

A *Shuilla* to Nabu

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NABU:

A Babylonian scribal god hailing from Borsippa, Nabu was the son of Marduk and a major god in the post-OB Mesopotamian pantheon. His consort was Tashmetu. Although attested already in the early second millennium, we can trace Nabu's rise to prominence only starting in the later second millennium. His status in the pantheon reached its zenith during the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods, as attested by the several temples and shrines dedicated to him in many major Assyrian and Babylonian cities (e.g., Nineveh, Nimrud, Borsippa, and Babylon). Personal names are further proof of his importance. Nabu was the most common deity invoked in Neo-Assyrian theophoric names and second only to Marduk in first millennium Babylonia. Note especially the Neo-Babylonian royal names Nebuchadnezzar (*Nabû-kudurri-ûsur*, "O Nabu, guard my firstborn") and Nabonidus (*Nabû-na'id*, "Nabu is praised").

Archaeologists have uncovered tablets in several of Nabu's Ezida temples ("The True House"). The Nimrud finds are especially impressive, which have yielded copies of the Succession Treaty of Esarhaddon (see SAA 2, no. 6) in a throne room and about 300 tablets of literary content in the temple's library (see CTN IV).¹ Tablets found in libraries at Ashur, Nineveh, and Huzirina (modern Sultan Tepe) bear formulaic colophons that clearly demonstrate scribal devotion to Nabu (e.g., *BAK*, nos. 233, 318, and 353, the latter of which reads *tâkilka ul ibâš Nabû*, "the one who trusts in you, O Nabu, will not be put to shame").

In keeping with his function as the scribe of the gods, Nabu is represented by a stylus or wedge in iconography. Celestially, he is associated with the planet Mercury. He is mentioned by name in the Bible in Isa 46:1.

THE PRAYER:

The prayer adapts the typical three-part structure. It starts with the customary hymnic introduction in lines 1–10 (and line 10^a). Line 10^b contains the usual self-identification formula and recognition of the supplicant's humble position in relation to the deity ("the servant who fears you"). Lines 11–18 comprise the prayer's petition section, thematically-centered on the supplicant's old age. A description of piety (lines 11–12) precedes the complaint (lines 13–16). A recapitulation of the invocation follows in line 17 (compare with line 1) just before the prayer's very brief petition proper in line 18. The prayer concludes with a one line formulaic promise of future praise (line 19).

Joel Hunt has recognized a tri-partite structure to the opening hymn based on grammatical and thematic features. In lines 1–5 substantives and participial phrases that describe Nabu's character predominate. These lines

¹ For a general overview of the tablet finds, see Joan and David Oates, *Nimrud: An Assyrian Imperial City Revealed* (London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 2001), 203–210.

present a timeless portrait of who Nabu is. In Lines 6–8 complete sentences using third person verbs describe Nabu’s word, his relationship to his father, Marduk, and thus his position within the hierarchy of the gods. Finally, lines 9–10, using complete sentences and second person verbs (if one follows Mayer’s MS B in line 9), characterize Nabu as one willing and able to help a supplicant with angry personal deities. The use of second person verbs in this final part of the hymn form a transition between the hymnic and petitionary sections.

Although its structure is common, the prayer offers a couple of points of literary interest. I have already mentioned how line 17 near the end of the prayer, positioned between lament and petition, re-invokes the deity with words that recall the first line. Notice also that the use of the words “days” and “years” in line 15, part of the lament, recalls the vocabulary of line 3, part of the hymnic introduction. Line 18’s employment of the verb *ṣabātu*, “to seize, hold,” harks back to the same verb in line 2, if the restoration is correct: Nabu holds his stylus; the supplicant seizes Nabu’s prayer. Finally, just as Nabu is the one who opens the ear (line 2) to receive divine insight, the supplicant is the one who opens his hands (line 12) in prayer (for a possible pun, see the notes on line 12). It seems the prayer re-uses the vocabulary of the first few lines throughout the remainder of the prayer, but especially toward its conclusion, thereby giving the prayer a certain coherence with regard to language.

The prayer presents the supplicant as an old man (lines 12 and 15), perhaps one who has lived a life of devotion (line 11, broken). Despite his humility before the gods and humans (? , lines 13–14), he feels he has not received the favor and mercy due him (16). The precise nature and origin of his mistreatment—whether from the gods or humans or both—are not at all clear. In any case, the supplicant wishes to be set free from that which has troubled him (line 18). There is little more that can be said without indulging speculation.

ESSENTIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Nabu. A. R. Millard. “Nabû.” *DDD*, 607–610. Francesco Pomponio. “Nabû. A. Philologisch.” *RIA* 9 (1998), 16–24. Ibid. *Nabû: Il culto e la figura di un dio del Pantheon babilonese ed assiro*. Studi Semitici 51; Rome: Istituto di Studi del Vicino Oriente, 1978. U. Seidl. “Nabû. B. Archäologisch.” *RIA* 9 (1998), 24–29.

Text. Edition: Mayer, 469–472. Translations: Foster, 697; Seux, 301–302; Mayer, 471–472. Study: Joel Hunt, “The Hymnic Introduction of Selected *Šullia* Prayers Directed to Ea, Marduk, and Nabû.” PhD. Dissertation. Brandeis University, 1994, pp. 187–232.

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| 1. | [ÉN ^d A]G [?] 'reš-tu ¹ -ú | IBILA <i>ke-e-nu</i> |
| 2. | [ša-bit] GI ṭup-pi | BAD-ú ḥa-sis-si |
| 3. | [x x UD [?]].MEŠ | <i>ba-ru-ú</i> MU.AN.NA.MEŠ |
| 4. | [e-ṭir] na-piš-ti | <i>mu-ter gi-mil-li</i> |
| 5. | [SAG.KAL] DINGIR.MEŠ | <i>šu-mu kab-tu₄</i> |

Line 1: ÉN = *šiptu*, “incantation.” This word marks the beginning of the prayer. It is not a part of the prayer itself. ^dAG = *Nabû*. There is no question that this prayer is directed to Nabu (see lines 7, 17, and 20). There is, however, some question as to whether the text actually indicates this by stating the deities name at its beginning (the sign read as AG here is partly broken). *rēštû*, “firstborn; preeminent.” Your semantic decision should be based on the whole line, especially the meaning of IBILA. For confirmation, see the usage in CAD R, 275, which cites this lexeme in other contexts alongside *māru* and *aplu*. IBILA = *aplu*, “heir, son.” *Kēnu* (*kīnu*), “true.” Here, the word denotes legitimacy, as in the “true heir.”

Line 2: GI = *qanu*, “reed” (*qan* = bound form). Translate the words “the reed of the tablet” in light of the material culture of the Mesopotamian scribe. With what did scribes write? Note the sound play between *kēnu* and *qān* in lines 1 and 2, respectively. Is this significant? Note also the use of *kittu*, the feminine form of *kēnu*, in the following phrase said of Nabu: *šābit-ma qan ṭuppu kittu*, “(Nabu), who holds the proper stylus” (cited in CAD K, 393). BAD = *pītu*, “opening” (lit.); or BAD = *petû*, “to open.” *Ḥasissu* is usually written *ḥasīsu* (see CAD H, 126 and the variant in Mayer’s MS C: ‘*ḥa-si’-[-sī]*), “aperture of the ear; understanding.” The phrase *pīt ḥasissi*, literally, “opening of the ear,” denotes extraordinary intelligence. BAD may be understood as either the noun *pītu* or a participle, *pētû*, “the one who opens.” The former interpretation implies that extraordinary intelligence is an attribute of the deity and is related to or possibly a result of Nabu’s scribal ability. But how does one account for the presence of the final vowel in what should be a bound form, *pīt*? The latter interpretation (BAD = *pētû*) maintains the grammatical parallel with lines 3 and 4 (and the restoration in line 2) and implies that Nabu, as the paradigmatic scribe, imparts knowledge to human scribes. The implication of the phrase, as a line in *Ludlul* using the near synonym *uznu* demonstrates, is revelatory: *zaqīqu abāl-ma ul upatti uzni*, “I prayed to the dream god, but he did not open my ear.” (See COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS below.)

Line 3: UD.MEŠ = *ūmū* (f. *ūmātu*) plural(s) of *ūmu*, “day.” *Barû*, “to watch over, to inspect, to observe”; also used technically by scribes in tablet colophons, “to collate.” The latter usage is not appropriate here, but may provide background information for interpreting Nabu’s epithet in line 3b. MU.(AN.NA.)MEŠ = *šanātu*, plural of *šattu*, “year.”

Line 4: *Eṭēru*, “to spare (someone).” Possibly read [*na-šir*], from *našāru*, “to protect, to guard.” *Turru* (D of *tāru*) *gimilla*, “to return a kindness; to avenge.” The social and literary context in which this phrase is used determines the kind of return one will receive, good or bad (see CAD G, 74–75 for examples). Given the positive epithet in line 4a, the returning of a kindness may seem most appropriate. But, one may also entertain the idea that line 4a is directed at the speaker of the prayer while 4b against those who would threaten the speaker’s life. In this case, avenging may be the best interpretation. Given the possibilities, one may wish to choose a translation that conveys both positive and negative connotations of the phrase. For example, Nabu is “one who responds to actions in kind.” (See COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS below.)

Line 5: SAG.KAL = *ašarēdu*, “leader, foremost.” *ašarēd ilī* is a very common title for various deities in prayers. See CAD A/2, 417.

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| 6. | [<i>zi-kir</i>]-š <u>u</u> <i>ul e-ni</i> | <i>a-bu ba-nu-šú</i> |
| 7. | [^d]TU.TU <i>ul e-ni</i> | <i>zi-kir</i> ^d AG DUMU-šú |
| 8. | [<i>in</i>]a DINGIR.MEŠ <i>ma-ši-šu</i> | <i>a-mat-su ši-rat</i> |
| 9. | [š]a DINGIR-šú <i>is-bu-su</i> | <i>tu-sa-ḥar</i> GÚ-su |
| 10. | <i>ša ze-na-at</i> NAM-šú | <i>tu-sal-lam it-ti-šu</i> |

Variant lines:

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| 10 ^a . | [šá <i>ar-n</i>]a [?] ₁ <i>i-šú</i> , | <i>ta-pa-ṭar ar-an-šu</i> |
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Line 6: *Zikru*, “speech; command; name.” The pronominal suffix on *zikru* refers to Nabu, who is the center of attention here. *Enû*, “to change.” The subject for this verb is in the second part of the line. *Bānû*, “progenitor, creator.” This term is commonly found in apposition with *abu*. See CAD B, 94.

Line 7: ^dTU.TU = Marduk. DUMU = *māru*, “son.” Notice the grammatical and semantic parallel constructions in lines 6 and 7. The verb, *ul enni*, and the kinship terms, *bānû* and *māru*, fill the same slot in each line, but there is a chiasmic pattern in the positions of *zikiršu* / *zikir Nabû* and *abu* / ^dTU.TU.

Line 8: *Māšu*, “twin brother,” the third kinship term in the last few lines. Mayer’s MS B has *maš-še-šu* (normalized *maššéšu*), a bi-form of *māšu* (see CAD M/1, 401). How might one understand the idea of the gods as Nabu’s twin brothers? Perhaps he is/was their equal or peer. *Širu*, “august, excellent,” a very common adjective used with divinity (see CAD Š, 210–212). Here the adjective is predicative (3fs). The exaltation of Nabu’s word in the latter part of the line may indicate his position of authority *over* those gods once his peers.

Line 9: Notice the change of person here and in line 10. The prayer now directly addresses Nabu. Lines 9 and 10 are characterized by strong grammatical and semantic parallelism: both begin with relative clauses describing a person experiencing divine anger (god and goddess, alternately) and then contain a second person verb plus complement (substantive or prepositional phrase, both ending in *-šu*). *Sabāsu* (more commonly *šabāsu*), “to be angry.” *Suḥḥuru* (D of *saḥāru*), “to turn (away, toward).” The above text follows Mayer’s MS B, which shows a second person durative verb (*tusaḥḥar*); this reading enhances the parallelism between lines 9 and 10. (MS A has a third person preterite, *usaḥḥira*.) GÚ = *kišādu*, “neck.” To whom does the pronominal suffix on this word refer? Nabu is the implied subject of *tusaḥḥar*. The idiom *suḥḥuru kišāda* (or *pānī*), “to turn the neck (or face),” indicates the direction of the neck’s owner’s attention, away, toward, or back to someone or something, depending on context. See CAD S, 49–50. In this case, Nabu turns *the angry personal god* back to his devotee. While the deity’s attention is directed away from his or her ward, the individual is open to all kinds of potential evils. Thus it is important for the deity’s face (or neck) to be turned at all times toward the devotee. (See also COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS below.) For a discussion of the personal god in Mesopotamia, see Karel van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel: Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life* (SHCANE 7; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 66–87.

Line 10: Mayer’s MS B deviates in this line substantially and contains an additional line between our lines 10 and 11. They are inserted below for sake of interest. *Zenû*, “to be angry.” *zenât* is a 3fs predicative form. NAM = *šimtu*, “fate.” Here, however, the term probably refers to an individual’s personal goddess (*išturu*), thus completing the parallelism started

10 ^b .	[<i>ana-ku</i>] 'NENNI' A NENNI	ÌR <i>pa-liḫ-ka</i>
11.	[<i>i</i>]na meṣ-ḫa-ru-ti-ia	<i>ma-ši-šu-ti ú-sa-pa</i>
12.	[š]e-ba-a-ku ana DÙ DINGIR.MEŠ	<i>pe-ta-a up-na-a-a</i>
13.	[<i>ina</i>] li-pi-in ap-pi-a	<i>tak-tu-ru 'na'-pa[l-ti]</i>
14.	[<i>ina</i>] IGI NAM.LÚ.U ₁₈ .LU	<i>ki-ma me-ḫe-e ana-ku</i>
15.	<i>it-ta-at-la-ku</i> UD.MEŠ-ia	<i>iq'-ta-at-a</i> MU.MEŠ-ia

in line 9 of the angered personal god. An angry personal god and goddess is a common motif in Mesopotamian prayers. *Sullumu* (D of *salāmu*), “to reconcile.”

Line 10a: *Arnu*, “guilt.” *Išû*, “to have, to own.” *Paṭāru*, “to release.”

Line 10b: NENNI A NENNI = *annanna mār annanna*, “so-and-so, son of so-and-so.” This is a very common phrase in prayers. It serves as a placeholder for the name and filiation of the person speaking the prayer (as in the phrase, “I, *state your name*”). *Annanna* sometimes also holds the place for the names of a person’s personal god and goddess. ÌR = (w)*ardu*, “servant.” The god–devotee relationship is imagined in terms of a king and his servant. *Palāḫu*, “to fear.”

Line 11: *Meṣḫarūtu*, “youth.” How does this word influence one’s understanding of the prayer? *Ma-ši-šu-ti* is obscure. The text is secure, but the meaning is unknown. Could it be related to the word used of the gods in line 8? We simply do not know. *Suppû*, “to pray.”

Line 12: *Šēbu* (*šību*), “old person, elder.” The form is predicative (1cs). Note the life-cycle contrast with line 11: youth to old age. DÙ = *kalu*, “all, totality.” *Upnu*, “hand.” Note the dual form with 1cs suffix. *Petû upnī*, “to open the hands” (literally); more idiomatically, “to pray.” In line 12, *upnu* is the subject (*upnā* is nom. dual) and *petā* is 3fp predicative. This phrase may be punning on the idiom discussed in the notes to line 2, *petû uzna* (see also COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS below). If so, the line may imply that a *petû upna*, “opening of the hand,” was one way to receive a *petû uzna*, “opening of the ear” (i.e., a divine response). In any case, raising one’s hands was a basic petitionary ritual gesture in the ancient Near East (beyond Mesopotamia, see the biblical examples in 1 Kgs 8:22 and 1 Tim 2:8). This gesture, of course, is closely related to the label that identifies many Mesopotamian prayers, namely, ŠU.ÍLA = *šuilakku*, “hand-raising (prayer).”

Line 13: *Lipin appi*, “stroking of the nose” (literally), “prostration.” The word *lipnu* / *libnu* is not recognized by the CAD (see L, 11 *labānu*); rather, see *AHW*, 551 or *CDA*, 182. *Karû*, “to be(come) short.” Notice the Assyrian form (prefixed-*ta*) of the 3fs G perfect. With *napaltu* (= *napaštu*), “life, throat, breath,” as the subject, the verb means, “to be(come) short of breath.”

Line 14: IGI = *pānu*, “face.” *Ina pāni*, “in front of, before.” NAM.LÚ.U_{18/19}.LU = *amīlūtu*, “humanity.” *Meḫû*, “storm, whirlwind.” How do you explain this simile? A few suggestions: The simile may be a poetic expansion upon the person’s breathlessness noted in line 13; it may indicate the speaker’s poor bodily condition; it may be an attempt to convey the speaker’s tumultuous life in broader human society; or, in light of line 15, the simile may indicate the transitory character of the speaker’s existence. In other contexts, *meḫû* in similes and metaphors conveys strength, chaos, and even violence (see CAD M/2, 6). Since, however, similes activate a field of associations, you need not nail this simile down to one meaning.

Line 15: Notice the similarity between this line and line 3 (if the restoration is correct). Is the end of the prayer looking back to the beginning? See also line 17, assuming the

16.	<i>ul a-mur</i> SIG ₅	<i>né-me-lu la</i> TUKU- <i>ši</i>
17.	[IBILA [?] k] <i>e-e-nu</i>	^d AG <i>geš-ru</i>
18.	[aš]- <i>bat[?] si[?]-pe-e-ka</i>	<i>kul-lim-ma-an-ni</i> ZÁLAG
19.	[na] <i>r-bi-ka lu-šá-pi</i>	<i>dà-lí-lí-ka lud-lul</i>
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20.	[IN]IM.INIMŠU.ÍLA	^d AG-KÁM
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correctness of the restorations there. *Ittatlakū* is a Gt perfect of *alāku*, “to go, to walk”; in the Gt, “to go away.” It makes little sense for “days to go away,” so choose a verb in your translation that conveys the sense more idiomatically. *Qatū*, “to come to an end, to finish.”

Line 16: SIG₅ = *dumqu*, “good fortune.” *Nēmelu*, “benefit, gain, profit.” TUKU = *rašū*, “to acquire.” Line 16 indicates a general absence of success throughout the speaker’s life.

Line 17: *Gešru* (*gašru*), “powerful, mighty. Used substantively, this word was a very common epithet for deities in Mesopotamian prayers. This line recapitulates the invocation at the beginning of the prayer. Given its proximity to the conclusion of the prayer, how might one interpret its significance? Some options: it is purely literary, intended to create a sort of ring structure in the prayer; it is a rhetorical intensification, increasing the sense of urgency within the prayer; it insures the deity’s attention just before stating the petition in the following line.

Line 18: Notice again, if the restorations are correct, the harking back to words from the beginning of the prayer: *šabātu* also occurs in line 2 (restored). *Si[?]-pe-e-ka* is obscure. It may be *sīpu*, “prayer.” Thus, *ašbat sīpēka*, literally, “I seized your prayer”; more idiomatically, “I prayed to you” (see CAD Š, 32 for an analogy). The word may also be *sippu*, “doorjamb.” If so, then the line may merely indicate that the speaker has come to Nabu’s temple for supplication, “I have taken hold of your (temple’s) doorjamb.” In any case, line 18a remains uncertain. *Kullumu*, “to show.” The verb form is a D ms imperative with 1cs suffix. ZÁLAG = *nūru*, “light.” (A variant in Mayer’s MS B reads: *lūmur nūru*, “let me see the light.”) One may think on first glance to interpret the phrase *kullimanni nūra*, “show me the light,” in terms of a revelatory experience (or perhaps even a wish for death). The idiom, however, derives from the imagery of a prisoner being set free from a dark prison cell. See CAD K, 524. How does this affect the interpretation of the prayer? What is the speaker asking for? In light of Nabu’s ability to turn back the anger of one’s personal deities (lines 9–10) and in light of the fact that the speaker seems to have had a lifetime absence of good fortune, it may be that the freedom the speaker seeks is freedom from divine displeasure.

Line 19: *Narbū*, “great achievements.” *Šuppū* (D of *šapū*), “to make resound, to proclaim.” This verb and the one in 19b are cohortatives, “let me. . .” *Dalilū*, “praises.” *Dalālu*, “to praise.” *Dalilika ludlul* is a cognate accusative construction; that is, the verb and its object both come from the same root. Translate idiomatically, “let me proclaim your praises.” *Shuilla*-prayers almost always conclude with some form of foreword looking praise. The phrases *narbīka lušappi* and *dalilika ludlul* are very commonly used for this purpose.

Line 20: This line is the rubric, that is, it tells something about the preceding lines. In this case, the rubric identifies the form of the prayer and to whom it is directed. As is typical, the rubric is written in Sumerian. It may be translated, “it is a *shuilla*-prayer for Nabu.”

COMPARATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

A few idioms in the prayer are worthy of our comparative attention. The phrase *pētū hasīsu*, “the one who opens the ear,” in line 2 is comparable to the BH phrase פתח את האזנה, “to open the ear” (Isa 50:5 and 48:8) and the

similar *גלה את האזן*, “to uncover the ear” (see 1 Sam 9:15, 20:2, 12, 13, 22:8(2x’s), 22:17, 2 Sam 7:27, Isa 22:14, Job 33:16, 36:10, 15, Ruth 4:4, and 1 Chron 17:25). In reference to human activity, the Hebrew idioms mean “to inform” (e.g., 1 Sam 20:13). When a deity is the one informing a human, however, the idiom denotes revelatory activity (e.g., 1 Sam 9:15 and Isa 50:5). The means of conveying the information may be different (e.g., a dream, prophetic intuition, or the scribal tradition, as our prayer implies), but the Hebrew and Akkadian phrases designate the same mythological idea: a deity somehow informs a human of something he or she would not otherwise have known apart from the deity.

Turru (D of *târu*) *gimilla*, “to return a kindness, to avenge,” in line 4 compares to the BH phrase *השיב גמול*, “to return in kind,” and *שלם גמול*, “to repay in kind.” As with the Akkadian phrase, the BH phrases can indicate something either positive or negative, depending on the situation. The idea is simply that one receives treatment (i.e., requital) in accord with one’s own actions (see Obad 15). The phrases are usually used negatively, designating a payment of retribution against evildoers, the proud, or enemies (see, e.g., Ps 28:4, Ps 94:2, Isa 66:6, Jer 51:6, and Ps 137:8). But the positive use is also attested (see Prov 19:17 and 2 Chron 32:25). For the two phrases in the same context (of requiting an enemy), see Joel 4:4.

The idiom *subhuru kišāda* (or *pānī*), “to turn the neck (or face) back toward or away from,” when used negatively (i.e., in the sense of “away from”) compares conceptually³ to the common BH idea of the deity hiding his face (*הסתיר את הפנים*, see, e.g., Pss 13:2, 27:9, 44:25, 69:18, 88:15, 102:3, and 143:7). As Ps 143:7 indicates, when the deity hides his face, the supplicant feels like one headed for the grave. The opposite of the deity hiding his face is the deity making his face to shine upon, i.e., to be happy with, an individual (*האיר את הפנים*, see, e.g., Pss 31:17, 67:2, 80:4, 8, 20, 119:135, and of course Num 6:25). As in Mesopotamia, devotees in ancient Israel desired the protective attention of their deity at all times.

Turning to a more thematic level of comparison, one can see that our Akkadian prayer presents a supplicant advanced in years. Ps 71, a lament of the individual, depicts a comparable supplicant and is therefore related, thematically-speaking.⁴ In this psalm the supplicant explicitly recounts his devotion during not only his youth (vv. 5 and 17) but even from birth (v. 6)! He fears, however, in his old age (*עת זקנה*, v. 9a, and *זקנה ושיבה*, v. 18), when he most needs the deity (*בכלות כחי*, “when my strength is failing,” v. 9b), Yahweh has cast him aside (*אל-תשליכני*, v. 9), abandoned him (*אל-תעזבני*, vv. 9 and 18a), and become distant (*אל-תרחק*, v. 12). This abandonment is not death as we define it (i.e., cessation of bodily functions) because it is precisely during this period of divine absence that the supplicant fears his enemies will overtake him (vv. 10–11). Viewed from the perspective of his own ancient Israelite mi-

³ There are attestations of turning (*שב* in the *Hiphil*) the face toward (e.g., Dan 11:18) or away from (e.g., Ezek 14:6) someone or something in BH, of course, but this idiom does not convey the idea of divine abandonment or renewal of attention.

⁴ For old age in ancient Israel, see J. Gordon Harris, “Old Age,” *ABD* 4.10–12.

lieu, however, the supplicant was as good as dead, so that he describes his restoration as nothing less than a kind of resurrection: “you will make me live again and draw me up again out of the depths” (i.e., Sheol) (תָּשׁוּב תַּחַיִּינִי (תָּשׁוּב תַּעֲלִינִי וּמִתְהוֹמוֹת הָאָרֶץ תָּשׁוּב תַּעֲלִינִי; v. 20).⁵ The supplicant alternates between praise, lament, and petition throughout the psalm but ends like our Akkadian prayer with praise, though here it is much more extensive (vv. 22–24).

⁵ For this qualified notion of resurrection, see Jon D. Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel: The Ultimate Victory of the God of Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 35–66.