: 61; see also Koch-Westenholz 2000: 68.
[158] KAR 423 is a large Neo-Assyrian excerpt tablet on the chapter *pān tākalti* of the canonical *Bārûtu*, which concerned those subsections of the *facies visceralis,* i. e. "The Front of the Pouch" which weren't considered as important to merit an own chapter, see Koch 2000: 267–282.This most common *protasis* concerning the Well-being (often cited in Middle Babylonian and Neo Assyrian reports as well) is not preserved in the canonical series, see Koch-Westenholz 2000: 276 with note 699.
[159] Cf. Jeyes 1989: 62–63, and see the shorth summary Starr 1990: XLIII–XLIV.

be identified with the vertical groove on the *lobus dexter*.[160] As its rather poetic name foretells, just like the Path itself, it was connected with warfare. Here again, the *apodoses* of the chapter *pān tākalti* tablet 8 are quite fragmentary, however, the first one of the *padān šumēl marti*-omens on the excerpt tablet KAR 423 clearly supports this assumption:

BE GÍR 150 ZÉ GAR
SÌG-*i*□ IGI ÉRIN KÚR
KÚR *šá ú*-□*a-ma-ra*[*k-ku* NU KUR]-*ád*
If the Path to the left of the gall bladder is present
Defeat of the enemy's army
The enemy who plots against you will not succeed

(KAR 423 ii 73-74)[161]

nīdi kussê (ŠUB AŠ.TE or ŠUB ^{GIŠ}GU.ZA)

The "Throne base" is the most common English designation of this subsection, and, although the translation "base" for *nīdu* have been doubted by many,[162] the *raison d'etre* of such an interpretation is illustrated by MDP 57 (= Labat 1974) No. 4:1:

DIŠ ŠUB.BA GU.ZA GAR SUHUŠ ^{GIŠ}GU.ZA ŠUB
If the *nīdi kussê* is present, the base of the throne will be set.[163]

It is the area close to the Finger *(processus caudatus)*, which, I. Starr suggested, can be identified with the *impressio renalis*, the ligament which connects the liver with the right kidney.[164] Despite the poorly preserved state of *pān tākalti* Tablet 9 which concerns the Throne base, on the basis of the *apodoses* of the ŠUB.BA ^{GIŠ}GU.ZA compendium we may assert that *nīdi kussê*-omens dealt mainly with the private life of the king and the prince, and their immediate family.[165]

ubānu (ŠU.SI or U)

[160] See Jeyes 1989: 64; and Koch-Westenholz 2000: 60.
[161] Also cited in Jeyes 1989: 64.
[162] For previous literature see Koch-Westenholz 2000: 56 with note 162.
[163] Also cited by Koch-Westenholz 2000: 56.
[164] Starr 1983: 88; and Starr 1990: XLIV, on the ambiguities regarding the exact identification of theis feature see Koch-Westenholz 2000: 57, with previous literature. See also Jeyes 1989: 65, who stresses that the Throne base is classified as *u*□*urtu* in to the ŠUB.BA ^{GIŠ}GU.ZA compendium (MDP 57 = Labat 1975: No. 6. i 15 and 20).
[165] Cf. Jeyes 1989: 65; and Koch-Westenholz 2000: 57.

The term “Finger”, which can be written logographically as ŠU.SI in Old Babylonian compendia and as U in later texts refers to a *šīru* and designates the caudate lobe□ which was known to the classical writers as the “head of the liver” *(caput lecoris)*.[166] As an important part of the liver it was treated in the seventh chapter of *Bārûtu* which contained 11 tablets.[167] Generally, the Finger as a whole may have symbolized the foreign and the hostile, as the following example demonstrates:[168]

šum-ma mar-tum is-hu-úr-ma ú-ba-nam il-ta-we-e

šar-rum ma-tam na-ka- ⌜*ar-ta-am*⌝ *i-*[· *a*]*-ab-bat*

If the gall bladder has turned round and surrounded the Finger
the king will seize a foreign land

(YOS X 31 ii 24– 30)

As for the main concerns of the present study this feature is of high relevance since it occurrs in *Šumma izbu* omens as well– where, beyond its general negative connotations, it may often signify death. These specific associations can possibly be connected with the logographic form, since U can also refer to holes (*šīlu, pilšu,* see below), such fortuitous marks in extispicy which clearly allude to death. One may also note the element SI, which may basically refer to horns (Akkadian *qarnu*), but can also be equated with *ubānu*[169] in itself (perhaps as a shortened form of the compound ŠU.SI and also because of the similarity of the specific shape of the Finger to that of horns). These allusions are clearly represented in *Šumma izbu* omens as well (e.g. *Šumma izbu* I 6, discussed in chapter IV, as well as in Tablet V, treated at the end of the present chapter III) which also reflect that the disciplinary code of *Bārûtu* made a great impact on the code-system of the teratological compendium.

nīru (AL.TE or ŠUDUN)

The “Yoke”, which was classified as a drawing, is bordered by the zone of the Finger, the left edge of the left lobe, the hepatic artery and the upper edge of the liver– thus, it

[166] See Jeyes 1989: 65; Starr 1990: XLIV; and Koch-Westenholz 2000: 69.
[167] For a detailed discussion of this feature and the somethimes rather ambiguous terminology concerning its parts see Jeyes 1989: 66–71; and the shorther summary which can be found in Koch-Westenholz 2000: 69–70.
[168] In detail see Jeyes 1989: 70.
[169] For lexical equation see Aa III/4: 155, see CAD U 4 (sub. *ubānu*, lexical section).

can be identified with the omasal impression *(impressio omasica)*.[170] As it was suggested, this part of the liver could have got its name because, like a yoke, it keeps the right and the left lobes together.[171] Although U. Jeyes supposed that the symbolic meaning of the Yoke can be connected with the city, this assumption is not supported by the *apodoses* of first millennium Yoke-omens (*pān tākalti* 15), many of which refer to attacks by several kinds of pests and other „unwelcomed guests", such as Elamites or Subarteans.[172]

□***ibtu*** (MÁŠ)

The "Increase" or "Increment" was the last zone which had to be inspected, and it can be identified with the papillary process *(processus papillaris)*—on the orientation tablet BM 50494 (see Fig. 2.) it separates the top of the Yoke from the middle of the Yoke and is classified as a *šīru*.[173] It's symbolic value concerns the harvest and profit, as it is also evident from AO 7033 obv. 7:[174]

2 MÁŠ-*tum a-we-lum né-me-lam i-ma-ar*
If there are two Increases: the man will see wealth.

[170] See in detail Jeyes 1989: 71; Starr 1990: XLV; and Koch-Westenholz 2000: 58.
[171] See already Hussey 1948: 29; with Jeyes 1989: 71.
[172] Jeyes 1989: 71; with Koch-Westenholz 2000: 58.
[173] See already Hussey 1948: 29; and cf. Jeyes 1989: 72; Starr 1990: XLV; with Koch-Westenholz 2000: 64–65.
[174] Cited by U. Jeyes (Jeyes 1989: 72); on the symbolic value of the Yoke see also Koch-Westenholz 2000: 59.

The fortuitous marks

Now we should turn to the characteristic marks such as holes, fissures, and various configurations with specific names (e.g. „weapon marks", „foot-marks", cross-shaped marks, etc.) and well-defined symbolic meanings which may appear within the previously discussed zones. Again, we will only restrict ourselves to the most common ones, those also listed in the second tablet of *Multābiltu*.[175]

kakku (GIŠTUKUL)

The "Weapon" is a small excrescence which resemble to the sign GAG. Basically, it is a small protrusion of flesh, as the following examples clearly demonstrate it:[176]

GIŠTUKUL GIM GIŠKAK GUB-*iz*
If the weapon to the right stands up like a peg
UZU GIM GIŠKAK GUB-*iz*
flesh stands up like a peg

We possess illustrations of weapon marks in first millennium commentaries, from where it is also obvious that their profile was V-shaped and they resembled to arrowheads (see Fig. 4.).[177]

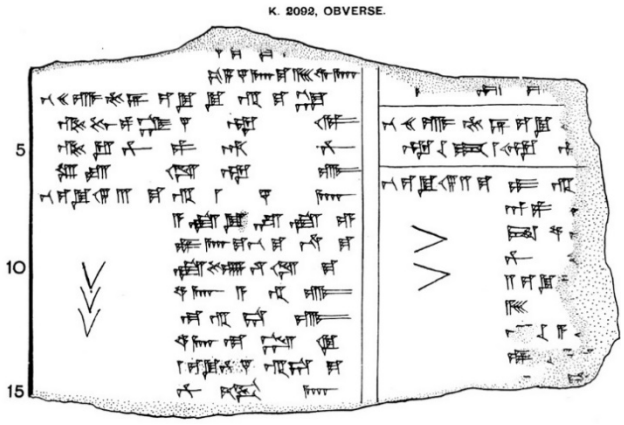


Fig. 4. Copy of the commentary tablet to *Bārûtu* Chapter 8 *(kakku)* K 2092 (CT 31 15) with drawings of weapon marks

[175] CT 20 44 i 51: GIŠTUKUL GÌR U DU_8 KAM-tu_4 BAR-tu_4 *kak-su-ú* KAR-tu_4 *ni-ip-hu*. Cited by Jeyes 1989: 81; for a new edition see Koch 2005: 114. *Multābiltu* is the name of the 10th and final chapter of the canonical extispicy series. It seems to be a first millennium addition, which contains general interpretative rules (Tablet 1), joker signs (Tablet 2 and 3, see below), the lists of various zones and marks, and simple omina as well, see the general introduction of U. Koch in Koch 2000: 5–33. Although it was considered as a "handbook for correct interpretation" (see Larsen 1987: 215), as U. Koch assumed, it is very unlikely that it served any practical purpose at all—rather, it can be viewed as a step towards more abstract thinking and as such, it reflects the scientific aspect of divination, divorced from the everyday practice (see Koch 2005: 1).

[176] CT 31 10 iii 6 and CT 31 38 i 15, cited by Jeyes 1989: 82.

[177] Cf. Jeyes 1989: 82; Starr 1990: LI; with Koch-Westenholz 2000: 48. For the mentioned commentaries to *Bārûtu* see Nougayrol 1974, to which SpTU 2 No. 45 should also be added.

It is one of the most well-known marks and can appear anywhere on the exta, either alone or in conjunction with other marks. Basically, it was a negative mark connected with warfare, thus, if it appeared on the left side of a given zone, it was considered as positive (victory), while if it appeared on the right, it was regarded unfavourable (defeat). A further important factor in the interpretation of the Weapon was the direction towards it pointed (*lit*. "looked", *na□ālu*).[178]

šēpu (GÌR)

The "Foot" clearly got its name from its specific shape, as it can be seen on the liver model KBo VII 7 on which it is illustrated as a small incision with a curved end resembling the shape of the human foot.[179] It could also be compared to the curved staff (*gamlu,* see below).[180] A Foot in the *protasis* is often matched with *šēpu* in the *apodosis* which is associated with "coming" or "conveyance" (of news, revolt, the enemy, and so on). [181]

šīlu (U)

The Hole, as an essentially negative sign is also one of the best known marks, and can also be referred to as *pilšu* ("hole" or "perforation", also written with the grapheme U).[182] Actually, *pilšu* is a Hole that goes all the way through (*ipluš* or *šutabrû*) and as such, it signifies death□and all sorts of evil: e.g. eclipses, epidemics, or the loss of eyesight.[183] Holes occupied an important place among the fortuitous marks and consequently the diviners had to pay special attention to their ominous significance□as it is clearly illustrated by the famous Old Babylonian "liver tablet" (BM 92668, see Fig. 5.). As it was already shown by Nougayrol, although it usually appears as a general example of liver models, actually it depicts a series of perforations and its main purpose was to instruct the diviners in the change of the ominous significance of each with the change in its location on the liver.[184]

[178] See in detail Jeyes 1989: 82; and Koch-Westenholz 2000: 48.
[179] See also Meyer 1987: 168.
[180] Based on CT 30 48 rv. 11, cf. Koch-Westenholz 2000: 65.
[181] See Jeyes 1989: 84; with Koch-Westenholz 2000: 65.
[182] Cf. Jeyes 1989: 84.
[183] See Starr 1978–1979; and the short summary in Koch-Westenholz 2000: 65–66.
[184] Nougayrol 1941; cf. Starr 1978–1979: 45.

Fig. 5. The "liver tablet": Old Babylonian inscribed model of a sheep's liver (BM 92668, probably from Sippar)

pi*□*ru (DU8)

The "Split" or fissure which is according to *Multābiltu* 2, a crack on the liver, (generally) "1/2 finger long" (1/2 ŠU.SI DU8)[185] is again a common negative sign, associated with the idea of detachment. Accordingly, the Old Babylonian *apodoses* concerning the Split, examined by U. Jeyes concentrate on the themes of "flight, defection, desertion, betrayal, loss, and failure".[186] An illustrative example is the lung-omen YOS X 36 iii 3–5.[187]

DIŠ *i-na* Á.ZI MUR *ši-pu-um ù pi-i*□*-ru-um i-na* Á.GÙB
ši-ip-ka a-na ma-a-at LÚKUR *úr-ra-ad-ma*
wa-□*i-a-am i-le-eq-qé*
If a Foot is on the right side of the lung and a Split is on the left side:
your invading force will descend on the enemy's country
and take (prisoner) whoever comes out.

[185] CT 20 44 i 56, cf. Jeyes 1989: 84; and Koch-Westenholz 2000: 61. For a new edition of this line: Koch 2005: 114. For a short description of this mark see also Starr 1990: LII.
[186] For the collected examples see Jeyes 1989: 85.
[187] Cited in Jeyes 1989: 85.

This omen is a good example regarding the meaning of the Foot as well: the latter appears on the right, that is, on our side and signifies motion, departure ("your invading force will descend"), while the negative Split, appearing on the enemy's side portends the ill fate of someone who is departing (or flees) from the invaded country.

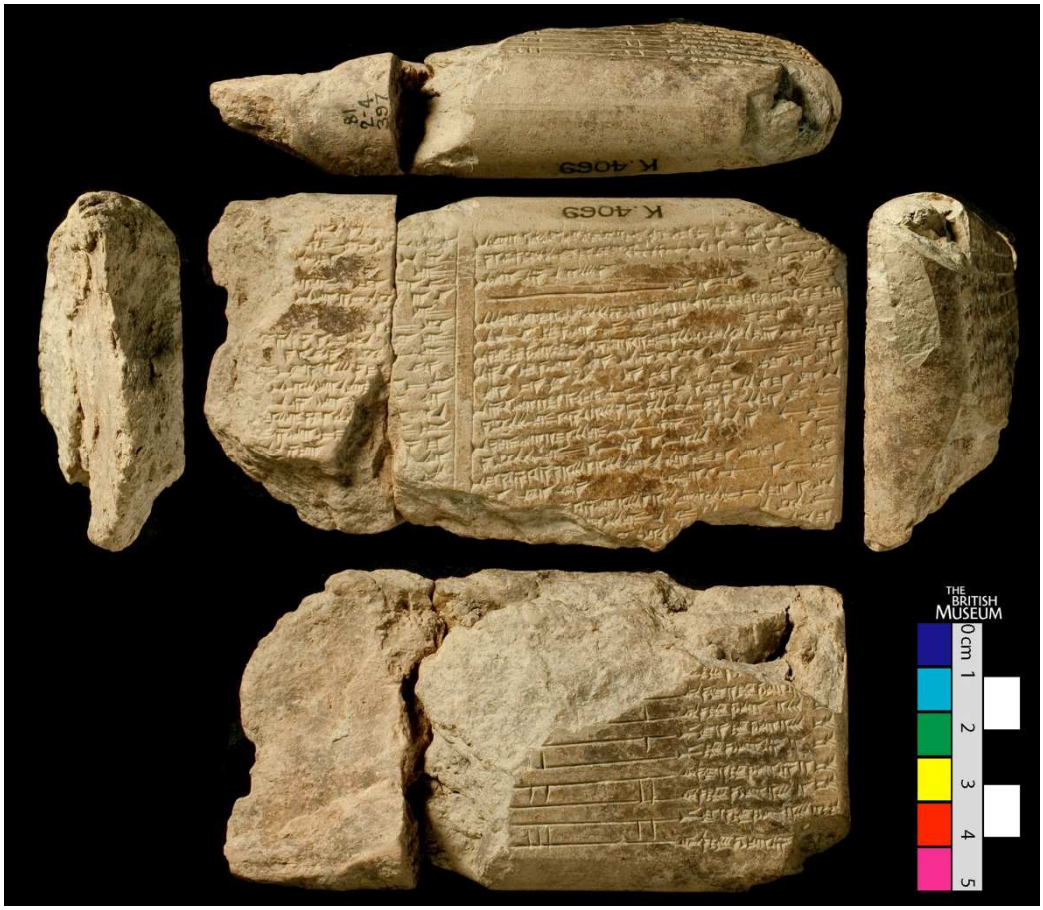


Fig. 6. Illustration of Splits on the reverse of the Neo-Assyrian commentary tablet K 4069 (CT 20 26)

pallurtu/pillurtu/išpallurtu (BAR-*tu*$_4$)

The "Cross" mark consists of two Splits which cross each other. It is (again) a universally negative mark, associated with disorientation, chaos, and anarchy—perhaps the two intercrossing Splits not only signified detachment, but rather the complete loss of direction and control.[188] This concept made impact to *Šumma izbu* omens as well, as it can be seen in the following example:

BE *iz-bu* 2-*ma* GIM *pí-il-lu-ur-ti it-gu-ru-ma ina* MURUB$_4$-*šú-nu*
šumma izbu šināma kīma pillurti itgurūma ina qablišunu
DAB.DAB *taq-ti-it* BAL UŠ$_4$ KUR MAN-*ni* SÙH *ina* KUR GÁL-*ši*
ti☐*butū taqtīt pale* ☐*ēm māti išanni tēšu ina māti ibbaššī*

[188] Cf. Jeyes 1989: 87; and Koch-Westenholz 2000: 60.

If there are two *izbu*s and they are crossed like a cross and joined at their waist
End of the reign, the political situation of the land will change, there will be confusion in the land

(*Šumma izbu* VI 16)[189]

One may also note the possible basic allusion of its shape: the two intersecting element may signify conflict (and thus warfare), see the following subchapter on the graphic principles of interpretation and especially about the shape of cuneiform signs.

erištu (KAM/KÁM-*tu*$_4$)

Unlike that of the formerly discussed marks, the exact appearance of the "Request" is still debated. In the liver model KUB 4 72 it is represented as a small excrescence, smaller than the Weapon on the same model.[190] Thus it is possible that the name derives from the word *erēšu* ("seed").[191] On the basis of all this, U. Jeyes proposed that it can be a formation of fat, shaped like a seed of some kind.[192] Be there as it may, like Weapons, Requests can occur all over the liver, however, unlike Weapons, they were generally considered as positive marks—unless they were dark or of an unusual size. As for its more specific symbolic meaning, a Request in the *protasis* is often matched by a divine request in the apodosis.[193]

larû (PA)

The "Branch" is actually not a fortuitous mark *per se*, but rather, an extension to a normally occurring feature□which may "have" *(rašû, išû)* a branch. Actually any part of the extra or any fortuitous marking can display "branching", that is, bifurcation.[194] The Path, for example, commonly had branches, as it is illustrated on the obverse of K 219+2095 (CT 20 28, see Fig. 7.). According to the first tablet of *Multābiltu* (Tablet 1 29), the Branch was considered as a positive sign and could be associated with achievement, conquest, or expansion.[195]

[189] This omen was also discussed by de Zorzi 2011: 65 as an example of the (general) symbolic value of connected bodyparts.
[190] Cf. Jeyes 1989: 86; and Koch-Westenholz 2000: 48.
[191] As it was proposed by Leiderer 1990: 27; cf. Koch-Westenholz 2000: 48.
[192] Jeyes 1989: 86.
[193] See Koch-Westenholz 2000: ibid.
[194] See Jeyes 1989: 92–93; and Starr 1990: LIII.
[195] Jeyes 1989: 93; for a new edition see Koch 2005: 96.

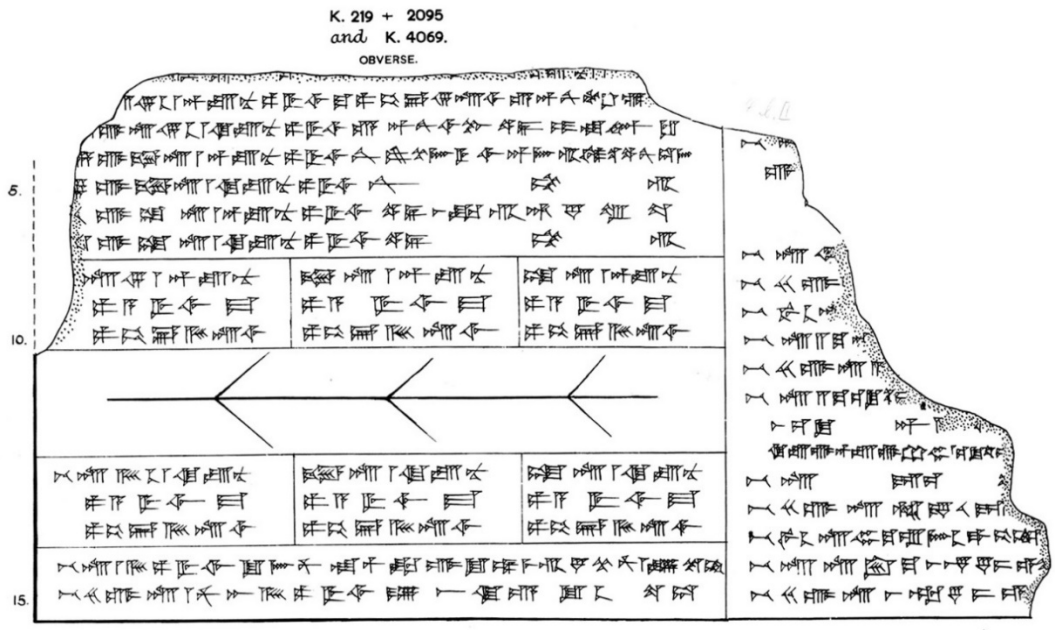


Fig. 7. Neo-Assyrian commentary (K 219 + 2095, CT 20 28) on *Bārûtu* Chapter 4 *(padānu)* illustrating the Branches of the Path

Of course, the main concern of this outline, beyond the summary of the basic disciplinary code of extispicy is to provide an interpretative aid for the analysis of the *Šumma izbu* omens treated in the following chapters of this work—and therefore, it is non-exhaustive.[196] As for the shake of the latter concern, we should now turn to the so-called "joker" signs, that is, signs which may change the outcome of the entire extispicy: *niphu* (IZI.GAR) and *pitruštu* (DU$_8$.UŠ-*tum*).

Tablets 2 and 3 of *Multābiltu* are devoted to these joker signs and contain lists of *protases* which can be considered as *niphu* or *pitruštu*, respectively, and rules regarding their working mechanisms□either they appear alone or in combination with each other.[197] According to the summary of U. Koch,[198] a *niphu* is often linked to the triple occurrence of a feature,[199] whereas a *pitruštu* is linked to the left/right opposition. It is a *pitruštu* if a sign occurs on both sides—it means that the usual dichotomy of right/left is put out of play. *Niphu*s may have more varied character, so it is more difficult to define the rules according to which a certain sign should be considered as a *niphu*. Generally,

[196] For a more detailed list and discussion of the fortuitous marks see Jeyes 1989: 81–93; with Starr 1990: L–LV; and the excellent, short description of the *termini technici* in Koch-Westenholz 2000: 46–70 (where, however, they appear in alphabetical order).

[197] On joker signs see already Starr 1975: 241–247; and Jeyes 1980: 13–32; with the more recent discussion of U. Koch in Koch 2005: 10–21.

[198] Koch-Westenholz 2000: 57.

[199] For a more lengthy discussion of this phenomenon in Old Babylonian extispicy see Winitzer 2006: 572–581.

a sign is a *niphu* if a feature is larger than usual, or if something occurs three times, but many other, less clear-cut signs are included as well (e.g. Tablet 2 87□89: "If the Stenght is split", "If the Strenght is turned", "If the gall bladder is full of air"). The *niphu*s have a joker-effect and reverse the result of extispicy, thus they make an otherwise favourable omen unfavourable (and vice versa), while two *niphu*s cancel out each other.[200]

See, for example:

BE GÌR 3 NU SILIM-*át ina* NU SILIM-*tim* SILIM-*át*
šumma padānu 3 lā šalmat ina lā šalimti šalmat
If there are three Paths: It is unfavourable,
in an unfavourably extispicy it is favourable

(*Multābiltu* 2 82)[201]

UR5.ÚŠ [DÙ-*ma ina* SILIM-*ti* 2 IZI.GAR].MEŠ GAR.MEŠ IZI.GAR IZI.GAR *ip-pal-ma* SILIM-*át*
têrta teppušma ina šalimti 2 *niphātu šakna niphu nipha ippalma šalmat*
When you perform extispicy and in a favourable extispicy there are 2 *niphu*s:
one *niphu* annuls the other, it is favourable

(*Multābiltu* 2 158)[202]

However, one should also note that this principle appears in other disciplines as well—largely based upon the technical terminology and certain rules of extispicy—and thus it also can be traced in Old Babylonian lecanomancy, see for example:[203]

šumma šamnum šulmi šinā iddima ištēn rabi ištēn □*eher*
ana mar□*i rigmum ana harrāni zitta ikkal*
If the oil produced two bubbles and one was big and one was small
for an infirm: (it forecasts) crying, for a military campaign: it enjoys profit

šumma šalāšat šulmū niphu
If it (produced) three bubbles: it is a *niphu*

(Pettinatto, *Ölwahrsagung* I 49□51)

šumma šalāšat šulmī mitharūtim ittadiam
niphum pû lā kīnum
If it (=the oil) produced three equal-sized bubbles

[200] See Koch-Westenholz 2005: 20.
[201] Koch 2005: 120.
[202] Koch 2005: 129.
[203] The following examples were also cited by Winitzer 2006: 573–574.

it is a *niphu* (which means that) the omen is unclear

(Pettinatto, *Ölwahrsagung* II 37)

The disciplinary code of extispicy—conclusions

Even the above outline is, again, far from being exhaustive, by now, as we have got acquainted both with the basic elements of the simple code and the basic lore of extispicy, this elementary knowledge may enable us to interpret such simple omens as the ones appearing in the following sequences:

MAŠ[204] ŠU.SI *ka-ak-kum ša-ap-li-iš ra-ki-ib / ka-ak-kum nu-ú-um*
šumma ubānam kakkum šapliš rakib kakkum nûm
If a **Weapon** is riding on the **Finge**r **downward**□ the weapon is ours
MAŠ SU.SI *ka-ak-kum e-li-iš ra-ki-ib / ka-ak-ki na-ak-ri-im*
šumma ubānam kakkum eliš rakib kakki nakrim
If a Weapon is riding on the Finger **upward**—the weapon of the enemy

(YOS X 33 ii 24–27)[205]

As we have seen, the Finger signified the enemy, or something hostile in general, and as such, it can reflect some kind of armed conflict. The presence of weapon marks, of course, reinforces this notion. So the definitive fact in here is the location of the weapon: if it appears **below** the Finger, it becomes a positive sign, while the weapon **above** the Finger takes negative value—according to the simple above/below opposition, discussed in the previous sub-chapter.

Similarly, our next sequence from the first millennium *Bārûtu*, which is not at all more complex, involves the appearance of holes (generally negative signs which portend death and destruction), appearing either in the right (our), or in the left (enemy's) side of the Presence. The third omen concerns holes on both sides—and thus, according to the foregoings, it is a *pirištu* which annuls the left/right dichotomy:

BE *ina* 15 NA BÙR ŠUB-*di* ŠUB-*ti* ÉRIN-*ni*
šumma ina imitti manzāzi šīlu nadi miqitti ummāni
If a hole lies in the right side of the Presence: defeat of the army

[204] This logographic, Old Babylonian form of *šumma* reflects the southern Old Babylonian omen tradition, see Jeyes 1989: 12.

[205] This omen pair was also discussed by A. Winitzer (Winitzer 2006: 271), although as an example of simple generation based on oppositions (involving contrasting spatial points), without further analysis.

BE *ina* 150 NA BÙR ŠUB-*di* ŠUB-*ti* ÉRIN KÚR
šumma ina šumēl manzāzi šīlu nadi miqitti ummān naqri
If a hole lies in the left side of the Presence: defeat of the enemy army

BE *ina* 15 NA *u* 150 NA BÙR ŠUB-*di* GABA.UŠ
šumma ina imitti manzāzi u šumēl manzāzi šīlu nadi pitruštu
If a hole lies in the right side and the left side of the Presence: It is a *pitruštu*

(*Manzāzu* Tablet 2: 31–33)[206]

Although these examples are quite illustrative, such clear-cut *protases* and *apodoses* are, as a matter of fact, in no way frequent. Although generally the—so to say—core of the apodoses of extispicy omens can clearly be defined by the coefficient simple and disciplinary codes, in most cases there are further, specific elements, related both to content and wording, which cannot be explained solely on the basis of these two code-systems. The following omen, already discussed by U. Jeyes,[207] and consequently by A.R. George,[208] is rather representative in this respect.

[MAŠ *e*]-*le-nu-um* KÁ É.GAL *ši-lum še$_{20}$-e-li*
MAŠ *elēnum bāb ekallim šīlum šeli*
wa-ṣi a-bu-lim ne-šim i-da-ak
wā□i abullim nēšum idâk
If there is a hole gouged above the palace gate
a lion will kill someone who goes out of the city gate

(YOS X 26 ii 32)[209]

Both Jeyes and George considered this entry as an illustrative example of the "symbolism (which) can explain the connection of protasis and apotosis".[210] According to their interpretation, since a hole signifies death, and the zone of the Palace gate may allude to the city gate, "the hole in the Palace gate means death in the city gate."[211] George even adds, that in this very case "concrete objects, location and mark generate the apodosis."[212] Neither authors, however, bothered themselves by the further, rather consequent questions: how do we know, who will die, and how can we define the specific way of death? To put it in other words: why will someone, who goes out, will be the victim, and why will he, specifically, killed by a lion? Why a lion in all the world?

[206] See Koch 2005: 87. This "neat" sequence was also cited in English translation in Koch 2015: 82.
[207] Jeyes 1980: 25, with note 73.
[208] George 2010: 329.
[209] See Jeyes 1980: 32, note 73.
[210] Jeyes 1980: 25.
[211] Quoted from George 2010: 329.
[212] Ibid.

To answer the first question, we should take the simple code into consideration. It is true, that the disciplinary code of extispicy clearly defines, beyond the mere occurrence of a death (signified by the hole), the exact location of this death as well, as the Palace gate concerns the traffic through the city gate, however, we should also note the appearance of the location "above". As we have seen, it defines negative value, which is, in this very case of the city gate, refers to the outgoing direction (the direction leading towards the uninhabited and thus dangerous areas). That is, on the basis of the simple and disciplinary codes we are able to define that someone who goes out on the city gate will die—the only remaining problem concerns the question of "how". This question will only be answered in the concluding part of the next sub-chapter, since the appearance of the lion in the *apodosis* is based on the third layer of the code systems—the written one.

2.2. **Celestial divination**

Astrology, that is, the encoding of the "celestial writing" *(ši□ir šamê)* was a royal art in Mesopotamia, practised during the first millennium by the □*upšarrū*, the "scribes of *Enūma Anu Enlil*", that is, of the astrological omen series, who were considered as the highest-ranking scholars in the Neo-Assyrian court. Many of the premises of their discipline, such as the general benefice of malefic nature of planets, the constellations (some transmuted into zodiacal signs), the three- and four-fold divisions of the heavens, as well as the allusions of brightness or dimness, left and right, and so on, were transmitted both to the West and to the East, and are occasionally subsistent even in modern day astrology.[213]

Just as that of extispicy, the disciplinary code of celestial divination constitutes a coherent, well-defined system, the foundations of which were already laid by the time of the emergence of the oldest written astrological omens. F. Rochberg-Halton called these fundamental principles (such as the associations relating to four-fold divisions and as such to countries, whether in relation to cardinal divisions, eclipse quadrants, winds, and so on)[214] as "traditionally accepted schemata."[215] This "schemata" defined the basic

[213] Cf. Brown 2006: esp. 91; and Annus 2010: 10–12. On the adoption of Mesopotamian astrological knowledge in Vedic India see Pingree 1987: 293–315; and Pingree 1998: 125–137.

[214] On the code related to four-fold divisions see in more detail Brown 2000: 140–140.

[215] See *inter alia* Rochberg 2010a: 70.

contents of the *apodoses*, as well as the structure of the series. As it was observed by D. Brown: "the huge number of invented omens, particular those with impossible, non-occurring *protases* demonstrates that their creators were not interested in accurately recording observations of the heavens. It reveals instead that once the basic categories of directions, constellations, planets, watches, heliacal risings, occultations, eclipses, colours, etc. had been made there was little need felt to observe the sky again before writing new *protases*."[216] Upon investigating this underlying code-system of EAE (labelled, again, as "simple code" by him), Brown came to the conclusion that the primary concern of the astrological series was not to collect a mass of celestial observations and to combine them with events observed on the earth, but rather, to generate vast amounts of *protases* and *apodoses* from each other, "the *majority* of which involved little or no empirical input" (the emphasis is the author's).[217] Since, on the one hand the fundamentals of the disciplinary code system (that is, the associations related to various planets, constellations, directions, meteorological phenomena, and so on) was already summarized by Koch-Westenholz[218] and Brown, and since, on the other hand, it is largely unrelated to the decoding of *Šumma izbu* omens, we won't repeat them in here. But there is a third reason for that, namely that while the present author is admittedly not an expert in celestial divination, the mapping of the more detailed methods of omen generation/interpretation in EAE, or even the refinement of the code system would require several decades of long, detailed examination of astrological omens. It is not a coincidence thus, that only a few eminent scholars, such as Erica Reiner, Ulla Koch, Francesca Rochberg, or David Brown reached mastery in this complex discipline. However, the fact that it is also true to ancient scholars, makes our ungroundedness a bit less frustrating. All at once, the already mentioned case of Marduk-šāpik-zēri clearly demonstrates that the "simple code" of celestial divination was anything but "simple."

In his already mentioned letter Marduk-šāpik-zēri cites several astral omens among witch, due to the sadly fragmentary state of the subsequent part of the tablet, only the first three can be identified with certainty. Yet, if we take a closer look on the very choice, the emendations, and finally, on the alternative explanation of these three, we will get really close to reconstruct his aims, as well as his specific way of thinking. The first omen is quoted without any further explanation, yet, it is supplemented with a second *apodosis*, definitely created by the author:

[216] Brown 2000: 136.
[217] Brown 2000: ibid.
[218] Koch-Westenholz 1995: 97–136.

SAA 10 160 obv. 11–12:
DIŠ ^{MUL}SAG.ME.GAR *ina še-er-ti ik-tu-un* LUGAL.MEŠ KÚR.MEŠ SILIM.MEŠ
šumma Nēbiru ina šērti iktūn šarrū nakkrūtu išallimū
LUGAL *ana* LUGAL SILIM-*ma* KIN-*ár*
šarru ana šarri šulma išappar

If Jupiter becomes steady in the morning: enemy kings will make peace,
one king will send peaceful messages to another.

This omen is actually the very first entry of the Jupiter Tablets (64–65) of *Enūma Anu Enlil*,[219] and as such, is the one most often cited by the scholars of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal.[220] It is rather unique, moreover, since the unreal phenomenon appearing in the *protasis* is nothing else but an adaptation of the first line of the Venus tablet VAT 10218, cited in the catchline of Tablet 60 (K 12011): "If Venus becomes steady in the morning: the people of the entire land will eat abundant bread, enemy kings will make peace."[221] Thus the Jupiter omen retained the *protasis*, and part of the *apodosis*. If we confront these facts with the introductory part of Marduk-šāpik-zēri's letter ("*I have now been kept in confinement for two years and, for fear of the king, my lord, though there have been good and bad portents for me to observe in the sky, I have not dared to report them to the king, my lord. Now, however, afraid that it might turn into my fault, I have decided to write to the king, my lord"* lines 6–10), it seems rather odd that he begins with this very omen of all others involving an impossible celestial event. Even if we presume that under "confinement" he meant that he could not get access to the series, it would not be, so to say, elegant to open with an incipit—and especially not with such a popular one. Actually, one may have the feeling already at the beginning of this analysis that this man was either a fool (and a layman), or quite the contrary, a self-confident expert who felt himself capable to correct or renew the current scientific consensus, or even to induce paradigmatic changes. So let's see how he complemented the *apodosis* appearing in the standard series, and, of course, that upon what grounds!

[219] See, however, the problems concerning the exact numbering of the Jupiter Tablets in Reiner–Pingree 2005: 1.
[220] See also SAA 8 115: 11–12, 160: 11–12, 170: 1–2, 184: 5–8, and 254: 1–2; with Reiner–Pingree 2005: 34.
[221] See Rochberg 2004: 75; and Reiner–Pingree 2005: 27.

Getting back to our first entry, it is evident, that according to the disciplinary code of astrology, the planet **Jupiter** was the the "star of Marduk,"[222] and as such, it was generally associated with the **king**. As for "morning" *(šērtu/šēru)* we should note that it was associated with brightness, even on textual grounds, since the equation of *šērtu/šēru* with *namāru* ("to be(come) bright, shine"), *nūru* ("light"), and related terms appears rather frequently in astrological commentaries,[223] so it can be considered as well-known by the scholars of the royal court—as it is confirmed by the assertions of Issar-šumu-ēreš, chief ☐*upšarru* of king Esarhaddon:

SAA 10 23, rv 8–20	
ina UGU ^{d}*Dil-bat*	Concerning the planet Venus,
ša LUGAL *be-li iš-pur-an-ni*	about which the king, my lord, wrote to me:
ma-a ^{d}*Dil-bat*	"Venus is
ina še-re-e-ti i-kun	stable in the morning"
a-na ma-a-ti ta-qab-bi-ia	—when will you tell me (what does it means)?
ki-i an-ni-i	According to what
ina mu-kal-lim-ti [*šà*]-[☐*ir*]	was written in the commentary
ma-a ^{d}*Dil*-[*bat*]	"Venus is
ina še-er-ti [*i-kun*]	stable in the morning
ma-a še-[*e*]-[*ru na-ma-ru*]	(the word) »morning« (means here) [to be bright][224]
šá-ru-[*ru*] [*na-ši-ma*]	[it carries] radiance.
KI.[GUB-*sà* GI.(NA)]	(The expression) its position [is stable]
ina [UD-*mu*?] [xxx]	(means) ...."

Well, one should interject that the ending of this letter is rather frustrating. Nevertheless, the explanation of Issar-šumu-ēreš confirms that the equation *šērtu/šēru* = *namāru* operates in the interpretation of our very omen as well,[225] and one should add at this point that, according to the simple code, "**brightness**" has a general **positive**

[222] MUL ^{d}AMAR.UTU, on this designation see Koch-Westenholz 1995: 120; and Brown 2000: 57; while on the name SAG.ME.GAR see Koch-Westenholz 1995: ibid; and Brown 2000: 55. For *Nēbiru* ("ferry"), used in our transcription see also Koch-Westenholz 1995: 120; and Brown 2000: 58, with note 168 (and further literature). For a summary on the various names and epithets of this planet see Koch-Westenholz 1995: 120–121; and Brown 2000: 64–66.

[223] See, for e.g. *šēri namāru šarūri našima* ACh Ištar 4 34, also Ach Supp. 44: 1 (*še-e-ru na-ma-ru*), 3, and passim, see CAD Š/2 322 (sub. *šērtu*), and also: *še-rum namāru* in ACh Ištar 2: 7, 2:8, 11: 3 and passim, see CAD Š/2 331 (sub. *šēru*, lexical section), and ŠE.ER *namāru* ŠE.ER *šarūru* in K 148: 7, see CAD Š/2 141 (sub. *šarūru*, lexical section).

[224] The emendation is based on the commentary text itself, see the previous note.

[225] And one may recall SAA 8 184 obv. 6–8 (unassigned, fragmentary report) which quotes this very omen together with the explanation: [*še-e-ru*] *na-mar-ma* /ŠE.ER.ZI ÍL-*ma* (lines 7–8).

value. That is, the interpretation concerns the king and can be associated with positive events—but upon what ground can we specify the latter? There is one expression which remained unexplained thus far: the very same GI of the *protasis* (which means "to be stable"), the interpretation of which is broken in the above quoted letter—and as such, seemingly lost forever. However, one should also notice that the word SILIM (which means, among others, "peace" and "to make peace") appears both in the original apodosis, and in the one (presumably) created by Marduk-šāpik-zēri himself, and thus it is foreseeable, that this cannot be a coincidence and there has to be some kind of link between GI and SILIM. However, to reveal the underlying association, which indeed affects the exact wording of the *apodoses*, we should at first get acquainted with the written code—so we will get back to this omen in the end of the next sub-chapter.

As for the following cited entry, we cannot define the exact source, although this omen was recalled by other astrologers as well,[226] however, with a slightly different *apodosi*s, in which GIN ("to be firm") appears instead of the *dāri* ("everlasting") used in here. It concerns Jupiter as well, since the constellation ZUBI (Akkadian *gamlu*, the "(shepherds) crook", that is, Auriga) was equated with this planet.[227]

SAA 10 160 obv. 13.

DIŠ ^{MUL}ZUBI ŠE.ER.ZI ÍL
šumma Gamlu šarūru naši
SUHUŠ ^{GIŠ}GU.ZA LUGAL ***da-ri* (or DA.RI)**
išid kussê šarri dāri

If Auriga carries radiance:
The foundation of the king's throne will be **everlasting**.

Here, the interpretation follows the same course as that of the before-cited omen, that is, **ZUBI** concerns the **king**, while ***šarūru*** can be associated with **brightness,** so it carries a **positive value**. As for the throne base, we should also turn to the written code—which will explain Marduk-šāpik-zēri's slight modification as well (see below). However, it is evident, already at this point that the choice of this omen is well thought-out—the *protasis* is actually almost the same as that of the previous one—with other words. As such, it reflects the mastery of the author, who uses a code-name of Jupiter

[226] SAA 8 115: rv. 4 (Bullu□u), and SAA 8 170: rv. 1 (Bamāya).
[227] See Brown 2000: 61–62.

and in fact quotes the same commentary on *šērtu/šarūru* as his already mentioned colleagues—and even corrects their interpretation. In other words: Marduk-šāpik-zēri was anything but a fool. He gradually reveals that he can renew even the most well known, and deliberately plays (as for this case, he really does play) with an association seemingly common in the scholarly circles of the Assyrian court—he knows the ropes, and is really old-acquainted with the latter.

Finally, we arrived to the last clearly legible, and by all means most interesting passage, the one supplemented with an altenative interpretation (and a somewhat detailed explanation). Assuredly, we cannot secede from Jupiter omens—although the following one was preserved only in here, since it is not included in the edition of the Jupiter tablets.

SAA 10 160 obv. 14–16

DIŠ ^{MUL}SAG.ME.GAR *ina* KUN.MEŠ GUB ^{ÍD}MAŠ.GÚ.QAR *u* ^{ÍD}UD.KIB.NUN.KI
šumma Nēberu ina Zibbāti izzaz Idiqlat u Purattu
sa-ki-ki DIRI.MEŠ : IDIM : *sa-ki-ki* : IDIM : *nag-bi* : DIRI [: *ma-lu*]-⌈*ú*⌉
sakīki malâ : IDIM : *sakīki* : IDIM *nagbi* : DIRI : *malû*
HÉ.⌈NUN⌉ *u* HÉ.GÁL.⌈LA *ina* KUR⌉ GÁL-*ši*
nuhšu u hagallu ina māti ibbašši

If Jupiter stands in Pisces: the Tigris and the Euphrates
will be filled with silt. IDIM (means) “silt” IDIM (means) “spring” DIRI (means) “to be full”
There will be prosperity and abundance in the land.

It goes without saying that at this point the author declares trumps and markedly departs from the “traditional”: the two interpretations are radically different, even regarding their basic value—the original has a negative, while the one offered by Marduk-šāpik-zēri is evidently positive, full to overflowing with innovations, even at first glance. It is also salient, however, that the first one is quite specific, as it refers to the two rivers, so one may suspect that the latter were somehow encoded in the *protasis*, and as such, may be related to the disciplinary code of astrology. And indeed, if we seek for discipline-related associations concerning the constellation Pisces (KUN.MEŠ, Akkadian *Zibbāti*, “the tails”) we find the following relevant passage in the Great Star List:[228]

[228] For a recent edition of this text see Koch-Westenholz 1995: 187– 205, and for the quoted lines: 192–193.

145	MUL ^{íD}IDIGNA	^{d}*A-nu-ni-tum*
146	MUL ^{íD}BURANUN	MUL ŠIM.MAH

Although this is in itself not quite telling, but one may consider that "Pisces", as a plural noun, also refers to a composite constellation—jut as the Mesopotamian designation ("Tails"). Actually, the latter was one of the last constellations to be established, since in MUL.APIN and earlier traditions the "western fish/tail" was called the Great Swallow (ŠIM.MAH), which included the "neck" of Pegasus as well (so it consisted of SW Pisces and Epsilon Pegasi), while the name of the northern fish, which also included the middle of Andromeda, was the Goddess Anunītum (= NE Pisces and Andromeda).[229] The latter, as we have seen, were also envisaged as the heavenly Euphrates and Tigris.

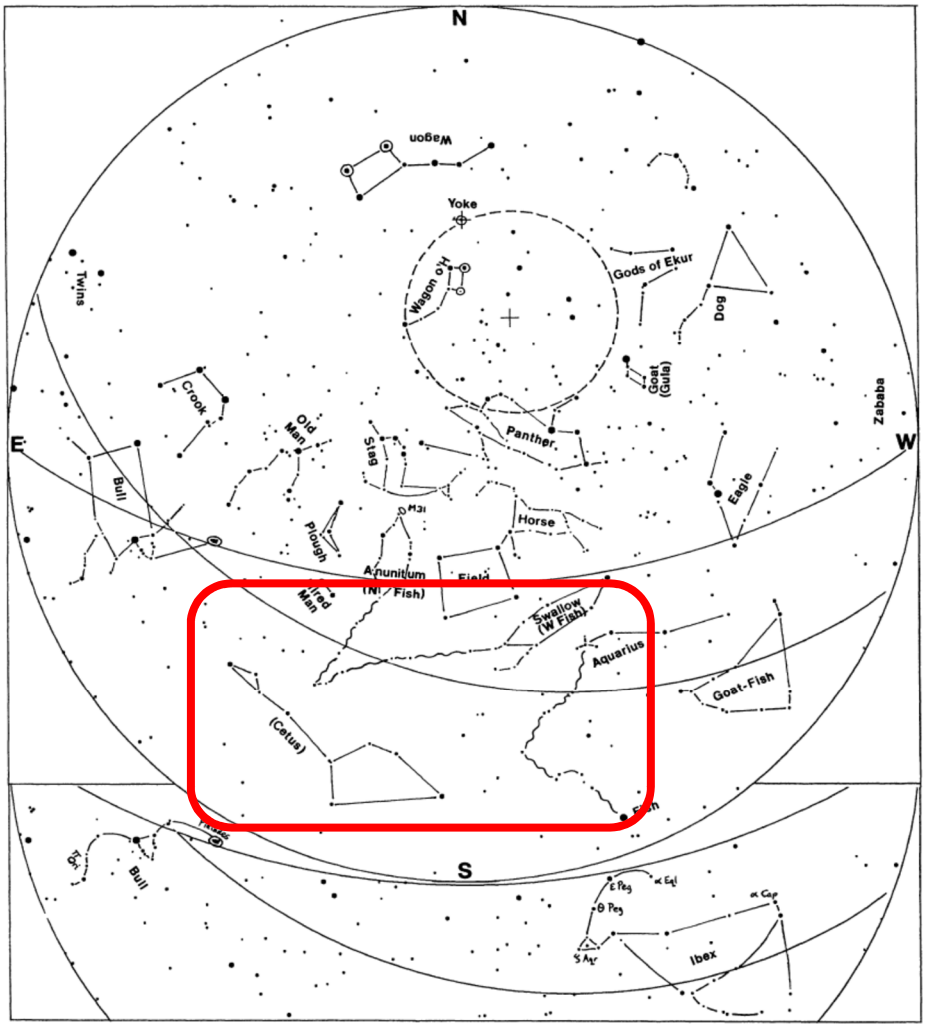


Fig. 8. The night sky of late summer 2800 BCE at 36°N, showing Babylonian constellations and highlighting the two "Tails/Fishes". After Rogers 1998: 22, Fig. 7.

[229] On the history and development of this constellation see inter alia Rogers 1998: esp. 27.

So while the disciplinary code of celestial divination clearly defines that the interpretation will concern the two main rivers, other considerations, such as the origin of the negative value of the original *apodosis* are not that clear cut, and, as we will see, are largely dependent on the written code. We may safely assume that at this point Marduk-šāpik-zēri dived into the deep end—and it is time for us to do the same!

3. Written Code

"(The edubba'a): one enters it blind, and leaves it seeing"[230]

The procedures of the interpretations discussed in the present sub-chapter are based on associations which are characteristic to the cuneiform writing system, in which the form, name, and phonetic values of a given cuneiform sign, as well as polyphony and polysemy can all play some kind of a role. Therefore, the en- and decoding of these associations between *protasis* and *apodosis* requires thorough scribal and scholarly education and knowledge, and admittedly, a great deal of creativity in many cases. While some of them, especially graphic ones are visible for the first sight, or can be "heard," such as the paronomastic associations, upon reading, a great deal of the written code may remain hidden before those who are incompetent, or unable to *see* the underlying principles of the code, and thus the underlying "layers" of the text. To put it simple: the written code concerns all the possibilities which are hidden or embedded in the cuneiform writing system, taking into consideration all the main characteristics of the latter, the physical appearance of the signs, their polysemy, homophony, and last but not least, bilingualism, which opens the door to the appliance of the latter in multi-language level as well. Since the recognition of all these characteristics were acquired during scribal education, we may say that they represent, in fact, the alpha and the omega of divination science—even on the inner omen level, since the written code, already learned during "schooldays," constituted the final stage of omen generation and interpretation. Yet, however "universal" it seems to be at first sight, we should foretell already at this point that it could only have used properly by professionals, since only after the basic contents of the *apodoses* were defined by the simple and disciplinary codes, could one investigate the written surface and *reveal the exact wording* of the interpretations. That is, the possibilities of the written code, learned practically from the very beginning of scribal education, were by no way infinite, but rather, were strictly narrowed down. Thus it can be stated that at this point we have arrived to an exalted (if not the most exalted) sphere of Mesopotamian scientific thinking, since by this stage the associations embedded in the writing system had to be made consistent with the already defined values, protagonist(s) and events—the ignorance of the latter might have led to false interpretations, as we will see in the already mentioned case of Marduk-šāpik-zēri.

[230] (é igi-nu-gál (var.: nu-bad) ba-an-ku$_4$ igi i-gál (var.: igi-bad) ba-an-ta-è) Detail of a Sumerian riddle, see Civil 1987: 19□20, and also Volk 2000:1–2.

As it was already said, several contributions were made regarding the analysis of the principles of the written code (usually labelled as "learned associations" or "hermeneutic techniques")[231] in the inner-omen level.[232] All of these works, however, focused on the *single* (possible, or sometimes rather speculative) "hermeneutical" link between the *protasis* and *apodosis* or certain (generally decontextualized) omens, and never considered these procedures as parts of a more complex and coherent interpretative system. Moreover, although it was at times by-the-way stated that these techniques are based on (general) scribal education,[233] practically no one attempted to compare them with the characteristic associative and organizing methods of the fundaments of the latter: the lexical lists. In this respect, the recent dissertation of Jay Crisostomo[234] who focused on the advanced lexical education in Old Babylonian Nippur (and, within the frames of the latter, specifically with the re-edition and textual analysis of proto-Izi) is a refreshing exception. Namely, since Chrisostomo, upon throughoutly analysing the principles of the written code in lexical texts—referred to by him as "analytical hermeneutics", already observed that the latter constitute the basis of the "hermeneutic techniques" applied in scientific texts. Of course, his focus, aim, and task was rather different from those of ours, and therefore he did not devote a detailed comparative study to this matter. As for our case, however, such an attempt may prove to be rather fruitful, as it may highlight the basic methods and mechanisms operating on the last stage of omen generation/interpretation.

Moreover, getting some insight to the organizing principles and methods of lexical lists, which, again, amied to reveal a system encoded in the cuneiform, may enables us to understand the foundations of the structure of SAG ITI NU TIL.LA, which also aimed to reveal a system—originating from the divine.

3.1. The written code in lexical texts—the foundations of the Science of Writing

As a preliminary remark one may assert that the history of the research of the lexical material has a very similar course to that of omen texts in general. In other words, it also

[231] Cf. *inter alia* Brown 2000: 132 and 138.

[232] For a detailed overview of "hermeneutic interpretation techniques", and for the "pseudo-etymologic" and etymographic interpretations see Maul 1999: 1–18; and Frahm 2010: mainly 96–98. On the same techniques used in the text commentaries see Frahm 2011a: 70–76.

[233] See e.g. on the influence of lexical material on omen texts (in general, regarding the technology of listing, finding parallels, opposites and analogies) see Leichty 1993; and also Brown 2000: 76 and 132: (these assicioations were) drawn from (what he termed) "Listenwissenschaft" or the "technology of listing".

[234] Crisostomo 2014.

represents a paradigmatic shift in the approach regarding the intellectual background of lexical lists—as scholars, departing from (the rather boresome and disillusive) "Listenwissenschaft", arrived, finally to the study the Science of Writing.

The former expression, which refers to Mesopotamian "list-making science" was introduced by W. von Soden in his ill-famed essay *"Leistung und Grenze sumerischer und babylonischer Wissenschaft",* originally published in 1936, and written in the spirit of the racist politics of Nazism.[235] Von Soden's basic aim was to provide a brief sketch about the scientific thinking and worldview of the Sumerian and Babylonian races—through the examination of the lexical material available to him at that time. Since for him the lexical tradition reflected nothing more than a naïve attempt to categorize and order the perceivable world *("Ordnungswille")*, and this Mesopotamian taxonomy failed to conform to modern scientific categories, his examination confirmed the ideology of the Nazi party, namely, the intellectual superiority of the Aryan races—since both the Sumerians and the Akkadians were unable to produce some kind of a real science and scholarship which could have been compared to that of the ancient Greeks or Indians. Although in this respect von Soden's *Leistung und Grenze*, which was reprinted twice after World War II (with some bibliographical addenda, but otherwise unmodified), marks, to use the words of N. Veldhuis, "a black page in the history of Assyriology",[236] its basic assumptions, namely that lexical lists represented some kind of a classification system, and the very concept of Listenwissenschaft made such a huge impact on the general approach towards lexical lists, that they persist even in more recent descriptions of the lexical tradition, published during the second half of the twentieth century.[237] "Listenwissenschaft" became a standard term in Assyiriological literature and, moreover, it entered to the lexicon of humanities scholarship as a whole.[238]

Although the term Listenwissenschaft appears even in the most recent discussions of Mesoptamian intellectual history, it became more descriptive and concerns the practice of list-making and the list format in general, which are characteristic to the cuneiform textual record, whether in lexical lists, omen compendia, law collections, incantations, and so on. As it was already observed by A. Leo Oppenheim who, although rejected the

[235] For a more detailed discussion of this influential essay see Flygare 2006; with Crisostomo 2014: 30□31; and Veldhuis 2014: 21□22 and 53□54.

[236] Veldhuis 2014: 22.

[237] See e.g. Larsen 1987: 209; Civil 1995: 2305; Westenholz 1998: 451–452; Steinkeller 1995□1996: 212; and even Brown 2000: 76, however, with note 203; and Cancik-Kirschbaum 2010: 30. See also the general description of these tendencies in Crisostomo 2014: 30□31; and Veldhuis 2014: 22 and 54.

[238] See Hilgert 2009: 278; with Veldhuis 2014: 22.

naïve "categories" suggested by von Soden, still considered the lists as tools for classification, that the very format facilitates comparison and contrasting which determine the organization of the list—and knowledge, in general.[239] It is thus a remarkably different approach, since while von Soden considered the structure of the lists as a blind path of Mesopotamian mentality, Oppenheim understood the intuitive and schematic principles which defined the organization of the material. And indeed, it is the very format of the lists which facilitates and actuates the generation of new knowledge, both sintagmatically and paradigmatically. To quote Jay Chrisostomo, "lexical lists, the first and most foundational of cuneiform scholarly texts, provide the basic format from which ancient cuneiform scholarship and analogical hermeneutics emerged. List-making creates juxtaposition, which allows and invites association and analogy."[240]

To put it in other words, lexical lists as—indeed actual—scientific texts, upon generating, as we will see, one entry from another, were actually investigated (and consequently taught, as the tools of scribal education) nothing else, then *correlations*. These various correlations (based on graphic, phonetic, or semantic principles) were embedded in the writing system, and on smaller scale, in the signs or words themselves, and, moreover, were largely *contextual*, since in case of individual lists many coefficient factors defined which word or sign might or might not be present, as well as the structure and sequence of the individual entries. One might safely say that they constituted a holistic system *per se*.

In fact, all this conforms with our previous assertions about omen generation, and, as we will see, with the organisation of larger textual units in the compendia—especially in SAG ITI NU TIL.LA as well. However, on a larger scale it also conforms (rather strikingly) with the following observations of the psychologist Richard E. Nisbett who, with regard to general "Eastern"[241] conceptual habits and more specifically, to scientific reasoning came to the conclusion that (italics mine):

[239] Oppenheim 1977: 248□249; and Oppenheim 1978.

[240] Crisostomo 2014: 31.

[241] Richard E. Nisbett, upon investigating the "Geography of Thought", that is the differences between the cognitive processes and the conceptual system of "East" and "West", came to the conclusions that in general, Westerners reason analytically. They focus on the object (whether physical or social) and its attributes, use its attributes to categorize it and apply rules based on the categories to predict and explain its behavior. In contrast, East Asians reason holistically, they focus on the object in its surrounding field, they have no or little concern in categories or universal rules, and behaviour is explained on the basis of the forces presumed to be operative for the individual case at a particular time. In his ground-breaking work (*The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westeners Thik Differently… and Why,* Nisbett 2003) he confirmed each of these points with evidence from laboratory experiments. Of course, as he admitted as well, the terms "East Asians" and "Westeners" are broad-bush, used to billions of people—as

> "the conviction about the fundamental relatedness of all things made it obvious to them that objects are altered by *context*. Thus any attempt to categorize objects with precision would not have seemed to be of much help in comprehending events. The world was simply *too complex and interactive for categories* and rules to be helpful for understanding objects or controlling them."[242]

Moreover:

> "Events do not occur in isolation from other events, but are always *embedded in a meaningful whole in which the elements are constantly changing and rearranging themselves*. To think about an object or event in isolation and apply abstract rules to it is to invite extreme and mistaken conclusions."[243]

In other words: correlations and associations are parts of larger-scale, as we have already labelled, holistic systems. It is, as we will see, also fits well to omen interpretation, where all the basic code systems had to be taken into consideration—by means of a single association based on a single code one cannot explain or create the proper interpretation. However, if we think it further, such thinking habits may already emerge during elementary cuneiform education (e.g. in simple thematic lists),[244] even before the acquirement of graphic, phonetic, or semantic associations during "advanced lexical education", since the definition of the correct reading of a sign which did not appear alone, required contextualization: the scribes had to define whether if it is a logogram, a phonogram, or a determinative and consequently define the correct reading in a *given* context—in relation to other signs. Thinking this even further in the light of the above quotes which concerned "Eastern" conceptual habits (ancient and modern as well), we may ask: what if it is not only writing in itself which (well demonstratedly) changes human cognition,[245] but rather, we should take into consideration the specific writing sys-

if they were nearly identical. However, in case of overall, pioneering theories, generalisation is unavoidable, despite the myriad differences, obviously recognized by the author as well (in this respect see Nisbett 2003: esp. xxii□xxiii).

[242] Nisbett 2003: 24.

[243] Nisbett 2003: 27.

[244] During the course of the Old Babylonian curriculum in Nippur, for example, as it was reconstructed by N. Veldhuis (Veldhuis 1997: XXX; and see also Veldhuis 2014: 204□215), after the acquirement of the basics (sign elements, simple signs, and names), the students learned simple thematic lists (Old Babylonian Nippur Ura), in which the contextualization of signs was inevitable. After this second level, they continued with various sign and word lists, which constitute the "advanced lexical education" of Crisostomo, see Crisostomo 2014: esp. 2, 25□26 and 53.

[245] The cognitive changes which result from literacy constitute a well-studied topic in anthropology, psychology, and linguistics which called forth a vast amount of scholarly literature. For a recent, excellent summary of the latter see Horowitz□Watson 2011: 15□44 (Chapter 2: Writing and conceptual change), with further literature.

tem as well, since the decoding of logographic scripts requires different cognitive processes than the reading of alphabetic texts,[246] and as such they actually predestine the holistic conceptual processes of the literate intellectuals.

The examination of correlations offered by the writing system, as it emerges in lexical lists, can in no way be considered as "scribal play"[247]—as a scientific approach, the generation of entries from other ones reflect the basic aim to *reveal* the specific elements of a complex system. An illustrative example for that is the following passage from one of the earliest attested god lists, created during the Early Dynastic period at the city of Fāra:[248]

Fāra god list (IAS 88 iv 5ff.)

^{d}Nergal$_{x}$ (**KIŠ**.UNUG)
^{d}**KIŠ**:**PIRIG** (=^{d}Tidnum?)
^{d}**Pirig**-bànda
^{d}**Pirig**-kal (=^{d}Pirig-lamma?)
^{d}**Pirig-sag$^{!}$-kal**
^{d}**UD**.KA
^{d}**UD-sag-kal**

As it was already observed by G. Rubio, while the organization of later god lists from the second and first millennia are based on theological and mythopoetic principles, the Early Dynastic lists from Fāra and Abū-☐alābīh represent tree sets of organizing principles. The entries, that is, the names of gods follow one after another either on the basis of graphic associations (when they share a sign in common), phonetic similarities, or basic conceptual or semantic association.[249]

Is is actually impossible not to notice, that the animal head signs appearing in the first entries (KIŠ, and consecutively PIRIG) were rather similar (especially during the Early Dynastic period),[250] and that **the transition from one section to another seems to be defined by the last sign of the previous entry** (possibly also in the case of KAL and UD, and one may also observe the repetition of "sag-kal" in the last entries). Not incidentally, this latter principle (set out in bold) which is reflected, as we will see,

[246] See also Horowitz–Watson 2011: 19☐20.
[247] Cf. also Crisostomo 2014: 31☐32.
[248] See Krebernik 1986. On god lists in general, see Lambert 1957–71; and Litke 1998: 1–6; with Rubio 2011: esp. 97–99.
[249] See Rubio 2011: 99.
[250] On KIŠ and PIRIG in the ED period see Mittermayer 2005: 6☐10 and 22☐28.

in other types of lexical lists as well, will be of great importance for us—upon analysing the transition between the sub-sections of SAG ITI NU TIL.LA, composed more than one and a half thousand years later.

As for the Fāra god list, the analysis of Rubio confirmed a phenomenon already well-known in Assyriology, namely that the pantheon appearing in the list shows minimal correspondence with the divine realm reflected in co-temporary administrative texts and teophoric names—as the following tablet clearly reflects.

The Fāra Panthea			
• offering lists: 56 deities, of which only 15 also appear in the Fāra god list • Fāra god list SF 1: ca. 600 names, of which 421 are preserved			
Deities attested in the god list, the offering lists, and the onomasticon 12	Deities attested in the offering lists and the onomasticon but not in the god list 14	Deities attested in the god list and the onomasticon but not in the offering lists 4	Deities attested in the god list and the offering lists but not in the onomasticon 3

That is, Early Dynastic god lists can be considered as scholarly constructions, "in large part detached both from personal religiosity and public cult."[251] And indeed, as some of the teonyms listed in our above example clearly reflect: they were rather artificial, or in other words generated and thus represent deities (or titles) unknown for both daily and cultic practice. What may have been then, one might ask, the aim of this scholarly effort which actually created non-existent deities? One should not forget that we are dealing with an essentially theological composition, and thus we cannot talk about "scribal play" in here—no one would have "played" with the (names of the) gods. Rather, we are actually confronted with the very same concept which will be fundamental for the understanding of the intention of the author of SAG ITI NU TIL.LA as well. The scholars were *not creating* "new" deities, but rather, they may have perceived that they were actually *revealing* the formerly unknown parts of a cosmic, divine system—upon decoding the cuneiform.

Graphic correlations in the earliest lexical texts

[251] Rubio 2011: 109.

Lexical lists already appear among the archaic texts of Uruk and Jemdet Na□r—hallmarking the beginning of a scholarly tradition which lasted for nearly 3000 years.[252] These earliest texts (the corpus contains 13 more or less standardized compositions, unilingual lists of various words) were semantically ordered and display some kind of an organizational structure, although our understanding of the latter is sometimes limited due to our limited cultural and linguistic knowledge.[253] We will only recall one example, a section from the composition known as Vessels and Garments (which listed vessels, prepared products, and textiles),[254] and thus it is not surprising that the greatest part of the entries appearing on Fig. 9. represent the basic vessel sign (DUG_b) which functions here as a frame or container sign.[255]

[252] On the archaic lexical corpus in general see Veldhuis 2014: 27□34. The entire corpus was published by Hans Nissen and Robert Englund in ATU 3 (Englund□Nissen 1993), which now can be complemented with a few fragments published in ATU 7 (Englund et al. 2001), and with other tablets from illicit diggings, became known during the last decade of the twentieth century, and allegedly originating from Umma, see Algaze 2005: 17.

[253] Archaic records contain only word signs and thus can be considered as non-glottographic—that is, they were not read but rather, verbalized (see Hyman 2006), and can be understood for us on a general level, even if the very language which it was represented is (surprisingly) debated. Although according to most scholars the language could have been nothing else than Sumerian, Robert Englund, one of the main specialists of the corpus opiniate that the language is unknown (see Englund 1998: 73□81). On this debate see Veldhuis 2014: 29 with further literature, while on our limited cultural knowledge see also Wagensonner 2010: 287□288.

[254] See Veldhuis 2014: 37□38.

[255] Cf. Wagensonner 2010: 297□298 fur further graphic associations in the list, and also op.cit: 301□302 on archaic frame signs.

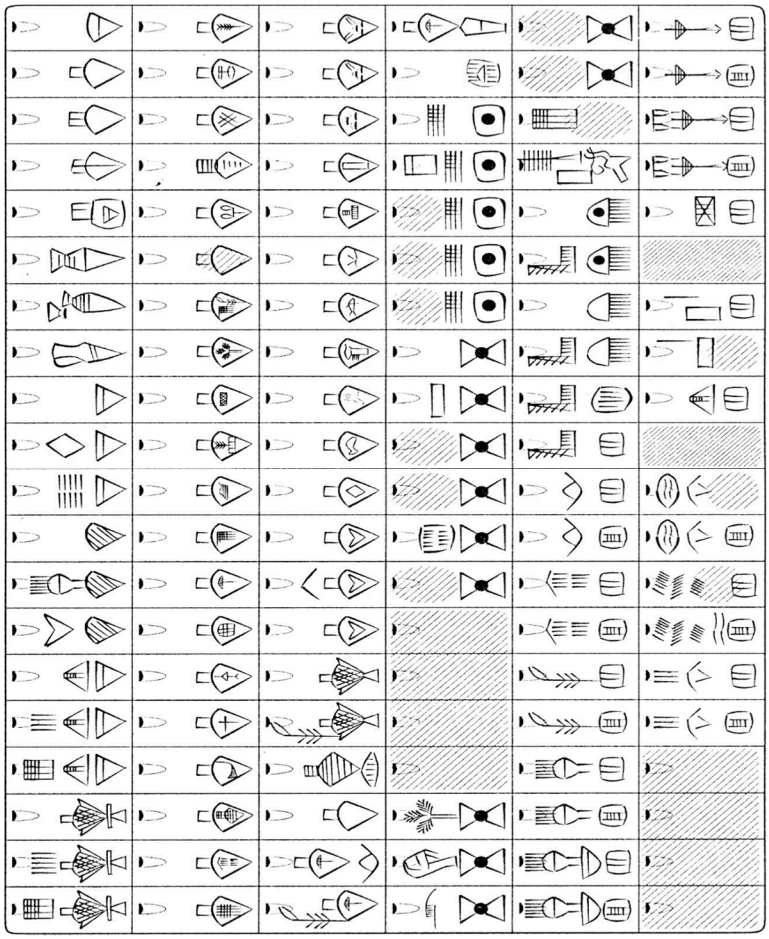


Fig. 9. Composite copy of archaic Vessels and Garments, after Englund 1998: 97, Fig. 29.

Section 21□54, appearing on the above figure attracted much scholarly attention, since each of its entries contains the vessel (container) sign inscribed with some commodity: grain, milk, nuts, but even pig or donkey as well. One may understand this section as a list of containers for these commodities or their products, however, only a slight overlap can be observed between the entries of the list and the containers appearing in contemporary administrative records (a rare exception is $DUG_{b}x$ $ŠE_{a}$, a container for grain). That is, since most of these signs seem to be artificial and thus generated—or, to use the terminology of Th. Krispijn, they can be considered as "theoretic signs."[256]

The generation of archaic entries, however, has a much more common method, which involves the graphic shape of signs (of course, at this point when the readings are rather uncertain, we cannot even talk about any other factor). As the earliest lists were subjected to a throughout analysis performed recently by Klaus Wagensonner,[257] he observed that the organization of the entries in the archaic lists was quite often based on various graphic principles, namely:

[256] See Krispijn 1992.
[257] See Wagensonner 2010 (esp. p. 290).

1. a group of entries may share the same sign,
2. a group of entries may share a sign-sequence (consisting of two or more signs),
3. a group of entries may share a specific sign-combination (composed of two juxtaposed signs or by means of a frame-sign),
4. a group of entries may share the shape of a sign,
5. a group of entries may share a frame-sign,
6. a group of entries may share a sign-part,
7. a group of entries may share a sign-modification (*gunû, tenû,* and so on).

The following copy, complemented with the display work of Wagensonner, illustrates the various graphic correlations observable in archaic Lu A (NAMEŠDA), namely: same signs, common frame-signs, similar sign shapes and sign sequences.[258]

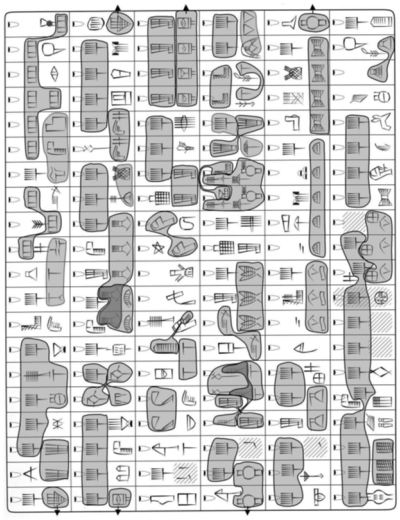


Fig. 10. Archaic Lu A composite text, after Englund–Nissen 1993: 17, Fig. 4, complemented with the display work of Wagensonner showing the various graphic correlations (Wagensonner 2010: 305, Fig. 3)

These considerations are also evident in the Early Dynastic lexical materail, which is basicly the continuation of the archaic tradition, since, although in a somewhat modified form, it represents all the standard archaic compositions—in a rather conservative way over the entire duration of the third millennium.[259] The following, neat example was also treated by J. Crisostomo, although we have to slightly complement his interpretation.[260]

[258] See the detailed discussion in Wagensonner 2010: 293□294.
[259] See Veldhuis 2014: 60□72.
[260] Cf. Crisostomo 2014: 35□36.

The manuscript of ED Fish from Ur in Fig 11 lists fishes and other aquatic animals, and thus it is obvious that most entries contain the determinative KU_6, which is thus rather a semantic indicator, than a graphically arranging element. The latter, however, become relevant if we carefully read lines 3'–9' of the second column:

ii 3' agargara-ku_6
ii 4' agargara-sìla-ku_6
ii 5' nun-AB-ku_6
ii 6' gir
ii 7' kíĝ-ku_6
ii 8' ĝír-ku_6
ii 9' šum-ku_6

Fig. 11. UET 2, 234 (ED Fish), after Crisostomo 2014: 35.

As for graphic considerations, it is at first sight clear and visible that the first three entries of this section begins with the **same sign** (NUN). They contain the names of various fish-types, among which agargara (written later with NUN*tenû*)[261] is a real fish which appears in other texts as well.[262] The two other fish names, however, appear only in this very composition, so it is quite possible that (although the last entry which contains the AB element may refer to some kind of saltwater fish),[263] they are actually non-existent, "theoretic" elements generated on the basis of graphic principles.

The next section begins with the "gir"-fish, equivalent the Akkadian *šahû*, which appears in numerous lexical, administrative texts, and even in Old Babylonian literary compositions, so we are again dealing with an existent, and presumably saltwater breed.[264] The sign GIR itself is actually KU_6*gunû*, and seemingly this graphic element defines the the following entry, since kíĝ of our texts is **written with *gunû*-hatchings,** so the two entries share the **same sign-modification**.[265] As for the last two entries, it is again visible that ĝír and šum share a rather **similar sign form**. But how can the sign GÍR, the first element of this graphically related couplet associated with the previous entries? Although one may argue that some very distant resemblance of the

[261] See MSL 9, 124□137 viii 501, re-edited in MSL 14, 121□122 8, cf. Crisostomo 2014: 35, note 103.
[262] See ePSD sub. *agargara* for furter lexical and administrative occurrences.
[263] We know a manuscript from Fāra which does not contain the NUN-element in the entry of the AB fish, see Crisostomo 2014: 35.
[264] For textual references see ePSD sub. gir, with Proverb collection 11.42 (ETCSL 6.1.11), Segment C 15: gir ab-ba sag ní-ba sal-sal (A gir-fish of the sea, whose head is wider than its body).
[265] Although in later lists with sign names it isn't described as *gunû*, cf. Crisostomo 2014: 35□36. On the sign modification *gunû* in sign-names of the lexical lists see esp. Gong 2000: 31□32

sign forms may also play some role in here, it is much more probable that it was in fact the **homophonous Sumerien reading** /ĝir/ which facilitated the creation of this entry (and that it was somewhat overlooked by Crisostomo). And indeed, if we consult with the dictionary it turns out that ĝír^{ku6} is actually a phonetic variant of the already discussed gir^{ku6}, a saltwater fish, and this variation may also be affected by the fact that ĝír, as a verb means "to flash" (Akkadian *barāqu*), which may recall the picture of the flare-up or gleamy body of the fish in the foams of the sea.[266]

This last association, of course, if we are correct, goes well beyond the graphic correlations investigated in late in third millennium lexical material, and became much more obvious and relevant in the next, in many respects formative period of the Mesopotamian lexical tradition—in Old Babylonian times.

□*âtu*-type and phonological correlations

The Old Babylonian period hallmarks, to use the words of N. Veldhuis, a general "Revolution in Writing",[267] not just because it has a rather rich textual history—with regard to omen texts as well, since this is the very phase during of which the first written omens appear—but also because it involves remarkable changes in the character of the lexical material. Although, judging by the already discussed organizational principles and correlations which persist up until the very end of the practice of lexical and scientific activity in Mesopotamia, I'm not really convinced that we should talk about a real scientific revolution in the Kuhnean sense, which involves paradigmatic changes, however, we cannot deny that the OB lexical corpus reflects many novelties. To quote Veldhuis again, the "corpus of the Old Babylonian period is almost entirely new, although elements of earlier lexical traditions are sometimes used in creating these new compositions. The traditional lexical texts of the third millennium were still being copied … but their numbers dwindle compared to the new word lists and sign lists."[268] Many of this new compositions, attested primarily on school tablets, belongs to the new genre of sign lists which emerged during this time[269] and incorporated the lists of simple and complex signs equated with (generally) various Sumerian readings, and at times, especially in

[266] See ePSD sub. ĝír, even with the literary reference from Nanše B (ETCSL 4.14.2) Segment B 9: ĝír^{ku6}-e ab mu-na-ab-ĝír-re (The flash-fish makes the sea sparkle for her).

[267] See Veldhuis 2014: 143.

[268] See Veldhuis 2014: 143□144.

[269] An excellent overview of the Old Babylonian lexical novelties is Veldhuis 2014: 143□201. As for sign lists in particular, although such compositions appeared already in Šuruppak and Ebla, and perhaps in the archaic period as well, they were rare and did not constitute a stable tradition—in contrast with the Old Babylonian sign lists, widely used in scribal education, see Veldhuis 2014: esp. 177.

case of specific compositions as Proto-Aa or Proto-Diri (see below), also with Akkadian translations. In other words, the explicit (as well as the implicit!) bilingualism of the lexical material also become visible during this period.

One of the most important sign lists, learned as the very first composition during the level of advanced lexical education in Old Babylonian Nippur was Proto-Ea,[270] which lists multiple Sumerian readings of simple cuneiform signs, usually in two column format.[271] The three-column, explicitly bilingual format of the same list which provides each entry with one or more Akkadian translations is known as Proto-Aa (also named after the incipit of the first millennium version). Basically, it follows the order of Ea, as it can be seen in the following passages:[272]

Proto-Ea[273]

66.	mu-u_2	TUG_2
67.	tu-u_2	TUG_2
68.	nam	TUG_2
69.	u_3-mu-uš	TUG_2

Proto-Aa[274]

66.	mu-u_4	TUG_2	*litbušum*	to clothe oneself
67.	tu-u_4	TUG_2	*ṣubātum*	garment
68.	nam	TUG_2	*rubû*	ruler
69.	u_4-mu-uš	TUG_2	*ṭēmum*	reason
			milkum	advice

The short extract from Proto-Ea represent four different readings of the TÚG sign: mu_4 = to dress, tu_9 (or túg) = garment, nám = ruler, and umuš = reason, but these corresponding meanings become even more evident if we consider the Akkadian subcolumn of the same section in Proto-Aa. As it is also evident from the last entry of the latter, Aa tends to represent all the possible Akkadian equivalents of a Sumerian logogram (which sometimes may receive as many as ten Akkadian renderings), therefore Aa is much longer than Ea.[275] This tendency becomes even more dramatic during the first millennium, when both lists become bilingual. While first millennium, canonical Ea usually gives only one Akkadian translation of a Sumerian term, Aa lists *all the known translations*, and as such it grows to a 42 tablets long composition which contains about

[270] The name Ea is derived from the initial entry (Ea = *nâqu*) of the canonical, first millennium version. Both Proto-Ea and Ea, as well as Proto-Aa and Aa were published by M. Civil in MSL 14 (= Civil 1979). For a short overview of these lists see Veldhuis 2014: 178□182.

[271] Although Proto-Ea texts in one column formats are also known, see Veldhuis 2014: 179.

[272] Also cited by Veldhuis 2014: 180.

[273] After CBS 7846 = P228034 (a small prism), this section corresponds to lines 66□69 of the composite text, see MSL 14 (=Civil 1979): 33□34.

[274] CBS 11001+ = P229723 obv. iii), corresponds to lines 66□69 of the composite text, see MSL 14 91.

[275] See also Veldhuis 2014: 181.

14,400 entries.[276] Fig. 12 well illustrates that, since shows a passage from the nearly two hundred equations for the sign BAR in Aa I/6.[277] However, while concerning this very section other authors concluded that if an exegete sought for a variant reading or meaning, "there was almost no limit for finding different meanings for a given word or sign,"[278] we should note that actually *there was*—at least in omen generation/interpretation, since these "different meanings" had to be reconciled with the other code-systems. And this means and meant the real challenge.

140	ba–a	BAR	*ba–a–ru*	*uš–šu–[ru]*
141	ba–ár	BAR	MIN	*uš–šu–[ru]*
142				*za–a–[zu]*
143				*mi–iš–[lu]*
144				*meš–la–[nu]*
145				*bi–e–[rum]*
146				*bi–e–[šu]*
147				*sa–l[a–x]*
148				*ba–⌜x⌝–[x]*
149				*ik–[x–x]*
150				*ša–[la–qu]*
151				*[š]a–[la–tu]*
152-165	broken			
166	(ba–ár	BAR	*ba–a–ru*)	*⌜x–x⌝–[x]*
167				*qa–la–[pu]*
168				*qu–lip–tum*
169				*ṣa–la–pu*
170				*ka–pa–rum*
171				*ka–šá–du*

Fig. 12. A short passage from the nearly two hundred equations for the sign BAR in Aa I/6, after MSL 14 229.

It is not surprising than that by the first millennium, both Ea and Aa became important reference tools[279] for scholars who were interested to find alternative translations or readings for a given sign or word, since they provide essential, so-called ☐***âtu*-type equations**—and as such, they will be of remarkable importance for us as well during the analysis of SAG ITI NU TIL.LA.

[276] See *inter alia* Civil 1995: 2310.

[277] See MSL 14 229☐235.

[278] Frahm 2010: 14, and more recently Frahm 2018b: esp. 13–15.

[279] I would rather avoid the terms "sourcebook" or "handbook" (used by many, cf. *inter alia* Frahm 2011: 14 and passim), since, as we have seen, these series formed part of the general scribal education, and as such were presumably known by heart by the scholars—at least in part. It is in fact anything but surprising, especially if we recall the quite telling case of the Yoruba cowrie diviner from Nigeria, recorded by W. Bascom, who was able to recite more than 12,000 lines from a divinatory text. The transliteration and translation of these verses occupy the largest part of his study, see Bascom 1980: 54☐773; and see also Böck 2010: 208 on this very case.

Basically, the term □*âtu* refers to a text which contain readings of particular cuneiform signs—as such, it may either refer to bilingual lexical lists, or to commentaries[280] (especially since the earliest commentaries from the first millennium, such as the Principal Commentary of *Šumma izbu*, contain nothing more than various readings of given signs or words and thus resemble to lexical lists).[281] Accordingly, □*âtu*-type equations, e.g. the equation of a given sign with a different reading or Akkadian translation, refer to correlations drawn from lexical texts. □*âtu*-type equations (or simply "lexical equations") are so essential in omen generation/interpretation that we might say that they constitute the backbone of the written code, since, although they only rarely explicit in the text itself, form the basis of the relevant phonological associations (see below).

Last but not least, while the basic sign lists will be important sources for fundamental □*âtu*-type equations, there is much more in them, since they represent, and consequently teach during scribal education, beyond polysemy, **homophony** as well, that is, various **phonological** (and semantic) **correlations** which involve their organizational structure. This phenomenon was already observed by D. O. Edzard who demonstrated that the sections of Old Babylonian Nippur Ea were arranged according to different **graphic, semantic**, and **phonological principles**.[282] The next example corresponds to the 39th section of Edzard, it represents lines 660□674 of the composite text of Proto-Ea (MSL 14 edition).[283] The first column contains the modern Assyriological lemmata, the second column is the entry marker, the third one represents the Sumerian readings of the signs, while the signs themselves appear in the fourth.

4'	[[tu_{15}]]	𒁹	tu-⸢u_3⸣	[𒅎(IM)]	wind
5'	[[$ŋi_6$]]	𒁹	mi-e	[𒈪(MI)]	night
6'	[[ku_{10}]]	𒁹	ku-u_2	[𒈪(MI)]	dark
7'	[[$gigi_2$]]	𒁹	gi-gi	[𒈪(MI)]	black
8'	[[dugud]]	𒁹	du-ku-ud	⸢(DUGUD)⸣	heavy
9'	[[gi_{17}]]	𒁹	ge-e	(GIG)	sick

Ni 3770 (= *MSL* 14 Jc = P229488) r i' 4'–9'

[280] Cf. Frahm 2011a: 14, and for a detailed discussion on the meaning of the term and specific types of □*âtu*s see Frahm 2011: 48□55.
[281] On this tabular commentary format see Frahm 2011a: 34□35.
[282] Edzard 1982.
[283] This section was also cited by J. Crisostomo (see Crisostomo 2014: 54).

The first entry of this passage represents the turn between the IM- and the MI-sections—which is obviously based on phonological grounds. That is, it was the **similar phonetic form** by means of which the two sections became related, and, moreover, it is possible that the traditional sign-sequence IM.MI (used in the name of the Anzud bird (IM.DUGUD=MI) was also taken into consideration—as it was already suggested by Edzard.[284] The next associations of the section are clearly graphic: three entries represent the **same sign**, while the last two contain the **same sign with modifications**.

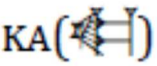
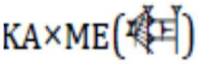
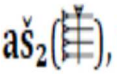
Such correlations are also evident in the other basic sign lists which formed part of the advanced lexical education. Thus, for example, some of the transitions between the various sections of Proto-Izi, a by-and-large acrographic list (with shows thematic considerations as well), throughoutly discussed by Crisostomo, are also worthy to recall. The very first section of this composition (I 1□13)[285] is governed by the grapheme NE (and represents semantic limitation as well since all the expressions enumerated in here are related to fire), while the subsequent section is acrographically focused on the sign AN (I 13□41, and is related to the times of the day seen by the aspect of the sky).[286] The transition is marked by the entry in line 13, namely the syllabic ga-**an**-zé-er (which means flame, and represent the same phonetic form as the previous, synonymous entry, gánzer = NE.SI.A), since, as a **last entry of a section**, it **contains the subsequent governing sign**—and as such, can also be considered as a kind of catchline. This principle will be of specific importance for us, since it can consequently be traced in SAG ITI NU TIL.LA as well.

As for the transitions in Proto-Izi, we may also briefly recall the one between the BARAG (I 141–150) and the DAG sections (I 151□157).[287] The first one is an acrographic section with some thematic insertion (e.g. barag = "sack" is followed by sa-al-kad$_5$ which also means "sack"). The consequent DAG section is related to it (since it is evident, that there is no graphic correlation between the signs, nor does the sign DAG or something similar appears in the "catchline" of the BARAG sequence) by means of the **homophony of the possible Sumerian readings**: DAG can be read as bárag (which means "to spread").[288]

Homophony, among other principles, can be traced even in Nigga, the most strictly acrographic list of the curriculum.[289] We will analyse s short sequence from the "BAL"

[284] Edzard 1982: 52; and see also Crisostomo 2014: 55.
[285] For the edition see Crisostomo 2014: 180□183.
[286] In more detail see Crisostomo 2014: 64; and for the edition see Crisostomo 2014: 183□184.
[287] For the edition see Crisostomo 2014: 215□219.
[288] Cf. Crisostomo 2014: 64.
[289] On OB Nigga in more detail see Veldhuis 2014: 174□175.

section, which, however, allows some entries in which BAL appears in positions other than initial:

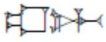
ii 38	bal-bal-e		KA()
ii 39	inim bala	to discuss	
ii 40	eme bala	to translate	KA×ME()
ii 41	háš bala		
ii 42	áš bala	to curse	
iii 1	áš bala	to insult	
iii 2	^{túg}bala	pala-garment	$aš_2$(), tug_2(), ŋeš()
iii 3	^{giš}balak	spindle	

(CBS 10984 rv = MSL 13 94, A_2 = P227639)[290]

Beyond the evident graphic principles, the first entries of this passage show some semantic coherence as well, since all the compound verbs are related to speech. As for inim and eme bala, they use **graphically similar signs**, KA for inim and KAxME for eme (see above). The next pair of entries, in turn, represent **homophony** (between háš and áš). Finally, the last four entries concern graphic analogy, on the basis of the **similar shape** of áš, túg, and giš (also see above).[291]

Turning towards the last acrographic list according to the curricular order, Proto-Diri, we also have to touch upon explicit and implicit bilingualism—the former is well reflected by Diri which, as a rule, contained the (sometimes multiple) Akkadian translations of the complex signs as well.[292]

[290] Also cited in Crisostomo 2014: 58.
[291] See also the analysis of Crisostomo 2014: 59.
[292] For a summary on Proto-Diri see Veldhuis 2014: 182□187; and for an analysis of the various structuring techniques which operate simultaneously in this specific list see Hilgert 2009.

o iv 19'	[[u_6-nir]]		***ziqqurratum***	ziggurat
o iv 20'	[[u_6]]		***amār[um]***	to observe
o iv 21'	[[u_6]]		[...]	...
o iv 22'	[[u_6]]		***bârum***	to examine
o iv 23'	[[uktin]]		***bunnannû***	facial features
o iv 24'	[[uktin]]		***binētum***	appearance
o iv 25'	[[uktin]]		***ṣubur panī***	grimace
o iv 26'	[[zermušku$_x$]]		***qurqurrum***	copper smith
o iv 27'	[[tibira]]		***qurqurrum***	copper smith
o iv 28'	[[^{ŋeš}taškarin]]		***taškarinnu***	boxwood

(CBS 7349+ = MSL 15 A = P229672)

This section is, again, a good example for the ways how the governing grapheme alternates. The initial sign of the first entries is IGI, while from the fifth entry onwards the list enumerates words which begin with a modified IGI (IGI*gunû*). These words, in turn, end with the sign ALAN, and on this ground the list adds TAK_4.ALAN as well (which is clearly unrelated to the IGI-sequence). The Akkadian equivalent of TAK_4.ALAN is *qurqurru* ("copper smith"), and, **based on** this **Akkadian word**, the list inserts its **alternative Sumerian reading** (tibira, that is, URUDA.NAGAR). As for the final entry which is actually the beginning of the GIŠ section, Crisostomo was unable to find an analogy which would associate it with the previous entries,[293] however, taking a closer look on the basic **sign form** of GIŠ+TAŠKARIN, it turns out that it is rather **similar** to the URUDA of the previous entry.

As for the associative role of Akkadian translation one should also note that beyond the simple, □*âtu*-type equations (with various Sumerian readings) they may also generate phonetic associations. This short sequence from the bilingual manuscript fragment (N 5699 obv. i 2'-3') of the thematic list Lu = *ša*[294] clearly represents that:

gá gaba-ra = ***sīrum*** ("reed shelter")
šurum = *kabû* ("dung")

Here, the **phonetic correspondence** concerns the **Akkadian word** and the subsequent, both **semantically** and etymologically unrelated **Sumerian logogram**—generated from the former.

[293] See Crisostomo 2014: 59, also for the analysis of this section.
[294] On the list in general see Veldhuis 2014: 159□166; and on the bilingual version see Crisostomo 2014: 57, with Veldhuis 2014: 159 note 325.

Conclusions

The correlations which were embedded in the writing system and constitute the fundaments of the Science of Writing can be traced from the very appearance of the Mesopotamian textual record. Lexical lists, as the earliest scientific texts which investigated and taught the underlying associative principles and possibilities of the writing system represent the basic types of these correlations: **graphic,** □***âtu*-type**, and phonetic (the latter may affect **homophonous logograms**, or **homophonous Sumerian and Akkadian words**, respectively). As lexical lists formed the basic part of elementary scribal education we may safely assume that the scribes quickly became familiar with these methods—later on, however, they were only relevant to those who completed the advanced stages of the curriculum (and thus became acquainted with **literary texts** as well), and consequently began to study some of the scholarly disciplines., since only than were they able to properly use the possibilities offered by the written code.

3.2 The written code in omen generation / interpretation

Graphic correlations

Basic sign forms

This associative method, throughoutly discussed by Eckart Frahm,[295] concerns a given "key-grapheme" of the *protasis*, and, to be more exact, the connection between *protasis* and *apodosis* is established by the latter's form. Accordingly, in case of the first cited omen, beyond the elementary Akkadian reading of the PAB/KÚR sign (*nakru,* "enemy"), it is the sign form itself which is associative, because the two crossing wedges can also be interpreted as a visual reference to the battle of enemies:

BE ŠÀ.NIGIN GIM PAB/KÚR
šumma tīrānu kīma **PAB/KÚR**
KI.TUŠ-*ka a-na* KI.TUŠ **KÚR**-*ka* SI.SÁ
*šubatka ana š**ubat nakrīka iššir***
If the (coils) of the intestine look like a **PAB/KÚR-sign**,
your camp **will charge** the camp of the **enemy**.

(CLAY 1923: No. 13, 28)[296]

[295] Frahm 2010.

[296] For this particular example see also Rochberg 2010b: 21; for other examples of a similar nature see Frahm 2010: 111 and 102–103. The associative value of sign forms is demonstrable in several sophisticated writing methods from the first millennium, see also Maul 1999: mainly 7–10.

The already discussed omen from *Šumma izbu*, in which a "cross" appears, can also be mentioned in here, since on the graphic level it *may* represent two crossed wedges, and thus, as a visual icon, *may* refer to battle and conflict. We should note, however, that actually the logogram BAR, which can be equated with the Akkadian *pillurtu*, does not appear in the *protasis*, so it is in fact a theoretic reading (see below).[297] Despite all that, the grapheme SÙH in the apodosis, which signifies confusion is indeed associative in this respect, since it consists of two crossing elements (BÚRxBÚR, that is, BÚR-*gilimmû*):[298]

BE *iz-bu* 2-*ma* GIM *pí-il-lu-ur-ti* **(BAR)** *it-gu-ru-ma ina* MURUB$_4$-*šú-nu*
šumma izbu šināma kīma pillurti itgurūma ina qablišunu
DAB.DAB *taq-ti-it* BAL UŠ$_4$ KUR MAN-*ni* **SÙH** *ina* KUR GÁL-*ši*
ti☐*butū taqtīt pale* ☐*ēm māti išanni tēšu ina māti ibbaššī*
If there are two *izbu*s and they are crossed like a cross and joined at their waist,
End of reign, the political situation of the land will change, there will be confusion in the land.

(*Šumma izbu* VI 16)

Similar associations on the graphic level can also be detected in SAG ITI NU TIL.LA as well. The following entry concerns the horn (an element which will be throughoutly discussed in the next chapter) of a gazelle (Sumerian MAŠ.DÀ). The latter compound is in fact the combination of a cross (MAŠ) and the weapon-sign KAK and as such, it alludes to armed conflict:

BE SAL SI MAŠ.DÀ Ù.TUD
šumma sinništu qaran ☐*abītu ulid*
taq-ti-it BAL-*e* U$_4$-*me i-*☐*u-tu*
taqtīt pale ūmē ī☐*ūtu*

If a woman gives birth to gazelle horn,
End of reign (within) a short time.

(*Šumma izbu* I 43)

[297] Contra de Zorzi 2011: 69, who argues as if the grapheme would actually appear in the *protasis*, cf. however, the score transliteration of the line in question in de Zorzi 2014: 508.

[298] Cf. de Zorzi 2011: 69. On the essentially negative associations of sign-crossing see already Gong 2000: 26.

The next omen represents a somewhat more sophisticated association since the exact wording of the *apodosis* is based both on the graphic and phonetic associations of the written code (for the latter, see below).

BAD IGI.BAR *ki-ma* BAD *a-ša-at* LÚ *i-ni-ak*
šumma naplastum kīma BAD aššat awīlim inīak
If the View[299] is like (the grapheme) BAD, the man's wife will have illicit sexual intercourse.

BAD IGI.BAR *ki-ma* BAD *ù ši-lum ina* ŠÀ-*ša na-di a-ša-at* LÚ *i-ni-a-ak-ma*
šumma naplastum kīma BAD u šīlumina libbiša nadi
mu-sà i-□a-ba-as-sí-i-ma i-da-ak-ši
mussa i□abassīma idâkši
If the View is like (the grapheme) BAD and a hole is in its centre, the man's wife will have illicit sexual intercourse and her husband will seize and kill her.

(YOS X 14 5□7)

This example was already treated by A. Winitzer,[300] and recently by E. Frahm, and the latter author concluded that it should been the graphic shape of the sign BAD which defined the interpretation, since "it consists of a straight horizontal wedge ending in a hole-like Winkelhaken (and thus) it seems quite conceivable that the entry is informed by sexual symbolism of a Freudian type."[301] As for the second omen, Frahm assumed that the death in the *apodosis* can be related to the reading of BAD as ÚŠ = *mâtum* ("to die"), at the end, however, he arrived to the conclusion that it is more likely that it was the hole in the centre which defined seizure and death (according to our disciplinary code). While the present author agrees with Frahm relating to the "Freudian type" graphic symbolism of the BAD sign, as well as the latter interpretation of the hole, however, one has to remark that it is in fact the reading ÚŠ of the sign BAD, also mentioned by Frahm, which defined the exact wording of the first apodosis, since the logographic equivalent of the verb *nâlu/niālu* ("to have illicit sexual intercourse") is the homophonous (GIŠ)UŠ.[302]

[299] Contra Winitzer 2006: 534, who translated it as "Path," but corrected the translation in Winitzer 2017: 398–399.
[300] Winitzer 2006: 534, and recently Winitzer 2017: 398–399.
[301] Fram 2010: 100.
[302] See CAD N/I 197 (sub. *nâlum,* lexical section): giš UŠ = *ne-a-lum(!), na-qá-bu-um* (MSL 2 144 ii 13, Poto-Ea).

Graphic similarity

As we have seen already in the case of the archaic and Early Dynastic lexical lists, graphic similarity or common sign-elements had an important role in the generation of entries. Accordingly, similar principles can be observed in the omen corpus. Thus, it was the graphic similarity of the cuneiform signs which determined the exact "wording" (written form) of the following omen from *Šumma izbu*:

BE SAL **ANŠE** Ù.TUD
šumma sinništu imēra ulid
LUGAL ŠÚ *ina* KUR GÁL-*ši*
šar ***kiššati*** *ina māti ibbašši*

If a woman gives birth to a donkey,
The land will have a powerful king (lit: king of the universe).

(*Šumma izbu* I 13)

In the case of this omen, a somewhat hidden association can be assumed between the word 'donkey,' written with the sign ANŠE in the *protasis* and the sign ŠÚ, appearing in the *apodosis*—that is, we have to make some □*âtu*-type equations. The Principal Commentary interprets ŠÚ as *kiššatu*,[303] and the word *kiššatu* can alternatively be written with the sign KIŠ, the Middle Babylonian (and earlier) form of which largely resembles the ANŠE sign.[304]

KIŠ

ANŠE

The following example is in a way different since in case of the next discussed omen the graphic similarities between *protasis* and *apodosis* are visible at first sight, even so, it can be considered as more elaborate since they affect whole expressions□written with carefully chosen cuneiform signs:

DIŠ SÍK *bi-tam na-da-at ek-liš* GÁL *ina tam-*□*a-a-ti* GEN.MEŠ

[303] See below, esp. in note 321.
[304] For sign forms see Labat 1976: 118 (ANŠE) and 192 (KIŠ).

If the hair turns inside: He will be gloomy, he will suffer losses.

(*Alamdimmû* II 107, text duplicate D)[305]

Fig. 13. After Kraus 1939: Pl. 4, text 3b rv. iii 10

The evident connection between *protasis* and *apodosis* on the written level is based on the deliberate choice of the graphemes, by means of which the verbal form *na-da-at*, appearing in the *protasis*, is, so to say, graphically "reproduced" in the *apodosis*. In the latter, the *ina tam-* sequence resembles to the sign NA, and thus the expression *ina tam-*□*a-a-ti* has the graphic form NA-DA-A-TI. Furthermore, as it was also observed by B. Böck,[306] another graphic association (labelled by her as "play") can be observed between the *ek-* of the *ek-liš* of the *protasis* and GÁL in the *apodosis*—both being the same cuneiform sign.

Similar graphic considerations may affect larger textual units as well—one might say that they can also work on the vertical axis, just as we have seen in case of several lexical lists. The following passage (*Šumma um*□*atu*, text duplicate K 12548+ = TBP 36 i 1-14) was already treated by B. Böck,[307] who observed that upon generating the entries one after the other, the "scribes were guided by keywords, in particular by logograms."[308] As it is again visible at first sight, the elements of the expression HUL ŠÀ GIG which appears in the apodosis of the first entry, reappear in the following entries. That is, line 2 contains GIG, line 3 HUL GIG, and line 4 ŠÀ HUL. Line 4 contains the term ŠUB KA, which appears in line 5 as well. And finally, as for ŠUB EN INIM-*šú* in line 8, we should note that line 9 and 13 also contain the expression EN INIM. For a better visualisation of these graphic associations I include the copy of F. R. Kraus, as well as the transliteration of B. Böck—the latter concerns only the related logograms and syllabic spellings[309]—actually, the former copy with display-work is rather similar to the already discussed figure created by Wagensonner form the text of archaic Lu A (see above).

[305] See Böck 2000: 82; and Böck 2010: 209.
[306] For the graphic analysis of this omen see Böck 2010: 209.
[307] Böck 2010: 210□211.
[308] Böck 2010: 201.
[309] After Böck 2010: 211.

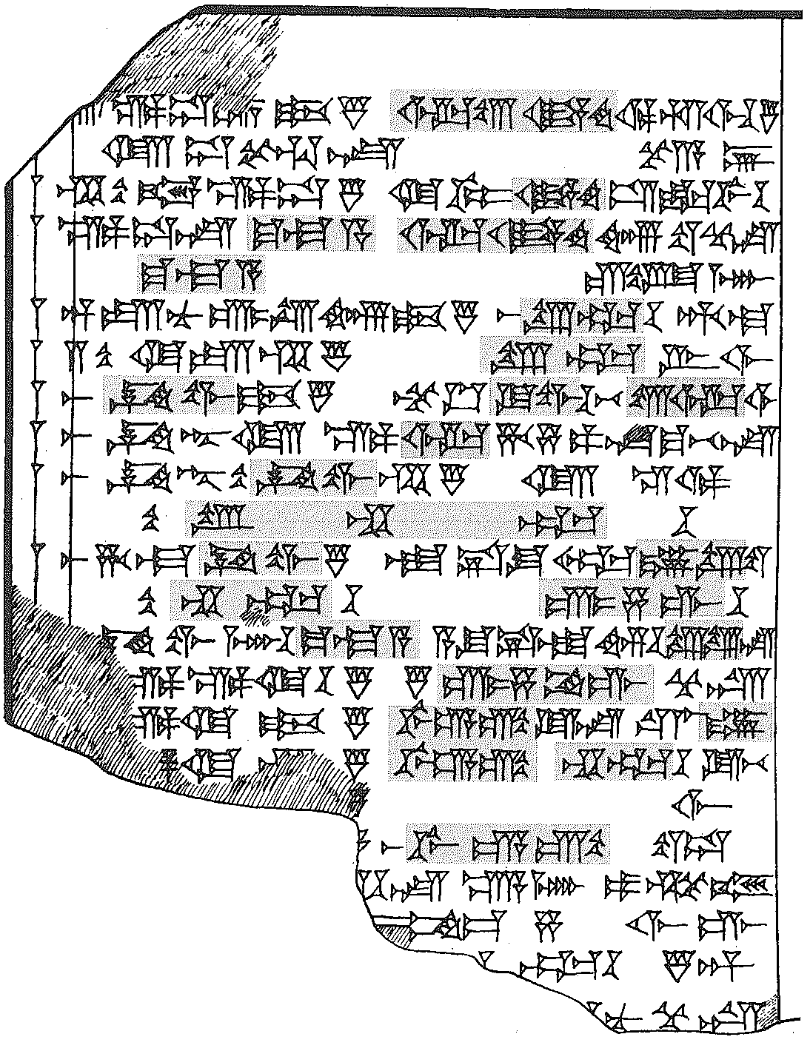


Fig. 14. *Šumma um□atu*, text duplicate K 12548+ = TBP 36 i 1-14, after Kraus 1989: Pl. 39

1	ḪUL ŠA$_3$ GIG
3	GIG
4	*ma-la-a* ḪUL GIG
5	*ma-la-a*
6	ŠUB KA
7	ŠUB KA
8	GU$_2$.TAL$_2$ *ku-tál* ŠA$_3$ ḪUL
9	(SAG.)ḪUL(.ḪA.ZA)
10	GU$_2$.TAL$_2$
11	ŠUB EN INIM
12	GU$_2$.TAL$_2$ LU$_2$ ŠUB
13	EN INIM *ú-ṣa-mar*
14	*ma-la-a* ŠUB.ŠUB
15	*ú-ṣa-am-mar*
16	^{mí}KALA.GA LU$_2$
17	^{mí}KALA.GA EN INIM
19	^{mí}KALA.GA

Sign names

Although the following examples still concern the cuneiform graphemes of the written level, instead of form, they rather focus on the Akkadian designations of the cuneiform signs (also drawn from lexical lists)[310]—a topic which was throughoutly discussed by E. Frahm:[311]

BE IGI.BAR *ki-ma pa-ap-pi-im*
šumma naplastum kīma ***pappim*** (=**PAB**)
ᶜ*ug*ᶜ*-ba-ab-tam* DINGIR *i-ri-iš*
*ug**bab**tam ilum irriš*
If the lobe of the liver is like the ***pappum*** (named) grapheme (=**PAB**),
the god wants the (inauguration of) an *ug**bab**tum*-priestess.

(YOS X 17, 47)

BE IGI.BAR *ki-ma ka-aš-ka-aš*
šumma naplastum kīma ***kaškaš*** (=KASKAL)
ᵈIŠKUR *i-ra-hi-i*☐
ᵈ***Adad*** *irahhi*☐
If the lobe of the liver is like the ***kaškaššum*** (named) grapheme (=KASKAL),
Adad will devastate.

(YOS X 17, 48)

The Akkadian sign-names appearing in the *protases* (*pappum* and *kaškaššum*, respectively) are accompanied by associations of various character. In the first case it is clear that the phonetic value of the sign name is the standard, on which the ***pap**pum*/**PAB** – *ug**bab**tum* wordplay is based.[312] In contrast, the second omen represents a more complex connection, since the expression *'kaškaššum'* can be associated with the univocal adjective *'kaškaššu(m)*' ("overpowering"), which—not incidentally of course—is one of the frequent epithetons of Adad, the Storm god, thus it can also be semantically associated with the *apodosis*.[313] This specific type of associative method remained thus far unattested in the case of *Šumma izbu*.

[310] On the Akkadian names of cuneiform signs in general see Gong 2000.
[311] Frahm 2010, and for examples of the sign names discussed below: *op.cit.*: 84–85.
[312] Frahm 2010, 101; Noegel 2010, 150.
[313] On this association see already Lieberman 1977: 148; and recently Winitzer 2006: 533 with note 105; Frahm 2010: 101; and Noegel 2010, 150.

□*âtu*-type and phonological correlations

In case of phonetic correlations, the scribes operated primarily with the tool of *paronomasia*, that is, with etymologically unrelated Sumerian and/or Akkadian words appearing in the same or similar phonetic forms, but with differing meanings.[314] Just as in lexical texts, these phonological, paronomasic associations may concern the Akkadian words, the Sumerian logograms, and can be detected between Akkadian words and Sumerian logograms as well. However, clearly visible (or, more properly, audible) paronomastic correlations are rather rare, generally the phonetic associations can only be revealed by means of □*âtu*-type associations, consisting of one or more "steps" (see below). This in fact goes without saying, and consequently, also true for the following, simple and clear-cut, and thus often cited examples—which involve the Akkadian words by means of basic □*âtu*-type associations:

BE *iz-bu* SAG UR.ᵍMAHᵍ *ša-ki-in* ⌈LUGAL *da*⌉-*an-nu-um*

šumma izbu qaqqad ***nēšim*** *šakin šarrum dannum*

ib-ba-aš-ši-ma ma-tam sa-ti ú-na- ᵍ*aš*ᵍ

ibaššima mātam šâti ***unnaš***

If the *izbu* has the head of a **lion** *(nēšim)*
there will be a mighty **king**,
and he will **weaken** *(unnaš)* the land.

(YOS X 56 i 26–27)[315]

DIŠ UGA.MUŠEN GU_7
šumma āriba ikkal
ir-bu TU-[*ub*]

If a man dreams that he is eating a raven ***(āribu)***
He will have income ***(irbu)***

(Assyrian Dreambook, K 6611 line y+10)[316]

[314] Several authors have referred to this kind of "word-play" in the omen series, emphasizing a number of cases, e.g. Leichty 1970: 6; Starr 1983: 9–10; Greaves 2000; Hurowitz 2000: esp. 78–87; Noegel 2002; Noegel 2007: mainly 9–11 and 20–21; Annus 2010: 9; Rochberg 2010b.

[315] From the Old Babylonian version of *Šumma izbu*, for comparison see Leichty 1970: 202.

[316] See Oppenheim 1956: 316; with Noegel 2002: 168.

DIŠ UZU LÚ.MEŠ GU_7
šumma šīr amēlē ikkal
NÍG.TUK *ma-da* TUK-*ši*
šarâ māda irašši

If a man dreams that he is eating human flesh ***(šīru)***
He will have ***(rašû)*** great riches ***(šarû)***

(Assyrian Dreambook, K 6663 + 8300 line x+13)[317]

DIŠ GIŠ*mi-ih-ra* SUM-šú
šumma mihra inaddinšu
GABA.RI NU TUK-*ši*
māhira ul irašši

If someone gives him a fir tree ***(mihru)***
He will have no equal ***(māhiru)***

(K 2018A line y+17)[318]

Such cases, in turn, in which the **same Sumerian logogram** appears in the *protasis* and *apodosis* (whether with the same or different Akkadian equivalents) are also rather simple and evident. The next example, together with similar ones, was also cited by de Zorzi as an example of the paranomastic relationship between the Akkadian words,[319] however, one should not overlook that the same Sumerian logograms appear on both sides of the omen, therefore paronomasia, in the first place, is related to the latter (and only consequently to the—otherwise—etymologically related Akkadian equivalents, drawn, again, from basic □*âtu*-type associations).

BE *iz-bu* GÌR.MEŠ-*šú* **EGIR**.MEŠ *ka*□-□*a*
šumma izbu šēpāšu ***arkâtu*** *ka*□□*ā*
EGIR-*át* É NA ZÁH
arkat *bīt amēli ihalliq*

If the rear legs of the *izbu* are cut,
The estate of the house of the man will perish.

(*Šumma izbu* XIV 73)

[317] See Oppenheim 1956: 315 (transliteration) with 271 (translation and short discussion of cannibalistic dreams). See also Noegel 2002: 168.
[318] See Oppenheim 1956: 323 (transliteration) with 277 (translation); and Noegel 2002: 168.
[319] See de Zorzi 2011: 68, where only the Akkadian transscription was quoted.

The following omen, in turn, uses the same logogram on both sides—however, with different, and thus etimologically unrelated Akkadian equivalents:

BE SAL Ù.TU-*ma* **GÌŠ(= UŠ)-***šú* NU GÁL
šumma siništu ulidma išaršu lā ibbašši
EN É *ul in-né-ši-ir* **UŠ**-*di*
bēl bīti ul inneššir irreddi

If a woman gives birth and (the foetus) has no penis,
The owner of the house will not prosper, confiscation.

(*Šumma izbu* III 68)

This entry was also cited by de Zorzi, who correctly noted that the lack of sexual organs define—according to our simple code—the basic topic of the *apodosis*, the lack of prosperity, and moreover, that there is a strong phonetic assonance between the Akkadian words of the *protasis* and *apodosis*.[320] However, she slightly overlooked that this "assonance" is in fact the result of another paronomastic association between the Akkadian words, namely between *išaru* ("penis") and the verb *ešēru* in the *apodosis*—and therefore the latter's exact wording was defined *both* by the logogram GIŠ = UŠ, and its specific Akkadian equivalent appearing in the *protasis*.

Of course, the homophony or phonetic similarity of logograms is unrelated to modern indexes, as it is well demonstrated by the following omen of *Šumma izbu*:

BE SAL ***qá-ti*** Ù.TU LUGAL **ŠÚ** *ina* KUR GÁL ˹*ši*˺
šumma sinništu qāti ulid šar kiššati ina māti ibašši
If a woman gives birth to a hand,
the land will have a powerful king (lit: king of the universe).

(*Šumma izbu* I 37)

Traditionally, the syllabically written Akkadian word *qātu* (hand) corresponds (according, again, to a basic □*âtu*-type equation) to the logogram **ŠU**, the phonetic reading of which **/šu/** concurs with the **ŠÚ** sign used here,[321] therefore the association is based on the phonetic values of (possible) Sumerian logograms.

[320] See de Zorzi 2011: 68.

[321] The equation ŠÚ = *kiššatu* appearing in column I line 8 of the Principal Commentary on *Šumma izbu* as well (see Leichty 1970: 211). The word *kiššatu* ("totality") is represented in the cuneiform sources—beyond the ŠAR and ŠÁR logograms—traditionally by the $šu_4$ (U) grapheme, it is clear therefore that its identification with the ŠÚ sign is based on homophony ($ŠU_4$ = ŠÚ = /ŠU/). On (LUGAL) ŠÚ appearing in the Principal Commentary (with different associations); see also Frahm 2011: 63–64 with note 297.

Phonetic associations may concern the possible, or one might say further alternative readings or equivalents (based, again on □*âtu*-type equations) of both logograms and Akkadian words as well. The following, neat example was elaborate by Scott Noegel, who even devoted a NABU-note to it,[322] which foretokens that this omen is worthy to recall.

BE KA_5.A *i*□*-bat*
šumma ***šēleba*** *i*□*bat*
[d]Lama(**AN.KAL**) DAB-*bat*
[d]*Lamassu i*□*abbat*
If someone (in his sleep) catches a **fox**:
He will seize a L**amassu**.

(Assyrian Dreambook (Sm 801) Rv. iii 9)[323]

With regard to the quoted omen, Noegel pointed out that the word "fox" (Akkadian *šēlebu*) which appears in the *protasis* of the cited dream-omen, and written in the text with the KA_5.A logogram, can also be written down syllabically, as *še₇-líb-bu*,[324] using the following signs: (A).AN(=*še₇*).KAL(=*líb*)-*bu*(=*su₁₃*).[325] Therefore, in this case the association is based on the speculative reading (lama(AN.KAL)-*su₁₃*), in which the Lamassu (AN.KAL) of the *apodosis* would be reflected.

Finally, one should recall such cases when the **phonetic correspondences** concern the **Akkadian words and Sumerian logograms**. The logic of the inner, written association of the following omen, originating from *Šumma izbu,* is greatly similar to the previous example built on the theoretic reading of the Lamassu, but in here the phonetic value of the Sumerian logogram in the *protasis* will be related to a further, possible Akkadian equivalent of another logogram, appearing in the *apodosis*.

BE SAL **MUŠ** Ù.TUD É LÚ AL.**GE_6**
šumma sinništu □*īra ulid bīt amēli* □***alim***
If a woman gives birth to a **snake**, that man's house will become **dark**.

[322] Noegel 1995.
[323] See Oppenheim 1956: 281 and 326; as well as Noegel 1995: 101; Noegel 2007: 21–22; and Noegel 2010: 151, respectively.
[324] However, one has to note that the spelling is strictly theoretic, since, as also mentioned by Scott Noegel, the word in this form does not appear in the known cuneiform text corpora, see Noegel 1995: 102.
[325] The theoretical reading of Scott Noegel should be briefly supplemented, since he declassifies the syllabic *še₇-líb-bu* form as (A).AN.KAL-*u* (Noegel 1995; Noegel 2007: 22; and Noegel 2010: 151). In contrast, the last theoretic sign, BU, has a frequent Old Babylonian (thus archaic) reading, *su₁₃* which can also be applied here, and which may seem a more plausible phonetic complement of the word Lamassu.

(*Šumma izbu* I 16)

The association between sign and interpretation is based on the emphasized Sumerian, or rather, the equated Akkadian readings, with the complication that the latter are not identical to those which appear in the above represented, normalized transliteration. If we regard the phonetic value **(/muš/)** of the MUŠ sign, and not the basic "snake" (□*īru*) reading as standard,[326] and so to say project the former onto the Akkadian lexicon, we can immediately associate it with the word ***mūšu*** (night). The appropriateness of this is verified by the using of **GE$_6$** in the *apodosis*, since the primary Akkadian reading of this grapheme is the same: ***mūšu,*** that is, night.[327] The meaning of the above used "become dark" refers to this as well, with the same origin. Thus:

Protasis: MUŠ → /muš/ → *mūšu* (night)
Apodosis: GI$_6$ → *mūšu /muš$_9$* (→□*alāmu*)

Associations based on intertextual references

Scholarly texts

As it was already said, the basics of the written code were acquired in the course of scribal education. The latter, however, concerned, in its advanced stage, literary texts as well, and later on the specific divinatory training may have also concerned a variety of other textual (and scholarly) genres, and finally, one should not forget that the most revered scholars were, as a rule, members of respectful scholarly "dynasties"—with well-equipped libraries in their homes. Therefore, the presence of sophisticated intertextual references in omen compendia is actually predictable. And indeed, it emerges already at the beginning of SAG ITI NU TIL.LA, at the sixth omen of the first tablet *Šsa*.

BE SAL ÚR.BAR.RA Ù.TU
šumma sinništu barbara ulid
UMUŠ KUR ⌜NIŠ⌝ *-ni*
ṭ ēm māti išanni
If a woman gives birth to a wolf:
"the land will go mad."

[326] The names of the sign MUŠ (*mu-uš, mu-šú*, etc., see Gong 2000: 162) and the numerous Sumerian loanwords indicate that the pronunciation of this logogram really sounded likewise, e.g. MUŠ.MAH = *mušmahhu,* MUŠ.HUŠ = *mušhuššu,* MUŠ.GAL = *mušgallu*, etc.

[327] Note also the rare syllabic reading *muš$_9$* of ge$_6$(MI), originating from the same Akkadian equivalent.

(*Šumma izbu* I 6)

This *apodosis*, which was already discussed, occurs at several places in the *Šumma izbu*,[328] in this case however an interesting phenomenon is observable if we call up a cultic commentary text (KAR 307),[329] in which the wolf is associated with the god Anu:[330]

KAR 307 Rv. 11:	UR.BAR.RA (=) *e□e**mm**u **š**a A**n**im* (the ghost of Anu)
Ši I 6:	ÚR.BAR.RA – *□ē**m** **m**āti i**š**a**nn**i*

The existing *paronomasia* between the two texts is unequivocal, and apart from the fact that the consonantal pattern of the lines in question are exactly the same, we can also clearly observe the well-known association between *□ēmu* and *e□emmu* (that is "intelligence, conscience"—"dead spirit, ghost").[331]

Although it might be said that this is only incidental, it must not be ignored that both sources are connected with the wolf, actually explaining its "meaning" as a sign or abstract entity, respectively. As we have already said, the compendia may contain intertextual references and if this assumption is correct in the present case as well, we are dealing with a highly sophisticated connection, since the scribe, apart from referring to a scientific work associated with the wolf, leans on its wording as well—and does so brilliantly.

Literary allusions

A further category is formed by omens in which the "written" association is based on an external literary text. As we have seen, literary compositions formed an essential part of

[328] Tablet I 130, Tablet II 18, etc. (among other *apodoses*).

[329] SAA 3 99–102. For more details on this tablet, containing secret knowledge *(pirišti ilāni rabûti)*, which counted as "taboo" *(ikkibu)*, see Horowitz 1998: 5–19; Lenzi 2008: 173. On the passage in question: Livingstone 1986: 82–83, and 88–89 (in connection with a commentary text, which also refers to the frequent association between *□ēmu – e□emmu*, on the latter see also below).

[330] This is in obvious association with the following identification of the wolf-star: ^{mul}UR.BAR.RA= ^{d}*A-nu* (5R 46 No. 1:2.), for comparison: Livingstone 1986: 89.

[331] From the viewpoint of the individual, the *□ēmu* (conscience, intelligence) unifying the periods of life on earth and the existence after that, does not cease after death, but lives further in the "deadly spirit, ghost" *(e□**emmu**)*, both theoretically and phonetically. A later commentary text also splits and interprets the word as "e-*□emmu*", accordingly: e-┌□*em*┐*-me: qa-bu-ú* ṭ *è-e-me* / E: *qa-bu-ú* : KA$^{de\text{-}em4\text{-}ma}$ HI : ṭ *è-e-me*, i.e.: *e*ṭ *emmu* = to say the command, (since E (means) to say *(qabû)*, (and) *dimma* = command (SpTU 1 49, Rv. 36b–37). For a well known alternative interpretation of the logogram GIDIM (Akk. *e*ṭ *emmu)* see lately Frahm 2011a: 74. For more recent information on the former "wordplay" see Abusch 1998: mainly 367–369 (with earlier references).

advanced scribal education, and, moreover, since diviners can be considered as members of the most learned class, it is obvious that they were familiar with the "classics" of their age.

The literary aspect of the following, illustrative example is unequivocal, but naturally only to those who are familiar with the story of Etana, the legendary king who ascended into the sky on the back of an eagle:

BE ŠÀ.NIGIN GIM TI_8.MUŠEN
šumma tīrānu kīma ***erî***
BÀ-*ut* ^{d}*E-ta-na* LUGAL *šá* AN-*e* ÈD-*ú*
amūt ^{d}***Etana*** *šarru* ***ša šamê ītelû***

If the (coils of the) intestine look like an **eagle:**
the omen of **Etana**, the king **who ascended to heaven**.

(Clay 1923 No. 13. 33)[332]

Even more thorough literary and textual knowledge is necessary for the correct interpretation of certain omens of similar nature. In the omen text that follows, the correlation between *protasis* and *apodosis*—as it was revealed by Andrew R. George—is in close connection with the description of the catastrophe which destroyed mankind: it is related indirectly to the *Atram-hasīs* and directly to the adapted story of the *Gilgameš Epic*. Here, however, it is not enough to be acquainted with the main stream of events, since the focus is on a concrete passage, and its characteristic imagination and wording. So first, let us quote the relevant passage from the *Gilgameš Epic*:

[*urr*]*adma ana Apsî itti Ea bēliya ašbāku*
ana kâšunu ušaznanakkunūši nuhšamma
[*hi*□*ib*] *i*□□*ūrāti puzur nūnīma*
i[*l*?...] x x x x *mešrâ ebūramma*
ina šēr ***kukkī***
ina līlâti ušaznanakkunūši šamūt kibāti

'[I shall] go down to the Apsû, to live with Ea, my master,
he will rain down on you (pl.) plenty:
[an abundance] of birds, a riddle(?) of fishes,
[...] ... riches (at) harvest-time!
In the morning he will rain down on you (pl.) **bread-cakes**,

[332] See also the brief discussion of this omen in Rochberg 2010b: 21.

in the evening, a torrent of wheat.'

(SB Gilgameš XI 42–47, George 2003: 704–706)

The passage in question contains the promise of Ea who foretells (through his chosen one, the Flood hero) that certain foodstuffs,[333] and specifically, as we read in the Epic of Gilgameš, *kukku*-breads[334] will "rain down" from heaven—as foretokens of the devastating Flood. Here, the last two lines are of particular relevance for us—for two reasons. First of all, this passage, which, further on, was repeated twice as the plot of Tablet XI develops—reaffirming the importance of this couplet within the divine message—is even interesting in itself.

The history of interpretation of these lines is an age-old story which goes back to the early '20s, when scholars such as Arthur Ungnad and then Carl Frank already supposed that this passage contains a world-play on *kukku* (bread-cake) and *kibtu* (wheat)—although this assumption was later proved to be false by Wolfram von Soden (in 1955), whose conclusion determined the scholarly approach regarding these lines for many years.[335] However, in an article published in 1987, A. R. Millard proposed a different solution, since he observed that rains of wheat and other food—and sometimes rather extraordinary stuff do appear in omen *protases*,[336] where they always bode ill. Therefore he suggested that whoever composed these lines, had a knowledge of "the language of omens".[337] Indeed, as we will see, the *kukku*-bread appears in omen texts as well, and one of them is even related to this very passage. However, it does not mean that the former world-play theory was abandoned: scholars tried to prove with various techniques the supposed hidden meaning of the "signs of the Flood".[338] As A. R. George proposed, the word *kukku* was chosen, on the one hand, for it's phonetic similarity with *kakku* ("weapon, warfare"), which represents the coming "battle", that is, the Deluge. On the other hand, it is also a possible allusion to the upcoming doom of mankind, since the homophonous *kukkû* ("the Dark") is a Name of the Netherworld.[339] Furthermore, as George noted, the logograpghic equivalent of the other key-word, *kibtu*, is GIG,[340] which

[333] OB *Atram-hasīs* III 34–35: large quantities of birds and fish, see Lambert–Millard 1969: 88; and George 2010: esp. 323.

[334] For details on the *kukku* bread or cake, a characteristic Mesopotamian pastry, see George 2010: 325–326, and below.

[335] On the history of interpretation in detail see Millard 1987: 64□65.

[336] E.g. lentils, cardamom seeds, coloured hair, blood (in *Enūma Anu Enlil*), potshersds, or razors (in *Šumma ālu*), in detail see Millard 1987: 66–67; and George 2003: 510□511.

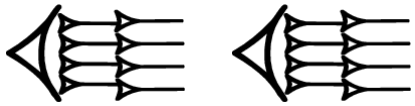
[337] Cf. George 2010: 325.

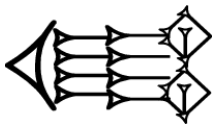
[338] For a short summary see George 2010: 326.

[339] George 2003: 512; cf. CAD K 498 (sub. *kukkû* = darkness, only with lexical references).

[340] CAD K 340□341 (sub. *kibtu*) lexical section and further numerous examples for this logographic form.

in turn can be equated with Akkadian *mar□u* (“ill”), whence *maruštu* (“misfortune”). Thus, in the second case, George proposes that a learned, *□ātu*-type association was embedded in the literary text, based on the possible logographic form of the Akkadian word appearing in the text. This “logographic approach” was already proposed by J. Bottéro, who, in turn, assumed that the association is based on the logograpghic eqivalents of *kukku* (GÚG) and *kibtu* (GIG), which **sound similar**.[341] However, one may assume that the two approaches can be alloyed, especially if we consider that in the first case the homophonous *kukkû* (“darkness”) is possibly a Sumerian loan from KUKKU, which can be written as $KU_{10}.KU_{10}$, (actually with two MI graphemes), or as $KUKKU_5$ (also the grapheme MI).[342] Thus if we suppose these possible/theoretic logographic readings (one for the homophonous, but rather allusive word, and one for the actual Akkadian word in the second line), the following graphic pattern evolves at the end of the lines:

$KU_{10}.KU_{10}$ / $KUKKU_5$ 

GIG 

As for this certain *kukku*-bread in omen text, now we should recall the emblematic example which represents clear connection with the above cited Gilgameš-passage, since in here it is also the *kukku*-bread which foresigns Enlil’s wrath (and the consequent Deluge).

BE KI.[GUB *ki-ma k*]*u-uk-ki*
šumma manzāzu kīma ***kukki***
^{d}*En-líl a-na* KUR *a-na* HUL^{ti} *ú-* ⌜*šar*⌝

Enlil ana māti ana lemutti uššar
If the “station” is like a ***kukku* bread**,
Enlil will descend to the land with evil intention.

(MS 3176/2:10)[343]

[341] Bottéro 1992: 186, note 3.
[342] MI can be read as GÍG or $KUKKU_5$ in Sumerian, the latter also means “dark”, cf. ePSD sub. kukku, which thus can either be written with $KU_{10}.KU_{10}$ (=MI.MI) or $KUKKU_5$ (MI.MI).
[343] Middle Babylonian liver-omen from the Schøyen Collection, see George 2010: 325, re-edited in CUSAS 18 (Text No. 33, line 10, = George 2013: 232).

The last question which may arise is that of date. Which work may had inspired the other? With the words of A. George: "did the omen tradition assimilate a literary motif or did the literary composition adopt a divinatory motif"?[344] Although it is admittedly impossible to give a conclusive answer, finally he voted in favour of the later possibility, considering that the author of the standard *Gilgameš Epic*, Sîn-lēqi-unninni was nothing else than a scholar, thus we may suppose that the text he standardized should bear the imprint of his educational background. In other words, it seemed more likely to him that the omen of the *kukku* and Enlil's wrath informed the expansion of the passage which appeared already in Old Babylonian *Atram-hasīs* with the above discussed lines, rather than that the omen was itself generated from the latter's *kukku*-motif.[345] Be there as it may, we should note that the other (rare!) attestations of the *kukku* in the omen corpus in general are in no way related to the text of the Epic, which supports this assumption. On the one hand, we possess commentaries regarding it's specific, supposedly crescent-like shape, such as:[346]

BE *manzāzu* (NA) *kīma* (GIM) *kukki* (GÚG) *appu* (KIR$_4$) *u išdu* (SUHUŠ)
^{giš}*kakka* (TUKUL) *ibnû* (DÙ)*-ma qabal* (MURUB$_4$)*-šú zu-qúr*
"If the 'station' is like a bread-cake": (i. e. its) tip and base are
pointed (lit. form weapon-marks) and its middle is peaked.
(*Manzāzu* Commentary 1:106, Koch-Westenholz 2000: 146–147)

On the other hand, it appears in a *Šumma izbu* omen (XVII 52'), where sadly the *apodosis* is broken, and in *Šumma padānu* III 23–24, from where it becomes clear that it was generally considered as a negative sign in extispicy (and as such, maybe proper to use in literary context, especially in the light of the further, above detailed allusions). However, the following omen-pair also reveals that it's basic allusions were rather different:

BE GÍR 2-*ma* AN.TA-*ú* GIM *gam-lim* KI.TA-*ú* GIM GÚG
šumma padānu šināma elû kīma gamli šaplû kīma kukki
URU KÚR NIGIN-*ma* DIB-*at ana* ŠÀ URU TU-*ma* ÉRIN-*ni* HA.LA GU$_7$
āl nakri alammīma a□abbat ana libbi āli errub ummāni zitta ikkal

[344] George 2010: 331.
[345] George 2010: 332.
[346] See also *Pān tākalti* Commentary 3:28, Koch-Westenholz 2000: 413; also cited by George 2010: 326.

If there are two Paths and the upper one is like a curved staff and the lower one is like a *kukku*-bread:
I will encircle the enemy city and conquer it. I will enter it and my army will divide the spoils.

BE GÍR 2-*ma* KI.TA-*ú* GIM *gam-lim* AN.TA-*ú* GIM GÚG
šumma padānu šināma šaplû kīma gamli elû kīma kukki
KÚR URU NIGIN-*ma* DIB-b*at ana* ŠÀ URU TU-*ma* ÉRIN KÚR HA.LA GU_7
nakru āla ilammīma i□abbat ana libbi āli irrubma ummān nakri zitta ikkal

If there are two Paths and the lower one is like a curved staff and the upper one is like a *kukku*-bread:
The enemy will encircle the city and conquer it. He will enter it and the enemy army will divide the spoils.

As we have learned from the previous sub-chapter, according to the disciplinary code of extispicy, most *padānu*-omens concerned warfare—this one is being no exception. Although it was assumed that generally the appearance of two Paths was interpreted favourably,[347] as the omens of the third and fourth tablet of *Šumma padānu* (treating double Paths) reflect, their specific shape and position may largely specify the meaning—which than can be either positive or negative.[348] So what can be said about the specific shapes in here?

Basically, the Akkadian *gamlu* (Sumerian GÀM) can be translated as curved staff or crook, a staff which might have originally been the tool of a shepherd or hunter, but became a cultic tool used by ritual experts, kings, or gods.[349] For example, in lexical lists one of the designations of the *āšipu (muššipu)* is "The man who holds the crook in his hand" (LÚ ^{GIŠ}GÀM ŠU DU_7),[350] while, according to the first millennium ritual series

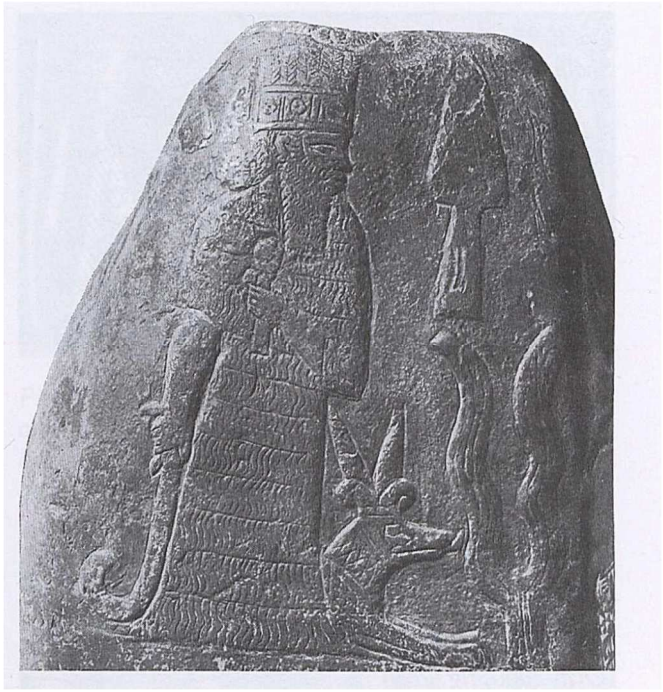
[347] Cf. Jeyes 1989: 55, quoting YOS 10 11 i 3-4: *šum-ma pa-da-nu ši-na / a-li-ik ha-ar-ra-*[*nim*] *ha-ra-an-šu* [*i*]*-ka-aš-ša-ad* : "If there are two Paths: the one who is going on a campaign will complete it". Cf. also *Šumma padānu* III 1 (Koch 2000: 187): BE GÍR 2-*ma* ÚR.BI *e□-ru* SUHUŠ-*a-an* GI.NA.MEŠ KI.TUŠ *ne-eh-tum (šumma padānu šināma mithāriš e□ru išdān kīnā šubat nēhti)* "If there are two Paths and they are drawn parallel: A stable foundation, living in peace".

[348] Cf. already *Šumma padānu* III 2 (Koch 2000: 187): BE GÍR 2-*ma i-ri-a* GAR.MEŠ ÉRIN-*ni* KASKAL-*šá* ŠUB-*ma* MAN-*tam-ma* DIB-*bat (šumma padānu šināma iria šaknū ummānī harrānša in-addima šanītamma i□abbat)* "If there are two paths and they lie side by side: My army will abandon its campaign and embark on another"; and *Šumma padānu* III 3 (Koch 2000: 187): BE GÍR 2-*ma* MAN-*ú* BAL-*ma* SAG.UŠ IGI GIŠTUKUL.MEŠ *šá ana* ŠÀ *la bab-lu ana* NUN TE.ME-*ni (šumma padānu šināma šanû nabalkutma kajjamāna i□□ul kakku ša ana libbi lā bablū ana rubê i□ehhûni)* "If there are two Paths and the second one is bent and points to the normal one: Weapons that were not brought inside will attack the prince".

[349] In more detail see Ambos–Krauskopf 2010: esp. 127□139.

[350] Lu Excerpt I 208, see CAD M 281 (sub. *muššipu*) for further lexical references. Literally, the above description means "who perfects the crook", however, as C. Ambos suggested, it can be a misspelling for

Šurpu, the god Amurru and his manifestation AN.AN.MAR.TU, as divine purifyers and exorcists carried the *gamlu*-crook and the *banduddû*-vessel, which contained the holy water ("Amurru and AN.AN.MAR.TU, who carry the *gamlu*-crook and the *banduddû*-bucket, the purifier and exorcist of heaven and earth").[351] Furthermore, the *gamlu* was a weapon of the god Marduk, and even the constellation *gamlu* (^{MUL}ZUBI, see under 2.2 of the present chapter) was called the "weapon of the hand of Marduk".[352]



ŠU DU_8 ("to hold in the hand"), see Ambos–Krauskopf 2010: 127□128 with note 6. Although this possibility cannot be ruled out, I would rather suggest that we are dealing with a world-play (or better: with an association based on the written code) which is based on the many possible meanings of the compounds ŠU /DU/ (for the compound Sumerian verb ŠU DU_7 (Akk. *šuklulu*, "to perfect, to complete") see Karahashi 2000: 154□156, for ŠU DU8 (Akk. *kullu*) see Karahashi 2000: 156□158). The many possible layers of meaning which can be connected to such compounds are well represented by the famous Verse Account, a polemic against the Neo Babylonian ruler Nabonidus, written by the priests of Marduk, that is, by the eminent scholars of his era (see in general Shaudig 2001: 563□578 for a new edition and a brief introduction to this text). According to this composition, the cult statue of the Moongod in the city Harran, newly introduced by the last Neo-Babylonian ruler (a statue which, as the authors described, rather resembled to some kind of a demon than to a real god) was like the god LUGAL ŠU DU$^{(sic)}$ (Col. i 27'). This name, as it was already suggested by Th. G. Lee (Lee 1994: esp. 34) and recently by P. A. Beaulieu (see Beaulieu 2007: 156□158), was a "pun" on ^{d}LUGAL.ŠÙD.DÈ, a chtonic form of Ninurta, on LUGAL ŠU DU_8 (LUGAL = *šarru, bēlu,* ŠU = *qātu*, DU_8= *tarā*□*u*), that is, "The lord/king who stretches out his hand", (see Schaudig 2001: 566 note 914, with Beaulieau 2007: 158), which is accord with the first part of the line in question: [*i-tar-ra*]-*a*□ ŠU^{II}-*su ki-ma* ^{d}LUGAL.ŠU.DU ("It stretches out his hand like Lugalšudu", see Shaudig 2001: 566), and possibly on LUGAL ŠU DU_7, "The lord/king who perfects (the month)", what refers to the last day of the lunar month and therefore the chtonic aspect of the Moongod. For the latter suggestion I'm indebted to Dániel Pásztor, who currently writes his MA thesis on the Verse Account of Nabonidus at ELTE.

[351] *Šurpu* VIII 41□42, see Reiner 1958: 41; and see also Ambos–Krauskopf 2010: 128.

[352] ^{MUL}ZUBU : ^{GIŠ}TUKUL *šá* ŠU^{II} ^{d}MARDUK (5R 46 No. 1:3), for further such references see CAD G 35 (sub. *gamlu*, mng. 6').

Fig. 15. Representation of the god Marduk, carrying a *gamlu*-crook on a Middle Babylonian kudurru. After Ambos–Krauskopf 2010: 129, Fig. 7.

Finally, the *gamlu*-crook as a ritual tool could be held by kings in ritual contexts, when it provided defence against various supernatural harms and was used for purificatory purposes as well.[353] As such, it did not formed part of the royal regalia (such as the sceptre and staff), and thus it's appearance on visual representations, e.g. on statues of Neo Assyrian rulers from temple precincts (see Fig 16). clearly signifies a cultic context.[354]

Fig. 16. Statue of king Ashurnasirpal II (883□859 BC) from Kalhu, the temple of Ištar Bēlet Māti—holding a *gamlu*-crook (BM 118871)

As we have also seen on the visual representations, the *gamlu* had a characteristic, inward curving shape. Therefore we may suppose that a *gamlu*-shaped mark or groove on the liver can easily allude to encirclement (of cities, camps, and so on)—in fact, it can be a rather simple indexical association and as such, can form part of our simple code.

[353] For e.g., in the *bīt salā' mê* ritual ("House of sprinkling water"), a ritual investiture for the Babylonian king which was carried out to prepare him for the partaking in the New Year' festival, see in more detail Ambos–Krauskopf 2010: 128□129.

[354] On the representations of rulers holding gamlu-crooks (both textual descriptions of artifacts and actual visual representations) see Ambos–Krauskopf 2010: 130.

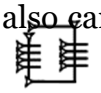
As for the latter, it is also evident that the omen-pair in question contains a simple above—below opposition. On this note, we have already discussed that "above" had negative values and can be assocated with the enemy *(pars hostilis)*. Thus, an encircling sign which appears on the side of the enemy (AN.TA) may encode the encirclement of the enemy. And indeed, in the first case we've read that: "I will encircle the enemy city and conquer it" (URU KÚR NIGIN-*ma* DIB-*at*).

Yet, another surmise can also be recalled regarding this association: it concerns the phonetic similarity of the Akkadian word *gamlu* and the name of cumeiform grapheme GAM (which, with the reading GÚR means "circle").[355] The following example from *Bārûtu* may support this assumption:

BE SILIM GIM **GAM** KUR NUN *ana* BAD_4 **NIGIN**-*hur*
šumma šulmu kīma gammi māt rubê ana dannati ipahhur
If the Well-being is like the grapheme GAM: the land of the prince will gather in a fortress
(*Pān tākalti* Tablet 6, Koch-Westenholz 2000: Text No. 64, line 39)[356]

Upon discussing this omen E. Frahm could not define the etymographic link between *protasis* and *apodosis*.[357] However, in the light of the foregoings it seems rather probable that the appearance of the sign NIGIN (LAGAB.LAGAB) in the interpretation is far from accidental—since the basic verbal equivalent of NIGIN (and NÍGIN, which is one LAGAB sign) is "to encircle, to enclose" (Akkadian *lamû*, the very same verb which appears in our presently analysed liver-omen as well).[358]

Turning towards the other ominous feature appearing in the first omen of the couplet on "our side" *(pars familiaris)*, that is, "below", we may suppose that in this case it was not the form of the (crescent-shaped) *kukku*-bread which defined the associated meaning, but rather, as the association of the previous example, it was based on the written code as well. That is, if we take Sumerian equivalent (GÚG) into consideration, it is practically impossible not to notice that this grapheme (which also can be read as LÙ) is actually a LAGAB*gunûgunû*:



The graphic shape of this grapheme is rather suggestive: it depicts something enclosed, encircled (NÍGIN) with hatchings that cross-cut the latter, thus it can be seen as

[355] The name of the sign was *ga-am-mu*, see Gong 2000: 124.

[356] The chapter *pān tākalti* of canonical Bārûtu concerned those subsections of the facies visceralis, i. e. "The Front of the Pouch" which were not considered as important to merin an own chapter, see Koch 2000: 267□282.

[357] Frahm 2010: 106, where he notes tha GAM means, inter alia, *mâtu* (to die), a connotation that might have influenced the negative prediction.

[358] NÍGIN = *la-mu-u* Ea I 32b, NIGIN = *la-mu-ú* Ea I 47d, and see the further numerous lexical equetions in CAD L 69 (sub *lamû,* lexical section). For further Akkadian equivalents see ePSD sub. NIGIN.

the graphich representation of breaking, entering into an enclosed, fortified entity (a camp, a city, and the like). At this point we are seemingly rather close to the original interpretation, since the appearance of a *kukku*-shaped Path in "our" side means, according to the first omen, that (after the encirclement): "I will enter (to the enemy city)".

The second omen, which was generated from the first one, concerns the reverse situation:

> If there are two Paths and the **lower** one is like a **curved staff** and the **upper** one is like a ***kukku*-bread**:
> The enemy will encircle the city and conquer it. He will enter it and the enemy army will divide the spoils.

Here, the *gamlu*-crook, the sign of encirclement appears in "our" side, which means that "our" city will be enclosed, while the *kukku*, the sign of breakthrough concerns the enemy.

Conclusions

As this lengthy analysis also reflects, upon defining the correct interpretation of a given omen, all three of the code-systems discussed in this chapter has to be taken into consideration. While the simple code defines certain values, and incidentally the actors and/or the events involved, and the disciplinary code provides further clues regarding the latter, it is the written code which determines the exact meaning and even the wording of the apodosis. Of course, each omen entry is, so to say, a microcosmos in itself: beyond the detection of the symultaneous work of these code-systems, from the third stage of analysis onworards, that is, from when the investigation of the written code is taken into consideration, it is impossible to lay down the general rules of interpretation. As it was seen, written associations can take several forms and may affect various words or cuneiform signs of the protases, so in each case we have to take into account several various facts: the graphic shape, the name, the phonetic value of the cuneiform signs, or that of Sumerian or Akkadian words, their actual or possible lexical equivalents (even lengthy synonym-chains), the latter's graphic or phonetic associations, and so on. From this point onwards, one might say that each case is unique (however, in the next chapter we will investigate certain examples as well in which the context largely defines these associations). Although this might seem frustrating at first glance, in reality the inner logic of the omen entries is in most cases rather clear-cut. To illustrate all that in practice, we should get back to our previously treated, emblematic examples.

At first, to the problem of the lion appearing at the city gate in the liver omen.

[MAŠ *e*]-*le-nu-um* KÁ É.GAL *ši-lum še$_{20}$-e-li*
MAŠ *elēnum bāb ekallim šīlum šeli*
wa-ṣi a-bu-lim ne-šim i-da-ak
wā□i abullim nēšum idâk
If there is a hole gouged above the palace gate
a lion will kill someone who goes out of the city gate

(YOS X 26 ii 32)

As we have already seen, the disciplinary code of extispicy clearly defines the protagonist and the outcome of the *protasis*: the Palace gate concerns the traffic through the city gate, "above" defines the negative value, that is, the outgoing direction, and finally, the hole *(šīlu)* refers to death. That is, someone who goes out on the city gate will die—previously the only problem concerned the specific way of death: the appearance of the lion.

Now, as we are acquainted with the specific interpretative methods of the written code, we should take into consideration the possible logographic forms of the Akkadian text.

The **lion** *(nēšu)* can be equated either with the most common logogram UR.MAH, or with PIRIG.[359] The latter, in turn, readed as ÚG, is the logographic equivalent of the Akkadian word *nūru* as well, which means "light".[360] "Light" has an alternative logographic form, not uncommon in omen texts,[361] namely the logogram **SI**.[362]

As for the elements of the *protasis*, the hole ***(šīlu),*** as we have seen, is usually written with the logogram U, according to the disciplinary code, and U denotes *ubānu* as well.

[359] Cf. the lexical equations, e.g. PIRIG = *ni-e-šú* Ura XIV 125, pi-ri-ig PIRIG = *ni-e-šu* S^{b} I 205, and further references in CAD N/II 193 (sub. *nēšu,* lexical section).

[360] Cf. pi-rig PIRIG = *nu-u-ru* Idu II 219, u-ug PIRIG = *nu-rum* Aa III/4 68, u-ug UG = *nu-rum* Aa III/4 77 (the logogram UG actually consists of PIRIGxUD, and can be read as PÌRIG as well). See CAD N/II 347 (sub. *nūru* lexical section).

[361] Cf. for e.g. the astrological commentary CT 26 43 viii 10: SI = *nu-ú-ru*, and the commentary to the diagnostic series SA.GIG Tablet I 19 (DIŠ SI GU$_4$ IGI GIG BI BA.ÚŠ If (the patient) sees the horn of an ox, he will die) in SpTU I 27 rv 6: [DIŠ SI GU$_4$] ⌈IGI⌉ GIG BI ÚŠ : SI : *qar-nu* : SI : *nu-úr* : SI : *šá-ru-ru* (If he sees an ox horn, (the patient) will die — SI (means) "horn", SI (means) "light", SI (means) "radiance".) For the edition of the latter commentary see George 1991 (with further remarks on the text in Esztári– Bácskay– Simkó 2014), and see George 1991: 148– 149 for the quoted lines. The lexical citation in this text is probably quoted from S^{a} Voc N 1'–4', omitting 2': [si-i SI] = [*qa*]-*ar-nu*, [*i*]-*ta-nu*, [*n*]*u-ú-ru*, [*šá*]-*ru-ru*, see George 1991: 157. One should note again the negative portent of SI in the protasis (it means the death of the patient), which may originally stem from its equation with *ubānu* (U) and *pilšu*, see below.

[362] Cf. si-i [SI] = *nu-ú-rum* Aa III/4 168, and S^{a} Voc N 3', quoted in the previous note. See CAD N/II 347 (sub. *nūru* lexical section).

Ubānu, however, can also be referred to with the logogram **SI**[363] (perhaps as a shortened form of the compound ŠU.SI and also because of the similarity of the specific shape of the Finger to that of horns).

Furthermore, the verb ***šelû*,** the last element of the *protasis*, although its meaning is a bit obscure (it was only tentatively translated as to "gouge" by A. George, however, perhaps on the basis that it should be related to *šīlu*), its lexical equivalents are fairly certain. The fact that it was also equated with the logogram **SI**, actually comfirms our assumption that the final content of the a*podosis* and its exact wording was defined by means of the written code, on the basis of simple, □*âtu*-type lexical equations. It was the common lexical equivalent of the key-words of the *protasis* (SI) which defined the very mean of death: with a rather simple equation (SI = *nūru* = PIRIG) it actually called forth, or more properly, revealed the "lion" of the *apodosis*.

However, one should never neglect the holistic nature of this three-stage decoding: although they might seem complex and manifold, the mechanisms of the written code can never overwrite the basic associations of the simple and disciplinary codes, since they actually build upon the latter—and as such, cannot alter the already defined meaning(s). In other words, the sometimes seemingly infinite possibilities offered by the written code are narrowed down by means of the two other code systems.

Actually, that was the very fact which finally led the many times mentioned attempt of **Marduk-šāpk-zēri** to a dead end. As it already turned out (see 2.2 of the present chapter) that the omens cited by him were carefully chosen and his reasoning was well built and structured. He opened with one of the most well-known entries, the incipit of the Jupiter Tablets (which is actually an adaptation of the first line of the Venus Tablet), complementing the original entry with a second *apodosis*:

SAA 10–160 obv. 11–12

DIŠ ^{MUL}SAG.ME.GAR *ina še-er-ti ik-tu-un* LUGAL.MEŠ KÚR.MEŠ SILIM.MEŠ
šumma Nēbiru ina šērti iktūn šarrū nakkrūtu išallimū
LUGAL *ana* LUGAL SILIM-*ma* KIN-*ár*
šarru ana šarri šulma išappar

If Jupiter becomes steady in the morning: enemy kings will make peace,
one king will send peaceful messages to another.

[363] For lexical equation see Aa III/4: 155, see CAD U 4 (sub. *ubānu*, lexical section).

Concerning the original interpretation, we have already defined that **Jupiter** refers to the **king**, and that the word ***šērtu*** was associated with **brightness**, on the basis of a popular commentary: *šērtu namāru šarūru naši* (the word) "morning" (means) to be bright, it carries radiance.[364] This "brightness" defines the positive value of the apodosis. By now we can consider the exact wording as well. It was already observed that the logogram SILIM appears in both *apodoses*—and this is indeed not a coincidence, since the Akkadian equivalent *šalāmu* (and consequently *šulmu*) has another, specific logographic equivalent, GI which, in turn, stands for the verb *kânu* (means "to be steady" in astrological texts).[365] That is, the wording is based on a rather simple □*âtu*-type association (*kânu* = GI = *šalāmu*), which was, as one also should note, quite specific to astrological literature, as the following commentary also confirms:

GI *ka-a-nu* KI.MIN *ta-ra-ku* GI *šá-la-mu*

(Ach Sin 3: 71)[366]

The second apodosis, created by Marduk-šāpik-zēri also builds, on the one hand, on this specific □*âtu*-type equation, by using SILIM (*šulmu*, "peace"). But what about the "sending of messages", expressed by the verb *šapāru*? The appliance of this phrase is, in fact, based similarly on the written code, since *šapāru* can also be equated with the logogram GI. [367] Although it is not a quite common equation, and one might say a bit unorthodox as compared to the former, does not alters, but rather, expands the interpretation, and as such, very much apt to demonstrate that the author can even specify one of the most traditional interpretations of his colleagues.

And in this spirit, he continues, one might say plays (since in this case, actually for the first time, we seemingly deal with a real "world play") with a similarly common passage, *šarūru naši* which alludes to the already quoted commentary, citing an entry which also refers to Jupiter and contains this very expression:

SAA 10 160 obv. 13.

DIŠ ^{MUL}ZUBI ŠE.ER.ZI ÍL
šumma Gamlu šarūru naši
SUHUŠ ^{GIŠ}GU.ZA LUGAL ***da-ri* (or DA.RI)**
išid kussê šarri dāri

[364] See note XXXX.
[365] Cf. GI : *ka-a-nu* in ACh Supp. Sin 16:20, and further astrological references in CAD K 160 (sub. *kânu*, lexical section).
[366] See also Thompson Rep. 25 rv. 3, 27 and passim, cf. CAD K 160 (sub. *kânu*, lexical section).
[367] Cf. GI = šá-pa-ru in Lanu B iii 3, see CAD Š/1 430 (sub. *šapāru* lexical section).

If Auriga carries radiance:
The foundation of the king's throne will be **everlasting**.

The message is evident: he is very well acquainted with the academic catchprases of the Assyrian court, however, he is not only able to specify, but also to correct some traditional or fossilized contributions to knowledge, since this very *apodosis* was quoted differently by his Assyrian colleagues, using the verb GIN/GI (to be stable) instead of "everlasting" (DA.RI). What's behind all that? As we have already said, **ZUBI**, the constellation Crook is a code-name of **Jupiter**, so it concerns the **king**, while ***šarūru,*** based on the above, can be associated with brightness, so it carries a **positive value**. At this point, we can also add that the "throne base" of the *apodosis* was revealed by means of the written code, since *šarūru* can also be equated with the logogram HAR,[368] which is in turn a logographic equivalent of the term *išdu* ("base, foundation"),[369] written in the here with the more common logogram SUHUŠ. One might say, the original interpretation did not base on wheels within wheels: it concerned something about the throne base of the king, and in fact what else can a "positive" throne base can be, than stable? Well, according to Marduk-šāpik-zēri, it can be everlasting—but why? His "correction" becomes clear if we take a closer look on the compound logogram ZUBI, which consists of two elements: PAP.NÁ. If we dispiece this compound, actually as a kind of notariqon, we may unfold that the second one, according, again, to □*âtu*-type equations, corresponds with the Akkadian verb *nâlu* ("to lie"), which, in turn, can also be equated with the logogram RI[370]—and yet, we get the second element of the key-word. Admittedly, it is a neat association, especially since it conforms with the other code-systems and thus with the original meaning of the *apodosis* as well.

The latter, however, is definitely not true for our last example from the letter:

SAA 10 160 obv. 14–16

DIŠ ^{MUL}SAG.ME.GAR *ina* KUN.MEŠ GUB ^{ÍD}MAŠ.GÚ.QAR *u* ^{ÍD}UD.KIB.NUN.KI
šumma Nēberu ina Zibbāti izzaz Idiqlat u Purattu
sa-ki-ki DIRI.MEŠ : IDIM : *sa-ki-ki* : IDIM : *nag-bi* : DIRI [: *ma-lu*]-⌈*ú*⌉
sakīki malâ : IDIM : *sakīki* : IDIM *nagbi* : DIRI : *malû*
HÉ.⌈NUN⌉ *u* HÉ.GÁL.⌈LA *ina* KUR⌉ GÁL-*ši*

[368] Aa V/2: 172.
[369] Aa V/2: 266.
[370] Sa Voc. F 3', and also Aa II/7 ii 8, see also CAD N/I 204 (sub. *nâlu* lexical section).

nuhšu u hagallu ina māti ibbašši

If Jupiter stands in Pisces: the Tigris and the Euphrates
will be filled with silt. IDIM (means) "silt" IDIM (means) "spring" DIRI (means) "to be full/filled"
There will be prosperity and abundance in the land.

As we have already defined, according to the disciplinary code the constellation KUN.MEŠ (Tails /Pisces) alludes to its two constituting elements, which in turn correspond to the Tigris and the Euphrates. Further on, the **Akkadian verb *izuzzu*,** written with the traditional logogram GUB, can also be equated with **DIRI**,[371] which, accordingly, do appear in the *apodosis*, as the logographic equivalent of ***malû***, ("to be(come) full, fill up with"). So much for the disciplinary and written correlations, since admittedly the specific reason of the negative value, as well as of the appearance of *sakīku* (silt) in the original interpretation escapes me. Maybe it is a really simple association, if we consider that the very concept of "filling up" in connection with the two rivers is essentially negative, still, it does not explain why was it specifically expressed, or rather complemented with *sakīku*. The fact that thus far the latter has not got any known lexical equivalents throws further difficulties in the way of the explanation. However, it can be a slight satisfaction that seemingly we are not the only ones eluded by the original *apodosis*, since it seems like, unless if we suppose that *sakīku* was after all encoded in the *protasis* somehow, that the alternative interpretation of Marduk-šāpik-zēri, instead of focusing on the *protasis*, is actually based on the wording of the *apodosis*.

It is evident even at first sight that he quotes simple, □*âtu*-type equations for *sakīku* and DIRI *(malû)*, respectively, which he obviously considers as the key-words of the *apodosis*. One should interject even at this point that this very method, despite how interesting or innovative it is, was rather uncommon in scholarly circles. Although he already tended to depart from the dogmatic tradition of the latter, the very moment when he went too far is almost palpable. Beyond the fact that he consciously neglected the topic defined by the disciplinary code, he presented an exclusively written code-based alternative full of, in addition, far-out intellectual manoeuvres. But let's reconstruct what he has done!

His first lexical equation, *sakīku* = IDIM is unfortunately lost for us, although it should really have existed since the etymologically related *sakku* ("blocked, deaf") and

[371] OB Diri Nippur 11, OB Diri Oxford 2, and Diri I 29, see CAD U 373 (sub. *izuzzu*, lexical section).

sukkuku (“deaf”) were indeed matched with the logogram IDIM.[372] The further two equations (IDIM = *nagbu*[373] “spring, underground water” etc. and the already mentioned DIRI = *malû*), on the other hand, were drawn from well-defined lexical sources. Fair enough, but how can all this be connected with the new *apodosis* created by him, according to which “There will be prosperity and abundance in the land?” Well, from this point he seemingly ceased to be elucidative, not unlikely because some of his further associations are rather free. While it is evident that the usage of the logogram GÁL was based on another □*âtu*-type equation (GÁL = *malû*),[374] it took a rather tricky way to arrive to “plenty and abundance” from the latter. As for these elements, we should get back to the logogram IDIM, which denoted the already mentioned *nagbu*, an expression for the underground water which can also be translated as the “Deep”—that is, it refers to the abode of Enki/Ea, the *Apsû*.[375] Moreover, Ea himself could also have been designated as ^{d}IDIM.[376] So *nagbu* alludes to the residence of the god of wisdom, which in the human sphere was nothing else than the city of Eridug, that is, NUN^{KI}, by means of which we got the other key-word, or rather element of the interpretation besides GÁL. From this pair, it is only a slight logical step to get to a traditional expression in which these very elements appear: HÉ.**NUN** and HÉ.**GÁL**.

Although this interpretation is full of wit and perhaps its author might really felt that “he saw the Deep,” as the unknown future (carrier) of Marduk-šāpik-zēri suggests that his Assyrian colleagues, probably together with the king himself, may have considered it even at best, as the German would say, *“geistreich aber falsc*h.” We, however, may learn something more from this case, beyond the warning that one should not neglect the coefficient operation of the code systems—relating to the identity of the king. Considering the facts that the author of this letter was well acquainted with the scholarly flavour and trends of the Assyrian court, and, especially, that his reasoning was a bit desperate though, but well-thought-out, he could not possibly expect that his “colleagues”, the ones he wanted to outdo, will be attentive enough to explain his “ingenious” novelty to the ruler. Since no one would say this in play, we should rather conclude that he addressed his letter to no one else than a scholar-king—to Ashurbanipal.[377]

[372] See Aa II/3 Section E 90□10’ (MSL 14 278).

[373] Aa II/ 3 Section E 11,’ Antagal D b 16 and passim, see CAD N/1 108□109 (sub. *nagbu* lexical section).

[374] Idu II 44, cf. CAD M/1 175 (sub. *malû*, lexical section).

[375] For the common expression ^{d}*Ea bēl nagbi* (“Ea, lor of the deep waters /the Deep”) see CAD N/1 esp. 110 sub. *nagbu* 2c).

[376] *dna-ag-bu*IDIM = ^{d}*É-a* (CT 24 14: 47 and passim, see CAD N/I 109 (sub. *nagbu* lexical section).

[377] The most famous evidence on Ashurbanipal’s acquaintance with the scribal arts and other scholarly disciplines is his own testimony about his education in the authobiographical inscription L^{4} (K 2694 + K 3050), according to which (L^{4} Obv. 14-18, for a recent translation see Zamazalová 2011: 315): „I

Also, one may add as a further conclusion that sometimes omens do not only reveal something divine—their selection and interpretation may reveal much about their human author.

learnt the lore of the wise sage Adapa, the hidden secret of all scribal art. 14 I can recognize celestial and terrestrial omens (and) discuss (them) in the assembly of the scholars. 15 I can deliberate upon (the series) '(If) the liver is a mirror (image) of heaven' with able experts in oil divination. 16 I can solve complicated multiplications and divisions which do not have an (obvious) solution. 17 I have studied elaborate composition(s) in obscure Sumerian (and) Akkadian which are diffi cult to get right. 18 I have inspected cuneiform sign(s) on stones from before the fl ood, which are cryptic, impenetrable (and) muddled up." On the scholarly education of Ashurbanipal in general see the excellent summary of S. Zamazalová (Zamazalová 2011: esp. 314–320, with further literature), for further evidence on the king's literacy see Livingstone 2007.

III. ON SHEEP, LIONS, AND HORNS — A CASE STUDY

As it was already mentioned, Tablet V is traditionally considered as the most archaic part of *Šumma izbu*[378] and thus, although it certainly carries the traces of the work of later redaction, we may expect that it will reflect rather clear-cut interpretations and structure, especially as opposed to the subsequently composed parts of the series, revered in contemporary academic circles. As such, it can be considered—even unseen—as apt for a throughout analysis on, so to say, a beginner level, upon putting our previous considerations about the simultaneous effect of the code systems to a test, before we proceed, with the examination of SAG ITI NU TIL.LA, to an advanced stage.

Over against the previous trends of omen interpretation in Assyriology, we will examine a lengthy section in its entirety which will also enable us to reveal the basic organising principles on the vertical axis—since later on the latter will also be worthy to compared with those of the "work of Ea." The specific section we picked upon concerns the **horns** of lions (presumably malformed lambs with lion-like facial features), borne by ewes (Tablet V 35–49).[379] Although we have just labelled it "lengthy," it can be seen that it consists of only 15 lines—however, as compared to the omen pairs, triplets, or at best quadruplets analysed previously as coherent units, it is indeed a long one. Some of its entries (40, 44, and 48) were already treated by N. de Zorzi, as examples which should have illustrated that horns were general "symbols" of royal and divine power, and as such, may allude to "aggression and conflict."[380] Actually, as we will see, horns have a more specific negative value—based on allusions drawn from the disciplinary code of extispicy. The latter, as it was already said, made a great impact on teratomancy—and this assertion can and will clearly be confirmed by the present case study as well, since our section represents a number of its rather specific elements.

Yet, before we begin and turn to the opening entry of the "horny" section, we should take a closer look on the last omen of the former one, since it will reveal a specific

[378] On the basis of the high number of the known Old Babylonian material, as well as that of historical omens incorporated into it. In fact, it constituted a "bridge" between the once separate series Š*sa* and *Šumma izbu*, see already Leichty 1970: 25□26.

[379] We will follow the line numbering clarified by N. de Zorzi (on the problems concerning the latter see de Zorzi 2014: 461□462), as well as her score transliteration (see de Zortzi 2014: 470□473 for the textual unit in question).

[380] De Zorzi 2011: 55.

method of transition between coherent textual units—already discussed in relation to lexical lists.

(34) BE U_8 UR.MAH Ù.TU-*ma* □*i-ba-ri* GAR
šumma lahru nēša ulidma □***ibāra*** *šakin*
LUGAL UB.DA.LÍMMU.BA EN-*el*
šarru kibrât erbetti ibêl

If an ewe gives birth to a **lion** and it has (a) □***ibaru,***
The **king** of the **four** quarters will rule.

Instead of getting confused already at the beginning by the rather ambiguous meaning of the key-term □*ibaru*, which may either refer to a peg-like growth, a pointy garden tool, or a plant, according to our dictionaries,[381] we should take the commentaries into consideration, since they reveal that contemporary scholars also had to clarify and explain this expression. According to the Principal commentary, a □*ibaru* was some kind of a protruding fleshy feature (B.1 11: □*i-ba-ru :* [*šīru* (UZU) *at-ru*]).[382]

A further, and even more detailed parallel to this explanation can be found in K 9180 (RA 17, 163) + K 13961 (CT 28 26) = TCS 4 232, commentary Z, 6'–7':[383]

BE *iz-bu ina* UGU SAG.DU-*šú* UZU GIM GIŠKIB *(šallūri) na-ši: šal-lu-r*[*u :* □*i-ba-ru*]
□*i-ba-ru* **UZU** *at-ru* GIM ŠU.**SI** [*a-*□*i*]

If the *izbu* has a piece of flesh on the top of its head resembling a *šallūru*-fruit:[384]
šallūru (can be equated with) □*ibaru*: □*ibaru* is a protruding flesh which [protrudes] like a finger.

So □*ibaru* was a fleshy feature (**UZU**) which resembled to a finger (ŠU.**SI** or **SI** in a shorter form, see below)—and yet, by means of the more specific commentary we have actually obtained the governing signs of the first entry of the subsequent section. The same phenomenon was already observed in lexical lists, where the **last entry of a section** might **contain the subsequent governing sign.** Accordingly, line 35, the opening entry of the horn-related textual unit reads:

(35) BE U8 **UR.MAH** Ù.TU-*ma* **SI**.MEŠ *šá* **UZU** GAR

[381] See CDA 337 and CAD □ 154□155.
[382] Cf. de Zorzi 2014: 464. The text was emended on the basis of the commentary edited in TCS 4 217: 179.
[383] Cf. de Zorzi 2014: 498.
[384] On the meaning of *šallūru* (a tree and its fruit) see CAD Š/1 253□254 (sub. *šallūru*).

šumma lahru nēša ulidma qarnī ša šīri šakin
NUN GABA.RI NU TUK-*ši*
rubû māhira ul irašši

If an ewe gives birth to a **lion** and it has **horns** from **flesh**,
The prince will have no rival.

Beyond that this omen is a clear example of the "catchline-type" transition between larger sections, there is a further observation which has to be stressed. Namely, that this line already appears at the beginning of Tablet V (=line 4) which was preserved in a late Babylonian manuscript (SpTU 3, 91, see Fig 17. below),[385] and in the small fragment from Nineveh as well (on which only the first ten lines were preserved).[386] However, in contrast with the other manuscripts, the Neo-Assyrian Kuyunjik tablet (K 9905 + K 8266)[387] inserted it to the beginning of the horn-related section. In other words, the latter was opened by line 35 (= line 4) **exclusively in a Neo-Assyrian recension**, all others (in fact, two Babylonian texts, SpTU 3, 91 and BM 75209)[388] omit this insertion and begin with line 36 of the composite text. Actually, this very fact foretokens the existence of characteristic Assyrian methods (and trends) of omen generation in a smaller, and organization on a larger scale, since these "catchline type" transitions, treated in detail in the concluding section of the present chapter, will be prominent in SAG ITI NU TIL.LA as well—and thus one may even get the feeling that we are actually tracing the work of the very same redactor(s) in here.

Back to line 35 and regarding its inner-omen correlations we should note that the **lion**, as usual, refers to the **king** or state matters (as, of course, most of the omens in this tablet). As for the basic allusions of **horns**, confronting with the already mentioned suggestion of N. de Zorzi, we may assert that essentially, they were explicitly considered as **negative** signs—as it is evident from the following omen-pair of the same tablet:

(40) BE U_8 UR.MAH Ù.TU-*ma* SI 15-*šú* NU GÁL
šumma lahru nēša ulidma qaran imittišu lā ibašši
ÉRIN NUN GABA.RI NU TUK-*ši*
ummân rubê māhira ul irašši

[385] Ms A of de Zorzi, see de Zorzi 2014: 462.
[386] K 8985, Ms B_1 of de Zorzi, can be joined with B2, which contains omens from the second half of Tablet V, see de Zorzi 2014: 462, and below Table 1 on the various recensions.
[387] Mss C1 and C2 in de Zorzi 2014: 462□463. K 8266 = CT 27 20.
[388] Ms D of de Zorzi, see de Zorzi 2014: 463.

If an ewe gives birth to a **lion** and it has **no right horn**,
The army of the **prince** will **have no rival**.
(41) BE U_8 UR.MAH Ù.TU-*ma* SI 150-*šú* NU GÁL
šumma lahru nēša ulidma qaran šumēlišu lā ibašši
ÉRIN KUR GABA.RI NU TUK-*ši*
ummān nakri māhira ul irašši

If an ewe gives birth to a **lion** and it has **no left horn**,
The **army** of the **enemy will have no rival**.

Thus, having no horns on our side results in a positive interpretation (in other words, in this case a negative sign appears on the enemy's side), while a horn on the right means anything but good for us—and indeed, it is good for the enemy. What is the underlying principle of this evidently negative value?

If one seeks for an explanation, should consider, as a first step, that by-and-large horns were also similar to fingers, which is well-reflected by the fact that beside *qarnu* ("horn") the logogram **SI** could also stand for ***ubānu*** ("finger").[389] At this point, we can and in fact should recall the disciplinary code of extispicy, according to which **the Finger** (*ubānu*, the caudate lobe) may have symbolized the foreign and the hostile, and thus had an essentially negative value. It was also said that beyond its general negative connotations, it often signified death in various omen compendia. This latter association, as we have also already defined, can possibly be connected with its logographic form **U**, which can refer to holes ***(šīlu, pilšu)*** as well—fortuitous marks with clear allusion to death.[390]

Bearing all this in mind it is evident, however, that the *apodosis* of line 35 is positive, so one might ask why. On the one hand, the explanation is obvious: there are two horns (SI.MEŠ) in the *protasis*, and although it is not explicit, we should rather suppose that they were placed both on the right and the left sides (cf. for example, line 38 of the present section below) which takes the binary left/right opposition out of play. On the other hand, these horns were fleshy (*šá* UZU). On a general level, flesh, similarly to fat,[391] may allude to richness—since meat consumption was a privilege of the rich. However, this association manifests itself on the written level as well, since, as we have already seen in

[389] Cf. Aa III/4 155 and further lexical references in CAD U-W 3□4 (sub. *ubānu* lexical section).
[390] See Chapter 3.2.1.
[391] Cf. de Zorzi 2011: 66.

case of dream omens, the Akkadian *šīru* can be connected with *šarû* ("riches") on paronomastic grounds. To put it simple, the appearance of "flesh," which had general positive allusions, determined the positive value of the interpretation.

Finally, we should turn to the exact wording of the latter. As the displayed copy of SpTU 3, 91 in Fig 17 reflects, the term GABA, among others, comes up over and over again in the *apodoses* of the horn-related section, it occurs in altogether four of the 15 *apodoses*—which cannot be a coincidence (note, however, that our presently discussed entry appears in line 4 of this tablet). In other words, one may suspect some kind of written correlation behind this frequent occurrence, based, presumably, on a □*âtu*-type equation. And indeed, we can trace a rather simple one which explains these recurring *apodoses*: just as DIRI (SI.A, see above in Chapter II.3 conclusions), the logogram SI can also be equated with the Akkadian verb *malû*[392] which, in turn, can correspond to the logogram GABA as well.[393]

(36) BE U_8 **UR.MAH** Ù.TU-*ma* **SI**.MEŠ GAR-*ma* **3-*tu*$_4$** *ina* **15**-*šú* GAR
šumma lahru nēša ulidma qarnī šakinma šaluštu ina imittišu šakin
LUGAL KUR NU **UR$_5$**-*ta*$_5$ ŠU-*su* **KUR**-*ád*
šarru māta lā šatta qāssu ikaššad

If an ewe gives birth to a lion and it has horns, three on its right side,
The king will conquer a land which was (previously) not his own.

At first sight, this entry confronts with our previous considerations, since even so the **negative horns** appear on the **right side**, the apodosis is favourable for "us."

[392] See Sa Voc. M 16 and further lexical (and commentary) equations in CAD M/1 175□176 (sub. *malû* lexical section).

[393] Although the lexical equation du-u GAB = *ma-lu-u šá* HAR-*tu* (Aa VIII/1 140) is admittedly not quite clear-cut, the frequency of the evident equation of SI and GABA in this unit (a see also below, in SAG ITI NU TIL.LA entries) may confirm its pertinence.

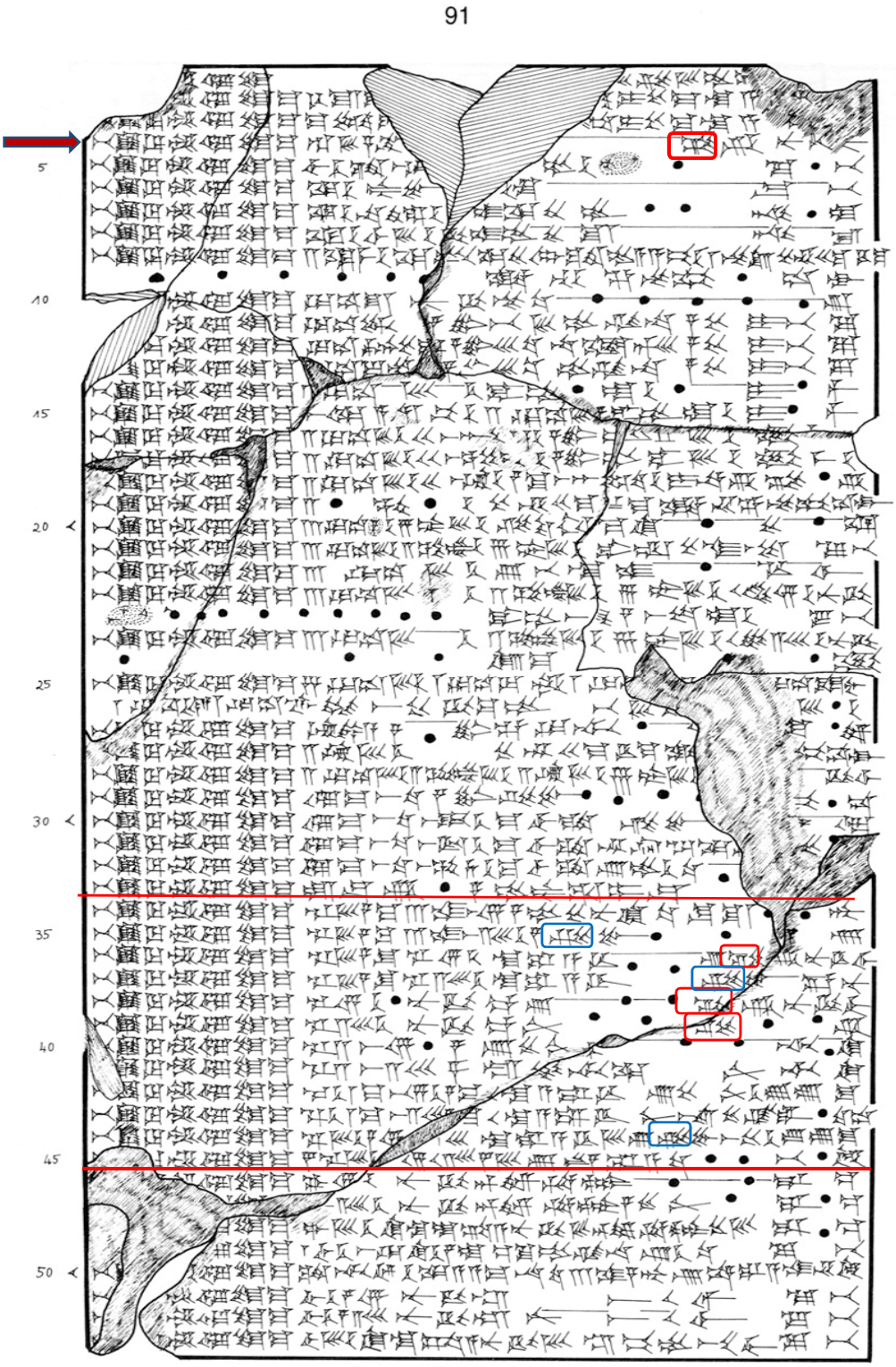


Fig 17. The copy of SpTU 3, 91, displaying the recurring elements of the *apodoses* in the horn-related section of Tablet V.

In this case, however, we should turn again to the code system of extispicy, since, as we may remember, according to the latter the triple appearance of a sign/mark was considered as a ***niphu*** (joker sign)—which, in turn, **reversed the result** and made an otherwise unfavourable result favourable (and vice versa, see Chapter II.2.1).

What about the key-words of the *apodosis*? The appearance of UR_5 / HAR, which specifies the contents of the latter (since it will concern a land which wasn't yet under the control of the king) is first off conscious. If we turn to the lexical material, this suspect proves true, since it turns out that **UR_5 / HAR** can be equated with *šarūru* which, as we have seen during the analysis of both liver and astral omens in the concluding section of the previous chapter, is another possible equivalent of **SI**.[394] Furthermore, a similar consideration can be revealed regarding the usage of **KUR** *(kašādu)*, which is also based on a □*âtu*-type chain: KUR = *napāhu*[395] = SI.[396]

Line 36 constitutes the first element of a pair which is based on simple left/right dichotomy (and thus reflects the simplest form of omen generation on the vertical axis)—accordingly, the entry in line 37 investigates the opposing possibility:

(37) BE U_8 **UR.MAH** Ù.TU-*ma* **SI**.MEŠ GAR-*ma* **3-*tu*$_4$** *ina* 150-*šú* GAR
šumma lahru nēša ulidma qarnī šakinma šaluštu ina šumēlišu šakin
ZI-*bu ana* **NUN**
tību ana rubê

If an ewe gives birth to a **lion** and it has **horns**, **three** on its **left** side,
There will be a revolt against the prince.

Since the interpretation follows the very same line, it is enough to restrict ourselves to the wording of the *apodosis*. Our specific key-word is the logogram ZI which, together with the compound ZI.GA, is the common equivalent of *tību* ("rise, attack") and the related verb *tebû*.[397]

ZI.GA can also be the logographic equivalent of the term □*ītu*, if it was used in a secondary meaning, referring to expenditures, losses, and the like.[398] However, the basic meaning of this Akkadian term is "rise (of the sun)", traditionally written with the compound logogram È,[399] just as the etymologically related verb *wa*□*û (*"to go out"). The

[394] See inter alia S[a] Voc N 1'-4': [si-i SI] = [*qa*]-*ar-nu*, [*i*]-*ta-nu*, [*n*]*u-ú-ru*, [*šá*]-*ru-ru*, in more detail see note xxx. One should also note that the Principal commentary adds a further equation to this line, namely: $^{ur}UR_5$ = *šu-a-tú* / $^{ur}UR_5$ = *nak-rù* (Principal commentary B.1 15□16, see de Zorzi 2014: 464). On the basis of the phonetic gloss /ur/, this equation involved the homophony of the logograms UR_5 and UR, since the latter was indeed equated with *nakru* ("enemy"), see inter alia MSL 9 133: 476 (Proto-Aa), and further lexical references in CAD N/1 190 (sub. *nakru* lexical section).

[395] See inter alia Igituh I 413, Nabnitu XXIII b 1, and further references in CAD N/1 253 (sub. *napāhu* lexical section).

[396] Aa III/4 170, see also CAD N/1 253 (sub. *napāhu* lexical section).

[397] See CAD N/1 386□390 (sub. *tību*), and CAD N/1 307 (sub. *tebû* lexical section).

[398] Cf. CAD □ 215 (sub. □*ītu*, lexical section).

[399] Ibid.

latter can also be matched with the compound DIRI,[400] which is nothing else, than the sign combination SI.A. Although this □*âtu*-type chain (**ZI**(.GA) = □*ītu* = È = *wa*□*û* = **SI**.A) seems somewhat more complicated than the previous ones, it is still rather unambiguous, especially in the light of the fact that the related term È will (re)appear in the section (see below). However, one should also take notice of another possibility regarding the specific correlation concerning the logogram ZI in here. According to an astrological commentary[401] ZI can be the equivalent of the verb *namāru* ("to shine"), which, in turn, can also be written with SI.[402] Although this thread is obviously more simple and as such may seem more attractive, we cannot be sure whether the discipline-related literature of astrology would indeed play any role in here. Anyway, the logogram ZI appears in altogether three apodoses (for the other two see below), so it is certain that it was specifically related to "horns."

(38) BE U_8 **UR.MAH** Ù.TU-*ma* **SI**.MEŠ GAR-*ma* SI 15-*šú la-ra-a* TUK
šumma lahru nēša ulidma qarnī šakinma qaran imittišu larâ iraššī
NUN GABA.RI NU TUK-*ši*
rubû māhira ul iraššī
(the Neo-Assyrian manuscript K 9905 + K 8266 adds):
šá 15 *u* 150 **ŠU**-*su* **KUR**-*ád*
ša imitti u šumēli qāssu ikaššad

If an ewe gives birth to a lion and it has horns, and its right horn has a branch/bifurcation,
The prince will have no rival.
(the Neo-Assyrian manuscript K 9905 + K 8266 adds):
he (lit. "his hand") will defeat (his enemies) both on the left and the right.

As a matter of fact, each and every correlation of the written code appearing in here are by now familiar. We have already explained the underlying reasons behind the use of GABA (in this case, one may also note that the use of the same logogram (TUK) in the original *apodosis*), while the Neo-Assyrian addition builds, on the one hand, upon the already unfolded □*âtu*-type chain: KUR = *napāhu* = SI (complemented with the reflection of the left/right symmetry of the *protasis*). However, there is one thus far unexplained element in the Assyrian recension, namely ŠU ("hand"), which, as the Akkadian

[400] SI.A = *wa*-□*ú-um* Proto-Diri 4a, see CAD A/2 356 (sub. *a*□*û* lexical section).
[401] 5R 12 No. 5:4, see CAN N/1 211 (sub. *namāru* lexical section).
[402] Aa III/4 169, see ibid.

qātu can be equated with the logogram PA as well,[403] is actually a real cunning reflection of the "Branch" (*larû* = PA) appearing in the *protasis*.

Since the horns appear on both sides they annul each other—the only remaining question concern the exact reason behind overall positive value of the interpretation(s). At this point again, we should turn to the disciplinary code of extispicy, since the "Branches" were already discussed among the common marks, although they were not fortuitous marks *per se*, only extensions to a normally occurring feature—which may "have" *(rašû, išû)* a branch. It was also defined that Branches were positive signs and could be associated with achievement, conquest, or expansion—just as in the present case.

This explanation conforms with the interpretation of the next entry which investigates the opposing possibility:

(39) BE U_8 **UR.MAH** Ù.TU-*ma* **SI**.MEŠ GAR-*ma* **SI 150**-*šú* ***la-ra-a*** TUK
šumma lahru nēša ulidma qarnī šakinma qaran šumēlišu larâ iraššī
ZI-*bu dan-nu*
tību dannu

If an ewe gives birth to a lion and it has horns, and its left horn has a branch/bifurcation,
(There will be) a strong revolt.

As a matter of fact, all but one correlation requires further explanation in this case: the appearance of *dannu* ("strong") in the *apodosis* which, in turn, is based on a neat association which involves more than one elements of the *protasis*. It is well-known that the common logographic equivalent of ***dannu*** is KAL,[404] but it can also be matched with **PIRIG**,[405]—which may also refer to a **lion**. From this point the explanation run along the same lines as the one we have already treated in case of the lion, the hole, and the city gate (see Chapter II.3 conclusions). As we have seen, PIRIG, read as ÚG, is the logographic equivalent of ***nūru*** as well, which, in turn, has an alternative logographic form, not uncommon in omen texts,[406] namely the logogram **SI**.[407]

The following entries of our section were already quoted to illustrate the general negative value of horns. Moreover, each of their correlations were discussed in the meantime, so one only add that they improve the number of the GABA-*apodoses*.

[403] PA = *i*-□*u, qa-tum* Aa I/7 Section B ii 78, see CAD Q 184 (sub. *qātu* lexical section)
[404] Cf. CAD D 93 =sub. *dannu* lexical section).
[405] Aa III/4 74, see ibid.
[406] See notes XXX and XXX.
[407] Cf. si-i [SI] = *nu-ú-rum* Aa III/4 168, and passim (sub. *nūru* lexical section), and see notes XXX.

(40) BE U_8 UR.MAH Ù.TU-*ma* SI 15-*šú* NU GÁL
šumma lahru nēša ulidma qaran imittišu lā ibašši
ÉRIN NUN GABA.RI NU TUK-*ši*
ummân rubê māhira ul irašši

If an ewe gives birth to a **lion** and it has **no right horn**,
The army of the **prince** will **have no rival**.

(41) BE U_8 UR.MAH Ù.TU-*ma* SI 150-*šú* NU GÁL
šumma lahru nēša ulidma qaran šumēlišu lā ibašši
ÉRIN KUR GABA.RI NU TUK-*ši*
ummān nakri māhira ul irašši

If an ewe gives birth to a **lion** and it has **no left horn**,
The **army** of the **enemy will have no rival**.

Although it is evident that the subsequent entries constitute a pair as well, unfortunately both the essential parts of their *protases* and *apodoses* are lost, so we are unable to analyse their correlations. In fact, in the light of our forthcoming conclusions about the specific Assyrian trends of omen interpretation and generation this break will be considered as even more regrettable, since this omen pair appeared exclusively in the Neo-Assyrian manuscript.

(42) BE U_8 UR.MAH Ù.TU-*ma* SI 15-*šú* N[U]
[ ] *ar-bu-ta*$_5$ DU
šumma lahru nēša ulidma qaran imittišu lā …
…. arbūta illak

If an ewe gives birth to a lion and *it has no right horn and …*
… will take flight.

(43) BE U_8 UR.MAH Ù.TU-*ma* SI 150-[*šú* NU …]
[ ] *ar-bu-ta*$_5$ DU
šumma lahru nēša ulidma qaran šumēlišu lā …
…. arbūta illak

If an ewe gives birth to a lion and *it has no right horn and …*
… will take flight.

Luckily, however, the entries of the next omen pair are preserved—and, again interesting in many respects.

(44) BE U_8 UR.MAH Ù.TU-*ma* SI.MEŠ 2 *ina* 15-*šú* GAR
šumma lahru nēša ulidma qarnī 2 ina imittišu šakin
NUN KUR KÚR-*šú* **TI**-*qé*
rubû māt nakrisu ileqqe

If an ewe gives birth to a **lion** and it has **two horns** on the **right**,
The **prince** will **take the land of his enemy**.

(45) BE U_8 UR.MAH Ù.TU-*ma* SI.MEŠ 2 *ina* 150-*šú* GAR
šumma lahru nēša ulidma qarnī 2 ina imittišu šakin
URU ÙRU-*ti-ka* KÚR **TI**-*qé*
āl ***ni□irtika*** *nakru ileqqe*

If an ewe gives birth to a **lion** and it has **two horns** on the **left**,
The enemy will take your fortified city.

Seemingly, again, these entries contradict to our basic assumption about horns, since the appearance of **two horns** on our side goes with a positive *apodosis* (and vice versa). However, one should not forget a specific feature of the right/left dichotomy which is characteristic to *Šumma izbu*, namely, that, to quote E. Leichty again, "**two ominous features on the right side being good** and **two ominous features on the left side being bad**." [408] Now, if we turn to the specific wording of the *apodoses*, both containing the logogram **TI** which stands for the verb *leqû* ("to take") in here, one may reconstruct a somewhat longer □*âtu*-type chain. Most of the other Akkadian equivalents of TI *(balā□u, labāru, wašābu)*[409] can be written with the logogram TIL (=BAD), which, in turn, is an equivalent of both *gamāru* and *qatû* ("to be(come) complete, come to an end").[410] The latter verbs can be equated with the logogram ZAL,[411] which, in turn is the common logographic form of *namāru* ("to shine").[412] From this point, since "shining" and "light" became evolved, the reasoning is familiar: *namāru* has another lexical

[408] Leichty 1970: 7; also cited by Guinan 1996: 6; see Chapter 3.1.
[409] See Aa II/3 Part 3:4, 6, and 7 (MSL 14 277).
[410] See MSL 2 130a v 11□13 (Proto-Ea), Idu II 240□241, and further lexical passages in CAD Q 177 (sub. *qatû* lexical section), and in CAD G 25 (sub. *gamāru* lexical section).
[411] za-al ZAL = *ga-ma-rum, qá-tu-ú* VAT 6574 rv. ii 10' (Proto-Ea), and also MSL 9 149 ii 11□12 (Proto-Aa), cf. also in CAD Q 177 (sub. *qatû* lexical section), and in CAD G 25 (sub. *gamāru* lexical section).
[412] MSL 9 149 ii 10 (Proto-Aa), MSL 14 123 No. 9: 381 (also Proto-Aa), and see the further lexical passages in CAD N/1 210 (sub. *namāru*, lexical section).

equivalent, namely **SI**.[413] If someone would consider this chain of equations a bit too complicated, we may consider an alternative explanation as well, based on the fact that the Akkadian verb *leqû* was, according to Neo-Assyrian synonym lists from Nineveh, synonymous with the already discussed *kašādu*.[414] With regard to the latter, we have revealed a much more simple □*âtu*-type chain: *kašādu* = KUR = *napāhu* = SI.[415]

What else can be said about the specific wording of the second *apodosis*—that is, about the appearance of a fortified city? In this case, the explanation is again much more clear-cut, since *ni*□*irtu* ("secret, treasures, fortification") can be equated with the logogram U,[416] which, as we have already seen, stands for *ubānu* (ŠU.SI or SI) as well.

Proceeding further in our section, one may have the feeling that by now we have seen everything and we can immediately reveal each of the correlations of the following omen triplet (based on opposition and gradation). However, as it will be seen, this text always has further surprises in store for us.

(46) BE U_8 UR.MAH Ù.TU-*ma* SI-*šú* 1-*ma ina* 15-*šú* GAR-*ma u la-ra-a* TUK
šumma lahru nēša ulidma qaranšu ištētma ina imittišu šakinma u larâ irašši
NUN KUR KÚR (K 9905 + K 8266 adds: *ina* **GIŠTUKUL**) ***ú-šam-qat***
rubû māt nakri (ina kakki) ušamqat

If an ewe gives birth to a **lion** and it has **one horn** on the **right**, and it has a **branch/bifurcation**,
The prince will destroy the land of the enemy (with weapons).

(47) BE U_8 UR.MAH Ù.TU-*ma* SI-*šú* 1-*ma ina* 150-*šú* GAR-*ma u la-ra-a* TUK
šumma lahru nēša ulidma qaranšu ištētma ina imittišu šakinma u larâ irašši
KÚR *ina* ŠÀ KUR NAM.RA.È
nakru ina libbi māti šallata uše□□*e*

If an ewe gives birth to a **lion** and it has **one horn** on the **left**, and it has a **branch/bifurcation**,
The enemy will plunder in the midst of the land.

(48) BE U_8 UR.MAH Ù.TU-*ma* SI.MEŠ-*šú šá* 15 *u* 150 *la-ra-a* TUK.MEŠ
šumma lahru nēša ulidma qarnāšu ša imitti u šumēli larâ iraššâ

[413] Aa III/4 169, see ibid. and note XXX of the present chapter.
[414] *le-qu-ú* = *ka-šá-du* in An IX 69 and Malku IV 130.
[415] See notes XXXX of the present chapter.
[416] Aa II/4 52, see CAN N/2 276 (sub. *ni*□*irtu* lexical section).

NUN **ZI**-*bu* KUR-*šú* ***ú-šam-qat***
rubû tēbi mātišu ušamqat

If an ewe gives birth to a **lion** and **both its right and the left horns** have a **branch/bifurcation**,
The prince will stamp out a rebellion in his land.

On the basis of the first entry we may conclude, on the one hand, that howsoever negative a horn had been considered, the appearance of a positive branch on the right actually overwrote its value. The real feat, however, concerns the written code, since the key-word of the *apodosis*, ***ú-šam-qat*** comprehends complex □*âtu*-type equations based on two elements of the *protasis*, as well as a possible graphic allusion. If we consider the graphic form of this expression, it immediately catches one's eye that it consists of the sign sequence **Ú Ú ŠU,** on the basis of which one may suggest that it can possibly be considered as a notariqon. The reason behind the usage of ŠU was already unfold relating to the Neo-Assyrian addition to the entry in line 38, which also concerned a "Branch:" there we have defined that the Akkadian equivalent of **ŠU**, *qātu* can be connected with PA as well,[417] and thus reflects the "Branch" (***larû* = PA**) of the *protasis*. The equation concerning the other element, Ú, is also rather plain: **Ú** may also stand for a "horn" ***(qarnu)***.[418] Although this compound is in itself remarkable because it represents thus far the most sophisticated written correlations, perhaps there is even more in it, since if we replace the logograms with their above revealed equivalents, we will get the following sequence: **SI SI PA**. It is actually nothing else than the visual representation of two **horns, and a branch on the right**. The Neo-Assyrian addition operates on similar grounds, since ^{GIŠ}TUKUL can be dissolved to GIŠ = *i*□*u* = PA[419] *(larû)*, and to KU = *napāhu*[420] = SI,[421] that is, it can theoretically visualized as a horn with a branch as well.

As for a branch on the left horn (line 47), it is evident that it implicates the opposing value, and thus the enemy will plunder in our land. But why "plunder" (NAM.RA.È), so specifically? The compound logogram **È** stands, on the one hand, for the previously discussed verb *wa*□*û*, which can also be equated with the compound DIRI (**SI**.A).[422] On the other hand, one may also take into consideration that È consists of the signs UD and

[417] PA = *i*-□*u, qa-tum* Aa I/7 Section B ii 78, see CAD Q 184 (sub. *qātu* lexical section)
[418] See Izi E 250F, in CAD Q 134 (sub. *qarnu* lexical section).
[419] Aa I/7 7, see CSAD I-J 215 (sub. *i*□*u* lexical section).
[420] MSL 2 151: 30 (Proto-Ea), see CAD N/1 263 (sub. *napāhu* lexical section).
[421] Aa III/4 170, see ibid and note XXX.
[422] See note XXXX.

DU, among which the correlation concerning **UD** is again a lightsome one: as it matches with *namru* and *namāru* as well,[423] it can be connected, one might say by now conventionally, with the logogram **SI**.

The third omen of this short sequence considers the case of the appearance of branches on both horns—and two horns, as we have seen, overrule the left/right dichotomy, therefore the interpretation is positive (due to the branches themselves). Since both written correlations (concerning **ZI** and ***ú-šam-qat***) were already explained, we should rather proceed forward and take a closer look upon the next omen which, at the same time, is the last entry of the section.

(49) BE U_8 UR.MAH Ù.TU-*ma* 4 SI.MEŠ-*šú ina* 15 *u* 150 GAR.MEŠ
šumma lahru nēša ulidma 4 qarnātušu ina imitti u šumēli šaknā
NUN *kib-ra-a-tú* BAD-*el*
rubû kibrāti ibêl

If an ewe gives birth to a lion and it has four horns on the right and the left,
The prince will rule the (four) quarters.

Again, the equal number of horns appearing on both sides annul the left/right dichotomy, so there is one last thing which has to be taken into consideration: the specific number **four**. As we have already pointed out during the discussion of the numerical symbolism of the written code (see Chapter II.1), "four" always stands for **totality**—and accordingly, it concerns the rule of the four quarters, that is, the entire world. As such, it is also apt to close a section, implying, just as in our case, that it is complete.

Conclusions and further considerations

The throughout analysis of a complete section indeed confirmed our previous assumptions about the co-efficiency of the code-systems, namely that as a rule, upon generating an interpretation *(apodosis)* each one has to be taken into consideration. One may add that the above examination also made evident that this principle does not only effect isolated, so to say de-contextualised cases, but rather, it works in each and every case, reflecting, at the same time, that in fact every single word (or at times even cuneiform

[423] Aa III/3 40, 44, 58, 64, 66, 80, 81, 84, 90, and 93, see MSL 14 233□234.

sign) of a given *apodosis* is well reasoned and was decoded from the *protasis*. Furthermore, beyond the fact that extispicy did not only affected the "lexicon" of *Šumma izbu,* since most of our examples wold have remained unexplained without the former's disciplinary code, it was also turned out that one may detect well established correlations within a longer and coherent textual unit. As for the characteristics of these correlations, we should also observe the presence of a seemingly specific Assyrian trend: upon extending the interpretations, the additions of the related Kuyjunjik-recension (C_1–C_4, see below) laid enhanced stress upon the associations facilitated by the written code.

In the light of this fact one may have a sort of feeling that the previously detected so to say obsession devoted by **Marduk-šāpik-zēri** to the written code was not (only) meant to reflect the creative genius of the author, but rather, it aimed to represent that he was able to be abreast with the trend maintained by his Assyrian colleagues.

A brief analysis of **omen generation on the vertical axis**, that is, on inter-omen level traceable in our very section and on Tablet V as a whole may further confirm this supposition, revealing, all at once, the existence of a certain written code-based method which, again, can be considered as an Assyrian characteristic. As for the simplest methods of vertical generation (that is, generation of *protases* from the previous ones), it is evident that most, if not all *protases* of our section is, to use again the terminology of D. Brown, "invented", generated, in many cases on rather simple, on might say simple code-based grounds. The latter involve binary (left/right) opposition, as in the case of the pairs discussed above, or gradation (multiple occurrence of a given phenomenon, as in the case of line 48), usually expanding certain sequences up until the number four, which, as we have seen, alluded to the concept of totality—just as we have seen relating to the last, remarkably artificial entry of our unit. These simple generative methods were thoroughly discussed by Abraham Winitzer in relation to Old Babylonian extispicy omens,[424] and we can conclude that in this respect the horn-related section follows the same general, archaic trends.

However, there is one remarkable exception: the very first entry, or, more properly, the very first entry which appears exclusively in the Assyrian recension. As we have seen, its *protasis* correlated with that of the last entry of the preceding section:

(34) BE U_8 UR.MAH Ù.TU-*ma* □*i-ba-ri* GAR

šumma lahru nēša ulidma □***ibāra*** *šakin*

[424] Winitzer 2006 and Winitzer 2017.

If an ewe gives birth to a lion and it has (a) ☐***ibaru***

This correlation was based on the related ideas clarified by textual references (Principal commentary B.1 11: ☐*i-ba-ru : [šīru* (**UZU**) *at-ru]*, and K 9180 (RA 17, 163) + K 13961 (CT 28 26) = TCS 4 232, commentary Z, 6'–7': BE *iz-bu ina* UGU SAG.DU-*šú* UZU GIM GIŠKIB *(šallūri) na-ši: šal-lu-r*[*u : ☐i-ba-ru*] / ☐*i-ba-ru* **UZU** *at-ru* GIM ŠU.**SI** [*a-☐i*]), which actually **contain the key-words** of the Assyrian opening entry of the subsequent unit:

(35) BE U_8 **UR.MAH** Ù.TU-*ma* **SI**.MEŠ *šá* **UZU** GAR
šumma lahru nēša ulidma qarnī ša šīri šakin

If an ewe gives birth to a lion and it has **horns** from **flesh**

This method, clearly inspired by a certain mode of transition between sections in lexical lists, where, again, the **last entry of a section** might **contain the subsequent governing sign,** was already labelled by us as "catchline-type." Upon seeking for similar transitions in Tablet V, we got to a striking observation: they can be traced several times at the section-borders, however, **exclusively in the Neo-Assyrian Kuyunjik manuscripts** (see Table 1 for the list of related ones, with the highlighted Assyrian insertions).

Siglum	Museum No. and edition	Provenience	Lines preserved	Tradition
A	W 23270 (SpTU 3, 91)	Uruk	1–28, 30–41, 44–58, 62, 64, 65, 68, 70–99, 101, 103–104, 106–108, 110	Babylonian
B_1	K 8985 (TCS 4, 73–83 E)	Nineveh	1–10	Assyrian (?)
B_2	K 3970 + Rm 233 (CT 27, 21–22 = TCS 4, 73–83 B)	Nineveh	68, 70–92, 105–134	Assyrian (?)

C_1	K 9905 (de Zorzi 2014: 469–473)	Nineveh	25, 29–48	Assyrian
C_2	K 8266 (CT 27, 20 = TCS 4, 73–83 A)	Nineveh	29–47	Assyrian
C_3	K 8265 (CT 27, 23 = TCS 4 73–83 A)	Nineveh	45–72	Assyrian
C_4	K 4132 (CT 27, 19) + K 5929 + K 8474 + K 12888 (CT 28, 26) = TCS 4, 73–83 A	Nineveh	73–114	Assyrian
D	BM 75209		26–28, 30–34, 36–41, 44–58, 62, 64–65, 68, 70–89	Babylonian
G	79-7-8 113 (CT 28, 38 = TCS 4, 73–83 E)	Nineveh	98–110	Assyrian
H	K 15281 (de Zorzi 2014: 477–479)	Nineveh	73–82	Assyrian
I	BM 134518 (de Zorzi 2014: 475–476)	Nineveh	59–60, 62–67	Assyrian

Unfortunately, K 9905 + K 8266 (Mss. C_1 + C_2 of de Zorzi)[425] became badly broken by the last lines of the "horny-section," and, although the latter were preserved as well at the beginning of the concluding fragment K 8265 (= Ms. C_3 of de Zorzi),[426] it is also rather fragmentary, so we cannot define such a transition at the end of our analysed unit. However, we should already note that most of the Assyrian insertions were not individually generated entries (for this specific purpose), but rather, they were excerpted from the opening section of the whole tablet (1–28, see below), and that the latter did not contain any omen which would have referred to ears—which constitute the main topic of the subsequent lines (50–52).

Nevertheless, upon proceeding further in the text we find another, exclusively Assyrian insertion after the last entry (line 58) of the IGI-section (54–58, related to the various malformations of the eyes of the "lion-lamb"), and between the beginning (line 62) of the unit which concerns the various (further) animal-like features of the head. That

[425] See de Zorzi 2014: 462.
[426] De Zorzi 2014: 463.

is, this insertion is longer as it covers three lines, two of which (59 and 60) were, again, excerpted from the beginning of Tablet V (and appear on the Assyrian manuscript I as well), while line 61 is unique as it appears only in Ms C_3, and was evidently generated from the preceding one—but let's see the reasons behind all that!

We have to begin our analysis with line 58 which appears both in the Babylonian and Assyrian manuscripts (for the shake of clarity we will quote the following lines in score transliteration):

(58)
A.1': BE U_8 U[R.M]AH Ù.TU-*ma* IGI.II-*šú* GIM *mi-ra-a-nu kàt-ma* KUR *in-neš-ši*
C_3.14: [BE] U_8 UR.MAH Ù.TU-*ma* IGI.II-*šú* GIM *mi-ra-ni kàt-ma* KUR *i[n-neš-ši]*
D.1': [BE] U_8 UR.MAH Ù.TU-*ma* IGI.II-*šú* GIM *mi-ra-a-ni kàt-ma* KUR *in-neš-[ši]*

šumma lahru nēša ulidma īnāšu kīma mīrāni katmā mātu innešši

If an ewe gives birth to a lion and its eyes are covered like those of a puppy,
The land will be weakened.

Just as the absence of the eyes (treated in the previous omen triplet, lines 55–57, concerning right, left, and both eyes, respectively), it seems evident that the covering of the eyes (implying blindness) can also be considered as a general negative sign. How comes the "weakening" of the land? Here again, the answer relies on the written code, if we consider the Sumerian equivalent of the puppy *(mīrānu)*: UR.TUR,[427] since its second element may also stand for *enšu* ("weak"),[428] and thus it explains the appearance of its verbal form *(enēšu)* in the apodosis. On may add "as well," since all at once it forms the basis of the Assyrian insertion, which, at this time, is based primarily on a □*âtu*-type equation.

59 (=3)
C_3.15: [BE] U_8 UR.MAH Ù.TU-*ma ma-li-i na-ši* BAL *ma-li-i* KUR *ma-la-a i-na-áš-ši* Z[I KÚR?]
I.1: BE U_8 UR.MAH Ù.[TU]
I.2: [*ti-bu*]-*um* [ ]

šumma lahru ***nēša*** *ulidma* ***malî naši*** *pale* ***malî*** *mātu* ***malâ inašši*** *tīb* [*nakri?*]

[427] Ura XIV 82a, see CAD M/2 105 (sub. *mīrānu* lexical section).
[428] See e.g. MSL 2 143 i 17 (Proto-Ea), CAD E 170 (sub. *enšu* lexical section).

If an ewe gives birth to a **lion** and it has **matted hair**,
It is the time of **grief**; the land will **fall into mourning**; attack [of an enemy?]

This entry was already treated in Chapter II.1 concerning the simple, culturally conditioned correlation between *protasis* and *apodosis*, since, as we have defined in there, **matted hair** was an index of **mourning**. Now, on the other hand, we have to clarify the reason behind the appearance of this "matted" hair—in relation to the previous entry. The key-term is the mentioned Akkadian phrase ***enšu***, since beyond TUR, it can also be equated with the by now well-known logogram **SI**,[429] and, as one may already add, with the phonetically related SIG as well.[430] As SI is an already confirmed equivalent of ***malû***, we have right away arrived to the phonetically related element of the *protasis*. However, we should interject that the latter was also affected by further **phonetic correlations**, especially, if we consider the paronomastic association on the inner-omen level, which goes beyond the re-appearance of *malû*: ***nēša, naši* □ *inašši***. Practically it is hard not to notice that we are in fact dealing with an association based on the root consonants on ***enšu***, which was encoded from the previous *protasis*—and written out in verbal form in the previous *apodosis* as well. To sum up, it is obvious that the Assyrian insertion of this entry is based, again, on the written code, but beyond **□*âtu*-type equations**, the inter-omen correlations operated on a **phonetic** level as well, and seemingly even the ***apodosis* might have played a role** in the definition (or in here actually selection) of the *protasis* of the next entry. What can be revealed concerning the next line?

60 (=2)
C_3. 16: [BE] U_8 UR.MAH Ù.TU-*ma* **SÍK**-*su gup-pu-šat* BAL ***ma-li-i*** KUR ***ma-la-a*** [*i-na-aš-ši*]
I.3: [BE] U_8 KI.MIN-□*ma* **SÍK**-*su*□ *gup*-[*pu-šat*]

*šumma lahru **nēša** ulidma šārassu guppušat palê **malî** mātu **malâ inašši***
If an ewe gives birth to a lion and its **wool** is exceptionally thich/huge
It is the time of **grief**; the land will **fall into mourning**

[429] Aa III/4 175, cf CAD E 170 (sub. *enšu* lexical section).
[430] S^b I 314; Antagal G 118; and see especially the Princpal commentary: SIG = *en-šu* (commenting on Tablet I 112).

Here, the insertion is based on the already mentioned chain of equations: **SI = *enšu* = SIG**,[431] as it is also evident from the very fact that it retains the previous *apodosis*, which was lexically and phonetically related to (SI =) ***malû*** and ***enšu***. The verb *gapāšu* ("to be huge, massive"), on the other hand, can be equated with the logogram ZI,[432] and thus, as we have seen many times in the horn-related section, it can also be connected with (SI =) ***malû.*** But there is even more, if we consider that the verb ***našû***, appearing in the preceding *protasis*, can also be matched with the logogram ZI,[433] and as such, it also alludes to our present key term (and also correlates with the governing phonetic pattern).

So much about the entries drawn from the beginning of Tablet V, since the third inserted line, which appears only in Ms C_3 is actually generated from the former:

61.
C_3.17: [BE] U_8 UR.MAH Ù.TU ŠU-*su* ***gup-pu-šat*** *ni-ši-it* LU[GAL]
šumma lahru nēša ulidma qāssu guppušat nišīt šarri [ ]

If an ewe gives birth to a lion and it has a huge paw (lit. hand),
The one installed/chosen by the king [ ]

It is evident that this line offers a variant for something being exceptionally huge (*guppušat*), and also from the fact that on the inner-omen level it relies, as far as it is detectable in the fragmentary *apodosis*, on the equation *gapāšu* = ZI as well (see above), since the term *nišītu*, appearing in the interpretation, is related to *nīšu* ("lifting, raising"), which, as it derives from the already treated verb *našû*, can logographically written with **ZI**.GA[434]—but what's the matter with the hand? Well, at this point we may reveal that this insertion is indeed ingenious, since, based on the equation *gapāšu* = ZI = *našû* we can get to another key term, since the latter verb can also be written as **ŠU**.^{du}UL.[435] That this specific form, which contains one of the basic elements of our entry, was indeed taken into consideration by the redactor of Ms. C3 is further strengthened by the fact that it plays a significant role in the way of re-joining to the original text (that is, to the next entry)—since the sign **UL** is nothing else than a compound of U.**GU_4**.

[431] See note XXX.
[432] Aa III/1 156, see CAD G 43 (sub. *gapāšu* lexical section).
[433] Idu I 41, with Aa III/1 92, see CAD N/II 81 (sub. *našû* lexical section).
[434] See CAD N/II 294□297 (sub. *nīšu* B)
[435] Erimhuš VI 88, see CAD N/II 81 (sub. *našû* lexical section).

62.
A.2': BE U_8 U[R.M]AH Ù.TU-*ma* SAG.DU **GU_4** GAR NUN KUR KÚR-*šú ú-šam-qat*
C3.18: [BE] U_8 UR.MAH Ù.TU-*ma* SAG.DU **GU_4** GAR NUN KUR KÚR-*šú ina* ^{GIŠ}TUKUL [ ]
D.2' BE U_8 UR.MAH Ù.TU-*ma* SAG.DU **GU_4** GAR NUN KUR KÚR-*šú ú-šam-[qat]*
I.4: [BE] U_8 KIMIN-*ma* SAG.DU **GU_4** [ ]

šumma lahru nēša ulidma qaqqad alpi šakin rubû māt nakrišu (ina kakki) ušamqat

If an ewe gives birth to a lion and it has a head of a bull,
The prince will destroy the land of the enemy (with weapons).

So the Assyrian generative method, based, this time, on a □*âtu*-type equation already revealed the "bull" (**GU_4**) of the following *protasis*—but based on our previous learnings one may consider whether we can specify the contents even more. In fact, the Assyrian entry may lead us to another significant association, on the basis of the key-words of the *protasis* and ***apodosis***, respectively. First, as for *gapāšu*, we should note that it may have an alternative logographic form, on the basis of the equation of the derived term *gapšu* with **GÚ**.[436] And in turn, if we set together **GÚ** with **ZI**, we arrive to an existing lexical equation, namely: GÚ.ZI$^{ni\text{-}iš\ re\text{-}ši}$[437], which contains the synonym for **head**, Akkadian ***rēšu***.

Although it is not the proper time and place to discuss the other Assyrian insertions, highlighted in Table 1 above, in detail, we can conclude that each one of them appears in section borders, and most of them were extracted from the very beginning of Tablet V which, in turn, served as a kind of "table of contents" which listed the sections (actually longer or shorter sub-chapters) of the tablet as a whole. That this initial section (1–28) formed part of the Assyrian manuscripts as well is well reflected, beyond the testimony of Ms. B_1, by the fact—which was, in turn, seemed rather confusing to N. de Zorzi[438]—that the Principal commentary, coming from Assyria, followed the order of the "Babylonian" tablet. Thus, although the relation of the Assyrian and Babylonian versions seemed rather problematic to N. de Zorzi,[439] their relatedness and differences are clearly explainable. There were indeed two versions or more properly traditions, a Babylonian and an Assyrian one, the latter, however, differs only in respect of its characteristic method of redaction: it excerpted the entries from the initial section and inserted

[436] Izi F 39, see CAD G 45 (sub. *gapšu* lexical section).
[437] Nigga 476, see CAD N/II 294 (sub. *nīšu* B lexical section).
[438] De Zorzi 2014: 462.
[439] Cf. de Zorzi 2014: 462□463.

them to the related section borders. However, the reason behind these insertions goes well beyond an Assyrian type of "Ordnungswille"—only such entries were used which, by means of correlations based on external texts, □*âtu*-type equations, and finally phonetic similarities, that is, on various elements of the written code, were apt to serve as **catchlines** in which the subsequent entry was in fact decoded (sometimes both in the *protasis* and the *apodosis*). In other words, they provided the sophisticated transition between various sections—just as we have seen, although on a smaller scale, in lexical lists. So while at the beginning of our conclusions we could only assert that the Assyrian recensions laid more emphasis on the written code, now we can conclude that they actually developed nothing else than a characteristic (in fact) generative method with full of genius, based on the principles of the latter, but extend them to the inter-omen level.

The mere existence and the above traced operation of this Assyrian type of redaction and text generation may clarify, at the end, the very purpose of the much mentioned Mardik-šāpik-zēri. Upon using this **"catchline-type" sequence** at the beginning of his omen quotations he did anything but "playing"—rather, as a matter of fact he aimed to imitate this **Assyrian high style**.

As for the latter, it is time for us to say a final goodbye to Mardik-šāpik-zēri, as well as to all his Babylonian colleagues, since by now we have the basic knowledge at our disposal to set forth on a journey to the Assyrian scholarly circles, upon making the greatest attempt of this work and trying to get closer to the author of SAG ITI NU TIL.LA

IV. INTER-OMEN ASSOCIATIONS: THE CLASSIFICATION OF METAPHORIC CORRELATIONS

āmiru immar—šēmû išme
Those who can see, will see
Those who can hear, will hear

The simplest thematic principles and patterns of arranging omen entries one behind the other based on the *protases* (which actually can be seen with half an eye, such as the direction from head to toe, succession of colours, binary oppositions, etc.) are, as we have already said, well known and several researchers have dealt with the expansion of the variations of the different phenomena (multiplication of various limbs, of number of births, etc.)—often into the realm of the evidently impossible—as a systematic editing technique.[440] Therefore the latter type of metaphoric relationship, based largely on the simple code, although played an essential role in omen generation or invention, will not be treated here in detail—one should rather consult the brilliant and detailed monographs of David Brown (on EAE) and of Abraham Winitzer (on Old-Babylonian liver omens),[441] respectively. At the same time, however, little attention has been paid to the fact that many of the above sketched associative methods, especially those largely dependent on the written code, may involve, as we have already seen in the case of the Assyrian insertions in Tablet V, the sequential order of the entries in smaller or larger structural units as well. In fact, upon briefly touching this topic both Abraham Winitzer and Nicla de Zorzi stated that this specific phenomenon, although it can be detected at times, is rare, as compared to the "(more) standard procedures,"[442] and at best it can be traced in case of nuclear units, consisting of two or three entries.[443] Thus far these scholars had only been detected one longer, and as such exceptional textual unit which was evidently generated on written (paronomastic) grounds—this passage, labelled as an "emblematic example,"[444] which, however, can and should be complemented in many respects, will be discussed below in detail.

[440] See already Jastrow 1914 mainly: 7–8, 13–28; and Leichty 1970: 24–25; and recently de Zorzi 2011: 46□52 (all on *Šumma izbu* omens).

[441] Winitzer 2006 and recently Winitzer 2017.

[442] Winitzer 2006: 607, and Winitzer 2017: 439. Of course, one should not forget that this conclusion was drawn from the Old Babylonian material.

[443] Cf. the examples cited in de Zorzi 2011: 69; and de Zorzi 2014: 194□196; as well as in Winitzer 2006: 605□620, and recently Winitzer 2017:438–449..

[444] de Zorzi 2011: 71.

At the same time, we could already see that beyond the simple, that is, simple code-based omen pairs or triplets observed thus far, all of the metaphoric or vertical correlations detected at the section borders in Tablet V were, on the one hand, "*based on a written text, and (were) distinct from traditional or common associations, and those based on generally accepted theology,"*[445] that is, most of them belonged to the □*âtu*-type. On the other hand, vertical correlations based on homophony (paronomasia) also played some role, so one might say that by now we have revealed such vertical correlations which can be **heard** by anyone when reading the Akkadian text aloud, beyond the ones which could only been **seen** by the experts of the discipline and by those who were familiar with the related lexical material—that is, who were "blind" upon entering to the edubba, but "left it **seeing**."[446]

It is not at all incidental that we are talking about "seeing" and "hearing." Although at this point it may regrettably seem a bit subjective, I have always had a strong impression that the initial lines of SAG ITI NU TIL.LA can in fact allude to these ideas. This initial section, consisting of four entries (which will be analyzed in detail below), is not engaged in anything which can be born from women, but rather, it involves fetuses in utero—crying in various ways. Of course, at first sight this mere impossible phenomenon (although see Excursus 1 on the question of its actuality) may seem absurd both to specialists and laymen, a revealable telesticon may explain the very existence of these opening lines□ which may have contained a specific introductory message. The latter becomes even more detectable if we take a closer look on the version of a Neo-Assyrian extract *(nishu)*. All at once, we should note that this initial unit was preserved only in Babylonian manuscripts, and we have but one extract tablet *(nishu)* from Nineveh:[447]

Manuscripts related to Tablet I 1–4:

A = W 23272 (SpTU 3, 91), from Uruk, see Fig. 19.

C = BM 54038 (TCS 4, 31□44 e), from Borsippa

D = MS 1808 (CUSAS 18, 35), Babylonian

Ex.1 = K 258 (CT 27, 14□15) + K 3793 (CT 27, 7) + K 19305 (edited in TCS 4, 31□45), Nineveh,

see Fig. 18.

[445] That is how D. Brown defined his "learned" associations, see Brown 2000: 77.

[446] According to the already quoted Sumerian riddle, see Civil 1987: 19□20, with note XXX of the present study.

[447] Here again, for the shake of clarity we use the sigla of the recent edition, see de Zorzi 2014: 338.

On the last tablet, which omits the second and the third omens, lines 1 and 4 appear directly behind each other. If we too place them likewise, dimidiating them to *protases* and *apodoses*, the text will read as follows:

1.
A.1 BE SAL *a-rat-ma šà* ŠÀ-*šà* ÉR (A.**IGI**)
KUR NÍG.GIG **IGI-[*mar*]**
C.1 BE SAL *a-rat-ma šá* ŠÀ-*šá i-bak-ki*
KUR NÍG.GIG **IGI-*mar***
D.1 BE SAL *a-rat-ma ša* ŠÀ-*ša i-bak-ki*
KUR NÍG.GIG [IGI-*mar*]
Ex.1.1 BE SAL *a-rat-ma šà* ŠÀ-[*šà i-bak* / A.**IGI**-*k*]*i*
KUR.BI NIG.GIG **IGI-*mar***

šumma sinništu arâtma ša libbīša ibakki mātu marušta immar
If a woman is pregnant with child, and her foetus (lit.: interior) **cries**,
The land will experience **"taboo"**.[448]

4.[449]
A.4 BE SAL *a-rat-ma šà* ŠÀ-*šà is-si-ma* ***še-mu-ú iš-mi***
KÚR *dan-nu* ZI-*ma* KUR *ú-šal-pat*
C.4 BE SAL *a-rat-ma šá* ŠÀ-*šá is-si-ma* ***še-mu-ú iš-mi***
KÚR KALAG.GA ZI-*ma* KUR *ú-šal-pat*
D.4 BE SAL *a-rat-ma ša* ŠÀ-*ša is-si-ma* ***še-mu-ú iš-mi***
KÚR KALAG.GA ZI-*ma* KUR *ú-šal-pat*
Ex.1.2 BE SAL *a-rat-ma šà* ŠÀ-*šà is-si-ma* ***še-mu-ú iš-mi***
KÚR KALAG.GA ZI-*ma* KUR *ú-šal-pat*

šumma sinništu arâtma ša libbiša issima šēmû išme nakru dannu itebbima māta ušalpat
If a woman is pregnant with child, and her foetus (lit.: interior) cries out and who can hear, hears it, a strong enemy will rise and destroy the land.

[448] The translation as "catastrophe" proposed by E. Leichty (Leichty 1970: 32) and followed by N. de Zorzi ("sventura", see de Zorzi 2014: 343), is not exactly precise here. The *apodosis* refers to the consequences, that is, the punishment of the transgression of a taboo, thus instead of paraphrasing, the translation remains literal for the sake of simplicity. On the general concept of taboo see (among others): Douglas 1969; and for a brief summary: Buckser 1997. As for the Mesopotamian taboo concept (and on the expression NÍG.GIG / *ikkibu*, "taboo") see van der Toorn 1983: esp. 43; Hallo 1985: esp. 29–33; Geller 1990; Cohen 2002: 25□27; Geller 2012; and most recently Böck 2012 (esp. pp. 305□311).

[449] Since the associative reference in the case of the fourth omen, discussed further below, involves only the *protasis*, the lengthy enumeration of the *apodosis* will not be requoted in here.

Fig 18. Obverse of the Neo-Assyrian excerpt tablet Ex.1 =
K 258 (CT 27, 14□15) + K 3793 (CT 27, 7) + K 19305

Let us start at the end, that is, with the key expression of the second *protasis*! This *figura etymologica* formed from the verb *šemû* ("hear") is a relatively rare expression, which is limited to the corpus of the Neo-Assyrian oracular queries and omen collections, respectively, so it seems to belong to the professional terminology of divination. Although it was supposed that the formula "those who can hear will hear" would be a reference to certain phenomena which can only be revealed by expert observers,[450] the opposite interpretation can also be true, which is supported by the variant of this expression which contains *mātu išme* ("the land hears").[451] Be there as it may, it is clear that the general meaning of the phrase "those who can hear, (will) hear" involves understanding. In the oracular queries this is supplemented with a parallel phrase, as follows**:**

[450] Schott 1938: esp. 293.
[451] Biggs 1967: 120:2, see note 104.

āmiru immar—šēmû išme (those/he who (can) see, those/he who (can) hear). This expression, though not belonging to the obligatory formula of such texts,[452] can be read at several places (mostly in the following form: **IGI(*-ru/ri*) IGI(*-mar*) *še-mu-ú iš-me***), and typically as a question: "Will he who can see, see it, (and) he who can hear, hear it?"[453]

In the light of the above it seems anything but a coincidence that the text variant originating from Uruk use the compound logogram ÉR, consisting of the signs A.**IGI** for the visualization of *bakû*. It is rather unfortunate that the Neo-Assyrian excerpt tablet is broken at this very part (see Fig 18), only the end of the sign KI can be traced at the end of the *protasis*. However, one should seriously consider that the latter could have been a phonetic complement to a logographic form, especially in light that the Uruk manuscript contains the same, and rather unique sequence *šà* ŠÀ-*šà* as the Assyrian text, so it seemingly follows the latter's tradition.

To sum up, considering the logographic forms and the specific Akkadian expression the following correlation takes shape in a telostic form:

1.	IGI
2.	IGI-*mar*
4.	*šēmû išme*

Assuming that we are dealing with the conscious use of signs and words for such purposes, a newer intertextual reference can be registered, since this phrase clearly recalls the wording of the oracle queries—the only question which remains is how to interpret it in this very context and what should be regarded as its subject, that is, what should or could be seen and heard? At this early stage of the underlying analysis we can only speculate, but in any case it may not be incidental that, as we will see, the word NÍG.GIG (*ikkibu),* i.e. "taboo" is another key expression of the first entry. As for "taboo" in Neo-Assyrian scholarly context, it is well-known that several texts are known which are defined by the colophon as the „taboo of gods." These texts kept the secrets of "privileged" knowledge only approachable by the experts, the insiders—that is, such secrets which could only be **seen** and **understood** by certain, worthy persons.[454] Thus, it cannot be excluded that the allusion hidden behind the opening lines conveys a message similar to that of the mentioned colophons—the correlations of this text will only be **seen** and

[452] For more on the terminology see: Starr 1990: 14–28, and on the expression in question, which may appear among the closing formulas of the actual request (but with optional use), see: cited work: 20.

[453] For example: SAA 4 3 (Obv. 9), 5 (Obv. 9), 7 (Obv. 7), 14 (Obv. 13), 18 (Obv. 13).

[454] For more on such layers of meaning for *ikkibu* see: Lenzi 2008: mainly 157–160.

heard by those who master the art of divination. Well, at first this may seem rather disquieting for us who have just entered to the "advanced level," however, as the following analysis will reveal, the structure of our textual unit indeed based on associations which involve "**seeing**" and "**hearing**," and once they will be detected, they will reveal a coherent, and thus well explainable system, so the end will try all.

Those who can hear, will hear

Let us start with the more evident examples which evolve "hearing." With respect to the target of our examination, the first 82 entries of the first tablet of *Šumma izbu*, it was already observed by several authors that a certain omen sequence is clearly based on the **similar phonetic pattern** of the Akkadian keywords of the *protases*. As it was detected by J. Bottéro already in the early 70s, the key terms of the *protases* in lines 28–30, namely *ipi, ipi ša* ("membrane, which…"), and *apišalâ* (from Apišalû/ an Apišalean)[455] constitute a coherent unit which represents the same phonetic pattern.[456] Thirty years later, Marten Stol discovered a similar set in lines 31–33: *lipištu* (scrotum, in lines 31□32) – *libittu* (brick, in 33), which contain the same pattern.[457] More recently, in 2011 Nicla de Zorzi proposed that these two sets can even be connected on the basis of their consonantal pattern, i.e. in lines 28–32 the use of the roots *pšl–lpš* and their reverse arrangement, respectively, are the consequence of conscious editing.[458] Thus, the whole sequence, the "emblematic example" of N. de Zorzi which, according to the previous results, displays the permutation *pšl–lpš* as it was reconstructed with painstaking efforts by three various scholars during altogether forty years can be summarized as follows:

[455] The term is a nisbe formation from the toponym Apišal, a city which was never localised (cf. Leichty 1965), but which rather frequently occurs in the *apodoses* of the so-called "historical omens" (see below), both from the second and the first millennium. On the term *apišalâ* in more detail see: Leichty 1965; and Leichty 1970: 34, note 30.

[456] Bottéro 1972–1973: 115.

[457] Stol 2000: 159, with note 83.

[458] De Zorzi 2011: 71.

	protasis	***apodosis***	**root consonants of the *protasis***	
I 28	*šumma sinništu i**p**i ulid* If a woman gives birth to a membrane	KUR BI ŠUB-*di*		*p(l)*
I 29	*šumma sinništu i**p**i **š**a **š**īri dāma ma**l**i ulid* a fleshy membrane filled with blood	KUR BI ZÁH	*pš(š)l*	
I 30	*šumma sinništu a**p**i**š**a**l**â ulid* an Apišalien	KUR BI ZÁH	*pšl*	
I 31	*šumma sinništu **l**i**p**i**š**ta ulid* to a scortum/bloody mass[459]	URU BI ŠUB-*di*; unclear	*lpš*	
I 32	*šumma sinništu 2 lū 3 **l**i**pš**āti ulid* to 2 or 3 scortums/bloody masses	KUR BI ZÁH	*lpš*	
I 33	*šumma sinništu **l**i**b**i**tt**a ulid* to a brick	*apodosis* lost	*lbt*	

Actually, the appliance of **this specific phonetic pattern** (with the root consonants ***p-l-š***) in omen generation / interpretation is not a real novelty. As a matter of fact, it has a long history since it is already detectable in Old Babylonian times, specifically in the liver omen corpus. According to a much quoted example, a so-called "historical omen" concerning the capture of the city of **Apišal** by the famous Akkadian ruler Narām-Sîn:[460]

*šumma bāb ekallim 2-ma [3] kalītum u ina imitti martim **pilšū** 2 **palšū**ma šutebrû amūt **Apišalim** ša Narām-Sîn ina **pilšim** ikmûšu*

[459] The term *lipištu* was left untranslated in the edition of Leichty (Leichty 1970: 34), while M. Stol interpreted it as „scortum" (Stol 2000: 159□160). The second translation („bloody mass") is that of de Zorzi (de Zorzi 2011: 71, and cf. de Zorzi 2014: 377□378), cf. CAD L 199 (sub. *lipištu*): „an abnormal fleshy or membranous substance".

[460] Some scholars, such as A. Goetze (see Goetze 1947: esp. 264□265) were quite convinced that those omens which mention the deeds of the long-dead kings of Akkad and Ur, or legendary figures such as Gilgameš or Etana, among others, attested for the first time on liver models from Mari, and then carried on into the first omen series created during the Old Babylonian period, were based on written third-millennium sources and thus on historical facts. However, as the following examples clearly demonstrate, they should rather be considered as invented/generated omens since they represent clear-cut paronomastic associations on the inner-omen level. For detailed discussion of the "historical omens" see *inter alia*: Cooper 1980; Glassner 1983; Starr 1986; Foster 1990: 40□43; George 2010: 238; Richardson 2010: 233□235; and recently de Zorzi 2011: 70 (with previous literature); and Pongratz-Leisten 2014: esp. 40□42.

If the Palace gate is twice and the Kidney is [trice] and there are two perforations to the right of the gall-bladder and they go right through

It is the omen of the Apišalian whom Narām-Sîn captured by means of a breach

(YOS X 24: 9)

This omen, i.e., the very topic was elaborated during the first millennium, since the apodosis of the following example contains an even more detailed version:

amūt Narām-^{d}Sîn / [*ša ina šīrī*] *annî ana* ^{URU}***Apišal*** *illikuma* / [***pilš]ū iplušu*** ^{P}*Rīš-^{d}Adad šar* ^{URU}***Apišal*** / *u sukkal* ^{URU}***Apišal*** *qāssu ikšudu*

Omen of Narām-Sîn, who, by this omen marched against the city of Apišal, made a breach and captured Rīš-Adad, the king of Apišal, and the vizier of Apišal

(*Multābiltu* Tablets 14–15, Text 11: 12)[461]

Judged by a literary composition known as "*Narām-Sîn and the Lord of Apišal*,"[462] this conquest of Narām-Sîn, although its historicity have been much disputed,[463] became a traditional literary topos, picked up at some point by diviners who created a written correlation based on the homophony of the toponym and *pilšu* (hole), and generated an interpretation which concerned the conquest of the city by means of making a breach *(pilšū palšū)*.[464] Although at first sight it may seem that the appliance of this very phonetic correlation, together with the city of Apišal originates, again, in *bārûtu*, at this point it is impossible to define how widely known it actually was in broader scholarly circles.

Rather, we should focus on the very methods by means of which this—rather simple—correlation was carried to the prime of perfection in SAG ITI NU TIL.LA. It is somewhat striking that with regard to the above quoted paradigmatic unit, each scholar focused solely on the obvious paronomastic—assonance-based relations between the *protases*, and paid less attention to the corresponding *apodoses*, didn't even quoting them at all. However, as it can be seen, they display the very same expression three times within the five related entries, and as this feature does not seem to be a coincidence it may worth our attention. Accordingly, after some closer investigation it turned out that

[461] See Koch 2005: 230–231.

[462] See Westenholz 1997: 173□187, and see also op.cit: 244□245 about the "Great Revolt against Narām-Sîn" where Rīš-Adad of Apišal appears as a member of the coalition formed against the Akkadian ruler.

[463] On this specific topic see Glassner 1983; with Westenholz 1997: 174.

[464] Of course, labelled as "world play," this very phonetic correlation is much discussed, see inter alia Glassner 2004: esp. 6; George 2010: 328; and more recently de Zorzi 2011: 70, with previous literature.

the key Sumerian verb of the *apodoses* is in fact related to the common phonetic pattern of the *protases*—forming a correlation which works in inter- and inner-omen level as well, that is, shapes omen generation both on the horizontal and vertical axes.

This "suspicious" verb which recurs over and over again with the *protases* representing the mentioned phonetic pattern *(pšl–lpš)* is **ZÁH** (HA.A) = *halāqu* (in 29–30 and 32, see Fig 19). Admittedly, at first glance it may seem unrelated to the former pattern. However, on the basis of its phonetic value, ZÁH can be equated with the homophonic ZAH (=NE, $ŠEG_6$) = ***bašālu*** ('to roast, burn into ashes', etc.), which, in addition, upon representing the voiceless counterpart of the dental phoneme */b/*, can also take the form "***pašālu***".[465]

root consonant—***protases***		root consonants—***apodoses***
I 28	*p(l)*	ŠUB
I 29	*pš(š)l*	*bšl*
I 30	*pšl*	*bšl*
I 31	*lpš*	ŠUB
I 32	*lpš*	*bšl*
I 33	*lbt*	lost

[465] See CAD B 135□137, sub. *bašālu*.

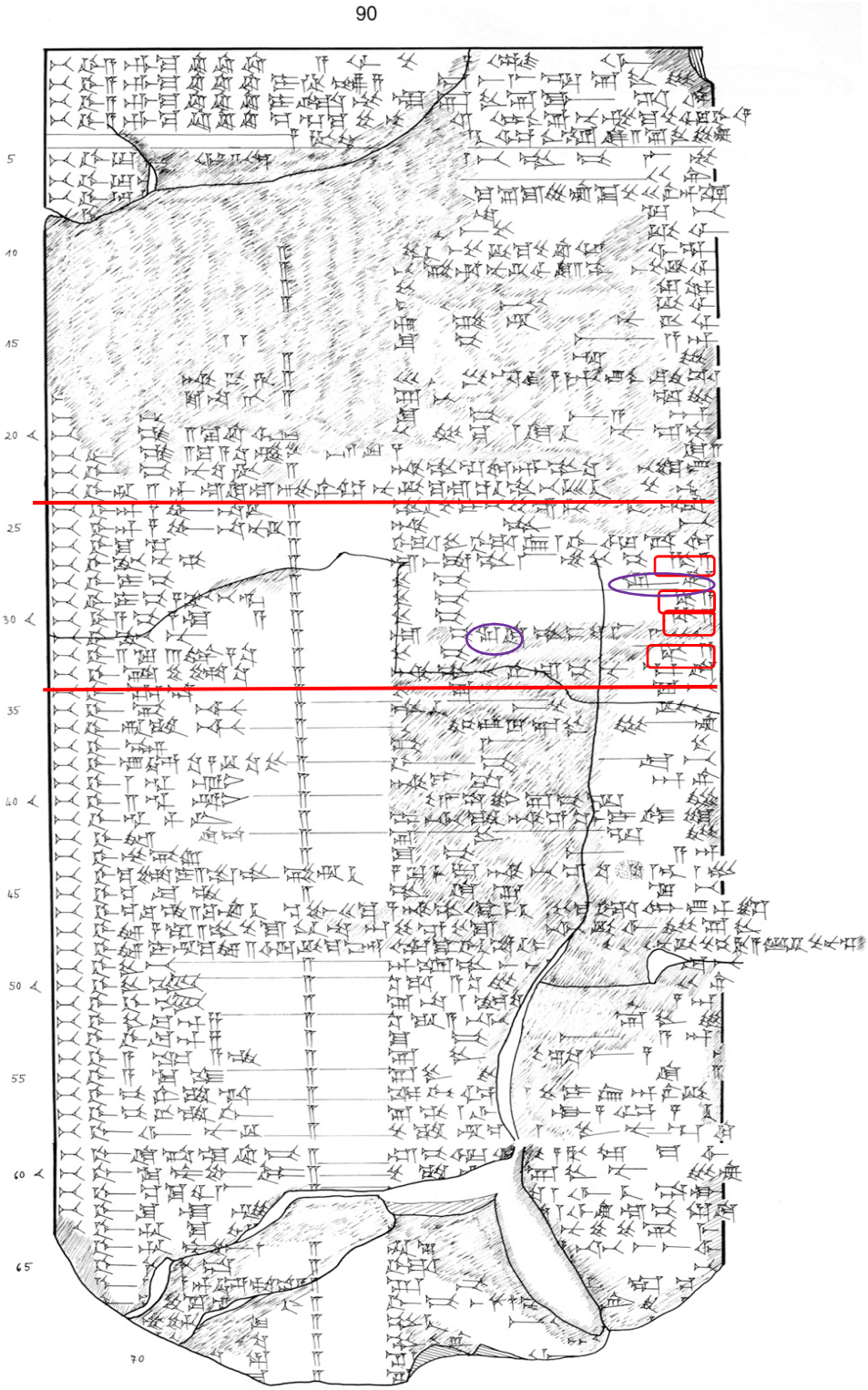


Fig. 19. Obverse of SpTU 3, 90 (Ms. A)

There is more, however, if we take a closer look on the other Sumerian logogram appearing in these *apodoses*, ŠUB (lines 28 and 31), written with the grapheme RU, which can be equated either with *nadû* (“to throw,” and “to be thrown into ruin” in N stem), *maqātu* (generally “to fall,” and specifically “to invade, raid”), or *naqāru* (“to tear down,

destroy").[466] The latter, which by the way appears, as we will see, in the *apodosis* of the entry preceding our (present) section (line 27) in syllabic form, can be equated with the logogram GUL as well,[467] which, in turn, is a common equivalent of the semantically related *abātu* ("to destroy").[468] Thereby we have arrived to the key-element of this interpretation, since *abātu* can also be matched with another logogram, namely **U**,[469] and by now we can be well aware that the latter is nothing else but the logographic equivalent of ***pilšu*** (and ***palāšu***). Of course, one may interject that the logogram U has as many as 140 lexical equivalents in canonical Aa[470] and thus theoretically it could be equated, by means of □*âtu*-type chains, with anything, however, due to its essential relatedness (based on the disciplinary code of extispicy) to the phonetic pattern ***p-l-š***, makes our interpretation stand unchallenged.

In case of the correlations of the apodoses, we have already left the field of simple "hearing," and along with that it became evident that at times the **governing phonetic pattern** has to be revealed by means of □***âtu*-type equations**. In view of these results, it was tempting to investigate whether this "emblematic" sequence might be, so to say, widened—even on a level which goes beyond simple "hearing," thus involves **"seeing"** as well. Moving at first in a backward direction, we can immediately make a striking observation, namely that none of the above mentioned scholars noticed that line 27 contains the very same expression as line 31, that is, UZU.NU (***lipištu***, scrotum/bloody mass)[471] so it is also belong to our phonetic unit□as it is reflected by the two Neo-Assyrian *nishus* as well, which omit lines 28□30, and one of them (Ex.2, see below) contains line 27, while the already mentioned Ex.1 represents 31 instead, suggesting thereby that these two lines can be considered as variants. It is also easy to observe that the *apodosis* of 27 uses the same, now familiar logogram ZÁH, and thereby constructs the same (phonetic) inner-omen relation, while also fitting into the vertical "chain":

	protasis	*apodosis*
27	UZU.NU GUD	URU *ina-qar;*
	li**p****i****š****ti a****l****p****i***	LUGAL LÁ-*mu*;

[466] See inter alia Aa VI/4 137□139a: šu-ub RU = *ma-qa-tum / na-du-ú / ta-ra-ku / na-qa-rum*, in MSL 14 442.

[467] Cf.: *ina*-GUL-*ma* : *i-na-qar-ma* : GUL : *na-qa-ri* : GUL : *a-ba-tum* in TCL 6, 17: 17f (astrological commentary), and the various logographic forms in CAD N/1 328□332 (sub. *naqāru* lexical section).

[468] See S^b II 336, S^a Voc. AA 38' and further lexical equations in CAD A/1 41 (sub. *abātu* lexical section).

[469] Aa II/4 63, see ibid.

[470] Aa II/4 1□140, see MSL 14 280□283.

[471] See note XXX.

root consonant—**protases**		root consonants—**apodoses**
27	*lpš*	*bšl*

However, the case of line 27 is even more complex and interesting, since the different interpretations represented in the *apodosis* show further correlations.

The first one is based partly on an already known □*âtu*-type chain: as we have seen, the common Sumerian counterpart of the first Akkadian verb, *naqāru* is GUL, which in turn can be equated with the Akkadian verb *abātu* I ('to destroy').[472] On the other hand, the homophonic verb, *abātu* II ('to run away') is one of the equivalents of the semantically related ZÁH, *halāqu*,[473] appearing in the third interpretation (but note that the latter appears only in the late Babylonian Ms. A, see below).

To sum up:

apodosis 1: *naqāru* = GUL = ***abātu* I**
apodosis 3: *ZÁH* = *halāqu* = ***abātu* II**

The second observable correlation within the apodosis concerns the logogram **LÁ** of the second interpretation, which can be equated with *nadû*,[474] and, as we have seen, *nadû* = ŠUB = *naqāru*:

apodosis 1: *naqāru* = ŠUB = ***nadû***
apodosis 2: LÁ = ***nadû***

These apodotic correlations reflect and refer to several phenomena. At first, they suggest that lines 27 and 31 are indeed variants. Since this fact affects the problem of the Assyrian extract tablets (since from line 16 onwards we have another one, Ex.2), we will quote these entries in score transliteration. As for the latter, by now we should complement our list of manuscripts with further related tablets:

A = W 23272 (SpTU 3, 91), from Uruk, contains lines 1□73 and 82□131.

B = K 3688 (CT 27, 5□6) + K 3881 (CT 27, 4) + K 7278 (CT 28, 10) + K 8274 (CT 28, 34) + K 8794 + K 9842 + K 10278 + K 10478 + K 14167 + Sm 1927 (CT 28, 18), from Nineveh, contains lines 13□131.

C = BM 54038 (TCS 4, 31□44 e), from Borsippa, contains lines 1□18 and 116□131.

[472] See note XXXX.

[473] Ea I 15ff, Ea IV 113f and further lexical references in CAD A/1 45 (sub. *abātu* B lexical section), and see also Izbu Principal Commentary 371□372 (ibid).

[474] MSL 14 92 74:1 (Proto-Aa), see CAD N/1 70 (sub. *nadû* lexical section).

D = MS 1808 (CUSAS 18, 35), Babylonian, contains lines 1□19 and 123□131.

E_1 = ND 4405/52 (CTN 4, 31), from Kalhu, contains lines 13□30.

Ex.1 = K 258 (CT 27, 14□15) + K 3793 (CT 27, 7) + K 19305 (edited in TCS 4, 31□45), Nineveh,

contains lines 1, 4□5, 7□9, 13□16, 18, 22□24, 31, 35□36, 47□48, 50□51, 54□55, 58, 56, 60, 63□64, 67□68, 72, 74□76, 78, 82□83, 86, 90□92.

Ex.2 = K 3939 (CT 27, 1□3) + K 11870 + K 14530, from Nineveh, contains lines 16, 18, 22□24, 27, 35□36, 47□48, 50□51, 54, 58, 56, 60, 63□64, 67□68, 72, 74□76, 78, 82□83, 86, 90□92.

As it can be seen, there are only minor differences between the two Neo-Assyrian extract tablets, one of them concerns the lines in question, while the other represents the omission of a single line (55), which is actually the variant of the previous one (line 54 concerns ^{LÚ}BA.AN.ZA, while 55 contains ^{SAL}BA.AN.ZA, see below). In this light it is even more tempting to compare lines 27 and 31:

27.

A.28 BE SAL UZU.NU GU_4 MIN URU ***ina-qar*** LUGAL **LÁ**-*mu* KUR BI **ZÁH**

B.15 [BE] SAL UZU.NU GU_4 Ù.[TU]

E_1.16 BE SAL UZU.NU GU_4 MIN URU

Ex.2.7 [*i-na-qa-a*]*r-ma* LUGAL.BI LÁ-*mu*

šumma sinništu lipišti alpi ulid ālu innaqqar(ma) šarru / šarraša ikkammi

Ms. A adds: *mātu šī ihalliq*

If a woman gives birth to a scrotum / bloody mass of a bull, the land will be destroyed, the king / its king will be captured, that land will perish.

31.

A.32 BE SAL UZU.NU MIN URU BI **ŠUB**-*di* LUGAL.BI[?] **LÁ**[?]-*mu*?

B.19 [BE] SAL UZU.NU Ù.TU [ ]

E2.2 BE SAL UZU.NU Ù.T[U]

Ex.1.16 [BE SAL UZU].NU Ù.TU URU BI ŠUB [ ]

šumma sinništu lipišta ulid ālu šū innaddi šarrašu ikkammi

If a woman gives birth to a scrotum /bloody mass, that city will be thrown into ruin, its king will be captured

It is evident even at first sight that the *protases* contain the very same expression *(lipištu)*, complemented with GU_4 *(a**lp**u)* in line 27, but what about the *apodoses*? Well, if these two entries were subsequent ones, we would say that the latter were generated from each other as well, if we consider the already revealed written correlations:

apodosis 27: *naqāru* → ŠUB = ***nadû***
LÁ (= *nadû*)

apodosis 31: ŠUB = ***nadû*,**
LÁ (= ***nadû*)**

While the above *ṣâtu*-type equations indeed confirm that these two lines can be considered as variants both with respect to the *protases* and their interpretations, the very written code-based correlation between the *apodoses* raise the possibility of the existence of **catchline-type transitions**, similar those already observed in the Neo-Assyrian version of Tablet V. In this respect, it was tempting to compare (at first) line 27 with the subsequent entry of the main text:

27.
A.28 BE SAL UZU.NU GU_4 MIN URU ***ina-qar*** LUGAL **LÁ**-*mu* KUR BI **ZÁH**
B.15 [BE] SAL UZU.NU GU_4 Ù.[TU]
E_1.16 BE SAL UZU.NU GU_4 MIN URU [
]
Ex.2.7 [*i-na-qa-a*]*r-ma* LUGAL.BI LÁ-*mu*

šumma sinništu lipišti alpi ulid ālu innaqqar(ma) šarru / šarraša ikkammi
Ms. A adds: *mātu šī ihalliq*
If a woman gives birth to a scrotum / bloody mass of a bull, the land will be destroyed, the king / its king will be captured, that land will perish.

28.
A.29 BE SAL *i-pí* MIN KUR BI ŠUB-*di*
B.16 BE SAL *i-pí* Ù.[TU]
E_1.17 BE SAL [*i*]-*pí* Ù.TU [ ]

šumma sinništu ipi ulid mātu šinnaddi
If a woman gives birth to a membrane, that land will be thrown into ruin.

As it is now evident at first glance, the apodoses are clearly related to each other, according to the already traced written correlation:

apodosis 27: *naqāru* → ŠUB = ***nadû***

LÁ = ***nadû***

apodosis 28: ŠUB = ***nadû***

As for the *protases*, it seems also relevant that the next entry of both Neo-Assyrian extracts is line 35 of the main text, which concerns the "birth" of a *silītu* (ARHUŠ), that is, an afterbirth. Line 35, by the way, marks a clear section border between the analysed unit governed by the phonetic pattern, which, at the same time, shows some kind of thematic coherence as well, since almost all entries concern membranous formations (or afterbirths?), in contrast with the subsequent section which lists various body parts (line 36: head, line 37: hand, line 38: wrist, and so on). It is also remarkable that the extracts contain line 36 as well, so in this case they seemingly represent (according to the Neo-Assyrian fashion revealed in Tablet V), the transitions between the various subsections. Of course, we will return to this phenomenon, however, before that we should consider the possible relatedness of the *protases* of lines 28 and 35.

In this respect one should consult, again, the lexical series which make clear that *ipu* ("membrane" in line 28) and *silītu* (or *šelītu*, written with the logogram ARHUŠ in line 35) are in fact synonymous:[475]

Ea III 243	ar-huš	ÉxSAL	*i-pu*	(membrane)
243a			*re-e-mu*	(womb)
244	uš	ÉxSAL	***i-pu***	
244a			***si-li-tú***	(membrane, afterbirth)

Before we would treat the question of section borders, methods of transition, and the question of the internal logic of the Neo-Assyrian extracts, first we have to note, in relation to the analysed, phonetically governed section which ends with line 35, that its real beginning seemingly even precedes line 27. It becomes evident, if we examine the preceding entries from line 24 onwards, which, by the way, is the previous entry of both extracts, and seemingly marks some kind of a border between line 23 (which also appears in the extracts and concerns a bird), and 24 (which concerns a "god who has a face").[476]

[475] For the following lexical sequence see MSL 14 313- 314, and for the equation see also: uš ÙŠ(=ARHUŠ) = *i-pu, si-li-tum* in S^{b} I 314- 315, and also SÌLA = *si-li-tu, i-pu* in A I/6 27- 28, see CAD I 173 (sub. *ipu*, lexical section), and CAD S 264 (sub. *silītu* lexical section).

[476] The following score transliteration omits Ms. F (K 2242 + K 11592), see de Zorzi 2014: 338, which ends with this very lines and thus only contains some fragmentary signs from at the end of the entries.

24.

A.25	BE SAL DINGIR *šá bu-na* TUK MIN LUGAL **ŠÚ** KUR *i*-BE
B.12	BE SAL DINGIR *ša bu-na* TUK [ ]
E_1.13	BE □SAL□ DINGIR *ša bu-na* TUK Ù.TU LUGAL **ŠÚ** [ ]
Ex.1.15	[BE SAL DINGIR] *ša bu-na* TUK Ù.□TU□ [ ]
Ex.2.6	[ ] KUR *i-be-el*

*šumma sinnišut i**l**a **š**a **b**ūna išû ulid šar kiššati māta ibêl*

If a woman gives birth to a god who has a face, the king of the universe will rule the land.

25.

A.26	BE SAL DINGIR *šá bu-na* NU TUK MIN **BAL** LUGAL **TIL**
B.13	[B]E SAL DINGIR *šá bu-na* NU TUK Ù.[TU]
E_1.14	BA SAL DINGIR *šá bu-na* NU TUK Ù.TU **BAL** LUGAL [**TIL**]

*šumma sinništu i**l**a **š**a **b**ūna lā išû ulid **p**a**l**ê **š**arri iqatti*

If a woman gives birth to a god who has no face, the reign of the king will come to an end.

26.

A.27	BE SAL **ŠU.SI** MIN DAM LÚ DAM-*sa ana* HUL **UŠ**-*di*
B.14	[BE] SAL ŠU.SI Ù.[TU]
E_1.15	BE SAL □ŠU.SI□ Ù.TU DAM-*tú* □NA□ D[AM]

šumma sinništu ubāna ulid aššat amēli mussa ana lemutti ireddi

If a woman gives birth to a finger, the wife will draw his husband into (doing) evil.

First of all, we should clarify the basic content of the firs omen pair, that is, to what a "god with/without face" may alludes to. Presuming that according to the overall semantic context it may refer to an anthropomorphic formation, one has to consider what is the distinctive feature of gods—according, actually, to the simple code. If we recall the visual representations of gods, this feature can evidently be nothing else than a horn /or horns. Yet, we have already learnt that a horn (SI) may allude to fingers (U or ŠU.SI) and, of course, to holes (*pilšu*, U), according to the disciplinary code of extispicy. The former feature(s) actually appear(s) in the entry (26) which comes after this omen pair, referring, all at once, to the subsequent **governing phonetic pattern *(p-l-š)***. Bearing this in mind, however, we should take a brief look upon the Akkadian transcription, since it is also remarkable that the *protases* of lines 24□25 in fact contains the voices counterpart of the latter, namely: ***l-š-b***. That this is in fact not a coincidence is can be

confirmed by the apodosis of entry 25, which, on the level of "hearing,", also represents ***p-l-š*** (in ***palê šarri***). But there is way much more.

The term *būnu* ("face") is the synonym of *pānu*,[477] which, in turn can be equated with the head as well.[478] So according, again to the simple code the presence of the face/head leads to a positive *apodosis*, while its lack results in a negative interpretation. What else, however, can be said about a god—according to the written code? Although one may get a bit surprised, but beyond the traditional logographic form (AN = DINGIR), ***ilu*** can also be (theoretically written with the sign U_5, which is nothing else than the combination of **HU.SI**,[479] and also with the grapheme **U**.[480] This actually means that by the latter we have the key element of the preceding entry (the "bird" in line 23 = MUŠEN = the sign **HU**), and those of the subsequent one (ŠU.**SI** and **U**). Thus, it starts to become clear that the ***protases*** work with the **catchline-type** mechanism—but what about the related *apodoses*?

Their correlation (both on the horizontal and vertical axes) becomes evident if we quote a lexical section—to which we have already referred to regarding the reading HU.SI:

Aa II/6 col iii Source B[481]

3'	U_5(=**HU.SI**)	***i-lum***
4'		*il-tum*
5'		*be-el-tum*
6'		***kiš-ša-tu***

There we are, we have just arrived to the key term of the apodosis of line 24, *kiššatu*, which is traditionally written with the logogram ŠÚ. Of course, it explains the inner-omen correlation, however, it is also related to the vertical one(s), since ***kiššatu*** can also be written with the homophonic logogram $ŠU_4$, which is actually the grapheme **U**—again.[482] Thus far we have clearly established a catchline-type transition between lines 24 and 26, however, we also have to take the apodosis of entry 25 into consideration which, as we have seen, is related to the opposite case (the god without a face).

[477] Cf. Idu I 48, and other references in CAD B 320 (sub. *būnu* lexical section), with Principal Commentary 61□61: IGI : *pa-nu* / IGI : *bu-nu*.

[478] SAG = *pa-nu* in Idu I 120, and see the further lexical references in CAD P 84 (sub. *pānu* lexical section).

[479] See Aa II/6 iii Source B line 3', see MSL 14 293.

[480] Aa II/4 15, cf. also CAD I-J 91 (sub. *ilu* lexical section).

[481] See MSL 14 293.

[482] Aa II/4 10 and 46, see CAD K 457 (sub. *kiššatu* lexical section).

At this point it is worthy to turn to our Principal Commentary, were we will find the following equation:[483]

7. [LUGAL ŠÚ *i*]*na* KUR GÁL-*ši*
8. ŠÚ *kiš-ša-tu*
9. ŠÚ ***a-hu-ú***

How all this can be related to our *apodoses*? The answer becomes clear-cut if we consider the relevant □*âtu*-type equations, since the term ***ahû*** ("strange, foreign, hostile") can be paired with *šanû* ("to change (most often) one's mind")[484] which, in turn, is equated with the logogram **BAL**—of course, one should add that (due to the loss of the BAL-section in our main sign list) this equation was only preserved by the commentary tradition.[485] However, this correlation may constitute a bridge between the *apodoses* of 24□25□26, and, together with the other key logogram (TIL) of the very same interpretation (line 25), confirms that we are in fact on the right track upon presuming that the vertical associations affect the *apodoses* as well. The logogram TIL in question is actually nothing else than the sign BAD, which, as it is well-known, can be read as **ÚŠ** as well (with the usual meaning "to die"), and it is not a great challenge to observe that in fact it "foretells," or rather explains the appearance of the homophonous logogram **UŠ** in the subsequent *apodosis* (26). As for the latter, one should also not forget about the other relevant element: HUL which, in turn, is the common logographic form of ***šal-puttu/šulputtu*** ("destruction") as well,[486] and as such, it alludes to the by now well-know phonetic pattern.

To sum up, if we visualise the related key elements of these three entries (concerning the written code) we get the following diagram (which only represents the vertical relations, and the □*âtu*-type basis of the phonetic associations):

	protasis		***apodosis***	
	□*âtu*-type	phonetic	□*âtu*-type	phonetic
(23	**HU**)			
24.	*ilu* = **HU**.SI, U	***l-š-b***	**ŠÚ** = **U** (*ahû*)	
25	*ilu* = HU.**SI**, **U**	***l-š-b***	BAL = *ahû* = **ŠÚ**; TIL (**ÚŠ**)	***p-l-š***

[483] For the composite text of this passage see de Zorzi 2014: 339. This equation also occurs in other lines of the same texts, as well as in a *Šumma ālu* commentary, see CAD K ibid.

[484] ku-úr KÚR = *šá-nu-u, a-hu-u* in Aa I/6 4□5, see CAD A/I 210 (sub. *ahû* lexical section).

[485] See inter alia BAL = *šá-nu-ú* in LBAT 1577 i 3 (astrological commentary), BAL = *šá-nu-u* in UET 4, 208:14 (commentary on Nabnitu Tablet XVIII), in CAD Š/1 403 (sub. *šanû* B lexical section).

[486] Cf. CAD Š/1 261□262 (sub. *šalputtu*).

26 **ŠU.SI** (= **U**) → ***p-l-š*** **UŠ; HUL** → ***š-l-p***

What we have just reconstructed is actually the imprint of our revered author, who indeed carried the Assyrian catchline-type transition to the prime of perfection. In fact, we cannot even talk about catchlines any more, but rather, about a **system** in which each and every element (both of the *protases* and *apodoses*) is reasoned and interconnected. As it was already seen by the relatedness of lines 27 and 28 (see above), these evident written correlations (which define and include the phonetic ones as well) are not restricted to the extracts, which at first sight may have seemed as catchlines on section borders, similar to the ones detected in Tablet V. Our above analysed sequence (from which only line 24 appears in the *nishu*s) reaffirms this assumption, and all at once foretells that the function of the extracts of SAG ITI NU TIL.LA will be rather different—of course, we will get back to this topic in detail.

So to sum up, while in case of Tablet V the Assyrian interpolations, worked according the same principles, were actual catchlines between smaller or larger section, inserted by an Assyrian redactor who worked on an already existing and by and large complete text, in here he (presumably the very same person?) created something (almost?) wholly anew where, on might say, each and every line became a "catchline," or rather, integral part of a **truly holistic system**. Even this short sequence analysed above reflects that his system in which everything is related to everything is indeed flawless, one might say divine, and all at once demonstrates his already mentioned considerations: he was not generating omens from the preceding ones (both from the *protases* and *apodoses*), but rather, he **decoded the entries from each other**. Finally, one should not forget his initial statement, since it was also proved to be true, even by this short analysis: an untrained reader would never even notice what is actually "happening" in this text. One might **hear** a few phonetic correlations, however, as we have just detected, in several cases the latter can and only be revealed by means of □*âtu*-type equations. In other words, **only those can hear correctly, who had already learned how to see**.

Those who can see, will see

On the basis of our previous conclusions and relying on the specific generative methods I have just started to unfold, it is time for us to reveal the underlying system of SAG ITI NU TIL.LA—starting our final analysis at the very beginning.

As we have already said, the first four entries constitute a separate, so to say opening section which concerns, on the thematic level, the crying of fetuses within their mothers'

womb (again, see Excursus 1 on this specific phenomenon). After the quotation of these entries in score transliteration we will have to clarify some rather unusual (but of course, deliberately used) expressions related to crying, before canvassing the internal logic and structure of this unit.

1.

A.1 BE SAL *a-rat-ma šà* ŠÀ-*šà* ÉR (A.**IGI**) KUR NÍG.GIG **IGI-[*mar*]**

C.1 BE SAL *a-rat-ma šá* ŠÀ-*šá i-bak-ki* KUR NÍG.GIG **IGI-*mar***

D.1 BE SAL *a-rat-ma ša* ŠÀ-*ša i-bak-ki* KUR NÍG.GIG [IGI-*mar*]

Ex.1.1 BE SAL *a-rat-ma šà* ŠÀ-[*šà i-bak* / A.**IGI**-*k*]*i* KUR.BI NIG.GIG **IGI-*mar***

šumma sinništu arâtma ša libbīša ibakki mātu marušta immar

If a woman is pregnant with child, and her foetus (lit.: interior) **cries**,
The land will experience **„taboo"**.

2.

A.2 BE SAL *a-rat-ma šà* ŠÀ-*šà* ***i-ha-az-za kùr-rù*** LÁ-*al* É LÚ BIR-[*ah]*

C.2 BE SAL *a-rat-ma šá* ŠÀ-*šá i-ha-zu* ***kùr-rù*** LÁ-al É LÚ BIR-*ah*

D.2 BE SAL *a-rat-ma ša* ŠÀ-*ša i-ha-as-si* ***kùr-rù*** LÁ-*al* □É LÚ□ B[IR-*ah*]

šumma sinništu arâtma ša libbīša ***ihazzu/ihassi*** *kurru iššaqqal bīt amēli issappah*

If a woman is pregnant with child, and her foetus (lit.: interior) **hisses,**
The *kurru*-measure will be weighed, the house of the man will be scattered.

3.

A.3 BE SAL *a-rat-ma šà* ŠÀ-*šà* ***i-dam-mu-um*** É LÚ É.GAL **UŠ**-*di*

C.3 BE SAL *a-rat-ma šá* ŠÀ-*šá* ***i-dam-mu-um*** É LÚ É.GAL **UŠ**-*di*

D.3 BE SAL *a-rat-ma ša* ŠÀ-*ša* ***i-dam-mu-um*** É LÚ É.GAL **UŠ**-*di*

šumma sinništu arâtma ša libbīša ***idammum*** *bīt amēli ēkallu ireddi*

If a woman is pregnant with child, and her foetus (lit.: interior) **murmurs/moans,**
The palace will confiscate the man's house.

4.

A.4 BE SAL *a-rat-ma šà* ŠÀ-*šà is-si-ma* ***še-mu-ú iš-mi*** KÚR *dan-nu* ZI-*ma* KUR *ú-ša[l-pat]*

A.5 NÍG.HA.L[AM.MA *ina* KUR GAR-*an bu-š]á-šú* SIG_5 KÚR GU_7 KI.MIN É LÚ BIR-*ah* (linea)

C.4 BE SAL *a-rat-ma šá* ŠÀ-*šá is-si-ma* ***še-mu-ú iš-mi***

C.5 KÚR KALAG.GA ZI-*ma* KUR *ú-šal-pat* NÍG.HA.LAM.MA *ina* KUR GAR-*an bu-ša-ša* SIG_5 KÚR GU_7 KI.MIN É LÚ BIR-*ah*

D.4 BE SAL *a-rat-ma ša* ŠÀ-*ša is-si-ma* ***še-mu-ú iš-mi*** KÚR KALAG.GA □ZI-*ma*□ KUR *ú-šal-*□*pat*□ NÍG.H[A.LAM.M]A i[na KUR GAR-*an]*

D.5 *bu-ša-ša* SIG_5 KÚR GU_7 KI.MIN É NA BI[R-*ah]*

Ex.1.2 BE SAL *a-rat-ma šà* ŠÀ-*šà is-si-ma* ***še-mu-ú iš-mi*** KÚR KALAG.GA ZI-*ma* KUR *ú-šal-pat*

Ex.1.3 NÍG.HA.LAM.MA ina KUR GAR-*an bu-ša-ša* SIG_5 KÚR GU_7 KI.MIN É LÚ BIR-*ah* (linea)

šumma sinništu arâtma ša libbīša issima šēmû išme nakru dannu itebbima māta ušalpat šahluqtu ina māti iššakkan būšaša damqa nakru ikkal KI.MIN bīt amēli issappah

If a woman is pregnant with child, and her foetus (lit.: interior) cries out and who can hear, hears it, a strong enemy will rise and destroy the land, there will be destruction in the land, its property and goods will be consumed by the enemy, ditto, the house of the man will be scattered.

Some philological comments

As it was said, some specific elements in this section practically call out for commentary. One such word is the extremely rare verb *hasû/azû,* appearing in line 2 and translated as "to hiss" in the CAD,[487] and also interpreted accordingly by Erle Leichty.[488] Unfortunately, the situation is not so unambiguous since both translations are based on semantic considerations drawn from *Šumma ālu* entries in which a "salamander/lizard" *hisses* in the bedroom.[489] In respect of more exact meaning, the commentary text on the latter

[487] CAD H 166, sub. *hazû*.
[488] Leichty 1970: 32, note 2.
[489] CT 38, 39:23.

compendium is of no help either, as *hasû* is explained here with the verb *šasû*,[490] which has several meanings, and beyond shouting, crying and calling, it can also refer to ear ringing, blowing and to whistling sounds[491]—therefore all we get to know is that this certain salamander gave out some sort of sound. Moreover, since we are dealing with omen texts, it is by no means certain that this is a typical "salamander sound" (i.e. hissing). The same can be said for the sounds produced by various animals, humans and inanimate objects appearing under the heading *azû* of the CAD.[492] We cannot be certain that the dog associated with this expression "yelps"[493] (since it can also growl or even whine), and it is utterly impossible to define the sound heard by a "ghost above the bed,"[494] or by the wall of a house.[495] A certain text use the expression in question for the description of the ringing of the ear, which is at places traditionally expressed with the verb *šasû*,[496] and it can also be used as a synonym of the latter when a person, suffering from a nightmare "screams, but no one hears,"[497] however, even these sources do not help in narrowing down the exact meaning. It is the examination of the words which can be brought into etymological connection with the verb *hasû/azû,* which may bring us a little closer to understanding the expression. Thus, for example, the nominal *hasû* refers to "a person with speech defect," the Sumerian equivalent of which (lú zé-za)[498] appears in a Sumerian diatribe, where a certain Engardug, the object of abuse is "zé za among the singers."[499] Furthermore, in the work entitled *Competition between Bird and Fish*, it appears as the sound of the marsh (zé za engur-ra).[500] The latter may refer to two types of sound phenomena: on the one hand to the sound of the water (perhaps some kind of bubbling), on the other hand to the rustling of the reeds.

[490] CT 41, 27 Rv. 9: *i-ha-az-zu = i-šá-as-su*.

[491] CAD Š/II sub. *šasû*, mainly 147–151. It is to be noted that the verb *šasû* occurs in regard to a sheep foetus at one place in the *Šumma izbu*, almost in the same context: *šumma izbu ina libbi ummišu issima (*XVII lines 83–85, *protases*). Unfortunately, no information is provided here either regarding the nature of the sound, the only clarity is that it can be heard clearly, since: *lahrum ahîtum īpulšu* (another sheep answered, see XVII 85).

[492] See CAD A/II 528–529.

[493] CT 39, 2: 92, 93 and 94 (*Šumma ālu*), for the above proposed translation see: CAD A/II 529.

[494] CT 38, 26: 28 *(eṭemmu ina elēn majāli ihazzu)*, also from the *Šumma ālu* compendium. Here, the CAD uses the translation "moaning," see CAD A/II, 529. The sound of the spirits is no less elusive than they themselves, it seems that in the rituals this is also referred to by the verb š*asû*, for more details see Scurlock 2006, 8 ("to shout"), and Text No. 1. (=AfO 29/30.4, 10–18) as well as No. 2. (AfO 29/30. 4, 19–Lo.E. 2', OrNS 39 Tab. 5 = Rm 99, and SpTU 4 137).

[495] CT 38, 15: 48, the CAD translates as "groans" (see ibid.).

[496] TDP 70:17 *(šumma uznāšu ihazzā)*, for comparison: CAD A/II, 529.

[497] AfO 18 67 iii 29 (OB omen text)—*ihazzûma lā išemmûšu*, see CAD A/II, 529.

[498] OB Lú B v 8, and A 138, see: CAD H 129.

[499] Diatribe B, 3. (= ETCSL 5.4.11).

[500] ETCSL 5.3.5, line 30.

The next related word is the homonymous *hasû,* which is the name of a water bird (Sumerian šu-lú^{mušen}, "bird with human hands," i.e. bird with palm-shaped feet), and the same bird can also be designated with the Akkadian word *hūqu*.[501] The latter most probably refers to the bird's characteristic voice, and this at last can give us some clue, since the akin word *hūqu* ("C")[502] is the name of some kind of breathing difficulty,[503] a symptom which signaled the imminent death of the patient. In addition to laboured breathing, or rattling, this raises several possibilities (chronic coughing, throat clearing, chest wheezing, etc.),[504] but it also starts to outline the layers of the meaning of the verb *hazû/azû* in question.

The translations "hissing" and "moaning" of the CAD, though most probably based on other associations, are not far from the rustling sound appearing here in connection with the reeds. It is more than likely that in the mentioned diatribe the singer was mocked because of a speech defect and not because he continuously "rattled" and "coughed," since (unless he was dying) this could not have been his constant characteristic feature—thus, beyond lisping it would not really fit into the context. The water bird may also give a screeching sound and the "ringing of the ears" may also refer to a similar, sharp sound effect, however, it must be added that the possibility cannot be excluded completely, that the concepts of "throat clearing, cawing" are the basic associatives. In any case, it is certain that the exact meaning is not tangible, merely approachable.

However, we must not forget the context, since none of the above sources explain in a satisfying manner how and why a verb with such a special meaning became one of the expressions referring to the sounds of crying or mourning. The possible explanation might be that the author related it (perhaps owing to the phonological similarity) to *nahāsu*, since the expression *ithusu* formed from this appears in several places together and paired with a Sumerian equivalent of *bakû*, that is, with ÉR PÀD.[505] The word *ithusu* can be equated with the Sumerian $SIG_7.SIG_7$ GAR actually meaning „to produce 'SIG_7(-SIG_7)sounds/noises,'" an onomatopoetic expression referring to sobbing (and perhaps to the gasping of air, using the logogram SIG_7 which is in fact IGI*gunû*).[506] The verb in

[501] šu-lú^{mušen} = *ha-zu-ú* = *hu-u-qu* (Hg B iv 284 és 250a, as well as Hg C I 1), see: CAD H 244.

[502] CAD H 244.

[503] See TDP 150:47 and TDP 150:43, as well as the comments of the CAD (H 244).

[504] It is to be noted that the CAD questionably associates the word with the verb *huqqu* as well, interpreting it as "to croak, to caw," since it refers to the sound of a crow *(āribu)*, which of course would shift the balance towards the meaning "coughing, clearing of the throat." The problem is that beyond the uncertainty of the etymological link, the verb occurs only twice, and in both cases in the *Šumma ālu*, thus, although there is no doubt that it refers to a sound given by a crow, in the absence of other attestations, the interpretation cannot be completely certain.

[505] For the compilation of such sources see George 2002: 141–142.

[506] George 2002: 142.

such form is unknown to the ePSD, but SÌG.SÌG (third millennium and Old Babylonian sìg-sìg), which is interchangeable with 'sig$_7$-sig$_7$' is a well-known Sumerian word,[507] with the following meanings: wind, breeze, spirit, soul *(mehû, šāru, ziqīqu)*. If our assumption is correct, i.e. the sequence indeed used the Sumerian 'ÉR PÀD—SIG$_7$.SIG$_7$ GAR' analogy, a semantic, as well as graphic correlation can also be presumed in addition to the phonological similarity, because the association in question makes it clear that in line 2 the verb *hasû* can be graphically associated with IGI (by means of the theoretic IGI*gunû*), and was used in the sense "to blow, rustle, hiss, etc." Naturally the translation "to blow" based on the latter conclusions is still questionable and only of approximate nature.

In contrast, ***damāmu,*** appearing in line 3 is a frequently used verb, which is clearly related to the concept of mourning, turning up with the same meaning in other Semitic languages as well, and traditionally also as a parallel to the equivalents of *bakû*.[508] The general translations ("to cry, weep, mourn") do not really specify its meaning, thus it is worth taking a look at the characteristic sounds it can be associated with. Similarly to its Hebrew equivalent, with which the cooing of doves, the sounds coming from the marsh, as well as "murmuring/muttering" can be expressed,[509] *damāmu* also primarily refers to the cooing of doves in non-divinatory texts, i.e. in those which may contain metaphors based on reality.[510] Whilst not connected in the CAD to the presently discussed verb, mention should be made of the expression *dummû* as well, because based on semantic considerations they can by all means be related: namely, *dummû* primarily refers to the murmuring, roaring of the sea.[511]

[507] Further to the above, it may occur in the form si-si-ig/ga, see: ePSD sub. sisig.

[508] Thus the Hebrew *d-m-m* II generally appears as the pair of *b-k-y* in the Biblical texts, in more detail see Levine 1993: mainly 90–93, and for Ugaritic examples: cited work, 95.

[509] See Levine 1993: mainly 102.

[510] Among others: *kīma summe adammuma gimir ūmēja* (Ludlul I 107), for further such examples see CAD D 60.

[511] Naturally, it cannot be neglected that it appears as the equivalent of the Sumerian compound ŠE ŠA$_4$, as also the expression *damāmu*, see: SBH 20:46–47: ŠÀ A.AB.BA.GIN ŠE.ÀM ŠA$_4$[.ZU]: *kīma libbi tāmtim tudammû*. For the further examples see: CAD D 179.

EXCURSUS 1: CAN A FOETUS ACTUALLY CRY?

As stated previously, from a Mesopotamian point of view the real experience of an omen is not inevitable. This though, does not attenuate the scientific value of the descriptions found in the *protases* based on non-experienced phenomena, the irrationalities are simply theoretical possibilities in a system attempting to reveal everything which is divinely encoded in the written form of the omen, and striving for perfection. Generally, however, it is assumed that the theoretical extrapolations derive from a certain empirical observation, which was modified and enhanced, respectively. In case of the first four lines, forming a closed thematic unit, this scheme seems invalid, since seemingly every phenomenon is absurd. Nonetheless, before hastily stating that the descriptions of the first four *protases* give evidence of the vivid fantasy of Mesopotamians, it is worthy to explore whether similar events have ever been reported. In other words: can a foetus actually cry?

It is not surprising that several references can be found according to which during the course of history, the crying or shouting of a foetus was also regarded as being an impossible, supernatural phenomenon, and in later times also being thought of as a divine sign or prodigy. For example, Titus Livius mentions that in 214 BC., during the critical days of the Second Punic War, several prodigious phenomena which predicted the victory of Rome were reported, amongst the Marrucini for instance, a victory cry was heard from an infant „in the mother's womb."[512] According to tradition, St. John the Baptist whooped,[513] prophet Muhammad cried out *in utero*,[514] while the Russian hagiography makes mention of an event when once St. Sergius of Radonezh burst out sobbing no less than three times during Sunday mass—well before his birth.[515]

After all these, it seems all the more surprising that when we search for further references later in time, a rather abundant material can be found in medical literature from the first half of the twentieth century: a number of well-known, expert gynecologists and obstetricians wrote about the crying within the womb *(vagitus uterinus)* in the columns of modern scientific periodicals, regarding the phenomenon as real and explainable.

[512] Livius, *Ab urbe condicta*, book 24 10. caput: *infantem in utero matris in Marrucinis 'Io triumphe' clamasse.*

[513] According to the Gospel of Luke, upon the visit of Mary, Elizabeth's "babe (lit. foetus) whooped (lit. leaped for joy) in her womb" (ἐσκίρτησεν τὸ βρέφος ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ αὐτῆς), Lk 1, 41, and compare: Lk 1, 44 (ἐσκίρτησεν ἐν ἀγαλλιάσει τὸ βρέφος ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ μου "the babe in my womb leaped for joy").

[514] Illingworth 1955: 75; Pinkerton 1969: 482.

[515] Illingworth 1955: 75; Pinkerton, 1969: 482; Thyret 1994: 486.

Such essays were frequently accompanied by case reports, in which the physicians realistically depicted and discussed their own astonishing experiences in connection with crying fetuses. Since these authors were professionals, it would be hard to believe that they would have wanted to put an end to their career and make fools of themselves before the entire profession. Some authors were stirred by the experience and started to collect data: R.S. Illingworth, for example, reported as many as 125 cases which could be found in the „literature"—and he only ventured as far as the beginning of the 19th century.[516] Occasionally, the ominous crying was heard by a smaller team (as in one case in a 19th century "operating theatre"), inducing the superstitious astonishment of those present: for example, one of the nurses knelt down and prayed for several hours, until the birth of the baby.[517] Scientific explanation to the phenomenon became an issue triggering heated debates, since as a prerequisite of *vagitus uterinus* air had to somehow enter the womb, which assumption was found by many to be nonsense and even ridiculous.[518] Others argued that in the majority of the reported cases interventions were necessary, which were carried out manually or with the use of forceps, during the course of which it was possible somehow for the air to reach the womb.[519] Still others went further, and regarded the phenomenon of *vagitus uterinus* as real, to the extent that a specific classification was even introduced. For example, Ian M. Jackson differentiated between two types of crying within the womb, a "weak, moaning" type mostly only heard by stethoscope and a "loud, gasping for air" type, associated with writhing movements and asphyxia in general.[520]

It is not up to us to decide which camp was right, and from our point of view it is not necessarily essential either—although it should be noted that from the second half of the 20th century there is no trace of such reports in the medical literature any more. It is an essential fact, however, that the mentioned physicians, together with many others of their colleagues, were witnesses or narrators of sound effects resembling crying from the womb in case of humans and occasionally also of animals.[521] Accordingly, whatever

[516] Iillingworth 1955: 75.
[517] For a report of the case see Clouston 1933: 201.
[518] See cited work, with the listings of pros and cons.
[519] Among others: Peters 1929.
[520] Jackson 1943: 266.
[521] H. Matthiasson for example (Matthiasson 1933) reports on experiences related to *vagitus uterinus* in connection with pregnant cows—though in this case it cannot be excluded that the obstetrician fell prey to the unique sense of humor of his "farmer friends." The author, however, mentions an interesting literary reference (*Fornmanna sögur*, 1828, Bd. 11, 10), according to which the whining of puppies in the uterus of their mothers was regarded in the Saga as an omen of significant events.

the explanation is, there had and has to be a phenomenon which was sometimes perceived in ancient Mesopotamia too, and which could most accurately be described by the intellectuals of the ancient Land between the Rivers in the same manner as by their descendants thousands of years later: as foetal crying.

What else can be said about the verbs "blowing, hissing" and "whirring" occurring in lines 2 and 3? In the heroic age of the stethoscope, a good friend of the inventor René Laennec, a certain Jacques Kergaradec, who was the first to use the tool during the study of gravidae and who, as a matter of fact, could be thought of as the forefather of gynaecological listening, outlined at length the characteristic sounds which could be heard from the abdomen of pregnant women. According to his report written in 1822, thorough listening to the abdomen of a pregnant woman at an advanced stage with a stethoscope, or even with just the ear, a characteristic, blowing kind of sound can be heard in the majority of cases in some part of the womb. He called it the "placental souffle," because he thought that the sound could be heard the most clearly at the fixation point of the placenta.[522] Several other gynaecologists of the era also described this sound, comparing it to the blowing of the wind, the murmuring of the sea, and to blowing, respectively—worthy of mention is the association of Dr. Evory Kennedy, who in certain cases considered it to resemble to the "cooing of doves."[523]

In this case the sound undoubtedly exists: it is produced by the circulation of the placenta and is clearly heard during the modern doppler test, with contemporary gynecologists referring to it in general as "the sound of a snow storm." Naturally, with the naked ear it can only be detected (if detected) in case the individual knows precisely what to search for and why—although, it should be added, it is perfectly perceivable with a cone made of wood, bone, etc., resembling to the early tool of Laennec (Figs. 20–21.).[524] It is understandable that in case of certain diseases involving pregnant women, like toxaemia or autoimmune diseases, such as SLE *(systemic lupus erythematosus)* or CLAS *(circulating lupus anticoagulant syndrome)* which are accompanied by hypertension,[525] or in case of abdominal pregnancies, where the blood circulation becomes rather intensive in the placental arteries (which fundamentally do not serve this purpose), the "blowing

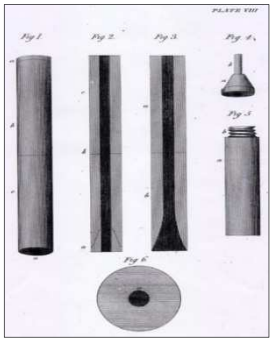
[522] Based on Lee 1844: 153–154.

[523] Based on Lee 1844: 154.

[524] Based on oral reports and comments. It is to be mentioned that in Hungary a few decades ago the physicians and nurses still learned the listening to and observing of the foetal heart rate with such a wooden funnel.

[525] For a review of diseases of such nature see: Benirschke-Kaufmann 1990: 499–529 (disorders associated with hypertension) and 530–541 (lupus).

noise" also becomes louder.[526] It might therefore be assumed that quite rarely (and naturally not from a great distance, though not when directly examining the abdominal wall either) the sound could be heard by the "unprofessional ear" as well.



Figs. 20–21. Stethoscope of Laennec from the heroic age, and its cross section illustrated by J. Kergaradec

Therefore, though it will never be completely verified, it is tempting to assume that the opening lines of the teratological *Šumma izbu* series may indeed refer to real phenomena, even to this certain „placental souffle" with a terminology strikingly similar to the definitions of the 19th century.[527] Based on all the above, the case of the first four lines can therefore be of interest not only to the Assyriologist, but rather, to the medical historian as well, and furthermore, it points out that at times even the seemingly most absurd description may contain some truth.

[526] Studying the presence of the "blowing noise" in abdominal pregnancies, it was found that these noises are much louder than in case of normal pregnancies (Dixon–Stewart 1960: mainly 1105).

[527] Naturally this does not mean that the observations of the two periods can be grouped into the same category, since beyond the fact that the why and how of the phenomenon was evidently unclear in Mesopotamia, we cannot even talk of systematic observations, as for example in case of the pulse. In regard to the latter see: Oppenheim 1962, and on the scientific value (according to modern sense) of the observation: cited work: 30–33.

SAG ITI NU TIL.LA

A TABULAR SUMMARY OF THE UNDERLYING STRUCTURE

1. BE MUNUS *a-rat-ma šá* ŠÀ-*šá* (var: *šà* ŠÀ-*šà*) *i-bak-ki* (var: ér(A.**IGI**) KUR NÍG.GIG **IGI-*mar***

šumma sinništu arâtma ša libbiša ***ibakki*** *mātu* ***ikkiba*** *immar*

Horizontal correlation: IGI – IGI(-*mar*)

ibakki – ikkibu (chiasmus)

IGI

IGI-*mar*

2. BE MUNUS *a-rat-ma šá* ŠÀ-*šá* (var: *šà* ŠÀ-*šà*) ***i-ha-zu*** (var: *i-ha-az-za*) ***kùr-rum***(var:-*rù*) LAL-*al*

É LÚ BIR-*ah*

šumma sinništu arâtma ša libbiša ***ihazzu/ihazza*** *kurrum išaqqal bīt amēli issappah*

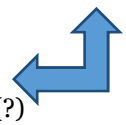
has/zû = **IGI***gunû*(SIG7).**IGI***gunû* **GAR** *kurrum***:** KI**.LAM**

Vertical correlation 1 (from the protasis): **IGI***gunû*(SIG7).**IGI***gunû*

Vertical 2 (from the apodosis): IGI-***mar*** → IGI **GAR**

IGI

LAM (?)



3. BE MUNUS *a-rat-ma šá* ŠÀ-*šá* (var: *šà* ŠÀ-*šà*) ***i-dam-mu-um*** É LÚ É.GAL **UŠ**-*di*

šumma sinništu arâtma ša libbiša ***idammum*** *bīt amēli ēkallu ireddi*

damāmu = A.**IGI** Ax**IGI** or ŠÉŠ (SÍG.**LAM** SÍG.**LAM**)

V1 (from protasis): A.**IGI** Ax**IGI**

V2 (from apodosis): KI.**LAM** →SÍG.**LAM**

H: *damāmu* →*damu* (blood) = **ÚŠ (BAD)** →**UŠ** (paronomasia)

IGI

BAD

4. BE MUNUS *a-rat-ma šá šá* ŠÀ-*šá* (var: *šà* ŠÀ-*šà*) *is-si-ma* ***še-mu-ú iš-me*** KÚR KA-LAG.GA (var: *dan-*

šumma sinništu arâtma ša libbiša ***issima <u>šēmû išme</u>*** *nu*) **ZI**-*ma* KUR *ú*(var*:* ***ù)-šal-pat***

nakru dannu itebbima māta ušalpat

NÍG.**HA.LAM**.MA *ina* KUR GAR-an *bu-ša-ša* $\mathbf{SIG_5}$ KÚR GU_7

šahluqtu ina māti iššakkan bušâša

nakru ikkal

KIMIN É LÚ BIR-*ah*

šasû= *has/zû*(**IGI***gunû*(SIG7).**IGI***gunû* GAR) – Izbu Comm. 3

bīt amēli issappah

ZI = erase, remove = **IGI*gunû***

lapātu Š = IGI.**UR**

šasû = BI (A V/I 145)

HA.LAM = *lapātu, lemnu* → IGI.**UR**

SIG_5 = IGI.ÉRIN

V1 (from protasis): IGI

V2 (from apodosis): **BAD** = *petû* = BI = ***šasû*** (A = B = C = D →**A = D**)

Horizontal correlations:

– ZI = erase, remove = **IGI***gunû*

– *lapātu* Š = *IGI.**UR***

– HA.LAM = *lapātu* IGI.**UR**

– SIG_5 = **IGI**.ÉRIN

NEW SECTION

BAD **UR**

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5. BE MUNUS **UR**.MAH Ù.TU **LAL**-*mu*

URU BI **DAB**-*at* LUGAL.BI

šumma sinništu nēša ūlid ikkammi

ālu šū iṣ ṣ abbat šarrašu

MAH = *kabtu* = **BAD** (Aa II/3 5)

DIB = ☐*abātu,* ***kamû***

LAL = ***kamû***

kamû (“outside”) = **BAR** (Aa I/6 181)

Horizontal:

MAH = *kabtu* = BAD = *pagru*(LÚ.BAD) = BAR (Aa I/6 186) = ***kamû***

UR

BAR

6. BE MUNUS **UR.BAR**.RA Ù.TU

šumma sinništu barbara ūlid

$UŠ_4$ KUR **MAN**-*ni*

☐*ēm māti išanni*

Horizontal:

BAR = *mašû* (“forget”)

mašû = MAN (Aa II/4 159)

Aa I/6 311 and Izbu Comm. 363

BAR = *mašû* = MAN

BAR = *nakru* (“enemy”) Aa I/6 214

MAN = *šanû* (“change”)

šanû = KÚR (Aa I 6 4)

UR = *nakru* (Erimhuš II 134, MSL 9 133:476 (Proto-Aa)

KÚR = *nakru* (Aa I6/ 1)

BAR , UR = *nakru* = KÚR = *šanû* = **MAN**

UR

BAR

7. BE MUNUS **UR**.GI_7 Ù.TU

šumma sinništu kalba ūlid

EN É **ÚŠ**-ma

bēl bīti imâtma

É.BI BIR-ah

bīssu issappah

$UŠ_4$ KUR **MAN**-*ni*

☐*ēm māti išanni*

DINGIR GU_7

ilu ikkal

GI_7 = KU

KU = *nūru* (

nūru = **BAR** (Aa I/6 250)

Horizontal:

BAR , UR = *nakru* = KÚR = *šanû* = **MAN**

ÚŠ = BAD = *pagru*(LÚ.BAD) = **BAR** (Aa I/6 186) = ***kamû* (=KU)**

BAR

BAR

8. BE MUNUS **ŠAH** Ù.TU

šumma sinništu šahâ ūlid

MUNUS AŠ.TE DAB-*at*

sinništu kussâi ☐*abbat*

ŠÁH = ŠUL = pig
= ***herû*** (“to dig”)
***herû* = BAR** (A I/6 297)
***herû* = BAL** (commom logographic form, Comm. II 107)

AŠ.TE = ***kussû, sukku*** (“throne”)
kussû= **BAL** (Izbu Comm. 14)

sukku = **ZAG** = ***šahātu*** (“corner”). Cf. Izbu Aa VIII/4 15) = **BAR** (A I/6 174)

AŠTE = *sappartu* = tip of the horn

(Sum. **SI**) of an animal

BAR **ZAG** = ***šahātu*** **SI**

9. BE MUNUS GUD Ù.TU
šumma sinništu alpa ūlid

LUGAL **ŠÚ** *ina* KUR GÁL-*ši*
šar kiššati ina māti ibbašši

GUD = ***šahā□u*** A (“jump, rise”)
common written form, cf. Izbu Comm. 201
homophonic: ***šahātu*** (“corner”) = ZAG
= **BAR**
and ***šahā□u*** B (“undress”) = **SI** (A III/4 157)

-

BAR IGI

24. BE MUNUS DINGIR *ša bu-na* TUK Ù.TU
šumma sinništu ila ša būna išû ūlid

LUGAL ŠÚ KUR *i-be-el*
šar kiššati māta ibêl

būnu = *pānu* = **IGI** (Idu I 48, Nabnitu I 5 and Izbu Comm. 61-61a)
būnu = *pānu* = ZAG (A VIII/4 24) = **BAR**

opposition

25. BE MUNUS DINGIR *ša bu-na* NU TUK

BAL LUGAL **TIL**

šumma sinništu ila ša būna lā išû ūlid ***palê šarri iqatti***

(plš)

būnu = *pānu* = **IGI** (Idu I 48, Nabnitu I 5 and Izbu Comm. 61-61a)

būnu = *pānu* = ZAG (A VIII/4 24) = **BAR** form)

TIL = *labāru* (common logographic

labāru = **U** (Sa Voc. N 23'f)

TIL = ***qatû***("come to an end") → *qātu* ("hand")

= **ŠU**

plš **U, ŠU**

26. BE MUNUS **ŠU**.SI Ù.TU
šumma sinništu ubāna ūlid

DAM LÚ DAM-*su ana* HUL UŠ-*di*
aššat amēli mussa ana lemutti ireddi

***ubānu* (finger) = U** (Aa II/4, 2)

U = bùr = *palāšu, pilšu (plš)*

HUL = *šalputtu* (destruction)

(A II/4: 86

Idu I 68 ***(šlpt)***

plš - šlp

Sa Voc. N 26' etc.

compare also Principal Comm. 139:

U = *pa-la-šú*

and 133f : bu-u-ruU = *ši-lu, pil-šu)*

SI

27. BE MUNUS UZU.NU GUD Ù.TU
šumma sinništu lipištiplpi ūlid

URU *ina-qar;* LUGAL LAL-*mu*;
KUR BI **ZÁH**

lpš lp - bšl

28. BE MUNUS *i-pí* Ù.TU
šumma sinništu ipi ūlid

KUR BI ŠUB-*di* -

29. BE MUNUS *i-pí ša* UZU UŠ DIR
šumma sinništu ipi ša šīri dāma mali ūlid

KUR BI ZÁH

pš(š)l - bšl

30. *šumma sinništu apišalâ ūlid*

KUR BI ZÁH

pšl - bšl

31. *šumma sinništu* ***li*****p**i**š***ta* (UZU.NU) *ūlid* — URU BI ŠUB-*di*; LUGAL BI? LAL?-*mu* — ***lpš***

32. *šumma sinništu 2 lū 3* ***li*****pš***āti *ūlid* — KUR BI ZÁH

lpš - bšl

33. *šumma sinništu* ***li*****b**i**tt***a* (SIG_4) *ūlid* — apodosis lost

lbt

34. *šumma sinništu 2 lū 3 libnāti ūlid* — apodosis lost

lbt

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35. BE MUNUS ARHUŠ*še-li-tú* Ù.TU — BAL LUGAL **MAN**-ni

šumma sinništu silīta ūlid — *palê šarri išanni*

URU BI NU SI.**SÁ**

ālu šū ul iššir

ARHUŠ = **NUN.LAGARxBAR**

= *littu* (“cow”, Aa V/3 86)

SÁ = *milku* (“advise”, Ea IV 92) = **NUN.LAGARxGAR** (Ea V 153b)

NUN = *naqāru* = **BAD**

= *damqu* = SIG_5 (**IGI**.ÉRIN)

V. CONCLUSIONS—THE NEW GENERATION OF OMEN INTERPRETATION

He who saw the Deep, the foundation of the country
who knew the proper ways, was wise in all matters,
Gilgameš, who saw the Deep, the foundation of the country
who knew the proper ways, was wise in all matters,
he explored everywhere the seats of power.
He knew the totality of wisdom about all things
he saw the secret and uncovered the hidden,
he brought back a message from before the flood.[528]

Admittedly, it would have been rather fancy and impressive to open the present study with the above, so to say epigraph which largely inspired our title—however, it would also have been capable of misinterpretation, since while it definitely suits to the ancient authors, it would have been anything but true for us.

Of course, it may sound striking at first, considering the throughout analyses carried out on the previous pages which, not incidentally, indeed confirmed the complexity and the strict rules of the formerly reconstructed underlying framework of Mesopotamian omen texts, whether in case of interpretation, or generation. By now it can and has to be assumed that this framework consists of three correlating interpretative sub-systems, labelled in here as simple, disciplinary, and written codes, and if one intends to find the correct explanations or correspondences either within individual omen entries, or even lengthy textual units, each of these "codes" has to be taken into consideration. Moreover, as it became evident during the throughout analysis of Tablet V, and then especially SAG ITI NU TIL.LA, a given text may carry many different hallmarks and represent various trends, whether discipline-related ones or those characteristic to the various scholarly circles of their time. The latter, all at once, are especially relevant with regard to the use of the written code, which may unfold the scholarly, or at times even the social or familial background of their author.

Still, we cannot say that we have already seen the Deep, "read" and unravelled every secret of the whole *Apsû*—rather, the analysis of the underlying structure of SAG ITI

[528] Introductory lines (Tablet I 1-8) of the standard Gilgameš-epic, see George 2003 Vol. 1: 538□539; and George 2007. As it is clear from the Ugarit text (George 2007), this post-Old Babylonian introduction did not originate in the first millennium.

NU TIL.LA provided only a short glimpse to a previously unknown level of Mesopotamian science and scientific thinking—showing an entire ocean in a drop. Therefore, the present work does not aim to provide strict conclusions, but guidelines—that is, it tends to pave and make way for a fresh start of a new trend (or generation) in omen interpretation. According to the basic principle of this new method we have to reject the previous aims of randomly examining de-contextualised entries, desperately seeking for single correlations. Instead, we have to analyse coherent textual units, taking each of the code-systems into consideration, both in inner- and inter-omen level—starting, at first with the other works inspired by the God of Wisdom. As it could be seen, in the light of such an investigation, however painstaking it seems at times, the individual entries will become interrelated elements of a complex network, and as such, they indeed reveal the underlying structure of these scientific compositions, unfolding, all at once, the specific cognitive system of their authors.

As for the latter, the neat motto used as the title of the very first sub-chapter of Marc Van De Mieroop's *Philosophy before the Geeks*,[529] namely "**I read, therefore I am**" perfectly characterises the phenomenon also revealed by us. Although each code systems played an essential role in omen generation/interpretation, it was in fact the written code, the Science of Writing which constituted the alpha and omega of Mesopotamian scholarly activity. Actually, this was already foreshown by the remarkably high percentage of logograms in the omen compendia of the first millennium—as compared to the Old Babylonian, mainly syllabic Akkadian texts. Of course, the latter also offered several inherent "written" correlations, logograms, however, considering their relatedness to the increasing lexical material which, in turn, can well typified by the sign list Aa with its nearly 14 400 entries and at times hundreds of possible Akkadian equivalents for a simple cuneiform sign, clearly multiply these possibilities. And indeed, the Assyrian trends of interpretation, already detected during the analysis of Tablet V and extended before our eyes to a complex, holistic system which shaped the "hidden" structure of SAG ITI NU TIL.LA—revealing such knowledge which was only accessible to the experts, those "who can see"—clearly signifies the supremacy attributed to the Science of Writing, that is, the decoding of cuneiform. Actually, while the excellent study of Jay Crisostomo[530] demonstrated the operations of the written correlations (his "analogical hermeneutics") in the lexical material, we have just unfold the other side of the coin: the practical appliance of these methods in scientific reasoning.

[529] Van de Mieroop 2016.
[530] Crisostomo 2014.

Reasoning, as a cognitive process can, however, remarkably differ in various cultures and areas. As it was already discussed in relation to the written code, the system we have revealed, in which every element is interrelated, is in fact quite alien to the generally linear "Western" way of thought (which also tends to categorize things). Therefore, to understand the operation of this system, instead of thinking in "lines," as previously, we have to start thinking in "circles." And this is the point where we should briefly treat and confirm the always contested "practical value" of such a study as the present one which, at first sight, may seem to the layman as an illustration of how one wasted her time *"to find out how other people wasted theirs."*[531]

Upon investigating the unlikeness of the cognition and the intellectual tradition of "East" and "West" and trying (as a reasonable scholar) to explain the origin of the differences Richard E. Nisbett ventured to fields rather uncharted for him. It does not aim to be a critique, of course, since as a psychologist he cannot be thoroughly trained in disciplines such as social and economic history, linguistics or philology, and nor does it detract from his study as a whole. However, it is of remarkable interest for us that he touches upon the relatedness of language and the way of thought, discovering that (italics mine) "East Asian languages are highly »*contextual*«. Words (or phonemes) typically have multiple meanings, so *to be understood they require the context* of sentences. English words (on the other hand) are relatively distinctive and English speakers in addition are concerned to make sure that words and utterances require as little context as possible."[532] Moreover, „according to linguistic anthropologists Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf, the differences in linguistic structure between languages are reflected in people's habitual thinking processes. This hypothesis has moved in and out of favour among linguists and psychologists over the decades, but it is currently undergoing one of its periods of greater acceptance. Some of our evidence about language and reasoning speaks directly to the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis."[533] However, if we accept that language makes a difference in understanding the word, we should not forget about its essential relatedness (especially in modern times) to literacy, and, as we have already said we cannot talk about literacy in general, but rather, we should consider the specific writing systems. In this respect the very fact that Chinese (and consequently Japanese) use a logo-syllabic, and thus highly „contextual" script, deserves, as for my opinion, some atten-

[531] See note 38 of the present study.
[532] Nisbett 2003: 157.
[533] Nisbett 2003: 159.

tion. And thus, we have got back to a familiar topic: the holistic nature of scientific reasoning which can simply be re-modelled by the basic process how one defines the exact reading and meaning of a grapheme—by means of the context.

In this light, the examination of the system of thought revealed by Mesopotamian scientific texts can be connected to rather current issues both in cognitive sciences—and everyday life, in general. As for the latter, without being more specific, which of course I cannot be, let's just say that in our present days it is a vital concern of the "West" to understand the way how the "East" thinks.

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