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A HYMN TO NINKASI

BY J. DYNELEY PRINCE
Columbia University

The text of this all-Sumerian fragmentary hymn (Vat. 6705) is published in the *Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler*, X (1913), 14, by H. Zimmern. The original is a tablet of comparatively recent acquisition, containing a hymn to Ninkasi in four-line strophes. The beginning of the hymn has been mutilated and there is also a break between the Obverse and the Reverse. The end of the first section is a two-line strophe. The text is exceedingly difficult to decipher, as it is not only mutilated in places, but the original scribe apparently in many instances wrote carelessly, making erasures and corrections. As a result of this, a later student using the neo-Babylonian writing inserted a number of both marginal and textual glosses, an attempt to explain which has been made below.

As instances of the uncertain character of the scribe's writing the following may be cited:

Obv. 7. *-ki* in *En-ki* is so unclear as to be unrecognizable, were it not for Obv. 5.

Obv. 12. *maš-lig* is clearly for *maš-e*, as shown in Obv. 14.

Obv. 16-18. *a-si-ga-* shows a *si* like *gur*, but it must be *si*, while the *ga* is like *ik*, but it is evidently *ga*. Cf. here Obv. 18: *lig-ga* where the *lig* is perfectly clear.

Rev. 3-4. *u-sa* has been corrected and *u(?)-šuta* is very unclear.

Rev. 5: is this *gar-ba* or *gar-ma*?

In the following paper I have attempted to render the hymn as accurately as possible from the lithographed reproduction. The second section beginning Rev. 11 is so full of difficulties that I have made no effort to interpret it. The first four lines, however, may be transliterated as follows:

Rev. 11. *gi umun-e gi umun-e*

Rev. 12. *gi umun-e kaš-lam di-ri*

Rev. 13. *gi umun-e dm- (GAR) nunuz (?) šag-šag-gi*

Rev. 14. *kaš-lam di-e (gloss ri) dm (GAR)-na ? kislaš-kislaš-ea*

The following abbreviations have been used: Amiaud and Méchineau = Amiaud et Méchineau, *Tableau Comparé*, Paris, 1902; Bart. = George A. Barton, *Origin and Development of the Babylonian Writing*, 1913; B. = Rudolph Brünnow, *Classified List*; Del. = Friedrich Delitzsch, *Sumerisches Glossar*, 1914; HT. = Paul Haupt, *Akkadische und Sumerische Keilschrifttexte*; Langdon = S. H. Langdon, *Sumerian Grammar*, 1911; M. = Bruno Meissner, *Seltene Assyrische Ideogramme*, 1910; MSL = J. D. Prince, *Materials for a Sumerian Lexicon*; PAOS = *Proceedings of the American Oriental Society*; R. = Rawlinson, *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*.

TEXT

No. 156 (Vat. 6705)

Obverse

1. šu-mu-ra
. for my hand
2. ⁴Nin-ka-si su(g)-ki-zu peš-du(UL)-ki-(zu) . . .
Ninkasi for thy land, the fosterer of the glory of thy land (art thou)!
3. . . . ba(š)-bi šu-mu-ra dimmer du(UL)
. for my hand, god of glory
4. ama-zu ⁴Nin-ti nin-zu-ab
Thy mother is Nin-ti lady of the deep
5. a-a-zu ⁴En-ki en ⁴Ni-dim-mut
. . . . Thy father is Ea, the lord Nudimmut
6. ⁴Nin-ka-si ama-zu ⁴Nin-ti d(am)
Nin-ka-si thy mother is Nin-ti.
7. a-a-zu ⁴En-ki en ⁴Nu-dim-mut
Thy father is Ea the lord Nudimmut.
8. si-gar gur-gur (KIL-KIL) mar maš-e gaba-a-(zu)
The mighty bolt, O great functionary, thou art its breaker!
9. (za-ra gloss) egi(r) { maškim-ta } ub(PU)-ba egi(r) dug-dug(XI-XI)-a
(ab gloss) { }
(As for thee) O princess, in spite of the demon of the chamber, princess, thou makest glad (or 'dost heal').
10. ⁴Nin-ka-si (si)-gar gur-gur (KIL-KIL) mar maš-e gaba-a-zu
Ninkasi the mighty bolt, O great functionary, thou art its breaker.
11. egi(r) maškim-ta ub(PU)-ba egi(r) dug-dug (XI-XI)-a
O princess, in spite of the demon of the chamber, princess, thou makest glad (or 'dost heal').
12. egi(r) udun maš-e gaba-a-zu
O princess, thou who breakest open the furnace of the mighty one;

13. *tinur gu*(KISAD) *nunuz-a* (e gloss) *si-di-di-a*
thou who rulest the furnace of all creation(?)
14. ⁴*Nin-ka-si* *epi(r)* *udun maḡ-e gaba-a-zu*
Ninkasi, princess, thou who breakest open the furnace of the mighty one;
15. *tinur gu* (KISAD) *nunuz-a si-di-di-a*
thou who rulest the furnace of all creation (?);
16. *gír iḡi-gar-ra a-si-gd-zu*
thou who raisest on high the network of the lightning;
17. *ur-me-me mun-gam-gam-md-a-an*
thou who causest our enemies to bend down in submission!
18. ⁴*Nin-ka-si gír iḡi-gar-ra a-si-gd-a-zu*
Ninkasi who raisest on high the network of the lightning;
19. *ur-me-me mun-gam-gam-md-a-an*
thou who causest our enemies to bend down in submission;
20. *ad-gír-gi* (gloss) *muḡ-bi-a a-gar-ra-zu*
O thou real producer of lightning who changest those who are against thee;
21. *i-zi zi i-zi-dam i-zi-gd-gd-dam*
A firm wall, a wall thou art, a wall indeed thou art.
22. ⁴*Nin-ka-si muḡ-bi-a a-gar-ra-zu*
Ninkasi who changest those who are against thee
23. *i-zi zi i-zi-dam i-zi-gd-gd-dam*
a firm wall, a wall thou art, a wall indeed thou art.
24. *ad gír-gi md maḡ-a kalag-gd-zu*
Thou real producer of the lightning, exalted functionary, mighty one!
25. *ka*(LIB)-*a Ninni-di an-aḡ-aḡ-a-an*
Heart of Ninni the judge, which curses(?),
26. ⁴*Nin-ka-si ad-gír-gi ma(r) maḡ*
Ninkasi, real producer of the lightning, exalted functionary!

[Break between Obverse and Reverse]

Reverse

1. ⁴*Nin-ka-si gar-*
Ninkasi
2. *kaḡ u-sa kaḡ-ḡu*
Wine of U-sa(?) wine which
3. *kaḡ u(?)-ḡuta umun-e-ka* ⁴*Ninni-di-dam*
Wine of U(?)-ḡuta of the lady Ninni the judge, it is.
4. *laḡtan maḡ-a mi-ni-in-si-di-a-an*
She apportions it in the exalted vessel.
5. ⁴*Nin-ka-si kaḡ gar-ba* (?) *umun-e-ka* ⁴*Ninni-di-dam*
O Ninkasi wine of offering(?) of the lady Ninni the judge, it is.
6. *laḡtan maḡ-a mi-ni-in-si-di-a*
She apportions it in the exalted vessel.

7. *kaš si-(im) kaš laftan mi-ni-in-a-dé-a-zu*
Wine of the bowl, wine of the vessel, when thou pourest it out,
8. *IdQarqar IdUd-(kib)-nun-na-ka sig(SE)-ga-a-an za (gloss)*
to the river Qarqar, to the river Euphrates thou givest it.
9. *4Nin-ka-si kaš si-(im) (ka)š laftan a-dé-a*
Ninkasi wine of the bowl, wine of the vessel, when thou pourest out,
10. *IdQarqar IdUd-(kib)-nun-na-ka sig (SE)-ga-a-an*
to the river Qarqar, to the river Euphrates thou givest it.

COMMENTARY

Obverse

2. *su(g)*=SU, evidently a preposition here; B. 165, =*el (elí)*; cf. HT., p. 141, on pure prepositions.

peš; cf. Bart. 341a for the sign = primarily *aládu*, MSL, p. 269.

du (UL) = *asámu* "be beautiful," B. 9134; MSL, p. 85. *peš-du*(UL)-*ki-zu* may also mean "glorious fosterer of the land art thou."

8. This line is duplicated in line 10, *gur-gur* (KIL-KIL) = *kabbaru* "very strong," IV. R. 9, 19-20a.

mar-maš = *pašišu* "anointing priest," B. 5824; IIR, 25, 32c. In line 24 below, *má-maš* is clearly identical. *gaba* = *pašáru* "loosen, break open," *passim*, but usually with the value *tuš* in this sense.

9. A very difficult line; duplicated in line 11. The gloss *za-ra* "as to thee" = "thou art the one who" was evidently written by a student to indicate that the line is in the second personal construction. The *-ra* is the demonstrative particle noted by Langdon, § 163.

epi(r) here means "princess, notable," although written with the EGIR-sign. The *epi(r)* in this case = *igi-ir(ra)* "one who stands first." Delitzsch, p. 30, gives the apocoped form *epi* as occurring for "princess." Note that in Ranke, *Bab. Exped. of the Univ. of Penn.*, VI, 1, No. 29, case-line 9, this *epir* occurs as the title of a witness, whose name *Šamaš-ki-ci* precedes the title. The writing of this word with the wrong sign has a parallel in the use of EDIN = *céru* "field" for the preposition *círu* "upon."

In *maštim-ta*, the *-ta* may mean "in spite of," as *-ta* has every force of *ina*, frequently = "in spite of," Prince, PAOS, 1895, cexxi.

ub(PU)-*ba* is difficult. PU has the value *ub*, Langdon, p. 299, applied especially to the inside of a building = any inclosure or place; hence = *tupqu*, "region."

dug-dug (XI-XI) = primarily *tubbu* "make good."

12. Duplicated in line 14. *udun* (U-MU) = *udunnu* "furnace"; also *tináru*, M. 6616.

13. Duplicated in line 15. The sign with the value *tinur* = *tináru* is the square inclosing IM; cf. Fossey, 4888 ff.: *ellamsu*; *kišina*; *ninda*; *tinur*. Note also that *imi* (IM) = *arú* "fire-pot," B. 8356; 8372.

gu (KIŠAD) = *napzar* "all, entirety," B. 3220. *nunuz* = *lipá* "offspring"; cf. Prince, *AJSL*, XXIV, 66-67, and note B. 8100: *nunuz-ti* "generation of life." Delitzsch, p. 207-8, gives the chief meaning of *nunuz* as *pílu*, a color-word, possibly "red" (?). As the meaning of the sign of *nunuz* seems to indicate "generation," *MSL*, p. 265, it is probable that the equivalents *piru*, *pílu*, denoting color, are paronomastic applications associated with *lipu*.

16. Duplicated, line 18. In *gír iši-gar-ra*, *gír* clearly means "lightning," while *iši-gar-ra* = *šabiká* "network," which latter word is also a synonym of *kubšu* "a netted headdress," Muss-Arnolt, p. 1003; cf. *MSL*, pp. 193-94.

a-si-ga = *a-sig-ga*. Note that (a)-*sig*(PA) = *šaḡá* "be high, pointed," Langdon, p. 237; see Muss-Arnolt, p. 1026, *s.s.* *šakádu* "be pointed."

17. *ur-me-me*; *ur* = *nakru* "enemy" + *-me-me* "our." *gam-gam* "cause to bow down," *MSL*, pp. 121 and 122.

20. Duplicated, line 22. The glossator adds *ad-gír-gi* here, which appears in the text, line 24 (26). This expression was clearly intended by the glossator to precede *muš-bi-a* probably = "those who are opposed"; *muš* = *eli*; *a-gar* = *šaná* "change," B. 11706.

21. Duplicated, line 23. *i-si* = *i-garu* "wall," IIR, 38, 18c; cf. *is-si* "wall," Lotz, Tiglath-pileser, p. 180. This word *i-si* contains the abstract vowel-prefix *i-+zi* "something firm." In *i-si-gá-gá* (= *gar-gar*), the final element must mean *bašá*, *šakánu* "a wall which is truly fixed."

24. *ad-gír-gi* (gloss in 20 and 26): *ad* "begetter" + *gír* "lightning" + *gi* "firm, real" = "real begetter of the lightning." *md-maš* = *mar-maš*, as in line 10.

Reverses

1. *u-sa* = some red plant (?); *sa* = "red," Langdon, pp. 234-35.

3. *u(?)-šuta* possibly "grain." The sign seems to be the *šuta*-sign in Bart. 466: *ambu, sirqu*.

4. The first sign seems to be the equivalent of B. 8185: *duk* = *luštan* = *lušánu* "a sort of vessel." Cf. M. 4234 and 6109. The sign is NUNUZ + LIT, with a LA-insert with the value *luštan*, given Fossey, 4080. Two similar signs are Fossey, 4082: *mud* = *zuburu* and 4084: *usan* "vessel" = *qinazu*, a sort of receptacle.

7. *si-(im)*; Langdon gives *si-im* of gold; *Recueil de tablettes chaldéennes*, p. 221, obv. 14.

Note that the glossator suggests here *mi-ni-in-(de-a)*.

8. The glossator suggests here *sig-ga-za*, second person, instead of *sig-ga-a-an*.