MESOPOTAMIAN MAGIC IN TEXT AND PERFORMANCE

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Any representation of an action or utterance in written form is, by definition, never a full reflection of its actual performance.[1] Indeed, our knowledge of Mesopotamian magic, as it existed in performance, will always be partial and incomplete. This is a result of the simple fact that our knowledge of the practice of Mesopotamian magic is channeled mainly through the medium of text.[2] Assuming a written representation serves as a record of an existing ritual practice, it must be approached as a selective account of specific aspects of a ritual, which were deemed necessary to be written down, in a specific time, place and context.[3] In addition, we cannot assume that a ritual text[4] or written recitation merely records a practice which existed before it was written down; the action or recitation may have been composed initially in writing, by means of a combination of observation and writing, or with reference to an oral tradition. Following the initial writing of an incantation or ritual text, the composition represented by the text may have been transmitted in writing and/or orally. Similarly, the composition may have been performed with a full or partial reference to a text, a version of it, or as a purely or partially oral tradition.

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[1] Abbreviations follow the *RlA* (Ebeling et al., Reallexikon der Assyriologie, Berlin/Leipzig/New York, 1928–) and *CAD* (A.L. Oppenheim et al., The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of Chicago, Glückstadt and Chicago, 1956–2010). Many thanks to B. Pongratz-Leisten and D. Schwemer for important comments on earlier drafts. I am also grateful to D. Schwemer for sharing work which is in press. Of course, all errors are my own. Part of this paper is adapted from a presentation, "The Ritual Deposition of Figurines in Seventh Century Assur: Theory Versus Practice, or Divergent Traditions?", which I gave at the workshop *Exploring Ritual in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean: Performance, Texts and Material Culture*, organized by I. Rutherford and myself, at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, New York, May 16, 2014. I would like to thank the participants of this workshop, together with the participants of another workshop on ritual at the same institution (*Ritual and Narrative: Texts in Performance in the Ancient Near East*, May 1, 2015, organized by B. Pongratz-Leisten), for stimulating discussions, which helped formulate the ideas presented here.

[2] In some cases, archaeological data or iconography also informs us regarding magical practice. For example, images of an exorcist treating a patient are known, for which see e.g. Schwemer 2011, fig. 20.1, 20.2. Archaeological evidence includes apotropaic figurines (see e.g. Rittig 1977).

[3] Assuming that the text records an existing ritual, elements considered as "noise", such as introductory comments, or seemingly insignificant details, are usually omitted. The written record usually includes only the words of a performance, excluding non–verbal actions and visual elements. In addition, the act of embodying the action or utterance in textual form (or composing it initially in textual form), may transform the nature of the composition, in terms of its form, contents and language (Goody 2000, 47–62).

[4] My use of the word "text" refers to the physical textual artifact; here, "ritual text" refers to the written documentation of ritual actions (agenda), as opposed to recitations such as incantations or prayers (recitanda). "Ritual" or "composition" refers to the ritual as it exists in a performance, as opposed to its textual representation. I am not using the word "text" as it is used in various fields of the humanities, to refer to media beyond the written word. Similarly, my use of the word "performance" and "performative" refers to physical or speech acts within a ritual context. I am not using the word "performance" in its wider sense, to refer to potentially any human behavior; for example, it is common in anthropology to refer to the "performing of identity". My use of the word "performance" is informed more by its use in ritual theory (Bell 1998).

Indeed, composition, transmission and performance are separate processes, each of which may involve written and/or oral aspects. In addition, such texts often existed in multiple versions at the same time and place, and/or different times and places; thus, editing and transformation of compositions also frequently took place during transmission, and perhaps also performance, on both the written and/or oral levels. Thus, orality and its interface with writing is, a highly complex and multifacted issue. The context of production and use of Mesopotamian magic texts, is a topic which belongs amongst M. J. Geller's long standing interests. I am very pleased to contribute to this volume in honor of Prof. Geller, who kindly allowed me to attend his Sumerian reading classes in London, an experience which played an important role in my intellectual development.

The purpose of writing magic texts[5] or ritual texts, may lie in the performative, apotropaic, pedagogic or scholastic realms, none of which are mutually exclusive.[6] Indeed, the text may have been written by an individual, who may be classed as a magical practitioner, scribe, scholar, an apprentice of either of these professions, or an individual whose activities encompassed more than one of these activities. One of the main purposes of writing lies within the context of the performance of the ritual documented or composed; in this context, the text may serve as a means of reference, and/or perhaps as a means of training, testing and/or memorization, for ritual specialists or apprentices. Another purpose of writing may lie in the writing of text itself as a ritual act, and/or as a means of creating an apotropaic object in the form of the text itself.[7] These two functions clearly situate the act of writing within the performative and apotropaic contexts of magic. Both of these contexts are allied, as they involve the actual practice of magic. Scholastic and pedagogic contexts for the production of such texts are also well known, particularly in the first millennium.[8] The scholastic function of writing incantation and ritual texts is shown, for example, by the existence of commentaries to such texts (Frahm 2011, 121–128). Indeed, according to E. Frahm, the development of the commentary tradition is closely allied to the fixation of series, or the process which is sometimes called "canonization" in the late second millennium; magical, medical and divinatory series were central to this enterprise (Frahm 2011, 317–332).[9] The pedagogic function of writing magic texts is similarly clear; magic texts were central to the second stage of the

[5] For a working definition of "magic" within the field of Near Eastern studies, see Geller 2010, 161–167; Schwemer 2011, 419–420; Schwemer, in press. For the purposes of this article, "magic texts" are mainly incantation texts, which may include rubrics and/or some ritual instructions; this definition also includes detailed ritual instructions. For the distinction between "incantation" and "prayer", see n. 17.

[6] A further motivation for the writing of ritual texts may lie in the allocation of materials for offerings, such as those texts which outline the daily cult. However, a distinction should be made between such texts, and economic texts which detail offerings (Sallaberger 2006-2008, 423–426).

[7] For such a use of writing in a magical context, see Heeßel 2014, with reference to earlier literature. Such a purpose of writing magic texts is also well known outside Mesopotamia (see, e.g. Faraone 2011 for the case of Greek incantations).

[8] A distinction between scholastic and pedagogic contexts is often far from clear, particularly in the case of magic texts, which belonged to the advanced stage of the curriculum in the first millennium. In any case, I believe that such a distinction is evident in, for example, a comparison of commentaries with simple copies of incantations.

[9] See below for a brief discussion of the debate concerning "canonization" and serialization.

Babylonian scribal curriculum in the first millennium, where they seem to have served the purposes of both training young exorcists, as well as other scholars or professions in the temple cult (Gesche 2001, 210–212).

Existing work on the orality debate within Near Eastern studies has focused more on literary texts, and less on cultic or liturgical texts.[10] Recent studies of divination texts, however, have addressed related questions, concerning the extent to which specific texts reflect actual divinatory practice.[11] Although the questions addressed here are infrequently addressed within Near Eastern studies of magic and ritual, they are often the focus of studies in other fields.[12] In the case of Early Mesopotamia, a period for which we have little direct evidence regarding the purpose of writing incantations, this question has been discussed by P. Michalowski (1992), with reference to W. Farber (1990). Farber's view that incantations were an oral tradition that only sporadically entered the written tradition, contrasts with Michalowski's view that Sumerian incantations were a written tradition, with no (proven) direct relationship to practice. According to N. Wasserman (2003, 181–182; 2014), at least some incantations may have been both composed and performed by the same individuals in the Old Babylonian period; thus, an opposition between "scribes" and magical experts, assumed in the arguments of both Michalowski and Farber, cannot be supported. G. Barjamovic (2015) has made a convincing argument that, in the case of Old Assyrian Kaneš, a similar model fits the evidence. At Old Assyrian Kaneš, the evidence regarding (partially) duplicating manuscripts, literacy, writing style and archaeological context, suggests that incantations were written within a performative context, and probably performed by the same individuals who wrote the texts. One may argue that the case of Kaneš is unique; but as Barjamovic argues (2015, 63–64), there is no reason why a similar model did not exist in Old Babylonian Babylonia, although we currently lack relevant sources which can be securely attributed to such a private context.

Imagining a context for the production and performance of magic texts may be attempted through the examination of several clues, many of which are suggestive but inconclusive. For example, Wasserman (2014) has examined the context and purpose of writing early Akkadian incantations, through the analysis of the shape and structure of the tablets themselves. Wasserman's conclusion is that tablets containing multiple incantations, as opposed to those tablets which include only one incantation, are likely to have served the needs of professional exorcists. As mentioned above, Wasserman generally approaches such texts as the products of magical practitioners who could write, deconstructing the paradigm of scholar vs.

[10] The orality debate within Near Eastern studies in recent decades, and its focus on literature, is represented by, e.g. Vogelzang and Vanstiphout 1992. However, within Hittitology such debates have been extensively discussed with reference to ritual texts (see e.g. Schuol 2010, and Müller (ed.) 2016). Recently, P. Delnero (2015) has made a convincing argument for the use of Old Babylonian Emesal liturgical tablets, as texts which are situated within a clear performative context, interacting with oral tradition and even shaping the oral versions of the texts which are performed.

[11] On this question, see recently Heeßel 2012, with reference to earlier literature.

[12] See e.g. Ronning 2003, with reference to earlier literature; De Haro Sanchez (ed.). 2015.

practitioner. Such a context, where the distinction between "scribe" and practitioner may be blurred, may also be envisaged in the case of Old Babylonian incantations from the Schøyen collection, some of which feature highly syllabic and even "corrupt" spellings (George 2016, especially 160–163, nos. 55–58).

In the first millennium, it is well known that exorcists (*āšipu*/*mašmaššu*)[13] were literate. Indeed, in the first millennium, we know from the exorcists' libraries that exorcists copied and collected a wide variety of texts, including many which are unrelated to magic (Schwemer 2011, 421–423). However, despite this information, the precise purpose for which writing was used in the case of magic texts, remains open to debate. For example, does "for performance" (*ana ṣabāt epēši*) mean that the texts were used as a means of instruction or rehearsal? To what extent was the writing of magic texts pedagogic or scholastic? M. J. Geller has examined the question of writing and its purposes, by means of the information provided in colophons (Geller 2010, 130–140). Such information is often valuable; for example, *ana tamārti* "for reading" is found in some colophons, and it may refer to the use of a text in an academic, pedagogic context, as suggested by Geller (2010, 135–137). Yet another approach lies in a close consideration of verbal forms in ritual texts; for example, the choice of imperative forms may indicate a performative context (Geller 2016, 22).

A context divorced from practice is suggested in specific instances. For example, a preamble and series of incantations for the consecration of a priest is known in first millennium manuscripts (Borger 1973, Löhnert 2010), although its reference to *nêšakku* and *paššīšu* priests, both of which are known exclusively as literary and/or archaic, priestly designations after the Old Babylonian period (Sallaberger and Huber Vulliet 2003–2005, 630–631), suggests that this particular text was transmitted for scholastic rather than performative purposes.[14] A Nineveh manuscript of a cycle of prayers (*BBR* 26), which plays a role in both *Bīt Rimki* "House of the (Ritual) Bath" and *Bīt salā' mê* "House of Sprinkling Water", follows an order which appears to be unrelated to the order in which the prayers are performed. Instead of following the order of performance, this text follows an order based on a hierarchy of divine couples. This conclusion is suggested by a comparison of the ritual text with Assyrian court correspondence concerning the ritual's performance (Ambos 2013, 188–191). This suggests that this text may have functioned, not primarily as a reference work embedded in a performative context; instead, the symbolic, scholastic and/or apotropaic functions of the text are emphasized.[15]

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[13] The terms *āšipu a*nd *mašmaššu* seem to both refer to the same practitioner, conventionally translated as "exorcist". However, the reading and meanings of these terms has led to some confusion. See Geller 2010 (43–44) for the theory that *āšipu* is the more literary term, although both terms have the same meaning.

[14] A further alternative, suggested to me by B. Pongratz-Leisten, is that this text may have served as a model for the consecration of a priest, performed by alternative cultic personnel in the first millennium.

[15] What I call "symbolic" qualities may alternatively be called "literary" qualities, if "literature" is defined by the presence of non-functional elements. The question of what exactly constitutes "literature", and whether incantations may be classed as literature, is debated within Near Eastern studies; see e.g. Veldhuis 1999.

Another approach to the question of theory vs. practice in magic rituals, lies in the comparison of ritual texts with archaeological sources. In the area of Near Eastern ritual and magic, I know of relatively few contributions, which adopt such an approach. Studies by F. Wiggermann (1992, 97–101), A. Schmitt (in Ambos 2004, 229–234) and C. Ambos (2004, 76–77) demonstrate that there is rarely an exact correspondence between text and archaeology, in terms of evidence for a specific ritual. F. Tourtet (2010) has compared texts and archaeology with particular reference to the single Pazuzu figurine, for which a precise archaeological findspot is known, from Dūr-Katlimmu; the results are of interest, but they fail short of demonstrating an agreement between text and archaeology. Most of these studies compare evidence where the material and textual sources are separated in time and space. However, even in the case of the well known house of the 7th C. exorcist Kiṣir-Aššur and his family, where both ritual text and archaeological evidence of ritual are known from the same house and the same approximate period, there is only a partial convergence of text with material evidence. The ritual tablet *šēp lemutti ina bīt amēlī parāsu* "to block the entry of evil (lit. "the foot of evil") into a person's house", was found together with many of the figurines specified in the text, in this house.[16] Even considering the fact that the tablet is partially broken, and excavation reports are incomplete, it is clear that there was no attempt to fully represent the ritual in written form, and there are small divergences between text and material sources. In addition, the text routinely omits certain aspects of the ritual. For example, the text does not mention the brick capsules into which the figurines are placed. In addition, no distinction is made in the text between three-dimensional forms of figurines and plaques, both of which are known from the house. In any attempt to compare text and archaeology, no matter how close both sources are in time and space, the possibility always exists that divergent practices took place within a particular time and space. The possibility also exists, that ritual texts differ from material evidence as a result of the type of information included in the ritual text, or perhaps the preservation of an outdated practice in written form. Thus, a comparison of text and archaeology in the case of magic rituals is inherently limited with respect to the questions addressed below.

This paper focuses on incantation and ritual texts, with the aim of determining the extent to which such texts reflect actual performance. The evidence suggests that the primary function of writing such texts in Mesopotamia was generally, for its use in a performative context. However, the following attempts to trace what is in my assessment, an increased emphasis on the scholastic function of writing such texts in the first millennium BCE, which existed concurrently with performative contexts for writing during this period.[17]

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[16] *KAR* 298, for which see Rittig 1977, 150–174; Wiggermann 1992, 41–103; Feldt 2015, with earlier literature.

[17] Although this paper focuses on the non-performative aspects of the transmission of incantations and/or associated rituals, it is important to bear in mind that at the same time there is also evidence for a performative context. This is shown most clearly by the existence of reduced versions of texts, which must have served as aide-mémoires for ritual practitioners. Such manuscripts

INCANTATIONS, INCANTATION-SERIES AND RITUAL TABLETS

The category of text usually called "incantation" may be partly defined by its ritual context.[18] Incantations may include no ritual instructions, or they may include a subscript and/or ritual instructions. In Early Mesopotamia, incantations usually did not include ritual directions; if they were included, they were usually in the form of short rubrics.[19] The ritual context of incantations may also be implied within the actual incantation. Such cases may involve the ritual practitioner referring to his own actions; for example, in many incantations the exorcist is personified as Asalluḫi/Marduk, who receives ritual instructions from his father (Enki/Ea). Another possible indication of the ritual context of incantations may be their order within series. There are important examples of the compilation of associated incantations, already in the Old Babylonian period. However, it seems that the order of such compilations was not yet fixed into what we might call a series.[20]

When incantations began to be more systematically compiled in the first millenium,[21] a ritual tablet was added in some instances. However, in cases where there is an associated ritual tablet, the precise nature of the relationship between incantation series and ritual tablet is highly complex. For example, it is clear that the order of incantations in series does not always conform to the order of performance in ritual tablets. Where rubrics or short performance instructions are attached to incantations within series, such instructions do not always conform to the associated ritual tablet. In such cases, we can offer two possible explanations. Firstly, the incantation series may reflect a performance practice known from another

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have been described as "compendia", in the case of summary tablets of Namburbi rituals (Maul 1994, 203–216); alternatively, such texts have been termed "memoranda" (Schwemer 2006; Abusch and Schwemer 2011, texts 7.6.6 and 8.7; Schwemer, in press, section 3.4. "Diplomatische Systematik").

[18] The definition of "incantation" vs. "prayer" is a complex question. For a provisional discussion of some of the problems involved in such a definition, see Lambert 2008. Generally, prayers involve a human's address to the gods. Conversely, our evidence for incantations involves a ritual specialist; in addition, the words of the incantation are conceived as a divine creation invoking divine authority. Here, the term "incantation" is used in its conventional sense. Essentially, this text category is associated with rubrics such as én(-é-nu-ru), ka-inim-ma and tu_6. It must be borne in mind, however, that the same incantation can occur with a different rubric, and rubrics are not necessarily indicative of generic categories. In addition to the definition of incantation as text, its performance context is also important; incantations were normally performed by the exorcist (*āšipu*/*mašmaššu*) or physician (*asû*).

[19] Relatively few ritual texts are known from Mesopotamia before the first millennium. However, the existence of detailed ritual texts from Old Babylonian Mari, and Bronze Age Syria and Anatolia, shows that the practice of writing ritual texts was already well established. See the survey of ritual texts in Sallaberger 2006–2008, 428–429.

[20] Important examples of such Old Babylonian compilations include the Sumerian monolingual version of Udug-hul (Geller 1985), or the compilation of eleven "love incantations" on a single Old Babylonian tablet from Isin (Wilcke 1987). Although the compilation of incantations is known in the Old Babylonian period, there is no clear evidence for their standardization into a fixed series (Worthington 2010). However, there are some indications of an associated order of incantations already in the Old Babylonian period. For example, the sequence of incantations on multi-column tablets of Udug-hul, partially follows the order of incantations known from the much expanded, first millenium bilingual version, *Utukkū Lemnūtu* (see Geller 1985, 3–9; Geller 2016, 5–7).

[21] "First Millenium" is used loosely here. The wholesale revision and compilation of various corpora in cuneiform culture was probably well under way during the Kassite period, although most works seem to have been revised in the eleventh century (Heeßel 2011). Such revisions and relative standardization does not imply the formation of an authorative "canon". For a critical discussion on this subject, see Rochberg-Halton 1984. The related notion of "forerunner", for Old Babylonian versions of first millenium "canonical" versions has also been justifiably questioned in recent scholarship (Farber 1993). As discussed below, there is evidence to suggest that various corpora were being revised throughout the first millenium, particularly at Nineveh.

recension than the ritual tablet. Or secondly, the compilation of incantations in series may be determined, not by their actual performance, but other considerations. This issue is of particular interest, as it allows us to examine the extent to which the textual transmission of incantations was dependent on, or independent from, their performance.

Any attempt to address the questions posed in this article, is dependent on the existence of comprehensive, up to date editions. Work in this area is certainly progressing, as shown by recent editions of *Muššu'u* "Rubbing" (Böck 2007), *Bīt salā' mê* "House of Sprinkling Water" (Ambos 2013), the incantations and rituals against the demoness Lamaštu (Farber 2014; hereafter "*Lam.*"), *Maqlû* "Burning" (Abusch 2015) and *Utukkū Lemnūtu* "Evil *Utukkū* Demons" (Geller 2016). With regard to my interest in the relationship between incantation-series and their associated ritual tablets, the publication of the long awaited edition of *Lam.* by W. Farber is of particular importance. This is due to the fact that firstly, the series clearly includes a ritual tablet which is directly associated with the series. Secondly, the main manuscript of the most well attested, "canonical" version from Nineveh (Farber's "Text A" = K.2482+[22]), clearly shows the juxtaposition of incantation-series and ritual tablet on the same physical, multi-columned tablet. This combination, which is followed in the other Nineveh manuscripts, demonstrates striking discrepancies between the sequence of incantations and rituals in the series, and the ritual tablet. Thus, the Nineveh series of *Lam.* provides us with an excellent case study for issues concerning the textual transmission and performance of incantations. Before proceeding with an examination of *Lam.*, I will briefly discuss more general issues regarding incantation-series, ritual tablets and serialization.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF INCANTATION-SERIES AND RITUAL TABLETS

As mentioned above, incantations were transmitted in a variety of ways in Mesopotamian texts. They could exist in isolation, or with an accompanying rubric and/or ritual. Within ritual texts, incantations and other prayers are either referred to by incipit, or written out in full. Series which include integrated rubrics and/or ritual instructions, include those which are intended to undo the negative effects of omens (Nam-búr-bi, see Maul 1994), or to counter witchcraft ($Uš_{11}$-búr-ru-da, see Abusch and Schwemer 2011, 115–245; for discussion, see Schwemer 2007, 56–61).[23] However, most series consist of incantations alone. Incantation-series may be divided into two groups, those which include a ritual tablet, and those which do not. Ritual tablets are known for *Maqlû* "Burning", *Šurpu* "Burning",[24] *Bīt Rimki* "House of the

[22] Not all the fragments of this tablet are physically joined in their present state, but Farber is very probably correct in stating that that his "Text A" was originally a single physical tablet.

[23] It is an important fact that the serialization of both of these series is known first from Nineveh manuscripts. The significance of these series will be discussed further below.

[24] See Reiner 1958, and Farber 2012b with references to further literature. An edition of *Šurpu* is in preparation by F. Simons (PhD, Univ. of Birmingham). Note that the ritual tablet of *Šurpu* clearly belongs to a different recension from Assur, and its

(Ritual) Bath",[25] *Bīt salā' mê* "House of Sprinkling Water", *Mīs Pî* "Washing of the Mouth",[26] *Bīt Mēseri* "House of (Ritual) Enclosure",[27] *Mušš u'u* "Rubbing"[28] and *Lam.* Most of the incipits of such series are mentioned in their corresponding ritual tablets, although the incipits do not necessarily occur in the same order in both incantation-series and ritual tablet. Such series may be contrasted with compilations of related incantations, for which no ritual tablet is known. These compilations include *Utukkū Lemnūtu* "Evil *Utukkū* Demons",[29] Saĝ-ba "Oath" (Schramm 2001), Zú-buru$_5$-dab-bé-da "To Seize the Locust-Tooth" (George and Taniguchi 2010), *Qutāru* "Fumigation" (Finkel 1991, 103–104), Saĝ-gig "Headache", Á-sàg-gig "Illness of the Asag Demon" and Hul-ba-zi-zi "Dissipation of Evil".[30] Some incantations may be considered as a group due to their distinctive features and rubrics; but there is no evidence for their organization into series. For example, there is no evidence for the serialization of Nam-erím-búr-ru-da incantations, against "oaths", or the curses that result from the breaking of oaths (Geller 1998, 127).[31] The same is true for Šà-zi-ga incantations, for the promotion of potency (Biggs 1967).[32] The so-called "Compendium of Incantations" (Schramm 2008), is probably not a true series; as discussed by Geller (2011), this associated group of incantations is essentially a collection of *Kultmittelbeschwörungen*, which were used in various ritual contexts for the purification of objects. There are suggestions that incantations against *Samāna* ("Red Evil"?) were organised into series, although this is uncertain (Finkel 1998, 97; Beck 2015, 173–174). There is no clear evidence for the serialization of Diĝir-šà-dab$_{(5)}$-ba incantations (Jaques 2015, 109–123). Similarly, although these incantations played an

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status as the first tablet in the series is in question (see Lambert 1960, Farber 2012b). Although *Šurpu* and *Maqlû* are both named after the act of burning which is a component of their rituals, the purpose of burning is different in each case. In *Šurpu* the act of burning, amongst other activities, is intended to absolve the patient from the curse which results from a broken oath (*māmītu*). In *Maqlû* the act of burning refers to the destruction of the patient's enemy, by means of burning a figurine representing a witch.

[25] There is no full edition of *Bīt Rimki* yet. For a translation of the ritual tablet see Farber 1986; for an analysis see Ambos 2012.

[26] See the edition by Walker and Dick (2001); on this ritual see more recently, Shibata 2008 with references to earlier literature.

[27] A full edition of *Bīt Mēseri* was in preparation by the late R. Borger. For a recent treatment, see Wiggermann 1992, 105–118.

[28] As discussed further below, there is clearly an associated ritual tablet for the incantation-series *Mušš u'u* "Rubbing"; but its identity as "the" ritual tablet has been called into question, due to the related but tenuous correspondence between ritual tablet and series (Böck 2003).

[29] Although there is no ritual tablet for *Utukkū Lemnūtu*, some manuscripts include rubrics and even short ritual instructions (see Geller 2016, 21–25).

[30] Editions of Saĝ-gig and Á-sàg-gig are in preparation by W. Schramm. An edition of Hul-ba-zi-zi was the subject of I. L. Finkel's unpublished PhD dissertation (1976); a complete edition by Finkel is in preparation. An edition of the series Alan-níĝ-saĝ-íl-la, for making a cult image, is also in preparation by Schramm. Zi-pà incantations may also have been organized into series, due to the reference to a *pirsu rēštû* "first section" in one manuscript (Borger 1969, 15; see also Borger 1970). This list is not exhaustive.

[31] An edition of Nam-erím-búr-ru-da incantations and rituals is in preparation by S. M. Maul; for translations see Maul 2010, 135–145. It is interesting that these incantations and rituals could be transmitted in two general forms. A large ritual tablet from the "house of the exorcist" from Assur incorporates the full text of incantations (*BAM* 3 234). But at both Assur and Nineveh, tablets of incantations without ritual instructions are also known (Maul 2010, 136, n.308).

[32] Nam-erím-búr-ru-da and Šà-zi-ga are both cited in the list of the "exorcist's handbook" (Geller 2000, 242–254, text E, line 12 and 14; Clancier 2009), which is a collection of works described in its opening line and subscript (line 27) as SAG.MEŠ ÉŠ.GÀR MAŠ.MAŠ-*ti*. It is unclear whether ÉŠ.GÀR = *iškāru* "series" in this context, refers to the serialization of the exorcists' handbook itself, or whether this term refers to the serialized nature of the incipits referred to within the text. It is also possible that ÉŠ.GÀR = *iškāru* is used here as a term for "text-type", which may or may not be organized into series. On the problems involved in the terminology for "series" see Worthington 2010.

important role in the ritual *ilī ul īde* "My god, I did not know", they were also performed in various other rituals (Jaques 2015, 258–296). Thus, we lack evidence for the existence of a dedicated ritual tablet associated with these incantations.

The existence of a ritual tablet cannot be explained merely as a result of the accident of survival. One might assume that a ritual tablet was unnecessary; perhaps the ritual practitioners knew the rituals, but not the incantations. However, this does not explain the existence of a ritual tablet in some instances but not others. The possibility cannot be excluded that further ritual tablets may be discovered at some point. However, it seems fairly certain that some incantation-series do not include a ritual tablet due to the fact that they do not represent a fixed sequence of ritual actions. Incantion-series which do not include a ritual tablet can be described as apotropaic or medical. They include incantations which can be used in a variety of ritual contexts;[33] they are not generally restricted to ritual contexts involving a particular time and place. As discussed by B. Böck (2007, 67–69), the *Lam.* series is an exception in this sense; it is a series against a demoness, which includes a ritual tablet.

Utukkū Lemnūtu consists of at least 16 incantations and hymns in its first millenium bilingual "canonical" version. It seems unlikely that this sequence of incantations represents a ritual sequence. Indeed, the organising principle in this composition seems to be thematic. If we assume that the 16 tablets represent a complete composition, a circular "ring composition" may be suggested (Geller 2007, xiii–xviii). Three of the tablets (nos. 2, 10 and 11) are in fact Marduk hymns. According to Lambert (1999), Marduk's Address to the Demons (tablet 11) existed as an independent composition, before it became incorporated into *Utukkū Lemnūtu*. Its considerable length, and other unusual features, make it unique. Furthermore, a commentary was known on Marduk's Address (Frahm 2011, 123–127). One gets the impression of *Utukkū Lemnūtu*, as it exists in this first millenium series, as a sequence of compositions put together as a work of "literature", as well as, or instead of, being a handbook for a ritual specialist. Recently, our honoree has emphasized the practical, therapeutic function of this group of incantations (Geller 2016, 1, 33–42). Whilst I do not disagree, the important question for my purposes, is not whether the incantations and ritual of *Utukkū Lemnūtu* were performed, for which we do indeed have evidence, but whether its serialized form is a product of its performative and/or scholastic functions. My particular interest lies in the nature of textual artifacts and their relationship to performance; an academic motivation may lie behind the production of a manuscript, or a collection of manuscripts, but the incantations and

[33] It is well known that the same incantations, and sequences of incantations, are known from more than one series. However, this applies both to incantation-series which include ritual tablets, and those which do not. *Maqlû* incorporates material from Uš$_{11}$-búr-ru-da, and *Šurpu* incorporates Nam-erím-búr-ru-da material. Similarly, the central parts of *Maqlû* and *Šurpu* are incorporated within *Bīt Rimki* (Sallaberger 2006–2008, 428). *Muššu'u* shares material with Saĝ-gig, Udug-hul and Hul-ba-zi-zi (Böck 2007, 31). Udug-hul/*Utukkū Lemnūtu* shares material with various other incantation types/series (Geller 2016, 5–6).

rituals recorded in the text may have been widely performed at the same time, with or without reference to the manuscript(s).

As mentioned above, the sequence of incantations in incantation-sequences and their associated ritual tablets, where known, do not always match. This is clear in *Mīs Pî* (Walker and Dick 2001, 86–88) and *Bīt salā' mê* (Ambos 2013, 197). However, in these two instances, such discrepancies could be explained as the result of divergent recensions. Unlike the case of *Lam.*, discussed below, there is no manuscript for either of these works, which combines most of the incantations together with their associated ritual instructions. In *Muššu'u* there is clearly an associated ritual tablet, but it seems to be only obliquely related to its associated incantation-series (Böck 2003; Böck 2007, 70–78). Only 17/18 of the 46/47 incantations of the series are cited in the ritual tablet, and the order of incantations in series and ritual tablet do not match. The sequence of incantations in the ritual tablet of *Muššu'u* may be followed in the Assur catalogue of incantation incipits (Geller 2000, 227, text A: i 15'–23'). However, in this instance it is unclear, due to the fact that incantation catalogues do not distinguish between incipits of individual incantations, and the opening incipits of incantation sequences.

Šurpu is a good example of the lack of correspondence between incantation-series and ritual tablet. As discussed by W. G. Lambert (1959–1960), not only does the ritual tablet belong to a different Assur recension. Of even greater significance is the fact that this tablet (*LKA* 91) contains ritual instructions, followed by its associated incantations, cited in a different order than the order just given in the ritual instructions on the same physical tablet. The incantations of *Šurpu* are also cited in a different order to the incantation-series, in the Assur catalogue (Geller 2000, 227, text A: i 1'–4'). These discrepancies can be explained as a result of the confluence of divergent textual traditions, which took place during the process of serialization.[34]

In *Maqlû*, the relationship between series and ritual tablet has been examined by T. Abusch (1992). Abusch shows that the ritual instructions in Nineveh manuscripts do not necessarily agree fully with the ritual sequence implied in the associated incantations. Abusch explains some of the discrepancies as evidence of the expansionist editorial tendencies of Ninevite scribes. According to Abusch, the Nineveh scribes introduced greater detail, inadvertently introducing inconsistencies in the relationship between incantation and ritual tablet. However, in *Maqlû* the arrangement of incantations, and the relationship between incantation-series and ritual tablet differs in some manuscripts (Schwemer 2007, 41–55); but in the "canonical" version, for which the Nineveh manuscripts are most important, the general order of incantations mostly follows the order in the ritual tablet. In addition, as Abusch shows in another study (1991), the rubrics known from certain manuscripts of Tablets II and III mostly agree with the

[34] With reference to *Muššu'u*, Böck (2007, 69) suggests that such discrepancies between series and ritual tablet indicate a certain freedom ("eine gewisse Freiheit") on the part of the ritual practitioners. In my view, such discrepancies are better explained as the result of a divergence between text and performance, as discussed further below.

corresponding instructions in the ritual tablet.[35] In this respect it is important to note that the "canonical" version of *Maqlû* formed a continuous overnight ceremony, performed at the end of the month of Abu (July/August). In the case of other series for which ritual tablets are known, such as *Lam.*, such information is generally lacking.

THE SERIALIZATION OF INCANTATION-SERIES DURING THE FIRST MILLENIUM BCE

Although the wholesale revision of text corpora probably took place during the late second millenium, we can assume that many texts continued to be revised throughout the first millenium.[36] Different traditions existed in the first millenium, at various centres in Babylonia, as well as at Assur, Kalhu, Huzirina (Sultantepe) and Nineveh.[37] In some cases, the differences are extreme; for example, the three successive tablets of incantations and rituals for Ištar and Dumuzi include catch-lines to their following tablets in the Nineveh and Assur versions. The Assur manuscript of "Tablet II" concludes with the catchline to "Tablet I", instead of the expected "Tablet III", as in the Nineveh version; thus it seems the ritual followed radically different sequences at Assur and Nineveh (Farber 1977, 24–26). The "stream of tradition" might appear to be monolithic at Nineveh, but this site should probably be considered as a special case. It is well known that Ashurbanipal had an obsessive ambition to collect as many texts as possible from Babylonia; indeed, this process was already known under Esarhaddon, and it is clear that the appropriation of Babylonian knowledge had already begun in the Middle Assyrian period.[38] Rituals and incantations were the second largest text type collected at Nineveh, second only to divination texts; such texts were

[35] Nevertheless, the degree of convergence between series and ritual tablet in the case of *Maqlû*, is less clear than in series such as *Lam.*, as there is at present no single physical tablet of *Maqlû* upon which both the incantation-series and ritual tablet are written together. A six-columned *dubgallu* tablet of *Maqlû* (A 7876, Abusch and Schwemer 2009) probably contained the entire incantation-series and ritual tablet, but only a fragment of the tablet is preserved.

[36] The uncertainty regarding the date of revision is due to the fact that few incantation or ritual texts can be securely dated to the late second millenium. This is partly due to the imprecision of dating based on script and language alone. For example, tablets from Assur which are written in Babylonian script are often considered to be Middle Babylonian. However, this principle is not universally accepted. For example, ms. Ee of *Lam.* (= VAT 10353) is taken as Middle Babylonian by N. Heeßel, but W. Farber prefers a Neo-Babylonian (!) date (Farber 2014, 15–17).

[37] As E. Robson (2011) argues, if we can accept A. L. Oppenheim's notion of "the stream of tradition" at all, it should be modified to "streams of tradition", to reflect the localized traditions of various centers, as well as the importance of individual agency in the processes of textual transmission. The word "tradition" may be considered problematic in the case of performed texts, such as incantations and prayers, as the written tradition cannot be automatically equated with performed tradition. Thus, it may be more accurate to speak of variant "textualizations" of incantations and prayers, rather than "traditions". However, the problem with the word "textualization" is that it suggests that incantations and prayers originated as oral compositions, which were written down. This may or may not be the case; it is also possible that such compositions were originally composed in written form, and transmitted in written and/oral form.

[38] See for example, the Middle Assyrian manuscripts of rituals and incantations from Assur, which have parallels in first millenium exorcistic literature (Maul 2003). Babylonian scholars are known to have been active in Assur from the 14th century onwards (Wiggermann 2008). This may suggest that the claim in the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic, that the king appropriated Babylonian knowledge, is not entirely fictive.

considered most important for the protection of the realm, and especially the king.[39] Together with this characteristic of Nineveh as a center for the absorption of Babylonian knowledge, there is some evidence that peripheral areas preserved more traditional versions than those known from centers of power such as Nineveh (Worthington 2010, 396). In addition to the copying of Babylonian texts, there is some direct evidence that the scholars of Nineveh compiled or adapted texts, with the approval of the king. For example, the following letter,from the diviners Marduk-šumu-uṣur, Nāṣiru and Tabnî, concerns the revision of a series:

> The series should be rev[ised] (*iš*$^{\text{!}}$*-ka-ru*$^{\text{!}}$ *li-ib-*[*ru-u*]). Let the king command: two "long" tablets (*li-gi-na-a-te*) containing explanations of antiquated words (*ṣa-a-ti*) should be removed, and two tablets of the haruspices' corpus (*ba-ru-te*) should be put (instead). *SAA* 10 177: o. 15–r. 6.

Although the series referred to above is divinatory, we know that incantation-series were also referred to, using the same term (*iškāru*). For example, a letter from Marduk-šākin-šumi, chief exorcist under Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, refers to the performance of the incantation-series *Šurpu* (*SAA* 10 261: r. 3–8). The following letter from the same sender is concerned with the compilation of tablets of unknown incantations or rituals, presumably to form a series:

> As for myself, I am presently [col]lecting all the 30 to 40 "canonical" tablets (*ṭup-pa-a-ni* 30 40 SIG_5.MEŠ) that are relevant to the matter, as well as (all) the existing "non-canonical" ones (*a-ḫi-ú-ti*)[40] that are ever [per]formed (in this connection). *SAA* 10 245: r. 12–18.

Thus, at Nineveh under the Sargonids, it was a priority amongst scholars and the king, to collect, compile and possibly edit, incantations, rituals and divinatory corpora. Of course, this does not mean that such Assyrian editorial activities were entirely new. However, it is striking that the first evidence for the serialization of important incantations and rituals is known first from Nineveh. Apart from *Lam.*, this is known for several other series. For example, the first evidence for the serialization of Namburbi rituals is known from Nineveh, where the series extended to at least 136 tablets. According to S. M. Maul, the Nineveh series is likely to have been created, as an academic exercise, but also as a means of creating an apotropaic collection of tablets for the protection of the king (Maul 1994, 216–221). Similarly, the Ušburruda series, first attested at Nineveh, includes at least 63 tablets (Abusch and Schwemer 2011, 13–14; discussion in Schwemer 2007, 56–61). The serialization of Namburbi and Ušburruda texts seems to have been motivated by the need to protect the king, as well as a scholastic desire to compile corpora, as

[39] On the contents of Ashurbanipal's library, see recently Frame and George 2005; Fincke 2003–2004.

[40] This letter is of added interest due to the fact that it distinguishes tablets which are "canonical" (*damqu*) and "non-canonical" (*aḫû*). In its basic sense *aḫû* means "outside, strange", and the translation "non-canonical" is inappropriate (Rochberg-Halton 1984). It seems that this term signifies material that does not belong to series. However, material which is *aḫû* can also be included within series. It therefore remains a problematic term (see Worthington 2010).

well as to serve the needs of exorcists' performances. Of course, such rituals were performed, as we know from Assyrian court correspondence; but performance cannot be assumed to be the primary motivation for the creation of such serialized ritual texts. This is particularly transparent in the case of Namburbi and Ušburruda texts; the length of their series, together with the fact that their accompanying ritual instructions are usually attached to, or integrated within each individual Namburbi or Ušburruda, shows that their serialization is very unlikely to represent anything like a unified ritual.[41]

A tendency towards organizing and compiling material is well known at Nineveh, even where we cannot speak of a true series. For example, Pazuzu incantations which were previously known from individual Pazuzu heads, were brought together with materials from other apotropaic texts, and put into a specific ritual context at Nineveh (Heeßel 2002, 55). Similarly, the "Kuyunjik Compendium" of incantations and rituals for the calming of babies attests to the organization of materials previously known in individual manuscripts, to form a collection of 27 paragraphs on a single multi-columned tablet (Farber 1989). The same goes for the "Compendium" of 21 incantations on an 8-columned tablet ("Text A" = K.2715+; Schramm 2008), discussed above.

An overall picture of the editorial tendencies of the scholars of Nineveh under the Sargonids, would be a worthy but daunting task, and it is beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is noteworthy that, in several detailed studies of the textual history of *Maqlû*, T. Abusch has presented a view of Ninevite editorial activities, arguing for elongation and the addition of detail, as a key feature of Nineveh manuscripts.[42] In addition to the study of 1992 discussed above, Abusch (2010) argues that a Babylonian manuscript from Nineveh preserves a version older than the standard, expanded version from Nineveh. According to Abusch, this is confirmed by the fact that the order of incantations on this tablet agrees with versions from Sultantepe and Assur. Furthermore, according to Abusch the original Namburbi character of the text, to counter the effects of negative omina, is transformed to form anti-witchcraft incantations in the standard version; however, this process of transformation is already apparent in the Babylonian manuscript. It remains an open question whether the expansion known from Nineveh manuscripts represents an expansion in ritual text, or ritual performance. D. Schwemer (2007, 43) argues for the representation of additional incantations in the ritual tablet of *Maqlû*, as an expansion in practice, not just text. In my view, the overall picture of Ninevite editorial tendencies may suggest that such inclusion of extra detail is motivated by scholarly rather than performative concerns. But the inherent problem in the above analyses, is the fact that the reconstructed editorial history of manuscripts can always be explained as the representation of divergent streams of tradition (written and/or oral streams), and/or individual

[41] Note that Namburbi rituals were transmitted in a variety of formats (Maul 1994, 163–190).

[42] It should be remarked that Abusch's reconstructions of textual history based solely on internal evidence have not been universally accepted. For example, Schwemer (2007, 42–43) argues that what are explained as historical developments may also be explained as differences of individual scribal habits.

scribal idiosyncracies. For this reason, examples of incantation-series with ritual instructions on the same physical tablet are especially valuable. It is for this reason that I have chosen to now look at the case of *Lamaštu*.

LAMAŠTU: A CASE STUDY[43]

Considering the importance of Nineveh for the serialization of incantations and rituals, this picture is only confirmed in the case of *Lam.* Incantations and rituals concerning *Lam.* are known across three millenia, in Sumerian and Akkadian, including areas outside of Mesopotamia such as Ugarit. In fact, it is at Ugarit that the first evidence for the compilation of *Lam.* incantations is known (ms. Ug). However, ms. Ug. is a distinct compilation with no direct parallel, and in fact the majority of second millenium *Lam.* texts are only indirectly related to first millenium versions. In the first millenium, *Lam.* texts begin to be serialized in two versions. The *pirsu* version, attested from Nineveh sources,[44] and named after the Ninevite scholars' use of the term *pirsu* "section", is by far the most well attested. The *ṭuppu* version, named after the Babylonian use of the term *ṭuppu* "tablet", as a means of designating divisions of the series, is much less known. The provenance of its sources includes Babylon, Sippar, Uruk and Assur.

The overall structure of the *Lam.* series in its "canonical" version at Nineveh, consists of three sections (*pirsu*; hereafter called "*Lam.* I/II/III"). The first two sections are sequences of incantations and rituals in a fixed order. The third section is a ritual tablet. The Babylonian *ṭuppu* version may have also consisted of three sections; each section is called a "tablet" (*ṭuppu*). Two of the sections of the *ṭuppu* version are sequences of incantations and rituals, and the third a ritual tablet; however, the sequence of the three tablets in the *ṭuppu* version is not entirely clear. The existence of a ritual tablet in this version is also unclear. The ritual tablet of the *pirsu* version is duplicated partially in a Babylonian manuscript (ms. x),[45] and the existence of a ritual tablet at Assur is assumed due to its citation in an Assur catalogue.[46] Farber remarks that mss. E, F and H which are included in the edition of the ritual tablet of the *pirsu* version, may in fact belong to the *ṭuppu* version, since they are Babylonian texts found at Nineveh. However, this is difficult to ascertain, as they only attest to *Lam.* III. It is only in *Lam.* I and II where the order of incantations and rituals differ substantially in the *pirsu* and *ṭuppu* versions. Using the Nineveh version as a reference, and also assuming Farber's suggested ordering of the two *ṭuppu* tablets is correct,

[43] In the following, references to page numbers are to Farber 2014, unless stated otherwise. Text sigla also refer to Farber's edition of *Lam.* (2014). For the purposes of the following discussion, it is important to bear in mind that upper case manuscript sigla denote Nineveh manuscripts.

[44] The *ṭuppu* version is possibly attested in the fragmentary Sultantepe ms. (ms. M).

[45] Other partial parallel passages to the third *pirsu* may also exist in Babylonian manuscripts, such as ms. Rb and others (see p. 49–50, section 1.2.2.3). There are also various parallels in Babylonian script, of sections of *Lam.* III which may or may not be part of *Lam.*

[46] Geller 2000, 230–231, text A: iv 1'–2': én ^{d}dìm-<me> dumu an-na […] *e-nu-ma né-pe-ši šá* ^{d}dì[m-me *teppušu*].

the ordering of incantations and rituals in the *ṭuppu* version is as follows: (1st? *ṭuppu*) 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13; (2nd? *ṭuppu*) 5, 7. It is worth noting, however, that although the order of incantations and rituals is different in both versions, their content is almost exactly the same.[47]

Thus, the Nineveh *pirsu* version is the main source for the serialization of the series as a fixed order of incantations and rituals, followed directly by a ritual section, *Lam.* III. As already mentioned above, what is particularly striking about this example, is not merely the fact that the sequence of actions in *Lam.* I and II do not agree with *Lam.* III. What is of even greater significance is the fact that all three *pirsu* are attested on a single, six-columned tablet (ms. A). This shows that the discrepancies between the sequence of incantations and rituals in *Lam.* I and II, when compared with the ritual section (*Lam.* III), cannot be explained as the result of divergent recensions. This observation is supported by the other Nineveh manuscripts, as shown on Table 1. Manuscript B is similarly a six-columned tablet, which presumably included *Lam.* I, II and III in its original state; but unfortunately it does not preserve *Lam.* III. Manuscripts C_1, C_2 and C_3 do not belong physically to the same tablet, but according to Farber they belong to the same set of library tablets as ms. A, D_1 and D_2 (p. 20–21). As for the accompanying ritual instructions, their overall consistency across all three *pirsu*-sections in Nineveh manuscripts, is illustrated in Table 2. The overall picture is that a remarkably consistent version of the three *pirsu*-sections was transmitted at Nineveh.[48]

Thus, if the Nineveh recension indeed represents a deliberate, unified series, it is all the more striking to observe the internal inconsistencies between *Lam.* I/II and III. These inconsistencies are illustrated on Tables 3 and 4. The first, and for me most important, implication of these discrepancies, is that the series as it stands does not make sense as a reference work produced solely for the performance of a single, extended *Lam.* ritual. Considering the overall tripartite structure of the work, one might assume that *Lam.* I/II provides the full text of incantations, which are cited only by incipit in *Lam.* III. This may be the case in a sense; however, the fact that the order of incantations and associated rituals is entirely different in *Lam.* I and II shows that *Lam.* I/II cannot have been composed and compiled specifically as a reference for the performance of the ritual outlined on *Lam.* III.

This interpretation is confirmed by an internal analysis of *Lam.* I/II. The incantations and attached rituals of these *pirsu*-sections possess some degree of internal consistency, shown on Table 3 by underlined passages. For example, themes are clearly shared between Inc. 2 and Ritual 2a, Inc. 6 and Ritual 6a, Inc. 8 and Ritual 8. Furthermore, Ritual 7 includes an instruction to write its associated Inc. 7 on a tablet. In addition, Ritual 2a refers to the recitation of "the incantation" (I 30': *minûta tamannūši*

[47] The wording of rituals 7 and 8 differ slightly in their internal order, but they are almost identical in their content.

[48] The fragmentary ms. FsB is the only *Lam.* text from Nineveh preserving a version which cannot be reconciled with the "canonical" version (see p. 37).

"you recite the incantation to her"), which must refer to Inc. 2. These ritual passages are all used in *Lam.* III (see Table 4). However, here they are used in an entirely different context; they are not preceded by their associated incantations.

The integrity of *Lam.* I/II as the original sequence, which preceded the composition of *Lam.* III, can also be observed if the compilation is considered as a deliberately organized structure. The opening and closing incantations (Inc. 1 and 13) both employ the incipit "Dimme, Child of An", although they are different incantations. In addition, the opening and closing incantations are the only ones which specifically indicate in their respective rubrics, that they are to be recited for the protection of a baby. These features may suggest a circular "ring composition", which, as discussed above, was argued for by Geller in the case of *Utukkū Lemnūtu*. The internal development of *Lam.* I/II is also of interest. Inc. 1 was perhaps chosen to open the series due to its popularity; indeed, it is the most well attested *Lam.* incantation on amulets, there being at least 8 exemplars dating to the first millenium (p. 32, 48–49). It is also an introductory text, announcing *Lam.*'s 7 names. Inc. 2 uses the same incipit, but it gradually introduces new themes. The sequence of incantations steadily introduces more complexity, involving references to mythological episodes. Occasionally, a sequential relationship is discernible within the content of contiguous incantations. For example, Inc. 11 describes Anu's dilemma as the father of *Lam.* He needs to find a solution to the problem of *Lam.*'s malicious attacks without murdering his own daughter, so he banishes her to the sea and mountains. Inc. 12 finds another solution, involving the classic Marduk-Ea dialogue. Here, Ea advises his son to deal with the problem of *Lam.* by using the power of incantations, combined with offerings for her onward journey, and a plot to block her inside a range of mountains. Thus, the theme of *Lam.*'s banishment to the mountains connects Inc. 11 and 12.

Following Farber (p. 17), *Lam.* III can be divided into five parts: a) the "dog figurines ritual" (1–28/29); b) the "stones ritual" (30–63); c) "salves and fumigations" (64–75), d) "rubbing" (76–109"); e) the "7 day ritual" (110–135); the "epilogue" (136–138, but not entirely preserved). The *Lam.* incantations in *Lam.* I/II are used in various other ritual contexts, such as the incantation-series *Qutāru* and Zi-pà (p. 47). One manuscript of the *Qutāru* series from Babylon (ms. Ea, p. 47) uses parallel incantations from the *Lam.* Nineveh series. But the interesting thing about this manuscript is that the order of incantations follows the sequence Inc. 2, 3, 7, 6. *Lam.* III only uses, or makes reference to, four incantations from *Lam.* I/II in parts a, b and c of the ritual (see Table 4). In *Lam.* III, 8–28, the instruction includes the writing of Inc. 7 on a tablet. In *Lam.* III, 69–73, Inc. 2, 3 and 6 are to be recited. Thus, it seems that an association between Inc. 2, 3, 7 and 6, known from *Qutāru*, is also known from the opening three parts of *Lam.* III. At the same time, these opening three sections parallel baby rituals, particularly the incantations *zurrugu zurrugu* and *kirišti libi*, as discussed by Farber (p. 29). The following "rubbing" section of *Lam.* III involves the recitation of Inc. 1–13 whilst rubbing the baby from head to feet. This has a direct parallel in

the ritual tablet of *Muššu'u* "Rubbing", which involves the recitation of incantations whilst rubbing the patient from head to feet (Böck 2003). A relationship with *Muššu'u* is further confirmed by the three incantations which directly follow the "rubbing" section of *Lam.* III: saĝ-ba "Oath", *tummu bītu* "Adjured is the house", and ab-ta nam-mu-un-da-ku$_4$-ku$_4$-dè "Do not enter to him through the window". These three incantations occur in the same order at the end of the *Muššu'u* ritual tablet, as remarked by Farber (p. 256). Saĝ-ba is known as a separate group of incantations, but it is also used in *Muššu'u*, *Maqlû* and *Lam.* III (Schramm 2001, 8–9). This standard sequence of incantations is recited at the end of rituals or ritual sections, when surrounding the patient's bed with an apotropaic circle of flour.[49]

CONCLUSION

It seems most likely that *Lam.* I/II were compiled originally, probably in the late second millenium. A ritual tablet was probably added in the *ṭuppu* version, but it was probably not primary. Indeed, it may be significant that *Lam.* texts which parallel the Nineveh version, used in Babylonian schooling during the first millenium, do not include passages from *Lam.* III.[50] According to Farber (2012) these exercises may have been used, not only for scribal education, but also for training or reference in the context of performance. If that is indeed the case, it would suggest the primacy of the incantation-series, as opposed to a ritual tablet, in the context of Babylonian performance practice. At Nineveh, it seems that the order of incantations and rituals in *Lam.* I and II of the *ṭuppu* version was modified. However, as suggested by Farber (p. 20), the revision of *Lam.* I/II at Nineveh was primarily concerned with adapting the sequence of incantations to the "head to feet" ritual action section in *Lam.* III (III 76'–99'). The associated ritual actions of these incantations are entirely omitted from the "head to feet" section of *Lam.* III, and are in fact, displaced to other parts of the ritual in *Lam.* III, together with other additions. The most likely explanation is that the text of incantations and rituals in *Lam.* I/II were perceived to be of such great importance for the effectiveness of rituals against *Lam.* that they should not be changed in their content. However, the scholars of Nineveh must have considered it admissable to change the *order* of texts in *Lam.* I/II to some extent. They also must have considered it admissable to change the order entirely in *Lam.* III, and to add new material to the ritual *pirsu*. Indeed, as discussed above, *Lam.* III is closely

[49] The full set of this standard sequence is attested in the *Muššu'u* ritual tablet (Böck 2003, 6). Indeed, the sequence was standardized to the extent that an abbreviated instruction for its performance seems to be specified in at least one instance (ÉN *a-nam-di* ÉN *adi*(EN) ÉN *t*[*ummu bītu*] "(you recite) the incantation 'I have cast a spell' up to and including '*A*[*djured is the house*]'"; see Abusch and Schwemer 2011, 397–398). *tummu bītu* is unedited, but see provisionally, Wiggermann 1992, 111–112.

[50] Ms. FsL from Sippar is probably a school tablet attesting to a section which corresponds to *Lam.* III, 49–63. But this manuscript does not follow the Nineveh version exactly, and it is for this reason that it is included by Farber amongst other "non-canonical" ritual passages.

related, and perhaps borrows from, other first millenium rituals, such as the baby rituals, *Qutāru*, Zi-pà and *Mušš̆u'u*. Farber (p. 20) argues that the ritual tablet of the *pirsu* version is more ancient, and that *Lam.* I/II were changed to confirm to *Lam.* III, 77–97. Farber's reasoning is based on the fact that the Babylonian Nineveh tablets (E, F, H) of *Lam.* III are known, but none are known for *Lam.* I/II. However, as Farber himself remarks (p. 21), the question remains whether mss. E, F and H represent the *ṭuppu* or *pirsu* versions of *Lam.*

Thus, discrepancies between series and ritual tablet may be explained as the result of the convergence of variant textual streams. The most important point which I have attempted to illustrate here is that such written streams cannot be assumed to correspond exactly to performance practice. The internal inconsistencies in the Nineveh *Lam.* series, demonstrated conclusively by the juxtaposition of conflicting performance sequences on the same physical tablet, can only be explained as a result of the processes of textual transmission. My interpretation of the textual history of Lam. diverges somewhat from Farber's. In my view, the ritual tablet (*Lam.* III) is likely to have represented contemporary performance practice at Nineveh. But the sequences of incantations and rituals in *Lam.* I and II may represent a more ancient Babylonian sequence, which was probably not performed at Nineveh; but it remained integral to the text, only slightly adapted in terms of its internal order, to conform to changing ritual practice. The parallels known from other magic rituals, discussed at the beginning of this paper, suggest that the processes of textual transmission discussed in our case study may not be unique to *Lam.*

Table 1: Incantations Attested on Nineveh Manuscripts

Manuscript A			Manuscript B	
Incantation	*Lam.* I/II	*Lam.* III	*Lam.* I/II	*Lam.* III[51]
1	x	x		
2	x	x		
3		x		
4	x (+rub./rit.)			
5	x			
6		x		
7		x	x	
8	x	x	x	
9		x		
10		x	x	
11		x	x	
12	x	x		
13	(x)[52] (+rub./rit.)	x		

Manuscripts $C_{1–3}$			Manuscripts A/B/$D_{1–2}$/E/F/G/H[53]	
Incantation	*Lam.* I/II	*Lam.* III	*Lam.* I/II	*Lam.* III
1	x	x	x	x
2	x	x	x	x
3		x		x
4	x	x	x	x
5	x	x	x	x
6	x	x	x	x
7	x	x	x	x
8	x	x	x	x
9	x	x	x	x
10	x	x	x	x
11	x	x	x	x
12	x	x	x	x
13	x	x	(x)[54]	x

Incantations only cited in *Lam.* III:

Manuscripts C_3, E, G, H: *zurrugu zurrugu* (“abracadabra”; III 57–60)
kirišti libi (“abracadabra”; III 61–62); rubric (III 63)[55]

Manuscripts A, C_3: udug hul-ĝál saĝ-gaz zi-da “Evil *utukku*-demon, true head-smasher”
saĝ-ba saĝ-ba “Oath, oath”
tummu bītu “Adjured is the house”
ab-ta nam-mu-un-da-ku_4-ku_4-dè “Do not enter to him through the window”
^{d}En.ki lug[al *abzu*$^{?}$] “Enki, kin[g of the Abzu$^{?}$”]

[51] Ms. B (*Lam.* III, 28–34) includes a passage of ritual instructions which has no direct parallel with the ritual instructions on *Lam.* I/II.

[52] Only traces of incantation 13 appear at the end of ms. A. The rubric and ritual instruction do appear.

[53] Mss. E, F and H are in Babylonian script.

[54] Ms. A includes only traces in the last line of incantation 13, which do conform to the other mss.

[55] According to Farber these incantations are “abracadabra”. Van Dijk (1982, 100–101) suggests they are Elamite; indeed, van Dijk compares these incantations to several other incantations concerning Lamaštu which apparently exhibit Elamite influence.

Table 2: Ritual Instructions Attested on Nineveh Manuscripts[56]

Ritual instruction	*Lam.* III	*Lam.* I	*Lam.* II
7	8–28 (A, (B), E, F, G)[57]		61–83 (B, C_2)
8	35–41 (C_3, G)		113–118 (C_2, D_2)
3b	44–45 (C_3, G, H)	58–59 (D_1)	
13	45–46 (C_3, G, H)		ø 212 (A, C_2)
2b	64–66 (C_3, E, H)		
3d	67 (C_3, E, H)	ø 61 (D_1)	
6a	67–68 (C_3, E, H)		28–30 (C_2, D_2)
3c	74 (A, C_3, E, H)	ø 60 (D_1)	
6b	74–75 (A, C_3, E, H)		31–33 (C_2, D_2)
2a	110–118 (A, C_3, E)	23–31 (C_1, D_1)	
3a	119–129 (C_3, E)	47–57 (D_1)	
4	130–135 (C_3, E)	94–99 (A, C_1, D_1)	

Ritual Instruction	Mss. C_3	Mss. $C_{1–2}$	Other Nineveh Mss. *Lam.* I/II and III
2a	x	x	x
2b	x		
3a	x		x
3b	x		x
3c	x		x
3d	x		x
4	x	x	x
6a	x	x	x
6b	x	x	x
7		x	x
8	x	x	x
13	x	x	x

[56] Ritual passages are numbered after their associated incantations on *Lam.* I and II. The table does not include ritual instructions in *Lam.* III which are unknown in *Lam.* I and II. Ritual instructions associated with incantations 1 and 5 are not cited in *Lam.* III. Incantations 9, 10, 11 and 12 do not have associated ritual instructions. The *pirsu* and *ṭuppu* versions of rituals 7 and 8 include significant variants, mainly concerning the sequence of ritual actions; however, their overall content is almost identical in both versions. Here I follow Farber (and Borger's) use of the symbol ø to indicate an inexact parallel. Farber (2014, 45) defines the symbol as "text (or passage) belongs with x; for further information and details see there". Mss. E, F and H are in Babylonian script.

[57] Ms. B includes only one and a half signs at the end of line 28.

Table 3: Ritual Action According to Lam. I and II (pirsu version)[58]

Inc. 1	"Dimme, Child of An…". Invocation of the seven names of Lamaštu.
Rit. 1	You write Inc. 1 on a clay cylinder seal, place it on the baby's neck.
Inc. 2	"Dimme, Child of An…". Ritual content: making Lamaštu hold a black dog, pouring well water for her.
Rit. 2a	Make a figurine of Lamaštu as a prisoner. For Lamaštu: place unsifted flour, libate well water, make her hold a black dog. Make her sit at the head of the sick person for three days. Give her food and travel provisions. Recite "the incantation" (Inc. 2) to her, in the morning, noon and evening. On the **third day**, late afternoon, bury her outside in the corner of the wall.
Rit. 2b	Recipe including bitumen and other materials from a boat. Anoint the patient with the recipe.
Inc. 3	"She is fierce…". Description of Lamaštu's evil deeds. Plea to Šamaš to exert his rulership (over Lamaštu).
Rit. 3a	Make a figurine of Lamaštu. Clothe her, give her comb, distaff, oil. Make four clay donkeys, fill four leather bags with provisions for the donkeys. In the late afternoon, shortly before sunset, move her out into the steppe (*ṣēru*), make her face eastward, surround her with a magic circle. Conjure her (*tutammīši*).
Rit. 3b	Place chaff, pig dung and other materials around the patient's neck.
Rit. 3c	Fumigate the patient with *kukru*-plant and mustard seed.
Rit. 3d	Anoint the patient with cress(?) and *aprušu*-plant.
Inc. 4	"She is clad in scorching heat…". Description of Lamaštu's evil deeds. Conjuring of Lamaštu (*utammīki*) by the great gods.
Rit. 4	Make a figurine of Lamaštu. Have her sit at the head of the patient. Stick a dagger in a vessel. Place the vessel at the head of the patient for three days. On the **third day**, in late afternoon, take her outside and strike her with the dagger. Bury her in the corner of the city wall. Surround her with a magic circle.
Inc. 5	"Dimme, Child of An…". Long description of Lamaštu's evil deeds and appearance. Request for Lamaštu to target animals instead of humans, and to accept travel provisions provided.
Rit. 5	Make a figurine of Lamaštu. Make a clay donkey. Provide travel provisions. Variation on Rit. 2a and 3a.
Inc. 6	"I am casting a spell…". Ritual content: reference to cloth and pig's lard.
Rit. 6a	Rub the patient with a mixture including soiled cloth and lard from a white pig.
Rit. 6b	Fumigate with unsifted flour, *šušikillu*-onions, snake skin etc.
Inc. 7	"Fierce is the daughter of Anu…". Description of Lamaštu. Reference to narrative including the text of Asalluhi's incantation against Lamaštu "Be gone to the mountain which you love" (*atlakī ana šadî ša tarammī*), within Inc. 7.
Rit. 7	Make a tablet, write Inc. 7 on it. Hang the tablet at the head of the bed. Make clay dogs, write inscriptions on the model dogs, place them in positions near or at the door.
Inc. 8	"She is fierce…". Description of Lamaštu. Reference to narrative including dialogue with Enlil. Conjuring of Lamaštu (*utammīki*) by *ḫarbu*-plough and seeder-plough.
Rit. 8	Make coils from wool, donkey, pig, centipede, *ḫarbu*-plough and seeder-plough. Hang the coils around the patient's neck.
Inc. 9	"She is fierce…". Description of Lamaštu. Plea to Šamaš to exert his rulership (over Lamaštu).
Inc. 10	"Oh Lamaštu, daughter of Anu…". Description of Lamaštu.
Inc. 11	"I am the daughter of Anu from heaven…". Dialogue between Lamaštu (first person) and her father, Anu. Instead of killing his daughter, Anu wishes Lamaštu to leave, preferably to the sea or a high mountain.
Inc. 12	"She is monstrous, the Daughter of Anu…". Long description of Lamaštu. Ea-Asalluhi dialogue. Ea tells Asalluhi/Marduk to use incantations against Lamaštu, and to give Lamaštu travel provisions. Asalluhi/Marduk is also directed to build canals and mountains to stop Lamaštu getting near to the patient.
Inc. 13	"Dimme, the child of An…". Request that Lamaštu leaves.
Rit. 13	Rub the patient with a potion including *azallû*-plant. Place *azallû*-plant around the patient's neck.

[58] The contents of ritual instructions and incantations are summarized, including only what I consider the most salient points. Underlined passages indicate agreement between Incantation and ritual instructions, in terms of ritual content. Note that Rit. 2a, Rit. 4 and Rit. 5 are each 3-day rituals.

Table 4: Ritual Action According to Lam. III (pirsu version)[59]

1. 1–7: Draw a representation of Lamaštu at or near the door of the bedroom.
2. 8–28: (**Rit. 7**) Make a tablet, write **Inc. 7** on it. Hang the tablet at the head of the bed. Install clay dogs.
3. 29–35: Prepare a cord of stones. Place the cord around the patient's neck.
4. 35–41: (**Rit. 8***) Make coils from wool, donkey, pig and other materials.
5. 42–43: Combine the cord of stones with the coils. Attach materials to the neck of the patient.
6. 44–45: (**Rit. 3b**) Place chaff, pig dung and other materials around the patient's neck.
7. 45–46: (**Rit.13***) Place *azallû*-plant (on white cord) around the patient's neck.
8. 47–63: String stones onto wool cords, tie the cords to the patient's hands and feet. Recite (7 times) the incantations ***zurrugu zurrugu*** and ***kirišti libi*** over the stones.
9. 64–66: (**Rit. 2b**) Recipe for anointment, including bitumen and other materials from a boat.
10. 67: (**Rit. 3d***) Anoint the patient with *aprušu*-plant and azullû-plant.
11. 67–78: (**Rit. 6a**) Anoint the patient with donkey's hide, fuller's paste, soiled cloth, fish, lard from a white pig.
12. 69–73: Recite **Inc. 2, 3 and 6**, three times over the ointment.
13. 74: (**Rit. 3c**) Fumigate with *kukru*-plant and mustard seed.
14. 74–75: (**Rit. 6b**) Fumigate with unsifted flour, *šušikillu*-onions, snake skin etc.
15. 76–99: When you rub (*tumašša'u*) the baby, recite:
    Inc. 1 over his head
    Inc. 2 over his neck
    Inc. 3 over his right hand
    Inc. 4 over his left hand
    Inc. 5 over his chest and abdomen
    Inc. 7 and 6 over his back
    Inc. 8, 9, 10 and 11 over his right foot
    Inc. 12 and 13 over his left foot
16. 100–104: Recite **Inc. 6** over three fumigations, place them by the door and bed. Hold an *e'ru*-stick and palm shoot to his head.
17. 104–106: Recite **udug hul-ĝál saĝ-gaz zi-da** "Evil *utukku*-demon, true head-smasher". Then place (the *e'ru*-stick and palm shoot) next to his head. Then surround the bed with a flour circle.
18. 107–109: Recite **saĝ-ba saĝ-ba** "Oath, oath", ***tummu bītu*** "Adjured is the house", **ab-ta nam-mu-un-da-ku$_4$-ku$_4$-dè** "Do not enter to him through the window" and **^{d}En-ki lug[al *abzu*$^{?}$]** "Enki, kin[g of the Abzu…]"
19. 110–118: (**Rit. 2a***) <u>On the first day, in the evening</u>, you make a figurine of Lamaštu as a prisoner. For Lamaštu: place unsifted flour, libate well water, make her hold a black dog. Make her sit at the head of the patient for three days. Give her food and travel provisions. Recite "the incantation" (Inc. 2?) to her, in the morning, noon and evening. On the **third day**, in the late afternoon, bury her outside in the corner of the wall.
20. 119–129: (**Rit. 3a***) <u>On the fourth day</u>, you make a figurine of Lamaštu. Clothe her, give her comb, distaff, oil. Make four clay donkeys, fill four leather bags with provisions for the donkeys. In late afternoon, shortly before sunset, move her out into the steppe, make her face eastward, surround her with a magic circle, conjure her.
21. 130–135: (**Rit. 4$^{(*)}$**) <u>[On the fifth day]</u>, you make a figurine of Lamaštu. Have her sit at the head of the patient. Stick a dagger in a vessel containing ashes. Place the vessel at the head of the patient for 3 days. On the **third day**, in late afternoon, take her outside and strike her with the dagger. Bury her in the corner of the city wall. Surround her with a magic circle, (but) you must not look back.
22. 136–138: Direction concerning the wet nurse and the sick baby's salves.

(The remaining text is broken. Lacuna of up to five lines.)

[59] The contents of ritual instructions and incantations are summarized, including only what I consider the most salient points. Asterisks indicate significant variations in ritual instructions, compared to *Lam.* I and II. Underlined passages indicate the most significant additions to such instructions. Ritual instructions which only appear in *Lam.* III are left unmarked. Note that Rit. 2a and Rit. 4 are each 3-day rituals, as in Lam. I/II.

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