

mu-zu an-za₃-še₃ kur-ur₂-še₃ he₂-ḡal₂

Altorientalistische Studien
zu Ehren von Konrad Volk

Herausgegeben von
Jessica Baldwin und Jana Matuszak
unter Mitarbeit von Manuel Ceccarelli

dubsar 17

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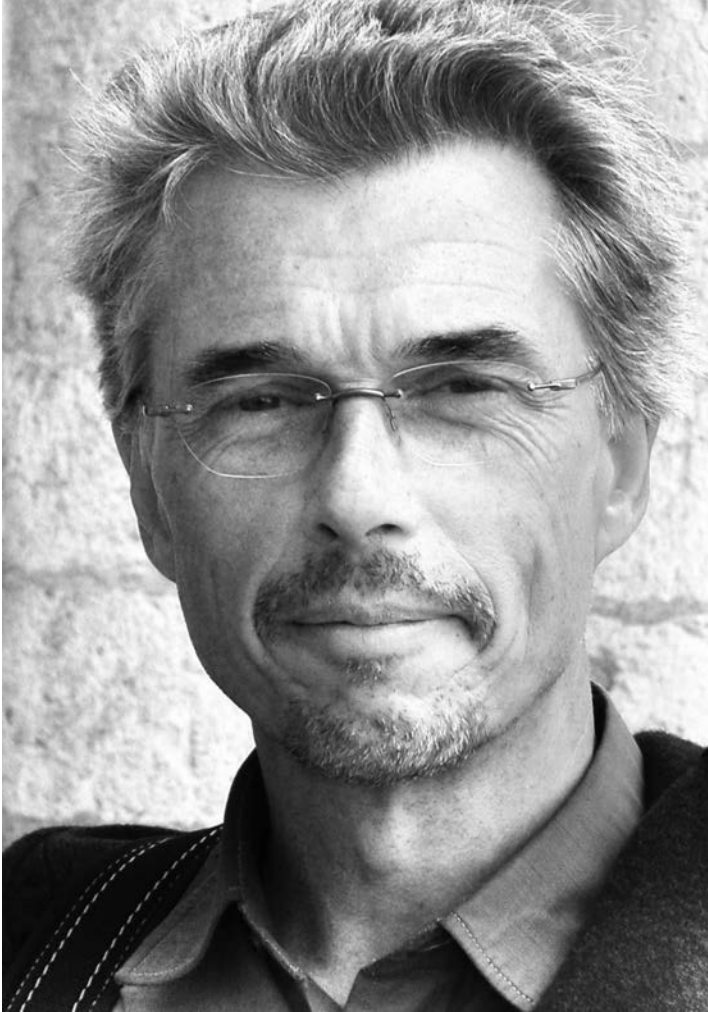
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“Skipped Lines” (MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ) in Balaḡ and Eršema Prayers

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Sam Mirelman (SOAS University of London)*

To Konrad Volk, in appreciation

I. Introduction: Emesal prayers and performance

The performance of Emesal prayers, especially Balaḡ and Eršema prayers, was a central component of the temple cult during the first millennium BCE, and probably earlier as well. Balaḡ and Eršema prayers were sung, to the accompaniment of musical instruments, by the *kalû* priest in the various temples of Babylonia and Assyria during the regular cult, as well as on special calendrical and non-calendrical occasions. About 1500–2000 tablets belonging to the corpus of the *kalû* are known today, dating from the beginning of the second millennium BCE up to the very end of the first millennium BCE.¹

Although Emesal prayers are known to us today as a textual corpus, it is important to keep in mind that unlike other literary works, these texts were first and foremost performed texts. This is demonstrated by the many ritual texts that refer to the cultic performance of Emesal prayers, by colophons that indicate the performative contexts and singing of Emesal prayers, by syllabic orthography (especially in the Old Babylonian period), and by performative indications in the form of melismatic chains of vowels and short musical notations that are found on tablets containing Emesal prayers.²

¹ For a selection of studies on, and editions of this corpus, see Krecher 1966; Cohen 1972; Cohen 1974; Kutscher 1975; Cohen 1981; Cohen 1988; Maul 1988; Volk 1989; Black 1991; Maul 2005; Löhnert 2009; Gabbay 2014; Gabbay 2015; Shibata, forthcoming.

² Löhnert 2009, 55–86; Gabbay 2014, 63–192; Delnero 2015; Mirelman 2018.

II. Skipped lines: Abbreviation in Emesal prayers

The performative nature of Emesal prayers is also reflected in the choices made by the copyists of tablets containing Emesal prayers, in terms of textual layout, formatting, and also the use of abbreviations (Gabbay / Mirelman 2017). The use of abbreviation in the writing of Emesal prayers suggests that whole prayers, and especially litanies, were memorized by the *kalû*; the use of abbreviation is also likely to have been motivated by a need to save space on tablets.

One abbreviation, which occurs frequently in Late Babylonian manuscripts of Emesal prayers, is the annotation MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ “skipped lines” (Mayer 1990, 32–33). This scribal annotation is also known in some Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian tablets of such prayers from Nineveh. It usually refers to the textual omission of sections of text, ranging from a few lines to up to over a hundred lines, that contain lists of gods or cities and temples, usually incorporated in repetitive litanies, a characteristic of Emesal prayers.³ These litanies are often shared between various Emesal compositions, and the series of gods, cities, temples, and epithets within such litanies, even when different in content, follow well established patterns (Gabbay 2014, 38–58). The frequent use of repetition, and of standardized lists of gods and cities or temples, meant that the use of abbreviation is entirely expected in the writing of Emesal prayers. The annotation x MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ (“skipped lines”) indicates that a specific number of lines are omitted from the tablet. It usually appears after the first or second line of the litany, often written in a smaller script on a blank space on one of these lines. The identification of these missing lines is only possible by the use of parallel manuscripts where litanies are written in full, by analogy with well-established litanies which are shared between various compositions, or by analogy with standard sequences of names (even when the content of the litanies themselves differs). Through such comparisons, it is usually possible to deduce probable missing lines. The identification of such skipped lines is of importance, not only for the reconstruction of complete compositions as they existed in performance. It is also of interest for the identification of passages which were deemed to be so well known by the writers of Emesal prayers, that they were not always written out in full.

Before dealing in detail with attestations of the annotation “skipped lines,” it is worth examining a case in which a similar phenomenon occurs, but without this annotation. As will be seen below, usually the annotation “skipped lines” occurs between the first line(s) and last line(s) that are written in full. However, the same practice of writing down the first and last lines, but without this annotation, occurs as well. It is attested in TCL 6, 55 (= TCL 16, 41) from Late Babylonian Uruk. It is significant that this tablet is a summary tablet or “compendium.” Writing “compendia” tablets, i. e., summary tablets reducing entire compositions to key lines,

³ For litanies, see Krecher 1966, 42–45; Black 1991, 29–31; Löhnert 2009, 52–54; Gabbay 2014, 38–58.

is a practice known particularly in first millennium BCE manuscripts (Gabbay 2014, 232–233), motivated by either performative and/or pedagogic reasons. TCL 6, 55 (= TCL 16, 41) is probably a compendium tablet representing an entire Balaĝ to Enlil, summarized in the form of extracts, incipits, and final lines of sections. The tablet also summarizes a litany. In this tablet, the standard city litany, which, as discussed below (§VI), is one of the key litanies omitted with the annotation MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ in various tablets, is omitted, but without using this annotation. This entire litany is condensed in an abbreviated form into lines 10'–11' on the tablet (Cohen 1988, 162:b+179–188):

- 10' úru-zu ^U na-an-šub-bé ^{A.AN I} dè-ra-ab-bé ^E
 11' unug^{ki}-ga é-an-na ^Ú na(-an-šub-bé ^{A.AN I} dè-ra-ab-bé ^E) : ^Ú é-
 dāra-an-na ^Ú na`(-an-šub-bé ^{A.AN I} dè-ra-ab-bé ^E)
- 10' “Do not abandon your city,” may (the gods) each say to you!
 11' “Do not (abandon) Uruk, Eana,” (may the gods each say to you!) ...
 “Do not (abandon) Edara’ana,” (may the gods each say to you)!

Line 10 is the first line of a passage, beginning a well-known stock phrase with the general mention of “your city,” and proceeding in the next lines with a list of toponyms that repeats the same stock phrase. In this tablet, only the first and last lines of this list are written down. The first line, mentioning Uruk and Eana, indicates that the litany here is a local Urukean variation on the standard first millennium city litany (as preserved also in MLC 1852:rev. 24'ff.; cf. Gabbay 2014, 219). The unabbreviated form of this passage would have had a list of eleven more toponymns between Uruk/Eana and Edara’ana (see §VI below). In other instances, where this or similar litanies are abbreviated, the annotation “skipped lines” appears. However, TCL 6, 55 routinely omits large sections of text. Thus, in the case of this tablet, there is no need to indicate the omission of a litany with the annotation MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ “skipped lines.”

Building on the work of Mayer (1990, 32–33), the following attempts to identify and contextualize sequences of lines which are skipped, in tablets which include the annotation MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ. The significance and meaning of this annotation was recognized by G. A. Reisner (1896, xv–xvi). However, the reading of GU₄.UD as a logogram for the verb *šahātu* “to jump, leap” was first recognized by B. Meissner (1908). The precise verbal form implied is uncertain, although a stative is expected (Mayer 1990, 32–33).

This scribal annotation is to be distinguished from the annotation *hepi* “broken,” or the less frequently attested annotation x MU.MEŠ GAZ.MEŠ “x broken lines,” which refer to missing lines or signs on the *Vorlage* from which writers copied tablets (Worthington 2012, 24–27). By contrast, MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ refers to the writer’s deliberate omission of lines, the writing of which is optional, as they are well known, and probably already committed to memory by *kalū*-priests. The performative context of this annotation may be suggested by the fact

that it is only attested in Balaḡs and Eršemas, two closely associated genres which are known to have been sung; it has not (yet) been identified in other genres of Emesal prayers such as Eršaḡuḡas and Šuilas. This is of interest, due to the fact that Eršaḡuḡas, and especially Šuilas, also feature extensive repetition. However, Balaḡs, in which most of the attestations of MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ are known, are by far the longest, multi-sectional category of Emesal prayers. Thus, it is likely that the adoption of this annotation was motivated, at least in part, by a need to save space in the writing of Balaḡ tablets, a practice which may have then been applied to Eršemas. In addition, Balaḡs and Eršemas were performed in the regular, daily temple cult; this contrasts with Eršaḡuḡas or Šuilas, which were often performed on special occasions (Maul 1988, 25–56; Gabbay 2014, 158–168; Shibata, forthcoming). This may suggest that, due to their regular, daily performance, repetitive sections in Balaḡs and Eršemas were truly committed to memory, and the writing of such passages was considered optional. Indeed, the memorization and musical performance of Balaḡs and Eršemas was an essential feature of these compositions; this contrasts with Eršaḡuḡas or Šuilas, which were recited, not sung (Gabbay 2014, 12–13; 81–154).

III. Skipped lines in texts that are not Emesal prayers

All the attestations of the annotation “skipped lines” appear in Emesal texts, apart from two. One line of the Standard Babylonian Epic of Gilgameš, on a manuscript from Achaemenid/Seleucid Uruk (IM 76941), includes the annotation. As discussed by A. R. George (2003, 808), in this instance it appears that the scribe wrote 5 MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ “5 lines are skip[ped]” (II, 260) instead of GAZ (*hepi*) “broken,” due to the fact that five lines (II, 254–259) were mostly broken in the *Vorlage* from which the scribe was working. Thus, the scribe used this term as an efficient means of indicating the omission of an extended passage, which was mostly broken in the manuscript from which the copy was being made.⁴

A colophon belonging to a Late Babylonian manuscript of the Nippur Compendium (BM 38413; George 1992, 162; cf. Gabbay 2016, 14) includes the annotation indicating skipped lines within a context which seems to refer to the role of oral transmission in a scholarly setting. The colophon refers to the text being “heard according to the mouth of a scholar” (*a-na pi-i UM.ME.A ša-mu-ú*), and to

⁴ VAT 17476 (VS 24, 30, obverse; cf. Gabbay 2014, 235, n. 59), a tablet belonging to an unidentified Balaḡ, includes a passage which belongs to the shorter version of the long god litany, a litany for which the annotation MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ is often used (see §V below). However, in this case each line is followed by *iš-ša-ah-iṭ* “skipped.” Following a double line, line 15' reads [] x PAP² ER.MEŠ *iš-ša-ah-iṭ*. It is unclear what is intended here, as an indication that a refrain is omitted would be excessive if it is repeated in every successive line. It is possible that, as in the Gilgameš example cited above, the verb *šaḡāṭu* “to jump, leap” is used where we may expect *hepi* “broken,” if we assume that the scribe is referring to the absence of the right column in a *Vorlage* from which he is working.

a lesson (*malsútu*). Not all the terminology in this colophon is clear. However, the colophon concludes with MU.ME *ina bi-re-e-tú* GU₄.UD.ME *a-mi-r[u]* ana TIL.LA GAR-an, which may be translated as “the lines in between are skipped; the reader may complete them.” The reason for the skipping here may be related to the scholarly or didactic setting of the text, rather than the broken *Vorlage* as in the previous line, or the cultic performative context in the Emesal prayers examined below.

Before dealing with the rest of the attestations, all in Emesal texts, it is worth mentioning the use of the annotation MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ in two colophons of Emesal texts. These attestations refer to skipped lines in the context of a line count of the total number of lines on the tablet. BM 38742 (Balaĝ a úru-ĝu₁₀ im-me, unpublished; cf. Gabbay 2014, 236, n. 63) and BM 66635 (unidentified Enlil Balaĝ, unpublished; cf. Gabbay 2014, 236, n. 63) refer in their colophons to their total line count, followed by “with (EN = *adi*) two/three lines skipped.” It is unclear what these “skipped lines” refer to, since otherwise a larger number of lines are skipped in litanies of Emesal prayers.

IV. Provenance and dating of “skipped lines” attestations

The annotation MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ in Emesal texts is first attested at seventh century BCE Nineveh, in tablets written in both Assyrian script (K.3585, probably also K.4427+), and Babylonian script (K.3315+, K.5160+, K.5168+).

Chronologically, the annotation next appears in Achaemenid/Seleucid Uruk. The so-called “Converse Tablet,” although unprovenanced, was written in Dēr according to its colophon, but is likely to have been brought to Uruk in antiquity, and is likely to originate in Square U18 (Gabbay 2014, 262). The other Uruk tablets that contain this annotation originate from the Rēš Temple (BaM Beih. 2, nos. 21, 22, 30; VAT 7824).

The majority of attestations are known from tablets of Emesal prayers published in SBH and CTMMA 2 (= Maul 2005), which may be considered a single group. These tablets are unprovenanced, but their origin from Babylon is shown by their colophons, which also date them to the late second to early first centuries BCE. Some of the collection may date earlier, and may have been brought to Babylon from other locations such as Borsippa (Gabbay 2014, 245–250).

The remaining attestations consist of unprovenanced Late Babylonian tablets from the British Museum, which are likely to come from Babylon or Borsippa, and one unprovenanced Late Babylonian tablet, perhaps from Babylon or Borsippa, from the Yale Babylonian Collection (MLC 382).

Finally, a variation of the phrase MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ appears in a Balaĝ tablet from the Royal Ontario Museum, perhaps from Late Babylonian Nippur, edited in the appendix below.

V. Long god litanies

There are several long god litanies, which typically occur at the end of Balaḡs, and feature the ancestors of Enlil and other deities.⁵ It should be emphasized that although referred to as “litanies” in Assyriological scholarship, they differ from other litanies which include a repetitive phrase with alternating names of gods, since they only contain a long list of names and epithets without any repetitive phrase.

Such long god litanies exist in various recensions, within the same period, and between periods (Gabbay 2014, 56–58).⁶ For example, the 98 lines of an Old Babylonian version expand to 129 lines in a first millennium BCE version.⁷

NBC 1315, an Old Babylonian manuscript of the Balaḡ e-lum gu₄-sún, includes the scribal annotation *ilū adi iggammarū* “the gods, until they are complete” (Cohen 1988, 280:e+174), skipping over most of the lines from this long litany. This annotation is, in fact, an Old Babylonian precursor to the first millennium BCE annotation MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ. On NBC 1315, the identification of skipped lines as a reference to this specific litany is based on the fact that the first and third lines of the litany are included immediately before the scribal annotation (it is unclear why NBC 1315 omits the second line of this litany), followed by a double ruled line, and a subscript indicating the completion of the tenth *kirugu*-section of the Balaḡ:

A = NBC 1315 (Balaḡ e-lum gu₄-sún; collated from photograph)

B = VS 2, 11⁸ (Balaḡ e-lum gu₄-sún)

A r.14' ^dmu-ul-líl-lá dam-a-ni ^dnin-líl-lá-^ˀa^ˀ [(x)]

B iv 1 ^dmu-ul-líl-le dam-a-ni ^dnin-líl-le

B iv 2 an ^duraš ki še gu-nu-e

A r.15' ^den-ki ^dnin-ki ^den-mul ^dnin-mul [(x)]

B iv 3 ^den-ki ^dnin-ki ^den-ul ^dnin-ul

A r.15'a *i-lu a-di ig-ga-am-ma-ru*

B iv 4ff. (rest of litany of over 100 lines, written in full)

A

A r.16' ki-ru-gú 10 kam-ma

⁵ The late R. Borger’s (unpublished) *Die Emesal Götterlitaneien*, announced in Maul 2005, 83, is reportedly a study of the long god litanies. We have no other knowledge of the work, and have not seen Borger’s unpublished manuscript.

⁶ Besides the examples discussed in this section, two fragments from Late Babylonian Uruk probably contain further references to this litany being skipped. They are BaM Beih. 2, 30:2'–3' and BaM Beih. 2, 22, 5'.

⁷ Such a tendency towards the expansion of Old Babylonian litanies in the first millennium BCE is known elsewhere (Löhnert 2009, 52–54).

⁸ VS 2, 11 (VAT 607+) reportedly belongs to the same tablet as TCL 15, 2 (AO 3924; see Cohen 1988, 272, source C), although we have not yet been able to confirm this.

Parallel Old Babylonian manuscripts include the rest of this litany (Cohen 1988, 280–291:e+172–e+280; see Löhnert 2009, 396–398). Although the litany in its Old Babylonian version is slightly shorter than the first millennium BCE version, NBC 1315 skips over, not only the litany but also the concluding eight lines featuring the “mother in prayer” (*ama šùd-dè*), which are not omitted in first millennium BCE manuscripts.

This litany is skipped in several first millennium BCE manuscripts, where the gap is annotated by MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ. K.3315+ (Balaḡ *am-e bára-an-na-ra*; Babylonian script) and K.3585 (unidentified Balaḡ) both omit this litany, as shown by their inclusion of the opening and closing lines of the litany, before and after the annotation “skipped lines”:

K.3315 (BL 163)+K.9154 (BL 15; BA 10/1, 12)+K.8706 (BA 10/1, 10)
+Sm.1204 (Gabbay 2015, pl. 8) (*Balaḡ am-e bára-an-na-ra*; cf. Gabbay 2015, nos. 14–15):

ii 4' šùd an ʾurašʾ ki še gu-nu-r[a]
ii 5' ^{d+}en-ki ^dnin-ki ^{d+}en-ul ^dni[n-ul]
ii 5a' 1.UŠ.47 (= 107) MU.MEŠ [GU₄.(UD.)MEŠ]
ii 6' ʾama šùd-dèʾ é-a ér-[ra]
ii 7' [*ina um-ma-ti-šá*] *i-ka²-rab ana É*
(for continuation, cf. Cohen 1988, 241ff.:c+360ff.)

K.3585 (BA 10/1, 10a; unidentified Balaḡ):

r.3 [an urašʾ] ki še gu-nu-ra
r.4 [^den-ki ^dnin-ki] ^den-ul ^dnin-u[1]
r.4a [107² MU.M]EŠ GU₄.MEŠ
r.5 [ama šùd-dè] é-a ér-r[a]
r.6 [*ina um-ma-ti-šá*] *i-ka²-rab ʾÉ*
(for continuation, cf. Cohen 1988, 241ff.:c+360ff.)

Both of these manuscripts include the longest skipped sections that we have identified in first millennium BCE manuscripts. Skipping this litany was not a consistent practice at Nineveh, as shown by the two-column tablets K.4629 (SBH III)+Rm.132 (5R, p. 52, no. 1) and K.2442 (SBH 49a)+K.5148 (Cohen 1988, 838)+K.17282 (Gabbay 2015, pl. 7), which both include the litany concluding the Balaḡ *mu-tin nu-nus dí-m-ma* (for these tablets, see Gabbay 2015, 72–73).

Later first millennium examples, where skipped lines are marked, do not skip such a large number of lines. In fact, it is interesting to note that tablets belonging to the group published in SBH and CTMMA 2, which include many attestations of MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ, write out most of this long litany. SBH 48 (unidentified

Balaḡ; Cohen 1988, 234–235:c+250–263, 303–304:c+124–137) writes out the entire litany except for the opening ten lines, which are marked as “skipped lines”:

- 5' ^dmu-ul-líl-le dam-a-ni ^dnin-líl-le
 6' an uraš ki še gu-nu-ra
 7' ^{d+}en-ki ^dnin-ki ^{d+}en-mul ^dnin-mul
 7'a 10 MU.MEŠ GU₄.MEŠ
 8' ^dnuska á-maḡ udug é-kur-ra
 9'ff.: text continues with the full litany of over 100 lines; see Cohen 1988, 235ff.:c+264ff. // 304ff.:c+138ff.

Shorter versions of this litany begin almost the same as the longer version, but end differently. An exact reconstruction of these shorter versions is not yet possible. This is due to the fact that manuscripts which do write out the litany are not fully extant.⁹ These shorter versions consist of approximately forty or fifty lines. Some of these shorter versions begin with the familiar phrase: an uraš ki še gu-nu-ra “An (and) Uraš, earth where barley sprouted,” followed by forty or fifty skipped lines.

Three tablets belonging to the Marduk/Nabû tradition refer to a 41-line section, perhaps identical in all three, with the annotation “skipped lines.” See the following attestations, followed by discussion:

BaM Beih. 2, pl. 19, no. 21 (Balaḡ en zu sá mar-mar; collated):

4 [umun-ra mu-lu a-ra-z]u-ke₄ a-ra-zu dè-ra-^rab^r-[bé]

5 [an uraš ki še g]u-nu-ra : 40^l MU.ME GU₄^l.ME^l

6 [šùd-dè še]-eb É re-eš ki NE-en-gi₄-[gi₄]

7 [ki-šú-b]i-im [balaḡ an-na-ke₄/kam]

(followed by Eršema nam-mu-un-šub-bé-en)

K.5160+ (Babylonian script; for information on the different fragments of the tablet, see Gabbay 2015, no. 22; second and final tablet of Balaḡ en zu sá mar-mar):

r.iii 25' [an uraš] ^rki^r še gu-nu-[ra]

r.iii 25'a [39[?] MU].^rMEŠ^r ^rGU₄.UD^r. [MEŠ]

r.iii 26' [dìm-me-er an-na] dìm-me-er ki-[a]

⁹ See especially SBH 13:20 (Cohen 1988, 389–390, ms. J, b+129ff.): an uraš ki še gu-nu-ra etc., but only the first eight lines are (partially) extant. Cf. also Lambert 1971, 351, n. 19, for fragments which may be used in the reconstruction of this litany in its first millennium version.

- r.iii 27' [šùd-dè še-eb é-saḡ-í]l-la ʿki ʿNE-en-g[i₄-gi₄]
 r.iii 28' [ina ik-ri-bi l]i-bit-ti É.MIN ana áš-ri-š[á² litūr(?)]

r.iii 29' [ki-šú-bi-im] balaḡ ^d[marduk-ke₄/kam]
 (followed by Eršema nam-mu-un-šub-bé-en)

“Converse Tablet” (Balaḡ ukkin-ta eš-bar til-la; Lambert 1971; Cohen 1988, 491–492:f+207–247):

- | | | |
|--------|--|--|
| r.18' | ^{MIN U} umun-ra mu-lu a-ra-zu-ke ₄ ^E | a-ra-zu ^U dè-ra-ab-bé |
| r.18'a | <i>ana be-lu₄ šá téš-li-tú</i> | <i>tés-li-tú liq-bu-šú</i> |
| r.19' | an ^d uraš | ki še gu-nu-ra ^A |
| r.19'a | 25 MU.MEŠ GU ₄ .UD.MEŠ | |
| r.20' | égi zi-da ^A | ^d ki-ša ₆ ^A nu-nus ša ₆ -ga ^A |
| r.21' | a-a ugu-zu | ^d asal-lú-ḫi-ke ₄ ^E |
| r.22' | ama ugu-zu | ^d pa ₄ -nun-an-ki-ke ₄ ^E |
| r.23' | mu-ud-na ^U ki-áḡ-zu | gašan-gù-téš-a-si-ga-ke ₄ ^E |
| r.24' | sukkal-an-na gašan-šubur-ra ^{A U} | sukkal maḫ-di kingal [!] |
| r.25' | ^{šUB} umun-ug sánga-maḫ abzu-ke ₄ ^{E U A} | ur-saḡ gal ^d dug ₄ -ga-ab-
šú-gi ₄ -gi ₄ ^I |
| r.26' | ad-gi ₄ -gi ₄ | ^d en-nun-daḡal-la-«na» ^A |
| r.27' | ^{MEZE LÁ} ad-gi ₄ -gi ₄ gašan-šùd-dè-an-na ^{A U} | ad-gi ₄ -gi ₄ dug ₄ -ga-ni-
kiri-zal |
| r.28' | ^[ŠÈM DJU] ama ur-saḡ-ḡá gašan-tin-lu-ba ^{A U A} | ur-saḡ gal umun ^d di-kud-
maḫ-àm |
| r.29' | umun ad-hal an ^d uraš-a-ra ^{A U} | dìm-me-er an-na ^A
dìm-me-er ki-a |
-
- r.30' [šù]d-dè še-eb é-zi-da-ta^A ki NE-en-gi₄-gi₄
-
- r.31' [ki-š]ú-bi-im balaḡ ^dna-bi-um-ke₄

BaM Beih. 2, 21 and K.5160+ both contain the same compositions, namely the Balaḡ en zu sá mar-mar to Marduk followed directly by the paired Eršema to this Balaḡ (nam-mu-un-šub-bé-en; Gabbay 2015, no. 22). Therefore, it is likely that the long god litany in both tablets is identical, indicating that in K.5160+ we should restore the same number of skipped lines as in BaM Beih. 2, 21 minus one, since K.5160+ does include the last line of the litany, which is included in the forty skipped lines of BaM Beih. 2, 21. Nevertheless, a word of caution is due: BaM Beih. 2, 21 exhibits local Urukian variations. Note the concluding line, contextualizing the Balaḡ in relation to the Rēš temple rather than the expected Esaḡil; the same can be said for the Balaḡ’s paired Eršema which is also included on this tablet (see Gabbay 2014, 109, 111; Gabbay 2015, 219–220). Therefore, one cannot disregard the possibility that the long litany was also different in BaM Beih. 2, 21.

The “Converse Tablet” contains a different composition, namely the Balaḡ ukkin-ta eš bar til-la to Nabû. But it is very possible that its litany was identical to that of the Balaḡ en zu sá mar-mar.¹⁰ The “Converse Tablet” indicates that twenty-five lines of this litany are skipped. The tablet then continues with ten further “skipped lines.” However, these ten “skipped lines” actually represent the final fifteen lines of the litany, since five physical lines on the tablet contain two “literary” lines each (ll. 24, 25, 27, 28, 29). Added to the twenty-five skipped lines, this makes a total of forty skipped lines, and, including the introductory line, a total of forty-one lines for the litany overall. It is difficult to answer the question why the scribe skipped only the first twenty-five lines but wrote down the remaining fifteen lines in full. It is likely that certain passages were so well-known that there was no need to write them down. Perhaps the first twenty-five lines, dealing mostly with Enlil, were especially well known from various compositions, while the last fifteen, dealing especially with Nabû, were more specific to this composition, and not as well-known as other sets of epithets.

A fourth example, BM 38756, containing the Balaḡ úru a-še-er-ra of Enki, begins differently, but also includes the annotation “40 skipped lines,” followed by the final line of the litany. If taken literally, this would mean that the total number of lines would be forty-two, not forty-one, as in the other short version of this litany:

BM 38756 (end of Balaḡ úru a-še-er-ra, Gabbay 2015, no. 2, pl. 1):

r.² 6' ^dmu-ul-líl-lá [dam-a-ni ^dnin-líl-lá[?]]

r.² 7' an uraš k[i še gu-nu-ra]

r.² 7'a 40 MU.ME GU₄.ME

r.² 8' dìm-me-er an-n[a dìm-me-er ki-a]

r.² 9' šùd-dè še-eb é-^rZU^r. [AB-ta ki NE-en-gi₄-gi₄]

r.² 10' ina ik-ri-bi li-b[it-ti E.MIN ana ašrišu litūr (?)]

r.² 11' ki-šú-bi-im [balaḡ ^den-ki(-ga)-ke₄]

SBH 23 includes the conclusion to the Utu-focused Balaḡ ^dutu[?] [...] é[?]-kur-ra, with the same concluding line, and the annotation “50 skipped lines.” If taken literally, this would make a total of fifty-two lines:

¹⁰ Note that this concluding section with the long god list is preceded by the same section that precedes the god list in the Balaḡ en zu sá mar-mar (umun úru-ni-a na-áḡ zé-eb ba-an-tar-re).

SBH 23 (end of Balaĝ ^dutu[?] [...] ^é?-kur-ra; Cohen 1988, 420:a+47–98; collated from photograph):

- r.23 ^{‘E MIN/A’} an uraš-[a] ki še gu-[nu-ra]
 r.23a 50 MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ
 r.24 ^{‘ŠUB?’} dìm-me-er an-na ^A dìm-[me-er ki-a]

The parallel manuscript to this passage, K.4427 (BL 96)+K.4620 (BA 5, 9), most probably also included an annotation “50 skipped lines” in lines 29’–30’ (see Cohen 1988, 420:a+47–98):

- 29’ [an uraš-(a)] ki še gu-[nu-ra]
 29’a [50 MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ](?)
 30’ [dìm-me-er a]n-na dìm-me-er [ki-a]

MMA 86.11.349+MMA 86.11.365 (Balaĝ nir-ĝál lú ^è-NE to Ninurta; Maul 2005, no. 4) features yet another variant of the shorter version of this litany, which begins differently, using epithets of Ninurta, but ends with the same concluding lines as in the attestations above. It also contains the annotation “40 skipped lines,” which can be partially reconstructed according to parallel manuscripts (cf. Maul 2005, 40):

- r.31’ égi-ru-ma a[ma gal ^dnin-líl]-lá
 r.31’a (ras.) ru-ba-tú URU u E [u]m-[m]u GAL-tu₄ ^dMIN
 r.32’ ^{dr}a[˘]-[ru-ru nin⁽⁹⁾ ^dmu-ul-líl-lá-r]a
 r.32’a 40 MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ
 r.33’ dìm-me-er an-na [dìm-me-er ki]-a
-
- r.34’ šùd-dè še-eb ^é-šu-me-[˘]ša₄[˘] [ki NE-en-gi₄]-gi₄
-
- r.35’ ki-šu-bi (ras.)-im [b]a[la]ĝ [^dnin-ur]ta-ke₄

VI. Toponym litanies

The standard first millennium BCE toponym litany consists of thirteen names of cities and temples, which are usually written using a smaller number of physical lines on the tablet, since some of the items appear in the same line. It follows the order Nippur-Sippar-Babylon-Borsippa, with associated temples and shrines. The litany can also appear in a longer version, including seven more items related to Kiš, Kutha and Dilbat (Gabbay 2014, 43, Table 4).

The “Converse Tablet,” in its long version, skips fifteen lines (rev. 14’), consisting of the standard first millennium BCE city litany. This litany begins with Nippur and the Ekur, which are included (rev. 13’–14’) before the indication “15 skipped lines.” These skipped lines are preserved in full in K.5160+, which

contains the same section and sequence in its litany;¹¹ see Cohen 1988, 490–491:f+184–204:

A = “Converse Tablet” (Lambert 1971)

B = K.5160+ (see §V above; collated from photographs)

A r.13'	úru-na ^A nibru ^{ki} U-na	E na-
A r.14'	E ^A MIN še-eb é-kur-ra	E na-
A r. 14'a	15 MU.MEŠ GU ₄ .UD.MEŠ	
B iii 1'	ʿše-eb ʿé-[kur-ra	na-]
B iii 2'	ki-ùr ʿéʿ-[nam-ti-la	na-]
B iii 3'	zimbir ^{ki} ʿéʿ-[babbar	na-]
B iii 4'	úru-na tin-tir ^{ki}	[na-]
B iii 5'	ʿšeʿ-eb é-saḡ-ʿílʿ	[na-]
B iii 6'	úru-ʿnaʿ ʿbàdʿ-si-ʿabʿ-[ba ^{ki}]	[na-]
B iii 7'	še-eb ʿéʿ-zi-ʿdaʿ	[na-]
B iii 8'	é-maḥ-ti-la	[na-]
B iii 9'	é-te-me-an-ki	ʿnaʿ-
B iii 10'	é-dàra-an-na	ʿnaʿ-
B iii 11'	é-nam-bi-zi-da	ʿnaʿ-
B iii 12'	é-ur ₄ -me-imin-an-ki	na-
B iii 13'	é-šir-saḡ-ús-sa	na-
B iii 14'	kiš ^{ki} é-dub-ba	na-
B iii 15'	é-me-te-ur-saḡ	na-
B iii 16'	gú-du ₈ -a ^{ki} é-mes-lam	na-
A r.15'	MIN dil-bat ^{ki} é-i-bí ^d a-nu-um	E na-
B iii 17'	dil-bat ^{ki} é-i-bí ^d a-nu-um	ʿnaʿ-
A r.16'	MIN na-áḡ zé-eb ba-an-tar-re	^d mu-zé-eb-ba-sa ₄ -a
B iii 18'	na-áḡ zé-eb ba-an-tar-re	^d ʿmuʿ-[zé-eb-ba-sa ₄ -a]

The shorter version of this litany, which begins with Nippur and the é-kur and ends with é-dàra-an-na, is skipped in the following five passages of the Balaḡ en zu sá mar-mar, indicated by “6/7 skipped lines,” depending on whether Nippur and Ekur appear in the same line or not:

¹¹ It is a significant feature that K.5160+ includes this litany in full, but it skips the long god litany in its shorter version (see §V above).

- A = K.5168+K.5703A+K.6099+K.8728+K.10728+K.11219+K.13412+K.13935+K.13939+K.13949+K.16931(+K.5189(+K.5171+K.5354(+K.18724 (cf. Cohen 1988, 401); first tablet of Balaḡ en zu sá mar-mar (same sequence of tablets and scribe as K.5160+ below; unpublished transliteration, courtesy of D. Shibata)
- B = BM 38552 (first tablet of Balaḡ en zu sá mar-mar; unpublished transliteration, courtesy of D. Shibata)
- C = SBH 11 (// first tablet of Balaḡ en zu sá mar-mar; Cohen 1972, 148–157, no. 5; unpublished transliteration, courtesy of D. Shibata; collated from photographs provided by A. Heinrich)
- D = SBH 39 (// first tablet of Balaḡ en zu sá mar-mar; Cohen 1972, 308–313, no. 27; unpublished transliteration, courtesy of D. Shibata).

1.

A iia 19 nibru^{ki} é-kur na-(an-šub-bé-en dè-ra-ab-bé) a-(ra-zu dè-ra-ab-bé)

A iia 19a 6 MU.MEŠ []

B iii 23' [] ´é´-kur []

B iii 23'a ´6´ MU.ME´ GU₄.UD.ME

C r.19' [nibru^{ki} é-k]ur^{!?} na-an-

C r.19'a 6 MU.MEŠ GU₄.´UD´.MEŠ

A iia 20 é-dàra-an-na na-a- (*vacat*)

B iii 24' ´é-dàra-an´-na na-[] x

C r.20' [é-dàra-an-n]a na-an- (*vacat*)

2.

B iii 47' ´úru´-zu nibru^{ki} me-na ì-x-[]

B iii 47'a 7 MU.ME GU₄.UD.ME

B iii 48' ´é´-dàra-an-na me-na ì-x-[]

3.

A iv 5' [... nibru^{ki} mu-un-ḥu]l-a u₆

A iv 5'a 7 MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.[MEŠ]

B iv 2' [... nibru^{ki} mu-un-ḥul-a u₆]

B iv 2'a 7 MU.ME GU₄.UD.ME

A iv 6' [é-dàra-an-na mu]-´un´-ḥul-a u₆ (*vacat*)

B iv 3' [é-dàra-an-na mu-un-ḥ]ul-´a´ ´u₆´ (*vacat*)

4.

- A iv 30' šà-gi-kár-ga-´zu´ []
 B iv 27' šà-gi-ká[r-ga-zu] ´nibru^{ki} ´é-kur ´h´é´-
 B iv 27'a 6 MU.ME GU₄.UD.ME
 D 24' [] nibru^{ki} ´é-kur]-ra h´é-
 D 24'a 6 MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ
- A iv 31' šà-ge-kár-ga-z[u]
 B iv 28' šà-ge-kár-g[a-zu] ´é´-dàra-an-na ´h´é´- (*vacat*)
 D 25' [] ´é-dàra-an-na [h´é]-dù (*vacat*)

5.

- A iv 34' nibru^{ki} [] -r]a?
 B iv 31' ´nibru^{ki} ´é´-[kur]? ´du^{tu}-gin₇ ´zé´-zé-
 B iv 31'a ´6´ MU.ME GU₄.UD.ME
 D 28' nibru^{ki} x x x x x zé-
 D 28'a 6 MU.MEŠ ´GU₄.UD.MEŠ´
- A iv 35' ´é´-dàra-an´-[na] (*vacat*)
 B iv 32' ´é´-dàra´-[an-na] ´zé´-zé (*vacat*)
 D 29' ´é´-dàra´-[an-na]

VII. Enlil and Marduk litanies

A standard sequence in litanies, especially in Enlil and Marduk Balašs and Erše-mas, lists the gods Enlil-(Enki)-Marduk/Nabû and their epithets as follows (Gabbay 2014, 40, Table 1):

- 1 umun kur-kur-ra
- 2 umun du₁₁-ga zi-da
- 3 ^dmu-ul-líl a-a ka-naš-šá
- 4 sipa saš-šá₆-ga
- 5 i-bí du₈ ní te-na
- 6 am érin-na di-di
- 7 ù lul-la ku-ku
- 8 (^dam-an-ki)
- 9 ^dasar-lú-ḫi
- 10 ^den-bi-lu-lu
- 11 ^dmu-zé-eb-ba-sa₄-a
- 12 ^ddi-ku₅-maḫ-àm

This list is skipped in the following passage of the Balaḡ en zu sá mar-mar:

A = K.5168+(+) (see §VI above)

B = BM 38552 (see §VI above)

C = SBH 20b (// first tablet of Balaḡ en zu sá mar-mar; Cohen 1972, 218–222, no. 15; unpublished transliteration courtesy of D. Shibata)

A ii 20'	[		] bar-r[a]
B ii 21'	umun	ʿkur-kur-ra	ʿbar-ra	me-[a]
B ii 21'a			10 MU.MEŠ	GU ₄ .UD.ME
C r.9'	umun	kur-kur-ra	bar-ra	me-a
C r.9'a			7 MU.MEŠ	GU ₄ .UD.MEŠ
A ii 21'	[		] ʿbar-[-ra]
B ii 22'	ʿumun	^d di-ku ₅ -maḡ ^ʿ -a	[bar-]
C r.10'	umun	^d di-ku ₅ -maḡ-àm	bar-	(<i>vacat</i>)

The ten skipped lines in BM 38552 signify the ten epithets and names between the first and last epithets written in full in this manuscript. However, the parallel manuscript SBH 20b indicates that only seven lines of the same litany are skipped. We are unable to offer a certain explanation for this discrepancy. Sometimes physical lines on the tablet do not correspond exactly to the number of literary lines. Possibly, this phenomenon may explain the discrepancy; perhaps the tablet from which SBH 20b was copied, included one or two physical lines within which more than one epithet was written.

This litany is also abbreviated, presumably skipping the full ten lines, in the following:

SBH 46 (Balaḡ mu-tin nu-nus dí-ma; Cohen 1988, 222:a+54–65)

r.15 [umun kur-kur]-ra mu-lu u₆-di

r.16 [10] MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ

r.17 umun ^ddi-ku₅-maḡ-a mu-lu

Another SBH manuscript contains a litany ending with Dikumaḡa, as in the previous case. However, the beginning of the litany is slightly different, and the litany is identical to the litany discussed above, only from the epithet sipa saḡ-ḡi₆-ga onwards, i. e., from what is the fourth line in the litany discussed above. The tablet includes the beginning of the litany, until sipa saḡ-ḡi₆-ga. It then indicates seven skipped lines, which follow the sequence of the litany discussed above, followed by the concluding item of the list, umun ^dr di^ʿ-[ku₅]-ʿmaḡ-àm^ʿ; see Cohen 1988, 329:f+216–226:

VAT 37+442+1735+(SBH 70)+VAT 2173+(SBH 85)+VAT 1803 (Balaḡ am-e bára-an-na-ra):

- 16' eden-na-aš lu-lu ši-^ˈin^ˈ-di šir-r[a]x[]
 17' ana É *dul-lu-ḫiš il-lak šir-ḫi i-[qab-b]i*
 18' ^dmu-ul-líl ši ka-naḡ-ḡá ^dMIN *na-piš-tì m[a]-^ˈa^ˈ-ti*
 19' sipa saḡ-ḡi₆-ga ši- : umun ^ddi^ˈ-[ku₅]-^ˈmah-àm^ˈ
 19'a 7 MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ

Another standard variation of the litany discussed above begins with “great An” (an gu-la), followed by Enlil, but then followed by different gods depending on the focus of the text. As expected, the Marduk Balaḡ en zu sá mar-mar contains Enki and Marduk/Nabû epithets at this point, and the list and sequence is as follows (Gabbay 2014, 41, Table 3):

- 1 an gu-la
- 2 (^dmu-ul-líl)
- 3 kur gal a-a ^dmu-ul-líl
- 4 (^dam-an-ki)
- 5 ^dasar-lú-ḫi
- 6 ^den-bi-lu-lu
- 7 ^dmu-zé-eb-ba-sa₄-a
- 8 ^ddi-ku₅-mah-àm

Two passages in this Balaḡ contain the first and last lines of this litany, with five skipped lines in between. The two passages are as follows:

A = K.5168+(+) (see §VI above)

B = BM 38552 (see §VI above)

C = SBH 11 (see §VI above)

1.

- A iib 2 ^ˈan^ˈ ^ˈgu^ˈ-la
 A iib 2a 5 [MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ]
 B ii 66' an gu-la ^ˈe^ˈ-[ne-èḡ-ḡá-ni]
 B ii 66'a [5 MU.ME GU₄.UD.ME]
 C 19' [an gu-la] e-ne-èḡ-ḡá-ni
 C 19'a [5 MU.MEŠ] ^ˈGU₄^{2'}. [UD.MEŠ]
 A iib 3 umun ^ddi-ku₅-ma[h-a]
 B ii 67' umun ^ddi-^ˈku₅^ˈ-mah-^ˈa^ˈ ^ˈe^ˈ-[ne-èḡ-ḡá-ni (*vacat*)]
 C o.20' umun ^ddi-ku₅-^ˈmah-àm^ˈ e- (*vacat*)

2.

A iii 30' e-ne-èĝ-bi e-ne-èĝ an gu-la-k[e₄']

A iii 30'a [5 MU.MES G]U₄'UD'.MES'

C r.26' [an g]u-'la' a-ba

C r.26'a 5' MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ

A iiib 1 [e'-n[e-èĝ-

B iii 31' e-ne-èĝ-bi e-ne-èĝ ^ddi-ku₅-ma[h-a] 'a'-ba (*vacat*)

C r.27' [^dd]i-ku₅-maḥ-àm a-ba (*vacat*)

VIII. Inana litanies

The standard Inana litany includes the following epithets (see Gabbay 2014, 53, Table 15):

- 1 mu-gig an-na gašan-an-na
- 2 kur gul-gul gašan é-an-na
- 3 an al-dúb-ba gašan (é-)ĝi₆-pàr-ra
- 4 ki siĝ-ga gašan é-an-ki-ke₄
- 5 ^dlíl-lá-en-na gašan tūr-amaš-a
- 6 ama é-a ^dda-da nu-nus sa₆-ga
- 7 ^dna-na-a dumu-saĝ é-a

This litany is skipped in SBH 54. The tablet contains the first and last lines, and, as expected, five lines are skipped in between:

SBH 54 (Balaĝ a-še-er ĝi₆-ta; Black 1985, 27, 32:279–285; Cohen 1988, 714:b+187–193)¹²

3 [mu-gig a]n-na gašan-an-na-ke₄

3a 5 'MU.MEŠ' [GU₄.UD.ME]Š

4 [^dna-na-a] dumu-saĝ é-a-ke₄

The same litany is probably also skipped in the tablet ROM 910.209.570 (see appendix).

Later on in SBH 54, another Inana litany is skipped. This standard litany refers to Inana as lady of Uruk, Zabalam, Kiš, and Babylon (Gabbay 2014, 54, Table 16):

mu-gig ga-ša-an-an-na
gašan é-an-na
gašan ki unug^{ki}

¹² Collated from a photograph. Note that this reading is based on a join which is not indicated in Reisner's copy. Several fragments have been joined to the tablet after the publication of SBH, only some of which are included in the *Nachtrag* to SBH (p. 154).

gašan ki zabalam^{ki}
 gašan ħur-saḡ-kalam-ma
 gašan é-tùr-kalam-ma
 gašan tin-tir^{ki}

The tablet contains the first and last lines, and the annotation “5 skipped lines” in between, as expected:

SBH 54 (see above) (Cohen 1988, 716:b+235–243; Black 1985, 29:328–336, 32):

54 mu-gig an-na-ke₄ edin-na-na ér
 54a 5 MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.M[EŠ]
 55 gašan tin-tir^{ki}-ke₄ edin-na-na ér (*vacat*)

Another manuscript belonging to the same Inana Balaḡ, SBH 63+CTMMA 2, 7, probably included the first line of the litany followed by an annotation indicating skipped lines (Maul 2005, 59, no. 7:23', 62).¹³

MMA 86.11.288+MMA 86.11.557 (CTMMA 2, 14) contains three Ritual Eršemas (Eršemas ur-saḡ^(d)ut-u₁₈-lu, kur-gal a-a^dmu-ul-lil, and i-lu-ke₄ i-lu-ke₄; Gabbay 2015, nos. 60, 71, 78). In the latter Eršema it skips four lines (l. 27) of an Inana litany, in a version which is unique to first millennium Eršemas, and in which Eana of Uruk is replaced with Eḫursaḡkalama of Kiš (Gabbay 2014, 53, Table 15) (cf. also possibly in ROM 910.209.570 in the appendix below). The skipped lines are preserved in the duplicate BM 132093 (CT 42, no. 12):

Eršema i-lu-ke₄ i-lu-ke₄ (Gabbay 2015, no. 78)

A = BM 132093 (CT 42, no. 12)

B = MMA 86.11.288+MMA 86.11.557 (CTMMA 2, 14)

3 A 29 a mu-gib an-na gašan-an-na-[ke₄]
 B 27 mu-gib an-na gašan-an-na-ke₄
 B 27a 4 MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ

4 A 30 i-lu-u-ak-ke-e kur gul-gul gašan ħur-s[aḡ-kalam-ma-ke₄]
 5 A 31 MIN an al-dúb-ba gašan é-t[ùr-kalam-ma-ke₄]
 6 A 32 MIN A^dlíl-lá-en-na gašan [tùr-amaš-a-ke₄]
 7 A 33 MIN ama é-a d[a-da nu-nus ša₆-ga]

8 A 34 MIN A^dna-na-a^A [dumu-saḡ é-a-ke₄]
 B 28^dna-na-a dumu-saḡ é-a-ke₄

¹³ BM 132096 (CT 42, 20; new copy in Black 1985, ms. B, 75–76) contains the same litany, but with two additional toponyms, é-bára-dúr-ḡar-ra (temple of Inana at Nippur), and Nippur (see Black 1985, 29:329'–335'), reflecting a presumed Nippur origin of this tablet (Gabbay 2013, 117, n. 31; Gabbay 2014, 220, n. 221).

IX. Other skipped sections

1. BaM Beih. 2, pl. 19, no. 21 contains the end of the Balaḡ en zu sá mar-mar followed by the Eršema nam-mu-un-šub-bé-en (Gabbay 2015, no. 22). This Eršema is known from Nineveh manuscripts representing a Babylonian version, directed towards Marduk. BaM Beih. 2, no. 21 belongs to a different recension of the same Eršema, which is directed towards Anu, consistent with its provenance from Seleucid Uruk. Line 12a indicates seven skipped lines:

8 [nam-m]u-un-šub-bé-en umun-ḡu₁₀ [nam-mu-un-šub-bé-en]
 9 *la ta-nam-dan-ni be-lu [la ta-nam-dan-ni]*
 10 [umun a]n gal-e nam-mu-un-šub-bé-en [(...)]
 11 [umun unu]g^{ki} nam-mu-un-šub-bé-en [(...)]
 12 [umun É r]e-eš nam-mu-un-šub-bé-e[n (...)]
 12a 7 MU.ME GU₄.ME

The skipped lines cannot follow the Babylonian parallel, which lists Marduk and Babylon/Borsippa epithets (see Gabbay 2015, 111). Instead, the writer of this tablet must have intended Anu epithets, or possibly standard Enlil epithets (Gabbay 2015, 118).

On line 13a of the same tablet, a further annotation indicates that six(?) lines are skipped. The tablet is broken at this point. We may expect that the skipped lines intended here would parallel the corresponding lines of the Babylonian version (composite lines 15–20). These lines are a plea from the supplicant to the deity, not to be abandoned. However, this is not certain, especially since the skipping of lines which are not litanies is unusual, although possible (see §III above and no. 2 immediately below).

2. The entire section dilmun^{ki} niḡin-na úru-zu u₆ ḡá-e-dè of the Balaḡ mu-tin nu-nus dí-m-ma in SBH 46, rev. 27–30 contains the first and last lines of the section dilmun^{ki} niḡin-na, with an annotation for the lines skipped in between:

r.27 dilmun^{ki} niḡin-ù [ú]ru-zu u₆ ga-e-dè
 r.28 *kab-tu₄ na-às-ḡi-ram-m[a] URU-ka ḡi-i-iṡ*
 r.29 42 MU.MEŠ G[U₄.UD.M]EŠ
 r.30 e-sír la-la-bi [nu]-gi₄-gi₄

Based on the parallel manuscripts we expect 49 lines to be skipped at this point (see Gabbay 2015, no. X, text III). The skipping of this entire Balaḡ section is unusual. It is an Enlil-focused section, appearing in different versions both as a section of different Balaḡs and as an independent Ritual Eršema, and was thus perhaps particularly well-known.

3. CTMMA 2, 14 (see §VIII above) contains three Ritual Eršemas, all three of which feature a heart pacification unit which seems to be unique to these compositions (Gabbay 2015, 8). The writer of this tablet wrote the heart pacification in full at its first appearance on the tablet (ll. 12–23). At each of the subsequent repetitions of this heart pacification unit on this tablet, nine lines of the passage are omitted, although opening and closing lines are included in order to indicate the passage intended.

Eršema kur-gal a-a ^dmu-ul-líl ll.16–26 (Gabbay 2015, no. 71), Eršema i-lu-ke₄ i-lu-ke₄ I:11–21 (Gabbay 2015, no. 78) (restoration according to Eršema ur-saḡ ut-u₁₈-lu ll. 13–23, see Gabbay 2015, no. 60):

šà-ab ur-saḡ gal šà-ab huḡ-e-ta

9 MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ

Restored lines:

šà ^dut-u₁₈-lu šà-ab huḡ-e-ta

šà umun ^ddi-ku₅-maḥ-àm šà-ab huḡ-e-ta

šà ^dba-ba₆ nu-nus ša₆-ga šà-ab huḡ-e-ta

šà gašan-tin-lu-ba šà-ab huḡ-e-ta

šà gašan-i-si-in^{ki} šà-ab huḡ-e-ta

šà gašan-gù-téš-a-sì-ke-ke₄ šà-ab huḡ-e-ta

šà gašan-ḡu₁₀ ^dna-na-a šà-ab huḡ-e-ta

šà gašan ḥur-saḡ-kalam-ma šà-ab huḡ-e-ta

šà gašan é-tùr-kalam-ma šà-ab huḡ-e-ta

égi gašan tin-tir^{ki}-ra šà-ab huḡ-e-ta

MLC 382, one of two other tablets which include the same three Ritual Eršemas preserved in CTMMA 2, 14 (with variants) on the same physical tablet, follows a similar practice. The heart pacification unit is written in full at its first appearance on the obverse of the tablet (ll. 2'–19', Gabbay 2015, 193–195). At its second appearance only the first and last lines are written in full, with the indication that sixteen lines in between are skipped (rev. 11a, Gabbay 2015, 229–231). As noted, these sixteen lines can be partly restored according to the identical section appearing in an earlier Eršema on the same tablet (cf. also the possible restoration in ROM 910.209.570 in the appendix below).

MLC 382: rev. 11–12 (Gabbay 2015, no. 78, pl. 19):

r.11 [u₄ šà-ab huḡ]-e-ta u₄ bar ḥuḡ'-e-ta

r.11a 16 MU.ME GU₄.UD.ME

Restored lines:

šà/égi(?) ... u₄ šà-ab huḡ-e-ta

šà/égi(?) ... u₄ šà-ab huḡ-e-ta

šà/égi(?) ... u₄ šà-ab huḡ-e-ta

šà/égi(?) ... u₄ šà-ab ḥuḡ-e-ta
 šà/égi(?) ... u₄ šà-ab ḥuḡ-e-ta
 šà/égi(?) ... u₄ šà-ab ḥuḡ-e-ta
 šà/égi(?) gašan ki unug^{ki}-ga-ke₄ u₄ šà-ab ḥuḡ-e-ta
 šà/égi(?) gašan ki zabalām^{ki}-ma u₄ šà-ab ḥuḡ-e-ta
 šà/égi(?) gašan ḥur-saḡ-kalam-ma u₄ šà-ab ḥuḡ-e-ta
 šà/égi(?) gašan é-ur₅-šà-ba u₄ šà-ab ḥuḡ-e-ta
 šà/égi(?) gašan é-dur-an-ki u₄ šà-ab ḥuḡ-e-ta
 šà/égi(?) gašan tin-tir^{ki}-ra u₄ šà-ab ḥuḡ-e-ta
 šà/égi(?) gašan bād-si-ab-ba^{ki} u₄ šà-ab ḥuḡ-e-ta
 égi(?) gašan é-zi-da u₄ šà-ab ḥuḡ-e-ta
 gašan-ḡu₁₀ ^dna-na-a u₄ šà-ab ḥuḡ-e-ta
 égi maḥ ^da-ru-ru u₄ šà-ab ḥuḡ-e-ta

r.12 [gašan é-a gašan d]im-me-er-e-ne u₄ (*vacat*)

4. The tablet SBH 21 (Balaḡ e-lum gu₄-sún) contains a litany beginning with Martu and ending with Nanaya, with a reference to six skipped lines in between. This litany can be restored according to an occurrence of the same list earlier on the same tablet (see Cohen 1988, 301:82–89):

r.25 [^dmar-tu mu-lu ḥu]r-saḡ-ḡá-ke₄ šu (bí-in-è)
 r.25a 6 MU.MEŠ GU₄.^rUD.MEŠ^r

Restored lines (according to SBH 21:25'–30', see SBH p. 42; Cohen 1988, 299:32–39):

^dam-an-ki am úru-zé-eb^{ki}-ba-ke₄
 ama èš-maḥ ^ddam-gal-nun-na-ke₄
^dasar-lú-ḥi umun tin-tir^{ki}-ke₄
 mu-ud-na ki-áḡ-zu ^dpa₄-nun-an-ki-ke₄
 sukkal zi ^dmu-zé-eb-ba-sa₄-a
 é-gi₄-a dumu-saḡ-^duras-a

r.26 égi ^rzi-da^r ^rgašan^r-[ḡu₁₀] ^dna-na-a šu (*vacat*)

5. BM 68609 (Eršema ušum gùd nú-a, Gabbay 2015, no. 3) begins with a litany featuring Amanki (Enki) and Asarluḥi, followed by the annotation “4 skipped lines,” and the final line of the litany mentioning Dikumaha. Another tablet contains part of the last two of these four skipped lines, with Muzebassa'a in the fourth line, perhaps preceded by Enbilulu; see Gabbay 2015, no. 3:22–29:

12' umun-ra a-ra-zu-a šà-ba ab-ḥuḡ-ḡe₂₆-e-ne
 13' šá be-lí i-na te-es-li-ti lib-ba-šú ú-na-aḥ-ḥu
 14' ^dam-an-ki a-ra-zu-a bar-bi ab-sed-ne

15' šá^d é-a ina te-es-li-ti ka-bat-ta-šú ú-šap-šá-ḫu

16' ^dasar-lú-ḫi a-ra-zu-a šà- (vacat)

17' 4 MU.ME GU₄.UD.ME

Restored lines, according to BM 38116:1'–2' (Gabbay 2015, no. 3:27–28, text C):

[DN a-ra-zu-a bar-bi ab-sed-ne]

[DN a-ra-zu-a šà-ba ab-ḫuḡ-ḡe₂₆-e-ne]

^{r^{d+?}}[en-bi-lu-lu(?) a-ra-zu-a bar-bi ab-sed-ne]

^{d^r}mu^ˀ-[zé-e]b-^rba-sa₄-a^ˀ [a-ra-zu-a šà-ba ab-ḫuḡ-ḡe₂₆-e-ne]

18' umun ^ddi-ku₅-maḫ-àm a-ra-zu-a bar-bi (vacat)

An exact reconstruction of these four lines is not entirely certain. A. R. George (1988, 161) has suggested that it follows the standard epithets of Marduk, Nabû, and affiliated deities, and it is likely that it would be similar to the standard Enki-Asarluḫi litany (Gabbay 2014, 46, Table 6), although it does not seem to conform to this entirely.

6. Skipped lines are indicated in two manuscripts of a passage, which in its Old Babylonian version, is essentially a hymn to Enlil and his Ekur temple, together with associated shrines, gates and courtyards of Nippur. The passage, discussed in detail by A. Löhnert (2009, 48–50), is featured in the first *kirugu* of the Balaḡ^dutu-gin₇ è-ta, and the first *kirugu* of the Balaḡ^dzi-bu-ù zi-bu-ù of Enlil (Löhnert 2009, 11–121, 178–257, 392–395, 407–432). This passage is also featured in two Late Babylonian manuscripts, VAT 7824 and SBH 5, in which lines are skipped. The Late Babylonian Uruk tablet VAT 7824 skips thirty-four lines, and according to collation it appears that the same number of lines are skipped in SBH 5. The problem with the reconstruction of this section of text is due to the fact that it is attested mostly in Old Babylonian manuscripts, and it is therefore difficult to reconstruct in its first millennium BCE version. The longest first millennium exemplar of this passage is K.7138+ (Löhnert 2009, 120, Ku9), but it only preserves the opening lines of this section. Both the Old Babylonian and first millennium BCE versions begin with Ekur. But SBH 5 and VAT 7824 indicate that é-dàra-an-na concludes the passage (Löhnert 2009, 49–50):

A = SBH 5 (Balaḡ an-na e-lum-e; Cohen 1988, 208–221; collated from photographs)

B = VAT 7824 (// Balaḡ am-e bára-an-na-ra, Kutscher 1975, pls. 1'–2'; Cohen 1988, 319–341)

A 22 [é]-kur-^rra^ˀ é-šà-ge-pàd-da-na^A

A 23a ^r34¹ ^rMU.MEŠ^ˀ GU₄.UD.MEŠ

B 7 é-kur-ra é-šà-ge-pàd-da-[na]

B 8 šá É.MIN bi-it i-tut kun-nu ŠÀ-ŠÚ [...]

B 8a 34 MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ
 A 23 []-⁷ĝá⁷ é-dàra-an-na-na ^A
 B 9 umun ka-na-ĝ-ĝá é-dàra-an-na-n[a]
 B 10 *be-lu₄ ma-a-tú ana É.MIN*

The é-dàra-an-na, a cella of Zarpanītum in the Esaĝil of Babylon, does not appear in the Old Babylonian version. Indeed, it would not be expected in the Old Babylonian version, as its introduction to this passage is indicative of the Babylonization of Emesal prayers in the first millennium BCE.

7. A unique use of the annotation appears in BM 48485 (unidentified Balaĝ, Gabbay and Mirelman 2017, 31):

15' [...] im-ši-^E(ĝen-na-ta) ^A
 15'a 24 MU.MEŠ *ta-a-a-ár-tu₄* GU₄.UD.⁷MEŠ⁷

A precise reconstruction of the twenty-four skipped lines is not possible here, at least partly due to the broken context. Perhaps it contained a sequence known from Nabû Balaĝs, but this is uncertain (see Gabbay and Mirelman 2017, 31). We argue that the usage of *tayyartu* “repetition,” here most probably serves to reinforce the meaning of the annotation “skipped lines.”

X. Conclusion

Most of the passages discussed above must have belonged to the basic repertoire of every *kalû* priest. Where reconstruction is possible, the content of skipped lines in litanies is generally as expected, reflecting an emphasis particularly on Enlil, and the Babylon and Marduk focus of Balaĝ and Eršema prayers in the first millennium BCE. The majority of skipped passages may be reconstructed with confidence. However, it is noteworthy that there still remain some passages for which a precise reconstruction is not possible. The annotation discussed above is used mostly for skipped lines in litanies, but occasionally it is also used for other passages. It may also be significant that the one clear instance where an entire Balaĝ section is skipped, is focused on Enlil (Balaĝ section *dilmun^{ki} niĝin-na urú-zu u₆ ĝá-e-dè*; see §IX above), probably the foremost deity in the corpus of Balaĝ and Eršema prayers. The collection of Ritual Eršemas discussed above (§§VIII–IX; MMA 86.11.288+MMA 86.11.557 and MLC 382) is an example where the annotation is clearly used as a means of scribal economy; the heart pacification unit is shared between the compositions, and the annotation is used in order to avoid repetition on the same physical tablet. However, in the majority of cases, it is not entirely clear that this annotation is used only due to the demands of scribal economy in the writing of tablets. Instead, or perhaps in addition to the

need to save space on tablets, the indication of skipped lines indicates the existence of well-known passages, which were committed to memory by all *kalûs*, and which were not routinely written down.

Appendix: ROM 910.209.570

The tablet ROM 910.209.570 (CDLI P417311; see plate 1), published here with the kind permission of the Royal Ontario Museum, contains the section áb-gin₇ gù dé-dé, probably belonging to a Balaḡ of Inana.¹⁴ Since the section does not begin in the first column of the tablet, and probably not on its first line either, the tablet should not be identified as containing the Balaḡ áb-gin₇ gù dé-dé of Inana. Indeed, at least in its Old Babylonian version, this Balaḡ seems to differ from the text on our tablet (see Cohen 1988, 533–535; see also below, note to lines 2'–5').

The section áb-gin₇ gù dé-dé is known from the Balaḡ úru ḫul-a-ke₄ of Inana (Cohen 1988, 653:b+44–45), which would perhaps indicate the composition to which our tablet belongs. However, the incipit there also contains the temple name é-kur-ra (see below, note to lines 2'–5'), which seems to be missing in our tablet (although this phrase would have occurred where the line in our tablet breaks, there is probably no space to restore it). Nevertheless, Ekur is mentioned in the following lines of our tablet, and therefore it is possible that our tablet should be identified with this Balaḡ after all, perhaps in a slightly variant version.¹⁵

Transliteration

Left column

1'	[	]-^r ḡu ₁₀ [?]
2'	[	]x-ḡu ₁₀ [?]
3'	[	]-^r ta [?] -ḡu ₁₀ [?]
4'	[	]-^r e [?] -ba [?] -ba
5'	[	]-an-SUM [?]
6'	[	]x

Rest broken

Right column

1'	[	]x[]
2'	[	á-b-gi _{n7} gù dé-dé gù 'dé-dé' [(0) [?]]

¹⁴ We thank Dr. Clemens Reichel, Associate Curator at the Royal Ontario Museum, for allowing us to publish the tablet. We are most thankful to Prof. Enrique Jiménez for notifying us about this tablet and for sending us excellent digital photographs. The tablet measures 4.1 × 3.2 cm.

¹⁵ Note also that the previous section of the Balaḡ úru ḫul-a-ke₄ of Inana contains the verb gù-dé with the Ekur temple (Cohen 1988, 652–653:b+41–42).

3' [k]i-ma lit-ti iš-ta-na-^ras-si^r [MIN[?] (0)[?]]
 4' mu-gig an-na gašan-an-na-k[e₄]
 5' ^dna-na-a ⁷GU₄?UD?ME? dumu-saġ-é-^ra^r
 6' áb-gin₇ gù dé-dé é-kur-ra-k[e₄[?]]
 7' gù an-na ba-te gù ki-šè ba-t[e]
 8' ^rnu^r-gig é-kur-^rra^r gù dé-d[é[?]]
 9' [] ^ré[?]-kur[?]-ra^r ^rgù[?](“SAG”[?]) dé[?]-d[é[?]]
 Rest broken

Translation

Left column
 too broken for translation

Right column

1' [...] ... [...]
 2' The one crying, crying like a cow, [...],
 3' (Akk.: She cries over and over like a cow [...]),
 4' Hierodule of heaven, Gašanana,
 5' Nanaya, ^{seven skipped (lines)?} firstborn of the House,
 6' The one of Ekur crying like a cow,
 7' The cry reached heaven, the cry reached earth,
 8' Hierodule of Ekur, crying,
 9' [...] of Ekur, crying,
 Rest broken

Notes

Left column:

3'–4'. Cf. Cohen 1988, 554:23, 25 (Old Babylonian Balaġ úru àm-ma-ir-ra-bi, cf. also Cohen 1988, 544:109, 111), ending with the verbs la-ba-ra-ab-è-ta-ġu₁₀, and ši-im-e-ba-ba-e, respectively, paralleled in the first millennium BCE version of the Balaġ úru àm-ma-ir-ra-bi (Cohen 1988, 562–563: 135, 137, 141) by la-ba-ra-è-da-ġu₁₀, [la-ba]-ra-è-[da-ġu₁₀], im-ta-ba-ba-eš.

Right column:

2'–5'. The incipit and litany are preserved in five other tablets. The first two belong to the Balaġ úru ħul-a-ke₄ of Inana, the third one may belong either to the same Balaġ or to the Balaġ áb-gin₇ gù dé-dé, and the identification of the fourth and fifth tablet is uncertain:

- (1) 80-7-19, 117 (Cohen 1988, 815), ii:6'–10' (Nineveh, Neo-Assyrian period); see Cohen 1988, 653:b+44–45 (collations from photographs marked with an asterisk):

6' áb-gin₇ gù dé-d[é gù-dé-dé]
 7' (*vacat*) é-[kur-ra (...)]

8' *ki-ma lit-ti* ^ʿ*iš*^ʿ-[*ta-na-as-si*]
 9' (*vacat*) ^ʿ*ana*^{ʿ*}* [*é-kur*^ʿ (...)]
 10' [m]u*^ʿ-^ʿ*gig*^{ʿ*}* ^ʿ*an*^{ʿ*}-[*na gašan-an-na*]
 Rest broken

- (2) MLC 1868 (Cohen 1988, 809), rev. 18'–19' (Uruk, Late Babylonian period); see Cohen 1988, 653:b+44–45 (collation from photographs marked with an asterisk):

18' ^{xx} *áb-gin*₇ *gù dé-dé* [^(x) *gù*] ^ʿ*dé*^ʿ-^ʿ*dé*^E *é-kur-ra* *áb-gin*₇ *gù*
^{dé-dé*} ^A ^E ^ʿ*gù*^ʿ ^ʿ*dé*^ʿ-[*dé* (...)]
 19' [m]u^{!?}-[*gi*]g^{!?} a[n^{!?}-na^(x)] ^ʿ*gašan*^{*}-^{*}*an*^{*}-^{*}*na*^{*} [(...)] ^A *gašan an-na*
 Rest broken

- (3) BM 114056, obv. (unpublished; Ur, Late Babylonian period)

1 *áb-gin*₇ *gù dé*-[*dé*]
 2 *ki-ma lit-tu*₄ *i[š-ta-na-as-si*]
 3 *mu-gig an-na* [*gašan-an-na*]
 4 *kur gul-gul* [*gašan é-an-na*]
 5 *an al*-[*dúb-ba gašan é-š*₆*pâr-ra*]
 6 *k[i]*^ʿ *s[i*g^ʿ-*ga gašan é-an-ki-ke*₄ (?)
 Rest broken

- (4) VAT 17177 (VS 24, 36), ii^ʿ:6–21 (Babylon; Neo-/Late Babylonian period) (collated from photograph)

6 [*áb-gin*₇ *gù dé-dé*] *é é-kur-ra gù dé-dé*
 7 [*ki-ma lit-ti iš-ta-na-ás-si*] ^ʿ*ana*^ʿ *é-kur iš-ta-na-ás-si*
 8 [*mu-gig an-na*] *gašan-an-na-ke*₄
 9 [*kur gul-gul gaš*]an *hur-saḡ-kalam-ma-ke*₄
 10 [*an al-dúb-ba gašan*] ^ʿ*é*^ʿ-*tùr-kalam-ma-ke*₄
 11 [*ki-sig-ga* (?) *gašan é-ur*₅]-^ʿ*šà*^ʿ-*ba-ke*₄
 12 [*gašan dur*^ʿ-*a*]n^ʿ-*ki* (or: [*gašan é-a*]n^ʿ-*ki*)
 13 [^d*líl-lá-en-na gašan (é-)*tùr-*am*]aš[!]-*a-ke*₄
 14 [*ama é-a* ^d*da-da n*]u-nus *ša*₆-*ga*
 15 [^d*na-na-a dumu-saḡ é*]-^ʿ*a*^ʿ-*ke*₄
 16 [*áb-gin*₇ *gù dé-dé é-kur-ra* (?) *gù*] *dé-dé*
 17 [*gù an-na ba-te gù ki-šè ba*]-*te*
 18 [*ana AN-e iṭ-ḫe ana K*]i-*tì iṭ-ḫe*
 19 [*nu-gig é-kur-ra gù dé-dé* (?) *gù dé*]-*dé*
 20 [*iš-t*]a-na-as-si
 21 [*gù dé*]-*dé*
 22 [] x x []
 Rest broken

A fifth noteworthy text to be cited here is an Old Babylonian tablet that begins with a very similar, but different, litany probably reflecting the Balaġ áb-gin₇ gù dé-dé:

(5) CBS 6890 (PBS 10/2, 17), i:1–7; see Cohen 1988, 533:1–7 (collated from photograph):

- 1 áb-gin₇ gù dé-dé ga-ba-ra-è / eden-šè ga-ba-ra-è
 - 2 mu-gig an-na ga-ša-an-an-na-ġen
 - 3 kur gul-gul ga-ša-an é-an-na-ġen
 - 4 ʿanʿ [d]úb-ba ga-ša-an ġi₆-pàr-ra-ġen
 - 5 [d]íl-lá]-ʿenʿ-na ga-ša-an tùr-amaš-a-ġen
 - 6 [ama é-a ^d]a-da nu-nus ša₆-ga
 - 7 [d]na-na-a d]u₅[?]-mu ša₆ é-e-ke₄
- (for continuation, see Cohen 1988, 533)

At first glance, texts 1–3 seem to include the standard 7-line sequence of names and epithets of Inana (see §VIII above), which were preserved in a shorter version of six lines during the Old Babylonian period, as reflected in text 5 (Gabbay 2014, 52–53 with Table 15). However, text 4 contains a different sequence, eight lines long, not known from any other text (although combining elements and sequences known elsewhere, see Gabbay 2015, no. 60, II a+11–13, no. 78, I 3–8, II 3–9, no. 83, rev. iii:0ʹ–5ʹ; see §§VIII, IX above), and it is not clear whether this is a unique variant or that texts 1–3, and consequently our text as well, should be restored according to it.

Our tablet preserves the first and last lines that are common to both the standard sequence and the unique sequence in text 4, but skipping the middle with a scribal annotation. This makes it impossible to determine which of the sequences should be restored. Additionally, the number of lines counted in this annotation is seven (while six would have been expected in both cases), indicating that either the distribution of epithets over the lines was different (i.e., that two lines were written as four lines) or that the tablet contained a different version of one of the litanies, perhaps including local epithets. Since the tablet may have come from Nippur as other tablets in the Royal Ontario Museum collection (Gabbay and Jiménez 2019, 83) and since other tablets (probably from Uruk, but exhibiting a Nippur tradition) contain local additions to other litanies (Gabbay 2014, 220–221; Gabbay 2017; see also above, n. 13), it is possible that this tablet too contained local additions to the litany. Alternatively, since the reading of the annotation here is not entirely certain and differs from the regular annotation, it may not necessarily refer to skipped lines (see note to line 5ʹ below). Perhaps it notes a total of seven lines in the litany after the first line, i.e., six skipped

lines plus the final line. It may also be significant that the remark is found on the last line and not on the first line or right after it.

5'. The tablet seems to contain a variation of the annotation MU.MEŠ GU₄.UD.MEŠ, with only the second part of the phrase (GU₄.UD.ME). However, the signs are not certain and the vertical of what is read here as UD together with what is read here as ME may actually be the sign A. In addition, one cannot rule out the possibility that the first sign is not GU₄, but together with the beginning of what is read here as UD, is actually MU, yielding the unique sequence MU.A.

7'. For this line, compare a line from the Old Babylonian version of the Balaḡ úru àm-ma-ir-ra-bi from Me-Turan (Volk 1989, 26, xxiii:13):

mu-gig-bi gù an-na ba-ta gù ki-šè ba-te

The line is different in the first millennium BCE parallel (Cohen 1988, 567:c+221; Volk 1989, 57:30): mu-g[ig²] [g]ù²-bi *ri-gim-ša* 'an'-na *ana šá-me-e* ba-*it-te-ḫi* te. As noted by Volk (1989, 68), the line also occurs in the composition Inana and the Numun-plant (Kramer 1980, 93:60): gù an-e ba-te gù ki-šè ba-te. For further parallels, see references in Volk 1989, 68.

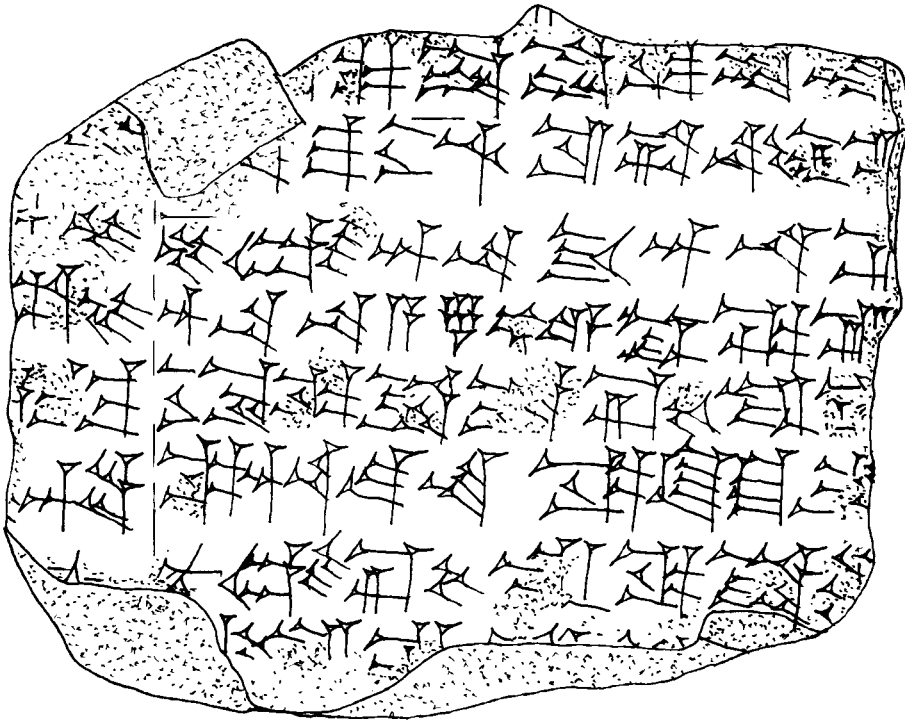
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Plate



Pl. 1: ROM 910.209.570