

health, and happiness with divine guidance and protection. This desire is fused strongly to a wish for a good social reputation (also very prominent in *Ludlul*; see Lenzi, forthcoming), which is why the setting for some of these walking phrases is explicitly in the street, that is, in public. In light of these phrases, I suggest *Ludlul* V 118 be restored and translated as follows:

[ina tūb šīri] u ḥūd libbi libā' ūmišam

May he walk along *the street* every day [in a sound body] and gladness of heart.

Clearly, no one attestation of the cited phrases clinches the argument for this “walk along” translation of *Ludlul* V 118. Rather, it is the imagery, captured variously by the phrases and taken as a whole, that is decisive, adding yet another bit of evidence for the pervasive influence of the incantation-prayer tradition upon the poem (see LENZI 2023: 300–341).

Notes

1. See already LENZI / ANNUS 2011: 197 for the two Babylonian witnesses.
2. See also LENZI / ANNUS 2010: 30, 44; LENZI / ANNUS 2011: 198; OSHIMA / ANTHONIOZ 2023: 157.
3. ABUSCH / SCHWEMER 2016: 242 translate the first part of the line “may I go past the strong one (*danna*).” I think Foster’s idea to take *danna* adverbially gives the best sense. He translates “may I progress proudly” (2005: 685, l. 64).

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114) “Living Yesterday” in *Ludlul* II 39 — In the second tablet of *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* (ed. HÄTINEN 2022 [trans. Benjamin Foster]), the suffering Šubši-mešrê-šakkan declares as follows *de profundis*:

II 39 ša ina am-KUR ibluṭu imūt ud-di-iš¹⁾ (var. ú-di-iš)

II 40 surriš uštādir zamar uḥtabbar

II 39 He who lived in am-KUR died uddiš,

II 40 For a moment one is downcast, in an instant full of cheer.

II 39 has been analyzed in two ways. The first—opted for by LAMBERT 1960: 40, and later by e.g., CAD A/2: 79 s.v. *amšat* and HÄTINEN 2022—is to read am-KUR as *am-šat* while translating “yesterday”; take *ud-di-iš/ú-di-iš* to derive from *uddu/ūdu* (a loan from Sum. *ud*, “day”),²⁾ and to be an adverb meaning “today”; and understand the line to mean “He who was alive yesterday died today.” The second—proposed by VON SODEN 1990: 123 and later followed by FOSTER 2005: 399, OSHIMA 2014: 89, and LENZI 2023: 73 (discussion p. 122 ad II 39)—is to read am-KUR as *am-mat*, “forearm” while taking it to metaphorically refer to “strength” or similar; analyze *ud-di-iš/ú-di-iš* as deriving from *ūdu* (var. *uddû*, *uddu*, *udû*, *uṭṭû*), “trouble, difficulty” (CAD U/W: 25–26); and understand the line to mean something like “He who lived by might died in distress”—e.g., “Wer (eben noch) kraftvoll lebte, starb in Bedrängnis” (VON SODEN 1990: 123); “He who lived by (his) brawn died in confinement” (FOSTER 2005: 399).

Having for its theme the transience of human life, a universal topic of thought and song, “He who was alive yesterday died today” has intuitive appeal. It also draws support from parallelism, since II 40 likewise concerns the speed with which human life changes (there, the transformation is from discontented paralysis to boisterous activity), and also utilizes two adverbs referring to time (*surriš* and *zamar*). Yet this translation runs into a problem: for “yesterday,” one would expect not *amšat* but *amšāli* (CAD A/2: 79). (As is relevant below, Akkadian has yet another word for “yesterday,” *timāli*.) Lambert does not comment on this difficulty. CAD A/2: 79 s.v. *amšat* (cited in HÄTINEN 2022 [comment ad II 39] as support for translating *amšat* as “yesterday”) comments: “The word probably represents a scribal error.” Yet there is good reason to agree with Lenzi (2023: 122 ad II 39) in judging this explanation “unlikely”: all three manuscripts attesting to this part of the line—two from Kouyunjik (K.2518 + DT.358 obv. 39; K.3972 + K.9973 + DT.151 obv. 39) and one from Sultantepe (STT 1 no. 33 obv. 39)—have *am-KUR*.

The three manuscripts’ unanimous spelling also argues against *ša ina am-mat(i) ibluṭu imūt uddiš*, “He who lived by might died in distress.” The sign sequence MI UR ŠÁ, found two lines earlier in *Ludlul* (II 37, MI UR ŠÁ *an-za-nun-ze i-ḥa-ak-ki-im man-nu*) and attested to by the very same Kouyunjik manuscripts (K.2518 + DT.358 obv. 37; K.3972 + K.9973 + DT.151 obv. 37), was long read as *mi-lik šá*, with II 37 then being rendered as *mi-lik ša anzanunzê iḥakkim mannu* and translated along the lines of “Who can fathom the reasoning of the gods of the depths?” (e.g., “Who understands the plans of the underworld gods” [LAMBERT 1960: 40]; “Who can grasp the intentions of the gods of the depths” [FOSTER 2005: 399]). Yet as JIMÉNEZ 2019 shows, the signs should rather be read *mi-lik-šá*, and the line understood as “Her (the goddess’) intention—the depths—who can fathom it? (*milikša anzanunzê iḥakkim mannu*).”³⁾ As part of his reasoning, Jiménez points out that “Grammatically, the writing *mi-lik* for the accusative of the status rectus in two different Kuyunjik manuscripts [...] would be highly irregular” (2019: 80). The very same logic can be marshalled against reading *am-mat* as denoting the genitive status rectus *ammati* despite *am-mat* appearing in two different Kouyunjik manuscripts (with a third, Sultantepe manuscript now invoked for good measure).

Drawing on comparative Semitics, a third way to analyze *Ludlul* II 39 may be suggested. The word *amšāli*, derived from Proto-Akkadian **amš(iy)*, is cognate with Arabic *’amsi/’amsi* (“yesterday”) and Hebrew *’emeš* (“last night”) (RUBIN 2024: 672, 674; see also STRECK 2016: 11 n. 5). All four derive from Proto-Semitic **’amsi*, which—Rubin hypothesizes (2024: 672) based on e.g., Akk. *mūšu* “night”, Ge’ez *māsēt* “evening”, and Arabic *masā* “evening”—“probably meant specifically ‘last night’; ‘yesterday evening.’” In light of these Semitic cognates, the ending *-āli* in *amšāli* appears anomalous, and should, as Kogan and Krebernik observe (2021: 399) and Rubin likewise argues (2024: 674 n. 16), be explained as influence from *timāli*, likewise meaning “yesterday.” (As Kogan and Krebernik also observe [2021: 399], “Both **timāl-* [...] and **’amš(iy)-* [...] are well attested in WS [...] and must have coexisted in proto-Akkadian.”)

On the basis of this Semitic-linguistic situation, it may be proposed that *amšat* (or perhaps *amšāt*) derives from Proto-Akkadian **’amš(iy)*, “yesterday,” yet, unlike *amšāli*, does not end with a *timāli*-influenced *-āli*; and that *ina amšat* is an otherwise unattested adverbial phrase meaning “yesterday.” As a point of clarification, it is also possible that, in keeping with the hypothesized meaning of Proto-Semitic **’amsi*, and the confirmed meaning of Hebrew *’emeš*, *ina amšat* may rather mean “(in) the evening before” or “(in) the night before”; yet because Proto-Akkadian **’amš(iy)* probably means, and Akkadian *amšāli* as well as Arabic *’amsi/’amsi* certainly mean, “yesterday,” that meaning is supposed for *ina amšat* as well.

Two formal analyses of *ina amšat* may be suggested, each having as its starting point a different analysis of *amšat*. These were suggested to me by Michael Streck and Shlomo Izre’el respectively, and are given here with gratitude to both:

1) *amšat* is an adverb meaning “yesterday,” and affixed with an ending *-at*—perhaps a shortened form of the common adverbial ending *-atta(m)/atti* (on *-atta[m]/atti*, utilized for instance in *timāliattam*, likewise meaning “yesterday” [OB lexical, CAD T: 417], GAG § 113 l). Understanding *amšat* in this way, *ina amšat* would be equivalent to Neo-Assyrian *ina timāli* and its by-form *ittimāli* (**in-timāli*) (CAD T: 416–417 s.v. *timāli* d), and a parallel to adverbs found throughout Akkadian and beginning with *in-* (e.g., *immati* [**in-mati*], “when,” CAD M/1: 408 s.v. *mati* 2).⁴⁾

2) *amšat* is the *status absolutus* of a feminine noun *amšātu* (or perhaps *amšātu*), “the day before.” The use of *ina amšat* to mean “(in) the day before,” readily translated in the context of *Ludlul* II 39 as “yesterday,” would then constitute another example of an Akkadian adverbial phrase employing a preposition followed by a noun in the *status*

absolutus (GAG § 62 h)—cf. *ištu dār*, “up to this point (lit. ‘since forever’)” and *ana dār*, “forever” (CAD D: 107–108 s.v. *dār* 2’–3’); *ištu ūm šāt*, “from primordial days” (RIME 4 E4.6.8.2: 34); and *ana imen*, “to the right” (ARM 5 no. 65: 35). It would also be a formal parallel to Hebrew *lammohōrāt* (Jonah 4:7, 1 Chronicles 29:21) and *mimmohōrāt* (e.g., Exodus 18:13), both meaning “the day after”—for these employ a nominal, feminine -*t*-affixed form of the adverb *māhār* (“tomorrow”), and begin with the prepositions *la* (“to”) and *mi* (“from”) respectively.

Whichever of these two analyses is to be opted for, *Ludlul* II 39 may be read *ša ina amšat ibluṭu imūt uddiṣ*, and translated “He who was alive yesterday died today”—exactly as in the first aforementioned way to analyze the line—yet now with the understanding that *ina am-šat* is no scribal error giving rise to faulty Akkadian, but perfectly good Akkadian richly paralleled in the Semitic language family.

Notes

1. LAMBERT 1960: 40, CAD U/W: 19, and HÄTINEN 2022 all read *ud-de-eš*. Yet, following their analysis of *ud-de-eš* as derived from *uddu* (from Sum. *ud*, “day”) and affixed with a locative-terminative adverbial ending, there would be no reason not to utilize the standard form of that ending, namely *iš*, and then read *ud-di-iš*. And indeed, Hätinen reads the variant *ú-DI-IŠ* as *ú-di-iš* (for *ūdiš*) rather than *ú-de-eš*.

2. An adverb *uddiṣ/ūdiṣ*, “today” would be without known parallel, yet *uddam*, likewise derived from Sum. *ud* and meaning “today,” is attested in OB texts (CAD U/W: 19).

3. Jiménez translates “Her counsel—the abyss—who fathoms it” (2019: 81), yet the implied equivalence between *milikša* (*Ludlul* II 37) and both *tēm ilī*, “plan of the gods” in the line immediately previous (*Ludlul* II 36) and *alakti ilī*, “way(s) of the god” in that immediately following (*Ludlul* II 38) indicates that *milikša* refers not to the goddess’ “counsel” but her “intentions” (as in HÄTINEN 2022) or the like.

4. For a list of Neo-Assyrian adverbs beginning with *ina* or *in-*, along with attestations, HÄMEEN-ANTTILA 2000: 58–59; on Neo-Assyrian adverbs, LEONHARDT 2024: 299–311 and *passim*, with temporal adverbs discussed on pp. 300–303. On Akkadian adverbs beginning with *in-*, GAG § 113 m.

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115) A Bibliographical Corrigendum to a Recent Discussion of *Emar* 256 (E6 256) — In a recent paper (TADMOR 2026), I discussed the adoption text *Emar* 256 (copy ARNAUD 1985: 69; no photo available; edition ARNAUD 1986: 251–253). In the text, a man named Addu reports that his son, Ḫulāyu, is no longer his son; that Ḫulāyu died; and that Ḫulāyu’s three children were cast out into the square, and then lifted therefrom by a man by the name of Abī-kapī. As part of my discussion (TADMOR 2026: 209–212), I wrote as follows (TADMOR 2026: 210, with citations adapted to house style):

What events, concrete and symbolic, underlie this text, and in what order did they occur? Carlo Zaccagnini [1995: 102–103], Nicoletta Bellotto [2009: 147–148], and Maurizio Viano [2023: 210], agree in proposing the following sequence: Addu (here, the grandfather) disowned his son, Ḫulāyu. Ḫulāyu then died, and his children were cast into the street. A man named Abī-kapī rescued the children from the street, and took them into his household. He then adopted them, with *Emar* 256 being produced to ratify the adoption and outline its stipulations [...]. Yet an