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**‘The Physician is the Judge!’— A Remarkable Divine Dialogue in the Incantation:
ÉN ur-saĝ^dasal-lú-ĥi igi-bé ĥé-pà saĝ-ĥul-ĥa-za ĥé-pà**

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Adam Falkenstein, in his founding work *Die Haupttypen der sumerischen Beschwörung*, recognized that many incantations contain a divine dialogue between Marduk and his father Ea and coined it the ‘Marduk-Ea-formula’. In this dialogue, Asalluĥi/Marduk goes to Enki/Ea and tells him that an evil disease is afflicting someone. He asks his father what to do. Enki/Ea answers his son with ‘My Son, what do you not know, what shall I add for you; Asalluĥi, what do you not know, what shall I add for you? Whatever I know, you know too!’ and provides his son with the necessary ritual agenda before sending him on his way to the patient. From the corpus of early Sumerian and Akkadian incantations from Fāra and Ebla, we now know that different deities may act in this divine dialogue, e.g., Enlil (instead of Enki/Ea) and Ningirim (instead of Asalluĥi/Marduk) (see Cunningham 1997, 24f.; Ceccarelli 2015; Rudik 2015, 46f.). For the first millennium, Falkenstein (1931, 70) notes one exception in a therapeutic text concerning eye disease (= BAM 510: iv 14 // BAM 513: iv 20) where Asalluĥi/Marduk is replaced with Namma/u (^dENGUR). Another duplicate from Sultantepe (= STT 279: r. 41; 47) reads ^dÍD (A+ENGUR) instead.²

Although the deities are to some extent interchangeable, they can be attributed to the realm of magic and therefore to the magical expert, i.e., *āšipūtu*. The present study brings a different kind of divine dialogue to light, mainly known from manuscripts of the first millennium BC. Here, we find the healing deity Damu (instead of Enki/Ea) depicted as the ‘father’ telling his ‘son’ Nabû³ (instead of Asalluĥi/Marduk) not to interfere with the patient and to keep his distance. It is up to the physician (lú-a-zu) to treat the patient, which places this new dialogue in the realm of the healing deities and the physician, i.e., *asūtu*. Damu should not be seen here as the biological father of Nabû, but rather as a ‘senior’ deity instructing a ‘junior’ deity.⁴ The occurrence of Nabû here may be explained by the tradition that casts him as a son of Marduk, attributing Nabû to the realm of the *āšipūtu*. This dialogue would then be the first example in which a healing god (i.e., Damu) forbids a deity of exorcism (i.e., Nabû) to interfere with the treatment of a patient, i.e., *asū* over *āšipu*.⁵ Admittedly, this may seem odd in the context of an incantation, especially one that commences with typical exorcizing formulae conjuring evil by deities associated with exorcism, i.e., Asalluĥi, Šazu, Enki and Ninurta. However, this new dialogue occurs consistently in the same Sumerian incantation, i.e., ÉN ur-saĝ^dasal-lú-ĥi igi-bé ĥé-pà saĝ-ĥul-ĥa-za ĥé-pà, attested in various medical texts, which may suggest that this kind of dialogue was specifically invented for medical incantations.

The aforementioned incantation addresses the demon saĝ-ĥul-ĥa-za (= *mukīl rēš lemutti*⁶) and is found *in extenso* among passages concerned with headaches, i.e., saĝ-ki-dib-ba (BAM 508+489; LKA 145; K 8211; K 6329) and against the demon saĝ-ĥul-ĥa-za/*mukīl rēš lemutti* specifically (BAM 520 (+) AMT 14,2). The incipit is quoted in the abbreviated form ÉN ur-saĝ^dasal-lú-ĥi in medical passages in which a patient’s temples are afflicted by (the hand of) a ghost (BAM 216: 15’; AMT 19,1: iv¹ 13’ // BAM 482: iv 32’) or in which the patient’s temples are throbbing (RA 53, 1ff: 19⁷) or swollen (Iraq 65, 225: 19). Geller (2007, 8 n.27) remarks that this abbreviated incipit is related to the Udugĥul X/a, in which a large enumeration occurs where every line starts with ur-saĝ^dasal-lú-ĥi, but its incipit can now be restored as ÉN ur-saĝ^dù-tu-ud-da ba-a[n-bùlug ab-zu-ta me-en] (see Geller 2016, 324). The fact that the abbreviated incipit ÉN ur-saĝ^dasal-lú-ĥi is found in a similar medical context

¹ I am indebted to Nils Heeßel for reading and commenting on an earlier draft of this paper.

² Wiggermann 1998-2000a, 138.

³ Ms. B reads the otherwise unknown deity Nammakal (nam-ma-kal), see below.

⁴ For a discussion on this concept, see Rudik 2015, 95.

⁵ Noteworthy is that ms. D and E read ‘Damu spoke to the firstborn of Nabû’, see below.

⁶ For a general discussion of saĝ-ĥul-ĥa-za/*mukīl rēš lemutti*, see Farber 1974 with Steinert 2012, 184f.

⁷ Recently republished by Geller 2007.

(i.e., concerning forms of headache) as the *in extenso* attestation ÉN ur-saĝ^dasal-lú-ḫi igi-bé ḫé-pà saĝ-ḫul-ḫa-za ḫé-pà confirms that we have here the same incantation.⁸

Additionally, we find an earlier version from the Middle Babylonian period with significant deviations from the standard incantation for exorcism in a collection of Ḫulbazizi precursors from Dūr-Kurigalzu (Sumer 9, 29).⁹

The incantation ÉN ur-saĝ^dasal-lú-ḫi igi-bé ḫé-pà saĝ-ḫul-ḫa-za ḫé-pà has been known by scholars for a long time, but it has never been studied or edited in full.¹⁰ Collations are indicated by *.

A	BAM 508+489	K 239+2509+3261+9080	i 15''-21''
B	LKA 145	A 146 ¹¹	10-15, r. 1
C	BAM 520 (+) AMT 14,2 ¹²	K 9503+81-7-27, 85 (+) K 11723	ii 12'-18'
D	CDLI no. P397537	K 8211	ii 9'-18'
E	CDLI no. P396459	K 6329	ii 9'-17'
F	CDLI no. P422463	BM 123362	r. 16'-19'
MB	Sumer 9, 29 ¹³	IM 49981	1'-14'

1. (ÉN) ur-saĝ^dasal-lú-ḫi igi-bé ḫé-pà saĝ-ḫul-ḫa-za ḫé-pà
(INCANTATION:) By the presence of the hero Asalluḫi, be conjured! (O) saĝ-ḫul-ḫa-za demon be conjured!

A	i 15''	ÉN ur-saĝ ^d []
B	10	ur-saĝ ^d asal-lú-ḫi igi-bé ḫé-pà saĝ-ḫul-ḫa-za ḫé-pà	
C	ii 12'	ÉN ur-saĝ ^d asal-lú-ḫi igi-bé ḫé-pà []
D	ii 9'-10'	ÉN ur-saĝ ^d asal-lú-ḫi igi-bé ḫé-pà / saĝ-ḫul-ḫa-za ḫé-pà	
E	ii 9'-10'	ÉN ur-saĝ ^d asal-lú-ḫi igi-bé ḫé-pà / saĝ-ḫul-ḫa-za ḫé-pà	
F	r. 16'	[É]N ur-saĝ ^d asal-lú-ḫi igi-bé ḫé-pà saĝ-ḫul-ḫa-za ḫé-pà]
MB	8'	[igi-b]é ḫé-pà saĝ-ḫul-ḫa-za ḫé-pà	

2. ur-saĝ^dša-zu igi-bé ḫé-pà saĝ-ḫul-ḫa-za ḫé-pà

⁸ This has already been noted by Köcher in BAM 3, xv. Note that in BAM 5, xxxvi Köcher remarks that the citation of ÉN ur-saĝ^dasal-lú-ḫi in BAM 482: iv 32' (K 2574+) is most likely not related with ÉN ur-saĝ^dasal-lú-ḫi igi-bé ḫé-pà saĝ-ḫul-ḫa-za ḫé-pà, since the sign after ^dasal-lú-ḫi is definitely not /igi/ disregarding the possibility of an abbreviated incipit. An edition of the relevant passage in BAM 216 and AMT 19,1 // BAM 482 is provided by Scurlock 2005, 350f.

⁹ The remains of four incantations are preserved on this fragment: 1) a precursor to ÉN ur-saĝ^dasal-lú-ḫi igi-bé ḫé-pà saĝ-ḫul-ḫa-za ḫé-pà (ll. 1'-14'); 2) an unparalleled incantation, but one which shares features with the later Ḫulbazizi series (see Finkel 1976, 25); 3) a precursor to Ḫulbazizi no. 21: ÉN en-na-da-a sil₇-lá-da-a; and 4) a precursor to Ḫulbazizi no. 18: ÉN ^{mul}Šukūdu šumšu mušallil qabli. For further literature and discussion on the position of Sumer 9, 29 in regard to the later Ḫulbazizi series, see Zomer 2017, 223.

¹⁰ Köcher in BAM 5, xxxvi lists all known attestations of this spell in medical texts; the parallel with Sumer 9, 29 was already recognized by Finkel 1976, 254. Note that Finkel also provides a preliminary transliteration of this spell based on K 8211, but without a translation, remarks or further discussion. Another fragment cited by Köcher that might be related to the present incantation is K 11969 (CDLI no. P399549), where we find the broken catchline ÉN ur-saĝ [...].

¹¹ After Pedersén 1986, 65 (= N4: 249).

¹² This join was already suspected by Köcher in BAM 6, xiv n. 21 and can now be confirmed in ll. 5-7.

¹³ This variant is considerably longer than the later standard incantation. It is especially noteworthy that the incantation starts off differently:

- 1'. [...] 'x x' [...]
 2'. [...] ni zu [...]
 3'. [...] 'x še' a [...]
 4'. [...] 'x' nu-me-en
 5'. [...] 'x'-kur²-ru
 6'. [... igi-bé ḫé]-pà saĝ-ḫul-ḫa-za ḫé-pà
 7'. [... igi-bé] ḫé-pà saĝ-ḫul-ḫa-za ḫé-pà

By the presence of the hero Šazu, be conjured!¹⁴ (O) saĝ-ḫul-ḫa-za demon be conjured!

A	i 16''	ur-saĝ ^d š[à-]
B	12	ur-saĝ ^d šà-zu	'ki-min'
C	ii 13'	ur-saĝ ^d šà-zu igi-bé 'hé'-p[à]
D	ii 11'-12'	ur-saĝ ^d šà-zu igi-bé hé-pà / saĝ-ḫul-za hé-pà	
E	ii 11'	ur-saĝ ^d šà-zu igi-bé hé-pà saĝ-ḫul-ḫ[a]
F	r. 17'	[u]r-saĝ ^d šà-zu igi-'bé' hé-'pà'	
MB	9'	[igi-b]é hé-pà saĝ-'ḫul'-ḫa-za hé-pà	

3. ur-saĝ^den-ki-ke₄ igi-bé hé-pà saĝ-ḫul-ḫa-za hé-pà
By the presence of the hero Enki, be conjured! (O) saĝ-ḫul-ḫa-za demon be conjured!

A	i 17''	ur-saĝ ^d en-k[i*]
B	11	ur-saĝ ^d en-ki-ke ₄	ki-min
C	ii 14'	ur-saĝ ^d en-ki igi-bé []
D	ii 13'-14'	ur-saĝ ^d en-ki-ke ₄ igi-bé {x}* hé-pà / saĝ-ḫul-ḫa-za hé-pà	
E	ii 12'	ur-saĝ ^d en-ki-ke ₄ igi-bé hé-pà saĝ-ḫu[l]
F	r. 17'	ur-'saĝ ^d en-ki igi-bé hé-p[à]	
MB	10'	[igi]-bé hé-pà saĝ-'ḫul'-[ḫa]-za hé-pà	

4. ur-saĝ^dnin-urta igi-bé hé-pà saĝ-ḫul-ḫa-za hé-pà
By the presence of the hero Ninurta, be conjured! (O) saĝ-ḫul-ḫa-za demon be conjured!

A	i 18''	ur-saĝ ^d ni[n-urta]
B	13	ur-saĝ ^d nin-urta igi-bé hé-pà 'saĝ' [-]
C	ii 15'	ur-saĝ ^d nin-urta i[gi-]
D	ii 15'-16'	ur-saĝ ^d nin-urta igi-bé hé-pà / saĝ-ḫul-ḫa-za hé-pà	
E	ii 13'-14'	ur-saĝ ^d nin-urta igi-bé ḫ[é-pà] / saĝ-ḫul-ḫa-za []
F	r. 18'	ur-saĝ ^d nin-urta 'igi-bé' 'hé'-[p]à	
MB	11'	[sa]ĝ-ḫul-ḫa-za [hé]-pà	

5. ad da-mu dumu-saĝ^dnà gù mu-un-na-an-dé-e
Father Damu¹⁵ spoke to the first-born Nabû¹⁶:

¹⁴ Ms. C interchanges the positions of Enki and Šazu.

¹⁵ Ms. D and E read 'Damu, spoke to the firstborn son of Nabû'. The omission of the divine determinative for Damu in ms. A, B, C and F may be explained from a confusion of /ad^dda-mu/ and /ad-da-ĝu₁₀/ in oral transmission. One may argue that ad-da-ĝu₁₀ 'my father' was originally intended. Especially, considering ms. A has /ad mu/, which can be read /ad-ĝu₁₀/, and the parallelism with /dumu-ĝu₁₀/ in the following line. Note however, that an introduction of two deities (i.e. the participants of the dialogue) is expected following other divine dialogues, s. Falkenstein 1931, 54ff. Even in the case of an abbreviated version of the dialogue, we would rather expect /a-a-ni/ 'his father' instead of /ad-da-ĝu₁₀/ 'my father'. An interpretation ad-(da)-ĝu₁₀ dumu-saĝ DN(-ke₄) gù mu-un-na-an-dé-e 'My father spoke to the firstborn of DN' or 'My father, the firstborn of DN, spoke to him (-nna- 3.sg.IO)' seems illogical since the following line starts with the introduction dumu-ĝu₁₀ 'My son ...'. Hence /ad^dda-mu/ is preferred here as original reading, which has resulted in the abbreviated /^dda-mu/ (ms. D and E) and /ad da-mu/ (ms. A, B, C and F), which is most likely an oral confusion with /ad-da-ĝu₁₀/.

¹⁶ Ms. B reads tentatively an otherwise unattested deity Nammakal. If this reading is correct, we have here a DN of the same typology as, for example, Erragal/Errakal (^dèr-ra-kal, ^dèr-ra-kal-kal, ^dèr-kal; see Wiggermann 1998-2000b, 218). In a similar way, Nammakal might be explained as a later additional and artificial name of the deity Namma/u, who is well-known to appear in Sumerian and bilingual magical texts and, as observed above, is known from another occasion in a medical context to replace Asalluḫi/Marduk in a divine dialogue

A	i 19''	ad <da>-mu dumu-saĝ ^r d ^r []
B	14	ad da-mu dumu-saĝ nam-ma-kal gù m[u ¹² -]
C	ii 16'	ad da-mu dumu-saĝ ^d []- ^r na-an-dé ^r -[
D	ii 17'	^d da-mu dumu-saĝ ^d nà-ke ₄ gù mu-un-na-an-dé-e	
E	ii 15'	^d da-mu dumu-saĝ ^d nà-ke ₄ ^r gù ^r []
F	r. 18'	^r ad da ^r -[mu] ^r dumu ^r -saĝ ^d r ^r nà ^r gù mu-un-na-a[n-]
MB	12'	[g]ù mu-un-na-an-dé-e

6. dumu-ĝu₁₀ nam-ba-ši-in-ri lú igi nu-un-bar-re
 “My Son, don’t impose yourself upon him!¹⁷ You will not (even) look at the patient.¹⁸”

A	i 20''	dumu-ĝu ₁₀ nam-ba-ši []
B	15	dumu-ĝu ₁₀ nam-ba-ši-in-ri lú igi ^r nu [?] -[]
C	ii 17'	dumu-ĝu ₁₀ nam-tar-[] nu-un-bar*-[
D	ii 18'	dumu-ĝu ₁₀ nam-ba-ši-in-ri lú igi nu-un-bar-ra	
E	ii 16'	dumu-ĝu ₁₀ nam-ba-ši-in-[]
F	r. 18'	dumu-ĝu ₁₀ nam-tar- ^r re [?] ^r x ^r []
MB	13'	[] ^r x ^r lú igi mi-in-bar-re

7. lú-a-zu di-ku₅ inim-bé nu-mu-un-tar-re¹⁹
 The physician is the judge!²⁰ You will not decide this case.”

A	i 21''	lú-a-zu di-ku ₅ i[nim]
B	r. 1	lú-a-zu tag- ^r e ^r [] nu-tar-ra tu[₆ -én]
C	ii 18'	l[ú]- ^r a-zu ^r di-k[u ₅] nu-tar-re t[u ₆ -én]
D	ii 19'	lú-a-zu di-ku ₅ inim-bé nu-mu-un-tar-ra	tu ₆ [-én]
E	ii 17'	lú-a-zu di-ku ₅ inim-bé n[u-]
F	r. 19'	-z]u di- ^r ku ₅ inim [?] []
MB	14'	[-t]ar- ^r re ^r

8. ka-inim-ma saĝ-ĥul-za-kám
 It is an incantation against saĝ-ĥul-ĥa-za

C ii 19' [ka-inim-ma] saĝ-ĥul-ĥa-za-[kám]

(see Wiggermann 1998-2000a, 138). Note, however, that we would have a syllabic spelling of the name instead of the more conventional ⁴ENGUR.

¹⁷ Ms. C and F translate this as ‘My Son, do not decide!’.

¹⁸ Note that the MB version does not contain the negation {nu} and may either reflect the same divine dialogue as displayed by the manuscripts of the first millennium but with a positive outcome for the exorcist deity, or it is simply corrupt at this point.

¹⁹ For inim—tar, ‘to decide a matter’ instead of inim—ku₅ ‘to swear’, see van Dijk/Geller 2003, 67. The present attestation of the idiom would confirm the case for the Ur III incantation TMH 6, 19 (HS 2439), *pace* the reluctance of Rudik 2015, 422 n. 766 and n. 768; 425.

²⁰ lú-a-zu di-ku₅(-da-am) is here rendered as a nominal sentence. An alternative interpretation would be to render di ku₅ as a non-finite form translating ‘the physician, who (normally) decides, he will not decide this case.’ Ms. B translates this as ‘The physician will touch (him)’.

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