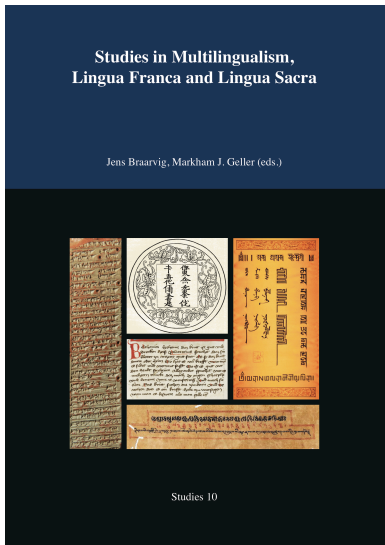Max Planck Research Library for the History and Development of Knowledge
Studies 10

Klaus Wagensonner:
Sumerian in the Middle Assyrian Period

Studies in Multilingualism,
Lingua Franca and Lingua Sacra

Jens Braarvig, Markham J. Geller (eds.)

Studies 10

Chapter 8
Sumerian in the Middle Assyrian Period
Klaus Wagensonner

8.1 Introduction

Sumerologists are in the fortunate position that their research is based on a huge and long-lasting corpus of royal or votive inscriptions, lexical, literary, liturgical, legal, and administrative texts, to name just a few of the main textual categories. If we take the archaic tablets from Uruk into account, for which a Sumerian background is not more than an unsubstantiated hypothesis, we are facing roughly three millennia of Sumerian scribal lore.[1] Given this enormous timespan, which includes periods of *actively* compiling texts in Sumerian as well as ones in which older scribal lore was copied and transmitted, it is imperative to consider that there are not just "as many Sumerian languages as there are Sumerologists,"[2] but indeed there are as many Sumerian grammars, or grammatical nuances, as there are periods or places where Sumerian was transmitted. Maybe this view is too exaggerated considering that the basics of Sumerian language remained more or less the same. However, over such a vast amount of time no language stays untouched or is resistant to modifications and changes in its structure, syntax, or lexicon, let alone to influences from other languages.[3] And, of course, there is the texts' orthography that frequently may conceal grammatical details and, hence, obstructs our perception of Sumerian grammar.[4] Often, peculiar spellings were coined "errors" or "mistakes," but this *notion* should be widely abandoned. Language contact is one, but not the exclusive, motivator for such changes.[5] In this respect, let us consider K. David Harrison's view, when he states:

> Languages are highly complex, self-organizing systems in constant flux. […]
> We all participate in constant change, but no individual speaker controls the
> speed, trajectory, or character of change. A process of emerging complexity—
> not yet well understood—gives a language its constantly changing and charac-
> teristic shape.[6]

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[1] See Thomsen (1984, 26–33) and Michalowski (2004) for a brief chronological overview of the attestation of Sumerian.

[2] For this saying of linguist and Sumerologist Igor M. Diakonoff, see Diakonoff (1976, 99).

[3] This is of course quite apparent dealing with compositions that were copied and transmitted throughout a long period of time and at different places, as well as by scribes who were at different stages in their career. The best case in point is the composition "Ninurta's Exploits" or *Lugal-e*; see section 8.3.3 below. For linguistic change, see with previous literature, for example, Brisch (2007, 91–94).

[4] See Edzard (2003–2005) and Edzard (2003–2005, 132): "'Rechtschreibung' ist ein für jedes Schriftsystem unabdingbares Prinzip, das der Summe der Benutzer ein gemeinsames Verständnis ermöglicht."

[5] Language contact is already recognizable in texts dating to the first half of the third millennium. For the latest study about loanwords and their origin, see Civil (2007).

[6] See Harrison (2007, 207).

This does certainly not mean that Mesopotamian scribes, and young ones, in particular, made no mistakes; scribal errors do exist, quite frequently at times, but every *peculiar* spelling must be treated with utmost care.[7] Stefan Maul argued that the scribes working on bilingual texts during the first millennium BCE were not necessarily unable to comprehend the Sumerian, but that the interpreter or commentator instead wanted to introduce a new text layer, which subsequently led to discrepancies between the Sumerian and Akkadian versions.[8]

From a grammatical point of view, the Sumerian language and its written lore are frequently treated in relative homogeneity, almost concealing the fact that grammar and lexicon may show important differences between sites and periods. Grammarians often deal with linguistic phenomena in texts that cover either long periods of time or whose manuscripts originate from various places or even different scribal milieus.[9] Such a treatment is certainly reasonable when dealing with a language overview as, for instance, in Marie-Louise Thomsen's *Sumerian Language*[10] or Brahm Jagersma's *A descriptive grammar of Sumerian*,[11] or within a greater linguistic framework.[12] There are, nonetheless, important studies as, for example, Jeremy Black's *Sumerian Grammar in Babylonian Theory*,[13] which provides a more close-up view of the Sumerian language with a focus on a specific period on the one hand and on a specific kind of dataset, namely the rather artificial framework provided by the so-called *Old Babylonian Grammatical Texts* (short OBGT), on the other.[14]

The Old Babylonian period, which is often perceived as a pristine example for the study of scribal education and transmission of knowledge, does not present a coherent treatment of the Sumerian language either. Grammatical lists, such as the *Old Babylonian Grammatical*

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[7]Since a majority of literary and lexical texts came down to us through school exercises, there are plenty of cases of apparent scribal errors and erasures. Nonetheless, each supposed error need to be evaluated individually.

[8]See Maul (1997, 266—267).

[9]Almost all major Sumerian literary compositions originate from rather diverse findspots. Dealing with the often rather variant orthographies in single witness texts and the sometimes painstaking task of providing scores instead of composite transliterations is a first step in understanding the complex stream of tradition. I will not attempt in this study to discuss the question of textual criticism regarding Sumerian literary compositions. A study about the variation in compositions dating to the early second millennium was recently undertaken by Paul Delnero (2012b).

[10]Thomsen (1984).

[11]Jagersma (2010).

[12]See, e.g., Michalowski (2004).

[13]See Black (1991 [1984]).

[14]The major text source for Black's study is the *Old Babylonian Grammatical Texts* (abbrev. *OBGT*) that comprise a rather important source for the Old Babylonian linguistic view of Sumerian grammar. In the review of Seminara's treatment of the Akkadian version of "Ninurta's Exploits" Markham J. Geller tries to compare the verbal forms in *OBGT* with those of the literary text and concludes his comparative approach as follows: "[W]hile bilingual texts represent translation of Sumerian into idiomatic Akkadian, and that use of an appropriate Akkadian verbal form was determined by context and meaning, rather than by any mechanical or fixed correspondence between a Sumerian and an Akkadian verbal form. The paradigms, on the other hand, have no context with which to determine the Akkadian translation, and the patterns are often unusual or exaggerated, which might suggest that the grammatical paradigms are functionally unusable for deciphering Sumerian texts. However, the paradigms cannot be altogether discounted, since they were intended to establish the form rather than the meaning of Sumerian verbal forms" (Geller 2005, 124–125). See also Veldhuis (2005) and Huber (2007). For this notion, see also Krispijn (1982, 145): "In der rezenten Forschung misst man dem sonstigen Korpus der zweisprachigen Inschriften aus dieser Periode, der sogenannten *OBGT* und ihrer späteren analytischen Überlieferung *NBGT*, ziemlich viel Bedeutung bei. Die Schwierigkeit ist, dass die in diesen Texten vorkommenden Verbalformen ohne Kontext sind, uns also nichts näheres über die Syntax übermitteln, und dass obendrein viele Formen nur hier belegt sind." Niek Veldhuis subdivides the grammatical lists into "Verbal Paradigms" and "Grammatical Vocabularies"; see Veldhuis (2014, 194–199).

Texts published in the fourth volume of the *Materialien zum Sumerischen Lexikon* are mere glimpses and simply treatments of single verbs or morphological elements. All in all, they do not provide a full-fledged paradigm that can be exploited in order to deal, for instance, with narratives or even the syntax of a sentence.[15] Recently Paul Delnero discussed the variation in a rather coherent group of Sumerian literary texts, which was copied in the Old Babylonian period at various places.[16]

This paper deals with a period in which copying Sumerian scribal lore was still at its peak. Scholarly texts deriving from various sites in Babylonia reached its northern periphery. Unfortunately, exactly how texts are transmitted is often unclear. Colophons of the time offer a few clues, but it is clear that sources reached the north under very different circumstances. The title of this paper might imply a comprehensive treatment of Sumerian grammar in the Middle Assyrian period in an area north of the Mesopotamian core and therefore at its periphery. But this is certainly not attempted here because of exactly the reason stated above. Furthermore, the Sumerian found in these texts is usually the Sumerian of the sources. An exception are texts that were compiled in Assyria proper, such as a few texts praising the Assyrian king.[17] The main objective of this paper, however, is to pinpoint some observations on Sumero-Akkadian bilingual texts and subsequently the relationship between the late tradition of a Sumerian source text and its Akkadian translation. The Middle Assyrian period contributes significantly to our understanding of the ancient scribal lore, which is often insufficiently preserved in the areas a majority of the compositions were imported from. The reasons for this temporal—and also geographical—limitation are mostly based on our meagre knowledge about the transmission of lexical and literary texts in the late second millennium BCE on the one hand, and the extraordinary good state of preservation of the Middle Assyrian scholarly texts on the other.

8.2   Translating Sumerian

In order to deal appropriately with translations from the late second millennium, let us first provide some general remarks on the physical appearance of bilingual texts. By the Middle Assyrian period, bilingualism fully infiltrated scholarly texts. Among the many Sumero-Akkadian texts dating to this period there are large numbers of lexical lists, which are already more or less parallel to the tradition of the respective lists in the first millennium BCE. On the other hand, we are dealing with a slightly smaller corpus of bilingual literary compositions.[18] Except for lexical texts, which distribute the Sumerian and Akkadian versions in columns, bilingual texts in the Middle Assyrian period conventionally use an interlinear distribution, which means that each Sumerian line is followed by its Akkadian *equivalent*.[19]

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[15]See Vanstiphout (1979, 119–120) and Civil (2010, 246).
[16]See Delnero (2012b; 2012a).
[17]One among these is briefly discussed on page 274 below.
[18]For the latter, see the list in Cooper (1971, 1–2, note 2).
[19]On interlinear translations in Mesopotamia, see the keyword "Interlinearbilinguen" in the *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* (Krecher 1976–1980) and Cooper (1993, 80).

As has been attested previously,[20] and in particular during the first millennium BCE, indented lines for the Akkadian equivalents are a widely absent feature in the Middle Assyrian period. In those instances in which the Sumerian version retains a rather short form, the scribes frequently saved space by putting both versions on one single line and separating Sumerian and Akkadian by a so-called *Glossenkeil* (e.g., ⪦, ⪦, ⪦).[21] The famous tablet of the "Astrolabe" B in its Middle Assyrian version *KAV* 218 represents a *subtype* of interlinear translations. Due to the tablet's layout and the division into three columns, the scribe had to break each version several times. In order to keep the Sumerian and Akkadian versions apart, all lines except for the first are indented.[22] This subtype, however, still belongs to the category of interlinear translations. Similar to lexical texts, some bilingual compositions distribute the Sumerian and Akkadian versions into separate columns with the Sumerian text on the left and its Akkadian equivalent to the right.[23] It is difficult to decide whether this kind of layout derived from the source used by the copyist, or whether it was restricted to certain genres of scholarly texts. In any case, this type of layout is rather scarce in the Middle Assyrian period outside the genre of lexical texts.

In quite a few instances, both versions demonstrate a tendency towards segmentation into smaller (syntactical) units. The separation of a line into two halves is well attested in literary sources of the first millennium BCE, but is relatively uncommon in the Middle Assyrian period. In the subsequent example attested on VAT 9710 (*Lugale* IX–XII, line 421), the following segmentation can be observed:

O	ii	07	nam-ug$_5$-ga-mu	mu-un-ku$_5$-da-[gin$_7$]
		08	*a-na na-ri-ia*	*ki-i ta-at-ta-ˈmaˋ-[an-ni]*

More common are segmentations in even smaller units such as in line 9 of *Nin-Isina's Journey to Nippur* :[24]

[20]See the rare example MS 2624 dating to the Old Babylonian period and compare footnote 61. Although full translations already exist from the first half of the second millennium BCE, they are relatively scarce compared to the overwhelming majority of monolingual Sumerian compositions. Quite frequently, Sumerian texts of this period contain glosses, which annotate certain signs, words, or expressions. Besides providing semantic variants or indicating the syllabic reading of a (difficult) sign, these annotations usually contain Akkadian equivalents in a certain idiomatic use. A good example is *UET* 6, 175, containing both pronunciation glosses as well as Akkadian equivalents. *UET* 6, 176 comes from the same scribal context, but omits these glosses, despite adding a partial translation to the colophon; for a discussion of this text and exegetical literature, see now Civil (2009, 67–68). Glosses are quite rare in the Middle Assyrian texts discussed here and limit themselves to phonetic indicators, such as in copies of lexical texts; see, for instance, VAT 8875 obv. i, 10: **dili i$_3$**^{i}**-ni-ma$_6$**^{ma}**-a** : *i-di-iš-ši-ˈšuˋ-ma*. For a gloss in a copy of a literary composition, see VAT 10565 obv. 13: […] ^{im}**im$_2$** […].

[21]In the examples of bilingual texts given below, Akkadian equivalents are separated by " : " from their Sumerian version, irrespective of the presence of a *Glossenkeil*.

[22]The tablet's scribe Marduk-balāssu-ēreš marked these indentations with additional vertical ruling on the tablet; see the hand copy of VAT 9416 in Wagensonner (2014b, 474–475). Similar subdivisions by ruling can be found in copies of lexical texts, such as VAT 9713, on which the scribe inserted an additional ruling in order to separate the classifier GIŠ. One can compare this layout to lexical texts from Ugarit. In a version of *Ura* XXI (*RSO* 7, 57), for instance, the scribe subdivided the Sumerian column into three subcolumns. This part of *Ura* contains place names. The place names are classified by preceding ᴜʀᴜ and following ᴋɪ, which are separated from the lexeme by the aforementioned dividing lines. Is ᴜʀᴜ omitted the scribe, nevertheless, starts in the first subcolumn.

[23]Examples are *KAR* 4 with an additional preceding column containing the so-called *Silbenalphabet* A (see section 8.3.6 below), or VAT 9833 (+) BM 130660 where the same layout can be observed.

[24]The transliteration follows manuscript A; for a new hand copy, see Wagensonner (2008, 292).

O	17	^{d}udug-sa$_6$-ga	a-a $^{d+}$en-lil$_2$-la$_2$	zi-da-na	mu-un-ᴅᴜ
	18	^{d}ᴜᴅᴜɢ.sᴀ$_6$.ɢᴀ	*a-bi* $^{d+}$ᴇɴ.ʟɪʟ$_2$	*im-nu-ša*	*il-˹lak˺*

A similar kind of segmentation can, of course, occur in the aforementioned column-based bilingual texts as well. The following example comes from tablet VI of the lexical series *Ana ittišu*:[25]

O	i	12	min$_3$-na-ne-ne	*ki-lal-lu-šu-nu*
		13	3(diš)-a-ne-ne	*ša-la-aš$_2$-ti-šu-nu*
		14	u$_3$ ku$_3$-babbar	*u$_3$ i+na* ᴋᴜ$_3$.ʙᴀʙʙᴀʀ
			4(diš)-kam$_2$-ma-ta	*er-bit-ti-šu-nu*
		15	kaskal-še$_3$ i$_3$-su$_8$-ge-eš	*a-na har-ra-ni il-li-˹ku˺*

Sometimes a text became too long to fit one line. In such a case the scribe needed to abandon any kind of segmentation. Another noteworthy feature concerns the so-called "firing holes." This frequently attested feature of late *library* texts, which is produced by punching deep holes into the clay body using a round *stylus* or pin, requires an in-depth study. Whereas it is perfectly feasible to interpret such holes on large tablets to reduce the strain on the tablet during the firing process, their purpose to do so on smaller or medium-sized clay tablets appears to be negligible and further explanations are possible. Very occasionally the placement of these holes appears to take the syntax of the text into account.[26]

The relationship between the Sumerian and the Akkadian versions of a composition quite often pose a certain amount of difficulties, which was pointed out by Markham J. Geller:

> Like any good translation, Akkadian translations of Sumerian literature had to be cast in idiomatic Akkadian, which often makes it difficult to match the Akkadian and Sumerian texts grammatically.[27]

Elsewhere Geller challenges the necessity of our separate treatment of the Sumerian and Akkadian versions of a literary composition, in order not to judge the ability of the ancient translator to understand the Sumerian source correctly:

> On the other hand, it is questionable whether one must translate each version of a bilingual text independently, which assumes *a priori* that the ancient translator has failed to grasp the sense or even spirit of the original text.[28]

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[25]For a new hand copy of VAT 8875, see Wagensonner (2014b, 470–471). For current images of the tablet, see the *Digitale Keilschrift Bibliothek* (see footnote 105). The modern line count represents the physical appearance on the tablet. Every ten entries—not lines—are marked by a *Winkelhaken*.

[26]This can be observed, for instance, on the copies of *Nin-Isina's Journey to Nippur*, and is discussed in Wagensonner (2008, 278).

[27]Geller (2010, 98).

[28]Geller (2005, 122).

The Middle Assyrian scribes had all the necessary tools, such as lexical texts, specialized vocabularies,[29] and even paleographical lists[30] at their disposal. These reference works play a pivotal role in the transmission of scholarly texts, but whether they were used as tools for an interpreter is difficult to judge based on the textual record.[31]

In terms of their transmission in the last third of the second millennium BCE both versions should be considered as *one* unit.[32] The Middle Assyrian scribes were mostly not concerned with translating the Sumerian of older compositions into Akkadian; they had already copied a bilingual text. However, the advantages of stand-alone translations of either the Sumerian or the Akkadian version are not always self-evident.[33] Henri Limet summarises these issues as follows:

> La traduction est l'art de presenter […] dans une langue un texte qui a été écrit ou prononcé dans une autre. On passé donc d'une langue A, dite "de depart," le sumérien, à une langue B, dite "d'arrivée," appelée aussi "langue cible," l'accadien. La difficulté vient, non seulement de ce que les deux langues A et B different dans leur vocabulaire et leur grammaire, mais aussi de ce que le texte à traduire a été conçu dans une culture qui n'est pas celle de la langue cible.[34]

Some bilingual compositions of this late stage appear to have been compiled from an Akkadian perspective. The Sumerian of such texts frequently demonstrates a great variety of unusual spellings, which frequently seem impenetrable and almost of arcane and cryptographic nature. Fluent translations of such texts seem to be impossible without the Akkadian equivalent. However, the Sumerian language received the status of a pseudo-original by placing it first.[35]

The textual record of the Middle Assyrian period remains rather silent about the means of transmitting *scholarly* texts. Any information about the *origin* of a source can be gleaned

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[29]See, for instance, the Emesal vocabularies found in Assur. One of these vocabularies was copied by Sin-šuma-iddina of the Ninurta-uballissu family (Ass.2001.D-586); see Frahm (2002, 60–61). The tablet can be added as 3.1.3 to the inventory given in Wagensonner (2014b, 460). Its colophon is intriguing because it is the only hitherto known text written by this young scribe to add an eponym. It shows that Sîn-šuma-iddina copied this tablet contemporary to his brothers. In the same eponymy, his brother Marduk-balāssu-ēreš copied the third tablet of *Aa* and the sixth tablet of *Ai*. Bēl-aha-iddina copied the second tablet of *Diri* in the same year. The other known colophons on tablets written by Sîn-šuma-iddina do not add a date and differ from the customs used by his two other brothers. Whether this fact indicates that he received his education from another individual remains unanswered.

[30]We may refer here to the paleographical sign list written by Marduk-kābit-ahhēšu, which collects significantly older sign forms; see the photos in Meissner (1927, plates III–IV). The entries in this list follow the sequence of the *Silbenalphabet* A. The scribe added to each entry the contemporary equivalent in smaller script. For its colophon, however, he clearly used archaizing sign forms, maybe as additional practice. The same scribe was also responsible for copying VAT 9833 (= *KAR* 24) containing incantations from *Utukkū lemnūtu*. This tablet is said to be part of BM 130660 edited in Geller (1980); see section 8.3.7 below.

[31]In late commentary literature of the first millennium BCE, lexical texts were occasionally cited or quoted, but there is no evidence for this practice in the Middle Assyrian period.

[32]Jerrold S. Cooper states that after the Old Babylonian period the "Akk. translation gradually became a standard and standardized accompaniment to all Sum. texts" (Cooper 1978, 46).

[33]For such an approach see, for instance, Wagensonner (2008, 284–286).

[34]Limet (2000, 607).

[35]Wilfred G. Lambert, for instance, in discussing BM 98496 hypothesized: "The difficulty of this piece, and no doubt the reason for its neglect hitherto, arises from the loss of most of the Akkadian. Where it is preserved the sense is clear, but the Sumerian, which is what mostly remains, is obscure in the extreme. The author obviously thought and wrote first in Akkadian, and then produced a totally artificial rendering" (Lambert 1976, 86). For an Old Babylonian example, see footnote 61.

from the colophons.[36] The so-called "Astrolabe" B with its sophisticated astronomical menology of the month names is available in its full form thanks to the Middle Assyrian tablet VAT 9416. Most other text witnesses and parallels date to a significantly later date and are much more fragmentary.[37] A textual analysis of the Middle Assyrian tablet clearly favors an earlier date. Some of its verbal forms show features of Middle Babylonian texts. As we will see further down, the Sumerian of this composition shows an array of *peculiar* or at least *arcane* spellings.[38]

The colophons on Middle Assyrian tablets, as far as they are preserved, may provide information on the origin of a source text or the family background of the copy's scribe,[39] but colophons never include information on the responsible translator of a Sumerian composition. This is mainly due to the fact that the translated source in its bilingual setting was considered as one inseparable entity.[40] A rather different case presents itself through two copies of the lexical series *Ea*. The colophons on Ass. 523 as well as VAT 10172 both refer to the source as being an "old A.A series" (Ass. 523: A.A^meš-*tu* LIBIR.RA^meš-*tu* and VAT 10172: GEŠ.GAR₃ A.A^meš LIBIR.RA^meš). Indeed, both tablets contain archaizing sign forms. One can contrast this kind of lexical tradition with another tablet dated from the Middle Assyrian period which also contains a copy of the first tablet of *Ea* lacking any *older* sign forms.[41] Note that both the paleographical sign list *AfO* 4, plates III–IV written by a certain Marduk-kābit-ahhēšu as well as the Middle Assyrian copy of the creation myth *KAR* 4 (see section 8.3.6) go back to "old sources."

Some information can be gained through textual analysis, which might provide clues as to the *origin* of the source text used by the copyists.[42] However, even such analyses provide mere glimpses, but fail to give the whole picture and thus many issues persist. An unfortunate fact is the lack of information regarding both the translators of Sumerian texts as well as the exact circumstances of the process of translating these texts.[43] The colophons are generally ignorant about these highly intriguing aspects and limit themselves to the scribes,

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[36]Frauke Weiershäuser recently investigated the dependence of lexical texts found in Assur and possible ways of their transmission; see Weiershäuser (2008).

[37]See Çağirgan (1985). In the meantime new text witnesses became known, one among them dates to the Middle Babylonian period. For a new edition of this text together with duplicates and parallels, see now Horowitz (2014).

[38]Despite the addition of an Akkadian translation, this composition might go back to a significantly earlier date; see section 8.3.5 below.

[39]It should be noted that the level of data provided by colophons varies from scribe to scribe and might even be related to the respective scribe's *education*. Very often a colophon does not go beyond identifying the copied text. For the exceptional case of the family of the royal scribe Ninurta-uballissu, see now Wagensonner (2011; 2014b).

[40]An intriguing case is provided by the composition "Nin-Isina's Journey to Nippur" preserved now through four manuscripts, among which two were written by Middle Assyrian scribes. A fragment of the Sumerian text dates to the Old Babylonian period and originates from Nippur. Another manuscript dating to the Old Babylonian period has now come to light in the London private collection. It contains the complete Sumerian text (see Cohen 2017). There is no direct evidence for the transmission of this text in the centuries between the Old Babylonian and Middle Assyrian periods. When was it translated? Who was its translator? The scribes were not concerned with these matters. But the colophons on the Middle Assyrian copies at least provide some clues to a previous scribe or owner of the source; see footnote 44 below.

[41]See Wagensonner (2011, 662, 1.1.1; 676–677, 3.1.1); for a new hand copy of VAT 10172, see Wagensonner (2014b, 476–477) and a photo is found at the *Digitale Keilschrift Bibliothek* (see footnote 105). For a new hand copy of BM 108862 (= *CT* 35, plates 1–8), see Wagensonner (2014b, 478–479).

[42]See footnote 8.3.5 for some Middle Babylonian characteristics.

[43]We have seen above that the Old Babylonian period and to some extent the Middle Babylonian period attest to a rich corpus of glosses added to Sumerian texts. Though partial in nature, such annotations can be considered as early attempts to provide interlinear translations.

who already had a bilingual copy at their disposal.[44] Nonetheless, it can be taken for granted that the Middle Assyrian scribes were not the translators of Sumerian compositions, neither lexical nor literary.[45]

In Emar, whose texts date slightly earlier than the Middle Assyrian texts from Assur, the colophons on copies of scholarly tablets are separated by a double ruling from the actual "base text" as well. Over the double ruling the sequence BE MAN BE is written in smaller script. Yoram Cohen notes that besides Mesopotamia and Emar this notation is also known from Ugarit and Hattusa. At least for Mesopotamia or Assyria, in particular, it seems rather plausible to see in BE a notation that stands for Sumerian **til**. This is somewhat verified by the parallel **al.til** also written over the double ruling on VAT 8876. MAN, on the other hand, still poses some problems. An interpretation of BE for *bēlu*, "lord," and MAN for *šarru*, "king," appears too far-fetched. Cohen emphasizes that in the Western periphery, this notation may have lost any semantic affiliation and kept only a symbolic value.[46]

A few redactional remarks such as *hepi*, "it is broken," not only show that the Middle Assyrian scribes attempted to produce a faithful copy of their sources, but moreover that they did not have to bother with translating or interpreting Sumerian compositions.[47] If such remarks also occur in the Akkadian version, it is quite clear that the Middle Assyrian scribes already copied from a bilingual source. Such a source text quite certainly can be traced in a center of learning such as Nippur of the slightly earlier Middle Babylonian period. Amid the scarcity of Middle Babylonian literary sources, N 6286 is a comparatively well-preserved bilingual source of "Ninurta's Return to Nippur," whose layout puts the Sumerian and Akkadian versions into columns.[48] Another issue is the fact that we know almost nothing about scribal education in the Middle Assyrian period. There should have existed some means of transmitting the know-how of writing and dealing with "old" scribal lore, either affiliated to an institution[49] or within the private sphere of skilled scribes or officials in the

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[44]One intriguing exception are the colophons on *KAR* 15 and *KAR* 16, both containing the bilingual version of "Nin-Isina's Journey to Nippur." Its colophon deviates from the usual array of data provided and adds the following information on the source tablet's provenience: "According to the wording of the written tablet of Iqīša-Ninkarrak, son of Ninurta-bāni, it is written" (*KAR* 16, rev. 29–30). However, it remains uncertain whether this Iqīša-Ninkarrak, whose name contains the Akkadian form of the goddess Nin-Isina, was the translator of the Sumerian version or had this tablet only at his disposal. For the latest edition of this composition, see Wagensonner (2008) and for further remarks on the colophons of the Ninurta-uballissu family, see Wagensonner (2011; 2014b). Frequently the double ruling that separates the colophon from the body of the text contains the remark TIL or sometimes even AL.TIL, that is, a Sumerian expression for Akkadian *qati*, "(the source) is complete/finished."

[45]For discussing the possibility that the Assur scribes "composed and redacted Mesopotamian literary texts, and thus actively contributed to the process of canonization," see Geller (1990, 210 and *passim*).

[46]See Cohen (2009, 59–60).

[47]See for this remark Worthington (2012, 25–27). This remark is attested, for instance, on *KAR* 4 and appears there in three consecutive lines almost at the top of the tablet's reverse in both the Sumerian as well as Akkadian columns. This might indicate that Kidin-Sîn's source text from which he copied had significant damage at the upper part of the reverse or even a broken bottom edge.

[48]For a photo of this tablet, see Cooper (1978, plate XIV, text Aa) and see http://cdli.ucla.edu/P280051, accessed April 7, 2017. The Middle Assyrian copy of *KAR* 4 (see footnote 47) follows the same pattern.

[49]For the "tablet house" *bīt ṭuppāte*, see Jakob (2002, 255–256), who concludes: "Es muß angesichts der vorgestellten Belege letztlich offen bleiben, ob im mA *bīt ṭuppāte* Schreiber nicht nur beschäftigt sind, sondern auch ausgebildet wurden. Andererseits ist relativ unwahrscheinlich, daß die assyrische Verwaltung die Ausbildung von Schreibern, die doch das Rückgrat der Bürokratie bilden, nicht in eigener Regie durchführt und den 'Lehrplan' von Anfang an bestimmt" (Jakob 2002, 256). See further the overview in Waetzoldt and Cavigneaux (2009, 305–306).

city's administration. Compared to the richness of sources for the Old Babylonian period[50] and the later evidence from first millennium BCE Babylonia,[51] we search in vain for any meaningful information regarding this issue. There are neither archaeological traces nor any valuable hints in the texts that may help in identifying the Middle Assyrian *bīt ṭuppāte* as *locus operandi* for the education of young scribes.[52] For the time being, any reconstruction of teaching methods must remain speculative.[53] Additionally, the copies of the Middle Assyrian scribes appear not to resemble *school* texts.[54]

Yet another issue defying any easy approach is the choice of texts that have been copied in Assur. The composition "Nin-Isina's Journey to Nippur," for instance, is otherwise known only from a small fragment originating from Old Babylonian Nippur.[55] Was it mere coincidence that this composition found its way to Assur? In his recent overview of the lexical tradition in Mesopotamia, Niek Veldhuis noted that the Middle Assyrian corpus of lexical texts contained, besides *regular* school texts, also "rare archaic compilations, such as the phrasebook Ki-ulutinbiše (also known as *ana ittišu*), which originated in Old Babylonian Nippur."[56]

Given all those circumstances and the complex history of text transmission, which is shrouded from view by a lack of information, it is an arduous task to treat the "quality" of a language in such a late stage. When exactly the Sumerian language ceased to be used as vernacular is a cause of much debate and might have happened in various stages after the downfall of the Ur III Empire at the end of the third millennium BCE. All written scribal lore that has been compiled in the two millennia that followed may show *deficiencies* or peculiarities of any kind.[57] The decline of Sumerian is due further to the ever-increasing infiltration of Akkadian into the economic and daily life. However, a great share of the textual material used for grammatical observations and setting up an *artificial* paradigm belong to some extent to the Old Babylonian school milieu.[58] The variation between copies belonging to the same composition often allows for the identification of scribal errors, *Hörfehler*, and other *deficiencies* in copying source texts.[59]

Frequently, secondary literature texts dating after the Old Babylonian period are deemed to contain mistakes or errors by the respective scribe. Just a few attempts were undertaken to interpret *unusual* spellings as evidence for linguistic change or variations in

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[50]See, for example, Charpin (1986, 420–425) and Robson (2001).

[51]See Gesche (2001, passim).

[52]Jakob (2002, 255) and see footnote 49 above.

[53]For this problematic situation, see the introductory remarks in Wagensonner (2011).

[54]See Veldhuis (2014, 336).

[55]For a hand copy of CBS 15132, see Wagensonner (2008, 294, text C).

[56]See Veldhuis (2014, 318).

[57]Markham J. Geller states about the late tradition of Sumerian compositions as follows: "Late bilingual texts often differ considerably from earlier duplicates, especially in the prefixes, infixes and suffixes of their verbal forms, and nor can these forms be easily explained by the Akkadian translations. The suspicion is that those who translated the Sumerian in late periods had no real understanding of Sumerian grammar, or simply chose to ignore it" (Geller 2010, 98).

[58]See, for instance, George (2005, 128) and Veldhuis (2005). A rather important case study is the evidence from "House F" in Nippur, which yielded a staggering amount of school texts allowing for an analysis of an Old Babylonian school curriculum; see Robson (2001, 45–50).

[59]See, for this aspect, the recent study by Paul Delnero, who based his analyses on the orthographical variation between text witnesses of a group of Sumerian literary compositions known as the "Decad"; see Delnero (2012b; 2012a).

virtue of regional customs.[60] But one has to bear in mind that the Old Babylonian texts are, strictly speaking, not a product of speakers of the Sumerian language. Bilingual sources from the Old Babylonian scholarly sphere are relatively scarce. Bilingualism infiltrated royal inscriptions and lexical texts faster than narrative compositions. Complete interlinear *translations* are practically absent from the Old Babylonian text corpus. Partial Akkadian translations are usually added to Sumerian texts as annotations or glosses.[61]

Jerrold S. Cooper states about bilingualism and bilingual texts in the first half of the second millennium BCE:[62]

> But unlike the period after 1600 BCE, when Sumerian texts were as a rule accompanied by an Akkadian translation, in this earlier period, translations were quite rare, often from outlying areas, and by their appearance and quality betray themselves as the work of inferior scribes, either students who needed a 'pony' to learn Sumerian, or scribes who never learned Sumerian well enough in the first place. The rarity of these early bilinguals, compared to the thousands of unilingual Sumerian tablets of the same period, is eloquent testimony to the strength of Sumerian tradition in the Old Babylonian (2000–1600 BCE) academy.[63]

The variation and use of local orthographical as well as grammatical features allows local traditions or even only the preference of a single scribe to be highlighted. Even while comparing the wide array of text witnesses to a given Sumerian literary text in the Old Babylonian period, the variants between the respective manuscripts may be astonishing.[64]

Copies of lexical and literary texts, which came down to us from the Middle Assyrian period, offer important insights, such as possible evidence for dictation. A proper investigation of many of these features, however, is still a desideratum. There is ample evidence that Sumerian at the end of the second millennium BCE was not just widely used in the scholarly tradition, but was given a pivotal role in the scribal sphere as well. The physical appearance of the (bilingual) texts themselves provide enough hints, let alone the fact that in bilingual texts the Sumerian version generally appears first—both in interlinear as well as

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[60]For a recent treatment of linguistic change in the Sumerian language with a focus on the songs of praise of the Larsa dynasty, see Brisch (2007, 91–113) and also some remarks in Wagensonner (2012, 17–18). A good example is a composition known as "Ur-Namma, the canal digger." Steve Tinney treated the various sources originating from Nippur and Ur separately; see Tinney (1999).

[61]See, for instance, *UET* 6, 175 and Civil (2009, 67–68). The most compelling example for a complete interlinear version is the recently published tablet MS 2624; see George (2009, 78–112, plates 38–43). Its editor Andrew George pointed out that it represents "an exercise in arcane learning" (George 2009, 78). In terms of the tablet layout the Sumerian version of the text appears to be prior to the Akkadian, for the Akkadian lines are intended. The Sumerian text, however, is highly artificial and uses "rare and obscure words culled from academic lists, and a frequently morphemic presentation of Sumerian words that is alien to the grammar of that language" (George 2009, 78).

[62]For bilinguals in the Old Babylonian period and their sentence structure, see also Sullivan (1979).

[63]Cooper (1993, 79).

[64]Only recently Paul Delnero in his PhD thesis studied the variation between texts belonging to the so-called *Decad*, a group of ten Sumerian literary compositions, which were copied in an early stage of the scribal training in the Old Babylonian period; see Delnero (2006). Examples such as "Ninurta's Exploits" demonstrate the huge discrepancies that occur over the long and complex stream of tradition. For the Old Babylonian period, the same author studied the importance of memory errors in the transmission of texts; see Delnero (2012a).

column-based bilingual texts—, and is followed by the Akkadian *translation*.[65] This feature for bilingual narrative texts might have completely derived from the lexical tradition.[66]

Amid the fact that we have only small glimpses of the original textual record at our disposal, the extant texts suffice in order to get a good perception of the scribal lore that was transferred to Assur and copied there. The prominence of compositions such as "Ninurta's Exploits" or "Ninurta's Return to Nippur" is noteworthy. Together with the two manuscripts of "Nin-Isina's Journey to Nippur," it is astonishing to note that most of the Sumerian literary texts associated with the Middle Assyrian period in Assur deal (at least to some extent) with the topic of the divine journey. Whether this fact has any relevance for a kind of "program" in acquiring cuneiform sources, must remain speculative.

8.3 Text Basis

In the Middle Assyrian period, the elite[67] of Assur came into contact with a huge amount of literary and lexical texts, which originated in Babylonia. It is almost impossible to reconstruct the transmission paths of these scholarly texts. Following one possible, and not unlikely, hypothesis Babylonian scribes brought their text collections with them when moving to the Assyrian realm.[68]

With the Middle Assyrian period, we enter an age of diplomacy and international relations.[69] The Assyrian "state" was increasing its power and political hold in the Fertile Crescent. According to a fragmentary passage in the "Epic of Tukultī-Ninurta I," the Assyrian king plundered Babylonian libraries and brought their contents to Assyria.[70] There are

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[65]The term "translation" is frequently inappropriate or not precise. The supplemental sign syllabary *Diri* provides a good case in point. Some of the designations for stones contained in it have Akkadian *equivalents* that go beyond pure translation. These also provide information on certain characteristics of the respective stones. Thus, lapis lazuli is not only *translated* by the Akkadian term *uqnû* or by the loan form *zaginnu*, but adds the characteristics *ellu*, "pure," *ebbu*, "bright," and *namru*, "shiny"; see now Wagensonner (forthcoming). Niek Veldhuis summarised the various types of translating Sumerian in this lexical text and categorises them as "multiple translations," "qualified translations," "translations of partially represented entries," "Emesal entries," "transferred meaning," and "archaizing and rare entries"; see Veldhuis (2014, 183–187).

[66]For the physical appearances of bilingual texts after 1600 BCE, see Cooper (1993, 80–83). See also Krecher (1976–1980), who states: "Die sum. Fassung ist in jedem Fall, auch wenn aus der akk. übersetzt, wie die (angeblich) primäre und wichtigere aufgezeichnet, d. h. links von der akk. oder über ihr. Beabsichtigt ist offenbar in der Regel die 'wörtliche' Entsprechung beider Fassungen. Ist die sum. Fassung in sich unverständlich und ist aus ihr auch unter Annahme von korrupter Tradition kein in sich verständlicher Wortlaut rekonstruierbar, so ist unabhängig vom Vorhandensein irgendwelcher einsprachiger Duplikate die akk. Fassung als die primäre zu vermuten" (Krecher 1976–1980, 125).

[67]This term can certainly be considered an apt designation for the Middle Assyrian scribal sphere. It is, however, important to differentiate between common administrative scribes and such scribes, who mastered the copies of large lexical series and literary texts, all of which we consider nowadays as library texts, leaving aside the issues relating to this term; see Charpin (2008, 193–194; 2010, 178–179) and see also Cancik-Kirschbaum and Kahl (2017, 35–99).

[68]See, for example, Geller (1990, 210, note 8): "One might even entertain the possibility that Marduk-balassu-eriš belonged to a Babylonian scribal family living in Assur. Babylonian tablets were, in any case, found in the Assur libraries." Compare the case of the Babylonian scribe Marduk-nādin-ahhē settling at Assur, which was studied by Frans Wiggermann; see Wiggermann (2008).

[69]See Veldhuis (2014, 226).

[70]For the pertinent passage see, for instance, Fincke (2003–2004, 123–124, note 108). See also Cooper (1978, 50–51): "Ten or more years after Nebuchadnezzar's death, Tiglathpileser I invaded Babylonia and sacked Babylon, and our MA mss., which date to his reign, may very well be copies of texts brought back by him as booty. In any case, it was under this ruler that Assyrian scribes first began copying Babylonian texts on a large scale, and

a couple of Middle Babylonian scholarly texts among the tablets found at Assur, and those might very well have come to Assur on such an occasion.[71]

By looking at all the extraordinarily well-preserved Middle Assyrian manuscripts, one might wonder what happened to the sources, the *Vorlagen*. It is unlikely that all bilingual texts were transmitted orally. This is confirmed, on the one hand, by the great stability in compositions such as "Ninurta's Exploits," but also by internal remarks that imply copying from a physical source. Such remarks might occur within the copy itself.[72] Some of the tablets add TIL or AL.TIL before the colophon, thus indicating that the copy is "complete." Also, the Sumerogram GABA.RI quite certainly refers to a physical tablet, which was used as a source text for the copyist. It is, however, not always clear whether every scribe copied from such a tablet, or whether sometimes text witnesses also went back to other forms of transmission, such as dictation. The texts themselves are usually not very explicit, but give nevertheless some small clues. The colophon of the aforementioned text witnesses for "Nin-Isina's Journey to Nippur" refer to the source as being written *ana pî ṭuppi šaṭāri*, "according to the wording of the written tablet." Amid the well-preserved corpus of Middle Assyrian copies at our disposal, the sources are gone. Were they sent back? Were the sources first copied onto perishable material or on tablets, which were then recycled? All these questions unfortunately cannot be answered. One can, however, entertain such a possibility and compare the situation in Assyria in the last third of the second millennium BCE with medieval *scriptoria*, where manuscripts were copied before being returned to their *home institutions*.[73]

The majority of Middle Assyrian scholarly texts discussed in this study was assigned to a possible *institutional* library with the preliminary designation "Reconstructed Library M 2" by Olof Pedersén. The reconstructed state of this *library* or manuscript collection is owed to the find conditions at Assur, for the texts assigned to it were found spread over a relatively large area at the site of Assur, more precisely between the Aššur temple precinct and the temple of the gods Anu and Adad.[74] This Middle Assyrian collection is often referred to as a royal library supposedly established in the reign of Tiglath-pileser I.[75] The studies by Claudio Saporetti and Helmut Freydank about Middle Assyrian eponyms showed that an affiliation of these texts to the reign of Tiglath-pileser I appears to be unlikely.[76] Whether the tablets belonging to this reconstructed group were part of an institutional *library* or part of smaller manuscript collections stored in the houses of various Middle Assyrian officials

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we may suppose that the Babylonian model for our MA mss. dates to this period or slightly earlier." See further Wiggermann (2008, 215).

[71] See, for instance, *KAR* 19, which has been collated at a research stay in the Vorderasiatische Museum, Berlin, in September 2009. For the Middle Babylonian tablets, see also Fincke (2003–2004, 138–139).

[72] One such remark is *hepi*, "it is broken," found in some of the texts. See page 232 above.

[73] See also Fincke (2003–2004, 141).

[74] For a summary, see Pedersén (1998, 83–84): stating that "[i]t is not clear whether all the tablets diverted in Neo-Assyrian times had, during the Middle Assyrian period, belonged to one, single library or whether they may have been divided into a few separate libraries" (Pedersén 1998, 84). A superficial survey of the texts catalogued by Pedersén provides the following text genres: literary (MB), 1; literary (MA), 4; lexical (*Ea, Aa, Diri, Kagal*), 7; lexical (*Ai*), 1; lexical (*Nabnītu*), 1; lexical (*Ura*), 1; texts concerning hippology, 20; omens, extispicy, 5; prescription, recipe, 6; law, 5; palace or harem regulations, 1; list of booty, 1; map, 1; royal, 2; letter, 1. The Middle Babylonian and Middle Assyrian tablets incorporated into the Neo-Assyrian library N 1 at the Aššur temple represent a substantial increase in the texts of that group; see Pedersén (1986, 17–18).

[75] See Weidner (1952–1953).

[76] See, in particular, Freydank (1991). For dating the Middle Assyrian lexical texts from Assur, see Weiershäuser (2008, 351–352, note 3).

can no longer be verified.[77] Be that as it may, by the Neo-Assyrian period specific tablets were selected and moved to the *royal libraries* in Nineveh, which were assembled by either Esarhaddon or Ashurbanipal.[78] It is, however, rather unclear why certain tablets were chosen and others not. It is therefore rather surprising that either Esarhaddon's or Ashurbanipal's officials chose BM 122625+ containing a copy of sections XIII–XVI of "Ninurta's Exploits",[79] because this copy attests to several deficiencies compared to the tradition of this literary text. The tablet's scribe Marduk-balāssu-ēreš presumably copied the complete composition onto four large tablets, of which three exemplars survived.[80] Another example is a god list published as *CT* 24, 20–46 written by a certain Kidin-Sîn son of Suti'u. This god list is an exceptional case within the Middle Assyrian evidence because Kidin-Sîn copied the text "according to the wording of an old 'big tablet'" (rev. vi, 8': *a-na pi-i* DUB.GAL-*le* LIBIR.RA).[81] The same scribe also copied the creation myth *KAR* 4, which has not been transferred to Nineveh. However, there are copies known of this composition at Kuyunjik. Thus one can entertain the possibility that this composition was copied on clay or wax before being transferred to the capital.

The Middle Babylonian and Middle Assyrian "library" texts from Assur are often considered to be part of a royal collection established by Tiglath-pileser I.[82] But, as was emphasized by Niek Veldhuis recently, the archaeological and textual evidence speaks against assigning this group of texts to the reign of Tiglath-pileser I.[83] According to Pedersén, three *libraries* date to the Middle Assyrian period. Besides the small library in the Old Palace (M 1) and an even smaller collection of a couple of school tablets found near the Ištar temple (M 3), the largest group of Middle Assyrian *library* texts has been reconstructed by

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[77] Jeanette Fincke states that "[t]here is no proof for the existence of a Middle Assyrian library in Aššur that had been assembled by a king, nor that these tablets had been acquired for the palace" (Fincke 2003–2004, 138). See further Freydank (1991, 94–97).

[78] For the claimed literacy or scholarship of the Neo-Assyrian king Ashurbanipal and his predecessor Esarhaddon, see now Frame and George (2005); see further Fincke (2003–2004, 122–124).

[79] I.e., Van Dijk (1983, text n$_1$).

[80] *KAR* 14 is his copy of sections IX–XII and there is sufficient reason to suggest that this scribe also copied *KAR* 13, which contains sections I–IV; see Wagensonner (2011, 666–667).

[81] Such *dubgallu*-tablets are known in rare instances; for the discussion of a first millennium BCE fragment of a "big tablet," originally containing the whole composition Maqlû see Abusch and Schwemer (2009) and the tablet reconstruction (Abusch and Schwemer 2009, 55, Fig. 1). The colophon on *CT* 24, 20–46 (K. 4349) is preceded by a particularly intriguing statement, which to some extent refers to "editing" work by the scribe: *qaq-qu-ru im-ti-ˈidˀˋ*-[ma(?)] / ˈilˋ-*te-niš al-tarˀˋ*-, "The surface is enough, (therefore) I wrote(?) (them) together" (see Hunger 1968, No. 51). As a marginal note, the Akkadian word *qaqquru* for *qaqqaru* raises suspicion as to the date of the tablet, since attestations are usually Neo-Assyrian and not Middle Assyrian. Quite surprisingly, the same scribe wrote a second version of this god-list, an unprovenanced tablet which was used by Richard Litke in his reconstruction of the god-list An : *Anum* (ms. B). As the Kuyuncik-text its "chapters" are followed by a short colophon containing the number of entries (and in the case of YBC 2401 also the location within the series), which are separated by double rulings from the main text. However, the colophon of YBC 2401 differs. It states that the tablet was written and collated (in.sar igi.kar2) "according to the wording of old tablets" (*ana pi-i ṭup-pi*ᵐᵉˢ LIBIR.RAᵐᵉˢ). Both on *KAR* 4 and the god-list *CT* 24, 20–46 Kidin-Sîn's profession and the profession of his father Suti'u are written with the logogram A.BA. Only YBC 2401 has DUB.SAR TUR and DUB.SAR LUGAL respectively. It seems not implausible to interpret the Kuyuncik-tablet as a later copy—despite variants and Middle Assyrian sign forms—produced for Ashurbanipal's library with YBC 2401 as its source. The latter could very well be the *dubgallu* referred to in the colophon of the Kuyuncik-tablet. Paul-Alain Beaulieu, in a footnote, raises the possibility of a Neo-Assyrian date as well, Beaulieu (1992, note 19); see further the remarks in Beaulieu (1992, 71, note 13) and Litke (1998, 16–18 (ms. A).

[82] See, for instance, Geller (1990, 211–212).

[83] See Veldhuis (2014, 323).

Pedersén due to the "findspots and external appearance of the tablets" (M 2).[84] The archae-ological context poses many difficulties. It is, for instance, not possible to affiliate the group M 2 with the Aššur temple. As indicated above, it is not entirely certain whether the texts of this group were part of an *official* collection or belong to several private manuscript collec-tions.[85] The many findspots of Middle Assyrian material found together with Neo-Assyrian scholarly texts in the southwest of the Aššur temple seem to indicate that the earlier tablets were incorporated into a later (temple) library (N 1).[86]

A brief survey of the *manuscript collection* M 2 with its affiliations to the later Neo-Assyrian group N 1 shows that it contained a large variety of scholarly texts.[87] Apart from the literary texts, the most important part comprises copies of lexical lists. An intriguing group are texts dealing with hippology. For this study, the bilingual sources are of particular interest.

The Middle Assyrian period offers one of the most pristine sources for the transmission of bilingual texts in Mesopotamia, much of which is owed to the good state of preservation of most of the tablets. Amid the creation of various Assyrian scholarly texts, the prime focus of the Assyrian kings was the south, and it is this period that presents most of the major compositions in a form that is rather reminiscent of the "standardized" editions in the first millennium BCE.[88] The elite living and working in Assur or Assyria in this period drew an enormous amount of knowledge from the south, from Babylonia.[89] Despite the propagandistic and possibly ahistorical view presented in the *Tukulti-Ninurta Epic*, most sources of scholarly texts might not have been brought to Assyria as war booty, but might have accompanied scribal families of Babylonian descent who settled in Assyria and brought their manuscript collections with them.

The most homogenous group of colophons can be found among the aforementioned array of tablets originating from the *collection* M 2 at Assur with stray finds that had been identified as belonging to the group N 1. Currently (at least) 23 tablets can be assigned to the three sons of the royal scribe Ninurta-uballissu.[90] Amid the relative abundance of sources, there is no information available on this family, which goes beyond the names, occupations, and family relations of these scribes. Ninurta-uballissu's title "royal scribe" suggests that

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[84]See Pedersén (1985, 31). Jeanette Fincke summarizes their physical appearance as follows: "However, many of the Middle Assyrian tablets of the Aššur temple that were fired in antiquity have a distinct appearance—a red core with an ivory-colored outer surface—which can also be observed on Middle Assyrian tablets from the Anu-Adad temple in Aššur and from the area between these temples" (Fincke 2003–2004, 138). See further the remarks on the firing process with focus on the Middle Assyrian *library* texts in Lambert (1965, 283).

[85]See also Fincke (2003–2004, 138), who states that "[t]here is no proof for the existence of a Middle Assyrian library in Aššur that had been assembled by a king, nor that these tablets had been acquired for the palace."

[86]See Pedersén (1986, 13–19; 1998, 132). The term "library" is used here cautiously; see also Cancik-Kirschbaum and Kahl (2017, 123–139).

[87]See footnote 74.

[88]See Weiershäuser (2008, 353–357).

[89]Although often omitting such important information, some colophons give at least rudimentary proveniences of their sources. According to this data, most texts came from Babylon and Nippur, the latter being one of the major centres for scholarly tradition in the Old Babylonian period.

[90]For an inventory as well as style and content of the known tablets belonging to this corpus, see now Wagensonner (2011, 658–678; 2014b, 460). A paleographical analysis might reveal even further examples. This is possible to some extent using the excellent photos provided by the *Digitale Keilschrift Bibliothek*, which focuses on the lexical texts from Assur (see footnote 105). See Geller (1990), who compared the scribal hand on BM 98496 (= Lambert 1976, 93) with texts that have been copied by Marduk-balāssu-ēreš with the conclusion that "it is probable that Marduk-balassu-eriš copied all […] [these] tablets, since the ductus is identical" (Lambert 1976, 212).

he held a high position within the Middle Assyrian state administration. However, there are no legal or administrative documents known so far that shed any light onto this individual. Such a lack of information regarding this family in everyday documentation is quite intriguing, but might simply be due to the incomplete dataset that is at our disposal. All the information on the individual careers of the royal scribe's sons is also only known from the colophons of scholarly tablets. Unless all these gaps in our documentation are merely coincidence, these comparatively productive scribes certainly did not share the same destiny as the (Babylonian) scribe Marduk-nādin-ahhē, whose *tempus operandi* falls into the reign of the fourteenth century king Aššur-uballiṭ. This scribe, whose Babylonian origin is evident,[91] moved to Assur probably shortly after the new Marduk temple was inaugurated and built a house *ina ṣilli bīt Marduk*.[92] In contrast to him, the societal backgrounds of our scribes Marduk-balāssu-ēreš, Bēl-aha-iddina, and Sîn-šuma-iddina lie in the *shades* of time. Judging from the layout of the extant colophons, it seems likely that the last-mentioned scribe learned his skills from a different tutor.[93]

The texts selected for this study are by no means numerous. This is due to the fact that observations aim at focusing on bilingual text sources going beyond single word-to-word equivalents. Hence, lexical lists such as *Ea* or *Ura* will not feature here.[94] Consequently, this survey deals with bilingual literary compositions and those lexical texts that contain phrases and expressions. Among the texts discussed in the subsequent sections are one lexical and four literary texts as well as a text that might be called astronomical or "technical literature."[95] The most important lexical text for this brief survey is certainly the series *Ana ittišu* which was well known in the Middle Assyrian period.

Amid the rather problematic connotations of this term, the Middle Assyrian texts discussed below can be considered, in general, "canonical" compositions in the sense that their contents can sufficiently be compared to later first-millennium BCE successors in terms of lexicon, grammar, and sequence of entries or lines.[96] In this study, this term is used in quite a superficial sense; it ought not to be taken literally. In Mesopotamia, this term was frequently used for compositions, which were standardized to a high degree within the stream of tradition. This process of standardizing a composition does not necessarily imply any rigid copying of texts sign by sign. This terminology is usually applied to witnesses of compositions, which preserve the same wording. Variants are frequently attested and a relative flux

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[91] See Wiggermann (2008, 205–206).

[92] BM 96947, edited in Wiggermann (2008, 219–222, line 5).

[93] Only four texts can be assigned to Sîn-šuma-iddina so far. These are VAT 10172, a copy of the first tablet of the lexical series *Ea* (for a hand copy, see Wagensonner (2014b, 476–477); JON 38, a well-preserved manuscript of the "twelfth tablet" of the series *Izi* (see Civil 2010, 45–51); and BM 121117, a tiny fragment of a possible literary composition (for a hand copy, see Wagensonner (2011, 701, 3.2.1). The Emesal vocabulary Ass.2001.D-586 copied by this scribe shows that this scribe copied texts at the same time as his two other brothers. But due to the differences in the colophons' layout, it must remain open whether he was indeed instructed by a different master scribe.

[94] For the transmission of lexical texts in Middle Assyrian Assur, see Weiershäuser (2008) and now Veldhuis (2014, 317–353).

[95] For this designation, see Cooper (1971, 1–2, note 2).

[96] Francesca Rochberg-Halton states that "[t]here is in any case no evidence in the cuneiform scholarly tradition that suggests that standardization became a rigorous law applied to a text's particular form and content" (Rochberg-Halton 1984, 128). Recently, Frauke Weiershäuser pointed out that the Middle Assyrian recensions of lexical lists from Assur contain a good number of variation compared to later versions. Variations concern, in particular, entries that became obsolete later on and the sequence of entries. On the other hand, parts of the Middle Assyrian recensions may be completely parallel to versions of the first millennium BCE; see Weiershäuser (2008, 356).

in the textual integrity may be quite evident.[97] The grammatical analysis of the Sumerian language in this late stage of its transmission cannot limit itself to the dataset provided by lexical texts alone. They usually—*Ana ittišu* is an exception—provide not enough context for a given lexeme. Hence, bilingual narrative compositions offer crucial insights into both the use and the understanding of Sumerian grammar. One of the most important sources for such an analysis is the long composition "Ninurta's Exploits," also known by its *incipit* as *Lugal-e*. This literary text offers the opportunity to trace the modifications in the text from the first half of the second until the second half of the first millennia BCE. Several text witnesses dating to the Middle Assyrian period are known from finds at Assur and Nineveh. Also the much shorter composition "Ninurta's Return to Nippur" is preserved through manuscripts from these two places. It should be noted that the text witnesses from Nineveh were moved there from Assur in the Neo-Assyrian period. An intriguing case represents the account on the divine journey of the goddess Nin-Isina to Nippur. We have here a hardly known composition, which by chance entered the scribal repertoire of two Middle Assyrian scribes. All these three compositions show some relation to the topic of Sumerian divine journeys. Whether this is a coincidence or the texts were chosen on purpose, can no longer be verified due to the gaps in the documentation. Due to the shattered archaeological context the texts were found in, the question of either private or institutional *libraries* arises. According to Dominique Charpin, the term "library" is frequently used inadequately, since the contents of libraries are categorised and scholarly works usually derive from purpose-driven collecting. In contrast to libraries are *archives*, which contain the written sources pertaining to either an individual, a group of people or an institution.[98] Charpin states that the intentional firing of a tablet in ancient times can be a criterion for a library, although this feature is not ultimate proof of its existence.[99] For the Middle Assyrian texts, which will be studied in the subsequent sections, the term *manuscript collections* is preferred.[100]

There are many further texts that might awaken our curiosity and be worth studying in much greater detail. In order to keep this study within reasonable limits, only a small selection of examples has been chosen.

8.3.1   The Lexical Series *Ana ittišu*

The lexical series usually referred to by its Akkadian incipit *Ana ittišu* (henceforth *Ai*) or, less frequently, by its Sumerian equivalent **ki-ulutin-bi-še₃**[101] is unusual compared to other members of this genre. The composition has more in common with grammatical texts, since many passages resemble paradigmatic features.[102] The composition was edited by Benno Landsberger in the first volume of the *Materialien zum Sumerischen Lexikon* (abbrev. *MSL*). Landsberger only included the later sources from Assyria and was not aware of any earlier versions, such as the forerunners from Nippur dating to the Old Babylonian period (so-called *Proto-Ai*).[103] The Middle Assyrian scribes possibly imported the complete series from Babylonia. The colophons on VAT 9552 (= *Ai* III) and VAT 8875 (= *Ai* VI) refer to

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[97] See, for example, the diachronic comparison of a section from *Ura* in Weiershäuser (2008, 361–364).
[98] See Charpin (2008, 193).
[99] See Charpin (2008, 193).
[100] See Charpin (2010, 201).
[101] For this reading, see canonical *Diri* IV, 267: u_2-*lu-tin* : ᴋɪ.ᴋᴀʟ : *ittu*; see Civil, Farber and Kennedy (2004, 160).
[102] See Veldhuis (2014, 329).
[103] See Landsberger (1937, I).

sources from Nippur. So far no traces of this list can be found among the Kassite or Middle Babylonian lexical tradition.[104]

The Middle Assyrian text witnesses are extraordinary because of their excellent state of preservation compared to many of the later sources and can therefore be considered one of the major sources for the reconstruction of this lexical series. The subsequent discussion is based on the following two manuscripts in particular:[105]

1. VAT 9552 is the upper half of a copy of *Ai* III (**ur$_4$** : *hamāmu*) written by Bēl-aha-iddina of the Ninurta-uballissu family.[106]
2. VAT 8875 is an almost completely preserved text witness of *Ai* VI (**sib$_2$-ta** : *elātu*). The tablet was written by Marduk-balāssu-ēreš and checked by his brother, the afore-mentioned Bēl-aha-iddina.[107]

It is rather probable that the Middle Assyrian scribes of Assur imported the whole series of *Ana ittišu*.[108] Unfortunately, the colophon does not mention any scribe's name. All other text witnesses containing copies of *Ai* originate from the context of the sons of the royal scribe Ninurta-uballissu.

A full discussion of grammatical features between the Sumerian and the Akkadian versions is not attempted here. The subsequent paragraphs only contain a few glimpses.

Example 1: *Ai* III (VAT 9552) obv. i, 10

buru$_{14}$[109] nu-ub-da-me-a

: *la-a-am e-bu-ri*

This example contains one of the rare attestations for a Sumerian equivalent to the Akkadian preposition *lāma*, "before." Later grammatical texts such as *NBGT* I, 423 offer the entry **nu-da** : *la-ma*.[110] A morphologically rather close parallel can be found in *NBGT* IV, 19: **nu-ub-dam** : *la-ma*.[111] The sample taken from the grammatical text, however,

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[104] See the summary in Veldhuis (2014, 229–269), and see further Veldhuis (1996, 20; 2005, 237, note 26).

[105] The lexical texts found by the German excavations in Assur are now available within the framework of the project *Digitale Keilschrift Bibliothek: Digitale Keilschriftbibliothek Lexikalischer Listen aus Assur* (University of Göttingen), http://keil.uni-goettingen.de/, accessed April 7, 2017). All discussed texts have been collated. *Ai* VII is kept in the İstanbul Arkeoloji Müzeleri; see also footnote 108.

[106] See Wagensonner (2011, 672, text 2.1.3); for a hand copy of this tablet, see Wagensonner (2011, 696–699). An edition is presented in Landsberger (1937, 33–50).

[107] See Wagensonner (2011, 664, text 1.1.4). For a new hand copy of the tablet, see now Wagensonner (2014b, 470–471).

[108] Another tablet copied by Marduk-balāssu-ēreš is Const. 4523; see Wagensonner (2011, 664–665, text 1.1.5). Since this text needs collation, it is not included here. Among the Middle Assyrian text finds from Assur is also VAT 10498 (= *KAV* 8), whose colophon identifies this copy as the twenty-third extract tablet (IM.˹GID$_2$.DA˺ 23.KAM$_2$.MA) of the series. Since according to the colophon this copy contained 35 lines of text, it can indeed be considered an extract. For a new hand copy, see p. 279 below.

[109] This copy of *Ai* contains a couple of peculiar sign forms. BURU$_{14}$ appears to be such an instance: ⌐▱⌐ (obv. i, 9).

[110] See Hallock and Landsberger (1956, 146). The preceding entry reads **nu** : *la-a*.

[111] See Hallock and Landsberger (1956, 164). The Old Babylonian Forerunner of *Izi* provides a direct parallel. While in II, 198–200 the entries follow the sequence **nu-še**—**nu-ub-dam**—**nu-ub-diri** (see Civil et al. (1971, 46), *NBGT* IV, 18–20 has **nu-un-še**—**nu-ub-dam**—**nu-ub-diri** (see R. Hallock and Landsberger 1956, 164).

conceals the presence of the verbal base **me**, "to be," as is clearly shown by the line in *Ai*. Example 2 deals with a very similar verbal chain.

Example 2: *Ai* III (VAT 9552) obv. i, 11

buru$_{14}$ nu-ub-da-g̃en^{kin}-a

: MIN(*la-a-am e-bu-ri*) *il-˹la˺-kam$_2$*

In this instance, the preposition *lāma* is not attested in its usual prepositional use (e.g., *lām ebūri*; *Ai* III obv. i, 10), but as the conjunction "before." Thanks to the pronunciation gloss *kin*, the Sumerian version clearly uses a *hamṭu* base. Examples 1 and 2 show that the prefix chain **nu-ub-da-°** alone renders the Akkadian conjunction *lāma*.

Example 3: *Ai* III (VAT 9552) obv. i, 22

[ur$_3$-r]a-˹ta˺ ka ba-ab-še$_3$

: *iš-tu u$_2$-ri ana*[112] *˹pi ap˺-ti*

This entry on the Middle Assyrian tablet might contain an orthographic error. Against the usual equivalent **ab** for the Akkadian word *aptu*, "window," this copy of *Ai* reads **ba-ab**. Since the genitive is not marked, the Sumerian version should be understood as **ka-ab:ba-še$_3$** instead. It is noteworthy that Bēl-aha-iddina uses the same spelling in the subsequent entry: **[ur$_3$-ra-t]a igi ba-ab-še$_3$** : KI.MIN *a-na pa-ni ˹ap-ti˺*. One might even entertain the possibility that the scribe confused Akkadian *aptu* with the close semantic term *bābu*, "door," and transposed the latter onto the Sumerian version.

Example 4a: *Ai* III (VAT 9552) obv. ii, 38–39 // *Ai* VI (VAT 8875) obv. i, 26–29

a$_2$-tuku a-na i$_3$-g̃al$_2$-la[113] / teš$_2$-a se$_3$-ga-bi in-ba-eš

: MIN(*ni-me-lu*) *ma-la ib-ba-šu-u$_2$* / *mit-ha-riš i-zu-zu*

a$_2$-˹tuku a˺-na i$_3$-g̃a$_2$-g̃a$_2$-a / igi-^{d}utu-še$_3$ / teš$_2$-a se$_3$-ga-bi / in-ba-e-ne

: *ni-me-la ma-la ib-ba-aš$_2$-šu-u$_2$* / *i+na ma-har* ^{d}UTU / *mi-it-ha-ri-iš* / *i-zu-uz-zu*[114]

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[112]The use of the sign DIŠ (*vs. a-na* in the subsequent entry) for the Akkadian preposition *ana* is rarely attested in Middle Assyrian texts, but might have been caused by the limited space in this line. Compare VAT 8884 obv. 18 (*ana-ku*) and VAT 10565 (= *KAR* 17) rev. 6 (*ana ta-ha-zi*).

[113]Add an initial horizontal wedge in the hand copy in Wagensonner (2011, 697) to the sign form LA (as in the subsequent line).

[114]Due to the parallel passages in *Ai* III and *Ai* VI, both versions are presented here together.

Example 4b: *Ai* III (VAT 9552), obv. ii, 40–41 // *Ai* VI (VAT 8875) obv. i, 30–33

˹a$_2$˺-tuku a-na i$_3$-ǧal$_2$-la / [te]š$_2$-a se$_3$-ga-bi in-ba-e-ne

: ɛš$_5$(*ni-me-lu*) *ma-la ib-ba-šu-u$_2$ / mit-ha-riš i-zu-zu*

a$_2$-tuku a-na i$_3$-ǧal$_2$-la / igi-^{d}utu-ka / teš$_2$-a se$_3$-ga-bi / in-ba-eš

: *ni-me-la ma-la i-ba-šu-u$_2$ / i+na ma-har* ^{d}ᴜᴛᴜ / *mi-it-ha-ri-iš / i-zu-zu*.

The respective Akkadian versions do not differentiate the Sumerian verbal chains in terms of aspect. Both *ḫamṭu* **in-ba-eš** and *marû* **in-ba-e-ne** are rendered *i-zu-zu*. Whereas the former should be analyzed *izūzū*, the last-mentioned should be a present form *izuzzū*. As quoted above *Ai* VI contains a parallel to these entries with a couple of variants. Whereas *Ai* III renders Sumerian **i$_3$-ǧal$_2$-la** in both entries as *ibbašû*, *Ai* VI differentiates between *ibbaššû* for **i$_3$-ǧa$_2$-ǧa$_2$-a** and *i-ba-šu-u$_2$* for **i$_3$-ǧal$_2$-la**. Noteworthy is also the inconsistency between **igi-^{d}utu-še$_3$** and **igi-^{d}utu-ka**, which are both rendered *ina mahar Šamaš*.

More interesting is the Sumerian equivalent to the Akkadian adverb *mithāriš*, "each one." All instances of *Ai* attest to the form **teš$_2$-a se$_3$-ga-bi**.[115] Line 490 of "Ninurta's Exploits" has the form **teš$_2$-a-ra-ke$_4$**.[116] This form appears to be rather close to **teš$_2$-ba ri-a-ǧa$_2$** in the Old Babylonian text. Another bilingual source dating to the Neo-Assyrian period (ms. j$_1$) renders **teš$_2$-a si-ga** for *mithāriš* instead. The Sumerian form is already attested in the Middle Assyrian period within the tradition of *Ai*.[117] The form **teš$_2$-a si-ga** clearly goes back to Old Babylonian **teš$_2$-a se$_3$-ga** as attested in royal inscriptions.[118]

Example 5: *Ai* III (VAT 9552) obv. ii, 5–7

ku$_3$-im-ba	: *bu-tuq-qu-˹u$_2$˺*
ku$_3$-im-ba ag-a	: *ba-ta-˹qu˺*
ku$_3$-im-ba ba-an-ag	: *ib-ta-ta-˹aq˺*

The third tablet of *Ai* provides two Akkadian equivalents for the Sumerian expression **ku$_3$-im-ba**: (1) *butuqqû*, and the loanword (2) *ibissû* (< **i-bi$_2$-za**), "deficiency, loss."[119]

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[115]For an interpretation, see Seminara (2001, 339 *s.v.* "Linea 490") and Prang (1976, 35) with attestations from Middle Babylonian legal texts.

[116]This reading is based on the text witness VAT 9710 (= *KAR* 14 / van Dijk 1983, ms. d$_1$), rev. i, 6; for a new hand copy, see Wagensonner (2011, 688–691). Line 52 of the Old Babylonian text reads **teš$_2$-ga-ru-še$_3$**, which is equated with *mit-*[*ha-riš*] in the Neo-Assyrian manuscript i; see Dijk (1983, II, 45) and the discussion in Geller (2010, 97 *s.v.* line 52).

[117]The Middle Assyrian manuscript of "Ninurta's Exploits" cited here offers several other intriguing "unorthographic" spellings, which shall be briefly discussed in section 8.3.3 below.

[118]For the expression **gu$_3$ teš$_2$-a se$_3$-ga/ge/ke** see, for instance, *RIME* 4.3.6.9, line 7, and *RIME* 4.2.14.2, line 25. For finite verbal constructions, see *RIME* 4.2.14.15, line 53 (**gu$_3$ teš$_2$-a u$_3$-bi$_2$-se$_3$-ke**) and *RIME* 4.3.7.8, line 6 (**teš$_2$-a bi$_2$-in-se$_3$-ga**).

[119]The equation **ku$_3$-im-ba** : *ibissû* is, however, separated from the other entries and concludes the section on expressions containing **ku$_3$**, "silver" (obv. ii, 22). Against *CAD* B, 356 *s.v. butuqqû*, the Sumerian expression in fact reads **ku$_3$-im-ǧeš**, which may be interpreted as a scribal error. It is directly followed by the section on **i-bi$_2$-za** (obv. ii, 23–25).

It is noteworthy to look on the greater context of these lines in *Ai* III and compare the overall sequence of entries with other text genres. The Sumerian literary composition *Inana* C incorporates some of these terms in line 123:

Ai III,	ku_3-dun (ii, 2) → ku_3 a_2-tuku (ii:4) → ku_3-im-ba (ii, 5. 22) → i-bi_2-za (ii, 23)
Inana C, 123	ku_3-dun ku_3 a_2-tuku i-bi_2-za ku_3-im-ba [d]inana za-a-kam
Ms. Oa (Tell Ḥarmal)	[*ta*]-*ak-ši-tum ne-me-lum i-bi-su-u₂* / *bi-ti-iq-tum ku-ma eštar*
	Business, great winning, financial loss, deficit are yours, Inana.[i]

Table 1: [i]See Sjöberg (1975, 190–191).

It is extraordinary that the literary text, which was rather popular in the Old Babylonian period and survived through many copies, presents these terms widely in the same sequence. Precursors of the list *Ai* were already known in Nippur in the first half of the second millennium.

The tablet's scribe Bēl-aha-iddina used some peculiar sign forms on his copy of *Ai* III, such as KU_3 (⿻; VAT 9552 obv. ii, 20). It appears that the same sign form occurs in this scribe's copy of "Nin-Isina's Journey to Nippur" (VAT 9308 [text B] obv. 25).[120]

Example 6: *Ai* VI (VAT 8875) obv. ii, 18–25

inim $ĝa_2$-$ĝa_2$	: *ba-qa-ru*
inim $ĝa_2$-$ĝa_2$	: *ra-ga-mu*
inim-ma in-$ĝa_2$-$ĝa_2$	: *ib-ta-qar*
inim-ma in-$ĝa_2$-$ĝa_2$	: *ir-ta-gum₂*
inim-ma in-$ĝa_2$-$ĝa_2$-a	: *a-na ba-qa-ri₃*
inim-ma in-$ĝa_2$-$ĝa_2$-a	: *a-na ra-ga-me*
inim-ma nu-un-$ĝa_2$-$ĝa_2$-a	: *a-na la-a ba-qa-ri₃*
inim-ma nu-un-$ĝa_2$-$ĝa_2$-a	: *a-na la-a ra-ga-me*

Similar to *grammatical* lists, this lexical series includes a couple of *paradigms* as well. In this example, each Sumerian entry is duplicated and translated with a form of either the verb *baqāru* or *ragāmu*. In the first pair of entries, the Sumerian form **inim $ĝa_2$-$ĝa_2$**, which appears to contain a reduplicated form of the verb **ĝar**, is rendered by the Akkadian infinitives. In the remaining entries, the Sumerian word **inim** is followed by a locative postposition. The second group renders the finite verbal form either as a I/2 stem preterite or a I stem perfect. The sequence is progressing afterwards. The third group adds a nominalising morpheme

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[120]See the hand copy of VAT 9308 (= *KAR* 15) in Wagensonner (2008, 294).

°**-a** and the last group negates the finite verbal chain. Instead of **ša (lā) ibtaqru* or **ša (lā) irtagmu*, these lines render the Sumerian expressions as infinitive constructions.

Example 7: *Ai* VI (VAT 8875) obv. ii, 33–34

eg̃ir-ra-ni in-gug$_4$-e	: ki.min(*arkassu*)u_2-*pa-ra-as*
eg̃ir-ra-ni nu(-)in-gug$_4$-e	: ki.min *ul* u_2-*pa-ra-as*

In this example the negative morpheme ***nu-** is added paradigmatically without influencing the subsequent syllable. This phenomenon is not completely unknown. The second tablet of *Ura* contains many Sumerian verbal forms. Entry 70 contains the form **in-na-an-sum** followed by **nu-in-na-an-sum** in the subsequent entry.[121] Whether or not this particular orthography is influenced by the separate negative particle in the Akkadian equivalents remains uncertain. Examples such as *Ai* VI (VAT 8875) obv. i, 47—^{gu}**gu$_3$ li-bi$_2$-in-sum** : *ul iš-ru-ur*—show that the phonetic adaptation of the negative modal prefixe in the Sumerian verbal chain was known.[122]

Example 8: *Ai* VI (VAT 8875) obv. iv, 23–27

^{tab}tab$_2$-e-da bi$_2$-in-e-eš	: *ṣa-ra-pa iq-bu-u$_2$*
ur$_5$ in-nu-bi / in-na-an-eš	: *la-ka-šu / iq-bu-u$_2$*
^{na4}kišib-a-ni ib$_2$-ta-an-ze$_2$-er / bi$_2$-in-e-eš	: *ka-nik-šu pu-su-sa / iq-bu-u$_2$*

In this example, the Sumerian version contains the plural base of the verb **du$_{11}$**, which renders, as expected, the Akkadian verbal form *iqbû*, "they said." Nonetheless, the different orthographies **bi$_2$-in-e-eš** and **in-na-an-eš** are noteworthy. The latter can be compared to **in-na-an-ne-eš** attested in lines 275 and 278 of "Inana's Descent"[123] as well as in lines 241 and 243 of the "Nippur Lament."[124]

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[121] See Landsberger (1957, 56). In addition to the prefix chain **nu-in-**°, there are also attestations for **nu-i$_3$-**° and **nu-im-**°.

[122] Compare *Gudea Statue* B vii, 49–53: **alan-e / u$_3$ ku$_3$-nu za-gin$_3$ nu-ga-am$_3$ / u$_3$ urudu-nu u$_3$ an-na-nu / zabar-nu / kig̃$_2$-g̃a$_2$ lu$_2$ nu-ba-g̃a$_2$-g̃a$_2$**, "For this statue nobody was supposed to use silver or lapis lazuli, neither should copper or tin or bronze be a working (material)" (Edzard 1997, 36); for the use of the particle **nu** alone in negated copular clauses, see now Zólyomi (2014, 24–25); for an example outside royal inscriptions or literary compositions, see Wagensonner (2015, line 3).

[123] See Sladek (1974, 137).

[124] In all manuscripts, this form is followed by the enclitic copula **-am$_3$**; for the matrix, see Tinney (1996, 236).

8.3.2 "Nin-Isina's Journey to Nippur" (abbrev. NJN)

According to the colophon on the Middle Assyrian copy VAT 9304, this composition had 49 lines of text.[125] This short **šir₃-nam-šub** was already known through a small fragment dating to the Old Babylonian period. An almost perfectly preserved manuscript of the Sumerian text also dating to the Old Babylonian period in a London private collection has now been published.[126] The only information so far about the subsequent *history* of this composition comes from the aforementioned colophons on the two parallel Middle Assyrian text witnesses, which were written by the two brothers Marduk-balāssu-ēreš and Bēl-aha-iddina. Both brothers also checked each other's copy (ɪɢɪ.ᴋᴀʀ₂). These colophons are comparatively precise as to the source's provenience, which is stated to originate in a tablet in the possession of a certain Iqīša-Ninkarrak.[127] The few observations that follow are based on a composite text derived from both Middle Assyrian manuscripts.

Example 9: NJN, line 3

e₂-ta hul₂-la-ni nam-ta-e₃ u₄-ğa₂-nun-na-g[in₇]

: *iš-tu* ᴇ₂ *la-li-ša i+na ku-um-mi-ša it-ta-ṣa-a*

The syntax in both the Sumerian and Akkadian versions differs quite significantly. Whereas in the Sumerian text the "joy of the goddess" comes forth of the temple, it is the goddess herself who leaves the "house of her joy" in the Akkadian interlinear translation. The Akkadian form *la-li-ša* cannot be used as subject here. Hence, the *translation* renders Sumerian *e₂-hul₂-la-ni-ta*.[128] Another irregularity in this line is the verbal form **nam-ta-e₃** with its rendering *ittaṣâ* in the Akkadian version. Here, it is appropriate to have a comparative look at a couple of further examples of **na**-preformatives in the respective text corpus:

Lugal-e	379	na-ba-niğin	: *la-a u₂-sa-hi-ra-ma*
	491	nam-ba-ra-be₂	: *e ta-na-še-er*
	567	na-ab-tar-[re]	: *ia ip-pa-r[is]*
	568	nam-[DI]	: *a-a iq-qa-[bi]*
Angim	68	nam-mi-in-[us₂]	: *i-rad-[di-šu]*

This line allows a comparison to *Gudea Cyl*. A viii, 1: **gu₃-de₂-a eš₃ e₂-ninnu-ta zalag-ga nam-ta-e₃**, "indeed Gudea came out again from the shrine Eninnu with a radiant

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[125] This amount of lines only makes sense if the Sumerian and Akkadian versions are taken as one unit each. Compare manuscripts of "Ninurta's Exploits" and "Ninurta's Return to Nippur" in the same corpus; see Wagensonner (2008, 290).

[126] Cohen (2017).

[127] This personal name implies that this individual was quite probably related to a temple or shrine of the goddess Nin-isina or Ninkarrak. See above, footnote 44.

[128] Usually, the noun **hul₂** is used only as an adjective. Hence, a reconstruction *e₂-hul₂-la-na-ta, though suiting the Akkadian version better, is improbable. See, for instance, a royal inscription by Warad-Sîn, *RIME* 4.2.13.21, line 31: **sağ-ki-zalag-ša₃-hul₂-la-ni-ta**, "with shining face and joyous heart" Frayne (1990, 242).

face."[129] The Akkadian rendering *ittaṣâ* is to be understood as separative I/2 stem, although one rather expects *luttaṣâ, "she indeed came out." The Akkadian directional phrase *ina kummiša*, "in/ from her cella," renders Sumerian **u₄-g̃a₂-nun-na-gin₇**, "like day(light) of the/her cella."

Example 10: NJN, line 5

sila-dag̃al-uru-na-ke₄ mi-ni-in-dib-be₂ uru-ne₂ mu-un-da-sa₂

: *re-bit* URU-*ša a-na ba-'-i* URU-*ša i-ša-an-na-an*

The translation of this line (possibly dating to the Middle Babylonian period) renders the Sumerian finite verbal chains quite differently. While the first one corresponds to an infinitive construction (*ana bâ'i*), the second one is given as durative (*išannan*). In contrast to lexical (word-to-word) attestations, this different treatment is due to the fact that the verbal forms appear in a context.[130] Finite verbal chains of the Sumerian verb **dib**, "to pass, to walk along," often contain a dimensional locative or directive infix. In Akkadian, however, the verb *bâ'u* is transitive.[131] The verb **dib** occurs also on VAT 8884[132] rev. 8–9: ⌜e₂⌝-šu-me-ša₄ **pa-e₃ dib-dib-be₂-ke₄** : *ana* E₂.ŠU.ME.ŠA₄ *šu-pi-iš i+na ba-'-ka*.[133]

Example 11: NJN, line 6

g̃idlam-a-ni ur-sag̃ ᵈpa-bil₂-sag̃ hi-li-a mu-un-DU

: *hi-rat qar-ra-di* ᵈPA.BIL₂.SAG *i+na ri-ša-ti il-lak*

This line is part of a lengthy description of a divine procession of the goddess Nin-Isina to the quay in Isin. While **g̃idlam-a-ni**, "his/her spouse," clearly refers to the goddess' spouse Pabilsag̃, the Akkadian translation *mis*interprets this detail by providing the genitive construction *hīrat qarrādi*, the "warrior's wife." Thus, according to the Akkadian, the goddess herself is still subject. In this context, however, we expect her spouse to be part of the procession.

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[129] See Edzard (1997, 74).

[130] *OBGT* VI, 130 equates the Sumerian verbal form **mu-un-da-g̃ar** with *iškunšu*; see Hallock and Landsberger (1956, 83). See Geller (2010, 98), who discusses a Late Babylonian text witness of "Ninurta's Exploits" and the fact that its translation was "cast in idiomatic Akkadian."

[131] Instead of *ribīt ālīša ana bâ'i*, one expects the construction ***ana ribīt ālīša bâ'i*. For further bilingual attestations, see *CAD* B, 178–179 and line 13 of "Nin-Isina's Journey to Nippur": **e-sir sila-dag̃al mu-un-na-ab-sikil-e uru mu-un-na-ab-ku₃-ge** : *su-qu u₃ ri-bi-tu ul-lu-lu-ši* URU *u₂-lal-ši*. In the Sumerian version, both verbal chains are identical except for the base. Nonetheless, the Akkadian renders the first form as a stative (*ullulūši*) and the second one as a durative (*ullalši*).

[132] VAT 8884 = Cooper (1978, text cC).

[133] For a full score of this line, see Cooper (1978, 96, 98). The Old Babylonian version reads **dib-dib-be₂-da-ni**. The Neo-Assyrian text is much closer to the early second millennium sources than to the Middle Assyrian text. This discrepancy might have been caused by the form **pa-e₃-a-ke₄** in the preceding line (**pa-e₃ ak-e** in the Old Babylonian version).

8.3.3 "Ninurta's Exploits" (lugal-e ud-me-lam$_2$-bi nir-g̃al$_2$; *Lugal-e*)

The composition nowadays referred to as *Lugal-e* is one of the most frequently copied texts in the Old Babylonian period. Far more than a hundred manuscripts are known for this period alone.[134] Manuscripts were found among the *school* tablets in "House F" at Nippur. In the Old Babylonian period, the texts or parts of it belonged to the curriculum of apprentice scribes. "Ninurta's Exploits" is among fourteen literary texts that were copied by advanced scribes.[135] The attestation of "Ninurta's Exploits" for the early second millennium is comparable to the Standard Babylonian "Gilgamesh Epic" in the first millennium BCE.

In his edition, Jan Dijk discussed the various tablet types through which the composition is preserved. The Old Babylonian period attests to a few Type I tablets, which contained the whole text of approximately 730 lines in twelve columns. Most text witness, however, encompass much shorter sections, either half or a quarter, or even a sixteenth.[136]

Whereas all Old Babylonian sources of this composition were only transmitted in Sumerian, it can be assumed that the Akkadian translation goes back to the Middle Babylonian period, although secure bilingual text witnesses dating to this period are missing so far.[137]

The Middle Assyrian period offers the best evidence for the bilingual text before the first millennium BCE. By this time, the composition was divided into sixteen sections, which go back to the Old Babylonian format of the **im.gid$_2$da**-tablets. The extant colophons locate the sources in Nippur. It is quite certain that the Middle Assyrian apprentice scribe Marduk-balāssu-ēreš of the Ninurta-uballissu family produced a copy of the whole composition, which was inscribed onto four large tablets. He wrote the well-preserved four-column tablet VAT 9710,[138] with sections IX–XII. He was also responsible for BM 122625+[139] containing sections XIII–XVI. This copy was selected and transferred to Nineveh in the Neo-Assyrian period. Last but not least VAT 9306[140] is a fragment of a four-column tablet comparable to the aforementioned two texts. Due to its paleography and the placement of sub-colophons between the sections, it is beyond any doubt that this fragment with sections I–IV was written by the same scribe as well.

The list above represents extraordinary sources for the composition "Ninurta's Exploits." It is not certain whether its scribe Marduk-balāssu-ēreš decided himself to combine four sections on each tablet or whether this arrangement was already present on his source. Be that as it may, the Middle Assyrian texts from Assur also attest to several tablets, which only contain one section of the text.

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[134]See the list of sources with majuscule sigla in Dijk (1983, II, 13–19).

[135]For a reconstruction of this curricular setting, see Robson (2001, 54, table 6). Another group of advanced-level teaching was the so-called *Decad*. Robson states that the fourteen compositions "held a similar curricular status to the members of the Decad," although it was "not as strong or as pervasive as the Decad's" (Robson 2001, 55).

[136]For a diachronic overview of the extant manuscripts and their textual reconstruction, see Dijk (1983, II, 1–12).

[137]Compare, however, the bilingual ms. Aa of "Ninurta's Return to Nippur," which presents the Sumerian and Akkadian versions of the text in columns; see Cooper (1978).

[138]VAT 9710 = *KAR* 14 = Dijk (1983, text d$_1$). For a new hand copy of this tablet, see Wagensonner (2011, 688–691, 1.2.1).

[139]BM 122625+ = Dijk (1983, text n$_1$). For a new hand copy of this tablet, see Wagensonner (2014b, 472–473).

[140]VAT 9306 = *KAR* 13 = Dijk (1983, text h). See Wagensonner (2011, 692).

1. VAT 10565[141] is the damaged upper half of a one-column tablet, which contains the third section of "Ninurta's Exploits."[142] Its colophon is comparable to the one on VAT 9441 + VAT 10648 + VAT 11216, an extract tablet of "Ninurta's Return to Nippur." Unfortunately, this type of colophon does not contain any information on the responsible scribe.[143]

2. VAT 10628[144] is the badly damaged lower part of a possibly one-column tablet.[145] The preserved lines can be assigned to section XII.

3. VAT 10643[146] is just a small fragment. It probably contains the same recension as BM 122625+[147] cited above, because it also inserts lines 524–530 between 568 and 569. This could either mean that Marduk-balāssu-ēreš did not intentionally forget the respective lines on *KAR* 14, but that this discrepancy was already present already in the source he used, or BM 122625+ used VAT 10643 as its source or *vice versa*. Based on the distribution of text on obverse and reverse, the fragment should have contained just sections XII and XIII. It could be argued whether Bēl-aha-iddina wrote VAT 10643. If so, this case is comparable to "Nin-Isina's Journey to Nippur."[148]

In his study, Stefano Seminara thoroughly discussed the bilingual version of "Ninurta's Exploits." Therefore, I will only highlight specific peculiarities that occur in the Middle Assyrian text witnesses.

Example 12: *Lugal-e*, line 97 (tablet III) (VAT 10565 obv. 15–16)

OB	lu$_2$-im$_2$-ma-bi kur-ra/re im-ra uru$^{(ki)}$-bi/ba bu-du/tu-ug im-za
MA	[lu$_2$-i]m$_2$-ma-bi kur-ra ˹im˺-[r]a-ah uru-bi bu-[u]g-tu ˹za˺
	: [*la-si-m*]*u-šu ina* KUR-*i* ˹*i-du*˺-*uk-ma* ˹URU˺-*šu* ˹*u$_2$-nap*˺*˺-[*pil*(?)]

The Akkadian verb rendering the Sumerian compound **bu-ug-tu━za**, "to destroy, to kill," is badly damaged.[149] Dijk[150] reads *u$_2$-*[*a*]*b-*[*bit*(?)]. Based on the sign remains the identification of the sign AB is rather questionable. *CAD* L, 106 *s.v. lāsimu* favors a reading *u$_2$-ṣa*[*b-bit*]. The sign form ERIN$_2$ appears to be much closer to what is still visible on the tablet. However, there is also a third possibility: NAB. The lexical text *Nabnītu* E (= VII = VAT 8755)[151] reads on rev. i, 44 **bu-du-ug** : 6(diš) *ša mim$_3$-ma* in a section starting with

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[141] VAT 10565 = *KAR* 17 = Dijk (1983, text q). The museum number "VAT 10567" in Dijk (1983, II, 20) needs to be corrected accordingly.

[142] See the hand copy on p. 280.

[143] It is not unlikely that both tablets stem from the hand of the same scribe.

[144] VAT 10628 = *KAR* 363 = Dijk (1983, text o$_1$).

[145] For a hand copy, see p. 281.

[146] VAT 10643 = *KAR* 370a+b+c = Dijk (1983, text m$_1$). For a hand copy of *KAR* 370a, see below, p. 281.

[147] BM 122625+ = Dijk (1983, text n$_1$).

[148] See above, section 8.3.2. In this case, both Marduk-balāssu-ēreš and Bēl-aha-iddina copied the whole composition and checked each other's copy.

[149] For this loanword, see Civil (2007, 30 *s.v.* 207. putuk).

[150] Dijk (1983, II, 59).

[151] The tablet has been collated during a research stay in Berlin in March 2011. For a photo, see the website of the *Digitale Keilschrift Bibliothek* (see footnote 105).

patāqu. In contrast to the manuscript of "Ninurta's Exploits," the lexical text preserves the older form **bu-du-ug** instead of **bu-ug-tu**. Interpreting the sign remains as ᴺᴬᴮ may lead to a potential verbal form *unappil*, which derives from the verb *napālu*, "to tear down, to demolish," and in stem II, "to turn upside down."

Example 13: *Lugal-e*, **line 378 (tablet IX) (VAT 9710 obv. i, 7–9)**

OB	mu-ud-(da-)na in-ši-tu-ud ba-an-ʊš₂/ʊš hur nu-mu-da-(ab/an-)ğar-ra
MA	mu-ud-na mu-ši-tu-ud ba-an-ᴛᴀ hur nu-mu-da-an-ğar-re-eš[i]
	: *ša a-na ha-i-ri-ia ul-du-šu u₂-rab-bu-šu u₂-ri la-a iš-šak-na-ma*
NA	mu-ud-na mu-ši-e-tu-ud [b]a-an-tu-ud[!] hu-ur
	nu-mu-da-[a]n-nen-ğa₂-ğa₂
	: *a-na ha-ʿi-ri-ia ul-du-šu₂ u₂-rab-bu-šu₂ hu-ru la iš-šak-nam-ma*

Table 2: [i]The construction **hur** + negation was discussed in Cavigneaux and Al-Rawi (2000, 37), where the authors refer to the first lines of the Sumerian composition "Bilgames' Death" based on manuscript M1 from Me-Turan (**hur nu-mu-un-da-an-zi-zi**: "A cause du calque (?) akk., nous transcrivons dans ce cas hur; pour l'hésitation entre ur₅ et mur […]. L'akk. hur(ru), s'il s'agit d'un dérivé de √'hr 'être en arrière' (dans d'autres langues sémitiques des dérivés de cette racine portent aussi le sans 'autre') donne à penser que l'étymologie du mot est sémitique" (Cavigneaux and Al-Rawi 2000, 37, note 73). The reading of this lemma must be deduced from the Neo-Assyrian version: **hu-ur**. See also Falkenstein (1938, 19–20 *s.v.* line 7).

The greatest discrepancy between the various manuscripts is the verbal form **ba-an-ᴛᴀ**.[152] The Akkadian version has *urabbûšu*, for which the Neo-Assyrian manuscript e₁ provides the expected verbal base **tu-ud**. The extant Old Babylonian text witnesses have either ᴛɪʟ (ms. O₁) or ʊs₂ (mss. L₄ and X₄), which should be interpreted as phonetic variants (based on the readings **uš₂** and **uš**). The Middle Assyrian base, however, defies any suitable explanation.[153]

Example 14: *Lugal-e*, **line 380 (tablet IX) (VAT 9710 obv. i, 12–3)**

OB	šul-zi munus-zi-da/de₃ ba-an-du₁₁
MA	šul-zi nu-nus-zi-de₃ ba-an-tu-ud
	: *eṭ-lu ki-nu ša sin-niš-tu kit-tu ul-du-šu*
NA	šul-zi munus-zi-da ba-an-tu-ud
	: *eṭ-lu₄ ki-i-nu ša sin-niš-tu₄ kit-tu₄ ul-du-šu₂*

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[152]See the score in Dijk (1983, II, 108).

[153]Note, however, the possible verbal base ᴛᴀ in the form **im-ma-ni-ta** in ms. Ma of "Bilgames and the Bull of Heaven" from Me-Turan, line i, 39. See Cavigneaux and Al-Rawi (1993, 105). Line 45 of the composition reads (= ms. Ma, line i, 34) presumably **im-ma-ni-[ta?]** again, while manuscript No from Nippur reads **me-e[n-de₃-en]**; see George (2010, 109).

The Middle Assyrian text is the only text witness that provides the spelling **nu-nus** for **munus**, "woman."[154] The Old Babylonian as well as first millennium sources read **munus** instead.[155] Another noteworthy variation is the verbal base **tu-ud** in post-Old Babylonian manuscripts. All extant text witnesses from the first half of the second millennium read **du$_{11}$** instead. The co-occurrence of the verbal bases **tu-ud** and **du$_{11}$** is attested in the "Tale about the *šumunda*-Grass" as well. Lines 10–13 contain the following *parallelismus membrorum*: **an in-du$_{11}$ {x} ki in-tu-ud / u$_2$.du$_6$&du$_6$.še.sar in-ga-an-tu-u[d] / ki in-tu-ud an in-du$_{11}$ / u$_2$.du$_6$&du$_6$.še.sar in-ga-an-tu-u[d]**.[156]

Example 15: *Lugal-e*, line 383 (tablet IX) (VAT 9710 obv. i, 18–9)

OB	ga-ša-an-g̃en dili-mu-ne ga-an-ši-g̃en en-(da-)gi$_{16}$-sa-še$_3$
MA	[ga]šan g̃a$_2$-e dili-šA_4.ab da-ši-in-g̃en en-da-gi$_{16}$-sa-a-še$_3$
	: [*be*]-*le$_2$-ku e-diš-ši-ia lu-ul-lik a-na be-li$_2$ da-ri-i*
NA[i]	umun-g̃en dili-mu-ne da-an-ši-g̃en en-da-gi$_{16}$-s[a...]
	: *be-le$_2$-ku e-diš-ši-ia lul-lik-šu$_2$ a-na be-li$_2$ da-*[...]

Table 3: [i]The composite transliteration derived from manuscripts e$_1$ and a$_2$; see Dijk (1983, II, 110).

The first millennium version appears to be closer again to the Old Babylonian text than to the Middle Assyrian recension. While both the text of the early second millennium as well as the late recension use the Emesal form of the enclitic copula **°-g̃en** as in **ga-ša-an-g̃en**, "I am the lady,"[157] the Middle Assyrian text contains the independent pronoun **g̃a$_2$-e**. In light of the Akkadian stative *bēlēku*, a copula would be more suitable.[158] It is not unlikely that the *interpreter* had issues with the spelling **°-g̃en** for the Emesal enclitic copula of the first and second persons.[159] While the use of the independent personal pronoun in place of the commonly used enclitic copula is surprising, but not inexplicable, the subsequent form **dili-šA_4.ab** is difficult to interpret in light of the other versions. Both the Old Babylonian and

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[154]See Schretter (1990, 246–247 *s.v.* **nunus**), whose reading "nús" should be corrected to "nus."

[155]The later sources appear to be closer to the Old Babylonian version than to the Middle Assyrian text. In his discussion of "Ninurta's Return to Nippur," Jerrold S. Cooper states that "[t]he presence of an Akkadian translation, and the absence of the standardized translation format, supports the assumptions previously made from evidence of the Bogh[azköi] texts alone, that the addition of Akkadian translations occurred early in the formation of the canon, while the standardization of translation formats occurred later [...]" (Cooper 1978, 50).

[156]See Wagensonner (2009, 359). For the line in "Ninurta's Exploits," see the comments given in Seminara (2001, 307 *s.v.* line 380): "Lo sviluppo du$_{11}$ > tu-ud dalla recensione monolingue a quella bilingue è giustificato dal consueto espediente dell'omofonia."

[157]The later version (text e$_1$) has **umun-g̃en**, "I am lord."

[158]The use of the independent pronoun **g̃a$_2$-e** instead of **°-g̃en** could have been triggered by the presence of the independent pronoun in the subsequent line of the Middle Assyrian recension: **[a$_2$]-še g̃a$_2$-e mu-un-na-ni-in-du$_8$** : [*lum*]*a-an a-na-ku am-ma-ra-aš$_2$-šu*. Compare the following occurrences of the enclitic copula: line 422 (= VAT 9710 obv. ii, 9–10): **en ^{d}nin-urta-me-en [...]** : en ^{d}nin.urta *a-na-ku* [...] [see also line 617 (= BM 122625+ obv. i, 9–10)]; line 428 (= VAT 9710 obv. ii, 21–2) **g̃uruš-me-en** [...] : *eṭlu at-ta* [...]; line 432 (= VAT 9710 obv. ii, 27–28): **en-me-en** [...] : *be-le$_2$-ku* [...]; line 489 (= VAT 9710 rev. i, 4–5): [...] **du$_{14}$-me-en** [...] : [...] *mu-uṣ-ṣa-lu at-ta* [...].

[159]See footnote 158 for further examples of the copula written in normal orthography **°-me-en**.

Neo-Assyrian texts read **dili-mu-ne** instead, which fits quite well with the Akkadian equivalent *ēdiššīya*, "I alone," offered by the Middle Assyrian recension onwards. Although a satisfactory solution of this form might escape us, one can pinpoint lines 3 and 5 in "Bilgames' Death" according to manuscript M1: **ša₃-aš-ša₄**.[160] Also the bilingual letter from Mari published by Dominique Charpin reads in obv., 22: **[lugal (ša₃) aš-š]a₄** […], whose Akkadian offers *a-na lugal gi-it-ma-lim* […].[161] The Akkadian adjective *gitmālum* is known as gloss and thus equivalent to **aš-ša₄** in *Proto-Izi* I, 174. There it is preceded by **dili-ni** accompanied by the gloss *we-di-iš-ši-šu*.[162] The lexical series *Izi* was copied by the Middle Assyrian scribes and even by a member of the Ninurta-uballissu family.[163] The close proximity of these two lexemes in a lexical text already known from the Old Babylonian period onwards might be no coincidence for the problematic form attested in the Middle Assyrian text. This, however, does not solve the sign AB. BM 122625+[164] obv. ii, 40–41 equates **dili-a** with *e-diš-ši-šu*.[165] *Ana ittišu* should also not be unmentioned in this respect. Its sixth tablet (VAT 8875) equates **dili-ni-ni** with *i-di-iš-ši-šu*.[166]

Finally, **da-gi₁₆-sa** deserves a brief discussion. This form is already attested in the Old Babylonian manuscript L₄ and represents most likely a hybrid spelling.[167] It is a mixture of **da-ri₂** derived from Akkadian *dārû*, and **gi₁₆-sa**, the Sumerian term for "eternal."[168]

Example 16: *Lugal-e*, line 419 (tablet X) (VAT 9710 obv. ii, 3–4)

OB	[ⁿ]ᵃ⁴u₂ kur-ra ma-an-zi-ge-en-na-gin₇
MA	ⁿᵃ⁴u₂ kur-ra ba-an-zi-ga-[en-na-gin₇]
	: *šam-mu i-na* KUR-*i ki-i te-e*[*t-bi-a*?-*am*]

Frequently, Sumerian verbal chains attested in later periods contain a *hiatus* as, for instance, in the given example between GA and EN.[169] A similar phenomenon occurs in line 4 of the creation myth *KAR* 4: […] **mu-un-gi-na-eš-a-ba** or in *Ai* VI rev. ii, 33–34, which reads **na₄-kišib mu-sar-ra-ne-ne ib₂-ra-ra-eš**. Stefano Seminara correctly points out that "[q]ueste grafie denunciano la natura artificiale della lingua sumerica della recensione bilingue" and "presenta un'insolita grafia franta, forse esito di un eccesso di scrittura analitica".[170]

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[160] See Cavigneaux and Al-Rawi (2000, 25 and 37–38 *s.v.* lines 3 and 5). The authors refer to legend of an Old Babylonian cylinder seal reading **aš-ša**; see Collon (1986, 107, no. 177).

[161] See Charpin (1992, 11).

[162] See Civil et al. (1971, 23).

[163] See a text kept in a private collection; Civil (2010, 45–51).

[164] BM 122625+ = Dijk (van Dijk 1983 text n₁).

[165] See Dijk (1983, II, 158 *s.v.* line 584) for the full score.

[166] See also footnote 20 above.

[167] But see Seminara (2001, 308–309).

[168] Compare the semantic sequence in the lexical entries in *Proto-Izi* II, 359/360–361: **gi₁₆-sa**, **da-ri₂**; see Civil et al. (1971, 51).

[169] See also *Lugal-e* X, line 422: **im-hu-luh-ha-en-na-g[in₇]** compared to the Old Babylonian form **ba-e-hu-luh-en-na-gin₇** (texts S1 and W1).

[170] Seminara (2001, 321). Compare Example 7 above.

Example 17: *Lugal-e*, line 420 (tablet X) (VAT 9710 obv. ii, 5–6)

OB	šu-se$_3$-ke-mu-še$_3$ mu-e-dab$_5$/gib-ba-gin$_7$
MA	šu-siki-mu-še$_3$ mu-e-dib-ba-[gin$_7$]
	: *a-na ka-mi-ia ki-i tak-mi-*[*in-ni*]

The Sumerian expression **šu-siki-mu-še$_3$** is only clear by checking the Old Babylonian text witnesses, which have **šu-se$_3$-ke-mu-še$_3$** instead.[171] Thus **šu-siki**, "hairy hand," is certainly a phonetic variant. Whether such a variant was caused by either a memory error or by dictation is difficult to answer.[172] The Middle Assyrian recension of "Ninurta's Exploits" does not offer an abundance of such phonetic variants, but the rather technical text of the "Astrolabe" B does offer quite a few.[173]

Example 18: *Lugal-e*, line 424 (tablet X) (VAT 9710 obv. ii, 13–14)

OB	ug$_2$-gal / piriĝ-banda$^?$ usu-bi-ta nir-ĝal$_2$-la-am$_3$ he$_2$-me-zi-ir-zi-re-de$_3$ / he$_2$-me-ze$_2$-er-ze$_2$-re-de$_3$
MA	u$_4$-gal a$_2$-kal-ga-bi-še$_3$ nir-ĝal$_2$-e he$_2$-en-zi-re-de$_3$
	: *u$_4$-mu* GAL-*u$_2$ ša a-na e-mu-qi$_2$-šu dan-na-ti tak-lu li-pa-sis-ka*

As was pointed out by Seminara, there is a lexical variation between **ug$_2$-gal** (O$_1$) or **piriĝ-banda** (S$_1$) in the Old Babylonian period and **u$_4$-gal** in the Middle Assyrian text.[174] The Akkadian interpreter understood **u$_4$-gal** literally and rendered it *ūmu rabû*, "the great storm." The same phenomenon occurs in the subsequent expression **a$_2$-kal-ga-bi-še$_3$**, which re-interprets the Old Babylonian form **usu**(A$_2$.KAL)-**bi-ta**. This does not mean that the elements of the sign group A$_2$.KAL are always treated individually in the Akkadian translation. Already in the subsequent line **usu** is rendered with Akkadian *emūqu*. Splitting *Diri* compounds into their elements and *interpreting* them is not uncommon in cuneiform sources. It is a particular feature of late commentaries and can be compared to the hermeneutic method of etymography.[175]

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[171] There is no separate discussion of this phenomenon in Seminara's treatment.
[172] For variants in (Old Babylonian) Sumerian literary texts caused by memory errors, see now Delnero (2012a).
[173] See section 8.3.5.
[174] See Seminara (2001, 323).
[175] See Frahm (2011, 70–76).

Example 19: *Lugal-e*, line 506 (tablet XI) (VAT 9710 rev. i, 33')

OB	mar-za-^{d}utu me-zu he$_2$-a
MA	ğarza-^{d}utu ğarza he-a
	: *pa-ra-aṣ* ^{d}UTU *lu par$_2$-ṣu-ka*
NA	ğarza-^{d}utu ğarza he$_2$-a
	: *pa-ra-aṣ* ^{d}UTU *lu-u par$_2$-ṣu-ka*

The Old Babylonian text differentiates in all available manuscripts between the Emesal form **mar-za**, "rites," and **me-zu**, "your *me* (cult ordinances)." Both concepts are merged together in all later recensions of this line. Instead of the Emesal form, both occurrences use **ğarza**. It is quite likely that in the second instance **ğarza** can be considered a phonetic misinterpretation of **me-zu**, since the signs ME and BAR are paleographically quite similar.[176] This discrepancy is indicated by the Akkadian equivalent *lū parṣūka*, "they may be your rites," which is not substantiated by the Sumerian version.

Example 20: *Lugal-e*, line 541 (tablet XII) (VAT 10628 obv. 2–3)

OB	pu-uh$_2$-ru-um-ma šagina mu-e-ni-ğar-ra-gin$_7$[i]
MA	[x x]x[ii] -ma ˹gu$_2$* mi*$^?$-ni*-ib$_2$*˺-[ğar(?)-ra(?)-gin$_7$(?)][iii]
	: [*ki-m*]*a*[iv] *ša ina pu-*˹*uh-ri tak$_2$*˺*-nu-*[*šu*(?) …]

Table 4:

[i] Ms. H$_2$ has **šagina-me-en** instead and reads afterwards **gu$_3$-ğar-ra-gin$_7$**; for the score, see Dijk (1983, II, 147).

[ii] According to van Dijk (1983, II, 147), there are remains of the sign BU at the beginning of the line. However, there is not enough space for **p[u-uh$_2$-ru-u]m-ma**. Even for a shorter spelling (compare the Old Babylonian **pu-uh-ru$_2$** in ms. H$_2$) space is limited. The lexical list *Proto-Izi* II, 142 has **me-lam$_2$** with the gloss *pu-uh$_2$-ru*; see Civil et al. (1971, 45). The available space in VAT 10628 would be enough for [me-la]m$_2$-ma, but this is not a common equivalent of Akkadian *puhru*. Compare for this sign sequence, though in another context, also the hymn *Šulgi* D, line 388: **ni$_2$ me-lam$_2$-ma gu$_2$ hu-mu-ni-us$_2$**, "May you lift (your) head with a terrifying splendour" Klein (1981, 88–89).

[iii] There doesn't appear to be enough space to fit a second person °-ğar-re-en-na-gin$_7$ as expected by the Akkadian translation.

[iv] See for this reconstruction the Neo-Assyrian manuscript z$_1$ and compare lines 419–422 of "Ninurta's Exploits"; see the score in van Dijk (1983, II, 119–120). Line 422 equates **im-hu-luh-ha-en-na-gin$_7$** with *ki-i tu-gal-li-ta-ni*.

The Middle Assyrian version (collated from the original) offers a couple of variants. The title **šagina**(GIR$_3$.NITA) appears to be missing. Instead, it is plausible to assume that the Sumerian

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[176] See also Seminara (2001, 346).

line attests to the compound verb **gu$_2$—g̃ar**, "to submit."[177] Thus a reconstruction of the Akkadian verb *kanāšu*, "to submit," a known equivalent of the aforementioned compound verb,[178] appears to be suitable.

Example 21: *Lugal-e*, line 545 (tablet XII) (VAT 10628 rev. 1–2)

OB	kur-kur-re/ra giri$_{17}$ ki-šu$_2$-šu$_2$-zu^i giri$_{17}$ šu ha-ra-ab-tag-ge
MA	kur-kur-ra ki-[a]g̃$_2$ su-up-pa-ni giri$_{17}$ šu ha-ra-ˊab*ˋ-tag-ge
	: ᴋᴜʀ.ᴋᴜʀ^{meš} *ina šu-ke-ni ap-pa li-il-[b]i-na-ku*-x-[…]

Table 5: ^{i} This part of the line differs in every single manuscript. The quoted version is attested in manuscript H$_2$. J$_2$ has **ki-šu$_2$-[u]b-e**, which is more revealing in light of the Middle Assyrian text; A$_4$ has **ki-šu$_2$-šu$_2$-da**.

Unfortunately, the only sufficiently preserved later version does not provide any clues toward an understanding of the modifications that took place in the late second millennium BCE.[179] Line 161 of "Ninurta's Return to Nippur" is similar in content but does not show significant variation between its Old Babylonian and Middle Assyrian recensions.[180] In this line, the verbal compound **giri$_{17}$ ki-su-ub ha-ma-ab-ak-ke$_4$-e-ne** is translated as *liš-ki-nu-u$_2$-ni*, "they may prostrate themselves," in its Akkadian version. The quoted line from "Ninurta's Exploits" uses the Akkadian verb *šukênu* as well, but deviates greatly in the Sumerian line. The enigmatic **ki-ag̃$_2$** (badly damaged but visible) appears to have somehow slipped into this line. It is noteworthy as well that the scribe wrote **su-up-pa-ni** instead of **su-ub-ba-ni**.

Example 22: *Lugal-e*, line 675 (tablet XV) (BM 122625+ rev. i, 6'-7')

OB	en-ra ma$_2$-sag$_x$(ɪᴛɪ.*gunû*)-a mu-un-na-b[e$_2$-ne$^?$]
MA	ˊen-e ma$_2$-sag̃-g̃a$_2$ˋ mu-un-ˊnaˋ-ni-ib$_2$-e$_3$-n[e$^?$*]
	: ˊen *i+na mah-rat*ˋ ^{geš}ᴍᴀ$_2$ *i-ta-mu-u$_2$*

Based on the verbal base **e$_3$** in the Middle Assyrian recension, the Akkadian should have some form of the verb *(w)aṣû*, "to come out (etc.)." The interpreter, however, translates the Sumerian verbal form with *itammû*, "they utter."[181] The use of this particular verbal base might have been caused by the preceding line, which renders **he$_2$-en-na-ˊe$_3$ˋ** with Akkadian *liš-ta-p[i-šu*(?)]. There, the verbal base fits the context.

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[177]See examples in Karahashi (2000, 97–98).

[178]See the lexical attestations in *CAD* K, 144.

[179]See text k$_1$ in the score in Dijk (1983, II, 148). It reads **giri$_{17}$ ki-s[u …]** : *ina š[u-…]*.

[180]But note that the Neo-Assyrian version of this line deviates from all its predecessors; for a score, see Cooper (1978, 86).

[181]See also Seminara (2001, 367).

Example 23: *Lugal-e*, line 724 (tablet XVI) (BM 122625+ rev. ii, 13'-4')

OB	[nin-s]ağ-gi$_6$-ga en$_3$-tar-tar uğ$_3$-e inim si-sa$_2$
MA	nin-sağ-gi$_6$-ga en$_3$-tar-tar-re uğ$_3$-e si ba-ab-si
	: ˹be˺-let ṣal-mat SAG.DU muš-tal-tu muš-te-ši-rat KUR^{meš}

In this final example, the unusual spelling **si—si** for the compound verb **si—sa$_2$** should be highlighted. Although this phenomenon has been discussed elsewhere,[182] it should be emphasized here again that the same spelling occurs in another text copied by the same scribe. This text, "Nin-Isina's Journey to Nippur," renders **si mi-ni-ib$_2$-si** with the Akkadian verbal form *uš-te-šir$_3$*.

8.3.4   "Ninurta's Return to Nippur" (an-gin$_7$ dim$_2$-ma; *Angim*)

The composition known as "Ninurta's Return to Nippur" was the second major Sumerian literary text about the deeds of the warrior god. Unfortunately its state of preservation in the Middle Assyrian period is poor compared to "Ninurta's Exploits." So far, it is available through three text witnesses:[183]

1. BM 122652 + BM 98745 (Th 1905-4-9, 251 = Cooper 1978, ms. aA) was written by the "young scribe" Marduk-balāssu-ēreš and originally contained the complete text on a four-column tablet. It is the only surviving copy from Assur that contains the whole composition. It seems quite likely that this scribe had at his disposal several extract tablets belonging to "Ninurta's Exploits" and "Ninurta's Return to Nippur," which he assembled onto larger tablets. As his copy of tablets XII(I)-XVI of *Lugal-e*, this manuscript also found its way to Nineveh.[184] It is rather likely that this fragment belonged to a tablet of similar size and shape as his copies of *Lugal-e*.[185] Unfortunately, just small portions of the tablet are well enough preserved.

2. VAT 9441 + VAT 10648 + VAT 11216 (= Cooper 1978, ms. bB)[186] was an extract tablet. Whereas the colophon does not preserve a scribe's name, it resembles the colophon of VAT 10565, an extract tablet of "Ninurta's Exploits." Thanks to the join, several more lines can now be read. Therefore a complete transliteration is given:

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[182]See Wagensonner (2011, 653–656) with further attestations. To these can be added line 259 of the composition and furthermore a manuscript of "Inana and Ebih" (*UET* 6, 17), which reads in obv. 13: **[igi-za er$_2$]-ra [si] ba-ni-in-si**.

[183]For some general notes on the Middle Assyrian manuscripts of "Ninurta's Return to Nippur," see Cooper (1978, 32–36).

[184]For a photo, see Cooper (1978, pl. XV (text aA)). A hand copy is published in Wagensonner (2011, 693, 1.2.3).

[185]For a reconstruction based on VAT 9710, see Wagensonner (2011, 667).

[186]For a photo of the loose join VAT 9441(+)VAT 10648, see Cooper (1978, plates XVI–XVII [text bB]). The tablet has been studied at a research stay in the Vorderasiatische Museum, Berlin, in March 2011. A hand copy of the joined tablet is now provided on p. 282.

O 01' [° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° : ° ° ° ° ° °] ˹in?˺x

02' [° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° °] [mu-n]a-an-˹du˺
03' [° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ina ma]h-˹ra˺ il-la-a[k]

04' [° ° ° ũ ° ° ° ° ° °] eĝir-a-ni nam-mi-in-[us$_2$]
05' [° ° ° ° ° ° °]-˹tu˺me˹ti ar-ka i-rad-[di-šu]

06' [° ° ° ° ° : °]x ina a[p]-si-i ana par-ṣi ez-zu-te šu.[ṭi-u$_2$]

07' [° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° °] ˹mu˺-un-na-˹rig$_7$˺
08' [° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° °] ˹AN˺-e ˹ana˺ ši-rik$_2$-te iš-˹ru-ka˺-[šu]

09' [° ° ° ° ° ° nu-mu-ni-i]b$_2$-ĝa$_2$-ĝa$_2$: ^{d}a-nun-na-ku DINGIR˹meš˺
[G]AL^{me}[š …]

10' [° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° °] : ˹EN˺ a-bu-˹ba˺-ni-iš i-ba-˹ ˺˺

11' [° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° °] a-˹ma$_2$˺-ru an-ur$_3$-˹ru˺-da
12' [° ° ° ° ° ° nu-k]ur$_2$-˹ti a˺-bu-˹ba˺-niš i-ba-'

13' [u$_4$-gi]n$_7$ a[n-ur$_2$-ra dum-dam mu-ni-i]b$_2$-za ˹: ki˺-ma u$_4$-me ina
i-šid AN-e ut-ta-[az-za-am]

14' ˹du˺-ni [inim $^{d+}$en-lil$_2$-la$_2$-t]a (x) ˹e$_2$-kur˺-ra ĝa$_2$-ĝa$_2$-d[e$_3$?]
15' a-lak-šu ina? ˹x ub?˺ [$^{d+}$EN.L]IL$_2$ [a-na] ˹E$_2$˺.KUR it-ta-aš$_2$-[kan]

16' ur-˹saĝ˺-diĝir-e-˹ne˺ […-s]u$_3$-su$_3$: ˹UR˺.SAG DINGIR^{meš}
na-as$_2$-pa-nu ˹KALAM x˺[…]

17' nibru^{ki}-˹še$_3$?˺ an-ba[d ° ° ° ° °]-a-ta : ˹a˺-na ni-pu-ru ni-siš la-a
t[e$_4$-he-e]

18' ^{d}nuska [sukk]al-˹mah˺-$^{d+}$en-lil$_2$-la$_2$-˹ke$_4$˺ e$_2$-kur-ra gaba
im-mi-in-[ri]
19' ^{d}NUSK[A]˹x x˺ ṣ]i-ru ša $^{d+}$[EN.LI]L$_2$ i+na E$_2$.KUR uš-tam-hi-ir-[šu]

20' en ^{d}˹nin˺-urta-ra silim-ma mu-˹un-na˺-a[b-d]u$_{11}$: ana EN
^{d}NIN.URTA šul-ma i-qa[b-bi]

21' lugal-ĝu$_{10}$ ˹ur-saĝ˺ šu-˹du$_7$˺-me-en ˹ni$_2$˺ -zu-še$_3$ ĝeštu$_2$ […]

22' en *qar-ra-*ʿ*du*ʾ *šuk-lu*ʾ*-lat a-na ra-*[*m*]*a-ni-ka u₂-zu-un-*[…]
———————
23' ʿd ʾnin-urta ur-ʿsağ̃ʾ šu-du₇-me-en ni₂-zu-še₃ ğeštu₂ […]
———————
24' ʿd ʾnin.urta ʿ*qar*ʾ*-ra-*ʿ*du*ʾ *šuk-lu-lat a-*ʿ*na ra*ʾ*-*[*m*]*a-ni-ka*
       u₂-zu-[*un-*…]
———————
25' [n]i₂ me-ʿlam₂ʾ-zu eš₃ d+en-lil₂-la₂-ke₄ [tu]g₂-gin₇ bi₂-i[n-dul]
26' [*p*]*u-*ʿ*luh*ʾ*-ti me-lam-me-*ʿ*ka*ʾ E₂ d+EN.LIL₂ [*ki-ma ṣ*]*u-ba-ti*
       ik-[*tum*]
———————
27' [° °]x gu₃-du₁₀ ur₅-ša₄-zu : ᵍᵉˢ GIGIR-*ka*[° ° ° °] ʿx x xʾ […]
———————
28' [° ° °] ʿx x x xʾ : *i+*ʿ*na ra-ka-b*[*i-ka* …]
———————
29' [° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° °] ʿxʾ […]
       remainder broken
R 01' [° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° °] ʿxʾ
   02' [° ° ° ° ° ° ° ° °] *u₂*-x[° ° ° ° °]
———————
03' [° ° ° ° °] ʿdab₅-dab₅-x x šu-su₃ nun? […]ʾ
04' [° ° ° ° °] *ša ik-mu-u₂ sum-ma-*x […]
———————
05' ʿuru lah₄*-lah₄ʾ-e-ne […]
06' ʿURUʾᵐᵉˢ x *ša iš-lu-l*[*u* …]
———————
07' ʿd ʾa-nun-ʿnaʾ-ke₄-e-ne ʿxʾ […]
08' ʿd ʾ*a-nun-na-*ʿ*ki i+*ʿ*na*ʾ *qu-l*[*a-ti* …]
———————
09' kur-gal d+en-lil₂-la₂ […]
10' ʿKURʾ.GAL d+EN.LIL₂ ʿxʾ […]
———————
11' dili-im₂-babbar-ʿraʾ x […]
12' *nam-ra-ṣi-it* […]
       (double ruling)
13' [ama(?)]-ʿgalʾ? d?nin?ʾ- [lil₂(?)-le(?) ša₃(?) ki(?)-ur₃(?)]-a-ni-t[a]
       blank space
14' [DUB(?).2(diš)(?).KAM(?).MA(?) AN(?)-GI]N₇? 5(u)? 3(diš)
       MU.BI.I[M]
———————

3. VAT 8884 (= *KAR* 18 = Cooper 1978, text cC)[187] is a quite well-preserved extract tablet. It was written by a certain Nabû-nādin-šumī, who is hitherto not known from any other texts. Like the second manuscript, the tablet contains just an extract of the composition.

It is not unreasonable to assume that the last-mentioned two tablets were used by Marduk-balāssu-ēreš to produce his copy of the complete text.[188] Unfortunately, the poor state of preservation of his copy does not allow for clear answers. The last lines, however, run parallel on both text witnesses including the omission of line 202 compared to the Old Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian evidence.

Jerrold S. Cooper collected the "errors" or variants in the transmission of this text. His classification includes (1) perceptual errors, (2) unmotivated alteration, and (3) motivated alteration.[189] The Akkadian interlinear translation was affected by variants as well.[190]

Example 24: *Angim*, line 162 (VAT 8884 obv. 18–19)

OB	šu-mah saĝ piriĝ-ĝa₂ ᵈen-lil₂-la₂ ne₃-ni-še₃ tu-da-me-e[n]
MA	usu-mah saĝ ug-ga ᵈen-lil₂-le UG.UG-ta tu-ud-da-me-en
	: *e-mu-qa-an ṣi-ra-ti zi-im la-a-be ša* ᵈEN.LIL₂ *ina e-mu-qi₂-šu ul-du-šu ana-ku*
NA	[u]su-mah saĝ piriĝ-ĝa₂ ᵈen-lil₂-la₂ šu u₃-tu-ud-d[a-me-en]
	: ˹e˺-mu-qan ṣi-ra-a-te zi-im la-bi ša₂ ᵈMIN *ina e-mu-qi₂-šu ul-d[u-šu₂ ana-ku]*

This is one of the few lines of *Angim* that allows for a diachronic overview of the Old Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian text layers. The example clearly shows that the Middle Assyrian recension of this line is a kind of mixture between the Old Babylonian sources and the later tradition that followed in the first millennium BCE. The Sumerian expression UG.UG-ta is rendered with *ina emūqīšu*, "in his strength." Whereas **ug** is used for *lābu*, "lion," in this line as well, both the Old Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian versions have **piriĝ** instead. Sumerian **ug** for Akkadian *emūqu* is found again in line 164.[191] According to Jerrold S. Cooper, the orthography UG.UG is erroneous and was caused by the similar paleography of the signs PIRIG and UG in Babylonia.[192] It is noteworthy to find the same phenomenon in line 4 of the composition, which is preserved in Assur through manuscript aA copied by

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[187]For a hand copy of the respective tablet, see below, p. 284.

[188]The composition would have been divided into four parts; see Cooper (1978, 38). This is substantiated by the amount of lines mentioned in the colophon of manuscript bB: 53.

[189]See Cooper (1978, 45–46) and compare both the table 6 on pp. 40–42 dealing with lexical variants between the Old Babylonian text and later recensions.

[190]See Cooper (1978, 48–49 with table 10).

[191]VAT 8884 reads in obv. 20: **[an-n]e₂ UG gal-a-ni-še₃ pa₃-da-me-en** : [*ša₂* ᵈ*a-nu i+*]*na e-mu-qi₂-šu ra-ba-a-ti u₂-tu-u₂-šu a-na-ku*. Both the Old Babylonian and the Neo-Assyrian versions have **a₂** instead; for a score transliteration, see Cooper (1978, 88).

[192]See also the commentary in Cooper (1978, 105–106 *s.v.* line 4).

Marduk-balāssu-ēreš. This material might be taken as a hint that either all Middle Assyrian manuscripts of "Ninurta's Return to Nippur" derive from the same source text(s) or one version was copied from an already existent copy in Assur.

Example 25: *Angim*, line 83 (VAT 9441+ obv. 27')

OB	$^{\tilde{g}e\check{s}}$gigir-za gu$_3$-du$_{10}$ ur$_5$-ša$_4$-bi
MA	[…]x[193]gu$_3$-du$_{10}$ ur$_5$-ša$_4$-zu
	: $^{ge\check{s}}$GIGIR-*ka* [° ° ° °] ⸢x x x⸣ […]
NA	$^{\tilde{g}e\check{s}}$gigir-zu gu$_3$-de$_2$ ur$_5$-ša$_4$-bi
	: *nar-kab-ta-ka ana ri-gim ra-me-me-ša$_2$*

The joined tablet VAT 9441+ allows for a diachronic examination of this line. The Middle Assyrian version appears to be closer to the Old Babylonian. The Neo-Assyrian text re-interprets **gu$_3$-du$_{10}$**, "pleasant voice," and replaces it by **gu$_3$-de$_2$**, "call" (Akk. *rigmu*). Unfortunately, the Akkadian version on the Middle Assyrian text is almost completely broken off. In line 428 of "Ninurta's Exploits," the Middle Assyrian version renders **gu$_3$-de$_2$-zu** as *ši-si-it-ka* (= VAT 9710 obv. ii, 21–22). Nevertheless, there are a couple of other possibilities for the Middle Assyrian text. VAT 8884[194] rev. 17') reads **gu$_3$-du$_{10}$** or **inim-du$_{10}$** in line 200. Since the score in Cooper[195] is misleading, it is given here again without incorporating the different variants in the Old Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian manuscripts:

OB	inim-du$_{10}$ lugal-la sud-ra$_2$-še$_3$ mu-un-na-ab-be$_2$
MA	inim-du$_{10}$ nam-lugal-la su$_3$-ud-ra$_2$-še$_3$
	du$_{11}$-mu-un-na-ab
	: *ṭe$_2$-em ša[r-ru-ti ana rūqeti(?) qi-bi-ši]*
NA	inim-du$_{10}$ ⸢lugal u$_4$⸣-sud-⸢da⸣-še$_3$ mu-un-na-ab-be$_2$
	: *a-ma-⸢tu$_2$ ṭa⸣-ab-tu$_2$ ša$_2$ šar-ri ana ru-qe$_2$-e-ti iq-bi-ši*

In contrast to line 83 cited above, the Neo-Assyrian recension stands much closer to the Old Babylonian text and it is the Middle Assyrian version that deviates quite substantially. Here, the Middle Babylonian editor probably took the imperative **du$_{11}$-[mu-un-na-ab]** already present in line 188 of the Old Babylonian text. The first millennium BCE version, however, has a finite verbal form in the Sumerian line (**mu-un-na-ab-be$_2$**), which is translated as preterite (*iq$_2$-bi-ši*) both in the Middle Assyrian and first millennium sources. The beginning of this line, again, offers intriguing variation, which pertains to the Akkadian inter-

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[193] The sign remains at the beginning of this line are inconclusive, but the given space does not necessarily support either [$^{\tilde{g}e\check{s}}$gigir-z]u or [[…]-z]a. It seems that the possessive suffix has been moved toward the end of the line in the Middle Assyrian version.

[194] VAT 8884 = Cooper (1978, text cC) = *KAR* 18.

[195] Cooper (1978, 98).

pretation. Whereas the Middle Assyrian line renders the logogram group ᴋᴀ.ʜɪ as *ṭēmu*,[196] the Neo-Assyrian version translates its constituents separately: *amātu ṭābtu*.[197]

8.3.5 "Astrolabe" B

The Middle Assyrian scribes of Assur did not indulge in the mere copying of the Sumerian literature that was passed down to them from Babylonia. Among the texts that came to Assur from Babylonian sites was also quite technical literature, such as the so-called "Astrolabe B." As was pointed out elsewhere, this designation is of course a misnomer, since the relevant texts do not represent measuring tools for the rising of stars.[198] Apart from the two known examples of circular *Astrolabe*-texts, this kind of scholarly literature is usually treated in lists or tables.[199] The text of Middle Assyrian "Astrolabe B" has forerunners and several successors in the first millennium BCE. Although the origins of this text might reach far back, it appears that the various parts of this text were put to writing not earlier than the Middle Babylonian period. The Kassite dynasty in Babylonia was the driving force for many aspects of scholasticism, and scientific thought such as it appears in texts like "Astrolabe B" demonstrate this quite well. The Middle Assyrian copy was written by Marduk-balāssu-ēreš and checked by his brother Bēl-aha-iddina, both members of the Ninurta-uballissu family.[200] As was pointed out by Wayne Horowitz, who recently collected all related material and presented it in a thorough study, the Middle Babylonian tablet containing a short version of the Sumerian text represents one of the precursors of this tradition.[201]

Since this composition is now available in an up-to-date study by Horowitz, this short treatment will limit itself to a few passages.[202] *KAV* 218 contains a couple of forms that are clearly Middle Babylonian. It is quite likely that Marduk-balāssu-ēreš had already a bilingual source at his disposal, which also included the other parts as the star catalogue.

Among its four sections only the first part is of interest here. It contains a bilingual menology for the twelve month names of the Babylonian calendar. The relationship be-

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[196]See, for instance, *Igiduh* 1, 200: ᴋᴀ*di-im-ma*ʜɪ : *ṭe-[e-mu]*. For further lexical and bilingual attestations, see *CAD* Ṭ, 85 *s.v. ṭēmu*.

[197]See the late commentary *SpTU* 1, 49 (= CCP 4.2.E) on a therapeutic text, which aims at explaining the ailment called "Hand-of-a-Ghost" (šu.ɢɪᴅɪᴍ.ᴍᴀ). Via the otherwise not attested orthography of the Akkadian word for "ghost" written *e-ʿṭem`-me* (rev., 14) the commentator seeks to establish an "etymological" link between the syllables *e* and *ṭem* by correctly taking the Sumerian **e** in the meaning of Akkadian *qabû*, "to speak" and relating the syllable *ṭem* to *ṭēmu* (fully quoted as ʿᴋᴀʿ[*de*-]ʿ*em4*ʿ-*ma*ʿ.ʜɪ; rev., 15). Therefore, ghosts are "those who give orders" (*qābû ṭēmi*); for a discussion of this explanation, see Finkel (2014, 309–311).

[198]See, for instance, Horowitz (1998, 154).

[199]For this distinction and the various sources, see now Horowitz (2014, 2–3).

[200]Horowitz (2014, 3) and *passim* reads "Ninurta-bullissu," but the latter element cannot be corroborated by the evidence in the colophons, since quite frequently and also on the Astrolabe-text the spelling *u2*ᴛɪ.ʟᴀ-*su* clarifies its interpretation. See the remarks to this tablet and its colophon in Wagensoner (2011, 670–671, 1.2.5). A new copy of the VAT 9416 is presented in Wagensonner (2014b, 474–475); see further Horowitz (2014, Plates I–IV).

[201]Horowitz states that "VS 24, 120 would appear to give witness to one of the sources for the Alb [i.e., *KAV* 218] menology to which other materials, particularly the Akkadian translation and a set of month-stars, were later added to complete the text as we know it from Alb B I. Exactly how, where, and when this happened is unknown, but it may have occurred proximate to the time of the composition of Alb B itself" (Horowitz 2014, 48). See also Horowitz (1998, 159) and Sassmannshausen (2008, 269). Horowitz argues that the Middle Babylonian sources themselves may derive from earlier Old Babylonian traditions. Another Middle Babylonian tablet from Nippur (HS 1897) can be interpreted as forerunner to the 30-star catalogue, which then was incorporated into the composition of the "Astrolabe B"; for an edition and discussion of this text witness, see Oelsner and Horowitz (1997–1998).

[202]See Horowitz (2014, 33–46) with commentary thereafter. For an older edition, see Çağirgan (1985).

tween the Sumerian and the Akkadian shows many peculiarities that should be highlighted here in greater detail. As was discussed in section 8.2 above, due to its tabular format, the "Astrolabe" can be considered a sub-type of interlinear translations. Regarding its Sumerian version, the main phenomenon we will encounter in this text is the case that finite verbal forms in the Akkadian "translation" are frequently represented by bare verbal bases or infinite verbal constructions in the Sumerian version. Another phenomenon, orthographical in nature, quite frequently uses rarely attested readings in the Sumerian text, which could either be interpreted as auditory or memory errors, or erudite or arcane ways of writing Sumerian. The following observations concentrate on the better preserved menologies in the first two columns of the tablet. In order to properly discuss the text, each menology is fully transliterated with indication of the respective line number on *KAV* 218. Variants in other manuscripts are given in the discussion. The versions are provided, against the original, in columns.

Nisannu (I)

O	i	01	[1(diš) iti bara$_2$] mul 1(aš) gana$_2$ bara$_2$-an-na	(07)	[ɪᴛ]ɪ ʙᴀʀᴀ$_2$ *i-ku-u$_2$ šu-bat* ^{d}*a-nim*
		02	[ba]ra$_2$ il$_2$-˹la˺ bara$_2$ ǧar-ra	(08)	ʟᴜɢᴀʟ *in-na-aš$_2$-ši* ʟᴜɢᴀʟ ɢᴀʀ-*an*^{i}
		03	[s]ur*-ra-an sig$_5$-ga	(09)	*šur-ru-u$_2$* sɪɢ$_5$ *ša* ^{d}*a-˹nim˺*
		04	˹an˺-na $^{d+}$en-lil$_2$-la$_2$-ke$_4$	(10)	˹*u$_3$*˺ $^{d+}$ᴇɴ.ʟɪʟ$_2$ ɪᴛɪ $^{d+}$ᴇɴ.ᴢᴜ
		05	˹iti˺ ^{d}nanna dumu-saǧ		
		06	˹$^{d+}$en-lil$_2$-la$_2$˺-ke$_4$	(11)	[ᴅ]ᴜᴍᴜ sᴀɢ-*ti-i* ˹*ša*˺ $^{d+}$ᴇɴ.ʟɪʟ$_2$

Table 6: ^{i} Note that in line 43 the scribe wrote the verbal form syllabically (*iš-ša-ka-an*) instead of using the mixed orthography (ɢᴀʀ-*an* (line i, 8). The parallel in *Sm* 755 reads *iš-šak-kan*.

In the treatment of the first month, the Akkadian compiler interpreted Sumerian **bara$_2$** in two ways: In the first instance it is translated with Akkadian *šubtu*, "dwelling." The other occurrence offers the equivalent *šarru*, "king." Although none of these equivalents take the primary semantic meaning of **bara$_2$**, "dais," into account, the expression **bara$_2$ il$_2$-la bara$_2$ ǧar-ra** could easily be understood literally.[203] There are a few instances in Sumerian literature that support the meaning "ruler," therefore taking the dais as symbol for the king.[204]

  After collation the first sign in the subsequent line is certainly sᴜʀ instead of ɢᴀʀ. Thus, Akkadian *šurrû* appears to be a loanword of the Sumerian form **sur-ra-an**.[205] The whole expression this term appears in is omitted both in the earlier version *VS* 24, 120 as well as in later related texts. It is, however, included in the Neo-Assyrian copy *Sm* 755.[206] But it is

[203] See *Aa* I/2, 353–364 (Civil, Green, and Lambert 1979, 218), which equates **bara$_2$** with [*šar*]-*ri*^{sic}, *šub-tu$_4$*, *ni-me-du*, *pa-rak-ku*, *mu-ša$_2$-bu*, *a-ša$_2$-bu*, *ba-ša$_2$-mu*, and [*ša*]*b-su-u$_2$*.
[204] See, for instance, the composition *Enlil* A, lines 81–82: **en-en-e bara$_2$-bara$_2$-ge$_2$-ne / nidba-ku$_3$-ga si mu-ni-in-sa$_2$-eš**, "Lords and sovereigns prepared lofty regular offerings there" (composite text based on the score given in Delnero 2006, 2145–2146). See also Example 29 below, which provides the Akkadian equivalent *iškaru* for two different spellings in the Sumerian version.
[205] See also Horowitz (2014, 54).
[206] See Horowitz (2014, 54–55).

safe to say that this entry was already available in the source Marduk-balāssu-ēreš used for his copy. Was the inclusion of this entry triggered by the phonetic similarity between *vsarru* and *šurrû*?

Ayyaru (II)

O i	12 ˹1(diš) iti˺ gu₄ mul-mul ^dimin-bi	(19) ITI GU₄ *za-ap-pu* ^dIMIN.BI DINGIR^{meš} GAL^{meš}
	13 diĝir-gal-gal-e-ne	
	14 ki-pad-ra₂ gu₄ si-sa₂-e-ne	(20) *pe-tu-u₂ er-ṣe-ti*
		(21) GU₄^{meš} *ul-te-eš-še-ru₃*
	15 ki-dur₅ gal tak₄-tak₄	(22) *ru-ṭu-ub-tu up-ta-ta*
	16 ^{ĝeš}apin dur-dur-˹ru˺-ke₄	(23) ^{geš}APIN^{meš} *ir-ra-ah-ha-ṣu*
	17 iti ^dnin-ĝir₂-su	(24) ITI ^dNIN.GIR₂.SU *qar-ra-di*
	18 ur-saĝ ensi₂-gal ^{d+}en-lil₂-la₂-ke₄	(25) *iš-ša₂-ak-ki*GAL-*i* ˹*ša*˺ ^{d+}EN.LIL₂

The Sumerian phrase **gu₄ si-sa₂-e-ne** is rendered by the Akkadian *alpū ulteššerū*, which is one of the few characteristic Middle Babylonian forms in this text. Compare this to line 11 of "Nin-Isina's Journey to Nippur," which equates **si mi-ni-ib₂-si** with Akkadian *uštešešr*.[207] The subsequent phrase in the Sumerian version is **ki-dur₅ gal tak₄-tak₄**, which is rendered *ruṭubtu uptattâ* in the Akkadian version. Lexical attestations of *ruṭubtu*, "wet land," are practically non-existent. This lexeme may be connected to *ruṭibtu*, "flooded ground," whose equation after the lexical series *Igiduh* I, 295 is **ki-dur₅**.[208] Sumerian **gal** clearly is a phonetic variant of **ĝal₂** and thus belongs to the Sumerian compound verb **ĝal₂—tak₄**, "to open." On the Middle Babylonian fragment *VS* 24, 120 we read in obv. 3 […] **ki-dur₅ ˹ĝal₂ tak₄˺-tak₄**.[209] The final difficult phrase is the Sumerian ^{ĝeš}**apin dur-dur-ru-ke₄**, which is equated in the Akkadian text with *epinnū irrahhaṣū*, "the ploughs are devastated." It should be noted that "Astrolabe" B is the only lexical occurrence for **dur** = *rahāṣu*, so far. Nevertheless, the lexical series *Antaĝal* attests to the equation **dur₂-dur₂-ru** : MIN(*rahāṣu*) *ša ašābi*.[210] The third tablet of the lexical series *šarru*[211] has on *CT* 18, plate 29–30 (K.2054)[212] from the Kuyunjik collection the equation USAN₂+KAK (⌇⌇) : *rahāṣ ūme* (rev. ii, 20). A glance onto the ligature in this list from Ashurbanipal's library reveals that the latter part equals the sign DUR (⌇⌇). Horowitz assumes a semantic link between the two verbs *rahāṣu* A, "to trample, to destroy," and *rahāṣu* B, "to wash, to bathe," since the cause of destructions of the former is the weather god Adad.[213]

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[207] See also Example 23 above.
[208] See *CAD* R, 437 and Sjöberg (1988, 172, note 5).
[209] See the comments in Horowitz (2014, 58).
[210] See *Antaĝal* F, 250 (Cavigneaux, Güterbock, and Roth 1985, 219). The verbal base **dur₂** is confirmed by an Old Babylonian grammatical text published in Civil (1994, 205–206). Line ii, 5 reads: **a-ša₃ gu₄ dur₂-ru-na** : *i-na* A.ŠA₃ GU₄ *ra-ha-ṣu hup-p[u-*x]*.
[211] For general remarks on this series, see Cavigneaux (1969, 638).
[212] For an image of the respective tablet, see entry P346055 in the *CDLI* database.
[213] See Horowitz (2014, 58).

Simānu (III)

O	i	26	1(diš) iti sig₄ mul	(32) ˹ITI˺ SIG₄ *is-le-e a-ge* ᵈ*a-nim*
			gu₃-an-na aga-an-na-ke₄	
		27	mul-bi ᴋᴀxɴᴇ ba!-an-sa₂	(33) [ᴍᴜ]ʟ.˹ʙɪ˺ ᵈ˹ɢɪ:ʙɪʟ˺ *ša-nin*
		28	iti u₃-šub lugal-ke₄	(34) [ɪᴛ]ɪ *na-al-˹ba˺-an*ʟᴜɢᴀʟ
		29	lugal u₃-šub sig₄-ke₄	(35) [ʟᴜ]ɢᴀʟ *na-al-ba-na*
				i-la-˹bi˺-in
		30	kur-kur e₂-ne-ne	(36) [ᴋ]ᴜʀᵐᵉš ᴇ₂ᵐᵉš-*ši-na*
			mu-un-du₃-a	*ip-pu-˹šu₂˺*
		31	iti gul-la kalam-ma-ke₄	(37) ɪᴛɪ ɢᴜʟ.ʟᴀ *ša ma-a-ti₃*

In the menology of the third month, the phrase **lugal u₂-šub sig₄-ke₄** is difficult to interpret. The Akkadian version has *šarru nalbāna ilabbin*. Usually, **sig₄** alone should not mean "to make bricks." We would expect here additionally the base **du₈**, which is well attested in lexical texts.[214] Syntactically this phrase runs parallel to the preceding one: **iti u₂-šub-lugal-ke₄**. For a lexical attestation see, for instance, *Proto-Izi* I, 263: **sig₄-du₈**^*la-ba-a-nu*.[215]

Du'ūzu (IV)

O	i	38	[1(diš) i]ti šu mul	(45) ɪᴛɪ šᴜ *ši-ta-ad-da-lu*
			sipa-zi-an-na	ᵈᴘᴀᴘ.ꜱᴜᴋᴋᴀʟ
		39	ᵈnin-šubur sukkal-mah	(46) ꜱᴜᴋᴋᴀʟ *și-i-ru ša* ᵈ*a-nim*
		40	an-na ᵈinana-bi-id-da-ke₄	(47) *u* ᵈ*eš₁₈-tar₂* ɪᴛɪ ɴᴜᴍᴜɴ
				ša₂-pa-ku
		41	iti numun dub-bu-ni numun	(48) *numun-ni har-pi šu-și-i*
		42	nim-ta-e₃-de₃	
		43	kid₂-kid₂ iti ᵈnin-ru-ru-gu₂	(49) *ši-si-it*ᵈɴɪɴ.ʀᴜ.ʀᴜ.ɢᴜ₂
		44	sipa ᵈdumu-zi	(50) ɪᴛɪ ꜱɪᴘᴀ ᵈᴅᴜᴍᴜ.ᴢɪ
			ba-dab₅-dab₅-˹ba˺	*ik-ka-mu-u*̂

In this menology, one can highlight a couple of intriguing orthographical spellings. The conjunction °**-bi-da** is written °**-bi-id-da** in line i, 40.[216] In line 43, the scribe uses **kid₂-kid₂** to render Akkadian *šisītu*, "cry." The sign ᴋɪᴅ₂ or ᴛᴀᴋ₄ cannot be traced *per se* in lexical lists neither as equivalent for *šisītu* nor the infinitive *šasû*. Nonetheless, the lexical series *Diri* attests in I, 231 to a logogram group ɢᴀᴅᴀ.ᴛᴀᴋ₄.ꜱɪ with the equivalent *šisītu*.[217] It

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[214]See also Horowitz (2014, 62).
[215]See Civil et al. (1971, 26).
[216]In the creation myth *KAR* 4, we find the possible spelling °**-bi₂-ta-a**; see the discussion of Example 30 below.
[217]This logogram group is read *ak-kil*; see Civil, Farber and Kennedy (2004, 112). As a marginal note on inter-textuality, one has to pinpoint the fact that in *Diri* two entries farther down the same logogram is equated with *bīt*

might not be too far-fetched to propose that **kid₂** is actually a phonetic reflection on Sumerian **gu₃-de₂**, the common equivalent to *šasû* and its derivatives.[218] In this line, the Akkadian interpreter did not take **iti** into account. Was is forgotten in virtue of the phonetic similarity to *it* in *ši-si-it*?

Abu (V)

O ii 01	´1(diš)` [iti ne ᵐᵘˡkak-si-s]a₂ ᵈnin-urta-´ra`	(08) ɪᴛɪ ɴᴇ *šu-ku-du* ᵈɴɪɴ.ᴜʀᴛᴀ ᴋɪ.ɪᴢɪᵐᵉˢ
02	[ki-izi bar₇(?)-ba]r₇*-re-de₃ⁱ	(09) *ut-tap-pa-ha di-pa-ru a-na* ᵈᴀ.ɴᴜɴ.ɴᴀ.ᴋᴇ₄
03	g[i*-izi-la₂ gur₃(?)-ru(?)-de₃(?)]ⁱⁱ ᵈa-nun-na-ke₄-ne	
04	ᵈᴋᴀxɴᴇ am-ta-e₁₁-de₃ ki-ᵈutu-ra	(10) *in-na-aš₂-ši*ᵈɢɪ:ʙɪʟ
05	tum₄(NIM)-tum₄-mu-de₃ ǧuruš gešbu₂ lirum-ma	(11) *iš-tu* ᴀɴ-*e ur-ra-dam-ma* (12) *it-ti* ᵈᴜᴛᴜ *i-ša-na-an*
06	iti ᵈbil₃-ga-mes ka₂-ne-ne	(13) ɪᴛɪ ᵈɢᴇš.ɢɪɴ₂.ᴍᴀš *tu-šu-u'-u₂*
07	u₄-9ₓⁱⁱⁱ-kam₂ a-da-min₃	(14)
		(15) *u₄-mi eṭ-lu-tu ina* ᴋᴀ₂ᵐᵉˢ-*šu₂-nu*
		(16) *u₂-ma-aš₂ u₂-ba-ri* *ul-te-ṣu-u₂*

Table 7: ⁱ Wayne Horowitz reads **[ki-ne sar-sa]r-re-ne**; see Horwitz (2014, 68).
ⁱⁱ Both the reconstruction of the verbal form as well as the verb base itself are uncertain. For a bilingual attestation of **gi-izi-la₂**—**gur₃**, "to carry a torch," see *R* IV p. 26, no. 3, 41–42: **[gi]-izi-la₂ gur₃-ru gi₆-gi₆-ga zalag₂-ga-ab** : [*nāš*] *di-pa-r*[*i*] *mu-nam-mir ek-le-ti*; cited after *CAD* D, 156 *s.v. dipāru*. Alternatively, we could also expect the verbal base **il₂** and possibly a form **il₂-la-de₃**. Wayne Horowitz reads only the nominal part; see Horowitz (2014, 68).
ⁱⁱⁱ Although there is plenty of space available in this line, the scribe wrote (or copied) just three wedges over each other in order to indicate the numeral "9." This is a common administrative practice. Its Akkadian representative *tušu'û* is one of the rare syllabic spellings of this numeral.

The month name Abu contains a passage that is quite clear in its Akkadian version, but less so in the Sumerian "source." The Akkadian has *Girra ištu samê urradam-ma itti Šamaš*

Ninšubur, a deity that is dealt with in the menology of the fourth month; for Ninšubur/Papsukkal, see Wiggermann (1998–2001).
[218]Horowitz (2014, 65) refers to *Ea* VIII: 13, which equates ᴋᴀᴅ₅.ᴋᴀᴅ₅ with *šisītu*.

išannan, "Girra descends from heaven and rivals Šamaš." In the Sumerian version, this passage goes as follows: **ᵈKA×NE am-ta-e₁₁-de₃ / ki-ᵈutu-ra NIM-NIM-mu-de₃**. For the Akkadian verb *šanānu*, we would expect a form containing the base **sa₂** in the Sumerian text.[219] In line i:27 is rendered as stative *šanin* in its translation.[220]

The base NIM is problematic. This logogram is also attested in the fourth month (line i, 42), where it is equated with Akkadian *harpu*, "early" (line i, 48). An alternative reading in the menology of the month Abu could be **tum₄**. This reading may solve the vowel harmony: **tum₄-tum₄-mu-de₃**. Also compare it to line 143 of "Ninurta's Return to Nippur," which has in its Old Babylonian text the following: **e₂ ki-bal tum₄-tum₄ gešbu(GEŠ.RU) ᵏᵘˢguru₂₁(E.IB₂.UR₃)-ĝu₁₀ mu-da-an-ĝal₂-[la-am₃]**, "I bear those which carry off the temples of rebellious lands, my throwing stick and shield."[221]

Tešrītu (VII)

O ii		
22	1(diš) iti du₆ mul mudul(MU.BU)ⁱ-keš₂-da	(30) ITI DU₆ *ni-i-ru* ᵈ⁺EN.[L]IL₂
23	ᵈ⁺en-lil₂-le PA šu-nir-ne-{x}-ne	(31) *šu-pa₂-a-tu*ⁱⁱ *u₂-tal₂-la-[l]a*
24	ku₃-ku₃-mu nam-LU₂+u₁₈-lu umun in-dadag	(32) *ni-šu u ru-bu-u₂ u₂-tab-[b]a-bu*
25	˹ne˺-saĝ mu ku₃-ga kur-kur-ra	(33) *ni-iq šat-ti el-lu ša*KUR˹ᵐᵉˢ˺*-ti₃*
26	ᵈa-nun-na-ke₄-e-ne mu-un-na ka₂	(34) *a-na* ᵈA.NUN.NA.KE₄ *in-na-˹qi˺*
27	abzu ta-e₃ ki-se₃-˹ga˺	(35) *ba-˹ab ap˺-si-i ip-pat-[t]e*
28	lugal-ᵈdu₆-ku₃-ga ᵈ⁺en-ki ᵈnin-˹ki˺	(36) *ki-is-˹pu a-na* LUGAL˹.DU₆.K[U₃.G]A
29	iti pap-bil₂-ga ᵈ⁺en-lil₂-la₂-˹ke₄˺	(37) ᵈ⁺EN-KI *u* ᵈN[IN.KI [...]] ˹KA?˺ [...]
		(38) ITI *a-bi a-bi* [*ša* ᵈ⁺EN.LIL₂]

Table 8: ⁱ See, for instance, *Diri Nippur* ix, 18: [x-ᵈ]*u-ul* : MU.BU : *ni-ru-um*; see Civil, Farber and Kennedy (2004, 32).
ⁱⁱ The sign BA should indeed be read here with unvoiced consonant. The manuscript Sm 755+ (Çağirgan (1985, text B); see the photo in the *CDLI* database, no. P426447) reads in obv. ii, 15: *šu-pa-tu*. Unfortunately, its Sumerian pendant is not preserved.

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[219] See, for instance, "Nin-Isina's Journey to Nippur," line 5: [...] **uru-ne₂ mu-un-da-sa₂** : [...] URU-*ša i-ša-an-na-an*; see Wagensonner (2008, 280). But see also *KAV* 218 where the verb in the Sumerian phrase **mul-bi KA×NE ba-an-sa₂**

[220] See the discussion on the menology of the month Simānu above.

[221] For score and translation, see Cooper (1978, 82–83) and compare his comments (1978, 127–128). The reading **tum₄** instead of **nim** is confirmed by **tun-tun** in the Neo-Assyrian manuscript.

The Akkadian construction *šu-pa₂-a-tu* is problematic. In the previous edition of the text by G. Çağirgan, the signs after the divine name in the Sumerian line are read **gup₂(ʟɪ)-pa šu-nir-ne-ne**, which led to the translation "shrines are purified."[222] The sign ʟɪ certainly needs to be connected with the divine name Enlil.[223] The Neo-Assyrian manuscript Sm 755+[224] has in obv. ii, 10 **[…mul ᴍᴜ.ʙ]ᴜ-keš₂-ˈdaˈ d⁺en-lil₂-la₂**. The remaining part could be read ᴘᴀ/**ĝidri**[225] **šu-nir-ne-ne**, "sceptre (and) emblems." In light of the Neo-Assyrian version Sm 755+ (*šu-pa-tu*), it is not unlikely to interpret it as stem III of *(w)apû*, "to make visible."[226] This interpretation would not literally translate the Sumerian term, but provide a descriptive equivalent: "the visible ones."[227] For favoring *šubtu*, "dwelling, shrine," one should look at the *ṣâtu* commentary *CT* 41, 42 (CCP 3.4.9.M) line 3, which reads: *šub-tu₄* **šu.nir** : **šu.nir** : **kak-ku** : ᴍɪɴ : *mun-dah-ṣ[u]*.[228] Horowitz refers the lexical list *Antağal*, where the equation **šu.nir** = *šurinnu* occurs within a group of designations for shrines.[229]

The Akkadian verbs *ūtallalā* and *ūtabbabū* are parallel. The first Sumerian equivalent **ku₃-ku₃-mu** seems to have its conjugation prefix in suffix position, which normally indicates an imperative or a defective writing for a "pronominal conjugation."[230]

Last but not least the Sumerian phrase **ka₂ abzu(-)ta(-)e₃** is worth a remark.[231] This solution is closer to the Middle Assyrian text, which has *kispu* in the Akkadian translation. The Akkadian interpreter approached this expression and translated *bāb apsî ippattê*,[232] "the gate of the Apsû is opened." The Sumerian base **e₃** is not a common equivalent of Akkadian *petû*.[233] A similar case is found in the menology of the fourth month. There, the Sumerian phrase **numun nim ta-e₃-de₃** is translated *numun-ni har-pi šu-ṣi-i*. The base **e₃** appears to be merged with the dimensional marker.

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[222] See Çağirgan (1985, 411) and compare Horowitz (2014, 77), who differentiates between "divine-emblems" in the Sumerian and "shrines" in the Akkadian translations.

[223] For this solution, see also *CAD* Š/III, 179 *s.v. šubtu* A 3 b.

[224] Sm 755+ = Cagirgan (1985, text B).

[225] The sign is clearly ᴘᴀ and not ɢᴇš.

[226] See either *CAD* A/II, 203 *s.v. apû* A 5 or *CAD* Š/III, 328–329 *s.v. šūpû*.

[227] For similar attestations in stone names in the lexical series *Diri*, see Wagensonner (forthcoming) and footnote 65 above.

[228] See Labat (1933, 116) and Frahm (2011, 185).

[229] See Horowitz (2014, 77).

[230] The Neo-Assyrian version Sm 755+ has in obv. ii, 11 **[…ku₃ˀ]-ku₃-ga**.

[231] The Neo-Assyrian recension Sm 755+ possibly reads **[k]a₂ abzu a-sa₆-ga**. Horowitz (2014, 78) offers the reading **kiˈ-se₃ˈ-ga** instead.

[232] Horowitz (2014, 77) reads *ip-patᵃ[ᵗˀ-t]e*, but there does not appear to be any pronunciation gloss in this line.

[233] As noted by Wayne Horowitz, the lexical list *Antağal* offers an equivalent *petû ša bābi*. See the bilingual attestations given in *CAD* P, 341–342. The dictionary proposes that the scribe of *KAV* 218 has forgotten a second sign ᴀʙ after ᴢᴜ.ᴀʙ in order to indicate the beginning of a verbal chain (*CAD* P, 342); see also Horowitz (2014, 78).

Arahsamnu (VIII)

O	ii	37	1(diš) iti apin ᵍⁱˢal-la₂-bi ᵍᵉˢ⸢apin-na⸣ [edin-na]	(41) ITI APIN pa-ṭar₃ⁱ ᵍᵉˢAPIN!(T: MAH) ᵍᵉˢal-⸢la⸣
		38	a-da-min₃ di₅-di₅-⸢de₃⸣	(42) u₃ ᵍᵉˢAPIN a-na EDIN ul-te-ṣu-u₂
		39	a-ki-tu ur ğar-ra iti ᵈ⸢iškur⸣	(43) a-ki-it e-re-ši iš-ša-ka-an
		40	gu₂-gal an-ki-a	(44) ITI ᵈIM GU₂.GAL AN-e u₃ KI-ti₃

Table 9: ⁱ The use of the relatively complex sign DAR₃ instead of simple TAR is noteworthy. Sm 755+ has indeed pa-ṭar in obv. ii, 22.

In line 41 the scribe deliberately wrote ᵍᵉˢMAH (⬡) instead of the expected ᵍᵉˢAPIN (⬡). Both signs share a couple of graphical similarities but, one wonders whether the sign MAH was mistakenly copied for *APIN.NA (see line 37) or the scribe considered the reading /al₆/ of the sign MAH and therefore anticipated the subsequent ᵍᵉˢal-la.

Quite intriguing is the Sumerian phrase a-da-min₃ di₅(RI)-di₅-de₃, which was interpreted in the Akkadian version as ultēṣû, a Middle Babylonian form of šutēṣû, "to quarrel." According to the lexical attestation in Nabnītu M (= XXVII), line 269 the Sumerian should be **a-da-min₃ di** instead.[234] This orthography is not uncommon. See, for instance, the initial line of the Old Babylonian "Tale about the šumunda-Grass": **ab-ba na mu-un-de**. The verbal form clearly needs to be connected with **na de₅**, "to instruct."[235]

Finally, Sumerian **ur** (line 39) represents in light of its Akkadian equivalent erēšu, "to cultivate" in line 43 certainly a peculiar writing. Similar to **di₅** for **di** it appears to be another phonetic variant, in this case for **uru₄**(APIN).[236]

8.3.6   The Creation Myth *KAR* 4

This text was last discussed and edited together with the Old Babylonian unilingual fragment IB 591[237] by Wilfred Lambert.[238] Most of this composition is known thanks to the Middle Assyrian tablet, which itself already constituted a copy of an imported source. The text received much attention in the past, not to mention its side-by-side presentation with the

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[234] See Finkel (1982, 237). Pascal Attinger discussed the compound verb **a-da-min₃ du₁₁/e/di**; see Attinger (1993, 417–422, §§ 226–234).

[235] For the different spellings of this compound verb, see Sefati et al. (2005, 233).

[236] So the other known manuscripts. Horowitz (2014, 82) reads **uru₁₃**.

[237] This fragment from Isin was first mentioned in Edzard and Wilcke (1977, 86), but remained unpublished.

[238] See Lambert (2013, 350–360). For another recent edition, see Lisman (2013, 330–346). Lambert does not include the rather thorough treatment of this text in Pettinato (1971, 74–81). Whereas Lisman uses siglum A for the Middle Assyrian text discussed here, Lambert designates the tablet simply as "Main text." The joined fragments from the Kuyunjik collection are designated "K" by Lambert, but taken as separate sigla by Lisman (B–D). The small fragment A 17634 is text "A" in Lambert's edition (but given A 17643) and "E" in the one by Lisman. Since this study will limit itself to just a few brief remarks, there is no need to reference the additional text witnesses extensively. See further the discussion in Viano (2016, 97–99).

Silbenalphabet A.[239] The textual record shows that this list of syllables goes beyond being a conventional learning tool and lexical text. The Kuyunjik text refers to the combined copy of the *Silbenalphabet* and the creation myth as "second tablet" (ᴅᴜʙ 2(diš).ᴋᴀᴍ₂.ᴍᴀ) of a series, whose *incipit* is given as *me me* [*kur*₂]-ˊ*kur*₂ˋ *i-li*. In the colophon, this information is preceded by a catch-line referring to the Atra-hasis epic.[240] The serialization of this creation myth in a larger context might have been a first millennium invention. Lambert sees the *Silbenalphabet* as the first composition in the series and the creation myth as the second, since the former is also attested in its own accord. But the Kuyunjik tablet clearly puts the *Silbenalphabet* and the creation myth side by side, as does the Middle Assyrian text. Be that as it may, *KAR* 4 represents an intriguing text within the corpus of the Middle Assyrian scribal lore. It was copied by a young scribe called Kidin-Sîn, son of Suti'u. There is only one other text known from this scribe, a copy of the god list AN : *Anu* on a large tablet with twelve columns text, which found its way into the royal libraries of Nineveh.[241]

It remains uncertain whether at this occasion also the text of the creation myth was copied from the Middle Assyrian source and brought to Nineveh. Instead of the broken areas designated as such on the Middle Assyrian tablet, the Kuyunjik has, besides the entries of the *Silbenalphabet*, unintelligible traces of the Sumerian and Akkadian versions.[242] Unfortunately, Kidin-Sîn's colophons do not insert a date, as is known from a couple of other scribes in *library* M 2 such as the aforementioned Marduk-balāssu-ēreš and Bēl-aha-iddina from the Ninurta-uballissu-family. Therefore, his copies cannot be placed within a chronological framework. Whereas on *KAR* 4, Kidin-Sîn serves in the rank of ˡᵘ²ᴅᴜʙ.sᴀʀ ᴛᴜʀ (Akkadian *ṭupšarru ṣehru*), "young scribe," he is ᴀ.ʙᴀ on the copy of the god list. This writing is a comparatively rare Sumerogram for *ṭupšarru* in the Middle Assyrian period.[243] Based on this difference in the given occupations, the god list should date later when Kidin-Sîn was farther advanced in his career.[244]

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[239] This feature is already present in the Old Babylonian version from Isin. See also the discussion in Cavigneaux and Jaques (2010).

[240] Joan Goodnick Westenholz interprets these texts as "secret lore"; see Westenholz (1998, 456).

[241] This text was published as *CT* 24, 20–46; see also Geller (1990, 212, note 17). Its colophon reads as follows: ˊ*a*ˋ-*na pi-i* ᴅᴜʙ.ɢᴀʟ-*le* ʟɪʙɪʀ.ʀᴀ / [ᵐ]*ki-din*-ᵈ30 ᴀ.ʙᴀ / ᴅᴜᴍᴜ *su-ti-e* ᴀ.ʙᴀ ᴍᴀɴ / ɪɴ.sᴀʀ ɪɢɪ.ᴋᴀʀ₂, "According to the wording of the old *inventory*, Kidin-Sîn scribe, son of Suti'u royal scribe, it is written and checked" (*CT* 24, pl. 46, col. xii:8–11); see also Hunger (1968, 32, no. 51).

[242] See Lambert (2013, 356). It should be noted that in contrast to the Middle Assyrian text the Sumerian and Akkadian versions in the Kuyunjik manuscript are written in interlinear format. The entries of the *Silbenalphabet* are written, however, in two subcolumns.

[243] For its attestation in the textual record, see Jakob (2002, 237). It is also attested in the legend of the impressive seal of the Middle Assyrian scribe Aššur-šumī-aṣbat, son of Rībāte, which was thoroughly discussed in Deller (1982). There too, the father's occupation is given as ᴀ.ʙᴀ ᴍᴀɴ, which equals ᴅᴜʙ.sᴀʀ ʟᴜɢᴀʟ and therefore *ṭupšar šarre*. Deller (1982, 151–152) highlights the possibility that there might be functional differences between an ᴀ.ʙᴀ-scribe and the more commonly attested ᴅᴜʙ.sᴀʀ. Nonetheless, we find both designations among the texts of Ninurta-uballissu's sons: Bēl-aha-iddina is attested in the function as ᴀ.ʙᴀ on VAT 9487, a text that dates later than all others known to derive from this family. ᴀ.ʙᴀ therefore might indicate a certain stage in the career of a scribe, but writings such as ᴀ.ʙᴀ ᴍᴀɴ seem to favor just an orthographical variant; for VAT 9487, see now Wagensonner (2011, 675–676, 2.1.6, hand-copy on p. 700) and an improved hand-copy of the reverse in Wagensonner (2014a).

[244] For a parallel, see the case of Bēl-aha-iddina, who checked a tablet written by a certain Nabû-šuma-iddina, son of Badû in the function as ᴀ.ʙᴀ. Unfortunately the end of the line is broken. It therefore must remain open whether he actually left the status as ᴀ.ʙᴀ ᴛᴜʀ or ᴅᴜʙ.sᴀʀ ᴛᴜʀ at this stage; for attestations of the writing ᴀ.ʙᴀ ᴛᴜʀ see, for instance, VAT 5744, a copy of the third tablet of the lexical series *Erimhuš*, where Marduk-šuma-izkur is ᴀ.ʙᴀ ᴛᴜʀ and son of a royal incantation-priest named Hambizi.

The colophon categorises this composition as "secret lore" (AD.HAL, *pirištu*) followed by the expression *mūdû mūdâ lukallim*, "may the knowledgeable show (it) to the knowledgeable." In the Middle Assyrian textual record this expression is rather unique. Possibly its scribe Kidin-Sîn took this expression over from the tablet he copied from, which probably originated from Middle Babylonian Nippur. The well-preserved tablet CBS 6060 containing an interesting collection of correspondences between objects such as trees, plants, or animals and deities[245] bears a colophon, which includes the same formula as well: ZU-u_2 {A} ZU-*a li-ˈkalˈ-lim*.[246] This expression is followed by the wish that "the ignorant must not see (it)" (NU ZU-u_2 NU IGI-*mar*).[247]

However, it is less the implications of secret lore or esoteric knowledge that shall be highlighted here, but rather the bilingual tradition of this text. Karl Hecker notes that "der Text war schon in der Antike stark verderbt überliefert und ist daher nicht überall sicher verständlich."[248] Among the instances of bilingual texts in the Middle Assyrian period *KAR* 4 is one of the rare cases in which the Sumerian and Akkadian versions are written in separate columns.[249] Whether this arrangement was caused by the presence of the *Silbenalphabet* A is uncertain.[250] A new hand copy of *KAR* 4 is presented on p. 285, below.

Example 26: *KAR* 4 obv. 10–11

bara$_2$-mah ni$_2$-te mu-un-ki-KU-mu$_2$-a	: *ina* BARA$_2$ *ṣi-r*[*i*…]
ni$_2$-te-a-ni šu mi-ni-ib$_2$-gi$_4$-gi$_4$	: u_2-*ši-bu-ma i+na*
	r[*a-ma-ni-šu$_2$-nu*…]

The Akkadian translation can partly be reconstructed from the Kuyunjik tablet. Although this text offers the reading du_5-*ru* for the sign KU in the Middle Assyrian copy, *KAR* 4 seems to use the noun **ki-tuš**(KU) here as the verbal base. This becomes clear from the equivalent *ūšibū*, "they sat down," in the subsequent line.[251] On rev. 18 of *KAR* 4 we read as follows:

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[245] See Livingstone (1986, 175–188) and Lenzi (2008, 188–189).

[246] See also Hunger (1968, no. 40).

[247] Both phrases are part of a tripartite secrecy formula in later periods; see Beaulieu (1992, 98) and for a list attestations Borger (1957–1971). Laurie Pearce discusses the phrase *mūdû lā mūdâ likallim* (not in the list of Borger 1957–1971) and translates it "The knowledgeable should keep (the tablet) from the unknowledgeable"; see Pearce (2006, 12). This translation appears to take *likallim* as form of the verb *kullu*, "to hold back," instead of the expected *kullumu*, "to show." Further notes on these "secrecy formulae" are available at Frahm (2011, 344) and, in particular, Lenzi (2008, 186–203) with an updated list of attestations. Paul-Alain Beaulieu adds: "Since the colophon of that manuscript [i.e., *KAR* 4] specifically labels the text as esoteric knowledge […], it seems reasonable to posit the existence, within the Mesopotamian scribal tradition, of a subsystem of esoteric speculations based on the Silbenalphabet" (Beaulieu 1995, 11).

[248] See Hecker (1994, 606).

[249] The Kuyunjik manuscript uses the interlinear layout.

[250] See Beaulieu (1995, *passim*).

[251] A rather similar example is attested in the royal inscription *RIME* 4.4.6.2 dating to the reign of the Urukean king Anam (lines 17–19): **ki-tuš-ša$_3$-hul$_2$-la-na / la-la-bi-še$_3$ tum$_2$-ma / mu-un-ki-ĝar**, "I founded there his/her abode of rejoicing, suitable for her delight" (see Frayne 1990, 472–473).

$^{\tilde{g}e\check{s}}$hur-gal-gal mu-un ni$_2$-zu*	: *i+na ra-ma-ni-šu$_2$-nu u$_2$-ṣu-˹ra-te˺*
hur-hur-re	*r*[*a-ab-ba-te uṣ-ṣi*]-˹*ru*˺˹˺

Similar to **ki-tuš** above, the reflexive pronoun **ni$_2$-zu** is inserted within the verbal chain. The translation however contains the suitable─though without a corresponding personal suffix─expression *ina ramānīšunu*.

Example 27: *KAR* 4 obv. 16–17 and 19–20

a-na-am$_3$ he$_2$-en-bal-en-ze$_2$-en	: *mi-na-a i ni-pu-uš*
a-na-am$_3$ he$_2$-en-dim$_2$-en-ze$_2$-en	: *mi-na-a i ni-te-pu-uš* (line 20: *i ni-ib-ni*)

In both instances, the Sumerian and Akkadian versions show a clear discrepancy between the verbal forms. Whereas the Sumerian text uses the suffix for the second person plural, the Akkadian translation indicates a first person plural: *i nīpuš* and *i nītepuš* or *i nibni*. The Kuyunjik text differs quite substantially from the Middle Assyrian recension. In lines 16–17 it uses the verbal prefix **ga-ab-°** for the cohortative while keeping the **°-en-ze$_2$-en** as suffix. The verbal base **bal** with a corresponding Akkadian verb *epēšu* in the Middle Assyrian version is noteworthy. The Neo-Assyrian text, however, uses the verbal base **du$_3$** in line 16 instead, but keeps **bal** in line 19. The interlinear translation of this later recension, nonetheless, has the expected *i nuš<bal>kit*. Also line 20 differs quite substantially from the Middle Assyrian text. Here, the Sumerian verbal form reads **mu-un-me-e-e-ze$_2$-en**. Its scribe clearly interpreted the verbal base as **du$_{11}$** with its *marû* stem **e**, "to speak." This explains why instead of *i nibni* the Akkadian translation in the Neo-Assyrian text has *i nibbi*.[252] Similar discrepancies of the distribution of suffixes occur in this composition elsewhere. In line 25 of *KAR* 4, for instance, the Sumerian verbal chain **im-ma-an-tag-en-ze$_2$-en** is equated with *i ni-iṭ-bu-ha* in the corresponding Akkadian text.[253]

Example 28: *KAR* 4 obv. 21

diĝir-gal-gal-e-ne mu-un-sur-re-eš-a	: ᴅɪɴɢɪʀ$^{me\check{s}}$ ɢᴀʟ$^{me\check{s}}$ *šu-ut iz-zi-zu*

Here, the Middle Assyrian text clearly uses the base **sur** for the Akkadian verb *izuzzu*. Jan Lisman interprets this spelling as an unorthographic writing.[254] The later Neo-Assyrian text uses (correctly) the base **su$_8$** in the infinite form **su$_8$-ge-eš**. Omitting the initial wedge of

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[252]Lambert (2013, 354) erroneously has "*i ni-ib-ni*." See also Seminara 2001, 408–409.
[253]But compare line 26 where *i ni-ib-na-a* corresponds to **mu$_2$-mu$_2$-e-de$_3$** in the Sumerian text.
[254]See Lisman (2013, 341).

the sign SUR would lead to ĜAR, which is semantically much closer to the Akkadian verb *i/ uzuzzu*.[255]

Example 29: *KAR* **4 obv. 26**

uš$_2$-uš$_2$-e-ne nam-LU$_2$+U$_{18}$-LU mu$_2$-mu$_2$-e-de$_3$	: *i+na da-me-šu-nu i ni-ib-na-a a-mi-lu-ta*

The infinite verbal form **mu$_2$-mu$_2$-e-de$_3$** corresponds to the cohortative *i nibnâ*.[256] Both previous and subsequent Sumerian lines contain the second person plural, which is rendered with the first person plural in the respective Akkadian translation. It cannot be ruled out completely that the suffix –e-de$_3$ is a defective spelling for –en-de$_3$-en.[257] For a possible Old Babylonian example, see *Sîn-iddinam* A (text B = Wagensonner 2007, 545–546), line 21': **se$_3$-ga-de$_3$-en**; see the commentary (Wagensonner 2007, 554). The suffix °-e-de$_3$ is frequently translated by an infinitive construction as well.[258] One example is, for instance, obv. 29: **gi-de$_3$** : *a-na ku-un-ni*.[259]

Example 30: *KAR* **4 obv. 27**

a$_2$-ĝeš-ĝar-ra-diĝir-e-ne eš$_2$-gar$_3$-ne he$_2$-a	: *iš-kar* DINGIR^{meš} *lu iš-kar-ši-na*

Similar to Example 19 above the Akkadian translation uses the same equivalent for two (seemingly) different terms in the Sumerian text: (1) **a$_2$-ĝeš-ĝar-ra** and (2) **eš$_2$-gar$_3$**.[260] In all likelihood, it seems that the former is an erudite spelling for the latter, both imitating the Akkadian lexeme.

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[255]See *CAD* U/W, 373–374 *s.v. uzuzzu*.

[256]Compare rev. 29 (= line 70) in this text, which reads **ki nam-lu$_2$-u$_{18}$-lu ba-ni-in-dim$_2$-eš** : *a-šar a-mi-´lu`-tu ib-ba-nu-u$_2$*.

[257]For a recent discussion of the so-called "pronominal conjugation," see Edzard (2003, 137–142, ch. 12.14.4), who gives no examples for the first and second plural forms; see further Jagersma (2010, 672–674, ch. 28.6).

[258]For a discussion, see Edzard (2003, 134–137, ch. 12.14.3). The later evidence for our line has **he$_2$-mu$_2$-mu$_2$** in the Sumerian version. Line obv. 37 on *KAR* 4 has in its Sumerian version the phrase **eg$_2$ si-sa$_2$-e-de$_3$-ze$_2$-en**, which is rendered *i-ka a-na šu-t*[*e-šu-ri-ku-nu*] in its Akkadian equivalent. The latter form fits the syntax for the "pronominal conjugation."

[259]See also obv. 36: **gi-na-e-de$_3$** : *a-na ku-u*[*n-ni*].

[260]The former is also attested in *canonical Lu*, Excerpt II, line 95; see MSL 12, 107. The editors of *CAD* I/J state that "[i]n Sum. lit. texts éš.gàr occurs beside á.giš.gar.ra, while the Ur III econ. texts use only the latter, whereas in those of the Akkad period éš.GÀR alone is found. In bil. texts and vocabularies both Sum. words appear and are rendered by *iškaru*. In Akk. contexts, however, we normally have éš.GÀR and rarely a late logogram GIŠ.GÀR" (MSL 12, 249 *s.v. iškaru* A). For **a$_2$-ĝeš-ĝar-ra** used in Ur III economic texts, see Sigrist (1992, 91–92), who translates this term "prestation impose."

Example 31: *KAR* 4 obv. 32–33

e₂-diĝir-gal-gal-e-ne	: *šub-tu*GAL-*tu ša* DINGIR^meš
bara₂-mah-a tum₂-ma	: *ša a-na pa-rak-ki și-ri šu-˹lu-kat₂*^?˺

In this example, the adjective **gal** referring to the gods in the Sumerian text, was re-interpreted and assigned to denote a quality of the house or abode. A similar case can be found in line 41 of "Nin-Isina's Journey to Nippur":

bara₂-gal-mah-ba si^*sic* mi-ni-in-ĝar-re-eš […]

: *i+na pa-rak-ki și-ri ra-biš uš-bu-˹ma*˺ […]

While the Sumerian line qualifies **bara₂** with both adjectives **gal** and **mah**, the interpreter understood **gal** as adverb and used *rabîš*.

Example 32: *KAR* 4 rev. 13–14 (= line 54)

gu₄ udu maš₂-anše ku₆ mušen-NE-ta-a	: GU₄ UDU *bu-la* KU₆^meš *u₃* MUŠEN^meš
he₂-ĝal₂-kalam-ma zil(NUN)-zil-e-de₃	: HE₂.GAL₂ *i+na* KUR *a-na du-še-e*

The Sumerian verb **zil** is usually not equated with *dešû*, "to be abundant."[261]. Already line 7 on the reverse corresponds to line 14 cited above. Instead of *duššû*, the interpreter uses the verb *rubbû*, "to enlarge."[262] The Middle Assyrian scribes in Assur knew the base **zil**, but apart from *KAR* 4 it appears to have never been used to render a form of Akkadian *dešû*. VAT 9541, which contains a Middle Assyrian excerpt from *Ea* V, equates this verbal base with *ša₂-la-tu*, "to split off" (obv. i', 13').[263] In line 48 of "Nin-Isina's Journey to Nippur"[264] the Akkadian form *u₂-da-aš₂-ša-ši* renders Sumerian **mu-un-na-ab-šar₂-re**. The base **šar₂** is a common equivalent for Akkadian *dešû*.

A last remark shall be made on the ending °-NE-ta-a in line 13 of the example cited above. The Sumerian conjunction °-bi-da appears in various readings. The "Astrolabe" B renders it °-bi-id-da. It is therefore likely to see in our line another way of spelling this conjunction: **mušen-bi₂-ta-a**.

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[261] See *CAD* D, 129–130 *s.v. dešû* v.

[262] See, for instance, the vocabulary *Sb* II, line 127: *nu-un* : NUN : *ra-bu-u* (R. T. Hallock et al. 1955, 139). A closer parallel is attested in *Reciprocal Ea*, tablet A, "section" B, line 6: *nu-un* : NUN : *ru-bu-u* (Civil, Green, and Lambert 1979, 530).

[263] See Civil, Green and Lambert (1979, 404). For a photo as well as a new edition, see the website of the *Digitale Keilschrift Bibliothek* (see footnote 105). Unfortunately the colophon is broken on this tablet. The scribal hand appears not to be related to Kidin-Sîn or a member of the Ninurta-uballissu family. The scribe of VAT 9541, for instance, writes the sign GAR with four wedges instead of the common three.

[264] Text A = *KAR* 16; text B = *KAR* 15; for a new edition of this composition, see Wagensonner (2008).

8.3.7   Varia

Jerrold S. Cooper published an overview of the bilingual texts found at Assur (and Nineveh), which date to the period in question.[265] No attempt is made in this brief section to provide any exhaustive treatment of additional texts.

In 1976, Wilfred G. Lambert edited a fragment, which he believed to date to the reign of the Assyrian king Tukultī-Ninurta I based on linguistic parallels to *KAR* 128 and 129.[266] Based on a paleographical analysis between the text published by Lambert and texts written by Marduk-balāssu-ēreš, Markham J. Geller concluded that all these texts might have been copied by the same scribe and that "a Tukulti-Ninurta prayer, albeit containing statements by the king himself in the first person, could have been composed in the reign of Tiglath-Pileser I, during a period when the Assur scribal schools were thriving and productive."[267] Lambert deemed the Sumerian of BM 98496 as "obscure in the extreme."[268] The layout of the Sumerian and Akkadian versions is column-based. Unfortunately, most of the Akkadian text is gone, leaving the Sumerian text with many peculiar spellings intact: Examples are the obvious adverb **zi-ne$_2$-eš** in obv. i, 10 as a variant to more common **zi-de$_3$(ɴᴇ)-eš** or the two consecutive verbal chains **mu-un-dir-dir-re nam-bal-la$_2$-e** (obv. i, 8), which probably need to be understood as non-orthographic renderings of ***mu-un-dir-diri-ge nam-ba-la$_2$-e**.[269]

Another example dating to this period is a "bilingual hymn to Ninurta" edited by Wilfred G. Lambert in his *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*.[270] This bilingual text follows the usual interlinear layout. Unfortunately, the tablet does not preserve a colophon. It differs, however, quite substantially from the previous text. Its Sumerian version is to a great extent well understood, as demonstrated by the following example:

Example 33: VAT 10610 rev. 16–17

  sila-daĝal abul u$_2$-zug sil$_6$-la$_2$ ĝal$_2$-la dib-be$_2$-da-zu-[ne]

   : *ina re-bit a-bu-ul u$_2$-suk-ki ša$_2$ ri-ša$_2$-ti ma-la-a-at ina ba-i-k*[*a*]

This line allows for a comparative analysis to the composition "Nin-Isina's Journey to Nippur" discussed above. Line 5 contains both **sila-daĝal** (: *rebītu*) and the verbal base **dib** (: *bâ'u*).[271] Noteworthy is also Sumerian **ĝal$_2$** for Akkadian *malû*. Line 43 of NJN contains the intriguing syllabic spelling **ĝa$_2$-la-ni** in order to render *malât*.

The Middle Assyrian scribes from Assur copied collections of incantations as well. A case in point is the fragment VAT 9833 (= *KAR* 24), which belongs to the series *Utukkū lemnūtu*.[272] As was pointed out by Andrew R. George, this fragment is part of the "same tablet

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[265] See Cooper (1971, 1–2, note 2).

[266] See Lambert (1976, 85 [referring to *KAR* 118 and 119]).

[267] See Geller (1990, 212).

[268] See Lambert (1976, 86).

[269] Compare the parallel in *Ai* I, 72 (= K.4350 rev. ii, 29' = *CDLI* P395509): **he$_2$-diri-ga nam-ba-la$_2$-e** : *li-tir a-a* ˹*im*˺-*ṭi$_2$*.

[270] See Lambert (1996 [1960], 118–120) with a new copy of *KAR* 119, *ibid.*: plate 32 (VAT 10610).

[271] See the full discussion of this line in Example 10 above.

[272] For a new hand copy of this fragment, see below, page 288 and now also Geller (2016, plates 116–117).

as BM 130660" edited by Markham J. Geller.[273] A reconstruction favors a six-column tablet (see p. 288 below). As was noted by Geller, two of the Neo-Assyrian text witnesses from the Kuyunjik collection contained six-column tablets as well.[274] Since VAT 9833 comes from an archaeological context, it is not entirely clear how BM 130660 happened to enter the collection of the British Museum. It is known that twenty boxes with finds from Assur were taken to London in the early 1920s, before Walter Andrae could tend to their shipment to Berlin, and that some objects were extracted from them.[275] Geller notices about this text that "[a]lthough the script is indicative of a library hand, the errors in the text attest to the scribe's carelessness or ignorance."[276] Its scribe Marduk-kābit-ahhēšu is known from at least one other scholarly text. He copied the paleographical list *AfO* 4, plates III–IV.[277]

Geller discussed the variants in the Middle Assyrian copy compared to versions dating to the first millennium BCE. Besides orthographical variants, lexical or semantic differences are particularly revealing. As Geller pointed out, the Middle Assyrian text uses quite frequently rare equivalents when rendering the Sumerian.[278] We get a similar perspective by looking on other texts used in this study.

Example 34: BM 130660 obv. ii, 24–25 (= Tablet 13–15, 106)

e$_2$-a mu-lal$_2$ ĝiri$_3$-ni ha-ba-an-GI

: *ša$_2$ ina* e$_2$ *it-te-ne$_2$-'e-lu-u* giri$_3$-*šu lip-pa-ri-is*

Lexical texts provide two Sumerian equivalents for the Akkadian verb *e'ēlu*, "to hang up": **šu-ur-ĝar** and **ri**. Stem I/3 seems to be triggered by the reduplication of the grapheme LA$_2$. Noteworthy is also the verbal base GI, which is rendered here by stem IV of the Akkadian verb *parāsu*. The Neo-Assyrian text K.111+[279] reads **ha-ba-an-tar** at the end of the line (rev. ii, 8) and renders it *li-ip-ru-us* in the subsequent Akkadian *translation*. Although the verbal base **tar** is usually equated with *parāsu* elsewhere in the Middle Assyrian evidence,[280] there are a few hints for the usage of **gi** : *parāsu* in the Middle Assyrian version of *Utukkū lemnūtu*. The *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* cites a Late Babylonian bilingual litany, which was published by Wilfred G. Lambert.[281] This text reads in obv. 11 as follows: **an-ra a mu-ni-ib$_2$-gi$_4$-a-ni** : *e-liš mi-la ip-ru-su*.[282] The Neo-Assyrian fragment K.

[273]See George (2003, I, 493, note 169) and Geller (1990, 211, note 15 ["a non-contiguous join"]). For an edition of the British Museum text, see Geller (1980, hand copy on pages 43–44). Mauricio Viano briefly treated this VAT 9833; see Viano (2008–2009, 115–117). Both fragments contain paleographic features (for instance, the *Glossenkeil* with four slanted wedges or the size of the so-called firing holes), which make this hypothesis very plausible. See now also Geller (2016, 6), where it is edited as ms. R.

[274]See Geller (1980, 26). To these belong K 4905+, which similar to the Middle Assyrian text contains tablets 13–15 of the series.

[275]See Crüsemann (2003, 60). This, however, happened too early. According to the museum catalogue, BM 130660 was donated by Edmund Clough on 3 November 1948.

[276]See Geller (1980, 26).

[277]See Meissner (1927); see also Geller (2016, 498, note to line 271).

[278]See Geller (1980, 23).

[279]K.111+ = Geller (1980, text i) = *CDLI* P237782 = Geller (2016, 434, text b).

[280]See, for instance, *Ai* VI (VAT 8875) obv. ii, 37: **en$_3$-bi bi$_2$-in-tar** : *ar-ka-su par$_2$-sa-at*.

[281]See *CAD* P, 166 *s.v. parāsu*.

[282]See Lambert (1971, 340).

5255 (= *CDLI* P395959) offers in rev. 8–9 the Akkadian equivalent *še-pi ip-ru-su* for **ğiri₃ mu-un-se₃-ki-ta**. Hence, the verbal form in *Utukkū lemnūtu* cited above should rather be read **ha-ba-an-sig₁₇**.[283]

8.4   Conclusions

Although the main focus of this study is to pinpoint a selection of orthographical and morphological peculiarities, it is clear from the previous pages that many obstacles remain while dealing with Sumerian texts of a late period. Even if all these texts had been copied at the same place and date within a rather narrow time frame, many issues persist. On the one hand, the data is obscured by the sometimes rather complex ways and methods of textual transmission. In the case of Assur in the Middle Assyrian period, in general, and the group of the M 2 texts, in particular, there are many uncertainties regarding text acquisition and distribution of source texts. This is mainly due to the fact that the archaeological context was already disturbed in antiquity and the boundaries between the Middle Assyrian texts in this group and texts that had been assigned to the later temple *library* N 1 are not always clear. A place for copying tablets in this period, as for instance a *scriptorium*, has never been found. In the Old Babylonian period, the transmission of Sumerian literary texts was mainly triggered by the scribal education in the "schools," the **e₂-dub-ba-a**. But there is no evidence for such an institution in the last third of the second millennium BCE. While we are in the lucky position that there is even archaeological evidence for such institutions in the first centuries of the second millennium and also to some extent for the first millennium BCE, we know astonishingly little about textual transmission in the latter part of the second millennium.

On the other hand, variations between different texts often hamper our understanding of specific grammatical problems. Furthermore, just a minor part of the extant texts give us data about the provenances of the sources. This information is mostly general in a way that allows no further investigation. Textual or linguistic analysis of the Akkadian translations may sometimes give clues, especially in light of particular Middle Babylonian forms,[284] but here too we have no knowledge of the degree of redaction undertaken by the Middle Assyrian copyists. As long as we do not have more extensive sources for the Middle Babylonian tradition of Sumerian compositions, we have no way of knowing for sure whether these young scribes blindly copied sources or did redaction work themselves.

The Sumerian may contain peculiarities as well. Phonetic variants appear to be quite common.[285] Even if they pose problems for the modern reader, the Akkadian translations frequently solve a great deal of issues. In this paper, it was deliberately decided not to speak about Sumerian in the Middle Assyrian period in terms of quality. We are not deemed to judge the Sumerian of this period. There are a great deal of peculiar writings, either phonetic

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[283]Compare line 505 of "Ninurta's Exploits," which reads according to rev. i, 32' in the Middle Assyrian text witness VAT 9710 **uğ₃-za ğiri₃ᵀ(T: ᴀʙ₂)-za ba-ab-sig₃-ge-da** rendering it *a-na še-ep ni-še-ka ta-taš-pak*.

[284]Compare Sassmannshausen (2008, 265), who states that one urgently needs a descriptive linguistic study of late Old Babylonian texts in order to discern the grade of phenomena that have previously been treated as typical Middle Babylonian and which may have already existed earlier.

[285]See, in particular, the discussion of "Astrolabe" B in section 8.3.5 above.

variants or widely abbreviated verbal forms. One might even substantiate the claim that the former originates either from dictation or from minor hiccups in the scribe's memory.[286]

Recently, Eckart Frahm argued that the Kassite rulers "initiated some of the earliest editorial projects that led to the emergence of the new corpus of 'canonical' texts that remained in use until the end of cuneiform civilization." A clue to such an editorial endeavor is provided by a scribal note on the later hemerological tablet *KAR* 177, according to which scholars copied and selected from seven tablets originating from places such as Sippar, Nippur, Babylon, and so forth, and gave (the new edited compendium) to the Kassite king Nazi-maruttaš.[287]

As I have tried to show throughout this short study,[288] the Akkadian versions of the Sumerian compositions discussed above should not be considered a secondary layer of text.[289] Originally derived from glosses and annotations, they eventually became part of the stream of tradition. Both Sumerian and Akkadian versions of a given line were treated as one unit.

The Sumerian language and its scribal lore were able to preserve its status and importance long after its demise as spoken language at the end of the third millennium or slightly later. Whereas the Akkadian language infiltrated and soon dominated the socio-economic life, many areas of the religious and cultural sphere still thrived from the presence of Sumerian texts. Lexical texts, both those dealing with the shapes and readings of signs as well as thematic word lists, were the essential tools for dealing with Sumerian semantics. But word lists present the Sumerian out of context. Bilingual texts that put whole Sumerian phrases and their Akkadian equivalents side by side can be seen in this light as well. They extend the lexical corpus by providing context. In doing so, they kept the Sumerian language alive and removed it from the artificial environment of lexical lists.

Highly learned *literature*, such as the treatment of the various month names of the year in the "Astrolabe" text presented above, are often considered erroneous due to the fact that their Sumerian appears to reveal deficiencies on a morphological basis or orthographical details that seem peculiar compared to more *classical* Sumerian literature of the early second millennium BCE. But these texts and their compilation need to be located in the arcane realm of the scribal art. When the scribe of the "Astrolabe" uses the sign DUR for the Akkadian verb *rahāṣu* instead of DUR₂, it must not necessarily be an error or misinterpretation. In a recent article about the various text layers that remain hidden within the orthography of a word, Stefan Maul argues that the Akkadian versions on late bilingual texts should be considered more as comments than simple transpositions into Akkadian.[290] This view has many merits, in particular, in light of annotations on text witnesses of Sumerian literature dating to the early second millennium BCE.

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[286] For the latter, see the recent study by Paul Delnero, who investigated variations between literary manuscripts belonging to the so-called *Decad*, which might be interpreted as memory errors; see Delnero (2012b).

[287] See Frahm (2011, 323).

[288] See footnote 20.

[289] For some of the texts discussed above, the Middle Babylonian period already provides fully developed interlinear translations. For a rare Sumerian text still adding Akkadian glosses one can refer to the Middle Babylonian text witness of the "Instructions of Ur-Ninurta" (MM 487b). The annotations on this fragment can be compared to similar glossing in Old Babylonian literary texts. They do not provide full translations, but merely select single verbs or idioms and add the Akkadian translation in smaller script in the centre of the line; see the latest treatment of this text witness in Rowe (2012).

[290] See Maul (1999, 13).

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[291] Wagensonner (2005).
[292] Wagensonner (2008, texts A and B).
[293] See Wagensonner (2011; 2014b).
[294] http://cdli.ox.ac.uk/wiki/, accessed April 7, 2017.
[295] http://www.cdli.ucla.edu/, accessed April 7, 2017.
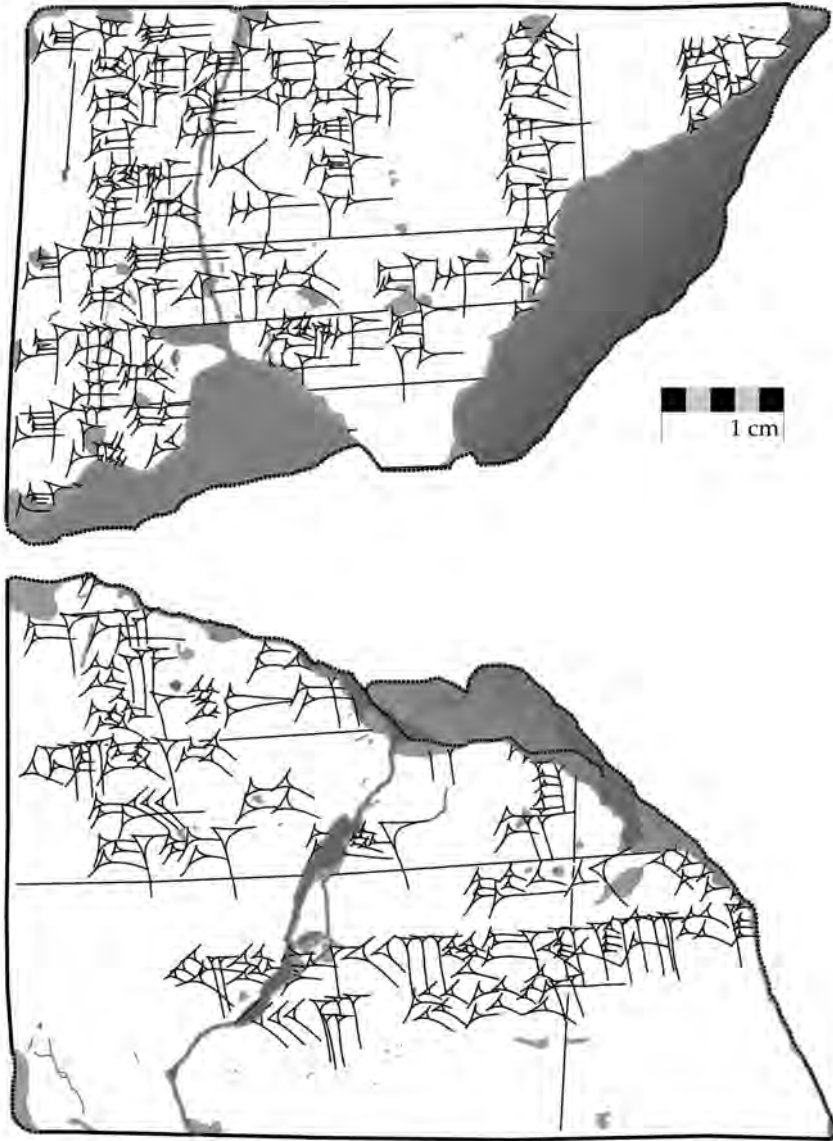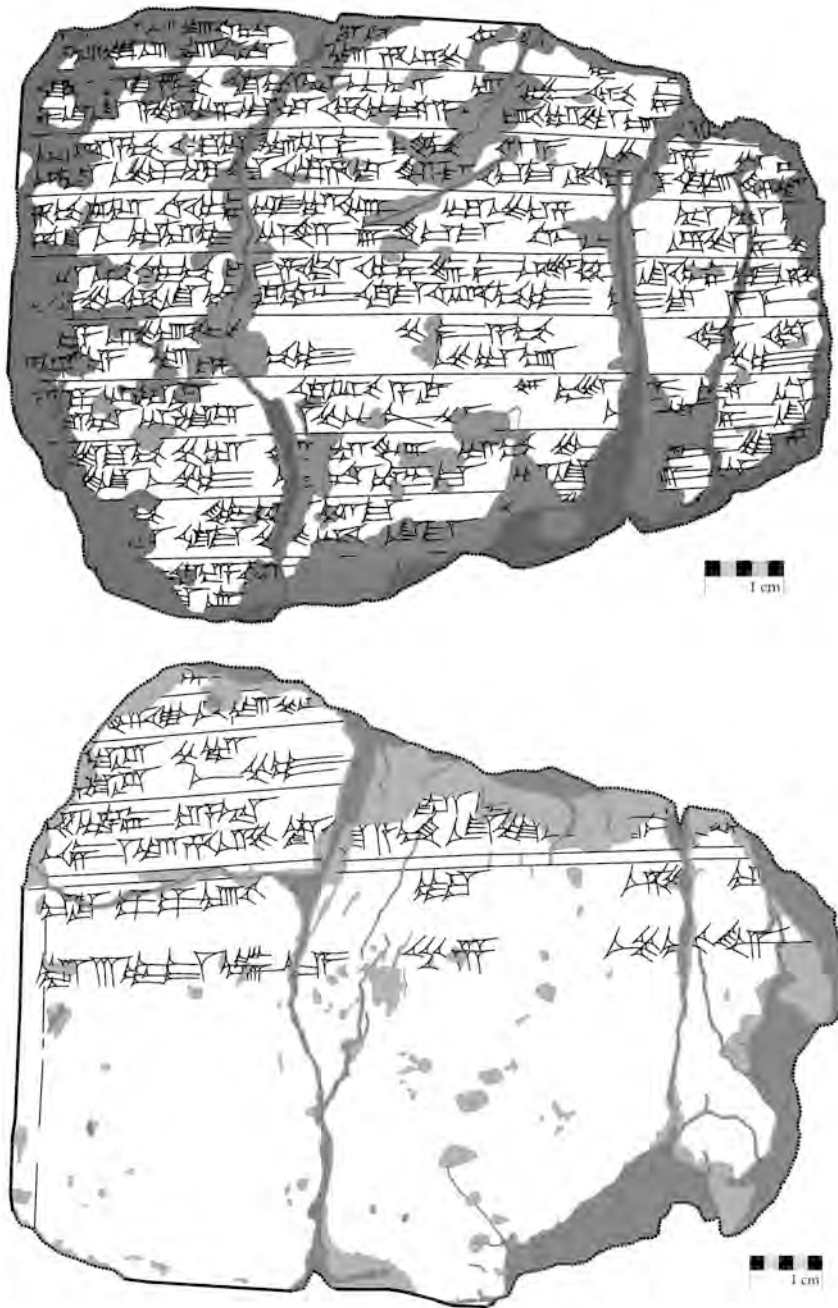
8.5   Appendix

Figure 1: VAT 10498 (= *KAV* 8)

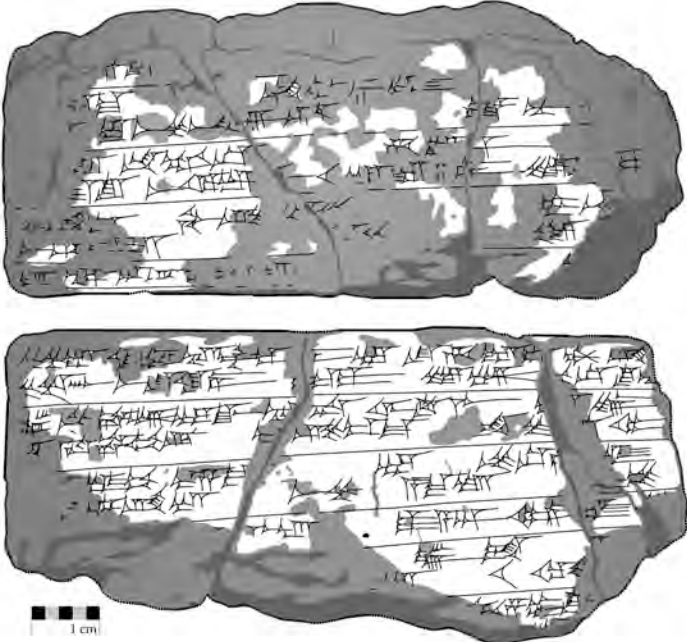Figure 2: VAT 10565 (= *KAR* 17 = 1983 text q)

Figure 3: VAT 10628 (= *KAR* 363 = 1983 text o$_1$)
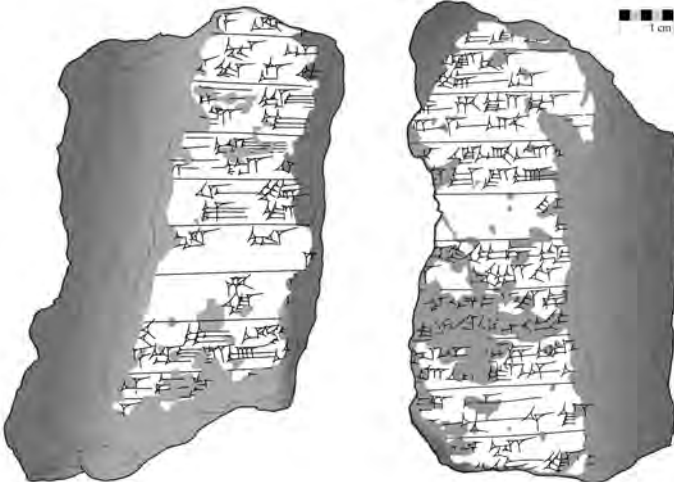

Figure 4: VAT 10643 (= *KAR* 370a = 1983 text m$_1$)

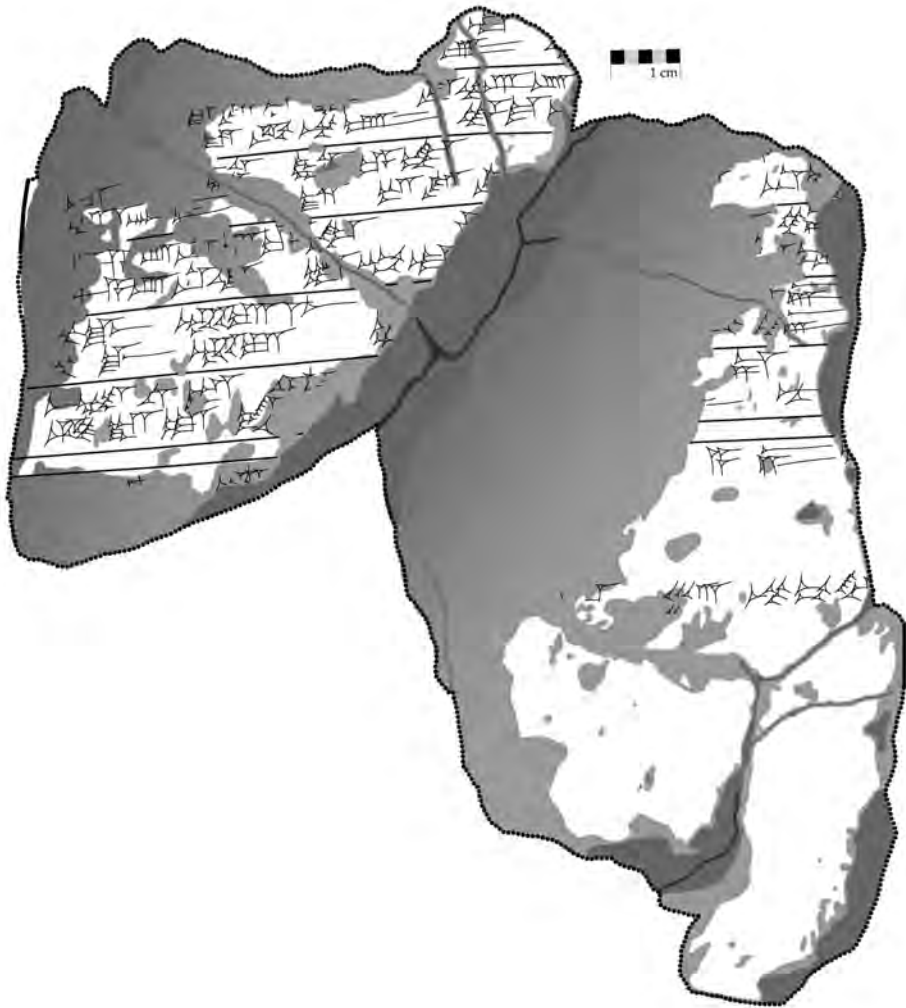Figure 5: VAT 9441 + 10648 + 11216 (= 1978 text bB), obverse

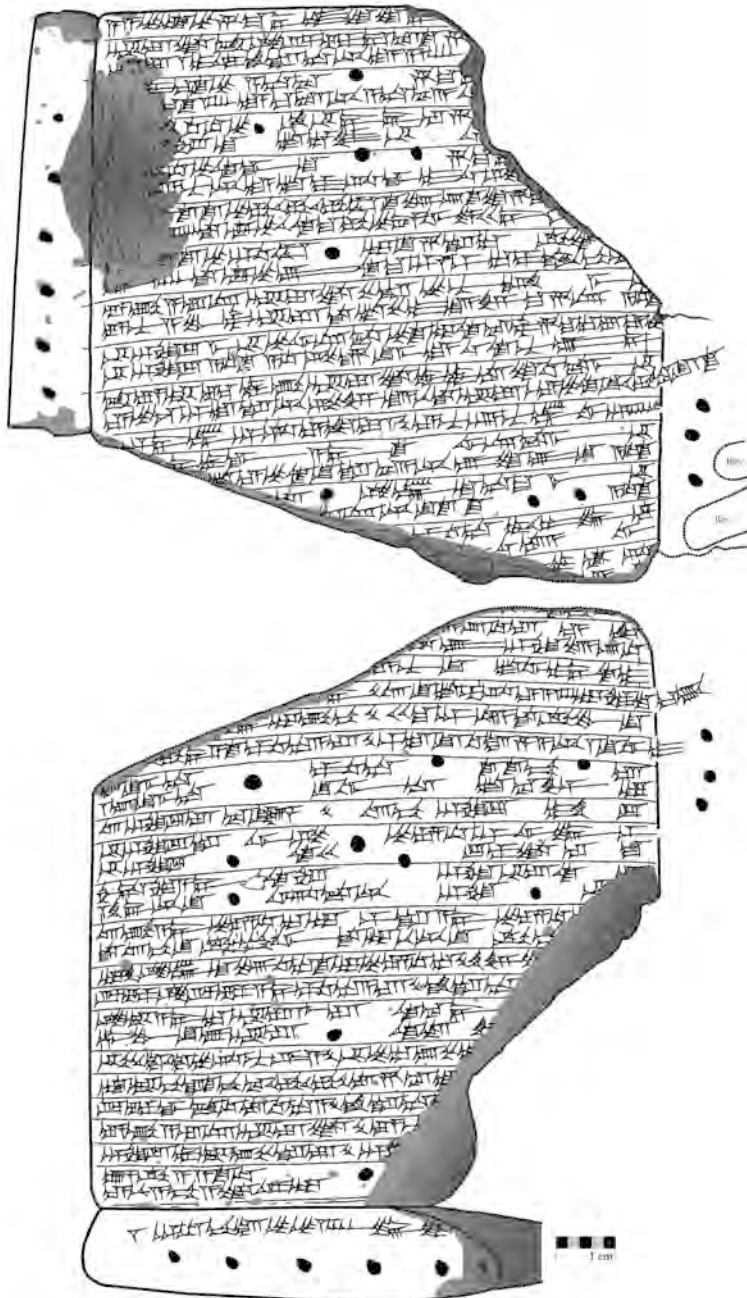Figure 6: VAT 9441 + 10648 + 11216 (= 1978 text bB), reverse

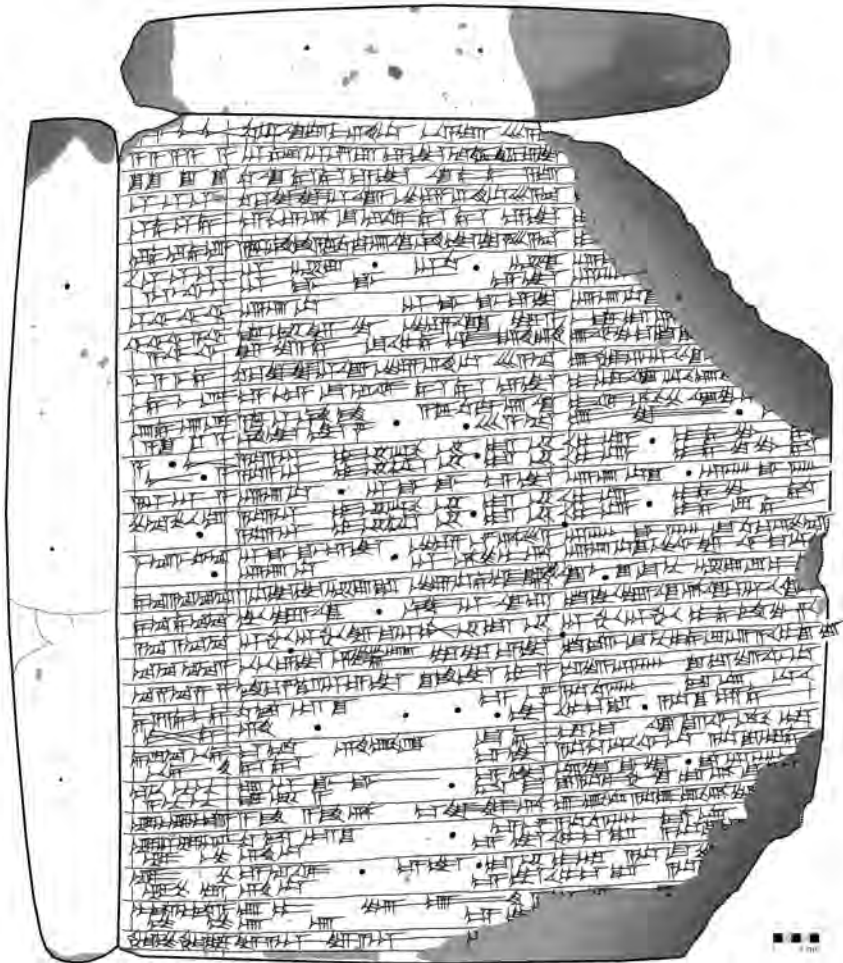Figure 7: VAT 8884 (= *KAR* 18 = 1978 text cC)

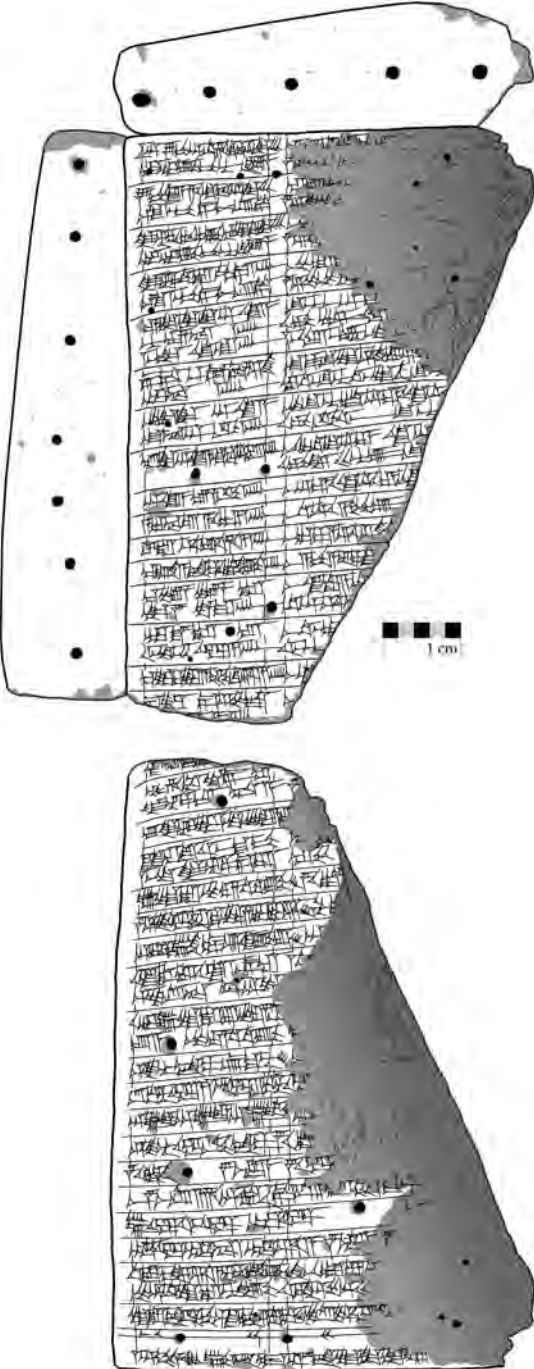Figure 8: VAT 9307 (= *KAR* 4), obverse

Figure 9: VAT 9307 (= *KAR* 4), reverse

Figure 10: VAT 9833 (= *KAR* 24)

Figure 11: Reconstruction of VAT 9833 (+) BM 130660, obverse

Figure 12: Reconstruction of VAT 9833 (+) BM 130660, reverse

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