

13. May he walk behind me.
14. May he make my gatekeeper bow to the ground,
15. And I, may I raise my neck to heaven.
16. In the shrine of Enki, Asare in his abzu
17. Will not be able to undo.
18. Since Nanše is at my side.

Looking at the realistic erotic scenes on Old Babylonian clay plaques, considering their quantity, distribution and their function, it seems to me that this spell is a verbal expression of the same nature and purpose. Compared with the representations on the plaques, perhaps the images which seem to me overly outspoken may have been conventional, reflecting a relaxed and pragmatic attitude toward sex. Assante maintains that the plaques were made for the non-elite public²⁴. However, the creation of a written text requires much longer training than shaping images in clay, especially when plaques were made by means of a mould that allows a mass production. Therefore, it stands to reason that the acquisition of a written spell as ours would be above the means of the greater part of the population. This perhaps is the reason for the rarity of this text. The practical purpose may account for the plain imagery when compared with the richness of the Dumuzi-Inanna love songs. However, some literary properties of the text suggest that it was created by a well educated scribe. Hallo already commented on the high standard of the writing. To that we may add that the structure text points to the literary skills of the scribe. The first section, ll. 1-10 is arranged in couplets of the same pattern, and the theme was developed progressively from one couplet to the next as a chain of related features. Line 10, the last of this section closes a circle and creates a framework by referring to the first line of the text. The appeals to Inanna and the personal god forms the second part, ll. 11-15. This passage links up with the first section by means of a word-play between the last line of each section, namely l. 15 and l. 10. The third part, ll. 16-18, is a standard formula to which a personal note was added as a solution: "since Nanše is at my side".

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²⁴ Assante 2002:30.

LUGAL-E AND THE SONG OF ULLIKUMMI; A STRUCTURAL COMPARISON*

FUMI KARAHASHI (PHILADELPHIA)

In the cuneiform literature of Mesopotamia and Anatolia, several stories tell of a god doing battle against a mountain or a stone. This paper will compare the story lines of two of these mythological compositions, the Sumero-Akkadian Lugal-e and the Hurro-Hittite Song of Ullikummi.

Lugal-e, one of the major Ninurta myths, tells of his fight against the Asag monster, his creating the irrigation system, and his decreeing the fates of various stones. This composition is handed down to us in a Sumerian monolingual version from the Old Babylonian period and in a bilingual Sumero-Akkadian version from the Middle Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Neo-Assyrian periods¹.

The Song of Ullikummi belongs to the Kumarbi Cycle of Hurrian origin, which was acquired by the Hittites probably towards the end of the 15th century BC². Of the Kumarbi Cycle, the most well known to the student of comparative religion is the Song of Kumarbi, which is also called the Theogony or Kingship in Heaven. It deals with the succession to divine kingship: Alalu's rule is overthrown by Anu, whose rule is taken away by Alalu's offspring, Kumarbi, who in turn loses control of heaven to Anu's offspring, Teššub. Since the publication of this Hittite text Hittitologists and Classicists have been studying this episode and its close parallel in Hesiod's Theogony, the succession of Uranos, Kronos, to Zeus³. The Song of Kumarbi is assumed to be the first in the sequence of the cycle, followed by four

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¹ J. J. A. van Dijk, *LUGAL UD ME-LÁM-bi NIR-ĜÁL: Le récit épique et didactique des Travaux de Ninurta, du Déluge et de la Nouvelle Création*, 2 vols (Leiden, 1983). The text is also available through the *Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature* (<http://www-etcls.orient.ox.ac.uk>): ETCSL 1.6.2.

² A. Archi, Hittite and Hurrian Literatures: An Overview, in *CANE*, 2373. According to G. McMahon, the strong Hurrian influence on Hittite culture became evident at the Middle Hittite period and came to dominate the culture in the New Hittite period (Idem, *Theology, Priests, and Worship in Hittite Anatolia*, in *CANE*, 1985).

³ For the bibliography, see Ch. Penglase, *Greek Myths and Mesopotamia: Parallels and Influence in the Homeric Hymns and Hesiod* (London, 1994) 185 note. 6; see also A. Bernabé, *Generaciones de dioses y sucesión interrumpida. El mito hitita de Kumarbi, la <<Teogonía>> de Hesíodo y la del <<Papiro de Derveni>>*, *Aula Orientalis* 7 (1989) 159-179; Ph. H. J. Houwink ten Cate, *De hurritische 'theogonie' en 'theomachie' in de Hettitische redactie en het Griekse gebruik van de conceptie*, in: D. van der Plas, B. Becking, and D. Meijer (eds.), *De schepping van de Wereld: Mythische voorstellingen in het Oude Nabije Oosten* (Muiderberg, 1990) 97-126; R. Lebrun, *From Hittite Mythology: The Kumarbi Cycle*, in *CANE*, 1971-1980; M. L. West, *The East Face of Helicon: West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth* (Oxford, 1997) 276-305.

other songs including the Song of Ullikummi⁴. The Song of Ullikummi, the subject of this paper, tells of Teššub's fight against the stone monster Ullikummi. It is best preserved in a Hittite version⁵, but a small fragment of a Hurrian version also exists⁶.

This paper is intended to suggest that Lugal-e and the Song of Ullikummi share a basic structure with combat-myth motifs⁷ and that the Hurro-Hittite mythologist might have borrowed and transformed some motifs from other Mesopotamian myths in creating his own narrative⁸.

When the texts of Lugal-e and the Song of Ullikummi are juxtaposed, five units of a plot action can be recognized as follows:

Lugal-e	The Song of Ullikummi
I. <i>Creation of the Enemy</i>	
An coupled with the green earth. Asag is born, and this "murderer of the mountain" forms the army of stones and challenges Ninurta.	Kumarbi couples with a huge rock. A stone monster is born and named Ullikummi, "Destroyer of Kumme." Kumarbi plans to raise it to be a challenger to Teššub and places it on Ubelluri's right shoulder in the Dark Earth.
II. <i>Reaction</i>	
Ninurta rises to action. Šarur spies on Asag and gives Ninurta cautious advice.	The Sun God sees Ullikummi and brings the bad news about it to Teššub and Tašmišu. Teššub sees it and is overwhelmed. Šauška tries to seduce Ullikummi but fails.
III. <i>First Battle — Defeat</i>	
Ninurta prepares for battle and attacks. Asag fights back and overcomes Ninurta.	Teššub and Tašmišu prepare for battle, in which Ullikummi overcomes Teššub.
IV. <i>Help</i>	
Šarur goes to Nippur to ask Enlil's advice and gets an assurance of victory.	Tašmišu exhorts Teššub to get Ea's help. Ea severs Ullikummi from Ubelluri's shoulder under its feet.
V. <i>Second Battle — Victory</i>	
Ninurta fights Asag and defeats it.	Teššub resumes fighting Ullikummi [and most likely defeats it].

⁴ See H. A. Hoffner Jr., *Hittite Myths* (Writings from the Ancient World 2; Atlanta, 1998 [first edition, 1990]) 40-65; D. Schwemer, *Die Wettergottgestalten Mesopotamiens und Nordsyriens im Zeitalter der Keilschriftkulturen* (Wiesbaden, 2001) 444-459.

⁵ H. G. Güterbock, The Song of Ullikummi: Revised Text of the Hittite Version of a Hurrian Myth, *JCS* 5 (1951) 135-161 and *JCS* 6 (1952) 8-42.

⁶ M. Giorgieri, Die hurritische Fassung des Ullikummi-Lieds und ihre hethitische Parallele, in: G. Wilhelm (ed.), *Akten des IV. Internationalen Kongresses für Hethitologie, Würzburg, 4-8. Oktober 1999* (StBoT 45, Wiesbaden, 2001) 134-155.

⁷ For combat-myth motifs, see J. Fontenrose, *Python: A Study of Delphic Myth and its Origins* (Berkeley, 1959) 9-11.

⁸ The motif of battle against the sea which is found in the Song of Ullikummi and the related matter are not treated in this paper; for these, see Schwemer, *Wettergottgestalten* (see note 4) 226-237, 451-454; I. Rutherford, The Song of the Sea (ŠA A.AB.BA ŠIR): Thoughts on KUB 45.63, in Wilhelm, *Akten* (see note 6) 598-608.

Now, let us look into details of each unit.

Unit I: Creation of the Enemy. The enemy is created: Asag for Ninurta, and Ullikummi for Teššub. Asag is engendered by An from a sexual union with the green earth (Lugal-e 26) and called "murderer of the mountains" (Lugal-e 29). Ullikummi is a basalt stone, engendered by Kumarbi from a sexual union with a huge rock (§§5.11)⁹. Kumarbi names this new-born monster Ullikummi (§12), which means "destroyer of Kumme" in Hurrian¹⁰, with Kumme being the city of Teššub¹¹. But first Kumarbi wants to hide it in order not to be seen by the great gods so that it can mature to challenge Teššub (§13) and has it placed on the right shoulder of Ubelluri, the Hurrian equivalent of the Greek god Atlas (§§17f., 20).

The circumstances of the creation of Asag and Ullikummi are similar: both involve the earth or the rock, which are considered female. As for their offspring, while Ullikummi is a stone, there is an ambiguity about Asag. Since I have discussed the identity of Asag elsewhere¹², here I only refer to my suggestion that it could be an embodiment or a prototype of stone and/or mountain¹³. We may assume that both Lugal-e and the Song of Ullikummi deal with a mountain/stone enemy engendered by the god of the old generation and the female earth or rock¹⁴.

Unit II: Reaction. A divine champion, Ninurta in Lugal-e and Teššub in the Song of Ullikummi, appears to face his powerful enemy. Both are young gods associated with storms and war, but they occupy a different position in their respective pantheon. Ninurta always remains the son of the supreme god Enlil and never surpasses him¹⁵. Teššub, written as ^dIM or ^dX (= ^dU) and equated to Iškur/Adad, is the supreme god of the Hurrian pantheon¹⁶. Although their rank is different, they belong to the same group of gods that share the similar characteristics and certain basic motifs and images¹⁷. It is remarkable that the initial reaction of the champion towards the enemy is quite different. While Ninurta immediately rises to action (Lugal-e 75-108), Teššub sits and bursts into tears (§33)¹⁸.

⁹ This paper follows the paragraph number of English translation in Hoffner, *Hittite Myths* (see note 4) 56-65. For the god Kumarbi, see *Hurrians*, 52f.

¹⁰ *Hurrians* 60; Giorgieri, 2001 (see note 6) 144-150.

¹¹ For its proposed location, see *Hurrians*, 49.

¹² Fighting the Mountain: Some Observations on the Sumerian Myths of Inanna and Ninurta, *JNES*, 63 (2004) 111-118.

¹³ Cf. K. Polinger Foster stresses the volcanic imagery in Asag and Ullikummi, see Idem, Volcanic Landscapes in Lugal-e, in: L. Milano, et al. (eds), *Landscapes, Territories, Frontiers and Horizons in the Ancient Near East, Part III: Landscape in Ideology, Religion, Literature and Art. Papers Presented to the XLIV Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Venezia, 7-11 July 1997* (Padova, 2000) 23-39.

¹⁴ A. Annus, *The God Ninurta in the Mythology and Royal Ideology of Ancient Mesopotamia* (SAAS 14, Helsinki, 2002) 180. Cf. *Hurrians*, 61: "In the Ullikummi myth... the theme of birth from stone may have its roots in ancient traditions which the Hurrians brought with them from their previous settlements in the Kurdish mountains."

¹⁵ M. E. Vogelzang, The Cunning of Ea and the Threat to Order, *JEOL* 31 (1989-90) 75 with note 31. Cf. P. Steinkeller suggests that the original divine ruler of Nippur was Ninurta, in On Rulers, Priests and Sacred Marriage: Tracing the Evolution of Early Sumerian Kingship, in: K. Watanabe (ed.), *Priests and Officials in the Ancient Near East* (Heidelberg, 1999) 114, note 36; M. Krebern timer expresses his reservation in *RIA* 9 (1998-2001) 459 (article on Ninlil).

¹⁶ For Teššub, see *Hurrians*, 49-51.

¹⁷ For shared motifs and images by Mesopotamian storm gods such as Ninurta, Ningirsu, Pabilsag, Asarluhi and Iškur, see M. E. Cohen, ur.sag.me.šár.ur.: A Širnamšubba of Ninurta, *WO* 8 (1975) 35 ad 136; see also Schwemer, *Wettergottgestalten* (see note 4) 229.

¹⁸ Compare with the similar reaction of Gilgameš who sits and bursts into tears when his *pukku* and *mekkû* have fallen into the netherworld (Gilgameš, Enkidu and Netherworld 164-168); for the text, see A. Shaffer, *Sumerian Sources of Tablet XII of the Epic of Gilgameš* (Ph.D. Diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1963) (ETCSL 1.8.1.4).

In both stories we find the champion being aided by his capable and loyal helper who is always on the alert, reading and judging the situation¹⁹. For Ninurta this is his personified mace Šarur²⁰, and for Teššub his brother Tašmišu²¹. Šarur spies on the enemy forces and warns Ninurta of their impressive strength (Lugal-e 109-150). In the Song of Ullikummi, Tašmišu spots the Sun God coming towards them with the bad news (§25) and prepares the bulls and chariot for battle following Teššub's order (§§38f.). Beside Tašmišu, Teššub has another helper, the goddess Šauška. Šauška joins her brothers on the way to see the monster (§32), and since Teššub is helpless, she takes the matter into her hands.

Now let us look at Šauška. Her name is written ^dIŠTAR (U+DAR)²² and she is called Queen of Nineveh²³. Šauška means "the great one" in Hurrian, equated to Akkadian Ištar²⁴. She tries to conquer the monster by seducing it (§35). In the Song of Hedammu²⁵, which may precede the Song of Ullikummi, Šauška successfully used her seductive power against the gigantic serpent Hedammu, Teššub's opponent²⁶. However, she fails this time with Ullikummi whom Kumarbi created as neither able to see nor to hear (§§36f.)²⁷.

There is no figure parallel to Šauška in Lugal-e. Yet, the interaction between Šauška and the stone monster calls to mind the Sumerian myth Inanna and Ebiḫ, where Inanna, angered by Mount Ebiḫ's lack of respect for her, attacks it, thus causing its total destruction²⁸. The feminine method employed by Šauška and the outcome of her attempt are quite opposite from those of Inanna: Inanna is warlike and victorious. Nevertheless, one aspect is similar. That is preparation of the goddesses involving feminine appearances prior to the action: as "[Šauška(?)] dressed and ornamented herself [with...]" (§35), and so did Inanna with a garment of queen-ship, a charm/joy, a headdress, and a carnelian necklace (Inanna and Ebiḫ 54-56)²⁹. It is

For the recent treatment of this Gilgameš episode, see J. S. Cooper, *Buddies in Babylonia: Gilgameš, Enkidu, and Mesopotamian Homosexuality*, in: T. Abusch (ed.), *Riches Hidden in Secret Places: Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Memory of Thorkild Jacobsen* (Winona Lake, 2002) 73-85; J. Klein, *A New Look at the 'Oppression of Uruk' Episode in the Gilgameš Epic*, *ibidem*, 187-201.

¹⁹ For the helper role, see W. Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (Berkeley, 1979) 10.

²⁰ See Cooper, *The Return of Ninurta to Nippur: an-gim dīm-ma* (AnOr 52, Rome, 1978) 122 ad 129f.

²¹ The Hurrian Tašmišu is identified with the Hittite Šuwaliyaz (^dNIN.URTA, ^dURAS), see Schwemer, *Wettergottgestalten* (see note 4) 448, note 3719.

²² For the writing of her name, see I. Wegner, *Gestalt und Kult der Ištar-Šawuška in Kleinasien* (AOAT 36, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1981) 21-23.

²³ For Šauška, see *Hurrians*, 51f., and also G. Beckman, *IŠTAR of Nineveh Reconsidered*, *JCS* 50 (1998) 1-10.

²⁴ I. Wegner, *Der Name der Ša(w)uška*, in: D. I. Owen and G. Wilhelm (eds.), *Studies on the Civilization and Culture of Nuzi and the Hurrians* 7 (Bethesda, 1995) 117-120. Šauša, which is the older form of Šauška, occurs among the Ur III administrative documents as "Šauša of Nineveh"; see C. Wilcke, *A Note on Ti'amat-Bāsti and the Goddess Ša(w)ušk(a) of Nineveh*, *Drevnij Wostok* 5 (1988) 21-26 (English summary, 225-227); see also T. Sharlach, *Foreign Influences on the Religion of the Ur III Court*, in: Owen and Wilhelm, *Studies* 12 (Bethesda, 2002), 91-114.

²⁵ Its English translation and a short commentary are found in Hoffner, *Hittite Myths* (see above note 4) 50-55.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, 54, §11.2.

²⁷ Ph. H. J. Houwink ten Cate, *The Hittite Storm God: His Role and His Rule According to Hittite Cuneiform Sources*, in: D. J. W. Meijer, (ed.), *Natural Phenomena: Their Meaning, Depiction and Description in the Ancient Near East* (Amsterdam, 1992) 110, 115f.

²⁸ P. Attinger, *Inana et Ebiḫ*, *ZA* 88 (1998) 164-195 (*ETCSL* 1.3.2).

²⁹ Another example of Inanna's dressing motif is found in Inanna's Descent to the Netherworld 17-25; for the text, see W. R. Sladek, *Inanna's Descent to the Netherworld* (Ph.D. Diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1974) (*ETCSL* 1.4.1).

noteworthy that Inanna-Ištar's seduction is one of the recurring motifs of Mesopotamian literature: her intention to seduce Gilgameš is well known from the Sumerian-Akkadian Gilgameš tradition³⁰. There is no doubt that Šauška's role in the Song of Ullikummi is to be understood from the point of story development of the Kumarbi Cycle. However, Šauška's involvement in Teššub's business regarding the stone monster can be also seen against the backdrop of the close association of Inanna and Ninurta with the mountains and stones³¹ and her readiness to utilize her feminine power found in Mesopotamian mythology.

Unit III: First Battle — Defeat. In Lugal-e Ninurta engages in the battle (Lugal-e 151-167), in which Asag fights back and overcomes him (Lugal-e 168-190). In the Song of Ullikummi Teššub and Tašmišu engage in the battle and also are defeated; consequently Teššub goes to exile (§§40-48).

Unit IV: Help. Divine help is sought at this deepest point of crisis. When Ninurta is overwhelmed by Asag, Šarur goes to Nippur to get some instructions from Ninurta's father Enlil (Lugal-e 191-224). Šarur returns and delivers to Ninurta Enlil's advice and an assurance regarding his victory (Lugal-e 225-243). In the Song of Ullikummi, when Ullikummi overcomes Teššub, Tašmišu exhorts Teššub to ask for Ea's help. Accepting their plea, Ea himself goes off to the place of Ubelluri and cuts the feet of Ullikummi from him thus breaking the monster's power (§§59-63). Then Ea encourages them to resume the battle (§§65f.).

The motif of Enki/Ea helping gods and mortals in crisis is a recurrent one of Sumerian and Akkadian literary compositions. This has been treated by Vogelzang in her article "The Cunning of Ea and the Threat to Order."³² She points out that "Making plans is Ea's great and indispensable contribution, but to execute a plan, to put it into concrete practice, he makes use of one or more mediator, depending on the complexity of the plot."³³ For instance, in Inanna's Descent to the Netherworld, the goddess Ninšubur goes to seek Enki's help following Inanna's instructions, and then Enki fashions two sexless creatures, gives them instructions to bring Inanna back to life, and sends them down to the Netherworld. In the Anzu myth, Ninurta sends his message to Ea through Šarur, and then Ea in turn gives advice to Šarur who delivers it to Ninurta³⁴. In such cases, we find the role of mediator not only from Enki/Ea to the seeker but also from the seeker to Enki/Ea because the protagonists are not in a situation where they can ask help by themselves: Inanna is dead, and Ninurta is in the midst of a losing battle.

In the Song of Ullikummi this Mesopotamian motif is incorporated with some variations. First, there is a time between the end of the lost battle of Teššub and Tašmišu and their seeking help: therefore, Ea is directly approached by them without any intermediary. Second, Ea does things himself instead of instructing somebody else, although after the action, Ea conveys an encouraging message to Teššub through Tašmišu.

³⁰ A. George, *The Epic of Gilgameš: The Babylonian Epic Poem and Other Texts in Akkadian and Sumerian* (London, 1999) 166ff. Cooper 2002 (see note 18) 81 offers a different interpretation of Inanna's intention in Sumerian Gilgameš and the Bull of Heaven. Most recently, A. George, *The Babylonian Gilgameš Epic*, vol. 1: *Introduction, Critical Edition and Cuneiform Texts* (Oxford, 2003) 472.

³¹ Inanna and Ninurta share not only some epithets but also some literary expressions describing their fight against the mountain; see note 12.

³² Vogelzang, *JEOL* 31 (1989-90).

³³ *Ibidem*, 73.

³⁴ M. E. Vogelzang, *Bin šar dadmē: Edition and Analysis of the Akkadian Anzu Poem* (Groningen, 1988); A. Annus, *The Standard Babylonian Epic of Anzu* (SAATexts 3, Helsinki, 2001).

In Lugal-e a divine intervention is sought in the midst of the crisis in accordance with the prototype, but it is Enlil to whom Šarur turns; it is not Enki. This deviation can be understood in the framework of father-son relationship since Ninurta is always portrayed as a loyal son of Enlil. However, we also know from Ninurta and Turtle that Ninurta and Enki are not always on good terms³⁵.

Unit V: Second Battle—Victory. Encouraged by his father Enlil, Ninurta attains the ultimate victory and destroys Asag (Lugal-e 244-303). He calls the defeated Asag "zalag-stone" (Lugal-e 328) and turns it into a construction material (Lugal-e 349-354). Also in the Song of Ullikummi, the war's tide starts to turn after Ea's intervention. The end of the story is not preserved, but it is supposed that Teššub wins over Ullikummi³⁶.

In conclusion, Lugal-e and the Song of Ullikummi can be reduced to a certain common pattern: namely, a young champion aided by a helper initially suffers setbacks, but given the intervention of the other god, defeats his mountain/stone enemy. Moreover, the Song of Ullikummi borrows and transforms Mesopotamian literary motifs for its own story-telling purposes.

INITIAL PLENE WRITING AND THE CONJUGATION OF THE FIRST WEAK VERBS IN AKKADIAN¹

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Abstract

This article deals with a remarkable feature in the conjugation of Akkadian verbs with a weak first radical. In the present of the G-stem and the present and preterite of the D-stem, these verbs regularly drop the first radical and show contraction of the prefix vowel and the first vowel of the stem, even in those dialects that normally do not have vowel contraction. The result of this contraction is a long vowel identical in quality to the prefix vowel. For Old Babylonian, this can be established beyond doubt on the basis of a very specific spelling pattern in the pertinent verb forms: only those forms in which the first radical is intervocalic can have a plene spelling with an extra vowel sign at the beginning of the word. The ensuing contrast in spelling between the present and the preterite of *alākum* "to go", and between the present and the preterite of the D-stem on the one hand, and the prefixless forms of the D-stem on the other, shows that these forms differ in their initial syllable. The assumption that this difference consists of a contrast in length and that the plene spellings represent a long vowel, even though they occur in a closed syllable, provides a straightforward interpretation of this phenomenon. For the other early dialects (Sargonic Akkadian, Ur III Akkadian and Old Assyrian) there is no orthographic evidence of the same kind, but the consistent use of defective spellings and the general absence of strong forms suggest that they also have this long vowel. Orthographic features of texts from the first millennium, on the other hand, suggest that by the Middle Babylonian and Middle Assyrian period it had been shortened².

1. In Old Babylonian (OB), the verbs with a weak first radical, the I' verbs, show a very peculiar orthographic pattern in the present forms of the G-stem and in the present and preterite forms of the D-stem. For instance, for the 3rd p. sg. form that is usually transcribed as *illak* "he goes", from the I' verb *alākum* "to go", we expect to find the spellings *i-la-ak* or *il-la-ak* according to the normal rules of OB cuneiform, and for the 1st p. sg. *allak* we expect *a-la-ak* or *al-la-ak*, since a geminate consonant may but need not be expressed in writing. However, the actual spellings attested are *i-la-ak* and *i-il-la-ak* for the 3rd p. and *a-la-ak* and *a-al-la-ak* for the 1st p., with gemination and an additional vowel sign at the beginning which at face value seems to be superfluous³. Thus the particular spelling that would seem to

¹ Research for this paper was carried out as part of the project "The Akkadian verb and its Semitic Background", which is financed by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO). I am grateful to Bram Jagersma, Theo Krispijn and Wilfred van Soldt for comments on an earlier draft.

² Many of the ideas developed here have also been expressed by others, in particular by Knudsen (1980 and 1984/86), but have not found the response they deserve. The best illustration of this is the fact that the latest (third) edition of GAG in §23d, after endorsing the untenable explanation of spellings such as *a-ak-ka-al* and *e-er-ru-ub* as expressing a word-initial *aleph*, fails to mention Knudsen's views apart from stating that Knudsen has "eine abweichende Erklärung", without even mentioning what it consists of. Since the problem is rather consequential for the phonology of Akkadian, I feel justified in attempting to reopen the discussion, although I do not have a solution for all problems involved.

³ The statement in GAG §97c sub β that these forms are always ("immer") spelled with this extra vowel (*i-il-la-ak*, *ú-up-pí-iš*) is incorrect.

³⁵ B. Alster, "Ninurta and the Turtle", UET 6/1 2, JCS 24 (1972) 120-125.

³⁶ Güterbock, JCS 5 (1951) 140.