

gir₃-gen-na and Šulgi's "Library": Liver Omen Texts in the Third Millennium BC (I)

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§1. Introduction

§1.1. Any understanding of extispicy as a literature transmitted from the 3rd into the 2nd millennium depends on the premise of forerunners¹ to the three forms of technical literature arising in the Old Babylonian period: liver-omen models, compendia, and reports. Aside from the size, extent, and comprehensiveness of the OB compendia, several other features have lent plausibility to the existence of a 3rd millennium written tradition for liver-divination texts. These include: later references to extispicy's antiquity; the appearance of 3rd millennium kings in OB historical omens; the appearance of diviners in 3rd millennium professional lists; 3rd millennium references to sheep omens and liver divination in literary contexts (without reference to textual material); and a few purported examples of 3rd millennium extispical texts (which can be shown to be spurious).² Yet nothing has been so influential in this premise than the only piece of 3rd millennium evidence that seems to specifically mention extispical technical literature, two oft-quoted lines from Šulgi's Hymn B, ll. 132-3, usually translated:³

*I am a ritually pure interpreter of omens.
I am the very Nintu (creator deity) of the collections of omens*

maš₂ šu gid₂-gid₂ zalag-zalag-ga-me-en
gir₃-gen-na inim UZU-ga-ka⁴nin-tu-bi ge₂₆-me-en

¹ By "forerunners," I mean here any text that employs an observational principle to record an observed signifier in connection with its signified meaning; for a good example of a text which discusses extispicy but falls outside this definition, see the Ebla "omen" published by Coser (2000).

² I will treat these other aspects in a later, separate article.

³ Translation Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ETCSL, <<http://www-etcsl.orient.ox.ac.uk>>), text

§1.2. The translation "collections" (or "library," or "series")⁴ is derived from the Standard Babylonian word *girginakku* (CAD G 86-7). The reasons for understanding gir₃-gen-na(-ka) as *girginakku* seem fairly straightforward: aside from the obvious homophony,⁵ gir₃-gen-na logically suggests the serialization of a library series or collection in the periphrastic sense of a "proceeding-by-foot": as one puts one foot after another, so one reads (or writes) one tablet after another. The meaning seems to fit well in this passage (§2), if more problematically where it appears in other Šulgi Hymns (§3). The etymology seems further reinforced by an Ur III literary catalog (§4) which employs the term gir₃-

2.4.2.02; similarly: Castellino (1972), and Klein (1981), who gives: "I am a ritually pure *bārû*-diviner. In the "series" of the oracles I am the Nintu of their word(ing)," preferring gir₃-gen-na-ka UZU-ga ... (against ETCSL's gir₃-gen-na inim UZU-ga ...); cf. Šulgi B l. 318, gir₃-gen-na inim en₃-du-ga₂-kam, "the collected words of all the hymns ...". Below, I will cite ETCSL for Šulgi B (except where otherwise indicated) given the continued want of an up-to-date edition of the text, esp. for comparison of variants as would be critical to, e.g., the discussion of l. 318. The manuscript of Geerd Haayer cited by ETCSL was not available to me.

⁴ Most recently George (2005) 133; the author nowhere suggests, however, that extispical texts were among these "library" texts. Extispical knowledge does not appear among the humorous scribal dialogues describing the e₂-dub-ba-a curricular subjects, and the Kassite extispical scribal exercise UM 29-13-542 (Veldhuis 2000) is "by far the oldest example."

⁵ Or perhaps not so obvious: Klein's (1981) reading of the possessive particle -ka in this one attestation would be the only known reading which would support a non-back-formed phonetic etymology for Akkadian *girginakku*; the three other attestations in which gir₃-gen-na supposedly means *girginakku* are all in *TMH NF 3*, 55, discussed in §4; none employs the particle -ka.

gen-na, apparently referring to “series” of incantations. Thus, though most other 3rd millennium attestations of gir₃-gen-na indicate a semantic field of conveyance or movement, it would appear that Šulgi was indeed referring to a serialized Ur III omen literature much like the Old Babylonian compendia.⁶

§1.3. Yet the supposed “Sumerian loanword” *girginakku* is in all other known logographic writings (all post-dating the Old Babylonian period) expressed by the altogether different term im-la₂ (or im-gu₂-la₂, or im-gu₂-la₂-geš-tuku).⁷ No known source expresses the lexical equation {gir₃-gen-na = *girginakku*}. The other post-OB reading for gir₃-gen-na in Akkadian is *tallaktu* (AHw 1310-1311): “methods,” “procedures,” “pathways.”⁸ Akkadian *tallaktu* is syllabically attested as early as the Old Babylonian period, while syllabic *girginakku* is not known until later Standard Babylonian (CAD G 86-87).⁹ One might question why Šulgi did not use a more current term like ka-keš₂-da if “series” was indeed what was meant?¹⁰ In reading Šulgi B ll. 132-3, should we necessarily look ahead to SB *girginakku* (always oth-

erwise written im-(gu₂-)la₂), and understand a “series” of omen tablets, when we might read OB *tallaktu*, a “procedure” of divination? The essay below argues that neither the context of these lines in Šulgi B – nor other uses of gir₃-gen-na in his hymns – nor, finally, the use of the term in an Ur III “literary catalogue” – should lead us to believe that “series” should be the translation of Ur III gir₃-gen-na, but rather “procedure,” with implications for the editorial history of extispical literature.

§2. The local context of gir₃-gen-na in Šulgi B ll. 132-3

§2.1. The lines in which Šulgi boasts of his skill as a diviner are set in the middle of a long passage about his innate physical and mental abilities, and far from the point at which he begins to discuss his learned abilities. After a brief introduction (ll. 1-12) to the 385-line poem, Šulgi does indeed brag immediately of his ability to write (ll. 13-20), a skill which he tells us includes “subtraction, addition, reckoning and accounting,” but he does not return to this theme until l. 270 and following. The major subjects of Šulgi B may be profiled thusly:

lines:

- 21-51: military prowess
 - 56-113: hunting ability
 - 118-130: physical strength (e.g., racing and dancing)
 - 131-149: **skill at extispicy**
 - 154-174: musical ability (tuning, finger technique, natural ability¹¹)
 - 175-205: kingly nature (innate¹² sense of justice and destiny)
 - 206-220: skill at conversing in foreign languages
 - 221-243: innate¹³ sense of justice
 - 244-258: observance of cultic duties
 - 259-269: the pacific internationalist
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- 270-307: learned skill in reading ancient hymns and writing new ones
 - 308-319: establishment of scribal academies, composi-

⁶ Other attestations of gir₃-gen-na are discussed by Civil (1989) 55, in which the translation “list (gir₃-gen-na) (of fields)” belies the underlying allusion to the fixed “sequence of turns” of the prebend-holders in the use of those fields (see Civil’s discussion, p. 59); for the Early Dynastic administrative text from Adab, see fn. 18, below.

⁷ Even this equation [im-gu₂-la = *girginakku*] is known from only one source, *Hb* 10, 460-461. It is, of course, precisely because no Old Babylonian usage of *girginakku* is attested that Lieberman (1977) did not include it in his study of Sumerian loanwords in Old Babylonian Akkadian.

⁸ gir₃-gen-na as “pathways” would be in harmony with the semantics of extispicy, a practice full of “paths.”

⁹ It is true, however, that a lexical equation of *tallaktu* with gir₃-gen is not confirmed until the Middle Babylonian period, AHw 1310: “bab., m/nA. LL. gir₃= *tal-lak-tu* V R 16, 24ab. Wz. GIN.GIN”; the OB exemplar for *tallaktu* comes from *AfO* 13, 46 (*MCT* 137, 46).

¹⁰ van Dijk and Geller (2003), 61: ka-keš₂-keš₂, similar to the later eš₂-gar₃. The “Temple Hymns,” for example, are credited to the “compiler” Enheduanna, lu₂-dub-KA-keš₂-da en-he₂-du₇-an-na (Sjöberg and Bergmann [1969]), l. 543; in the “Instructions of Šuruppak” (Alster [1974] 50-51 and pls. V-VI), the text concludes by praising the instructions, l. 281: nin dub gal-gal-la šu du₇-a, “which befit the queen of all great tablets [=Nisaba]”; cf. ETC SL, text 5.6.1, l. 279: “the lady who completed the great tablets.”

¹¹ Šulgi insists that he has created (rather than learned) rules for tuning instruments, he is able to instantly play instruments he has never touched before, he can perform laments off-the-cuff better than any professionals, etc.

¹² ll. 181-183: “I am one who is powerful enough to trust in his own power. He who trusts in his own exalted name may carry out great things.”

¹³ In this passage, the emphasis is on Šulgi’s wisdom, which, by example, serves as the template for justice throughout his land.

tion of hymns

320-385: valiant deeds preserved in inscriptions¹⁴

§2.2. The subject of extispicy comes right after Šulgi talks about fighting, hunting, running and dancing—right before music, justice and kingship—and 121 lines before he discusses his knowledge of texts and writing, about how he can read hymns written in cuneiform, and how he instituted a “house of wisdom” (e₂-geštu₂), “academies” (e₂-dub-ba), and “places of learning” (ki-umun₂) for education in writing. Extispicy is squarely set within the largest part of the hymn which concerns itself with Šulgi’s innate and natural abilities (ll. 21-269), rather than those learned skills that relate to written knowledge and the propagation of his immortal legacy (ll. 270-385).

§2.3. A closer look at ll. 131-149 in full is in order:

I am a ritually pure interpreter of omens. I am the very Nintu (creator deity) of the GIR₃-GIN₂-NA of omens. These words of the gods are of pre-eminent value for the exact performance of hand-washing and purification rites, for eulogy of the en priestess or for her enthronement in the gipar, for the choosing of the lumah and nindingir priests by sacred extispicy, for attacking the south or for defeating the uplands, for the opening of the emblem house, for the washing of lances in the “water of battle” (blood), for the taking of subtle decisions about the rebel lands. After I have determined a sound omen through extispicy from a white lamb and a sheep, water and flour are libated at the place of invocation. Then, as I prepare the sheep with words of prayer, my diviner watches in amazement like an idiot. The prepared sheep is placed at my disposal, and I never confuse a favourable sign with an unfavourable one. I myself have a clear intuition, and I judge by my own eyes. In the insides of just one sheep I, the king, can find the indications for everything and everywhere.

§2.4. No elaborate exegesis is required to show that Šulgi is a liver-divination expert not because he learned how to do it, but because he is a “natural.” It is in fact the “expert” here who is the “idiot” (na-ga₂), while Šulgi relies on his “clear intuition” (ša₃ zalag) and the judgment of his “own eyes” (igi-gu₁₀); the king is not some mere trained apprentice who has been taught a technical skill, he is (quite the opposite) the very “creator deity” (dⁿnin-tu)¹⁵ of such omens. Compare next

¹⁴ ll. 374-385 include the king’s epithets and a concluding hymn to Nisaba.

this passage with Hymn C, the most similar in Šulgi’s hymnic literature, in which he discusses his extispical powers in ll. 97-111:

By heart (ETCSL: “Since from birth”)¹⁶ I am also a Nintu (creator deity), wise in all matters, I can recognise the omens of that extispicy in a pure place. I keep a look-out that ... I am a lord ..., as I range about in my anger. I also have a solidly based knowledge of My vision enables me to be the dream-interpreter of the Land; my heart enables me to be the Istaran (god of justice) of the foreign lands. I am Šulgi, good shepherd of Sumer. Like my brother and friend Gilgameš, I can recognise the virtuous and I can recognise the wicked. The virtuous gets justice in my presence, and the wicked and evil person will be carried off by Who like me is able to interpret what is spoken in the heart or is articulated on the tongue?

§2.5. Šulgi’s extispical skill is innate, not learned: his recognition of extispical signs comes to him “by heart” (ša₃-ta). His knowledges and interpretive abilities are derived from his “vision” (igi-gu₁₀) and his “heart” (ša₃-gu₁₀), he “recognizes” (mu-zu) “what is spoken in the heart” and “articulated on the tongue.”¹⁷ In this context, a reading of gir₃-gen-na in Šulgi B ll. 132-133 as “procedure(s)” is much preferable to “library”:

*I am a ritually pure interpreter of omens.
I am the very Nintu (creator deity) of omen-procedure(s).*

§3. (ki-)gir₃-gen(-na) elsewhere in Šulgi Hymns

§3.1. Six other uses of gir₃-gen occur in the Šulgi Hymns. Four of these are formulated as the compound ki gir₃-gen, and these all refer to walking or going,¹⁸ not to seriation, collection, compilation, or the like:

¹⁵ Šulgi also compares his creative powers to Nintu’s in Hymns C and E; not only is Nintu well known as a creator-/birth-/mother-goddess (ETCSL: Nintud A, Enki and Ninhursag, Enki and the World Order, Ibbi-Sin C, others), she is elsewhere credited with creation of en-ship and kingship (Nintud A, Išme-Dagan A).

¹⁶ One anonymous reader has pointed to the word-play in juxtaposing ša₃ (as “womb”) with ^dNintu.

¹⁷ ETCSL. As in Šulgi B, these lines appear in a passage clearly segregated from that in which Šulgi discusses his ability to read and write: ll. 46-49 describe his writing ability as focused on accounting techniques, adding (at his most literary) the ability to write inscriptions on pedestals.

¹⁸ The semantic range is supported by the appearance of the term gir₃-gen-na in four lines of OIP 14, 193;

- B 110 ki gir₃-gen-gu₁₀ nig₂ *Wherever I direct my steps*
mu-un-gar-gar, ...¹⁹
- B 287 a₂ nam-ur-sag-ga₂ *about my heroic courage*
ki gir₃-gen-na-gu₁₀ *and expeditions*²⁰
- B 301 lugal-bi ki gir₃-gen- *Wherever that king's path*
na ħe₂-en-du *may lead*²¹
- E 28 šu TUK₄-a ki gir₃- *and about my expeditions*
gen-gu₁₀

§3.2. Elsewhere, gir₃-gen occurs twice by itself without ki, in ll. 308-336 of Šulgi B, in a passage which is explicitly concerned with written sources. The meanings of gir₃-gen here are not contingent on the context of writing: Šulgi may here refer to “method of writing” (though even this is disputable), but that does not mean that all methods (most importantly, the gir₃-gen of ll. 131-2) are written ones. The first use of gir₃-gen here may be found in ll. 316-8 of Šulgi B²²:

316. geštu₂ dab₅-ba-gu₁₀ *This and this only is*
i₃-ne-eš₃ ne-e *now my accumulated*

Steinkeller (1980) 6-7 understood these to be professional “conveyors(?)”; R. Englund (1990) 54-5 preferred “expedition/transport” (by PN / to GN).

¹⁹ Castellino (1972), 40-1 (his l. 111), in the first of several translations referring to a “library” or the like, understood “(That) I keep deposited in my library.” He argued, 141-142, that the verb GAR, juxtaposed with ki gir₃-gen-na (which he understood as a nominal form of *alāku*, rather than the noun “steps”), could not refer to movement (cf. his translation l. 301), even though the passage deals exclusively with running and hunting. ETCSL’s translation (“Wherever I direct [lit. “set”] my steps”) is here preferred.

²⁰ Castellino (1972) 60-1: “And for the gallant achievements (proclaimed) in my collection.”

²¹ Castellino (1972) 60-1: “That man (lu₂-bi) withersoever he may go”

²² It is not immediately evident how the ETCSL translation of ll. 317-318 derives from the Sumerian, either syntactically or lexically; the full ETCSL translation is: “The collected words of all the hymns that are in my honour supersede all other formulations.” Castellino’s (1972) readings are at some variance: in l. 317, nig₂-du₁₁-ge for nig₂-ka-ge; and (more importantly) in l. 318, gir₃-gen-na-ka instead of gir₃-gen-na inim, “collection” instead of “collected words”: “What my intelligence could achieve (lit. grasp), that is so. What I have composed in its entirety is gathered in the collection of my songs, what can be added there?” Castellino’s understanding of “collection” relies on the wholesale restoration of a verb (“gathered”) which must be dismissed because it is not in the text.

- ur₅-ra-am₃ *knowledge*²³
317. nig₂ ka-ge dib-ba *All other formulations,*
ki-šar₂-ra
318. gir₃-gen-na inim *the collected words / of all*
en₃-du-ga₂-kam a- *the hymns (that are in my*
na mu-ši-gal₂-la *honor) / supersede*

§3.3. This translation implicitly furthers the idea of a “collection” by translating “all” (from ki-šar₂-ra) twice, both in “all other formulations” and “of all the hymns.”²⁴ Lines 317-318 are, without doubt, quite difficult to understand, especially with regard to syntax, but several points are in order. The first is that gir₃-gen modifies speech (du₁₁ / inim, or perhaps en₃-du), not writing. The terms are tangled precisely because the passage discusses the writing down of unwritten forms (spoken and sung compositions), but either A) what are collected are spoken words (inim), not tablets, signs or writing; or B) the meaning is “its procedures” or “the manner of words” (i.e., by reading gir₃-gen-na-ka). A translation of “procedure” or “manner” fits well here, neither consequent nor contingent on the passage’s overall concern with writing.

317. *Everything which I have composed,*
318. *what can exceed the manner (gir₃-gen-na) of*
wording of my hymns (inim en₃-du-ga₂-kam²⁵)?

§3.4. In this understanding, gir₃-gen-na is a reference to the “procedure” or “method” of composition, to style—not to an editorial technique of collection or redaction of manuscripts—a translation which nevertheless does no damage to the idea that (indeed) Šulgi’s hymns are being written down.

§3.5. Our second case (ll. 328-329²⁶ of Šulgi B) makes

²³ The “knowledge” referred to here are the songs of Šulgi which had been established in the scribal “academies” of Nippur and Ur; see esp. George (2005).

²⁴ Castellino (1972) 227 acknowledges the possibility of understanding ki-šar₂-ra as the subject either of what precedes it or follows it, but translates it only in the former sense. The ETCSL translation also adds “that are in my honor,” which is not present in the text.

²⁵ inim (=awātu) in the sense of “wording (of a tablet)” is well-established (*CAD* A₂ amātu A, mng. 3, 34-35, though mostly in legal, not literary, contexts); cf. Šulgi Hymn E, l. 51 (Ludwig [1990] 55): mu ni₃ en₃-du-ga₂ l. 51, “Zeilen des Inhalts meiner Lieder” (ETCSL text 2.4.2.05: the “lines of the songs”).

²⁶ ETCSL ll. 328-329: lugal-me-en a₂-ga₂ dlamma-bi kalag-ga-na šir₃-bi-im / ki gir₃-gen-na-gu₁₀ nar-e mu-ši-

this point even more clearly:

328. lugal-me-en a₂-ga₂ d^llama-bi(-im) kalag-ga-ga₂
šir₃-bi-im
329. ki-gir₃-gen-na-gu₁₀ nar-e mu-ši-gar

Castellino (1972) 61-64:

328. I, the king, (lugal-me-en), my arm is the protecting genius (a₂-ga₂ d^lamma-bi-im) (and) this is the song of my valour (kalag-ga-ga₂ šir₃-bi-im)
329. Which I placed (mu-ši-in-gal₂) in my “library” (ki-gir₃-gen-na-mu) for (the use of) the singer (nar-e).

ETCSL:

328. For me, the king (lugal-me-en)
329. the singer (nar-e) has recorded (mu-ši-in-gar) my exploits (ki-gir₃-gen-na-gu₁₀)
328. in songs (šir₃-bi-im) about the strength of the protective deity of my power (a₂-ga₂ d^lamma-bi kalag-ga-na).

§3.6. In this instance, only Castellino proposed to translate “library”—yet he was already aware that it was less probable to understand Šulgi as the subject of the clause in l. 329 and the singer as modified by a terminative particle. He chose instead to see Šulgi as the “true subject” (as the speaker), and thus the song is “placed in my library” (ki-gir₃-gen-na has never otherwise been proposed as “library,” but only gir₃-gen-na).²⁷ ETCSL’s translation properly restores ki-gir₃-gen-na as the object of the verb: the musician has recorded Šulgi’s exploits (or expeditions, or ways, as in the four examples at the outset of this section) in songs. Once again, even though the passage is explicitly about writing and composition, (ki-)gir₃-gen-na is not a term referring to a “series” of tablets or “collection” of songs, but to the “exploits” or “ways” of the king.

§4. *gir₃-gen-na* in the Ur III “literary catalog” HS 1360

§4.1. Outside of Šulgi’s Hymns, the only other known use of gir₃-gen-na²⁸ supporting the later Akkadian *girginakku* is its use (four times) in the Ur III “literary

in-gar (both ETCSL and Castellino [1972] have noted gar and gal₂ as variants between those of the 70+ available tablets and fragments that preserve this line).

²⁷ Castellino (1972) 229: “In itself the complex (nar-e mu-ši-gal₂) should be analyzed as ergative (-e) and verb, ‘the singer/musician has placed’...”; he nevertheless preferred to see Šulgi as the “speaker (true subject),” and that the (tablet with the) song was placed in a library, by the king, and for the singer.

²⁸ See above, fnn. 6 and 18.

catalog” HS 1360. This text has received much attention,²⁹ but has thus far defied a secure translation, and continued reference to the text as a “catalog” of other texts must remain provisional. The structure of the text may be presented in the followed “collapsed” form:

- 1 dub-sag-ta
2-7 [six incipits, the first of which is d^{en}-ki unu₂-gal im-e₁₁, followed by double-ruling]
8 gir₃-gen-na d^{en}-ki unu₂-gal im-e₁₁-kam
9 ša₃ LAGABxU-dili-kam³⁰
10 dub-sag-ta
11-15 [five incipits, the second of which is d^{li}-li-a-ke₄, followed by double-ruling]
16 gir₃-gen-na d^{li}-li-a-kam
17 ša₃ LAGABxU-dili-kam
18 GIR₃-SAHAR lu₂ inim zi dag PUZUR₅?-ba
19 gir₃-gen-na-bi lu₂ nu-da-pa₃
[empty space]
20 gir₃-gen-na
21 iri-bala-a-aš₂-di-da-kam³¹

§4.2. Kramer’s original interpretation of HS 1360 was that it catalogued four separate compositions by listing the incipits of at least 15 other serialized tablets, each group of incipits (to tablets) summarized as “gir₃-gen-na [name of composition].”³² Already a quarter-century ago, Civil questioned the idea that the text was an in-

²⁹ The text has been published twice in the series *TMH*: an autograph first appeared in *TMH* NF 1-2, 360, by Pohl (1937); a full edition by Kramer followed later as *TMH* NF 3, 55 (1961); it appears in transliteration only on the ETCSL website (at this writing, last updated 2005). The text has received further comment from Hallo (1963), Civil (1976), Wilcke (1976), with new collations by van Dijk and Geller (2003); see also Krecher (1980).

³⁰ I am grateful to G. Farber for clarifying this reading: thus “it is within the LAGABxU,” not Kramer’s ša₃ PU₂-dili-kam, “(and) (this will result in) a ‘Fountain’.”

³¹ G. Farber also offers (personal communication) that di-da ought to mean “speaking” (as Wilcke [1976] has it), not “going” (Kramer [1961]); thus, Wilcke: “It is the gir₃-gen-na of the speaking-to-the-rebel-city.”

³² Kramer’s (1961) proposed compositions: six incipits (ll. 2-7), summarized as the gir₃-gen-na “Enki is the unu₂-gal rising”; five incipits (ll. 11-15), summarized as the gir₃-gen-na “The God Lilia(k)”; and two uncataloged compositions, “The feet of the man of the righteous word” (whose gir₃-gen-na has not been “found” [lu₂ nu-da-pa₃]) and “the advance towards the enemy city.” In Kramer’s view, each incipit indicated a new tablet; for the two compositions whose incipits/tablets are not

ventory of other tablets on the grounds that the discovery of a duplicate made that function unlikely; Civil speculated about a possible “didactic arrangement” of the tablet’s information.³³ That “catalogue” is a problematic understanding of the text is further suggested by the absence of the term *gir₃-gen-na* (as well as the great structural differences) in all other known Ur III³⁴ and Old Babylonian³⁵ literary catalogs — HS 1360 simply has no known analogues. Wilcke, in almost the same moment as Civil, issued a brief (1976) note about the text (“Ritual? Katalog?”), gravitating towards the interpretation that *gir₃-gen-na* here meant “ritual.” Though still holding that the text as a whole was an inventory,

cited, we may assume that “series” should imply at least two (and presumably more) tablets. Kramer did not explain how a series which had “not been found” could be (or needed to be) cataloged. Kramer’s interpretation depended on heavy restorations of long phrases in his translation, interposing (among others) the terms “composition” six times (ll. 2, 8, 11, 16, 18, and 21), “tablet” six times (ll. 3 (twice), 12 (twice), 19, 20), and “labeled/titled” seven times (ll. 2, 8, 11, 16, 18, 19 and 21). Cf. van Dijk’s (1963: 53) suggestion of “soustitre/titre d’une subdivision.”

³³ Civil (1976) 145 n. 36: “...when one can find duplicates of a catalogue, even though it has all the appearances of an inventory (e.g., *TMH NF 3*, 55, now duplicated by Ni 1905), some other interpretation seems to be in order.”

³⁴ Hallo (1963) 168-169 notes that the Yale catalogue better resembles the Old Babylonian catalogues in content (many of the titles were known as OB copies of hymns) and structure (especially the accounted total of tablets as *šu-nigin₂*) than its Ur III “counterpart,” HS 1360, which lacks these features. Though at that time Hallo knew of no titles or incipits from HS 1360 which could be identified with known Ur III or OB hymns, van Dijk and Geller (2003, 4-5 and notes to nos. 16, 14, and 21) have proposed contemporary Ur III parallels between (from greatest to least degree of convincingness): HS 1360’s l. 15 and HS 1556; l. 18 and HS 1368a; l. 3 and HS 1497. Note that although the first and third (both incantations) of these parallels are to the first lines of the respective tablets, the second parallel (not an incantation, but a ritual direction) is not the first line of a tablet — it appears on HS 1368a’s line 13, not an incipit.

³⁵ Among those eleven OB catalogues transliterated by the ETCSL (0.2.01-.08, .11-.13), a thumbnail sketch finds both catalogues with lists of incipits only (.01, .03, .05?, .06, .11, .12?, .13) and catalogues with subtotals (.02, .04, .07, .08?) — and in most cases (excepting .05 and .07-.08), a good portion of the compositions they catalog are otherwise known — but in no case can I see rubrics present in these documents, and certainly not using the term *gir₃-gen-na*.

the term *gir₃-gen-na* did not itself indicate “library” or “series (of tablets)”, but was, rather, a liturgical directive indicating the ritual’s procedure of the individual incantations (i.e., “the performance of the ritual *den-ki unu₂-gal im-e₁₁*, etc.).³⁶ Only a few years later, Krecher similarly offered that the text’s use of *gir₃-gen-na-bi* could be read “its sequence” [of doing] as much as “its series.”³⁷ These three positions have recently been adopted in two important amendments proposed by van Dijk and Geller (2003):

1. first, that the term *dub-sag-ta*—which Kramer apparently took to mean “first tablet” of the first two “compositions”—ought to be understood as “incipit” (specifically, however, an incipit only at (lit.) “the head of the tablet”);
2. accordingly, the *gir₃-gen-na*’s that conclude the first two sequences refer to ritual procedures as a whole—both *recitanda* and *operanda*—rather than (by title) to a ritual text on another tablet.

§4.3. Kramer’s multi-tablet “library-series” (i.e., a collected works entitled “Enki-is-the-unugal-rising”), on these terms, becomes instead a “(ritual/rubric of) procedure.”³⁸ The subscripts indicating the proper performative sequence of listed incantations (i.e., for the enactment of a ritual called “Speaking-to-the-rebel-city”) thus likely referred as much to unwritten ritual acts as their accompanying utterances.³⁹

³⁶ Wilcke (1976: 42); van Dijk and Geller (2003) 4-5 and 72, pointing to the fact that “ritual” would normally be termed *kid₃-kid₃*, and that no incipit in the ritual texts Wilcke cites are found in HS 1360.

³⁷ Krecher (1980) 483.

³⁸ That van Dijk and Geller prefer the translation “rubric” over “ritual” little affects the fundamental point that what are listed by HS 1360 are not tablets, but procedures. Note especially van Dijk and Geller’s (2003) No. 17, an incantation text which juxtaposes *gir₃* with a *genuine* term for “series” in its ll. 12-13: *gir₃-ba-da me-a / ka-keš₂-keš₂-ba na-gi*: “Having arrived at (the tablet’s) ‘rubric’ / he indeed assigned its ‘series’.” Though the editors consider the translations to be conditional, it seems certain that this juxtaposition shows that the terms cannot mean the same thing.

³⁹ Some further difficulty in understanding Kramer’s interpretation of the *gir₃-gen-na* as giving the title of the larger composition by the first incipit arises for the second series, for which the *Lilia(k)* incipit appears second, not first. The understanding of *gir₃-gen-na* as “rubric” solves the logical complications in requiring the title of a “composition” to come first—thus the *gir₃-gen-na* is the “*Lilia(k)* procedure,” including and named for one

§4.4. The following interpretive points follow logically: first, *dub-sag-ta* as “incipit [at the head of the tablet]” indicates that the incantations following on HS 1360 are all contained on one tablet, not that each following incipit marks the head of a new tablet. Consequently, *gir₃-gen-na* (a rubric meaning “procedure”⁴⁰) summarizes the ritual, performed by incanting these incantations in sequence. “Procedure” also makes better sense of the *gir₃-gen-na* in ll. 19-20, the first of which refers to an incantation which has not been found,⁴¹ and the second of which refers to HS 1360 itself, which (single tablet that it is), cannot be a “series”—but certainly a “procedure”. Thus, where Kramer saw the text as an inventory of four compositions on 15+ tablets, the observations made by Civil, Wilcke, Krecher, and van Dijk and Geller lead us to see HS 1360 as a liturgical text outlining a ritual procedure composed of three sub-rituals, whose materials would be found on only three other tablets:

- ll. 1-9, a tablet, found in the LAGABXU, which contains six incantations, the performance of which is a procedure called “Enki-is-the-unugal-rising”;
- ll. 10-17, a tablet, found in the LAGABXU, which contains five incantations, the performance of which is a procedure called “The God Lilia(k)”;
- ll. 18-19 is a procedure whose name is known, but whose tablet has not been found (and thus the individual incantations are not able to be listed);
- and ll. 20-1 is a subscript summarizing the three procedures above as (together) a ritual procedure called a “Speaking-to-the-rebel-city.”⁴²

§5. *Ur III gir₃-gen-na* ≠ *girginakku*, = *tallaktu*

§5.1. The difference between understanding HS 1360 as a list of procedures, rather than a list of tablets, is perhaps fine enough to account for a later Middle Babylonian scribal misunderstanding that *gir₃-gen-na* meant

the same thing as *im-gu₂-la₂*.⁴³ The implications for the editorial process and observationalism of liver omens are somewhat larger:

I am a ritually pure interpreter of omens.

I am the very Nintu (creator deity) of the omen procedures.

§5.2. The difference between a “run” or “series” of procedures (*tallaktu*) and a “run” or “series” of tablets (*girginakku*) marks the difference between a traditional craft knowledge and a manuscript tradition, and this has further implications for how we understand the development of the later OB serials and their pretensions towards observationalism (though these pretensions may, in the end, be our own). A 3rd millennium “library” would lead us to understand the OB liver-omen compendia as the first-known recensions of an as-yet undiscovered (but older and transmitted) scientific literature. 3rd millennium “procedures,” however, is a translation of *gir₃-gen-na* which leads us to see a traditional art (whether intuitive and inspired, orally-transmitted, or both) only later transformed into a written and technical science, sometime between the reign of Šulgi and the post-Išbi-Erra OB liver models found at Mari.

§5.3. Šulgi’s claim to proprietary knowledge of the divinatory arts was, nevertheless, an early rhetorical assertion of a privileged, royal epistemology, one that later sparked the scholastic, technical literature deployed as an instrument of power by OB kings and courts. Epiphenomenal literature emphasizing “secret” knowledge (in this latter case, belonging to diviners in royal service) was—and is—a hallmark of changes in discourses of power which can no longer rely solely on traditional forms of legitimation to secure rule.

of the included steps, not the “composition (entitled) Lilia(k).”

⁴⁰ Krecher (1980) translates HS 1360’s *gir₃-gen-na* as “Abfolge(?)”.

⁴¹ Understanding the text as an inventory of tablets would also require the (awkward, though not impossible) condition that the scribe would have to have otherwise known that the *GIR₃-SAĤAR* ... etc. was a “series” of tablets despite its absence.

⁴² This summary would answer the questions raised by Civil (1976) and Krecher (1980).

⁴³ *girginakku* should probably number among those Sumerian loanwords which came into Akkadian on “an Akkadian speaker’s defective knowledge of scholastic Sumerian” (Lieberman [1977] 19).

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