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Rearranging the Gods in Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty (SAA 2 6:414–465)

Spencer L. Allen

Summary

The arrangement of divine names in the curse section of Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty (SAA 2 6:414–465) defied D.J. Wiseman's expectations. Subsequent scholars have claimed the arrangement is based on the traditional divine hierarchy of the Assyrian pantheon or the lexical godlists tradition, but such explanations are only partially adequate. This paper argues that the list of gods in ll. 414–465 (and especially ll. 419–430) was instead based upon an ancient Mesopotamian curse tradition, as Moshe Weinfeld observed, common to the Laws of Hammurapi and several other Neo-Assyrian treaties. This paper also reveals the Assyrian scribe's specific motives underlying his innovations to this ancient curse tradition in SAA 2 6:414–465 and proposes reexamining the relationship between SAA 2 6 and Deuteronomy 28 in light of these innovations and motives.

A. Defied Expectations in SAA 2 6:414–465

Fifty-five years ago in his study of Esarhaddon's treaty, Donald J. Wiseman was unable to explain the arrangement of divine names in the treaty's traditional curse section (SAA 2 6:414–465).¹ He recognized that the first five names made sense in their particular order, but the remaining thirteen divine names' order defied his expectations. These five names whose arrangement made sense to Wiseman are Aššur, Mullissu, Anu, Šîn, and Šamaš. Al-

1 D. J. Wiseman, "The Vassal-treaties of Esarhaddon," *Iraq* 20 (1958): 25. The eight copies of this loyalty oath to Esarhaddon that were published in Wiseman's article are known by different names and abbreviations. Because of Wiseman's article title, VTE became the popular abbreviation early on and is still frequently used, but EST (Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty) seems to be increasingly popular. Compare, for example, Hans Ulrich Steyrmans, "Die neuassyrische Vertragsrhetorik der 'Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon' und das Deuteronomium," in *Das Deuteronomium* (ed. Georg Braulik; ÖBS 23; Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2003), 89–152; Jacob Lauinger, "Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty at Tell Tayinat: Text and Commentary," *JCS* 64 (2012): 87–123; and Bernard M. Levinson and Jeffrey Stackert, "Between the Covenant Code and Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty: Deuteronomy 13 and the Composition of Deuteronomy," *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 3 (2012): 123–140. Because I use several other texts from the State Archives of Assyria (SAA) volumes, I will refer to this text as SAA 2 6.

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though neither Wiseman nor anyone else could have predicted this precise selection and arrangement of divine names for this or any specific Neo-Assyrian text, he was correct: nothing about these first five names defies our expectations. Nevertheless, the motives behind the arrangement in ll. 414–465 can be explained by comparing it to the lists of gods contained in the sets of traditional and ceremonial curses found in Neo-Assyrian treaties and other administrative documents.² As we encounter each pair of divine names in this set of traditional curses, a relationship can explain each individual pairing, moving from the first to the next. More importantly, however, when we look at how this list of gods differs from others we can also account for longer sequences than mere pairs and, thereby, reduce the seemingly *ad hoc* nature of our explanations.

Given the selection of the first five divine names, their order fits well within Michael Barré's general observation concerning lists of gods in Neo-Assyrian treaties.³ Those lists begin with the chief deity or deities, who are followed by the first-tier deities, the second-tier deities, and (occasionally) their consorts.⁴ The first-tier deities are Anu, Enlil, and Ea, and the second-tier deities are Šin, Šamaš, and Adad. Lower-tier deities, which include the warrior gods, their consorts, and independent goddesses, typically follow these higher gods, and the Sebittu (i.e., the Pleiades) conclude any list of Assyrian deities in which they appear.⁵ Furthermore, the chief deities of Babylon (i.e., Marduk and Nabû) and their consorts often appear between the second-tier gods and the lower-tier gods and independent goddesses in these Neo-Assyrian lists of gods.⁶

2 In their introduction to the SAA volume on Neo-Assyrian treaties, Simo Parpola and Kazuko Watanabe distinguish "traditional" and "ceremonial" curses. A traditional curse is one that has been associated with a particular deity who acts as the punishing agent, whereas a ceremonial curse is effected by all the gods who are invoked in the treaty (Simo Parpola and Kazuko Watanabe, *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths* [State Archives of Assyria 2; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1988], xlii). They further distinguish between the two by noting that traditional curses are common to other genres of Mesopotamian literature, whereas ceremonial curses entail metaphoric or symbolic acts that are performed as part of the treaty's ratification.

3 As a phrase, "list of gods" refers to a set of at least three divine names appearing together in treaties, royal inscriptions, and other administrative documents and is used in distinction from "godlists," which belongs to the scribal lexical tradition.

4 Michael L. Barré, *The God-List in the Treaty between Hannibal and Philip V of Macedonia: a study in Light of the Ancient Near Eastern Treaty Tradition* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 8. Barré notes that these six gods were united as a specific collection in ancient texts, as indicated by the natural sequence of multiples of ten associated with the individual deities: Anu = 60; Enlil = 50; Ea = 40; Šin = 30; Šamaš = 20; Adad = 10. The first-tier deities are associated with the higher three numbers, and the second-tier deities are associated with the lower three. These deities also regularly appear in mythological texts and royal inscriptions.

5 Barré, *God-List*, 25–26.

6 Barré, *God-List*, 19.

Though the first five names match Barré's pattern in SAA 2 6:414–465, the logic behind the following divine names in ll. 425–465 is more complicated, and their order looks like no other list of gods, which is why they defied Wiseman's expectations. In particular, the divine names of the warrior god Ninurta and two celestial bodies, the deities Venus and Jupiter, interrupt the typical transition from the second-tier deities to the chief Babylonian deities, and the names of the second-tier deity Adad and the warrior god Nergal are located within what we might expect to have been a list of five independent goddesses (these irregularities are indicated by the bold font in Table 1).

Table 1: The List of Divine Names in SAA 2 6:414–465

Line:	Divine Name:
414	Aššur
417	Mullissu ⁷
418A	Anu
419	Šin
422	Šamaš
425	Ninurta
428	Venus
431	Jupiter
433	Marduk
435	Zarpānītu
437	Bēlet-ilī
440	Adad
453	Ištar//Lady-of-Battle ⁸
455	Nergal
457	Mullissu//Who-Resides-(in)-Nineveh
459	Ištar//Who-Resides-(in)-Arbela
461	Gula
464	the Sebittu.

7 When a consort is listed immediately after (usually her) husband in a table, her name is indented by three spaces in the following line. This indicates that her position within the list of gods is dependent upon her relationship with him. When the goddess is not listed immediately after her husband, her name is not indented, even when her position as the first independent goddess still reflects the rank afforded her because of her consort. For example, Mullissu is the first independent goddess in SAA 2 6:16–20 and 25–30 because she is Aššur's consort (see Table2).

8 Two parallel lines (//) are used here and elsewhere to indicate that a divine name and an epithet are acting together with the force of a single full name, and the dashes treat the connected words like an individual word (e.g., ^diš-tar be-leṭ MURUB₄ u ME₃ = Ištar//Lady-of-Battle).

Armed with Barré’s model, even if we had been informed which names would be included in ll. 414–465, we could not have predicted this particular arrangement of divine names. Not only does this list not fit Barré’s model—a model whose regularity can be found within other textual genres such as royal inscriptions, blessings in personal and royal correspondence, and some cultic texts—it does not, to my knowledge, match any other known list of gods. To be sure, this list does not even match the other lists of divine names within SAA 2 6 itself. Compare, for instance, the names in the traditional curse list (ll. 414–465) with those in the divine witness list (ll. 16–20) and the adjuration list (ll. 25–30), which appear near the beginning of the treaty (see Table 2):

Table 2: Comparing the Lists of Gods in Esarhaddon’s Treaty (SAA 2 6)

ll. 16–20 and 25–30:	ll. 414–465:
Aššur	Aššur
	Mullissu
Anu	Anu
Enlil	
Ea	
Sîn	Sîn
Šamaš	Šamaš
Adad	Ninurta
	Venus
	Jupiter
Marduk	Marduk
	Zarpānitu
Nabû	Bēlet-ilī
Nusku	Adad
Uraš	Ištar//Lady-of-Battle
Nergal	Nergal
Mullissu	
Šerū’a	
Bēlet-ilī	
Ištar-of-Nineveh	Mullissu//Who-Resides-(in)-Nineveh ⁹
Ištar-of-Arbela	Ištar//Who-Resides-(in)-Arbela
	Gula
	the Sebittu.

9 For convenience, complex divine name and epithet sequences, like Mullissu//Who-Resides-(in)-Nineveh and Ištar//Who-Resides-(in)-Arbela, will be simplified to Mullissu-of-Nineveh and Ištar-of-Arbela throughout the remainder of this essay. For a discussion on the complex relationship between the goddesses Mullissu and Ištar-of-Nineveh, see Wiebke Meinhold, *Ištar in Aššur: Untersuchung eines Lokalkultes von ca. 2500 bis 614 v. Chr.* (AOAT 367; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2009), 191–207, esp. 204–205; see also, Spencer L. Allen, “The Splintered Divine: A Study of Ištar, Baal, and Yahweh Divine Names and Divine Multiplicity in the Ancient Near East” (Ph.D. diss, University of Pennsylvania, 2011), 311–325.

The divine witness list and the adjuration list are two identical lists that adhere closely to Barré's observed model.¹⁰ In these two lists, the warrior gods and independent goddesses follow the chief deities and other high gods. The list of gods in the set of traditional curses differs from these and other lists primarily because of the peculiar placement of the divine names Adad, Ninurta, and Nergal, as well as the surprising inclusion of the two celestial bodies Jupiter and Venus.¹¹

Aided by Barré's observed model for lists of gods in Neo-Assyrian treaties, along with a study on the nature of the curses associated with each deity in SAA 2 6:414–465, we can explain the arrangement's irregularities that defied Wiseman's expectations more than half a century ago. Though this list of gods is unique, we can elucidate on a large scale the unusual arrangement of gods in ll. 414–465 by comparing it to the lists of gods contained in other Neo-Assyrian documents and the ceremonial curses that appear later in the text.

B. What We Might Have Expected of SAA 2 6:414–465

In order to explain why the arrangement of the divine names in SAA 2 6:414–465 defied Wiseman's expectations, we must first consider what his expectations were, or at least what ours would have been.¹² These expecta-

10 Barré's observed model is derived, in part, from the list of gods in the eighth-century treaty between Aššur-nērāri V and Mati'-ilu of Arpad (SAA 2 2 vi 6–26). The list of divine names in vi 6–26 is by far the longest list of divine names in the Neo-Assyrian treaty tradition, with no less than 37 Assyrian gods: Aššur, Anu (and) Antu, Enlil (and) Mullissu, Ea (and) Damkina, Šin (and) Ningal, Šamaš (and) Aya, Adad (and) Šala, Marduk (and) Zarpānītu, Nabû (and) Tašmētu, Ninurta (and) Gula, Uraš (and) Bēlet-ekalli, Zababa (and) Bau, Nergal (and) Laš, Madānu (and) Ningirsu, Ḫumḫummu (and) Išum, Erra (and) Nusku, Ištar//Lady-of-Nineveh, Ištar//Lady-of-Arbela, Adad-of-Kurbail, Hadad-of-Aleppo, Palil, (and) the heroic Sebittu. This list is followed by a broken list of at least nine non-Assyrian deities: Dagan (and) [M]ušuruna, M[elqarth (and) Eš]mun, Kub[aba (and) Kar]ḫuḫa, Hadad, [...], and Ramman-of-[Damascus], Za...

11 It should also be noted that that stars/planets Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Mercury, Mars, and Sirius (ll. 13–15) precede Aššur and the other gods named in the divine witness list (ll. 16–20), but these two lists are marked as distinct because each begins with "in the presence of" (*ina IGI*, ll. 13 and 16).

12 Noting that the list of gods in SAA 2 6's set of traditional curses is not random, Michael P. Streck offers four potential criteria for explaining the relationship from one god to the next: the (traditional) divine hierarchy (*Götterhierarchie*), a common pairing of two deities (*Götterpaare*), a parent/child relationship between two deities (*Eltern-Kind-Verhältnis der Götter*), and a relationship based on the function of their associated curses (*ähnliche Aspekte oder Funktionen der Götter*; Michael P. Streck, "Die Flüche im Sukzessionsvertrag Asarhaddons," ZAR 4 [1998]: 183). These four criteria are descriptive and somewhat helpful, but they are overly general and do not account for the real differences between this list of gods and those in other treaties. Rather than consider the list of gods in ll. 414–465 two (or three) at a time, we must examine the list of gods found within the set of traditional

tions are probably based upon an ancient Mesopotamian set of traditional curses, which is already attested in the epilogue of the eighteenth-century Laws of Hammurapi (LH xlix 18-li 83) and continued into the ninth century, as evidenced by Šamši-Adad V's treaty with Marduk-zākir-šumi of Babylon (SAA 2 1:16'-r. 16).¹³ Despite the time and space between these two inscriptions, the list of gods found in LH xlix 18-li 83 includes the three first-tier deities and one of their consorts and all three second-tier deities, all of whom are followed by Zababa, Ištar, and Nergal. Probably due to the popularity of the Laws of Hammurapi in the scribal tradition, this precise list of gods survived, appearing several hundred years later in the traditional curse section of SAA 2 1. Allowing for restored lacunae in SAA 2 1, the only difference between these two lists of divine names is the fact that the Babylonian chief deities Marduk and Nabû begin the list in SAA 2 1 (see Table 3). Presumably, the divine names Ištar and Nergal were included in this treaty, but the extant text is so broken that the divine names Šîn, Adad, and Zababa had to be restored based on the curse material. Nothing after a small portion of Zababa's curse has survived.

Another Neo-Assyrian treaty also contains traces of this millennium-long set of traditional curses, the seventh-century treaty of Ashurbanipal with Babylonian Allies (SAA 2 9 r. 5'-25'). Unlike those found in SAA 2 1, the curses and the associated gods have been rearranged in SAA 2 9, demonstrating that the tradition was or became somewhat malleable.¹⁴ For instance, whereas Ea completes the grouping of first-tier deities in the LH epilogue and in SAA 2 1, he interrupts the second-tier deities in SAA 2 9, appearing between Šîn and Adad.¹⁵ Moreover, the curse that is associated with Ea in SAA 2 9 r. 14 is actually the curse that is associated with Šamaš in LH l 36-40 (see below), but Ea is associated with a very different curse in SAA 2 1 r. 7-8. The inclusion of other deities in SAA 2 9 that are not found in LH

curses on as large a scale, or long a sequence, as possible in order to reduce the availability of *ad hoc* explanations and focus more reliably on specific motives behind the particular arrangement in SAA 2 6:414-465. Admittedly, Streck considers the six-member sequence Anu/Šîn/Šamaš/Ninurta/Venus/Jupiter a single unit because the associated curses are related or similar (*ähnliche*), but such a claim is incorrect as will be discussed below.

13 Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972; repr., Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 120 n. 6. Weinfeld cited "R. Borger, *Orientalia* 34 (1965), 168-169, especially ll. 27-31" in his footnote.

14 While the list of gods in SAA 2 9 r. 5'-25' is unique, we can see that it is a mix of the traditional curses pattern and Barré's observed list of gods. Because this was a treaty between two brothers, Ashurbanipal in Assyria and Šamaš-šumu-ukīn in Babylonia, the Babylonian chief deities Marduk and Nabû have been placed immediately after the Assyrian chief deity Aššur. The second-tier deities are next, followed by the warrior gods and three independent goddesses (compare with SAA 2 6:16-20 and 25-30, see Table 2). As the consorts of the Babylonian chief deities, Zarpānītu and Nanaya are the first and second independent goddesses.

15 I have observed a diminishing role for the first-tier deities in lists of gods in Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions during the empire's final century. Whereas Anu, Enlil, and Ea all appeared

or SAA 2 1 is also apparent, such as the appearance of the newcomer deity Ištar-of-Arbela.

Like the seventh-century treaty SAA 2 9, the slightly earlier seventh-century treaty SAA 2 6 borrows but also deviates from the millennium-long curse tradition common to LH and SAA 2 1 (see Table 3). At first glance, the list of gods in SAA 2 6 seems exceedingly different from the other three, but upon further consideration and comparison with Barré’s observed list-of-gods model, these differences are minimal.

Table 3: Curse Lists from the Laws of Hammurapi Epilogue and Neo-Assyrian Treaties

LH xlix 18-li 83:	SAA 2 1:16’-r. 16:	SAA 2 6: 414–465:	SAA 2 9 r. 5’-25’:
		Aššur	Aššur
		Mullissu	
	Marduk		Marduk
	Nabû		Nabû
Anu	[Anu]	Anu	
Enlil	Enlil		
Mullissu	Mullissu		
Ea	Ea		
Šamaš	Šamaš	Šin	
Šin	[Šin]	Šamaš	Šin
			Ea
Adad	[Adad]		Adad
		Ninurta	Ninurta
			Nergal
Zababa	[Zababa]		Zababa
Ištar	[Ištar ²]	Venus	
Nergal	[Nergal ²]	Jupiter	
		Marduk	
		Zarpānītu	
		Bēlet-ilī	
		Adad	
		Ištar//Lady-of-Battle	Zarpānītu
		Nergal	Nanaya
Nintu		Mullissu-of-Nineveh	
Ninkarrak		Ištar-of-Arbela	Ištar-of-Arbela
		Gula	
		the Sebittu.	

in royal inscriptions during the reigns of Sargon, Sennacherib, and Esarhaddon, only Ea appeared in lists of gods in Ashurbanipal’s royal inscriptions (Allen, “Splintered Divine,” 423). Given this tendency, the absence of Anu and Enlil in the traditional curses of SAA 2 6, a text that dates near the end of Esarhaddon’s reign, is not unexpected and fits well with their absence in SAA 2 9. Ea is probably included in SAA 2 9 r. 5’–25’ because he was Marduk’s father, and the fact that he interrupts the second-tier deities may be linked to the curse associated with him in this set of traditional curses.

Allowing for the arrangement of the deities and their associated curses in these other texts, three possible sets of expectations present themselves for SAA 2 6:414–465 (see Table 4). Common to all three sets, we expect Adad to follow Šin and Šamaš, which is where the divine name Ninurta actually appears. We also expect Šamaš and his associated traditional curse to precede Šin and his traditional curse.¹⁶ Thus, in all three sets of expectations, Adad completes the second-tier deities as a group, and Ninurta appears later in the list (Table 4).

Table 4: *Reconsidering the List of Gods’ arrangement in SAA 2 6:414–465*

SAA 2 6:	Set 1:	Set 2:	Set 3:
Aššur	Aššur	Aššur	Aššur
Mullissu	Mullissu	Mullissu	Mullissu
Anu	Anu	Anu	Anu
Šin	Šamaš	Šamaš	Šamaš
Šamaš	Šin	Šin	Šin
Ninurta	<i>Adad</i>	<i>Adad</i>	<i>Adad</i>
Venus	Venus	Venus	Venus
Jupiter	Jupiter	Jupiter	Jupiter
Marduk	Marduk	Marduk	Marduk
Zarpānītu	Zarpānītu	Zarpānītu	Zarpānītu
		Ninurta	Ninurta
			Gula
		Nergal	Nergal
			(Laš)
Bēlet-ili	Bēlet-ili	Bēlet-ili	Bēlet-ili
<i>Adad</i>			
Ištar//Lady-of-Battle	Ištar//Lady-of-Battle	Ištar //Lady-of-Battle	Ištar //Lady-of-Battle
Nergal			
Mullissu-of-Nineveh	Mullissu-of-Nineveh	Mullissu-of-Nineveh	Mullissu-of-Nineveh
Ištar-of-Arbela	Ištar-of-Arbela	Ištar-of-Arbela	Ištar-of-Arbela

16 The fact that Šamaš precedes Šin in LH’s traditional curses is not problematic because the sequential relationship between these two deities is fluid throughout the second- and first-millennia lists of gods. This change in order even occurs within LH itself. In the prologue, a discussion of Ḥammurapi’s support for Šin’s cult in Ur immediately precedes the discussion of his support of Šamaš’s cults in Sippar and Larsa (LH ii 13–36). Šin often precedes Šamaš in Neo-Assyrian documents, which makes sense given that the former is the father of the latter in many mythological traditions and is associated with a larger mystical number (see n. 4).

There was also a first-millennium Assyrian tradition of placing Nabû before his father Marduk (see Barbara N. Porter, “What the Assyrians Thought the Babylonians Thought about the Relative Status of Nabû and Marduk in the Late Assyrian Period,” in *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, Helsinki, September 7–11, 1995* [eds. S. Parpola and R.M. Whiting; Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997], 255). Indeed, it was not unusual for a scribe to write the name Nabû before Marduk when the two were included in a blessing at the beginning of a letter, but later in the same letter the scribe would place the name Marduk, or his title Bēl, before Nabû in a longer list of gods (see, for example, SAA 10 53:7 and 13–14; 59:4 and 6–7; and 61:4 and 7).

SAA 2 6:	Set 1:	Set 2:	Set 3:
Gula	Ninurta Gula	Gula	
	Nergal (Laš)	(Laš)	
the Sebittu	the Sebittu	the Sebittu.	the Sebittu.

In set 1, the warrior gods Ninurta and Nergal have been placed near the end of the list, immediately after the four independent goddesses and before the Sebittu. In contrast, in set 2, the warrior gods have been placed before the independent goddesses and immediately after the Babylonian chief deities. In set 3, these warrior gods and their consorts appear between the Babylonian chief deities and the independent goddesses.

The rationale behind these three sets of expectations reflects different lists of gods found in contemporary Neo-Assyrian inscriptions. In set 1, the warrior gods have been paired with their consorts, an arrangement resembling those found in blessings that serve as greetings in letters to the king (Table 5).

Table 5: Explaining Set 1

Set 1:	SAA 10 197:7–14:	SAA 10 286:3–7:
Aššur	Aššur	Enlil
Mullissu		Mullissu
Anu		Ašš[ur]
Sîn	Sîn	[Sîn + Ningal]
Šamaš	Šamaš	[Šamaš] + Aya
Adad	Adad	Adad + [Šala]
	Nu[sku]	
Venus	Venus	
Jupiter	Jupiter	
Marduk	Marduk	[Marduk]
Zarpānītu	[Zarpānītu]	[Zarpānītu]
	Nabû	Nabû
	Tašmētu	Tašmētu
Bēlet-ilī	Sa[turn]	
	Mercury	
Ištar//Lady-of-Battle		
Mullissu-of-Nineveh	Queen-[of-Nineveh]	[Ištar-of-Nineveh]
	Queen-of-Kidmuri	
Ištar-of-Arbela	[Queen]-of-Arbela	[Ištar-of]-Arbela
Ninurta	Ninurta	Ninurta
Gula	[Gula]	Gula
Nergal	Nergal	[Nergal]
(Laš)	Laš	[Laš]
the Sebittu.		

In both SAA 10 286:3–7, written by Nabû-nādin-šumi to the king, and SAA 10 197:7–14, written by Adad-šumu-ušur to the king, Ninurta is paired with his consort Gula, and Nergal is with his consort Laš, allowing for Par-pola's proposed restoration. Naturally, this comparison raises a question concerning Laš's absence in SAA 2 6, but apart from the possibility that Laš simply never made her way into the set of traditional curses, no explanation is apparent.¹⁷ In set 2, the warrior gods' placement resembles what we find in SAA 2 9, the treaty between Ashurbanipal and his brother Šamaš-šumu-ukīn in Babylon (see Table 3). Set 3 is based on SAA 2 2 vi 6–26 (see n. 10), and it locates the two warrior gods and their consorts between the Babylonian chief deities and their consorts and the five independent goddesses. Because set 2 is based upon a list of gods from another treaty and each of those gods is individually associated with a curse, we may be inclined to favor it over set 1, which is based on lists from another genre of inscriptions and lacks individual traditional curses, and set 3, which is from a treaty but also lacks individual traditional curses. Ultimately, however, each set of expectations is equally worthy of consideration because they aid our understanding of how SAA 2 6:414–465 is unique, not because they show us how this text should actually have been arranged.

Having established where Adad, Ninurta, and Nergal could be in our ideal arrangements, we are now ready to make sense of the arrangement for the remaining thirteen gods in SAA 2 6:414–465. Most names can be easily explained in light of arrangements found in other Assyrian lists of gods, such as the location of the Babylonian chief deities and their consorts, the high gods, and the warrior gods and independent goddesses. Similarly, if we momentarily ignore the three problematic names Adad, Ninurta, and Nergal, the five independent goddesses and the Sebittu expectantly finish off the list of divine names.¹⁸ Thus, we can argue with confidence that only the placement of Adad, Ninurta, Nergal, and the inclusion of the two planets Venus and Jupiter in SAA 2 6:414–465 should have defied Wiseman's or anyone's expectations. Having explored the divine hierarchy, we can now consider the anomalous portions of this list of gods.

17 The goddess Laš appears alongside Nergal in the eighth-century treaty between Aššur-nêrâri V and Mati'-ilu of Arpad (SAA 2 2 vi 12; see n. 10) in the lengthy list of gods (ll. 6–26) that follows a list of curses. Likewise, she appears alongside Nergal as a divine witness in the eighth-century Aramaic treaty between Barga'yah of KTK and the same Mati'-ilu (Sefire i A 9 = KAI 222 A 9). In neither inscription, however, is an individual curse associated with the goddess.

18 Another very unusual aspect regarding the lists of gods in SAA 2 6:414–465 is the fact that a non-geographically-located Ištar (i.e., Ištar//Lady-of-Battle) is found within the same list of gods as geographically-located Ištar goddesses (i.e., Mullissu-of-Nineveh and Ištar-of-Arbela). This is the only seventh-century Neo-Assyrian inscription with a list of gods that includes both a non-geographically-located Ištar and a geographically-located Ištar (Allen, "Splintered Divine," 423–434, esp. 423 nn. 45–47).

C. (Re)Arranging the Curses in SAA 2 6 and Deuteronomy 28

Of these arrangement irregularities, previous scholarship has primarily focused on the order of the deities whose associated curses are also found in Deuteronomy 28: Šîn, Šamaš, Ninurta, and Venus.¹⁹ As far as interest in SAA 2 6's traditional curses go, however, these four gods represent three different problems: the order of the Šîn/Šamaš sequence, Ninurta where we expect Adad, and the presence of Venus.

Let us first consider the order of the Šîn/Šamaš sequence. When we consider the traditional curses and their associated gods in SAA 2 6:419–424, we see that this is the only set of traditional curses in a treaty in which Šîn and his associated curses precede Šamaš and his associated curses (see Table 3). As mentioned above (see n. 16), despite the general variability of whether Šîn or Šamaš is listed first when these two gods appear side-by-side in Mesopotamian inscriptions, the Šîn/Šamaš sequence in ll. 419–424 remains anomalous among our extant witnesses to the set of traditional curses.²⁰ The scribe likely switched the order for thematic reasons. The leprous curse associated with Šîn fits better alongside the several disease curses associated with Anu, namely, exhaustion, malaria, sleeplessness, worries, and ill health (418A–C), whereas the darkness curses associated with Šamaš do not relate to Anu's disease curses at all. Because both Šîn and Šamaš are second-tier deities and their order was readily switched around in lists of gods by scribes since at least the Old Babylonian period, this change would have been a relatively minor one. Though minor, it is instrumental for setting up the arrangement for the subsequent list of gods.

Next, when we compare the list of gods in SAA 2 6:414–465 with our three possible sets of expectations (see Table 4), the second irregularity that we encounter is the placement of Ninurta along with his associated carrion curse. The placement of Ninurta and his carrion curse does not correspond with what we expect, but the location is all the more curious because it and the

19 Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 116–122; Riekele Borger, “Zu den Asarhaddon-Verträgen aus Nimrud,” *ZA* 20 (1960): 173–196, esp. 191–192; Rintje Frankena, “The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon and the Dating of Deuteronomy,” *OtSt* 14 (1965): 144–150; Steymans, “Eine assyrische Vorlage für Deuteronomium 28, 20–44,” in *Bundesdokument und Gesetz: Studien zum Deuteronomium* [ed. Georg Braulik; Freiburg: Herder, 1995], 132–134 and 138–139; Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation*, JPS Torah Commentary 5 (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 497; Christoph Koch, *Vertrag, Treueid, und Bund: Studien zur Rezeption des altorientalischen Vertragsrechts im Deuteronomium und zur Ausbildung der Bundestheologie im Alten Testament* [BZAW 383; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008], 216–230.

20 It is, in part, because of this Šîn/Šamaš sequence that Weinfeld and others have been correct to suggest a literary relationship between SAA 2 6 and Deuteronomy 28. However, deciding whether Deuteronomy 28 borrowed directly from a copy of SAA 2 6, both texts borrowed from a third text (e.g., a non-extant treaty or a formal collection of traditional curses), or this Šîn/Šamaš sequence developed independently is more difficult.

curses associated with Šin, Šamaš, and Venus are found in yet another arrangement in Deuteronomy 28:26–33. The notable difference between SAA 2 6 and Deuteronomy 28 is the location of the carrion curse within each collection. In Deuteronomy 28, the carrion curse (v. 26) is the first of the common curses; however, in SAA 2 6, it is the third curse (Table 6).

Table 6: Comparing Deuteronomy 28:26–33 with SAA 2 6:419–430²¹

Deut. 28:	Curse:	SAA 2 6:
v. 27	skin inflammations/leprosy	ll. 419–421 (§39)
vv. 28–29	madness, “blindness”/darkness, and dismay	ll. 422–424 (§40)
v. 26	carcasses carrion for animals	ll. 425–426 (§41)
v. 30	fiancée raped, loss of house, vineyard	ll. 428–429 (§42A)
vv. 31–33	possessions and children plundered	ll. 429–430 (§42B)

In SAA 2 6, these traditional curses begin with leprosy, continue with darkness, follow with a carrion curse, and end with oppression in the forms of raped loved ones and lost houses. In Deuteronomy 28, the carrion curse is first, and the rest follow in order.

For Weinfeld, the fact that the curses in Deuteronomy 28 in and SAA 2 6 do not match exactly was not problematic because, as he noted, Ninurta along with his associated carrion curse (ll. 425–427) “has no fixed position in the VTE [SAA 2 6] either.”²² In a footnote, he suggested that the curse in v. 26 may have originally followed the one in v. 29 so that vv. 26 and 30–33 had been paired for thematic reasons:

It is possible that Deut. 28:26 is not in its original place and that, like the malediction in the Assyrian treaty, it originally occurred after the curse of darkness in v. 29. Since enemy pillage usually follows in the wake of military defeat, it is plausible to assume that vv. 30ff., which deal with pillage and capture by the enemy, originally followed immediately after the curse of defeat in v. 26.²³

Theoretically, if Deuteronomy 28 borrowed these common curses from a copy of SAA 2 6, Ninurta along with his associated curse could have been the third, first, or last god. Regardless, Weinfeld based this lack of a fixed position for Ninurta and his associated carrion curse in the SAA 6 tradition on the variant copy ND 4329. In this inscription, Ninurta and his associated carrion curse follow Jupiter and his curse, and both of them probably follow Venus and her curse.²⁴ By comparing ND 4329 with the other extant SAA 2 6

21 Table 6 is adapted from Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 497.
22 Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 119.
23 Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 119 n. 1.
24 Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 119 (and n. 1); see also Wiseman, “Vassal-treaties,” 61 and plate 31. According to Wiseman’s commentary, Ninurta’s curse occurs after Venus’s curse:

copies, including the recently discovered T1801 from Tell Tayinat,²⁵ we learn that Ninurta and his associated curse have been relocated to the end of this sequence (Table 7).

Table 7: Variant Arrangements of SAA 2 6:419–433

Standard List of Divine Names (ND 4327, 4335, 4451F, 4328B and T1801 ²⁶ :	Variant List (ND 4329):
Šin	Šin
Šamaš	Šamaš
Ninurta	[Venus]
Venus	Jupiter
Jupiter	Ninurta.

In its own way, ND 4329’s list of gods makes more sense than does the standard list because it groups four celestial bodies together (i.e., the moon-god Šin, the sun-god Šamaš, Venus, and Jupiter), but as we shall see, the standard list likely reflects the intended order. Ignoring for a moment the gods in this list, ND 4329’s sequence makes little sense as an arrangement of traditional curses. Because the curse associated with Jupiter denies the transgressor entrance into Marduk’s Esagil-temple, we expect this curse to precede a curse associated with Marduk, which is exactly what happens in the standard list. In the ND 4329 variant, we instead find Ninurta and his associated curse as the follow up. ND 4329’s sequence also interferes with the war-themed curses associated with Ninurta and Venus in the standard list.

As a carrion curse, we cannot help but notice that this is a battle-themed curse that fits well with the curses associated with Venus about raped women and the houses lost after a battle.²⁷ In the standard list, the scribe positioned the warrior god Ninurta after the second-tier Šamaš in this list of gods in order to replace another warrior god, Zababa, whose post-second-tier position had once been secure in the set of traditional curses from the eighteenth

[“ND 43]29: has ll. 431–2 here and places 425–7 after l. 430” (p. 61), but his autograph of the variant text ND 4329 does not include an extant Venus curse (plate 31).

25 Lauinger, “Esarhaddon’s Succession Treaty,” 99–100; *idem*, “Some Preliminary Thoughts on the Tablet Collection in Building XVI from Tell Tayinat,” *Journal of the Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies* 6 (2011): 8–10.

26 ND 4328B and T1801 probably follow the same list-of-gods pattern as do ND 4327, 4335, and 4451F, but the inscriptions are broken in these places.

27 Another version of the carrion curse, which is associated with Palil in SAA 2 6:519, is found among the ceremonial curses and mentions vultures (*zībū*). This curse follows another battle curse associated with Aššur in l. 518, in which Aššur is asked to strike down the transgressor. The carrion curse’s relationship with battle is further reinforced in one of Esarhaddon’s royal inscriptions. In RINAP 4, Esar. 1 v 5–9, Esarhaddon brags that Aššur delivered his enemies into his hands, and he left their defeated corpses to be eaten by vultures (*zībū*) as he carried off the booty.

century (LH 1 81–91) to the ninth century (SAA 2 1 r. 16; see Table 3). Although the scribe chose Ninurta to replace Zababa as the warrior god with a war-themed curse in SAA 2 6:425–426, he did not simply alter the name and leave the original curse. He also altered the curse from one that had been about defeating the enemy in battle (LH 1 81–91) to one concerning the consequences of post-battle defeat, a curse that is more closely related to the curse associated with Venus in ll. 428–430.

This brings us to the third irregularity, the intrusion of Venus (and then Jupiter) where we might expect Ištar. If we interpret Ninurta's inclusion as a replacement for Zababa as a warrior god rather than for Adad as the second-tier god, then we may similarly interpret the celestial goddess Venus as a substitution for the goddess Ištar, even if modern scholars tend to identify Venus with Ištar.²⁸ As ND 4329 hints, this particular Ištar goddess could have been chosen because of her celestial connections with Šin and Šamaš. Moreover, this substitution also allows for the inclusion of Jupiter into the larger list of gods. In the standard list, Jupiter's position between Venus and Marduk makes perfect sense: the Venus/Jupiter sequence reflects a celestial relationship, and the Jupiter/Marduk sequence reflects Jupiter's relationship with (or as some may argue *as*) the deity Marduk.²⁹ This portion of the standard list (i.e., from Šin to Jupiter and then Marduk) also resembles the list of gods found in Adad-šumu-ušur's letter to the king (SAA 10 197), only Adad and Nusku are missing in SAA 2 6 (see Table 5).

Having found no "plausible explanation" for the "order of the curses in Deuteronomy," Weinfeld concluded that the arrangement was determined by the gods associated with those curses and that the gods' arrangement was based upon a traditional Assyrian hierarchy, a theory that has since been embraced by others.³⁰ However, as already discussed, the list of gods in SAA 2

28 Streck identifies Venus with Ištar in his attempt to make sense of the gods' arrangement in ll. 414–465. Specifically, he refers to Venus as the daughter of Šin (Streck, *Flüche*, 182). In contrast, I maintain that Venus and Ištar/Lady-of-Battle were considered separate and distinct goddesses in SAA 2 6 in much the same way Ištar-of-Arbela is a separate and distinct goddess because the scribe has treated them as distinct and separate goddesses.

29 For a fuller discussion on the nature of the relationship between Jupiter as a physical manifestation of a deity and the god Marduk, see Francesca Rochberg, "The Heavens and the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia: The View from a Polytheistic Cosmology," in *Reconsidering the Concept of Revolutionary Monotheism* (ed. Beate Pongratz-Leisten; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 126–127. It should also be noted, however, that the planet/star Jupiter could be associated with other deities, like Šin. According to BM 121206 viii 55', "Jupiter is the star of Šin" (^dSAG.ME.GAR MUL ša ^d30; Govert van Driel, *The Cult of Aššur* [Assen: van Gorcum, 1969], 96–97).

30 Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 119. Like Weinfeld, Steymans suggests that the arrangement of divine names is based upon the hierarchy of the Assyrian pantheon (Steymans, "Eine assyrische Vorlage," 120). Christoph Koch follows Streck's findings that the overall organizing principle is the hierarchy of the Assyrian pantheon, followed by keywords and common content. Because Koch concludes that there are more differences than similarities between SAA 2 6:419–439 and Deuteronomy 28:26–33, his interest in the list of gods in the set of traditional

6:414–465 does not represent a traditional Mesopotamian or Assyrian hierarchy. A traditional hierarchy would include Enlil and Ea after Anu, or it would at least place Adad with Šîn and Šamaš. This hierarchical arrangement is exactly what we find in the eighteenth-century LH xlix 18-li 83 and the ninth-century SAA 2 1:16'-r. 16 set of traditional curses, which Weinfeld and Steymans cite,³¹ but this is not what we find in SAA 2 6. Furthermore, Weinfeld's reliance upon a traditional Mesopotamian hierarchy implies that Ninurta belongs where he is in ll. 425–426 because of his status within that hierarchy, but Ninurta certainly lacks the status to appear between the second-tier deities and the Babylonian chief deities in a Neo-Assyrian treaty.

Despite this long tradition of linking gods with curses and keeping them in a specific order, we cannot rely on this alone as an explanation for either the list of gods or the curses associated with them in SAA 2 6:415–430. Weinfeld reinforced the connections between deities and particular curses by citing Babylonian *kudurru* inscriptions that further associate Šîn with skin ailments and Šamaš with justice,³² but these particular curses could be and were associated with multiple deities. First, consider the fact that Šamaš and Ea are both associated with the same curse, one that involves uprooting the transgressor and making his ghost thirst for water (see Table 8). Another example involves clothing the transgressor in leprosy. SAA 12 93 records Mannu-dēiq's donation of his son Nabû-maqtu-šatbi to Ninurta, and one of its curses threatens anyone who would take Nabû-maqtu-šatbi away from Ninurta. In r. 4–5, it is the goddess Ištar-of-Arbela who would clothe the transgressor in leprosy, whereas in SAA 2 6:419–420, Šîn is the god who would give the transgressor leprosy.³³ A third and final example, one which requires fewer restored lacunae, is actually the carrion curse associated with Ninurta in SAA 2 6:425–426, which was a curse associated with Ištar in LH li 9–11.

curses is focused on the Assyrian transmission of the lists (Koch, *Vertrag*, 230 and 234; Streck, “*Flüche*,” 186). Rather than appeal to an Assyrian hierarchy directly, as Weinfeld, Steymans, Streck, and Koch do, Tigay simply notes that the curse arrangement in Deuteronomy 28:26–33 “seems to correspond to traditional groupings of the gods in Mesopotamian texts” (Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 497, emphasis mine). As noted above at length, I do not dispute the idea that the Assyrian or Mesopotamian hierarchy influenced this list of gods in the set of traditional curses, but this hierarchy should only be used as a first step in making sense of the order.

31 Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 120 n. 6; Steymans, “Eine assyrische Vorlage,” 128, 131, and 139.

32 Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 120f.

33 Weinfeld cites several other links between Šîn and leprosy and skin inflammations (Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 120f.).

As in the LH's epilogue, SAA 2 1, and SAA 2 6, the curse associated with Adad in SAA 12 93 involves famine. The curse associated with Ninurta in SAA 12 93 involves defeat by a merciless weapon (b.e. 15–16), which has little to do with his carrion curse in SAA 2 6:425–427.

Table 8: Curses and their Various Associated Gods

LH l 34-40: (¹⁴ dUTU) ³⁴ <i>e-li-iš</i> ³⁵ <i>ina ba-al-tu₂-tim</i> ³⁶ <i>li-is-su₂-uḫ₂-šu</i> ³⁷ <i>ša-ap-li-iš</i> ³⁸ <i>ina er-se-tim</i> ³⁹ GIDIM ₄ .GIDIM ₄ -šu ⁴⁰ <i>me-e li-ša-aš-mi</i> May (Šamaš) uproot him from the living above and make his ghost thirst for water in the netherworld below.	SAA 2 9 r. 13'-14': r. 13' ^d <i>e₂-a...</i> [<i>e-liš ina TI.LA.MEŠ</i>] 14' ^d <i>li-is-suḫ-an-na-a-šu₂ šap-l[iš ina KI.TIM e-ṭim₂-ma-a-nu A-MEŠ li-ša-me]</i> May Ea...uproot us [from the living above and make our ghost thirst of water] bel[ow].
SAA 12 93 r. 4-5: r. 4 ^d IŠ.TAR <i>a-ši-bat</i> ^{uru} [<i>arba-il₃</i>] ⁵ <i>ša₂-ḫar-šub-[ba-a] lu</i> ^r <i>tu'-[ḫal-lip-šu₂]</i> May Ištar-of-Arbela [clothe him] with leprosy.	SAA 2 6:419-420: ⁴¹⁹ ^d 30... <i>ina SAHAR.ŠUB-pu</i> ⁴²⁰ <i>li-ḫal-lip-ku-nu</i> May Sîn...clothe you with leprosy.
LH li 8-11 (¹ ⁹² dINANA) ^{li} ⁸ <i>qa₂-ra-di-šu</i> ⁹ <i>li-ša-am-qi₂-it</i> ¹⁰ DAM-mi-šu-nu ¹¹ <i>er-še-tam li-iš-qi₂</i> May (Ištar) strike his warriors down (and) soak the earth with their blood.	SAA 2 6:425-426: ⁴²⁵ ^d MAŠ... <i>li-šam-qit-ku-nu</i> ⁴²⁶ MUD ₂ .MEŠ-ku-nu <i>li-mal-[li]</i> EDIN May Ninurta...strike you down (and) fill the plain with your blood.

Ištar and a version of her associated curse from LH li 8-11 likely also belonged to the now broken portion of the ninth-century intermediary text SAA 2 1. Regardless of the intermediate steps between LH and SAA 2 6, however, these similar-but-not-quite-identical curses are associated with two different deities. The fact that a war-themed curse was associated with two different warrior deities makes sense, as does the fact that both Sîn and Ištar were associated with leprosy in SAA 12 93 r. 4-5 and SAA 2 6:419-420.³⁴ While there might have been a tendency for Mesopotamian scribes to associate particular deities with particular curses, these few examples, which are derived from an admittedly limited pool of possible texts, suggest that any known tradition could be readily ignored when scribes had other plans in mind. Thus, we must overlook Weinfeld's suggestion that the location of particular traditional curses heavily influenced the placement of their associated gods in SAA 2 6:414-465.

³⁴ See JoAnn Scurlock and Burton Andersen, *Diagnoses in Assyrian and Babylonian Medicine: Ancient Sources, Translations, and Modern Medical Analyses* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 454. Similarly, both Ištar and Sîn were considered responsible for causing infantile seizures (p. 443). I would like to thank JoAnn Scurlock for drawing my attention to these disease associations common to both Ištar and Sîn.

The sequence *Šîn/Šamaš/Ninurta/Venus* that we know from SAA 2 6:419–430 does not at first glance resemble the sequence *Šamaš/Šîn/Zababa/Ištar* that we know from LH xlix 18-li 83 and SAA 2 1:16'-r. 16 or the sequence *Šamaš/Šîn/Adad/Venus* that we might propose in light of other Neo-Assyrian lists of gods, but we can account for the differences. The *Šamaš/Šîn* to *Šîn/Šamaš* sequence difference is a simple son/father reversal that resultantly links Anu with Šîn because of their disease-themed associated curses. The *Ninurta/Venus* sequence represents the substitution of a warrior god/Ištar pairing, in which Zababa was replaced by a more popular warrior god, and Ištar was placed by another Ištar goddess. This latter substitution also prepared a natural transition from the second-tier deities to the Babylonian chief deities with the addition of Jupiter. Finally, we can reject Weinfeld's theory that Ninurta had no real home in his conjectural *Šîn/Šamaš/Venus* sequence because there was never such a sequence without either Ninurta or Zababa between the father-son pair and either Venus or Ištar. This suggests that the carrion curse in Deuteronomy 28:26 was intentionally repositioned by the biblical author.

D. The Remainder of the (Re)Arrangement in SAA 2 6

After accounting for the rearrangement of the curses common to SAA 2 6 and Deuteronomy 28, a few questions concerning the lists of gods and curses remain. These questions focus on Adad and Nergal: Why does Adad precede Ištar//Lady-of-Battle rather than follow Šamaš, and why does Nergal interrupt the series of independent goddesses? First, the *Adad/Ištar* sequence is not an uncommon sequence, occurring in various Assyrian royal inscriptions and as the transition from tablet III to tablet IV in the lexical godlist *An = Anum*.³⁵ The sequence in SAA 2 6:440–454, however, was probably based on themes found in other curses within SAA 2 6 itself rather than these earlier texts. Specifically, the impetus for the *Adad/Ištar* sequence can be found within the ceremonial curses, those curses in ll. 513–663 whose efficacy lie with “all the gods invoked in this tablet” (*DINGIR.MEŠ ma-la ina*

35 The *Adad/Ištar* sequence can be found in lists of gods in the following Neo-Assyrian period royal inscriptions of Aššurnāširpal II: RIMA 2 A.0.101.49 r. 6'-8'; 56:7; and 66:4. The divine names also appear in sequence in earlier royal inscriptions: RIMA 1 A.0.73.4 r. 11–12 (in this Aššur-uballiṭ I inscription, the Ištar under consideration is specified as *Ištar-kudnittu*); A.0.74.1001:6' (in this Enlil-nērārī inscription, the divine name Ištar has been restored); and A.0.76.1:16–17 (an Adad-nērārī I inscription).

Although the *Adad/Ištar* sequence can be obtained from the *An = Anum* lexical series by stripping Adad of his consort and the entourage that separates him from Ištar, these two divine names do not actually appear in sequence. For a discussion on the problems of using lexical lists like *An = Anum* to establishing a divine hierarchy in Assyria, see Allen, “Splintered Divine,” 151–156, esp. 155, and Table 5.4a.

tup-pi a-d[e]-e an-[ni-e MU-šu₂-nu zak-ru], l. 526).³⁶ The ceremonial curses involving cannibalism and bow smashing (ll. 568–575) especially illuminate the curses associated with Adad and Ištar in ll. 440–454.

In SAA 2 6:440–442, Adad is introduced as the god responsible for stopping the seasonal flooding, depriving the fields of grain, and bringing a great flood upon the land. This agrees with what we have come to expect from the ancient Mesopotamian set of traditional curses associated with Adad (e.g., LH 1 64–80 and probably SAA 2 1 r. 13–15). After these curses, a litany of curses relating to Adad's famine appears, but Adad is only implicitly the root cause of these disasters (SAA 2 6:443–452). These additional curses include a plague of locusts, children grinding their parents' bones, a lack of dough for baking, the need for cannibalism to survive, human carrion eaten by animals, and ghosts who cannot receive libations. All of these disasters fit perfectly well as the immediate and lingering effects of the flood and drought that Adad had brought, but the curses that discuss human flesh as a food source are of particular interest:

⁴⁴⁹*ina bu-ri-ku-nu* UZU.MEŠ DUMU.MEŠ-ku-nu *ak-la ina bu-b[u-ti]* ⁴⁵⁰*hu-šaḥ-hu* LU₂ UZU LU₂ *le-e-kul* LU₂ KUŠ LU₂ ⁴⁵¹*li-la-biš* UZU.MEŠ-ku-nu UR.KU.MEŠ ŠAḤ.<MEŠ> *le-e-ku-lu*

In your hunger, eat your sons' flesh. In severe famine may a man eat (another) man's flesh. May a man wear (another) man's skin. May dogs and pigs eat your flesh. (ll. 449–451)

The threatened famine would be so severe that the living must eat those who died to survive, but even this source of food is limited because they must compete with the dogs and pigs for the bodies. When we consider the ceremonial curses, we find that two follow this same human-animal pairing:

⁵⁶⁸ (KI.MIN KI.MIN) *ki-i ša₂ LAL₃ ma-ti-qu-u-ni* MUD₂.MEŠ *ša₂ MI₂.MEŠ-ku-nu* ⁵⁶⁹ DUMU.MEŠ-ku-nu DUMU.MI₂.MEŠ-ku-nu *ina pi-i-ku-nu li-im-ti-iq* ⁵⁷⁰ (KI.MIN) *ki-i ša₂ ša₂-aš-^rbu²-tu²-^r tul-tu ta-kul-u-ni* ⁵⁷¹ *ina bal-tu-te-ku-nu* UZU.MEŠ-ku-nu UZU *ša₂ MI₂.MEŠ-ku-nu* ⁵⁷² DUMU.MEŠ-ku-nu DUMU.MI₂.MEŠ-ku-nu *tu-is-su lu ta-kul*

(Ditto Ditto) Just like honey is sweet, may the blood of your women, your sons, and your daughters be sweet in your mouth. Just like a worm eats *šašbutu*, may a worm eat your flesh and the flesh of your women, your sons, and your daughters while you are alive.

Whereas the first of the two traditional curses associated with Adad involves people eating other peoples' flesh (UZU.MEŠ), in the first of these two curses

³⁶ In contrast to the set of traditional curses in ll. 414–465, in which each curse is associated with a specific deity, the ceremonial curses in SAA 2 6 invoke only seven individual deities by name. Those deities who are explicitly mentioned again are: Aššur (l. 518); Palil (l. 519), Ea (l. 521), the great gods of heaven and earth (ll. 523), Erra (l. 524), and all the gods already invoked (ll. 526, 573, 616A, 618A), Šamaš (twice; ll. 545 and 649); Enlil (l. 659); and Nabū (l. 660).

it is blood that is consumed by people (MUD₂.MEŠ). In the second in each pair of curses, human flesh is consumed (UZU.MEŠ *akālu*) by animals, but the traditional curse's dogs and pigs have been replaced by worms in the ceremonial curse.

Although a curse about cannibalism that is followed by a curse about animals eating human flesh makes for an interesting match between the traditional and ceremonial sets of curses, the fact that both pairs are followed by another common curse is quite significant.

In the traditional curses associated with Adad, there is one final Adad-curse concerning ghosts who cannot receive libations as a result of the famine,³⁷ but as a collection these Adad-associated curses are followed by a curse associated with Ištar//Lady-of-Battle in which the goddess smashes the transgressor's bow:

453^d IŠ.TAR *be-lit* MURUB₄ u ME₃ *ina* M[E₃] *dan-ni* GIŠ.BAN-*ku-nu liš-bir*⁴⁵⁴ *i-di-ku-nu*
lik-si *ina* KI.TA LU₂.KUR₂-*ku-nu li-še-šib-ku-nu*

May Ištar//Lady-of-Battle **smash your bow** in a great w[ar]. May your arms be bound, and may she place you under your enemy (ll. 453–454).

The only other curse in SAA 2 6 that mentions a smashed bow (GIŠ.BAN *šabāru*) is located immediately after the pair of curses about the consumed blood and worms in the ceremonial curses:

573 (KI.MIN) DINGIR.MEŠ *ma-la ina tuṭ-pi a-de-e an-ni-i* MU-šu₂-*nu zak-ru* GIŠ.BAN-
ku-nu *liš-bi-ru* *ina* KI.TA LU₂.KUR₂-*ku-nu*⁵⁷⁴ *lu-še-šib-u-ku-nu* GIŠ.BAN *ina* ŠU^{II}-*ku-*
nu lu-ša₂-bal-ki-[tu]

(Ditto) May all the gods invoked in this tablet **break your bow**. May they place you under your enemy. May they make your bow lose resilience in your hands.

What we really have here is a sequence of three ceremonial curses in ll. 568–574, one about cannibalism, one about animals eating human flesh, and a

37 Notably, the ceremonial curses in the Sefire inscription and the Tell Fekherye bilingual inscription contain similar curses without invoking multiple deities. In the Sefire inscription (KAI 222–224), Adad is responsible for sending hail (KAI 222 A 25–26), but the rest of the curses are made without a specific deity's invocation (ll. 27–35), though “the gods” (אלהי) as a collective are invoked in l. 30. Likewise, Adad is the central deity invoked in the Tell Fekherye inscription, though he is accompanied by his consort Šala in l. 30 (Nergal appears in l. 38, but he is not the god causing the plague, he is simply associated with it; i.e., *šbt zy nyrgl*, “the plague of Nergal; Jonas C. Greenfield and Aaron Shaffer, “Notes on the Akkadian-Aramaic Bilingual Statue from Tell Fekherye,” *Iraq* 45 [1983]: 112). The following seven lines (ll. 31–37) call on no deity, but they describe the devastation in terms that resemble the Sefire curses, as well as several curses from Deuteronomy 28 (see Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 494–497). Carlo Zaccagnini notes the further similarities between ll. 10–14 of the Akkadian in the Tell Fekherye inscription with both SAA 2 2 and the Pazarcik boundary stone inscription (Carlo Zaccagnini, “Notes on the Pazarcik Stela,” *SAAB* 7 [1993]: 61).

third about smashing the transgressor's bow. Thus, I suggest that the best explanation for the unexpected Adad/Ištar sequence in the set of traditional curses (ll. 440–454) can be found within SAA 2 6 itself. This set of ceremonial curses is similar enough that it can be understood to have provided a pattern that was mimicked by relocating Adad away from his second-tier cohorts Šin and Šamaš and pairing him with Ištar.³⁸

Finally, we can now consider the intrusion of the divine name Nergal between Ištar//Lady-of-Battle and the final three independent goddesses. Actually, both Adad and Nergal interrupt what would have been a series of five independent goddesses in their expected position within the larger list of gods (see Table 2): Bēlet-ilī/Ištar//Lady-of-Battle/Mullissu-of-Nineveh/Ištar-of-Arbela/Gula.³⁹ Adad's addition into this sequence has already been explained in light of thematic curses, so our attention turns to the fact that Nergal has been placed between Ištar//Lady-of-Battle and this trio of independent goddesses. (We can discount the male deities who follow the Sebittu because they are not Assyrian deities, but foreign ones, and so they comprise a different list of deities.⁴⁰) Significantly, Nergal is the final Assyrian male deity encountered within the traditional curses. Moreover, Nergal is the final male deity in the set of traditional curses in the LH's epilogue (LH li 24–39), and should a full copy of SAA 2 1 be discovered, he would presumably be the final male deity in that collection of traditional curses (see Table 3). Whereas the scribe responsible for SAA 2 9 included a series of warrior gods in the set of traditional curses (r 5'–25'), the scribe responsible for SAA 2 6:414–465 decided against such a series.⁴¹ The scribe had already paired Adad with Ištar

38 I recognize that I am not the first to notice the intratextual relationship between the traditional and ceremonial curses in SAA 2 6. Steymans also comments upon the intratextual relationship between the curses associated with Ninurta in ll. 425–426 (§41) and those ceremonial curses in ll. 481–487 (§56) and their mutual influence on Deuteronomy 28:26 (Steymans, "Eine assyrische Vorlage," 129–131).

39 The three-goddess sequence, Mullissu-of-Nineveh/Ištar-of-Arbela/Gula, appears again in Esarhaddon's treaty with King Baal of Tyre (SAA 2 5 iv 1'–3'), where they precede the Sebittu (l. 5') and several foreign deities (ll. 6'–18'). Unfortunately, the divine name Mullissu-of-Nineveh and the associated curse had to be restored, and the geographic element in the divine name Ištar-of-Arbela must also be restored.

40 Curiously, the recently discovered variant treaty text from Tell Tayinat omits the Sebittu and their associated curse. In this text, Aramiš (^da-ra-miš, T1801 vi 44) and Adad-of-Kurbail and his consort Šala-of-Kurbail (^dISKUR ^d«DIŠ»ša-la ša₂ ^{uru}kur-ba-il₃, ll. 45) appear after Nergal and the independent goddesses (ll. 35–41) and before the foreign goddess Šarrat-Ekron (^dšar-rat a-am-qar₂-ru-u-na', l. 47), whom Lauinger identifies as Ptgyh//Lady-of-Ekron (Lauinger, "Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty," 119).

41 Briefly mentioning the Adad/Ištar/Nergal sequence in SAA 2 6:440–456, Daniel Schwemer states that Adad is the first in a group of warrior deities (*zu Beginn einer Gruppe von Kriegsgöttern*), which is supported by the epithets associated with Ištar//Lady-of-Battle (*be-let MURUB₄ u ME₃*) and Nergal//Hero-of-the-Gods (*qar-rad DINGIR*, l. 455; Daniel Schwemer, *Die Wettergottgestalten Mesopotamiens und Nordsyriens im Zeitalter der Keilschriftkulturen: Materialien und Studien nach den schriftlichen Quellen* [Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001], 594 n. 4790). Because Adad's function as the divine "canal inspector of heaven and

and moved Ninurta between Šamaš and Venus, so he made Nergal the final male deity in the list of gods and placed him immediately after Ištar. Though we would not necessarily have expected that Nergal would be where he is in SAA 2 6, his current position is reminiscent of his position in the epilogue to the LH's traditional curses and the ancient Mesopotamian set of traditional curses that survived to the end of the Neo-Assyrian period.⁴²

The scribe responsible for SAA 2 6 had the freedom to place a god and his associated curse anywhere within the set of traditional curses and could include or exclude deities as he saw fit, but Nergal's present location suggests that the scribe was actually making his arrangement with a nod to the ancient tradition.

E. Conclusion

The arrangement of gods named within the traditional curses in SAA 2 6:414–465 is unique when considered as a list of gods, but the rationale behind this list can readily be surmised. Comparing this list of gods and their associated curses with those traditional curses contained in other Neo-Assyrian treaties, the epilogue to the Laws of Hammurapi, and even Deuteronomy 28:26–33, several specific explanations for SAA 2 6's rearrangement become evident to the modern reader. Some of these divine name rearrangements can be attributed to an intratextual interest in key themes and words, such as the consumed-human-flesh curses followed by the smash-your-bow curses, which is common to the ceremonial curses in ll. 568–574 and the Adad/Ištar sequence in the traditional curse section (ll. 440–454). Some of the rearrangements can be attributed to maintaining a traditional hierarchy, while others can be attributed to divine pairings, based on

earth" (GU₂.GAL AN-*e* KI.TIM, l. 440) is Schwemer's real interest in the footnote, he does not attempt to provide a satisfactory explanation for this particular sequence. Elsewhere, he notes that these three divine names appear together in a different arrangement as recipients of an offering provided by Sargon II: Nergal/Adad/Ištar//Lady-of-Battle (*a-na* ^dURI₃.GAL ^dIŠKUR ^diš-tar be-li₂ ta-ha-zi, TCL III ii 160; Schwemer, *Wettergottgestalten*, 592). Although this text has a different arrangement of the divine names, this sequence does reinforce the warrior aspect common to the three deities. Again, Schwemer has no interest in the particular order of the divine names, only their collective association as warrior deities.

42 Though this Ištar/Nergal/independent goddesses pattern does not appear in any extant set of traditional curses in seventh-century Neo-Assyrian treaties, Nergal's name does precede the divine names of two independent goddesses in two different blessings to the king:

⁴ *aš-šur* ^dEN ^dAG ⁵ ^d30 ^dU.GUR ⁶ ^d15 *ša* Aššur, Marduk, Nabû, Šin, Nergal, Ištar-of-Nineveh, Ištar-of-Arbela (SAA 10 82)

⁶ [*aš-šur*] ^d30 ^dUTU ^dEN ^dPA ^dU.GUR [Aššur], Šin, Šamaš, Marduk, Nabû, Nergal, Ištar-of-Nineveh, Ištar-of-Arbela (SAA 10 252).

either the gods' relationships or the curses associated with them. To compensate for relocating Adad with Ištar and away from his traditional second-tier partners Šîn and Šamaš, Ninurta was moved up and paired with a curse previously associated with Ištar. The relocation also served as a substitution of the warrior god Ninurta for Zababa that allowed Venus to serve as a substitution for Ištar, which further linked this sequence with the Babylonian chief deities through the addition of Jupiter. The curses associated with the deities in this new Anu/Šîn/Šamaš/Ninurta/Venus sequence also created a sequence of curses that begins with a pair of illness curses (i.e., those associated with Anu and Šîn), and it ends with a pair of battle curses (i.e., those associated with Ninurta and Venus) that blend seamlessly into a pair of planets (i.e., Venus/Jupiter). Unsurprisingly, Šamaš was placed in the middle of these because of his filial relationship with Šîn.

Overall, arrangement of traditional curses and divine names is built around an interplay of divine pairings and thematic curse pairings. The divine name sequences Anu/Šîn, Ninurta/Venus, and Adad/Ištar are based on thematic curses, whereas the sequences Šîn/Šamaš, Venus/Jupiter, and Jupiter/Marduk are based on divine relationships. Likewise, Nergal's position may have been based on established divine pairings such as Ištar/Nergal and Nergal/independent goddess. Together these shorter sequences combine to produce the unique subsequence Anu/Šîn/Šamaš/Ninurta/Venus/Jupiter/Marduk and the equally unique subsequence Adad/Ištar/Nergal/Mullissu-of-Nineveh/Ištar-of-Arbela/Gula within the larger list of divine names in SAA 2 6:414–4650. As we encounter each pair of divine names in this set of traditional curses, a relationship can explain each individual pairing; however, when we look at how this arrangement differs from the ancient Mesopotamian set of traditional curses we can account for longer sequences than mere pairs and, thereby, reduce the seemingly *ad hoc* nature of our explanations. While no one could have predicted the arrangement of list of gods encountered in SAA 2 6:414–465, and although the nature of the list defied Wiseman, there is no longer anything about this list of gods that defies our explanation.

Finally, armed with a fuller understanding of the motives behind this particular list of gods' arrangement and the innovations that the Assyrian scribe added to the set of traditional curses by rearranging the gods and curses, we can reconsider anew the relationship between SAA 2 6 and Deuteronomy 28. Rather than simply note that the curses in ll. 419–430 and vv. 26–33 correspond in theme and then claim that the author of Deuteronomy borrowed from SAA 2 6, we can use the methodology executed above to determine what motives and innovations could have driven the biblical author to arrange his curses in the manner he did. As such, three possibilities present themselves. The biblical author responsible for Deuteronomy 28 might have borrowed directly from SAA 2 6, as many scholars content. He might have

borrowed from another, older Assyrian treaty and rearranged the traditional curses based on his own literary motives. Or he might have inherited his list of traditional curses from an Israelite rather than Assyrian intermediary that altered the curse arrangement to reflect Israelite history.

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