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PART ONE

**Secondary Developments and Synthetic
Growth in Akkadian Incantations and Prayers:
Some Case Studies in Literary and
Textual History**

Chapter One

Problem, Hypothesis and Illustration

A study of all published and many unpublished Akkadian prayers and incantations containing witchcraft-related terminology reveals that most of the texts deal primarily with witchcraft and can be typed and assigned to distinct categories on structural and thematic grounds. In a number of texts, however, these terms occur as members of a much larger group of evils and stand in no causal relationship to the non-witchcraft terms. While this creates no essential difficulty for the interpreter in those instances where the text has as its object the combatting of evils of all types (as, for example, in the General Namburbi group represented by *JAOS* 59 11ff. (13:6-8) and parallels: *LKA* 128 (obv. 10f.) // (?) *KAR* 120 and *KAR* 282 (Frag. 1:3) and the related *KAR* 286 (15)¹), it does pose problems of an internal and/or contextual nature in a number of texts belonging to a wide range of prayer and incantation types.

It is the purpose of this study to demonstrate that many of these texts are not made of whole cloth, but have undergone a series of changes, that these texts are often best understood as recensional stages in the development of a composition and that an understanding of these texts, be it for purposes of interpretation, literary or religious history or translation, requires the application of "higher critical" methods. We propose to examine examples drawn from two text groups. These text groups were chosen because they are characterized by structurally different types of enumeration. The examples drawn from these groups were chosen because they exemplify different processes of development and require different types of analysis.

However, before turning to these texts, it will be of some benefit to illustrate the differences between "manuscripts" of one com-

¹ Cf. *JNES* 19 153, where all these texts, save for the last one, are listed. A witchcraft entry occurs in all General Namburbi incantations of the *JAOS* 59 13 group sufficiently preserved to permit judgment and in almost all the texts influenced by it. See below Chapter 2, Sec. D, 4, Position of Witchcraft Entry, 1), and notes 3, 53 and 54. The appropriateness of the inclusion of this entry in this General Namburbi type will be discussed elsewhere.

position, each of which must be classified as a different recension. K 2467 + 80-7-19, 116 obv. r. col. 12' - rev. r. col. 2, *KAR* 78:1'-5' and *KAR* 226 IV 3-13² provide us with an excellent example; for the genetic relationship between these texts is undeniable and their differences probably exemplify the simplest form of expansion of a short list of evils. These incantations are particularly relevant to our study because they relate to the General Namburbi,³ demonstrate the secondary nature of the witchcraft theme and occur in witchcraft contexts.⁴

²These texts have been identified as duplicates by Reiner, *Šurpu* (*Afo Beiheft* 11) [Henceforth: *Šurpu*], p. 54, and the first two lines of our incantation have already been transliterated and translated there. For *KAR* 78:4'-5', cf. *RA* 36 31 n. 4. In K 2467 + and *KAR* 78, as well as in *Šurpu*, p. 12 II 9f., the incantation *aktabsakka* is followed by the incantation *īpuš^d Ea ipšur^d Ea* (cf. *Šurpu*, p. 54). In *KAR* 226 IV, however, the incantation *aktabsakka* is followed not by *īpuš^d Ea* but by two fragmentary lines (14-15), the first of which ([xx(x) Ū.IN].NU.ŪŠ GIŠ.[...]; cf. possibly *JCS* 21 10:6+a and references there) probably contains a ritual. Therefore, although it still remains possible that the incantation *īpuš^d Ea* occurs also in *KAR* 226, there is no evidence for this (modify accordingly the statement in *Šurpu*, p. 54). (For lists of occurrences of the incantation *īpuš^d Ea*, cf. *RA* 36 31f., *OrNS* 8 306f. and especially 307 n. 3, *Šurpu*, p. 54, and Caplice, *The Akkadian Text Genre Namburbi* [Diss., University of Chicago, 1963] pp. 172f.)

³*KAR* 78 has been classed in *RA* 48 7 as a Namburbi text written on an amulet. It is interesting to note the connections between the incantation found in K 2467 +, *KAR* 78 and *KAR* 226 and the General Namburbis. Three essential elements in this incantation have parallels in that group: (a) the request that the exiting periods carry off evils and the entering ones bring goodness is found in *KAR* 37 rev.(!) 2f. (cf. *RA* 36 31 n. 4) and *JAOS* 59 14:27f.; (b) plants, in their releasing and purifying role, are mentioned in contiguity to the aforementioned motif in *KAR* 37 rev.(!) 1 and *JAOS* 59 14:24-26; and (c) the evils listed in *KAR* 226 IV 8-10 recur in *JAOS* 59 13:3-10, *LKA* 128:5-10 // *KAR* 120:5-8, *KAR* 282 frag. 2:6-8, *AnBi* 12 284:56f., *KAR* 286:10-13 and in texts influenced by this genre (*KAR* 26 obv. 41 f., *Maqlû* VII 123ff., *KAR* 269 rev. 2'-4' and *JNES* 15 142:60'f.). [Note that a witchcraft sequence almost always occurs in these texts in the larger list of which these lines form part; the only exceptions are *AnBi* 12 and *JNES* 15. See above note 1 and below Chapter 2, Sec. D, 4, Position of Witchcraft Entry, 1), and notes 53 and 54.]

⁴See below note 10.

K 2467 + 80-7-19, 116

obv. r. col.

- 12' [ÉN *ak-tab-sa*]-*ka ša-ad-da-ak-ka* GIŠ.Š[INIG]
 13' [GIŠ.SIKIL.LA Ú].[IN].NU.UŠ GIŠ.ŠÀ.GIŠ[IMMAR]
 14' [*im-ṭu-ia ta-ni-hi-ia ta-di-ra-ti-ia*]

rev. r. col.

- 1 U₄-*mu* [ITU] [MU.AN.NA *ša it-tal-ku lum-ni lit-ba-lu*]
 2 KIMIN *ša* [ir]-[*ru-bu-ni* TIL.LA *li/lu-bi/bil-lu-ni* ÉN]

KAR 78

- [ÉN *ak-tab-sa-ka ša-ad-da-ak-ka* GIŠ.ŠINIG]
 1' [GIŠ.SIKIL.L]A!? Ú.IN.NU.UŠ ŠÀ-*bi gi*-[*šim-ma-ri*]
 2' [*im-ṭu-ia*] *ta-ni-hu-ia ta-dir*⁵-[*ti?*]-[*ia*]
 3' [(x x)] [ù]-<a> *a-a hu-uṣ-ṣu* GAZ ŠÀ-*bi ta*-[x] [x x]
 4' [U₄-*mu* ITU] MU.AN.NA *ša it-tal-ku lum-ni lit*-[*ba*]-[*lu*]
 5' [U₄-*mu* ITU] MU.AN.NA *ša ir-ru-bu-nu* TIN *lu-bil-lu-ni* É[N]

KAR 226 IV

- 3 ÉN *ak-tab-sa-ka*[*a ša-ad-da-ak-ka* GIŠ.ŠINIG]
 4 GIŠ.SIKIL.LA Ú.I[N.NU.UŠ GIŠ.ŠÀ.GIŠIMMAR (...)]
 5 *im-ṭu-ia ta-ni-hu-ia ta*-[*di-ra-ti-ia*]⁶
 6 [la¹-*a ṭu-ub* ŠÀ-*bi-ia* [*la-a ṭu-ub* UZU.MEŠ-*ia*]⁷ (HUL?)]
 7 [*kiš*]-[*pi*]¹ *ru-he-e ru-se-e up-ša-se-e* [HUL.MEŠ-*te ša* LÚ.MEŠ-*te*]
 8 [HUL MÁŠ].[GI₆!?!].MEŠ Á.MEŠ-*te* GISKIM.MEŠ-*te*
 HUL.[MEŠ-*te* NU DÜG.GA.MEŠ]
 9 [UZU.MEŠ *ha*]-[*ṭu*]-[*ú-te*]⁸ H]UL.MEŠ-*te pár-du-ú*-[*te*]

⁵ Can DIR have the value *dira*? Note Renger's objection (ZA 61 37f.) to the assignment of CVCV values to CVC signs.

⁶ Perhaps this line is to be further restored according to KAR 78:3'.

⁷ For our restoration cf., e.g., LKA 128 obv. 14 and Laessøe, *Bît rimki*, p. 39:28 (for which cf. p. 42) // STT 76:29 // 77:29, and so emend KAR 80 rev. 10: NU DÜG ŠÀ-*bi* N[U DÜG.G]A <UZU>.

⁸ Similar lists seem to require this restoration of 9a. The major difficulty is that the normal form of this line in these lists is (HUL) UZU(.MEŠ/ME) *ha/haṭ-ṭu-ti/te*/[LAL?].MEŠ *par/pár-du-ti/te lem-nu-ti*/HUL.MEŠ NU

- (HUL.MEŠ-te) NU DÙG.GA.MEŠ]
 10 [hi-niq UDU.NITÁ SIZKUR SIZ]KUR li-pit qa-te
 KA UK[Û!.MEŠ⁹
 11 [mim-ma lem-nu ša i]-[na SU]-ia ù É-ia [GÁL]-[u
 12 [U₄-mu ITU MU.AN.NA ša it]-[tal]-ku lum-ni l[it-ba-lu]
 13 [KIMIN ša ir-ru-bu]-[ni!?] TI.LA [lu-bil-lu-ni ÉN]

A simple comparison of these texts reveals that the group of evils which is limited to one line in K 2467 + 80-7-19, 116 has been expanded by a further line in *KAR* 78 and by six lines in *KAR* 226.¹⁰

DÙG.GA.(MEŠ) (cf. *KAR* 26:41, *KAR* 269 rev. 2', *KAR* 286:12, *LKA* 128 obv. 7f. // *KAR* 120:6f., *JAOS* 59 13:5f., *Maqlû* VII 124 and K 5409:4 [which has a shortened formulation to match the nature of the list there]), and our line would be the only one, if our restoration is correct, in which *lemnûte* precedes *pardûti*. Note that only one wedge of -[ʃu]- is preserved and that this wedge might belong to the preceding sign.

⁹Restored and emended according to *KAR* 282 frag. 1:9.

¹⁰While it is almost certainly true that from a literary and typological point of view the development of the incantation was one of expansion, we are unable to specify the exact motives for the development or to reconstruct the exact chain of events. Our inability is due to the difficulty involved in assuming a direct development of the incantation from the context in which the short version is found (K 2467 +) to that in which the expanded version is found (*KAR* 226). Since the content of the first three columns of *KAR* 226 (cf. Excursus) indicates that that tablet contained either a collection of witchcraft incantations and rituals or a complex witchcraft ritual, it seems reasonable to assume either that the incantation was adapted for use in this witchcraft ritual by the insertion of the line mentioning witchcraft into an already expanded list of evils, or that the incantation, even before it was introduced into this ritual, had already taken on the form known from *KAR* 226 and, therefore, already contained the line mentioning witchcraft. However, since the short version of the incantation (K 2467 +) seems also to be found in a witchcraft context in K 2467 + (obv. r. col. 7'f.: LÚ].UŠ₁₂.ZU.MU MÍ.UŠ₁₂.ZU.[MU] [...] ru-hi-šú-nu HUL.[MEŠ]), the assumption that the incantation was expanded in a direct line of movement from its context in K 2467 + to that in *KAR* 226, while it would account for the addition of the line referring to witchcraft, would not account for the addition of the lines containing the non-witchcraft evils. A detailed reconstruction of the history of the incantation must await either the discovery of more exemplars of the incantation or a more precise definition of the overall context of our three tablets, which is presently rendered impossible by their fragmentary state.