

The Temples of Sud: An Old Babylonian Lament (TCL 15, 1)

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Abstract: TCL 15, 1 (AO 3024) is the only known manuscript of a Sumerian lament on the temples of Sud, the city-goddess of Šuruppak. Despite its excellent state of preservation, the text has received almost no attention since the (long outdated) edition of Witzel (1935). This article makes a fresh attempt to interpret the text, in light of recently discovered sources on the cults of Sud in the early Old Babylonian period.

This article offers a new edition of TCL 15, 1 (AO 3024, CDLI P345345), the only known manuscript of an Old Babylonian Sumerian lament on the temples of the goddess Sud. The tablet (13.5 by 6.5 by 2.9 cm) was purchased by the Musée du Louvre from the dealer A. Brimo in 1896, and was copied and published by H. de Genouillac in 1930 as the first item of his *Textes religieux sumériens* (= *Textes cunéiformes du Louvre* 15).¹ This prominent placement reflects the almost ideal state of preservation and nearly complete legibility of AO 3024, both of which are unusual features in an Old Babylonian Sumerian literary tablet. Yet the text has received very little attention since its publication. Falkenstein (1933) made no comments on AO 3024 in his review of TCL 15. S. Langdon noted a transliteration and

¹ The measurements of the tablet and the reference to Brimo are taken from <https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010154558> (accessed 28 March 2024). I have no further indications on the provenance of the tablet.—I began to work on TCL 15, 1 while editing CUSAS 38, 1 (= Metcalf 2019, 9–17). Since then I have been fortunate to be able to discuss the text with several colleagues. J. Lisman and U. Gabbay generously shared with me a draft transliteration and translation, which I have been grateful to consult for comparison. I am also thankful for the provisional transliteration and translation that I encountered on OBEL in March 2024; while my interpretation of the text is rather different, the OBEL corpus as a whole has been an immensely valuable resource. I have benefited very significantly from detailed comments offered by P. Attinger, U. Gabbay, A. Otto and W. Sallaberger, as well as from joint readings of the text with J. Beltz and D. Schwemer in Würzburg (August 2024) and A. Cavigneaux in Geneva (September 2024). A. Thomas, M. Alassi and V. Pataï kindly permitted me to collate the tablet in August 2023 and September 2024. Particularly in an edition of a text that requires difficult choices to be made in almost every line, it should not be supposed that these colleagues necessarily accept everything that I have written. My stay at the Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg was made possible by grants from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and SCIAS Würzburg. Abbreviations follow the Reallexikon der Assyriologie and (for titles of Sumerian literary works) Attinger (2021, 21–56), with the following supplements: ES = Emesal, GSF = Attinger (2021), GSF² = Attinger (2023), HES = Heidelberger Emesal-Studien (2014—).

translation into the margins of his personal copy, which is now kept in the Art, Archaeology and Ancient World Library, University of Oxford. A full edition was then presented by Witzel (1935). Apart from the highly misleading fluency of the translation, this edition was marred by Witzel's insistence that the text is connected to the cult of Dumuzi. Subsequently the text was cited sporadically (under the alternative title TRS 1) in Krecher's groundbreaking 'Sumerische Kultlyrik' (Krecher 1966) and in rare specialised studies of Old Babylonian laments such as Löhnert (2009). Delnero (2020, 444) briefly mentions TCL 15, 1 as a catalogue-entry.²

The reason for this striking neglect of such a well-preserved and legible literary text evidently lies in the philological problems that it presents: due to many non-standard spellings, perplexing grammatical and lexical features, and scribal omissions, it seems impossible to offer a confident translation of TCL 15, 1. The attempt that I have made here, based on repeated collation of the tablet, is motivated by two recent developments. The first is the renewed scholarly interest in lamentation-poetry in general and the (especially difficult) Old Babylonian Sumerian textual evidence in particular, as documented by several recent publications.³ A new and very helpful resource is now offered by the online corpus Old Babylonian Emesal Liturgies (OBEL) directed by N. Veldhuis. The progress made on the literary genre as a whole clearly facilitates a fresh approach to TCL 15, 1, rebarbative as the poem remains.

The other reason to return to TCL 15, 1 is the newly available contextual evidence on the cults of the goddess Sud in Šuruppak under the kings of Isin in the early Old Babylonian period. This famous city was previously considered to have been insignificant or even

² 'Single column tablet with multiple sections from a lament in which the goddess Sud seems to be the focus. Possible, but not certain that this source contains a lament to Sud, and probable that the lament in this source is from a Balag'. The text does not appear to be cited by Cohen (2023).

³ For editions of Old Babylonian compositions see e.g. Delnero (2020, 307–77), Cavigneaux (2021), Cavigneaux (2022), Delnero and Gabbay (2023), Cavigneaux (2023), Jaques (2024).

practically abandoned by the early second millennium BC, and in theological terms Sud was thought at this point to have been largely absorbed by Enlil's wife Ninlil.⁴ Yet the recently published Sumerian *sergida*-hymn CUSAS 38, 1 shows that a ruler of the Isin-dynasty, Būr-Sîn (1897–1876 BC), explicitly attributed his kingship to Sud as the deity of Šuruppak, and described his votive offerings to the goddess in a cultic scene set in her temples, the Ekisiga and the Edimgalana. CUSAS 38, 1 refers to Sud's marriage to Enlil, and to her association with Nippur, but also conceives of her as an independent deity of her own city. Both of the temples of Sud mentioned in CUSAS 38, 1 (the Ekisiga and the Edimgalana) occur also in TCL 15, 1, which in addition seems to feature a further, otherwise unknown temple of Sud, the E'eden. We also know from separate evidence that the Edimgalana was maintained by king Enlil-bāni, another ruler of the Isin-dynasty (1862–1839 BC), as shown by a building inscription (RIM E4.1.10.7), one copy of which is supposed to have been found at the site of Khum near Fara/Šuruppak. TCL 15, 1 is therefore an important but hitherto neglected piece of evidence on the early Old Babylonian cult of Sud, which seems especially deserving of a fresh attempt as new archaeological explorations of Fara have commenced in 2017 under the direction of A. Otto.⁵

SUMMARY AND INTERPRETATION

On the most plausible reading, the text on TCL 15, 1 consists for the most part of two *kirugu*-stanzas of almost equal length (the first and the third, plus the incipit of the largely omitted second stanza), which have been extracted from what must have been a longer composition. The first *kirugu*, entitled [uru₂ ga-ša-an-bi-ra še mu-un-n\[a-...-ša₄\]](#), 'The city lamented to its lady' (1–20), revolves around the destruction of the Ekisiga- and Edimgalana-temples of Sud.

⁴ See the summary with references given by Metcalf (2019, 9–11).

⁵ On Sud and Šuruppak see now also Wilcke (2018, 119 no. 10 [copy of IB 932 = RIM E4.1.10.7 ex. 3]), Peterson (2021a, 125–26), Wagensohn (2022, 239–40. 271). On the new archaeological work at Fara/Šuruppak, see most recently Otto (2024).

An enemy hand is said to have ruined the past prosperity of these venerable shrines, whose cult personnel are now unable to perform their usual duties. Special emphasis is placed on the former greatness of the city and the temples, which now lie in ruins. The next section of the text contains the third *kirugu*, *e2-eden-e eš3-e*, ‘That E’eden! That shrine!’ (22–42). Here the focus lies on a further temple, the E’eden, as well as the Ekisiga, and on the nefarious role of the chief gods An and Enlil, who are blamed as the ultimate cause of the disaster. Sud has been forced to leave her dwelling: her cultic instruments are no longer played, and the priestesses spend their days in lament. A catch-line cites the opening of a lost sequel, beginning *a-nun-ke4-ne e-en-dur2-ru-ne-(eš)*, ‘The Anuna-gods are sitting there...’: Sud is here possibly called on to repair the damage wrought by Enlil, in her capacity as a mother-goddess.

At least two textual difficulties that have complicated the interpretation of this already challenging text can be straightforwardly resolved. One is the final line count, which is given as 42 (*šu+niġen2 42 mu-bi-im*) and appears at first sight not to match the actual number of lines written by the scribe; the other is the seemingly unclear purpose of two additional lines of text that are noted on the left edge of the tablet.⁶ Contrary to previous assumptions that the scribe’s line count is erroneous, the key is to understand that the first of the two additional lines on the left edge represents an inadvertently omitted line of text, which should follow line 6 and is therefore to be treated as ‘line 7’. This is shown both by the verbal parallels between lines 6 and ‘7’ and by the deliberate positioning of ‘line 7’: the scribe, after realising the omission, noted ‘line 7’ on the left edge exactly at the vertical point that corresponds to its intended position on the obverse, i.e. after line 6. The point of insertion is additionally signalled by a ruling.⁷ Once ‘line 7’ is included, the final count of 42 is correct. The second

⁶ For the perceived problems with these two features see Witzel (1935, 346) and more recently Löhnert (2009, 39–40 with n.182), where the situation on TCL 15, 1 is described as ‘völlig unklar’.

⁷ This conforms to the typology of ‘forgotten lines’ established by Hallo (1977). For other examples see Lambert (1990, 290–91), Löhnert (2009, 37), Metcalf (2025, 22 with n.27).

additional line of text noted on the left edge of the tablet belongs after line 22, as its placement again indicates, and supplies the information that *e₂-eden-e eš₃-e*, ‘That E’eden! That shrine!’, is to be understood as the title of the third *kirugu*.

The other main textual question is the fate of the second *kirugu*, which seems to have disappeared in between the ‘first’ and the ‘third’ stanzas that the scribe wrote down on the tablet. The liturgical notations after lines 22 and 42 confirm that *e₂-eden-e eš₃-e* is indeed the third, and not the second, *kirugu*, which makes emendation of 3 to 2¹ impossible. The most plausible interpretation, suggested to me by both A. Cavigneaux and U. Gabbay, is that line 21 (*u₃-u₈-a uru₂-ĝu₁₀ u₃-u₈-a uru₂-ĝu₁₀*, ‘Ah, my city! Ah, my city!’), which is the first new line of text after the end of the first *kirugu* (1–20), in fact represents the incipit of the second *kirugu*: the scribe chose not to copy out this stanza in full, and then proceeded immediately to the third *kirugu* beginning in line 22. The decisive advantage of this reading is that it explains why the scribe chose to clarify, in the corresponding annotation on the left edge, that line 22 (*e₂-eden-e eš₃-e*, ‘That E’eden! That shrine!’) is indeed the start of the third (rather than the second) *kirugu*.

Finally, the wider literary context invites some comment. We now possess, in CUSAS 38, 1, a celebratory cult hymn that exalts Sud’s position as the goddess of Šuruppak by associating her with An and Enlil (CUSAS 38, 1: 27–37); yet we also have, in TCL 15, 1, a lament on the decline and destruction of Sud’s temples that is blamed on those same chief gods (TCL 15, 1: 27–42). This juxtaposition illustrates the diversity of content and performance contexts of Old Babylonian Sumerian cult poetry. CUSAS 38, 1 offers an emphatically affirmative perspective on the positive ties between the chief gods (An and Enlil), the patron deity of Šuruppak (Sud) and the mortal king (Būr-Sîn of Isin). The wording of certain key passages suggests that CUSAS 38, 1 was composed for performance to accompany the presentation of votive offerings to Sud by king Būr-Sîn, on one or more occasions: this emerges especially

clearly at the end of the first part of the text ('Since you (= Sud) have given him (= Būr-Sîn) the staff (to direct) the teeming peoples, / May he govern the entirety of your settled lands for you!', CUSAS 38, 1: 22–23) and at its conclusion ('Accept his gift, let him be the man (of) your beer (offerings)! / [...] Lady of the Ekisiga, / Pleasant woman of the Edimgalana!', 45–49).⁸

By comparison, TCL 15, 1 is formed mostly of familiar topoi of Sumerian lamentation-poetry, which are however obscurely expressed in many cases. Like CUSAS 38, 1, and ancient hymnic poetry in general, the poem avoids specific contextual references, presumably in order to permit repeated performances in cult.⁹ But as is true of *balaĝ*-laments as a whole, the central event in TCL 15, 1 – the destruction of Sud's temples – is described in such generic terms that no historical background, however vague, is identifiable at all. TCL 15, 1 therefore most likely belongs to those kinds of lamentation-poems that were ritually performed in order to anticipate and enact the anger of the chief gods (An and Enlil) in a controlled setting, and thereby to avert the destruction that is so drastically imagined in the song.¹⁰ It is of course possible that the generic clichés of the destruction and abandonment of Sud's temples happened to coincide with the decline, at some point in the early Old Babylonian period, of her formerly great city: the contrast between past and present is notably emphasised in the first *kirugu* (1–20), and there may have been some convergence between literary convention and historical context.

It is in any case clear that the three temples mentioned in TCL 15, 1 – the Ekisiga, the Edimgalana and the E'eden – must have retained a degree of cultic significance in the Isin-period. TCL 15, 1 does not state the name of the city in which these temples are located:

⁸ See further Metcalf (2019, 1–4. 9–11), Glenn (2019, 126–30. 167–69. 259).

⁹ See on this point Metcalf (2015, 19–22).

¹⁰ See recently Löhnert (2009, 3–8), Gabbay (2014a, esp. 167–68), Delnero (2020, 31–38), Cavigneaux (2022, 38–43). Specifically on Šuruppak, there may be a passing reference to the destruction of the city in the Inana-lament *Uru ama'irabi* XXI 41 (LAM.SU.KUR.RU^{ki} *hul-lu-a*), according to what seems to be a garbled spelling in ms. H2 (unpublished, but transliterated on OBEL: <https://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/obel/P355702>).

while this omission seems easiest to understand if the city is indeed Šuruppak, of which Sud was the patron deity, the identification is not completely certain, and there is a possibility that the lament actually revolves around a little-known city called iš-su^{ki}, which may have been located in the area of Adab (and so perhaps not far from Šuruppak: see commentary on line 2). Even if the evidence of TCL 15, 1 is not clear on this point, the view that the Ekisiga and the Edimgalana were located in Šuruppak, and were maintained by the rulers of the Isin-dynasty, seems to me to be encouraged by the combined evidence of RIM E4.1.10.7 (Edimgalana, king Enlil-bāni) and CUSAS 38, 1 (Ekisiga and Edimgalana, king Būr-Sîn, with a strong emphasis on Sud as the deity of Šuruppak).¹¹ Archaeological surveys conducted in Fara/Šuruppak in 2018 and 2022 have tended to confirm earlier suspicions that a large, 160 by 120m building found in the main mound of the site (which has unfortunately been subjected to extensive looting) must have been the temple of Sud, which (according to A. Otto) may well have endured until the early second millennium BC, even if the city was no longer of any significance by that point.¹² In the topographical context it is also important to note, finally, that both CUSAS 38, 1 and TCL 15, 1 point to associations between Sud, Šuruppak and other female deities of nearby cities (such as Adab and Isin), which require a more detailed study that I have not attempted here (see provisionally the commentary on line 24).

THE MANUSCRIPT

¹¹ I assume that these are the names of distinct temples, yet they could also be parts of a single temple. Further, there is a possible etymological and/or orthographic connection between the Ekisiga and the term E2.KI.SI3.GA, ‘tomb’, which can be read [ḥašurra_x](#) (GSF² s.vv. E2.KI.SI3.GA and [e2 ki-si3-ga-k](#)). While this link requires further study, I would provisionally tend to distinguish between the E2.KI.SI3.GA in the sense of ‘tomb’ and the Ekisiga of Sud, which has no obvious funerary associations (similarly Tsukimoto 1985, 32–33; Peterson 2023, 100; GSF² s.v. [e2 ki-si3-ga-k](#)).

¹² See esp. Otto (2024, 87–91). Martin (2012, 345) notes the presence of a single seal from the Isin-Larsa period among the abundant finds of glyptic from earlier periods at Fara/Šuruppak.

Cavigneaux (2021, 143–44) has recently described both the attractions and the perils of the Old Babylonian Sumerian liturgical corpus, which are illustrated also by TCL 15, 1. In this instance the paradox is that the text is highly legible in appearance and yet largely obscure in content. What I have tried to offer in these pages is an up-to-date transliteration accompanied by a *possible* interpretation. As will become apparent, the difficulties lie partly in the frequent non-standard spellings and slightly ungrammatical constructions, and partly in what appear to be scribal omissions. Such omissions occur not only when the scribe wished to avoid repeating identical sign-sequences, as at lines 1–4 and 6–7, but also in non-repetitive contexts, especially towards line-end. One essential fact (which is not visible in de Genouillac’s copy in TCL 15) is that the tablet was much too narrow to accommodate the amount of text that the scribe wished to fit into a single line. This appears to have led the scribe to omit individual syllabic signs on several occasions. Certainty is impossible in the absence of a reliable duplicate manuscript, but seemingly clear instances that invite restoration include: *il-lu-a uz-⟨ga⟩-me-en*, ‘you are a shrine of *ilu*-crying’ (16), *ze₂-⟨ba⟩-a-ĝu₁₀ ki-sikil-ĝu₁₀*, ‘my sweet one, my maiden’ (17) and *ga-ša-an-bi tur₃-bi-ta muš mi-ni-in-⟨tum₂⟩*, ‘its mistress has abandoned the fold’ (31). In other cases I have relegated my suggested emendations to the commentary, to avoid excessive intervention—see above on the perils of editing a text of this kind—yet I would emphasise that almost of all of the scribe’s apparent omissions can be explained by the scribe’s struggles in adapting the text to the available space on the tablet. On the obverse the scribe frequently tried to begin new syntactical units even though line-end was nearly reached, and his occasional omissions seem to me to be a result of this; only on the reverse did the scribe realise that he had enough space to use indented lines. As a result, the reverse has no clear cases of omission (except in the catchline, where an extensive erasure again caused the scribe to abbreviate the text). It is also worth noting that the tablet as a whole is marked by numerous erasures and over-written

signs (not usually shown in de Genouillac's copy in TCL 15), which indicate that the scribe had difficulties not only with the layout but also with the content of what he was trying to write.

Finally, the scribe employed both more complex and more cursive sign-forms, with the more complex version typically occurring first (compare e.g. AN in lines 1 vs. 10–12, GA in lines 1 vs. 25, E₂ in lines 3–4 vs. 40, NA in lines 4 vs. 8, TA in lines 8 vs. 31, etc.). To some extent on the reverse, and very clearly on the left edge, the scribe hastened to finish his work, and accordingly chose cursive sign-forms.¹³

¹³ See CUSAS 38, 14 for an especially clear parallel. On such patterns of alternating sign-forms, see recently Wagensohnner (2019) with further references.

TRANSLITERATION AND TRANSLATION

Readings obtained by collation that diverge from de Genouillac’s hand-copy are marked by an asterisk.

1. **uru**₂ **ga-ša-an-bi-ra** še **mu-un-n**[a-...-ša₄]
The city lamented to its lady,
2. Iš **su**₃-**ge**^d**sud**₃ {x} **ga-ša-a**[n-bi-ra]
...(?) (lamented) to Sud, its lady:
3. **e**₂-**ki-si**₃-**ga-ĝu**₁₀ **ga-ša-an-bi-r**[a]
‘My Ekisiga!’, (the city lamented) to its lady,
4. **e**₂-**dim-gal-an-na-ĝu**₁₀ **ga-ša-an-bi-r**[a]
‘My Edimgalana!’, (the city lamented) to its lady.
5. **ub** **ir**₂-**ra ser**₃-**ra tur-tur-bi mu-un-na-**ṛ^{du}₁₂*-**du**₁₂*ṛ
They very quietly played the drum of laments (and) songs for her.
6. **ga-ša-an ta mu-aĝ**₂ **gu**₃ **mu-ri-da** <ta mu->**aĝ**₂ **gu**₃ **mu-**ṛ^{x-x}
That I cried out to you: ‘The lady, what has she assigned?’, that I
cried out(?) to you: ‘What has she assigned?’,
- 7 (on left edge). **aĝ**₂-**AK-ĝu**₁₀ **ga-an-du**₁₁ <gu₃>**mu-ri-da**
/ **ur**₅ **nu-**ṛ^{mu}-**da-ši-šid-da**
That I cried out to you: ‘I will declare what was done to me!’—
(these cries) are beyond counting!
8. **mu da-ri-a-ta**^d**sud**₃^l **dumu nun-na** {x} **i-**ṛ^{bi}₂(?!)^ṛ **mu-un-ši-bar-re**
Since ancient times, the princely daughter Sud has gazed upon it
(= the city)!
9. **za**₃ ME TA GA **ḥa-ab-ge**₄ **guru**₃^{ṛu} I MUŠ **i**₃-**bala-e**
...(?)
10. **gu**₄-**gen**₇ **nir-ĝal**₂ **ka-ba-ra-be**₂ **mu-un-na-an-DU.DU.DU**
Like a bull, the proud (city)—its cowherd has led it away(?) from her!

11. am-si šub-ba-gen⁷ ba-šub-be² lu² zi-iz-zi la-ba-an-tuku

Like a horned bull that was struck down, you (= the city) are falling down. It has no one to raise it up again!

12. me-na A A MU UN BI ŠE³ gi-la-ba EN-na e²-e ħa-an-ku⁴-re

When...(?) let me enter into the temple!

13. e² diġir-re-e-en-ne me-e-am u⁴ sud-a šen-šen kalam ul⁶-le

The temple of the gods, where is it? In the distant past, (it was) magnificent, it was shining brightly on the land!

14. kala-ga-ġu¹⁰ ġeš³ tukul-e in-ta me-e eš³ gal-la maš*-gi

A weapon has struck my strong one! Where is the guardian of the great shrine?

15. sig⁴-ga-ġu¹⁰ ša³-ġar-re in-ta ki aġ² li-bi-⟨ir⟩ en nu-mu-⟨tar⟩

A famine has struck my weak one! The beloved one—the watchman no longer cares for it!

16. eš³ gur(?) -ra kala-me-en la-ba-šid il-lu-a uz-⟨ga⟩-me-en

They no longer recite ‘You are a firm(?), strong shrine!’. (Instead) you are a sacred precinct of *ilu*-crying!

17. sila-a ki ne-de³-ġu¹⁰ ze²-⟨ba⟩-a-ġu¹⁰ ki-sikil-ġu¹⁰ la-ba-ur³

In the street—the place where I play—my sweet one, my maiden no longer walks along.

18. ab-ba KA EN bi²-du¹¹ im-SI.A MU sug za³-ge ba-SAR

The old man (said): ...(?)

19. um-ma ku⁶-me-en IM rig⁸-ga a-gen⁷ SUL gi⁷-in sa-pa-an su³

The old woman (said): ...(?)

20. še-ša⁴ ir²(-)ši-ib-be² ME GI u³ nu-ku uz-⟨ga⟩ ni-in zi nu-mu-un-ge⁴ (The temple) is uttering (its) moans in tears,...(?) does not sleep:

(subscript) ki-ru-gu₂ 1-kam-ma

21. u₃-u₈-a uru₂-ĝu₁₀ {x x x} u₃-u₈-a uru₂-ĝu₁₀

22. e₂-eden-e eš₃-e gu₃ ħul-lu-bi di-di

(left edge) ki-ru-gu₂ 3 kam-ma / e₂-eden-e eš₃-e

23. bi-ib-kuš₂-u₃ a-še-er nu-uš-gul-e gu₃ ħul-lu-bi di*-di*

24. ^dsud₃{ki} dumu nun lal₃-e₂-ša₃-ba-ke₄

25. me-a u₃-mu-un-ne sa₆ nun e₂-ki-si₃-ga

26. balaĝ gu-la balaĝ ^dad-ge₄-ge₄-ĝu₁₀

27. saĝ-ki gid₂-da-bi an-ne₂ uru₂-na saĝar-ta ba-da-an-šar₂

28. u₈* bi₂-in-du₁₁ ^dmu-ul-lil₂ saĝar tuš*-a*-na aĝ₂-bi ba-ħul-ħul

29. ħe₂ an-ba iri-na di-de ge₁₇-bi ba-an-ne₂-eš{x}-a-ta

the sacred precinct...(?) does not calm down.

It is the first *kirugu*.

‘Ah, my city! Ah, my city!’

‘That E’eden! That shrine!’, they are crying out in pain.

It is the third *kirugu*: ‘That E’eden! That shrine!’

They are distressed about it, they really cannot stop lamenting, they are crying out in pain:

‘Sud, the princely daughter, that priestess!’

‘Where (is) that lord, the good one, the prince of the Ekisiga,’

‘The great harp, my *adgege*-harp?’

As they (= the chief gods) became angry, An mingled (the people) of his city with the dust!

He said ‘Ah!’, Enlil—as he sat (in) the dust, their affairs were ruined.

After they (= the chief gods) bitterly decreed that (the people) should say(?):

‘Let it be! The ruins of her city!’(?),

30. *me-bi kur-gal kun₂-na ma-ab-AK-bi za₃-bi ne-en ta* Its divine powers, the great mountain, all that had been made radiant for me(?)—that shrine, what (is) this now(?)?
31. *ga-ša-an-bi tur₃-bi-ta muš mi-ni-in-⟨tum₂⟩^{ḡeš}kiri₆-a mu-un-da-til₃* Its mistress has abandoned the fold, she can dwell (only) in the garden.
32. KA GIR₃-na ir₉-re du₁₁-ga*-ba U₂ nam-ba-an-zi-iz-ḫi ...(?)
33. *na-aḡ₂-bi-še₃ ga-ša-an-e iti-ma-e ⟨ba⟩-an-ku₄ inda₃ la-ba-an-ḡar* Because of this, the mistress entered the bedroom, (yet) no food was placed there.
34. *ur-re ša₃-ḫa* eš₃ gurum mu-un-na-di a₂ tal₂ ḡeš US₂ ʾx¹ KI nu-KU* The dog and pig, curled up (in) the shrine(?), wander about for her(?).
The wide embrace...(?).
35. *ša₃ ib₂-ba-a nu-te-en-te-en gu₃ ḫuš-bi g[e₁₇...]* The angry heart is not calming down, its angry voice [...] bitter [...].
36. *a-bu-ul-la ka₂ ig tuku-a-bi ig ezen ba-[...]* The main gate, its gate that has a door...(?), festivities [...].
37. IŠ su₃ iri ezen-bi saḡ in-UL ib-ba-ab-bi [...] ...(?), the city has...(?), its festivities, its anger [...]
38. *bur-šu-ma um-ma iš su₃-ga il-lu u₄ mu-un-da-til₃* The matrons and the old women of...(?) spend the day (in) lamentation together:
39. *u₄ aḡ₂ ga-am₃-ma₃(?)-a uru₂ ku-a / uru₂-zu al-gul-gul* ‘The storm that has carried (our) things away! The city is cast down!’——‘Your city is being destroyed!’

40. u₄ aĝ₂ ga-am₃-ma₃(?)-a e₂ ku₄-ku₄-zu / e₂-zu al-gul-gul

‘The storm that has carried (our) things away! Your temple is being entered!’——‘Your temple is being destroyed!’

41. mušen dal-la-a-gen₇ ^dmu-ul-lil₂-e / bad₃ ħu-mu-ra-ab-us₂-e

Like a bird that has flown, Enlil is making (a nest in) a wall(?) for you!

42. a-gen₇ me-du₃ ^dmu-ul-lil₂ saĝ-eš{x}-e mu-un-du₃

Ah, what have you done! Enlil has completed the task(?)!

/ ta i₃-in-gul-lu-u₂-a-bi

Such is the destruction that he has wrought!

(subscript) ki-ru-gu₂ 3 kam-ma

It is the third *kirugu*.

(catchline) ^da-nun-ke₄-ne {x x x} e-en-dur₂-ru-ne-⟨eš⟩

The Anuna-gods are seated there,

uĝ₃ dur₂-ru-un-dur₂-ru-na-bi u₃-mu-un-e ba-bi-ib-ri

(The city’s) seated people—the lord has dispersed them!

/ bi-bi kul-la-a-me-en

You (= Sud?) are the one who gathers the dispersed!

(line count) šu+niĝen₂ 42 mu-bi-im

Total: its lines are 42.

COMMENTARY

1. The verb can no doubt be restored as *še ša*₄, ‘to lament’ (Krecher 1966, 77 with n. 194).

2. The sequence *iš su₃.g* occurs here and in 37–38 (*iš su₃ iri ezen-bi... / bur-šu-ma um-ma iš su₃-ga...*). At first sight this looks like an imperfective participle of the verb *kuš₇*(*iš su/su₃*, ‘to destroy’, which is common in laments; but the syntactical position at the head of the clause would be awkward, and that verb is in fact *kuš₇ su/su₃.ø* (GSF s.v.), not *su₃.g* (as here). Unless we are looking at a different (related?) verb that involves *su₃.g*, we may take the approach (suggested by A. Cavigneaux) that *iš su₃.g* is connected to the place-name *iš-su^{ki}*, attested in a handful of Ur III-documents and almost unknown to scholarship (for a passing remark see Steinkeller 1987, 22 n.13). The more eloquent documents suggest that *iš-su^{ki}* had an *ensi*₂ and lay in the vicinity of Adab (YOS 4, 66), and that it was linked to Umma by a canal (BPOA 6, 928; BPOA 7, 1947). To understand *iš su₃.g* as a place-name in TCL 15, 1 is contextually plausible, given the parallel between *iš su₃.g* in line 2 and *uru*₂, ‘city’, in line 1 (‘The city lamented... / *iš su₃.g* lamented...’). Unfortunately the expected local determinative (^{ki}) is absent in TCL 15, 1.¹⁴ The essential idea that *iš su₃.g* is a nominal phrase alternating with *uru*₂ remains plausible, however, and so I provisionally propose the reading *iš su₃.g*, ‘deserted sand-dune’. See Steinkeller (2007, 221) for *iš*, ‘sand-dune’, as an image of urban devastation in Sumerian laments. While I know of no exact parallel for the phrase *iš su₃.g*, I would compare *e₂-ri-a su₃.g*, ‘barren place’ (GSF s.v. *su₃(-ga)* adj. ‘vide’), which also occurs in laments and similarly alternates with *iri* at LSU 348–49: ‘Enlil, your city (*iri-zu*)—look upon it, it is an empty wasteland (*e₂-ri-a su₃-ga*)! / Nippur, your city—look upon it, [it is an empty wasteland]!’). In sum, the sense could be that the lamented city has turned into a

¹⁴ Nor is it clear that *iš-su^{ki}* had the required termination in /-g/. Note here BPOA 7, 1947 r. 4, which reads *u₄ 5-še₃ ša₃ iš-su^{ki}-ka tuš-a*, ‘after (the boat) stayed for 5 days within *iš-su^{ki}*...’. While this spelling seems to point to **ša₃ iš-su.ø^{ki}-(a)k-a*, W. Sallaberger informs me that according to the norms of Ur III-period orthography it could also conceal **ša₃ iš-su.g^{ki}-ak-a*.

‘deserted sand-dune’ (iš su₃.g = probably Šuruppak, in TCL 15, 1) or ‘barren place’ (e₂-ri-a su₃.g = Nippur, in LSU).

After the divine name Sud (^dSU.KUR.RU), a sign was erased by the scribe. This was very likely the local determinative ^{ki}, as in line 24: it seems that the scribe struggled to decide between the spellings ^dsud₃ and ^dsud₃^{ki}, both of which are independently attested (see Metcalf 2019, 15; Peterson 2021a, 125).

5. **ub** is an attested non-standard spelling of **ub₇**, ‘drum’ (GSF s.v. **ub₇**). The subject of the clause therefore seems to be the instrument accompanying the song. **ir₂-ra(-)ser₃-ra** looks like a non-standard spelling of **ir₂ a-še-er-ra** (thus Krecher 1966, 92), but **a-še-er**, ‘lament’ (ES), is spelled in the usual way in line 23, as Krecher himself noted, and **ser₃**, ‘song’, can occur in connection with **ir₂**, ‘tear, lament’, and similar terms. Examples include: **ser₃ ir₂-a u₄ mu-ni-ib-zal-e**, ‘(The deity) spends her days in songs (and) tears’ (AUWE 23, 125 r. 3); **balaĝ-ĝa₂-ni ser₃ mu-un-na-ra i-lu mu-un-na-ab-be₂**, ‘(The deity’s) *balaĝ*-instrument strikes up a song for her, it is saying *ilu* for her’ (CT 15, 7–9 r. 9); **ser₃-re nu-til₃-le.../ ir₂-re ^{sag₃}sag₇ nu-di...// ši-ri-iĥ la qa-te-e.../ bi-ki-ti la ^ʾš^u-us^ʾ-su²-ʾki^ʾ...**, ‘A mournful song that has no end.../ A lament that cannot be terminated...’ (HES 2, 22 i 22–23, post-OB, with ELS §727 s.v. *š^u-uz-zu-ku*). **tur-tur-bi**, ‘very quietly’, is found in similar context at LU 86–87 (see GSF s.v.). The sense here is perhaps that the *ub*-drum is played softly as a sign of humility before the deity: compare Gudea Cyl. A vii 3, where it is said that thanks to the *balaĝ* the supplicant’s ‘quiet utterance’ (**tur du₁₁-ga**) will be accepted as a ‘mighty utterance’ (**maĥ du₁₁-ga-am₃**), with Gabbay (2014a, 88–90).

At line-end the reading ^ʾdu₁₂-du₁₂^ʾ (suggested by Attinger) is the best fit for the remaining traces (matching the form of **-tuku** at the end of line 11).

6–7. Only one thing is certain in this passage: line 7 was omitted by the scribe at first, and subsequently written down on the left edge of the tablet (see ‘Summary and Interpretation’,

above). Beyond this, it seems to me that these lines can be understood only if the omission of certain recurring signs is assumed: the likely explanation is that the scribe felt that he was running out of space as he approached line-end (see general discussion under ‘The Manuscript’). As for the analysis of what appears to be the main verb, I have considered **gu₃ mur-ed-a(m₃)**, from **gu₃ mur**, ‘to cry’ (GSF s.v., with parallels), but that is not easy to construe with a direct object. A better alternative (which I owe to Attinger) is to derive **gu₃ mu-re-da** from **gu₃ de₂**, ‘to call out’, where ***-de₂** has become **-da** either under the influence of the **ta** that follows or (as Sallaberger suggests) due to subordination (**-da < *-de₂-a**). In the phrase **ta mu-aĝ₂**, **ta** is the usual ES counterpart to **a-na**, ‘what?’, and **aĝ₂** could be the verb recently identified by Attinger in a very similar context at LU 140–42, 151a–51c, 162–64 (Ur version): see Attinger (2015, 60), and GSF s.v. **aĝ₂** vb. (‘mesurer, départir, impartir, attribuer en partage’).

In line 7, **ur₅ nu-[⌈]mu[⌋]-da-ši-šid-da** is either a reduplicated form of **šid**, ‘to count’, or **ši** (which does not appear to be erased) represents a phonetic complement.

8. According to CUSAS 38, 1: 31, **dumu nun** (‘princely daughter’) was one of the epithets given to Sud by her spouse Enlil (see Metcalf 2019, 16 for further references). The scribe seems to have struggled with both the name of the goddess and the noun **i-[⌈]bi[⌋]**: **i-** is preceded by the remains of an erased sign, and **-bi₂** rather resembles a sign of the KA-type. If taken literally **^dsud₃ dumu nun-na** would appear to be the object of **i-bi₂ bar** (‘seit ewigen Jahren schaut es auf Sud, die Fürstentochter’, Bergmann 1964, 39), but since it is usually the gods who gaze benevolently upon their subjects (Dicks 2012, 224–238) I assume that the expected ergative case-ending has been erroneously omitted (unless, as Attinger notes, **-a** is in fact the copula, in which case the translation would be ‘Since ancient times, Sud has been the princely daughter. She has gazed upon it’). In the verb, the initial person-prefix **-n-** that precedes the dimensional prefix **-ši-** refers to the personified city.

9. *za*₃ here (and at lines 18, 30) seems to have the meaning ‘sanctuaire’ (GSF s.v.), as at Nanše A, 197/295 (*za*₃-*bi-a lu*₂ *sa*₂-*du*₁₁-*ga-bi*, ‘the one in charge of the offerings of their temple’). If this is correct, read perhaps: *za*₃ *me ta-ga ḥa-ab-ge*₄, ‘The shrine, struck by silence—may she return to it!’, or on a different word-division (suggested by Cavignaux): *za*₃-*me-ta ga ḥa-ab-ge*₄ *gur*₃-*ru i muš i*₃-*bala-e*, ‘De notre côté, le lait a été retiré, ceux qui le portaient ont traversé le fleuve qui serpente’.

10. *ka-ba-ra* = *ga-ba-ra*, ‘aide-bouvier’ (GSF s.v.). For the general imagery cf. LU 265–68, where the herdsmen abandon their animals (*u*₈...*sipa zi-bi ba-ra-ḡen*, etc.); here the verb is transitive, in which case the sequence DU.DU.DU is possibly a defective spelling of *lah*₅-*lah*₅, ‘to lead away’.

11. On the image of a proud animal that is now fallen cf. e.g. *ṛpiriḡ*¹-*gen*⁷ *a-ru-ub-ba ba-šub-ba*, ‘Like a lion that has fallen into a trap...’ (UN A, 184), and on the fallen who can no longer rise cf. LSU 415: *saḡ saḡar-ra ki ba-ni-ib-u*₂-*us*₂ *lu*₂ *zi-zi la-ba(-an)-tuku(-tuku)*, ‘The crowns (of the palm-trees) touched the ground, there was no-one to raise them again’.

12. Perhaps: *me-na-a-a(-)mu-un-bi ḥuḡ gi-⟨bi⟩-la-ba en-na e*₂-*e ḥa-an-ku*₄-*re*, ‘When is its lord appeased? May I enter into the temple yet again!’

13. UD in the sense ‘bright’ (cf. *šen-šen*) is usually read *babbar* or *ḥad*₂, but here the reading *ul*₆ (= *nabātu*, ‘to be bright’, Aa III/3, 118 = MSL 14, 335) seems unavoidable given the final *-le*.

14.–15. I owe to Cavignaux the suggestion that *kala.g...sig*₄ (= *sig*, ‘weak’) represents a complementary expression of totality. I also assume that *ta* = *ta*₃.*g*, ‘to strike’, and *maš-gi* = *maškim*, ‘overseer’ (cf. Gudea Cyl. B ix 23 on the *maškim dag-a*, ‘chamberlain’, of Ningirsu), and that *li-bi-⟨ir⟩* = *niḡir* (ES) in parallel to *maškim*, and (as also suggested by Cavignaux) *en ⟨tar⟩* = *en*₃ *tar* (cf. *sag-en*₃-*tar*, ‘caretaker’).

16. The more obvious reading of the first signs would be eš₃ *si-ra*, perhaps = *e-sir₂-ra*, ‘in the street’ (thus Cavigneaux, cf. *sil-a* at the start of 17), but *gur*, ‘firm’, also seems possible and in my view yields better sense. For notions of firmness and strength in this connection cf. the foundations of the Eninnu that are made to be *gur* at Gud. St. B vi 63, and eš₃ *kala.g*, ‘strong shrine’, said of the Ekur at NL 163. *il-lu* is here a variant of the common interjection *i-lu*, as in line 38 (noted by Krecher 1966, 148f. with n.433, see there for further variants). I assume that, as at line 20, the scribe has not fully written *uz-⟨ga⟩*, ‘shrine’, for lack of space. The expected form of the anticipatory genitive would be **il-lu-a uz-ga-bi*, but the resumptive possessive pronoun (-*bi*) is omitted also in eš₃ *gal-la maš-gi*, ‘the guardian of the great shrine’ (14).

17–19. Laments often describe the abnormal behaviour imposed on the old and the young: see e.g. LU 228–29 (*um-ma, ab-ba, de₁₀-de₁₀-la₂*); Eršemma 184 (ed. Cohen 1981, 57–60), 39–43 (*ab-ba, de₁₀-de₁₀-la₂, um-ma, ki-sikil, ġuruš*); *Ukkin-ta eš-bar til-la* (ed. Schwemer 2022) r. 1–5 (*ki-sikil, ġuruš, de₁₀-de₁₀-la₂, ab-ba, um-ma*). In the temple context these terms can refer to various kinds of priests: see the cult personnel assembled at Išme-Dagan AB 72–73 (*um-ma, bur-šu-ma, egi₂ zi-da, ki-sikil, lu₂-banda₃^{da}, ab-ba, ġuruš*), with parallels (Ludwig/Metcalf 2017, 13. 17).

17. *ki ne-de₃* = *ki e-ne-di*, ‘playing place’, as at Manchester Tammuz r. ii 22’ (Guerra/Veldhuis 2024). The verb *ur₃* in this context has a sense similar to Akk. *bâ’u*, ‘to walk along, to pass over’ (see CAD s.v. *bâ’u* bil., and GSF s.v. *ur₃* vb.: ‘se traîner, se glisser’).

18. Possibly: *ab-ba enim uru₁₆ bi₂-du₁₁ im-diri-MU sug za₃-ge ba-mu₂*, ‘The senior (priest) (said): ‘He (= Enlil) made a strong pronouncement! He has gone further(?): It is completely destroyed (*mu₂*, in error for **gu₇*)!’’. The sequence ...-*du₁₁*...-*diri* typically indicates that one of the great gods has ‘decreed’ something, but has then also ‘gone beyond’ that initial

decision by making the catastrophe even worse. See Gabbay (2015, 54) on Erš. 3 30–33, Cavigneaux (2023, 132) on S3 iii 30–31, cf. CUSAS 38, 7: 21 (‘It is not what was said, it is not what was said!’). It therefore seems possible that the ‘old man’ is here speaking about Enlil’s destructive command, which will be explicitly blamed in the third *kirugu* (27–30, see comments *ad loc.*).

19. Perhaps: ‘The old woman (said): “Am I a fish? Has (my) person (*ni*₂?) been consumed? How the young man (*sul*) (and) the servant woman(?) are full of agitation!”’ The old woman may be comparing herself to a fish in the sense that she is a victim of violence, in the same way as the humans who are ‘consumed altogether like fish on a string (*ku*₆ *dara*₂)’ at *Uru ama’irabi* XXI 52 (OB versions, ed. Volk 1989, 42), as revised in OBEL with reference to Civil (1989, 243). Compare also *Ukkin-ta eš-bar til-la* r. 4, where the victims are speared like fish (with Schwemer 2022, 69), no doubt again for (metaphorical) consumption. In this connection *rig*₇ / *rig*₈ is certainly the verb ‘to be eaten’ (not registered in GSF but included in GSF²). At line-end, perhaps *sa-pa-an su*₃ = *za-pa-aĝ*₂ *zu*, ‘to be full of agitation’ (said of a temple at LN 32, though in a positive sense, GSF s.v.). The subjects here seem to be the ‘young man’ (*sul*), mentioned in a similar litany at *Udug-hul* VII 78 (ed. Geller 2016, 266), and the ‘servant woman’ (if *gi*_{7-in} = *gi*_{4-in}, ES, where *gi*₇ may have been chosen to save space at the end of the line).

20. The scribe has again struggled to fit the text into the available space. If the need for restoration of omitted signs is accepted, read perhaps: *še-ša*₄ *ir*₂₍₋₎*ši-ib-be*₂ *engiz* ((EN).ME.GI) *u*₃ *nu-ku uz-⟨ga⟩ ni-in zi nu-mu-un-ge*₄, ‘(The temple) is uttering (its) moans in tears. The purification priest finds no sleep, (and) the sanctuary, wandering about, does not calm down.’ The final verb seems quite clearly to be *zi ge*₄, see GSF s.v. *ge*₄ (‘reprendre (son) souffle, se calmer’). For the rest, I assume that *ir*₂₍₋₎*ši-ib-be*₂ stands for an adverbial construction like **ir*_{2-še}₃ *ab-be*₂ (vel sim.), cf. *ir*_{2-še}₃ *ba-ab-be*_{2-ne}, ‘(the lamenters) are speaking (to the

temple) in tears' (NL 41). *uz-⟨ga⟩*, 'sanctuary', features the same scribal omission or abbreviation as at line 16, above, also near line-end. *ni-in*, which I take to be a form of *niĝen₂*, could be a verbal participle, 'wandering around' (following Gabbay), although one might in that case expect to find a version of the imperfective base *ni₁₀-ni₁₀*; alternatively *ni-in* = *niĝen₂* could represent the adjective (rather than the verb) *niĝen₂*, in which case translate 'the entire temple did not calm down'.

21.–22. Line 21 (*u₃-u₈-a uru₂-ĝu₁₀*) is probably the incipit of the otherwise omitted second *kirugu*, immediately followed by the start of the third *kirugu* in line 22 (*e₂-eden-e eš₃-e*): see 'Summary and Interpretation'.

22. EDEN here has a series of initial vertical wedges: this form is not listed in aBZL no. 115, but see Cavigneaux/al-Rawi (2002, 38 fig. 5) for parallels. The E'eden (identified as such already by Witzel 1935, 343) seems to be another temple of Sud, and the reference to the Ekisiga that follows in line 25 suggests that the E'eden likewise belonged to Sud's cult sites. Yet a temple of Sud of that name has not yet been identified, to my knowledge. Possible comparanda include: (i) the place-name E'eden documented in an Early Dynastic inscription (RIME 1.5.1), which D.R. Frayne (*ibid.*) has proposed to identify with Tell al Hayyad, a site that lay in the area south of Nippur (as did Šuruppak); (ii) a personal name or place-name *e₂-eden(?)* listed in TŠŠ 302 v 3 from Šuruppak, yet the reading is uncertain and the tablet itself was actually imported from Uruk, according to Steible/Yıldız (2014); (iii) *a-edin*, the name of a temple or settlement built by Ur-Nanše and thought to be near Ĝirsu (RIME 1.9.1.17 iii 7–8); (iv) the place- or temple-name *e₂-eden* mentioned in Old Babylonian liturgical texts in connection with Inana and Dumuzi: see *Uru ama'irabi* XIX 43–44, with Volk (1989, 112–13), and Peterson (2013) on UM 29-13-246+ o. 7–8, Peterson (2021b, 95 n.2); (v) a suggestive reference to Sud as the 'life of the steppe' (*ṛ x x x x ṛ zi eden-na-[k]e₄*) in CUSAS 38, 1: 36, in damaged context. Without decisive external evidence, it seems impossible to say

more on the nature and location of the E'eden in TCL 15, 1 at present. Gabbay comments that this may in fact be an epithet of a shrine in the nearby open country, perhaps the destination of a procession.

23. At line-end read *di-di* (as in line 22), not UD.UD as the copy in TCL 15 indicated.

24. On the erasure of ^{ki} after ^dsud₃ see the note on line 2, above. The title or epithet *lal₃(-)e₂-ša₃-ga* / *lal₃(-)e₂-ša₃-ba* (ES) is elsewhere attested in connection with Sud, and has given rise to the suggestion that the *e₂-ša₃-ga/-ba* could be the name of one of her temples, located perhaps in Šuruppak: see attestations and discussion by Bergmann (1964, 39), Krecher (1966, 124–125), Krebernik (1998–2001, 457). This view is encouraged by the reference to the Ekisiga, which was undoubtedly a temple of Sud, at the end of the following line (25). In the absence of independent evidence for such a temple, however, it seems more economical to link the term to the priestly title *lal₃-e-ša₃-ga* / *lal₃-e₂-ša₃-ga*, which has been identified by more recent scholarship: according to Huber Vulliet (2010, 141–43; 2019, 258–61), this office was connected to the cult of the mother-goddess. The association with the mother-goddess is encouraged by CUSAS 38, 1: 48, where the *e₂-maḥ* is named as a place where Sud is venerated. While I took this to be a generic epithet ('great temple'), Peterson (2021a, 126) has plausibly identified it as a specific reference to the temple of the mother-goddess in Adab (as shown by parallels elsewhere: CLAM 610, 612–13 [a+62–67, b+134–37], and MS 3415 [P252356] r. 1–4, unpublished).¹⁵ Sud's proximity to other female deities is further illustrated by CUSAS 38, 1: 34–43, where Sud receives the name 'Ninlil' from Enlil but simultaneously remains an independent city-goddess of Šuruppak; conversely, the Ekisiga is addressed as a temple of Ninlil in Keš in the lament *Immal gudede* a+60–61 (CLAM 610).¹⁶ Note in this

¹⁵ I am very grateful to K. Volk for providing photographs confirming the Diġir-maḥ / Sud-sequence in MS 3415.

¹⁶ It may be suggestive in this connection that AO 3023, which was purchased from the same dealer as our text (AO 3024), is the lament known as the 'Passion de Lilu'

connection the terracotta figurine of the mother-goddess type discovered as a surface find in the southwestern part of the main mound in Fara/Šuruppak, which may date to the late third or early second millennium BC (Otto/Einwag 2020, 299. 306 fig. 10). See also the comments on the Catchline, below.

25.–26. I assume that the *adgege*(‘counsellor’)-harp, which serves to pacify the hearts of the gods (Gabbay 2014a, 103–9), is the subject of both lines. This introduces the theme of implacable divine anger, which will be the focus of the remainder of the text.

27.–28. The wrath of the chief gods An and Enlil is frequently identified as the ultimate cause of destruction, see e.g. Ceccarelli (2014), Delnero (2020, 195–97), Cavigneaux (2023, 114–15).

27. For *saḫar-a/-da šar₂*, ‘to mix with earth’, in the sense ‘to defile’, see e.g. *ku₃ sa₆-ga-zu saḫar kur-ra-ka nam-ba-da-ab-šar₂-re*, ‘Personne ne doit mêler ton bel argent à la terre du monde infernal’ (InDesc. 44, after Attinger 2019a), Lugale 263, Lipit-Eštar D 31.

28. The first sign in this line is *u₈*, not *lu₂* as suggested by the copy in TCL 15, where *KU* was also misrepresented as *BA*, and the *A* that follows it was inadvertently omitted. The exact sense here is unclear: I have tentatively assumed that *tuš-a-na* is a variant form of **tuš-a-ne₂*, in keeping with a familiar pattern (see Attinger 2014 on *si-a-na*, ‘lorsqu’il a occupé’). An alternative interpretation, very similar in meaning, would be *tuš-a na-aḡ₂-bi ba-ḫul-ḫul*, ‘sitting (in) the dust, (the city’s) fate was destroyed’ (thus Cavigneaux).

29. The copy in TCL 15 does not show that *-eš-* was written over another sign (perhaps *eš₂*). *an-ba* in this context is presumably the noun meaning ‘détritus, décombres’ (GSF s.v.). The overall sense is highly obscure: it may resemble the sequence at LU 139–151, which reflects <https://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/obel/P355693>, in which female deities and the *Emah* feature prominently: as Cavigneaux notes, this could indicate a shared provenance. AO 3023 and 3024 are similar also in format, while displaying some orthographic differences (esp. *i-lu*, ‘Woe!’, in AO 3023 vs. *il-lu* in AO 3024).

on the destruction that has been decreed by the gods (*iri-ĝu₁₀ gul-gul-da im-me-ne-eš-a-ba*) and on the vain hope that Enlil may end it by declaring ‘Let it be!’ (*ĥe₂-am₃*). I owe to Attinger the idea that *di-de* may depend on *ba-an-ne₂-eš-a-ta*.

30. The general sense seems to be that the past splendour of the temple (the ‘great mountain’) is contrasted to its present desolation, but the detail (esp. the interpretation of *ma-ab-AK-bi*) is very uncertain. *ne-en ta* could mean, literally, ‘this, what (is it)?’, for which Attinger compares *a-na-am₃/ta-am₃ ne(-e)*, ‘what is this?’ (GSF s.v. *a-na*).

31. Short of space, the scribe did not fully spell out the phrase *muš tum₂*, ‘to abandon’, which is well-established in this context (cf. LU 1).

32. Perhaps *U₂ = u₄*, ‘daylight’, and *-zi-iz-ĥi = -saĥ₄-saĥ₄*, ‘to become obscure’, in which case translate ‘do not let him/her obscure the daylight!’ (following Cavigneaux, cf. LSU 81–82).

33. I assume that *iti-ma* stands for *itima*, ‘bedroom’ (i.e. the god’s inner sanctum within the temple, cf. e.g. Enlil A 76). I owe to Cavigneaux and Gabbay the interpretation of *inda₃ la-ba-an-ĝar*, ‘no food was placed there’, i.e. the goddess was deprived of her usual offerings.

34. The sign following *ša₃* is *ĥA* (inaccurately copied in TCL 15), as found in lines 9, 12 and 19. On the face of it, the line therefore begins with a reference to a ‘dog (*ur*) and pig (*ša₃-ĥa = šaĥa₂*)’, a common pairing (Metcalf 2023, 63–64, add e.g. Parayre 2000, 168–80). The sense may be that the animals used to be curled up but now wander about in distress, cf. *ur-re i-dib gurum-ma me-e i-dib nu-tuku*, ‘That dog, curled up (on) the threshold – I, I have no threshold!’ (BM 96679, 46, ed. Kramer 1988). Alternatively, *ša₃-ĥa* could be emended to *ša₃-ĝar[!]*, ‘hunger’, in view of the frequent association of hunger and the contortions (*gurum*) that it induces in its victims (e.g. *ša₃-ĝar-e igi-bi im-gurum-me-e*, ‘famine was contorting their faces’, LSU 391, cf. 492; ‘Sealand tablet’ r. iii 11’ with Gabbay 2014b, 167). In that case the sense might be something like ‘Thus (*ur-re = ur₅-re*), hunger makes the writhing shrine wander about for her.’

As for the rest of the line, Krecher (1966, 94) proposed the reading **mu-un-na-di-it-pi**, which he took to be a reduplicated form of **dib**, ‘to pass by’. I find it simpler to separate A₂(= **id**) PI from the preceding verb, and to read **a₂ tal₂**, ‘broad embrace’ (e.g. ŠN 34), though I can offer no convincing interpretation of the signs that follow.

36. The sense is unclear, but the destruction of the city gate is mentioned in similar context at LSU 292, 404 and LEridu A33, with Attinger/Krebernik (2004, 63 with n.129).

37.–38. For iŠ **su₃-ga**, see the comments on line 2.

37. The sign following **in-** seems to be a cursive UL (rather than GIG). The intended sense may have been that the usual festivals are no longer celebrated, cf. **ezen gal-bi šu nu-du₇-du₇**, ‘(Uruk’s) great festivals are not performed’ (PBS 10/2, 15 o. 18).

38. On **il-lu = i-lu** see the note on line 16, above, and compare here the frequent combination with **u₄ zal**, ‘to spend the day’ (Krecher 1966, 148–49).

39–40. These lines seem to represent the chants of the matrons and the old women. In approaching the end of the copied extract, the scribe moved away from the more elaborate sign-forms of the obverse and tended towards cursive writing. The sign E₂ thus appears here in a reduced form (contrast lines 3–4). In both lines 39 and 40, the sign that follows **ga-am₃** seems to me to contain two (rather than three) inscribed vertical wedges ($\hat{G}A_2 = ma_3$). This reading is encouraged by the layout, which suggests that the sign should be read together with **ga-am₃-** and the following **-a**. We are therefore probably looking at a form of **ga-am₃** (ES) = **ga₆.ĝ**, ‘to take away’ (GSF s.v.), a verb commonly found in laments (Jaques 2012). This, if correct, was first perceived by Witzel (1935, 342. 345).

41. The second half of the line, beginning with **bad₃**, is written with smaller signs than the first, as if the scribe initially forgot to write it down, and then struggled to fit it into the available space. This may explain the oddity of the formulation: **mušen**, ‘bird’, typically occurs in combination with the verb **us₂** in the phrase **gud₃ us₂**, ‘to make a nest’ (Krecher

1966, 182), but here the expected *gud*₃, ‘nest’, is absent. I know of no exact parallel involving *bad*₃, ‘wall’, but perhaps the intended sense is that Enlil has displaced the inhabitants of the temple from their familiar home (cf. e.g. ELA 116/188, and Löhnert 2009, 280–82).

42. *-eš* has again been written over another sign, perhaps *eš*₂, as in line 29. The sense is very uncertain: I have assumed that *me-du*₃ = *mu-e-du*₃ (following Cavigneaux), and that *saĝ-eš-e* = *saĝ-bi-še*₃, ‘completely’ (GSF² s.v.). *ta i*₃-*in-gul-lu-u*₂-*a-be*₂ is the almost exact ES counterpart to the exclamation *a-na im-gul-lu-u*₈-*a-bi* at InŠuk. 168, also in a context of divine anger and destruction: *u*₄-*ba munus-e nam-galla*₄^{la}-*na-še*₃ *a-na im-gul-lu-u*₈-*a-bi*, ‘Alors, voilà ce que la femme fait de terrible à cause de sa vulve’ (Attinger 2019b).

Catchline: The catchline is clearly separated from the main text by a double ruling, as is common (Löhnert 2009, 37). The text is only partly intelligible (note again the scribe’s erasures): perhaps the Anuna-gods are here said to ratify Enlil’s destruction of the people (cf. Uru *ama’irabi* II 76, Delnero 2020, 336. 370). *ba-bi-ib-ri* is a non-standard spelling of the verb *biri*, ‘to scatter’ (GSF s.v.), standing for **ba-BIRI.BIRI*. I owe to Schwemer the suggestion that *bi-bi* in the following clause could be another, very reduced non-standard spelling of a participle derived from the same verb (= /bib’i/?). It would thus be the counterpart to *kul*, ‘to gather’: the deity addressed (Sud?) would in that case be called upon to repair the damage wrought by Enlil and the Anuna-gods. This would probably agree with Sud’s role as a mother-goddess (see comments on line 24); cf. the later role of Bēlet-ilī at SB Gilg. XI 117–27, 164–71.

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