

YOUR PRAISE IS SWEET

A MEMORIAL VOLUME FOR JEREMY BLACK
FROM STUDENTS, COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS



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PREFACE

za₃-mi₂-zu dug₃-ga-am₃
'Your praise is sweet'

This volume is intended as a tribute in memory of our teacher, colleague and friend, Jeremy Black. The scope of the contributions to it are a testament to Jeremy's own wide-ranging interests and to his ability to forge scholarly connections and friendships among all who shared his interest in Mesopotamia. His readiness to engage especially with younger scholars is reflected in the number of articles written by colleagues at an early stage in their careers.

Jeremy's own career followed a varied and interesting path. Prior to his appointment as University Lecturer in Akkadian at Oxford in 1988, he had spent a year (1981–2) as a Research Associate at the Oriental Institute in Chicago working on the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary, followed by several years in Baghdad, first as the Assistant Director of the British Archaeological Expedition to Iraq (1982–5), and then as its Director (1986–8). His time in Iraq awakened in Jeremy a deep affection for the country and its people, and he was profoundly affected by the recent tragic events there.

In recent years Jeremy became best known for the Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature, a collaborative project which began with a pilot study in 1997 and went on to make editions and translations of numerous key Sumerian literary compositions available not only to scholars but also to the wider public. While the Sumerian language and literature were his main academic interests, his publications (listed on pp. vii–xi) embraced such diverse topics as Akkadian bird names, Parthian history, and amethysts. But to list these formidable academic achievements is not to do justice to the person Jeremy was: above all a kind, patient and inspiring teacher, as well as a stimulating colleague and firm friend.

We are grateful to all those colleagues who took the time to contribute to this volume, as well as to Jeremy's half-brother, Peter Mitchell, for kindly writing the Afterword. Tessa Rickards generously contributed her etching of a Sumerian cylinder seal for the title page. We especially thank the British Institute for the Study of Iraq, in particular Jon Taylor and the publications committee, for taking on the task of publishing it.

Heather D. Baker
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RECONSIDERING THE CONSECRATION OF PRIESTS IN ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA

ANNE LÖHNERT—MUNICH

I had the wonderful opportunity to be a student of Jeremy Black's unfortunately for only a short period of time, yet his interest and support were a motivation and inspiration to me as a young scholar. In memory of his keen interest in religious texts—reaching beyond his rich discussions and publications—I would like to present a text which may somehow be linked to the scholars who were known as the keepers of secret knowledge. This will be my small tribute to an unforgettable scholar.

Textual material that provides us with explicit descriptions about the installation or consecration of priests in ancient Mesopotamia is quite rare. Amongst the most important texts of the second millennium BCE are the installation ritual of the EREŠ.DINGIR of the storm god in Emar and the incantations for the purification of the *gudu*₄-priest before his investiture.¹

Apart from this second-millennium evidence there is a bilingual text published by Borger in 1973 which has become known as 'The consecration of a priest of Enlil'. Except for a few references, this text has not yet been discussed in detail. Although its contents are sometimes difficult to understand, it is a valuable source regarding priestly purity in the first millennium BCE.² Borger reconstructed the whole text from five duplicates (A–E), to which two more duplicates can now be added. All of them date from the first millennium, including three from Kuyunjik, one probably from Assur, two from Nabû's temple in Nimrud, and one unprovenanced manuscript.³

The whole text is divided into a preamble and sixteen incantations. Duplicate A bears a colophon which identifies it as a copy from a Babylonian original that was made on 11-IX in the sixth year of Sennacherib by an apprentice of an incantation-priest of that king.⁴

The preamble introduces the *nēšakku* and *pašišu*-priest of 'Enlil' and 'Ninlil', who must undergo various kinds of inspection before entering the temple of the gods for the first time. The inspection takes place in the bathroom and involves ascertaining whether or not they have the requisite physical and mental qualifications to enter priestly office (i 1–44).

Rather than following this with a ritual description, the text instead gives sixteen incantations that provide (partially cryptic) suggestions regarding the development of the ritual and the meaning of the individual steps leading to its conclusion. As will be shown, the incantations do not solely

¹ The ritual of the EREŠ.DINGIR was edited by Arnaud 1985–7 and subsequently treated by Dietrich 1989 and Fleming 1992. The Old Babylonian incantations for the purification of the *gudu*₄ before his investiture were published by Farber and Farber 2003.

² An analysis of this text formed a major part of my MA thesis at the University of Munich (2002).

³ The tablets from Kuyunjik and Assur and the unprovenanced Late Babylonian tablet have been treated by Borger 1973; unless otherwise indicated, the *sigla* as well as the textual references are adopted from Borger, *ibid.* The two additional duplicates from Nimrud are published in CTN 4 93 (pl. 53) and 122 (pl. 78). They match Borger's line numbering as follows:

CTN 4 122 = i 2–i 20 and i 32–i 44 (= preamble)

CTN 4 93 = ii 44–'D rev. 11' + five more lines (= incantations IX–X).

A transliteration and translation are given below.

⁴ The colophon in ms. A reads: ⁽⁴²⁾[GABA].^rRI[?] KÁ.DINGIR.RA^{ki}1 *ki-ma* SUMUN-ŠÚ^r SAR-ma¹ [IG].I.KÁR ⁽⁴³⁾[...] ^rŠAMÁN¹.LÁ TUR ⁽⁴⁴⁾[...^{li}MU₇.]MU₇ LUGAL ⁽⁴⁵⁾[X]^{ki} ⁱⁱⁱGAN¹ [... U]D 11-KÁM ⁽⁴⁶⁾[*lim*]-mu ¹*mi-tu-nu* ^{li}rGAR KUR¹ *i-sa-na* ⁽⁴⁷⁾[MU] 6-KÁM ^{md}EN:ZU-ŠEŠ.ŠEŠ-e[r]*i-ba* ⁽⁴⁸⁾[^{siš}]GIŠIMMAR KUR ^d*aš-šur*.

reflect the words spoken by the *āšipu*, but the *nêšakku* or the *pašišu* himself is considered to play an active role too. As to the exact functions of *nu-eš₃/nêšakku* and *nam-šita/pašišu*, it suffices to observe that both were priests responsible for the upkeep of the daily cult.⁵ The assignment of these priests to ‘Enlil’ and ‘Ninlil’ could have the same implications as in Old Babylonian times, when the *nêšakku* was the cultic priest serving a male deity while the *pašišu* was the cultic priest serving a female deity (Renger 1975: 112).⁶ In the first millennium the names ‘Enlil’ and ‘Ninlil’ did not refer to the actual divine couple Enlil and Ninlil known from Old Babylonian Nippur. Rather, the term ‘Enlil’ was transformed into a generic term for divine supremacy (e.g., *ellillu/ellilūtu*).⁷ Thus, the relevant passage of the consecration ritual (i 1–4) has to be seen in this light too, because its composition probably postdates the Old Babylonian period. Hence, it is not too far-fetched to assume that ‘Enlil’ and ‘Ninlil’ were adopted as designations for the highest-ranking gods of a temple—be it Assur and Mullissu of the Assyrian pantheon, or the pair Marduk and Šarpanītu, or Nabû and Tašmētu of the Babylonian pantheon, or indeed any Mesopotamian god.⁸

The counterbalancing of purity and impurity was an essential aspect of cultic procedures. Before establishing contact with a deity the priests had to confirm their own purity as well as the purity of the ritual settings.⁹ Accordingly, the whole consecration of the *nêšakku* and the *pašišu* was devoted to the question of purity.

In the preamble, not only the immaculate lineage, but also the physical and mental integrity of the initiate were examined.¹⁰ This means that absolute purity was demanded of the priest. Cultic purity included the inner, invisible level as well as its materialisation in externally visible features.¹¹ Once a positive outcome of the inspection is obtained, the initiate undergoes the ritual, divided among the incantations into the stages outlined in Table 1.

⁵ For the office of the *nêšakku* and *pašišu* in Old Babylonian times see Renger 1969: 138–80; for an overview of the Sumerian-Akkadian equations and the functions of both priests see Sallaberger and Huber Vulliet 2003–5. Note that in later periods the titles *nêšakku* and *pašišu* are only found in literary contexts and never as everyday terms (Sallaberger and Huber Vulliet 2003–5: §5.3.1).

⁶ For the *pašišu* of the goddess Ninlil in Middle Babylonian Nippur see Sassmannshausen 2001: 66.

⁷ Cf. AHW 203: *Ellil* = ‘the highest god’, *Ellil(l)la/ītu* = ‘the highest goddess’ and *Ellilūtu* = ‘highest rank’.

⁸ The adoption of ‘Enlil’ and ‘Ninlil’ into the Assyrian recension (ms. A), which explicitly refers to king Sennacherib, may well be understood as part of a reform of religious ideology undertaken by Sennacherib. With the mention of Ninlil we would have one more allusion to his cultic reforms, since in earlier times the god Assur had no female companion (Deller and Donbaz 1987: 227).

⁹ For discussions of purity see Maul 1994: 39–46, 94–100 and *passim*; Berlejung 1998: 181–92 and *passim*. Acting as commissioner of a deity in some rituals, the priest must have complied with the divine expectations. Therefore the initial incantation of *Šurpu* I (Reiner 1958: 11, l. 4) states ‘I am a pure man’ (ĝe₂₆-e lu₂ ku₃-ga-me-en). The declaration: ‘I am the bathed one, whose hands are pure, the messenger of Ea and Marduk’ (susbu šu dadag-ga lu₂kiĝ₂-ge₄-a d^{en}-ki d^{asar}-lu₂-ĥi-ka-me-en/*ramku ša qātāšu ebbā mār šipri ša Ea u Marduk anāku*, e.g., SpTU 3 67 obv. i 47–8) imply physical purity obtained through ablution. Often the priest requests exculpation from moral lapses, as can be found in the *lipšur*-litanies (Reiner 1956: 142–3, ll. 41’–66’), in the *ezib*-formulae of the divination-priest just before extispicy (Starr 1990: XX–XXVII), and finally, in our incantation XII (iii 10’–16’; see below).

¹⁰ As Borger 1973: 163 already pointed out, the preamble has parallels to some passages of the Old Testament and the so-called ‘Enmeduranki text’. The latter includes an inspection with similar criteria for qualification as a divination-priest (Lambert 1998). For priests’ purity as recorded in Late Babylonian legal and administrative documents see now Waerzeggers and Jursa 2008. According to these documents especially the physical descent of the initiate was of judicial concern.

¹¹ In the letter SAA 13 138 the recently appointed priest of Istar’s temple in Arba’il informs king Assurbanipal about a gala-priest of Ea who has committed thefts in the temple and is therefore no longer to be allowed to perform ritual actions (*lā elāšu ina parakki*; for this expression see footnote 37). In the letter SAA 10 160, rev. 10–12, on the other hand, the *kalû*-priest Marduk-šapik-zeri pleads to the king on behalf of an exorcist who, despite the fact that his face and hands are branded (*pānīšu u rittīšu šatrū*), is a very competent priest.

Table 1: Stages of consecration, according to the incantations

<i>Incantation</i>	<i>Lines</i>	<i>Sumerian or Akkadian rubric</i>	<i>Translation</i>
I–VII	i 57, 64; ii 6, 10, 20, 28, 36	ka-enim-ma ġiri ₂ šu-i-kam	Formula of the barber's knife
VIII	ii 40	ka-enim-ma šá ^{ġis} UMBIN ta-b[a-lu ² ...]	Formula for the removal ² of the (finger-)nail
IX	ii 52	ka-enim-ma tu ₉ ku ₃ -ga-kam	Formula of the pure cloth
X	c. 6 lines after 'D rev. 11'	[ka-enim-ma ...]	[Formula ... of the <i>paršġgu-turban?</i>] ¹²
XI	iii 23'	ka-enim-ma e-sir ₂ dib-ba-kam	Formula for walking on the street
XII	iv 15	ka-enim-ma e ₂ -kur ku ₄ -ku ₄ -da-kam	Formula for entering the Ekur ¹³
XIII	iv 26	ka-enim-ma ENIM ABZU 10 šá me-e e ₂ ^d ku-sù TUM ₂	Formula 'word of the Apsù', 10 lines, while bringing water of the house of Kusu
XIV	iv 30	ka-enim-ma [... ZU:]AB šu-si-i	Formula for bringing out [... Ap]sù?
XV	iv 40	ka-enim-ma ni ₂ -te-a-ni ku ₃ -ga	Formula for self-purification ¹⁴
XVI	iv 41	[ka-enim-ma ...]	[Formula ... of the white <i>tapsù-blanket</i>] ¹⁵

Although explicit instructions on actions are missing, a razor was seemingly used for cutting the hair. The tonsure of priests in the first millennium is often attested in texts and iconography, and was considered to be the main feature of a priest (especially the *šangû*-priest).¹⁶ The first two incantations might imply such a tonsure. It is the priest that the text refers to, on whose head water is poured, whose body is rubbed with soap, and who is 'bathed' with(?) the bronze razor.¹⁷ The meaning of 'to bathe' can be understood as a general term for the ceremony involved, for shaving itself represents a ritual action. If the interpretation of Incantation III (ii 2) a tu₅-tu₅-a^{ġis}umbin-TAR saġ-ga dadag-ga as 'to bathe with water, to cleanse by shaving the head'¹⁸ is correct, then we do indeed have an explicit hint of an actual shaving.

¹² The rubric is broken but, as will be shown below, the suggested addition fits the context.

¹³ A similar rubric completes the purification ritual of the *gudu₄*, where it reads e₂ ku₄-ku₄-da-kam, 'in order to enter the temple' (Farber and Farber 2003: iv 11'). As Farber and Farber 2003: 100 suggest, this purification is a preliminary ritual and is not part of the actual investiture. In contrast, our ritual does not end with the self-purification but continues with the investiture of the priests (see the discussion below).

¹⁴ The rubric 'to purify a *gudu₄*-priest' occurs twice in the Old Babylonian ritual. First, the fifth incantation reads *gudu₄ ku₃-ge-^rda¹* (Farber and Farber 2003: iii 16), which happens before he is allowed to enter the temple (see previous footnote). Second, as a summary of the whole purification ritual the Old Babylonian text has the rubric *gudu₄ ku₃-ge-da-kam* (Farber and Farber 2003: iv 13).

¹⁵ Ms. A gives only the catchline; ms. B breaks off before the rubric.

¹⁶ For a detailed discussion of this topic see Scheyhing 1998; Waerzeggers and Jursa 2008: 14, 20–2, 28–33.

¹⁷ The translation of i 66 by Scheyhing 1998: 64 as '(...) das bronzene Schermesser zum Reinigen zu baden (...)') would actually fit much better in the context of an incantation of the razor. But the Akkadian in the parallel line i 48 equates tu₅-tu₅ with *rummuku*, which (according to CAD R s.v. *ramāku*) is never combined with an impersonal object. (See also the translation of the phrase in question in CAD R 111, lex. section: '... to bathe in a pure fashion (using?) a razor, ...')

¹⁸ Borger 1973: 172 translates verbatim 'mit Wasser zu baden, mit einem Kopfrasiermesser? zu erhellen', which corresponds exactly to the Sumerian phrase. For the wider understanding 'to shave' cf. Antagal F 184: ^{ġis}umbin-TAR = *gul-lu-[bu]* (MSL 17 217), and Nabnitu H 1–3: ^{ġis}umbin-TAR = *gul-lu-b[u]*; saġ-sar-ra = MIN; ^{ġis}umbin-AK-a = MIN (MSL 17 175).

Incantation VII rounds off the series of the ‘razor incantations’. Even though it is badly preserved, the remaining sign traces [...-ĝ]u₁₀-ta ħ[u-...] or [...]-ĝu₁₀-ta ħu-m[u²-...] of i 33–4 reveal the apotropaic concern of this incantation.¹⁹ The formula of Asalluĥi, ‘child of Eridu’, who was invoked in the preceding incantations in order to wipe off (the evil), to purify, to cleanse and to brighten,²⁰ is omitted here. By bathing and shaving, the polluting substances have been washed away, and the initiate is prepared for the next step.

The following incantation, VIII, aims at the elimination of all evil by the exclamation: ‘To loosen the knot/string of evil is up to you, lord Marduk, so absolve me from my bond!’ (ii 37–9).²¹ Finally, the rubric ‘for removing the (finger)nail’ points to the act of cutting the fingernails. The implication here is that the fingernail bears negative powers and its removal accompanies the elimination of evils. Such an ‘absorptive’ function is not without parallels: in the Late Babylonian incantation SpTU 3 81 from Uruk, as well as in the apotropaic ritual KAR 134, the nail is charged with negative power and later eliminated in various ways.²² The incantation lacks the formula of the purifying Asalluĥi since an irreversible separation from evil is demanded in order to attain a higher level of purity.

Incantations IX and X represent two ‘Kultmittelbeschwörungen’ of a garment that can be regarded as the insignia.²³ Since CTN 4 93 is decisive for an improved understanding of both incantations, a transliteration and translation are presented here in detail:

Incantations IX and X

1´.	[...] ¹ qe ²¹ -[... ...] [...] the threa[d ...].	
2´.	¹ munus ¹ dim ₂ ¹ -ma tun ₃ -bi [...]	The wise woman [...] the lap/rug [...],
3´.	<i>sin-niš-ti ĩe-mi</i> [...]	
4´.	um-ma dim ₂ -ma ¹ x si x ¹ [...]	the wise old woman ... [...].
5´.	<i>pur-šum-ti ĩe-mi</i> [...]	
6´.	^d asar-lu ₂ -ĥi nam-šub na- [...]	Asalluĥi/Marduk [recited] the incantation.
7´.	^d marduk šip-tam [...]	

¹⁹ They certainly can be understood as a parallel to the motive of the prevention of evil, which is part of the ‘Legitimationstyp’ (Falkenstein 1931: 31), and here the particular variant sil₇ igi-ĝu₁₀-ta, ‘Get out of my presence!’ (Falkenstein 1931: 32–3).

²⁰ i 54–5: ĥe₂-en-ku₃-ga ĥe₂-en-sikil-la ĥe₂-en-dadag-ga // li-lil li-bi-ib li-nam-mir

i 61–2, ii 4–5: šu dadag-ga-a-ni-ta ĥe₂-em-(ma)-ab-ur₃-ra // ĥu-mu-un-ku₃-ga ĥu-mu-un-sikil-la ĥu-mu-un-dadag-ga.

ii 18, 26: ĥe₂-en-ku₃-ga ĥe₂-en-sikil-la ĥe₂-en-dadag-ga.

²¹ An almost exact parallel for this passage is found in the Late Babylonian incantation SpTU 3 81, obv. 21–2, part of a collection of incantations which avert evil by spellbinding hair or nails. The parallel confirms the transliteration and translation by Borger 1973: 167, 173, which can be restored as follows: ⁽³⁷⁾[en₂] sa ĥul tuĥ-u₃-da en ^dmarduk-¹e¹-[da-am₃] ⁽³⁸⁾[ki-š]ir lum-ni pa-ta-ru it-ti lum-nu DIŠ/ana? ¹x¹ [...] ⁽³⁹⁾[bēlum] ^dmarduk it-ti-ka-ma i-il-ti [puṭur]. Besides the parallels given by Borger 1973: 175 ad ii 27–39, it should be added that in the course of the medical ritual *muššu’u* (‘rubbing’) the priest has to recite the incantation sa ĥul tuĥ-u₃-da, ‘to dispel the evil knot/string’ (Böck 2003: 3–6, ll. 4 and 20).

²² For SpTU 3 81 see the previous footnote. The finger- or toenail has to be put into a jar and then thrown into the river (obv. 13–14 and 24). For KAR 134 see Ebeling 1931: 25. This text consists of incantations which dissolve a spell and re-establish the strength of the afflicted person. The first fully legible line explicitly points to the evil-absorbing character of the nails: KI T[I]-ú UMBIN-ia lip-pa-ṭir ar-ni [X²], ‘let my sin be exorcised through my nail’ (obv. 11´, after CAD S 251 *supru*). The only (preserved) ritual instruction aims at the separation from something harmful by kneading the nails into clay and throwing it into a well, a river, or into the box under the door pivot (*lū ana būru lū ana nāri lū ana buršimdi dalti tanaddi*, obv. 13–16). An overview of items with evil-absorbing functions—including nails—is provided by Maul 1994: 76–82.

²³ The garment as the central object of a purifying ritual is noteworthy, as only two other attestations of this kind are known. An Old Babylonian series of ‘Kultmittelbeschwörungen’ empowers offerings ingredients, such as cedar, honey, ghee, different sorts of oil, and finally ends with two incantations of the ‘cloth’ and the SAR.SAR linen (Geller 2001: 230–2, ll. 55–70). And one of the initial actions of a coronation ritual includes a mouth-washing ritual of the king’s garment, throne and ritual throne (Berlejung 1996: 6/11 ll. 15–16).

8'. $\text{ḫe}_2\text{-en-ku}_3\text{-ga ḫe}_2\text{-en-sikil-la ḫe}_2\text{[...]}$	He may purify, he may cleanse, he may [brighten]!
9'. $\text{eme ḫul-ḡal}_2\text{ bar-še}_3\text{ ḫ[ḫe}_2\text{-...]}$	The evil tongue shall [stay] aside!
<hr/>	
10'. $\text{ka-enim-ma } 7\text{ tu}_9\text{ ku}_3\text{-ga-[kam}_{(2)}\text{]}$	7 lines, Formula of the pure cloth.
<hr/>	
11'. $\text{en}_2\text{ }^d\text{uttu munus sag}_{10}\text{-ga dumu } ^d\text{en-lil}_2\text{-la}_2\text{ du}_2\text{-ud-[da]}$	Incantation: Uttu, the good woman, child born by Enlil.
12'. $^d\text{MIN } \text{sin-niš-ti SIG}_5\text{-tum mar-ta šá } ^d\text{en-líl ul-[du-ši]}$	
13'. $\text{ki-aḡ}_2\text{-ḡa}_2\text{ } ^d\text{en-}^r\text{ki}^1\text{-ga-ke}_4\text{ su-na tum}_3\text{-ma-a}$	The beloved child of Enki/Ea that is made fit in her/his
14'. $\text{mar-tum na-ram-ti } ^d\text{é-a šá BAD}^? \text{ zu-mur šu-lu-k[at}^?]$	body, ²⁴
15'. $\text{e-}^r\text{ze}_2\text{ }^1\text{-ni-ta siki sag}_{10}\text{ siki babbar-ta šu-na im-ma-an-}^r\text{ḡal}_2\text{ }^?]$	sheep of good wool, of white wool she put in his hands.
16'. $\text{še-e-ni šī-pa-q-ti SIG}_5\text{.MEŠ } \text{šī-pa-a-ti pe-ša-tú ana ŠU}^{\text{II}}$	
17'. $^{\text{III}}\text{bar-si}^1\text{ šita ku}_3\text{-ga šu im-}^r\text{mi}^1\text{-in-ga}_3\text{ sa im-ma-ni-in-g[e}^{\text{III}}]$	In the pure prayer she ... the bar-si turban and made it ready.
18'. $\text{pār-ši-ga ik-rib } ^r\text{x x}^1\text{ ep-ru-ti uš-ter-s[}^{\text{III}}]$	She prepared the <i>paršīgu</i> -turban in [...] prayer of the cover? ²⁵
19'. $\text{LU}_2\text{.TUG}_2\text{ } \langle\langle\text{x}\rangle\rangle\text{ kalam-ma-ke}_4\text{ šu-na im-ma-an-šum}_2$	The 'Fuller of the land' gave it in his hand.
20'. $\text{ana áš-la-ki šá ma-a-ti ip-qid}$	She handed it over to the 'Fuller of the land'.
21'. $^{\text{III}}\text{bar-si a zalag}_2\text{-ga šu-luḫ-luḫ-ḫa}$	The bar-si turban—with splendid water it is washed.
22'. $\text{pār-ši-ga ina me } ^r\text{x x}^1\text{-ti ú-za-ak-ki}$	He cleaned the <i>paršīgu</i> -turban with [splendid?] water. ²⁶
23'. $\text{šu sikil-ta šu s[u- ... su]-ub-ba-a}$	With cleansed hands [...] rubbed.
24'. $\text{ina qa-ti } ^r\text{x}^1\text{ [...] } ^r\text{x}^1$	
25'. $^d\text{asar-lu}_2\text{-ḫi } ^r\text{x}^1\text{ [...]}$	Asalluḫi/Marduk [...].
26'. $^r\text{d}^1\text{marduk [...]}$ (remainder destroyed)	

Incantation IX appears to describe the preparation of the garment that is specified as the *paršīgu*-turban in Incantation X. First of all, it mentions the thread (being the basic element of a cloth) of the goddess Uttu which is said in ii 43/44 to be 'straightened' by Ištar.²⁷ The incantation is completed by Asalluḫi, who bestows the thread with power by purification (ii 49–50).

²⁴ The only other preserved ms. is D, where rev. 3–4 read: *dumu ki-aḡ₂-ḡa₂ ^den-ki-ga-ke₄ su-na tu[m₂-...] / mar-ti na-^rram¹-ti ^dé-a šá zu-um-^rx¹ [...]*. The Akkadian line of CTN 4 93 causes some confusion: should the second half be a mixture of *ša ina zumrīša/šu šūlukat* = '(Uttu), who is fit in her/his body' and *ša zumurša šūluku* = '(Uttu), whose body is fit'? The meaning of this passage remains unclear—one should assume that ll. 11'–14' allude to a specific but incomprehensible mythologem regarding the relationship between Uttu, Enlil and Enki (see Michalowski 1992: 309–12 for intertwinements of incantations with myths).

²⁵ The parallel ms. D (rev. 8) reads: [...g]a ina ik-rib el-lu-tú ip-ru-su uš-ter-si, 'After she cut off [the *paršīgu*-turban?], she made it ready'. In CTN 4 93 the sign(s) following *ik-rib* is/are illegible, but neither the traces nor the space support the reading *el-lu-tú*. Apart from that the text has a noun *ep-ru-ti*, not a verbal form of *parāsu* (as ms. D). The translation 'the cover' (abstract of verb *apārum/epērum*, 'to cover the head') is only tentative, since the Sumerian version provides no evidence for interpretation either.

²⁶ I cannot provide any satisfactory solution for the reading of the traces *ina? me ^rx x¹-ti*. If the sign on the Sumerian line is indeed *zalag₂* the Akkadian could be read *^rnam-ru¹-ti*, for which the traces would fit. According to the dictionaries, the only other occurrence of 'splendid water' is found in the Old Babylonian 'Dialogue between the cleaner of clothes and a customer' l. 10: *ina mē namrūti ta-dī-x* (UET 6/2 414, Gadd 1963: 183). However, if we accept *namrūti* the problem remains that *mē* ought not to be written *me* but *me-e*.

²⁷ The combination Uttu–Ištar also occurs in *Šurpu* V/VI ll. 144–9 (Reiner 1958: 34) and in a Middle Assyrian ritual of *utukkū lemnūtu*, where Uttu spins Ištar's spittle into a spell-binding thread (Geller 1980: 30/36 l. 141').

Incantation X specifies the textile as the *paršīgu*-turban.²⁸ Since it is an exceptional garment, Uttu,²⁹ the goddess of weaving, is working on it herself. As material she chooses white sheep's wool. The colour 'white' points to the shiny and pure character of the textile, whose supernatural quality is emphasised all the more because the goddess of weaving herself and 'The fuller of the land'³⁰ are in charge of its production.

On putting on the turban, the initiate is visibly distinguished from ordinary people and he is allowed to enter the Ekur temple. But before he can do so, he must 'walk on the street'³¹ (Incantation XI). The slightly modified incantation of the *mīs pī* ritual, en₂ e-sir₂-ra du-a-ni-ta ('when he walked along the street') fits this context, in which Asalluḫi/Marduk observes the contamination of his *āšipu/mašmāšu*-priest, who is walking on the street (SAALT 1: 211–25). This incantation was probably recited during the procession of a newly-fashioned divine image from the river to its shrine (SAALT 1: 210). The 'street' is well known as a place of peril jeopardising the mandatory cultic purity of a priest.³² Therefore Incantation XI starts with the invocation of the god Kusu,³³ being as 'chief exorcist' the authority capable of purifying the initiate.

In fact, the initiate names violations which he himself or another person has committed consciously or unconsciously (iii 2'–16'). Such considerations are also part of the *lipšur*-litanies (Reiner 1956: 137–8, ll. 81–95 and pp. 142–3, ll. 41'–62') and of Šurpu II (Reiner 1958: 13–18).³⁴ The same gods—Nusku, Kusu and Ningirim(a)—are invoked for purification, in order to 'enter the Ekur' (*lūruba ana Ekur*, iii 20'). Finally, the initiate concludes his preliminary measure with the words: 'If I prostrate, it bowed me down', if I tread on the ground, my feet shall be straight' (*uškên lū ukannišanni akabbas qaqqaru līšerā šēpēya*, iii 21'). Notably, the purity of the feet is also the

²⁸ Within the scope of a priestly consecration it should be mentioned that the EREŠ.DINGIR of the storm god of Emar also receives a red wool headdress (¹⁰⁶BAR.SIG ⁵¹⁶HÉ.ME.DA) as one of her insignia (l. 42).

²⁹ Uttu is not one of the great gods, but her seat E-ešgar ('House of the assigned task') is nevertheless mentioned in Tintir II l. 13' (George 1992: 50). Some other attestations of this goddess serve to illustrate her responsibilities. For the entry ^dTAG×TÚG or ^dTAG.TÚG in An-Anum II ll. 355–6, a Seleucid god list gives glosses explaining the sign TAG as *ma-ḫa-su šá TÚG*, 'to weave a textile' (Litke 1998: 109 n. 354). A hemerology equates her with *ettūtu*, 'spider' (George 1992: 283). And finally, as stated in *Laḫar and Ašnan* (ETCSL 5.3.2, l. 17) and *Enki and the World Order* (ETCSL 1.1.3, l. 383), lordship cannot exist without Uttu fashioning the royal cap.

³⁰ As far as I know, the appellation 'Fuller of the land' is not attested elsewhere. Ea/Enki is often indicated as being the master of various crafts (e.g., MSL 9 207–9), but there is no reference to 'fuller'.

³¹ The rubric e-sir₂ dīb-ba-kam has at least four parallels within the series of the 'forerunners to *utukkū lemnūtu*' (Geller 1985: 26–33). There, the evil demons wait at every imaginable place in order to attack human beings and cause evil diseases which can only be cured by priests.

³² Before starting a ritual, the priest has to obtain absolution for any pollution caused by the 'street'. Such pleas are part of the initial lines of the *lipšur*-litanies, where the priest asks Šamaš for forgiveness (Reiner 1956: 142–3, ll. 41'–6').

³³ The title saḡḡa₂ maḫ ^den-lil₂-la₂-ke₄ as stated in Incantation XIII is the usual epithet of this deity (Michalowski 1993: 158–60). As a deity concerned with purification he played an important role within purifying rituals. Gibil and Kusu formed the pair 'censer' (niḡ₂-na/Kusu) and 'torch' (gi-izi-la₂/Gibil). The *mīs pī* ritual also refers to Kusu and his purifying function. At the beginning an instruction orders the setting up of a hut in the garden for Kusu, wherein the water basin has to be installed (SAALT 1 37/38 and 53/54 ll. 11 and 23). He carries out his duty by swaying censer and torch 'in order to bring light into the darkness' (SAALT 1 106/110 ll. 27–8). According to another *mīs pī* incantation he purifies the crown by means of the 'holy water basin' and 'the pure water of the Apsū' (SAALT 1 194–5/204, l. 13).

³⁴ On analogy with the *lipšur*-litanies (Reiner 1956: 142–3, l. 48'), ll. iii 11'–13' have to be understood as: 'If I have been neglectful, if I have not been neglectful, if I have committed a sin, if I have not committed a sin, if I have been remiss, if I have not been remiss' (*lū angi lū lā angi lū aḫḫi lū lā aḫḫi lū ešēḫ lū lā ešēḫ*). The finite form *angi*, which is here assumed to derive from the infinitive *egū*, remains problematic. As Borger 1973: 175 *ad* iii 11' already pointed out, the writing *an-gi* instead of *e-gi* is certain. Nevertheless, because of the close parallelism to the *lipšur*-litanies and the reference to possible negligence towards a deity expressed in these three statements, the translation of *angi* as 'I have been neglectful' seems to be the most appropriate.

main concern of an incantation of the *mīs pî* ritual, when the god's statue is about to enter the temple (SAALT 1: 176/187, ll. 20–23).

Having been freed from the pollution of the street, the initiate is now allowed to enter the Ekur. To judge from the expression in Incantation XII '[...] to the Ekur I ascend' (*ana Ekur elli/ellu*, iv 1/2), this may have been considered synonymous with an actual ascent into a higher sphere.³⁵ Even though the lines of this incantation are badly preserved, the wording of a 'Legitimationstyp' incantation is still legible. The initiate seeks protective escort (iv 3–4)³⁶ in order to prevent harm that may cling to him and that therefore may contaminate the temple at his entry (iv 5–13).

Incantation XIII consists of 10 lines of the 'Word of the Apsû', which is marked by the purifying radiation of Eridu and the Apsû, seat of the crafty god Enki/Ea. This incantation invokes the priests and gods of the Eridu-circle. The list starts with the *enkummu*-priest, whose duties lay within the sphere of cultic purification (Walker 1966: 170; Charpin 1986: 390). The following divine couple Enkum and Ninkum, and the abgal-priest, whose prominent feature was 'flowing hair' (Charpin 1986: 389), belonged to the Eridu-circle. The chain of purification deities is continued by Kusu, Ningirim(a) and Asalluḫi (iv 21–3). The incantation has the rubric 'Word of the Apsû while bringing water of the house of Kusu', where ENIM ABZU is used as an idiomatic expression. By consulting other passages this topos can also be closely linked to purification:³⁷

1. VAT 13841+13842, rev. 6: ENIM ABZU šá GI.IZI.LÁ = 'word of the Apsû of the torch'; the torch has already appeared in the context of purification;³⁸
2. In Esagil-kin-apli's 'Exorcists' Manual' the entry ENIM ABZU GI.NU.TAG.GA-ú shows the affiliation to the purification cult, since it appears together with 'hand-washing rites'.³⁹
3. The ENIM ABZU of the 'kettledrum ritual' from Kuyunjik confirms the purity of the bull whose skin is destined to cover the *lilissu*-kettledrum (Linssen 2004: 275, 278, i 17 and 26).

The Akkadian supplementary note 'while bringing the water of the house of Kusu' facilitates the reference to the *mīs pî* ritual, where at one point the water basin is set up in the 'house of Kusu', who then accomplishes the 'Kultmittelbeschwörung' of the crown by means of 'the holy water basin, the water of the Apsû'.⁴⁰ The suggestion of Berlejung (1998: 423/435, n. 1977) to equate the *bīt rimki* of the mouth-washing rituals (*mīs pî*) with the *bīt Kusu* gains relevance because the following incantations support the assumption that our incantation also refers to such a *bīt Kusu* set up in a garden on a river bank. To sum up, Incantation XIII refers to a purifying spell in which powerful authorities bless the water (for self-purification?).

Incantation XIV is very fragmentary but ties in with the previous one. The purifying aspect postulated by the interpretation of the term 'Word of the Apsû' in the rubric is apparent once again. The first line underlines this with the words: 'The holy water basin of Enki, the water of the lapis lazuli quay he found there' (a(-)gub₂-ba ^den-ki-ga-ke₄ a kar za-gin₃-na mu-ni-in-pa₃, iv 27). A similar combination of 'water basin' and the 'pure quay' occurs in the 'Kultmittelbeschwörung' of the throne within the *mīs pî* ritual, which states: 'Kusu, the chief exorcist of Enlil, [...] he grandly

³⁵ Apart from the literal meaning 'to climb' the verb *elû* has also a figurative meaning (cf. CAD E 119–20 *elû*). With the phrase *lā elâšu ina parakki*, 'He is not to ascend the dais' (SAA 13 138 rev. 18e, see also footnote 11) a punishment is inflicted upon a priest who is thus no longer allowed to carry out his duty in front of the cult image. This evidence supports the idea that 'the ascent to the Ekur' points to the priest's future cultic actions in the temple.

³⁶ Cf. the example 'Nergal at my right side, Ninurta at my left side' (Falkenstein 1931: 30).

³⁷ The following text passages are cited after Borger 1973: 176 *ad* iv 26.

³⁸ For the function of the torch cf. footnote 35.

³⁹ Cf. Geller 2000: 244, l. 3: ENIM ABZU GI.NU.TAG.GA-ú u ŠU.LUḪ DINGIR.RA / ENIM ABZU *gi-nu-taq-qu-ú u* ŠU.LUḪ.ḪA DINGIR.RA, 'Word of the Apsû, *ginutaqqû*, and hand-washing rites of the deity'. For *ginutaqqû* see Geller 2000: 252 *ad* l. 3.

⁴⁰ Cf. the passage cited in footnote 34.

ordered [...]. On a pure quay, on a clean quay, purify it (i.e., the throne) with the water basin and acknowledge it as [...] of the Apsû!' (SAALT 1 196/205, ll. 19–21). Finally, a badly damaged rubric of an incantation within the mouth-washing of the 'choice bull' has also the traces kar-za-gin₃-na [...] (Linszen 2004: 267–8, rev. 11).

Another association leads to the Ekar-zagina of Ea/Enki, designating both the temple in the complex of Esagil in Babylon and its adjoining river and garden area (e.g., George 1992: 300–3).⁴¹ Even though only ms. A, originating from Kuyunjik, includes this incantation, the name was likely adopted from its Babylonian original or even from the presumed original Nippur background. In any case, the incantation hints at a ceremony held on a river, be it the Euphrates (as stated in the next incantation) or the Tigris.

The extant lines of Incantation XV provide sufficient basis for an interpretation, because it is not only the rubric 'to purify oneself' that explicitly addresses the act of purification.⁴² The mention of the Euphrates in iv 31 affirms the fact that rivers were usually the locations where the purifications (*tēliltu*)⁴³ and a good part of the mouth-washing ritual took place.

Lines iv 35–9 undoubtedly indicate a physical purification: mouth, hands, feet—the whole body—shall become pure. A similar statement is found at the beginning of the Old Babylonian purification ritual of the gudu₄-priest, where arm, hand and foot became 'fair' (i₃-sa₂) (Farber and Farber 2003: i 2–4). By now, the initiate has attained the purity required to carry out cultic actions.

The rubric of Incantation XVI remains unknown, but the beginning of the incantation that ms. A gives as catchline is preserved in ms. B. Ms. A refers to a second tablet but it is not clear to what extent the incantation there belongs to the ritual on tablet A. However, ms. B suggests that it is still part of the ritual, and therefore we must assume that the ceremony lasts for an unspecified time. In the incantation the central term *tapsû* is somewhat obscure. The text provides no useful hints for identifying this item or defining its function: it is the appropriate symbol of divinity (iv 41/41a), and here especially (or generally?) assigned to Ea and the Apsû; furthermore, it is a cultic ordinance of Enlil. Further qualifications are not given.

Apart from this incantation the *tapsû* is attested in a few other text passages. The term usually denotes a textile (CAD T 193–4); only once is it used for leather covers (SAA 7: 89, obv. 12).⁴⁴

During the *mīs pī* ritual the *tapsû* is referred to twice: once in an instruction to let the god sit down in a linen *tapsû* (Berlejung 1998: 426/441, ll. 96/12; SAALT 1: 59, l. 95 and pp. 74/78, l. 13),⁴⁵ the second time in a 'Šu'ila for the mouth-opening of a god', when the god is told to lie/sit in a pure linen *tapsû* (SAALT 1: 169/185, l. 59).⁴⁶ According to Berlejung these actions aim to isolate the cultic image from the profane world. From this line, another newly reconstructed text can now be understood too (Berlejung 1998: 138 n. 774). Its fragmentary state nevertheless allows identification as a ritual instruction, where a priest puts the *tapsû* on the king's head. Besides the ritual contexts, the veiling of ordinary people's faces was a general requirement when they were given an audience by the king (Parpola 1980: 172 n. 12). It cannot be determined whether or not the *tapsû* was also used for covering the head. But if so, then either the initiate's head or that of the divine statue was covered before the initiate presented himself to the god.

⁴¹ See also the map in George 1992: 17 and 24.

⁴² A similar rubric, gudu₄ ku₃-ge-da, occurs in the Old Babylonian purification ritual for the gudu₄-priest (Farber and Farber 2003: iii 16' and iv 13'); see also footnote 13.

⁴³ Cf. references in Maul 1994: Index s.v. 'Fluß'. A Ninevite incantation of the *mīs pī* ritual thematises the Tigris (Berlejung 1998: 424–36; SAALT 1 56 l. 52), and another of Šurpu IX ll. 119–28 the Euphrates (Reiner 1958: 49).

⁴⁴ The arrangement in HAR-ra = *hubullu* XIX does not contribute to the identification of the *tapsû* ('garment of the bailiff, garment of the image, *tapsû*, sumptuous garment, garment of Hana, ...' (*ša rēdī, ša šalmi, tapsû, ša illūku, ša hanū* ...), MSL 10 135, ll. 271–5).

⁴⁵ DINGIR.BI ina UGU GI.KID.MAḤ ina tap-se-e GADA TUŠ-šú.

⁴⁶ [ú₈DU₈]-a ḡgada tuḡ-a¹ [...] // [i]na tap-se-e ki-ḡte¹-[e ...].

CONCLUSION

In recapitulation we can draw the following picture: Incantations I–XII repeatedly indicate the temple as the seat of the divine and as an area clearly separated from the profane world. Any trespasses by unauthorised parties involved great dangers. In order to avert these dangers the future priest had to undergo a purifying ritual. Therefore, the aim of Incantations I–XII is to gain access to the temple. The necessary procedure begins with seven washings (and shavings) that wipe away any pollution. Immediately afterwards the adhering evil is literally cut off with the fingernails, thus concluding the separation from the previous environment. Now the initiate is allowed to wear a special turban of divine origin, which gives the purification ceremony an outwardly visible new status. The preparations for entry into the temple are now performed.⁴⁷

Before the initiate proceeds to the Ekur, he has to avoid the pollutions of the profane area, i.e., the street, because it risks compromising his cultic purity. Since the preamble locates the inspection of the initiate in the ‘bathroom’, where the washing ceremony was also likely to have taken place, the initiate may really have walked along a street in order to reach the temple. With the elimination of all evil now concluded, the initiate is permitted to do so.

But access to the temple is only one step within the ritual, because at least the following three incantations (XIII–XV) prescribe some kind of mouth washing. Like the often-cited *mīs pî* (‘mouth-opening’) ritual, this ceremony was performed on the banks of a river, and comparable to the *mīs pî* ritual, the final goal here is a person who is permanently able to communicate with the divine sphere (as the *mīs pî* of a divine statue enabled the deity to communicate with the human sphere).⁴⁸ With Incantation XV the initiate reaches the stage of ritual purity: he can contact the deity orally (purity of the mouth), perform ritual acts (purity of the hands) and walk around in the temple without endangering its cultic purity (purity of the feet).

If Incantation XVI is an immediate continuation of the ritual, we can assume that the initiate is presented to the deity while veiled. In any case, at the end of the ritual a priest emerges who has access to the temple and is able to act as intermediary between the earthly and the divine spheres.

Addendum

The article of Waerzeggers and Jursa (2008), which appeared after the submission of this contribution, is worth mentioning here since it examines the purity of priestly initiates from the perspective of Late Babylonian legal and administrative documents, thus meshing nicely with the preamble to the ‘Consecration of a priest of Enlil’. For a survey of installation procedures according to Neo-Assyrian documents see now Löhnert (2007).

⁴⁷ At this point the Hittite instructions for the temple personnel offer a nice parallel since they apply to the deity’s kitchen staff: ‘Let them be bathed and shaven, let their (body?) hair and their nails be removed. Let them wear pure garments’ (after Wilhelm 1999: 198).

⁴⁸ Another example of a short-term ‘mouth washing’ is the preparations of the divination-priest before he can carry out his work for the king: he washes his hands, clothes himself with a new garment, rinses his mouth with cedar sap, washes his mouth and hands again, etc. (Zimmern 1901: 75–8, ll. 13–18; Maul 2003: 76).

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ABBREVIATIONS

Bibliographical abbreviations follow those listed in the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* and the *Chicago Hittite Dictionary*, with the following additions and exceptions:

AAICAB	see Grégoire 1996–2001
Adab	see Yang 1989
AMD	Ancient Magic and Divination
CST	see Fish 1932
GARES	Archivi Reali di Ebla: Studi
ARI	see Grayson 1972–6
ASJ	<i>Acta Sumerologica</i> (Japan)
ATU	see Englund and Nissen 1993
AUWE	Ausgrabungen aus Uruk-Warka, Endberichte
BaF	Baghdader Forschungen
BAM	see Köcher 1964; 1980
BBVO	Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient
BSA	<i>Bulletin on Sumerian Agriculture</i>
CM	Cuneiform Monographs
DB	see Kent 1953 (edition of DB, pp. 116–A35)
DP	see Allotte de la Fuÿe 1908–20
ECTJ	see Westenholz 1975b
<i>Emar</i>	see Arnaud 1985–7
ETCSL	see Black et al. 1998–2006
FAOS	Freiburger Altorientalische Studien
Fö	see Förtsch 1916
GAG	see Von Soden 1969
HdO	Handbuch der Orientalistik
HSAO	Heidelberger Studien zum Alten Orient
ISET	see Çiğ et al. 1969 (ISET 1); Çiğ, Kızılyay and Kramer 1976 (ISET 2)
KAR	see Ebeling 1919–20
LKA	see Ebeling 1953
MC	Mesopotamian Civilizations
MSVO	see Englund and Grégoire 1991
MVS	Münchner Vorderasiatische Studien
Nik	see Nikol'skij 1908
NYPL	New York Public Library
OBC	Orientalia Biblica et Christiana
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OPSNKF	Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund
OSP 1	see Westenholz 1975a
PDT	see Çiğ et al. 1956
PIHANS	Publications de l'Institut historique-archéologique néerlandais de Stamboul
PNA 2/I	see Baker 2000
RCU	P. Michalowski, <i>The Royal Correspondence of Ur</i> (diss., Yale Univ.)
RGTC	Répertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes
RIA	Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie
SAAB	<i>State Archives of Assyria Bulletin</i>
SAACT	State Archives of Assyria Cuneiform Texts
SAALT	State Archives of Assyria Literary Texts
SANE	Sources from the Ancient Near East
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization
SCIAMVS	Sources and Commentaries in Exact Sciences, Kyoto, Japan
SEL	Studi Epigrafici e Linguistici sul Vicino Oriente antico
SF	see Deimel 1923
SpTU 3	see Von Weiher 1988
StAT	Studien zu den Assur-Texten; see Radner 1999 (StAT 1), Donbaz and Parpola 2001 (StAT 2)
STH	see Hussey 1912
TCTI 2	see Lafont and Yildiz 1996

- TLB 3 see Hallo 1973
 TSA see de Genouillac 1909
 UAVA Untersuchungen zur Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie

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