

THE REVISION OF BABYLONIAN ANTI-WITCHCRAFT
INCANTATIONS: THE CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF
INCANTATIONS IN THE CEREMONIAL SERIES *MAQLÛ**

Tzvi Abusch

Introduction

In this paper, I shall try to shed some further light on modes of revision of Akkadian incantations. Individual incantations were not static and often took on more than one form. We know of the existence of these forms through several means. Sometimes, we actually have extant variant forms of an incantation that are similar enough to indicate a genetic relationship but sufficiently different to suggest that they had separate identities.¹ In other instances, internal tensions or inconsistencies in a text suggest that the preserved text was produced by the revision of an earlier version. In the latter instance, we establish the existence of different forms of the text by means of a critical analysis that focuses primarily upon the aforementioned internal tensions or inconsistencies.

Elsewhere, I have compared extant forms of individual incantations (and expect to do so again).² Here, I shall discuss some results obtained through critical analysis of incantations in the Akkadian magical series *Maqlû*, "Burning." This series is the longest and most important Mesopotamian composition concerned with combating witchcraft; its text served as the script of a ceremonial performance. *Maqlû* contains a

* This paper was first drafted while I was a member of the Institute for Advanced Studies, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, during the spring and summer of 2006. I am grateful to the institute and its staff for their support and hospitality, to the other members of the research group "Occult Powers and Officiants in Near Eastern Cultures" for their collegiality, and to Brandeis University for supplementary support. Versions of this paper were read at the institute's conference "Continuity and Innovation in the Magical Tradition," Jerusalem, July 2006, as well as at the 217th meeting of the American Oriental Society, San Antonio, 2007.

¹ In some instances, we must try to determine whether the differences are no more than performance or aesthetic variants.

² See, e.g., my *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature: Case Studies*, BJS 132, (Atlanta, 1987 [a revised version of my 1972 Harvard dissertation]), pp. 9–44 (see below).

ritual tablet and eight incantation tablets that record the text of almost one hundred incantations directed against witches and witchcraft. The present form of the text seems to be a creation of the early first millennium BCE, the standard long text having developed from an earlier short form by means of a series of sequential changes. A critical examination of many of the incantations in *Maqlû* (as in other Mesopotamian series, collections, and shorter rituals) would produce interesting literary and/or textual results, but those on which we focus our attention here were re-studied recently because of problems encountered during the latest stage of editing and translating the series.³ In the course of this recent work, a number of incantations were subjected anew to critical analysis; this close and detailed study led to some new results as well as to the confirmation of some earlier impressions.

I shall present here only a few of these results. I shall discuss two incantations that may be said to have undergone expansion. These incantations contain interpolations that enumerate evil forces or destructive actions associated with the witch. These interpolations are in the form of lists, and their inclusion is marked off by repetitive resumptions.⁴

The reconstruction of stages of development of an incantation through critical analysis starts from the premise that an incantation should and will normally exhibit a coherence of thought and congruence between its parts. Such qualities are to be expected of relatively short literary works produced by a single composer. But sometimes a single incantation contains multiple motifs, sections, or just lines that are not wholly congruent, that are repetitive and/or awkward, that may even be contradictory, or that are at home in different incantation types or compositions. The mixture of non-congruent materials should usually be understood as a consequence of development or alteration.⁵

³ Whereas in previous studies, I followed the line division and count in the edition of *Maqlû* by G. Meier, *Die assyrische Beschwörungssammlung Maqlû*, AfO Beiheft 2 (Berlin, 1937), and "Studien zur Beschwörungssammlung Maqlû," AfO 21 (1966): 71–81, in this study I follow the line count of my own forthcoming edition; this new line count has now been used also in T. Abusch and D. Schwemer, "Das Abwehrzauberritual *Maqlû* ('Verbrennung')," in B. Janowski and G. Wilhelm, (eds.), *Omina, Orakel, Rituale und Beschwörungen*, Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments, Neue Folge 4 (Gütersloh, 2008), pp. 128–186.

⁴ For an alternative hypothesis regarding the formation of these incantations, see the final paragraphs of this paper.

⁵ See my "Water into Fire: The Formation of Some Witchcraft Incantations," *Mesopotamian Witchcraft: Towards a History and Understanding of Babylonian Witchcraft Beliefs and Literature*, AMD 5 (Leiden, 2002), pp. 197–198.

While it is true that the incongruity of parts in an incantation may be due to the utilization of frozen traditional blocks or segments in the initial formation of the incantation, this incongruity is more often due to the revision of an already existing incantation. The revision may be part of a general tendency or development, or it may be no more than an idiosyncratic creation.

The revision of an incantation and incorporation therein of new materials (and the creation thereby of incongruence) are due to such factors as: the adaptation of a text for a new purpose; the correlation of an incantation with a new or added ritual action; the integration of a simple text into a new, more complex, and larger ideological and/or ritual framework; the adaptation of a text to new religious beliefs or cognitive/intellectual norms. In more general terms, one may say that often the change of a text will reflect a change of ideas, a change of purpose, and/or a change of ritual usage. Overall, these changes are functions of developments in the areas of religious thought and literary norms.

Over the years I have identified many relatively simple examples of change, changes that are easily comprehensible because the revision involved no more than the insertion of a line or two.⁶ But the two *Maqlû* incantations here considered, Tablet II 19–75 and Tablet IV 1–79, will be seen to contain expansions and interpolations of significant length. In these instances, change seems to have produced a complex text; however, because the insertions are relatively long and in list form, the revisions are often more easily identifiable than some other revisions that are also extensive but more subtle. Moreover, in these incantations, the interpolations are marked off by a repetitive resumption, a device often referred to by the technical term *Wiederaufnahme*. This term refers to the fact that when a digression of a thematic or generic nature had sundered connections in a text, a redactor might repeat in identical or similar words lines of the text that preceded the break created by the interpolation.⁷ A *Wiederaufnahme* is a particularly

⁶ See, e.g., “Water into Fire,” pp. 198–199.

⁷ See, e.g., M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 84–86 (note particularly the references in p. 85, n. 19) as well as A. Rofé, *The Prophetic Stories* (Jerusalem, 1988), p. 63, n. 13. But note that a *Wiederaufnahme* may also be an authorial feature “when an inclusio is involved. The latter is manifestly a stylistic device which frames a text and marks its own integrity: it does not mark off another literary unit” (Fishbane, p. 86). It is also a narrative-strategic device (see, e.g., M. Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* [Bloomington, 1985], p. 414). See also J. H. Tigay, “Evolution of the

useful analytic signal, for sometimes it is one of the initial indicators of an interpolation, and in the right circumstances, its existence serves to confirm the analysis that a text had been expanded by means of insertions.

But before turning to the two aforementioned incantations, I would reiterate that the evidence underlying our conclusion that incantations in *Maqlû* may sometimes be revised by means of interpolation and expansion is not simply limited to the results of critical analysis; it is evident in the manuscript tradition as well. For when we examine the manuscripts of incantations that contain lists or enumerations, we occasionally find that some of the manuscripts do not contain the list or contain shorter versions thereof. Three examples suffice to illustrate this point: *Maqlû* III 1–30, V 26–35, and VII 114–140. It should be noted that like the incantations studied in this essay, the expansions in *Maqlû* III 1–30 and V 26–35 are also set off by a *Wiederaufnahme*.

The first half of *Maqlû* III 1–30 describes the actions of a witch. *SpBTU* 3, 74a, a Babylonian manuscript from Uruk, omits lines 8–14. By itself, this omission might be explained as a haplography, but it is more likely that the Uruk manuscript represents an early form of the text. The theme of lines 8–13 is incongruous with that of the surrounding lines. For while those lines describe the witch's attack upon the commercial life by means of her spittle, lines 8–13 describe the witch's attack upon the sexuality of the young people of the town by means of her glance. Line 14, moreover, repeats three of the four words found in line 7. Given the thematic incongruity between the two sections and the repetition of line 7 in line 14, the omission of lines 8–14 in *SpBTU* 3, 74a attests to the fact that lines 8–13 were a later insertion and that line 14 was then added as a *Wiederaufnahme* for the purpose of reconnecting parts of the text that were sundered by the insertion, thereby resuming the commercial description of the original text.⁸

The incantation *Maqlû* V 19–47 contains (in lines 26–35) a list of destructive actions that are wished upon the witch and her witchcraft;

Pentateuchal Narratives," in J. H. Tigay, (ed.), *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism* (Philadelphia, 1985), pp. 48–49 and idem, "Conflation as a Redactional Technique," *ibid.*, pp. 69, 74, and n. 46 for *Wiederaufnahme* as an editorial device; and idem, "Conflation," p. 74, n. 46 for *Wiederaufnahme* as an authorial device.

⁸ For a detailed presentation of this argument, see my "Maqlû III 1–30: Internal Analysis and Manuscript Evidence for the Revision of an Incantation," in M. Luukko, et al., (eds.), *Of God(s), Trees, Kings, and Scholars: Neo-Assyrian and Related Studies in Honour of Simo Parpola*, *Studia Orientalia* 106 (Helsinki, 2009), pp. 307–313.

each verbal action is compared to a plant because the verb is similar to the name of the plant and forms a word play. For example, line 32: *kīma ḥašē liḥaššūši kišpūša*, “Like a cress plant may her witchcraft pierce her.” This section is absent in the fragment K 18618, which probably is part of the Babylonian manuscript K 2436 + K 6006 (+) K 5349 + K10161 (+) K 18618 (+) Sm 388 (+) Sm 741 + 2069.⁹ And we note that in the texts in which it appears, this section is set off by a *Wiederaufnahme*, for both it and the following section begin (lines 26 and 36) with the address *epišti u muštēpišti*, “my sorceress and the woman who instigates sorcery against me.” That the absence of lines 26–35 in the Babylonian manuscript is not simply due to haplography is evident from the fact that in the expanded text this section disturbs the development of a theme based upon forms of the word *nabalkutu*, “to turn against” (19–25 [see 21], 36ff. [see 37–39]).

An example even more similar to those studied in this paper is provided by the expansion of *Maqlû* VII 114–140. Already in a paper presented to the American Oriental Society in 1970 and worked out in greater detail in my 1972 dissertation,¹⁰ I argued that this *Maqlû* incantation was created by the insertion of a lengthy list of evils into a base incantation like K 7594: 1’–8’ (//KAR 165, rev. 1’–4’)—thus VII 118–129 (as well as some lines following the central ritual in line 130) were an expansion. At the time, I imagined that the development took place prior to the incorporation of the incantation in *Maqlû*, an opinion that seemed reasonable in view of the length of the insertion. What I could not know then was that K 7594 was actually part of *Maqlû*. Recently, J. Fincke joined this Babylonian fragment to a Babylonian manuscript that I had pieced together over many years (K 5350 + 5374 + 7594 + 7610 + 7476 + 7631 + 8882 + 9635 + 11567 + 19154 + Sm 798b).¹¹ Accordingly, the development must have taken

⁹ I am indebted to Daniel Schwemer for the knowledge of K 18618; he noticed that this fragment supported the argument presented in this paper and communicated it to me.

¹⁰ See Abusch, *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature*, pp. 13–44. I there referred to this incantation as VII 119–146 in accordance with Meier’s line count.

¹¹ Even without K 7594, this manuscript presented such a deviant and problematic text that I questioned one of the joins and was even tempted in summer 1994 to break it in order to have it retested; I was only prevented from doing so when an additional join that I made that same summer indicated that my earlier reconstruction had to be right.

place not before the composition of *Maqlû* but in the course of its transmission.¹²

I am not unaware that the shorter/earlier manuscript in each of the three cases just cited is Babylonian—this is almost certainly significant.

Analysis

I now turn to the analysis of *Maqlû* II 19–75 (A) and IV 1–79 (B).¹³

A. *Maqlû* Tablet II 19–75¹⁴

19. Incantation. O Girra, perfect lord, “You are the light,” (thus) your name is invoked,
20. You illumine the houses of all the gods,
21. You illumine the totality of all the lands.
22. Because you are present for me and
23. Decide lawsuits in the stead of Šin and Šamaš,
24. Judge my case, render my verdict.
25. For your bright light, all the people await you (hence)
26. For your pure torch, I turn to you, I seek you.
27. Lord, I seize your hem,
28. I seize the hem of your great divinity,
29. I seize the hem of my god and my goddess,
30. I seize the hem of my city god and my city goddess.
31. [...] have pity on me, O lord. The witch has (now) roared at me like a drum.
32. She has seized my head, my neck, and my skull,
33. She has seized my seeing eyes,
34. She has seized my walking feet,
35. She has seized my crossing knees,

¹² In light of the new evidence, I have now restudied *Maqlû* VII 114–140 and subjected it and the related *Maqlû* VII 57–79 to a detailed analysis; see my “A Neo-Babylonian Recension of *Maqlû*: Some Observations on the Redaction of *Maqlû* Tablet VII and on the Development of Two of its Incantations,” in J. C. Fincke, (ed.), *Festschrift für Gernot Wilhelm anlässlich seines 65. Geburtstages am 28. Januar 2010* (Dresden, 2010), pp. 1–16.

¹³ For transcriptions of the Akkadian of these incantations, see the Excursus to this paper.

¹⁴ My translation assumes that a preterite form of the verb may sometimes function as a performative present.

36. She has seized my (load) bearing arms.
37. Now in the presence of your great divinity,
38. Two crisscrossed bronze figurines
39. Of my warlock and my witch,
40. Of my sorcerer and the woman who instigates sorcery against me,
41. Of my male and female encirclers,
42. Of my male and female poisoners,
43. Of the male and female who are enraged at me,
44. Of my male and female enemies,
45. Of my male and female persecutors,
46. Of my male and female litigants,
47. Of my male and female accusers,
48. Of my male and female adversaries,
49. Of my male and female slanderers,
50. Of my male and female evildoers,
51. Who have given me over to a dead man, who have made me experience hardship—
52. Be it an evil demon, be it an evil spirit,
53. Be it an evil ghost, be it an evil constable,
54. Be it an evil god, be it an evil lurker,
55. Be it Lamaštu, be it Labāšu, be it Aḥḥāzu (jaundice),
56. Be it Lilû, be it Lilitu, be it Ardat-Lilî,
57. Be it *li'bu*-illness, the seizure of the mountain,
58. Be it *bennu*-epilepsy, the spawn of Šulpa'ea,
59. Be it *antašubba* ("fallen from heaven")-epilepsy, be it *Lugalurra*-epilepsy,
60. Be it Hand of a god, be it Hand of a goddess,
61. Be it Hand of a ghost, be it Hand of a curse,
62. Be it Hand of mankind, be it young Lamaštu, the daughter of An,
63. Be it *Saḡḥulhaza*-demon, the attendant who provides evil,
64. Be it swelling, paralysis, numbness,
65. Be it anything evil that has not been named,
66. Be it anything that performs harm to humanity,
67. That seizes me and constantly pursues me night and day,
68. Afflicts my flesh, seizes me all day,
69. And does not let go of me all night.
70. Now in the presence of your great divinity,
71. In pure sulfur, I am burning them, I am scorching them.
72. Look at me, O lord, and uproot them from my body,
73. Release their evil witchcraft.

74. You, Girra, are the lord, the one who goes at my side,
 75. Keep me well, that I may declare your great deeds and sing your praises.

Maqlû II 19–75 is a rather long incantation. It begins with a hymnic invocation of the fire god Girra, followed by a statement that the victim is turning to this god for judgment and is taking hold of the fringe of his garment as well as the fringes of other gods related to the victim (19–30). Then, in lines 31–69, the speaker describes what the witches have done to him. This is a rather long description and is actually made up of several lists: First, the speaker states that the witch has attacked and seized various parts of his body (32–36). He then proclaims that now, in the presence of the fire god, he is presenting two crisscrossed figurines of bronze (37–38). These figurines are designated as representing the witch; here follows a long list of names of different kinds of witches (39–50), each pair introduced by the determinative-relative pronoun *ša*, “of” (e.g., *ša kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya*, “of my warlock and my witch”). The list culminates in a one-line general description (line 51) of the harm to which the witches have subjected the victim: “who have given me over to a dead man, who have made me experience hardship.” Lines 52–66 form a long list of demons and illnesses that likewise culminates in a description (lines 67–69) of how evil forces have seized and held on to the victim night and day. In lines 70–71, the speaker again says that he is performing the ritual act in the presence of the divinity, and here he states that he is burning the figurines in sulfur. In lines 72–73, he then asks for divine assistance—namely, that his lord look upon him and extirpate the evils (lit. “them”) from his body and release their evil witchcraft. The text ends in lines 74–75 with a final invocation and promise of praise.

The text presents a number of structural and logical difficulties. The very length of the combined lists is problematic. More specifically, the following questions are among those that need to be answered: What is the function of lines 32–36, the section that describes how the witch has seized her victim? What relationship obtains between the list of witches and the act described in line 51? What relationship obtains between the list of demons and the preceding witchcraft section, generally, and line 51, specifically? What is the relationship of the list of demons to the description of activities in lines 67–69? Clearly, the most notable difficulties are those caused by the list of demons and illnesses (lines 52–66). These difficulties are of both a syntactic and a conceptual nature. The syntactic difficulty is due to the fact that the list

seems disconnected from its surrounding context and forms a parenthesis. The conceptual difficulty is occasioned by the very existence of a list of demons and illnesses (lines 52–66) here in a witchcraft ritual, for witches and demons are of different natures, the former human, the latter supernatural, and the absence of a clear syntactic connection means that the text does not state clearly what their relationship might be.

It is *a priori* probable that an oral rite containing several lists—particularly lists that disrupt the logical flow of the text—has undergone significant expansion and revision and that one or more of the lists were inserted secondarily into the incantation. This seems to be confirmed by the existence in lines 37–39 and 70–71 of a structuring *Wiederaufnahme* (repetitive resumption) surrounding the lists in lines 40–69:

enenna ina maḥar ilūtika rabīti (37)

šina ṣalmī siparri etgurūti (38)

(ša kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya) (39)

enenna ina maḥar ilūtika rabīti (70)

ina kibrīti elleti aqallišunūti ašarrapšunūti (71)

Now, in the presence of your great divinity,

Two crisscrossed bronze figurines

(of my warlock and my witch)...

Now, in the presence of your great divinity,

In pure sulfur, I am burning them, I am scorching them.

The existence of long lists and of a *Wiederaufnahme* indicates that the long central part of the text is made up of secondary elements. But let us first study the *Wiederaufnahme* and see its implications, leaving for later an examination of the lists. The *Wiederaufnahme* is realized by the repetition of line 37 as line 70. The inclusion of lists in lines 39–69 caused line 71 to be separated from lines 37–38—that is, the lists resulted in the separation of parts of a ritual statement from each other. Such a statement would have read:

37. *enenna ina maḥar ilūtika rabīti*

38. *šina ṣalmī siparri etgurūti*

39. *ša kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya*

71. *ina kibrīti elleti aqallišunūti ašarrapšunūti.*

37. Now, in the presence of your great divinity,

38. Two crisscrossed bronze figurines

39. Of my warlock and my witch

71. In pure sulfur, I am burning (them), I am scorching (them).

The text of II 77–103, the very next incantation in Tablet II, follows a ritual sequence comparable to the one just reconstructed for our incantation:

*enenna ina maḥar ilūtika rabīti
šina ṣalmī kaššāpi u kaššāpti ša siparri ēpuš qātukka
maḥarka uggiršunūtima kâša aḩqidka* (II 91–93)

Now, in the presence of your great divinity,
By your power I have fashioned two bronze figurines of the warlock
and witch,
In your presence I cross them, and to you I give them.

This later incantation is also to the fire god. It thus supports the contention that lines 37–38 (and very likely line 39: *ša kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya*, “of my warlock and my witch” [but see below]) and line 71 belong together, and that such a ritual statement constituted the original kernel of the text of II 19–75.

Thus, originally, the statement “now in the presence of your great divinity, two crisscrossed bronze figurines of my warlock and witch” would have been followed immediately by the description of ritual activity presently found in line 71: “In pure sulfur, I am burning (them), I am scorching (them).” But the insertion of various lists between lines 39 and 71 would have broken the connection (perhaps even splitting off the first part of the sentence [38–39] from its closing [71] and leaving the objects in 38–39 (*šina ṣalmī siparri etgurūti...*, “two crisscrossed bronze figurines...”) disconnected from the verbs that governed them (*aḩqallišunūti ašarrapšunūti*, “I am burning them, I am scorching them”)), and the redactor would have felt the need to recreate the connection. For this reason, line 37 is repeated as line 70; this *Wiederaufnahme* refocuses the speech on the ritual and thus reconnects elements of the ritual that had been sundered by the major digressions.

It should be noted that a non-canonical or variant form of the incantation supports this analysis. In place of the form of line 38 of the canonical text, *KAR 240* reads: *šina ṣalmī siparri etgurūti ušēpiš*, “Two crisscrossed bronze figurines of the warlock and witch I have had fashioned.” This version has *ušēpiš*, “I have had fashioned,” where the standard text has nothing. Regardless of whether we consider *ušēpiš* to be original or an addition, the reading *ušēpiš* supports the argument that the incantation has experienced a major interpolation that disrupted the incantation and split up the description of the ritual: Either *ušēpiš*

is secondary and was added in order to provide a verb to a statement that no longer had one, or it is original and the verb in line 38 was dropped so that as the present introduction of a long list of witches, line 38 might have the proper form of a header rather than serve as a verbal expression or description of the ritual.¹⁵

Having seen that the text has experienced major expansion and structural modification by means of interpolations, we should now turn our attention to the lists themselves. Let us deal with them in order.

Immediately prior to the description of the ritual, a list (lines 32–36) describes how the witch has seized the various parts of the victim's body. In addresses to gods, the description of the evils that the witch has done against the speaker usually precedes the statement of the ritual act that he is undertaking against the witch. Thus if, for example, we look again to the incantation that follows ours in Tablet II (an incantation which, as we have seen, evinces similarities to the incantation under study), we find that the speaker in lines 87–89 recites the foul deeds of the witch immediately prior to his ritual statement in the previously quoted lines 91–93:

I have been attacked by witchcraft, and so I stand before you,
I have been cursed in the presence of god, king and lord, and so I come
toward you,
I have been made sickening in the sight of anyone who beholds me, and
so I bow down before you.

This suggests that also in our incantation, the description of the witch seizing the victim that appears prior to the ritual was part of the original text.

But if lines 32–36 are primary, the same cannot be said of the lists of witches and demons. That it is unnecessary to list a long series of witches is indicated, for example, by the ritually similar II 92, cited above: *šina ṣalmī kaššāpi u kaššāpti ša siparri ēpuš qātukka*, “By your power I have fashioned two bronze figurines of the warlock and the witch,” where the mention of only the *kaššāpi u kaššāpti*, “the warlock

¹⁵ Personally, I think that the verb is original to the text, for that form of the text is easier, even though the argument that it was needed to reconnect sundered lines might serve my analysis better.

and the witch,” suffices and seems natural.¹⁶ The present list in II 39–50 is an example of a standard expanded list (for which, see, e.g., *Maqlû I* 73–86¹⁷ and *AfO* 18 [1957–58], 289: 1–5). It is possible, therefore, that the first pair, the warlock and witch (*ša kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya*, line 39), was original and that a standard series of pairs of different kinds of “witches” drawn from a standard list was added on to it, though we cannot exclude the possibility that line 39 was also secondary and that a full list comprising the standard series of pairs was inserted as lines

¹⁶ Note, moreover, that the version of our incantation preserved in *KAR* 240 does not contain lines 40–41 and skips from line 39 to line 42. This omission further suggests that the list of witches itself was built up over time, for the sequence *kaššāpu*, “warlock,” + *rāḥû*, “poisoner” (39+42: *kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya + rāḥīya u rāḥītiya*) seems to be an earlier one (see, e.g., VI 127 // 135: *e kaššāptiya lû rāḥḥātiya*, “Ha! my witch, my poisoner,” and cf. the many cases where we have just *kišpû ruḥû*, “witchcraft, spittle” [e.g., VII 161] and not the standard longer sequence). Assuming that line 39 existed in the original text (which in itself is not certain), lines 42ff may have been added first, and only later lines 40–41.

¹⁷ *Maqlû I* 73–86 reads:

73. ÉN ^dnuska annûtu ṣalmû ēpišiya
 74. annûtu ṣalmû ēpišiya
 75. ṣalmû kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya
 76. ṣalmû ēpišiya u muštēpišiya
 77. ṣalmû sāḥiriya u sāḥirtiya
 78. ṣalmû rāḥīya u rāḥītiya
 79. ṣalmû bēl ikkiya u bēlet ikkiya
 80. ṣalmû bēl šerriya u bēlet šerriya
 81. ṣalmû bēl rīdiya u bēlet rīdiya
 82. ṣalmû bēl dīniya u bēlet dīniya
 83. ṣalmû bēl amātiya u bēlet amātiya
 84. ṣalmû bēl dabābiya u bēlet dabābiya
 85. ṣalmû bēl egerreya u bēlet egerreya
 86. ṣalmû bēl lemuttiya u bēlet lemuttiya

73. Incantation. O Nuska, these are the figurines of my sorcerer,
 74. These are the figurines of my sorceress,
 75. The figurines of my warlock and my witch,
 76. The figurines of my sorcerer and the woman who instigates sorcery against me,
 77. The figurines of my male and female encirclers,
 78. The figurines of my male and female poisoners,
 79. The figurines of the male and female who are enraged at me,
 80. The figurines of my male and female enemies,
 81. The figurines of my male and female persecutors,
 82. The figurines of my male and female litigants,
 83. The figurines of my male and female accusers,
 84. The figurines of my male and female adversaries,
 85. The figurines of my male and female slanderers,
 86. The figurines of my male and female evildoers.

39–50.¹⁸ That a standard series of pairs of different kinds of “witches” was added here receives further support from the fact that whereas a description of what the witches have done follows only after the enumeration in the other texts that contain the list, here we find descriptions both before (31–36) and after (51).

Line 51 describes the harm to which the witches have subjected the victim. But let us leave for later the discussion of line 51, which is best discussed alongside lines 67–69, and turn instead to the list of demons and illnesses in lines 52–66. This list is set off from the previous list of witches by the non-human nature of the entries and by the introduction of each entry by means of *lū*, “be it,” rather than by the determinative-relative pronoun *ša*, “of,” that introduces each pair of witches. Were the witches and demons part of one list, we would have expected also the demons to have been introduced by *ša*, as is the case, for example, in *anašši dipāru*, “I am raising the torch,” the last incantation in Tablet I, and therefore for our text to have read something like “figurines of my warlock and my witch, of my sorcerer and the woman who instigates sorcery against me, of my male and female encirclers, etc. . . ., of an evil demon, of an evil spirit, of an evil ghost, of an evil constable, of an evil god, of an evil lurker, etc. . . .”¹⁹ In addition, each list is characterized by a separate descriptive statement (51;

¹⁸ That *kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya*, “my warlock and my witch,” of line 39 could either have been part of the original text and have attracted the rest of the list or have been part of a list that was inserted is further supported by the observation that this pair may have formed the first entry of a standard list. This inference is strongly suggested by *Maqlû* I 73ff. That list is difficult, but it seems to point to the existence of a list with *kaššāpu* and *kaššāptu* as the first pair. *Maqlû* I 73ff. begins with *ēpišiya . . . ēpišiya*, “my sorcerer . . . my sorceress,” followed by *kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya*, “my warlock and my witch,” and then again *ēpišiya u muštēpišiya*, “my sorcerer and the woman who instigates sorcery against me,” etc. Why is *ēpišiya* repeated twice? An explanation would be forthcoming were we to assume that originally I 73ff only had *ēpišiya u ēpišiya*, to which a standard list (that began with *kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya*, followed by *ēpišiya u muštēpišiya*, etc.) was added. This solution would establish the existence of a list with *kaššāpu* and *kaššāptu* as its first entry. (I should note that the existence of a list that began with *kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya* and was identical with II 39ff. would render it more likely that line 39 was also secondary in this incantation and was introduced as part of the list.)

¹⁹ For such a usage with demons and the like, see simply *Maqlû* I 135–139: *anašši dipāru šalmišunu aqallu / ša utukku šēdu rābišu eṭemmu / lamašti labāši aḥḥāzu / lilū lilitu ardat-lilī / u mimma lemnu mušabbitu amēlūti*, “I am raising the torch and burning the figurines of the demon, the spirit, the lurker, the ghost, Lamaštu, Labāšu, Aḥḥāzu (jaundice), Lilū, Lilitu, Ardat-Lilī, and any evil that seizes mankind.”

67–69). Thus, the fact that the two lists are characterized by different subjects, modes of enumeration, and descriptions²⁰ demonstrates their separateness and strongly suggests their compositional independence.

Moreover, as mentioned earlier, the list of demons is syntactically disconnected from its surrounding context and forms a parenthesis. As the text stands now, the list of demons seems to provide an explanation of the nature of the evil experience that, according to line 51, the witch made the victim experience. The list was apparently inserted to explicate and enumerate *namrāšu*, “hardship,” in the line that precedes the list and seems now to stand in apposition to line 51. Thus, while the expanded list was not part of the original incantation, the list of demons and illnesses was probably only added to the incantation subsequent to the development of the list of witches. Perhaps the list of demons and illnesses was incorporated into the text in order to expand the range of the witch’s power and to (re)define her relationship to demons (cf. *Maqlû* V 57–75 and see below).

We turn now to lines 51 and 67–69. Line 51 (*ša ana mīti puqqudū’inni namrāša kullumū’inni*, “who have given me over to a dead man, who have made me experience hardship”) seems to refer backward to the previously enumerated witches. One has this impression in the first instance because also this line is introduced by means of the determinative-relative pronoun *ša* (here with the meaning “who”), the mode of introduction of each item in the previous list of witches. But actually this form of introduction of line 51 may simply be due to the fact that when the citing of an individual witch or of a series of witches is followed by a description of her/their actions, that description is often introduced by the relative *ša* even when the mention of the witch had not been introduced by *ša*. Be that as it may, it seems reasonable to assume that this line was added following the expansion of the list of “witches” as a way of drawing the list together and of describing and summarizing what the group had done. But this chronology may not be correct; we shall reexamine this impression immediately below in our discussion of lines 67–69.

We now turn to the end of the list. Lines 67–69 seem to be part of the demon section because these lines come at its end, seem to summarize it, and, on the face of it, seem better to describe activities that

²⁰ Our conclusion stands even if (as is done below) the descriptions (51; 67–69) are treated together and understood to have been inserted into the text at the same time.

suit demons and illnesses,²¹ particularly because of the phrase “that afflicts my flesh.” Thus, it would be reasonable to assume—as we did with line 51 in regard to the preceding list of witches—that lines 67–69 were added following the expansion of the list of demons and illnesses as a way of drawing that list together and of describing and summarizing the harm that these evils had done.²²

But the structure of lines 67–69 raises another possibility. Lines 67–69 read:

67. *ša šabtannima*²³ *mūša u urra irteneddânni*
 68. *uḫattû šīriya kal ūmi šabtannima*
 69. *kal mūši lā umaššaranni*

That seizes me and constantly pursues me night and day,
 Afflicts my flesh, seizes me all day,
 And does not let go of me all night.

The structure of these lines is A-B-X-A'-B', X being the phrase “who afflicts my flesh.” It seems likely that this phrase is an insertion in the middle of an otherwise closely knit parallel structure. As stated earlier, the phrase “who afflicts my flesh” suits demons and illnesses better than witches. If it is correct to regard the insertion of this phrase as part of a secondary revision, then also an earlier version of lines 67–69 might originally have referred to witches and have continued line 51.²⁴ If so, both summary statements might have been inserted into the text at the same time. In that case, the connection between lines 51

²¹ Cf., e.g., W. Farber, *Beschwörungsrituale an Ištar und Dumuzi* (Wiesbaden, 1977), p. 131: 68–69 (transcribed and translated on pp. 144–145): *mimma lemnu ša DIB-an-ni-ma(išbatannima) UŠ.MEŠ-ni(irteneddânni) la'bann[i] lā umaššaranni*, “‘Alles Böse’, das mich erfasst hat und mich dauernd verfolgt, mich befallen hat, mich nicht loslässt...” (but see note 23 below.).

²² Accordingly, lines 67–69 would have been inserted following the insertion of the list of demons, but modeled on line 51.

²³ The form of *šabātu*, “to seize,” in lines 67 and 68 is written *šab-ta/t[an]-ni-ma* and should be normalized as *šabtannima* (stative+suffix). While *šab-ta/t[an]-ni-ma* may possibly be an ancient mistake for the prefix form of the verb (*išbatannima*), it seems more likely that DIB-*an-ni-ma* in Farber, *Beschwörungsrituale*, p. 131: 68, should be transcribed as *šabtannima* rather than *išbatannima*.

²⁴ The beginning of KAR 235, obv. 2' (now missing on photo VAN 12912a and on the tablet) does not have the opening *ša* of line 67 (the rest of lines 67–69 are on obv. 2'–3'). Obv. 1' has only traces and does not indicate what preceded line 67 in this manuscript. In view of the absence of *ša*, we may be permitted to speculate that perhaps this manuscript reflects a form of the text in which line 67 immediately continued line 51 and accordingly did not require *ša* (**ša ana miṭi puqqudū'inni namrāsa kullumū'inni šabtannima mūša u urra irteddânni kal ūmi šabtannima kal mūši lā umaššaranni*); but note the shift from the plural to the singular form of the verb.

and 67–69 would have been disrupted by the insertion of the list of demons (and the similarity of lines 51 and 67–69 would then provide further support for the secondary nature of that list).

But both line 51 and lines 67–69 are odd; they are quite different from typical descriptions of the activities of witches, and we should not treat them as we would other descriptions. Thus, while it is reasonable to suppose that both summary statements were inserted into the text at the same time, their strangeness suggests that they were inserted not prior to the insertion of the list of demons but subsequent thereto—that is, after the insertion and expansion of both lists.

Perhaps one of the reasons for the insertion of lines 51 and 67–69 was to separate the lists from each other. If so, lines 67–69 were intended to describe what demons do, while line 51 was inserted to characterize the witches, introduce the demons, and connect the witchcraft and demonic sections (51a = giving man over to ghosts; 51b = giving man over to demons and the like). In any case, the witches are the ultimate cause (i.e., they give the person over to demons) and demons the proximate cause (i.e., they cause the present suffering) of the victim's plight.

Following the enumeration of demons and illnesses, the speaker first states that he is burning the figurines in sulfur and then, in lines 72–73, asks for divine assistance. The form of this final request provides further support for our conclusion regarding the secondary nature of the demon/illness section and helps us grasp more fully how the text was revised. Here the speaker turns to the god with the request: (*naplisan-nima bēlu*)²⁵ *usuḥṣunūti ina zumriya / pušur kišpīšunu lemnūti*, “(Look at me, O lord, and) uproot them from my body, release their evil witch-

²⁵ It is probably not a coincidence that the god is referred to as *bēlu*, “master,” both at the beginning of the request (31) and here at the end. Alongside *bēlu* we find the use of *rēmu* (*rēmanni*, “have pity on me”) in line 31 and *naplusu* (*naplissanni*, “look at me”) in line 72. Such usages are unexpected in an incantation to the fire-god as judge. These lines may form a secondary envelope construction that is intended to present the god not as a judge but as a gracious master. *Bēlu* also occurs in line 27; seizing the hem of the god(s) in lines 27–30 fits the representation of the god as a gracious master, and thus also lines 27–30 may possibly be part of the adaptation of the incantation or of the type.

Furthermore, note the use of a perfect form of the verb (*iltasi/u*, “has (now) roared”) in line 31. Could the use of the perfect in that line rather than the normal preterite, and in contrast to the use of the preterite in lines 32–36, reflect the later insertion of line 31 and therefore belong to a different linguistic usage/stage? Elsewhere, I shall take up the question of the use of tenses/aspects in *Maqlū* incantations.

craft.” The two requests, lines 72b and 73, seem to stand in parallel, but they cannot refer to the same entity for the following reasons: line 72b cannot refer to the witches and must refer to the demons and illnesses previously enumerated, for it is demons and illnesses that take up residence in the body, while witches normally seize their victim externally but do not invade the body.²⁶ (One extirpates demons and illness, but kills witches.) As the text now stands, “their witchcraft” of line 73 refers back to the demons of line 72. But witchcraft is practiced by humans and not by demons, and therefore line 73 cannot refer back to line 72. Accordingly, line 72b is also an insertion, for it is meant to refer to the demons who have attacked the victim. Thus, the first request refers to disease, the second to witchcraft.

At present, then, the designations of evil in the text seem to be organized along a secondary chiasmic pattern of hysteron-proteron:

- A₁ Enumeration of witches (39–51)
- B₁ Enumeration of demons (52–69)
- B₂ Request to remove the illnesses and demons (72b)
- A₂ Request to release witchcraft (73).

Let us now summarize some of the developments that we have noted. The original kernel of the text of lines 37–73 would have read something like:

enenna ina maḥar ilūtika rabīti
šina ṣalmī siparri etgurūti (uṣēpiš)
ša kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya
ina kibrīti elleti aqallišunūti ašarrapšunūti
nāplisannima bēlu pušur kišpīšunu lemnūti

²⁶ There are exceptions, but these reflect the late merger of the witch and illness, a development that is reflected by or is taking place in our text (see, e.g., LKA 154 + 155 //, and my discussion in “Internalization of Suffering and Illness in Mesopotamia: A Development in Mesopotamian Witchcraft Literature,” in *Studi Epigrafici e Linguistici sul Vicino Oriente Antico* 15 (1998) [= P. Xella, ed., *Magic in the Ancient Near East*]: 49–58 = Abusch, *Mesopotamian Witchcraft*, pp. 89–96).

A comparable situation may exist in *Maqlū* VII 12–16. Line 14 there reads: ^d*ningišzida lissuḥšunūti*, “May Ningišzida extirpate them.” Since on the face of it *nasāhu*, “to extirpate, uproot,” seems to fit better with objects than persons, it seems to refer to the witchcraft rather than the witches. But that assumption creates problems and confusion in the text, for in the adjoining lines the 3rd person plural suffix (both object and possessive) refers to the witches. Perhaps, there too *nasāhu* with the 3rd person plural object suffix has been added to the text. Alternatively, the usage may reflect a change in the image of the witches so that they are now demonic (this does not preclude the possibility that the line was added).

Now in the presence of your great divinity, (37)
 Two crisscrossed bronze figurines (38)
 Of my warlock and my witch, . . . , (39)²⁷
 In pure sulfur, I am burning them, I am scorching them. (71)
 Look at me, O lord, and release their evil witchcraft. (72a, 73)

Subsequently, the incantation underwent the series of expansions and revisions that we have noted: A list of designations of different kinds of witches (39–50) was expanded in stages; then a list (52–66) of demons and illnesses was inserted.²⁸ Perhaps at this stage, line 72b was added to the request in order to cover the aforementioned demons and illnesses. Subsequent to these expansions, line 37 was repeated as line 70 in order to refocus the speech on the ritual and thus reconnect stages of the ritual that had been sundered by the major digressions.

The inclusion of the list of demons indicates a growth of power on the part of the witch. Demons were originally independent beings, but over time the witch became able to control non-human demonic forces in addition to other human beings. The demons' loss of autonomy vis-à-vis the witch is due to her increasing power, but it also appears to parallel (and be part of the same trend as) an increasing subordination of demons to the gods.²⁹ In any case, one may suggest that the insertion of the list of demons in this incantation reflects an expansion of the range of powers of the witch, serves to redefine her relationship to demons and illness, and indicates her increasing control over demons.³⁰

B. *Maqlû* Tablet IV 1–79

1. Incantation. Burn, burn, blaze, blaze!
2. Evil and wicked one, do not enter, go away!
3. Whoever you are—the son of whomever, whoever you are—the daughter of whomever,

²⁷ The translation of the version of lines 38–39 with *ušēpiš* reads: “Two crisscrossed bronze figurines of my warlock and my witch I have had fashioned.”

²⁸ Because of uncertainties, we leave lines 51 and 67–69 out of the summary.

²⁹ For the subordination of the demons to the gods, see K. van der Toorn, “The Theology of Demons in Mesopotamia and Israel. Popular Belief and Scholarly Speculation,” in A. Lange, et al. (eds.), *Die Dämonen—Demons* (Tübingen, 2003), pp. 73–76.

³⁰ The witch's ability to dispatch demons (and illness) against her victims is evident in other incantations as well; an excellent example is provided by *Maqlû* V 57–75, especially 60–67.

4. Who sit and perform repeatedly³¹ your sorcery and machinations against me myself:
5. May Ea, the exorcist, release.
6. May Asalluḫi, the exorcist of the gods, Ea's son, the sage, divert your witchcraft.
7. I am binding you, I am holding you captive, I am giving you over
8. To Girra, the burner, the scorcher, the binder, the vanquisher of witches.
9. May Girra, the burner, be joined to my side.
10. Sorcery, rebellion, evil word, love(-magic), hate(-magic),
11. Perversion of justice, *Zikurrudâ*-magic, aphasia, pacification,
12. Mood swings, vertigo, madness,
13. You have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release.
14. You have betrothed me to a dead man,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
15. You have handed me over to a skull,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
16. You have handed me over to a ghost of (a member of) my family,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
17. You have handed me over to a ghost of a stranger,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
18. You have handed me over to a roaming ghost who has no caretaker,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
19. You have handed me over to a ghost in the uninhabited wasteland,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).

³¹ All verbs of bewitching in this incantation are 2nd person plural.

20. You have handed me over to the steppe, open country, and desert,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
21. You have handed me over to wall and battlement,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
22. You have handed me over to the mistress of the steppe and open country,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
23. You have handed me over to a kiln, a roasting oven, a baking oven, a brazier, a...-oven, and bellows,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
24. You have handed over figurines of me to a dead man,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
25. You have betrothed figurines of me to a dead man,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
26. You have laid figurines of me with a dead man,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
27. You have laid figurines of me in the lap of a dead man,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
28. You have buried figurines of me in the grave of a dead man,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
29. You have handed over figurines of me to a skull,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
30. You have immured figurines of me in a wall,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
31. You have laid figurines of me under a threshold,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).

32. You have immured figurines of me in the drainage opening of a wall,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
33. You have buried figurines of me on a bridge so that crowds would trample over them,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
34. You have made a hole in the mat (covering water) of a fuller and (therein) buried figurines of me,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
35. You have made a hole in the channel (full of water) of a gardener and (therein) buried figurines of me,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
36. Figurines of me—whether of tamarisk, or of cedar, or of tallow,
37. Or of wax, or of sesame-husks,
38. Or of bitumen, or of clay, or of dough,
39. Figurines, representations of my face and my body you have made
40. And fed to dog(s), fed to pig(s),
41. Fed to bird(s), cast into a river.
42. You have handed over figurines of me to Lamaštu, daughter of An,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
43. You have handed over figurines of me to Girra,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
44. You have laid my (funerary) water with a dead man,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
45. You have laid my water in the lap of a dead man,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
46. You have buried my water in the grave of a dead man,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).

47. You have buried my water [in?...] of the earth/netherworld,³²
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
48. You have buried my water [in?...] of the earth/netherworld,³³
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
49. You have drawn my water [in the presence of the gods of the night?],
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
50. You have given over [my water?] to Gilgameš,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
51. You have betrothed me [to the nether]world,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
52. *Zikurrudâ* magic in the presence of the moon (*Sîn*),
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
53. *Zikurrudâ* magic in the presence of Jupiter (*Šulpa'ea*),
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
54. *Zikurrudâ* magic in the presence of Cygnus (*Nimru*),³⁴
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
55. *Zikurrudâ* magic in the presence of Lyra (*Gula*),³⁵
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
56. *Zikurrudâ* magic in the presence of Leo (*Urgulû*),
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).

³² Perhaps [waste]land.

³³ Perhaps [a crevice] in the earth.

³⁴ More precisely, Cygnus, Lacerta and parts of Cassiopeia and Cepheus (so H. Hunger and D. Pingree, *Astral Sciences in Mesopotamia* (Leiden, 1999), p. 274).

³⁵ Or Aquarius: One manuscript has ^d*gu-la* (Lyra), another MUL.GU.LA (Aquarius).

57. *Zikurrudâ* magic in the presence of Ursa Major (*Ereqqu*),
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
58. *Zikurrudâ* magic in the presence of Scorpio (*Zuqaqîpu*),
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
59. *Zikurrudâ* magic in the presence of Orion (*Šitaddaru*),
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
60. *Zikurrudâ* magic in the presence of Centaurus (*Ḫabašîrānu*),
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
61. *Zikurrudâ* magic by means of a snake, a mongoose, a dormouse[?],
 a *pirurūtu*-mouse,
 You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).
62. *Zikurrudâ* magic by means of a corpse[?], [...], *Z[ikurrudâ]* magic
 by means of “spittle” (*ruḫû*),
 <You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release).>
63. [You have fed] me bread, food, (and) fruit,
 “You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release)”.
64. You have given me to drink water... [] beer and wine,
 “You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release)”.
65. You have washed me with water and potash,
 [You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release)].
66. You have salved me with oil,
 [You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release)].
67. You have had gifts brought to me,
 [You (have performed against me, have had performed against me: may Girra release)].
68. You have caused me to be dismissed from the presence of god[!],
 king, noble, and prince.
69. You have caused me to be dismissed from the presence of court-
 ier, attendant, and palace personnel.

70. You have caused me to be dismissed from the presence of friend, companion, and peer.
71. You have caused me to be dismissed from the presence of father and mother, brother [and] sister, wife, son and daughter.
72. You have caused me to be dismissed from the presence of household and city quarter, male and female servants, young and old of the household.
73. You have made me sickening in the sight of one who beholds me.
74. I have (now) captured you, I have (now) bound you, I have (now) given you over
75. To Girra, the burner, the scorcher, the binder, the vanquisher of witches.
76. May Girra, the burner, undo your bindings,
77. Release your witchcraft, [releas]e⁷ your scatter-offerings.
78. By the command of Marduk, Ea's son, the sage,
79. and blazing Girra, An's son, the warrior. Incantation Formula.

The incantation begins with a call to the fire to destroy the witches (line 1). In lines 3–4, the speaker addresses his enemies in the second person and imputes to them the repeated performance of witchcraft against him. He then asks that the two gods of magic, Ea and Asalluḫi, help him—that is, that Ea release and Asalluḫi turn back whatever witchcraft the witches had performed against him (lines 5–6). The speaker then states that he is binding the witches and giving them over to the fire god Girra, “the burner, the scorcher, the binder, the vanquisher of witches,” and expresses the wish that the fire god stand at his side and aid him (7–9). Then, in lines 10–73, the text specifies almost every imaginable act of witchcraft and repeats after each act the request that Girra undo whatever witchcraft the witch had performed. Finally, in lines 74–77, the speaker states that he has bound the witches and given them over to the fire god Girra, “the burner, the scorcher, the binder, the vanquisher of witches,” and expresses the wish that the fire god undo the witchcraft and the ritual paraphernalia used to perform witchcraft.

The most notable feature of this incantation is the extensive list of witchcraft activities found in lines 10–73. Most of the entries are followed by the antiphon: “You have performed against me (or) have had performed against me: may Girra release.” In the main, the entries are not unrelated items, but appear rather in blocks that contain a number of related entries describing what the witch had done. Though there is

some overlapping between blocks, each block appears to be characterized by a different action or perspective: for example, handing over (usually the verb *paqādu*) the victim to various entities, most notably ghosts (*eṭemmu*) (lines 14–23); burial and other treatment of figurines (*šalmū*) of the victim (some entries are parallel to entries in the preceding group) (lines 24–43); placing water (*mê*)³⁶ of the victim among the dead (lines 44–51); performance of *Zikurrudâ* magic in the presence of various astral bodies, etc. (lines 52–62); bewitching the victim by means of food, drink, washing, salving, and messages (lines 63–67); causing the rejection (*ina maḥar... šuškunu*) of the victim by various people and groups (lines 68–73).

This catalogue of witchcraft acts presents a relatively comprehensive account of what the witch can do. But various literary features—notably that the list can be divided into discreet blocks, that these blocks have some overlap, that some blocks are a bit disorganized, that some individual items deviate from the material with which they are grouped, and that the antiphon does not occur with all blocks³⁷—all immediately suggest that the list is composite.³⁸ But whether composite or not, the list in its present form was not originally part of the incantation, for the length and scope of the list are disproportionate to its present setting in an incantation that centers upon the invocation of the fire and the description of the ritual burning of the witches. Perhaps more

³⁶ I had originally thought that *mê* here referred to semen (actually, or perhaps just metaphorically), but I now accept D. Schwemer's suggestion that "water" here refers to the water offered in a funerary ritual and thus represents the death (and death ritual) of the victim.

³⁷ At the present time, I am not able to work out all the details of the blocks or of their incorporation. Some entries do not conform and deviate from their present environment. It is more than possible that not all long blocks were inserted at one time, and perhaps some entries were already present at the time of the composition of the incantation.

The following do not conform to the overall blocks. Is it possible that they are original?

14. *ana mīti taḥīrā'inni*, "You have betrothed me to a dead man."

15. *ana gulgullati taḥqīdā'inni*, "You have handed me over to a skull."

24. *šalmīya ana mīti taḥqīdā*, "You have handed over figurines of me to a dead man."

25. *šalmīya ana mīti taḥīrā*, "You have betrothed figurines of me to a dead man."

29. *šalmīya ana gulgullati taḥqīdā*, "You have handed over figurines of me to a skull."

51. *ana a[ra]lê taḥīrā'inni*, "You have betrothed me [to the nether]world."

³⁸ I have not yet been able to work out the relative chronology of the incorporation of the sections.

important in this regard is the fact that the list distances elements of a continuous performance from each other.

These descriptive and critical impressions are confirmed by the existence here, too, of a *Wiederaufnahme*:

akassikunūši akammikunūši anamdinkunūši
ana girra qāmē qālī kāsī kāšidu ša kaššāpāti (7–8)

aktamikunūši aktasikunūši attadinkunūši
ana girra qāmī qālī kāsī kāšidu ša kaššāpāti (74–75)

I am binding you, I am holding you captive, I am giving you over
To Girra, the burner, the scorcher, the binder, the vanquisher of witches.

I have (now) captured you, I have (now) bound you, I have (now) given
you over

To Girra, the burner, the scorcher, the binder, the vanquisher of witches.

We immediately note that lines 7–8 are repeated, with slight variation, in lines 74–75. This repetition is a consequence of the fact that several long series of actions were included in the incantation, and they thereby separated the beginning of the incantation from its end. Lines 74–75 were thus meant to reconnect the beginning and end of a text that had been disconnected by a major digression (or expansion of an element).

As noted, lines 74–75 repeat lines 7–8, but the repetition is not mechanical: the statement in line 7 is in the durative verb form (*akassikunūši akammikunūši*, . . . , “I am binding you, I am holding you captive, . . .”); that in line 74 is in the perfect (*aktamikunūši aktasikunūši*, . . . , “I have (now) captured you, I have (now) bound you, . . .”).³⁹ Because of the massive expansion of the incantation, a verbal expression that originally referred to an act taking place at the same time as the utterance, now referred to an act that had already been completed and was in the past.

The repetition of elements is not limited to these lines and extends also to the short request to the fire god that follows upon the speaker’s

³⁹ Given the position of these lines near the beginning and end of the incantation and the use of a durative in the one and a perfect in the other, it is possible to regard this repetition as an *inclusio*. All the same, it is a *Wiederaufnahme* because of the existence of blocks of material that seem to have been inserted into the incantation. The alternative would be to imagine the (composition and) incorporation of many of the blocks at the time of initial composition. This is not impossible, but would then reflect authorship on the basis of previously existing materials. See below.

statement that he is giving over the witches to him. In line 9, the text reads: “May Girra, the burner, be joined to my side.” This is expanded and paralleled by lines 76–77: “May Girra, the burner, undo your bindings, release your witchcraft, [releas]e² your scatter-offerings.” Thus, when the author repeated the earlier lines 7–8 in lines 74–75, he also repeated the earlier line 9 in expanded form in lines 76–77. Actually, it would appear that originally, prior to the expansion of the text and the subsequent creation of repetitive resumptions, line 9 was followed immediately by the final *ina qibīt* formula of lines 78–79: “By the command of Marduk, Ea’s son, the sage, and blazing Girra, An’s son, the warrior.” This is suggested by the fact that lines such as 9 normally occur at the end of an incantation. See, for example, the two incantations in KAR 80 and duplicates, where we find our line at the end of each incantation: *ⁿnуска šurbū ina qibītika litallil idāya*, “At your command, may grand Nuska be joined to my side” (rev. 14); *ⁿšamaš ina pīka ⁿgirra tappūka litallil idāya*, “Šamaš, by your order, may Girra, your companion, be joined to my side” (rev. 35–36).

In any case, prior to the addition of the lists of lines 10–73, the earlier text ended with lines 9+78–79; in this earlier text, lines 3–4 functioned as the description of the witches’ actions against the victim and were followed by a request in line 5(+6) that Ea and Asalluḫi release the witchcraft. Therefore the later recurring antiphon was modeled on line 5(+6); this line takes the description of the witches’ actions in line 4 as its understood object. Thus, we may conclude our analysis by saying that the original text probably was the present lines 1–9 + 78–79 and that the lists of malevolent actions that the witch could perform were all added secondarily. Each entry served to exemplify the general statement of line 4, and each was provided with an antiphon parallel to line 5.⁴⁰ Finally, lines 7–9 were repeated in a modified form as lines

⁴⁰ Line 13 (*tēpušāni tušēpišāni girra lipšur*, “You have performed against me, have had performed against me: May Girra release”) is the model for the antiphon in lines 14ff. represented by *te-*. The model for lines 10–13 is lines 4–5. Both in lines 4 and 13 as well as in the antiphones in lines 14ff., DN *lipšur*, “May DN release,” does not seem to have a direct grammatical object, though clearly the witchcraft or the act of witchcraft is the functional/logical object of the verb. But whereas the antiphones in 14ff. do not take the preceding entry as their direct grammatical object, both *tēpušāni tušēpišāni*, “you have performed against me, have had performed against me,” of line 13 and *tētenepušāni*, “you who perform repeatedly,” of the second half of line 4 do take the preceding entries (10–12 and the first half of line 4, respectively) as their direct objects. Is it possible, therefore, that line 13 may have served originally not as

74–77 in order to recreate the connection sundered by the insertion of the aforementioned lists presently found in lines 10–73.

Taken together, the entries generalize the power of the witch. Perhaps, then, the expansion reflects an attempt to present a full catalogue of all malevolent ritual activities that the witch could perform and thus to present her not as the limited force that she had previously been but as an almost universally powerful being.⁴¹

Conclusion

In my estimation, the texts that we have examined here are the result of expansion, and the various lists were secondarily added.⁴² But in conclusion, I would acknowledge that it is not inconceivable that texts of this sort may sometimes have been composed in the form in which we have them, the composer himself having put the disparate materials together.⁴³ For, surely, not all repetitive resumptions represent revision. Resumption may function as an authorial device,⁴⁴ and either serve an artistic purpose for a skilled craftsman or help a less than successful writer to deal with his own verbosity, expansiveness, listings, and digressions.⁴⁵ Thus, even were a lengthy composite incantation to have been put together by one hand, the mode of analysis exemplified in the present essay will have provided a model by which to

an “antiphon,” and that lines 10–13, like lines 3–5, may have been part of the original incantation?

⁴¹ It is probable that the types of malevolent actions attributed to the witch expanded during the first millennium to include activities that were previously not part of her primary repertoire. If one assumes (as I do) that the omen-witchcraft connection and therefore the *zikurrudā* (a deadly magical practice, lit. “throat cutting”) connection are relatively late, the fact that this incantation has included such activities in prominent positions in the list would suggest that the incantation has intentionally expanded the purview of the witch’s activities by incorporating malevolent activities that were previously not associated with her.

⁴² Cf. Sh. Shaked’s observation on the structure of the Aramaic bowl incantation MS 2053/170: “The way in which different formulae are put together in a single text. . . . One has the feeling, though, that a long text can evolve out of a fairly free juxtaposition of separate elements, that are used like building blocks” (“Form and Purpose in Aramaic Spells: Some Jewish Themes [The poetics of magic texts],” in Sh. Shaked, ed., *Officina Magica. Essays on the Practice of Magic in Antiquity* (Leiden/Boston, 2005), p. 7.

⁴³ Of the two incantations examined in this essay, this possibility is more likely to apply to the second rather than the first.

⁴⁴ See above, note 7.

⁴⁵ I am indebted to Martin Worthington for nudging me to reiterate the point that not all repetitive resumptions represent revision.

understand how a composer created a long and complex incantation by assembling preexistent materials and combining disparate elements (some of his own creation) into the incantation that we now have.

But where there are other reasons to believe that the text has been redacted, then the repetitive resumption should be treated as part of a revision and not as original. Often such evidence exists, and I would therefore conclude by affirming my belief that the incantations studied here, as well as many others, are the result of expansion. The texts surely exemplify continuity and innovation in the Mesopotamian magical tradition.

*Excursus: Transcription of Maqlû II 19–75 and IV 1–79 (partial)*⁴⁶

A. *Maqlû* II 19–75

19. ÉN ^dgirra bēlu gitmālu ^dnannārāta nabi šumka
20. tušnammar bitāt ili kalāma
21. [tu]šnammar gimir kal(i)šina mātāti
22. aššu attā [ana yâš]i tazzazzuma
23. kīma ^dsîn u ^dšamaš tadinnu dīnu
24. dēnī dīn(i) purussāya purus
25. ana nūrika namri nišū kalīšina upaqqāka
26. ana elleti dipārika ašhurka ešēka
27. bēlu sissiktaka ašbat
28. sissikti ilūtika [rabīt]i ašbat
29. sissikti i[liya u ^dištariya] ašbat
30. [sissikti il ā]liya u ^dištar āliya ašbat
31. []-x-ma rēmanni bēlu kaššāptu kīma lilissi iltasi eliya
32. išbat qaqqadī kišādī u muḥḥī
33. išbat inīya nātilāti
34. išbat šēpīya allakāti
35. išbat birkīya ebberēti
36. išbat aḥīya muttabbilāti
37. enenna ina maḥar ilūtika rabīti
38. šina šalmī siparri etgurūti
39. ša kaššāpiya u kaššāptiya
40. ša ēpišīya u muštēpišīya

⁴⁶ Partially broken individual signs are represented as complete except where some uncertainty remains or where adjoining morphemes are completely broken.

41. *ša sâḫiriya u sâḫirtiya*
42. *ša rāḫīya u rāḫītiya*
43. *ša bēl ikkiya u bēlet ikkiya*
44. *ša bēl ṣerriya u bēlet ṣerriya*
45. *ša bēl rīdiya u bēlet rīdiya*
46. *ša bēl dīniya u bēlet dīniya*
47. *ša bēl amātiya u bēlet amātiya*
48. *ša bēl dabābiya u bēlet dabābiya*
49. *ša bēl egerrēya u bēlet egerrēya*
50. *ša bēl lemuttīya u bēlet lemuttīya*
51. *ša ana mīti puqqudū'inni namrāša kullumū'inni*
52. *lū utukku lemnu lū alū lemnu*
53. *lū eṭemmu lemnu lū gallū lemnu*
54. *lū ilu lemnu lū rābišu lemnu*
55. *lū ^dlamaštu lū ^dlabāšu lū ^daḫḫāzu*
56. *lū lilū lū lilitu lū ardat lilī*
57. *lū li'bu ṣibit šadī*
58. *lū bennu riḫūt ^dšulpa'ea*
59. *lū antašubbū lū ^d[lugalurra]*
60. *lū qāt ili lū qāt [^dištari]*
61. *lū qāt eṭemmi lū qāt [māmīti]*
62. *lū qāt amēlūti⁴⁷ lū lamaštu ṣeḫertu mārat ^dani*
63. *lū saḫḫulḫaza mukīl rēš lemutti*
64. *lū dikiš šīrī šimmatu rimūtu*
65. *lū [mimm]a lemnu ša šuma lā nabū*
66. *lū [mimm]a ēpiš lemutti ša amēlūti*
67. *ša ṣabtannima mūša u urra irteneddānni*
68. *uḫattū šīriya kal ūmi ṣabtannima*
69. *kal mūši lā umaššaranni*
70. *enenna ina maḫar ilūtika rabīti*
71. *ina kibrīti elleti aqallišunūti ašarrapšunūti*
72. *naplisannima bēlu usuḫšunūti ina zumriya*
73. *pušur kišpišunu lemnūti*
74. *attā ^dgirra bēlu ālik idiya*
75. *bulliṭannima narbika lušāpi dalīlika ludlul*

⁴⁷ Perhaps the names in lines 60–62 are to be construed as Sumerian loan-words rather than ideograms read in Akkadian; if so, read: *šudingirrakku*, *šu'inannakku*, *šugidimmakku*, *šunamerimmakku*, and *šunamlullukku*.

B. *Maqlû* IV 1–79 (partial)

1. ÉN *bišlî bišlî qidê qidê*
 2. *raggu u šenu ē tērub atlak*
 3. *attāmannu mār manni attīmannu mārat manni*
 4. *ša ašbātunuma ipšēkunu upšāšēkunu tētenepušāni yāši*
 5. *lipšur^dea mašmaššu*
 6. *lišbalkit kišpīkunu^dasalluḫi mašmaš ilī mār^dea apkallu*
 7. *akassīkunūši akammīkunūši anamdīnkunūši*
 8. *ana^dgirra qāmē qālī kāsī kāšidu ša kaššāpāti*
 9. *^dgirra qāmū litallal idāya*
 10. *ipšu bārtu amāt lemutti rāmu zīru*
 11. *dībalā zikurrudā kadabbedā šurḫungā*
 12. *šabalbalā šūd pānī u šanē tēmu*
 13. *tēpušāni tušēpišāni^dgirra lipšur*
 14. *ana mīti taḫīrā’inni: tē(pušāni tušēpišāni^dgirra lipšur)*
- ...
74. *aktamīkunūši aktasīkunūši attadīnkunūši*
 75. *ana^dgirra qāmī qālī kāsī kāšidu ša kaššāpāti*
 76. *^dgirra qāmū l[ipaṭ]ṭir riksīkunu*
 77. *lipaššīr kišpīkunu [lipašš]īr sirqīkunu*
 78. *ina qibīt^dmarduk mār^dea apkalli*
 79. *u^dgirra āriru mār^dani qardu TU₆ ÉN*
- ...

