Another Early Dynastic Incantation
Niek Veldhuis
University of California, Berkeley

§1. Among the tablets recently made available in photograph in CDLI is a perfectly preserved ED tablet, now kept in the Musées royaux d’Art et d’Histoire, Brussels, Belgium (O.1920), that contains two incantations. The photograph does not allow a secure identification of every individual sign, but due to some measure of redundancy and the rules of the genre almost every line may be read with some degree of confidence. The present note is meant to draw attention to this tablet, which adds another exemplar to a rather rare genre in early Sumerian literature (see Krebernik 1984; 1996; and Cunningham 1997, chapter 2). A fuller study of the text will require collation of the original.

§2. Date and provenance of the tablet must be determined on internal grounds. The sign IM (or tum₂) is written with the two final verticals (NI₂). While NI₂ and IM are two separate signs in Fara, this distinction was already largely abandoned in Abu Salabikh (Krebernik 1998, 277). On the other hand, Utu is written without determinative, which points to an early dating (see Krebernik 1998, 284). In general, the sign order appears to follow the reading order of the signs. Based on these grounds, one may perhaps date the text to the ED IIIa period, probably a little later than the Fara corpus. To my knowledge, there is no internal evidence to suggest a provenience. The gods named are all widely known and revered; some of the motifs used in the incantation are known from Fara, but the Fara/Ebla duplicates demonstrate that such motifs could have a wide distribution.

§3. MRAH O.1920
obverse

i 1. en₂-e₂-nu-ru
2. an-na IM mu-zi
3. ki saḥar mu-zi

In heaven a wind arose,
on earth dust swirled;

ii 1. dal-ḥa-mun
2. mu-zi
3. su-bar lu₂
4. mu-zi
5. utu lu₂ he₂-DU
6. 4nanna lu₂ he₂-DU

south wind rose,
north wind rose;
gale
and dust storm
arose;
the body of a man
arose.
May Utu come to the man.
May Nanna come to the man.
May the eloquent, of brilliant speech,
Enki,
king, god of the Abzu,
come to the man.
He (they) saw south wind,
north wind,
gale,
dust storm,
and the body of the man.

iii 1. lugal dingir abzu
2. lu₂ he₂-DU
3. imu₅
4. im₅
5. l.IGLMAŠ
6. dal-ḥa-mun
7. su-bar lu₂
8. igi-na mu-bar
9. 4MA-gu₁₀
10 a-zu₅

My MA-god,
the physician,

iv 1. e-ta₄(TA-gu₉)-e₃
2. UD.KA du₁₁-ga
3. 4nin-girim₆(BU.KU₆.DU) of Ningirim.
empty space

Incantation

reverse

i 1. inanna ku₃
2. u₂₁ 4en-lil₂
3. an-gal₂-x
4. kur bad₃

Holy Inanna
and Enlil
were present
and saw in the high mountains
south wind,
north wind,
gale,
dust storm,
–like fishes and birds–

4. im₅ mu-zi
5. im₅ mir mu-zi
6. l.IGLMAŠ

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ii 1. su-bar lu₂  
   and the body of the man.
ii 2. igi-na mu-bar
ii 3. dMA-na  
   His MA god,
ii 4. a-zûs
ii 5. e-ta₆(TAgûnû)-e₃  came out.
ii 6. UD.KA du₁₁-ga  Incantation
ii 7. din-girimₓ(BU.KU₆.DU) of Ningirim.

§4. Commentary

§4.1. The text shares phraseology with the incantations number 4 and 5 in Krebernik 1984, which both deal with north wind, south wind, and the body (su-bar) of a man. The Fara incantations are both attested in two collective tablets (SF 54 = Krebernik 1984, 382-383 and TS₅ 170). The Fara texts use the verb ru (to blow), the new text has zi(g) (to rise). An Ur III incantation that includes some of the same phraseology was recently published by van Dijk and Geller 2003, no. 9.

§4.2. Obverse

i 6 The sign combination I.IGI.MA₅ (also obv. iii 5 and rev. i 7) is apparently another kind of wind, paired with dal-ḥa-mun. The translation “gale” is just a guess; the reading remains entirely unclear to me.

ii 1 For the sign MUN (DIMgunû) see Civil 1984, 162-163.

ii 4 The absence of case markers makes it hard to propose an interpretation for DU. Reading gub, one may translate “May god so-and-so assist the man,” assuming a comitative case for lu₂.

ii 6 I do not know of other attestations of eme-gal₂ or inim mul. The expression eme-gal₂ is patterned after inim-gal₂, etc.; see Black 2000.

iii 8 In this text -na represents the third person possessive; see also dMA-na (reverse 2, 3) which parallels dMA-gû₁⁰ (obv. iii 9). In the present line (and in reverse 2, 2) -na may indicate third person possessive plural, if we are to take all the gods mentioned as the plural subject of the verb.

iii 9 The identity of dMA is unknown to me; apparently dMA is the personal god or a guardian angel (also rev. ii 3).

iv 1 The use of TAgûnû (better visible in rev. ii 5) for -ta is usually restricted to UD.GAL.NUN texts (Krebernik 1998, 302). The verb may also be taken in a transitive sense: “(...) the physician took it out.” One may compare here Krebernik 1984 text 18c.

iv 3 GIRIM is probably written A.BU.HA.DU here (not every sign is clearly visible); the sign A is absent in rev. ii 7, adding still another possible spelling to the list in Krebernik 1984, 233ff.

§4.3. Reverse

i 2 Reading of this line is very uncertain.

i 3 At this place a god name would fit better; dîg-alim, however, is excluded by the visible sign elements.

i 9 Reading and function of this line are unclear to me.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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