

## Opening the Tablet Box

# Culture and History of the Ancient Near East

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Benjamin R. Foster

# Opening the Tablet Box

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in Honor of Benjamin R. Foster

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Sarah C. Melville  
Clarkson University

Alice L. Slotsky  
Yale University



## ABBREVIATIONS

The biographical abbreviations used in this volume are listed below and generally follow those of The Chicago Assyrian Dictionary (CAD). Additional abbreviations are included here or noted in individual articles.

A	Tablets in the Collections of the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago
AAAS	<i>Annales Archéologiques Arabes Syriennes</i>
AB	<i>Assyriologische Bibliothek</i> (Leipzig 1881–1933); NF 1–2 (1933)
AbB	Kraus, F.R., ed. <i>Altbabylonische Briefe in Umschrift und Übersetzung</i> Leiden: Royal Netherlands Academy 1964—; Leiden: Brill 1980
ABL	Harper, R.F. <i>Assyrian and Babylonian Letters in the Kouyunjik collection</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1892–1914
ACF	<i>Annali di Ca'Foscari</i>
Acta Or	<i>Acta Orientalia</i>
AE	<i>Année épigraphique</i>
AfO	<i>Archiv für Orientforschung</i>
AHR	<i>American Historical Review</i>
AHw	von Soden, W. <i>Akkadisches Handwörterbuch</i> . Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 1959–1985
AJA	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
AJSL	<i>American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures</i>
ANET	Pritchard, J.B. <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> Princeton: Princeton University Press 1950; 1955; 1969
AnSt	<i>Anatolian Studies</i>
AO	Tablets in the Collections of the Musée du Louvre
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AoF	<i>Altorientalische Forschungen</i>
AOTb	Antiquités Orientales, Tello, Musée du Louvre
ARES	Archivi Reali di Ebla, Studi
ARET	Archivi Reali di Ebla, Testi
ARM	Archives royales de Mari
ArOr	<i>Archiv Orientalni</i>
ARRIM	<i>Annual Review of the Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia Project</i>
AS	<i>Assyriological Studies</i>

Ashm	Tablets in the Collections of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
ASJ/Acta Sum	<i>Acta Sumerologica</i>
ASOR	American Schools of Oriental Research
AUCT	Andrews University Cuneiform Texts
AuOrS	<i>Aula Orientalis Supplements</i>
AUWE	Ausgrabungen in Uruk-Warka. Endberichte
BA	<i>Beiträge zur Assyriologie und semitischen sprachwissenschaft</i>
BAAL	<i>Bulletin d'Archéologie et d'Architecture Libanaises, Hors-Série</i>
BagF	<i>Baghdader Forschungen</i>
BagM	<i>Baghdader Mitteilungen</i>
BAR	British Archaeological Reports
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BBVO	Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderer Orient
BBVOT	Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderer Orient, Texte
BCSMS	<i>Bulletin for the Canadian Society of Mesopotamian Studies</i>
BDHP	Watermann, L. <i>Business Documents of the Hammurapi Period</i> . London: Luzac 1916
BDTNS	Database of Neo-Sumerian Texts ( <a href="http://bdtns.filol.csic.es">http://bdtns.filol.csic.es</a> ). Madrid: Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales of the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas
BE	Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania, Series A: Cuneiform Texts
BEHE	Bibliothèque de l'École pratique des hautes études (Paris)
BGU	<i>Aegyptische Urkunden aus den Königlichen (later Staatlichen) Museen zu Berlin, Griechische Urkunden</i> . Berlin 1895–
BI	The Banca d'Italia Collection in Rome
BIA/BIWA	Borger, R. 1996. <i>Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk Assurbani-pals. Die Prismenklassen A, B, C = K, D, E, F, G, H, J und T sowie andere Inschriften. Mit einem Beitrag von Andreas Fuchs</i> . Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz
BIFAO	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale</i>
BiMes	Bibliotheca Mesopotamica
BIN	Babylonian Inscriptions in the Collection of J.B. Nies
BiOr	<i>Bibliotheca Orientalis</i>
BM	Tablets in the Collections of the British Museum
BRM	Babylonian Records in the Library of J. Pierpont Morgan
BPO	Reiner, E. and Pingree, D. 1981. <i>BPO 2 Enuma Anu Enlil, Tablets 50–51</i> (Bibliotheca Mesopotamica 2, 2). Malibu: Undena Publications
BPOA	Biblioteca del Proximo Oriente Antiguo
BSEG	<i>Bulletin de la Société d'Égyptologie Genève</i>
BSMS	<i>Society for Mesopotamian Studies Bulletin</i>
BSOAS	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
BWL	Lambert, W.G. <i>Babylonian Wisdom Literature</i> . Oxford: Clarendon Press 1960

CANE	Sasson, J.M. <i>Civilizations of the Ancient Near East</i> . New York: Scribners 1995
CANES	Porada, E. <i>Corpus of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in North American Collections</i> . Washington: The Bollingen Foundation 1948
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CBS	Tablets in the Collections of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania
CDLI	Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative ( <a href="http://cdli.ucla.edu/index_html">http://cdli.ucla.edu/index_html</a> )
CM	Cuneiform Monographs
CNIANES	Carsten Niebuhr Institute of Ancient Near Eastern Studies
CRAI	Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres
CRRAI	Compte rendu, Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale
CT	Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum. London: British Museum Publications 1896–
CTN	Cuneiform Texts from Nimrud
CTN 4	Wiseman, D.J. and Black, J.A. <i>Literary Texts from the Temple of Nabû</i> . London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq 1996
CUF	Tablets in the Collections of Columbia University
CUNES	The Cornell University Collection in Ithaca, N.Y.
CUSAS	Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology
CUSAS 11	Visicato, G. and Westenholz, A. <i>Early Dynastic and Early Sargonic Tablets from Adab in the Cornell University Collections</i> . Bethesda: CDL Press Forthcoming
CUSAS 13	Maiocchi, M. <i>Sargonic Adab. Tablets of the Classical Sargonic Period in the Cornell University Collection</i> . Vol. I. Bethesda: CDL Press Forthcoming
CW	<i>Classical World</i>
DAS	LaFont, B. <i>Documents Administratifs Sumériens, provenant du site de Tello et conservés au Musée du Louvre</i> . Paris: CNRS 1985
DCCLT	Veldhuis, N. (director). Digital Corpus of Cuneiform Lexical Texts ( <a href="http://psd.museum.upenn.edu/dcclt">http://psd.museum.upenn.edu/dcclt</a> ) the University of California at Berkeley 2003–
DCS	Charpin, D. and Durand, J.M. <i>Documents cunéiformes de Strasbourg</i> . Paris: EDITIONS A.D.P.F 1981
DP	Allotte de la Fuÿe, M.F. <i>Documents présargoniques</i> . Paris: Ernest Leroux 1908–1920
EA	Knudtzon, J.A. <i>Die El-Amarna-Tafeln mit Einleitung und Erläuterungen</i> . 2 Vols. Leipzig: Hinrichs 1915
En. el.	<i>Enūma eliš</i>
ePSD	electronic Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary Project ( <a href="http://psd.museum.upenn.edu/epsd/index.html">http://psd.museum.upenn.edu/epsd/index.html</a> )

ErIs	<i>Eretz Israel</i>
ETCSL	Black, J.A. et al. The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature ( <a href="http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/">http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/</a> ). Oxford: 1998–2006.
FAOS	Freiburger Altorientalische Studien
FLP	Tablets in the Collections of the Free Library of Philadelphia
FuB	<i>Forschungen und Berichte</i>
GM/Gött. Misz.	<i>Göttinger Miszellen</i>
HANE/M	History of the Ancient Near East Monographs
HANE/M 8	Corò, P. <i>Prebende templari in età Seleucide</i> . Padova: S.A.R.G.O.N. 2005
HBTIN	Hellenistic Babylonia: Texts, Images and Names ( <a href="http://cdl.museum.edu/hbtinU">http://cdl.museum.edu/hbtinU</a> )
HoD	Handbook der Orientalistik. Leiden: Brill 1988–
HKL	Borger, R. <i>Handbuch der Keilschrifttexte</i> I, II. Berlin: W. de Gruyter 1967–1975
HSM	Tablets in the Collections of the Harvard Semitic Museum
IAS	Biggs, R.D. <i>Inscriptions from Tell Abu Šalabikh</i> (OIP 99). Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1974.
ICAANE	International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East
IM	Tablets in the Collections of the Iraq Museum, Baghdad
ITT	Thureau-Dangin, F. et al. <i>Inventaire des tablettes de Tello</i> . Paris: Leroux 1910
JANES	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JCS	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
JEA	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
JEOL	Jaarbericht van het Voor-Aziatisch-Egyptisch-Genootschap (from 1945: Genootschap). Leiden: Ex Oriente Lux 1933–
JESHO	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JRAS	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
K	Tablets in the Kouyunjik Collection of the British Museum
KAH	Keilschrifttexte aus Assur historischen Inhalts
KAR	Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts
Kh	Tablets from Khafadje in the Collections of the Oriental Institute
KSV	Tablets in the St. Petersburg Oriental Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences
L	Tablets in the Lagash/Girsu Collection in the Archeological Museum in Istanbul
LM	The Louise Michail Collection in Milano
MAD	Materials for the Assyrian Dictionary



MANE	Monographs on the Ancient Near East
MARI	Mari Annales des Recherches Interdisciplinaires
MCS	Manchester Cuneiform Studies
MDAI	Mémoires de la Délégation Archéologique en Iran
MDOG	Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft
MEE	Materiali Epigrafici di Ebla
MHE	Mesopotamian History and Environment
MHET	Mesopotamian History and Environment, Texts
Mitchell/Searight	Mitchell, T.C. and Searight, A. <i>Catalogue of the Western Asiatic Seals in the British Museum. Stamp Seals III: Impressions of Stamp Seals on Cuneiform Tablets, Clay bullae, and Jar Handles</i> . Leiden: Brill 2008
MLC	Tablets in the Collections of the J. Pierpont Morgan Library
MMA	Metropolitan Museum of Art
MS	The Schøyen Collection in Spikkestad, Norway
MSL	Landsberger et al. <i>Materialien zum sumerischen Lexikon; Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon</i> . Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum 1937–
MVN	Pettinato, G. et al. <i>Materiali per il vocabolario neo-sumerico</i> . Rome: Multigrafica editrice 1974
MZL	Borger, R. <i>Mesopotamisches Zeichenlexikon</i> (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 305). Münster: Ugarit-Verlag 2003
N.A.B.U.	<i>Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires</i>
NATN	Owen, D.I. <i>Neo-Sumerian Archival Texts primarily from Nippur</i> . Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns 1982
NBC	Tablets in the Babylonian Collection, Yale University Library
NBN	Neo-Babylonian
NCBT	Newell Collection of Babylonian Tablets at Yale University
ND	Field numbers of tablets excavated at Nimrud /Kalhu
Ni	Archaeological Museum, Istanbul (Nippur)
Nik	Nikol'skij, M.V. <i>Drevnosti Vostocnyja</i> , III/2 (St. Petersburg 1908), <i>Dokumenty ... iz sobraniia N.P. LiLhacheva</i> , (= Nik 1); collations by M. Powell, <i>Acta Sum</i> 3, 125 ff.; G. Selz, <i>FAOS</i> 15 / 1; <i>Drevnosti Vostocnyja</i> , V (Moskau 1915), <i>Dokumenty ... iz sobraniia N.P. Likhacheva</i> , (= Nik 2)
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OECT	Oxford Editions of Cuneiform Texts
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
OLZ	Orientalistische Literaturzeitung
Or	<i>Orientalia</i>
OrAn	<i>Oriens Antiquus</i>
OrNs	<i>Orientalia Nova Series</i>
OSP	Westenholz, A. <i>Old Sumerian and Old Akkadian Texts in Philadelphia Chiefly from Nippur</i> . Copenhagen: Carsten Niebuhr Institute Publishers 1987

PG	Migne, J.-P., ed. <i>Patrologia graeca</i> (= <i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Graeca</i> ). 162 Vols. Paris. 1857–1886
PIHANS	Publications de l'Institut historique-archéologique néerlandais de Stamboul
PNA	The prosopography of the neo-Assyrian empire
PSD	The Sumerian Dictionary of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania
QuadSem	<i>Quaderni di Semitistica</i>
RA	<i>Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale</i>
RAH	The Lippmann Collection in the Real Academia de Historia, University of Madrid
RCT	<i>Revista catalanade teologia</i>
RdE	<i>Revue d'égyptologie</i>
RIMB	<i>Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Babylonian Periods</i> . Toronto: University of Toronto
RIME	<i>Royal Inscription of Mesopotamia, Early Periods</i> . Toronto: University of Toronto
RIA	<i>Reallexikon der Assyriologie</i>
RSO	<i>Revista degli studi orientali</i>
RTC	Thureau-Dangin, F. <i>Recueil de tablettes chaldéenne</i> . Paris: E. Leroux 1903
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
SAAB	<i>State Archives of Assyria Bulletin</i>
SAAS	State Archives of Assyria Studies
SAK	<i>Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur</i>
SANE	Sources from the Ancient Near East
SANTAG	Arbeiten und Untersuchungen zur Keilschriftkunde
SBL	Society for Biblical Literature
SBTU/SbTU	von Weiher, E. <i>Spätbabylonische Texte aus Uruk</i> , 2, 3, 4. Mainz: Philipp 1983; 1988; 1993
SEL	<i>Studi Epigrafici e Linguistici sul Vicino Oriente Antico</i>
SKL	Sumerian King List
SMEA	<i>Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici</i>
SNAT	Gomi, T. and Sato, S. <i>Selected Neo-Sumerian Administrative Texts from the British Museum</i> . Abiko, Japan: Chiba 1990
SpTU/SPAT	Spätbabylonische Texte aus Uruk
SS, SSIII	catalog entries in Mitchell/Searight
StOr	<i>Studia Orientalia</i>
Streck Asb.	Streck, M. <i>Assurbanipal und die letzten assyrischen Könige bis zum Untergange Niniveh's</i> (VAB 7). Leipzig 1919
STT	Sultantepe Tablets
STTI	Donbaz, V. and Foster, B.R. <i>Sargonic Texts from Telloh in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum</i> . Philadelphia: University Museum 1982
TAPS	<i>Transactions of the American Philosophical Society</i>

TCABI/TCBI 1	Pomponio, F. <i>Tavolette cuneiformi di Adab delle collezioni della Banca d'Italia</i> . Rome: Centro Stampa della Banca d'Italia 2006
TCBI 2	Pomponio, F. et al. <i>Tavolette cuneiformi di varia provenienza delle collezioni della Banca d'Italia</i> . Rome: Centro Stampa della Banca d'Italia 2006
TCL	Textes cunéiformes du Louvre
TCTI	Lafont, B. and Yildiz, F. <i>Tablettes cunéiformes de Tello au Musée d'Istanbul: datant de l'époque de la IIIe Dynastie d'Ur</i> . Vol. 1. Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten 1989
TCVP	Pomponio, F. <i>Tavolette cuneiformi di varia provenienza delle collezioni della Banca d'Italia</i> . Rome: Centro Stampa della Banca d'Italia 2006
TIM	Texts in the Iraq Museum
TLOB	Richardson, S. <i>Texts of the Late Old Babylonian Period</i> (Journal of Cuneiform Studies Supplemental Series 2) Forthcoming
TM	Tablets from Tell Mardikh-Ebla
TOPOI	<i>International Review of Philosophy</i> . Springer
TU	Thureau-Dangin, F. <i>Tablettes d'Uruk</i> (TCL 6). Paris: Louvre Museum 1910–
TUT	Reisner, G. <i>Tempelurkunden aus Telloh</i> . Berlin: Untersuchungen zur Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie 1901
UET	Ur Excavations, Texts
UF	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
UM	Tablets in the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania
UmH	Tablets from Umm el-Hafriyat
UTI	Gomi, T. and Yildiz, F. <i>Die Umma-Texte aus den Archäologischen Museen zu Istanbul</i> . Bethesda: CDL Press 1997
UVB	<i>Vorläufiger Bericht über die ... Ausgrabungen in Uruk-Warka</i>
VAB/ VB	Vorderasiatische Bibliothek
VAS/VS	<i>Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler</i>
VE	Bilingual vocabulary from Ebla (MEE 4)
VO	<i>Vicino Oriente</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
W	Field numbers of tablets excavated at Warka
WB	<i>Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache</i> . 6 Vols. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag 1926–1961
WO	<i>Die Welt des Orients</i>
WZKM	<i>Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes</i>
YBC	Tablets in the Babylonian Collection, Yale University Library

YES	Yale Egyptological Series
YOS	Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts
ZA	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie</i>
ZÄS	<i>Zeitschrift für ägyptische sprache und Altertumskunde</i>
CBS	<i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphic</i>

## NOTES ON CITATION AND TRANSLITERATION STYLES

Text numbers herein have no punctuation (AUWE 16 35)

Page numbers come after publication year and colon (1983: 534–535)

Footnotes are designated n. (1983: 534 n. 5)

Figures are fig. (fig. 4)

Plate is pl. (pl. 3)

Transliterated Akkadian appears in italics with Sumerian logograms in caps or small caps.

Sumerian texts are usually transliterated in lower case. However, if the reading of a cuneiform sign is uncertain, the transliteration is in upper case.

## INTRODUCTION

This volume dedicated to Benjamin R. Foster was conceived long ago in our graduate school days when we had the good fortune to study under his brilliant tutelage. Captivated by his elegant, witty, and sometimes irreverent lectures, we were inspired daily to solve the mysteries of cuneiform and to explore the linguistic, literary, and historical implications of the many and diverse texts we worked through together. We promised ourselves then that someday we would find a way to express our appreciation. Ben's 65th birthday proved a fitting occasion to collect contributions from students, colleagues, and friends in an honorary volume.

Born on September 15, 1945 in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, Ben became interested in the ancient world at an early age. During high school, he spent summers working at the University Museum in Philadelphia under the guidance of the renowned Sumerologist, Samuel Noah Kramer. Before entering Princeton University, Ben took a year to study at the Middle East Center for Arabic Studies in Shemlan, Lebanon, where he perfected his Arabic and took full advantage of more peaceful times to travel extensively through the entire Middle East. At Princeton he majored in Oriental Studies, concentrating on Arabic and the Middle East from the Hellenistic to the modern period. He graduated summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa, and intended to begin immediately a doctoral program in Assyriology in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Literatures (as it was then called) at Yale University.

But the U.S. Army had other plans and Ben received his 1-A draft notice on commencement day, 1968. After just one semester at Yale, he was called up for military service, including nearly a year at Cu Chi and Tay Ninh, Vietnam, as an ammunition specialist, for which he earned the Bronze Star, Army Commendation Medal, and Vietnam service ribbon. While stationed stateside, he convinced the army that he should learn Russian. As a result, Ben would be one of the few Assyriologists to read the works of Russian colleagues and to develop academic ties with them during the Cold War era.

Having returned safe and sound from Vietnam, Ben re-entered Yale, earning his Ph.D. in 1975. Since then, he has remained at Yale, rising through the ranks to hold his present positions as the William M.

Laffan Professor of Assyriology and Babylonian Literature and Curator of the Yale Babylonian Collection. He has tirelessly served the university in many administrative roles, including a decade as department chairman, and was also instrumental in creating the undergraduate major in the department, which previously had granted only graduate degrees.

Since 1983, summers have found Ben enjoying life deep in the French countryside, where he has written many books and articles in the quiet of his garden. He has established close connections with French colleagues, resulting in his regular participation in conferences and colloquia in Paris. In addition, he has been a visiting professor at the École Pratique des Hautes Études (1998) and the Collège de France (2010).

A prolific writer, Ben is the author of more than a dozen books and monographs, well over one hundred journal articles, more than seventy reviews, and numerous contributions to a variety of dictionaries, encyclopedia, and biographical compendia (too numerous to include in the bibliography herein). These publications reveal an astonishing intellectual versatility, covering topics as varied as early economic history, cuneiform literature, authorship, Mesopotamian humor and wit, time and space, identity, and speculative thought. Whereas Ben's early research focused primarily on Sargonic commercial activity, land use and administration, and the Sumerian temple-State, his interest soon shifted to Mesopotamian literature. In addition to original editions of cuneiform masterpieces, such as a splendid new translation of Gilgamesh, Ben's incisive criticism has transformed our understanding of the Mesopotamian literary tradition. His landmark anthology of Akkadian literature, *Before the Muses*, and the paperback version, *From Distant Days*, not only make accurate and breathtakingly beautiful translations available to Assyriologists, but also introduce cuneiform literature to a worldwide audience of students and the general reader.

Not all of Ben's work comes from the pages of ancient history. He has never abandoned his involvement in the contemporary Middle East, regularly teaching two foundation courses in this area for Yale undergraduates. Since the start of the Iraq War, he has written and spoken widely on the destruction of Iraq's cultural heritage. Moreover, he has easily reached beyond the confines of Mesopotamian antiquity to investigate such matters as the beginnings of American Assyriology, Yale's role in the study of ancient and modern Near Eastern languages in the United States, and the appearance of Assyriology and Assyriologists in works of English and American literature.

In 1975, Ben married Karen Polinger, whom he met in the Babylonian Collection library when both were students at Yale. Over the years, he and his wife have taken particular pleasure in welcoming visiting colleagues, whether in their old farmhouse in Connecticut or their stone cottage in France. They have two grown daughters, Constance and Ruth.

The essays in this volume are meant to reflect Ben's sweeping interests in the ancient Near East and Egypt with studies on topics ranging from social and economic history to literature and language. We offer them as a small token of our esteem for an exemplary teacher, colleague, and friend.

THE ASSYRIAN ELEGY:  
FORM AND MEANING

A.R. GEORGE

*School of Oriental and African Studies, the University of London*

The subject of this article is a minor masterpiece of Assyrian literature. It is a real pleasure to dedicate it to the honour of Benjamin R. Foster. In his new translation of the Epic of Gilgameš for Norton Critical Editions and his magnificent and ever-expanding anthology, *Before the Muses*, Ben Foster has not only translated the masterpieces of Babylonian and Assyrian literature but also exposed to a wide readership many neglected compositions, some of which were perhaps deservedly obscure. The Assyrian elegy was long neglected, but undeservedly so.

For a poem of its importance, the Assyrian elegy has had rather a strange history. It is inscribed on a tablet which was excavated at Kuyunjik, the citadel of Nineveh, and delivered to the British Museum in the 1850s, where the tablet is now K 890. The text was first made known by S. Arthur Strong in 1894, in an article that gave editions of two tablets from Nineveh containing collections of oracular prophecies from the reigns of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, K 2401 and K 883 (now texts nos. 3 and 7 in Simo Parpola's edition of *Assyrian Prophecies*).<sup>1</sup> In an extended textual note on l. 4 of K 883 Strong gave a full transliteration of K 890, which he observed "contains some interesting words and forms."<sup>2</sup> He did not translate it and nor, for a long time, did anyone else.

F.W. Geers made a rough hand copy of the tablet sometime in the period 1929–1939, and the cuneiform text of K 890 became known to the very limited number of Assyriologists who had access to the rich resources of Geers's folios after the Second World War, first in Chicago and then in Heidelberg. Nevertheless, in his invaluable concordance of cuneiform texts, *Handbuch der Keilschriftliteratur*, Rykle Borger was

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<sup>1</sup> Parpola 1997: 22–27 and 38–39.

<sup>2</sup> Strong 1894: 634.



able to record very few occasions during the first three-quarters of the twentieth century when words and phrases of the text of K 890 were quoted in the secondary literature.<sup>3</sup>

The slow rescue of K 890 from oblivion began with the late Karlheinz Deller's review of the texts from Sultantepe, which included his important observation that its text was a lament, sharing that genre and unusual *plene* spellings with *STT* 360.<sup>4</sup> At that time Deller's main interest lay in Neo-Assyrian grammar and spelling, and he did not himself publish any extended study of K 890. However, his prompting surely lay behind the first modern editions of the text, which were both by scholars who came under his influence at Heidelberg.

In the 1970s the bible scholar Rainer Albertz studied Assyriology with Deller in Heidelberg while writing his *Habilitationsschrift* on personal piety and official religion in Israel and Mesopotamia. The resulting book contained, for the first time, the cuneiform of K 890 (in photograph) and, also for the first time, a translation of the text, alongside a modern transliteration prepared under Deller's guidance.<sup>5</sup> Albertz did not annotate the text philologically nor respond to it as literature, but quoted it to illustrate the considerable dangers of childbirth in the ancient Near East. The neglect suffered by K 890 is neatly illustrated by the decision taken, when Albertz's book was reprinted by the Society of Biblical Literature in 2005, to omit the photograph of the cuneiform.

In 1985 Alasdair Livingstone took up a position as Deller's colleague at the Altorientalisches Seminar and began to prepare a volume of Assyrian literary texts for the State Archives of Assyria project. The book appeared in 1989, and K 890 was included in it as text no. 15, under the title "Elegy in Memory of a Woman."<sup>6</sup> The project style precluded the presentation of the text in more than a transliteration, collated with the original tablet, and an English translation, but the plates included good photographs of the tablet.

While the Assyrian elegy was thus being accorded due place in the small corpus of Assyrian literature, Erica Reiner was working on the first, and so far only, literary-critical study. Having already translated the poem for a German anthology,<sup>7</sup> a few years later she published a full treatment

<sup>3</sup> Borger 1967: 522; 1975: 277.

<sup>4</sup> Deller 1965: 464.

<sup>5</sup> Albertz 1978: 53–54.

<sup>6</sup> Livingstone 1989: 37–39 and pls. 5–6.

<sup>7</sup> Reiner 1978: 186–187.

as part of a study of Babylonian and Assyrian poetry.<sup>8</sup> The elegy at last emerged as a miniature masterpiece. Since that time it has taken its rightful place in anthologies in Germany and America. Karl Hecker translated it in a fascicle of *Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments* (1989) and it has appeared in successive editions of *Before the Muses*, under the title “Elegy for a Woman Dead in Childbirth.”<sup>9</sup> But in all this time, no copy of the cuneiform text has ever been published, although pen-and-ink drawings have long been the conventional mode of publishing cuneiform, especially in the case of texts that should be read by every student.

This article makes good that omission (fig. 1).<sup>10</sup> But it aims to do more than that. It cannot replace Erica Reiner’s wonderful response to the elegy, and especially her sensitivity to patterns of sound and the use of imagery, but it gives another literary-critical reaction that I hope will add something to the experience of reading this unique little poem. The text of K 890 has been established by repeated collation and I have little new to add to the decipherment, and nothing that materially alters the sense (see only ll. 14 and 23). That being so, in what follows I have deliberately relegated the transliterated text to the end of the article. In order more clearly to approach the poem as a combination of words rather than a sequence of signs, I present it first in a conventional transcription.<sup>11</sup> And in order to convey something, I hope, of its quality as a work of literature I render it into English more freely than is usual in Assyriology. Another literal translation would be superfluous, when four have been published in the last twenty-five years.

Reiner took the view that the poem is a “sequence of dialogues within a dialogue” and that its structure is determined by the changes of speaker. Here I try a different approach, in which form is given precedence. In my view the poem can be divided into four-line stanzas, which each articulate a particular point of view, and through which the poem develops in distinct stages. Each stanza comprises four verses arranged in two couplets. As usual in Akkadian poetry, a verse ends with a short pause, a couplet with a longer one, and this distinction determines how the translation is punctuated.

<sup>8</sup> Reiner 1985: 85–93.

<sup>9</sup> Foster 1993: 905; 1996: 890; 2005: 949.

<sup>10</sup> My copy of K 890 is published by permission of the Trustees of the British Museum. I was aided in preparing it by fresh photographs of the tablet taken by Nineb Lamassu.

<sup>11</sup> The unusual *plene* spellings noted by Deller remain an enigma and are not discussed here (see Reiner 1985: 90), but in order to note their presence the transcription marks with an acute accent morphologically short vowels spelled *plene*.

The first stanza reads as follows (ll. 1–4):

*ana mīni kī eleppé ina qabal nāré nadâki  
šabburū hūqēki battuqū ašlēki  
kallulū pānēki nār libbi āle tebbirī  
akē lā nadâkū lā battuqū ašlēya*

“Abandoned like a boat adrift midstream,  
“Your thwarts all broken, painters severed:  
“Why cross the City’s river, veiled in a shroud?”  
“How not to drift abandoned, my painters severed?”

The composition begins with a question asked by the poem’s voice. The topic of this initial stanza is the metaphor of a broken boat abandoned to drift down river. The first couplet makes the comparison between the person addressed, a woman, and the boat. The image is rich. The boat’s structure is broken, as represented by its “thwarts”. I have retained the word chosen by Reiner to translate *hūqu*, which are the cross-pieces of a wooden frame. A common application is to the rungs of a ladder, and Armas Salonen thought that in our text a landing-ladder was meant,<sup>12</sup> but Reiner was surely right to propose that here *hūqu* better denotes the structural transverse members of a boat’s frame. Thwarts double as seats in small craft then as now, as can clearly be seen in the silver model boat excavated at Ur.<sup>13</sup> These are not the only kind of traditional Mesopotamian river craft to have cross-pieces, however. Probably the image should rather be of a *kelek* or raft like those that used to ferry people over the Tigris, as photographed by Walter Andrae near Aššur before 1914.<sup>14</sup> The *hūqu* would not then be thwarts that are sat on, for *keleks* are rowed from a standing position, but the transverse poles that form the raft’s frame. As such they are less easily translated, and I have stuck with Reiner’s “thwarts”.

The boat is more than broken: it is adrift in midstream, lost to the bank because its mooring ropes are cut. The woman is likewise more than broken: she is cast off from her earthly life, and the physical connection with human society is severed, because, as we discover in the first line of the second couplet, she is a corpse in a shroud, and making her final journey across a river. Midstream suggests the prime of life: and we shall learn that she died prematurely. Having begun by injecting these two new

<sup>12</sup> Salonen 1939: 125.

<sup>13</sup> U 10566, photograph Salonen 1939: pls. 8–9.

<sup>14</sup> Guest and Hopkins 2005: 134–135. I thank Nineb Lamassu for this bringing this publication to my notice.

ideas, that she is dead and crossing a river, the second couplet ends with an abbreviated repetition of the original metaphor, as if spoken by the woman in response. This response, however, is no true answer to the question; for that we must wait until the poem's end.

All previous translators have assumed or explicitly commented that *libbi āli* “the City” in l. 3 is a reference to the city of Aššur, for this name was clearly the common term of reference among Assyrians to their ancient religious capital. The image evoked by the poem's opening would then seem to be a boat carrying a woman's body across the river Tigris at Aššur. No one has asked whether Assyrians actually did transport their dead to the far side of the Tigris. Archaeological research into human burial at Aššur shows that during the first millennium the inhabitants buried their dead under the floors of dwelling houses and in ruinfields, particularly where the inner city wall had fallen into disrepair.<sup>15</sup> But then again, no one has looked for a cemetery outside the city and, in the absence of evidence, it remains possible that some burials took place across the river.

There is another explanation, however. The expression *libbi āli*, literally “midst of town”, was a term in common usage from the Old Babylonian period on. It has a history of application to cities other than Aššur. In the Nippur Compendium it is a name of Nippur<sup>16</sup> and is also so used in a cultic explanatory text.<sup>17</sup> Given the history of theological and ideological syncretism between Nippur and Aššur, it seems probable that the Assyrians borrowed the term *libbi āli* from Nippur.<sup>18</sup> But, as in the Old Babylonian period, so also in the first millennium: the phrase *libbi āli* was used to refer to the central part of any city. For example, in Nabû-ile'i's boundary stone from late eighth-century Dēr, three plots of urban land are identified as adjoining *eqel* (a.šà) *lib-bu-(ú) a-lu* “the arable land in town” (VAS I 70 ii 34, iii 19 with haplography of *lib*, iv 10).<sup>19</sup> Other non-specific examples of *libbi āli* can easily be gleaned from the dictionaries.

<sup>15</sup> Mofidi Nasrabadi 1999: 83–89.

<sup>16</sup> George 1992: 148–149 § 4: 13.

<sup>17</sup> OECT XI 69 + 70 i 25; Gurney 1989: 28.

<sup>18</sup> George 1990: 157.

<sup>19</sup> The only editor of this boundary stone consistently read a.šà = *eqlu* where I read *a-lu* in this phrase (Peiser 1896: 158–165). Orthographically a.šà is possible in ii 34 and iv 10, but it makes little sense for a plot of land to be identified in a legal document as *ṭēḫ eqel libbi eqli* “adjacent to a field inside a field”.

If we set aside the idea that *libbi āli* in l. 3 of the present text must refer to Aššur, a more suitable alternative arises. The city is the walled netherworld, known euphemistically as the Great City.<sup>20</sup> Access to this city was by river, the lethal river Ḫubur, over which a grim ferryman (Gilgameš or Ḫumuṭ-tabal) transported the dead to their final resting place.<sup>21</sup> In this analysis the verse of l. 3 signifies that the woman is making the journey to the realm of the dead.

The first stanza of the elegy was perhaps occasioned by the forlorn sight of a broken boat adrift on a river, perhaps indeed on the Tigris at Aššur. The image calls to the poet's mind a newly dead woman, possibly his sister or daughter, maybe even his wife, whom he imagines crossing the river of the netherworld. Like many bereaved, he asks himself the question "Why?" And his question receives in his mind a fragmentary echo of an answer, as if the dead woman were herself speaking.

The second stanza reads as follows (ll. 5–8):

*ina ūmē inbu aššūni akê ḫadâk-ânâku  
ḫadâk anâkú ḫadi ḫābirī  
ina ūmē ḫilūyá ētarpū pānēya  
ina ūmē ulādēya ittakrimā ēnāya*

"During the days I was with child, how happy I was!

"Happy I was, and happy my husband!

"The day my pains began, a shadow fell across my face,

"The day my labour started, brightness faded from my eyes."

Structurally, the stanza comprises two couplets that juxtapose opposite emotions, joy in the first and pain in the second. Both couplets comprise two lines each bound by a common topic and by alliteration and assonance, but because they present a shift in circumstances from one extreme to another, each is also marked apart by means exclusive to it: the first by lexical repetition (*ḫadâk, ḫadâk, ḫadi*), the second by syntactic repetition (time phrase, verb, subject). In terms of the poem's development, the stanza's theme is the woman's recent history, told as a first-person reminiscence, from the joyful moment when she discovered she was pregnant, and husband and wife looked forward to the prospect of future family life, to the terrifying onset of the life-destroying pain of labour and childbirth. The listener or reader is made aware, with this stanza, of why the woman died, but without the fact of her death being stated.

<sup>20</sup> Sum. urugal } Akk. *irkalla*; Horowitz 1998: 293; Katz 2003: 338–339.

<sup>21</sup> Horowitz 1998: 355–358; George 2003: 130–131.

The third stanza runs as follows (ll. 9–12):

*patâni upnâyá ana Bēlet-ilī ušalla*  
*ummu ālidāte attī etirri napultī*  
*Bēlet-ilī kī tašmūni tuktallila pānēša*  
 [...] *attī ana mīni tuššanallēni*

“I besought the mother goddess, fists unclenched:

“‘O mother, you that bore me, spare my life!’

“The mother goddess heard, then veiled her face:

“‘[Who are] you, and why beseech me so?’”

This stanza also displays a clear unity, in structure and in theme. Structurally it consists of two perfectly balanced couplets, both comprising a verse of narrative and a verse of direct speech. The two couplets again present a contrast, this time between the dying woman’s desperate appeal for help, palms piously stretched open even in her agony, and the goddess’s unyielding rejection from behind the hidden screen that divides man and god.

The theme of the third stanza is motherhood, and that is why I have rendered Bēlet-ilī, literally “Mistress of the Gods”, in terms of her function as the divine mother of all. Like Reiner, I have felt it necessary also to paraphrase the expression *ummu ālidāte*, literally “mother of those who give birth”, but unlike her I do not think the speaker is seeking favour through the solidarity of mothers (Reiner: “You too have borne a child!”). For me the expression invokes the idea that the mother goddess has a duty of care to those who have to endure the experience that she invented when she created, with Ea’s help, the first human baby, and that this duty of care puts her in the position of being mother to every human mother.<sup>22</sup>

The final verse of the stanza expresses what would have been well known, that the mother goddess presides over birth but is powerless in the face of death. That is why in mythology the mother goddess, as Nintu (Atram-ḫasis III vi 46) or Mammītu (SB Gilgameš X 320), had to be present when the gods made men mortal: she was thus forced to collude in changing for worse the destiny of her creation. Among the deities invoked in prayer at death’s door were Marduk and especially Gula, both of whom were held to “revive the dead”, but not the mother goddess. Put simply, a mother gives birth but cannot save the dying, no matter how they cry for her.

<sup>22</sup> A philological solution would be to reject *ālidāte* (pl.) in favour of the singular *ālittē* “mother who bore me,” by either (a) an emendation *a-li-da-te* to *a-li-it!-te* or (b) a literary epenthesis, *ālidatē* < *ālittē*.

This is the fourth stanza (ll. 13–16):

[*hābirī ša ir'am*]ūni ittidī riganšu  
 [mannu(?) ētekm]anni aššat lalêyá  
 [...] ša dūr šanâté  
 [...] kak]dā qaqqar hibilāte

“[My spouse, who] loved me, cried aloud:  
 “‘[Who(?) has robbed] me of my wife and comfort?  
 “‘[...] through all eternity,  
 “‘[...] for] ever in the place of ruin.’”

Analysis of this stanza suffers from the damage sustained by the beginnings of the lines. Reiner made the breakthrough in seeing that ll. 13–14 introduce the woman’s husband. The first verse of the stanza is clearly a narrative report of his reaction to her death. Damage makes it difficult to know how many verses are to be identified as his lament. Reiner opts for one, Hecker for two, Livingstone avoids quotation marks, and Foster does not translate ll. 15–16. I propose that the widower’s lament occupies all three remaining lines of the stanza, and that his reaction is the stanza’s essential burden.

The two verses of the fourth stanza’s second couplet hold in common references to well-known attributes of the netherworld: it is a place where one resides forever, and it is a scene of decay, where all is covered in dust. Reiner left the word *hibilāte* untranslated. In rendering it as “ruin” I am departing from the translations of Livingstone (“misdeeds”) and Hecker (“Unrecht”), and following CAD H: 180 (“ruins”), and Deller and Albertz (“Ruinen”).<sup>23</sup> The contrasting but complementary themes of eternity and decay bind this couplet. It stands in contrast to the first couplet of the stanza, which I assume with Reiner somehow articulates the new widower’s initial disbelief—“What? Who? And why?” As restored here, his plea employs the same verb, *ekēmu*, that Gilgameš uses when confronted with Enkidu’s death (SB VIII 49: *ī[tekma]nni*, var. *ēkimanni*), and I would judge this a deliberate allusion to the most prominent bereavement in ancient Mesopotamian literature. The husband’s disbelieving question yields to the awful realization that his loss is permanent, for like Enkidu his wife belongs forever to a different place.

<sup>23</sup> *hibiltu* meaning “ruin” is rare but substantiated by Ashurbanipal’s usage in claiming to have “made good the damaged parts of all the temples” of Babylon (V R 62 no. 1: 14–15: *šá eš-re-e-ti ka-li-ši-na hi-bil-ta-ši-na ú-šal-lim*, Streck 1916: 230). For the plural *hibilāte*, without elision, see Hämeen-Anttila 2000: 35.

The fourth stanza, then, imagines that the newly dead woman hears her husband's lament and is able to communicate it to the one who questions her. Posthumous awareness of the grief of the bereaved is a motif found elsewhere in literature. So Gerontius and his guardian angel in John Henry Newman's poem, "The Dream of Gerontius" (1865): "I hear the voices that I left on earth." / "It is the voice of friends around thy bed, / Who say the 'Subvenite' with the priest. / Hither the echoes come."

I restore the fifth stanza as follows (ll. 17–20):

[*mīttu sūqāté*] *libbi āle tallak tassisi nubû*  
 [*û'a kal*] *ûmē annûte issi hābirēya anāku*  
*issēšu ašbākū ša rā'imānēya*  
*mūtu ina bēt eršēya ihlulā hīllūtu*

Passing through the City's [streets, the woman's shade] gave wail:

"[Alas for all] that time my husband was my company!

"With him I dwelt, the property of him that loved me,

"Then to our bedroom stealthy Death did creep."

All who have translated l. 17 have again taken *libbi āli* to mean Aššur and have compounded their difficulties by parsing the verbs as second-person forms. If so, the second verb could be feminine (it is written *ta-si-si-i*), but the first would be masculine (*tal-lak*). So who is being addressed?

The formal analysis of this composition by stanza has so far led us to expect stanzas to display a unity of theme or topic. Lines 18–20 show very clearly that the poem's attention has returned to the dead woman, who speaks them—and remains speaking until the end of the poem. Accordingly I propose that the verbs of l. 17 are third-person feminine forms, and that their subject is the dead woman. This, then, is the first and only verse in the entire poem that is not speech: the poet imagines the woman's shade as having arrived in the Great City, where she wanders about bemoaning her lot.

The narrative verse ends with *nubû* "lament", and the remainder of the poem consists of exactly that lament. The lament begins in this stanza with the expression of longing for the life that is gone. The second couplet makes a contrast between the husband who occupied her bed in her lifetime and death that dragged her from that bed and is now her sole master. In this stanza the emotional *locus* of the poem begins in the netherworld (l. 17), moves back to the world of the living (ll. 18–19, bound by *issi*), and returns to the netherworld (l. 20), with a verse that evokes a line from that great Babylonian meditation on death, the Epic of Gilgameš (SB XI 245): *ina bīt mayyāliya ašib mūtu* "in my



bed-chamber Death does abide”. With the careful switching of *locus* and by subtle intertextual allusion the poet reminds us that the life we enjoy is encompassed by the painful reality of death.

The last stanza is not four verses but three (ll. 21–23):

*issu bētēyá ussēšānni yāši*  
*issu pān ḥābirēya iptarsanni yāši*  
*šēpēya issakana ina qaqqar lā tayyārēya*

“From my house he drove me forth,

“From my husband cut me off;

“My footfall here he planted, in a place of no return.”

The first two verses are a couplet, bound by syntactic parallelism (ablative phrase, verb, object), by lexical repetition (*issu . . . yāši*), and by complementary meaning. The third verse is the result: she has been taken whence she cannot return. And this, finally, is the plain answer to the question posed by the poem’s voice in the first three verses of the first stanza. The whole poem is enclosed in a frame comprising the question, “Why are you crossing the river in a shroud?” and the answer, “Because I am going to the netherworld.” Understood thus, the elegy functions as a lyric meditation on a sudden death, and comes to the conclusion that we meet elsewhere in the literature of ancient Mesopotamia: death comes we know not when, and cannot be resisted.

The foreshortening of the poem’s final stanza, from the four expected verses to the three we have to be content with, is, in my view, a poetic device employed deliberately to underline the blunt truth of its conclusion. The empty verse that follows is a shocking void, a silence meant to deafen. In just the same way, when Ūta-napišti tells Gilgameš the facts of life and death, the regular structure of the passage is twice similarly broken. The last twenty-six lines of Tablet X fall formally into a series of five quatrains interrupted by two three-line stanzas (as punctuated in George 2003: 696–699). The two short stanzas leave two shocking voids, two deafening silences. These deliberate pauses occur after the following verses: SB X 303: *ur[ruḥiš? . . .]šunūma išallal mūtu* “all [too soon(?) in] their very [prime(?)] death abducts them”; and SB X 318: *lullā mītu ul ikruba {karābi} ina māti* “the dead do not greet man in the land” or, rather better, “no one dead has ever greeted a human in this world.”<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Foster 2001: 83. In my critical edition I understood *karābi* as a paranomastic infinitive (George 2003: 877). It now occurs to me that a more elegant verse would result if this word was explained instead as a scholastic intrusion, a Late Babylonian commentator’s gloss on *ik-ru-ba*, to signal derivation from *karābu* not *qerēbu*.

Both lines emphasize the sudden and irreversible nature of death, exactly the themes that inform the Assyrian elegy. I do not think it is a coincidence that the elegy ends with the same poetic effect. Death leaves a void.

To conclude, the Assyrian elegy emerges from this study as a composition that has been carefully framed by question and answer, and no less carefully structured in six stanzas—each of four lines, except the last, and each dwelling on a particular theme or topic, except the last. The poet achieves a perfect balance between form and meaning. The poem's formal perfection adds to its emotional impact as a deeply moving response to loss.

*Transliteration of K 890 (Fig. 1)*

obv.

- 1 *a-na mi-i-ni ki-i*<sup>gis</sup>*eleppe(má)-e ina qabal(murub<sub>4</sub>) nāre(id)-e na-da-ki*
- 2 *šab-bu-ru hu-ge-ki-i ba-tu-qu áš-le-ki*
- 3 *ka-lu-lu pa-ni-ki-i nār(id)*<sup>uru</sup>*libbi(šà) āle(uru) te-bi-ri*
- 4 *a-ke-e la na-da-ku-ú la ba-tu-qu áš-le-ia*
- 5 *ina u<sub>4</sub>-me in-bu áš-šu-u-ni a-ke-e ha-da-ka-a-na-ku*
- 6 *ha-da-ak a-na-ku-ú ha-di ha-bi-ri-i*
- 7 *ina u<sub>4</sub>-me hi-lu-ia-a e-tar-pu-u pa-ni-ia*
- 8 *ina u<sub>4</sub>-me ú-la-de-ia it-ta-ak-ri-ma ēnā(igi+min)*<sup>meš</sup>*-ia*
- 9 *pa-ta-ni up-na-ia-a a-na*<sup>d</sup>*be-let-ilī(dingir) ú-šal-la*
- 10 *um-mu a-li-da-te at-ti-i e-ṭi-ri-i na-pu-ul-ti*
- 11 *be-let<sup>1</sup>-ilī(dingir)*<sup>meš</sup> *ki-i ta<sup>1</sup>-áš-mu-ni tuk-tal-li-la pa-ni-šá*
- 12 *[x x x x x a]t-ti-i a-na me-ni tu-ša-na-le-ni*
- 13 *[ha-bi-ri ša ir-a-m]u-u-ni it-ti-di-i ri-ga-an-šú*
- 14 *[man-nu? e-te-ek-m]a-ni áš-šat la-le-ia-a*

rev.

- 15 *[x x x x x x] ša<sup>1</sup> du-ur šanāte(mu.an.na)*<sup>meš</sup>*-e*
- 16 *[x x x x x kak]-da-a qa-q-qar hi-bi-la-te*
- 17 *[mi-tú? sūqāte(sila)*<sup>meš</sup>*-e? uru]ibbi(šà) āle(uru) tal-lak ta-si-si-i nu-bu-u*
- 18 *[ú-u-a? kal?] ūmē(ud)*<sup>meš</sup> *an-nu-te issi(ta) ha-bi-re-ia a-na-ku*
- 19 *is-se<sup>1</sup>-šu áš-ba-ku-ú ša ra-i-ma-ni-ia*
- 20 *mu-u-tú ina bēt(é) erše(ki.ná)-ia iḥ-lu-la-a hi-il-lu-tú*
- 21 *issu(ta) bēti(é)*<sup>ti</sup>*-ia-a us-se-ša-an-ni a-a-ši*
- 22 *issu(ta) pa-an ha-bi-re-ia ip-tar-sa-an-ni a-a-ši*
- 23 *šēpē(gir+min)*<sup>meš</sup>*-ia is-sa-ka-na ina qa-q-qar la ta-ia-re<sup>1</sup>-ia*

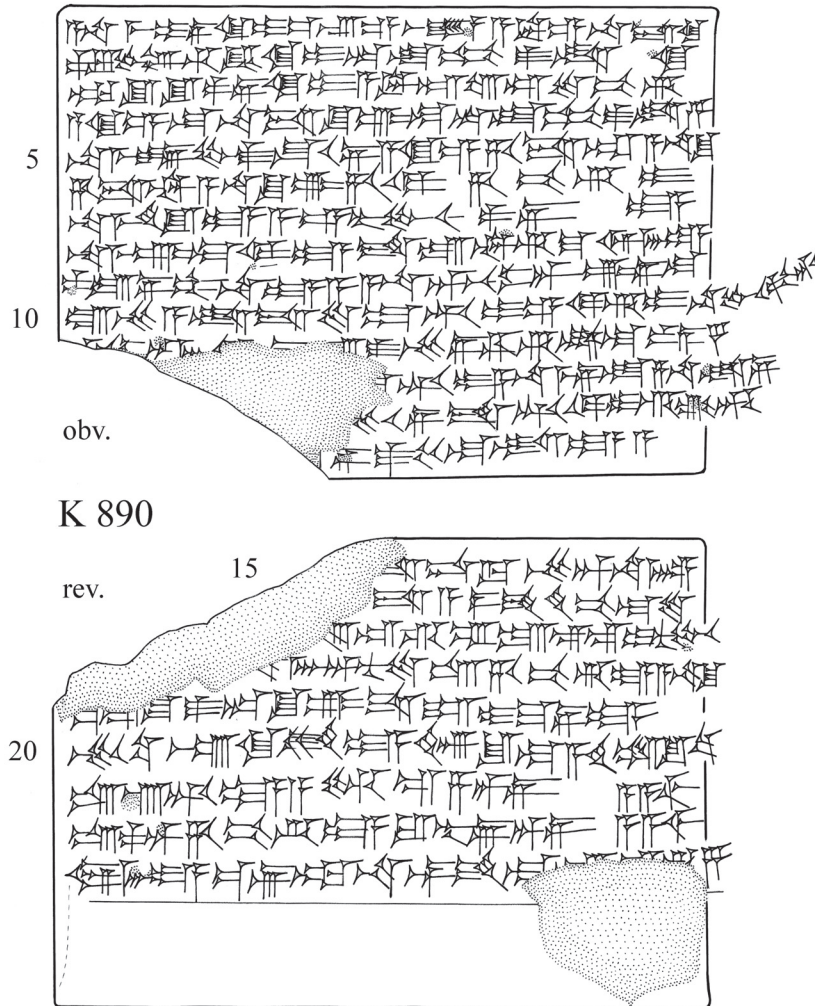


Figure 1.

*Parsing Notes*

5: *ḥa-da-ka-a-na-ku* employs crasis; cf. the same phrase in l. 6. Being superfluous in such a spelling, the *a* is therefore counted among the unusual *plene* spellings of morphologically short vowels and marked in the transcription with an acute accent.

12: *tuṣanallēni*: II/3 present 2 f. sg.

- 17: *tallak*: I/1 present 3 f. sg.; *tassisí*: I/1 perfect 3 f. sg.
- 19: *ša rā'imānēya*: a nominal clause, in apposition to the implicit subject of *ašbāku*.
- 23: *issakana*: I/1 perfect 3 m. sg. ventive with epenthesis (or *ka* for *ak*, *issakna*).

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