

## CHAPTERS 1 AND 2 OF THE *bārûtu* \*

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The question whether the Kouyunjik collection, that is, the remains of the library of Assurbanipal, most of which is now in the BM, is a representative example of such a library at the time, or merely reflects the predilection of this monarch for texts dealing with divination, is still debatable<sup>1</sup>. However, it is precisely the keen interest of the later Sargonids, Esarhaddon and his son Assurbanipal, in this arcane “science” which is most helpful to the study of Mesopotamian divination, notably extispicy, because it gave the scribes and diviners the intellectual impetus to produce extensive series of divinatory texts, such as the *bārûtu*, the NA extispicy series par excellence, as well as sundry other extispicy texts and commentaries. My purpose in this paper is to discuss the first two “chapters” of the *bārûtu*, as well as another text, which as it turns out is a commentary on one of them. I am referring to K. 3978+, a large 4 column tablet which originally must have comprised about 250 lines. Some of its missing parts can be restored with the help of duplicates, other parts have so far remained unrecovered. Column IV in particular is poorly preserved. Its upper part is missing and what remains is mostly vitrified, although some of it can be read with the help of duplicates. K. 3978+ is an extispicy commentary of the *mukallimtu* type. This fact is explicitly stated both in the colophon of K. 3978+ (DUB-1-KÁM-ma [mu-k]al-lim-tu, etc.) and in one of the published duplicates, CT 31, 49, which is said in the colophon (line 31) to be tablet 1 of a *mukallimtu*. I should like to note in passing that commentaries of the *mukallimtu* type are attested for other chapters of the *bārûtu*<sup>2</sup>, and were most likely available for all 10 chapters. These commentaries

<sup>1</sup>) The substance of this paper was read at the 39th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale held at Heidelberg in the summer of 1992.

<sup>1</sup>) See I. Starr, *The Rituals of the Diviner*, p. 1, fn. 2.

<sup>2</sup>) Some of those appear to have been quite extensive. CT 51, 156, for example, is the fourth tablet of a commentary (*ši-i-bu u mu-kal-lim-tum*) on chapter 3 of the *bārûtu* (BE NA).

appear to have formed a series of their own (*šu-ma-at ši-i-bi u mu-kal-lim-ti*, etc.).

K. 3978+ is mostly unpublished, with the exception of the lower right-hand part of column II and the upper right-hand part of column III, published in CT 31, pls. 17 and 18, respectively. What is generally unknown is that K. 3978+ is a commentary on chapter 1 of the *bārûtu*, the one described in a surviving colophon as *šumma isru* and, as we shall see, the parts of the sheep belonging to this series are, beside *isru* itself, the vertebrae, the rib cage, the floating ribs or cartilages (*najabtu*) and the breastbone. But first, a few words about the reading of this word, *isru*. It occurs once in an OB omen text, YOS 11, 23, the one I edited in my book *The Rituals of the Diviner*. It appears in line 136 of that text, side by side with *kursinnu*, the fetlock. It is written syllabically there, *is-ra-am*, and that writing shows that it should be read *isru* and not GIŠ.DAL, which reflects its other attested writing, *isri*, the latter simply being the plural of *isru*. However, in the late texts the two writings are used interchangeably. DAL or *tallu*, the diaphragm, is usually written DAL or DAL.ŠÀ. Also, the *isrus* are four in number, as is clear from K. 3978+ col. I, and they have something to do with the fetlocks or thighs, at least with that general region of the sheep.

So much for *isru*. It is now necessary to say a few words about the *bārûtu*, an omen series composed by the scribes of Assurbanipal, and modelled after the large Assur compendium KAR 423 with respect to the order of parts of the sheep. It had 10 so-called “chapters”, consisting of 100 tablets or so altogether, following, as noted, the order of parts of KAR 423, and if you are familiar with the latter, you know that it begins with *isru* omens. KAR 423, I, 16 lists 10 *liqte ša šumma isri*. These are followed by *kaskasu* omens, and continue with the major parts of the liver, beginning with *manzāzu*, the “station”, *padānu*, the “path”, and so on. The *bārûtu* follows the same order, but as noted, it considers the vertebrae, rib cage, floating ribs and breastbone as part of its first chapter. The kidneys may belong either to the first or second chapter, most likely the latter (I shall have more to say about it below). Of the 10 “chapters” of the *bārûtu*, the first 2—chapter 1 being the series *šumma isru* and chapter 2 being the series *šumma tirānu* (ŠÀ.NIGIN), that is, the intestines—deal with parts of the sheep other than the liver and lungs.

A clue to the number and order of parts of the first chapter of the *bārûtu* is provided by the unpublished fragment 82-3-23, 32, whose colophon is preserved and states it to be the fourth tablet of the series *šumma isru*. It would appear, then, that this chapter consisted of 4 tablets, some published, others as yet unpublished. The reason why the published texts have not been identified till now as belonging to the series *šumma isru* is that their colophons are only partially preserved, usually the name of the series being the missing part. Nevertheless, I believe that the 4 tablets of chapter 1 of *bārûtu* are identifiable and their colophons restorable. The restorations, as we shall see, are supported by the catch-lines.

The order of the 4 tablets belonging to the series *šumma isru* is as follows: tablet 1 is represented by the unpublished fragment 82-3-23, 17, whose partially preserved colo-

phon I would restore as DUB-1-KÁM-*ma* [ÉŠ.GÀR BE *is-ru* ...]. The obverse of this fragment preserves a few traces of BE *isrus*. The surviving protases in the reverse refer to *pasinnus*, which, according to K. 3978+, I, 15f., is the same as *isru*<sup>3</sup>. This fragment must be a duplicate of a much better preserved unpublished tablet, K. 2722+, which, as we shall see, served as the major source of omens of column I of K. 3978+. The catch-line of 82-3-23, 17, whose protasis, BE KIŠIB 15 *a-tar* [...] is preserved, is the first line of Sm 236, published in CT 31, 45, which is thus tablet 2 of the series. I would restore its colophon as DUB-2-KÁM-*ma* ÉŠ.GÀR [BE *is-ru* ...]. The catch-line of this tablet is BE KAK.TI šá 15 *ina* [SAG<sup>7</sup>-[šá PA TUK-ši ...], “if the right rib cage [has a bifurcation] in [its] top [...]”, which is the first line of CT 31, 24 (82-5-22, 500), which is thus tablet 3 of the series. I would restore its colophon as DUB-[3-KÁM-*ma* ÉŠ.GÀR BE *is-ru* ...]. The catch-line of this tablet is BE KAK.ZAG.GA 15 *ka-p*[*i-iš*] 2.30 *n*[*a-pár-qud* ...], “the breast-bone is cur[led] on the right, and li[es on its back] on the left”, which is, as one would expect, line 1 of tablet 4 of this series, and indeed, the extant fragment mentioned above, 82-3-23, 32, does preserve, aside from the colophon, some *kaskasu* omens.

A note on the catch-line of this tablet, BE BIR šá 15 *ana* 2.30 GU<sub>4</sub>.UD-*it-ma* [...], “if the right kidney ‘jumps’ to the left and [...]”<sup>4</sup>. It is not immediately clear whether this is line 1 of a putative tablet 5 of *šumma isru* or that of tablet 1 of chapter 2 of the *bārûtu*, the one dealing with the intestines (ŠÀ.NIGIN). In my opinion, the latter is the case, for the following reason: the colophon of BRM 4, 13, 78 describes it as IM-3-KAM-*ma* BE ŠÀ.NIGIN IM-7-KAM-*ma* ÉŠ.GÀR *ba-ru-tu*, that is, the third tablet of the series ŠÀ.NIGIN (chapter 2 of the *bārûtu*) as well as tablet 7 of the *bārûtu*. If this is the case, then chapter 1 of the *bārûtu* could not have had more than 4 tablets. The catch-line of tablet 4 of this chapter may thus be line 1 of tablet 1 of chapter 2 of the *bārûtu*. In other words, at least some of the omens of this tablet may have been kidney omens. There are also two other significant indications that chapter 1 consisted of 4 tablets, and not only in the NB *bārûtu*:

1. It would appear that each of the 4 columns of K. 3978+ corresponds to one of the 4 tablets of the *šumma isru* series. For example, column I of K. 3978+ got many of its omens from K. 2722+, which is, in my opinion, tablet 1 of chapter 1 of the *bārûtu*. Although the left side of the former is missing, it is clear that this tablet had *isru* omens, because at least 10 of them are identical with those of K. 3978+, col. I, as the following table shows:

<sup>3</sup>) *šum<sub>4</sub>-ma ... ina is-ri šá 15 u 2.30 [ina pa-s]in-ni ša 15 u 2.30 U.MEŠ ŠUB.MEŠ-ma ...*, “if ... in the *isrus* of the right and left, (that is) [in the *pas*]innus of the right and left there are holes ...”.

<sup>4</sup>) Cf. Boissier, *Choix*, p. 108, fn. 273.

K. 2722+	K. 3978+, col. I
1	3, (8)
5	30, 31
9	22
10	28
14	24, 26
16	47
17	48
21	50
23	19
26	59

This is the case also with the other tablets in this series. As we have seen, Sm. 236 (CT 31, 45) is the second tablet in this series, but it is a relatively small fragment, of which only lines 1, 3 and 7 can be said with certainty to have been excerpted for comment in K. 3978+, col. II.

Sm 236	K. 3978 <sup>5</sup> , col. II
1	39
3	44
7	49

Much more is extant of tablet 3 of chapter 1 of the *bārûtu*, CT 31, 24 and 25 (82-5-22, 500), and at least 16 of its surviving omens have been excerpted for comment in K. 3978+, col. III.

82-5-22, 500	K. 3978+, col. II <sup>5</sup>
1	61
4	62
82-5-22, 500	K. 3978+, col. III
6	19
7	2
9	4
12	5
13	20

<sup>5</sup>) A word on K. 3978+, col. II, 61f.. K. 3978+, col. II, 61 is the catch-line of the duplicate CT 31, 49, 30, which is described in the colophon as tablet 1 of a *mukallimtu*. In other words, this commentary presented the material of K. 3978+, II, 60 and K. 3978+, II, 61 is therefore part of the second tablet of this *mukallimtu*.

14	16
15	11
16	6
23	22
24	24
25	9
r.7	43, 45
r.9	46
r.15	34

As for tablet 4, 82-3-23, 32 is an important fragment, because it preserves the colophon which identifies it as tablet 4 of the series *šumma isru*. Other than that, it preserves just a few protases of *kaskasu* omens. Therefore, other unpublished duplicates of this tablet, which served as the sources of omens for K. 3978+ column IV, must be used. The most useful of these duplicates is K. 3982+<sup>6</sup>. At least 6 omens from this tablet were excerpted in the commentary.

K. 3982+ <sup>7</sup>	K. 3324+
6	4
11	8-11
r.11	15-16
r.12	17-18
r.13	20-21
r.16	25-26
82-3-23, 32	K. 3324+
6	29

2. The catch-line of K. 3978+ refers to the intestines (BE ŠĀ.NIGIN 15 KUD.MEŠ, etc.), indicating that this tablet is followed by one which is a commentary on chapter 2 of the *bārûtu*.

Before turning to chapter 2 of the *bārûtu*, I would like to make two additional remarks:

1. Although, as noted above, K. 3978+ excerpted its primary omens from chapter

<sup>6</sup>) For K. 3982+, cf. Boissier, *Choix*, pp. 93f.. It should be noted that the obverse of this tablet is poorly preserved, so most of the information is provided by its reverse. Also, K. 3978+, IV itself, for the reasons outlined above, is mostly unusable. The duplicate, K. 3324+, is used in the table below.

<sup>7</sup>) The correspondence of K. 3982, 6, 11 to K. 3324+, 4, 8f., respectively, is not entirely certain. For K. 3982, 6, cf. however, the duplicate K. 4136, 14.

1 of the *bārûtu* for commentary, other sources as well were used for alternative omens<sup>8</sup>, such as were considered to have some bearing on the primary ones, the so called *šanu šumšu*, *šalšu šumšu*, and so on<sup>9</sup>;

2. It is of interest to note that wherever the opposition right-left was concerned, the scribes excerpted only those omens which deal with the right side of the part of the sheep in question<sup>10</sup>.

That the series dealing with the intestines (ŠÀ.NIGIN) is chapter 2 of the *bārûtu* is clear from the colophon of BRM 4, 13, noted above, which describes it as the third tablet of this series and the seventh tablet of the *bārûtu*. It is now certain that this chapter of the *bārûtu* consisted of at least 8 tablets, which are listed below:

1. tablet 1 is represented by the small fragment 82-5-22, 552, with only the ends of about 10 apodoses preserved. It is, in my opinion, the first tablet of the series, because its catch-line, which can be restored from KAR 423, I, 26, [BE ŠÀ.NIGIN IM DIRI.MEŠ *ni-i*]p-hat LÚ.HAL ŠUB-t[i ERIM-ni], “[if the intestines are full of wind, confused] omens of the diviner, down[fall of my army]”, appears to be the first line of K. 3670+, the second tablet in the series. I would therefore restore the colophon of 82-5-22, 552 as [DUB-1-KÁM-ma ÉŠ.GÀR B]E ŠÀ.NIGIN [...].

2. K. 3670+ is, according to its colophon, DUB-2-KÁM ÉŠ.[GÀR BE ŠÀ.NIGIN ...]<sup>11</sup>, that is, tablet 2 of the series.

3. BRM 4, 13, which I had occasion to refer to above, is according to its colophon tablet 3 of the series.

4. The extant portion of tablet 4 consists of a number of duplicates one of which preserves the colophon in its entirety, *tu-pi* 4-KÁM-ma ÉŠ.GÀR BE ŠÀ.NIGIN<sup>12</sup>.

5. The catch-line of tablet 4 gives the first line of tablet 5 as BE *um-mat* ŠÀ.NIGIN 2-ma ZI-ib SAL.HUL, “if the coils of the colon form two clusters, a dangerous attack”. However, nothing else of this tablet is known to me (see, however, below).

The next two tablets in the series, tablets 6 and 7, fortunately have their colophons sufficiently preserved for certain identification.

6. K. 3949+ is, according to its colophon, DUB-6-KÁM-ma ÉŠ.[GÀR BE ŠÀ.NIGIN ...]. The restoration is certain, because the catch-line, BE SIG-tum TAB-et, etc., is the first line of

7. K. 3691+, which is, according to its colophon, [DUB]-7-KÁM-ma ÉŠ.GÀR [B]E ŠÀ.NIGIN.

8. K. 3733+ is evidently the eighth tablet of this series, because its first line BE IGI

<sup>8)</sup> For example, the unpublished tablet, Sm. 1904, 8, 11f. served as the source of K. 3978+, col. I, 33-35.

<sup>9)</sup> Note, for example, K. 3978+, col. I, 27-37, 10 *šumšus*.

<sup>10)</sup> An exception is K. 3978+, col. II, 59.

<sup>11)</sup> Restored from the duplicate, Rm 2, 180.

<sup>12)</sup> K. 6483 + Sm 791.

ŠÀ.NIGIN KI.TA *a-miš/meš*, etc., is identical to the catch-line of tablet 7. Furthermore, lines 10ff. of this fragment correspond to K. 4045a+, 1ff., although the two do not join<sup>13</sup>. The composite text, then, must have had originally at least 100 lines or so, of which about 95 are preserved. It thus has more lines than tablet 3 (BRM 4, 13), the best preserved in the series, with just under 80 lines.

The new information about chapters 1 and 2 of the *bārûtu* enables us to revise the layout of the latter suggested by Ulla Jeyes in her book, *Old Babylonian Extispicy*, p. 10<sup>14</sup>. The table below shows the most likely number of tablets of each “chapter” of the *bārûtu* in the light of the new evidence presented above.

Chapter 1	BE <i>isru</i>	4 tablets
Chapter 2	BE ŠÀ.NIGIN	8+ tablets
Chapter 3	BE NA	6 tablets
Chapter 4	BE GÍR	5+ tablets <sup>15</sup>
Chapter 5	BE IGI.TÙN	15 tablets
Chapter 6	BE ZÉ	10 tablets
Chapter 7	BE ŠU.SI	11 tablets
Chapter 8	BE GIŠ.TUKUL	8+ tablets
Chapter 9	BE HAR	14 tablets
Chapter 10	BE <i>multabiltu</i>	17 tablets
Total		98+ tablets

This table calls for some explanatory notes:

1. As noted above, the third tablet of the series ŠÀ.NIGIN = the seventh tablet of the *bārûtu* (BRM 4, 13, 78). This indicates that chapter 1 (*šumma isru*) could only have had 4 tablets.

2. The ninth tablet of chapter 6 (ZÉ) = the forty-eighth tablet of the *bārûtu*<sup>16</sup>. Since this chapter had 10 tablets, the number of tablets in the first 6 chapters of the *bārûtu* should be 49. However, since the attested total is actually 48, it means that either chapter 2 (ŠÀ.NIGIN) or chapter 4 (GÍR) may have had an additional tablet.

3. The sixth tablet of chapter 7 (ŠU.SI) = the fifty-fifth tablet of the *bārûtu* (BRM 4, 12, 81). Since this chapter had 11 tablets, the first 7 chapters of the *bārûtu* should consist of 60 tablets.

<sup>13</sup>) However, K. 3733+ may be part of the duplicate tablet, K. 3832+.

<sup>14</sup>) For a recent discussion of the *bārûtu*, the reader is referred to Ulla Jeyes, *Old Babylonian Extispicy*, pp. 10ff. and fns. 24-33.

<sup>15</sup>) Note, however, CT 20, 13, r. 11 [... DUB?] 6-KAM-ma BE GÍR ZAG [...].

<sup>16</sup>) For references, see Jeyes, *op. cit.*, p. 189, fn. 29.

4. Of the remaining chapters, chapter 8 (GIŠ.TUKUL) had at least 8 tablets, as the following evidence shows: the catch-line of tablet 7 of this chapter (DUB-7-KAM-*ma* BE GIŠ.TUKUL, K. 3656+, r. 5) is [BE *ina* ... SU]HUŠ NA 2 GIŠ.TUKUL.MEŠ GAR.MEŠ-*ma* IGI.IGI-*lum*, “[if, in] the base of the ‘station’ there are 2 ‘weapon’- marks, and they face each other” (*ibid.*, 6), suggesting an additional tablet in this chapter<sup>17</sup>.

5. The series *pan takaltī* (IGI.TÙN), which is chapter 5 of the *bārûtu*, had 15 tablets, at least in the NB *bārûtu*, according to the colophon of BM 75224 (forthcoming).

6. It is of interest to note that of the so-called fortuitous markings, the “weapon”-mark alone merited a chapter of its own in the *bārûtu*.

7. The number of tablets of chapters 9 and 10 is “fixed” by CT 20, 1.

A word about the NA and NB, or perhaps I should say LB, *bārûtu*<sup>18</sup>. It is possible that the latter had had more tablets than the former, rather than less. For example, although it is clear from the colophon of BM 75224 that the LB series *pan takaltī* had, as I have just noted, 15 tablets, the NA version of this chapter may have only 12<sup>19</sup>. This may be due to a NB predilection for tablets of 60 lines, of which BM 75224 and BRM 4, 15 and 16 (the latter two being duplicates of tablet 4 of chapter 2 of the *bārûtu*), may serve as examples.

There is also some evidence for the existence of a commentary on chapter 2 of the *bārûtu* (ŠÀ.NIGIN), although the only attested evidence for it known to me is the fragmentary duplicates Rm 2, 144 and 83-1-18, 418, which in their extant form appear to be a commentary on the tablet 6 of this series, but hardly any omens from this tablet can be cited with certainty as evidence. One reason for it is the poor state of preservation of tablet 6 (K. 3949+). If we assume that it had originally between 80-100 lines, only a quarter of it is preserved, and that too only partially. This is also the case with Rm 2, 144 and 83-1-18, 418. Neither has a colophon or catch-line preserved<sup>20</sup>. Some omens in the obverse of Rm 2, 144 can be shown to have come from K. 8752+. For example, lines 9,

<sup>17</sup>) The latter may be line 1 of 83-1-18, 443, which may thus be tablet 8 of this chapter.

<sup>18</sup>) All the extant tablets of the LB *bārûtu*, e.g. BRM 4, 12, 13; TCL 6, 2, 4, etc., are Seleucid. These maintain the helpful practice of noting the sequence of these tablets within the *bārûtu* (e.g. TCL 6, 4, r. 16; BRM 4, 12, 81; 13, 78).

<sup>19</sup>) Cf. Jeyes, *op. cit.*, p. 10 and fn. 35.

<sup>20</sup>) The following table shows the possible correspondences between tablet 6 and the duplicates Rm 2, 144 and 83-1-18, 418, although none of it is certain, for the reasons outlined above:

K. 3949+	Rm 2, 144 / 83-1-18, 418
18	r.5
r.2	r.14
r.3	r.12

10 of the former correspond to lines 3, 5 of the latter<sup>21</sup>. However, the relation of this tablet to chapter 2 of the *bārûtu* is not clear, because it is partially vitrified and its colophon is not preserved.

Is the fact that Rm 2, 144, 9f. is a commentary on K. 8752+, 3, 5 an indication that the latter is tablet 5 of chapter 2 of the *bārûtu*? This question cannot be answered with certainty at our present state of knowledge.

<sup>21</sup>) The obverse of 83-1-18, 418, on the other hand, is difficult to read, and the extant part does not appear to correspond to that of Rm 2, 144.