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the Ancient Mesopotamian Divinatory Series
Šumma Ālu ina Mêle Šakin”

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Nicole Lundeen-Kaulfus, BA

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Leaping Lizards!

Edition and Analysis of the Lizard Omens (Tablet 32) in the
Ancient Mesopotamian Divinatory Series

Šumma Ālu ina Mêle Šakin



Nicole Lundeen-Kaulfus

University of Vienna

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Cover Image:

The cover image of a falling, two-tailed lizard was created when I submitted text prompts and omens from my MA thesis to the artificial-intelligence image-generating platform Midjourney (<http://www.midjourney.com/>; accessed between March 13–19, 2023). Under Midjourney's Terms of Service (<https://docs.midjourney.com/docs/terms-of-service>, version effective February 10, 2023; accessed April 4, 2023), the owner of the platform, Midjourney Inc. grants a license to created images under the Creative Commons Noncommercial 4.0 Attribution International License. For details on the rights, warranties, and restrictions of the license, see <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/legalcode> (accessed April 4, 2023).

Sometimes naming a thing
—giving it a name or discovering its name—
helps one to understand it.
Knowing the name of a thing and
knowing what that thing is
gives me even more of a handle on it.

Parable of the Sower by Octavia E. Butler

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Writing, much like divination, is about entering into conversation with others—luckily with other human beings, and not capricious divine entities. The process of writing my thesis has been like casting off a small raft into a river of conversation. Without many helpers, my little vessel would surely have been permanently grounded on the river’s rocky banks or mucked up in the muddy shallows. Instead, I reached the end because people cheered me on and helped me dig out my raft and push it back into the flowing waters when I got stuck. I owe each of them an immeasurable amount of gratitude.

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The enthusiasm and helpfulness of those outside of Assyriology for my project continually surprised me; no matter how odd my questions about glowing lizards or how often lizards fall from ceilings might have seemed. In this sense, I'd like to thank the "lizard lassoer" Dr. Earyn McGee, her Twitter followers, and Elisabeth Farebrother for sharing their lizard resources. I'd also like to thank Dominique Bauer for reading drafts and for his insights into Sanskrit divination.

Like many other students, the lockdowns in the wake of the covid-19 pandemic created unexpected hurdles to finishing my thesis. At the same time, I was extremely fortunate. Dr. Rachel Bryant Davies, Dr. Kelly Hignett, and Dr. Olivia Saunders, not only warmly welcomed me into their online writing group, but provided encouragement and tips on my thesis, all while juggling their own teaching, research, and family responsibilities. Kelly, Olivia, and Rachel, thank you so much. I look to forward to our continued writing sessions and hope to finally one day meet in person. And to my friend, Delia Villadsen: You have an innate ability to know when to prod me to get back to work. Thank you for the shared laughs!

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And lastly to our dog, Atrejo, whose snores were the soundtrack to many writing hours, thanks for the reminders to take breaks to walk you or to scratch behind your ears.

List of Abbreviations

- AHw *Akkadisches Handwörterterbuch.*
(Von Soden 1965–74. 3 Bänder.)
- CAD *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*
(Oppenheim and Reiner 1956–2010)
- CCP Cuneiform Commentaries Project at Yale University
<https://ccp.yale.edu/>, see also various bibliographic entries under Jiménez
- CMAwR *Corpus of Mesopotamian Anti-Witchcraft Rituals. Vol. 3*
(Abusch et al. 2020)
- CDLI Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative
<https://cdli.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/>
- CT *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum*
CT 38, see (Gadd 1925); CT 41, see (Gadd 1931)
- CUSAS 18 Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology 18
(George 2013)
- eSAD *The Electronic Supplement to The Akkadian Dictionaries*
<https://www.gkr.uni-leipzig.de/altorientalisches-institut/forschung/supplement-to-the-akkadian-dictionaries>
- GAG *Grundriss der Akkadischen Grammatik*
(Von Soden 1995)
- If a City* *If a City Is Set on a Height*
(Freedman 1998–2017. 3 Vols)
- KAL 1 Keilschrifttexte aus Assur literarischen Inhalts 1
(Heeßel 2007)
- KAR Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts
(Ebeling 1919–1923)
- RINAP 5 The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period 5
(Novotny and Jeffers 2018)
- RIA Reallexikon der Assyriologie und vorderasiatischen Archäologie
<https://rla.badw.de/reallexikon.html>, individual entries under author's name
- STT *The Sultantepe Tablets*
(Gurney and Hulin 1964)
- TDP *Traité Akkadien de diagnostics et pronostics médicaux*
(Labat 1951)
- YOS 10 Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts 10
(Goetze 1947)

Edition Conventions

Omens are named by their place in the relevant omens sequence, e.g., Nineveh 15 is the 15th omen in the Nineveh recension. Apostrophes indicate a gap in the omen sequence and by (gap) placed in between omens. Manuscripts are named by their museum number, e.g., K 3730+, or in the case of the Sultantepe manuscript, by their place of first publication STT 323. When manuscripts are presented individually, omens are referred to by line number(s), e.g., VAT 9906 *iii* 17–18.

[DIŠ]	Full brackets indicate missing text. They can include reconstructed signs or translations, indications of break lengths (noted by x for each sign), or lacunae [...].
ʿDIŠʿ	half brackets indicate broken, but legible signs (score only)
X	illegible sign, can be combined with brackets
<i>English in italics</i>	uncertain translation
If ditto (= a lizard) DIŠ KI.MIN (EME.DIR) <i>šumma</i> KI.MIN (<i>šurāru</i>)	Signs of repetition (section 4.1.3) are translated as ‘ditto’ and are followed by the sign’s referent translation in parentheses with an equal sign (= a lizard). In the transliteration and transcription, the signs of repetition are written as logograms, but are also followed by referents in parentheses.
that house will (again) be inhabited.	Simple parentheses in the English translation indicate text that is not present in the original Akkadian, either through scribal omission or because English requires the addition although the Akkadian does not. These are often conjugations and pronouns used as subjects.
ši kàt ša	non-italicized lowercase signs are legible, but their meaning is unclear
[... ŠUB- <i>a</i>]t? EN!	An exclamation mark indicates a sign with an unusual feature; a question mark is an uncertain reading. These markings will carry over to the reconstructed transliteration, transcription, and translation if the sign(s) are preserved on only one manuscript
<< <i>ina</i> >>	superfluous sign written by the scribe
KUN.<MEŠ>	sign omitted by the scribe
- <i>am</i> (MAR) GAZ(copy: kum)-	Scribal orthographic errors are placed within parentheses in subscript immediately following the corrected reading. Modern copyist mistakes (hand copies) are indicated with ‘copy:’.
(erasure), (illegible traces)	erasure by scribe; traces of erased or damaged signs
:	<i>Glossenkeil</i> (mostly score, rarely reconstructed transliteration if present on all manuscripts)
/	beginning of new line (score only)
—	the em-dash is a graphic element to indicate the transition between protasis and apodosis (reconstructed translation)
DIŠ EME.D[IR] / [...]	Bolding in parts cited from earlier editions indicates a difference between the current edition and the earlier edition. (commentary only)

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Part I Introduction

What I imagine is the strange, tickling sensation of sharp claws scampering around in my palms. And then, when I open up my hands to take a peek, a thin, red tongue lashes out. Reflected in those glassy eyes, I see my own lonely face, peering down, looking for something to love and cherish. That's what Lizard feels like to me.
from Yoshimoto Banana's "Lizard"¹

The abundance of Mesopotamian texts related to divination attest to the importance of the practice and to beliefs about a world full of messages by divine entities not only willing to communicate, but also knowledgeable about the future. These messages, or omens, were collected and organized in omen texts. The second and first millennium BCE² witnessed an extensive proliferation of these omen texts. Their organization into lengthy collections are called omen series. Among these, the series known by its incipit *šumma ālu ina mēle šakin* 'If a city is set on a height' (henceforth *šumma ālu*) stands out as the longest and one of the most varied series in terms of subject matter, focusing on terrestrial omens. The omens are placed in a context that is an environment formed by humans, that is unsolicited omens related to a city and its surroundings. It is also the most important source of animal omens from Mesopotamia.

Despite its length and its importance for our understanding of Mesopotamian divination, a complete edition of the series remains outstanding. After writing her doctoral thesis on *šumma ālu* (Moren 1978), Sally Freedman (*née* Moren) began the monumental task of editing the series. In 1998, the first of a, to date, three volume edition of the series was published: *If a City Is Set on a Height* (henceforth *If a City*). Two more volumes would follow in 2006 and 2017.

Perhaps because of the series sheer size and the lack of a complete edition, the research into the logic and organizing principles of the series has mostly been limited to its reconstruction (De Zorzi forthcoming, para. 1; n.d.). One attempt to rectify this gap is the project *Bestiarium Mesopotamicum: Animal Omens in Ancient Mesopotamia* (Universität Wien), led by Nicola De Zorzi, and under whose auspices this thesis was written. The project, funded by the Austrian Science Fund,³ examines the animal Tablets of *šumma ālu* with an aim to improve existing editions and to study the hermeneutic framework in the animal omens (De Zorzi n.d.).

¹ "Lizard" is a short story in Yoshimoto's (1995, 19) identically named short story collection.

² All dates are BCE unless otherwise indicated.

³ This thesis was written under the auspices of the project *Bestiarium Mesopotamicum: Animal Omens in Ancient Mesopotamia* (Universität Wien), which received funding from the Austrian Science Fund (*FWF des Wissenschaftsfonds*) (Project n° P 31032). Sections of Part IV (4.2.4 & 4.2.5) result from research conducted under the auspices of the project REPAC "Repetition, Parallelism and Creativity: an Inquiry into the Construction of Meaning in Ancient Mesopotamian Literature and Erudition" (2019-2024, University of Vienna), which has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Grant agreement no. 803060).

Šumma ālu has 47 Tablets, or chapters, which collect omens on animal behavior and characteristics (De Zorzi n.d.). This Master's thesis is a completely re-worked edition of *šumma ālu's* Tablet 32, which collects omens from the behavior and characteristics of lizards.

The current thesis presents the omens of Tablet 32 in English translation with reconstructed transliterations and transcriptions. A score with transliterations are also provided for each attestation of an omen, and detailed philological commentary is provided to supplement each omen's presentation. The current edition is also the first to bring together all known manuscripts from Tablet 32 and includes a previously unknown join discovered by De Zorzi in February 2020.

In February 2020, the project team traveled to the British Museum. I'd like to thank the Trustees of the museum for the chance to collate all the relevant cuneiform tablets for Tablet 32 in person. Doing so, allows for the current edition to include corrected sign readings and even previously missing lines. The cuneiform tablets from Assur were recently edited in the first of the series 'Keilschrifttexte aus Assur literarischen Inhalts' (KAL 1) and the current edition leans heavily on that edition, but also adds transliterations based on KAL 1's hand copy that were not transliterated in that edition.

As part of the process of creating the current edition, particular attention was paid to the omen sequences, but also related texts, such as commentary texts and other divinatory series, were examined to determine uncertain readings. Comparing the omen sequences preserved on different manuscripts calls for a number of changes and corrections to be suggested. The philological commentary provide most of the details, but the most significant change is surely to the sequence of omens in the textual recension preserved on the manuscripts from Nineveh. For example, the very first omen, Nineveh 1, now incorporates⁴ line K 6912+ 2, which had previously been thought to be an interpolation (*If a City* 2 2006, 166 note 1 Ex(3)). Further, because of the above-mentioned new join, two omens (K 3730+ r 12' and K 10792 2'; K 3730+ r 12' and K 10792 2') can now confidently be placed in Tablet 32, and the remaining lines below the ruling on the reverse of K 3730+ are now to be placed in Tablet 33 (geckos).

A major difficulty in examining the omen sequencing in Tablet 32 is the presence of different textual recensions. See section 3.4.1 for further details. All known manuscripts for Tablet 32 originate from three geographic find sites: Nineveh, Assur and Sultantepe. The manuscripts from these three sites do have similarities and the texts they preserve do overlap in terms of the omens they preserve, but their differences are too large to completely reconcile them

⁴ I thank Nicla De Zorzi for her tenacity and support in making this rather complicated omen into something coherent.

with each other. Another factor is their differing chronological distribution. The manuscripts from Nineveh and Sultantepe date from the beginning of first half of the first millennium; whereas the manuscripts from Assur are Middle Assyrian clay tablets from the end of the second millennium. Nevertheless, the Sultantepe manuscript shows remarkable similarities with some of the Assur manuscripts.

As was done in *If a City 2*, I grouped the omens into three recensions, named for the find sites. The current edition also edits manuscripts preserving particularly differing texts separately. Presenting them separately makes the differences more obvious and allows for a clearer picture of the hermeneutic principles underlying omen sequencing. To demonstrate this, section 3.4, analyses and provides a detailed description of three omens preserved on Sm 710+9'-12'.

Updating and improving the animal Tablets of *šumma ālu* helps with the primary aim of the Bestiarium Mesopotamicum project, which is to examine the “hermeneutic system underlying the presentation of animals” (De Zorzi n.d.) in the divinatory series. As the project notes, there is a conspicuous lack of studies on *šumma ālu*. This thesis helps to address this gap.

Studies on other Mesopotamian divinatory texts, have revealed a hermeneutic system linking ominous signs and outcomes based on similitude on the “semantic, phonetic and graphic level(s)” (De Zorzi 2022b, 87). Nevertheless, animal omens continue to be interpreted as reflections of real animal behavior, instead of being understood as depictions of animal behavior from an anthropocentric perspective.

This thesis concludes that lizard behaviors and characteristics described in the omens of Tablet 32 reflect a human-centric view of the reptile. These limited ‘ominous descriptors’ are connected to possible outcomes by combining semantic and symbolic associations along with phonetic and graphic elements. In this context, Tablet 32’s omens, like many of its counterparts, exploit the polyvalency of cuneiform writing to display an abundant amount of “word play”. Further, examining the omen sequencing in Tablet 32 reveals that the Tablet’s linguistic features, or as they are referred to in this thesis, rhetorical devices,⁵ do not just simply creating connections between protases and apodoses, but that these also interweave to create a web of connections between omens. One of the main difficulties in creating an edition of Tablet 32, namely the Tablet’s three textual recensions, with their varying, yet similar, omen sequences, provides ample fodder for this analysis.

⁵ The term rhetorical devices is used in the absence of emic terminology to describe what is visible in these texts. See section 4.2 for an explanation of how the term is used here.

The thesis begins, in Part II, with contextual background to understand how *šumma ālu* as a whole fits into Mesopotamian divination and to present its textual sources. The discussion includes some of the symbolic associations lizards carry in various cultures since Tablet 32 is a collection of lizard omens.

Part III of this thesis provides a detailed review of the corpus and includes an analysis of differences and improvements the current edition makes upon previous publications and editions. Additionally, it includes a description of the manuscripts which were used to reconstruct the text and a description of the taxonomy and characteristics of the lizards described in Tablet 32. The Akkadian word for lizard, *šurāru*, has a number orthographic and linguistic peculiarities, which are also discussed. Part III concludes with a discussion of some of the methodological challenges this corpus poses, such as a lack of a complete version of the text and the presence of different textual recensions.

The bulk of the thesis is devoted to an analysis of the omen sequence in Tablet 32 in Part IV. The omen's syntactic structure starts off the discussion. The section moves on to examine sequences of opposing binary pairs (left/right, up/down, etc.). Schematic relationships are common in Mesopotamian texts. These are thematically related items, for example colors, presented in a fixed, or at least showing only minimal variation, sequence. Tablet 32 is interesting because it reveals another category for these schematic relationships, namely, the furnishings in a house that a lizard interacts with. Phonetic associations and repetition also play an important role in Tablet 32. Further, the semantic content of the omens and the rhetorical devices often seem to mirror each other. This is particularly obvious in the omens with mentions of twins or duality, which feature a conspicuous amount of consonant doubling and sign repetition. Mirror structuring, whether chiasmatically across multiple omens or just with the repetition of a sign in both the protasis and apodosis is also common. The analysis section concludes with a small group of somewhat aberrant omens in Tablet 32. While these omens do involve a lizard, their subject is a man walking in the street, not a lizard. They are syntactically and semantically conspicuous and complex. Conclusions are discussed in Part V.

Finally, the thesis concludes with the newly revised and updated edition (Part VI). The introduction to the edition describes its structure and conventions. Immediately following are detailed descriptions and background on each of the cuneiform tablets known to belong to *šumma ālu* that preserving omens from Tablet 32. The manuscript indices present each manuscript in a table that includes information on its location in a museum and in digital archives. A publication history is also included. The tables also provide a detailed description of the manuscript's state of preservation and any pertinent information to help interpret the text preserved on each

manuscript. Relevant related texts—texts that do not belong to *šumma ālu* directly, but can help to reconstruct omens or help to decipher problematic readings—are also discussed.

Concluding this section, the edition presents all of the omens of Tablet 32. The omens include translations, transliterations, and transcriptions. Copious philological commentary are also provided after most omens. The reconstructed omens are grouped by recension: Nineveh, Assur, and Sultantepe. Both the Nineveh and Assur recensions present not only a reconstructed sequence of the omens, but also editions of individual manuscripts which differ significantly from other manuscripts in the same recension.

Part II Context

Now I am aware of no people, however refined and learned or however savage and ignorant, which does not think that signs are given of future events, and that certain persons can recognize those signs and foretell events before they occur.
Cicero, De Divinatione 1.2⁶

2.1 Mesopotamian Divination

The search for meaning and knowledge is human nature. The variety of divinatory methods used to do so is bound only by the limits of human imagination. Despite divination's widespread use, modern scholars have sometimes dismissed the practice as superstition and often ignored divination as a topic of study.⁷ This, irrespective of the fact that examining a culture's divinatory system is to examine a culture's epistemology: "Divination systems do not simply reflect other aspects of a culture; they are the means (as well as the premise) of knowing which underpin and validate all else" (Peek 1991, 2). The importance of divination and its interplay with other facets of Mesopotamian daily life, whether scholarly or religious or mundane, cannot be overstated. Ancient Mesopotamian sources from the third millennium provide some of the earliest written evidence for divination worldwide (see section 2.1.1). As the practice became a subject of particular interest for the ancient Mesopotamian scribal milieu during the second and first millennia, Mesopotamian scribes began to produce a prodigious number of Akkadian texts related to divination. Divination's prominent cultural position meant it influence other aspects of Mesopotamian culture. Its influence spread far beyond the immediate region. "Even after cuneiform was long forgotten, the Babylonians and Assyrians were associated with astrology and other forms of divination" (Koch 2015, 7). Traces remain even today of the flow of ideas, including divination, between the ancient Near East, both westward with Greece and eastward to India.⁸ Modern divination methods such as astrology and even the modern scientific field of astronomy can trace links back to the work Mesopotamians did in divination.

Divination, to broadly define the term, is the methods used by humans to gain knowledge not otherwise known or obtainable.⁹ In Mesopotamia, divination was "a practical means of

⁶ From Falconer (LCL 1923, 223)

⁷ Flower (2008, 13) argues viewing divination as primitive has led to viewing the practice as irrational. Divination is, instead, he says, a way to extend rational knowledge and thought into the realm of the unknown through at times exceedingly complicated and sophisticated means.

⁸ The breadth of the topic unfortunately places it beyond the scope of this thesis, but for an introductory bibliography, see Koch (2015, chap. 1.3 especially note 17) and Frahm (2011, chap. 12) comments on the legacy of Babylonian and Assyrian hermeneutics. For specific examples of knowledge transfer and further discussion, see also Aaboe (1992), Knudsen (2008), and Pingree (1997), among others.

⁹ Secondary literature on divination provides a multitude of definitions; though, a surprising number of authors do not attempt any definition. While any list cannot be comprehensive, for discussions around defining divination from the fields of anthropology and ancient Greek studies, see Flower (2008, 8), Johnston (2008, 3), Silva (2014, 1177), and Tedlock (2001, 189). For discussions within Assyriology, see Brown (2006, 73–74), Koch (2015, 1), Maul (2013, 9–10), and Winitzer (2010, 177).

discovering the will of the gods, the intentions and actions of other people, or determining which road to choose in life, what decision to make in a particular situation or revealing hidden causes” (Koch 2015, 1). All-known human cultures, both past and present, have practiced some form of divination (Tedlock 2001, 189). Scholars often follow Socrates to categorize the “staggering” (Silva 2016, 507) variety and number of divinatory methods into two broad groups:¹⁰ *mantikē entheos*, or inspired divination, a madness in which the diviner is not in their right mind—a classic example is Pythia’s possession by the god Apollo in her role as the Oracle at Delphi; and *mantikē technike*, or technical divination, in which the diviner, while in their right mind, makes rational observations based on signs (Plato 2002, 25–26 *Phaedrus* 244a–d). As Silva (2016, 507) notes, the two categories are best thought of as a continuum; some (perhaps all) divination methods incorporate elements of both.¹¹ Nevertheless various authors have taken up the two categories,¹² even if the terminology they use may vary. For the first category *mantikē entheos*, terms such as intuitive, nonrational, inspirational, or natural are sometimes used, and for the latter, *mantikē technike*, terms such as technical, rational, mechanical, or artificial may be used. Although both types of divination existed in Mesopotamia, the available corpus weighs heavily towards forms of technical divination.¹³ The discussion below therefore presents a sub-categorization of technical divination within the Mesopotamian context and does not directly address inspired divination.¹⁴

Mesopotamian divination¹⁵ predicates the existence of divine entities willing to communicate and to involve themselves in all aspects of human life. The written sources available show that every aspect of the world expressed divine will (Maul 2007, 362); even the smallest deviations in daily life could be traced back to the gods (Heeßel 2007, 1). Divination opens bidirectional communication channels between humans and the divine while other religious acts, such as prayer or votive offering, often only offer one-way communication from the human to the divine.¹⁶ Divination thus confirms for the querent, in a way other religious acts cannot, the divine’s presence within and concern with human matters (Johnston 2008, 4–5). Mesopotamian

¹⁰ Cicero, *De Divinatione* 1.72 (Falconer, LCL 1923, 302–3) groups methods as either *naturalia* and *artificiosa*.

¹¹ For examples see the discussion on that page, but also Silva (2014) for a discussion on Zambian basket divination which integrates rational analysis, bodily pain, and spiritual possession in practitioners’ search for hidden knowledge.

¹² Perhaps due to the sheer multitude of divination systems, authors have attempted to classify them in a myriad of ways. See Peek (1991, 11–12) for a list and bibliography.

¹³ There may have been a bias that viewed omens originating from inspired divination techniques such as dream omens or oracles with a certain amount of skepticism. Mesopotamian diviners could use more technical forms of divination, such as extispicy to confirm the validity of the former methods’ predictions (Starr 1983, 4). Note, however, that fewer extant written sources do not necessarily equate less interest. Brown (2006, 103) observes that inspired (Brown: mediumistic) forms of divination must have been intrinsically oral in nature, and, as such, it is perhaps not surprising that fewer written texts survive.

¹⁴ For an example of inspired divination, see Pongratz-Leisten’s (1999, 47–94) discussion on oracles in Mesopotamia.

¹⁵ For bibliography on Mesopotamian divination, see De Zorzi (2022b, 85 note 2).

¹⁶ Heeßel (2012, 16–17) came to a similar conclusion in his discussion on Mesopotamian extispicy.

divination, for the most part, foresaw an expert, the diviner, as a mediator and interpreter between humans and the divine (Brown 2006, 73).

Not only did Mesopotamian divination allow for bidirectional communication, but it allowed for both the divine as well as humans to initiate communication. The divine could send *omina oblativa*, or unsolicited signs, to inform humans of infractions, warn people of danger, or to give pertinent information about the future. Almost any aspect of life could be considered potentially ominous. Astronomical omens for example related to the movements and characteristics of heavenly bodies. Another example were omens sent in the form of anomalous births, both by humans and non-human¹⁷ animals. Terrestrial omens might include the behavior of non-human animals, but also human physiognomic omens or human behavior such as house construction. Humans, with the help of divinatory experts, then had to correctly interpret the divine message and had to take appropriate counter measures to appease the divine and avoid evil (Leichty 1992, 241; Maul 1994, 12–13). The corpus of lizard omens from *šumma ālu* (see Part III) studied in this thesis is a written collection of *omina oblativa*.

On the other hand, humans could ask the gods for information through ritualized divinatory methods. The responses from the divine are referred to in secondary literature as provoked omens, *omina impetrativa*.¹⁸ Preeminent among the many forms of *omina impetrativa* in Mesopotamian divination was liver extispicy (Maul 2007, 361), the divinatory inspection of anomalous features on a sacrificial animal's liver, usually a sheep. Sources mentioning extispicy date from the third millennium¹⁹ until the end of cuneiform sources and stretch across most of the cuneiform cultural world (Fincke 2014, 9).²⁰ In the divination process, an animal would be ritually slaughtered, and a yes-or-no question posed to the gods. The gods communicated their answer by writing signs, in the form of deformities, growths, or holes, on the animal's viscera, especially the liver. Writing, in general, was a metaphor for divination and communication with the divine (Broida 2012, 4). After the animal had been sacrificed, the liver would be examined, and a mental network of quadrants mapped onto the organ.²¹ The signs left by the gods were determined to be

¹⁷ I use the term non-human as a reminder that humans are also animals and both were able to be 'objects' through which divinatory messages could be conveyed in Mesopotamian divination. In general, however, this thesis uses the term 'animal' refers to non-human animals and people, individuals, and similar terms to refer to human beings.

¹⁸ See also Brown (2006). Brown divides Mesopotamian divinatory techniques into three categories (*oblativa*, *impetrativa*, and mediumistic; the final form being similar to Socrates's *mantikē entheos*, or inspired divination) not so much as by who initiates communication, but by whether any "ceremony, apparatus, or materials" (2006, 77) was needed to elicit signs.

¹⁹ Cf. Richardson (2010, 228) who, while not denying the number of references to extispicy and the practice's likely status, cautions against over associating mentions of animals in divination with extispicy as there were other forms of divination involving animals, even in early periods.

²⁰ Textual sources on extispicy have been found written in Sumerian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Hittite, Hurrian, Ugaritic, and Elamite.

²¹ Liver models with these quadrants have survived to the present-day. One Old-Babylonian example, BM 92668, is at the British Museum. Images are available on the museum's website

positive, negative, or neutral based on their placement within this grid. This mathematical approach places the technique squarely within the category of technical divination. Because humans could not manipulate an animal's internal organs before slaughter, the organs were considered well-suited to providing true information²² (Greaves 2000, 108).

There were a myriad of forms of divination practiced in Mesopotamia. And while the above categories are an apt shorthand for discussing the various methods of technical divination, it is important to heed Brown's (2006, 74, 103–4) caution that many techniques, for example dream omens, blur the lines of classification. Even *omina oblativa*, which at first glance would appear to rely wholly on divine initiative and therefore human passivity, have elements of *omina impetrativa*. The omens the divine would send still require humans to actively observe the omens, signifying that "signs were looked for in certain areas and at certain times" (Brown 2006, 77).

The conception the Mesopotamian divinatory system establishes is one with a malleable future, whose current path is known to the divine, though unknown to humans. The future is not static. Human beings could appeal unfavorable futures to the gods and offer up apotropaic rituals. The future was created "as the result of a dialogue between man and god, an act of communication that could be initiated by gods or men"²³ (Maul 2007, 362).

2.1.1 sources of Mesopotamian divination

Mesopotamia's earliest mentions of divination date to the third millennium (Richardson 2010, 227). Some see divination's, likely oral, origins as even earlier (Heeßel 2007, 1). While there are some Sumerian texts that mention divination, it is unclear which language was used for divination in the third millennium, before divination was "textualized" in the second millennium (Crisostomo 2018, 148). While texts devoted solely to divination do not appear until much later, various third-millennium documents contain scattered references to divination. Among the early sources are administrative texts, lists of professions, and year names. These texts reference professional titles held by diviners (Richardson 2010, 227), the filling of priestly posts by means of divination (Veldhuis 1999, 164; Richardson 2010, 229), dream omens, and both extispicy and other animal omens (Richardson 2010, 228). Whereas later written sources (second and first

(https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1889-0426-238) or through CDLI (<https://cdli.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/artifacts/365126>).

²² Anthropological reports on modern-day divination show that people remain concerned with divination's procedural aspects to ensure that the knowledge obtained is "true" (Silva 2016, 507–8). Sørensen (2013, 182) discusses how the act of divination renders otherwise random information into relevant information. Therefore the practitioners of a myriad of divinatory methods, from around the world, insist that particular attention is paid to procedural matters.

²³ Despite Maul's use here of the word "men", female diviners did practice their craft in Mesopotamia (Brown 2006, 114). Also, there is at least one example of direct communication from the divine to humans. A letter exists from the goddess, Kititum, to the Old Babylonian king, Ibalpiel (Ellis 1987, 237).

millenniums), place divination at the center of scribal culture, these third-millennium references suggest early divination was largely an oral practice (Annus 2010, 1; Koch 2015, 59).²⁴

In the Old Babylonian period (2000–1600 BCE), the divination craft changed as not only do the number of sources increase, but also the types of sources. It is from this period that a mainstay of Mesopotamian divinatory literature, omen compendia, appears. In Assyriology parlance, an omen is not only an ominous phenomenon, but also a written casuistic (If ..., then ...) statement that links the ominous phenomenon with its associated outcome (Koch 2015, 16; Rochberg 2010, 19). Assyriology has adopted the terms *protasis* and *apodosis* from grammarians to differentiate an omen's two clauses. Specific to Assyriology, however, is that the terms are commonly used to refer to the described phenomena and associated outcomes in an omen and not necessarily in the grammatical sense of the syntactic elements the terms refer to; though, they often correspond. *Protasis* refers both to the *if*-clause as a syntactic element, and to the described ominous phenomenon in that clause. Similarly, the *apodosis* refers both to the *then*-clause but also the associated outcome. The oldest Akkadian omens, dating to the early Old Babylonian period, are a group of omens found on liver models from Mari (Snell 1974, 117). In the second millennium, scribes began to collect omens into vast lists, or compendia (Koch 2015, 16; Oppenheim and Reiner 1977, 16; Richardson 2010, 226). These collections are “the most important and best represented text genre related to divination” (Koch 2015, 32).

Reports also begin to appear in the Old Babylonian period (Richardson 2010, 226). The reports document specifics of actual divinatory sessions. They often contain not only the client, for whom the divination was carried out, but also the purpose, or question put forward to a god (Koch-Westenholz 2002, 140) and document the readings of specific signs on organs observed during extispicy.

Not only do the types of documents relating to divination increase, but also the variety of divination methods, at least as documented in a written form, also begins to expand. While later omen compendia would cover a vast array of topics, terrestrial omens are among those present from the outset (Heeßel 2007, 1). These unsolicited omens collected signs from events on earth, including omens involving the characteristics and behavior of animals.

Whereas the beginning of the second millennium saw large growth in the number and variety of sources related to divination, the end of the second millennium and much of the first millennium experienced a veritable boom.²⁵ The richness and variety of sources flourished in this

²⁴ For an overview of the evidence for third-millennium divination, see Falkenstein (1966) and Richardson (2010).

²⁵ The sheer number and variety of sources are too numerous to cover here. For an excellent overview, including bibliography for further reading, see Koch (2015, chap. 2).

period (Koch 2015, 30–31 tables 4 & 5). Most of the commentary texts, texts written by ancient scribes to elaborate upon Mesopotamian “literary, religious, and scholarly works, from epics and rituals to legal, medical and omen texts” (Frahm 2011, 4),²⁶ date from this period (Frahm 2011, 24–25). Other sources, such as letters between diviners and the king, begin to appear in larger numbers. Divination is mentioned in royal inscriptions as Neo-Assyrian kings took a particular interest in divination (Zamazalová 2011, 315–17). Rulers willingly and without hesitation placed their plans and actions under the scrutiny of diviners (Maul 2015, 125) as communication between the divine and king became a political instrument (Pongratz-Leisten 2015, 6:323–26).

Compendia which fill two or more written cuneiform tablets are known as series and are usually titled, as they were in antiquity, by their incipits (Koch 2015, 32).²⁷ Though the process of collecting omens into series began already in the Old Babylonian period, the “process gained real momentum in the end of the second-millennium” (Heeßel 2018, 254). Nevertheless, Assyriologists use ‘series’ to refer to the large series of the first millennium. These series reflect a “high degree of standardization” (Koch 2015, 30), a process that likely already started in the second millennium (Heeßel 2018, 254).

Series could be thousands of omens long and divided into sub-sections or chapters. A single sub-section is referred to as *tūppu*, or Tablet. While the entirety of a Tablet is usually written on one physical, clay tablet, there are rare cases of a Tablet encompassing multiple clay tablets (Freedman 1998, 6 note 10). For this reason, when referring to the physical medium upon which cuneiform is written, this thesis will either refer to the ‘cuneiform tablet’ or to the ‘manuscript’, but when referring to the sub-section of a series, this thesis will refer to a Tablet (note the word’s capitalization).

The divinatory series *šumma ālu* holds a unique place in the corpus of Mesopotamian divination texts, as it is the longest collection of unsolicited terrestrial omens featuring ominous phenomena in and around a city. Overall *šumma ālu* has yet to receive much scholarly attention beyond discussions around its reconstruction (De Zorzi n.d.). Further, its over 40 Tablets on various fauna make it an extraordinary source of non-human animal omens and the focus of the *Bestiarium Mesopotamicum* project, under whose auspices this thesis was written. This thesis specifically examines Tablet 32, which collects omens on the behavior and physical characteristics of lizards. The next subsection of this thesis provides an overview of the modern publication

²⁶ As an indication of divination’s significance to the Mesopotamian scribal milieu, Frahm (2011, 23) notes that omen compendia were the first texts for which commentary texts were written.

²⁷ See, however, Koch (2015, 32) for examples of series with other naming conventions, even in antiquity.

history of *šumma ālu* and the various ancient textual sources available to reconstruct this important divinatory series.

2.2 – *Šumma ālu* ...

The longest and one of the most varied—in terms of subject matter—of Mesopotamian divinatory series is the series known by its incipit *šumma ālu ina mēle šakin* ‘If a city is set on a height’, referred to from here on out as *šumma ālu*. The series collects terrestrial omens—phenomena associated with a town environment and deemed to have mantic relevance. It includes several Tablets with omens related to animal behavior and aspects of the animals’ features. The omen series *šumma ālu* originally had over 13,000 omens and around 120 Tablets (Mittermayer 2023).

2.2.1 modern publication history

The scope and breadth of *šumma ālu* is daunting, and although individual cuneiform tablets from the series have been occasionally published as hand copies since the early 20th century CE, it would not be until the end of the 20th century that anyone would attempt a complete text edition of the divinatory series. Building on the work from her PhD thesis,²⁸ Sally Freedman took on the enormous task of creating a complete philological edition.²⁹ Though not yet complete, the three-volume work (1998; 2006; 2017) (hereinafter *If a City* 1, 2, and 3, respectively) is an invaluable resource and the most extensive and complete translation and work on *šumma ālu* to date. The three volumes cover Tablets 1–63.

The first study of *šumma ālu* as a text, however, was Nötscher’s (1928; 1929; 1930) three volumes work offering transliteration and translation and minimal philological commentary. This work however was mostly limited to the fragments published as hand copies published in CT 38 41. Individual cuneiform tablets have also been translated and included in secondary literature on various topics. For example, Holma’s (1923) work on the bird omens found in the British Museum includes cuneiform tablets from *šumma ālu*.

Besides Freedman’s work,³⁰ there a few other modern sources of information on *šumma ālu* worth mentioning. Heeßel’s (2007) publication of terrestrial omens from Assur in the first volume of the series ‘Keilschrifttexte aus Assur literarischen Inhalts 1’ (KAL 1) includes previously unpublished cuneiform tablets and re-edits already published cuneiform tablets from Assur. Specific to this thesis, Heeßel’s work includes a previously unpublished cuneiform tablet with lizard omens (VAT 9906). Further, Mesopotamian divination has gained interest among scholars and is the topic of several research projects. The Vienna-based Bestiarium Mesopotamicum, an Austrian Science Fund-funded project led by Nicla De Zorzi specifically examines the animal

²⁸ See Moren (1978).

²⁹ There are numerous difficulties in creating a complete edition, not least of which is *šumma ālu*’s sheer size. Freedman (1998, 2–3) quickly discusses some of the hurdles in creating a comprehensive edition.

³⁰ Freedman (1998, 3–5) includes a more complete and detailed overview on *šumma ālu*’s publication history up to 1998 than is possible here.

omens to provide an updated digital edition of Tablets 22–42. This Master’s thesis is written within the auspices of De Zorzi’s project.

2.2.2 textual history

Most of the sources for *šumma ālu*³¹ date from about the seventh century (Freedman 1998, 13), when the series was copied and transmitted in a ‘standard’ form. In our corpus, Tablet 32, these are the manuscripts originating from Nineveh. The series continued to be copied, at least in part, until 228 BCE (Freedman 1998, 14).

Terrestrial omens made an early appearance in the history of Mesopotamian divination, with the earliest omens dating to the Old Babylonian period (Heeßel 2007, 2; the editions are Joannès 1994; and Weisberg 1969–1970). noting that already during this early period, there were connections between the terrestrial omens found in Old Babylonian texts and those in the standardized form of *šumma ālu* from the seventh century being presented in this thesis. See the commentary at Nineveh 12, for a parallel lizard omen from an Old Babylonian omen collection. Cuneiform sources more directly related to *šumma ālu* begin to appear at the end of the second-half of the second millennium. These manuscripts are mostly from Assur³² (Heeßel 2007, 2). Though the cuneiform tablets from Assur do not cover all of the known Tablets in *šumma ālu*, our corpus includes three Middle-Assyrian cuneiform tablets. The omens from these manuscripts have been included in the current edition of Tablet 32 under the recension ‘Assur’. See also section 3.2 on textual sources and the manuscript indices in 6.3 for details on the sources of Tablet 32.

2.2.3 overall structure of the divinatory series

In its standard form, *šumma ālu*’s approximately 120 Tablets covered a myriad of topics. The omens move from omens about the city and house in general (how they are built, their foundations, smells, construction, etc.) and then moves on to omens about animals in and around a home (KAL 1 2007, 2–3). Overall, omens focusing on non-human animal are mostly in Tablets 22–79 and range from small animals (for example, small reptiles), insects to larger animals, both domestic (for example, livestock) and wild (for example, lions). (De Zorzi forthcoming). There are some Tablets interspersed on other topics such as Tablets 50–52 about fire or Tablets 54–60 that cover omens about plants, agricultural fields, and canals. The final

³¹ Koch (2015, 237–39) provides a detailed overview of the ancient sources and their chronology. Further information can be found in the introduction to KAL 1 (Heeßel 2007, 2–8), which provides specifics to the cuneiform tablets found at Assur as well how the text preserved on manuscripts from Assur differs from those found at other sites. Freedman’s (1998, 1–14 particularly 13–14) introduction is also an excellent source for information on *šumma ālu*’s textual history and structure as it was known in 1998.

³² For details on the terrestrial omens from Assur, see Koch (2015, 237–38) and Heeßel (2007), especially the introduction on pages 4–8.

Tablets of the series cover assorted topics such as omens, prayers, and sexual behaviors (KAL 1 2007, 2–3). The Tablets consisting of animal omens³³ are structured thus:

Tablets 22–40 are small animals that can be found in and around a human's home. Included are dangerous animals such as snakes and scorpions, but also other small reptiles such as lizards and geckos. Mongooses, small rodents, insects and various vermin and crop pests are in this section (De Zorzi forthcoming). The series then moves to larger animals in Tablets 41–49, beginning with livestock (sheep and goats), but also includes equids and large cats. The final four Tablets (46–49) deal with dogs and pigs. Animals return in Tablet 63 with animals more associated with a natural environment (as opposed to a house): fish, turtles, frogs (all Tablet 63) and birds (Tablets 64–79). Tablet 80 has sexual behavior omens and includes both humans and non-human animals (De Zorzi forthcoming).

The current thesis is a newly updated edition of *šumma ālu's* Tablet 32, which collects omens taken from the behavior and appearance of the small animal known in Akkadian as *šurāru* (written logographically as EME.DIR or EME.ŠID). It was identified already in the early 20th century as a lizard (Landsberger 1934, 114). The lizard of Tablet 32 was likely similar or the same as the small, symbolic lizards of the *Lacertidae* family. (See also the discussion at section 3.3). It is a lithe creature, with four legs, an undulating gait, and a long tail that it could lose and regrow. As with many of the animals in *šumma ālu*, omens involving lizards occur in contexts in which the lizard has invaded the human realm: most commonly within the house, but also in the human contexts such as when a man walks in the street (Assur 89'–95'). In terms of *šumma ālu's* overall thematic sequence, lizard omens follow scorpions (Tablet 31) and precede geckos and skinks (Tablet 33).

³³ As noted in De Zorzi (forthcoming), most of the animal omens have been published in *If a City* 2 and 3 (2006, 2017) and Heeßel (KAL 1 2007).

2.3 Lizard symbolism³⁴

Humans have not formed the close relationship with lizards that they have with some other animals such as dogs or even livestock. Yet, lizards have continuously sparked the human imagination (Sax 2017, 62–63). The lizard, with its exceptionally vast morphology, has proven an apt vessel to convey a vast array of symbolic meaning from ancient times to the present. In modern time, films, books, tales,³⁵ and even conspiracy theories are replete with lizards as well as anthropomorphic and alien lizards. Terms such as ‘lizard people’ and ‘lizard brain’³⁶ are common in popular culture and even psychology. This despite the fact that the theory of the triune brain, of which the reptilian cortex, has been discredited by evolutionary biologists for decades (Cesario, Johnson, and Eisthen 2020, 255). In some cultures, lizards are on the menu, and though lizards have been hunted as game since at least the Neolithic period (Munro 2003, 53), the reptile is listed among the unclean animals in Leviticus 11 29–30. Lizards feature prominently in some forms of traditional medicine, and modern western medicine continues to study the ability of some lizard species to regenerate limbs in the hope of finding applications to treat human beings.³⁷

The Mesopotamians were not alone in ascribing ominous characteristics to lizards.³⁸ The ancient Greeks ascribed mantic properties to the small reptile (*σαῦρος*), and it can be often found on Greek statues of diviners (Bouché-Leclerq 1879, 1:147). Just as in Mesopotamia, lizards were also used in ancient Greek magical incantations (Hünemörder 2006). Across the Mediterranean, certain lizards were worshiped in the ancient Egyptian city of Fayum and some even mummified (Hopfner 1913, 136). Lizards (*lacerta*) are even mentioned in Cicero’s *De Divinatione* 2.62.29

³⁴ Sections of my MA thesis have been adapted and will appear in a slightly different form on the Bestiarium Mesopotamicum website as an overview to Tablet 32 (Lundeen n.d.); see <https://tieromina.acdh-dev.oeaw.ac.at/omens/chapters/32/structure/>.

³⁵ Lizards are common villains in comic books and monster/horror films so only a tiny selection of media representations of lizards follows. If one accepts Godzilla as an aquatic lizard, the monster film genre can be said to be dominated by lizards, but unequivocal lizards can also be found in many movies. See for example, the 1959 “The Giant Gila Monster” and the 2012 “Journey 2: The Mysterious Island”—a sequel to the 2008 film adaptation of Jules Verne’s *Journey to the Center of the Earth*. In Irish folklore, people sleeping near a river risk a small lizard slithering into their mouth, leading to the person’s eventual death (Locke 2017, 36). Lizards are not always villains. In Marco Finnegan’s (2020) comic book *A Lizard in a Zoot Suit*, two sisters try to save one of a hidden group of humanoid lizards. The lizard is a metaphor to explore the racism that led to Los Angeles’s 1943 Zoot Suit Riots. The 2011 animated Western “Rango” has as its protagonist a chameleon, aptly trying to find his true identity, and several other species of lizards make up the supporting cast.

³⁶ The theory of the triune brain envisions the human brain as comprising of increasingly developed layers. At the core, the most primitive brain layer is said to be a reptilian complex, or more colloquially a ‘lizard brain’. The other two layers are paleo- and neo-mammalian and are said to be responsible for ever more complex emotions, social interactions and morality (Cesario, Johnson, and Eisthen 2020; Sax 2017, 53).

³⁷ For example, see Lytal (2021), which reports on a research project hoping their studies into lizard tails can help lay the groundwork for advances in wound-healing in human beings.

³⁸ For an introduction and bibliography on beliefs around lizards in antiquity, with an emphasis on Ancient Greece and Egypt and the occasional excursion elsewhere, though not Mesopotamia, see Nock (1972); cf. Hurwit (2006) which builds upon Nock and updates the Greek bibliography. See Tedlock (2006) for a quick mention of lizards and divination in North America. Nijman and Bergin (2017) examine the trade in reptiles for Moroccan traditional medicine and cover some of the uses for and beliefs about lizards there.

(Falconer, LCL 1923, 440–41)—just as indicated in *šumma ālu*, lizards in one’s home appears to have been a commonplace occurrence in ancient Rome as well.

The netherworld’s spatial location under the earth and a lizard’s quick movement in and out from between rocks or cracks in walls, meant that lizards were a chthonic symbol in the Greek Archaic period and was associated with malevolent powers. It could thus be used as an apotropaic device (Hurwit 2006, 130) and is often depicted on amulets against the evil eye (Nock 1972, 272). It is also likely that the lizard inspired such feelings due to its quick, scurrying movements, the sloughing of its skin just as snakes do, and the ability of many species to lose and regenerate their tails. In fact, Aelian in his *De Natura Animalium* 2.23 (Scholfield, LCL 1958, 122–23) implies the Greeks believed that a lizard cut in half, would not only be able to survive but would be able to rejoin the halves and lead a normal life; though, it would bare a scar from its ordeal (also mentioned in Nock 1972, 274).

Tablet 32’s omens seem to share some of this uneasy feeling about lizards. Many of the protases are associated with negative apodoses. There is a small, but observable association between lizards, illness, and death within the omens. This is perhaps not surprising as lizard body parts feature in Mesopotamian medicinal recipes,³⁹ and there are lizard omens in the medical-diagnostic series SA.GIG.

The uneasiness may also be why Tablet 32 is one of the few in *šumma ālu* to not only include omens that mention women in the apodoses, but to feature women within the protasis (Muller 2016, 431). The snake and scorpion omens also feature women (Muller 2016, 431). The connection between women and lizards is unclear, but may be an association between the uncanniness of lizards and other small crawling creatures with women. The connection may be reflected in the use of lizards in reproductive medicine. The cuneiform tablet BAM 3 246: 1–5 partially preserves an abortifacient recipe that calls for a lizard to be crushed and added to beer and drunk by the pregnant woman (Biggs 2000, 11), and BAM 3 248 IV 13 has a recipe to ease labor that includes a lizard (Stol 2000, 55 note 46). Perhaps not unexpectedly, some of the omens featuring women mention having children. See, for example, Assur 59. It and a few selections from the omens with women are copied below:

Nineveh 51’ If a lizard carrying a snake stares at a woman — that woman will be married together with a secondary wife.
 DIŠ EME.DIR MUŠ *na-ši-ma* MUNUS IGI MUNUS BI KI DAM.TAB.BA
in-na-ḫa-az

³⁹ For a list, see Landsberger (1934, 114).

Assur 59 If a lizard gives birth in a woman's kettle — that woman will have twins; she will go about unhappily.
 DIŠ EME.DIR *ina* ŠEN MUNUS Û.TU MUNUS BI MAŠ.TAB.BA TUK-ši *ina*
 ŠÀ.ḪUL DU.DU-ak

Sultantepe 77 [If a lizard] crawls [into] a woman's [c]opper kettle — that woman [will be happy?]
 [DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina* ^{uru}duŠEN MUNUS KU₄ MUNUS ši ŠÀ-^ša[?] DÙG[?]-ab[?]]

The apodoses in *šumma ālu* are often repetitive and limited in topics. Nevertheless, even a quick glance at the lizard omens reveals an unusually large number of omens relating to opponents or adversaries. Often these take the form of overcoming one's legal adversary or simply being involved in a court case. These apodoses are often linked to protases about lizards falling in front of a man (see Assur 5's commentary). If lizards are connected symbolically to one's adversary, the metaphor of the lizard falling in front of the man, likely at his feet, is obvious. What is less obvious is why a normally skittish and usually harmless animal is connected to an adversary at all.

One consideration may be the lizard's connection to death and rebirth (due to its skin sloughing, its ability to regenerate its tail, and its tendency to scurry into dark crevices), which may give it martial connotations. Lizards are often present in Greek art foreboding violence or death (Hurwit 2006, 124–28). Another clue can be found in other divinatory texts. As pointed out by Nougayrol (1972, 144 note 1), there is a link in divinatory texts between the king Sargon, famous for his military campaigns, and lizards. Why this should be is unclear.⁴⁰ In various extispicy omens,⁴¹ such as the series *šumma tīrānū* 'If the coils (of the colon)', if an organ is said to look like a lizard, the apodosis is listed as being ^{gi}ŠTUKUL LUGAL.GI.NA 'the Weapon of Sargon'. This connection, which would have been known to scribes, may account for the high number of adversary apodoses among the lizard omens. Fights between male lizards are common and may result in one combatant ripping the tail off of the other, loss in status for the loser or even death (Vitt and Caldwell 2014, 271). Supporting this are the multiple omens involving entwined (*kitpulū*) lizards. Sibbing-Planthold (2021, 343) notes images of entwined animals, whether snakes with each other or donkeys⁴² copulating with a jenny, can be used to represent death.

⁴⁰ Glassner (2019, 485–86) speculates that the association originates in a proverb about a lizard falling into a spider's web, to the detriment of the spider (Lambert 1996, 220, lines 23–25). Glassner interprets it as a story about the conflict between Sargon and Lugal-zage.sī.

⁴¹ See for example K 6050 33 from the series 'If a gall-bladder', edited in Starr and Al-Rawi (1999, 180–85) or MLC 1874 from the series 'If the coils (of the colon)', first published in Clay (1923, 33, BRM 4 13, line 60). Note: scorpions can also be associated with the Weapon of Sargon: see K 3805 r 5' (Boissier 1894–1899, 1.1–1.3:91–92).

⁴² The association between donkeys and death is one of homophony. The Sumerian for donkey ANŠE sounds like Anzū, the mythical bird who is said to have a countenance of 'Death' (*Mūtu*) (Sibbing-Plantholt 2021, 342–43); see there as well for the example of a donkey copulating with a jenny in a commentary text on SA.GIG.

Though many of the omens' apodoses are broken (Assur 74'–75', Assur 76'–77', Assur 79', Assur 97'–107'), the ones that are complete are mostly negative:

- Assur 97'** If entwined lizards fall onto a man but do not separate — co[nfusion], distress.
 DIŠ EME.DIR *kit-pu-lu-ma ana* UGU NA ŠUB.MEŠ-*ma* NU DU₈.MEŠ S[ÛḪ]
ni-zíq-tu₄
- Assur 98'** If (= entwined) lizards fall ditto (= onto a man), separate, and remain sitting in front of the street — he will witness the downfall of his legal adver[sary].
 DIŠ EME.DIR MIN (*kit-pu-lu-ma ana* UGU NA) ŠUB.MEŠ-*ma* DU₈.MEŠ-*ma ana* IGI SILA TUŠ ŠUB-at E[N INIM]-š*u* IGI-*mar*
- Assur 99' Variant A** (VAT 9793)
 If ditto (= entwined lizards) fall onto a man and do not [separate but ... onto the man — that man will experience imprisonment].
 DIŠ KI.MIN (EME.DIR *kit-pu-lu-ma*) *ana* IGI NA ŠUB.MEŠ-*ma* NU [DU₈.MEŠ-*ma a-na* UGU NA *iš-lu-ú* NA BI KI.ŠÚ IGI-*mar*]
- Assur 105'** If [dit]to (= [entwin]ed) [lizards] fall onto a man's right foot a[nd separate] — either [im]prisonment or severe confinement will afflict him.
 DIŠ [EME.DIR MI]N (*kit-pu-lu-ma*) *ana* UGU ĞÌR NA ZAG ŠUB.MEŠ-*m[a*
 DU₈.MEŠ] *lu [m]e-se-ru lu* KI.ŠÚ *dan-nu* DAB-*su*
- Assur 106'** If [ditto (= entwined) lizards fal]l [(= onto a man's left (= foot)) and separate — he will acquire a *twitching* in his feet.
 DIŠ [EME.DIR MIN (*kit-pu-lu-ma ana* UGU ĞÌR NA) ĞÙB ŠUB].MEŠ-*ma*
 DU₈.MEŠ MUNUS.LUḪ ĞÌR.MEŠ-šú TUK-š*i*
- Assur 107'** [If ditto (= entwined) lizards ...] fall onto ... and do not separate — depression for an entire day.
 [DIŠ EME.DIR MIN (*kit-pu-lu-ma*) ... *ana*] UGU x x ŠUB.MEŠ-*ma* NU
 DU₈.MEŠ *ta-dir-ti* U₄.1.KÁM

Part III The Corpus: Tablet 32

*"My armour is like tenfold shields, my teeth are swords, my claws
spears, the shock of my tail is a thunderbolt, my wings a
hurricane, and my breath death!"
Smaug in J. R. R.'s The Hobbit⁴³*

3.1. Current Edition

The current edition of Tablet 32 differs considerably from the previous edition in *If a City 2* (2006, 164–201). Most importantly a close study of the omens and their relationship to each other have allowed us to present a much corrected and in depth presentation of the omen sequencing in Tablet 32. The text has been comprehensively re-edited, readings have been corrected and updated, and the sequence of omens has been reconsidered.

An interesting and challenging aspect of Tablet 32 is that the available source manuscripts cannot be easily reconciled with one another and are likely based on differing source texts. Therefore in the edition that follows, the texts that these manuscripts preserve are grouped into three recensions as was done in *If a City 2*. Each recension preserves differing—though there are overlaps—omens and sequences. The recensions are named for the geographical find sites of the manuscripts in each recension: Nineveh, Assur, and Sultantepe. See sections 3.2.1 and 3.4.1.

In February 2020, the team from De Zorzi's Bestiarium Mesopotamicum project traveled to the British Museum, where I had the fortunate experience to be able to collate the Nineveh manuscripts in person. This collation clarified sign readings and line counts. It also revealed an omitted attestation of an omen (Nineveh 36' Variant D). Further, De Zorzi discovered a new join between the reverse of K 3730+ and K 10792. This join confirms two previously unplaced omens are lizard omens, but also shows another four should actually be placed in Tablet 33 (geckos). See 'Sequence on reverse of K 3730+ and K 10792' in the Nineveh recension.

The manuscripts from Assur were recently edited and published in KAL 1 (2007 manuscripts 16, 17, 18). The readings for these manuscripts were done from photographs, where available, and hand copies, but follow KAL 1 closely. One of the manuscripts, VAT 9906 (KAL 1 manuscript 18) was unknown at the time of *If a City 2*'s publication. Thus the current edition is the first to bring all known manuscripts for Tablet 32 together in one publication. Though the readings for the Sultantepe manuscript were done from the same hand copy available at the time of *If a City 2*'s publication, analyzing the similarities in that manuscript's sequence with those on the manuscripts from Assur have allowed us to suggest alternatives for problematic readings.

⁴³ Smaug is a dragon from Tolkien's (2002, 282) *The Hobbit*. Sax (2017, 10) explains that over history the term 'lizard' has been used to include any animal (real or not) that creeps or glides, including serpents, agamids, or, even, dragons.

3.2 Textual Sources

Though a complete copy of *šumma ālu*'s Tablet 32 has not yet been found, the Tablet's text is partially preserved on eleven partially fragmentary, clay tablets.⁴⁴ The geographic distribution of the find sites of Tablet 32's cuneiform tablets reflects the overarching patterns of *šumma ālu* as a whole. Seven cuneiform tablets originate from Nineveh and date to the seventh century BCE: K 2708+; two physically joining tablets K 3730+ and K 10792; K 6912+; as well as K 9057 and K 12180+, which do not physically join but belong to the same originally four-column manuscript; and Sm 710+. Meanwhile, three cuneiform tablets originate from Assur and date to the end of the second millennium (KAL 1 2007, 4; 2007, 13 manuscripts 16–18): VAT 9793 (KAL 1 17), VAT 10167 (KAL 1 16), and VAT 9906 (KAL 1 18). Finally, one almost complete cuneiform tablet originates from Sultantepe (excavation number SU 1952, 242, but is better known from its first publication as STT 323). Although the Sultantepe manuscript is contemporaneous with the clay tablets from Nineveh, being Neo Assyrian, the text it preserves bears a closer resemblance to the obverse of the Middle-Assyrian VAT 10167.

Due to the fragmentary states of the manuscripts and the variations in the omen sequence preserved from one manuscript to the next, it is difficult to reconstruct a single, standard sequence for Tablet 32. In addition to the manuscripts preserving parts of Tablet 32 itself, there are two types of related texts⁴⁵ that can aid in reconstructing or interpreting individual lizard omens: ancient commentary texts and omens from other Mesopotamian divinatory series. See also section 3.2.2 and 6.3.4 in the edition. Despite all the difficulties, however, the various cuneiform tablets and sequences preserved on them provide a glimpse into the myriad of methods ancient scribes had at hand in creating omen lists and reflect the richness of ancient scholarship.

3.2.1 manuscripts by geographic find site⁴⁶

Complicating the reconstruction of Tablet 32 is the fact that the eleven fragmentary clay tablets preserving lizard omens differ from one another in terms of not only which omens they preserve, but also the sequence in which omens are presented. Because the text preserved on clay tablets originating from one geographical site more closely resemble one another in terms of content and omen sequences than the texts preserved on manuscripts from other sites, the

⁴⁴ One commentary text indicates Tablet 32 may have been at times copied onto parchment (Jiménez 2014), which is obviously much less durable than clay. This may account for the sparse and incomplete sources on lizard omens. For other cuneiform tablets mentioning parchment copies, see Frahm (2005, 45).

⁴⁵ Though it is not included in this edition, as the text does not help to reconstruct any of the omens in Tablet 32, there is a third related text. This is the so-called *Namburbi* rituals. These are a collection of apotropaic rituals to counteract negative omens, and there is a section specifically on lizard omens. See Maul's (1994, 304–11 VIII 3) edition.

⁴⁶ Sections of my MA thesis have been adapted and will appear in a slightly different form on the Bestiarium Mesopotamicum's website as an overview to Tablet 32 (Lundeen n.d.); see <https://tieromina.acdh-dev.oeaw.ac.at/omens/chapters/32/structure/>.

present edition follows *If a City 2* and splits Tablet 32's omens into three textual recensions⁴⁷ based on geographical origin: Nineveh, Assur, and Sultantepe. The current edition names omens by recension as well as the omen's place within that recension's sequence of omens. For example, the omen Nineveh 15 refers to the 15th omen in the Nineveh recension.

Despite the differences between the three recensions, many overlaps exist. Identical or extremely similar omens might be preserved in multiple recensions. At times even sequences of omens are preserved. Connections and similarities between the recensions have been noted in the current edition within the philological commentary to each respective omen.

Nineveh

The find site Nineveh has the largest number of clay fragments preserving Tablet 32 omens, seven in total. These are all Neo-Assyrian (first millennium) cuneiform tablets associated with Assurbanipal's library. The sequencing of the omens on the Nineveh manuscripts is particularly complicated as all of the tablets are what are known as excerpt texts. Excerpt texts do not preserve a complete form of a Tablet's omens, but instead, as the name implies, provide a selection of omens.

Little is known about the excerpt process: for example, why were certain omens chosen over others, how often were new omens added or when were the omens rearranged? This latter issue potentially applies to our manuscripts. While the six Nineveh manuscripts preserve similar and often identical omens, there are significant differences in the omen sequences from one cuneiform tablet to the next. This edition of Tablet 32 presents the omens from Nineveh by following the sequence on K 2708+.

Additionally, to reflect the differences between the individual Nineveh manuscripts, the reverse of K 3730+, the sequence on K 9057 (+) K 12180 and the sequence on Sm 710+ have also been presented individually. The sequences on these manuscripts reveal some additional methods scribes used to organize omen sequences. Omens on these separate editions, have been named by the tablets museum number and the line(s) the omen appears on. The philological commentary includes any similarities or overlaps with the omens in the main Nineveh sequence.

K 2708+ is a four-column cuneiform clay tablet which preserves 35 omens⁴⁸, making it the second-largest collection of lizard omens among the Nineveh manuscripts. The clay tablet is incomplete, with both the top and bottom edges as well as much of the reverse being broken away.

⁴⁷ *If a City 2* refers to recensions as traditions.

⁴⁸ *If a City 2* (2006, 164 Nineveh Tradition A) states K 2708+ preserves the most omens. Our omen count indicates K 3730+ has slightly more; likely due to differences in how omens are counted and the fact that we were able to place a few new omens.

Column *i* and *ii* contain 19 and 10 omens, respectively. Column *iii* is missing, and column *iv* only preserves a few partial protases.

Although *If a City 2* (2006, 164 Nineveh Tradition A) suggests K 2708+ might be a standard text, we see the manuscript as an excerpt text. In its current state, the manuscript does only preserve lizard omens, which might speak in favor of interpreting it as a standard text. However, if one extrapolates from the clay tablet's fragmentary state and the fact that it is clearly a four-column tablet, a fully reconstructed version of the manuscript would require an exponentially large amount of lizard omens to fill the entire manuscript. The potential number of lizard omens would then dwarf the number of omens for animals in similar animal Tablets.

Our edition follows *If a City 2* and uses the omen sequence preserved on K 2708+, starting with the 22nd Nineveh omen (Nineveh 22'), as the standard sequence for the Nineveh recension. The beginning of K 2708+ is missing, but the largest Nineveh tablet, K 3730+ (see below), preserves Tablet 32's incipit along with a further 21 omens, forming the first 21 omens in the Nineveh recension. There is a gap of unknown size in the omen sequence between Nineveh 22 (corresponds to line K 3730+ 21) and Nineveh 23' (K 2708+ *i* 1'). The gap is not likely to have been large, however, around five to ten omens. The omens preserved on K 2708+ (Nineveh 23'–31', none of which are preserved on K 3730+) are much too fragmentary to be certain, but they do bear some similarities to omens in the Assur recension (Assur 8-12; Assur 19–21). K 3730+ (line 22) rejoins the sequence on K 2708+ (line *i* 10') in Nineveh 32', which just happens to have the same protasis as Assur 30.

There are 41 omens on **K 3730+'s** generally well-preserved obverse. A piece, however, is missing from the manuscript's upper-right quadrant, and the obverse breaks off after 43 lines. The cuneiform tablet's upper-edge is partially preserved as is Tablet 32's incipit. While the obverse consists entirely of lizard omens and is in a relatively good state of preservation, the reverse is almost completely broken away and the remaining lines can be placed in both Tablet 32 and Tablet 33 (geckos), making K 3730+ clearly an excerpt text. The first 10 lines of K 3730+'s reverse preserve only the last few signs of each line, but are likely lizard omens continued from the obverse of the manuscript. In the process of collating tablets, De Zorzi joined the reverse of K 3730+ with K 10792. The smaller tablet K 10792 was first published by *If a City 2* (2006, 202–22 Ex(6)) as a separate excerpt text in Tablet 33 (geckos). The first six lines of K 10792 were previously unplaced and thought to be possible lizard omens (2006, 205 note 17'). After the join, lines K 10792 1' and 2' are likely to be lizard omens. Lines K 10792 3'–6', however, have now been shown to be part of Tablet 33 (geckos).

Starting with K 3730+ r 11', K 10792 lies atop K 3730+'s reverse, near the larger manuscript's right-hand side. Both K 3730+ r 12' and K 10792 2' preserve part of the same ruling that demarcates the transition to gecko omens. K 3730+ r 11'-12' align with K 10792 1'-2'; although they are fragmentary. From K 3730+ r 13' (aligns with K 10792 3') until the manuscript's bottom edge (partially preserved), the omens are taken from Tablet 33 (geckos). Because the remains of the lizard omens on the reverse of K 3730+ are so fragmentary, they cannot be placed. Therefore, the reverse of K 3730+ has been presented separately in this edition.

K 6912+ is a smaller excerpt text with 21 lines preserving 11 lizard omens on the obverse. Part of the obverse's top edge has been preserved, but all the other edges are missing as is much of the reverse. During collation, it was noted that *If a City 2* omits the extremely fragmentary first line of the reverse, which results in differing line counts between this edition and *If a City 2*. The reverse has 10 lines with 9 omens.

Though they do not physically join together, **K 9057 and K 12180+** are two pieces of the same manuscript: originally a four-column Neo-Assyrian excerpt text. Lizard omens are clearly preserved in K 12180+ i 1'-13'. Note that during collation, it was revealed that the fragmentary line K 12180+ i 1' had been omitted in *If a City 2*. It has been included here, resulting in different line counts between the current edition and that in *If a City 2*. Due to the positioning of K 9057 and K 12180+, in relation to each other, the traces of apodoses visible on K 9057 i 1'-8' are also likely to have been lizard omens and have, therefore, been presented in the current edition. None of these traces were included in *If a City 2*'s edition of Tablet 32. The rest of K 12180+ i and the remaining three columns on fragments K 9057 and K 12180+ collect omens from Tablets 33-36 (geckos and skinks, mongooses and small rodents) (*If a City 2*, 2006, 164 Ex(4)).

When omens on K 9057 (+) K 12180+ duplicate or are close parallels to omens preserved on other Nineveh tablets, these have been included in the scores of the main Nineveh omen sequence. The omen sequence preserved on K 9057 (+) K 12180+ reflects unique methods the scribes used to organize omens and differs from the sequence on other manuscripts.⁴⁹ To preserve this unique sequence, the omen sequence on K 9057 (+) K 12180+ has also been presented separately in the current edition.

The final Nineveh cuneiform tablet is **Sm 710+**. It preserves just under 20 lizard omens on the obverse. The reverse is completely broken away as are the top and bottom edges. Part of the right-hand edge is preserved. Although the left-hand edge is missing, the protases of a few omens are almost complete, which makes estimating how many signs are possibly missing. Similar to

⁴⁹ K 9057 and K 12180+ also preserve a unique sequences for the omens in Tablet 33 (geckos).

K 9057 and K 12180+, several of the omens preserved on Sm 710+ show parallels to omens preserved on other Nineveh tablets and have been included in the relevant omen scores, but the sequence of the omens on Sm 710+ is different. Therefore, the omen sequence on Sm 710+ has also been presented separately in the present edition.

Assur

The three manuscripts from Assur are all Middle-Assyrian (second millennium) tablets and as such they preserve an earlier version of the lizard omens than the Neo-Assyrian clay tablets from Nineveh. The current edition's readings of these manuscripts largely follow Heeßel's (KAL 1 2007, 67–77 manuscripts 16–18) recent edition with a few exceptions.

Two of the cuneiform tablets, VAT 9793 and VAT 10167, are duplicates. The larger one, **VAT 10167**, is almost complete and preserves, partially or in whole, 134 lizard omens. A small part of top edge is preserved. The bottom edge is entirely broken away, creating a gap in the omen sequence after Assur 72. The smaller cuneiform tablet, **VAT 9793**, only preserves 18 lizard omens—all of which are also preserved on the reverse of VAT 10167. Note, we follow KAL 1 (2007, 13 manuscript 16) in determining the reverse and obverse of VAT 10167. This differs from the cuneiform tablet's hand copy (KAR 382), its photograph on CDLI, and its edition in *If a City 2* (2006, 172–83, 194–201).

Much of VAT 10167's obverse and the Sultantepe manuscript (see below), SU 1952, 242 (STT 323), show remarkable similarities in both the omens they preserve and their sequencing. Both manuscripts however also preserve omens not found on the other. While the philological commentary notes these similarities and parallels, it can be helpful to examine the omens from Assur and Sultantepe together. See also the discussion in section 3.4.2 comparing the two recessions. While there are some parallels between the Assur omens and those preserved on the Nineveh cuneiform tablets, they are less frequent. These similarities, however, have also been noted in the philological commentary.

The third manuscript from Assur, **VAT 9906**, is a six-column tablet, of which only column *ii* is well-preserved (KAL 1 2007, 13 manuscript 18). The beginning of VAT 9906 is broken away and the remaining omens all use a sign of repetition (MIN) to indicate the animal referred to in the protases. That is, the animal in the omens on VAT 9906 is no longer explicitly mentioned. Nevertheless, as noted in KAL 1 (2007, 13 manuscript 18), a few of the omens show similarities to lizard omens found on the other Assur tablets. For example, the omen on VAT 9906 v 12' appears to be the same omen as Assur 50:

VAT 9906 v 12' If ditto (= a lizard) repeatedly walks about on a man — his days will be long; a good message will be established for hi[m].
 DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) *ina* UGU NA DU.DU U₄.MEŠ-š_u GÍD.DA.MEŠ INIM SIG₅
 GAR-š[ú]

Assur 50 If a lizard repeatedly walks about on a man — his days will be long; a good message will be established for him.
 DIŠ EME.DIR *ina* UGU NA DU.DU-ak U₄.MEŠ-š_u GÍD.DA.MEŠ INIM SIG_{5-ti}
 GAR-š_u

Because of these overlaps and similarities, we follow KAL 1 (2007, 13 manuscript 18) and place VAT 9906 in Tablet 32. The cuneiform tablet was first published and edited in KAL 1 and therefore not included in *If a City 2*. Hand copies of VAT 9906 are included in KAL 1 (2007, 172–75 manuscript 18), but only columns *ii* through *v* are transliterated and translated as columns *i* and *vi* are quite fragmentary. Nevertheless in the current edition, we have included attempted transliterations from both column *i* and *vi* based on the hand copies in KAL 1.

Sultantepe

The Sultantepe manuscript known as STT 323 (excavation number: SU 1952, 242) is a largely intact one-column cuneiform tablet with parts of all four edges preserved. Unfortunately photographs of the tablet are not available. Readings were done from the hand copy prepared in the mid-20th century (Gurney and Hulin 1964 STT 323). This is the only manuscript from Tablet 32 to preserve a colophon, which reveals the omens were copied from a large tablet (DUB.GAL.LI) from Babylon. One omen, however, shows that there may have been west-Semitic influences on the orthography. See the philological commentary at Sultantepe 60 on *šá-li-mu*. As noted above, the texts preserved on the Sultantepe manuscript and on the obverse of the Assur manuscript VAT 10167 are remarkably similar in content and sequence. See also the discussion in 3.4.2 comparing the Assur and Sultantepe recensions.

3.2.2 related texts

In addition to the cuneiform tablets mentioned above, which preserve omens taken directly from *šumma ālu*, two additional ancient sources help to reconstruct individual omens from Tablet 32. The first are commentary texts, the second are medical-diagnostic omens from Mesopotamian divinatory series SA.GIG.

Commentary texts

The first commentary text, BM 41586, actually provides commentary on *šumma ālu*'s Tablet 31 (scorpions), but its ending rubric partially preserves Tablet 32's incipit and therefore helps to reconstruct Tablet 32's opening omen (Nineveh 1). The second commentary text, K 1, on the other hand, comments on multiple Tablets from *šumma ālu*, including Tablet 32. Although this second text has 28 lines relating to lizard omens, only a few can be confidently associated with known, individual lizard omens (found on the cuneiform tablets discussed above). These have

been noted in this edition's philological commentary. The unplaced lines of the commentary text on K 1 can be found at the Yale *Cuneiform Commentaries Project* (CCP 3.5.30 lines 44–70). Both of the commentary texts are discussed in the philological commentary to the relevant omens in this edition. The reading of Nineveh 1 on BM 41586 has also been included in the omen score as helps reconstruct the protasis.

SA.GIG medical-diagnostic omens

The first two Tablets of the medical-diagnostic series SA.GIG collect omens relating to the fate or cause of a patient's illness. Labat (1951) edited SA.GIG as *Traité Akkadien de diagnostics et prognostics médicaux* (TDP). In SA.GIG's first Tablet, it is a healing practitioner (*ašīpu*), who observes the ominous phenomena. The second Tablet includes observations by any man⁵⁰ (*amēlu*) in addition to the healing practitioner. It is this second Tablet that is relevant to our edition as it includes a number of animal omens.⁵¹ Heeßel (2001) provides an updated edition of the second Tablet. The second Tablet's omen sequence mirrors a person's movement when visiting a someone who is ill: first on the way to the patient, then the patient's house, bed, environment, etc., then the person's travels back home after sunset (Heeßel 2001, 24). On the way, the person encounters a number of animals, which are taken to be portentous regarding the illness's outcome. SA.GIG's second Tablet has four lizard omens (TDP 2 44–47) partially preserved on four manuscripts (Heeßel 2001, 32–33 omens 44–47). Only one of the omens, TDP 2 45,⁵² appears to have a parallel in *šumma ālu*, Sultantepe 34. TDP 2 45 also helps clarify the reading of a problematic sign in Sultantepe 34. See the philological commentary at Sultantepe 34 for details. While the remaining three lizard omens in SA.GIG do not have known parallels in *šumma ālu* Tablet 32, the topic of illness is common among the lizard omens of Tablet 32 (see the commentary at Nineveh 11 for a list).

⁵⁰ As correctly noted by Heeßel (2001, 24 note 3), the Akkadian *amēlu* can refer to both men and women, but given that Mesopotamian divination occurs within a male-oriented context, following Heeßel's suggestion of translating 'man' seems appropriate. Cf. Muller (2016, 431), who offers up that women may play such a rare role in omen protases because the logograms NA or LÚ used to write *amēlu* may have been intended as a general neutral 'someone'.

⁵¹ The parallels between *šumma ālu* and SA.GIG's second Tablet have long been noted and commented on. See Heeßel (2001) for a discussion and bibliography.

⁵² An updated score of TDP 2 45 is available in Heeßel's (2001, 33 omen 45) edition.

3.3 The Lizards of Tablet 32

Tablet 32 is a collection of omens taken from the behavior and appearance of the small animal known written with the logograms EME.DIR or EME.ŠID. The Akkadian reading *šurāru* was identified in the early 20th century as a lizard (Landsberger 1934, 114). While it is tempting to look at lists of local lizard species and attempt to select likely candidates for the term *šurāru*, the process is fraught with problems similar to those of retrospective diagnoses.⁵³

The term ‘lizard’ is biologically incoherent and is not a category in modern taxonomy. Though many would delineate the boundaries of the category ‘lizard’ as including all non-snake squamates (an order of reptiles with scales), the term’s limits in terms of categorization actually vary by context and source.⁵⁴ Using the usual definition of all non-snake squamates, however, also includes geckos and skinks, two animals the Mesopotamians clearly did not consider lizards as they are handled separately in Tablet 33. For many people, the symbolic lizard is a fairly narrow category; it is a member of the *Lacertidae* family, such as the European wall lizard.

While limiting *šurāru* to the *Lacertidae* family is probably too narrow, as there are other similar-looking species endemic to the region,⁵⁵ Tablet 32 is likely referring to any similar-looking animal, whether it biologically actually belongs to the *Lacertidae* family or not.

The animal’s propensity, in Tablet 32’s protases, to fit into various vessels (Nineveh 57’: If a lizard gives birth in a *mudê* (container) of a man’s house) and be stepped on (Assur 88’: If a man unwittingly steps on a lizard (but) does not kill (it)) support an association between the lizard of Tablet 32 with an animal similar to a symbolic lizard from the *Lacertidae* family. That is one of the small snake-like animals with legs that crawl between rocks and crevices.

As with most of the omens within *šumma ālu*, the lizard omens of Tablet 32 place the animal within a human’s spatial awareness. The animal falls onto humans (Nineveh 9: If a lizard

⁵³ Arrizabalaga (2002, 58–62) provides an illustrative example of the problems around retrospective diagnoses. The term ‘typhus’, since its earliest use in Ancient Greece until the modern day, when it still refers to a group of diseases and not a single disease, has taken on different meanings and encompasses a wide variety of diseases from a modern perspective of disease classification.

⁵⁴ The classification of small-reptiles, especially, non-snake reptiles, was often ambiguous in antiquity (Andreozzi 2020, 132). In more recent history, tadpoles, scorpions (Sax 2017, 8) or salamanders have all been categorized as lizards at some point. Moving beyond biology into more colloquial uses, lizards can take on ever broader meaning to include crocodiles or to include, another biologically incoherent category, dinosaurs. In folk taxonomy, various animals, for example amphibians and worms (Locke 2017, 36), have also been considered lizards at different times and places. For an introduction intended for a general audience to some of the various ways humans have categorized lizards, see Sax (2017).

As concerns *šumma ālu*, it is important to note that geckos and skinks (Tablet 33) are both non-snake squamates and are usually included in the category ‘lizard’. Geckos are also the only type of lizard that can vocalize, and yet, in *šumma ālu* both lizards (Tablet 32) and geckos (Tablet 33) can vocalize. See Nineveh 47’ discussion on noise in *šumma ālu*.

⁵⁵ Lizard fauna in Iraq has numerous species outside of the *Lacertidae* family. For a discussion of modern lizard biodiversity in Iraq, see Rahemo and Mohamad (2014). Anderson (1968) is somewhat older but provides an overview of lizard fauna in neighboring Iran.

with two tails falls onto a man) or their belongings; climbs onto their furnishings (Sultantepe 28: [If a lizard] cli[mbs onto a ma]n's [bed and lies down]); circles humans or their body parts (Assur 84': If a lizard encircles a man's neck); crawls into, onto or under spaces and things (Assur 42: If a lizard crawls into a bread box and lies down). They make noise and call out (Nineveh 47': If a lizard calls out all day in a man's house) or they hiss (Nineveh 37': If a lizard hisses on top of a man's sleeping place). Lizards also give birth⁵⁶ (Sultantepe 74: [If a liza]rd gives birth u[n]der the threshold of a man's house). Lizards occasionally walk about on people (Nineveh 64': [If a lizard walks ab]out [o]n a young, unmarried woman) or household furnishings (Nineveh 40': If a lizard wa[lks about] on top of a [m]an's bed). Despite all this activity, it is noteworthy that after falling, one of the most common verbs associated with lizards is the passive IGI-*mar* or IGI.DU₈ 'is/are seen'. This verb is often used in protases in which the characteristics of a lizard are discussed and is more prevalent among the omens from the Nineveh recension. For example, the protasis of Nineveh 5 reads "[If] a white [li]zard with two tail[s] is seen in a man's house". Other protases use the verb to refer to where a presumably dead lizard is seen. (Nineveh 49': If a lizard is seen in either water or beer). Although the lizards of Tablet 32 are very much in motion, the agency the text gives them is limited.

3.3.1 lizard orthography⁵⁷

'Lizard' is almost always written in Tablet 32 using the equivalent logograms EME.DIR or EME.ŠID⁵⁸—the former, as already noted by Landsberger (1934, 114),⁵⁹ is more common in Assyrian texts, even outside the context of *šumma ālu*. In line with this, all of our corpus's manuscripts from Assur and Sultantepe use EME.DIR, while all of the Nineveh manuscripts, except K 2708+, use EME.ŠID. Less commonly, the word 'lizard' is written syllabically and always in the feminine *šu-ri-ri-it-tu₄*.

Nineveh 3 [[If in a [man's?] house a lizard [wi]th two tails [is seen? and?] the right
[o]ne is short, but the left one is long — that man [...] in g[oo]d? [...].
[Šu]m-ma šu-ri-ri-it-tu₄ šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá ina É [NA? IGI? ú? š]á ZAG
LÚGUD.DA-ma šá GÙB GÍD.DA NA BI ina S[IG₅?-ti [...]

⁵⁶ Most lizards reproduce by laying eggs and only a few species give birth to live young, which the English 'to give birth' implies. The Akkadian (*w*)*alādu*, usually written in *šumma ālu* with the logogram Û.TU, has a broader semantic meaning than the English and encompasses various forms of creation (Couto-Ferreira 2016, 27; CAD A.1: 287–94 s.v. *alādu*). Nevertheless, the English 'to give birth' has been used over other options such as 'begets (young)' or 'lays (eggs)', because in English both verbs require a direct object that is not present in the Akkadian. Further, there are a few omens in *šumma ālu* that reference an animal's eggs directly, but none among the lizard omens. See, for example, Rinderer (2021, 93 omen §24.6).

⁵⁷ Sections of my MA thesis have been adapted and will appear in a slightly different form on the Bestiarium Mesopotamicum's website as an overview to Tablet 32 (Lundeen n.d.); see <https://tieromina.acdh-dev.oeaw.ac.at/omens/chapters/32/structure/>.

⁵⁸ In the lexical list Practical Vocabulary Assur, EME.DIR is differentiated from EME.ŠID and corresponds to *iššû*. CAD (Š: 255–56 s.v. *šurāru* A) suggests that *iššû* (often translated as 'a type of gecko') is the Assyrian version of *šurārû* and notes this is the only attestation of such differentiation.

⁵⁹ See also the discussion on orthography in CAD (Š: 255–56 s.v. *šurāru* A) for the prevalence of the two writings.

The Sumerian etymological meanings of the logograms EME.DIR and EME.ŠID are unknown. The presence of EME, which is the Sumerian sign for ‘tongue’, has led some⁶⁰ to speculate that DIR and ŠID might reference the ability of many lizards to protrude and retract their tongues, as snakes do. This could be another explanation for the placement of lizard omens near *šumma ālu*’s Tablets on such dangerous animals as snakes and scorpions.

Although the Sumerian etymology is unknown, the Akkadian correspondence for the two logograms is known to be *šurāru*. The Mesopotamians differentiated between several types of lizards, but it is not possible to say which word referred to which species (Ebeling 1938, 315 RLA s.v. *Eidechse*). In any case, Tablet 32 limits itself to the small animal, or lizard, referred to by the Akkadian term *šurāru*.

In general, the Akkadian for ‘lizard’ is problematic (CAD Š: 255b s.v. *šurāru* A):

(1) Akkadian is flexible in terms of the grammatical gender associated with lizards. Both male and female forms are used in correspondence to the same logograms. Further, there are multiple attested forms of the word. Masculine forms include *šurāru*, *šurīrû* and *šurārû*, and the feminine attested forms⁶¹ are *šurīrītu* and *šurīrittū*. The omens of Tablet 32 reflect this gender ambiguity. The grammatical gender used on one manuscript can differ from one omen to the next, or even, as is the case with K 3730+ in Nineveh 1, within the same omen with no obvious difference in meaning. See the commentary on grammatic gender at Nineveh 1.

(2) The plural of lizards is rarely indicated with the expected plural marker MEŠ. In fact, CAD (Š: 255 s.v. *šurāru* A) states that there are no known attestations of EME.DIR.MEŠ or EME.ŠID.MEŠ. On the other hand, *If a City 2* (2006, 176 omens 33’–55’) reads or reconstructs several omens as EME.DIR.MEŠ (Assur 105’–127’). For these omens, we follow the readings in KAL 1 (2007, 70–71 Rs. 35’–59’), which do not include the plural marker. In collating the Nineveh manuscripts, however, the following two attestations of a plural marker with a logogram for lizards were found:

Nineveh 37’ Variant C (K 6912+)

[If li]zards [...] in [a man’s?] sleeping [place ...]
[DIŠ E]ME.ŠID.MEŠ *ina* KI.[NÁ NA? ...]

Sm 710+ 15’ (is also Nineveh 41’ Variant B)

[If] entangled [li]zards fall onto a man — that man: wherever he goes will
con[sume] a share.
[DIŠ E]ME.ŠID.MEŠ DAB.DAB-*ta-ma ana* UGU ‘NA’ ŠUB.MEŠ NA BI KI
DU-*ku* ḪA.LA G[U7]

⁶⁰ See, for example, Landsberger (1934, 114, note 3), Gordon (1958, 58, fable 5.83), and CAD (Š: 255 s.v. *šurāru* A).

⁶¹ The Aramaic loanword for lizard is *šurīrītā*. The Aramaic word, however, covers animals such as the chameleon and salamander, which does not seem to be true for the Akkadian (Landsberger 1934, 114).

In most instances, EME.DIR and EME.ŠID can refer to both a singular lizard and to multiple lizards. Because *šurārû* is a possible reading for the logograms, CAD (Š: 255 s.v. *šurāru* A) suggests it may be a collective noun for lizards, making the plural marker MEŠ unnecessary. Often the only indication that EME.DIR or EME.ŠID should be read as a plural is the context. Plural usage can sometimes be gleaned from verb forms, but as omens tend to use logograms instead of syllabic spellings, which would make plural verb forms explicit, this is limited in its usefulness.

In this edition, the masculine singular *šurāru* is used for the logograms EME.ŠID and EME.DIR unless a feminine form is indicated through personal pronouns, adjectives, or syllabic spelling. As the few syllabic writing in Tablet 32 fit with the feminine form *šurīrittu*, and not *šurīritu*, the former has been used for when a feminine is indicated. Where the context or verb forms indicate a plural, *šurārû* has been used. If a feminine form is indicated for the plural, *šurīrātu* has been used.

3.4 Methodological Difficulties

One of the first questions one might ask about Tablet 32 is “How many lizard omens are there?”. Providing an answer, however, is not easy and the process is riddled with intricacies. Nevertheless, attempting to do so can aid in explaining Tablet 32’s idiosyncrasies. The primary problem in reconstructing Tablet 32, and therefore also in determining how many lizard omens there were, is that a complete copy of Tablet 32 has yet to be found. All of the available manuscripts are fragmentary with varying degrees of completeness.

The cuneiform tablet with the most omens is VAT 10167, a single-column Middle-Assyrian manuscript from Assur, preserving, partially or in whole, 134 lizard omens, and yet it is also incomplete. Using VAT 10167’s omen count, 134, to determine how many lizard omens have been preserved from Tablet 32 is problematic. Least importantly, there is a gap of unknown size between where the obverse breaks off after the 72nd omen (Assur 72) and where it picks up again on the reverse (Assur 73’).

The most significant issue in using VAT 10167’s omen count is that it is a Middle-Assyrian tablet, and thus, predates the standard form of *šumma ālu* by around half a millennium. Comparing the text on VAT 10167 to the texts preserved on the Nineveh manuscripts, which date to the first half of the first millennium, shows significant differences between them. (see 3.2.1 for details on the manuscripts by geographic site and 3.4.1 below for details on recensions). Even where there are similarities in individual omens, the texts show marked differences in which omens are preserved and the sequence in which they are presented. Further, even the themes addressed by omen protases differ significantly. The Assur manuscript and the Nineveh manuscripts do not have the same base text(s). VAT 10167 simply does not accurately reflect the state of Tablet 32 as it was in its standard form, and as such, the Assur manuscript’s omen count is not a reliable measure.

A further problem in determining the omen count is that even if the manuscripts are contemporaneous to the standard form of *šumma ālu*, as the Nineveh manuscripts are, most, if not all, were excerpt texts. This means that, in antiquity, they were created by excerpting texts from a larger, more complete exemplar. Comparing the texts written on various excerpt texts can help to provide an understanding of what types of omens were included in Tablet 32 and in which sequence they may have been placed, but still make it difficult to know how many omens in total there may have been as sequences and omens can vary. Though this reasoning is not always clear to the modern-day reader, examining the structure of the omens preserved on the manuscripts shows that the order of the omens were anything but random.

The methods and the structure of omen sequences will be discussed in detail in Part IV, but as an introduction, the triad of omens found on Sm 710+ 9'-12' helps to elucidate some of the difficulties that can arise when working with excerpt texts and the difficulties in determining not only an exact count of the lizard omens, but also the sequence of omens in Tablet 32.

Sm 710+ 9' [If a lizard fa]lls [...] — that man will have a god and a lamassu protective spirit.
 [DIŠ EME.ŠID ... ŠUB]-ut LÚ BI DINGIR u ^dLAMMA TUK-^ršī^r
 [šumma šurāru ... imq]ut amēlu šū ila u lamassa irašši

Sm 710+ 10' [If a lizard fall]s [in front of a man] — the downfall of his legal adversary (will occur).
 [DIŠ EME.ŠID ana IGI NA ŠUB-u]t ŠUB-at EN INIM-šú
 [šumma šurāru ana pān amēli imqu]t maqāt bēl amātišu

Sm 710+ 11'-12'
 [If a lizard fal]ls onto? [a man] — a message will arrive [for] that [man] (and) a lamassu protective spirit will approach him or a common man will proudly prosper.
 [DIŠ EME.ŠID ana] ^rUGU[?] [NA ŠUB-u]t ma-qá-at INIM / [ana LÚ] ^rBI^r
^dLAMMA TE-^ršú^r lu MAŠ.EN.GAG mi-li GABA ina-ḫi-iš
 [šumma šurāru ana] muḫḫi^r? [amēli imqu]t maqāt amāti [ana amēli] šuāti
 lamassu iṭeḫḫēšu lū muškēnu mīli irti inaḫḫiš

On Sm 710+, the three omens are physically grouped together, one after the other. Not only do signs, which appears in all three omens (for example, the *-ut* of ŠUB-*ut* 'falls'), physically align from one line to the other, but each line's blank spaces also align with each other. This placement graphically emphasizes the cohesiveness of the unit.

The placement on three consecutive lines also dovetails the thematic links between the three omens. The omens initiate a sequence (Sm 710+ 9'-15') of protases in which a lizard falls (ŠUB-*ut*). Further, the first (Sm 710+ 9') and third (Sm 710+ 11'-12') omens bookend the triad with mentions of *lamassus* 'protective spirits'. One can also imagine that the condition of having a god and *lamassu* 'protective spirit' (Sm 710+ 9') would certainly be thematically connected to being successful in legal matters, resulting in the downfall of one's legal adversary (Sm 710+ 10'). Therefore although the second omen (Sm 710+ 10') may appear at first glance to be a random insertion, it is instead an exploration on the subject of having a god and *lamassu*. The triad also exhibits a typical tripartite structure of related clauses—a structure known from other genres of Mesopotamian literature: the first two omens are only one line long, and the third omen is longer and flows over onto a second line. Most importantly, the three omens exhibit a number of internal links, but two examples will suffice here: Firstly, the consonant pattern of the verb in all three protases, *imqut*, precipitates the consonant pattern of *maqāt* in the final two omens. The links are not just horizontal, that is between protasis and apodosis, but also vertical between the apodoses of individual omens. The 'downfall of his legal adversary' ŠUB-*at* EN INIM-šú in the second omen's (Sm 710+ 10') apodosis is connected to the message arriving *ma-qá-at* INIM in the third omen

(Sm 710+ 11'–12') since both use the word *maqāt*—written once with a logogram (ŠUB-*at*) in Sm 710+ 10' and once syllabically (*ma-qá-at*) in Sm 710+ 11'—and both use the sign INIM to read *amāt*(-), once as part of the technical term 'legal adversary' and once as the word 'message'. The mixed use of logograms and syllabic spellings helps to indicate that Sm 710+ is an excerpt text.⁶²

Taking these considerations into account, it appears to have been a deliberate decision on the part of the scribe to place the three omens together on Sm 710+. If we only had this excerpt text to help us reconstruct Tablet 32, we would be tempted to count three omens and place them in the sequence as they appear on Sm 710+. Examining the other manuscripts, however, reveals that the omen in line Sm 710+ 9' does not have a corresponding omen on any of the other known cuneiform tablets. One possibility would be to see this as an accident of preservation. Perhaps the omen has simply broken away from the other manuscripts. A counterargument is that the omen preserved on Sm 710+ 10' appears on two other manuscripts, K 3730+ 21 and K 12180+ *i* 7' (see Nineveh 22), while the omen preserved on Sm 710+ 11'–12' is only preserved on K 3730+ 19 (see Nineveh 20). Whereas the placement of the three omens on Sm 710+ reflects the graphic, thematic and semantic links between the omens and therefore creates a triad of omens, their placement on other clay tablets does not group them together, nor does it for that matter, even place them within the same sequence.

Circling back to our original question of how many lizard omens there were in Tablet 32, there is an argument for including all three omens on Sm 710+ in the count as they logically fit together and form a triad. At the same time, Sm 710+ is the only manuscript to preserve all three, and the only one to preserve the omens as a cohesive sequence. The question becomes does Sm 710+ more accurately reflect the state of *šumma ālu*'s Tablet 32 or is the text on Sm 710+ the result of spontaneous invention by the part of a scribe? Did our ancient scribe perhaps observe two omens with *maqāt* and INIM and decide they formed a pair and, to round out the unit, add in the omen on Sm 710+ 9' with a *lamassu* to tie it to the omen preserved on Sm 710+10'? While it is impossible to answer these questions as we do not have records of the thought process behind the creation of these texts, these three omens do indicate that excerpt texts have their own inner logic. Excerpt texts, though certainly pulling from other texts, are created as individual manuscripts in their own right.

These three omens exemplify not only some of the difficulties in counting omens, but also determining in what sequence the omens should be placed. The sequence is so different from one

⁶² I thank Nicla De Zorzi for her comments on this.

manuscript to the next, it is not possible to say what the “correct”, if such a term can even apply to a text such as *šumma ālu*, sequence of the omens is.

Though the extant copies of Tablet 32 available to us today may not be able to answer such deceptively simple questions such as how many lizard omens there were or in what order they were placed, they can provide us insight to more interesting aspects of the process of text creation in Mesopotamia. As was shown above, we can see that the creation of texts was an intentional process and not a random process of listing observations. There are a number of principles that scribes could and did use to organize the omens. The above-mentioned techniques such as thematic links, the intentional placement of signs and empty spaces on the clay tablet, the repetition of signs and words written in various forms, both syllabically or as logograms, and the repetition of consonant patterns, provide but a glimpse into the array of methods scribes used to create associations protases and apodoses, and, even more interestingly, between individual omens.

3.4.1 recensions

The most distinguishing feature of Tablet 32’s structure is its three recensions. See also section 3.2.1 manuscripts by geographic find site. There are similarities between the three in terms of themes the protases address. All three have omens about lizards falling onto a man or body parts such as hands and feet or onto a man’s bed, table or stool. Lizards are also seen or found dead in beer and water in all three recensions. Lizards make noise or hiss in both the Nineveh and Assur recensions. And all three recensions feature lizards reproduce in and around the home.

Despite their similarities, the recensions show topical preferences when it comes to protases. For example, though protases involving the color of animals are common in several chapters of *šumma ālu* (Hirvonen 2016), lizards are only described by their coloring in the Nineveh recension. For example:

Nineveh 43’ If there is a white lizard in a man’s house — dispersal of the house.
 DIŠ EME.ŠID BABBAR *ina* É NA GÁL-ši BIR-aḥ É

Lizards are perhaps one of the animal kingdom’s most famous examples of autotomy—the ability to break off an appendage—and regeneration. Yet, there is only one omen that refers to a lizard without a tail:

Nineveh 12 If a lizard without a tail [is s]een — the man’s wife will bear (so) many children that there won’t be any bread in his mouth.
 DIŠ EME.ŠID šá KUN NU TUK-ú I[GI]-ir DAM NA DUMU.MEŠ *ma-’a-du-ti*
 Û.TU-*ma* NINDA *ana* KA-šú NU GAR-*an*

The above omen is likely to have been one of the older omens as it has an Old Babylonian forerunner (see the omen commentary for details). Lizards with multiple tails,⁶³ however, appear in all three recensions. For example:

Nineveh 15 If a white lizard with two tails [...] ... — that house will become poor.
DIŠ EME.ŠID BABBAR šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-[šú ...] x É BI ÚKU-*in*

VAT 9906 v 8'-11' (Assur)

[If ditto (= a lizard) with] two tails is seen in a man's house, [its]? tail ... and from his? ... escapes? ... [...].

If he kills (it) and one takes (it) [...] — he will have a good sign ... [...].

If he kills (it), but no one takes (it) — he will have a bad sign ... [...].

[DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) šá] 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá *ina* É NA IGI.DU₈ KUN-[sa]? x x x ma *ina* i-x x šú x x [u]š-te-šī? x [...]

šum₄-ma GAZ-ma *il-te-qú* [(x)] GIZKIM SIG₅ IGI x [(x)]

šum₄-ma GAZ-ma NU *il-te-qú* GIZKIM ḪUL IGI x [(x)]

Sultantepe 64 If a lizard with two tails falls onto a man — that man will find his position.
DIŠ EME.ŠID šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá *ana* UGU NA ŠUB-*ut* NA BI KI.GUB-šú IGI

The vast majority of Tablet 32's omens feature a lizard as the subject of the protasis. The Assur recension, however, also has a section of omens (Assur 89'-95') in which a man, not a lizard, is the subject.

Assur 89' If a man, while walking in the street, sees a lizard giving birth — he will claim the property of an important person.
DIŠ NA *ina* SILA *ina* DU-šú EME.DIR Û.TU IGI.DU₈ NÍG.ŠU KALA.GA EN-*el*

3.4.2 Assur and Sultantepe Recensions⁶⁴

As mentioned above in the discussion on each recension's sources (section 3.4.1), the obverse of the VAT 10167 (Assur) and the entirety of STT 323 (Sultantepe) are very similar in terms of content and omen sequencing.

The following table shows an example of the similarities and differences between the two recensions. In the table and the explanation that follows, omens are distinguished by a color. Each color is used once in each recension and indicates two corresponding omens. While most of the omens of the same color are not exact duplicates of the omen in the other recension, the similarities are undeniable.

⁶³ Tail bi- or trifurcation is attested for lizards and can occur when a tail does not completely break off (Pelegrin and Leão 2016, 21).

⁶⁴ Sections of my MA thesis have been adapted and will appear in a slightly different form on the Bestiarium Mesopotamicum's website as an overview to Tablet 32 (Lundeen n.d.); see <https://tieromina.acdh-dev.oeaw.ac.at/omens/chapters/32/structure/>.

Assur recension**Assur 3**

[If a lizard] falls [onto a man] — confusion, distress.

[DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* UGU NA] ŠUB-ut SÙḪ
ni-zíq-tu₄

Assur 4

[If a lizard ...] falls [... of a man] — all his possessions will disappear.

[DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* ... NA] ŠUB-ut *mim-mu-šu*
ZÁḪ

Assur 5

[If a lizard] falls [in front of a man] — he will prevail over his legal adversary.

[DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* IGI NA] ŠUB-ut UGU EN
INIM-šu GUB-az

Assur 6

[If a lizard] falls [... of a man] — the achievement of an objective (will occur).

[DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* ... NA] ŠUB-ut KUR-ad
Á.ÁŠ

Assur 7

[If a lizard] falls [... of a man] — he will overcome his legal adversary.

[DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* ... NA] ŠUB-ut EN INIM-šu
KUR-ad

Assur 8

[If a lizard] falls [behind? a m]an — (some)one will file a lawsuit against him.

[DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* EGIR[?] N]A ŠUB-ut *a-na*
di-ni-šu i-ger-ru-šu

Assur 9

[If a lizard fal]ls [behind a man] and flops about repeatedly — he will experience evil.

[DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* EGIR NA] ŠUB-ut-*ma*
it-tap-pi-iš ḪUL IGI-mar

Assur 10

[If a lizard] falls [behind a man] and touches (him) — his fortress will experience a negative *twist* of fate.

[DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* EGIR NA] ŠUB-ut-*ma* TAG
KALAG.GA-su *pí-is-la-at ḪUL IGI-mar*

Sequence continues: Assur 11–16

Sultantepe recension**Sultantepe 2**

[If a lizard] falls [o]nto a man — confusion¹, distre[ss].

[DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana*] UGU NA ŠUB-ut SÙḪ!
ni-ziq-[tu₄]

Sultantepe 3

[If a li[zard] falls [on]to [a man's] shoulder(s) and [...]

[DIŠ] E[ME.ŠID *ana* U]GU *bu-di* [NA]
ŠUB-*ma* [...]

Sultantepe 4

[If a lizard f[al]ls in front of a man — [his] legal adversary will be conquered.

[DIŠ] EME.ŠID *ana* IGI NA Š[UB]-ut KUR-ad
EN INIM-[*šu*]

Sultantepe 5

[If a lizard f[al]ls in front of a man — he will prevail over his legal adversary.

[DIŠ] EME.ŠID *ana* IGI NA Š[UB]-ut UGU EN
INIM-šú GUB-*a*[z]

Sultantepe 6

[If a lizard falls [beh]ind a man and [touches] him — he will experie[nce] a negative *twist* of fate.

[DIŠ] EME.ŠID *ana* [EGI]R NA ŠUB-ut-*ma*
[TAG]-su *pí-is-lat ḪUL IGI-[mar]*

Sultantepe 7

[If a lizard falls [beh]ind a man and [fl]ops about repeatedly — he will experie[nce] evil.

[DIŠ] EME.ŠID *ana* [EGI]R NA ŠUB-ut-*ma*
[it]-*ta-pí-iš MUNUS.ḪUL IGI-[mar]*

Sequence continues: Sultantepe 8–13

Firstly the two sequences are offset by at least one omen. This is not unusual when comparing the two recensions. The Assur sequence begins on **Assur 3** and the Sultantepe sequence on **Sultantepe 2**. The preceding omens are simply too fragmentary to comment on.

Secondly, while corresponding omens are generally in similar places within the two omen sequences, occasionally individual omens will be transposed within their respective recensions. For example, **Assur 9**, in which a lizard falls behind a man and flops about, precedes **Assur 10**, in which the lizard also falls behind a man, but touches him instead of flopping. See also the discussion about the similar Nineveh 30' in section 4.2.4. In the Sultantepe recension, however, the lizard first touches the man it falls behind, **Sultantepe 6**, and then falls behind a man and flops about repeatedly, **Sultantepe 7**. Though the above sequences have multiple omens transposed, not all sequences do. For example, the omens in Assur 11–16 follow the same sequence, without any transposition, as the omens in Sultantepe 8–13.

Another difference between omens in the two recensions can be orthographic. Orthographic differences are common around the use of phonetic complements and the use of NA versus LÚ for 'man'. The apodoses might also differ in whether they begin by stating NA/LÚ BI 'that man' or É BI 'that house' or not. Sometimes omens only differ slightly in terms of orthography such as *ni-zíq-tu₄* and *ni-ziq-tu₄* in **Assur 3** and **Sultantepe 2**, respectively. Other times the differences are greater, but the omens can still be said to be similar, such as **Assur 7** and **Sultantepe 4**. The apodoses of the two omens use the same signs, but the order is reversed. Though the change results in slightly different translations, the essential meaning of overcoming a legal adversary remains the same in both apodoses.

Not every omen on the obverse of VAT 10167 or on the Sultantepe tablet has a corresponding omen in the other recension. When comparing the two sequences above, it appears as if **Assur 6** and **Assur 8** are interpolations as they do not have corresponding omens in the Sultantepe recension. Within the Assur recension's sequence, however, both omens are well placed. The KUR-*ad* in **Assur 6**'s apodosis is picked up in the apodosis of **Assur 7**, and the reference of a legal adversary in **Assur 7**'s apodosis obviously triggers the topic of lawsuits in **Assur 8**. It is not, however, just the Assur recension that preserves additional omens. Further down in the Sultantepe sequence, starting with Sultantepe 60, there is a sequence of omens about lizards with two tails. None of these omens correspond to any omen in the Assur sequence.⁶⁵ A few of them, however, do overlap with omens in the Nineveh recension. Finally, there are omens such as **Assur 4** and **Sultantepe 3**. They are within similar sequences in their respective recensions and likely correspond to each other, but their fragmentary state and the signs they do preserve make reconciling them difficult.

⁶⁵ VAT 9906 v 13' and VAT 9906 v 14' are two omens featuring lizards with multiple tails. Neither show similarities to other multi-tailed lizard omens in the Sultantepe recension however.

Part IV – Analysis

*Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake;
Eye of newt, and toe of frog,
Wool of bat, and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork, and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg, and owlet's wing,—
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.
from Shakespeare's Macbeth (Act IV, Scene 1)⁶⁶*

4.1 Syntactic Structure

Despite the vast variety of subject matter covered by Mesopotamian divinatory texts, the core atom of these texts, the omen, remains relatively stable from one text to the next in terms of structure and grammatical features. An omen is a casuistic (If ..., then ...) statement that links an ominous phenomenon—in *šumma ālu's* Tablet 32, this is the behavior and physical characteristics of lizards—with one or more portended outcomes (Rochberg 2010, 19). The *if*-clause is the protasis; the *then*-clause, the apodosis. See section 2.1.1 for a discussion on the terms 'protasis' and 'apodosis'.

Syntactically, omens are very static and show little variation in how conditional statements are formed. Other genres of Akkadian texts, such as letters or legal codes, display a higher degree of syntactic variation in forming conditional statements. For an overview, see Cohen's (2012) book on the topic. Omens on the other hand, tend to only use *šumma*-conditional statements. The protasis is introduced by the Akkadian particle *šumma* 'if', which is usually written using one of several possible logograms⁶⁷ such as DIŠ or BE (E. Cohen 2010, 710; 2012, 154).

In *šumma ālu* as a whole, and in Tablet 32 specifically, the protasis usually begins with the sign DIŠ. There are rarer omens where *šumma* is spelled syllabically. Omens with syllabic spellings are discussed under Sultantepe 65 in section 4.1.1. As DIŠ is a simple downward-facing vertical wedge and each subsequent omen is usually started on a new line, the use of DIŠ as an omen's first sign can create a similar effect to that of a left-handed margin line. Longer omens might flow onto an indented second line and occasionally over a third or further line(s).

⁶⁶ Lizards and other small reptiles have often been used as ingredients in magical and medicinal recipes. See the discussion and references in section 2.3.

⁶⁷ The various logograms appear to be "linguistically non-pertinent" (E. Cohen 2010, 711). Although the logograms may be interchangeable in terms of meaning, there are patterns of use as regards context or historical time periods. See Cohen (2010) for further details and literature on the topic. Note, however, that not everyone agrees that the various logograms should always be read as *šumma*. See for example, CAD (Š.3: 276 s.v. *šumma*). Rinderer (2021, 15–16) discusses and provides a counterargument in favor of the reading *šumma*.

The protasis's subject—usually a lizard in Tablet 32—immediately follows *šumma*. According to the usual Akkadian syntax, verbs are placed at the end of a clause. The protasis's verb is most commonly in the preterite⁶⁸ but is translated into the present tense due to English syntax. As Akkadian does not use any written punctuation,⁶⁹ the verb's placement at the end of the clause is an indication of where the protasis ends and the apodosis begins.

An apodosis states the associated outcome of the protasis's ominous event(s). Syntactically apodoses begin with either the clause's subject or they can be constructed using topicalization (often a man or house(hold) mentioned in the protasis).

Nineveh 9 If a lizard with two tails falls onto a man — [that] m[an: wherever] he goes, he will experience good fortune.
DIŠ EME.ŠID ša 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá ana UGU NA ŠUB-ut N[A BI KI] DU-ku SIG₅
IGI

The apodosis's verb is usually in the present-future and is translated as the future tense in English. Some apodoses however are purely nominal and can consist entirely of one (or more) noun(s) or nominal phrases in *status constructus*.

Assur 14 [If a lizard] jumps from a wall onto a man — that man will appropriate something not his own.
[DIŠ EME.DIR] TA É.GAR₈ ana UGU NA GU₄.UD-iṭ NA BI mīm-ma la-a
šu-a-<ti> ŠU-su KUR-ad
[šumma šurāru] ištu igāri ana muḥḥi amēli išḥiṭ amēlu šū mimma lā
šuā<ti> qāssu ikaššad

Assur 3 [If a lizard] falls [onto a man] — confusion, distress.
[DIŠ EME.DIR] a-na UGU NA] ŠUB-ut SÛḪ ni-zíq-tu₄
[šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi amēli] imqut tēšû niziqtu

Assur 57 If a lizard gives birth under the *sūtu*-measurement vessel of a man's house — abandonment of the house.
DIŠ EME.DIR KI.TA-nu sa-at É NA Û.TU ŠUB É
šumma šurāru šaplānu sāt bīt amēli ūlid nadê bīti

The above examples show simple apodoses providing one associated outcome for a given protasis. There are however some omens with more complex apodoses providing multiple associated outcomes. Although it is not always clear, sometimes the context will allow us to view multiple apodoses as incremental increases of each or to interpret them as alternate outcomes.

Assur 15 [If a lizard] falls onto a man's right hand — that man will acquire profit; he will consume his profit.
[DIŠ EME.DIR] a-na UGU ŠU NA ZAG ŠUB-ut NA BI Á.TUK TUK-ši Á.TUK-šú
GU₇

⁶⁸ Though the preterite form is by far the most common for the protasis's verb, occasionally other forms such as the stative are also used. See the section 4.1.1 under 'other protases' for examples.

⁶⁹ One could argue that the *Glossenkeil* is a form of punctuation. These marks, which can vary in form, were written on Tablet 32's manuscript as two small, closely-spaced wedge heads, similar to a colon in English. The *Glossenkeil* has several functions, but two of its most common are to introduce glosses on how to read signs or to introduce alternative readings. It is nevertheless never used to demarcate the change from protasis to apodosis.

Sultantepe 62 [If] there is [a liz]ard that has two tails, has a snake's ..., the left (tail) is long (and) the right (tail) is short — divine wrath will repeatedly befall the man's house; there will be trouble¹ [for] a man's heir, and he will reveal² the wealth of his house.
 [DIŠ EME.ŠI]D šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá x x gi MUŠ GÁL-ši šá GÙB GÍD.DA šá ZAG LÚGUD.DA DI[NGIR.Š]À.DIB.BA ana É NA ŠUB.MEŠ [ana] DUMU.NITA NA ud¹-du-ú GÁL-ma NÍG.TUK É.BI ú²-kal-lam

Even more rare are apodoses in which instructions are given such as the following omen:

Sultantepe 60 [If a lizard wi]th two tails is repeatedly seen in a man's house — favorable: may he who sees (it), take its tail (and) may he place it [on the threshing floor]r of his house; on the day¹ when [it]s² t[ail]² has been placed in that house, a šedu and lamassu protective spirit will not approach the man's house.
 [DIŠ EME.ŠID š]á 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá ina É NA IGI.IGI šá-li-mu IGI KUN-sa TI-qi [ina SU]₇ É-šú GAR U₄¹ K[UN²-s]a² ina É šu-a-tu₄ GAR-tu₄ ^dALAD u ^dLAMMA ina É NA NU TE

Syntactically, the omens in Tablet 32 follow the usual structure for Akkadian omens. Nevertheless, as a group, there are some interesting specifics to the omens of Tablet 32 that will be discussed below.

4.1.1 protases of lizard omens

Thematically Tablet 32's protases can be broadly grouped into two categories; though, a large number of protases defy easy categorization. The first type emphasizes a lizard's behavior, while in the second category, a lizard's characteristics are more prominent. Then there are some omens which do not fall neatly into either category. They tend to be more complex protases.

behavior protases

The behaviors of lizards as described by the protases, as with many of the small animals in *šumma ālu*,⁷⁰ are relatively limited, especially when compared to larger animals such as livestock or animals with close relationships to humans, such as dogs.⁷¹ The actions are most commonly expressed using a third-person G-stem preterite simple verb of motion. Lizards commonly fall *imqut*, climb *īli*, escape *ūši*, give birth *ūlid*, turn back *ītur*, and so forth.

For the most part, the protases describe behaviors which a lizard could plausibly do, even if at times, they are unlikely (Assur 95' Variant A: [I]f a man, ditto (= while walking in the street), frightens seven lizards that are locke[d] in an embrace and are mating, (but) they do not separate). Lizards are also shown to crawl among household items (Assur 23: If a lizard crawls underneath a man's stool and lies down) or to fall onto them (Assur 25: If a lizard falls onto a man's table).

⁷⁰ I thank Nicla De Zorzi for this insight from our many discussions on animal omens.

⁷¹ The arguments here are expounded upon in De Zorzi's (2022b) chapter on dog and pig omens, which analyzes how those omens do not so much reflect the animal world as provide insight in to Ancient Mesopotamian mentalities. For other examples of small animal omens, see for example, the snake omens in Rinderer's (2021) Master's thesis. Harris's (2022) Master's thesis on the livestock omens in *šumma ālu*.

Lizards also often fall on or near a man (Nineveh 31': If a lizard falls behind a man (and) flops about repeatedly).

Lizards also vocalize⁷² in various protases. The verbs used to describe the action vary GÙ.DÉ.DÉ, GÙ-šú ŠUB.ŠUB-*di*, and *i-ḥa-az-zu*. In a few protases, lizards either eat or carry a snake (Nineveh 50'–52'). Besides other lizards, snakes are the only other non-human animal that lizards interact with in the protases of Tablet 32.

Although lizards do jump (Assur 14) and do circle around a man (Assur 94'), typical behaviors such as scurrying or escaping between crevices are missing. This might reflect a cultural viewpoint that typical animal behaviors are not expected to be divine messages. "Omens by definition are unusual" (Guinan 1996, 5).

Behavioral protases also often involve a spatial element invariably placing the lizard's actions within the human spatial realm. For example, actions often occur in relation to a man's body or in relation to possessions in a man's home, and almost always indicate the place where an action occurs.

Nineveh 20 If a lizard falls onto a man — a message will arrive for that man (and) a lamassu protective spirit will approach him or a common man will proudly prosper.
DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* UGU NA ŠUB-*ut ma-qá-at* INIM *ana* LÚ BI ^dLAMMA TE-šú
lu MAŠ.EN.GAG *mi-li* GABA *ina-ḥi-iš*

Nineveh 36' Variant B (K 3730+)
If a lizard falls onto a man's sleeping place (or on a man's) bed — losses; that man will be bedridden.
DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina* KI.NÁ ^{giš}NÁ NA ŠUB-*ut* I.BÍ.ZA LÚ BI ^{giš}NÁ DAB-*su*

Assur 15 [If a lizard] falls onto a man's right hand — that man will acquire profit; he will consume his profit.
[DIŠ EME.DIR] *a-na* UGU ŠU NA ZAG ŠUB-*ut* NA BI Á.TUK TUK-*ši* Á.TUK-šú
GU₇

Sultantepe 68 If a lizard takes something in a man's house — unfavorable: [that] om[en portends evil].
DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina* É NA *mim-ma* TI-*qí qi-bi* NU SILIM.MA GIZ[KIM *ši-i*
ḥa-ṭa-at]

Spatially, the action is notably constrained by the space of the observer: a human being, usually an unnamed man. Peek (1991, 2) notes in his introduction that the spatial and temporal placement of divination sessions "demonstrate the foundations of a people's world view." Similarly the setting of lizard omens, within the realm of the human world, reflects the

⁷² See the commentary at Nineveh 47' for a discussion on lizards making noise. Many lizard species do not vocalize. Notably geckos, which are the subject of Tablet 33 and are a type of lizard in modern taxonomies, do vocalize. Judith Pfitzner is re-editing Tablet 33 for publication as part of the Bestiarium Mesopotamicum project.

anthropocentric world view of the diviners, despite the omens purportedly being about non-human animals, namely, lizards.

One group of protases which always include a spatial element are when a lizard reproduces.⁷³ These protases are simple and extremely formulaic: the protases are always ‘If a lizard gives birth in PLACE’. They also almost always result in a negative outcome.

Assur 59 If a lizard gives birth in a woman’s kettle — that woman will have twins; she will go about unhappily.
 DIŠ EME.DIR *ina* ŠEN MUNUS Û.TU MUNUS BI MAŠ.TAB.BA TUK-ši *ina*
 ŠÀ.ḪUL DU.DU-*ak*
šumma šurāru ina ruqqi sinništi ūlid sinništu šī māšī irašši ina lumun libbi ittanallak

The above omen is a good example of how space is usually indicated syntactically, with a prepositional phrase starting with *ina* or *ana* placed immediately before the clause-ending verb.

Not only does considering the spatial aspects of the protases reveal a human-centric world view, but they also reveal an emphasis on what Rochberg (2010, 22) calls schematic relationships.⁷⁴ Omen protases, especially as regards spatial concerns, often appear pairs of binary opposites or in set lists of body parts. This phenomenon is not limited to omen series, but many other lists from Mesopotamia, and appears to be one of the many ways in which knowledge was organized.⁷⁵ Rochberg notes this emphasis on schematic relationships not only shows that omen lists are not just lists of observable ominous phenomena, but reflects the “value placed by the scribes on conception as well as perception”.

Sultantepe 12 If a liza[rd fa]lls onto a man’s right hand — [he will acquire ri]ches; [he will consume his riches].
 DIŠ EME.[ŠID] *ana* UGU ŠU NA ZAG [ŠUB]-*ut* [NÍ]G.TUK [TUK-ši
 NÍG.TUK-šú GU₇]

Sultantepe 13 If a liz[ard fa]lls onto a man’s left hand — [he will build] a house with his daughters’ money.
 DIŠ EME.[ŠID] *ana* UGU ŠU NA GÙB [ŠU]B-*ut* *ina* KÙ.BABBAR
 DUMU.MUNUS.MEŠ-šú É [DÛ-*uš*]

Note that the above two omens are followed by two omens in which a lizard falls on a man’s right and left foot, respectively, and finally a third omen in which the lizard climbs onto man’s foot. This sequence is discussed in section 4.2.1 on opposing binary pairs.

⁷³ Most lizard species reproduce by means of laying eggs. Nevertheless, the Akkadian verb describing this action (*w*)*alādu* is usually translated as ‘to give birth’. See the commentary at Nineveh 53’ for a discussion on why this translation has been used.

⁷⁴ Rochberg (2010, 22) also includes lists of colors as a schematic relationship. Colors are discussed in this thesis under ‘characteristic protases’ in section 4.1.1.

⁷⁵ See for example, Hilgert (2009, 296) for antonymy in the list Diri.

Spatial duality is not only indicated with directional words such as left and right, but also in the verb choices. An omen or a sequence of omens with the verb *imqut* ‘falls’, which implies a downward vertical direction, can be followed by omen(s) whose protasis includes the verb *ili* ‘climbs’, or more literally ‘goes up’.

- Assur 21** [If a liz]ard falls onto a man’s stool — an eclipse during the [day] watch (will occur).
[DIŠ EM]E.DIR *a-na* UGU ^{giš}GU.ZA NA ŠUB-*ut* KA×MI EN.NU.UN [*u₄-me*]
- Assur 22** [If] a lizard climbs onto a man’s stool — he will be chronically i[ll].
[DIŠ] EME.DIR *a-na* UGU ^{giš}GU.ZA NA E₁₁ *is-sa-la-[a]*

characteristic protases

The second main grouping of protases in Tablet 32 are those in which characteristics of lizards are described. In general, animals with a higher utilitarian value for the Mesopotamians have a higher level of differentiation in their classification. Even early lexical lists differentiate important animals such as goats and sheep by their sex or age, but only provide one term encompassing all varieties of a certain wild animal (Selz 2019, 37–38). Similarly the descriptors of lizards are limited in Tablet 32 and center on physical characteristics that can be discerned visually.⁷⁶ They are limited to a few themes: (1) a lizard’s coloring, (2) number of body parts, especially its tail, (3) state of being, and the animal’s (4) entanglement with other lizards and/or the entanglement of its multiple body parts. Though certainly not all, many of the characteristics are expressed in Akkadian as adjectives placed immediately after the noun for ‘lizard’. Instead of verbs of motion, as in the behavior protases, the verbs in these characteristic protases are often passive. Verbs such as *bašû* ‘there is; to exist’ or *innamir* ‘is seen’, the N-stem preterite of *amāru*, are more common. Just as in the protases which emphasize a lizard’s actions, protases focusing on a description of a lizard often have a spatial element placing the observed lizard within the human space. Similar to the behavior protases, this is expressed with a prepositional phrase.

- Nineveh 5** [If] a white [li]zard with two tails is seen in a man’s house — that house [...]
[DIŠ E]ME.ŠID BABBAR šá 2 KUN^{II}-šá *ina* É NA IGI É BI [...]
[šumma š]urāru pešû ša 2 zibbātuša *ina* bīt amēli *innamir* bītu šū [...]
- Assur 54** If a dead lizard is seen in a man’s house — that house will diminish.
DIŠ EME.DIR *mi-it-tu₄* *ina* É NA IGI É BI LAL
šumma šurīrittu mittu *ina* bīt amēli *innamir* bītu šū *imaṭṭi*

⁷⁶ The primacy of visual aspects may not be surprising given that vision is the primary human sense among both modern and Aristotelian hierarchies of senses (San Roque et al. 2015, 52). Note, however, that the ranking of senses has a cultural component, as observed by Majid et al. (2018). Therefore, it is unclear whether the ancient Mesopotamians would have concurred with the sentiment that visual aspects were the most important among sensory inputs.

1) color

Relatively few omens in Tablet 32 specify a lizard’s coloring, and all that do appear in the Nineveh recension. Just as in other genres of Mesopotamian texts, color in divinatory texts is a schematic element (see section 4.2.2) that influences the sequence of omens and is an element could influence whether a protasis’s associated apodosis was negative or positive (Hirvonen 2014, 35). The common schematic sequence for colors in *šumma ālu* is as follows: *pešû* ‘white’, *šalāmu* ‘black’, *sāmu* ‘red/brown’, *barāmu* ‘variegated’, *arāqu* ‘yellow/green’.⁷⁷ While omens with *pešû* and *šalāmu* might exchange places with one another in a color sequence, colors such as *sāmu* and *arāqu* rarely seem to precede the combination *pešû* and *šalāmu* (Hirvonen 2014, 82; Thavapalan 2019, 27). Already in texts from the Old Babylonian period, colors have been employed as a schematic element to organize omens (Winitzer 2017, 349–69). Colors also had a variety of associations for Mesopotamians, which can influence a protasis’s associated apodosis. For example, *pešû* ‘white’ is associated with warmth (positive), but can also refer to emptiness and therefore barren land (negative). Perhaps as a contrast to *pešû*’s barrenness, *šalmu* ‘black’ can refer to fertility (positive)⁷⁸ as well as death (negative) (Thavapalan 2019, 140, see also 37 table 2.4).

The sequence Nineveh 43’–45’ follows the expected sequence of colors.

- Nineveh 43’** If there is a white lizard in a man’s house — dispersal of the house.
DIŠ EME.ŠID BABBAR *ina* É NA GÁL-š*i* BIR-ah É
- Nineveh 44’** If there is a black lizard in a man’s house — that house will have a god.
DIŠ EME.ŠID GE₆ *ina* É NA GÁL-š*i* É BI DINGIR TUK-š*i*
- Nineveh 45’** If [there i]s a red lizard in a m[an’s] house — that house will have riches.
DIŠ EME.ŠID SA₅ *ina* É N[A GÁL]-š*i* É BI NÍG.TUK¹-š*i*

The sequence however appears incomplete as there are not any *burrumu* ‘variegated’ lizards. Interestingly, there are two separate omens featuring variegated lizards. There is a short sequences of omens (Nineveh 13–15) with two omens featuring variegated lizards followed by a single omen with a *pešû* ‘white’ lizard. White lizards also appear in K 12180+ *i* 9’ and Nineveh 5 and 43’.

⁷⁷ Thavapalan (2019), in her book on Mesopotamian color, effectively articulates the difficulties in translating endemic color descriptors into English color terminology. The Akkadian color lexicon incorporates not only hue, but also brightness and saturation. The English color lexicon, on the other hand, focuses primarily on hue, leading to a lack of direct correspondences between the two language’s color terminology (Thavapalan 2019, 38; 2018, 5). Thus Akkadian colors such as *pešû* and *šalmu* encompass ‘white’ and ‘black’, but also ‘light’ and ‘dark’, respectively. Following Thavapalan’s (2018, 2 note 2) approach, forward slashes in this thesis indicate a range of colors, including any shade or combination of shades falling within the given hues. For example, yellow/green could be, among other possibilities, yellow or green or yellow-green.

⁷⁸ See also the commentary at Nineveh 44’ for a discussion on the homophones *šalmu* ‘black’ and *šalmu* ‘statue’, and therefore a possible association between the color black and the divine.

- Nineveh 13** If a variegated lizard f[alls] onto a man [...] — he will be happy.
DIŠ EME.ŠID GÛN.A *ana* UGU NA Š[UB-ut ...] ŠĀ.BI DÛG.GA
- Nineveh 14** If a variegated lizard falls onto a man [...] — [that? man? will cons]ume [a share?]; that house will become wealthy.
DIŠ EME.ŠID GÛN.A *ana* UGU NA ŠUB-ut [...] NA? BI? ḪA?.LA? G]U₇ É BI
i-šár-rù
- Nineveh 15** If a white lizard with two tails [...] ... — that house will become poor.
DIŠ EME.ŠID BABBAR šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-[šú ...] x É BI ÚKU-*in*

Though it is conspicuous that these omens do not follow the usual schematic sequence for colors, it is unclear why that might be. The protases mentioning color are so few in Tablet 32 that it is difficult to make generalities to explain the aberration. The verbs in the respective sequences may have influenced the categorization of the two groups. The protases in Nineveh 43'–45' (expected sequence) all end with the verb *ittabši*, which is a common verb for protases describing the characteristics of lizards. On the other hand, the protases in Nineveh 13–14 (and likely 15) all have the verb *imqut*, which is a verb more common among the behavior protases. These last protases are a combination of behavior and characteristic protases.

2) number of body parts

The lizard's tail appears to have captured the attention of Mesopotamian scribes. This is perhaps not surprising, given that the tails of numerous lizard species are more conspicuous than their bodies in terms of size, color, or shape (Vitt and Caldwell 2014, 339). Additionally, many lizard species can autotomize their tails, enabling them to escape from predators by dropping their tails (Vitt and Caldwell 2014, 339). Only one protasis mentions a lizard without a tail:

- Nineveh 12** If a lizard without a tail [is s]een — the man's wife will bear (so) many children that there won't be any bread in his mouth.
DIŠ EME.ŠID šá KUN NU TUK-ú I[GI]-*ir* DAM NA DUMU.MEŠ *ma-'a-du-ti*
Û.TU-*ma* NINDA *ana* KA-šú NU GAR-*an*

Two-tailed lizards, as in Sultantepe 67 below, are more common, and they appear in protases from all three recensions.

- Sultantepe 67** If a lizard with two tails is seen in a man's house — [there will be] a negative message in the m[an's] house.
DIŠ EME.ŠID šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá *ina* É NA IGI INIM NU DÛG *ina* É N[A GÁL]

Multi-tailed lizards are a known phenomenon. After autotomizing their tails, some lizard species are able to regenerate the missing tail. Occasionally the process of regeneration goes awry, or if a tail does not fully break off, a new tail can still regrow causing bifurcation or even trifurcation of the tail (Pelegrin and Leão 2016, 21).⁷⁹ Although multiheaded animals may attract more attention,

⁷⁹ Pelegrin and Leão (2016) discuss the case of a lizard with six tails.

multi-tailed lizards continue to fascinate and make the occasional appearance in modern newspaper and magazine articles.⁸⁰

Similar to other protases describing lizard characteristics, some of the protases that mention multiple body parts employ passive verbs such as *innamir* ‘is seen’ (Nineveh 5; VAT 9906 v 13’), while in some protases, a two-tailed lizard *imqut* ‘falls’ (Nineveh 9, Sultantepe 64). There are also sequences of omens with protases that feature two-tailed lizards. The first omen introduces the topic of a two-tailed lizard, while the subsequent omen will indicate whether the left or right tail is longer than the other.

Sultantepe 60 [If a lizard with two tails is repeatedly seen in a man’s house — favorable: may he who sees (it), take its tail (and) may he place it [on the threshing floor]r of his house; on the day¹ when [it]s² t[ail]² has been placed in that house, a šedu and lamassu protective spirit will not approach the man’s house.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID š]á 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá ina É NA IGI.IGI šá-li-mu IGI KUN-sa TI-qi
[ina SU]₇ É-šú GAR U₄ K[UN²-s]a² ina É šu-a-tu₄ GAR-tu₄ ^dALAD u ^dLAMMA
ina É NA NU TE

Sultantepe 61 [If] in a man’s house [a lizard]d with two tails is seen; its right t[ail] is long — (formerly) angered gods will return to the man’s house.

[DIŠ EME.ŠI]D šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá K[UN]-sà šá ZAG GÍD.DA ina É NA IGI
DINGIR.MEŠ zi-nu-tu₄ ana É NA GUR.MEŠ-ni

One protasis, Nineveh 5, mentions the two-tailed lizard being white. The Assur recension also has a sequence about two-headed lizards.⁸¹

Assur 74’ [If a lizard with two] heads falls onto a man [...]
[DIŠ EME.DIR šá 2] SAG.DU.MEŠ-šú ana UGU NA ŠUB-ut [...]

Assur 75’ [If a lizard whose] two heads are entwined ... [...] onto a man [...]
[DIŠ EME.DIR šá] 2 SAG.DU.MEŠ-šú kit-pu-lu-ma ana UGU NA x [...]

Assur 76’ [If a lizard with] two heads climbs up from the ground onto the top of a man [...]
[DIŠ EME.DIR š]á 2 SAG.DU.MEŠ-šú TA KI ana UGU NA E₁₁ [...]

Assur 77’ [If a lizard] whose two heads are entwined falls onto the top of a man ...
[...]
[DIŠ EME.DIR] šá 2 SAG.DU.MEŠ-šú kit-pu-lu-ma ana UGU NA ŠUB-ut x [...]

3) a lizard’s state of being

A lizard’s state of being is a characteristic that appears in protases from all three recensions. Some protases mention if lizards are numerous (Assur 53), some mention if a lizard is dead (Assur 54), and still others mention if a lizard is damaged in some way (Nineveh 46’, Assur 55, Assur 64, Sultantepe 59). Lizards are also seen in locations, such as beer or water, which would imply that the lizard is dead. These omens seem to be related to the sequences in which

⁸⁰ For example, Owen’s (2015) article in *National Geographic* about a three-tailed lizard.

⁸¹ *Šumma ālu* Tablet 23 (snakes) has a protasis with a seven-headed snake (Rinderer 2021, 29, 222 both omen §23.88).

lizards are found in various foods and food storage vessels. See the discussion in section 4.2.3, and see the commentary at Nineveh 49' for a complete list of omens with these protases.

Nineveh 49' If a lizard is seen in either water or beer — an uprising against that house will arise.
DIŠ EME.ŠID *lu ina A lu ina* KAŠ IGI *ana É* BI ZI.BI ZI-šú

Hysteron proteron also plays a role in the sequencing of omens with dead lizards in the protasis. Dead lizards precede sequences of omens in which a lizard reproduces. In the Nineveh recension, implied death (Nineveh 49', above) is placed before the sequence of protases about birth (Nineveh 53'–57'). There is a short interpolation in which a lizard interacts with a dead snake in three protases (Nineveh 50'–52'). The Assur recension places the omen with a dead lizard (Assur 56: If a lizard dies either in water or in beer and is (thereby) seen) immediately before the sequence of omens (Assur 57–62) with lizards reproducing in the protases. Similarly, Sultantepe 70–72 and 74–76 have protases about lizards reproducing. The sequence is preceded by Sultantepe 69 in which a *crushed* (*nu-up-pu-ul-tu₄*) lizard appears in the protasis.

4) *tišbutā* entanglement

Although most verbs in the protases are G- or N-stem preterite forms, there are a group of protases which include verbs in the stative. The protases often involve multiple lizards and are often combined with an action in the G-stem preterite. For example, in Nineveh 41', the lizards are described as being entangled using the Gt-stem plural stative of *šabātu* 'to seize', and they fall *imqutā* onto a man.

Similarly in Sultantepe 66, lizards plaited together are described using the G-stem plural stative of the verb *patālu* 'to twist', but they also fall *imqutūni* from a date palm tree.

other protases

Behavior and characteristic protases are the largest and most obvious categories of Tablet 32's protases. Numerous omens remain, however, whose protases do not easily fit into one of the above two categories. These smaller groupings are briefly described here.

When a lizard's characteristics are expressed using a stative verb, the protases often combine elements of both behavior and characteristic protases.

Assur 79' [If] lizards, being entwined, fall from the roof beams ... [...]
[DIŠ] EME.DIR *kit-pu-lu-su-nu* TA 𒄩UR.MEŠ ŠUB.MEŠ-*ni* x [...]

In the Assur recension, there are nine omens (Assur 87'–95') in which a man, written NA, not a lizard, is the subject of the protasis. Nevertheless, all of the protases do involve a lizard in some way. Two example omens follow:

- Assur 88'** If a man unwittingly steps on a lizard (but) does not kill (it) — [that] ma[n] will acquire profit.
 DIŠ NA *ina* NU ZU EME.DIR KI.UŠ NU ÚŠ N[A BI] Á.TUK TUK-ši
- Assur 90'** If a man, while walking in the street, sees ditto (= a lizard) vomit — that man will acquire riches.
 DIŠ NA *ina* SILA *ina* DU-šú MIN (EME.DIR) *i-'a-ru-ma* IGI.DU₈ NA BI NÍG.TUK TUK-ši

The omens Assur 89'–95' form a sub-group within this sequence: the man, while walking in the street (*ina* SILA *ina* DU-šú), observes one or more lizards. These protases are particularly conspicuous not only for the change in subject, but for their overall complexity. Their syntax is vaguely anacoluthic and involve actions not only on the part of the man, but also the lizard(s) he observes. The actions mentioned in these protases also tend towards the unique and are often never present in other, less complex, protases. Lizards vomit *arû* (Assur 90'), swallow other lizards *la'ātu* (Assur 91'), mate *rakābu* (Assur 92'), lock in an embrace *edēru* (Assur 95'), and perform a long series of behaviors (Assur 93' and 94'). The man, besides walking in the street, seizes *šabātu* (Assur 92') or frightens *galātu* (Assur 95') lizards, among other actions. Assur 94' is discussed in detail in section 4.2.6.

Sultantepe 65 is a special example of a protasis where the lizard is not the subject. The omen is especially complex and is comprised of multiple protases. While the first protasis is fairly standard, the apodoses provides instructions. The final two protases and corresponding apodoses are based on the results of the instructions in the first apodoses. These final two protases and apodoses do not mention any lizards.

- Sultantepe 65** If a lizard with two tails is seen in a man's house — you will cut off (one of) its [t]ails [and] will attach (it) to a nursing ewe:
 If that [ew]e rejects her lamb — that omen portends evil.
 If that ewe loves her lamb — [th]at [om]en portends goodness.

The protases in Sultantepe 65 are also noteworthy for their syllabic spelling of *šumma*, instead of the usual DIŠ. Syllabic spellings of *šumma* occur in groups of particularly closely related omens. For example, the protases from Nineveh 2–4 read as follow:

- Nineveh 2** If in a [man's] house a lizard with two tails [is seen] and the right one is long — a (formerly) angry [g]od [will retur]n to the man.
 DIŠ EME.ŠID šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá u šá ZAG GÍD.DA *ina* É [NA IGI DIN]GIR ŠÀ.DIB.BA *ana* LÚ [GUR-r]a
- Nineveh 3** [I]f in a [man's?] house a lizard [wi]th two tails [is seen? and?] the right [o]ne is short, but the left one is long — that man [...] in g[oo]d? [...].
 [šú]m-ma šu-ri-ri-it-tu₄ šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá *ina* É [NA? IGI? ú? š]á ZAG LÚGUD.DA-ma šá GÙB GÍD.DA NA BI *ina* S[IG₅?-ti [...]
- Nineveh 4** [I]f in a man's house a lizard with two [ta]ils is repeatedly seen — a flood? [will come]?.
 [š]um-ma šu-ri-ri-it-tu₄ šá 2 [KU]N.MEŠ-šá *ina* É NA *it-ta-an-mar* A.KAL? [DU]?

Nineveh 2 introduces the ominous sign of a two-tailed lizard being seen in a man's house. Though fragmentary, it is clear Nineveh 2's protasis mentions the right tail as being long. Nineveh 3 also involves a two-tailed lizard, but offers an interpretation of an ominous sign that reverses which tail is long and which is short. Finally, Nineveh 4 continues the theme of two-tailed lizards, but offers a third option where which tail is long is inconsequential; it the repeated viewing of the two-tailed lizard which is important. As written, the omens belong to a single group of closely related omens. Of particular note with these omens is also the syllabic spelling of the word lizard *ṣu-ri-ri-it-tu₄* in the last two omens. Lizard orthography is discussed in section 3.3.1. Unfortunately there are not enough of these omens to know whether this is a common occurrence in omens where *šumma* is spelled syllabically or not.

Alternatively, *šumma* can also be written syllabically as *šum₄-ma*. The prime example of this is Sultantepe 65 (lines STT 323 r 25–27). In STT 323 r 25, the protasis begins as usual with DIŠ, but the apodosis, instead of providing an outcome, provides instructions. Lines r 26 and r 27 are indented and write *šum₄-ma* instead of DIŠ or *šum-ma*. The protases of these two lines provide two alternative outcomes to the instructions in line r 25. The apodoses of each then make a simple statement as to whether the omen is positive or negative.

Lines VAT 9906 v 8'–11' in the Assur recension have a comparable structure. Although lines VAT 9906 v 10'–11' conform to the same pattern in STT 323 r 26–27, the first line, VAT 9906 v 8' is too fragmentary to determine if it includes instructions. The use of *šum₄-ma* instead of DIŠ also appears in VAT 9906 v 6', but this line and its preceding and following lines are too fragmentary to offer much insight.

4.1.2 apodoses of lizard omens

Whereas the protases of Tablet 32 display some variation—describing various characteristics and describing a range of actions—the apodoses can only be described as formulaic. Even when there is variation, the themes are limited: wealth (Nineveh 10: (his) wealth will increase), the house(hold) (Assur 63: abandonment of the house), overcoming adversaries (Assur 5: he will prevail over his legal adversary), hunger (Assur 41: bread will be scarce for him), illness (Sultantepe 34: that sick man's illness will leave him), and children (Nineveh 63': that woman will give birth to a male (child)). In general the apodoses in omens from Tablet 32 are short and less complex than the protases. There are some rarer exceptions such as Nineveh 1 below.

Nineveh 1 Variant B (K 6912+)

[If] in a man's house [a lizard] with two tails is se[en and the ta]ils are long (and) red — may the one, who sees it, kil[l it] (and) may he take its [ta]il and [may² he² put² (it²)] on the threshing floor of his house; [on the day²] (it) has been placed in that house, šedu and lamassu protective spirits [will not approach] his house.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID] šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá ina É NA IG[I-ir-ma KU]N.MEŠ SÙ.MEŠ SA₅.MEŠ IGI.DU₈-šá GA[Z-ši KU]N-sà lil-qí-e-ma ina SU₇ šá É-šú [GAR² U₄²] ina É šu-a-tu₄ GAR-tu₄ ^dALAD u ^dLAMMA ina É-šú [NU TE]

Apodotic themes

It is not surprising that a collection of omens would include a large number of apodoses about wealth in some form or other. Lizards are not likely to have had a special association with wealth as wealth is a common theme in Mesopotamian divinatory texts.⁸² Nevertheless, there is a preponderance of apodoses concerning wealth. Some of the apodoses are explicit that a house (or by extrapolation the household) “will become wealthy” (Nineveh 14) or that “ma[n] will acquire profit” (Assur 88). Some are a more implicitly about wealth such as Sultantepe 59 which foretells the “dilapidation of the house” or Nineveh 11 where the man is said to “[...] and he will expand (his) property”.

The association with wealth is particularly obvious in omens in which the protasis involves hands in some way, though, not exclusively. This is not surprising as the hands are involved with grasping, taking and receiving.⁸³ For example, the following binary oppositional pair Assur 15 and 16 both involve a lizard falling onto a man's hands:

Assur 15 [If a lizard] falls onto a man's right hand — that man will acquire profit; he will consume his profit.
[DIŠ EME.DIR] a-na UGU ŠU NA ZAG ŠUB-ut NA BI Á.TUK TUK-ši Á.TUK-šú GU₇
[šumma šurāru] ana muḥḥi qāt amēli imitti imqut amēlu šū nēmela irašši nēmelšu ikkal

Assur 16 [If a lizard] falls onto a man's left hand — he will build a house using his daughters' money.
[DIŠ EME.DIR] a-na UGU ŠU NA GÙB ŠUB-ut ina KÙ.BABBAR.MEŠ DUMU.MUNUS.MEŠ-šú É DÙ-uš
[šumma šurāru] ana muḥḥi qāt amēli šumēli imqut ina kaspī mārātišu bīta ippuš

A prominent thematic element within Tablet 32's apodoses are adversaries. Several of the protases associated with such apodoses are notable for their repeated occurrences throughout Tablet 32. Protases are not usually repeated within a single omen text, but yet several protases

⁸² From *šumma ālu*, see for example omen §42.44' in Harris's (2022, 103) MA thesis. That omen's apodosis mentions the expansion of an animal pen. See also omen §22.83' about a baby's fate in Rinderer's (2021, 72) MA thesis. From *šumma izbu*, see 22: 123 (De Zorzi 2014, 2-Text Edition:877; For an English translation 2019–2024 or <https://repac.at/repacshowcases-divination/>) in which a pig carrying reeds foretells profit for its owner.

⁸³ See De Zorzi (2011, 58) for an example of associations between body extremities and verbs of taking and receiving in the teratomantic divinatory series *šumma izbu*.

within Tablet 32 and even within a single recension, repeat the identical protasis “If a lizard falls in front of a man” (Nineveh 22, Assur 5, likely Assur 7, Sultantepe 4, and Sultantepe 5). Interestingly, each of these protases is linked to slightly varied apodoses. Nevertheless, all of the apodoses are related to overcoming adversaries.

Apodotic syntax

The syntax of the apodoses in Tablet 32’s omens follows the general syntax of omen apodoses. They begin with the clause’s subject and end with a verb in the present-future, which is translated as the future tense in English. Unlike the protases, apodoses can also be purely nominal. As already indicated, apodoses tend to be relatively simple in Tablet 32, usually offering just one associated outcome per protasis. There are exceptions however and some omens have multiple apodoses or apodoses that give instructions.

An apodosis’s subject is most commonly the man, who is either mentioned directly in the corresponding protasis or is assumed to have theoretically observed the ominous phenomenon. In Tablet 32, the house(hold) can also be the subject of the apodosis as can the man’s legal adversary. These are still, however, related in some way to the man.

Sultantepe 4 [If] a lizard f[al]ls in front of a man — [his] legal adversary will be conquered. An interesting aberration is Assur 95’s apodosis. The country as an entity is the apodosis’s subject making the omen part of the genre of omens known as ‘public omens’. Public omens are common in some divinatory series, such as the human and non-human animal teratological series *šumma izbu* ‘If a malformed birth...’. They are rarer in *šumma ālu*, however, which mostly records ‘private omens’ that address the fates of individuals or smaller groups of people.

Assur 95’ Variant B (VAT 10167)

If a man, ditto (= while walking in the street), frightens seven (= lizards) that are locked in an embrace and are mating, (but) they do not separate — that country will experience a catastrophe.

Whatever the subject, some apodoses introduce the subject by stating ‘that man’ (NA BI) or something similar, while others do not. Why a specific apodosis might do this or not is unclear to me. It is apparent however that it does not seem to have affected the meaning of the apodosis as the same omen will appear in separate recensions and only differ by whether the subject is introduced in the apodosis or not.

Assur 33 If a lizard falls onto a sick man’s bed — his illness h[as befall]len (him).
 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* UGU ^{giš}NA NA GIG ŠUB-*ut* GIG-*su* Š[UB-*u*]*t*
šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi ereš amēli marši imqut murussu i[mqu]t

Sultantepe 33 [If a liz]ard [fa]lls onto [a sick man’s] bed — that sick (man): his illness has befallen him.
 [DIŠ EME].ŠID *ana* UGU ^{giš}NA [NA GIG ŠU]B-*ut* GIG BI GIG-*su* ŠUB-*ut*
 [*šumma šurā*]ru ana muḥḥi ereš [*amēli marši im*]qut maršu šū murussu imqut

Nominalized protases occur, but are less varied than those apodoses with verbal syntactic structures. Some are formed solely through a *status constructus*, such as “abandonment of the house” (Assur 60: ŠUB-*di* É), “dispersal of the house” (Assur 61: BIR-*aḥ* É), or “relocation of the house(hold)” (Nineveh 48’: *nu-kúr* É). Beds are also relocated in Nineveh 38’. Most of these protases deal with the house or household, but there are also some that refer to “uprisings of the (animal) fold?” (VAT 9906 ii 1: *te-bé* TÛR?). Uprisings also occur against the house as well (Assur 56). Losses also appear in *status constructus*. “a loss of male and female slaves” (Assur 38). Overcoming adversaries is a common theme in the apodoses, and it can also be expressed in the *status constructus* as “the downfall of his legal adversary” (Nineveh 22 Variant A: (ŠUB-*tì* EN INIM-šú)). Other nominalized protases are formed by listing nouns such as “confusion, distress” (Assur 3: SÛḤ *ni-zíq-tu*₄).

Apodoses in general are usually simple clauses. More complex apodoses do exist however. Two or more clauses can be combined asyndetically as below:

Nineveh 34’ If a lizard is sleeping on top of a man’s bed and (then) falls off — that man will consume a share, relocation of the bed.
 DIŠ EME.DIR *ana* UGU ḡ^{is}NA NA *ša-lil-ma* ŠUB-*ut* NA BI ḤA.LA GU₇ *nu-kúr*
 ḡ^{is}NA

They can also be combined using a conjunction.

Assur 85’ If a lizard escapes over a man’s leg, turns back, and (then) jumps onto him! — that man will escape from privation and hardship and will continually walk along a safe path.
 DIŠ EME.DIR AN.TA_(ID) PAP.ḤAL NA È-*ma* GUR-*ma ana* UGU-š^u GU₄.UD-*iṭ*
 NA BI *ina* PAP.ḤAL *u* MUNUS.KALA.GA È-*ma ina* KI.UŠ SILIM DU.DU

Much more rare are alternative apodoses. An example follows:

Nineveh 20 If a lizard falls onto a man — a message will arrive for that man (and) a lamassu protective spirit will approach him or a common man will proudly prosper.
 DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* UGU NA ŠUB-*ut ma-qá-at* INIM *ana* LÚ BI ^dLAMMA TE-šú
lu MAŠ.EN.GAG *mi-li* GABA *ina-ḥi-iš*

Nineveh 20 uses *lu* ‘or’ to introduce the alternative apodosis, but a *Glossenkeil* is also possible, such as in Nineveh 46’.

Nineveh 46’ If a *crush[ed]* lizard [...] ... in a man’s² house² [...] is seen — construction : dilapidation of the house.
 DIŠ EME.ŠID *na-pu-ul-t*[_u₄ x x x] x *ina* É² NA² [x (x)] IGI DÛ-*eš* : *e-ne-eš* É

In the Nineveh and Sultantepe recensions, there are also apodoses that are written as instructions. These are fairly complex apodoses.

Nineveh 1 Variant B (K 6912+)

[If] in a man's house [a lizard] with two tails is se[en and the ta]ils are long (and) red — may the one, who sees it, kil[l it] (and) may he take its [ta]il and [may' he' put' (it?)] on the threshing floor of his house; [on the day?] (it) has been placed in that house, šedu and lamassu protective spirits [will not approach] his house.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID] šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá ina É NA IG[I-ir-ma KU]N.MEŠ SÙ.MEŠ SA₅.MEŠ IGI.DU₈-šá GA[Zši KU]N-sà lil-qí-e-ma ina SU₇ šá É-šú [GAR² U₄?] ina É šu-a-tu₄ GAR-tu₄ ^dALAD u ^dLAMMA ina Éšú [NU TE]

Sultantepe 65 If a lizard with two tails is seen in a man's house — you will cut off (one of) its [t]ails [and] will attach (it) to a nursing ewe:

If that [ew]e rejects her lamb — that omen portends evil.
If that ewe loves her lamb — [th]at [om]en portends goodness.

DIŠ EME.ŠID šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá ina É NA IGI [K]UN-sa KUD-is-[ma ina] U₈ mu-še-niq-ti KÉŠ /

šum₄-ma [U]₈ ši-i SILA₄-sa i-zi-ir GIZKIM ši-[i] ha-ṭa-at /
šum₄-ma U₈ ši-i SILA₄-sa i-ram [GIZ]KIM [ši]-i dam-qat

4.1.3 excursus: signs of repetition

Just as modern writers and notetakers may use a ditto mark to indicate repetition from one line to the next, Mesopotamian scribes had ways to indicate repetition as well. The most common sign of repetition (translated as 'ditto') among the lizard omens is certainly (KI.)MIN. In Tablet 32, it is exclusively used in the protasis. The referent of (KI.)MIN can be as simple as EME.DIR (alternatively: EME.ŠID) or include both the word 'lizard' and a descriptor such as 'entwined'. As (KI.)MIN often replaces the word 'lizard' in the protasis, it is usually placed immediately after the sign DIŠ. In Assur 90', however, the protasis's subject is a man walking in the street. The lizard is in the middle of the clause and, therefore, so is MIN.

Assur 90' If a man, while walking in the street, sees ditto (= a lizard) vomit — that man will acquire riches.
DIŠ NA ina SILA ina DU-šú MIN (EME.DIR) i-'a-ru-ma IGI.DU₈ NA BI NÍG.TUK TUK-ši
šumma amēlu ina sūqi ina alākišu MIN (šurāru) i'arrūma imur amēlu šū mašrê irāšši

In the current edition, if every attestation of an omen uses a sign of repetition, the sign will be carried over to the reconstructed version of the omen. In this situation, signs of repetition are translated as 'ditto' followed by the sign's referent in parentheses with an equal sign (= a lizard). In the reconstructed transliteration and transcription, the signs of repetition are written as logograms, but are also followed by referents in parentheses.

A sign of repetition's referent is not always the same from one omen to the next, not even within the same sequence of omens. An example is Assur 90'–95'.

Assur 90' If a man, while walking in the street, sees ditto (= a lizard) vomit — that man will acquire riches.
 DIŠ NA *ina* SILA *ina* DU-šú MIN (EME.DIR) *i-'a-ru-ma* IGI.DU₈ NA BI
 NÍG.TUK TUK-ši

Assur 91' If a man, ditto (= while walking) in the street, sees a lizard swallowing a(nother) lizard, but he does not separate the<m> — he will die at the hand of his enemy and will not escape.
 DIŠ NA *ina* SILA MIN (*ina* DU-šú) EME.DIR EME.DIR *la-it-ma* IGI.DU₈-šu-
nu-<ti>-ma NU DU₈-šú-*nu-<ti>* *ina* ŠU KÚR-šu ÚŠ-*ma* NU Ē

Whereas the referent in Assur 90' is the expected 'lizard', the referent in Assur 91' is the phrase 'while walking'. In Assur 92'–94' MIN referent includes 'while walking', but expands to also include 'in the street'.

Assur 92' If a man, ditto (= while walking in the street), sees lizards mating, seizes them and does not separate (them but) kills them — as long as he lives, rumors will follow him, and he will die in slander.
 DIŠ NA MIN (*ina* SILA *ina* DU-šú) EME.DIR U₅ IGI.DU₈ DAB-*su-nu-ti-ma* NU
 DU₈.MEŠ GAZ.MEŠ-šú-*nu-ti* EN TI EME UŠ-šú-*ma* *ina* EME.SIG ÚŠ

Assur 95', the final omen in the sequence, is interesting as the two manuscripts on which the omen is preserved, differ in terms of MIN's referent. On VAT 9793 8' (variant A) the referent remains, as in Assur 92'–94', solely the phrase 'while walking in the street'. On VAT 10167 r 25' (variant B), the scribe either inadvertently omitted EME.DIR or expanded MIN's referent to encompass 'lizard' as well as the phrase about the man walking in the street.

Assur 95' Variant A (VAT 9793)

[I]f a man, ditto (= while walking in the street), frightens seven lizards that are locke[d in an embrace and are mating, (but) they do not separate — that country will experience a catastrophe].

[D]IŠ NA MIN (*ina* SILA *ina* DU-šú) EME.DIR 7 GÚ.DA.R[I-*ma* U₅.MEŠ
ú-gal-lit-su-nu-te NU DU₈.MEŠ KUR BI NÍG.ĤA.LAM.MA IGI]

Variant B (VAT 10167)

If a man, ditto (= while walking in the street), frightens seven (= lizards) that are locked in an embrace and are mating, (but) they do not separate — that country will experience a catastrophe.

DIŠ NA MIN (*ina* SILA *ina* DU-šú EME.DIR) 7 GÚ.DA.RI-*ma* U₅.MEŠ
ú-gal-lit-su-nu-te NU [DU₈].MEŠ KUR BI NÍG.ĤA.LAM.MA IGI

Assur 96' is not part of the above sequence of omens as the protasis is no longer about a man walking in the street, but a lizard falling, and therefore it no longer uses MIN. Such a switch in sequence seems to have precluded the use of a sign of repetition, even if the lizard remains a topic of all protases.

Assur 97' triggers a sequence of omens (Assur 97'–107') which use signs of repetition. The omens all feature entwined lizards. In this sequence of omens, manuscript VAT 9793 uses KI.MIN (whereas it used MIN in Assur 92'–94'). The other manuscript VAT 10167 continues to use MIN.

The referent of KI.MIN on VAT 9793 always includes *kit-pu-lu-ma* 'entwined', but sometimes varies to also include where the entwined lizards fall such as *ana UGU NA* 'onto a man' (Assur 98'). Again the two manuscripts, though purportedly duplicates of the same base text, differ in how much of the protasis is included as the referent of KI.MIN (See the variants of Assur 99'). Although Assur 99' and 100' use (KI).MIN to refer to entwined (lizards) falling on a man, in Assur 101', (KI).MIN only refers to 'entwined' as the lizards crawl into a man's lap. Assur 102' then uses (KI).MIN to have entwined lizards crawl into a man's lap. Assur 103' goes back to just 'entwined' lizards as the lizards fall besides a man. Unsurprisingly in Assur 104', KI.MIN is expanded to also include 'beside a man', not just 'entwined'. Similarly in Assur 105', the referent is only 'entwined', and then 106' it expands to include the 'on a man's foot' of Assur 105'. Assur 107' likely does the same, but is too fragmentary to be certain.

Signs of repetition are only used once in an apodosis (Assur 42). Instead of (KI).MIN, the signs read ŠU.BI.GIM.NAM.

4.2 Omen Sequential Structures

While the syntactic construction of omens is fairly straightforward and some research has been done on the hermeneutics linking ominous signs with associated outcomes, the structural principles upon which omen sequences are organized is not. Unfortunately the Mesopotamian scribes who created the vast omen lists did not leave behind written conceptual explanations about omen logic. Explanations are lacking on the connection between the ominous signs described in omen protases and the portended outcomes in the apodoses as well as for the logic underpinning the sequencing of omens.

Even a cursory examination of the omens of Tablet 32 will reveal that not only which ominous phenomena the scribes chose for omen protases, but how they connected protases with portended outcomes to create omens as well how they organized omens into sequences is not random. Though it has been a persistent assumption that omens, especially terrestrial omens such as those in *šumma ālu* are recordings of observed phenomena,⁸⁴ omens are better thought of as examples of “general ‘principles’, or rules, that have validity beyond the individual occurrence” (De Zorzi 2022b, 87).⁸⁵ The ominous phenomena described in the omen protases “draw on a schematised set of potential or imaginable phenomena” (De Zorzi 2022a, 376). Meaning is then assigned to these phenomena by means of “hermeneutic rules based essentially on analogy” and expressed by linking them to portended outcomes using “some relation of similitude between them on the semantic, phonetic, or graphic level” (De Zorzi 2022b, 87).

The ominous phenomena chosen as protases for the lizard omens of Tablet 32 have already been discussed above in section 4.1, but to summarize, the majority of protases describe either a lizard’s behavior or some characteristic of a lizard. The actions performed by lizards are relatively limited, especially in terms of a lizard’s agency, and mostly involve lizards falling or crawling into items. Otherwise, protases tend to describe a lizard’s coloring, the number of body parts it has, whether it is dead or alive, and its entanglement with other lizards.

The process of sequencing omens is quite complex and occurs at multiple levels. Each of Tablet 32’s recensions has a different sequence of omens, and the omen sequence of any one

⁸⁴ Though this view of omens is perhaps an older one, it is still one that can be found in secondary literature. For example, Maul (2003–2005, 46) states that ominous signs were first recorded after long periods of observation and empirical data collection. He adds that once the principles underlying the connections between the observed event and the predicted future events were understood could new omens be created using these principles. Annus (2010, 2) uses Maul’s views to support his statement that “segments of original observations were expanded into very comprehensive omen series”.

⁸⁵ See also Rochberg (2016, 221) who says Mesopotamian divinatory signs were not observations “nor even reflective of past observations” but were instead guidelines to interpret future signs. For a somewhat different approach, see Maul (2007, 361), who states, “An omen is a clearly defined perception understood as a sign pointing to future events whenever it manifests itself under identical circumstances.”

recension can be divided into subsections. Each subsection is then made up of “distinctive building blocks” (De Zorzi 2011, 52)⁸⁶ that are interlinked to create a web of connection and meaning.

There are several arguments against reading Mesopotamian omens as a list of historically observed phenomena. The existence of protases describing impossible phenomena is particularly strong evidence that the omens are not based on observation. Another argument is the obvious thought and work that went into composing these texts. Divination, in general, uses “often cryptic, poetic, and highly allusive” language because the “images these words and object conjure are paradoxical and evocative: they create and are created by a sense of discovery” (Tedlock 2006, 72). Such a statement can also be applied to the language in Mesopotamian omens. It should not be surprising that Mesopotamian scribes, immersed in a culture that held writing and linguistic skills in high esteem would use these skills when creating omen lists.

Tablet 32 aptly illustrates that the scribes did not rely solely on one method to establish connections between an omen’s protasis and apodosis, but rather meticulously composed omens to incorporate multiple layers of associations. This intentionality in composition can be extrapolated beyond a single omen onto the connections between omens, that is onto sequences of omens. Within omen sequences, associations based on similitude, between a single omen’s protasis and apodosis interplay with the connections between multiple omens. This interplay amplifies the effect of multiple layers associations based on similitude to create meaning and a sense of cohesiveness to the text. These methods interweave and demonstrate the scribe’s skill in diverse linguistic elements such as phonetics and semantics.

Cuneiform writing lends itself well to create multiple layers of meaning, while at the same time retaining the associations based on similitude, as cuneiform signs are not only polyvalent—that is any one sign can represent a number of syllables or words—but are also multifunctional; they can serve as logograms representing individual words, as syllables, or as classifiers (determinatives) (Hilgert 2009, 290). The Mesopotamian scribes shrewdly exploited the writing system’s polyvalence. For example, if a certain sign is used to write a word in the protasis, that sign’s other readings may trigger associations in the protasis—either by using similar syllabic spellings of the other reading, or using other logograms that also have a possible reading. An example occurs in Assur 94, which is discussed in section 4.2.6. Some omens show multiple levels of association and we, as non-native readers of these texts and being less trained and as linguistically expert in their writing system as the ancient scribes, will likely miss many of these associations.

⁸⁶ De Zorzi is discussing the structural sequence of the omen series *šumma izbu* ‘If a malformed fetus’, but the principles hold for the omens of Tablet 32 as well.

The discussion below will examine some of the apparent principles used to establish connections between ominous signs, described in an omen’s protasis, and the outcomes listed in the apodosis (horizontal associations). Further, the discussion also explores the structures and principles used for arranging sequences of omens (vertical associations). The term ‘rhetorical device(s)’ appears often in the following discussion.

I use this term in the absence of emic terminology to explain the textual effects, visible to us as readers, brought about by composing the text using these hermeneutic and structural principles. Though rhetorical devices are often used to persuade or to create a specific effect in an audience, it is not in this sense that I use the term. In the sense used here, some rhetorical devices are auditory such as consonance or onomatopoeia. Others might be structural such as chiasmic repetition. And still others are visual as well as auditory and rely on the polyvalence of the cuneiform writing system. Secondary literature sometime refer to these effects and structures as word play. I am persuaded by Noegel’s (2021, 23–24)⁸⁷ argument that the term is inappropriate as the basic element for these devices in Akkadian is not a word, as these devices are more usually based on consonants. Further, these devices in Akkadian texts are not “playful”. Instead, it has been suggested that these devices, which are based on repetition and similitude, reflect a culturally-specific scribal hermeneutic that in turn reflects a culturally-specific ontology rooted in analogical thinking. See De Zorzi’s (2022a, 376–81) article on “Parallelism and Analogical Thought in Babylonian Poetry” for details.

4.2.1 opposing binary pairs

Mesopotamian divination often displays an interest in opposing binary elements⁸⁸, and pairs of such omens are a common organizational component in Tablet 32. The protases of these omens are usually identical except for the opposing binary element. A common pairing occurs between the left and right sides of the human body (Guinan 1996, 6–8). For example, in the first omen, a lizard may fall on a man’s left foot (Sultantepe 13), and then in the omen immediately following, the lizard will fall on a man’s right foot (Sultantepe 14).

Although spatial pairings (up/down or left/right, etc.) are particularly common in Tablet 32, there are various other types of dichotomies. In addition to spatial pairings, De Zorzi

⁸⁷ Noegel’s (2021) book is a good overview of and an attempt to develop a taxonomy around many of these devices in a multitude of ancient Near Eastern texts.

⁸⁸ Heeßel (2012, 21–23) notes that descriptions of ominous signs (protases) in Mesopotamian extispicy texts are often “based on binary differentiation” (2012, 21) and can include additional dichotomies such as light versus dark, curved *kapāšu* versus flat *naparqudu*.

An interest in binary qualities is common in many divinatory systems, not just in Mesopotamia. Moffett and Hall (2020, 316–17) describe how diviners in southern Africa choose objects to use in divination along specific principles, including paired objects that could represent male and female aspects or single objects with a clear convex and concave side.

(2011, 48) notes that pairs in the divinatory series *šumma izbu* ‘if a malformed birth’ can also express qualitative oppositions such as large versus small or normal versus abnormal. These are also present in Tablet 32 as are temporal pairs.

Spatial

In addition to the common use of left and right, verbs can imply spatial direction.

Sultantepe 19 [If a lizard **fa]lls** [on]to a man’s stool — an eclipse during the day watch (will occur).

Sultantepe 20 [If a lizard] **climbs** [on]to a [m]an’s sto[ol] — that man will be chronically ill.

Temporal

Temporal pairs play a subordinate role in Tablet 32.

Nineveh 47’ If a lizard calls out all **day** in a man’s house — abandonment of the house.

Nineveh 48’ If a lizard calls out all **night** in a man’s house — relocation of the house(hold).

Qualitative

Here gender is used as a qualitative aspect of the human the lizard stares at, but another example might be the color white and black.

Nineveh 51’ If a lizard carrying a snake stares at a **woman** — that woman will be married together with a secondary wife.

Nineveh 52’ If a lizard carrying a snake stares at a **man** — that man will marry another woman.

Non-spatial verbal actions

Assur 101’ If ditto (= entwined) lizards crawl into a man’s lap and **do not separate** and [...] ... [...] ... will seize [...]

Assur 102’ If (= entwined) lizards crawl ditto (= into a man’s lap) and **separate** and beh[ind ...] will seize.

The above are but a few of the binary pairs that occur in Tablet 32. De Zorzi (2011, 52) rightly calls binary pairs such as these “building blocks”, and Winitzer (2017, 205) notes that such binary pairings are an important aspect for inter-omen organization.

Binary pairs, especially the spatially organized ones, can be combined together to form longer sequences of inter-related omens such as in the sequence Sultantepe 12–16:

Sultantepe 12	If a liza[rd fa]lls	onto a m an’s	right	hand	—
Sultantepe 13	If a liz[ard fa]lls	onto a man’s	left	hand	—
Sultantepe 14	If a liz[ard fa]lls	onto a man’s	right	foot	—
Sultantepe 15	[If a lizard fa]lls	onto a man’s	left	foot	—
Sultantepe 16	[If a lizard] clim[bs]	o]nto a man’s		foot	—

Although Sultantepe 16's protasis is not split into a dichotomic pair with a lizard climbing once onto a man's right foot and then left, the spatial element of climbing onto a man's foot is certainly oppositional to the previous omen in which a lizard falls onto a man's foot.

4.2.2 schematic relationships the case of furnishings

Another common organizing feature of the omens in Tablet 32 are sequences of omens with protases that revolve around a specific topic. Some of the topics in our corpus are involve lizards falling into various vessels (see section 4.2.3) or lizards giving birth in various places (see the commentary at Nineveh 53'). Other sequences are omens with protases about entangled lizards (see 'characteristic protases' in section 4.1.1), or protases in which a man walking in the street comes across one or more lizards (see 'other protases' in section 4.1.1). The exact borders between these sequences can be ambiguous as one or more omen(s) at the edges of these groups often serve as a pivot or thematic bridge⁸⁹ to another thematic sequence. In section 4.2.3, the omens with ovens in the protases act as a bridge between omens with fire and those involving culinary vessels.

The omens within thematic sequences often have what Rochberg (2010, 22) calls a schematic relationship to one another. The ominous phenomena in the protases revolve not only around a specific theme but are ordered according to a typical sequential pattern. A classic example of schematic relationships in Mesopotamian literature is color. The sequences of omens about lizard coloring was discussed in section 4.1.1 under 'characteristic protases'. In summary, only a limited number of colors usually appear in omen texts and often follow a typical sequence, with only slight variations.

There are several sequences with schematic relationships in Tablet 32, but one perhaps slightly unusual sequence is one in lizards interact with various pieces of furniture around a man's house.⁹⁰ These sequences occur in all three recensions. In the Nineveh recension, the sequence runs from Nineveh 32'–40' and is limited to interactions with a man's bed, *ereš ameli* (gišNÁ NA). The Nineveh recension is also particularly interesting for its omens that differentiate between a sleeping place *majjāl amēli* (KI.NÁ NA) and a bed (Nineveh 36'–38'). The schematic relationship,

⁸⁹ The idea of pivot lines is also part of the work by the research project REPAC (<http://www.repac.at>) Repetition, Parallelism and Creativity: an Inquiry into the Construction of Meaning in Ancient Mesopotamian Literature and Erudition led by Nicla De Zorzi. See for example, Menicatti (2021; 2022).

See also Hilgert (2009 especially 301–304) and Rinderer (2021, 39–45) for a similar idea of rhizomatic webs of knowledge in lexical lists and snake omens, respectively. Similar to botanical rhizomes, a list will follow a single strand of knowledge until a related side-topic occurs and is explored in a sub-sequence within the larger list, only to break off, and the original strand of knowledge is taken back up.

⁹⁰ I thank Nicla De Zorzi for informing me that such sequences also appear in Tablet 33 on geckos.

however, is most obvious in the Assur (Assur 21–33) and the Sultantepe (Sultantepe 19–34) recensions.

Stool

- Sultantepe 19** [If a lizard fa]lls [on]to a man’s stool — an eclipse during the day watch (will occur).
- Sultantepe 20** [If a lizard] climbs [on]to a [m]an’s sto[ol] — that man will be chronically ill.
- Sultantepe 21** [If a lizard] cr[aw]ls [under]neath a man’s st[o]ol and lies down — that house will (again) be inhabited.
- Assur 21** [If a liz]ard falls onto a man’s stool — an eclipse during the [day] watch (will occur).
- Assur 22** [If] a lizard climbs onto a man’s stool — he will be chronically i[ll].
- Assur 23** If a lizard crawls underneath a man’s stool and lies down — an enemy [will inhabit] that house.
- Assur 24** If a lizard climbs onto a man’s stool and lies down [...] ... [...]

Table

- Sultantepe 22** [If a lizard] falls [on]to a man’s tab[le] — ... he will be vexed.
- Sultantepe 23** [If a lizard] falls into a bowl [on] a man’s ta[ble] — illness will afflict him.
- Sultantepe 24** [If a lizard] climbs [onto a man’s] t[able] (and then) lies down — illness will afflict one on a journey.
- Sultantepe 25** [If a lizard] crawls [underneath] a man’s [tabl]e and lies down — his social standing will not be stable.
- Assur 25** If a lizard falls onto a man’s table — he will be ve[xed].
- Assur 26** If a lizard falls into a <bo>wl on a man’s table, — illness [will afflict him].
- Assur 27** If a lizard climbs onto a man’s table and lies down — someone will approach from far away, someone [...]
- Assur 28** If a lizard crawls underneath a man’s table and lies down — his social standing [will not be stable].

Bed

- Sultantepe 26** [If a lizard] falls [onto a ma]n’s [bed] — he will be vexed.
- Sultantepe 27** [If a lizard] climbs [onto a ma]n’s [bed] — (there will be) a favorable omen.
- Sultantepe 28** [If a lizard] cli[mbs onto a ma]n’s [bed and lies down] — he won’t have children.
- Sultantepe 29** [If a lizard] climbs? [onto a man’s bed ...] — relocation of the bed.
- Sultantepe 30** [If a liza]rd is [slee]ping on top of [a man’s bed] and (then) fal[ls off] — that man will consume a share ...
- Sultantepe 31** [If a liz]ard [cr]awls underneath [a man’s] b[ed] and lies down — he will be happy.

- Sultantepe 32** [If liz]ards [c]onfront one another underneath [a man's] be[d] — relocation of the bed.
- Assur 29** If a lizard falls onto a man's bed and lies down — his social standing [will be stable].
- Assur 30** If a lizard climbs onto a man's bed — (there will be) [a favorable] om[en].
- Assur 31** If a lizard climbs onto a man's bed and lies down — [he won't have any] children.
- Assur 32** If a lizard crawls underneath a man's bed and lies down — he will be ha[ppy].

Sick man's bed

- Sultantepe 33** [If a liz]ard [fa]lls onto [a sick man's] bed — that sick (man): his illness has befallen him.
- Sultantepe 34** [If a liz]ard climbs onto [a sic]k (man's) be[d] — that sick man's illness will leave him.
- Assur 33** If a lizard falls onto a sick man's bed — his illness h[as befall]en (him).

The Assur recension does not have an equivalent omen to Sultantepe 34.

In both recensions, the protases follow a consistent sequence about a lizard interacting with various household furnishings. The lizard first interacts with a man's stool, ^{gis}GU.ZA, followed by the man's table, ^{gis}BANŠUR, his bed, ^{gis}NÁ, and ultimately a sick man's bed, ^{gis}NÁ NA GIG. Despite the fact that individual omens within each recension differ in the apodoses associated with given signs in the protases, the schematic sequence for the furnishings remains persists in both recensions. For example, Sultantepe 21 and Assur 23 have the same protasis (If a lizard crawls underneath a man's stool and lies down), but each omen connects them to two similar but possibly opposing apodoses. Whereas the Assur omen's apodosis is definitively negative because an enemy will inhabit the house, the Sultantepe omen is ambiguous. It can be interpreted negatively, just as in the Assur omen, but it can also be interpreted positively as a sign that life will return to a previously uninhabited house. Nevertheless, both omens are in the same place in their respective recension's sequence.

A second schematic relationship, characterized by verbs with a spatial element, is superimposed upon the furnishings scheme. Namely, the lizard is first said to fall onto, *ana* UGU ... ŠUB-*ut*, the item of furniture, then climb onto it, *ana* UGU ... E₁₁, and then finally to crawl underneath it, *ana* KI.TA ... KU₄. The two recensions show the most variation as to whether they include omens from this superimposed scheme or not. For example, Sultantepe 26 is about a lizard falling onto a bed. The Assur recension does not have an equivalent omen, but instead Assur 29 is about a lizard falling onto a bed and lying down. This omen does not have an equivalent in the Sultantepe recension.

Overall, the primary determiner of the omen sequence appears to be the schematic sequence of the furnishings. The verbal-spatial schematic relationship is of secondary importance. The two schematic relationships, however, do not appear to have a significant effect on the associated apodosis of any one omen.

The schematic sequences can have slight differences that appear as interpolations. Firstly, interpolation can take the form of adding a verb to create a second action in addition to the schematic verb (e.g., in Sultantepe 27 a lizard climbs onto a man's bed and in Sultantepe 28 the lizard climbs onto a man's bed, but also lies down). This addition of a second verb in the protasis can replace a seemingly missing protasis with only the schematic verb. For example, in the sequence about a table, the protasis of Sultantepe 24 states the lizard climbs onto the table and then lies down. There is not any omen where the protasis is simply about a lizard climbing onto a table as there was for a stool (Sultantepe 20) or bed (Sultantepe 27; Sultantepe 34).

Another interpolation is the addition of specificity to the schematic verb. In Sultantepe 23, the lizard does not just fall onto a table, as in Sultantepe 22, but into a bowl on that table. Although the apodoses of these two omens (and the related Assur 25 and 26) do not appear on the surface to be related, the verb *nazāqu*, or 'to be vexed', which appears in Sultantepe 22's apodosis, is a linking element.

Sultantepe 22 [If a lizard] falls [on]to a man's tab[le] — ... he will be vexed.
[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana UGU]U^g BAN[ŠUR] NA ŠUB-ut x x ina-an-ziq
[šumma šurāru ana muḥ]ḥi paš[šūr] amēli imqut ... inanziq

Sultantepe 23 [If a lizard] falls into a bowl [on] a man's ta[ble] — illness will afflict him.
[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana UGU]U^g BA[NŠUR] NA ana^{duš}kal-li ŠUB-ut GIG DAB-su
[šumma šurāru ana muḥ]ḥi pa[ššūr] amēli ana kalli imqut muršu iṣabbassu

The verb has an onomatopoeic quality that also refers to the creaking of wood (Rendu Loisel 2016b, 294; Sibbing-Plantholt 2021, 369) explaining the link between the table in the protasis and the verb *nazāqu* in the apodosis. The same verb is also associated with the groans of someone who is ill (Sibbing-Plantholt 2021, 370), which helps to explain the next apodosis in Sultantepe 23.

A final type of interpolation occurs among the bed omens, the most numerous of the furniture omens. The protases of Sultantepe 30 and 32, respectively, include lizards involved in non-schematic activities such as sleeping *šalil* or confronting one another *imtaḥḥarā*. Although the omens in the Assur sequence do not include the same protases, the general schematic sequence about furniture is retained: sleeping on the bed occurs after omens which describe a lizard climbing onto the bed. Similarly, the lizards confront one another under the bed after Sultantepe 31 in which a lizard crawls underneath the bed and lies down. The bed is symbolically

the innermost sanctum within a home. It represents an individual's place of refuge.⁹¹ To find a lizard within the confines one's bed can understandably be disconcerting. It follows, unsurprisingly then, that the number of bed-related omens should outnumber those about a stool, and that they should be associated with negative outcomes. The themes of illness and children in the apodoses are also not surprising as beds are places of respite when one is ill and also the place for intercourse and where women give birth. Nevertheless, not all of the connections between protasis and apodosis are easy to explain.

Just as Winitzer (2017, 260) notes for Old Babylonian omen lists, “the drive for interpolation could at times take priority” over other forms of organization and interrupt it. The schematic relationship behind the described ominous phenomenon, however, does seem to be the overall organizing element of these omens. Winitzer (2017, 260) also notes that scribes could add additional omens after the primary schematic elements. This idea may explain the apparent outlier in Assur 24. This omen, in which a lizard climbs onto a man's stool and lies down, appears at the end of the sequence about a stool. This placement disrupts the schematic sequence of falls/climbs/crawls underneath as one would expect Assur 23 and 24 to be swapped.

4.2.3 lizards in culinary vessels

The sequence of omens concerning a lizard interacting with various vessels used in the preparation and storage of food and liquids is particularly intriguing. These omens are present in all three recensions, although they are only arranged into longer sequences in the Assur (Assur 41–46) and Sultantepe (Sultantepe 43(?)–49) recensions. The omens are noteworthy for several reasons. Firstly, they are overwhelmingly negative. Only the omens whose protases include the word *ṭābātu* ‘vinegar’, likely due to its similarity to the word *ṭābtu* ‘goodness’, result in a positive outcome.

A lizard in one's food is certainly unappetizing, and revulsion about food contamination is deeply ingrained human instinct. This instinctual repulsion⁹² may underlie the negative apodoses in the sequence about lizards in food and liquid vessels. Further in *šumma ālu*, small animals are often associated with food pests (De Zorzi forthcoming, note 81). Although lizards are not themselves usually pests for human food—though they do eat some fruits and plant matter—they are predators of food-eating insects.

⁹¹ I thank Yuval Levavi for his comments and insights on Mesopotamian beds.

⁹² Repulsion is a human instinct and not always logical. I'd like to thank Elizabeth Farebrother for pointing out that disgust around lizards and food may also have a biological reason. Modern studies—see for example, Ebani (2017)—have shown that lizards are carriers of salmonella and other zoonoses that can cause serious illnesses in humans should the disease causing agent contaminate food.

We will now discuss the omens Assur 41–46 as the sequence in the Assur recension is the most complete. Differences between it and the Nineveh and Sultantepe recensions as well as the sequence on the Assur manuscript VAT 9906 will be discussed below as relevant. Other omens with protases related to food or liquid are Nineveh 49', Assur 56, Sultantepe 43–49 (note Sultantepe 43 and 44 are too damaged to be definitively included in the sequence) and the omens on VAT 9906 *ii* 9–10. Tangentially related are Assur 47–48 and Sultantepe 51–52, which involve a storage bin, as well as Assur 59 and Sultantepe 76 with a woman's kettle.

- Assur 41** If a lizard falls into a bread box — bread will be scarce for him.
 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* ^gPISAN NINDA ŠUB-*ut* NINDA *i-qir-šu*
šumma šurāru ana pisan akli imqut aklu iqqiršu
- Assur 42** If a lizard crawls into a bread box and lies down — ditto (= bread will be scarce for him.)
 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* ^gPISAN NINDA KU₄-*ma ir-bi-iš* ŠU.BI.GIM.NAM (NINDA *i-qir-šu*)
šumma šurāru ana pisan akli irubma irbiš ŠU.BI.GIM.NAM (aklu iqqiršu)
- Assur 43** If a lizard falls into a vinegar jug — a divine gift will be available to him.
 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* DUG A.GEŠTIN.NA ŠUB-*ut* NÍG.BA DINGIR GÁL-*ši-šu*
šumma šurāru ana karpāt ṭābāti imqut qīšti ili ibbaššīšu
- Assur 44** If a lizard falls into a water jug or a beer jug — that man will be vexed.
 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* DUG A *lu ana* DUG KAŠ ŠUB-*ut* NA BI *ina-ziq*
šumma šurāru ana karpāt mē lū ana karpāt šikari imqut amēlu šū inazziq
- Assur 45** If a lizard falls into a beerwort container — that house will lack a watering place.
 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* DUG *nār-ṭa-bi* ŠUB-*ut* É BI *maš-qa-a ú-za-am-ma*
šumma šurāru ana karpāt narṭabi imqut bitu šū mašqâ uzammâ
- Assur 46** If a lizard falls into a bowl — there will be a cry (of distress) in the man's house.
 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* ^{duš}ÚTUL ŠUB-*ut* GÙ *ina* É NA GÁL-*ši*
šumma šurāru ana diqāri imqut rigmu ina bīt amēli ibbaššī

The Assur sequence begins with two omens involving a lizard and a bread box (^gPISAN). The presence of a bread box in the protases of both Assur 41 and 42 triggers a negative apodosis also involving bread *aklu*. It is significant that the sequence begins with bread as the word *aklu* can be used as a stand-in for food in general; see CAD (A.1: 238–45 s.v. *akalu*) for examples. The juxtaposition of bread (Assur 41–42) with consumable liquids (Assur 43–45), such as water or beer, is a literary trope already present since at least Old Babylonian literary texts and a merism meant to encompass all human nourishment (Wasserman 2003, 61, 94–96).

Although the sequence Assur 41–46 can be viewed as a complete unit, based on the theme of food and liquid vessels in the protasis, the sequence does not occur in isolation, but is itself placed at a specific point within the Assur recension. The preceding sequence of omens, Assur 35–40, involve protases in which a lizard interacts with fire and is variously singed (Assur 37), escapes (Assur 35, 38), or is alternatively burnt (Assur 36, 39) and not burnt Assur 40. The

protases of the final three omens of the fire sequence, Assur 38–40, feature a lizard falling into an oven (IM.ŠU.RIN.NA). An oven not only has a fire within it, but is also used to prepare food and medicine (CAD T: 420 s.v. *tinūru*). These three omens and the theme of an oven act as a thematic bridge, between the fire sequence and the sequence about food and liquid vessels. The presence of an oven in these final omens of the fire sequence likely trigger the presence of bread in Assur 41 and thereby setting off a sequence about food and liquids.

The connection between the two sequences is not just in the protasis, but also in the apodoses. Assur 38–40 all have negative outcomes, despite the fact that the Assur 39 and 40 have opposing protases (Assur 39: If a lizard falls into an oven and burns up 40: If a lizard falls into an oven but does not burn up). Further the apodoses all revolve around financial or material loss. When the food sequence begins with bread after a series of financial losses, it is again not surprising that the topic of hunger, possibly famine, as in Assur 41 (bread will be scarce for him), would appear in the apodosis.

The dominant negativity of this sequence is impossible to miss and likely related, not only to the aspects of disgust mentioned above, but also to Mesopotamian conceptions around food. For example, the eating of tainted or inedible food or liquid is a common motif among Mesopotamian curse literature (De Zorzi 2019, 234–37). What is particularly striking however is that Assur 43, in which a lizard falls into a vinegar jug, has a particularly positive apodosis (Assur 43: — a divine gift will be available to him.). Nötscher (1929, 189 Rs. Z. 43f) called Assur 43's positive apodosis 'conspicuous'.⁹³ On first examination, this seems to undermine the idea of repulsion as an overall principle. The positive apodosis seems out of place, until the corresponding omen in the Sultantepe recension, Sultantepe 45, is considered.

Assur 43 If a lizard falls into a vinegar jug — a divine gift will be available to him.
 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* DUG A.GEŠTIN.NA ŠUB-*ut* NÍG.BA DINGIR GÁL-*ši-šu*
šumma šurāru ana karpat ṭābāti imqut qīšti ili ibbaššišu

Sultantepe 45 [If a lizard] falls [into a vineg]ar [jug] — divine goodness will be available.
 [DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* DUG A.GEŠTIN.N]A ŠUB-*ut* DŪG.GA DINGIR GÁL-*ši*
[šumma šurāru ana karpat ṭābā]ti imqut ṭābat ili ibbašši

Omens Assur 42 and Sultantepe 45 both have positive apodoses, but they differ slightly. Instead of receiving a 'divine gift'⁹⁴ *qīšti ili*, as he does in the Assur variant, the man receives 'divine goodness' *ṭābat ili* in the Sultantepe variant. The connection between the protasis and the apodosis in the Sultantepe omen is based on phonetic similarity. That is, 'vinegar' *ṭābātu* in the

⁹³ German: *auffallend*. Note that Nötscher's (1929, 189 Rs. Z. 43f) suggested alternative reading *šá-na-an ibašši-šu* 'he will have a rival' for the above omen's apodosis can be dismissed as the manuscript's photograph confirms the apodosis's second sign is BA, with three horizontal wedges, and not NA.

⁹⁴ For the confusion, present already in antiquity, between 'divine wrath' and 'divine gift' see the commentary at Assur 43.

protasis is connected to the divine ‘goodness’ *tābat* in the apodosis because the consonants /ṭ b t/ are repeated in both words. Phonetic similarities is one of the ways connections between the ominous signs in the protasis and the outcomes of the apodosis were created in omens (De Zorzi 2022b, 87). The connection is further strengthened by the use of the likely similar sounding logograms DUG, in the protasis, and DÙG, in the apodosis.⁹⁵

The linguistic connection supersedes the repulsion of lizards contaminating food and its association with negative apodoses. Given the preeminence of writing⁹⁶ in Mesopotamian culture and within divination, it is perhaps not surprising that a phonetic connection would carry more weight than a symbolic association. What is interesting is that the Sultantepe omen makes the phonetic connection between vinegar and a positive outcome explicit, whereas the Assur has a positive association, but without any direct evidence of a phonetic connection.

4.2.4 phonetic associations and repetition

Rhetorical devices⁹⁷ abound in Mesopotamian literature, especially omen texts. Being based on repetition and similitude, the prominence of rhetorical devices in omen texts reflects a culturally-specific ontology rooted in analogical thinking (De Zorzi 2022a, 376–81).

While the use of rhetorical devices to connect protases and apodoses, as the devices reflect similitude⁹⁸ at the “semantic, phonetic and graphic level(s)” (De Zorzi 2022b, 87), has been commented on by many researchers (often using the terms like ‘word-play’ or paronomasia), the use of these rhetorical devices to structure omen sequences has received less attention. Both De Zorzi (2011, 67–71), commenting on the teratological divinatory series *šumma izbu* and Winitzer (2017, 438–49), writing on earlier Old Babylonian divination literature, noted that ‘word play’ was used by scribes not only to connect ominous phenomena with portended outcomes, but also to organize omens. This type of organization is also evident in the lizard omens of *šumma ālu*.

Our corpus features both uses of such rhetorical devices: to link protases and apodoses as well as to organize sequences. Because of its predominance within our corpus, the discussion here will mainly focus on the phonetic repetition to create associations between the protasis and apodosis as well as to create links between omens.

In our corpus, the two most common patterns for phonetic repetition are sibilants /s/, /š/, and /ṣ/ as well as nasal consonants combined with a dental, particularly /m/ with /t/ or /d/. In addition to creating a linkage at the phonetic level, this repetition has aural effects. The susurrant

⁹⁵ I’d like to thank Nicla De Zorzi for this insight.

⁹⁶ Writing was a metaphor for divination itself as well as for communication with the divine (Broida 2012, 4).

⁹⁷ For the use of the term ‘rhetorical devices’ in this thesis, see section 4.2.

⁹⁸ I’d like to thank Nicla De Zorzi for the many insightful discussion and conversations we had on the topic of similitude in Mesopotamian divinatory texts.

quality of repeated sibilants and the droning quality of repeated nasal consonants with dentals may have been appealing or at least deemed appropriate when dealing with matters of divine messages. Other common patterns of phonetic repetition, in no particular order, include 1) /š/ with a bilabial plosive /b/ or /p/, 2) various combination of /l-p-t-s-m/, and 3) /r/ combined with either a bilabial plosive (sometimes adding a /s/) or the dental /t/ (occasionally the combination also adds a /k/).

Two examples of sibilant repetition are found in Assur 21 and 22 and their counterparts, Sultantepe 19 and 20 (bolding indicates phonetic repetition):

- Assur 21** [If a liz]ard falls onto a man’s stool — an eclipse during the [day] watch (will occur).
[š**umma** šur]āru ana muḥḥi **kussi** amēli imqut na'dur maššarti [ūme]
- Assur 22** [If] a lizard climbs onto a man’s stool — he will be chronically i[ll].
[š**umma**] šurāru ana muḥḥi **kussi** amēli **ili issalla**[']

The omen sequence is certainly influenced by the spatial dichotomies ‘falls’ and ‘climbs’, but additional elements are also encountered in these two omens. The word *kussû* ‘stool’ may have semantic associations with the apodosis in Assur 21. A stool, as opposed to a bed, for example, is an item usually used during the day.⁹⁹ Further, the word *kussû* may have triggered an association with the royal sphere, which in turn results in an apodosis that is more general than the usual private omens in *šumma ālu* and which involves an eclipse. The king’s throne is also a *kussû*. In the later Neo-Assyrian astronomical divinatory series *enūma anu Enlil* ‘When the gods An, Enlil...’, an eclipse could be interpreted as an evil portent for the king. A ritual involving a substitute king would be performed to “absorb” the evil away from the real king (Rochberg 2004, 77–78; Ambos 2012, 100). Further linking the protasis and apodosis in Assur 21 are the doubled sibilants in *kussi* and *maššarti*.

The doubled sibilants continue in Assur 22. Not only is the word *kussi* again in the protasis, but there is a doubled sibilant in the apodosis’s *issalla* ‘he will fall chronically ill’. The use of *issalla*, the N-stem of *salā’u*, makes the intent of the repetition singularly obvious. The two verbs in Akkadian with the meaning ‘to be ill’, *salā’u* and *marāšu*, are slightly nuanced in meaning when used in omen texts (Stol 2009, 39).¹⁰⁰ The latter verb, however, is the more common word to describe being ill and is well-attested (Stol 2009, 29). It is in fact found throughout the lizard omens,¹⁰¹ whereas, within our corpus, the verb *salā’u* only appears in Assur 22 and its almost

⁹⁹ I’d like to thank Nicla De Zorzi for this insight.

¹⁰⁰ In other genres of literary texts, Stol (2009, 45) shows that the substantive derived from the two verbs, *sili’tu* and *muršu*, both ‘disease’, are simply variants of each other with no apparent nuance in meaning.

¹⁰¹ The commentary at Nineveh 11 has a list of lizard omens involving illnesses and diseases. Most, but not all, use a form of the verb *marāšu* or a substantive derived from it.

identical counterpart Sultantepe 20. Unusual vocabulary¹⁰² and orthography were a beloved rhetorical device by Mesopotamian scribes, especially to enhance other rhetorical devices (Noegel 2021, 160, 311), which certainly influenced the word choice. Nevertheless, *marāšu* remains more common in our corpus. The main difference lies in the repetition of phonetic elements. The inflected form of the N-stem *salā'u* doubles a sibilant, mirroring the doubled /s/ in *kussi*, whereas the inflected form of the G-stem *marāšu* does not. The doubled /l/ in *issalla'* is a further example of consonance as the repetition of the /l/ complements the repeated /l/ in *amēli ili*.

It is apparent that in Assur 22 phonetic repetition plays a significant role in creating linkages on the horizontal level, that is between the protasis and apodosis. However, the question remains as to what the significance of illness is in this omen. There are many Akkadian words with doubled sibilants. Why choose one related to illness? The theme of illness can be viewed as a manifestation of the process of creating sequential coherence.

The key word in Assur 21's apodosis is *maššarti* 'watch'. It is the word whose phonetic repetition links it to the same omen's protasis. It is also the word that connects the apodoses in Assur 21 and 22. The word's consonant's, excluding the feminine /t/, are the same as those in the word *muršu* 'illness'. That is, the theme of illness in the apodoses (suggested by rearranging the consonants in *maššarti* into *muršu*) helps to create a coherent omen sequence in Assur 21–22. To use the nomenclature from Noegel's (2021, 273–77) book on polysemy and paronomasia in ancient Near Eastern texts, rearranging consonants into another sequence is a form of anagrammatic paronomasia. However, in our two omens, the anagrammatic paronomasia is suggested, not explicit since the need to create a linkage between the protasis and apodosis in Assur 22 encourages the use of a word with doubled sibilants, here *issalla'*. Overlapping various rhetorical devices helps to create a sense of correctness and gives the omens and their sequence a weightier feel. The associations and sequencing are not just spatially determined (down before up), but also through semantic connotations (stool = throne → royal message → eclipse) and paronomasia (consonant doubling and anagrammatic paronomasia).

In the Assur omens above, instances of repeated sibilants in the protasis only reoccur once in each apodosis. Some omens, however, are replete with repetition. For example, Nineveh 51' and 52' are written almost entirely with words that either begin with a sibilant or contain one.

¹⁰² Unusual vocabulary with rhetorical effects are found in other genres of Mesopotamian literature. Veldhuis (1994, 44) discusses an incantation against a fly in which the unusual word *harḥasannu* 'ear' was chosen over the more typical *uznu*. He suggest the word choice is more "solemn", but also notes that the word mirrors structural elements in the incantation such as word length and phonetic repetition.

- Nineveh 51'** If a lizard carrying a snake stares at a woman — that woman will be married together with a secondary wife.
šumma šurāru šēra našīma sinništa imur sinništu šī itti šerreti innaḥḥaz
- Nineveh 52'** If a lizard carrying a snake stares at a man — that man will marry another woman.
šumma šurāru šēra našīma amēlu imur amēlu šū šanītamma iḥḥaz

It is noteworthy that the word *šēra* ‘snake’ in Nineveh 51’s protasis and *šerreti* ‘secondary wife’ in the apodosis are similar. Both omens strategically use repetition to emphasize the concept of ‘second’. In addition to the previously mentioned sibilants, there is also a notable number of nasal consonants, especially /n/. This is not surprising as the roots /š/ and /n/ feature in a number of words relating to the concept of ‘two’ or ‘second’, such as the verb *šanû*, meaning ‘to do again, to do for a second time’ (CAD Š.1: 398 s.v. *šanû* A) and the word *šina* ‘two’ (CAD Š.3: 32 s.v. *šina*), among others. The omen also features several words with doubled consonants, a recurrent element in other omens related to the concept of ‘two’. See section 4.25 on twins and doubling.

Further, the syntax of Nineveh 51’ contributes to the depiction of the idea of ‘two women’. The word *sinništu* ‘woman’ is mirrored on either side of the protasis’s verb *imur*, in the accusative and nominative cases. This mirrored structure persists in Nineveh 52’. This time, however, it is the word *amēlu* ‘man’ placed on each side of the protasis’s verb, both in the nominative case. Finally, the secondary wife in Nineveh 51’ apodosis has a semantic apodotic effect on Nineveh 52’, with the substantivized adjective *šanītamma* ‘another (woman)’ in Nineveh 52’ echoing the concept of ‘secondary’ from Nineveh 51’.

As in Nineveh 51’ and 52’, nasal consonants are among the most commonly used to create consonance. The preponderance of the nasal /m/ in the protasis, results in a droning, mumbling quality when spoken aloud. Similar to the susurrant effect of multiple sibilants, the droning quality of nasal consonants may have been deemed appropriate for omen texts. In the following Assur omen, there might also be a repetition in the form of the /m-l/ of *amēli* and the protasis’s first verb *immelilma* ‘plays’:

- VAT 9906 ii 15–17** If ditto (= a lizard) plays in a man’s house two days, three days, four days!, five days!, six days, seven days, many days and jumps in a man’s house — he will experience an attack; that house(hold) will not prosper.
šumma MIN (šurāru) ina bīt amēli 2 ūmē 3 ūmē 4 ūmē! 5 ūmē! 6 ūmē 7 ūmē ūmē mādūte immelilma ina bīt amēli išḫiṭ šeḫṭa irašši bītu šū ul iššir

The apodosis, on the other hand, has a notable lack of nasal consonants. And while this would seem to speak against phonetic connections between protasis and apodosis, closer inspection shows that there is indeed phonetic repetition between the omen’s two parts. Again, it

is sibilants that are repeated. All of the numbers in the protasis, except the number 4, have sibilants (: the numbers, except 4, are bolded).

The link between protasis and apodosis created by the repeated sibilants and the consonants /š-ḫ-t/ is further supported by the Babylonian topos of using the verb *mēlulu* ‘to play’ to describe fighting (CAD M.2: 17 s.v. *mēlulu* b). Therefore, the playing lizard in the protasis is associated with the apodosis’s attack. Phonetic repetition also reinforces this connection by replicating the consonants in the protasis’s other verb *išḫiṭ* ‘jumps’ and the first word of the apodosis *šeḫṭa* ‘an attack’. The /š/ reappears in the apodosis’s first verb *irašši*, whose root consonants /r-š-’/ in turn extends to the apodosis’s second verb *iššir* ‘prosper’, with its roots /’-š-r/; though, the order of the consonants is reversed.

Particularly prominent within the Assur and Sultantepe recensions is the steadfast use of a nasal consonant, especially /m/, in combination with a dental consonant.¹⁰³ Typical examples are Assur 53 and 54:

Assur 53 If lizards are very numerous in a man’s house — abandonment of the man’s house.
šumma šurārû ina bīt amēli magal mādu nadê bīt amēli

Assur 54 If a dead lizard is seen in a man’s house — that house will diminish.
šumma šurīrittu mittu ina bīt amēli innamir bītu šū imaṭṭi

In both cases, the combination of a nasal with a dental in the protasis is reflected in the apodosis. The combination of nasal and dental consonants also links the two omens, Assur 53 and 54 as a pair. Semantically, the two are linked as the concept of house if repeated in both omens and one could argue that a dead *mīttu* lizard could be seen as the opposite of numerous *mādu* lizards.

Another omen with the combination of the nasal and dental is below:

VAT 9906 ii 11 If ditto (= a lizard) falls into an oil vessel and dies — bad news will obstruct the man.
šumma MIN (šurāru) ana karpāt šamni imqutma imūt amāt lemutti ana pān amēli iparrīk

The protases verbs and the first words of the apodosis *imqutma imūt amāt lemutti* is but a series of words with the consonants /m/ and /t/ clustered around the boundary between protasis and apodosis. The above omen also repeats the /k-r-p/ of the protasis’s *karpāt* ‘vessel’ in the apodosis’s verb *iparrīk* ‘will obstruct’. This is another example of anagrammatic paronomasia.

¹⁰³ The combination of nasal and dental is also prevalent among the omens in Tablet 33 on geckos. In general, Tablet 32 and 33 show numerous similarities. Tablet 33’s omens are being re-edited and will be published online as part of the Bestiarium Mesopotamicum project. Until then, the most recent edition is *If a City 2* (2006, 202–22).

The negative portend of VAT 9906 ii 11 may also have a symbolic association as pouring oil on water and observing the shapes it creates was a divination method used in Mesopotamia (Lambert 2007, 4). Certainly if a lizard died within oil, it would be considered a form of contamination. The fact that the verb ‘to obstruct’ happens to have the same root-consonants as the word for vessel reinforces the connection.

Some omens feature phonetic repetition that only occurs within just the protasis or apodosis, but the repetition does not extend from the protasis to the apodosis. Nineveh 36' Variant B has a compound apodosis. The first part consists of but one word *ibissû* ‘losses’. The combination of /b-s/ is repeated in the second apodosis, with an additional sibilant /š/.

Nineveh 36' Variant B (K 3730+)

If a lizard falls onto a man's sleeping place (or on a man's) bed — losses;
that man will be bedridden.

*šumma šurāru ina majjāl ereš amēli imqut **ibissû** amēlu šū eršu **išabbassu***

In protases, a common consonant combination for this kind of consonance is /r-b/, which occurs in omens in which a lizard crawls underneath *ana šapāl ... **irub*** a piece of furniture and lies down ***irbiš***. See also section 4.2.2 for the omens about lizards interacting with household furnishings.

Due to the consonant-root structure of Akkadian words, it is perhaps not surprising that consonance and alliteration should play such a large role in omens. Nevertheless, the repetition of vowel sounds also plays its role, though granted to a much lesser extent, such as in Assur 37.¹⁰⁴

Assur 37

If a lizard falls onto a torch and is *singed* — that house will go to ruin.

*šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi dipāri imqutma **kupput** bītu šū **arbūta** illak*

The G-stem preterite forms of the protasis's two verbs *imqut* and *kupput* (*ku-pu-ut*) both end in a syllable formed by consonant plus -ut. The adverbial accusative *arbūta* in the apodosis mirrors this sound with the syllable /būt/. The verb *kupput* and the noun *arbūta* also repeat bilabial plosives with /p/ and /b/.

Phonetic repetition does not have to occur in isolation. In fact, it is frequently combined with other rhetorical devices to strengthen the connections between protasis and apodosis or between individual omens. The omens Nineveh 30' and 31'¹⁰⁵ share a number of features, linking the two omens.

¹⁰⁴ The counterpart to Assur 37 is Sultantepe 39. The two omens appear to differ only in the amount of preserved text. Assur 37 has been presented as it preserves the largest portion of text.

¹⁰⁵ The omens Assur 9 and 10 as well as Sultantepe 6 and 7 were used to reconstruct the Nineveh omens. They therefore share the same phonetic similarities. Note that the order of the two omens in the Assur recension is reversed.

- Nineveh 30'** [If a lizard fall]s [behind a man] and touches him — [he will experience a n[egative] *twist* [of fate].
[DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* EGIR NA ŠUB-*u*]t-*ma* TAG-*su* p*í*-*is-lat* 𒄩[UL IGI]-*mar*
[*šumma šurāru ana arkat amēli imqu*]t*ma ilpussu pislāt l[umni im]mar*
- Nineveh 31'** If a lizard falls behind a man (and) flops about repeatedly — [he will experience] e[vil].
DIŠ EME.DIR *ana* EGIR NA ŠUB-*ut it-tap-pi-iš* 𒄩[UL IGI]-*mar*
šumma šurāru ana arkat amēli imqut ittappiṣ l[umna immar]

Semantically, both omens' protases feature a lizard falling behind a man,¹⁰⁶ and their associated apodoses are negative. Structurally, the two omens' protases both have two parts; that is, the lizard performs another action beyond just falling behind a man. Finally, there is phonetic repetition between the two omens' apodoses.

Examining the phonetic links within each omen and between the omens reveals that phonetic repetition was used to support and strengthen the associations with a negative outcome. In Nineveh 30', the protasis's second verb *lapātu* (written: *ilpussu*, consonants /l-p-(t)-s/) translates as 'to touch lightly', but also carries connotations of negative intent (CAD L: 82 s.v. *lapātu*). These connotations fit with the negative apodosis and are replicated in the apodosis through anagrammatic paronomasia with the word *pislāt*. Though the word's exact meaning is unclear (see the commentary at Nineveh 30'), *pislāt* derives from *pasālu* 'to turn around, to twist' (CAD P: 216 s.v. *pasālu*; eSAD s.v. *pisiltu* 'twist, adversary'), making the word's use in anagrammatic paronomasia particularly fitting. Noegel (2021, 280) notes anagrammatic paronomasia is often present in texts containing "reversals, inversions, overturnings, and the like".

The protasis of the subsequent omen, Nineveh 31', also has two verbs, just as in Nineveh 30'. The second verb *napāṣu* 'to flop about' (written: *ittappiṣ*) not only incorporates phonetically similar consonants as the second verb of Nineveh 30's protasis—picking up the /t/ and /p/ as well as a similar sibilant /s/—but also shares semantic associations with Nineveh 30's *lapātu*, in that the former can also mean 'to kick, strike' (CAD N.1: 285 s.v. *napāṣu* A), certainly a 'touch' with negative intent. This is reinforced by the graphic repetition of the signs 𒄩UL IGI-*mar* in both omens, which results in the phonetic repetition of the consonants /l-m-r/.

While similar phonetic associations can be found in the parallel omens of both the Assur (Assur 9–10) and Sultantepe (Sultantepe 6–7) recensions, there are some differences between the recensions (see also the commentary under each omen). Most notably, the Sultantepe omens—the Sultantepe recension more usually mirrors the Assur recension—are surprisingly more

¹⁰⁶ See also the commentary at Nineveh 29' as we reconstruct the protasis to include a lizard falling behind a man.

similar to the Nineveh omens. Further, the Assur recension transposes the two omens; that is, the lizard flops about repeatedly in Assur 9 and touches the man in Assur 10.

All of the rhetorical devices discussed up to now have been at the level of the normalized Akkadian. In a few instances, however, there are indications that phonetic play may have also occurred at the level of logograms. In Assur 37, the signs GAR, in the protasis as IZI.GAR, and KAR, in the apodosis as KAR-*ta*₅, may have been phonetically linked. Further, IZI.GAR may have been linked with ZI.GA in Assur 38.¹⁰⁷ The Akkadian readings of the logograms, *dipāri* (IZI.GAR), *arbūta* (KAR-*ta*₅), and *šīt* (ZI.GA), however, do not have any obvious associations.

- Assur 37** If a lizard falls onto a torch and *is singed* — that house will go to ruin.
 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* UGU **IZI.GAR** ŠUB-*ut-ma* ku-*pu-ut* É BI **KAR-*ta*₅** DU-*ak*
šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi dipāri imqutma kupput bītu šū arbūta illak
- Assur 38** If a lizard falls into an oven but escapes — a loss of male and female slaves (will occur).
 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* IM.ŠU.RIN.NA ŠUB-*ut-ma* È **ZI.GA** ÌR ù GÉME
šumma šurāru ana tinūri imqutma ūši šīt ardi u amti

The above examples show that the links between ominous signs and portended outcomes as well as between omens within a subgroup are multi-layered. There can be semantic and symbolic associations, similar grammatical structures, binary pairs, and phonetic associations. An even more intricate example can be found in the sequence Assur 51–58, wherein Assur 55, initially appearing to deviate from the sequence, ultimately is shown to be a lynchpin upon which the upon which the sequence turns.

This sequence (re-printed below) of omens begins with an oppositional binary pair (marked in **bolded coral**) in which a lizard makes noise during the day and then the night (Assur 51 and 52). Other than a general association in *šumma ālu* of noise in the home being negative (see the commentary at Nineveh 47'), the connections between each omen's protasis and its apodosis is unclear. Nor is there at first glance, much to connect the pair to the remaining omens about dead lizards and one about a lizard giving birth. However phonetic repetition and several connections with Assur 55 links not only the first two omens, but the entire sequence. A final connection within the sequence is likely hysteron-proteron. The protases of Assur 54–56 pertain to death, whereas Assur 57 and 58 pertain to birth. In fact the birth sequence continues for several omens further. All three of Tablet 32's recensions feature sequences of omens in which lizards give birth. These sequences are always preceded by omens pertaining to death. This may be a representation of the lizard's symbolism of resurrection and rebirth.

¹⁰⁷ The two omens have counterparts in the Sultantepe recension: Sultantepe 39 and 40. The Assur omens have been presented here because the Assur manuscript preserves larger portions of the omens.

- Assur 51** If a lizard in a man's house keeps making noise the **entire day** — there will be misfortune.
 DIŠ EME.DIR *ina É NA ina DÙ u₄-me GÙ-šú ŠUB.ŠUB-di ŠUB-tu₄ GÁL-ši*
šumma šurāru ina bīt amēli ina kala ūme rigimšu ittaddi miqittu ibbašši
- Assur 52** If a lizard in a man's house keeps making noise **at night** — a loss of male and female slaves (will occur).
 DIŠ EME.DIR *ina É NA ina GE₆ GÙ-šú ŠUB.ŠUB-di ZI.GA ÌR ù GÉME*
šumma šurāru ina bīt amēli ina mūši rigimšu ittaddi šit ardi u amti
- Assur 53** If lizards are very **numerous** in a man's house — abandonment of the man's house.
 DIŠ EME.DIR *ina É NA ma-gal ḪI.A ŠUB-di É NA*
šumma šurārū ina bīt amēli magal mādu nadê bīt amēli
- Assur 54** If a **dead** lizard is seen in a man's house — that house will diminish.
 DIŠ EME.DIR *mi-it-tu₄ ina É NA IGI É BI LAL*
šumma šurīrittu mittu ina bīt amēli innamir bītu šū imatṭi
- Assur 55** If there is a *severed* lizard in a man's house — dilapidation of the house; grain will become scarce for that house.
 DIŠ EME.DIR *na-kíl-tu ina É NA it-tab-ši e-néš É É BI ŠE i-qir-šu*
šumma šurīrittu nakiltu ina bīt amēli ittabši enēš bīti bītu šū še'u iqqiršu
- Assur 56** If a lizard dies either in water or in beer and is (thereby) seen — an uprising (against) that house will arise.
 DIŠ EME.DIR *lu ina A lu ina KAŠ ÚŠ-ma IGI.DU₈ É BI ZI.BI ZI-šu*
šumma šurāru lū ina mē lū ina šikari imūtma innamir bītu šū tībšu itebbīšu
- Assur 57** If a lizard gives birth under the *sūtu*-measurement vessel of a man's house — abandonment of the house.
 DIŠ EME.DIR *KI.TA-nu sa-at É NA Û.TU ŠUB É*
šumma šurāru šaplānu sāt bīt amēli ūlid nadê bīti
- Assur 58** [If] a lizard gives birth under the millstone — the master of this house will be saved by the king's will.
 [DIŠ] EME.DIR *KI.TA-nu ^{na}UR₅ Û.TU EN É BI ina ŠÀ LUGAL KAR*
 [šumma] *šurāru šaplānu erī ūlid bēl bīti šuāti ina libbi šarri innetṭir*

A major connection for this sequence of omens, as in many lizard omen sequences, is the repetition of a nasal consonant with a dental (marked in **bold black**) in all of the omens. While the phonetic repetition is more obvious in Assur 53–58, it also exists in Assur 51 and 52, helping to connect these seemingly divergent omens to the rest of the sequence. The verb *ittaddi* is the Gtn preterite form of *nadû* (lit. 'to fall', here in combination with *rigmu* 'to utter noise'). The verb *nadû* is the same as the verb in the repeated apodosis 'abandonment of the house' in Assur 54 and 57. The repetition of the nasal consonant is not explicit in Assur 51 and 52, but it is implied. Therefore, the first /t/ in *ittaddi* has also been bolded.

Though all of the omens feature phonetic repetition in the combination of a nasal with a dental, only two omens use this phonetic repetition to create phonetic associations on the horizontal level (Assur 53 and 54). If one considers 'numerous' and 'dead' to be opposites, Assur 53 and 54 might also form another oppositional binary pair (marked in **bold blue-grey**).

While this connection is somewhat tenuous, it is noteworthy that it is these words that feature the phonetic repetition. Overall, the phonetic repetition is most obvious when all of the omens are examined as a group and appears to be an organizing element on the vertical level.

As mentioned at the beginning of this analysis, Assur 55 appears somewhat out of place in the sequence. Though the word *nakiltu* does have a nasal and a dental consonant, they are placed further apart than the other examples of repetition, making it less obvious both visually and aurally. The translation ‘severed’ is also uncertain (see the commentary at Assur 55) and gives the omen the appearance of being an interpolation within a sub-sequence of protases about dead lizards. It is also the only omen with a multi-part apodosis, with connections both upward and downward in the omen sequence.

- Assur 54** If a **dead** lizard is seen in a man’s house — that house will diminish.
 DIŠ EME.DIR *mi-it-tu₄ ina É NA IGI É BI LAL*
*šumma šurīrittu mittu ina bīt amēli innamir **bītu šū imatṭi***
- Assur 55** If there is a *severed* lizard in a man’s house — dilapidation of the house; grain will become scarce for that house.
 DIŠ EME.DIR *na-kil-tu ina É NA it-tab-ši e-neš É É BI ŠE i-qir-šu*
*šumma šurīrittu **nakiltu** ina bīt amēli **ittabši enēš bīti bītu šū še’u iqqiršu***
- Assur 56** If a lizard dies either in water or in beer and is (thereby) seen — an uprising (against) that house will arise.
 DIŠ EME.DIR *lu ina A lu ina KAŠ ÚŠ-ma IGI.DU₈ É BI ZI.BI ZI-šu*
*šumma šurāru lū ina mē lū ina **šikari imūtma innamir bītu šū tibšu***
itebbišu

There a number of rhetorical devices connecting Assur 55 to the other omens however. To begin with, a simple phonetic repetition (marked in **bold saffron**) occurs between Assur 55’s second apodosis (the consonants /q-r-š/) in the verb *iqqiršu* ‘it will become scarce’ and the protasis of Assur 56 (the consonants /š-k-r/) in the noun *šikari* ‘beer’. The repetition occurs in Assur 55’s second apodosis. Perhaps it was added to create an apodotic effect with Assur 56.

The verb in Assur 55’s protasis is a common one, *ittabši* ‘there is’. Though not unusual, the two omens on either side of Assur 55 both use another common verb *innamir* ‘is seen’ instead. With *ittabši*, the consonant pattern /t-b-š/ are introduced and create a complex web between the omens of the entire sequence. In a manner consistent with other phonetic repetition, the same consonants (marked in **bold dark blue**) appear in both of Assur 55’s apodoses.

Assur 56’s apodosis (*bītu šū tibšu itebbišu* ‘an uprising (against) that house will arise’) also contains the same consonants. This apodosis only appears in two omens, Nineveh 49’ and Assur 56 (Nineveh 49’ add *ana* ‘against’ before É BI ‘that house’). The signs BI ZI are repeated, though they belong to different words and the repetition of ZI (ZI.BI and ZI-šu) creates a *figura etymologica*, or the repetition of two etymologically related words in the form of a noun and verb.

While modern-day definitions of *figura etymologica* may emphasize the true etymological links between the two words, in antiquity the link was often of the phonetic or semantic variety (Clary 2009, 7). *Figura etymologica* is a rhetorical device present in a myriad of languages (Štech 1967), and is known from other cuneiform texts.¹⁰⁸ As a rhetorical device, *figura etymologica* makes a phrase's meaning more impactful and can help to bring about emphasis and understanding (Dardano 2019, 26–27). In Homeric epics, Clary (2009, 56–57) notes the device was also used to impress, through linguistic means, the self-evident truth of certain words.

In our example, Assur 56's apodosis, the noun *tību* 'revolt; attack' (ZI.BI) and the verb *tebû* 'to raise' (ZI-šu) are etymologically related (CAD T: 306 s.v. *tību*; 386 s.v. *tebû*). Together they mean 'a revolt will occur' (CAD T: 315 s.v. *tību* 5a). The apodosis also repeats the syllable *šu* three times. It is written twice with the logogram BI and once syllabically as -šú.

The repetition of the consonants /t/, /b/, and /š/, however, are not limited to the *figura etymologica*. They also occur in the words *bīti*, *bītu*, and *šu*. This connects then Assur 55 with not only the subsequent Assur 56, but also the *bītu šū* 'that house' in the preceding Assur 54. It loosely also ties the omen to the first omen in the sequence Assur 51 as the apodosis features words with the same consonants *miqittu ibbašši* 'there will be misfortune'. Though unclear, the phonetic repetition may also occur with the logograms É BI ŠE in Assur 55.

The *figura etymologica* and the repeated consonants circle back onto another repetition of the sign ZI, in Assur 52's apodosis (ZI.GA ÌR ù GÉME 'a loss of male and female slaves (will occur)'), creating another connection with the first pair of omens. The signs ZI.GA appear very similar to the signs ZI.BI. Further the sign ZI is polyvalent (see the commentary at Nineveh 49' and Assur 38). In our corpus, ZI can be read at times either as a *tību* 'revolt; attack' (as in Assur 56) or as *šītu* 'loss' (as in Assur 52). This connection is likely the reason for the protasis in Assur 57, where a lizard gives birth under the *sūtu*-measurement (written *sa-at*), as that particular word repeats the combination of a sibilant with a dental. Alternatively, should ZI.GA instead be read as the very similarly formed ZI.BI, Assur 52's apodosis could then be read as *tīb ardi u amti* 'uprising of the male and female slaves', which also recalls back to the consonants /t/ and /b/ of *ittabši* in Assur 55. These same consonants are in the final omen Assur 58, whose protases also repeats the theme of birth from Assur 57, but also the spatial element of *šaplānu* 'under'.

¹⁰⁸ Giusfredi (2012, 55 Obv. 6), commenting on a Akkadian medical text, suggests the ancient scribes may have used *figura etymologica* because it "may have sounded complicated". The device is also well known in incantations, and Veldhuis (1994, 45) describes how its use in an incantation against a fly creates a verbal exaggeration with phrasing usually reserved for the complete obliteration of the enemy. Zgoll (2006, 46 note 161) further notes that the passages with *figura etymologica* in a prayer to Marduk are memorable and intensely formulated.

Further shoring up the connection between all of these omens (Assur 51–58) is the sequencing of the apodoses. Semantically they appear to increase in intensity as one progresses through the sequence. Assur 51 begins with the announcement that ‘there will be misfortune’. The ‘loss of male and female slaves’ in Assur 52 could certainly be seen as a misfortune for the slave owner. Should the owner lose his slaves, he may have to abandon his house (Assur 53), which would result in that house diminishing (Assur 54) and its eventual dilapidation (Assur 55). Assur 55’s second apodosis, which through the use of the consonants /q/, /r/, and /š/ connects it to Assur 56, is about grain becoming scarce. This seems to both be a result of the household’s downfall, but also harken back to the slaves being lost in Assur 52 as who should then collect the grain. The mental recalling of Assur 52, however, is also supported by an uprising arising against that house in Assur 56. Then the house is abandoned yet again in Assur 57, creating another loop back to Assur 53. Finally, the king’s will saves the master of the house in Assur 58.

The syntax of the apodoses also exhibits an interest in symmetry.¹⁰⁹ The first four apodoses create an ABBA pattern in terms of syntax: A – *miqittu ibbašši* (noun + verb), B – *šīt ardi u amti* (*status constructus*), B’ – *nadê bīt amēli* (*status constructus*), A’ – *bītu šū imatṭi* (noun + verb). Assur 55, the lynchpin of the sequence, is the only one with two apodoses. The first, *enēš bīti*, echoes the *status constructus* of Assur 51 and 54. The syntactic structure of the second apodosis, *bītu šū še’u iqqiršu*, reoccurs in the structure of Assur 56’s apodosis, *bītu šū tībšu itebbīšu*. Assur 57’s apodosis, *nadê bīti*, is another *status constructus*, almost a duplicate of Assur 53’s apodosis. Assur 58’s apodosis, *bēl bīti šuāti ina libbi šarri innetṭir*, is rather different from the others.

It is true that Assur 51 and 52 as a binary pair are their own mini sequence of omens; just as Assur 53–56 are all a sequence about dead lizards. Even Assur 57 and 58 are just the first two omens of a longer sequence (Assur 57–62) about lizards giving birth. Within that, Assur 57–60 are organized chiasmatically (discussed in section 4.2.5). Nevertheless, the Assur 51–58 are also a coherent sequence. Complex and varied elements come together to weave a web of connections both within the omens (at the horizontal level between protases and apodoses), but also in between omens and between sequences of omens. What this particular sequence demonstrates well is that the vertical connections are not just sequential, but can also be used to have the text refer back onto itself (or conversely to refer forward to later omens in the sequence).

4.2.5 twins and doubling

An accumulation of repeated pairs of consonants often involves what Noegel (2004) refers to as ‘geminant ballast and clustering’. In the lizard omens, this device involves not only doubling sounds, as Noegel (2004, 2) notes, but also the doubling of logograms, and is often found in omens

¹⁰⁹ I thank Nicla De Zorzi for some of these insights on the apodoses in this sequence.

related to twins or duality. It appears as if an omen's meaning is replicated through its form, or that they reinforce each other within the omen. Assur 59, where the portended outcome is twins, is a good example.

Assur 59 If a lizard gives birth in a woman's kettle — that woman will have **twins**; she will go about unhappily.
 DIŠ EME.DIR *ina* ŠEN **MUNUS** Û.TU **MUNUS** BI MAŠ.TAB.BA TUK-*ši* *ina*
 ŠÀ.ḪUL **DU.DU-ak**
šumma šurāru ina ruqqi sinništi ūlid sinništu šī māšī irāšši ina lumun libbi
ittanallak

The scribe wrote the omen by repeating the signs **MUNUS** and **DU**. Further, in normalized Akkadian the omen features a number of words with clusters of doubled consonants: *ruqqi*, *sinništu*, *irāšši*, *libbi*, and *ittanallak*. In fact, the doubling of the sign **DU** means the apodoses second verb should be interpreted as an iterative Gtn present-future. The Gtn stem not only introduces an iterative meaning, reflecting the repetitive nature of twins, but also means the verb has an additional doubled consonant /t/.

Women, in general, appear less frequently in omens and even less so in protases (Muller 2016, 431). When omens feature women they are often marked by their connection to men (2016, 433), and it is most often their reproductive roles that are emphasized (2016, 436–37).

The presence of *ruqqu* 'kettle', a D-stem noun formed from the verb *raqāqu*, a verb that already includes a doubled consonant, seems to suggest the idea of giving birth to twins in the apodosis. Semantically, the roots /r-q-q/ denote thinness or flatness (CAD R: 167 s.v. *raqāqu*). This may indicate that *ruqqu* was a vessel made of metal that has been hammered flat to its limits (Guichard and Marti 2013, 62). Perhaps this is reminiscent of a pregnant woman's stretched abdomen, especially a woman carrying twins. There is also a graphical association between the sign ŠEN used to write 'kettle' and pregnancy: The archaic version of the sign ŠEN is a container with the sign A 'water' inside¹¹⁰ (Guichard and Marti 2013, 62 note 60). Water is a necessary component of agricultural fecundity and often means semen. The pregnant woman therefore becomes in essence the ŠEN-vessel. Further, lizards usually have multiple offspring at a time which helps to reinforce the associations with twins.

Even the fact the apodosis consists of two parts reflects duality. The second part of the apodosis, in which the woman goes about unhappily, also seems to be connected to the sign ŠEN *ruqqu* in the apodosis. Another reading of the sign ŠEN is *qablu* 'fight'. While children in general have positive associations in Mesopotamian literature, twins are more nuanced in terms of a favorable or unfavorable prognosis. Without the mention of gender, as above, the prognosis

¹¹⁰ For sketches, see Krebernik (1998, 279 LAK 713) and Steinkeller (1981, 248). See also Steinkeller (1984) for a continued discussion on ŠEN in various terminology.

could be positive, but should the prognosis be for male twins, it is generally unfavorable—as the second half of the apodosis indicates. The rivalry of two brothers foreshadows negative consequences and in some divinatory series even the downfall of communities (Stol 2000, 208–9). As Stol (2000, 208) notes, the context of conflict and communities calls to mind the conflict between the biblical twins Jacob and Esau or, from Roman mythology, Romulus and Remus.

The scribe however does not only match the apodosis and protasis in meaning, but also ensures the words' forms correspond to the semantic content. Not only is *ruqqu* a nominative form of the aptly named *Doppelungsstamm*, in which the middle radical is doubled, but the word MUNUS is repeated in both the protasis and apodosis. This is certainly not an uncommon occurrence in omens (see for example Nineveh 51'), but it is also not rare for the apodosis to omit the protagonist. The topic of twins reflects the decision not to do so here. Double repetitions, such as the repetition of the word *sinništu* 'woman' above, are common in references to twins (Noegel and Nichols 2019, 252).

The vast majority of the words in Assur 59 feature doubled consonants and those that are doubled are repeated across various words. For example, the doubled /n/ of *sinništu* is also part of the words *ittanallak* and *ina lumun libbi* 'unhappily'. And while *lumun* does not repeat consonants, both /m/ and /n/ are similarly articulated nasal sounds. Not only is the consonant /š/ doubled in the verb *irašši*, the consonant is repeated throughout the omen: *sinništu*, *ši* 'that', *māši* 'twins'. Even the word for woman *sinništu* repeats the consonants from the words for two *šinā* and *šittā*.

The word for twins is written with the logogram MAŠ.TAB.BA. TAB is a sign written with two parallel, horizontal wedges that can also mean *eṣēpu* 'to double'. Even the word for lizard *šurāru* features a doubling of the letter /r/. In fact, the one word that does not feature any repetition or doubling is the protasis's verb *ūlid*. Perhaps its conspicuous lack of doubling is marking its role as the demarcation between the ominous sign (protasis) and the associated outcome (apodosis). It seems clear that the prognosis of twins coincides with not only a doubling in signs, but a creation of geminate ballast. Such doublings are also common in biblical narratives featuring twins (Noegel and Nichols 2019). Finally, repeated consonants and the geminate clustering of consonants also helps to link Assur 59 with the subsequent omen.

Assur 60 If a lizard gives birth in the path of a man's house — abandonment of the house.
 DIŠ EME.DIR *ina tal-lak-ti É NA Û.TU ŠUB-di É*
šumma šurāru ina tallakti bīt amēli ūlid nadê bīti

The consonants of Assur 59's second verb *ittanallak* are repeated as *tallakti* 'path' in the protasis of Assur 60.

Beyond consonant and geminate clustering and the doubling of signs, Assur 59's placement in the omen sequence places it within a group of chiastically structured apodoses (Assur 57–60). This sequence is then immediately followed by another chiastically structured sequence Assur 60–63.

- Assur 57** If a lizard gives birth under the *sūtu*-measurement vessel of a man's house — abandonment of the house.
 DIŠ EME.DIR KI.TA-*nu sa-at* É NA Û.TU ŠUB É
šumma šurāru šaplānu sāt bīt amēli ūlid nadê bīti (A)
- Assur 58** [If] a lizard gives birth under the millstone — the master of that house will be saved by the king's will.
 [DIŠ] EME.DIR KI.TA-*nu* ^{na4}UR₅ Û.TU EN É BI *ina ŠĀ* LUGAL KAR
 [*šumma*] *šurāru šaplānu erī ūlid bēl bīti šuāti ina libbi šarri inneṭṭir* (B)
- Assur 59** If a lizard gives birth in a woman's kettle — that woman will have twins; she will go about unhappily.
 DIŠ EME.DIR *ina* ŠEN MUNUS Û.TU MUNUS BI MAŠ.TAB.BA TUK-*ši* *ina*
 ŠĀ.ḪUL DU.DU-*ak* (B/C)
šumma šurāru ina ruqqi sinništi ūlid sinništu šī māšī irašši ina lumun libbi ittanallak
- Assur 60** If a lizard gives birth in the path of a man's house — abandonment of the house.
 DIŠ EME.DIR *ina tal-lak-ti* É NA Û.TU ŠUB-*di* É
šumma šurāru ina tallakti bīt amēli ūlid nadê bīti (C'/A)
- Assur 61** [If a l]izard gives birth in the furnishings of a man's house — dispersal of the house.
 [DIŠ E]ME.DIR *ina mut-tab-bil-ti* É NA Û.TU BIR-*aḫ* É
 [*šumma* *šu*]rāru *ina muttabbiliti bīt amēli ūlid sapāḫ bīti* (D)
- Assur 62** [If a liz]ard gives birth in the *ḫarūru* (part of the millstone) of a man's house — dispersal of the house.
 [DIŠ EM]E.DIR *ina ḫa-ru-ur* É NA Û.TU BIR-*aḫ* É
 [*šumma* *šur*]āru *ina ḫarūr bīt amēli ūlid sapāḫ bīti* (D)
- Assur 63** [If] [liza]rds often fall in a man's house — abandonment of the [house].
 [DIŠ EME.D]IR *ina* É NA *ma-gal* ŠUB.MEŠ-*ni* ŠUB-*di* [É]
 [*šumma* *šur*]ārû *ina bīt amēli magal imtaqqutûni nadê [bīti]* (A)

Chiasmus¹¹¹ is a technique known from other Mesopotamian literature, but less remarked upon in omen texts. It displays the author's skillfulness (Assis 2002, 274) and "often directs the reader to the fact that the text is constructed, and not necessarily to the center of the structure" (Assis 2002, 287). Note that the chiastic structure is not always created through the repetition of exact signs from one omen to the other, but instead are sometimes created with logograms and other times through syllabic spellings.

Assur 59 is in the middle of a chiastic pattern that runs from Assur 57–60 (ABBA). The omen's second apodosis is characterized by several connections to the sequences around it. The

¹¹¹ For an example from biblical Hebrew of duality and chiasmus being connected, see Noegel and Nichols (2019, 258).

signs *ina* ŠÀ connect back to the apodosis of Assur 58 (B) and help to create the first chiastic structure. As mentioned before, the verb DU.DU.-*ak* (C) connects with the protasis of Assur 60 through phonetic repetition in *tallakti* (C'). Assur 60's apodosis *nadê bīti* (A) closes the first chiasmus (Assur 57–60), while at the same time starting the next one (Assur 60–63).

The protasis of Assur 62 is the last of a series about lizards giving birth. Assur 63's protasis ([If] [liza]rds often fall in a man's house) seems out of place, but if we assume the chiastic relationship of the apodoses is intentional, then perhaps the numerous omens about lizards giving birth triggered the association with *magal* an adverb meaning 'very (much), in large amounts, abundantly' (CAD M.1: 29 s.v. *magal*). This not only replicates the symmetry apparent in those apodoses, but the *magal* in Assur 63 echoes the *magal* in Assur 53.

Chiasmus is by definition a repetition or doubling, and it gives the sequence a mirrored structure. It is not surprising, therefore, that an omen about twins might be placed in the middle of such a sequence. Further study of chiasmus in omen sequences would surely bring to light many more such relationships and the use of other rhetorical devices.

The use of geminate ballast and clustering extends beyond omens about twins. Any omen related to the concept of duality can be marked by doubling, whether it be consonants specifically or the doubling of words or signs more generally. This mirrors Noegel and Nichols (2019) findings that doubling also occurs in biblical passages dealing with duality more broadly.¹¹² Noegel's (2004) earlier work linked the rhetorical device in biblical texts solely to references about twins. The doubled consonants have been bolded in the following example from Assur:

VAT 9906 v 13' If ditto (= a lizard) with two tails is seen in a man's house — there will be news.
 DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) šá 2 [K]UN.MEŠ-šá *ina* É NA IGI INIM GÁL-ši [(0)]
 šumma MIN (*šurīrittu*) šá 2 **zibbātuša** *ina* bīt amēli **innamir** amātu **ibbašši**
 [(0)]

As already mentioned in section 3.3.1, the grammatical gender of lizards was flexible in Akkadian. The use of the feminine *šurīrittu* above is indicated by the feminine ending on KUN.MEŠ 'tails'. The feminine form repeats both the consonants /r/ and /t/. The doubled object in the protasis is the lizard's tails *zibbātuša*, which appropriately doubles the letter /b/. The verbs in both the protasis and apodosis are N-stem forms that repeat consonants and grammatically replicate one another. Just as in the case of twins, the duality of the omen's subject matter seems to be reflected in the grammar and the phonetic elements of the omen.

¹¹² Noegel and Nichols (2019, 259–61) also has an excursion into the device's use in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.

In Nineveh 7 and 8, not only are consonants doubled, but in both apodoses, there is a clustering of the letter /z/.

Nineveh 7 Variant A (K 3730+)

If a lizard with two tails, the one tail [...] — [th]at [man? will be remove]d from his position.

šumma šurīrittu ša 2 zibbātuša zibbāssa ša [... amēlu? š]ū ina mazzāzišu [innass]aḥ

Nineveh 8

If a lizard with two tails falls in front of a man — that man will prevail over his legal adversary.

šumma šurīrittu ša 2 zibbātuša ana pān amēli imqut amēlu šu eli bēl amātišu izzaz

Apodoses in general use verbs in the present-future, which already doubles the verb's second consonant so the use of clustering is a means to emphasize the idea of doubling. It is also likely that in the case of Nineveh 7 and 8 the word *mazzāzu* 'position' in the first apodosis influenced the choice of the verb *izuzzu* in the second omen.¹¹³ As in the Assur (VAT 9906 v 13') example above, not only are letters doubled and clustered, but certain consonants are also repeated. For example, in Nineveh 8, the letters /m/ and /l/ occur particularly often. All three of the above omens repeat sibilants, especially /š/. Nineveh 7 adds another layer of repetition in the repeated use of the word 'tail'.

Sultantepe 62, below, provides an example of how omens on the topic of duality can be characterized by verbs in specific verb stems. In this omen, the iterative Gtn stem is used for the first verb in the apodosis, and the D stem is used for the final verb.

Sultantepe 62 [If] there is [a liz]ard that has two tails, has a snake's ..., the left (tail) is long (and) the right (tail) is short — divine wrath will repeatedly befall the man's house; there will be trouble! [for] a man's heir, and he will reveal? the wealth of his house.

[DIŠ EME.ŠI]D šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá x x gi MUŠ GÁL-ši šá GÛB GÍD.DA šá ZAG LÚGUD.DA DI[NGIR.Š]À.DIB.BA ana É NA ŠUB.MEŠ [ana] DUMU. NITA NA ud¹-du-ú GÁL-ma NÍG.TUK É.BI ú²-kal-lam

[šumma šurīri]ttu ša 2 zibbātuša ... šēri ittabši ša šumēli arkat ša imitti kariat ki[m]iltu ana bīt amēli imtanaqqut [ana] apil amēli uddū¹ ibbaššīma mašrē bītišu ukallam²

While these verb stems are found in omens not associated with duality, they seem to occur most often in omens that are. The same holds true for nominalized forms derived from D-stem verbs. The doubling of the second root consonant in the D stem lends itself well to the geminate ballast discussed above. Occasionally the D stem also takes on the nuance of plurality (Von Soden 1995 GAG §88 f) just as the derived-tan stems do.

¹¹³ The topic of overcoming an adversary in Nineveh 8 is certainly influenced by the lizard falling in front of the man in the protasis. See the commentary at Assur 5 for the omens in which a lizard, multi-tailed or not, falls in front of a man.

In addition to the geminate ballast and clustering, Sultantepe 62 exhibits phonetic repetition (sibilants, consonant pattern /b-š/, as well as the letters /m/ and /l/). The words *arkat* ‘long’ and *kariat* ‘short’ form an opposing binary pair and are also an example of anagrammatic paronomasia. Just as in other omens, multiple rhetorical devices are used within one omen.

4.2.6 sequences in which a man goes on a walk

In the discussion on phonetic repetition and geminate clustering, it is apparent that the rhetorical devices, word choices, and the structure of an omen, as well as the relationship of these aspects to other omens within an omen sequence, can reflect an omen’s topical content. A particular striking example, Assur 94’, comes from an unusual sequence of omens within the Assur recension. The subject of these omens (Assur 87’–95’) is a man, not a lizard. The man in these omens always encounters a lizard performing some action, thereby keeping the omens thematically situated within Tablet 32. These omens are not only conspicuous for their change in subject but also their general structure and word choice. As mentioned in section 4.1.1 under ‘behavior protases’, this sequence features lizards performing a wider variety of actions than other omens in Tablet 32. This thesis examines Assur 94’ to explore some of the ways the meaning and content of an omen can be replicated in the text itself.

Assur 94’ has similarities to medical-diagnostic omens from the divinatory series SA.GIG (see the commentary at Assur 94’ for details). Some of the omens in SA.GIG purport to be ominous signs a diagnostician encounters on the way to examining the patient (while walking in the street, for example). These omens often involve animals, and there are four lizard omens in SA.GIG. Nevertheless, only one of the four omens shows similarities to the omens in *šumma ālu*’s Tablet 32 (see Sultantepe 34). Assur 94’ is further connected to these medical-diagnostic omens by the reference to the Hand of Šamaš. In Mesopotamia, diseases were attributed to the hand of a deity.

Assur 94’ If ditto (= while) a man (= is walking in the street) a lizard turns toward him, (and) turning again encircles him — that man: should the ‘Hand of Šamaš’ leave him bedridden! [for]? a year (and) should he (thereby) consume (all) the property that he has amassed, he will die.

DIŠ NA MIN (*ina* SILA *ina* DU-šú) EME.DIR *ana* IGI-šú **is-ḫur is-ḫur**
NIGIN-šú NA BI ŠU ^dUTU [*ana*]? MU 1-KÁM ^{giš}NÁ DAB¹-*su-ma* NÍG.GA
NIGIN-ru GU₇-*ma* BA.ÚŠ

šumma amēlu MIN (*ina sūqi ina alākišu*) *šurāru ana pānišu iṣhur iṣhur*
ilmīšu amēlu šū qāt šamši [*ana*]? *šatti* 1-KÁM *erša ušašbassuma¹ makkūr*
ipḫuru ikkalma imât

Assur 94’ is replete with repetition and paronomasia. The verb *saḫāru* ‘to turn, turn around’ is repeated twice as *is-ḫur*. In hendiadys, *saḫāru* takes on the meaning of ‘to do again, to resume doing’ the secondary verb (CAD S: 40 s.v. *saḫāru* 1e). Therefore here it means to ‘turn again’. Even the subsequent sign NIGIN is a repetition as it can also be used to write the verb

saḥāru; though in this omen, it is read as *ilmīšu* '(it) encircles him'. The repetition is surely a reference to both verbs' meanings. NIGIN can also be read as *šādu* 'to prowl; to spin, to be subject to vertigo'. The lizard's actions in the protasis resemble prowling, and even if the reading is not directly intended, the ancient scribe must have been acutely aware of the connotations of vertigo, as it fits with the symptoms of the Hand of Šamaš (see the commentary at Assur 94'). One of the apodosis's verbs *paḥāru* 'to gather, collect' is also written with NIGIN. The use of anagrammatic paronomasia (repeated root consonants in a shuffled order) in the apodosis's penultimate word *ikkal-* recalls for the reader (or listener) the man's walking *alākišu* in the protasis. The protasis also has a vaguely anacoluthic structure, although this is a feature of all the omens in this sequence.

In the above omen, almost every element works together to weave a multilayered web of meaning around the concept of turning or circling. Not only does the lizard encircle the man, but if the man is watching the lizard to report on this sign, he is likely turning around as well. The sign NIGIN links the protasis and apodosis because it is repeated once in both. However, though NIGIN can be used to write *saḥāru* 'to turn around', it never has that reading in Assur 94'. Instead *saḥāru* is written syllabically two times in hendiadys, adding further emphasis to the theme of turning around. One becomes dizzy just examining the possible connections between the rhetorical devices and the omen's semantic meaning.

Part V – Conclusion

The rhetorical devices¹¹⁴ discussed in this thesis are but a few of the devices that are evidence of how omen texts combine semantic and symbolic associations along with phonetic and graphic elements to create, based on similitude, connections between the ominous phenomenon in an omen's protasis and the associated outcome in its apodosis. This thesis also shows how these associations can also be used alone or in combination with structural elements such as opposing binary pairs to create omen sequences. This analysis supports an interpretative shift away from seeing animal omens as direct reflections of actual animal behavior, but instead of as descriptors of animals from an anthropocentric perspective. That is, animal omens “draw on the animal world to match imagined scenarios of animal behaviour or human-animal interaction as signs onto predicting outcomes of human concern, based on constructed associative links of similitude between the signs and the predictions” (De Zorzi forthcoming).

The current thesis has naturally been limited by the corpus it examines, the lizard omens of Tablet 32 in *šumma ālu*, and cannot examine all of the animal omens. Fortunately, additional research has been and is currently being conducted within the same project (the Austrian Science Fund funded project *Bestiarium Mesopotamicum* led by Nicla De Zorzi in Vienna) under which this thesis was written. Notably, my colleagues Maya Rinderer (2021) and Craig Harris (2022) have contributed to this work with their respective Master's theses on the snake and livestock Tablets.

The process of collating the clay cuneiform tablets to create this new edition of Tablet 32's means many corrections to readings, line counts, and omen placement were suggested. In particular, the sequence of omens in the Nineveh recension have been updated, and Nicla De Zorzi found a new join between the reverse of K 3730+ and K 10792 (see description of K 3730+ in the manuscript indices 6.3.1), which allows us to now confidently place two omens (K 3730+ r 12' and K 10792 2'; K 3730+ r 12' and K 10792 2') in Tablet 32, and the remaining lines below the ruling on the reverse of K 3730+ are now to be placed in Tablet 33 (geckos).

The analysis of Tablet 32 show little surprises in the grammatical syntax of the lizard omens, but the analysis does reveal some interesting connections between syntax and content of the omen protases. The omen's syntactic structure starts the discussion and groups the lizard omens into two larger groups: omens whose protasis is about the behavior of lizards and omens whose protasis is about the characteristics of lizards; plus a third group of omens whose protases do not fit neatly into either category. This grouping reveals that while lizards are described as

¹¹⁴ The term rhetorical devices is used in the absence of emic terminology to describe what is visible in these texts. See section 4.2 for an explanation of how the term is used in this thesis.

performing various actions in Tablet 32, their behaviors lack agency. Further the descriptions of lizards show a particular concentration around particular aspects of a lizard: its color, multiple body parts and whether it is alive or dead.

Phonetic associations play an important role in Tablet 32. In one sequence, lizards interact with culinary vessels resulting in almost invariably associated with negative outcomes. However the phonetic similarities between the word vinegar and goodness [insert] mean that omens with vinegar in the protasis are positive. This is followed by a discussion of some of the various phonetic associations and repetitions in Tablet 32. This rhetorical device appears to have been particularly powerful in Tablet 32 because it is used to form groups of omens from omens that at first glance appear to be completely unrelated to each other (see the discussion on Assur 51–58 in section 4.2.4).

Although this thesis examines the rhetorical devices one after another, it is apparent that the text interweaves them and combines them in various ways. One omen in particular, Assur 94, about a man being encircled by a lizard showcases not only the complexity of these omens, but brings together in one single omen many of the rhetorical devices mentioned above to a dizzying effect.

Lizard omens have a number of omens involving twins or duality. In these omens, semantic content of the omens and the rhetorical devices often visibly mirror each other. These omens feature a conspicuous amount of consonant doubling and sign repetition. Mirror structuring, whether chiastically across multiple omens or just with the repetition of a sign in both the protasis and apodosis is also common.

More poetic structural elements such as chiasmus are under-analyzed when it comes to omen texts. It and other similar elements would likely be a fruitful avenue for future analysis of these texts. Given the size of *šumma ālu* and the importance of divination in Mesopotamia such analysis is important to help understand the mentality of those that wrote these texts.

Part VI – Edition

6.1 Edition Overview

What follows is a newly-revised edition of Tablet 32 from the Mesopotamian divinatory text known as *šumma ālu ina mēlē šakin* ‘If a city is set on a height’ (henceforth *šumma ālu*). Tablet 32 collects omens regarding characteristics and behaviors of lizards, *šurāru* in Akkadian. The present edition includes corrected and updated readings of the source cuneiform tablets as well as new omen sequences and interpretations, and therefore differs significantly from the most important previous edition *If a City 2* (2006, 164–201).

The known extant manuscripts (see section 6.3) preserving omens from Tablet 32 are difficult to reconcile with one another. They are based on differing source texts and, at least in the case of the manuscripts from Assur, reflect different stages of the text’s development. Therefore, the current edition does follow *If a City 2* in grouping the omens into three different versions, or recensions.¹¹⁵ The recensions correlate with the cuneiform tablets’ three geographical find sites: Nineveh, Assur, and Sultantepe. A single, complete copy of Tablet 32 is not known to exist. The current edition pays particular attention to comparisons between the recensions, especially the conspicuous similarities between Assur and Sultantepe.¹¹⁶ These comparisons have allowed missing parts of several additional omens to be reconstructed. The philological commentary under each relevant omen makes the comparisons explicit.

I collated the manuscripts from Nineveh at the British Museum in February 2020, which allowed me to clarify and correct both sign readings and line counts. Readings for the manuscripts from Assur were based on the most recent edition, KAL 1, as well as photographs and hand copies. Unfortunately, only a hand copy is available of the manuscript from Sultantepe.

The current edition is the first to include all of the known manuscripts from Nineveh, Assur and Sultantepe in one place. Since *If a City 2*’s publication in 2006, a further manuscript from Assur containing lizard omens, VAT 9906, was published (hand copy, transliteration, and translation) in KAL 1 (2007, 75–77, 172–175 manuscript 18). The collation work in the British museum helped to revise the Nineveh omen sequence and helped to place previously unplaced omens. Additionally, a new join was discovered by Nicla De Zorzi between the reverse of K 3730+ and K 10792.

6.2 Structure and Conventions

The current edition begins by presenting omens from the Nineveh recension, followed by those from Assur and then Sultantepe. The manuscripts from Nineveh not only preserve the

¹¹⁵ In some secondary literature, including *If a City 2*, recensions are also referred to as traditions

¹¹⁶ *If a City 2* (2006, 165 Sultantepe Tradition) also notes the similarities between the Sultantepe manuscript and VAT 10167.

largest number of lizard omens, but also date to the Neo-Assyrian period in first millennium, when *šumma ālu* as a text reached its most standardized form. The Assur manuscripts are Middle-Assyrian cuneiform tablets and as such pre-date the Nineveh manuscripts. There are notable overlaps and similarities between the manuscript from Sultantepe and Assur.

The current edition's naming convention for omens indicates which recension an omen belongs to as well as its place within the relevant recension's sequence. For example, the omen Nineveh 15 refers to the 15th omen in the Nineveh recension. The omen Sultantepe 52 is the 52nd omen in the Sultantepe recension. An apostrophe after the number indicates that there is one or more gaps in the omen sequence. For example, Assur 73' refers to the 73rd known omen in the Assur recension and indicates a gap somewhere in the preceding omen sequence.

The Nineveh and Assur recensions have manuscripts in such a bad state of preservation (for example, the reverse of K 3730+) that some omens cannot be placed in the sequence. There are also some excerpt texts which preserve omens in a sequence significantly different from the sequences on other manuscripts from the same recension. The sequence of omens these manuscripts preserve have been presented separately at the end of each relevant recension. Instead of the usual naming conventions, the omens are simply designated by the line number(s) on which they appear, for example, K 12180+ i 4'. If it is possible to place an omen within either the Nineveh or Assur sequence, there is a note in the philological commentary.

With luck, at least one manuscript will preserve an individual omen in its entirety. The reality is, however, that clay tablets are breakable, and thus parts of omens may be missing from any one manuscript. If an omen is preserved on multiple manuscripts, it can be possible to stitch together an omen's preserved parts from multiple manuscripts to recreate the omen as it may have appeared in its original form. This end result is the 'reconstructed omen'. In the present edition, reconstructed omens are presented first in their English translation to ease the comparison between omens for the non-Assyriologist. The reconstructed omen then includes a reconstructed transliteration (a sign-by-sign reading) and a reconstructed transcription (a reading in normalized Akkadian). Parts of the omen which are not preserved on any known manuscript are indicated with full brackets.

As with any translation, the English version of a reconstructed omen must balance closeness to the original Akkadian with English fluidity. Where the English translation necessarily strays somewhat from the original Akkadian, notes can be found in the relevant omen's

philological commentary. Further, an omen’s protasis and apodosis¹¹⁷ have been visually separated by an em dash — in the English translation. This is not a grammatical element, but simply a visual cue to the reader. The original manuscripts do not include any indication, beyond the occasional extra blank space, of a separation between an omen’s protasis and apodosis.

Example Omen: Nineveh 41’

If entangled lizards fall onto a man — that man: wherever he goes, he will consume a share. } **RECONSTRUCTED**
 DIŠ EME.DIR DAB.DAB-*ta-ma ana* UGU NA ŠUB.MEŠ NA BI KI DU-*ku* 𒄩A.LA GU₇ } **OMEN**
šumma šurīrātu tišbutāma ana muḥḫi amēli imqutā amēlu šū ašar illaku zitta ikkal

K 2708+ <i>i</i> 17’-18’	DIŠ EM[E].‘DIR’ ‘DAB’ ¹⁷ .‘DAB’ ¹⁷ [- <i>ta’</i> ...] / (indent) ‘𒄩A’.LA G[U ₇]	} MANUSCRIPT SCORE
K 3730+ 39	DIŠ EME.ŠID DAB.DAB- <i>ta-ma ana</i> UGU NA ‘ŠUB’.MEŠ ^(ME) NA BI KI DU- <i>ku</i> 𒄩A.LA GU ₇	
Sm 710+ 15’	[DIŠ E]ME.ŠID.MEŠ DAB.DAB- <i>ta-ma ana</i> UGU ‘NA’ ŠUB.MEŠ NA BI KI DU- <i>ku</i> 𒄩A.LA G[U ₇]	

- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 192 omen 41’ Ex(3)r.7’) includes K 6912+ *r* 8’ with the above omen (Nineveh 41’), but the line seems a better fit with Nineveh 42’. Note, however, that despite including K 6912+ *r* 8’ with the above omen, the footnote referring to the line is placed under Nineveh 42’ (*If a City 2*, 2006, 170 note 42’).
- ▶ The above omen’s protasis is quoted in the commentary text K 1 *r* 17 (CT 41 26–27; CCP 3.5.30), which reads:¹¹⁸

DAB.DAB ^{18a} - <i>ma</i>		<i>ti-iš-bu-ta-ma</i>
DAB.DAB- <i>ta-ma</i>	Means	to hold one another

We have normalized the verb as *tišbutāma*, the Gt stative of *šabātu* ‘to seize’. See also CAD (Š: 35 s.v. *šabātu* 9a 2’c), which mentions both the above omen and the commentary text.

The same commentary text is mentioned in *If a City 2* (2006, 170 note 42’). Although it is placed incorrectly with Nineveh 42’.

The commentary text is followed by 6 lines (*r* 18–23), which have not been placed. See ‘commentary texts’ in section 6.3.4.

- ▶ In K 2708+ *i* 17’, the signs DAB.DAB are badly damaged, but the remnants on the manuscript allow for the reading. There are at least three heads of vertical wedges and evidence of horizontal wedges.

The table below the reconstructed omen is the manuscript score, where transliterations from each of the manuscripts that preserve the omen, in whole or part, are presented. The manuscripts are identified by their museum number (Nineveh and Assur) or in the case of the Sultantepe manuscript, the abbreviation referring to its publication as a hand copy, STT 323. The manuscript indices (see section 6.3) provide details on the manuscripts including their museum numbers, state of preservation, and any joins. The current edition uses Assyriology conventions in both the reconstructed sections of the omen and the manuscript scores.

Finally, commentary to each omen is presented below the score to aid the reader in noticing interesting aspects of each omen and how it relates to the overarching sequence of

¹¹⁷ Succinctly, a protasis is the if-portion of an omen with a descriptions of the ominous phenomenon. The associated outcome, or the then-portion of the statement, is the apodosis. The terms are discussed in section 2.1.1 and omen syntax is discussed in section 4.1.

¹¹⁸ Readings and translation from Jiménez (2016, CCP 3.5.30, 52).

omens. Often the first bullet point is a note about similar or identical omens in other recensions. In addition to the usual commentary on philological and interpretative aspects, the current edition also includes readings from Tablet 32's previous editions, *If a City 2* or KAL 1, if they differ from the current edition. The differences are marked in **bold**.

6.3 Manuscript details¹¹⁹

There are eleven extant cuneiform fragments known to belong to *šumma ālu* that preserve lizard omens. Seven of them originate from Nineveh and date to the seventh century BCE (K 2708+; the two physically-joining fragments K 3730+ and K 10792; K 6912+; as well as K 9057 and K 12180+, which do not physically join but belong to the same originally four-column manuscript; and finally Sm 710+), three originate from Assur and date to the end of the second millennium (VAT 9793 (KAL 1 17), VAT 9906 (KAL 1 18), and VAT 10167 (KAL 1 16)) and one from Sultantepe (STT 323).

In addition, there are two types of related texts¹²⁰ (section 6.3.4) that can aid in reconstructing or interpreting individual lizard omens: ancient commentary texts to *šumma ālu* and omens from the medical-diagnostic series *sakikkû* (SA.GIG). There are two commentary texts, which are relevant for Tablet 32. The first commentary text, BM 41586, actually provides commentary on *šumma ālu*'s Tablet 31 (scorpions), but its ending rubric preserves Tablet 32's incipit and therefore helps to reconstruct Tablet 32's opening omen (Nineveh 1). The second commentary text, K 1, comments on multiple Tablets from *šumma ālu*, including Tablet 32. Only a few lines from K 1's 28 lines relating to lizard omens can confidently be placed with Tablet 32 omens. The unplaced lines can be found at the Yale *Cuneiform Commentaries Project* (CCP 3.5.20a lines 44–70).

The first two Tablets of the medical-diagnostic series *sakikkû* (SA.GIG) collect omens relating to the fate or cause of a patient's illness. It has long been noted that the omens in SA.GIG share similarities with *šumma ālu* (see Heeßel 2001 for a discussion and bibliography). SA.GIG's second Tablet has four lizard omens, one of which appears to be a parallel of Sultantepe 34 and helps to interpret a problematic sign in that omen.

6.3.1 Nineveh recension

All of the manuscripts from Nineveh are Neo Assyrian (first millennium) and associated with Assurbanipal's library. As part of the Bestiarium Mesopotamicum project, I was able to

¹¹⁹ The textual sources of Tablet 32 are discussed in section 3.2.

¹²⁰ There is a third related text, the so-called *Namburbi* rituals, which collects apotropaic rituals to counteract negative omens. Although there is a section specifically on lizards, the text does not help to reconstruct any of the lizard omens in Tablet 32 and is therefore not included in the current edition. For the rituals related to lizards, see Maul's (1994, 304–11 VIII 3) edition.

collate all of the Nineveh manuscripts in person at the British Museum in February 2020. The sequencing of the omens on the Nineveh manuscripts is particularly complicated as all of the cuneiform tablets are what are known as excerpt texts. Excerpt texts do not preserve a complete form of a Tablet's omens, but instead, as the name implies, provide a selection of omens. While the seven fragments from Nineveh preserve similar and often identical omens, there are significant differences in the omen sequences from one cuneiform tablet to the next. This edition of Tablet 32 presents the omens from Nineveh by following the sequence on K 2708+. Separate editions of a few manuscripts are presented at the end of the Nineveh recension: the physical join between the reverse of K 3730+ and K 10792, the sequence on K 9057 (+) K 12180, and Sm 710+.

K 2708+**K 2708 + K 7168 + K 12544****Location:** British Museum**Provenience:** Nineveh (Kouyunjik)**CDLI:** [P394620](#)*photograph available*

Description:

K 2708+ preserves 34 omens and has been taken as the ‘standard’ manuscript for the Nineveh recension as the sequences on some other manuscripts mirror its sequence.

The manuscript is the remains of an originally four-column clay tablet, of which both the top and bottom edges are missing. Based on the omen sequences of other Nineveh manuscripts, 20–25 lines are likely missing from the top.

On the obverse, column *i* is missing the top left-hand side—leaving but a few of the apodoses’s signs. The left-hand edge begins, in the middle of the fragment, and correspond to Nineveh 23’. Column *ii* joins the extremely fragmented apodoses of column *i*, so the beginnings of the omens are visible. Surface abrasion and a missing right-hand edge make the apodoses, however, difficult to read.

The reverse is badly damaged, leaving no trace of column *iii* and only parts a few lines in column *iv*.

manuscript type:

excerpt text

Neo-Assyrian script

collation:

original manuscript

Publication history:***If a City* 2, Tablet 32 A**Freedman, S. (2006) *If a City is Set on a Height*. Vol 2 Tablets 22-40.

Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 19.

Philadelphia: Samuel Noah Kramer Fund.

transliteration

translation

reconstruction

commentary

BC vol. 2, p. 468Bezold, C. (1891) *Catalogue of the Cuneiform Tablets in the Kouyunjik**Collection of the British Museum*. Vol. 2. London: British Museum Press.

short description of fragment

K 2708

K 3730+ and K 10792**K 3730 + K 4044 + K 6059 + K 9714 + Rm 321 + K 10792***This is a physical join between K 3730+ and K 10792.***location:** British Museum**provenience:** Nineveh (Kouyunjik); excavated by Sir Layard**K 3730+****CDLI:** [P366095](#)*partial hand copy available***K 10792****CDLI:** [P398888](#)*photograph available***Description:**

This is a Neo-Assyrian excerpt text preserving omens from Tablet 32 and 33 (geckos), with a generally well-preserved obverse. The obverse (K 3730+) preserves the top edge and parts of Tablet 32's incipit. The reverse is almost completely broken away, but lines can be placed in both Tablet 32 and 33. In the process of collating tablets, Nicla De Zorzi joined K 3730+ with K 10792.

There are 41 lizard omens on the obverse, which shows surface abrasion, but the upper-left corner is present. Most of the left and right-hand edges are preserved, but there is a large piece missing from the manuscript's upper-right quadrant, forming a diagonal V-shaped break between the two fragments that make up the manuscript's upper half. The bottom edge is missing as the manuscript breaks off after 43 lines.

The reverse is badly damaged: The first 10 lines preserve only the last few signs of each line, but are likely lizard omens continued from the obverse. Starting with line K 3730+ r 11', K 10792 lies atop K 3730+'s reverse, near the larger manuscript's right-hand side, forming a sandwich join. Both K 3730+ r 12' and K 10792 2' preserve part of the same ruling that demarcates the transition to gecko omens. The lines K 3730+ r 11'-12' align with the lines K 10792 1'-2'; though they are fragmentary. From line K 3730+ r 13' (aligns with K 10792 3') until the manuscript's bottom edge (partially preserved), the omens are taken from Tablet 33 (geckos). Because the remains of the lizard omens on the reverse of K 3730+ are so fragmentary, they cannot be placed.

manuscript type:
excerpt text
Neo-Assyrian script
collation:
original manuscript

Publication history:***If a City* 2, Tablet 32 Ex(1)**

Freedman, S. (2006) *If a City is Set on a Height*. Vol 2 Tablets 22–40. Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 19. Philadelphia: Samuel Noah Kramer Fund.

transliteration,
reconstruction, translation
and commentary to K 3730+

***If a City* 2, Tablet 33 Ex(6)**

Freedman, S. (2006) *If a City is Set on a Height*. Vol 2 Tablets 22–40. Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 19. Philadelphia: Samuel Noah Kramer Fund.

transliteration,
reconstruction, translation
and commentary to K 10792

Nötscher, Or. 39–42, Tafel 25 (?30?)

Nötscher, F. (1929) *Die Omen Serie: šumma âlu in a mêlê šakin (CT 38–40)*. *Orientalia* 39–42. Roma: Pontificio Instituto Biblico.

transliteration, translation &
commentary to CT 38,
plate 39

CT 38, plate 39

Gadd, C. J. (1925) *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum*. Vol. 38. London: British Museum.

hand copy of fragments
K 3730 + K 6059 + Rm 321

OT 1, plate 4

Holma, H. (1923) *Omen Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum, Concerning Birds and Other Portants*. I. Texts. The Asia Publishing Co.'s Oriental Series : Western Asia : Babylonia and Assyria ; v.1. Leipzig: Asia Pub. Company.

hand copy of fragments
K 3730 + K 6059 + Rm 321

BC vol. 2, p. 559

Bezold, C. (1891) *Catalogue of the Cuneiform Tablets in the Kouyunjik Collection of the British Museum*. Vol. 2. London: British Museum Press.

short description of fragments
K 3730 + K 6059 + Rm 321

K 6912+
K 6912 + K 9723**location:** British Museum**provenience:** Nineveh (Kouyunjik); excavated by Sir Layard**CDLI:** [P366096](#)*photograph available*

Description:

This is a Neo-Assyrian excerpt text with 21 lines preserving 11 lizard omens on the obverse and 10 lines with 9 omens on the reverse. Part of the obverse's top edge has been preserved, but all the other edges and much of the reverse are missing.

There is a large diagonal break where the two fragments have been joined that results in missing signs and makes reading signs along it difficult. The reverse has only been partially preserved on one of the fragments. Further collation reveals K 6912+ r 1' is omitted in *If a City 2*, which results in differing line counts.

manuscript type:

excerpt text

Neo-Assyrian script

collation:

original manuscript

Note that the obverse and reverse of K 6912+ are transposed on CDLI.

Publication history:
***If a City 2*, Tablet 32 ms. Ex(2)**Freedman, S. (2006) *If a City is Set on a Height*. Vol 2 Tablets 22–40.

Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 19.

Philadelphia: Samuel Noah Kramer Fund.

transliteration

reconstruction

translation

commentary

CT 38, plate 40Gadd, C. J. (1925) *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum*. Vol. 38. London: British Museum.

[Sm 710+ is on the same plate.]

hand copy

BC vol. 2, p. 818Bezold, C. (1891) *Catalogue of the Cuneiform Tablets in the Kouyunjik**Collection of the British Museum*. Vol. 2. London: British Museum Press.

short description of fragments

K 6912

K 9057 and K 12180+

K 9057 and K 12180 + K 13219 + K 14091 + Sm 505 + Sm 1401*This is a non-physical join between K 9057 and K 12180+.***location:** British Museum**provenience:** Nineveh (Kouyunjik); associated with Assurbanipal's Library; excavated by Sir Layard**K 9057****CDLI:** [P397884](#)*photograph available***K 12180+****CDLI:** [P399673](#)*photograph available***Description:**

Though they do not physically join together, K 9057 and K 12180+ are two pieces of the same four-column Neo-Assyrian excerpt text with omens taken from *šumma ālu* Tablets 32–36. Each fragment has its own line numbering because they do not physically join each other. Note that CDLI transposes K 12180+'s obverse and reverse.

K 9057 sits a bit above K 12180+ and partially preserves the top edge. Much of the original manuscript's lower part as well as its lower edge is preserved on the much larger fragment K 12180+. There is a gap of unknown length between the two fragments.

K 12180+ *i* 1'–13' preserves lizard omens, and due to the positioning of K 9057 in relation to K 12180+, the assumption is that the traces of apodoses on K 9057 *i* are also from lizard omens and are included in the current edition. *If a City 2* does not include them. Below K 12180+ *i* 13', ruling demarcates the transition from Tablet 32 to Tablet 33 (geckos). The rest of the manuscript includes omens from Tablet 33–36 (*If a City 2*, 2006, 164 Ex(4)).

If a City 2 (2006, 202–3) suggests K 6517 (*If a City 2*: Ex(2)), whose reverse preserves omens from Tablet 33 (geckos), might be a further non-physical join to K 9057 and K 12180+ and that the obverse of K 6517 might preserve lizard omens. Even overlooking the difficulties of placing that fragment, the lines on K 6517's obverse show little similarity to lizard omens. K 6517 has yet to be edited by the Bestiarium Mesopotamicum project at the time of writing this thesis, but so far seems an unlikely join.

Several lizard omens (K 12180 *i* 1'–13') are duplicates or close parallels to other omens on manuscripts from Nineveh. However, this manuscript's omen sequence has unique features warranting its presentation in its entirety after the Nineveh recension.

Note that collation revealed that *If a City 2* omits K 12180+ *i* 1', which results in differing line counts.

Publication history:***If a City 2*, Tablet 32 Ex(4)₁**Freedman, S. (2006) *If a City is Set on a Height*. Vol 2 Tablets 22–40.

Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 19.

Philadelphia: Samuel Noah Kramer Fund.

Transliteration

reconstruction

translation

commentary to fragment

K 9057

***If a City 2*, Tablet 32 ms. Ex(4)₂**Freedman, S. (2006) *If a City is Set on a Height*. Vol 2 Tablets 22–40.

Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 19.

Philadelphia: Samuel Noah Kramer Fund.

transliteration

reconstruction

translation

commentary to fragment

K 12180+

manuscript type:
excerpt text
Neo-Assyrian Script
collation:
original manuscripts

Sm 710+**Sm 710 + Sm 946****location:** British Museum**provenience:** Nineveh (Kouyunjik); excavated by G. Smith**CDLI:** [P426445](#)*photograph available***Description:**

This is a Neo-Assyrian excerpt text preserves just under 20 omens on the obverse. The reverse is completely broken away as are the top and bottom edges. Part of the right-hand edge is present. Although the left-hand edge is missing, the protases of a few omens are almost complete making it possible to estimate how many signs are missing.

Though individual omens do exhibit parallels to omens on other Nineveh manuscripts (and are included in the relevant scores), Sm 710+'s omens and omen sequence differs from the other Nineveh manuscripts. For this reason, an edition of Sm 710+ has been included at the end of the Nineveh recension. In its presentation of the Nineveh omens, *If a City 2* presents several of the omens on Sm 710+ only in footnotes.

manuscript type:
excerpt text
Neo-Assyrian script
collation:
original manuscript

Publication history:***If a City 2*, Tablet 32 Ex(7)**

Freedman, S. (2006) *If a City is Set on a Height*. Vol 2 Tablets 22–40. Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 19. Philadelphia: Samuel Noah Kramer Fund.

transliteration
reconstruction
translation
commentary

CT 38, plate 40

Gadd, C. J. (1925) *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum*. Vol. 38. London: British Museum.
[K 6912+ is on the same plate.]

hand copy of obverse

BC vol. 4, p. 1428

Bezold, C. (1896) *Catalogue of the Cuneiform Tablets in the Kouyunjik Collection of the British Museum*. Vol. 4. London: British Museum Press.

short description of Sm 710

6.3.2 Assur recension

The manuscripts from Assur include three Middle-Assyrian (second millennium) manuscripts, and as such they preserve an earlier version of the lizard omens than the Neo-Assyrian cuneiform tablets. The current edition's reading of all three largely follows Heeßel's (KAL 1 2007, 67–77 manuscripts 16–18) recent edition with a few exceptions. The first two tablets, VAT 9793 (KAL 1 17) and VAT 10167 (KAL 1 16), duplicate the same base text. VAT 10167 is much more complete and preserves, in part or in whole 134 lizard omens. VAT 9793 preserves only 18 omens, of which all can be placed on the reverse of VAT 10167. Much of VAT 10167's obverse and the Sultantepe manuscript STT 323 (see next section) show remarkable similarities in both the omens they preserve and their sequencing. Both manuscripts, however, also preserve omens not found on the other. The philological commentary notes these similarities, but it is helpful to consider the Assur omens together with those from Sultantepe and vice versa.

The third Assur manuscript, VAT 9906, is a six-column manuscript. Only column *ii* is well-preserved. Unfortunately all of the preserved omens use the sign of repetition MIN 'ditto' to refer to the protasis's animal. Though any explicit mention of a lizard is missing, we follow KAL 1 (2007, 13 manuscript 18) and place the manuscript within Tablet 32 due to its similarities with other manuscripts.

While some of the Assur omens show similarities to the omens preserved on manuscripts from Nineveh, the majority of the omens are different. The Assur manuscripts may pre-date *šumma ālu's* standardization or they may preserve a separate textual recension.

Assur omen sequencing and line counts

The photographs of manuscript VAT 10167 available on the CDLI website ([P282620](#)) reveal that a small portion of the manuscript's upper edge is still present. As suggested and read in KAL 1 (2007, 67 manuscript 16), the current edition interchanges the manuscript's obverse and reverse. This differs from the hand copy (KAR 382), its photograph on CDLI, and its publication in *If a City 2* (2006, 172–83, 194–201).

Interchanging the obverse and reverse changes the manuscript's line numbering and omen sequence. The line and omen count follows that used in KAL 1 (2006, 67–75 manuscript 16 = Text A).

VAT 9793

location: Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin
provenience: Assur (Qalat Sherqat)

CDLI: [P369360](#)
hand copy available

Description:

The text on this Middle-Assyrian fragment duplicates a section of the text preserved on VAT 10167. The left-hand edge is preserved, but the remaining edges are missing. The reverse has not been preserved.¹²¹ There are just under 20 omens preserved on the manuscript.

manuscript type:
 forerunner
 Middle-Assyrian script
collation:
 hand copy

The only image available is an Ebeling hand copy (KAR 393) from the early 20th century; and Heeßel, in preparing KAL 1, had access to the actual manuscripts. Therefore, readings from KAL 1 have been given preference over the hand copy.

Publication history:

KAL 1, Nr. 17 (B) Heeßel, N. (2007) <i>Divinatorische Texte I - Terrestrische, teratologische, physiognomische und oneiromantische Omina</i> . Vol. 1. Keilschrifttexte aus Assur literarischen Inhalts 1. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.	transliteration translation commentary collation remarks/sketches
If a City2, Tablet 32 B Freedman, S. (2006) <i>If a City is Set on a Height</i> . Vol 2 Tablets 22–40. Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 19. Philadelphia: Samuel Noah Kramer Fund.	transliteration reconstruction translation commentary
S.M. Moren, šumma alu, Tablet 30 E Moren, S. (1978). "The Omen Series 'Summa Alu': A Preliminary Investigation." PhD diss., Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania.	transliteration translation commentary
Nötscher, Or. 39–42, KAR 382 + 393 Nötscher, F. (1929) <i>Die Omen-Serie: šumma âlu ina mêlê šakin (CT 38–40)</i> . Orientalia 39–42. Rome: Pontificio Instituto Biblico.	transliteration translation commentary
KAR 393 Ebeling, E. (1919–23) <i>Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts</i> . Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, 28, 34 (WVDOG 28 & 34). Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung	hand copy of obverse

¹²¹ Description based on information in KAL 1 (2007, 67 manuscripts 16 and 17).

VAT 9906**location:** Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin**provenience:** Assur (Qalat Sherqat)**CDLI:** N/A*hand copy in KAL 1*

Description:

This¹²² Middle-Assyrian manuscript is a fragment of a six-column clay tablet. Only column *ii* is well preserved. The top edge is preserved, but only around 20 lines each of column *ii*, *iii*, and *v* have also been preserved. Columns *i* and *vi* preserve only remnants, while columns *iii* and *iv* preserve some fragmentary protases. The reverse shows a lot of surface abrasion; though, several lines of column *v* are preserved.

manuscript type:
forerunner
Middle-Assyrian script
collation:
hand copy

All of the preserved omens use the ditto sign MIN for the animal in the protasis. The manuscript has been included with the lizard omens as some of the omens are similar to omens on VAT 10167 and STT 323.

Publication history:

KAL 1, Nr. 18

Heeßel, N. (2007) *Divinatorische Texte I - Terrestrische, teratologische, physiognomische und oneiromantische Omina*. Vol. 1. Keilschrifttexte aus Assur literarischen Inhalts 1. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

transliteration
translation
commentary
hand copy

¹²² The description of the physical elements of this tablet such as surface abrasion has been taken from KAL 1 (2007, 75 manuscript 18) as collation of the physical manuscript was not possible.

VAT 10167**location:** Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin**provenience:** Assur (Qalat Sherqat)**CDLI:** [P282620](#)*photograph available***Description(s):**

Much of this Middle-Assyrian manuscript has been preserved. A section of VAT 10167's reverse duplicates the same text preserved on VAT 9793.

On the obverse, careful observation of the photograph shows a small portion of the top edge has been preserved. As suggested and read in KAL 1 (2007, 67 manuscript 16), the current edition interchanges the manuscript's obverse and reverse as regards foregoing publications and editions. Further supporting this ordering of the omens is the manuscript's close similarities with parts of the Sultantepe manuscript STT 323, which preserves both the incipit and colophon. The previous editions and publications of VAT 10167 (KAR 382, photograph on CDLI, *If a City* 2 2006, 172–83 and 194–201 manuscript C) present the reverse as the obverse, and vice versa.

The obverse's bottom section is missing. Both side edges are preserved. Much of the lower-left corner of the reverse is missing.

An orthographic note is that the first few omens use syllabic *a-na* instead of usual DIŠ for *ana*.

manuscript type:

forerunner

Middle Assyrian script

collation:

photograph

Publication history:**KAL 1, Nr. 16 (A)**

Heeßel, N. (2007) *Divinatorische Texte I - Terrestrische, teratologische, physiognomische und oneiromantische Omina*. Vol. 1. Keilschrifttexte aus Assur literarischen Inhalts 1. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

transliteration

translation

commentary

collation remarks/sketches

***If a City* 2, Tablet 32 C**

Freedman, S. (2006) *If a City is Set on a Height*. Vol 2 Tablets 22–40. Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 19. Philadelphia: Samuel Noah Kramer Fund.

transliteration

reconstruction

translation

commentary

S.M. Moren, *šumma alu*, Tablet 30 F

Moren, S. (1978). "The Omen Series 'Summa Alu': A Preliminary Investigation." PhD diss., Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania.

transliteration

translation

commentary

Nötscher, Or. 39–42

Nötscher, F. (1929) Die Omen-Serie: *šumma âlu ina mêlê šakin* (CT 38–40). *Orientalia* 39–42. Rome: Pontificio Instituto Biblico.

transliteration

translation

commentary

KAR 382

Ebeling, E. (1919–23) *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*. Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, 28, 34 (WVDOG 28 & 34). Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung

hand copy of obverse

6.3.3 Sultantepe recension

There is but one known manuscript that preserves lizard omens from Sultantepe: STT 323. Unfortunately photographs of the manuscript are not available, and therefore, readings of the omens were done from the hand copy prepared by Gurney in the mid-20th century.

The Sultantepe manuscript duplicates not only omens, but also, in many parts, the sequence of the omens on the Assur manuscript VAT 10167. The omens from Assur should be read together with those from Sultantepe and vice versa. The manuscript preserves a colophon designating the text as originating from Babylon.

STT 323

location: Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, Ankara
provenience: Huzirina (Sultantepe)

CDLI: [P338638](#)
hand copy from STT

Description:

The hand copy shows the top-edge of the manuscript is largely preserved as well as parts of the bottom edge. Much of the obverse's left-hand edge is missing, with parts still present only between lines 5 and 15. The right-hand edge is more intact; almost the entire bottom half remains. It is the only manuscript from Tablet 32 to preserve a colophon.

The hand copy indicates that the manuscript consists of multiple joins and both the obverse and the reverse show considerable damage.

manuscript type:
 Neo-Assyrian script
collation:
 hand copy

Publication history:

***If a City*2, Tablet 32 D**

Freedman, S. (2006) *If a City is Set on a Height*. Vol 2 Tablets 22–40. Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 19. Philadelphia: Samuel Noah Kramer Fund.
 Note that *If a City 2* lists the manuscript's excavation number as SU 52/2.

transliteration
 reconstruction
 translation
 commentary

STT 323

Gurney, O. R., and P. Hulin. 1964. *The Sultantepe Tablets II*. Occasional Publications of the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara 7. London: The British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara.

hand copy

6.3.4 Related texts

Even in antiquity, the divinatory series *šumma ālu* did not exist in isolation. Ancient commentary texts, written to aid, among other things, in understanding particular signs or phrases or other divinatory series such as the medical-diagnostic series *sakikkû* (SA.GIG) can help to decipher and properly interpret some of the omens in *šumma ālu*. As such a large and important series, *šumma ālu* has numerous related texts, but just two commentary texts and a set of four omens in the second Tablet of SA.GIG that are relevant to Tablet 32.¹²³ All of the texts have been edited relatively recently so while they are listed here in the manuscript indices, they have not been re-edited. An omen's commentary references the related texts if any are relevant.

*Commentary texts***BM 41586****location:** British Museum**provenience:** Babylon; purchased from Spartali & Co.**British Museum:** [41586](#)
*photograph of obverse***CDLI:** [P461205](#)
*no photograph***CCP:** [3.5.31](#)
*photographs available***Description:**

This small fragment is the upper portion of a manuscript that preserves parts of a commentary text on Tablet 31 (scorpions).¹²⁴ The manuscript originates from the Egibatila family archive. Included in the manuscript's ending rubric is a partial quote of Tablet 32's incipit. Line BM 41586 *r* 5', therefore, provides a partial attestation for the first Nineveh omen's protasis. See Nineveh 1. Of further interest is the mention on line BM 41586 *r* 6' that the continuation of the text (likely commentary on Tablet 32) was not copied onto clay, but onto a parchment scroll¹²⁵ (Jiménez 2014). The commentary text preserved here and on K 1 show similarities. Their base texts may be from the same recension of *šumma ālu* (Jiménez 2014).

manuscript type:
commentary
Late-Babylonian script
collation:
original manuscript

Most recent edition:**CCP 3.5.31 - Ālu 31 ("29")**

Jiménez, E. (2014) "Commentary on Ālu 31 ("29") (CCP 3.5.31)," *Cuneiform Commentaries Project* (E. Frahm, E. Jiménez, M. Frazer, and K. Wagensonner), 2013–2020; accessed January 19, 2020, at <https://ccp.yale.edu/P461205>. DOI: [10079/k98sfmm](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4939-9858-1_31).

transliteration
translation
commentary
photographs

¹²³ As mentioned before, the so-called *Namburbi* rituals is another related text that collects apotropaic rituals to counteract negative omens. Although there is a section specifically on lizard omens, the text does not help to reconstruct any of the lizard omens in Tablet 32 and is therefore not included in the current edition. For the rituals related to lizards, see Maul's (1994, 304–11 VIII 3) edition.

¹²⁴ The manuscript states it is commentary on the *šumma ālu* Tablet 29. The Tablets from *šumma ālu* are numbered differently in various recensions. The text however corresponds to Tablet 31 in the Tablet sequencing used here. See also Jiménez (2014) for a discussion on Tablet numbering in *šumma ālu*.

¹²⁵ For other manuscripts mentioning parchment copies from the same family's archive, see Frahm (2005, 45)

K 1**location:** British Museum**provenience:** Nineveh (Kouyunjik)**British Museum:** K.1
photograph and hand copy
*available***CDLI:** P237754
photograph and hand copy
*available***CCP:** 3.5.30
photograph and hand copy
*available***Description:**

This largely intact manuscript has the distinction of being the first cuneiform tablet to be added to the British Museum’s Kouyunjik’s collection; hence the museum number K 1. It is a commentary text to Tablets 30–32 in *šumma ālu*.

Not all of K 1’s commentary on lizard omens can be placed with known lizard omens. For those that can be placed, the commentary in the relevant omen refers the reader to K 1. For the remaining, unplaced comments, see CCP 3.5.30 lines 44–70.

Most recent edition:**CCP 3.5.30 - Ālu 30–32 (“27–30”)**

Jiménez, E. (2016) “Commentary on Ālu 30–32 (“27–30”) (CCP 3.5.30),” *Cuneiform Commentaries Project* (E. Frahm, E. Jiménez, M. Frazer, and K. Wagensonner), 2013–2020; accessed January 19, 2020, at <https://ccp.yale.edu/P237754>. DOI: [10079/q2bvqn3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4939-9237-3_3)

transliteration
translation
commentary
photographs

SA.GIG medical-diagnostic omens

The first two Tablets of the medical-diagnostic series *sakikkû* (SA.GIG) collect omens relating to the fate or cause of a patient’s illness, but it is the second Tablet, in which a man¹²⁶ (*amēlu*) observes the ominous phenomena, that includes four lizard omens. Labat (1951) published SA.GIG as *Traité Akkadien de diagnostics et prognostics médicaux* (TDP) and so the four lizard omens are usually referred to as TDP 2:44–47. Heeßel (2001) provides an updated edition along with a discussion and bibliography on the similarities between the second Tablet of SA.GIG and *šumma ālu*. The four omens are preserved on four manuscripts (Heeßel 2001, 27, 32–33 manuscripts A, E, G, and H). Only one of the omens, TDP 2: 45,¹²⁷ appears to have a parallel in *šumma ālu*, Sultantepe 34, and helps understand the reading of a problematic sign in the Sultantepe omen. While the remaining three lizard omens in SA.GIG do not have known parallels in *šumma ālu* Tablet 32, the topic of illness is common among the lizard omens of Tablet 32.

¹²⁶ As rightly noted by Heeßel (2001, 24 note 3), the Akkadian *amēlu* can refer to both men and women, but given that Mesopotamian divination occurs within a male-oriented context, following Heeßel’s suggestion of translating ‘man’ seems appropriate.

¹²⁷ See Heeßel (2001, 33 omen 45) for an updated score.

Nineveh Recension

Nineveh 1

Variant A (K 3730+ and BM 41586)

[If] in a man's house [a lizard with two] tails is seen [and the tails are long (and) red — may the one who sees it, kill it (and) may he take its tail and [may? he? put? (it?) on the threshing floor of his house; ...] šedu and lamassu protective spirits will [not approach] his house].

[DIŠ EME.ŠID šá 2] KUN.MEŠ-šú ina É NA IGI-ir-[ma KUN.MEŠ SÙ.MEŠ SA₅.MEŠ IGI.DU₈-šá G]AZ-ši KUN-su lil-qí-ma [ina SU₇ šá É-šú GAR? ... ^d]ALAD u ^dLAMMA [ina É-šú NU T]E

[šumma šurāru ša 2] zibbātušu ina bīt amēli innamir[ma zibbātu arkā sāmā āmirša lid]ūkši zibbāssu lilqīma [ina maškani ša bītišu liškun? ...] šēdu u lamassu [ina bītišu ul iṭehhū]

Variant B (K 6912+)

[If] in a man's house [a lizard] with two tails is se[en and the ta]ils are long (and) red — may the one, who sees it, kil[l it] (and) may he take its [ta]il and [may? he? put? (it?) on the threshing floor of his house; [on the day?] (it) has been placed in that house, šedu and lamassu protective spirits [will not approach] his house.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID] šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá ina É NA IG[I-ir-ma KU]N.MEŠ SÙ.MEŠ SA₅.MEŠ IGI.DU₈-šá GA[Z-ši KU]N-sà lil-qí-e-ma ina SU₇ šá É-šú [GAR? U₄?] ina É šu-a-tu₄ GAR-tu₄ ^dALAD u ^dLAMMA ina É-šú [NU TE]

[šumma šurīrittu] ša 2 zibbātuša ina bīt amēli inna[mirma zibb]ātu arkā sāmā āmirša lidū[kši zibb]āssa lilqīma ina maškani ša bītišu [liškun? ūm?] ina bīti šuāti šaknatu šēdu u lamassu ina bītišu [ul iṭehhū]

BM 41586 r 5'	DUB šá EGIR-šú DIŠ EME.ŠID šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šú ina É NA ina- ^r mir [?]
K 3730+ 1-3	[DIŠ EME.ŠID šá 2] KUN.MEŠ-šú ina É NA IGI-ir-[ma KUN.MEŠ SÙ.MEŠ SA ₅ .MEŠ] / [(indent) IGI.DU ₈ -šá G]AZ-ši KUN-su lil-qí-ma [ina SU ₇ šá É-šú GAR? ...] / ^d ALAD u ^d LAMMA [ina É-šú NU T]E
K 6912+ 1-4	[DIŠ EME.ŠID] ^r šá ^r ^r 2 ^r KUN.MEŠ-šá ina É NA IG[I-ir-ma] / [KU]N.MEŠ SÙ.MEŠ SA ₅ .MEŠ IGI.DU ₈ -šá GA[Z-ši] / [KU]N-sà lil-qí-e-ma ina SU ₇ šá É-šú [GAR?] / [U ₄ ?] ina É šu-a-tu ₄ GAR-tu ₄ ^d ALAD u ^d LAMMA ina É-šú [NU TE]

- ▶ The first Nineveh omen is rather complex: It flows over several lines. It is incomplete on all three attested manuscripts. And, because of its use of the precativ in the middle of the omen, the omen includes a line taken from a ritual. Finally, the omen's interpretation also involves multiple problems discussed below.

The commentary will address the individual manuscripts before considering the reconstruction and interpretation of the omen as a whole.

Manuscript readings

- ▶ Manuscript **K 6912+** preserves the largest portion of the above omen:
 1. The reconstructed beginning of K 6912+ 1 comes from the catchline on BM 41586 r 5' and is the standard beginning for lizard omens. The reconstructed ending of K 6912+ 1 comes from K 3730+ 1. The previous edition *If a City 2* (2006, 190 omen 1 Ex(3)1) reads K 6912+ 1 mostly as above.

2. *If a City 2* (2006, 166 note 1 Ex(3)) interprets K 6912+ 2 as an interpolation between the lines K 6912+ 1 and K 6912+ 3. This results in *If a City 2* (2006, 190 omen 1) omitting K 6912+ 2 from the above omen’s score. Line K 6912+ 2 is read in a note (*If a City 2* 2006, 166 note 1 Ex(3)) as follows:

[... EME.ŠI]D.MEŠ SUD.MEŠ SA₅.MEŠ IGI.DU₈ ša₂ I[i? ...]

Collation of the line shows a series of vertical wedges on the manuscript’s left-hand side. There appears to be the tail-end of a rather faint horizontal wedge running through the vertical wedges. While the remnants potentially allow for both the reading ŠID and KUN, the horizontal wedge’s alignment more closely corresponds to KUN. Thus, by reading the traces as KUN, the line can be incorporated into the omen: KUN.MEŠ ‘the tails’ (K 6912+ 2) refers back to the earlier ‘2’ KUN.MEŠ-šá ‘with two tails’ at the outset of the omen (K 6912+ 1).

The sign at the end of K 6912+ 2, on the broken right-hand edge, does not resemble LI as read in *If a City 2*. Upon collation, the remnants in K 6912+ 2 show two short horizontal wedges written closely on top of each other. To their right are further wedges that unfortunately continue onto a missing fragment. The remnants resemble those at the beginning of K 3730+ 2. At both the end of K 6912+ 2 and the beginning of K 3730+ 2, the remnants fit with the reading GAZ, interpreted as *dâku* ‘to kill’, which we suggest for both manuscripts. See also the commentary below on K 3730+.

3. Collation also shows that there are minimal remnants of a sign at the beginning of K 6912+ 3. The remnants allow for the reading KUN, which mirrors K 3730+ 2, despite the change in the lizard’s gender (KUN-*su* versus [KU]N-*sâ*) between the two manuscripts. This sign was omitted from the line’s reading in *If a City 2* (2006, 190 omen 1 Ex(3)3). The previous edition otherwise reads the line as above.

For the reconstruction of GAR in the break at the end of K 6912+ 3, see the commentary on the omen’s interpretation below.

4. Reconstructing U₄ ‘day’ in the break at the beginning of K 6912+ 4 is suggested from the comparable Sultantepe 60 (copied in the commentary below). The signs GAR-*tu*₄ are read syllabically as šá-*tu*₄ in *If a City 2* (2006, 190 omen 1 Ex(3)4) and are tentatively translated (2006, 167 omen 1) to mean ‘in that year(?)’. As in Sultantepe 60, we suggest reading GAR-*tu*₄ to be interpreted as the feminine stative of *šakānu* ‘to place’ with a subjunctive ending. The relative clause is introduced by U₄ ‘day’ (reconstructed in the break). See the first commentary under ‘omen reconstruction and interpretation’ for *If a City 2*’s translation.

For the reconstruction of TE in K 6912+ 4 and the transliteration of Sultantepe 60, see the comments on manuscript K 3730+, line 3.

- ▶ The omen runs over the first three lines of **K 3730+**. Although the manuscript is missing large portions of all three lines, reconstruction is at least partially possible based on the two other manuscripts.
 1. The protasis’s reconstruction is from the catchline on BM 41586 r 5’. The ending of K 3730+ 1 is taken from K 6912+ 2. The manuscript, at the beginning of K 3730+ 1, is abraded, and the end of the line is broken away, leaving more than enough room for the reconstruction.
 2. The preserved section of K 3730+ 2 begins with a broken sign, read as x in *If a City 2* (2006, 190 omen 1 Ex(1)2). Upon collation, the remnants suggest GAZ ‘to kill’. With this reading, the line’s second sign IGI can be read as the enclitic pronoun referring to the lizard, that is GAZ-*ši*. See also the commentary on K 6912+ 2 above.

If a City 2 (2006, 190 omen 1 Ex(1)2) reads the line as:

[...] x IGI KUN-su lil-qi2- ma [...]

The large size of the missing right-hand portion of K 3730+ 2 provides ample space to reconstruct multiple signs. We reconstruct *ina* SU₇ šá É-šú GAR² ... from K 6912+ 3. The commentary on the omen's interpretation below discusses the reconstruction of GAR. K 3730+ 3, the next line, begins with ^[d]ALAD u ^dLAMMA, which is also attested in the middle of K 6912+ 4. For these reasons, it is possible that the signs at the beginning of K 6912+ 4 should also be reconstructed at the end of K 3730+ 2.

3. The end of K 3730+ 3 has been reconstructed following K 6912+ 4.

After the manuscript's large break, K 3730+ 3 has minimal remnants of a final sign, too fragmentary to read with any certainty. Although *If a City 2* (2006, 190 omen 1 Ex(1)3) does not read the sign, we follow the previous edition's (2006, 166 omen 1) reconstruction and read TE 'to approach', based on the similar Sultantepe 60:

Sultantepe 60

[If a lizard wi]th two tails is repeatedly seen in a man's house — favorable: may he who sees (it), take its tail (and) may he place it [on the threshing floo]r of his house; on the day¹ when [it]s² t[ail]² has been placed in that house, a šedu and lamassu protective spirit will not approach the man's house.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID] šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá ina É NA IGI.IGI šá-li-mu IGI KUN-sa TI-qi¹ [ina SU]₇ É-šú GAR U⁴ K[UN²-s]_a² ina É šu-a-tu₄ GAR-tu₄ ^dALAD u ^dLAMMA ina É NA NU TE

- Manuscript **BM 41586** is a commentary text on scorpion omens (*šumma ālu* Tablet 31). It has been included in the above omen's score as the manuscript's ending rubric quotes the protasis of Tablet 32's first omen, a so-called 'catchline'. The remnants of the line's final signs are written on the edge of the manuscript and are damaged. They were also collated by the *Cuneiform Commentaries Project*.¹²⁸
 1. Collation reveals that *If a City 2*'s (2006, 166 note 1 BM 41586) placement of the catchline in BM 41586 r 4 is incorrect. The catchline is line r 5', as is also read by the *Cuneiform Commentaries Project* (Jiménez 2014 CCP 3.5.31). Further *If a City 2* interprets the sign read as *ina* above as a broken IGI and omits the subsequent sign read as ⁻¹mir² above. This has little bearing on the apodosis's translation.

(*If a City 2*, 2006, 166 note 1 BM 41586 r.4)

DUB ša₂ EGIR-šu₂ DIŠ EME.ŠID ša₂ 2 KUN.MEŠ-šu₂ ina E2 NA I[GI]

Omen reconstruction and interpretation

- *If a City 2* does not provide separate reconstructions for variant lines, and therefore its reconstructed transliterations and translations can differ significantly from the current edition, making comparisons difficult.

For ease of discussion, the above omen's reconstructed transliteration and translation in *If a City 2* are provided here, but differences are not marked in bold.

(*If a City 2* 2006, 166 omen 1)

[DIŠ EME.ŠID] ša₂ 2 KUN.MEŠ-šu₂ ina E₂ NA IGI-ir [ša₂-li-mu IGI] KUN-su lil-qi₂-ma ina SU₇ ša₂ E₂-šu₂ [ša₂ ...] ina E₂ šu-a-tu₄ ša₂-tum ^dALAD₃ u ^dLAMMA ina E₂-šu₂ [NU TE]

(*If a City 2* 2006, 167 omen 1)

[If a lizard] that has two tails is seen in a man's house—[favorable; let the one who sees (it)] take its tail and in the threshing-floor of his house, [the one who ...] in that year(?) in that house; no Šedu or Lamassu spirit will approach that house.

¹²⁸ Photos of BM 41586 can be viewed at <https://ccp.yale.edu/P461205>.

1. The most significant difference in interpretation is due to *If a City 2* (2006, 166 note 1 Ex(3)) understanding K 6912+ 2 to be an interpolation, whereas we have demonstrated that the line is in fact part of the above omen. See the commentary above under K 6912+.
 2. *If a City 2* (2006, 166 note 1) also reconstructs *šá-li-mu* at the end of K 3730+ 1 on the suggestion of Leichty. This appears to come from Sultantepe 60, which, because of its similarities to the above omen, was also used to reconstruct parts of K 6912+ and K 3730+ above. Sultantepe 60 has *šá-li-mu* immediately after the protasis's verb IGI.IGI 'is repeatedly seen'. The entire Sultantepe omen is provided in the commentary above under K 3730+.. In the present case, however, the suggested restoration with *šá-li-mu* simply does not reflect the state of K 3730+ 1 which has a large break after IGI-ir and must have more text missing (see the score above).
 3. The negative marker NU before TE at the end of the omen comes from Sultantepe 60. Although the two omens are not exactly the same, the similarities are striking, and there is more than enough room for a NU in the breaks of both K 3730+ and K 6912+.
- ▶ The reading of SÛ as *arāku* 'to be(come) long' for the third sign on K 6912+ 2 is attested in physiognomic omen texts. See CAD (A.2: 223 s.v. *arāku*). The more common logographic writing for *arāku*, however, is GÍD.DA; for an example, see Nineveh 2.
1. The signs SÛ.MEŠ (K 6912+ 2) were also interpreted as meaning 'long' in *If a City 2* (2006, 166 note 1 Ex(3)):

[...] long(?) red **lizards** are seen, **which** [...]

Note that *If a City 2* mistakenly reconstructs EME.ŠI]D 'lizards' instead of KU]N.MEŠ (see above) in front of SÛ.MEŠ, thus necessitating the question mark. Applied to tails, as suggested above, there is nothing questionable about the translation 'long' for SÛ.MEŠ.

- ▶ The reading GAR 'to put, to place' has been suggested as a possible reconstruction in both variants for what the man should do with the lizard's tail 'on his house's threshing floor'. The verb not only makes sense contextually but also forms of *šakānu* (GAR) are common in other omen texts with *maškānu* 'threshing floor'. There is the obvious play on the common verbal roots of the two words. See CAD (M.1: 371 s.v. *maškānu*). The most salient reason remains however that the similar Sultantepe 60 also uses GAR.
- ▶ The grammatical gender of lizards in Akkadian is flexible from one ancient source to the other, sometimes even being used interchangeably within one manuscript. The manuscripts here show this nicely: Manuscript BM 41586 (*r 5'*: KUN.MEŠ-šú) uses a masculine possessive suffix to refer to the lizard, whereas K 3730+ changes from the masculine (1: KUN.MEŠ-šú, 2: KUN-su) to the feminine (2: G]AZ-šī), and K 6912+ (1: KUN.MEŠ-šá, 3: [KU]N-sà) uses a feminine suffix. In the current edition, unless the gender is specifically indicated—through syllabic spelling or pronouns—the Akkadian masculine for lizard *šurāru* has been used. The feminine of lizard can be normalized as *šurīritu* or *šurīrittu*. We have chosen the latter to match the orthography of those omens that spell the animal syllabically. The variants of the above omen differ in the gender of lizards. See also section 3.3.1 for more on lizard orthography and grammatical gender.
- ▶ For other omens with *lamassu* or *šedu* protective spirits, see Nineveh 20, Sm 710+ 9', Assur 71, Sultantepe 58, and Sultantepe 60.

* * *

Nineveh 2

If in a [man's] house a lizard with two tails [is seen] and the right one is long — a (formerly) angry [g]od [will retur]n to the man.

DIŠ EME.ŠID šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá u šá ZAG GÍD.DA ina É [NA IGI DIN]GIR ŠÀ.DIB.BA ana LÚ [GUR-r]a

šumma šurīrittu ša 2 zibbātuša u ša imitti arkat ina bīt [amēli innamir i]lu zenû ana amēli [iturr]a

K 3730+ 4	'DIŠ' 'EME'.ŠID šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá u šá ZAG 'GÍD'. [DA ... GUR-r]a
K 6912+ 5-6	[DIŠ EM]E.ŠID šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá u šá ZAG GÍD.DA ina 'É' [NA IGI] / [(indent) DIN]GIR ŠÀ.DIB.BA ana LÚ [GUR-ra]

- The apodosis's verb is broken away on both manuscripts. K 3730+ 4 preserves a broken RA on the manuscript's right-hand edge. Although a large piece of the manuscript is missing between ZAG 'GÍD'. [DA and the broken RA, collation confirms both the sign's reading and its placement in line K 3730+ 4. Though *If a City 2* (2006, 190 omen 2' Ex(1)4) includes RA in its reading of K 3730+ 4, it does not incorporate the broken sign into the above omen (2006, 166 omen 2'), which results in the following reconstruction:

DIŠ EME.ŠID šá₂ 2 KUN.MEŠ-š_{u2} u šá₂ ZAG GID₂.DA ina E₂ [NA IGI DIN]GIR.ŠA₃.DIB.BA ana LU₂ [ŠUB.MEŠ]

We suggest reconstructing GUR 'to turn back' in the break and interpreting the broken RA as a phonetic complement. Thus reconstructed, the apodosis is a common and favorable prognosis indicating the god will 'resume a favorable attitude' toward the person. See CAD (T: 255 s.v. *tāru* 2d; Z: 85 s.v. *zenû* a 3') for other examples.

1. The suggested reconstruction is supported by the above omen's similarities in meaning and structure to Sultantepe 61.

[If] in a man's house [a lizard]d with two tails is seen; its right t[ail] is long — (formerly) angered gods will return to the man's house.

[DIŠ EME.ŠI]D šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá K[UN]-sà šá ZAG GÍD.DA ina É NA IGI DINGIR.MEŠ
zi-nu-tu₄ ana É NA GUR.MEŠ-ni

2. Note CAD (Š.1: 15 s.v. *šabsu*), commenting on K 6912+ 6, reads the apodosis as follows:

[DING]IR ŠÀ.DIB.BA ana amēli itâr

Collation of the manuscript shows K 6912+ 6 breaks off after *ana LÚ*, without any trace of GUR *itâr*. Nevertheless CAD's suggestion is probably correct.

3. The logogram ŠÀ.DIB.BA is attested in commentary and lexical lists for *šabsu*, *zenû*, and *kamlu*, all meaning 'angry, wrathful' (CAD Z: 84 s.v. *zenû*; Š.1: 4 s.v. *šabāsu*; K: 124 s.v. *kamlu*). We read *zenû* because of Sultantepe 61, which has the phonetic reading *zi-nu-tu₄*. *If a City 2* (2006, 167 omen 2') interprets DINGIR ŠÀ.DIB.BA as a single word meaning 'divine wrath', *kimiltu* in Akkadian. This and *If a City 2*'s suggestion to reconstruct ŠUB.MEŠ as the apodosis's verb likely come from Sultantepe 62, where DI[NGIR.Š]À.DIB.BA ana É NA ŠUB.MEŠ is the first of that omen's multiple apodoses. *Kimiltu* is a legitimate reading for DINGIR.ŠÀ.DIB.BA, but it does not fit well with the new reading GUR-*ra* as the above omen's final verb. Also Sultantepe 62 is not as close a match for Nineveh 2 as Sultantepe 61 is. Given the similarities between above omen and Sultantepe 61, it seems more appropriate to interpret the above signs as DINGIR ŠÀ.DIB.BA with the meaning 'an angry god'.

- ▶ Both the right and left-hand edges of K 6912+ are broken, but it does not seem that much is missing. The right-hand side has room for a few signs at the most. While the left-hand side's gap has a bit more room, it is not large.
- ▶ An indentation has been reconstructed at the beginning of K 6912+ 6. Indentations are common on *šumma ālu* manuscripts when omens carry over onto multiple lines. Comparisons with this manuscript's other omens indicate that there is room for a few signs on the left-hand side, but as the omen is logically complete with the reconstruction of NA IGI in line 5, an indentation seems probable.
- ▶ In K 6912+ 5, we reconstruct [NA IGI] at the end of the protasis as has been done in *If a City 2* (2006, 166 omen 2'). There is enough room at the edge of the manuscript for the reconstruction, and it is logical given that the proceeding omen uses the verb IGI in the protasis.
- ▶ Collation of both manuscripts confirms the reading KUN.MEŠ-šá instead of *If a City 2*'s (2006, 166 omen 2') KUN.MEŠ-šu₂.

* * *

Nineveh 3

[I]f in a [man's?] house a lizard [wi]th two tails [is seen? and?] the right [o]ne is short, but the left one is long — that man [...] in g[oo]d? [...].

[šu]m-ma šu-ri-ri-it-tu₄ šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá ina É [NA? IGI? u? š]á ZAG LÚGUD.DA-ma šá GÙB GÍD.DA NA BI ina S[IG₅]?-ti [...]

[šu]mma šurīrittu ša 2 zibbātuša ina bīt [amēli? innamir? u? š]a imitti kariatma ša šumēli arkat amēlu šū ina [dami]qti? [...]

K 6912+ 7–8	[š <u>u</u>]m-ma šu-ri-ri-it-tu ₄ šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá ¹ ina ¹ É ¹ [NA? IGI?] / [u? š]á ZAG LÚGUD.DA-ma šá GÙB GÍD.DA NA BI ina S[IG ₅]?-ti [...]
-------------	--

- ▶ Note the syllabic spelling of *šum-ma* instead of the usual DIŠ. In *šumma ālu*, syllabic spellings of *šumma* often occur when an omen's protasis directly relates to the preceding omen's protasis. It is as if the ancient scribe saw the omens as a group. The above omen has the same subject (a two-tailed lizard) as Nineveh 2, but provides an alternate tail as the longer one. When such groupings occur, the omens written with the syllabic *šum-ma* are often indented but K 6912+ is too damaged to be certain. See also Nineveh 4 and Sultantepe 65 for other omens with the syllabic *šum-ma* or *šum₄-ma*.
- ▶ CAD (K: 570 s.v. *kurû* 1b) mistakenly lists line K 3730+ 5 (CT 38 39: 3; Nineveh 7) as a duplicate to the above K 6912+ 7 (CT 38 40: 3). While K 3730+ 5 begins very similarly to the above omen, its apodosis aligns with K 6912+ 15 (Nineveh 7). We therefore follow *If a City 2* (2006, 190 omen 6') and place K 3730+ 5 there (Nineveh 7).
- ▶ The end of K 6912+ 7 lies upon a join between the fragments K 6912 and K 9723. Collation reveals remnants of *šá* and *ina* along the join, despite a mention in CAD (Š: 256 s.v. *šurīrittu*) that neither -šú nor -šá are to be found after KUN.MEŠ in this line or in line K 6912+ 9 (Nineveh 4). A broken É (two horizontals and one vertical wedge) is also visible after the gap where the two fragments of K 6912+ meet.

If a City 2 (2006, 190 omen 3', Ex(3)7) does not read the signs after the second *šá*.

[šu]m-ma šu-ri-ri-it-tu₄ ša₂ 2 KUN.MEŠ-š[a₂ ...]

The omission carries over to *If a City 2's* (2006, 166 omen 3') reconstructed transliteration and translation (2006, 167 omen 3'):

[šum-ma šu-ri-ri-it-tu₄ ša₂ 2 KUN.MEŠ-š[a₂ u] ša₂ ZAG LUGUD₂.DA-ma ša₂ GUB₃ GID₂.DA NA BI ina x ti [...]

If a lizard has two tails [and] its right one is short and its left one is long, that man [...]

- ▶ In line K 6912+ 8, there is vitrification on the signs GÍD.DA. Further, the remains of a single wedge's head are visible immediately before the gap where the manuscript's two fragments were joined together. The broken sign has been reconstructed above as SIG₅ because of the phonetic complement *-ti*. The reading is tentative. The sign was read as x in *If a City 2* (2006, 190 omen 3').
- ▶ See also Sultantepe 62, which transposes the order of the left and right tails and has a different apodosis.

* * *

Nineveh 4

[I]f in a man's house a lizard with two [ta]ils is repeatedly seen — a flood? [will come]?

[šum-ma šu-ri-ri-it-tu₄ šá 2 [KU]N.MEŠ-šá ina É NA it-ta-an-mar A.KAL? [DU]?

[šumma šurīrittu ša 2 [zibb]ātuša ina bīt amēli ittanmar mīlu? [illak]?

K 6912+ 9–10	[šum-ma šu-ri-ri-it-tu ₄ šá 2 [KU]N.M[EŠ]- ^r šá ^r / ina É NA it- ^r tan ^r -[ma]r A. ^r KAL [?] [DU]?
Sm 710+ 5'	[... KU]N.MEŠ-šá ina É NA it-ta-an-mar A.K[AL [?] DU]?

- ▶ See the commentary at Nineveh 3 on the syllabic spelling of *šum-ma*.
- ▶ The apodosis is broken on both manuscripts. The remnants of the signs following A on both manuscripts are compatible with the reading KAL to form A.KAL 'a flood'. While there is not another instance among the lizard omens, the phrase 'a flood will come' is a common among omen apodoses. For examples, see CAD (M.2: 70 s.v. *mīlu* A 1).

The reconstruction of A.KAL DU means the reconstructed transliteration and translation do not match those in *If a City 2*. That edition (2006, 166, 167 omen 4'; as well as 2006, 190 omen 4' Ex(3) and Ex(7)) reads instead a-x- [...]. Most of the breaks are also not indicated in the earlier edition, but the omen is otherwise read as above.

* * *

Nineveh 5

[I]f a white [li]zard with two tails is seen in a man's house — that house [...]

[DIŠ E]ME.ŠID BABBAR šá 2 KUN^{II}-šá ina É NA IGI É BI [...]

[šumma š]urāru pešû ša 2 zibbātuša ina bīt amēli innamir bītu šû [...]

K 6912+ 11	[DIŠ E]ME.ŠID BABBAR šá 2 KUN ^{II} - ^r šá ^r ina ^r É ^r NA ^r IGI É BI [...]
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- ▶ The above omen and Nineveh 6 are combined into one omen in *Ifa City 2* (2006, 166, 167, 190 all omen 5'). Such a reconstruction, however, implies that a second protasis repeating the phrase *šá 2 KUN^{II} ... IGI* 'with two tails ... is seen' is added after the (broken) apodosis in line K 6912+ 11. Comparing K 6912+ 12 to lines 7 and 9 (Nineveh 3 and 4) on the same manuscript, the signs *šá 2 KUN^{II}-šá ...* in line 12 align with the same signs in lines 7 and 9. This likely indicates that the illegible traces at the beginning of K 6912+ 12 introduce a new omen (Nineveh 6). Nevertheless due to the fragmentary nature of the manuscripts, such an interpretation remains uncertain.
- ▶ Collation shows that in line K 6912+ 11, after KUN 'tail', there are traces along the join between the manuscript's two fragments. The traces suggest reading both the dual marker ^{II} and the sign -šá, especially when one compares them with K 6912+ 14 (Nineveh 7), where the signs KUN^{II}-šá are legible. Although 'two tails' is written with the plural marker MEŠ in the preceding line (K 6912+ 10; Nineveh 4), there does not appear to be enough room for MEŠ. Neither Gadd's hand copy of K 6912+ (CT 38 40) nor *Ifa City 2*'s (2006, 190 omen 5' Ex(3)) reading of K 06912+ 11 indicates that there is a broken sign between KUN and *ina*.
- ▶ Though the apodosis is incomplete, it is likely to be negative just as in Nineveh 15, which has a similar protasis. See the discussion on colors in section 4.1.1.

* * *

Nineveh 6

[If a ... lizard ...] ... with two tails is seen [...] — that omen is not [...]

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ...] x mu[?] šú šá 2 KUN^{II}[-šá ...] IGI GIZKIM BI NU [...]

[šumma šurāru ...] ... ša 2 zibbātu[ša ...] innamir ittu šū ul [...]

K 6912+ 12–13	(illegible traces) x [?] mu [?] šú [?] šá 2 KUN ^{II} [-šá ...] / [...] IGI GIZKIM BI NU [...]
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- ▶ See Nineveh 5 for a discussion on why Nineveh 5 and 6 are interpreted here as two separate omens; note that they are presented as one omen in *Ifa City 2* (2006, 166, 167, 190 all omen 5').
- ▶ Collation reveals that the beginning of the line has traces of signs along the length of K 6912+ 12, leaving room for around seven to nine signs. These are followed by three signs: 'x[?] mu[?] and 'šú[?]. This broken section of the line likely describes another characteristic of the lizard. The beginning of line 13 is completely broken away, but there would also be room for around seven to nine signs. On the right-hand side of the manuscript it is unlikely that more than a couple of signs are missing from either line.

* * *

Nineveh 7

Variant A (K 3730+)

If a lizard with two tails, the one tail [...] — [th]at [man[?] will be remove]d from his position.

DIŠ EME.ŠID šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá KUN-sà šá [... LÚ[?] B]I ina KI.GUB-šú [in-na-sa]-aḥ

šumma šurīrittu ša 2 zibbātuša zibbāssa ša [... amēlu[?] š]ū ina mazzāzišu [innass]aḥ

Variant B (K 6912+)

[If a lizard with two] tails, the one tail ... [...] lies on top of its [...] — a man will be re[moved]? from his position.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID šá 2] KUN^u-šá KUN-sà šá x [...] x-šú *ir-kab* LÚ *ina* KI.GUB-šú *i[n-na-sa-ah]?*

[šumma šurīrittu ša 2] *zibbātuša zibbāssa ša ... [...] ... -šu irkab amēlu ina mazzāzišu i[nnassaḥ]?*

K 3730+ 5–6	'DIŠ' 'EME'.ŠID šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá KUN-sà šá [... LU [?] B]I / (indent) <i>ina</i> KI.GUB-šú [<i>in-na-sa</i>]- <i>ah</i>
K 6912+ 14–15	[...] KUN ^u -šá KUN-sà šá 'x' [...] / [...] 'x'-šú <i>ir-kab</i> 'LÚ <i>ina</i> KI.GUB-šú' <i>i[n-na-sa-ah]?</i>

- ▶ Unfortunately the omen's protasis is only partially preserved on either manuscript. Given that the verb *rakābu* 'to mount; to lie on top of' can be used in omens to say that one body part is located above another, we suggest two possible interpretations:

1. In K 6912+ 14, the traces of the sign following KUN-sà šá fit with the sign NI. A possible reconstruction would then be to read KUN-sà šá-*n*[*i-tu*]. In this context KUN-sà *šanītu* could be interpreted either as the 'second tail' or as the 'abnormal tail'. If connected with the verb *irkab* in K 6912+ 15, the verb's object (the body part upon which the second/abnormal tail lies) is lost within the break.

Parallels in other omens, especially extispicy omens, suggest the adjective *kajānu* 'normal' (CAD K: 40–41 s.v. *kajānu* a) as a possible counterpart to *šanītu*. The sign -šú at the beginning of line 15 is, however, problematic. It would suggest a masculine possessive pronoun for the object of *irkab* and, while lizards can be either gender in Akkadian, the feminine is used for KUN-sà 'its tail', and the adjective *šanītu* is also feminine.

2. Following the assumption that *irkab* describes the position of the lizard's tails, another conceivable reconstruction would be the adjectives ZAG 'right' or GÙB 'left' as descriptors of the tail. Such a reconstruction, however, does not reflect the traces at the end of K 6912+ 14. There are even fewer remnants of the sign at the beginning of K 6912+ 15—just a partial vertical wedge. While the traces do not exclude the reading GÙB, it remains highly speculative and seems less likely than the suggestion of *šanītu* and *kajānu* above.

The traces at the end of K 6912+ 14 and the beginning of K 6912+ 15 were left unread by *If a City 2* (2006, 190 omen 6' Ex(3)).

- ▶ The final sign on line K 6912+ 15 is fragmentary. The remnants, however, allow for the reading *in-*. We follow *If a City 2* (2006, 166 omen 6') in reconstructing the verb *innassaḥ* 'he will be removed' in the apodosis as it fits as well with the last sign in K 3730+ 6.
- ▶ In its reconstructed transliteration of the above omen, *If a City 2* (2006, 166 omen 6') interprets BI (from K 3730+ 5) as part of the omen's protasis. From the sign's position, it seems clear however that it is at the beginning of the apodosis.
- ▶ See Nineveh 3 for a discussion on the placement of K 3730+ 5–6 with the above omen instead of with K 6912+ 7–8 (Nineveh 3) as suggested in CAD.

* * *

Nineveh 8

If a lizard with two tails falls in front of a man — that man will prevail over his legal adversary.

DIŠ EME.ŠID šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá *ana* IGI NA ŠUB-*ut* NA BI UGU EN INIM-šú GUB

šumma šurīrittu ša 2 zibbātuša ana pān amēli imqut amēlu šu eli bēl amātišu izzaz

K 3730+ 7	DIŠ EME.ŠID šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá ana IGI NA [... INI]M-šú GUB
K 6912+ 16	[DIŠ EME.ŠID] 'šá' '2' KUN.<MEŠ>-šá' ana IGI NA ŠUB-ut NA BI UGU EN INIM [...]

- ▶ Collation reveals traces of a broken sign that fit with the reading INIM 'word' on the edge of the break in K 3730+ 7. These traces were omitted by *If a City 2* (2006, 190 omen 7' Ex(1)7), which otherwise read the line as above.
- ▶ Upon collating K 6912+ 16, there is a broken -šá after KUN. The area is damaged; there might also be the marking ^{II} ('2' KUN^{III}-šá') to indicate the dual. Neither Gadd's hand copy (CT 38 40) nor *If a City 2* (2006, 190 omen 7' Ex(3)) includes it:

[... š]a₂ 2 KUN.[...] ana IGI NA ŠUB-ut NA BI UGU EN KA-[...]

- ▶ Sultantepe 63 has been interpreted as preserving the same omen as above. See, however, the commentary there as the Sultantepe hand copy (STT 323) has a likely error. Note also the use of the phonetic compliment on GUB in the Sultantepe omen.
- ▶ For a discussion on the repetition of the protases about lizards—with or without tails—falling in front of a man, see the commentary at Assur 5.

* * *

Nineveh 9

If a lizard with two tails falls onto a man — [that] m[an: wherever] he goes, he will experience good fortune.

DIŠ EME.ŠID ša 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá ana UGU NA ŠUB-ut N[A BI KI] DU-ku SIG₅ IGI

šumma šurīrittu ša 2 zibbātuša ana muḥḥi amēli imqut a[mēlu šū ašar] illaku damiqta immar

K 3730+ 8	DIŠ EME.ŠID ša 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá 'ana' 'UGU' N[A ... S]IG ₅ IGI
K 6912+ 17–18	[DIŠ EME.ŠI]D ša 2 'KUN'. 'MEŠ'-šá' 'ana' UGU NA ŠUB-ut N[A BI] / [KI] DU-ku SIG ₅ [IGI]

- ▶ Collation of K 6912+ reveals a broken NA—the man of the apodosis—at the end of line 17. This is omitted in *If a City 2* (2006, 190 omen 8' Ex(3)). The omission carries over to the reconstructed transliteration (2006, 166 omen 8') and translation (2006, 167 omen 8') of the above omen in *If a City 2*, but the change in meaning is negligible.

Further, both *If a City 2* and Gadd's hand copy (CT 38 40) indicate the sign after KUN.MEŠ is -šú. The sign, however, is -šá, confirmed by collation.

* * *

Nineveh 10

If a lizard with two tails [...] on top of a man, [...] — (his) wealth will increase.

DIŠ EME.ŠID šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá ana UGU NA [...] NÍG.TUK uš-šab

šumma šurīrittu ša 2 zibbātuša ana muḥḥi amēli [...] mašrû uššab

K 3730+ 9	DIŠ EME.ŠID šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá 'ana' [... NÍG.TU]K? uš-šab
K 6912+ 19–20	[DIŠ EME.ŠI]D [šá] 2 'KUN'.MEŠ-šú? ana UGU NA [...] / [...] NÍG.TUK u[š-šab]?

- ▶ The line K 3730+ 9 is read by *If a City 2* (2006, 190 omen 9' Ex(1)) as

DIŠ EME.ŠID ša₂ KUN.MEŠ-ša₂ [...] x uš-šab

Collation of the manuscript shows traces of a broken sign on the right-hand edge of the break. Its traces, the tail end of two horizontal wedges, fit with the reading NÍG.TU]K. There is also a broken *ana* before the break.

- ▶ After collation of manuscript K 6912+, it is apparent that part of the sign ŠID is visible at the beginning of line 19, and there is a broken sign at the end of line 20, after NÍG.TUK. Both signs are missing in *If a City 2*'s (2006, 190 omen 9' Ex(3)) reading of these lines.

The remnants of the sign after NÍG.TUK are compatible with the reading u[š-sab]—there is what appears to be a broken KUR on the manuscript—but incompatible with a reading of šú, as suggested by *If a City 2* (2006, 166 omen 9'):

DIŠ EME.ŠID ša₂ 2 KUN.MEŠ-ša₂ ana UGU NA [...] NIG₂.TUK-[š_u2] uš-šab

This also affects the translation in *If a City 2* (2006, 167 omen 9'):

If a lizard that has two tails [...] on top of a man, **[his]** wealth will increase.

* * *

Nineveh 11

If a lizard with two tails [...] on top of a sick man — [...] and he will expand (his) property.

DIŠ EME.ŠID šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá ana UGU GIG [...] -ma NÍG.GA DAGAL-áš

šumma šurīrittu ša 2 zibbātuša ana muḥḥi marši [...] -ma makkūra urappaš

K 3730+ 10	DIŠ EME.ŠID šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá 'ana' [...] -ma NÍG.GA DAGAL-áš
K 6912+ 21	[...] 'ana' UGU GIG [...]

- ▶ It is important to note that the only overlap between K 3730+ 10 and K 6912+ 21 is the sign *ana*. The lines have been combined into one omen because they are the subsequent lines on their respective manuscripts to the preceding omen (Nineveh 10). The omen sequences on the two manuscripts are similar to one another; though manuscript K 6912+ has the occasional additional omen not present on K 3730+. The obverse of K 6912+ breaks off after the above omen.
- ▶ The above omen's translation in *If a City 2* (2006, 167 omen 10'), interprets NÍG.GA 'property' as the subject of DAGAL-aš.

If a lizard that has two tails [...] on top of a sick man, [...] and **(his) property will expand**.

The verb, however, should be read as being in the D-stem, *urappaš* 'he will expand', which is transitive. The subject is likely the man from the protasis.

- ▶ Lizard omens involving illness or diseases appear in all three recensions: Nineveh 11, 35', 36', 67', Assur 22, 26, 33, 34, 94', 125', Sultantepe 23, 24, 33, and 34. The medical-diagnostic series SA.GIG also includes four lizard omens, see Heeßel (2001) for details.

* * *

Nineveh 12

If a lizard without a tail [is s]een — the man’s wife will bear (so) many children that there won’t be any bread in his mouth.

DIŠ EME.ŠID šá KUN NU TUK-ú I[GI]-ir DAM NA DUMU.MEŠ *ma-’a-du-ti* Û.TU-*ma* NINDA *ana* KA-šú NU GAR-*an*

šumma šurāru ša zibbata lā išû in[nam]ir aššat amēli mārī mā’dūti ulladma akala ana pišu ul iššakkan

K 3730+ 11	DIŠ EME.ŠID šá KUN NU TUK-ú I[GI] ... <i>ma-’a</i>]- ^r <i>du</i> ¹ - <i>ti</i> Û.TU- <i>ma</i> NINDA <i>ana</i> KA-šú NU GAR- <i>an</i>
K 12180+ i 10’	[...] ^r Û.TU- <i>ma</i> NINDA <i>ana</i> KA-šú ^r NU GAR- <i>an</i>
Sm 710+ 7’	[... IGI]- <i>ir</i> DAM NA DUMU.MEŠ <i>ma-’a-du-ti</i> Û.TU- <i>ma</i> NINDA [...] (ruling)

- ▶ See the manuscript indices in section 6.3.1 for an explanation on the discrepancies in the line count of K 12180+.
- ▶ Collation of K 3730+ 11 shows that there is a broken -^r*du*¹ after the break and before -*ti*. This fits with the expected *ma-’a-du-ti* from Sm 710+ 7’. The sign at the beginning of the break is reconstructed as I[GI] from Sm 710+ 7’, where the phonetic complement -*ir* is still visible. This reconstruction allows for -ú to be associated with TUK ‘to have’, instead of being read as part of an unknown word ú-x, as done in *If a City 2* (2006, 191 omen 11’ Ex(1)11). It also clears up the difficulties in *If a City 2*, where [IGI] is present in the final reconstructed transliteration of the omen (*If a City 2* 2006, 166 omen 11’), but the ú-x of K 3730+ is dropped without comment:

Transliteration of K 3730+ 11 (*If a City 2* 2006, 191 omen 11’ Ex(1)11)

DIŠ EME.ŠID š_{a2} KUN NU TUK **u_{2-x}** [...] -**ti** U₃.TU-*ma* NINDA *ana* KA-š_{u2} NU GAR-*an*

Omen’s reconstructed transliteration (*If a City 2* 2006, 166 omen 11’)

DIŠ EME.ŠID š_{a2} KUN NU TUK [IGI]-*ir* DAM NA DUMU.MEŠ *ma-’a-du-ti* U₃.TU-*ma* NINDA *ana* KA-š_{u2} NU GAR-*an*

- ▶ The break at the right-hand edge of Sm 710+ 7’ is not large, but the thickness of the manuscript would have allowed the scribe to write the missing portions of the apodosis on the edge of the manuscript. Alternatively, the left-hand portion of the next line (Sm 710+ 8’) has a large break. Perhaps the omen was carried over onto the next line or onto the manuscript’s reverse. The reverse is unfortunately completely broken away.
- ▶ The above omen has a forerunner on an Old Babylonian collection¹²⁹ of omens taken from daily life (CUSAS 18, no. 16, col. viii 23’–37’, §64’, reading and translation from George 2013, 99):

DIŠ *i-na bīti(é)-šu šurārum(eme.šid) ša ‘zibbatam(kun) lā(nu) šaknu(gar)’ innamir(igi!) a[ššat(d[am])-su mārē(dumu)]^{meš} ma-du-ti u[l-la-ad]-ma [akalum(ninda) a-na pi]-šu ul(nu) šakin(gar)*

¹²⁹ There is another lizard omen in the same Old Babylonian collection of omens (CUSAS 18, no. 16, col. viii 17’–19’, §62’, reading and translation from George 2013, 99). It does not have a known parallel in *šumma ālu*:

DIŠ *i-na bubbulim(ud.ná.a) šurār(eme.šid) zibbatim(kun) 2-ta i-ta-mar i-šar-ru*

¶ (If) on the last day of the month a lizard with two tails is sighted: (the observer) will grow rich.

Tablet 32’s preserved lizard omens do not usually specify a specific point in time for an omen to be observed. Exceptions are omens involving a lizard vocalizing (Nineveh 7’–48’, Assur 51–52, Assur 68) and one omen about a lizard looking at a piece of fabric (Assur recension: VAT 9906 v 7’), which all specify that the observation is to occur either during the day or at night. Though not present in Tablet 32, specifying a calendar date is known from other omen series and other Tablets in *šumma ālu* (Rinderer 2021, 19–20).

¶ (If) in his house a lizard that has no tail is sighted: [his wife] will [give birth to so] many [sons] that there will not be [(enough) bread for] his [mouth].

* * *

Nineveh 13

If a variegated lizard f[alls] onto a man [...] — he will be happy.

DIŠ EME.ŠID GÛN.A ana UGU NA Š[UB-ut ...] ŠÀ.BI DÛG.GA

šumma šurāru burrumu ana muḥḥi amēli i[mqut ...] libbašu iṭāb

K 3730+ 12 DIŠ EME.ŠID GÛN.A ana UGU NA Š[UB-ut ...] ŠÀ.BI DÛG.GA

- ▶ Collation of K 3730+ shows that the fourth and fifth signs are written GÛN.A ‘variegated’ and are not the single sign SA₅ *samû* ‘red’ as read by *If a City 2* (2006, 191 omen 12’ Ex(1); 2006, 166 omen 12’). Note, however, that in the Neo-Assyrian period, the signs GÛN.A and SU₄.A *pelû* ‘red-hued’¹³⁰ are graphic variants of each other (cf. Borger 2010 signs 182 SU₄ and 183 DAR), resulting in difficulties in telling the signs apart. This ambiguity is reflected in the dictionaries where the above omen is translated with ‘red lizard’ in CAD (P: 319 s.v. *pelû* 1d).

Finally, collation also shows remnants of a broken sign after NA, at the beginning of the break, which is not read in *If a City 2*. The head of a diagonal wedge and a horizontal wedge are visible. We reconstruct to read ŠUB-ut ‘falls’ from Nineveh 14. It is a common verb in lizard omen protases.

While the break is relatively large and easily leaves enough room for an expanded protasis, the above protasis may also be complete after ŠUB-ut. See also Nineveh 14.

- ▶ This is a positive omen that appears to be thematically linked to Nineveh 14 and has the same apodosis as Nineveh 17.

* * *

Nineveh 14

If a variegated lizard falls onto a man [...] — [that? man? will cons]ume [a share?]; that house will become wealthy.

DIŠ EME.ŠID GÛN.A ana UGU NA ŠUB-ut [... NA? BI? ḤA?.LA? G]U₇ É BI *i-šár-rù*

šumma šurāru burrumu ana muḥḥi amēli imqut [... amēlu? šū? zitta? ikk]al bītu šū išarru

K 3730+ 13 DIŠ EME.ŠID GÛN.A ana UGU NA ŠUB-ut [... NA? BI? ḤA?.LA? G]U₇ É BI *i-šár-rù*

- ▶ Collation reveals a similar situation as to that in Nineveh 13: the signs read above as GÛN.A ‘variegated’ are read as the single sign SA₅ *samû* ‘red’ in *If a City 2* (2006, 191 omen 13’; 2006, 166 omen 13’). As mentioned in the commentary at Nineveh 13, GÛN.A is a graphic variant to SU₄.A *pelû*, which means ‘red-hued’.
- ▶ The sign at the end of the break is a broken GU₇ ‘to eat, consume’. The sign is read as x in *If a City 2* (2006, 191 omen 13’). We suggest reconstructing the common apodosis NA BI ḤA.LA GU₇ ‘that man

¹³⁰ For a discussion on the two reddish colors *pelû* and *samû*, see Thavapalan (2019, 128–33, 141–53).

will consume a share’ in the large break in the middle of the line. See Nineveh 41’, Assur 11, and Sultantepe 8 for other omens involving lizards falling on a man and apodoses about the man consuming a share.

- ▶ As preserved, the protases of Nineveh 13 and 14 appear identical. The breaks in the middle of respective lines on the manuscript are, however, large and would allow either of them to have had an expanded protasis.
- ▶ This is a positive omen thematically linked to Nineveh 13.

* * *

Nineveh 15

If a white lizard with two tails [...] ... — that house will become poor.

DIŠ EME.ŠID BABBAR šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-[šú ...] x É BI ÚKU-*in*

šumma šurāru pešû ša 2 zibbātu[šú ...] ... bītu šū ilappin

K 3730+ 14	DIŠ EME.ŠID BABBAR šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-[šú ...] ‘x’ É BI ÚKU- <i>in</i>
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- ▶ Collation of K 3730+ 14 shows the tail of a horizontal wedge on the right-hand edge of the break. While these traces were omitted in *If a City 2* (2006, 191 omen 14’ Ex(1)), the omen is otherwise read as above.
- ▶ See also Nineveh 5 as the two omens have similar protases.

* * *

Nineveh 16

Variant A (K 3730+ and K 12180+)

If a lizard [falls] on top of [a man] *when (the man) is celebrating* — [th]at [man]’s god will have mercy on him.

DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina* ḪÚL *ana* UGU [NA ŠUB-*ut* LÚ B]I DINGIR-šú ARḪUŠ-šú

šumma šurāru ina ḫidūti ana muḫḫi [amēli imqut amēlu š]ū ilšu irēššu

Variant B (Sm 710+)

[If a liza]rd f[all]s on top of a man (*who*) *is celebrating* — that man’s god will have mercy on him.

[DIŠ EM]E.ŠID *ina* ḪÚL LÚ *ana* UGU NA Š[UB]-*ut* LÚ BI DINGIR-šú ARḪUŠ-šú

[*šumma šurā*]ru *ina ḫidūt amēli ana muḫḫi amēli i[mq]ut amēlu šū ilšu irēššu*

K 3730+ 15	DIŠ EME.ŠID <i>ina</i> ḪÚL <i>ana</i> UGU [...] B]I DINGIR-šú ARḪUŠ-šú
K 12180+ i 6’	[...] B]I DINGIR-šú ARḪUŠ-šú
Sm 710+ 14’	[DIŠ EM]E.ŠID <i>ina</i> ḪÚL LÚ <i>ana</i> UGU NA Š[UB]- <i>ut</i> LÚ BI DINGIR-šú ARḪUŠ-šú

- ▶ The phrase *ina* 𒁭𒍪 has a counterpart in Tablet 33 on geckos (omen 112’):¹³¹

DIŠ KI.MIN (KUN.DAR) *ina hi-du-tú ina* UGU NA DU.DU-*ak* DINGIR-šú ARḪUŠ GAR-šú
If ditto (= a skink) repeatedly walk on top of a man *when (the man) is celebrating* — his god
will grant him mercy.

The translation of *hidūtu* as ‘joy, merry-making’, from CAD (H: 183 s.v. *hidūtu*), has been adopted for the above omen. *If a City 2* (2006, 167 omen 15’) translates the above omen as:

If a lizard falls on top of a man **in a celebration(?)**, that man’s god will have mercy on him.

- ▶ Collation shows that sign after DINGIR in K 3730+ 15 is -š*u*, not -šú as it is read in *If a City 2* (2006, 191 omen 15’ Ex(1)). We therefore reconstruct the above omen in both variants using -šú instead of -š*u*.

* * *

Nineveh 17

If a lizard cli[mbs] onto a man [...] — he will be happy.

DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* UGU NA E_[11 ...] ŠÀ.BI DÙG.GA

šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi amēli ī[li ...] libbašu iṭāb

K 3730+ 16	DIŠ EME.ŠID <i>ana</i> UGU NA E _[11 ...] ŠÀ ¹ .BI DÙG.GA
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- ▶ The break after E₁₁ ‘to climb’ is large enough to encompass several signs, which allows for the possibility that the lizard performs another action beyond climbing onto a man in the protasis. Note, however, that manuscript K 3730+ has several lines with large blank spaces; it is therefore plausible that the protasis ends with E₁₁. *If a City 2* interprets this omen’s protasis as ending after E₁₁, but otherwise reads the omen as above. See *If a City 2* (2006, 191 omen 16’ Ex(1)) for that edition’s reading of the line, (2006, 166 omen 16’) for the reconstruction, and (2006, 167 omen 16’) for the translation.
- ▶ Although the sign at the beginning of the break is fragmentary, making the reading E₁₁ somewhat speculative, the reading is supported as the traces fit with E₁₁ and the verb in the protasis of the subsequent omen, Nineveh 18, is also E₁₁.

* * *

Nineveh 18

If a lizard climbs onto a man’s foot — he will rejoice.

DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* UGU GÌR NA E₁₁ *i-ḥad-du*

šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi šēp amēli īli iḥaddu

K 3730+ 17	DIŠ EME.ŠID <i>ana</i> UGU GÌR N[A E] ₁₁ ¹ <i>i-ḥad-du</i>
Sm 710+ 16’	[DIŠ E]ME.ŠID <i>ana</i> UGU GÌR NA E ₁₁ <i>i-ḥad-du</i> (ruling)

¹³¹ *Šumma ālu’s* Tablet 33 is being re-edited by Judith Pfitzner as part of the Bestiarium Mesopotamicum project, which will be available online. The omen numbering was not finalized at the time of writing this edition so it may differ from the final version. The otherwise most recent edition is to be found in *If a City 2*.

- ▶ See also Sultantepe 16. The Sultantepe omen adds NA BI ‘that man’ to the apodosis, but the two omens are otherwise the same.
- ▶ Collation of K 3730+ 17 shows remnants of a sign after the break. There is only the head of a single wedge, but we have suggested the reading E₁₁ based on Sm 710+ 16’. This broken sign was not included in *If a City 2* (2006, 191 omen 17’ Ex(1)).

* * *

Nineveh 19

If a lizard [falls?] on [a man’s] foot — a message [will a]rrive in that house.

DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* UGU GÌR [NA ŠUB[?] *ma*]-*qá-at* INIM *ina* É BI

šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi šēp [amēli imqut[?] ma]qāt amāti ina bīti šuāti

K 3730+ 18	DIŠ EME.ŠID <i>ana</i> UGU ‘GÌR’ [NA ŠUB [?] <i>ma</i>]-‘ <i>qá</i> ’-‘ <i>at</i> ’ INIM <i>ina</i> É ‘BI’
------------	--

- ▶ Based on collation of K 3730+ 18, there is room for several signs within the break.

In the protasis, we suggest reconstructing ŠUB ‘to fall’ as in the following omen Nineveh 20. This also makes the above omen a thematic pair to the preceding omen Nineveh 18. While *If a City 2* (2006, 169 omen 18’) also tentatively translates the above protasis with ‘falls’, the earlier edition does not reconstruct (2006, 168 omen 18’) ŠUB in the break.

We also reconstruct *ma* in the break to form *ma-qá-at*, as in Nineveh 20. Nineveh 20 has a multipart apodosis, which also includes the arrival of a message.

If a City 2 (2006, 168 omen 18’) also reconstructs the apodosis as above, but translates (2006, 169 omen 18’) the signs *ma-qá-at* INIM as ‘something will happen’. For the combination of *maqātu* and INIM to mean ‘arrival of news’—translated above in more idiomatic English as ‘a message will arrive’—see CAD (M.1: 245–47 s.v. *maqātu* 3a’).

* * *

Nineveh 20

If a lizard falls onto a man — a message will arrive for that man (and) a lamassu protective spirit will approach him or a common man will proudly prosper.

DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* UGU NA ŠUB-*ut ma-qá-at* INIM *ana* LÚ BI ‘LAMMA TE-šú *lu* MAŠ.EN.GAG *mi-li* GABA *ina-ḥi-iš*

šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi amēli imqut maqāt amāti ana amēli šuāti lamassu iṭeḥḥēšu lū muskēnu mīli irti inahḥiš

K 3730+ 19	DIŠ EME.ŠID <i>ana</i> ‘UGU NA ŠUB- <i>ut ma-qá-at</i> INIM’ <i>ana</i> LÚ BI ‘LAMMA TE-šú <i>lu</i> MAŠ.EN.GAG <i>mi-li</i> GABA <i>ina-ḥi-iš</i> ’
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Sm 710+ 11’-12’	[...] ‘UGU’? [NA ŠUB- <i>u</i>] <i>t ma-qá-at</i> INIM / [ana LÚ] ‘BI’ ‘LAMMA TE-‘šú’ <i>lu</i> MAŠ.EN.GAG <i>mi-li</i> GABA <i>ina-ḥi-iš</i>
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- ▶ See also the separate edition of Sm 710+ as the above omen is part of a triad of omens that only appear on that manuscript.
- ▶ Collation of Sm 710+ reveals a number of problems with the reading of lines 11'–12' in *If a City 2* (2006, 191 omen 19' Ex(7))

[...]-*ut ma-qa₂-at* INIM *ana* LU₂ BI ^dLAMMA TE-*šu₂* MAŠ.EN.KAK *mi-li* GAB *ina-ḫi-iš*

Firstly, *If a City 2* overlooks a sign on the left-hand fragment of line 11'. The sign is broken, but the reading UGU seems plausible. The beginning of line 12' is broken where *If a City 2* reads *ana* LU₂. After collation, it is apparent that these signs are not on the manuscript. Nevertheless *ana* LÚ should be reconstructed in the manuscript's break. Finally, there is also a *lu* between TE-*šú* and MAŠ.EN.GAG, which *If a City 2* omits.

- ▶ The signs UGU NA ŠUB-*ut ma-qa₂-at* INIM in K 3730+ 19 are very damaged. Collation however reveals that the manuscript preserves traces of all of the signs. There is not a break as read by *If a City 2* (2006, 191 omen 19' Ex(1)).

DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* UGU x [...] *ma-qa₂-at* INIM *ana* LU₂ BI ^dLAMMA TE-*šu₂* MAŠ.EN.KAK *mi-li* GAB *ina-ḫi-iš*

Again there is also a *lu* between TE-*šú* and MAŠ.EN.GAG that the previous edition omits.

- ▶ The missing *lu* from both manuscripts means *If a City 2*'s reconstruction and translation (2006, 168, 169 both pages omen 19') differ from above:

DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* UGU x [NA ŠUB]-*ut ma-qa₂-at* INIM *ana* LU₂ BI ^dLAMMA TE-*šú* MAŠ.EN.KAK *mi-li* GAB *ina-ḫi-iš*

If a lizard [fal]ls onto a ma[n's ...], something will happen to that man, a protective spirit will approach him; a poor man will proudly prosper.

- ▶ For the interpretation of *ma-qa₂-at* INIM, see Nineveh 19.

* * *

Nineveh 21

If a lizard falls onto a man while (he is) sitting — that man's property will increase.

DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* UGU LÚ *e-nu-ma áš-bu* ŠUB-*ut* LÚ BI *mim-ma ú-at-tar*

šumma šurāru ana muḫḫi amēli enūma ašbu imqut amēlu šū mimma u'attar

K 3730+ 20	'DIŠ' 'EME'.ŠID <i>ana</i> UGU LÚ <i>e-nu-ma áš-bu</i> ŠUB- <i>ut</i> LÚ BI <i>mim-ma ú-at-tar</i>
Sm 710+ 13'	[DIŠ EME].ŠID <i>ana</i> UGU NA <i>e-nu-ma áš-bu</i> ŠUB- <i>ut</i> LÚ BI <i>mim-ma ú-at-tar</i>

- ▶ In the above translation, the Akkadian word *mimma* means 'whatever' or 'any'. In English, the translation 'something' or, by extrapolation, 'property' seems appropriate.
- ▶ Although the above omen's reconstructed transliteration in *If a City 2* (2006, 168 omen 20') is the same as here, *If a City 2* (2006, 191 omen 20' Ex(7)) mistakenly replaces the apodosis of Sm 710+ 13' with that of Sm 710+ 14' in the score

[DIŠ EME].ŠID *ana* UGU NA *e-nu-ma aš₂-bu* ŠUB-*ut* LU₂ BI DINGIR-*šu₂* ARḪUŠ-*šu₂*

This erroneous replacement partially explains the remark in *If a City 2* (2006, 168 note 20') that "Ex(4) has the variant apodosis DINGIR-*šu₂* ARḪUŠ-*šu₂*, 'his god will have mercy on him.'" This is

an immaterial comment as Ex(4) refers to the manuscript consisting of two non-physically-joining fragments K 9057 and K 12180+. That manuscript does not preserve any part of Nineveh 21. The intended manuscript must be Sm 710+, which, as already noted, does not have a variant apodosis.

* * *

Nineveh 22

Variant A (K 3730+)

If a lizard falls in front of a man — the downfall of his legal adversary (will occur).

DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* IGI NA ŠUB-*ut* (erasure) ŠUB-*tì* EN INIM-šú (erasure)?

šumma šurāru ana pān amēli imqut miqitti bēl amātišu

Variant B (K 12180+ and Sm 710+)

[If a lizard fal]ls [in front of a man] — the downfall of his legal adversary (will occur).

[DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* IGI NA ŠUB-*u*]t ŠUB-*at* EN INIM-šú

[*šumma šurāru ana pān amēli imqu*]t *maqāt bēl amātišu*

K 3730+ 21	DIŠ EME.ŠID <i>ana</i> IGI NA ŠUB- <i>ut</i> (erasure with traces) ŠUB- <i>tì</i> EN INIM-šú (erasure on edge)?
K 12180+ <i>i</i> 7'	[... ŠUB- <i>a</i>]t [?] EN [?] INIM-šú
Sm 710+ 10'	[... ŠUB- <i>u</i>]t ŠUB- <i>at</i> EN INIM-šú

- ▶ See also the separate edition of Sm 710+ as the omen on Sm 710+ 10' is part of a triad of omens on that manuscript.
- ▶ Collation of K 3730+ 21 reveals traces of around four or five erased signs after ŠUB-*ut*. Also after the line's final sign -šú, there is an errant head of a wedge. Perhaps it is another erasure as the apodosis is otherwise complete. Collation also confirms the reading ŠUB-*tì* instead of ŠUB-*tis*, as read by *Ifa City 2* (2006, 191 omen 21' Ex(1)).
- ▶ In K 12180+ *i* 7', the first sign has been tentatively read as a broken -*at*[?]. *Ifa City 2* (2006, 191 omen 21' Ex(4)₂ 6') leaves the sign as an uninterpreted x. There is one visible vertical wedge making the reading -*tì* from K 3730+ 21 impossible. Manuscript Sm 710+ 10' has ŠUB-*at*, which seems plausible here.
- ▶ For a discussion on the repetition of this particular protasis with varying apodoses—though all the apodoses relate to overcoming adversaries—see the commentary at Assur 5.
- ▶ After the above omen, there is a gap in the omen sequence. The subsequent omen starts with the 'standard' manuscript for the Nineveh recension, K 2708+.

* * *

(gap)

Nineveh 23'

[If a lizard ...] ...

[DIŠ EME.DIR ... á]š?

[šumma šurāru ...] ...

 K 2708+ i 1' [DIŠ EME.DIR ... á]š?

- ▶ Manuscript K 2708+ uses the term EME.DIR, not EME.ŠID, to refer to lizards. See section 3.3.1 on the orthography of lizards.

* * *

Nineveh 24'

[If a lizard ...] day [watc]h.

[DIŠ EME.DIR ... EN.NU]N *u₄-me*

[šumma šurāru ... maššart]i ūmē

 K 2708+ i 2' [DIŠ EME.DIR ... EN.NU]N *u₄-me*

- ▶ The remnants of the broken sign before *u₄-me* are three partial vertical wedges. We suggest the reconstruction EN.NU]N *u₄-me* 'day watch' as they occur in two other apodoses: Assur 21 and Sultantepe 19. The broken sign is read as x in *If a City 2* (2006, 191 omen 24' A i 2'). Though the current line is too damaged to be certain, several of the fragmentary endings in this section of the Nineveh recension match omens in the upper teens and low twenties of the Assur recension.

* * *

Nineveh 25'

[If a lizard ...] ... will have [...]

[DIŠ EME.DIR ... M]EŠ TUK-ši

[šumma šurāru ...] ... irāšši

 K 2708+ i 3' [DIŠ EME.DIR ... M]EŠ TUK-ši

- ▶ The above apodosis is much too fragmentary for any certainty, but as several of the fragmentary endings in this section of Nineveh omens seem to match omens in the upper teens and low twenties of the Assur recension, it is possible that the above omen is another instance of Assur 19.

* * *

Nineveh 26'

[If a lizard ...] will consume a [sh]are.

[DIŠ EME.DIR ... 𒄩]A.LA GU₇

[šumma šurāru ... z]itta ikkal

K 2708+ i 4' [DIŠ EME.DIR ... 𒄩]A.LA GU₇

* * *

Nineveh 27'

[If a lizard ... will re]ach [...].

[DIŠ EME.DIR ... KU]R-*ad*

[šumma šurāru ... ikaš]šad

K 2708+ i 5' [DIŠ EME.DIR ... KU]R-*ad*

- ▶ In *If a City 2* (2006, 168, 169, 192 all omen 27'), the broken KUR is read as x, and the omen is therefore not translated. Upon collation, however, the remnants fit the reading KUR.
- ▶ The above apodosis is much too fragmentary for any certainty, but as several of the fragmentary endings in this section of Nineveh omens seem to match omens in the upper teens and low twenties of the Assur recension, it is possible that the above omen is another instance of Assur 20.

* * *

Nineveh 28'

[If a lizard ...] ... he will experience [...]

[DIŠ EME.DIR ...] ab x x [(x)] IGI

[šumma šurāru ...] ... [...] *immar*

K 2708+ i 6' [DIŠ EME.DIR ...] 'ab' 'x' 'x' [(x)] IGI

- ▶ The first of the two signs read as x above has remnants similar to NU, but there is one diagonal wedge too many. It might be a damaged MU. The remnants of the second sign show the very end of two vertical wedges.
- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 168 omen 28'; 2006, 192 omen 28' A i 6') appears to have a typographical error as the last sign of line i 6' is read as si (instead of ši for IGI). Collation confirms the reading IGI or ši.

* * *

Nineveh 29'

[If a lizard falls behind[?] a man] — (some)one [will] file a [l]awsuit against him.

[DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* EGIR[?] NA ŠUB-*ut a-na d*]i-ni i-ger-r[u]-šú

[šumma šurāru ana arkat[?] amēli imqut ana d]īni igerr[û]šu

K 2708+ i 7' [DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* EGIR[?] NA ŠUB-*ut a-na d*]i-ni i-ger-r[u]-šú

- ▶ We reconstruct ŠUB-*ut* in the protasis from Assur 8 as the same apodoses appears there, and it is not a common one in the corpus. See the commentary there.

We follow *If a City 2* (2006, 168 omen 29') and reconstruct the protasis to have the lizard fall *ana* EGIR NA 'behind a man'. *If a City 2* does not explicitly state the reason for its reconstruction. Our reconstruction comes from Nineveh 31', whose protasis involves a lizard falling behind a man and then flopping about. Line K 2708+ i 9' preserves the complete protasis of Nineveh 31' and is ruled, which can indicate the end of a sequence of similarly constructed protases.

The fact that Nineveh 30's (K 2708+ i 8') protasis, as reconstructed from omens in the Assur and Sultantepe recensions, also features a lizard falling behind a man supports the idea of a sequence running from Nineveh 29' (K 2708+ i 7') to Nineveh 31' (K 2708+ i 9'). Nevertheless, as K 2708+ i 9' is the only complete protasis in our proposed sequence, we cannot exclude the possibility that the lizard falls somewhere else in relation to a man.

- ▶ Collation shows that the final sign of K 2708+ i 7' is visible, though very damaged, and is likely -šú, not -šu as suggested by *If a City 2* (2006, 168 omen 29').

* * *

Nineveh 30'

[If a lizard fal]ls [behind a man] and touches him — [he will exp]erience a n[egative] *twist* [of fate].

[DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* EGIR NA ŠUB-*u*]t-*ma* TAG-*su pí-is-lat* 𒄩[UL IGI]-*mar*

[šumma šurāru ana arkat amēli imqu]t-*ma ilpussu pislāt* l[umni im]mar

K 2708+ i 8' [DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* EGIR ŠUB-*u*]t-*ma* TAG-*su pí-is-lat* 𒄩[UL IGI]-*mar*

- ▶ The protasis has been reconstructed from Assur 10 and Sultantepe 6. While the Sultantepe omen is the same as above, the Assur omen has KALAG.GA-*su* 'his fortress' as the subject of the apodoses.
- ▶ The translation of *pislāt* in the apodoses is uncertain. It is the *status constructus* of the noun *pisiltu*, which can mean 'a lump of clay; clay tablet wrapping'. It is frequently attested in omen apodoses (for examples, see CAD P: 424 s.v. *pisiltu*), both in the singular and in the plural, but its meaning is unresolved.

As a *status constructus*, a noun must follow *pislāt*. Collation shows remnants of a sign after *pí-is-lat* that is not noted in *If a City 2* (2006, 192 omen 30' A i 8'). The sign is too fragmentary to confirm the reading 𒄩UL, and the break appears to be almost too small to fit both the signs 𒄩UL and IGI. Nevertheless the reading has been reconstructed from Assur 10 and Sultantepe 6, which both have 𒄩UL and IGI.

The meaning of *pišlāt* 𒍪UL is unclear. In line with *pišlāt*'s etymological meaning, we suggest interpreting *pí-is-lat* 𒍪UL as a 'negative twist of fate'. See *pasālu* 'to turn around, to twist' in CAD (P: 216 s.v. *pasālu*); see also eSAD (s.v. *pišiltu* 'twist, adversary').

- ▶ The protasis and apodosis of the above omen are connected by the phonetical association between the protasis's second verb *ilpussu* (roots lp(t)s) and the word *pišlāt* (roots pslt) in the apodosis.

* * *

Nineveh 31'

If a lizard falls behind a man (and) flops about repeatedly — [he will experience] e[vil].

DIŠ EME.DIR *ana* EGIR NA ŠUB-*ut it-tap-pi-iš* 𒍪[UL IGI-mar]

šumma šurāru ana arkat amēli imqut ittappiṣ l[umna immar]

K 2708+ i 9' 'DIŠ' 'EME'.DIR' *ana* 'EGIR' 'NA' 'ŠUB'-*ut it-tap-pi-iš* 𒍪[UL IGI-mar] (ruling)

- ▶ See also Assur 9 and Sultantepe 7. All three omens are almost identical. The Assur and Sultantepe omens both have an enclitic *-ma* attached to the protases first verb ŠUB-*ut*. Further, in Sultantepe 7, 'evil' is written as the feminine MUNUS.𒍪UL between the protasis's verbs.
- ▶ The above omen is translated in *If a City 2* (2006, 169 omen 31') as

If a lizard falls behind a man (and) **strikes**, [he will experience evil.]

We interpret the verb *it-tap-pi-iš* as a Gtn preterit of *napāšu*, which can mean 'to strike' or 'to kick', but also means 'to flop around'. The latter seems a more appropriate action for a lizard. Although *If a City 2* translates the Nineveh omen's verb as 'strikes' (above), that edition (2006, 179 omen 70'; 2006, 183 omen 7) translates the verb as 'flops around' for both of the Assur and the Sultantepe omens.

We normalize the verb as *ittappiṣ* as it is written with the final vowel being *i*. The expected form of the verb is, however, *ittappaṣ*. For this reason, CAD (N.1: 285 s.v. *napāšu* A1) lists the attestation in Assur 9 as uncertain.

- ▶ Just as in the Sultantepe sequence, the protases of the above omen and the preceding (Nineveh 30) have a similar structure. They also share a repetition of the consonant patterns: pslt in the previous omen, tpsl here.

* * *

Nineveh 32'

If a lizard climbs onto a man's bed — that man will consume a share.

DIŠ EME.DIR *ana* UGU ^{giš}NÁ NA E₁₁ NA BI 𒄩A.LA GU₇

šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi ereš amēli ili amēlu šū zitta ikkal

K 2708+ i 10'	'DIŠ' 'EME'.DIR <i>ana</i> UGU ^{giš} NÁ NA E ₁₁ NA BI '𒄩A'.'LA' 'GU ₇ '
K 3730+ 22	DIŠ EME.ŠID <i>ana</i> UGU ^{giš} NÁ NA E ₁₁ LÚ BI 𒄩A.LA GU ₇
Sm 710+ 17'	[DIŠ EM]E.ŠID <i>ana</i> UGU ^{giš} NÁ NA E ₁₁ NA BI 𒄩A.LA GU ₇

- ▶ See also Assur 30, which has the same protasis but a different apodosi.
- ▶ Collation of all the manuscripts confirms the reading NA between ^{giš}NÁ and E₁₁. This sign is omitted from *If a City 2*'s reconstructed transliteration (2006, 168 omen 32') of the above omen and from all the manuscripts in the omen's score (*If a City 2*, 2006, 192 omen 32' A i 10' Ex(1)22 and Ex(7)17').

Further, collation confirms that there are two, extremely broken, but visible, signs after 𒄩A at the end of line K 2708+ i 10'. The surface of the manuscript has broken away, but the signs' traces allow for a reading of '𒄩A'.LA' 'GU₇'.

- ▶ The slight variations in the manuscripts are negligible. The term for lizards can be written either as EME.DIR or EME.ŠID. Similarly in the Neo-Assyrian period, NA or LÚ could be used interchangeably to mean 'man'.
- ▶ See the separate edition of K 12180+ as line K 12180+ i 3', though fragmentary, may partially preserve the above omen.

* * *

Nineveh 33'

If a lizard lies on top of a (man's) bed — [(he) will ha]ve children.

DIŠ EME.DIR ana UGU ^{giš}NÁ NÁ-iš DUMU.MEŠ T[UK-šī]

šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi erši irbiš mārī ir[ašši]

K 2708+ i 11'	DIŠ EME.DIR ana UGU ^{giš} NÁ NÁ-iš DUMU.MEŠ T[UK-šī]
K 6912+ r 1'	[DIŠ E]M[E.ŠID ...]

- ▶ Line K 6912+ r 1' is omitted from *If a City 2* (2006, 192 omen 33'). This results in differing line counts on the reverse of K 6912+ between the current edition and *If a City 2*.
- ▶ See also Assur 31 and Sultantepe 28. Despite similar protases, the omens result in opposite apodoses.

* * *

Nineveh 34'

If a lizard is sleeping on top of a man's bed and (then) falls off — that man will consume a share, relocation of the bed.

DIŠ EME.DIR ana UGU ^{giš}NÁ NA ša-lil-ma ŠUB-ut NA BI 𒄩A.LA GU₇ nu-kúr ^{giš}NÁ

šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi ereš amēli šalilma imqut amēlu šū zitta ikkal nukkur erši

K 3730+ 23	DIŠ EME.DIR ana UGU ^{giš} NÁ NA ša-lil-ma ŠUB-ut NA BI 𒄩A.LA GU ₇ nu-kúr ^{giš} NÁ
K 6912+ r 2'	[DIŠ E]ME.Š[ID...]
K 12180+ i 8'	[DIŠ EME.ŠID... ŠUB]-'ut' 'NA' BI 𒄩A.LA GU ₇ nu-kúr ^{giš} NÁ
Sm 710+ 18'-19'	[DIŠ EM]E.ŠID ana UGU ^{giš} NÁ NA ša-lil-ma [ŠU]B-ut NA BI 𒄩A.LA GU ₇ / [(indent)? n]u-kúr ^{giš} N[Á]

- ▶ See the manuscript indices (section 6.3.1) for the discrepancies in the line count on K 12180+ and on the reverse of K 6912+.
- ▶ See also Sultantepe 30. Although the two omens have the same protasis and part of the same apodosis, the Sultantepe omen to omit *nu-kúr* ^{giš}NÁ ‘relocation of the bed’.
- ▶ For the meaning ‘relocation of the bed’ for *nu-kúr* ^{giš}NÁ, see CAD (N.1: 169 s.v. *nakāru* 11b). The above apodosis is partially quoted there.
- ▶ Collation of K 3730+ 23’ confirms the sign NA ‘man’ after ^{giš}NÁ ‘bed’. *Ifa City 2* (2006, 192 omen 34’ Ex(1)) omits the sign.

Collation of K 12180+ i 8’ also reveals *-ut* immediately after the broken left-hand edge, before NA. *Ifa City 2* (2006, 192 omen 34 Ex(4)₂ line 7’) omits the sign.

- ▶ Both the above omen (Nineveh 34’) and subsequent omen (Nineveh 35’) are not present on the standard manuscript K 2708+.

* * *

Nineveh 35’

If a lizard climbs onto the bed of a sick man — that sick man’s illness will leave him.

DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* UGU ^{giš}NÁ lúGIG E₁₁ lúGIG BI GIG-*su* TAG₄-šú

šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi ereš marši ili maršu šū murussu izzibšu

K 3730+ 24	DIŠ EME.ŠID <i>ana</i> UGU ^{giš} NÁ lúGIG E ₁₁ lúGIG BI GIG- <i>su</i> TAG ₄ -šú
K 6912+ r 3’-4’	[DIŠ E]ME.ŠID <i>an</i> [<i>a</i> ...] / (indent) lú[GIG ...]

- ▶ See the manuscript indices in section 6.3.1 for the discrepancies in the line count on the reverse of K 6912+ between *Ifa City 2* and above.
- ▶ The above omen is notably similar to Sultantepe 34. The Sultantepe hand copy (STT 323), however, shows the apodosis’s verb as being ŠUB-šú. See the Sultantepe omen’s commentary for a discussion about the problematic verb as well as a discussion on similar omens in the medical-diagnostic omen series SA.GIG and in *šumma ālu* Tablet 33 on geckos.
- ▶ Upon collation of K 6912+ r 3’, the third sign is a broken *ana* and not *ina* as read in *Ifa City 2* (2006, 192 omen 35’ Ex(3)).
- ▶ See the commentary at Nineveh 11 for a list of lizard omens involving illness.

* * *

Nineveh 36’

Variant A (K 2708+)

If a lizard falls onto a man’s sleeping place — losses; th[at] man: [...]

DIŠ EME.DIR *ina* UGU KI.NÁ NA ŠUB-*ut* I.BÍ.ZA NA B[I x x (x)]

šumma šurāru ina muḥḥi majjāl amēli imqut ibissū amēlu š[ū ...]

Variant B (K 3730+)

If a lizard falls onto a man's sleeping place (or on a man's) bed — losses; that man will be bedridden.

DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina* KI.NÁ ^{giš}NÁ NA ŠUB-*ut* I.BÍ.ZA LÚ BI ^{giš}NÁ DAB-*su*

šumma šurāru ina majjāl ereš amēli imqut ibissû amēlu šû eršu iṣabbassu

Variant C (K 6912+)

[If a li]zard falls onto [a man's sleeping place — losses; that man: ...]

[DIŠ E]ME.ŠID *ana* UGU [KI.NÁ NA ŠUB-*ut* I.BÍ.ZA NA BI ...]

[*šumma šu*]rāru *ana muḥḥi* [*majjāl amēli imqut ibissû amēlu šû ...*]

Variant D (Sm 710+)

[If a lizard] f[all]s [onto] a man's sleeping place (or onto a man's) bed — he will e[xperience?] losses; [that man: he] will be [bed]ridden.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina*] KI.NÁ ^{giš}NÁ NA Š[UB-*u*]t I.BÍ.ZA I[GI²-*mar*²] / [(indent)[?] NA BI ^{giš}NÁ] DAB-[*su*]

[*šumma šurāru ina*] *majjāl ereš amēli i*[*mqu*]t *ibissû im*[*mar*² *amēlu šû eršu*] *iṣabbas*[*su*]

K 2708+ <i>i</i> 12'	'DIŠ ¹ 'EME'.DIR <i>ina</i> UGU KI.NÁ NA ŠUB- <i>ut</i> I.BÍ.ZA NA B[I ...]
K 3730+ 25	DIŠ EME.ŠID <i>ina</i> KI.NÁ ^{giš} NÁ NA ŠUB- <i>ut</i> I.BÍ.ZA LÚ BI ^{giš} NÁ DAB- <i>su</i>
K 6912+ <i>r</i> 5'	[DIŠ E]ME.ŠID <i>ana</i> 'UGU' [...]
Sm 710+ 20'-21'	[DIŠ EME.ŠID <i>ina</i>] 'KI'.NÁ ¹ 'giš ¹ 'NÁ ¹ 'NA ¹ Š[UB- <i>u</i>]t I.BÍ.ZA I[GI ² - <i>mar</i> ²] / [(indent) [?] NA BI ^{giš} NÁ] 'DAB ¹ -[<i>su</i>]

- ▶ In **Variant A**, K 2708+ *i* 12' has the same protasis as line *i* 14' (Nineveh 38'). The two lines, however, have differing apodoses.

Collation of K 2708+ *i* 12' revealed that the fourth sign is *ina* not *ana* as read as by *If a City 2* (2006, 192 omen 36' A *i* 12'). The meaning does not change. See for example **Variant C**, K 6912+.

- ▶ In **Variant B**, the translation of the sequence *ina* KI.NÁ ^{giš}NÁ is uncertain. KAL 1 (2007, 91 manuscript 22 Rs. 26) records a similar protasis: [DIŠ *lu-u ana* UGU ^{giš}NÁ *lu-u ana* U]GU KI.NÁ GU₄.UD; (KAL 1 2007, 93 Rs. 26), '[If a wild cat] jumps [on either the bed or o]n the sleeping place'.¹³² Following that protasis, we suggest Variant B is an example of scribal ellipsis and interpret ^{giš}NÁ as an alternative to KI.NÁ: [If a lizard] f[all]s [on] a man's sleeping place (or on a man's) bed. See also Nineveh 37' Variant B for a similar construction.

For the combination of ^{giš}NÁ 'bed' with DAB 'to seize' in omen apodoses meaning 'to be bedridden', see CAD (E: 318 s.v. *eršu* 1d-2').

- ▶ *If a City 2* omits Sm 710+ 20'-21' (**Variant D**). The two lines are on the manuscript's broken, lower edge. On the left-hand side, only the very top parts of about five signs (Sm 710+ 20') are visible. Their readings above are tentative and based on Variant B. The signs for I.BÍ.ZA are on the other hand easy to read but are followed by traces of a less-certain sign. From Variants A or B, one would expect either a NA or LÚ. The traces however do not fit well with such a reading. We tentatively read IGI to form the verb *immar* 'he will experience'. The end of the line is damaged and while there is room for one sign, there does not appear enough room for the NA BI one would expect. Therefore we suggest reconstructing the phonetic complement *-mar*. We also assume the second portion of

¹³² The original German is „[Wenn eine Wildkatze entweder auf das Bett oder a]uf die Schlafstelle springt“. English translation is my own.

the apodosis is on the next line. The sign DAB, although damaged, is clearly written below the ZA of I.BÍ.ZA. DAB's position in Sm 710+ 21' leaves room for several signs in both the left- and right-hand breaks. Therefore we suggest that the line may have been indented. Sm 710+ also has lines with large blank spaces or signs have been written in a very stretched out form.

The manuscript Sm 710+ breaks off after these lines.

- ▶ As the earlier edition *If a City 2* does not provide separate reconstructions for variant lines, its reconstructed transliteration and translation of the above omen differ from the current edition, making comparisons difficult. See *If a City 2* (2006, 168, 169 both pages omen 36').

* * *

Nineveh 37'

Variant A (K 2708+)

If a lizard hisses on top of a man's sleeping place — relocation of the bed.

DIŠ EME.DIR *ina* UGU KI.NÁ NA *i-ḥa-az-zu nu-kúr* ^{giš}NÁ

šumma šurāru ina muḥḥi majjāl amēli iḥazzu nukkur erši

Variant B (K 3730+)

If a lizard hisses in a man's sleeping place (or on a man's) bed — relocation of the bed.

DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina* KI.NÁ ^{giš}NÁ NA *i-ḥa-az-zu nu-kúr* ^{giš}NÁ

šumma šurāru ina majjāl ereš amēli iḥazzu nukkur erši

Variant C (K 6912+)

[If li]zards [...] in [a man's?] sleeping [place ...]

[DIŠ E]ME.ŠID.MEŠ *ina* KI.[NÁ NA? ...]

[*šumma* ṣ]urārû *ina* majjāl amēli? ...]

K 2708+ <i>i</i> 13'	'DIŠ' 'EME'. 'DIR' 'ina' UGU KI.NÁ NA <i>i-ḥa-az-zu nu-kúr</i> ^{giš} 'NÁ'
K 3730+ 26	DIŠ EME.ŠID <i>ina</i> KI.NÁ ^{giš} NÁ NA <i>i-ḥa-az-zu nu-kúr</i> ^{giš} NÁ
K 6912+ <i>r</i> 6'	[DIŠ E]ME.ŠID.MEŠ <i>ina</i> 'KI'. [NÁ NA? ...]

- ▶ K 6912+ *r* 6's (**Variant C**) use of MEŠ on EME.ŠID is a rare attestation of a plural marker on the logograms for lizards. The discussion on the word *šurāru* in CAD (Š: 255 s.v. *šurāru* A) also states that there are not any known attestations of EME.ŠID.MEŠ. Within our corpus however there are two: Nineveh 37' Variant C and Sm 710+ 15' (Nineveh 41' Variant B). Usually the plural for lizards is indicated through the use of plural endings on verbs, adjectives or through contextual clues. See section 3.3.1.
- ▶ The commentary text K 1 *r* 9 (CT 41 26–27; CCP 3.5.30) lists *šasû* 'to shout, to make a loud noise, to utter a cry' as a synonym for *iḥazzu* (**Variants A and B**).
- ▶ See the previous omen Nineveh 36' for a discussion on *ina* KI.NÁ ^{giš}NÁ in the protasis (**Variant B**).
- ▶ The last sign of K 2708+ *i* 13' (**Variant A**) is fragmentary. The surface of the manuscript has fallen away, but the traces allow for the reading NÁ.

- ▶ As the earlier edition *If a City 2* does not provide separate reconstructions for variant lines, its reconstructed transliteration and translation of the above omen differ from the current edition, making comparisons difficult. See *If a City 2* (2006, 168, 169 both pages omen 37').

* * *

Nineveh 38'

If a lizard falls onto a man's sleeping place — relocation of the [bed].

DIŠ EME.DIR *ina* UGU KI.NÁ NA ŠUB-*ut nu-kúr*^{giš}[NÁ]

šumma šurāru ina muḥḥi majjāl amēli imqut nukkur [erši]

K 2708+ i 14' DIŠ EME.DIR *ina* 'UGU KI.NÁ NA ŠUB-*ut*¹ *nu-kúr*¹ ^{giš}[NÁ]

- ▶ See also Nineveh 36' Variant A as K 2708+ i 12' from the same manuscript has the same protasis as above, but a different apodosis.
- ▶ In *If a City 2* (2006, 169 omen 38'), the above omen is translated as follows:

If a lizard falls **opposite** a man's couch—relocation of the bed.

The preposition *ina* UGU means 'on' or 'on top of' or 'above', not 'opposite'. See CAD (M.2: 175 s.v. *muḥḥu* 2c) for the use of UGU after prepositions to reinforce the meaning of the preposition.

* * *

Nineveh 39'

If a lizard crawls[?] under a man's bed ... [...]

DIŠ EME.DIR KI.TA^{giš}NÁ NA KU₄[?] x x x [x (x)]

šumma šurāru šapal ereš amēli īrub[?] ... [...]

K 2708+ i 15' DIŠ 'EME'.¹DIR¹ KI.TA¹ ^{giš}NÁ¹ NA¹ KU₄[?] x x x¹ [x (x)]

- ▶ Collation shows evidence of a few broken sign after KU₄[?]. The signs are not included in *If a City 2* (2006, 192 omen 39').
- ▶ The above protasis is similar to Assur 32 and Sultantepe 31.
- ▶ In a note *If a City 2* (2006, 169 note 37') suggests the commentary text K 1 r 10 (CT 41 26–27; CCP 3.5.30) may refer to the above omen. The *Cuneiform Commentaries Project* (Jiménez 2016, CCP 3.5.30, 45) reads and translates the omen as follows:

<i>r</i> 10	NÍG.ME.GAR AL.KUD		<i>iš-di-iḥ-ḥu</i> KUD ^{as}
	NÍG.ME.GAR AL.KUD	means	profit will cease

If a City 2's suggestion is plausible due to the previous line of the commentary text (K 1 r 9) being placed with Nineveh 37' (see the commentary above), where K 2708+ i 13' is also placed. The placement, however, is highly speculative since the omen is fragmentary. We follow the CCP (Jiménez 2016, 3.5.30, 45) and leave the commentary text unplaced.

* * *

Nineveh 40'

Variant A (K 2708+)

If a lizard wa[lks about] on top of a [m]an's bed — [relocation of the bed].

DIŠ EME.DIR *ana* UGU ^{giš}NÁ [N]A D[U.DU-*ak nu-kúr* ^{giš}NÁ]

šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi ereš [am]ēli itt[allak nukkur erši]

Variant B (K 3730+ and K 6912+)

If a lizard walks about on top of a man's bed — relocation of the bed.

DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina* UGU ^{giš}NÁ NA DU.DU-*ak nu-kúr* ^{giš}NÁ

šumma šurāru ina muḥḥi ereš amēli ittallak nukkur erši

K 2708+ <i>i</i> 16'	DIŠ 'EME'. 'DIR' 'ana' UGU ^{giš} rNÁ' [N]A D[U.DU- <i>ak nu-kúr</i> ^{giš} NÁ]
K 3730+ 27	DIŠ EME.ŠID <i>ina</i> UGU ^{giš} rNÁ' NA DU.DU- <i>ak nu-kúr</i> ^{giš} NÁ
K 6912+ <i>r</i> 7'	[DIŠ E]ME.ŠID <i>ina</i> UGU ^{giš} N[Á ...] (ruling)

- ▶ Variants A and B differ only in which prepositions precedes UGU 'top'. The difference does not affect the translations.
- ▶ Collation of line K 2708+ *i* 16' (**Variant A**) shows a broken *ana* before UGU, not *ina* as read in *If a City 2* (2006, 192 omen 40' A i)

DIŠ EME.DIR *ina* UGU GIŠ.NA₂ [...]

Further, two fragmentary signs are visible after ^{giš}NÁ. The remnants allow for a reading of [N]A and D[U]. The signs' readings fit with the signs preserved on K 3730+ 27 (**Variant B**).

- ▶ As the earlier edition *If a City 2* does not provide separate reconstructions for variant lines, its reconstructed transliteration and translation of the above omen differ from the current edition, making comparisons difficult. See *If a City 2* (2006, 168, 169 both pages omen 40').
- ▶ See also Sultantepe 29. The two omens share the same apodosis and possibly the same protasis.

* * *

Nineveh 41'

Variant A (K 2708+ and K 3730+)

If entangled lizards fall onto a man — that man: wherever he goes, he will consume a share.

DIŠ EME.DIR DAB.DAB-*ta-ma ana* UGU NA ŠUB.MEŠ NA BI KI DU-*ku* ḪA.LA GU₇

šumma šurīrātu tišbutāma ana muḥḥi amēli imqutā amēlu šū ašar illaku zitta ikkal

Variant B (Sm 710+ 15')

If entangled lizards fall onto a man — that man: wherever he goes, he will consume a share.

[DIŠ E]ME.ŠID.MEŠ DAB.DAB-*ta-ma ana* UGU NA ŠUB.MEŠ NA BI KI DU-*ku* ḪA.LA G[U₇]

[*šumma šu*]rīrātu tišbutāma ana muḥḥi amēli imqutā amēlu šū ašar illaku zitta ik[ka]

K 2708+ i 17'-18'	DIŠ EM[E].DIR' 'DAB [?] .DAB [?] [-ta [?] ...] / (indent) 'ḪA'.LA G[U ₇]
K 3730+ 39	DIŠ EME.ŠID DAB.DAB-ta-ma ana UGU NA 'ŠUB'.MEŠ ¹ _(ME) NA BI KI DU-ku ḪA.LA GU ₇
Sm 710+ 15'	[DIŠ E]ME.ŠID.MEŠ DAB.DAB-ta-ma ana UGU 'NA' ŠUB.MEŠ NA BI KI DU-ku ḪA.LA G[U ₇]

- ▶ Sm 710+ 15' (**Variant B**) use of MEŠ on EME.ŠID is a rare attestation of a plural marker with the logograms for lizards. The discussion on the word *šurāru* in CAD (Š: 255 s.v. *šurāru* A) also states that there are not any known attestations of EME.ŠID.MEŠ. Within our corpus however there are two: Nineveh 37' Variant C and Sm 710+ 15' (Nineveh 41'). Usually the plural for lizards is indicated through the use of plural endings on verbs, adjectives or through contextual clues. See section 3.3.1.
- ▶ *Ifa City 2* (2006, 192 omen 41' Ex(3)r.7') includes K 6912+ r 8' with the above omen (Nineveh 41'), but the line seems a better fit with Nineveh 42'. Note, however, that despite including K 6912+ r 8' with the above omen, the footnote referring to the line is placed under Nineveh 42' (*Ifa City 2*, 2006, 170 note 42').
- ▶ The above omen's protasis is quoted in the commentary text K 1 r 17 (CT 41 26-27; CCP 3.5.30), which reads:¹³³

DAB.DAB ^{ta-ma}		<i>ti-iš-bu-ta-ma</i>
DAB.DAB-ta-ma	means	to hold one another

We have normalized the verb as *tišbutāma*, the Gt stative of *šabātu* 'to seize'. See also CAD (Š: 35 s.v. *šabātu* 9a 2'c), which mentions both the above omen and the commentary text.

The same commentary text is mentioned in *Ifa City 2* (2006, 170 note 42'). Although it is placed incorrectly with Nineveh 42'.

The commentary text is followed by 6 lines (r 18-23), which have not been placed. See 'commentary texts' in section 6.3.4.

- ▶ In K 2708+ i 17', the signs DAB.DAB are badly damaged, but the remnants on the manuscript allow for the reading. There are at least three heads of vertical wedges and evidence of horizontal wedges.

* * *

Nineveh 42'

If e[ntangle]d[?] lizards fall and a liz[ard ...]

DIŠ EME.DIR D[AB[?].DAB[?]]-ta ŠUB-ma EME.Š[ID ...]

šumma šurīrātu ti[šbu]tā[?] imqutāma šurīri[ttu ...]

K 2708+ i 19'	DIŠ EME.'DIR' D[AB [?] .DAB [?] -ta [?] ...]
K 6912+ r 8'	[... DAB [?] .DAB [?]]-'ta [?] ŠUB-ma EME.Š[ID ...] (ruling)

- ▶ We tentatively suggest reconstructing DAB[?].DAB[?] as the first verb in the protasis based on Nineveh 41'. The sign remnants at the end of K 2708+ i 19' fit with such a reading.

¹³³ Readings and translation from Jiménez (2016, CCP 3.5.30, 52).

- ▶ See the commentary at Nineveh 41' for *Ifa City 2*'s (2006, 192 omen 41') placement of K 6912+ r 8'.

* * *

Nineveh 43'

If there is a white lizard in a man's house — dispersal of the house.

DIŠ EME.ŠID BABBAR *ina* É NA GÁL-ši BIR-ah É

šumma šurāru pešû ina bīt amēli ittabši sapāh bīti

K 2708+ i 20'	DIŠ E[ME.DIR ...]
K 3730+ 28	DIŠ EME.ŠID BABBAR <i>ina</i> 'É' NA GÁL-ši BIR-ah É
Sm 710+ 8'a	[... B]IR-ah É

- ▶ Though fragmentary, K 2708+ i 20' has been included with the above omen as the manuscript's preceding line, K 2708+ i 19', has been placed with the preceding Nineveh 42'. Sm 710+ 8'a has also been included because of the reading BIR-ah and because the next line belongs to the Nineveh 44'.
- ▶ Nineveh 43'–45' form a triad of omens about lizards of various colors on K 3730+.

* * *

Nineveh 44'

If there is a black lizard in a man's house — that house will have a god.

DIŠ EME.ŠID GE₆ *ina* É NA GÁL-ši É BI DINGIR TUK-ši

šumma šurāru šalmu ina bīt amēli ittabši bītu šū ila irāšši

K 3730+ 29	DIŠ EME.ŠID GE ₆ <i>ina</i> 'É' N[A G]ÁL-ši É BI DINGIR TUK-ši
Sm 710+ 8'b	: DIŠ EME.ŠID GE ₆ <i>ina</i> É NA GÁL-ši 'É' [...]

- ▶ Collation of K 3730+ 29 shows remnants of NA and GÁL on the break. *Ifa City 2* (2006, 193 omen 44' Ex(1)) omits NA.
- ▶ Nineveh 43'–45' form a triad of omens about lizards of various colors on K 3730+.
- ▶ The break at the end of Sm 710+ 8' is not large, but the thickness of the manuscript would have allowed the scribe enough room to write the remainder of the apodosis as it appears on K 3730+ 29.
- ▶ The color *šalmu* 'black' is usually associated with auspicious outcomes among *šumma ālu*'s omens (Hirvonen 2014, 35). As Thavapalan (2019, 37) explains in her extensive *The Meaning of Color in Ancient Mesopotamia*, colors held multiple sometimes seemingly contradictory associations. The colors *pešu* 'white' and *šalmu* 'black' were seen, just as is often today, as opposing pairs. The associations with *pešu* include the negative 'barrenness'. As a contrast *šalmu*'s positive association is with 'fertility' (2019, 140). This association may explain the auspicious nature of *šalmu* in *šumma ālu*. The reason for the association with the divine, however, is unclear.

One speculative suggestion may be an association with the Akkadian homophone *šalmu* (though written logographically as ALAM or NU). The term *šalmu* is often translated as 'statue', 'relief' or 'likeness' (CAD Š: 78–85 s.v. *šalmu*), but as Bahrani (2003) explains in her book *The Graven Image: Representation in Babylonian and Assyria*, a *šalmu* is more than a mere image of something, but is

actually a facet of its existence. The statues or likenesses of deities are referred to as *šalmu* (CAD Š: 79–80 s.v. *šalmu* a). Since the presence of a deity's *šalmu* 'statue' in a temple meant the deity was present, the homophone *šalmu* 'black' perhaps triggers the existence of a deity in the apodosis.

* * *

Nineveh 45'

If [there i]s a red lizard in a m[an's] house — that house will have¹ riches.

DIŠ EME.ŠID SA₅ ina É N[A GÁL]-ši É BI NÍG.TUK¹-ši

šumma šurāru sāmu ina bīt a[mēli ittab]ši bītu šū mašrê irašši¹

K 3730+ 30 DIŠ EME.ŠID SA₅ ina 'É' N[A GÁL]-'ši' É BI NÍG.TUK TUK¹(š1)-ši

- ▶ We reconstruct the sign GÁL in the break on K 3730+ 30 from the previous two omens Nineveh 43' and 44'; the three form a triad of omens about lizards of various colors on K 3730+ 28–30.
 - ▶ Collation of K 3730+ confirms the reading SA₅ 'red'. There is a typographic error in *Ifa City 2* (2006, 193 omen 45') in which the fourth sign is written SA₄ instead of SA₅. The omen is reconstructed and translated in *Ifa City 2* (2006, 170, 171 both pages omen 45') as above.
- Collation also shows faint traces of a broken NA at the beginning of the break after the first É.
- ▶ The apodosis's verb is written as ŠI, but we follow *Ifa City 2* and Nötscher (1929, 174 z.27) and interpret this as a scribal mistake for TUK 'to have'.

* * *

Nineveh 46'

If a *crush[ed]* lizard [...] ... in a man's² house² [...] is seen — construction : dilapidation of the house.

DIŠ EME.ŠID na-pu-ul-t[u₄ x x x] x ina É² NA² [x (x)] IGI DÛ-eš : e-ne-eš É

šumma šurīrittu napult[u ...] ... ina bīt² amēlī² [...] innamir epēš : enēš bīti

K 3730+ 31 DIŠ EME.ŠID na-pu-ul-t[u₄ x x x] 'x' ina 'É'² 'NA'² [x (x)] 'IGI' DÛ-eš : e-ne-eš É

- ▶ The word *na-pu-ul-tu₄* raises a number of difficulties:
 1. As suggested by *Ifa City 2* (2006, 170 note 46'), *napultu* may be a variant of *nuppultu*, which is only attested in two places, both lizard omens: Assur 64 (*nu-pùl-tu*) and Sultantepe 69 (*nu-up-pu-ul-tu₄*). We translate all three of the omens' protases as 'crushed'.
 2. The word *nuppultu* may be a feminine adjective derived from the verb *napālu* 'to dig out, to gouge out eyes' or 'to tear down, to demolish' (CAD N.1: 275 s.v. *napālu* A 3) and modifying *šurīrittu*. This would give the adjective a meaning such as 'blind' or 'damaged'. See also AHW (II: 804 s.v. *nuppulu* 'blind; one-eyed'), which references all three lizard omens (Nineveh 46', Assur 64, and Sultantepe 69).

Along these lines, *Ifa City 2* (2006, 171 omen 46') translates *na-pu-ul-tu₄* in the above omen as 'damaged':

If a **damaged(?)** lizard is seen [...]—**construction** of the house.

If a City 2 (2006, 183 omen 125') uses the same translation for *nu-pùl-tu* (Assur 64). The Sultantepe omen (*nu-up-pu-ul-tu₄*) is however left untranslated (2006, 189 omen 69).

3. Another possibility is that the verb *napālu* is translated in the D-stem *nuppulu* as 'to kick up (dust)' or 'to turn upside down'. See CAD (N.1: 275 s.v. *napālu* A 4) for attestations from *šumma ālu* omen with dogs and pigs. The verb, however, appears to require an object. Further, the idea of kicking up dust may be giving a small lizard within the context of *šumma ālu* too much agency. Compare as well Assur 99', in which a lizard, described using another problematic verb written *iš-lu-ú*, may also be tossing up dirt.
4. On the other hand, the bilabials /p/ and /b/ are often interchangeable readings of the same sign, resulting in the alternate normalization *nabultu*, which the commentary text K 1 (CCP 3.5.30) equates with *mittu* 'dead'. The lines K 1 r 11–12, as emended by the CCP, read as follows:¹³⁴

r 11	<i>na-bu-ul-tu₄</i> <i>Nabultu</i>	means	<i>mi-it-ti</i> KI.MIN <i>nu-ub</i> ^{hi-pi' eš-su'} <(bu-ul-tu ₄)> 'dead.' ditto <i>nu-ub</i> (recent break)
r 12	<i>nu-<ub-bu>-ul-tu₄</i> <i>nu<bb>ultu</i>	means	<i>mi-it-tu₄</i> (ruling) 'dead'

This juxtaposition of *nabultu* and *mittu* leads AHW II to list *nabultu* as a hapax legomenon¹³⁵ meaning 'corpse', based on the Hebrew *nēbēlā* נְבֵלָה 'carcass, corpse', and for CAD (N.1: 328 s.v. *napultu*) to translate the above omen as "If a dead lizard [...]".

In a note on the commentary text K 1, *If a City 2* (2006, 170–171 note 46') suggests—and the *Cuneiform Commentaries Project* (CCP 3.5.30 note 11) agrees—that the equation with *mittu* may have developed from an ancient scribe misreading the text on VAT 10167 (Assur 64 — *nu-pùl-tu*), or a similarly written text, as NU *bal-tú* 'not alive'. Nötscher's (1929, 186 KAR 382+393 Rs. 64) edition of VAT 10167 (Assur 64) also reads the line so, translating the signs as 'no (longer) living' '*nicht (mehr) lebende*'. See also CAD (B: 68 s.v. *baltu*) where Assur 64 is read NU *ba-al-tú* and translated as 'sick'. Compare, however, Assur 54, where a dead lizard is described as such with the expected *mi-it-tu₄*.

We follow KAL 1 (2007, 74 Bemerkung 64) and reject Nötscher's reading since the variant spelling on STT 323 r 31 (Sultantepe 69: *nu-up-pu-ul-tu₄*) does not sustain it. *If a City 2* suggests that the original misreading (NU *bal-tú* instead of *nu-pùl-tu*) was carried forward in the commentary texts despite the incongruous variant spelling on the Sultantepe manuscript.

5. Finally, as the third radical is an /l/ directly preceding the /t/ of the feminine form, it may have originally been a sibilant. Using this reasoning, CAD proposes that both *napultu* and *nuppultu* may be derivations of *napāšu* 'to crush, to smash, to smite' in the D-stem. See CAD (N.1: 328 s.v. *napultu*, N.1: 287 s.v. *napāšu* A 7).

The most recent edition of the Assur omens, KAL 1 (2007, 72 Vs. 64), translates *nu-pùl-tu* in Assur 64 as 'trampled'.

[Wenn eine] *zertretene* [Eidech]se auf der Hausschwelle eines Mannes gesehen wird:
Dieses Haus wird ... [...].

¹³⁴ Readings and translations of both lines are based on Jiménez (2016 CCP 3.5.30, entries 46–47). Jiménez follows the emendations made by CAD N.1 (see the fourth philological commentary under *na-pu-ul-tu₄* at Nineveh 46').

¹³⁵ As AHW II sees Nineveh 46' as an attestation of *nuppulu* (comment 1), *nabultu* can remain a *hapax legomenon* attested only on the commentary text K 1.

As the suggestion in *If a City 2* of an ancient misreading is plausible (comment 4), interpreting *napultu* as a feminine adjective based on the verbs *napālu* ‘to blind’ (comment 1) or *napāšu* ‘to crush’ (comment 5) seems the most appropriate way forward. It is difficult to imagine how one would determine if a lizard is blind. We therefore follow KAL 1 and CAD’s proposal of an adjective based on *napāšu* and suggest the tentative translation ‘crushed’.

- ▶ In line K 3730+ 31, the scribe has placed a mark often used as a *Glossenkeil* in between DÛ-eš and *e-ne-eš*. Collation shows the signs are written tightly together, but they do not appear much smaller or interlinear as one would expect in the case of a *Glossenkeil* introducing commentary. *If a City 2* (2006, 193 omen 46’) interprets the three signs following the mark as a phonetic explanation for DÛ-eš ‘construction’ and therefore reads *e-ne-eš* as *e-pi₅-eš*. As the reading *-pi₅* for the sign NE, however, would be unusual for this period, we read the preferred *-ne* in its place. This permits the reading *enēš* ‘dilapidation of’, from the verb *enēšu* ‘to become weak’, for the section following the *Glossenkeil*-type mark. In our interpretation, the mark creates an alternate, either-or, apodosis ‘either construction of the house or dilapidation of the house’ instead of a gloss to explain the word ‘construction’. See CAD (E: 167 s.v. *enēšu* 1c) for ‘dilapidation of the house’.
- ▶ Collation of K 3730+ 31 shows that the sign read as *ku* by *If a City 2* (2006, 193 omen 46’ Ex(1)) is likely incorrect.

DIŠ EME.ŠID *na-pu-ul-t[u₄ ...] ku x [...]* IGI DU₃-eš : *e-pi₅-eš* E₂

Traces on the manuscript show two sets of two parallel wedges, similar to the beginning of the sign UG, but these are attached to something like a broken KU. We leave the sign uninterpreted as ‘x’. Collation also allows the reading of three further signs before the second damaged section of the line: *ina* ‘É’⁷² ‘NA’⁷³. These were left uninterpreted as a single sign *x* in *If a City 2*.

* * *

Nineveh 47’

If a lizard calls out all day in a man’s house — abandonment of the house.

DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina É NA ka-la u₄-mi GÛ.DÉ.DÉ ŠUB-e É*

šumma šurāru ina bīt amēlu kala ūmi ištassi nadê bīti

K 3730+ 32 DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina É NA ka-la* ‘*u₄-mi*’ ‘GÛ’.DÉ.DÉ ‘ŠUB’-e É

- ▶ The above omen’s protasis and that of Assur 51’s have the same meaning, but whereas Nineveh 47’ above uses a syllabic spelling of *ka-la*, Assur 51’ uses the logogram DÛ. Nevertheless, the apodoses differ: Assur 51’s apodosis is ŠUB-*tu₄* GÁL-ši, ‘there will be misfortune’. Note, however, that both apodoses include the logogram ŠUB.
- ▶ *Šumma ālu* features multiple omens about animal noises and cries, even for animals such as scorpions or lizards which are either usually silent or relatively quiet.¹³⁶ As the noises are usually referred to quite generally, with words such as *šasû* ‘to cry’ or *rigmu* ‘voice, noise’, the spatial contexts in which the noises are observed seems to play a role in whether the sound is negative or positive (though sounds are predominately negative). While noises outside, in the street, may occasionally be positive, noises in the home, as above, are negative (Rendu Loisel 2016b, 305–6).
- ▶ *Nadû* combined with *bītu* ‘house’ means ‘abandonment of a house’ (CAD N.1: 76–77 s.v. *nadû* 1c).

* * *

¹³⁶ For a discussion about the cry of a caterpillar in *šumma ālu*, see Rendu Loisel (2016a, 223).

Nineveh 48'

If a lizard calls out all night in a man's house — relocation of the house(hold).

DIŠ EME.ŠID ina É NA ka-la GE₆ GÛ.DÉ.DÉ nu-kúr É

šumma šurāru ina bīt amēlu kala mūši ištassi nukkur bīti

K 3730+ 33 DIŠ EME.ŠID ina É NA ka-la GE₆ GÛ.DÉ.DÉ nu-^rkúr^r É

- ▶ This omen is thematically linked to Nineveh 47', with opposing protases. Their apodoses are semantically related as well.
- ▶ The verb *nukkuru* with É means a move, resettlement, a change in domicile (CAD N.1: 170 s.v. *nakāru* 11c).
- ▶ The above omen's protasis is similar in meaning to the protasis of Assur 52. There the protasis is DIŠ EME.DIR ina É NA ina GE₆ GÛ-šú ŠUB.ŠUB-di, 'If a lizard keeps making noise at night'. The apodoses differ, however.

* * *

Nineveh 49'

If a lizard is seen in either water or beer — an uprising against that house will arise.

DIŠ EME.ŠID lu ina A lu ina KAŠ IGI ana É BI ZI.BI ZI-šú

šumma šurāru lū ina mē lū ina šikari innamir ana bīti šuāti tībšu itebbīšu

K 3730+ 34 DIŠ EME.ŠID lu ina A lu ina KAŠ IGI ana É BI ZI.BI ZI-šú

- ▶ All three recensions feature omens about lizards being seen and/or dying in water or beer or their respective containers: see Assur 44, 45, and 56, the omens on VAT 9906 ii 9 and 10 as well as Sultantepe 46–48.
- ▶ The sign ZI is polyvalent. We follow *If a City 2* (2006, 171 omen 49) and read ZI.BI as *tībšu* 'its revolt/attack'. The sign ZI, however, can also be read as *šītu* 'loss' (see Assur 38 for an example and commentary on that translation). In fact the similar omen preserved on VAT 9906 ii 9 (Assur) speaks for such an interpretation

If ditto (= a lizard) falls into a beer jug and dies — losses will occur.

DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) ana DUG KAŠ ŠUB-ma ÚŠ ZI.GA È

In the Assur omen, the phrase ZI.GA È is to be read unambiguously as *šītu ušši*, or 'loss(es) will occur'. Nevertheless in the above apodosis, the second ZI must be a form of the verb *tebû* 'to rise up, revolt'. Reading the first and the second ZI as *tību* 'revolt, attack' and *tebû* 'to rise up, revolt', respectively, preserves the *figura etymologica* formed between ZI.BI and ZI-šú. For another *figura etymologica* involving the same signs, see Assur 56. Although Assur 56 and the above preserve almost the same omen, the Assur's protasis explicitly states that the lizard is dead. No matter the translation, the connotations of 'loss' would surely have been on the minds of the scribes.

- ▶ Collation of K 3730+ 34 reveals the sign *ana*, before the apodosis's É, which *If a City 2* (2006, 193 omen 49' Ex(1)) omits.

* * *

Nineveh 50'

If a lizard is seen eating a snake in a man's house — a <fam>ine will befall that house.

DIŠ EME.ŠID MUŠ GU₇-ma ina É NA IGI ana É BI <SU>.GU₇ ŠUB-su

šumma šurāru šēra īkulma ina bīt amēli innamir ana bīti šuāti <sun>qu imaqqussu

K 2708+ ii 1'	[DIŠ E]ME.ʿDIRʿ M[UŠ ...]
K 3730+ 35	DIŠ EME.ŠID MUŠ GU ₇ -ma ina É NA IGI ana É BI <SU>.GU ₇ ŠUB-su

- ▶ Nineveh 50'–52' form a triad of omens about a lizard's actions in relation to a snake.¹³⁷

* * *

Nineveh 51'

If a lizard carrying a snake stares at a woman — that woman will be married together with a secondary wife.

DIŠ EME.DIR MUŠ na-ši-ma MUNUS IGI MUNUS BI KI DAM.TAB.BA in-na-ḥa-az

šumma šurāru šēra našīma sinništa īmur sinništu šī itti šerreti innaḥḥaz

K 2708+ ii 2'	ʿDIŠʿ EME.DIR MUŠ na-ši-ʿmaʿ ʿMUNUSʿ [...]
K 3730+ 37	DIŠ ʿEMEʿ.ŠID MUŠ na-ši-ma MUNUS IGI ʿMUNUSʿ BI KI DAM.TAB.BA in-na-ḥa-az

- ▶ The above omen and the subsequent, Nineveh 52', are both present on the manuscripts K 2708+ and K 3730+, but the sequence of the two omens is transposed. We follow the sequence on K 2708+ as it preserves the standard sequence of omens. See also the commentary at Nineveh 52'.
- ▶ The logogram DAM.TAB.BA can be normalized in Akkadian as either *tappātu* or *šerretu*, both mean 'secondary wife'.¹³⁸ See also CAD (Š: 138 s.v. *šerru* B; T: 181 s.v. *tappātu*).
- ▶ The verb in the protasis of this omen, IGI 'to see', is mistakenly translated as a passive in *If a City 2* (2006, 171 omen 51'). *If a City 2* also mistakenly reads DAM.TAB.BA as DAM 'husband' and TAB.BA 'friend'.

If a lizard carrying a snake **is seen by woman**, that woman will be married **to the husband of a friend**.

- ▶ Although line K 3730+ 37 is read as above in *If a City 2's* (2006, 193 omen 51' Ex(1)) score, *If a City 2's* (2006, 170 omen 51') reconstructed transliteration of the above omen is as follows

DIŠ EME.ŠID MUŠ na-ši-ma MUNUS IGI MUNUS BI KI **DAM TAB.BA in-na-ḥaz**

Collation confirms the reading *in-na-ḥa-az* instead of *in-na-ḥaz*.

* * *

¹³⁷ For the most recent edition of *šumma ālu's* snake omens, see Rinderer (2021).

¹³⁸ This was discussed with Nicla De Zorzi, who will be publishing a forthcoming article on this topic (De Zorzi, email correspondence, February 3, 2021).

Nineveh 52'

If a lizard carrying a snake stares at a man — that man will marry another woman.

DIŠ EME.DIR MUŠ *na-ši-ma* NA IGI LÚ BI *šá-ni-tam-ma iḫ-ḫaz*

šumma šurāru šēra našīma amēlu īmur amēlu šū šanītamma iḫḫaz

K 2708+ ii 3'	DIŠ EME.DIR MUŠ <i>na-ši-ma</i> N[A ... <i>šá-n</i>] <i>i-^rtam¹-[ma...]</i>
K 3730+ 36	'DIŠ' 'EME'.ŠID MUŠ <i>na-ši-ma</i> NA IGI LÚ BI <i>šá-ni-tam-ma iḫ-ḫaz</i>

- ▶ While this is the last of a triad of omens about a lizard interacting with a snake, it is also the second of a pair of omens in which a lizard carries a snake. The second omen seems to be written from the perspective of the woman in the first omen. Interestingly the order of the two omens is swapped on manuscript K 3730+. See also the commentary at Nineveh 51'.
- ▶ For the use of the passive for the verb IGI 'to see' in *If a City 2* (2006, 171 omen 52'), see the commentary at Nineveh 51'.
- ▶ Collation confirms the beginning of K 2708+ ii 3' is DIŠ EME.DIR, not DIŠ EME.ŠID as was read by *If a City 2* (2006, 193 omen 52' A ii).

* * *

Nineveh 53'

If a lizard gi[ves birth] in the path to a m[an]'s house — abandonment of the house.

DIŠ EME.DIR *ina tal-lak-ti É* N[A] Û.[TU] ŠUB É

šumma šurāru ina tallakti bīt am[ēli] ū[lid] nadê bīti

K 2708+ ii 4'	DIŠ EME.DIR <i>ina tal-^rlak¹-^rti¹ 'É'</i> N[A] 'Û'.[TU] 'ŠUB' 'É'
---------------	---

- ▶ The restoration of Û.TU comes from Assur 60 and Sultantepe 70. Note also the phonetic complement *-di* after ŠUB in the Assur omen.
- ▶ The above omen initiates a series of omens (Nineveh 53'–57') about lizards reproducing. All three recensions feature a series of such omens: Assur 57–62 and Sultantepe 70–72 and 74–76. See also VAT 9906 ii 5 (Assur).

The act of begetting young is written with the signs Û.TU, which correspond to the verb (*w*)*alādu*. This verb is usually translated as 'to give birth'. In Akkadian, however, its semantic meaning is much broader than in English: encompassing "the acts of conceiving, begetting, giving birth, creating, fashioning, producing, and [...] sometimes also [...] in reference to men as creators" (Couto-Ferreira 2016, 27). See also CAD (A.1: 287–94 s.v. *alādu*).

Most lizard species reproduce by means of laying eggs and only a few species reproduce by means of live young, which the English term 'to give birth' implies. Nevertheless the English 'to give birth' has been used over other options such as 'begets (young)' or 'lays (eggs)', because in English both verbs require a direct object that is not present in the Akkadian. Further, there are a few *šumma ālu* omens that reference an animal's eggs directly, though none among the lizard omens. See for example, the snake omen §24.6 as well as the commentary on omen §23.49 (Rinderer 2021, 93,

201–2, 239–40). In the Assur recension, the translations in KAL 1 always refer to lizards laying a clutch (of eggs).¹³⁹ This has not been treated as a difference in the translations.

The ‘Û.TU omens’ in Tablet 32 are extremely formulaic, even for omens: the protases are always ‘If a lizard gives birth in PLACE’, the apodoses are almost always negative (though see Assur 59 and Sultantepe 75–76) and the apodosis ŠUB É ‘abandonment of the house’ is especially common. The main difference between the omens is the place in which the lizard reproduces. For these reasons, if omens are not preserved in their entirety, determining parallels between the recensions with any certainty is difficult.

* * *

Nineveh 54’

If a lizard gi[ves b]irth in the furnishings of [a man’s house] — dispers[al of the house].

DIŠ EME.DIR *ina mut-tab-bil-ti* [É NA] Û.[T]U BIR-a[h É]

šumma šurāru ina muttabbilti [bīt amēli] ū[li]d sapā[h bīt]

K 2708+ ii 5’ DIŠ EME.DIR *ina mut-tab-^rbil^r-^rti^r* [É NA] ^rÛ.^r[T]U BIR-a[h É]

- ▶ Assur 61 and Sultantepe 72 help to reconstruct the missing portions of the above omen. They all appear to be the same.
- ▶ The manuscript shows faint, illegible traces of signs where É NA has been reconstructed. Collation also reveals legible traces of the Û of Û.TU. *If a City 2* (2006, 193 omen 54’ A ii 5’) omits Û, but does reconstruct it in the reconstructed transliteration (2006, 170 omen 54’).
- ▶ See also Nineveh 60’, preserved on K 3730+, as it may have the same protasis as above. The apodosis, however, is ŠUB-e É ‘abandonment of the house’.

* * *

Nineveh 55’

If a lizard [gives bi]rth in the *harūru* (a part of a millstone) [of a man’s] house — dispers[al of the house].

DIŠ EME.DIR *ina ḥa-ru-ri* É [NA Û].TU BIR-a[h É]

šumma šurāru ina harūri bīt [amēli ū]id sapā[h bīt]

K 2708+ ii 6’ DIŠ EME.DIR *ina ḥa-^rru-^rri^r* É [NA Û].TU BIR-a[h É]

- ▶ See Assur 62 and Sultantepe 71, which have been used to reconstruct the above omen’s missing parts. The omens, despite orthographic differences, are the same. Among *šumma ālu*’s snake omens (Tablet 23), there is an almost identical omen; though, the word order differs slightly (Rinderer 2021, 89, 226–27 omen §23.97):

§23.97

¹³⁹ German: “Wenn eine Eidechse [...] ein Gelege ablegt” (See for example Heeßel 2007, 72 KAL 1 16–17 Vs. 57).

[DIŠ MUŠ] *ina* É LÚ *ina* ḫa-ru-ri Û.TU É BI BIR-aḫ
 [If a snake] gives birth in a man's house in the ḫaruru-part of the mill—that house will be dispersed.

- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 193 omen 55' Aii) generally reads K 2708+ *ii 6'* as above. *If a City 2*, however, reads NA and Û as present on the manuscript even though collation reveals the signs must be reconstructed. This carries over to *If a City 2's* (2006, 171 omen 55') translation of the above omen, which is as follows:

If a lizard **gives birth** in the ḫaruru (part of a **millstone**)—**dispersal** [of the house].

Though *If a City 2* reads the signs É NA 'a man's house', they are excluded from the translation.

* * *

Nineveh 56'

If a lizard gives birth <be>low the flat surface of a millstone — that house w[ill be happy? ...].

DIŠ EME.DIR *ina* <KI>.TA KUR^{na4}UR⁵ Û.TU É BI D[ÛG[?].GA[?] ...]

šumma šurāru ina šaplān māt erī ūlid bītu šū i[ṭāb[?] ...]

K 2708+ *ii 7'* DIŠ EME.DIR *ina* <KI>.TA^r KUR^{na4}UR⁵ Û.TU É BI D[ÛG[?].GA[?] ...]

- ▶ This portion of K 2708+ is abraded so that readings are difficult.
- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 193 omen 56' A ii) reads K 2708+ *ii 7'* as follows:

DIŠ EME.DIR *ina* <KI>.TA-**nu** NA⁴.ḪUR U³.TU E² BI [...]]

While we follow *If a City 2* in emending KI to form KI.TA 'below', the traces of the sign after <KI>.TA do not fit with the reading -*nu*. Collation of K 2708+ *ii 7'* shows the heads of three diagonal wedges. We therefore read 'KUR'. The reading -*nu* in *If a City 2* appears to have based on Assur 58 and Sultantepe 75, whose protases are very similar to the above omen:

Assur 58

[If] a lizard gives birth under the millstone — the master of that house will be saved by the king's will.

[DIŠ] EME.DIR KI.TA-*nu* NA⁴UR⁵ Û.TU EN É BI *ina* ŠÀ LUGAL KAR

Sultantepe 75

[If a lizard] gives birth u[n]der the millstone — the master of the house [will be saved] by the k[ing's] hand.

[DIŠ EME.ŠI]D *ina* K[I].TA-*nu* NA⁴UR⁵.UR⁵ Û.TU EN É *ina* ŠU L[UGAL KAR]

The traces on K 2708+, however, simply do not allow for the reading -*nu*.

- ▶ In a comment on Assur 58, *If a City 2* (2006, 182 note 119') states that Nineveh 56' has the signs ŠU LUGAL (see also next comment). This does not reflect the state of the manuscript.
- ▶ The reading in *If a City 2* also omits the traces of a sign on the right-hand break, after BI. The traces reveal three closely-spaced, diagonal wedges. We suggest a possible reading of DÛG to form DÛG.GA 'to be happy'. Meanwhile *If a City 2* uses Sultantepe 75 to reconstruct the above omen's apodosis. This results in the following reconstructed transliteration (2006, 170 omen 56') and translation (2006, 171 omen 56'):

DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina* <KI>.TA-*nu* NA₄.ḪUR U₃.TU <EN> E₂ BI [*ina* ŠU LUGAL KAR]
 If a lizard gives birth under a **lower** millstone, **<the owner of>** that house [**will be saved from the king's hand**].

* * *

Nineveh 57'

If a lizard gives birth in a *mudê* (a container) of a man's house — the house [...]

DIŠ EME.DIR *ina mu-di-e* É NA Û.TU É [...]

šumma šurāru ina mudê bīt amēli ūlid bītu [...]

K 2708+ *ii* 8' DIŠ EME.DIR *ina mu-di-e* É 'NA' 'Û'.TU É [...]

- ▶ The translation of *mu-di-e* as 'a *mudê* (a container)' is based on the commentary text K 1 r 13–16 (CT 41 26–27; CCP 3.5.30). Using the same commentary text, *If a City 2* (2006, 171 omen and note 57') translates the word as "utensil". The commentary text K 1 r 13–16 reads as follows:¹⁴⁰

48 KUL- <i>de-e</i> É		In "The KUL- <i>de-e</i> of the house"
49 <(KUL- <i>de-e</i>)> ^{mu}	<i>nu-us-ḫu</i>	(KUL should be read as) <i>mu</i> , (and means) "a container."
50 <i>mu-du-ú</i>		(read as) <i>mudû</i>
51 <i>mu-du-ú</i>	<i>ú-du-ú</i>	<i>mudû</i> (is a writing of) <i>udû</i> ("equipment").

While the commentary text refers to the above omen, it must have had as its base text a different manuscript from the one we have available today as it is commenting on a scribal mistake between KUL and MU, which is not present on K 2708+ *ii* 8'.

In its more common usage, *mudû* means 'knowing' or 'acquaintance' (CAD M.2: 163 s.v. *mudû*). This meaning however does not fit well with the above commentary text and omen sequence. The word probably indicates a type of container as suggested by the commentary text, which equates it with *nushu* 'a container made of reed, leather, or clay' (CAD N.2: 352 s.v. *nushu*). As suggested in line 51 of the commentary text, we interpret *mudê* as a form of *udû* 'container, sack', 'equipment' or 'a comprehensive term for ... household goods' (CAD U/W: 22 s.v. *udû* A).

* * *

Nineveh 58'

If a lizard seizes ... in a man's house — th[at] house [...]

DIŠ EME.DIR *ina* É NA x ka DAB É B[I ...]

šumma šurāru ina bīt amēli ... iṣbat bītu š[ū ...]

K 2708+ *ii* 9' DIŠ 'EME'.DIR' *ina* 'É' NA 'x' 'ka' DAB É B[I ...]

- ▶ Collation of K 2708+ *ii* 9' shows a fragmentary sign after NA, read above as 'x'. The remnants show the head of a horizontal wedge and the heads of three wedges aimed diagonally down to the right. These diagonal wedges are placed above and to the right of the horizontal wedge. There also

¹⁴⁰ Readings and translations are from Jiménez (2016, CCP 3.5.30, 48–51). Note that CCP incorrectly states the reading *nu-us-ḫu* is in entry 50 (*r* 15). Examination of the manuscript's photographs on the CCP website confirms *If a City 2's* (2006, 171 note 57') placement of *nu-us-ḫu* as above, in entry 49 (*r* 14). The translation on the CCP website, however, correctly places the translation 'container'.

appears to be a vertical wedge at the end. The sign is read as a break in *Ifa City 2* (2006, 193 omen 58' A ii).

- ▶ *Ifa City 2* (2006, 171 omen 58') translation does not translate the protasis's verb

If a **lizard** [...] in a man's house, **that** house [...]

* * *

Nineveh 59'

If a lizard [...] ... [...] ... [...]

DIŠ EME.DIR [...] x [...] x [...]

šumma šurāru [...] ... [...] ... [...]

K 2708+ ii 10'-11'	DIŠ EME.'DIR' [x x x] 'x' [...] / (indent) 'x' [...]
--------------------	---

- ▶ The above omen is on the broken, bottom edge of the manuscript. In K 2708+ ii 10', the broken sign x is little more than the tip of a diagonal wedge. The sign in the next line has remnants that might allow for the reading TUK. The sign, if TUK, is rather small.

* * *

(gap)

Nineveh 60'

If a lizard is seen? or? (it) crawls into the furnishings of a man's house — abandonment of the house.

DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina mut-tab-bil-ti* É NA IGI? *lu?* KU₄ ŠUB -e É

šumma šurāru ina muttabbilti bīt amēli innamir? lū? irub nadê bīti

K 3730+ 38	DIŠ EME.ŠID <i>ina mut-tab-bil-ti</i> É NA 'IGI?' 'lu?' KU ₄ ŠUB-e É
------------	---

- ▶ The signs IGI? *lu?* are written where two fragments of the manuscript join together. Collation shows traces of a vertical wedge and a possible horizontal wedge. Although it is damaged, the sign KU₄ is visible. The signs IGI? *lu?* are omitted in *Ifa City 2* (2006, 170 omen 60') and so KU₄ 'to enter' remains as the only verb in the protasis:

If a lizard **enters** the furniture of a man's house—abandonment of the house.

Another possible, but less-certain reading of the damaged signs is Û.TU 'to give birth'. Such a reading is problematic as then the above omen would have the same protasis as Nineveh 54' (K 2708+), with a differing apodosis.

* * *

Nineveh 61'

[If a li]zards are regularly (seen) in the bedroom of a man's house — the mistress of the house will be ha[p]py.

[DIŠ EME].ŠID *ina ur-ši É NA sad-ru NIN É Š[À]-šá DÙG-ab*

[šumma šurār]û *ina urši bīt amēli sadrū bēlet bīti l[ibba]ša iṭâb*

K 3730+ 40a [DIŠ EME].ŠID' *ina ur-ši É NA sad-ru NIN 'É' Š[À]-šá DÙG-ab*

- Collation of the manuscript shows a break between the signs read as 'É' and -šá. On the edges of the break, there are traces of a sign. They are too fragmentary to read, but we follow *If a City 2* (2006, 193 omen 61' Ex(1)) and read ŠĀ. The traces fit, and ŠĀ is to be expected with the verb DÙG-ab 'to be happy'.

* * *

Nineveh 62'

Variant A (K 3730+)

If a lizard turns back in the road in front of a man — that man will attain his desire wherever he goes.

: DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina KASKAL IGI NA GI₄ NA BI KI DU-ku ÁŠ-su KUR-ád*

šumma šurāru ina ḥarrāni pān amēli itūr amēlu šū ašar illaku šibūssu ikaššad

Variant B (K 12180+)

[If a lizard ... —] he will attain his desire [wherever he go]es.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ... DU-*k*]u Á.ÁŠ-su KUR-ád

[šumma šurāru ... *illak*]u šibūssu ikaššad

K 3730+ 40b : DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina KASKAL IGI NA GI₄ NA BI KI DU-ku ÁŠ-su KUR-ád*

K 12180+ i 4' [... DU-*k*]u Á.ÁŠ-su KUR-ád

- The two manuscripts vary in how they write the word *šibūssu* 'his desire', but are otherwise the same. Collation confirms the sign Á before the sign ÁŠ in K 12180+ i 4' (Variant B). This is omitted in *If a City 2* (2006, 194 omen 62' Ex(4)₂).
- *If a City 2*'s (2006, 172 omen 62') reconstructed transliteration is based upon Variant A.

* * *

Nineveh 63'

[If a lizard wa]lks? about on a pregnant woman — that woman will give birth to a male (child).

[DIŠ EME.ŠID] *ina UGU munusPEŠ₄ [DU.D]U?-ak MUNUS BI NITA Û.TU*

[šumma šurāru] *ina muḥḥi erīti [ittal]lak? sinništu šī zikara ullad*

K 3730+ 41	[DIŠ EME.ŠID <i>ina</i>] UGU munusPEŠ ₄ [DU.D]U ² - <i>ak</i> MUNUS BI NITA Û.TU
K 6912+ <i>r</i> 9'	[DIŠ EME.ŠID] <i>ina</i> UGU ^r munus ¹ P[ĒŠ ₄ ...]
K 12180+ <i>i</i> 5'	[... NIT]A [?] Û.TU

- ▶ The commentary text¹⁴¹ K. 1 *r* 25 (CCP 3.5.30) possibly refers to the above omen:

60 Û.TU : *ba-nu-ú* Û.TU : *a-la-du* Û.TU means “to create”; Û.TU means “to bear.”

- ▶ Collation of K 3730+ 41 shows a gap where the manuscript’s two fragments were joined. The protasis’s verb DU.DU-*ak* has been reconstructed within this gap. All that is visible on the manuscript is a wedge’s small head after PEŠ₄ and before the break and a vertical wedge before the sign AK. These traces allow for the reading DU.DU-*ak*, but due to the minimal remains, the reading is speculative. The line is read similarly to above in *If a City 2* (2006, 194 omen 63’ Ex(1)), but without the break, as if the signs were clearly written on the manuscript.
- ▶ At the end of line K 6912+ *r* 9’ there traces of a fragmentary sign. We reconstruct PEŠ₄ based on K 3730+ 41. The sign is omitted in *If a City 2* (2006, 194 omen 63’ Ex(3)). Further, *If a City 2*’s (2006, 172 omen 63’) reconstructed transliteration overlooks the sign read as *ina*. The edition’s translation (2006, 173 omen 63’) is similarly affected.
- ▶ In K 12180+ *i* 5’, the sign read above as NIT]A[?] is omitted in *If a City 2* (2006, 194 omen 63’ Ex(4)₂). Because of the line’s fragmentary state, there is an element of speculation involved in its placement.

* * *

Nineveh 64’

[If a lizard walks ab]out [o]n a young, unmarried woman — a prominent person will marry that woman.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina*] UGU KI.SIKIL [DU.D]U-*ak* MUNUS BI DUGUD *iḫ-ḫa-as-si*

[šumma šurāru *ina*] *muḫḫi ardati [ittal]lak sinništu šī kabtu iḫḫassi*

K 3730+ 42	[DIŠ EME.ŠID <i>ina</i> UG]U KI.SIKIL [DU.D]U- <i>ak</i> MUNUS BI DUGUD <i>iḫ-ḫa-as-si</i>
K 6912+ <i>r</i> 10'	[...] ^r UGU ¹ [...]

- ▶ Collation confirms that the fourth to last sign in line K 3730+ 42 is to be read *iḫ*, not *i* as read by *If a City 2* (2006, 194 omen 64’ Ex(1)):

[... UG]U KI.SIKIL **DU.DU**-*ak* MUNUS BI DUGUD ***i***-*ḫa-as-si*

Further, there is a large gap in the middle of the line not indicated in *If a City 2*. The signs DU.DU are almost completely missing from the manuscript and need to be reconstructed within the gap. A single vertical wedge is all that remains. *If a City 2*’s reconstructed transliteration (2006, 172 omen 64’) and translation (2006, 173 omen 64’) are also similarly affected.

* * *

¹⁴¹ The readings and translation are from Jiménez (2016, CCP 3.5.30, 59–60).

Nineveh 65'

[If a lizard ...] house [...] — [th]at [house] will acquire a god; the master of the house will make a man's son content.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ...] É [... É B]I DINGIR TUK-šī EN É BI DUMU NA DÙG-ab

[šumma šurāru ...] bīti [... bītu š]ū ila irašši bēl bīti šuāti mār amēli uṭâb

K 3730+ 43 [DIŠ EME.ŠID ...] 'É' [... É B]I DINGIR TUK-'šī' 'EN' É BI 'DUMU' 'NA' 'DÙG'-'ab'

- ▶ Manuscript K 3730+ breaks off after the above omen. As the top edge of K 2708+ is also broken, there is a gap in the omen sequence.
- ▶ Because K 3730+ 43 is located along the bottom edge of the manuscript, many of the signs are broken. The sign before DINGIR appears to be the end of a BI. This sign is read as x by *If a City 2* (2006, 194 omen 65' Ex(1)).
- ▶ The phrase DINGIR TUK-šī, translated above as 'will acquire a god', can also have the idiomatic sense of 'to find luck' (CAD R: 194 s.v. *rašû A*) as *If a City 2* (2006, 173 omen 65') translates it.

* * *

(gap)

Nineveh 66'

If [...] ... [...]

DIŠ [... M]EŠ? [...]

šumma [...] ... [...]

K 2708+iv 1' 'DIŠ' [... M]EŠ? [...] (ruling)

- ▶ The surface of K 2708+ is severely damaged at this point. The only clear marking is the ruling and DIŠ; both are broken. There are traces of what appear to be three smaller *Winkelhaken*, which we have tentatively read as M]EŠ?. It is perhaps for this reason that *If a City 2* (2006, 194 omen 66') begins the line count of K 2708+ column iv with the subsequent line (K 2708+ iv 2' in the current edition) and does not include the above omen. This causes a discrepancy between the line numbering of K 2708+ iv in the current edition and in *If a City 2*.

* * *

Nineveh 67'

[If a liz]ard below [...] his illness [...]

[DIŠ EME].DIR *ina* KI.TA [...] GIG-s[u ...]

[šumma šur]āru *ina šapal* [...] *muruss*[u ...]

K 2708+ iv 2'-3' [DIŠ EME].DIR *ina* 'KI'.TA' [...] /
(indent) GIG-s[u ...] (ruling)

- ▶ Collation shows the sign after *ina* is KI, not *ku-* as read in *If a City 2* (2006, 194 omen 66' A iv 1'-2')
[...].DIR *ina ku-*[...] / GIG-*su* [...] (ruling)

Further, there are traces of a sign on the right-hand break. We suggest the reading TA to form KI.TA 'below'.

Nineveh 68'

If ditto (= a lizard) o[n? ...] ... [...]

DIŠ KI.MIN (EME.DIR) *ina* U[GU? ...] x [...]

šumma KI.MIN (šurāru) *ina m[uḥḥi?* ...] ... [...]

K 2708+ iv 4'-5' DIŠ 'KI'.MIN' *ina* U[GU? ...] /
(indent) 'x' [...]

- ▶ The above lines are read in *If a City 2* (2006, 194 omen 67' A iv 3'-4') as
DIŠ **EME.D[IR]** / [...]
- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 194 omen 68' A iv 5') inserts an additional line read as DIŠ [...] after K 2708+ iv 5'. Upon collation, this line is not apparent on the manuscript. The damage to the manuscript, however, makes it difficult to determine lines.

Nineveh 69'

If ... [...] placed ... [...]

DIŠ x [...] GAR šab x [...]

šumma ... [...] šakin ... [...]

K 2708+ iv 6'-7' 'DIŠ' 'x' [...] /
(indent) GAR šab 'x' [...]

- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 194 omen 69' A iv 6'-7') reads DIŠ [...] / x [...].

Nineveh 70'

If ditto (= a lizard) falls onto a woman? [...] — that man ... [...] that man [...]

DIŠ KI.MIN (EME.DIR) ina UGU MUNUS? [...] ŠUB-ut NA BI x [...] NA BI [...]

šumma KI.MIN (šurāru) ina muḥḥi sinništi? [...] imqut amēlu šū ... [...] amēlu šū [...]

K 2708+ iv 8'-10' 'DIŠ' 'KI'. 'MIN' ina UGU 'MUNUS'? [...] /
 (indent) ŠUB-ut NA BI 'x' [...] /
 (indent) NA BI [...] (ruling)

- ▶ The remnants of the sign after UGU in K 2708+ iv 8' (read above as 'MUNUS?') are a vertical wedge with a partial diagonal towards the bottom. The reading is inconclusive, but the traces allow for MUNUS. All that remains of the sign read as 'x' in line K 2708+ iv 9' is a faint vertical wedge on the sign's right-hand side.
- ▶ The lines are read in *Ifa City 2* (2006, 194 omen 70' A iv 8'-10') as follows:

[...] KIMIN ina UGU x [...] / ŠUB-ut NA BI [...] / NA BI [...] (ruling)

The reconstructed transliteration in *Ifa City 2* (2006, 172 omen 70') can only be seen as a mistake. Collation shows that there is not enough room on the manuscript to reconstruct DIŠ EME.ŠID before KI.MIN. Instead, KI.MIN should be interpreted as a sign of repetition whose referent is EME.DIR.

* * *

Nineveh 71'

If? a l[izard? ...]

DIŠ? E[ME?.DIR? ...]

šumma? š[urāru? ...]

K 2708+ iv 11' 'DIŠ'? E[ME?.DIR? ...]

- ▶ After K 2708+ iv 11', the manuscript has faint traces of signs on three subsequent lines before breaking off.

* * *

Sequence on reverse of K 3730+, joined with K 10792

Manuscript K 3730+ is an excerpt text. While the obverse consists entirely of lizard omens (Tablet 32) and is in a relatively good state of preservation, the reverse is almost completely broken away and the remaining lines can be placed in both Tablet 32 and Tablet 33 (geckos). Further, in the process of collating manuscripts, Nicla De Zorzi joined the reverse of K 3730+ with K 10792. The smaller fragment K 10792 forms a sandwich join on the reverse of K 3730+. Starting with line K 3730+ r 11', K 10792 lies atop K 3730+'s reverse, towards the larger manuscript's right-hand side. Both K 3730+ r 12' and K 10792 2' preserve part of the same ruling that demarcates the transition between lizard and gecko omens.

The first 10 lines of K 3730+'s reverse preserve only the last few signs of each line, but are likely lizard omens continued from the obverse of the manuscript. Lines K 3730+ r 11'-12' align with K 101792 1'-2'; though they are fragmentary. From K 3730+ r 13' (= K 101792 3') until the manuscript's bottom edge (partially preserved), the omens are taken from Tablet 33. Lines K 3730+ r 1'-12' are presented below. They are not included in *If a City 2*'s (2006, 164–201) edition of Tablet 32, but are mentioned in the introduction to Tablet 33 (*If a City 2*, 2006, 202 Ex(1)) and in a note (*If a City 2*, 2006, 205 note 17').

K 3730+ r 1'

[...] ...

[...] 'x'

[...] ...

* * *

K 3730+ r 2'

[...] ...

[...] 'a'?

[...] ...

* * *

K 3730+ r 3'

[...] ...

[...] 'x'

[...] ...

* * *

K 3730+ r 4'

[...] ...

[...] -'ni'

[...] ...

* * *

K 3730+ r 5'

[...] ...

[...]-^rsu^{1?}

[...] ...

* * *

K 3730+ r 6'

[...] ...

[...] ^rx¹

[...] ...

* * *

K 3730+ r 7'

[...] ...

[...] ^rx¹-šú

[...] ...

- ▶ What is read as two separate signs above may instead be the sign RI.

* * *

K 3730+ r 8'

[...] ...

[...] ^rx¹

[...] ...

* * *

K 3730+ r 9'

[...] will experience

[...] IGI-*mar*

[...] *immar*

* * *

K 3730+ r 10'

[...] ...

[...]-^rma^{1?}

[...] ...

* * *

K 3730+ r 11' and K 10792 1'

[...] ... [...] ...

[...] ṣxṣ [...] -šī

[...] ... [...] ...

K 10792 1'	[...] ṣxṣ [...]
K 3730+ r 11'	[...] -šī

- ▶ Line K 10792 1' is read by *If a City 2* (2006, 205 note 17') as

[...] **GAR** [...]

* * *

K 3730+ r 12' and K 10792 2'

[...] ... has brought (a lawsuit) [...] — he will prevail [over] his legal adversary.

[...] ṣxṣ ṣxṣ ṣxṣ ṣiṣ-ṣgirṣ-ṣruṣ [...] UGU] EN INIM-šú GUB-az (ruling)

[...] ... *igirru* [...] *eli*] *bēl amātišu izzaz*

K 10792 2'	[...] ṣxṣ ṣxṣ ṣxṣ ṣiṣ-ṣgirṣ-ṣruṣ [...] (ruling)
K 3730+ r 12'	[...] UGU] EN KA-šú GUB-az (ruling)

- ▶ The remnants of the protasis are too fragmentary to be certain, but we suggest reconstructing the protasis as 'If a lizard falls onto a man involved in a lawsuit'. See for example Assur 34 and Sultantepe 35 as both have protases in which a man is involved in a lawsuit and apodoses with favorable legal outcomes. Lawsuits can also occur in apodoses: Nineveh 29' and Assur 8'. See also Sultantepe 63 for another omen with the same apodosis.
- ▶ The signs run over onto the manuscript's edge.
- ▶ Line K 10792 2' is read by *If a City 2* (2006, 205 note 17') as

[...] x **LU**₂ *i-gir-ru* [...] (ruling)

* * *

The remaining lines on the reverse of K 3730+ and K 10792 preserve apodoses from Tablet 33 (geckos).¹⁴²

¹⁴² The omens from Tablet 33 are being edited by Judith Pfitzner as part of the Bestiarium Mesopotamicum project and will be published online on the project's forthcoming website. The otherwise most recent edition is in *If a City 2*.

Sequence on K 9057 and K 12180+

K 9057 and K 12180+ are two pieces of the same four-column Neo-Assyrian excerpt text with omens taken from Tablets 32–36 in *šumma ālu*. Each fragment has its own line numbering because they do not physically join each other. See the manuscript indices in section 6.3.1 for more details

K 9057 sits a bit above K 12180+. Much of the original manuscript's lower part as well as its lower edge is preserved on the much larger fragment K 12180+. There is a gap between the two fragments. K 12180+ *i* 1'–13' preserves lizard omens, and due to the positioning of K 9057 in relation to K 12180+, the assumption is that the traces of apodoses on K 9057 *i* 1'–8' are also from lizard omens. *If a City 2* does not include them. Below K 12180+ *i* 13', ruling demarcates the transition from Tablet 32 to Tablet 33 (geckos). The rest of the manuscript includes omens from Tablet 33–36 (*If a City 2*, 2006, 164 Ex(4)).

The sequence of the omens on the manuscript, K 9057 (+) K 12180+, differs significantly from the sequence attested on the other manuscripts within each of the respective Tablets. There are also omens preserved here that are not present on other manuscripts. Therefore we present the entire manuscript here. Where an omen can be placed within the Nineveh sequence, it is noted in the commentary.

Note that collation revealed that *If a City 2* omits K 12180+*i* 1', which results in differing line counts.

Column *i*K 9057 *i* 1'

[...] ...

[...] 'x'

[...] ...

- ▶ The traces on K 9057 *i* are too fragmentary to place. They have been included with the lizard omens as K 12180+ *i* (the continuation of the column) preserves lizard omens.

* * *

K 9057 *i* 2'

[...] ...

[...] 'x'

[...] ...

* * *

K 9057 *i* 3'

[...] ...

[...] 'x'

[...] ...

* * *

K 9057 *i* 4'

[...] ...

[...] 'x'

[...] ...

* * *

K 9057 *i* 5'

[...] ...

[...] 'EN'?

[...] ...

* * *

K 9057 *i* 6'

[...] ...

[...] 'x'

[...] ...

* * *

K 9057 *i* 7'

[...] ...

[...] 'IGI'?

[...] ...

* * *

K 9057 *i* 8'

[...] ...

[...] 'x'

[...] ...

- ▶ K 9057 breaks off after K 9057 *i* 8'.

* * *

(gap)

K 12180+ i 1'

[If a lizard ...] ...

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ...] 'x'

[šumma šurāru ...] ...

- ▶ The above line is not read in *If a City 2* and is not included in *If a City's* line numbering of K 12180+. This omission results in the fragment's line numbering differing between *If a City 2* and here.
- ▶ The broken sign at the beginning of this line is the tail end of two horizontal wedges.

* * *

K 12180+ i 2'

[If a lizard ...] ...

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ...] 'x'-šú

[šumma šurāru ...] ...

- ▶ The above line is omitted from the score in *If a City 2*, but it is read as above in a note (2006, 167 note 11' Ex(4)₂ i 1').
- ▶ The broken sign 'x' is the end of three downward-facing diagonal wedges.

* * *

K 12180+ i 3'

[If a lizard ...] ... will consume a share.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ...]-šu ḪA.LA GU₇

[šumma šurāru ...] ... zitta ikkal

- ▶ The apodosis is a fairly common one for lizard omens making it difficult to place the above omen. We suggest Nineveh 32' as K 12180+ i 8' is Nineveh 34'.
- ▶ The above line is omitted from the score in *If a City 2*, but it is mentioned in note (2006, 167 note 11, Ex(4)₂ i 2'). In the earlier edition, the first sign is left uninterpreted as x. Collation of the manuscript shows the sign to be -šu. The line is otherwise read as above.

* * *

K 12180+ i 4'

[If a lizard ... —] he will attain his desire [wherever he go]es.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ... DU-k]u Á.ÁŠ-su KUR-ád

[šumma šurāru ... illak]u šibûssu ikaššad

- ▶ This is Nineveh 62', Variant B; see the commentary there.

* * *

K 12180+ i 5'

[If a lizard walks² about on a pregnant woman — that woman] will give birth [to a mal]e (child).

[DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina* UGU munusPEŠ₄ DU.DU²-ak MUNUS BI NIT]A Û.TU

[*šumma šurāru ina muḥḥi erīti ittallak² sinništu šī zikar*]a ullad

- ▶ This is Nineveh 63'; see the commentary there.

* * *

K 12180+ i 6'

[If a lizard falls onto a man *when (the man) is celebrating* — that man]'s god will have mercy on him.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina* ḪÚL ana UGU NA ŠUB-ut LÚ B]I DINGIR-šú ARḪUŠ-šú

[*šumma šurāru ina ḥidūti ana muḥḥi amēli imqut amēlu š]ū ilšu irêššu*

- ▶ This is Nineveh 16, Variant A; see the commentary there.

* * *

K 12180+ i 7'

[If a lizard falls in front of a man — the downfa]ll² of his legal adversary¹ (will occur).

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana IGI NA ŠUB-ut ŠUB-a]t² EN¹ INIM-šú

[*šumma šurāru ana pān amēli imqut maqā*]t² bēl¹ amātišu

- ▶ This is Nineveh 22, Variant B; see the commentary there.

* * *

K 12180+ i 8'

[If a lizard is sleeping on top of a man's bed and (then) fa]lls off — that man will consume a share, relocation of the bed.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana UGU gis³NÁ NA *ša-lil-ma* ŠUB]-ut NA BI ḪA.LA GU₇ nu-kúr gis³NÁ

[*šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi ereš amēli šalilma imq]ut amēlu šū zitta ikkal nukkur erši*

- ▶ This is Nineveh 34'; see the commentary there.

* * *

K 12180+ i 9'

[If ... a] white [lizard] is seen — any man

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ...] BABBAR IGI-ir mim-ma LÚ

[*šumma šurāru ...*] pešû innamir mimma amēlu

- ▶ The above line is read as above in a note in *If a City 2* (2006, 167 note 11' Ex(4)₂ i 8').
- ▶ As preserved, the apodosis appears incomplete. The omen likely carried over onto the beginning of line K 12180+ i 10', but it is not preserved. White lizards also appear in Nineveh 5, 15, and 43'.

* * *

K 12180+ i 10'

[If a lizard without a tail is seen — the man's wife] will bear [(so) many children] that there won't be any bread in his mouth.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID šá KUN NU TUK-ú IGI-ir DAM NA DUMU.MEŠ *ma-'a-du-ti*] Û.TU-*ma* NINDA *ana* KA-šú NU GAR-*an*

[šumma šurāru ša zibbata lā išû innamir aššat amēli mārī mā'dūti] *ulladma akala ana pīšu ul iššakkan*

- ▶ This is Nineveh 12; see the commentary there.

* * *

K 12180+ i 11'

[If a lizard tak]es [something in a man's house] — unfavorable: that omen portends e[vil].

[DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina É NA mim-ma TI*]-^rqī *qi-bi* NU SILIM.MA GIZKIM š*i-i* ḥ[*a-ṭa-at*]

[šumma šurāru *ina bīt amēli mimma il*]qī qību ul šalim ittu šī ḥ[*aṭāt*]

- ▶ The above omen's protasis has been reconstructed from Sultantepe 68. The two appear to be identical.
- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 167 note 11' Ex(4)₂ i 10') transliterates the line in a note as follows:

[DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina E₂ NA mim-ma TI-qiz*] *iq-bi* NU SILIM.MA GIZKIM š*i* **SUM-na**

Collation of line K 12180+*i 11'* shows the sign read as -^rqī is preserved on the fragment. The second sign on the line is *qi-* not *iq*, and the sign read as SUM by *If a City 2* has been read above as -*i* and the beginning of a broken ḥ*a*. Traces of the top edges of the signs reads as-*ṭa-at* remain on the manuscript, but the remainder of the two signs are too abraded to read.

* * *

K 12180+ i 12'

[If a lizard ...] seizes... [...]

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ...] *iš-bat* MA[Š? x (x)]

[šumma šurāru ...] *išbat* ... [...]

- ▶ Though fragmentary, the omens preserved on K 12180+ *I 12'* and *I 13'* are written and spaced similarly on the manuscript and with large blank spaces that the other lines do not have. The two are likely thematically connected. As K 12180+ *i 13'* appears to have a positive apodosis, the above omen is likely to have a negative one.
- ▶ The sign read as MA[Š? is on a damaged portion of K 12180+ and may only be the start of a longer, more complex sign.
- ▶ The above line is transliterated in a note in *If a City 2* (2006, 167 note 11' Ex(4)₂ i 11'). The final sign is left uninterpreted as x, but the line is otherwise read as above.

* * *

K 12180+ i 13'

[If a lizard ...] seizes — goodn[ess ...]

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ...] *iš-bat* SI[G₅ x (x)] (ruling)

[*šumma šurāru* ...] *išbat dami*[*qtu* ...]

- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 167 note 11' Ex(4)₂ i 12') reads the line as above.

* * *

K 12180+ i 14'–25' and columns *ii–iv* on both K 9057 and K 12180+

The remaining lines in K 12180+ *i* preserve omens from Tablet 33. The remaining three columns on fragments K 9057 and K 12180+ collect omens from Tablet 33 (geckos and skinks) through Tablet 36 (*If a City 2*, 2006, 164 Ex(4)). At the time of writing, the most recent edition of these Tablets can be found in *If a City 2* (Tablet 33: 2006, 202–22, Tablet 34: 2006, 223–30, Tablet 35: 2006, 231–34, Tablet 36: 2006, 235–42).

Sequence on Sm 710+

The omen sequence on Sm 710+ includes omens not preserved on other Nineveh manuscripts and differs from their omen sequences. Of particular note is the triad of omens on Sm 710+ 9', 10', and 11'–12'. Their structure and characteristics are discussed under Sm 710+ 9' and in section 3.4.

Note that Sm 710+ 1'–4' are not treated in *If a City 2*'s edition of the lizard omens. Instead, the earlier edition presents the lines in transliteration only—without translation (*If a City 2*, 2006, 188 note 65).

Sm 710+ 1'

[If a lizard ...] ... [...]

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ...] 'x' is nim [...]

[šumma šurāru ...] ... [...]

- ▶ The first broken sign on Sm 710+ 1' shows the tail-end of a horizontal wedge that abuts a vertical wedge. The sign is missing in *If a City 2*'s (2006, 188 note 65 line 1') reading of the line.

* * *

Sm 710+ 2'

[If a lizard ...] ... that omen portends [goodness]

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ... -š]u[?] GIZKIM š*i-i* [dam-qat]

[šumma šurāru ...] ... ittu š*ī* [damqat]

- ▶ As Sm 710+ 2' and the subsequent line have the word GIZKIM 'sign' followed by the signs š*i-i* and š*i-i* ḥ*a*, respectively, *If a City 2* (2006, 188 note 65 lines 2' and 3') associates them with Sultantepe 65, which is an omen with multiple protases and apodoses. While the reconstruction of dam-qat 'goodness' in the apodosis seems appropriate—because the next omen on Sm 710+ 3' is likely to be ḥ*a-ṭa-at* 'evil'—the two lines are unlikely to be related to Sultantepe 65. Firstly, the order of favorable and unfavorable apodoses are reversed (as noted as well by *If a City 2*). Further, the signs before GIZKIM in Sultantepe 65 are read first as -*ir* and then -*ram*. The traces of the signs preceding GIZKIM on both Sm 710+ 2' and 3' do not fit with either reading. After collation, we tentatively read -š]u[?] for the sign before GIZKIM.

* * *

Sm 710+ 3'

[If a lizard ...] ... that omen portends ev[il]

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ...] 'x' 'ud'[?] su[?] GIZKIM š*i-i* ḥ*a*-[ṭa-at]

[šumma šurāru ...] ... ittu š*ī* ḥ*a*[ṭât]

- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 188 note 65 3') reads two uninterpreted signs before GIZKIM. Collation shows traces too minimal to determine of a third, initial sign. Despite reading the next two signs as 'ud'[?] su[?], it is unclear how to interpret the combination. Alternatively they may read SILIM.MA, but the signs do not fit exactly.

* * *

Sm 710+ 4'

[If a lizard ... of a ma]n[?] is seen — th[ere[?] will[?] be[?]] a cry in the man's house [...]

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ... N]A[?] IGI-ir GÛ-mu ina É LÚ G[ÁL[?]...] (ruling)

[šumma šurāru ... amē]li[?] innamir rigmu ina bīt amēli i[bašši[?] ...]

- ▶ Collation shows that there are minimal traces of a sign before IGI. We suggest reading NA not only because the traces allow for it, but lizards in omens are often seen on or in something belonging to a man. See for example line 5' on the same manuscript.
- ▶ Further, there is part of a sign, just a horizontal line, after LÚ, on Sm 710+ 4's right-hand edge. We suggest reading GÁL 'there will be'. Note that the reading is speculative. *If a City 2* (2006, 188 note 65 4') omits the two signs, but otherwise reads the line as above.

* * *

Sm 710+ 5'

[If] in a man's house [a lizard with two ta]ils is repeatedly seen — a flo[od[?] will come[?]]

[šum-ma šu-ri-ri-it-tu₄ šá 2 KU]N.MEŠ-šá ina É NA it-ta-an-mar A.K[AL[?] DU[?]]

[šumma šurīrittu ša 2 zibb]ātiša ina bīt amēli ittanmar mī[lu[?] illak[?]]

- ▶ This is Nineveh 4; see the commentary there.

* * *

Sm 710+ 6'

[If a lizar]d is repeatedly seen in a man's house — that house [...]

[šum-ma šu-ri-ri-it]-tu₄ ina É NA it-ta-an-mar É BI [...] (ruling)

[šumma šurīrit]tu ina bīt amēli ittanmar bītu šū [...]

- ▶ Similarly to the manuscript's first four lines, *If a City 2* (2006, 167 note 4') only provides a transliteration—without translation or reconstructing the missing portions of the protasis. The line is otherwise read as above.

* * *

Sm 710+ 7'

[If a lizard without a tail is s]een — the man's wife will bear (so) many children that there [won't be] any bread [in his mouth].

[DIŠ EME.ŠID šá KUN NU TUK-ú IGI]-ir DAM NA DUMU.MEŠ ma-a'-du-ti Û.TU-ma NINDA [ana KA-šú NU GAR-an] (ruling)

[šumma šurāru ša zibbata lā išû innam]ir aššat amēli mārī mā'dūti ulladma akala [ana pīšu ul iššakkan]

- ▶ This is Nineveh 12; see the commentary there.

* * *

Sm 710+ 8'a

[If there is a white lizard in a man's house — dis]persal of the house.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID BABBAR *ina* É NA GÁL-ši B]IR-ah É

[šumma šurāru pešû *ina* bīt amēli ittabši sa]pāh bīti

- ▶ This is Nineveh 43'; see the commentary there.

* * *

Sm 710+ 8'b

If there is a black lizard in a man's house — [that] house [will have a god].

: DIŠ EME.ŠID GE₆ *ina* É NA GÁL-ši É [BI DINGIR TUK-ši]

šumma šurāru šalmu *ina* bīt amēli ittabši bītu [šū *ila* irašši]

- ▶ This is Nineveh 44'; see the commentary there.

* * *

Sm 710+ 9'

[If a lizard fa]lls [...] — that man will have a god and a lamassu protective spirit.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ... ŠUB]-*ut* LÚ BI DINGIR *u* ^dLAMMA TUK-^rši^r

[šumma šurāru ... *imq*]*ut* amēlu šū *ila* *u* lamassa irašši

- ▶ The above omen is the first of a triplet of omens on lines Sm 710+ 9'–12'. The sequence exhibits a typical tripartite structure: the first two omens are only one line long, and the third omen is longer and flows over onto a second line. The lines are also written so that signs and blank space align across all four lines. Interestingly, the first line does not have a corresponding omen in the main Nineveh score. The following two do. Their order is, however, reversed, and they are not adjacent as they are on Sm 710+. See also the discussion of these omens in section 3.4.
- ▶ Collation confirms that following TUK there is a broken *-ši*, which *If a City 2* (2006, 191 omen 22' Ex(7)) omits.
- ▶ The translation offered by *If a City 2* (2006, 169 omen 22') reconstructs the protasis as missing an adjective for the lizard.

[If a ... lizard fa]lls [...], that man will have a god and a protective spirit.

While this is possible, in combination with the next two omens in the triad, it seems more likely that the missing protasis would describe where the lizard fell, instead of what type of lizard fell.

- ▶ See also Assur 71 which has a similar apodosis.

* * *

Sm 710+ 10'

[If a lizard fall]s [in front of a man] — the downfall of his legal adversary (will occur).

[DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* IGI NA ŠUB-*u*]t ŠUB-*at* EN INIM-šú

[šumma šurāru *ana pān amēli imqu*]t maqāt bēl amātišu

- ▶ This is Nineveh 22'; see the commentary there.
- ▶ The above is part of a triad of omens. See also Sm 710+ 9' and Sm 710+ 11'–12'.

* * *

Sm 710+ 11'–12'

[If a lizard fal]ls onto² [a man] — a message will arrive [for] that [man] (and) a lamassu protective spirit will approach him or a common man will proudly prosper.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana*] 'UGU'² [NA ŠUB-*u*]t ma-*qá-at* INIM / [*ana* LÚ] 'BI' dLAMMA TE-'šú' lu
MAŠ.EN.GAG *mi-li* GABA *ina-ḫi-iš*

[šumma šurāru *ana*] muḫḫi² [amēli imqu]t maqāt amāti [*ana amēli*] šuāti lamassu iṭeḫḫēšu lū
muškēnu mīli irti inahḫiš

- ▶ This is Nineveh 20'; see the commentary there.
- ▶ The above is part of a triad of omens. See also Sm 710+ 9' and Sm 710+ 10'.

* * *

Sm 710+ 13'

[If a liza]rd falls onto a man while (he is) sitting — that man's property will increase.

[DIŠ EME].ŠID *ana* UGU NAs *e-nu-ma áš-bu* ŠUB-*ut* LÚ BI *mim-ma ú-at-tar*

[šumma šurā]ru *ana muḫḫi amēli enūma ašbu imqut amēlu šū mimma u'attar*

- ▶ This is Nineveh 21'; see the commentary there.

* * *

Sm 710+ 14'

[If a liz]ard f[all]s on top of a man (*who*) is celebrating — that man's god will have mercy on him.

[DIŠ EM]E.ŠID *ina* ḪÚL LÚ *ana* UGU NA Š[UB]-*ut* LÚ BI DINGIR-šú ARḪUŠ-šú

[šumma šur]āru *ina ḫidūti amēli ana muḫḫi amēli i[mq]ut amēlu šū ilšu irēššu*

- ▶ This is Nineveh 16, Variant B; see the commentary there.

* * *

Sm 710+ 15'

[If] entangled [li]zards fall onto a man — that man: wherever he goes will con[sume] a share.

[DIŠ E]ME.ŠID.MEŠ DAB.DAB-*ta-ma ana* UGU 'NA' ŠUB.MEŠ NA BI KI DU-*ku* ҲA.LA G[U₇]

[šumma šu]rīrātu tišbutāma ana muḥḥi amēli imqutā amēlu šū ašar illaku zitta ik[ka]

- ▶ This is Nineveh 41' Variant B; see the commentary there.

* * *

Sm 710+ 16'

[If a li]zard climbs onto a man's foot — he will rejoice.

[DIŠ E]ME.ŠID *ana* UGU GÌR NA E₁₁ *i-ḥad-du* (ruling)

[šumma šu]rāru ana muḥḥi šēp amēli īli iḥaddu

- ▶ This is Nineveh 18; see the commentary there.

* * *

Sm 710+ 17'

[If a li]zard climbs onto a man's bed — that man will consume a share.

[DIŠ EM]E.ŠID *ana* UGU ^{giš}NÁ NA E₁₁ NA BI ҲA.LA GU₇

[šumma šu]rāru ana muḥḥi ereš amēli īli amēlu šū zitta ikkal

- ▶ This is Nineveh 32'; see the commentary there.

* * *

Sm 710+ 18'–19'

[If a li]zard is sleeping on top of a man's bed and (then) [fa]lls off — that man will consume a share; relocation of the b[ed].

[DIŠ EM]E.ŠID *ana* UGU ^{giš}NÁ NA *ša-lil-ma* [ŠU]B-*ut* NA BI ҲA.LA GU₇ / [(indent)? *n*]u-*kúr* ^{giš}N[Á]

[šumma šu]rāru ana muḥḥi ereš amēli šalilma [im]qut amēlu šū zitta ikkal [n]ukkur er[ši]

- ▶ This is Nineveh 34'; see the commentary there.

* * *

Sm 710+ 20'–21'

[If a lizard] falls [onto] a man's sleeping place (or onto a man's) bed — he will e[xperience?] losses; [that man: he] will be [bed]ridden.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina*] 'KI'. 'NÁ' ' ^{giš}'NÁ' 'NA' Š[UB-*u*]t I.BÍ.ZA I[GI?-*mar*?] /

[(indent?) NA BI ^{giš}NÁ] 'DAB'-[*su*]

[šumma šurāru *ina*] *majjāl* ereš amēli i[mqu]t *ibissû* im[*mar*? amēlu šū] *išabbas*[*su*]

- ▶ This is Nineveh 36', Variant D; see the commentary there.
- ▶ The manuscript Sm 710+ breaks off after Sm 710+ 21'.

* * *

Assur Recension

Sequence on VAT 9793 and VAT 10167

Assur 1

[If a lizard ...] ... [...]

[DIŠ EME.DIR ...] x x [...]

[šumma šurāru ...] ... [...]

VAT 10167 1 [DIŠ EME.DIR ...] 'x' 'x' [...]

- ▶ For Assur omen sequencing and line counts, see section 6.3.2. The line and omen count follows those used in KAL 1 (2007, 67–75 manuscript 16 = Text A), not *If a City 2*. To ease comparison, the above omen corresponds to Assur 62' in *If a City 2*.

* * *

Assur 2

[If a lizard ...] ... — [that?] man [...]

[DIŠ EME.DIR ...]-su NA [BI? ...]

[šumma šurāru ...] ... amēlu [šū? ...]

VAT 10167 2 [DIŠ EME.DIR ...]-su 'NA' [...]

- ▶ The sign read as *-su* is possibly the end of the protasis—perhaps the final syllable in a verb such as *ilpussu* 'it touches him'.

* * *

Assur 3

[If a lizard] falls [onto a man] — confusion, distress.

[DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* UGU NA] ŠUB-ut SÙĤ ni-zíq-tu₄

[šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi amēli] imqut tēšû niziqtu

VAT 10167 3 [DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* UGU NA] ŠUB-ut 'SÙĤ' 'ni'-'zíq'-'tu₄'

- ▶ The above omen commences a section about lizards falling in relation to (i.e., on top of, in front of, behind, etc.) a man. The opening omens of the Sultantepe recension also address lizards falling in relation to a man. The omens in both the Assur and Sultantepe recensions also show similarities in their structure and in the combination of protasis with apodosis. See also section 3.4.2. We therefore reconstruct the protases of the first few broken omens in the Assur recension from Sultantepe omens.

The Sultantepe counterpart to the above omen is Sultantepe 2, which reads as follows:

[DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana*] UGU NA ŠUB-*ut* SÙĤ¹ *ni-ziq*-[*tu*₄]
 [If a lizard] falls [o]nto a man — confusion¹, distre[ss].

- ▶ Although *niziqtu*, common in omen apodoses, is often translated as ‘worry’ or ‘grief’, CAD (N.2: 304 s.v. *niziqtu*) notes the word likely has a wider semantic range. Sibbing-Plantholt (2021, 359–72), in her discussion on the noun and its cognates, argues that instead of the narrower definition ‘to grieve’, the cognates have at their core the meaning ‘to be upset’ or ‘to be distressed’ (2021, 371). In any case, the words have a negative interpretation in omens (Rendu Loisel 2016b, 294).

Niziqtu is the opposite of *ḥadû* ‘to rejoice’ (Sibbing-Plantholt 2021, 362) and can be felt when one is worried about the welfare of loved-ones (2021, 365–67) or when someone dies (2021, 363–64), among other situations. Personified, *Niziqtu* is a winged *Mischwesen*—variously characterized as a demon (Rendu Loisel 2011, 58), an unnamed, low-ranking goddess representing *niziqtu* ‘grief’ (Wiggermann 2008, 114–15), or as the personification of an overwhelming emotion (Sibbing-Plantholt 2021, 357, 371)—associated with death and grief (Sibbing-Plantholt 2021, 357; Wiggermann 2008, 114).

There is, as well, an onomatopoeic component to both *niziqtu* and the verb *nazāqu* (Sibbing-Plantholt 2021, 368–70; Rendu Loisel 2011, 54–60), similar to that of wood creaking, the hissing of a snake¹⁴³ (Rendu Loisel 2016b, 294; Sibbing-Plantholt 2021, 369), or the groans of someone who is ill (Sibbing-Plantholt 2021, 370). Rendu Loisel (2016b, 294) associates *nazāqu* with a “sharp sound”. The words both “literally and figuratively represent the state and sound of suffering under an unbearable weight, whether wooden beams in a house or a person that feels the burden of distress” (Sibbing-Plantholt 2021, 371).

- ▶ In *If a City 2* (2006, 178 omen 64’), the missing portions of the above omen’s protasis are not reconstructed, but the visible traces are otherwise read as above.

* * *

Assur 4

[If a lizard ...] falls [... of a man] — all his possessions will disappear.

[DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* ... NA] ŠUB-*ut* *mim-mu-šu* ZÁĤ

[*šumma šurāru ana* ... *amēli*] *imqut mimmušu iḥalliq*

VAT 10167 4 [DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* ... NA] ŠUB-*ut* ¹*mim*¹-¹*mu*¹-¹*šu*¹ ZÁĤ

- ▶ We tentatively suggest that Sultantepe 3 might provide guidance for Assur 4’s missing protasis as the previous omen (Assur 3) corresponds to Sultantepe 2, and the subsequent omen (Assur 5) corresponds to Sultantepe 5 (Sultantepe 4 corresponds to Assur 7). Note that while Sultantepe 3’s protasis is incomplete, the *-ma* after ŠUB indicates a multipart protasis. Assur 4’s protasis, however, is clearly finished after ŠUB-*ut*. Sultantepe 3 reads as follows:

[DIŠ] E[ME.ŠID *ana* U]GU *bu-di* [NA] ŠUB-*ma* [...]
 [If] a li[zard] falls [on]to [a man’s] shoulder(s) and [...]

* * *

¹⁴³ For an example in an omen protasis, see Rinderer (2021, 69 omen §22.61’).

Assur 5

[If a lizard] falls [in front of a man] — he will prevail over his legal adversary.

[DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* IGI NA] ŠUB-*ut* UGU EN INIM-*šu* GUB-*az*

[*šumma šurāru ana pān amēli*] *imqut eli bēl amātišu izzaz*

VAT 10167 5 [DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* IGI NA] ŠUB-*ut* UGU EN INIM-*šu* GUB-*az*

- ▶ Sultantepe 5 has been used to reconstruct the above omen’s protasis as has also been done by *If a City 2* (2006, 178 omen 66’) and KAL 1 (2007, 68 Vs. 5 A5).

It should be noted, however, that Sultantepe 4 and 5 have the exact same protasis—assuming the Sultantepe hand copy (STT 323) is correct. Sultantepe 4 shows similarities to Assur 7. Reconstructing both Assur 5 and 7, using the respective Sultantepe omens, would therefore result in Assur 5 and Assur 7 also having the same protasis, just as Sultantepe 4 and 5 do.

Though we reconstruct Assur 5’s protasis above, see the discussion at Assur 7 as to why, for the time being, we have left Assur 7 as it appears on the manuscript, without reconstructing the protasis.

- ▶ While the repetition of protases is unusual, this particular protasis ‘If a lizard falls in front of a man’, however, is an exception. All three recensions feature omens with this protasis (Nineveh 22’ and Sultantepe 63 are additional omens about two-tailed lizards falling in front of a man) and not always with identical apodoses—although all the apodoses relate to overcoming adversaries. Further, Assur 5 and possibly Assur 7 as well as Sultantepe 5 and 7 (all four omens are similar) repeat the protasis within the same recension.

* * *

Assur 6

[If a lizard] falls [... of a man] — the achievement of an objective (will occur).

[DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* ... NA] ŠUB-*ut* KUR-*ad* Á.ÁŠ

[*šumma šurāru ana ... amēli*] *imqut kašād šibûti*

VAT 10167 6 [DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* ... NA] ŠUB-*ut* KUR-*ad* Á.ÁŠ

- ▶ The above omen is translated in *If a City 2* (2006, 179 omen 67’) as follows:

[If a lizard] falls [...]—attainment of **his** desire.

Although the subject of the apodosis is likely to be the man mentioned in the protasis, the possessive pronoun ‘his’ is not present in the original text.

- ▶ The signs Á.ÁŠ, translated above as ‘objective’, have a broad semantic meaning including ‘desire’ or ‘purpose’ or ‘business venture’ (CAD Š: 167–71 s.v. *šibûtu* A). With the verb *kašādu*, as above, the sense is often of ‘objective’ or ‘goal’. As De Zorzi (2009, 97–103, particularly 98–99) notes in her discussion of the word *šibûtu* the term in divinatory texts is to be understood broadly as an “undertaking”, but the evidence from outside of divinatory texts give the term a connotation of “business venture”.

* * *

Assur 7

[If a lizard] falls [... of a man] — he will overcome his legal adversary.

[DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* ... NA] ŠUB-*ut* EN INIM-*šu* KUR-*ad*

[*šumma šurāru ana ... amēli*] *imqut bēl amātišu ikaššad*

VAT 10167 7 [DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* ... NA] ŠUB-*ut* EN INIM-*šu* KUR-*ad*

- ▶ As mentioned in the commentary to Assur 5, the above omen, Assur 7, is similar to Sultantepe 4, which reads as follows:

[If] a lizard f[al]ls in front of a man — [his] legal adversary will be conquered.

[DIŠ] EME.ŠID' 'ana' IGI NA Š[UB]-'ut' KUR-*ad* EN INIM-[*šu*]

Reconstructing Assur 7's protasis from Sultantepe 4, however, would result in identical protases in Assur 5 and 7 (as occurs in Sultantepe 4 and 5).

While the apodoses of Assur 7 and Sultantepe 4 are essentially the same, the word order differs. We therefore leave Assur 7's as it appears on the manuscript and do not reconstruct on the basis of the Sultantepe omen. KAL 1 (2007, 68 Vs. 7 A7) also does not reconstruct the omen's protasis.

The earlier edition *If a City 2* (2006, 178 omen 68'), however, does use Sultantepe 4 to reconstruct Assur 7's protasis. This results in a reconstructed transliteration that reads as follows:

[DIŠ EME.DIR *ana* IGI NA] ŠUB-*ut* EN KA-*šu* KUR-*ad*

If a City 2 (2006, 178 note 66', 68') mentions that the repeated protases "may be a scribal error".

* * *

Assur 8

[If a lizard] falls [behind? a m]an — (some)one will file a lawsuit against him.

[DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* EGIR? N]A ŠUB-*ut a-na di-ni-šu i-ger-ru-šu*

[*šumma šurāru ana arkat? a*] *mēli imqut ana dīnišu igerrūšu*

VAT 10167 8 [DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* EGIR? N]A ŠUB-*ut a-na di-ni-šu i-ger-ru-šu*

- ▶ We reconstruct the protasis from Nineveh 29'. See the commentary there on reconstructing where the lizard falls in relation to the man.

If a City 2 (2006, 178, 179 both pages omen 69') reconstructs and translates the omen as above, with minor changes in breaks. The most recent edition KAL 1 (2007, 71 Vs. 8), while otherwise reconstructing and translating as above, does not reconstruct where the lizard falls in relation to the man. We follow *If a City 2* as there is evidence of a sequence of omens about lizards falling behind a man in the Nineveh recension, and the subsequent omens Assur 9 and 10 seem to indicate such a sequence also exists here in the Assur recension.

- ▶ Note also Assur 34, which is thematically similar to Assur 8. In Assur 34's protasis, the lizard falls onto a man already engaged in a lawsuit. The result is favorable.

* * *

Assur 9

[If a lizard fal]ls [behind a man] and flops about repeatedly — he will experience evil.

[DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* EGIR NA ŠUB-*u*]t-*ma it-tap-pi-iš* ̕UL IGI-*mar*

[*šumma šurāru ana arkat amēli imqu*]tma ittappiṣ lumna immar

VAT 10167 9 [DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* EGIR NA ŠUB-*u*]t-*ma it-tap-pi-iš* ̕UL IGI-*mar*

- ▶ See also Nineveh 31' and Sultantepe 7. The three omens are almost identical. The Nineveh omen, however, omits the enclitic *-ma* between the protases' verbs, and in the Sultantepe omen, 'evil' is written as the feminine MUNUS.̕UL.
- ▶ See also the commentary at Nineveh 31' for a discussion of the verb *ittappiṣ*.

* * *

Assur 10

[If a lizard] falls [behind a man] and touches (him) — his fortress will experience a negative twist of fate.

[DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* EGIR NA] ŠUB-*ut-ma* TAG KALAG.GA-*su pi-is-la-at* ̕UL IGI-*mar*

[*šumma šurāru ana arkat amēli*] imqutma ilput dannassu pislāt lumni immar

VAT 10167 10 [DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* EGIR NA] ŠUB-*ut-ma* TAG KALAG.GA-*su pi-is-la-at* ̕UL IGI-*mar* (ruling)

- ▶ For the translation of *pislāt lumni* as 'negative twist of fate', see the commentary at Nineveh 30'.
- ▶ The protasis's reconstruction is based on Sultantepe 6. Both the Sultantepe omen and Nineveh 30' are similar to the above omen, but they both omit the signs KALAG.GA 'fortress' from the apodosis and place *-su* after TAG 'to touch'. As *If a City 2* (2006, 178 note 71') notes, KALAG.GA may be an interpolation.
- ▶ The apodosis does not specify whose fortress will experience a negative twist of face. In all likelihood, it is the man mentioned in the protasis.

* * *

Assur 11

[If a lizard] falls onto a man [from the sky] — that man will consume a large share.

[DIŠ EME.DIR TA AN-*e*] *a-na* UGU NA ŠUB-*ut* NA BI ̕A.LA GAL GU₇

[*šumma šurāru ištu šamē*] ana muḥḥi amēli imqut amēlu šū zitta rabīta ikkal

VAT 10167 11 [DIŠ EME.DIR TA AN-*e*] *a*¹-*na* UGU NA ŠUB-*ut* NA BI ̕A.LA GAL GU₇

- ▶ The above omen's protasis has been reconstructed from Sultantepe 8. The two omens differ only in the use of syllabic spelling for *a-na* (above) instead of the sign DIŠ (Sultantepe 8) for the word *ana* and which logogram is used for the word lizard.

* * *

Assur 12

[If a lizard] jumps¹ onto a man [from ...] — that man will receive a good message.

[DIŠ EME.DIR TA x] *a-na* UGU NA GU₄.UD¹-iṭ NA BI INIM SIG₅ IGI-mar

[šumma šurāru ištu ...] *ana muḥḥi amēli išḫiṭ amēlu šū amāt damiḳti immar*

VAT 10167 12 [DIŠ EME.DIR TA x] ¹*a-na* UGU NA GU₄.UD¹-iṭ NA BI INIM SIG₅ IGI-mar

- ▶ The above omen's protasis has been reconstructed from Sultantepe 9:

If a lizard [jum]ps onto a man from ... — that man [will? receive? a good?] m[essage?].

DIŠ EME.ŠID TA x *ana* UGU NA [GU₄].UD NA BI I[NIM? SIG₅? IGI?-mar?]

Both omens are located within sequences of very similar omens. The preceding Assur 11 appears to be the same omen as Sultantepe 8, and the subsequent Assur 13 corresponds to Sultantepe 10. Both omens also include the phrase *ana* UGU NA, and the Sultantepe omen partially preserves the verb GU₄.UD 'to jump'. The two omens are likely similar.

In the above omen, the break in the protasis has space for at least three signs after DIŠ EME.DIR, leaving more than enough room for TA x 'from ...' to be reconstructed within the break. Nevertheless, both *If a City 2* (2006, 178 omen 73') and KAL 1 (2007, 68 Vs. 12 A12) do not reconstruct anything in the break beyond DIŠ EME.DIR. KAL 1 does indicate the gap however. This is likely because *If a City 2* does not reconstruct the verb in Sultantepe 9's protasis as GU₄.UD, but as [ŠUB]-*ut* 'falls'. Given the close parallels between the Assur and Sultantepe recensions and the match between the rest of the signs in the two omens, it is logical to reconcile the two omens.

See the commentary at Sultantepe 9 for the sign x after TA and Sultantepe protasis's reconstruction.

- ▶ From the photograph of VAT 10167 available on CDLI, the sign UD of GU₄.UD¹-iṭ appears to have too many vertical wedges. *If a City 2* (2006, 198 omen 73' C r.12') notes the sign is written as ŠAB and KAL 1 (2007, 68 Vs. 12 A12) marks the sign with an exclamation mark.

* * *

Assur 13

[If a lizard] climbs [from the g]round onto the top of a man — that man will make a profit.

[DIŠ EME.DIR TA K]I *a-na* UGU NA E₁₁ NA BI Á.TUK IGI-mar

[šumma šurāru ištu q] *aqqari ana muḥḥi amēli ili amēlu šū nēmela immar*

VAT 10167 13 [DIŠ EME.DIR TA K]I *a-na* UGU NA E₁₁ NA BI Á.TUK IGI-mar

- ▶ The protasis has been reconstructed from Sultantepe 10. Instead of acquiring Á.TUK 'profit', as above, the man in the Sultantepe omen acquires NÍG.TUK 'riches'. Another two omens where Á.TUK

man's consumption of his profit leads to him being forced to use the money set aside for his daughters' dowries to build a house, the above apodoses could be seen as negative and the relationship between Assur 15 and 16 is more of a narrative.

- ▶ The above omen corresponds to Sultantepe 12. Similarly to Assur 13 and Sultantepe 10, where the above omen uses Á.TUK 'profit', Sultantepe 12 writes NÍG.TUK 'riches'. Sultantepe 12 also does not have NA BI 'that man' in the apodosis. The omens are otherwise identical and both play on the multiple meanings of TUK.

* * *

Assur 16

[If a lizard] falls onto a man's left hand — he will build a house using his daughters' money.

[DIŠ EME.DIR] *a-na* UGU ŠU NA GÙB ŠUB-*ut* ina KÙ.BABBAR.MEŠ DUMU.MUNUS.MEŠ-šú É DÙ-*uš*

[šumma šurāru] *ana muḥḥi qāt amēli šumēli imqut ina kaspī mārātišu bīta ippuš*

VAT 10167 16 [DIŠ EME.DIR] 'a¹-na UGU ŠU NA GÙB ŠUB-*ut* ina KÙ.BABBAR.MEŠ
DUMU.MUNUS.MEŠ-šú' É 'DÙ-*uš*'

- ▶ For the pairing of Assur 15 and 16, see the commentary at Assur 15.
- ▶ See also Sultantepe 13. The Sultantepe omen lacks the plural marker MEŠ on KÙ.BABBAR 'money, silver' but otherwise appears to be identical.

* * *

Assur 17

[If a lizard] falls into a man's lap — he will acquire his son's profit; whatever he announces (that he will do) will be successful.

[DIŠ EME.DIR] *a-na bir-ki* NA ŠUB-*ut* Á.TUK DUMU-šú TUK-š*i* mīm-*ma* PÀ *ana ku-širi* ŠID

[šumma šurāru] *ana birki amēli imqut nēmel mārīšu irašši mimma izakkaru ana kuširi imannu*

VAT 10167 17 [DIŠ EME.DIR] 'a¹-na *bir-ki* NA ŠUB-*ut* Á.TUK DUMU-šú' TUK-š*i* mīm-*ma* PÀ *ana ku-širi* 'ŠID'

- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 179 omen 78') translates the above omen as
[If a lizard] falls onto a man's lap, **his son will acquire gain**; whatever **is found**, he will count as profitable.

This translation requires interpreting DUMU-šú 'his son' as the subject of the apodosis. The word order, however, indicates that the man mentioned in the protasis is the subject of the apodosis, not his son.

For PÀ with the reading *zakāru* 'to announce', see CAD (Z: 16 s.v. *zakāru*). This accounts for the difference in translation of the second half of the apodosis.

- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 178 omen 78') reconstructed transliteration of the above omen is

[DIŠ EME.DIR] *a-na bir-ki NA ŠUB-ut A₂.TUK DUMU-šu₂ TUK-ši mim₃-ma PAD₃ ana ku-širi₃ ŠID*

* * *

Assur 18

[If a lizard] falls onto a man's right foot — all of his possessions [will disap]pear.

[DIŠ EME.DIR] *a-na UGU GÌR NA ZAG ŠUB-ut mim-mu-šu [ZÁ]Ḫ*

[šumma šurāru] *ana muḫḫi šēp amēli imitti imqut mimmûšu [iḫall]iq*

VAT 10167 18 [DIŠ EME.DIR] *a¹-na UGU GÌR NA ZAG ŠUB-ut mim-mu-šu [ZÁ]Ḫ*

- ▶ See also Sultantepe 14. Both it and the above omen have the same protasis, and although the apodoses differ there is a connection with the use of *mim-ma* and ZÁḪ.

Sultantepe 14's apodosis

something will be los[t]; an eclipse during the d[ay] watch.

mim-ma ZÁ[Ḫ] KA×MI EN.NUN U[₄-me]

- ▶ The protases of the above omen and Assur 19 are unmistakably a pair. Further the first sign in the apodoses of both omens is MUNUS (read above as *mim-*).

* * *

Assur 19

[If a lizard] falls onto a man's left foot — [he will acquire] a *twitching* in his feet.

[DIŠ EME.DIR] *a-na UGU GÌR NA GÙB ŠUB-ut MUNUS.LUḪ GÌR.MEŠ-šu [TUK-ši]*

[šumma šurāru] *ana muḫḫi šēp amēli šumēli imqut galāt šēpīšu [irašši]*

VAT 10167 19 [DIŠ EME.DIR] *a¹-na¹ UGU GÌR NA GÙB ŠUB-ut MUNUS.LUḪ GÌR.MEŠ-šu [TUK-ši]*

- ▶ For LUḪ with the reading *galātu* 'to twitch', see CAD (G: 12 s.v. *galātu*). Although MUNUS.LUḪ is not otherwise attested for *galātu*, we follow KAL 1 (2007, 71 Vs. 19), which translates the omen as follows:

[Wenn eine Eidechse] auf den linken Fuß eines Mannes fällt: Er wird ein *Zittern* seiner Füße [bekommen].

Given the association of lizards with illness in Tablet 32, the apodosis may be interpreted literally as a twitch in a leg muscle or even something akin to restless leg syndrome, but the word *galātu* also carries negative connotations of fear, premature ejaculation, and restlessness. Lizards in Tablet 32 are also associated with journeys as are feet/legs *šēpū*, in general. An interpretation of mental¹⁴⁴ *Unwohlsein*, agitation, or restlessness may also be appropriate.

¹⁴⁴ For the associations between the semantically related *gilittu* and madness, see De Zorzi (2016, 135).

- ▶ The use of MUNUS ‘woman’ before LUḪ and the sign’s other reading *mesû* ‘to wash’ (CAD M.2: 30 s.v. *mesû*) likely explains *If a City 2’s* (2006, 179 omen 80’) translation.

[If a lizard] falls onto a man’s left foot, [he will acquire] a **female foot-washer**.

While there is an attestation of a slave woman washing her master’s feet in a text from the Old Babylonian period.¹⁴⁵ In that attestation, LUḪ is used as a verb.

Although *If a City 2’s* (2006, 178 omen 80’) reconstructed transliteration reads SAL.LUḪ, it reads SAL.LUḪ₃ in VAT 10167 19 (2006, 198 omen 80’ C r.19’).

- ▶ That the lizard falls onto the man’s feet in the protasis obviously cues the mention of feet in the apodosis. The combination of LUḪ and ĜĪR.MEŠ occurs in two other omens: Sultantepe 15, which bears striking similarities with the above omen (differences: ‘left’ is written with the number 150; MUNUS is omitted before LUḪ) and Assur 106’, which has the same apodosis, but a different protasis.

* * *

Assur 20

[If a liz]ard falls onto a man’s forehead and touches him — unexpected news [will reach] that man.

[DIŠ EME].DIR *a-na pu-ut* NA ŠUB-*ut-ma* TAG-*su* NA BI INIM NU ZU [KUR-*ád*]

[šumma šurā]ru ana pūt amēli imqutma ilpussu amēlu šū amāt lā idē [ikaššad]

VAT 10167 20 [DIŠ EME].DIR *a-na pu-^tut* NA ŠUB-*ut-ma* TAG-*su* NA BI INIM NU ZU [KUR-*ád*]

- ▶ See Sultantepe 3 for a discussion on the confusion between *būdu* ‘shoulders’ and *pūtu* ‘forehead’.
- ▶ See also Sultantepe 18. The main difference between the two omens is the use in the Sultantepe omen of *bu-di* ‘shoulder(s)’ instead of *pu-ut* ‘forehead’ in the protasis and the omission of NA BI ‘that man’ in the apodosis.
- ▶ Assur 20–28 follow closely the Sultantepe sequence (Sultantepe 18–25).

* * *

Assur 21

[If a liz]ard falls onto a man’s stool — an eclipse during the [day] watch (will occur).

[DIŠ EM]E.DIR *a-na* UGU ^{giš}GU.ZA NA ŠUB-*ut* KA×MI EN.NU.UN [*u₄-me*]

[šumma šur]āru ana muḫḫi kussi amēli imqut na’dur maššarti [ūme]

VAT 10167 21 [DIŠ EM]E.DIR *a-na* UGU ^{giš}GU.‘ZA’ ‘NA’ ŠUB-*ut* KA×MI EN.NU.UN [*u₄-me*]

- ▶ The apodosis is reconstructed from Sultantepe 19. The two omens appear to be the same.

¹⁴⁵ See Figulla and Martin (1953 UET 5 plate 366 line 12; discussed in Guichard and Marti 2013, 75 note 112; translated in Charpin 1986, 475–76).

- ▶ The apodosis ‘an eclipse during the d[ay] watch’ can be found in several omens: Sultantepe 14 and 19 as well as possibly the fragmentary Nineveh 24’. The only omen, however, to preserve the apodosis completely is Sultantepe 19, where it is written KA×MI EN.NUN *u₄-me*, and it is the basis of the reconstruction of *u₄-me*. See the commentary there for the slight differences in *If a City 2*’s reading and translation (2006, 178, 179 both pages omen 82’) of the above omen.
- ▶ The above omen is the first in a series about lizards interacting with the furniture in a man’s home.

* * *

Assur 22

[If] a lizard climbs onto a man’s stool — he will be chronically i[ll].

[DIŠ] EME.DIR *a-na* UGU ^{giš}GU.ZA NA E₁₁ *is-sa-la-[a’]*

[šumma] *šurāru ana muḥḥi kussi amēli ili issalla[’]*

VAT 10167 22 [DIŠ] EME.DIR *a-na* UGU ^{giš}GU.ZA NA E₁₁ *is-sa-la-[a’]*

- ▶ Sultantepe 20’s apodosis adds NA BI ‘that man’, but the two omens are otherwise the same.
- ▶ The verb *is-sa-la-a’* is the N-stem of *salā’u*, which CAD translates as either the ingressive of ‘to become ill, to enter a critical stage of an illness’ (CAD S: 96 s.v. *salā’u* A 1b) or ‘to become depressed, upset’ (CAD S: 97 s.v. *salā’u* A 2). It is one of two verbs to describe being ill in Akkadian (see also the discussion on Assur 22 in section 4.2.4); the other being the more common *marāšu* (Stol 2009, 29; CAD M.1: 269 s.v. *marāšu*). In commentary texts, the two verbs are often listed as synonyms (De Zorzi 2014, 2-Text Edition:340 lines 26–27; 2014, 2-Text Edition:381 omen 56 Apodosi). Indeed in his discussion of the verb *salā’u*, Stol (2009, 45) shows that in some text genres there are no discernible differences between the verbs. The combined use of *marāšu* and *salā’u* in some omen texts however indicate the two must have had a subtle difference in their meanings, at least in omen texts (Stol 2009, 39). For the most recent edition of the snake omen with an apodosis that includes both *marāšu* and *salā’u*, mentioned in Stol (2009, 39), see Rinderer (2021, 61 omen §22.16). Because the verb *salā’u* appears in combination with death whereas *marāšu* does not, Rinderer (2021, 114 omen §22.16) interprets to the N-stem of *salā’u* to be an intensification of *marāšu* and translates “he will enter a critical stage of illness”. We follow Stol’s (2009, 44) translation of the above apodosis and interpret the N-stem of *salā’u* to mean a long-lasting or chronic illness, while not excluding the possibility that the verb may mean ‘to enter a critical stage of an illness’.

If a City 2 (2006, 179 omen 83’) translates the omen as follows:

[If] a lizard climbs onto a man’s chair, **he will be infected.**

* * *

Assur 23

If a lizard crawls underneath a man’s stool and lies down — an enemy [will inhabit] that house.

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* KI.TA ^{giš}GU.ZA NA KU₄-*ma ir-bi-iš* KÚR É BI [TUŠ-*ab*]

šumma šurāru ana šapal kussi amēli irubma irbiš nakru bīta šūati [uššab]

VAT 10167 23 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* KI.TA ^{giš}GU.ZA NA KU₄-*ma* ʾir-ʾbi-ʾiš ʾKÚR ʾÉ BI [TUŠ-*ab*]

- ▶ The sign we read as KÚR, following KAL 1 (2007, 68 Vs. 23 A23; see also the collation notes at 143 Nr. 16 Vs. 23), is read as *ina* in *If a City 2* (2006, 198 omen 84'). *If a City 2*'s reconstructed transliteration (2006, 178 omen 84') and translation (2006, 179 omen 84') of the above omen are as follows:

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* KI.TA GIŠ.GU.ZA NA TU-*ma ir-bi-iš* <<*ina*>> E₂ BI [DUR₂-*ab*]

If a lizard enters underneath a man's chair and lies down, **that house will be inhabited.**

- ▶ See also Sultantepe 21; the two omens are similar. Where the Assur omen predicts an enemy inhabiting the house, the Sultantepe omen has É BI DÚR 'that house will (again) be inhabited.'

* * *

Assur 24

If a lizard climbs onto a man's stool and lies down [...] ... [...]

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* UGU gišGU.ZA NA E₁₁-*ma ir-bi-iš* [...] x [...]

šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi kussi amēli īlima irbiš [...] ... [...]

VAT 10167 24 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* UGU gišGU.ZA NA 'E₁₁'-*ma ir-bi-'iš*' [...] 'x' [...] (ruling)

- ▶ Although the apodosis is missing, this is likely to have been a positive omen as the protasis is spatially the opposite of the previous, negative omen Assur 23.

* * *

Assur 25

If a lizard falls onto a man's table — he will be ve[xed].

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* UGU gišBANŠUR NA ŠUB-*ut ina*-[*an-ziq*]

šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi paššūr amēli imqut ina[*nziq*]

VAT 10167 25 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* UGU gišBANŠUR NA ŠUB-*ut ina*-[*an-ziq*]

- ▶ The apodosis has been reconstructed from Sultantepe 22. The Sultantepe omen's apodosis appears to have been originally longer.
- ▶ See the commentary at Assur 3 for a discussion of the apodosis's verb *nazāqu* and its associated emotions.

* * *

Assur 26

If a lizard falls into a <bo>wl on a man's table, — illness [will afflict him].

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* UGU gišBANŠUR NA *ana* dug<*kal*>-*li* ŠUB-*ut* GIG [DAB-*su*]

šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi paššūr amēli ana <*kal*>*li* imqut muršu [*išabbassu*]

VAT 10167 26 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* UGU ^{giš}BANŠUR NA *ana* ^{dug<kal>-li} ŠUB-ut GIG [DAB-su]

- ▶ The missing parts of the above apodosis have been reconstructed using Sultantepe 23. The hand copy (STT 323) of the Sultantepe omen's apodosis, however, shows GIG <<KI!>> DAB-su. The sign KI is likely an extraneous sign, as it does not fit grammatically. We therefore do not reconstruct the sign in the above Assur omen. See, as well, the commentary at the Sultantepe omen.

* * *

Assur 27

If a lizard climbs onto a man's table and lies down — someone will approach from far away, someone [...]

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* UGU ^{giš}BANŠUR NA E₁₁-*ma ir-bi-iš šá* KASKAL SÛ-te TE-a šá [...]

šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi paššūr amēli ilima irbiš ša ḥarrāni rūqte iṭeḥḥā ša [...]

VAT 10167 27 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* UGU ^{giš}BANŠUR NA E₁₁-*ma ir-bi-iš šá* KASKAL SÛ-te TE-a šá
[...]

- ▶ The above omen has the same protasis as Sultantepe 24. The apodoses have thematic similarities as well, but where the Assur omen's apodosis reads KASKAL SÛ-te TE-a šá [...], the Sultantepe omen's apodosis reads šá KASKAL 'GIG' TE-šú 'illness will afflict one who is on a journey'. Just as *If a City 2* (2006, 179 note 88') observes, it is difficult to reconcile the signs between the two omens. Perhaps collation of the Sultantepe manuscript would allow for that omen to be read more similarly to the above Assur omen.
- ▶ The final five signs of the apodosis remain untranslated in *If a City 2* (2006, 179 omen 88').

If a lizard climbs onto a man's table and lies down, ... one who is on a journey.

This can be explained by *If a City 2*'s (2006, 199 omen 88 C r.27') reading of the sign SUD (above: SÛ) as MUŠ. The two signs resemble each other. We follow KAL 1 (2007, 68 Vs. 27 A27) in reading SÛ.

* * *

Assur 28

If a lizard crawls underneath a man's table and lies down — his social standing [will not be stable].

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* KI.TA ^{giš}BANŠUR NA KU₄-*ma ir-bi-iš* SUḤUŠ.BI [NU GI.NA]

šumma šurāru ana šapal paššūr amēli irubma irbiš išissu [ul ikân]

VAT 10167 28 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* KI.TA ^{giš}BANŠUR NA KU₄-*ma ir-bi-iš* SUḤUŠ.BI [NU GI.NA]

- ▶ Assur 28's apodosis has been reconstructed from Sultantepe 25.
- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 179 omen 89') and KAL 1 (2007, 72 Vs. 28) translate the above omen as follows:

If a City 2: If a lizard enters underneath a man's table and lies down, **that foundation [will not be firm]**.

KAL 1: Wenn eine Eidechse unter den Tisch eines Mannes kriecht und sich (dort) lagert: **[Kein dauerhaftes] Fundament**.

We translate SUĤUŠ.BI as 'his social standing' because the meaning of *išdu* 'foundation' can be extended to mean the 'foundation of a reign or government' as well as to 'social status'. See CAD (I/J): 237 s.v. *išdu* 2, 238 s.v. *išdu* 2d), for other examples from omens in *šumma ālu*.

- ▶ Assur 28 and 29 are thematically linked as both protases involve a lizard lying down on a man's furniture, and the apodoses involve the man's social standing.

* * *

Assur 29

If a lizard falls onto a man's bed and¹ lies down — his social standing [will be stable].

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* UGU ^{giš}NÁ NA ŠUB-*ut-ma*¹ *ir-bi-iš* SUĤUŠ.BI [GI.NA]

šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi ereš amēli imqutma¹ irbiš išissu [ikân]

VAT 10167 29 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* UGU ^{giš}NÁ NA ŠUB-*ut-ma*¹ *ir-bi-iš* SUĤUŠ.BI [GI.NA]

- ▶ As the above omen is a thematic variant to Assur 28—in fact, the two omens are almost the same, but for the difference of the lizard falling on a bed instead of a table—and such pairs often have opposing apodoses, the apodosis above has been reconstructed as positive, whereas Assur 28 was negative.
- ▶ In VAT 10167's photograph, the sign MA, part of ŠUB-*ut-ma*¹, appears to have extra marks above it.
- ▶ See Assur 28 for a discussion on the translation of SUĤUŠ.

* * *

Assur 30

If a lizard climbs onto a man's bed — (there will be) [a favorable] om[en].

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* UGU ^{giš}NÁ NA E₁₁ INIM.[GAR SIG₅]

šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi ereš amēli ili eger[rû damqu]

VAT 10167 30 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* UGU ^{giš}NÁ NA E₁₁ INIM.[GAR SIG₅]

- ▶ For the apodosis's reconstruction, see Sultantepe 27. See also Nineveh 32', which has the same protasis as above, but the apodosis for the Nineveh omen is NA BI ḤA.LA GU₇ 'that man will consume a share.'

* * *

Assur 31

If a lizard climbs onto a man’s bed and lies down — [he won’t have any] children.

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* UGU ^{giš}NÁ NA E₁₁-*ma ir-bi-iš* DUMU.MEŠ [NU IGI]

šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi ereš amēli ilima irbiš mārī [ul immar]

VAT 10167 31 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* UGU ^{giš}NÁ NA E₁₁-*ma ir-bi-iš* DUMU.MEŠ [NU IGI]

- ▶ For the apodosis’s reconstruction, see Sultantepe 28. See also Nineveh 33’, which has a similar protasis, but an opposing apodosis.

* * *

Assur 32

If a lizard crawls underneath a man’s bed and lies down — he will be ha[ppy].

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* KI.TA ^{giš}NÁ NA KU₄-*ma ir-bi-iš ŠÀ*.BI [DÙG.GA]

šumma šurāru ana šapal ereš amēli irubma irbiš libbašu! [iṭâb]

VAT 10167 32 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* KI.TA ^{giš}NÁ NA KU₄-*ma ir-bi-iš ŠÀ*.BI [DÙG.GA]

- ▶ Sultantepe 31 has been used to reconstruct the above apodosis. The two preserve the same omen, but the Sultantepe omen writes NÀ-*iš* instead of *ir-bi-iš* ‘lies down’. See also Nineveh 39’. Although the Nineveh omen is fragmentary, its protasis appears to be the same as above.
- ▶ As KAL 1 (2007, 74 note Vs. 32) notes, the sign ŠÀ has four vertical wedges where only three are expected. This appears to be a particularity in some Assur manuscripts. See, for example, Assur 58 on the same manuscript. In the same note, KAL 1 directs the reader to two further examples on manuscripts edited in KAL 1. The second manuscript, VAT 10481+ collects snake omens from *šumma ālu*. For a more recent edition of the snake omens, see Rinderer (2021).

* * *

Assur 33

If a lizard falls onto a sick man’s bed — his illness h[as befall]len (him).

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* UGU ^{giš}NÁ NA GIG ŠUB-*ut* GIG-*su Š[UB-u]t*

šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi ereš amēli marši imqut murussu i[mqu]t

VAT 10167 33 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* UGU ^{giš}NÁ NA GIG ŠUB-*ut* GIG-*su Š[UB-u]t*

- ▶ See also Sultantepe 33, which has been used to reconstruct the above apodosis. The two omens appear to be the same, except that the Sultantepe apodosis adds GIG BI ‘that sick man’.
- ▶ The reading Š[UB-u]t follows KAL 1’s (2007, 68 Vs. 33 A33) reading of the line as only a vertical wedge is visible on the manuscript’s photograph. Further, the hand-copy of Sultantepe 33 (see previous comment) also shows the apodosis’s verb to be ŠUB-*ut*.

The meaning of ŠUB-*ut* at the end of the apodosis, however, is uncertain. It is a form of the verb *maqātu*, which in the context of disease, usually means ‘to afflict’ (CAD M.1: 248 s.v. *maqātu* 4b), as KAL 1 (2007, 72 Vs. 33) translates the above omen:

Wenn eine Eidechse auf das Bett eines kranken Mannes fällt: Seine Krankheit **wird (ihn) be[fall]en**.

The edition *If a City 2* (2006, 181 omen 94’), on the other hand, translates the above omen as follows:

If a lizard falls onto the bed of a sick man, his sickness **[will fall (away)]**.

In some contexts, such as mathematics, *maqātu* can mean ‘to diminish’ (CAD M.1: 244 s.v. *maqātu* 1h). This is likely the reason for *If a City 2*’s translation.

As written ŠUB-*ut* could stand for the present tense *imaqqut*. But as the man is already sick (as noted in the protasis), it contextually makes little sense that illness would befall him in the future.

We have therefore interpreted the omen as a diagnostic omen and the verb as the preterite. There are several medical-diagnostic omens involving lizards in the series SA.GIG (for a discussion, see the commentary at Sultantepe 34), and, in many ways, the SA.GIG omens mirror the omens in *šumma ālu* (Heeßel 2001, 24). The above omen, however, does not have a parallel among the SA.GIG omens. For the SA.GIG omen that *If a City 2* (2006, 180 note 94’) mentions as a possible parallel (Labat 1951, 1:10–11 TDP 2: 44 and note 18), see now Heeßel (2001, 32 and 39 both omen 44), whose collation of additional SA.GIG manuscripts shows that omen’s protasis does not correspond to Assur 33’s protasis.

Another possibility is that the damaged signs on the Assur manuscript do not read ŠUB-*ut*, but are instead signs such as ZI ‘to live’ (less likely as the sign does not much resemble ŠUB) or TAG₄ ‘to leave’. See Sultantepe 34 for an example of the latter. This possibility presents its own problems. As mentioned above, Sultantepe 33 is almost an exact match for the above omen. If the apodosis was read to be positive (in that the man would live or his illness leave him), this would conflict with Sultantepe’s thematic pair Sultantepe 34, whose apodosis is a positive prognosis for an illness. The two omens have opposing protases and so one would expect the apodoses to also oppose.

- ▶ The commentary at Nineveh 11 lists the lizard omens involving illness.

* * *

Assur 34

If a lizard falls onto a man against whom someone has brought a lawsuit or who has been thrown into prison — that man will succeed in his la[wsu]it; the man will leave prison.

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* UGU LÚ *ša a-na di-ni i-ger-ru-šu lu šá ina* KI.ŠÚ ŠUB-ú Š[UB]-*ut* NA BI *ina d[i-ni]-šú TI-qé ina* KI.ŠÚ NA È

šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi amēli ša ana dīni igerrūšu lū ša ina kīli innaddū i[mq]ut amēlu šū ina d[īni]šu ileqqe ina kīli amēlu uṣṣi

VAT 10167 34 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* UGU LÚ *ša a-na di-ni i-gir-ru-šu lu šá ina* KI.ŠÚ ŠUB-ú Š[UB]-*ut*
NA BI *ina d[i-ni]-šú TI-qé ina* KI.ŠÚ NA È (ruling)

- ▶ The verb *leqû* in the context of lawsuits means ‘to receive a favorable verdict’. See CAD (L: 136 s.v. *leqû* 1d 3’, D: 151 s.v. *dīnu* 1 a–1’).

- ▶ See also Sultantepe 35. The two omens both address a lizard falling on a man involved in litigation and receiving a favorable result (in one manner or another). The Sultantepe omen lacks the mentions of prison in both the protasis and apodosis.

There are a few omens from Tablet 23 related to snakes falling on men involved in litigation and one about a man leaving prison; see Rinderer (2021, 75 §23.1–4).

- ▶ The manuscript’s photograph shows the breaks as above; although, both *Ifa City 2* (2006, 199 omen 95’ c r.34’; 2006, 180 omen 95’) and KAL 1 (2007, 68 A34) omit them.

* * *

Assur 35

If a lizard falls into the fire in a brazier but escapes — that man will escape from his imprisonment.

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* KI.NE *ana* IZI ŠUB-*ut-ma* È NA BI *ina* KI.ŠÚ-*šu* È

šumma šurāru ana kinūni ana išāti imqutma ūši amēlu šū ina kīlišu ušši

VAT 10167 35 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* KI.NE *ana* IZI ŠUB-*ut-ma* È NA BI *ina* KI.ŠÚ-*šu* È

- ▶ Omens Assur 35–49 form a series of omens about lizards falling or crawling into items around the house. The omens are organized by the household items and should be seen as related to each other. Within this larger group of omens, omens are also part of smaller groupings. See also section 4.2.2.
- ▶ The above protasis and apodosis show a clear link between the action of the lizard È (*w*)*ašû* ‘to go out’ or ‘to escape’ and the consequences for the man. The man of the apodosis is not mentioned in the protasis, neither is his entering prison. The implication is that he is the man thrown into prison in the previous omen Assur 34.
- ▶ Two other omens refer to lizards and braziers: Sultantepe 36 and 37. Assur 35 and Sultantepe 36 share the same apodosis; though their protases differ. Sultantepe 37’s protasis is fragmentary, but is likely to be the same as Assur 35’s protasis.

Sultantepe 36

[If a lizard] falls [onto ...] that is sitting (in) a br[azier] — that man will escape from prison.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* ...] *šá* K[I.NE] *aš-bu* ŠUB-*ut* NA BI *ina* KI.ŠÚ È

Sultantepe 37

[If a lizard] falls [into the fir]e [in a brazier] (and) escapes — that man will escape from privation and hardship.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* KI.NE *ana* IZ]I ŠUB-*ut* È NA BI *ina* PAP.ḪAL *u* KI.KAL È

* * *

Assur 36

If a lizard falls into the fire in a brazier and burns up — (a person doomed to) death will die.

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* KI.NE *ana* IZI ŠUB-*ut-ma* *ib-šal* ÚŠ BA.ÚŠ

šumma šurāru ana kinūni ana išāti imqutma ibšal mītu imât

VAT 10167 36 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* KI.NE *ana* IZI ŠUB-*ut-ma* *ib-šal* ÚŠ BA.ÚŠ

- ▶ Sultantepe 38 appears to be the same omen as above.
- ▶ The sign ÚŠ in the apodosis can also be read as IDIM, or *kabtu*, which explains the translation and reading from *If a City 2* (2006, 181 omen 97').

If a lizard falls in to the fire in a brazier and burns up, **a prominent person** will die.

* * *

Assur 37

If a lizard falls onto a torch and *is singed* — that house will go to ruin.

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* UGU IZI.GAR ŠUB-*ut-ma* *ku-pu-ut* É BI KAR-*ta*₅ DU-*ak*

šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi dipāri imqutma kuppūt bītu šū arbūta illak

VAT 10167 37 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* UGU IZI.GAR ŠUB-*ut-ma* *ku-pu-ut* É BI KAR-*ta*₅ DU-*ak*

- ▶ Sultantepe 39 appears to be the corresponding omen in the Sultantepe recension. Note the syllabic spelling of *arbūta* there.
- ▶ The verb *kupputu* is tentatively translated by CAD (K: 552–53 s.v. *kupputu* A) to mean ‘to compress’. In the context of the above omen, CAD translates the verb as ‘contracts’. AHW (I: 443 s.v. *kapātu(m)* 4d) translates the verb, in the context of lizards, as “*ist zusammengerollt*”, with the above omen as its only attestation. It has been translated above as ‘singed’ as the verb is obviously referring to what happens to a lizard when it is burning. The translation in *If a City 2* (2006, 181 omen 98’) ‘shrivels’ seems plausible as well. The edition KAL 1 (2007, 72 Vs. 37) translates ‘versengt’.
- ▶ See also the omen on line VAT 9906 ii 5 (in the Assur recension) as it has the same apodosis as above but a different protasis.

* * *

Assur 38

If a lizard falls into an oven but escapes — a loss of male and female slaves (will occur).

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* IM.ŠU.RIN.NA ŠUB-*ut-ma* È ZI.GA ÌR ù GÉME

šumma šurāru ana tinūri imqutma ūši šīt ardi u amti

VAT 10167 38 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* IM.ŠU.RIN.NA ŠUB-*ut-ma* È ZI.GA ÌR ù GÉME

- ▶ See also Sultantepe 40, which has been reconstructed using the above omen.
- ▶ The reading *šītu*, with the meaning ‘loss’ (CAD Š: 215 s.v. *šītu*), is one of the several attested for ZI.GA. For attestations from omen texts, including the above omen and others with slaves, see CAD (Š: 220 s.v. *šītu* 4b).

Another attested reading for the signs is *tību* ‘(up)rising’ or ‘revolt’ (CAD T: 386 s.v. *tību*), which is how KAL 1 (2007, 72 Vs. 38) translates the signs.

Wenn eine Eidechse in einen Ofen fällt, aber entkommt: **Aufstand** der Sklaven und Sklavinnen.

Most of the omen attestations for such a reading, however, relate to enemies attacking or rebellions against kings. The signs, though less commonly, can also be used for the verb *tebû* ‘to revolt’ (CAD T: 307 s.v. *tebû*). The contexts for omen attestations are similar to those under *tību*. See also the commentary at Nineveh 49’ for the reading of ZI as *tību*. Further, the use of È ‘to escape’ in the above protasis connects not only semantically with the reading *šītu*, but also the sign È can alternatively be read as *šītu* itself—though often translated with one of the word’s other meanings (CAD Š: 215 s.v. *šītu*). For these reasons we read the signs as above; though, we do not exclude the possibility of a revolt among the slaves.

- ▶ There may be a phonetic connection between the previous omen’s use of IZI.GAR in the protasis and the above omen’s use of ZI.GA in the apodosis.
- ▶ The above omen forms a thematic triad with the subsequent two omens. Whereas the lizard survives falling into the oven in Assur 38 and 40, the animal burns up in Assur 39. The triad’s last two omens are more closely related. See also the omens Sultantepe 40–42.

* * *

Assur 39

If a lizard falls into an oven and burns up — that house will be deprived of income.

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* IM.ŠU.RIN.NA ŠUB-*ut-ma* *ib-šal* É BI KU₄-*ba* ú-*za-am-ma*

šumma šurāru ana tinūri imqutma ibšal bītu šū erba uzammā

VAT 10167 39 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* IM.ŠU.RIN.NA ŠUB-*ut-ma* *ib-šal* É BI KU₄-*ba* ú-*za-am-ma*

- ▶ See Sultantepe 41, which has been reconstructed from the above omen.
- ▶ The above omen and the subsequent omen have opposing protases, but the apodoses remain negative in both instances. See also Assur 38; the three omens (Assur 38–40) form a thematic triad in which a lizard falls into an oven.

* * *

Assur 40

If a lizard falls into an oven but does not burn up — losses will occur for him.

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* IM.ŠU.RIN.NA ŠUB-*ut-ma* NU *ib-šal* ZI.GA È-*šu*

šumma šurāru ana tinūri imqutma lā ibšal šītu uššīšu

VAT 10167 40 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* IM.ŠU.RIN.NA ŠUB-*ut-ma* NU *ib-šal* ZI.GA È-*šu*

- ▶ See Sultantepe 42, whose missing parts have been reconstructed using the above omen.
- ▶ The protasis’s pronoun *-šu* could refer to a general ‘(that) man’, but as the omen is paired with the preceding Assur 39, it might also refer to be the house mentioned in that omen’s apodosis. See also the commentary there.

* * *

Assur 41

If a lizard falls into a bread box — bread will be scarce for him.

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* 𒀭PISAN NINDA ŠUB-*ut* NINDA *i-qir-šu*

šumma šurāru ana pisan akli imqut aklu iqqiršu

VAT 10167 41 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* 𒀭PISAN NINDA ŠUB-*ut* NINDA *i-qir-šu*

- ▶ As the Assur and Sultantepe recensions have closely mirrored each other for the past few omens, we would expect Sultantepe 43 to be similar or identical to Assur 41. Indeed the sign NINDA ‘bread’ appears in both, but there are problems in reconciling the signs as drawn on the Sultantepe hand copy (STT 323) with the above omen. See the discussion at Sultantepe 43.
- ▶ See also the discussion in section 4.2.3 on lizards falling into culinary vessels.
- ▶ Assur 42 adds to the above omen’s protasis while retaining the same apodosis.

* * *

Assur 42

If a lizard crawls into a bread box and lies down — ditto (= bread will be scarce for him.)

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* 𒀭PISAN NINDA KU₄-*ma ir-bi-iš* ŠU.BI.GIM.NAM (NINDA *i-qir-šu*)

šumma šurāru ana pisan akli irubma irbiš ŠU.BI.GIM.NAM (*aklu iqqiršu*)

VAT 10167 42 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* 𒀭PISAN NINDA KU₄-*ma ir-bi-iš* ŠU.BI.GIM.NAM

- ▶ Just as in the related previous omen Assur 41, one would expect the above omen to have a counterpart in the Sultantepe recension. The above omen should be considered together with Sultantepe 44 (see the commentary there). Again there are difficulties in reconciling the signs as drawn on the Sultantepe hand copy (STT 323) with the above omen.

* * *

Assur 43

If a lizard falls into a vinegar jug — a divine gift will be available to him.

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* DUG A.GEŠTIN.NA ŠUB-*ut* NÍG.BA DINGIR GÁL-*ši-šu*

šumma šurāru ana karpat ṭābāti imqut qīšti ili ibbaššīšu

VAT 10167 43 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* DUG A.GEŠTIN.NA ŠUB-*ut* NÍG.BA DINGIR GÁL-*ši-šu*

- ▶ Despite the above omen’s connection to and similarities with the unambiguously positive Sultantepe 45 (see below), *If a City 2* (2006, 181 omen 104’) interprets the above omen as negative and translates as follows:

If a lizard falls into a wine jug, there will be **divine wrath** for him.

The usual interpretation of NÍG.BA is *qīštu* ‘gift’, as above. In fact the above apodosis’s NÍG.BA DINGIR is translated positively in both KAL 1 (2007, 72 Vs. 43) and already by Nötscher (1929, 185 KAR 382 + 393 Rs. 43) as ‘divine gift’.

There is an ongoing discussion on the mistaken use in ancient times of NÍG.BA DINGIR in the stock phrase *kimilti ili paṭrassu* ‘divine wrath will be dispelled for him’ (George 1988, 154 note 2). The confusion occurred in antiquity when scribes incorrectly interpreted *qí-iš-ti* ‘gift’ as *ki-mil-ti* ‘wrath’, which the scribes then carried over to the logogram NÍG.BA. See CAD (K: 373 s.v. *kimiltu*), which states “note the writings NÍG.BA (i.e., erroneous interpretation of *ki-IŠ-ti*)”; and CAD (Q: 280 s.v. *qīštu*), which states “For *ki-mil-tu* misinterpreted as *qí-iš-tu* and wr. NÍG.BA, see *kimiltu* [...]”.

CAD (K: 373 s.v. *kimiltu*) interprets the above omen as being such an erroneous writing—that is, that the scribe wrote NÍG.BA, but intended *kimiltu* ‘wrath’. This is presumably where the translation in *If a City 2* originates. The inclusion of the above omen under *kimiltu* by CAD, however, seems tenuous. The other attestations of NÍG.BA with the meaning *kimiltu* ‘wrath’ all include the verb *paṭāru* ‘to dispell’—which fits with the stock phrase mentioned by George (1988, 154 note 2)—whereas the above apodosis’s verb is GÁL-šī-šu ‘will be available to him’. Note also that, at another point, CAD (B: 153 s.v. *bašû* 1n 3’b) translates the very same omen’s apodosis as “a present from the gods is in store for him”.

Sultantepe 45 likely has the same protasis and an only slightly different apodosis. It is unambiguously positive and reads as follows:

[If a lizard] falls [into a vineg]ar [jug] — divine goodness will be available.
[DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* DUG A.GEŠTIN.N]A ŠUB-*ut* DÜG.GA DINGIR GÁL-šī

Sultantepe 45 plays with the etymological connection between *ṭābātu* ‘vinegar’ and *ṭābatu* ‘goodness’. See CAD (T: 15 s.v. *ṭābtu* A) for a discussion on the positive associations of *ṭābtu* ‘salt’ and *ṭābatu* ‘vinegar’. The same positive associations are likely at work in Assur 43. We therefore follow KAL 1 and Nötscher in interpreting the above omen as positive and translating NÍG.BA DINGIR as ‘divine gift’.

Both omens are conspicuous for being the only positive omens in a series of negative omens about lizards falling into vessels involved with food preparation and storage. See the discussion in section 4.2.3. This fact is noted as well by Nötscher (1929, 189 Rs. Z. 43f) who called Assur 43’s positive apodosis ‘conspicuous’.¹⁴⁶

- ▶ Assur 43–45 form a sequence about lizards falling into vessels holding various liquids. This sequence is a smaller sequence within a larger sequence about lizards falling into vessels involved with food preparation and storage.
- ▶ Another similar protasis, with a different, but still positive apodosis, can be found on the Assur manuscript VAT 9906 *ii* 8.

* * *

Assur 44

If a lizard falls into a water jug or a beer jug — that man will be vexed.

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* DUG A *lu ana* DUG KAŠ ŠUB-*ut* NA BI *ina-ziq*

šumma šurāru ana karpāt mē lū ana karpāt šikari imqut amēlu šū inazziq

VAT 10167 44 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* DUG A *lu ana* DUG KAŠ ŠUB-*ut* NA BI *ina-ziq* (ruling)

¹⁴⁶ German: „auffallend“. Note that Nötscher’s (1929, 189 Rs. Z. 43f) suggested alternative reading *šá-na-an ibašši-šu* ‘he will have a rival’ for the above omen’s apodosis can be dismissed as the manuscript’s photograph confirms the apodosis’s second sign is BA, with three horizontal wedges, and not NA.

- ▶ The above omen combines the protases of Sultantepe 46 and 47, which both have the same apodosis ‘that man will be vexed’. Note, Sultantepe 46 writes the verb *ina-an-ziq*.
- ▶ See the commentary at Nineveh 49’ for a list of omens involving lizards in water or beer (vessels). See the commentary at Assur 3 for a discussion of the apodosis’s verb *nazāqu* and its associated emotions.

* * *

Assur 45

If a lizard falls into a beerwort container — that house will lack a watering place.

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* DUG *nār-ṭa-bi* ŠUB-*ut* É BI *maš-qa-a ú-za-am-ma*

šumma šurāru ana karpat narṭabi imqut bītu šū mašqâ uzammâ

VAT 10167 45 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* DUG *nār-ṭa-bi* ŠUB-*ut* É BI *maš-qa-a ú-za-am*_(MAR)-*ma*

- ▶ See also Sultantepe 48 as the only difference between it and the above omen is that the Sultantepe omen’s apodosis writes NA BI ‘that man’ instead of É BI ‘that house’, as above.

* * *

Assur 46

If a lizard falls into a bowl — there will be a cry (of distress) in the man’s house.

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* ^{dug}ÚTUL ŠUB-*ut* GÛ *ina* É NA GÁL-*ši*

šumma šurāru ana diqāri imqut rigmu ina bīt amēli ibbašši

VAT 10167 46 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* ^{dug}ÚTUL¹ ŠUB-*ut* GÛ *ina* É NA GÁL-*ši*

- ▶ See also Sultantepe 49; it only differs slightly from the above omen. The Sultantepe apodosis reads *ina* É NA BI ‘in that man’s house’. Also the verb was omitted from the apodosis—whether this is an ancient scribal mistake or an omission on the modern copyist’s part is unknown.
- ▶ The sign KA, read here as GÛ, is ambiguous. We follow KAL 1 (2007, 68 omen Vs. 46 A46) which reads the sign as GÛ and translates (2007, 72 Rs. 46) as follows:

Wenn eine Eidechse in einen Topf fällt: (Trauer)geschrei wird im Haus des Mannes vorhanden sein.

If a City 2 (2006, 200 omen 107’ C r.46’), however, reads the sign as INIM ‘word; affair’ and translates (2006, 181 omen 107’) as follows:

If a lizard falls into a bowl, there will be a (business or legal) affair in the man’s house.

There is an attestation of INIM with the verb *ibbašši* in an Old Babylonian physiognomic omen (YOS 10 54 r 16), which CAD (A.2: 42 s.v. *amātu* 6a 10’) translates as ‘there will be an affair’ but also lists as “obscure”. Other omens in which a lizard falls into a pots are negative, see for example Assur 80’. We therefore read GÛ as *rigmu* ‘voice, sound; noise; lamentation’, among other acoustic meanings.

The term *rigmu* is vague and ambiguous in Akkadian—its connotations range from a generic term for noise, to voices (human, animal and divine) as well as to the thunder of a storm god (Rendu Loisel 2016a, 189). It can also be the aggressive clamor of enemy armies (see CAD R: 331 s.v. *rigmu* 2, with examples from omens), but it can also refer to wailing or lamentation (see CAD R: 333 s.v. *rigmu* 5, also with example from omens). While allowing for the possibility of a legal affair occurring in the house, we suggest interpreting the apodosis as likely indicating that distress or lamentation will fall upon the household.

* * *

Assur 47

If a lizard falls into a full storage-bin — that house will need grain.

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* Ì.DUB SA₅ ŠUB-*ut* É BI *še-am i-ḫa-šaḫ*

šumma šurāru ana našpaki malī imqut bītu šū še'am iḫaššaḫ

VAT 10167 47 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* Ì.DUB SA₅ ŠUB-*ut* É BI *še-am i-ḫa-šaḫ*

- ▶ Sultantepe 50 has the same protasis as Assur 47, its apodosis differs, however.

[If a liz]ard falls into a full storage-bin — full storage bins will become empty.
[DIŠ EM]E.ŠID *ana* Ì.DUB SA₅ ŠUB-*ut* Ì.DUB.MEŠ SA₅.MEŠ SÙ.MEŠ

The hand copy of the Sultantepe manuscript (STT 323) shows traces of extraneous signs in the apodosis. See the commentary at Sultantepe 50 for a discussion on how these signs may correspond to the above omen's apodosis. In any case, the two apodoses are linked in meaning.

- ▶ See also Assur 48 as the two omens are thematically linked, with opposing protases and apodoses.

* * *

Assur 48

If a lizard falls into an empty storage-bin — that house will have (plenty of) bread.

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* Ì.DUB SÙ ŠUB-*ut* É BI NINDA *i-šeb-bi*

šumma šurāru ana našpaki rīqi imqut bītu šū akla išebbi

VAT 10167 48 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* Ì.DUB SÙ ŠUB-*ut* É BI NINDA *i-šeb-bi*

- ▶ Assur 47 and 48 have opposing protases and apodoses. See also Sultantepe 51 which appears to be the same omen.

* * *

Assur 49

If a lizard crawls into a leather bag and (then) lies down — that man will be vexed.

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* ^{kuš}LU.ÚB KU₄-*ma ir-bi-iš* LÚ BI *ina-ziq*

šumma šurāru ana luppi īrubma irbiš amēlu šū inazziq

VAT 10167 49 DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* ^{kuš}LU_(KU).ÚB KU₄-*ma ir-bi-iš* LÚ BI *ina-ziq*

- ▶ The above omen and Sultantepe 52 appear to be the same, with only slight orthographic differences.
- ▶ *If a City 2's* (2006, 180 omen 110') reconstructed transliteration overlooks the ancient scribe writing KU instead of LU.

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* KUŠ.LU.UB₂ TU-*ma ir-bi-iš* LU₂ BI *ina-ziq*

Further, despite reading the protasis's first verb as TU, *If a City 2* (2006, 181 omen 110') translates as follows:

If a lizard **falls** into a leather bag and lies down, that man will have trouble.

- ▶ See the commentary at Assur 3 for a discussion of the apodosis's verb *nazāqu* and its associated emotions.

* * *

Assur 50

If a lizard repeatedly walks about on a man — his days will be long; a good message will be established for him.

DIŠ EME.DIR *ina* UGU NA DU.DU-*ak* U₄.MEŠ-šú GÍD.DA.MEŠ INIM SIG₅-*tì* GAR-š_u

šumma šurāru ina muḥḥi amēli ittallak ūmūšu irrikū amāt damiqti iššakkanšu

VAT 10167 50 DIŠ EME.DIR *ina* UGU NA DU.DU-*ak* U₄.MEŠ-šú GÍD.DA.MEŠ INIM SIG₅-*tì* GAR-š_u

- ▶ From this point on, the sequence of omens in the Sultantepe recension no longer closely follow the sequence in the Assur recension. See Sultantepe 56, not Sultantepe 53, for a similar omen. Note, however, the second part of the above apodosis, 'a good message will be established from him', is not present in the Sultantepe omen. See also the omen on VAT 9906 v 12', which is very similar to the above omen.
- ▶ The above omen is translated in *If a City 2* (2006, 181 omen 111') as follows:

If a lizard repeatedly walks about on a man, his days will be long; a good **thing** will occur for him.

The difference in translation emanates from INIM, which at its core means 'word'. Among its extrapolated meanings are 'news', 'message', 'command', 'matter', 'affair', or 'thing'.

* * *

Assur 51

If a lizard in a man's house keeps making noise the entire day — there will be misfortune.

DIŠ EME.DIR ina É NA ina DÙ u₄-me GÙ-šú ŠUB.ŠUB-di ŠUB-tu₄ GÁL-ši

šumma šurāru ina bīt amēli ina kala ūme rigimšu ittaddi miqittu ibbašši

VAT 10167 51 DIŠ EME.DIR ina É NA ina DÙ u₄-me GÙ-šú ŠUB. ŠUB-di ŠUB-tu₄ GÁL-ši

- ▶ For the idiomatic phrase GÙ ... ŠUB.ŠUB-di meaning 'to utter a sound', see CAD (N.1: 94 s.v. *nadû 6-rigmu*). See also the commentary on animal noises at Nineveh 47'.
- ▶ In *Ifa City 2* (2006, 200 omen 112' C r.51'), the eighth sign is incorrectly read as PAP, instead of DÙ 'all, totality'. This carries over to *Ifa City 2's* (2006, 180 omen 112') reconstruction of the above omen. The sign PAP corresponds to *napharu* 'the entirety of (something)'. As this is comparable to DÙ's meaning, the translation of the protasis in *Ifa City 2* (2006, 181 omen 112') remains similar.

If a lizard in a man's house keeps making a noise all day, there will be **decease**.

KAL 1 (2007, 72 Vs. 51) translates the omen as follows:

Wenn eine Eidechse im Haus eines Mannes den ganzen Tag Lärm macht: ein **Sturz** wird eintreten.

The different translations in the apodoses are due to the multiple meanings of the word *miqittu* (See CAD M.2: 100 s.v. *miqittu*). All of the translations are valid, and all result in a negative prognosis.

- ▶ The above omen is paired with the subsequent omen Assur 52, which involves a noisy lizard in the night. The Nineveh recension also has a pair of omens about a lizard making noise, though the verb is GÙ.DÉ.DÉ 'to call out', first all day long (Nineveh 47') and then the entire night (Nineveh 48'). The apodoses of the Nineveh omens are both negative, but otherwise show no similarities to Assur 51 and 52.
- ▶ See the omen on VAT 9906 v 15' (Assur recension); it preserves the same omen, but with slight orthographic differences.

* * *

Assur 52

If a lizard in a man's house keeps making noise at night — a loss of male and female slaves (will occur).

DIŠ EME.DIR ina É NA ina GE₆ GÙ-šú ŠUB.ŠUB-di ZI.GA ÌR ù GÉME

šumma šurāru ina bīt amēli ina mūši rigimšu ittaddi šīt ardi u amti

VAT 10167 52 DIŠ EME.DIR ina É NA ina GE₆ GÙ-šú ŠUB.ŠUB-di ZI.GA ÌR ù GÉME

- ▶ For the interpretation of ZI.GA as *šitu* loss, see the discussion at Assur 38, which has the same apodosis as Assur 52. The commentary there also addresses KAL 1's (2007, 72 Vs. 52) translation of the signs as 'uprising' (*Aufstand*); see below for KAL 1's translation of the above omen. While we do not exclude the possibility of a revolt among the slaves (see the commentary at Nineveh 49' for

an example of ZI translated as *tību* ‘revolt, attack’), we translate as above for the same reasons we also translate Assur 38 as ‘a loss of male and female slaves’.

- ▶ While the above omen is thematically paired with the previous omen, Assur 51, the above protasis is missing the sign DÛ ‘all, totality’ making KAL 1’s (2007, 72 Vs. 52) translation of “die ganze Nacht” not quite exact, though the meaning is implied.

Wenn eine Eidechse im Haus eines Mannes die **ganze** Nacht Lärm macht: **Aufstand** der Sklaven und Sklavinnen.

- ▶ See also Assur 68, which though fragmentary might have the same or at least similar protasis. The apodoses differ.

* * *

Assur 53

If lizards are very numerous in a man’s house — abandonment of the man’s house.

DIŠ EME.DIR *ina* É NA *ma-gal* 𒄩.A ŠUB-*di* É NA

šumma šurārû ina bīt amēli magal mādu nadê bīt amēli

VAT 10167 53 DIŠ EME.DIR *ina* É NA *ma-gal* 𒄩.A ŠUB-*di* É NA_(TE)

- ▶ See also the omen preserved on VAT 9906 v 17’ (Assur recensions); it likely preserves the same omen as above.

* * *

Assur 54

If a dead lizard is seen in a man’s house — that house will diminish.

DIŠ EME.DIR *mi-it-tu*₄ *ina* É NA IGI É BI LAL

šumma šurīrittu mittu ina bīt amēli innamir bītu šū imaṭṭi

VAT 10167 54 DIŠ EME.DIR *mi-it-tu*₄ *ina* É NA IGI É BI LAL (ruling)

- ▶ Note the feminine adjective *mittu* ‘dead’ used to describe the lizard. For more on the flexible gender of lizards in Akkadian, see section 3.3.1.
- ▶ See also the omen preserved on VAT 9906 v 16’ (Assur recension); it preserves the same omen, but writes MIN instead of EME.DIR.

* * *

Assur 55

If there is a *severed* lizard in a man's house — dilapidation of the house; grain will become scarce for that house.

DIŠ EME.DIR *na-kil-tu ina É NA it-tab-ši e-neš É É BI ŠE i-qir-šu*

šumma šurīrittu nakiltu ina bīt amēli ittabši enēš bīti bītu šū še'u iqqiršu

VAT 10167 55

DIŠ EME.DIR *na-kil-tu ina É NA it-tab-ši e-neš É É BI ŠE i-qir-šu*

- ▶ See Sultantepe 59; the two omens have the same protasis, but the Sultantepe omen's apodosis only reads 'dilapidation of the house'. The Sultantepe omen also includes a gloss.

protasis

- ▶ The signs we read above as *na-kil-tu* and translate as 'severed' warrant discussion:

If a City 2 (2006, 180, 181 both omen 116') interprets the same signs as *na-gil-tu* and translates the omen as follows:

If **there is a glowing(?)** lizard in a man's house—weakening of **that** house; grain will be scarce for **it**.

For the differences in the apodosis, see the commentary further below.

If a City 2's (2006, 181 note 116')¹⁴⁷ translation follows CAD (N.1: 121 s.v. **naglu* (fem. *nagiltu*)), for which the above omen's protasis is the only attestation: "if a phosphorescent(?) lizard appears in a man's house".

Both translations interpret *na-gil-tu* as a feminine adjective derived from the verb *nagālu*, a word of uncertain meaning (CAD N.1: 107 s.v. *nagālu*). AHW (II: 709 s.v. *nagālu*) understands the verb's G-stem form to mean 'something like 'to gleam, to glow''.¹⁴⁸ AHW II bases its translation on Meissner's (1931, BAW 2: 47–48 s.v. 43–*nagālu*) suggestion that *nagālu* must mean 'shining, to be bright, glowing'.¹⁴⁹

Although forms of *nagālu* frequently appear (though certainly not exclusively) as an adjective for stars, Meissner's suggestion is problematic. His argument centers on a gloss appearing in an astrological report (Thompson 1900, 2:lxixiii&77 RMA No. 223a lines r 5–6).¹⁵⁰ Meissner interprets the gloss *nin-bu-ṭa* (from *nabāṭu* 'to shine brightly'), following the signs *nen-gu-la*, as *nengula's* synonym. As CAD (N.1: 107 s.v. *nagālu*) notes, however, the gloss is a variant to, not a lexical explanation of *nengula*.

Nevertheless, in literary contexts, scholars extend Meissner's suggestion 'to glow' to translate the N-stem adjective *nengul* as variations of 'impassioned' when the adjective appears with emotional body parts such *libbu* 'heart' or *kabattu* 'an inner body part, mind'. For example, in the *Fable of the Fox*, the emotional fox's heart is described using the adjective *na-an-gul*. Kienast (2003, 46–47 II column iv ms. F line 18) translates, „Hitzig erregt war sein Herz, er war voller Tränen“.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷ The note in *If a City 2* does not actually send the reader directly to CAD (N.1: 121), but to a further mention of the above omen in CAD (N.1: 328 s.v. *napultu*), which in turn then sends the reader to page 121.

¹⁴⁸ Original German: "etwa „gleißen, glühen“"

¹⁴⁹ German: *glänzend, hell sein, glühen* Until Meissner's suggestion, the verb had been translated as 'downcast' because of assumed Arabic cognates (Meissner 1931, 47 s.v. 43–*nagālu*).

¹⁵⁰ Museum number: 80-7-19, 55. A photograph is available on the British Museum website:

https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1880-0719-55

¹⁵¹ Cf. Lambert (1996, 205 Text G KAR 48 line 17) where the same line is translated as "[The] Fox [answered, his heart] grew incensed".

Even assuming an assimilation between the second *n* and the second root *g*, to form *neggulu* or *naggulu*, the signs in our protasis do not fit with an N-stem verbal adjective as in the literary examples. Therefore a meaning such as ‘glowing’, in the sense of ‘impassioned’, can be rejected for Assur 55.

In other divinatory texts, animals and even human infants are occasionally described using the G-stem stative *nagil*¹⁵² (sg.). See CAD (N.1: 107 s.v. *nagālu* a) for attestations. Scholars often translate this as ‘spotted’ or ‘spots’. For example see Cohen (2020, 154 §17), who translates an omen from the *šumma immeru* ‘If a sheep’ series as “If the sheep has the horns of a goat and it is spotted white, its liver will be full of ‘Arrow-head’(-marks).”¹⁵³ Cohen (2020, 176 note §17) remarks on CAD’s leaving the verb *nagālu* untranslated, but also references an omen in the series *šumma ibzu* ‘If a (birth) anomaly’, where the signs *na-gil* appear in combination with BABBAR ‘white’ (De Zorzi 2014, 2-Text Edition:443 Tablet IV omen 14).¹⁵⁴

While the above protasis’s syntax permits a translation such as ‘If a spotted lizard’, the lack of a color appears odd. More importantly, the attested feminine stative of the word is *naglat*, which does not fit with our signs.

Finally, KAL 1 (2007, 69 omen 55 A55) reads the signs as *na-kil-tu* and translates (2007, 72 omen 55) as follows:

Wenn eine **besondere** Eidechse im Haus eines Mannes erscheint: Verfall des Hauses, dieses Haus wird Getreide benötigen.

KAL 1 does not expound¹⁵⁵ on the translation, but it appears to be from *nakiltu*, the feminine of *naklu* ‘ingenious, clever, artistic’. While the adjective is attested to describe humans (CAD N.1: 188 s.v. *naklu*), *šumma ālu*’s context makes it an unlikely descriptor for a lizard. Nevertheless, Ebeling (1923, 77 note 2) appears to use this meaning when he discusses what animal EME.DIR could be.¹⁵⁶ He refers to the phrase EME.DIR *nakiltu* as evidence that the animal could be trained,¹⁵⁷ expanding the definition from ‘clever’ to ‘trainable’.

While we follow KAL 1 to read *na-kil-tu*, we do not interpret *nakiltu* as ‘ingenious’ or ‘special’. Assur 55 is placed between two omens with dead lizards in the protasis. Beyond the problems already mentioned above, an omen about a glowing or ingenious lizard is simply out of place in such a sequence. We would expect *nakiltu* to refer to a characteristic of a lifeless lizard.

We therefore suggest interpreting *nakiltu* as the feminine adjective of the verb *nakāsu* ‘to cut, to sever’, while perhaps leaving open the possibility of ‘spotted’ mentioned above. While CAD (N.1: 196 s.v. *naksu*) refers the reader to *naglu* ‘phosphorescent’ (discussed above), AHW (II: 723 s.v. *naksu(m)*), however, supports the translation and includes the above omen as an attestation for

A further example is *In the Prayer to Marduk*, No. 1, the mind *kabattu* is similarly described. While Oshima’s (2011, 151, 164 line 130) edition translates the relevant passage as ‘His mind is ablaze’ without commentary, Lambert’s (1959–1960, 58 line 130 note 130) earlier edition references Meissner.

¹⁵² See also Thavapalan (2019, 79–80 note 279) for possible cognates in other Semitic languages with the meaning ‘speckled, variegated’ or ‘tainted, defective’.

¹⁵³ Akkadian: *šumma immeru qarnī enzi šakinma u pūša nagil amussu kaksê malât* (Y. Cohen 2020, 154 §17)

¹⁵⁴ From De Zorzi (2014, 2-Text Edition:443 Tablet IV omen 14): [BE MUNUS] Û.TU-*ma* MIN-*ma* BABBAR *na-gil* KUR KI.KAL IGI-mar ĤUL É NA DAB-*bat*.

See also omen 15 on the same page for red spots.

Leichty (1970, 67 omen 14) in his earlier edition of *šumma izbu* ‘If a malformed birth’, reads the signs BABBAR *na-kir* and translates them as ‘white (spots)’. The signs *na-kir*, normalized as *nakir*, would be a stative of *nakāru* ‘to become hostile’ (among other meanings) and is completely unrelated to spots.

¹⁵⁵ KAL 1 (2007, 74 Bemerkung 55) only mentions the differing reading and translation in CAD (N.1: 121 s.v. **naglu*).

¹⁵⁶ Ebeling (1923, 77 note 2) argues for an interpretation of EME.DIR as a common wall gecko (German: *Mauergecko*) or a chameleon.

¹⁵⁷ German: „*daß es dressiert werden kann : man redet von einer Eme-Dir nakiltu.*“

Ebeling (1923, 77 note 2) explains geckos and similar animals were kept as pets to catch flies. The negative connotations of lizards within *šumma ālu* would seem to belie this idea. Note however that lizards could also have negative connotations in ancient Rome and yet were sometimes used as children’s playthings (Toynbee 1973, 220).

‘cut through’.¹⁵⁸ This interpretation assumes a consonant shift from s-t to l-t (see GAG §30g for the grammar).

apodosis

- ▶ The verb *enēšu* in combination with houses refers to dilapidation (CAD E: 167 s.v. *enēšu* 1c). Nineveh 46’s apodosis also has ‘dilapidation of the house’. The Nineveh omen features another difficult adjective, *napultu*, in the protasis.
- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 200 omen 116’) omits one of the signs read as É ‘house’ above. The omission occasions the grammatical differences in the apodosis’s translation (2006, 181 omen 116’) between our and that edition. Nevertheless, the overall meaning remains similar.

* * *

Assur 56

If a lizard dies either in water or in beer and is (thereby) seen — an uprising (against) that house will arise.

DIŠ EME.DIR *lu ina A lu ina* KAŠ ÚŠ-*ma* IGI.DU₈ É BI ZI.BI ZI-*šu*

šumma šurāru lū ina mē lū ina šikari imūtma innamir bītu šū tībšu itebbīšu

VAT 10167 56 DIŠ EME.DIR *lu ina A lu ina* KAŠ ÚŠ-*ma* IGI.DU₈ É BI ZI.BI ZI-*šu*

- ▶ Both KAL 1 and *If a City 2* translate the above apodosis by interpreting ZI to mean ‘loss’.

KAL 1 (2007, 72 Vs. 56)

Wenn eine Eidechse im Wasser oder im Bier stirbt und dabei gesehen wird: Dieses Haus wird **Verlust zu verzeichnen haben.**

If a City 2 (2006, 183 omen 117’)

If a lizard dies in water or beer and is seen, that house will **incur losses.**

While *šītu* ‘loss’ is a valid reading for ZI, we follow CAD (T: 315 s.v. *tebû* 5a) and translate as above. For the various interpretations of the polyvalent ZI, see in particular the commentary at Nineveh 49’, which is a similar omen in meaning and structure. The commentary at Assur 38 addresses the translation ‘loss’.

The scribes were certainly aware of the multiple readings for ZI. The placement of the subsequent Assur 57 might have been influenced by ZI’s alternate reading as *šītu* as Assur 57’s protasis features a similarly-sounding *sutu*-measurement vessel

The problem with reading *šītu* lies in the verb ZI-*šu*. It must be the verb *tebû* ‘to rise up, to revolt, to attack’. If we were to read ZI.BI as *šītu*, the expected verb would be GÁL or È, the second of which in combination with *šītu* can mean ‘loss(es) will occur’. Reading ZI.BI as *tībšu* also retains the figura etymologica created between ZI.BI ZI-*šu*. Therefore, just as in Nineveh 49’, we read *tībšu itebbīšu*.

- ▶ Both KAL 1 (2007, Vs. 56) and *If a City 2* (2006, 182 omen 117’) read the apodosis as E₂ ZI.GA ZI-*šu*. The signs GA and BI are very similar. Examining a photograph of VAT 10176 56, it appears the sign is BI, as in Nineveh 49’. Compare, for example, the sign with the BI in line VAT 10167 49 (Assur 49). The change in the sign’s reading affects the transcription slightly, but not the translation.

¹⁵⁸ German: “durchgeschnitten”

- ▶ The apodosis of the similar Nineveh 49' includes *ana* before É BI 'against that house', which is not present above. This may be a scribal ellipsis or, as we interpret it, an example of topicalization, literally, 'that house: an uprising will arise'.
- ▶ The thematic of lizards falling into water or beer (vessels) is common among the lizard omens. The commentary at Nineveh 49' includes a list.

* * *

Assur 57

If a lizard gives birth under the *sūtu*-measurement vessel of a man's house — abandonment of the house.

DIŠ EME.DIR KI.TA-*nu sa-at* É NA Û.TU ŠUB É

šumma šurāru šaplānu sāt bīt amēli ūlid nadê bīti

VAT 10167 57 'DIŠ' EME.DIR KI.TA-*nu sa-at* É NA Û.TU ŠUB É

- ▶ The above omen triggers a sequence of omens (Assur 57–62) about lizards giving birth in various areas in and around a man's house. See the discussion on the translation of lizard reproduction at Nineveh 53'.
- ▶ See also Sultantepe 74. Although the two omens are similar, the Sultantepe lizard gives birth under the KUN₄ 'threshold' of a man's house, instead of the *sūtu*-measurement vessel.

* * *

Assur 58

[If] a lizard gives birth under the millstone — the master of that house will be saved by the king's will.

[DIŠ] EME.DIR KI.TA-*nu* ^{na₄}UR₅ Û.TU EN É BI *ina* ŠÀ LUGAL KAR

[*šumma*] *šurāru šaplānu erī ūlid bēl bīti šuāti ina libbi šarri inneṭṭir*

VAT 10167 58 [DIŠ] EME.DIR KI.TA-*nu* ^{na₄}UR₅ Û.TU EN É BI *ina* ŠÀ LUGAL KAR

- ▶ Sultantepe 75 preserves a similar omen; the master of the house is saved by the ŠU 'hand' of the king and not his ŠÀ 'heart', *here*: 'will'.
- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 200 omen 119' C r.58') reads the sign ŠÀ as É 'house'. This reading carries through the reconstructed omen (2006, 182 omen 119') and the translation (2006, 183 omen 119'):

If a lizard gives birth under the *ḥaruru* (of the millstone), the master of that house will be saved **from the king's palace**.

We follow KAL 1 (2007, 69 Vs. 58 A58) and read the sign as ŠÀ. Further, we also follow KAL 1's (2007, 72 Vs. 58) interpretation of *ina* ŠÀ LUGAL KAR as being saved *by* the king's will.

Wenn eine Eidechse unterhalb eines Mühlsteins ein Gelege ablegt: Der Herr dieses Hauses wird durch den Willen des König gerettet werden.

- ▶ The sign ŠĀ is written with four vertical wedges, instead of three. For another example, see the discussion at Assur 32.
- ▶ See Nineveh 56' for a discussion of the problems with *If a City 2's* (2006, 171 note 56'; 2006, 182 note 119') use of the above omen to reconstruct the missing parts of the Nineveh omen.

* * *

Assur 59

If a lizard gives birth in a woman's kettle — that woman will have twins; she will go about unhappily.

DIŠ EME.DIR *ina* ŠEN MUNUS Û.TU MUNUS BI MAŠ.TAB.BA TUK-ši *ina* ŠĀ.ĤUL DU.DU-*ak*

šumma šurāru ina ruqqi sinništi ūlid sinništu ši māši irašši ina lumun libbi ittanallak

VAT 10167 59	DIŠ EME.DIR <i>ina</i> ŠEN MUNUS Û.TU MUNUS BI MAŠ.TAB.BA TUK-ši <i>ina</i> ŠĀ.ĤUL DU.DU- <i>ak</i>
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- ▶ While children in general have positive associations, twins are more nuanced in terms of a favorable or unfavorable prognosis. Without the mention of gender, as above, the prognosis could be positive, but should the prognosis be for male twins, it is generally unfavorable.¹⁵⁹ The rivalry of two brothers foreshadows negative consequences and in some divinatory series even the downfall of communities (Stol 2000, 208–9; Riemschneider 1970, 20).¹⁶⁰ Therefore the second portion of the apodosis can be seen as clarifying that the first portion is also to be seen as negative. See, however, Sultantepe 76. The similar omen specifies the woman's kettle to be copper, and its apodosis omits the second half about the woman going about unhappily. Thus Sultantepe 76 leaves the possibility open for a positive prognosis.
- ▶ The sign ŠEN 'kettle' in the apodosis denotes a "class of metal containers or receptacles, usually made of copper" (Steinkeller 1981, 243). Indeed Sultantepe 76 specifies a copper kettle, ^{urudu}ŠEN. The archaic version of the sign ŠEN is a container with the sign A 'water' inside¹⁶¹ (Guichard and Marti 2013, 62 note 60). As water is a necessary component of agricultural fecundity and often means semen, the connection between the ŠEN-vessel and a woman's pregnancy is obvious.

There is a further association between 'kettle' and pregnancy. Though written here with the sign ŠEN, the Akkadian equivalence *ruqqu*¹⁶² can also be written with the signs SAL.LA. Written as SAL.LA, *ruqqu* is takes on the less common association of anatomical terminology, especially in omen texts involving *exta* (for examples, see CAD R: 418–19 s.v. *ruqqu* 3). The signs SAL.LA can in turn also be read as *biššūru* or *ūru* 'female genitalia' (CAD B: 268–69 s.v. *biššūru*; U: 265–66 s.v. *ūru* B). The verbal roots *r-q-q* indicate qualities such as thinness or flatness (CAD R: 167 s.v. *raqāqu*). This may indicate a *ruqqu* is a vessel made of metal that has been hammered flat to its limits (Guichard and Marti 2013, 62). Perhaps this is reminiscent of a pregnant woman's stretched

¹⁵⁹ There is a Hittite omen (KUB 43.4 i 1–6) in which a woman who gives birth to twin boys is predicted to be afflicted with an evil illness. The boys however will thrive (Riemschneider 1970, 18–19 Bo 5333). The Hittite omen's grammar is discussed in Zorman (2017, 255–59).

¹⁶⁰ The omen series *šumma izbu* 'If a malformed birth' includes omens about twin births with negative prognoses for the entire country. See for example, De Zorzi (2014, 2-Text Edition:360 Tablet 1 omen 83). As Stol (2000, 208) notes, the context of conflict and communities calls to mind the conflict between the biblical twins Jacob and Esau or, from Roman mythology, Romulus and Remus.

¹⁶¹ For sketches, see Krebernik (1998, 279 LAK713) and Steinkeller (1981, 248). See also Steinkeller's (1984) addendum for a continued discussion on ŠEN as it is used in various terminology.

¹⁶² The similar-sounding plant *namruqqu* is used to both ease births and as an abortifacient (Biggs 2000, 11; for orthography, see CAD N.1: 244 s.v. *namruqqu*).

abdomen, especially a woman carrying twins. *Ruqqu*'s association with thinness and thin passages further supports its use in anatomical terminology, including parts of female reproductive anatomy—either the hymen or the vagina—along with other anatomical parts (Adamson 1990, 30–31). A further connection between women and ŠEN-vessels is the vessel's use in purification;¹⁶³ one of its many uses is for menstruating women to cleanse themselves (Guichard and Marti 2013, 74).

- ▶ See section 4.2.5 for a discussion about some of the rhetorical devices in omens with twins.

* * *

Assur 60

If a lizard gives birth in the path of a man's house — abandonment of the house.

DIŠ EME.DIR *ina tal-lak-ti É NA Û.TU ŠUB-di É*

šumma šurāru ina tallakti bīt amēli ūlid nadê bīti

VAT 10167 60 DIŠ EME.DIR *ina tal-lak-ti É NA Û.TU ŠUB-di É*

- ▶ See also Nineveh 53' and Sultantepe 70 as they preserve the same omen. Note the differences in the use of the phonetic complement on ŠUB. The commentary at Nineveh 53' also includes a discussion on Û.TU in lizard omens.
- ▶ The above omen is translated in KAL 1 (2007, 72 Vs. 60) as follows:

Wenn eine Eidechse im **Korridor** des Hauses eines Mannes ein Gelege ablegt: Aufgeben des Hauses.

* * *

Assur 61

[If a l]izard gives birth in the furnishings of a man's house — dispersal of the house.

[DIŠ E]ME.DIR *ina mut-tab-bil-ti É NA Û.TU BIR-aḥ É*

[šumma šu]rāru ina muttabbiliti bīt amēli ūlid sapāḥ bīti

VAT 10167 61 [DIŠ E]ME.DIR *ina mut-tab-bil-ti É NA Û.TU BIR-aḥ 'É'*

- ▶ See also Nineveh 54' and Sultantepe 72. The omens seem to be the same.
- ▶ KAL 1 (2007, 72 Vs. 61) translates *muttabiltu* as 'Gefäß', which is also a possible translation.

* * *

¹⁶³ That a ŠEN vessel should be connected with purification is not surprising given that another reading of the sign ŠEN is *ellu* 'pure', and the sign often appears in literature as a synonym to, or perhaps as a nuanced degree of, words meaning 'pure', such as KUG or SIKIL. For a discussion of ŠEN in the context of purity and purification rituals, see (Guichard and Marti 2013, 61–63, 73–77).

Assur 62

[If a liz]ard gives birth in the *ḫarūru* (part of the millstone) of a man's house — dispersal of the house.

[DIŠ EM]E.DIR *ina ḫa-ru-ur É NA Û.TU BIR-aḫ É*

[šumma šur]āru *ina ḫarūr bīt amēli ūlid sapāḫ bīti*

VAT 10167 62 [DIŠ EM]E.DIR *ina ḫa-ru-ur É NA Û.TU BIR-aḫ É*

- ▶ See the similar Nineveh 55' and Sultantepe 71. There are slight orthographic differences in the Nineveh omen, but otherwise the omens are the same. See also the commentary at Nineveh 55'.
- ▶ Assur 131' is another omen concerning the *ḫarūru* of a man's house and resulting in the dispersal of the house.

* * *

Assur 63

[If] [liza]rds often fall in a man's house — abandonment of the [house].

[DIŠ EME.D]IR *ina É NA ma-gal ŠUB.MEŠ-ni ŠUB-di [É]*

[šumma šur]ārû *ina bīt amēli magal imtaqqutûni nadê [bīti]*

VAT 1017 63 [DIŠ EME.D]IR *ina É NA ma-gal ŠUB.MEŠ-ni ŠUB-di [É]*

- ▶ See also Sultantepe 73, which differs only in the lack of a phonetic complement on the apodosis's verb.
- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 183 omen 124') interprets *magal* as an adjective for *šurārû*.

[If] **many** [liz]ards fall in a man's house—abandonment [of the house].

The word *magal*, however, is an adverb meaning 'very (much), in large amounts, abundantly' (CAD M.1: 29 s.v. *magal*). This also accounts for the plural marker on the verb. For the plural use of EME.DIR, without the marker MEŠ, see the commentary at Assur 53.

* * *

Assur 64

[If] a *crushed* [liz]ard is seen on the threshold of a man's house — that house ... [...]

[DIŠ EME.DI]R *nu-pùl-tu ina KUN₄ É NA IGI.DU₈ É BI x [...]*

[šumma šurī]rittu *nuppultu ina askuppat bīt amēli innamir bītu šū ... [...]*

VAT 10167 64 [DIŠ EME.DI]R *nu-pùl-tu ina KUN₄ É NA IGI.DU₈ É BI 'x' [...]* (ruling)

- ▶ For the word *nuppultu*, see the discussion at Nineveh 46', which writes *na-pu-ul-t[u₄ ...]*, instead of *nu-pùl-tu*. The words are nevertheless likely related.

The word *nuppultu* is also found in Sultantepe 69. Whereas the Assur lizard above ‘is seen’ IGI.DU₈, the lizard in the Sultantepe omen ‘exists’ GÁL-ši.

- ▶ Although *If a City 2* reads (2006, 200 omen 125’ C r.64’) and reconstructs (2006, 182 omen 125’) the omen as above, it omits É NA ‘of a man’s house’ from the translation (2006, 183 omen 125’). It also translates *nuppultu* as “damages(?)”. See the commentary at Nineveh 46’.

* * *

Assur 65

[If] there is [a ... lizard] in a man’s house — the master of that house [...]

[DIŠ EME.DIR] x ina É NA GÁL-ši EN É BI [...]

[šumma šurāru] ... ina bīt amēli ittabši bēl bīti šuāti [...]

VAT 10167 65 [DIŠ EME.DIR] ‘x’ ‘ina’ ‘É’ NA GÁL-ši EN É BI [...]

- ▶ The remainder of the manuscript’s obverse is fragmentary, only the middle of each line remains.

If a City 2 (2006, 182 note 126’ff) suggests the subject of Assur 65–72 (the obverse’s remaining lines) may be a different sort of lizard and does not reconstruct EME.DIR in the protases. *If a City 2*’s reasoning for this is that Assur 52’s protasis appears to be the same as the remnants of Assur 68’s protasis—though with differing apodoses. The manuscript VAT 10167, however, shows no indication of collecting omens from other animals, and there is sufficient room for an adjective modifying the type of lizard, say for example a color. Therefore, it seems more appropriate to reconstruct EME.DIR for the final few omens on the manuscripts obverse, as is also done in KAL 1 (2007, 69 Vs. 65-71).

- ▶ The photograph of VAT 101067 65 shows remnants of three signs on the left-hand side of the line. Only their upper edge remains, but two of the signs’ traces fit with the expected *ina É* ‘in the house’. The earlier edition *If a City 2* (2006, 200 omen 126’ C r.65’) only notes traces of two signs and does not reconstruct (2006, 182 omen 126’) or translate (2006, 183 omen 126’) them.

* * *

Assur 66

[If] there is [a ... lizard in] a man[’s house] — that house [...]

[DIŠ EME.DIR ... ina É] NA GÁL-ši É BI [...]

[šumma šurāru ... ina bīt] amēli ittabši bītu šū [...]

VAT 10167 66 [DIŠ EME.DIR ... ina É] NA GÁL-ši É BI [...]

- ▶ The signs *ina É* ‘in the house’ have been reconstructed from omen Assur 65 and because a house is mentioned in the apodosis.
- ▶ Although *If a City 2* reads (2006, 200 omen 127’ C r.66’) and reconstructs (2006, 182 omen 127’) the omen as above (with the omission of EME.DIR; see the commentary at Assur 65), the edition appears to inadvertently replicate the translation (2006, 183 omen 127’) from Assur 65.

[If] there is [...] a man[’s ...], **the owner of** that house [...]

* * *

Assur 67

[If] there is [a ... lizard in] a man[’s house] — that man [...]

[DIŠ EME.DIR ... *ina* É] NA GÁL-ši NA BI [...]

[šumma šurāru ... *ina bīt*] *amēli ittabši amēlu šū* [...]

VAT 10167 67 [DIŠ EME.DIR ... *ina* É] NA GÁL-ši NA BI [...]

* * *

Assur 68

[If a lizard ... ma]n’s [...] keeps making noise at night — downfall [...]

[DIŠ EME.DIR ... N]A *ina* GE₆ GÛ-šú ŠUB.ŠUB-*di* ŠUB-*ti* [...]

[šumma šurāru ... *amē*] *li ina mūši rigimšu ittaddi miqitti* [...]

VAT 10167 68 [DIŠ EME.DIR ... N]A *ina* GE₆ KA-šú ŠUB.ŠUB-*di* ŠUB-’*ti*’ [...]

- ▶ Assur 52’s protasis is similar to the above.

If a lizard in a man’s house keeps making noise at night
DIŠ EME.DIR *ina* É NA *ina* GE₆ GÛ-šú ŠUB.ŠUB-*di*

The apodoses, however, differ. These similarities are the reason *If a City 2* omits EME.DIR from protases of the final few omens on VAT 10167’s obverse. For more details, see the commentary at Assur 65.

- ▶ The doubling of the verb ŠUB in GÛ... ŠUB.ŠUB-*di* indicates the iterative Gtn-stem. We therefore translate ‘keeps making noise’ instead of the simple ‘to make noise’ as KAL 1 (2007, 72 Vs. 68) translates.

[Wenn eine Eidechse ... eines Man]nes in der Nacht **Lärm macht**: Fall [... ...].

- ▶ Omens with animal noises are discussed in the commentary at Nineveh 47’.

* * *

Assur 69

[If a lizard] climbs [onto a ma]n and wanders about — [that] man [...].

[DIŠ EME.DIR *ana* UGU N]A E₁₁-*ma i-du-ul* NA [BI ...]

[šumma šurāru *ana muḥḥi amē*] *li ilīma idūl amēlu* [šū ...]

VAT 10167 69 [DIŠ EME.DIR *ana* UGU N]A E₁₁-*ma i-du-ul* ’NA’ [BI ...]

- ▶ The reconstructed parts of the above protasis are based on Sultantepe 54, as the two omens show similarities. Whereas the above protasis’s verb is written in the singular *i-du-ul*, the Sultantepe

omen's protasis has an unexpected 'u' at the end (*i-du-lu*)—likely indicating a plural subject. It is therefore conceivable that the two omens have differing apodoses and so the above apodosis has not been reconstructed from Sultantepe 54.

Sultantepe 54

[If lizards climb] onto a m[an an]d wander about — that man will consume a share.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID] *ana* UGU N[A E₁₁-m]a *i-du-lu* NA BI ḪA.LA GU₇

* * *

Assur 70

[If a lizard ...] jumps [... of] a man — [that] man [...]

[DIŠ EME.DIR ...] NA GU₄.UD-*iṭ* NA [BI ...]

[*šumma šurāru* ...] *amēli išḫiṭ amēlu* [šū ...]

VAT 10167 70 [DIŠ EME.DIR ...] 'NA' GU₄.UD-*iṭ* NA [BI ...]

* * *

Assur 71

[If a lizard] climbs [...] — that man [will? have?] a *šedu* and a l[amassu protective spirit ...].

[DIŠ EME.DIR ...] E₁₁ NA BI ^dALAD u ^d[LAMMA TUK[?]-š*i*? (5+)]

[*šumma šurāru* ...] *īli amēlu šū šēda u* [*lamassa irašši*? (5+)]

VAT 10167 71 [DIŠ EME.DIR ...] 'E₁₁' 'NA' BI ^dALAD u ^d[LAMMA TUK[?]-š*i*? (5+)]

- ▶ The above apodosis's reconstruction is suggested by Sultantepe 58. The two omens are fragmentary however and not an exact match.

Sultantepe 58

[If a lizard clim]bs? [...] — that man will h[ave] a lamassu protective spirit (and) wealth.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ... E]₁₁? NA BI ^dLAMMA NÍG.TUK T[UK-š*i*]

As reconstructed, Assur 71's apodosis is complete after the verb TUK-š*i* 'will have'. And while the right-hand break is large enough, with at least room for five signs, for an additional apodosis, the apodoses on VAT 10167 often preserve large blank spaces.

- ▶ See the commentary at Nineveh 1 for a list of further omens featuring *šedu* and/or lamassu.

* * *

Assur 72

[...] ... [...]

[...] x [...]

[...] ... [...]

VAT 10167 72 [...] 'x' [...]

- ▶ The photograph of manuscript VAT 10167 72 reveals traces of a sign below the ^dALAD of VAT 10167 71 (Assur 71). The traces are too fragmentary to interpret. They are omitted from *If a City 2* (2006, 182–83, 201).
- ▶ The obverse of VAT 10167 breaks off after the above omen resulting in a gap in the omen sequence.

* * *

(gap)

Assur 73'

[If a lizard ...] ... in [a man's] house [...]

[DIŠ EME.DIR ...]-*tu*₄ *ina* É [NA ...]

[*šumma šurāru* ...] ... *ina bīt* [*amēli* ...]

VAT 10167 r 1' [DIŠ EME.DIR ...]-*tu*₄ *ina* 'É' [NA ...]

- ▶ As *If a City 2* sees this side of the manuscript as the obverse, the current omen sequence is different from the omen sequence in that edition. The above omen corresponds to *If a City 2*'s omen 1' of the Assur recension.¹⁶⁴ Further, the Sultantepe manuscript STT 323 does not closely resemble VAT 10167's reverse as it had on the Assur manuscript's obverse.
- ▶ In the available photos of VAT 10167, É is severely broken. Only the two horizontal wedges on the left-hand side of the sign as well as a partial vertical wedge are visible.

While the most recent edition of the Assur manuscripts, KAL 1 (2007, 69 Rs. 1' A1'; 2007, 73 Rs. 1'), reads and translates line VAT 10167 r 1' as above, the earlier edition *If a City 2* (2006, 194 omen 1' C1') leaves the broken É uninterpreted, reading x.

* * *

Assur 74'

[If a lizard with two] heads falls onto a man [...]

[DIŠ EME.DIR *ša* 2] SAG.DU.MEŠ-*šú ana* UGU NA ŠUB-*ut* [...]

[*šumma šurāru ša* 2] *qaqqadūšu ana muḥḥi amēli imqut* [...]

¹⁶⁴ Recensions are called traditions in *If a City 2*.

VAT 10167 r 2' [DIŠ EME.DIR šá 2] SAG.DU.MEŠ-šú ana UGU NA ŠUB-^rut^r [...]

- ▶ The above omen is the first in a sequence about lizards with two heads. While the other recensions do not have two-headed lizards, extraneous body parts are common in omens. For two-tailed lizards, see the first eleven Nineveh omens, Nineveh 15 as well as Sultantepe 60–65 and Sultantepe 67.
- ▶ *If a City 2*'s (2006, 173 note 2') note on the grammatical structure of *kitpulusunu* is misplaced. It should be placed with Assur 79' (Assur omen 7' in *If a City 2*).

* * *

Assur 75'

[If a lizard whose] two heads are entwined ... [...] onto a man [...]

[DIŠ EME.DIR šá] 2 SAG.DU.MEŠ-šú *kit-pu-lu-ma ana* UGU NA x [...]

[šumma šurāru ša] 2 *qaqqadūšu kitpulūma ana muḥḥi amēli* ... [...]

VAT 10167 r 3' [DIŠ EME.DIR šá] ^r2' SAG.DU.MEŠ-šú *kit-pu-lu-ma ana* UGU NA ^rx' [...]

- ▶ Examination of the manuscript's photograph confirms an additional sign follows NA, as read in KAL 1 (2007, 69 Rs. 3' A3'). Only the head of a horizontal wedge, however, remains. These traces are omitted from *If a City 2* (2006, 172 omen 3'; 2006, 194 omen 3' C3').

The traces would fit with the sign ŠUB, but then the above omen and Assur 77' would appear to have identical protases. In any case, the two omens are very similar. As the traces are too fragmentary to be certain, the reading has been left as ^rx'.

* * *

Assur 76'

[If a lizard wit]h two heads climbs up from the ground onto the top of a man [...]

[DIŠ EME.DIR š]á 2 SAG.DU.MEŠ-šú TA KI ana UGU NA E₁₁ [...]

[šumma šurāru š]a 2 *qaqqadūšu ištu qaqqari ana muḥḥi amēli ili* [...]

VAT 10167 r 4' [DIŠ EME.DIR š]á 2 SAG.DU.MEŠ-šú TA KI ana UGU NA E₁₁ [...]

- ▶ Assur 13 and Sultantepe 10 feature protases in which a lizard—assumed to have but one head—also climbs onto a man from the ground. Both have apodoses resulting in the man acquiring money.

* * *

Assur 77'

[If a lizard] whose two heads are entwined falls onto the top of a man ... [...]

[DIŠ EME.DIR] *šá* 2 SAG.DU.MEŠ-šú *kit-pu-lu-ma ana* UGU NA ŠUB-ut x [...]

[šumma šurāru] *ša* 2 *qaqqadūšu kitpulūma ana muḥḥi amēli imqut* ... [...]

VAT 10167 r 5' [DIŠ EME.DIR] 'šá' 2 SAG.DU.MEŠ-šú *kit-pu-lu-ma ana* UGU NA ŠUB-ut 'x'

- ▶ For a similar protasis, see Assur 75'.

* * *

Assur 78'

[If liza]rds are plaited together like date-palm fi[bers] and walk^l about in a man's house — the master [of the house? ...]

[DIŠ EME].DIR *ki-ma* ŠU.S[AR] *pat-lu-ma ina* É NA DU.DU-ak^l EN [É? ...]

[šumma šurā]rû *kima piti*[*liti*] *patlūma ina bīt amēli ittallakū^l bēl* [*bītī*? ...]

VAT 10167 r 6' [DIŠ EME].^rDIR' *ki-ma* ŠU.S[AR] *pat-lu-ma ina* É NA DU.DU-ak^l EN [...]

- ▶ The phonetic complement on DU.DU-ak 'walks about' indicates a singular subject. We nevertheless translate the above protasis with a plural subject for the following reasons: The stative *pat-lu-ma*, however, indicates a plural subject not only in form (the final u vowel) but also in meaning 'plaited together'. Indeed CAD (P: 436 s.v. *pitiltu* d) interprets the above protasis's subject as the plural 'lizards'. CAD also refers to Sultantepe 66, another omen with the phrase *ki-ma* ŠU.SAR *pat-lu-ma* 'plaited together like date-palm fibers' (see the commentary there). In the Sultantepe omen, the subject is unambiguously multiple lizards. Finally, the signs EME.DIR allow for a plural interpretation See also the section on lizard orthography 3.3.1.
- ▶ *If a City 2* and KAL 1 translate the above omen as singular.

If a City 2 (2006, 173 omen 6')

[If a **liz**ard tied like a **knot** walks about in a man's house, the owner [...]

KAL 1 (2006, 73 Rs. 6')

[Wenn eine **Eid**echse wie ein **Seil** verdreht ist und im Haus eines Mannes umherläuft:
Der Herr [... ...]

The logogram ŠU.SAR 'date-palm fibers' is commonly used in combination with the verb *patālu* 'to twist, to plait' (CAD P: 436 s.v. *pitiltu* d). At times it is also translated as 'a rope' which explains *If a City 2*'s 'knot' and KAL 1's 'rope'. In any case, the image evoked is one of entwined lizards, much as palm fibers may be braided together to form a rope.

* * *

Assur 79'

[If] lizards, being entwined, fall from the roof beams ... [...]

[DIŠ] EME.DIR *kit-pu-lu-su-nu* TA ^{giš}ÜR.MEŠ ŠUB.MEŠ-*ni* x [...]

[šumma] *šurārû kitpulūssunu ištu gušūrī imqutūni* ... [...]

VAT 10167 r 7' [DIŠ] 'EME'.DIR *kit-pu-lu-su-nu* TA ^{giš}ÜR.MEŠ ŠUB.MEŠ-*ni* 'x' [...]

- ▶ There is not only a semantic connection between the protases of Assur 78' and 79'—both involve entwined lizards—but the consonant pattern in *pitilti patlūma* (ptl) 'date-palm fibers' 'plaited (together)' (Assur 78') reoccurs in *kitpulūssunu* (Assur 79').
 - ▶ The word *kitpulūssunu* is formed from the adjective *kitpulu* 'entwined' in the plural with the third person plural -šunu: *kitpulūtu+šunu* and used here as an adverb. See CAD (K: 467 s.v. *kitpulu*) for a reference to the above omen, and see GAG (§113e, 'Die adverbialen Endungen') for the formation of adverbs with the personal pronoun suffixes.
- If a City 2's* (2006, 173 note 2') note on the grammatical structure of *kitpulūssunu* is incorrectly placed with Assur 74' (*If a City 2's* Assur omen 2') instead of the above omen.
- ▶ The logogram EME.DIR 'lizard' has been interpreted as a plural because the verb form ŠUB.MEŠ-*ni* 'to fall' requires a plural subject. For a discussion about the plural of lizards, see Assur 53.
 - ▶ Assur 96' is also about lizards falling from the roof beams.

* * *

Assur 80'

If a lizard falls into a sesame-oil pot — the master of the house will die and ... [...]

DIŠ EME.DIR *ana* DUG GIŠ.Ì.MEŠ ŠUB-*ut* EN É BA.ÚŠ-*ma* is x [...]

šumma šurāru ana karpat šamaššammī imqut bēl bīti imātma ... [...]

VAT 10167 r 8' 'DIŠ' EME.DIR *ana* DUG 'GIŠ'.Ì.MEŠ ŠUB-*ut* EN É BA.ÚŠ-*ma* is 'x' [...]

- ▶ Sultantepe 78 and the above omen resemble each other, but instead of the lizard falling into a DUG GIŠ.Ì.MEŠ 'sesame-oil pot', as above, the lizard falls into ^{dug}ŠAB Ī 'an oil bowl' in the Sultantepe omen. The apodoses have orthographic differences, but are otherwise the same and unfortunately break off at almost the same point in the text.
- ▶ Examining the photo of VAT 10167 r 8', it appears that there may be one or more signs between the signs GIŠ and Ī. If so, it is not possible to read them from the photo, and they may actually be an erasure on the part of the ancient scribe.
- ▶ For the reading of GIŠ.Ì.(MEŠ) as the seeds *šamaššammū*, see the discussion in CAD (Š.1: 306–7 s.v. *šamaššammū*). The plant referred to is the main oleiferous plant in Mesopotamia, likely sesame or flax. Further as CAD notes, while *šamaššammū* usually refers to the plant's seeds, some textual references refer to the oil produced from the seeds and still other references are ambiguous. This in combination with Sultantepe 78's protasis featuring a lizard falling into an oil bowl, leads us to translate the above as 'sesame-oil pot'. *If a City 2* (2006, 173 Assur omen 8') translates "sesame pot", and KAL 1 (2007, 73 Rs. 8') translates „Öltopf“.

* * *

Assur 81'

If a lizard crawls into a man's lap — his wife will die and mour[ning ...]

DIŠ EME.DIR ana ÚR NA KU₄-ub MUNUS.BI BA.ÚŠ-ma KI.Ḫ[UL ...]

šumma šurāru ana sūn amēli īrub aššassu imâtma kiḫ[ullû ...]

VAT 10167 r 9'

DIŠ EME.DIR ana ÚR NA KU₄-ub MUNUS.BI BA.ÚŠ-ma KI.Ḫ[UL ...]

- ▶ Collectively Assur 81' and 83' are problematic as they have the same protasis but differing apodoses. In fact, while the above is negative, Assur 83' appears to be positive.

To resolve the issue, *If a City 2* (2006, 172, 173 both pages omen 9'; 2006, 173 note 9') revises the above protasis so that a lizard enters a woman's lap, instead of a man's. This emendation occurs despite *If a City 2* confirmation that the manuscript indeed reads NA 'man'.

The more recent edition KAL 1 reads (2007, 69 Rs. 9' A9) and translates (2007, 73 Rs. 9') similarly to above. KAL 1 (2007, 75 Bemerkung Rs. 9' + 11') also notes the repeated protasis and suggests a scribal error has occurred. See, however, the commentary at Sultantepe 79 as that omen possibly involves a lizard crawling into a woman's lap. The signs show damage on the hand copy. The sequence of Sultantepe omens would also indicate a correspondence between Assur 81' and Sultantepe 79. This would support emending the above omen's protasis to have the lizard crawl into a woman's lap, instead of a man's. If this were the case, MUNUS.BI in the apodosis would no longer be 'his wife', but 'that woman'. Unfortunately the reading of Sultantepe 79 is rather tentative, and it is hard to completely reconcile the two omens with each other.

Another possibility is that this is not a scribal error, but that these two omens are meant for two different (unwritten) contexts. Supporting this is the fact that they are in two different sections of the manuscript, on two different sides of a horizontal ruling. A final possibility is that ÚR may also indicate two slight different body parts in each of the omens.

Changing the text to read MUNUS in the protasis instead of NA is to be done with caution. In general, women make only rare appearances in *šumma ālu* omens and are usually restricted to the apodoses. The Tablet on lizards being, however, one of the few exceptions (Muller 2016, 431–32).

Further and while certainly not common, Assur 81' and 83' are not the only instances among the lizard omens of identical protases being repeated among multiple omens with differing apodoses. See, for example, the multiple omens with the apodosis 'If a lizard falls in front of a man' discussed at Assur 5. We therefore read the above omen as it has been preserved on the manuscript, but note the similarities to Sultantepe 78 and the possibility of a scribal mistake.

- ▶ The sign ÚR, read here as *sūnu* 'lap', refers to that anatomical region and could also be translated as 'thigh' or 'loins'. Because the apodosis refers to a man's wife, it might also be a euphemism for the man's genitals. For examples, see CAD (S: 386 s.v. *sūnu* A).
- ▶ The break after KI.ḪUL 'mourning' or 'mourning ritual' leaves room for several signs—at least seven or eight. From other omen protases (CAD K: 350 s.v. *kiḫullû* 2), it is possible to imagine the original protasis indicated mourning would befall the man's house: KI.ḪUL ina É NA GÁL-ši 'there will be mourning in the man's house'.

* * *

Assur 82'

If a lizard crawls into a 'upur-zikari'-hairstyle, goes up and ... [...].

DIŠ EME.DIR ana ŠÀ TÚG.<NÍG>.SAG.ÍL.EZEN.NITA KU₄-ub ÍL-ma t[u ...]

šumma šurāru ana libbi upur zikari īrub īlīma ... [...]

VAT 10167 r 10' DIŠ EME.DIR ana ŠÀ TÚG.<NÍG>.SAG.ÍL.EZEN.NITA KU₄-ub ÍL-ma t[u ...] (ruling)

- ▶ The last sign is fragmentary and while the traces fit with the sign KU₄, read above as tu, it is unlikely that the verb KU₄ 'to enter' would be repeated twice in the protasis. It has therefore not been translated. KAL 1 (2007, 73 Rs. 10') also leaves the sign untranslated. *If a City 2* (2006, 173 omen 10') translates the sign as 'goes in'. Also as the text on the manuscript does not indicate any accusative object pronoun, *If a City 2*'s translation of ÍL-ma as 'raises it' does not fit.

If a lizard enters a man's **upur-garment**, raises **it** and **goes in** [...]

* * *

Assur 83'

If a lizard crawls into a man's lap — he will become rich and say, "Who is like me?"

DIŠ EME.DIR ana ÚR NA KU₄-ub i-šár-ru-ma ma-nu-me-e ki-i ia-a-ti-ma i-qab-be

šumma šurāru ana sūn amēli īrub išarrūma mannummê kī jâtima iqabbi

VAT 10167 r 11' DIŠ EME.DIR ana ÚR NA 'KU₄'-ub i-šár-ru-ma_(DA) ma-nu-me-e ki-i ia-a-ti-ma i-qab-be

- ▶ See also Assur 81's commentary as the two omens have the same protasis but differing apodoses.
- ▶ The signs *i-qab* are on the curve of the manuscript's edge and are not visible on the available photos of VAT 10167. The reading has been taken from KAL 1 (2007, 69 Rs. 11' A11').

* * *

Assur 84'

If a lizard encircles a man's neck — a remote enemy will learn of (his?) fate, but, as long as he lives, the matter will be unknown (to him); he will not hear the report.

DIŠ EME.DIR GÚ NA NIGIN KÚR SÙ NAM IGI-ma šu-ma EN TI INIM KÚR-ir EME la i-šem-me

šumma šurāru kišād amēli ilmi nakru rīqu šimta immarma šūma adi iballuṭu amātu inakkir lišāna lā išemme

VAT 10167 r 12' DIŠ EME.DIR GÚ NA NIGIN KÚR SÙ NAM IGI-ma šu-ma EN TI INIM KÚR-ir EME la i-šem-me

- ▶ The apodosis of the above omen is difficult to interpret because it is unclear in the Akkadian who is being referred to in each clause. Further, *šimtu* ‘fate’ is a polyvalent concept in Akkadian (Lawson 1992, 1). It is a person’s “predestined yet malleable fate” (Sibbing-Plantholt 2021, 337). Nevertheless it can be synonymous with (a natural) death (Lawson 1992, 75–76; Katz 2014–2016, 72 §3.4 Time of death; Sibbing-Plantholt 2021, 338 note 13). A likely interpretation is that the remote enemy of the protasis’s man will learn of his fate, i.e., death, but that man, that is the man with the lizard around his neck, will never learn of his enemy’s death.

Finally the apodosis’s vocabulary is also polyvalent.

1. The above omen is translated in KAL 1 (2007, 73 Rs. 12’) as follows:

Wenn eine Eidechse den Nacken eines Mannes umwindet: Ein entfernter Feind wird von dem *Schicksal* erfahren, ihm aber wird, solange er lebt, die Sache fremd bleiben, die **Nachrede** wird er nicht hören.

The logogram EME *lišānu* first and foremost means ‘tongue’. It has, however, a multitude of other meanings. Among the most common meanings are ‘report’ and ‘statement’ as well as ‘gossip’ and ‘slander’ (CAD L: 209–15 s.v. *lišānu*), as KAL 1 has translated it.

2. KAL 1 (2007, 75 Bemerkung Rs. 12’) notes that CAD (L: 213 s.v. *lišānu* 4 ‘language’) translates the end of the above omen’s apodosis as “talk will be hostile(?), speech will not be understood”. The sign KÚR read as *nakāru* can also mean ‘to be(come) hostile’ or ‘to be(come) estranged’. See CAD (N.1: 162 s.v. *nakāru* 1c) for examples in other omens.
3. A further translation with Cassandra-like implications is found under the entry *nakāru* ‘to countermand, overrule a command, refuse’ (CAD N.1: 165 s.v. *nakāru* 4): “as for him, as long as he lives KA KÚR-ir *lišānu la išemme* he will be contradicted(?) and no one will listen (to him).”

We translate as above as it narratively makes the most sense.

* * *

Assur 85’

If a lizard escapes over a man’s leg, turns back, and (then) jumps onto him! — that man will escape from privation and hardship and will continually walk along a safe path.

DIŠ EME.DIR AN.TA_(ID) PAP.ḪAL NA È-*ma* GUR-*ma* ana UGU-š^u GU₄.UD-iṭ NA BI ina PAP.ḪAL u MUNUS.KALA.GA È-*ma* ina KI.UŠ SILIM DU.DU

šumma šurāru elēnu purīd amēli ušīma itūrma ana muḫḫišu¹ išḫiṭ amēlu šū ina pušqi u dannati uššīma ina kibis šulmi ittanallak

VAT 10167 r 13’ DIŠ EME.DIR AN.TA_(ID) PAP.ḪAL NA È-*ma* GUR-*ma* ana UGU-š^u GU₄.UD-iṭ NA BI ina PAP.ḪAL u MUNUS.KALA.GA È-*ma* ina KI.UŠ SILIM DU.DU

- ▶ The sign SILIM read as *šulmi* ‘safety, peace’ above could also be read as the adjective *šalmi* ‘whole, safe, favorable’.
- ▶ In the available photos of VAT 101067, the sign *ana* is present between GUR-*ma* ‘turns back and’ and UGU-š^u ‘onto him’. The sign is omitted by both of the previous editions (*If a City* 2 2006, 172 omen 13’; 2006, 195 omen 13’ C13’; KAL 1, 2007 Rs. 13’ A 13’).
- ▶ From the photograph, the possessive suffix in UGU-š^u is difficult to read. The vertical wedge of ŠU is clearly visible, but several of the horizontal wedges seem to be missing. The most recent edition,

KAL 1 (2007, 69 Rs. 13' A 13'), marks the sign with an exclamation mark, but does not comment on the sign. The earlier edition (*If a City 2* 2006, 195 omen 13' C13') also reads UGU-šu, but the omen is reconstructed (*If a City 2* 2006, 172 omen 13') using UGU-šu₂. Though the sign appears oddly formed in the photograph, the reading -šu fits more closely with the sign than -šú. We therefore follow KAL 1 and read UGU-šu'.

* * *

Assur 86'

If a lizard walks about under a sitting man — that man will prevail over his legal adversary.

DIŠ EME.DIR *ina* KI.TA NA TUŠ DU.DU NA BI UGU EN INIM-šu GUB-az

šumma šurāru ina šapal amēli āšibi ittallak amēlu šū eli bēl amātišu izzaz

VAT 10167 r 14' DIŠ EME.DIR *ina* KI.TA NA TUŠ DU.DU NA BI UGU EN INIM-šu GUB-az (ruling)

- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 174, 175 both pages omen 14') reconstructs and translates the above omen as follows:

DIŠ EME.DIR *ina* KI.TA *qu₂-du-du* NA BI UGU EN KA-šu GUB-az

If a **lizard(s) are curled up** under a man, that man will prevail over his adversary.

We follow KAL 1 (2007, 69 Rs. 14' A14') and read TUŠ 'sitting' for the sign read as *qu₂* by *If a City 2*.

* * *

Assur 87'

If a man unwittingly steps on a lizard and (thereby) kills (it) — he will win a legal case.

DIŠ NA *ina* NU ZU EME.DIR KI.UŠ-*ma* ÚŠ *ina* di-nim i-le-'e

šumma amēlu ina lā idê šurāra ikbusma ušmīt ina dīnim ile''e

VAT 10167 r 15' DIŠ NA *ina* NU ZU EME.DIR KI.UŠ-*ma* ÚŠ 'ina' 'di'-'nim' 'i'-le-'e

- ▶ For the apodosis's broken signs, we follow KAL 1 (2007, 69 Rs. 15' A15'). In *If a City 2*, these signs are left uninterpreted (2006, 195 omen 15' C15') and untranslated (2006, 175 omen 15').

DIŠ NA *ina* NU ZU EME.DIR KI.UŠ-*ma* UG₇ x x is x-li-i'

If a man unwittingly steps on a lizard and kills it, ...

- ▶ Assur 87'-95' are a series of lizard omens where, unexpectedly, the subject of the protasis is a man, not a lizard. The scene is also the street and not within the home.
- ▶ The protases of Assur 87' and 88' are thematically linked. Although the protases are opposites, both omens have positive apodoses.

* * *

Assur 88'

If a man unwittingly steps on a lizard (but) does not kill (it) — [that] ma[n] will acquire profit.

DIŠ NA ina NU ZU EME.DIR KI.UŠ NU ÚŠ N[A BI] Á.TUK TUK-ši

šumma amēlu ina lā idê šurāra ikbus lā ušmīt am[ēlu šū] nēmela irasši

VAT 10167 r 16' DIŠ NA ina NU ZU EME.DIR KI.ÚŠ¹ NU ÚŠ N[A BI] Á.ÚŠ TUK-ši

* * *

Assur 89'

If a man, while walking in the street, sees a lizard giving birth — he will claim the property of an important person.

DIŠ NA ina SILA ina DU-šú EME.DIR Û.TU IGI.DU₈ NÍG.ŠU KALA.GA EN-el

šumma amēlu ina sūqi ina alākišu šurāru ūlid īmur būš danni ibēl

VAT 10167 r 17' DIŠ NA ina SILA ina DU-šú EME.DIR Û.TU IGI.DU₈ NÍG.ŠU¹ KALA.GA EN-el

- ▶ *Ifa City 2* (2006, 174 omen 17') reconstructs the omen as above, adding a break around part of ŠU, but translates (2006, 175 omen 17') KALA.GA as an adjective modifying NÍG.ŠU 'property'.

If, when a man is walking in the street, he sees a lizard give birth, he will **own substantial goods**.

Though *Ifa City 2*'s interpretation appears possible, we interpret KALA.GA as an 'important person'. Our interpretation follows CAD (B: 200 s.v. *bēlu* 1b), which translates "a powerful person will take over (his) possessions" and KAL 1 (2007, 73 Rs. 17'), which translates as follows:

Wenn ein Mann im (Vorbei)gehen auf der Straße eine Eidechse Eier legen sieht: Ein bedeutende Person wird Besitztümer übernehmen.

Nevertheless, the translations in both KAL 1 and CAD interpret KALA.GA as the subject of the clause, which the word order does not support. Therefore we translate as above with the caveat that 'he will claim substantial property' appears to be a further valid translation.

- ▶ The structure of the above omen's protasis in Akkadian is vaguely anacoluthic. See also the following omen Assur 90'.

* * *

Assur 90'

If a man, while walking in the street, sees ditto (= a lizard) vomit — that man will acquire riches.

DIŠ NA ina SILA ina DU-šú MIN (EME.DIR) i-'a-ru-ma IGI.DU₈ NA BI NÍG.TUK TUK-ši

šumma amēlu ina sūqi ina alākišu MIN (šurāru) i'arrūma īmur amēlu šū mašrê irasši

VAT 9793 1' [...] MIN [...]

VAT 10167 r 18' DIŠ NA ina SILA ina DU-šú MIN i-'a-ru-ma IGI.DU₈ NA BI NÍG.TUK TUK-ši

- ▶ CAD (A.2: 319 s.v. *âru* 1) interprets the protasis's first verb as *i-'i-ru-ma*, the preterite of the verb *âru* 'to go, advance (against a person)', and translates the protasis as "if a man sees a lizard head toward him while he walks in a street". Although CAD's interpretation is possible, we follow KAL 1 (2007, 73 Rs. 18') and *If a City 2* (2006, 175 omen 18') and interpret the protasis's first verb as *i-'a-ru-ma*, the preterite of *arû* 'to vomit'. Translating the verb as vomiting connects the omen with the preceding Assur 89', whose protasis also involves movement outward from the lizard's body 'giving birth' and whose apodosis is similar to the above's in topic and in the repeated use of the sign NÍG. Further, the subsequent omen Assur 91' results in negative prediction, and its protasis involves swallowing, an inward movement. Assur 90's apodosis is positive, and one would expect the two protases to also oppose each other.
- ▶ As in Assur 89', the above omen's protasis is vaguely anacoluthic.
- ▶ Both KAL 1 (2007, 73 Rs. 18') and *If a City 2* (2006, 175 omen 18') translate the omen along the same lines as above. We follow KAL 1 (2007, 69 Rs. 18' B1') and read MIN in line VAT 10167 r 18', whereas *If a City 2* (2006, 195 omen 18' B1') reads x. *If a City 2* (2006, 195 omen 18' C18') omits NÍG in the apodosis. We follow KAL 1 (2007, 69 Rs. 18' A18') to read 'NÍG'.TUK 'riches'.

* * *

Assur 91'

If a man, ditto (= while walking) in the street, sees a lizard swallowing a(nother) lizard, but he does not separate the<m> — he will die at the hand of his enemy and will not escape.

DIŠ NA *ina* SILA MIN (*ina* DU-šú) EME.DIR EME.DIR *la-it-ma* IGI.DU₈-šú-nu-<ti>-ma NU
DU₈-šú-nu-<ti> *ina* ŠU KÚR-šú ÚŠ-ma NU È

šumma amēlu ina sūqi MIN (*ina alākišu*) *šurāru šurāra la'itma imuršunū<ti>ma lā iṭturšunū<ti>*
ina qāt nakrišu imâtma ul uṣṣi

VAT 9793 2'	[DIŠ NA <i>ina</i> SIL]A MIN <i>la-[it-ma ...]</i>
VAT 10167 r 19'	DIŠ NA <i>ina</i> SILA MIN EME.DIR EME.DIR <i>la-it-ma</i> IGI.DU ₈ -šú-nu-<ti>-ma NU DU ₈ -šú-nu-<ti> <i>ina</i> ŠU KÚR-šú ÚŠ-ma NU È

- ▶ The last sign of VAT 10167 r 19' is difficult to read from the available photograph as it rests on the curve of the manuscript's edge. The reading È is taken from KAL 1 (2007, 69 Rs. 19' A19').
- ▶ Although line VAT 10167 r 19' omits writing -*ti* in both instances of the suffix -*šunuti*, Akkadian grammar necessitates its inclusion. KAL 1 (2007, 69 Rs. 19' A19') emends the second of the two, but omits the first. *If a City 2* (2006, 174 omen 19') emends neither.

* * *

Assur 92'

If a man, ditto (= while walking in the street), sees lizards mating, seizes them and does not separate (them but) kills them — as long as he lives, rumors will follow him, and he will die in slander.

DIŠ NA MIN (*ina* SILA *ina* DU-šú) EME.DIR U₅ IGI.DU₈ DAB-su-nu-ti-ma NU DU₈.MEŠ
GAZ.MEŠ-šú-nu-ti EN TI EME UŠ-šú-ma *ina* EME.SIG ÚŠ

šumma amēlu MIN (*ina sūqi ina alākišu*) *šurārû ritkubû imur iṣbassunūtima lā ippaṭrû idūkšunūti*
adi iballuṭu lišānu ireddišuma ina karši imât

VAT 9793 3'	[DIŠ NA MI]N EME.DIR U ₅ ...]
VAT 10167 r 20'	DIŠ NA MIN EME.DIR U ₅ IGI.DU ₈ DAB-su-nu-ti-ma NU DU ₈ .MEŠ GAZ.MEŠ-šú-nu-ti EN TI EME UŠ-šú-ma ina EME.SIG UŠ

- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 174 note 20') mentions that the commentary text K 1 left-edge *i* 1 (CCP 3.5.30) equates EME.SIG with the reading *kar-ši* 'slander'. It is, however, uncertain as to whether the commentary text refers to the above omen as many of the commentary text lines referring to lizards remain unplaced. The above omen also does not have a corresponding omen in the Nineveh recension.
- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 195 omen 20', C20'; 2006, 174 omen 20') reads EME.SIG₇ instead of EME.SIG.

* * *

Assur 93'

If, ditto (= while) a man (= is walking in the street), a lizard that jumps behind the man and makes itself known to him, walks behind him, and reaches (him), (then) pursues him and (finally) walks in front of him and jumps on him — that man will become rich and his days will be long, (but) he will not have a son.

DIŠ NA MIN (*ina* SILA *ina* DU-šú) EME.DIR EGIR NA GU₄.UD-ma *me-di-šu* EGIR-šu DU-ku-ma
KUR-du *ir-di-šú-ma ana* IGI-šú DU-ma *ana* UGU-šú GU₄.UD-iṭ NA BI *i-šár-rù-ma u₄-me-šú*
GÍD.DA.MEŠ DUMU NU TUK-ši

šumma amēlu MIN (*ina sūqi ina alākišu*) *šurār arkat amēli išḫiṭuma medišu arkišu illikuma ikšudu*
irdišuma ana pānišu illikma ana muḫḫišu išḫiṭ amēlu šū išarrūma ūmūšu irrikū māra ul irašši

VAT 9793 4'-5'	[DIŠ NA MI]N EME.DIR EGIR N[A ...] / [(indent) a]na UGU-šu GU ₄ .UD- ^r iṭ' [...]
VAT 10167 r 21'-22'	DIŠ NA MIN EME.DIR EGIR NA GU ₄ .UD-ma <i>me-di-šu</i> EGIR-šu DU-ku-ma KUR-du <i>ir-di-šú-ma ana</i> IGI-šú DU-ma / (indent) <i>ana</i> UGU-šú GU ₄ .UD-iṭ NA BI <i>i-šár-rù-ma u₄-me-šú</i> GÍD.DA.MEŠ DUMU NU TUK-ši

- ▶ The reading *me-di-šu*, which has been normalized as *medišu*, is a stative of *idû* 'to know' with a possessive pronoun (see CAD M.2: 3 s.v. *medû*; I/J: 20 s.v. *idû*). These signs are left as uninterpreted in *If a City 2* (2006, 175 note 21').
- ▶ The available photograph of VAT 10167 r 21' shows the sign after the second EGIR is ŠU, not NA as read by KAL 1 (2007, 70 Rs. 21' A21'). The translation in KAL 1 (2007, 73 Rs. 21' and 22') reflects this reading.

Wenn einem Mann dito (= beim auf der Straße Gehen) eine Eidechse hinterher springt und sie ihm auffällt, sie hinter **dem Mann** herläuft und (ihn) erreicht, ihm dann folgt und (schließlich) vor ihm herläuft und dann auf ihn springt: Dieser Mann wird reich werden und seine Tage werden lang sein, (jedoch) einen Sohn wird er nicht haben.

- ▶ For the reading *a]na* UGU-šu at the beginning of line VAT 9793 5', see the collation notes in KAL 1 (2007, 143 Nr. 17). They show the sign ŠU as having the expected four horizontal wedges. The exclamation mark on the sign in KAL 1 (2007, 70 Rs. 22' B5') seems to indicate that the sign was collated, not that the sign is unexpected. The earlier hand copy of VAT 9793 (KAR 393) shows the sign as only having three horizontal wedges. The unusual form of the sign on the hand copy likely accounts for *If a City 2* (2006, 195 omen 21' B5') reading the sign as NA.

* * *

Assur 94'

If ditto (= while) a man (= is walking in the street) a lizard turns toward him, (and) turning again encircles him — that man: should the 'Hand of Šamaš' leave him bedridden¹ [for]² a year (and) should he (thereby) consume (all) the property that he has amassed, he will die.

DIŠ NA MIN (ina SILA ina DU-šú) EME.DIR ana IGI-šú is-ḫur is-ḫur NIGIN-šú NA BI ŠU ^dUTU [ana]²
 MU 1-KÁM ^{giš}NÁ DAB¹-su-ma NÍG.GA NIGIN-ru GU₇-ma BA.ÚŠ

šumma amēlu MIN (ina sūqi ina alākišu) *šurāru ana pānišu isḫur isḫur ilmīšu amēlu šū qāt šamši*
 [ana]² *šatti* 1-KÁM *erša ušašbassuma¹ makkūr ipḫuru ikkalma imât*

VAT 9793 6'-7'	[DIŠ N]A MIN EME.DIR ana IGI-š[u ...] / NÍG.GA NIG[IN-ru ...]
VAT 10167 r 23'- 24'	DIŠ NA MIN EME.DIR ana IGI- ^r šú ¹ is-ḫur is-ḫur NIGIN-šú NA BI ŠU ^d UTU ¹ [ana] ² ^r MU ¹ 1-KÁM ^{giš} NÁ DAB ¹ (_{KU})-su-ma / (indent) NÍG.GA NIGIN-ru GU ₇ -ma BA.ÚŠ

- ▶ This omen is discussed in detail in section 4.2.6.

The apodosis

- ▶ The above omen resembles medical-diagnostic omens from other series: not only because of the illness 'Hand of Šamaš' (see below) but also the protasis's context. At the beginning of the diagnostic omen series SA.GIG (see also the commentary at Assur 33), the omens prognosing the fate of the patient are based on signs the diagnostician encounters on the way to examining the patient (while walking in the street, for example). The correlations between the animal omens in *šumma ālu* and the medical-diagnostic omens have long been recognized. See Heeßel (2001) for an overview.

In medical omens, the enclitic *-ma* in the apodosis can be used to subordinate the preceding clause with the conjunction 'if'. See GAG §160 for the grammar and Scurlock and Anderson (2005, xvi) for its translation in medical omens. We have followed Scurlock and Andersen's suggestion and translated the above apodosis as a conditional prognosis for the sick man.

Diseases in ancient Mesopotamia¹⁶⁵ were often attributed to specific deities or demons with the idiomatic expression 'Hand of ...'. The 'Hand of Šamaš' is associated with a number of symptoms such as psoriatic arthritis (Scurlock and Andersen 2005, 255) and, possibly relevant in the above omen, the paralysis or weakness a patient may experience after a seizure (Scurlock and Andersen 2005, 318, 445). It is easy to imagine a stroke patient, being bed-ridden for a year and having consumed all of his amassed wealth, succumbing to his illness in the end. See also the comments on vertigo (protasis) below.

- ▶ From the photograph of VAT 10167 r 23', the sign read as DAB 'to seize' is written as the comparable KU. The sign is read, without comment, as TUŠ and DAB in KAL 1 (2007, 70 Rs. 23' A23') and *If a City 2* (2006, 195 omen 22' C23'), respectively.

For the combination of ^{giš}NÁ 'bed' and the verb *šabātu* 'to seize' in omen apodoses to mean 'bedridden', see CAD (E: 318 s.v. *eršu* 1d 2').

- ▶ Manuscript VAT 10167 r 23' is damaged after ^dUTU 'Šamaš'. KAL 1 (2007, 70 Rs. 23' A23') reads ^rana¹⁷ within the damage. We follow KAL 1 but leave the sign in full brackets as it is not legible on the available photograph of the manuscript.

¹⁶⁵ For a discussion on why some symptoms may be associated with certain deities, see Scurlock and Andersen (2005, chap. 19). See the entire book for examples of medical omens and their translations.

The protasis

- ▶ The protasis is replete with repetition and paronomasia. We base the protasis's translation on the fact that, in hendiadys, *saḫāru* takes on the meaning of 'to do again, to resume doing' the secondary verb (CAD S: 40 s.v. *saḫāru* 1e).
 1. *If a City 2* (2006, 174 omen 22') interprets the verb's repetition as extraneous. (See below for the reading in previous editions).
 2. The above protasis is mentioned in CAD (U/W: 295 s.v. *uṣurtu* 4 (a wooden object, reading uncert.)) with the suggestion to read the signs as above, *is-ḫur is-ḫur*, and not as a repeated GIŠ.ḪUR. The signs read as GIŠ.ḪUR would be *uṣurtu*, which additionally to a 'type of wooden object' is more commonly translated as a 'drawing'.

Readings in previous editions

- ▶ While *If a City 2* (2006, 195 omen 22' B4') reads the last sign of VAT 9793 6' as NA, we follow KAL 1 (2007, 70 Rs. 23' B6') and read -š[u. The hand copy (KAR 393) also shows a broken ŠU. In VAT 10167 23', *If a City 2* (2006, 195 omen 22' C23') reads TE-*ma!*(i). We again follow KAL 1 (2007, 70 Rs. 23' A23') and read 'MU' 1-KÁM. The photograph of VAT 10167 confirms the reading.

As mentioned above, *If a City 2* (2006, 174, 175 both pages omen 22') interprets and translates one of the repeated *is-ḫur* as extraneous:

DIŠ NA *ina* SILA *ina* DU-š_{u2} EME.DIR *ana* IGI-š_{u2} *is-ḫur* <<*is-ḫur*>> NIGIN-š_{u2} NA BI ŠU ^dUTU
TE-*ma* GIŠ.NA₂ DIB-*su-ma* NIG₂.GA NIGIN-*ru* KU₂-*ma* BA.UG₇

If, when a man is walking in the street, a lizard circles **in front of him and** goes around, the hand of Šamaš will **reach** that man and he will take to his bed **and** consume the property he has amassed and die.

- ▶ KAL 1 (2007, 70 Rs. 23' A23' and B6' and Rs. 24' A24' and B7') largely reads the omen as above (for slight differences, see the comments on DAB and 'ana' (apodosis)). KAL 1 (2007, 73 Rs. 23'–24') translates the omen as follows:

23' Wenn **vor einem** Mann dito (= beim auf der Straße Gehen) eine Eidechse sich umdreht, wieder umdreht und ihn umkreist: Diesen Mann wird die Hand des Šamaš für ein Jahr ans Bett fesseln und

24' seinen angesammelten Besitz wird er aufzehren und dann sterben.

* * *

Assur 95'

Variant A (VAT 9793)

[I]f a man, ditto (= while walking in the street), frightens seven lizards that are locke[d in an embrace and are mating, (but) they do not separate — that country will experience a catastrophe].

[D]IŠ NA MIN (*ina* SILA *ina* DU-š_u) EME.DIR 7 GÚ.DA.R[I-*ma* U₅.MEŠ *ú-gal-lit-su-nu-te* NU
 DU₈.MEŠ KUR BI NÍG.ḪA.LAM.MA IGI]

[š_u]mma *amēlu* MIN (*ina* sūqi *ina* alākišu) šurārû 7 nendur[ūma ritkubū ugallissunūti lā ippaṭrū
mātu šī šaḫluqta immar]

Variant B (VAT 10167)

If a man, ditto (= while walking in the street), frightens seven (= lizards) that are locked in an embrace and are mating, (but) they do not separate — that country will experience a catastrophe.

DIŠ NA MIN (*ina* SILA *ina* DU-š_u) EME.DIR 7 GÚ.DA.RI-*ma* U₅.MEŠ *ú-gal-lit-su-nu-te* NU
 [DU₈].MEŠ KUR BI NÍG.ḪA.LAM.MA IGI

š_{umma} *amēlu* MIN (*ina* sūqi *ina* alākišu) šurārû 7 nendurūma ritkubū ugallissunūti lā [ippaṭr]ū
mātu šī šaḫluqta immar

VAT 9793 8'	[D]IŠ NA MIN EME.DIR 7 GÚ.DA.R[I- <i>ma</i> ...]
VAT 10167 r 25'	DIŠ NA MIN 7 GÚ.DA.RI- <i>ma</i> U ₅ .MEŠ <i>ú-gal-lit-su-nu-te</i> 'NU' [DU ₈].MEŠ KUR BI NÍG.ĪA.LAM.MA IGI

- ▶ The above omen's apodosis is a common one among various genres of divinatory texts, but it is rarer among the *šumma ālu* omens. See CAD (Š.1: 99 s.v. *šahluqtu*) for examples, including the above omen. Since the apodosis makes a prognosis about the country as a whole, it belongs to a genre known as 'public omens'. Public omens are common in some omen series such as *šumma izbu* 'If a malformed birth', which records omens about malformed human and non-human animals at birth. For the most part, omens in *šumma ālu*, especially the lizard omens, are 'private omens' that address the fates of individuals or smaller groups of people.

The numeral seven in the protasis is the likely cause for the appearance of a public apodosis within a series of otherwise private ones. In Akkadian, the sign for 7 can also be read as *kiššatu* 'entire inhabited world' or 'all, totality' (CAD K: 457 s.v. *kiššatu* A). A sign with this connotation would be expected to make a prognosis about the entire country. Alternatively, as noted by Konstantopoulos (2015, 15–16) in her doctoral thesis on the *Sebettu* 'heptad' demons, Mesopotamian literature is replete with motifs involving the number seven. She (2015, 16) postulates that the number is symbolically linked to transitions, especially those involving death. All omens can be said to denote transitions—as they predict events yet to occur—but the above omen does not specifically indicate a transition or death. Perhaps the word catastrophe, though, implies death. One reference to the number seven in Ashurbanipal's annals is certainly associated with both death and a catastrophic outcome for a people whose leader and troops broke an oath with the Assyrians. Prism A (BM 91026) preserves an account of famine and the resulting cannibalism: "(As for) Uaite', along with his troops, who did not honor my treaty, ... Famine broke out among them and they ate the flesh of their children on account of their hunger ... The foal (of camels), the foal (of donkeys), the calf, (and) the spring lamb sucked more than seven times at (their) wet nurses and (yet) they could not satisfy their stomachs with milk."¹⁶⁶

See also the omen preserved on VAT 9906 ii 15–17 and omen §23.88 in Rinderer's (2021, 29, 222) Master's thesis on the snake omens in *šumma ālu*.

- ▶ The two manuscripts only vary in the amount of information covered by the sign of replacement MIN. The signs for lizard, EME.DIR, are written in Variant A (VAT 9793 8'), but in Variant B (VAT 10167 r 25'), they must either be interpreted as part of MIN 'ditto' or as an omission on the part of the ancient scribe. See Assur 94' for the preceding line VAT 10167 r 24', where EME.DIR is written.

Surprisingly CAD (E: 30 s.v. *edēru* 1b) interprets the numeral 7 on VAT 10167 r 25' as an odd writing for MIN and reads as follows:

šumma NA MIN MIN(!)(wr. 7) GÚ.DA.RI-*ma* U₅.MEŠ *ugallissunūte* NU [DU₈.M]EŠ
if somebody ditto (= when walking along the street) scares ditto (= lizards) that are locked in
an embrace and are mating, but they do not separate

We do not follow CAD's interpretation and instead interpret the sign as written, namely, the number seven. Given that the number 7 is rare among the lizard omens, it is implausible that the ancient scribe wrote the sign for 7 by mistake for MIN. Most importantly, we can find no other attestations, whether from omens or other text genres, of the sign 7 being used as a sign of repetition. Finally, see the previous comment on the nature of the apodosis likely being influenced by the use of seven in the protasis.

- ▶ We follow KAL 1 (2007, 70 Rs. 25' A25') and reconstruct the missing verb [DU₈].MEŠ 'they separate' from Assur 92', which also involves mating lizards and a negative apodosis. *If a City* 2 (2006, 174

¹⁶⁶ Translation from RINAP 5 (Novotny and Jeffers 2018, 259 No. 11 Prism A lines ix 53–67).

omen 23') does not reconstruct the sign DU₈, but otherwise reconstructs the omen along the lines of Variant A. Other than omitting the final verb of the protasis, however, there is little difference in the translation from *If a City 2* (2006, 175 omen 23'). KAL 1 (2007, 70 Rs. 25' A25' and B8') reads the lines as above and translates (2007, 73 Rs. 25') along the lines of Variant B.

* * *

Assur 96'

If lizards in a man's house often fall from the roof beams — abandonment of the house.

DIŠ EME.DIR *ina* É NA TA gisUR.MEŠ *ma-gal* ŠUB.MEŠ-*ni* ŠUB-*di* É

šumma šurārû ina bīt amēli ištu gušūrī magal imtaqqutūni nadê bīti

VAT 9793 9'	DIŠ EME.DIR <i>ina</i> É NA TA gisUR.MEŠ [...] (ruling)
VAT 10167 r 26'	DIŠ EME.DIR <i>ina</i> É NA TA gisUR.MEŠ <i>ma-gal</i> ŠUB.MEŠ- <i>ni</i> ŠUB- <i>di</i> É (ruling)

- ▶ The word *magal* is an adverb meaning 'very (much), in large amounts, abundantly' (CAD M.1: 29 s.v. *magal*). Its placement in the sentence also indicates it is an adverb modifying the verb ŠUB.MEŠ-*ni* 'they fall'. Nevertheless, *If a City 2* (2006, 175 omen 24') translates it as an adjective modifying EME.DIR 'lizard'.

If **many** lizards fall from the beams in a man's house—abandonment of the house.

See also Assur 63 for a similar confusion with *magal*.

- ▶ Though *If a City 2* (2006, 196 omen 24' B9') omits the sign UR from its reading of line VAT 9793 9', the hand copy (KAR 393) indicates that the head of a horizontal wedge is present on the manuscript's broken right-hand edge. This broken sign is also included in the line's reading in KAL 1 (2007, 70 Rs. 26' B9'). Apart from that small omission, both lines on the two manuscripts are read as above in the earlier editions.
- ▶ See Assur 79' for entwined lizards falling from the roof beams.

* * *

Assur 97'

If entwined lizards fall onto a man but do not separate — co[nfusion], distress.

DIŠ EME.DIR *kit-pu-lu-ma ana* UGU NA ŠUB.MEŠ-*ma* NU DU₈.MEŠ S[ÛH] *ni-zíq-tu*₄

šumma šurārû kitpulūma ana muḥḥi amēli imqutūma lā ippaṭrū t[ēšû] niziqtu

VAT 9793 10'	DIŠ EME.DIR <i>kit-pu-lu-ma ana</i> UGU N[A ...]
VAT 10167 r 27'	DIŠ EME.DIR <i>kit-pu-lu-ma ana</i> UGU NA ŠUB.MEŠ- <i>ma</i> NU DU ₈ .MEŠ S[ÛH] 'ni'- <i>zíq-tu</i> ₄

- ▶ Both verbs of the protasis take a plural subject (as does the adjective written *kit-pu-lu*). CAD (K:174–75 s.v. *kapālu 2* 'kitpulu') emends VAT 10167 r 27' (KAR 382: 27) and VAT 9793 10' (KAR 393: 10) to add MEŠ after EME.DIR. While we interpret the subject as plural, we do not follow CAD in emending the lines. The signs EME.DIR can be interpreted as either singular or plural (see the commentary at Assur 53).

- ▶ VAT 10167 r 27' is badly damaged around the sign SÛĦ. The sign is reconstructed from Assur 3, which has the same apodosis (see also Sultantepe 2).
- ▶ See the commentary at Assur 3 for a discussion of the emotion *niziqtu*.

* * *

Assur 98'

If (= entwined) lizards fall ditto (= onto a man), separate, and remain sitting in front of the street — he will witness the downfall of his legal adver[sary].

DIŠ EME.DIR MIN (*kit-pu-lu-ma ana* UGU NA) ŠUB.MEŠ-*ma* DU₈.MEŠ-*ma ana* IGI SILA TUŠ ŠUB-*at* E[N INIM]-*šu IGI-mar*

šumma šurārû MIN (*kitpulūma ana muḥḥi amēli*) *imqutūma ippaṭrūma ana pān sūqi ašbū maqāt bē[l amāti]šu immar*

VAT 9793 11'	DIŠ KI.MIN ŠUB.MEŠ- <i>ma</i> DU ₈ .MEŠ- <i>ma ana</i> [...]
VAT 10167 r 28'	DIŠ EME.DIR MIN ŠUB.MEŠ- <i>ma</i> DU ₈ .MEŠ- <i>ma ana</i> IGI SILA TUŠ ŠUB- <i>at</i> E[N INIM]- <i>šu IGI-mar</i>

- ▶ The phrase *ana IGI SILA* 'in front of the street' is interpreted in *If a City 2* (2006, 175 omen 26') as meaning 'on the surface of the street'.

If entwined lizards fall onto a man and separate and stay **on the surface** of the street, he will see the downfall of his adver[sary].

We follow KAL 1 (2007, 73 Rs. 28') which translates 'vor der Straße'.

- ▶ The photograph of VAT 10167 r 28' shows abrasion around the signs E[N INIM]. There are traces on the manuscript where INIM is, but they are too faint to read from the photograph.

* * *

Assur 99'

Variant A (VAT 9793)

If ditto (= entwined lizards) fall onto a man and do not [separate but ... onto the man — that man will experience imprisonment].

DIŠ KI.MIN (EME.DIR *kit-pu-lu-ma*) *ana* IGI NA ŠUB.MEŠ-*ma* NU [DU₈.MEŠ-*ma a-na* UGU NA *iš-lu-ú* NA BI KI.ŠÚ IGI-*mar*]

šumma KI.MIN (*šurārû kitpulūma*) *ana pān amēli imqutūma lā [ippaṭrūma ana muḥḥi amēli išlū amēlu šū kīla immar]*

Variant B (VAT 10167)

If (=entwined) lizards fall ditto (= onto a man) and do not separate but ... onto the man — that man will experience imprisonment.

DIŠ EME.DIR MIN (*kit-pu-lu-ma ana* UGU NA) ŠUB.MEŠ-*ma* NU DU₈.MEŠ-*ma a-na* UGU NA *iš-lu-ú* NA BI KI.ŠÚ IGI-*mar*

šumma šurārû MIN (*kitpulūma ana muḥḥi amēli*) *imqutūma lā ippaṭrūma ana muḥḥi amēli išlū amēlu šū kīla immar*

VAT 9793 12'	DIŠ KI.MIN <i>ana</i> IGI NA ŠUB.MEŠ- <i>ma</i> NU [...]
VAT 10167 r 29'	DIŠ EME.DIR MIN ŠUB.MEŠ- <i>ma</i> NU DU ₈ .MEŠ- <i>ma a-na</i> UGU NA <i>iš-^rlu^r-^rú^r</i> NA ^r BI ^r KI ^r .ŠÚ ^r IGI- <i>mar</i>

- ▶ As mentioned in KAL 1 (2007, 75 Bemerkung Rs. 29'), the signs *iš-lu-ú* in VAT 10167 r 29' appear to be a form of *šalû*, a transitive verb meaning 'to whirl up, kick up (dust), to toss'. AHW (III: 1152 s.v. *šalû(m)* II 4 'Erde aufwerfen') also suggests *šalû* for VAT 10167 r 29' (KAR 382 29). CAD (Š.1: 272 s.v. *šalû* A 4) lists verb's meaning, in reference to the above omen, however, as "obscure".

There are attestations of the verb in other omen protases. See De Zorzi (2014, 2-Text Edition:805 Tablet 19 omen 104') for an ox that uses its tail to toss (*i-šal-lu*) dirt onto its back. The verb, being transitive, however, takes an object, often SAḪAR 'dirt, dust', which is missing from our omen. For such a reading, the line would need to be emended and SAḪAR added before *a-na* UGU NA.

Although *Ifa City 2* (2006, 196 omen 27' C29') reads line VAT 10167 r 29' with the signs *iš-lu-ul*, as opposed to *iš-^rlu^r-^rú^r* above, it (2006, 174 omen 27') reconstructs the omen using *is-lu-ul* and translates (2006, 175 omen 27') as follows:

If entwined lizards fall onto a man and do not separate but **crawl** on the man, that man will experience prison.

The reading and subsequent translation in *Ifa City 2*, however, can be ruled out as *iš* and *is* are not readings of the same sign, and VAT 10167 r 29's photograph confirms the reading *iš*. This is also noted in KAL 1 (2007, 75 Bemerkung 29').

A final possibility is the verb *našallulu* 'to slither'. It is attested with both lizards and snakes (CAD N.2: 56 s.v. *našallulu*). It is difficult however to reconcile the signs as they are written on the manuscript with the verb's attested forms. (CAD N.2: 55–56 s.v. *našallulu*; GAG §101).

We therefore leave *iš-lu-ú* untranslated, as in KAL 1 (2007, 73 Rs. 29'), while allowing that the lizards may be kicking up dust or slithering onto the man.

- ▶ Manuscript VAT 9793 explicitly writes *ana* IGI NA where manuscript VAT 10167 uses the sign of repetition MIN for *ana* UGU NA from line VAT 10167 r 27'.

* * *

Assur 100'

If (= entwined) lizards fall ditto (= onto a man) and separate and one ... [...] to the right and to the left ... —] that [man? ...] ... he will take away.

DIŠ EME.DIR MIN (*kit-pu-lu-ma ana* UGU NA) ŠUB.MEŠ-*ma* DU₈.MEŠ-*ma 1-en* ZAG u GÙ[B] x [x x x NA?] BI [x] x ki^r KAR-*er*

šumma šurārû MIN (*kitpulūma ana muḫḫi amēli*) *imqutūma ippaṭrūma ištēn imitta u šu[mēla]* ... [... *amēlu?*] *šū* [...] ... *iṭṭer*

VAT 9793 13'	'DIŠ ^r KI.MIN ŠUB.MEŠ- <i>ma</i> DU ₈ .MEŠ- <i>ma</i> [...]
VAT 10167 r 30'	DIŠ EME.DIR MIN ŠUB.MEŠ- <i>ma</i> DU ₈ .MEŠ- <i>ma 1-en</i> ZAG u GÙ[B] [^r x ^r [x x x NA?]] BI [x] [^r x ^r [^r ki ^r] KAR- <i>er</i>

- ▶ *Ifa City 2* (2006, 196 omen 28' C30') misses the traces of GÙB and the signs before KAR-*er*, which leads to a slightly different translation (2006, 175 omen 28').

DIŠ EME.DIR MIN ŠUB.MEŠ-*ma* DU₈.MEŠ-*ma 1-en* ZAG u [...] bi x ša KAR-*ir*

If entwined lizards fall onto a man and separate and **one right and [one left ...] will save**.

The signs are included in the collation notes in KAL 1 (2007, 143 Nr. 16 Rs 30').

* * *

Assur 101'

If ditto (= entwined) lizards crawl into a man's lap and do not separate and [...] ... [...] ... will seize [...]

DIŠ EME.DIR MIN (*kit-pu-lu-ma*) ana ÚR NA KU₄.MEŠ-*ma* NU DU₈.MEŠ-*ma* [...] x [...] x DAB-*bat*
šumma šurārû MIN (*kitpulūma*) ana sūn amēli īrubūma lā ippaṭrūma [...] ... [...] ... iṣabbat

VAT 9793 14'	[DIŠ] KI.MIN ana ÚR NA KU ₄ .MEŠ- <i>ma</i> [...]
VAT 10167 r 31'	DIŠ EME.DIR MIN ana ÚR NA KU ₄ .MEŠ- <i>ma</i> NU DU ₈ .MEŠ- <i>ma</i> ' [...] x [...] x DAB- <i>bat</i>

- ▶ Examining the photograph of VAT 101607 r 31' reveals faint traces of *-ma*, right after DU₈.MEŠ. This is omitted from both *If a City 2* (2006, 196 omen 29' C31') and KAL 1 (2007, 70 omen 31' A31'). Both editions otherwise read the omen as above.
- ▶ See Assur 102' for a thematically-linked protasis. See Assur 81' and 83' for omens about single lizards crawling into a man's lap.

* * *

Assur 102'

If (= entwined) lizards crawl ditto (= into a man's lap) and separate and beh[ind ...] will seize.

DIŠ EME.DIR MIN (*kit-pu-lu-ma* ana ÚR NA) KU₄.MEŠ-*ma* DU₈.MEŠ-*ma* EGI[R ...] DAB-*bat*
šumma šurārû MIN (*kitpulūma* ana sūn amēli) īrubūma ippaṭrūma ark[at ...] iṣabbat

VAT 9793 15'	[DIŠ KI].MIN KU ₄ .MEŠ- <i>ma</i> DU ₈ .MEŠ- <i>ma</i> [...]
VAT 10167 r 32'	DIŠ EME.DIR MIN KU ₄ .MEŠ- <i>ma</i> DU ₈ .MEŠ- <i>ma</i> EGI[R ...] DAB- <i>bat</i>

- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 175 omen 30') interprets the sign EGIR as the adverb 'afterwards'.
If entwined lizards go into a man's lap and separated and **afterwards** [...] will seize.
- ▶ See the commentary at Assur 101' for other omens where lizards enter a man's lap.

* * *

Assur 103'

Variant A (VAT 9793)

If ditto (= entwined lizards) fall beside a man and do not [separate ...]

DIŠ KI.MIN (EME.DIR *kit-pu-lu-ma*) a-ḫi NA ŠUB.MEŠ-*ma* NU [DU₈.MEŠ ...]
šumma KI.MIN (*šurārû* *kitpulūma*) aḫi amēli imqutūma lā [ippaṭrū ...]

Variant B (VAT 10167)

If ditto (= entwined) lizards fall beside¹ a man¹ and do not separate [...] ...

[DIŠ] EME.DIR MIN (*kit-pu-lu-ma*) *a-ḫi*¹ NA¹ ŠUB.MEŠ[Š]-*ma* NU DU₈.MEŠ [...] x ka

šumma šurārû MIN (*kitpulūma*) *aḫi¹ amēli¹ imqut[ū]ma lā ippaṭrū* [...] ...

VAT 9793 16'	'DIŠ' KI.MIN <i>a-ḫi</i> NA ŠUB.MEŠ- <i>ma</i> NU [...]
VAT 10167 r 33'	[DIŠ] EME.DIR MIN <i>a-ḫi</i> _(H.I.A) NA ¹ ŠUB.MEŠ[Š]- <i>ma</i> NU DU ₈ .MEŠ [...] 'x' ka

- ▶ VAT 10167 r 33' (Variant B) reads H.I.A after MIN 'ditto' instead of *a-ḫi* '(be)side' as in line VAT 9793 16' (Variant A). This is possibly a scribal transposition. The most recent edition of VAT 10167, KAL 1 (2007, 70 33' A33'), however, retains H.I.A and interprets (2007, 74 33') it as a stative plural of the verb *mādu*:

Wenn Eidechsen dito (= umeinander gewunden sind und) **zahlreich** (auf) einen Mann fallen, aber sich (dabei) nicht trennen: [... ...] ...

The problem with such an interpretation is that it makes it difficult to interpret NA ŠUB.MEŠ. Note that KAL 1 is forced to add 'auf' between parentheses. *If a City 2* (2006, 176, 177 both pages omen 31') interprets the omen with the reading *a-ḫi* as above but also adds 'many'

[DIŠ] EME.DIR *kit-pu-lu-ma a-ḫi* NA ŠUB.MEŠ-*ma* NU DU₈.MEŠ [...] za ka
[If] **many** entwined lizards fall beside a man and do not separate [...]

- ▶ It is difficult to discern on the photograph, but the sign read as NA¹ in VAT 10167 r 33' (Variant B) appears to have either a badly formed vertical wedge or an extraneous one.
- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 196 31' C33') reads VAT 10167 r 33' as above except for the penultimate sign, which it reads as ZA. In the manuscript's photograph, two stacked vertical wedges are visible.
- ▶ See also Assur 104' for a thematically paired omen.

* * *

Assur 104'

If (= entwined) [li]zards fall ditto (= beside a man) and separate — that man ... [...], he will prevail [over] hi[s] legal adversary.

DIŠ [EM]E.DIR MIN (*kit-pu-lu-ma a-ḫi* NA) ŠUB.MEŠ-*ma* DU₈.MEŠ NA BI x [x x] EN INIM-š[u]
KUR-*ad*

šumma [šu]rārû MIN (*kitpulūma aḫi amēli*) *imqutūma ippaṭrū amēlu šū ... [...]* *bēl amātiš[u]*
ikaššad

VAT 9793 17'	DIŠ KI.MIN ŠUB.MEŠ- <i>ma</i> DU ₈ .MEŠ NA BI [...]
VAT 10167 r 34'	[DIŠ EM]E.'DIR' MIN ŠUB.MEŠ- <i>ma</i> DU ₈ .MEŠ N[A B]I 'x' [x x] 'EN' INIM-š[u] KUR- <i>ad</i>

- ▶ Although both instances of the omen include a sign of repetition, KI.MIN and MIN, VAT 10167 r 34' also includes remnants of the signs EME.DIR 'lizard'. It is for this reason that the beginning of the omen has been reconstructed using EME.DIR MIN and not KI.MIN as in VAT 9793 17'.

1. The signs of repetition in the above omen refer to the previous omen, Assur 103', which appears on two varying manuscripts. Because we interpret the signs 𒄩.𒀭 in VAT 10167 r 33 (Assur 103') as a transposition of *a-ḫi* '(be)side', we use VAT 9793 16', which preserves *a-ḫi*, to reconstruct the above omen. KAL 1 (2007, 70 Rs. 34'), however, bases its translation (2007, 74 Rs. 34') on VAT 10167 r 34' and interprets 𒄩.𒀭 as a stative of *mādu*.

Wenn [Eidech]sen dito (= umeinander gewunden sind und **zahlreich** auf einen Mann) fallen und sich dann trennen: Dieser Mann ... [...], seinen Prozeßgegner wird er besiegen.

See the commentary at Assur 103' for the problems with such a translation.

2. *If a City 2* (2006, 176 omen 32') replaces the signs of repetition with the protasis of Assur 97'.

DIŠ EME.DIR *kit-pu-lu-ma ana UGU NA ŠUB.MEŠ-ma DU₈.MEŠ N[A BI EN] KA-šū KUR-ad*

This reconstruction is unlikely however as Assur 104' is a pair for Assur 103' and many of the omens between Assur 97' and 104' do not use *ana UGU* in their protases. Assur 105' has *ana UGU* in the protasis and writes it explicitly. The reconstruction further leads to a different translation in *If a City 2* (2006, 177 omen 32').

If entwined lizards **repeatedly** fall onto a man and separate a[nd ... **that man**] will prevail over his [adver]sary.

- ▶ The photograph of VAT 10167 shows traces of signs between the signs NA and INIM-š[u]. These are omitted in *If a City 2* (2006, 196 omen 32' C34').

* * *

Assur 105'

If [dit]to (= [entwin]ed) [lizards] fall onto a man's right foot a[nd separate] — either [im]prisonment or severe confinement will afflict him.

DIŠ [EME.DIR MI]N (*kit-pu-lu-ma*) *ana UGU ĠİR NA ZAG ŠUB.MEŠ-m[a DU₈.MEŠ] lu [m]e-se-ru lu KI.ŠÚ dan-nu DAB-su*

šumma [šurārû MI]N (kitpulūma) ana muḫḫi šēp amēli imitti imqutūm[a ippaṭrū] lū [m]ēseru lū kīlu dannu iṣabbassu

VAT 9793 18'	DIŠ KI.MIN <i>ana UGU ĠİR NA ZAG ŠUB.MEŠ-m[a ...]</i>
VAT 10167 r 35'	[DIŠ EME.DIR MI]N 'ana' UGU ĠİR NA ZAG 'ŠUB'.M[EŠ-ma DU ₈ .MEŠ] 'lu' [m]e-se-ru 'lu' 'KI'.ŠÚ <i>dan-nu DAB-su</i>

- ▶ For the reading 'lu' [m]e-se-ru 'lu' 'KI'.ŠÚ in line VAT 10167 r 35', see the collation notes in KAL 1 (2007, 143 Nr. 16 Rs. 35').
- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 176 omens 33'–55') reads or reconstructs the beginning of several omens as EME.DIR.MEŠ (Assur 105'–127' in the current edition). For these omens, we follow the readings in KAL 1 (2007, 70–71 Rs. 35'–59'), which do not include the plural marker. For the plural of EME.DIR, without MEŠ, see the commentary at Assur 53.
- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 196 omen 33' C35') reads VAT 10167 r 35' as follows:

[... **MEŠ** ana UGU GIR₃ NA ZAG ŠUB.M[EŠ- ...] **GUR-ru-šu₂** [...].ŠU₂ dan-nu DIB-su

The verb ŠUB.MEŠ ‘to fall’ and the adjective *kit-pu-lu-ma* indicate a plural subject. Nevertheless we do not read MEŠ as the first sign of VAT 10167 r 35’ as in *If a City 2*. The photograph shows a parts of the top of a vertical wedge. Though extremely fragmentary, the traces fit better with the reading MIN as is read by KAL 1 (2007, 70 Rs. 35’ A35’).

If a City 2’s (2006, 176, 177 both pages omen 33’) reconstructs and translates the omen as follows:

DIŠ EME.DIR.**MEŠ** ana UGU GIR₃ NA ZAG ŠUB.MEŠ-m[a ...] **GUR-ru-šu₂** [KI].ŠU₂ dan-nu DIB-su

If **lizards fall** onto a man’s right foot **an[d ...] turn back to him**, severe imprisonment will afflict him.

- ▶ In VAT 10167 r 35’, the sign MI]N is further to the right than it is in the protases of previous omens in this series. KAL 1 (2007, 75 Rs. 35’) notes that it is possible that more than just DIŠ EME.DIR could be reconstructed in the break.
- ▶ See also Assur 18 and Sultantepe 14 for omens in which a single lizard falls onto a man’s right foot.

* * *

Assur 106’

If [ditto (= entwined) lizards fal]l [(= onto a man’s) left (= foot)] and separate — he will acquire a *twitching* in his feet.

DIŠ [EME.DIR MIN (*kit-pu-lu-ma ana* UGU GÌR NA) GÙB ŠUB].MEŠ-*ma* DU₈.MEŠ MUNUS.LUḪ GÌR.MEŠ-šú TUK-ši

šumma [šurārû MIN (*kitpulūma ana muḫḫi šēp amēli*) šumēli imqut]ūma ippaṭrū galāt šēpišu irašši

VAT 9793 19’	DIŠ KI.MIN [GÙB ŠUB].MEŠ- <i>ma</i> DU ₈ .MEŠ [...]
VAT 10167 r 36’	[DIŠ EME.DIR MIN GÙB ŠUB.MEŠ]- ^r ma ^r [(0)] DU ₈ .MEŠ ‘MUNUS’. ^r LUḪ ^r GÌR.MEŠ-šú TUK-ši

- ▶ We reconstruct the missing portions of the protasis from Assur 19 and 105’. Entwined lizards fall onto a man’s right foot in Assur 105’. We would therefore expect the protasis of Assur 106’ to feature entwined lizards falling onto a man’s left foot. Indeed the above apodosis is found in another omen involved a single lizard falling onto a man’s left foot, Assur 19.

Examining VAT 9793’s hand copy (KAR 393) and its photograph, however, there is not enough room for the entire protasis to be reconstructed. Therefore it must be assumed that the referent of sign MIN is no longer just *kit-pu-lu-ma* ‘entwined’, as in the previous omens, but also now includes *ana* UGU GÌR NA ‘on a man’s ... foot’ from Assur 105’.

Both *If a City 2* and KAL 1 leave the protasis uninterpreted (see comment below).

- ▶ For a discussion on the interpretation of MUNUS.LUḪ, see the commentary at Assur 19.
- ▶ For *If a City 2*’s (2006, 176 omen 34’) reconstruction of EME.DIR.MEŠ, see the commentary at Assur 105’. The earlier edition also omits MUNUS before the sign LUḪ (visible on VAT 10167’s photograph). *If a City 2* (2006, 176, 177 both pages omen 34’) reconstructs and translates as follows:

DIŠ EME.DIR.MEŠ [...]MEŠ-*ma* DU₈.MEŠ LUḪ GIR₃.MEŠ-*šu₂* TUK-*ši*
 If lizards [...] and separate, he will acquire a **foot-washer**.

While KAL 1 (2007, 70 Rs. 36' A36' and B19') reads the signs preserved on the manuscripts as above, with slight differences in the breaks, it also does not reconstruct the protasis and translates (KAL 1, 2007, 74 Rs. 36') as follows:

Wenn[Eidechsen] dito (= umeinander gewunden sind **und**) ... , und sich dann trennen: Er wird ein *Zittern* seiner FüÙe bekommen.

On the hand copy of VAT 9793 (KAR 393), there is part of an unknown sign before the signs MEŠ-*ma*. Nevertheless, the reading above follows KAL 1 (2007, 70 Rs. 36' B19'), placing x completely within brackets, because the original manuscripts were collated for that edition.

* * *

Assur 107'

[If ditto (= entwined) lizards ...] fall onto ... and do not separate — depression for an entire day.

[DIŠ EME.DIR MIN (*kit-pu-lu-ma*) ... *ana*] UGU x x ŠUB.MEŠ-*ma* NU DU₈.MEŠ *ta-dir-ti* U₄.1.KÁM

[*šumma šurārû* MIN (*kitpulûma*) ... *ana*] *muḫḫi* ... *imqutûma lā ippaṭrû tādirtu ûmakkal*

VAT 9793 20'	[DIŠ KI.MIN <i>ana</i>] UGU [...] ŠUB.MEŠ [...]
VAT 10167 r 37'	[DIŠ EME.DIR MIN ...] 'x' 'x' 'ŠUB'.'MEŠ'-'ma' 'NU' DU ₈ .'MEŠ' 'ta'-dir-ti 'U ₄ '.1.'KÁM'

- ▶ The word *tādirtu* 'depression' can also mean 'distress' or 'gloominess' or even a public ceremony, as in 'a day of distress.' As the above omen appears to be paired with the following omen, which refers to a man being happy and living for a long time, the translation 'depression' has been used above.
- ▶ Much of the beginning of VAT 10167 r 37' is missing and what is preserved is damaged. Before ŠUB.MEŠ, there are traces of two signs. They are likely the body part upon which the entwined lizards fall, but they are unfortunately too fragmentary to decipher.

Referring to VAT 10167 r 37', the most-recent edition KAL 1 (2007, 75 Bemerkung Rs. 37') notes that traces of the sign NU are clearly visible on the manuscript. The sign is omitted in *If a City 2* (2006, 196 omen 35' C37').

- ▶ In line VAT 9793 20', *ana* was reconstructed as it is a common preposition preceding UGU.
 The hand copy of VAT 9793 (KAR 393) also varies slightly from the reading in KAL 1 (2007, 70 Rs. 37' B20'). On the hand copy, there are traces of a sign before ŠUB.MEŠ. As they do not provide additional information to the interpretation of the omen and the manuscript was collated as part of preparing KAL 1, the reading from KAL 1 is used above. The broken sign is read as x in *If a City 2* (2006, 196 omen 35' B20').
- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 176 omen 35') continues to reconstruct EME.DIR with an added plural marker (see the commentary at Assur 105') and, as discussed above, omits the sign NU.
- ▶ The manuscript VAT 9793 breaks off after the above omen.

* * *

Assur 108'

[If lizards ...] — he will be happy (and) his days will be lon[g].

[DIŠ EME.DIR ...] ŠĀ.BI DÛG.GA U₄.MEŠ-šú GÍD.DA.[MEŠ]

[šumma šurārû ...] libbašu iṭâb ūmūšu irrik[ū]

VAT 10167 r 38' [DIŠ EME.DIR ...] ŠĀ.ʾBIʾ DÛG.ʾGAʾ U₄.MEŠ-ʾšúʾ GÍD.ʾDAʾ.[MEŠ]

- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 176 omen 36') continues to reconstruct the protasis with DIŠ EME.DIR.MEŠ (see commentary at Assur 105'), but otherwise reconstructs and translates (2006, 177 omen 36') the omen roughly as above.
- ▶ From the VAT 10167 r 38' onward, KAL 1 (2007, 70–71 omens Rs. 38'–66') no longer reconstructs the subject of the protasis.

* * *

Assur 109'

[If lizards f]all [...] and separate — that man [will experience l]osses.

[DIŠ EME.DIR ... ŠU]B.MEŠ-*ma* DU₈.MEŠ NA BI [I].BÍ.ZA [IGI-*mar*]

[šumma šurārû ... imq]utūma ippaṭrū amēlu šū [i]bissâ [immar]

VAT 10167 r 39' [DIŠ EME.DIR ... ŠU]B.MEŠ-*ma* ʾDU₈ʾ.MEŠ NA BI [I].ʾBÍʾ.ZA [IGI-*mar*]

* * *

Assur 110'

[If lizards ...] separate — [...] ... [...]

[DIŠ EME.DIR ...] DU₈.MEŠ [x] x li x x x [...]

[šumma šurārû ...] ippaṭrū [...] ... [...]

VAT 10167 r 40' [DIŠ EME.DIR ...] DU₈.MEŠ [x] ʾxʾ li ʾxʾ ʾxʾ ʾxʾ [...]

- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 176, 177 both pages omen 38') reconstructs the above omen with the negative NU and translates as follows:

[DIŠ EME.DIR.MEŠ ... ŠUB.MEŠ-*ma* NU] DU₈.MEŠ [...] li [...]
 [If lizards **fall and do not(?)**] separate [...]

This has likely been done as Assur 109' also features the verb DU₈.MEŠ 'to separate' and omen protases often come in opposing pairs. The problem lies, however, in Assur 111', which also has the verb DU₈.MEŠ so it is not possible to know if instead Assur 109' and 110' are paired. We therefore do not reconstruct NU as was done in *If a City 2* but note it is a possibility. See the commentary at Assur 105' for *If a City 2*'s reconstruction of EME.DIR.MEŠ.

* * *

Assur 111'

[If lizards ... fa]ll and do² not² separate² — ... [...] ... fall.

[DIŠ EME.DIR ... ŠU]B.MEŠ-*ma* NU² DU₈².MEŠ² x [...] x ŠUB

[*šumma šurārû ... imqu*]tūma lā² ippaṭrū² ... [...] ... *imaqqut*

VAT 10167 r 41' [DIŠ EME.DIR ... ŠU]B.MEŠ-*ma* NU² 'DU₈².MEŠ²'x' [...] 'x' ŠUB

- ▶ The photograph of VAT 10167 has traces of a number of signs after ŠU]B.MEŠ-*ma*. The sign read as NU² above is read as *ina* by both KAL 1 (2007, 70 Rs. 41' A41') and *If a City 2* (2006, 196 omen 39' C41'). The photograph shows the head of a upward facing diagonal wedge which fits more with the sign NU than *ina*. The remaining signs are faint and difficult to read. While the signs DU₈.MEŠ 'separate' fit with the traces and the omen sequence, the reading is somewhat speculative.

KAL 1 (2007, 70 Rs. 41' A41')

[... ŠU]B.MEŠ-*ma ina* 'x' 'x' [...] 'x' ŠUB

If a City 2 (2006, 196 omen 39' C41')

[... ŠU]B.MEŠ-*ma ina bi*-[...] -*ma* ŠUB

* * *

Assur 112'

[...] ... [...] ...

[...] x [...] gar² di² giš²

[...] ... [...] ...

VAT 10167 r 42' [...] 'x' [...] 'gar²'di²'giš²' (ruling)

- ▶ Line VAT 10167 r 42' is badly damaged. The line is read by KAL 1 (2007, 70 Rs. 42' A42') as follows:

[...] 'x' [...] 'di²' 'x' (ruling)

and by *If a City 2* (2006, 197 omen 40' C42') as follows:

[...] *x-mi-is* (ruling)

* * *

Assur 113'

[...] ...

[...] x x x ad² šu x

[...] ...

VAT 10167 r 43' [...] 'x' 'x' 'x' 'ad²' šu x

* * *

Assur 114'

[...] ... — the lord of the throne will change.

[...] x šī x ti EN ^{giš}GU.ZA MAN-*ni*

[...] ... *bēl kussî išanni*

VAT 10167 r 44' [...] ^ṛx^ṛ ^ṛšī^ṛ ^ṛx^ṛ ti EN ^{giš}GU.ZA MAN-*ni*

- ▶ The reading of the second sign as ^ṛšī^ṛ has been taken from KAL 1 (2007, 70 Rs. 44' A44') as the photograph is difficult to discern. Similarly the final sign of MAN-*ni* is also from KAL 1.
- ▶ The placement of the dash to indicate the beginning of the apodosis is somewhat arbitrary as the signs are damaged.

* * *

Assur 115'

[...] ... evil

[...] x x ḪUL

[...] ... *lemutti*

VAT 10167 r 45' [...] ^ṛx^ṛ ^ṛx^ṛ ^ṛḪUL^ṛ

* * *

Assur 116'

[...] he will become rich.

[...] *i-šár-ru*

[...] *išarru*

VAT 10167 r 46' [...] ^ṛi^ṛ-^ṛšár^ṛ-^ṛru^ṛ

* * *

Assur 117'

[...] ... a man's house [...] ...

[...] x É NA [x] x

[...] ... *bīt amēli* [...] ...

VAT 10167 r 47' [...] ^ṛx^ṛ ^ṛÉ^ṛ ^ṛNA^ṛ [x] ^ṛx^ṛ

- ▶ Line VAT 10167 r 47' is read in *Ifa City 2* (2006, 197 omen 45' C47') as follows:

[...] **EN.NUN.NA** x x

The signs are badly damaged, and both readings seem plausible based on the available photograph. The reading from KAL 1 (2007, 70 Rs. 47' A47') has been used above.

* * *

Assur 118'

[... fa]ll (but) do not separate, a lizard [... — ...] in his house will be broken into.

[... ŠU]B.MEŠ-*ma* NU DU₈.MEŠ EME.DIR [...] *ina É-šú* GAM-*aš*

[... *imqu*]tūma lā *ippaṭrū šurāru* [...] *ina bītišu ippallaš*

VAT 10167 r 48'-49'	[... ŠU]B.MEŠ- <i>ma</i> NU DU ₈ .MEŠ EME.DIR /
	[(indent) ...] <i>ina É-šú</i> GAM- <i>aš</i>

- ▶ *Ifa City 2* (2006, 197 omen 46' C48'-49') reads the two lines as follows:

[... **.M]EŠ-*ma*** NU DU₈.MEŠ EME.DIR / [...] *ina E₂-š_u₂* GUR₂-*aš*

Because *Ifa City 2* interprets the penultimate sign as GÚR, Akk. *kanāšu* 'to submit', it translates (2006, 177 omen 46') as follows:

[If lizards **fall** [...] and do not separate, a lizard [...] in his house **will submit**.

While GAM can be read GÚR, the phonetic complement -*aš* makes the reading problematic. The corresponding verb form for 'will submit' is the G-stem present, but that would be *ikannuš*, not **ikannaš*. The D-stem present *ukannaš* would fit with the phonetic complement, but its meaning is 'to force into submission' and one would expect a direct object either directly preceding the verb or as an enclitic pronoun. See CAD (K: 146 s.v. *kanāšu* 5) for examples of *kunnušu* in omen texts.

* * *

Assur 119'

[... he will p]lace.

[... GA]R-*an*

[... *išak*]kan

VAT 10167 r 50'	[... GA]R- <i>an</i>
-----------------	----------------------

* * *

Assur 123'

[...] evil attack.

[...] ZI.GA 𒄩UL-ti

[...] *tīb lemutti*

 VAT 10167 r 55' [...] 'ZI'.GA 𒄩UL-ti

- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 177 omen 50') uses another reading of the signs ZI.GA to translate the above as follows:

[If lizards ...] **evil losses.**

While the signs ZI.GA can be interpreted as *šitu* 'loss', we do not know of any attestations of the phrase 'evil losses' written so. See also CAD (L: 128 s.v. *lemuttu*) for the phrase *tībi le-mu-ut-tim* 'a dangerous invasion'. For commentary on the multiple interpretations of ZI(.GA), see the commentary at Nineveh 49' and Assur 38.

* * *

Assur 124'

[...] — [th]at [man] will escape from privation and hardship.

[... NA B]I ina PAP.𒄩AL u MUNUS.KALA.GA È

[... *amēlu š]ū ina pušqi u dannati ušši*

 VAT 10167 r 56' [... NA B]I ina 'PAP'.𒄩AL u MUNUS.KALA.GA È

- ▶ Assur 85' has the same apodosis but adds that the man 'will walk along a safe path'.
- ▶ The terms PAP.𒄩AL and MUNUS.KALA.GA both have various shades of meaning, but all are negative. PAP.𒄩AL at its core means 'containment', but can also include 'distress'. MUNUS.KALA.GA can also mean 'famine'.

* * *

Assur 125'

[...] ... — the 'foot of evil' will invade the man's house.

[...] x GÌR 𒄩UL ana É NA KU₄[...] ... *šēp lemutti ana bīt amēli irrub*

 VAT 10167 r 57' [...] x GÌR 𒄩UL ana É NA KU₄

- ▶ The signs GÌR 𒄩UL, read here as *šēp lemutti*, literally 'foot of evil', are attested in other omens (CAD Š.2: 307 s.v. *šēpu* 6b). The ritual *šēp lemutti ina bīt amēli parāsu* 'to block the entry of the enemy in someone's house' is a multi-day ritual involving the fashioning and purification of protective statues as well as the purification of the house. At the end of the ritual, the statues are buried to protect the house (Wiggermann 1992, 4). The evil described by GÌR.𒄩UL can be a general fright or terror, but also has connotations of illness and death and is an evil that "portend[s] the approach of further evil" (Wiggermann 1992, 94).
- ▶ For the reading 'to invade' for KU₄, see CAD (E: 266–67 s.v. *erēbu* 1f).

* * *

Assur 126'

[... se]parate and he kills them — income will enter that house.

[... D]U₈-ma GAZ-šú-nu-ti ana É BI ir-bu KU₄-ub

[... ipp]aṭrūma idūkšunūti ana bīti šuāti irbu irrub

VAT 10167 r 58' [... D]U₈-ma GAZ-šú-nu-ti ana É BI ir-bu KU₄-ub (ruling)

- ▶ *If a City 2*'s (2006, 176 omen 53') reconstructed transliteration replaces -šú with -šu. KAL 1's (2007, 74 Rs. 58') translation of the above omen allows that before DU₈-ma there may be a NU 'not':

[... ... sie sich (nicht) t]rennen und er sie tötet: In dieses Haus werden Einnahmen eintreten.

* * *

Assur 127'

[...] or become numerous in the house — abandonment of the house.

[...] lu ina É i-mi-du ŠUB É

[...] lū ina bīti imīdū nadê bīti

VAT 10167 r 59' [...] 'lu' ina É i-mi-du ŠUB É

- ▶ See the commentary at Assur 105' for *If a City 2*'s reconstruction of EME.DIR.MEŠ. The above is the last omen which has this reconstruction.
- ▶ Whereas we follow KAL 1 (2007, 74 Rs. 59') and translate the signs *i-mi-du* as the G preterite of *mādu* 'to be numerous', *If a City 2* (2006, 177 omen 54') translates *i-mi-du* as the G preterite of *emēdu* 'to lean again' or 'to stand (near) by'.

[If lizards ...] or **stand** in the house–abandonment of the house.

* * *

Assur 128'

[...] If MIN[?] that have wings, fly around in a man's house and make noise — that house will be dispersed.

[...] DIŠ MIN[?] šá a-gap-pi GAR-nu ina É NA it-ta-nap-ra-šú u GÛ-mu GÁL-šú É BI BIR

[...] šumma MIN[?] ša agappī šaknū ina bīt amēli ittanaprašū u rigma ušabšū bītu šū issappaḥ

VAT 10167 r 60' [...] 'DIŠ' 'MIN[?] šá a-gap-pi GAR-nu ina É NA it-ta-nap-ra-šú u GÛ-mu GÁL-šú É BI BIR (ruling)

- ▶ The manuscript's left-hand side is broken away at this point. Comparing the line to other lines, where both the left and right-hand edges are preserved, the above omen appears to begin in the middle of line VAT 10167 r 60'. Without a duplicate manuscript or further joins, it is impossible to say whether the beginning of the line (the part broken away) contained a separate omen or a large amount of blank space.
- ▶ As noted in *If a City 2* (2006, 176 note 55'), the referent of MIN is uncertain. It may be the 'entwined lizards' of earlier omens as *If a City 2* suggests.

- ▶ The sign MU, of GÛ-*mu* ‘noise’, is written on the manuscript’s edge and is not visible on the available photograph. The reading is from KAL 1 (2007, 71 Rs. 60’ A60’). *If a City 2* (2006, 197 omen 55’ C60’), instead, reads ugu mu.

[...] x MIN ša₂ a-gap-pi GAR-nu ina E₂ NA it-ta-nap-ra-š_{u2} ugu mu GAL₂-š_{u2} E₂ BI BIR

How to interpret the signs ugu mu is unclear; *If a City 2* (2006, 177 omen 55’) tentatively translates them as ‘anger’.

[If lizards] ditto that have wings fly about in the man’s house, there will be **anger(?)**; that house will be dispersed.

As lizards making noises are not uncommon in omen protases (see the commentary at Nineveh 47’), we follow KAL 1 (2007, 71 Rs. 60’ A60’) and read GÛ-*mu*.

* * *

Assur 129’

[...] call out [in] the house — abandonment of the house.

[... ina] É GÛ.DÉ.DÉ ŠUB É

[... ina] bīti issi nadê bīti

VAT 10167 r 61’ [... ina] É GÛ.DÉ.DÉ ŠUB É

- ▶ See also Nineveh 48’, in which a lizard calls out the entire night in man’s house resulting in the relocation of the house(hold). See also the subsequent Assur 130’—an escalation of the above apodosis.
- ▶ The broken É is read as x in *If a City 2* (2006, 197 omen 56’ C61’).

* * *

Assur 130’

[... re]peatedly cries out — devastation of the house.

[... G]Û.MEŠ-si ḥa-rab É

[... išt]assi ḥarāb bīti

VAT 10167 r 62’ [... G]Û.MEŠ-si ḥa-rab É

- ▶ The verb of the protasis is interpreted as plural in KAL 1 (2007, 74 Rs. 62’).
[... ... s]chreien: Verwüstung des Hauses.

* * *

Assur 131’

[...] ... ditto, in the ḥarūru (part of the millstone) — dispersal of the house.

[...] x MIN ina ḥa-ru-ur na₄UR₅ BIR É

[...] ... MIN ina ḥarūr erī sapāḥ bīti

VAT 10167 r 63' [...] 'x' MIN ina ḥa-ru-ur^{na4}UR₅ BIR É

- ▶ Normal syntax would require a verb in the protasis after ^{na4}UR₅. None is present, however, on the manuscript, as noted by *Ifa City 2* (2006, 177 note 58'). CAD (H: 121 s.v. *ḥarāru*) suggests emending the omen to read 'cries' as the preceding omens have to do with noise.

* * *

Assur 132'

[...] — abandonment of the house.

[...] ŠUB É

[...] *nadê bīti*

VAT 10167 r 64' [...] 'ŠUB' É

* * *

Assur 133'

[...]

VAT 10167 r 65' (blank)

- ▶ Most of line VAT 10167 r 65' is missing. Only a small portion of the right-hand edge remains. There is likely text on the missing parts of the manuscript.

* * *

Assur 134'

[... of the] house.

[...] É

[...] *bīti*

VAT 10167 r 66' [...] 'É'

- ▶ Line VAT 10167 r 66' is the end of the manuscript.

* * *

Sequence on VAT 9906

Manuscript VAT 9906 is a fragment of an originally six-column clay tablet. On the obverse the majority of columns *i* and *iii* is broken away. The omens remaining in column *ii* use the sign of repetition MIN to indicate the subject of the protasis, and as column *i* is broken away, the manuscript does not actually indicate which animal is in the omens' protases.. The manuscript's extant omens show parallels, however, to other lizard omens from *šumma ālu* Tablet 32 and have therefore been placed here, as was done by KAL 1. The manuscript was first edited in KAL 1 and was therefore not included in *Ifa City* 2. The readings and reconstructions here are from the hand copies in KAL 1 (2007, 172–75 manuscript 18).

VAT 9906 *i* 1'

[...] ...

[...] x

[...] ...

 VAT 9906 *i* 1' [...] 'x'

- ▶ Based on the hand copy (KAL 1, 2007, 172–75 manuscript 18), there is room for one line preceding this line on the manuscript.
- ▶ There are traces of signs in column *i* on the hand copy, but KAL 1 (2007, 75 manuscript 18 Vs. I) only notes that the traces are too fragmentary for a transliteration.

* * *

VAT 9906 *i* 2'

[... of the] house.

[...] É

[...] *bīti*

 VAT 9906 *i* 2' [...] 'É'

* * *

VAT 9906 *i* 3'

[... disp]ersal of the house.

[...B]IR É

[... *sap*]āḥ *bīti*

 VAT 9906 *i* 3' [...B]IR É

* * *

VAT 9906 *i 4'*

[...] ... of the house

[...] x giš É

[...] ... *bīti*

VAT 9906 *i 4'* [...] 'x' giš É

* * *

VAT 9906 *i 5'*

[...] his ...

[...] x BI

[...] ... *šūati*

VAT 9906 *i 5'* [...] 'x' BI

* * *

VAT 9906 *i 6'*

[...] property

[...] NÍG.GA

[...] *makkūri*

VAT 9906 *i 6'* [...] NÍG.GA

* * *

VAT 9906 *i 7'*

[...] dispersal² of the house.

[...] 'BIR'² É

[...] *sapāh² bīti*

VAT 9906 *i 7'* [...] 'BIR'² É

* * *

VAT 9906 *i 8'*

[...] ...

[...] x x du?

[...] ...

VAT 9906 *i 8'* [...] 'x' 'x' 'du'?

* * *

VAT 9906 *i 9'*

[...] ...

[...] x

[...] ...

VAT 9906 *i 9'* [...] 'x'

* * *

VAT 9906 *i 10'*

[...] him?

[...] -su?

[...] ...

VAT 9906 *i 10'* [...] -^rsu?

* * *

VAT 9906 *i 11'*

[... will h]ave? [...]

[... ir]ašši?

[... T]UK?

VAT 9906 *i 11'* [... T]UK?

* * *

VAT 9906 *i* 12'

[...] ...

[...] x

[...] ...

VAT 9906 *i* 12' [...] 'x'

* * *

VAT 9906 *i* 13'

[...] ...

[...] x

[...] ...

VAT 9906 *i* 13' [...] 'x'

* * *

VAT 9906 *i* 14'

[...] ...

[...] x

[...] ...

VAT 9906 *i* 14' [...] 'x'

- ▶ Column *i* breaks off after this line.

* * *

(gap)

VAT 9906 *ii* 1

[...] ... [...] are numerous in a man's house — uprising of the (*animal*) fold?.

[...] 'x' [...] *ina É NA ҒIA te-bé 'TÛR'?*

[...] ... [...] *ina bīt amēli imīdū tebê tarbašī?*

VAT 9906 *ii* 1 [...] 'x' [...] *ina É NA ҒIA te-bé 'TÛR'?*

* * *

VAT 9906 ii 2

If ditto (= a lizard) roams around ... in a man's house — that house's wealth[?] will be consumed.

DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) *ina É NA ma nu šid i-du-la NÍG.GA[?] É BI GU₇*

šumma MIN (*šurāru*) *ina bīt amēli ... idūla makkūr[?] bīti šuāti innakkal*

VAT 9906 ii 2 DIŠ MIN *ina É NA ma nu šid i-du-la NÍG.[?]GA[?] É BI GU₇*

- ▶ The reading NÍG.GA is problematic. The remnants of the second sign on the hand copy (KAL 1, 2007, 172–75 manuscript 18) do not fit well with the reading GA. It has nevertheless been read here as GA as the NÍG is clear and NÍG.GA 'property' or 'wealth' is a common object for GU₇. KAL 1 (2007, 75–76 manuscript 18 Vs. II 2) reads and translates the above omen as follows:

DIŠ MIN *ina É NA ma nu šid i-du-la NÍG.[?]x' É BI GU₇*

Wenn dito (= eine Eidechse) im Haus eines Mannes ... umherwandert: ... dieses Hauses wird aufgebraucht werden.

* * *

VAT 9906 ii 3

If ditto (= a lizard) lies across the street in front of a man — the attainment of a desire (will occur).

DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) *ana IGI NA ina SILA GIB KUR-ad ÁŠ*

šumma MIN (*šurāru*) *ana pān amēli ina sūqi parik kašād šibûti*

VAT 9906 ii 3 DIŠ MIN *ana IGI NA ina SILA GIB KUR-ad ÁŠ*

* * *

VAT 9906 ii 4

If ditto (= a lizard) *stands watch[?]* in the street in front of a man — the attainment of a desire (will occur).

DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) *ana IGI NA ina SILA iṣ[?]-šur KUR-ad ÁŠ*

šumma MIN (*šurāru*) *ana pān amēli ina sūqi iṣšur[?] kašād šibûti*

VAT 9906 ii 4 DIŠ MIN *ana IGI NA ina SILA iṣ[?]-šur KUR-ad ÁŠ (ruling)*

- ▶ The reading *iṣšur* is possible from the signs, but the meaning is difficult to ascertain. We interpret it as the preterite of the verb *našāru*, which at its core means 'to watch over' or 'to protect'. The verb is transitive (CAD N.2: 33–47 s.v. *našāru*, particularly 47 s.v. *našāru* 20), but the above omen's protasis would require an intransitive verb.

The verb is left untranslated in KAL 1 (2007, 76 Vs. II 4).

* * *

VAT 9906 ii 5

If ditto (= a lizard) gives birth beside² a man's house — that house will go to ruin.

DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) *ina* DA² É NA Û.TU É BI *ár-bu-ta₅* DU

šumma MIN (*šurāru*) *ina idī² bīt amēli ūlid bītu šū arbūta illak*

VAT 9906 ii 5 DIŠ MIN *ina* DA² É NA Û.'TU' É BI 'ár'-bu-ta₅ DU

- ▶ See Assur 37 and Sultantepe 39 for lizard omens with the same apodosis but a different protasis.
- ▶ See the discussion at Nineveh 53' on the translation of Û.TU 'to give birth' in lizard omens.

* * *

VAT 9906 ii 6–7

If ditto (= a lizard) takes a small piece of wood out of a man's house to the gate — the master of the house will lose something.

DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) *ina* É NA *hu-ša-ba ana* KÁ È EN É *mim-ma ú-ḫal-laq*

šumma MIN (*šurāru*) *ina bīt amēli hušaba ana bābi ušēši bēl bīti mimma uḫallaq*

VAT 9906 ii 6–7 DIŠ MIN *ina* É NA *hu-ša-ba ana* 'KÁ' È EN É /
(indent) *mim-ma ú-ḫal-laq*

- ▶ The meanings of *hušaba* includes 'a twig' and 'wood chip'. In a transferred sense, it can mean something of little value, as KAL 1 (2007, 76 Vs. II 6–7) has translated it:

Wenn dito eine Kleinigkeit aus dem Haus eines Mannes zum Tor herausbringt: Der Herr des Hauses wird etwas verlieren.

* * *

VAT 9906 ii 8

If ditto (= a lizard) falls into a vinegar jug and does not die — construction¹ of a house.

DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) *ana* DUG A.GEŠTIN.NA ŠUB-*ma* NU ÚŠ *e'-peš* É

šumma MIN (*šurāru*) *ana karpat ṭābāti imqutma lā imūt epēš¹ bīti*

VAT 9906 ii 8 DIŠ MIN *ana* DUG A.GEŠTIN.NA ŠUB-*ma* NU ÚŠ *e'-peš* É

- ▶ Omen sequences about lizards falling into vessels for holding liquids occur in both the Assur and Sultantepe recensions. See also the discussion in section 4.2.3.
- ▶ The sign E of *e'-peš* 'construction' has too many vertical wedges. It looks like a cross between the signs E and É.
- ▶ A similar protasis (without mention of the lizard survival) occurs in Assur 43 and Sultantepe 45.

* * *

VAT 9906 ii 9

If ditto (= a lizard) falls into a beer jug and dies — losses will occur.

DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) *ana* DUG KAŠ ŠUB-*ma* ÚŠ ZI.GA È

šumma MIN (*šurāru*) *ana karpāt šikari imqutma imūt šītu ušši*

VAT 9906 ii 9 DIŠ MIN *ana* DUG KAŠ ŠUB-*ma* ÚŠ ZI.GA È

- ▶ The above omen is related to Nineveh 49' and Assur 56. While all three omens include ZI in the apodosis, the above omen uses a different translation of the sign. For discussions on the polyvalent sign ZI, see the commentary at both Nineveh 49' and Assur 38.
- ▶ The thematic of lizards falling into water or beer (vessels) is common among the lizard omens. The commentary at Nineveh 49' includes a list. Note the sequence on VAT 9906 (with a lizard falling first into a beer jug and then a water jug) transposes the sequence of the same protases found in the Sultantepe recension (Sultantepe 46 and 47).

* * *

VAT 9906 ii 10

If ditto (= a lizard) falls into a water jug and dies — a reliable (divine) response therein will not be good.

DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) *ana* DUG A.MEŠ ŠUB-*ma* ÚŠ KA *ki-num* ŠÀ-šú NU DÙG

šumma MIN (*šurāru*) *ana karpāt mē imqutma imūt pû kīnum ina libbišu ul iṭāb*

VAT 9906 ii 10 DIŠ MIN *ana* DUG A.MEŠ ŠUB-*ma* ÚŠ KA *ki-num* *ina* ŠÀ-šú NU DÙG

- ▶ The first sign of the apodosis has been read as KA 'mouth', here, 'response'. The reading INIM, as in KAL 1 (2007, 75 manuscript 18 Vs. II 10), would require a feminine adjective instead of the masculine *kīnum*. The adjective *kīnum* means 'truthful' or 'reliable'. For the combination KA and *kīnum* to refer to divine responses, see CAD (P: 460 s.v. *pû* A 1b *kīnu*).
- ▶ Nineveh 49's commentary includes a list of omens where a lizard falls into beer or water (vessels).

* * *

VAT 9906 ii 11

If ditto (= a lizard) falls into an oil vessel and dies — bad news will obstruct the man.

DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) *ana* DUG Ì ŠUB-*ma* ÚŠ INIM ḪUL-*te* *ana* IGI NA GIB

šumma MIN (*šurāru*) *ana karpāt šamni imqutma imūt amāt lemutti ana pān amēli iparrik*

VAT 9906 ii 11 DIŠ MIN *ana* DUG Ì ŠUB-*ma* ÚŠ INIM ḪUL-*te* *ana* IGI NA GIB

- ▶ There is an obvious wordplay between the word *imūt* 'he dies' in the protasis and *amāt* 'word; message' in the apodosis.

* * *

VAT 9906 *ii* 12–13

If [d]itto (= a lizard) falls into a harvest[?] silo[?] and dies — losses will occur in this man’s house; he will experience bad news.

DIŠ [M]IN (EME.DIR) *ana* Ì.DUB ŠE[?].KIN[?].KUD[?].DA[?] ŠUB-*ma* BA.ÚŠ *ina* É NA BI ZI.GA È INIM
 ҲUL-*te* IGI

šumma [M]IN (*šurāru*) *ana našpak ešēdi[?] imqutma imūt ina bīt amēli šuāti šītu ušši amāt lemutti
 immar*

VAT 9906 *ii* 12–13 DIŠ [M]IN *ana* Ì.DUB ŠE[?].KIN[?].KUD[?].DA[?] ŠUB-*ma* BA.ÚŠ /
 (indent) *ina* É NA BI ZI.GA È INIM ҲUL-*te* IGI

- ▶ The reading ŠE[?].KIN[?].KUD[?].DA[?] is based on a suggestion by KAL 1 (2007, 77 Bemerkung II 12–13). KAL 1 proposes the reading ŠE.KIN.TAR after Ì.DUB to result in the reading *našpak ešēdi*, or ‘harvest silo’. As noted by KAL 1, however, the signs in the hand copy do not fit such a reading.
- ▶ Based on the hand copy in KAL 1 (2007, 173 manuscript 18), the indent in line *ii* 13 is not large, but there is however a horizontal marking before the sign *ina*. As two signs in a row with the reading *ina* is not logical, perhaps it is the beginning of a horizontal ruling that was not carried through the line. Without seeing the manuscript in person, it is difficult to say what it might be.
- ▶ KAL 1 (2007, 75, 77 both manuscript 18 Vs. II 12–13) reads and translates VAT 9906 *ii* 12–13 as follows:

ii 12 DIŠ [M]IN *ana* Ì.DUB **li[?] šal x** ŠUB-*ma* BA.ÚŠ
ii 13 *ina* É NA BI ZI.GA È INIM ҲUL-*te* IGI
 12 Wenn [d]itto in ein *Vorratsgefäß* ... *fällt und stirbt*:
 13 Im Haus dieses Mannes wird Verlust zu verzeichnen, eine schlechte Nachricht
 wird er erfahren.

* * *

VAT 9906 *ii* 14

If ditto (= a lizard) continually jumps about — that house(hold) will be well.

DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) *ina* É NA *ir-da-na-qu-ud* É BI ŠÀ-šú DÙG

šumma MIN (*šurāru*) *ina bīt amēli irtanaqqud bītu šū libbašu iṭâb*

VAT 9906 *ii* 14 DIŠ MIN *ina* É NA *ir-da-na-qu-ud* É BI ŠÀ-šú DÙG

* * *

VAT 9906 *ii* 15–17

If ditto (= a lizard) plays in a man's house (for) two days, three days, four days¹, five days¹, six days, seven days, many days and jumps in a man's house — he will experience an attack; that house(hold) will not prosper.

DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) *ina* É NA 2 U₄ 3 U₄ 4 U₄¹ 5 U₄¹ 6 U₄ 7 U₄ U₄ ME *im-me-lil-ma ina* É NA GU₄.UD GU₄.UD TUK-ši É BI NU SI.SÁ

šumma MIN (*šurāru*) *ina bīt amēli* 2 *ūmē* 3 *ūmē* 4 *ūmē*¹ 5 *ūmē*¹ 6 *ūmē* 7 *ūmē* *ūmē mādūte*
immelilma ina bīt amēli išḫiṭ šeḫṭa irašši bītu šū ul iššir

VAT 9906 *ii* 15–17 DIŠ MIN *ina* É NA 2 U₄ 3 U₄ 4 U₄¹ 5 U₄¹ 6 U₄ 7 U₄ U₄ ME /
(indent) *im-me-lil-ma ina* É NA GU₄.UD GU₄.UD /
(indent) TUK-ši É BI NU SI.SÁ

- ▶ The translation ‘many days’ has been suggested by the sign ME after U₄. Although MEŠ would be the expected sign, it has been taken here as the plural of *mādu*, or ‘many’.

KAL 1 (2007, 75, 77 manuscript 18 Vs. II 15–17) reads and translates as above except for reading U₄.ME (as a plural for days) and adding *viele* ‘many’ in parentheses. Both interpretations seem plausible and lead to nearly the same translation.

- ▶ See also the discussion at Assur 95’ on the number seven.

* * *

VAT 9906 *ii* 18–19

[If ditto (= a lizard) ...] repeatedly *scratches* at a house² and [...] ... of evil will lie across *a clay pit*.

[DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) ...] *ana* É? [U]MBIN.MEŠ GAR.GAR-*ma* [...] x nig ḪUL *ana* KI.GAR GIB

[*šumma* MIN (*šurāru*) ...] *ana bīti*? [š]uprī *ištakkanma* [...] ... *lemutti ana kullati iparrik*

VAT 9906 *ii* 18–19 [DIŠ MIN ...] ‘*ana*’ ‘É?’ [U]MBIN.MEŠ GAR.GAR-*ma* /
(indent) [...] ‘x’ ‘nig’ ḪUL ‘*ana*’ ‘KI’.GAR GIB

- ▶ As KAL 1 (2007, 77 Bemerkung II 18–21) notes, the damage to manuscript VAT 9906 renders it unclear whether lines *ii* 18–21 form two separate omens or are one longer omen. As was done in KAL 1, the lines have been interpreted here as two separate omens.

If the lines form but one omen, however, lines *ii* 18–20 likely form the protasis (note the use of the preterite for the verb in line *ii* 20) and the apodosis is likely only to be found in line *ii* 21.

- ▶ The meaning of *ana* É? [U]MBIN.MEŠ GAR.GAR, translated here as ‘repeatedly *scratches* at a house²’, is uncertain. There are attestations of UMBIN ‘nails’ being used with the verb *šakānu* ‘to set, to place’, but they refer to the pressing of fingernails into the clay of contract tablets in place of seals to identify contractual parties and witnesses (CAD Š: 252 s.v. *šupru* A2).
- ▶ The translation of *kullati* is also unclear in the above omen. Besides ‘clay pit’, it can also be translated as ‘potter’s clay’. Neither meaning fits well; though there are attestations of clay pits in rituals and medical texts.¹⁶⁷ Another word for ‘clay pit’ is the Sumerian loan word *issū*, which may

¹⁶⁷ For examples, see CAD (Š.3: 28 s.v. *šīmu* 1h) or CAD (T: 107 s.v. *ṭīdu* 1b).

Part VI – Edition

explain the connection with lizards. EME.DIR can, in Assyrian, occasionally be read as *iššû*—indicated to be a small gecko *pizallurtu* in medical texts (Landsberger 1934, 117)(CAD I/J: 206–7 s.v. *iššû*). In the Practical Vocabulary Assur, EME.ŠID and EME.DIR are actually differentiated: the former as *šurīrittu* and EME.DIR as *iššû*. As noted by CAD (Š: 256 s.v. *šurāru*), *iššû* may be the Assyrian correspondence to the Babylonian *šurāru*.

* * *

VAT 9906 ii 20–21

[...] ... shies away — [...] will seize.

[...] x *ig-ru-ur* [...] DAB-*at*

[...] ... *igrur* [...] *išabbat*

VAT 9906 ii 20–21	[...] 'x' <i>ig-ru-ur</i> /
	[(indent) ...] DAB- <i>at</i>

- ▶ See the commentary at VAT 9906 ii 18–19 on whether VAT 9906 ii 18–21 form one omen or two.

* * *

VAT 9906 ii 22

[... (failed) attain]ment of a desire

[... (NU) KUR]-*ad* ÁŠ

[... (*ul*) *kaš*]ā*d* *šibûti*

VAT 9906 ii 22	[... (NU) KUR]-'ad' ÁŠ
----------------	------------------------

- ▶ Column *ii* breaks off after the above omen.

* * *

(gap)

VAT 9906 iii 1

I[f ...]

D[IŠ ...]

š*u*[*mma* ...]

VAT 9906 iii 1	D[IŠ ...]
----------------	-----------

- ▶ The beginning of column *iii* is fragmentary. KAL 1 provides a hand copy (KAL 1, 2007, 174 manuscript 18) and transliteration (2007, 75–76 manuscript 18 Vs. III), but the edition does not translate the first six lines as they are too fragmentary.

* * *

VAT 9906 *iii* 2–3*Lines VAT 9906 iii 2–3 are completely broken away.*

* * *

VAT 9906 *iii* 4–5

[If] ditto (=a lizard) [...] ... [...]

[DIŠ] MIN (EME.DIR) [...] x [...]

[šumma] MIN (šurāru) [...] ... [...]

VAT 9906 <i>iii</i> 4–5	[DIŠ] 'MIN' [...] / (indent) 'x' [...]
-------------------------	---

* * *

VAT 9906 *iii* 6–7

[If] ditto (=a lizard) ... [...] the lord [...]

[D]IŠ MIN (EME.DIR) ki? [...] EN [...]

[šumma] MIN (šurāru) ki? [...] bēl [...]

VAT 9906 <i>iii</i> 6–7	[D]IŠ MIN 'ki?' [...] / (indent) 'EN' [...]
-------------------------	--

* * *

VAT 9906 *iii* 8–9

If ditto (= a lizard) ... for a god ... [...] — that house [...]

DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) x *ana* DINGIR x [...] É BI x [...]šumma MIN (šurāru) ... *ana ili* ... [...] bītu šū ... [...]

VAT 9906 <i>iii</i> 8–9	'DIŠ' MIN 'x' <i>ana</i> DINGIR 'x' [...] / (indent) É BI 'x' [...]
-------------------------	--

* * *

VAT 9906 *iii* 10

If ditto (= a lizard) [...] in his sleeping place ... [...]

DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) *ina* KI.NÁ-šu *i*-[...]

šumma MIN (*šurāru*) *ina* *majjālišu* ... [...]

VAT 9906 *iii* 10 DIŠ MIN *ina* 'KI'.NÁ-šu 'i'-[...]

- ▶ See Nineveh 36' and 37' for protases involving a sleeping place.

* * *

VAT 9906 *iii* 11

If ditto (= a lizard) ... [...]

DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) *x* *re²-e* *x* [...]

šumma MIN (*šurāru*) ... [...]

VAT 9906 *iii* 11 DIŠ 'MIN' 'x' *re²-e* 'x' [...]

* * *

VAT 9906 *iii* 12

If ditto (= a lizard) on the head of a man ... [...]

DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) *ina* SAG.MEŠ NA *x* [...]

šumma MIN (*šurāru*) *ina* *rēšī amēli* ... [...]

VAT 9906 *iii* 12 DIŠ MIN *ina* SAG.MEŠ NA 'x' [...]

- ▶ The above omen and the subsequent, VAT 9906 *iii* 13, are similarly constructed and probably thematically linked. Instead of SAG.MEŠ 'heads', however, the unknown action described in the protasis of VAT 990 *iii* 13 occurs at a man's 'feet', GÌR.MEŠ. As they are placed together, SAG.MEŠ and GÌR.MEŠ refer to the upper and lower part of the man, respectively. This pairing also helps to explain the plural marker MEŠ after the SAG 'head', despite the obvious singular meaning. See also CAD (R: 277 s.v. *rēšu*) for instances where the word for head is occasionally written in the dual.

The signs SAG.MEŠ are also used with a singular meaning in the anti-witchcraft text known as *Regaining potency before Ištar-of-the-stars* (Abusch et al. 2020 CMAwR 3 Text 4.2 line 1:16). The text is best preserved on line VAT 8233 *r* 3, which reads GIM ^{na4}GIŠ.NU₁₁.GAL *lu* ZÁLAG.MEŠ SAG.MEŠ-[*ia*], is transliterated as *kīma ašnugalli ((lū)) namrū rēšī[ya]*, and is translated as "let [my] head be as bright as alabaster" (Abusch et al. 2020 CMAwR 3 Text 4.2 line 1:16).

* * *

VAT 9906 *iii* 13

If ditto (= a lizard) on a man's feet [...]

DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) *ina* GÌR.MEŠ NA [...]*šumma* MIN (*šurāru*) *ina šēpāt amēlī* [...]

 VAT 9906 *iii* 13 DIŠ MIN *ina* 'GÌR'.MEŠ' 'NA' [...]

* * *

VAT 9906 *iii* 14

If ditto (= a lizard) in the heart of ... [...]

DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) *ina* ŠÀ x [...]*šumma* MIN (*šurāru*) *ina libbi* ... [...]

 VAT 9906 *iii* 14 DIŠ MIN *ina* ŠÀ 'x' [...]

* * *

VAT 9906 *iii* 15–16

If ditto (= a lizard) or in ...[...] relocation of the house(hold) [...]

DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) *lu ina* ta²-[...] ZI É [...]*šumma* MIN (*šurāru*) *lū ina* ta²-[...] *nasāḥ bīti* [...]

 VAT 9906 *iii* 15–16 DIŠ MIN *lu ina* ta²-[...] /
 (indent) ZI É [...]

- ▶ The signs ZI É are ambiguous. As line VAT 9906 *iii* 16 is broken, it is unclear whether the signs are to be read as logograms or as a syllabic spelling, for example *ši-bit-[tu₄]* 'prisoner'. Further even if read as logograms as above, ZI has can be interpreted as a multitude of verbs (see the commentary at Nineveh 49' and Assur 38) and attestations of the combination ZI É are otherwise unknown.

* * *

VAT 9906 *iii* 17–18

If ditto (= a lizard) [...] from ... [...] ... [...]

DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) TA x [...] x [...]

šumma MIN (*šurāru*) *ištu* ... [...] ... [...]

 VAT 9906 *iii* 17–18 DIŠ MIN TA x [...] /
 (indent) x [...]

* * *

VAT 9906 *iii* 19

If di[tto (= a lizard) ...]

DIŠ M[IN (EME.DIR) ...]

šumma M[IN (šurāru) ...]

VAT 9906 *iii* 19 DIŠ M[IN ...]

* * *

(gap)

VAT 9906 *iv* 1'

[I]f ditto (= a lizard) [...]

[DI]Š MIN (EME.DIR) [...]

[šum]ma MIN (šurāru) [...]

VAT 9906 *iv* 1' [DI]Š MIN [...]

- ▶ While some signs from the beginning of lines in column *iv* are visible on the hand copy (KAL 1, 2007, 174 manuscript 18) and KAL 1 (2007, 76 manuscript 18 Rs. IV) provides transliterations, these omens are not translated in KAL 1 (2007, 77 manuscript 18 Rs. IV) because they are so fragmentary.

* * *

VAT 9906 *iv* 2'

Line VAT 9906 iv 2' is completely broken away.

* * *

VAT 9906 *iv* 3'

[...] ... [...]

[...] x [...]

[...] ... [...]

VAT 9906 *iv* 3' [...] 'x' [...]

* * *

VAT 9906 *iv* 4'

If [dit]to (= a lizard) [...] in the house of ... [...]

DIŠ [M]IN (EME.ŠID) *ina* É ri [...]*šumma* [M]IN (*šurāru*) *ina bīt* ri [...]

 VAT 9906 *iv* 4' DIŠ [M]IN *ina* 'É' 'ri' [...]

* * *

VAT 9906 *iv* 5'

If ditto (= a lizard) [...] in the house of ... [...]

DIŠ MIN (EME.ŠID) *ina* É ri sa[l ...]*šumma* MIN (*šurāru*) *ina bīt* ri sa[l ...]

 VAT 9906 *iv* 5' DIŠ MIN *ina* É ri sa[l ...]

* * *

VAT 9906 *iv* 6'

If ditto (= a lizard) ... [...] in a man's house [...]

DIŠ MIN (EME.ŠID) *ina* É NA di [...]*šumma* MIN (*šurāru*) *ina bīt amēli* di [...]

 VAT 9906 *iv* 6' DIŠ MIN *ina* É 'NA' di [...]

* * *

VAT 9906 *iv* 7'

[If ditto (= a lizard)] ... [...]

[DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR)] x x [...]

[*šumma* MIN (*šurāru*)] ... [...]

 VAT 9906 *iv* 7' [DIŠ MIN] x x [...]

* * *

VAT 9906 *iv* 8'

[If ditto (= lizards) ...] ... [...]

[DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) x].MEŠ x [...]

[šumma MIN (šurārû) ...] ... [...]

VAT 9906 *iv* 8' [DIŠ MIN x].MEŠ 'x' [...]

* * *

(gap)

VAT 9906 *v* 1'

[...] in² [...] ...

[...] ina² [...] giš² x

[...] ina² [...] ...

VAT 9906 *v* 1' [...] 'ina'² [...] 'giš'² 'x'

* * *

VAT 9906 *v* 2'

[...] ... [...]

[...] x x x [...]

[...] ... [...]

VAT 9906 *v* 2' [...] 'x' 'x' 'x' [...]

* * *

VAT 9906 *v* 3'

[...] ... [...] ... [...] ... [...] ... [...]

[...] x [...] M]EŠ² x [...] x [...] x x [...]

[...] ... [...] ... [...] ... [...] ... [...]

VAT 9906 *v* 3' [...] 'x' [...] M]EŠ² 'x' [...] 'x' [...] 'x' 'x' [...]

* * *

VAT 9906 v 4'

[...] ... [...] is seen [in?] a man's house [...]

[...] x x [...] *ina*? É NA IGI.DU₈ [...][...] ... [...] *ina*? *bīt amēli innamir* [...]

VAT 9906 v 4' [...] 'x' 'x' [...] *ina*? 'É' 'NA' 'IGI'.DU₈ [...]

* * *

VAT 9906 v 5'

[...] ... [...] ... on an oven ... [...]

[...] x x [...] x x UGU UDUN x [...]

[...] ... [...] ... *muh̄hi utūni* ... [...]

VAT 9906 v 5' [...] 'x' 'x' [...] 'x' 'x' 'UGU' UDUN x [...]

* * *

VAT 9906 v 6'

[...] ... if ... [...] ... goes up — a g[ood] message [...]

[...] x *šum*₄-*ma* x x [x] *ši kàt ša e-li* INIM S[IG₅ ...][...] ... *šumma* ... [...] ... *īli amāt d[amiqti]* ...]

VAT 9906 v 6' [...] 'x' *šum*₄-*ma* 'x' 'x' [x] *ši kàt ša e-'li'* INIM S[IG₅ ...]

- ▶ The last sign SIG₅ is fragmentary. The remnants shown on the hand copy (KAL 1 2007, 175 manuscript 18) may actually be 𒄀UL 'evil, bad' instead. See VAT 9906 v 7'.
- ▶ For the use of *šum*₄-*ma* instead of DIŠ, see the commentary at Nineveh 3. Such omens often directly relate to the omen preceding them. See also VAT 9906 v 8–11' for another omen constructed with *šum-ma*.

* * *

VAT 9906 v 7'

[...] ... *lifts* its *gaze* toward linen fabric in the night — bad news [...][...] x x *ina* GE₆ IGI-*šú ana* ^{túg^l(ki)}GADA *e-li* INIM 𒄀UL [...][...] ... *ina mūši inšu ana lubār kitê īli amāt lemutti* [...]

VAT 9906 v 7' [...] 'x' 'x' *ina* GE₆ IGI-*šú ana* ^{túg^l(ki)}GADA *e-li* INIM '𒄀UL' [...]

- ▶ KAL 1 (2007, 76 Rs. V 7') notes the sign read as ^{túg^l} above is written as KI on the manuscript.

* * *

VAT 9906 v 8'–11'

[If ditto (= a lizard) with] two tails is seen in a man's house, [its] tail ... and from his? ... escapes? ... [...].

If he kills (it) and one takes (it) [...] — he will have a good sign ... [...].

If he kills (it), but no one takes (it) — he will have a bad sign ... [...].

[DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) šá] 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá ina É NA IGI.DU₈ KUN-[sa][?] x x x ma ina i-x x šú x x [u]š-te-šⁱ? x [...]

šum₄-ma GAZ-*ma* *il-te-qú* [(x)] GIZKIM SIG₅ IGI x [(x)]

šum₄-ma GAZ-*ma* NU *il-te-qú* GIZKIM ḪUL IGI x [(x)]

[šumma MIN (šurīrittu) ša] 2 zibbātuša ina bīt amēli innamir zibbās[sa][?] ... ma ina i- ... šu ... [u]štēšⁱ? ... [...]

šumma idūkma ilteqqû [...] *itta damiqta immar* ... [...]

šumma idūkma lā ilteqqû itta lemutta immar ... [...]

VAT 9906 v 8–11'	[DIŠ MIN šá] 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá ina É NA IGI.DU ₈ KUN-[sa] [?] / (indent) x 'x' 'x' ma ina i-'x' 'x' šú 'x' 'x' [u]š-te-'š ⁱ ? 'x' [...] / (indent) <i>šum₄-ma</i> GAZ _(copy: kum) - <i>ma</i> 'il'- <i>te-qú</i> [(x)] GIZKIM SIG ₅ IGI 'x' [(x)] / (indent) <i>šum₄-ma</i> GAZ- <i>ma</i> NU 'il'- <i>te-qú</i> GIZKIM ḪUL IGI 'x' [(x)]
------------------	--

- ▶ In VAT 9906 v 10' the sign read as GAZⁱ is drawn on the hand copy (KAL 1, 2007, 175 manuscript 18) as KUM. KAL 1 (2007, 76 Rs. V 10') marks the sign with an exclamation mark, but does not comment on it so that it is likely the original manuscript has KUM.
- ▶ As noted in KAL 1 (2007, 77 V 8'-11'), the above omen is similarly constructed to Sultantepe 65.

* * *

VAT 9906 v 12'

If ditto (= a lizard) repeatedly walks about on a man — his days will be long; a good message will be established for hi[m].

DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) ina UGU NA DU.DU U₄.MEŠ-šu GÍD.DA.MEŠ INIM SIG₅ GAR-š[ú]

šumma MIN (šurāru) ina muḫḫi amēli ittallak ūmūšu irrikū amāt damiqti iššakkanš[u]

VAT 9906 v 12'	'DIŠ' 'MIN' ina UGU NA DU.DU U ₄ .MEŠ-šu GÍD.DA.MEŠ <<ana>> INIM SIG ₅ GAR-š[ú]
----------------	---

- ▶ VAT 9906 v 12' appears to preserve the same omen as Assur 50. That omen writes EME.DIR, not MIN, and does not include the superfluous <<ana>> in the apodosis.

We have marked *ana* as a scribal mistake not only because it is not present in Assur 50, but it is also grammatically superfluous. See also Sultantepe 56 for another similar omen.

* * *

VAT 9906 v 13'

If ditto (= a lizard) with two tails is seen in a man's house — there will be news.

DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) šá 2 [K]UN.MEŠ-šá ina É NA IGI INIM GÁL-ši [(0)]

šumma MIN (šurīrittu) ša 2 zibbātuša ina bīt amēli innamir amātu ibbašši [(0)]

 VAT 9906 v 13' 'DIŠ' 'MIN' 'šá' '2' [K]UN.MEŠ-šá ina É 'NA' IGI INIM GÁL-ši [(0)]

- ▶ Based on the hand copy (KAL 1, 2007, 175 manuscript 18), there is room on the right-hand side for an additional sign, but it is unlikely that there is another sign in the space.
- ▶ Some of the signs of the protasis are not much more than traces, but can be confidently read due to comparisons with other protases with 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá 'with two tails'.

* * *

VAT 9906 v 14'

[If ditto (= a lizard) with three? t]ail[s] is seen in a man's house — ditto (= there will be news.)

[DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) šá 3? K]UN.[MEŠ]-šá ina É NA IGI KI.MIN (INIM GÁL-ši)

[šumma MIN (šurīrittu) ša 3? z]ibb[ātu]ša ina bīt amēli innamir KI.MIN (amātu ibbašši)

 VAT 9906 v 14' [DIŠ MIN šá 3? K]UN.[MEŠ]-šá ina É NA IGI KI.'MIN'

* * *

VAT 9906 v 15'

[If ditto (= a lizard) in a man's house] keeps making [noi]se? [the entire day] — there wi[ll] be misfortune.

[DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) ina É NA ina DÙ u₄-me G]Û-šu? ŠUB.ŠUB-di mi-qit-tu GÁL-[ši]

[šumma MIN (šurāru) ina bīt amēli ina kala ūme ri]gimšu? ittaddi miqittu ibbaš[ši]

 VAT 9906 v 15' [DIŠ MIN ina É NA ina DÙ u₄-me G]Û-^ršu[?] ŠUB.ŠUB-di mi-qit-tu GÁL-[ši]

- ▶ We reconstruct the missing parts of the protasis using Assur 51. The two omens are similar and differ only in orthography. See the commentary at Assur 51 for the phrase GÛ ... ŠUB.ŠUB-di and references to other omens about lizards making noise. For a discussion on animals making noise in *šumma ālu*, see Nineveh 47'.
- ▶ KAL 1 (2007, 76 manuscript 18 Rs. V 15') reconstructs PAP in the protasis instead of DÙ, even though it also reconstructs the omen from Assur 51 (KAL 1, 2007, 68 Vs. 51 A51), where it reads DÙ.

* * *

VAT 9906 v 16'

[If a dead ditto (= lizard)] is seen [in a ma]n's [house] — that house will diminish.

[DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) *mi-it-tu₄* ina É N]A IGI É BI LAL

[šumma MIN (*šurīrittu*) *mittu ina bīt amē*]li innamir bītu šū imatṭi

VAT 9906 v 16' [DIŠ MIN *mi-it-tu₄* ina É N]A IGI É BI LAL

- ▶ Except for the use of MIN instead of EME.DIR, the above appears to be the same omen as Assur 54.

* * *

VAT 9906 v 17'

[If ditto (= lizards) are very] numerous [in a man's house] — abandonment of the [man's] house.

[DIŠ MIN (EME.DIR) *ina É NA ma-gal*] ḪI.A ŠUB É [NA]

[šumma MIN (*šurārû*) *ina bīt amēli magal*] īmidū nadê bīt [amēli]

VAT 9906 v 17' [DIŠ MIN *ina É NA ma-gal*] ḪI.A ŠUB É [NA]

- ▶ We reconstruct the protasis from Assur 53, which likely preserves the same omen as above, with only minor orthographic differences.

* * *

VAT 9906 v 18'

[...] ... [...] ... falls — that man will die ...

[...] da [...] x ŠUB NA BI ÚŠ x zi

[...] ... [...] ... *imqut amēlu šū imât* ...

VAT 9906 v 18' [...] 'da' [...] 'x' ŠUB NA BI ÚŠ 'x' zi

* * *

VAT 9906 v 19'

[...] its ... [...] ...

[...]-šú li x [...] x

[...]-šu ... [...] ...

VAT 9906 v 19' [...]-šú li 'x' [...] 'x'

* * *

VAT 9906 v 20'

[...] ... [...] ...

[...] x [...] x

[...] ... [...] ...

 VAT 9906 v 20' [...] 'x' [...] 'x'

* * *

(gap)

VAT 9906 vi 1' and vi 2'

Lines VAT 9906 vi 1' and vi 2' are too fragmentary for a transliteration or translation.

* * *

VAT 9906 vi 3'

[...] ... his?

[...] x-šú?

[...] ...-šu?

 VAT 9906 vi 3' [...] 'x'-šú?

* * *

VAT 9906 vi 4'

[...] ...

[...] x bad x x

[...] ...

 VAT 9906 vi 4' [...] 'x' bad 'x' 'x'

* * *

VAT 9906 vi 5'

[...] ...

[...] x x

[...] ...

 VAT 9906 vi 5' [...] 'x' 'x'

- ▶ Manuscript VAT 9906 breaks off at this point.

* * *

Sultantepe Recension

Sultantepe 1

[If a lizard] falls [...] of a man's ... — that man will not [...] ... [...]

[DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana*] x NA ŠUB-*ut* NA BI *ul* [...] x [...]

[*šumma šurāru ana*] ... *amēli imqut amēlu šū ul* [...] ... [...]

STT 323 1 [DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana*] 'x' 'NA' ŠUB-*ut* NA BI *ul* [(x)] 'x' [...]

- ▶ The hand copy (STT 323) varies slightly from the reading of the above omen in *If a City 2* (2006, 182 omen 1). Before the sign NA, there are traces of a vertical wedge within the damaged section. The sign before the very broken NA is unlikely to be UGU as the next omen in line STT 323 2 has UGU NA. There are several omens in the recensions from Assur and Nineveh in which lizards fall in front of (IGI) or behind (EGIR) a man; one of those seems likely for the above omen as well. Collation of the original manuscript would be necessary to determine the reading, if it is possible at all.

* * *

Sultantepe 2

[If a lizard] falls [o]nto a man — confusion!, distre[ss].

[DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana*] UGU NA ŠUB-*ut* SÙH¹ *ni-ziq-[tu₄]*

[*šumma šurāru ana*] *muḥḥi amēli imqut tēšû¹ niziq[tu]*

STT 323 2 [DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana*] UGU NA ŠUB-*ut* 'SÙH¹'_(copy: SUḪUR) *ni-ziq-[tu₄]*

- ▶ The above omen is used to reconstruct parts of Assur 3 (see the commentary there) as they appear to preserve the same omen and both appear in sequences about lizards falling in relation to a man.

On the other hand, Assur 3 also helps us interpret the above apodosis. The Assur protasis reads SÙH *ni-ziq-tu₄* 'confusion, distress', and the hand copy (STT 323) shows a damaged SUḪUR, as noted by *If a City 2* (2006, 183 note 2). According to Borger (2010, 173 sign 646 SUḪUR), the sign SUḪUR is to be read SÙḪ.

If a City 2 (2006, 182 omen 2) leaves the sign as uninterpreted and reads it as two signs.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ...] UGU NA ŠUB-*ut* x x *ni-ziq-[tu]*

- ▶ See the commentary at Assur 3 for a discussion on the emotion *niziqtu*.

* * *

Sultantepe 3

[If] a li[zard] falls [on]to [a man's] shoulder(s) and [...]

[DIŠ] E[ME.ŠID ana U]GU bu-di [NA] ŠUB-ma [...]

[šumma] šu[rāru ana muḥ]ḥi būdi [amēli] imqutma [...]

STT 323 3 [DIŠ] E[ME.ŠID ana U]GU bu-di_(copy: KI) [NA] ŠUB¹-ma [...] (ruling)

- ▶ The reading of *bu-di* as *būdi* for 'shoulder(s)' (CAD B: 303 s.v. *būdu* A) warrants discussion. To begin with, the hand copy (STT 323) depicts the second sign as KI instead of DI. See also *If a City 2* (2006, 183 note 3). The signs KI and DI resemble each other, and it is possible that the modern copyist misread the sign. Collation of the original manuscript would be necessary to confirm the reading.

In any case, *If a City 2* (2006, 182 omen 3) also reads the sign as DI.

[DIŠ] EM[E.ŠID ana U]GU pu-di [NA] SUB-ma [...] (ruling)

If a City 2 (2006, 183 omen 3) however interprets the signs differently from our translation.

[If] a **liz[ard falls on]**to a [man's] **forehead** and [...]

The pair *būdu* 'shoulders' and *pūtu* 'forehead' are not only similar sounding words, but can also be ambiguous when written in cuneiform. This ambiguity also means, as CAD (B: 305 s.v. *būdu* A) notes, the pair could be read as *pūdu* (shoulders) or *būtu* (forehead). See the discussion there, for why *būdu* and *pūtu* have been accepted over the latter two. *If a City 2* (2006, 182 omen 3), however, reads *pu-di* and translates (2006, 183 omen 3) 'forehead'.

The problematic between *būdu* and *pūtu* also appears in two other similar omens: Sultantepe 18 and Assur 20.

- ▶ The final sign before the break is somewhat problematic as drawn on the hand copy (STT 323). It immediately follows ŠUB in the middle of the line so we therefore suggest interpreting it as an enclitic *-ma* as was also done in *If a City 2* (2006, 182 omen 3). This interpretation means the protasis has a missing second part. The hand copy, however, shows a large amount of blank space after the sign and there is only room for a sign or two on the missing right-hand edge. Perhaps the sign is extraneous. Collation of the manuscript would be necessary to be certain.

* * *

Sultantepe 4

[If] a lizard f[al]ls in front of a man — [his] legal adversary will be conquered.

[DIŠ] EME.ŠID ana IGI NA Š[UB]-ut KUR-ad EN INIM-[šu]

[šumma] šurāru ana pān amēli i[mq]ut kašād bēl amāti[šu]

STT 323 4 [DIŠ] EME.ŠID¹ ana¹ IGI NA Š[UB]-¹ut¹ KUR-ad EN INIM-[šu]

- ▶ Assur 5 and 7 as well as Sultantepe 4 and 5 should be examined as a group as all four are very similar to one another.
- ▶ Based on the hand copy (STT 323), the above omen has the same protasis as the subsequent omen, Sultantepe 5. The apodoses are similar in meaning, but are not the same. For a discussion on the

repetition of this particular protasis with varying apodoses—though all the apodoses relate to overcoming adversaries—see the commentary at Assur 5.

- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 182 omen 4) does not include the break in the sign ŠUB, but otherwise transliterates the omen as above.

* * *

Sultantepe 5

[If] a lizard f[al]ls in front of a man — he will prevail[] over his legal adversary.

[DIŠ] EME.ŠID ana IGI NA Š[UB]-ut UGU EN INIM-šú GUB-a[z]

[šumma] šurāru ana pān amēli i[mq]ut eli bēl amātišu izza[z]

STT 323 5 [DIŠ] EME.ŠID¹ ana¹ IGI NA Š[UB]-¹ut¹ UGU EN¹ INIM-šú GUB-a[z]

- ▶ See also the commentary at Sultantepe 4, which has the same protasis as the above omen.

To resolve the problem of two omens with the same protasis, *If a City 2* (2006, 183 note 4-5) speculates that a single sign, such as GIG ‘sick’ might be missing after the sign NA in the above omen. The hand copy (STT 323) shows a large amount of blank space without any damage after NA making such reading unlikely.

Further, this particular protasis ‘If a lizard falls in front of a man’ is repeated with varying apodoses—though all relate to overcoming adversaries—in all three recensions. See the discussion at Assur 5.

* * *

Sultantepe 6

[If] a lizard falls [beh]ind a man and [touches] him — he will experie[nce] a negative *twist* of fate.

[DIŠ] EME.ŠID ana [EGI]R NA ŠUB-ut-ma [TAG]-su pí-is-lat ʘUL IGI-[mar]

[šumma] šurāru ana [ark]at amēli imqutma [ilpus]su pišlāt lumni im[mar]

STT 323 6 [DIŠ] EME.ŠID ana¹ [EGI]R NA¹ ŠUB¹-ut¹-ma¹ [TAG]-su pí-is-lat ʘUL IGI-[mar]

- ▶ For the interpretation of *pí-is-lat* ʘUL ‘negative *twist* of fate’ and the phonetical associations between the protasis and apodosis, see the discussion at Nineveh 30’. The two omens appear to be the same. See also Assur 10; although similar, the subject of the Assur omen’s apodosis is KALAG.GA-su ‘his fortress’ instead of ‘he’ (referring to the man in the protasis).

- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 181, 182 both pages omen 6) reconstructs and translates the omen as follows:

[DIŠ] EME.SID ana [EG]IR NA ŠUB-ut-ma [TAG]-su piš-is-lat ʘUL IGI

[If] a lizard falls [beh]ind a man and **strikes** him, he will **experience** an evil incident.

The hand copy (STT 323) shows a break after IGI and plenty of room to reconstruct the phonetic complement -mar. It has therefore been added to our reconstruction. The reading EME.SID in *If a City 2* is surely just a typographic error for EME.ŠID.

* * *

Sultantepe 7

[If] a lizard falls [beh]ind a man and [fl]ops about repeatedly — he will experie[nce] evil.

[DIŠ] EME.ŠID *ana* [EGI]R NA ŠUB-*ut-ma* [*it*]-*ta-pí-iš* MUNUS.ĪUL IGI-[*mar*]

[šumma] *šurāru ana* [*ark*]at *amēli imqutma* [*it*]*tapiš lemutta im*[*mar*]

STT 323 7 [DIŠ] 'EME'.ŠID 'ana' [EGI]R 'NA' 'ŠUB'-*ut-ma* [*it*]-*ta-pí-iš* 'MUNUS'.ĪUL IGI-[*mar*]

- ▶ See also Nineveh 31' and Assur 9. While the above appears to be the same as Assur 9, the Nineveh omen omits the enclitic *-ma* 'and' between the protasis's verbs.
- ▶ See also the commentary at Nineveh 31' for a discussion of the verb *ittapiš*.
- ▶ Just as in the Nineveh sequence, the protases of the above omen and the preceding (Sultantepe 6) have a similar structure. They also share a repetition of the consonant patterns: pslt in the previous omen, tpsl here.

* * *

Sultantepe 8

[If a li]zard [fa]lls onto [a man] from the sky — he [will consume a large] share.

[DIŠ E]ME.ŠID TA AN-*e ana* UGU [NA ŠU]B-*ut* ĪA.LA [GAL GU₇]

[šumma] *šurāru ištu šamê ana muḥḥi* [*amēli im*]qut zitta [*rabīta ikkal*]

STT 323 8 [DIŠ E]ME.ŠID 'TA' 'AN'-*e* 'ana' 'UGU' [NA ŠU]B-*ut* ĪA.LA [GAL GU₇]

- ▶ We use Assur 11 to reconstruct the above apodosis's missing parts. The two omens are the same except for slight differences in orthography.

* * *

Sultantepe 9

If a lizard [jum]ps onto a man from ... — that man [will? receive? a good?] m[essage?].

DIŠ EME.ŠID TA x *ana* UGU NA [GU₄].UD NA BI I[NIM? SIG₅? IGI?-*mar*?]

šumma šurāru ištu ... ana muḥḥi amēli [*išḥ*]iṭ *amēlu šū a*[*māt? damiqt? immar?*]

STT 323 9 'DIŠ' EME.ŠID 'TA' x *ana* UGU NA [GU₄].UD NA BI I[NIM? SIG₅? IGI?-*mar*?]

- ▶ The protasis's verb GU₄.UD 'jumps' as well as the above omen's apodosis have been reconstructed based on Assur 12.

Assur 12

[DIŠ EME.DIR TA x] *a-na* UGU NA GU₄.UD¹-*iṭ* NA BI INIM SIG₅ IGI-*mar*

[If a lizard] jumps¹ on top of a man [from ...] — that man will receive a good message.

Both omens are preceded and followed by similar omens on their respective manuscripts. Nevertheless, the reconstruction differs from that in *If a City 2*. The UD of GU₄.UD is clearly visible on the Sultantepe hand copy. The same sign however is interpreted as a phonetic complement to the verb ŠUB ‘to fall’ in *If a City 2*, which reconstructs (2006, 182 omen 9) and translates (2006, 183 omen 9) the omen as follows:

DIŠ EME. ŠID TA x ana UGU NA [ŠUB]-ut NA BI H[A.LA ...]
If a lizard **falls** onto a man from ..., that man [...] a sh[are.]

The sign preceding the final break, INIM above and HA in *If a City 2*, is fragmentary. The hand copy only shows a *Winkelhaken* and what might be partial traces of some wedges. Any reading is tentative, but INIM fits the traces and harmonizes with Assur 12.

- ▶ The sign x as drawn on the hand copy is complete, but it is unknown to me. *If a City 2* also leaves the sign uninterpreted.

* * *

Sultantepe 10

If a lizard [cli]mbs from the ground onto the top of a man — [he will acquire] riches.

DIŠ EME.ŠID TA KI ana UGU NA [E]₁₁ NÍG.TUK [IGI-mar]

šumma šurāru ištu qaqqari ana muḥḥi amēli [īl]i mašrē [immar]

STT 323 10 DIŠ EME.ŠID¹ TA KI ana UGU NA [E]₁₁ NÍG.¹TUK¹ [IGI-mar]

- ▶ The apodosis’s verb has been reconstructed from Assur 13. See the commentary there for the differences in what the man acquires in the apodosis. In other omens’ apodoses, NÍG.TUK appears with the verbs (*w*)*ašābu* ‘to increase’, *rappušu* ‘to expand’, or *rašû* ‘to have; to acquire’. Any of them are also possible reconstructions above.
- ▶ See also Assur 76’, which features a two-headed lizard crawling onto a man.

* * *

Sultantepe 11

If a lizard j[umps] from a wall onto a man — [he will appropriate some]thing not h[is own].

DIŠ EME.ŠID TA É.GAR₈ ana UGU NA G[U₄.UD mi]m-ma NU š[u]-a-ti [ŠU-su KUR-ad]

šumma šurāru ištu igāri ana muḥḥi amēli i[šḥiṭ mi]mma lā š[u]āti [qāssu ikaššad]

STT 323 11 DIŠ EME.ŠID¹ TA É.¹GAR₈¹ ana UGU NA G[U₄.UD mi]m-¹ma¹ ¹NU¹ š[u]-a-ti [ŠU-su KUR-ad] (ruling)

- ▶ See also Assur 14, which has been used to reconstruct the above omen. The omens are very similar, but the Assur omen’s apodosis adds NA BI ‘that man’. As drawn on the Sultantepe hand copy, there is not enough room for NA BI in the above omen and has therefore not been reconstructed. This changes the translation slightly, but not the meaning of the apodosis from that in the Assur omen.

* * *

Sultantepe 12

If a liza[rd fa]lls onto a man's right hand — [he will acquire ri]ches; [he will consume his riches].

DIŠ EME.[ŠID] *ana* UGU ŠU NA ZAG [ŠUB]-*ut* [NÍ]G.TUK [TUK-ši NÍG.TUK-šú GU₇]

šumma šurā[ru] ana muḥḥi qāt amēli imitti [imq]ut [m]ašrê [irašši mašrêšu ikkal]

STT 323 12 'DIŠ' EME.[ŠID] *ana* UGU ŠU NA ZAG [ŠUB]-*ut* [NÍ]G.TUK [TUK-ši NÍG.TUK-šú GU₇]

- ▶ We reconstruct the apodosis from Assur 15; note, however the Assur omen reads Á.TUK 'profit', instead of NÍG.TUK 'riches'. As the two omens are otherwise very similar, the commentary there largely also applies to the Sultantepe omen. See also Assur 13 and Sultantepe 10 for a similar pair.
- ▶ See the commentary at Assur 15 for a discussion on the thematic link between Assur 15 and 16 and Sultantepe 12 and 13. Assur 15 also discusses whether the above apodosis is positive or negative.

* * *

Sultantepe 13

If a liz[ard fa]lls onto a man's left hand — [he will build] a house with his daughters' money.

DIŠ EME.[ŠID] *ana* UGU ŠU NA GÙB [ŠU]B-*ut ina* KÙ.BABBAR DUMU.MUNUS.MEŠ-šú É [DÙ-*uš*]

šumma šurā[ru] ana muḥḥi qāt amēli šumēli [imq]ut ina kasap mārātišu bīta [ippuš]

STT 323 13 'DIŠ' 'EME'.[ŠID] *ana* UGU ŠU NA GÙB [ŠU]B-*ut ina* KÙ.BABBAR 'DUMU'.MUNUS.MEŠ-šú É [DÙ-*uš*]

- ▶ Assur 16 has been used to reconstruct the above omen's apodosis. The Assur omen adds MEŠ to KÙ.BABBAR 'money, silver' but otherwise appears to be identical.
- ▶ See Sultantepe 12 and Assur 15 for lizards falling onto a man's right hand.

* * *

Sultantepe 14

If a liz[ard fa]lls onto a man's right foot — something will be los[t]; an eclipse during the d[ay] watch.

DIŠ EME.[ŠID *ana*] UGU GÌR NA 15 [ŠU]B-*ut mim-ma* ZÁ[Ḥ] KA×MI EN.NUN *u*_[4-me]

šumma šurā[ru ana] muḥḥi šēp amēli imitti [im]qut mimma iḥall[iq] na'dur maššarti ū[me]

STT 323 14 DIŠ 'EME'.[ŠID *ana*] UGU GÌR NA 15 [ŠU]B-*ut mim-ma* ZÁ[Ḥ] KA×MI EN.NUN *u*_[4-me]

- ▶ See also Assur 18. Both it and the above omen have the same protasis—though the Assur omen writes ZAG ‘right’ where the Sultantepe omen writes 15 ‘right’—and although the apodoses differ there is a connection with the use of *mim-ma* and ZÁĤ.

Assur 18

[If a lizard] falls onto a man’s right foot — all of his possessions [will disap]pear.

[DIŠ EME.DIR] *a-na* UGU GÌR NA ZAG ŠUB-*ut mim-mu-šu* [ZÁ]Ĥ

- ▶ The second-half of the apodosis, KA×MI EN.NUN U_[4-me] ‘an eclipse during the d[ay] watch’, can be found in several omens; see Assur 21 for a list and discussion on the reconstruction.
- ▶ The above omen is thematically linked with Sultantepe 15.

* * *

Sultantepe 15

[If a lizard fa]lls onto a man’s left foot — he will acqu[ire] a *twitching* in (his) foot.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID] *ana* UGU GÌR NA 150 [ŠU]B-*ut LUĤ GÌR TUK-*[šī]

[šumma šurāru] *ana muḥḥi šēp amēli šumēli [im]qut galāt šēpi iras[šī]*

STT 323 15 [DIŠ EME.ŠID] *ana* UGU GÌR NA 150 [ŠU]B-*ut LUĤ GÌR TUK-*[šī]

- ▶ For the reading *galātu* ‘to twitch’ for LUĤ, see the commentary at Assur 19. Both Assur 19 and Assur 106’ have the same apodosis as above except instead of LUĤ, they write MUNUS.LUĤ. Though MUNUS.LUĤ is not otherwise attested for *galātu*, the apodoses of all three omens have been translated as above.

The sign LUĤ can also be read *mesû* ‘to wash’. See CAD (M.2: 30 s.v. *mesû*), which explains the translation in *If a City 2* (2006, 185 omen 15).

[If a **liz[ard]** falls onto a man’s left foot, he will **acquire a foot-washer**.

- ▶ Assur 19 is the Assur counterpart to the above omen. The Assur omen differs by using the sign GÙB ‘left’ instead of 150 ‘left’ and writing GÌR.MEŠ-*šu* ‘his feet’ instead of GÌR ‘foot’ in the apodosis.

* * *

Sultantepe 16

[If a lizard] clim[bs o]nto a man’s foot — that man will rejoic[ce].

[DIŠ EME.ŠID] *ana* UGU GÌR NA E_[11] NA BI *i-ḥad-*[*du*]

[šumma šurāru] *ana muḥḥi šēp amēli il[i] amēlu šū iḥad[du]*

STT 323 16 [DIŠ EME.ŠID] *ana* UGU GÌR NA E_[11] NA BI *i-ḥad-*[*du*]

- ▶ See also Nineveh 18. The only difference between the two omens is that the above omen adds NA BI ‘that man’ to the apodosis.

* * *

Sultantepe 17

[If a lizard] falls [on]to a man — ... tha[t ...]

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana U]GU NA ŠUB-ut x ú? mu? 'a? ud šu-a-tu[4 x]

[šumma šurāru ana mu]hhi amēli imqut ... šuāt[u ...]

STT 323 17 [DIŠ EME.ŠID ana U]GU (erasure) NA ŠUB-^rut^r x^r ú^r? mu^r 'a^r? ud šu-a-tu[4 x]

- ▶ The above omen is reconstructed in *If a City 2* (2006, 184 omen 17) as follows:

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana U]GU (erasure) NA ŠUB-ut x u₂ x mu 'a ud šu-a-tu₄ [...]

From the hand copy (STT 323), what *If a City 2* reads as x between ú and mu appears to be just one of the horizontal wedges on the right-hand edge of the sign ú.

The hand copy indicates the manuscript is damaged in this section and as the signs are difficult to interpret as drawn, collation would be necessary to help understand the omen.

Comparing STT 323 17 to other lines on the manuscript's hand copy, there is room for at least one sign after the sign read as -tu₄.

* * *

Sultantepe 18

[If a lizard] fall[s on]to a man's shoulder(s) (and) touches him — unexpected news will reac[h] (him).

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana UG]U bu-di NA ŠUB-u[t] TAG-su INIM NU ZU KUR-á[d]

[šumma šurāru ana mu]hhi būdi amēli imqu[t] ilpussu amāt lā idû ikašša[d]

STT 323 18 [DIŠ EME.ŠID ana UG]U bu-di_(copy: K1) NA ŠUB-u[t] TAG-^rsu^r INIM^r NU ZU KUR-á[d]

- ▶ See Assur 20; the two omens are similar, but differ in that the lizard falls onto the man's *pūtu* 'forehead' in the Assur omen. The commentary at Sultantepe 3 discusses the confusion between *būdu* 'shoulder(s)' and *pūtu* 'forehead'.
- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 184, 185 both pages omen 18) reconstructs and translates the omen as follows:

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana UG]U **pu**-di NA ŠUB-u[t] TAG-su INIM NU ZU KUR-**ad**₂
 [If a lizard] **falls** [on]to a man's **forehead** [**and**] strikes him, an unknown matter will **reach him**.
- ▶ Sultantepe 18–25 closely follow the sequence Assur 20–28.

* * *

Sultantepe 19

[If a lizard fa]lls [on]to a man’s stool — an eclipse during the day watch (will occur).

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana UG]U ^{giš}GU.ZA NA [ŠU]B-ut KA×MI EN.NUN *u₄-me*

[šumma šurāru ana mu]h̄hi kussi amēli [im]qut na’dur maššarti ūme

STT 323 19 [DIŠ EME.ŠID ana UG]U ^rgiš^rGU.ZA^r NA [ŠU]B-ut KA×MI EN.NUN *u₄-^rme^r*

- ▶ See Assur 21; the above omen has been used to reconstruct the Assur omen as the two omens are the same. Similar to the Assur recension, the above omen begins a sequence where a lizard interacts with a man’s furniture in the Sultantepe recension.
- ▶ As mentioned at Assur 21, the apodosis KA×MI EN.NUN *u₄-me* (alt: EN.NU.UN) ‘an eclipse during the d[ay] watch’, can be found in several omens. The above omen, however, is the only one to preserve *u₄-me* and has been used to reconstruct the remaining omens.

If a City 2’s (2006, 184 omen 19) reads the above apodosis as KA×MI EN.NU.UN.UD.ZAL. This reading simply does not match the hand copy (STT 323). In particular, the hand copy has NUN, not NU.UN and the final sign is ME. The sign does not resemble other ZAL signs on the manuscript; see for instance in line 20 (Sultantepe 20). The omen is translated in *If a City 2* (2006, 185 omen 19) as follows:

[If a lizard] **falls** [on]to a **ma[n’s ch]air**—darkness in the **midday** watch.

The change in meaning is minimal, but incorrect. *If a City 2* carries the apodosis’s translation over to both Assur 21 (2006, 179 omen 82’) and Sultantepe 14 (2006, 185 omen 14).

* * *

Sultantepe 20

[If a lizard] climbs [on]to a [m]an’s sto[ol] — that man will be chronically ill.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana UG]U ^{giš}GU.[ZA N]A E₁₁ NA BI *is-sal-la-a’*

[šumma šurāru ana mu]h̄hi kus[si a]mēli ili amēlu šū issalla’

STT 323 20 [DIŠ EME.ŠID ana UG]U ^{giš}GU.[ZA N]A ^rE₁₁^r NA BI *is-sal-^rla^r-^ra^r* (copy: MUNUS)

- ▶ The above omen’s counterpart in the Assur recension is Assur 22. While the Assur omen does not include NA BI ‘that man’ in the apodosis, the two omens are otherwise the same.
- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 185 omen 20) translates the above omen as follows:

[If a lizard] climbs [on]to a **ma[n’s ch]air, he will be infected.**

For the interpretation of the apodosis’s verb, *issalla’*, as ‘he will fall chronically ill’, see the commentary at Assur 22.

- ▶ The final sign of STT 323 20 must be -a’. The sign indicated on the hand copy, however, more closely resembles MUNUS. As the hand copy shows this part of the tablet is damaged, it is plausible that this is a mistake on the part of the modern copyist.

Further, the hand copy confirms the reading -sal (for the second sign in the final verb). The sign is read in *If a City 2* (2006, 184 omen 20) as -sa. *If a City 2* otherwise reads the omen as above.

* * *

Sultantepe 21

[If a lizard] cr[aw]ls [under]neath a man's st[o]ol and lies down — that house will (again) be inhabited.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana KI].TA ^{giš}GU.[Z]A NA K[U₄]-ma ir-bi-iš É BI TUŠ-ab

[šumma šurāru ana ša]pal kus[s]i amēli ir[ub]ma irbiš bītu šū uššab

STT 323 21 [DIŠ EME.ŠID ana KI].TA ^{giš}GU.[Z]A NA K[U₄]-ma ir-bi-iš É BI TUŠ-ab (ruling)

- ▶ See also Assur 23 as the two omens are similar. The Assur omen, however, predicts that KÚR É BI [TUŠ-ab] 'an enemy [will inhabit] that house'.

* * *

Sultantepe 22

[If a lizard] falls [on]to a man's tab[le] — ... he will be vexed.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana UG]U ^{giš}BAN[ŠUR] NA ŠUB-ut x x ina-an-ziq

[šumma šurāru ana muḥ]ḥi paš[šūr] amēli imqut ... inanziq

STT 323 22 [DIŠ EME.ŠID ana UG]U ^{giš}BAN[ŠUR] NA ŠUB¹-ut¹ x¹ x¹ ina¹-an-ziq

- ▶ See Assur 25; the two omens are very similar. The Assur omen's apodosis, however, only reads *ina-an-ziq* 'he will be ve[xed]', without the damage present in the Sultantepe omen (see below).
- ▶ The hand copy (STT 323) indicates traces of possibly two signs in the space between ŠUB-ut and *ina-an-ziq*. The traces show one horizontal wedge, similar to *ina*, followed by a damaged BAD. Based on typical omen syntax and the variations of the apodosis, the reading NA BI 'that man' seems probable. While the traces allow for BI, they do not, however, fit well with the reading NA. Collation of the original manuscript would be necessary to attempt a reading.
- ▶ *Ifa City 2* (2006, 184, 185 both pages omen 22) omits the traces preceding the final verb. The earlier edition reads and translates the above omen as follows:

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana UG]U GIŠ.BANŠUR NA ŠUB-ut ina-an-ziq
[If a lizard] falls [on]to a man's **table, he** will have trouble.

- ▶ See the commentary at Assur 3 for a discussion on the apodosis's verb *nazāqu* and its associated emotions.

* * *

Sultantepe 23

[If a lizard] falls into a bowl [on] a man's ta[ble] — illness will afflict him.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana UGU] ^{giš}BA[NŠUR] NA ana dugkal-li ŠUB-ut GIG DAB-su

[šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi] pa[ššūr] amēli ana kalli imqut muršu iṣabbassu

STT 323 23 [DIŠ EME.ŠID ana UGU] ^{giš}BA[NŠUR] NA ana ^{dug^r}kal¹-^rli¹ ŠUB-ut 'GIG' <<KI¹>>
DAB-su

- ▶ The hand copy (STT 323) indicates damage to the manuscript around the sign GIG. The sign GIG, as drawn on the hand copy, is missing a part on the right, similar to 𒄀. The hand copy also indicates an extraneous and damaged sign between GIG and DAB-su. We suggest the extraneous sign is likely the missing part of GIG and that the sign may have been written over an erased KI. We therefore read 'GIG' <<KI¹>>. Collation is necessary to confirm the suggestion.

If a City 2 (2006, 184 omen and note 23) does not indicate GIG is broken in its reconstruction of the above omen and reads KI as x, also suggesting it might be an erasure

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana UGU] GIŠ.BA[NŠUR] NA ana DUG kal-li ŠUB-ut GIG x DIB-su

- ▶ Sultantepe 23 and Assur 26 are similar, and the Sultantepe omen has been used to reconstruct the Assur omen's fragmentary apodosi. The Assur omen's protasis has been emended as it elides *kal* from *kalli*.

* * *

Sultantepe 24

[If a lizard] climbs [onto a man's] t[able] (and then) lies down — illness will afflict one who is on a journey.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana UGU] ^{giš}BANŠUR NA] E₁₁ ir-bi-iš šá KASKAL GIG TE-šú

[šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi] p[aššūr amēli] ili irbiš ša ḥarrāni muršu iṭeḥḥišu

STT 323 24 [DIŠ EME.ŠID ana UGU] ^{giš}BANŠUR NA] E₁₁ ir-bi-iš šá KASKAL 'GIG' TE-šú

- ▶ As the Sultantepe and Assur sequence have been following each other closely and the previous omen, Sultantepe 23, shared similarities with Assur 26, we would expect the above omen to correspond to Assur 27. Indeed the two omens have the same protasis and somewhat related apodoses. Nevertheless, see the commentary at Assur 27 for the difficulties in reconciling the two omens' signs with each other.

* * *

Sultantepe 25

[If a lizard] crawls [underneath] a man's [tabl]e and lies down — his social standing will not be stable.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana KI.TA ^{giš}BANŠU]R NA KU₄-ma ir-bi-iš SUḤUŠ.BI NU GI.NA

[šumma šurāru ana šapal paššū]r amēli irubma irbiš išissu ul ikân

STT 323 25 [DIŠ EME.ŠID ana KI.TA ^{giš}BANŠU]R NA KU₄ ir-bi-iš 'SUḤUŠ'.BI NU GI.NA
(ruling)

- ▶ The missing portions of the above protasis have been reconstructed from Assur 28. See also that omen's commentary for a discussion on *išdu* with the meaning 'social standing'.

* * *

Sultantepe 26

[If a lizard] falls [onto a ma]n's [bed] — he will be vexed.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* UGU ^{giš}NÁ N]A ŠUB-*ut ina-an-ziq*

[*šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi ereš amē*]li imqut inanziq

STT 323 26 [DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* UGU ^{giš}NÁ N]A ŠUB-^rut^r ina-an-^rziq^r

- ▶ We follow *If a City 2* (2006, 184 note 26) and restore the above protasis on the assumption that Sultantepe 26 and 27 are thematically paired.
- ▶ See the commentary at Assur 3 for a discussion of the apodosis's verb *nazāqu* and its associated emotions.

* * *

Sultantepe 27

[If a lizard] climbs [onto a ma]n's [bed] — (there will be) a favorable omen.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* UGU ^{giš}NÁ N]A E₁₁ INIM.GAR SIG₅

[*šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi ereš amē*]i ili egerrû damqu

STT 323 27 [DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* UGU ^{giš}NÁ N]A ^rE₁₁ INIM.GAR SIG₅

- ▶ The protasis has been restored from Assur 30.

* * *

Sultantepe 28

[If a lizard] cli[mbs onto a ma]n's [bed and lies down] — he won't have children.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* UGU ^{giš}NÁ N]A E_[11-ma ir-bi-iš] DUMU.MEŠ NU IGI

[*šumma šurāru ana muḥḥi ereš amē*]i ī[*lima irbiš*] mārī ul immar

STT 323 27 [DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* UGU ^{giš}NÁ N]A E_[11-ma ir-bi-iš] ^rDUMU.MEŠ^r ^rNU^r IGI

- ▶ The missing parts of the protasis have been reconstructed from Assur 31.

* * *

Sultantepe 29

[If a lizard] climbs? [onto a man's bed ...] — relocation of the bed.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana UGU ^{giš}NÁ NA] E₁₁? [...] nu-kúr ^{giš}NÁ

[šumma šurāru ana muḫḫi ereš amēli] īli? [...] nukkur erši

STT 323 29 [DIŠ EME.ŠID ana UGU ^{giš}NÁ NA] ^rE₁₁? [...] nu-kúr ^rgiš^rNÁ^r

- ▶ The manuscript's hand copy (STT 323) only shows traces of the bottom edge of the sign read above as E₁₁. The reading is tentative and based on the protasis of the previous omen. Another suggestion would be to mimic Nineveh 40' and read the traces as 'DU'. 'DU'-[ak]. The protasis would be '[If a lizard] walks ab[out]' [on top of a man's bed]'. The traces are omitted from *If a City 2* (2006, 184 omen 29), which reconstructs this omen as follows:

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana UGU GIŠ.NA₂ NA...] nu-kur₂ GIŠ.NA₂

* * *

Sultantepe 30

[If a liza]rd is [slee]ping on top of [a man's bed] and (then) fal[ls off] — that man will consume a share ...

[DIŠ EME.Š]ID ana UGU [^{giš}NÁ NA ša-]il-ma ŠUB-[ut] NA BI ḪA.LA GU₇ x

[šumma šurā]ru ana muḫḫi [ereš amēli šal]ilma imq[ut] amēlu šū zitta ikkal ...

STT 323 30 [DIŠ EME.Š]ID ana ^rUGU^r [^{giš}NÁ NA ša-]il-ma ^rŠUB^r-[ut] NA BI ḪA.LA ^rGU₇^r ^rx^r

- ▶ Nineveh 34' and Sultantepe 30 share the same protases and partially share the same apodosis. The Nineveh omen expands the apodosis: NA BI ḪA.LA GU₇ nu-kúr ^{giš}NÁ 'that man will consume a share, relocation of the bed.'
- ▶ The manuscript's hand copy (STT 323) shows a broken sign after GU₇ 'to consume', but as the signs are drawn on the hand copy, there is not enough room for an additional apodosis after GU₇.

* * *

Sultantepe 31

[If a liz]ard [cr]awls underneath [a man's] b[ed] and lies down — he will be happy.

[DIŠ EME].ŠID ana KI.TA ^{giš}[NÁ NA K]U₄-ma NÁ-iš ŠÀ.BI DÙG.GA

[šumma šur]āru ana šapal e[reš amēli īr]ubma irbiš libbašu iṭāb

STT 323 31 [DIŠ EME].^rŠID^r ana KI.TA ^rgiš^r[NÁ NA K]U₄-ma NÁ-^riš^r ŠÀ.BI DÙG.GA_(copy: BI)

- ▶ See Assur 32; the two omens have the same protasis and apodosis. Assur 32 syllabically writes *ir-bi-iš* instead of NÁ-iš 'lies down' as above.

- ▶ The last sign is written as BI on the hand copy (STT 323), but one would expect a GA after DÙG. *If a City 2* (2006, 184 omen 31) reads DÙG.GA without commenting on the hand copy's BI.

* * *

Sultantepe 32

[If liz]ards [c]onfront one another underneath [a man's] be[d] — relocation of the bed.

[DIŠ EME].ŠID ana KI.TA ^{giš}N[Á NA i]m-taḥ-ḥa-ra nu-kúr GIŠ.NÁ

[šumma šurā]rū ana šapal ere[š amēli i]mtaḥḥarā nukkur erši

STT 323 32 [DIŠ EME].ŠID ana KI.TA ^{giš}N[Á NA i]m-taḥ-ḥa-ra' nu-kúr ^{giš}r'NÁ'

- ▶ Because the verb *im-taḥ-ḥa-ra* requires a plural subject, EME.ŠID has been translated as a plural. For the plural reading lizards, without MEŠ, see the commentary at Assur 53.

* * *

Sultantepe 33

[If a liz]ard [fa]lls onto [a sick man's] bed — that sick (man): his illness has befallen him.

[DIŠ EME].ŠID ana UGU ^{giš}NÁ [NA GIG ŠU]B-ut GIG BI GIG-su ŠUB-ut

[šumma šurā]ru ana muḥḥi ereš [amēli marši im]qut maršu šū murussu imqut

STT 323 33 [DIŠ EME].ŠID ana UGU ^{giš}NÁ [NA GIG ŠU]B-ut GIG 'BI' GIG-su ŠUB-ut

- ▶ See also the commentary at Assur 33 for the reconstruction of the above protasis as well as the interpretation and translation of *maqātu* in the context of illness. The Assur omen omits GIG BI 'that sick (man)' from its apodosis, but it otherwise duplicates the above.
- ▶ The above omen and Sultantepe 34 are thematic variants with antithetical protases. See the latter's commentary for a discussion of similar omens in the medical-diagnostic series SA.GIG.
- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 184, 185 both pages omen 33) reconstructs and translates the omen as follows:

[DIŠ EME].ŠID ana UGU GIŠ.NA₂ [NA GIG ŠU]B-ut GIG BI GIG-su ŠUB-ut

[If a liz]ard falls onto the bed of [a sick man], that sick man's **sickness will fall (away)**.

See Assur 33's commentary on the translation of *maqātu* in the context of illness for the problems with interpreting ŠUB-ut as 'fall (away)'.

- ▶ The commentary at Nineveh 11 lists the lizard omens touching on the topic of illness.

* * *

Sultantepe 34

[If a liz]ard climbs onto [a sic]k (man's) be[d] — that sick man's illness will leave him.

[DIŠ EME.ŠI]D ana UGU ^{giš}N[Á GI]G E₁₁ GIG BI GIG-su TAG₄-šú

[šumma šurā]ru ana muḫḫi er[eš marš]i īli maršu šū murussu izzibšu

STT 323 34 [DIŠ EME.ŠI]D ana UGU ^{giš}N[Á GI]G E₁₁ GIG BI GIG-su TAG₄ (copy: ŠUB)-šú (ruling)

- ▶ The above apodosis, as drawn on the manuscript's hand copy (STT 323), appears to be the same as Sultantepe 33's apodosis, except for the final enclitic. That is, instead of the verb ŠUB having the phonetic complement *-ut* as in Sultantepe 33, Sultantepe 34 replaces it with the enclitic pronoun *-šú* to form ŠUB-šú. The reading ŠUB-šú is problematic. We would expect ŠUB to indicate a form of *maqātu* here as well, but due to the final dental in the verb, we would expect the enclitic to be *-su*, not *-šú*. Moreover Sultantepe 34's protasis is the opposite of Sultantepe 33's. We would expect the apodoses of Sultantepe 33 and 34 to also reflect this polarity.

A solution presents itself in three rather similar omens:¹⁶⁸ the lizard omen Nineveh 35', the gecko omen 42' from *šumma ālu's* Tablet 33, and a lizard omen in the medical-diagnostic series SA.GIG, TDP 2: 45.

Nineveh 35'

DIŠ EME.ŠID ana UGU ^{giš}NÁ lúGIG E₁₁ lúGIG BI GIG-su TAG₄-šú

If a lizard climbs onto the bed of a sick man — that sick man's sickness will leave him.

Tablet 33 (geckos), omen 42'¹⁶⁹

[DIŠ MUŠ.DÍM.GURUN.NA ana ^{giš}N]Á GIG E₁₁ GIG BI ina U₄-me šú-a-tu₄ GIG.BI TAG₄-šú

[If a gecko] climbs up [onto a] sick man's bed — that sick man's sickness will leave him on that day.

SA.GIG TDP 2: 45¹⁷⁰

DIŠ EME.ŠID ana UGU ^{giš}NÁ GIG i-li GIG-su ár-ḫiš TAG₄-šú

Wenn eine Eidechse auf das Bett des Kranken hinaufsteigt: Noch am selben Tag wird seine Krankheit ihn verlassen.

All three omens have the same protasis and similar apodoses as the above Sultantepe omen. The problematic ŠUB-šú of the Sultantepe omen, however, is replaced by TAG₄-šú in all three omens. The signs ŠUB and TAG₄ are similar enough that it is plausible to imagine the modern copyist mistakenly drew ŠUB instead of TAG₄ on the Sultantepe hand copy.

We suggest, therefore, reading TAG₄-šú instead of ŠUB-šú in the apodosis, following Heeßel (2001, 43 note 45 STT 323 Vs. Zeile 34).

- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 184 omen 34) reconstructs and translates (2006, 185 omen 34) the above omen as follows:

¹⁶⁸ Although the similarities between Sultantepe 34, Nineveh 35', and TDP 2:45 were already noted by *If a City 2* (2006, 185 note 34), they were not used to interpret Sultantepe 34's apodosis in that edition.

¹⁶⁹ *Šumma ālu's* Tablet 33 is being revised and re-edited by Judith Pfitzner as part of the Bestiarium Mesopotamicum project (*forthcoming*). The transliteration is from her work. Until then, the most recent edition is *If a City 2* (2006, 206, 207 both pages omen 42').

¹⁷⁰ The reconstructed transliteration has been created by the author from the score in Heeßel (2001, 33 omen 45). The translation is quoted from Heeßel (2001, 39 omen 45).

[DIŠ EME.Š]ID *ana* UGU GIŠ.NA₂ [GI]G E₁₁ GIG BI GIG-*su* ŠUB-*šu*₂ (ruling)
 [If a liz]ard climbs onto the **bed of a sick man**, that sick man's sickness will **fall (away)** from him.

See Assur 33's commentary on the translation of *maqātu* in the context of illness for the problems with interpreting ŠUB-*šu* as 'fall (away)'.

- ▶ For a list of omens involving illness, see the commentary at Nineveh 11.

* * *

Sultantepe 35

[If a lizard] falls onto a man who is [en]gaged in a la[wsuit] — that man will receive (a favorable judgment) against the opponent in his suit.

[DIŠ EME.Š]ID *ana* UGU NA *ša d[i-na] i-ge-ru-u* ŠUB-*ut* NA BI *ana* EN *di-ni-šu* TI

[*šumma šurāru*] *ana muḥḥi amēli ša d[īna] igerrū imqut amēlu šū ana bēl dīnišu ileqqe*

STT 323 35	[DIŠ EME.Š]ID 'ana' 'UGU' 'NA' <i>ša d[i-na]</i> 'i-ge-ru-u' ŠUB- <i>ut</i> NA BI <i>ana</i> EN <i>di-ni-šu</i> TI
------------	--

- ▶ See also Assur 34. The two omens both feature a lizard falling on a man involved in litigation and are associated with receiving a favorable result. The Assur omen also adds the alternative of the lizard falling onto an imprisoned man in the protasis. The associated apodosis therefore also adds that the man will leave prison—compare the apodosis of the subsequent omen Sultantepe 36.
- ▶ The verb *leqû* in the context of lawsuits means 'to receive a favorable verdict' (CAD L: 136 s.v. *leqû*1d 3'; CAD D: 151 s.v. *dīnu* 1 a-1').

* * *

Sultantepe 36

[If a lizard] falls [onto ...] that is sitting (in) a br[azier] — that man will escape from prison.

[DIŠ EME.Š]ID *ana* ...] *ša K[I.NE] aš-bu* ŠUB-*ut* NA BI *ina* KI.ŠÚ È

[*šumma šurāru ana* ...] *ša k[inūni] ašbu imqut amēlu šū ina kīli uṣṣi*

STT 323 36	[DIŠ EME.Š]ID <i>ana</i> ...] <i>ša K[I.NE] aš-bu</i> ŠUB- <i>ut</i> NA BI <i>ina</i> KI.ŠÚ È
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- ▶ The reconstruction of *ša K[I.NE] aš-bu* 'that is sitting in a br[azier]' in the protasis is somewhat speculative. The KI is broken and, as drawn, appears identical to *d[i* in Sultantepe 35's *ša d[i-na]*. We follow *If a City* 2 (2006, 184 omen 36) and read K[I.NE] as the Sultantepe omens closely mirror the sequence in the Assur recension. After Assur 34 (which corresponds with the preceding Sultantepe 35), the subsequent Assur omens relate to fire and ovens. Although the above omen does not have an identical match among the Assur omens, Assur 35 does combine the protasis of the following omen, Sultantepe 37, with the above omen's apodosis.

* * *

Sultantepe 37

[If a lizard] falls [into the fir]e [in a brazier] (and) escapes — that man will escape from privation and hardship.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana KI.NE ana IZ]I ŠUB-ut È NA BI ina PAP.ḪAL u KI.KAL È

[šumma šurāru ana kinūni ana išāt]i imqut ūši amēlu šū ina pušqi u dannati ušši

STT 323 36	[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana KI.NE ana IZ]I ŠUB-ut È NA BI ina PAP.ḪAL ¹ _(copy: 'BAL') u KI.KAL 'È'
------------	--

- ▶ See Assur 35, which combines the apodosis of Sultantepe 36 and the protasis of Sultantepe 37.

* * *

Sultantepe 38

[If a lizard] falls [into the fi]re [in a brazier] and burns up — (a person doomed to) death will die.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana KI.NE ana IZ]I ŠUB-ut-ma ib-šal ÚŠ BA.ÚŠ

[šumma šurāru ana kinūni ana išāt]i imqutma ibšal mītu imât

STT 323 38	[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana KI.NE ana IZ]I ŠUB-ut-ma ib-šal ÚŠ BA.ÚŠ
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- ▶ The protasis is reconstructed from Assur 36. The two omens appear to be the same.
- ▶ For a discussion of *If a City 2*'s (2006, 186, 187, both pages omen 38) reading of ÚŠ as IDIM, see the commentary at Assur 36.

* * *

Sultantepe 39

[If a lizard falls onto a torch and *is sing*]ed — that house wi[ll go] to ruin.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana UGU IZI.GAR ŠUB-ut-ma ku-pu-u]t 'É' BI ár-bu-ta₅ D[U-ak]

[šumma šurāru ana muḫḫi dipāri imqutma kuppu]t bītu šū arbūta il[lak]

STT 323 39	[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana UGU IZI.GAR ŠUB-ut-ma ku-pu-u]t 'É' BI ár _(copy: NU) -bu-ta ₅ D[U-ak]
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- ▶ The above omen's protasis is reconstructed from Assur 37. The Assur omen's apodosis writes KAR-ta₅ instead of the syllabic writing ár-bu-ta₅ for the accusative of arbūtu 'ruin' above. See the commentary there for the translation of *kupput*.
- ▶ The manuscript's hand copy (STT 323) shows nu-bu-ta₅ instead of ár-bu-ta₅ (See also, *If a City 2*, 2006, 186 note 39). As ár is the expected reading, based on Assur 37, and a broken ár- could have similarities to nu-, we follow *If a City 2* (2006, 186 omen 39) and read ár-bu-ta₅.

* * *

Sultantepe 40

[If a lizard falls into an oven bu]t escapes — [a los]s of ma[le and female slaves (will occur)].

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana IM.ŠU.RIN.NA ŠUB-ut-m]a È [ZI.G]A Ì[R ù GÉME]

[šumma šurāru ana tinūri imqutm]a ūši [šī]t ar[di u amti]

STT 323 40 [DIŠ EME.ŠID ana IM.ŠU.RIN.NA ŠUB-ut-m]a 'È' [ZI.G]A_(copy: BI) Ì[R ù GÉME]

- ▶ The fragmentary omen above has been reconstructed using Assur 38. Just as Assur 38–40 form a thematic triad in which a lizard falls into an oven and the animal at first escapes, then burns up, and finally does not burn, Sultantepe 40–42 do as well.

Nevertheless in a note to the above omen, *If a City 2* (2006, 186 note 40) refers the reader to Assur 40,¹⁷¹ instead of Assur 38. Although Assur 40 is indeed similar to the above omen, being part of the same thematic triad in the Assur recension, the above omen's remnants, as drawn on the hand copy (STT 323), better suit a reconstruction from Assur 38.

Indeed, the above omen's reconstructed transliteration in *If a City 2* (2006, 186 omen 40) uses the signs from Assur 38¹⁷² and not Assur 40.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana IM.ŠU.RIN.NA ŠUB-ut]-ma E₃ [ZI.G]A AR[AD u₃ GEME₃]

If a City 2's reading GÉME is likely a typographical error as *If a City 2* (2006, 180 omen 99') reads GÉME in Assur 38, from which the edition reconstructs the above omen.

- ▶ For the manifold translations of the polyvalent sign ZI, see the commentary at Nineveh 49', but also see, in particular as regards the above omen, the commentary at Assur 38.

* * *

Sultantepe 41

[If a lizard falls into an oven] and bur[ns up] — that house [will be deprived] of in[come].

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ana IM.ŠU.RIN.NA ŠUB-ut]-ma ib-š[al] É BI K[U₄-ba ú-za-am-ma]

[šumma šurāru ana tinūri imqut]ma ibš[al] bītu šū er[ba uzamma]

STT 323 41 [DIŠ EME.ŠID ana IM.ŠU.RIN.NA ŠUB-ut]-ma ib-š[al] 'É' BI K[U₄-ba ú-za-am-ma]

- ▶ The above omen has been reconstructed using Assur 39.
- ▶ Just as in the Assur recension, the above omen is part of a thematic triad in which a lizard falls into an oven (Sultantepe 40–42). While the above omen is related to the preceding Sultantepe 40, it is more closely paired to Sultantepe 42, where the only difference in the protasis is the negation of the verb *ibšal* 'it burns up'. Note that despite the opposing protases, the apodoses of both omens remain negative.
- ▶ The sign É is fragmentary; just the right-hand edge of the sign remains.

* * *

¹⁷¹ In *If a City 2*'s omen sequence, Assur 40 is numbered Assur 101'.

¹⁷² Assur 38 is Assur 99' in *If a City 2*'s omen sequence.

Sultantepe 42

[If a lizard falls into an oven b]ut does not burn up — loss[es will occur for him].

[DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* IM.ŠU.RIN.NA ŠUB-*ut-m*]a NU *ib-šal* ZI.G[A È-šú]

[šumma šurāru *ana tinūri imqutm*]a *lā ibšal šīt*[*u uššīšu*]

STT 323 42 [DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* IM.ŠU.RIN.NA ŠUB-*ut-m*]a NU *ib-^ršal*[?] ZI.G[A È-šú]

- ▶ The above omen has been reconstructed from Assur 40.
- ▶ As the two omens Sultantepe 41 and 42 form an obvious thematic pair, the implied subject of the apodosis in Sultantepe 42 may presumably be the same house from the previous omen's apodosis.
- ▶ The above omen is the final omen in a triad of omens about a lizard falling into an oven, see the commentary at Sultantepe 40.

* * *

Sultantepe 43

[If a lizard f]alls [...] — bread ... [...] ... [for him].

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ... Š]UB-*ut* NINDA *i-q*[*ir*][?]-x-[šú]

[šumma šurāru ... *i*]m^qut *aklu* ... [...] ... [...]

STT 323 r 1 [DIŠ EME.ŠID ... Š]UB-*ut* NINDA *i-q*[*ir*][?]-x-[šú]

- ▶ The previous five omens in the Sultantepe sequence closely follow the Assur sequence so we would expect the above omen to mirror that of Assur 41, which reads as follows:

If a lizard falls into a bread box — bread will be scarce for him.

DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* ^{si}PISAN NINDA ŠUB-*ut* NINDA *i-qir-šu*

Indeed, the presence of NINDA in line STT 323 r 1 supports this. The traces drawn on the hand copy (STT 323), however, show significant damage and do not align exactly with Assur 41.

The sign read as *q*[*ir*][?] shows traces of a horizontal and vertical wedge along with what is perhaps a horizontal line or the tops of several wedges, making the reading uncertain.

The sign read as *x* is drawn as a MA closely followed by GIŠ. This sign is read as *-ra* in *If a City 2* (2006, 186 omen 44), which reconstructs the above omen in line with Assur 41. Beyond the difficulties in reconciling the hand copy with the reading *-ra*, *If a City 2*'s reading results in an odd doubling of the consonant *r* in the verb *iqqiraššu*.

We read the above omen as it appears on the hand copy, but, given the similarities in the Sultantepe and Assur sequences, along with the presence of the sign NINDA, we suggest Sultantepe 43 and Assur 41 should be seen as at least related. Collation of STT 323 would be necessary to possibly reconcile the signs in the above omen with the Assur omen.

* * *

Sultantepe 44

[If a lizard ...] and lies down — bread ...

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ...]-*ma ir-bi-iš* NINDA *i-x-x-ri²-x*

[šumma šurāru ...]*ma irbiš aklu ...*

STT 323 r 2 [DIŠ EME.ŠID ...]-*ma ir-bi-iš* NINDA *i-¹x¹-¹x¹-ri²-¹x¹*

- ▶ Just as in the previous omen Sultantepe 43, we would expect the above omen to be similar to Assur 42, which reads as follows:

If a lizard crawls into a bread box and lies down — ditto (= bread will be scarce for him.)
DIŠ EME.DIR *a-na* ⁸PISAN NINDA KU₄-*ma ir-bi-iš* ŠU.BI.GIM.NAM (NINDA *i-qir-šu*)

The traces of the apodoses' verb, as drawn on the manuscript's hand copy (STT 323), however, do not exactly match up with the Assur omen.

The earlier edition *If a City 2* (2006, 186 omen 44) does reconstruct the above omen on the basis of Assur 42, but reads the apodosis's verb differently:

[DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* GI.PISAN NISAN TU]-*ma ir-bi-iš* NINDA *i-qa₂-ar*-[š_u2]

The first of the three signs read as ¹x¹ above (and as *-qa₂* in *If a City 2*) is broken. There is a horizontal wedge crossed by the tails of two vertical wedges, followed by two *Winkelhaken*. It resembles a broken GA.

The next sign read as ¹x¹ above resembles IGI; though the *Winkelhaken* appears to be a diagonal wedge, and the remaining wedges are oddly shortened. It appears *If a City 2* combines this sign with the following, read above as *-ri²*, to read *-ar*. While the sign AR consists of an IGI on the left and a RI on the right, the two signs are drawn with significant distance between them on the hand copy, making such a reading less likely. The final sign read as ¹x¹ is drawn on the manuscript's broken right-hand edge and is no more than the head of a wedge.

As with Sultantepe 43, we read Sultantepe 44 as it appears on the hand copy, but, given the similarities between the Sultantepe and Assur sequences along with the presence of *ir-bi-iš* NINDA, we suggest Sultantepe 44 and Assur 42 should be seen as related. Collation of STT 323 would be necessary to determine a more certain reading.

* * *

Sultantepe 45

[If a lizard] falls [into a vineg]ar [jug] — divine goodness will be available.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* DUG A.GEŠTIN.N]A ŠUB-*ut* DÙG.GA DINGIR GÁL-¹š¹

[šumma šurāru *ana karpāt ṭābā*]ti imqut ṭābat ili ibbaššī

STT 323 r 3 [DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* DUG A.GEŠTIN.N]A ŠUB-*ut* DÙG.¹GA¹ DINGIR GÁL-¹š¹

- ▶ The above omen commences a sequence of omens about lizards falling into vessels holding liquids. The sequence is discussed as part of section 4.2.3 on lizards in culinary vessels.

- ▶ Assur 43 has been used to reconstruct Sultantepe 45's protasis. Whereas the above omen makes the connection between the protasis and apodosis explicit (*tābātu* 'vinegar' and *tābatu* 'goodness') the Assur omen, whose apodosis reads *qīšti ili ibbaššišu* 'a divine gift will be available to him', does not. The lengthy commentary at Assur 43 discusses the conspicuous positive nature of both these omen's apodoses. A further thematically linked omen can be found on the Assur manuscript: VAT 9906 ii 8.

* * *

Sultantepe 46

[If a lizard] falls [into a water jug] — that man will be vexed.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* DUG A] ŠUB-*ut* NA BI *ina-an-ziq*

[*šumma šurāru ana karpat mē*] *imqut amēlu šū inanziq*

STT 323 r 4 [DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana* DUG A] ŠUB-*ut* NA BI *ina-an-ziq*

- ▶ The above omen's protasis has been reconstructed from Assur 44 as the Sultantepe omen sequence continues to follow that of Assur's, and the remnants drawn on the hand copy (STT 323) allow for such a reading. The Assur omen, however, combines the above omen's protasis with that of Sultantepe 47. Note that the apodoses of Sultantepe 46 and 47 as well as that of Assur 44 all translate as 'that man will be vexed'. The above omen, however, varies in orthography. The others write *ina-ziq*.
- ▶ Nineveh 49's commentary includes a list of omens where a lizard falls into beer or water (vessels). The commentary at Assur 3 discusses the verb *nazāqu* and its associated emotions.

* * *

Sultantepe 47

[If a liza]rd falls into [a bee]r[?] j[ug] — that man will be vexed.

[DIŠ EME.Š]ID *ana* D[UG KA]Š[?] ŠUB-*ut* NA BI *ina-ziq*

[*šumma šur*]āru *ana ka[rpat šika]rī[?] imqut amēlu šū inazziq*

STT 323 r 5 DIŠ EME.DIR 'ana' D[UG KA]Š[?] ŠUB-*ut* NA BI *ina-ziq*

- ▶ The above omen's protasis has been reconstructed from Assur 44. The Assur omen, however, combines the above omen's protasis with that of Sultantepe 46. See the commentary at both omens.
- ▶ Nineveh 49's commentary includes a list of omens where a lizard falls into beer or water (vessels). The commentary at Assur 3 discusses the verb *nazāqu* and its associated emotions.

* * *

Sultantepe 48

[If a liz]ard falls into a beerwort container — that man will lack a watering place.

[DIŠ EM]E.ŠID ana DUG nàr-ṭa-bi ŠUB-ut NA BI maš-qa-a ú-za-am-ma

[šumma šur]āru ana karpat narṭabi imqut amēlu šū mašqâ uzamma

STT 323 r 6 [DIŠ EM]E.ŠID ana DUG nàr-ṭa-bi ŠUB-ut NA BI maš-qa-a ú-za-am-ma

- ▶ For a similar omen, see Assur 45. The difference between the two lies in the subject of the apodoses: the Assur omen has É 'house' instead of NA 'man'. This difference likely explains why *If a City 2* (2006, 186 omen 48) reconstructs the above omen with É and translates (2006, 187 omen 48) the apodosis using 'house'. The hand copy (STT 323) clearly shows NA.

* * *

Sultantepe 49

[If a liz]ard falls into a bowl — <there will> be a cry (of distress) in that man's house.

[DIŠ EM]E.ŠID a-na dugÚTUL ŠUB-ut GÛ ina É NA BI <GÁL>-ši

[šumma šur]āru ana diqāri imqut rigmu ina bīt amēli šuāti <ibaš>ši

STT 323 r 7 [DIŠ EM]E.ŠID ana dugÚTUL ŠUB-ut GÛ ina É NA BI <GÁL>-ši

- ▶ GÁL-ši 'there will be' has been reconstructed from Assur 46. The sign GÁL is not present on the Sultantepe manuscript's hand copy. Until the original manuscript is examined, it is unclear whether the exclusion is one made by the ancient scribe or by the modern copyist. Another difference between the two omens is the lack of the pronoun BI after NA 'man' in the Assur omen.
- ▶ For a discussion on reading the sign KA as GÛ 'cry (of distress)', see the commentary at Assur 46.

* * *

Sultantepe 50

[If a liz]ard falls into a full storage-bin bin — the (previously) full storage bins will become empty.

[DIŠ EM]E.ŠID ana Ì.DUB SA₅ ŠUB-ut Ì.DUB.MEŠ SA₅.MEŠ SÛ.MEŠ

[šumma šur]āru ana našpaki malî imqut našpakū malûtu iriqqū

STT 323 r 8 [DIŠ EM]E.ŠID ana Ì.DUB SA₅ ŠUB-ut <<'is'>> <<'hi'>> Ì.DUB.MEŠ SA₅.MEŠ SÛ.MEŠ

- ▶ The signs read as 'is' and 'hi' above are difficult to interpret. They may be a scribal mistake or as suggested by *If a City 2* (2006, 186 note 50), they may be an erasure of É and ŠE, linking the omen to Assur 47.¹⁷³ The suggestion is logical as the two omens share the same protasis and their apodoses are thematically related.

¹⁷³ Assur 47 corresponds to Assur 108' in *If a City 2*'s sequence.

- ▶ See also Sultantepe 51 as the two omens are thematically linked, with opposing protases and apodoses.

* * *

Sultantepe 51

[If a liz]ard falls into an empty¹ storage-bin — that house will have plenty of bread.

[DIŠ EM]E.ŠID *ana* Ì.DUB SÛ¹ ŠUB-*ut* É BI NINDA *i-šeb-bi*

[šumma šu]rāru *ana našpaki rīqī¹ imqut bītu šū akla išebbi*

STT 323 r 9 [DIŠ EM]E.ŠID *ana* Ì.DUB SÛ¹ ŠUB-*ut* É BI NINDA *i-šeb-bi*

- ▶ Assur 48 is the above omen's counterpart in the Assur recension. See also Sultantepe 50, which has an opposing protasis and apodosis.
- ▶ On the hand copy (STT 323), the remnants of sign SÛ shows the heads of two vertical wedges, where one would expect only one wedge.

* * *

Sultantepe 52

[If a lizard] crawls into a leather ba[g] and (then) lies down — that man will be vexed.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID] *ana* ^{kuš}LU.Ú[B] KU₄-*ma ir-bi-iš* NA BI *ina-an-zīq*

[šumma šurāru] *ana lupp[ī] īrubma irbiš amēlu šū inazziq*

STT 323 r 10 [DIŠ EME.ŠID] *ana* ^{kuš}LU.Ú[B] 'KU₄'-*ma 'ir'-bi-iš* NA BI *ina-an-zīq* (ruling)

- ▶ See Assur 49; the two omens are identical, but for slight orthographic differences.
- ▶ See the commentary at Assur 3 for a discussion of the verb *nazāqu* and its associated emotions.

* * *

Sultantepe 53

[If a lizard] ... onto a m[an] — that man will live a long time.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID] *ana* UGU N[A] x NA BI *ú-lab-bar*

[šumma šurāru] *ana muḥḥi am[ēlī] ... amēlu šū ulabbar*

STT 323 r 11 [DIŠ EME.ŠID] *ana* UGU N[A] x NA BI 'ú'-*lab-bar*

- ▶ After the above omen, the Sultantepe manuscript no longer closely follows the omen sequence in the Assur recension. Although the above protasis has semantic similarities to Assur 50, that omen is actually a better fit to Sultantepe 56.

- ▶ While the subsequent omen's protasis has E₁₁ as its verb, the verb in the above omen's protasis is unlikely to be E₁₁ 'climbs' because as drawn the sign x does not leave enough room for E₁₁. All that remain of x is a single vertical wedge, on the sign's right-hand edge.
- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 187 omen 53) translates the apodosis as 'that man will be **poor**.' It is unclear how that translation came to be.

* * *

Sultantepe 54

[If lizards climb] onto a m[an an]d wander about — that man will consume a share.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID] *ana* UGU N[A E₁₁-m] *a i-du-lu* NA BI 𒀠A.LA GU₇

[šumma šurārû] *ana muḥḥi am[ēli ilûm] a idûlû amēlu šû zitta ikkal*

STT 323 r 12 [DIŠ EME.ŠID] *ana* UGU N[A E₁₁-m] *a i-du-lu* NA BI 𒀠A.LA GU₇

- ▶ The above omen's protasis has similarities to that of Assur 69. The difference between the two lies in the verb's number. The verb *i-du-lu* has been interpreted above as a plural, where Assur 69 reads *i-du-ul*, a singular verb.

* * *

Sultantepe 55

[If a lizard ...] on [a man] — his days will be lo[n]g.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID] *ana* UG[U NA ...] U₄.MEŠ-šú GÍD.[D]A.MEŠ

[šumma šurāru] *ana muḥ[ḥi amēli ...] ūmūšu ir[r]ikū*

STT 323 r 13 [DIŠ EME.ŠID] *ana* UG[U NA ...] U₄.MEŠ-šú GÍD.[D]A.MEŠ

- ▶ See also the subsequent omen, which has the same apodosis.

* * *

Sultantepe 56

[If a lizard repeatedly wa]lks about on a man — his days will be lo[ng].

[DIŠ EME.ŠID] *ina* UGU NA DU.D]U-ak U₄.MEŠ-šú GÍD.D[A.MEŠ]

[šumma šurāru *ina muḥḥi amēli itta*]llak ūmūšu irri[kū]

STT 323 r 14 [DIŠ EME.ŠID] *ina* UGU NA DU.D]U-ak U₄.MEŠ-šú GÍD.D[A.MEŠ]

- ▶ Assur 50 has been used to reconstruct the protasis. The Assur omen expands on the above apodosis to add 'a good message will be established for him.' See also the Assur omen on VAT 9906 v 12', which is very similar to the above omen.

* * *

Sultantepe 57

[If a lizard] falls [...] ... — losses will occur? [for? him?].

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ...] IGI? ŠUB-ut ZI.GA È?-[šú?]

[šumma šurāru ...] ... imqut šītu uššī[šū?]

STT 323 r 15 [DIŠ EME.ŠID ...] 'IGI?' ŠUB-ut 'ZI'.GA 'È'¹?-[šú?]

- ▶ The above omen is fragmentary. We interpret the apodosis as ZI.GA È-šú 'losses will occur for him', which occurs in a few other lizard omens. The reading È however is conjecture because the hand copy (STT 323) only shows the heads of two wedges. The remnants fit more closely with the reading È than with ÌR; ZI.GA ÌR ù GÉME 'a loss of male and female slaves (will occur)' being another common apodosis. Nevertheless, without collation of the original manuscript, any reading includes a certain amount of speculation.
- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 186, 187 both pages omen 57) reads and translates the above omen as follows:

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ...] x ŠUB-ut ZI.GA x [...]
[If a lizard] falls [...], losses [...]

* * *

Sultantepe 58

[If a lizard clim]bs? [...] — that man will h[ave] a lamassu protective spirit (and) wealth.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ... E]₁₁? NA BI ˢLAMMA NÍG.TUK T[UK-šī]

[šumma šurāru ...] ... amēlu šū lamassa mašrê ir[aššī]

STT 323 r 16 [DIŠ EME.ŠID ... E]₁₁? 'NA' BI ˢLAMMA NÍG.TUK T[UK-šī]

- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 187 omen 58) translates the above omen as:

[If a lizard ...], that man **will** have] a protective demon (and) wealth (*or* protective demon of wealth).

While the grammar and word order certainly allows for the translation 'that man will have a lamassu (protective demon) of wealth', such a translation does not appear to be otherwise attested. We therefore translate as above.
- ▶ The sign read above as a broken E₁₁ is read as du, but left uninterpreted in *If a City 2* (2006, 186 omen 58). See also the similar Assur 71, which has been reconstructed using the above omen. The sign E₁₁ is legible there.
- ▶ The protective spirit *lamassu* features occasionally in lizard omens, especially in the Nineveh recension. See the commentary at Nineveh 1.

* * *

Sultantepe 59

[If there is] a severed [lizard] in a man's house — dilapidation of the house.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID] *na-kíl-tu ina É NA GÁL-ši e-niš*^{gloss: niš} É

[šumma šurāru] *nakiltu ina bīt amēli ittabši enēš bīti*

STT 323 r 17 [DIŠ EME.ŠID] ^rna^r-^rkíl^r-^rtu^r ^rina^r É NA GÁL-ši e-niš^{gloss: niš} É (ruling)

- ▶ Traces of the signs *na-kíl-tu* are visible on the hand copy (STT 323), but they are extremely fragmentary. They have been restored using Assur 55. The Assur omen expands the apodosis to say that grain will become scarce and does not include a gloss for *enēš*, but is otherwise similar to the above omen. The Assur commentary includes a lengthy discussion on the translation of *na-kíl-tu*.
- ▶ The gloss *niš* is drawn on the hand copy as a smaller sign just below the sign read as *-niš*.

* * *

Sultantepe 60

[If a lizard wi]th two tails is repeatedly seen in a man's house — favorable: may he who sees (it), take its tail (and) may he place it [on the threshing floo]r of his house; on the day¹ when [it]s² t[ail]³ has been placed in that house, a šedu and lamassu protective spirit will not approach the man's house.

[DIŠ EME.ŠID] *šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá ina É NA IGI.IGI šá-li-mu IGI KUN-sa TI-qí [ina SU]₇ É-šú GAR U₄¹ K[UN²-s]_a² ina É šu-a-tu₄ GAR-tu₄ ^dALAD u ^dLAMMA ina É NA NU TE*

[šumma šurīrittu] *š]a 2 zibbātuša ina bīt amēli ittammār šalīmu āmiru zibbāssa lilqi [ina maška]n bītišu liškun ūm¹ zi[bbāss]_a² ina bīti šuāti šaknatu šedu u lamassu ina bīt amēli ul iṭeḥḥū*

STT 323 r 18–19 [DIŠ EME.ŠID] *šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá ina É NA IGI.IGI šá-li-mu IGI ^rKUN¹-sa TI-qí / [ina SU]₇ É-šú GAR ^rU₄¹ K[UN²-s]_a² ina É šu-a-tu₄ GAR-tu₄ ^dALAD u ^dLAMMA ina É NA NU TE*

- ▶ The above omen has many similarities with Nineveh 1; see there for further commentary.
- ▶ The first word of the apodosis is written as *šá-li-mu*, even though the expected form would be *sa-li-mu*, to form *salīmu* 'favorable'. Whereas Babylonian Akkadian differentiates the verbs *šalāmu* 'to stay well, to be healthy' (among other definitions) and *salāmu* 'to be reconciled, to make peace', along with words derived from the verbs (such as *salīmu*), forms which merge the two under the roots *š-l-m* are attested in periphery Akkadian.¹⁷⁴ Even though the manuscript's colophon indicates the text was copied from a Babylonian manuscript, there were perhaps West Semitic influences on the Sultantepe text.
- ▶ The above omen's apodosis is problematic. It is difficult to reconcile that although the omen is supposedly favorable, the protective spirits *lamassu* and *šedu* will not approach the house. The

¹⁷⁴ For a discussion on the merging of *š-l-m* and *s-l-m* in the periphery, see Dietrich and Loretz (1966, 216–17 *šlm* im Ug.). An attestation of the form *šalmu* is found in the Amarna letters (CAD S: 100–101 s.v. *salīmu* 1 a), and *ša-la-ma* is attested in a text from Ugarit (Ras Shamra) (CAD S: 101–2 s.v. *salīmu* 1 c). See also CAD (S: 104 s.v. *salmu*) for *salmu* written as *šalmu* in texts from Amarna and Hattuša (Boğazkale).

presence of such spirits indicates a favorable outcome, and their retreat foretells ill fortune for the place they have left (Konstantopoulos 2015, 57).

- ▶ The reconstruction of [ina SU]₇ at the beginning of line *r* 19 is from Nineveh 1 (K 6912+ 3). The hand copy (STT 323) shows traces of SU₇ that are omitted from *If a City* 2 (2006, 186 omen 60) which reads:

[DIŠ EME.ŠID š]_{a2} 2 KUN.MEŠ-š_{a2} ina E₂ NA IGI.IGI š_{a2}-li-mu IGI KUN-sa TI-qi₂ /
[ina **SU**]₇ E₂-š_u₂ š_{a2} x x **ana** E₂ š_u-a-tu₄ š_{a2}-tum ^aALAD₃ u ^aLAMMA ina E₂ NA NU TE

The sign read as š_{a2} in *If a City* 2 (2006, 186 omen 60), has been read above as GAR ‘to place’. The signs following it are fragmentary. We suggest reading ‘U₄’ K[UN[?]-s]_a? to form a temporal relative clause. The subsequent sign (preceding É) is drawn on the hand copy as *ina*, not *ana* as is read in *If a City* 2.

- ▶ The different readings result in a different translation in *If a City* 2 (2006, 187 omen 60).

[If a lizard th]at has two tails **is seen** in a man’s house—favorable; let the one who sees (it), take its tail [**and in the threshing-floor of**] his house, **the one who ..** in that house, **in that year(?)**, no Šedu or Lamassu spirit will approach **that** house.

* * *

Sultantepe 61

[If] in a man’s house [a lizar]d with two tails is seen; its right t[ail] is long — (formerly) angered gods will return to the man’s house.

[DIŠ EME.ŠI]D š_a 2 KUN.MEŠ-š_a K[UN]-s_a š_a ZAG GÍD.DA ina É NA IGI DINGIR.MEŠ zi-nu-tu₄ ana É NA GUR.MEŠ-ni

[šumma šurīrit]tu ša 2 zibbātuša zi[bbās]sa ša imitti arkat ina bīt amēli innamir īlū zinātu ana bīt amēli iturrūni

STT 323 <i>r</i> 20	[DIŠ EME.ŠI]D š _a 2 KUN.MEŠ-š _a K[UN]-‘s _a ’ š _a ZAG ‘GÍD’. ‘DA’ ina É NA IGI DINGIR.MEŠ zi-nu-tu ₄ ana É NA GUR.MEŠ-ni
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- ▶ See also Nineveh 2. The Nineveh omen features differing syntax and instead of multiple angry gods, there is but one in the apodosis. The two omens are, nevertheless, rather similar.

* * *

Sultantepe 62

[If] there is [a liz]ard that has two tails, has a snake’s ..., the left (tail) is long (and) the right (tail) is short — divine wrath will repeatedly befall the man’s house; there will be trouble! [for] a man’s heir, and he will reveal[?] the wealth of his house.

[DIŠ EME.ŠI]D š_a 2 KUN.MEŠ-š_a x x gi MUŠ GÁL-ši š_a GÙB GÍD.DA š_a ZAG LÚGUD.DA DI[NGIR.Š]Ā.DIB.BA ana É NA ŠUB.MEŠ [ana] DUMU. NITA NA ud¹-du-ú GÁL-ma NÍG.TUK É.BI ú[?]-kal-lam

[šumma šurīri]ttu ša 2 zibbātuša ... šēri ittabši ša šumēli arkat ša imitti kariat ki[m]iltu ana bīt amēli imtanaqqut [ana] apil amēli uddū¹ ibbaššīma mašrē bītišu ukallam[?]

STT 323 r 21–22 [DIŠ EME.ŠI]D šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá 'x' 'x' gi MUŠ GÁL-ši šá GÙB GÍD.DA šá ZAG
LÚGUD.DA /
(indent) DI[NGIR.Š]À.DIB.BA ana É NA ŠUB.MEŠ [ana] 'DUMU'.'NITA' NA
ud¹-du-ú GÁL-ma NÍG.TUK 'É'.BI 'ú'^{1?}-kal-'lam'

- ▶ Nineveh 3's protasis also features a lizard with a short right tail and a long left tail. They are, however, presented in the opposite order from above. What remains of the Nineveh apodosis indicates the two are not similar.
- ▶ The UD sign in *uddû* is drawn on the hand copy (STT 323) with extended horizontal wedges, but seems to be the sign UD. The word *uddû* has been translated as 'trouble' (see CAD U/W: 25 s.v. *ūdu*).
- ▶ The remnants of the two broken signs after KUN.MEŠ-šá 'two tails', as drawn on manuscript's hand copy, could fit the reading *qí-líp* to form the status constructus of *qilpu* 'skin', possibly referring to the skin a snake sloughs off. It is difficult however to reconcile the third sign, GI, with such a reading unless GI.MUŠ is the name of an unknown type of snake.

* * *

Sultantepe 63

If a lizard with two tails falls in front² of a man — that man will prevail over his legal adversary.

DIŠ EME.ŠID šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá ana IGI[?] NA ŠUB-ut NA BI UGU EN INIM-šú GUB-az

šumma šurīrittu ša 2 zibbātuša ana pān² amēli imqut amēlu šū eli bēl amātišu izzaz

STT 323 r 23 DIŠ EME.ŠID šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá ana IGI[?]_(copy: UGU) 'NA' ŠUB-ut NA BI UGU EN
INIM-šú GUB-az

- ▶ We follow *If a City 2* (2006, 188 note 63) and suggest emending the sign UGU 'on top of' to IGI 'in front of' for two reasons: Firstly, the above omen is otherwise identical to Nineveh 8, which has the two-tailed lizard falling in front of a man. Further, leaving the sign as UGU results in the protasis DIŠ EME.ŠID šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá ana UGU NA ŠUB-ut 'If a lizard with two tails falls onto a man'. This would be the same protasis as in Sultantepe 64, but with differing apodoses.
- ▶ For a discussion on the repetition of the protases about lizards—with or without tails—falling in front of a man, see the discussions at Assur 5.

* * *

Sultantepe 64

If a lizard with two tails falls onto a man — that man will find his position.

DIŠ EME.ŠID šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá ana UGU NA ŠUB-ut NA BI KI.GUB-šu IGI

šumma šurīrittu ša 2 zibbātuša ana muḥḥi amēli imqut amēlu šū mazzāzašu immar

STT 323 r 24 DIŠ EME.ŠID šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá ana UGU NA ŠUB-ut NA BI KI.'GUB'-'šu' IGI

* * *

Sultantepe 65

If a lizard with two tails is seen in a man's house — you will cut off (one of) its [t]ails [and] will attach (it) to a nursing ewe:

If that [ew]e rejects her lamb — that omen portends evil.

If that ewe loves her lamb — [th]at [om]en portends goodness.

DIŠ EME.ŠID šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá ina É NA IGI [K]UN-sa KUD-is-[ma ina] U₈ mu-še-niq-ti KÉŠ /

šum₄-ma [U]₈ šī-i SILA₄-sa i-zi-ir GIZKIM šī-[i] ḥa-ṭa-at /

šum₄-ma U₈ šī-i SILA₄-sa i-ram [GIZ]KIM [šī]-i dam-qat

šumma šurīrittu ša 2 zibbātuša ina bīt amēli innamir [zi]bbāssa tanakkis[ma ina] laḥri mušēniqti tarakkas

šumma [laḥ]ru šī puḥāssa izīr ittu š[ī] ḥaṭāt

šumma laḥru šī puḥāssa irām [it]tu [š]ī damqat

STT 323 r 25–27	DIŠ EME.ŠID šá 2 KUN.MEŠ-šá ina É NA IGI [K]UN-sa KUD-is-[ma ina] U ₈ mu-še-niq-ti KÉŠ / (indent) šum ₄ -ma [U] ₈ šī-i SILA ₄ -sa i-zi-ir GIZKIM šī-[i] ḥa ¹ -ṭa-at / (indent) šum ₄ - ^r ma ^r U ₈ ^r šī-i SILA ₄ -sa i-ram [GIZ]KIM [šī]- ^r i ^r dam ^r -qat ^r (ruling)
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- ▶ The omen preserved on VAT 9906 v 8'–11' (Assur) is a similarly constructed omen.
- ▶ As mentioned by *If a City 2* (2006, 188 note 65), the object of KÉŠ 'to attach' appears to be the lizard's cut off tail. CAD (M.2: 266 s.v. *mušēniqtu c*) suggests the object of KÉŠ to be "[a lamb at the udder of] a ewe giving suck", but as noted by *If a City 2*, this interpretation ignores the protasis.
- ▶ Just as in STT 323 52/2 r 26 and 27, lines Sm 710+ 2' and 3' (Nineveh recension) also have the sign combination GIZKIM šī-i. For this reason, *If a City 2* (2006, 188 note 65 lines 2'–3') suggests the beginning lines of Sm 710+ may be connected to the above omen.

Sm 710+ 2'

[If a lizard ...] ... that omen portends [goodness]
[DIŠ EME.ŠID ... -š]u² GIZKIM šī-i [dam-qat]

Sm 710+ 3'

[If a lizard ...] ... that omen portends ev[il]
[DIŠ EME.ŠID ...] ^rx¹ ^rud²? su² GIZKIM šī-i ḥa-[ṭa-at]

Two points, however, speak against such an interpretation. Firstly, the Nineveh manuscript (Sm 710+) reverses the order of the favorable and disadvantageous lines in relation to the above omen. Additionally, the traces of the sign before GIZKIM in Sm 710+ 2' do not fit with the reading -ram as in STT 323 r 27 above and have instead been tentatively read as -š]u².

See also the commentary at Sm 710+ 2' and 3' (Nineveh).

* * *

Sultantepe 66

If lizards are plaited together like date-palm fibers, and they fall from a date palm tree — downfall [of ...]

DIŠ EME.ŠID *ki-ma* ŠU.SAR *pat-lu-ma* TA ^{giš}[GIŠI]MMAR ŠUB-*tú-ni* ŠUB-*t[i ...]*

šumma šurārû kīma pitilti patlūma ištu [giši]mmari imqutūni miqitt[i ...]

STT 323 r 28 DIŠ EME.ŠID *ki-ma* ŠU.SAR *pat-lu-ma* TA ^{giš}[GIŠI]MMAR ŠUB-*tú-ni* ŠUB-*t[i ...]*
(ruling)

- ▶ The G-stem plural stative of *patālu* and the phonetic complement on the verb ŠUB indicate that EME.ŠID should be interpreted as a plural (see Assur 53 for the plural interpretation of EME.ŠID). See also the pertinent commentary at Assur 78', whose protasis also involves lizards plaited together like date-palm fibers walking about a man's house. The commentary there also addresses *If a City 2*'s use of the word 'knot' in its translation of both the Assur and the above omen.
- ▶ The apodosis's *miqitti* has several meanings, all of them negative. See CAD (M.2: 100–102 s.v. *miqittu*) for details. It can mean 'downfall' as read above, 'epidemic', or 'death' as *If a City 2* (2006, 189 omen 66) seems to have interpreted it.

If lizards **tied as if in a knot** fall down from a date palm tree, **decease of** [...].

Using downfall in the apodosis mirrors the lizards' fall in the protasis. Additionally the 'downfall of a legal adversary' is a common lizard apodosis and might be suggested as a reconstruction.

While ŠUB-*at* is a more common way to write 'downfall', Nineveh 22 Variant A is an example of 'downfall' written as ŠUB-*tì*.

* * *

Sultantepe 67

If a lizard with two tails is seen in a man's house — [there will be] a negative message in the m[an's] house.

DIŠ EME.ŠID *šá 2* KUN.MEŠ-*šá ina* É NA IGI INIM NU DÙG *ina* É N[A GÁL]

šumma šurīrittu ša 2 zibbātuša ina bīt amēli innamir amātu lā ṭābtu ina bīt am[ēli ibbašši]

STT 323 r 29 DIŠ EME.ŠID *šá 2* KUN.MEŠ-*šá ina* É NA IGI INIM NU DÙG *ina* É N[A GÁL]

- ▶ The reconstruction of GÁL 'to be' in the apodosis is suggested by the subject INIM 'word, message'. Another plausible reconstruction would be ŠUB, which would result in the translation 'a negative message [will arrive] in the m[an's] house.'

* * *

Sultantepe 68

If a lizard takes something in a man's house — unfavorable: [that] om[en portends evil].

DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina* É NA *mim-ma* TI-*qí* *qi-bi* NU SILIM.MA GIZ[KIM *ši-i* *ḥa-ṭa-at*]

šumma šurāru ina bīt amēli mimma ilqi qību ul šalim it[tu šī ḥaṭât]

STT 323 r 30 DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina* É 'NA' *mim-ma* TI-*qí* *qi-bi* 'NU' SILIM.MA GIZ[KIM *ši-i* *ḥa-ṭa-at*]

- ▶ The above omen appears to be the same as the omen on K 12180+ i 11' (Nineveh), which has been used to reconstruct the missing parts of the above omen's apodosis.

* * *

Sultantepe 69

If there i[s] a *crushed* lizard in a man's house [...] ... [...].

DIŠ EME.ŠID *nu-up-pu-ul-tu₄* *ina* É NA GÁL-[*ši* ...] x [...]

šumma šurīrittu nuppultu ina bīt amēli ittab[ši ...] ... [...]

STT 323 r 31 DIŠ EME.ŠID *nu-up-pu-ul-tu₄* *ina* É NA GÁL-[*ši* ...] 'x' [...]

- ▶ For the word *nuppultu*, see the lengthy discussion at Nineveh 46', which writes *na-pu-ul-t[u₄ ...]* instead of *nu-up-pu-ul-tu₄*. The words are likely variations of the same word.

The word *nuppultu* is also found in Assur 64 The Assur protasis's verb is IGI. DU₈ 'is seen'.

- ▶ *If a City 2* (2006, 189 omen 69) leaves *nuppultu* untranslated.

* * *

Sultantepe 70

If a lizard gives bi[rth] in the path of a man's house — [abandonment of the house].

DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina* *tal-lak-ti* É NA Û.T[U ŠUB-*di* É]

šumma šurāru ina tallakti bīt amēli ũ[id nadê bīti]

STT 323 r 32 DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina* 'tál'-'lak'-*ti* É NA Û.T[U ŠUB-*di* É]

- ▶ Nineveh 53' and Assur 60' have been used to reconstruct the apodosis. While the Assur omen includes the phonetic complement *-di* on ŠUB, it is omitted in the Nineveh omen. As the Sultantepe recension follows the Assur recension more closely than the Nineveh recension, the phonetic complement *-di* has been included in the reconstructed apodosis above.

- ▶ For a discussion on the semantic context of Û.TU 'to give birth', see Nineveh 53's commentary.

* * *

Sultantepe 71

If a lizard [gives birth] in the *h[a]r[ū]ru* (a part of a millstone) of a ma[n's house] — dispers[al of the house].

DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina h[a]-r[u-u]r [É] N[A Û.TU] BIR-a[h É]*

šumma šurāru ina h[a]r[ū]r [bīt] a[mēli ūlid] sapā[h bīti]

STT 323 r 33 DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina h[a]-r[u-u]r [É] N[A Û.TU] BIR-a[h É]*

- Reconstructions are from Nineveh 55' and Assur 62. See also the commentary at Nineveh 55'. The Nineveh omen has slight orthographic differences from the above.

* * *

Sultantepe 72

If a lizard gives birth in the furn[ishings of a man's house] — dispersa[l of the house].

DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina mu[t-tab-bil-ti É NA] 'Û'.TU BIR-a[h É]*

šumma šurāru ina mu[ttabbiliti bīt amēli] ūlid sapā[h bīti]

STT 323 r 34 DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina mu[t-tab-bil-ti É NA] 'Û'.TU BIR-a[h É]*

- The above omen has been reconstructed from Nineveh 54' and Assur 61. All three omens appear to be the same.

* * *

Sultantepe 73

[If lizar]ds often fall¹ in a [man's] house — abandonment of the house.

[DIŠ EME].ŠID *ina É [NA] ma-gal Š[UB.ME]Š-[n]¹ ŠUB É*

[šumma šurā]rû ina bīt [amēli] magal imtaqqutûni¹ nadê bīti

STT 323 r 35 [DIŠ EME].ŠID *ina É [NA] 'ma'-'gal' Š[UB.ME]Š-[n]¹ ŠUB 'É'*

- Reconstructions come from Assur 63. See the commentary there for *If a City 2's* (2006, 189 omen 73) use of *ma-gal* as an adjective instead of the adverb it is. For the plural use of EME.ŠID, see Assur 53.
- The above omen might be an interpolation. Its placement in the middle of a sequence of omens about lizards giving birth seems misplaced. Further the same omen is placed in the Assur recension (Assur 63) after the Assur sequence of lizard giving birth.
- The sign read as $-[n]^1$ is drawn on the hand copy (STT 323) with a large vertical wedge, where one would expect two smaller ones. The sign is broken in any case.

* * *

Sultantepe 74

[If a liza]rd gives birth u[n]der the threshold of a man’s house — abandonment of the house.

[DIŠ EME.Š]ID *ina* K[I].TA-*nu* KUN₄ É NA Û.TU ŠUB É

[šumma šurā]ru *ina* š[a]plānu askuppati bīt amēli ūlid nadê bīti

STT 323 r 36 [DIŠ EME.Š]ID *ina* K[I].TA-*nu* KUN₄ É NA Û.TU ŠUB É

- ▶ Most species of lizards do not procreate by means of live birth. See the commentary at Nineveh 53’ for context on the Û.TU ‘to give birth’.
- ▶ The above omen most closely resembles Assur 57, which replaces KUN₄ ‘threshold’ with the *sa-at* ‘the *sutu*-measurement vessel’.

* * *

Sultantepe 75

[If a lizar]d gives birth u[n]der the millstone — the master of the house [will be saved] by the k[ing’s] hand.

[DIŠ EME.Š]ID *ina* K[I].TA-*nu* ^{na4}UR₅.UR₅ Û.TU EN É *ina* ŠU L[UGAL KAR]

[šumma šurār]u *ina* š[a]plānu erī ūlid bēl bīti *ina* qāt š[arri inneṭṭir]

STT 323 r 37 [DIŠ EME.Š]ID *ina* K[I].TA-*nu* ^{na4}UR₅.UR₅ Û.TU EN É *ina* ŠU L[UGAL KAR]

- ▶ We reconstruct the above omen’s missing parts from Assur 58. The two omens are similar notwithstanding the different formulation in the apodoses in which the master of the house in the Assur omen is saved by ‘the king’s will’, instead of by ‘the king’s hand’.
- ▶ See the discussion at Assur 58 for the interpretation of the apodoses’s *ina* as the instrument ‘by’.
- ▶ Although *If a City 2* (2006, 188 omen 75) reconstructs the above omen, except for minor changes in sign damage, as above, the translation (2006, 189 omen 75) differs.

[If a lizar]d gives birth **under** the **ḥaruru (of the millstone)**, the master of the house [will be saved] **from** the k[ing’s] hand.

- ▶ For a discussion of *If a City 2*’s problematic connection between Nineveh 56’, Assur 58, and Sultantepe 75, see the commentary at Nineveh 56’.

* * *

Sultantepe 76

[If a lizard] gives birth [in] a woman’s [co]pper kettle — that [wo]man [will have] twin[s].

[DIŠ EME.Š]ID *ina* ^{ur]udu}ŠEN MUNUS Û.TU [MUN]US BI MAŠ.TAB.B[A TUK-šī]

[šumma šurāru *ina* r]uqqi sinništi ūlid [sinniš]tu šī māš[ī iraššī]

STT 323 r 38 [DIŠ EME.Š]ID *ina* ^{ur]udu}ŠEN MUNUS Û.TU [MUN]US BI MAŠ.TAB.B[A TUK-šī]

- ▶ See also Assur 59. The two omens are very similar. The Assur omen, however, has a longer apodosis that includes *ina* ŠÀ.ĤUL DU.DU-*ak* ‘she will go about unhappily.’ Further, the Assur omen does not specify that the kettle is copper. The commentary at Assur 59 discusses the connotations of twins in divinatory texts as well as the connection between ŠEN-vessels ‘kettles’, women, and fertility.

* * *

Sultantepe 77

[If a lizard] crawls [into] a woman’s [c]opper kettle — that woman [will be happy?]

[DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina* ^{uru}duŠEN MUNUS KU₄ MUNUS šī ŠÀ-[-ša? DÛG²-ab?]

[*šumma šurāru ina r*]uqqi sinništi īrub sinništu šī libba[ša? iṭāb?]

STT 323 r 39 [DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina* ^{uru}duŠEN MUNUS KU₄ MUNUS šī ŠÀ-[-ša? DÛG²-ab?]

- ▶ We suggest reconstructing the apodosis’s verb as DÛG-*ab*, which in combination with ŠÀ ‘heart’, means ‘she will be happy’.

* * *

Sultantepe 78

[If a lizard] falls [into] an oil [b]owl — the master of the house will die and ... [...].

[DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina* ^{dug}ŠAB Ì ŠUB EN É ÚŠ-*ma* is [...]

[*šumma šurāru ina š*]appi šamni imqut bēl bīti imâtma ... [...]

STT 323 r 40 [DIŠ EME.ŠID *ina* ^{dug}ŠAB Ì ŠUB EN É ÚŠ-*ma*_(copy: šu) ‘is’ [...]

- ▶ See the commentary at Assur 80. The Assur omen and the above resemble each other, but instead of the lizard falling into a ^{dug}ŠAB Ì ‘an oil bowl’, as above, the lizard falls into a DUG GIŠ.Ì.MEŠ ‘sesame-oil pot’ in the Assur omen. The apodoses have orthographic differences, but are otherwise the same and unfortunately break off at almost the same point in the text.
- ▶ Although the hand copy (STT 323) shows the sign after ÚŠ to be ŠU, we read -*ma* because Assur 80 has BA.ÚŠ-*ma*. The two signs are alike, and this is likely a mistake on the part of the modern copyist. Additionally, the very last sign of STT 323 r 40 is drawn on the hand copy as two partially preserved horizontal wedges. Again considering Assur 80, we suggest reading ‘is’.

If a City 2 (2006, 173 note 8’; 2006, 189 note 78) notes Sultantepe 78 and Assur 80’s similarities, but does not read the Sultantepe omen’s final two signs as above. Instead *If a City 2* (2006, 188 omen 78) reads šu x [...]. The signs remain uninterpreted in *If a City 2*’s (2006, 189 omen 78) translation.

* * *

Sultantepe 79

[If a lizard ...] enters a woman's [...] — that woman ... [...].

[DIŠ EME.ŠID ...] x MUNUS KU₄ MUNUS BI ki x [...]

[šumma šurāru ...] ... šinništi īrub šinništu šī [...]

STT 323 r 41 [DIŠ EME.ŠID ...] ᵀxᵀ MUNUS KU₄ MUNUS ᵀBIᵀ ki ᵀxᵀ [...]

- ▶ The manuscript's hand copy (STT 323) shows a *Winkelhaken* and a wedge head at the end of the line. These are omitted by *If a City 2* (2006, 188 omen 79).
- ▶ As the previous Sultantepe omen corresponds with Assur 80', it would not be surprising if the above omen corresponds to Assur 81'. There are, however, difficulties in reconciling the two, not least because the Assur omen has NA 'man', not MUNUS 'woman' in the protasis (but see the commentary at the Assur omen as there are problems with that omen's protasis). The Sultantepe apodosis also does not include all the signs of the Assur omen's apodosis. Nevertheless there are similarities that should be considered if the Sultantepe manuscript could be collated. We very tentatively suggest the following reconstruction:

[DIŠ EME.ŠID *ana*? ᵀ]Rᵀ MUNUS KU₄ MUNUS BI KI.Ḫ[ULᵀ? ...]
 [If a lizard] crawls [into?] a woman's [la]pᵀ — that woman: m[ourning? ...]

- ▶ This is the final omen on the obverse of STT 323.

* * *

Colophon

[... omens fr]om a large tablet, a copy from Ba[bylon]

[... T]A ŠÀ DUB.GAL.LI GABA.RI TI[N.TIR^{ki}]

[... iš]tu libbi ᵀḫgalli gabarê b[ābili]

STT 323 r 42 [... T]A ŠÀ DUB.GAL.ᵀLIᵀ GABA.RI TI[N.TIR^{ki}]

- ▶ The colophon is notable because it provides a reference to the text having been copied from a DUB.GAL.LI '(exceptionally) large tablet'. These large manuscripts would have preserved entire compositions from various genres, including omen lists. Each side of a *ᵀḫgallu* might have had five or six columns of 150 lines each, written in small script (Abusch and Schwemer 2009, 53).¹⁷⁵
- ▶ The manuscript ends.

* * *

¹⁷⁵ For a discussion of *ᵀḫgallu*, including attestations and text genres, see Abusch and Schwemer (2009, 53–54). For a reconstructed drawing of what a *ᵀḫgallu* of *Maqlu* may have looked like, see Abusch and Schwemer (2009, 55, Fig. 1). Photographs of the six-column Middle-Assyrian god list An : *Anum* (YBC 2401), also mentioned in Abusch and Schwemer (2009, 53), can be viewed at <https://collections.peabody.yale.edu/search/Record/YPM-BC-016994>. See CAD (T: 126 s.v. *ᵀḫgallu*) for further attestations.

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Abstract (English)

Tablet 32, a section from Mesopotamia's longest divinatory series, *šumma ālu ina mēlē šakin* 'If a city is set on a height', collects omens on the behaviors and characteristics of lizards. It is but one of several sections that collect omens about non-human animals. The creation of the vast omen lists of the first millennium was long thought to be empirical at its core, based on millennia of recording observed phenomena. Scholars have since recognized that omen texts combine semantic and symbolic associations along with phonetic and graphic elements to create, based on similitude, connections between the ominous phenomenon in an omen's protasis and the associated outcome in its apodosis. Within this context, Tablet 32's omens, like many of its counterparts, exploit the polyvalency of cuneiform writing to display an abundant amount of "word play". Examining the Tablet's omen sequence reveals common structural elements such as oppositional binary pairs and schematic relationships based on commonly known sequences such as color, but also lesser known ones such as lists of household furnishings. The text phonetic repetition and graphic doubling to mirror an omen's semantic context of twins and duality.

This Master's thesis was written under the auspices of the project *Bestiarium Mesopotamicum: Animal Omens in Ancient Mesopotamia* (Universität Wien), which received funding from the Austrian Science Fund (FWF des Wissenschaftsfonds) (Project n° P 31032). Sections of Part IV (4.2.4 & 4.2.5) result from research conducted under the auspices of the project REPAC "Repetition, Parallelism and Creativity: an Inquiry into the Construction of Meaning in Ancient Mesopotamian Literature and Erudition" (2019-2024, University of Vienna), which has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Grant agreement no. 803060).

The thesis is a completely re-edited version of Tablet 32 with transliteration, translation, and philological commentary. Based on collations of the original clay tablets and photographs, sign readings and omen sequences have been corrected. The current edition is also the first to bring together all known manuscripts from Tablet 32 and includes a previously unknown join discovered by Nicla De Zorzi in February 2020.

Examining the omen sequencing in Tablet 32 reveals that the Tablet's linguistic features go beyond simply creating connections between protases and apodoses, but that these also interweave to create a web of connections between omens. Tablet 32's three textual recensions, with their varying, yet similar, omen sequences, makes the text aptly suited to examine how layers of similitude can be variously used to create a cohesive whole.

Abstract (Deutsch)

Tafel 32, ein Kapitel aus dem längsten aus Mesopotamien bekannten divinatorischen Text *šumma ālu ina mēlê šakin* „Wenn eine Stadt auf einer Höhe liegt“, beinhaltet Omina über das Verhalten und die Eigenschaften von Eidechsen. Tafel 32 ist einer von mehreren Abschnitten des Gesamttexts, in denen Omina über nichtmenschliche Tiere behandelt werden. In der bisherigen Forschung nahm man lange an, dass die Erstellung der umfangreichen Listen von Omina aus dem ersten Jahrtausend im Kern eine empirische Basis besaß und auf jahrtausendelangen Aufzeichnungen real beobachteter Phänomene beruhte.

Neuere Forschungen haben jedoch gezeigt, dass Omentexte aus Basis einer Kombination von semantischen und symbolischen Assoziationen mit phonetischen und grafischen Elementen entstanden sind. Diese Kombinationen basieren auf dem Prinzip von Ähnlichkeit und verbinden das omenhafte Phänomen in der Protasis eines Omens mit dem entsprechenden Ergebnis dieses Phänomens in der Apodosis. In demselben Kontext können die zahlreichen „Wortspiele“ in den Omina der Tafel 32 gesehen werden, die—wie viele andere Teile des Textes—auf der Polyvalenz der Keilschrift beruhen. Die untersuchten Omenabfolgen auf Tafel 32 weisen typische Strukturelemente von Omentexten auf, wie gegensätzliche binäre Paare oder schematische Beziehungen, die auf bekannten Abfolgen, beispielsweise von Farben, basieren, aber auch weniger bekannte Elemente, wie Abfolgen von Omina, die auf Listen von Haushaltsgegenständen aufbauen. Auch können, zum Beispiel, phonetische Wiederholung und grafische Verdopplung des Texts einen semantischen Kontext von Dualität in der jeweiligen Omina spiegeln.

Diese Masterarbeit wurde im Rahmen des Projekts ‚Bestiarium Mesopotamicum: Tieromina im Alten Mesopotamien‘ (Universität Wien) verfasst, das durch den österreichischen Wissenschaftsfonds FWF (Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung) (Projektnummer P 31032) gefördert wurde. Abschnitte des Teils IV (4.2.4 und 4.2.5) basieren auf Forschungstätigkeiten im Rahmen des Projekts REPAC „Repetition, Parallelism and Creativity: an Inquiry into the Construction of Meaning in Ancient Mesopotamian Literature and Erudition“ (2019-2024, Universität Wien), gefördert von European Research Council (ERC) im Rahmen des Forschungs- und Innovationsprogramms Horizon 2020 (Fördervereinbarung Nr. 803060).

Diese Masterarbeit enthält eine vollständig überarbeitete Edition von Tafel 32 mit Transliteration, Übersetzung und philologischem Kommentar. Durch die Kollation des Textes anhand von Originalen oder Fotografien der Texts konnten nicht nur einige Zeichenlesungen, sondern auch die Reihenfolge mancher Omina korrigiert werden. Die hier vorliegende Edition führt erstmalig alle bekannte Manuskripte von Tafel 32 zusammen und enthält zudem einen von Nicla De Zorzi im Februar neu entdeckten Join zweier Tontafeln.

Die Untersuchung der Abfolgen der Omina auf Tafel 32 zeigt, dass die sprachlichen Merkmale des Textes nicht bloß Verbindungen zwischen den jeweiligen Protasen und Apodosen herstellen; auch diese Teile selbst sind jeweils untereinander verwoben, wodurch ein Netz von Verbindungen zwischen den einzelnen Omina geschaffen wird. Tafel 32 liegt derzeit in drei verschiedenen Textversionen vor, die zwar ähnliche, jedoch nicht idente Omenabfolgen enthalten. Eine Detailanalyse dieser drei Textvarianten zeigt daher besonders deutlich, wie die vielschichtigen Formen von Ähnlichkeit und ihre vielfältigen Kombinationsmöglichkeiten einen kohärenten Gesamttext erzeugen.