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An Old Assyrian Incantation against the Evil Eye*

Abstract

A new Old Assyrian incantation against the evil eye (*ēnum lamuttum*) is published here, adding to the steadily increasing number of such texts. Parallels to Old Babylonian examples are provided, and in the context of a discussion of the religious life and practice of the Old Assyrian merchants, other new texts from Kültepe with previously unattested gods and information concerning a private chapel are presented.

Among the texts excavated by Prof. Tahsin Özgüç and his team at the site of Kültepe in 1994 were two incantations: kt 94/k 821, already published by Cécile Michel¹, and kt 94/k 520, which is the topic of the present communication. The two texts come from two different archives discovered during the same campaign. The first belongs to the archive of the Šalim-Aššur family currently under publication by Mogens Trolle Larsen. The second text, translated below, came from the archive of the merchant Irma-Aššur, whose records are being prepared for publication by Gojko Barjamovic.²

Michel recently listed the incantations so far known from private houses in the lower city at Kanesh.³ In all, seven tablets with nine incantations have been identified: kt a/k 611 with an incantation against a “black dog”, who lies in wait to attack the traveller straying from his caravan⁴, the fragmentary kt a/k 302 which relates to reed⁵, BIN 4, 126 and kt 94/k 821 that are both directed against the female demon Lamaštum⁶, and kt 90/k 178, which bears two incantations – one concerned with giving birth, and the other with the common disease

* We are grateful to Prof. C. Günbattı (Ankara) for his collation of kt 94/k 520 l. 23, as well as to Aa. Westenholz and J. Andersson for their critical comments on both texts. We are particularly indebted to W. Farber for his help, which led to a number of improved readings and interpretations of the Assyrian incantation.

¹ Published in C. Michel (1997).

² See M. T. Larsen *forthcoming* for the division of these two archives.

³ C. Michel (2004), 395.

⁴ K. R. Veenhof (1996).

⁵ K. Hecker (1996), 30.

⁶ W. von Soden (1956) and C. Michel (1997).

jaundice that afflicts so many new-born babies.⁷ Finally, Veenhof is to publish kt 91/k 502 with two incantations – one concerning a cooking-pot and the other an object called “the heart”.⁸

Among his many and varied contributions to the field of Old Assyrian studies, Karl Hecker has dealt with the study of the intellectual environment in the Assyrian colony at Kanesh, and most of the school-texts found in the merchant’s houses have been discussed and edited by him.⁹ The edition of the present text therefore seems a good occasion to address a few points on the education and religious practices of the Assyrian merchants, and to relate this to a brief discussion of the issues raised by the few and scattered school-texts, religious and literary documents.

kt 94/k 520

Transliteration:

- 1 *e-nu-mì : e-nu-um : e-nu-um*
- 2 *a-lu-ší-tum : ki-ša : bi-ru-um*
- 3 *la-am-nu-um : ki-ša : ši-tum*
- 4 *a-bi-ik-tum : tí-ru-um*
- 5 *É a-we-lim : ká-nu-nam*
- 6 *pá-hu-ra-am tù-sá-pí-ih*
- 7 *bé-tám : ša-gi₄-ma-am : tí-li-šu*
- 8 *ta-áš-ku-un : ta-hu-uz*
- 9 *GU₄ : i-na ú-ri-im ta-hu-uz*
- 10 *: UDU : i-na ma-áš-qé-e*
- 11 *ta-hu-uz : e t-lam : i-na*
- 12 *sú-pu-im : ta-hu-uz*
- 13 *wa-ar-da-tám : i-šu-wa-ri-im*
- 14 *[t]a-hu-uz : šú-ùh-ra-[am]*
- 15 *[i]-bu-ud : ta-ri-tim*
- 16 *ta-hu-uz : e-nu-um*
- 17 *la-mu-tum : a-tí : ší-ip-tum*
- 18 *la i-a-tum : ší-pá-at*
- 19 *É-a : be-el ší-pá-tim*
- 20 *ta-mu-a-tí : A-nam*
- 21 *ù A-na-tám : Lá-ah-ma-am*

⁷ C. Michel (2004). A Neo Assyrian text contains several lines that run parallel to the Old Assyrian incantation, as noted by Michel. The later text has been understood as directed against biliousness, cf. B. Foster (1993), 847, and B. Böck (1999), 421–423. Michel suggests, that despite this parallel, and the fact that the first incantation is concerned with a difficult childbirth, the Old Assyrian text may be simply “une incantation contre une véritable chèvre” (p. 412). For an Old Babylonian spell against jaundice, see UET 5, 85 edited in B. Landsberger – T. Jacobsen (1955), 14, n. 7.

⁸ The text was made available for our study by Veenhof. Also the inventory kt 94/k 670 of a merchant’s private chapel in Anatolia (discussed below) lists a “heart” made of silver among the sacred objects kept in the room.

⁹ For a complete bibliography and a list of the Old Assyrian school-texts, see C. Michel (2003), 139–140.



- 22 ù¹[Du¹]-ra-am : er-ša-tám
 23 [ù¹] na-i-li-ša : la ta-tù-/ri-ma
 24 la ta-ša-bi-tí-ší-ni

Oh, eye, eye! *alušitu*-eye!

Truly – a malicious *birru*-disease!

Truly – carried away sleep!

Trembling!

She dispersed the ingathered fireplace of the man's house.

She brought about the ruin of the noisy household.

She has seized.

She has seized the cow from the shed.

She has seized the sheep from the watering place.

She has seized the young man from prayer.

She has seized the maiden in dance.

She has seized the child from the nurse's embrace.

You are the evil eye!

The incantation is not mine, it is the incantation of Ea, lord of incantations.

You are cursed by Anum and Antum, Lahmum and Dürum, the Underworld, and those who lie in it, that you shall not return, and that you shall not seize her!

line 1: the opening lines of the Assyrian incantations regularly consist of repetitive phonetic formulae and word-play such as in the present text. Other examples are: kt 90/k 178: ¹ar-hu-um a-ra-ah ²a-ra-ah-tum ar-ha-at ³ar-hi-iš and ²⁴e-er-qú-um e-ri-iq ²⁵e-ri-iq-tum e-er-qá-at; kt 91/k 502: ¹1 dí-qá-ru-mì dí-qá-ru-um and ¹⁶¹li-bu-mì li-bu-um (courtesy K. Veenhof); kt 94/k 821: ¹e-za-at pu-ul-ha-at ²i-lá-at na-ma-ra-at; kt a/k 611: ¹da-mu-um / da-ma-mu-um; BIN 4, 126: iš-t[é]-a-at e-lá-at a-pu-la-at mu-uš-ta-ba-ba-at ù-tù-kà-at lam-na-at. For the Babylonian examples, see W. Farber (1981), 70 and his discussion in W. Farber (1989), 144–145.

line 2: After the opening line, the incantation follows a quasi-poetic structure recording separate characteristics of the evil eye. The word *a-lu-ší-tum* is a *hapax*. AHW has *alušû(m)* = Menschenklasse[?]. This is rejected in CAD, with an obscure reference to *kulu'u*. A connection with *aluzinnu*, a word that refers either to a profession (perhaps a jester or clown) or to a plant, seems unlikely. Regardless, the word is plainly an attribute referring to the eye.

line 2: *kīša* is not otherwise attested in the Assyrian incantations, though it does occasionally appear in other contexts: TC 2, 39 l. 28 ff: ^dNIN.ŠUBUR-ba-ni ù a-ta ki-ša-am / id-a / ki-ša-am ta-dí-a. The passage was treated by Hecker in his grammar –106a: “Modalworte und –enklitika”, where he says: “Unklar ist der Sinn von nur einmal belegtem *qīšam* – *qīšam*”. The passage is rendered as: “Pn und du, legt, oder habt ihr schon gelegt? Warum kam euer Bescheid nicht?” This interpretation is taken up in AHW s.v. *kīšam*, where we find the translation “entweder – oder” for *kīšam* – *kīšam*. The dictionary refers under this lemma to *kīša(m)ma*, but no Old Assyrian examples are given; the translation provided is: “‘verzeih mir!’ im Sinn v doch wohl”, an interpretation that is not far from the one chosen by the CAD s.v. *kīša*, where we find one single Old Assyrian example and the translation “certainly, evidently”. The passage from TC 2, 39 is not discussed either here or in other places

in the CAD. The example referred to in the CAD is from the unpublished letter kt c/k 266: ²³*a-šu-mì GEMÉ ma-lá ú šit-ni-šu* ²⁴*tup-pá-am áš-pu-ra-kum* ²⁵*ki-ša-ma GEMÉ ša ke-na-tim* ²⁶*i-na ma-ah-ri-a té-zi-ib* ²⁷*GEMÉ iš-tí-a tù-uš-té-ša*, “once or twice I have written to you about the slave-girl. Certainly, you did indeed leave the slave-girl with me. You made the slave-girl go out with me.” If *kīšama* really means “certainly”, it is remarkable that the letter-writer adds a further “*ša kēnātim*” which should be translated something like “in truth”.

In the unpublished text kt 87/k 324, l. 21 ff, we find the following passage: *a-wi-lu a-ni-ú-tum i-pu-ùh-ri-im É kà-ri-im i-zi-zu-ma ki-ša-am Šu-Sú-en₆ DUMU I-tur₄-DINGIR É-et Pí-lá-ah-Ištar DUMU A-šur-SIPA DAM.QAR-ri-šu i-dí-ma A-dù-we x x DUMU A-ni-na É-bé-tí iš-a-ma ki-ša-am na-da-am e-mu-ru* (courtesy K. Hecker) “(fifteen names:) these men stood up in the assembly of the Kanesh colony, and *kīšam* Šu-Suen son of Itūr-ilī set down the houses of his merchant Pílah-Ištar son of Aššur-rē’ī, and Aduwe ... son of Annina bought the houses, and *kīšam* they witnessed the ‘setting down’”. Here the meaning “either – or” does not satisfy. In his comment to the passage, Hecker sees the word *kīšum* as referring to an object that can be ‘put down’ (*nadā’um*). The discussion of *kīš(š)um* in Veenhof *forthcoming* seems to us to indicate that several homonymous words exist. Contrary to his opinion, one of them – a noun – may well represent a variant spelling of *kīsum* (‘purse’), see CAD s.v. *kīsu* a): ‘business capital’ with the passage from TC2, 39 discussed above. In the unpublished texts c/k 440 (courtesy Dercksen) and 88/k 263 (courtesy Donbaz) another homonym seems to be a designation used about metals. The semantic field of this word is thus still undetermined, and it is quite unclear whether the repeated *kīša* – *kīša* in our text should be understood as “either – or”, which is somewhat difficult to understand, or as “certainly – certainly.”

line 2: *birrum*: Surely to be connected with the word *birratu*, according to the CAD “a filmy condition of the eye.” Cf. J. Fincke (2000), 86–91.

line 4: *tirrum*: as a tentative suggestion, we refer to *tirratu*: ‘an affliction’, or to the verb *tarāru*: ‘to tremble’.

line 5–7: The phrase is an exact parallel to the OB incantation published in Farber 1981, and even helps to ascertain and improve certain readings of the broken passages in that text: ¹⁰*ki-nu-na-am pu-¹hu²-ra-am ú-sa-pi-ih* ¹¹*bi-ta-am ša-gi-¹ma¹-am ti-li-ša-am iš-ku-un*. The translation offered in K. van der Toorn (1996), 122 and n. 18: “She entered the storage room and broke the seal. She dispersed the secluded fireplace and turned the locked house into ruin” is based on his reading *ša-gi-ra-am* “locked”, whereas the present text supports Farber’s original reading. The OB text begins with the word ¹*[i]-nu-um*, and is labelled ¹⁸*ši-ip-tum ša i-ni-[im]* [contra N. Wasserman (1995), 61], showing that it too is concerned with the evil eye. However, the reading suggested for the remainder of line 1 by A. Cavigneaux – F. al-Rawi (1994), 85 n. 19 cannot be maintained, as shown by a collation carried out by A. Westenholz.

line 9–16: The parallel *supūru* (cattle pen) in YOS 11, 11: 6 clearly indicates that we are dealing with the lemma *urūm* (stable). The MA form *urā’u* tentatively suggested in AHw may be regarded as a mistake on the basis of the present reference. Close parallels to the passage are found in the two OB incantations YOS 11, 11 and 19. In the first example (YOS 11, 11) the text reads: ⁶*ŠÀ UD i-na su-pu-ri-i[m] iš-ba-at* ⁷*ŠÀ UDU i-na ta-ar-ba-ši-im iš-ba-at* ⁸*ŠÀ GURUŠ i-na šu-li-i-im iš-ba-at* ⁹*ŠÀ KI.SIKIL i-na me-lu-ul-ti-im iš-ba-at*. In the

second example (YOS 11, 19) it reads: ⁹*i-ša-ab-ba-at e ʔ-lam i-na šu-li-im* ¹⁰KI.SIKIL *i-na me-lu-li-im* ¹¹*še-eh-ra-am i-na bu-ud ta-ri-tim*. A less clear example may be found in YOS 8 where we read: ¹⁰*tu-uš-ta-ah-di-ir b[u- ...]* ¹¹*ka-lu-mi-e še-eh-ra-am i-na b[u-ud] / ta-ri-tim*. The lexicographic variations between the OB examples and the present one are also worthy of notice: OB *šullûm* = OA *suppu'um*, and OB *mêlulum/mêlultum* = OA *šuwârûm*. The present context proves that *šullûm* in the OB texts clearly has to represent a phonetic variant of *sullûm* 'prayer'; we thus have to correct the translations in YOS 11 p. 26: "battle", W. Farber (1990), 309: "street", and Foster 1993 i 133: "roadway". The sequence young man – young woman – child with a nurse appears also in the Sumerian incantation TCL 16, 89 l. 8–10. See M. L. Thomsen (1992), 23. Note also the re-edition by M. Geller (2003), 124, where a different translation is offered.¹⁰ He sees the passage in question as containing a reference to loss of libido: "He approached the lad and sapped his (sexual) energies, he approached the maiden and tossed away her *towel*. He approaches the nurse with (her) charge and cuts through the (child)-harness." It seems impossible to establish any connection with our incantation.

Geller 2004 republishes the Akkadian evil eye incantation from Assur; in this text we find in lines 12–13 a somewhat distant parallel to our text; his translation of KI.NE as "furnace" should probably be corrected to "fireplace", since all of the passages where *kinûnum* otherwise appears in incantations concern a domestic context.

Line 15: We understand *ina būd* in parallel to *kirimmu*, not simply as a part of the body (the shoulder), but rather as a particular way in which the nanny held the infant.

line 21: The writing *A-na-tám* is not known to us from elsewhere.

line 21: For *Laḫmu* see F. A. M. Wiggermann (1992), 164ff. with further references.

line 20–23: Note the parallel passage in kt 91/k 502: 8–11 (courtesy K. Veenhof): (8) *ta-mu-a-tí : AN ú AN-tám* (9) *Lá-ah-ma-am ú Du-ra* (10) *er-ša-tám ú na-^li-^lša* (11) *ta-mu-a-tí : a-tí*. For the divine couple ^d*Du-ri* and ^d*Da-ri*, their connection to *Laḫmu*, and the ancestry of Anu, see Lambert 1985, 190. Whereas incantations elsewhere evoke the daughters of Anu, the present example instead calls upon his parents and grandparents.

line 24: Although W. Lambert (1950–60), 117, l. 32 on the basis of a similar context in a SB text argued that the word *nā'ilu* refers to the river Ḫubur, we prefer to take it as a reference to the dead who dwell in the Underworld.

line 25: The subjunctive in this line is plainly caused by the fact that it appears as a part of an oath, see W. Farber (1975), 178.

Discussion:

Texts that do not belong to the world of trade and business are very rare in the private archives of the merchant houses at Kültepe. Apart from the incantations, we have a few school-texts, which seem to show that some training in literacy did take place in Kanesh itself.¹¹ We also have two copies of a royal inscription from Assur, the famous Erišum-text, and Günbatti has published a literary composition about king Sargon of Akkade.

¹⁰ Text edited as BL 3, pages 129–134.

¹¹ C. Michel (1998) with proveniences listed in K. H. Hecker (1996). For a recent addition, see V. Donbaz (2004).

All of these texts have been discovered in the ruins of private houses. The incantation published here shows several close connections to the OB incantations as has been made clear in the detailed commentary above. In the same way, the *Lamaštu*-incantation published by Cécile Michel has close parallels in the OB incantation, YOS 11, 20. Both Landsberger, Jacobsen and Farber have argued that the OB incantations draw upon an oral folk tradition.¹² If this line of thought is to be maintained in view of the close Assyrian parallels, such folk poetry must have its common roots at least as far back as the Ur III period. Although rarely visible due to the nature of the preserved documentation from Kültepe, it seems increasingly clear that the Old Assyrian merchants were fully integrated into the common Mesopotamian cultural and religious tradition.¹³

There is no textual reference to a scribal school in Kanesh, and no archaeological evidence either. In their publication of the Erišum inscription Landsberger and Balkan did suggest that the house where it was found could have been a school¹⁴, but this has been challenged by Hecker.¹⁵

We do of course know of persons who were called *ṭupšarrum*, “scribe”¹⁶, but such individuals were attached to the colonial administration and did not serve in private contexts. The one example we have of a person training to learn to read and write (*ṭupšarruttum*) refers to a private merchant – Pūšu-kēn’s oldest son Su’eyya who wrote to his father: DUB.SAR-tām wa-dí lá-am-da-ni e-pá-tá-am a-na um-me-a-ni-a šu-bi-lam, “you know that we are learning the scribal craft. Send me an *epattu*-garment for my teacher.”¹⁷ It seems obvious that he was attending a school in Aššur rather than in Kanesh.

The absence of a proper school in Kanesh probably means that the training of basic skills in literacy, so important for the merchants who spent their active commercial lives in a basically non-literate Anatolian context, took place in several places where a merchant taught his children and employees. This explains the distribution of simple school-texts in private houses. The Sargon text has a clear entertainment value that might also account for its presence, but the discovery of the Erišum text in two duplicates in the same house suggests it must be grouped with the regular school-texts. It is not so easy to see why a private individual would have copies of royal inscriptions lying around, unless they were used for didactic purposes. In the same house where they were discovered, also two of the incantations listed above were found: kt a/k 302 and kt a/k 611. Although the exact find spot of the four tablets is only vaguely explained in the excavation report, it seems that both the Erišum-inscription and the incantations came from within or just around the dark area next to the oven shown on the photo in T. Özgüç (1949), *pl.* 70 i. In a brief note the excavators state that 10–12 tablets were found here, on what must have been the level of

¹² B. Landsberger – T. Jacobsen (1955), 14, note that: “Quite a few incantations still clearly recognizable as having their origins in the simple spells of folk poetry have managed to rescue themselves into the canon of Akkadian incantation literature”. See also W. Farber (1990), 299–305.

¹³ See e.g. the recently published Sargon-myth from Kültepe. For new divine names, see also the texts quoted in footnote 28, and note e.g. the personal names *Šu-Ta-mu-zi* (kt 94/k 863a: 1) / *Šu-^dDUMU.ZI* (kt 94/k 1402: 2) and *Giš-il₅-ga-mi-iš* (kt k/k 49: 2 (courtesy K. Hecker).

¹⁴ B. Landsberger – K. Balkan (1950), 220–222.

¹⁵ K. H. Hecker (1996), 291.

¹⁶ See M. T. Larsen (1976), 304–307 and J. G. Dercksen (2004), 74.

¹⁷ CCT 4, 6e: 4–8.

the original floor. Both of the royal inscriptions are directly said to have come from this location with no direct mention of the incantations.¹⁸

Hecker has grouped the incantations as school-texts. It cannot be excluded, of course, that they may have been used for the training of literacy, but it seems to us that they must first of all be understood as utilitarian, everyday documents recording texts that were to be used in concrete situations. Indeed, their practical purpose in the Assyrian colony accounts for their widespread (though by no means common) distribution among the merchant archives.

Incantations against the evil eye are not very common in the cuneiform tradition.¹⁹ Geller suggests that “the notion of ‘evil eye’, familiar to Semitic magic, may not have been a Sumerian concept.”²⁰ The Sumerian texts that refer to *igi hul* should rather be understood to refer to the “evil face” rather than the eye.

The absence of ritual instructions in all of the Old Assyrian incantations, and the fact that we have no reference to a person whose profession was an (*w*)*āšipum*, “incantation expert”, probably means that the use of these texts was a matter of everyday practice rather than a professionalized activity. One may speculate that the women known as *gubabtu*-priestesses might have functioned in such private ritual contexts. We do have references to certain specialists in the religious sphere (apart from the mention of priests and priestesses), but these seem always to refer to people in Assur.²¹ We hear of *šā’iltus*, female diviners, and of *bāriātum*, female *haruspexes*.

Private religion and the everyday practice of religious rites in the Assyrian community in Anatolia is not well attested.²² Several texts contain reference to sacrifices, *niq’u*, and these were often associated with travel. In a list of small amounts paid to various people we find the passage: ¹³2 GÍN KUG.BABBAR ¹⁴*a-na Puzur₄-A-šūr* ¹⁵*i-nu-mi a-na A-lim^{ki}* ¹⁶*i-li-ku ni-qí-i-šu* ¹⁷*a-dí-in*, “I gave 2 shekels of silver to Puzur-Aššur as his sacrifice when he went to the City” (kt 94/k 1694: 13–17).²³ Similar situations are described in other texts (AKT 3, 12: 17–20; kt m/k 43: 1–5)²⁴, and a text in the Šalim-Aššur archive provides added information about this practice. A caravan from Assur on its way to Kanesh via Uršu and Mamma stops to make sacrifices at the crossing of the Euphrates and in the two towns: *i-na ša-pá-at*

¹⁸ K. H. Hecker (1993), 282 specifically states that kt a/k 302 came from another room in the same house.

¹⁹ M. L. Thomsen (1992), 20. A list of all known examples is given by M. Geller (2003), 116; see also M. Geller (2004), and W. Farber (1984), 70 (P. 62, l.e.).

²⁰ M. Geller (2003), 117.

²¹ One reference, ATHE 57: 3, may refer to an old woman who is described as *šā’ilat Kaneš*, cf. Hirsch UAR², Add.: 29 and G. Kryszat (2006), 105.

²² For the religious practices of the Anatolian community as evidenced through the Assyrian texts, see G. Kryszat (2006).

²³ The same text ends with ¹⁷*i-nu-mi* ¹⁸*a-ma-sú e-hu-zu-ni* ¹⁹1 GÍN KUG.BABBAR *a-na am-tí-šu* ²⁰*a-dí-in i-nu-mi* ²¹*Puzur₄-Ištar a-ma-sú* ²²*e-hu-zu-ni* 1 GÍN KUG.BABBAR ²³*a-na am-tí-šu a-dí-in*, “when he married his maid I gave 1 shekel of silver to his maid; when Puzur-Ištar married his maid, I gave 1 shekel of silver to his maid.”

²⁴ Mentions of *niq’u*-payments are very common in the corpus, and more than a hundred and twenty texts record one or several such payments. Usually they are insubstantial amounts between a third and three shekels of silver. AKT 3, 32 contains a list of 15 individual *niq’u*-payments and kt 94/k 1685 lists 12 such payments. TC 3, 177 (see H. Hirsch UAR² 63b) records: ¹*št-im* 30 *ni-qí ša* GUD.ĪI.A ²*št-im ni-qí ša* UDU.ĪI.A.

²*na-ri-im* ³*iš-tí-in e-me-ra-am* ⁴*a-qí-i* ⁵*iš-tí-in i-na* ⁶*Ur-šu-ú a-na* ⁷*Ištar be-lá-at kà-le²-/ta* ⁸*a-qí-i* ⁹*iš-tí-in* ¹⁰*i-na Ma-ma* ¹¹*ILLAT-tum iq-bi₄-ma* ¹²*a-qí-i* 15 GÍN ¹³AN.NA *a-na* ¹⁴*e-ri-qí-im* ¹⁵*áš-qúl*, “I sacrificed one sheep at the river-bank. I sacrificed one in Uršu to Ištar-kalita. The caravan asked me for one in Mamma and I sacrificed it. I paid 15 shekels of tin for a wagon.”²⁵

Sacrifices are of course also attested in contexts where a temple is involved, and a very clear example is from another long list of *niq’u*-payments where we read: ⁷*i-nu-mì* ⁸*ma-ha-i* É *Iš-ha-ra* ⁹*e¹-li-ú-ni* 5 GÍN KUG.BABBAR ¹⁰*ni-qí-i-šu : a-dí-šu-um*, “when my uncle went up to the temple of Išhara I gave him 5 shekels of silver for his sacrifice.”²⁶

In the religious sphere we also find the common expression *ikribu*, which probably refers to investments pledged to a divinity, i.e. a temple or chapel in Assur.²⁷ Several texts refer to gifts of various kinds to be given to a temple in fulfillment of such a pledge, and to the already known examples we can add one from the Šalim-Aššur archive, where we find amounts of silver and gold plus a sun-disk weighing 3 minas of gold as votive offerings for Aššur; further vulva-ornaments as votive offerings for Ištar of Assur, of Qatna and of the obscure Babylonian town of Dīm, plus a vulva-ornament for Annunītum.²⁸

No temple has so far been discovered in the lower town at Kanesh, but it is assumed that at least a temple to the god Aššur was located there.²⁹ The Išhara-temple mentioned in the text above may have been located on the main mound. Religious installations in private houses have not been recognised either, although the excavations have turned up various artefacts that have clear religious significance. Figurines of various materials, mostly lead, and stone moulds for such objects have been found in relatively large numbers, but most are from the late phase of level 1b and they seem to represent Anatolian religious beliefs rather than Assyrian ones.³⁰ The same is presumably true also for the cult vessels discovered; one example from level 2 is the famous boat carrying what appears to be a shrine and divine figures.³¹

²⁵ kt 94/k 673. The identity of the goddess in Uršu requires further study. Note also the text kt 93/k 94 (courtesy C. Michel), which mentions the taking of an omen on the bank of a river in the course of a journey, and see the Hittite version of the Sargon Myth KBo 22.6 i 14–18 mentioning his sacrifice of one ox and seven sheep on the brink of the river Aranzah.

²⁶ kt 94/k 1685: 7–10. Other examples are: ATHE 8, CCT 4, 6f and kt 94/k 736.

²⁷ Discussion in J. G. Dercksen (2004), 79.

²⁸ kt 94/k 1296: 1 GÚ 1 *ma-na* 1 GÍN KUG.BABBAR ²ú 1 *ma-na* 1 GÍN ³GUŠKIN *qá-qá-sú* ⁴*ma-sà-a-am* ù 3 *ma-na* ⁵GUŠKIN *ša-am-ša-am* ⁶*ik-ri-bi : a-na A-šur* ⁷*ha-bu-lá-ku* ⁸*a-na : Iš-ta-ar* ⁹*A-šu-ri-tim* ¹⁰*Qá-at-ni-tim* ¹¹ù *Dí-mi-tim* ¹²ù *re-e : ik-ri-bi* ¹³*ha-bu-lá-ku* ¹⁴*a-na A-nu-ni-tim* ¹⁵ú *ra-am : ha-bu-lá-ku* ¹⁶1/2 *ma-na* KUG.BABBAR *ni-is-ha-tim* ¹⁷*a-na A-šur : ha-bu-lá-ku*. What the “washing of his head” refers to is obscure; it could be a religious ceremony or perhaps a commercial procedure, where *qaqqudum* stands for the capital amount. The understanding of the lines 8–13 with the three manifestations of Ištar is due to Dercksen, who has pointed out that “the Babylonian town of Dim is only known in AbB 6, 114: 23 (^{uu}*Di-i-im*) and AbB 10, 15: 32 (*Di-im*^{ki}).” See also kt 94/k 1119: ²*ik-ri-bu* ³*ša* ^dMAR.TU ^{4d}IM : *ša-ra-ma-té-en* ^{5d}EN.ZU ^{6d}KAL *ša tá-ra-/dim* ⁷*Be-lim* ⁸*E-a* ù *Mi-ší-ri-/im* ⁹*La-ma-sí-im* ¹⁰*A-na : ù Pá-bi₄-il₅/ša-an*.

²⁹ L. Matouš (1974).

³⁰ K. Emre (1971) and K. Emre (1993) and T. Özgüç (2003) for images and further references.

³¹ T. Özgüç (1994) and T. Özgüç (2003), 216–219. The boat was found in the house of the trader Elamma alongside a number of other cultic objects, among others the unique carved triton shell shown in T. Özgüç (2003), 3–4.

The absence of any clear archaeological evidence for private religious installations, chapels etc. gives special importance to a small text from the Šalim-Aššur archive, since it seems to provide an inventory of a private chapel.

kt 94/k 670

- 1 [x p]á-šu-ru ša IGI i-li²-šu
- 2 1 ku-sí-um ša IGI
- 3 A-šūr 1 kà-sú-um
- 4 ša IGI ša-ru-ma¹-té-en
- 5 2 ha-WA-ru ša tá-áb-té-en
- 6 1 kà-sú-um ša KUG.BABBAR
- 7 ú ší-ku-tù-um
- 8 ša IGI Ú-ku-ur
- 9 5 kà-ku-ú
- 10 2 qá-áb-li-a-tum
- 11 1 li-bu-um ša KUG.BABBAR
- 12 1 ni-kà-sú ú 1 tup-pu-um
- 13 ša is-ku-ri-im
- 14 [mì-ma a-nim] ša DUMU Ku-ra
- 15 [i-nu]-mì e-kál-lu-šu
- 16 [En]-um-A-šur ip-té-ú
- 17 [x x x] [ta]-at Ku-ra
- 18 [e-zi]-ib
- 19 [IGI] Ku-ku-wa
- 20 [IGI Ma]-nu-ki-ì-lí-a

[x] tables that were in front of his gods. 1 chair that was in front of Aššur. 1 cup that was in front of Šarru-mātēn. 2 *hawiru* for/of salt, 1 cup of silver and a perfume-flask that was in front of Ukur. 5 weapons, 2 *qablītu*-containers, 1 “heart” of silver, 1 *nikkassu*-emblem (of Šamaš) and 1 wax tablet – all this belonging to Kura’s son, when Ennam-Aššur opened his main building, he left ... for Kura. Witnessed by Kukkuwa and Mannu-kī-iliya.

line 4: The god Šarru-mātēn (new attestations in: kt 94/k 1119; kt c/k 1079 and TPAK 210): according to Hirsch UAR², 26 with further comments in the *addendum* 14 this is a ‘Beiname des Aššur’. However, the present appearance of the god in a list next to Aššur seems to render this interpretation doubtful.

line 5: 2 *ha-WA-ru ša tá-áb-té-en*: the first word is not understood, although it seems to denote a container. The dual placed at the end of the phrase is strange; one would have expected 2 *hawArān ša tābtim*.

line 8: For Ukur, the vizier of Nergal, see RIA s. v. Nergal – 1.3, and W. Lambert (1973), 356: “Most likely then one should read the name Uqur, the Akkadian imperative: “Destroy!” (cf. Gilg. IX 24), and Uqur was probably the name of the sword of Erra/Nergal, deified as his vizier”.

line 10: *qablītu*: a domestic container used in symbolic references also to indicate ownership of a house. I 705: “the household and the furnishings belong to me, be it the *q.*, the

table, forks and knives, the *zamaltum*-chest and the hides”. In kt m/k 69, 24 the object is inlaid [see K. Hecker (2004)]. In BIN 4, 90 examples of silver and copper are listed. In kt h/k 87 eight *q.* occur in a list of household furniture and utensils – two are said to weigh 15 pounds each.

line 12–13: *iskūru* ‘wax tablet’, cf. CAD s.v. *iškūru*. One more reference to such an object appears in the Old Assyrian text kt 92/k 233: ²¹*i-na tup/pi-im* ²²*ša i-is-ku-ri-im* (see Veenhof *forthcoming*).

The text appears to be a contract set up when Ennam-Aššur, the son of Šalim-Aššur, emptied the house of a certain son of Kura. The name Kura occurs very often in the archive, mostly in texts that refer to Ennam-Aššur, but it is not possible to establish their precise relationship. There are no other references to the special situation described in the text.

This isolated text provides the most detailed information we have for the way in which a chapel in a private house was set up. The gods mentioned at the beginning of the text may have been family gods, perhaps representing ancestors.³² Golden statuettes referred to as “PN’s gods” are mentioned elsewhere in the available texts³³, and provide a glimpse of an institution that was presumably ubiquitous. However, in the absence of archaeological data it is difficult to establish a more definite interpretation.³⁴

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³² See G. Kryszat (2005–06), 247–248.

³³ See kt a/k 447 a and b: *i-le-e ša Šu-Ku-bi-im É nu-a-im ú-šé-ši-ma a-na hu-bu-ul Šu-Ku-bi-im a-na* ^dIM *i-ši-qi-il*₅, discussed in J. G. Dercksen (1996), 105, and kt 92/k 212: ⁵DINGIR-li GUŠKIN *ša Illi*₅-*pi-/ú-šur*, and finally: kt 2001/k 325 a and b: ¹⁸DINGIR-li *ša GUŠKIN ša šál-lim-A-šūr* ¹⁹*a-bi*₄-*ša*, İ. Albayrak (2004), 13–14.

³⁴ Cf. K. van der Toorn (1996), 51–62 and 111.

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