The Scaffolding of Our Thoughts

Essays on Assyriology and the History of Science in Honor of Francesca Rochberg

Edited by

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Sumerian Divination

C. Jay Crisostomo

Sumerian and Divination

Adam Falkenstein began his seminal article on divination: “Wohl in keinem Gebiet der babylonischen Überlieferung ist der Unterschied zwischen der sumerischen und der akkadischen Tradition so ausgeprägt wie in dem Sektor ... dem der 'divination', umschrieben wird” (Falkenstein 1966: 45). Now, more than fifty years since this article was published, the sentiment behind Falkenstein’s statement remains true. Whereas Falkenstein explored the traces of divinatory practice in Sumerian texts, I am more interested in the issue of language use. As far as the language of divination in the extant cuneiform texts from the ancient Near East, Akkadian is exclusive—or at least nearly so. This contribution discusses the exceptions, the rare examples of unilingual Sumerian or bilingual Sumerian-Akkadian divination. Although we share many common philosophical and linguistic interests, it is rare that my work on multilingualism perfectly intersects with Chessie Rochberg’s interests in the history of astronomical sciences and cuneiform divination. It is fortunate that I have the opportunity to offer this singularity to her, a wonderful teacher, champion, and intellectual—almost as fortunate as I am to have been her student.

Divination undoubtedly had a long history in the region of Mesopotamia before it was ever textualized (Falkenstein 1966; Richardson 2010). Less clear, however, are the languages that tradition was conducted in or associated with—maybe Sumerian, possibly some Semitic languages including forms of Akkadian, perhaps others. Divination is referenced in Sumerian texts such as the Gudea cylinders and Šulgi B or in Ur 111 year names (see Michalowski 2006: 247–250; Koch 2015: 59–63). Presumably, divination began as some sort

* I had the pleasure of reading divinatory and astronomical texts with Chessie Rochberg while I was a student at Berkeley. I hope that this attempt reflects well upon her training and insight. Many thanks to Wayne Horowitz for insights on certain points and to Ulla Koch for reading and commenting upon early drafts. I also thank the Trustees of the British Museum for permission to publish K.2241+ here and the staff of the Department of Middle Eastern Studies for allowing me to collate the tablets mentioned here. All errors in fact or interpretation are mine alone.
of oral tradition, although, as S. Richardson argues, the relationship between these traditions and the scholarly divination that emerges in the early second millennium is suspect (Richardson 2010: 226–239). But we need not dive into divinatory traditions or origins here. My focus is on language use, specifically, language use that we can observe and analyze in texts.

When divination became textualized in the early second millennium, when omen reports were written down, and when serialized lists of omens became compendia of sorts, these were written in Akkadian rather than Sumerian, the traditional language of listing scholarship, such as the lexical lists. Divinatory texts are markedly Akkadian. It seems as though Sumerian is deliberately excluded from divinatory scholarship. Although the reasons for this possibly linguistically driven output are unclear, Richardson’s recent proposal connecting the creation of divinatory literature directly to political concerns at the end of the Old Babylonian period provides major clues for consideration.1 Whatever the reasons, textualized divination is nearly always written in Akkadian.

The Beginnings of a Written Sumerianized Divination Tradition

In the Festschrift honoring Erle Leichty, Piotr Michalowski discussed the possibility of an omen report written in Sumerian. Michalowski argues convincingly that this represented some scribal attempt to render technical Akkadian extispicy terminology into Sumerian. That report is attested on two different tablets and treated slightly differently in each.

37 X1 īgī ni₃₂-sa₆-⸢ga⸣-ni ĝa₂-ra mu-un-ši-in-ni-bar
   X2 omits
38 X1 ša₃-ne-ša₄-ĝu₁₀ šag₄ kug₃-bi-še₃ mu-un-ĝar
   X2 omits
39 X1 ki₃₂-gi₄-a-ĝu₁₀ uzu silim-ma-ke₄ ma-an-ĝar
   X2 [ki₃₂-gi₄-a]⁻₁[ĝu₁₀] uzilim-ma im-ma-an-ĝar

---

1 Richardson goes so far as to argue that “the divinatory craft was appropriated by competing Amorite courts, hungry for legitimizing devices” and further that “The project to deliberately encode and control this common culture form enabled Old Babylonian kings to define alternative access to divine knowledge” (Richardson 2010: 239). This argument strongly suggests that the use of Akkadian as opposed to Sumerian would underscore the otherness of this literature in contrast to the more prevalent Sumerian scholarly/literary form. Richardson’s argument remains quite provocative.
40 X1  uzu zi-da-na uzu gub₃-⸢ba²-ĝa₂⸣ a₂[diri u₃-ni-ak
X2  […]i-da a₂-gub₃-bu-ba a₂-diri u₃-mu-ni-ak
41 X1  ši'tukul a₂ zi-da-ĝa₂ gu₃-bi zi-da ul gur₃-ru mi-ni-šum₂
X2  omits
42 X1  ši'tukul gub₃-bu-na gu-da la₂-la₂ gu₂-ri-bi ĝar-ra
X2  omits
43 X1  lu₂ hul-ĝal₂-ĝu₁₀ šu-ĝa₂ i₃-ĝa₂-ĝa₂ saĝ ĝiš bi₂-ra
X2  [………]-⸢ĝal⸣-e šu-ĝa₂ ba-ni-in-ĝal₂ saĝ ĝiš bi₂-ra-ra
44 X1  un kukku₂-ga-ke₄ zalag-še₃ e₃-de₃ dur₂ silim-⸢ma⸣ nu₂-de₃
X2  [……………]-⸢ga⸣-ke₄ zalag-še₃ e₃-⸢de₃ dur₂ silim-⸢ma nu₂-de₃
45 X1  ėtu en ka-aš-bar an-ki-ke₄ a₂-aґ₂-ĝa₂ im-ma-an-ĝar
X2  traces

X1:

(Enlil) has cast his favorable glance upon me, set his holy heart on mercy, and established for me my favorable omen. And after I had the follow-up reading made concerning his pars familiaris and my pars hostilis, the weapon-mark on my right side, its trunk is straight, and that (good news) gave me joy; on the weapon-mark on his (i.e., Išbi-Erra's) left side a filament is suspended, it is placed (against) the other side. (The message was:) “My enemy shall fall into my hands, he shall be killed, the people, having come out of darkness into the light, will lie in peaceful habitations.” Utu, lord who makes the decisions of the heavens and the earth, has provided (this) omen.

X2:

(Enlil) has established for me my favorable omen. And after I had the follow-up reading made concerning right side and the left side, (the message was:) “My enemy shall fall into my hands, he shall be killed, the people having come out of darkness into the light, will lie in peaceful habitations.” ...

This omen is embedded within a literary letter from the Ur iii king Ibbi-Sîn to Puzur-Numušda, governor of Kazallu (CKU 24, Michalowski 2011: 463–482). As Michalowski emphasizes, this omen was “clearly invented by some northern scribe, who cleverly invented a Sumerian technical vocabulary for extispicy” (Michalowski 2011: 479). This Sumerian omen is thus merely a construct, a

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3 Although Michalowski had earlier argued, “Within the narrow constraints of the present discussion one can only argue that all of these strands point in the same direction: the Larsa..."
bold attempt at replication and translation. Moreover, this clever fabrication remains the only Old Babylonian attempt at Sumerian divination.

With the exception of a single Kassite school text (Veldhuis 2000: 74) and—if they count as evidence—the Sumerian and bilingual menologies that eventually become absorbed into Astrolabe B (Horowitz 2010, 2013, 2007),4 we have nothing further resembling Sumerian divination for about 1,000 years. CKU 24 and the singular Kassite omen—both products of scribal schools—hint at an attempt to graft Sumerian into the divinatory tradition. At the least, such few examples are highly marked. A handful of Sumerian-only and bilingual Sumerian-Akkadian omen compendia provide us an opportunity to examine writing practices and norms associated with scholarship, specifically divinatory scholarship, in cuneiform cultures.

A Corpus of Sumerian Divinatory Texts

I know of eleven texts attesting Sumerian and bilingual divination, beginning with the Kassite school text and continuing into Hellenistic Uruk (see table 1.0). These texts represent extispicy, behavioral omens, diagnostic omens, and especially celestial omens, the latter primarily attested at Nineveh.5 Of these eleven, three appear to be monolingual Sumerian; the rest seem to be bilingual. Unfortunately, most of these are highly fragmentary. I first present a few remarks and observations. In the appendix of this votive to Chessie, I offer an edition of the longest of these omens, K.2241+ from Nineveh. Editions (some rudimentary) of the other ten are available online on the Bilinguals of Late Mesopotamian Scholarship project (oracc.org/blms/), using the six-digit P-number provided in the table below inserted following the forward slash in the url (example: oracc.org/blms/P394288). Photographs of each are available on CDLI, again by inserting the appropriate P-number after the url cdli.ucla.edu/.6

origin of the convoluted Sumerian omen embedded in the literary letter” (Michalowski 2006: 255).

4 For full editions of all astrolabe texts, see Horowitz 2014.

5 These celestial omens were initially indicated in SpTU 1 (Hunger 1976: 90) and listed in Reiner 1998 and again in Koch 2015: 149 n.404. Some are cited in BPO 2 and used in the later volumes of the CAD.

6 Further metadata are available on the British Museum website (britishmuseum.org), including measurements.
Some Observations on Sumerian Divination

The first and unsurprising observation of this corpus is that the Sumerian rarely reflects Old Babylonian literary standards. In all cases, the Sumerian is obviously constructed off the accompanying Akkadian or, similar to the Old Babylonian Sumerian omen of cku 24, some Akkadian omen or terminology in the background.

The syntax follows patterns established for Akkadian omens, the so-called “If ‘P’ then ‘Q’” formulation also known from both Sumerian and Akkadian lists of laws (Rochberg 2009, 2010b). The subject of the protasis is topicalized. Verbal forms in the protasis are given as perfectives, imperfectives, statives (with al-), nominalized (with -a) or as participles (with -ed), which generally correspond to Akkadian preterites or statives. Verbs in the apodosis are typically imperfective corresponding to Akkadian duratives, again conforming to recognizable patterns.

Most of the translations—and I use this term in a broad sense—are simply one-to-one correspondences, a type of translation method we observe regularly in late bilinguals. The following is representative:

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<th>Number</th>
<th>Publ.</th>
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<th>Period</th>
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<td>Sum.</td>
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<td>CTN 4 89</td>
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<td>Nimrud</td>
<td>Sum.</td>
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<td>SpTU 1, 85</td>
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<td>LB</td>
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<td>bil.</td>
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<td>W 22307,13(+)</td>
<td>SpTU 1, 86 (+)</td>
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<td>LB</td>
<td>Uruk</td>
<td>bil.</td>
<td>P348507 (+)</td>
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<td>W 22307,66</td>
<td>SpTU 1, 145a</td>
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<td>LB</td>
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<td>SpTU 3, 86</td>
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<td>LB</td>
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<td>bil.</td>
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<td>W 17360,ad</td>
<td>AUWE 23, 324</td>
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<td>LB</td>
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<td>bil.</td>
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tukum-bi gu₂-gal kug-sig₁₇ šam₂-šam₂-da lugal ma-da-bi en⁻¹-na₁-[x] ti-la ma-da-bi gi-in-gur₂-ru
šum-ma l'LUGAL¹ hur-ra-ṣu i-ša₂-am LUGAL KUR ša₂-a-šu₂ a-di l'bal¹-tu₃ mat-su i-kan-nu-us-su
If a king purchased gold, the king of that land, as long as he lives, his land will submit to him
SpTU 1, 85:11’–12’

This example presents the classic method of word A in Akkadian is equivalent to word B in Sumerian. So Akkadian šumma “if” equals Sumerian tukum-bi “if,” a straightforward and unremarkable correspondence. The second word, however, provides Akkadian šarru “king,” represented by the logogram LUGAL, equated to Sumerian gu₂-gal, a word which, although not really equivalent to “king” nevertheless refers to high status. Indeed, a Neo-Assyrian version of the lexical list Lu = ša actually provides the correspondence gu₂-gal = šarru (MSL 12, 91 A = VAT 10216 obv. i 40; oracc.org/dcclt/P373780). It therefore seems as though one method of translation employed in creating these bilingual divinatory texts involves drawing on known equivalents from lexical texts or other similar strategies.

Secondly, Sumerian divination appears to be particularly connected to celestial divination and other aspects of astronomy and astrology. The celestial bodies all have names written in Sumerian, several with no known Akkadian equivalents. The menologies also utilize Sumerian. A Sumerian-only menology from Middle Babylonian Babylon seems to be adapted as a bilingual into Astrolabe B as well as into Enûma Anu Enlil 51 (Horowitz 2010). Moreover, Enûma

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7 The Sumerian of the protasis of this particular omen (with DIŠ preceding) is cited in the Diviner’s Manual, (line 3 Oppenheim 1974; noted in Hunger 1976: 90).
8 The only other copy that I am aware of which preserves this section for this version of Lu = ša I (long) is broken at this line (STT 2 373 obv i 40: […] = lšar¹-ru; see oracc.org/dcclt/P338688). To my knowledge, the only other times the equation is made is in the citation of this omen in the Diviner’s Manual (see preceding note) and implicitly in a colophon of Diri 6 from Nippur, on a tablet belonging to Taqiš-Gula written by Enlil-rema-šukun from the fifth year of the reign of one of the Artaxerxes, BAK 119: mar-tah-ša-as-su GU₂.GAL KI⁴(me (PTS 1, published Goetze 1945; online at oracc.org/dcclt/X459237).
10 Jessica Baldwin (Tübingen) is currently writing a dissertation on the star signs and names.
Anu Enlil, the major celestial omnia series, includes a bilingual introduction in which the Sumerian is clearly fabricated and requires an explanatory commentary to account for the translation (BM 59595, see Verderame 2002: 36–37; Frahm 2011: 136–137; Lambert 2013: 175–176). Finally, as Niek Veldhuis points out, a Sumerian technical term for an eclipse, abununnu, is attested in the Old Babylonian version of the list *Diri* from Nippur, but not in any other contexts except for a late OB or MB esoteric bilingual text which likely draws on *Diri* as a scholarly source (Veldhuis 2014: 187, 263–265). Our corpus includes six Sumerian or bilingual omens dealing with celestial divination, more than half of our corpus. Unfortunately, only one of these is substantially preserved (see the edition below).

All of the omens in this group deal with fixed stars, but very few are unbroken. Very few have parallels in published texts. The preserved omens provide protases for the following stars: Raven (*mulUGA*), Chariot (*mul šIGIR*), Scorpion (*mulGIR₂.TAB*), Plow (*mulAPIN*), *pāšittu* (*mulKA.MUŠ₂.GU₇.E*), Anzu bird (*mul dANZUD₃mašen*), Jumping star (*GU₄₃*), Mousy One (*mulEN.TE.NA.BAR.HUM*), Flashing star (*mulAN.TA.SUR.RA*), Doe goat (*mulUZ₃*), Field (*mulAŠ.GAN₂*), and Liar (*mulLULLA*). The order of the constellations in this group of texts differs from those on the Astrolabes or Mulapin or on any of the constellation texts published in *BPO 2*.

Notably, a few of these astronomical omens seem to occur in multiple copies. One particular omen is known from a constellation text edited as *BPO 2 17*.

* UGA MUL.BI ma-diš S[A₅] BURU₁₄ ŠE.GIŠ₂ SI S[A₂]*

If the Raven star is very red, the flax harvest will prosper

Although fragmentary, it appears as though this omen occurs in two of our bilingual texts and one Sumerian text.

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11 An online edition with photographs is available at the Cuneiform Commentaries Project (ccp.yale.edu/P461268).
12 See Westenholz 2005 for an edition of this bilingual text.
13 See commentary to rev. 1–5 below.
K.2241+ 0 4′–6′: mulUGA [...] ma-ʾ-diš sa-a-[mu ...]a
AUWE 23, 324 4–5: [...] al-[su₄-su₄]₃ bur₁₄ še-ĝiš-i₃ si [sa₂]
[...] e-bur ŠE.GIŠ.i₃ [iš]₃-[šir]
82-3-23, 120 1: [... mul]UGA¹ mul-bi lul-aš [al]-[su₄-su₄ ...]b

a Parallel noted in Reiner and Pingree 1981: 77.
b The protasis of this omen occurs several times for other constellations in this group including mulAPIN (K.2241+ 24′–27′), mul dANZI₃mušen (K.2241+ 30′–33′), mulAN.TA.SUR.RA (K.2241+ rev 10–11), mulUZ₃ (K.2241+ 12–13), mulAŠ.GAN₂ (K.2241+ 14–15). The negative version of this omen also occurs: mulKA₅.A (K.8634 5′).

So was there a particular tradition of bilingual divination, perhaps even a “canonical” series such as the known, but not extant series of Sumerian and bilingual proverbs and wisdom texts known as Sidu (Finkel 1986; see also Frahm 2010)? Indeed, celestial divination appears to have been regularly translated into other languages including Hittite, Hurrian, Ugaritic, and Elamite (Koch 2015: 160–162) and textual manuscripts were imported from Susa into Emar during the Middle Babylonian period (Rutz 2006). Moreover, K.2241+ was, according to the colophon, copied from an original indicating some kind of ongoing tradition for at least that particular text. I hesitate, however, to reconstruct an entire tradition or series on such scant evidence as one or possibly two omens that happen to co-occur on a few texts. From what little remains, it is clear that this particular omen is surrounded by different omens in each text.

Where these texts fit into the history of textualized celestial divination is unclear. Since the section in Enûma Anu Enlil dealing with fixed stars (tablets 50–58) is so fragmentarily preserved, it is impossible to say whether any of these texts attest a standard recension of Enûma Anu Enlil or whether they represent an alternative celestial omen tradition or whether these were among the many astronomical and astrological excerpts and one-offs. The corroboration of individual omens within these texts nevertheless further establishes the link between Sumerian divination and celestial divination.

Finally, each of these texts uses syllabic writing to represent Akkadian. As Mark Geller has previously observed, syllabic Akkadian is highly unusual for

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15 On which, see Rochberg 1999a.
16 According to the Nineveh catalog; for literature on the difficulties in reconstructing the latter part of the series, see Koch 2015: 174 n.456.
late omen compendia (Geller 1991–1992: 181–182). He further considers a bi-
lingual diagnostic omen compared to a parallel omen from TDP, written in
typical logographic fashion.

TDP 82:24
* na₄KIŠIB GU₂-šú DU₈ SA.MEŠ-šú GARₙu u PA.AN.BI ina KIR₄-šú DAB.
DAB GIG.BI NU-TIN

SpTU 3, 86:3–4
[tukum-bi na₄kišib gu₂]-ni al-du₈-a sa-sa-a-ni al-ğar-re-eš u₉ pa-an-bi kir₄-
bi ba-da-dab-dab lu₂-ru-ra-bi nu-ti-e
[šum-ma ku]⁻¹nu-uk¹-ku [ki⁻šá¹-di-šú pa⁻¹ti³⁻¹[ir] šér-a-nu-šú šak-nu u na-
pa-as-su ina ap-pi-šú ū-sab-bat mar-ṣa šu-ū ul i-bal-luṭ
If vertebrae on his neck are dislocated, his tendons are present, and his
breath is caught in his nose, that sick man will not get well.

As Geller notes, the Sumerian version of the omen from SpTU 3, 86 is almost
equally the same as the logographic Akkadian version from TDP, albeit with
fully expressed verbal forms and other minor elaborations. The Akkadian ver-
sion of SpTU 3, 86, however, is fully syllabic. Geller emphasizes this as an ex-
ample of “how late Sumerian bilinguals could have been constructed, perhaps
for pedagogic purposes.” I would prefer to underscore just how Sumerianized
the typical omen is.

“Sumerian” Divination?

It is this notion, then, that I wish to ponder more abstractly. Given the pau-
city of Sumerian language divination, why do typical first millennium omens
bother to create or present the appearance of Sumerian omens through the
use of extensive logograms? The obvious possibility is that these divinatory
scholars wanted to tap into the scholarly indexicality of Sumerian. But I think
such an explanation is incomplete: it fails to account for the important impli-
cation that Sumerian—linguistically—never establishes itself as a scholarly
language in the field of textualized divination.

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17 The extensive use of logograms in the late divinatory tradition stands in contrast to the
highly syllabic nature of the Old Babylonian compendia, with the relative exception of
Old Babylonian celestial divinatory compendia (Rochberg 2006: 342–343; Koch 2015: 159).
The scholar-scribes who are crafting and copying these divinatory texts, whether highly logographic or bilingual or monolingual Sumerian, are no ignoramuses. They know what “good, Classical” Sumerian looks like. They know that whatever they are fabricating is not up to the standards of a literary text such as Lugal-e or An-gim, not even the late versions of these compositions.

The Sumerian omens I have remarked upon here are the exceptions that prove the general rule. I consider them a discursive semiotic, an attempt to explore the boundaries of traditional indexicality, a metadiscourse on the relationship between writing and language in cuneiform scribal culture. In these texts, the written norms of the community of late divination scholars are effectively violated. In contrast to this “Sumerian” divination, for typical scholarly divination, it is irrelevant whether omens are linguistically Akkadian or Sumerian or written primarily in logograms or syllabic signs. Textualized omens exist within the interlingual space that the cuneiform writing system allows, even encourages.

Rochberg has often reminded us of the complexity of scholarly knowledge evident in these divinatory texts from the first millennium. Indeed, Rochberg has continually emphasized the interconnection between all the scholarly disciplines in cuneiform scribal culture and how cuneiform scholars created and transmitted knowledge. In addition to the various disciplines associated with the tupšarrītu, these scholars were masters of cuneiform and their languages. They doubtless recognized and took full advantage of the possibilities afforded by their scholarship. In other words, scholars’ ability to manipulate the script and the languages was yet another means by which they created scholarly knowledge. Or, as Rochberg astutely puts it, “[T]he crux for a cuneiform epistemology is in what was considered the object of knowledge, especially when words and signs were of central interest” (Rochberg 2014: 50).

The writers of these divinatory texts—whether they write monolingual Akkadian, monolingual Sumerian, or bilingual Sumerian-Akkadian—are not necessarily conscientious of the language ideologies we typically ascribe them. They act according to their enculturated habits, practices formulated in the act of copying, in their identification with the scribal arts. These habits and practices are in part grounded in a scholarly ideal of crafting, manipulating, and engaging with the cuneiform writing system and the interlingual space generated by that writing system in cuneiform scribal culture. This is the reason why “Sumerian” divination never catches on. The sharp distinction between Akkadian and Sumerian is perhaps more of a modern methodological delineation than necessarily an ancient one.

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Appendix: Edition of K.2241+

K.2241 + K.2704 (approx. 12.5cm × 11cm; see Figs. 8.1 and 8.2) with the registration number A.186 was found on the Kuyunjik mound and accessioned into the British Museum at an unknown date. It represents almost the entire left half of the tablet, with only a few lines missing at the beginning and from the end of the colophon. It was written by and/or belongs to the ubiquitous scholar Nabû-zuqup-kēnu, based on a previous copy.\(^\text{19}\) Nabû-zuqup-kēnu is associated with several copies of *Enûma Anu Enlil* and other tablets dealing with astronomical and astrological concerns, including the commentary *Sîn ina Tāmartišu*.\(^\text{20}\) Since, as noted above, this text was apparently copied off an unknown original, it could belong to a series proper. It was certainly not a one-off, but belonged to some sort of textual tradition.

Most of the omens in this text begin the Sumerian omen with **ud** in the left margin.\(^\text{21}\) The entire omen is given in Sumerian and then translated into Akkadian in the lines following. The beginning of the Akkadian translation is not so marked.

**Obverse**

1′. \([...] U\)G\([A...]\)

2′. \(\text{mul}^1\)UG\([A...]\)

3′. \(\text{mul}\)UGA \([...]\)

4′. \(\text{mul}\)UGA \(\text{ix}\) \([...]\)

5′. \(\text{ma}-\text{diš sa-a-[mu ...}\)

6′. \(\text{ZAG šá URU mulUGA ina}^\text{2} \([...]\)

7′. \(\text{šum-ma a-ri-î} \text{im}^1 \text{MUL.MEŠ} \([...]\)

8′. \(\text{ik-ki-ra}^2 \([...]\)

9′. \(\text{ud} \text{mul} \text{gišgigir de-en-me-šar}_2 \text{-ra} \text{ix} \([...]\)

10′. \(\text{mul} \text{EN.ME.ŠAR}_2 \text{-RA ul} \text{ix} \([...]\)

11′. \(\text{ud} \text{mul} \text{gišgigir mul-bi igi-bi} \([...]\)

12′. \(\text{kum}_2 \text{kala-g} [...]


\(^{21}\) Since the ud that begins the Sumerian line is almost never translated, it is clear that it is simply the entry marker. Other instances of **ud** used as the entry marker are known (e.g., *yos* 10 62), but not collected. This use for the **ud** sign is suggested in the sign list Aa 18; BM 93037 obv i 19; (*u₃** ud **ut-tu-ú = šum-ma*) and other lexical and bilingual texts equating **ud** and *šumma* (see *CAD* $\text{Š}/3$ s.v. *šumma* lex. sec.), which parallels how **diš** is understood (e.g., the Principal Commentary to *Šumma Izbu* tablet 3: $\text{di-š} = \text{šum}^\text{mu}-\text{ma}$, see Leichty 1970: 216; De Zorzi 2014: 409).
Sumerian Divination

13′. (mul) giš GIGIR MUL.MEŠ-šu [x] [...]
14′. [...]
15′. (mul) giš gigir mul-bi [...]
16′. (mul) giš GIGIR MUL.MEŠ-šu [...]
17′. ud mulgir₂-tab ud si-bi igi-↓du₈↓ a-↓šub↓ [...]
18′. mu-e-ne [sağ↓-bi-ta a-šub [mu]↓-x↓ [...]
19′. (mul) GIGIR₂-TAB U₄↓ qa-ra-an-šu in-nam-ru [x] [...]
20′. (mul) in ra-ši-sá i-ma-quit ina re-iš šat↓-ti [x] [...]
21′. ud mulgir₂-tab ud [si↓-bi igi-du₈ a-↓šub↓ im a [x] [...]
22′. mu-e-ne murub₄-bi-ta a-šub mu [murub₄-bi-ta] [...]
23′. (mul) GIGIR₂-TAB U₄↓ qa↓-ra-an-šu in-nam-ru [...]
24′. (mul) in qa-b-lí-šá i-ma-quit ina MURUB₄ [MU] [...]
25′. ud mulapin mul-bi lul-aš al-su₄-su₄ [x] [...]
26′. en-te-na an-sag₂ ud kum₂ [x] [...]
27′. (mul) APIN MUL-šú ma-↓-diš sa-a-mu ti-[x] [...]
28′. ku-us-šu ri-ih-šu [U₄]↓ [um [...]
29′. ud mulka-muš-i₃-gu₇-e mul-[bi [...]
30′. (mul) KAMUŠ₂₃-GU₇-E [...]
31′. ud mul d₄anzud[mul-en] [mul-bi lul-aš al-su₄-su₄]
32′. ud-da e₂-[meš [...]
33′. (mul) ANZU[mul-en] MUL.MEŠ-šu ma-↓-diš sa-a-mu [...]
34′. (BE₄-ma um-[ma-tum [...]

Reverse

1. ud d₄gu₄-u₃ [x] [...]
2. gaz-e-ne [...]
3. bara₂ suh-bi [...]
4. dGU₄-U₃ da-nu- [...]
5. di-ik-tu KA↓ tu-n[u' [...]
6. ud mul-en-te-na-bar-hum igi mul-bi [...]
7. ki-bal-a kalam-ga [x] [...]
8. mulEN.TE.NA.BAR.HUM pa-an MUL.MEŠ-šu al"" A [...]
9. na-bal-kät-tum da-na-tum [x] [...]
10. ud mulan-ta-sur-ra mul-bi lul-aš al-[su₄]}↓-[su₄ [...]
11. mulAN.TA.SUR.RA MUL.MEŠ-šú ma-↓-diš sa-a-f[mu [...]
12. ud muluz₃ igi-bi lul-aš al-su₄-su₄ d₄ir₃-ra kalam-ma [x]}↓-[x [...]
13. mulUZ₃ pa-nu-ša ma-↓-diš sa-a-mu mu-ta-nu iš-f[x-x- [...]
14. ud mulas-gan₂ igi-bi lul-aš al-su₄-su₄ im rib-[ba" [...]
15. mulÅŠ.GAN₂ pa-nu-šu ma-↓-diš sa-a-mu şá-a-r[u' [...]

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16. [... n]am-ki-us₂ gi-na  الأيام ين ana-na al-x [...]
17. [...] 'x x si₁ su₂ buru₄ kalam-'ma₁ [...]
18. [...] 'x₁ ina' EN PA šá iz-za₁ ás₁-su šá [...]
19. [...] 'x₁-ú ina MU.BI iš-sūr e-bu- [...]

Colophon
20. LIBIR.RA.BI GIN₇ AB.SAR.AM₃
21. DUB₄₄ mdAG-zu-qu-up-GÍ.NA DUMU md[AMAR.UTU-MU-BA₄₄]
22. traces

Translation
Obverse
1′–2′. [If] the Raven star [...]
3′. (If) the Raven star [...]
4′–8′. (If) the Raven star [...] very red [...] the borders of the city. The Raven star [...] in [...]. If the stars of the Raven [...] is changed, [...]
9′–10′. If the Chariot [...] Enmešara [...]
11′–14′. If the front star of the Chariot [...] there will be severe heat [...]
15′–16′. The stars of the Chariot [...]
17′–20′. If when the pincers of the Scorpion are visible, collapse [...] the beginning of the year [...] will collapse; in the beginning of the year [...]
21′–24′. If the pincers of the Scorpion are visible, collapse of the stars in the middle of the year [...] will collapse; in the middle of the year [...]
25′–28′. If the stars of the Plow are very red [...] devastating winter, hot days [...]
29′–30′. If the stars of KA.MUŠ.₁₃.GU₇.E [...]
31′–34′. If the stars of the Anzu bird [are very red ...], summer [...]

Reverse
1–5. If the Ox [...] defeat [...] the foundations of the dais [...]
6–9. If the front stars of Enmebarhum [...] massive revolt [...]
10–11. If the stars of Antasura are very red [...]
12–13. If the front stars of the Doe Goat are very red, pestilence [...] in the land [...]
14–15. If the front stars of the Field are very red, extensive wind [...]
16–17. (Sum.) [...] firm foundations [... in heaven [...] ... harvest in the land [...]
18–19. (Akk.) [...] who will stand with the lord of [...] which [...] in that year will prosper; the harvest [...]

Compare other Nabû-zuqup-kēnu colophons (BAK 293–311). Note especially the colophon from BBR Nr. 7 (K.3242+: BAK 301): ki-i pi-i 2.DUB.MEŠ LIBIR.RA.MEŠ AB.SA[RAM₃ [...]
DUB₄₄ mdAG-zu-qu-up-GÍ.NA DUMU mdAMAR.UTU-MU-BA₄₄ lu₂DUB.SAR [ŠA₄₃.B]
AL.BAL mgab-bi-DINGIR.MEŠ nKAM₄₃ lu₂GAL.DUB.SAR.MEŠ.
Colophon

20–22. Written [and checked] according to its original. Tablet of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu, son of [Marduk-šuma-iqiša ...]

Commentary

obv. 1′–8′. These opening lines are difficult to reconstruct due to their fragmentary state. It is difficult to ascertain which of the opening 2 lines are Sumerian and which are Akkadian; it is, however, likely that neither lines 3′ or 4′ are Sumerian since neither begins with ud. Moreover, it seems as though the beginning of 7′ should be considered part of the preceding Akkadian omen. However, such would entail that 4′–8′ constitutes a single omen and therefore does not appear to translate what occurs in the preceding lines.

Protases dealing with the Raven star may be found in BPO 2 XVII obv. i 11′–17′. 82-3-23, 120 1–3, another text in this group of bilingual omens, also gives protases with the Raven star.

If the beginning of 6′, pāṭu ša āli represents (part of) an apodosis, I can find no parallels among the published fixed star omens.

The verb nakāru in 8′ is often used to indicate the change of positions (manzāzu) of fixed stars and planets in the sky (see Reiner and Pingree 1981: 18). BPO 2 XVII 9–10 give protases that discuss the manzāzu of the Raven star.

obv. 9′–10′. The Akkadian line does not begin like the Sumerian, which suggests an equation of mul ĝišgigir and mul.en.me.šar₂.ra. This association may be explicit in the Sumerian line, which juxtaposes the two star names. This identification is overt in the standard version of Ura = Hubullu 22 290′ (following Bloch and Horowitz 2015).

obv. 11′–14′. Cited in Reiner and Pingree 1981: 75, mentioned in reference to nark-abtu as a constellation in CAD N/1 s.v. narkabtu mng. 2. See BPO 2 X VI 8′: [*] mulEN. ME.ŠAR₂.RA MUL IGL.BI GIN₇ ka-ra-re-e ina MURUB₄-šú 1 MUL ma-diš SA₅ um-šum dan-nu [GA]₂ “If the front star of Enmešara is like the noon-day sun and in its middle one star is very red, there will be severe heat.” Based on this parallel, it is again likely that mul ĝišgigir and mul.en-me-šar₂-ra are equated here. Following kum₂ kalag-ga, there is a large gap before a break; some form of the verb ġal₂ is expected based on the parallel.

obv. 17′–20′. Partially cited in cad Q s.v. qarnu mng. 2b. Due to the broken context, the nuance of šub = maqātu in this and the following omen is unclear. It is possible that maqātu does not refer to the year, and that the actual subject is not preserved. The fact that both apodoses, however, deal with different times of the year suggests that the

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23 The citation in CAD Q s.v. qablu A mng. if offers no translation for maqātu.
year is indeed the subject. The plural mu-e-ne in the Sumerian line is not reflected in the Akkadian and should probably not be considered.

**obv. 21′–24′.** Partially cited in *CAD Q* s.v. *qablītu* A mng. 1f.

**obv. 25′–28′.** Cited in Reiner and Pingree 1981: 75. Partially cited in *CAD S* s.v. *sāmu* bil. section and *CAD R* s.v. *riḫšu* A mng. a. To my knowledge, the equation an-pa and *riḫšu* is unique. Sumerian an-pa typically refers to the zenith, Akkadian *elat šāmē*. The lexical list Antagal, however, offers *gir₃ sag₂* = *MIN*(∗*ra-ha-ṣu*) šá [GIRI₃] “to strike with the feet = to rush, said of [feet]” (Antagal N ii′ 13′, see MS 17 = Roth 1985: 240),

which suggests a correspondence *sag₃* “to hit, strike” = *rahāṣu* “to trample, destroy,” a reasonable semantic translation. The an in this word should be taken as perhaps an attempt to attach a verbal prefix.

**obv. 29′–30′.** Cited in Reiner and Pingree 1981: 72 with comparison to BPO 2 XV 5′.

**obv. 31′–33′.** Restoration suggested by Reiner (Reiner and Pingree 1981: 41) on the basis of BPO III 11b. See also BPO 2 XVI 9′: *mulANZU* = *MUL.BI IGI.BI ma-diš SA₅ BE-ma EN.TE.NA šur-ru-ū BE Ma.EŠ u [m-šum GAL₂] *If the front star of the Anzu bird is very red, if it is winter, there will be frost; if it is summer there will be heat.*

**rev. 1–5.** The writing *dgu₄*-u₃—presumably reflecting a phonetic rendering for *dgu₄*-utu, usually identified as Mercury—is, to my knowledge, completely unique. The phrase following *dīktu* is unclear.

**rev. 6–9.** Partially cited in *CAD N/1* s.v. *nabalkattu* bil. section and mng. 5.²⁶


**rev. 12–13.** Partially cited in *CAD M/1* s.v. *mādīš* bil. section and *CAD P* s.v. *pānu* bil. section. To my knowledge, the correspondence *Erra = mūtānu* (nor *Nergal = mūtānu*) is not given anywhere else, but the cosmic domain with which Erra/Nergal is associated makes the equation reasonable.

**rev. 14–15.** Referenced in *CAD P* s.v. *pānu* bil. section. Cited in Reiner and Pingree 1981: 40 with additional notation there that this same omen likely occurs in another text in the group under discussion, K.3094 ii 5. The reading and restoration of *rib-ba* is

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24 The section offers three different correspondences for *rahāṣu*: ib₂-bi₂-ra = ra-ha-ṣu šá *e-de*₁-{e} “... = to flood, said of a wave” (line 12’) as well as ma-da lu₃-ṣu₃ = *MIN*(ra-ha-ṣu) šá *ma*-ti? “disturbed land = to flood, said of a land” (line 14’). Thus, in the section, it would seem that ra, sag₂, and lu₃ are equated to *rahāṣu*.

25 Note that *sag₂( PA.GAN)* must be understood as an alternative for *sag₃(PA)*, used exclusively in lexical texts.

26 The *CAD* citation in mng. 5 cites K.3094, another text in the present group, but mentions K.2241+.

27 Note the implied correlation between Nergal and *mūtānu* in AbB 2, 1189–11 and the apodosis in an Old Babylonian extispicy (Jeyes 1979 no. 3 iv 11’), which mentions Nergal which U. Jeyes rightly interprets as plague (i.e., *mūtānu*, Jeyes 1979: 121; see further Jeyes 1980: 109).
based on this latter text, which gives im rib-ba; BPO 2 111 obv. 17 is ambiguous: IM KAL BA.AB.ZI.ZI.

rev. 16–19. These lines are slightly opaque as little appears to correspond between the Sumerian and the Akkadian. I have therefore given separate translations above to account for the discrepancies. It seems as though gi-na “to be firm” corresponds to uzuzzu “to stand.” The equivalence may be semantically based as “to be firm” could conceivably be a near equivalent to “to stand.” Alternatively, the correspondence may rely on the near homophone of Sumerian ĝen “to walk,” but written with the same sign (DU) as gub “to stand.” More difficult is nam-ki-us₂ apparently equated to bel PA

Figure 8.1 K.2241+ obverse.
COURTESY THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.
(or similar). Perhaps the Akkadian should be read bēl haṭṭī (EN GIDRU) “lord of the scepter” as a metaphor for the king; nam-ki-us₂ “foundations, dais?” could then be understood as synecdoche for the king. The second line is slightly more transparent as si sa₂ = ešēru and buru₁₄ = ebūru would be expected. One would expect the traces preceding si sa₂ to correspond to mu-bi in some way, but such does not appear to be the case.

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