

An Attempt at *Šimâ milka* (Ugaritica V, 163 and Duplicates) Part I: Prologue, Instructions II, III, IV*

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Šimâ milka is an Akkadian literary text belonging to the genre of instructions. It survives in manuscripts from Ugarit, Emar, Ḥattuša and Kalḫu. This article is the first of a series in which a complete new edition of this composition will hopefully be published.

Keywords: Akkadian Wisdom Literature.

This paper originated in an attempt to review D. Arnaud's recent publication of the Akkadian and Sumerian literary texts from Ugarit.¹ My original purpose was to prepare a set of philological notes on selected texts from this volume. However, one particular text, numbered 49 in Arnaud's book ("La sagesse d'Uruk"), has quickly captured my attention. This text, designated here by its first two words, *Šimâ milka* ('Hear the advice'), has already benefited from a previous publication by Arnaud (Emar VI, Nos. 778–780). Two new manuscripts of the composition are now made accessible to scholars through his present work.

Šimâ milka belongs to the genre of instructions. This genre, which was common in Egyptian, Sumerian and West Semitic literary traditions,² is rather poorly represented in Akkadian literature (v. BWL 92ff.). This may partly explain why there are so many difficulties in interpreting this text. It is full of rare words and unusual idioms not attested elsewhere, so that quite often one can only guess at the meaning of a given passage. A further complication arises from the fact that in most of the manuscripts of *Šimâ milka* a line on the tablet does not necessarily correspond to a line of poetry. Accordingly, proper segmentation of the text into verses (sti-

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¹ Arnaud, D. *Corpus des textes de bibliothèque de Ras Shamra-Ougarit (1936–2000) en sumérien, babylonien et assyrien* (AuOr Sup 23). Sabadell, 2007.

² V. Fox 2000:17ff.; Alster 2005:42ff.



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chometry) is not always easy to achieve; in some cases, even the correct division between precepts may prove problematic.³

Needless to say, *Šimâ milka* can be properly studied only within a broader context of the wisdom literature of the Ancient Near East and Egypt. Such an investigation is beyond the capacity of the present author. Below only parallels from Mesopotamian wisdom literature and the biblical Book of Proverbs will be adduced systematically.

In view of the fact that *Šimâ milka* was known (in written form) from the Old Babylonian period⁴ down to Neo-Assyrian times⁵ and was especially popular as a school text among Late Bronze Age scribes from the Mesopotamian periphery,⁶ there are good chances that additional manuscripts of this composition will show up sooner or later.

Publication history⁷

The first manuscript of *Šimâ milka*, which comes from Ugarit, was published by J. Nougayrol as Ugaritica V, No. 163 (Nougayrol 1968:273ff.). Nougayrol also recognized that the second half of the Ugarit manuscript is duplicated in a tablet from Boğazköy (ibid. 276f.) where much of the original Akkadian text is accompanied with a Hittite translation.⁸ At first, *Šimâ milka* received relatively little attention.⁹ This has changed with the publication of the manuscript from Emar (Emar VI/4, Nos. 778–780). This manuscript preserves the final part of the composition (badly damaged in the manuscripts from Ugarit and Boğazköy) which turned out to be a critical response from the son to the advice given to him by the father. Since this publication, several new editions of *Šimâ milka* based on the three manuscripts mentioned above have appeared.¹⁰ In 2007, the composition has been re-edited by D. Arnaud (2007:148ff.) who was able to make use of two

³ Only in MSS Ug₃ and Boğ, the instructions are separated by rulings.

⁴ As recognized by M. Civil (1989:7), the first line of *Šimâ milka* occurs in a late Old Babylonian literary catalogue (Cohen 1976:131, l. 15; v. further Sallaberger 2010:307ff. and fn. 62 below).

⁵ See below on the manuscript of *Šimâ milka* from Nimrud (Kalḫu).

⁶ Cf. van Soldt 1995:177; Márquez Rowe 2006:110; Cohen 2009:221f.

⁷ Cf. Hurowitz 2007:37f. [The book of Y. Cohen, *Wisdom from the Late Bronze Age* (Atlanta, 2013) appeared after this article was completed.]

⁸ The Hittite column of this tablet was edited separately in Laroche 1968:779ff. and Keydana 1991.

⁹ But v. Khanjian 1975; Smith 1975; Foster 1993:332ff.

¹⁰ Dietrich 1991; Kämmerer 1998:176–207; Seminara 2000. V. also Foster 2005:416ff.

new manuscripts (both from Ugarit). Finally, mention should be made of the articles by W. Sallaberger (2010, submitted in 2005) and V. A. Hurowitz (2007).¹¹ Sallaberger attempts to define the place of *Šimâ milka* in Mesopotamian literary tradition. The paper also contains the results of his collation of the manuscripts from Ugarit (RS 22.439) and Emar,¹² as well as his reading of certain passages. Hurowitz, on the other hand, seeks to interpret *Šimâ milka* from the perspective of Biblical wisdom literature. His article concludes with a preliminary translation of the text.

Manuscripts¹³

	Exc/Mus No.	Provenance, Description	Publication
Ug ₁	RS 22.439 ¹⁴	Ugarit, “Maison aux tablettes” in the “Ville Sud.” ¹⁵ Four-column tablet the lower part of which is broken away. Originally it contained the entire text of the composition.	Ugaritica V, No. 163
Ug ₂	RS 94.5028	Ugarit, “Maison d’Urtēnu.” ¹⁶ Middle part of a one-column tablet which originally contained the first half of the composition.	AuOr Sup 23, pls. XXIV–XXV
Ug ₃	RS 94.2544+94.2548	Ugarit, “Maison d’Urtēnu.” Four-column tablet of which only the bottom part is preserved. Originally it contained the entire text of the composition.	AuOr Sup 23, pl. XXIII ¹⁷
Em	Msk 74233q+74233p (+) 74177a+74197a (= 74177e)+74295a (+) 74233r (+) 74107aj (+) 74234g(?)	Emar, “Temple M ₁ .” ¹⁸ Most of the fragments come from the square M III NE (except for Msk 74295a which comes from the neighbouring square M I SW).	Emar VI/4, Nos. 778–780

¹¹ Both papers were written too early to make use of Arnaud’s book of 2007.

¹² Most importantly, Sallaberger managed to show that the fragment Msk 74295a (Emar VI/4 No. 780) comes from the left edge of col. iv of MS Em (see further below).

¹³ Cf. Nougayrol 1968:273; Dietrich 1991:34–36, 65–67; Sallaberger 2010:304; Arnaud 2007:160.

¹⁴ That the small fragment taken by Nougayrol to preserve the beginnings of ll. MS Ug₁ i 29–32 (Nougayrol 1968:273, with fn. 3) belongs to this tablet is questionable (v. Arnaud 2007:163).

¹⁵ V. van Soldt 1991:182ff.; idem 1999:34; Pedersén 1998:79.

¹⁶ V. van Soldt 1999:35f.; Malbran-Labat 2008.

¹⁷ Arnaud’s (2007:160) description of MSS Ug₂ and Ug₃ is marred by several misprints (cf. *ibid.* 228). Note also that the dimensions of these tablets adduced by Arnaud (*ibid.* 160) are at odds with those given in Malbran-Labat 2008:37.

		Four-column tablet some parts of which are missing. Originally it contained the entire text of the composition.	
Boğ	Bo. 425+531/t	Ḫattuša, “Haus am Hang.” ¹⁹ The tablet has two columns on each side. In the left column, we find the Akkadian text of <i>Šimâ milka</i> , while in the right, its partial translation into Hittite. The manuscript contains the second half of the composition.	KUB IV, 3 + KBo. XII, 70 ²⁰
Nim	ND 4382 (= IM 67565)	Kalḫu, the Nabû temple. ²¹ Four column tablet upper part of which is broken away. Originally it contained the entire text of the composition.	CTN IV, 203

Notes on the manuscripts

The combined evidence of MSS Em and Ug₃ helps to determine the size of the missing lower part of **MS Ug₁**. First, it can be noted that the last line in col. iii of MS Ug₁ (22') is to be identified with MS Em iii '49'.²² The next line in MS Em (iii '50') is a counterpart of MS Ug₃ iv 1.²³ Therefore, the first line of col. iv of MS Ug₁, which is broken away, must have corresponded to MS Ug₃ iv 1. The word 'a¹-ne₂-en-na at the end of the last preserved line in col. iv of MS Ug₃ (12) should be matched with 'a¹-ne₂-en-na at the beginning of MS Em iv 6. The first preserved line in col. iv of MS Ug₁ seems to be a match for MS Em iv 23.²⁴ Thus, the gap between MS Ug₃ iv 12 and MS Ug₁ iv 1' corresponds to about 17 ll. in MS Em (iv 6–22). The average line length in MS Ug₁ seems to be somewhat shorter than in MSS Em and Ug₃. So, 12 ll. in MS Ug₃ + 17 ll. in MS Em could correspond to a little over 30 ll. in MS Ug₁. These 30 or so lines should

¹⁸ V. Rutz 2013:93ff.; Pedersén 1998:61ff.

¹⁹ V. Scheucher 2012:119f.; Pedersén 1998:53.

²⁰ The fragment KBo. XII, 128 does not belong to this tablet, v. Beckman 1986:20, fn. 6.

²¹ V. CTN IV, pp. 1ff.; Pedersén 1998:151f.

²² [(...)] 'x (x)' [...-h]a²-[a]š₂²-šu-ma (MS Ug₁ iii 22') // [...-m]a² e te-et-ha-aš-š[u-...] la-a 'x x (x)' (MS Em iii '49' = Msk 74107aj l. 10'(+)+74233r l. 12'). For the continuous line numbering of cols. i and iii of MS Em used in the present paper see below.

²³ [...]'x¹ KA ša₂ pu-uz-ri [...] 'x x¹ [(x x)] (MS Em iii '50' = Msk 74107aj l. 11'(+)+74233r l. 13') // [...] KA ša₂ pu-uz-ri [...] (MS Ug₃ iv 1).

²⁴ L. MS Ug₁ iv 1' is almost completely broken. But cf. [... G]₂.UN 'x' in MS Ug₁ iv 2' which obviously parallels ... GU₂.UN [...] in MS Em iv 24.

be placed in the gap between the top of col. iv and MS Ug₁ iv 1'.²⁵ Now, if we recall that the space between MS Ug₁ iii 1'²⁶ and the bottom of the tablet is occupied by 33 ll. on the obverse (MS Ug₁ ii 1–33), we may assume that the tablet when complete had about 60 ll. per column. On the reverse, this space was not fully utilized by the scribe who left the ends of cols. iii and iv uninscribed. The question is whether or not the same was also true of the obverse.²⁷ For an attempt to answer this question see immediately below.

The last preserved line in col. i of MS Ug₁ (34) is to be identified with MS Ug₂ obv. 20' and MS Em i 35 (= Msk 74177a i 15').²⁸ At the same time, l. MS Ug₂ obv. 21'–22' // MS Em i 36 is a match for MS Ug₃ i 1'.²⁹ The first column of MS Ug₃ ends with l. 15'. Ll. MS Ug₃ i 1'–15' could correspond to about 16 ll. from the missing lower part of col. i of MS Ug₁ (MS Ug₁ i [35–50]).³⁰ It is important that the last line in col. i of MS Ug₃ (15') matches MS Em i 50 (= Msk 74177a i 30') which is also the last line in col. i of MS Em.³¹ Now, the crucial question is whether the first line in col. ii of MS Ug₁ could be taken to correspond to l. MS Em ii [1] // MS Ug₃ ii [1], which is broken away in both MS Em and MS Ug₃.³² As was shown above, in col. i of MS Ug₁, there must have been space for about ten more lines after l. MS Ug₁ i [50] which should have corresponded to MS Ug₃ i 15' // MS Em i 50. Thus, if MS Ug₁ ii 1 is to be seen as a counterpart of MS Ug₃ ii [1] // MS Em ii [1], this would mean that the scribe of

²⁵ Col. iv of MS Ug₁ thus had some 42 ll. (30 ll. + iv 1'–12').

²⁶ L. MS Ug₁ iv 1' is situated two lines below MS Ug₁ iii 1'. Accordingly, between MS Ug₁ iii 1' and the top of col. iii, there must have been some 28–30 ll.

²⁷ Cf. Nougayrol 1968:273.

²⁸ L. MS Ug₁ i 34 is almost completely broken. But cf. ... *ne₂-me-'lam* s1.A' [...]-*nu-tum* (MS Ug₁ i 33) // ... *ne₂-mi-la ma-la' su₂²-su₂²-ni-ti* (MS Ug₂ obv. 19') // [...]-*ni-tum* (MS Em i 34).

²⁹ [... *zi*]-*'iq-ti'² šu₂ mi-na-[a ...]* (MS Ug₃ i 1') // *iz₂-qut a-na zi-iq-ti-šu mi-'na'-[a]* / *il-qe* (MS Ug₂ obv. 21'–22') // [... *mi-na*]-*'a' il-qe₃* (MS Em i 36).

³⁰ On the assumption that the average line length in MS Ug₁ is somewhat shorter than in MS Ug₃.

³¹ [...-*a*š] *šu-me-lu-u₂ GU₄-ka* (MS Ug₃ i 15') // [...] *'a'-ia im-ḥa-aš šu-me-lu-'u₂* [(...)] (MS Em i 50).

³² Cf. Arnaud's note to § 11 of his edition of *Šimâ milka*: "Le paragraphe précédent termine la colonne I de RS₃ (= MS Ug₃.—R. N.); ce début de ligne-ci commence en haut de la colonne II de RS₁ (= MS Ug₁.—R. N.). Certes, l'on n'est pas assuré que la disposition fût la même dans les deux manuscrits, mais, par convention, je suppose que n'existait pas de solution de continuité dans le texte aujourd'hui disponible" (Arnaud 2007:167).

MS Ug₁ left a blank space at the end of col. i. Such an arrangement of the text on the obverse of a literary tablet would by no means be unparalleled in Ugarit.³³ Yet, this surmise is improbable for the following reason. MS Em ii 1' is to be identified with MS Ug₁ ii 21.³⁴ At the same time, MS Em ii 1' is situated across from MS Em i 30 (= Msk 74177a i 10'). This latter line is a duplicate of MS Ug₁ i 30–31.³⁵ Accordingly, if col. ii of MS Ug₁ started from the same line as col. ii of MS Em, we would expect MS Em ii 1' to find its match somewhere around MS Ug₁ ii 30. If one is not willing to assume that MS Em interpolated (or MS Ug₁ omitted) some ten lines of text, then it is necessary to conclude that col. i of MS Ug₁ was entirely filled with text. Therefore, MS Ug₁ ii 1 should have corresponded to l. MS Em ii [10] or somewhere near it. This means that there are about ten lines of *Šimâ milka* which are completely lost to us.³⁶

However, there is another difficulty which complicates the matter. The last preserved line in col. ii of MS Ug₁ (33) seems to match MS Em ii 12'.³⁷ The last line in col. ii of MS Em is probably 22', which is broken away.³⁸ The first preserved line in col. iii of MS Ug₁ is to be identified with MS Em iii '28' (= Msk 74177a iii 3'''; M₂ 69' in Arnaud 2007:171, comment to l. 96').³⁹ Thus, the gap between MS Ug₁ ii 33 and iii 1' can be filled with some 37 ll. in MS Em (ii 13'–iii '27'). These 37 ll. might have corresponded to about 40 ll. in MS Ug₁.⁴⁰ If we assume that col. ii of MS Ug₁ was com-

³³ Cf. Ugaritica V, Nos. 162, 164(?) and 168 (= Arnaud 2007, Nos. 32, 48A and 29 respectively).

³⁴ A[D^{mes} ...] (MS Em ii 1') // 'a¹-bu-ni ... (MS Ug₁ ii 21).

³⁵ [šumma ... im-m]a-ti (MS Em i 30) // ... šum-ma DAB₅-^ršu¹ / [immati] ... (MS Ug₁ i 30–31). Cf. also MS Ug₂ obv. 15'–16': ... šum-ma iṣ-ša-a[b²-t]u²-šu₂ / im-ma-ti ... Note that the small fragment which is taken by Nougayrol to contain the beginnings of ll. MS Ug₁ i 29–32 does not actually belong here (v. fn. 14 above).

³⁶ Perhaps, these lines may be partly preserved on the fragment Msk 74234g (Emar VI/4, 779) if it indeed belongs to MS Em (see below). Note that there are also quite a number of unidentified lines in MS Nim (especially in col. ii).

³⁷ L. MS Ug₁ ii 33 is almost completely broken. But cf. [mārī] / KI ad U AMA 'x x¹ [...] (MS Ug₁ ii 31–32) // DUMU-ri i[t-ti ...] (MS Em ii 11').

³⁸ MS Em iii '4' (= Msk 74177a iii 2') is a match for MS Ug₃ iii 6 (v. Arnaud 2007: 170, comment to § 20). Accordingly, the first line in col. iii of MS Em, which is broken away, should have corresponded to MS Ug₃ iii 3. This means that both these manuscripts had roughly the same number of lines in the column ii (ca. 50 ll.).

³⁹ L. MS Ug₁ iii 1' is almost completely broken. But cf. 'ni'-[id-na(?)] ina KASK[AL-ni ša₂ 'NU' [ti-du-u] / i-š[ap-...]-ka GU₇¹ NINDA^{mes} 'x'[...] (MS Ug₁ iii 2'–3') // ni-id-[na(?)] ... / a-kul₂ NINDA [...] (MS Em iii '29'–'30').

⁴⁰ Granted that the average line length in MS Ug₁ is somewhat shorter than in MS Em.

pletely used up by the scribe (as seems to be the case with col. i, see above), then the missing lower part of this column should have accommodated some 27 ll. Accordingly, there would have remained only about 13 ll. to be placed on the missing part of col. iii which of course should have had space for the same 27 ll. It is hardly imaginable that there was empty space at the top of col. iii. Therefore, we are left with the possibility that col. ii contained only 46 or so lines (MS Ug₁ ii 33 + 13 ll.). Accordingly, there must have been blank space for about 14 ll. at the end of col. ii.

We are thus faced with the problem of how to account for the fact that the text is arranged differently in cols. i and ii of MS Ug₁. Tentatively, I would suggest the following explanation. MSS Em and Ug₃ seem to attest to a “standard” edition of the whole text of *Šimâ milka* on a four-column tablet containing about 50 ll. per column, with the end of col. iv left blank. It is conceivable that MS Ug₁ was copied from such a tablet. The copy (MS Ug₁) was apparently larger (about 60 ll. per column) than the original. As it seems, the scribe of MS Ug₁ at first decided to use the whole length of his tablet. He completed the first column of MS Ug₁ so that its last line (ca. 60) corresponded to l. 10 or so in the column ii of the *Vorlage*. However, after the second column of the *Vorlage* had come to an end, the scribe preferred to move to the reverse with the *Vorlage* thus leaving the end of col. ii of his copy uninscribed. In the same way, col. iii of MS Ug₁ probably ends with the last line in the third column of the *Vorlage*, so that there remains a blank space for about 10 ll.

The length of the text in MS Ug₁ can be roughly estimated as 198 ll. (ca. 60 ll. in col. i + ca. 46 ll. in col. ii + ca. 50 ll. in col. iii + ca. 42 ll. in col. iv). The tablet concludes with a colophon which states that it was written by a certain Šiptiaum(?)⁴¹ (on the difficulties in reading the colophon v. Nougayrol 1968:290).

MS Em comprises eight fragments.⁴² The beginning of the composition is preserved on the fragments Msk 74233q+74233p (MS Em i 1–14). I agree with Dietrich (1991:35) that there are 6 ll. missing in the gap between the last line in Msk 74233q and the first line in Msk 74177a.⁴³ Accordingly, l. Msk 74177a i 1' can be numbered MS Em i 21, and the first column of MS Em contains 50 ll.

⁴¹ This scribe is known only from the colophon of MS Ug₁, v. van Soldt 1991:24.

⁴² According to Sallaberger, “In der Emar-Sammlung (of the Aleppo Museum.—R. N.) ließen sich vielleicht noch weitere zugehörige Fragmente finden” (2010:304).

⁴³ This gap corresponds to ll. MS Ug₁ i 17–22.

The second column of MS Em may have had the same number of lines as the first.

The top of the third column seems to lack only two lines. Accordingly, Msk 74177a iii 1' is numbered here MS Em iii '3' (quotation marks are used to indicate a degree of uncertainty). After MS Em iii '5' there is a gap of approximately four lines. So, Msk 74177a iii 1'' = MS Em iii '10'. From l. MS Em iii '16' on, the text continues on the fragment Msk 74197a(= 74177e) (MS Em iii '16' = Msk 74197a l. 1').⁴⁴ The lacuna between Msk 74197a 6' and Msk 74177a iii 1''' could accommodate about four lines. Thus, Msk 74177a iii 1''' = MS Em iii '26'. The last line in col. iii of Msk 74177a is numbered here MS Em iii '34' (this line is correctly identified with MS Ug₁ iii 7' in Arnaud 2007:172⁴⁵). According to Dietrich, the end of col. iii of MS Em, which is broken away, was probably left blank, as is the case with col. iv which ends with l. 33.⁴⁶ This assumption is rightly refuted by Sallaberger (2010:304). Most probably the broken bottom part of col. iii of MS Em is partly preserved on the fragments Msk 74107aj(+)-74233r.⁴⁷ L. Msk 74107aj 1'(+)-Msk 74233r 3' (= MS Em iii '40') corresponds to MS Ug₁ iii 13',⁴⁸ while the second to the last line in Msk 74107aj (12' = MS Em iii '51')⁴⁹ matches MS Ug₃ iv 2.⁵⁰ The first line

⁴⁴ As is clear from Sallaberger's copy (2010:316), the traces in MS Em iii '16' and Msk 74197a l. 1' belong to one and the same sign.

⁴⁵ *še-[pi-ka(?) ...]* (MS Em iii '34') // GIRI₃^{mes}-ka ... (MS Ug₁ iii 7').

⁴⁶ "Ein Rückschluß auf die Länge der Kolumne E III (= MS Em iii.—R. N.) ist, von E IV ausgehend, nur bedingt möglich: Die Kopie von D. Arnaud scheint jedoch den Schluß naheulegen, daß der Schreiber die Beschriftung von E III mit derselben Zeile abgeschlossen hat wie in der Kolumne E IV. Also hatte E III ursprünglich doch wohl auch 34 Zeilen" (Dietrich 1991:35). Note that, according to Dietrich, col. iv of MS Em contains 34 ll.

⁴⁷ According to Rutz, "Msk 74107aj and Msk 74233r appear to be from different manuscripts" (2013:274). Similarly, Arnaud states that "Msk 74107aj ... n'est pas le même manuscrit que Msk 74233r ..." (2007:160). Neither Rutz nor Arnaud explain their reasoning. It is generally believed that the lines preserved on Msk 74107aj(+)-74233r furnish the ends of ll. MS Em iii '13'ff. (= Msk 74177a iii 4'ff.), v. Arnaud 1987:379 (his lines 69'ff.); Dietrich 1991:52ff. (E 69ff.); Seminara 2000:510ff. (E 69ff.); Arnaud 2007:172ff. (§§ 26–27, M₁ (= Msk 74107aj.—R. N.) ll. 1'ff., M₆ (= Msk 74233r.—R. N.) ll. 1'ff.).

⁴⁸ Cf. ... I₃ DU₁₀.A² in Msk 74233r l. 3' (= MS Em iii '40') and I₃ DU₁₀.GA¹ ... in MS Ug₁ iii 13'. Cf. also [... §]u-up-pu-u₂ ... (Msk 74107aj l. 2' = MS Em iii '41') // ... §u¹-u[p-pu]-u₂² ... (MS Ug₁ iii 14').

⁴⁹ Msk 74107aj l. 13' is almost completely broken.

⁵⁰ [...]x AN² x(-)IG¹-ri 'x' [...] (MS Em iii '51') // [...]'x'(-)IG-ri ... (MS Ug₃ iv 2). Cf. also [...]'x' KA ša₂ pu-uz-ri [...] (MS Em iii '50') // [...] KA ša₂ pu-uz-ri [(...)] (MS Ug₃ iv 1).

in col. iv of MS Em is to be identified with MS Ug₃ iv 7–8.⁵¹ Accordingly, there were about three completely broken lines before the end of col. iii of MS Em. This column thus contained about 55 ll.⁵²

All in all, MS Em should have contained about 188 ll. (50 ll. in col. i + 50(?) ll. in col. ii + ca. 55 ll. in col. iii + 33 ll. in col. iv).

Finally, there are two fragments, Msk 74234g and 74295a which were published by Arnaud as Emar VI/4, Nos. 779 and 780 respectively and identified by him as parts of MS Em. However, Arnaud did not attempt to define their original place on the tablet. As has been shown recently by Sallaberger, Msk 74295a comes from the left edge of col. iv.⁵³ As to Msk 74234g, Sallaberger doubts whether it belongs to MS Em at all.⁵⁴ This fragment contains the beginnings of eleven lines preceded by a blank space to the left. This blank space is separated from the text by single rulings. In my opinion, Msk 74234g could belong to col. ii. On the obverse of Msk 74177a, there is usually a blank space between the endings of the lines in col. i and the beginnings of those in col. ii, and the columns are separated by single rulings. If we place Msk 74234g at the top of col. ii, it might witness the ten or so missing lines of *Šimâ milka* which were assumed above to have been present at the broken end of col. i of MS Ug₁.

MS Boğ consists of two large pieces, KUB IV, 3+KBo. XII, 70. The tablet has two columns on each side. The left column contains the original Akkadian version of *Šimâ milka* (unfortunately, this column is badly damaged), while the right, the sporadic Hittite rendition of the Akkadian text. MS Boğ contains the second part of the composition and seems to attest to an edition of the whole text of *Šimâ milka* on two tablets. The first three instructions on the obverse are preserved only in the Hittite column (KBo. XII, 70:5'ff.). Dietrich cautiously suggests that KBo. XII, 70:6'ff. may

⁵¹ [...]^xta ta-ra-an SAG GIRI₃ DUMU-ri ^rx^r[...] (MS Em iv 1) // [...-t]^a ta-ra-an SAG GIRI₃ / [māri ...] (MS Ug₃ iv 7–8).

⁵² As one may judge from Msk 74107aj(+)Msk 74233r, at the end of col. iii of MS Em, there is progressively less space between the lines of cuneiform.

⁵³ V. Sallaberger 2010:304 and see the copy on p. 316. Msk 74295a furnishes the beginnings of ll. MS Em iv 20–29.

⁵⁴ According to Sallaberger, Msk 74234g could belong only to col. i: “Platz dafür (Msk 74234g.—*R. N.*) wäre überhaupt nur in Kol. i zwischen 74.295a und 74.177a, doch ist beim Fragment 74.234g der linke Randstrich links neben dem Schriftbeginn gezogen, während 74.177a+ die Keilköpfe auf den Randstrich setzt” (Sallaberger 2010:304). Note that the sign AD in Msk 74234g l. 6' and the sign U₂ in l. 7' might well extend over the rulings (unfortunately, the beginnings of these signs are damaged).

parallel MS Ug₁ ii 31–32 // MS Em ii 11'.⁵⁵ Arnaud, on the other hand, matches KBo. 12, 70:6'ff. with his § 23 (“Qu'il ne faut pas maudire sa famille”) consisting of MS Ug₃ iii 11'f. // MS Em iii '26'f. (= Msk 74177a iii 1''f.).⁵⁶ I would rather suggest that *ir-ri*-[...] at the beginning of l. MS Em iii '27' should correspond to ...*-ta u₂-e-'ek-zi'* ‘... s/he will demand from you’ in KBo. XII, 70:13' (hence restore *ir-ri*-[*iš-ka* ...]). If this identification is correct, the first two instructions in MS Boğ (KBo. XII, 70:5'–11') should run roughly parallel to ll. MS Em iii '17'–'25' which are almost completely lost.

Finally, I was able to identify CTN IV, 203 as a further manuscript of *Šimâ milka* (MS Nim).⁵⁷ In this manuscript, the instructions are arranged in a different order from that in which they occur in the other manuscripts of *Šimâ milka*.⁵⁸ MS Nim is extremely difficult to read. As noted in CTN IV, p. 30, the tablet is “written in a very rough hand” and is “probably a scribal practice tablet.”

On the present edition

I intend to devote a series of articles to *Šimâ milka*. The second article will contain the edition of the instructions I, V–VII.

Wherever possible, the text of a particular instruction is based on an individual manuscript with restorations from the other manuscripts

⁵⁵ [... *mārv*] / KI AD U AMA 'x x'[...] (MS Ug₁ ii 31–32) // DUMU-ri i[t-ti ...] (MS Em ii 11'). “Da hier thematisch die Eltern angesprochen werden, könnte der zweite Spruch der hethitischen Version, möglicherweise auch der nicht vollständig ins Hethitische übertragende erste, in Parallele gesetzt werden” (Dietrich 1991:49, fn. 85).

⁵⁶ “D’après la traduction en hittite ... ces lignes traitaient de la malédiction contre les parents” (Arnaud 2007:171).

⁵⁷ In CTN IV, p. 30 this tablet is described as follows: “Akkadian Proverbs. Column i 7 (a misprint for ii 6.—R. N.) parallels BWL, p. 144:8” (v. also Foster 2005: 926, but cf. Lambert 1999–2000:155). MS Nim ii 6' (*ar-ni 'ša₂ la' ti-du-u₂ u₂-ša₂-aš-bat [(x)]*) may in fact be a corrupt version of MS Ug₁ iii 2'–3' ([... *ina KASK*]AL-*ni ša₂ 'NU'* [ti-du-u] / i-š[ap-...]ka ...).

⁵⁸ I could identify with certainty only the following matches between MS Nim and the other manuscripts of *Šimâ milka*: MS Nim i 15'–16' // MS Ug₁ ii 7–8; MS Nim iii 5–12 // MS Ug₁ iii 10'–14' // KUB IV, 3:12–18 (cf. Keydana 1991:71, ll. 12–17) // MS Em iii '38'–'41'; MS Nim iii 13–14 // MS Ug₁ ii 28–30 // MS Em ii 8'–9'; MS Nim iv 6 // MS Em iv 2 // MS Ug₃ iv 8. The parallel that proves beyond any doubt that CTN IV, 203 is a manuscript of *Šimâ milka* is as follows: [...] *i-qab-bi* / [...] *mal-ki* (MS Nim iv 7–8) // [m]a-ru pī(KAXU)-š_{u₂} i-pu-ša i-qab₂-bi iz-za-'qa'-ra' / ana abī(AD)-š_{u₂} ma-al-ki ... (MS Em iv 3–4, v. also MS Ug₃ iv 9–10). Cf. also [...]x' da-me-[(x)]-em'-a-te (MS Nim iv 11) // ... da-me-me-tum ... (MS Em iv 6); [...]uš-tap-'x'[(x)-p]a-a-te (MS Nim iv 12) // [m]u-ur-tap-pi₂-dum ... (MS Em iv 7).

which preserve the instruction in question. Variant readings are given in the critical apparatus. The text is set out in lines of poetry (as noted above, in most of the manuscripts of *Šimâ milka* there is often no correlation between a line of poetry and a line on the tablet). In the notes and commentary, a (poetic) line that is being commented upon is referred to by the number of the line (or the numbers of the lines) by which it is represented in the manuscript serving as the base text for a given instruction.

Prologue

The text is based on MS Ug₁, it is also preserved in MS Em (Msk 74233q+74233p).

- (i 1) *ši-ma^a mil-ka^r ša^r šu-pe₃-e^b amēli(LU₂)^{lim^r}*
 (i 2) *ša uzna(GEŠTU)^{na} i[p-t]u<-uš(?)>^{dr}EN^r.LIL₂.BAN₃.DA*
 (i 3) *em-qa mil-ka <ša> šu-pe₃-[e] amēli(LU₂)^{lim^c}*
dš_{a2} uzna(GEŠTU)^{na d (i 4)} eš-ru-ku-uš^dEN.[LIL₂.BAN₃].^rDA^r
ina pī(KAXU)-šu₂ (i 5) u₂-š_u-u₂ pa-ra-aš t[e-ne₂-še-ti(?) a-hi]-ra-ti
 (i 6) *ana^r ni-ši^e da-la-la [...b]i²-ra*
an(ŠE₃) (i 7) bu^r-uk-ri it-ta-š[i mi]-lik-šu
 (i 8) *iz-za^r-qa-ra kab-ta₂-t[a] tas-li-ta^f*

^a Em i 1: [š]i-ma<<-ma>>; ^b Em i 1: šu-^ru₂-pe₃-[...]; ^c Em i 3: [L]U₂; ^{d-d} Em i 3: ša uz-n[a]; ^{e-e} Em i 5: a-na MUNUS.NITA [ni]-^rši^r; ^{f-f} Em i 7: kab-ta₂-tam^r(ŠU₂) ta-as₂-li-ta

- (i 1) Hear the advice of the famous man,
 (i 2) <to whom> Enlil-banda revealed wisdom,
 (i 3) the wise advice <of> the famous man,
 (i 3-4) to whom Enlil-banda granted wisdom,
 (i 4-5) from whose mouth came forth the rules for future people,
 (i 6) for mankind he ...
 (i 6-7) To the son has come his advice,
 (i 8) he has spoken *the thoughtful words*.

Notes

i 1//3. Ever since Nougayrol (1968:283) *šu-pe₃-e* LU₂-*lim*⁵⁹ is generally regarded as a personal name and is usually rendered as either ‘The most

⁵⁹ Nougayrol reads *šu-be-e-amēli*(LU₂)^{lim} ‘Submerge l’homme!’ (the form *šu-be-e* is interpreted by him as imperative of *bā’u* Š). This rather odd reading arises from

splendid of men'⁶⁰ or 'The (most) splendid man.'⁶¹ There is a controversy as to who is the bearer of the name. Most scholars take it to belong to the father. This interpretation follows quite naturally from the first line of MS Ug₁, commonly read as: *ši-ma mil-ka 'ša' šu-pe₃-e amēli(LU₂)^{lim}* (*šimâ⁶² milka ša ...*).⁶³ However, Dietrich (1991:38f., with fn. 25) reads the line differently. In his view, the traces in the middle of the line, usually identified with ŠA, should actually be seen as the sign MA and the *Personenkeil*. Thus, for Dietrich, *šūpê amēli* can only be understood as the name of the son: *ši-ma mil-ka-ma^{r1} šu-pe₃-e amēli(LU₂)^{lim}* 'Höre doch (folgen)den Rat, Šūpê-amēli' (ibid. 39). A recent collation by W. Sallaberger (2010:305) confirms the traditional reading.⁶⁴

It should be mentioned that Dietrich's interpretation originated from the fact that both MSS Ug₁ and Em lack the *nota genitivi ša* in l. 3: *emqa milka šūpê amēli*.⁶⁵ Usually, *milka* in this line is interpreted as a bound form,⁶⁶ but this is hardly a satisfactory explanation. It is true that in the Akkadian texts from Ugarit and Emar a noun in the construct state may, and often does, retain a case ending. But this phenomenon is mainly re-

an endeavour to identify the bearer of the name with the father of the Babylonian Noah (v. Nougayrol 1968:283).

⁶⁰ V., for instance, Seminara 2000:489f., with fn. 13. Within this reading, the name is taken to represent a superlative construction (v. GAG³ § 68b): *šūpê-amēli*.

⁶¹ V. Dietrich 1991:39, fn. 26; idem 1993:57, fn. 68. In this case, the superlative meaning is apparently assumed to be conveyed by the pattern šuPRuS (v. GAG³ § 68b, but cf. Kouwenberg 2010:331f.).

⁶² The spelling *ši-ma* in MS Ug₁ (cf. also *ši-ma* <<-ma>> in MS Em) seems to stand for the imperative plural *šimâ*. The lack of the plene vowel (**ši-ma-a*) is unproblematic, since such defective spellings are by no means infrequent in the Akkadian texts from Ugarit (v. van Soldt 1991:287ff.). This reading is in line with plural imperatives in the opening lines of such compositions as Ammiditana's Hymn to Ištar (Thureau-Dangin 1925); CT 15, 1–2 (Römer 1967; v. also Wilcke 1977:153–155). The first line of our text, as preserved in the Old Babylonian catalogue of literary compositions AUAM 73.2402 (Cohen 1976:130–133), l. 15, should probably be read [*ši-m*]i-a mi-il-kam (cf. [(x) x]-e mi-il-kam (Cohen 1976:131); cf. also Sallaberger 2010:307, with fn. 9).

⁶³ Cf. this line in MS Em i 1: [*š*]i-ma <<-ma>> mil-ka [x] šu-^ru²-pe₃-[...].

⁶⁴ Curiously enough, Sallaberger (2010:304) reads in the first line of MS Ug₁ both the sign ŠA and the *Personenkeil*: ... mil-ka 'ša' šu-pe₃-e ... (from his copy on p. 305 one should rather read: ... š[a]¹...). This reading seems unnecessary in the light of the parallel line (MS Ug₁ i 3 // MS Em i 3) which lacks the *Personenkeil*.

⁶⁵ Dietrich 1991:39, fn. 25; v. also Hurowitz 2007:39f., fn. 13.

⁶⁶ V., for instance, Sallaberger 2010:305 (with the reference to Huehnergard 1989:151); Seminara 1998:304.

stricted to the archival texts where it is duly explained as interference from the scribes' vernacular (van Soldt 1991:425), whereas the literary texts found in these two cities normally show the correct Akkadian forms.⁶⁷ Accordingly, with Arnaud (2007:161), I believe that both manuscripts *erroneously* omit *ša* in this line. Admittedly, this interpretation presupposes that MSS Ug₁ and Em depend on a common *Vorlage* that already contained this error.

Now, the crucial point about *šūpê amēli* is that it need not be regarded as a personal name. Rather, it should be understood simply as an epithet of the father: 'the famous man'⁶⁸ (with the adjective preposed to its head noun, as is often the case in Akkadian poetry, cf. e. g. *emqa milka* in l. 3 of our text).

i 2. It is not clear whether MS Em shares with MS Ug₁ the omission of the personal suffix *-š(u)* after the verb *ip-tu*.⁶⁹ According to Arnaud (2007: 161), both manuscripts are corrupt at this point. Yet, the copy seems to leave enough room to restore the sign UŠ (or ŠU₍₂₎) in the gap between the fragments Msk. 74233q and 74233p: *ša uzna(GEŠTU)^{na} ip-tu-[uš(?)]^{d+E}*N.LIL₂ BAN₃.D[A] (MS Em i 2).⁷⁰

The interpretation of the idiom *uzna petû* in the present passage is rather ambiguous. 'To open the ear' normally means either 'to grant wisdom' or 'to inform,' 'to reveal.' The parallelism with *uzna šarāku* (ll. 3–

⁶⁷ The few exceptions are listed in van Soldt 1991:424, fn. 46 (*milka* in l. 3 of our text is not included in the list). Cf. eleven correct bound forms in MS Ug₁ (RS 22.439) cited *ibid.* 421, fn. 45. According to Seminara (1998:304), *bu-ša šu^{II}-šu₂* 'la proprietà delle sue mani' in MS Em (Msk. 74107aj l. 7') provides another example of a bound form with a case-ending. Since, however, this phrase occurs in a damaged context, Seminara's reading (v. also Dietrich 1991:54, E 76) should not be taken for granted. Cf. Arnaud's restoration *'i-pu-ša qātā(ŠU)^{II}-šu₂* (2007:152, l. 114').

⁶⁸ Cf. 'Ecoute ... le conseil de l'homme exceptionnel ... le sage conseil de l'homme exceptionnel' (Arnaud 2007:154); 'Listen to the counsel of the *distinguished* [person] <...> (Listen) to the wise counsel (of) the *distinguished person*' (Klein 1990:66f., n. 25, Klein's italics).

⁶⁹ Dietrich (1991:38) reads *i[p-t]uš* in MS Ug₁. The reading *i[p-t]u* is now confirmed by Sallaberger's collation (Sallaberger 2010:305). We expect the suffix to occur with the verb because of the form *išrukuš* in the parallel line (MS Ug₁ i 3–4). Note, however, that in the passages collected in CAD P 352f.; U 370f. the pronominal suffix is almost invariably attached to *uznu*.

⁷⁰ Cf. *ip-tu-[-šu]* (Dietrich 1991:38); *ip-tu* [(x)] (Sallaberger 2010:305). There seems to be space for only one sign in the gap (cf. ... *mil-ka [ša] šu-^ru₂-pe₃-[...]* in MS Em i 1). Therefore, the restoration of the suffix after *ip-tu* should probably imply the ligature [^{d+E}]N.LIL₂.

4) seems to suggest the former meaning. Still, the meaning ‘to reveal’ may also be involved: the god Ea is probably described as the ultimate source of the advice (*milku*) which is revealed by him to the father.

i 3–4. There seems to be not enough space in l. 3 of MS Em to restore *ša uz-n[a išrukuš* ^dEN.LIL₂.BAN₃.DA]. Sallaberger (2010:305) restores at the end of the line: ... *ša uz-^rna* ¹[KI.MIN(?)]. Alternatively, the line might have slipped down⁷¹ and thus continued in accordance with MS Ug₁.

i 4–5. Some scholars interpret the form *u₂-šu-u₂* as plural (preterit 3 m. pl.). This seems to be based on the (usually tacit) assumption that the singular *paršu* ‘order,’ ‘custom’ in this line⁷² is used as a collective.⁷³ A more plausible explanation is advanced by Seminara (2000:491, fn. 18), who suggests that the relative pronoun *ša* at the beginning of the (poetic) line MS Ug₁ i 3–4 extends its force also to the present line (cf. also Sallaberger 2010:305).

On the meaning of *paršu* in this passage see commentary below.

The word following *pa-ra-aš* is commonly restored as *ū[mī]* ‘days’ (^rU₄¹[^{meš}] or ^ru₄¹-[^{mī}]): *paraš ū[mī a-ḫi]-ra-ti*.⁷⁴ Within this reading, *a-ḫi-ra-ti* (restored from MS Em i 5) is apparently identified with *ahrātu* ‘later time,’ ‘future’ (*ū[mī] a-ḫi-ra-ti* thus should be seen as a unique variant of the common phrase *ahrât ūmī* ‘future days’). I propose to restore in the lacuna the word *tenēšetu* ‘people’: *paraš t[e-ne₂-še-ti a-ḫi]-ra-ti* ‘the rules for future people.’⁷⁵ Cf. *ahrātu* as an attribute of *nišū* ‘people’ in BBSt. No. 4 ii 13 and OIP 2, 138:46 (both passages are cited in CAD A₁ 194b). If cor-

⁷¹ Cf. MS Em (Msk. 74177a) iv 5, 10, 23, 25.

⁷² The interpretation of *pa-ra-AZ* in MS Ug₁ as *parās* ‘die Entscheidungen’ proposed by Dietrich (1991:38) is apparently based on his reading *pa-r[a]-^ra¹-as* in MS Em i 4. However, the two vertical wedges on the fragment Msk. 74233p which are read by Dietrich as ‘A’ should rather be seen as the end of the sign RA whose beginning is found on Msk. 74233q (cf. *pa-^rra¹-aš* in Sallaberger 2010:305).

⁷³ Cf. ‘De sa bouche sortent les règles ...’ (Nougayrol 1968:280); ‘From his mouth have come forth rules ...’ (Foster 2005:416); ‘De sa bouche sortent les règles ...’ (Arnaud 2007:154, v. also his comment on p. 161).

⁷⁴ Cf. e. g. ‘rules for later times’ (Foster 2005:416); ‘die Kultordnung für spätere Zeiten’ (Sallaberger 2010:305).

⁷⁵ The traces of the first sign of the word in question in MS Ug₁, as copied in Sallaberger 2010:305, point to TE rather than to UD (the traces in MS Em i 4 may point to both). According to Arnaud (2007:161), MS Ug₁ “porte D[A, U[M ou š[A (et non U[D] avant la cassure.” The lacuna in MS Ug₁ may seem too short to accommodate *t[e-ne₂-še-ti a-ḫi]* ... But the signs TE, NI, ŠE, TI, A, and ḪI are all rather small, while the lacuna is actually larger than it appears in the copy (v. Nougayrol 1968:284, n. to l. 6).

rectly restored, *teněšētu* furnishes a parallel to *nišū* ‘people’ in the following line. Cf. also a similar passage in the first tablet of the Gilgamesh Epic (l. 44) discussed in the commentary below.

Morphologically *ahrātu* is a substantivized fem. pl. *nisba* adjective derived from **ahru*.⁷⁶ Thus, *a-ḫi-ra-ti* (*ahīrāti*) is a different word, probably the G stem verbal adjective *ahīru* ‘late,’ ‘future’ (with *r* preventing the vowel syncope) that seems to be otherwise unattested (but see immediately below). It is not clear to me whether *nišū ahrātu* in BBSt. No. 4 ii 13 and OIP 2, 138:46 is actually to be interpreted as *nišū ahrātu* (< *ahīrātu*) or, on the contrary, *ahīrātu* in *Šimâ milka* should rather be seen as a reanalysis of *ahrātu* in phrases like *nišū ahrātu*.

i 6. MUNUS.NITA before *nišū* ‘people’ in MS Em i 5 should probably not be taken as a variant of the expression *zikar sinniš* ‘male and female,’⁷⁷ since the order woman–man (*sinniš zikar*) would be most unusual.⁷⁸ With Arnaud (2007:161), I would rather identify this sign group with the complex logogram MUNUS.NITA^{mes} which occurs in texts from Alalah IV, Hattuša, Emar, Nuzi, Ugarit and Amarna.⁷⁹ The meaning and reading of this logogram are still a matter of debate. It has long been thought that the key to the reading of MUNUS.NITA^{mes} lies in the lexical entry **ni-id-lam** = MUNUS.NITA = *hīrtu* ‘(chief) wife’ (Diri IV 162, v. MSL 15, 156). Starting from this equation, MUNUS.NITA^(mes) has been variously interpreted as ‘Weib,’ ‘Kebsweib’ (*marhītu*),⁸⁰ as chief wife (*hīrtu*),⁸¹ as wife or woman,⁸² etc.⁸³ Such an interpretation of MUNUS.NITA^(mes) originally emerged as an attempt to explain MUNUS.NITA^{mes} in certain passages in the Amarna tab-

⁷⁶ The structure of *ahrātu* is made explicit by the uncontracted form *ah-ri-a-at* in LIH 60 iv 3 (v. Wasserman 1992:5).

⁷⁷ Thus explicitly in Dietrich 1991:39, fn. 28.

⁷⁸ Among the examples collected in CAD S 287f., the order woman–man is found only once: *te <-ne₂> -šet būi(E₂)-šū₂ sin-^rni⁷-šū₂ u zik-ri* ‘the people of his household, female and male’ (STT 38:149, v. Gurney 1956:156 (The Poor man of Nippur)).

⁷⁹ This combination of signs also occurs once in the Middle Assyrian song catalogue KAR 158 (vi 9’): *su-u₂-qa a-ba⁷-ma 2 MUNUS.NITA^{mes} u₂-ta* ‘When I was walking along the street, I met two ...’ The interpretation of MUNUS.NITA^{mes} in this passage is not clear to me. Cf. CAD B 179b; A₂ 519a; S 215b; AHW. 1036a (reading *sekretu*); Groneberg 2003:64 (reading *assimnu*).

⁸⁰ Knudtzon 1915:1464.

⁸¹ Goetze 1959:98.

⁸² Kühne 1973:26f., fn. 119 (reading *hīrtu*?).

⁸³ Cf. also the widely accepted reading of MUNUS.NITA as *sekretu* (v., for instance, AHW. 1036a).

lets.⁸⁴ With the appearance of new texts (most notably from Nuzi and Emar, see below) it has become clear that in too many cases it cannot be so treated. Today there seems to be a common opinion that MUNUS.NITA^{mes} can be read in at least two different ways. The old readings based on the equation MUNUS.NITA (NIDLAM₂) = *hīrtu* are mostly reserved for the passages where they may be said to have become traditional.⁸⁵ In the rest of the cases, the interpretation of this logogram remains controversial. Some scholars are of opinion that MUNUS.NITA^{mes} should not be taken as a complex logogram, but is rather to be decomposed into its constituent parts: MUNUS ‘woman’ + NITA ‘man’ + plural marker (that is, ‘women and men’).⁸⁶ To my taste, this interpretation is too straightforward: the rendering of MUNUS.NITA^{mes} as ‘women and men’ would certainly sound awkward in most of the passages concerned. The authors of CAD are quite vague as to the exact meaning and reading of this logogram: “In the Bogh. and MB Alalakh refs. the context suggests a meaning ‘people,’ or ‘women,’ or the like ... the reading of this group of signs may ... be *nišū*, *amīltu*, *sinništu*, or the like” (CAD S 216f.). Finally, Arnaud interprets MUNUS.NITA as *šerru* ‘baby,’ ‘(young) child.’⁸⁷ His main argument is that in Emar VI 652, l. 73’ MUNUS.NITA^{mes} stands in place of *šerru* in the stock apodosis *nišū šerrīšina ana kaspi ipaššarā* ‘people will sell their children for silver.’⁸⁸ But the signs in question are damaged and uncertain.⁸⁹ To my eye, the reading [M]I₂.NITA proposed in Arnaud 1987:263 can hardly be accepted.⁹⁰

I believe that MS Em provides evidence for the reading *nišū* ‘people’ of MUNUS.NITA^{mes}. In this manuscript, the word *nišū* following MUNUS.NITA should probably be regarded as a gloss on the logogram. Several argu-

⁸⁴ EA 38:4; 39:6, and cf. Moran’s restoration of EA 49:5 (Moran 1992:120f., n. 2). Cf. also the use of MUNUS.NITA^{mes} in royal letters from Ugarit (Ugaritica V, 21:4’; 24:7, for further references v. Moran 1992:120f., n. 2). However, it was early realized that MUNUS.NITA^{mes} could scarcely be translated by ‘wives’ (or the like) in EA 19:85 and 22 iv 43.

⁸⁵ Cf., for instance, the rendering of MUNUS.NITA^{mes} in EA 38:4 as ‘chief wives’ (Moran 1992:111) and ‘mogli’ (Liverani 1999:420). Cf. also Lackenbacher’s (2002: 193) translation of this logogram in Ugaritica V, 24:7 as ‘épouses.’ V. also CAD M₁ 281a sub *marhītu*.

⁸⁶ First proposed in Wilhelm 1980:73 for HSS 16, 10:75. Cf. also Moran’s interpretation of EA 19:85 (1992:46, n. 23).

⁸⁷ Arnaud 1998:146. Cf. also his translation of l. MS Em i 5: ‘pour les enfants des gens opprésés’ (Arnaud 2007:154).

⁸⁸ For the references v. CAD P 240b; Š₂ 320b.

⁸⁹ For the copy v. Arnaud 1985:553.

⁹⁰ Cf. Al-Rawi–George 2006:53, where these signs are read [L]U₂.TUR¹².

ments may support this hypothesis. First, in many passages the meaning suggested for MUNUS.NITA^{mes} by the context is either ‘family,’ ‘household’⁹¹ or ‘servants,’ ‘domestics’⁹² (in some cases it is difficult to decide between these meanings, cf. AIT 112:4; 235, *passim*).⁹³ Now, as is well known, *nišû* has both these senses. Second, it is striking that MUNUS.NITA is invariably combined with the plural marker MEŠ.⁹⁴ It is, therefore, more natural to read MUNUS.NITA^{mes} as *nišû* ‘people’ (*pluralis tantum*) rather than, say, *hīrātu* ‘wives.’ Third, MUNUS.UG₃^{mes} in Emar VI, 212, ll. 9, 12, 17 which occurs in a context similar to that in which MUNUS.NITA^{mes} is found in Emar VI, 217, l. 8 and 256, ll. 8, 12 is likely to be interpreted as confusion of UG₃^{mes}, the common logogram for *nišû*, and MUNUS.NITA^{mes}.⁹⁵

⁹¹ AIT 89:2(?); PRU 4, 232, RS 17.244, l. 11(?); Emar VI, 256:8, 12; 217:8. I believe that MUNUS.NITA^{mes} in the letters from Amarna and Ugarit mentioned in fn. 84 above could also be interpreted in this way.

⁹² AIT 75:7; 111:5(?); HSS 16, 10:75. The phrase *an-nu-ti* NIG₉.BA^{mes} MUNUS.NITA^{mes} *gab-ba₂-šu-nu-ma ...* which summarizes an inventory of gifts from Tušratta (EA 22 iv 43) should perhaps be translated ‘all these gifts (and) servants ...’ The servants sent to the pharaoh by Tušratta might have been mentioned earlier in the text, at the partially broken end of the column iv (probably, in l. 42). Cf. [*u₂*]-*de₄-e mu-lu-gi^{mes} an-nu-ti gab-ba₂-šu-nu-m[a] ...* ‘all these [obj]ects (and) dowry-personnel ...’ at the end of another inventory of Tušratta’s gifts (EA 25 iv 65, transl. Moran 1992: 81, for the interpretation of *mulūgu* as ‘dowry-personnel’ v. *ibid.* 82, n. 30; 83, n. 47). As a part of the list, the *mulūgu*-personnel are mentioned just before the concluding section (iv 64).

⁹³ Admittedly, there are still some passages where MUNUS.NITA^{mes} could be interpreted as ‘women.’ Thus, in AIT 232 MUNUS.NITA^{mes} seems to be contrasted with LU₂^{mes}; in AIT 298:1 it is used in the heading (DUB-*pi* MUNUS.NITA^{mes}) that introduces a list of women (Wiseman 1959:53f.; Goetze 1959; but perhaps there are also a few boy/male names in the list). In the treaty between a Hittite king and Paddatiššu of Kizzuwatna (Meyer 1953:116, l. 17 and *passim*, v. CAD S 217a), MUNUS.NITA^{mes} seems to designate the whole population of a settlement (*ālu*), rather than only its women. The interpretation of this logogram in KAR 158 vi 9’ (v. fn. 79 above) and KUB XXXVIII, 23 i 9 (quoted in Kühne 1973:27, fn. 119) is unclear to me.

⁹⁴ The only exception I am aware of is provided by MUNUS.NITA in the fifth line of MS Em of *Šimâ milka* (if correctly interpreted). In AIT 232:1 read MUNUS.NITA^{mf}[^{es}] rather than MUNUS.NITA-*tu₄* (thus in Arnaud 1998:146).

⁹⁵ In Arnaud 1986:224 this logogram is mistakenly read as MI₂.NITA₂^{mes}. For the correct reading v. Durand 1989. Durand interprets MUNUS.UG₃^{mes} in this text as *nišūtu* (= *nišūtu*) ‘famille.’ According to him, “Comme UN-MEŠ correspond normalement à *nišû*, il est vraisemblable que sa préfixation par l’idéogramme sumérien de la femme est le moyen qu’a trouvé le scribe antique de rendre compte de l’adjonction d’un suffixe féminin akkadien.” However, the word *nišūtu* contains

As to the origin of MUNUS.NITA^{mes}, this logogram should probably be considered a creation of Late Bronze Age scribes from the Mesopotamian periphery (perhaps, of Mittanian origin) that did not take root in Mesopotamia proper (but cf. fn. 79 above).⁹⁶ One is reminded of the Egyptian determinative for people which consists of the logogram for man plus the logogram for woman plus the three strokes of the plural marker (note in particular that this determinative is commonly used with the Egyptian word for ‘people,’ *rmṯ*).⁹⁷ The ultimate Egyptian origin of MUNUS.NITA^{mes} seems quite probable. Yet, this hypothesis does not explain the particular order woman–man of the logogram. Tentatively, I would suggest that this order is due to a pun on a grammatical peculiarity of the word *nišū*: despite being morphologically masculine plural, it requires feminine plural agreement. Thus, MUNUS could be taken as a graphic indicator of this “femininity” of *nišū*. This would resemble, to some extent, the use of MUNUS in such instances as MUNUS.KUR₂ = *nukurtu* ‘war,’ ‘hostility’ where it renders the feminine ending of the Akkadian word (for further examples v. Borger 2010:450; cf. also Durand’s interpretation of MUNUS.UG₃^{mes} in Emar VI, 212 cited in fn. 95).

The interpretation of *da-la-l[a(-...)]* is difficult. Nougayrol posits an otherwise unattested word *dallalu* ‘pauvre’: [*an*]a *nišū da-la-l[a-ti]* ‘[pou]r les pauv[re]s hommes.’⁹⁸ Yet, to posit a *hapax legomenon*⁹⁹ in a damaged and obscure passage is far from convincing. Besides, it is not at all self-evident why the people should be described as ‘poor,’ ‘oppressed’ or the like.¹⁰⁰ Dietrich (1991:38) adopts Nougayrol’s restoration *da-la-l[a-ti]*, but regards it as a

the abstract suffix *-ūt-* rather than the feminine suffix. The logogram in Emar VI, 212 should not be confused with MUNUS.UG₃^{mes} = *sekrētu* in certain Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions (v. CAD S 216b; Borger 2010:354f.).

⁹⁶ For a different view, v. Greengus 1990:29 (MUNUS.NITA is read by Greengus as *hīrtu*).

⁹⁷ I owe this observation to Albert Davletshin.

⁹⁸ Nougayrol 1968:277, 280. Cf. also ‘for lesser(?) mankind’ (Foster 1993:332); ‘pour les enfants des gens opprimés’ (Arnaud 2007:154). Nougayrol (ibid. 284) derives *dallalu* from the rare verb *dalālu*, with the reference to AHw. 153a (according to CAD D 178a, this verb occurs only in the D-stem, for *da-li-il* in RA 44, 13:10 v. now CAD T 92a). Nougayrol’s interpretation also draws on the West Semitic root *d-l-l* (cf. Hbr. *dal* ‘low,’ ‘poor’; Ug. *dl* ‘poor’).

⁹⁹ *da-la-la* in *Šimā milka* has probably nothing to do with *dal-la-li* in Tablet VI of the Standard Babylonian Gilgameš Epic (George 2003:622, l. 76).

¹⁰⁰ Nougayrol probably means that people are called ‘poor’ because they are lacking proper knowledge of the antediluvian traditions (cf. Nougayrol 1968:275; cf. also Maul’s interpretation of *nišū apātu* in SB Gilg. I 44 (Maul 2008:155)).

derivation from the verb *dalālu* ‘to praise.’¹⁰¹ Dietrich’s reading depends crucially on his restoration of the verbal form at the end of the line as [*iz-za-q*]a₂-ra: ‘für das Volk wird er Huldigungen aussprechen.’ But, as shown by Sallaberger’s collation, this restoration is to be excluded (see further below). Moreover, it is by no means clear why the father should praise people.

Sallaberger offers yet another interpretation of this crux. He takes *da-la-la* as an infinitive from *dalālu* ‘to praise’: ‘der den Menschen das Lobpreisen (der Götter) [*herüberbrach*]te!’ (2010:305). This reading seems to be based on such passages as *ša lā mašê dalīlikunu luštammar ana nišî rapšāti* ‘Let me sing your praises, not to be forgotten, to the widespread people’ (Lambert 1974:276, l. 39).¹⁰² The main question that arises from Sallaberger’s translation is whether ‘die Götter’ can indeed be seen as an implicit object of *dalālu*.

It seems appropriate here to examine the passages where *dalālu* has no explicit object. The following two occurrences are cited in AHW. 153b (sub *dalālu* II 5): *rēšiš ul adallal ina puḫur itbā[rīya]* ‘(Modest) like a slave I did not boast in the company of my friends’ (BWL 88:294, transl. CAD R 271b); PN₁ PN₂ <...> *ša abbūšunu ana šarrī abbīya udallipū-ma u šunu unarrītū epēš šarrūtīya qereb GN₁ u GN₂ ana dalāl aḫrāti ūbilšunūti* ‘Dunanu und Samgunu <...> deren Väter die Könige, meine Väter in Unruhe gehalten hatten, und die auch selbst bei der Ausübung meines Königtums mich beunruhigt hatten—ich brachte sie nach Baltil und Arbela, damit *die Späteren* (*mich*) preisen’ (Borger 1996:107, B VI 76–82 // C VII 71–75, transl. *ibid.* 227, Borger’s italics). In the former case (the Babylonian Theodicy), the speaker seems to mean by *dalālu* his own self-praise,¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ This reading is not commented upon by Dietrich. He seems to analyze *da-la-la*-[*ti*] as a plural of **dalaltu*. Cf. also ‘To mankind he says words of praise (*dalāla*)’ (Hurowitz 2007:46).

¹⁰² It may also be noted that Sallaberger apparently seeks to interpret *da-la-la* in the light of the word *paršu* in the previous line. Cf. ‘Er (the father.—*R. N.*) hat die Kultordnung und Riten für spätere Zeiten verkündet, womöglich die Menschheit das Beten (‘Preisen’) gelehrt’ (Sallaberger 2010:306).

¹⁰³ There is in fact no unanimity as to the interpretation of *dalālu* in this passage. Most translators follow Landsberger’s rendering which obviously implies the N-stem reading of *a-dal-lal*: ‘Einem Sklaven gleich wurde ich nicht gerühmt in der Versammlung [meiner] *Geno[ssen]*!’ (Landsberger 1936:73, original italics; cf. also Pfeiffer, ANET³ 440; Foster 2005:921). But cf. Lambert’s translation: ‘I did not worship even as a slave in the company of my associates’ (BWL 89). In my opinion, the reading proposed in CAD R 271b (cf. already CAD I 294b, where the verb, however, is read *atallal*) best fits the context of ll. 291–294 of the Theodicy which is about the humility of the sufferer.

while in the latter (an inscription of Assurbanipal), it is the king (the first person of the text) who is to be praised by future generations.

The use of *dalālu* in the inscription of Assurbanipal is strongly reminiscent of that of *dalīlu* (*dilīlu*) ‘praise,’ ‘glory’ in the following three passages: *ēdu ina libbi ana dalīli ul ēzib* ‘I did not leave a single person there to praise (me)’ (RINAP 4, 186:46, Leichty’s translation); *350 šābī ina libbīšunu addūk šittūtūšunu ana dalīli undeššir* ‘I killed three hundred and fifty soldiers among them (and) let the remainder go free to (spread the news of my) glory’ (RIMB 2, 280:24’ff., Frame’s translation); *ina libbi āli ištēn amēlu ana dilīli linnezib* ‘may (just) one man be spared in the city to (proclaim my) glory’ (SAA II, No. 2 vi 5, translation as in the edition). A different interpretation of *dalīlu* in these passages, as well as of *dalālu* in the inscription of Assurbanipal, was proposed by W. R. Mayer (1976:314).¹⁰⁴ He cautiously suggests that this “bare” *dalīlu/dalālu* could be compared with *dalīl ilī* ‘the praise of the gods’ in an inscription of Tiglath-pileser I: *rēma aršāššu-ma ištu ālīya Aššur dalīl ilī rabūti ana dalāli ana napišti umaššeršu* ‘I had mercy on him and let him leave my city Aššur alive in order to proclaim the glory of the great gods’ (RIMA 2, 22:25ff., Grayson’s translation).¹⁰⁵ Thus, according to Mayer, when the object of *dalālu* is not specified, it presumably means ‘to praise the gods’ (correspondingly, *dalīlu*, when used alone, should mean ‘the praise of the gods’). This interpretation, which is in fact very close to Sallaberger’s treatment of *da-la-la* in *Šimā milka*,¹⁰⁶ seems quite plausible, especially if we keep in mind that *dalālu*, as well as *dalīlu*, mostly occurs in the context of worshipping the gods.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, it is by no means necessary that *dalīl ilī* in the annals of Tiglath-pileser must hold the clue to the meaning of *dalīlu/dalālu* in the passages that concern us here. The traditional rendering, ‘the praise (of the king),’ reflected in the translations cited above, appears to be equally justified.

Now, how could one describe the link between the meanings of *dalālu* in the Theodicy and the inscription of Assurbanipal? In fact, the answer to this question is somewhat difficult to formulate. I would suggest that in

¹⁰⁴ But cf. already Delitzsch, HWB 219a.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. also TCL 3, 146; RINAP 4, 81:17 (the latter passage is cited in fn. 107 below).

¹⁰⁶ Cf. also Lambert’s translation of BWL 88:294 cited in fn. 103.

¹⁰⁷ But cf. *dalīli ša šarri bēliya lādul* ‘Let me sing the praise to the king, my lord’ (ABL 756 rev. 2f.); *ana napšati muššeranni-ma tanitti Aššur lušāpā lādula qurdika* ‘Let me live so that I may proclaim the fame of the god Aššur (and) praise your (Esarhaddon’s.—R. N.) heroism’ (RINAP 4, 81:17, Leichty’s translation).

both instances the implied object of *dalālu* may be defined as the main (or, one should rather say, thematic) participant of a given span of discourse.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, it is conceivable that, in *Šimâ milka*, the father is said to be praised by people, apparently for his great wisdom and wise advice. Of course, this interpretation must remain uncertain until we have a convincing restoration of the verb at the end of the line (see immediately below).

Sallaberger's collation (2010:305) shows that, as is also clear from the copy of Nougayrol, the damaged sign before RA cannot be read [G]A (thus Dietrich and Seminara). Rather, the traces point to [B]I.¹⁰⁹ With due caution, Sallaberger restores [*u-še-b*]i-ra '[*herüberbrach*]te.'¹¹⁰ However, *šūburu* can only mean 'to take someone or something across the water' and thus could hardly suit the context. Very tentatively, I would suggest restoring [*ulabb*]ira (or: [*ušalb*]ira): 'he achieved lasting fame (*dalāla*).'

i 6–7. The sign sequence AN KU is commonly, and I believe correctly, interpreted as a preposition.¹¹¹ What preposition exactly is concealed behind this writing remains a matter of disagreement. With Seminara (2000:491, with fn. 16), I read here *an(a)* (^{an}ŠE₃), since this preposition is obviously required by the context.¹¹² The spelling ^{an}ŠE₃ calls for some comment. ŠE₃ as a logogram for *ana* is primarily known from the Middle Babylonian literary texts from Susa, famous for their idiosyncratic orthography.¹¹³ However, this spelling is also found, albeit very rarely, in texts outside Susa.¹¹⁴ The phonetic complement *an* preceding the logogram is explained by Seminara (*ibid.*) as a common shorthand writing of

¹⁰⁸ The main participant *par excellence* is, of course, the first person agent.

¹⁰⁹ Nougayrol reads [*z*]ur(?)*-ra-an-ku* (1968:277) and interprets this sign sequence as the name of the son (*ibid.* 284).

¹¹⁰ The traces are identified with BI also by Arnaud (2007:148), but his reading (*bi-ra ana₂-ku* 'entre-temps, moi') is highly improbable.

¹¹¹ But cf. Nougayrol 1968:277 (v. fn. 109); Arnaud 2007:148 (v. fn. 110).

¹¹² Cf. Dietrich 1991:38f., with fn. 29 (*an ku* (= *ana kūm*) *bukri* 'an die Erstgeborenen'); 1993:57, with fn. 70 (*an ku bukri* 'instead of the first-born'); Sallaberger 2010:305 (*eli* (AN.ŠE₃) *bukri* 'dem Erstgeborenen gegenüber,' original italics).

¹¹³ V. Labat, MDP 57, 4ff. (on the origin of "Susa" orthography v. now George 2013:139ff.). Elements of this orthography occur in Tablet XXII of the series *Enūma Anu Enlil* (v. Rochberg-Halton 1988:251; Farber 1993; George 2013:141). Some of them are treated in the commentary tablet K 4166+ (v. Frahm 2011:135).

¹¹⁴ KBo. I, 4, passim (a treaty from Boğazköy, v. Weidner 1923:61, fn. 14); CT 31, 5 iii 48, 50 (a Kuyunjik tablet belonging to the so called Orientation Tablets, v. Koch 2005:532). The latter text exhibits yet another trait of "Susa" orthography: TA = *ina* (v. Borger 1957:193, n. to Vs. 6). For other references v. George 2013:108.

ana (“consueta brachigrafia per *ana*”). But, as far as I am aware, AN is never used as an abbreviation for *ana*. Rather, we are dealing here with the short form *an* of the preposition.¹¹⁵ This form is perhaps not surprising in the prologue to *Šimâ milka* which exhibits many peculiarities of language (see below).

i 8. Following Sallaberger (2010:305), I prefer to interpret KAB-DA-*ta* in MS Ug₁ i 8,¹¹⁶ as well as KAB-DA-[*tum/tu*(?)] in ii 30,¹¹⁷ as a by-form of *kabattu* ‘innards,’ ‘mood,’ ‘mind’ (*kab-ta₂-ta*) rather than to see in it a derivation from *kapādu* ‘to plan,’ ‘to plot.’¹¹⁸

Most translators take *tas-li-ta* (*ta-as₂-li-ta* in MS Em i 7) as *teslītu* (*taslītu*) ‘prayer,’ ‘supplication.’ A different interpretation was put forward by Seminara and Arnaud. Both scholars propose to derive the word in question from the verb *salā’u* ‘to cheat,’ ‘to lie’:¹¹⁹ ‘discorso ben congegnato (e) *sarcastico*’ (Seminara 2000:492, original italics); ‘des propos captie[ux et] mensongers’ (Arnaud 2007:154). Both readings draw on the entry *taslītu* ‘abwertende Rede’ in AHw. 1337a. Today, it has become clear that this lexeme is actually non-existent.¹²⁰ Moreover, as pointed out by Sallaberger (2010:306), the verb *salā’u* ‘to lie,’ from which *taslītu* is supposed to be derived, is exclusively Assyrian.

On the meaning of the phrase *kabtata taslīta* see commentary below.

Commentary

The peculiarities of language¹²¹ and, to a lesser extent, writing¹²² found in the prologue to *Šimâ milka* are quite numerous and appear to be intro-

¹¹⁵ Cf. Hurowitz 2007:40, fn. 14.

¹¹⁶ Cf. KAB-DA-*tam*’(ŠU₂) in MS Em i 7 (for the reading of the last sign v. Dietrich 1991:38, fn. 22, but cf. Arnaud 2007:161; Sallaberger 2010:305).

¹¹⁷ Cf. KAB-DA-*t[um*(?)] MS Em ii 10’ (Msk 74177a).

¹¹⁸ Cf. Nougayrol 1968:284 where the word in question is understood as a substantive of the pattern PaRSatu meaning ‘action concertée,’ ‘réfléchie,’ ‘réflexion (?)’ (cf. also Arnaud 2007:161). In Seminara’s view (2000:492, fn. 21), *kap-da-ta* is a feminine plural adjective in the oblique case. However, the expected form would be *kapdāti*. Cf. also Dietrich’s reading *kap-da-t[a] tes₂-le-ta* ‘besonnene Gebete’ (1991:38f.), ‘prudent prayers’ (1993:53, 57).

¹¹⁹ CAD S 97f. *salā’u* B; AHw. 1015 *salā’u* II.

¹²⁰ V. CAD T 282f. (sub *taslimtu*); *ibid.* 283 (sub *taslītu*). For the interpretation of *TAS-li-tu* (var. *TAS-lit*) in BWL 32:57, cf. also George–Al-Rawi 1998:199.

¹²¹ Cf. the unusual *a-hi-ra-ti* (v. note to ll. 4–5); the short form of the pronominal suffix in *eš-ru-ku-uš* (l. 4); the short form *an* of the preposition *ana* (v. note to ll. 6–7). Cf. also the poetic form *kabtatū* of the word *kabattu* ‘innards’ (thus according to

duced intentionally by the author to give special prominence to this part of the text.¹²³ One might be tempted to believe that, from the point of view of the history of the text, the prologue should be seen as an addition to the rest of the composition (excluding the reply of the son).¹²⁴ However, as is well known, works belonging to the genre of instructions *characteristically* begin with a prologue.¹²⁵ Therefore, it is doubtful that the precepts which constitute the main body of *Šimâ milka* could ever have existed *as a whole* without some sort of introduction.¹²⁶ The prologue should rather be viewed as an integral part of *Šimâ milka*. Yet, it is hardly surprising that it is stylistically different from the following maxims and is further distinguished from them by a somewhat ornamental language.

It is typical of the genre of instructions that precepts are addressed from father to son.¹²⁷ The father is usually a concrete, often famous, person. Therefore, it is legitimate to ask whether, in *Šimâ milka*, some individual person is meant by the ‘famous man’ (*šūpû amēlu*). In the opinion of Nougayrol (1968:275f., 283), he should be identified with ‘(the man from) Šuruppak,’ the father of the Babylonian Noah, who gives advice to his son in the Sumerian Instructions of Šuruppak.¹²⁸ In Seminara’s view (2000:489f.), it is rather the Babylonian Noah (Atra-ḫašīs) himself who is hidden behind the figure of the father. Finally, according to Sallaberger, the name of the father (understood by him as ‘Erschienenener/Herrlicher der Menschen’) may allude to the Flood hero *or* to his father “ohne dass sich eine direkte Verbindung ziehen ließe” (Sallaberger 2010:306, fn. 4).¹²⁹

AHw. 416a; note, however, that *kabtatū* also occurs in MS Ug₁ ii 30 (// MS Em ii 10’; v. Arnaud 2007:151, l. 82)). Note also the use of the word *bukru* (l. 7), a poetic synonym for *māru* ‘son’ (for this treatment of *bukru* v. CAD B 310a; Seminara 2000:492, fn. 20, but cf. AHw. 137a (‘Erstgeborener’), as well as the translation of this word in Sallaberger 2010:305).

¹²² Cf. the use of ŠE₃ as a logogram for *an(a)* in l. 6 (v. note to ll. 6–7).

¹²³ Another feature that makes the prologue distinct from the instructions that follow is its intertextuality (see below).

¹²⁴ Cf. “Nous avons lieu de penser qu’introduction et conclusion sont ici ‘plaquées’ sur un recueil de préceptes assez terre à terre, afin de lui donner le double prestige d’une haute antiquité et d’une ‘philosophie générale’” (Nougayrol 1968:276).

¹²⁵ Cf. Fox 2000:71ff.

¹²⁶ The question of whether *Šimâ milka*, taken as a whole, was originally oral or written composition is beyond the scope of the present paper.

¹²⁷ Cf. the label “Father-and-son instructions” used in Alster 2005:22.

¹²⁸ Alster 2005:32, 104f.

¹²⁹ The mention of the city of Uruk in MS Ug₁ i 27 (// MS Em i 26 (Msk 74177a i 6’), MS Ug₂ obv. 12’; v. Arnaud 2007:149, l. 28) does not necessarily mean that the

I tend to agree with Seminara that the father should be identified with Atra-ḫasīs. Thus, the god Ea (referred to by the epithet ^dEN.LIL₂.BAN₃.DA ‘junior Enlil’), who granted wisdom to the father,¹³⁰ is, of course, well known as a divine patron of Atra-ḫasīs. Further, the second line of *Šimā milka* may perhaps echo the passage from the Assyrian version of the Atra-ḫasīs Epic that introduces the figure of the Flood hero: [*i-n*]a *ši-im-ti* ¹*a-tar-ḫasīs*(GEŠTU) *amēli*(LU₂) / [*ša*₂ *ilī*(DINGIR)]-*šu* ^d*e*₂-*a* *uzun*(GEŠTU)-*šu* *pe-ta-at* ‘To the destiny of the man Atra-ḫasīs / Ea, his god, kept an open ear.’¹³¹ Admittedly, this rather difficult passage¹³² does not really match the line from *Šimā milka* (note in particular that the idiom *uzna* *pe-tu* is used quite differently in the Atra-ḫasīs Epic and *Šimā milka*). Finally, the (poetic) line MS Ug₁ i 4–5, as restored here, appears to allude to the line 44 of the first tablet of the Standard Babylonian Gilgameš Epic:¹³³ ‘*mu-kin*’ *par-ši ana niši*(UG₃)^{meš} *a-pa-a-ti* ‘(Gilgameš) who established the order for the numerous people’ (v. George 2003:540).¹³⁴ As pointed out by George, this line tells about the customs and practices of the antediluvian era which Gilgameš learned from Ūta-napišti.¹³⁵ Therefore, the fact that, in *Šimā milka*, ‘the order’ (*paršu*) ‘came forth from the mouth’ of the father could be taken as further evidence that he is to be identified with Atra-ḫasīs.¹³⁶

father comes from this city (thus contra Arnaud, cf. the title “La sagesse d’Uruk” given by him to our text).

¹³⁰ The idiom *uzna* *pe-tu* ‘to grant wisdom’ (lit. ‘to open the ear’) in l. 2 (|| *uzna* *šarāku*, ll. 3–4) could actually be a pun on the name Atra-ḫasīs ‘Foremost-in-Wisdom’ (note that *ḫasīsu* primarily means ‘aperture of the ear,’ ‘ear’).

¹³¹ Lambert–Millard 1969:106, MS S iv 17f., restored from MS S v 27f., v. Lambert 1969:533, transl. *ibid.* 534; cf. also Foster 2005:271.

¹³² Left untranslated in CAD P 353a. The Old Babylonian version is unfortunately badly damaged at this point, v. Lambert–Millard 1969:66, ll. 361ff. (in l. 361 read perhaps: [...] ‘x x’ *ši-im-ti*² x x (x) [(x)]).

¹³³ Cf. Sallaberger 2010:306.

¹³⁴ This line belongs to the “old” prologue (SB Gilg. I 29–62) and thus could have been present already in the Old Babylonian version of the Epic.

¹³⁵ “[Gilgameš] is celebrated as a kingly adventurer and pioneer explorer whose journey to Ūta-napišti ... brings not personal discovery but public improvement. His encounter with the Flood hero enabled him to reintroduce the arts of civilization after the destruction of mankind by the Flood” (George 2003:447, cf. also *ibid.* 98, 445f.).

¹³⁶ It should be admitted that from the reply of the son at the end of the composition we learn that the father is expected to die soon—something which obviously could not happen to the immortal Flood hero. One may suppose, however, that the reply of the son was not originally a part of *Šimā milka* but was added to it

The use of *paršu* in *Šimâ milka* and the Gilgameš Epic calls for some comment. In both passages, this word appears to mean ‘proper order,’ ‘custom.’¹³⁷ The ‘custom’ seems to imply not only religious observances, but also legal and moral norms of human life.¹³⁸ Thus, to follow the advice of the father probably means to adhere to the established social order.

The phrase *kabtata taslîta* is extremely difficult to interpret. It appears in synonymous parallelism with *milku*, the main word for ‘advice,’ ‘precept’ in the prologue to *Šimâ milka*, and thus seems to refer to the instructions of the father. Most probably the two words *kabattu taslîtu* form a nominal hendiadys, in which the (semantic) head noun follows its modifier (i. e., *kabattu taslîtu* = **taslît kabtati*).¹³⁹ Within this phrase, the word *kabattu* (var. of *kabattu*) probably means ‘innards’ as a source of thoughts. The interpretation of *taslîtu*, however, is highly problematic. Its basic meaning, ‘prayer,’ seems to be excluded by the context. To be sure, *taslîtu* can also mean ‘entreaty,’ ‘supplication,’ but it would seem strange indeed that the father should plead with his son (apparently, asking him to follow his advice).¹⁴⁰ Obviously, such an appeal could not be said in a proper fatherly tone. One might also posit the development of meaning of *taslîtu* from ‘entreaty,’ ‘appeal’ to ‘exhortation,’ ‘instruction.’¹⁴¹ However, this solution would be completely ad hoc. In what follows, I would propose a new (and admittedly tentative) interpretation of *taslîtu* in the prologue to *Šimâ milka*.

As is well known, in Ancient Mesopotamia, the prayer was normally very skillfully composed.¹⁴² It seems that this fact was well perceived by

at a later time without being fully harmonized with the rest of the composition. Alternatively, one may agree with Sallaberger that no particular person is meant by the father. In this case, the allusions noted above would indicate that the wisdom of the father is comparable to that of the Flood hero.

¹³⁷ The form *par-ši* in the Gilgameš Epic is ambiguous as to its number but in the light of the clearly singular *pa-ra-aš* in *Šimâ milka* it should probably also be considered singular.

¹³⁸ Cf. Landsberger’s rendering of *paršu* as ‘göttliche Ordnung’ (Landsberger 1924–1925:67), ‘heilige Ordnung’ (ibid. 68).

¹³⁹ Cf. Sallaberger’s translation ‘seine innersten Bitten (wörtl. ‘Gedanken und Anflehen’)’ (2010:305). On nominal hendiadys in Akkadian v. Wasserman 2003:6–16.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. ‘entreaties’ in Foster 1993:332; cf. also Sallaberger’s translation cited in fn. 139.

¹⁴¹ Cf. ‘well-considered(?) exhortations’ in Foster 2005:416. Nougayrol’s translation seems to presuppose the development from ‘prayer’ to ‘piety’: ‘Il (lui) a révélé réflexion (?) [et (?)] piété (?)’ (1968:280).

¹⁴² As attested, for instance, by W. R. Mayer’s monumental *Untersuchungen zur Formensprache der babylonischen ‘Gebetsbeschwörungen’* (Mayer 1976).

the ancients themselves. Thus, it is noteworthy that one of the Akkadian words for ‘prayer,’ *tēmēqu*, is derived from the root ‘-m-q ‘to be wise.’¹⁴³ In CAD T 334b, *tēmēqu* is defined as ‘well-conceived presentation of a case,’ ‘prayer’ and is explained in the following way: “The etymological cognates of *tēmēqu* are *emqu* ‘clever, well-considered,’ *nēmequ* ‘skill, etc.’ This semantic range (and not such meaning as ‘fervent prayer’)¹⁴⁴ fits both the use of the word to refer to the persuasive presentation of a case to the deity or to the king, and the Sum. corresponding KA *ša₆.ša₆*” (ibid. 335b). So, I would suggest that *taslītu* in our text is used metaphorically to indicate that the instructions of the father are as elaborate and persuasive as a carefully composed prayer¹⁴⁵ (it is perhaps not accidental that the advice of the father (*milku*) is described as *emqu* ‘wise’ in l. 3).

Instruction II

The text is based on MS Ug₁, it is also partly preserved in MS Ug₂.

- (i 17) ^re¹ te-e[r-d]i₃ māru(DUMU)^{ru} ina bīt(E₂) qe-re-ti
 (i 18) [x x (x)]-^ru₂¹ ka-ta mu-šam₃-^rri²¹-at libba(ŠA₃)^{ba} (i 19)^rul x¹ [(x) d]i²
 māru(DUMU)^{ru} itti(KI) šābī(ERIN₂)^{meš} da-ba-be
 (i 20) ta-ḥa[r-ri] bu-bu-ut-ka-ma ta-ḥa-di₃ šikara(KAŠ)^{meša}
 (i 21) ina ^rsūqi(SILA)^b me-^rte-qi^c e-ba-ti

^a Ug₂ obv. 3': šī-ik-ra; ^b Ug₂ obv. 3': i-na su-qi; ^c Ug₂ obv. 3': mi-te-qi

- (i 17) O son, do not go to a tavern!
 (i 18–19) ...
 (i 19–20) O son, should you *whet* your appetite and *enjoy* the beer
 in the company of talkers,

¹⁴³ Cf. also the verb *šutēmuqu* ‘to pray,’ ‘to supplicate.’ According to Kouwenberg (2010:407), it is to be derived from *tēmēqu* ‘prayer.’

¹⁴⁴ For the rendering of *tēmēqu* as ‘inbrünstiges Gebet’ v., for instance, Delitzsch, HWB 89a; von Soden, RIA 3:161a.

¹⁴⁵ To be sure, in CAD I 66a, *taslītu* is understood as a prayer that contains requests and supplications. But this word may also be taken as a general term for ‘prayer.’ There is another passage where *taslītu* could refer to a deliberate prayer: *tes₂-li-ti ta-ši-mat ni-qu-u sak-ku-u₂-a* ‘To me prayer was discretion, sacrifice my rule’ (BWL 38:24, Lambert’s translation). Lambert’s interpretation of *tašimtu* in this passage as “that practical wisdom which enables a man to make the best of his circumstances” (BWL 289) has found wide acceptance. However, it is also possible that *tašimtu* in this passage means ‘wisdom,’ ‘deliberation.’ In this case, *teslīti tašim-mat* could be rendered as ‘my prayer was (always) well-considered.’

- (i²¹) you will become (too) fat to (squeeze through)
a narrow street.

Notes

i 17. The restoration $[u]l\ te-e[r-r]u-[u]b^2$ proposed by Dietrich (1991:40, v. also Seminara 2000:496) seems improbable. If the copy is correct, Nougayrol's (1968:278) reading ${}^r e^1\ te-e[r-d]i_3$ is to be preferred (v. also Foster 2005:416; Arnaud 2007:148).¹⁴⁶ However, the meaning 'to frequent' of *redû* suggested by Nougayrol is questionable.¹⁴⁷ Arnaud's rendering 'ne reche[rch]e pas' (2007:154) also seems unlikely. With J. Khanjian (1975:376), I opt for the well-known intransitive meaning of *redû* 'to go,' 'to proceed.'

The unique *bût qerēti* ('banquet house') seems to be a poetic synonym for *bût šikari/bût sibi* 'tavern.'

i 18–19. I prefer to leave this line untranslated. However, in what follows, I would like to offer some thoughts on its interpretation.

At the beginning of the line one should probably restore a 3 m. pl. present form of a third-weak verb. In view of *bût qerēti* in the preceding line, $[i-ge_{(2)}-ru]-u_2$ seems to be a reasonable possibility.¹⁴⁸ The object of the verb is obviously *kâta* 'you.' The subject, however, is lacking. The plural verbal form, therefore, appears to be used impersonally.

libba at the end of the line is commonly treated as the direct object of the participle *mu-šam₃-ri²-at* (supposedly derived from *marû* Š 'to fatten,' 'to provide with fodder').¹⁴⁹ However, as is well known, only exceptionally can a participle govern an object in the accusative case in Akkadian (v. GAG³ § 148c). Thus, in a damaged passage this interpretation is im-

¹⁴⁶ According to Dietrich (1991:40, fn. 33), the traces of the first sign in the line "können in Parallele zu Z. 19 nur auf ein *ul* weisen". To my eye, what remains from the sign looks rather like the two vertical upper wedges of the sign E.

¹⁴⁷ '[Ne] h[ant]e pas le cabaret ...' (Nougayrol 1968:280); cf. also Foster 1993: 333; 2005:416. There appears to be no evidence for this meaning in the dictionaries of Akkadian. The origin of Nougayrol's interpretation probably lies in two passages from *Šumma âlu* (CT 38, 31 rev. 19; CT 39, 44:5) mentioned in his comment to ll. 17–20 (Nougayrol 1968:285). Both passages deal with a man who regularly visits (*usaddir-ma ûnerrub; erēba sadir*) a brothel (*ašammu*).

¹⁴⁸ Note that Arnaud (2007:148) restores here the infinitive of the verb *qerû*.

¹⁴⁹ Cf., for example, 'qui engraisse le ventre' (Nougayrol 1968:280); 'die Leibesmästerinnen' (Dietrich 1991:41, with fn. 40); '(che) ingrassa il ventre' (Seminara 2000:496, with fn. 44). Note also Arnaud's reading *mu-šam₃-ri-ši* (Arnaud 2007: 148). The copy, however, shows a clear AD.

mediately suspect. I would interpret *libba* as the object of the verb *ul* 'x'[(x)-d]i² (l. 19) and suggest the following tentative restoration: *libba*(šA₃)^{ba} *ul* t[i²-d]e² 'you will lose your mind.'¹⁵⁰ As far as I know, there is no parallel for this phrase in Akkadian. However, it is reminiscent of the idea commonly found in Biblical and Egyptian wisdom literature that the heart is the source of speech,¹⁵¹ and it needs to be guarded, lest it say too much (v. Fox 2000:185f.). Needless to say, tavern is typically a place where one can easily get talkative.¹⁵²

mu-šam₃-ri²-at is difficult. It is usually seen as a feminine (singular or plural) participle in the construct state. Alternatively, one could read it as a 2 m. sg. stative with the short form of the suffix (-*āt*, v. GAG³ § 75c*; Kouwenberg 2010:180). The text may be corrupt at this point. If the word in question is indeed derived from *marû* 'to fatten,' this might be taken as further evidence that the present precept contains a warning against drinking and gluttony (see below).

To sum up, I would suggest that this line (including the verb at the beginning of l. 19) is structurally parallel to ll. 19–21 (as interpreted below). Both passages illustrate the consequences of not adhering to the admonition given in l. 17. Both are conditional sentences consisting of a protasis introduced by a verb in the present (*tahharri* ... *tahaddi*, l. 20; [*iqerr*]û(2), l. 18) and apodosis which contains either a stative form (*ebâti*, l. 21; perhaps also *mu-šam₃-ri²-at*, l. 18) or the "prefixed stative" *ul* t[*id*]e (l. 19).

A provisional translation of the line would be: 'Shall they invite you (to the tavern), you will become(?) ... and will lose your mind.'

i 20. The reading *ta-ḥa[r-ri]* in MS Ug₁ is now confirmed by *ta-ḥar-ri* in MS Ug₂ obv. 2'. According to AHw. 1559b, *tahharri* in this line belongs to *ḥarû* V and is rendered as 'bewältigen'.¹⁵³ The verb *ḥarû* V 'eingreifen?' (AHw. 329a) is otherwise attested only in a *balaḡ* composition **am-e amaš-**

¹⁵⁰ MS Ug₂ obv. 1' seems to read 'ul' [x (x)]-r² [...] Cf. however Arnaud's (2007:162) restoration 'ul' [ta-l]ak.

¹⁵¹ Cf. perhaps the following passage from an incantation against slander: [*šil-lassunu*(?) *m*]i-qūt *pi-i-šu₂-nu ul-tu libbi*(šA₃)^{bi}-*šu-nu u₃ ḥa-še-e-šu₂-nu / [ana šapti*(?)*]-š*u₂-*nu a-a i-la-a* 'let no [insolence(?)] (or) blasphemy ascend from their hearts and their lungs [to] their [lips(?)]' (UET 6/2, 410:12f., v. Gurney 1960:222).

¹⁵² This can be nicely illustrated by the following passages: *ina bēt šikrim mala libbišu-ma ētarwu* 'he talked freely in the tavern' (CCT 4, 7b:5ff., transl. CAD Š₂ 428b); **lu₂-lul-la-gin₇ e₂ kaš-ka** KA **nam-tar-tar-re** (= *kīma sarri ina bīt šikari lā tuštarrah*) 'do not boast like a liar in a tavern' (Instructions of Šuruppak 67, v. Alster 2005:70).

¹⁵³ This rendering (but without a question mark) is adopted by Dietrich (1991:41, fn. 41).

a-na,¹⁵⁴ where it corresponds to the verbal component of the Sumerian compound verb **šu ~ ku₄-ku₄** ‘to withstand,’ ‘to surpass(?)’:¹⁵⁵ **a-a^dmu-ul-lil₂ an-dib-ba mu-un-du₃ šu nu-mu-un-ku₄-ku₄** : *a-bi^dMIN ri-kis šamê(AN)^e te-pu-uš-ma qa-at ul i-ħa-ar₂-ri* ‘Father Enlil has made the bond of heaven, nobody can surpass(?) it’ (SBH 130:33, v. Cohen 1988:154, l. 17). This same passage gave rise to the entry *ħarû* ‘to lay hand on’ in CAD H 118b, which is cited by Seminara in support of his translation of *ħarû* in *Šimâ milka* as ‘to rob’ (‘rapinare’). However, Seminara’s interpretation is based primarily on the supposed parallelism between *iħarri* and the verb in the second hemistich of the line (read by him as *ħatû* ‘to smite,’ see below).¹⁵⁶ Neither ‘bewältigen’ nor ‘rapinare’ are apparently related to the verb found in SBH 130:33 (which is problematic in itself). Both renderings, therefore, are purely ad hoc. I follow Nougayrol in regarding *iħarri* as a form of *ħerû* ‘to dig.’ The phrase *taħarri bubûtkā* probably means ‘you will whet (lit. ‘dig,’ ‘deepen’) your appetite.’¹⁵⁷ Admittedly, no further examples of such figurative use of *ħerû* are known to me. For *bubûtu* meaning ‘appetite’ see the passages adduced in fn. 171 below.

Dietrich (1991:41, fn. 42) and Seminara (2000:496, fn. 47) treat *ta-ħa-TI* (MS Ug₁)¹⁵⁸ as a form of *ħatû* ‘to smite.’ But the phrase *taħatti šikara* ‘you (will) smite the beer’ can only be intelligible within a very specific interpretation of the text (such as the one proposed by Seminara, see the commentary below).¹⁵⁹ Arnaud reads *ta-ħa-ti₃* (from *ħatû* ‘to do wrong,’ ‘to sin’): ‘tu trouverais la bière insuffisante’ (2007:154). However, the meaning ‘être en défaut’ (ibid. 162) of *ħatû* is otherwise unattested and seems hardly likely. With Nougayrol, I read *taħaddi šikara* ‘you will enjoy the beer.’¹⁶⁰ To be sure, this interpretation is not without problems. First,

¹⁵⁴ For the form *u₂-sa-ħa-ar-ri* (ABL 463rev.:9), which is interpreted in AHW. as a Št-stem form of this verb, cf. CAD S 48a; SAA V, 260 rev. 9’.

¹⁵⁵ On this verb, often read as **šu ~ tu-tu**, v. Sjöberg 1963:173.

¹⁵⁶ Seminara 2000:496, fn. 46.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. ‘tu creu[ser]jais (?) ta faim’ (Nougayrol 1968:280). For Nougayrol, this means ‘apaiser sa faim’ (v. his comment on p. 285). Nougayrol’s interpretation is adopted by Arnaud (2007:154).

¹⁵⁸ The traces in MS Ug₂ obv. 2’ could be read as *ta-^rħa¹-d[i²]*.

¹⁵⁹ Dietrich’s proposal to render *ħatû* as ‘verzichten’ (‘(dann) muß du <...> auf Rauschtrank verzichten’) does not seem probable.

¹⁶⁰ ‘Tu ... prendrais goût aux boissons’ (Nougayrol 1968:280). Cf. also ‘you should take your pleasure in the beer’ (Foster 2005:417); ‘you will enjoy the beer’ (CAD Š₂ 421b); van Soldt 1991:246, fn. 12.

hadû is a *u/u* verb, only very rarely the forms with the vowel *i* occur.¹⁶¹ But a mistake on the part of the scribe of MS Ug₁ seems possible.¹⁶² Second, *hadû* does not normally take a direct object. Commonly, an indirect object (dative), expressed by *ana* or dative personal suffix, is used to encode the source of joy ('to rejoice at').¹⁶³ Note, however, that the rendering of *hadû* as 'to enjoy smth.' (CAD Š₂ 421b, cited in fn. 160) implies a higher degree of transitivity than this verb usually has. Therefore, the use of the accusative (*šikara*) seems quite justified.

KAS^{mes} in MS Ug₁ is apparently singular (cf. *ši-ik-ra* in MS Ug₂). For the use of the plural marker MEŠ as a sort of logogram marker v. van Soldt 1991:428f., with further references.

i 21. I interpret *sūqu* in this line, commonly taken as a substantive meaning 'street',¹⁶⁴ as an adjective 'narrow.' Otherwise this adjective is attested only once in the text of Sargon's VIIIth campaign: *girra qatna mēteqa sūqa ša zūk šēpē šēlāniš ẓīqu-ma* '(between the mountains I improved) the narrow road, a path so narrow that the infantry could only pass sideways' (TCL 3, 330, transl. CAD S 400a).¹⁶⁵ It seems remarkable that in both

¹⁶¹ The following examples could be gleaned from CAD H 25ff.: *li-iḫ-di-ka* (TCL 6, 53rev.:9, and passim); *jī-iḫ-di* (EA 144:15); *aḫ-ta-di* (KUB 3, 70:14); *ḫi-di* (En. el. II 145 (one manuscript reads *ḫu-u₂-du*), 147); *ul ni-ḫi-de-e-ma* (ABL 576rev.:1).

¹⁶² Cf. *te-ḫe-ru* (MS Ug₁ iii 5', 6') for the expected *teḫri* from *ḫerû* 'to dig.'

¹⁶³ E. g., *u ana ša ṭupṭam ubbalakkim ḫudê* 'Behandle ferner denjenigen, der dir den Brief überbringt, freundlich!' (AbB 6, 2:16ff., Kraus's translation); *ḫudû[s]um* 'Greet him friendly' (AbB 14, 122:7, Veenhof's translation). According to Nougayrol, "la poésie babylonienne admet un complément direct avec *hadû* 'prendre plaisir à' (CAD 6, 26 b)" (1968:285). Apparently, he refers to *mušūka awāt taḫaddû liblam-ma* 'may the night bring you a word you will be glad of' (George 2003:206, l. 262). But this evidence is rather meagre. Indeed, according to the well known rule (v., for instance, GAG³ § 165c), when a noun functions as an indirect object (dative) of a relative clause which depends on it, it must be resumed by an anaphoric pronoun in the relative clause. However, it is not obvious that this rule should be strictly applied to a relative clause without a relative pronoun (cf. GAG³ § 166c). The problem deserves further study.

¹⁶⁴ Cf., for instance, 'dans une rue fréquentée' (Nougayrol 1968:280, for the literal translation v. *ibid.* 285); 'in einer Durchgangsstraße' (Dietrich 1991:43); 'dans la rue' (Arnaud 2007:154).

¹⁶⁵ The regular adjective from *siāqu* 'to be narrow' is *sīqu* in Babylonian and *sāqu* in Assyrian (Kouwenberg 2010:65f.). Needless to say, the adjective *sūqu* is morphologically unique, since an adjective from a IIy/w adjectival verb normally has either *ī* (*ē* in Assyrian) or *ā* as the stem vowel (*ibid.* 479). Note that *rūqu* 'distant' (with the variant *rēqu*) cannot be seen as a parallel, as it is derived from an originally IIIH verb *r-h-q* (*ibid.* 571).

cases *sūqu* is used as an attribute of *mētequ* ‘road,’ ‘passage.’ Perhaps we are dealing here with a stock phrase. In the inscription of Sargon, *mētequ sūqu* designates a narrow road through the mountains, whereas in our passage *sūqu mētequ* seems to refer to a narrow city street.

e-ba-ti is interpreted here as a 2 m. sg. stative (*ebâti*) from *ebû* ‘to be thick’ (for the present line I would suggest the meaning ‘to be fat’).¹⁶⁶

Commentary

The interpretation of this instruction depends crucially on whether one takes l. 21 to belong to it or not. Usually, this line is seen as the beginning of the following precept.¹⁶⁷ Hence, l. 20 should complete the instruction. In my view, this line is not quite suitable for that purpose: one would expect it to describe negative consequences of keeping company with the ‘men of talking’ (*šabû dabābe*, l. 19),¹⁶⁸ but it could hardly be read in this way.

As I understand it, Dietrich’s translation of the line implies that a man who consorts with the ‘men of talking’ does not have enough food to eat and beverage to drink: ‘(Dann) must du deinen Hunger bewältigen und auf Rauschtrank verzichten’ (Dietrich 1991:41). However, the treatment

¹⁶⁶ Commonly, it is read as *e-pa₂-ti* ‘numerous (people)’ (Nougayrol 1968:285; Foster 2005:421; Seminara 2000:498, with fn. 52). Dietrich (1991:43, with fn. 47) suggests reading *ebâti* ‘dicke Dinge,’ ‘großmächtigen Reden’ (from *ebû* ‘to be thick’). Cf. also von Soden’s (1969:193) interpretation: “In Z. 21 kann *e-pa₂-ti* wegen *šikanî^{mcs}* ‘Bier’ in Z. 20 wohl nur Pl. fem. zu *epû* ‘gebacken’ sein im Sinne von ‘Backwerk’” (von Soden’s remark is too laconic to be comprehensible). Arnaud reads the first sign of the word differently: *reb¹-ba-ti* ‘(dans) le carrefour.’ His reading is based on MS Ug₂ obv. 3’. Indeed, in this manuscript the sign in question looks more like KAL than E. However, in view of the clear E in MS Ug₁, I prefer to read it as E. Arnaud reached the opposite conclusion: according to him, the evidence of MS Ug₂ “permet de corriger le E de RS₁ (= MS Ug₁.—R. N.) en RIB¹/REB¹” (2007:162).

¹⁶⁷ With the exception of von Soden, cf. his interpretation of *e-BA-ti* cited in fn. 166.

¹⁶⁸ This interpretation, in its turn, presupposes some convincing restoration of l. 19 which, to my mind, has not been achieved. Cf. Nougayrol’s translation: ‘[II] ne [sied (?)] pas, (mon) fils, de frequenter (ces) gens’ (Nougayrol 1968:280, v. also Foster 2005:417). It is commented upon as follows: “La traduction suppose en tête de ligne une expression comme *ul ritum* (ou: *ul ir(i)d(dû) (ana) + infinitif*” (ibid. 285). However, within Nougayrol’s interpretation, the genitive *da-ba-be* is left unexplained. Dietrich (1991:40) restores *ul D[U-a]k*: ‘Willst du, Sohn, nicht mit Übelredenden gehen’ (v. also Seminara 2000:496; Hurowitz 2007:46; Arnaud 2007:148). Despite the attempted indicative rendering of the form *ul tallak*, it is apparently taken by Dietrich as modal: ‘don’t go’ (as actually translated by Hurowitz). One would expect either the vetitive (*ē tallik*) or the prohibitive (*lā tallak*).

of the verbs *ta-ḥar-ri* and *ta-ḥa-TI*, which lies behind this translation, is highly questionable (see above). Arnaud seems to treat this line similarly.¹⁶⁹ Again, his reading is mainly based on the dubious interpretation of *ta-ḥa-TI*.

An intricate interpretation was proposed by Seminara. In his opinion, *šābū dabābe* (l. 19) designates idle soldiers, who can fight only with words. Should the son, evidently a soldier himself, go with them to a tavern, he would certainly get drunk and, instead of doing real battle, he would plunder only his own food ration (*taḥarri bubūtkā*) and smite only the beer (*taḥatti šikara*).¹⁷⁰ Several objections may be raised to this interpretation.

First, the rendering of *ḥarū* as ‘to rob’ is groundless (see above).

Second, there is no convincing evidence for the meaning ‘razione di cibo’ of *bubūtu*. Indeed, in a number of passages (v. CAD B 302b), this word is commonly taken to mean ‘sustenance,’ ‘food’ (in most of the cases, it occurs in parallelism with *akalu* ‘food’). But one cannot infer from these passages the meaning ‘food ration.’¹⁷¹ The only passage that

¹⁶⁹ ‘Tu creuserais ta faim et tu trouverais la bière insuffisante’ (Arnaud 2007:154).

¹⁷⁰ Seminara 2000:495f. He translates l. 20 as follows: ‘(Se non vorrai) *rapinare* la tua (stessa) razione di cibo e fare strage di birra’ (ibid. 496, original italics). This interpretation is adopted by Hurowitz (2007:46).

¹⁷¹ In fact, even the meaning ‘sustenance,’ ‘food’ of *bubūtu* may be questioned. In my view, the meaning ‘hunger’ fits most of the passages cited in CAD B 302b. Cf. *bubūta rabāku akala taṣšāku* ‘My appetite is great (lit. ‘I am great with regard to appetite’), I have become fat on food’ (2R 60 ii 10). Note, however, that *bubūta rabāku* in this passage is usually treated differently, cf., for instance, ‘I have grown large on food’ (CAD B 302b; R 41a); ‘I thrive on hunger’ (CAD A₁ 241b); ‘I’ve gotten large from starvation’ (Foster 2005:939). *iš bubūtam etnuš akalam* in an incantation against a mad dog (LB 2001:9, v. Whiting 1985:182) seems to describe difficulty of swallowing, a well known symptom of rabies: ‘It has a poor appetite, it is weak (as to swallow) food’ (cf. Wu Yuhong 2001:34; Metzler 2002:846; for a different treatment v., for instance, Wasserman 2003:33). The behavior of the dog seems to be interpreted in a rather straightforward way: the dog does not eat, so it does not experience hunger at all. In another incantation, the condition of the dog is viewed from a different angle: *bubūtam mād etni[š]* (sic) *akalam* ‘it is full of hunger, (but) weak (as to swallow) food’ (OECT 11, 4:3f.). *bubūtam a-li-IB* in BM 79938, l. 3 (Finkel 1999:218) remains unclear (cf. Wasserman 2003:34, with fn. 31). The rendering of *bubūtu* as ‘sustenance,’ ‘food’ seems almost unavoidable in the following stock description of the Netherworld: *ašar epru bubūssina-ma akalšina tiṭtu* ‘where dust is their sustenance, their food clay’ (George 2003:644, l. 188, George’s translation; cf. also CT 15, 45:8 // KAR 1obv.:4’; STT 28 iii 3). But perhaps *bubūtu* ... *akalu* in this passage could also be taken as a distributed nominal hendiadys, ‘scanty subsistence’ (cf. ‘dürftigste Hungerstillung’ in AHW. 135b; ‘Hun-

might suggest the meaning ‘ration’ for *bubûtu* comes from the Tablet VI of the Standard Babylonian Gilgameš Epic: [...] *kurummatî u bubûti* (George 2003:620, l. 26). Indeed, *kurummatu* ‘food,’ ‘food portion’ and *bubûtu* in this passage may be seen as synonyms.¹⁷² Since, however, the first half of the line is missing, this interpretation is no more than a guess.¹⁷³ In my opinion, *kurummatî u bubûti* may alternatively be treated as a nominal hendiadys:¹⁷⁴ ‘my scanty subsistence’ (lit. ‘my sustenance and my hunger’).¹⁷⁵

Third, the rendering of *šābū dabābe* as ‘quelli che fanno la guerra a colpi di parole’ is not at all self-evident.¹⁷⁶ The word *šābu*, understood by Seminara as ‘army,’ ‘soldiers,’ may also mean simply ‘group of people,’ ‘people’ (v. CAD S 54b). With Arnaud (2007:154), I prefer to render *šābū dabābe* as ‘talkers.’¹⁷⁷ The ‘talkers,’ I think, designate here tavern frequenters. They are called so because alcohol is well known to loosen one’s tongue.¹⁷⁸

germahl’ in Borger, BAL³ II 244a). The verse in question then might be translated as ‘where dust is their meagre sustenance and clay is their (only) food.’ Cf. the examples adduced in Wasserman 2003:7f. This phenomenon is also attested in biblical Hebrew poetry (first described in Melamed 1961, v. further Watson 1984:328ff.; Lillas 2012:114f., 274ff.). The remaining passages cited in CAD B 302b do not support the meaning ‘sustenance’ of *bubûtu*. Thus, *itti dulli kîma ina bubûti tanaššari-ma u tušabbalam* (CT 44, 58:16f.) is translated by Kraus as follows: ‘Mit Mühe knapst du es dir gleichsam vom Hunger(tuche) ab und schickst (es) mir dann’ (AbB 1, 134). In MDP 28, 405:1ff. restore perhaps *bitam ana mārīša iddin anumma <ana> bubûtim iddiššim* ‘She gave the house to her daughter, now she (the daughter) has given (some food/a field (?) to satisfy her mother’s) needs (lit. ‘hunger’).’ Finally, *bu-bu-tu* in VAS 6, 30:20 turned out to be non-existent (v. Jursa 1995:13).

¹⁷² Cf., for instance, ‘my food and my sustenance’ (George 2003:621). But cf. Maul’s translation: ‘Dann *müßte* ich mein tägliches Brot und sogar meinen Hunger *vergessen*’ (Maul 2008:92, original italics).

¹⁷³ Unfortunately, the manuscript from Emar (MB Emar₂ in George’s edition) is also damaged at this point: [... *lu-u*]m²-šî *bu-bu-ti-ma ku-[ru-ma-ti(?)]* ‘[... should I] neglect my sustenance and [my] food?’ (George 2003:334, l. i 9’, restoration and translation as in the edition).

¹⁷⁴ On nominal hendiadys in Akkadian v. Wasserman 2003:6–16.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. *pagrî u šubâtî* in the preceding line (Gilg. VI 25), which could be rendered as ‘my body clothing’ (lit. ‘my body and my clothing’). Cf. also the interpretation of *bubûtu ... akalu* in Gilg. VII 188 and the parallel passages in Ištar’s Descent to the Netherworld and Nergal and Ereškigal proposed in fn. 171 above.

¹⁷⁶ According to Seminara (2000:496, with fn. 45), *šābū dabābe* is also a pun (“caricatura”) on *bēl dabābi* ‘adversary (in court).’

¹⁷⁷ Cf. also Dietrich’s translation ‘Übelredende’ (1991:41).

¹⁷⁸ To the passages already cited in fn. 152 add *ina šikari iṣṣuš awātam umma šū-ma* ‘when he was in his cups he let slip a word, saying’ (ARM 2, 124:4ff., transl. CAD Š₂ 422a).

Finally, mention should be made of the interpretation put forward by B. R. Foster. According to him (2005:417, fn. 2), l. 20 means “in public places eat only what you need, keep quite, and leave.”¹⁷⁹ While not implausible, this reading seems rather far-fetched.

An interpretation similar to the one proposed here is that of Nougayrol: ‘tu creu[ser]ais(?) ta faim et prendrais goût aux boissons’ (1968:280). Thus, the line seems to imply that tavern frequenting could turn the son into a glutton and drunkard. It seems strange, however, that this idea is expressed in such a cheerful way (note especially the use of the verb *hadû*). This problem is solved once we take l. 21 to complete the instruction. In that case, ll. 19–21 may be seen as a conditional sentence, introduced by the present tense forms *taharri* and *tahaddi* (l. 20). L. 21, then, represents the apodosis of this sentence (see above for a similar interpretation of ll. 18–19). The instruction thus consists of the admonition (‘do not go to a tavern,’ l. 17) which is then properly motivated:¹⁸⁰ the son is warned against lingering in the tavern, since drinking of beer and gluttony would make him extremely fat.¹⁸¹

It seems noteworthy that drunkenness and gluttony are also put together in the Book of Proverbs, where it is advised not to be ‘among the winebibbers, among gluttonous eaters of meat’ (Prov 23:20).¹⁸² Note also that ‘he is a glutton and a drunkard’ is the way the parents characterize their rebellious son in Deut 21:20.

Instruction III

The text is based on MS Ug₁, it is also preserved in MS Ug₂ and (partly) in MS Em (Msk 74177a i 1’).

(i 21) *a-a^a ub-la pī(KA×U)-ka* (i 22) *b^tu-^rpul₂¹ nišī(UN)^{mešb}*
^ce taq₂-bi tappā(NAM.TAB.BA) (i 23) *lā(NU) tappā(NAM.TAB.BA)-šū₂^c*
^d<ē tappulšū> ul ^rit²-ta-ši¹ mē(A) pī(KA×U)-šū₂^d

¹⁷⁹ The line is translated by Foster as follows: ‘You should ... your hunger, you should take your pleasure in the beer.’

¹⁸⁰ Ll. 19–21 may actually be taken as a special type of motive clause. Cf. the designation “conditional result” applied by D. E. Smith (1975:242) to similar passages in *Šimâ milka*. According to him, “the conditional result describes the possible adverse (in general it need not be adverse) outcome of failure to keep the requirements of the admonition or exhortation it follows” (ibid.). On motive clause in Mesopotamian wisdom literature v. also Alster 1987:204f.

¹⁸¹ Note that l. 21 seems to have comic overtones.

¹⁸² This admonition, however, is motivated differently: ‘For the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and drowsiness will clothe (them) with rags’ (Prov 23:21).

^a Ug₂ obv. 4': *a-ia*; ^{b-b} Ug₂ obv. 4': *tu-pu-ul ni-ši*; ^{c-c} Ug₂ obv. 5': *e ta-aq-bi tap-pa la ta-pa-šu'*; ^{d-d} Ug₂ obv. 6': *e tap-pul₃-šu ul e-te-ši me-e pī(KA×U)-ka*

(i 21-22) May your mouth not insult people.

(i 22-23) Do not say, "..."

(i 23) Do not *try to insult anyone*, so that he will not foam at the mouth.

Notes

i 21-22. The verb (*w*)*abālu* 'to bring' with *pû* 'mouth' as its subject must take a direct object (cf. the passages collected in CAD P 458f.). Therefore, the readings proposed by Nougayrol and Foster appear unlikely.¹⁸³ In the opinion of Seminara, *pû* should be seen as the object of the verb.¹⁸⁴ This interpretation seems to be based on ABL 1058rev.:12 where *pû* was thought to be the object of (*w*)*abālu* (v. CAD A₁ 19a). However, this passage is now treated differently (v. CAD Š₁ 445a; SAA V, 218). Besides, *e-BA-ti* (read by Seminara as *epâti* 'la moltitudine') could hardly function as the subject of the sentence. In Dietrich's view, the object of (*w*)*abālu* is *e-ba-ti*, read by him as *ebâti* 'großmächtigen Reden' (lit. 'dicke Dinge') from *ebû* 'to be thick'.¹⁸⁵ As interpreted here, *e-ba-ti* (stative 2ms from the same root) should rather belong to the preceding instruction. With Arnaud,¹⁸⁶ I consider *tupul nišî* (l. 22) to be the object of (*w*)*abālu*.¹⁸⁷

i 22-23. I take the words NAM.TAB.BA NU NAM.TAB.BA-šu₂ (MS Ug₁) // *tap-pa la ta-pa-šu'* (MS Ug₂) as the content of what one should not say (*ē taqbi*).¹⁸⁸ Within the context of the present instruction, these words should probably be seen as insulting, but their exact meaning is far from certain. The syllabic spellings *tap-pa*, *ta-pa* in MS Ug₂ may be interpreted as the absolute state of *tappû* 'partner,' 'friend.' To some degree, *tappā lā tappāšu* reminds one of such fixed expressions as *šeher rabi* 'small and great' or *zīkar sinniš* 'male and female' (v. GAG³ § 62i). It is also reminiscent of the dis-

¹⁸³ 'Dans une rue fréquentée, ne parle(?) pas' (Nougayrol 1968:280); 'Hold your tongue as you pass through the bustling(?) street' (Foster 2005:417).

¹⁸⁴ 'Non permettere che la gente vada a riferire per la pubblica via quanto t'è uscito di bocca!' (Seminara 2000:498). Cf. also his literal translation of the line: 'La moltitudine non riferisca i tuoi discorsi (la tua bocca)!' (Seminara 2000:498 fn. 54).

¹⁸⁵ 'In einer Durchgangsstraße halte keine großmächtigen Reden' (Dietrich 1991:43)

¹⁸⁶ 'Ta bouche ne profère pas d'insultes contre les gens' (Arnaud 2007:154).

¹⁸⁷ Usually, *tupul nišî* is regarded as the object of *qabû* (l. 22).

¹⁸⁸ Arnaud interprets these words as indirect speech: 'Ne dis pas que l'ami de quelqu'un ne l'est pas' (2007:154). With the discovery of MS Ug₂, previous treatments of this passage have been rendered obsolete.

tributive use of *status absolutus*.¹⁸⁹ I would suggest tentatively that *tappā lā tappāšu* is a fixed phrase, probably a popular insult or slander. I do not venture to translate this phrase, but I tend to agree with Arnaud (2007:162) that the point at issue is that one should not inflame a quarrel among friends.¹⁹⁰ Perhaps, to say *tappā lā tappāšu* would mean to accuse someone of not being reliable to his partners or friends.

i 23. The verbal form *ē tappulšu*, omitted in MS Ug₁, is now supplied by MS Ug₂ (*e tap-pul₃-šu*).¹⁹¹ Following Arnaud (2007:162), I parse it as a 2 m. sg. vetitive of *napālu* ‘to dig out,’ ‘to demolish.’¹⁹² But the meaning of *napālu* in the present context is not clear. Arnaud (2007:154) renders *ē tappulšu* as ‘ne le ruine pas.’ According to him, the suffix *-šu* refers to *tappû* (ll. 22–23). Tentative as it is, my interpretation is based on the meaning ‘to dig out’ of *napālu*. I would suggest that this verb is used here figuratively in the sense of ‘to search eagerly,’ ‘to seek’ and that the personal suffix refers to *tuṭlu* ‘insult’ (l. 22). Thus, *ē tappulšu* could mean ‘do not seek it (insult).’ That is, ‘do not try to insult anyone.’ Admittedly, the meaning ‘to seek’ of *napālu* is otherwise unattested. My reading is inspired by a passage from the Book of Proverbs (16:27): ‘The worthless man plots (*kōre*, lit. ‘digs up’) evil, and on his lips there is a scorching fire.’ Here the verb *kārā* ‘to dig’ appears to be used in the sense similar to that proposed for Akkadian *napālu* above. Cf. the interpretation of this verse by M. V. Fox: “The evil that is ‘mined’ may be a scheme, a slander, or an insult. The scoundrel digs for this, perhaps, in his heart, and when he brings it to his lips, his mouth is like a blast furnace that sears all who come near” (Fox 2009:622).

With the discovery of MS Ug₂, it is now clear that the sign A in MS Ug₁, previously taken as a verbal ending (*‘it²-ta-ṣi²-a*), is actually used as a logogram for *mû* ‘water’ (cf. *me-e* in MS Ug₂). The form *‘it²-ta²-ṣi* (MS Ug₁) is probably to

¹⁸⁹ Cf., for instance, *ana kār kār-ma* ‘to every *kārum*’ (GAG³ § 62g; GKT § 65b).

¹⁹⁰ Cf. ‘A perverse man spreads strife, and a slanderer separates close friends’ (Prov 16:28).

¹⁹¹ The value *pul₃* of the sign BAL has not been attested so far in texts from Ugarit (cf. Huehnergard 1989:353, No. 9). According to von Soden–Röllig, *Das Akkadische Syllabar*, No. 8, the values *bul₃* and *pul₃* of BAL are restricted to Middle- and Neo-Assyrian texts. In view of strong Assyrian influence on the Akkadian of Ugarit at the latest stages of its history (van Soldt 1991:522), the reading *tap-pul₃-šu* in MS Ug₂ seems fairly probable.

¹⁹² According to Arnaud, one could also emend the text: “On pourrait invoquer une haplographie partielle: <*ta*>-*tap-pal*, de *tapālu*; mais le vocalisme est en /i/, non en /a/” (2007:162). Note that the correct form would be *ē tatpil*.

be parsed as a 3 sg. present of (*w*)*ašû* Gt (*ittašši*).¹⁹³ The phrase *ul ittašši mē pīšu* (var. *pīka*) may be rendered literally: ‘The water will not pour from his (var. your) mouth.’ Certainly, the passage calls for further comment.

First, the verb does not agree in number with its plural subject *mû* ‘water.’ This mistake (or rather peculiarity) is found in both MSS Ug₁ and Ug₂. Should we perhaps consider *mē pī* ‘water from the mouth’ as a sort of compound noun (and thus singular)? Note, however, that there is at least one more apparent mistake common to both these manuscripts.¹⁹⁴

Second, it needs to be determined which of the readings (*pī-šu* ‘his mouth’ MSS Ug₁ and Em¹⁹⁵ vs. *pī-ka* ‘your mouth’ MS Ug₂) makes better sense in the context. I believe that *pī-ka* is inferior to *pī-šu* (but see fn. 196 below). The suffix *-šu* may perhaps refer to the person at whom the insulting phrase *tappā lā tappāšu* is directed. To be sure, this interpretation must remain uncertain until we can better elucidate the meaning of *tappā lā tappāšu* (see above).

Third, what is meant by ‘the water from the mouth’? I agree with Arnaud that it stands here for ‘saliva.’ But I am not convinced of his general interpretation of the passage. According to him, “c’est, selon toute vraisemblance, le crachat qui sanctionne solennellement un serment. Comprenons: il ne faut jurer à tort et à travers” (Arnaud 2007:163). But was this symbolic act ever practiced in Mesopotamia? In my view, it is remarkable that *pû* ‘mouth’ occurs both at the beginning and at the end of the instruction. This repetition, I believe, is significant since it frames the text creating an *inclusio*. One may further suppose that there is a parallelism between *tupul nišī* which is brought by one’s mouth and *mē pī* which also comes from the mouth. Thus, ‘the water will not pour from his mouth’ may be understood in the sense ‘he will not foam at the mouth.’ That is, ‘he will not insult you.’¹⁹⁶ The moral, therefore, is quite simple: insult not that you be not insulted.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹³ In Arnaud’s view (2007:162), the problematic sign in MS Ug₁ is rather to be read as I (*i-ta-ši*). The form *e-te-ši* in MS Ug₂ seems to show “the Babylonian i-umlaut” (as this phenomenon is called in van Soldt 1991:390f., with fn. 20; cf. also Kouwenberg 2010:534f.), cf. the form *it-te-ši* (RS 20.146, l. 10) adduced in van Soldt 1991:391. Note also the wrong vowel of the prefix (*e-*) which may be due to the interchange of E- and I-signs sporadically attested in the Akkadian texts from Ugarit (van Soldt 1991:281ff.).

¹⁹⁴ Cf. *ta-[t]a-pal-la-^rah³* (MS Ug₁ ii 15) and *ta-ta-pal-la^h₃* (MS Ug₂ rev. 9’).

¹⁹⁵ [... KA×U-š]u (Msk 74177a i 1’).

¹⁹⁶ A (superficially?) similar passage from an inscription of the Old Assyrian ruler Irišum should be mentioned here. It is found in a notoriously difficult context

Commentary

As pointed out by Nougayrol (1968:285, n. to ll. 21–25), terse speech is commonly recognized as being of great value in the wisdom literature of the Ancient Near East. Talkativeness is usually seen as leading to insulting.¹⁹⁸ In this regard, it is interesting to note a smooth transition from the preceding precept to the present one. While in the former it is advised not to go to a tavern and avoid the company of ‘men of talking’ (that is, tavern frequenters, see above), in the latter the counsel is to control one’s speech. In a similar way, drunkenness is described to cause harsh words in the Instructions of Anii (17.6–7): ‘Do not overdo it when drinking beer, for unlovely (?) is the evil speech that will come forth from your mouth, without your knowing that you spoke it’ (cited from Fox 2009: 742, cf. also AEL II 137).¹⁹⁹

which is worth citing in full: *qa₂-^rbi¹ wa-ta-ar-tim i-na mu-uš-l[a₂-le] [x]^rx¹ ša ha-ri-bi₄-im pu-šu ^ru₃¹ qi₂-na-su₂ i-ša-ba-at : ki-ma ka₃-ar-pi₃-tim ‘ha’ <-ap₂>-e-tim qa₂-qa₂-su₂ i-ha-pi₃ ki-ma qanu¹im(G1) qi₂-li <-im(?)> i-qi₂-a-al u₂ ma-u₂-š[u] i-pi₃-šu-ma i-lu-ku qa₂-bi₄-i wa-ta-a[r-t]im i-na mu-uš-la₂-le ki-ma bēt(E₂)^{be-et} ha-ri-bi₄-im bēs(E₂)^{be}-su₂ e-we* ‘The one who lies (lit. ‘talks too much’) in the Step Gate, the demon of ruins will seize his mouth and his hindquarters; he will smash his head like a shattered pot; he will fall like a broken reed and water will flow from his mouth. The one who lies (lit. ‘talks too much’) in the Step Gate, his house will become a house of ruin’ (RIMA 1, 21:39–46, Grayson’s translation). The phrase ‘water will flow from his mouth’ is very difficult to interpret. It may describe a symptom of a disease (such as vomiting), but this is far from certain. Note that gagging of the mouth and anus finds its parallel in the treatment of the figurine of an adversary or a demon: one of the hands of the figurine is put into its mouth and the other into its anus (Abush–Schwemmer 2011:363f.). Furthermore, it is unclear to me whether the use of the conjunction *u* implies a close link of this passage with the preceding one: ‘He will fall like a broken reed and (so) ...’ As it seems, this question should rather be answered negatively. However that may be, the context, I believe, clearly suggests that the liar is destined to death. Thus, the phrase under scrutiny here probably means ‘he will die.’ If this interpretation is correct, the variant *pī-ka* in MS Ug₂ may be explained in the following way: ‘Do not try to insult anyone so that the water will not flow from your mouth (that is, you will not die).’

¹⁹⁷ Cf. **in dub₂-dub₂-bu-ra in mu-na-an-ġar giri₁₇ ur₅-e giri₁₇ mu-na-an-ur₅-r[e]** ‘He who insults is insulted. He who sneers is sneered at’ (Alster 1997:92, 3.69, Alster’s translation). Cf. also, perhaps, ‘Do not go out to quarrel hastily, for what will you do afterwards, when your neighbor insults you?’ (Prov 25:8, as translated in Fox 2009:781).

¹⁹⁸ Thus, in the Counsels of Wisdom it is advised to control the speech and thus avoid insults (BWL 100:26–30; 104:127–134). Cf. also Prov 10:19.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. also the interpretation of *libba ul t[īd]e(?)* in MS Ug₁ i 18–19 proposed above.

The text is neatly structured (see the note to l. 23 for the possible use of *inclusio*). Note particularly the sound pattern (consonance) consisting of the repetition of the consonants *t/t*, *b/p* and *l* which runs through the whole instruction:

ayy-ubla pîka tuppul nišî
ē taqbi tappā lā tappāšu
ē tappulšu ul ittašši mē pîšu

Instruction IV

The text is based on MS Ug₁, it is also preserved in MS Ug₂ and (partly) MS Em (Msk 74177a).

(i²⁴) *tarašši*(TUKU)^{š^a} *bil₂-ta bil₂-tu*[*m hu*]r-ru-up-tum
 (i²⁵) *šu-te-tum*^b r-i-kiⁱ-il-tum^c r-nukurtu(NAM.KUR₂)^d ša₂^e lā(NU)^f nap-ša₂-ri^g
 (i²⁶) [*i-bi₅-su₂-u₂*] ni-ṭil₂^h īmī(IGI)ⁱ
e te-eš-ši īmī(IGI)^{meš}-ka (i²⁷) [*a-na aššat*(DAM) *amēli*(LU₂)^{li}]^m

^a Ug₂ obv. 7': *ta¹-ra-aš-ši*; ^b Ug₂ obv. 8': *šu-ut-ta-tu₃*; Em i 22: ^rš^u-te-^rx¹; ^e Ug₂ obv. 8': *e-ṭe²-tu₃*; ^d Ug₂ obv. 9': NAM.KUR₂.RA; ^e Ug₂ obv. 9': *ša*; ^f Ug₂ obv. 9': *la-a*; Em i 23: [*l*]a-a; ^g Ug₂ obv. 9', Em i 23: *nap-ša-ri*; ^h Ug₂ obv. 10': *ni-ṭi₃-il*; Em i 24: [...i]l;
ⁱ Ug₂ obv. 10', Em i 24: *e-ni*

(i²⁴) You will get punished! A premature punishment,
 (i²⁵) a dark pit, a mortal enmity,
 (i²⁶) a sudden misfortune—
 (i²⁶⁻²⁷) do not covet (another) man's wife!

Notes

i 24. *biltu* 'load,' 'burden' in this line is commonly rendered as 'harvest' or 'gain.' Hence, *biltu hurruptu*²⁰⁰ is an 'early harvest/gain.'²⁰¹ The line itself

²⁰⁰ With Arnaud (2007:163), I read 𒀠AR-ru-up-tum as *hurruptu* rather than *harruptu*. This D-stem verbal adjective (probably in its Assyrian form *harrupu*) is otherwise attested only in a Neo-Assyrian Practical Vocabulary where it is used as an attribute of *karānu* 'wine': GEŠTIN 𒀠AR-ru-pu (v. CAD H 115; AHw. 328a). It is possible that 𒀠AR-ru-up-tum in our passage is actually a spelling for *haruptu*, fem. sg. of *harpu* 'early.' A similar case would be *tar-ra-aš-ši* for *tarašši* in MS Ug₂ obv. 17'.

²⁰¹ Cf. 'Tu (en) aurais les fruits. Des fruits hâtifs ...' (Nougayrol 1968:281); 'You would garner a harvest? The over-hasty harvest is ...' (Foster 1993:333); 'You might garner a gain. But the over-hasty harvest is ...' (idem 2005:417); 'Du erntest dabei zwar Erfolg, aber es ist ein verfrühter Erfolg!' (Dietrich 1991:43); 'Tu en aurais revenu: revenu bien hâtif ...' (Arnaud 2007:154).

is considered by some scholars as the beginning of a new instruction which warns against the early harvest (Nougayrol, Foster). Yet others see it as a continuation of the preceding precept. The ‘early harvest,’ therefore, is taken as a metaphorical description of the doubtful gain that could be obtained from slander (cf. Seminara 2000:497f., with fn. 58). With the discovery of MS Ug₂, it now seems clear that *biltu* begins a list of disasters that could befall an adulterer (see further the commentary below). Thus, with Hurowitz (2007:46), I interpret *biltu* in this line as ‘guilt,’ ‘punishment.’ A remarkable parallel to our passage is provided by the great Šamaš Hymn (BWL 132:114f.):

ina la u₄-me-^ršu₂’ [a]r-rat nišī(UN)^{meš} i-kaš-šad-su

ina la a-dan-ni-šu₂ i[š]-ša₂-al i-raš-ši bil-ta (var. GU₂.U[N])

‘Before his days (are up), the curse of the people will overtake him,
Before his due time, he will be brought to account, he will get punished.’²⁰²

The passage is about the punishment imposed on a dishonest merchant. The phrase *bilta rašû* seems to mean the same in both *Šimâ milka* and the Šamaš Hymn. It is also tempting to compare *ina lā ûmēšu* and *ina lā adannīšu* in the Šamaš hymn with *biltu hurruptu* in *Šimâ milka* (see below). But first the meaning ‘guilt,’ ‘punishment’ of *biltu* needs to be justified.

According to CAD B 230f. (sub *biltu* mng. 1c), there is a set of passages, as well as a couple of personal names, where *biltu* appears to be used in the sense of ‘burden,’ ‘onus,’ ‘plight.’ This rendering is properly supported by the entry from a commentary on Sa-gig where ŠU GA₂.GA₂ corresponds to both *na-še-e bi-il-tu₂* ‘to bear a burden’ and *na-še-e še-er-tu₂* ‘to bear punishment.’²⁰³ This view has been questioned by the late W. L. Moran (1991). In his opinion, in all the examples cited in CAD, we are actually dealing with the word *pištu* (*piltu*) ‘insult’; ‘reproach’²⁰⁴ (in all these cases, the first syllable of the word is spelled with either BIL or BIL₂). Indeed, Moran’s inter-

²⁰² The interpretation of l. 115 follows CAD A₁ 98b. Lambert reads this line differently: ‘If he (the merchant.—R. N.) demanded repayment (*i’-ša₂-al*) before the agreed date, there will be guilt upon him’ (BWL 133, v. also the comment on p. 321). For a detailed criticism of this reading v. Moran 1991:329, fn. 26.

²⁰³ GCCI 2, 406:5f. (cited from CAD Š₂ 324a). On this text v. Frahm 2011:225f. Cf. also Lambert’s comment on the use of *biltu* in the Šamaš Hymn: “‘Guilt’ is a guess at the meaning of *biltu*, since ‘burden’ and ‘guilt’ appear to have been related ideas, for the verbs *našû* and *zabû* are used with both” (BWL 321). Lambert then adduces the commentary entry cited above.

²⁰⁴ On the latter meaning v. Moran 1991:323f., fn. 9.

pretation fits most of the passages concerned.²⁰⁵ But there are two places where the reading *biltu* seems at least as likely as *piltu*.²⁰⁶ In what follows, I shall first consider the evidence from ABL 301, which has served as a starting point for Moran's discussion, and then proceed to the above-cited verses of the Šamaš Hymn.

(1) In ABL 301, Assurbanipal's famous letter to the Babylonians written at the beginning of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's revolt, there are three occurrences of the word in question (each time it is spelled with the sign BIL). The pertinent passage in the letter reads as follows:

*en-na-a aš₂-ša₂-a ni-it-te-ki-ru-uš a-na BIL-ti-ni i-ta-ra ul BIL-tu ši-i
ia-a-nu šu-u₂ ki-i šu-mu bab-ba-nu-u₂ u aš₂-ša₂ it-ti bēl(EN) da-ba-bi-
ia₂ ta-ta-ši-iz-za šu-u₂ ki-i ša₂-kan BIL-te ina muḫḫi(UGU) ra-me-ni-
ku-nu u ḫaṭ-ṭu-u i-na libbi(ŠA₃) a-de-e ina pan(IGI) ili(DINGIR)*

‘(And I know another matter that is on your minds). “Now, at this time, since we have opposed him/it so often, it will become our reproach.” This is no reproach. There is none of this when the reputation is excellent. But as for your siding with my enemy, this would be the same as bringing reproach upon yourselves and to sin against the oaths before God’ (ABL 301rev.:3–11, transl. Moran 1991:327).

As Moran himself admits, the word *biltu* in the sense of ‘charge,’ ‘guilt’ would also fit the context (ibid. 323).²⁰⁷ His main argument against this reading is that “nowhere else does *biltu* mean ‘charge’” (the *raison d'être* of the excursus at the end of the paper is thus to maintain this very statement). The word in question, therefore, should rather be interpreted as *piltu* (*pištu*) ‘scorn,’ ‘reproach.’ “The fit is a little neater,” Moran believes, “because the central theme of the letter is the name or reputation of the Babylonians” (ibid. 324). In his view, in ABL 301, *piltu* ‘reproach’ is contrasted to the good name of the Babylonians. The reasoning behind this conclusion is rather complicated. Moran obviously assumes that the letter

²⁰⁵ This is certainly the case with the passages from the Poor Man of Nippur (STT 38:67 and passim, v. Moran 1991:327f.) and the Etana Epic (Haul 2000: 140, l. 4'; 188, l. 140; v. Moran 1991:328f.), as well as with such personal names as *Usub-pilti-Marduk* (ibid.; v. also CAD P 434a).

²⁰⁶ Note that Moran does not take into account the above-cited entry from the Sa-gig commentary GCCI 2, 406.

²⁰⁷ Cf. CAD A₂ 460b; B 230b; Oppenheim 1967:169; Parpola 2004:227f., with fn. 4.

is very skillfully composed. Thus, some parts of the text could, in a sense, be mirrored by the others. Of particular importance for Moran's discussion is the correspondence between the passage just cited and the following one:

ap-pit-tim-ma ša₂-ra-te-e-šu la ta-šem-ma-a šu-un-ku-nu ša ina panī(IGI)-ia u ina pan(IGI) mātāti(KUR.KUR) gab-bu ba-nu-u₂ la tuba-'a-ša₂ u₃ ra-man-ku-nu ina pan(IGI) ili(DINGIR) la tu-ḥat-ṭa-a

'Accordingly, you, for your part, shall not listen to his lies. Do not ruin your reputation, which in my judgment and that of the world is simply perfect, and do not make yourselves guilty before God' (ABL 301obv.:19–24, transl. Moran 1991:320).

According to Moran, the correspondence is striking: in both passages we find first the description of an act of disloyalty (*attunu appittim-ma šārātēšu lā tašem-mā || ašša itti bēl dabābīya tattašizzā*), then its consequences are specified (*ramankunu ina pan ili lā tuḥattā || ḥat(t)û ina libbi adê ina pan ili*). In the same way, Moran takes *šunkunu ... lā tuba*"ašā to correspond to *šû kī šakān Bilte ina muḥḥi ramenikunu*. Accordingly, *šuma bu*"ušu 'to ruin the reputation' is considered synonymous with *Bilta šakānu* 'to inflict ... (upon oneself),' which means that *Biltu* is used as the opposite of *šumu* (*banû*) '(good) reputation' and should, therefore, be read as *piltu* 'insult,' 'reproach.'

I agree that the letter is very well written. But Moran's reading of the above-cited passages does not seem to me entirely conclusive. My first criticism concerns the use of *gabbu* 'entirety,' 'all' in obv. l. 21. Moran views it as an attribute of *banû*: 'simply perfect.' Thus, according to him, *gabbu banû* means the same as *babbanû* 'excellent' in rev. l. 7.²⁰⁸ However, it is far more likely that *gabbu* is an attribute of *mātātu* (obv. l. 21): 'all the countries.'²⁰⁹ My second point of disagreement has to do with the interpretation of *yānu šû kī šumu babbanû* (rev. ll. 6–7). In my view, there can be little doubt that this phrase is grammatically parallel to *šû kī šakān Bilte ...*

²⁰⁸ Cf. "... Assurbanipal assures them (the Babylonians.—*R. N.*) that it (their reputation.—*R. N.*) is simply perfect (*gabbu banû*, 21–22), and begs them not to ruin it (20–22). He dispels as groundless the Babylonians' fears that they brought BIL-tu upon themselves, by pointing to their excellent reputation (*kī šumu babbanû*)" (Moran 1991:324).

²⁰⁹ Cf. Oppenheim 1967:169; Frame 1992:139; Parpola 2004:227; AHw. 272a sub *gabbu* I 2b.

(rev. ll. 9–11). Yet, this is hardly reflected in Moran’s translation. Note in particular that *kī* in rev. l. 6 is supposed by him to have a different meaning than *kī* in rev. l. 9.²¹⁰ I believe that the meaning “‘like’ of identity” suggested by Moran (1991:325) for *kī* in rev. l. 9 may be equally applied to *kī* in rev. l. 6. Thus, Assurbanipal appears to state that the reputation of the Babylonians is *not* perfect: *yānu šū kī šumu babbanû* ‘it is not that (your) name is exceptionally good.’ But it is still good enough (*banû*, obv. l. 22) for him, as well as for others. The fact that their reputation is not excellent does not seem to have any serious consequences for the Babylonians (*ul Biltu šī*). But should they now take part in the revolt, *that* would be considered as *Biltu* (*šū kī šakān Biltu ina muḥḥi ramenīkunu*) and as a sin against the oath before the god. Within this reading, *biltu* ‘onus,’ ‘plight,’ ‘guilt’ fits the context considerably better than *piltu* ‘insult,’ ‘reproach.’

(2) As regards the above-cited passage from the Šamaš Hymn, Moran himself acknowledges that his interpretation is very difficult to prove in this particular case. The main problem is, of course, the variant GU₂.U[N] for BIL-*ta* in one of the manuscripts of the hymn. Yet, Moran considers the possibility that “a scribe was misled by the ambiguous BIL-*ta* into an erroneous GUN” (ibid. 329). He adduces four arguments in defence of the reading *piltu*. However, in my opinion, only the first two of them are substantial enough to merit discussion, the remaining two being of little importance in themselves.

The first argument is as follows: “If there is no other evidence for figurative *biltu*, one should hesitate to admit a single exceptional case” (ibid.).²¹¹ Indeed, the interpretation of *Biltu* in ABL 301 is rather uncertain. However, *tarašši* BIL₂-*ta* in *Šimâ milka* constitutes a clear parallel to *irašši* BIL-*ta* in the Šamaš Hymn.²¹² Now, BIL₂-*ta* in *Šimâ milka* could hardly stand for *piltu*. In fact, there is strong evidence in favour of the reading *biltu* meaning ‘guilt,’ ‘punishment.’ First, *tarašši* BIL₂-*ta* may be compared with the beginning of the sixth instruction of *Šimâ milka*: *itti ili tarašši arna* ‘you will get punished by the god (or: you will become a sinner before the god)’ (MS Ug₁ i 32 // MS Ug₂ obv. 17’). These phrases are most probably synonymous. Note in particular that both have the same

²¹⁰ This passage is interpreted in the same way by G. Frame (1992:139) and S. Parpola (2004:227).

²¹¹ There is a certain degree of circular reasoning here, since, as we have seen, the same argument was used to justify the reading *piltu* in ABL 301.

²¹² At the time of Moran’s writing, *biltu* in the passage from *Šimâ milka* was commonly translated as ‘harvest’ or ‘gain’ (see above).

rhetorical function in that they are used as motive clauses. Thus, the apparent parallelism between *arna* ‘guilt,’ ‘punishment’ and BIL₂-*ta* suggests the reading *bilta* for the latter. Second, BIL₂-*tum* in BIL₂-*tum hurruptu* could hardly be taken as a spelling for *piltu*, since ‘early insult’ would make no sense (on the meaning of ‘early punishment’ see below).

Moran’s second argument is that “the virtual parallelism here of *arratu* and BIL-*ta* recalls the pair *pištu-erretu*” (ibid. 330). Indeed, *pištu* ‘insult’ and *erretu* ‘curse’ are commonly paired together.²¹³ At first glance, the evidence adduced by Moran might seem quite convincing. However, its validity depends on how one understands the phrase *arrat niši* (l. 114). Moran seems to take *niši* as a subjective genitive.²¹⁴ In his view, *arrat niši* is “the common, popular curse, probably *the* popular curse, since it is assumed to be common knowledge” (ibid., original italics). For the ill-fated merchant it means “his poverty, but especially his early and heirless death” (ibid. 331). This interpretation is mainly based on Moran’s analysis of the immediate context of the passage in question (ll. 112–122). As demonstrated by Moran, this section is neatly structured: the whole passage is framed by *inclusio* (ll. 112, 122); there is also repetition of certain key words. What is more, the misfortunes of the dishonest merchant (ll. 114–117) are apparently contrasted with the rewards of the honest one (ll. 119–121). The former is overtaken by the ‘curse of the people,’ ‘brought to account,’ gets BIL-*ta*, and finally has no one to inherit him, whereas the life of the latter is prolonged, his family is enlarged, and he gets rich. Moran further argues that *arrat niši ikaššassu* ‘the curse of the people will overtake him’ (l. 114) should strictly correspond to *wappaš kimta* ‘he will enlarge (his) family’ (l. 120).²¹⁵ It is this correspondence that leads him to the conclusion already cited above. There is hardly any doubt that ll. 114–117 and 119–121 stand in sharp contrast to each other, but the juxtaposition *arrat niši ikaššassu* vs. *wappaš kimta* does not seem necessary. What is more important, *arrat niši*, as interpreted by Moran, is difficult to reconcile with *ina lā ūmēšu* ‘before his days’ at the beginning of

²¹³ For the references v. Moran 1991:327f.

²¹⁴ He compares *arrat niši* with *ina tēlte ša pī niši* (BWL 281), translated by him as ‘the popular proverb says’ (ibid. 330).

²¹⁵ In the same way, Moran matches *iššāl irašši* BIL-*ta* ‘he will be brought to account, he will get ...’ (l. 115) against *mešrā irašši* ‘he will gain wealth’ (l. 120). For Moran, this juxtaposition constitutes an additional argument in favour of the reading *piltu*. In his view, *irašši piltu* means that the dishonest merchant “becomes and remains an object of revilement, as he dies young, impoverished, childless” (ibid. 331).

the line. Is there really a due time for ‘the popular curse’ to overcome the man? The text obviously implies that *arrat nišī* is something which is destined for everyone, the dishonest merchant just falls victim to it before his due time. In my opinion, “‘the’ curse of the people’ should rather be seen as a kenning-like periphrasis for ‘death.’ Probably, *arrat nišī ikaššassu* is to be matched against *balāta uttar* ‘he (Šamaš/the merchant (?)) will prolong (his) life’ (l. 119).²¹⁶ In this light, the reading *biltu*, meaning ‘guilt,’ ‘punishment,’ in l. 115 is almost unavoidable. As it seems, by ‘punishment’ is meant the premature death of the merchant.

Turning now to the meaning of *hurruptu* (or *haruptu*, see fn. 200), the verb *harāpu*, from which it is derived, means basically ‘to be early.’ There are, however, some hints that it can also mean ‘to be quick,’ ‘to hasten.’²¹⁷ Thus, at first sight, it might seem tempting to render *biltu hurruptu* as ‘swift punishment.’ However, as we have seen above, in the passage from the Šamaš Hymn, which provides a parallel to *tarašši bilta* in *Šimâ milka*, the dishonest merchant gets his ‘punishment’ (that is, ‘death’) earlier than he would have hoped. It is also noteworthy that, according to the Šamaš Hymn, a similar destiny seems to await the adulterer (BWL 130:88f.):

ša₂ a-na al-ti tap-pe-šu₂ iš-šu-^ru₂¹ [inīšu]
i-na u₄-um la ši-ma-ti u₂-ša-^rx¹[...]

‘A man who covets his neighbour’s wife,
 Before his time, he ...’

Unfortunately, the text is damaged at the crucial point. However, *ūm lā šīmāti* could hardly mean anything but a ‘day not destined (for his death).’²¹⁸

I believe that the evidence adduced justifies the translation ‘early punishment’ of *biltu hurruptu*. That is, as in the Šamaš Hymn, *biltu* (*hurruptu*) in *Šimâ milka* stands for ‘premature death.’

²¹⁶ Note that Moran (ibid. 330) contrasts *balāta uttar* with *ina lā ūmēšu* ‘before his days’ (l. 114) and *ina lā adannīšu* ‘before his due time’ (l. 115).

²¹⁷ In Aa VIII/2:250 (MSL 14, 503) *harāpu* is equated with Sum. **ul**₄ ‘to be quick,’ ‘to hasten.’ Cf. also the use of the adverb *harpiš* in the Middle Babylonian tablet of Gilgameš from Ur: *hanṭiš harpiš izzirū’a liḫū ana kâši* ‘My curses shall afflict you swiftly and soon!’ (George 2003:298, l. 13, George’s translation); cf. also the parallel passage in Tablet VII of Standard Babylonian Gilgameš (ibid. 638, l. 105).

²¹⁸ See the passages collected in CAD U 150; Š₃ 18a.

i 25. *šu-ut-ta-tu₃* in MS Ug₂ confirms that *šu-te-tum* in MS Ug₁ is a by-form of *šuttatu* ‘pitfall,’ as originally suggested by Seminara (2000:498). On this word see further commentary below.

MS Ug₂ seems to read *e-ṭe₄¹-tu₃* (or *e-ṭi¹-tu₃*, v. Arnaud 2007:163), the fem. sg. of *eṭū* ‘dark.’ Accordingly, the difficult *‘i-ki’-il-tum* in MS Ug₁ may stand for *ekiltu* ‘dark’ (cf. Arnaud 2007:163; for sporadic use of I-signs for *e* in the Akkadian texts from Ugarit v. van Soldt 1991:281ff.).²¹⁹

naṣṣāru in this line appears to be yet another example of the pattern naPRāS functioning as an infinitive of the N-stem.²²⁰

i 26. As noted in CAD I 4a, the original meaning of *ibissū* (‘financial loss,’ ‘damages’) “became less specific in OB and later and often seems to refer, in a general way, to personal misfortune.” In view of the interpretation of *biltu* (*hurruptu*) proposed above, it is interesting that in the “Principal Commentary” on *Šumma izbu* this word is equated with *mūtu* ‘death’ (Leichty 1970:227, l. 527).

With Arnaud (2007:154), I take *niṭil mī* ‘look,’ ‘glance’ as an attribute of *ibissū*. Cf. *mūt niṭil inim* ‘sudden death’ in CH xlix 70 (perhaps, this parallel may be taken as further evidence that *ibissū* actually means ‘death’ in our passage).

The form *tešši* seems to display “the Babylonian i-umlaut” (van Soldt 1991:390f.; for a different explanation v. Huehnergard 1989:54ff.).

i 26–27. On the sexual connotations of the idiom *inī našū* v. Paul 2005:220ff.

Commentary

With the discovery of MS Ug₂, it now seems clear that a new precept begins at l. 24.²²¹ It starts with what appears to be a list of calamities in store for the adulterer. Yet, the matter may be a bit more complicated. Another man’s wife as a source of mortal danger for a man attracted to her is a well-known topos in the wisdom literature of the Ancient Near

²¹⁹ Previously, *i-ki-il-tum* was commonly taken as a by-form of *nikiltu* ‘trick,’ ‘cunning,’ v., for instance, Nougayrol 1968:281; Seminara 2000:498, with fn. 51.

²²⁰ V. Kouwenberg 2010:290, fn. 10, where further references may be found; cf. also van Soldt 1991:437.

²²¹ For the previous treatments see the note to l. 24. Arnaud takes ll. 17–26 (his § 3) to represent a single long instruction which ends with *ibissū niṭil mī*. He labels it “Du danger des mauvaises fréquentations.” *ē tešši inīka ana aššat amēli* is regarded by him as an (exceptionally) short maxim.

East.²²² Quite often, a negative metaphor (or a series of them) is used to describe her.²²³ Thus, it seems possible to read ll. 24–26 as a metaphorical depiction of another man’s wife. Indeed, *šuttatu* ‘pitfall’ may plausibly be interpreted in this way (see below), but this reading does not readily apply to *nukurtu ša lā napšāri* ‘mortal enmity,’ since the latter obviously means the fury of the cuckolded husband.²²⁴ In this regard, *biltu* (in *biltu ħurruptu*) and *ibissû* are rather uncertain. If, as suggested above, they are used euphemistically for ‘death,’ then what is meant is apparently the sad fate of the adulterer. But could these words also allude to the adulteress as the source of the death? In a similar way, *šuttatu* ‘pitfall,’ as a metaphor for another man’s wife, certainly implies that the man may fall into it.²²⁵ Perhaps, *nukurtu ša lā napšāri* might also refer to both a consequence of adultery and the adulteress as its source.

Another man’s wife (perhaps, also woman in general, see fn. 223 above) is commonly portrayed as a trap in the Ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature.²²⁶ Within Akkadian literature, a close parallel to the use of *šuttatu* in our passage is provided by the Dialogue of Pessimism: *sinništu bûrtu bûrtu šuttatu ħirîtu* ‘Woman is a hole—a hole, a pitfall, a ditch’ (BWL 146:51). This figurative use of *šuttatu* is also found in *Malku = šarru* IV 137, where one of the manuscripts (LTBA 2, 1 xiii 24) adds *sinništu* to the equation *ħubullu* ‘pitfall’ = *šuttatu*.²²⁷

²²² V. Fox 2000:141 for some references (mostly from Egyptian literature). Here I follow Fox (*ibid.* 134ff.) in understanding the Strange Woman of Proverbs as another man’s wife.

²²³ Cf. Prov 23:27; Qoh 7:26; BWL 146:51f. (the Dialogue of Pessimism). Admittedly, the latter two passages do not specify the woman described as adulterous. Nevertheless, they can hardly be dismissed as irrelevant. Possibly, another man’s wife is actually meant in both cases.

²²⁴ Cf. Prov 6:34–35.

²²⁵ Cf. ‘The mouth of strange women is a deep pit; he with whom the Lord is angry will fall into it’ (Prov 22:14). Cf. also Sirah 9:3.

²²⁶ Cf. Sirah 26:22; Qoh 7:26. In the Egyptian Instructions of Anii it is said that a woman living far from her husband ‘sets a trap’ (16.15, cited from Fox 2000: 135, cf. also AEL II 137). Similarly, the great Šamaš Hymn states: *ša₂ a-na al-ti tap-pe-šu₂ iš-šu^r-u₂’ [i^rnīšu] <...> kun-na-aš₂-šu kip-pu zi-ru u₂-^rx’ [...] <...> ina ħu-ħa-ri ša₂ e-re-e sa-ħi-ip ul i-de ‘A man who covets his neighbour’s wife <...> A snare is set for him ... <...> Without knowing it, he is caught in a copper trap’ (BWL 130:88ff.). Cf. also Sirah 9:3.*

²²⁷ Cf. CAD H 218b; S 287f.; Š₃ 405a. Only the end of the right subcolumn is preserved on the tablet: [...]^rx’ *sin-niš-tu₂*. The signs *sin-niš-tu₂*, which are clear on the copy, are distinctly squeezed, so there seems to be enough space for the reconstruction [*ħubullu* = *šuttat*]u(?) *sinništu*. In the recent edition of *Malku = šarru* by I. Hruša

It has long been noticed that the passage from the Dialogue of Pessimism has a remarkable parallel in the Book of Proverbs (23:27): ‘For a strange woman²²⁸ is a deep pit (*šūḫā*), and an alien woman is a narrow well (*bā’ēr*).’ Cf. also Prov 22:14 (cited in fn. 225 above) where *šūḫā* depicts ‘the mouth of strange women.’ As Akk. *šuttatu*, Hbr. *šūḫā* has ‘pitfall’ as its basic meaning.²²⁹ Thus, it appears that *šuttatu* and *šūḫā* share both concrete and metaphorical senses.²³⁰ Moreover, it seems likely that these words are etymologically related:²³¹ Akk. *šuttatu* may be explained as an extension of the more original *šuttu* ‘pit(fall)’²³² by adding to it a second (pleonastic) feminine suffix which made it possible to distinguish this *šuttu* from the homonymous *šuttu* ‘dream.’ *šuttu* ‘pit(fall)’ is probably to be derived from **šuh̄tu*²³³ with gemination of *t* as a result of the loss of the guttural.²³⁴

Now what is the significance of the fact that both Akk. *šuttatu* and Hbr. *šūḫā* can serve as a metaphor for adulteress? This question cannot be answered in detail here, but in what follows I shall outline some of the problems involved.

As is clear from the passages mentioned above (v. fn. 226), the idea of another man’s wife as a trap is well known in both Akkadian and Hebrew wisdom literature. Various terms designating different kinds of snares

these signs are read differently: [...*t*]a-*a*²-*tu*₂ (Hrůša 2010:387, MS E xiii (Rs.) 24). Unfortunately, this new reading is not commented upon. Note that the signs in question were also read as *sin-niš-tu*₂ by W. von Soden (cf. *sinništu* in the index in LTBA 2, 9; furthermore, LTBA 2, 1 XIII 25 (sic) is cited in AHw. 1047a sub *sinništu*).

²²⁸ For the emendation of *zōnā* ‘whore’ in the Masoretic text to *zārā* ‘strange,’ v. Fox 2009:738; Held 1973:176, fn. 35.

²²⁹ Cf. Jer 18:20, 22 (Qr).

²³⁰ V. further Held 1973:174–176.

²³¹ Cf. already Pope 1964:275.

²³² This word is known only from lexical lists, where it is equated with Sum. **buru**₃ ‘hole’ (Aa II/4, 117, v. MSL 14, 283) and Akk. *ḫaštu* ‘hole,’ ‘pit,’ ‘grave’ (*Malku* = *šarru* VI 206, v. Hrůša 2010:134, 420). Note that *ḫaštu* can also be equated with *šuttatu* (v. CAD H 143a, *ḫaštu* lex. section).

²³³ This etymology would, of course, be impossible if one derives Hbr. *šūḫā* from the verbal root *šwh̄* ‘to sink down’ which is supposed to have **h̄* as its original third radical, cf. Arb. *sāḫa* ‘to sink (into the ground)’ (Lane 1460). But the very existence of this verb in Biblical Hebrew is questionable (Held 1973:177ff.). Besides, the alleged semantic link between ‘to sink down’ and ‘pitfall’ seems rather weak.

²³⁴ One would, of course, expect that the loss of a syllable-final guttural would result in lengthening of the preceding vowel. There are, however, also examples of the loss of a syllable-final guttural resulting in gemination of the following consonant, cf. *rittu* ‘hand’ (SED I No. 230), *litu* ‘cow’ (SED II No. 142); *erbetu* ‘four’ (< **arbaʿt*-). I owe these examples to Leonid Kogan.

can be used to describe her. It is, therefore, not impossible that the metaphorical use of *šuttatu* and *šūhā* might arise independently in both literatures.²³⁵ How, then, could one prove that the similarity is not coincidental? I believe that further parallels between the depictions of the (adulterous) woman in the two literatures might be taken to support this claim. Thus, the collocation of the words *šuttatu* and *būrtu* in the above-cited passage from the Dialogue of Pessimism strongly recalls the word-pair *šūhā/bā'ēr* in Prov 23:27.²³⁶ Another parallel is that a sharp dagger serves as an image of the woman in both the Dialogue and the Book of Proverbs.²³⁷ It should be stressed, however, that the evidence adduced is

²³⁵ As suggested to me by L. Kogan, this argument will carry more weight if the rare word *šūhā* is taken as a by-form of the more common *šaḥat* (< **šahtu* < ***šuhtu*) 'pit(fall),' cf. the treatment of *bōšet* ~ *būšā* and other similar pairs in Steiner 2012:373f. (reference courtesy L. Kogan). Traditionally, *šūhā* and *šaḥat* (cf. also *šihā* 'pit') are regarded as two distinct, albeit (nearly) synonymous, words derived from the same verbal root (cf., for instance, Waltke 2005:214; cf. also Wächter, TDOT 14, 596).

²³⁶ The meaning of Akk. *būrtu* and Hbr. *bā'ēr* in the passages just mentioned is not quite certain. Fox (2009:739) compares *bā'ēr* 'well' in Prov 23:27 with *bōr* 'cisterne' and *bā'ēr* in Prov 5:15, where these words are used to describe a man's own wife. According to him, "these terms allude to the vagina, for both its shape and its productivity <...> The sexuality of a man's own wife is regarded as a blessed, productive well and a source of joy (5:15–18), whereas the 'well' of another man's wife is a trap" (ibid.). Since, however, *bā'ēr*, as well as *bōr*, can also mean 'pit(fall)' (cf. Ps 55:24 and Ps 7:16 for *bā'ēr* and *bōr* respectively), one may wonder whether this meaning would fit the context of Prov 23:27 better. In ANET³ 438, R. H. Pfeiffer renders *būrtu* in the Dialogue of Pessimism as 'well' (with the reference to Prov 5:15, v. ibid. n. 2), but this reading has not won general acceptance. *būrtu* in the passage in question is usually translated as either 'snare' (Jacobsen in Frankfort et al. 1946:217; Speiser 1954:99) or 'pitfall' (Lambert, BWL 147; Foster 2005: 924). Otherwise, *būrtu*, meaning 'pit(fall),' seems to occur in the Middle Assyrian version of Etana: [p]u-ut būrti(PU₂) um-de-la-a B[U-...] 'He (Etana) filled the front of the pit with [...]' (Haul 2000:144, l. 7'; I follow CAD B 338b in reading PU₂ as *būrtu*). Unfortunately, the passage is seriously damaged, but there can be hardly any doubt that *būrtu* is used here as a synonym of *šuttatu* 'pitfall' where the eagle was cast by the serpent (v. Haul 2000:144, ll. 10', 13', 16'). Cf. also the use of *būru* in the first tablet of the Standard Babylonian Gilgameš (ll. 130–131 // 157–158): *untalli būri ša uḥarrū [anāku] / uttassiḥ muballīya ša usnīlu* 'He has filled in the pits that I dug, / he has uprooted my snares that I laid' (transl. George 2003:547). Needless to say, there is a certain etymological relation between the Hbr. *bōr* and *bā'ēr* and Akk. *būru* and *būrtu*. This problem, however, is notoriously complex and falls outside the scope of the present paper. On this issue, cf. Fronzaroli 1971: 611, 632, 640 (reference courtesy L. Kogan).

²³⁷ Cf. *simništu*(MUNUS) *paṭ-ri parzilli*(AN.BAR) *še-e-lu ša₂ ik-ki-su ki-šad eṭ-[i]* 'Woman is a sharp iron dagger that cuts a man's neck' (BWL 146:52); 'But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword' (Proverbs 5:4).

somewhat weakened by the fact that both Akkadian examples stem from one particular passage from the Dialogue of Pessimism.

Now, if the similarity is not due to chance, there seem to be two possible ways of dealing with it: either the peculiar use of *šuttatu* and *šūḫā* in Akkadian and Hebrew poetry should go back to a common (poetic) language, or it should be explained by the influence of one literature on another.²³⁸ Needless to say, to decide between these possibilities would by far exceed the scope of the present paper.

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²³⁸ In the latter case, the word ‘pitfall’ in one language would be rendered by its semantic (and, incidentally, also etymological) equivalent in the other. To be sure, the semantic equivalence between Akk. *šuttatu* and Hbr. *šūḫā* cannot be proved conclusively. The word *šuttatu* is certainly the most frequent term for ‘pitfall’ in Akkadian (the other terms known to me are *huballu*, *hubaltu*, *hubullu*, *ḥaštu*, *būru*, *būrtu*, *mahdu*, *naḥallu*(?), *sahātu* (a West Semitic loanword that appears in texts from Mari, v. Streck 2000:114)). As to Hbr. *šūḫā*, it remains to be determined whether or not it is a by-form of *šahat* (see fn. 235 above), which word seems to be the most common term for ‘pitfall’ in Hebrew (cf. Wächter, TDOT 14, 597).

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