

Was there a Sumerian Version of the Laws of Hammurabi?

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A clay tablet, purchased from the Khabaza collection, was entered in the Catalog of the Tablet Collections of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, on May 25, 1895 and given the accession number CBS 1511. The place of discovery was noted as unknown, but it is likely that most of the texts from the second Khabaza collection originated in Sippar. In the catalog the text was dated to the First Dynasty of Babylon and described as a "Sumerian Hymn or Psalm". The preserved reverse contains 22 double lines (see photograph); we can assume from the shape of the tablet that it originally contained about 45 lines. The obverse is completely flaked off.

The tablet was written in Sumerian and contains Akkadian glosses, two of which have been quoted in the *CAD*¹. However, the text was not identified there.

It was not until March 1991 that I was able to identify the tablet as containing a Sumerian version (with Akkadian glosses) of the epilogue section of the *Laws of Hammurabi* (*CH*). The reverse covers *CH* Epilogue xxviii 5-80(?). Only a few lines are broken at the end of the tablet. Two Akkadian translations are preserved on the edge of the lost obverse: [*šu-ul*]-*pu-ut ma-ti-šu*, "the destruction of his land", and [*ha-la-a*]*q a-li-šu*, "the ruin of his city". These phrases correspond to *CH* Epilogue xxvi 91-91: *šu-ul-pu-ut ma-ti-šu ha-la-aq ni-ši-šu* (note *a-li-šu* in our text). In spite of the variant, there is hardly any doubt that the obverse also contained a part of the Epilogue. Indeed, it seems quite probable that the tablet originally contained the entire Epilogue.

The date of the text is undoubtedly Old Babylonian. Since the provenance of CBS 1511 is probably Sippar, we can refer the reader to Driver-Miles, *Babylonian Laws* 1 pp. 29ff., where Driver suggests that the stela containing the *Laws of Hammurabi* stood in Sippar from where it was carried off to Elam.

Two lines, *CH* xxviii 17-18: *ÉREN-šu ri-i-ma-am a-i u₂-šar-ši*, "let his soldiers not find mercy", were not translated into Sumerian in CBS 1511. The reason for this is quite clear: col. xxviii 17 is damaged on

1. *ka-mi-iš* in line 5' (Sum. *gú šu ak-dè*) in *CAD* K 122 s.v. *kamiš* A, "like a captive"; *i-bè-el-lu-ù* (Sum. *su_h-su_h-ù*) in *CAD* B 72 s.v. *balû* (*belû*) v. lex. and bil. section (last passage).

the stela found in Susa, as is evident from both Deimel's and Bergmann's hand copies. The reading of this line could only be established through the neo-Assyrian fragment CT 13 47 rev. ii 9'-11': *um-m[a]-an-[š]-ma] ri-[i]-ma-am (a ū-šar-ši)*. It is evident that the person who read or copied the Epilogue in order to produce a Sumerian translation was not able to read the damaged line. He omitted the translation of the following line (xxviii 18) as it did not make any sense without the previous one. It is therefore quite probable that this line in the Epilogue had been already been damaged in Old Babylonian times, a half a millennium before the stela was carried off to Susa by the Elamites. It must be noted, however, that the two lines *CH* Epilogue xxviii 10-11 *da-mi-šu-nu er-še-tam li-is-qi*, "may she let the earth drink their blood", are also missing in the Sumerian translation, although they are preserved on the stela. Another deviation from the wording of the stela is found in line 16' of our text, a matter which is discussed in the commentary to the line below (see also the commentary to line 14'). If I am correct that col. xxviii 17 was already damaged when the stela was used as a source for a Sumerian translation, then these deviations are difficult to explain. We must assume that variants were found in copies of the stela, but I cannot speculate further on that here².

Since we now have a Sumerian version of the epilogue, we might assume that other parts, if not the whole, of the *Laws of Hammurabi* were also translated into Sumerian. The presence of a new "law code" in Sippar from the Old Babylonian period written in Sumerian³ poses a problem: was that "law code" originally written in Sumerian or is it a Sumerian translation from a Babylonian original? In addition to royal inscriptions from the First Dynasty of Babylon written in both Sumerian and Akkadian, there are fragments of bilingual Old Babylonian stelae⁴. Therefore, one may suggest that early versions of the *Laws of Hammurabi*, or parts of it, also had two versions: the Old Babylonian Akkadian original and a translation of it into Sumerian (hardly the other way around). If this is indeed the case, then it would not be necessary to view CBS 1511 as a pure school text, in spite of the fact that we know that legal terminology was a part of scribal training⁵; rather, one could assume that it was an official document turned into a Sumerian version.

Let us hope that more tablets will be found that contain parts of the Sumerian version of the *Laws of Hammurabi*. It gives me great pleasure to dedicate this article to my friend and former colleague at the Oriental Institute in Chicago, Miguel Civil, and to thank him for all the valuable help he has so generously given as a consultant and reader of the *Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary*.

TEXT

- 1'. [. . . .] [x] 'x' suh₃-suh₃ giš-giš-la₂' [x (x)]
 xxviii 5-7: *i-ši-tam sa₃-ah₃-ma-aš-tam li-iš-ku-un-šum*
- 2'. [. . . .] he₂-bi₂-ib₂-šub-b[u]
 xxviii 8-9: *qar-ra-di-šu li-ša-am-qi₂-it*
- 3'. [. . . .] edin-na he₂-em-mi-in-gar'-[x]
 xxviii 12-16: *gu-ru-un ša-al-ma-at um-ma-na-ti-šu i-na še-ri-im li-it-ta-ad-di*
- 4'. [. . . .]]u₂'-kur₂-e-ne he₂-ni-ib-si-[x (x)]
 xxviii 19-21: *šu-a-ti a-na qa₂-at na-ak-ri-šu li-ma-al-li-šu-ma*

2. For other variations in the *Laws of Hammurabi* see J. J. Finkelstein, *RA* 63, 11ff.

3. P. Michalowski and C. B. F. Walker in *Studies Sjöberg*, pp. 393ff.

4. *YOS* 9, 39-61; also *UET* 1 146, pl. XXXV where fragm. b (bilingual) is a duplicate of *TLB* 3 3 (Sumerian), containing a self-praise of Hammurabi (see Sjöberg, *ZA* 54 pp. 50ff.).

5. Sjöberg, *AS* 20 pp. 164 ff.; P. Michalowski and C. B. F. Walker in *Studies Sjöberg*, pp. 383ff.

- 5'. [.] u₂ kur₂-a-ni gu₂ šu ak-de₃ ħe₂-ni-ib₂-tum₂-mu
ka-mi-^riš^r
 xxviii 22-23: *a-na ma-at nu-ku-ur₂-ti-šu ka-mi-iš li-ru-šu*
- 6'. [^dGIR₃.UNU-ga] kala-ga-dingir-re-e-ne šen-šen šu nu-ru-gu₂ qa₂-ba-^ral^r [...] *qa₂-ba-al la ma-ħa-ar*
 xxviii 24-26: ^dGIR₃.UNU-gal dan-nu-um i-na i₃-li₂ qa₂-ba-al la ma-ħa-ar
- 7'. [u₃-ma]-^ra-mu mu-ša-ak-ši-id sa₂ bi₂-in-du₁₁-ga
 xxviii 27-28: *mu-ša-ak-ši-du er-ne₂-ti-ia*
- 8'. [...] ^rla²-ni^r i-na kaš-š^ru- izi-giš-gi-gin₇ un-bi ħe₂-KAX?-KAX?
 xxviii 29-34: *i-na ka-š^ru-ši-š^ru ra-bi-im ki-ma i-ša-tim ša a-pi₂-im ni-ši-š^ru li-iq-me*
- 9'. [...] [x^rli-ša-ti-š^ru-ma giš-GAZ ħe₂-em-mi-in-ak
 xxviii 35-36: *in GIŠ.TUKUL-š^ru dan-nim li-ša-ti-š^ru-ma*
- 10'. [...] [x^rx-ni] bi-ni-a-ti-š^ru alan-im-gin₇ ħe₂-en-gul
 xxviii 36-39: *bi-ni-a-ti-š^ru ki-ma ša-lam ti-di-im li-iħ-bu-uš*
- 11'. [... egi₂-maħ-k] jur-kur-ra ama-dim₂-ma-mu ibila u₃ mu ħa^r-ba-da-an-kar
 xxviii 40-44: ^dNIN.TU EGI₂ ši-ir-tum ša ma-ta-tim AMA ba-ni-ti IBILA li-ṭe₂-er-š^ru-ma
- 12'. [...] x numun-nam-lu₂-ulu₃ nam-ba-^ran-du^r₁₂-du₁₂
 xxviii 45-49: *š^ru-ma-am a u₂-šar-ši-š^ru i-na qer-bi-it ni-ši-š^ru NUMUN a-wi-lu-tim a ib-ni*
- 13'. [^dnin-in-si^k] na dumu-an-na <e₂-kur->ra nig₂-sa₆-ga-mu inim bal-bal-e
 xxviii 50-54: ^dNIN.KAR.RA.AK DUMU.MUNUS AN-nim qa₂-bi-a-at dum-qi₂-ia i-na E₂.KUR
- 14'. [.] nu-mu-un-še₁₈-de₃
ša la (blank) na-ħi
 xxviii 55ff. See commentary
- 15'. [.] nig₂-keš₂ nu-še₁₈-de₃
 [.] x i-na (blank)
 xxviii 59ff. See commentary
- 16'. [.] [x] su-ni-še₃ na-an-zi-zi i-na ši-ri-š^ru
la i-te-bu-u₂
 xxviii 63. See commentary
- 17'. [.] [x] en-na zi-ni suħ-suħ-u₃
i-be₂-el-lu-u₂
 xxviii 63: *a-di na-pi₂-iš-ta-š^ru i-be₂-el-lu-u₂*
- 18'. [.] ħe₂-šeš₄^r-šeš₄^r
 []-ma-am
 xxviii 68-69: *a-na eṭ-lu-ti-š^ru li-id^r-dam-ma-am*
- 19'. [.] [^da-nu]n-na-ke₄-ne
 xxviii 70-73: DINGIR GAL.GAL ša ša-me-e u₃ er-še-tim DINGIR A.NUN.NA
- 20'. [.] [ku₄-ra^r
- 21'.
 22'.

Remainder broken away.

NOTES

1'. su_3-su_3 (or su_3-sa_4) occurs together also in CT 21, 40 iv 10-11 (Hammurabi inscription) $giš-giš-la_2$ te-en-te-en su_3-su_3 si-si-a translated as *mu-be-el-li tu-uq-ma-tim mu-še-eb-bi sa-aḥ-ma-ša-tim* "he who extinguishes battles, silences turmoils". $giš-giš-la_2$ Innin-šagurra 164, bil. version (OB) = *ša-ga-aš-tum*.

3'. For gu-ru-un (gu-ru-um) ak, gar, Akk. *gurunna* (*ina gurunni*) *garānu*, see Lugale 349; 393; 702. -gar- in our text is written over an erasure.

Between lines 3' and 4' we would expect the Sumerian translation of CH xxviii 17-18, read in Driver's edition as ERIN₂-šū *ri-ma-am a-i u₂-šar-ši* "may she not let his soldiers have (find) mercy"; see p. 219 above in the introduction.

5'. The expression gu_2 šu ak, corresponding to Akkadian *kamûm* "to capture" is otherwise not known to me. Akkadian gloss *ka-mi-iš* "like a captive" is quoted in CAD K 122 s.v. *kamiš* (there read gu_2 -še₃ ak-de₃ but original has šu, not -še₃).

6'. $šen-šen$ šu nu-ru- gu_2 = *qabal lā mahār*, cf. Innin-šagur-ra 53 me_3 - gir_3 -a-ni šu nu-ru-[gu_2]-da "her murderous battle cannot be opposed" and BA 10/1, p. 25 no. 25:6-7 [me_3]-a $šen-šen$ -na gaba nu-ru- gu_2 = [*ina ta-ḥa*]-zi *qa-bal-šu₂ ez-zi-iš ul im-maḥ-ḥar*.

7'. Restoration [u_3 -ma]-ā-mu is certain; however, the plene writing -ma]-a- is striking, and I know of no further references.

8'. *kašūšum* 1. "overpowering divine wepon", 2. "annihilation," "crushing defeat": CAD K 296f. has two known equivalents: (1) [x]-šū-ur₃ = *ka-šu₂-[šū₂]* SIG₇.ALAN S 28 (MSL 16, 135), (2) šur-ur₄-ur₄; šu-ur₄-ur₄-zi-ga-zu ⁴er₃-ra-gin₇ lu₂-g₁₆-g₁₆ ^{gi}-ir₂gir₂-^{gi}-ir₂gir₂ ^{ḥe}₂-en-ak = *ka-šu-uš-uš-ki na-ad-ru ki-ma* ⁴erra *qar-da-mu li-šab-ri-iq* "your (Inanna-Ištar's) fierce k. strike the wicked with lightning like Erra" Elevation of Ištar IV B 19-20; ur₄-ur₄ (for šu-ur₄-ur₄; ur₄-ur₄) [dingir-maš]-tab-ba = *ka-šu-uš* [DINGIR].MEŠ *ki-lal-laan* (referring to Nergal). The Sumerian equivalent for *kašūšum* is unfortunately broken in our text. The Akkadian gloss *i-na kaš-šu-* is unfinished; the surface of the tablet is somewhat worn following *kaš-šu-*, and no traces of signs are visible. Further reduplication *kaššu-* is surprising and otherwise not attested. Reading *i-na pi₂-šu*, even though would fit the context, has to be ruled out.

The two signs at the end of the line are epigraphically somewhat uncertain. A reading KAXLI-KAXLI seems possible; if so, KAXLI-KAXLI = mu_7 - mu_7 = ma_3 - ma_3 = *qamûm* A "to burn"; a reading KAXSAR-KAXSAR is also a possibility: ma_3 - ma_3 for ma_3 - ma_3 .

9'. *li-ša-ti-šu-ma*, Sumerian $giš$ -GAZ (*gaz/naga*) $ḥe_2$ -em-mi-in-ak, has been interpreted in CAD N/2, 133 as Š of *natûm* (*naṭûm*) "to hit, to beat" (see also Driver-Miles p. 301; AHw 768 (b)). $giš$ -GAZ ak is otherwise Akkadian *šagāšu* (*šakāšu*), see SIG₇.ALAN XX 129 (MSL 16, 182).

11'. ama -dim₂-ma as corresponding to *ummum bānītum* is otherwise not attested; cf. CAD B 95 *banû* A 1. b). Cf. ⁴nin-ḥur-sag-ga₂ ama in-dim₂-e-na <-mu->uš, Akkadian version *a-na* ⁴NIN.MAḤ AMA *ba-ni-ti-ia* Samsuiluna A 36-37. Sumerian version has "may she bereave him of an heir and name".

11'-12' should have read: DN egi_2 -maḥ-kur-kur-ra ama -dim₂-ma-mu *ibila* ḥa(text has A-)-ba-da-an-kar, mu nam-ba-an-du₁₂-du₁₁ $ša_3$ -un-ga₂-na-ka numun-nam-lu₂-ulu₃ nam-ba-an-dim₂, corresponding to DN *rubātum*(EGI₂; var. [*ru*]-ba-tum in the OB fragm. MDP 10 p. 84 and pl. 9) *ši-ir-tum ummum*(AMA) *ba-ni-ti aplam*(IBILA) *li-ṭe₇-er-šu-ma*, *šu-ma-am a u₂-šar-ši i-na qer-bi-it ni-ši-šu zēr*(NUMUN) *a-wi-lu-tim a ib-ni*.

13'. Nininsina(-Ninkarrak) is *dumu-an-na*, for instance, in Temple Hymns 393; SRT 6 i 24; Laws of Lipiteštar i 6-7; OECT 5, 8:2. *dumqum* corresponds here to nig_2 -sa₆-ga; nig_2 -sa₆-ga = *dumqu* also in JNES 33, 288:6; PBS 1/2, 135 rev. 7' (44/45; collated; the two last refs. have to be added in AHw and CAD D); cf. nam -sa₆-ga = *du-um-qum* SIG₇.ALAN R 189 (MSL 16, 302), followed by nig_2 -sa₆-ga = *da-me-eq-tu*.

For our line, see *CAD* D 182 *dumqu* 4. "recommendation", "good news". Cf. du_{11} - du_{11} - $ne-ne$ sa_6 - $ga-mu$ = *at-ma-a du-um-qi₂-ia* "put in a good word for me!" 5R 62, no. 2:65 (Sumerian corrupt). *inim bal* (-bal), as corresponding to *atmû* and *qabû*, see PSD B 54 bal D 2.1.1.; p. 60 Bilingual 13.; 14.; 15.; p. 61 Lexical 12.

14'. *CH* xxviii 55-58 *mur-ša-am kab-tam* A_2 - SAG_3 *le-em-nam si₂-im-ma-am mar-ša-am ša la i-pa-aš-še-hu*, which should be Sumerian *tu(-ra)-dugud a₂-sag₃-hul GIG-GĪG-ma⁶ nu-mu-un-še₁₈-de₃*; there is enough space for this restoration. The Akkadian *ša la* (blank) *na-ḫi* points to v. *nāḫum*; we would have expected *ša la ...-še-hu*. The scribe seems to have been confused: *nāḫum* D *nuḫḫum* in *CH* xxviii 63 might be the reason for this incomplete Akkadian translation.

15'. *CH* xxviii 59-61: A.SU(sic) *qe₂-re-eb-šu la i-lam-ma-ma-du i-na ši₂-im-di la u₂-na-ah₂-hu-šu* "(disease) of which no physician knows the nature (and) cannot relieve it with bandages": [*a-zu ša₃-bi nu-un-zu-a*] *nig₂-keš₂ nu-še₁₈-de₃*. The traces of the last sign in (a) are not clear: *-zu]-a⁷*. There is certainly enough space for this proposed restoration.

šimдум "bandage" is Sumerian *nig₂-keš₂*, see Nigga 12 (MSL 13, 96) *nig₂-keš₂ si-im-du*. The reading of the sign following *nig₂-* as *keš₂* is certain. Reading at the end of (a) as *-m]a-du* (: *i-lam-ma-du*) is almost certain.

16'. This line would correspond to *CH* xxviii 63 *ki-ma ni-ši-ik mu-tim la in-na-sa₃-hu* "which like the bite of death cannot be plucked out". *na-an-zi-zi* (b) would be Akkadian *lā innassaḫū*; the reason the scribe translated *na-an-zi-zi* as *la i-te-bu-u₂* is not known, and he also added *i-na ši-ri-šu*, Sumerian *su-ni-še₃* (error for *su-ni-ta*). The expression *ina širišu lā itebbū* "which shall not 'stand up' from his flesh" is otherwise unknown⁷.

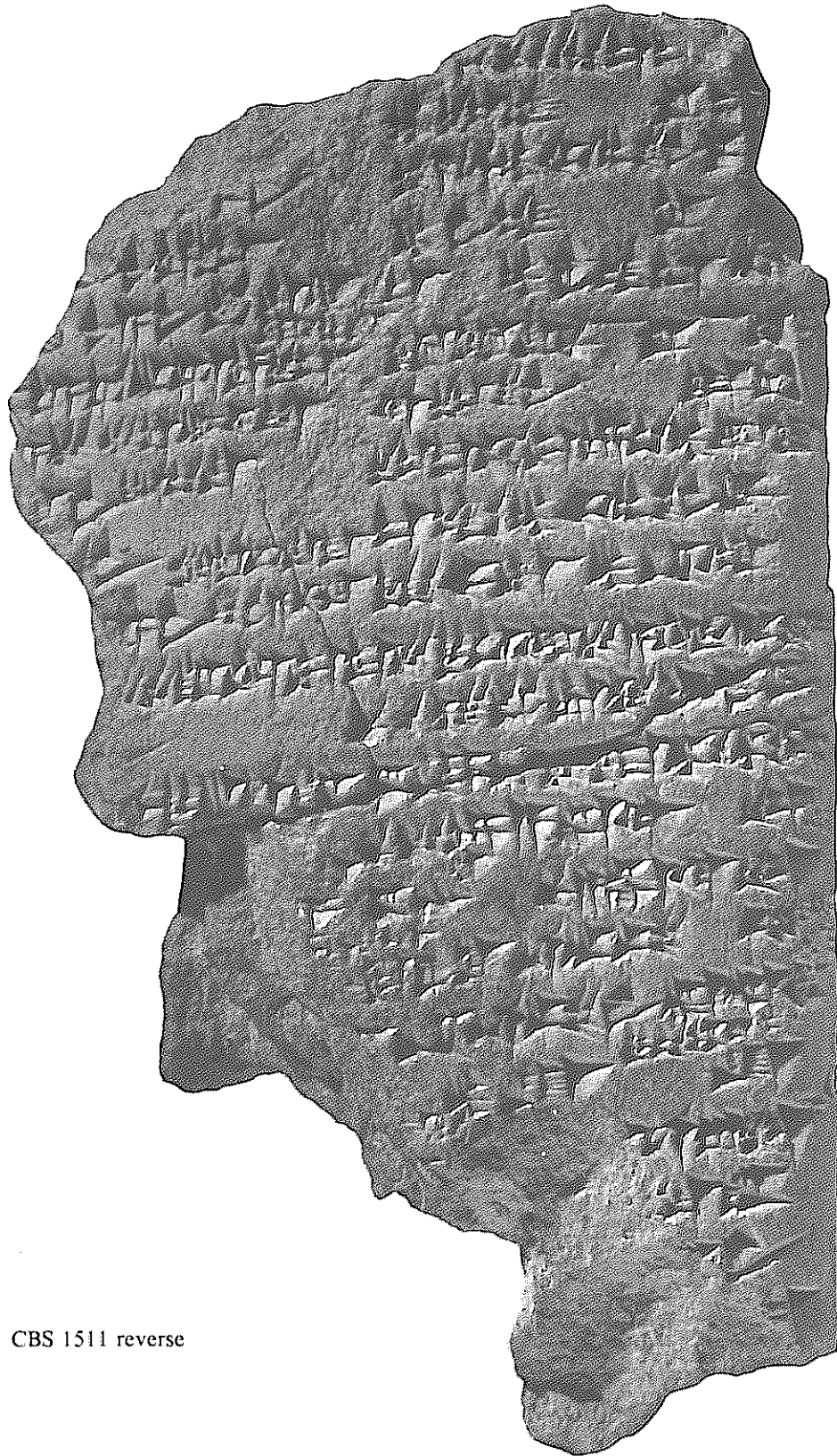
17'. (a) Stela: *i-na bi-ni-a-ti-šu li-ša-ši-a-aš-šum-ma. suḫ* = *bullū ša napišti*: *CAD* B 72 *balū* (*belū*) lex. section.

18'. Stela: *a-na eḫ-lu-ti-šu li-DA-dam-ma-am* (both Deimel and Bergmann have *-DA-* in their copies). *AHW* 155 *damāmu* Gtn and *CAD* D 60 *damāmu* 1a) read *li-id-dam-ma-am* ("may he mourn before his men" *CAD* D 60; "that he will complain to his men" *CAD* B 73 *balū* v. 1.b). Akkadian gloss *]ma-am*, reading almost certain. The two signs following *ḫe₂-* in (b) are epigraphically somewhat uncertain. To read *ḫe₂-šeš₄-šeš₄* seems plausible.

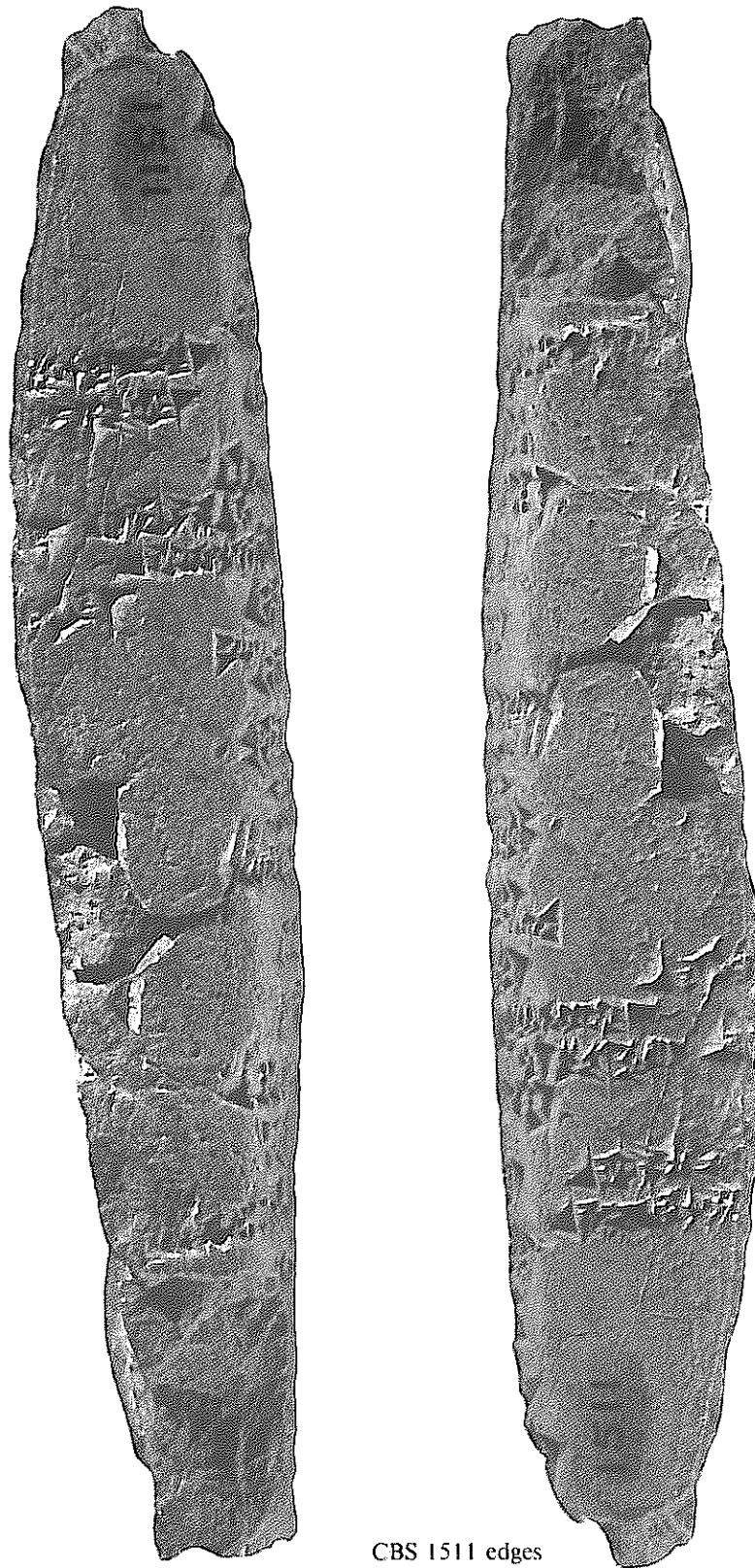
20'. *ku₄-ra* "entering," "who enters" at the end of the line has no counterpart in the Stela. A possible restoration of the line would be [*šedu-e₂-a sig₄-e₂-babbar-ra(-ka)*] *ku₄-ra* "the *šedu*-spirit of the house entering the brickwork of the Ebabbar"; cf. *CH* xxv 48ff. *še-du-um la-ma-sum₂ ilū*(DINGIR.DINGIR) *e-ri-bu-ut e₂-sag-il₂ libitti*(SIG₄) *e₂-sag-il₂* "the *šedu*- and *lammassu*-spirits who enter the Esagil (and the brickwork of the Esagil)".

6. a_2 - sag_3 - hul : *nig₂-gig a₂-sag₃-hul ḫe₂-em-ta-e₃* STT 2, 219 ii 22'. *šimnum* "carbuncle", "skin eruption", a general term for disease: *CAD* S 276; Sum. *gig*; *gig* also = *maršu*. *šimnum maršu* as corresponding to *GIG-GIG-ma* (*gig-GIG-ma*), see Lugale 177 *ki-a su-bi bi₂-ib₂-dar GIG-GIG-ma* (var. *GIG-ma* for *GIG-GIG-ma*) *bi₂-ib₂-gar*, bil. version *ki-a su-bi bi₂-ib₂-dar [...]* = *er-še-tu₄ zu-mur-ša₂ il-[e-e...]* "he split the earth's body, [...]", (text i₂); [... *gig-gig-ga bi₂-in-gar* = [...]-*e-ti-ma sim-ma mar-ša iš-k[um]* "the split the earth's body], made painful the s.-disease" (text u). See further *TCL* 16, 60:5 *G[IG]-GIG-ma ki-kukku₂-ga-ba ša₃-bi lu₂ nu-zu* "the nature (lit. heart) of the dark spots of the ...-disease nobody knows", where *G[IG]-GIG-ma ... ša₃-bi lu₂ nu-zu* is Akkadian *šimma maršam ... azūm qerebšu la ilammadu* in *CH* xxviii 57-60; as in *CH* xxviii 50ff., this disease is connected with Nininsina-Ninkarrak, so also *SEM* 100:12 (*JCS* 34, 64); *SRT* 6 i 21; Damu, the son of Nininsina, as healing the disease; see also Nintinugga's Dog 6 a_2 - sag_3 (-)*GIG-GIG-ma ša₃-bi bar ak* (thus text E; A, B omit one *GIG*) "the one who examines the a.-disease (and?) the ... disease". Reading of *GIG-GIG-ma* is unknown to me; if Lugale bil. version (IV 42) has been correctly restored as [*gig-gig-ga* = *šimma marša* (OB version *GIG-GIG-ma* (var. *GIG-ma*)) then we suggest that the reading was uncertain and the scribe simplified it to *gig-gig-ga gu₂-murgu-zu-ta za₃-gu-du-zu-še₃ ka-keš₂ GIG-ma ab-ta-si-si* "from your shoulders to your buttocks (your) joints are full of(?) ... disease" Two Scribes 88-89 (*TuM NF* 3, 43 ii 14-15 and dupls.; no text has *GIG-GIG-ma*); *GIG-ma* here seems to be a general term for disease; cf. *CT* 4, 3:7 (OB) *GIG-GIG-ma*, in the bil. version Sm.28+ translated as *si-im-mi še-e* [...], restored as *še-e-[nu-ti]* (*ši-e-[nu-ti]*) in *MSL* 9.106 F 7; *CAD* S 127 *yennitu* (a skin disease) but Sm.28+ is not quoted there; text needs collation. For "black spots" on the skin, caused by the *šimmu*-disease see, besides *TCL* 16, 60:5 (just quoted), Köcher *BAM* 32:16 (*CAD* S 276b).

7. Cp. *su-bi* (var. *su-na*) *u-me-ni-zi-zi* = *ina zu-um-ri-šu₂ u₂-suḫ-ma* "expel it (the disease) from his body" *Šurpu* 7:65-66; also *ZA* 45, 26 K.1289 rev. 3-4 and dupls.



CBS 1511 reverse



CBS 1511 edges