Top – Middle – Base

A System of Omen Sequencing and its Interpretation in *Barûtu* Chapter 3 and in Old Babylonian Precursors

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Abstract: This paper analyses three omen sequences from the third chapter of the first millennium extispicy omen series *Bārûtu*, which is devoted to the section of the liver called *Manzāzu*, 'the Presence'. These sequences share the same Top-Middle-Base system of vertical arrangement in the omen protases, while the apodoses associate this scheme with sets of three subjects belonging to the same social group or environment. This article compares these 1st millennium sequences with their Old Babylonian precursors and discusses similarities and discrepancies in the interpretation of the Top-Middle-Base scheme. I investigate the omen sequences on both the horizontal, or syntagmatic, and on the vertical, or paradigmatic, level. On the syntagmatic level, I determine the rules governing the association of a given section of the Presence in the protasis with a given subject in the apodosis. On the paradigmatic level, I investigate the different interpretative systems adopted in the apodoses in correlation with the Top-Middle-Base scheme in the protases, and provide evidence for two such systems of interpretation. In some cases, the Top-Middle-Base scheme in the protases is interpreted as a three step-movement, from the closest to the furthest from a certain point, in the parallel sequence of apodoses. Other texts choose a different interpretation which assigns a special function to the middle entry's apodosis, which functions as a structural medium between the two external elements of the sequence, thus playing the role of a 'pivot' line. This paper focuses especially on this interpretative system, which has not previously been detected within the omen compendia.

Keywords: divination, omen, sequence, extispicy, *Bārûtu,* Top-Middle-Base, syntagmatic, paradigmatic, 'pivot' line

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Introduction

In its standardised, Neo-Assyrian version, the extispicy omen series *Bārûtu* consists of about one hundred Tablets and is divided into ten chapters or subseries, devoted to different sections of the internal organs of the sacrificial sheep.[1] The

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[1]   The first nine chapters treat body parts and internal organs of a sacrificial animal, including skeleton and carcass (chapter 1), intestines (chapter 2), various sections of the liver (chapters 3–7), the ominous mark *kakku* 'Weapon' (chapter 8), and lungs (chapter 9). The final chapter, *Multābiltu*, literally 'the one which carries back and forth', has been edited by Koch 2005 and consists of seventeen Tablets including a compilation

third chapter of the series treats conditions and modifications of the *manzāzu* 'Presence', which corresponds to the vertical groove on the *lobus sinister* of the liver,[2] and was identified by a different name, *naplaštum*, 'View' (IGI.BAR) in the Old Babylonian extispicy compendia.[3] This was the first section of the liver examined by the diviner, and, as the name indicates, its appearance symbolised the presence of the gods and their willingness to accept the sacrifice.[4] The chapter devoted to the Presence consisted of six Tablets, of which only the sixth is relatively well preserved.[5]

The following analysis will focus on three omen sequences from this chapter, *Manzāzu* 1: 4'–6', *Manzāzu* 2: 28–30, and *Manzāzu* 6: 37–39, which share the same system of vertical arrangement. The sequence of protases observes the same condition first in the Top, second in the Middle, and third in the Base of the Presence. The parallel sequence of apodoses associates this scheme with a set of three subjects belonging to the same social group or environment. Thus, the three sections of the Presence correspond to three different subjects in the predictions.

Winitzer thoroughly discusses the implications of the Top-Middle-Base scheme and of its interpretation in the corpus of Old Babylonian extispicy.[6] A similar investigation on the basis of first millennium material has not yet been attempted, and the present study shall determine whether the interpretative rules detected by Winitzer in the Old Babylonian omen compendia apply to the Top-Middle-Base sequences from the first millennium *Bārûtu* as well.

To do this, we will first compare the Top-Middle-Base sequences from the first millennium *Manzāzu* to their second millennium precursors. In the case of *Manzāzu* 1: 4'–6' (1.1), the protases observe a perforation in the Top-Middle-Base of the Presence, and the apodoses predict robberies in the temple committed by different members of the temple hierarchy. A very similar sequence is found

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of general rules and norms for the interpretation of the extispicy series *Bārûtu.* This final chapter was probably added to the series during the first millennium and was meant for diviner-scholars who studied the extispicy series (Koch 2005, 5–7). See Koch 2015, 96, for a preliminary sketch of the entire series as well as for a summary of each chapter. The series is thought to have reached its standard form by the end of the second millennium BCE. At some point, it assumed the name of the discipline itself, *Bārûtu*, although the earliest unambiguous evidence for this name is found in Late Babylonian colophons (Koch 2000, 25–27).

2   Jeyes 1989, 53; Koch 2000, 52.

3   The name underwent changes. The feminine form *naplaštum* (IGI.BAR) occurs in compendia from Southern Babylonia. The masculine counterpart *naplašum* (IGI.TAB) is found in Old Babylonian texts from Sippar. In the first millennium sources, the Presence is almost exclusively identified with the logogram NA, which might be an abbreviation of *naplaštum* in origin (Koch 2000, 52).

4   Koch 2000, 52.

5   See Koch 2000, 79–182, for the edition of the entire chapter.

6   Winitzer 2017, 290–322.

in a text from the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin, partially edited by Nougayrol (1950, 29) which we will discuss in 1.2. The well-known Old Babylonian liver model CT 6, 1–3 (Entries 11–13), which we will discuss in 1.3, also provides an interesting source for comparison with these sequences.

In 2.1, we will turn to *Manzāzu* 2: 28–30. This sequence associates the appearance of one or more Holes in the centre of the Top, Middle, and Base of the Presence in the protases with apodoses predicting the death of different important figures. Two sequences from the Old Babylonian View compendia MAH 15874 (20–23) and YOS 10 17 (50–55) share some similarities with this Neo-Assyrian text.[7] These two sequences, though presenting a different arrangement of the Top-Middle-Base scheme in the protases, as well as a different arrangement of the interpretative motifs adopted in the apodoses, are very close to one another. In 2.2, we will analyse the text from MAH 15874, and in 2.3, we will turn to YOS 10 17: 50–55, to evaluate similarities and discrepancies between the two texts.[8]

Manzāzu 6: 37–39 (3.1) partially overlaps with sequences from these two Old Babylonian View compendia, YOS 17: 48–50 (3.2) and MAH 15874: 1–9 (3.3), as well. All three of these sequences concern the appearance of a Hole on the right side of the Top, Middle, and Base of the Presence/View, and associate this sign with predictions of death among a man's household.

The structural comparison of the first-millennium sequences with their Old Babylonian precursors will bring valuable results. On the one hand, we will show that some interpretative motifs maintained a certain stability over time.[9] Some of the analogical connections that governed the arrangement of the entries in the Old Babylonian View compendia can be found more or less unaltered in the sequences from the chapter *Manzāzu*. On the other hand, there are significant discrepancies in the interpretation of the Top-Middle-Base scheme. Different principles and

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[7]   MAH 15874 was first published by Nougayrol (1950, 33–40). YOS 10 17 was published in Goetze 1947 (Plate XV–XIX). Both tablets have since been re-edited by Glassner (2009, 40–43)

[8]   These two tablets provide many examples of Top-Middle-Base sequences. MAH 15874 is a 23-line tablet and includes three sequences whose protases build on a Top-Middle-Base scheme. Only the first sequence has the regular Top-Middle-Base arrangement. The second sequence considers the Top of the View in two successive protases (and thus runs Top-Top-Middle-Base) while the third sequence – which will be discussed in 2.2 – runs Top-Middle-Middle and does not consider the Base of the View. YOS 10 17 is a much longer tablet, consisting of about 95 entries (Glassner 2009, 45). Lines 48–61 build on a Top-Middle-Base scheme, but as with MAH 15874, the sequences include duplication of parts of the View in consecutive protases.

[9]   I use the term 'motif' in the basic meaning that it has in literature and poetry, namely, to define a recurring idea or image. In our case, the phrase 'interpretative motif' is meant to define certain ideas that occur repeatedly in the apodoses as the interpretation of a given sign.

rules seem to be at play in the vertical arrangement of the entries, and in the combination of the Top-Middle-Base scheme with a given interpretative motif in the apodoses.

In order to evaluate such discrepancies in the treatment of the Top-Middle-Base scheme, this study will analyse and compare the omen sequences both on the horizontal and on the vertical level. On the horizontal level, we will investigate the 'syntagmatic' connection between antecedent and consequent in a single omen (borrowing a term from structuralism).[10] In this respect, the present analysis aims to understand the reasons for the association of a given section of the Presence/View in the protasis to certain figures or subjects in the apodosis.[11] On the vertical level, we will consider the overall structure of these sequences and will focus on the vertical or 'paradigmatic' connections between the omens, again adopting structuralist terminology.[12] This is meant to show the parallelism between the Top-Middle-Base paradigm in the sequence of protases and its interpretation in the apodoses.

On the vertical, 'paradigmatic' level, this study will provide evidence for two main interpretative systems of the Top-Middle-Base spatial scheme.[13] Some sequences relate this paradigm in the protases to a set of three subjects belonging to the same category or environment in the apodoses. This interpretative system and its association with the Top-Middle-Base scheme in the Old Babylonian extispicy

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[10]   The use of this term follows the consideration of the single omen as the smallest unit that builds the divinatory compendia. In this sense, the omen is defined as a 'syntagm', and the connections within its constituents are defined 'syntagmatic'. These two terms and their implications for the extispicy compendia are discussed in detail by Winitzer 2017, 28–30.

[11]   The terms 'figure' and 'subject' are here meant to indicate the groups or categories of people (members of the clergy and of the royal elite, circles of a man's acquaintances) which are the topics of the predictions that we will consider here.

[12]   This term and its use applied to Mesopotamian divinatory compendia, of extispicy in particular, is thoroughly discussed by Winitzer 2017, 13–16; and 28–30.

[13]   With the term 'system', I indicate a consistent idea or method according to which the omens of a given sequence can be organised on the vertical level. This can apply to the vertical arrangement of variables in the protases – such as the Top-Middle-Base spatial variables under discussion – or to the systematic logic that governs the arrangement of the predictions in the sequence of apodoses. I use the term 'scheme' in a slightly stricter sense and as a synonym for the term 'paradigm', namely, to define sets of variables that relate a sequence of protases on the vertical level, and that are meant to explore different possibilities of a certain condition or mark, such as the different shades of colour or the different positions in which those marks may occur. Such variables generally occur in fixed sets – such as, for instance, the Top-Middle-Base divisions that here define the sections of the Presence – and for this reason, the terms 'schemes' and 'paradigms' well apply to them.

compendia has been studied by Winitzer,[14] and the following analysis will show that a similar logic underlies the interpretation of several of the Top-Middle-Base sequences in the Neo-Assyrian *Bārûtu* as well. In these cases, the Top-Middle-Base scheme seems to be interpreted metaphorically in the apodoses as a three-step movement, beginning with the closest and ending with the furthest from a certain point.[15]

This interpretative system does not apply to all the sequences, however. Other texts choose a different interpretation which assigns a special function to the middle entry's apodosis. In these cases, the middle entry plays the role of a 'pivot' line, and functions as a structural medium between the two external elements of the sequence. This paper will focus especially on this interpretative system and on the structural role of the middle entry's apodosis, which has not previously been detected within the omen compendia.

1. Stealing the Property of the Gods

1.1 *Manzāzu* 1 (BM 51256): rev. 4'–6', and Two Earlier Parallels

To begin, we will discuss three parallel omen sequences which concern the meaning of a perforation in the Top-Middle-Base of the Presence/View.[16] The first sequence belongs to the first Tablet of the chapter *Manzāzu* (*Manzāzu* 1, BM 51256: rev. 4'–6', 1.1), the second comes from an unpublished extispicy text from the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin (1.2), and the third is found on a famous Old Babylonian liver model (CT 6, 1–3, discussed in 1.3).

In all three sequences, the image of a perforated Presence/View evokes the idea of something belonging to the gods being stolen. This visual analogy triggers predictions of robbery in the parallel sequences of apodoses, which forecast that members of the temple hierarchy – a *ēnu*-priest(ess), the *šangû*-chief temple administrator, and the wife of the *šangû* – will repeatedly steal 'the sacred property of the gods' (*asakku*).[17]

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[14]   Winitzer 2017, 313–315.

[15]   The order can also be reversed, as in the case of YOS 10 17: 48–50 (see 3.3).

[16]   As mentioned in the introduction, the View corresponds to the zone identified by the name 'Presence' (*manzāzu*) in first millennium extispicy compendia (Jeyes 1989, 53; Koch 2000, 52).

[17]   CAD A/2, 327, *asakku* B 'something set apart (for god or king, a taboo)', and 2', 'to appropriate something which is under taboo'. The predictions involve an impious action on behalf of the temple staff, which is said to be seizing something that should not be removed or touched, and constitutes, therefore, a taboo. Koch's translation (Koch 2000, 84) of the term *asakku* as 'the sacred property of the gods' seems fitting in this context since the acts of stealing take place among the temple staff.

The first sequence from the first Tablet of the chapter *Manzāzu*, which is attested on only one manuscript (BM 51256[18] rev. 4'–6'), reads as follows:

MANZĀZU 1	PROTASIS	APODOSIS
4'.	*šumma* **rēš manzāzi** *pališ-ma ina libbīšu šīlu nadi* 'If the **Top of the Presence** is perforated, and a Hole lies in its centre',	**ēnu** *asakka ištanarriq iṣṣabbat-ma iddâk*] 'The **ēnu priestess** [will repeatedly steal the sacred property of the god, (but) she will be caught and killed]'.
5'.	*šumma* **qabal manzāzi** *pališ-ma ina libbīšu šīlu nadi* 'If the **Middle of the Presence** is perforated, and a Hole lies in its centre',	**šangû** *as*[*akka ištanarriq iṣṣab-bat-ma iddâk*] 'The **chief temple administrator** [will repeatedly steal the] sacred property [of the god, (but) he will be caught and killed]'.
6'.	*šumma* **išid manzāzi** *pališ-ma ina libbīšu šīlu nadi* 'If the **Base of the Presence** is perforated, and a Hole lies in its centre',	**aššat šangî** *asak*[*ka ištanarriq iṣṣabbat-ma iddâk*] 'The **chief temple administrator's wife** [will repeatedly steal] the sacred property [of the god, (but) she will be caught and killed]'.

The text preserves the complete sequence of protases, but only the beginning of the apodoses, while the rest of the predictions is restored on the basis of a text from the Berlin collections edited without further elaboration by Nougayrol (1950, 29).[19] We will focus on the latter text in the following paragraph (1.2).

The beginning of the apodoses in the Neo-Assyrian sequence above preserves the subjects of the predictions, which all involve members of the temple hierarchy. The association of the Presence/View with the temple environment in these omens reflects the symbolic association between the Presence and the divine realm in

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[18] Koch 2000, 83–84. Note that the preceding lines of this tablet (rev. 1'–3') preserve the remaining of another Top-Middle-Base sequence. Only the protases are partly preserved.

[19] Koch 2000, 84, n. 252–253. One cannot exclude the possibility that this text from Berlin is a duplicate of *Manzāzu* 1. However, since the whereabouts of this tablet are unknown and thus collation is precluded, the suggestion can only remain purely speculative.

extispicy.[20] The division of the Presence into three sections Top, Middle and Base clearly parallels the division of the temple personnel into three categories, namely the *ēnu*-priest(ess), the *šangû*-chief temple administrator, and his wife. The system of correspondences between the Top-Middle-Base scheme in the protases and the subjects mentioned in the apodoses thus runs as follows:

rēšu, Top	=	*ēnu* priest(ess)
⬇		⬇
qablu, Middle	=	*šangû* chief temple administrator
⬇		⬇
išdu, Base	=	*aššat šangî* chief temple administrator's wife

As the table shows, the Top of the Presence corresponds to the *ēnu*-priest(ess). This was a special type of priest or priestess consecrated to a god, who was regarded as the earthly spouse of a god or a goddess.[21] In the omen sequence from the Old Babylonian liver model CT 6, 1–3, that we will discuss in 1.3, the *ēnu* is referred to by means of the feminine pronoun -*ši*, and on the basis of this parallel, Koch[22] concludes that *ēnu* refers here to a priestess as well.

The Middle of the Presence is associated with another high rank official in the temple staff, that is, the *šangû*-chief temple administrator. This official ran the

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[20]   In this respect, Jeyes 1989, 53–54, argued that the Presence can occasionally represent the 'agents of the gods', namely the clergy and in particular the diviners. She (54) suggested that 'a normal Presence symbolizes a successfully established communication with the divine. An expansion or doubling of this groove appears to expand the theme of the divine to include the diviners'. However, Koch 2000, 53, rejects this suggestion, on the ground that 'there is no basis for describing the diviners as a sort of clergy'. This holds true; however, it is reasonable to suggest that the mention of the Presence in the protases and its association with the divine triggers the setting of the temple environment in the apodoses of this sequence. The notion of divine presence in Mesopotamian divination, in particular in the corpora of Old Babylonian extispicy and lecanomancy, has been discussed also by Winitzer (2010, 186–192).

[21]   This office is attested already in lexical lists from the Early Dynastic period (Henshaw 1994, 44). The title *ēn(t)u* is commonly translated as 'highest priest(ess)'. The fact that this priest was regarded as the earthly spouse of a goddess is proved by the common practice that the male *ēnu* served a female goddess, while a female *ēntu* served a male god. However, the practice of differentiating the male *ēnu* from the female *ēntu* seems to end with the Old Babylonian period. Afterwards, the female *ēntu* disappears and is attested only in literary texts. The male *ēnu* survives in first millennium administrative texts, but with different functions. He seems to be more of a public official than a member of the divine family, as it was in earlier times. For a survey of this title and his meanings, see Sallaberger & Huber-Vulliet 2005, 626–629. Also, Stol 2016, 555–566.

[22]   Koch 2000, 84 n. 253.

temple and had both cultic and administrative tasks.[23] The *šangû*'s wife is associated with the Base of the Presence and may represent the next step in this scale after the *šangû*. Just as the *ēnu* represents the human spouse of a god or a goddess and may therefore be regarded as the closest figure to the divine sphere, the *šangû*'s wife is the closest figure to the *šangû*, who is the most important human representative of the gods. Thus, the interpretative scheme runs from the *ēnu* (spouse of the goddess and closest figure to the gods themselves) to the *šangû* (human representative of the gods, and so less close to the gods than the *ēnu*, but still very close) to the *šangû*'s wife (the closest figure to the most important human representative of the gods, but the furthest figure from the gods in this sequence).

This interpretative scheme associates the Presence with the divine realm, as is the norm in Mesopotamian extispicy, while the Top-Middle-Base scheme reflects a movement from the closest to the furthest to the divine sphere. The two sequences analysed in the following paragraphs (1.2 and 1.3) attest to the long tradition of this interpretation.

1.2 A Tablet from Berlin

Nougayrol 1950, 29, partially edited an unpublished tablet from the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin,the whereabouts of which are now unknown. According to Nougayrol's edition, this text includes two triads of omens which concern perforations in the Presence organized according to the Top-Middle-Base scheme. The second triad parallels the sequence from *Manzāzu* 1 discussed in the previous paragraph (1.1). Nougayrol read the relevant passage as follows:[24]

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[23] This title is attested in lexical lists since the Early Dynastic period down to Seleucid times (Henshaw 1994, 21–24). It seems that, in older periods (Old Babylonian and earlier) the *šangû* worked together with the *ēn(t)u*-high priest in the temple (Sallaberger & Vulliet 2005, 628). This would provide a reason for their placing side by side in this sequence and would also prove that those texts reflect older practices, which were not in use anymore at the time of their composition. In fact, in the Neo-Assyrian period, the *šangû* is the chief authority in the temple, he administers the temple properties, presides the ritual actions and he can be identified with the deity that he serves or with the temple itself. He is the chief of the cultic personnel and figures at the top of hierarchically arranged lists of witnesses (Sallaberger & Huber-Vulliet 2005, 628–629).

[24] Nougayrol 1950, 29, did not give any contextual information about this tablet (no museum number is given in Nougayrol's edition), but he suggests an Old Babylonian date. A later date, perhaps Middle Babylonian or even first millennium, is also possible, as it is possible that this is a duplicate manuscript for *Manzāzu* 1 (see n.20 above). Our transliteration follows Nougayrol's edition.

BERLIN TEXT[25]	PROTASIS	APODOSIS
1	*šumma rēš manzāzi pališ* 'If the **Top of the Presence** is perforated',	*ēnu asakka ištenerriq* 'The ***ēnu*-priestess** will repeatedly steal the sacred property of the gods'.
2	*šumma qabal manzāzi pališ* 'If the **Middle of the Presence** is perforated',	*mašmaššu asakka ištenerriq* 'The **exorcist** will repeatedly steal the sacred property of the gods'.
3	*šumma išid manzāzi pališ* 'If the **Base of the Presence** is perforated',	*ašti šangî*[26] *asakka ištenerriq* 'The **chief temple administrator's wife** will repeatedly steal the sacred property of the gods'.
…	…	…
4'	*šumma rēš manzāzi pališ ina libbīšu šīlu nadi* 'If the **Top of the Presence** is perforated, (and) a **Hole** lies in its centre',	*ēnu asakka ištenerriq iṣṣabbat-ma iddâk* 'The ***ēnu*-priestess** will repeatedly steal the sacred property of the gods, (but) she will be **caught and killed**'.
5'	[*šumma qabal*] *manzāzi pališ ina libbīšu šīlu nadi* 'If the **Middle of the Presence** is perforated, (and) a **Hole** lies in its centre',	*šangû asakka ištenerriq iṣṣabbat-ma iddâk* 'The **chief temple administrator** will repeatedly steal the sacred property of the gods, (but) he will be **caught and killed**'.
6'	[*šumma išid*] *manzāzi pališ ina libbīšu šīlu nadi* 'If the **Base of the Presence** is perforated, (and) a Hole lies in its centre',	*ašti šangî asakka ištenerriq iṣṣabbat-ma iddâk* 'The **chief temple administrator's wife** will repeatedly steal the sacred property of the gods, (but) she will be **caught and killed**'.

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[25] The line numbers are for convenience only, since Nougayrol 1950, 29, does not include them. Between the first and the second triad, Nougayrol omitted some part of the text, which he marked with dots (…). Since there is no image of this tablet currently available, it is impossible to determine the extent of the lacuna in Nougayrol's edition, and therefore, we leave a blank line between the first and the second triad to signal this missing part of the text. Note, however, that the Neo-Assyrian text in BM 51256: rev. 2'–6' discussed above (1.1) has an extra line between the two triads (3'), whose apodosis is not preserved, but whose protasis concerns the Top, the Middle and the Base of the Presence at the same time.

[26] *aš-ti šangî* in Nougayrol's edition (Nougayrol 1950, 29).

This text includes two sequences of three entries each, the second of which parallels the sequence in *Manzāzu* 1: 4'–6' (1.1) in the protases.

This triad elaborates the condition of the 'perforated' Presence explored in the first triad with the variable of a Hole lying in the centre of the Presence's Top, Middle, and Base. The parallel sequence of apodoses has a corresponding addition predicting the death of the one who steals the sacred property of the gods, based on the well-established analogical connection between the Hole and death.[27] Schematically, the structure is as follows:

Presence (T-M-B) + Perforation = Subject (*ēnu-mašmaššu-ašti sangî*) + Robbery

Presence (T-M-B) + Perforation + Hole = Subject (*ēnu-šangû-ašti sangî*) + Robbery + Death

If we now turn to the subjects of the apodoses, we see that in both triads, the Top of the Presence is associated with the *ēnu*-priestess and the Base is associated with the chief temple administrator's wife (*ašti šangî*). The subject of the middle entry, however, changes unexpectedly: the first triad has the exorcist, *mašmaššu*, while the second triad has the chief temple administrator, *šangû*. The cultic role of the exorcist, who also represents an intermediary between the human and the divine world, may have underlain his placement in the sequence together with the *ēnu* and the *šangû*'s wife, although, unlike them, the exorcist is not strictly associated with the temple hierarchy. In Neo-Assyrian times, the *mašmaššu* seems rather connected to the royal power, performing purification rituals in the palace.[28] Interestingly, another purification priest (the *pašīšu*) is mentioned in the middle entry of a Top-Middle-Base sequence (2.2).[29]

1.3 The Old Babylonian Liver Model CT 6 Pl. 1–3

The Old Babylonian liver model Bu 89–4–26, 238, published in CT 6, 1–3, includes another Top-Middle-Base sequence regarding the View (*naplaštum*) which can be compared with the two sequences treated in the previous paragraphs. This

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[27] This frequent connection was first noticed by Jeyes 1980, 112.

[28] This title has a long history, that goes from the Early Dynastic period down to Achaemenid and Seleucid times. At a certain point in the first millennium, this official seems to merge to a certain extent with that of the *āšipu*. They are both involved in rites of protection against the evil. It is only in later periods (Achaemenid and Seleucid), however, that families of *āšipu/mašmaššu* are attested specifically in connection with temple organisations (Sallaberger & Huber-Vulliet 2005, 632).

[29] Cf. the Top-Middle-Base omen sequence in YOS 10 31 iii 45–iv 6, discussed in Winitzer 2017, 313. In this case, the middle entry's apodosis concerns the diviner, *bārû*, who is also a middle-rank official connected to the palace and performing ritual and cultic tasks. There seems to be a connection between the middle entry and this type of middle ranking official.

section of the liver model was edited by Nougayrol 1950, 29 (entries 11–13), and corresponds to obv. 7 and rev. 8–9 in the edition of the same model published online on http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/cams/barutu/corpus/. The sequence reads as follows:

CT 6 PL. 1–3	PROTASIS	APODOSIS 1	APODOSIS 2
13/ OBV. 7	*šumma* **rēš naplaštim** *pališ-ma šutebrû*[30] 'If the **Top of the View** is perforated and it goes all the way through',	**ēnum** *asakka ištanarriq* **iṣabbatūšī-ma iqallûši** 'the **ēnu-priestess** will repeatedly steal the sacred property of the gods, **but they will catch her and burn her'**,	*šumma* **šangûm**[31] *ēnam ittanajjak* 'or the **chief temple administrator** will repeatedly have intercourse with an *ēnu-*priestess'.
12/ REV. 8	*šumma* **qabal naplaštim** *pališ-*[*ma*] *šutebrû* 'If the **Middle of the View** is perforated and it goes all the way through',	**aššat šangîm** *asakkam ištanarriq* 'the **chief temple administrator's wife** will repeatedly steal the sacred property of the gods',	*šumma* **šangûm** *ēnam ittanajjak* 'or the **chief temple administrator** will repeatedly have intercourse with an *ēnu-*priestess'.
11/ REV. 9	*šumma* **išid naplaštim** *pališ-ma šutebrû* 'If the **Base of the View** is perforated and it goes all the way through',	**aššat šangî** *asakkam ištanarriq* 'the **chief temple administrator's wife** will repeatedly steal the sacred property of the gods',	*šumma* **muttallik bīt ilim** *ēnam ittanajjak* 'or **a temple visitor** will repeatedly have intercourse with an *ēnu-*priestess'.

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[30] CAD B, 279, *bitrû* 4.
[31] Spelled phonetically (*ša-gu-um/ša-gi*(-*im*)) in the text.

In this version, the sequence of protases describes a deep perforation (*pališ-ma šutebrû*) in the Top, Middle, and Base of the View.[32] Each protasis is associated with a double apodosis, the second one introduced by *šumma*.[33]

The first set of predictions forecasts repeated robberies in the temple. In the first entry, the subject of the apodosis is the *ēnu*-priestess, while in the following two entries, it is the chief temple administrator's wife (*aššat šangî(m)*). In all three of the sequences studied so far, the Top of the Presence/View in the protasis is associated in the apodosis with the high priestess, and the Base of the Presence/View is associated with the chief temple administrator's wife. Unlike the Neo-Assyrian version and the Berlin text, however, the apodosis of the second entry in the Old Babylonian model is the same as that of the third entry, and it concerns the temple administrator's wife instead of the temple administrator himself as in the other two sequences. Thus:

Protasis	NA and Berlin Text Apodosis	OB Apodosis
rēš naplaštim/manzāzi	*ēnu(m)*	*ēnu(m)*
qabal naplaštim/manzāzi	*šangû*	*aššat šangî(m)*
išid naplaštim/manzāzi	*aššat/ašti šangî(m)*	*aššat šangî(m)*

The second set of predictions in the Old Babylonian liver model refer to illicit sexual activities involving the high priestess.[34] Semantically, they are connected

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[32]   The order is inverted in Nougayrol's edition of the liver model, in which the sequence runs Base-Middle-Top. However, the fact that the entry concerning the Top of the View is found on the obverse of the liver model, while the two entries devoted to the Middle and the Base of the View (in this order) are on the reverse, shows quite clearly that the sequence is to be read from the Top to the Base, and not the other way around. The edition available online at http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/cams/barutu/corpus orders the text differently from Nougayrol and assigns to these entries the numbers obv. 7 and rev. 8–9. Here, we refer to both the numberings from both the editions (Nougayrol 1950 and the online edition http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/cams/barutu/corpus). Note, however, that Koch 2000, 84 n. 253, adopts yet another system of case numbering for this text, following the CAD (CAD E, 169, *ēnu* 2 a) and referring to these three entries as cases 42 to 44.

[33]   The conjunction *šumma* has here a disjunctive meaning 'or', introducing an alternative to the first prediction (CAD Š/3, 275–276, *šumma* 1 d). The use of this conjunction to introduce alternative interpretations in omen apodoses is discussed in Winitzer 2017, 42–44.

[34]   The verb *nâku* occurring in these predictions seem to refer in general to immoral sexual behavior, mostly on the behalf of the man (Stol 2016, 234). Occasionally, it might even

to the first set of predictions in that 'stealing the property of the gods' and 'having intercourse with an *ēnu*-priestess' are both illegal acts that involve 'stealing' something that belongs to the gods.[35] The parallelism of the two set of predictions is reinforced by the use of the same verbal stem (Gtn).

In the first two entries, the subject of the apodosis is the chief temple administrator (*šangûm*), while in the final entry, it is 'a temple visitor' (*muttallik bīt ilim*) who 'will repeatedly have intercourse' with an *ēnu*-priestess.

Thus, while in the first sequence of apodoses, the second and third predictions are repeated, the second sequence repeats the first and second prediction:

Protasis	Apodosis 1	Apodosis 2
Top	**ēnum** *asakka ištanarriq* **iṣabbatūši-ma iqallûši**	**šangûm** *ēnam ittanajjak*
Middle	**aššat šangîm** *asakkam ištanarriq*	**šangûm** *ēnam ittanajjak*
Base	**aššat šangî** *asakkam ištanarriq*	**muttallik bīt ilim** *ēnam ittanajjak*

On closer inspection, it becomes clear that the middle entry has a special role to play in the make-up of this Top-Middle-Base sequence. On the one hand, the first part of the apodosis (*aššat šangî asakka ištanarriq*) anticipates the content of the following entry's first apodosis, which repeats this prediction *verbatim*.[36] On the other hand, the second part of the apodosis (*šangûm ēnam ittanajjak*) repeats *verbatim* the preceding entry's second apodosis.

The first entry is the only one to include the phrase *iṣabbatūši-ma iqallûši,* 'they will catch her and burn her' (bold and ruled in the table above). Semantically, the death of the high priestess represents the peak of the sequence of predictions concerning robberies in the temple.

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indicate acts of rape (Stol 2016, 254 n. 1), and thus it seems that the action expressed by this verb implies a passive role of the woman, who, in our omen sequence, is 'taken' or 'stolen' just like the property belonging to the gods in the other set of predictions.

[35]   The role of the *ēntu* was that of a human wife of the god, and for this reason, her behaviour and costumes were extremely important (see footnote 24 above). She was to act like a married woman in every respect, and her misconduct was an offense to the god himself (Sallaberger & Vulliet 2005, 626–627). The prediction of illicit sexual acts involving this priestess implies therefore a serious act of impiety.

[36]   There is a negligible difference in spelling: the apodosis of the middle entry has a plene writing in the genitive *šaĝîm* (spelled *ša-gi-im*), while the same word in the following entry's apodosis is spelled spelling *ša-gi.*

If we consider all the apodoses as a coherent whole, we notice that they are built as two parallel contrasting sequences. The three predictions of the first sequence all have a woman as their subject, i.e., the high priestess and the chief temple administrator's wife, who share the same role of important wives.[37] The object of the predictions involving these women is the sacred property of the gods (*asakku*), and the grammatical construction is as follows: Subject (*ēnum / aššat šangî(m)*) – direct object (*asakka(m)*) – Gtn Verb (*ištanarriq*). The apodoses of the second sequence parallel this construction (Subject *šangûm / muttallik bīt īlim* – direct object *ēnam* – Gtn Verb *ittanajjak*), but this time a woman, i.e., the high priestess, is the direct object in the predictions, and the subjects, i.e., the chief temple administrator and the temple visitor, are both males. The object of the second predictions, the 'sacred property' which is 'stolen' from the gods is now the *ēnu*-high priestess herself, who is said to be taken by these subjects by means of illicit sexual intercourse.

In these two parallel sequences, the first element of the first sequence and the final term of the second one function as two contrasting terms. As in the Neo-Assyrian and Berlin texts discussed above (1.1 and 1.2), the *ēnu*-priestess represents the closest figure to the divine sphere. On the other hand, the 'temple visitor', who does not belong to the temple hierarchy, is the furthest figure from the divine domain. The position of these two figures, at the beginning and the end of the respective sequences, functions as an additional element reinforcing their contrastive roles. Also, the alliteration of velar /k/ and /q/ and of liquid /l/, together with the assonance of /a/, /u/ and /i/ in the final word of the first prediction in the first sequence (*iQaLLûši*) and the first word of the third prediction in the second sequence (*mutaLLiK*) strengthens the link between the two predictions:[38]

Protasis	First Sequence	Second Sequence
Top	***ēnum** asakkam ištanarriq* *iṣabbatūši-ma **iqallûši***	
		***šangûm** ēnam ittanajjak*
Middle		***šangûm** ēnam ittanajjak*
	*aššat **šangîm** asakkam ištanarriq*	
Base	*aššat **šangî** asakkam ištanarriq*	***muttallik** bīt ilim ēnam ittanajjak*

The two contrastive elements placed at the beginning and at the end of the respective sequences are interchanged with the repeated predictions *aššat šangî(m) asakka(m) ištanarriq,* and *šangûm ēnam ittanajjak*. The middle entry contains both the repeated elements, of the first and of the second sequence, and thus creates a climax towards the two non-repeated elements.

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[37] See remarks in 1.1 and n. 22.

[38] Winitzer 2017, 338–449, discusses extensively the roles of paranomasia and wordplay in the vertical organisation of omen sequences.

2. The Death of an Important Public Person and a River's Flood

2.1 *Manzāzu* 2, 28–30

We will now examine a second Top-Middle-Base sequence, this one from Tablet 2 of first millennium *Manzāzu*[39] (*Manzāzu* 2: 28–30),[40] which deals with the occurrence of one or more Holes in the Presence. As in the sequences discussed in the first section, the apodoses interpret the Hole as a sign of death, and all predict the death of important public figures.

The first-millennium sequence is comparable to sequences found in the Old Babylonian View compendia MAH 15874: 20–23 and YOS 10 17: 50–55 (see 2.2 and 2.3). We will begin with the Neo-Assyrian sequence:

MANZĀZU 2	PROTASIS	APODOSIS
28.	*šumma ina rēš manzāzi ina libbi manzāzi šīlu nadi* 'If a Hole lies in the **Top of the Presence**, in the **centre of the Presence**',	*ēnu rabû*[41] *imât ana [...] miqitti ša[ngî]*[42] 'A powerful **high priest** will die […] downfall of the **chief temple administrator**'.
29.	*šumma ina libbi qabal manzāzi šīlu šalāš ūlū erbe nadû* 'If three or four Holes lie in the **centre** of the **Middle of the Presence**',	*miqitti aḫḫê ru[bê]* 'Downfall of the **prince's brothers**'.
30.	*šumma ina libbi išid manzāzi šīlu nadi* 'If a Hole lies in the **centre** of the **Base of the Presence**',	*bēltu*[43] *imât* 'The **queen** will die'.

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[39] This Tablet focuses on the Presence in combination with a number of ominous marks. The section from which this passage is taken deals with Holes and "Request" marks in different areas of the Presence (25–46) (Koch 2000, 80).

[40] This text is preserved on K 2258 + K 3271: 9'–11' (Koch 2000, 87).

[41] *en-nu* GAL-*ú* ÚŠ. Note that the sign GAL includes an extra horizontal wedge (De Zorzi, personal communication).

[42] *ana* GIŠ [x] ŠUB-*ti* KID.M[AŠ?], in Koch's edition (Koch 2000, 87). The reading *šangî* is thus not entirely certain. Collation of a photo of the tablet from the British Museum shows traces of one sign following GIŠ, which might be GAG, to be read as *sikkatu* 'weapon'. This reading (*ana sikkati*), however, does not seem to fit well the context.

[43] Transliteration follows Koch's reading of K 2258 + K 3271, 10' (*Manzāzu* 2, 30, in Koch 2000, 87). The term for 'queen' is spelled NIN-*tu₄* ÚŠ.

As in the 'Stealing the property of the gods' sequences, the Top of the Presence is connected with the highest ranks of the temple hierarchy, the *ēnu*-priest[44] and the *šangû* 'chief temple administrator'.[45] However, in this sequence, the second entry (29) introduces a shift from the temple to the palace sphere, as the subject of the prediction are the 'prince's brothers'. Possibly, wordplay played a role in connecting this apodosis to the preceding one. The alliteration of liquid /r/ and labial /b/, together with the assonance of /u/, in the subjects of the two entries (*ēnu rabû → rubê*) connects the *ēnu* in the first entry with the prince's brothers in the second on a phonological level.

The subject of the third entry's apodosis also belongs to the palace sphere. Once more, a woman, the wife of an important man, is associated with the Base of the Presence in the apodosis of the final entry of the sequence.[46]

The system of correspondences between signs and predictions on the horizontal axis is also noteworthy. The first entry's protasis uses a different expression to indicate the spatial location of the Hole than do the other two protases, and it mentions two subsections of the Presence, namely, the Presence's Top and its (i.e., the Presence's) centre (**ina rēš manzāzi ina libbi manzāzi**). This double spatial indication corresponds to a double subject in the apodosis, which mentions the *ēnu*-priest and the *šangû*.[47]

Similarly, the protasis of the following entry refers to a plural number of Holes, three or four, in the Presence, and the apodosis reflects this plurality in the

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44 Unlike in the sequences discussed in section 1, in which the *ēnu* was the female priestess rather than a male priest (in fact, she was referred to by means of a feminine pronoun and 'taken' by means of sexual intercourse, as in the sequence from paragraph 1.3) this title indicates here the male *ēnu*-priest. The practice of differentiating the male *ēnu* from the female *ēntu* seems to end indeed with the Old Babylonian period, and afterwards, the female *ēntu* disappears and is attested only in literary texts. The male *ēnu* survives in first millennium administrative texts, but with different functions. He seems to be more of a public official than a member of the divine family, as it was in earlier times (Sallaberger & Huber-Vulliet 2005, 626–629). It seems thus more likely that this first millennium text refers to this type of official, which is associated with another important temple official, the *šangû*. The importance of the *ēnu* depended on the importance of the deity that he served in the local pantheon (Sallaberger & Huber-Vulliet 2005, 627). So, the *ēnu rabû* indicates an especially important one.

45 The *šangû*, as mentioned in 1.1, was the highest rank of the temple hierarchy in Neo-Assyrian times and had both cultic and administrative functions. Note that, as in the sequences discussed in section 1, *ēnu* and *šangû* occur in the same passage.

46 In the Neo-Assyrian sequence discussed in 1.1, as well as in the Berlin text discussed 1.2, and in the Old Babylonian liver model (1.3), the Base of the Presence is associated with the wife of the chief temple administrator in the final entry of the sequence.

47 The same subjects occur also in *Manzāzu* 1, r. 4'–6', and in the other sequences discussed in 1, in which they appear in different but consequent predictions. It seems that these two subjects are consistently associated with the Top-Middle-Base scheme.

subject of the prediction, i.e., the prince's brothers (*aḫḫê rubê*). The final protasis mentions only one Hole in the centre of the Presence's Base, and correspondingly, the subject of the apodosis includes a single figure, the queen. The system may be summarised as follows:

1)   Top + Center   – 1 Hole   → *ēnu*-priest + *šangû* (DUAL)
2)   Middle Center – 3/4 Holes → prince's brothers   (PLUR)
3)   Base Center   – 1 Hole   → queen   (SING)

The interpretative system in this passage thus involves two different sets of variables in the protases – not only the Top-Middle-Base scheme, but also the number variable – which the apodoses interpret symbolically.

The overall coherence of this passage is also visible in the system of repetition that characterises the apodoses, which forecast death by means of two alternate constructions. The first prediction employs a verbal construction (*ēnu imât*) and a nominal one (*miqitti šangî*). The following apodosis repeats the nominal construction with *miqittu* while the final entry repeats the verbal construction with the G durative form of *mâtu*, 'to die'. The result is a chiastic disposition of the apodoses:

1)   *ēnu rabû imât* ...   *miqitti šangî*
2)   *miqitti aḫḫê rubê*
3)   *bēltum imât*

This repetition with variation ties together the short passage in a coherent composition built upon the Top-Middle-Base scheme, in which the middle entry's apodosis has a pivotal function, as in the sequence from the liver model CT 6, 1–3 (11–13) discussed in section 1.3. The middle entry repeats the construction from the final part of the preceding prediction, and this doubling of the phrase *miqitti +* GEN creates a balance between the two external terms of the sequence (*ēnu rabû imât ... bēltu imât*) and the two central elements (*miqitti šangî ... miqitti aḫḫê rubê*).

2.2 MAH 15874: 20–23

MAH 15874 is an Old Babylonian View compendium first edited by Nougayrol[48] and republished by Glassner in 2009.[49] The final sequence of this compendium (MAH 15874: 20–23) provides an interesting source for comparison to the Neo-Assyrian Top-Middle-Base sequence discussed in the previous paragraph (2.1). The sequence documents a variant of the Top-Middle-Base scheme. The first two

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[48]   Nougayrol 1950, 33–40.
[49]   Glassner 2009, 40–44, published this text and YOS 10 17: 49–51 (discussed below). He also re-edited OBE 1, another Old Babylonian compendium which shares similarities with these two texts and includes a similar omen sequence (OBE 1: 1–14).

entries consider the presence of a Hole in the centre of the View's Top and Middle. Instead of describing the occurrence of a Hole in the View's Base as one would expect, however, the final entry's protasis turns once more to the Middle of the View and describes the occurrence of two Holes in its centre. As in the sequence from *Manzāzu* 2 discussed in 2.1, this sequence combines the occurrence of a Hole in the View with predictions of death for important public figures (22). Other themes which are absent from the Neo-Assyrian sequence, namely an eclipse (20–21) and a river's flood (23), are, however, found in the Old Babylonian text:

MAH 15874	PROTASIS	APODOSIS
20–21	*šumma ina rēš naplaštim ina* [*libbī*]*ša šīlum nadi* 'If a Hole lies in **the Top of the View**, in its [centre]',	*namtallû* 'An **eclipse**'.
22	*šumma ina qabliat naplaštim ina* [*libbī*]*ša šīlum nadi* 'If, a Hole lies in **the Middle of the View**, in its [centre],'	*lū ēnum wedûm lū pašīšu wedûm imât šanûm šumšu kīš nārim*[50] 'Either a **well-known ēnu-priest** or a **well-known pašīšu-priest** will die; alternatively, strength (?)[51] of the **river**'.
22-23	*šumma ina qabliat naplaštim ina* [*libbī*]*ša šīlū šina nadû* 'If, two Holes lie in the **Middle of the View**, in its centre,'	*mīlu ṭaḫdum illakam* '**Abundant flood-waters** will come'.

In the first entry, the visual analogy between the image of a Hole in the centre of the View's Top in the protasis seems to trigger the prediction of an eclipse in the apodosis.[52] In this case, the apodosis does not explicitly refer to the death of an important figure, but it does so implicitly, as an eclipse symbolises the death of

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[50]   The reading of this passage is not clear. Glassner 2009, 41, reads it as, *qî*-*iš na-ri-im,* and interprets this phrase as referring to the river's ordeal as its 'gift'. This apodosis would then imply another prediction of death. See, however, Winitzer's remarks: "this solution seems unlikely to me, and notably was not shared by either *CAD* or AHw (s.v. *qišum)."* (Winitzer 2017, 40, n. 36). Here, we follow Winitzer's reading of this passage *ki-iš nārim*, (Winitzer 2017, 40).

[51]   Following Nicla De Zorzi's suggestion (De Zorzi, personal communication), we take *kīš* to be the construct state of *kiššu*, 'strength, might, power' (CAD K, 461, *kiššu* B), though this reading is only tentative as this form is not otherwise attested.

[52]   This idea was first suggested by Jeyes 1980, 111–112.

the king. This is suggested also by the parallel text YOS 10 17: 49, which forecasts both an eclipse and the king's death explicitly in correspondence with the very same protasis.[53] Moreover, as with the sequences analysed in 1 and 2.1, it seems plausible that the middle entry repeats motifs from the preceding entry's apodosis. Thus, the eclipse in the first entry refers implicitly to a prediction of death (of the king), and the following entry's prediction takes up this motif with another prediction of death.

As in the sequences treated in section 1, the underlying system interprets the sections of the View, the Top and the Middle in this case, as a set of subjects that represent different degrees of proximity to the divine realm. Unlike the sequences from section 1, however, the closest figure to the divine sphere is here represented by the king, who is equated with the Top of the View.[54] The *ēnu*, that in the other sequences occupies the top position, is here associated with the Middle of the View and with the *pašīšu* priest.[55] In this sequence, they represent a point further from the divine realm than the king himself. Thus:

1)   ***namtallû***   ***eclipse (death of the king)***
                    ↓   ↓
2)   *lū **ēnum wedûm** lū **pašīšu wedûm** imât*   ***death of an important priest***

The second apodosis also includes a second prediction, the reading of which is not entirely clear but which concerns the river, perhaps its strength in particular. The uncertain reading notwithstanding, this apodosis clearly anticipates the following entry's apodosis. The protasis of the last entry focuses again on the Middle of the View, but in this case, there are two Holes in its centre. The shift from a single Hole to two Holes in the protasis seems to lead to an amplification of the

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[53]   See the discussion of this sequence below (section 2.3).

[54]   The king is indeed the most important cultic figure and might be regarded as a quasi-god himself. He acts as representative of his land in front of the gods, and he is responsible for the gods' cult in the entire country. For this reason, he is the most important cultic figure. In Assyria, the king is also the most important priest of Ashur, and he holds the title of *šangû* of Ashur. In other cities, other priestly titles used to be attributed to the kings (Sallaberger & Huber-Vulliet 2005, 624).

[55]   The *pašīšu* priest is attested already in the earliest Sumerian lexical lists and throughout Mesopotamian history until Neo-Assyrian times (Henshaw 1994, 29–32). Unlike the *ēn(t)u*-high priest(ess), who seems to have had a strong representative role as the human husband/wife of the goddess (Sallaberger & Huber-Vulliet 2005, 626), the function of the *pašīšu* seems to relate to cultic activities, especially those concerned with purification rites. Moreover, while there was only one *ēn(t)u*-high priest(ess) in a temple at a time, it seems there could be more than one *pašīšu* employed in the same temple at the same time, especially in the biggest temple organizations (Sallaberger & Huber-Vulliet 2005, 630). It is worth noting that in the Berlin text discussed above (1.2) the middle entry is also associated with a purification priest, the *mašmaššu* (*mašmaššu asakka ištenerriq,* 2).

meaning of the third apodosis, from the prediction involving the river in the second entry to the prediction of an 'abundant flood' in the third one.[56]

2)	*kīš nārim*	*strength of the river*
	⬇	⬇
3)	*mīlu ṭaḫdum*	*abundant flood*

As in the sequences treated in sections 1.3 and 2.1, the middle entry's apodosis seems to function as a pivot between the first and third entries. The first part of the prediction elaborates further on the motif of death from the preceding entry's forecast. The second part of the prediction, on the other hand, anticipates the motif of the river, which is taken up and amplified in the third entry's apodosis. Thus:

1) *namtallû* 'eclipse, death of the king'

2) *lu ēnum wedûm lu pašīšu wedûm* imât   *kīš nārim*
   'death of important priests'   'strength (?) of the river'

3)   *mīlu ṭaḫdum*
                                                           'abundant flood'

2.3 YOS 10 17: 50–55

Another interpretation of the Top-Middle-(Base) sequence treated in 2.2 is found in YOS 10 17: 50–55.[57] This sequence includes four entries. Unlike the sequence in MAH 15874 discussed above (2.2), the first three entries follow the regular Top-Middle-Base scheme, and their protases all consider the occurrence of a single Hole in each of the three sections of the View. The fourth entry concerns a Hole in the 'Bases' of the View, both on the right and left sides. The passage reads as follows:

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56 That the employment of 1 → 2 numerical sequences in the protases corresponds to 'an amplification of the theme from the previous entry' in the apodoses has been noticed by Winitzer 2017, 411–413. In this respect, Winitzer also discusses part of the sequence from MAH 5874 (20–22) that we are discussing here and compares it with YOS 10 17: 54; 58–59 which we discuss below (2.3).

57 First published by Goetze 1947, Plate XV ff., this text has recently been re-edited by Glassner 2009, 42–43, together with MAH 15874 and OBE 1. MAH 15874 is an Early Old Babylonian tablet from Larsa and probably dates earlier than YOS 10 17 and OBE 1. Glassner 2009, 44–45, however, excludes the possibility that it is the source for YOS 10 17 and OBE 1, on the basis of paleographic and philological evidence.

YOS 10 17	PROTASIS	APODOSIS
52–53	[*šumma ina r]ēš naplaštim* ina *libbim šīlum nadi* ['If a Hole lies in **the Top of the V]iew**, in the centre',	*š[ar]rum*[58] *mūt š[īm]tīšu imât šanû šumšu* **namtallûm** 'The **[ki]ng** will die a natural death,[59] alternatively – an **eclipse**'.
53–54	[*šumma ina] qabliat naplaštim* ina [*libbim šī]lum nadi* ['If a Hole lies in] **the Middle of the View**, in the [centre',	*lū] ēnu wedûm imât lū pašīšu wedûm imât [š]anû šumšu k[ī]š*[60] *nārim* 'Either] **a well-known ēnu** or **a well-known pašišu** will die; alternatively, strength (?) **of the river**'.
54	*šumma ina* **išdi** [*naplaštim*] ina *libbim šīlum na[di]* 'If a Hole lies in **the Base of the [View]**, in the centre',	**miqitti** *rēdîm* (?) *edîm*[61] '**Downfall** of an important soldier (?)'
55	*šumma naplaštum ina iš[dā]t imittam u šu[melam šīlu]m nad[i]* 'If a Hole lies <in> the View, in the B[as]es, on **the right and l[eft]** lie[s]',[62]	*m[īlu]m illakam-ma itâr* '**[Flo]od-waters** will come but will come up (?) but will then subside'.

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58 The reading of the sign LUGAL is, however, uncertain. Glassner 2009, 42, reads L[UG]AL *mu-ut š[i-im]-ti-[š]u i-ma-at,* partly following the parallel YOS 10 41:29 (Glassner 2009, 42, n. 87). Winitzer's reading *šarrum/ awīlum,* 'the king/the man' (Winitzer 2017, 64–65), follows the preceding reading in Meyer 1987, 95 (Winitzer 2017, 64, n.126).

59 The expression *mūt šīmtīšu imât,* which literally means 'he will die the death of his fate', is connected with the phrase *ana šīmti alāku,* literally 'to go to (one's) destiny' and implies a natural death (CAD M/2, 318, *mūtu* f) 1'). For this reason, this phrase is to be kept apart from the phrase *mūt ilīšū imât,* 'to die the death of his god', which also occurs in omen apodoses but seems to refer rather to death as a consequence of an illness (Fincke 2013, 124).

60 See n. 48 and n. 49 above for reading and translation of this term.

61 The apodosis is difficult. Glassner 2009, 42, reads: *mi-qi-ti x-da-x-x-*KI-*im.* Winitzer 2017, 64, does not transliterate this passage, choosing to adopt what he defines as 'the cautious option' (Winitzer 2017, 64, n. 128). Nicla De Zorzi collated a photo of this tablet from the Yale collection and suggested to me the tentative reading *mi-qí-ti* AGA.ÚS (?) *e-di-im* for this passage (De Zorzi, personal communication).

62 The syntax of this protasis is difficult. The translation here follows the integration suggested in Winitzer 2017, 64. See especially his remarks Winitzer 2017, 65, n.136: 'The unusual bound plural atop the absence of a preposition before the View render the

As in the sequence from MAH 15874 treated in 2.2, the first entry of this sequence predicts the death of the king, this time expressed both explicitly (*š[ar]rum mūt šīmtīšu imât,* 'the king will die a natural death') and metaphorically by the prediction of 'an eclipse' (*namtallûm*). The second entry's prediction follows this motif in the first part and, as in MAH 15874, it predicts the death of an important priest, either an *ēnu* or a *pašīšu* priest. The second part of the prediction also parallels that in MAH 15874, introducing the interpretative motif of the river's flood, i.e., 'a … from the river'.

Thus, the first and second entries in both sequences run almost parallel, but the two sequences differ in the third entry. MAH 15874: 22–23 considers the Middle of the View (instead of the Base), and the occurrence of two Holes lying in its centre, while the third protasis of this sequence from YOS 10 17 considers the Base of the View and describes the condition of one Hole lying in its centre. The reading of this apodosis is not entirely certain; however, the beginning of the apodosis preserves *miqittum*, which introduces another prediction of death concerning an important person (*edûm*), perhaps a soldier (*rēdûm*(?)).

The theme of the flood reappears in the final entry (55), which expands the Top-Middle-Base scheme in the protasis by describing a Hole in the bases of the View, on the right and left sides. The mention of both the right and left sides together seems to lead to an ambiguous interpretation in the apodosis, which forecasts a flood that will come but then turn back.[63] The following table summarises the structure of this passage:

ENTRY	PROTASIS	APODOSIS	THEME
1	Hole in the centre of the View's **Top**	**Eclipse/Death** of the King	*DEATH* (A)
2	Hole in the centre of the View's **Middle**	**Death** of important Priest + 'Gift' from the **River**	*DEATH* (A') RIVER (B)
3	Hole in the centre of the View's **Base**	**Downfall** of an important Soldier (?)	*DEATH* (A'')
4	Hole in the **right and left** Bases of the View	**Flood-waters** coming but turning back	RIVER (B')

syntax of this protasis difficult, though a minor rearrangement of words (**šumma ina isdāt naplaštim*) would remedy things'.

63   This is a recurrent interpretative motif in Old Babylonian extispicy texts: see Winitzer 2017, 335–346, who extensively discusses cases in which a given ominous mark occurs both on the right and left side of a given section and investigates the correspondence of this type of protasis with apodoses that convey a sense of indeterminacy or reciprocity.

The structure of this sequence is very close to that in MAH 15874: 20–23 (2.2). However, the third entry in YOS 10 17: 54 does not match MAH 15874: 22–23, and consequently, the two sequences show slightly different arrangements. The following table shows the arrangement of motifs in the two sequences of apodoses:

YOS 10 17: 50–55			MAH 15874: 19–23		
1. *DEATH*	→ A		1. *DEATH*	→ A	
2. *DEATH* // RIVER	→ A' // B		2. *DEATH* // RIVER	→ A' // B	
3. *DEATH*	→ A''		3. RIVER	→	B'
4. RIVER	→	B'			

In MAH 15874, the structure is bipartite, with the first entry's apodosis and the first half of the middle entry's predictions concerning death (of the king and of an important priest, respectively), while the second half of the middle entry's prediction and the final entry's apodosis concern a flood. In YOS 10 17:50–55, the first and second entries parallel the arrangement of MAH 15874, but the third entry returns to the theme of death, rather than the river's flood. The fourth entry turns again to the prediction of a flood, thus creating an alternation between the two themes.

In both sequences, the apodosis sequence starts with the prediction of the eclipse (*namtallû*) and ends with the prediction of the flood (*mīlu*). The arrangement seems to reflect a top-down perspective, which equates the Top of the View with the heavenly sphere, represented by the natural phenomenon of the eclipse in the first apodosis, and the Base (or, in the case of MAH 15874, the Middle) of the View with the terrestrial sphere, which corresponds to the river's flood motif in the final apodosis of the sequences.

3. Death from among a Man's Household

3.1 *Manzāzu* 6, 37–39

The sixth Tablet is the best-preserved part of *Manzāzu*, and mainly concerns Holes in the Presence.[64] The protases of the sequence *Manzāzu* 6: 37–39 deal once more with a Hole found in the Top, Middle, and Base of the Presence, but this time, the Hole is found in the right side of the Presence and in an 'opening'.[65] The sequence reads as follows:

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[64]   The long section from which the passage discussed below is taken (7–44) considers the occurrence of one Hole in the Presence (Koch 2000, 81).

[65]   The reading of the sign BAD in this entry (BE *ina* SAG NA 15 NA BAD-*ma*, 37) is not entirely clear, however. Koch 2000, 108, n. 305, suggests a form of the verb *nesû*, 'to open', on the basis of a late commentary (*Manzāzu* 24: 2–3), where the logogram BAD is glossed as *issī-ma*. This verb is then explained with the form *ipattū-ma*, which according to Koch 2000, 176, n. 501, may be equated with *ipettē-ma* (from the verb *petû*, 'to open'). This suggestion is further supported by *Manzāzu* 9: 3'–5', where the

MANZĀZU 6	PROTASIS	APODOSIS
37.	_šumma ina **rēš imitti manzāzi** nesû-ma šīlu nadi_ 'If in the **Presence's right Top** there is an opening, and a Hole lies there',	_ina **ni[šût amēli** imât]_ '(Someone) in the **family of [the man** will die'].
38.	_šumma ina **qabal imitti man-zāzi** nesû-ma šīlu nadi_ 'If in the **Presence's right Middle** there is an opening, and a Hole lies there',	_ina **nišū[t aššat amēli]** imât_ '(Someone) in **the family of [the man's wife]** will die'.
39.	_šumma ina **išid imitti manzāzi** nesû-ma šīlu nadi_ 'If in the **Presence's right Base** there is an opening, and a Hole lies there',	_ina **aḫīt [amēli]** imât_ '[(Someone) in the **man's] cir-cle of acquaintances** will die'.

In this sequence, the 'opening' in the Top, Middle and Base of the right of the Presence and the occurrence of a Hole within it is associated with a sequence of apodoses forecasting death within a man's circle.[66] There is perfect correspondence between protasis and apodosis on the horizontal axis. The right side of the Presence in the protasis corresponds to the _pars familiaris_, here represented by 'the man' in the apodosis.[67] The 'opening' found in the right side of the Presence represents different groups of people belonging to a man's sphere of influence, while a Hole found in that opening represents death among these groups of people. The apodoses' vertical sequence reflects a movement from the man's inner circle (his family) to his outer sphere of influence (his wider circle of acquaintances). The scheme can be summarised as follows:

1)	Top of the Presence	= Closest sphere of influence	= Man's family
	⬇	⬇	⬇
2)	Middle of the Presence	= Intermediate sphere of influence	= Family of the man's wife
	⬇	⬇	⬇
3)	Base of the Presence	= Outer sphere of influence	= Man's circle of acquaintances

Thus, the Top-Middle-Base scheme corresponds to different degrees of closeness to the subject involved, i.e., the 'man'. This interpretative system is similar to the one used in the sequences treated in paragraph 1, in which the Top-Middle-Base

form _ne-su-ma_ is spelled phonetically. Unfortunately, only the protases of these lines are preserved, and these only incompletely.

[66] The apodoses are restored from a parallel passage in _Manzāzu_ 13: 5–7, which, however, does not preserve the protases.

[67] This analogy is well-known in Mesopotamian divination. See Winitzer 2017, 323–328.

scheme is interpreted in the apodosis as an outward movement from the closest to the divine realm to the furthest from it.

3.2 YOS 10 17: 49–51

YOS 10 17 provides a different version of the same sequence.[68] In this version, the predictions deal once more with death within a man's circle, represented by *aštapir bīt awīlim*, 'the servants of the man's household', *aḫiāt awīlim*, 'the man's dependents', and *nišūt awīlim*, 'the man's family'. The sequence reads as follows:

YOS 10 17	PROTASIS	APODOSIS
49	*šumma ina **rēš naplaštim** ina **imittim** šīlum nadi* 'If a Hole lies in the **View's Top** on the **right**',	*ina **aštapir bīt awīlim** mamman imât šanûm šumšu **namtalli barārtim*** 'Someone among **the servants of the man's household** will die; its second interpretation: (it is) an **eclipse in the dusk watch**'.
50	*šumma ina **qabliat naplaštim** ina **imittim** šīlum nadi* 'If a Hole lies in the **View's Middle** on the **right**',	*ina **aḫiāt awīlim** mamman imât [šanû]m šumšu **namtalli qablītim*** 'Someone among the **man's dependents** will die; its [seco]nd interpretation: (it is) an **eclipse in the midnight watch**'.
51	*šumma ina **išdi naplaštim** ina **imittim** šīlum nadi* 'If a Hole lies in the **View's base** on the **right**',	*ina **nišūt awīlim** mamman imât šanûm šumšu **namtalli šāturrim*** 'Someone among the **man's family** will die; its second interpretation: (it is) an **eclipse in the dawn watch**'.

The sequence of apodoses starts from the maximum reach of a man's power, which is represented by the household's servants and is equated with the View's Top right in the protasis. The Middle of the View may be interpreted as his wider circle of acquaintances and dependents (*aḫītu*), and the Base represents the base of the man's power – namely, his own family, *nišūt awīlim*. As Winitzer 2017, 314, suggests, this sequence of subjects seems to reflect 'the inward progression toward one's own family'.[69] The order is inverted compared to the first-millen-

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68 First published by Goetze 1947, Plate XV ff., this text has been recently re-edited by Glassner 2009, 42–43, together with MAH 15874 and OBE 1.

69 Winitzer 2017, 314, suggests a system of interpretation for this sequence that goes from the less negative prediction (death among the servants of the man's household), which corresponds to the Top of the View in the protasis, to a more negative prediction

nium sequence in paragraph 3.1, which reflected a movement from the man's in-
ner circle (his family) to his outer sphere of influence (his circle of acquaint-
ances).[70]

Unlike the first millennium text, however, the apodoses of this omen sequence
also include a second prediction, concerning an eclipse.[71] In this second sequence
of predictions, the time cycle dusk>midnight>dawn in the apodoses parallels the
Top-Middle-Base scheme in the protases.[72] This sequence is also found in the
Old Babylonian View compendium MAH 15874 (1–9), and it is worth consider-
ing the two texts together.

3.3 MAH 15874: 1–9

MAH 15874 (1–9) also combines the occurrence of a Hole in the right side of the
View with predictions of death within a man's household, and as in the sequence
just discussed (3.2), a second set of predictions is also given in which a Hole in
the Presence is interpreted as predicting an eclipse. The text reads as follows:

MAH 15874	PROTASIS	APODOSIS
1–3	*šumma ina* **rēš naplaštim** *ina* **imittim** *šīlum nadi* 'If a Hole lies in the **View's Top** on the **right**',	*ina* **nišūt awīlim** *ūlū ina* **aštapir awīlim** *mamman imât šanûm šumšu* **namtalli barārtim** 'In **the man's family** or among **the man's servants** someone will die; its second interpreta-tion: an **eclipse in the dusk watch**'.
4–6	*šumma ina* **qabliat naplaštim** *ina* **imittim** *šīlum nadi* 'If a Hole lies in the **View's Middle** on the **right**',	*ina* **aḫīti awīlim** *mamman imât ūlū* **nārum awīlam i-*na!*-ar** [*šanû*]*m šumšu* **namtalli qablītim** 'Among the **man's dependents** someone will die or: **the river will kill the man**; its [second]

(death among the man's dependents), corresponding to the Middle of the View, to the
most negative prediction (death among the man's family), corresponding to the Base
of the View in the apodosis.

[70] Here, too, phonological repetition and wordplay may have a role in the horizontal re-
lationship between protases and apodoses. Note the alliterations and assonance: *rēš
naplaštim* ←→ *aštapir,* *qabliāt* ←→*aḫiat,* and *išdi naplaštim* ←→*nišūt.*

[71] As we have seen in 2.2 and 2.3, there is a close connection between Holes in the Pres-
ence and eclipse predictions.

[72] Winitzer 2017, 308–312, discusses this interpretation of the Top-Middle-Base scheme
according to a temporal system.

		interpretation: an **eclipse in the midnight watch**'.
7–9	*šumma ina **išdi naplaštim** ina **imittim** šīlum nadi* 'If a Hole lies in the **View's Base** on the **right**',	*ina **nišūt awīlim** ūlū ina **aštapir awīlim** mamman imât šanûm šumšu **namtalli šāturrim*** 'In the **man's family** or among the **man's servants** someone will die; its second interpretation: an **eclipse in the dawn watch**'.

We should begin by focusing on the first set of predictions. The first prediction in the apodosis sequence forecasts death from among the man's family or servants (*ina nišūt awīlim ūlū ina aštapir awīlim*). The second entry's first apodosis forecasts death from among the man's dependents (*ina aḫīti awīlim*) or, as an even more negative eventuality, the death of the man himself (*nārum awīlam inâr*). As in the other sequences from these compendia analysed above (2.2 and 2.3), the middle entry includes the theme of the river/flood. The last entry's first apodosis repeats that of the first entry (*ina nišūt awīlim ūlū ina aštapir awīlim mamman imât*).

The build-up of this sequence may be partially based on sign repetition and on a complex sign play. In the first entry, the phrase *rēš naplaštim* in the protasis resonates with the noun *nišūt*, in the corresponding apodosis. Moreover, the logogram SAG, which is the logographic reading of *rēšu*, possibly connects the Top of the View in the protasis (*rēš naplaštim*) with the composite sign SAG.GÉME. ARAD, that is, the logographic writing of the Akkadian word *aštapiru*, 'slaves, servants', written syllabically in the apodosis.[73] This term, *aštapiru,* possibly echoes the phonetic reading of the second sign in IGI.BAR, with the alliteration of labials /b/, /p/ and liquid /r/ (**BAR** – *aštapir*). In the second part of this entry's apodosis, the term *barārtu* (in the genitive) also establishes a link with those two terms by repeating the same CVC sounds (/bar/). The logogram BAR may also trigger the presence of the term *aḫītu* 'circle of acquaintances and dependents' (here written syllabically), which could also be written logographically with this sign.[74] This term thus relates to the preceding apodosis and to the corresponding protasis through sign play (IGI.BAR à BAR = *aḫītu*). This may ultimately relate

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[73] CAD A2, 473–474, *aštapiru* b4'; also, *aštapiru* e2'. See in particular *Šumma Ālu* 12: 34 (Freedman 1998, 194–195), in which the apodosis runs almost parallel to this one (*ina* SAG.GÉME.ARAD LÚ.ÚŠ BA.UG₇, "someone mortally ill among the servants will die").
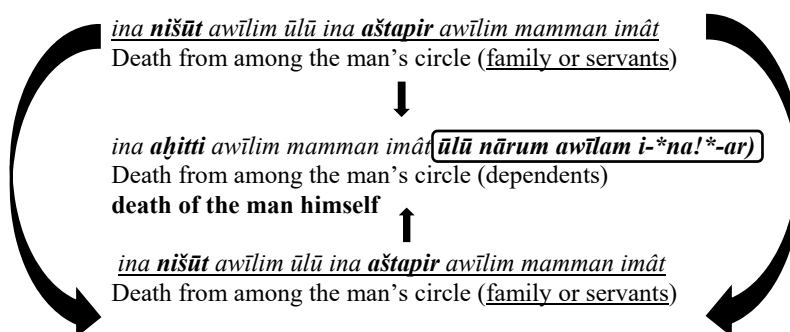
[74] CAD A1, 191, *aḫītu* 5a. Cf. CT 39 3:23 (SB *Šumma Ālu): ina* BAR-*it* LÚ.BE *imât.* The tablet includes an excerpt text from *Šumma Ālu* 54–55. See Freedman 1998, 7, 9, 337; also, Freedman 2017, 95–97 (Tablet 54); 98–106 (Tablet 55).

also to the verbal form, of difficult reading, in the second part of the apodosis. The second sign, between the third person prefix vowel *i-* and the final sign *ar,* has been read differently. Nougayrol proposed the reading *i-ba-ar* for this verbal form and translated the sentence as 'the river will grasp the man'.[75] This would establish a link with both the corresponding and the preceding protasis, but also with the following apodosis by repeating once more the CVC cluster *bar*.

1) <u>*reš*</u> ***naplaštim*** (<u>SAG</u> IGI.**BAR**) … → *ašta**pir**um* (<u>SAG</u>.GÉME.ARAD) … → … ***barārt**im*

2) *qabliat* ***naplaštim*** (MURUB₄ IGI.**BAR**) à ***aḫītum*** (**BAR**) … → … *ib**âr***?

The verbal form was read differently by Glassner, however, who restored *i-*na!*-ar* '(the river) will kill (the man)'.[76] The sign NA is not legible from the photo of the tablet available online,[77] but Glassner's reading seems acceptable, since it fits the context well and moreover, this verbal form establishes a paranomastic connection with the subject (*NARum – iNAR*), and so is followed here.

From a structural point of view, the beginning of the second apodosis (*ina aḫīti awīlim mamman imât*) mirrors the structure of the preceding and following ones (*ina nišūt awīlim ūlū ina aštapir awīlim mamman imât*). But the following section (*nārum awīlam inâr*, assuming that the reading of the verbal form is correct) breaks this pattern and forecasts death for the man himself. This constitutes the most negative prediction and introduces an odd element to the sequence, thus breaking its structural parallelism. The following scheme is meant to show the repetitive arrangement of this apodosis sequence:

*ina **nišūt** awīlim ūlū ina **aštapir** awīlim mamman imât*
Death from among the man's circle (<u>family or servants</u>)

*ina **aḫitti** awīlim mamman imât ūlū **nārum awīlam i-*na!*-ar)***
Death from among the man's circle (dependents)
death of the man himself

*ina **nišūt** awīlim ūlū ina **aštapir** awīlim mamman imât*
Death from among the man's circle (<u>family or servants</u>)

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[75] Nougayrol 1950, 34. See CAD B, 3–4, *ba'āru*, 'to catch fish, to fish, to catch birds, to hunt, to catch animals, to capture persons, to catch a criminal'. The verb seems to be attested in magical texts, but not in omen literature (*ba'āru* d2'). The metaphor of the river 'catching/fishing' someone is intriguing, but perhaps a little too abstract for this context.

[76] Glassner 2009, 40, collated the original tablet. This reading was already suggested by Jeyes 1989, 104. The verb *nêru* (*nâru*) with the meaning 'to kill, to slay' is attested also in another Old Babylonian omen (YOS 10 26 iv 10; see CAD N 2, 180–181, *nêru* 1a and 2).

[77] CDLI n. P423859.

Thus, the repetition of the same prediction in the first and last apodoses create a climax toward the middle entry, which breaks the repetitive pattern and constitutes the peak of the apodoses' sequence.[78]

Conclusion

This paper has analysed three Top-Middle-Base omen sequences from the chapter *Manzāzu* of the first millennium omen series *Bārûtu* and has compared these sequences with their Old Babylonian precursors. The aim has been to understand whether the rules operative in the interpretation of the Top-Middle-Base scheme in the Old Babylonian extispicy texts are also at play in the arrangement of the first millennium *Bārûtu*.

Our comparison has shown that certain interpretative motifs remained remarkably stable over time and were consistently associated with the Top-Middle-Base scheme. This stability notwithstanding, the comparison of the first-millennium sequences with their Old Babylonian precursors has brought to light significant discrepancies as well. New figures may replace the subjects of the apodoses, and older sequences of apodoses can be dropped from the later texts, as we have seen in the sequences discussed in section 1.

The sequences examined in section 2 present a similar case. *Manzāzu* 2: 28–30 (2.1) omits the predictions concerning the natural phenomena of the eclipse and of the river's flood, which are present in MAH 15874: 19–23 (2.2) and YOS 10 17:50–55 (2.3). These two Old Babylonian sequences from MAH 15874: 19–23 (2.2) and YOS 10 17:50–55 (2.3) also present a different overall arrangement of the omens.

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[78] This role of the middle entry, which constitutes the peak of a Top-Middle-Base sequence, is not isolated. Cf. YOS 10 31 iii 45–iv 6, discussed in Winitzer 2017, 313. In this sequence, the Top-Middle-Base scheme in the protasis corresponds to a set of subjects belonging to the palace sphere in the apodoses (*sukkalmaḫḫum>bārûm>zabardabbûm*). The middle entry predicts the death of the diviner, which may be regarded as the most negative eventuality since the diviner is the subject most closely involved in the reading and use of the omen compendia. Cf. also AO 7539: 7–9, also discussed in Winitzer 2017, 313, in which the Top-Middle-Base scheme in the protases is equated to a set of three subjects (*mār šarri,* 'the son of the king' > *la ḫassu,* 'an idiot' > *mār muškēni,* 'the son of a commoner') who are said to be seizing the throne in the apodosis. Again, the middle entry represents the most negative eventuality, in which 'an idiot' seizes the throne. This apodosis also presents a different phrasing compared to the other two, which both share the same construction *mār šarri kussia iṣabbat,* 'the son of the king will seize the throne', and *mār muškēni kussia iṣabbat* 'the son of a commoner will seize the throne'. Unlike the first and last entries, the second one has a different construction *lā ḫassu māta ibêl*, 'an idiot will rule the land'. This change reinforces the role of the middle apodosis as peak of the sequence.

The comparison of *Manzāzu* 6: 37–39 (3.1) with YOS 10 17: 49–51 (3.3) and MAH 15874: 1–9 (3.3) has brought similar findings. The first millennium-sequence does not include the predictions of the eclipse, which are present in the apodoses of the two Old Babylonian compendia. But all the three sequences include a sequence of apodoses concerning the death of important persons.

Therefore, we can conclude that the association of these interpretative themes with the Top-Middle-Base scheme was consistent during the transmission of the extispicy texts, without this consistency turning into a fixed rule. Variations and elaborations in the arrangement of the scheme and of its interpretation were always possible, as the comparison of similar sequences show. Nevertheless, the overall systems of interpretation of the Top-Middle-Base scheme remained the same, and on the basis of the evidence discussed, it is possible to identify two such systems that are operative in the arrangement of the Old Babylonian texts as well as in the first millennium *Bārûtu*. On the one hand, the apodoses may interpret this scheme as a set of three subjects belonging to the same environment or category. This correspondence results in two parallel sequences which relate the tripartite division of the Presence with three different subjects belonging to the same category or environment. This interpretative system of the Top-Middle-Base scheme, which has been discovered and discussed by Winitzer[79] in the corpus of Old Babylonian extispicy, is also at work in the arrangement of the first millennium series *Bārûtu*, as the analysis of the three Top-Middle-Base sequences from the chapter *Manzāzu* has shown.

Moreover, the sequences of subjects in the apodoses seem to reflect a movement from or toward a certain point. In the case of *Manzāzu* 1: 4'–6' (1.1), the sequence of temple figures in the apodoses seem to move from the closest figure to the gods' sphere to the furthest from it. A similar organisation is found in *Manzāzu* 6: 37–39 (3.1). Here, the subjects of the predictions in the apodoses seem to depart from the closest figures to the man involved (his family) to the furthest ones (his circle of acquaintances). The order is inverted in YOS 10 17: 49–51 (3.2) where the sequence of apodoses interprets the Top-Middle-Base scheme as an inward movement from the furthest reach of a man's influence to his closest family.

On the other hand, the analysis of the other Old Babylonian sequences and of *Manzāzu* 2: 28–30 (2.1), attests to a slightly different interpretation of the Top-Middle-Base scheme. The examples from the liver model CT 6, 1–3: 11–13 (1.3), and the two sequences from the Old Babylonian View compendia MAH 15874: 19–23 (2.2) and YOS 10 17: 50–55 (2.3), show a special use of the middle entry's apodosis. That the middle entry may have a special role in Top-Middle-Base sequences is also noticed by Winitzer 2017, 322, who suggests that 'the middle,

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[79]   Winitzer 2017, 312–315.

representing on such occasions an expansion from a binary opposition, sensibly came to represent something ambiguous, not prone to simple interpretation'.[80]

The sequences discussed here shed light on this peculiarity of the middle entry, which seems to play a structural role. In some cases, the middle entry's apodosis assimilates the prediction of the preceding entry and introduces the prediction of the following one. For this reason, it functions as a structural medium between the first and last terms of the sequence, and its role is that of a 'pivot' line. The sequence of *Manzāzu* 2: 28–30 (2.1) is especially interesting, since it provides evidence for both interpretative systems of the Top-Middle-Base scheme at the same time. The text equates this paradigm in the protasis sequence with a set of three subjects in the apodoses, but the middle line seems to have a pivotal function, since it repeats the same construction as the preceding line and creates a balance between the first and final elements of the sequence.

The case of MAH 15874: 1–9 (3.2) can also be associated with this interpretative system. In this passage, the middle entry's apodosis seems to represent the peak of the apodoses' sequence, since it forecasts the most negative eventuality (the death of the man himself). The repetition of a single prediction in the first and third entries' apodoses highlights the central role of this entry and reinforces the climax toward this prediction.

This interpretative system of the Top-Middle-Base scheme, which assigns a structural role to the middle entry, has not been detected before in Mesopotamian extispicy texts, and is therefore especially interesting. This use of the middle entry as a 'pivot' line may constitute a structural technique that plays a role in the arrangement of the omen sequences, in the Old Babylonian extispicy texts as well as in the first millennium *Bārûtu*.

Acknowledgements

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[80] Winitzer 2017, 321–322, suggests that the Top-Middle-Base scheme represents an expansion of a *pars familiaris – pars hostilis* logic. He (321) highlights the 'concentration of alternative interpretations' in the middle entry's apodosis, and suggests that 'the middle entry in such passages 'represent(s) a hypothetical point between the *pars familiaris* and *pars hostilis* (or right and left)'. We suggest, however, that the presence of alternative interpretations in the middle entry's apodosis in Top-Middle-Base sequences may rather derive from the structural use of the middle entry in such sequences.

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