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whose preferred times of performance (and occasionally non-performance) are sometimes specified in the texts. I would still, however, insist that when we say in a letter that we are going to perform Maqlû, we mean a *maqlû*, that is, one or more of the incantations of the series and not the whole compendium from beginning to end, any more than a determination to sing hymns means singing every hymn in the hymnal. A good indication in this direction is the performance of a *maqlû*, so described, in the lunar eclipse ritual for the month of Ayyaru (Schwemer, *Maqlû*, p. 3), a month which, as we have seen, was particularly appropriate for the performance of Maqlû as detailed in its own commentaries.

To remember is that witchcraft is as much a medical as a magical problem, and Maqlû is not that dissimilar to the UGU series of medical texts which has numerous prescriptions, many of which are for exactly the same problem, organized in some logical order and with the *legomena* and *dromena* as often as not on separate tablets. I should also add that it can now be proven that a "new edition" (SUR.GIBIL) of this series was made in Assyria and in the Neo-Assyrian period.[25] Even more intriguing is that the catalogue that demonstrates this also contains a catalogue of UŠ$_{11}$.BÚR.RU.DA, a rubric recognized, if only on texts in Babylonian script (Schwemer, *Maqlû*, p. 54-55, cf. 59-60), as indicating Maqlû recitations.

In conclusion, the works under review, especially Abusch's AMD volume and its companion piece, Schwemer's *Maqlû*, are long awaited and will be the go-to edition of the text for many years to come. However, much more work will need to be done before we are truly in a position to understand the production and transmission of knowledge in ancient Mesopotamia.

Chicago. J. Scurlock.

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[25]) See Scurlock 2014, pp. 295-306.

B. Ottervanger, The Tale of the Poor Man of Nippur, XXVI + 61pp. Helsinki, The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2016 (= SAACT 12). $ 29.95. ISBN 978-952-10-9496-5.

This slim, but handy volume continues the publisher's tradition of making important Akkadian texts accessible by providing a reconstructed textual edition based on collated sources, a transliteration and translation, a brief introduction to the text, commentary, and general bibliography, as well as indices of names and logograms, a glossary, and a sign list. Textual variants found in the text's four known recensions appear below the transliteration.

Ottervanger introduces the tale by discussing its four recensions, the provenance and date of the text (*i.e*. Nippur, ca. 1000 BCE), and its relationship to other Akkadian literary texts. With regard to the latter, he notes that scholars have understood portions of the tale as reflecting a Sumerian proverb and alluding to the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and, in a more satirical way, to the Babylonian story known as *Advice to a Prince*. Also discussed here is the importance of the mayor's title "citizen of Nippur" for underscoring the reversal of the hierarchy of power between the mayor and the story's protagonist Gimil-Ninurta. Ottervanger understands the tale's unique lack of references to gods and their activities as the author's way of keeping the focus on "human wit as a means to overcome grief and frustration in the face of injustice" (p. xii). He similarly perceives that magic, divination, and ritual appear to play no role in the narrative, even when animals are slaughtered (ll. 17, 46, 92), birds are released (l. 97), and Gimil-Ninurta poses as a doctor promising to heal the mayor's wounds (ll. 121-134). He opines:

„This focus, and the humorous nature of the narrative, endows the tale with what can be seen as therapeu-

tic quality, able to aid people in overcoming the daily anguish in dealing with the powers that be. However, there may be another side to the absence of any active role for the gods in the tale: Mesopotamian religion would not easily sanction a reversal of the social order inherent in the tale's plot (p. xii)."

The book's introduction concludes with an examination of the tale's meter and poetic style, including parallelism, key words, and non-normative syntax, and a survey of previous studies relating to the present edition.

While Ottervanger intends the volume to provide a detailed treatment of the text in line with current scholarship, he also integrates a number of his own philological and literary insights. With regard to philological matters, he proposes corrections for several passages, challenges several long-standing readings, and reconstructs many broken portions of the text. For example, in l. 24, instead of the previously proposed reading *i-ta*[*g-giš*] from *nagāšu* "leave, go away, wander about", he restores *i*-[*tak-ša*] from *akāšu* "divert, change direction", and renders the line "turned to the gate of the chief of Nippur" (pp. 15, 26). Instead of *ur-ta-šú* "his commission, charge" or *ur-ša-šú* "his desire" (l. 41), he suggests *tíš*-[*iš*]-*šú* "his clamor", a by-form of *šisītu* (pp. 28-29). A few other proposals are more conjectural. For example, Ottervanger restores the broken l. 56 in conjunction with a presumed shift in scene from the cook's preparation of Gimil-Ninurta's goat to the dinner: [*laputtû* (NU.BÀN.DA) *tap-pi-i nap-ta-*]*ni il-si-ma* "[the chief] called [to the dinn]er-[companions]" (p. 30). He restores the end of l. 82: *i*-[*si*]-*ḫu-šú né-ba-ḫa-am i*-[*na na-lap-ti*]-*šú* "They bo[un]d him a sash o[n] his [coat (of mail)]" (pp. 11, 35). For l. 114, he suggests the reading *i-ta-šu-uš* "he worried" instead of *i-ṣi-iḫ* "he laughed" because the mayor had just been beaten. Thus, he translates: "the mayor heard it, and [worried] all da[y]" (pp. 18, 39). Given Ottervanger's stated goal "to establish the most likely reading of each line" (p. xv), it is unfortunate that he could not consult the main recension of the text from Sultantepe housed at the Ankara Museum (p. xv).

With regard to the text's literary features, Ottervanger is especially adept at highlighting key words, literary patterns, and cases of repetition, hendiadys, enjambment, polysemy, and paronomasia. To demonstrate the latter device, he proposes that the description of the poor man as "dressed (*la-biš-ma*) in unchanged clothes" (l. 10) suggests the expression *lābiš* "like a lion", a fitting simile for a ravenous person (p. 23). He also observes that the word *ḫazannu* "mayor" usually takes the personal name determinative (M) in the text. However, when first mentioned in l. 21 it appears with LÚ. He avers that, even though it was not read aloud, the sign contributes to the repetition of the sound /*lu*/ in the line: *lul-qí-ma ana* É LÚ *ḫa-za-an-ni lu-bil* ÙZ "let me take the goat and bring it to the house of the mayor" (p. 25). He keenly detects the presence of bilingual paronomasia in l. 92: "The chief slaughtered a *pasil*[*lu*] sheep to in[cre]ase his meal." As he notes, "A scribal pun in this line consists in the fact that the infinitive *šumʾud* 'to increase' ... appears beside the Sumerograms ŠUM (*ṭabāhu* 'to slaughter') and UDU (*immeru* 'sheep')" (p. 36). Ottervanger's literary contributions to the text are numerous and valuable, and perhaps should have warranted the inclusion of a chart to facilitate locating the various devices by name and verse.

The author's interest in literary matters extends to parallels that he draws from the Hebrew Bible. Thus, he points out that, like many biblical (and Ugaritic) texts, one finds the number three as a thematic and structural feature. In *The Poor Man of Nippur*, we find references to a three-year old goat (l. 15), one-third beer (*i.e.* diluted with two-thirds water, ll. 59, 62), three beatings (ll. 68, 113, 139, 158), and three watches of the day (ll. 94, 96, 98) (p. 23). He also explains the Akkadian term *rebītu* "market-square" (l. 13) by turning to the Hebrew cognate *rĕḥōb* "broad place" (p. 24). In addition, Ottervanger discusses the similarities and differences between the account of the mayor's seizure of Gimil-Ninurta's goat and Nathan's parable (2 Samuel 12:1-7).

As fitting as these parallels are, I suggest it is equally appropriate to consider the entire tale as employing another literary theme familiar to students of the Bible in which a person uses deception to exact vengeance upon a more powerful rival. One can point to numerous cases including Yael and Sisera, Jacob and Esau, Jacob and Laban, and Ehud and Eglon.[1] Having mentioned the account of Ehud and Eglon, it is worth noting several other parallels between that narrative and *The Poor Man of Nippur*. In Judges 3:20, Ehud gains access to Eglon by telling him: "I have a message of God for you." In the Akkadian poem, Gimil-Ninurta asks the gate keeper three times to convey the "blessings of the gods upon your master" before inflicting a beating on him (ll. 66, 111, 137). In both cases, the protagonist uses an expression that might usually bear a positive meaning to portend a personal message of violence. Indeed, Gimil-Ninurta followed his greeting with the mayor's beating, while Ehud followed his missive by plunging his blade into Eglon's stomach. In addition, both stories place emphasis on the protagonist's left hand during the encounter. In *The Poor Man of Nippur*, the narrator informs us that Gimil-Ninurta held his goat in his left hand while blessing the mayor with his right (l. 35), a gesture that the mayor perceived as denoting a bribe. In Judges, we are told that Ehud used

[1]) These have been studied by Ora Horn Prouser, *The Phenomenology of the Lie in Biblical Narrative* (Ph.D. Dissertation; Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1991), p. i (abstract), who remarks: "deception was considered an acceptable and generally praiseworthy means for a weaker party to succeed against a stronger power. It was not deemed appropriate, however, for a more powerful person to dissemble in order to achieve his or her goals."

his left to drive the sword through Eglon (Judges 3:21). Moreover, in both stories the revenge takes place in an isolated place. In *The Poor Man of Nippur*, the mayor "took him i[nto] a house, an inaccessible place" (p. 129). In Judges 3:23-25, the narrator repeatedly informs us that Eglon took Ehud into a private upper chamber and locked the door.

If there is any one aspect of the book that I would call into question, it is the author's uncritical acceptance of the oft-cited view that the story of *The Poor Man of Nippur* is essentially humorous in nature. Ascertaining what the peoples of the ancient Near East considered humorous is extremely difficult because humor is culturally defined and we lack an ability to comprehend fully the cultural matrices that inform it. We must be especially careful not to classify a text as funny, simply because it appeals to our contemporary Western sense of humor – in this text scholars sometimes reference the beatings of the mayor at the hand of the poor man as evidence of ʽslapstickʼ. Even if we broaden our definition of humor to include satire and sarcasm, our task remains difficult. Indeed, one could see the same scenes simply as illustrating the potential consequences of corruption. With this in mind, I note that the name Nippur occurs no less than eighteen times in the text, far more often than required by the story. Though not discussed in this volume, one wonders whether the story repeats the name Nippur, a holy city associated with Enlil and acts of piety, to underscore by way of contrast the mayor's misdeeds that inform the plot. The text's numerous cases of polysemy and paronomasia too, far from encouraging a laugh, usually highlight reversal or foreshadow later events. Indeed, polysemy and paronomasia in ancient Near Eastern texts generally do not function to amuse. Alternatively, such devices could have provided teaching moments for masters to transmit possible polyvalent readings to pupils; note that one of the recensions (ms. D) is a Neo-Babylonian school text that contains a few lines from the beginning of the text. Additional support for this view comes from the fact that many of the text's polysemous readings could not have been espied by hearing the text recited.

Finally a brief list of minor *errata*:

p. xi: "this collation is was a title ..."
p. xv: "As a part of direct approach ..."
p. 23: Paragraph starting with "The 3 m. sg." should be indented or joined to previous paragraph.
p. 25: Number 19 is not bolded as other verses in the commentary.
p. 29, line 44: "tells to the mayor about ..."
p. 29, line 51: wages > wedges.
p. 49: First entry for *abālu* defines as "to be dry," but every reference given (*i.e.*, ll. 21, 29, 50) means "bring." The second entry, *abālu* B is defined as "to bring," and adds l. 91.

The above considerations notwithstanding, Ottervanger has written a welcome addition to the *State Archives of Assyria Cuneiform Texts* series; one that will serve a future generation of scholars and make far more accessible this fascinating text.

Seattle. S. Noegel.

Amar Annus, The Overturned Boat: Intertextuality of the Adapa Myth and Exorcist Literature. XII + 148 pp. Winona Lake, Eisenbrauns – Helsinki, The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2016 (= *State Archives of Assyria Studies* XXIV). £ 48,–, $ 59,95. ISBN 978-952-10-9491-0.

This wide-ranging study seeks to reinvigorate and broaden traditional comparative methods of Assyriology and biblical studies by recourse to concepts and terminology borrowed from cognitive analysis and neuroscience. Its field of inquiry is ancient Mesopotamian exorcism; its portal thereto is a group of Sumerian and Akkadian texts about or referring to the sage Adapa, who at some point was deemed the founder of exorcism as a professional vocation. Annus seeks to reconstruct key elements of the "master narrative" of the exorcist's craft in such a way as to make "contextually independent" comparison useful and revealing. His forest is therefore more than just a plurality of trees; his texts are incidents of a larger discourse. He makes his case with admirable energy, passion, and erudition.

Annus's exorcistic narrative has more than one beginning: a southern version, at home in Eridu and Uruk, in which the Flood is a defining chronological factor, versus a northern version, perhaps at home in Kish, in which it does not. Traces of rival claims include Aratta *versus* Uruk and the condemnation of Enmerkar in *The Cuthaean Legend of Naram-Sin*. Another north-south difference in narrative strategy is the hero's initial fear and discomfiture (p. 79), a motif found in Babylonian epic style, as in Nebuchadnezzar I's confession: "I became afraid of death, did not advance to battle ... [I lay on a] bed of misery and sighs" (B. Foster, *Before the Muses*[3], Bethesda: CDL Press, 2005, p. 382), but not in Assyrian epic or commemorative prose or in the heroic poetry about the Sargonic kings. For this, Annus offers an elaborate psychological explanation (p. 79: "his new Self will be instantiated"), whereas to this reader it is, rather more simply, a stock motif of combat narratives that makes the final victory the more impressive. Not many, perhaps, will share Annus's view of the Flood as "sanitizing" an old order in preparation for a new one or even that the Flood was a kind of exorcistic ordeal, though he has interesting comments to make about fire and flood (pp. 87-88). Some readers will surely be put off by the frequent recourse to "It is reasonable to suggest", "It seems probable", "It is possible that" as a way of introducing ideas that have no basis whatsoever in any Mesopotamian evidence, such as a festival in honor of Adapa's boat trip