than *bān*, would have made such a change almost seamless, involving only a switch in case from *abīšu* to *abūšu*.

These assessments, less critical than Lambert's, of the changes made in the Assyrianized version, comport with Eckart Frahm's judgment that "Given the political importance of their endeavor, it seems preferable to assume that the authors of the new text knew quite well what they were doing" (2011: 350–351). They likewise dovetail with Frahm's argument whereby Aššur's identification with his own ancestor Anšar, may, when taking into account Aššur's characterization in other sources as *bānû ramānīšu*, "The creator of himself," be seen as a sign not of amateurishness but of theological sophistication (2011: 351). Interpreted thus, the Assyrianized version of *Enuma Elish* deserves more credit than it has sometimes been given.

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89) Winnowing Down the Syntactical Possibilities of a Key Assertion in the *Marduk Ordeal* — The so-called *Marduk Ordeal* (LIVINGSTONE 1989 no. 34 [*Assur Version*] and no. 35 [*Nineveh Version*]) contains a remarkable statement: *enūma eliš ša dabibūni ina pān bēl ina nisanni izammurūšūni ina muḫḫi ša ṣabitūni* [*šū*] (*Assur Version*: 34, *Nineveh Version*: 29). While its general sense seems clear, its syntax is difficult to parse and has been variously construed. Frymer-Kensky translates "Enuma Elish, which is said before Bel in Nisan: he? sings it because he (Bel) is captive (*or*: before Bel who is captive)" (1983: 135); Livingstone, "Enūma eliš, which is recited and chanted in front of Bēl in Nisan, concerns his imprisonment" (1989: 84); Kämmerer and Metzler, "*Enūma eliš*, das im Angesicht von Bēl vorgetragen ist (i.e.: wird), singen sie *darüber*?, daß sie ihn ergriffen halten" (2012: 36); and Worthington, "*Enūma eliš*, which *is spoken*, (and which) in front of Bēl *they* sing *to him* in the month of Nisan, is about *the fact that he is* (or: *the one who was*) captured" (2020: 120).

One issue with the translations of Frymer-Kensky and Kämmerer and Metzler has to do with *izammurūšūni*. That verb can be understood either as ending with a plural ventive or an Assyrian subjunctive. In light of the omnipresence of Assyrian subjunctive forms in the *Marduk Ordeal*—looking at the Assur version, such forms are found in every line from obv. 1 to 68—as well as the presence of such a form (*dabibūni*) earlier in the line, the latter option seems more likely. Yet if *izammurūšūni* is indeed in the subjunctive, the verb should belong with the subordinative clause beginning with *enūma eliš ša*, "*Enuma Elish*, which," rather than begin a new clause one as it would in Frymer-Kensky's "he? sings it" and Kämmerer and Metzler's "singen sie *darüber*?."

A second issue—one which, to my knowledge, has not been invoked in discussions of the line—is that translations such as "which is said before Bel in Nisan" and "das im Angesicht von Bēl vorgetragen ist" involve a verb-initial construction beginning with *dabibūni*. In most Akkadian texts, especially literary ones, this would not be a problem. Yet it would be strange for the *Marduk Ordeal*, for every other clause preserved in it is verb final. Such a problem is also found in Livingstone's "recited and chanted in front of Bēl in Nisan." And his translation is likewise contraindicated by the location of *ina nisanni* between *dabibūni* and *izammurūšūni*, which points to *ina nisanni* qualifying one verb and not the other. That being said, one could analyze *enūma eliš ša dabibūni ina pān bēl ina nisanni izammurūšūni* as "Enuma Elish, which is recited before Bēl in Nisan, (and) which they sing (before Bēl in Nisan)," ending up with the same sense as Livingstone's idiomatic "recited and chanted" though still having the problem of the unique clause-initial *dabibūni*. A further, though more minor, problem with Livingstone's translation is that one

would expect "his imprisonment" to be conveyed with the infinitive *ṣabātīšu* or the verbal noun *ṣibittīšu*, not the stative *ṣabitūni*.

Worthington's syntactical division does not cause any of these problems; adapting it slightly, one could have "Enuma Elish, which is recited, (which) they sing before Bēl in Nisan: [It is] about (the fact) that he was captured." The meaning may be that the poem is recited, as well as sung, before Bēl in Nisan. Yet it should be said that the translations "which is spoken," or, as here, "which is recited," are awkward in possibly implying that *Enuma Elish* was unusual in being recited, while that poem was hardly unique in being spoken out loud. As Worthington notes (2020: 459 n. 459), Lambert (1997: 779) has "Enuma Elish, as it is called, which they chant before Bēl in the month of Nisan, refers to his imprisonment." This is not awkward in the least, yet one would expect the usual senses of "to speak" (CAD D: 4–7) or "recite" (CAD D: 7) for *dabābu* rather than "call," for which one would rather have expected *nabû*. The exact meaning of "this rather outrageous assessment" (FRAHM 2011: 353) pronouncement therefore remains unclear.

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90) A matter of life and death. The Akkadian verb *dâku* and Tukultī-apil-Ešarra IV*'s war with Mukīn-zēri (731–727 BC) — Some historians of the first millennium (BC, as with all dates henceforth) have translated the Akkadian verb *dâku* (Assyrian: *duāku*) not as 'to slay, kill', but rather as 'to defeat', as outlined by Fales (2011: 109):

> … the verb *duāku/dâku* means "to defeat" (especially with the internal object *diktu* [sic!], as in the passages quoted above [scil. SAA 19, 80]), but also "to kill," with a certain indifference of use, both in Neo-Assyrian and in Standard Babylonian.

This is at odds with *dâku*'s attestations and etymology (e.g. AHw: 152; CAD D: 35–43; eSAD D: 9–10). Deriving from Semitic √*dwk* 'to crush' (compare √*dkk*, √*dkdk*), its equation with Sumerian GAZ 'to kill, beat', and its use in Akkadian (e.g. in law codes) evidence its lethality. The image is of blunt force with terminal consequences—comparable is Proto-Germanic *slahaną* 'to hit, strike, kill', from which descend German *schlagen* 'to strike', *Schlag* 'blow, strike', *Schlacht* 'battle', and *erschlagen* 'to strike down, dead', and English 'slay', 'slaughter', and 'onslaught' (or even Italian *ammazzare* 'to kill', if from *a* + *mazza* 'mace, club, baton'). Timeless in its simplicity, the symbolism of clubbing another to death is attested in Early Dynastic Egyptian and Mesopotamian 'smiting scenes', and the ceremonial maces found in the ancient Near East (e.g. NIEDERREITER 2014; MCMAHON 2021) and today's Commonwealth (e.g. MCDONOUGH 1979) alike. This is *dâku*'s ambit.

Certainly, at the Neo-Assyrian court, there is a *dâku/bulluṭu* dichotomy which can only describe the king's power over life and death, as in the precept [*šumma šarru*] *iqṭibi mā dūk balliṭ kī pî* [*šarri* …] "[Should the king] command "kill!" or "spare!", then (he will do) as [the king commands …]" (SAA 12, 83 o. 21′), or a pardoned courtier's admission *ša duāki anāku lā ša balluṭi anāku* "I was (destined) for slaughter, not sparing" (SAA 16, 36 o. 3'–5'). Moreover, a direct equivalence between *dâku* and West Semitic *qṭl* 'to kill' appears in the Neo-Assyrian by-name for Dūr-Katlimmu (Tall Šayḫ Ḥamad, Syria), *Dūr-Adūk-limmu* 'Fort "I slew a thousand"'—evidently, the element *-Katl-* had been equated with √*qṭl* (TADMOR 1985).

This must be kept in mind when approaching the compound expression *dīkta dâku*, translated as 'to defeat' by CAD D: 139–140, for which Fales (2005: 184; 2011: 109) implies uncomplimented *dâku*