A "NEW" OLD ASSYRIAN INCANTATION

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The fragmentary Old Assyrian tablet BM 113625 published in copy as CCT 5, 50e is an incantation that so far seems to have escaped scholarly attention. Although a mere 12 lines are preserved, it is a welcome addition to the small corpus of Old Assyrian incantation tablets, of which only seven instances are listed in Cécile Michel's Old Assyrian bibliography (Michel 2003: 137-38). Moreover, it contains two words which were not previously attested in Old Assyrian and one peculiar grammatical formative that seems to be completely novel, and it allows us to expose one or two entries in CAD as ghost words.

Since the copy given in CCT 5, 50e turned out to be in need of revision, a new autograph of the tablet has been made. The edition published here is based on collations and photographs made by Jeanette Fincke. She added both the new autograph (see Fig. 1) and the photographs (see Fig. 2) that we reproduce by the courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum. The detailed philological discussion presented in this article has been elaborated by Bert Kouwenberg.

The preserved part of the tablet is largely parallel to the obverse of kt 90/k 178, another Old Assyrian incantation, published by Cécile Michel (2004). In order to make the parallels more visible, the relevant part of kt 90/k 178 is put next to the transliteration of CCT 5, 50e.

CCT 5, 50e (BM 113625; registration number: 1919-7-12, 374)[2]
Measurements (width × height × thickness): 38.5 × 29[+] × 14.5[+] mm (the preserved part could be about half of the tablet)

	CCT 5, 50e	kt 90/k 178: 5-14
	(beginning lost)	
O.1'	[i-n]a ˹a-pí˺-[ša]	[5]… i-na [6]a-pí-ša ǀ
	[q]á-qá-ra-am ˹ǀ té˺-[sú-uq(?)]	qá-qá-ra-am ǀ té-sú-uq(?)[3]

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[2] According to the Museum catalogue that is accessible online (http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/ search_the_collection_database.aspx), this tablet was bought by the British Museum from antiquity dealer I. Élias Géjou.

[3] The reading of the final sign is problematic, see the discussion in Michel 2004: 405-06. The options seem to be *tessuq* from *esāqum* (Babylonian *esēqum*) 'to incise' and *teṣṣur* (*té-ṣú-úr*) from *eṣārum* 'to scratch' (Babylonian *eṣērum*). However, neither are semantically quite satisfactory (does a cow incise or scratch the ground with her nose?), and they both (usually) have the vowel pattern i/i, although in the case of *eṣārum* there are traces of an older preterite *ēṣur*, such as *té-ṣú-ra-ni* (ICK 2, 296: 3) and *né-ṣú-ur* (DTCFD 34, 261 kt 79/k 101: 10), both as part of the expression *iṣurtam eṣārum* 'to draw up an *iṣurtum*-document' (see Veenhof 1995). Apart from the question whether this is the same verb as *eṣārum* 'to scratch' (usually with the derived meaning 'to draw (a picture)'), it also seems unlikely that a verb of this meaning would belong to the vowel class u/u. Although it is not impossible, a/u would be more typical. Finally, in Old Assyrian the sign UR has only been only attested so far in *nūrum* 'light' as part of personal names.

	⸢i⸣-na dí-im-a-té-š[a]	[7]i-zi-bi-tí-ša ǀ
	ta-sà-ra-aq	ta-ša-bi-iṭ
5'	É-tám ǀ ma-na-ša-/am	[8]bé-tám ma-na-mì ǀ
	la₁-áš-pu-ur	lá-áš-pur
LoE.	ma-na-ša-am	[9]ú
	lu-e-e-er	lu-wa-e-er
R.	a-na ma-ru-⸢a⸣-[a]t	a-me-er-ú-at
10'	ša-⸢su₁⸣-ur ⸢7⸣ [0?]	ša-sú-ra-tim [10]7
	ù 7-ma ǀ ma-re-ki-/na	ù 7-ma ǀ ma-re-ki-na
	ta-áp-šu-kà-té-ki-na	[11]ù ta-áp-šu-kà-té-ki-na
	[l]i-qí-a-ni-ma	[12]li-qí-a-nim-ma ǀ ba-áb
	[x]x - x - ⸢DÍ⸣ ǀ ⸢GA⸣ [	[13]a-ra-aḫ-tim ḫa-ba-tum
	(rest of reverse lost)	[14]ḫu-ub-ta …
LeE.1''		[…]x(-)ri-ša

Translation of CCT 5, 50e:

'... [1'][with her nose [2']she brushes(?)] the ground, [3']with her tears [4']she sprinkles [5']the house. Whom [6']shall I send [7']whom [8']shall I instruct (i.e. send with instructions) [9']to the daughters of [10']Šassur, seven [11']plus seven (in number) (with the words): [13']"Bring along [11']your (fem. pl.) spades [12'](and) your baskets, …"'

Comments:

1'-2': The restoration of this clause is inspired by the parallel: the extant traces seem to justify it, although they are too scant to be deciphered independently from the parallel, apart from [q]á-qá-ra-am. However, the fact that in the next clause the parallel texts diverge, calls for some caution.

3': dí-im-a-té-š[a] is the first Old Assyrian attestation of the word for "tears", which appears in the dictionaries as dīmtu (CAD D 147a) or dimtu(m) (AHw 171a). Its Semitic cognates point to a (nominal) root *dVmʕ- on the basis of Hebrew and Aramaic dimʕā and Ugaritic ʔudmʕt. This Old Assyrian form shows the regular development of post-consonantal ʕ to ʔ (Kouwenberg 2006: 175-76), with ʔ reflected in the broken spelling: nominative plural *dimʔātum. The corresponding singular is probably dimʔutum <*dimʔătum.

4': sarāqum 'to sprinkle, to strew' is attested here for the first time in Old Assyrian. Lines 3'-5' correspond to ina zibbitīša tašabbiṭ bētam 'she sweeps the house with her tail' in the parallel incantation.

5'-13': The rest of the preserved part of CCT 5, 50e represents a variant of the well-known "mannam lušpur formula", discussed in Farber 1990. It is the third example in Old Assyrian, the other ones being kt 90/k 178: 5-14 quoted above and kt a/k 611: 8-16 published by Veenhof (1996), which reads: [8]… ma-nàm [9]lá-áš-pu-ur [10]a-na ma-ru-a-at É-a [11]4[+3 5+]2-ma [12][kàr-pá-té]-ki-na [13]ša sà-am-tim ú kà-né-ki-na [14]ša ḫu-lá-li-im [15]li-qí-a-ma al-kà-ma [16]i-na na-ri-im (rest fragmentary): 'whom shall I send to the daughters of Ea, seven plus seven (in number) (with the words): "Bring along your (fem. pl.) jars of carnelian and your pots of ḫulālum-stone, go and […] out of/in the river […]"'. Line 12 is restored on the basis of
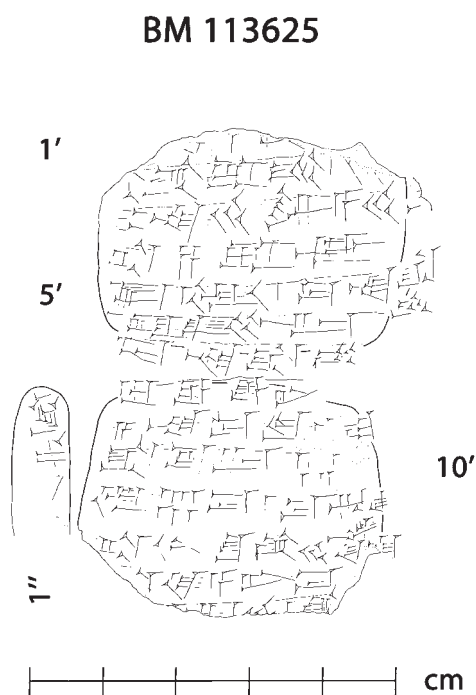
BM 113625

Fig. 1. Autograph

Fig. 2. BM 113625

Babylonian parallels, especially JCS 9, 8 A: 13-16 // B: 14-16 (OB) and Emar VI/4, 345 no. 737: 7-11 (MB), see Farber 1990: 310. The version represented by CCT 5, 50e contains several noteworthy features.

5' and 7': The most remarkable feature is the interrogative *ma-na-ša-am* in lines 5' and 7', which has not been attested elsewhere so far (but also occurs in the Old Assyrian letter kt 94/k 909 discussed below). On the basis of the copy in CCT 5, 50e, it has found its way into CAD M/1212b as *man(n)ašam*, an adverb of unknown meaning. However, although it is a problematic form, it is unlikely to be an adverb.

Both form and context suggest that it is based on or derived from *mannum* 'who?' but the nature and the background of *-ša-am* are obscure. Superficially, it is reminiscent of the Old Assyrian indefinite pronoun *mì-ma-ša-ma*, which is a strengthening of *mimma* 'something, anything' (see CAD M/2 82b s.v. *mimmû* 2c). However, it is unlikely that *mì-ma-ša-ma* contains a suffix *-šam*: rather, it consists of *mimmāša* + the enclitic particle *-ma*, cf., for instance, *tí-ir-ta-kà mì-ma-a-ša* 'any message from you' (VS 26, 71: 13). A form *mì-ma-ša-am*, which would be parallel to *ma-na-ša-am*, has not been attested.[4]

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[4] Thus a form such as *mì-ma-ša-ma tí-ir-ta-kà* (TC 2, 12: 11) is to be read *mimmāšāma* rather than *mimmāšamma*, and this doubtless also applies to instances of *mì-ma-ša-ma* without a suitable feminine noun in the vicinity to which *-ša* can refer. They are best explained as fossilized forms with the 3sf suffix pronoun originally referring to a feminine noun such as *tí-ir-tum* 'message' or *awātum* 'matter, affair', also because *mì-ma-ša-ma* typically occurs as direct object of verbs such as *šapārum* 'to write', *šamāʾum* 'to hear' and (*uznam*) *patāʾum* 'to inform' (see CAD M/2 82-83 s.v. *mimmû* 2c).

A second form that might be relevant is *ma-nu-šu* in *ma-nu-šu šūt ma-nu-šu anāku* 'who is he, who am I?' (CCT 6, 14: 40, transl. CAD Š/3 392a s.v. *šūt* B 1a-1'). Babylonian parallels (see CAD M/1 216 s.v. *mannu* b) show that *mannušu* comes from *mannăšu, and suggest that *-šu* is a (fossilized) 3sm suffix pronoun rather than an adverbial suffix. However, *-šam* is not a suffix pronoun.[5]

Since *ma-na-ša-am* is an alternative to *ma-na-mì* (kt 90/k 178: 8), i.e., the accusative *mannam* with the enclitic particle *-mi*, which here indicates an apostrophe (Wasserman 2012: 188), we may assume — as a last resort — the existence, so far unattested, of an enclitic particle *-šam* with a function similar to *-mi*: *mannaššam < mannam-šam*. Obviously, this assumption is purely speculative as long as no other instances have been found.

A third instance of *ma-na-ša-am* is found in the unpublished Old Assyrian letter kt 94/k 909: 22-24, from which I quote here with the kind permission of Mogens Larsen:

> (why [*mīnam*] should I write to you at length about the affairs of your house and my own (affairs), and on top of your distress) *u anāku ma-na-ša-am lá-áš-pu-ra-kum*

At face value, this would mean 'as for me, whom should I send to you?'. This is slightly incoherent (cf. also the insertion of *anāku* at this point), since the intention rather seems to be 'what should I write to you', as an emphatic repetition of the previous clause. Perhaps the sender of the letter is trying to emphasize his plight by using what he regarded as a literary flourish. This idea is strengthened by the fact that later on (in line 33) he complains that he does not have a "*marṣam libbi(m) u āširam*", i.e., someone who is concerned about him and cares for him, of which *marṣam libbi(m)* is a "*damqam īnim* construction" (Wasserman 2003: 45-60), which is typical of literary Babylonian. It is the only Old Assyrian instance currently attested.[6]

8': *lu-e-e-er* is a peculiar spelling, but the parallel form *lu-wa-e-er* in kt 90/k 178: 9 shows beyond doubt that it is the 3sm precative of *waʾʾurum* 'to instruct', a rare verb in Old Assyrian (apart from these two instances, only *ú-wa-er-šu(-ma)* 'I have instructed him' (CTMMA 1, 92 no. 71: 38) and *mamman ammākam e ú-wa-er-ki(-ma)* 'let nobody there boss you (Fem) around' (BIN 6, 17: 7-8) are attested. The D-stem of I/w verbs has both a "strong" and a "weak" conjugation in the present and the preterite, the former with, and the latter without *-wa-*, e.g. *luwaššer* and *luššer* 'let me release' and *luwaddi* and *luddi* 'let me indicate' (Hecker 1968: 157 §93f). This explains *luʾʾer* alongside *luwaʾʾer*. The copy of CCT 5, 50e reads *ma-e-e-er*, which has given rise to the ghost entry *muʾuru with unknown meaning in CAD M/2 321-22.

9': *ma-ru-ˈaˈ-[a]t*: this form also appears in kt a/k 611: 10, whereas kt 90/k 178: 9 shows the regular Old Assyrian form *me-er-ú-at*. The form *ma-ru-a-at* is a curious mixture of Old

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[5] There is an adverbial suffix *-šam* with several functions, but none of them seems appropriate for this case. In Old Assyrian, *-šam* shows at least four functions: (1) directional in *annēšam* 'hither' etc. (Kouwenberg 2012: 64); (2) distributive after temporal nouns in *ūmišam* 'each day, daily', etc.; (3) temporal in *pānišam* 'first, soon, before earlier'. Finally, it can be used (4) a strengthening of *-iš* in *dannišamma* 'strongly, very'. Moreover, the context requires a direct object rather than an adverb.

[6] For *marāṣum* with *libbum* 'to be concerned for' (alongside its more common meaning 'to be angry, displeased, disappointed'), cf., for instance, *libbī dannišamma imtarṣakkunūti* 'I became very concerned about you' (TC 3, 112: 22-23) and *kīma ša ana iāti awâtēa libbī marṣu ana awâtēka libbī lu marṣu* '(may [three gods] be my witnesses that) I am as concerned about your affairs as I am concerned about my own affairs' (CCT 5, 22c: 11-15) (pace CAD M/1 274a, where these instances are classified under *marāṣu* 4a 'to become angry, displeased').

Assyrian *merʾuātum* (originally *marʾuātum) and Babylonian *mārātum*. It may even suggest that Babylonian *mārātum* goes back to *māruātum (and is thus to be normalized as *mārâtum*, if we adhere to the useful convention of indicating contracted vowels by means of a circumflex). In that case *ma-ru-a-at* may be an archaic Babylonian form borrowed along with the formula and — unlike *lašpur* — not adapted to Old Assyrian grammar.[7]

10': Instead of *Ša-su₁-ur*, the parallel kt 90/k 178: 9 has *šassurātim*, plural of *šassūru* 'womb, mother goddess' (CAD S/2 145-46 s.v. *šassūru* A). *Šassurātum* is the form usually encountered in Babylonian incantations and literary texts (see CAD *l.c.* and Stol 2000: 80-83). The unique endingless form that occurs here suggests that the writer of this incantation interpreted the word as a divine name Šassur. The use of SU₁ is exceptional in Old Assyrian (Hecker 1968: 59 §40a).

10'-11': *7 u 7-ma*: since direct speech after *šapārum* 'to send, to write' is not normally introduced by *-ma*, this instance of *-ma* is part of the phrase *sabe u sabēma* 'seven and seven', which may be compared to distributive *ana kār kārma* 'to each and every *kārum*' and the use of *-ma* to distinguish different persons with the same name, as in *I-na-ar I-na-ar-ma* 'Inar and (another) Inar' (Anatolia 8, 148 g/t 36: 1-2). It is remarkable that the Old Babylonian instances of this phrase do not have *-ma*, see Farber 1990: 306-07 sections 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 (the later Babylonian *mannam lušpur* phrases no longer include "7 plus 7").

14': The traces do not agree with the corresponding line of kt 90/k 178 *bāb araḫtim ḫabātum ḫubtā* 'destroy the mouth of the canal completely', which Michel (2004: 408) plausibly explains as referring to the removal of any obstacles to an easy delivery.[8] This makes it impossible to be certain about the function of this incantation. Still, it seems plausible that CCT 5, 50e is a birth incantation to help a woman in labour, just as the first part of kt 90/k 178. To this genre also belong the Old Babylonian incantations VS 17, 34 (van Dijk 1972) and YOS XI 86 (van Dijk 1973). The phrase "with her tears she sprinkles the house" is reminiscent of phrases such as "with my horns I root up the soil, with my tail I whirl up dust clouds" (*ina qarnīya qaqqaru ṭerāku ina zibbatīya ušteššera turbuʾī*, BAM 248: III 56-57, see Veldhuis 1991: 14) in later versions. For these incantations, see Röllig 1985 and Veldhuis 1991.

LeE.1'': The preserved signs are insufficient for any plausible restoration.

With this incantation, the number of Old Assyrian incantation tablets rises to eight, and the number of actual incantations to ten. CCT 5, 50e is the second Old Assyrian tablet with an incantation for a woman in labour (see the commentary on l. 14' and below). Until now, the following Old Assyrian incantations are known (see Michel 2003: 137-38–also for the bibliography on the texts — and Michel 2004: 395):

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[7] By way of exception, Old Assyrian also uses a Babylonian-like plural *mārātum*: *ma-ra-tù* in the phrase *ana* PN *aššitīšu merʾēšu [u] ma-ra-tù* 'to PN, his wife, his sons and (his) daughters' (OIP 27, 19A: 8-10 // B: 8-10), where *ma-ra-tù* seems to be a scribal error for *ma-ra-té-šu*, and *ana ma-ra-té-šu* 'to his daughters' (St. Garelli p. 231 no. 4: 26).

[8] The verb *ḫabātum* used here is not *ḫabātum* 'to rob, to plunder', but its homonym (or homograph?) *ḫabātum* 'to destroy' corresponding to Babylonian *(ʾ)abātum*, see Kouwenberg 2010: 525 (where this verb can be added).

Purpose	Incantations	Sources
for a woman in labour	2	Kt 90/k 178 ll. 1-23 (Michel 2004); CCT 5, 50e
against jaundice(?)	1	Kt 90/k 178 ll. 24-34 (Michel 2004; Böck 1999: 421-23)
against Lamaštu	2	BIN 4, 126 (von Soden 1956); Kt 94/k 821 (Michel 1997)
against an angry heart	1	Kt 91/k 502 ll. 16-31 (to be published by K.R. Veenhof)
against the evil eye	1	Kt 94/k 520 (Barjamovic and Larsen 2008)
against a black dog	1	Kt a/k 611 (Veenhof 1996)
for a magic potion (?)	1	Kt 91/k 502 ll. 1-15 (to be published by K.R. Veenhof)
addressed at a reed	1	Kt a/k 320 (Hecker 1996 and Farber 1996)

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