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**Studies in comparative religion and literature of the ancient
Near East: An interpretation of *Šurpu* and Spell 125**

Shreibman, Henry Maynard, Ph.D.

Columbia University, 1988

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Studies in Comparative Religion and Literature
of the Ancient Near East :
An Interpretation of Šurpu and Spell 125

Henry M. Shreibman

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

Columbia University

1988

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ABSTRACT

Studies in Comparative Religion and Literature
of the Ancient Near East:
An Interpretation of Šurpu and Spell 125

Henry M. Shreibman

Šurpu has been considered for decades to be among the most important incantation texts in Mesopotamian. It deals with the alleviation of an individual patient's sense of physical, emotional, and social failure due to unresolved transgression and guilt. Šurpu provides both a sympathetic ritual and a verbalized confession in its attempt to restore the patient's sense of well-being.

Professor Erica Reiner's complete edition of the Šurpu series has been available since 1958. To date, no integrated survey and interpretation of the text has been produced.

The present study examines the rituals, the motifs, and socioreligious transgressions which constitute the body of the series. It would appear as though the motifs catalogued in Šurpu are informed by Mesopotamian Belles Lettres literature, including philosophical speculations, incantations, personal litanies, hymns, and prayers. An individual perspective and religious outlook emerge from this comparison.

Chapter one establishes a methodology for interpreting the texts and rituals combining Comparative Religion, Sociology, and Cross-Cultural studies. From these perspectives the multifaceted nature of the texts are best revealed.

Chapter two discusses the evolution of the term māmītu and its specialized usage in Šurpu and this commentary.

Chapter three gathers and interprets motifs from the cultic, ritual, theological, and social aspects of the Šurpu catalogues. References from the Belles Lettres and the cross-cultural parallels are presented.

Chapter four is devoted to the study of Spell 125 of The Book of the Dead. The spell is studied in light of its similarity to Šurpu. Spell 125 also serves as an interlocutor between ritual and Wisdom literatures. Here the internal Egyptian parallels are examined.

This dissertation is intended as a companion to Professor Reiner's work. It provides the reader with a manual of comparative religion and literature which aids in the interpretation of Šurpu and its parallel text Spell 125. It hopes to encourage the future study of these materials by both Assyriologists and Egyptologists.

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Preface

I was introduced to the Surpu text by Dr. David Marcus during my second year of Akkadian at Columbia University. It was apparent from my first reading of the material in Tablet II and III that this text was an exciting, untapped wellspring of information concerning the nature of Mesopotamian religion and literature.

The rich material in the Surpu provided an opportunity to demonstrate and test an interdisciplinary approach toward Ancient Mesopotamian literature and culture to which I am deeply committed. To best understand the material one needs to bring to the text a combined interest in language, religion, sociology, and psychology.

Professor Moshe Held, of dear and blessed memory, served as the original sponsor of this dissertation. Throughout our years together from when I was his research assistant and personal secretary down to the last week of his life in Israel, he was a paradigm of methodology and academics, as well as a great source of personal encouragement to me in this work. He was a great friend - I miss him to this day.

I have profited greatly from discussions with Professors Reiner, University of Chicago, Moshe Greenberg and Moshe Weinfeld, Hebrew University and Theodore Gaster, Columbia University. Their suggestions, comments, and reservations were invaluable.

I am especially appreciative of Professor David Marcus for his indepth criticism, help and guidance over the last three years and in the final preparation of this text. He was there for me at the beginning and at the end. A special word of thanks to Dr. Ogden

Goelet of Columbia University for his informative comments on Chapter 4 "Spell 125: A Parallel to Surpu in Ancient Egyptian Literature." I accept full responsibility for the final product.

I am indebted to the helpful and patient staffs of the libraries at: Gratz College in Philadelphia, the Semitics and Egyptology Collections of Hebrew University, The Oriental Institute of The University of Chicago and Spertus College of Judaica.

I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to the following funds and institutions for supporting my work and research: The Danciger Fund, The President's Fellowship and The Center for Israel and Jewish Studies, Columbia University, The Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, and the Jerusalem Fellows.

This dissertation is dedicated to my family: to my father Oscar Shreibman, of dear and blessed memory, who taught me to love learning from books and people, to my mother S. June Shreibman, who raised me with creativity, humor and intellectual curiosity and to my life partner Barbara, whose art, intelligence, fortitude and love provides me with hope. May Jesse Oscar, and all our children flourish and grow in such a loving environment.

Henry M. Shreibman

Jerusalem, Israel
24 Kislev 5748
December 15, 1987

Abbreviations

The standard abbreviations found in the following texts will be used:

Assyriological:

The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of Chicago.
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984. Volume 'S.'

Biblical and Post-Biblical:

JBL 95 (1976), 335-46.

In addition the following abbreviations will be used:

- AEL M. Lichtheim. Ancient Egyptian Literature, Vol. I - III. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.
- Ahw. W. Von Soden. Akkadisches Handwörterbuch. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1965.
- AM A. L. Oppenheim. Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964.
- ANET J. B. Pritchard. Ancient Near Eastern Texts related to the Old Testament. 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.
- Art H. Frankfort. The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient in the Pelican History of Art. London: Penguin Books, 1970.
- BDB F. Brown, S. R. Driver and C. A. Briggs. Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament. Oxford: Clarendon, 1907; reprint ed. 1972.

- BL G. Driver, and J. Miles. The Babylonian Laws. Commentary I; Texts II. Oxford: Clarendon, reprint ed. 1975.
- BWL W. G. Lambert. Babylonian Wisdom Literature. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960, reprint ed., 1975.
- CAD A. L. Oppenheim. The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of Chicago. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965f.
- CH R. F. Harper. The Code of Hammurabi.
- CJ The Classical Journal.
- Class.App. J. Waardenburg. Classical Approaches to the Study of Religion. Vol. 1. Netherlands: Mouton, 1973.
- Comp.Rel. M. Pye. Comparative Religion. London: Devon Press, 1972.
- Cyl.Or. L. Delaporte. Catalogue des cylindres orientaux. Paris: Musee du Louvre, 1920, 1923).
- Dialogue The Dialogue of Pessimism. W. G. Lambert. Babylonian Wisdom Literature. Oxford: Clarendon, 1960, reprint ed. 1975.
- Elem. E. Durkheim. The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life. New York: Free Press, 1969.
- Gilg. R. C. Thompson. The Gilgamesh Epic.
- GB J. G. Frazer. The Golden Bough. Abridged ed. New York: Macmillan, 1963.

- GB 1 - X J. G. Frazer. The Golden Bough, Complete and Unabridged, MacMillan: 1922.
- HL The Hittite Laws. A. Göetze. ANET 188-197.
- IDB The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, 1962.
- Iraq 42 J. J. Geller. "A Middle Assyrian Tablet of Utukkū Lemnūtu Tab. 12." Iraq 42 (1980): 23-51.
- Izbu E. Leichty. The Omen Series Šumma Izbu. New York: Augustin, 1970.
- Jastrow M. Jastrow. A Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Babli, Yerushalmi and Midrashic Literature.
- JCS 18 A. K. Grayson, and W. G. Lambert. "AKKadian Prophecies." JCS 18 (1964): 7-30.
- JNES 15 E. Reiner. " Lipšur Litanies." JNES 15 (1956): 129-149.
- JNES 33 W. G. Lambert. " DINGIR.ŠA.DIB.BA Incantations." JNES 33 (1974): 267-322.
- LE A. Göetze. The Laws of Eshnunna. Annual of ASOR 31 (1951-52). New Haven: 1956.
- Legends T. H. Gaster. Myth, Legends and Custom in the Old Testament. New York: Harper, 1969.
- Lud. Ludlul bēl Nemeqi. W. G. Lambert. Babylonian Wisdom Literature. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960, reprint ed., 1975.

- LXX The Septuagint version of the Old Testament.
- MÄS Münchener Ägyptologischen Studien.
München: Westdeutscher Verlage.
- Magic J. Trachtenburg. Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study of Folk Religion.
New York: Atheneum, 1979.
- MAL G. Driver & J. Miles. The Assyrian Laws. Oxford: Clarendon, 1935.
- NT The New Testament. Revised Standard Version.
National Council of Churches. London: Collins, reprint ed., 1952.
- OT The Holy Scriptures according to the Masoretic Text. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, reprint ed., 1955.
- para. paragraph (¶).
- Patterns M. Eliade. Patterns in Comparative Religion. New York: Meridian, 1970.
- ref. reference. Used to identify a listing of a reference as cited in the CAD.
- Reiner, Surpu E. Reiner. Surpu: A Collection of Sumerian and Akkadian Incantations.
AfO , Beiheft 11. Graz: Wiendner, 1958.
- Rel.Sem. W. R. Smith. The Religion of the Semites, the Fundamental Institutions.
New York: reprint ed., Schocken, 1972.
- SANE G. Buccellati, M. Buccellati, P. Michalowski, ed. Sources from the Ancient Near East.
Malibu: Undena.

- sub sub voce = "under this word."
Used to identify the word under
which a reference is listed in dictionaries
such as CAD.
- Sumerian E. I. Gordon. Sumerian Proverbs
Proverbs Glimpses of Everyday Life in Mesopotamia.
Philadelphia: Museum Monographs, 1959.
- Theod. The Babylonian Theodicy. W. G. Lambert.
Babylonian Wisdom Literature,
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960,
reprint ed., 1975.
- TD T. Jacobsen. The Treasures of Darkness,
A History of Mesopotamian Religion.
New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976.
- Thespis T. H. Gaster. Thespis: Ritual, Myth and
Drama in the Ancient Near East. New York:
Harper, 1966.
- UT C. H. Gordon. Ugaritic Textbook.
AnOr 38. Rome: Pontificum Institutum
Biblicum, 1965.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 General Description

Šurpu was a broadly used ritual incantation series produced in response to the personal religious needs of a physically and emotionally suffering patient. The series is written as a guide, an instruction manual, and a text for a ritual drama to be conducted by the Mašmaššu (incantation priest) and the Āšipu (exorcist, aide to the incantation priest) in the presence of the suffering suppliant. The body of the series constitutes lists of transgressions and areas of indiscretion which might have led the suffering suppliant to his need of ritual purification. However, the text also includes directions for and descriptions of purification rituals, mythology, and folklore related to the emotional restoration and physical well-being of the patient.

Šurpu has been considered for decades to be one of the most important ritual incantation texts in Mesopotamian literature. Both in terms of the quality and quantity of the text, it is unusual in Mesopotamian studies to have access to such an extensive view of the dynamics of organized religion serving the needs of personal religion. This series appears to be at the philosophical crossroads of the established concerns of official religion and the emerging perspectives of individual religion.

An able and complete transliteration, translation, and technical apparatus for the Šurpu series by Professor Erica Reiner has been available since 1958, Šurpu: A Collection of Sumerian and

Akkadian Incantations. However, to date there has not appeared an in-depth, integrated study on the series.

The Šurpu series offers an excellent opportunity to study one of the earliest known examples of a confession. Central to the understanding of the catalogues of confessed transgressions is the technical use of the term māmītu. The Šurpu text utilizes a unique usage of the term māmītu to describe the physical, social, cultic, legal, and ethical nature of transgression. In chapter two a new, conceptual approach toward the meaning of māmītu as "parameter" will be offered in the hope of resolving a lingering problem in understanding the body of the text.

The primary goal of chapter three is to survey, cross-reference, and elucidate the socioreligious implications of these atomized actions, references, and transgressions. The major themes of the Šurpu series will be collected and examined as to their meaning and place within ancient Near Eastern literature and culture. The ritual drama which unfolds in the text will be considered and analyzed in its relationship to the body of the text. The literary evolution of these themes and notions will be presented where they impact ideas in comparative religion. In attempting to interpret aspects of Mesopotamian religion and culture one must continually qualify the conclusions which are reached. The parallels drawn from other civilizations, together with the references from Mesopotamian literature, provide the best backdrop upon which to judge the isolated phrases in Šurpu.

There is an international concern for these socio-ethical categories and the need for confession as evidenced by a significant

parallel in Spell 125 of The Egyptian Book of the Dead. Chapter four will present and catalogue the major cross-references between Šurpu and Spell 125 A and B. It will offer a structural analysis of the text and a comparative topical commentary of Spell 125, in which the cross-cultural context of the parallel notions will be discussed.

A major project for the Assyriologist and student of religion is the complete textual analysis and commentary on the Šurpu series. As a first step in such an undertaking, the structure, content, and cultural context of these texts must be examined and surveyed to determine its place in Mesopotamian culture specifically and in the ancient Near East generally. That task is the subject of this dissertation.

1.2 The History of Šurpu Research

The Šurpu text was published first, in parts, by Professor Heinrich Zimmern of Leipzig in 1896. In his Beiträge zur Kenntnis der babylonischen Religion Zimmern established the basic text of the series, under the section "Die Beschwörungstafeln Šurpu." In this first appearance of the texts, Zimmern offered a transliteration, a translation into German, and a brief commentary mostly explaining problems in orthography. He specifically mentions his "direct and indirect" indebtedness to Dr. Bezold in the editing of the Šurpu series. Professor Zimmern also continued to publish fragments of the Šurpu for the next few years in the journals.¹ Professor Zimmern's book was met with a certain degree of criticism.²

James A. Craig, then Professor of Semitic Languages and Literatures at the University of Michigan, copied and published a selection of religious texts preserved in the British Museum. In the first volume of his Assyrian and Babylonian Religious Texts he also presented selections from the Šurpu series. He copied the Šurpu tablets according to and following the listings in the three catalogues of tablets then available in the British Museum. His method and approach were received by Professor Zimmern³ and Professor P. Jensen⁴ with rather strong criticisms. They took exception to his readings and translations. None of these papers presented an integrated interpretation of the nature of the series.

Craig in the following year published Volume II along with a brief rebuttal. The vehemence and acerbity of criticism, both personal and professional, concerned issues of methodology in this then field. Much of the controversy centered around the fact that Craig had not confined his work to a single series, had attempted only a cursory translation, and had not availed himself of the newly published fourth tablet catalogue. However, Craig reminds them "that up to the present no one has edited a Series."⁵ In passing, Craig mentions the fact that the eighteen pages of Šurpu which Zimmern offered were "among the easiest, if they are not altogether the easiest, in the British Museum."⁶ Craig also raises a criticism as to Zimmern's overly conservative approach: "What important "contribution" has Prof. Z. contributed, in his Beiträge, to the study of religions by following "das einzig richtige Verfahren."⁷

In 1912, R. W. Rogers in his Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament presents a transliteration and English translation of

Šurpu Tablet II under the heading "An Incantation with Ethical Contents."⁸ In one of his handful of notes on the text, he reveals surprise as to the religious qualities of the text in that "very high ethical ideas are mingled promiscuously with primitive views of demonical forces."⁹

In the early twenties, great interest was directed toward the study of religion in Mesopotamia and Šurpu translations proliferated. A. Ungnad translated what was then available of the Šurpu series from the texts in several different locations.¹⁰ B. Landsberger offered a translation of selected portions of the Šurpu series in the Textbuch zur Religionsgeschichte of Lehmann-Haupt.¹¹

It would appear that Šurpu Tablet II was of the greatest interest to early Assyriologists. Thus, in 1926, A. Ungnad and H. Gressman published this tablet in their Altorientalische Texte und Bilder zum Alten Testament.¹² The first eighty lines of Tablet II were presented and translated with comment. G. Meier, in the late 1930's, wrote "Die Ritualtafel der Serie 'Mundwaschung'" which served as the primary work on Šurpu for some twenty years.¹³ Likewise, F. Kocher wrote on Šurpu.¹⁴

In 1958, Professor Erica Reiner published the now authoritative text of the Šurpu series. She collates the tablets and offers an excellent transliteration, and translation of the text. She presents the so-called "Ritual-tablet" for the first time. Her commentary is, for the most part, limited to linguistic and orthographic problems with the text. The compact and efficient introduction includes some general comments about the possible use and meaning of the text, while the interpretation and implications

of the rituals and the specific references within the series are left mostly to the reader's imagination. Nevertheless, students of Šurpu would still benefit greatly from Reiner's expert opinion on the more subjective issues related to the meaning of the texts.

Since Reiner's publication almost thirty years ago no major work has appeared on the Šurpu text. The lack of ongoing research and articles is surprising.¹⁵ Most of the major texts which deal with Mesopotamian religion do, however, make passing reference to Šurpu, usually in conjunction with Maqlû. These comments typically generalize concerning the Mesopotamian propensity for repetitive rituals of exorcism. However, any critical reading of Šurpu reveals its centrality to any discussion of Mesopotamian religion and thought.

1.3 The Dating of Šurpu

Judging from the broad geographic distribution of the various recensions of the series, Šurpu enjoyed considerable popularity in its own period. Copies were found in the library of Aššurbanipal and in the libraries at Aššur and Sultantepe.

Both linguistic and contextual evidence points to the final composition of the Šurpu series during the Kassite period, along with the bulk of the other major Akkadian literary works. The Kudurru boundary stones, which were broadly used in this period, evidence structural, linguistic, and lexical similarities with the text of our series. Friedrich,¹⁶ Schott,¹⁷ Falkenstein,¹⁸ Von Soden,¹⁹ and Reiner²⁰ agree upon the similarity of language between the Šurpu series and the Kassite Kudurru genre. The fact that the use and abuse of the Kudurru is listed frequently in the

texts themselves provides ample cultural evidence.²¹

The history of religious thought can also be used as a relative index of chronology. The religious orientation and ideology of the Šurpu series are consistent with other works of the Second Millennium B.C.E.²² The majority of works which were composed during the Isin-Larsa, Old Babylonian, and Kassite periods demonstrate a growing expression of the concerns of personal religion. Insecurity, fear, self-doubt, self-appraisal, and guilt are indicative of compositions of this period. Another characteristic of late Second Millennium religious thought is the rise and centrality of the personal god. Much of an individual's sense of stability and order was predicated upon being in good stead and under the protective concern of one's personal god. The catalogues of the Šurpu frequently mention the status of relations with the patient's personal god.²³

1.4 The Form of Šurpu

The text of the Šurpu series is presented in a terse and proscriptive style. The atomized phrases deal with a multiplicity of topics and issues. The apparent internal organization of these phrases reflects a desire on the part of the scribes and editors to offer broad catalogues of human behavior which might prompt divine wrath. The nature and presentation of these catalogues and their organization provide insights into the socioreligious infrastructure of the society.

The position of Šurpu within Mesopotamian literature is challenging to the existing categorizations. It is generally

referred to as a magical incantation because it includes ritual and cultic directions. It provides directions to the Mašmaššu, as well as mythical justifications for his incantation priest's relieving the patient from his ills. There are extensive lists of maleficent demons to be placated and propitious deities to be courted. However, the organization, the length, and the broad distribution of ethical concerns set it apart from this genre and clearly distinguish it from a work such as Maqlû. The information inherent in the catalogues of transgressions appears to be culled from sources as broad as myth, wisdom, and Belles Lettres literature.

With the advent of the discovery of the "Ritual-tablet" from Aššur, certain questions as to the correct assignment of the tablets arose. Ultimately, the "Ritual-tablet" was assigned by Reiner as Tablet I. Her decision to list it as Tablet I was based upon the earlier suggestions of G. Meier²⁴ and F. Köcher²⁵ that it represented a suitable beginning and explanation of the rituals to follow. The new "Ritual-tablet" indicates a different order for the use of the Šurpu series.²⁶

The actual ordering of the tablets of the Šurpu series is based upon the colophons and subscripts of the scribes of the Nineveh library. The Nineveh recension has established itself as canonical ordering of the procedure, numbered from Tablet II - IX in Reiner. However, there is no extant tablet with the subscript "Tablet V of Šurpu." The tablet following Tablet IV appears without a subscript and is shorter than the other tablets of the series (it completes the whole text on a single tablet). So both Zimmern and Reiner agree that this tablet should be referred to as

Tablet V/VI.²⁷ Thus, including the new Tablet I there are only eight actual tablets of the Šurpu text.

Reiner speculated that the text of Tablet V/VI constituted the original closure for the dramatic ritual of the series.²⁸ According to this theory, when the Nineveh series was created, Tablets VII, VIII and IX were appended to the original six tablets, serving a "deuteronomical" function of expanding upon and duplicating existing themes. This present work will follow Reiner's order and text for all references to the Šurpu series.

Throughout the series various literary devices are in evidence. These devices indicate an oral transmission and use of the text. Certain places within the ritual reading of the text call for the introduction of the personal name of the patient or the patient's personal god. The text signifies this inclusion through the use of NENNI A NENNI "NN, son of NN, whose god is NN, whose goddess is NN."²⁹

Oral formulaic repetition is demonstrated in several ways throughout the series. The most common formula or rhetorical device in the series is the use of anaphora in repetitive catalogues. Tablet II demonstrates some of the most sophisticated structuring. In Šurpu II:20-28, various kinship members are introduced under the formulaic anaphora of itti "from" and enclosed by the epistrophic formula iprusu "who estranged." Šurpu II:69-75 uses a formulaic anaphora of ina "because" to present a series of socioreligious factors. A literary unit dealing with personal gods frames each phrase with the anaphora lamassu "protecting deity"

and the epistrophe ittami "he has sworn" in Šurpu II:88-92. The extensive list of symbols and objects in Šurpu II:104-128, through which the patient attempts to find a sign for determining the cause of his suffering, is introduced by the clearly oral instruction "he has asked (for a sign), he has asked (for a sign)." Then each phrase uses the anaphora ina "at" and the epistrophe ša'il "he has asked (for a sign)."

Almost all of Šurpu III from verse 3 through 175 open with the anaphoric construct māmīt and close with an epistrophic verb. The end of Šurpu III:176-183 continues to use this formulation with the construct aran. Šurpu IV:36-44 uses an anaphoric ina to catalogue forms of physical suffering and Šurpu IV:45-55 to list the "seizing" demons. Šurpu IV:89-108, as a section, closes the tablet with a verbal anaphora and epistrophe to emphasize the active nature of divine interactions.

Another proof of the oral nature of the text is the use of a shorthand for the repetition of an established antiphonal chorus. The body of Šurpu VIII carefully catalogues standards and transgressions through the use of itti māmīt as an anaphora. The section runs from Šurpu VIII:48-77. The antiphonal catchphrase to be recited following each new listing is written out in full once in Šurpu VIII:49 "may they be released for you, absolved for you, wiped off you." For the remaining phrases the scribe saves time and emphasizes the oral impact of the text by cuing the priest to this repetitive formula through the use of MIN MIN MIN "ditto, ditto, ditto."

Several locations within the series use mythologic dialogues and narratives as a means of attributing power, authority, and

credibility to the priest in the eyes of the patient and audience. The introductory section to Šurpu V/VI serves just this function. Šurpu V/VI:1-59 extends the potent healing wisdom tradition from Ea to Marduk to our attending priest. Toward the end of the tablet in Šurpu V/VI:144-171, female deities are also described in a narrative as transferring their releasing powers in a divine ritual to be duplicated by their earthly counterparts. A similar section is read in Šurpu VII:37-53, where the function of the dramatic scene is to transmit a sense of personal, divine concern to the patient.

An aetiological tale describing the origins of "binding forces" introduces Šurpu VII. The impact of this narrative elevates these negative forces to epic proportion, threatening the whole fabric of society. The patient, no doubt, senses that he is not alone in his fight for release. His predicament takes on the symbolic import of a primal struggle through this powerful mythic section.

All of these and other cases of rhetorical devices aided in both the memorization and dramatic presentation of the text in an oral form. These devices contributed to the impact and dramatic effect of these extensive lists.

1.5 The Content of Šurpu (A Brief Synopsis)

To best understand Šurpu, the series must be viewed as a whole and not in parts as it is so often quoted. This, however, is not so easily accomplished. Each tablet has its own function in the overall process of alleviating the physical, emotional, and religious suffering of the patient. Therefore, this study of Šurpu presents an introduction to the content of the series in the form of

brief synopses and interpretations of each tablet.

Tablet I

The patient together with the assembled Temple staff, including the Mašmaššu and the Āšipu, prepare the location and participants of the ritual drama. The essence of the central Šurpu ritual is the transference of the transgressions and offenses of the suffering patient to various mundane agents (an onion, dates, matting, wool, goat's hair, and red wool), which are then desquamated or unravelled and burned.

The patient suffers from a sense of restraint and of being bound. The underlying theory of this ritual is that of sympathetic magic. Thus, the efficacy of the ritual is based upon the patient's belief in the priest's power to transfer the destructive, undesirable, and illusive qualities of pain and failure into material substances which can be destroyed. With the processes of desquamation, unravelling, and burning, the desired effect upon the patient is a reciprocal release from the pain and suffering.

Tablet II

This tablet interprets and visualizes the suffering of the patient as a sense of restraint and tension which must be released. The patient, with the help of the extensive lists of the tablet, searches two possible sources for his suffering: (1) the deities who have been angered and (2) his own ethical and moral failure. The introduction is addressed, on behalf of the patient, to the gods and goddesses in general, who may be the source of his suffering or

ultimate absolution.

This tablet intimates a process of dramatic recitation and interaction between the priest and the suffering patient. What constitutes the body of the text is an extensive list of social, religious, and ethical actions transgressed or overlooked by the patient. They are recited in the hopes of determining the nature of the infractions which caused the anger of the gods. Certain cultic objects and contexts are appealed to in the hopes of revealing the true source of the miasma. In closing, major then minor deities are invoked in specific by name and attribute, in hopes of enlisting their powers to bring about the patient's physical and emotional release.

Tablet III

The text provides another extensive catalogue which aids the patient in isolating and identifying the nature of his sufferings. The assumption here is that the patient is the source of his own trouble, yet is not aware of the specific act or acts which caused it. The tablet utilizes the technical term māmītu to describe the relationships, attitudes, locations, and actions which may have bound the patient to an evil fate. The term māmītu will be discussed in chapter two of this dissertation.

The centrality of Marduk to this ritual is first revealed in Tablet III. He is invoked by his pseudonym Asalluḫi, calling to action his divine proficiency in providing release.

Tablet IV

The patient is described as suffering from the restricting

and binding malevolent power of demons. He calls upon the leadership of Marduk to rally the benevolent divine forces on his behalf. This petition is based upon the mythologic image of Marduk as the champion of mankind against the evil Asakku.

The catalogues of Tablet IV are unique in that they provide an extensive list of proscriptive ethical and moral principles. It can be assumed that these suggested behaviors were part of the moral re-education of the patient against future transgressions.

Tablet V/VI

Here is a description of the physical ills of the patient visualized as the smothering-binding power of demons. The scene then shifts to a celestial stage where a mythic drama is presented. Marduk takes notice of the man's sufferings and turns to his father Ea for his magical intervention. Ea provides reassurance to Marduk, and thus to the priest and patient concerning the potency of the central ritual of Šurpu.

A relationship exists between the "Ritual-tablet" (Tablet I) and Tablet V/VI. The body of Tablet V/VI is an expansion upon the ritual purification acts of burning in Tablet I. A literary and metaphoric interpretation of each ritual action and agent is presented.

Tablet VII

The source of the patient's sufferings is again described as a physical attack of demonic forces. A primal mythologic origin is attributed to these malevolent powers. An insight is given into the nature of the physical ailments of the patient.

A new ritual of release, exorcism, and healing is presented. It is introduced by another mythologic scene between Ea and Marduk, where the father again empowers the son to come to the aid of the patient.

Tablet VIII

This tablet demonstrates an increased interest in ordering and cataloguing. The text is composed of a series of incantations which call the divine forces to battle against the binding evil forces. An extensive series of god lists are presented in the form of a violent and physical threat to evil demons. Human sorcery and magic are introduced as a new source of suffering to be confronted.

There is a reiteration of ethical and moral categories, many of which are to be found in Tablet III. Additions are made to this list and are presented in compact, well-ordered groupings. The major ritual agent referred to in the tablet is the purifying power of water.

Tablet IX

The text of this tablet refers to a process of "purification of the mouth." New ritual agents, objects, plants, and locations are introduced, based upon their cleansing characteristics. The tablet as a whole deals with the lustration of the patient. The form of the incantation follows the pattern of "Kultmittelbeschwörungen," describing and praising these agents. This material serves as a closure and possible appendix to the series.

1.6 The Ritual Use of Šurpu

The Akkadians themselves referred to this incantation series as Šurpu or "burning." It has been generally assumed that this rubric relates to the mode of expiating the physical and moral miasma of the patient. In truth, the use of fire as a central agent of exorcising the affliction from the patient appears only in the first and fifth/sixth of the seven tablets. Fire is used as but one among several methods of ritual exorcism and purification.

The efficacy of the Šurpu series relies upon three basic forms of ritual: (1) ritual action, (2) ritual recitation, and (3) ritual drama. Each in its own way contributes to the well-being of the patient.

The ritual actions of Šurpu include the rites of desquamation, burning, and purification. The miasma and sense of restraint of the patient are transferred to ritual agents, which are peeled, unravelled, and then burned symbolizing the release of the patient.³⁰ The patient is then purified through the use of the absorbent qualities of flour³¹ and the cleansing qualities of water and selected flora.³²

Ritual recitation is another mode of healing the patient. Here it is the healing power of the word which serves the patient's sense of failure and frustration. Through the process of recitation of socioreligious variables in everyday life, the search for the contributing factors, and the identification of the particular activities that caused the suffering the patient is conducted toward a cure.³³ The names and attributes of the gods who can effectuate

his release are also recited.³⁴

Ritual drama and mythology are presented as a means of establishing the ancient basis and primal tradition for the exorcising arts.³⁵ The reading of these mythologic sections solidify the patient's faith in the system. The techniques of the priests are thus authenticated. The priests themselves are presented as the professional apprentices of the arts of Ea and Marduk.

Traditionally, Šurpu has been grouped together with another ritual incantation Maqlû. The comparison of these two "sister" series is more applicable in terms of their titles than their content. Maqlû also shares the meaning "burning." Nevertheless, the content and underlying concept of the texts differ. Maqlû is directed toward the physical obstruction and destruction of the antisocial, magical source of the patient's ills. Šurpu makes no mention of witches or evil human agents as the external source of the patient's suffering. Thus, in truth there is little comparison to be made between the two texts except on the literary plane. The Šurpu series is directed inwardly toward the determination and identification of the source of the patient's failing situation. Maqlû looks outwardly for the cases of human failure.³⁶

The actual order of the Šurpu series has been thrown into disarray with the appearance of the "Ritual-tablet" from Aššur. Until the recent discovery of Tablet I, the order of the series was based upon the Nineveh recensions and was unclear as to what rituals actually began the ritual procedure of Šurpu.

As indicated above, the current understanding of the order of the Šurpu series has been altered by the appearance of the

"Ritual-tablet." It would appear, however, that once the "Ritual-tablet" is assigned as Tablet I, we have a suitable introduction to the ritual drama itself.

Professor Erica Reiner has demonstrated that there was a ritual cycle of procedures used in conjunction with Šurpu to achieve the patient's recovery.

1.7 Hypotheses and Premises

The Šurpu series offers a unique insight into the operative and ideological nature of Mesopotamian religion. The following operating hypotheses, which will be discussed and considered throughout this present work, are the by-product of extensive reading and research into Šurpu. These propositions, assumptions, and premises will facilitate an integrated study of the many issues raised by the Šurpu series.

1.7.1 On Mesopotamian Religion

Throughout the text there are three major sources of the patient's sufferings: ethical misconduct, random demons, and magical spells. The Šurpu text clearly emphasizes the role of ethical behavior and the effect it has upon the relative well-being of the patient. In earlier periods and in other incantations including Maqlû, the main source of suffering is considered to be the effects of magic or the random anger of capricious gods and demons.

The Šurpu series represents a novella in that the notion of Causality is the operative principle. Šurpu assumes a direct correlation between human ethics and divine reward and punishment.

Thus, ethical behaviors are listed in the negative and positive form. Then the gods are listed and petitioned for their powers of intercession. The catalogues of the Šurpu series represent a view of the "correct" ordering of the universe from the perspective of organized religion. In this sense, Šurpu represents a step in a transition in the history of Mesopotamian religion from a random and capricious view of the gods toward a responsible, accountable pantheon.

The Šurpu series is written on behalf of the individual worshipper who is suffering. However, the text does not consider the motivations and attitudes of the patient toward the religious system of the time. Thus, Šurpu provides us with only one dimension of the sufferer's concerns and world view.

A more complete picture of the religious perspective and personal suffering of the patient can be derived from related Mesopotamian literatures. These works can be understood as representing a genre of literature which deals with various aspects of religious speculation from differing perspectives. The texts which comprise Belles Lettres literature are: Ludlul, The Theodicy, The Dialogue of Pessimism, and selected hymns. The Šurpu series appears to represent the actual ritual recourse for the same kind of individual who is described as suffering in the Belles Lettres literature. The same themes of speculation, suffering, the search for the source of miasma and eventual release are also to be found in Biblical and Egyptian traditions.

1.7.2 On the Individual in Mesopotamian Religion

The text of the Šurpu presents a view of the increasingly central place of the individual in Mesopotamian religion. The concerns of personal religion are considered from the perspective of the Temple scribes. Royal and public religion are barely treated in the Šurpu series.

The individual at this stage in Mesopotamian religion is responsible for his actions, the consequence of which is his well-being. To some degree the beneficence of the gods is within the control of the individual based on his correct conduct.

The major and the minor gods are viewed as interested in the condition of the individual worshipper. They are now petitioned as individuals and in groups for their protection and intervention on behalf of the suffering patient. The gods are called upon via their individual attributes and powers, identifying their particular skills which could aid the patient. Likewise, the individual can even call upon the gods in the first person singular as seen in Šurpu V/VI:187-199.

Another novella of the Second Millennium appears in Šurpu in the form of the personal gods and spirits (ilišu, lamaštu).³⁷

Personal gods serve as intermediaries between the individual and the major gods of the pantheon. Yet, they also are intimately tied to the physical, emotional, and professional well-being of the individual worshipper.³⁸ They protect the individual in return for loyal and prompt sacrifice. However, they also can be offended and ostracized. This brings on suffering, a sense of abandonment, and the patient's sense of restraint.

It is only through the lense of the catalogues of the organized schools of religion that we are presented with the sufferings of the individual patient. Nevertheless, a sketch of the individual worshipper is decipherable. Vulnerability epitomizes the personal condition and situation of the patient. He fears that his actions, in all or some of the listed areas, have brought about his condition. The patient is vulnerable to incorrect conduct or the negative forces of the universe on the moral, material, familial, temporal, and spatial planes.

This vulnerability creates a sense of disintegration and disequilibrium for which the patient seeks a resolution. There are psychosomatic manifestations of these feelings of failure, which are described by a composite symptom. Binding, restraint, and restriction are the way in which his sufferings are visualized. This symbolic unification of the symptoms permits the transference of the patient's suffering to a ritual solution, where the effective images are ones of unravelling, desquamation, and release.

His posture is one of repentant innocence as the extensive lists of factors are recited on his behalf. The reading of these lists performs two functions. The patient searches for the past deed, known or unknown, which constitutes the source of his suffering. By hearing the variables and factors recited he is also being re-educated as to the socioreligious standards of his culture. There appears to be a theological assumption that human beings can change, repent, and learn; they are not eternally bound to their given natures. Again, the underlying principle is Causality - that one's actions have brought on his troubles.

1.7.3 On the Rituals of Šurpu

The efficacy of the Šurpu series is centered in the recitation of the socioreligious variables, mythologic healing traditions, and the enactment of ritual exorcism. This combination of dramatic actions attempted to aid the patient in his physical, emotional, and spiritual battles for recovery. The addition of recitations to the rituals marks a point of development in Mesopotamian religion when the accepted power of exorcism called for supplementation. The rituals themselves were not considered sufficient to resolve the accumulated problems of the patient.

The ritual exorcisms and purifications of the Šurpu series utilize acceptable and normative practices within the bounds of organized religion of the time. Therefore, this work shall not refer to these ritual actions and projections as "magic." The term magic will be used to describe the illicit, counterband ritual activities of the nonauthorized practitioner. The dramatic rituals and mythic tales of Šurpu symbolically identify the sufferings of the patient with layers of ritual agents which can be desquamated and destroyed. The homeopathic effect of this dramatic projection is the psychological removal of the binding sense of restraint. In conjunction with the healing power of the word through the recitation of the socioreligious moral categories, the mind and the spirit of the patient are treated. This expands the scope of any definition of magic.

Both the authorized officials of the Temple (mašmaššu, āšipu) and the illicit magicians operated under similar basic principles. Their methods were essentially the same. They were considered authorized if conducted by the Temple officials and

condemned if conducted by outside practitioners. They all functioned under the rules of sympathetic magic, the principles of which resided in a view of the world where "like produces like" and "effect resembles cause."³⁹

1.8 Methodology

Šurpu is a unique series in Mesopotamian literature, both in terms of the material it presents and the diversity of the subjects with which it deals. The series is composed of a combination of styles and modes of presentation. There are ritual instruction, incantation, catalogue, ritual interpretation, and mythic drama. No single monolithic methodological approach is suited to the multidimensional nature of this text. In discussing the structure and content of the Šurpu series this work will apply an interdisciplinary method, a synthetic approach that will include interpretations and observations from Comparative Religion, Cross-Cultural Conceptual study (Cultural Anthropology), and Sociology of Religion. These perspectives add greatly to understanding the possible meaning and intent of the Šurpu series.

1.8.1 Comparative Religion

The main concern of this present study is that any one methodology of the science of religion might to some degree distort the field of research. There is the danger of using too broad a theoretical interpretation of religion which is overly inclusive. The possibility also exists of being too narrow and therefore excluding relevant pieces of information. This section will present an approach which has been synthesized from the fields of Comparative Religion and History of Religions. The theoretical and practical admonitions of Michael Pye in the introduction to his Comparative Religion best exemplify in writing the caution and responsibility necessary for study in these fields.⁴⁰ For purposes herein

Comparative Religion will be understood as a field of study which scientifically attempts to present, discuss, and interpret religious phenomena and processes, with consideration for analogous data.

This study of Surpu will utilize an "operational definition" of the study of religion as its theoretical basis. The benefit of such a definition is that it eschews the expansive questions of normative religion, essential religion, and the presentation of intricate superstructures on the meaning of religion.⁴¹ Thus the least violence is committed against the raw information. It is not neatly placed (or forced) into an existing theory or overall interpretation of the religion. The datum speaks for itself. At the same time, it makes its focus the manifestations of the religion's symbols, rituals, and observances. The disciplines of history of religions, sociology, and psychology are combined to approach the given datum. This may also be referred to as a phenomenological approach, with reservations.⁴²

The goals of a phenomological, operational study are to approach the data "as a set of actions and concepts together with the social groups and psychological states associated with them."⁴³ To this definition should be added the concept of time through the introduction of another component of comparative religion -- the area of History of Religions.

This approach can illuminate a practice or ritual in a given time and place by tracing its later manifestations and developments. The "dynamics" both past and future will be within the purview of this study when attempting to elucidate a given ritual or image (referent). The hope is to avoid statically presenting a living

segment of the cultus.⁴⁴ Again, the construction of evolutionary schemes and deterministic hierarchies will be avoided.⁴⁵

The inherent dilemma of the comparative study of religions is the degree to which the interpretations and explanations presented express the religious reality they describe:

"Can meanings be elucidated at all without interpretation? If a degree of interpretation is necessarily involved in the second-hand elucidation of meaning, is the elucidator not thereby contributing to the developing meaning of the religious tradition in question?"⁴⁶

This should be constantly kept in mind during the process of making commentary. Yet a midground must be sought between that observation and the fear of not interpreting at all: "no statement about a religion is valid unless it can be acknowledged by that religion's believers."⁴⁷ In dealing with Šurpu, interpretations can be built upon statements and evidence from the related Belles Lettres literature of the ancient Near East.

The true value of a comparative, interdisciplinary study of Šurpu will become apparent only if restraint and discipline are practiced: "There is a time to explain and a time to refrain from explaining."⁴⁸ There is a time for offering parallels with comment and a time not to offer parallels. Explanations should remain partial and tentative, and not inclusive and conclusive.⁴⁹ When applying the historical method, it is best to give credence to the notion of "interplay and transmission of ideas" while at the same time accepting the possibility of "spontaneous, independent attestation of phenomena by different peoples in different times."⁵⁰ It is within these guidelines and reservations that the

method of comparative religion will prove of benefit to the best possible interpretation and understanding of the Šurpu text, while at the same time reinstating the credibility of such an approach in the field of ancient Near Eastern studies.

1.8.2 Cross-cultural - Conceptual Notions

The Šurpu text deals mostly with the nonmaterial, religious, and philosophical concerns of the individual under stress and pressure. The main referents to be compared with other cultures are the motivations and activities which are products of sin, guilt, and the need for confession. The various practices, actions, and attitudes are viewed as transgressions by the Šurpu editors. These actions are drawn from the daily and religious life of that society and reflect that particular time and milieu. It is also apparent that these lists of activities have to some extent been drawn from wisdom literature and other Belles Lettres sources. Thus, these lists of "guilt producing" actions and attitudes are really recurring motifs and images which carry with them important cultural information. In addition some of the realia of ancient religion can be compared. The guiding principles and fundamentals of praxis as revealed in Šurpu, including sympathetic magic, sacrifice, cleansing, exorcising, and ritual isolation, will be discussed cross-culturally and conceptually in the hope of shedding the most light upon the ordinary and unusual rituals of Šurpu. Together these will be the referents which will be compared cross-culturally in this work.

Are these referents, notions, and themes valid for use in cross-cultural study with the immediate surrounding cultures? John

Whiting from the Laboratory of Human Development at Harvard University conducted a study called "Sorcery, Sin and the Superego: A Cross-Cultural Study of Some Mechanisms of Social Control," where he isolated aspects of human motivation including "fear, anxiety, guilt, shame and the sense of sin."⁵¹ In fact, the use of universal, "human-nature"-based referents are common in cross-cultural study.⁵² The use of the human conditions of suffering, lament, conscience, guilt, and confession as referents seems established in the field of cross-cultural study.

Because Surpu echoes many of the images and motifs found elsewhere in Wisdom literature, it, like other religious literature, is impacted directly and indirectly by multiple cultural forces, regional and international. The scientific study of religion assumes that religions, when viewed cross-culturally, share certain concerns and processes. When studied just in terms of their own immediate cultural perspectives, it is difficult to create any control over their relative development. It becomes virtually impossible to reflect on the evolution of concepts because there is only a linear (horizontal), time-bound perspective. However, when a specific topic or referent is isolated, studied, and compared to other such usages in related, neighboring civilizations it takes on greater meaning, because it is now viewed in context. This vertical perspective permits study in depth and also offers the coefficient of control over the referent. These conceptual notions can now be compared and contrasted from culture to culture in the hope of achieving greater insight into their meaning at the given place and time. Cross-currents of thought and influence can be sensed. Shared

reactions or polemic contradistinctions can be intimated. This method does not always attempt to reveal specific details about the usage of an idiom or term, but rather illuminates the general ancient milieu or perspective on life.

The cross-cultural approach finds its origins in the field of cultural anthropology. The basic concern of this field is to gain a "knowledge of how human lifeways develop and change, the conditions that are responsible for their differences in space and time."⁵³ Among its activities are included the cataloguing of "folkways" of the material and nonmaterial culture under study. William Graham Sumner, a comparative sociologist, in his seminal work called Folkways, says of societies' mores:

"they give him (the individual) his outfit of ideas, faiths and tastes and lead him to prescribed mental processes. They bring to him codes of action, standards, and rules of ethics. They have a model of the man-as-he-should-be to which they mold him." 54

The particular "ways of a society" tell us about the society and the place of the individual within this culture.

One of the inherent weaknesses of this form of study is the nature of the information which is to be correlated and interpreted. It should be remembered that the cultural anthropologist can study the given society in situ and in its own time. Their barriers to understanding include, among other factors, the language and the informant ("scientists, missionaries, travelers") and, in addition: "To record a full description of the totality of a people's existence over any extended period of time is patently

impossible."⁵⁵ For generations the cry of the ancient Semitist and student of the ancient Near East has been that:

"the cuneiform texts give us a strangely distorted picture of Mesopotamian civilization ... composed of spotty detailed information and of rough and incomplete outlines of major political and cultural developments."⁵⁶

However, we are in no worse a position to describe carefully Mesopotamian civilization than our colleagues in cultural anthropology are to generalize about their given cultures. In fact, we sometimes forget that we are actually in a better position. We have as good an understanding of the languages as they do, and in fact better resources for coping with the problems in translation in the form of dictionaries, lexicons, and linguistic studies.⁵⁷

With a text such as Surpu we possess the Ancients' own form of categorization and classification, and this is something to which the research anthropologist is rarely privy.⁵⁸ So in terms of gathering and sorting the primary information, the student of the ancient Near East is as well off as any academic researching a civilization foreign to him.

This area of research has been shunned and to a large extent criticized by those in the field of ancient Semitics, and rightfully so. Under the influence of the Golden Bough and other such catalogues, there was a temptation to compare cultures and civilizations that were far afield and which shared little more than a tangential motif or image.⁵⁹ However, the cross-cultural study of religion is not the same as folklore or motif studies. The latter collects and correlates the broadest possible selections of

references. The former selectively synthesizes the materials.

So in creating a responsible and credible cross-cultural study for this work, only certain cultures and literatures will be taken into consideration in the commentary and analysis of Šurpu. These are all cultures or civilizations of the same approximate area, who had some, if not significant, interaction and contact. Thus, literary and material parallels and discussions will be collected and drawn from the following cultures.

1. Biblical text and civilization as reflected through the Biblical tradition. Given the proximity in language and social environment, as well as the frequent interactions between Mesopotamia and Israel, this is a suitable and illuminating resource for cross-cultural material. Israelite culture also reflects an intriguing source of innovations and documentations of aspects of both Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations, because it served as the "passage" between these two cultures.

2. North-West Semitic language and culture. The literary and administrative texts of Ugarit include many parallels to the issues and concerns of the Mesopotamian as seen in Šurpu. The common concern for trade and the points of contact along the routes provide amply for cross-cultural study. Hittite materials will be correlated when appropriate.

3. Egyptian culture and civilization the major competing force with Mesopotamia. Their cycle of war and peace permitted a great deal of cultural exchange, while at the same time preserving

their uniqueness. The Wisdom literature and the myths offer credible comparison cross-culturally with some materials in Šurpu. Chapter four is devoted to the literary and cross-cultural comparison of themes and motifs dealing with confession between Egyptian sources and Šurpu.

4. The civilizations of the Mediterranean. The civilizations of the Greeks, Myceneans, and Minoans including their art and architecture can provide insight into the world view of the Ancient. The earliest written Greek texts will be utilized occasionally in cross-cultural comparison, including: Homer's, Iliad and Odyssey and Hesiod's, Works and Days, and the Homeric Hymns.⁶⁰

The ultimate goal of the cross-cultural method is not to look at the data in isolation, but rather to be able to trace comparatively the evolution and development of human lifeways.

1.8.3 Sociology of Religion

The majority of the data produced in both Šurpu and the Belles Lettres literature speaks in the first person singular and is reflective of the condition of the individual. Nevertheless, the genre, style, and presentation are the product of groups of authors, scribes, and editors over an extended period of time. The subject and content are private and individuated. The form, context, and method are social. Consistent with the thought of A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and others, "the functions of religion are typically achieved without human intention: religious actors usually act as they do to relate to the sacred...not to enhance social order."⁶¹

"The individuals" of Šurpu, Ludlul, and the Theodicy were not necessarily aware of the social information they were presenting, and therefore can be considered excellent informants (with some reservation related to the editing and copying of the texts).

The universal meaning and sensitivity of the Belles Lettres literature of the ancient Near East comes from the dialectic tension between the expressed emotions of the individual as viewed through the lense of the society. "Primarily and directly, the subject, the owner as it were of religious experience is the religious society, not the individual."⁶² This approach also can be overstated. Often we sense what appears to be the authentic, individual, religious experience or reaction. The Šurpu ritual was experienced by an individual in the presence of the officiants. There are moments when the interaction of the mašmaššu and the patient seems so personal that they must have reflected a reminiscence of some personal experience. However, especially when interpreting Šurpu, we must be aware that:

"the religious society rather than the individual must be treated as primarily responsible for the feelings, thought and actions that make up historical religion."⁶³

There is a subtle interaction between authentic, personal human experience and the process by which it appears in a universal literary style.

Religion is an innately collective matter.⁶⁴ This present study will use the Šurpu text as a means of better describing and understanding the religious institutions of ancient Mesopotamia. Likewise the categories, ideas, conceptual notions, and parameters

expressed in texts can be taken as reflections of the social perspectives, conditions, and realities of that civilization.

This appraisal of the texts is referred to as a structural-functional approach. This method attempts to isolate the "natural purpose" of a practice or custom, without consideration for their "practical justification or lack of justification."⁶⁵ The structural-functional method is a hybrid, which reflects the evolution of the socio-anthropological study of religion. Structural analysis was generally embodied in the work of Robertson Smith, James Frazer, and others whose tendency was to posit tripartite theories of cultural evolution with this analysis.⁶⁶ They showed interest in ritual and diminished the importance of belief. Their concern for the "origins" of the religious practice or belief, together with the evolution of the structures, frequently blurred their correlation and analysis of the raw data. Durkheim did much in his own right to fight this overrationalistic approach and to introduce the validity of the nonrational in the functional analysis.⁶⁷ A. R. Radcliffe-Brown offered this corrective to the structural-functional approach: "we deal not with the origins but with the social functions of religions, i.e. the contribution they make to the formation and maintenance of a social order."⁶⁸ Another pitfall of this method has tended to be the the inclusion of a value laden world view that imparts the "romantic," pure innocence and "universal beneficence" of the social functions of religion.⁶⁹ This present reading and interpretation of the structure and function of the varied lists of Surpu will assert neither an idealized nor a Malthusian image of the social mechanisms of Mesopotamian religion. This method will be utilized as a means to

achieving the best description of the practices and their possible underlying beliefs.

There is a delicate balance between ritual and belief in any given religion. Vilfredo Pareto offers this guideline:

"The proposition so often met with, 'This or that people act as it does because of a certain belief' is rarely true; in fact, it is almost always erroneous and the inverse proposition 'People believe as they do because of this or that conduct' as a rule contains a larger amount of truth, although it is too absolute." 70

So in his sense, this study will place its emphasis upon the conduct and the expressed social behaviors and then seek the evidence for a particular set of beliefs as referred to in Belles Lettres literatures.

It is hoped that by having described and combined the methodological approaches of Comparative Religion, Cross-cultural studies, and Sociology of Religion this analysis of the Šurpu text will be insightful, without doing damage or disservice to the object of study.

Notes to Chapter One

1. See H. Zimmern, "Zu den Maqlū-, Šurpu- und Šu-ila-Beschwörungen," ZA 28, 67-74 and "Zu den Keilschrifttexten aus Aššur religiösen Inhalts," ZA 30, 184-229.

2. Cf. L. W. King, AJSL 16, 142-48.

3. See H. Zimmern, Lit. Centralblatt, p. 462f.

4. See P. Jensen, "Recensionen," ZA 11, 92-97.

5. J. A. Craig, Assyrian and Babylonian Religious Texts (Leipzig: Hinricks, 1897), Vol. II, p. iii.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid. p. iv.

8. R. W. Rogers, Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament (London: Oxford, 1912), pp. 170-75.

9. Ibid. p. 170 n. 1.

10. A. Ungnad and H. Gressman eds., Altorientalische Texte und Bilder zum Alten Testament 2nd ed. (Berlin and Leipzig: 1926-1927) Vol. I i, pp. 96f. and A. Ungnad, Religion der Babylonier und Assyrer (Jena: Diederich), pp. 259f.

11. Cf. C. F. Lehmann-Haupt, Textbuch zur Religionsgeschichte (Leipzig, 1923), Vol. II, pp. 317f.

12. A. Ungnad and H. Gressman, Altorientalische Texte und Bilder zum Alten Testament Vol. I, pp. 324-25.

13. G. Meier, "Die Ritualtafel der Serie 'Mundwaschung'," AfO 12, 40-45.

14. F. Köcher, "Zur zweiten und dritten Tafel der Beschwörungsserie Šurpu" MIO 2, 219-44.
15. Professor Reiner herself admits to giving little recent thought to the content and interpretation of the Šurpu text. (Telephone interview: University of Chicago, August 1987).
16. J. Friedrich, "Grammatische und lexikalische Bemerkungen zum Hethitischen," ZA 35, 17.
17. S. Schott, ZDMG 81, NF 6 (1927), p. xlvii as referred to by E. Reiner, Šurpu, p. 2.
18. A. Falkenstein, "Zur Chronologie der sumerischen Literatur," MDOG 85, 6 n. 27.
19. W. Von Soden, "Das Problem der zeitlichen Einordnung akkadischer Literaturwerke," MDOG 85, 24.
20. E. Reiner, Šurpu, p. 2. Professor Reiner continues to believe that the body of the text was a product of this period (Oral communication: University of Chicago, September 16, 1987). See Tz. Abusch, "Studies in the History and Interpretation of some Akkadian Incantations and Prayers against Witchcraft," Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1972, p. 43-44 who insists that Maqlû is written in a period other than the Kassite. This is yet another factor which distances this text from Šurpu, in terms of time and common sources from the Belles Lettres.
21. Šurpu II:45-6; III:54, 60; VIII:51.
22. Th. Jacobsen, Toward the Image of Tammuz (Cambridge, 1970), p. 38-45. See also W. G. Lambert, "The Reign of Nebuchadnezzar I: A Turning Point in the History of Ancient Mesopotamian Religion," in McCullough, The Seed of Wisdom (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1964), pp. 8, 10.
23. Šurpu II:3, 32-34, 75, 87-92; III:1; IV:4, 11-13, 20, 76-78; VIII:81.
24. G. Meier, "Die Ritualtafel der Serie 'Mundwaschung'," AfO 12, 40.

25. F. Köcher, "Zur zweiten und dritten Tafel der Beschwörungsserie Šurpu," MIO 2, 219.
26. See E. Reiner, Šurpu, pp. 5-6.
27. See H. Zimmern, Beiträge zur Kenntnis der babylonischen religion (Leipzig, rev. ed., 1975) and E. Reiner, Šurpu, p. 5.
28. E. Reiner, Šurpu, p. 5.
29. Šurpu II:3, 187. Cf. Šurpu IV:77, 86; V/VI:184.
30. Šurpu I and Šurpu V/VI:60-122.
31. Šurpu I and Šurpu V/VI:123-143.
32. Šurpu V/VI:187-199 and Šurpu IX.
33. Šurpu II, III, IV and VIII:41-75.
34. Šurpu II:129-192; III:161-175; IV:60-75, 89-108; VIII:10-40.
35. Šurpu V/VI:1-59; VII:1-53; VIII:1-5.
36. A. L. Oppenheim, AM, p. 272. For an example of the usual, but fallacious correlation between the functions of Šurpu and Maqlû in general works on Mesopotamia see H. Ringgren, Religions of the Ancient Near East (London: SPCK, 1973), p. 90.
- See Tz. Abusch, "Studies in the History and Interpretation of some Akkadian Incantations and Prayers against Witchcraft," (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1972). The total silence of Tz. Abusch concerning Šurpu and his lack of cross-referencing in his work on Maqlû to Šurpu is one of the clearest indications of the complete difference between the two incantations. This present dissertation will on occasion draw attention to the similarities in language between Šurpu and Maqlû. The differences in function between the two incantations will also be noted.

37. Th. Jacobsen, Toward the Image of Tammuz (Cambridge, 1970), p. 44.

38. Ibid. pp. 160-64.

Tz. Abusch is in agreement with the notion that incantation texts are an excellent means to understanding the underlying place of individual religion within Mesopotamian religion: "These texts reflect suffering, fears and anxieties common to all men and are among the most important sources for our knowledge of the personal religious life of the ancient Mesopotamian." See Tz. Abusch, "Studies in the History and Interpretation of some AKKadian Incantations and Prayers against Witchcraft," (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1972), p. 1.

39. J. G. Frazer, GB, p. 12.

40. M. Pye, Comparative Religion (London: Devon Press, 1972).

41. H. Kishimoto, "An Operational Definition of Religion," Numen 8,3 (1961): 236-40.

42. A caveat must be made concerning the weaknesses and tendencies of classical phenomenology. Beware the "theological" superstructure or the pursuit of the "essential" religion: "His (the phenomenologist) ultimate goal is the inclusive formulation of the essence of religion." C. J. Bleeker, The Sacred Bridge, 36. So our use of the term phenomenology is presented in its most virgin meaning: concern for phenomena and not theories. This study shall compare and contrast analogous phenomena and not build grand schemas of Mesopotamian religion.

43. M. Pye, Comp.Rel., p. 12. See also C. J. Bleeker, The Rainbow: A Collection of Studies in the Science of Religion (Leiden: Brill, 1975), pp. 4-11, for further consideration of this method of approach.

44. C. J. Bleeker, The Sacred Bridge, p. 16-25.

45. J. Wach, The Comparative Study of Religions (New York: Columbia University, 1958), p. 57.

46. M. Pye, Comp. Rel. , pp. 32-33.
47. W. C. Smith, "Comparative Religion: Whither and Why?" in M. Eliade and J. M. Kitagawa, The History of Religions (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), p. 42.
48. M. Pye, Comp.Rel. , p. 17.
49. See J. Wach, Comparative Study of Religions (New York: Columbia University, 1958), p. 11.
50. M. Pye, Comp.Rel. , p. 21.
51. See in C. S. Ford, Cross-Cultural Approaches (New Haven: HRAFP, 1969), pp. 147-167.
52. See G. Piers and M. Singer, Shame and Guilt (New York: Norton, 1970), pp. 7-8 and pp. 15-22.
53. C. S. Ford, Cross-Cultural Approaches (New Haven: HRAFP, 1969), p. 3.
54. W. G. Sumner, Folkways (Boston: Ginn, 1906), pp. 173-74.
55. C. S. Ford, Cross-Cultural Approaches (New Haven: HRAFP, 1969), p. 8.
56. A. L. Oppenheim, AM , p. 11.
57. See J. Wach, The Comparative Study of Religions (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), p. 11, "The student of religions is never well enough equipped linguistically" and C. S. Ford, Cross-Cultural Approaches (New Haven: HRAFP, 1969), pp. 19-20, on the problems of language and interpretation.
58. C. S. Ford, Cross-Cultural Approaches (New Haven: HRAFP, 1969), pp. 10-11. The interpretation of this form of thinking is risky, but necessary.

59. See J. B. Vickery, The Literary Impact of the Golden Bough (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973) for an incisive, sensitive analysis of the idealized, humanistic motivations of that era for this all-inclusive comparative method.

For a critical view of the successors to the Golden Bough and a discussion of the limitations of this approach, particularly that of Th. Gaster see G. S. Kirk, Myth: Its Meaning and Function in Ancient and other Cultures, Sather Classical Lectures 40 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1973), pp. 77-83.

60. For other such studies which follow this methodological assumption of cross-cultural contact between these two civilizations see: E. Sollberger, "Graeco-Babyloniaca," Iraq 24 (1962): 63-72; M. Astour, Hellenosemitica (Leiden: Brill, 1967); "The Gilgamesh Epic and Homer," CJ 70 (1975): 1-18.

On the general subject of cross-cultural and literary sharing between the aforementioned civilizations (Mesopotamia, Egypt and Israel) see a full discussion by W. G. Lambert, "The Interchange of Ideas between Southern Mesopotamia and Syria-Palestine as seen in Literature," BBVO 1 (1982): 311-16.

61. L. Schneider, Sociological Approach to Religion (New York: Wiley, 1970), pp. 47-48.

62. R. R. Marett, The Threshold of Religion (London, 1909), p. 137.

63. Ibid. p. 123.

64. See E. Durkheim, Elem., p. 466 "...nearly all great social institutions have been born in religion. Now in order that these principle aspects of the collective life may have commenced by being only varied aspects of religious life, it is obviously necessary that the religious life be the eminent form as it were, the concentrated expression of the whole collective life. If religion has given birth to all that is essential in society, it is because the idea of society is the soul of religion."

65. S. Langer, Philosophy in a New Key (New York, 1948), p. 38.

46. J. B. Vickery, The Literary Impact of the Golden Bough (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 18. For example see: H. Frankfort, Kingship and the Gods (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1948), pp. 278-9 for his notion of the rising ethical conception of the divine from Egypt to Mesopotamia to Israel.

67. E. Durkheim, Elem ., p. 257.

68. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, Structure and Function in Primitive Society (London: Cohen and West, 1965), p. 154.

69. L. Schneider, Sociological Approach to Religion (New York: Wiley, 1970), pp. 48-49.

70. V. Pareto, The Mind and Society (London: Cape Press, 1935), Vol. 1:90.

Chapter Two: Māmītu in Šurpu

2.0 Māmītu in Šurpu

The term māmītu is central to the understanding of Šurpu.

The concept is used throughout the text to identify the socioreligious, ethical concerns whose transgression brought on the suffering of the patient. In addition, māmītu is used literally to express a particular, individual transgression related to the taking of oaths.

This chapter will present the normative use of the term in Akkadian and examine its specialized usages in the Šurpu tablets. Past attempts to find a suitable translation for the term māmītu in Šurpu will be surveyed. Finally, a new, conceptual approach toward the specialized use of the term in Šurpu will be introduced for use throughout this work.

2.1 In General Use: Māmītu as "oath"

It is generally agreed upon by the major dictionaries that the etymology of the noun māmītu is derived from the verb amû/awû, meaning "to speak, argue, discuss."¹ Von Soden lists māmītu as a form of "wamûm."² Thus, the relationship between speech and the spoken oath is established.

The term māmītu is primarily translated by the CAD as "oath, sworn agreement."³ A secondary usage is listed as "curse (consequences of a broken oath attacking a person who took it, also as a demonic power)."⁴ Von Soden translates the term māmītu as "Eid (oath), Bann (ban)."⁵ Both of the translations, "curse"

adopted by the CAD and "ban" by Von Soden, require explanations to adapt the term's usage for what appears to be more than the result of a literal oath.

Literally, māmītu - oaths were sworn between two parties calling a third party to witness. Oaths were taken in business, legal, and diplomatic contexts. Vows were made before the gods. The potency and permanence of such an oath was predicated upon the authority and status of this third-party witness. In most cases the oath was taken in the name of the king or a god.

The underlying principle of this form of oath-taking was that the third-party witness served not only to authenticate and officiate as keeper of the oath, but also functioned as the enforcer of the oath should it be broken. This dramatic imagery and projection was understood by both parties to the oath. It was a means of preserving the central concept of the sanctity of the spoken word. In all situations, the māmītu - oath takes on a religious connotation. Thus, the individual who took the oath was kept to his word through the awareness of the potential threat of the third party as enforcer/witness. This same principle of threat or punishment was operative in other forms of oath-taking and covenant-making.⁶ Consistent with this sense of fear accompanying the notion of swearing oath, the etymology of the term nīšū "oath" is life.⁷ The symbolic value of this derivation is that one's life is in the balance when taking on an oral obligation.

Once the oral formula of the given māmītu is expressed the transaction takes on a permanent, religious quality which can

only be annulled through the solemn, verbalized release of the other party. Barring this sense of release, the party who originally took the oath is in a state of still being bound to his word. His methods of achieving release from his word are limited to either legal or religious recourse.

2.2 Studies on Māmītu

The majority of the studies and translations have attempted to offer a singular translation for all appearances of the term throughout the Šurpu series.

Reiner, in her masterful translations of Šurpu, fluctuates in her approach to this difficult word. Her main discussion of the term māmītu appears in a note to Tablet III.⁸ Reiner indicates that in Tablet III, as well as throughout the series, whenever the term is used she translates "oath." She assumes that wherever the complete understanding of a phrase escapes us that this too should be understood as "symbols and symbolic actions accompanying an oath."⁹

In this brief note we see that Reiner maintains a particular approach toward the term, which is based in a specific understanding of Mesopotamian religion. She states concerning the understandable and even more vague categories symbolic of actions related to swearing and oath taking:

"It was feared, it appears from this tablet, that the numen inherent in these, once invoked, would stay unbound and afflict the person who had sworn the oath." 10

Reiner clearly takes all references in Tablet III, and the series as a whole, as referring to the literal meaning of oath. However, this does not explain the similarity between many of the unclear cases and their appearance in other ethical and moral lists in the series unrelated to any notion of oath. We are left with a sense that we are not breaking through to the meaning of these extensively enumerated lists and categories in Tablet III and throughout the Šurpu series.

In addition, Reiner, throughout her translation, conveys her uneasiness with a uniform, literal understanding of the term as a sworn oath. Occasionally in whole sections and individual references, she places the translation in single quotation marks. She describes the function of this device indirectly. It can be assumed the translations of oath when found in single quotation marks are references in which the direct connection to the literal translation of oath is obscured by factors of culture and time. These doubtful cases are significant in number. In the all important Tablet III the majority of the references are in single quotation marks from line 14 through 150. Only Šurpu III:1-13 and the pantheon list of III:151-175 are considered literal oaths according to the above stated system of translation. What the objective standards for this differentiation are is unclear. This approach to the term māmītu creates as many questions as it solves. Her reluctance to offer a translation attests to the serious difficulty in adopting any monolithic understanding of the term in the Šurpu tablets.¹¹

Another problem in translation is revealed by Reiner's response to phrases in which the synonymous terms nīšū and māmītu appear together.¹² Professor Reiner in these circumstances uniformly translates nīšū with the unusual "invocation," as opposed to the standard "oath." This is no doubt a means of accommodating the monolithic translation of māmītu as oath. In some circumstances she chooses to place 'oath' in the single quotation marks, adding to the complexity of understanding.¹³

2.2.1 Māmītu as "phobia"

Kinnier Wilson, in "An Introduction to Babylonian Psychiatry," takes a completely different approach toward the term māmītu.¹⁴ Here a basic reading of psychology and psychiatry is applied to various texts, among them Šurpu. Wilson describes the patient in Šurpu as the "Babylonian psychopath."¹⁵ Thus, the extensive ethical and socioreligious variables listed in Šurpu II are considered "compulsions to do or not to do (and, therefore, a fear of or a phobia for doing,) a certain act."¹⁶

The strengths and weaknesses of this line of thinking, and the examples which are drawn upon as proof, merit a fuller critique in a future study. However, at this juncture suffice it to say that this translation demands too many selective machinations to be a viable solution. The sufferings of the patient are more than just physical. However, Wilson notes emphatically that there is "barely a physical symptom mentioned in the book."¹⁷ There are, nevertheless, several extensive descriptions of the specific nature of his physical sufferings, including: "dumbness and daze,"

"headache," a sickness that is in my body, my flesh, my veins," "paralysis," "scabs", "chest cough" and "phlegm."¹⁸ He dismisses the ethical nature of the text, mentioned by all other commentators, projecting a psychological interpretation upon all of the lists. A general caveat to this monolithic approach to the term māmītu is in order.

It should be remembered that the Šurpu text was widely used and that patients had their names added to the formulae through the use of the "NN" device.¹⁹ Wilson's final diagnosis is based upon an understanding of all of the symptoms being found in one specific patient. Given his perspective, we must assume that there was no process of self-examination or education being conducted through the recitation of the Šurpu series. Thus, following Wilson's translation of māmītu as "phobia" or "compulsion," we are left questioning the function and purpose of the series. We are left to assume that all those who used the Šurpu were violent psychopathic, obsessive-compulsives manifesting several hundred contradictory symptoms!

These studies have not managed to distinguish between the literal and technical usage of the term in the Šurpu series. There has been little success in illuminating the broad conceptual use of the term, in all its dimensions, in the text.

2.3 Māmītu in Šurpu

A survey of the term māmītu as used in Šurpu reveals the fact that the concept carries a varying meaning in different

contexts. Several of the appearances of the term māritu reflect the primary translation of "oath." They deal specifically with transgressions related to broken oral agreements. Other appearances of the term project a technical usage, carrying a broader spectrum of meaning. Each tablet reflects an additional understanding of the use of the term.

In Tablet II, several of the ethical categories listed do refer specifically to transgressions involving the swearing of oaths and other forms of oral responsibility.

Surpu

II:6	word untrustworthy
II:38-39	word untrustworthy
II:55-57	deceptive oath
II:74	oath to god
II:82-86	false legal oath as witness
II:88-92	swearing by protective deities
II:88	swearing by parent's protecting deity
II:89	swearing by protecting deity of older siblings
II:90	swearing by friend's protecting deity
II:91	swearing by protecting deity of god and king
II:92	swearing by protecting deity of lord and lady

The sensation of the giver of an oath, after the fact, is expressed by terms of binding. The psychological dynamic of the oath, once given, produced a strong sense of responsibility on the part of the speaker. The religious implications of the sacred, oral formula presented the speaker with a sense of inextricable obligation. This mood of eternal responsibility was stifling, personally and professionally, and thus accounts for the metaphors of "binding." Upon exoneration for transgression and the ritual removal of the pollution, which comes from the abuse of the sanctity of the word, terms of "release" are utilized.

In Šurpu II:141-167, an extensive pantheon list is called upon to release the oath of the patient. The final line of this catalogue, Šurpu II:167, calls for a release from the oath: "release his oath." It is unclear from this context whether the term māmītu here refers to a particular oath shown above.

The summation of Tablet II calls upon all of the gods just mentioned (Šurpu II:168-184) to release the patient from a multiplicity of binding factors, including oaths:

"May the god and goddess, as many as there are
invoked,
stand by him today,
and of NN, son of NN, the [sin]s,
the errors, the crim[es],
the [offen]ses, the [o]aths,
may they [extirp]ate, [may they],
blot out, u[n]do,
may they lift the oath (off him)." ²⁰

"Oaths" are here in 1.189 mentioned in particular among other factors which caused the sense of restraint in the patient. However, the final line which completes the precative statement now seems to use the term māmītu in the singular as a collective. It carries a general sense, referring to all the previously mentioned variables and factors which tend to bind. The closure to Tablet II assumes that the patient suffers from a combination of factors, only some of which are related to the swearing of oaths.

The majority of the references to māmītu seem to reflect a technical and specialized use of the term. These variables have little or no relationship to swearing or the taking of oaths. Internal evidence indicates that in these cases māmītu carries a broader sense of meaning. In Šurpu VIII:61 and 77, we read the technical usage together with the verb "to swear," departing from

the formula:

1.61 "Together with the 'oath' of chair, seat, bed, couch (and) swearing."

1.77 "Together with the 'oath' of swearing by bow, chariot, sword or spear."

The text itself seems to add the verb "to swear" to create the understanding that a given variable does specifically deal with a sworn oath. These two references demonstrate the nonliteral, unique connotation of māmītu, independent of swearing, when used in the formulaic lists. The best test, however, for the understanding of this term lies in its use in Tablet III.

The most prominent appearance of the technical use of the term māmītu appears in Tablet III. It is from this tablet that we get the greatest sense of the variable meaning of the term māmītu in the Šurpu series.

In Tablet III, māmītu is used to introduce 175 of the 185 lines in the tablet. The opening line of this text makes it clear that the term māmītu is intended to refer to all of the socioreligious factors and categories to follow through the use of the phrase "any oath": "The effect of any oath this man, son of [his] god, [is under]." ²¹ Not by any means are all of the categories which follow to be taken literally as verbally sworn oaths. The majority of these references indicate a broader usage of the term in a technical sense.

Intra-tablet Šurpu evidence indicates that ritual objects mentioned should be considered literally as sources of an oath sworn by them. As referred to above, in Šurpu VIII:61, we see the formulaic technical usage of māmītu together with possible ritual

objects and the verb to swear: "Together with the 'oath' of chair, seat, bed, couch (and) swearing." Again, in Šurpu VIII:77, we read of various weapons as the object of literal oaths: "Together with the 'oath' of swearing by bow, chariot, sword or spear." From other extra-Šurpu sources it can be shown that oaths were taken by family members, ritual objects, and gods.²² Thus, all objects, when mentioned together with the term māmītu, should be read as literal objects of sworn oaths. Operating under these criteria, the following phrases can be considered as referring to authentic oaths:

oath taken by kin members	<u>Šurpu</u> III:3-11
true and false false oath	III:12-13
oath taken by god or ritual actions	III:14-18
oath taken by ritual objects	III:19-21
oath on weapons	III:27-29
broken oath of loyalty to friend	III:34
public oath	III:36
oath on ritual objects	III:37; 88-91
false oath with divinity	III:38-39
oath to Nabu	III:41
oaths offensive to gods due to form	III:42-44
oath by protective spirits	III:45
false oath	III:55
oath by animals	III:68
oath by Ninurta	III:72
oath by sacred place	III:73-74
oath by capricious spirits	III:75-83; III:84-87
oath by temple musical instruments	III:88-91
oath to god (Girru?)	III:93
oath to various gods, pantheon list	III:104-113
oath by temple accoutrements	III:115-122
oath to various gods, pantheon list	III:151-175

Other of the socioreligious variables mentioned are references to ethical behaviors or actions which influence the well-being of the patient on a moral plane. Their relationship to the literal meaning of oath is untenable. The operative notion appears to be that moral transgressions and failures lead to divine

punishment and thus the patient's suffering. Nevertheless, they too are introduced by the term māmītu.

dishonesty to the gods	<u>Šurpu</u> III:22
offensive to the sun	III:23; 127
bribery	III:24
destructive behavior	III:25
abused sacrifice	III:35
dangerous activities	III:50-51
tampering with boundary markers	III:53-54
offensive behavior to the gods	III:56
obstruction of water rights	III:57
use of stolen property (of gods?)	III:58
negative social association	III:59
setting a boundary marker	III:60
disruption of cultic procession (?)	III:61
abuse of water sources	III:62-67
antisocial behavior	III:69-71
dangerous location	III:92
cultic abuses	III:93-95
retaliation	III:96
concern for the defenseless	III:97-98
sacred time	III:101-103; 114-115
human suffering	III:123
culpability by association	III:125-26
	III:128-133; 134-138
categories of transgression	III:141-144

It should be noted that the majority of these factors represent conscious actions, which are considered undesirable behaviors or transgressions.

Nevertheless, the series also includes many of the same māmītu described as positive proscriptions. Māmītu, when used to indicate socio-ethical conduct, describe the behavior in negative terms. However, both positive and negative behaviors are indicated in the catalogues of the series. The proscriptive catalogues of Šurpu IV:11-44 describe many of the positive aspects of behavior found under the rubric māmītu verbalized in a negative form in Šurpu II, III, and VIII. In addition, many of the same variables are listed as positive vehicles for determining the source of the

patient's suffering in the ša'il "he asked for a sign" section in Šurpu II:104-128. Thus, māmītu is not necessarily a negative, or a term connoting evil. It is a factor in human existence which, depending upon human conduct, can be turned to good or evil.

The way in which the major list of Šurpu III is completed is another significant indication that māmītu should be understood as a technical term with broader meaning than the literal "oath." A closure to the body of the tablet attempts to summarize all of the categories and factors previously mentioned, before producing a pantheon list: "the 'oath' of wronged man or wronged woman, the 'oath' he knows or does not know."²³ Given the formal nature in Mesopotamia of swearing an oath, there is no way in which a man could swear an oath and not be beholden and aware of his obligation. It should be noted that Reiner expresses her doubts as to the literal nature of the translation of the term by here placing 'oath' in single quotation marks.²⁴

Similarly, the end and dramatic closure of the tablet itself again provides an *inclusio* to the previous lists. The same rhetorical formula of completion is used now with the central term arnu "sin":

"[the s]in of dead or living, the s[in of wronged ma]n or wronged woman"

"[the s]in he knows and (the s[in) he does not know."²⁵

The term continues to appear throughout the Šurpu series following these two basic meanings, either referring directly to oaths sworn or the technical usage referring to the varied socioreligious, ethical factors. In addition, māmītu are envisioned as personifications and mythologized deifications.

In Tablet IV, māmītu is listed several times as one of the several sources of the patients sufferings:

Šurpu

IV:56 "(seized by) sin, oath, error, crime"

IV:79 "May the record of his sins, errors, crimes, oaths"

IV:88 "the sin and oath which are there to torment men"

IV:92-93 "...may he (Sin) undo his oaths"
 "... may he (Šamaš) release sin"

This tablet also continues to utilize the metaphoric image of the māmītu as something which binds, restrains, and calls for release:

Šurpu

IV:23 "to drive away the oath"

IV:70 "loosen the fetters, release the oath"

IV:82 "his oaths undone."

Šurpu IV:79-88 describes a ritual drama for the removal of the binding effects of the māmītu among other sources of physical suffering. "Sins, errors, crimes and oaths" are to be "thrown into the water."²⁶ This ritual action "wiped out," "removed," "(has) undone" and "(has) driven away" all of his physical and moral suffering.²⁷ The unresolved power of the oath is one among several forms of suffering.

What distinguishes Šurpu U/VI is the association of

māmītu with bodily ailments. These psychosomatic images of the broken or unfulfilled oath are noteworthy.

Šurpu V/VI:7/8 "evil curse, oath, headache"

Šurpu V/VI:38-41 "undo his oath, release his oath,"
"that the disturbing evil of his body"

Šurpu V/VI:135 "(thus) may its oath not be begotten within me"

Māmītu is mentioned frequently as one among several sources of suffering, as we have seen before: "(so) invocation, oath, retaliation, questioning (may be removed)."²⁸ A new image of the evil, binding side of an unresolved oath is described as darkness: "may the oath leave so that I may see the light."²⁹ The image of darkness is commonly associated with illness and physical failure.

Throughout this tablet māmītu is considered a polluting source of physical and moral miasma which must be removed. The body of Tablet V/VI interprets and metaphorically describes in detail several processes for the release from the binding effects of the oath among other factors, which appeared in Tablet I.

A ritual dramatic action is added whose potency is based in the power of magical knots in Šurpu V/VI:144-171. The purpose of the ritual is to attract the evil 'oath' from the body of the patient through the use of multicolored woven threads. Once the 'oath' has been transferred via the mythologic sympathetic magic of Uttu and Ištar, Marduk disposes of the threads and thus the

suffering of the patient. It assumes the technical usage of māmītu throughout the ritual, representative of all of the factors contributing to the physical suffering of the patient.

In Tablet VII, māmītu is pictured as a mythologized primal force of evil which plagues humanity.

"The dīmītu -disease had come down from the midst of the Apsu, the 'Oath' was on its way down from the midst of heaven, (and) the Ahhazu -demon was breaking through the ground like weed, they were spreading awesome rays toward the four cardinal points, scorching (everything) like fire, they were plaguing the (prolific) population of the cities, pestering their bodies... ." 30

In addition, Šurpu VII:54-68 provides another mythologic ritual drama conducted by Marduk to release the "seizing" grasp of the personified māmītu and dispatch it to the uninhabited wilderness. Throughout this tablet māmītu is best understood as referring to the technical usage, indicating the multiple sources of the patient's suffering.

Tablet VIII continues to expand upon the personified image of māmītu, now listing it in a deified form among other minor gods, who might effect the release of the patient.³¹ The body of Šurpu VIII:48-77 reiterates and further categorizes many of the socioreligious variables listed in Tablet II. Thus, following a similar formula established in Šurpu II, each group of these ethical variables is introduced by itti māmīt ... "Together with the 'oath'... ." Reiner's translation again reflects uncertainty through the use of the single quotation marks.

Śurpu VIII does include literal usages of our term. Māmītu is mentioned in one of the most complete lists of the multiple sources of the patient's suffering in the whole series:

"may your sin, your oath, your error, your crime, your invocation, your disease, your weariness, sorcery, spittle, dirt, evil machinations which occur to you... ." 32

The breaking of an oath is but one of the ways in which the patient catches himself in a bind. Likewise, oath is but one of the translations which applies to the term māmītu as it is used technically throughout the Śurpu series.

In conclusion it can be said that of the 440 total uses of the term māmītu in the Śurpu series, 125 of the usages reflect a literal meaning. The vast majority of the uses of māmītu (315), reflect a specialized, technical usage and therefore demand a unique, conceptual approach in translation if accuracy is to be achieved.

2.4 A Conceptual Approach toward māmītu

The term māmītu has two major meanings in the Śurpu series. The literal usage refers specifically to a single variable, the swearing of an oath which binds the patient to the sanctity of his word. The series also demonstrates a technical usage of the term which demands its own translation.

As demonstrated above, difficulties arise when translating the term māmītu as "oath" uniformly throughout the text. By doing

so, more often than not, the meaning of the term, the phrase, and even the intent of the text is obscured. The challenge of the evidence is to determine an illuminating appropriate translation, which serves to explicate the technical use of māmītu in Šurpu, when it does not refer literally to a sworn oath.

First, let us summarize the evidence concerning this technical usage of māmītu in the Šurpu series. The term is used in conjunction with a multiplicity of socioreligious, ethical, and mundane factors spanning human conduct and behavior. What each of the individual factors have in common is that they have in some way determined the present condition of the suffering patient. It is clear that no one individual could have transgressed, consciously or unconsciously, all of these areas of behavior. However, misconduct in some of these areas, according to the logic of the series, produces anger in the gods and the resultant physical and emotional suffering. The present sufferings of the patient and the future avoidance of such a situation is intimately tied to his relationship to these variables listed as māmītu.

The nature of the suffering is frequently described in terms of binding and restraint. The physio-spiritual condition of the patient is depicted as bound and restricted by these factors and his past behavior. The key to the patient's present and future well-being is to be found in his relationship to these variables and the gods' appraisal of that relationship. The individual's failure to behave correctly regarding these categories has the potential to anger the gods. And, it is the gods who have the power over the

patient's sense of restraint or release. Thus, the technical term māmītu projects this sense of binding and restraint in ritual and metaphoric contexts.

Māmītu conceptually represents both positive and negative behaviors. As described earlier, the proscriptive socioreligious factors of Šurpu IV:11-44 and the petitions of Šurpu II:104-128 offer an insight into the positive, moral challenge which underlies the extensive māmītu lists.

The generalization which Reiner offers referring to the "evil" nature of māmītu is based in the fact that the majority of the variables mentioned are negative behaviors to be avoided.³³ However, this approach fails to grasp the essentially neutral quality of the term. The māmītu becomes a source of trouble and evil when transgressed, abused, or ignored by humans. From an educational perspective, these "negative" lists of māmītu outline what positive activities an individual should undertake to avoid trouble with man, society, and the gods.

Māmītu is also used to describe certain times, situations, and locations. The domain of the sacred is not limited to the material plane in ancient religions. These variables include sacred time,³⁴ sacred places,³⁵ and other vulnerable contexts.³⁶

Šurpu lists these contextual factors where the individual was more vulnerable to negative "binding" forces or incorrect conduct which would antagonize the gods.

In general, it can be said that when māmītu is used in its technical form in Šurpu it demonstrates a broad conceptual meaning, which is not easily or correctly translated as oath in any form.

2.5 Māmītu and the term "parameter"

In an attempt to present the best possible interpretation of the māmītu, the variables it describes, and the general function of the Šurpu series, the term "parameter" will be proposed and used throughout this dissertation when discussing the transgressions. The term "parameter" resolves much of the confusion related to the nonliteral usages of māmītu.

Parameter, when taken directly from the Greek, means "equal measure" for use in the comparison of objects.³⁷ In the field of mathematics it refers to "a constant or variable term in a function that determines the specific form of the function but not its general nature."³⁸ The term parameter, like māmītu, provides a moral index against which the patient can compare the nature of his intentions and deeds. As a measure, it sets the limits by which the individual can judge the degree to which his behavior caused his sufferings. Likewise, the term parameter is a constant which shares form with the other socioreligious factors, yet still carries its own specific nature.³⁹

Conceptually, this term parameter is consistent with the cultural environment of the the Kassite period. The Kassite preoccupation with the kudurru indicates a strong need to determine the limits between the individual and communal domain. In the area of religion, a revolution was taking place which heralded the centrality of the individual's place in religion. The extensive ethical, socioreligious catalogues of the Šurpu series delineate the qualities of legitimate moral behavior for the individual.

These māmītu, whether stated in the negative or the positive, served both the individual and society as a parameter by which they could guide their everyday activity and conduct.

An aspect of all ancient religions seeks these kinds of parameters and their harmonizing effect on reality. One of the basic human religious needs is for a sense of symbolic order and unity for all activities, be they sacred or mundane and secular. This tends to render the many threatening aspects of existence more comprehensible, bridging the gap between the human and divine. Mircea Eliade states that religious symbolism permits the "unification" of forms.⁴⁰ He goes on to say that there is:

"a tendency to fit the 'whole' into a single system, to reduce the multiplicity of things to a single 'situation' in such a way as also to make it as comprehensible as it can be made." 41

In just that sense of ordering, the parameters of the Šurpu series unify the responsibility, and thereby suffering of the patient into a single entity. Each māmītu does not demand its own individual ritual of release. This synthesizing function of the religious symbol māmītu facilitates the dramatic release from the binding sense of all the parameters through unified, ritual actions.

Māmītu when transgressed or ignored create a sense of binding and restraint in the individual. This too is a universal religious symbol. Eliade describes the sense of being bound or restrained as one of the archetype symbols. He presents a universal principle which provides a clear understanding of the central, operative religious concept of the Šurpu series:

"But, more significant still, this symbolism of 'binding' and 'loosing' reveals man's specific situation in the universe, a situation that no other hierophany by itself would be capable of revealing; one might even say that it is only this symbolism of bonds that fully reveals to man his ultimate situation and enables him to express it to himself coherently." 42

This new centrality of the place of the individual in Mesopotamian religion, which came with the second millennium demanded an ordering of the universe of human activities. Yet with it came a new psycho-religious state, that of guilt and conscience. The listing and recitation of these parameters served the socializing purposes of the Temple and the emotional needs of the patient as he searched out the source of his failures.

The term "parameter" will be used to catalogue, interpret and discuss the māmitu because it encompasses the sometimes neutral, comparative, limiting, and restraining sense of the term in Šurpu.

Notes to Chapter Two

1. CAD A2, 86a, sub amû A.
2. Ahw. 599b, sub māmītu. The term is listed as a "paspis" form.
3. CAD M1, 189b, sub māmītu.
4. Ibid.
5. Ahw. 599b, sub māmītu.
6. W. R. Smith, Rel.Sem. pp. 480-81. Cf. Gen. 15; Jer. 34:18.
7. CAD N2, 290a, sub nīšu A.
8. See E. Reiner, Šurpu, p. 55 n. 1. Professor Reiner has recently indicated that she feels that these lists were developed almost by "free association" and thus the transgressions listed had some relationship to actual oaths. (Personal Interview: University of Chicago, September 16, 1987).
9. See E. Reiner, Šurpu, p. 55 n. 1. Professor Reiner states that she was not satisfied with the uniform translation of "oath." She wished to convey the sense through the "simplest possible translation." She would have "preferred a more neutral term" to indicate the transgression of a tabu. (Personal Interview: University of Chicago, September 16, 1987).
10. See E. Reiner, Šurpu, p. 55 n. 1.
11. Ibid.
12. Šurpu V/VI:67, 77, 87, 97, 107, 117, 125; VII:27/28.
13. Šurpu VII:27/8. When informed of these complexities as related to the interpretation of the text, Professor Reiner stated that her "solution" of using the term "oath" seems too "heavily loaded word" and not fully satisfactory. (Personal Interview: University of Chicago, September 16, 1987).

14. See J. V. K. Wilson, "An Introduction to Babylonian Psychiatry" Landsberger Festschrift AS 16, 289-98.

15. J. V. K. Wilson, AS 16, 294.

16. Ibid. 295.

17. Ibid. 294.

18. Šurpu V/VI:3-8; 69; VII:24, 30.

19. See Šurpu II:3, 187; IV:77, 86; V/VI:184.

20. Šurpu II:185-92.

21. Šurpu III:1.

22. Cf. CAD N2, 290-94, sub nīšu A. See above Chapter 2 n. 8.

23. Šurpu III:149-50.

24. E. Reiner, Šurpu, p. 23. See above Chapter 2 n. 13.

25. Šurpu III:182-83.

26. Šurpu IV:79-80.

27. Šurpu IV:81-83.

28. Šurpu V/VI:67, 77, 87, 107, 117.

29. Šurpu V/VI:72, 82, 92, 112, 122, 143.

30. Šurpu VII:1-10.

31. Šurpu VIII:29.

32. Šurpu VIII:43-44. Cf. Šurpu VIII:79-82.
33. E. Reiner, Šurpu, p. 55 n. 1. According to Professor Reiner's system the vast majority of the uses of the term māmītu are translated figuratively through the use of quotation marks. According to my count and understanding there are 315 technical and specialized usages of the term māmītu, whereas only 125 references could be construed as literally as referring to actual oaths. This appears to indicate that there is a need to develop a term which can reflect this specialized usage in the Šurpu text.
34. Šurpu III:38, 43, 101-03, 114-15; VIII:42-43 and see section 3.1.4 "Sacred Time."
35. Šurpu III:42, 73-74; VIII:48, 74-75 and see section 3.1.3 "Sacred Place."
36. Šurpu III:33, 44, 46-49, 50-51, 64-66; VIII:50-54, 60-63.
37. H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, Greek-English Lexicon, 525a, sub parametreo.
38. J. Stein, Random House Dictionary (New York: Random House, 1963), p. 1047a. This term was selected because of its essential neutrality when applied to the field of religion and the process of confession. This solution is also not completely satisfactory, because the term is not immediately understandable to the uninitiated reader. Professor Reiner continues to be influenced by a general interpretation of the Šurpu which views all of the lists as transgressions of specific tabus, as opposed to a differentiation between transgressions and neutral values. (Personal interview: University of Chicago, September 16, 1987).
39. See C. L. Barnhart, S. Steinmetz and R. K. Barnhart, A Dictionary of New English (London: Longman), 349a "Parameter - 1) a measurable factor which helps with other such factors to define a system, 2) any defining or characteristic factor." See also W. and M. Morris, Harper Dictionary of Contemporary Usage (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), p. 445-46 where the term parameter is discussed and judged by their panel as not acceptable when misconstrued for the word "perimeter" by politicians in particular. Cf. p. 445 and 446 where several members discuss the useful aspects of the word:
 David H. Bradley - "The meaning of parameter is a multi-dimensional boundary. ...Parameter used properly is useful."
 Leo Rosten - "Parameter means a variable constant."
 Roy Gandolf - "Parameter seems to have become standard usage."

40. M. Eliade, Patterns, pp. 452-53.

41. Ibid.

42. M. Eliade, Patterns, p. 453.

Chapter Three

The Text: Šurpu 's Parameters and Motifs in Comparative Religion and Literature

3.0 Introduction

Chapter three attempts to draw together a nonexhaustive, but representative discussion of significant cross-cultural parallels, thoughts, and motifs which can aid in the understanding of the terse Šurpu texts. Through the presentation and study of Mesopotamian and cross-cultural parallel motifs, it becomes apparent that Šurpu 's categories, parameters, and patterns are part of an enduring tradition that includes Wisdom literature and spans international boundaries.

Šurpu did not evolve in a vacuum. There is a shared, moral vision of human conduct between confessional literature, Wisdom literature, litanies, philosophical contemplations, religious myths, rituals, psalms, laments and personal prayers. For convenience, these varied genre will be referred to as "Belles Lettres literature." When read together and in comparison to Šurpu they provide an illuminating backdrop to these ostensibly mechanical catalogues. The significance of comparison lies in the demonstration of the universal awareness of practice and usage in ancient religious thought and confession in spite of cultural diversity.

The starting point for gathering parallel ideas and texts is the Šurpu itself. Five major categories appear to serve as the foundation for presenting the individual with confessional material and moral guidance: cultic (3.1), ritual (3.2), theological (3.3),

ethical (3.4), and social (3.5). These categories of discussion were not arrived at randomly: the internal organization of the catalogues reveals material gathered in these major areas. The statements, notions, and moral standards of Šurpu are frequently worded in a negative form typical of confessions. Elsewhere in Šurpu, these atomized references appear as assertions. The term "parameter" is used to describe the positive and negative qualities of these socioreligious, moral indicators.¹ This usage reflects the idea of moral limit, which, if crossed, binds the patient to debilitating consequences.

Each of these categories, as presented, is composed of multiple references from within the Šurpu texts, which will be discussed as a unit of thought. However, occasionally problem areas are discussed where only a single or partial reference hints at a moral value which is universally common to confessional literature. In these cases, the comparative method serves to shed light on these darker recesses of ancient Mesopotamian culture.

The cultic parameters of section 3.1 delineate for the patient the operating principles and the nature of the sacred in life. They establish both the boundary and the nexus for contact between the divine and the mundane. The ritual parameters in section 3.2 elucidate the background of the symbols and agents used in the ritual tablets of Šurpu. Section 3.3 discusses several of the theological concerns expressed in Šurpu. Section 3.4 compiles and examines the major ethical parameters of the text. The social definition and self-image of the patient is discussed in section 3.5. The parameters of Šurpu frequently interface between ethical,

religious, and legal considerations. Together these areas present a picture of the patient's world, in his time of need, as defined for him by the religious authorities.

A suppliant, in the moments of true confession, is ripe for change. Thus, one of the characteristics which Šurpu shares with confessionals in general is its seemingly random inclusion of all areas of conduct, while conscientiously asserting a blueprint for personal, social, and religious order. At these powerful moments of personal transition, confessional literature serves to aid the reconstructive process and create channels for communicating basic social and cultural values.²

Šurpu is not only a confessional for dealing with matters "ex post facto." Through cataloguing and listing of values and standards it teaches acceptable guidelines for future personal and public conduct, according to the mores of its time. The didactic function of Šurpu serves as a witness to the major areas of concern of the established religious institutions. This chapter represents a reading of that record, attempting to order and study these expressed values and place them in their appropriate cultural and literary setting.

Each of the categories encompasses a major part of the patient's intended behavior or actual conduct. To be at peace with these areas of human endeavor was the key to the success of the Šurpu. To understand the impact and import of these categories upon the individual's sense of well-being and the society's need for stability is the function of this chapter.

The Text: Šurpu 's Parameters and Motifs in Comparative Religion

3.1 Cultic Parameters

- 3.1.1 Law of Contagion
Sympathetic Magic Šurpu II:64-66, 98-103, 166-167
III:128-133; IV:69-70, 78, 80-81.
- 3.1.2 Sacred Food Šurpu II:5, 69, 77, 9; III:58, 131-132,
135-137.
- 3.1.3 Sacred Place Šurpu II:121-128, 177-178; III:50, 65-67,
73-74, 81-83; VII:60-68; VIII:52, 83; IX:42-48.
- 3.1.4 Sacred Time Šurpu II:120; III:23, 38, 43, 101-103,
114-115, 127; VIII: 42-43; IX:46.

3.2 Ritual Parameters

- 3.2.1 The Process of Desquamation Šurpu I:1:13b-21; V/VI:50-143.
- 3.2.1.1 Onion (šūmu) Šurpu I:1:18; V/VI:52/53, 60-72.
- 3.2.1.2 Dates (suluppū) Šurpu I:19; V/VI:54/55, 73-82.
- 3.2.1.3 Matting (pitiltu) Šurpu I:1:20a; V/VI:56-57, 83-92,
144-171.
- 3.2.1.4 Intrinsic Power of Animal Agents Šurpu I:20-22; II:115
III:68, 120; V/VI:93-122.
- 3.2.1.5 Flock of Wool (šipat itqi) Šurpu I:20b; V/VI:93-102.
- 3.2.1.6 Goat's Hair (šarat enzi) Šurpu I:21a; V/VI:103-112.
- 3.2.1.7 Red Wool (širpu) Šurpu I:21b; V/VI:113-122.
- 3.2.2 Water Šurpu I:4, 6, 13; IV:80; V/VI:179-181, 187-199;
VII:80-83; VIII:6-9, 43, 83-90; IX.
- 3.2.3 Process of Enclosure, The Magic Circle Šurpu I:3; III:127.
- 3.2.4 Process of Absorption and Extergation using Flour
Šurpu I:10-11; 22-23; V/VI:123-129, 130-143; VII:54-59;
VIII:17, 49, 55.
- 3.2.4.1 Extergation Šurpu I:11, 16, 22-23; VII:54-59.
- 3.2.5 Process of Immolation and Expiation Šurpu I:16-23;
V/VI:60-61, 71, 73-74, 81, 83-84, 91, 93-94, 101,
103-104, 11, 113-114, 121, 130, 141-142.

3.3 Theological Parameters

- 3.3.1 Human posture of innocence Šurpu II:32-34; III:150.
- 3.3.2 Sin Šurpu II:32-34, 187-189.
- 3.3.3 Blasphemous Neglect Šurpu II:11, 33, 73-80; VIII:81.
- 3.3.4 Divine Justice (The Characteristics) Šurpu II:67-68; VII:84-87.
- 3.3.5 Witchcraft and Sorcery Šurpu II:67-68; V/VI:129; VII:60/61; VIII:81.

3.4 Ethical Parameters

- 3.4.1 Adultery Šurpu II:48; IV:6.
- 3.4.2 Boundaries Šurpu II:45-46; III:54, 60; VIII:51.
- 3.4.3 The Bound Captive Šurpu II:29-31; IV:31-32, 35-36, 74-75.
- 3.4.4 The Defenseless, Vulnerable Šurpu II:18-19, III:97-98; IV:18, 28, 42-43.
- 3.4.5 Inheritance Šurpu II:11:44, 52.
- 3.4.6 The Judiciary Šurpu II:15; III:24.
- 3.4.7 Bloodshed (Murder) Šurpu II:49, 93-94; III:34.
- 3.4.8 Speech: The Sanctity of the Spoken Word
- 3.4.8.1 Duplicity Šurpu II:6, 38-39, 56; III:55; VIII:73.
- 3.4.8.2 Oaths Šurpu II:44, 82-86, 88-92, 116; III:3-11, 14, 17, 34, 41, 43, 93, 139-140; IV:79-80; VIII:60-61, 77.
- 3.4.8.3 Gossip Šurpu II:9, 60.
- 3.4.8.4 Exaggeration Šurpu II:17.
- 3.4.9 Transgression by Agency Šurpu II:14-15, 61.
- 3.4.10 Weights and Measures Šurpu II:37, 42-43; VIII:64-67.

3.5 Social Parameters

- 3.5.1 Kinship, Family Šurpu II:20-28, 35-36, 88-89; III:3-11; 176-181; IV:58; V/VI:42-47; VIII:58, 59.
 - 3.5.1.1 Father || Son Šurpu II:20-21.
 - 3.5.1.2 Mother || Daughter Šurpu II:22-23.
 - 3.5.1.3 Mother-in-law || Daughter-in-law Šurpu II:24-25.
 - 3.5.1.4 Brother against Brother Šurpu II:11:26, 35, 89; III:5, 178; IV:58; V/VI:46-47; VIII:58-59.
 - 3.5.1.5 Friends and Associates Šurpu II:26-28, 90; III:10-11, 34; VIII:58.
- 3.5.2 Local loyalty Šurpu II:19, 95-97.
- 3.5.3 Divisiveness Šurpu II:53, 71-72.
- 3.5.4 Social Reversal Šurpu II:52; VIII:68, 70.

3.1 Cultic Parameters

This collection of parameters attempts to delineate the operating principles and the nature of the sacred in the life of the religious Mesopotamian as revealed in the Šurpu text. Several subcategories of the sacred are derived from the catalogues of the Šurpu series: 3.1.1 Law of Contagion, Sympathetic Magic, 3.1.2 Sacred Food, 3.1.3 Sacred Place, and 3.1.4 Sacred Time. These subcategories were created based upon the multiple references to these areas made throughout the text. By surveying these factors, which were of concern to the authors, a picture can be drawn of the limits and extent of the cult as it affected the potential patient of Šurpu.

That which is sacred is, more often than not, that which is separate. E. Durkheim utilizes the term "interdiction" to represent the way in which cultures establish the sacred.³ Objects, locations, and people can be "set aside" by a given society and thereby be considered as sacred. These elements are tied to the material principle which states that physical contact with that which is interdicted transmits miasma and produces religious-theological complications for the individual. There are essentially two types of interdictions: those against the powerfully sacred and those against the innately desecrating profane.⁴ Both of these kinds of interdiction are evident in Šurpu.

Some situations or objects must be avoided because of their material religious power; others because of their material cultic profanity. Religious life and profane life cannot exist together in

the same person, place, or time.⁵

3.1.1 Law of Contagion, Sympathetic Magic

Šurpu II:64-66, 98-103, 166-167;

III:128-133; IV:69-70, 78, 80-81.

The patient of Šurpu was, in all probability, suffering from several identifiable physical, psychological, and social forms of failure. True to the cultic worldview of the times, these frustrations were prefigured as material forms of pollution, which were attacking the patient. Accordingly, this physical pollution continues adversely to affect the patient until the appropriate combination of expiations and prayers, such as Šurpu, are undertaken.

The underlying principles of sympathetic magic are the basis for this interpretation of events and causes. J. G. Frazer describes two major axioms within the laws of sympathetic magic: the Law of Similarity (Homeopathic Magic) and the Law of Contact (Contagious Magic).⁶ The Law of Similarity is the guiding principle for the major ritual drama and incantations of Šurpu I and Šurpu V/VI. This principle states that "like produces like or that an effect resembles its cause."⁷

The other of the two major axioms within the principles of sympathetic magic, the Law of Contagion, has bearing upon several of the parameters in Šurpu. This axiom states that: "things which have once been in contact with each other continue to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed" and that once they have been in contact "with each other they are always

in contact."⁸ The Law of Contagion is for all purposes the major factor in understanding ancient religion in general and the rituals and incantations of Šurpu in specific.⁹

The primary principle of similarity, as understood by Frazer, does not however fully describe the overall purpose of the extensive catalogues of socioreligious and ethical parameters. It can be argued that Šurpu represents a step in cultic evolution by combining causality, and its ethical implications, together with the law of contagion. Durkheim speaks of just such a combination in the form of a critique of Frazer's strictly magical view of religion.¹⁰ M. Douglas, in her Purity and Danger, correlates the human preoccupation with pollution and the ordering of moral rules for a society.¹¹ The Law of Contagion supplies both the form and content of the search for and solution of the patient's problems in Šurpu.

Once the patient has acknowledged his polluted condition, he must next determine its source and a means for its removal. Religious systems which hold to the principles of sympathetic magic seek one of several essential sources for the pollution: (1) the individual's own actions and thoughts and (2) intentional or unintentional contact with another individual who transmitted the feared contagion. A finer analysis of these origins would distinguish between active or passive transmission of the contagion.

For example, Maqlû attempts to rectify a situation in which the passive patient is under attack by illicit magical practitioners. Through the operative principles of sympathetic magic, practitioners transmit failure and frustration to the patient

in a physical form. Quite the opposite is true in Šurpu. Here the source of the pollution is identified as deriving from the patient's own intentional or unintentional interdicted actions. Among those misjudgments are poor social contacts.

Thus, the patient's social contacts are also open to circumspection and criticism. Several parameters pinpoint the patient's physical proximity to a polluted individual as one of the direct sources of his pollution. In Šurpu II:98-103 we hear:

"he went straight toward an accursed person (tamī),
 an accursed person went straight toward him,
 he slept in the bed of an accursed person,
 he sat in the chair of an accursed person,
 he [ate] at the table of an accursed person,
 he dran[K] from the cup of an accursed person."

Physical contact with objects touched or used by the polluted individual transmit the miasma according to the Laws of Contagion. A similar list is heard in Šurpu III:128-133, with the added social factors of pollution transmitted through touching, speaking, eating, and drinking with the accursed man.¹² Even his leftovers carry danger. Šurpu III:134-138 produces the identical litany, however here social and physical contact is interdicted with a "sinner" (arni). A similar catalogue is recorded in the Lipšur litanies.¹³

It would seem that these references can be explained by a general interdiction against intentional social contact with "evil" people, who transmit their form of pollution. The patient is described as having actively pursued and been attracted by a negative social stratum. The key to understanding these parameters

may well be the following phrases from Šurpu II:64-66:

"who knows improper things (lā amrāti),
has learned unseemly things (lā natāti),
who has taken his stand with wickedness,
transgressed the borderline of right (itē kitti
ītiqū)."

The next few phrases go on to describe contact with illicit magical practitioners. In the ancient Near East an individual was judged by his public contacts and held ritually accountable for his social interactions.

Šurpu presents several images which visualize the miasma of transgression as having a material nature. The sense of transgression is depicted as being: "untied" like a knot or "fetters" in Šurpu IV:69-70, something to be "shed" or "wiped off" in Šurpu IV:78, and "washed down" the river in Šurpu IV:80-81. The same processes are mentioned in a literary unit in the Lipšur litanies.¹⁴

In Šurpu II:166-167 we hear: "the seven winds blowing upon him, release his oath." When read in isolation this literary image is obtuse. However, in all probability the image is built upon the metaphor which envisions the physical burning and sympathetic transfer of the miasma to smoke, which is then blown away. This is in contrast to the image of complete consumption by fire of the rituals in Šurpu I and Šurpu V/VI. We hear quite literally stated in the Lipšur litanies: "may it (the curse) rise to heaven like smoke."¹⁵ Ludlul III:60 amplifies the image of sympathetic transference: "He made the wind bear away my offences."¹⁶ The heavens are considered by Šurpu IX:105 to be purifying: "may he be

clean like heaven, may he be pure like the core of heaven." ¹⁷ This particular metaphor and image may well offer another understanding of the literal meaning of the title of our text, Šurpu or burning.

3.1.2 Sacred Food Šurpu II:5, 69, 77, 95;
III:58, 131-132, 135-137.

See Section 4.5.7.2 for Egyptian parallels.

Ancient religious concern for what is ingested is one of the prime examples of an axiom within the Laws of Contagion: "you are what you eat." If the individual is cultically affected by certain external physical contact, by logical extension the individual is evenmore affected by substances taken internally. Ingestion is the most intimate of material contacts possible. ¹⁸ Food is interdicted to man because: (1) it is the designated food of the god and transmits the sacred mana, (2) it is symbolically associated with the god and it would be sacrilegious to ingest it (totem), or (3) the characteristics of the food would symbolically transmit an undesirable effect upon the eater.

Tabu, when used as a technical term, refers to the existentially negative side of the supernatural. ¹⁹ That which is tabu possesses the dangerous side of the mana, and "is not to be lightly approached." ²⁰ Reiner translates "taboo" for the term NIN.GIG (ikkibu). ²¹

In Šurpu II:5, the first major parameter of the series is: "who has eaten what is taboo to his god (ikkīb ilīšu), who has eaten what is taboo to his goddess." It is also the first parameter mentioned in Šurpu IV, as shown below. These transgressions

dealing with edibles can be understood as either, procedural infractions of the rules of sacrifice or the ingestion of a tabu food type.

Šurpu 11:76-77 lends credence to the former interpretation, holding that the patient fails to service the gods in the prescribed manner: "made the purifications, (then) complained and withheld (it)...saved something (for the gods, but) ate it."

The other possible interpretation is the interdiction against eating a forbidden food product in general (tabu). Here the question arises as to whether the food is tabu because of its innate qualities of the sacred (possessing mana) or whether this food was interdicted because it was the god's property. Is the food of the gods or for the gods? ²² A survey of the tabu food prohibitions in Mesopotamian religion might better reveal the importance of the distinction.

The use or abuse of what is "sacred to his god" (ikkīb ilīšu) is a parameter common to ancient religions involved with alimentary service to the gods. This is because the food fed to the gods takes on a highly "symbolic value," possessing an internal "logic of sensible qualities." ²³ In Enuma Elish VI:109-120, the aetiology of the function of humanity is described as the correct service of the gods. It should not be overlooked that the sacrificial food served on a daily basis to the gods also probably fed the Temple staff and stores, which might explain the emphasis placed upon this responsibility. ²⁴ The obligatory feeding of the gods leads to a variety of parameters and transgressions in Šurpu :

Šurpu 11: 73-74

"because of all the contempt (ša imēšu) for the god and goddess, because he promised in the heart and by mouth but did not give." 25

Šurpu 111:22

"the 'oath' (māmītu): to set something aside (for the god) but ask again for it." 26

Šurpu 111:58

"to eat stolen meat." 27

Šurpu 1V:4

"to eat what is taboo to one's god." 28

The spiritual and ceremonial importance of 'proper' service to the gods is evident from the frequent appearance of this category of transgression. The sacrificial food was considered the property of the Temple, and the suppliant was expected to be trustworthy.²⁹ The reliable care and feeding of the gods established theological 'credit' for the individual:

"Give food to eat, beer to drink,
Grant what is asked, provide for and honour,
In this a man's god takes pleasure,
It is pleasing to Šamaš, who will repay with
favour." 30

The principle of do ut des provides the internal logic for this aspect of the sacrificial system: "The man who sacrifices to his god is satisfied with the bargain (libbašu tābšu): He is making loan upon loan."³¹ This principle appears cross-culturally throughout the ancient Near East. In Ugarit, the sacrifice is properly offered together with a musical accompaniment: "Present [thy petitions] with thy music, and he will consent to all."³² To renege on a vow to

the gods was a transgression which necessitated expiation.

Another danger comes from contact with an individual who can transmit his "sinful" miasma materially via his food:

Šurpu III:131-133

'the oath': to eat an accursed man's food (tamê akālu),

'the oath': to drink an accursed man's water,

'the oath': to drink an accursed man's leftovers."

Šurpu III:135-137

'the oath': to eat a sinner's food (arni akālu),

'the oath': to drink a sinner's water,

'the oath': to drink a sinner's leftovers."

This transgression, identically duplicated in the Lipšur litanies, is apparently a stock incantation phrase.³³ It is clear that physical contact with an individual whose behavior lies outside the acceptable norm is threatening to the physical and spiritual well-being of the patient. The converse of this principle of material transmission is seen in the pride of Mesopotamian kings partaking of the sacrificial "leftovers" of the divinity, due to the conferred power and blessing intrinsic to the food.³⁴

In Mesopotamia, the designation of tabu (ikkibu) is derived from a god or location. Particular animals are identified with specific gods and therefore are tabu. Thus, it is an outright act of defiance and sacrilege to eat what is known symbolically to be sacred to a given deity:

"Daily Sacrifices to the Gods of the City of Uruk"

"In the temple of the god Shamash, ram's meat shall never be offered to the deity Shakkan. In the temple of the god Sin, bull's meat shall never be offered to the god Īarru. Fowl flesh shall never be offered to the goddess Beletšeri. Neither bull's meat nor fowl flesh shall ever be offered to the goddess Ereshkigal."³⁵

It is a tabu of Nedu, the chief doorkeeper of the nether world, to eat summatu ("dove") or tarlugallu ("rooster"),³⁶ presumably because of their instinctive functions as vociferous guards and because feathers often characterized the dead in Mesopotamia. The eating of arrabu (roof-mouse) is a sin against Enlil.³⁷ The pig is considered interdicted because of its unbecoming physical appearance, described in this "popular saying":

"The pig (šahû) is unholy...
 besmattering his backside,
 making the streets smell, polluting the houses.
 The pig is not fit for a temple, lacks sense, is not
 allowed to tread on pavements,
 An abomination (ikkīb) to all the gods, an
 abhorrence (tahdat ili) [to (his) god,]
 accursed (nizirti) by Šamaš." 38

In a particular "utukkī lemnūti," a general tabu is outlined: "wheat flour is forbidden (ikkīb) (as an offering) to gods, šeqūšu -flour is forbidden (as an offering) to ghosts."³⁹ Sumuqan's domain is over cattle and wild animals. So it is a sin against Sumuqan to catch and presumably eat, fish, fowl, and wild beasts.⁴⁰

The infraction of this category of transgression is understood as an offense against one's own personal god. The majority of citations seem to reflect little awareness on the part of the Mesopotamian individual of which animals are actually tabu or totem to the gods. This would indicate that the fundamental transgressions operative in the sacred food parameters in Šurpu attempt to describe acts of defiance and conscious sacrilege. The notion of intentional or unintentional transgression is often

mentioned together with transgressions of sacred food: "unknowingly I ate what is forbidden to my god, unknowingly I trod upon (ground) forbidden by my goddess."⁴¹ A similar reference is made in the Lipšur litanies: "if he ate unwittingly what is taboo to his god."⁴² Divine prerogative is the issue and not the symbolic value of a particular animal.

Blessing food and drink before partaking is a means of 'releasing' the known or unknown restrictions upon the substance for human consumption.⁴³ It would appear that the devout would wash, sing praises, and make an offering before consuming any food: "...he has eaten his food without invoking his god"⁴⁴ and "when you have found the water, you libate (tanagqi) this water before Šamaš (and only then) you can drink this water."⁴⁵ Ludlul laments that in spite of his performing ritual libation before eating he still suffers:

Lud. II:12-13; BWL 39
 "Like one who has not made libations (tamqītum) to his god,
 nor invoked his goddess at table."

Lud. II:19-20; BWL 39
 "But has eaten his food without invoking his god,
 and abandoned his goddess by not bringing a flour offering."

Ritual washing is a common method for gaining the approval of the gods before eating: "Quickly, (fetch) me water for my hands, and give it to me so that I can dine... Šamaš accompanies washed hands."⁴⁶ Mesopotamian tradition held these practices before eating as sacred, and so we hear the parameter stated in the DINGIR.ŠA.DIB.BA Incantations:

"The food I found I did not eat to myself,
The water I found I did not drink to myself,

"The food I found I ate with sighing
(ina tānihi),
the water I found I drank with sighing." 47

In the Biblical tradition, injunctions related to edibles is a prominent feature of Biblical and later Jewish religion. The debate as to the function of these restrictions continues.⁴⁸ The notion of alimentary tabu is also evident in Egyptian religion as seen below in section 4.5.7.2, "Food of the gods." Cross-culturally, not only do the gods place restrictions upon certain foods, but they also demand their full portion from all sacrifice. Food tabus appear to be a society's means of expressing a need for ritual purity and cultural order.

In the mythology of Mesopotamia, this basic competition between what is human and what is for divine consumption is given a bitter ideological and aetiological explanation. In the Myth of Adapa humanity is seduced and then tricked out of immortality. Food, when offered as a symbol of divine hospitality, had the potential to grant perpetual life.⁴⁹ The sense of paradise lost is an established motif in ancient Near Eastern myth which is also evident in Biblical literature, for example the temptation scene of Gen. 2.

In surveying the ancient Near Eastern attitude and practices related to sacred food, one gets the impression that this was an area of continual cultic embellishment in which the commoner had difficulty keeping track of the tabu foods.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, the gods' sovereign power over sacrificial food was an established fact.

Thus, it is frequently mentioned as a transgressed parameter by frustrated suppliants. Touching upon this sensitive issue, a self-deprecating posture of innocence is dramatically expressed by the patient in the DINGIR.ŠA.DIB.BA Incantations: "I am an ox, [I do not] know the plants I eat."⁵¹

3.1.3 Sacred Place Šurpu II:121-128, 177-178;
III:50, 65-67, 73-74, 81-83;
VII:60-68; VIII:52, 83; IX:42-48.

See Section 4.5.9.2 for Egyptian parallels.

Certain locations carry with them a greater sense of the sacred than others. These sites are primarily places of physical or geological interest, which eventually achieve a mythologic or cultic importance.⁵² As with other aspects of the holy, sacred places are usually set apart and isolated from the main centers of human habitation: "the place ([man]zāzka) where you stay is forbidden ground (ašru parsu)."⁵³ The places carry the positive and negative powers of holiness. Cross-culturally, the vehicles for the development of a sacred place are folklore and myth.⁵⁴ This process of mythologic attribution is evident in Gilgamesh's description of his building up of Uruk and in Enuma Elish :

"All his toil he engraved on a stone stela.
Of ramparted Uruk the wall he built,
Of hallowed Eanna, the pure sanctuary...
Seize upon the threshold, which is from of old!"⁵⁵

"After Ea had vanquished and trodden down his foes,
Had secured his triumph over his enemies,
In his sacred chamber in profound peace had rested,
He named it "Apsu," for shrines he assigned (it).
In that same place his cult hut he founded."⁵⁶

historical and miraculous events are attributed to these same locations, creating a rich fabric of meaning for the eventual human edifices and shrines erected on these sites.⁵⁷ The Etana Myth indicates prehistoric time and place by stating: "The shrines had not been built altogether."⁵⁸ The primal context provides an ongoing center for contemporary hierophanies and cultic acts, which carry a continuity of significance and sacred power.⁵⁹

In the Šurpu II:121-122, references are made to just such earthly places which carry the power of the divine:

"he asked for a sign [from] the gods of heaven,
[at] the sanctuaries (parraki) of the earth,
he asked for a sign at the sanctuary of the Lord and
the Lady."

A short catalogue of sacred places is offered in Šurpu III:73-74:
"the 'oath' of chapel (sukku) or shrine (panpanu), the 'oath' of
dais (dīhu) or throne (parakki)." In Šurpu III:81-83, the
potential for positive or negative divine power is alluded to with
sacred places listed together with wild spirits which haunt:

"the 'oath' (māmītu) of the Lady of the city-wall
and crenels,
the 'oath' of the ...-demons of the corners,
the 'oath' of the open altar (ibreti) or its socle
(nēmedīša)."

It is possible that Ištar was the female patron of the open altars,
which were associated with the dangers of the underworld.⁶⁰ These
sacred places attracted the divine mana to an earthly setting:
"chapels, sanctuaries, altars and daises hearken to you
(Ištar)."⁶¹ Likewise, these locations are propitious. They

Potentially possess the solutions to the petitions of the patient.

In Šurpu II:123-128, all of the places mentioned might well refer to locations encountered during a traveler's journeys, as intimated by the closing phrase:

"he asked for a sign leaving the city and entering the city,
 he asked for a sign leaving the city-gate and entering the city-gate,
 he asked for a sign leaving the house and entering the house,
 he asked for a sign in the street,
 he asked for a sign in the temple,
 he asked for a sign on the road."

Places of exit and entrance, whether city or home, carry with them powerful potential for good or evil: "they (the demons) stand at the crossroads and turn back the traffic of the country."⁶² The vulnerability permits greater contact with the divine. The merchant or traveler's distance and isolation from populated centers provides the opportunity for hierophany or kratophany. Šurpu III:50 specifically marks the beginning of a journey as a significant moment: "[the 'oath' that the man has set out on a journey." Prayers were offered on behalf of the heroes Gilgamesh and Enkidu when they departed to destroy Humbaba.⁶³ Travel and movement provide close moments of contact with mana: "You stand by the traveller whose road is difficult...It [is you] who patrols the unseen routes, you constantly tread paths which confront [Šamaš] (alone)."⁶⁴ Simple catalogued locations indicating land and water travel are mentioned in Šurpu VIII:52: "ditchbank and canal, bridge, pass, path and road."⁶⁵

Cross-culturally, Biblical tradition also images the traveler as more susceptible to revelation: Jacob's ladder on the road between Beer Sheba and Haran (Gen. 28:10), Jacob's wrestling with the angel by the ford of Jabbok (Gen. 32:23f.), and the talking ass of Balaam (Num. 22:22f.). In Ugaritic literature, Daniel's daughter Paghat is granted two revealed visions while on the road.⁶⁶

An open, desolate place is another setting ripe for manifestation of the divine power. In Šurpu VIII:48, a list of open places is presented: "field, orchard, house, street, alley, open altar and its socle."⁶⁷

There is still an unexplained phenomenon in the city planning of ancient Mesopotamia, where the sanctuary is located outside of the city walls, although it is joined with the city by a connecting "sacred road."⁶⁸ This may be an institutionalization of the notion of greater divine presence apart from human settlement. The semidivine, predomesticated origins of the figure Enkidu are attributed to his dwelling on the unadulterated "steppe."⁶⁹

The desolate place carries with it a sense of cultic purity. It thus provides the correct environment for the disposal of the material aspects of transgression as seen in a spell in Šurpu VII:63-64, where loaves of bread absorb the miasma: "take it out to the plain (sēri), the pure place, put it down at the base of a thorn-bush."⁷⁰ A patron goddess "of the plain and field" is entrusted with the task of expiating the miasma.⁷¹ She is identified as the consort of Latarak ("the king of the wilderness").⁷² In the Akkadian New Year's kuppuru-ritual, the

body and head of the scape-ram are disposed of and the attending priest and the ritual slaughterer are exiled to "open country" for a period of seven days.⁷³ Cross-culturally, similar rituals are seen in the sacrifice and preparations of the red heifer "outside of the camp, in a clean place" in Num. 19:3, 9, and the expulsion of the scapegoat "to Azazel into the wilderness" in Lev. 16:10.

Also cross-culturally, open places have always been a meeting place for humans and their gods. In the Telepinus Myth, the hero takes to the open country and "steppes" in search of the saving powers of the vanquished god.⁷⁴ In Biblical tradition all of the major, classical revelations occurred in the reflective isolation of the wilderness: the burning bush at Mount Horeb (Ex. 3:1f.), the request for three days of prayer in the desert before Pharaoh (Ex. 5:3), the giving of the Commandments on Mount Sinai (Ex. 19-21), and water from the rock in the desert of Sin (Ex. 17; Num. 20:1). Following this established Biblical motif, the NT sets the major revelations of Jesus in isolated and "lonely places" (ἔρημος): Jesus's early development (Luke 1:80), the forty-day temptation of Jesus in the Judean wilderness (Luke 4:1-13), the call of Simon Peter (Luke 4:42), the multiplying of food (Mark 6:31; Luke 9:10), the feeding of the five thousand (John 6:31), and the walking on water (Matt. 14:13).

Mountains and high places likewise were considered sacred for their purity, as in Šurpu III:65-67: "the 'oath' (māmītu) of mountain (šadi) or ravine (hurri)...of source (rēši) or to[rrent] (natbaki)... of pass (nēribu)." An incantation in Šurpu IX:42-48 correlates the ritual purity of the mountain

together with the expiating mountain waters.⁷⁵ Similarly, the opening of the Lipšur litanies appeals for absolution to an extensive list of forty-seven mountains and their expiating powers manifested through floral and rock formations.⁷⁶

Cross-culturally, Biblical tradition preserves the notion of the sacred mountain with the central tasks these high places served: the Binding of Isaac on the mountain called YHWH yir'eh, "in the Mountain the Lord will appear" (Gen. 22:14); Jacob's mountain sacrifice (Gen. 31:54); Moses and Aaron unite at "mountain of God" (Ex. 4:27); Mount Sinai and the Ten Commandments (Ex. 19; 24; 34; Deut. 5); death of Aaron on Mount Hor (Num. 20:22); blessings and curses on Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal (Deut. 11:29); David mourns on Mount of Olives (2 Sam. 13:30); contest of prophets on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:19f.); curse of Mount Seir (Ezek. 35); and the centrality of Mount Zion in Jerusalem (Isa. 8:18, 27:13; Psa. 48:2). In Ugaritic literature, specific mountain chains are frequently considered the sacred dwelling of the gods, for example Baal's Zaphon,⁷⁷ Anat's Enibaba,⁷⁸ and mountain of Lala.⁷⁹

Šurpu's references to sacred place are consistent with those found in other cultures and times. The more obtuse lists of places and locations found in Šurpu can best be understood in the light of the strong cross-cultural evidence for this factor in comparative religion.

3.1.4 Sacred Time Šurpu II:120;

III:23, 38, 43, 101-103, 114-115, 127;

VIII:42-43; IX:46.

See Section 4.5.9 for Egyptian parallels.

The sacred and profane in Mesopotamia were delimited in part by factors of season, timing, and sequence of events. The ancients' sense of time differs significantly from ours: there was a simultaneous sensitivity to the momentary, the cyclical-repetitive, and the linear qualities of sacred time.⁸⁰

The rhythm of cultic life spun with the spheres of the heavens, demonstrating an awareness of lunar, solar, and general celestial events. The quality of cyclical time was established at creation:

Enuma Elish V:12-22

"The Moon he caused to shine, the night (to him) entrusting.

He appointed him a creature of the night to signify the days:

"Monthly, without cease, form designs with a crown.

At the month's very start, rising over the land,
Thou shalt have luminous horns to signify six days,
On the seventh day reaching a [half]-crown.

At full moon stand in opposition in mid-month.

When the sun [overtakes] thee at the base of heaven,
'Diminish' [thy crown] and retrogress in light.

At the time [of disappearance] approach thou the
course of the sun,

And [on the thir]tieth thou shalt again stand in
opposition to the sun." 81

Enuma Elish V:45-46

"After he [had appointed] the days [to Shamash],
[And had established] the precincts of night and
d[ay]." 82

The daily cycle of light and dark was ritually institutionalized. In Šurpu II:120, the beginning and the end of

the day are considered powerful times of revelation: "he asked for a sign at sunrise and sunset." Several other references are made to rituals being conducted before the sun(rise).⁸³ There are strong indications of sanctuaries being oriented toward the east to capture the first sun of the morning: "At the entrance of the sanctuary, which he had been viewing, he (Zu bird) awaits the start of day."⁸⁴ Biblical literature attests to the centrality of the sun in foreign worship, inside and outside ancient Israel.⁸⁵

Both day and night were sacred. Each carried its own ritual characteristics and power. In Šurpu III:101-103, a broken list preserves the cyclical sense beginning and ending with images of the night:

"the 'oath' (māmītu) of holy eve and [...]
 the 'oath' of holy day and [...]
 the 'oath' of the night [...]."

A linear awareness of the passage of time also carried a sacred quality. In Šurpu III:115, a linear progression is catalogued: "the 'oath' of day, month or year." The author of Ludlul apparently conceives of time in a linear fashion, as seen in the opening line of the second Tablet: "I survived to the next year; the appointed time passed."⁸⁶ A similar linear conception is heard in a poetic form in Lud. I:105-106: "By day there is sighing, by night lamentation, monthly - wailing, each year - gloom."⁸⁷ Cross-culturally, this literary convention appears throughout the ancient Near East. In Ugarit we hear time sequences described in progressions of seven days,⁸⁸ days - months,⁸⁹ and days - months - years.⁹⁰

Both propitious and disastrous timing of human activities were augured through the skies. Not only the ultimate fate of the individual, but also the daily events of life were determined and proscribed by the powers of the universe, and their influence on the calendar.

A general conception of time in Mesopotamia integrated the notion of fate on a microcosmic scale. There are good days (ūmū magrūtu) and evil days (ūmū lemnūtu), as usually described in hemerology and extispicy texts.⁹¹ This worldview maintains that there is an appropriate time for certain events and a dangerous, life-threatening time for other events. Each day, hour, and moment can be judged correct or fatal for the same activity. This notion is referred to in Šurpu III:38: "the 'oath' (māmītu): to ask on a dark day (ūmi etî), but deny it." In the DINGIR.ŠÀ.DIB.BA Incantations we hear the following petition: "Do not hand me over to an evil day (ūmi lemni). Do not turn me over to a day of storm (ūmi mehê)."⁹²

Following the lunar progression of time, certain days are ritually sacred and auspicious on a monthly basis. A list of propitious days for expiation is presented for an unknown god in an incantation in Šurpu VIII:42-43:

"of heaven and earth: day, month and year, holy eve, holy day, the 7th, the 15th, the 19th, the 20th, the 25th, the day of the new moon, the day of the washing (ritual), the evil day, the 30th."

In Šurpu IX:46, an incantation concerning the purity of the mountains refers to an appropriate day for ritual ablution: "on a resplendent day, a favorable day, fit for sprinkling water." The first, seventh and fifteenth are mentioned as days especially set aside for purification rights in Akkadian ritual.⁹³ Šurpu appears to be remiss in not mentioning the sixteenth and seventeenth days which are frequently assigned for rituals, probably set to coincide with the appearance of the full moon.⁹⁴ The twentieth day is mentioned as a day of celebration for Šamaš in his major hymn.⁹⁵

From Šurpu III:114, it would appear as though each day was protected by a particular god who was to be worshipped: "the 'oath' (that he) mentioned the patron (god) of the day." Similarly, Ludlul II:25-26 mentions the notion of a set ritual day for one's personal god: "The day for reverencing the god was a joy to my heart; The day of the goddess's procession was profit and gain to me."⁹⁶

Šurpu is virtually complete in listing the major qualities of sacred time for the patient. This excellent description of the various effects of sacred time upon the Mesopotamian attests to Šurpu's important place in the Temple incantations.

Notes to Chapter Three and to Section 3.1

1. See section 2.5 and p. 66, notes 37-39 for full discussion.
2. V. Turner, The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure (Ithaca: Cornell University Paperbacks, 1985), pp. 42-43 and 103. See also an article which documents similar educational functions of rituals in other cultures by R. W. Brislin and S. Bochner, "Initiation Ceremonies and Secret Societies as Educational Institutions," in Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Learning (New York: Wiley, 1975).
3. E. Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life (New York: Free Press, 1969), p. 338.
4. Ibid. p. 340.
5. Ibid. pp. 346-47.
6. J. G. Frazer, GB , pp. 12-18; the parenthesis are my own.
7. Ibid. p. 12.
8. Ibid. pp. 12-13.
9. E. Durkheim, Elem. , pp. 398-405 and in particular Durkheim's critique p. 399 n. 22. See Tz. Abusch, "Studies in the History and Interpretation of some Akkadian Incantations and Prayers against Witchcraft," (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1972), p. 31 where Surpu and Maqlû functionally agree that "evil removed must be transferred to another object." In Maqlû that is a magical doll. In Surpu transference is made to objects with more symbolic that magical power.
10. See E. Durkheim, Elem. , pp. 405-13.
11. M. Douglas, Purity and Danger , (London: Routledge, 1966), p. 129f.
12. See section 3.1.2 "Sacred Food."
13. E. Reiner, JNES 15, 136:85-88.

14. E. Reiner, JNES 15, 140:7'-22'.
15. E. Reiner, JNES 15, 136:98; cf. 140:7'.
16. BWL 51; cf. CAD A2, 295a (lex.sec.), sub arnu , ref. 4R 10 (rel.) "let the wind carry off the wrong I committed."
17. Cf. Ex. 24:10 where the pure quality of the heavens is referred to as a color.
18. E. Durkheim, Elem. , p. 341.
19. See R. Marett, in J. Waardenburg, Class.App. , p. 259.
20. R. H. Codrington in J. Waardenburg, Class.App. , p. 261.
21. E. Reiner, Surpu , p. 13:5.
22. See J. Campbell, Primitive Mythology (Middlesex: Penguin, 1969), p. 446.
23. See R. Firth, Symbols (N.Y.: Cornell, 1973), pp. 243-45.
24. A. L. Oppenheim, AM , pp. 187-88.
25. Surpu 11:73-74. This transgression presents a common ancient Near Eastern practice where a sacrificial offering is vowed but not fulfilled. See section 4.5.2 "Food of the gods."
26. Surpu 111:22. The transgression of apportioning a sacrificial offering to the gods but renegeing on the vow.
27. Surpu 111:58. Based on parallels cross-culturally our best guess is that this is meat stolen from the Temple.
28. Surpu IV:4.
29. W. G. Lambert, JNES 33, 283:141-42 "I coveted your abundant property, I desired your precious silver."

30. Counsels of Wisdom 61-64; BWL 103.
31. Dialogue 56-57; BWL 147.
32. ANET 147b; II K (125) i:44-45. Cf. Baal's role as intercessor after 7 days of offerings IID (2 Aqht) i:3-17.
33. Cf. E. Reiner, JNES 15, 137:86-88 and p. 129-30 on the literary connections between the texts.
34. A. L. Oppenheim, AM, p. 189.
35. "Daily Sacrifices to the Gods of the City of Uruk" 40-43; ANET 344b.
36. CAD I/J, 55b, sub ikkibu (1.a 1'), ref. KAR 178 (hemer.).
37. CAD I/J, 55b, sub ikkibu (1.a 1'), ref. KAR 177 (hemer.). A variant mentions Ninlil.
38. "Popular Sayings" rev. III:13-16; BWL 215.
39. CAD I/J, 55b (lex.sec.), sub ikkibu (1.a 1'), ref. KAR 166 (unpubl., series utukki lemnuti).
40. CAD I/J, 55-56a, sub ikkibu ref. KAR 178 (SB hemer.).
41. CAD I/J, 55b (lex. sec.), sub ikkibu ref. 4R 10 (rel.) and other citations CAD I/J, 55-56, sub ikkibu.
42. E. Reiner, JNES 15, 137:83.
43. M. Eliade, ed., Encyclopedia of Religion (New York: MacMillan, 1987), Vol. 5:391.
44. Lud. II:19; BWL 39.
45. CAD L, 126-27a, sub lêmu (3'), ref. CT 38 (incant.). See J. G. Frazer, GB, Vol. 1:117 for the principle.

46. Dialogue 11, 13; BWL 145. Also see BWL 289 n. 19 for commentary.
47. W. G. Lambert, JNES 33, 279:83-84, 98-99; cf. 289:8-11.
48. See J. Neusner, The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism (Leiden: Brill, 1973) and his critique of Mary Douglas, pp. 137-42.
49. See Adapa ; ANET 102a.
50. M. Douglas would perhaps interpret this as the constructive side of ambiguity and anomaly in culture. See: Purity and Danger (London: Ark, 1984), pp. 37-40.
51. W. G. Lambert, JNES 33, 285:12.
52. M. Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane , 23-24.
53. CAD M1, 234b, sub manzazu (lex.sec.), ref. CT 16 (incant.) and cf. Ex. 3:15 and Josh. 5:15.
54. L. Levy-Bruhl as quoted in M. Eliade, Patterns , p. 367.
55. Gilg. I i:8-10, 13; ANET 73b.
56. Enuma Elish I:73-77; ANET 61b.
57. M. Eliade, Patterns , pp. 367-68.
58. Etana A-1 i:9 (OB ver.); ANET 114b.
59. M. Eliade, Patterns , p. 369.
60. Cf. CAD I/J, 4b sub ibratu (lex.sec.), ref. SBH p.131 (hymn).
61. E. Reiner and H. G. Güterbock, "The Great Prayer to Ištar," JCS 21, 259:14.

62. CAD S, 38b (lex.sec.), sub sahāru , ref. CT 16 (incant.).
63. Gilg. III ii (Assyr. ver.); ANET 81a-b.
64. Šamaš Hymn 65, 67-68; BWL 131.
65. Cf. also Šurpu III:33 "of road (harrāni) or path (alakti)."
66. ID (IAqht) ii; ANET 153b. In great part the danger and vulnerability when travelling comes from possible incidents with demons which traditionally wander outside of established settlements. See J. C. De Moor, "Demons in Canaan," JEOL 27, 106-19 for further cross-cultural discussion of the phenomenon.
67. Cf. Šurpu VIII:71 for a similar list.
68. A. L. Oppenheim, AM , pp. 115, 139.
69. Gilg. I ii:8-9; ANET 73b.
70. Šurpu VII:63. cf. Šurpu V/VI:164 and CAD §, 145-46, sub sēru A (3h).
71. Šurpu VII:67/68.
72. Šurpu II:177-78. See CAD §, 147a-b, sub sēru A (3j2').
73. "Temple Program for the New Year's Festivals at Babylon;" ANET 333:360-64.
74. "Telepinus Myth;" ANET 126:10-15.
75. Cf. Šurpu VIII:39-40, 54. See also J. Lundquist, "Studies on the Temple in the Ancient Near East," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1983), pp. 61-69 who demonstrates the relationship between the primordial mountain, the temple and the primordial waters.
76. E. Reiner, JNES 15, 133-35:1-47.

77. VAB:C ('nt:III) 27-29 and IIK (125) i:6-7.
78. VAB:D ('nt:IV) 78-79.
79. III AB B (137) 21-22.
80. M. Eliade, Patterns , pp. 388-91.
81. Enuma Elish V:12-22; ANET 68a.
82. Enuma Elish V:45-46; ANET 501b. Cf. Gen. 1:3-5, 14-19.
83. Cf. Surpu III:23, 43, 127. For a discussion of the importance of the sunrise to the principles of ANE cultus see P. C. Mathew, The Cultus of the Ancient Near Eastern Semities: Its Principle and Theology , (India, 1983), pp. 51-57 and 67.
84. "The Myth of the Zu" ii:16-17 (Assyr. ver.); ANET 113a. See A. L. Oppenheim, AM , p. 328.
85. See Isa. 41:25; Ezek. 8:16; 2 Kings 23:5, 11. Cf. Num. 25:4 where the punishment fits the crime in the eyes of the priesthood.
86. Lud. II:1; BWL 39.
87. Lud. I:105-06; BWL 36.
88. IK (Krt) iii:104-07, 113-18; iv:194-95; 207-09; v:118-22; IID (2 Aqht) ii:33-39.
89. I AB (62) 1:25-26; IID (2 Aqht) ii:44-47.
90. IAB (49) 5:7-8; ID (IAqht) iv:176-77.
91. CAD M1, 47b, sub magrû (a).
92. W. G. Lambert, JNES 33, 279:96-97; cf. 291:23-24 including

concept of "evil night" (mūši lemni).

93. "Creation of Man by the Mother Goddess" 18-19 (OB ver.); ANET 99b.

94. Cf. "Temple Ritual for the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Days of an Unknown Month at Uruk;" ANET 338-39 which describes a sunrise ritual on 17th; "Daily Sacrifices to the Gods of the City of Uruk;" ANET 344b:33 mentions the significance of the 16th day.

95. Šamaš Hymn 156; BWL 137. Cf. BWL 221:6-7 where the 20th is referred to in a popular saying as a "bright day" (ūmuka nammar) for Šamaš.

96. Lud. 11:25-26; BWL 39.

3.2 Ritual parameters

This section will discuss some of the central ritual procedures and mechanisms used within the Šurpu series. These processes and agents contribute to the ritual potency and efficacy of the Šurpu text. In addition, many are echoed in the text itself as parameters. Whether these were used or abused, transgressed or adhered to, these factors contributed to the patient's condition.

3.2.1 The Process of Desquamation

Šurpu I:13b-21; V/VI:50-143.

The rite of desquamation is central to the ritual function of the Šurpu. Tablets I and V/VI:50-143 of the Šurpu series involve the ritual action of "stripping off" or desquamation.¹ This procedure is a dramatic projection of the patient's need for release and absolution. The patient's sense of moral and socioreligious miasma called out for expiation.

In Šurpu I:13b-21, this rite involves the use of six prosaic agents in a sacred ritual drama of release: an onion, a bunch of dates, a piece of matting, a flock of wool, goat's hair, and red wool. The ritual drama begins with the āšipu setting the six agents apart by holding them and then placing them above the patient. This action in sympathetic magic establishes the relationship between the patient and the material agent, which now becomes the "substitute" (therápōn). A similar action can be seen in the ritual of the "laying on of the hands" in the expiatory drama of the scapegoat.² The number six itself does not resonate well in the world of ritual and magic. However, the formulaic, dramatic

climax (on the number seven) can be seen in the final action of the ceremony -- the second coating (probably) with flour and its being burned.³

In Šurpu V/VI:50-143, there is an expansive repetition of the simple commands we read in Tablet I. It also serves as a commentary to the opening ritual of the text. The same six agents are mentioned with some variations and additions. The version in Šurpu V/VI is essentially an embellishment upon the ritual in Šurpu I. When read together they provide an insight into the possible protoform of the ritual, as well as its meaning.

The original form of the desquamation rite may well have involved only three agents: onion, dates, and matting. The next stage may have added three agents: wool, goat's hair, and red wool. The final form as found in Tablet V/VI, builds upon the closure of flour burning by adding another type of flour and a mythologic ritual drama (rendering nine actions in total). This theory is strengthened by the appearance of these three primary agents in basically the same form in Maqlû V:57f., in Sippar No. 8,⁴ and in the Lipšur litanies.⁵ They all share these same common agents and each in their own way innovates on these established components of the ritual.

These three agents, when taken as a unit, express a poetic unity or triad.⁶ Symbolically, each represents a realm of the universe: the onion the earthly realm and the date the upper realm.⁷ The matting represents the human sphere -- a combination of the two. Additionally, the onion and the dates form another symbolic merism, from the bitter to the sweet. Both the date and the

matting were made from the date-palm.⁸ And so they carried with them the powerful imagery of this tree so critical to the Mesopotamian culture (forming another symbolic merism, bracketing the onion). Given the mythologic introduction to Šurpu V/VI, the richness of the symbolism of these particular objects may have well been the motivation for their use as ritual agents. This knowledge may have been representative of the magical esoterica which was being conjured.⁹

The rite of desquamation is also paralleled in the Lipšur litanies.¹⁰ The connection between Šurpu and the Lipšur has been noted for many years.¹¹ In these litanies, only the three primary agents are mentioned. In the Lipšur litanies, the parallels to our text do not reflect an action but rather a literary reference to this dramatic image: "... may they be peeled off like an onion, stripped off like dates, unraveled like a matting!"¹²

"Stripping off" is a common literary image in expiatory rituals, however rarely is it so vividly actualized: "may it (evil) be stripped off with the water of his body and the washwater of his hands"¹³ and, in a namburbi ritual, "may it be stripped off my sins."¹⁴

An interesting question remains as to whether the poetic image or ritual action came first. Having compared the literary qualities of the Lipšur litanies to our references in the Šurpu, it may be safe to say that a particular religious practice or ritual seems to underlie most of these poetic images. This may well be one of the major contributions of the Šurpu to our understanding of the relationship between Mesopotamian religion and literature.

3.2.1.1 Onion (šūmu)

Šurpu 1:18; V/VI:52/3, 60-72.

The onion, allium cepa of the lily family, is universally understood as an apotropaic against evil due to its pungent taste and odor.¹⁵ Cross-culturally, members of the Allium family are understood as providing medicinal benefits and good luck and thereby serve as apotropaics. Most bulbous vegetables¹⁶ of this kind serve the same function, such as garlic allium sativum (šūmu) and the andaḥašū -bulb which was seen used against witchcraft.¹⁷ A. L. Oppenheim speaks of the early domestication of these plants, in spite of the fact that they were not significantly represented in the Mesopotamian diet.¹⁸ The layered physical structure of the onion has been known to intrigue ancient humanity.¹⁹

In Egypt, the concentric layers of peel and flesh have been likened to the universe and the regenerative qualities of the snake.²⁰ The Biblical memory of the slave diet of the Israelites offers an insight into the importance of these vegetables to the Egyptians: "the leeks and the onions and the garlicks."²¹ The Boghazköy texts make mention of a whole festival devoted to the andaḥašū -bulb.²²

Also within the purview of Hittite culture, there is an incantation which explicitly describes the action and logic motivating the desquamation of an onion in a rite of purification.²³ This ritual is used in the purification of a Temple and not an individual:

"Afterward they handed to him an on[ion] and while this is being done, she* speaks as follows: "If in {the presence of the god anyone speaks} as follows: 'Just as this onion consists of skins which are wrapped together, one being [unable to get loose from another - as (in) an on]ion] let evil, oath, curse (and) uncleanness be wrapped around that Temple!' See now, I have picked this onion apart and have [no]w left only one 'wretched stem'. Even so let him** pick apart evil word, oath, curse (and) uncleanness from the god's [temple]! Let god and sacrificer be free of that matter!" 24
 * the priestess, called the Old Woman
 ** the sacrificer

As this incantation shows, this is a counter-magical rite, which reveals that the desquamation of the onion was used as a ritual by Temple functionaries on behalf of a lay sacrificer.

3.2.1.2 Dates (suluppū)

Šurpu I:19; U/VI:54/5, 73-82.

The symbolic power of the bunch of dates should be considered together with the important value of the date-palm which produces them. The cultivation and fertilization of the date-palm (gišimmaru) represents one of the great feats of early domestication by Mesopotamian civilization.²⁵ The date-palm held a central place in the economic development, structural construction, and religious aspects of the society.²⁶ All components of the date-palm had a functional use, from the fronds to the fruit, from the timber to the fibers. The pollination and cross-fertilization procedures of the horticulturist became the sacred domain of the Temple. Depictions of this process in ritual settings are found throughout the Mesopotamian glyptic.²⁷

The powers of the date-palm, due to its height and the mysterious movements of its fronds in the upper winds were considered of the celestial realm. In the Theod. 56-58, the date-palm is addressed as an intermediary between heaven and earth:

"O palm, tree of wealth, my precious brother,
endowed with all wisdom, jewel of <gold>
you are as stable as the earth,
but the plan of the gods is remote." 28

Because it was seen as based in the earthly realm, but in symbolic contact with the celestial realm, it was understood to have semidivine and expiatory powers: "may the date palm that catches every wind release me."²⁹ The date-palm is used together with another of the celestial, divine figures, the Kerûbîm, in a vision of the heavens.³⁰

Dates together with flour are used in a ritual of expiation in a Namburbi text, where they are thrown in the river: "he raises in his left hands flour, dates, a šasqû -flour."³¹ Even the date pit (aban suluppî) was frequently used in rituals.³²

In the Rabbinic literature, the mystical qualities of the date and the date-palm continued to be appreciated. Dreaming of date-palm trees was considered a expiatory sign that "one's sins have come to an end."³³ The art of divination by "the language of the date palm" was still prevalent in Rabbinic literature.³⁴

The primal power of the date-palm was clearly demonstrated to the patient, through the use of its by-products in the central ritual and as it figured as a parameter not to be transgressed. The intentional destruction of the date-palm was interdicted in Šurpu VIII:74.

3.2.1.3 Matting (pitiltu)

Šurpu I:20a; V/VI:56/57, 83- 92, 144-171.

The matting stands symbolically in relation to the date-palm. It is the creative human interaction with the by-products (fronds fibres) of the sacred tree, that gives this agent its potency. In Šurpu V/VI:85, the correlation is drawn between the matting and its source: "the fibres it is made of will not return to the date-palm." The term pitiltu literally refers to any "twisted," woven substance including ropes, cords, and even bedding materials.³⁵ Reiner sticks by her translation "matting," in spite of strong evidence that this term refers to "twisted rope."³⁶ Etymologically, there is a connection with the Hebrew pātal, petîl and Aramaic petal.³⁷

The use of this fabricated agent is an innovative imitation of the given properties of the other natural agents. Matting was used in Mesopotamia as a construction, bedding and packing material.³⁸ Yet it is probably not for these reasons that this agent is chosen for the ritual. The taming of the reed marshes comes to symbolize the primal essence of human activity and technical potential, as seen in the opening of the Enuma Elish I:5: "When no grassland had been formed, no reed thicket laid out (še-ēu)."³⁹ Early pastoral encampments were referred to as reed-matted or fenced-in areas.⁴⁰ As noted by Oppenheim, "the spinning of wool seems to have developed in imitation of the spinning of vegetable material."⁴¹

The matting was used to carry, clothe, and prop the gods in their daily ritual routines.⁴² The reed mat was also used in burial and thus as an agent in sympathetic magic related to the death of an intended victim: "I will roll them (my bewitchers) up like a reed mat."⁴³ The importance of this substance can be seen in several synonyms for matting: burû A,⁴⁴ ipšu B,⁴⁵ and kîtu.⁴⁶ Thus, semiotically, the mat, whether of reeds or of palm carried a powerful religious connotation.

The term pitiltu appears with the notion of "unravelling" (< pitiltu lipaššer "may the rope be unravelled") as an incantation in Maqlû V:58: "may her sorcery be stripped off like (these) dates (from the cluster), unravelled like (this rope)."⁴⁷ Adding to the interpretation of deeply visceral release of a sense of miasma through this action of desquamation, we hear the same phrase referring to and describing the entrails: "interwoven like matting."⁴⁸

In spite of the fact that this kind of ritual is unusual, it continues to appear in later Near Eastern contexts. The reed maintains an image of ritual purity into the Talmudic period. Surprisingly, in spite of its porous qualities when woven, the mat of reeds is deemed unsusceptible to ritual uncleanness in BT Kelim 17:17. In the Koran Sura 16:92, a similar process is mentioned in the context of keeping oaths:

"And be not like unto her who unravels the thread, after she has made it strong, to thin filaments making your oaths a deceit between you ...".

It would appear that the unraveling of woven threads is an unacceptable ritual of release from oaths in this period. This reference also may be read as an important parallel to the ritual in Šurpu V/VI:144-171. It is probable that the patient of Šurpu was aware of the ritual uses and symbolism of this agent.

3.2.1.4 Intrinsic Power of Animal Agents

Šurpu I:20-22; II:115; III:68, 120; V/VI:93-122.

The last three ritual agents of the rite of desquamation assume the intrinsic power of animal products and by-products. The use of parts of animals in ritual and magical contexts is cross-culturally well founded.⁴⁹ The agent itself carries the potency and symbolism of that specific animal. The laws of sympathetic magic recognize that animals have an external soul.⁵⁰ Parts of their bodies carry this potency and can be used without causing harm to the animal or danger to the practitioner.⁵¹

Moreover, throughout the ancient world, particular human characteristics, powers, and skills were attributed to animals.⁵² Animals, both in toto and in pars, were used in rituals for their symbolic representation of humans and their conditions. For example, sexual potency is one among several characteristics attributed to most of the "domesticated" and wild animals which were used ritually.⁵³ It was common to weave yarns from the fibers of particular animals to create a given magical effect, as seen in a ritual text where the hair tufts of a spring lamb, a ram's rear, and a female virgin kid are spun together.⁵⁴

What is significant for our purposes is that animals and their by-products are mentioned as the agents of rites of release and desquamation accompanying the act of confession. In our context, these tufts and threads are ritually unravelled, guided by the notion that both in form and substance they can offer the patient release. Their animal origins and innate properties function to amplify their power as ritual agents.

3.2.1.5 Flock of Wool (šipat itqi)

Šurpu I:20b; V/VI:93-102.

Wool as an agent of absorption is universal. Thus, wool was used for medicinal purposes in the preparation and application of unguents.⁵⁵ In magic, it was most often used as a wrapping for an apotropaic amulet carrying curative agents: around the neck, on the forehead, and around the finger.⁵⁶

A normal process in the preparation of wool for use in making materials is "carding." This mundane action is translated into a symbolic gesture in our context using the verb napāšu, best translated as "unravel."⁵⁷ In our text, this action of carding wool is semiotically related to the removal of sin and the release from the binding nature of transgression. At the same time, the natural properties of wool permit the miasma to be absorbed symbolically.

3.2.1.6 Goat's Hair (šarat enzi)

Šurpu I:21a; V/VI:103-112.

The goat capra hircus (wild) mambrica and any of its

by-products, especially its hair, are cross-culturally a symbol of ritual potency. The identical combination of agents is used for its powerful absorptive qualities in a different manner in this Utukkū Lemnūtu: "wrap wool around the hair of a black goat... ." ⁵⁸ This sympathetic relationship can be seen in one particular magical rite, where goat's hair is considered a substitute for the goat itself. ⁵⁹

The goat is a prominent sacrificial victim in most Middle Eastern cultures. In the Bible, the he-goat buck (šē'îr) appears as victim in virtually all forms of sacrifice as a sin offering: at new moon (Num. 28:15), during Pēsah (Num. 28:22-24), during Šābū'ôt (Num. 28:30), at the Rōš Hāšānāh (Num. 29:5), and during Sūkôt (Num. 29:16,19). In Ugaritic literature, the mountain goat (ʿz) appears in a Temple provisions text: "in the ... sacrifice a single goat (ʿzm)." ⁶⁰ In the Epic of Ba'al and Anat, wild mountain goats (y'lm) are offered: "slaughter seventy wild goats." ⁶¹ The horn of the y'l is also a component in the sacred composite bow of Aqhat. ⁶²

The distinctive feature of the goat is its black beard. ⁶³ Due to this "human" characteristic, magical and mystical associations with the goat and its hair are many. The use of the hair in ritual contexts is widespread. In I Sam. 19:13-16, goat's hair appears in a ruse: "And Mikhal took the terāpîm, and laid them on the bed, and put the pillow of goat's hair at its head and covered it with a cloth." Goat hair woven into curtains becomes one of the main components of the tabernacle. Visually, there must have been some attraction to the black color of the goat hair offset by the red-dyed rams' skins in this ritual construction. ⁶⁴ We see

this same desire to contrast black and red in Šurpu.⁶⁵ Hittite scapegoat rituals include a wreath of multicolored, twined wool placed on the victim's head, with black and red among the colors.⁶⁶

In spite of the frequent appearance of goat hair in rituals, its use in literary contexts remains an unclear symbol. The relationship between the goat, its hair, and our text is manifested, but unresolved: "the Māmītu -(demon) had a goat's head, the hands and feet of a man."⁶⁷ A literary reference to the anger of Nabu duplicates our ritual action, but sheds little additional light: "who plucked apart the mountain (region) like goat hair."⁶⁸ However, the permanence of the act of removing hair may be the guiding symbol behind all uses of this animal by-product in Šurpu: "As this goat's hair is plucked apart...which [will not return] onto its goat."⁶⁹

3.2.1.7 Red Wool (širpu)

Šurpu I:21b; V/VI:113-122.

The virtues of the color red distinguish this agent from the "flock of wool" (šipat itqi) in Šurpu I:20b. The primal power of red, for good or evil, may well be a sympathetic association and transference from the redness of blood, possibly the blood of sacrifice.⁷⁰ Red, which symbolized the sinister forces, eventually became understood as a potent apotropaic and antidemonic.⁷¹ In the historical annals of the kings, the sign of evil threat and prowess in battle, kīma nabašši "as red as dyed wool," is made toward the enemy.⁷² However, red wool was also used in the treatment of the

eye and head.⁷³ The powerful connotations of red are seen in literary and magical contexts.

In the Bible, the symbolism surrounding Esau's birth (Gen. 25:25) and life (Gen. 25:30) involves red as a sign of the "inferior" twin. As noted above, red was used as a dye for many of the furnishings of the tabernacle.⁷⁴ One of the unresolved mysteries of the Biblical sacrifice is the expiatory rite of the red heifer (Num. 19). The tribe of Judah may well be under the protection of red, as extrapolated from Jacob's benediction.⁷⁵

In Ugaritic literature red is seen as a protective preparation for two ritual activities. Paghat avenges the death of her brother Aqht and thus prepares for battle: "in the sea she bathes and stains herself red with murex (brandaris) (wtdm tid!m bglpy)." ⁷⁶ Lustration, followed by the use of red rouge, also serves as an apotropaic preceding ritual slaughter: "then he washed and rouged himself (wyadm), he washed from hand to elbow, from his fingers up to the shoulder."⁷⁷

We might suppose that visually Šurpu I utilizes white wool and red wool. The notion of human change, and the ability to remove stain physically, seems correlated cross-culturally with the contrasting colors red and white.⁷⁸ In Isa. 1:18, red is synonymous with sin: "Though your sins be like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be white as wool." An Akkadian reference uses the color red as an image: "until the red color becomes white (and) the white becomes the color red."⁷⁹ The Biblical mind, however, utilizes this image⁸⁰ in a literary context which speculates about human change.

3.2.2 Process of Purification, Lustration, and

Expiation: Water

Šurpu I:4, 6, 13; IV:80; V/VI:179-181, 187-199;
VII:80-83; VIII:6-9, 43, 83-90 and IX.

See Section 4.5.14 for Egyptian parallels.

Water appears as both a ritual agent and an ethical parameter in the Šurpu. In ritual contexts water is an agent of purification, lustration, and expiation. As a parameter, water is viewed as a sacred component of the universe which must not be abused or polluted.⁸¹ Like all aspects of the sacred, water has both its attractive, positive attributes and its negative, dangerous aspects.⁸²

In Šurpu I:4, 6, and 13, water is sprinkled as a purifying ablution, preparing the patient for each rising stage of the ritual. This process of preparation is emphasized through specific water incantations, which are indicated for recitation by the attending priest.⁸³ Šurpu VIII:83-85 completes the tablet with images of ritual lustrations.

The body of Šurpu IX describes various plants used together with waters for the lustration, purification, and expiation of the patient. Individual sections of the body are washed from head to toe. The dramatic illusion of the tree (representing the ritual plants) from its top to its roots reinforces the images of purity.⁸⁴ The end of Šurpu IX:119-128 establishes the purity of the mountains as the source of flowing waters.⁸⁵

In Šurpu V/VI:173-186, water is used to end the ritual actions and the tablet by extinguishing the fires. The dramatic illusion is extended through projecting the image of these waters cooling the anger of the gods in Šurpu V/VI:187-199.

Šurpu VII:80-83 vividly expresses the ritual lustration of the patient as a form of expiation:

"(Thus) may this man, son of his god, become pure, clean, resplendent, may he be washed (clean) like an alabastron, may he be scoured (clean) like a jar for butter."

Water is the universal agent of purification. Cross-culturally, ablutions and lustrations are the most prominent forms of ritual use of water. However, the sprinkling of token amounts of water is also well attested.⁸⁶ It should be noted that a related ritual to Šurpu is referred to as Bīt salā' mē, "The House of Sprinkling," which like Bīt Rimki, was used for the general purification of the patient.⁸⁷

Water had the power to alter the physical and spiritual condition of the suppliant. Here an incantation invokes water as a ritual agent in the hope of "appeasing the wrath of the god":

"I am feeble, my fear is much. May the earth, which received (it), draw my fear to the Apsu, May the turbulent (waters) receive my fears, May [smooth] (waters) receive (them) from me, May [well ordered] (waters) permanently change places with me. [May it draw] the iniquity of the irreverent [(and take it)] before you." 88

The function of water in Šurpu and in Biblical rituals is frequently similar. The purification of the Levites was

accomplished by first a symbolic and then full ritual bath: "So shall you do to them, to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purifying on them... and let them wash their clothes and cleanse themselves."⁸⁹ Ezek. 36:25 expresses a similar ritual function in poetic form. Water together with hyssop are used over a seven-day period in the purifications following a death.⁹⁰

In Šurpu, water is used to establish the ritual place of the altar. However, in Israelite religion this was accomplished through the use of sacrificial animal blood. The 'āšām (the guilt) and the 'ôlāh (the burnt) and the šelēmim (the complete) offerings seem most closely related to the preparation of the altar with a ritual liquid: "... and its blood shall be sprinkled round about the altar."⁹¹

Water libations are poured as a symbol of expiation for sin: "And they gathered together to Mizpa and drew water, and poured it out to the Lord and fasted on that day, and said there 'We have sinned against the Lord'."⁹² This phrase may well be the origin in Israelite and later Jewish worship of a communal, ritual confession. For our immediate purposes the fact that cross-culturally water and confession are related is significant. This should be compared to the Bīt Rimki ritual of bathing. A medieval Rabbinic manifestation of the same practice can be seen in the Tašlîk ceremony conducted near a body of water on the afternoon of ROŠ Hāšānāh.⁹³

3.2.3 Process of Enclosure: Magic Circle (zisurrû)

Šurpu I:3; III:127.

The process of enclosure is one of the first actions in the ritual of Šurpu I. In this context, the substance used to create the magic circle is flour, probably due to its absorptive qualities. Later, in Šurpu III:127, we read the religious parameter: "to go down into a magic circle at sunlight."⁹⁴ In both cases, the process of enclosure is the means of setting the context of ritual action.

The magic circle (zisurrû) is the universal means of setting the ritual action apart from the secular realm of operation. This simple action closes out foreign, undesirable forces and powers, thus delineating the sacred space.⁹⁵ It also concentrates the positive powers, not permitting them to stray during the ritual. It, in a literal sense, claims or acquires this given space for the forces of good.⁹⁶

The use of flour as the agent in the process of enclosure is common in Akkadian ritual preparations: "I surrounded them (the figurines) with a magic circle (made) of barley flour, (which is under the protection of) the curse pronounced by the great gods."⁹⁷ In another ritual context, the flour selected for use in construing a magic circle is convoked in solemn prayer: "your flour represents the magic circle."⁹⁸ As an apotropaic action against evil incursions we hear: "I have surrounded you with a magic flour circle, be (therefore) conjured, be surrounded completely!"⁹⁹ Flour is also heaped on the perimeters of a ritual as a means of setting the action apart.¹⁰⁰

The act of "surrounding" (lamû) constitutes a central step in the "gestures of approach" to and enclosure of the holy.¹⁰¹ Without these precautions the power of the sacred might "burst out" and become dangerous, if not life threatening.¹⁰² Danger and fear accompany ritual gestures of approach and so we hear: "he took the oath of Šamaš because he despised the magic circle."¹⁰³

In Mesopotamia, as in other cultures, the magic circle serves as the fundamental apotropaic against evil intrusion: "(the demons) who attempt an attack(?) against the magic circle made of barley flour."¹⁰⁴ The opening or breaking of the circle marks the end of the ritual action: "as soon as the ritual has come to a standstill and its 'circle' has been opened."¹⁰⁵

In AKKadian, the verb lamû "to surround" is used in a ritualized sense, both in medicine and magic.¹⁰⁶ The patient can be circumscribed with various substances including flour (as in our text), salt, and sand: "you surround the sides of the reed mat with (a ridge of) sand."¹⁰⁷ In the act of healing, the bed is circumambulated three times.¹⁰⁸

Circumambulation is a popular method of delineating a crucial area.¹⁰⁹ AKKadian sahāru literally means "to encircle" and one of its common derived meanings is "to go to a shrine to worship."¹¹⁰ The act of circumambulating an altar and thereby sanctifying the place is attested in Ps. 26:6. In Josh. 6:1-21, the Israelite procession conducted around the walls of Canaanite Jericho recognizes the cross-cultural power of the magic circle.¹¹¹

3.2.4 Process of Absorption: Flour

Šurpu I:10-11, 22-23; V/VI:123-129, 130-143;
VII:54-59; VIII:47,49,55.

The process of absorption underlies the use of flour throughout the Šurpu ritual. Flour (upuntu) symbolically and empirically possesses absorptive qualities. In general, salt is another common agent with distinctive absorptive qualities. Flour, however, appears as a ritual agent in the main ritual of Šurpu I and in other minor rituals later in the series. In each case flour performs the same function.

In Šurpu I, flour appears as a porous agent which heightens the efficacy of the magic circle. The patient also scatters the flour on himself and the Āšipu wipes off the patient with the flour. The flour's absorptive properties capture the pollution of the patient. Through the law of contagion, within the principle of sympathetic magic, atonement is achieved through the flour being burned.¹¹² In Šurpu I:10-11, 22-23, the flour together with the pollution it carries is cast in the fire, providing dramatic expiation for the patient. Later in the series, in Šurpu V/VI:123-129, 130-143, flour yet again appears symbolically, absorbing the personal miasma and frustrations of the patient.

In Akkadian texts, figures and circles are also drawn with flour (upuntu). This particular kind of flour was coarse and inexpensive and therefore suitable for liberal ritual offerings and use.¹¹³

Throughout the Maqlû text figurines of flour and dough are

used in sympathetic magic rituals of release.¹¹⁴ An interesting synthesis of the rituals in our text and that of the Maqlû can be read in CAD L, 216a-b sub līṣu : "you rub dough of emmer and ... -flour on the body of the man and make a figurine of it."¹¹⁵ Pictures of evil are also drawn with flour in the hopes of attracting the evil.¹¹⁶

This "coarse flour" is used throughout the Šurpu given its availability and its layers of symbolic and mechanical function.

3.2.4.1 Process of Extergation: Flour

Šurpu I:11, 16, 22-23; VII:54-59.

The "wiping off or down" of the patient with flour appears several times in the Šurpu rituals. This act of extergation is founded on the principle and process of absorption. Twice in Šurpu I the patient is extergated and the flour is burned. A parallel and more extensive ritual is to be seen later in the series.

In Šurpu VII:54-59, a ritual is introduced which utilized the absorptive qualities of the same coarse flour, yet now in the form of expiatory loaves:

"Take seven loaves of pure coarse flour,
string (them) on a bronze skewer,
cap them with a bead of carnelian,
wipe (with it) this man, son of his god,
whom an 'oath' has seized."

The formulaic phrase which dominates the catalogue of parameters in Šurpu VIII:47-82 emphasizes the importance of extergation in the dramatic therapeutic language of the text: "be released for you, be absolved for you, be wiped off you."

Flour, dough (līšū), and bread itself are the most common agents used with the term kapāru "to wipe off" in ritual contexts: "wipe that man with bread (and) dough"¹¹⁷ and "the bread with which they wiped your body."¹¹⁸ In an Utukkū lemnūtu, flour is used as an apotropaic barrier against evil, through wiping the face (55:40) and the body (57:31') with this act as the climax: "the dough with which you have rubbed his body (may be eaten)."¹¹⁹ In this same text, "wheat flour" is described as ikkibu to the gods, whereas "bitter corn" is prohibited to demons.¹²⁰ A ritual from Boghozköy uses full loaves to collect the pollution: "you wipe him seven times with seven dry loaves."¹²¹ Later in the same ritual, Nisaba as "deified flour" is praised for its "nature of dispelling the māmītu."¹²² In each case the absorptive properties of these flour products serve to purify and cleanse the patient.

A secondary function of wiping off with flour is that of rendering the patient "blanched and whitened." Even after significant efforts at wiping off, much residual flour remains on the body. Considering the fact that no ritual immersion is mentioned, we can assume that the patient functioned throughout the ritual drama in this full body "make-up."¹²³ This physical depiction of bodily purity serves to reinforce the patient's sense of recovery and absolution both at the beginning and end of the ritual drama. The use of flour brackets the major activities of this ritual.¹²⁴

3.2.5 Process of Immolation as Expiation: Fire

Šurpu I:16-23; V/VI:60-61, 71, 73-74, 81, 83-84, 91, 93-94, 101, 103-104, 111, 113-114, 121, 130, 141-142.

Burning or immolation is considered by some the central ritual action of the series, thus its name Šurpu "burning." It is certainly the climax of the ritual in Šurpu I. In Šurpu V/VI, the sympathetic dramatic illusion is that fire completely destroys the past as well as the future potential of the miasma to cause illness. However, the series utilizes other ritual processes to provide expiation for the patient, including: the use of water in Šurpu IV:80f. and VIII:83-90, the use of knot magic in Šurpu V/VI:144-171, expulsion to wilderness in Šurpu VII:63-68, extergation in Šurpu I:11, 23 and VIII:49f., and the use of purifying plants and water in Šurpu IX.

In Šurpu I:16-23, the process of immolation is the seal to the preceding rituals in the tablet. The patient is prepared for the central act of the drama. The Āšipu empowers and protects the patient through the recitation of an incantation ("An evil curse like the gallu -demon") and the transference of the six agents to the patient. In consecutive order the patient performs the appropriate action of desquamation and immolation on each of the six ritual agents. He thereby facilitates his own expiation and dramatizes his desired sense of release. There might be another interpretation underlying this more obvious meaning.

The act of immolation appears not only to carry the message of complete removal and expurgation of the miasma. The destruction of these agents also seems to intimate the denial of their use in the service of god and king. The ancient religious concept of do ut des seems to underlie this component of the ritual. Drawing information from Šurpu V/VI, the description of each of the six agents demonstrates their sacrificial function:

Šurpu V/VI

- 66 (onion) that will not be used for the meal
of god or king
- 76 (dates) that will not be used for the meal
of god or king
- 86 (matting) which will not be fit for a proper use
- 96 (wool) will not be used for the clothing
of god or king
- 106 (goat hair) whichfor a proper use
- 116 (red wool) will not be used for clothing
of god or king

The subtle threat to withhold the provisions of the gods seems to be an established component of the sacrificial system. This form of attracting divine attention, and the resultant "negotiation," seems also to have presented some risk of divine wrath.

In Egyptian Wisdom literature we hear Meri-Re threaten "every god who will not build" a part of his Sakkarah pyramid: "he shall have no bread, he shall have no sunshade, he shall not wash himself in a basin, he shall not smell the joint of meat, he shall not taste the leg of meat."¹²⁵ This may well be the meaning behind the ritual parameter in Šurpu II:74: "he promised in heart and by mouth but did not give." The finality of the act of burning makes it a vivid and lasting image that attracts and repels human emotions.

Notes to Section 3.2

1. Another possible term might be ecdysis, which describes the "stripping off," sloughing and renewal of the snakes skin.
2. Lev. 16:21.
3. Surpu 1:22-23. It seems as though flour was used again as the agent inspite of the lacuna.
4. J. V. Scheil, Une saison de fouilles à Sippar, MIFAO 1 (Cairo: 1902), p. 98 and Tz. Abusch, "Mesopotamian Anti-Witchcraft Literature: Texts and Studies Part I," JNES 33, 256 general emphasis on tripartite ritual actions.
5. See below, E. Reiner, JNES 15, 136:79f.
6. Cf. V. Turner, The Ritual Process, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 37 on "Classificatory Structure: Triads." Triads are one of the universally accepted ritual units.
7. See below section 3.2.1.2 "Dates."
8. Cf. Surpu V/VI:85.
9. Surpu V/VI:27-34.
10. Cf. E. Reiner, JNES 15, 129-49.
11. Cf. P. Jensen, ZA 2, 319; H. Zimmern, ZA 30, 188 n. 2 and J. Nougayrol, JCS 1, 329-36.
12. E. Reiner, JNES 15, 137:79-80; also 141:12'-14', 28'-30'.
13. E. Reiner, JNES 15, 139:101.
14. See R. Caplice, SANE 1/1, 17:36; 22:32, 64.

15. See M. Leach, Funk and Wagnall's Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Myth and Legend (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 441b.
16. Including: amuššu -bulb, ezizzu -bulb, zizu -bulb.
17. Cf. CAD A2, 112-13a, sub andahšu (c), ref. KUB 37 (Besch. rit.).
18. A. L. Oppenheim, AM, pp. 44 and 313.
19. See Gen. Rab., Wayiqaš 95:4 (Soncino Talmud, p. 884); MSV 95 (Soncino Talmud, p. 920) for the same idiom "stripped like an onion."
20. See Pliny, Historia Nat. 19:101.
21. Num. 11:5. Cf. BDB 1002b The relationship between the Hebrew šûmîm "garlics" and Akkadian šûmu "onion" should be noted.
22. See: H. G. Güterbock, "An Outline of the Hittite AN.TAH.ŠUM Festival" JNES 19, 80-89 and O. R. Gurney, Some Aspects of Hittite Religion, 31 who identifies this spring bulb as possibly crocus or saffron.
23. See D. H. Englehard, Hittite Magical Practices: An Analysis (Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 1970), pp. 122-24; KUB 29 (Besch. rit.) and A. Göetze, ANET 346a.
24. A. Göetze, trans. "Ritual for the Purification of God and Man;" ANET 346a.
25. Cf. GIŠ rašê "the tree of riches" CAD G, 102b, sub gišimmaru (a), ref. Hh. III (lex.= hubullu) and CT 18 (Malku III).
26. A. L. Oppenheim, AM, p. 312.
27. See H. Frankfort, Art; Pl. 218, 224.
28. Theod. 56-58; BWL 75.

29. Maqlû I:22.
30. See Ezek. 41:19f.
31. See R. Caplice, Or. NS 40, 143.
32. Maqlû IX:170.
33. BT , Ber. 57a.
34. BT , Sukk. 28a, BT , B. Bat. 134a.
35. See B. Landsberger, Date Palm , AfO Beih. 17; 21 n. 62.
36. Cf. Ahw. 869b, " Palmbast-Strick " and E. Reiner, JNES 15, 141:14'.
37. See BDB 836-37, v. "twist", n.m. "cord, thread (twisted)."
38. A. Götze, JCS 2, 165ff.
39. M. Held, "Two Philological Notes on Ēnuma Eliš ," Kramer Festschrift , pp. 236 and 237 n. 75 for other attestations of reeds in Creation epics; contra Heidel, ANET 61a "No reed hut had been matted, no marsh land had appeared."
40. See the geographical use of the terms zibnatum in CAD 2, 104a, sub zibnu and CAD H, 260a, sub hussu.
41. A. L. Oppenheim, AM , p. 319.
42. Cf. infra CAD synonymous references cited.
43. Cf. Maqlû II:172, IV:37 with burû.
44. CAD B, 339b-40a.
45. CAD I/J, 171a.

46. CAD K, 475b-76a.
47. See CAD S, 376a-b, sub suluppū (f) for other references.
48. E. Leichty, Izbu 162, 42.
49. M. Eliade, ed., Encyclopedia of Religion, (New York: MacMillan, 1987), Vol. I:291-92.
50. J. G. Frazer, GB, pp. 792-802.
51. J. G. Frazer, GB, p. 35.
52. See J. de Somogyi, "Magic in Ad-Damiri's Hayat al-Hayawan," JSS 3, 265-87 for a similar list and discussion of animal parts which persist in Near Eastern magical usage.
53. J. Campbell, The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology (Middlesex: Penguin, 1969), pp. 46-47; pp. 66-67.
54. CAD I/J, 300a, sub itqu (2b), ref. CT 23 (med.).
55. Cf. CAD I/J, 300a, sub itqu (2b), ref. AMT 99 (med.) and KAR 195 (incant. rit.) as a tampon.
56. Cf. CAD I/J, 299b-300a ref. repectively KMI 51 (med.); AMT 20 (med.); KAR 201 (rel.).
57. See CAD N1, 291a, sub napāšū B.
58. M. J. Geller, "A Middle Assyrian Tablet of Utukkū Lemnūtu Tab. 12," Iraq 42, 31:195'.
59. R. Caplice, Or. 36, 9:2f.
60. C. H. Gordon, UT, 1153:4.

61. I AB (62), ii 26.

62. 2 Aqht VI:22.

63. Cant. 4:1, traditionally the metaphor is interpreted as referring to the quantity of hair of the beloved, however most of the poetic images in the section elude to color.

64. Ex. 25:4; 35:6, 23.

65. Cf. M. J. Geller, Iraq 42, 30:135' for a ritual, hair twine composed of contrasting white and black thread; it should be noted to this date in Israeli-Palestinian Art these remain dominant colors used for contrast in folk art.

66. See O. R. Gurney, Some Aspects of Hittite Religion (Oxford: British Academy, 1977), pp. 48-49. Also see E. Laroche, Catalogue des Textes Hittites (Paris: Klincksieck, 1971), No. 40.

67. Cf. CAD E, 182b, sub enzu, ref. ZA 43, 16:47 (lit.).

68. W. G. Lambert, Studies Albright, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), p. 345 r.3.

69. Surpu U/VI:103-05; this same notion operates for all the agents, once extracted and burned they can not return to their original state.

70. J. Trachtenberg, Magic, p. 135. Cf. da'mu "dark colored, dark red" CAD D 74-75.

71. See M. J. Geller, Iraq 42, 77 The most common form of make-up was red pigment made from hematite.

72. CAD §, 104-05, sub ṣarāpu B.

73. CAD I/J, 300a, sub itqu (2b).

74. Ex. 25:5; 26:14.

75. Cf. Gen. 49:12; 8-12.

76. I D 203-04; cf. Nah. 2:4 suggests red as a battle color.
77. I K iii 156-58.
78. Cf. V. Turner, The Ritual Process (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 39 and 123 red and white are frequently in polar, binary opposition.
79. CAD S, 209a, sub sirpu A, ref. CI 23 (med.).
80. Cf. Jer. 13:23.
81. Cf. Surpu III:31, 51, 57, 62-67. See J. Lundquist, "Studies on the Temple in the Ancient Near East," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1983), pp. 70-73 for a discussion of the significance of the primordial waters for rituals.
82. Cf. Surpu III:47-49; IV:29; VIII:53-54 water carriers and related equipment are representative of the patient's vulnerability in travel.
83. Cf. Surpu VIII:43 hints at a special day for ritual illustrations "the day of the washing (ritual)."
84. Cf. Surpu IX:1-8.
85. Cf. This correlation is drawn throughout the text as in Surpu III:65-67; V/VI:188-90; VIII:39-40.
86. See M. J. Geller, Iraq 42, 30:146-47 "sprinkle water over that man." Also see R. Caplice, Or. 39, 137:6 and CAD N1, 76a, sub nadû (1 b5').
87. See J. Læssøe, Studies on the Assyrian Ritual and Series bit rimki (Kopenhagen: Munksgaard, 1955), pp. 19-20 for full references and the possible interaction of these various incantations and unpublished texts mentioned in E. Reiner, Surpu, p. 3.
88. W. G. Lambert, "DINGIR.^{SA}.DIB.BA Incantations," JNES 33, 277:56-61.
89. Num. 8:7.

90. Num. 19:18-22.
91. Lev. 7:2 and Ex. 29:16; Lev. 1:5ff. and Lev. 3:1ff.
92. I Sam. 7:6.
93. This ritual was probably instituted by Rabbi Jacob Moellin (the Maharil 1355-1427) see J. Z. Lauterbach, Rabbinic Essays (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1951), p. 433f.
94. Sunrise was considered prime ritual time in Ancient religions. See A. L. Oppenheim, AM, p. 225 and Th. Jacobsen, The Treasures of Darkness (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), p. 204. See also notes to 3.1, n. 83 and section 3.1.4.
95. See M. Eliade, Patterns, pp. 371-73.
96. See Th. Gaster, Legends, p. 257, para. 104.
97. CAD Z, 138a, sub zissurrû (b), ref. AfO 14 (bīt mēsirī); "curse" here refers to māmitu.
98. CAD G, 101b (lex.section), sub gišhuru, ref. AfO 11.
99. CAD L, 76a, sub lamû (7), ref. 4R 58 (Lamaštu).
100. Cf. R. Caplice, Or. 36, 30.
101. Cf. M. Eliade, Patterns, p. 370.
102. Cf. For extensive preparations Ex. 19:10-17; 22-23 "set bounds about the mountain and sanctify it" and for a disastrous, unprepared, spontaneous approach 2 Sam. 6:6-8.
103. W. G. Lambert, Iraq 27, 7 r. iv:25. Cf. 2 Sam. 6:9-11.
104. CAD Z, 138b, sub zissurrû (b), ref. CT 17 (incant.).
105. CAD K, 399a, sub Kippatu (2b), ref. BMS 12 (Šu.ila).

106. See CAD L, 72b, sub lamû (2b) and Ahw. 541-42 lawûm , lamû . Cf. E. Reiner, Surpu , p. 61 n. 87.
107. See CAD L, 72b, sub lamû (2c), ref. RAcc. 10 (Kalu rit.). See also J. G. Frazer GB (3rd ed., 1935), Vol. II:331 for the use of salt as a barrier to evil and Maqlû IX:124 surrounding with wool. For some of the underlying symbolism of salt in rituals see M. Stol, "Cress and its Mustard," JEOL 28, pp. 30-31, p. 30 n. 56 and p. 32 n. 71 and 72.
108. CAD L, 70b, sub lamû , ref. ZA 45, 42 (NA rit.).
109. See Th. Gaster, Thespis , p. 193 n. XL 107. Cf. CAD L, 70b, sub lamû , ref. ZA 45, 42 (NA rit.).
110. See Ahw. 1005-008.
111. Cf. CAD L, 74b, sub lamû (4,3'), ref. ARM 1 131 (1et.) where a seige is accomplished in seven days. For more references to the magic circle see Th. Gaster, Legends , para. 257 notes p. 842 and H. Zimmern, ZA 30, 216 n. 2.
112. Cf. J. G. Frazer, GB , pp. 14f.
113. Cf. Ahw. 1426a, sub upumtum, upuntu , "ein Mehlauch für opfer."
114. Cf. Maqlû 11:125; IV:41; IX:185.
115. Ref. KAR 92:9 (incant. rit.).
116. See M. J. Geller, Iraq 42, 30:113'.
117. CAD K, 178a (lex. section), sub kapāru , ref. CT 17 11 (incant.).
118. Ibid. CT 17 33 (incan.).
119. E. E. Knudson, "An Incantation Tablet from Nimrud," Iraq 21, 60:34'-41'.

120. E. E. Knudson, "An Incantation Tablet from Nimrud," Iraq 21, 59:27'-28'.

121. CAD K, 179a, sub Kapāru, ref. ZA 45, 202 ii 20 (Bog. rit.).

122. Ibid.; ref. ZA 45, 202 ii 27 (Bog. rit.).

123. Cf. R. Caplice, Or. 39, 138:29 "you annoint him with gypsum and dried bitumen" and Ahw. 1426a, sub upumtum, upuntu, "sculte er hin" Hem. 178:36.

124. Cf. Šurpu 1:22-23.

125. "Curses and Threats;" ANET 327b.

3.3 Theological Parameters

This selection of parameters surveys some of the major issues which defined the relationship between the divine and human realms. The Šurpu series carries with it a particular theological view and set of assumptions when attempting to influence the gods. Likewise, several of the parameters indicate the divine expectations of human conduct. When read together with cross-references from Belles Lettres literature, the theological perspective of Šurpu becomes accessible to the modern reader.

3.3.1 Human Posture of Innocence

Šurpu II:32-34; III:150.

The posture of the patient before the gods is innocence throughout the Šurpu series. Divine sympathy is sought through a theological stance that assumes the gods' concern for an honest, erring human. The catalogues list both transgressions of commission and omission. However, the lists are recited under the guiding assumption that the patient is honestly unaware of the nature of his sin. The plethora and variety of the sins mentioned removes some of the impact of the particular transgression on the patient. Ignorance of the socioreligious parameters did not exempt one from responsibility to the gods and man.

This is a rare insight into the faith of the Ancients. Šurpu II:32 sets out the belief system which underlies the Šurpu

confessionals:

"He does not know what is a crime (šerti) against the god,
he does not know what is a sin (ennit) against the goddess.
He scorned the god, despised the goddess,
his sins (arnūšu) are against his god,
his crimes (qillassu) are against his goddess."

Causality is the fundamental religious belief of this ritual text. Ritual, ethical or theological transgressions have brought emotional and physical crisis to the patient's life. The ethical intentions of the patient were less important than the actions he has taken. The task of this confession is to discover, reveal, and then confess the action or actions which placed the patient in a desperate position vis a' vis the gods. This phrase forms an ethical and literary merism. Transgression has been committed passively and actively. This formulaic statement sets the tone of complete confession and catharsis.

A similar assertion appears as a closure to the confessions of Tablet III in Šurpu III:150: "the 'oath' (māmītu) he knows or does not know." Here, the nature of the ethical search in the series becomes more clear. This is a stock phrase for confession in ritual texts: annu īdû lā īdû ēteppuš anā(ku) "I committed sins, knowingly or unknowingly."¹

A critical question as to the functioning of the system of causality within ancient Near East religions needs to be raised. How does the individual know he has transgressed if he is unable to determine his sin? To the modern's understanding, an internal contradiction is evident between the posture of innocence and the search for the specific damaging transgression.

The key to this difficult question is found within the corollaries of the doctrine of Reward and Punishment. Health and well-being were universally recognized as a reward of the gods.² Several citations from within the Šurpu text amplify this theological perspective, attributing to several gods the powers over human health. In Šurpu IV:89-108, a pantheon of twenty-one gods are petitioned according to their varied healing functions. Marduk carries his attributed title of "lord of life" in Šurpu VIII:88, as in other Akkadian texts.³ This theological understanding is found in Mesopotamian literature: "(the goddess Gula) whose mere looking (at a person) spells good health and whose turning to (a person), well-being;"⁴ and "may he give me the gift of long life (balātum dārâ)."⁵ The verb sahāru is used idiomatically to express "turning toward with favor to," thereby transmitting good health and fortune.⁶ Praise is directed toward Ištar in "The Great Prayer to Ištar:" wherever you look with favor, the dying gets well, the sick gets up."⁷

Sickness was considered a punishment of the gods: "may they (the gods) order that his life (last) not a day (longer)."⁸ The Mesopotamian knew well that the divine sources of well-being were also the potential causes for illness and death: "may those (deities) who establish the fate of life deny him life."⁹ The answer now becomes more clear. The patient's psycho-physiological condition was a self-indicator of the degree of accumulated transgression and resultant divine disapproval. The simplest form of self-examination permitted the patient to determine his standing with the gods, based upon his physical, emotional, and social

stability. This method is evident in the direct correlation drawn between the posture of innocence, the search, and physical suffering in the DINGIR.ŠA.DIB.BA Incantations: "Drive out from my body illness from known and unknown iniquity."¹⁰

This view is also described in Biblical religion: "But it pleased the Lord to crush him by disease: if his soul shall consider it a recompense for guilt, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days..."¹¹ Here the fundamental rule is expressed and then interpreted. The illness is a warning and punishment from God, and it can be taken as an atonement. The Belles Lettres literature operates on the premise that the gods use health as a tool of Reward and Punishment, however it also debates their ongoing validity. This debate is heard in the Book of Job in the dialogues between his friends.¹²

A survey of the Wisdom literature on this subject points toward the possibility that the theological starting point of Šurpu is informed by the perspective of the sufferer / suppliant so familiar in Mesopotamian literature. The catalyst for confession is the overwhelming sense of frustration over what appears to be unwarranted failures: "one who acknowledges no guilt rushes to his god."¹³ The lament of the guilt-ridden petitioner frequently uses this phraseology to project a tone of innocence and therefore reduced culpability:

"I unwittingly (lā Tdē) committed sacrileges
(anzil) against my goddess." 14

"I do not know what wrong (arnu) I have done." ¹⁵

"I do not know the sin (arni) that I have committed (ša ugallilu)." ¹⁶

"I do not know my sins (gellātiša), which are numerous." ¹⁷

The patient is held responsible for those parameters which he is not cognizant of having transgressed. The very enunciation of such an inclusio reveals the sense of intensive searching for the cause of the patient's ills that is involved in the Šurpu texts: "The first thing incumbent upon the priest was to discover what the patient had done to merit punishment by superior powers." ¹⁸ The lengthy catalogues facilitate the search as well as the moral education of all those involved. The affirmation of ignorance was synonymous with innocence and a central component in the total purification and release of the patient. ¹⁹

The final stage in such an argument from innocence might well be: ilī ul īdi šēretka dannat "O my god, I do not understand why your punishment is so heavy." ²⁰

3.3.2 Sin and Transgression

Sin and transgression are the essential concerns of Šurpu. If it were not for the strong theological belief in sin and its emotional-psychological power over the Mesopotamian, the Šurpu and other such rituals would have had little meaning and use. The centrality of this concept in Mesopotamian religion and culture is seen in ritual and literature. Šurpu is very explicit in its references, educating the patient in this theological principle.

In Šurpu II:32-34, four terms are used to express the varied forms of transgression that might be involved in any given case: "crime" šertu, "sin" ennetu, "sin" arnu, "crime" gillatu.²¹ The listing of these terms in series is common to Šurpu, but the order does not seem fixed:

"May the record of his sins (arnišu), errors (hitātišu), crimes (gillātišu), oaths (māmātišu) (all) that is sworn, be thrown into the water." 22

The Lipšur litanies use the same catalogue. Note, however, the differences in Professor Reiner's translation of the terms hitātuša and māmātušu between the two texts:

"may his sins (arnūšu) be absolved, his offenses (hitātuša) wiped out, his crimes (gillātušu) washed off, his curses (māmātušu) absolved, 23 his pains (maršūšu) driven out."

The weight of these forms of transgression create a cumulative sense of physical, as well as emotional illness: "the illness of my sin (arni), transgression (šerti), crime (gillati), error (hititi)."²⁴

When such catalogues of terms are presented, the desired effect is one of completeness; the guiding assumption being that each term carries with it a different set of transgressions. This literary usage is apparent in a more legalized formula which closes Tablet II:

Šurpu II:187-192

"the sins (arnišu), the errors (hitātišu), the crimes (gillātišu), the [offences] (ennitišu), the [oaths] (māmātišu), may they [extirpate, may they ... , blot out, u[nd]o, may thy lift his oath (off him)]."

The severity of these acts can be sensed in the fact that their guilt is transmitted from generation to generation if not expiated appropriately: "she bears the guilt (for the wrongdoing) of her father"²⁵ and "my father has committed the offense (whose consequences affect) me."²⁶ This is among the greatest fears of the patient of Šurpu.

Sin was a frightening factor which spanned time and place in the life of the Mesopotamian. It was visualized as a material entity which had to be destroyed before the individual could proceed with living. Thus, confession alone was not sufficient to relieve the burden of transgression. The healing ritual actions of Tablet I and Tablets V/VI created a materialization of this theological concept and then removed it physically from the patient's body and mind.

3.3.3 Sins of Neglect

Šurpu II:11, 33; 73-80; VIII:81.

See Section 4.5.7.1 for Egyptian parallels.

The neglect of ritual obligations appears several times in Šurpu as a form of defiance in the face of divine authority. It is an act of verbal and physical neglect of the human obligation to serve the gods.

In reflecting upon Mesopotamian religion, the feeding and care of the gods was a regular feature.²⁷ So the mere act of overlooking or disregarding these rites was considered by the religious authorities active blasphemy. This is seen in the mythologic texts, as well as those of Belles Lettres literature: "the food offering must not be forgotten (lā immaša)."²⁸ In

Egyptian religion there is particular concern for this parameter.²⁹

Šurpu II:11 introduces the dual nature of neglecting the gods in a section listing verbal transgressions: "(who scorned (idāsu) his god), despised (imēšu) his goddess." The full dynamic of blasphemy underlying neglect can be seen in Šurpu II:73-80:

"because of all the contempt (imēšu) for the god and goddess,
because he promised in heart and by mouth but did not give,
omitted (imēšu) the name of his god in his incense-offering,
made the purifications, (then) complained and withheld (it)...
saved something (for the gods, but) ate it,
after he behaved arrogantly, he started to pray,
disarranged the altar that had been prepared,
made his god and his goddess angry with himself."

The main terms used to express the transgression of neglect are dāsu and mēšu. The verb dāsu and its derivatives seem to indicate a negative attitude and action. The usage indicates a verbalized disrespect similar to the literal meaning of the English term blasphemy (Grk. blaspheméo "to speak profanely").³⁰

Reiner's translation of mēšu varies from "despised," "have contempt for," and "omitted the name." Von Soden lists the term separately, indicating its distinct meaning to disregard, neglect ("missachten").³¹ In all cases this verb is used to indicate a purposefully lazy and lackadaisical attitude toward human or divine obligations, a sign of disrespect.³² Thus, the best translation of the term in Šurpu would be forms of "to despise," reflecting the theological rebellion in the act.³³

The verb mēšū was used to express human arrogance and hubris, arising from depression and frustration. This human emotion is explained as a psychological reaction to trauma: "In your anguish you blaspheme (tādaš) the god"³⁴ and "Like one who has grown torpid (imhu) and forgotten (imšū) his lord."³⁵ Verbalized blasphemy at a time of shock was the norm in Mesopotamian literature.³⁶ The author of Ludlul was aware of the various stages of theological disillusionment and resultant anger, as evidenced by his speaking as the third person observer in a literary unit in Tablet II:12-22.

In Mesopotamian literature, the transgression of neglect is not gratuitously perpetrated. It is a means of expressing one's anger over divine rejection. It also served to attract the interest of the gods in the worshipper's personal condition. In some periods there were legal implications to blaspheming the gods: "If a woman, whether the wife of a man or a daughter of a man utters blasphemy (šillata taqtibi)... ." ³⁷ In Šurpu, the concern is more with blasphemous acts of neglect.

In a catalogue of active, ritual infractions against the gods we see: "who in his negligence has despised the gods' rites (mēšunu imīšū)." ³⁸ This interesting turn of phrase seems to indicate that even a negligent is considered by the gods to be blasphemy. Another such glimpse into the religious worldview of the Ancients is seen in The Theodicy: "In your mind you have an urge to disregard the divine ordinances." ³⁹

These statements give us a composite profile of the religiously, rebellious soul. In a section devoted to an antisocial

outburst the sufferer says: "I will ignore (lumēš) my god's regulations and trample on his rights."⁴⁰

3.3.4 Divine Justice (The Characteristics)

Surpu II:129-133; VII:84-87.

See section 4.5.6.3 for Egyptian parallels.

One of the sources of the patient's anger and frustration is a faulty conceptual, theological approach toward the gods. The suppliant is mistaken in believing that human justice operates in the same way as divine causality. Cross-culturally, this anthropomorphism of divine justice is indicative of all ancient Near Eastern religions.

The literary image of deus otiosus expresses the human theological frustrations concerning the availability of divine logic: "...the plan of the gods is remote (nisi)" ⁴¹ and "The divine mind, like the center of the heavens, is remote (nesima)."⁴²

There is always the intimation that this knowledge is esoteric and thus available only to the few: nišī la landa "the masses do not know it" ⁴³ and "A brutish man does not know, nor does a fool understand this." ⁴⁴

The disruption in communication is caused by the human inability to see the situation in perspective and to understand divine logic:

Isa. 55:8-9

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." ⁴⁵

The references to divine justice in Šurpu are limited to descriptions of the characteristics of the divine order. However, they demonstrate the same gap heard in Wisdom literature between the human and the divine modes of operation. This accounts for the contradictory expressions of awe and anger over the reality between the divine and human interaction.

The individual's frustration rises with the sense of an existential and epistemological abyss between the divine and the human: "God is greater than man...(He) speaks once, yea twice, yet man perceives it not."⁴⁶

3.3.5 Witchcraft and Sorcery Šurpu 11:67-68; V/VI:129; VII:60/61; VIII:81.

Šurpu is more often than not referred to as a magical incantation, however, in its own time and culture, it was viewed as a normative religious practice. Throughout the text there are examples of ritual actions used on behalf of the patient's recovery which we would identify pejoratively as magic. The priest and patient would no doubt see it quite differently. It is important to bridge this gap of understanding if one is to achieve a meaningful interpretation of these frequent references to sympathetic magical procedures.

Any discussion of the phenomena of witchcraft and sorcery in the ancient Near East is complicated by the conceptual bias we moderns carry with us concerning magic.⁴⁷ The terms witchcraft and sorcery are used hereafter to describe the illicit, nonauthoritative use of sympathetic theories and methods independent of the

Temple-Palace domain. Ritual drama, visualization, and sympathetic magic express the normative procedures of the priests. Nevertheless, the notion of magic, particularly sympathetic magic, was central to the religious world of the ancient Mesopotamian.

What we moderns call "magic" includes both authorized sympathetic rituals and illicit practices of a fringe stratum of the society.⁴⁸ Sorcery, the private magic of unauthorized individuals, was a threat to the existing religious practices in every ancient society and thus was outlawed.⁴⁹

In contradistinction, the techniques and methods of sympathetic magic demonstrated in the Šurpu series and other such texts must have been considered "legitimate" and part of the mainstream, religious institutions of the time.⁵⁰ Thus, the term "magic" does not appropriately describe this acceptable form of ritual conduct. The positive function of sympathetic magical theories in the cult and the sympathetic magical procedures underlying the Šurpu rituals are respectively presented above in section 3.1 "Cultic Parameters" and section 3.2 "Ritual Parameters." Similar normative textual examples of sympathetically based rituals include, among others, Maqlû, Bīt Rimki, the Namburbi, and Utukkū Lemnūtu.

The actual techniques of priest and magician may have been the same. However, these "same" practices conducted by the wrong people in the wrong place were destructive to the order of religious society.⁵¹ The Temple functionaries and the people had a vested interest in preserving the borders between authorized and counterband sympathetic rituals.

Šurpu II:68 refers to unacceptable forms of magic: "he set his hand to sorcery and witchcraft (" ana kišpī u ruhē)." This reference follows several parameters in Šurpu II:64-67 which indicate the patient's attraction to esoterica and other forms of socially unacceptable behavior:

"who knows improper things (lā amrāti), has learned unseemly things (lā natāti), who has taken his stand with wickedness (limnūtim), transgressed the borderline of right (itē kittu), committed things that are not proper (lā banīta)."

These parameters are abstract in nature and do not distinctly point toward magical practices. Nevertheless, the tone of this section does intimate sacrilegious conduct.

Two different terms are used to express sorcery and witchcraft: kišpū and ruhū. Acts of sorcery are referred to by the term kišpū. This term may have some relationship to a root meaning to "eclipse" in Arabic Kasafa. This has led some scholars to relate this term to the use and preparation of herbs in magical potions.⁵² It should be noted that the Hebrew equivalent (Kešāpîm),

when translated in the LXX, is rendered pharmakon, whose primary meaning is "an enchanted potion, philtre," or "a charm, spell, enchantment." By derivation it comes to mean "a drug, a medicine."⁵³ Robertson Smith understood the term as referring to "shredded herbs."⁵⁴ Likewise within Mesopotamia, the term appears frequently with the use of herbs.⁵⁵ In general and specific it can be said that the term kišpū refers to the notion described in our culture as "black magic."⁵⁶ This simple distinction between legitimate and illicit practices from within the Mesopotamian

worldview cannot be drawn frequently enough.⁵⁷

Human saliva and other bodily by-products have since earliest times been the stock and trade of the powers of magicians.⁵⁸ The Lipšur litanies preserve a list of bodily by-products and their danger to human contact: "nail-pairings, (or) shavings from the armpit."⁵⁹ Kišpū practices, unlike any authorized religious ritual, often involved the use of spittle. Akkadian preserves this ancient perception in the term ruḫū or "spittle magic," which is the major synonym of Kišpū.⁶⁰ The Hittite term for magic, alwanzatar, like its Akkadian counterpart, is derived from a sign which refers to "spittle or mucous."⁶¹

Spittle magic appears prominently in the lists of factors which cause the patient grief throughout the Šurpu ritual. He calls for release from: "blasphemy against god and goddess, the evil (effect) of sorcery (kišpī), spittle, dirt, evil machinations."⁶² The end of Tablet VII preserves the title of an incantation which catalogues all of the "evil" bodily by-products which might be used against the patient in magical rites: "Incantation: Sneeze, ..., cough, slime, spittle, [foam]."⁶³

Another use of spittle with deep magical origins is the dramatic role this action plays in ritual cursing and rejection.⁶⁴ In Šurpu VII:60/61, spittle is used in an authorized, though ancient traditional ritual of rejection: "have him spit upon (the dirt) wiped off him." It should be noted that Biblical religion preserves this use of spitting as a ritualized action of formal rejection, which eventually becomes a literary image.⁶⁵ The rites of ḥālišāh within the laws of levirate marriage represent a

formalized acceptance of this magical practice into a legal formula.⁶⁶ However, spittle magic as such does not appear in Israelite practice or Biblical literature. During the Roman occupation of Israel, spittle magic and healing in particular reappear in Rabbinic literature,⁶⁷ early Christian healing,⁶⁸ and Rabbinic lore⁶⁹ referring to the use of spittle in response to eye ailments.

Knot magic is another technique which appears in Šurpu U/VI:144-171. Both symbolically and visually a knot binds and can be used to confound good or evil forces.⁷⁰ The knowledge of knots, usually the magical art of a woman, is a powerful and feared form of sympathetic magic.⁷¹ This universal form of magic is demonstrated by two women, IŠtar and Uttu. The ritual is here one of release, where the women prepare the multi-colored twine which Marduk breaks, thereby freeing the patient from all suffering and magic.⁷² As with spittle magic, knot magic reappeared during the Second Temple period. Rabbinic literature makes frequent references to the popular fears of being bound by knots and their potent magic.⁷³

Having defined the nature of witchcraft in Šurpu and the ancient world, we now turn to the practitioners of illicit magic in Mesopotamia. The practice of sorcery and witchcraft is theologically and ethically threatening to the order of Temple and society. Moreover, the parameter of sorcery is mentioned in several of the Mesopotamian law codes as illegal and punishable.⁷⁴ These legal references show interest in the practitioners and their sex. This concern is also evident in Šurpu.

Šurpu U/VI:17-35 invests male gods with the aegis of the

magical arts in Mesopotamia. Ea is mentioned here, and elsewhere in Mesopotamian literature, as the possessor of the primal knowledge of exorcism and magical practice.⁷⁵ Marduk inherits this legacy and magical knowledge. However, when dealing with the illicit magical arts cross-culturally there is a preference for female leadership. Indicative of this tendency, in Šurpu V/VI:144-163 incantations and rituals, the concoctions are prepared by an old woman prefigured as the image of Uttu.⁷⁶ This points to the vestigial memory of their magical potency and legitimate position within society and probably dates back to primal cultural memories of the centrality of the woman during the Neolithic revolution.⁷⁷ However, there remains a traditional and cross-cultural fear of female forms of magic.⁷⁸

There is also a tendency cross-culturally and in Mesopotamia to isolate the magical practices of women, while authorizing and centralizing the magical powers of men into the established priesthood.⁷⁹ Because of the negative connotation of the role of women in magical practices, it, is noteworthy that the official domain of conjuration and magic tended to be associated with male gods.

The Biblical law codes also share the cross-cultural imperative to indicate the sexual identity of the magical practitioner. In Ex. 22:17, only the female practitioner is cited: "You shall not suffer a witch (mekašēpāh) to live." Here the question is no longer the nature of the activity or the specific social stratum, but rather the sexual designation of the magician. As the idea developed against magical practices in the male

dominated circles of organized religion, the witch or sorceress became the paradigm for all illegal magic. The phraseology and inclusive language ("also") of Lev. 20:27 demonstrates an assumption about the central place the woman holds concerning magic:

"A man also or a woman that is a medium
(ʾōb) or a wizard (yidʿōniy),
shall surely be put to death: they shall
stone them: their blood shall be upon them." ⁸⁰

The majority of the references from within the cultural milieu of the Bible refer with both deference and fear to the witch and her powers. ⁸¹ Izevel of 2 Kings 9:22 and the medium (baʿalat-ʾōb) of Endor in I Sam. 28:8f. are among the classic examples which reflect the universal concept of the woman as the master magician.

In Ezek. 13:17-23, the woman is described as the consummate magician whose sympathetic rituals are seen as a moral threat as much as a sin against normative religion. Biblical literature at this point no longer made a distinction between kinds of magic (black or white), but saw all of these activities as a threat to the order of society. In addition, the existence of authorized or unauthorized magical services within Israelite society was in theological conflict with monotheism. ⁸² These polemics in the Bible are also directed against the Mesopotamian experience and serve to clarify the relative tolerance of Mesopotamian culture's definition of acceptable magical practices. In both cultures, however, the woman becomes the symbol of illicit magic.

Surpu presents a fine catalogue of some of the ritual dramas and procedures in the priest's repertoire. Likewise, it clearly draws distinctions between the acceptable forms of sympathetic magic and the illicit forms which contribute to the patient's suffering. In such a controversial area, this serves to educate the patient as well as the modern the modern reader.

Notes to Section 3.3

1. CAD E, 203b, sub epēšu (2c c'), ref. KAR 45 (penit. psalm).
See also Maqlû 1:25-26 for a posture of innocence.
2. Cf. E. Reiner who describes the nature of ritual texts in JNES 19, 31 "private consultations concerning the recovery of the sick."
3. Cf. Surpu II:174 which possibly refers to another protecting healer.
4. CAD B, 46b, sub balātu (1a), ref. STT 73 (omena).
5. CAD B, 47b, sub balātu (1b), ref. YOS 1 45 (Nbn.).
6. See CAD S, 53a, sub sahāru (16b).
7. E. Reiner, and H. G. Güterbock, JCS 21, 261:40; cf. 262:Bo rev. 3'.
8. CAD B, 51a, sub balātu (2a), ref. BBSt. No.2,9 ('Kudurru).
9. Ibid. MDP 6 10 (personal votary).
10. W. G. Lambert, JNES 33, 281:114.
11. Isa. 53:10.
12. See Job 11:13-20; 18:5-20; 20:24-25.
13. BWL 116:10.
14. CAD I/J, 29b, sub idû (2c), ref. 4R 10 (rel.).
15. CAD A2, 295 (lex.sec.), sub arnu , ref. 4R 10 (rel.).
16. CAD G, 132a, sub gullušu (c), ref. ABRT 1 14 (incant.).

17. CAD G, 72b, sub gillatu (2'), ref. KUB 4 17 (rel.).
18. See W. F. Albright, From Stone Age to Christianity (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1957), p. 173.
19. See E. Reiner, Šurpu, "Ritual Tablet" rev. II:18' and E. Reiner, Šurpu, p. 3; similar processes in different texts KAR 90, rev. 20 (Besch.inc.); E. Ebeling, TuL 120.
20. CAD I/J, 22b, sub idû, ref. PBS 1/I 14 (SB rel.).
21. Cf. CAD E, 169b, sub ennetu (2), ref. KAR 373 (incant.) for similar order as our present context: arnu enit(!)ta hituata gillata.
22. Šurpu IV:79-80. See E. Reiner, Šurpu, p. 53:32 (ennetu, nīšu, arnu) and cf. CAD M1, 194a, sub māmitu (b), ref. KAR 165 (incant.).
23. E. Reiner, " Lipšur litanies," JNES 15, 137:77-79.
24. Šurpu V/VI:68; VIII:79 (same order plus anzilli).
25. CAD A2, 296b, sub arnu (1b), ref. Labat, TDP 208 (med.).
26. CAD A2, 297b, sub arnu (2a), ref. KAR 178 (SB hemer.).
27. See A. L. Oppenheim, AM, pp. 183f. and pp. 190f.
28. Enuma Elish VI:117; ANET 69b.
29. See Section 4.5.7.1 "Blasphemy."
30. See CAD D, 118-19, sub dasu, 1. to treat with injustice, to treat with disrespect, 2. to dupe, to cheat. Cf. H. G. Lidell and R. Scott, Greek-English Lexicon, 131a.
31. Cf. AHW. 649a-b, sub mēšu(m).
32. CAD M2, 41b sub mēšu 1. "to despise, to have contempt for, to disregard."

33. See S. Blank, "The Curse, the Blasphemy, the Spell, the Oath," HUCA 23, 1:83-85.
34. Theod. 255; BWL 87.
35. Lud. 11:21; BWL 39.
36. For the expression of this anger in a series see Theod. 133-43; BWL 77.
37. See MAL A 2:14-16.
38. Lud. 11:17; BWL 39.
39. Theod. 80; BWL 77.
40. Theod. 135; BWL 79.
41. Theod. 58; BWL 75. Cf. Ps. 92:5 "your thoughts are very deep."
42. Theod. 256; BWL 87.
43. Theod. 257; BWL 87.
44. Ps. 92:7. Cf. Ps. 10:5 "your judgments are far above beyond his sight."
45. Cf. Theod. 264; BWL 87.
46. Job 33:12-14.
47. See J. Stein, Random House Dictionary (Unabridged, 1966), p. 862a "Syn. 1 Magic may have glamorous and attractive connotations; the other terms suggest the harmful and sinister." Cf. Tz. Abusch, "Studies in the History and Interpretation of some Akkadian Incantations and Prayers against Witchcraft,"

(Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1972), p. 8 where he notes a similar resistance on the part of Assyriologists to the subject of magical literature whose "lack of sympathy ... and antipathy to magical literature" leads them to the conclusion that "magical texts do not make sense."

48. See B. L. Goff, Symbols of Prehistoric Mesopotamia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 163 and R. C. Thompson, Semitic Magic, p. xxxiv.

49. W. R. Smith, Rel.Sem., p. 264.

50. See R. C. Thompson, Semitic Magic, p. xxv.

51. See B. L. Goff, Symbols of Prehistoric Mesopotamia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 169 for comments on the multiplicity of religious possibilities or "collection of beliefs" within Mesopotamian religion.

52. BDB 506b.

53. H. G. Lidell and R. Scott, Greek-English Lexicon, p. 751b-52, sub pharmakon.

54. W. R. Smith, Rel.Sem., p. 442. Cf. BDB 506b, ref. J. Phil. 14:124-27.

55. See Šurpu II:67-68 and G. R. Driver and J. C. Miles, AL Commentary, p. 488 n. 12.

56. Cf. CAD K, 454-55, sub kišpū and R. C. Thompson, Semitic Magic, p. xxiv.

57. See the polemic of B. L. Goff, Symbols of Prehistoric Mesopotamia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), pp. 162-63.

58. Šurpu VII:88; and J. G. Frazer, GB, pp. 272 and 276. See J. Trachtenberg, Magic, pp. 159 and 203.

59. E. Reiner, JNES 15, 143:44'.

60. AHW. 993b, sub ruhû, Bezauberung ("enchantment").

61. See H. A. Hoffner, HL , p. 125 for full discussion of the UH4 sign.
62. Šurpu VIII:81. Cf. Šurpu V/VI:129.
63. Šurpu VII:88.
64. M. Leach, Funk and Wagnall's Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Myth and Legend (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), pp. 1078b-79.
65. Num. 12:14; Job 30:10; Isa. 50:6; Matt. 26:67, 27:30; Mark 10:34, 14:65, 15:19; Luke 18:32.
66. Deut. 25:5-10. Cf. BT , Yebam. 104a; Sanh. 49b, 62b.
67. BT , Yoma 47a; Ned. 55b; Hag. 23a.
68. John 9:6; Mark 7:33, 8:23.
69. Lev. Rab. IX:9 (Tzav); pp. 117-18.
70. J. G. Frazer, GB pp. 202 and 279-83.
71. M. Leach, Funk and Wagnall's Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Myth and Legend (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), pp. 586-87.
72. Cf. Šurpu V/VI:182-183 where Siris is called upon the break the knot. Cf. E. Reiner, JNES 15, 139:116, 120.
73. BT , Šebu. 11b, 113a; Pesah. 11a; Besa 31b; Hag. 20b; Sukk. 33b.
74. See the following citations in the codes: Ur-Nammu Code 10:270-80; CH 2; MAL 47; HL 44b, 111, 163.
75. A. L. Oppenheim, AM , p. 195.
76. Cf. M. J. Geller, Iraq 42, 36:135'; 41 n.138'; CT 17 (incant.) 20:75-76 "menopausal woman."

77. W. W. Hallo and W. K. Simpson, The Ancient Near East: A History (New York: Harcourt, 1971), pp. 10-14.

78. See M. Eliade, Patterns pp. 239-47 on the origins of male fear of the female and her correlation with the earth. Cf. M. P. Nilsson, Greek Folk Religion (Oxford: Clarendon, 1925) p. 96 for evidence of the "subordinate position" of women in official religion.

79. See G. B. Vetter, Magic and Religion (New York, 1958), pp. 62-69 and J. Waardenburg, Class.App. pp. 120-24.

80. Cf. MAL 47 and see Deut. 18:10 for male form.

81. For Israelite fear of all forms of illicit semi-religious activities see: Lev. 20:6; Deut. 18:10; 2 Kings 23:24; Isa. 8:19; Ezek. 13:17f.

82. See Y. Kauffmann, Religion of Israel (New York: Schocken, 1972), pp. 86-87.

3.4 Ethical Parameters

The parameters discussed in this section deal with aspects of the ethical and moral standards of Mesopotamian society as indicated in the Šurpu texts. Many of these socioreligious standards are amplified by Mesopotamian law in the various codes. The penalties for these crimes are well known and rather severe. However, there is no mention in Šurpu of the legal consequences for the patient of having committed these crimes. Thus, in cases where the ethical infractions are also civil crimes, we must assume that the parameters are to be taken symbolically, figuratively, and for their moral-educational value.¹ Where this is not the case, this man would and could be held by the priest in the name of the courts. One of the general characteristics of confessionals is to mention specific criminal acts together with moral transgressions, while not distinguishing between the two. Confessions strive for literary completeness and catalogue areas which produce moral miasma.

The same questions concerning the interface between moral and legal standards can be posed for virtually all of the ethical parameters described in Šurpu. What did the patient conceive as the social and religious implication of his confessions to these crimes and transgressions? How did the patient understand the cultural mores from which he strayed? Preliminary answers to these difficult considerations can be found through examining the legal codes, Belles Lettres literature, and Wisdom literature.

3.4.1 Adultery Šurpu II:48; IV:6.

See Section 4.5.10 for Egyptian parallels.

Šurpu shows concern for the sexual transgression of adultery, with or without the consent of the female party. Adultery, and the act of what appears to be rape, are described in Šurpu II:48. This crime against a neighbor's wife is mentioned as the second action in a series of violent criminal acts. According to the social standard of the time, forcible entry into a home was considered tantamount to violence against family and property.² According to the sexual mores of the time this forced entry into the house compromised the wife's modesty. The crime of adultery was closely related to the property rights of the husband.³ Šurpu IV:6 indicates the woman's collusion in the act of adultery. In both cases the sanctity of the social concept of friendship or neighborliness is desecrated.

Šurpu IV:6 records a less violent form of adultery, implicating the wife as well: "to visit the wife of one's friend secretly." This reference echoes female-initiated adultery which is discussed in the legal codes. Ur-Nammu 4 (222-231 = B para. 1) describes the capital punishment of a married woman who uses her womanly charms to seduce a stranger. MAL A 13-14 and MAL A 16 also parallel Šurpu IV:6-7 with female initiated sexual deception at home and in the temple.

A strange male's presence in the house implicated both adults sexually: "do not stay in a house with a married woman."⁴ This cultural concept is amplified by the law codes. The mere act of being in the house of a man, legally constituted sexual misconduct:

"his wife [shall not leave her house, but she shall take care of her person by not] entering the [house of another]...If that woman did not take care of her person and did enter the house of another, they shall prove it against that woman and throw her into the water." 5

The recourse of killing those caught in the act is acceptable in Mesopotamian culture, presumably after a trial. The suspect wife is held accountable: "a man's wife will commit adultery, and her husband will catch her at it and kill her." 6 In CH 129 a similar stand is taken, however here pardon can be offered:

"If the wife of an awilum has been caught while lying with another man, they shall bind them and throw them into the water. If the husband of the woman wishes to spare his wife, then the king may in turn spare his subject." 7

The act of rape or verifiable, forceable sexuality with a man's wife was well documented in the legal codes of various periods. 8 However, this criminal act was also a religious transgression, as seen in the message of Wisdom literature on the subject. 9 The religious authorities fear acts of adultery as a condemnation of religious and social standards of the time. Thus threats are made: "A man who covets his neighbor's wife, will [.....] before his appointed day." 10 Another reference includes a possible play on the image of the physical penalty of forced rape: "He will be caught in a copper trap that he did not foresee." 11 This socioreligious offense is confessed in the Lipšur litanies: "if he had intercourse with the wife of his friend." 12 The term arnu, with its religious connotation of sin and guilt, is used to describe the nature of this crime: "he who has intercourse with

(another) man's wife, his guilt (arnu) is grievous." ¹³

Cross-culturally, The Book of the Dead mentions "committed adultery" as a moral infraction. ¹⁴

3.4.2 Boundaries

Šurpu II:45-46; III:54, 60; VIII:51.

See Section 4.5.3 for Egyptian parallels.

Significant socio-ethical concern is placed in the settlement and maintenance of established land boundaries. It would appear that the intention of this parameter was to describe the illegal act of falsely erecting a boundary stone, thereby misrepresenting the agreed upon land division. ¹⁵ The abuse, vandalism, or criminal changing of established and agreed upon boundaries was an offense against not only the laws of the society, but also the socioreligious standards of the period.

In general it can be said that the parameters in Šurpu invoke legal responsibility:

Šurpu II:45-6

"he set up an untrue boundary (kudurru), but did not set up the [true boundary, he removed mark (usa), frontier (misra) and boundary."

Šurpu III:54, 60

"[the 'oath': to fix a [boundary, but change it"
"the 'oath': to mark frontier or boundary."

However, the sanctity of the field and its correct division can be sensed in the catalogue in Šurpu VIII:51: "Together with the 'oath' of seeder plow, the share of the subsoil plow, furrow,

frontier, boundary and inscription."

One of the major cultural manifestations of the Kassite period (1700-1230 BCE) is the broad use of and reference to Kudurru boundary markers. The use of this form of ritualized property marking reflects an underlying political reality for this period.¹⁶ The agricultural plots so marked with Kudurru designated property holders who had received special privileges and exemptions from service to the state, most probably the corvee.¹⁷ This system was never as manifested in earlier periods of Mesopotamian culture and is not in evidence in the period of Hammurapi. Thus it has been used as a cultural, legal, and artistic terminus for the Kassite period.¹⁸

The design of these stones reveals the interplay between religion, law, and ethics. These boundary stones were short, often rounded and divided into two specific ranges. The upper register included the symbols and emblems of the gods who were witnesses and guards over this negotiated land grant: "Ninurta and Gula who guard this boundary stone."¹⁹ The divine symbols of the Kudurru offer the art historian a plethora of information on the use of images depicting the gods. These symbols are grouped on pedestals in a nonliteral form, creating a nonverbal shorthand for the selections from the pantheon.²⁰ The lower register includes an inscription, noting the benefactor and cursing anyone who upset this arrangement or these boundaries. The function of the Kudurru was at once religious, social, and legal.

Two legal considerations existed in terms of the abuse of boundary markers: defacing of the stones and tampering with their

placement. The primary transgression was changing the designated position of the boundary stone or its complete removal. Whether spoken of or perpetrated this crime merited a measure for measure imprecation, synonymous with being disinherited or childless: "may he pull up his border path, his border (markings) and his boundary stone"²¹ and "(May the god tear out his border marker) trample over his borderline and change his marker."²² There were legal and religious sanctions against not only removing and uprooting the kudurri, but also against altering the text of the boundary stones: "(curse against whoever) changes its border path, border line or border stone."²³

Whether placed in the Temple as a witness to a transaction or erected in the field to mark property lines, the kudurru was intended to be permanent, according to this inscription: "that his name will not be forgotten forever."²⁴ The gods were called upon to protect these agreements: "the name of the monument is: Nabu-Protects-the-Boundary Stones-of-the-fields."²⁵ It was the physical representation of a binding contract or transaction, with the divine pantheon serving as witness.

Both parties were understood as bound by these conditions, even if the contract was pledged orally. In Surpu III:60, there is just such an oath mentioned: "'the oath': to mark frontier or boundary." Here we have a fine example of the term māmītu being used literally, as verified by this parallel usage describing just such an oath: "made an agreement with each other and took an oath with each other concerning the border (< misri)."²⁶ It should be noted that this form of oath is taken in a royal and courtly

context.²⁷

In Israelite civilization, the preservation of the boundary stones and the permanent negotiations they represented was a crucial social, legal, and religious obligation. The religious component is derived basically from the Biblical concern that the agricultural and property holdings of the defenseless were preserved in spite of their weakness.²⁸ Nevertheless, in the Book of Isaiah 10, the image of the boundary stone is used as an expression of a national imprecation, reminiscent of the curses in Mesopotamian culture: "By the strength of my hand have I done it...I have removed the bounds (gebûlôt) of the people and have robbed their treasures."²⁹

A general prohibition against the removal of a boundary stone is recorded:

"You shall not remove your neighbor's landmark, which they of old time have set in your inheritance, which shall inherit in the land that the Lord your God gives you to possess." 30

The formulation of this injunction possibly reflects the notion of perpetual, royal land grants. It is noteworthy that the order of the parameters in Surpu II:44-46 is consistent with the origin of this Mesopotamian practice: the subjects of inheritance and boundary stones are both mentioned in close proximity.

The most distinctive aspect of Biblical considerations regarding this subject is the strong ethical and moral imperative which becomes the basis for legislation. The preservation of correct boundaries becomes directly associated with the defenseless. The widow and her rights are considered the specific domain of God's

protection: "The Lord will pluck up the house of the proud; but he will establish the border of the widow." ³¹ The verb yissah (root: nsh) "uproot" in the first stiche demonstrates the universal ancient Near Eastern literary image of the transgression of boundary stone removal. Likewise, the "fatherless" is considered under divine protection: "Do not remove the old landmark; and do not enter the fields of the fatherless: for their redeemer is mighty; he shall plead their cause with you." ³² The oppression of the defenseless is explicitly described in the book of Job 24: "Some remove landmarks; they violently take away flocks, and feed them. They drive away the ass of the fatherless, they take the widow's ox for a pledge." ³³ The boundary stone enters Israelite poetry as a literary image:

Isa. 19:19-20

"In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land Misrāyîm, and a pillar at its border to the Lord. And it shall be for a sign and for a witness to the Lord of hosts in the land of Misrāyîm: for they cry to the Lord because of the oppressors and he shall send them one that shall save them and plead for them and he shall deliver them."

Here the several components of this image are unified, including the boundary stone (maṣṣēbâh), the defenseless, divine protection, and defense. It is clear that paronomasia is in evidence in the use of the term Misrāyîm. It should be noted that Von Soden mentions the possible relationship between the term misru(m) and the vocable for the country Misrāyîm, with the meaning " Grenze " "boundary, limit, border." ³⁴

This socioreligious concern for the verifiability of borders and boundary stones was also evident in Egyptian culture. In The Book of the Dead Spell 125, there are several references to this parameter. Two of the references allude to the falsification of land measurements during the transactions.³⁵ In Spell 125 B18, there is an indication that there was considerable tension related to the division and maintenance of the property rights most probably after the flooding season. Egyptian Wisdom literature considered it acceptable to become angry when matters of property were at stake.³⁶

Greek culture also makes mention of this value. Homer, waxing poetic, reveals that universally property transactions involve heated argumentation from both sides:

Iliad XII:422f.

"But just as two men with measuring-rods in hand
strive about the boundary stones in a common field,
and in a narrow space contend each for his equal
share; even so did the battlements hold these
(Danaans and Lycians) apart (in battle)."

Cross-culturally, it can be said that the process of determining and establishing firm property rights was a tense and disputed activity. This was, of course, a concern of the landed wealthy in any given society and therefore consistent with our description of the courtly context of Belles Lettres literature. The process of preserving one's boundaries, delineated by markers, demanded financial, political, and physical prowess. Thus, the violent removal or defacing of boundary stones was a direct affront to the land owner; a call to self-defense in the name of one's

family. The moral side of a given society was revealed by its ability to protect the property rights of the weak and defenseless. Thus did the preservation of boundary stones become a religious consideration.

3.4.3 The Bound Captive

Šurpu II:29-31; IV:31-32, 35-36, 74-75.

The rich metaphor of the bound captive in Šurpu may be read either literally or figuratively:

Šurpu II:29-31

"who did not free a captive, did not release a man in bonds,
who did not let the prisoner see the light (of day),
who said to the captive: "leave him captive!", to the man in bonds:
"bind him tighter!"

Šurpu IV:31-32

"to set free the prisoner, to show (him) daylight,
him who has been taken (captive), to rescue (him) ...,"

Šurpu IV:35-36

"to return the prisoner of war and the captive to his people,
(that he may) see (=be seen?) in the presence of his people"

Šurpu IV:74-75

"the fettered go free, the captive go free,
the prisoner see the light of day."

When read literally, the reference is to the common practice of taking captives in battle, keeping them in prisons (dark places), and holding them for ransom.³⁷ As a political policy the taking of captives is well recorded: "he shall let go my captives not for price or reward."³⁸ Another literal interpretation is related to the imprisonment of the debtor's family members as human pledge. These literal usages appear throughout Šurpu. The figurative

interpretation, though less common, is also found within the Wisdom literature. Taken as a poetic image, anyone bound or captive is an illusion to physical debilitation and suffering, whereas seeing the light is a symbol of recovery. Both images appear in cross-cultural contexts.

In Šurpu II:29-31 and Šurpu IV:31-32, 34-35 (which both follow statements about family and kin), the practice of taking family members as prisoner may have resonated in the ears of the patient: "he has put your wife, your sons, your slave girls into prison."³⁹ A mother's lament for a son is directed toward Šamaš: "she whose son is captive constantly and unceasingly confronts you."⁴⁰ The most common reason for family members to fall into prison was for unpaid debts.⁴¹ An individual can offer himself, his critical property, or any member of the kinship group as a pledge (nipūtu), thus the system is cross-culturally criticized by Wisdom literature.⁴²

In Mesopotamian law there is a clear preference for a human pledge over any pledge of work equipment.⁴³ From letters in several periods we hear of family members taken as pledges on unfulfilled debts.⁴⁴ Both Biblical and Mesopotamian law set limits on how long a man could offer his own family member up as a pledge.⁴⁵

In Ugarit, human beings were offered in pledge (ʿrbn), including kin or fellow town members and employees.⁴⁶ When a pledge of this kind was called, it could have a devastating cumulative effect upon the whole family: "he has put your 3 pledges in prison, come quickly and get your 3 pledges out of prison."⁴⁷

"Prison," in the context of a human pledge made on a debt, was most often living in poor conditions within the estate of the creditor.⁴⁸ This was particularly true during the Kassite period, the period most closely related to the production of Surpu.⁴⁹ A particular letter discusses, complaints from the creditor concerning the cost of extended upkeep of a pledge under house arrest.⁵⁰ Thus, abuse was a means of prompting payment, especially when the pledge was a family member.⁵¹

Throughout Mesopotamia the quality and characteristics of prison are virtually identical. In spite of differences in time and technology, cross-culturally the prisoner seems to have suffered from the same environment and fate. The "prison" more often than not was a dark pit or hole.⁵² The location of the prisoners included meager sustenance and insufficient space: "The crouching-one hastens that he may be loosed, and that he not die in the pit, nor shall his bread fail."⁵³ Fast action was a factor due to the life threatening conditions in prison: "who died of hunger in (lit. and) imprisonment, who died of thirst in imprisonment."⁵⁴ The prisoner or captive was thus considered among the unfortunates in society, due the aid of the caring citizen.⁵⁵ It should be noted that the imprisoned slave did not qualify for these gestures of concern.⁵⁶

The prison could also be used by the king. In Israel it was as an extension of his power.⁵⁷ When the Mesopotamian ruler used the prison, a chorus of similar critique concerning abuses was heard. Here is just such a Wisdom literature caveat concerning the imprisonment of the king's own citizens:

"if he puts them (the citizens of Nippur, Sippar or Babylon) in prison...a foreign enemy will make his way into the prison in which they were put." 58

The figurative image of the "bound captive" is based in the motif of binding.⁵⁹ That which is bound is physically debilitated. Thus, in magical rites the ritual act of binding is a means of causing physical or psychological ills.⁶⁰ The bound individual becomes the captive of the illness, waiting for liberation and release. Thus we hear: "let him be freed from his captive state, let him recover from his being sick."⁶¹ It is also common to turn to Šamaš for succor regarding these kinds of illnesses. This parallel, literary pair of being bound and being ill appear frequently as attributes of Šamaš's merciful powers: "Šamaš it is in your power to give health to the deadly sick, to free the bound."⁶² This is the same usage found in Šurpu IV:73-4: "the sick get well, the fallen get up" || "fettered go free, captive go free" together with the poetic closure, ša bīt sibitti nūru līmur "the prisoner see the light (of day)."

The term prison is also used figuratively to refer to the restrained and bound feeling of the ill body. Frequently, the ailing patient will conceptualize his failing body as a prison in Wisdom literature. In Lud. II:95-98, we hear a full metaphor of the body as prison:

"I take to a bed of bondage, going out is a pain, my house has become my prison. My arms are stricken, which shackles my flesh; my feet are limp, which fetters my person." 63

The imagery of restraint, in reference to illness, informs the

metaphor of the prison. In Ludlul, upon recovery from the illness, images of binding are again utilized: "My illness was quickly over and [my fetters] were broken."⁶⁴ Death, the ultimate illness, was seen as a divine punishment from which there was no release: "a punishment from which there is no escape has overcome me, death is binding me."⁶⁵

This figurative reading, which relates physical illness with captivity, may have bearing upon the use of the phrase "the bound captive" in Šurpu and offer its best interpretation. The references might be describing the patient's debilitating sense of physical and emotional suffering, using a familiar poetic image. The "bound captive" is but one of several images used in the motif which describes the plight of the "defenseless" in Belles Lettres literature.

3.4.4 The Defenseless, Vulnerable

Šurpu II:18-19; III:97-98; IV:18, 28, 42-43.

See Section 4.5.5 for Egyptian parallels.

Throughout the ancient Near East the condition of the defenseless and vulnerable men, women, and children was an indication and barometer of the moral health of the society.⁶⁶ In Šurpu II:18-19, the paradigmatic vulnerable woman is described. In Šurpu III:97-98 and IV:28, the defenseless infant is mentioned. The general needy condition of the defenseless is referred to in Šurpu IV:18, 42-43, and 73. These references should be read as consistent with a cross-cultural motif which catalogues the defenseless components of society.

The defenseless were considered under the protection of the king and/or the divinity, lest they be taken advantage of legally or economically by the "rich oppressor": "he who hands over the weak over to the powerful."⁶⁷ Hammurapi, like other kings, mentions this in his introduction: "so that the strong should not oppress the weak."⁶⁸

The defenseless woman in Šurpu II:18-9 is an expansion upon the notion of the powerless man enšū.⁶⁹ Synonyms of physical and mental weakness become descriptions of financial incapacity.⁷⁰ The social reality prevailed; once a man was poor he lost all previous status.⁷¹

By inference, the destitute woman was that much more vulnerable, considering the frequent mention of this motif in Mesopotamian literature. The married woman carried the desirable and protected status. The widow became the paradigm of the vulnerable woman. In Sumer this notion of the poor and the widow was already developed: "...is a poor man's lot, helplessness is the widows lot."⁷² Ištār was seen as the protector of the defenseless women in society: "Ištār-is-a-Mother-to-the-Weak-Woman."⁷³ Legal and economic justice were a critical component in the relative well-being of the widowed population: "(the poor widow) approached the judge and did not receive justice."⁷⁴

The god Šamaš, in his pursuit of justice, seems to have set the standard of concern for the vulnerable in society: "he who intercedes on behalf of the weak is pleasing to Šamaš."⁷⁵ In the Šamaš Hymn 132-134 the pleas of the defenseless become an ethical imperative:

"The feeble man calls you from the hollow of his mouth, the humble, the weak, the afflicted, the poor, she whose son is captive constantly and unceasingly confronts you." 76

Cross-culturally, moral activities on behalf of the defenseless and suffering appear as an ethical catalogue of the divinity's attributes. It appears that these literary collections of ethical characteristics were used throughout Belles Lettres literature. There are some striking similarities across civilizational borders:

Poetic Images Describing Divine Compassion

Akkadian

Samaš Hymn 71-78; BWL 132
refugee, captive, prisoner...(broken), sick

Samaš Hymn 133-135; BWL 135
humble, weak afflicted, poor, captive, stranger

Ugaritic

II K VI:46f.
widow, broken in spirit, poor, fatherless, sick

Biblical

Isa. 58:6-7 oppressed prisoners, hungry, poor, naked
Isa. 61:1 meek, broken hearted, captives, opening prison
Ezek. 18:16 hungry, naked, poor (also Ezek.18:5, 11)
Ezek. 34:4 weak, sick, crippled, strayed, lost
Ezek. 34:16 lost, strayed, crippled, sick (reversed order)
Zech. 11:16 those cut off, young, heal broken, feed
Ps. 69:33 poor, prisoners
Ps. 146:7-9 oppressed, hungry, prisoners, blind,
bowed down, righteous, fatherless
and the widow.

When comparing these lists, one senses the international nature of the images which existed. Using these as a foundation, the individual author was then free to emphasize one ethical, divine quality over another, expressing his own creative response.

What remains unclear is the degree to which each civilization implemented these ethical imperatives expressed in their literature. Ugarit and Israel chose to view these images as reflections of the moral tone of their societies. The cross-cultural evolution of the images which compose the motif of "the defenseless" can be seen in the literatures. The "poor" became synonymous with the orphan and the widow:

"...You do not judge the case of the widow, nor adjudicate the cause of the broken in spirit, nor drive away those who prey upon the poor. Before You, you do not feed the fatherless, nor behind your back the widow." 77

The widow and the orphan appear as a stock parallel pair: "He judges the case of the widow, adjudicates the cause of the fatherless." ⁷⁸ The orphan and the widow also appear as a hendiadys. ⁷⁹ The concepts rather than the rigid rules of poetic parallelism were the concerns of the authors; thus there was creative interchange of the pairs.

The "poor man" carried a special social status within Israelite society, offering an opportunity for generosity and correct conduct: "for the poor shall not cease out of the land." ⁸⁰ The poor are a symbol of righteous concern in the lament: "I was a father to the poor." ⁸¹ The phrase "poor woman" as such does not appear, indicating that the "widow," as described above, became the

inclusive metaphor for the unfortunate woman.

The images of "the defenseless" in Šurpu are informed by the Mesopotamian and international literary catalogues and then utilize these metaphors as moral guidelines for the repentant patient.

3.4.5 Inheritance Šurpu II:44, 52.

This parameter touches upon two basic aspects of Mesopotamian society: (1) the legal considerations of inheritance and (2) the primal fear of a lost inheritance on the part of the legitimate son. This topic may also offer an insight into the world view of the upper class, courtly concerns which are so much a part of Belles Lettres literature.

This parameter in Šurpu II:44 is directed toward the patient who is the father of sons: "he disinherited the legitimate son (and) [did not establish (in his rights) the legitimated] son." The nature of the transgression lies in the father's creating an unjust sequence of inheritance in which the will is contested. "The legitimated son" may refer to the incorrect order of inheritance, one in which: (1) the younger son would have inherited before the older son or (2) a will was produced showing preference for an adopted son over a natural son. Such possibilities challenged the order of the Mesopotamian family, guided by the principle that the father designated the primary heir aplu.⁸² Thus another parameter where the preservation of the existing social order was the primary concern. The patient, as father, was seen as an agent of the established order. This legal parameter was elevated to the religious realm in the name of preserving the status quo.

Parental favoritism was potentially in conflict with the laws and expectations of the heirs. This human quality would seem to be one of the major causes of tension within the family: "(If a father presents a house, a field, and a garden) to the son who he likes the best."⁸³ This preference for the elder son is not however echoed in the law codes.⁸⁴

CH 165 anticipates contention during the probating of the will after the father's death. This law realistically describes the intrafamily tensions as caused by the "extra" portion given the first-born (aplu). Cross-culturally, this extra portion is also a factor in Israelite society.⁸⁵ In Mesopotamia, this right of the first-born son needed the added protection of a written document to maintain smooth familial relations.⁸⁶ Thus, in the case of Šurpu II:44, the son would have legal recourse in his demands for restitution. However, it is clear that Šurpu's concern goes beyond the legal. The father is depicted as responsible for maintaining stability and harmony within the family.

Disinheritance was a possible route of recourse of the angry father. This may be the background to both Šurpu II:44 and 52: "He ousted a well-to-do young man from his family." In CH 169, we hear a categorical defense of the son's rights and the rejection of this option:

"If an awīlum, having made up his mind to disinherit his son, has said to the judges, "I wish to disinherit my son," the judges shall investigate his record, and if the son did not incur wrong grave (enough) to be disinherited, the father may not disinherit his son."

This law offers leniency in the first proven case of "grave wrong," only permitting disinheritance by the father in the second proven case.

Adoption was a regular part of ancient Near Eastern society, particularly as a financial and manpower solution for maintaining property and estates. It represents another scenario for understanding Surpu II:52. The adopted son is frequently heard protesting mistreatment in inheritance practices within his family:

"according to the custom established by the gods Šušinak and Išme-Karab, that an adoptio in fratrem is (as valid as natural) brotherhood and an adoption is (as valid as natural) sonship, the possessions of my father PN now belong to (lit. have turned to) me." 87

The adopted son was fully legitimate, but often in the position of having to defend his rights. A significant section concerning the laws of adoption appears in CH 185-193. Several of these laws concern the denied responsibility toward the adopted son on the part of the foster father.⁸⁸ There is a fear that "the intruder or newcomer," possibly a reference to an adopted child will steal the inheritance of the legitimate son: "a newcomer will carry off the estate of the man."⁸⁹ This kind of intrafraternal jealousy, competition, and paternal favoritism may well have been the source of tension, bringing about the father's transgression.

This theme is prominent cross-culturally in the mythology and tales of the ancient Near East. In Biblical literature, there are several cases of change in the accepted inheritance procedures. Abram shows loyalty to the conventional inheritance laws related to

adoption as regards his household "manager and administrator."⁹⁰ God attempts to anticipate the potential inheritance tension. He clarifies his position in this case where the child to be born to Abram, this natural child (Isaac) shall be the primary inheritor.⁹¹ The tensions between Sarai and Hagar were related to the inheritance rights of their sons Isaac and Ishmael: "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of his bondwoman shall not be heir with my son."⁹² Abraham's significant emotional reaction reflects the popular, ethical understanding concerning the less desirable child's privileges. Again, Abraham must be convinced by God that the standard laws which would maintain the rights as heir to the son of a concubine are to be overruled in this case.⁹³ Jacob steals the blessing of Esau in an act of cunning, through pretending to be the elder son.⁹⁴ Gaster suggests that this tale may be reminiscent of "a legal ceremony whereby a younger son was substituted for his elder brother as rightful heir of the paternal inheritance."⁹⁵

It can be assumed that the participants in the Surpu ritual had a familiarity with the multiple sources of tensions regarding inheritance within the family.

3.4.6 The Judiciary Surpu II:15.

The honest judiciary is essential for the operation of any society; however, the temptation of bribery and judicial corruption is ever present. Questions which arise are: what actually caused the judge to act incorrectly and what was the nature of his transgression? It should be remembered that the judiciary in

Mesopotamia was permitted to receive gifts as part of their function as civil servants.⁹⁶ The offering of Šulmānu was a method of moving your case onto the docket.⁹⁷

In Šurpu 11:15, one can speculate that the judge is being asked to overlook the evidence: "who caused the judge to (pronounce) [incorrect] (judgement)."⁹⁸ Here, he has actually interfered with justice and does not merely oil the mechanism of the courts. Hammurapi, whose laws contain no direct mention of bribery,⁹⁹ did in his official correspondence distinguish between a valid and a morally offensive "gift" to a judge.¹⁰⁰ Support for this assumption is seen in Šurpu III:24, where a bribe is taken in return for a judgment: "the 'oath': to pronounce a judgement for bribe."

Ancient civilizations project their highest ideals of the righteous judiciary upon their divinity. Thus, the concept of imitatio dei underlies most literary statements about justice. Šamaš, the divine Sun with his symbol the šaššāru ("saw"), sets a standard for justice: "A circumspect judge who pronounces just verdicts."¹⁰¹ Reciprocal punishment is offered to the unjust judge: "You give the unscrupulous judge experience of fetters."¹⁰²

Cross-culturally, the Biblical judge is warned against perverting justice or being open to perversion: "you shall not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shall you speak in a cause to incline after a multitude to pervert justice" and "keep yourself far away from a false matter."¹⁰³ God is depicted as the paradigm of the righteous judge.¹⁰⁴

The primary god of the Greek pantheon also demanded a just

earthly judiciary: "(Zeus) waxed wrath against men that by violence give crooked judgments in the place of gathering and have driven justice out."¹⁰⁵ The divine realm was the standard of moral behavior: "The blessed gods do not love reckless deeds, but they honor justice and the righteous deeds of men."¹⁰⁶ The Koran likewise warns against judicial bribery as a moral offense.¹⁰⁷

Though unclear as to the exact meaning, the references concerning the judiciary in Šurpu are consistent with ethical catalogues from all genres of literature. The patient of Šurpu is reminded of the importance to the society of having an honest judiciary.

3.4.7 Bloodshed (Murder)

Šurpu II:49; 93-94; III:34.

See Section 4.5.13.1 for Egyptian parallels.

The shedding of blood is considered tabu in ancient Near Eastern cultures.¹⁰⁸ Contact with that blood is a source of miasma. Blood in Semitic culture represents the life source of the entity and thus is transvalued as a symbol of bonding, as in rituals of covenant and sacrifice between two parties. Western semitic culture is more attuned to the ritual use of blood than is Mesopotamian culture, where it was more of a symbol of social relationship.¹⁰⁹ Blood was synonymous with kinship: "I am your brother, your flesh and blood."¹¹⁰

Throughout Šurpu there are references which reflect the operative nature of the tabu. Disloyalty of a trusted friend is implied throughout the unit Šurpu II:47-50. A crime of physical

violence against a neighbor is specifically mentioned in Šurpu II:49. The parameter listed in Šurpu III:34 likewise speaks to the offensive nature of an assault against a friend: "the 'oath': to swear (faithfulness) to a friend, but kill him." Taking advantage of a friendship or such a bond was an offense against both the friend and the "blood" which they shared.¹¹¹ The relationship with one's neighbor bespeaks a trust and confidence which is sacred and binding.

In Šurpu II:93-94, a more chronic abuse is described: "he trampled in blood(shed), he used to follow wherever blood was shed." The Šurpu Commentary C, edited by Professor Reiner, carries a definition for the term dabdû: "the blood of a slain man."¹¹² The parameter might, therefore, deal with a polluting contact with the blood of a murder victim.

Blood of a murdered victim transmits pollution, as seen in this Old Akkadian letter: "the king has committed bloodshed, therefore his throne is blemished."¹¹³ The criminal carries with him this sense of pollution, as well as the legal implications of his crime: "now the criminals who are polluted with his blood."¹¹⁴

Trampling in blood is in general considered abhorrent in Mesopotamia, whether done by demon,¹¹⁵ god,¹¹⁶ or man. The term dabdû, however, usually refers to military defeat, massacre, and the resultant bloodshed on the field of battle.¹¹⁷ It can be assumed that participation in battles carried with it ritual pollution through contact with the blood of casualties. This is another possible interpretation of the background of Šurpu II:93-94.

Cross-culturally, battle is seen as ritually polluting.¹¹⁸
 In Ugarit, Anat goes into a battle frenzy, wades in blood, and afterwards performs what appears to be a ritual lustration.¹¹⁹
 Even sacrifice, in its excesses, is metaphorically correlated with military massacre.¹²⁰

In Biblical literature the "shedding of blood" šāpak dām was a cultural way of describing the wanton destruction of life, animal or human.¹²¹ In the Book of Ezekiel the relationship between robbery and murder is mentioned: "If he has begotten a son that is a robber (ben pāriš), a shedder of blood (šōpēk dām)."¹²²

This correlation parallels the series in Šurpu II:47-50.

All blood shed without specific cause cries out and transmits pollution, even nonnormative animal sacrifice:

Lev. 17:3-4

"(whatever Israelite) that kills an ox or a lamb or goat in the camp or that kills it outside the camp, and brings it not to the door of the Tent of Meeting, to offer an offering to the Lord...blood shall be imputed to that man; he has shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people."

Blood cries out for atonement and only accepts the blood of the slayer himself as a suitable means of cleansing the land.¹²³ Blood shed in acts of murder affects the ritual and moral qualities of the whole land and people: "for blood pollutes the land."¹²⁴

These ritual associations with blood are never as direct in Mesopotamia as they are in the West. However, Šurpu demonstrates both the social and ritual dangers of contact with shed blood.

3.4.8 Speech: Sanctity of the Spoken Word

See Section 4.5.11 for Egyptian parallels.

The sanctity of the spoken word is central to the mores of the ancient Near East. Lament, Wisdom literature and mythology all emphasize the importance of this value.¹²⁵ Speech, covering over fifty statements is the single largest category of transgression in the Šurpu series.¹²⁶ Thus, this parameter may well provide a link for the understanding of Šurpu's healing use of the spoken word in the confessionals. Likewise, it attests to the emphasis granted the spoken word throughout Wisdom literature.

Many of the particular statements concerning speech can be placed within a legal context: Šurpu II:6-8, 14-15, 38-39, 60a. Other parameters are directed toward the proper use of language in general, explicating ethical attitudes and mores: Šurpu II:9-14, 17, 40-41, 54-56, 60b, 63, 74, 81; III:144, IV:9, 57.

3.4.8.1 Duplicity and Dishonesty

Šurpu II:6; 38-39; 56; III:55, VIII:73.

Duplicity in Šurpu can be defined as deceitfulness and deception in speech directed toward man and god. In both the ancient and modern world it is difficult to determine the interface between an ethical problem of oral deceitfulness and lying which has legal ramifications.¹²⁷

Duplicity is literally described in several locations in the Šurpu series.

Šurpu II:6

"(he) who said <<no>> for <<yes>>, who said <<yes>> for <<no>>."

Šurpu II:38-39

"he said <<there is>>, when there was not, he said <<there is not>>, when there was."

Šurpu II:55-57

"his mouth is straight, (but) his heart is untrue, (when) his mouth (says) <<yes>>, his heart (says) <<no>>, altogether he speaks untrue words."

Šurpu II: 38-39 can be identified as referring to a specific oath. When read in conjunction with Šurpu II:37, which deals with honesty in weights and measures, we are presented with a unit of moral thought. Just such an oath of honesty is taken in regard to the nonreliability of a merchant's weights.¹²⁸ A parallel to these phrases is offered by Professor Reiner in her commentary, from a physiognomy text: "If there is, 'there is not' constantly in his mouth, if there is not, 'he always says 'there is'."¹²⁹

Šurpu III:55 and VIII:73 also describe a form of duplicity: "to promise, but change (one's word)" and "Together with the oath of jokes and banter, promising (but) changing (one's word) and refusing."

Šurpu II:55-57 expresses a general ethical concern for honesty, which closes a literary section of the text. A subtle consideration is raised between what one truly feels (in the heart) and what one verbalizes for social reasons. A similar ethical concern for speech directed to the gods is heard in Šurpu II:74: "because he promised in the heart and by mouth but did not give." This notion is explicated in Enuma Elish IV:77: "why do you assume a friendly attitude outwardly, while your heart thinks of

attack."¹³⁰

The reliability of one's word in a verbal negotiation was a stabilizing factor in ancient Near Eastern society. Verbal integrity was considered a minimum for responsible social conduct; "the taking of a false oath was inconceivable."¹³¹ Whether directed toward man or god, the word was considered binding. This nevertheless remained an area of considerable discussion, reflecting the gap between the value and the practice. Verbal honesty is an admirable principle which presents great difficulty in terms of self-realization, as amply attested throughout the various forms of Wisdom literatures.¹³² The phrases in Šurpu must be read against just this cultural emphasis.

Esarhaddon is wary of verbal duplicity: "they answer each other 'yes', but (mean) 'no', speaking lies all the time."¹³³ Court intrigue was apparent to Aššurbanipal: "outwardly, with his lips, he speaks (words of) friendship, but inwardly his heart is full of murder."¹³⁴ In the Šamaš Hymn 125, the problem of the dishonest witness is implied through this elliptical reference: "those whose mouth says 'No' - their case is before you."¹³⁵ The individual who "swears falsely" in a public setting carries the social stigma of the "sign of a liar."¹³⁶

Wisdom literature laments the power of dishonest speech over the individual: "they combine against me in slander and lies."¹³⁷ The sufferer sees himself as accused: "(he) has frivolously sworn a solemn oath by his god, (like such an one) do I appear."¹³⁸ In the Theodicy 279-280, human nature's propensity for lying is echoed: "(Mami) gave perverse speech to the human race. With lies and not

truth, they endowed them forever." ¹³⁹ The social status of the woman was determined by the deftness of her mouth. ¹⁴⁰ Ostracism was a social response to the dangers of the 'perverse in speech': "Do not converse [with a tale]bearer." ¹⁴¹ The lasting effects of speech were a motivation for verbal responsibility: "For what you say in a moment will follow you afterwards." ¹⁴² On the same topic, the Sumerian proverbs are sensitive to the lasting qualities and impression of the dishonest character: "tell a lie, tell the truth; it will be considered a lie." ¹⁴³

In Ugarit the importance of "the word" is mythologized. King Keret makes a vow and later does not fulfill it. ¹⁴⁴ Ašerah acts out her divine retribution for this sin by causing him to suffer a critical, life-threatening illness: "Ašerah is mindful of her vows, yea the Goddess [of her dedications]." ¹⁴⁵ The Aramaic Words of Ahigar show noteworthy interest in the area of speech and honesty. ¹⁴⁶

As noted earlier, Wisdom literature applies itself especially to this area of speech. Percentage-wise in the Biblical literature this topic occupies the greatest amount of material. ¹⁴⁷ The idiom for verbal honesty is vividly tied to the mechanics of speech: "tongue of just," ¹⁴⁸ "lying tongue," ¹⁴⁹ "righteous lips," ¹⁵⁰ "lips of truth," ¹⁵¹ "lying lips," ¹⁵² "mouth of the upright," ¹⁵³ and "mouth of justice" ¹⁵⁴

Dishonesty is not tolerated in legal settings: "A trusty witness is he that does not lie: but he that utters lies is a false witness." ¹⁵⁵ Wisdom literature catalogues exemplars of verbal integrity in legal settings: "true witness," ¹⁵⁶ "false

witness,"¹⁵⁷ "deceitful witness,"¹⁵⁸ and "ungodly witness."¹⁵⁹

The literature of lament bemoans the results of dishonest speech: "for the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me with a lying tongue"¹⁶⁰ and "they delight in lies; they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly."¹⁶¹ Oral imagery is also utilized to express the fear of duplicity: "deceitful tongue,"¹⁶² "false tongue,"¹⁶³ "lying lips,"¹⁶⁴ and "mouth of righteousness."¹⁶⁵ In general it can be said that both Wisdom and Lament literatures share a sensitivity on the issue of honest speech: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue."¹⁶⁶

The Greco-Roman period of Israel's history offers a multitude of parallels emphasizing the ongoing importance of the spoken word. A continuity of idiom, style, and content are expressed, paralleling our images in Šurpu. A parallel to Šurpu II:6, 38-39, 55-57 is seen in Ruth Rab. VII:6: "the 'yea' of the righteous is 'yea' and their 'nay' is a 'nay'." In the Talmud, duplicity was an issue: "do not say one thing with the mouth and another with the heart."¹⁶⁷ Rabbi Akiva notes that there are those who ruin the state of affairs by: "taking the oath with his lips, but annulling it with the heart."¹⁶⁸ Rabbinic law demands that 'the lips' speak the truth since 'the heart' (one's intentions) cannot be empirically examined.¹⁶⁹ In a discussion of what constitutes an oath, the simple use of the word 'no' is considered an oath, with some precedent for 'yes': "'No' is an oath; 'Yes' is an oath."¹⁷⁰ "Amen" is yet another legal way of formalizing a statement to be true.¹⁷¹ The trustworthiness of an individual in

their speech serves as an insight into an individual's character: "It is the penalty of a liar, that should he even tell the truth, he is not listened to."¹⁷²

The value, as well as the motif, is found in the New Testament. Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, presents his commentary on the problem of swearing a false oath: "Let what you say be simply 'yes' or 'no'; anything more than this comes from evil."¹⁷³ The Letter of James 5 uses the same literary reference:

"But above all, my brethren, do not swear by heaven or by earth or any other oath, but let your 'yes' be 'yes' and your 'no' be 'no'; that you may not fall under condemnation."¹⁷⁴

The structure and the content of the references to verbal duplicity in Šurpu are an integrated part of the Belles Lettres genre spanning both cultures and eras.

3.4.8.2 Oaths Šurpu II:44, 82-86, 88-92, 116;
III:3-11, 14, 17, 34, 41, 43, 93,
III:139-140; IV:79-80; VIII:60, 61, 77.

In spite of the appearance of the term māmitu throughout the Šurpu series, and its literal translation as "oath," only selected parameters refer to the actual process of swearing an oath. The taking of an oath was the society's way of verifying the truth in cases of doubt and of binding an obligation. The oath became a

method for solidifying human and religious responsibilities. The Šurpu series supplies a rather complete catalogue of the various forms of making spoken oaths - whether written as māmītu or not.

One of the characteristics of the spoken oath is its permanence. Unless the individual achieved release from the vowed responsibilities, the oath was considered as binding upon other relatives and generations. Šurpu III:3-11 describes the various kin from whom the power of the oath is transmitted to the patient, including parents, grandparents, siblings, in-laws, children, and friends. The oath of the father's house is considered binding for seven generations.¹⁷⁵ All oaths are powerful no matter what the quality or sincerity, as seen in Šurpu III:12-13, which closes this section "true or false oath, heavy or light oath." A different form of oath is mentioned between friends, to substantiate their relationship: "to swear (faithfulness) to a friend, but kill him."¹⁷⁶

The oath had a binding effect upon the person who swore it. This sense of obligation to the oath is another source of restraint and frustration for the patient of Šurpu. A ritual for expiation, a sworn oath is described in Šurpu IV:79-80: "May the record of his sins, errors, crimes, oaths, (all) that is sworn, be thrown into the water... ."

The court context frequently demands oaths to verify testimony. In Šurpu II:82-86, the legal demands on the patient as witness and accused are listed:

"Be it released, because he has sworn to facts of which he was ignorant, he has sworn after he took away (something), he has sworn after he hid something, he has sworn in a case of a theft he committed, he has sworn in a capital case."

Šurpu III:139-140 appears to refer to a legal context, where the patient took a false oath knowingly: "to carry, but swear (to the opposite), to take but to swear (to the opposite)."

The swearing of an oath by the name of a divinity constitutes the majority of references to oaths in the series. The divinities are mentioned by name or are designated by their symbols. The swearing of an oath by a god is a serious ritual action which demands the correct preparations, including lustrations.¹⁷⁷ Šamaš is specifically referred to in a presumably prohibited sunrise ritual in Šurpu III:43. Nabu or Marduk are probably invoked in Šurpu III:14, 41 where their symbols the "spade" marru and the "plow" epinnu are respectively mentioned.¹⁷⁸ Nusku or Girru, in Šurpu III:17 and 93 could be the god invoked in an oath as the "god holding the lamp (dipāru)."

When swearing by an object, a human or a god, the underlying concept is one of dramatic transference: the more powerful the object of the oath, the more serious and durative the oath itself. There is ample cross-cultural evidence for this process. An oath is sworn by weapons in Šurpu VIII:61; 77 adding a sense of reinforcement to the spoken oath.¹⁷⁹ The "protective deities" lamaštu of kin and officials can be sworn by to lend authority to an oath.¹⁸⁰ A ritual act of swearing to a god while breaking a table or cup is mentioned in Šurpu VIII:60. The dramatic projection of this action of breaking is a threat whose message is:

may this happen to him who breaks this oath. The swearing of an oath in Šurpu is a religious process of binding oneself to societal obligations.

3.4.8.3 Gossip Šurpu II:9, 60.

See Section 4.5.11.4 for Egyptian parallels.

In the context of transgressions of speech, the issue of gossip carries significant meaning in that it is an ethical value which cannot be legislated. Gossip, "muššabru" is referred to in Šurpu II:9. Šurpu II:60 "spreads gossip" (uššabru).¹⁸¹ The term šabāru "prattle, twitter, flit, move quickly" itself reflects some of the cultural attitudes toward this subtle parameter. The root has several homonyms and near homonyms which, in general, transmit the idea of rapid motion.¹⁸² This fluttering movement is used in reference to such parts of the human body, eyes and lips, and to the characteristics of animals, locomotion of snakes, and chirping of birds.¹⁸³ Derivatives of the root dabābu are also used to express the idea of gossip; interestingly they are not utilized in Šurpu.¹⁸⁴

The semiotic image behind this idiom is: the lips fluttering with great alacrity. Fluent and rapid speech are a sign of human well-being: "So that I, whose lips used to prate, have become like a mute."¹⁸⁵ But, in a societal and political context, the fast-speaking individual raises suspicion as to his intention: "whose lips were nimble in speaking slander and unseemly words."¹⁸⁶ When used with the eyes, the visual image is one of suspicious darting and social criticism: "If I enter the palace,

eyes look askance at me." ¹⁸⁷

However, it is the relationship between the habits and characteristics of birds and human gossip that draws cross-cultural literary attention. Birds are considered of the spirit and the wind, and frequently the messenger. ¹⁸⁸ The human imagination projects upon them the ability to see all and to be at many places at once. ¹⁸⁹ They view the world from a "divine perspective" and are viewed as capable of speech; and so they become the mythical source of gossip. ¹⁹⁰

In courtly context, the bird is seen as the carrier of treacherous gossip: "Do not curse the King, no, not even in your bed chamber: for a bird of the sky will carry the sound, and that which has wings shall tell the matter." ¹⁹¹ In Jer. 5:27, in speaking about entrapping wicked men, a mixed metaphor is used combining the idea of the indulged, fat, kept bird and the motif of gossip and deceit: "As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great and grow rich." In the Hittite Tale of El-kunirša, Ištar transforms herself into objects, among them birds, that she might spy and report the latest gossip on illicit, celestial love affairs. ¹⁹²

Speech is envisioned as a thing of the air. Like some birds it flies away or like others it comes homing: "Like a wandering sparrow, like a flying swallow, so a curse that is causeless comes home to roost." ¹⁹³ The Wisdom of Ahiqar 7 notes that all speech is in the free domain, for better or worse: "A word is a bird, once released it cannot be captured." Aristophanes in his Birds projects the image of the bird as gossip: "There is no one who knows

where my treasures repose, if it be not a bird of the air." ¹⁹⁴

Rabbinic literature continues to use the motif of gossip and the bird. A man can hear the vague rumors of a wife's disloyalty "from a flying bird," which can lead to the test of Soṭah. ¹⁹⁵ Rambam on this citation suggests the possibility that the bird might be of the talking variety, such as the parrot. The dove, as an externalized symbol of Israel, eavesdrops on their behalf. ¹⁹⁶ In this reference, is revealed the folk belief that birds have a language which can be learned by humans. The extension of this belief is that birds can both understand and transmit human speech. Perhaps this folk knowledge, cross-culturally, is at the core of the relationship between birds and gossip.

Gossip is mentioned in Šurpu only twice. However, the Akkadian root sabāru reveals Šurpu's appreciation of and participation in the imagery of the "bird" and gossip used throughout Wisdom literature to describe this human failing.

3.4.8.4 Exaggeration Šurpu 11:17

See Section 4.5.11.2 for Egyptian parallels.

This is another example of a transgression which is morally and not legally binding upon the individual. Exaggeration is a minor offense. However, it tested the basis of this society, which so relied upon verbal accuracy and the sanctity of the spoken word. The concern here is not for literary hyperbole, as evident in common speech. ¹⁹⁷ The nature of the transgression is that the exaggerations stretch the truth to the point of falsehood. This form

of lying can have bearing upon the actions or veracity of another member of society, and thus potentially disrupts societal order.

Lambert, in a discussion of terms reflecting sins of speech, states that the root atirtu "would suggest exaggeration," but that the examples imply "much more."¹⁹⁸ In lexical contexts, the connotation is of expansive, excessive speech.¹⁹⁹ However, it is the correspondence between exaggeration and dishonesty which provides the majority of examples. The simple usage of exaggeration can be seen in these references: "there is not one single true word in these reports...all are exaggerated"²⁰⁰ and "I have faithfully reported what I have seen, I have not spoken exaggeratedly."²⁰¹ The apprehension about numerical inaccuracy is considered: "he told you a lie by (saying): three donkeys have been taken away (only one donkey was taken)."²⁰² The results of the exaggeration are feared: "my lord will find out...whether I have reported untrue things to my lord."²⁰³ There are ramifications to exaggerating in a legal context: "he who tells an untrue word at the Mušalalu Gate."²⁰⁴

Exaggeration, in the form of talking too much is also considered a transgression. Garrulousness is thus described in literature as morally noxious: "To speak too much is like fire, food that makes the stomach sick."²⁰⁵ In an Omen text, "disrespect will be shown" to "the whisperer."²⁰⁶ We see the implications of speech being carefully judged in terms of both quality and quantity.

Certain Biblical proverbs may have some bearing on a possible definition of exaggeration, based upon terms for profusion of speech.²⁰⁷ In the Rabbinic period, hyperbole was recognized both as a legitimate literary device in Biblical texts²⁰⁸ and as a

discouraged activity in exaggerating quantity.²⁰⁹

Theophrastus describes a character called "The Fabricator" (logopaiia), who, unlike the other "talkers," tends toward exaggeration of time, place, facts, and figures. He captures the human fear of exaggerators, which underlies the Wisdom and Šurpu reference to this habit.²¹⁰ The worst damage of exaggeration is experienced by the fabricators and their credibility: "Not only are they liars, but the lies do them no good."²¹¹

3.4.9 Transgression by Agency Šurpu II:14-15; II:61.

See Section 4.5.1 for Egyptian parallels.

To cause another to sin is a sin in Šurpu. Šurpu II:14-15 represents a phrase whose wording and presentation has socio-ethical impact: "[who, as a witness,] caused wicked things to be spoken, who caused the judge to (pronounce) [incorrect (judgement)]". In Šurpu II:61, we likewise hear: "he incites to rob."

Through the use of the III conjugation (causative), the parameter violated was one of "causing another to have transgressed." This represents an expansion upon the sin of commission. The patient himself had not sinned. His source of guilt was indirect; it is acquired by association and agency. This category of transgression represents a sophisticated structure of responsibility and guilt for that society. It appears as a common component in ancient confessional lists, because the function of this kind of ritual litany has as much to do with the standards and well-being of the society as that of the individual suppliant.

Encouraging or causing another human to err was a transgression.

Occasionally this notion is alluded to as fear of exposure to corrupting forces: (if you have contact with criminal types then) "In (your) good grace you will become as a mind for them, then you will reduce your own output, foresake your path."²¹² Akkadian Wisdom literature in general makes little mention of this form of transgression. However, both Israelite and Egyptian culture make frequent mention of this transgression. These references can provide a background for understanding this parameter in Šurpu.

The Hebrew Bible describes the causative transgression. The "object" of the transgressor possesses certain tendencies or weaknesses which are exploited by the "subject" (the causal transgressor) who wishes to do him evil. The "object" is drawn in to acting upon impulse. In having successfully caused his sinning, the "subject" becomes a transgressor regardless of the misconduct. This ethical perception is echoed in Šurpu when the patient is accused of having contact with a sinner, lest he be physically polluted or immorally influenced.²¹³ The relationship between the Mesopotamian and Biblical usage might be the societal concern for the cumulative effect of individual sin upon society as a whole. The transgression of agency serves the religious authorities as a method of transmitting an ethical world view which has bearing upon the community at large.

The essence of this form of transgression is that it is as wrong to commit the sin as it is to create a situation where another commits the same offense: "neither make mention of the name of their gods (yourself), nor cause (another) to swear by them."²¹⁴ The

message: the individual must be mindful of himself and society. The nature of responsible witnessing is an excellent example of the important result of individual conduct:

Num. 35:30

"Whoever kills any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of the witness: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die."

The causal relationship between the action of one individual and the fate of another in a situation of a single witness is too direct for society to bear, thus the weight of the responsibility must be shared by two. The guiding, idealistic principle is that two witnesses could not be in collusion, nor perjured.²¹⁵

The process of causing evil in someone else to some degree implies a transfer of responsibility. In Biblical usage, the fact that one can be influenced and "caused" to transgress serves as a warning against this natural human, social process. Prostitution and illicit sexuality is one such example, because it has a decadent effect upon society: "Do not prostitute your daughter, to cause her to be a harlot; lest the land fall into harlotry and the land become full of foulness."²¹⁶ Hosea uses the metaphor of seduction to describe the allurements of foreign religious practice.²¹⁷ The same image is used poetically as a metaphor for the temptation of false wisdom: "With her much fair speech she causes him to yield, with the smoothness of her lips she seduces him."²¹⁸

As stated before, this usage of the causal conjugation reveals a subtlety in the ethical perspective of ancient society. The smallest of our actions can have a negative effect: "He that

winks with the eye causes sorrow."²¹⁹ We are responsible for those who are weak of will, both as common citizens and leaders: "He who causes the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit"²²⁰ and "For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are lead by them are destroyed."²²¹ Every member of the society is a potential role model. Human actions have a profound effect upon the unfortunates of society. The literature of lament assumed this extended responsibility: "If I have withheld the poor from their desire or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail...then let my arm fall from my shoulder blade."²²²

Other uses of the causal conjugation of interest to our discussion are: to serve as positive role models²²³ or to justify the pain and suffering in life.²²⁴ This category of transgression can be found in The Book of the Dead Spell 125.²²⁵

In presenting a transgression in this form, Šurpu is consistent with the rich fabric of international wisdom. The observers of ancient society realized even with this high ethical standard that there were those who actively worked against the common good: "For they sleep not unless they have done some mischief; and their sleep is taken away unless they cause some to fall."²²⁶

3.4.10 Weights and Measures

Šurpu II:37, 42-43; VIII:64-67.

See Section 4.5.15 for Egyptian parallels.

Throughout the ancient Near East concern is expressed for

the conduct of the merchant in the use of his scales and measurements. Although there is no direct evidence for a standardization throughout the land, there seems to have been a moral expectation of fairness and honesty during the weighing process.

Šurpu makes several references to transgressions in business conduct:

Šurpu II:37
"gave with small (measure) and received with big (measure)"

Šurpu II:42-43
"he us[ed] an untrue balance, (but) [did not us]e [the true balance],
he took money that was not due to him, (but) [did not tal]ke mo[n]ey due to him]"

Šurpu VIII:64-67
"Together with the 'oath' of giving with a small seah-measure (but) taking with a big seah-measure."
"Together with the 'oath' of giving with a small shekel-weight (but) taking with a big shekel-weight."
"Together with the 'oath' of giving with a small mina-weight (but) taking with a big mina-weight."
"Together with the 'oath' of using an untrue balance (or) taking untrue money and swearing (it was rightful)."

It is unclear from these references whether these statements refer to abuses within a two-standard weight system (light and heavy) or to outright cheating of the customer. Contextually, Šurpu II:42 and 43 share the subject of illegal and unethical business practices and should be considered a parallel pair. Šurpu VIII:67 provides a basis for this interpretation. The same scale which was tampered with for grain or produce measurement would also be used to weigh out silver in exchange.

It had been assumed, based upon other cultures, that standardization existed in Mesopotamia, as established by the Temple-Palace complex.²²⁸ Applying this hypothesis, the transgression in Šurpu II:37 and VIII:64-66 could be understood very simply as cheating. The small (or "light") weights should be used for domestic commerce. The heavy (or "big") weights should be used for international commercial exchange. This would constitute an abuse of the "dual system."²²⁹ One of the manifestations of fraud within this system was usury.²³⁰

The difficulty with this hypothesis is that there is no substantial evidence for any form of standardization in Mesopotamia. However, there are attestations of commissions being taken on the difference between domestic and international weight systems.²³¹ There is reason to believe that there were different standards used by the general population and by Temple-Palace-complex.²³² This is attested both in Akkadian and Biblical sources: "he weighed the hair of his head at 200 shekels by the King's weight."²³³ However, from the ethical point of view expressed by Šurpu, the tampering with either the existing "standardized" system or cheating during the process of weighing-out equally constituted a transgression and source of miasma as seen in Šurpu II:42 and VIII:67.

The opportunity for dishonesty frequently arose in the mundane transactions over food and grain purchases, as heard in other confessions.²³⁴ The Šamaš Hymn 103-106 seems to verify this relationship between the use of scales, money and business transactions, since the section dealing with money and foreign investments immediately proceeds the section dealing with weights

and measures (Šamaš Hymn 107-115).²³⁵ Equally common was fraudulent conduct in the area of granting credit and collecting on loans.²³⁶ To grant a grain loan by one standard and then to collect payment on that loan by a heavier weight was a method of accruing interest without openly stating the fact.²³⁷

These ethical transgressions are amplified in the law codes. In CH 108 there is an indirect reference to the dual system:

"If a woman wine seller, instead of receiving grain for the price of a drink has received money by the large weight and so has made the value of the drink less than the value of the grain, they shall prove it against the wine seller and throw her into the water."

This law legislates against a fraudulent transaction using the incorrect weights. The law in HL 177-186 set a fixed shekel price for various consumer goods and business expenses, which circumvented, to some degree, having to trust a particular merchant's scales.

In the CH 88-96 a section deals with crimes related to the granting of interest and grain loans. CH 50-51 also discusses agricultural loans. CH 94 has particular bearing upon Šurpu II:37 and VIII:64-66:

"If a merchant lent grain or money at interest and then he lent (it) at interest he paid out the money by the small weight and the grain by the small measure, but when he got (it) back he received the money by the [large] weight (and) the grain by the large measure, [that merchant shall forfeit] whatever he lent."

The Biblical prophets are particularly alert to this ploy.

In decrying the exploitation of the poor who are in need of grain loans before festive meals, we hear of this transgression: "that we may set forth wheat making the ʾêpa small and the šeqel great and falsifying the balances of deceit."²³⁸ It would appear that some merchants became wealthy, filling their storage bins, using this method: "Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure (ʾêpat rāzôn) that is abominable?"²³⁹

Biblical literature asserts the following parallel, using an literary expression:

Lev. 19:35-36

"You shall not falsify measures of length, weight or capacity. You shall have an honest balance, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin."

Cross-culturally, the gods are depicted as concerned for the accuracy of scales because they too ate from the grain measured out to them for sacrifice.²⁴⁰ In Biblical literature, God is seen as personally concerned for the maintenance of reliable weights and measures: "A just weight and scale are the Lord's, all the weights in the bag are his work"²⁴¹ and "Divers weights are an abomination to the Lord and a false balance is not good."²⁴² The gods also used the scale to project a sense of responsibility before the final judgment.²⁴³

In Mesopotamia, Šamaš is the god of justice and judgment, and thus is depicted as weighing out his decisions.²⁴⁴ He exists in a meta-realm above the other gods, preserving his image of both the unbiased judge, mediator or merciful one even in the

mythology.²⁴⁵ In the Šamaš Hymn 113, a parallel to Šurpu 11:37 is found in a larger section (vs.107-113) dealing with this kind of dishonesty: "who weighs out loans (or corn) by the minimum standard, but requires a large quantity in repayment."²⁴⁶ The Šamaš Hymn 118-119 recognizes the religious and moral aspect of this value:

"The honest merchant who weighs out loans (of corn) by the maximum standard, thus multiplying kindness, it is pleasing to Šamaš, and he will prolong his life."²⁴⁷

A Biblical parallel is heard emphasizing the moral and not legal aspects of this transgression: "A false balance is an abomination to the Lord; but a just weight is his delight."²⁴⁸

It would appear that Šurpu is cognizant of the two different kinds of transgression and attempts to differentiate between them by listing them separately in the series.²⁴⁹ So well known were these practices that the motif is indicated in Wisdom literature through the literary device of periphrasis (antonomaisia), which assumes knowledge on the part of the audience. In Professor Reiner's translation, the term "(measure)" is supplied for clarity.²⁵⁰ It is clear that Šurpu conceived of fair weights and ethical business conduct as playing a significant role in the religious life of the patient. This value was evident in popular wisdom, as well as literary and legal aspects of the culture.

Notes to Section 3.4

1. Cf. V. Turner, The Ritual Process (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 94 and 103 concerning the socializing, educational effect of rituals in "reaggregation or reincorporation."

2. See S. Greengus, "A Textbook Case of Adultery in Mesopotamia," HUCA 40-41, 38-39 where forced entry by one's own adulterous wife is mentioned.

3. See G. R. Driver & J. C. Miles, AL Commentary, p. 37.

4. CAD A2, 387b sub ašābu (lex.sec.), ref. OECT 6 (Bab.pent.psalms).

5. CH 133, 133a.

6. CAD D, 40b, sub dâku (2.7'), ref. YOS 10 (OB ext.) it should be noted that this is an omen text, which only indicates of social awareness of the phenomenon. Cf. MAL 15 where both the adulterous wife and her lover must die after being tried.

7. CH 129. Cf. CH 131, 132 for other such accusations with less proof.

8. Cf. Sumerian Law 7; CH 130; MAL A 12, 55; Hittite Law 197.

9. See R. Gordis, "On Adultery in Biblical and Babylonian Law," Judaism 33, 210-11 who questions M. Greenberg's interpretation of Biblical laws on adultery as an offense exclusively against God. Likewise I here question, the commonly accepted notion that Mesopotamian adultery laws are only an offense against the husband and not the gods.

10. Šamaš Hymn 88-89; BWL 131.

11. Šamaš Hymn 94; BWL 131.

12. E. Reiner, JNES 15, 137:84b.

13. Ninurta Hymn 3-4; BWL 119.
14. Cf. Spell 125, B19 and further discussions in section 4.5.10 "Sexual Behavior."
15. J. Hinke, Selected Babylonian Kudurru Inscriptions (Leiden: Brill, 1911), pp. 14-15.
16. Ibid. pp. 16-31.
17. A. L. Oppenheim, AM , pp. 122-23 and pp. 286-87.
18. J. Hinke, Selected Babylonian Kudurru Inscriptions (Leiden: Brill, 1911), pp. 6-8.
19. CAD K, 495a, sub kudurru A, ref. BE 1/2 149 (Bab. kudurru, Marduk-nadin-ahhi).
20. See J. Hinke, Selected Babylonian Kudurru Inscriptions (Leiden: Brill, 1911), pp. 71-115.
21. CAD K, 495a, sub kudurru A, ref. I R 70 (Caillou Michaux).
22. CAD M2, 113a, sub misru , BB St. #7.
23. CAD K, 496a, sub kudurru A, ref. BB St. #8.
24. CAD D, 108a, sub dar (c 2'), ref. RA 16, 126 (NB kudurru).
Cf. CAD K, 495b, sub kudurru (2a), ref. BB St. #7
"Establisher-of-Permanent-Boundaries."
25. CAD K, 495a, sub kudurru A, ref. MDP 2 (leg.doc.).
26. CAD M1, 191b, sub māmītu (1b), ref. CT 34, 38 (Synchron.Hist.).
27. This practice as verified by Oppenheim. See AM , p. 159.

28. See "The Defenseless, Vulnerable" sections 3.4.4 and 4.5.5.
29. Isa. 10:13.
30. Deut. 19:14. Cf. Prov. 22:28 "Remove not the ancient landmark, which your fathers have set."
31. Prov. 15:25.
32. Prov. 23:10-11. Cf. Jer. 50:34.
33. Job 24:2-3.
34. See Alt. 659a, sub mišru(m) "Grenze (bezeichnung)."
35. See Spell 125 A23, A24 under section 4.5.3 "Boundaries."
36. See section 4.5.11.1 "Speech: Abuse" and 4.5.3 "Boundaries."
37. See A. L. Oppenheim, AM, p. 106 and p. 108; prisoners also offered technical assistance AM, pp. 64, 67, 96, 209, 366 n. 37. For a discussion of the image of light as salvation see: C. J. Bleeker, The Rainbow (Leiden: Brill, 1975), pp. 193-207 "The Religious Significance of Light."
38. Isa. 45:13. Cf. J. J. Gelb, "Prisoners of War," JNES 32, 70-98.
39. CAD §, 156a, sub sibittu, ref. TCL 17 (OB let.).
40. Šamaš Hymn 134; BWL 135.
41. See G. R. Driver & J. C. Miles, BL Commentary, p. 210. A marriage might have begun with a debt see CH 151-52.
42. See for kin: Prov. 6:1-5, 17:18; for essential clothing: Ex. 22:26; Deut. 24:10-13; Prov. 20:16, 27:13; Job 22:6; for essential equipment: Deut. 24:6; for widow's property: Deut. 24:17; Job 24:3; in general: Ezek. 18:7, 12; 33:14; Prov. 22:26.

43. CH 241.
44. G. R. Driver & J. C. Miles, BL Commentary , p. 216 n. 8, ref. Ebeling, NBBU 332:33-34 a man's wife; Clay, BEUP XIV:315 a man and his wife (Kassite Period 1266-54 BCE); Ebeling, AbB 102:36-39 a man and his daughter.
45. Ex. 21:2-6 a son six years and Deut. 15:12-15, 18; a daughter redeemed Ex. 21:7-11.
46. C. H. Gordon, UT 1161:1, 7; 2046:1; 2079:1; cf. UT , Glossary #1915, 461.
47. CAD §, 156a, sub šibittu , ref. Genouillac, Kich 2 possibly hostages from kinship group.
48. CH 115-17. Cf. G. R. Driver & J. C. Miles, BL Commentary , pp. 215-16.
49. G. R. Driver & J. C. Miles, BL Commentary , p. 216 n. 8, ref. RA 34 (1937), 163-64.
50. Ibid. p. 219, ref. Ungnad, AbB 106:22-49.
51. MAL A 39 (a wife or daughter); CH 116 (a son), 230.
52. See Gen. 37:20f. for the Joseph cycle and the origin of the Biblical motif and Isa. 24:22, pit II prison; for general description, Isa. 20:4; Neh. 1:3.
53. Isa. 51:14. Cf. 2 Kings 6:22; Jer. 18:22.
54. CAD §, 155b, sub šibittu (lex. section), ref. ASKT 88-89; cf. Zech. 9:11 "you have released your prisoners out of the pit where there was no water."
55. Deut. 21:10-14; Isa. 14:17; 49:10; Psa. 106:46.

56. See CH 16:46.

57. See for ethical caveats Gen. 34:29; Deut. 28:41; for examples, of women captives: Num. 31:9; Isa. 30:2; for brother as captive: Gen. 14:14; 2 Chron. 28:8; for children as captives: Ex. 12:29; 2 Kings 5:2; Isa. 52:2; Ezra 8:35; 1 Chr. 5:21; Lam. 1:5; for political captives: Jer. 20:6.

58. Advice to a Prince 20, 22; BWL 113.

59. See section 2.4 "A Conceptual Approach toward māmītu ."

60. CAD K, 253a, sub kasû (5c), "to paralyze, to bind magically"; cf. Lud. III, BWL 54 comm. h; Maqlû VII:64; 71.

61. CAD B, 53a, sub balātu (lex.sec.), ref. 4R 17 (hymn.inc.).

62. CAD K, 248a, sub kasû (b), ref. STI 72 (inc.rit.). This notion as an attribute of God is repeated three times in daily present day Jewish liturgy see A. Davis, The Metsudah Siddur (New York: Noble, 1981), p. 105:26 (from the prayer "Help of our Fathers") "He frees the captive and redeems the humble" and p. 112:1 (from the daily "Amidah") "Releaser of the imprisoned." See also Psalm 146, p. 71:18 (as part of morning worship) "Adonoy releases the imprisoned" which provides the Biblical origins of the phrase.

63. BWL 45.

64. Lud. III:49; BWL 51.

65. CAD K, 252b, sub kasû (3b), ref. Tukulti-Ninurta Epic iv.

66. Cf. sections 4.5.5 "The Defenseless, Vulnerable" and 4.5.6.3 "Justice"; see F.C. Fensham, "Widow, Orphan, and the Poor in the ANE Legal and Wisdom Literature," Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom, pp. 161-71.

67. CAD D, 96a, sub dannu (3c), ref. KAR 119 (SB wisdom). Cf. "Hymn to Ninurta" BWL 119:11 and Isa. 3:14f.

68. CH I:38. Cf. CAD E, 171a-b, sub enšû (b), for full listings where Sargon and Aššurbanipal also include this category.
69. Cf. W. G. Lambert, BWL 18 n.1 for a brief discussion of synonymous terms akû, dunnamû, hubbulu, katû, lapnu, lillu.
70. See A. Göetze, LE 39.
71. Theod. 283-84; BWL 89. Cf. Lud. 1:60f, 77f., 94, 103-04 and Eccl. 9:15-16 "the poor man's wisdom is despised."
72. C. H. Gordon, Sumerian Proverbs (Philadelphia: Museum Monographs, 1959), p. 197, 2.33; cf. the series of proverbs on the poor 188-98, 2.15-33.
73. CAD E, 171b, sub enšû, ref. TCL 10 (OB). Cf. C. H. Gordon, Sumerian Proverbs (Philadelphia: Museum Monographs, 1959), p. 197 n. 8 "Nanshe is the guardian of the widow."
74. W. G. Lambert, Iraq 27, 5 ii 6, cf. ii 8 context: where judge receives bribe but does not hear her case.
75. CAD E, 171a, sub enšû (b), ref. Schollmeyer #16; cf. Isa. 11:4; 25:4.
76. BWL 135. Cf. Šamaš Hymn 99-100; BWL 133.
77. II K 46-50 dl II ytm II almnt. Cf. reversed order: Isa. 10:2; Job 31:16-17; also same order Sir. 35:13-14; see: W. F. Albright, HUCA 23, 18 and M. Dahood, Anchor Bible, Ps., 11:136, 111:342, 450.
78. II D V:7-8, almnt II ytm. Cf.: Ex. 22:23; Isa. 10:2; Ps. 94:6; Job 22:9; also widow + orphan: Ex. 22:21; Zech. 7:10; Mal. 3:5.
79. II K 49-50 ytm II almnt. Cf. Jer. 49:11; Ps. 68:6; 109:9; Job 24:3; Sir. 4:10; 35:14 and orphan + widow: Deut. 10:18; 14:29; 16:11; Isa. 9:16; Jer. 7:6; Ps. 146:9.

80. Deut. 15:7-11. Cf. Ex. 23:3f.; Lev. 19:10f.; 25:25f.; 2 Sam. 12:1f.

81. Job 29:16. Cf. Job 5:15f.; 20:10,19; 24:4,9,14; 29:12; 30:16,19; 34:19,28; 36:6,15.

82. See CH 170:58.

83. CH 165:34.

84. It should be noted that the father determined the order of inheritance and that it did not necessarily fall to the eldest son. Cf. CH 150, 162-71, 173-74, 178-81, 184. See also E. Neufeld, HL, p. 126 who states that there is no inheritance law in HL.

85. Cf. Deut. 21:17.

86. G. R. Driver & J. C. Miles, BL Commentary, 11:331 where the problem of the aplu is discussed.

87. CAD A1, 187b, sub ahhutu (2), ref. MDP 23 (leg.doc.).

88. CH 189-91.

89. CAD E, 304b, sub errebu ref. TCL 6 (ext.).

90. See Rashi's Commentary to Gen. 15:2-3.

91. Gen. 15:4-8.

92. Gen. 21:10; cf. 16:6.

93. Gen. 21:11f.

94. Gen. 27:1-40.

95. Th. Gaster, Legends , pp. 165 and 165-82 for cross-cultural evidence, none of which are taken from within the Mesopotamian sphere.
96. Cf. J. J. Finkelstein, JAOS 72, 77-80.
97. Ibid. p. 78; ref. Harper, ABL 2 #2.
98. Cf. E. Reiner, Surpu Commentary , p. 50 B 8 lā natātum = lā amarātu. Another lexical text offers the same notion lā natātu = lā kinātu see CAD N2, 130b-31a , sub naṭū A, ref. ASKT (rit.).
99. Cf. CH 5.
100. J. J. Finkelstein, JAOS 72, 79-80.
101. Šamaš Hymn 101; BWL 133.
102. Šamaš Hymn 97, BWL 133. Cf. CAD D, 32a, sub dajānu , ref. Schollmeyer 16 (N.B. Šamaš Hymn) "you (Šamaš) show the prison to the wicked judge."
103. Ex. 23:2, 7. Cf. Lev. 19:15.
104. Deut. 10:18; Ps. 10:18.
105. Homer, Iliad XVI:386f.
106. Homer, Odessey 14:83.
107. Koran , Sura 2:188.
108. W. R. Smith, Rel.Sem. , pp. 312-21 and pp. 479-81.
109. A. L. Oppenheim, AM , p. 192 and p. 365 n. 18.
110. CAD D, 79b, sub damu (3), ref. Ischali and CAD D, 75b (lex. section), ref. Ai. III (series ana ittišū) 8: "his flesh and blood."

111. Cf. Gen. 37:22 and Joseph's brothers' wariness concerning his blood being shed.
112. E. Reiner, Surpu , p. 51, Commentary C:34-35.
113. CAD D, 79a-b, sub damu , ref. CCT 4 (OA let.).
114. CAD D, 79b, sub damu , ref. ARM 3 (pers.let.).
115. CAD D, 75a-b (lex. section), sub damu ref. CT 16 (rit.let.).
116. CAD K, 10b, sub kabāsu (7b), ref. Bauer, Asb. 2
117. Cf. CAD D, 14a, sub dabdû (2) "bloody battle, massacre, carnage, affray of battle, corpses on the battlefield."
118. Cf. S. Thompson, Motif-Index to Folk-Literature (Helsinki-Bloomington, 1932-36), D 156.2.2.1 "blood which pollutes in battle."
119. V AB B; ANET 136. Cf. Isa . 63:3.
120. W. R. Smith, Rel.Sem. , p. 228 and p. 228 n. 1. Cf. Isa. 1:12 and CAD D, 76a (lex. section), sub damu ref. 4R 19 (atonement psalm to Istar).
121. BDB 1049a-b.
122. Ezek. 18:10.
123. Gen. 9:6; Num. 35:33-34.
124. Num. 35:33; Deut. 19:10; Deut. 21:7-9.
125. Cf. sections 4.5.11 - 4.5.11.6 on "Speech."
126. Surpu 11:6-17; 38-41; 55-57; 82-92.

127. See N. Rotenstreich, On the Human Subject (Illinois: Thomas, 1966), pp. 78-90.
128. CAD A1, 59a, sub abnu A(4c), ref. MVAG 33 (leg.doc.Kultepe).
129. E. Reiner, Šurpu, Commentary, p. 55. Cf. ZA 43 (1936), 92:38', 40'.
130. CAD E, 97b, sub eliš (4).
131. G. R. Driver and J. C. Miles, BL Commentary, p. 468.
132. See section 4.5.11.5 "Speech: Lying."
133. R. Borger, Esrh. 12:22.
134. CAD E, 97b, sub eliš (4), ref. Streck, Ašb. Cf. Ps. 62:5.
135. BWL 135.
136. S. M. Moran, "A Lost 'Omen' Tablet," JCS 29, 66:16.
137. Lud. I:69; BWL 35.
138. Lud. II:22; BWL 39.
139. BWL 89.
140. "Proverbj;" BWL 238:3-8 (Obv. II, IV).
141. Counsels of Wisdom; BWL 99:21; cf. also BWL 101:30.
142. Counsels of Wisdom; BWL 105:133.

143. E. I. Gordon, Sumerian Proverbs (Philadelphia: Museum Monographs, 1959), No. 2:71, p. 229. Cf. Prov. 12:13 and constrast Prov. 12:19. From the perspective of the dishonest individual see Prov. 17:4 and cf. TB Sanh. 89a.

144. IK 200f.

145. IIIK 25-30. See L. R. Fisher, Ras Shamra Parallels II:377, p.273 for restoration literature.

146. See The Words of Ahigar ; ANET 429b "lying lips" and 132 "false witness."

147. In the Book of Proverbs for example 169 maxims of 915 total lines deal with speech representing over 18% of the material presented.

148. Prov. 10:20.

149. Prov. 6:17; 12:19; 21:6; 26:28.

150. Prov. 10:31; 16:13.

151. Prov. 12:19.

152. Prov. 12:13,22; 17:4. Cf. Ahigar 132-34.

153. Prov. 12:6.

154. Prov. 10:32.

155. Prov. 14:5; 12:17.

156. Prov. 14:25.

157. Prov. 6:19; 19:5,9; 21:28; 25:18. Cf. Ahigar 140.

158. Prov. 14:25.

159. Prov. 19:28.
160. Ps. 109:2.
161. Ps. 62:4. Cf. Jer. 9:7.
162. Ps. 52:4; 120:2. Cf. Mic. 6:12 and Zech. 3:13.
163. Ps. 120:3.
164. Ps. 31:18.
165. Ps. 37:30.
166. Prov. 18:21.
167. BT, Bab. Mes. 49a.
168. BT, Hal. 51a; 52a. Cf. also Hal. Rab. 22:2.
169. BT, Sebu. 26a.
170. BT, Sebu. 36a.
171. Num. Rab. IX:35 (p.312) based upon Jer. 11:5.
172. BT, Sanh. 89b.
173. Matt. 5:37.
174. Jas. 5:12. Cf. 2 Cor. 1:17-20 another early Christian use of "Amen" vs "Yes and No" in oaths.
175. Surpu III:6.

176. Šurpu III:34.
177. Šurpu II:44.
178. Cf. Šurpu II:116.
179. S. Thompson, Motif-Index to Folk-Literature (Helsinki-Bloomington, 1932-36), M 113.1 swearing over weapons.
180. Šurpu II:88-92.
181. Šurpu II:63 should be considered based upon the reading in the Šurpu Commentary [barru paršu] : dābibu parrīšu].
182. See CAD §, 4a-b, sub ṣabāru A, discussion; CAD M2, 245a, sub muṣṣabru and Von Soden, AHW. 1065a, sub ṣabāru "sich schnell bewegen." Cf. Lud. 1:71; BWL 35.
183. Cf. Prov. 30:19 for Biblical intrigue with these aspects of fauna.
184. Cf. CAD D, 16a-b, sub dābibu "talkative, gossipy (person)"; CAD D, 14a, sub dabbibu "talkative, gossipy man"; CAD D, 133a-b, sub dibbu A (3), "gossip, rumor."
185. Lud. 1:71; BWL 35.
186. CAD §, 3b, sub ṣabāru A (3), ref. TCL 3 (Sar.).
187. CAD K, 209-10 and Šurpu II:8.
188. M. Leach, Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 142b.
189. Cf. Isa. 16:2. See Prov. 27:8.

190. M. Leach, Funk and Wagnall's Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Myth and Legend (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 141b.
191. Eccles. 10:20.
192. ANET 519b; "possible Canaanite original," ref. MDOG 85, 33.
193. Prov. 26:2.
194. Aristophanes, Birds 1.600.
195. BT, Sotā 31a.
196. BT, Git. 45a.
197. Cf. section 4.5.11.2 "Exaggeration".
198. BWL 313 n. atirtu .
199. See CAD A2, 485b-86 sub atartu A; 489-90 sub /ataru/ (1,4'b); 499 sub atru ; cf. Ahw. 1489-1491 sub (w)atāru(m) lexical sections.
200. CAD A2, 489b, sub ataru , ref. ARM 1 47 (pers.let.).
201. CAD A2, 492a, sub ataru (4c), ref. KAR 130 (let. to Aššur).
202. CAD A2, 486a, sub atartu A (2), ref. ARM 4 58 (pers.let.).
203. Ibid. ref. ARM 2 13 (per.let.).
204. Ibid. ref. Bellenten 14 (Irišum).

205. M. Civil, "Instructions of Šuruppak," JNES 43, 292:143. See Counsels of Wisdom; BWL 99:21 "Do not converse [with a tale]bearer"; 101:30 "A talebearer is accursed"; 106:161-62. Cf. section 4.5.11.3 "Speech: Garrulity" and 4.5.11.4 "Speech: Gossip."
206. S. M. Moran, JCS 29, 66:21.
207. Cf. Prov. 10:19; 11:13; 15:2; 17:27.
208. See BT, Hul. 90b to Deut. 1:28 and I Kings 1:40.
209. See BT, Hul. 98a as relates to percentages of intermixed foods.
210. Theophrastus, Characters 35.
211. Theophrastus, Characters 36:11.
212. Counsels of Wisdom 23-24; BWL 99.
213. See Šurpu II:98-103; III:59, 128-38.
214. Josh. 23:7. Cf. I Kings 8:31, on causing another to swear an oath.
215. BT, B. Bat. 31a(end)-31b; Qidd. 65a, 66a; and acceptable single witness Yebam. 115a, 116b, 117b; Qidd. 65b(end)-66a.
216. Lev. 19:29. Note prohibition in Deut. 24:4 against against remarriage "and you shall not cause the land to be sinful."
217. Hos. 4:12.
218. Prov. 7:21.
219. Prov. 10:10.

220. Prov. 28:11.

221. Isa. 9:15.

222. See Job 31:16-22. Also see Job 24:7, 10 for a series of ethical causal effects.

223. Isa. 13:10; 28:12; 58:14; 61:11.

224. See Jer. 15:8; 29:4, 7, 14.

225. Cf. section 4.5.1 "Agency" and Spell 125 A12, A13, A15, A16; B7, B21.

226. Prov. 4:16.

227. Jer. 32:9-10; Isa. 46:6.

228. See T. Jacobsen, "Early Political Development in Mesopotamia," ZA 52, 91-140; Oppenheim, AM, pp. 107 and 187 and A. L. Oppenheim, "A Bird's Eye View of Mesopotamian Economic History," Trade and Market in the Early Empires, (Glencoe, 1957).

229. G. R. Driver & J. C. Miles, BL Commentary, p. 180.

230. Ibid. p. 181.

231. M. Roaf, "Weights on the Dilmun Standard," Iraq 44, 137-41.

232. CAD A1, 59a, sub abnu A, ref. CCT 2 (let.) "in the weight of the country"; YOS 8 (Rim-Sin contracts from Larsa) "royal weight"; CT 6 (ext.) "(according to) the palace weight stone for incoming goods."

233. 2 Sam. 14:26. Cf. Ex. 30:13, 24; Lev. 5:15; Num. 3:47, 50 and G. R. Driver & J. C. Miles, BL Commentary, p. 182.

234. See W. G. Lambert, JNES 33, 278:76-77 in a broken line but clear context; cf. JNES 33, 324:18f. a Hittite parallel.

235. BWL 133.

236. See Dialogue 62-69 and 29'-34'; BWL 149.

237. Cf. Šamaš Hymn 113; BWL 133 and W. Heimpel, "Nanshe Hymn," JCS 33, 90:142-43 for the improper use of the small and large weights.

238. Amos 8:5.

239. Micah 6:10.

240. Cf. Šurpu 11:113 and section 4.5.7.2 "Food of the Gods" and 4.5.15 "Weights and Measures."

241. Prov. 16:11.

242. Prov. 20:23.

243. See in Egyptian Art the vignette to Spell 125 in the Book of the Dead. This image can be seen in some of the later books of the Bible in the literary form: Job 31:6 "let me be weighed in an even balance" and Dan. 5:27 "you are weighed in the balances and found wanting."

244. A. L. Oppenheim, AM, pp. 195-96.

245. Cf. The Etana Myth.

246. Šamaš Hymn 113; BWL 132.

247. Šamaš Hymn 118-19; BWL 132.

248. Prov. 11:1.

249. Contra G. R. Driver & J. C. Miles; BL Commentary , p. 181.

250. E. Reiner, Šurpu , p. 14.

3.5 Social Parameters

Aspects of the patient's interaction with society can be culled from Šurpu, in which the individual's social identity is described as a combination of the nuclear family, the extended family, local association, and national loyalty. The Mesopotamian individual's social status and stability of position within the society contributed to a sense of personal well-being. The picture provided by Šurpu appears to corroborate information about social identity found in texts from personal letters to Wisdom literature.

3.5.1 Kinship, Family

Šurpu II:20-28, 35-36, 88-89; III:3-11, 176-181;
IV:58; V/VI:42-47; VIII:58, 59.

The primary social association of the individual was with the nuclear family. However, the catalogues that list the patient's relations go beyond that of the organic family to relations by marriage and friendship groupings. Thus, it is most appropriate to use the term kinship to describe best the social fabric of society as depicted in Šurpu.¹

Šurpu applies the following formulae to describe significant social units with a sense of extended family or kinship group:

Šurpu II:20-28.
father, son, mother, daughter, daughter-in-law, mother-in-law,
brother, friend, companion.

Šurpu II:35-36

father, elder brother, parents, elder sister.

Šurpu II:88-89.

father, mother, elder brother, elder sister, friend, companion, god and king, lord and lady.

Šurpu III:3-11

father, mother, father's father, mother's mother, brother, sister, seven paternal generations, family, in-laws, offspring, sucklings, friend, companion, comrade, associate.

Šurpu III:176-181

father, mother, father's father, mother's mother, brother, sister, friend, companion, family, in-laws, late offspring, sucklings.

Šurpu IV:58 (Šurpu VIII:59, reverse order)

father, mother, elder brother, elder sister.

Šurpu V/VI:42-47

father, mother, elder brother.

Šurpu VIII:58

brother, associate, comrade, companion, guest, fellow-citizen.

Based upon these textual references, it would appear that the paradigmatic patient of Šurpu was envisioned as a male family member with children, living siblings, and parents. This can be seen by comparing the point of view of the lists with references to his being a man and the sexual preferences mentioned.²

Little is known about the nature of the binding force for relations beyond the organic family unit.³ However, Šurpu presents, as a given, a description of the familial sense of responsibility and obligation, going beyond blood lines.⁴ The technical term for "kin" may well be salātu, that is, those that live within the same residence.⁵ The more commonly used term is kimtu "family, kin."⁶ Šurpu describes a religious sense of social loyalty projected beyond family members to friends and fellow

citizens. Friends and working relationships appear to serve an equally important role within the individual's perception of the extended family.⁷ These references, though poetic by nature, offer proof that the notion of kin extended beyond blood ties. The notion of kinship also appears to extend beyond the limits of time and space to grandparents and seven paternal generations as in Šurpu III:6. These associations when functioning well provided the individual with a positive feeling of divine approval. However, Šurpu also makes mention of the social and familial pressures experienced, which create disruption.

These catalogues reflect more than a neutral social appraisal. Apposition and tension exist between the various forces within the family structure. In Šurpu II:20-28 for example, father is mentioned in apposition to the son, mother to daughter, mother-in-law to daughter-in-law. The term "estranged" (iprusū) is used to convey the nature of the pressure between these forces in the kinship group. Likewise several of the references draw attention to the special status of the elder sibling, both brother and sister, within the family. Here, the problems of inheritance best explain the nature of the interaction between siblings.⁸

The catalogue in Šurpu II:20-28 literally describes the tensions within the family and kinship group as a source of the patient's pollution. This extensive listing offers us an understanding of the operative internal logic of the other kinship catalogues mentioned in Šurpu.

In Šurpu II:20-28, the patient stands accused and takes upon himself the responsibility for having caused kinship tensions. This catalogue is written to serve the perspective of the married son within the domain of the father, who is the tutelary head of the kinship group. The young man who is the patient stands in a position to effect all the parties mentioned. It must not have been unusual for the young married man to be a mediator between these conflicting powers within his orbit. We have here an insight to the kinds of pressures experienced within the kinship group. At the same time, this listing of the pressures between kin serves to remind the patient of the essential social relationships and to reinforce appropriate conduct. Thus, it reiterates the social norms and expectations of the period.

In Šurpu II:20-28, the grouping of the members according to sexual identification (males: father-son; females: mother-daughter; mother-in-law - daughter-in-law) raises the issue of possible underlying psychosexual tension between these roles. The sexual parameters of incest that reveal the sociological manifestation of psychological temptation are not lacking in the ancient Near East. In the myth known as the "Dynasty of Dunnum,"⁹ the gods play out several different combinations of incest as means of developing a moral perspective.¹⁰ In the Bible Lev. 18:6-18, there is an extensive listing of the sexual parameters related to kinship groups. This catalogue defines the members of the extended family and is written from the perspective of the father as the head of the kinship group. Certainly for Israelite society, sexual tabu was a means of clearly defining kinship groupings.

Sexual temptation and competition may well be a factor in the ordering of these parameters in Šurpu, particularly in the area of the in-laws.¹¹

To the modern ear, the catalogue inclusion of the daughter-in-law || mother-in-law in the kinship group is both logical and familiar. However, the identical schema of the extended family is corroborated in the prophetic lament in a Biblical description of family tensions:

"For the son dishonors the father, the daughter rises up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the members of his own house." 12

Job 17:14 and Zech. 16:45 also catalogue the organic family from the Biblical perspective.¹³

Tension within the kinship group is mentioned in Wisdom literature: "My family (kimti) treats me as an alien."¹⁴ In the incantation DINGIR.ŠA.DIB.BA, a kinship list is offered which includes the driving out of arni from: "my father, my grandfather, my mother, my grandmother...my elder brother, my elder sister ... the sin of clan, kith and kin."¹⁵ A kinship listing with a literary tone is given in the context of dishonesty and internecine tension in the "Cuthean Legend": "father [with father, brother] with brother, young man with young man, friend with companion, they will not speak the truth with another."¹⁶ This same connotation can be felt in this reference to kinship competition: "For even your brothers and the house of your father, even they deal treacherously with you...I have forsaken my house, I have left my heritage."¹⁷

Throughout the Šurpu text, the members of the kinship group, both living and dead, are considered intimately tied to the fate and well-being of the individual patient. A sense of guilt on the part of the patient, as related to his social interactions with his kinship group, seems to underlie the frequent mention of these parameters.

Ancient cultures, whose fundamental social outlook is centered in "guilt," acknowledge the hereditary nature of miasma within the immediate family. However, in the transitional stages from the "shame-oriented" to the "guilt-centered" culture, the miasma is characteristically seen as transmitted to all social contacts and members of the kinship group.¹⁸ When in trouble, an individual first turns toward kin. In Šurpu the patient frequently is turned toward kinship catalogue by the text in hopes of his locating the source of the miasma. He carries guilt about having disrupted his family life (Šurpu II:20-28), about having contempt for his elders (Šurpu II:35-36), about having sworn by significant family and social figures (Šurpu II:88-92; III:3-11), about the residual effect of past kinship guilt (Šurpu III:176-183), and about having offended kinship members (Šurpu IV:58; V/VI:42-47; VIII:58, 59).

A sense of guilt is a strong indicator of socially binding relations within the organic family: "the consequences of sins of the father or mother, brother or sister, family, kin (or) relatives have seized him."¹⁹ A sure sign of the individual's acceptance of this expanded social unit is the degree of transmitted guilt and responsibility the individual senses at a moment of turmoil. A traditional "guilt culture" speaks of the "hereditary and physical

character of moral impurity."²⁰

Each component within the described kinship group (father || son; mother || daughter; mother-in-law || daughter-in-law; brother || friend || companion) carried with it a special set of responsibilities, interactions, and parameters of acceptable behavior. Šurpu assumes, when it presents eight kinship catalogues, that the patient can identify the social aspects of his failure, pollution, and guilt. This, however, is not immediately apparent to the modern reader. The literature of the time sheds light on the cultural assumptions which were circulating concerning social relationships of the individual. It is therefore fitting to examine each of the roles within the kinship group as mentioned in Šurpu. A comparative survey of the literature reveals the centrality of kinship parameters within ancient Near Eastern religious and social life.

3.5.1.1 Father || Son Šurpu 11:20-21.

The tensions and pressures experienced between father and son, which might lead to alienation, and the resultant guilt are well documented. A general sense of tension is prevalent: "if a father and son are angry at each other."²¹ This tension may have at its root any number of sources. There is an expectation of honesty and loyalty on the part of the son: "a son will speak truth to his father."²² Nevertheless, the examples of the resentful and rebellious son are evident: "the son used to curse his father in the streets."²³

The father and son more often than not worked together. This became a contributing factor in the development of tensions: "the

son will become more important than his father."²⁴ In contrast to the image of the overly ambitious and successful son is the paradigm of the lazy son: "A father drags a boat along the canal, while his first born lies in bed."²⁵ Given the birthright of the son in question, parental expectation could also lead to family pressures. The competition did occasionally prompt a show of strength and physical violence, which then became the domain of the courts: "If a son strikes his father, they shall cut off his hand."²⁶ As in our text, the alienation could lead to a renouncing of one's status in a legal oath: "If a son should say to his father 'you are not my father'."²⁷

In North-West Semitic literature, the responsibilities are sensitively and poetically described:

"who takes his hand in drunkenness, who carries him when sated with wine...who plasters his roof on the day of [rain], who washes his clothes on the day of mud." 28

From this same reference it can be seen that the son also was responsible for: being a central figure in the management of the house, maintenance of ancestral gods, correct family burial, protection and defense.²⁹

In the Biblical tradition, the relationship between father and son reflects aspects of the transition from "a shame to a guilt culture" perspective.³⁰ Wisdom literature is concerned to a large extent with parental shame and embarrassment: "A wise son keeps the Torah, but he that is a companion of riotous men shames his father."³¹ The son's conduct was a reflection on the father and

potentially could destroy the father.³² Expectations of loyalty and performance created high tensions and emphasis on respect.³³ Biblical law is clear on the subject, speaking in the language of reward, punishment,³⁴ and deterrence.³⁵

Considering that Šurpu is written from the perspective of a man with his own family and a living father, the cross-cultural attestations of this classical tension clarify this major reference. A wise father practiced moderate child-management techniques out of respect for the intimate nature of the relationship between father and son.³⁶ Following human nature, the opportunities for a son to accumulate a sense of guilt and pollution are numerous. Cross-culturally, the folk wisdom prevailed: "there exists no son who does not cause (his) father troubles."³⁷

3.5.1.2 Mother || Daughter Šurpu 11:22-23.

The positive aspects of the mother-daughter relationship are not clearly defined. However, the sources of guilt are explicit. Verbal respect is considered a bare minimum. When this is refused on the part of the daughter, recourse is taken: "(this is a house) where daughters talk back spitefully to mothers."³⁸ Mothers were envisioned as the source of the tension: "a mother plans evil against (her) daughter with a smile."³⁹ However, the more ancient Sumerian wisdom realizes the shared responsibility: "The mother shouts at the child, the child talks back at the mother."⁴⁰

The tension became proverbial. A mother's aggression against her daughter is a portent of social disaster: "a mother will bar the door to daughter."⁴¹ This act is read as a formal form of social

rejection in a legal setting: "not even a mother opens her door to her daughter."⁴² A lockout scene can be read in the Atrahasis myth. It offers some sense that the two worked or shopped together, creating potential tensions:

"Daughter watched the mother's going in, but the mother would not open her door to the daughter. The daughter watched the scales of the mother, the mother watched the scales of the daughter." 43

There is also a hint at sexual distrust in the idea of watching the doors.

The prophet Ezekiel records the folk proverb which reveals the essence of the tension: "As is the mother so is the daughter, you are your mother's daughter, who loathed her husband and her children."⁴⁴ In Mesopotamia a mother and daughter relating positively toward each other was out of the natural order, as indicated in this prophecy, which augurs impending disaster: "mother will speak 'truthfully' to daughter."⁴⁵

3.5.1.3 Mother-in-law II Daughter-in-law Šurpu II:24-25.

The tensions between these members of the extended family are literally proverbial: "what you, daughter-in-law do to (your) mother-in-law, they (fem. pl.; your daughters-in-law) will do to you."⁴⁶ This adage is clearly written from the perspective of the mother-in-law who perceived the daughter-in-law as the source of the troubles.⁴⁷ The rights between the two parties also seem to have been a bone of contention, which might even have led to public embarrassment and litigation.⁴⁸ However, our text envisions the

patient-husband-son in the uncomfortable position of the intermediary. It is reasonable to project that his sense of responsibility, then frustration, turned to guilt on this matter. He is thereby susceptible to accepting the blame as the cause of this normal interfamily pressure.

Another source of tension documented in the ancient Near East is the sexual competition between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. The young age of marriage, together with the proximity and intimacy of the living conditions of the kinship groups, was a major factor.⁴⁹ It is apparent that these two women, who were integrated into the kinship group are a source of sexual enticement.⁵⁰ In Akkadian literature, a kinship listing describes the sexual infractions of a man: "(a man had intercourse with his mother, his sister, his daughter) a man had intercourse with his mother-in-law."⁵¹ This catalogue seems to be written to the same husband-son as the Surpu text. The tutelary head of the family also feels the sexual pressure of a young woman in the household, so we hear of him taking an oath against his fantasies.⁵² The daughter-in-law is not always so passive, nor innocent in the seduction.⁵³

In the Bible as well, the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law were conceived as a source of sexual temptation within the kinship group. In a significant catalogue of social norms, all which have the potential to destroy the fabric of the society if transgressed, there is a caveat to the young man: "Cursed be he that lies with his mother-in-law."⁵⁴ In context, this interdiction appears second only to incest with one's sister.⁵⁵ A

warning is also offered to the father, as head of the kinship group: "You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law; she is your son's wife."⁵⁶ In a summary of these warnings, the problem of the tempting daughter-in-law is again raised, second only to incest with one's mother.⁵⁷ Israelite society was aware of the problem of the "foreign" women within the extended family. As with any system of tabu, the potential danger was also perceived as a potential for a positive use of this power, as can be seen in the Book of Ruth.⁵⁸

Matt. 10:35 and Luke 12:53 recall the familial pressures of Mic. 7:6 in an apocalyptic projection. These two texts continue to emphasize the tensions between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law.⁵⁹ This reference has particular bearing upon the biographical details of the life of Jesus, in light of the competition between Mary and Mary Magdalene.

The long documented tradition of the tension between mother and daughter-in-law in various cultures amplifies the significance of this simple reference in Šurpu.

3.5.1.4 Brother against Brother Šurpu II:26, 35, 89;

III:5, 178; IV:58; V/VI:46-47; VIII:58-59.

Reference is made to brother in all eight kinship catalogues in the Šurpu text. This bespeaks the importance of this relationship to the potential patient. Brothers were naturally and socially at odds with each other. Birthright was a constant source of pressure. Each brother was in a position of contention for a better inheritance; the older the brother, the fewer the troubles.

The younger the brother, the greater the competition. Šurpu is written from the perspective of the frustrated, competitive, younger brother.⁶⁰ This perspective reflects a realistic understanding of the world view of the younger brother. There is also an awareness of the literary genre dealing with the plight of the younger sibling.

Literary images reflect an aetiology for the primal tension between brothers: "Star of the (battle)cry, who makes agreeable brothers fight with each other."⁶¹ Fraternal battle became a poetic image of social decadence: "brother shall not spare brother, they shall slay each other."⁶²

Multiple allusions to the interaction of brothers throughout Akkadian literature provides a background for understanding the references in Šurpu, because potentially they could defend and protect each other.⁶³ Even when on good terms the underlying tension can be felt: "you are my brother, oblige me I can do you a favor (some time)."⁶⁴ Ouations of reconciliation are also heard: "you should be on good terms with your brother and not quarrel."⁶⁵ More often than not, extant references describe disloyalty or dishonesty: "I have a brother, but he does not take care of me,"⁶⁶ also "the words which my unbrotherly brother of mine told you."⁶⁷

The dominant source of tension was financial competition, as reflected in this mathematical problem: "how much did (the share of) one brother exceed (that of) the (other) brother?"⁶⁸ There was contention over shared property as seen in the legal codes.⁶⁹ Their common holdings were ever disputed: "his share which (he holds) in common with his brother PN."⁷⁰ It was common practice

for the aplu to receive a minimum of a double share of any division of wealth⁷¹ or be in a managerial status over the holdings of all the brothers.⁷² The younger brothers invariably sensed that they were shortchanged: "PN our older brother, has been doing us wrong."⁷³ So well established was this social frustration over the norms, that Wisdom literature frequently plays on this theme sarcastically.⁷⁴ Occasionally, this competition could lead to physical violence and even arrest: "(a prison term for PN) because he struck his elder brother."⁷⁵ Another source of tension, which is now familiar, is in the area of sexual violence against each other within the same kinship group: "if a man has intercourse with his brother's daughter."⁷⁶

A cumulative sense of guilt might develop: "the spirit of a dead brother or sister has seized him."⁷⁷ These kinds of transgressions could be the diagnosed source of physical illness: "he has sinned against his brothers."⁷⁸ Both emotional and physical stress are a manifestation of a sense of responsibility and guilt, reminiscent of our patient in Šurpu. The tenacity of a brother's anger and grudge could cause the sense of helplessness and frustration indicative of Šurpu's patients: "A brother offended is harder won than a strong city and their contentions are like the bars of a fortress."⁷⁹

3.5.1.5 Friends and Associates (Friend, Companion, Comrade)

Šurpu II:26-28, 90; III:10-11, 34; VIII:58.

Further strong evidence of the kinship system is the inclusion of friends, associates, and companions together with

members of the organic family in the catalogues. They serve a literary function in the lists, but also appear to reflect the social reality. In terms of mutual responsibility, brothers, friends, and associates carry a similar status. Trust, companionship, and verbal honesty are the hallmark of the comrade and friend.⁸⁰

In Šurpu II:90, the "protecting deity" of "friend and companion" (ibri u tappê) are sworn by, together and equally with those gods of the organic family members. They shared a completely equal status within the kinship unit in terms of divine favors due them. The breaking of faith with a friend was itself a transgression meriting its own parameter: "the 'oath': to swear (faithfulness) to a friend, but kill him."⁸¹ A similar sentiment is heard in Šurpu VIII:58, where the denial of the act of cursing one's "brother, associate (itbāri), comrade (rū'a), companion (tappû), guest (ubari) (and) fellow citizen" is considered a transgression.

Šurpu II:26-28 demonstrates the most complete form of this perspective: "who estranged brother from brother, who estranged friend from friend, who estranged companion from companion." These three phrases can be read together as a literary unit or taken individually. As a unit they reflect a literary parallelism. The terms for brother (ahu) and friend (ibru) are a parallel pair, poetically expressing a kinship relationship: "brothers and friends are always angry with me."⁸² Likewise, the terms brother (ahu) and companion (rū'a) appear as a pair: "brother will put brother to the sword, friend will put friend to the sword."⁸³ Biblical Hebrew also recognizes this parallel pair, providing the semantic

link: "I am a brother to jackals and a companion to owls."⁸⁴

Poetry is not mathematics.⁸⁵ However, the solipsistic usage seems clear as a kind of staircase parallelism or climactic tricolon (brother || friend || companion). In Šurpu III:10-11, a catalogue of binding oaths of kinship lists four terms to express the notion of friends: "the oath of friend (ibri) or companion (tappe), the oath of comrade (rū'a) or associate (itbāru)." Cross-culturally, there is a shared literary and social correlation drawn between brothers, friends, and companions.⁸⁶

The term ibru conveys the meaning of comrade, colleague, or associate of the same status in a business or professional context.⁸⁷ The term appears frequently in parallel pair with tappû.⁸⁸ In Šurpu, both components of this parallel pair appear when expressing the transgression of adultery. Šurpu II:48 describes a hypothetical transgressor who "had intercourse with his neighbor's (tappēšu) wife." While Šurpu IV:6 points to the same parameter: "to visit the wife of one's friend (ibrišu) secretly." This transgression represents the worst kind of breakdown between friends and the use of both terms emphasizes the point.

Biblical Wisdom literature, however tends to prefer the loyalty and service of the comrade and friend over that of the organic brother: "There are friends (re'im) who merely pretend friendship, and there is a true friend (ḥēb) who is closer than a brother."⁸⁹ There is a kind of amazement mixed with disillusionment expressed concerning the fidelity of the colleague and companion over family ties:

"Do not forsake your own friend
 (rē'akā) and your father's friend;
 nor go into your brother's house in the
 day of calamity: "for better is a neighbor
 (šakēn) that is near than a brother that
 is far off." 90

The Biblical kinship catalogue includes your comrades and those of your father. However, there are still greater expectations for organic family members and thus greater disappointment.

The sanctity of the word is central to the relationship. Thus a friendship can be safely sworn by: "if he swore (friendship) to friend and companion." ⁹¹ The colleague is also the confidant in hard times, with whom you speak your heart. ⁹² This kind of intimacy presents ample opportunity for disloyalty.

Cross-culturally, the most common cause for estrangement and alienation between friends would be the breaking of the word, and signs of disloyalty: "my friend, who does not keep my secrets." ⁹³ Gossip is the obvious culprit: "but he that repeats a matter separates close friends ('allūp)." ⁹⁴

The loss of friends was a stock lament in the Belles Lettres literature. This social reality has frequently been misconstrued by psychological literary interpretations of paranoia on the part of the author. Basic stages of social rejection, failure, and isolation are recorded as a literary genre within this literature. The early stages are filled with the expanding worry of being ignored.

Job 16:20
 "My friends (ra'āy) scorn me."

Job 19:14

"My kinsfolk have failed (grôbây) and
my familiar friends (mîyûd'ây) have forgotten me."

Job 19:19

"All my trusted friends (mitēy sôdîy) abhor me."

Another stage can be distinguished when affliction or trouble strike; then one rejects the code of comrade-like conduct:

Ps. 38:12

"My lovers (ʔôhavây) and friends stand aloof from
my plague;
and my kinsmen (grôbây) stand afar off."

Ps. 41:10

"Even my own familiar friend (ʔîš ʔlômîy)
in whom I trusted...has lifted up his heel
against me."

The feeling of isolation brings on justifiable depression: "Friend and companion (ʔôhab wâra'â) you have put far from me, my acquaintances are in darkness."⁹⁵ The final stages are characterized by friends being more aggressive in their rejection: "My friend has become foe, my companion has become a wretch and a devil. In his savagery my comrade denounces me, constantly my associates furbish their weapons. My intimate friend has brought my life into danger."⁹⁶ The Poor Man of Nippur bemoans his situation and goes into isolation: "where neither friends nor companions have pity for him."⁹⁷ From the individual's perspective rejection and isolation are compounded, complicating the situation: "friends and companions (var. my fellow citizens) are always furious with me."⁹⁸

In both literature and culture, one's friends and associates

were powerful members of the kinship group. To be whole with oneself and the gods, the patient needed to be accepted by both blood and nonblood kin. A life without loyal, trustworthy comrades and friends took its toll in terms of a sense of belonging to the group. Acceptance by one's friends contributed toward the individual's well-being within the social fabric of the ancient Near East. The patient feels responsible, and therefore guilty for his feelings of isolation from family, extended family, colleagues, and friends who compose his social circle and kinship group. An insightful Wisdom tradition warns: "Seeing what you have done to your friend, what will you do to your enemy?"⁹⁹

3.5.2 Local Loyalty Šurpu II:19, 95-97.

The city in which the individual lived was another variable which determined social self-image. Rejection, isolation, or interruption of the smooth function within this social mechanism was considered a transgression. The fear of rejection underlying this parameter is clearly verbalized: "if you please, father, the city must not reject me."¹⁰⁰ Šurpu presents this parameter from both perspectives, that of the rejector and the exile.

In Šurpu II:19, the patient is accused of an act of cruelty by having caused a woman to be rejected by her city, presumably based upon an accusation of her disloyalty or antisocial conduct: "who turned [a... woman] away from her city."

Šurpu II:95-97 describes some of the possible causes for expulsion from one's city: "he a[te] what was taboo in his city, he betrayed the affairs of his city, he gave his city a bad

reputation." The possible causes are for the most part very subjective, including dietary transgression, betrayal of city secrets, and the city's embarrassment. Loyalty oaths were in some cases administered.¹⁰¹

In the Kassite period, being expelled from one's city was considered a powerful curse suitable for use on the kudurru : "(may the gods curse him so that) he may become an outcast in his city."¹⁰² The political motivation for such an action is a possible explanation: "an exile who was driven away will return to his city."¹⁰³ The betrayal and treason of the city's business by a woman possibly sheds light on the action taken in Šurpu II:19: "a woman will betray the affairs of the assembly."¹⁰⁴ It should be remembered, however, that the woman in Šurpu II:19 is the victim of an unfair or unjust accusation. However, false accusation was not restricted to female citizens: "an inhabitant of the city will betray a secret"¹⁰⁵ and "thus he did wrong and drove me from the town."¹⁰⁶

In a lament, Ludlul complains generally and specifically of social rejection. The correlation between city and kinship relations is also drawn:

Lud. I:80-84

"If I walk the street, ears are pricked;

If I enter the palace, eyes blink.

My city frowns on me as an enemy;

Indeed my land is savage and hostile.

My friend has become my foe." 107

The same section continues to describe the various social settings of rejection, including household slaves, family members, and the general public of the city. This is indicative of the fear of social rejection throughout Mesopotamian Wisdom literature. Rejection from the kinship group is a real fear: "Did you not hate me and expel me from my father's house?"¹⁰⁸ Being exiled from one's city was no less disturbing.

Cross-culturally, the exile is usually prefigured as a male. It would appear that the female exile from the city is built upon the established image of the exiled or banished man, which is more common in the Biblical texts. The literary image of the disloyal exile takes on particular significance in the Bible. In the prophetic tradition, the quality and impact of the parameter in Šurpu II:19 is captured and utilized as a literary metaphor: "For the Lord has called you as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit; but a wife of youth, can she be cast off?"¹⁰⁹ The answer to this rhetorical question is "no," if you are not to be considered a transgressor of this parameter.

"Turning the face away" (šūb 'et pānîm) is a way of transmitting both disapproval and rejection: "How then will you turn away the face of one officer of the least of my master's servants."¹¹⁰ The full value of the gesture may be captured in the idea of physically turning away from, therefore showing the back to the ostracized party: "for they have turned their back to me and not their face."¹¹¹

This gesture of rejection carries with it a lasting stigma, given the importance to the ancient Near Eastern individual of

association with the group: "I (God) will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb and I will cut him off from the midst of my people."¹¹² In Akkadian, the phrase pānīša usahhīram carries the connotation of ostracism for socially unacceptable behavior.¹¹³ Banishment¹¹⁴ is often the recourse of the king in his court: "the king speaks this thing as one that is guilty, in that the king does not fetch home again his banished one."¹¹⁵ The "outcast" (ḡḡīēh) becomes a poetic image that raises a sense of sympathy, of destitution, and misfortune at the hand of oppressors:

"...hide the outcasts, betray not the wanderer. Let my outcasts, the outcasts of Moav, dwell with you; let you be a convert to them from the face of the despoiler."¹¹⁶

This image is expanded to be symbolic for the eschatological suffering and redemption of corporate Israel: "I will heal you of your wounds because they called you an Outcast."¹¹⁷

The rejection and exile from the city as a social unit placed added pressure on the individual. The failure to maintain and demonstrate strong proof of local loyalty contributed to the patient's sense of pollution.

3.5.3 Divisiveness Šurpu II:53, 71-2.

See Section 4.5.6.2 for Egyptian parallels.

Mesopotamian culture was essentially conservative due to the socio-political-religious nature of the authorities' power. The Temple-Palace complex embodied a message which strongly encouraged

the preservation of the social status quo. Thus, the threat of disruption of the public order was considered a significant social parameter, carrying with great guilt.

In Šurpu II:53, the patient is accused of having "scattered a gathered clan." This line is broken; however, it represents a firm Mesopotamian social standard. Professor Reiner in her commentary notes that the following phrase cannot be satisfactorily rendered.¹¹⁸ Yet, from the context and the Mesopotamian attitude toward the subject, the message is clear concerning the disruption of kin. Šurpu II:20-25 already has stated the powerful sense of guilt the patient is subjected to for having estranged the various members of his kinship group from one another. The same parameter is described on a broader social plane in Šurpu II:71-72: "because of the assembly he divided, because of the tightly united company he dispersed."

The action of disrupting the unity of the family is frequently heard in omen literature, as the result of a bad sign: "the man's household will be scattered" and "for all time his house will be dispersed."¹¹⁹ In the Ištar Hymn we hear the pious lament and petition: "my clan is scattered, my fold is dispersed" and "may my dispersed clan gather together."¹²⁰ The fear of the breakdown of the family structure always exists for the Mesopotamian: "(so that) his household should not be scattered, his family not dispersed."¹²¹

The positive side of this parameter is heard in Mesopotamian literature, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a stable kinship structure. It is a common boast of the kings in the royal

inscriptions. Esarhaddon prays: may I extend my family, gather together my relatives."¹²² Assurbanipal says of Esarhaddon's family sense: "(where Esarhaddon) enlarged the family, gathered together the relatives and kin."¹²³ A sign of divine restoration of a given society is reunification after disaster: "the city will prosper, (its) scattered will be reassembled/ he will reassemble."¹²⁴

Mesopotamian Belles Lettres literature was aware of the danger divisiveness posed to society and attributed its causes to human misjudgment. In the Dialogue of Pessimism 38, we hear this value presented as the moral to a section on family life: "A man who follows this course breaks up his father's home."¹²⁵ As was stated earlier in the section 3.5.1 on "Kinship," one of the central factors which contributes to tension in the kinship group is sexuality. In the Counsels of Wisdom we hear of the dangers of granting too much respect or power to sexually tempting slave girls or prostitutes: "The house which a slave girl rules, she disrupts" and "She (temple harlot, courtesan) will disrupt the house she enters, and her partner will not assert himself."¹²⁶

In Egyptian literature, there is a possible parallel to the notion of social divisiveness. Unfortunately, the specific reference in Spell 125 B28 is unresolved in terms of its translation. Only Allen translates the phrase as "have dissembled."¹²⁷ Further study by Egyptologists could resolve whether this truly is a parallel reference.

The pro-male Mesopotamian bias is definitive regarding the ultimate source of family tensions. The social status of the male as

the head of the home was considered an assurance of internal stability: "either a house slave or mother(?) will rule the house of the man and it will become dispersed."¹²⁸ Thus Šurpu projects the ethical value and responsibility of family cohesion upon the male head of household.

3.5.4 Social Reversal Šurpu II:52; VIII:68, 70.

See Section 4.5.12 for Egyptian parallels.

The Šurpu series is written from the perspective of the upperclass. The patient, as well as the priests, were aligned with the order and authority of the Temple-Palace complex. The Šurpu text is well aware of the social stations which were the basis for the preservation of their culture. Šurpu VIII:70 presents a socio-political hierarchy emphasizing the centrality of the Temple-Palace Complex officialdom: "Together with the 'oath' of god, King, noble, or prince, governor, officer or judge." Any change in socioeconomic status carried with it serious theological implications. In the court setting, the loss of face and status was a clear indication to both sufferer and observer of divine intervention. Reversals of social standing were considered punishments from the gods.

The action of disrupting the social order within the family was a concern of Šurpu, as has been shown. In Šurpu II:52, where the economic status of a nobleman is conscientiously threatened, an additional factor is considered: "He ousted a well-to-do young man (etlu damqa) from his family." This action on the part of the patient was considered more than a mere inconvenience to one

individual, it was symbolic of an attack against the social order in general.¹²⁹ Given the emphasis in Mesopotamian culture on the importance of inheritance rights, this is in all probability the means for "ousting" the young man from his family. The disruption of the smooth transfer of inheritance rights was considered a sign of divine punishment for unethical business practices in the Šamaš Hymn 116-117: "His heir will not assume control of his property, nor will his brothers take over his estate."¹³⁰ Reversals of social standing spelled trouble for the whole society: "The rich 'will be impoverished,' the poor will become rich... 'the rich man' will beg (lit. extended his hand to) the poor man."¹³¹

Another form of social reversal which threatened the status quo is seen in the formal relationship between the master and the slave. This was an institution which contributed to the stability of the culture. In Šurpu VIII:68, we see the importance of appropriate, mutual respect being maintained: "Together with the 'oath' of cursing a slave, slave-girl, master or mistress, but denying." The privileged owner of slaves is reminded to treat his property with respect. A slave was traditionally imprisoned for denying or blaspheming members of the master's family.¹³² Ludlul I:89 realizes this painful social reality, which marks disaster: "My slave has publicly cursed me in the assembly."¹³³

In Mesopotamian Wisdom literature we hear the lament of the insulted master. Social reversal is a component of a literary formula of lament: "I, who strode along as a noble, have learned to slip by unnoticed. Though a dignitary, I have become a slave."¹³⁴ In the form of a parody, the final lines of the Dialogue of

Pessimism described the master as all powerful. ¹³⁵

Evidence of this fear of reversal of social standing is echoed as a literary genre. Divine favor was evidenced by familial, social, economic, and professional stability. In Theodicy 74-75, the author's religious expectations are described: "But I was bearing a profitless corvée as a yoke. My god decreed instead of wealth destitution." ¹³⁶ Reversal of social standing was theologically contradictory to the accepted notion of reward and punishment: "The vegetarian (devours) a noble's banquet, while the son of the notable and the rich (subsists) on carob." ¹³⁷ In addition the members of court considered, as the obligation of their personal gods, an assurance of social, political, and economic upward mobility:

"How have I profited that I have bowed down to my
god?
I have to bow beneath the base fellow that meets me;
The dregs of humanity, like the rich and opulent,
treat me with contempt." ¹³⁸

Theodicy 76-77 considers gross social reversal an evidence of the theological paradox of life and injustice: "A cripple is my superior, a lunatic outstrips me. The rogue has been promoted, but I have been brought low." ¹³⁹ However, court intrigue was first and foremost a real worry to the nobleman as seen in the section from Ludlul I:60-62:

"Thus the first, "I will make him pour out his life."
The second says, "I will make him vacate his post."
On this wise the third, I will seize his position."
"I will take over his estate", says the fourth." ¹⁴⁰

The worst insult is finding that your political enemy is the direct benefactor of your failures: "While he who utters defamation of me is promoted."¹⁴¹

In Egyptian literature, there are significant parallels to the Mesopotamian concern for the preservation of the social and political status quo.¹⁴² The fear of social reversal was theologically and socioeconomically motivated. The stability of Egyptian culture was also dependent upon the smooth, uninterrupted operation of the Temple complex.

Social disruption and reversal were indicators of disaster. The patient read his own personal situation in light of this world view. The Šurpu texts make several references to the social order and attempt to educate the patient regarding his role in maintaining the status quo.

Notes to Section 3.5

1. See A. L. Oppenheim, AM , pp. 76-79 for a discussion of some of the general problems in determining kinship terms for Mesopotamian society.
2. See Šurpu III:1; II:48; IV:6-7.
3. A. L. Oppenheim, AM , pp. 76f.
4. Contra W. R. Smith, Rel.Sem. , pp. 272f.
5. Cf. CAD S, 93a, sub salātu A, "kin by marriage" and Ahw. 1014 "Hausgemeinschaft."
6. CAD K, sub kimtu , 375b.
7. Šurpu II:27-28, 90; III:10-11; 179; VIII:58.
8. See Šurpu II:35-36, 88-89; IV:58; V/VI:42-47.
9. "Dynasty of Dunnum;" CT 46 #43.
10. See Th. Jacobsen, ID , p. 231.
11. Šurpu II:24-25; III:8, 180.
12. Mic. 7:6.
13. See also T. S. Prewitt, "Kinship Structures and the Genesis Geneologies," JNES 40, 87-98.
14. Lud. I:92; BWL 35.
15. W. G. Lambert, JNES 33, 280:115-17. Cf. Šurpu III:3-11.
16. O. R. Gurney, AnSt 5, 107:137-38.

17. Jer. 12:6-7.
18. See L. Entralgo, Therapy of the Word in Classical Antiquity (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), pp. 32-34.
19. CAD K, 376b, sub kimtu (c), ref. Kocher BAM 234 (Besch. inc.).
20. L. Entralgo, Therapy of the Word in Classical Antiquity (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), pp. 37-38.
21. CAD A1, 69a, sub abu A (1a), ref. CT 39 (SB Alu).
22. Ibid. ref. ABL (NB astrol.).
23. Ibid. ref. Borger, Esarh. 12. Cf. Prov. 20:20; 30:11, 17.
24. CAD A2, 176a, sub aplu, ref. CT 20 (SB ext.).
25. Theod. 245-46; BWL 85.
26. CH 195:41.
27. CAD M1, 308b, sub maru (lex.sec.), ref. Ai. VIII iii.
28. II D i 33-34, 47f.
29. II D i 26-33.
30. See E. R. Dodds, The Greeks and the Irrational (Berkeley: University of California, 1968), pp. 28-63. Cf. I Sam. 20:34.
31. Prov. 28:7. Cf. also Prov. 10:1; 15:20; 17:21, 25; 19:13; 29:3.
32. See Prov. 19:26; 28:24.

33. Cf. Isa. 45:10.
34. Ex. 20:12.
35. Lev. 20 :9; Deut. 21:18.
36. See Gilg. XII:26. Cf. Prov. 3:11f.; 22:6; 29:17 and contra: Prov. 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13.
37. CAD A1, 68b, sub abu A (1a), ref., VAS 16 (OB let.).
38. CAD Z, 88b, sub zērāti (b,2'), ref. VAS 16 (OB let.).
39. CAD M1, 302b, sub mārtu (1,10'), ref. Cagni, Erra II.
40. W. Heimpel, "Nanshe Hymn," JCS 33, 92:168-69.
41. A. K. Grayson and W. G. Lambert, JCS 18, 21 iii:15.
42. CAD B, 16a, sub babu A (1a), ref. PSBA 10 (NB leg.).
43. W. G. Lambert, Atrahasis , 112 rev. vi:7-10.
44. Ezek. 16:44.
45. A. K. Grayson and W. G. Lambert, JCS 18, 14 ii:17.
46. SB wisdom, BWL 261:10.
47. See CAD K, 80a, sub kallatu (a,3'), ref. CT 29 19 (OB let.) "your (mother-in-law) daughter-in-law hates you."
48. See CAD K, 80a, sub kallatu (a,3'), ref. YOS 2 (OB let.) and CT 29 12 (OB let.).

49. See CAD K, 81a, sub Kallatu (b,4'), ref. BE 14 (temple doc.) for a family unit of four including mother-in-law and daughter-in-law.
50. See CAD K, 80b, sub Kallatu (a,5'), ref. KAR 177 for a heremerology mentioning the favorable month for a daughter-in-law to join a household.
51. CAD E, 149a, sub emētu, ref. CT 29 (SB list of prodigies).
52. E. Szlechter, "Les Tablettes Juridiques datées du Règne d'Abî-Ešuh conservées au musée d'Art et d'Histoire de Genève," JCS 7, 99.
53. See CAD K, 80b, sub Kallatu (a, 5'), ref. KAR 180 (SB omen comm.); B. Landsberger, JCS 9, 131:6 (archive of Ubarum).
54. Deut. 27:23.
55. Deut. 27:22.
56. Lev. 18:15.
57. See Lev. 20:12.
58. Cf. MAL 46 for contingency provisions for daughter-in-law.
59. For general family tensions see Matt. 10:21 and Mark 13:12.
60. Cf. Šurpu II:35, 89; IV:58; V/VI:46-47; VIII:59.
61. Ištar Hymn, STC 2 75:9. Cf. Myth of Dumuzi and Enkimdu II Cain and Abel (Gen. 4:1-16); Jacob and Esau (Gen. 25:21-26).
62. CAD A1, 164b, sub ahāmeš (1b), ref. Gössmann, Era IV. Cf. A. K. Grayson and W. G. Lambert, JCS 18, 21 iii:9 "brothers will eat brothers" and the similar image in an eschatological usage in Matt. 10:21: "Brother will deliver brother up to death."

63. G. Dossin, "Une Lettre de Iarîm-Lim, Roi d'Alep, a Iašû-Iahad, Roi de Dîr," Syria 33, 66.
64. CAD G, 21b, sub gamalu (1,a,1'), ref. CCT 4 (let.).
65. CAD A1, 204a, sub ahu A (3a,2'), ref. TCL 20 (OA let.).
66. CAD A1, 196a, sub ahu A (1a), ref. Boyer Contrib. 119 (OB let.).
67. CAD A1, 197a, sub ahu A (1a), ref. ABL 301 (NB let. of Ašb.). Cf. Ps. 50:20 "You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother's son."
68. CAD A1, 197b, sub ahu (1a,4'), ref. MCT 50 D (OB let.). Cf. TCL 20 (let.) "fighting over silver and gold."
69. See CH 166:69; LE 38:23.
70. CAD A1, 199a, sub ahu A (1d,3'), ref. Dar. 144 (Darius).
71. See CAD M1, 311b, sub māru (1b',4'a'), ref. HSS 9 24 (let.) at Nuzi; cf. ARM 8 (leg.) two-thirds share. There is no indication that the first born is exclusively selected as the aplu.
72. CAD A1, 199a, sub ahu A (1d,2',e), ref. BE 8 (leg.) for the shares of three brothers held by the eldest.
73. Ibid. ref. LIH 92 (Hamm.).
74. See Theod. 247-50; BWL 85.
75. CAD A1, 199a, sub ahu A (1d,2',e), ref. PBS 2/2 (MB, Kassite).
76. CAD A1, 197b, sub ahu A (1a,3'), ref. CT 39 43 (SB A1u).
77. Ibid. ref. Labat, TDP 114 (med.).

78. CAD A1, 197b, sub ahu A (1a,3'), ref. CT 28 29 (SB physiogn.).
79. Prov. 18:19.
80. Counsels of Wisdom 148-53; BWL 105. Cf. Job 6:14 "To him that is afflicted love is due from his friend (רֵעֵ)."
81. Šurpu III:34.
82. CAD I/J, 6b, sub ibru (c), ref. PBS 1/1 2 (OB lit.).
83. A. K. Grayson and W. G. Lambert, JCS 18, 17:16; cf. 20 ii:5-6 "[colleague] will put colleague to the sword, friend will murder friend."
84. Job 30:29. However it should be noted that Biblical poetry prefers companion || brother Ps. 35:14; Prov. 17:17; 18:24; 27:10.
85. Oral communication: Moshe Held, Columbia University; September 21, 1975.
86. See section 4.5.6.2 "Social Disintegration" and 4.5.11.4 "Gossip."
87. See CAD I/J, 5b; Ahw. 363, " Genosse , Gefahrte ."
88. Cf. Maqlû III:15; IV:77 for similar catalogue of friendship terms.
89. Prov. 18:24.
90. Prov. 27:10.
91. E. Reiner, JNES 15, 137:94.
92. See Theod. 12; BWL 71.

93. "Proverbs;" BWL 278:14.
94. Prov. 17:9b; 16:28 and cf. Section 4.5.11.4 "Gossip."
95. Ps. 88:19.
96. Lud. 1:84-88; BWL 35. Cf. Jer. 38:22.
97. O. R. Gurney, AnSt 6, 157:130.
98. CAD I/J, 6b, sub ibru (c,2'), ref. 4R 59 (inc.).
99. "Proverbs;" BWL 232 ii. 35-37.
100. CAD A1, 384b, sub ālu (2d), ref. Sumer 14, 65 (OB Harmal).
101. See CAD A1, 384a, sub ālu (2c), ref. ABL 33 (NA let.).
102. CAD I/J, 57a, sub ikkibu (1b,2'), ref. ZA 9, 386 (kudurru).
103. CAD A1, 385a, sub ālu (2d), ref. YOS 10 31 (OB ext.).
104. CAD A2, 34b, sub amatu A (3b), ref. YOS 10 36 (OB ext.). Cf. also ZA 43, 96 (moralistic omen).
105. CAD A1, 384a, sub ālu (2c), ref. YOS 10 36 (OB ext.).
106. CAD A2, 295b, sub arnu (1a,4'), ref. EA 137 (Amarna let.).
107. BWL 35.

108. Judg. 11:7.
109. Isa. 54:6.
110. Isa. 36:9; Ezek. 7:22. Cf. also for images of divine rejection: "hide face" Isa. 54:8; 59:2; 64:7; Mic. 3:4; Job 13:24; 34:29.
111. Jer. 2:27; 18:17.
112. Ezek. 14:8.
113. See CAD S, 49b-50a, sub sahāru; YOS 10 39 (OB ext.); cf. pānīšunu usahharu KB 6/2 56 (myth.); CT 17 1 (inc.).
114. Ahw. 1006b, sub sahāru(m) (D,3a), panū sahāru "ausweisen" (to banish, exile); cf. CAD S, 49b-50a, sub sahāru (11,a,1',a'-b').
115. 2 Sam. 14:13f; cf. as a form of punishment Ezr. 7:26.
116. Isa. 16:3-4. Cf. the "exile" 2 Sam. 15:19.
117. Jer. 30:17. Cf. Isa. 11:12; Psa. 147:2 and Jer. 49:36.
118. E. Reiner, Šurpu, p. 55, n. 54.
119. CAD S, 155b, sub sapāhu, ref. YOS 10 41 (OB ext.) and KAR 212 r. 1:26. For additional references see CAD S, 155b-56a, sub sapāhu (8).
120. Ištar Hymn 78, 89. Cf. CAD S, 152a, sub sapāhu (1b) for translation of STC 2 81.
121. CAD B, 294b, sub bītu (6j), ref. K. 2617 (tamītu).

122. CAD K, 376b, sub kimtu (b), ref. Borger, Esrh. 26.
123. Ibid. ref. Streck, Ašb. 4.
124. A. K. Grayson and W. G. Lambert, JCS 18, 22: Rev. (i), 5.
125. Dialogue 38; BWL 147.
126. Counsels of Wisdom 71, 80; BWL 103.
127. Cf. section 7.5.6.2 "Social Dis-integration."
128. CAD A2, 246b, sub ardu (m), ref. BRM 4 12 (ext.).
129. Cf. Šurpu 11:52-54, our phrase is the introduction to a tricolon, which is unusual in the Šurpu series. See also Maglû I: 4-5 for a similar concern for loss of social status. For fuller consideration see A. L. Oppenheim, "The Position of the Intellectual in Mesopotamian Society," Daedalus 104 (1975): 37-46.
130. Šamaš Hymn 116-17; BWL 133.
131. A. K. Grayson and W. G. Lambert, JCS 18, 14:15-16; cf. 17:10 "paupers will become rich, the rich [will become paupers]."
132. See CAD A2, 244b, sub ardu (1c), PBS 7 60.
133. Lud. 1:89; BWL 35.
134. Lud. 1:77-78; BWL 35.
135. Dialogue 85-86; BWL 149.
136. Theod. 74-75; BWL 77.
137. Theod. 185-86; BWL 81.
138. Theod. 251-53; BWL 87.

139. Theod. 76-77; BWL 77.

140. Lud. 1:60-62; BWL 33. Cf. Lud. 103-04; BWL 37.

141. Lud. 1:94; BWL 35.

142. Cf. Section 4.5.12 "Social Status."

Chapter Four

Spell 125: A Parallel to Šurpu in Ancient Egyptian Literature

4.1 Introduction

Much of the focus of Egyptian religion, both in cult and in literature, centers upon the life of the soul in the world-to-come. The pyramids and private tombs stand as lasting monuments to this cultural and religious concern for the preparations, death, and journey of the soul in the afterlife. The Book of the Dead represents a collection of mortuary texts which developed over many millennia beginning sometime during the Fifth Dynasty. The texts offer us a glimpse into the many stages of preparation of the deceased, the eventual journey of the soul, and the events which take place upon arrival in the afterlife. This vade mecum for the soul also can be used to document the beliefs of the Egyptian royal religion and the moral issues of the time. In the The Book of the Dead there exists an intriguing parallel to Šurpu.¹

Spell 125 of The Book of the Dead consists of an extensive catalogue (thirty-six in Text A; forty-two in Text B) of social, religious, ethical, theological infractions, and transgressions. This text is known in modern scholarship by several names. It was first referred to as "The Negative Confession"² and more recently as "The Protestation of Guiltlessness."³ Breasted, a prominent Egyptologist, disputed the misnomer the "Negative Confession," insisting that this text was neither a confession nor negative.⁴ He was the first to introduce the idea that it is a "confession of innocence" before the judges in the afterlife.⁵

The debate concerning the nomenclature of this particular spell reflects a dispute among scholars concerning the actual function and interpretation of the text's ritual. The text construes these lists of socioreligious statements as a series of denials on the part of the deceased soul before a court of moral, final judgment (vs. 2 "The Broad Hall of the Two Truths"). On the other hand, Egyptian Wisdom literature in its own right reinforces the mythologic notion of a final judgment: "The council which judges...is not lenient that day...A man remains over after the day of his death and his deeds are placed by him in heaps."⁶ Another admonition encourages the appropriate preparation for death, both morally and materially (embellishment of the dwelling place for the soul), while still alive.⁷ This reference reveals that the Book of the Dead may well have been a form of prophylactic, self-education before the final judgment.

For the most part Egyptian religious literature is not a source for moral teaching or thought. By its very nature it is devoid of ethical lessons. In this sense, the moral categories expressed in Spell 125 isolate it from other religious texts. Thus, when seeking the possible source for the moral categories and issues raised in Spell 125, one must turn to Egyptian Wisdom literature. This genre provides the clearest glimpse into ethical standards of Egyptian culture at a particular time. For the best understanding of the worldview which is the basis for the lists of Spell 125, this work will search Egyptian Wisdom literature for parallels, cross references, and insights into the context and moral principles of Egyptian religion.⁸ This reading of Spell 125 removes some of the sense of isolation and provides a context for understanding the

possible background of these themes.

When reading the text in comparison with the style and content of Šurpu II, III, and VIII, Spell 125 demonstrates significant thematic parallels. But the form and method of presentation also are similar. Spell 125 is an atomized, didactic catalogue, which is illuminated by a close reading together with Egyptian Wisdom literature.⁹ There are strong indications that, in Egypt as well, there is a common genre of social, ethical, and ritual topics and issues which are raised in confessionals, Wisdom literature and other Belles Lettres literature. The posture of the suppliant soul in Egyptian Wisdom literature is similar in his guilt ridden personality to the patient of Šurpu: "As forth fool who does not harken...He does everything blameworthy...guilt is his food...dying while alive everyday."¹⁰ A sense of guilt and sin is apparent in Spell 125, but not quite developed.

Most Belles Lettres literature in either Mesopotamia or Egypt is a product of the upper strata and their socioeconomic milieu. The references and the context of Spell 125 reflect an awareness of and sensitivity for the concerns of this socio-political stratum. The transgressions are representative of a broad selection of religious, cultic, legal, ethical, and social issues. The style and presentation of the text reveals a sophisticated ordering and internal structure for these varied transgressions. In his discussion of the B version, Allen posits the notion that there is involved in the "laudatory phrases or epithets" an "overtone of magic," because "it amounts to a presumed predetermined verdict of innocence" at the trial.¹¹ There is a

concern for completeness in the clear denial of all of these transgressions. In short, Spell 125 is a sound literary and moral parallel to the Šurpu texts, inspite of the differences in culture and functional utilization within their given cults.

A significant factor in this comparison is the proximity of period in which the Šurpu and Spell 125 evolved. The Šurpu tablets, as mentioned before, were probably produced and edited during the Kassite Period 1700-1230 B.C.E.¹² The antecedents to the Book of the Dead are the Pyramid texts and the Middle Kingdom Coffin texts. Thus, the formulation of the texts was still in process during the beginning of the New Kingdom (1580-1090 B.C.E.) and continued to be copied in a noncanonical form until the end of the Saite period (during the 26th Dynasty, 664-525 B.C.E.). Several copies of the spell and some further versions exist down to the Ptolemaic period. Some materials in Šurpu are attested as early as the beginning of the OB period (1790 B.C.E.),¹³ with the series itself not projected earlier than to MB times.¹⁴ Setting aside the questions of interaction and influence between them, it is clear that Šurpu and Spell 125 shared the stage in their respective cultures for the same two millennia. Šurpu was without question a more ancient production.¹⁵ These texts appear at once to be a reflection of their own time and culture, while being influenced by the more universal thought and moral categories of ancient Near Eastern Wisdom literature.

These catalogues can be taken at face value and compared for their ethical concerns and style. In Šurpu we are given a glimpse of an individual suppliant's ritual response to the moral frustrations and dilemmas depicted in the Belles Lettres literature

of Mesopotamia. Spell 125 reflects the new emphasis on "individualism" and "inward" piety evident in the literature of the New Kingdom.¹⁶ Like Šurpu, it blends the dependency upon and belief in magic together with a growing sense of moral responsibility.¹⁷ The fact that such significant parallels do exist, bears out the essential international character of religious confessions specifically and Wisdom literature in general.

In the comparison of these versions of Spell 125 and the material in Šurpu, only issues of topical theme, content, literary usage, and style will be mentioned. The issues of translation, word choice, and lexicography will be left for a fully qualified Egyptologist. However, language problems in Egyptian and translation will be indicated by the multiple translations offered, in instances where difficult phrases or passages are concerned. The edition of Thomas George Allen, The Book of the Dead in Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization #37 (1969-74), 97-99 will be the basic translation. His translation is figurative, smooth, and solves many problems. The other translations are more literal, revealing the unique wording of the Egyptian. Spell 125 is represented by two major extant versions. Allen's A and B versions are based on Aa variants (18th dynasty, 1570-1320 B.C.E.).¹⁸ The following translations will be cited in difficult cases.

1) Miriam Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature (1976), Vol. 2, p. 124-127 will be referred to as AEL.

2) John A. Wilson translated Spell 125 in ANET 34-36. The texts are collected by Ch. Maystre and are taken from his Livres des Morts, Ch. 125 "Les déclarations d'innocence" (1937). Maystre gathers his A and B versions from texts through to the 21st dynasty (1085-945 B.C.E.). 19

As mentioned above, the A and B versions of Spell 125 are of different lengths. Version A lists thirty-six statements; version B has arrived at forty-two statements, probably based upon the magical significance of multiples of the number seven.²⁰

This chapter is therefore directed toward Egyptologists who have interest in the possible sources for Spell 125 from within Egyptian literature. The parallels with Šurpu are limited in this chapter to cross references to the same topics as discussed more fully in chapter three. The presentation of the Egyptian parallel to Šurpu will be as follows:

1) In section 4.2 and 4.2.1 Allen's translated text of Spell 125 A and B will be listed, with the alternative translations when helpful. The formula "I have not ..." which precedes all of the statements, is understood, and will be omitted here for convenience. This will render all of the statements in the affirmative; so that only what is being denied appears as a reference.

2) In section 4.3 and 4.3.1 a structural analysis of each version will be offered, indicating literary and topical organization of the material.

3) In section 4.4 two versions will be cross referenced intratextually for clarifications and parallels, according to

thematic areas.

4) In section 4.5 a comparative topical commentary on Šurpu and Spell 125 will then be presented, following the basic order of the cross reference topics. This commentary will include an intertextual comparison with selected Egyptian Wisdom texts.²¹

The text of Spell 125 A and B is organized and presented in this fashion to facilitate a comparison of the parallels to Šurpu for both Assyriologists and Egyptologists, who to date have not been exposed to this rich mine of comparative material. It is hoped that this chapter will serve as a basis for future studies from both disciplines.

4.2 Translation: Spell 125 A

*I have not:

- A1 sinned against anyone [AEL : done crimes against people]
 A2 mistreated people [AEL : mistreated cattle]
 A3 done evil instead of righteousness
 [AEL : sinned in the Place of Truth]
 A4 known not what is not (proper) [AEL : should not be known]
 A5 done anything bad [AEL : done any harm]
 A6 at the beginning of each day set tasks (harder than)
 I had set (previously)
 [AEL : exacting more than my due]
 A7 My name has not reached the Pilot of the bark
 [AEL : bark of the mighty ruler]
- A8 reviled the god [AEL : blasphemed a god]
 A9 laid violent hands on an orphan [AEL : robbed the poor]
- A10 done what the god abominates [AEL : abhors]
 A11 slandered [AEL : maligned] a servant to his superior
 A12 made (anyone) grieve [AEL : caused pain]
 A13 made (anyone) weep [AEL : caused tears]
 A14 killed
 A15 turned (anyone) over to a killer [AEL : ordered to kill]
 A16 caused anyone's suffering
- A17 diminished [AEL : damaged] the food(-offerings)
 in the temples
 A18 debased [AEL : depleted] offering cakes of the gods
 A19 taken [AEL : stolen] the cakes of the blessed [AEL : of dead]
- A20 copulated (illicitly)
 A21 been unchaste [AEL : defiled myself]
- A22 increased or diminished the grain measure
 A23 diminished the palm [AEL : aroura, a land measurement]
 A24 encroached upon fields [AEL : cheated in fields]
 A25 added to the balance weights
 A26 tampered with plumb bob of balance
 [AEL : plummet of scales]
- A27 taken milk from a child's mouth [AEL : mouth of children]
 A28 driven small cattle from their herbage [AEL : pasturage]
 A29 snared birds for god's harpoon tips
 [AEL : birds in the reeds of the gods]
 A30 caught fish of their <lagoons> [AEL : in their ponds]
- A31 stopped (flow of) water in its seasons [AEL : held back water]
 A32 built dam against flowing water [AEL : stream]
- A33 quenched a [AEL : needed] fire in its time
 A34 (observe) days for haunches of meat
 [AEL : neglected the days of meat offerings]
 A35 kept cattle away from the God's property [AEL : detained]
 A36 blocked [AEL : stopped] the God at his processions

4.2.1 Translation: Spell 125 B

I have not:

- B1 sinned [AEL : done evil]
- B2 robbed
- B3 been greedy [AEL : coveted]
- B4 stolen
- B5 killed people

- B6 debased [AEL : trimmed] measures
- B7 done crooked things [AEL : cheated]
- B8 stolen the god's property
- B9 told lies
- B10 taken away [AEL : seized] food
- B11 been ill-tempered [AEL : sulked]
- B12 transgressed [AEL : trespassed]

- B13 killed divine cattle
- B14 profiteered [AEL : extorted]
- B15 robbed bread rations [AEL : stolen]

- B16 eavesdropped [AEL : spied] [ANET : gossiped]
- B17 been garrulous [AEL : prattled]
- B18 quarreled except in behalf of my property

- B19 committed adultery
- B20 been unchaste [AEL : defiled myself]

- B21 inspired terror [AEL : caused fear]

- B22 transgressed [AEL : trespassed]
- B23 been hot(-tempered) [AEL : been violent]
- B24 been deaf to words of truth [AEL : to Maat]
- B25 made trouble [AEL : quarreled]
- B26 winked [ANET : at injustice]
- B27 done wrong sexually, practiced homosexuality
[AEL : copulated with a boy]
- B28 have dissembled [AEL : been false]
[ANET : evasive, over protective]
- B29 have quarreled [AEL : reviled]
- B30 done violence [AEL : been aggressive]
- B31 been quick-tempered [AEL : had hasty heart]
- B32 misrepresented my nature, washed the god
[AEL : attacked and reviled a god]
- B33 gossiped about matters [AEL : made many words]
- B34 (done) no wrong, done not evil [AEL : sinned, done wrong]

- B35 reviled (the King) [AEL : made trouble]
- B36 waded in the water
- B37 been loud-voiced [AEL : raised voice]
- B38 reviled the god [AEL : cursed]
- B39 been puffed up [AEL : boastful]
- B40 made distinctions (of others) from myself [AEL : haughty]
- B41 large have been my needs except of my property
[AEL : wanted more than I had]
- B42 reviled [AEL : cursed] the god in my own city [AEL : town]

4.3 Structural Analysis: Spell 125 A

A1-A7 General Confession

This first section opens with a general statement of confession and closes with a reference to the mythological journey of the soul. The body of this section is concerned with general formulae of confession. These comments cover sins of commission. A3 and 4 make reference to crossing the divine realm both in action and thought, a form of hubris perhaps.

A8-A16 General Transgressions

Here an ostensibly random collection of transgressions cover several categories of socioreligious statements. Some internal structure is apparent in two subsections (A8-A11 and A12-A16). A8-A11 alternate between cultic (A8: blasphemy; A10: abomination) and interhuman infractions (A9: violence to the defenseless; A11: slander a slave). This first section is followed by a subsection concerned with societal trouble and violence (A12-A16). Two transgressions of agency begin this analysis of human suffering, where emotional damage is brought upon another person in rising stages: "grieve," then "weep" (A12-A13). A14 provides that pair with a simple but powerful climax phrase dealing with murder. A15 almost appears to be a gloss or comment on the previous phrase. It admits that being an accomplice in murder is as serious as the crime itself. This section closes with a general confession which denies causing any form of human suffering (A16).

A17-A19 Sacred Foods**A20-A21 Sexual transgressions****A22-A26 Weights and Measures****A27-A30 Denial of Sustenance**

This section opens with two transgressions which are concerned with the withholding of sustenance from defenseless creatures (A27-A28). An apparent correlation is drawn between the human infant and small cattle in the animal world. The moral transgression is the failure to show concern for any young; be it animal or human. Following on the topic of denial of food, the section closes with two transgressions related to theft from the divine food stores (A29-A30).

A31-A32 Water Rights

The association of water creates the transition from the previous section. This section presents the interesting topic of timing and social concern. A31-A32 deal with the fair use of water rights in crop irrigation from a shared water source.

A33-A36 Cultic Responsibilities

The transitional notion is that of "appropriate timing". The transgressions and oversights are related to the care and maintenance of the god's: fire (A33), sacrificial offerings (A34), sacred fields (A35) and ritual processions (A36).

4.3.1 Structural Analysis: Spell 125 B

B1-B5 General Violence

This version opens with a single formulaic denial of transgression (B1), then is followed by a series of statements which outline kinds of social violence. B2-B4 deal with financial violence. The climax to this section is murder (B5).

B6-B12 General Transgressions

This section is characterized by an alternation between transgressions which effect the divine and human realms, as we saw in Spell 125 A8-A16. The transgressions on the human plane are concerned with general behavior patterns and attitudes, whereas the transgressions on the divine plane are more specific. B6 speaks of the debasing of grain measures (which technically could be for human or sacrificial use). This is followed by the accusation of doing "crooked things" [AEL : cheating], which could be in either realm of ethical behavior (B7). The remaining transgressions against the divine are concerned with sacred place (B8) and the denial of food (B10). The transgressions in the human realm are: telling lies (B9) and being ill tempered (B11). This section is closed by a general denial of transgression (B12).

B13-B15 Denial of Sustenance

This section may well be an interpolation or scribal error which should follow B10 (this section can be understood as

transgressions on the human plane; Cf. A27-A28). This suggestion is posited based upon its relationship topically to the issues of denial of sustenance and the alternating order of divine and human planes.

Without emendation, these three transgressions share the notion of denial: either of the food of the gods (B13, B15) or the just income of the human (B14).

B16-B18 Speech (Verbal Transgressions)

This section deals with excesses related to human speech. B16 is a statement which is concerned with what is heard (ANET : or what is done with the information heard). Excessive speech is considered a transgression (B17), whereas quarrelsomeness is acceptable only in defense of one's property rights (B18).

B19-B20 Sexual Transgressions

B21 Transgression of Agency

B22-B34 Attitudinal Transgressions

The formulaic general statement of guiltlessness opens this section (Cf. B12). This catalogue includes a broad selection of statements dealing with human attitudinal and behavioral transgressions. The tone and quality of moderation is the common factor in most of these statements. The exceptions would appear to be B24, B26 (ANET : responsiveness to injustice) and B27 (sexual transgressions). B34 neatly closes this section with a inclusive, general statement of innocence (Cf. A1, A4).

B35-B42 Speech (Verbal Transgressions)

The majority of these statements deal with transgressions or excesses in speech. It opens and closes with a comment on blasphemous speech against the king (B35) and the local god (B42). The same transgression appears roughly in the middle of the section (B38). In the context of speech, B39 "been puffed up" [AEL : boastful] would seem to refer to the verbal excess of exaggeration. The two obvious exceptions to this structural analysis are B36 (wading in the water) and B41 (material needs or requests); however, they do bracket the section as the second and the next to the last statements in the catalogue.

4.4 Indexed Cross References: Topical Areas and Categories

- 4.5.1 Agency (Cause other to...)
 Grief A12, 13
 Kill A15
 Suffer A16
 Terror B21
- 4.5.2 Animals
 Cattle, mistreated A2
 Divine cattle, killed B13
- 4.5.3 Boundaries A23, A24
- 4.5.4 Character
 Misrepresent nature B32
 Set tasks A6
 Swallow heart B26
 Temper B11, B18, B23, B25, B31
- 4.5.5 The Defenseless, Vulnerable
 Orphan, Poor A9
 Milk from child A27
- 4.5.6 Ethics (Social)
 4.5.6.1 Economic, usury B14
 4.5.6.2 Disintegration, been false B28
 4.5.6.3 Justice B24, B26
 Cheating B7
 Evil, general A1, A3, A5, B1, B7, B34
 Poor A9
 Transgress, general B12, B22
- 4.5.7 Gods, divine domain
 4.5.7.1 Blasphemy A3, A8, A17, B32, B38, B42
 4.5.7.2 Food of A17-A19, A29, A30, A34, B10, B15
 4.5.7.3 Human Knowledge of, limitations A4
 Birds A29
 Cattle A35, B13
 Fish A30
- 4.5.8 Materialism B18, B41
- 4.5.9 Ritual Obligations
 Fire A33
 4.5.9.1 Procession A36
 4.5.9.2 Sacred Place A3, A29, A30, B8
 Sacrifice A17, B15, A34

- 4.5.10 Sexual Behavior
 - Adultery B19
 - 4.5.10.1 Homosexuality B27
 - Self, unchaste A20, A21, B20
- 4.5.11 Speech (Verbal Transgressions)
 - 4.5.11.1 Abuse B35 (against King)
 - B32, B38, B42 (against god)
 - Angry B11
 - Criticism B24
 - 4.5.11.2 Exaggeration (puffed up) B39
 - 4.5.11.3 Garrulity B17, B33
 - 4.5.11.4 Gossip and Discretion B16, B33
 - 4.5.11.5 Lying B9
 - 4.5.11.6 Loudness B37
 - Quarrelsome B18, B25, B29
- 4.5.12 Social Status A11
- 4.5.13 Violence B23, B30
 - 4.5.13.1 Murder A14, A15, B5
- 4.5.14 Water
 - 4.5.14.1 Rights A31, 32
 - 4.5.14.2 Pollution B36
- 4.5.15 Weights and Measures A22, A25, A26, B6

4.5 Comparative Topical Commentary: Šurpu and Spell 125

4.5.1 Transgressions of Agency

The notion of agency, having caused others to transgress, is a cross-cultural topic of guilt and confession. Concern is expressed not only for the innocence of the individual soul, but also for the damage the individual might have caused others as a result of his own transgressions.

In Spell 125, there is consideration given to the victims of the particular soul's transgression. When an individual's conduct or action creates grief (A12), weeping (A13), suffering (A16) or terror (B21) of an innocent, the soul is held accountable. A15 reflects an awareness of entrapment on the one hand and for the individual's being an accomplice to a murder on the other. The transgression of agency exposes the full culpability of indirect involvement in crime. This is seen most clearly in Šurpu II:14-15, where a judge is led astray, but the patient is considered responsible.

In Šurpu II:14-15, the awareness is of having caused others to transgress: "who caused treachery to be spoken, (inappropriate) pronouncements he caused in the judge."²² The world view of Šurpu is alerted to the possibility of one individual drawing another into a similar condition of sinfulness and guilt. In these cases, the individual who causes the transgression is as responsible as the one who commits the injustice.

The very fact that they (the soul or the patient) have

caused others to hurt or to transgress is an extension of basic principles of both Spell 125 and Šurpu. Both project a common ethical concern for the effect of the behavior of the individual upon the society as a whole.

4.5.2 Mistreatment of Animals

Concern for animals is a universal issue in Wisdom literature. The success of agriculture and other human institutions depended on the well-being of domesticated animals. The interdependency of the animal and human population was a source of amazement, if not religious awe for ancient civilizations.

Spell 125 mentions concern for treatment of animals twice.²³ The difficulty in translating A2 is to be found in the Egyptian idiom of "cattle of the gods" as a metaphor for humanity in general.²⁴ Allen in his text translates "mistreated people" (A2), reflecting a figurative understanding of an ellipsis. This problem of translation seems to have been laid to rest by Lichtheim, who returns to the literal translation of "I have not mistreated cattle."²⁵ B13 seems clearly related to the destruction of divine property. Similar concern is seen for the sacred place and the temple's animals in Theodicy 135-6: "I will ignore my god's regulations and trample on his rites. I will slaughter a calf."²⁶ It would appear as though the food stores of the gods were a serious concern of the religious authority and thus the content of Spell 125.²⁷ This raises questions as to how serious, if at all, the ethical concern for animals was in the ancient Near East.

In Šurpu III:30 there is a reference to a gesture of scorn

or mistreatment of cattle: "to strike the cheek of an animal." Any interpretation of this statement must be tentative. It should be mentioned that Šurpu III:30 appears in the context of another ritualistic gesture of "throwing a clod in the water."²⁸ It is difficult to ascertain if this ritual (or destructive) action is held within the Temple precincts or property. Mesopotamian religious authority was also concerned for the protection of their stores and herds. But what can be said is that this is considered a transgression and therefore against the societal norms of the time.²⁹ The comparison of the references is transparent. The difficulty lies in the final and definitive interpretation of these actions within their own societies, and then we should consider whether they are truly parallels. What can be posited at this juncture is that the interaction between man and beast, both in Mesopotamia and Egypt, was a critical area of conduct.

4.5.3 Boundaries

In Egyptian civilization the clear delineation of boundaries was a key to the economic survival of the individual and the society.³⁰ Modern understanding of the "feudal" land distribution and use system in ancient Egypt is limited. Nevertheless, the issue of accurate and reliable land measurement was of concern to Spell 125 A23-A24. In a series (A22-A26) related to ethical business transactions, the land measurement standards are set down as a clear component in deportment. An interesting insight into the behavioral norms of Egypt is revealed as related to a man and his property. In B18 the importance of moderation of one's temper is raised. However,

a qualifying consideration is made. Anger is justifiable when arguing on behalf of one's property. Likewise, the ideals of antimaterialism and moderation are modified by the legitimate concerns for one's property in B41.

Egyptian Wisdom literature shows concern for the maintenance of accurate boundary measurement:

"Instruction of Amen-em-Opet," Ch. 6
 "Do not carry off the landmark at the boundaries of the arable land, nor disturb the position of the measuring cord...Guard against encroaching upon the boundaries of the fields lest a terror carry you off." 31

Firm local and national boundaries were a symbol of the social structure and position essential to the sense of stability for the ancient Egyptian, and so we hear this instruction to the King Meri-ka-Re: "Respect the nobles and make your people to prosper. Establish your boundaries and your frontier patrol."³²

Mesopotamian culture was equally concerned for just and correct application of land and property rights. One of the main factors in the Kassite period was this concern for property rights and boundaries. Thus, we hear in Surpu 11:45-46: "he set up the untrue boundary, but did not set up the true boundary, he removed mark, frontier and boundary." This concern for boundaries is reflected several other times in Surpu,³³

Throughout the ancient Near East ethical land measurement is heard as a cross-cultural theme for the most practical of reasons; the survival of the existing social systems. In addition, this was a moral issue for these cultures because unethical practices in this area had immediate and devastating impact on the poor and the

defenseless of society: "Do not encroach upon the boundaries of a widow."³⁴

4.5.4 Character

The nature of one's character and the development of personal qualities appears cross-culturally in Wisdom literature. Almost by definition the acquisition and growth of positive characteristics is the goal of these texts. In Egypt in particular, the evolution and positive direction of the Ka is essential to personal and religious well-being. An individual concerned for the nature of his character will attempt to present himself as even-keeled and not given to emotional outbursts. We hear at the end of the "Instruction for Meri-Ka-Re": "Give the love of thee to the whole world, a good character is a remembrance."³⁵

Being ill-tempered (or ANET : contentiousness) is considered an undesirable trait in Spell 125 B11. A sense of calm and emotional self-control is an admirable personal and professional characteristic: "If you are one to whom a petition is made, be calm as you listen."³⁶ Contentiousness can be born of jealousy: "It is only a little of that for which one is covetous, that turns a calm man into a contentious man."³⁷

Moderation and control of the temper is another broad consideration of Wisdom literature. Spell 125 B23 and B29 describe this trait. Quarreling is a manifestation of anger (B18). Overly quick mood shifts were considered a transgression (B31). However, the vivid metaphor for the angry man is the idiom "hot-tempered" (or ANET : "overheated") which is used in B23. This idiom appears

throughout Egyptian Wisdom literature. In the "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet," Ch. 4 is directed toward the comparison of "the heated man of the Temple" as compared to "the truly silent man."³⁸

Other adages are devoted to the dangers of the "heated man": "Do not associate to yourself the heated man, nor visit him for conversation."³⁹ This angry individual is to be avoided in the name of your own personal well-being.⁴⁰ The attribute of patience is lauded: "Be not evil; patience is good."⁴¹

Surpu expresses an equal concern for a stable temperament. A wild and physically uncontrollable anger symbolically augered socially destructive violence: "He who... shakes and trembles in anger."⁴²

4.5.5 The Defenseless, Vulnerable

The poor, the weak, the defenseless, and the vulnerable of all kinds appear as issues throughout Wisdom literature. The widow and the orphan are the symbols of legal and economic defenselessness.⁴³ They offer an opportunity for the wealthy to demonstrate either sensitivity or cruelty.

In Spell 125 there are two references to unfortunates who are defenseless. A9 presents some problem in translation. The line can be understood as laying "violent hands on an orphan" or doing "robbing the poor." In either case, there is an abuse of the defenseless. Both translations are verifiable in the Egyptian Wisdom literature.

A King uses such a phrase to indicate his sensitive generosity to his people: "I gave to the destitute and brought up

the orphan."⁴⁴ In spite of the clear class distinctions evident throughout Egyptian Wisdom literature, the poor are not to be discriminated against: "Do not distinguish the son of a (positioned) man from a poor man."⁴⁵ In the "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 2, a catalogue of the defenseless and vulnerable is presented: "Guard yourself against robbing the oppressed, and against overbearing the disabled. Stretch not forth your hand against the approach of an old man..."⁴⁶ In spite of the fact that material success is considered a gift of the gods, one is not supposed to lord over one to whom a change has come.⁴⁷ In the "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" all of Ch. 28 is devoted to the topic of the needy, including the widow and the stranger: "God desires respect for the poor, more than the honoring of the exalted."⁴⁸ The same text in Ch. 25 is devoted to the listing of the physically and emotionally destitute.⁴⁹

Spell 125 A27 describes the abuse of a vulnerable infant: "taken milk from a child's mouth." In Šurpu III:97-98, there is a parallel māmītu -parameter mentioned: "to put the breast into the mouth of a small child, (to cause) the drying up of the breast." A tentative interpretation might be offered. The positive side of this value can be heard later in Šurpu IV:28: "to treat the small child tenderly". "The breast" can be considered the symbol of concern and succor in times of defenselessness. Thus, "putting the breast" is the extension of aid and "the drying up of the breast" is a withdrawal of assistance at a time of need.⁵⁰ When read in context it is clear that the transgression deals with the abuse of human and animal young. This is a signal example of the instructive nature of cross-cultural comparison of motifs and genre. It can be deduced

that the image of feeding or denying an infant is a poetic symbol for cruelty or sympathy toward the defenseless and vulnerable.

4.5.6 Ethics

The social ethics of a civilization are illuminated in Wisdom literature. Spell 125 documents several forms of social ethics which are verifiable in other texts. These statements tend to describe economic and legal aspects of life.

4.5.6.1 Usury

Apparently, the societies of the ancient Near East seem to have had an uneven distribution of wealth which led to the practice of loaning and credit.⁵¹ In situations where credit was offered on money with interest, usury became a temptation. We hear in Spell 125 B14 of the transgression of "profiteering."⁵² The core of the transgression seems to be the desire to take more than is just. Evasion of debts or responsibility are equally detestable. Lichtheim's translation would also bring A6 to bearing upon this point: "I did not begin a day by exacting more than my due."⁵³ This is a matter for further investigation by Egyptologists.

In Egypt Wisdom literature, we sense the centrality of fair play because anyone can experience financial reversals without warning: "Satisfy (n. 22 "pay off") your clients with what has accrued to you...As to him who evades satisfying his clients men say: "He is a ka of robbery. A proper ka is a ka with which one is satisfied."⁵⁴ Thus, the message in Egypt appears to be one of moderation in business transactions. Excessive ambition is a

transgression.

Fairness in dealing with the poor is amplified in the "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 11: "Be not greedy for the property of a poor man, nor hunger for his bread. As for the property of the poor man it is a blocking of the throat..."⁵⁵ In Ch. 13 of the same text, a formula is offered for collecting back payment from the poor without causing excessive hardship: "If you find a large debt against a poor man, make it into three parts, forgive two and let one stand."⁵⁶

In a letter from Ugarit, we hear that charging interest is not gentlemanly or becoming between friends.⁵⁷ This Western Semitic ethic is paralleled in the Biblical literature: "to a stranger you may lend upon interest; but to your brother you shall not lend upon interest."⁵⁸ Biblical Belles Lettres literature also shows concern for this potential form of cruelty: "He who by usury and unjust gain increases his substance, gathers it for him who will graciously regard the poor."⁵⁹

4.5.6.2 Social Disintegration

A potential parallel in this area of ethics demands further investigation. In Spell 125 B28, a difficult phrase appears which is rendered by Allen as "have dissembled" (with the meaning "false," "been evasive or ANET : "over-protective"). This is somewhat reminiscent of the phrase in Šurpu II:53, "he scattered a gathered clan."⁶⁰ In Šurpu II:71-2 we also hear an accusation of disruption of societal subgroups: "because of the assembly he divided, because of the tightly united company he dispersed."

At this juncture, only the following hints at the meaning of this reference can be offered. In Egyptian Wisdom literature we hear of a kind of "the contentious man" who: "is a disturbance to citizens: he produces two factions among the youth... he is also a traitor...A talker is "an enciter" of a city."⁶¹ He seems to fit the description of a social disintegrator, of which the ruling class is very wary. The "dissembler" might best be interpreted as one who threatens the existing status quo of the social fabric, be it family or city. This is a working hypothesis for this possible parallel.

4.5.6.3 The Importance of Justice

The trivialization of the concept of justice is cross-culturally an ethical concern. Internationally, justice is considered to be the main attribute of the god and the central concern of the king as well as the commoner.

Spell 125 B24 confesses being deaf to the truth or Ma'at. Likewise, in Spell 125 B7, the soul is accused of having caused others to be "crooked." This same image of ethical "crookedness" is seen in the Akkadian egru in Surpu II:10. Active and passive perversions of justice are considered transgressions.

In Spell 125 B26 the accusation stands as to having "winked (at injustice)." This particular translation presents its own difficulties. However, this gesture in this context can be considered a sign of derision, carrying an exclusively negative connotation. A similar expression is admonished against in Egyptian Wisdom literature, at the table of a superior: "You should not

pierce him with many stares, (for such) an aggression is against him is abomination to the ka ."⁶² The physiognomy of the wink carries any number of negative cross-cultural implications:

Job 15:12

"why do your eyes wink" (theological doubt)

Ps. 35:19

"those who hate me without cause wink their eye" (social derision) 63

Prov. 10:10

"he who winks with the eye causes sorrow."⁶⁴

It would appear as though the gesture of winking at injustice projected a negative image.⁶⁵

Justice (ma'at) is frequently mentioned in Egyptian Wisdom literature. In the "Instruction of Ptah-hotep," justice is considered the attribute of the good leader: "Justice is great, its appropriateness is lasting...It is the right path before him who knows nothing."⁶⁶ A large catalogue which attempts to define the aspects of justice appears in the "Instruction for Meri-ka-Re" including the topics of quieting "the weeper," not oppressing "the widow," not disinheriting a man, not impairing "officials," avoiding wrongful punishment, not slaughtering, meting out efficient punishment, strong rebellion control and not murdering a man with positive qualities.⁶⁷ Any minimalization of the concept of Justice was in direct conflict with the tone and content of Egyptian culture.

4.5.7 Gods

In spite of the differences between Egyptian and Mesopotamian religion, the topics and transgressions raised by the established religious literary schools is very similar. The Temple complex in each society served a central function, producing expectations and obligations for the common citizen. These religious and cultic demands are expressed as the requests and requirements of the gods themselves. In reality, these ritual and religious behavioral parameters are a means of maintaining stability within the priestly and Temple establishment. Thus, the parallel material between Spell 125 and Šurpu is mostly to be found as a reflection of the social structures of ancient religious institutions.

4.5.7.1 Blasphemy

Blasphemy is a concern of Spell 125. It is mentioned three times within the texts. "Reviling the god" is mentioned twice within a section concerning correct and appropriate speech (B38 and B42; according to Lichtheim B32 as well). These references appear to refer to a form of blasphemous speech or action against the gods. B42 is qualified in that the local city god is the object of abusive language. A8 and B38 mention the general transgression of "reviling the god."

There is little mention of blasphemy against the gods in Egyptian Wisdom literature. This may be explained by the previously noted Egyptian reluctance toward true confession of such a controversial transgression.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, we do hear the guarded statement: "God is angry at them who disregard him."⁶⁹

This general sense of disregard is to be found in Spell 125 A10 "done what the god abominates."⁷⁰

In Šurpu, where neglect and blasphemy are synonymous there is mention made of abusive speech toward the deities as a source of punishment and guilt. Šurpu Tablet II shows particular concern for this form of disregarding the authority and stature of the gods:

Šurpu II:33 "he blasphemed the god, neglected the goddess"

Šurpu II:73 "because of all the contempt for the god and goddess"

Šurpu VIII:81 "blasphemy against god and goddess"

The fullest reference comes in the middle of a series listing transgressions of speech in Šurpu II:6-17. In context, these several broken lines clearly point toward verbal abuse of the gods: (who scorned his god), despised his goddess; (who...), spoke evil things; (who...), spoke unseemly things."⁷¹

4.5.7.2 Food of the gods

One of the largest categories within Spell 125 is the disruption, destruction or theft of the food of the gods. In A17 the accusation is related to the apparent reduction of the required allotment of "food-(offerings)" to the gods. The bread offering is damaged in A18. B15 is almost a commentary on this same reference, in that the "bread ration" is "robbed." Based upon the literary analysis of the section from B6-B11, B10 might well refer to the removal of divine food.⁷² Beyond the fact that this transgression is presumptuous and irreverent, it is also a serious impingement upon the income of the priesthood.

In some ways diminishing the importance of sacrifice, we hear of this definition of the "food of the god": "singing, dancing and incense are his food."⁷³ Sacrificial offerings could also be denied on a daily basis as a means of bribery for divine favors.⁷⁴

Theft of the sacrificial foods may have been a factor due to the extreme pressure the producers were placed under by government requirements:

"Let me tell you also of the fish catcher. He is more miserable than any (other) profession...If there is a cutting down in the total 'of the official register', then there is a complaint."⁷⁵

The bird catcher is also mentioned earlier in this text.⁷⁶ This helps to explain these other pleas in Spell 125: "I have not snared birds from the god's harpoon" (A29 as rendered by ANET) and "I have not caught fish of their (lagoons)" (A30). A warning is offered against "falsifying the temple rations."⁷⁷ These laborers, when under pressure, turned to the richest resources when they could to fulfill their needs.

A positive ethic mentioned in Egyptian Wisdom literature concerns being generous in the feeding of the gods: "Make the offering-table flourish, increase the loaves, and add to the daily offerings."⁷⁸ It is difficult, given the theory of do ut des, to imagine the gods requesting greater offerings and thereby obligating themselves to excessive favors to the suppliants. The benefit to the priesthood is rather transparent in this adage.

In Šurpu similar accusations are made. A catalogue of ritual and cultic infractions is made including several similar references.⁷⁹ In Šurpu II:74, he pledges one thing to the gods and gives another: "because he promised in heart and by mouth, but did not give." Šurpu II:37 when read within the context of Mesopotamian cross-references, might well be interpreted to be cheating on a pledged grain ration of the gods: "gave with small (measure) and received with big (measure)."⁸⁰ In Šurpu II:76-77, there is a fuller explanation of this transgression: "he made purifications, (then) complained and withheld (it), ...saved something (for the gods, but) ate it." This change of heart in medias res was not only a form of hubris, but also very damaging to the concerns of the officials of the Temples. A more violent form of interference with the food of the gods is also heard: "(he) disarranged the altar that had been prepared."⁸¹ In all probability, this reference as well might be related to the theft of the food of the gods: "he has eaten stolen meat."⁸²

4.5.7.3 Human Knowledge of the gods, limitations

Hubris is a topic of discussion throughout the ancient world. There are times when the gods seem more distant than others: "the god who knows characters has hidden himself."⁸³ And at these moments of doubt and frustration literature frequently resigns itself to the fact that the designs and plans of the divine are beyond human ken. There are clear limits set to human knowledge.

Spell 125 A4 confesses: "I have not known what should not be known" (ANET 's rendering is more literal: "I have not known what is not").⁸⁴ In Egyptian Wisdom literature the individual is warned from being overly curious as to the nature or appearance of the gods: "You should not inquire about his affairs."⁸⁵

In Surpu II:64 we hear a similar confession: "(he) who knows improper things, has learned unseemly things."⁸⁶ Akkadian Wisdom literature also contemplates the limits of human knowledge:

Lud. II:36-7

"Who knows the will of the gods in heaven? Who understands the plans of the underworld gods? 87

Lud. II:48

"I am 'appalled' at these things; I do not understand their significance." 88

Theod. 58

"the plan of the gods is remote."⁸⁹

Theod. 256-7

"The divine mind, like the center of the heavens is remote; knowledge of it is difficult; the masses do not know it." 90

It would appear that restrictions against excessive theological speculation were supported by the religious authorities.

4.5.8 Materialism

It is not unusual to see both the positive and negative aspects of materialism mentioned cross-culturally. True wisdom is aware of both extremes and chooses the moderate course between these options. This is the polar, didactic method indicative of Wisdom literature. However, this system reveals not only the methodology of

these texts, but also the internal contradiction that exists around the issue of materialism. The destructive forces at play within the pursuit of material wealth were known to the ancients. However, wealth and prosperity were universally considered a tangible barometer of divine approval. Thus, Wisdom literature will also tend to praise the merits of aggressive and industrious acquisition of wealth. It should be noted that later wisdom collections of "Instruction," such as "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet," tend to diminish the importance of "worldly success."⁹¹ Both of these aspects of the wisdom discussion of materialism are apparent in our texts.

Spell 125 B18 refers to the defense of a man's property as an acceptable exception for being argumentative.⁹² At the end of Spell 125 B41, we hear the plea that: "my needs have not been large except for my property." The dualistic attitude concerning materialism is heard in this one phrase. The statement of not needing (ANET): "too large a portion" or "wanted more than I had" comes through as an accepted norm. However, the notion accumulating sufficient property is entered as a qualification.

In Egyptian Wisdom literature, the ancients heard from the positive side: "He is a possessor of property who has no wants."⁹³ What one owns and possesses is considered a gift of the gods, which can also be taken back if one becomes overly materialistic.⁹⁴ A change of fortune from poverty to riches should encourage generosity: "do not be miserly with your wealth, which has accrued to you as the gift of god."⁹⁵ These economic reversals were considered frequently, a reflection of hidden fears: "If you are

(now) important after your (former) unimportance...You are not behind some other equal of yours to whom the same has happened."⁹⁶

One is encouraged to do the most with what one has been granted, frequently using the metaphor of one's garden: "And fill your hand (with) every flower which the eye may behold. One 'feels the need of' them all and it is good fortune not to lose them..."⁹⁷ Certain negative characteristics and tendencies are related to the accumulation of wealth and property. Egyptian Wisdom literature senses the pitfalls of the nouveau riche. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 11, describes a rising sense of greed for the property of the poor, through the metaphor of overeating. The excess could never be digested, but only vomited up.⁹⁸ Being covetous was destructive of the individual as well as society.⁹⁹

Šurpu makes no reference to this value, however Akkadian Wisdom literature echoes this concern for conspicuous consumption:

Theod. 52-53

"the nouveau riche who has multiplied his wealth, did he weigh out precious gold for the goddess Mami?" 100

Theod. 63-4

"The opulent nouveau riche who heaps up goods, will be burnt at the stake by the king before his time." 101

Theod. 187

"the owner of wealth is fallen...is far away."¹⁰²

The general rule concerning the stand of Egyptian Wisdom literature on the issue of materialism is to take what you are given graciously and modestly, regardless of size: "Better is a measure that the god gives you, than 5,000 (taken) illegally."¹⁰³ All wealth and material comes from the gods, but it is ephemeral: "For

man is clay and straw, and the god is his builder. He is tearing down and building up every day." ¹⁰⁴

4.5.9 Ritual Obligations

The praxis of the cult frequently becomes the essence of religion. We hear several times in Spell 125 and throughout Egyptian Wisdom literature the importance of appropriate and well-timed sacrificial actions. Ritual fires must be attended and extinguished at the correct time within the cult, as we hear in A33: "I have not quenched a fire in its time." In addition, the suppliant is responsible to know the correct times for specific kinds of sacrifices in Spell 125 A34: "I have not (observed) the days for haunches of meat (ANET : offerings)." These two statements share not only their place within the cult, but the concern for the appropriate timing. Egyptian religion in general emphasized the notion of correct time and place for all events and activities as a by-product of the concept of predestination. ¹⁰⁵ To interfere with the ostensible order of things is to threaten the internal structure and purpose of life.

Cultic efficiency and regularity were understood as manifestations of religious faith in the god's ability to return the favor:

"A man should do what is of advantage to his soul: the monthly service of the priest, putting on white sandals, visiting the temple, revealing the mysteries, having access to the shrine, and eating bread in the temple." ¹⁰⁶

The preoccupation with the correct time is apparent in this general admonition: "Celebrate the feast of your god and repeat it at its season."¹⁰⁷ This statement continues by being so circumspect as to suggest that the time and place of the suppliant's offering be recorded, for full credit.¹⁰⁸ The detail of these offerings becomes critical: "Make offering to your god, and beware of sins against him."¹⁰⁹

In Šurpu, ritualistic detail is considered among the major parameters. Details are crucial for ritual success. Šurpu II:73-80 catalogues several cultic transgressions in a series:

"because of the contempt for the god and goddess, because he promised in heart and by mouth but did not give, omitted the name of his god in his incense offering, made the consecrations, complained and withheld (it), ...saved something (for the gods, but) ate it, after he behaved arrogantly, he made the prayer gesture, disarranged the altar that had been prepared, made his god and his goddess angry with himself, standing up in the assembly, said inadequate words."

The importance of procedural order and scheduling is manifested in these references to the religious action of "asking for a sign" (ša'il): "at sunrise and sunset"; "leaving the city and entering the city"; "leaving the city-gate and entering the city-gate"; "leaving the house and entering the house."¹¹⁰ Appropriate timing is essential to Šurpu, as is clearly seen in Tablet III where the various "times" are mentioned, including: Šurpu III:102-2 "holy eve and day"; Šurpu III:103, 173 "night"; Šurpu III:115 "day, month or year." Tablet IX also refers to set times for festive offerings: "to perform correctly the New Year (festival) for seven days, seven months, seven days, (at) the place which may not be

entered."¹¹¹ Surpu III:38 includes a reference to the omen literature, whose consideration was the appropriate timing of all actions: "ask on a dark day, but deny it."

4.5.9.1 Procession

The cultic procession was also a ritual obligation in Egyptian religion. This was a festive or solemn public religious celebration. It was one of the few personal contacts the simple, individual worshipper had with the divine images and thus frequently became rather frenzied. The professional priesthood no doubt had its hands rather full during these occasions.

In Spell 125 A36, the following confession is made: "I have not blocked the god at his procession" (ANET : "stopped").¹¹² Egyptian Wisdom literature in general is sensitive to this rather common transgression. Some rather specific interdictions are mentioned, no doubt from experience:

"Instruction of Ani"
 "Be not (too) free with him during his procession. Do not approach him (too closely) to carry him. You should not 'disturb the veil'; beware of 'exposing what it shelters'." 113

Positive admonitions are also offered: "Revere the god upon his way, made of costly stones and fashioned of metal."¹¹⁴

In Surpu III:61 we read the difficult statement: "to overturn a chariot and touch its equipment." It can be speculated that this phrase is related to a cultic procession and parallel to our text in A36.¹¹⁵

4.5.9.2 Sacred Place

Sacred locations demand specific and appropriate behavior. The conduct of an individual, as regards the gods, is under greater circumspection in a sacred place than in other contexts.

In Spell 125 A3 we hear the generalized claim of innocence (ANET): "I have not sinned in the Place of Truth."¹¹⁶ The "Place of Truth" is a euphemism for the temple or necropolis, because these are sacred places which effect a greater sense of honesty.¹¹⁷ Just as these places inspire a tone of truthfulness, so the other precincts of institutional religion are meant to be sacrosanct. Thus, sacred place is also behind the ethic expressed in A29 and A30.¹¹⁸

In Šurpu, the notion of sacred place is described directly and indirectly. Sacred space is delineated in several ways throughout Tablet I, including: the use of "the magic circle of flour" and the use of fumes from "the sulfur torch."¹¹⁹ In some respects any of the accoutrements of the temple also carry the power of the sacred, such as: bed, chair, table, cup giver, lit stove, torch, bellows, tablet and stylus, sūtu -, and ga -measure.¹²⁰ The temples are considered the sacred place of the gods here on earth: "he asked for a sign the gods of heaven, the sanctuaries of the earth."¹²¹ Šurpu also includes a catalogue of the sacred dwellings places of the various gods.¹²² Earthly sacred place is defined and listed: "chapel or shrine, dais or throne."¹²³

4.5.10 Sexual Behavior

There are five references to sexual transgression in Spell 125. A20 and A21 refer in general to sexual misconduct to one's self or with another. B19 and B20 almost appear to be a duplicate, however B19 more explicitly makes reference to adultery. B27 directly mentions homosexuality.¹²⁴

Adultery is one of the traditional cross-cultural temptations and transgressions. It is prominent in Mesopotamian and Biblical Wisdom literature, however less frequent in Egyptian sources.¹²⁵ Again, we may be confronting the Egyptian avoidance of true confession. The emphasis upon early and loyal marriage may well be the derived, positive, social norm.¹²⁶

Spell 125 B19 clearly states: "I have not committed adultery." The introductory phrase referring to a minor deity reveals some of the power of this transgression: "O Fiend, who comes from the slaughter house."¹²⁷ In a similar context, we hear a reference to adultery in Surpu II:47-49: "He entered his neighbor's house, had intercourse with his neighbor's wife, shed his neighbor's blood."¹²⁸ Adultery is poignantly associated with murder or bloodshed cross-culturally.¹²⁹ Surpu IV:6 also refers to a clandestine sexual interaction with a friend's wife: "to have intercourse with the wife of one's friend secretly". This form of adultery was a significant source of guilt in Mesopotamia: "He who has intercourse with (another) man's wife, his guilt is grievous."¹³⁰

4.5.10.1 Homosexuality

Homosexuality is mentioned once in Spell 125 B27 "done wrong

sexually, practiced homosexuality." Egyptian Wisdom literature does not appear to show interest in this form of sexual behavior.¹³¹

The introductory phrase of B27 can be utilized as an instructive commentary on the nature of the transgression.¹³²

No direct mention is made of this practice in Šurpu. However, if modern law codes are any reference point, then unspecified "indecent acts" usually are euphemisms for sexual deviation. Thus, further investigation should be conducted in this direction for these statements in Egyptian texts and in Šurpu II:40-41 "(he) spoke unseemly things, spoke improper things, he spoke insolent things..." and Šurpu II:67 "(he) committed things which are not proper." Mesopotamian texts do occasionally refer to sexual deviation: "the owner of the sacrificial sheep will practice sodomy."¹³³ Some aspects of IŠtar worship may have involved homosexuality:

Gössmann, Era IV:55
"the kurgarrû's and the assinnu's whom IŠtar changed from men into women to show the people piety." 134

CT 39 45:32 (SB Alu)
"if a man has intercourse with an assinnu ." ¹³⁵

Certain kinds of utterances (egirru) also should be investigated, in that they incited interaction with an assinnu.¹³⁶ The interaction between doing "unseemly things" and speech is also seen in Lipšur litanies: "I did unfitting things, my mouth was full of improper words."¹³⁷ This working hypothesis remains very speculative and may never be proved satisfactorily.

It should be mentioned that in the Rabbinic period a folk

interpretation of Biblical text, attributing homosexuality to an Egyptian ruler appears in the Talmud. Potiphar was said to have selected Joseph "for himself" in homosexual activity.¹³⁸

4.5.11 Speech (Verbal Transgressions)

Speech and the use of language is the central concern of Egyptian Wisdom literature and courtly conduct. This is attested by the introductory statements of several of the Instructions: "Teach you him first about speaking."¹³⁹ The "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" can be understood in toto as a comparison between the approach of the "heated man," who lacks verbal control and "the silent man," who has control of his speech.¹⁴⁰ Silence is the central theme and key to much of what Wisdom literature has to teach cross-culturally.

In general, Egyptian Wisdom literature wishes to stress the importance of thinking about speech: "A man may fall to ruin because of his tongue."¹⁴¹ Listening is one of the critical skills of good speech.¹⁴² In Surpu III:59, listening to evil is equal to being an accessory: "to listen to a wicked person, but deny it."

The intelligent use of silence is effective among men and before the gods: "He tears down, he builds up with his tongue."¹⁴³ Man is admonished to speak with a sense of balance and moderation, to the positive: "Put the good remark on your tongue, while the bad is concealed in your belly."¹⁴⁴

4.5.11.1 Abuse

This value concept was mentioned in relation to the gods in Spell 125 B38 and B42.¹⁴⁵ However, this is also the same phrase

used by B35 in reference to the King: "I have not reviled the (King)." This kind of speech is often construed by the King as treason: "he produces two factions among the youth...denounce him in the presence of the court...He is also a traitor...A talker is 'an exciter' of a city."¹⁴⁶ In the execration texts "talk of rebellion" is a capital crime.¹⁴⁷

Šurpu II:63 is also sensitive to the social danger of abusive speech: "his mouth is ..., lying, his lips confused and violent." Social intercourse with those who are evil or sinful is a vehicle of contagion and collusion: Šurpu III:130 "to talk to an accursed man" and Šurpu III:134 "to talk to a sinner."

4.5.11.2 Exaggeration

The idiom to be "puffed up" occurs in Spell 125 B39 in a series of phrases dealing with speech: "I have not been puffed up." In this context it would appear to deal with speech (Lichtheim AEL II:127 "boastful"). The transgression here may tentatively be identified as the verbal exaggeration of one's worth or merit. In the same vein, B40 also is a verbal form of haughtiness: "I have not made distinctions (of others) from myself."¹⁴⁸

In Egyptian Wisdom literature, the same idiom appears also in terms of the uses and abuses of speech:

"Instruction of Ptah-hotep"
 "Let not your heart be puffed up because of your
 knowledge; be not confident because you are a wise
 man...Good speech is more hidden than an emerald, but
 it may be found with maidservants at the
 grindstones..."¹⁴⁹

An interpretation of this phrase is -- a King who exaggerates his knowledge and does not counsel with everyone, loses knowledge. Humility in speaking about oneself is an Egyptian attribute. Admonitions are mentioned concerning this transgression, referred to here as boastfulness: "(Be not) boastful before (my very) eyes, and beware of boasting of another."¹⁵⁰

Surpu 11:17 mentions a value which deals with the distrust born by extending the truth: "(who) saysalways says (and) exaggerates." The danger in exaggeration is that it destroys any standards of objective reporting and thereby threatens the sanctity of the word.¹⁵¹

4.5.11.3 Garrulity

Moderation in speech is a universal message of Wisdom literature. Excessive speech leads to misstatements and eventual lies. The less one says the better. When one speaks, the desired effect is short in length and rich in content. Any other behavior is criticized by wisdom texts. Spell 125 B17 deals with excessive speech: "I have not been garrulous" (< ANET : "let my mouth gone on"). This is especially true in the courtly circles.¹⁵²

In Egyptian Wisdom literature we hear a fitting adage: "Do not talk a lot. Be silent, and you will be happy. Do not be garrulous."¹⁵³ Incessant speech is such a part of the human condition that the inability to wax eloquent is considered a sign of divine punishment: "My lordly mouth have they held as with reins, so that I, whose lips used to prate, have become like a mute."¹⁵⁴

Here we stop.

4.5.11.4 Gossip and Discretion

Reliable friendship is at the core of Egyptian concern with gossip. Listening is a key to learning and speech. What is done with what is heard, is the crux of loyalty. An individual must feel that he can trust a confidant. A king is instructed not to approach a subordinate even in loneliness, because of the danger of being repeated.¹⁵⁵

In Spell 125 B16 and B33 we hear: "I have not eavesdropped" < ANET : "gossiped"¹⁵⁶ and "I have not gossiped about matters." The parallel in Surpu II:9 simply states in a broken phrase "gossip."¹⁵⁷ The patient in Surpu also confesses to several forms of verbal violence including "spreads gossip."¹⁵⁸ In each case, the potentially sacred act of listening is violated. In an omen text from Mesopotamia, we hear of eavesdropping and spying as something which might embitter one's life.¹⁵⁹

In Egyptian Wisdom literature the concern seems to be for the well-being of the social order: "Do not listen to an official's reply indoors in order to repeat it to another outside."¹⁶⁰ Thus, many of the Egyptian kings learned the desirability of being guarded in speech. One of proscriptions against gossip involves the development of a sense of discretion:

"Instruction of Ani"
 "You should not express your (whole) heart to the stranger, to let him discover your speech against you. If a passing remark issuing from your mouth is hasty and it is repeated, you will make enemies." 161

Even potential friends should be scrutinized: "Reason with him after

a while. 'Test' his heart with a bit of talk."¹⁶²

Akkadian Wisdom literature advises wary speech: "Beware of careless talk, guard your lips...But exert yourself to restrain your speech."¹⁶³ Pausing before speaking is one way of assuring thought about not only the subject under discussion, but also the reliability of the listener.¹⁶⁴

Within the limits of the Egyptian court, excessively open speech with a superior also was a risk: "Keep your tongue from answering your superior and take care not to insult him...let him not cast his speech to catch you."¹⁶⁵ The only safe talk is with an "equal," as long as he is not offended and turned into a talebearer.¹⁶⁶ At court banquets there was especial danger of being too free with one's speech due to the food, drink, and ambiance: "When he eats and drinks inside, his answer (is) heard outside."¹⁶⁷ These festive occasions heightened the ability to be gossiped about or misquoted. The most vivid metaphor of care in speech is the suggestion to be as silent as the crocodile: "Your silence will overthrow them. The crocodile that makes no sound, dread of it is ancient. Do not empty your belly to everyone."¹⁶⁸

The knowledge of "the heart of man" is a "gift of god" which dare not be abused.¹⁶⁹ This transgression clearly had specific meanings for the court, but likewise this was a potential offense against the ka of another individual as well.

4.5.11.5 Lying

The sanctity of the word in the ancient Near East was founded on the ideal of truthfulness. Whether in personal conduct or

a legal setting one's word was taken as binding. In Spell 125 B9 the confession is made: "I have not told lies." This statement is unqualified as to the context, yet may well be referring to the universal concern of Wisdom literature for false witness.

In similar fashion, we simply read the statement in Šurpu III:144: "of lie or blasphemy."¹⁷⁰ The closure to a section dealing with verbal transgressions states all-inclusively in Šurpu II:57: "all together he speaks untrue words." In addition to these general references, several other idioms for lying or telling the truth are mentioned including:

Šurpu II:6

"who said 'no' for yes, who said 'yes' for no."

Šurpu II:55-56

"His mouth is straight, (but) his heart is untrue; his mouth (says) yes, his heart says no."

In Egyptian Wisdom literature, we encounter similar notions concerned with lying: "Do not sever your heart from your tongue"¹⁷¹ and "Keep firm your heart, steady your heart, do not steer with your tongue."¹⁷² In the "Admonitions of Ipu-wer" we read a interesting parallel: "He who knows says: "Yes (it is so)!" The fool says: "No, (it is not)!"¹⁷³

Šurpu II:7 also expresses concern for honesty in the giving of testimony: "who pointed his finger (accusingly) (behind the back) of his (fellow man)" and Šurpu II:14 "(who as a witness) caused wicked things to be spoken." So in Egyptian sources we read: "Do not bear witness with false words, so as to brush aside a man by your tongue."¹⁷⁴ Ch. 19 and 20 of the "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" deal with the importance of honesty in the courts. As

can be seen this moral quality, whether on the streets or in the courts it is a foundation of ancient Near Eastern societies.

4.5.11.6 Loudness

Moderation in the modulation of the voice was also practiced. Control of one's speech was important if one was to be respected in the court environment. However, another major consideration for speaking softly is the concern of the priesthood and the gods themselves for this theological transgression.

In Spell 125 B37 we hear the confession: "I have not been loud voiced." The location and nature of this transgression is not specifically mentioned. However, in Egyptian Wisdom literature the same concern is raised, in a specific context: "Do not raise your voice in the house of god, he abhors shouting; pray by yourself with a loving heart, whose every word is hidden."¹⁷⁵ This observation is made in reference to the appropriateness and desirability of silent prayer. In Akkadian Wisdom literature, a catalogue of ritual actions listed "ritual murmurs."¹⁷⁶

Excessive loudness, was something that potentially could disturb the gods. Cross-culturally, mythology documents the aetiology of the practice of ritual, cultic silence.¹⁷⁷ We hear in Greek mythology for example that younger gods were a source of disruption and that the symbol of their rebellion was excessive noise.¹⁷⁸ It should be noted that Typhon, this rebellious, unrestrained source of noise, is considered "the Greek equivalent of the Egyptian Set, the enemy of Osiris."¹⁷⁹

Noise from below is universally perceived by the gods on

high as a potential rebellion: "they threatened to raise the din of furious war against the immortals in Olympus."¹⁸⁰ In the cult, noise was intrusive in religious contexts, which were characterized by their silence. Cross-culturally, the mystery of the temple was amplified by the vastness and silence of the sacred place.¹⁸¹ In Sumer, the tone of the temple environs was described as the place "where daylight is unknown."¹⁸² The temple is where the gods rest in the dark, refresh, and hear soft prayers: "He has erected a shrine about them and when they weep he hears."¹⁸³

4.5.12 Social Status

Status was important in all ancient Near Eastern cultures. There is a critical awareness of the potential for social mobility, in both directions up and down. The fear of the unjustified reversal of fortune is universal.¹⁸⁴ The reactions of fellow courtiers were of concern. Personal blunder or royal fickleness could effect status: "laugh after he laughs, and it will be very pleasing to his heart...no one can know what is in his heart."¹⁸⁵ Divine punishment was an ever present source of flux: "He (the day) makes a thousand poor by his will, he makes a thousand men into chiefs when he is in his hour of life."¹⁸⁶ The nature of the gods was often imaged as capricious: "Man does not have a single way, the lord of life confounds him."¹⁸⁷

In Spell 125 A11, the soul states: "I have not slandered a servant to his superior." A sensitivity to those who might be climbing the social ladder is unusual in such a rigid society as Egypt. Yet, causing trouble for another even below your status is cruel: "Do not shout 'crime' against a man, when the cause of (his)

flight is hidden." ¹⁸⁸ In regard to the temple officials we hear: "Do not remove a servant of the god, so as to do favors to another." ¹⁸⁹ Those in favor should remember their humble origins: "If you are (now) important after your (former) unimportance." ¹⁹⁰

In Šurpu VIII:68, there is a statement which demonstrates concern for the fate of a slave as well: "of cursing a slave or slave-girl...but denying." ¹⁹¹ It was a transgression to curse a slave. This ethical consideration may well be out of self-interest, fearing a reversal in social status: "My slave has publicly cursed me in the assembly." ¹⁹² In certain quarters of Mesopotamia there appear to have been legal sanctions against an impetuous slave:

"as to the report about the slave who uttered a blasphemy against his master's son and is being held in detention." ¹⁹³

Slaves were expected to be loyal, and were given oaths of loyalty by the King. ¹⁹⁴ The majority of Mesopotamian texts are not sympathetic to the plight of the slave.

4.5.13 Violence

The stability of any given society is predicated, among other factors, upon its ability to discourage legitimated or random violence. Throughout the ancient Near East certain forms of retaliation and revenge were considered legitimate in earlier periods and eventually outlawed. ¹⁹⁵ Crimes against personal or familial-clan pride cried for vengeance even after these reforms. Thus, the religious authorities frequently emphasized the importance of avoiding all forms of violence.

General violence is referred to in Spell 125 B30: "I have not done violence" and according to Lichtheim B23 "been violent." In a vivid series Šurpu II:58-59 describes some of the threats to social order: "He who...shakes and trembles (of rage), destroys, expels, drives to flight."¹⁹⁶

4.5.13.1 Murder

Murder is considered the most heinous of crimes in the ancient Near East. Consideration however is given for the motivations leading to the violent action.

In Spell 125 we hear several confessions related to this sin: "I have not killed" (A14); "I have not turned anyone over to a killer" (A15) and "I have not killed people" (B5). It is not surprising that we hear in Šurpu II:49 "(he) shed his neighbor's blood" and in Šurpu III:34 "to swear (faithfulness) to a friend, but kill him." The shedding of blood is also a related statement.¹⁹⁷ Blood revenge was no longer considered legitimate in this period, and so we read the statement in Šurpu III:96: "to retaliate against someone."

Egyptian Wisdom literature is clear on this matter: "Do not slaughter: it is not of advantage to you."¹⁹⁸ Revenge is the god's: "Do not kill a single one that comes close to you, when you have shown him favor: the god knows him."¹⁹⁹ An interesting qualifier is mentioned, however: "Do not kill a man when you know his good qualities, one with whom you did once sing the writings (old class mate)."²⁰⁰ It should be noted that a "traitor" or agitator may be killed without guilt.²⁰¹ However, even the king

does not want the blood on his record for the final judgment, and so a traitor's capital punishment is considered divine retribution: "for the god knows his treachery in his heart and the god condemns his sins in blood."²⁰²

4.5.14 Water

Water is critical to the ancient Near East for the obvious reasons of agriculture. It also serves an essential function cross-culturally as a purifier in lustrations.²⁰³

The Nile was and is critical to the fructification of Egypt. Thus, throughout Egyptian literature we hear of this river's importance in personal terms: "for love of whom the Nile has come, possessor of sweetness, greatly beloved, when he comes the people live."²⁰⁴ It was the source for all living things, being referred to as "the lord of fish and fowl."²⁰⁵ Water is used as a poetic image of both wisdom and eternal happiness: "No magic can oppose it (the knowledge of the next world), (but) it reaches those who will give it water."²⁰⁶ A similar attitude is maintained in Mesopotamian myth, in the form of an idiom of blessing: "(may your) trenches fill with water."²⁰⁷

4.5.14.1 Water Rights

The flow of natural or irrigational water was the foundation of agriculture in the ancient Near East. This was another form of respecting boundary rights and thereby preserving the well-being of the community. In Spell 125 A31 and A32 just such transgressions are denied: "I have not stopped the (flow of) water in its season. I

have not built a dam against the flowing water." In A31 there appears to be a reference to the seasonal, cyclical nature of the overflowing of the Nile.²⁰⁸ The Egyptians realized the international importance of this resource: "The countries of Syria and Nubia, and the land of Egypt, you set every man in his place, you supply their necessities...you make a Nile in the underworld, you bring it forth as you desire, to maintain the people (of Egypt)." ²⁰⁹ In Ezek. 29:3, the Israelite God takes credit for the Nile's cycles, resenting the Egyptian assumption that it was caused by the pharaoh's divine will.

The overflowing of the Nile was just such a sacred event involving the Pharaoh and the gods.²¹⁰ This "gift of the Nile" was given to all Egyptians and therefore it was a socioreligious transgression to redirect this flow from others.²¹¹ Canals then and now are dug from the main banks of the Nile and led through various properties and fields up to five miles inland on either side. Holding up the flow has a cumulatively deleterious effect on all those surrounding fields, which are fed by interconnecting channels. Likewise, hoarding the waters through the use of dams was considered a serious transgression and a threat to the well-being of others.

Similarly in Mesopotamia, where all agriculture was dependent on artificial irrigation ditches, damaging of the dikes and channels was considered a transgression against god and man: "I will bore a well and let loose a flood."²¹² Thus, in Surpu III:57 we hear a striking parallel (A32) statement: "to dam up an open ditch."

Major philosophical differences have been attributed to the

reliability of the weather and waters in Egypt and the violent, sporadic weather in Mesopotamia.²¹³ However, it should be noted that Egyptian Wisdom literature also makes references to seasonal irregularities of the availability of water as an evidence of the tumultuous nature of life: "When last years watercourse is gone, another river is here today; great lakes become dry places, sandbanks turn into depths."²¹⁴

4.5.14.2 Water Pollution

In Spell 125 B36 we hear: "I have not waded in the water." It is unclear from the immediate context what exactly is the nature of the sin. Wading upstream might be a threat to the purity of the water below. However, cross-culturally violence against this crucial resource was considered a transgression.

In Surpu III:63, we may have a statement which illuminates this particular action: "to urinate or vomit into a river." This value is mentioned in a series listing essential water sources.²¹⁵ The improper intrusion into water would be considered a serious offense for both ecological and spiritual reasons. In an omen we hear that having intercourse with a woman in a river is a sin against Ea.²¹⁶

Water was considered a living force (hammayîm hahayyîm)²¹⁷ in the ancient world, which could be offended or injured.²¹⁸

Permission of the water spirit was needed to safely cross any body of water.²¹⁹ All forms of water have the potential to aid or destroy humanity, and thus they were considered holy. Hesiod repeats this folk wisdom of Greece: "Never cross the sweet-flowing water of ever-rolling rivers afoot until you have prayed, gazed into the soft

flood and washed your hands in the clear lovely water."²²⁰ The way in which one approached water therefore was a universal socioreligious value.

4.5.15 Weights and Measures

The standards for the a country were set by any number of authorities. The Palace, the Temple, the city gate, and individual merchant might have a standard weight stone that they established for common use.²²¹ Barring the possible use of a universal standard, there were frequent opportunities in the ancient Near East for malpractice in this area of business. The importance of maintaining a consistent "standard of honesty" throughout the realm, however, was essential for the financial well-being of the country. This is a transgression where the buyer is damaged financially and the seller is injured ethically and morally. In both Surpu and Spell 125, specific and general values dealing with correct measure are described.

In Spell 125, this economic value is mentioned several times. The measure itself is tampered with in B6. In A25 and A26 the component parts of the scale are changed. And in A22 the individual is cheating on the weighing process.

In Egyptian Wisdom literature this moral principle is also discussed. Two chapters of the "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" are completely devoted to honesty in weights and measures. Chapter 16 begins with a concern for not altering the equipment of the scales: "Do not move the scales nor alter the weights, nor diminish the fractions of the measure."²²² The ape or ibis headed form of the god Thoth is described as sitting by the balance, "his heart is in

the plummet."²²³ This chapter presents dishonesty in this area as a direct offense against the god.²²⁴ Chapter 17 is directed toward cheating during the weighing process:

"Instruction of Amen-em-Opet"
 "Beware of disguising the measure, so as to falsify its fractions; do not force it to overflow nor let its belly be empty. Measure according to its true size, your hand clearing exactly." 225

"The eye of Re" is depicted as a watchful eye mythologically fragmented into parts, which sets the standard for the weighing procedure and demands honesty.²²⁶ This chapter closes with a stern warning: "Greater is the might of the threshing floor than an oath by the great throne."²²⁷ Honesty in weighing clearly holds a serious place in the fate of the soul in the final judgment.

In Šurpu we also hear frequent references to this value:

Šurpu II:42
 "he us[ed] an untrue balance, (but) [did not use [the true balance]"

Šurpu VIII:67
 "...of using an untrue balance (or) taking untrue money and swearing (it was rightful."

In each case the transgression involves a conscious action of cheating when weighing. Akkadian Wisdom literature frequently describes this as a norm for socioreligious behavior.²²⁸ Šamaš, because of his general association with judgment and honesty, is also responsible for accurate measurement. In the Šamaš Hymn, we hear of a parallel business trick in Egypt and Mesopotamia:

"The merchant who practices trickery as he holds the

corn measure, who weighs out loans (or corn) by the minimum standard, but requires a large quantity in repayment." 229

This can be compared with a similar ruse in Egypt: "Do not accept a farmer's dues and then assess him so as to injure him."²³⁰ The gods, in both civilizations, took personal interest in this transgression.

4.6 Conclusion

Chapter Four has attempted to demonstrate several points crucial to the understanding of Spell 125. The first was to present Šurpu and Spell 125 together in one work, thereby reinforcing the relationship between these two texts and facilitating their comparison. By cataloguing the various topics and issues discussed in Spell 125, the reader is presented with a clear picture of the extent of the ethical categories of this unique spell from the Book of the Dead. Likewise, the substantive parallels between Šurpu and Spell 125 become apparent both in terms of style and content.

The body of this chapter assembles parallels in religion and literature between Šurpu and Spell 125 according to topic. Here they appear following the logic of Spell 125. Given the study offered in Chapter Three on the issues and topics in Šurpu, there may appear to be some redundancy. However the comments and parallels raised in this present chapter shed light on many of the same questions, but from a different angle and through a different cultural lense. As has been demonstrated, it is overly simplistic to assume that just because a literary parallel exists that it has the same value in another culture. Thus, the contrasts between the two

texts also have been noted.

Chapter Four has attempted to demonstrate the similarity between the issues raised in Šurpu and Spell 125, while at the same time establishing their difference in cultural perspective. The Egyptian usage and understanding of these topics is different from the Mesopotamian. The identical phrases have different meanings and origins and thus have been studied independently. Nevertheless, crossreferences were shown in the hope that Egyptologists and Assyriologists will raise and consider comparative questions.

Given this research into the source of the categories presented in Spell 125, it appears that Egyptian Wisdom literature plays a major role in providing the text with its content and its point of moral reference. Each listing reveals many parallels from Egyptian Wisdom literature. The closest literary source for moral teaching in Egypt is Wisdom literature and not texts from Egyptian religion. In this sense the uniqueness of Spell 125 has been demonstrated and further research on the part of Egyptologists is encouraged.

However, the influence of Wisdom literature on Spell 125 is similar to the role played by Mesopotamian Belles Lettres literature on the content of Šurpu. Both Spell 125 and Šurpu appear to be informed by a genre of literature outside of their own cultic or incantation sources. This relationship between Wisdom and Religious literature is an important datum in the overall discussion on the production of Spell 125 and Šurpu in their respective cultures. The similarity of the moral catalogues found in Spell 125 and Šurpu points toward the international quality of wisdom motivated ritual texts.

Philological and linguistic commentary should play an important role in the best interpretation of Spell 125. Many questions and tentative interpretations have been raised in this chapter in the hope of stimulating discussion and research on these parallel texts on the part of qualified Egyptologists. The ground work laid here can provide the foundation for future research by Egyptologists.

Notes to Chapter Four

1. First cited by E. A. W. Budge, The Egyptian Book of the Dead (1898). Again it should be emphasized that this present work is intended to stimulate further research by qualified Egyptologists. Thus the following list represents the most recent, major studies dealing with this unusual spell which should be referred to: Charles Maystre, "Les Déclarations d'Innocence," RAPH 8 (1937); Christine Seeber, "Untersuchungen zur Darstellung des Totengerichts in Alten Ägypten," MÄS 35 (1976); Erik Hornung, Das Totenbuch der Ägypter (Zurich-München, 1979).

For more exhaustive bibliographical references on the subject of "Sin" and the "Book of the Dead" in Egyptology see: Wolfgang Helck and Otto Eberhard eds., Lexikon der Ägyptologie, (O. Harrassowitz: Wiesbaden, 1986), Band VI:108-10 ("Sünde und Schuld" (Sündenbekenntnis) " and 641-43 ("Totenbuch").

2. E. A. W. Budge, The Egyptian Book of the Dead (1898).

3. See J. A. Wilson in ANET, pp. 34-36.

4. See J. H. Breasted, The Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt (London: Hodder, 1912), p. 301.

5. See J. H. Breasted, The Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt, p. 303. For a fuller consideration of the place of the Book of the Dead in Egyptian religion see C. J. Bleeker, The Rainbow (Leiden: Brill, 1975), pp. 91-105, and especially pp. 104-05.

6. "Instruction for Meri-ka-Re;" ANET 415:51-57 and AEL I:100-01.

7. See "Instruction of Ani;" ANET 420 v:1f. and AEL II:138.

8. One should not lose sight of the fact that Spell 125 fits into a larger work whose content and function deals solely with magic. The extensive thematic comparisons from comparative religion and literature should not cloud the distinctions between the two works in over-all form and content. The Book of the Dead like Surpu does not shrink in the face of what we see as a contradiction; that is, the linkage between magic and morality. See M. Lichtheim, AEL II:7 for a brief discussion of this point.

9. See ANET 34, Introduction to "The Protestation of Guiltlessness." Certain topics are unique to Egyptian thought and are only mentioned in Spell 125 and not in Surpu :

- 4.5.4 Character
- 4.5.6.1 Usury
- 4.5.8 Materialism
- 4.5.10.1 Homosexuality
- 4.5.11.6 Loudness

These topics will be discussed only in Chapter Four, in conjunction with Wisdom Literature parallels.

10. "Instruction of Ptah-hotep;" ANET 414:575-85. See C. J. Bleeker, The Rainbow (Leiden: Brill, 1975), pp. 121-22 for a discussion of Egyptian religion and its developed sense of guilt.

11. T. C. Allen, The Book of the Dead, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 37, (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1974), p. 3.

12. E. Reiner, Surpu, p. 2 Introduction and A. Falkenstein, MDOG 85, p. 6, n. 27 and W. von Soden, MDOG 85, p. 24. For a discussion of the possibility of cultural exchange along existing trade routes see: A. L. Oppenheim, "An Essay on Overland Trade in the First Millennium B. C.," JCS 21, 236-54.

13. Professor Reiner still believes that it is impossible to know for sure the date of composition, however internal evidence does appear to point toward the Kassite period (Interview, Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, September 16, 1987. See also A. Falkenstein, LSS NF 1,10 as quoted in E. Reiner, Surpu, p. 2.

14. See E. Reiner, Surpu, Introduction, p. 2.

15. Cf. section 3.4.2 "Boundaries" on concern for property boundaries and the Kassite Kudurru.

16. M. Lichtheim, AEL, II:3-8.

17. M. Lichtheim, AEL, II:119.

18. See T. C. Allen, The Book of the Dead, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 37, (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1974), p. 97 n. 213.

19. ANET 34, Introduction.

20. This explanation represents the most current thinking, as expressed by C. Seeber, "Untersuchungen zur Darstellung des Totengerichts im Alten Ägypten," MAS 35, 137. However, the standing interpretation for years was that the number 42 represented the 42 administrative districts projected upon the next life in the form of the 40 judges of the "Broad Hall." For this now rejected theory see J. H. Breasted, The Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt (London: Hodder, 1912), p. 303.

21. The majority of comparisons will be drawn from the following texts in the Egyptian Wisdom genre: "The Instruction of the Vizier Ptah-hotep" (composition approx. 2450 B.C.E.); "The Instruction for King Meri-ka-re" (composition approx. 22nd century B.C.E.); "The Instruction of King Amen-em-het" (possible composition 1960 B.C.E.); "The Instructions of Ani" (composition approx. 18th Dynasty - 1550-1305 B.C.E.); "The Instruction of Amenemope" (composition approx. Ramesside period - beginning 1195 B.C.E.) and "The Instruction of Papyrus Insinger" (composition approx. late Ptolemaic period 80-30 B.C.E.).

22. Cf. section 3.4.9 "Transgression by Agency."

23. See B13, and A2 significant difference in translation, here we are using the rendering of ANET : "cattle".

24. See "Instruction for Meri-ka-Re;" ANET 417:131 "Well directed are men, the cattle of the god" and AEL II:106. See also R. Grieshammer, "Zum, 'Sitz in Leben' des Negativen Sündenbekenntnisses," ZDMG , Supplementa 2 (1974): 18-25.

25. AEL II:125.

26. Theod . 135-36; BWL 79.

27. See Section, 4.5.7 "Gods."

28. Surpu III:31.

29. See section 3.1.3 "Sacred Place" for discussion of the relationship between animals and divine property.

30. See the Introduction to the "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet;" ANET 421 i:15-end and Lichtheim, AEL II:152, all Ch. 6 devoted to the issue of boundaries.

31. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 6; ANET 422 vii:1-viii:10 and AEL II:151-52.
32. "The Instruction of Meri-ka-Re," ANET 415:38.
33. Cf. section 3.4.2 "Boundaries" and Šurpu III:54; III:60; VIII:51.
34. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 6; ANET 422 vii:15 and AEL II:151. Cf. parallels found in Biblical wisdom Prov. 15:25; 22:28; 23:10.
35. "Instruction for Meri-ka-Re;" ANET 418:142 and AEL I:142.
36. "Instruction of Ptah-hotep;" ANET 413:264-65 and AEL I:68.
37. "Instruction of Ptah-hotep;" ANET 413:323.
38. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet;" Ch. 4; ANET 422 vi:1 and AEL II:150-51.
39. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet;" Ch. 9 xi 13 and AEL II:153.
40. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet;" Ch. 10 ANET xiii:10 and AEL II:154.
41. "Instruction for Meri-ka-Re;" ANET 415:37 and AEL I:99.
42. Cf. Šurpu II:58 and Spell 125 B29-32 for relationship between temper and violence.
43. See section 3.4.4 for references; Šurpu II:18. For a more detailed discussion of the ethical stand toward the poor see: H. Brunner, "Die religiöse Wertung der Armut in Alten Ägypten," Saeculum 12, 319-44.
44. "Instruction of Amen-em-het;" ANET 418:5 and AEL I:136.
45. "Instruction for Meri-ka-Re;" ANET 415:62 and AEL I:101.

46. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 2; ANET 422 iv:4 and AEL II:150. Compare this reference to a similar catalogue found in "Instruction for Meri-Ka-Re;" ANET 415:47-52 "weeper, widow ..." and AEL I:100.
47. "Instruction of Ptah-hotep;" ANET 413:340 and AEL I:69. Cf. Ibid. 175f. and "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet;" ANET 423 xix:14 "God is (always) in his success" and AEL II:158. For additional references see: section 4.5.9 "Materialism."
48. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 28; ANET 424 xxvi:9f and AEL II:161.
49. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 25; ANET 424 xxiv:9-end and AEL II:160.
50. See section 3.5.1 "Kinship, Family" for a discussion of the supportive function of the family structure.
51. See section 3.4.3 "The Bound Captive" and Šurpu II:29-31 for the transgression of credit taken against human pledges. Also see A. L. Oppenheim, AM, p. 88f.
52. Cf. Dialogue 62-69, BWL 149.
53. AEL II:125. Contra: T. C. Allen, The Book of the Dead, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 37 (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1974), p. 97 "I have not at the beginning of each day set tasks (harder than) I had set (previously)."
54. "Instruction of Ptah-hotep;" ANET 413:339-41 and AEL I:69.
55. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 11; ANET 423 xiv:5f. and AEL II:154-55.
56. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 13; ANET 423 xvi:5 and AEL II:155.
57. J. Nougayrol, "Le Palais Royal d'Ugarit III," MRS 6, 19 RS 15, 11:23.
58. Deut. 23:20f. Cf. Ex. 22:25; Lev. 25:36-37; Num. 5:7, 10.

59. Prov. 28:8. Cf. also Isa. 24:2; Jer. 15:10; Ezek. 18:8f.; 22:12; Ps. 15:5.
60. See section 3.5.4 "Social Reversal" for a discussion of the implications of the disruption of the family structure.
61. "Instruction for Meri-ka-Re;" ANET 415:25-29 and AEL I:99.
62. "Instruction of Ptah-hotep;" ANET 412:125-26 and AEL I:65.
63. In Prov. 6:12f. winking the eye is described as part of the repertoire of the "base and wicked person."
64. Cf. Spell 125 A12-A13.
65. It would appear that the symbolic gesture of winking cross-culturally carries a derogatory message.
66. "Instruction of Ptah-hotep;" ANET 412:85-95 and AEL I:64.
67. See "Instruction for Meri-ka-Re;" ANET 415:47-52 and AEL I:100-01.
68. See ANET 416 n. 17; 417 n. 44.
69. "Instruction of Ani;" ANET 420 iii:4 and AEL II:136.
70. Cf. Surpu II:33 and section 3.3.3.
71. Surpu II:11-14.
72. See section 4.3.1, structural analysis of Spell 125 B.
73. "Instruction of Ani;" ANET 420 iii 10f. and AEL II:136-37. Cf. ANET 420 vii 17 incense as "daily food" and AEL II:141.
74. See "Curse and Threat;" ANET 327b which is an excerpt from the Pyramid Texts found in the Sakkarah pyramid of King Meri-Re Pepi I and cf. AEL I:45.

75. "The Satire on the Trades;" ANET 433 viii:7-end and AEL I:189-90. Cf. H. G. Güterbock, "Die historische Tradition bei Babyloniern und Hethitern: Weidner Chronicle," ZA 42, 47-57 where kings are judged according to their generosity with the fish offerings.
76. "The Satire on the Trades;" ANET 433 viii:5f. and AEL I:189.
77. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet;" Ch. 5 vi:14 as found in AEL II:151.
78. "Instruction for Meri-ka-Re;" ANET 416:66f. and AEL I:102.
79. See section 3.1.3 "Sacred Place" and Šurpu II:73-81.
80. See section 3.4.10 "Weights and Measures" for an additional interpretation as falsifying weights and measures. Cf. Šurpu II:113 for the importance of these ritual measures.
81. Šurpu II:79. Cf. Spell 125 A18.
82. See Šurpu III:58 and section 3.1.2 "Sacred Food."
83. "Instruction for Meri-ka-Re;" ANET 417:125 and AEL I:105-06.
84. M. Lichtheim, AEL II:125.
85. "Instruction of Ani;" ANET 420 vii:12f. and AEL II:141. Cf. ANET 420 n. 7 "about his form of appearance."
86. See section 3.1.3 on "Sacred Place" for a discussion of several ritual improprieties.
87. Lud. II:36-37; BWL 41.
88. Lud. II:48; BWL 41.
89. Theod. 58; BWL 75.

90. Theod. 256-57; BWL 87,
91. M. Lichtheim, AEL II:146.
92. See section 4.5.3 "Boundaries."
93. "Instruction for Meri-ka-Re;" ANET 415:43 and AEL I:100.
94. "Instruction of Ptah-hotep;" ANET 413:340f. and AEL I:69.
See section 4.5.5 "The Defenseless" and 4.5.6.3 "Importance of Justice" for fuller references.
95. "Instruction of Ptah-hotep;" ANET 414:432 and AEL II:141-42.
96. "Instruction of Ptah-hotep;" ANET 414:428-40 and AEL II:139.
Cf. "Instruction of Ani;" ANET 421 viii:5f. "A man is nothing. One is rich, one is poor while bread continues" and AEL II:142.
97. "Instruction of Ani;" ANET 420 vi:i-10 and AEL II:141-42.
Cf. Papyrus Beatty V, verso ii:8-11.
98. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 11; ANET 423 and AEL II:154-55.
99. "Instruction for Meri-ka-Re;" ANET 415:40.
100. Theod. 52-53; BWL 75.
101. Theod. 63-64; BWL 75.
102. Theod. 187; BWL 81.
103. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 6; ANET 422 viii:20 and AEL II:152.
104. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 25; ANET 424 xxiv:14f. and AEL II:160.
105. See J. H. Breasted, The Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt (London: Hodder, 1912), p. 55f.; 268-69 and H. G.

Güterbock, "Die historische Tradition bei Babyloniern und Hethitern: Weidner Chronicle," ZA 42, 47-57 for an interesting parallel concept: the selection of kings are judged righteous or lost because of the correct timing of the fish offerings. The notion of the appropriate and set time for events is yet another example of the ma'at concept's influence upon daily life.

106. "Instruction for Meri-ka-Re;" ANET 416:60-65 and AEL I:101-02.

107. "Instruction of Ani;" ANET 420 iii:3f. and AEL II:136.

108. "Instruction of Ani;" ANET 420 iii:5f.; 420 n. 2 and AEL II:136.

109. "Instruction of Ani;" ANET 420 vii:12 and AEL II:140.

110. See Surpu II:120, 123-25 and section 3.1.4. "Sacred Time."

111. Surpu IX:66.

112. M. Lichtheim, AEL II:125.

113. "Instruction of Ani;" ANET 420 vii:13-14. Cf. AEL II:141 and 146 n.13 "disturb the oracles." Oracles were read according to the movement of the god during ritual procession in the Ramesside period (Communication: Dr. Ogden Goelet, Columbia University, September 1987).

114. "Instruction for Meri-ka-Re;" ANET 417:125-26 and AEL I:105-06.

115. See section 3.1.3 for Mesopotamian material on divine procession and "sacred place."

116. M. Lichtheim, AEL II:125. Contrast the translation of Allen 97 "I have not done evil instead of righteousness."

117. See M. Lichtheim, AEL II:132 n. 4.

118. See section 4.5.7 "Gods."

119. See Šurpu I:3, 5 and section 3.2.3 and 3.2.4.
120. See Šurpu II:105-13 "he asked for a sign...(by the above objects)."
121. Šurpu II:121. Cf. M. Eliade, Patterns, p. 373 "All these sacred constructions represent the whole universe in symbol."
122. See Šurpu II:145-54.
123. Šurpu III:73-74; also: 83 "open altar or its socle."
124. The nature of the sexual transgression is not all that clear in the ancient text. (Communication: Dr. Ogden Goelet, Columbia University, September 1987.
125. See W. Kornfield, "L'adultère dans l'Orient antique," RB 57, 92-109 and R. Gordis, "On Adultery in Biblical and Babylonian Law," Judaism 33, 210-11.
126. See "Instruction of Hor-Dedef;" ANET 419 and AEL I:58-59. "Instruction of Ani;" ANET 420 iii 1f.; 421 viii 1f. and AEL II:136 and 141.
127. M. Lichtheim, AEL II:127. Cf. Introductory phrase to B13 "O Blood-eater who comes from the slaughter place" for "Killing sacred cattle." It should be noted that nearly all of the statements in Spell 125B are addressed to minor dieties with lurid sounding names. Thus, this can not be considered a pivotal point.
128. Šurpu II:47-49.
129. See section 3.4.1 for a discussion of "Adultery."
130. BWL 119:3.
131. It should be noted that not only does Egyptian Wisdom literature not mention homosexuality in general, but that the reference from Spell 125 B27 is an unclear case. Contrast the Biblical tradition which is very outspoken on the issue: Lev. 18:22, 23; 20:13, 15-16. For full bibliographical references in

comparative religion see: Tom Horner, Homosexuality and the Judeo-Christian Tradition: An Annotated Bibliography, ATLA Bib. No.5, (London:1981).

132. M. Lichtheim, AEL II:127. As stated above in n. 126, the minor deities to whom the majority of Spell 125B is addressed are not to be taken too literally. However, this particular allusion appears to be consistent with the stated transgression: "O Backward-faced who comes from the pit."

133. CAD A2, 342a, sub assinnutu, ref. YOS 10.

134. CAD A2, 341b, sub assinnu (a).

135. CAD A2, 341b, sub assinnu (b).

136. CAD A2, 341b, sub assinnu (b), ref. CT 39 41 (SB Alu).

137. E. Reiner, JNES 15, 142:54'.

138. See Rashi commentary to TB Sota 13b. In addition the homosexual practices considered abhorrent by the Bible were projected upon both the Egyptians and Canaanites in the Sipra 9:8.

139. "Instruction of Ptah-hotep;" ANET 412:39 and AEL I:63.

140. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet;" AEL II:147 and ANET 421f.

141. "Instruction for Meri-ka-Re;" ANET 420 vii:9 and AEL II:140.

142. "Instruction of Ptah-hotep;" ANET 414:534 and AEL I:73-74. Cf. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 22; AEL II:159.

143. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet;" Ch. 9, AEL II:153 xii:3 and ANET 423a.

144. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet;" Ch. 8, AEL II:153 xi:10-11.

145. Cf. section 4.5.7.1 "Blasphemy."

146. "Instruction for Meri-ka-Re;" ANET 415:25-30 and AEL I:99. Fear of traitors is a central theme for this "Instruction." For similar politically motivated (and justified) fears in Wisdom texts see "Instruction of Amen-em-het;" ANET 418-19 and AEL I:134-39. Amenemhet was assassinated in his 31st year of his rule.
147. ANET 329 (n 1) and (p 1) "every evil word, every evil speech, every evil slander, every evil thought, every evil plot..."
148. M. Lichtheim, AEL II:127 "haughty." Dr. Goelet offers the translation of "be high" (Communication: Columbia University, September 1987).
149. "Instruction of Ptah-hotep;" ANET 412:52 and AEL I:63.
150. "Instruction of Hor-Dedef;" ANET 419 para. 2 and AEL I:58.
151. Cf. sections 3.4.8.1 "Duplicity" and 3.4.8.4 "Exaggeration."
152. M. Lichtheim in AEL II:127 translates the phrase as "prattled. Thus, according to M. Lichtheim B33 should also be listed under garrulous speech. Moderation in speech is a major theme in Egyptian Wisdom literature. For an excellent example of the Egyptian court concerns related to discretion and self control see R. O. Faulkner, "Ptahhotep and the Disputants," Festschrift Grapow, Ägyptologische Studien (Berlin, 1955), 81-84.
153. "Instruction of Ani;" ANET 420 iv 1f. and AEL II:137.
154. Lud. I:71; BWL 35.
155. "Instruction of Amen-em-het;" ANET 418 i 3f. and AEL I:136.
156. M. Lichtheim in AEL II:127 translates the idea as "spied."
157. See section 3.4.8.2 for references and discussion on "Oaths."
158. Surpu II:60.

159. See S. M. Morgan, "A Lost "Omen" Tablet," JCS 29, 66:21 and A. L. Oppenheim, "Idiomatic Accadian (Lexicographical Researches)," JAOS 61, 263 on the AKKadian idiom šakin uzna.
160. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 24; AEL II:160 this is the topic of the whole chapter.
161. "Instruction of Ani;" ANET 420 vii:7f. and AEL II:140.
162. "Instruction of Ptah-hotep;" ANET 414:464f. and AEL I:72.
163. Counsels of Wisdom 131, 134; BWL 105.
164. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 2; AEL II:151 v:8.
165. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 9; AEL II:153 xi:15-18 and ANET 423a.
166. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 13; ANET 423: xi 20 and AEL II:156. Cf. BWL 119:7 "(he) who spreads vile rumours about his equal."
167. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 12; AEL II:154 xii:11-12 and ANET . Cf. "Instruction of Ani;" AEL II:137 4:7f. and ANET 420b.
168. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 21; AEL II:159 xxii:8-11 and ANET 424a.
169. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 24; ANET xxiv:4.
170. Cf. Šurpu II:63 "lying his lips confused" and see section 3.4.8.1 on "Duplicity and Dishonesty."
171. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 10; ANET xiii:17 and AEL II:152.
172. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 18; ANET xx:2-3 and AEL II:158.

173. ANET 442 vi:11f. Cf. a corruption: "Instruction of Amen-em-het;" ANET 419 iii:3f. "Much idle chat" is in the streets. The wise man says "Yes," making search for his "No" because he does not know it" and AEL I:137. See M. Lichtheim's note on the frequency of this statement and its lack of clarity AEL I:139 n. 12.
174. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 13; AEL II:155 xvi:1-2 and ANET 423b.
175. "Instruction of Ani;" AEL II:137 4:2f. and ANET 420a.
176. Samaš Hymn 131; BWL 135.
177. See Enuma Elish I:21-23, 25, 38, 40.
178. See the titan Typhöeus / Typhon in Hesiod, Theogony 820-35 "there were voices in all his dreadful heads which uttered every kind of sound unspeakable" and Homeric Hymn III:351 "an awful noise swelled up."
179. H. J. Rose, Handbook of Greek Mythology (New York: Dutton, 1959), p. 60.
180. See Homer, Odessey XI:305f.
181. See Enuma Elish VI:51-54 where the shrine is described as the place where the gods rest at night. Cf. "Eridu Lament," JCS 30, 140:16-19 for a similar theme as regards Sumerian deities.
182. See M. W. Green, "Eridu Lament," JCS 30, 138:12'.
183. "Instruction for Meri-ka-Re;" ANET 417:135 and AEL I:106.
184. See M. Lichtheim, AEL II:146 n. 14 for literature on this motif cross-culturally.
185. "Instruction of Ptah-hotep;" ANET 412:130f. and AEL I:65.
186. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 25; AEL II:160 xxiv:16-17 and AEL II:163, n. 27.

187. "Instruction of Ani;" AEL II:142 8:10.
188. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 8; AEL II:153 xi:6-7.
189. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 5; AEL II:151 vi:16-17.
190. "Instruction of Ptah-hotep;" ANET 414:429.
191. Šurpu VIII:68.
192. Lud. I:89; BWL 35.
193. CAD A2, 244b, sub ardu (c), ref. PBS 7. Cf. CH 282:97 where slave is punished for denying his master.
194. CAD A2, 249a, sub ardu (8'), ref. ABL 584.
195. See Šurpu III:96 for a statement against retaliation. The word-concept of the "blood-avenger" carries the power of these earlier standards in the ancient Near East. See B. Cohen, Jewish and Roman Law, Vol. 2 (1966), pp. 624-27 and p. 793f. addenda.
196. Šurpu II:58-59.
197. See section 3.4.7 "Bloodshed (Murder)" for further discussion.
198. "Instruction for Meri-ka-Re;" ANET 415:47f. and AEL I:100.
199. "Instruction for Meri-ka-Re;" ANET 418:140 and AEL I:107.
200. "Instruction for Meri-ka-Re;" ANET 415:51 and AEL I:100-01.
201. See "Instruction for Meri-ka-Re;" ANET 415:21f.
202. "Instruction for Meri-ka-Re;" ANET 415:49-50 and AEL I:100. Cf. ANET 415 n. 6.

203. See Surpu 1:4 and section 3.2.2 "Water."
204. "Hymn to Amon-Re;" ANET 366 iv:7f.
205. "Amen-hotep III's Building Inscription;" ANET 375:10 and AEL 11:45
206. See "Instruction for Meri-Ka-Re;" ANET 415:52-53, n. 8, 9 and AEL 1:101.
207. O. R. Gurney, "Cuthean Legend," AnSt 5, 106:159.
208. See Herodotus, Histories II:5,10,15f., as this 100 day cycle was a source of religious awe, pre-scientific amazement and speculation for the whole ancient world and J. G. Griffiths, "Hecataeus and Herodotus on a 'Gift of the River'" JNES 25, 57-61.
209. "Hymn to the Aton;" ANET 370b and AEL 11:98-99.
210. See H. Frankfort, Kingship and the Gods (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), pp. 58f.
211. Cf. A. De Buck, The Egyptian Coffin Texts (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935-1961), B 3C 570-76 "I made the great flood waters that the poor man might have rights in them like the rich."
212. Theod. 138; BWL 79 in a series of anti-social and religious actions.
213. See H. Frankfort, Wilson and Jacobsen, Before Philosophy (Baltimore: Pelican Books, 1973), p. 43-47 and a critical review by S. N. Kramer, JCS 2, 51f.
214. "Instruction of Ani" AEL 11:142 viii:6-9. Cf. "The Tradition of Seven Lean Years in Egypt," ANET 31-32 "and those who are in

the palace were in heart's affliction from a very great evil, since the Nile had not come in my time for a space of seven years."

215. See above, Šurpu III:62-67.

216. See S. M. Moren, "A Lost 'Omen Tablet'," JCS 29, 66:1.

217. See Lev. 14:5-6, 50-52.

218. W. R. Smith, Rel.Sem. , 135.

219. See Gen. 32:24-32 Jacob at the Jabok; Ex. 14:15-31 for the parting of the waters, where "the cry" to the Lord was the request. Cf. Homer, Iliad I:414-29 the Achaeans and the request before Oceanus.

220. Hesiod, Works and Days 1. 735-39.

221. See section 3.4.10 "Weights and Measures."

222. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 16; AEL II:156 xvii:18-19.

223. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" AEL II:156 end - xviii:1. Cf. A. Göetze, "Old Babylonian Documents from Sippar," JCS 11, 26 #13:4 "the weight stone of Šamaš."

224. Cf. Prov. 16:11 "A just weight and balance are the Lord's; all the weights in the bag are his."

225. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 17; AEL II:157 xviii:15-20.

226. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 17; AEL II:157 xviii:23. See A. Gardiner, Egyptian Grammar (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 3rd ed. rev., 1957), pp. 197-99, para. 266, no. 1.

227. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 17; AEL II:157 xix:8-9.

228. See section 3.4.10 "Weights and Measures."

229. Šamaš Hymn 112-13; BWL 135.

230. "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet" Ch. 17; AEL II:157 xix:4-5.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

5.0

It has been said that the moral and ethical pace of civilization, by its very nature, has great difficulty keeping stride with its technological advancements.¹ The Kassite period, the most probable time for the development of Šurpu, was one of economic and cultural advancement. This surge in cultural activity may well have resulted in some of the richest literature of the ancient Near East. The transgressions confessed in the Šurpu are an impressive catalogue of categories that touch upon the conduct of the individual in almost every aspect of daily life -- catalogues which appear to be informed by this cultural and literary surge. The individual who completed the Šurpu ritual and remembered what was said could, by all standards, be considered an ethical human being, a new kind of religious individual with a call to moral responsibility.

5.1 On Šurpu

This present study represents the first attempt at providing an integrated study of the Šurpu tablets. By studying the texts from the perspective of comparative religion, the multifaceted nature of Šurpu is best revealed. It has been almost thirty years since Professor Reiner first published her definitive transliteration and translation of the Šurpu materials. This dissertation is intended as a companion to her work, providing the reader with a manual of comparative religion and literature dealing

with the major topics raised within the Šurpu texts.

Chapter two discussed the evolution of the term and its specialized usage as "parameter" in Šurpu and this commentary. From the outset, it became clear that the use of the term māmītu in the Šurpu series had a unique and specialized meaning to the authors. The term carried with it two major messages for the priest and the patient. It bears the connotation of binding-ritual obligation, which could only be released through a combination of sympathetic magical acts. It also was used to describe and delineate for the suffering patient the moral, social, religious, and legal areas of transgression which might have led to his physical and emotional condition. Thus, the areas of human behavior catalogued under the rubric of māmītu also served to educate and arm the patient against future transgression and pollution. In doing so, the term māmītu provides for the patient and the priesthood a collection of the socioreligious "parameters" of life at that time.

Borrowing from the texts, own internal logic, chapter three presented the motifs and themes from Šurpu's catalogues in the areas of cultic, ritual, theological, and social parameters. The internal logic and order of the authors is revealed through this presentation. Many of the same themes and issues raised in Wisdom literature, litanies, philosophical contemplations, religious myths, rituals, psalms, and personal laments and prayers are echoed in the lists of Šurpu. The Belles Lettres literature, therefore, appears to be the source of their content. The first task of chapter three was to correlate these patterns and similarities through the presentation of literary parallels from Belles Lettres literature.

Having established the place of these motifs in the Mesopotamian sphere, these themes are then followed into neighboring cultures, expanding the backdrop upon which these parameters can be analyzed in comparative religion. This work leaves the impression that there is an international flavor to Wisdom and Belles Lettres literature in the areas of personal religion, ethical teachings, and the dissemination of a socioreligious ethic.

Chapter four was devoted to the comparative study of the most vivid cross-cultural parallel to the catalogues of Šurpu, that of Spell 125 from The Book of the Dead. This chapter represents a first attempt at the presentation and specific study of these long-ago identified cousins for both Assyriologists and Egyptologists. Without the use of linguistic studies, parallels are drawn between Egyptian Wisdom literature and Spell 125. Likewise, the similarities between Šurpu and Spell 125 are documented. Although the function of these texts in their own respective religions and societies are different, the selection of motifs is striking in their similarity. Spell 125 appears to occupy a similar place to Šurpu, serving as an interlocutor between Wisdom literature and ritual. This comparison illuminates the slow, rising international wave of interest in issues of individual religion and morality.

5.2 On Šurpu, Individual Religion, and Belles Lettres

Certain tentative conclusions can be drawn from this study of Šurpu concerning the status of personal religion, the nature of Belles Lettres literature, and the cross-cultural flow of information during the Kassite period.

The collected materials of the present study seem to point to the fact that there was an evolving place for personal and individual religion within a generally public and institutionalized Mesopotamian system. Šurpu provides the link between what ostensibly appears to be mere philosophical and literary brooding in the Belles Lettres literature and the specific ways in which Akkadian ritual could serve the needs of the individual.

The technique by which Šurpu serves the religious needs of the suffering individual is novel. The Šurpu rituals involve the patient as a direct participant in his own healing. The rituals expand the existing magical repertoire of the Mesopotamian priesthood to include now the device of confession and thereby education as a factor in the patient's catharsis and release from transgression. Šurpu approaches the suffering patient as a complete human being capable of change, not just magical manipulation. His identification of the specifics of his transgression was as important to his recovery as were the dramatic rituals of desquamation and release. Šurpu appears to represent a transitional step between predictable applications of sympathetic magic and the religious call to individual accountability.²

It would appear that Belles Lettres literature was the testing ground for the development of aspects of individual religion. What began as philosophical inquiries and debates essentially became raw material for many of the practical applications found in Šurpu. An ancient Mesopotamian exposed to Belles Lettres literature as Ludlul, The Šamaš Hymn, The Dialogue of Pessimism, and the Theodicy, for example, would have

already entered into the realm of moral self-evaluation, if he applied what was learned to his own condition in life. The degree to which the actual application was made or even intended merits further consideration. However, the socioreligious parameters of Šurpu appear to be influenced by the Belles Lettres literature's categories and themes. Wisdom literature by its very nature applies itself to universal considerations; and so Šurpu through this avenue shares some of that universal quality. The cross-cultural and literary parallels from the Belles Lettres literature of other cultures mentioned throughout this work attest to international flavor of these motifs and themes.

The similarities described between Spell 125 and Šurpu point toward some cultural interaction during this period. However, no theory of direct or indirect borrowing has been or will be offered. Wisdom literature was in many cultures the vehicle by which religious innovations were introduced. Both Mesopotamian and Egyptian Wisdom literature from this period were occupied with an ever-growing concern for the position of personal responsibility in religion. The questions as to whether either Šurpu or Spell 125 were directly informed by each other is left unresolved. It is sufficient at this stage to say that the cross-cultural parallels are striking.

5.3 A Call for Future Šurpu Studies

Both the form of presentation and the content of Šurpu distinguish it from other incantations. This study presented and attempted to justify the use of an interdisciplinary method spanning

the fields of language, religion, cultural anthropology, and cross-cultural studies. The present study has limited itself to these areas of inquiry; future Šurpu studies would call for research in several additional areas.

Students of Mesopotamian law have ample raw material presented in Šurpu for the study of the interface between legal obligation and moral considerations promoted by religion. A goodly number of the socioreligious parameters presented in Šurpu appear in one or more of the law codes of Mesopotamia. They are confessed to by the patient. However, if they in truth were the causes of his guilt and suffering he was also the perpetrator of specific crimes. Through the process of distinguishing social habits or socioreligious conventions from criminal and legal categories, one is better able to understand the nature of ethics for the time. There can be "no meaningful study of a legal system without weighing its underlying assumptions against other normative systems such as religion and ethics."³ Thus, the future examination of Šurpu in the light of the Mesopotamian law codes could greatly expand our understanding of the broader context of the law.

The Šurpu texts also call for a reconsideration of psychological studies of the religious texts of Mesopotamia. The underlying efficacy of the Šurpu ritual is perhaps based in the healing power of the word and the Mesopotamian attitudes toward shame, guilt, and confession. It can be said that Mesopotamian literature reflects a specific set of psychological perspectives and even states of mind.⁴ The question is to what extent do these

psychological categories and "conditions" reflect the norms and standards of the times. Are we dealing with the psychic condition of the author, the editors, the scribe, or the culture as a whole? When we interpret a cultic text, are we being exposed to the condition of a specific individual or are we privy to the reaction of the society to all its deviants?

The attempts to apply the sciences of psychiatry and psychology to Mesopotamian literature over the years have met with mixed results. S. N. Kramer's critique of "the highly speculative nature" of Frankfort and others cannot be forgotten: "Now at least as far as Mesopotamia is concerned, this psychological analysis of the mind (that it is not capable of "detached reflective thought") of ancient Near Eastern man is without basis in fact."⁵

However, a forceful answer should be given to Kinnier Wilson's attempt to offer specific diagnoses based upon a selective reading of Belles Lettres literature.⁶ The unspoken premise of Wilson's work is that these texts, whether Maqlû, Šurpu, Ludlul, or any of the others, are first person descriptions of a particular individual. Wilson's discussions and rapid diagnoses indicate that he believes he is dealing with the symptoms and record of a specific individual. This present study does not support this notion and in fact seems to refute this hypothesis. The Šurpu text is a reflection of the values of society as a whole. Further discussion and debate is necessary on this and other aspects of psychology of religion as related to the Šurpu texts.

However, another major parallel to Šurpu is found separated by time and culture. To this day, on Yom Kippur ("The Day

of Atonement"), Jews throughout the world verbalize a confession whose form and content is reminiscent of that in the Šurpu.⁷ This confession, probably composed during the time of the editing of the Babylonian Talmud, also lists a vast number of socioreligious parameters that no one individual could have possibly transgressed. The function of the confession is shared with that in Šurpu, that is, the search for the source of the sin through the process of extensive recitation. This area of comparative liturgy also calls for further study. This study has merely scratched the surface of what might be done with the Šurpu text.

The Šurpu ritual attempts to relieve the suffering patient from his physical and emotional sense of being bound to his past transgressions. The pain and guilt of just such a patient is heard throughout the texts of Ludlul and other such laments: "Where have mortals learnt the way of a god?"⁸ The Šurpu represents a response to the call of the individual in his grief: "My complaints have exposed the incantation priest."⁹ A sense of expiation was the goal of the ritual: "In the "Gate of Release of Guilt" I was released from my bond."¹⁰

People, ancient and modern, share the same fundamental doubts about existence. Our place in our given society is ever unsure. Our physical condition is ever changing. Our sense of self is ever in flux. In spite of the distance between us in space, time, and technology, these basic fears and concerns remain tied to the human condition. What differs is our mode of explanation and our methods for coping with the origins of the tensions, misfortunes, and failures that are a regular part of human existence.

The method and approach of Šurpu are archaic; however, the human need for release is eternal: "A man's spirit can sustain him through illness; but low spirits - who can bear them?"¹¹

Notes to Chapter Five

1. A. J. Toynbee, A Study of History, (London: Oxford, 1954-1961) Vol. IX, pp. 756-57 and p. 466.
2. See W. F. Albright, From Stone Age to Christianity, (New York: Doubleday, 1957), p. 173.
3. Z. W. Falk, Law and Religion, (Jerusalem: Mesharim, 1981), p. 10.
4. A. L. Oppenheim, AM, pp. 198-199.
5. S. N. Kramer, JCS 2, 56; 40-41. Cf. S. N. Kramer, "Love, Hate and Fear: Psychological Aspects of Sumerian Culture," Eretz Israel 5, 66-74 where he also fails to establish a functional application of psychology to Mesopotamian studies.
6. J. V. Kinnier Wilson, "An Introduction to Babylonian Psychiatry," AS 16, 289-298. His theory is founded upon his understanding of māmītu as a psychological state, Ibid. p. 294. See section 2.2.1.
7. The "Vidui" or Large Confession is found in the High Holiday ritual. See J. H. Hertz, The Authorized Daily Prayer Book, (New York: Bloch Publishing, 1974), 910-919 for one collection with translation.
8. Lud. 1:38; BWL 41.
9. Lud. 1:108; BWL 45.
10. Lud. IV:85; BWL 61.
11. Prov. 18:14.

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