

**A Neo-Babylonian Recension of *Maqlû*:
Some Observations on the Redaction of *Maqlû* Tablet VII and on
the Development of Two of Its Incantations***

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The purpose of this paper is to describe a Neo-Babylonian recension of *Maqlû* VII contained on the Nineveh tablet K 5350 + 5374 + 7594 + 7610 + 7476 + 7631 + 8882 + 9635 + 11567 + 19154 + Sm 798b, to try to work out its relationship with the Standard Nineveh Version, and to trace a bit of the history of two of the incantations in Tablet VII.

In the summer of 1994, at a time when the number of the fragments known to belong to this Neo-Babylonian tablet were fewer and several had not yet been physically joined,¹ I considered having the join K 7476 + Sm 798b broken and retested because the text that the join created seemed to deviate significantly from the Standard Version. The notable problem was that in this manuscript, a fragmentary version of VII 130-140² seemed to be located on obverse, column ii prior to lines 80 ff., rather than in its expected

* It is a great pleasure to celebrate Professor Gernot Wilhelm's accomplishments and person. Gernot Wilhelm has made significant contributions to our knowledge and understanding of Akkadian, Hurrian, and Hittite linguistics, philology, and culture. Not only has he assumed the leadership of important scholarly institutions, but he has also led the way in the study of Western Asian languages and literatures through his own scholarship. On a more personal level, I would here express my deep appreciation of a friendship that began in 1977, and I wish Gernot many continued years of health and productivity.

¹ At that time, the textual situation was: K 5374 + 9635 (+) K 7476 + Sm 798b (+) K 7631 + 11567 (+) K 5350 (+) K 8882, for which see G. Meier, "Studien zur Beschwörungssammlung *Maqlû*," *AfO* 21 (1966): 78.

² Whereas in previous studies, I followed the line divisions and line numbers in the edition of *Maqlû* by G. Meier, *Die assyrische Beschwörungssammlung Maqlû*, *AfO Beiheft 2* (Berlin, 1937) and "Studien zur Beschwörungssammlung *Maqlû*," pp. 70-81, I now follow the line count of my own forthcoming edition; this new line count has now already appeared in T. Abusch and D. Schwemer, "Das Abwehrzauberritual *Maqlû* ('Verbrennung')," in *Omina, Orakel, Rituale und Beschwörungen*, Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments, Neue Folge 4, ed. B. Janowski and G. Wilhelm (Gütersloh, 2008), pp. 128-186.

place on reverse, column iii after lines 80 ff. But that summer I identified K 19154³ as a fragment of Tablet VII and joined it to the aforementioned K 7476 + Sm 798b, thus confirming the earlier join and indicating that one had to accept the existence of a deviant version.

This meant that we had to deal with whatever problems a deviant version occasioned and to ascertain, first of all, what the existence of lines identical with 130 ff. on the obverse prior to lines 80 ff. signified. More specifically, we had to decide whether the lines belong to the incantation *amsi qātīya* (VII 114-140) and thus indicate that that incantation was placed at an earlier point in the Neo-Babylonian recension or whether, as seemed more probable, they belong to the incantation *attūmannu kaššāptu* (VII 55-79) and thus indicate that that incantation had a different ending in that recension. In either case, we had to explain the meaning of the difference between the recensions and how it came about.

Matters stood thus until the early 2000's, when Jeanette Fincke joined K 7594 to K 8882.⁴ I immediately noticed that there were several ramifications for the Neo-Babylonian recension. Here I mention just two: First, because K 7594 contained an early form of the incantation *amsi qātīya* (VII 114-140), the ending of the incantation on the obverse could not be part of *amsi qātīya* but had to be a variant ending of *attūmannu kaššāptu* (VII 55-79). This was confirmed when in the course of our work on the tablet in 2006, Daniel Schwemer noticed that the newly joined piece could be directly joined to the main tablet.⁵ Furthermore, the join of K 7594 to a tablet of *Maqlû* meant that I had to rethink a solution that I had earlier proposed: in 1970, in a paper presented to the American Oriental Society and worked out in greater detail in my 1972 dissertation,⁶ I had identified K 7594 as a precursor to the present *Maqlû* VII 114-140 and had argued that the *Maqlû* incantation was created by the insertion of a lengthy list of evils into a base incantation like K 7594: 1'-8' (// KAR 165, rev. 1'-4') – thus VII 118-129 (as well as some lines following the central ritual in line 130) were an expansion. At the time, I imagined that the development took place prior to the incorporation of the incantation in *Maqlû*, an opinion that seemed reasonable in view of the length of the insertion. But once Fincke had joined the Babylonian fragment K 7594 to a Baby-

³ It should be noted that K 19154 had already been described as "Bab. Maqlû-type incantations" by W. G. Lambert, *Catalogue of the Cuneiform Tablets in the Kouyunjik Collection of the British Museum. Third Supplement* (London, 1992), p. 32.

⁴ See J. C. Fincke, "The Babylonian Texts of Nineveh," *AIO* 50 (2003-2004): 142. In 1997, at my request, M. J. Geller examined the various pieces of the tablet, for which I thank him; in a letter of November 14, 1997, he informed me that K 5374 +, K 7476 +, and K 7631 + could actually be directly joined. K 7610 was identified and joined to K 5350 by Fincke in 2003.

⁵ I take this opportunity to thank Daniel Schwemer for collations of K 5350 + during the preparation of this paper.

⁶ See Abusch, *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature. Case Studies*, Brown Judaic Studies 132 (Atlanta, 1987 [= my 1972 Harvard dissertation, with a new preface]), pp. 13-44. I there referred to this incantation as VII 119-146 in accordance with Meier's line count.

lonian manuscript of Tablet VII, it became apparent that the development must have taken place not before the composition of *Maqlû* but in the course of its transmission.

The existence of a version of Tablet VII that both incorporates K 7594 and shows other significant differences from the Standard Version of that tablet is a great boon. While we are now confronted by a recension that contains several serious differences from the Standard Version, these differences also provide us with a means of exploring the development of the text. For the variations can be linked together and can thereby help us to explain the differences between the versions and to trace the history of Tablet VII. Furthermore, this Neo-Babylonian Nineveh recension provides us with the possibility of furthering our understanding of the formation of some of the incantations in Tablet VII, and it suggests to me some modifications and refinements of my previous reconstruction of the history of *amsi qātīya* (VII 114-140).

The major areas of difference between the Neo-Babylonian Version and the Standard Nineveh Version relate to: 1. the order of incantations, and 2. the form of the incantations *attūmannu kaššāptu* (VII 55-79) and *amsi qātīya* (VII 114-140). There may have been other significant differences, but the Neo-Babylonian tablet is still not complete and the aforementioned differences are presently the main differences that are evident. I believe that the Neo-Babylonian text constitutes a separate recension and that overall it contains a text that is more original than that of the Standard Nineveh Version. This is immediately evident from the study of the order of incantations and of the text of the two incantations.

This study will be devoted to an examination of the two incantations VII 55-79 and VII 114-140. However, before taking up these incantations, I should comment on the difference in order of incantations in the two recensions. In the Neo-Babylonian recension the incantations *ipšiki epšētiki* (101-106) and *kišriki kušsurūti* (107-113) do not appear between *bā'ertu ša bā'irāti* (80-100) and *amsi qātīya* (114-140), but come after *amsi qātīya*. Thus, rather than the order of the Standard Version, the Neo-Babylonian Version has the order:

attūmannu kaššāptu (55-79)
bā'ertu ša bā'irāti (80-100)
amsi qātīya (114-140)
ipšiki epšētiki (101-106)
[kišriki kušsurūti] (107-113)

The order of the Neo-Babylonian Version is certainly not simply the result of scribal error. It is possible that this order makes better sense than that of the Standard Version. But, more significant, the Neo-Babylonian order is the very order also found in the Sultantepe recension of the Ritual Tablet, a recension that usually contains an older/more original version of the text than the Neo-Assyrian Ritual Tablet found in Nineveh. *STT* 83, rev. 40' reads:

- 40'a [ÉN am-si Š]U.[I]LMU ub'-¹ba-ab⁷ SU.<MU> LUH ŠU.II ✱
 40'b ÉN ip-še-¹ki ep-š¹-<ti>-¹ki⁷ LUH ŠU.II ✱
 40'c ÉN KA.KEŠDA.MEŠ-k[i KEŠDA.MEŠ KI.MIN]

The order of incipits in the Sultantepe manuscript differs from that of the standard Nineveh Assyrian text of the Ritual Tablet (RT) and from the order of incantations of the standard Nineveh Assyrian text of Tablet VII. The order in *STT* 83, rev. is: *STT* 83, rev. 40'a // RT 150'-151', *STT* 83, rev. 40'b // RT 148', and *STT* 83, rev. 40'c // RT 149'; that is, RT 148' // *STT* 83, rev. 40'b, RT 149' // *STT* 83, rev. 40'c, and RT 150'-151' // *STT* 83, rev. 40'a. As stated, the order agrees with that found in our Babylonian recension.

Turning now to the two incantations *attīmannu kaššāptu* (55-79) and *amsi qātīya* (114-140), I shall first describe these incantations as they appear in the two versions of our text; I shall then discuss some of the differences between the forms of these incantations in the two versions.

Description. *amsi qātīya*: I begin with the latter incantation, because it is easier to understand the differences between the two versions of this incantation and because I have already explained many of the differences in an earlier study, an explanation that remains generally correct even though it was worked out when I still thought that the Neo-Babylonian version was a precursor to an incantation in *Maqlû* rather than part of a *Maqlû* version. In parallel columns, the text of the two versions of *amsi qātīya* reads:

Standard Text: *Maqlû* VII 114-140⁷

- 114 ÉN *amsi qātīya ubbiba zumrī*
 115 *ina mē nagbi ellūti ša ina eridu ibbanū*
 116 *mimma lemnu mimma lā tābu*
 117 *ša ina zumriya širīya šer-ānīya bašū*
 (expanded list of evils)
 129 *lumnū kišpī ruḥē rusē upšāšē lemnūti ša amēlūti*
 130 *itti mē 'ša' zumriya u musāti ša qātīya*
 131 *liššaḥiṭma [c]li šalam nigsagilē lillik*
 132 *šalam nigs[agil]ē arnī dinānī lizbil*
 133 *'sūqu u' sulū lipattirū arnīya*
 134 *ēnītu līnānni māḥertu limḥuranni*
 135 *amḥur meḥru limḥurū'inni*
 136 *ūmu šulma arḥu ḥidūti šattu ḥegallaša libila*
 137 ^dea ^dšamaš u ^dmarduk yāšī rūšānimma
 138 *lippašrū kišpī ruḥū rusū*
 139 *upšāšū lemnūti ša amēlūti*
 140 *u māmītu littaši ša zumriya*

Neo-Babylonian: K 5350+ iii

- [ÉN *amsi qātīya ubbib*]a *zumrī*
 [ina mē nagbi ellūti ša ina eridu i]bba^{nū}
 [mimma lemnu mimma lā tābu] →
 [ša ina zu]mriya *širīya* / [šer-ānīya b]ašū →

 itti mē ša *zumriya* / [u musāt]i ša *qātīya* →
 liššaḥiṭma / [ana muḥḥiki u] ana lāniki lillik
 [ēnītu līn]ānni māḥertu limḥuranni
 [amḥur meḥru lim]ḥurū'inni ÉN

⁷ For a translation of the Standard Version of VII 55-79 and 114-140, see Abusch and Schwemer, "Das Abwehrzauberritual *Maqlû* ('Verbrennung')," pp. 172-175.

The Standard Version of *amsi qātīya* (114-140) contains some 27 lines. In summary form, it runs as follows: The speaker first states that he is washing himself in the pure water of Eridu. He then expresses the wish that all evils, which are enumerated in a list that culminates in a standard enumeration of witchcraft evils, be rinsed-off his body with his wash water and flow onto a figurine of a substitute, a *nigsagilā*. The incantation ends with a series of wishes, namely, that the street release his sin, that a substitute stand in for him and receive the evil consequences of an unlucky encounter, that the day, month, and year bring goodness, that Ea, Šamaš and Marduk assist him and, finally, that the witchcraft be released and the *māmītu* take leave of his body.

Turning to the Neo-Babylonian Version, we note that also in that version, the speaker begins by stating that he is washing himself in the pure water of Eridu, but he then expresses the wish that unspecified evil (*mimma lemnu*) – not a list of evils – be rinsed-off onto the person of an unspecified addressee. The speaker concludes with the wish that a substitute stand in for him and receive the evil consequences of an unlucky encounter. The restored text of this version reads:

- [ÉN *amsi qātīya ubbib*]a *zumrī*
 [ina mē nagbi ellūti ša ina eridu i]bba^{nū}
 [mimma lemnu mimma lā tābu ša ina zu]mriya *širīya*
 [šer-ānīya b]ašū itti mē ša *zumriya*
 [u musāt]i ša *qātīya liššaḥiṭma*
 [ana muḥḥiki u] ana lāniki lillik
 [ēnītu līn]ānni māḥertu limḥuranni
 [amḥur meḥru lim]ḥurū'inni ÉN⁸

I wash my hands, I cleanse my body

in the pure spring water that was formed in Eridu.

May everything evil, everything untoward that is in my body, my flesh,

and my sinews rinse off with the water of my body

and the washing of my hands

and come upon your head and your body.

May a substitute stand in for me, may one who encounters (me) take (it) over from me,

I have encountered an ominous encounter; may they take (it) over from me.

⁸ The actual text reads:

- [ÉN am-si ŠU.II.MU ub-bi-b]a SU.MU
 [ina A.MEŠ IDIM KÜ.MEŠ ša ina erī-du₁₀ i]b-ba-nu-ú
 [mim-ma lem-nu mim-ma NU DU₁₀.GA ša ina S]U.MU UZU.MEŠ.MU
 [SA.MEŠ.MU b]a-¹šū-ú⁷ KI A.MEŠ ša SU.MU
 [u mu-sa-a-t]i ša ŠU.II.MU liš-šā-ḥi-ṭ-ma
 [ana muḥ-ḥi-ki u] ana la-ni-ki līl-lik
 [e-ni-tú li-na]-an-ni ma-ḥir-tú lim-ḥur-an-ni
 [am-ḥur mi-iḥ-ru lim]-ḥu-ru-ṭ-in-ni ÉN

This version is only 8 lines long, thus in this short version there is no list of evils – a list that runs some 12 lines in the Standard Version – and no mention either of witchcraft or of a *nigsagilā*.

attimannu kaššāptu: We now turn to the earlier incantation in the tablet, *attimannu kaššāptu*. To the extent that it is preserved, the text of K 5350 +, the Neo-Babylonian version, is basically identical⁹ with that of the Standard Version through line 76 (lines 75-76 are broken in K 5350 +). A significant divergency sets in at line 77. The Standard Version and the variant section of K 5350 + read:

Standard Text: Maqlū VII 55-79

55 ÉN attimannu kaššāptu ša ipuša šalmī
56 iṭṭulu lānī ibnū lamassī
57 im[u]ru [b]ālū ušarriḫu gattī
58 ušabbū nabnūt[ī]
59 umaššilu bunnannīya
60 ubbīr[u m]inātīya
61 ukassū mešrētīya ukanninu manānīya
62 yāši^dea mašmaš ilī uma²iranni
63 maḥar^dšamaš šalamki ešer
64 lānki aṭṭul lamassaki abni bāltaki āmur
65 gattaki ušarreh nabnūtiki ušabbi
66 ina^dnisaba elletī bunnannīki umaššil
67 minātīki ubber mešrētīki ukassī
68 manānīki ukannin
69 ipšū tēpušinni ēpuški
70 miḥer tušamḥirinni ušamḥerki
71 gīmīl tagmīlinni utēr agmīlki
72 kišpīki ruḫēki rusēki epšētēki lemnēte
73 upšāšēki ayyābūte
74 našparātīki ša lemutti
75 rāmki zērki dibalūki zikurudūki
76 kadabbedūki dimmakurrūki likillū rēški
77 itti mē ša zumriya u musāti ša qātīya
liššaḫi^tma
78 ana muḫḫiki u lānīki lillikma anāku lublūt
79 ēnīta līnānni māḥerta limḥuranni
79A amḥur meḥru limḥurū²inni

Neo-Babylonian: K 5350 + ii (var.)

itti m[ē ša zumriya u musāti ša qātīya]
liššaḫi^t[tma eli šalam nigsagilē lillik]
šalam nigsagi^t[lē arnī dinānī lizbil]
sūqu [u sulū lipaṭṭirū arnīya]
ūmu šul[ma arḫu ḫidūti šattu ḫegallaša libila]
^dea [dšamaš u dmarduk yāši rūšānimma]
lippaš[rū kišpī ruḫū rusū upšāšū lemmūti ša
amēlūti] \
[u māmītu littāši ša zumriya É]N

⁹ The only textual variants worth noting here are: Lines 67-68: The nouns in line 67 are transposed: [me]šrētūka ubber [m]inātīka ukassī; they, as well as the noun in the following clause (line 68: [ma]nānīka), have a 2nd person masculine singular possessive suffix instead of a feminine one. Line 72: epšētēki lemnēti is absent. For the significance of these variants, see below, the section on the history of *attimannu kaššāptu*.

In its standard form, this incantation is a victim's address to a witch who is referred to in the second person. The victim first describes how the witch had formed a detailed replica of his person and has twisted and bound its limbs. He then states that he has gone before Šamaš at the behest of Ea, drawn a flour representation of the witch, and created a form of the witch by performing the same actions of formation that she had performed against him. He then states that he has caused her to experience the witchcraft that she had performed against him. He expresses the wish that her acts of witchcraft stand ready to overwhelm her and then asks that it – the evil – be rinsed off his body with his wash water and flow onto the person of his addressee. He concludes with the wish that a substitute stand in for him and receive the evil consequences of an unlucky encounter.

When we turn to the Neo-Babylonian form, we note that generally the text runs parallel to the Standard Version until we reach line 77, the wish that the water pour down upon the witch's person. Here instead of *ana muḫḫiki u ana lānīki* we encounter a substitute, *nigsagilē*. The restored text of this section of the Neo-Babylonian version reads:

itti m[ē ša zumriya u musāti ša qātīya]
liššaḫi^t[tma eli šalam nigsagilē lillik]
šalam nigsagi^t[lē arnī dinānī lizbil]
sūqu [u sulū lipaṭṭirū arnīya]
ūmu šul[ma arḫu ḫidūti šattu ḫegallaša libila]
^dea [dšamaš u dmarduk yāši rūšānimma]
lippaš[rū kišpī ruḫū rusū upšāšū lemmūti ša amēlūti] \
[u māmītu littāši ša zumriya É]N¹⁰

With the water of my body and the washing of my hands
May it rinse off and come upon a figurine of a substitute,
May the figurine of the substitute bear my sin as a replacement,
May street and way undo my sins,
May the day bring well being, the month joy, the year prosperity.
Ea, Shamash, Asalluhi, help me so that
Witchcraft, spittle, enchantments, evil machinations of mankind be released,
And oath go forth from my body.

¹⁰ The actual text reads:

KI A. [MEŠ ša zumriya u musāti ša qātīya]
liš-ša-ḫi-i^t[t-ma eli šalam nigsagilē lillik]
NU NIG.SAG.Í [L-e arnī dinānī lizbil]
su-ū-qu [u sulū lipaṭṭirū arnīya]
u4-mu šul-[ma arḫu ḫidūti šattu ḫegallaša libila]
^dē-a [dšamaš u dmarduk yāši rūšānimma]
lip-pa-aš-[ru kišpī ruḫū rusū upšāšū lemmūti ša amēlūti] \
[u māmītu littāši ša zumriya É]N

It is immediately striking that the ending of the incantation *attimannu kaššāptu* in the Neo-Babylonian Version is all but identical with the ending of *amsi qātīya* in the Standard Version. I believe that these lines were originally part of *attimannu kaššāptu* and were later transferred to *amsi qātīya*.

Further evidence that these lines were originally not part of *amsi qātīya* and derive instead from *attimannu kaššāptu* is provided by *KAR* 269, obv. II 1-3:

[x x (x)¹¹ yāš]i rūš[ānimma lippašrū kišpī]
 'ruḥū' [r]usū u[pšāšū lemmūti ša amēlūti]
 'u' [m]āmītu ša zumriya [littašī]¹²

These lines are identical with the last lines of the standard text of VII 114-140. But in this Assur text, these lines are not part of *amsi qātīya*; rather in that version, just as in the Neo-Babylonian one, they are part of *attimannu kaššāptu* and duplicate the last lines of the Neo-Babylonian version of that earlier incantation.¹³ This is evident from the fact that *KAR* 269, obv. II 1-3 are separate from and precede the incantation found on rev. III 1'-13', which incantation is the early Assur parallel to and representative of *amsi qātīya* of the standard version.¹⁴ Thus, at least as regards the ending of *attimannu kaššāptu*, both an early Assur text¹⁵ and our Neo-Babylonian recension contain the same text.

But it is not just that the concluding section of the Neo-Babylonian Version of *attimannu kaššāptu* is now found at the conclusion of the Standard Version of *amsi qātīya* (at lines 130-133 and 136-140); in addition, the conclusion of the Neo-Babylonian Version of *amsi qātīya* – *ēnītu līnānni māḥertu limḥuranni / amḥur meḥru limḥurū'inni* – is both retained in the Standard Version of that incantation (at lines 134-135) and repeated at the end of the Standard Version of *attimannu kaššāptu* (at line 79-79a). Accordingly, the differences between the text of the individual incantations in the two versions are not isolated differences, and the characteristics of the individual incantations in the different versions reflect recensional tendencies.

¹¹ Probably restore ^d*marduk* here and the names of ^d*ea* and ^d*samaš* at the end of the preceding line.

¹² For the identification of these lines and a transliteration of Ebeling's copy, see my *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature*, pp. 77 and 81; I have been able to consult a new copy recently prepared by D. Schwemer—as regards these lines, there are no textual differences between the copies.

¹³ Already in *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature*, p 42, n. 56, I had considered the possibility that these lines were not part of *amsi qātīya* but the ending of a different incantation. But given the evidence available at that time, I felt that it was more judicious to assume that it was the final part of *amsi qātīya*. Modify that conclusion, accordingly.

¹⁴ For a discussion of that incantation, see below.

¹⁵ A volume of transcriptions and translations of *Maqlû* texts that I am presently preparing for the SBL series "Writings from the Ancient World" will include not only the Standard text of *Maqlû* but also this early Assur version (or, rather, forerunner). That version comprises not only *KAR* 226 and 269 first presented in my *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature* and touched upon in the present article but also such other texts as *KAR* 240 (while Meier included *KAR* 240 in his edition of *Maqlû*, I decided some years ago that it should not be treated as a manuscript of the standard version because of its high degree of divergence therefrom).

History. It is surely significant that the major differences between the Neo-Babylonian and Standard Versions of our two incantations are interrelated. But how are we to explain the different forms of the incantations and their relationship? To answer these questions we must first understand the shared character of each of the different versions and the significance of the developments from one version to the next. The two incantations in the Standard Version are now closer in form to conventional witchcraft texts than are their versions in the Neo-Babylonian recension. But even these two incantations were originally not standard witchcraft incantations. Rather, they were rooted in and had features of the *namburbi* type or reflected a type of incantation that was intended to counter evil signs that were sent by the witch and encountered by her victim. This group of incantations – especially the earlier versions – emphasized the use of substitutes as the recipient of the evil and eventually conflated the witch and the substitute, thereby also punishing the witch and causing her to suffer the harm that she had initiated against her victim. I cannot take up all the details here but let me sketch a bit of the development of these incantations as I understand it.

***amsi qātīya*:** The most general of the forms is the Neo-Babylonian Version of *amsi qātīya*, for here the generic evil – *mimma lemnu mimma lā tābu* – which adheres to the speaker is to be washed off onto the addressee (*ana muḥḥiki u ana lāniki*), presumably the substitute, who is then mentioned explicitly in the last line (*ēnītu līnānni māḥertu limḥuranni / amḥur meḥru limḥurū'inni*). In all essentials, my earlier reconstruction of the history of the fragmentary incantation on K 7594 and of its relationship to the standard text of VII 114-140 still holds. The Neo-Babylonian Version is a form of text from which we would derive the long text found in the Standard Version.¹⁶

The Neo-Babylonian Version contains a base text that could have served as the kernel for the much-expanded Standard text. Subsequently, the incantation was expanded by the insertion of a standard general list of evils of the *namburbi* type. In addition, the witchcraft entry – *lumnū kišpī ruḥē rusē upšāšē lemnūti ša amēlūti* – that originally occurred much earlier in that list was moved to the end of the list; the concluding section presently found in the Neo-Babylonian Version of *attimannu kaššāptu* – an ending associated primarily with the *namburbi*'s – was transferred to our incantation; and the original ending – *ēnītu līnānni māḥertu limḥuranni / amḥur meḥru limḥurū'inni* – was incorporated into the new ending.

These developments had two consequences and perhaps purposes. The incorporation of the list of evils and the new ending transformed the text into a general or universal *namburbi* type. But given the *Maqlû* context, perhaps a more important development is evident in the movement of the witchcraft entry to the end of the list, for the position of that entry at the end of the list accorded witchcraft special importance and probably was done for the purpose of adapting the text for use against witchcraft

¹⁶ That the incantation would have developed from the long form of the Standard Version to the short form of the Neo-Babylonian Version is highly unlikely and almost inconceivable.

or enhancing that use if the text was already being used against witchcraft. This transformation was supplemented by the mention of witchcraft in line 140, the last line of the text: *lippašrū kišpī ruḥû rusû upšāšû lemmûti ša amēlûti u māmîtu littasi ša zumriya*, “so that witchcraft, spittle, enchantments, evil machinations of mankind be released, and oath go forth from my body.” Still, in addition to containing segments that are related to *namburbi*’s, this incantation also retained features that make it anomalous and dysfunctional as an anti-witchcraft text and are pointers to its history.¹⁷

Here we should make mention of a related text that underwent some of the same developments as the Standard Version of *amsi qātīya* (VII 114-140). I have in mind *KAR* 269, rev. III 1'-13'.¹⁸ In *KAR* 269, the beginning of the incantation is broken; the preserved text begins with a fragmentary version of the standard general list of evils of the *namburbi* type. In this version of the incantation, as in *Maqlû* VII 114-140, the list culminates in a standard enumeration of witchcraft evils, which here however is followed by *ša ina zumriya šīrīya šerʿānīya bašû*. In this version of the incantation, the list seems to have been inserted between *mimma lemnu mimma lā tābu* (VII 116) and *ša ina zumriya šīrīya šerʿānīya bašû* (VII 117). Following the list, the speaker expresses the wish that all evils be rinsed off his body with his wash water and flow upon the witch (note that our other versions do not mention the witch as the explicit object of the ritual).

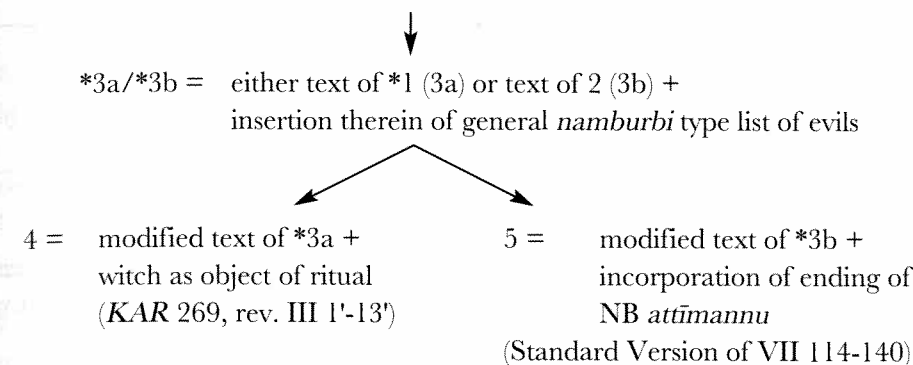
The approximate development of the two versions of *Maqlû* VII 114-140 and of their Assur parallel *KAR* 269, rev. III 1'-13' may be set out schematically as follows:

*1 = *amsi qātīya ubbiba zumrī*
ina mē nagbi ellūti ša ina eridu ibbanū
mimma lemnu mimma lā tābu ša ina zumriya šīrīya
šerʿānīya bašû itti mē ša zumriya
u musāti ša qātīya liššaḥṭma
ana muḥḥiki u ana lāniki lillik

2 = text of *1 +
ēnītu līnānni māḥertu limḥuranni
amḥur meḥru limḥurūʾinni
 (Neo-Babylonian Version)

¹⁷ Most notably, the mention of a *nigsagilā* in line 132, which mention was carried over from the earlier version of *attimannu kaššāptu*.

¹⁸ For this text, see my *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature*, pp. xv-xvi, 13-44. On pp. xv-xvi, I noted that the piece of the tablet that contained the incantation under study was missing and that I was therefore unable to collate it or even study a photograph. Fortunately, Daniel Schwemer has now found the missing piece, and he will publish a copy of the whole tablet in a future volume of *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur literarischen Inhalts*. Schwemer’s copy shows some differences from the copy in *KAR* 269, reverse, and several of my earlier readings, but these do not effect my overall conclusion that *KAR* 269, rev. III 1'-13' and the Standard Version of VII 114-140 are parallels and derive from the same original text.



As I already noted in *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature*, *KAR* 269, rev. III 1'-13' and the Standard Version of VII 114-140 are parallels and derive from the same original text. However, *KAR* 269, rev. III 1'-13' is less complex and represents an earlier stage of development of our incantation.

attimannu kaššāptu. The same general development, but this time starting later in the evolution of the incantation, is evident in *attimannu kaššāptu* (VII 55-79). The earlier version – the Neo-Babylonian Version – was already intended to counter evil that included omens sent by the witch, but the incantation was still centered on the transference of the evil onto a *nigsagilā* substitute; this version ended, moreover, with a series of wishes of the *namburbi* type. A comparison of the two extant versions of this incantation shows that this earlier version was transformed by the replacement of the *šalam nigsagilā* by a second person referent and the replacement (that is, its transfer to VII 114ff) of the series of wishes that had opened with a wish involving the *šalam nigsagilā* by the simpler *ēnītu līnānni māḥertu limḥuranni amḥur meḥru limḥurūʾinni*. By the elimination of the original series of wishes and the replacement of the *šalam nigsagilā* by the “you” of the figurine, the incantation takes on an increased witchcraft quality, for the “you” of the figurine was – or at least could be – construed as referring to the representation of the witch mentioned earlier in line 63 (*šalamki ēšir*). These developments in this incantation are more subtle than the changes that we can document either through manuscripts or parallels for *amsi qātīya*. In that incantation, we saw a text that was general in its approach to evil change into a *namburbi* type and then take on witchcraft qualities. Here, in *attimannu kaššāptu*, the version of the text that we have even in the Neo-Babylonian recension is a stage of development and the result of earlier transformations of a text in *namburbi* garb into one that is more like a witchcraft text.

That even the Neo-Babylonian Version of this incantation is already the result of earlier changes of a non-witchcraft incantation into one directed against witchcraft is clear from a number of anomalies in the incantation.

A. *Namburbi* quality rather than witchcraft quality: The *namburbi* quality is evident from the original use of a substitute and from the original ending as well as from the centrality of the theme of the reversion of witchcraft signs encountered by the victim that were sent by the witch in lines 69-71 and 73-74:

ipšū tēpušinni ēpuški
miher tušamhirinni ušamherki
gimil tagmilinni utēr agmilki
(kišpiki ruḥēki rusēki epšētēki lemnēte)
upšāšēki ayyābūte
našparātiki ša lemutti

The sorcery that you performed against me I perform against you,
 The (ominous) encounter that you caused me to encounter I make you take over,
 The vengeance that you wrecked on me I wreck on you.
 (May your witchcraft, your spittle, your enchainments, your evil manipulations,)¹⁹
 Your hostile machinations,
 Your messages of evil,...

B. In this incantation, the witch is accused of creating a detailed and realistic form of representation of the victim (lines 56-59); the victim, for his part, states that he is creating a similar form of representation of the witch (lines 64-66):

iṭṭulu lānī ibnū dlamassī
īmuru bālti ušarriḥu gattī
uṣabbū nabnīti / umaššilu bunnannīya
 (O witch) Who looked at my form and created my image,
 Who saw my bearing and gave rich detail to my physical build,
 Who comprehended my appearance and reproduced my features.
lānki aṭṭul lamassaki abni →
bāltaki āmur / gattaki ušarreḥ →
nabnītki uṣabbi / ina dnisaba elletī bunnannīki umaššil
 I have looked at your form and created your image,
 I have seen your bearing and given rich detail to your physical build,
 I have comprehended your appearance and reproduced your features with pure flour.

Yet, normally in witchcraft texts representations, both of the witch and of the victim, are generic and not specific. But the type of representation found in our incantation is like the type occasionally made to serve as a substitute in *namburbi* materials. As R. I. Caplice observed regarding substitutes, *tamšīlu* “entail a more realistic physical representation of the ominous object [than *šalmu*].”²⁰ Note the emphasis on the related verb *muššulu* in *attimannu* (lines 59 and 66).

¹⁹ Line 72 was inserted at a later stage of development of the text; see below.

²⁰ R. I. Caplice, *The Akkadian Text Genre Namburbi*, Ph. D. dissertation (University of Chicago, 1963), p. 83.

C. That the figures in the early portion of the incantation were not only originally the object of witchcraft and anti-witchcraft activity and that the text experienced revision are further suggested by textual peculiarities in this section:

1. While all other lines of the corresponding descriptions of the witch's and the victim's ritual activities are parallel, the opening line of each is not. Whereas the witch is said to make a figurine in clay (55), the patient draws an image in flour (63)²¹:

attimannu kaššāptu ša īpuša šalmī
 Whoever you are, O witch who made my figurine (55);
maḥar dšamaš šalamki ēṣer
 And before Shamash I have drawn your image (63).

2. Lines 60-61 // 67-68 read:

ubbiru minātīya
ukassū mešrētīya →
ukanninu manānīya
 (O witch) Who bound my body,
 Who tied my limbs together,
 Who twisted my sinews.
minātiki ubber →
mešrētiki ukassi
manānīki ukannin
 I have bound your body,
 I have tied your limbs together,
 I have twisted your sinews.

These lines differ from the rest of the description in two ways:

- Poetic form: This poetic line is made up of three units in contrast to the preceding lines in the description each of which contains two units.
- Whereas the other lines of the description simply tell how the image was conceived and fashioned, these lines describe destruction actions.

These several anomalies are explained by the hypothesis that the incantation originally told of the patient's construction of a detailed substitute and that subsequently the text was transformed into a description of the parallel activities of a witch and a victim, including the twisting of limbs. Thus, the original description was lines 62-66; subsequently, lines 55-59 and 60-61 // 67-68 were added.

Further support for the separate origin of at least lines 60-61 // 67-68 is actually provided by our Neo-Babylonian manuscript. Earlier (see above, note 9), we noticed that in that manuscript the nouns of the first two units (line 67) are transposed

²¹ Note line 66: *ina dnisaba elletī bunnannīki umaššil*.

([me]šrêtika ubber [m]inâtika ukassi) and that their possessive pronominal suffixes are masculine rather than the expected feminine of the Standard Version. What makes this suffix variation particularly interesting is that in the same manuscript also the noun in the following clause of the three-unit sequence has a 2nd person singular masculine possessive suffix ([ma]nânika ukannin) rather than the feminine of the Standard Version. Since this manuscript agrees with the other manuscript in having feminine suffixes in the other lines, the occurrence of -ka in a set of clauses that is different from the rest of the incantation also in other respects suggests that these lines formed a set that was carried over to our incantation from elsewhere. One may not doubt the significance of the variation of suffixes here, for this change to masculine occurs only in these two lines of the incantation in this Neo-Babylonian manuscript and is, therefore, not a function of this manuscript and of Neo-Babylonian disregard for final vowels.

That the text had been subjected to the kind of witchcraft transformation mentioned above would agree, moreover, with the different forms of the common witchcraft entry, line 72, in the two recensions: Whereas the Standard Version has *kišpiki ruḥêki rusêki epšêṭêki lemnêti*, the Neo-Babylonian Version has *[kišpik]i ruḥêki rusêki*, but not *epšêṭêki lemnêti*. If we assume that the standard line was introduced as part of a witchcraft overhaul, then perhaps *epšêṭêki lemnêti* was not included at first because the more original *upšâšêki ayyâbûti* (line 73) was perceived as equivalent to *epšêṭêki lemnêti*. That this portion of the text has been revised is suggested also by the fact that there is now no clear subject in either recension for the singular verbs in *itti mē ša zumriya u musâti ša qâtîya liššaḥîṭma eli... lillik* of the ritual wish in lines 77-78, for (with the possible exception of *miḥer tušamḥirînni ušamḥerki gimil tagmilînni utēr agmilki*) the preceding subjects are plural. Thus, not only has the Standard Babylonian Version of *attîmannu kaššâptu* undergone change from the early Neo-Babylonian Version, but even that version already represented a transformation of a still earlier text that was originally not directed against witchcraft.

Having noticed that our Neo-Babylonian Nineveh tablet represents a separate recension, we would note, by way of conclusion, that Tablet VII is not the only *Maqlû* tablet for which a Neo-Babylonian recension is attested at Nineveh, though perhaps it is the most dramatic instance. One or two examples should suffice to illustrate this point. In the Ritual Tablet, the Neo-Babylonian Nineveh manuscript K 8879+ and the Sultantepe STT 83 agree in presenting ritual instructions in a more concise manner than do the Neo-Assyrian Nineveh texts of the Ritual Tablet. The Neo-Babylonian Nineveh tradition of Tablet VIII seems to contain fewer incantations than the Neo-Assyrian Nineveh Version. In Tablet VIII, the incantation *undu kaššâptu ibir nâru*, lines 35'-52', is omitted in the Neo-Babylonian Nineveh text K 10106+10276. That this reflects the existence of a separate Babylonian recension is indicated by the omission of the incipits of this

very incantation as well as of the preceding one, *ittapḥa dšamaš* (VIII 24'-34'), in the aforementioned Neo-Babylonian Nineveh Ritual Tablet K 8879+ and in the Sultantepe manuscript of the Ritual Tablet.²²

Not surprisingly, *Maqlû* had multiple recensions. And by noticing the existence of different recensions of *Maqlû* Tablet VII, we have been able to follow the development of some *Maqlû* incantations and to see how they originally had a more general character but were transformed into anti-witchcraft incantations, thereby assuming their standard form. We have also been able to observe the development of our *Maqlû* text itself from one version to the next.

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²² For these examples, see Abusch, "Ritual and Incantation: Interpretation and Textual History: A Consideration of *Maqlû* VII: 58-105 and IX: 152-59," in "Sha'arei Talmon": *Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon*, ed. M. Fishbane and E. Tov (Winona Lake, 1991), pp. 367-380 = Abusch, *Mesopotamian Witchcraft: Towards a History and Understanding of Babylonian Witchcraft Beliefs and Literature*, AMD 5 (Leiden, 2002), pp. 193-196; and "The Ritual Tablet and Rubrics of *Maqlû*: Toward the History of the Series," in *Ah, Assyria ...: Studies in Assyrian History and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography Presented to Hayim Tadmor*, ed. M. Cogan and I. Eph'al, Scripta Hierosolymitana 33 (Jerusalem, 1991), pp. 237-240 = *Mesopotamian Witchcraft*, pp. 167-169.

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