

A New Source for *The Great Star List*, Its Ancient Name, and Issues for Further Study

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The composition commonly known as *The Great Star List* (K. 250+, duplicates, and parallels) has yet to be published in full edition.¹ At present, a composite transliteration and translation, with a list of sources, is available in Ulla Koch-Westenholz's book *Mesopotamian Astrology*, pp. 187-205.² An earlier 1959-60 study of the text by Ernst Weidner ("Ein astrologischer Sammeltext aus der Sargonidenzeit," *AfO* [1959-60], 105-13) offers editions and discussion of many sections of the text; this being an improvement on Weidner's earlier work in *Weidner Handbuch* 6-22, dating way back to 1915.

At present, *The Great Star List* is actually known from at least two versions which have been conflated into one in the composite edition and previous studies: 1) a standard Neo-Assyrian version attested to by a number of exemplars from Assurbanipal's library with the main example being the tablet K 250+ (A+I), and 2) what may be a Neo-Babylonian version, represented in part by AO 8196 (H) which includes some material not

¹ Transliteration and translation, with both commentary and discussion. Such an edition is planned by J. Fincke and this author as part of a longer study of star-lists and star-names that is being funded by the Israel Science Foundation (ISF 457/15). The abbreviation GSL below is for *The Great Star List*. All other abbreviations are as in the *CAD* (*The Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*).

² Ulla Koch-Westenholz, *Mesopotamian Astrology: An Introduction to Babylonian and Assyrian Celestial Divination* (Copenhagen: The Carsten Niebuhr Institute of Near Eastern Studies, Museum Tusculanum Press, University of Copenhagen, 1995). See Appendix B, which she describes on p. 187 as: "not a fresh edition of the text but merely a digest of what today is public knowledge about it, for the readers convenience." The *sigla* for the exemplars in this article are as given by Koch-Westenholz, but exemplars A and I are now joined (A+I); see Francis Reynolds, "Unpropitious Titles of Mars in Mesopotamian Scholarly Tradition," *Rencontre Assyriologique* 43 (1988), 347-58. We utilize Koch-Westenholz's line numbering system, which we give as GSL line #. A few additional possible fragments are now undergoing study by Fincke and Horowitz.

available in the Neo-Assyrian sources.³ Likewise, the available tablets are written in more than one format. K. 250+ is written in six columns, three on the obverse and three on the reverse, with each column consisting of two sub-columns – left and right. Most of the other exemplars come from eight-column tablets, again with each column consisting of two sub-columns. Further, K. 250+ gives only what is known as *The Great Star List*, and this is probably also the case for Exemplar G which was purchased in Mosul, and well may turn out to be a true duplicate of K. 250+. In contrast, most of the eight-column exemplars give *The Great Star List* over four columns on their obverse only, with a word list on their reverse.⁴ The Neo-Babylonian exemplar AO 8196 (H) too is written in six columns with the end of *The Great Star List* at the bottom of col. iv, and the last surviving column, col. v = rev. ii, giving the word list.⁵

As for *The Great Star List*'s contents, the left side of the double-columns typically gives the name of some star or another astronomical/astrological proper noun, with the right side giving an equivalence. For example, in GSL 83-113, Sumerian or Akkadian names for Mars in the left column are all equated with the standard Akkadian name for the planet, the divine-name ^d*šalbatānu*, in the right column.⁶ None of the previously known exemplars of

³ For example, the list of three heavens published in Wayne Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1998), chap. 1. For discussion of AO 8196 (H) see *ibid.*, 7-8, and Ernst Weidner, "Ein astrologischer Sammeltext aus den Sargonidenzeit," *AfO* 19 (1959-60), 106, with a handcopy on pl. XXXI-XXXIV.

⁴ Sources B and F. This was also probably the case for C and E. The nature of the word list is not yet clear but an interest in astronomical/astrological terminology is discernible. The fragment J = OECT 11 84 gives only lines from the word list. We are not yet ready to determine if differences in physical format are always an indication of different versions of *The Great Star List*. One must remember that MUL.APIN, the most canonical of cuneiform astronomical texts, whose text remains remarkably stable for centuries, is available in both single and double-tablet formats; see Herman Hunger and David Pingree, *MUL.APIN. An Astronomical Compendium in Cuneiform* (AfO Beiheft 24; Vienna, 1989), 8-9. Of course, the existence of a third edition or more is also possible.

⁵ The left column (obv. i, rev. iii) is lacking.

⁶ The Akkadian name for Mars ^d*šalbatānu* written out in the first entry on the right, with MIN (ditto) in the entries below, and the last two entries for Mars as Nergal in lines 112-13, before a horizontal ruling marks the end of the section. For this part of *The Great Star List*, the many names of Mars, and Mars as Nergal, see Reynolds, "Unpropitious Titles of Mars." The fact that the right column remains static and the left is variable places such parts of *The*

The Great Star List preserve either the opening line of the work, or a colophon, so the ancient name(s) of *The Great Star List* has thus far remained unknown.

While on sabbatical at the University of California, Berkeley, in the winter of 2012, Niek Veldhuis informed me that he had identified a new exemplar of *The Great Star List* in the collections of the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum in San Jose, California. At Professor Veldhuis' invitation, I then studied this tablet, RC 0708, on the basis of the photograph available in CDLI,⁷ which shows that the present fragment gives part of col. i lines 1ff. Thus, RC 0708 gives the first witness to the missing opening section of *The Great Star List*, with the first line being its incipit, and so its ancient name. Unfortunately, all that survives from col. i is part of the last sign of each line, or in the case of lines 1-2, at most the merest of traces of the very end of the last sign. Full study of the tablet is not yet possible, making it impossible for me to offer an edition of the tablet below. What is possible is to make a few preliminary remarks and observations in the hope that this will serve as the starting point for full study of the tablet.⁸

*RC 0708: The Tablet*⁹

RC 0708, in Neo-Assyrian script, gives part of the upper portion of its original. Parts of three columns are preserved on both the obverse and reverse, with double vertical ruling lines separating the sub-columns and columns from one another. The shape of the present fragment suggests that, when complete, RC

Great Star List in the realm of Akkadian-Akkadian lexical series of the type of *Malku* = *šarru*, for which see now Ivan Hruša, *Die akkadische Synonymenliste, malku-šarru: Eine Textedition mit bersetzung und Kommentar* (AOAT 50; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2010).

⁷ www.cdli.ucla.edu/P388407.

⁸ Preliminary studies and collations of the tablet at The Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum were conducted by Yigal Bloch in November 2013 and by myself in January 2018. We thank Julie Scott, Steven Armstrong, and Lorraine Katich, and the entire staff of this wonderful museum for facilitating our visits, and all for their hospitality during our stay in San Jose.

⁹ In my remarks below I will be most conservative in reading from the photograph. I will only offer readings when I am certain of what I think my eyes or those of Dr. Bloch have seen so as to not mislead the reader. Others may see more, but the history of scholarship in our field teaches us that suggested readings from photographs and collations, and even clearly marked restorations, over time become accepted as what is actually on the tablet. In any case, all my readings will ultimately need to be confirmed by the production of a handcopy, which will be included in the book by J. Fincke and myself.

0708 was a six-column work with three columns each on the obverse and reverse.

What is now the very far left of the obverse of the fragment gives the last sign, or traces of the last sign of the first column, for what looks like about 10 lines, from col. i 1 down to about col. i 10. Col. ii is the most intact. Here, we have all or most of about ten lines in full in both sub-columns, with four or five more lines available in the right sub-column, for a total of approximately 15 lines. Col. iii is represented only by six lines or so from its left sub-column, all of which begin with the determinative for star-names MUL. Rev. col. i-iii are now represented only by vertical dividing lines marking the columns and sub-columns that extend downwards at the bottom of the reverse into what is otherwise uninscribed space. It is unclear if this merely indicates that the tablet was left unfinished by its scribe, or if the upper part of the reverse gave the scribe sufficient space in which to finish his work. It is very likely that Koch-Westenholz' Source G (Vincent Scheil 1927: 32-34, copy p. 33) comes from the same original as the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum piece. This source, like RC 708, has vacant space at the bottom of its reverse as well.¹⁰ Unfortunately, Scheil's exemplar, which was in a private collection in 1927, cannot at present be located; so we cannot test this hypothesis.

The Koch-Westenholz composite *Great Star List* ends with line 313. If we assume that the Rosicrucian tablet gives roughly the same text as that represented by the composite, we are obligated to assume an average of over 50 lines per column for the six columns of RC 0708. However, we must now also allow for the lines in Scheil's tablet (if it indeed comes from the same original), the vacant space at the bottom of RC 0708 reverse, and also perhaps for a colophon. This makes it dangerous to guess how much of the composite text we might have had on RC 0708 when complete. Nonetheless, I am willing to "guesstimate" that our fragment represents something like the top quarter or so of the original's obverse and bottom quarter of its reverse. As such, it

¹⁰ This observation was made by J. Fincke.

seems just barely possible that RC 0708 is large enough to accommodate the required 300+ lines of the composite text of *Great Star List*, even allowing for the vacant space on its reverse.

RC 0708: The Surviving Text

The surviving text in col. iii can be identified. What appears to be col. iii 2-4 corresponds to GSL 101-103, with entries for ^{mul}apin, ^{mul}šudun, and ^{mul}šu-pa quite legible.¹¹ This is from the list of names for Mars that begins in GSL 83 and continues down to GSL 113. As these names for Mars occur around the twentieth entry in the Mars portion of the Koch-Westenholz composite text, the Rosicrucian tablet's list of the names for Mars must have begun in the now missing lower portion of RC 0708 col. ii. Further, if the entries corresponding to GSL 101-103 are found at the top of RC 0708 iii, this indicates that the first two columns of RC 0708 yield our expected average of 50 lines or so of the composite text for each column.¹²

Col. ii is divided into two sections by a horizontal ruling after what appears to be line 3. The first entry in line 4 introduces names for Mercury. Here the standard name for Mercury, ^{mul}udu-til gu₄-ud, is clearly visible in the right sub-column. The left sub-column is broken, but one can see the MUL determinative, and then what remains of what appears to be two signs. We suggest a reading ^{mul}MÌN-ma for *šanumma*, "The Strange Star," which is normally a name for Mars, but can also be a name for Mercury as in SAA 8 503. The Mercury section then continues in RC 0708 ii 5ff., with MIN (ditto) in the right sub-column indicating that the names in the left sub-column too are names for Mercury. In col. ii 5-6 we seem to have ^{mul}a-hu-u and ^{mul}na-ka-ra[?], "The Alien Star" and "The Enemy Star," to match "The Strange Star" in line

¹¹ The next line may give the beginning of GSL 104: ^{mul}ba[l-téš-a = ^dMIN].

¹² This would give us approximately 150 lines for the three columns on the obverse with about 150 more lines needed on the reverse to complete The Great Star List as reconstructed by Koch-Westenholz.

4.¹³ I also tried to read the name in col. ii 9' as ^{mul}Nēberu, Marduk's star, as Mercury,¹⁴ but collation could not confirm this reading. No corresponding section giving names for Mercury is to be found in the current composite *Great Star List*, but we presume that the Mercury list should be placed somewhere in the range of lines 45 to 77 of the Koch-Westenholz reconstruction, where a number of broken lines are followed by a gap of 24 lines.¹⁵ In any case, the Mercury list in the lower part of RC 0708 col. ii appears to follow the same pattern as the list of names for Mars that is now represented in part by our col. iii: it begins with the standard name for the planet in the right sub-column followed by MIN – with a variety of names for the planet in the left sub-column.

The first three lines of col. ii, above the horizontal ruling, must belong to the section of *The Great Star List* immediately before the list of names for Mercury. At present, I cannot obtain nearly enough information to make a secure identification of this section. Similarly, one cannot be certain how far down col. ii the Mercury section continued, but it must have ended long before the bottom of the column since, as noted above, we are well into the section for Mars by the time we get to the top of col. iii.¹⁶ This seems to confirm that we are missing as much as three-quarters of the original tablet.

This then leaves us col. i, where all that remains is the very far right end of the uppermost portion of the right sub-column, immediately before the vertical rulings separating col. i from col. ii. At the very end of line 1 of col. 1 there appear to be traces from a final vertical stroke DIŠ. What remains of this stroke sits precipitously on the very edge of the preserved face of the obverse,

¹³ David Brown, *Mesopotamian Planetary Astronomy-Astrology* (Groningen: Styx, 2000), 58. For all three as names for Mars, see Reynolds, "Unpropitious Titles of Mars," 350-51, and note the three Akkadian names together as well in the Urgud star-list (*MSL* XI 40: 34-36).

¹⁴ For ^{mul}Nēberu = Mercury in Astrolabe B and some first millennium sources, see Wayne Horowitz, *The Three Stars Each, The Astrolabes and Related Texts* (*Afo Beih.* 33; Vienna, 2014), 20-24.

¹⁵ When the Koch-Westenholz edition resumes, at *GSL* 78-82, lines 80-82 have Ištar in the right column, and Iliabrat, and Dumuzi in the left column, none of which is normally associated with Mercury. The list for Mars then follows in *GSL* 83 after a horizontal ruling.

¹⁶ A short section for Saturn may have been included between the Mercury and Mars lists.

just after the broken surface on the right side of the surviving fragment tablet rises to meet the flat surface of the preserved portion of the obverse.¹⁷

More of DIŠ-stroke is visible at the end of line 2. Full DIŠ-strokes are then clearly visible at the ends of lines 3-8, with further traces of the same stroke in line 9, and perhaps also in line 10 before the column breaks off entirely. We suggest that the vertical strokes at the end of col. i 2ff. are what remains of the sign MIN ‘ditto’. If so, we hypothesize that at least the version of *The Great Star List* now represented by RC 0708 began with a list of multiple names for a one single heavenly body, but which one? I suggest Jupiter. Below it will be proposed that this suggestion allows us to identify the opening section as a list of names for Jupiter, and more importantly, to propose that the ancient name of *The Great Star List* was ^{mul}sag-me-gar = ^dšul-pa-è, “Jupiter = šulpa’e,” a title which has hitherto been known from a colophon to *Mul-Apin*, catalogues, and a library record, but not from any identified exemplars of the work.

Towards a Reconstruction of RC 0708 col. i

We suggest that traces from the head of a vertical stroke at the end of col. i 1 are for the end of a DU-sign, from [UD.]DU = è. This we take for ^dšUL.PA.UD.D]U, to be read [^dšul-pa]-ṛè¹⁸. Thus, we may restore RC 0708 i 1 as follows:

RC 0708 i 1: [^{mul}sag-me-gar = ^dšul-pa]-ṛè

¹⁷ The remains of this stroke were visible to me when the tablet was taken outside and collated in full sunlight. The traces are also just about discernible on the photograph, but given the uncertainties involved, we will continue to read this (possible) last sign in obv. 1’ as ṛDIŠ’.

¹⁸ This is the name used for Jupiter in GSL 241 where the name is preserved in full. However, the same head of a stroke would also close the line if the name was realized [^dšul-pa-è]-ṛa, as the A-sign too ends with a vertical. We restore the divine determinative DINGIR, rather than MUL, on the basis of the writing ^dšalbatānu for the standard name for Mars in the right sub-column of the Mars list.

This restoration gives us an equation between two common names for Jupiter that were in use in the Neo-Assyrian period.¹⁹ Since there is no horizontal ruling visible in RC 0708 col. i,²⁰ the rest of the surviving entries must then be part of the same section as col. i 1. What we may then fairly assume would be a list of names for Jupiter of the same type as the lists of names for the planets Mars and Mercury later in *The Great Star List* that we discussed above. In both the Mars and Mercury lists, the left sub-columns give various names for the two planets, while the right sub-column gives MIN after the first entry. As such, we should expect RC 0708 col. i too to give various names for Jupiter in its left sub-column, with MIN repeated in each line in the right sub-column from line 2 onwards. Hence, the presence of vertical strokes at the end of lines 2ff., since MIN is written as two full length vertical strokes. Thus, we may propose the following edition of RC 0708 col. i in its present state:

1. [mul^{mul}sag-me-gar = ^dšul-pa]-rè
2. [mul^{mul}x x x = MI]N
3. [mul^{mul}x x x = M]IN
4. [mul^{mul}x x x = M]IN
5. [mul^{mul}x x x = M]IN
6. [mul^{mul}x x x = M]IN
7. [mul^{mul}x x x = M]IN
8. [mul^{mul}x x x = M]IN
9. [mul^{mul}x x x = MI]N
10. [mul^{mul}x x x = MI]N

¹⁹ See, e.g., ^{mul}SAG.ME.GAR in *Mul-Apin* I i 38, II i 38, 60, and ^dŠUL.PA.È.A in *MulApin* II i 2. So too *SAA* 8 147: 7-8: The star of Marduk at its (heliacal) rising is (called) šulpae, when it ascends to (a height) of one league it is (called) sagmegar . . . , with this passage repeated in *BPO* 3 230, K. 3124: 5' (collated). Cf. *BPO* 4 178, K. 2212: 19'-23'.

²⁰ What might be taken as the end of light horizontal line below col. i 3 appears to be just a scratch.

The Text Jupiter = Šulpa'e

A text named *Jupiter = Šulpa'e* is known from the catch-line of BM 42277, a tablet in Babylonian script that is utilized as Source D for *Mul-Apin* II in Hunger and Pingree's standard edition in *AfO* Beih. 24:

DIŠ^{mul}SAG.ME.GAR dŠul-pa-è

2 UŠ 41ÀM MU.ŠID.BI DUB.2.KÁM MUL.APIN NU AL.TIL

GABA.RI bár-sipa^k[i]

Jupiter = Šulpa'e

161 are its lines. Tablet II of *Mul-Apin*, not complete,

Original from Borsippa

The Babylonian scribe of BM 42277 here gives ^{mul}SAG.ME.GAR = dŠul-pa-è as a catchline, and notes that his version of *Mul-Apin* is incomplete.²¹ Thus a composition *Jupiter = dŠulpa'e* seems to be taken by this scribe to be part of *Mul-Apin*, apparently following a tradition where our text may have been thought to be a sort of *Mul-Apin* Tablet III. This is not normally the case. *Mul-Apin* is elsewhere written at most as a two-tablet work,²² and our text *Jupiter = Šulpa'e* is not included in any surviving exemplar of *Mul-Apin*; nor is it mentioned in any of the other extant colophons of the series. More important, *Jupiter = Šulpa'e* is named as an independent work in Assyria, in

²¹ The number of lines given here as 161, and the fact that our text is catalogued as incomplete, open an intriguing possibility here. Could the 161 lines refer to only the first half or so of *The Great Star List* which when complete we estimated above would have a length of 300+ lines. If so, this first half could include most or all of the stellar material in *The Great Star List*, but exclude the latter half of *The Great Star List* which considers other topics including the planets, comets, month-names, the days of the lunar month and the Moon's phases, the winds, and Gula-goddesses of various cities. If this is the case, could the notation "not complete" refer to the format of our tablet RC 0708 and Source G where most or much of the reverse is left vacant except for the tablets' rulings.

²² So the edition by Hunger and Pingree which is organized as two tablets of four columns each. A few exemplars are written as "double-tablets" giving the material from both standard *Mul-Apin* I and II together over six columns of text on a single piece of clay.

Assurbanipal's library: in the catalog K. 12000d, where it is listed immediately after *Mul-Apin*, and in a library record published as SAA 7 49 rev. i 3':²³

1 2 SAG.ME.GAR ^dŠul-p[a-è]

1 of 2 (writing boards of) *Jupiter* = Šulpa[a'e]

These two pieces of evidence allow us to confirm that the work *Jupiter* = Šulpa'e was normally considered to be an independent work, which followed *Mul-Apin* in at least one strand of the Neo-Assyrian scribal canon.²⁴

Yet, the catalog K. 12000d and the library record do more than just confirm the existence of a text named *Jupiter* = Šulpa'e. Both point us in the direction of our identification of this as an ancient name for *The Great Star List*. The library record indicates that *Jupiter* = Šulpa'e occupied two writing boards. This demonstrates that *Jupiter* = Šulpa'e was long rather than short, and the catalog places *Jupiter* = Šulpa'e directly after *Mul-Apin* II, confirming its position in the aforementioned catchline to the *Mul-Apin* exemplar BM 42277. Thus, *Jupiter* = Šulpa'e must be a long composition that would fit into the canon right after *Mul-Apin*, and in fact could be (mistakenly?) taken as a continuation of *Mul-Apin*. *The Great Star List* is indeed long, written over multiple column tablets, with more than 300 possible total entries. There is no other extant astrological or astronomical work of such length for which we do not know its ancient name. This alone, without all the other supporting evidence given above, might have allowed us to guess that *The Great Star List* and *Jupiter* = Šulpa'e could be one and the same. Further,

²³ Previously Simo Parpola, "Assyrian Library Records," *JNES* 42 (1983): 15 iv 3'. For both SAA 7 49 (= the Parpola text) and K. 12000d, see previously Hunger-Pingree, *MUL.APIN*: 8-9. The library records are now available online at <http://oracc.org/saao>.

²⁴ Such sequences of texts can be established elsewhere in the cuneiform corpus. See e.g. Diri after Erimhuš (*MSL* XV 3); LÚ-lists after *Urra = hubullu* (Pera D. Gesche, *Schulunterricht in Babylonien im ersten Jahrtausend v. Chr.* [AOAT 275; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2001]: 125-27); and the transition at the end of the Sumerian Gilgamesh tale *Bilgamesh and the Netherworld* to *Bilgamesh and Huwawa* (Andrew R. George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh: The Babylonian Epic Poem and Other Texts in Akkadian and Sumerian* [London: Penguin, 1999]: 189).

what type of text would one expect after *Mul-Apin*, or, even better, what type of text could be taken as a natural continuation of *Mul-Apin* as in the colophon of BM 42277? A text written in the same physical format as *Mul-Apin* (tablets written in the format of double-columns), presumably with an interest in astronomy, and astrology, given that the last section of *Mul-Apin* is a set of astronomical omens (*Mul-Apin* II iii 16 - iv 12).²⁵ Again, *The Great Star List* perfectly fits these criteria. Thus, I feel secure in proposing that at least one version of what modern Assyriology has long known as *The Great Star List* is none other than the ancient work *Jupiter = Šulpa'e*.

Issues for Further Study

Three lines of further inquiry present themselves. First, and most important, RC 0708 must be copied, collated, and studied. Only then can we be absolutely certain that RC 0708 col. i 1 ends with the vertical stroke that allows us to restore line 1 as the incipit of *Jupiter = Šulpa'e*.

Second, many questions concerning the history of what we know as *The Great Star List* must still be asked and answered. For example, how many editions of *The Great Star List* circulated, under what name(s), and was the main version of *The Great Star List* comprised of only one tablet of 300+ lines as suggested by K. 250+ (A+I) and the composite edition? Was there perhaps a shorter edition as well, or a multi-tablet edition, where each tablet had substantially less than 300+ lines? What is the relationship between the Assyrian and Babylonian exemplars of *The Great Star List*, and between *The Great Star List* and the word list found on so many of the known exemplars? Was there, in addition to a standard edition of the whole package, a much longer expanded edition that included commentary and digressions?²⁶

²⁵ For discussion see Wayne Horowitz and Rita Watson, *Writing Science before the Greeks: A Naturalistic Analysis of the Babylonian Astronomical Treatise MUL.APIN* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 117-22, 172-73.

²⁶ This, for example, is the case for the the Mesopotamian Uranology group of texts that are currently being studied by P. A. Beaulieu, J. Steele, and myself. For this group see for now Hunger and Pingree, MULAPIN, 63-65, and some excerpts from the group quoted in G. E.

Finally, further study of what have been called the “giskim texts” and their commentaries may shed light on RC 0708, *The Great Star List*, and related problems. The “giskim texts” and their commentaries have recently been noted and briefly discussed in Frahm,²⁷ where they are identified with a third tablet of *Mul-Apin*: *Mul-apin had a third tablet, represented by the so-called “giskim texts . . .”* From their description in Frahm’s study, these tablets seem to include two types of material.

They begin with a number of descriptions of various planetary phenomena, each of which is summarized with the words: *annītu ittu(giskim) ša* ... “This is the characteristic sign of (phenomenon).” There then follows a second section that provides theological and other explanations of the names of Jupiter and other planets.

This second section sounds a lot like *The Great Star List*, as was already recognized by Frahm himself in his note 784: “This part of the tablet can be described as a sort of commentary on certain sections of the Great Star List (edited by Koch-Westenholz 1995: 187-205).” One of the exemplars of the “giskim texts,” VAT 9427 from Assur, allows us to make this relationship even clearer. Hunger-Pingree MUL.APIN 8-9 reports that this second section begins on VAT 9427 at line 51 with the entry ^{mul}SAG.ME.GAR = ^dšul-pa-è, which is indeed what we have reconstructed above as the first line, and so the ancient name of *The Great Star List*, our *Jupiter* = *Šulpa’e*.²⁸ But what about VAT 1-50? Are these lines quoting from a text that is not part

Kurtig, *The Star Heaven of Ancient Mesopotamia, the Sumero-Akkadian Names of Constellations and Other Heavenly Bodies* (St. Petersburg: Aletheia, 2007).

²⁷ Eckart Frahm, *Babylonian and Assyrian Text Commentaries: Origins of Interpretation* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2011), 166-67. Four exemplars belonging to this group are known: K. 3213 (+) 12108 + 13396, K. 9594 + 20284, and K. 10636 from Nineveh, and VAT 9427 from Assur. Rm. 855 in Babylonian script is a commentary (5R 31 no. 3; CT 41 45; René Labat, *Commentaires assyro-babyloniens sur les presages* [Bordeaux: Imprimerie-Librairie de L’université, 1933]: 126-27). For earlier discussion of the group, see Hunger-Pingree, MUL.APIN, 8-9, and Ernst Weidner, “Die astrologische Serie Enūma Anu Enlil,” *Afo* 14 (1941-44): 172-95, 308-18.

²⁸ A relationship between VAT 9427 and *The Great Star List* was recognized earlier in Weidner, “Ein astrologischer Sammeltext,” 106. Cf. Alasdair Livingstone, *Mystical and Mythological Explanatory Works of Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 51.

of *Jupiter = Šulpa'e*, or was *Jupiter = Šulpa'e* sometimes an independent work, and sometimes attached to another work now represented by VAT 9427 1-50? Are these lines quoting from a text that is not part of *Jupiter = Šulpa'e*, or was *Jupiter = Šulpa'e* sometimes an independent work, and sometimes attached to another work now represented by VAT 9427 1-50, and parallel material on other tablets belonging to the “giskim texts” group? If so, what does this tell us about the word list on the reverse of some of the exemplars of *The Great Star List*? 'Tis a muddle! Again, only full publication of the tablets in question will allow us to answer such questions.

Conclusion

Above we presented a preliminary discussion of the tablet RC 0708 in The Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum in San Jose, California, primarily on the basis of a photograph published in CDLI. This preliminary study of the tablet has yielded three immediate results: 1) an identification of a list of names for Mercury in *The Great Star List*; 2) a proposal that *The Great Star List* opened with a list of names for Jupiter, and 3) a proposal that the ancient name of at least one version of what we know as *The Great Star List* was *Jupiter = Šulpa'e*. These conclusions, however, must await confirmation by publication of a full edition of RC 0708, and further study. This then brings us to a more long term and personal implication of the present study. After examining RC 0708, and contemplating the issues raised by my study of the tablet, I am more convinced than ever that a full edition of *The Great Star List* is long overdue. It is to this end that Jeanette Fincke and I have begun to prepare a full annotated edition of *The Great Star List* that will occupy a place of honor in our new editions of star lists and related materials that is being funded by the Israel Science Foundation and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. At the end of this process, we believe that what we will find will be multiple versions of the *The Great Star List*, not unlike the situation we now have for *Enuma Anu Enlil*, the *Astrolabes*, and the aforementioned Mesopotamian Uranology group. Of these multiple versions, I believe that at least one from

Assurbanipal's library in Nineveh will turn out to bear the ancient title *Jupiter* = *Šulpa'e*, and that RC 0708 belongs to this version.