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Cunéiformes

Two rituals to postpone an ill-omened childbirth: an edition of KAR 223 and duplicates

Henry Stadhouders and Ulrike Steinert

matri longa decem tulerunt fastidia menses

Vergilius, Ecloga 4:61

Abstract

In this article the authors present a text edition of a pair of rituals that seek to delay a childbirth due in Nisannu until the following month. Hitherto the remarkable text has been known from just a single specimen from Assur (KAR 223), which is not free of lacunae. The present edition rests on the much firmer basis of additional five newly identified text witnesses, all of them in Babylonian script. As a result the text of the rituals can now be reconstructed without gaps; also, a textual conundrum encountered in the Assur exemplar needs no longer cause embarrassment, as the new manuscripts prove it to be an inferior reading. In order to put the bipartite ritual in a broader frame culturally and intertextually the edition proper is preceded by an explanatory introduction.

Résumé

Les auteurs de cet article présentent l'édition d'un texte regroupant deux rituels visant à retarder au mois suivant une naissance prévue pour le mois de Nisannu. Jusqu'à présent ce texte remarquable n'était connu que par un seul exemplaire provenant d'Assur (KAR 223), lequel n'était pas exempt de lacunes. La présente édition repose sur une base nettement plus solide avec le témoignage de cinq textes supplémentaires récemment identifiés tous écrits avec le ductus babylonien. En conséquence, le texte de ces rituels peut être reconstruit en totalité et de plus, les embarras rencontrés dans un passage obscur de l'exemplaire d'Assur n'ont plus lieu d'être, car les nouveaux manuscrits montrent qu'il s'agit d'une leçon de moindre qualité. Une introduction explicative précède l'édition proprement dite et permet de situer ce rituel bipartite dans un cadre plus large, tant sur le plan culturel que sur le plan de l'intertextualité.

Keywords: KAR 223, K. 8666, K. 11550, K. 13315, 79-7-8,95, BM 68458, childbirth in Nisannu, nam.búr.bi, boat metaphor, birth rituals, pregnancy rituals, nativity omens, Sin, Šamaš, spindle whorl

PART 1.

INTRODUCTION

The pair of rituals forming the topic of this paper has been known to Assyriologists for almost a century. The prime text witness **A** (KAR 223) was published by Erich Ebeling as a hand copy in the second volume of *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts* in 1920 and edited by the same author in his “Aus dem Tagewerk eines assyrischen Zauberpriesters” in 1931.¹ This Neo-Assyrian tablet in landscape format found in the library N4 at Assur bears the colophon of Kišir-Nabû, son of Šamaš-ibni and nephew of Kišir-Aššur, belonging to the famous family of conjurers (*mašmaššu*) of the Aššur temple.² The colophon (rev. 13-14) states that the tablet was copied according to an older original for the purpose of a ritual performance ((*ana*) *šabāt epēši*).³

A second manuscript of the text (**B** = K. 8666) was briefly cited by Erica Reiner (1967: 191 n. 15) in connection with her discussion of Sultantepe tablets containing Namburbi (“release”) rituals to counter the unpropitious omen of a birth in the month Nisannu. Later on, Marten Stol discovered that K. 8666 forms a duplicate to KAR 223, and he discussed the

¹ Ebeling 1931a: 3-8.

² See Maul 2010: 203ff. dating Kišir-Nabû's active years to the last third of the 7th century BCE; see also Pedersén 1986: 41-75, esp. 61 (98) for the text and the archaeological context (the so-called “Haus des Beschwörungspriesters”).

³ For the colophon see also Hunger 1968: No. 208.

rituals in his book *Birth in Babylonia and the Bible*, including a partial translation of the Assur version (Stol 2000: 93-94).⁴ Since K. 8666 has never been edited, save for its incipit and catch-line, and four more fragmentary tablet witnesses for the rituals have come to light in recent years, it is worthwhile to provide a fresh edition on the broader basis of all the witnesses currently known, buttressed up with succinct comments on the most salient features of this remarkable text.⁵

It is noticeable that KAR 223 is at present the only text witness written in the Neo-Assyrian ductus. All other five manuscripts are in a Neo-Babylonian script; four of them stem from Nineveh (Ms. **B**, **C**, **E** and **F**), while Ms. **D** (BM 68458) comes from Babylonia, presumably from Sippar.⁶ While 79-7-8, 95 (Ms. **C**) was probably inscribed on a small tablet in landscape format like KAR 223, K. 8666 is a one-column tablet in portrait format (IM.GÍD.DA), showing traces of exposure to fire. BM 68458 (Ms. **D**), K. 13315 (Ms. **E**) and K. 11550 (Ms. **F**) present small fragments with duplicating text passages. Manuscripts **A**, **B** and **C** contained the same text of two ritual ceremonies whose purpose is stated in line 1 (Mss. **A** and **B**): “When the month of a woman’s delivery has arrived and it is the month Nisannu – <in order to> let (it) pass by”.⁷ The first ritual to delay a woman’s delivery expected for Nisannu (lines 2-15) consists of instructions for a special amulet to be worn by the woman during the critical month, combined with an offering and prayer to the moon god Šîn, taking place on the roof of the house (presumably in the evening or during the night). The treatment of the woman is complemented by an ointment with plant ingredients and by regular fumigation with aromatics and hair combings. The second ritual (lines 16-32), which takes place in the morning is addressed to the sun god Šamaš, consisting of an offering and prayer (entitled *ÉN Šamaš bēlu šurbû nūr elāti u šaplāti* “Šamaš, exalted lord, light of the upper and lower regions”), which is uttered by the woman while standing on a “ramp” (*šukbusu*).⁸ As additional measures of ritual protection, the woman’s ears are then filled with red wool, she is dressed in a special type of cloth (^{tūg}BA.AN.DUL)⁹ and anointed with oil containing *tarmuš*

⁴ Together with a discussion of the hemerologies and the Namburbi ritual, the latter of which was published for the first time by Maul (1994: 400-408).

⁵ While U. Steinert was working in the British Museum on cuneiform texts related to women’s health care preparing an edition of K. 8666, I. L. Finkel pointed out to her Ms. **C** (79-7-8, 95) as a third duplicate. In an exchange of ideas the present authors had some years ago as BabMed collaborators it turned out that H. Stadhouders had independently identified Mss. **C-E** as duplicates and had painstakingly prepared transliterations of Mss. **A-E**, spending much time and effort in particular on the daunting job of establishing the text of K. 8666. In order to valorize the intellectual investment both authors had put into these texts individually it was decided between them to publish their respective results as a joint article, all the more because these had turned out to be complementary in large measure. In October 2017, Greta van Buylaere kindly informed us of her identification of K. 11550 (Ms. **F**) as yet another duplicating fragment from Nineveh. Since a treatment of the bipartite ritual that will include copies of the hitherto unpublished tablets **B-F** is forthcoming in Steinert’s monograph on women’s healthcare texts (Steinert (in preparation)), the text edition here presented is limited to score and bound text transliterations and a translation. Whereas the authors naturally take equal responsibility for the present article as a whole, it is fair to say that, essentially, Part 1 represents the work of U. Steinert and Part 2 that of H. Stadhouders. In Part 1 the indication ‘Edition line(s) number(s)’ has reference to the text edition in Part 2.

⁶ Leichty and Grayson 1987: 234; for the 82-9-18 collection cf. also Leichty 1986: xxxiii.

⁷ This incipit is also cited as a catchline in a fragmentary Neo- or Late Babylonian tablet, BM 47801 rev. 12’: [*e-nu-ma*] [MUNUS ITI] Û.TU-šú KU₄-am-ma [...] “[When] the month of a woman’s delivery has arrived and [(it is the month Nisannu ...)]”. BM 47801 preserves ritual instructions involving offerings to Ea and Asalluhi and a substitute figurine, as well as an incantation to Šamaš uttered by the patient (the composition is not attested from other texts). The catchline could indicate that BM 47801 belonged to a group of ritual texts related to pregnancy/birth, organised as a series. For BM 47801 see Steinert (in preparation).

⁸ The connection of sun and moon god with birth is well known, and both deities are invoked in connection with fertility, pregnancy and delivery in other prayers/incantations, see e.g. Stol 2000: 63-64, 66-69, 71-72; Polonsky 2006; Steinert 2017a: 223-226.

⁹ Cf. below.

plant and tamarisk seed.¹⁰ The text concludes with the common-sense recommendation that the woman “should not bump (or: strain?) herself” (*ramanša lā uda’ap* [var.: *ida’ip*]), promising that “she will finish the month Nisannu and then give birth” (line 32).

K. 8666 (Ms. **B**) is the only manuscript in which a catchline is preserved (rev. 14’); it refers to the Namburbi ritual to be performed in case the ill-omened event had come to pass after all: “<If> a baby is born in Nisannu between the first and thirtieth day”.¹¹ The continuation of the incipit introducing the Namburbi text, which is also known in abbreviated form from hemerological texts, is worth quoting in full: “If a baby is born in Nisannu between the first and thirtieth day, by his feet (i.e. through his own actions) his father’s house will be disrupted;¹² either the ‘hand’ of his god or the ‘hand’ of the king will reach his father and his mother. As to that baby: it will fare well in future days. ‘Release’-ritual in order that the evil of that baby does not reach his father and mother, in order to make that disaster go by, that this evil goes away and does not come near to his father and his mother.”¹³ In contrast to the rituals in KAR 223 and duplicates, which focuses on the pregnant woman, the Namburbi ritual is performed for the head of the household and father of the child, in a secluded place in the steppe. It consists of offerings to Ea, Šamaš and Asalluhi including a sheep sacrifice, and a prayer to be recited by the man asking the gods to avert the evil portended by the untimely birth of his child and cleanse him of any concomitant effects. The evil is transmitted to garden plants on which the client has to stand, and which were presumably discarded in the river afterwards, since the man beseeches the river god in a second prayer to take over the evil threatening him.¹⁴

Since the catchline of K. 8666 poses a link with a Namburbi ritual, the latter of which is a type of ritual associated with the lore and practice of *āšipūtu*, the “craft of the ritual specialist/conjurer” in the Exorcist’s Manual (KAR 44: 29 and duplicates), we can be quite certain that KAR 223 likewise belonged to the realm of the *āšipu*.¹⁵ The basic features of the rituals in KAR 223 and duplicates, e.g. their nature as protective rituals avoiding and warding off an imminent event that would cause misfortune and disaster, as well as the characteristic

¹⁰ Filling the woman’s ears with red wool and dressing her in this special type of cloth are features so far unique to the present ritual.

¹¹ Read ‘LÚ’.TUR, not MUNUS.TUR as was suggested by Stol 2000: 93 n. 19. For the Namburbi ritual see Maul 1994: 400-408 and Stol 2000: 94-95.

¹² For *ina šēpēšu* see Heeßel 2000: 328; cf. Steinert 2012: 229-230 for the metonymic use of *šēpu* for “person; self” in idiomatic phrases.

¹³ Cited from Stol 2000: 95 with n. 25; cf. Maul 1994: 401-402, preserved in the Namburbi texts A. 184 (from Assur), STT 72 and 251 (Sultantepe). The omen is also found in *Iqqur īpuš* (Labat 1965: 132 § 64: 1 (K. 11082: 13). The incipit is further cited in a catalogue of Namburbi tablets from Late Babylonian Uruk (SpTU 1, 6: 12; Maul 1994: 192).

¹⁴ Mention should be made of another omen context, in which the prognosis that a baby will bring about disruption of his father’s house occurs but is coupled with a quite shocking recommendation to undo the portended evil. Tablet 29 of the *Diagnostic Handbook* contains two entries, in which a demon of epileptic seizures, Lugalurra or “the spawn of Šulpaea”, “is born” with a person, referring to a newborn suffering from a severe form of epilepsy (lines 1-3 and 22-24, Heeßel 2000: 318, 320). The first omen advises to bury the child alive in the crouched position of a *kūbu* (an unborn foetus *in utero*) to avoid disaster; in the second omen the baby is to be thrown into the river alive in order to have it carry off the evil sign. For discussion see Stol 1993: 89 and Heeßel 2000: 329-330, 335 (with further parallels). We follow Heeßel’s hand copy and disregard Kinnier Wilson’s deviating reading and interpretation (Kinnier Wilson 2007). The harsh measure taken in this particular case cannot be explained solely on the basis of the negative prognosis for the parents; it may possibly have been prompted as well by the belief that a newborn affected by these demonic diseases was seen as a manifestation of the demons in human shape, a *monstrum*. For two similar cases of the incurable “spawn of Šulpaea” in an adult, which foreshadow disaster for the family, and in which the patient is to be killed by being buried alive or being burned, see STT 89: 174-186, discussed in Stol 1993: 15; Reiner 1966: 92; Heeßel 2000: 329.

¹⁵ For the Exorcist’s Manual see Geller 2000: 242-254, 256-258; Jean 2006: 62-82 and for a fresh edition, Geller 2018.

“therapeutic” measures applied (amulet, ointment, fumigation) likewise point in the direction of the discipline *āšipūtu*.

The instructions for the amulet opening the first ritual are noteworthy in several respects. One unusual feature is the use of sixty spindle whorls (*qaqqad pilakki*), thirty of which should be of tamarisk wood (*bīnu*^{giš}SINIG), and the other thirty of *musukkannu*-wood (^{giš}MES.MÁ.GAN.NA), which the practitioner is instructed to produce especially for the occasion.¹⁶ The use of spindle whorls (lit. “spindle heads”) made of wood or stone as a component of amulets is rarely encountered in other texts. For example, collections of amulets for various purposes mention spindle whorls of two different materials, *mēsu*-wood and of *algamešu*-stone (steatite?), among the items for two amulets, one of which was applied “If a man’s face is spinning all the time” (*šumma amēlu panūšu iššanundū*) and the other one in a cure to stop the gnashing of teeth (Schuster-Brandis 2008: 109-111 Kette 61 and 64).¹⁷ At least in the first example, the spindle whorl must have been chosen because of an assumed link with the patient’s symptom (either referring to “spinning” as distorted facial features or to feelings of vertigo).¹⁸

In the ritual under discussion, however, the spindle whorls may have been chosen for a different reason, supposedly because spindles were objects typically used by women and symbolise femininity.¹⁹ The sixty spindle whorls are strung on a cord of multi-coloured wool and sixty knots are tied into the cord. The number sixty corresponds with the instruction in lines 7-9 that the woman has to cut off and throw away one of the tamarisk and *musukkannu*-whorls each day throughout the month Nisannu (from the first to the thirtieth day).²⁰ The amulet is complemented by two other cords with *magico-medical* materials according to Ms. A (this passage is omitted in Ms. B): thirty “grains” of the *musukkannu* tree (seeds or small kernels of wood)²¹ are strung on a cord of red wool, and fifteen (!) pieces of *e’ru*-(cornel) wood²² are threaded on another cord of red wool, both combined with an identical number of knots. Then Ms. A (KAR 223: 5) adds: “you tie stones (worn around) the hips by a woman ‘who does not bear easily’ (MUNUS NU SI.SÁ) together with them (i.e. the knots mentioned before)”, referring to amulet prescriptions for women to avoid premature delivery known from other sources.²³ The whole ensemble was attached to the woman’s body (presumably to

¹⁶ Probably, both types of wood had a contrastive colour (light/dark). *Musukkannu* has been identified as Pakistani rosewood (*Dalbergia sissoo*), cf. Borger 2004: 341 No. 486; Tengberg and Potts 1999: 131-132, who also note archaeological attestations of spindle whorls made from rosewood found at Iranian sites. The wood of this tree is hard and of a dark brown colour; it was imported and later also cultivated in Mesopotamia. The meaning of the Sumerian equivalent, ^{giš}mes-má-gan-na “*mēsu*-tree from Magan” also points to an Eastern origin (cf. CAD M/2 237-239). In contrast, tamarisk wood has a light colour, which may have a reddish hue.

¹⁷ For the first amulet see BAM 376 ii 12’ // AMT 46/1 i 24’ // K. 3937+ 2. col. 6’ (Schuster-Brandis 2008: 208ff. Text 3), for the second amulet see BAM 376 ii 16’ // BAM 372 iii 4’ // BAM 364 i 3 (Schuster-Brandis 2008: Text 2) // BAM 30: 44 // K. 3937+ 2. col. 10’ etc. For *algamešu* see also Schuster-Brandis 2008: 393-394.

¹⁸ Note STT 89: 103 and 109, where is made the telling comparison: “If (the patient’s) right/left eye circles like a spindle” (*īnšu ša imitti/šumēli kīma pilaqqi ilammi*), see Stol 1993: 91-92. Cf. also SpTU 5, No. 257 rev. 14, comparing someone’s spindle with a whirlwind (*ašamšūtu*), von Weiher 1998: 74 and 171.

¹⁹ See e.g. CAD P 372-373 sub b; Waetzoldt 2011: 1-3, esp. § 2; Stol 2016: 29-33, 339-340.

²⁰ Ms. A (KAR 223) stands out from the rest in having the singular and quite perplexing reading: “from the first day of Nisannu to the thirtieth day of Ayāru” (Edition line 8; A:6) which is again repeated in the prayer to Šin (Edition line 17; A:11), requesting divine protection for this two-month period. However, since the other manuscripts unanimously read “from the first day of Nisan to the first day of Ayāru” here, Ms. A must be considered corrupt, for the period of danger stipulated in line 1 does only concern the month Nisannu, not the month Ayāru, which is regarded as propitious.

²¹ Cf. CAD U/W, s.v. *uṭṭatu* sub 2.

²² Collation has proved the hand copy of A (KAR 223) wrong in having the number 14; the physical tablet has 15, which belongs well among the multiples thirty and sixty that play a pivotal role in the ritual.

²³ The verb *ešēru* (SI.SÁ) “to be/go straight” is encountered in the Š-stem with the meaning “to let (the child) pass, to let (it) go easily (referring to a normal birth)”, while the Št-stem is used with the meaning “to give birth

the hips), although the text is fragmentary and does not give detailed instructions as to how the different strings had to be arranged.

As a fascinating feature, the text further states that the woman is supposed to throw away the spindle whorls in the staircase of the house (*ina bīt simmilti*), and this architectonic feature is also mentioned in the following ritual instructions (cf. below). The locality “staircase” seems to be of specific significance in the present ritual, since to our knowledge the staircase is rarely mentioned as the scene of action for any episode of other Mesopotamian rituals.²⁴ It is likely that the staircase was seen as a place of passage (from the lower floor of the house to the roof), befitting the situation of the woman who is ritually held in a suspended moment of passage (between pregnancy and delivery).²⁵ The amulet tied with knots prescribed here was clearly intended to delay the moment of birth, and the gradual disposal of the spindle whorls seems to materialize the idea of a gradual release of the woman from the burden of her pregnancy.²⁶

The instructions for the amulet are immediately followed by a description of further ritual actions taking place on the roof of the house: the woman goes up to the roof, where an offering table and censer are set up “in front of Šin”. The patient participates in the ritual by bringing or lifting up a BA.AN.DUL-cloth from the ground (floor?) and “drawing” (*išaddadma*) it (Edition line 12).²⁷ Then she has to take this cloth up “from the staircase to the roof”, where she has to spread it out and assume a specific position on top of the cloth (Edition line 14, *ina muhhi ikerri*). Although the exact meaning remains rather unclear,²⁸ the verb underlying the

easily”, e.g. in the context of birth rituals/incantations to speed up difficult labour in BAM 248 iv 12 (CAD E s.v. *ešēru* sub 6a-2’ and 10; Scurlock 2014: 599; cf. also BAM 248 i 53). However, the female participle (Št) in the expression *sinništu lā muštēširtu* (MUNUS NU SLSÁ) is used in a ritual in SpTU 5, 248 to describe a female patient who gets pregnant but cannot bring her pregnancies to term, and this meaning also fits the present context of KAR 223 // (for discussion of SpTU 5, 248 see Scurlock 2002: 215-223; Couto-Ferreira 2013). An incantation and stones for a MUNUS NU SLSÁ (*sinništu lā muštēširtu*) are preserved on a Sultantepe tablet (see STT 241: 7 and 29, Schuster-Brandis 2008: 149-150; Stol 2000: 132-133). Elsewhere, amulets with stones are used to protect pregnant women from miscarriages provoked by sorcery and other evil influences, and are attached to different body parts including the woman’s hips, see e.g. Thureau-Dangin 1921: 164ff.; discussed in Schuster-Brandis 2008: 147-149; Schwemer 2007: 101 No. 41 rev. v 2’ff. including a amulet of “59 stones for the hips ..., a string of amulet stones for a pregnant woman” (59 NA₄.MEŠ šá MURUB₄.MEŠ ... *tak-ši-ri šá* MUNUS.PEŠ₄). For the texts see also Steinert (in preparation).

²⁴ Cf. CAD S 275. C. Ambos (2014-2016: 123 § 3) mentions a few examples for the use of ladders in Mesopotamian and Hittite rituals, where they symbolise the cosmic passage between upper world and netherworld. For the heavenly ladder (*simmilat šamāmī*) connecting earth/netherworld and heaven, cf. W. Horowitz 1998, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography* (Winona Lake), 66.

²⁵ Cf. similarly Ambos 2014-2016: 123.

²⁶ The symbolism of tying and untying (e.g. knots) is commonly met with in rituals focussing on maintaining gestation and speeding up labour.

²⁷ For *šadādu* “to draw (a curtain or cloth)” in connection with setting up ritual offerings, see CAD Š/1, 22 sub 1b. For a varying interpretation of *šadādu* in the present context, i.e. that the woman drags or brings along the cloth with her up to the roof, cf. the Edition below and respective meanings assembled in CAD Š/1 s.v. *šadādu* sub 2-3.

²⁸ The Akkadian reading of ^{túg}BA.AN.DUL as well as the meaning of the lexeme have not yet been established with certainty. The lexical texts only attest to a Sumerian noun ^gba-an-dul, which designates a reed mat made of palm fibres (also used for fences), which is equated with Akkadian *zibnu* and *ib/pšu*, see AHW 364a, 1524b; CAD I/J 171, CAD Z 104; MSL 7, 52: 308; MSL 9, 184: 307. The classifier TÚG suggests that in KAR 223 //, BA.AN.DUL refers to a cloth, possibly made from plant fibres rather than wool and having a coarse texture(?). The word *zibnu* “reed mat” itself is attested only a few times in rituals. In LKA 154 + LKA 155 (KAL 2, 24) obv. 21 (Abusch and Schwemer 2011: 258: 31 No. 8.1 Ms. B), an anti-witchcraft ritual, pairs of figurines representing the witches and warlocks have to be clothed in a reed mat, which may possibly be interpreted as an allusion to burial practices and to the aim of the ritual: to destroy the power of the witches and warlocks and send them to the netherworld, see in particular lines 111-114 of this text (incantation to Šamaš), Abusch and Schwemer 2011: 262 (= LKA 154+155 rev. 40-43). In a second ritual performed for the king and generically related to penitential prayers (*šigû*-lamentations), the royal patient has to lie down on a reed mat bedding (KI.NÁ *zi-ib-ni i-na-al-la*),

form *ikerri* seems to be *kerû* (presumably a variant of *karû* “to be short”) or *qerû* “to invite”, yet neither of these verbs would appear to fit the context neatly; the latter is objectionable not only semantically but also because an accusative complement is missing. It may be suggested with due reserve that the woman has to assume a crouching or curled-up position, since the text continues with the instruction that the woman should get up again and stand erect (*itebbîma izzazma*), washing her hands in front of Sîn (cf. the commentary to lines 14-15 below). After the ablution she says (*iqabbi*/DU₁₁.GA) a short prayer to the moon god three times (Edition lines 17-19).²⁹ It is noteworthy that in Mss. **A** and **C**, the prayer’s incipit with the address “Oh Sîn, luminary of heaven and earth” is omitted; Ms. **B** and **F** are the only manuscripts having this line.³⁰ In the prayer, the woman implores the moon god to take care of her during the critical period, adding the wish that her baby shall eventually “see the light”, thereby expressing her hope for a successful delivery. The ritual ends with a short prescription for an ointment and a fumigation, to be administered downstairs and repeatedly “until she gives birth” (Edition lines 20-23).

The second ritual begins with setting up an offering table and censer “in front of Šamaš” and a libation of beer (Edition lines 24-25). Then the text stipulates that the woman should take up position “on a ramp” (Edition line 26 *ina muhhi šukbusi izzazma*), where she has to utter the incantation prayer *Šamaš bēlu šurbû nūr elāti u šaplāti* “Šamaš, exalted lord, light of the upper and lower regions” three times, repeating the words said aloud for her by the practitioner first.³¹ The noun *šukbusu*, translated in CAD Š/3 214b as “ramp” and in AHw 1263a as “Tritt” or “Stufe”, merits a short digression. Apart from the present ritual, the word *šukbusu* is only attested in a few other Neo-Assyrian ritual texts. LKA 141 is a fragmentary tablet from Assur copied by Kišir-Aššur that contains procedures for pacifying the angry personal god or the god of the “house(hold)” (*il bīti*).³² The ceremony to resolve the anger of the personal god (rev. lines 3-8) takes place on the roof, whereas in KAR 223 // the locality remains unspecified. What LKA 141 and KAR 223 // have in common is that in both of them the instruction for the patient to “step on a ramp” is followed by a prayer to Šamaš, to be said by the patient, and a subsequent prostration (LKA 141 rev. 7-8: ‘LÚ BI *ina* UGU’ *šuk-bu-si* GUB-az-ma ŠU^{II}-su DAB-bat-ma [...] / ana ‘IGI dUTU t[u-šad]-bab-šú-ma uš-ken). A minor detail that sets KAR 223 // apart from LKA 141 rev. 7 is that in the latter the conjurer holds the patient’s hand for the duration of the prayer.³³ A second ritual text mentioning a *šukbusu* “ramp” is found in KAR 90, likewise from Assur and copied for a ritual performance by Ki[šir-Aššur].³⁴ This tablet contains the instructions for the performance of the ceremony to calm down the anger of one’s personal god entitled *ilī ul īdī*, designated after an incantation belonging to the genre known under the Sumerian rubric DINGIR.ŠĀ.DAB.BA.(GUR.RU.DA.KAM)

presumably as a gesture of suffering and penitence (K. 3519+9012+ obv.(!) 5’ (unpubl.), now joined to IV R² 54 (61), No. 2, see CDLI P394505 for a photo of the tablet). A new edition of this text including further duplicating fragments is projected by H. Stadhouders. For *šigû* see further CAD Š/2 413-414; van der Toorn 1985: 117-121, 124-154.

²⁹ See Edition lines 16 and 20; by way of comparison, note the contrast in the second ritual (cf. below) between *tamannu* (ŠID-*nu*) “you recite” (Edition line 26) and *tušadbabšu* “you have her say (i.e. repeat)” (the incantation; Edition line 37). For *qabû* and *dabābu* (Š-stem) indicating an active role on the part of the patient, to wit the repeating of an incantation prayer uttered first by the healer, see Couto-Ferreira 2015: 187-200.

³⁰ See also Mayer 1976: 409 Sîn 12.

³¹ For the prayer see also Mayer 1976: 417.

³² For the colophon see Hunger 1968: No. 203; see further Pedersén 1986: 73 (543).

³³ The Šamaš prayer beginning in LKA 141 obv. 17’ff. (Mayer 1976: 418 Šamaš 65) may in fact belong to the ritual on the reverse.

³⁴ Thus Ebeling 1931b: 120 No. 28 rev. 20 (written on the upper edge): *a-na ša-bat DÙ-ši mKi-š[ir-...]*; Pedersén 1986: 60 (67). The reading Kišir-Nabû is equally possible. The instruction to step on a ramp is further encountered in a ritual fragment from Nineveh (K. 9680: 8’, unpubl.).

“(To turn back) the angry heart of the god”.³⁵ The ritual covered by KAR 90 is far more elaborate than KAR 223 // and LKA 141. It takes place “in front of the door of/on the left” (obv. 2: *ina IGI^{giš}IG šá GUB*), which seems to refer to a specific door in the patient’s house (the door to the left wing?), pointing perhaps to the inner courtyard of the house as the place to stage the ceremony. The specialist first sets up an elaborate offering arrangement in a holy space ritually demarcated by a flour circle and performs the mouth washing rite on the patient. Then, in obv. 15, the latter has to step on a *ramp* (*ina UGU šuk-bu-si GUB-az*), whereupon he has to say incantation prayers to his personal god. As in LKA 141, the specialist takes the patient’s hand, and the recitation is followed by a prostration. A comparison of the three rituals with respect to location and significance of *šukbusu* “ramp”, suggests that the word most likely denotes an architectural feature, quite possibly a type of staircase (of a different type than *similtu* “ladder; staircase” encountered earlier in KAR 223 //) or a component thereof.³⁶ The ritual action of having the patient step on the *šukbusu* may thus have served to mark the transitional status of the patient. It cannot be excluded, however, that the *šukbusu* may have been one of the smaller moveables in the house, such as a footstool; something of the kind might be implied in KAR 223 //, where it is stipulated that, once the pregnant woman has repeated the prayer to Šamaš three times, she should prostrate herself, after which the practitioner lets her sit or squat down (*tu-še-šib-ši*) to be administered further prophylactic/protective treatments (Edition lines 37-40).³⁷

Another interesting element of the Šamaš prayer in KAR 223 // is the occurrence of the formula of self-introduction (Edition lines 21-22): “I have called out to you [...], I, Mrs. NN, daughter of Mrs. NN, [whose god is NN], whose goddess is NN”. Notably, the woman is identified through the female line (as daughter of Mrs. NN) rather than through the usual patrilineal affiliation encountered in prayers for male patients.³⁸ The woman then calls herself “a full boat”, alluding to a classic metaphor for the pregnant woman encountered in birth incantations,³⁹ and expresses her problem: “for the purpose of letting pass by the month I am due to deliver I have turned to you” (Edition line 33), and she alludes to the impending danger of her situation (Edition line 34: “Because it lies with you to let the evil sign pass by, to loosen the knot of evil!”), asking the sun god to let the month elapse (Edition line 35: “Let this month in which I am due to deliver pass by for me!”).

³⁵ See Lambert 1974: esp. 269 for these incantations and their links with KAR 90 as well as for the correct reading of KAR 90 obv. 1: *e-nu-ma né-pe-ši ša i-lí ul i-di te-[ep-pu-šú]* “When you perform the ritual of ‘My god, I do not know’”.

³⁶ The word is a šuPRuS derivation of the verb *kabāsu* “to step, to trample; to walk upon”, which in the Š-stem also means “to make a road or ramp by compressing and stamping the soil” (CAD K 11 sub 7c). This meaning is attested especially in Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions describing different building projects. The noun *šukbusu* is not discussed by Hilgert 2006-2008: § 1 among other Akkadian terms used to designate ramps, which are mostly attested as larger constructions in cities enabling access to specific buildings (e.g. palace/temple terraces or city gates), but they are also found in monumental buildings (see Hausleiter 2006-2008). For ramps or staircases in the Neo-Assyrian palace architecture, where they seem to be restricted largely to the throne room and most likely led to the palace roof, see Kertai 2015: 205-210, 215-216. The construction of ramps inside residential buildings to reach the roof (or an upper floor) would have been a rarer phenomenon compared with the use of staircases, and it may be for this reason that ramps occur only sporadically in the textual record. For staircases, cf. also C. Ambos 2014-2016; Miglus 1999: 64-66, 140-141, 163-172; Miglus 2014-2016.

³⁷ Ebeling (1931b: 118 note e) surmised that *šukbusu* could mean “das Betretbare”, referring to a “profane” area, in which the patient would have been allowed to position himself without infringing on the demarcated (sacred) ritual space.

³⁸ Cf. BM 54846, a fragmentary tablet from the Achaemenid period, which preserves part of a birth(?) incantation recited for a woman who seems to be identified by name and affiliation in obv. 7’. Here, the text inserts the name of the father. See Steinert (in preparation) for an edition of the text.

³⁹ For discussion see e.g. Stol 2000: 61-62, 103, 140-141; Steinert 2017b. The latest study of the metaphor by Aino Häntinen came too late for us to give it our due attention (“‘I am a Fully Laden Boat!’: A Mesopotamian Metaphor Revisited”, KASKAL 14 [2017], 169-185).

One problem remains to be tackled: why was Nisannu, of all months, considered so ill-boding in connection with childbirth in the hemerological tradition and what may have motivated the belief that delivery in this month was an evil sign for the parents or the family at large (apart from the rationale and prediction given in the texts themselves). It is remarkable that the whole month is deemed negative, not just particular days. Thus, we learn from texts such as the Offering Bread Hemerology (Livingstone 2013: 107ff.) that particular days of each month were regarded as “evil days” (UD.ĤUL.GÁL, *ūmu lemnu*). This hemerology keeps to a schedule of nine evil days (which fall on day 1, 7, 9, 14, 19, 21, 24, 29, 30 of any one month).⁴⁰ It is interesting to observe that apart from this summarising statement at the end of the text, specific evil days seem to be stipulated only in the section for the first month, Nisannu, though it is possible that the same days were considered as evil in every other month as well.⁴¹

It might well be that Nisannu as the first month of the year, in which one of the major religious festivals took place (the New Year’s festival *akītu*), had a higher number of evil (dangerous) days than the other months, but the textual record is neither complete nor unequivocal enough to confirm this hypothesis.⁴² Moreover, if one compares the preserved omens in *Iqqur īpuš* concerning all sorts of activities carried out by a common man in the month Nisannu, the majority of them gives a negative prognosis either for the man himself or for his household. Negative prognoses are attached to all major activities or changes affecting the structure and state of a man’s house and landed possessions (e.g. building a house, laying its foundations, demolishing a house, filling the foundation platform, altering a house, moving into a new house, “opening” a well, a tomb, an uncultivated plot for cultivation, renewing a garden), whereas activities of a restorative and cultic or religious nature undertaken in Nisannu are counted positive (e.g. inspecting the house, returning home, bringing the house in order, repairing a divine dais, restoring a divine statue, bringing offerings to one’s god).⁴³ Notably, with regard to activities implying changes in family structure, taking a wife in Nisannu or letting the bride move into the husband’s household (consummation of marriage) are associated with a positive prognosis, whereas the birth of a child in this month means disaster. One could speculate that, since house-building activities were generally regarded as ambivalent hemerologically, they were ascribed an ominous significance of the highest degree and, as a consequence, needed to be accompanied by appropriate rituals.⁴⁴ Inasmuch as birth likewise had an ambivalent significance and was considered a dangerous and potentially life-threatening event (for both mother and child), birth in Nisannu may have been classified as similarly ill-boding and contrary to the religious character of the month (i.e. aiming at the renewal and stability of society and cosmos rather than change implicated by the birth of a child). This being said, it needs to be added that not only Nisannu, but other months, too, were deemed unsuitable or dangerous for each of the enumerated activities (often about half of the months are either negative or positive), and the passage in *Iqqur īpuš* on the birth of a child in

⁴⁰ Livingstone 2013: 149: 64-66, preserved in KAR 178 and 179. Especially the multiples of seven and the 19th day (associated with the wrath of Gula) counted as evil days, see Livingstone 2013: 258.

⁴¹ As a slight divergence, the Nisannu section also registers the 28th day of the month associated with “laying the brick (birthing) structure of Bēlet-ilī” as evil (Livingstone 2013: 115 KAR 178 iii 14-15).

⁴² The number of lucky days also differs for each month according to the preserved tables listing them throughout the year, but other months can have fewer lucky days than Nisannu, cf. Livingstone 2013: 83-98 *passim*. Evil days were apparently differentiated from “unlucky” days (NU ŠE), which were unfavourable for specific activities.

⁴³ See Labat 1965: §§ 1, 5, 7-13, 17, 41-44 (all negative), cf. § 65; §§ 14-16, 21, 29, 31-33, 36, 61-62 (positive). Some of the omens have also been integrated into *Šumma ālu* (terrestrial omen series), see Freedman 1998: 88 (Tablet 5: 1-3), 240 (Tablet 16: 3), 256 (Tablet 17: 34); see further 162 (Tablet 10: 51), 166 (Tablet 10: 130) for similar ominous activities in different months.

⁴⁴ See Ambos 2004: 8f., 29ff., 63ff. *passim* for omens related to house-building and for apotropaic and protective rituals performed in the course of construction and renovation.

the twelve months of the year is no exception.⁴⁵ The significant thing, however, is that with the exception of the month Nisannu — which foreshadows disaster for the whole family/household — all the prognoses concerning the birth of a baby in the other months of the year seem to concern the fate of the child only (e.g. sudden/early death, old age, poverty or prosperity in later life). The impending consequences of a birth in Nisannu were thus regarded as more dramatic and called for immediate ritual action to counter their effect. It should also be pointed out that, whereas most of the human activities or mundane happenings listed in the first part of *Iqqur īpuš* (from house building to marriage) could be planned and inauspicious months could be avoided, childbirth could not be planned to the same degree (even if people may have tried to time sexual intercourse/conception with regard to the expected delivery nine months later, for which we do not have a shred of evidence).⁴⁶ Birth in a specific ill-boding month was thus similar to other ominous signs manifesting themselves in natural phenomena or disasters at particular times, such as a fire in one's house caused by lightning or encounters with wild animals. The feared consequences of ominous events beyond human control could be averted through appropriate rituals, which the Mesopotamian healers called Namburbi ('release') rituals. Even so, the fact that the month in which a woman was due to deliver could be roughly calculated had evidently prompted the healers to devise a ritual for the special purpose of manipulating the moment that the expected event was to happen, a precautionary measure that should make their resort to a Namburbi later on redundant. Trying to postpone an imminent birth by means of a ritual may be regarded as a benign or gentle way of steering a physical process, since it is opting for a delay of the due date rather than inducing premature labour before the expected month has arrived, e.g. by administering abortive drugs.

PART 2.

TEXT EDITION

Sources

A = VAT 8004, published as KAR 223; provenance: Assur. Landscape format, fairly well preserved, though seriously deteriorated over the last century. Assyrian script; obv.: 20 lines = Edition 1-29; rev.: 12 lines = Edition 30-41; 3 lines of colophon. Collated; corrected readings are marked by ¹; any emendation of the physical cuneiform of this and the other text witnesses is indicated by double exclamation marks ^{!!}. Signs completely lost since Ebeling published his copy are put between {}; what signs are partially lost appear between ³.

B = K. 8666, unedited; photo on CDLI, P238752; provenance: Nineveh; first mentioned by E. Reiner, JNES 26 (1967), 191, n. 15. Portrait format, tablet almost completely preserved but text at many places worn off or otherwise disfigured. Babylonian script; obv. 21 lines = Edition 1-26; rev. 13 lines = Edition 31-41; 1 line taken up by a catchline, 2 lines of colophon; in total four to five lines entirely lost at the bottom.

C = 79-7-8, 95, unedited; photo on CDLI, P236879; provenance: most likely Nineveh (CBT 1, xxix, labels the 79-7-8 consignment as "Assyrian, apart from possible strays"); identified independently by I. Finkel and H. Stadhouders. Big fragment, landscape format, preserving about half of the original text. Neatly written in Babylonian script; obv.: 13 lines = Edition 3-23; rev.: 12 lines = Edition 24-41.

D = BM 68458 (82-9-18, 8456), unpubl.; photos at the end of this article; provenance: Babylonia, probably Sippar; identified by H. Stadhouders. Fragment of a portrait format tablet, Babylonian script; obv.: 8 lines = Edition 17-23; rev.: 9 lines = Edition 28-34. CBT 2, 234

⁴⁵ See Labat 1965: 134ff. § 64.

⁴⁶ Note the attestation of the Middle Babylonian female personal name *Nisannītum* "She of (i.e. born in) the Nisannu" (PBS 2/2, 142: 10; BE 15, 190 iii 17), showing that birth in Nisannu was occasionally remembered in the child's name. One wonders whether the belief in the negative impact of birth in Nisannu is a phenomenon of the 1st millennium BCE texts.

describes the fragment curiously as “rituals and incantations on behalf of a woman who describes herself as an ‘empty boat’.”

E = K. 13315, unedited; photo on CDLI, P239201; provenance: Nineveh; identified by H. Stadhouders. Tiny fragment of a tablet in landscape format, Babylonian script; obv.: 4 lines = Edition 10-13; rev.: 8 lines = Edition 27-37.

F = K. 11550, unedited; photo on CDLI, P239012; provenance: Nineveh; identified by G. van Buylaere, to whom thanks are due for kindly bringing her discovery to our attention. Small fragment, portrait format (?), Babylonian script; obv.: 6 lines = Edition 15-19; rev.: 6 lines = Edition 30-34.

Score text transliteration

1.

A₁ {^re¹-nu¹-ma¹MUNUS ITI} šá Û.TU-šá KU₄-ma ^rITI¹? [B]I² it_iBARA₂ <ana> šu-[]

B₁ ^re¹-nu-ma MUNUS ITI šá Û.TU -šá i-ru-ba-am-ma it_iBARA₂ <ana> šu-tu-qí
2.

A₂ {DÙ.DÙ.B}I 1 šu-ši SAG.DU gišBALA 30 ša gišŠINIG

B₂ DÙ.DÙ.BI 60+šu SAG.DU gišBALA 30 SAG.DU gišBALA gišŠINIG
3.

A_{2/3} 30 šá gišMES.MÁ.GA[N.NA] / {ina sig¹ba}-ru-un-di È-ak

B₃ 30 SAG.DU gišBALA giš^rMES¹.MÁ.GAN.NA DÙ-uš ina sig¹ba-ru-un-di È-ak

C₁ [] x x x []
4.

A₃ 1 šu-ši KA.KÉŠ KÉŠ 30 ŠE gišMES.MÁ.GAN.NA ina SÍG SA₅.A []

B₄ ^r60+šu KA.KÉŠ¹ KÉŠ

C₂ []
5.

A₄ {30 K[A].K}ÉŠ KÉŠ 15¹ GIG gišMA.NUina SÍG SA₅.A È-a[k]
6.

A₅ [15 KA.KÉŠ K]ÉŠ NA₄.MEŠ MURUB₄.MEŠ šá MUNUS.NU.SI.SÁ it-ti-šú-nu ta-ša-^rmid¹
7.

A₆ [] KÉŠ-si ul-tú¹¹ U₄.1.KÁM šá it_iBARA₂ EN U₄.30.KÁM

B₄ ^rina MURUB₄.MEŠ-šá KÉŠ¹ TA U₄.1.KAM šá it_iBARA₂ EN U₄.30.KAM

C₂ [] .KÁM šá it_iBARA₂ EN U₄.30.[]
8.

A₆ šá it_iGU₄ u₄-mu 1+en SAG.DU gišBALA

B₅ ^rU₄¹ 1+en SAG.DU gišBALA ^rgišŠINIG ¹ù 1+en SAG.DU gišBALA
9.

A₇ [] -i]l-tu₄ i-bat-taq-ma i-na-suk

B_{6/7} ^rgišMES¹.MÁ.GAN.NA ina ^rÉ¹ sim-^rmi¹-il-ti i-bat-taq-ma / []-^rna¹-[]-suk

C_{3/4} [] ba]t-taq-ma / []
10.

A₈ []-^rm¹a¹ ana¹ IGI ^dsin GI.DU₈ tara-kás

B₇ a-na ú-ri il-li-ma ana IGI ^dsin GI.DU₈ KÉŠ-as

C₄ [] ana IGI ^dsin GI.DU₈ KÉŠ

E₁ x []
11.

A_{8/9} NÍG.NA šim^{LI} GAR-an KAŠ BAL-qí-ma/ []

B₈ [] .N[A]LI GA[R-an K]AŠ.[S]AG BAL-qí-ma la tuš-ken

C₅ [] BA]L-qí-ma tuš-ken

E₂ NÍG.NA[]

12.

A₉ []¹D¹UL¹ *ul-tú* KI *íl-ma i-šad-da-ad-ma*
B_{8/9} ^{túg}BA.AN¹.DUL / *ul-tu* [-r]a *íl-ma i-šad-da-ad-ma*
C_{5/6} ^{túg}BA.AN.DUL / [] *í¹-šad-da-ad-ma*
E_{2/3} [] / TA *qaq*-[]

13.

A₉ TA É *sim-mil-tu₄* *ana* ÛR E₁₁-*ma*
B_{9/10} *ul-tu* É / *a-di* Û[R] *í¹-[š]el-í¹le¹* *a-na* *í¹UR¹* *il-li-ma*
C_{6/7} TA É *sim-mil-ti* / [] ÛR *ú-šel-le* *ana* ÛR E₁₁-*ma*
E_{3/4} [] / *a-di* *ú*-[]

14.

A₁₀ [] *i-ma-ga-í³ag³-ma*
B₁₁ ^{túg}BA.AN.DUL *i-ma-ak-ka-ak*-[] *m]uḫ-ḫi i-ke-ri*
C_{7/8} ^{túg}BA.AN.DUL / *í¹-ma-ak-ka-ak-ma* *ina* *muḫ-ḫi i-ke-er-ri*

15.

A₁₀ *ana* [I]GI ^dsin *šU^{II}-šá* LUḫ-*si*
B₁₂ *i-teb-bi-ma iz-za-az-ma* *ana* I[GI] *šU^{II}-šú* LUḫ-*si*
C₉ *i-teb-bé-e-ma GUB-az-ma* *ana* IGI ^dsin *šU^{II}-šá* LUḫ-*si*
F_{0/1} [] / *GUB-zu-ma* []

16.

A₁₀ *ana* ^dsin KAM DU₁₁.GA
B₁₃ *ana* ^dsin *ki-a-am i-qab-bi* ÉN *í¹sin¹ [n]a-a[n]-na-ra* AN-*í¹e¹* u KI-*tim*
C₁₀ *ana* IGI ^dsin UR₅.GIM DU₁₁.GA
F_{2/3} *ana* ^dsin U[R₅.GIM] / ÉN *sin* ^{d+}ŠEŠ^{!!!?}.KI-*ra* A[N] []

17.

A₁₁ []¹.KÁM *šá* ^{iti}BARA₂ EN U₄.30.KÁM *šá* ^{iti}GU₄
B₁₄ *ul-tu* U₄.1.KAM *šá* ^{iti}BARA₂ *ana* U₄.1.KAM *šá* ^{iti}GU₄
C₁₀ TA U₄.1.KAM *šá* ^{iti}BARA₂ EN U₄.1.KAM *šá* ^{iti}GU₄
D₁ [] *a-n*]a U₄.1.KAM *šá* ^{i[ti]}G[U₄]
F_{3/4} [] / U₄.1.KAM *šá* ^{iti}BARA₂ *a-n*]a []

18.

A_{12/13} [] *lu-uš-te-šir* IGI-*ka* / [] *l]i-mur nu-u-ru*
B₁₄ *piq-dan-ni*
C₁₁ *piq-dan-ni*
D_{2/3} [] *lu-uš-lim lu-ši-i[r]* / [] *šèr-ri li-mu-ra nu-ru*-[]
F₅ *piq-dan-ni-ma lu-u*[š-]

19.

A₁₃ {n}àr-*bi-ka lu-šá-pí dà-lí-lí-ka lud-lul*
D₄ []-*bi-ka lu-šá-pí dà-lí-lí-ka lid^{sic}-lul*
F₆ [-b]i-*ka* []

20.

A₁₄ []-*ma* *ina* *qaq-í³qa-ri³ í³ur³-í³ra¹-dam-ma*
B₁₅ 3-šú *í¹-qab-bi* *ana* *í¹qaq¹-qa-ra ur-ra-dam-ma*
C₁₁ 3-šú DU₁₁.GA-*ma* *a-na* *qaq-qa-ri ur-ra-dam-ma*
D₅ [] DU₁₁.GA-*ma* *ana* *qaq-qa-ru ur-ra-dam-ma*

21.

A₁₄ ^úak-*tam* ^úIGI-*lim* *ina* *í¹+GIŠ* ŠÉŠ-*si*
B_{15/16} ^úak-*ta*[m] / [] *G*]IŠ *i-nam-di* *ip-pa-áš-ši-iš*
C₁₂ ^úak-*tam* *ana* *í¹+GIŠ* ŠUB-*ma* ŠÉŠ

D6'7' [ú]k-tam ũIGI-lim ana ì+GIŠ ŠUB-di-ma / [- á]š-ši-iš^{!!} (tablet: KA)
22.

A15 [] saḥ-l{é-e mu-šá-ṭa NUMUN GADA}

B17 [GAZ]I^{sar} ZÀ.ḪI.LI^{sar} mu-šá-ṭi NUMUN¹[]

C12'13' šimGÚR.GÚR GAZI^{sar} / saḥ-lé-e mu-šá-ṭi NUMUN GADA

D7'8' kal GÚR.GÚR GAZI^{sar} ZÀ.ḪI.LI^{sar} / []

23.

A15 a-di ù.TU ina DÈ SAR-ši

B18 [-l]a-du ina DÈ SAR-ši¹

C13' a-di ù.TU ina DÈ SAR-š[i]

D8' [a]-¹di ul-la¹-[]

24.

A16 [] {^dUTU GI.DU₈ KÉŠ-¹as¹}

B19 [] ^dUTU GI.DU₈ KÉŠ-as

Cr.1 ana KI.MIN ina še-rim ana IGI <^dUTU> GI.DU₈ KÉŠ-as

25.

A16 {NÍG.N}A šimLI GAR-an KAŠ.SAG BAL-qí

B19/20 NÍG.¹NA šimLI¹[^mLI]/ []

Cr.1 NÍG.NA šimLI GAR KAŠ BAL-qí

26.

A17 [] {šuk-bu-si GUB-ma ÉN ^dUTU EN} šur-bu-u 3-šú ŠID-nu

B20/21 [MUN]US BI UGU ¹šuk¹-bu-¹si¹ GUB-[] / [] x x []

Cr.1/2 [] ina UGU šuk-bu-si GUB-az-ma ÉN ^dUTU EN šur-bu-ú 3-šú ŠI[D]

27.

A18 [] {šur-bu-u ZALAG₂ AN.TA.[]} u KI.TA.[]

Cr.3 [^dUTU šur-bu-ú ZALAG₂ AN.TA.MEŠ u KI.TA.MEŠ

Er.1' ÉN ^d[]

28.

A19 [] {i-gi-gi^d a-nun-na-ki NUN¹ pa¹-ri¹-[]} x x []

Cr.3 DI.KU₅ ^di-gi-gi NUN pa-ri-is EŠ.BAR []

Dr.1' [] p[a-r]i-is EŠ.BAR []

Er.1' []

29.

A20 {[-ši]m^{1?} NAM.MEŠ []} u ka-su-ú i-še-su-{ka k[a-]}

Cr.4 [].MEŠ šab-ta šal-la ù ka-su-ú i-šá-as-si-ka ka-<<šá>>-a-šú

Dr.2'3' [NA]M.MEŠ šab-tu šal-la u ka-¹su¹-[] / [-š]e-su-ka ka-a-šá

Er.2' mu-šim ¹NAM¹.[]

30.

Ar.1 {[-k]a ak-mis} ana-ku munusN[ENNI-

Cr. 4/5 šá-pal-ka a[k-] / [NE]NNI-tum DUMU.MUNUS NENNI-tum

Dr.3'4' šá-pal-ka ak-mis / [-k]u al-si-ka munusNENNI-tú DUMU.MUNUS NENNI-tum

Er.2'3' [] / ana-ku al-si-ka []

Fr.0/1' [] / x x []

31.

Ar.2 [] {^d15-šá} NENNI-tum gi[š]MÁ ma-li-tú ana-ku

B1'2' [] / [^diš₈-tár-šú ¹NENNI-tum¹ gišMÁ m[a-

Cr.5/6 šá DINGIR-šúNENNI ^d15-šú NENNI-t[um] / []

Dr.5' [^d1]5-šú NENNI-tum gišMÁ ma-li-ti ana-ku

Er.3'4' [] / gišMÁ ma-lit ana-ku^{!!}

Fr.2' šá DINGIR-šú NENNI ^d1[5-šú]

32.

Ar.2/3 ^rd[UTU] / []-ma mu-gur tes-li-ti
 Br.2'/3' [] / [re]-man-ni-ma mu-gur tes-li-t[u₄]
 Cr.6/7 [^dU]TU ši-m^ran-ni¹ / re-man-ni mu-gur tes-li[t]
 Dr.6' [r]e-man-né-e-ma mu-gur tes-li-tú
 Er.4' []
 Fr.3' ^dUTU ši-man-ni r[e-]

33.

Ar.3/4 MU šu-tu-qí I[TI] / []-ka a-še-{e}-ka ^{túg}SÍG-[]
 Br.3'/4' [] / x-^ria¹ iti¹BARA₂ as-^hur-ka eš-e-ka ^rtúgSÍG¹-ka a[š-]
 Cr.7 [] eš-e-ka ^{túg}SÍG-ka aš-[]
 Dr.7'/8' []-ia iti¹BARA₂ as-^hur-ka eš-e-ka / []
 Er.5' áš¹¹-šú šu-tu-qí ITI []
 Fr.4'/5' áš-šú šu-tu-qí ITI [] / ^{túg}SÍG-ka aš-bat

34.

Ar.5 [] HUL-tim šu-tu-qu {ki}-šir lum-ni pa-^{ta}-r[i]
 Br.5'/6' GISKIM HUL-tim šu-tu-qu ki-šir lum-ni pa-^rta-ru¹ / KI-^rka ba-šú¹-ú
 Cr.8 [] lum-ni DU₈ KI-ka ba-šú¹-ú¹
 Dr.8'/9' []-^ršú²¹GISKIM HUL-tim šu-t[u-] / []-r[i KI-ka ba-šú-[]
 Er.6' GISKIM HUL-tim []
 Fr.5'/6' áš-[] / ki-šir lum-~~ni~~ pa-^t[a-]

35.

Ar.6 [].TU-MU an-né-^re¹ šu-ti-q{a-an-ni}-[]
 Br.6' ITI Û.TU-ia an-ni-i šu-ti-qa-an-ni-ma
 Cr.9 []
 Er.7' ITI Û.TU []

36.

Ar.7 []-ka lu-šá-pi dà-l{i-l}i-ka lud-lul TU₆.{ÉN}
 Br.7' nar-bi-ka lu-šá-p[i] dà-lí-lí-^rka lud-lul¹ TU₆.[]
 Cr.9 [-b]i-ka lu-šá-pi dà-lí-lí-ka lu[d-l]ul
 Er.7' []

37.

Ar.8 [ÉN an]-ni-tú 3-šú t{u-š}ad-bab-šú MUNUS BI tuš-ken-ma
 Br.8' ^rÉN¹ an-ni-ti 3-šú tu-šad-^rbab¹-šú MUNUS BI tuš-ken-m[a]
 Cr.10 [] tuš-ken-ma
 E8' ÉN an-ni-[]

38.

Ar.8/9 tu-še-eš-šeb-^rši¹ / [].DA GEŠTUG^{II}-šá DIRI-ma
 Br.9' ^rtu-še¹-šeb-ši-ma ^{sig}HÉ.ME.DA GEŠTUG^{II}-šú DIRI-[]
 Cr.11 []

39.

Ar.10 [] MU₄.MU₄-si ì+GIŠ sèr-di ^útar-muš NUMUN ^{giš}ŠINIG
 Br.10'/11' ^rtúg¹BA.AN.DUL MU₄.MU₄-si ì+GIŠ sèr-di / ^útar-muš NUMUN ^{giš}ŠINIG
 Cr.11/12 [-s]i ì+GI[š sè]r-di ^útar-[m]uš / []

40.

Ar.11 [ŠÉ]š-si a-di ITI šá Û.TU ú-še-et-te-qu-ma
 Br.11'/12' ina ì.GIŠ BUR ŠÉŠ-su / EN ITI šá Û.TU-šá ú-še-ti-iq-[q]u?
 Cr.12 [-q]u

41.

A_{r.12} []-šá la i-da-`i-ip ^{iti}BARA₂ ú-qa-ta-ma Û.TU

B_{r.13} ra-man-šá la ú-da-`a-ap

C_{r.12/13} ra-^fman¹-šá la ú-da-[] / []

Catch-line

B_{r.14} <DIŠ> i-na ^{iti}BARA₂ <TA> U4.1.KÁM EN U4.30.KÁM ^fLÚ¹.TUR Û.TU

Colophon

A_{r.13} ina ZAG la-bi-ri-šú SAR-ma IGI.KÁR

A_{r.14} {a-na} ša-bat DÙ-ši ^pki-šir-^dAG šá ^dAG NIR-su

A_{r.15} A ^{pd}UTU-ib-ni ^{lu}MAŠ.MAŠ É an-šár

B_{r.15} ki-ma la-bi-ri-šú <šá>-tir-ma

B_{r.16} IGI.^fKÁR¹ IM.GÍD.DA ub x x x an[?] x

Eclectic text in bound transcription

¹ enūma sinništu arḫu ša alādīša
irubamma arḫu[?] šū[?] nisannu <ana>
šūtuqi ² epuštašu:

šūši qaqqad pilaqqi šalāšā ša bīni ³
šalāšā ša musukkanni teppuš ina
barundi tašakkak ⁴ šūši kišra takaššar
šalāšā uṭṭat musukkanni ina šīpāti
sāmāti [tašakkak] ⁵ šalāšā kišra
takaššar ḥamiššeret ḥerši e`ri ina šīpāti
sāmāti [tašakkak] ⁶ [ḥamiššeret kišra
takaš]šar abnāt qablē lā muštēširti
ittīšunu tašammid ⁷ ina qablēša
tarakkas

ultu (ūmi) maḥrē ša nisanni adi (ūmi)
šalāšī ⁸ ūmu ištēn qaqqad pilaqqi bīni u
ištēn qaqqad pilaqqi ⁹ musukkanni ina
bīt simmilti ibattaqma inassuk

¹⁰ ana ūri illima ana pān Sīn riksa
tarakkas ¹¹ nignakka burāša tašakkan
šikara tanaqqima tuškēn

¹² zibna ultu qaqqari inaššima
išaddadma ¹³ ultu bīt simmilti adi ūri
ušelle ana ūri illima ¹⁴ zibna imakkakma
ina muḥḥi ikerri

¹⁵ itebbema izzazma ana pān Sīn qātēša
imessi ¹⁶ ana Sīn kīam iqabbi

šiptu: Sīn nannāra šamē u eršeti ¹⁷ ultu
(ūmi) maḥrē ša nisanni adi (ūmi) maḥrē
ša ayyari ¹⁸ piqdannima luštēšir

Translation

¹⁻² When the month in which a woman is due to
give birth has arrived and that month is Nisannu
– this is the appropriate ritual to make it pass by:

²⁻⁴ You make sixty spindle whorls, thirty of
tamarisk wood and thirty of sissoo wood, and
thread them on a multicoloured string, tying
sixty knots (between them). ⁴⁻⁵ [You thread]
thirty sissoo grains on (a string of) red wool,
tying thirty knots (between them). ⁵⁻⁷ [You
thread] fifteen gnarls of ashwood on (a string of)
red wool, ty[ing fifteen knots (between them)]
and you fix beads worn around the hips by a
woman who failed to give birth successfully onto
them and then fasten (the strings) to her waist.

⁷⁻⁹ Each day, from the first of Nisannu up to the
thirtieth inclusive, in the staircase, she cuts off
one spindle whorl of tamarisk wood and one
spindle whorl of sissoo wood and throws them
away.

¹⁰⁻¹¹ She goes up to the roof and you set up an
offering arrangement before Sin (there). You put
juniper on the censer, libate beer and prostrate
yourself.

¹²⁻¹³ She lifts up a rush mat from the ground and
brings it from the staircase onto the roof by
dragging it along. ¹³⁻¹⁴ When she arrives on the
roof she spreads out the rush mat and she *curls
herself up* on it (*in a fetal position*).

¹⁵⁻¹⁶ Then she rises and standing upright she
washes her hands before Sin, speaking to Sin as
follows:

¹⁶⁻¹⁹ “*Incantation*: Sin, luminary of heaven and
earth, watch over me from the first of Nisannu
until the first of Ayyaru so that I give birth at the

maḥarka šerrī līmur nūru 19 *narbīka lušāpi dalīlīka ludlul*

20 *šalāšīšu iqabbima ana qaqqari urradamma* 21 *aktam imḥur-lim ana šamni inaddima ippaššīš* 22 *kukru kasē sahlē mušāṭi zēr kitē* 23 *adi ulladu ina dikmēni tuqattarši*

24 *ana ki.min ina šērim ana pān Šamaš riksa tarakkas* 25 *nignakka burāša tašakkan šikara tanaqqi* 26 *[sin]ništu šī ina muḥḥi šukbusi izzazma šipta Šamaš bēlu šurbū šalāšīšu tamannu*

27 *šiptu: Šamaš bēlu šurbū nūr elāti u šaplāti* 28 *dayyān Igigi Anunnaki rubū pāris purussē [...]* 29 *mušīm šīmāti šabta šalla kasū išessūka kāša* 30 *šapalka akmis anāku annannītu mārāt annannītu* 31 *ša ilšu annanna ištaršu annannītu eleppu malītu anāku* 32 *Šamaš šimānni rēmannima mugur teslītī* 33 *aššu šūtuqi arah [alā]dīya nisannu ašhurka eš'eka sissiktaka ašbat* 34 *aššu itti lemutti šūtuqu kišir lumni paṭāri ittīka bašū* 35 *arah alādīya annē šūtiqannima* 36 *narbīka lušāpi dalīlīka ludlul – tē šipti*

37 *šipta annītu šalāšīšu tušadbabšu sinništu šī tuškēnma* 38 *tušeššebšima tabarra uznēša tumallama* 39 *zibna tulabbassi šaman serdi tarmuš zēr bīni* 40 *ina šaman pūri tapaššassi adi arḥa ša alādīša ušettequ* 41 *ramānša lā uda''ap nisanna uqattama ullad*

Colophon A (r.13-15):

ina pūt labīrīšu šaṭirma bari / ana šabāt epēši Kišir-Nabū ša Nabū tuklassu / mār Šamaš-ibni mašmašsi bīt Aššur

Catchline B (r. 14'):

<šumma> *ina nisanni <ultu> (ūmi) maḥrē adi (ūmi) šalāšī šerru i''allad*

proper time in your presence and my child sees the daylight, then I shall magnify your glory and sing your praise.”

20-23 Having spoken thus three times she goes downstairs, puts *aktam*-plant and *imḥur-lim*-plant in oil and rubs herself with it. Until she gives birth you fumigate her with *kukru*-aromatic, *kasū*, *saḥlū*, ‘combed hair’ and linseed on charcoal.

24-26 Alternatively: at dawn you set up an offering arrangement before Šamaš, put juniper on the censer and libate beer. While that woman is standing on a stair² you recite the incantation “Šamaš, exalted lord” three times:

27-29 “*Incantation*: Šamaš, exalted lord, lamp of the upper and lower worlds, judge of the Igigi and Anunnaki, prince who makes decisions [...] and who determines fates – it is you whom captive, deportee and prisoner invoke. 30-31 I have knelt down at your feet, I NN, daughter of NN, whose god is NN, whose goddess is NN, me being a fully loaded cargo ship. 31-33 Šamaš, listen to me, have mercy upon me, answer my prayer: in order to make Nisannu, the month I am due to deliver, pass by I have turned to you, sought you out, grasped the hem of your garment. 34-36 Since it is in your power to make an evil omen pass by and to loosen the knot of evil, have the present month in which my delivery is due pass by me, then I shall magnify your glory and sing your praise – *Incantation formula*.”

37-40 You have her say this incantation three times. That woman prostrates herself, then you have her sit down, whereupon you stuff her ears with red wool, clothe her with the rush mat and rub her with olive oil and with *tarmuš*-plant and tamarisk seed in perfumed oil. 40-41 So long as she has not let the month in which her delivery is due pass by she must avoid bumping herself; once she has completed the month of Nisannu she is to give birth.

Copied in accordance with its original and checked (by) Kišir-Nabū whose trust is Nabū, son of Šamaš-ibni, conjurer of the Aššur temple, for the purpose of performing the ritual.

<If> a child will be born <be>tween the first and thirtieth day of Nisannu.

Colophon **B** (r. 15'-16'):

Copied according to its original and checked.

kīma labīrīšu šaṭirma / bari imgiddū/ê Tablet ...

ub x x x an[?] x

Notes

1. *īrubamma*: it should not go unmentioned that the subject of *īrubamma* has been believed to be the woman rather than the month (CAD A/1, 289 and Stol 2000: 93 with n. 21) and that, as a consequence, we should translate “When a woman has entered the month, she is due to deliver.” However, there is a parallel idiom that can be adduced in support of the month being the subject: [DĪŠ] ITI *šá ù.TU-šú iq-ri-ba-am-ma...* = [*šumma*] *arḫu ša alādīšu iqribamma ...* “[if] the month she is due to give birth has arrived” (SpTU IV, 153:21). It also seems more in line with omen syntax to take the month for the subject and consider MUNUS as a casus pendens. For *erēbu* “to be coming” said of spans of time see AHW 236, s.v. *erēbu*, G, 9 and 240, s.v. *ēribu*, 2.b.

***arḫu*’ *šū*’...:** for the end of A:1 M. Stol proposed the restoration *šu-[u/ú]* (Stol 2000: 94, n. 21); the lacuna must have accommodated more text than just one sign, though. E. Reiner’s suggestion to read the corresponding part of text in **B** as *šu-tu-qí* (Reiner 1967: 191, n. 15) is now fully corroborated. On good grounds it may therefore be surmised as an alternative that **A** originally had: *šu-^ru¹[ana šu-tu-qí]*, and that the scribe of **B** made an error in missing out the words <*šu-ú/u ana*> as a result of parablepsis (homoiarcton with *šu-tu-qí*).

After this line **B** inserts a single ruling (**B**:1).

2-3. ... *ša* ... *ša*: **B** is more wordy in twice having *ša* “of” replaced with *qaqqad pilaqqi* “spindle whorls of”.

4-7. *šalāšā* ... *tašammid*: **B** (and **C** as well?) omits this entire passage thereby reducing the woman’s equipment to the belt with the twice thirty spindle whorls and the sixty knots tied between these. Unlike this belt, the additional strings of beads detailed in **A** play no active role as the ritual evolves; obviously, they have a prophylactic function backstage and are supposed not to be removed till after the extended pregnancy has terminated in a happy childbirth.

7-9. *ultu* ... *ibattaqma*: **A**’s insertion of *ša ayyari* baffles all logic. Yet, the manuscript cannot be denied a fair degree of consistency, inasmuch as by leaving out at the same time the specification *bīni ... musukkani* it maintains a perfect match between the total number of spindle whorls and that of the days of their removal, viz. sixty; see also line 17.

10. *illima* ...: here begins the ceremony proper; from lines 1 (*īribam*) and 17 (*ultu (ūmi) mahré ša nisanni*) it can be inferred that it has to take place on the first of Nisannu.

11. *tuškēn*: **B** reads *lā tuškēn* “do not prostrate yourself”. With reference to line 37, it could be argued that we should rather translate “she (does not) prostrate(s) herself”.

13. *adi* ...: **A** offers a lectio facilior by omitting *adi ūri ušelle*: “She lifts up a rush mat from the ground and drags it along while she climbs from the staircase onto the roof, spreads out the rush mat and ...” Incidentally, the variant might imply that E₁₁-*ma* has to be normalized as *ušellema*: “She lifts up a rush mat from the ground and brings it from the staircase onto the roof by dragging it along, spreads out the rush mat and ...”

14-15. *ina* ...: *ina muḫḫi ikerri itebbema izzazma* omitted in **A**: “... she spreads out the rush mat and washes her hands before Sin”.

***ina muḫḫi ikerri*:** the translation “curls herself up on it (in a fetal position)” should be assessed as a most tentative way to get the drift of this unique idiom, based on the context and the verb’s meaning “to shrink, to contract” (AHW 452, s.v. *karû*, Gtn: “sich i.w. zusammenziehen”). See also Part 1, footnote 14. It is not clear whether the woman adopts this position lying down or rather squatting herself; either way, it is here assumed that she does so

in imitation of an unborn baby still in its mother's womb, her peculiar action being an instantiation of the belief that the appearance and behaviours of a pregnant woman not only indicate, as unprovoked omens, how she and her foetus will fare in the months ahead, but also have an impact on how the foetus will develop and, as such, can be instrumentalized so as to have the pregnancy process evolve according to wish (Stol 2000: 104; 105-106). Bronze and terracotta figurines in a crouching posture are commonly believed to represent unborn babies in an advanced state of development (Stol 2000: 30 and 81). Even so, it needs admitting that we have failed to adduce supportive evidence for this specific case of maternal mimicry from the cuneiform record or the world's folklore at large. If the hypothesis is a viable one, it could be further speculated that the rush mat in which the woman is enveloped in the second ritual (line 39) is meant to symbolize the womb, making the act a counterpart of the curling up on the mat, for either rite seeks to prolong the baby's fetal stage beyond the natural term by having its mother play the foetus.

16-20. *kīam iqabbi ... šalāšišu iqabbi*: the prayer to Sin is transmitted unevenly across the Mss.: **A** and **C** omit the incipit (line 16), whereas **B** and, even more drastically, **C** reduce the format to that of an ejaculatory prayer by not stating what purpose the imploring is done for (*-ma luštēšir/lušlim ... nūru*) as well as suppressing the doxology (*narbika ... ludlul*).

16. *iqabbi*: After *iqabbi* **F** inserts a single ruling (**F:2'**).

nannāra: the logographic writing found in **F** defies our palaeographic understanding. For one thing, except for a group of four to five obliques, the sign before KI bears little resemblance to a regular ŠEŠ, as it ends in a vertical and has two horizontals at the base. In fact, its appearance is not unlike a ligature of the god-determinative and ÍM or AŠ.ÍM; did the scribe mean to write the intended NANNA as ^{d+}AŠ.ÍM.<BABBAR>.KI in lieu of the correct ^dŠEŠ.KI? Which would be an utter idiosyncrasy such as could only have arisen with a gravely mistaken copyist. Since the target sign cannot have feasibly been any other but NANNA, and the KI component is unmistakably there, the disputed signs have, all things considered, been taken for an unorthographic ŠEŠ in ligature with the classifier for things divine.

17. *adi* ...: in keeping with its peculiar variant in line 7 **A** has *adi (ūmi) šalāšī* “until the thirtieth of Ayyaru”.

18. *luštēšir*: **D** has the variant *lušlim lūšir* “so that I have a successful delivery.” For *šalāmu* having the sense of “to deliver (a child, acc.)” see W. Mayer, “Akkadische Lexikographie: CAD Š/1” (*OrNS* 63 [1994], 111-120), 115, sub *šalāmu* 1d; this special meaning of the verb, attested in a few OB letters, has developed from its broader meaning “to reach the goal/finish” (‘ans Ziel gelangen’). Now, as delaying the date calculated for a woman to deliver runs counter to nature, it would not have been a trivial thing to achieve, so failure of the procedure to make the miracle happen might reasonably have been feared. As such, it would make sense to render “so that I bring my (prolonged) pregnancy to term (*lušlim*) successfully (*lūšir*).”

19. After this line **D** inserts a single ruling (**D:4'**).

21-22. *ippaššiš* ...: **A** has *tapaššassi* “you rub her with it” instead, which is the more common expression. While in **D** the KA may readily be explained as a miscopied IŠ, we fail to understand the KAL that comes next.

23. After this line **AC** insert a single ruling (**A:15; C:13'**).

24. *ana ki.min ina šērim*: this must refer to the early morning of Nisannu 1st, which would have been most expedient as an alternative to the nocturnal option just described, as the lunar crescent that ushers in the new month is standing in the night sky visibly for only a short while.

26. After this line **AC** inserts a single ruling (**A:17; C r.:2**).

29. *išessûka*: **C** has the verb in the singular: *išassika*.

30. *anāku* ...: after *anāku* **DE** insert *alsika* “I have invoked you” (others: “I am invoking you”).

36. After this line **AC** insert a single ruling (**A** r.:7; **C** r.:9).

37. *tuškēnma*: unlike line 11, this time the subject unambiguously is the woman; in Babylonian vernacular texts it is not uncommon for the *ta/tu*- verbal prefixes to have a 3rd person sg. fem. referent, see GAG §75h.

41. *uda''ap*: instead of the D stem, **A** has the verb in the G stem: *ida''ip*.

After this line **AB** insert a single ruling (**A** r.:41; **B** r.:13').

Catch-line: refers to the namburbi edited in Maul 1994: 400-408. Reiner's reading MUNUS.TUR (Reiner 1967: 191, n. 15 as well as Stol's reading SAL.TUR (Stol 2000: 93, n. 19) are to be amended to LÚ.TUR.

Colophon B: the faint impressions following IM.GÍD.DA are in fact the traces of four to five erased signs. In all likelihood, these would have represented the name of the tablet owner; however, the male person's name marker is missing, unless we are to assume that it has merged with the final vertical of the DA-sign.

Last but not least, a fascinating parallel to our case from Late Antiquity should not go unnoticed, remote in time and quite different as to procedure, yet strikingly similar in the intent to prevent an imminent birth from taking place at the ill-omened time nature would have it and delay it until the hour most auspicious for the event to happen has arrived. The late echo of our scene is found in the Alexander Romance, Old Greek, Armenian and Syriac versions, Book I, Chapter 12, where the story is told of how the future cosmocrator came into the world.⁴⁷ When his mother Olympias has brought her pregnancy to term and labour has started she settles herself on the birthing stool to deliver the boy. Then Nectanebos, grand magician and the one who had begotten the child with her by stealth to begin with, comes into action to implement his skills as an astrologer and accoucheur. Having cast the horoscope and finding out that the present hour spells doom and misery for the newborn child, he urges the queen to rise from the birthing chair and wait with giving birth until the next hour, which might be going to forebode good fortune. As the current and half a dozen ensuing hours pass by, the tale repeats itself, having Nectanebos reiterate his prediction of an ill-starred fate for the child by linking the successive hours with a specific disaster each, were the child to be born in it; poor Olympias' pangs intensify as the delays renew, pushing her to the verge of exhaustion. Finally, when Jupiter, the star of Zeus-Ammon, is observed culminating in the most auspicious of astral configurations, the moment is declared to be there for the queen to stop delaying delivery and at last give birth to baby Alexander; and so the boy is born under a lucky star after all.

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⁴⁷ An online edition of the Alexander Romance is available at <http://www.attalus.org/info/alexander.html>. An in-depth study of the Greek version of the chapters that make up the nativity tale is Tiemersma 1995 (critical edition of the Greek text with translation and commentary).

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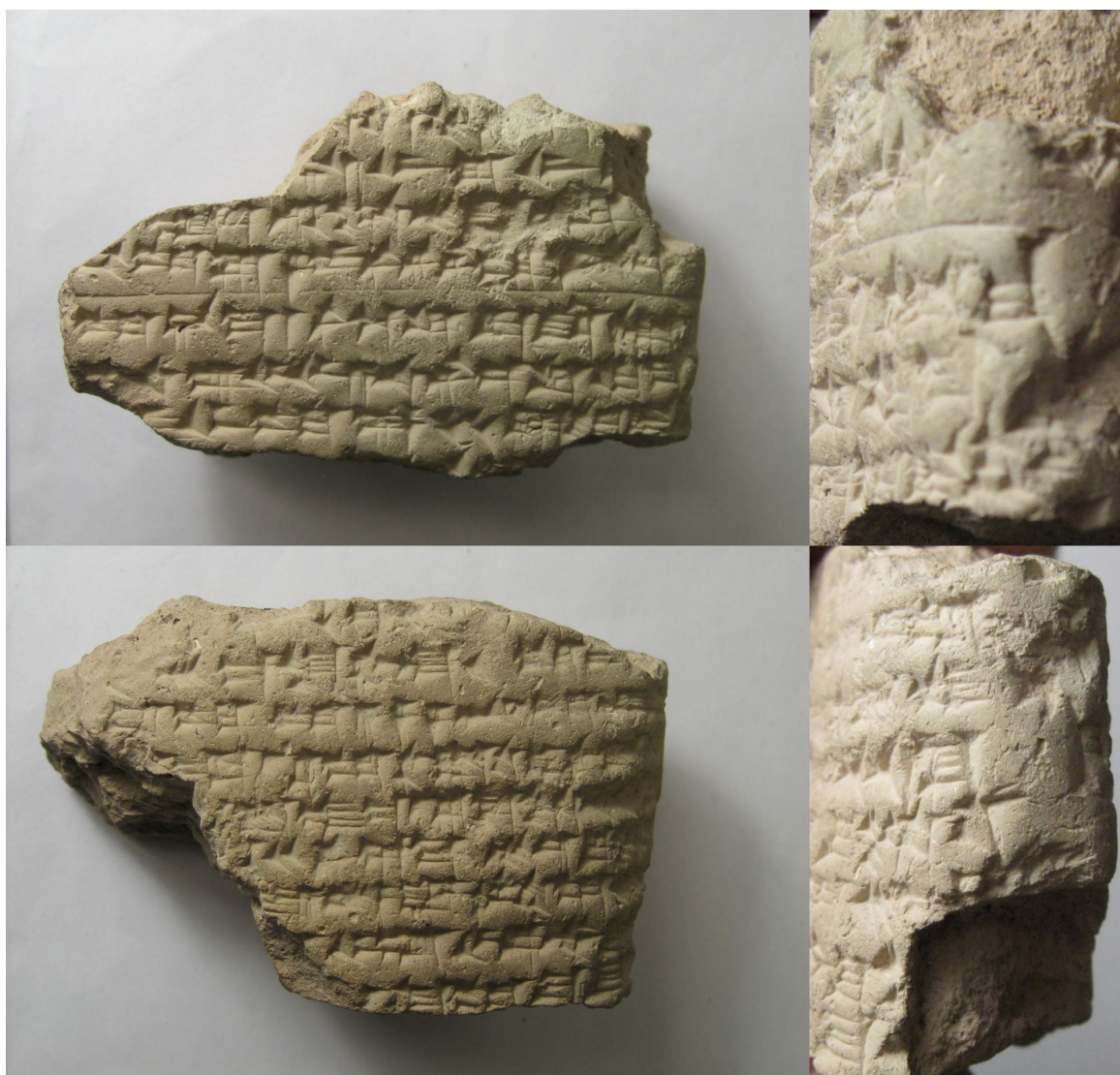
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