

CURRENT RESEARCH IN CUNEIFORM PALAEOGRAPHY
VOLUME 2

Current Research in Cuneiform Palaeography 2

Proceedings of the Workshop organised at the 64th Rencontre
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edited by

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Preface

The papers collected in this volume originate from the workshop “Current research on cuneiform palaeography 2” held in Innsbruck on 19 July 2018, at the occasion of the 64th *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale*.

The organization of a second workshop devoted to this topic was inspired by the positive reactions to the first workshop on “Current Research in Cuneiform Palaeography” organized in 2014 at the 60th *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale*, which contributed towards drawing further attention to a field of cuneiform studies that during the last decade had been witnessing ever growing attention among scholars. Rather than exhausting their potential, that first meeting and the ensuing proceedings (Devecchi – Müller – Mynářová 2015) sparked further interest into cuneiform palaeography by providing case studies on diverse topics such as writing space, wedge order, quantitative analysis, text reconstruction, sign identification and palaeographic dating.

The present volume brings new insights on cuneiform palaeography through contributions on different text corpora that date from the 3rd to the 1st millennium BCE and derive from the whole Ancient Near East (from southern Mesopotamia, to Anatolia, Syria and the northern Levant).

Eleven papers were presented during the workshop. Even though not all of them appear in this publication, we would like to thank all speakers who took part in the event, as well as other colleagues who contributed to the rich discussion and a productive working atmosphere. During the conference a paper relevant to the topic of the workshop was presented by Livio Warbinek and therefore it is included in the present volume as well.

We would like to express our gratitude to the organizers of the 64th *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* for their support and hospitality in accommodating our workshop within the conference.

We are also grateful to Peter Werner and PeWe-Verlag for having kindly assisted us in preparing the manuscript for publication. We would also like to express our gratitude to all reviewers for their valuable suggestions and comments.

The publication of the proceedings was generously funded by the Department of Historical Studies of the University of Turin, within the project “L’Anatolia antica: politiche imperiali e culture locali tra XV e VII secolo a.C.” (PRIN 2015). Preparation of the manuscript was supported by the research project of the Czech Science Foundation No. GA ČR P401/12/G168 (“History and Interpretation of the Bible”).

In Turin, Prague, and Würzburg
16 October 2019

Elena Devecchi
Jana Mynářová
Gerfrid G.W. Müller

Abbreviations

| | |
|-----------|--|
| AbB | Altbabylonische Briefe in Umschrift und Übersetzung (Leiden) |
| ABL | R.F. Harper, <i>Assyrian and Babylonian Letters belonging to the Kouyounjik collection of the British Museum</i> . Chicago 1892–1914. |
| Ach. Hist | Achaemenid History (Leiden) |
| AD | Astronomical Diary |
| ADFU | Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft in Uruk-Warka (Berlin) |
| AO | Antiquités orientales, museum siglum of the Musée du Louvre, Paris |
| AOAT | Alter Orient und Altes Testament (Münster) |
| AfO | Archiv für Orientforschung (Berlin – Wien) |
| AnOr | Analecta Orientalia (Roma) |
| AoF | Altorientalische Forschungen (Berlin) |
| ARCANE | Associated Regional Chronologies for the Ancient Near East (Turnhout) |
| ARET | Archivi reali di Ebla (Roma) |
| ArOr | Archiv Orientální (Prague) |
| Ashm | Museum siglum of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford |
| ASJ | Acta Sumerologica – Japan (Hiroshima) |
| AT | Alalah Texts published in D.J. Wiseman, <i>The Alalakh Tablets</i> . London 1953. |
| ATU | Archaische Texte aus Uruk (Berlin) |
| AVO | Altertumskunde des Vorderen Orients (Münster) |
| BBVO | Berliner Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte (Berlin) |
| BCHP | I. Finkel – R.J. van Spek, <i>Babylonian Chronicles of the Hellenistic Period</i> , a preliminary version available at https://www.livius.org/sources/about/mesopotamian-chronicles/ |
| BdI | Le tavolette cuneiformi di Adab delle collezioni della Banca d'Italia (Rome) |
| BDTNS | Base de Datos de Textos Neosumericos (Madrid) |
| BE | The Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia) |
| BGH | T. Richter, <i>Bibliographisches Glossar des Hurritischen</i> . Wiesbaden 2012. |
| BIN | Babylonian Inscriptions in the Collection of James B. Nies, Yale University, New Haven |
| BiOr | Bibliotheca Orientalis (Leiden) |
| BM | Museum siglum of the British Museum, London |

Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|---|
| BM E | Museum siglum for tablets in the collections of the British Museum, London, originally housed in the Egyptian collection |
| Bo | (Unpublished) tablets from Boghazköy |
| BPOA | Biblioteca del Próximo Oriente Antiguo (Madrid) |
| BRM | Babylonian Records in the Library of J. Pierpont Morgan, New Haven |
| BSOAS | Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies (London) |
| Cam | Cambyses |
| CBS | Catalogue of the Babylonian Section; University Museum, Philadelphia |
| CDLI | Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (Los Angeles – Berlin) |
| CDLN | Cuneiform Digital Library Notes (Los Angeles – Berlin) |
| CDLP | Cuneiform Digital Library Preprints (Los Angeles – Berlin) |
| CG | Catalogue Général des Antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire |
| CHANE | Culture and History of the Ancient Near East (Leiden – Boston) |
| CHD | Chicago Hittite Dictionary (Chicago) |
| ChS | Corpus der hurritischen Sprachdenkmäler (Roma) |
| CM | Cuneiform Monographs (Groningen) |
| CoS | W.W. Hallo – K. Lawson Younger (eds.), <i>The Context of Scripture</i> . 3 vols. Leiden – Boston 1997–2002; K. Lawson Younger (ed.), <i>The Context of Scripture. Supplements</i> . Vol. 4. Leiden 2016. |
| CRAI | Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres (Paris) |
| CT | Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum (London) |
| CTH | E. Laroche, <i>Catalogue des textes hittites</i> . Paris 1971. |
| CUSAS | Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology (Bethesda) |
| Cyr | Cyrus |
| Dar | Darius |
| DAS | Documents d'Archéologie Syrienne (Udine) |
| DBH | Dresdner Beiträge zur Hethitologie (Wiesbaden) |
| DMOA | Documenta et monumenta Orientis antiqui (Leiden) |
| DOG | Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft |
| DP | M.F. Allotte de la Fuÿe, <i>Documents présargoniques</i> . Paris 1908–1920. |
| EA | El-Amarna tablets: J.A. Knudtzon, <i>Die El-Amarna-Tafeln</i> (VB 2), Aalen 1964 ² ; A.F. Rainey, <i>El Amarna Tablets 359-379. Supplement to J.A. Knudtzon, Die El-Amarna-Tafeln</i> (AOAT 8). Neukirchen-Vluyn 1970. |
| EBA | Early Bronze Age |
| ED | Early Dynastic |
| Enn | Ennanum |
| Erm | Museum siglum of the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg |
| ES | Early Sargonic |

X

Abbreviations

| | |
|----------|--|
| FLP | Museum siglum of the Free Library of Philadelphia, Philadelphia |
| GC | R.P. Dougherty, <i>Goucher College Cuneiform Inscriptions</i> . New Haven 1923–1933. |
| GMTR | Guides to the Mesopotamian Textual Record (Münster) |
| HANEM | History of the Ancient Near East. Monographs (Padova) |
| HdO | Handbuch der Orientalistik (Leiden) |
| HEG | J. Tischler, <i>Hethitisches etymologisches Glossar</i> . Innsbruck 1971–2016. |
| HSS | Harvard Semitic Series (Cambridge) |
| HUCA | Hebrew Union College Annual (Cincinnati) |
| HZL | C. Ruster – E. Neu, <i>Hethitisches Zeichenlexikon</i> . Wiesbaden 1989. |
| IBoT | <i>İstanbul Arkeoloji Müzelerinde Bulunan Boğazköy Tabletleri</i> (Istanbul) |
| JANER | Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions (Leiden – Boston) |
| JAOS | Journal of the American Oriental Society (Ann Arbor) |
| JAS | Journal of Archaeological Science (London) |
| JCS | Journal of Cuneiform Studies (New Haven – Baltimore) |
| JRL | Museum siglum of the John Rylands Library, University of Manchester, Manchester |
| KAR | E. Ebeling, <i>Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts</i> . I/II (WVDOG 28, 34). Leipzig 1919–1923. |
| KBo | <i>Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi</i> (Leipzig – Berlin) |
| KUB | <i>Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi</i> (Berlin) |
| KZ | Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Sprachforschung (Berlin – Göttingen) |
| LAK | A. Deimel, <i>Liste der archaischen Keilschriftzeichen</i> (WVDOG 40). Berlin 1922. |
| LBA | Late Bronze Age |
| Lgz | Lugalzagesi |
| MBA | Middle Bronze Age |
| MC | Mesopotamian Civilizations (Winona Lake) |
| MCS | Manchester Cuneiform Studies (Manchester) |
| MDOG | Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin (Berlin) |
| Mean | Meannedu |
| MEE | Materiali epigrafici di Ebla (Napoli) |
| Mkg | Mesigala |
| MLC | Museum siglum of the Morgan Library Collection in the Yale Babylonian Collection, New Haven |
| MOS | Mitteilungen aus den orientalischen Sammlungen (Berlin) |
| MSK | Tablet siglum of texts from Tell Meskene, ancient Emar |
| MVN | Materiali per il Vocabolario Neo-Sumerico (Roma) |
| MZL | R. Borger, <i>Mesopotamisches Zeichenlexikon</i> (AOAT 305). Münster 2003. |
| N.A.B.U. | Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires (Paris) |

Abbreviations

| | |
|---------|--|
| NBC | Museum siglum of the Nies Babylonian Collection in the Yale Babylonian Collection, New Haven |
| Nbk | Nebuchadnezzar |
| Nbn | Nabonidus |
| NCBT | Newell Collection of Babylonian Tablets, Yale University, New Haven |
| NMS | Museum siglum of the National Museum Scotland, Edinburgh |
| Ner | Neriglissar |
| OA | Oriens Antiquus (Roma) |
| OBO | Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis (Fribourg) |
| OIP | Oriental Institute Publications (Chicago) |
| OLZ | Orientalistische Literaturzeitung (Berlin) |
| Or NS | Orientalia Nova Series (Roma) |
| PIHANS | Publications de l'Institut historique-archéologique néerlandais de Stamboul (Leiden) |
| PTS | Museum siglum of the Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton |
| QS | Qatna Studien (Wiesbaden) |
| QSS | Qatna Studien Supplementa (Wiesbaden) |
| QuadSem | Quaderni di Semitistica (Florence) |
| RA | Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale (Paris) |
| REC | F. Thureau-Dangin, <i>Recherches sur l'origine de l'écriture cunéiforme</i> . Paris 1898. |
| RSP | Y. Rosengarten, <i>Répertoire commenté des signes présargoniques sumériens de Lagash</i> . Paris 1967. |
| S | Sargonic |
| SANER | Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records (Berlin – Boston) |
| SAOC | Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization (Chicago) |
| SAQ | Studi Archeologici su Qatna (Udine) |
| SMEA | Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici (Roma) |
| SR | Special Register, Egyptian Museum in Cairo |
| Srg | Sargon |
| StBoT | Studien zu den Boghazköy-Texten (Wiesbaden) |
| StMes | Studia Mesopotamica (Münster) |
| TCL | Textes cuneiforms, Musées du Louvre (Paris) |
| TH | Texte der Hethiter (Heidelberg) |
| TT | Qatna Tablets from Idadda's archive published in T. Richter – S. Lange, <i>Das Archiv des Idadda. Die Keilschrifttexte aus den deutsch-syrischen Ausgrabungen 2001–2003 im Königspalast von Qatna (QS 3)</i> . Wiesbaden 2012. |
| UAVA | Untersuchungen zur Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie (Berlin) |
| UET | Ur Excavations. Texts (London) |

Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|---|
| UF | Ugarit-Forschungen (Münster) |
| UM | Museum siglum of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia |
| Ušd | Ušurdu |
| VAT | Vorderasiatische Abteilung Tontafeln, museum siglum of the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin |
| VB | Vorderasiatische Bibliothek (Leipzig) |
| VBoT | A. Götze, <i>Verstreute Boghazköi-Texte</i> . Marburg 1930. |
| VS | Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der Königlichen Museen zu Berlin (Berlin) |
| WAM | Museum siglum of the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore |
| WdO | Die Welt des Orients (Wuppertal – Göttingen) |
| WVDOG | Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft (Leipzig – Berlin) |
| WZKM | Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes (Wien) |
| YBC | Museum siglum of the Yale Babylonian Collection, New Haven |
| YNER | Yale Near Eastern Researches (New Haven) |
| YOS | Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts (New Haven – London – Oxford) |
| ZA | Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie (Leipzig – Berlin) |
| ZATU | M.W. Green – H.J. Nissen. <i>Zeichenliste der archaischen Texte aus Uruk</i> . Berlin 1987. |

Abbreviations, Lines, and Clay Tablets: How to write a KIN Oracle, How to Manage the Space

LIVIO WARBINEK¹

1.1 Preliminary remarks

The oracles used by the Hittites included Extispicy, Augury, the “Bed” Oracle, the “*HUR-RI*-bird” Oracle, the “Snake” Oracle, and the KIN Oracle;² and like everywhere in the Ancient Near East, they were considered to be messages from the gods (Beal 2001: 57). Most of these oracular methods were imported from abroad, particularly from Mesopotamia and Syria, while others seem to have had local Anatolian origins.³

The main aim of this paper is to highlight some palaeographic peculiarities of the KIN symbolic oracle: the abundant use of abbreviations for recording an oracle on one hand, and the organization of the clay tablet layout in defined spaces on the other. These features can show and explain how the oracle was written down and could be useful for understanding other types of clay tablets.

In oracular texts, abbreviations were writing solutions used to shorten the most common and repeated technical terms and to arrange the oracle reports in the available space on the tablets. Conversely, layout emphasized the graphic issue, i.e. how to manage the tablet spaces and to organize the lines and paragraphs. These two aspects, strictly linked, are examined and discussed in this study. Before looking at these elements, it is appropriate to briefly summarize the KIN oracle.

-
- 1 I wish to thank the IAA Committee Board for providing me with the “IAA Fund for Recent PhDs for RAI Attendance” enabling me to participate in the 64th Rencontre in Innsbruck. I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Giulia Torri who supported me throughout my PhD Dissertation on the KIN oracles (“Il sistema mantico ittita KIN”, Florence 2018; a published version is planned for the near future, some outcomes from this study have already been published in Warbinek 2017; *id.* forthcoming). I also owe many thanks to Dr. Amir Gilan for supporting me during the preparation of this contribution, to Prof. Dr. Joost Hazenbos for kindly reading my drafts, and to Prof. Dr. Gerfrid G.W. Müller for his help and courtesy in sharing with me the pictures of the Hethitologie-Portal Mainz (HPM); BoFN pictures are published by kind permission of the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin. Any mistakes are of course my own, whereas abbreviations follow the *Chicago Hittite Dictionary*.
 - 2 See Archi 1974: 113; Beal 2001: 57–80; Hazenbos 2003: I 4–6; Haas 2008: 17–65; Marcuson 2016: 97–98.
 - 3 See Archi 1974: 131–134; 1975: 121; 1982: 279–283; 1991: 88–89; Kammenhuber 1976: 10; Popko 1995: 82–83; Beckman 1999: 530; Soysal 2000: 115–116; Beal 2001: 76; 2003: 207; Hazenbos 2003: I 8; Haas 2008: 19–20; Taracha 2009: 145.

1.2 The KIN Oracle

As far as we know, the KIN oracle was a symbolic⁴ divination technique developed only in the Hittite cultural milieu.⁵ The main scholarly contributions on the KIN oracle came from Archi (1974), Orlamünde (2001), Hazenbos (2003), Haas (2008), and Marcuson (2016). The first systematic study is still considered the fundamental approach to the topic. Archi recognized the symbolic structure and investigated the KIN features according to the principal sources.⁶ To make these features clearer, see for instance KBo 41.201 ii 9–13:

- 9 IŠ-TU^{MUNUS}ŠU.GI ER.^{TUM} QA-TAM-MA-pát nu KIN SIG₅-ru
 10 'DINGIR^{MEŠ} GUB-er' TI-tar UD^{HIA URU}KÙ.BABBAR-ša-an ME-er
 11 'na'-at pa-an-ga-u-i INA UD.2^{KAM} D'DAG' 'GUB' <-iš> da-pi-an 'ZI'-an
 12 'pár'-na-aš-ša SIG₅ ME-aš na-at A-NA LUGAL ZAG-'za' [GAR-ri]
 13 INA UD.3^{KAM} ḪUL ME-an nu-kán an-da SUD-.li₁₂. [(NU.)SIG₅]

⁹⁾The same question through the Old Woman: let the KIN Oracle be favorable! ⁽¹⁰⁾The Gods arose, they took the Life, the Days (and) Ḫattuša ⁽¹¹⁾and (they gave) them to the Congregation. On the second day, the Throne arose, took the Whole Soul, ⁽¹²⁾and the Good of the House, and [they are placed] to the Right of the King. ⁽¹³⁾On the third day the Evil (was) taken and (given) into the Emptiness. [(Un)Favorable].

As can be seen from the example above, the KIN oracle was performed by the^{MUNUS}ŠU.GI⁷ “Old Woman”, who also supervised Hittite rituals.⁸ The oracular investigation was based on symbolic operations which were dependent upon the grammatical positions (nominative-accusative-locative) of the oracular symbols.⁹ The usual frame was constructed by movements in which a symbolic *agens* (nominative), took one or more passive symbols (ac-

-
- 4 Beal 1992: 128: “I wonder if the traditional translation ‘Los-Orakel’ (Engl. ‘lot oracle’) should not be abandoned in order to avoid confusion with real lot oracles [...]. I would suggest perhaps ‘symbol oracle’”.
- 5 Not all the KIN sources come from a specific findspot. At present, the most representative site is Boğazköy, i.e., the Hittite capital Ḫattuša, and, in particular, the citadel buildings of Büyükkale. Outside the capital, there are only four KIN findspots, located in Uşaklı, Kuşaklı, Tell Atchana (Alalah) and Kayalıpınar (Şarišša).
- 6 Particularly, KUB 5.1+, KUB 5.3+, KUB 22.70 and KBo 2.2.
- 7 To date, the correspondence between Sumerian^{MUNUS}ŠU.GI “Old Woman” and the Hittite *ḫāšawa*- “mid-wife”, proposed by Otten (1952: 233–234), and the exact scope of the oracles and rituals performed by these characters are still not clear. See Bin-Nun 1975: 121–122; Kammenhuber 1976: 119, 127; Benedetti 1980: 94, 104–106; Pecchioli Daddi 1982: 580–590; Beckman 1983: 232–235; Haas – Wegner 1988: 1–2; Beal 2001: 76; Haas 2003: 16; 2008: 20; Beckman 2016: 51; Marcuson 2016: 17, 410–413.
- 8 See Pecchioli Daddi 1982: 581–590; Frantz-Szabó 1995: 2009; Popko 1995: 82–83; Hazenbos 2003: I 8; Haas 2008: 20; Beckman 2016: 52–53; Marcuson 2016: 176. The Old Woman took part in the celebration of the festival (Marcuson 2016: 83–95) and funeral rituals (Bin-Nun 1975: 123–124), but her peculiarity was to be the only female oracular practitioner among the Hittite diviners (Beal 2001: 76).
- 9 Archi 1974: 115; Hazenbos 2003: I 9.

cusative) and put them in or to another symbolic place (locative). Although there are many entities that could form part of a KIN operation, the symbolic group does not seem to be open to all entities (Archi 1974: 116).¹⁰ Those movements could have occurred one, two, three, or even four times in a single oracle, but usually, a KIN oracle consisted of three actions, as in KBo 41.201 above. The first was never marked, whereas the second and the third were introduced with a temporal expression: *INA UD.2/3^{KAM}* “on the second/third day”; *2/3-ŠU/ŠÚ* “second, third”; *2/3-NU/Ú* “second, third time” (Akk. *ŠANÚ, ŠALĀŠĪŠU*); *2/4 urkiš* “second, fourth trace”.¹¹ The different ways of writing these temporal expressions are also a form of abbreviation, as we will see below.

2. Abbreviations

Abbreviations and short forms were very common in oracular texts, including KIN ones.¹² Sometimes they were necessary because the space on the clay tablet was limited. However, their frequent recurrence was not only due to the lack of space. Their wide use in the oracles was principally considered as a part of a writing style.

2.1 Common abbreviations

In the KIN oracle, abbreviations concerned the most commonly repeated symbols as well as the expressions and verbs present in the transcribed oracular operations. They could have been shortened phonetically, graphically, or through Sumerograms (with or without phonetic complementation).¹³ Although the following forms also occur singularly in other text genres, their repetitive use in the KIN oracular texts was widespread:

Hittite words phonetically shortened:

- *pa.-za*¹⁴ = *pankuš=za* “the Congregation (took ...) for itself”
- *pa.-i / pa.-u-i* = *pangawi* “to the Congregation”
- *da.-an ZI-an* = *dapian ZI-an* “the Whole Soul”

¹⁰ The choice of the KIN symbols might depend on the immediate impact of the current oracular topic. However, the vast majority of the KIN oracles have the same symbolic set. For these symbolic lists see Archi 1974: 134–144; Ünal – Kammenhuber 1974: 161–162; Orlamünde 2001: 303–305 and Marcuson 2016: 116–120.

¹¹ Archi 1974: 120–121; Orlamünde 2001: 301 with n. 36; Marcuson 2016: 111–112.

¹² Popko 1995: 135 “Their language [of divination texts] is sparing and simplified, the writing itself hasty and full of graphic abbreviations”.

¹³ On *heterogram* definition see Weeden 2011: 7, 10–12 and Kudrinski – Yakubovich 2016: 53–56, 58–59.

¹⁴ In the past, this and the following reading have been often confused with *UGULA-za* and *UGULA-i* (particularly see Ünal – Kammenhuber 1974: 162 and Ünal 1974: 34ff.), whereas today (Orlamünde 1998: 70–71; CHD P: 91; HEG II/11: 410) we know that *pa* was an abbreviation for *panku-*.

Expressions graphically shortened:

- *INA* ... (written AŠ, HZL 1)
- *ANA* ... (written DIŠ, HZL 356)
- ⅔ ... (without phonetic complementations: *-NU / -ŠU* etc.)

Logographic abbreviations

Nouns:

- GÙB-(*la*)*tar* = *ipalatar*² “Leftness”
- ḪUL-*lu* = *idalu* “Evil”
- IZI = *paḫḫur* “Fire”
- PAP-*mar* = *paḫṣanumar* “Protection”
- SIG₅ = *aššu* “Goodness”
- SILIM-*ul* = *aššul* “Well-being”
- SUD-*li* = *šannapili* “Emptiness”
- TI-*tar* = *ḫuišwatar* “Life”
- ZALAG.GA = *lalukkima* “Light”

Verbs:

- ME-*aš* = *dāš* “it took”
- ME-*an* = *dān* “(was/were) taken”
- ME-*ir* = *dāir* “they took”
- ME-*iš*¹⁵ = *daiš* “it put”
- SUM-*iš* = *pāiš* “it gave”
- SUM-*an* = *piyan* “(was/were) given”
- SUM-*ir* = *pāir* “they gave”
- GUB-*iš* = *araiš* “it arose”
- GUB-*ir* = *arair* “they arose”
- GAR-*ri* = *ki(yan)tari* “it is/they are placed”
- SIG₅-*ru* = *lazziyattaru* “Let (the oracle) be favorable!”
- NU.SIG₅-*du* = *kallarešdu* “Let (the oracle) be unfavorable!”

It should be noted that these abbreviations were not mandatory. Some symbols were always written in the same way (GÙB-*tar*, IZI, TI-*tar*, ZALAG.GA), whereas other short Hittite words could have been written phonetically too (*idalu* or ḪUL-*lu*, *aššul* or SILIM-*ul*; *aššu*- or SIG₅). On the other hand, the writing ME-*aš* is more frequent than *da-a-aš*, but SUM-*iš* occurs as often as *pa-iš*. However, the recourse to abbreviated forms was generally widespread.

15 The Sumerogram ME can imply both the verb *dā-* “to take” and the verb *dai-* “to put”, but in KIN oracles it usually refers to the former.

2.2 “Extreme” abbreviations

Occasionally, the use of abbreviations is reported in the logographic script without the phonetic suffix for casus or conjugation.¹⁶ For this reason, only their position in the oracular sentences allows us to understand when they function as subjects, objects, verbs, and final destinations of the movements:

KUB 6.7 + KUB 18.58 iii 11'

Transcription: 2-Ú SIG₅-za ZALAG.GA ME-aš DINGIR.MAḤ SUM

Translation: “Second: Goodness took the Light, (and) gave (it) to the Ḥannaḥanna”¹⁷

The latter example illustrates the scarcity of grammatical elements, relating to both declension and conjugation. According to the common KIN texts, it is possible to reconstruct the complete text as it might have been before it was abbreviated:¹⁸

Extended form: INA UD.2^{KAM} SIG₅-wa-an-za ZALAG.GA-an ME-aš na-at DINGIR.MAḤ-ni SUM-iš

Translation: “On the second day, the Goodness took the Light for itself and gave it to the Ḥannaḥanna”

Elsewhere, extreme abbreviations can be observed also for the construction of single words:

KUB 22.50

3' nu-kán DINGIR<-LIM>-ni da.<-pí-i> ZI<-ni>

5' ŠE-rù DINGIR<-LUM>-za da.<-pí-an> ZI<-an> ME-aš nu<-kán> ANA' GI[G

8' nu-kán DINGIR^{LIM}-ni da.<-pí-i> ZI<-ni>

KUB 49.15 (+) KBo 39.55

14' [...] 2-NU DINGIR.MAḤ GUB<-iš> TI-tar NINDA.GUR₄.[RA ...

15' [I]NIM LUGAL KU[R Me]-ra-a ME-aš nu-kán ANA LUGAL KUR M[e-ra-a ...]

16' 3-ŠÚ DINGIR^{LAM}! x[-x] da-pí.<-an> ZI<-an> ME-a[n ...]

However, it seems difficult to explain why these oracles have been written down with this kind of extreme abbreviation, whether it was a well-founded decision by the scribe or a

¹⁶ See, particularly, KUB 6.7 + KUB 18.58, Beckman – Bryce – Cline 2011: 234–241; Marcuson 2016: 106.

¹⁷ See Beckman – Bryce – Cline 2011: 236–237. About the Ḥannaḥanna in the KIN oracles, see Marcuson 2016: 130 with n. 80.

¹⁸ Whether as it was in the first stage of the writing in a possible previously draft of this text, or as it appeared in the mind of the scribe when he was writing. However, there are no elements to speculate further.

practical need arising from the pressure to transcribe it quickly.¹⁹ Particularly in KUB 6.7+ and KUB 22.50, the scripts appear quite cursive and at the same time, there is enough available space to write the words carefully, i.e., with all the suffixes.

Moreover, the greater use of abbreviations and short forms, as well as small mistakes and omissions in the writing, are more pronounced where different oracular methods are alternated in order to confute the previous investigation, i.e. the *Kombinierte Orakel* tablets.²⁰ This is likely to depend on how the clay tablet was organized and the method it was written; hence, what concerned the layout.

3. Layout

According to van den Hout (1998: 10–32) and Waal (2015: 20–38), the entire tablet corpus may be divided into two main categories according to their structure and typology: the “comprehensive” or “permanent” tablets and the “small” or “ephemeral” ones. The first typology includes large-size tablets carefully edited for conservation purposes, usually with two columns (Fig. 1). The second typology includes, instead, the smallest tablets, which were usually written in a single column (Fig. 2). Concerning the oracles, the comprehensive tablets contain compositions of different methods (KIN, Extispicy, and Augury, each introduced by standard formulas), whereas the small ones only have one oracular method.

Although both types make frequent use of abbreviations, the difference in the layouts may be due to their function. According to Waal (2015: 35) the small tablets “include documents that were written down on the spot, during the oracle inquiries, [...], interrogations or dictations”. For this reason, they might have been ephemeral texts, where the oracular

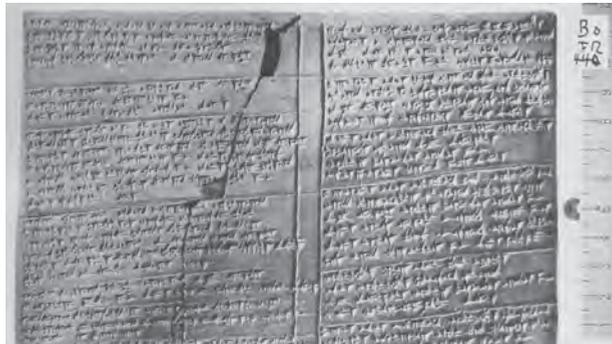


Fig. 1. KUB 5.3 (CTH 563; Bo 2042+3484; BoFN00440) obv. i–ii:
KIN-SU-MUŠEN Oracles.

¹⁹ Regarding possible situations in which a quick oracle could be required, see Warbinek forthcoming.

²⁰ Namely, CTH 577, 578, 579, 580, but *de facto* also in other CTHs differently classified: (e.g. CTH 561, 562, 563).

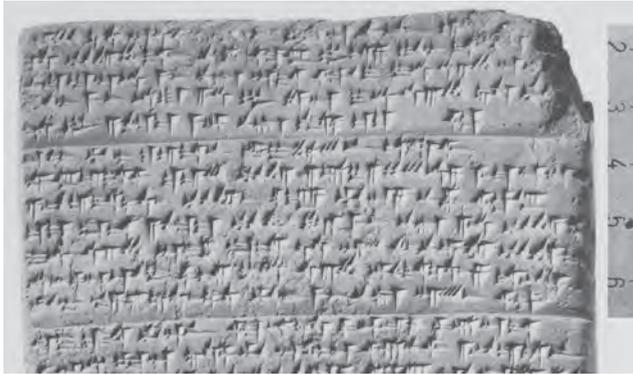


Fig. 2. KUB 6.3 (Bo 19, BoFN00575a) obv. 1–15: only KIN Oracles.

investigations were directly noted, whereas the comprehensive tablets were a written collection and edition of the others, forming part of the archives. Because of their different function, it is not surprising that the comprehensive tablets have been better preserved than the small ones.²¹

Furthermore, they also differ with regard to their edition: while the small tablets seem messier without a clear layout, the comprehensive tablets often have a well-ordered text, set out in paragraphs whose contents are divided by logical units. In both cases, the organization of the writing space involves the layout, and in particular how the edges and margins, paragraphs and the space arrangements have been worked out.²² It is possible to note these peculiarities especially where the tablet is blank or unwritten (i.e. there is a “lack of text”; see § 3.1. below), or, on the contrary, where the text appears to be confined in a smaller space (§ 3.2.).

3.1 Lack of text

The first example is a simple empty paragraph of KUB 49.76 (Fig. 3).²³ This section is unintelligibly blank, while the source reports only KIN oracles before and after. It seems quite likely that this space was left free for recording another oracular technique (later?), but it is not possible to suggest which divination would probably have been written there.

21 On the temporary character of the single-columned tablets, see Waal 2015: 87, 90.

22 Waal 2015: 85–124.

23 Other examples are: KBo 2.2 iii 29ff. and iv 18–21; KUB 5.1+ iii 100ff. and iv 33ff.; KUB 5.24 ii 11ff.; KUB 6.14 Rev. 4'ff.; KUB 18.37 Rev. 2'ff.; KUB 22.36 Rev.² 10'ff.; KUB 49.24 Obv. 1'ff.; Rev. 13'ff.; KUB 50.40; KUB 50.76 Obv. 3'ff., 5'ff.; KUB 52.41; KUB 52.45 Rev. 6ff.

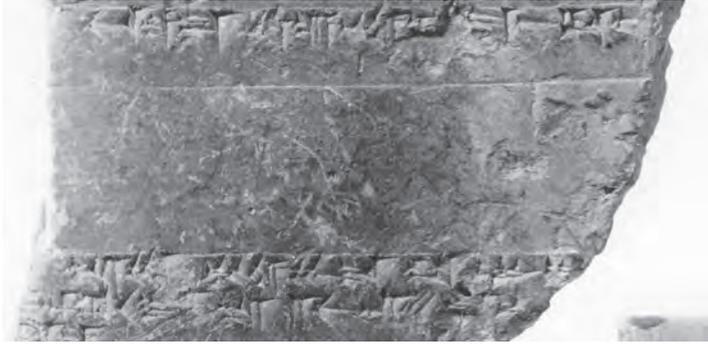


Fig. 3. KUB 49.76 obv.? 5'ff.: blank paragraph.

Another unwritten oracle situation occurs where text and paragraphs were not arranged together, producing too wide paragraphs, as in KUB 16.20 (Fig. 4).²⁴ This also implies a division of the tablet layout into paragraphs before the text had been written down; however, this fact may simply represent a mistake in the tablet organization.



Fig. 4. KUB 16.20 obv. 8'ff.: paragraph space larger than necessary.

If in the previous examples the oracles are complete in their whole structure, it seems to be more difficult to understand the lack of oracular operations. Nevertheless, in some cases, the paragraph is half-empty reporting only the oracular question and inquiry: e.g., in KUB 18.34 Rev. 4'ff. the inquiry [*nu*] KIN SIG₅-*ru* “[so] let the KIN oracle be favorable!” is not followed by any oracle (Fig. 5).²⁵

²⁴ See also KUB 5.4 ii 7ff.; KUB 16.20 obv. 8'ff.; KUB 18.21 obv. 9ff.; KUB 22.57 obv. 10f., 19ff.; rev. 3'f., 8'f.; KUB 50.90 obv. 9'ff., 18'ff., Rev. 24'ff., 30'ff.; KUB 50.118 obv. 8'ff.; KUB 52.37 ii 4'ff.

²⁵ See KBo 22.264 iv 9ff. (ca. 3 empty lines); KUB 5.1+ iii 47ff. (ca. 2 empty lines), iii 50ff. (ca. 2 empty lines), iii 100ff. (ca. 2 empty lines); KUB 5.4 ii 29ff. (ca. 5 empty lines); KUB 18.50 obv. 5'ff. (ca. 4 empty lines); KUB 22.37 obv. 12' (ca. 5 empty lines); KUB 22.63, 18' (ca. 5 empty lines).



Fig. 5. KUB 18.34 rev. 4'ff.

Likewise, the same empty section can follow the standard formula *IŠTU* ^{MUNUSŠU}.GI *ER*.^{TUM} *QATAMMA*=*pat nu KIN NU./SIG₅-ru/du* “The same question through the Old Woman: let the KIN oracle be (un)favorable!”, without anything following (KBo 2.2 ii 16–17, Fig. 6):²⁶



Fig. 6. KBo 2.2 ii 16–17.

Similar cases occur with other oracular methods, for instance:

- KUB 49.28 (CTH 577) ii? 12': TA ^{LÜ}IGI.MUŠEN “Through the Augur” followed by two empty lines, then a KIN paragraph, and then again (16') TA ^{LÜ}IGI.MUŠEN, but here with the bird-oracle report;
- KUB 50.60 (CTH 577) i 6: TA ^{LÜ}IGI.MUŠEN (followed by two empty lines);

²⁶ KBo 2.2 ii 3–6 (ca. 4 empty lines); ii 16–17 (ca. 2 empty lines); KBo 44.209 iii 2'ff. (ca. 3 empty lines); iv 7'ff. (ca. 2 empty lines); KBo 44.211, 11'ff. (ca. 3 empty lines); KBo 44.219 Rev. 6'f. (ca. 1 empty line); KBo 44.126, 7'ff. (ca. 4 empty lines); KUB 16.77 ii 15?ff. (ca. 3 empty lines); KUB 5,5 i 26ff. (ca. 4 empty lines); KUB 5,1+ iv 51f., 59f., 79f. (each with ca. 1 empty line), 82ff. (ca. 3 empty lines), 85ff. (ca. 4 empty lines); KUB 6.34 iv² 9'f. (1 empty line); KUB 6.35 rev. 5'f., 8'f., 11'f., 16'f. (each with ca. 1 empty line), IBoT 4.44, 4'ff. (ca. 3 empty lines); KUB 52.37 ii 1'ff. (ca. 7 empty lines), 5'ff. (ca. 3 empty lines).

- KUB 50.99 (CTH 577), 4' and 9': *IŠTU* ^{LÚ}HAL “Through the Haruspex” (followed by two empty lines); 5' and 10': *IŠTU* ^{LÚ}IGI.MUŠEN (followed by three empty lines);
- KUB 52.49 (CTH 577) ii 8: *IŠTU* ^{LÚ}HAL ER.^{TUM} QATAMMA=*pát* “The same question through the Haruspex” (followed by two empty lines).

Possible explanations for these blank spaces may be either that the scribes forgot to write these spaces, or that they were waiting for oracular input that perhaps was never delivered. In both cases, it seems that the layout of the clay tablet was organized beforehand, at least where the paragraph lines are schematic and regular in their size (e.g. KUB 5.1: four lines for the main oracles, two for the counterchecks). There is also the possibility that the scribes drew the paragraph lines during the writing process, rather than beforehand. They could have left open some space while waiting for further input, drew a line and continued with the rest of the text, but this behavior cannot be observed in the whole oracular corpus as a general rule and often is not compatible with the lack of oracular elements. This happens for example in KUB 50.79 and KUB 5.1, where the oracular actions were apparently not concluded and, therefore, the oracular information is missing:

KUB 50.79 rev.[?] 1–3b:²⁷

| | | | | | | |
|----|---|-----------------------|---|---|--|---|
| 1 | [| x-x-x-e-ni ma-a-an-ma | ıx-x, x-x-x-x-x- | [| |] |
| 2 | [| x-zi ŠE-rù | ıEN, ^{MEŠ} INIM-ma-aš ZAG-tar INIM SILIM-an ta[r ² ME-ir] | | | |
| 3 | [| 2-NU | (empty) | [| |] |
| 3b | [| ∅ | | [| |] |

⁽¹⁾[...]x but if ıx-x, x-x- [... ⁽²⁾(verb)? Let (the KIN) be favorable! ıThe Lords, [took] the Rightness of the Matter, the Matter, the Well-being x[⁽³⁾(and they gave them to the ...)]. Second (time): ...

KUB 5.1 iii 87–89:²⁸

87 ar-*ha-pát-kán ku-er-mi nu UL DÙ-mi i-wa-ar* ^mTe-me-ti
 88 zi-la-an-kán A-NA ^{URU}Ne-ri-ik a-pé-ez-za SIG₅-in SIG₅-ru
 89 ^{GIŠ}DAG GUB-iš *pár-na-aš* SIG₅
 (3 blank lines)

⁽⁸⁷⁾I will cut completely away. I will not do like Temeti. ⁽⁸⁸⁾Will the outcome for Nerik be favorable on that account? Let (the KIN) be favorable! ⁽⁸⁹⁾The Throne arose, <took> the Good of the House ...²⁹

27 See Marcuson 2016: 498.

28 See Ünal 1974: 78–79; Beal 1999: 52.

29 Beal 1999: 52 observed: “Three unscribed blank lines were left for the rest of the answer”.

In these specific cases, the lack of oracular endings is difficult to explain and might suggest some unidentified problems during the writing process of the tablet. As for now, the presence of unwritten oracular sections is far from being clearly resolved.

3.2 Confined space

By contrast with this lack of text, the oracles could also be confined in a smaller space. In KUB 49.77 iv (Fig. 7), despite the presence of an apparently empty paragraph below, the text continues upwards into the *intercolumnium*. Even if the tablet is broken, it is possible to argue that the paragraph space was wrongly calculated and the empty paragraph below was intended for something else.



Fig. 7. KUB 49.77: The last line of rev. iv continues on the *intercolumnium*.

Furthermore, the cuneiform signs underline another confined space in KUB 52.41, where a smaller and shallower script follows the first three lines (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8. KUB 52.41 rev.?² ll. 7'–9' and 10'–12' show scripture of different sizes.

Even more interesting is the fact that this difference between the script extends to the respective subjects. While the first three lines of the paragraph report the oracle context and question, those in smaller script represent the KIN oracle *tout court*. In this regard, there can be three explanations for this disparity. First, while the scribe was writing, he noted the insufficient space and therefore decided to scale down his script. Second, the scribe wrote the KIN operations and the oracular result (ll. 10'–12') a while after the writing of the context and question in the first three lines, possibly after the KIN work had been carried out by the Old Woman. Third, the second part (ll. 10'–12') may have been added by another scribe when the clay was quite dry. Although the first hypothesis is most likely, it does not totally exclude the others, even though the last two statements are difficult to prove. Nevertheless, the assumptions based on a lapse of time might find a useful term of comparison in KBo 18.142 (Mouton 2007a: 220–221; 2007b: 551–555). This tablet is a KIN letter with the oracular question and the context on the obverse, i.e., the queen saw in a dream a possible act of sorcery against the wife of Ḫarranaziti, whereas the performances and the result of the oracle are on the reverse. The difference becomes even clearer if we look at the clay tablet itself (Fig. 9–10; Berman 1982: 94 n. 5; Soysal 2000: 87–89).



Fig. 9. Obverse of KBo 18.142.



Fig. 10. Reverse of KBo 18.142.

Following Soyal (2000: 88) “the same scribe probably wrote both sides of the tablet”, but “the oracular question was first inscribed on a tablet, then the oracle performances and results were added as a continuation of the text”.

According to this comparison and its interpretation, it looks plausible that the script of KUB 52.41 may also represent two different moments in the oracular procedure and its writing. In addition, KUB 52.41 does not make extensive use of abbreviations. And, as an *argumentum e contrario*, if the scribe wrote all six lines without a pause, why did he not use more abbreviations rather than reduce the script? However, whichever of the three solutions proposed above is correct for KUB 52.41, to accept it the clay tablet layout had to have been initially defined in paragraphs.

Another example of confined space, also extreme in a way, is KUB 49.39 ii (Fig. 11) where there are even two whole paragraphs with smaller handwritings.³⁰

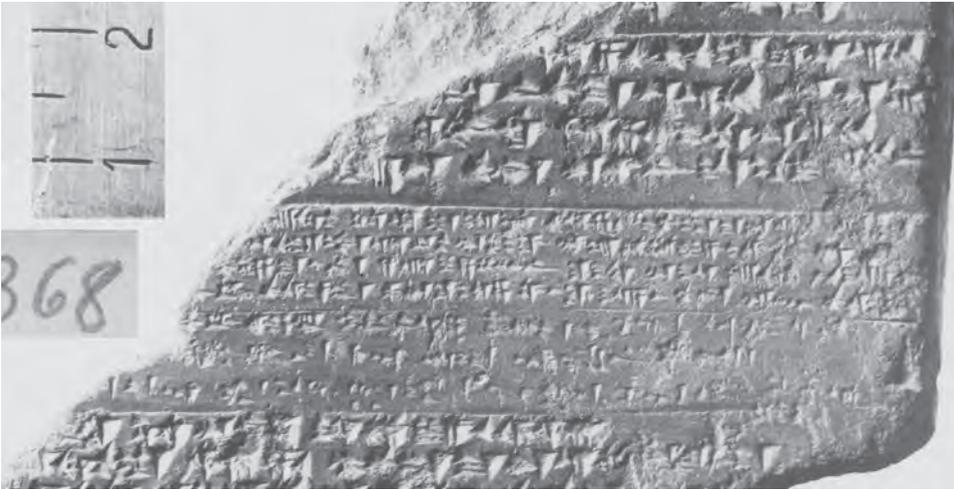


Fig. 11. KUB 49.39 obv. ii: the two central paragraphs have clearly different script sizes.

This peculiarity concerns also the subject since the two central paragraphs are both KIN oracles in between two other paragraphs with augury divinations. Therefore, it is possible that each oracular method was written down at the time it was performed (first the augury, then the KIN?), allowing the scribe to edit the tablet by oracular methods. Once again, it seems evident that the clay tablet needed to be formatted in fixed paragraphs before being written.

Furthermore, it is possible to find the opposite situation. In KUB 5.3 ii 48 the scribe apparently erased the symbol ŠA DINGIR^{MEŠ} *karpīuš* “the Angers of the Gods” in order to rewrite it at the beginning of the next line (Fig. 12). Perhaps, the scribe realized that the available space was larger than necessary and opted for a *horror vacui* solution.

KUB 5.3 ii 47–49

47 nu KIN NU.SIG₅-du
 48 IŠ-TU MU^{HLA} GÍD.DA {ŠA }
 49 .ŠA DINGIR^{MEŠ}, *kar-pí-uš* ME-an-te-eš na-at DINGIR.MAḤ-n[i SUM-an-te-eš]
 49b [∅] NU.SIG₅

³⁰ As Archi in the KUB 49: p. 23, already noted: “Zusatz. kleinere Schrift”.



Fig. 12. KUB 5.3 ii 48: the circle shows the erased *ŠA DINGIR^{MES} karpiuš*, that follows in l. 49

4. Inconsistencies

While the scribes were writing the tablets, it could have happened that they made mistakes. In the KIN corpus, these inconsistencies can be divided into two main groups: grammatical (§ 4.1.) and writing (§ 4.2.) mistakes.

4.1 Grammatical mistakes

As the example KBo 41.201 (above § 1.2) has shown, in every single oracular movement the main clause (of taking some symbols) is usually linked with the end position (of giving/placing them) through the *nu+pronoun* coordination. In this situation, the agreement in number and case between the enclitic pronoun (*-at*, *-aš*, *-an*) and the quantity of symbolic objects is not always respected,³¹ as the following text shows:

KUB 16.66 ii 18'–20'

18' [...] ^dDAG GUB-iš ŠA LUGAL *da-pi-an* ZI-an ME-aš

19' [*n*]a-an A-NA LUGAL ZAG-za ME-iš INA UD.2^{KAM} DINGIR^{MES} GUB-ir

20' [*pá*]r-*[n]*a-aš a-aš-šu MU^{KAM}-na ME-ir na-an *pa-an-ga-u-i* SUM-ir

⁽¹⁸⁾The Throne arose, took the Whole Soul of the King ⁽¹⁹⁾[and] placed it to the Right of the King. On the 2nd day the Gods arose, ⁽²⁰⁾took the Good of the [Hou]se and the Year and gave them to the Congregation.

Furthermore, the disagreement in number often occurs between subject and verb, especially with plural subjects with verbs in the third person:

³¹ Archi 1974: 123.

| Examples | Subject | Verb | Correct verbal form |
|--|---|-----------------|---------------------|
| IBoT 1.32 obv. 21; KBo 22.264 iv 2; KUB 16.81+ rev. 17'' | LÚ ^{MEŠ} URU ^{GIDRU} - <i>maš</i> | ME- <i>aš</i> | ME- <i>ir</i> |
| AT 454 ii 28'–29' | LÚ ^{MEŠ} É.DIN- GIR ^{LIM} - <i>šamaš</i> | ME- <i>aš</i> | ME- <i>ir</i> |
| KUB 6.3, 11–12; KBo 44.209 i 13'–14'; KUB 6.13+ 11'–12' | ^d <i>Gulšaš</i> | ME- <i>aš</i> | ME- <i>ir</i> |
| KUB 5.5 i 19 | GIDIM ^{HIA} | ME- <i>aš</i> | ME- <i>ir</i> |
| KUB 5.3+ i 56–57 | DINGIR ^{MEŠ} | ME- <i>iš</i> * | SUM- <i>ir</i> |

* In this last case, the Sumerogram ME- corresponds to the verb *dai-* “to put”. See § 2.1 and footnote 14 above.

In my opinion, these grammatical mistakes are not so uncommon or significant. Rather, I wish to suggest how the symbols in both nominative and accusative positions could represent a single entity of the oracle, thereby justifying the disagreement in number with the pronouns or verbs.

4.2 Writing mistakes

Generally, in the KIN oracles writing mistakes take the form of repetitions, forgotten words, or twice copied symbols, and often they make no sense. In relation to the typology of the tablets (above § 3), the mistakes occurring in the smallest and ephemeral tablets could be explained by the use of recording the oracles with haste or under dictation.³² Instead, in the comprehensive tablets mistakes could have occurred during the copying process of oracles, as happened with Hittite rituals: “Copying from a written example [...] is often betrayed by mechanical writing errors such as dittography, haplography, or so-called parablesis, the jumping from one word to the next identical word while omitting everything in between” (Marcuson – van den Hout 2015: 144).

The collected mistakes in the KIN oracles are as follows. They occur relatively seldom in the large oracular text corpus and their presence is surely less significant than the wide use of abbreviations.

Numerical mistakes:

- in KBo 41.173 iv 7'–8' and KUB 5.5 iii 7'–12' two different oracular actions are both marked with *INA UD.2*^{KAM} (rather than *INA UD.3*^{KAM}).

³² See Soysal 2000: 88; Waal 2015: 35; Warbinek forthcoming.

Additions:

- in KBo 13.76 obv. 14 the scribe introduced a (short) forgotten line between ll. 13–14;
- in KUB 22.66 rev.³ 7' the Sumerogram ZI has been copied twice: “[*dapia*]n ZI ZI-*an*”;
- in KBo 14.21 ii 25' the verb ME-*aš* has been written twice after both accusative-symbols;
- in KBo 41.164, 2' the scribe forgot the verb ME-*aš*, and so he put it in the available space between the last symbol MU^{KAM}-*ya* and the following coordination *na-an*, adapting the size of his script.

Omissions:

- in KBo 41.173 iv 7' there is no subject. According to the verbs, a possible reconstruction could be: INA UD.2.^{KAM} <DINGIR^{MEŠ} GUB-*ir*> ... ME-*ir* ... SUM-*ir*;
- in VBoT 25 i 7, KUB 5.1 i 68,³³ KUB 5.5 iii 7'–12', KBo 14.21 i 77' there was no inquiry [(NU.)SIG₅-*ru/du*] in the opening oracle wording;
- in KUB 5.1 iv 86–88, 89–92 there are neither inquiry nor answer;
- in KUB 5.4+ ii 13 the last important locative-symbol is missing;
- in KUB 50.58++ i 8' there are both the inquiry (NU.SIG₅-*du*) and the result (NU.SIG₅), but not the KIN procedures. Is it possible that the lack of available space made useless or even superfluous the transcription of the oracular actions?

Inversions:

- in KUB 6.3 obv. 19 and KUB 18.37 rev. 7', the results (SIG₅ and NU.SIG₅) had been copied *before* the last oracular action;
- in IBoT 1.32 obv. 20 the sequence of the KIN symbols ^{LÚ}KÚR IZI MÈ “Enemy, Fire (and) Battle”, followed by an erasure, appears *before* the inquiry KI.MIN ŠE-*ru*. Their presence in this position is not only wrong but also suspicious and the erasure that follows seems to prove that a mistake was made. Indeed, the same ^{LÚ}KÚR IZI MÈ symbolic sequence turns up in the following line 32. For this reason, it is almost certain that the scribe wrote some KIN symbols in the wrong place, erased the last signs (but not all), and then decided to go further.

5. Conclusions

In light of what has been presented above, there are some interesting points to emphasize regarding the KIN oracle, its textual structure, and its clay tablet layout.

First, it is beyond question that edges, lines, and paragraphs were prepared and drawn up in the clay before writing the oracle. In this operation, paragraphs could have been left either completely empty or begun with a standard inquiry or formula. After that, the oracle details

33 It should be noted that in Beal's translation (1999: 45) appears inexplicably the missing inquiry: “Let (the oracle) be favorable”.

were written in the remaining empty spaces. The possibility that the text was written down step by step for oracular methods (KIN, MUŠEN, SU and so on) is not less important. This seems evident where, for instance, KIN paragraphs are alternated with empty ones, probably intended for other oracular methods. Furthermore, to fit the oracular text into the available space, resolutions, and techniques could be employed to solve spatial problems: reducing the script of the signs or making frequent use of oracular abbreviations.

Lastly, it is possible to speculate further about the relationship between available space and use of abbreviations. When abbreviated KIN symbols and shortened verbal forms appear in larger paragraphs, this was probably due to the scribe's routine of constantly writing similar oracular procedures. What remains unclear is if the oracular tablets we have are the result of copying transmission, that is, if the scribes used to copy the oracles already carried out from other drafts, which may have been written on the spot and now are most likely missing or lost. I find this hypothesis most interesting, but at the moment there is no evidence to support it.

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