CUNEIFORM MONOGRAPHS

MESOPOTAMIAN POETIC LANGUAGE: SUMERIAN AND AKKADIAN

M.E. Vogelzang
H.L.J. Vanstiphout
editors

SIYX
PUBLICATIONS

MESOPOTAMIAN POETIC LANGUAGE

CUNEIFORM MONOGRAPHS 6

Edited by

T. Abusch, M. J. Geller, Th. P. J. van den Hout
S. M. Maul and F. A. M. Wiggermann

STYX
PUBLICATIONS
GRONINGEN
1996

CUNEIFORM MONOGRAPHS 6

PROCEEDINGS OF THE GRONINGEN GROUP FOR THE STUDY
OF MESOPOTAMIAN LITERATURE

VOL. 2

MESOPOTAMIAN POETIC LANGUAGE: SUMERIAN AND AKKADIAN

M. E. Vogelzang
H. L. J. Vanstiphout

Editors

STYX
PUBLICATIONS
GRONINGEN
1996

ISBN 90 72371 84 4
ISSN 0929–0052
CIP

STYX-Publications
Postbus 2659
9704 CR GRONINGEN
THE NETHERLANDS
Telephone: 31–(0)50–5717502
Fax: 31–(0)50–5733325
E-mail: styxnl@compuserve.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface vii
Introduction ix–xi
Abbreviations xiii–xviii

Bendt Alster
Literary Aspects of Sumerian and Akkadian Proverbs 1–21
Jeremy Black
The Imagery of Birds in Sumerian Poetry 23–46
Jerrold S. Cooper
Magic and M(is)use: Poetic Promiscuity in Mesopotamian Ritual 47–57
Brigitte Groneberg
Towards a Definition of Literariness as Applied to Akkadian Literature 59–84
Shlomo Izre'el
Mesopotamian Literature in Contemporary Setting: Translating Akkadian Myths 85–125
Anne D. Kilmer
Fugal Features of Atraḫasīs: The Birth Theme 127–139
Piotr Michałowski
Ancient Poetics 141–153
Herman L.J. Vanstiphout
Ambiguity as a Generative Force in Standard Sumerian Literature, or Empson in Nippur 155–166
Marianna E. Vogelzang
Repetition as a Poetic Device in Akkadian 167–182
Joan G. Westenholz
Symbolic Language in Akkadian Narrative Poetry : The Metaphorical Relationship between Poetical Images and the Real World 183–206
Franz Wiggermann
Scenes from the Shadow Side 207–230
Index Locorum 231

PREFACE

The Mesopotamian Literature Group, constituted in June 1990, held its second meeting from 12 to 14 July 1993 at the Department of Languages and Cultures of the Middle East of the University of Groningen. This second meeting was convened by Dr H.L.J. Vanstiphout and Dr M.E. Vogelzang, as was the first. It was again financed out of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences grant to Dr Vogelzang.

The participants at this meeting were: Dr Bendt Alster (Copenhagen), Dr Jeremy Black (Oxford), Prof. Dr Jerrold S. Cooper (Johns Hopkins), Prof. Dr Brigitte Groneberg (Hamburg), Dr Shlomo Izre'el (Tel Aviv), Prof. Dr Anne D. Kilmer (Berkeley), Prof. Dr Piotr Michałowski (Ann Arbor), Dr Herman L.J. Vanstiphout (Groningen), Dr Joan G. Westenholz (Jerusalem), Dr Marianne E. Vogelzang (Groningen), Dr Franz Wiggermann (Amsterdam VU).

The editorial policy has remained the same as in the Proceedings of the first meeting:[1] the individual contributors have been left free to rework, amend, qualify ... their paper as they thought fit in the light or gloom of the often lively discussions – or to leave their text unchanged. When editing the first proceedings we could make play with the oral and written aspects underlying the published texts. We cannot do the same now. Nobody will be offended when we say that no contributor came near Shakespeare in her or his use of poetic language. But neither did any of them approach the Great McGonnigle, we are pleased to say.

As before, the conveners/editors have the pleasant duty to thank the members of the group for their enthusiasm, support, help, understanding, patience, conviviality and most of all for their deep commitment and their friendship.

Special words of thanks must go to the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences for their support by means of Dr. Vogelzang's Fellowship grant; to the Faculty of Arts of Groningen University, the Department of Languages and Cultures of the Middle East, and the Research Institute for Classical, Oriental, Medieval and Renaissance Studies (COMERS), for their hospitality and support; to Dr. Julia van Dijk-Harvey for her technical assistance (in spite of the fact that she is an Egyptologist); and to our publisher and his efficient and always patient staff.

H.L.J. Vanstiphout M.E. Vogelzang

[1] For the Proceedings of the first meeting, the reader is referred to M.E. Vogelzang & H.L.J. Vanstiphout (eds.), *Mesopotamian Epic Literature: Oral or Aural?* Lewiston etc.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992.

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps even more than was the case with the proceedings of the first meeting of the Mesopotamian Literature Group,[1] the studies collected in this volume tend to shuttle back and forth between the general characteristics of any literature as such, and the specific features we claim to uncover in Sumerian and Akkadian poetics.

This is true for the collection as a whole as well as for a number of individual contributions. A somewhat *theoretical approach* runs from statements that are valid almost universally – universally, that is, when treating ancient literatures –, as in Michałowski's paper, to the reasoned application of empirically observed features of phonic poeticality (or 'literariness' in Akkadian : Groneberg) or metaphor (Westenholz; Wiggermann) in one poetic system, over investigations of the generative mechanisms engendered by a universal of poetic language as such in another system (ambiguity in Sumerian poetics: Vanstiphout). As to precise *subtopics of poetic language*, we have discussed mainly phonic texture (Groneberg; Vogelzang; Izre'el), imagery/metaphor (Black; Vanstiphout; Westenholz; Wiggermann), and the way in which they collaborate (Cooper). The *material*, or rather the historical representations of the poetic systems treated, ranges from general overviews of a system (Black; Michałowski; Vanstiphout) to modes of discourse (mainly narrative and laudatory poetry in Akkadian: Groneberg; Westenholz; Vogelzang), to specific types of literature (Alster: Sumerian proverbs; Cooper: a group of love incantations in Akkadian), and to individual compositions, either as such (Kilmer: *Atraḫasīs*) or as an example (Izre'el: *Adapa*). The *method* of treatment is also diverse. We had basically descriptive analyses of single features and their effects on the textural micro-level (Black; Groneberg; Vogelzang), but also studies of the role poetical features play in the literary structure of discrete types (Alster; Cooper; Kilmer), together with investigations of overarching macro-characteristics of poetic language as such (Michałowski; Vanstiphout; Westenholz). There are also three highly specific and unusual – at least in the present context – treatments: Kilmer tracks down a group of phonic features together with what Roland Barthes would call the 'symbolic code'[2] as markers of a possible mode of performance of a specific text; Izre'el investigates the implications of turning one poetic system into another albeit somewhat kindred one; Wiggermann intends to locate and explain a coherent group of symbolic and referential themes against the background of a specific Mesopotamian view of the universe.

This two-(or three-?)dimensional 'multiplicity of approaches'[3] precludes easy general

[1] See M.E. Vogelzang & H.L.J. Vanstiphout, *Mesopotamian Epic Literature: Oral or Aural?* Lewiston etc.: Edwin Mellen Press 1992. The review by B. Foster in *BiOr 51* (1994) cols. 587–90 may also be consulted with profit.

[2] I.e. the 'code' by which structural and textural features of the text as such influence its 'meaning', or, in Barthesian terms, its 'readability'. See R. Barthes *passim*, but most specifically his famous *S/Z*.

[3] The two dimensions are, of course, the universality of the features as against the specificity of the languages and cultures involved. A third might be seen in the historical aspect of the evolution within a specific poetic system; in other words, in literary history. The term 'multiplicity of approaches' is deliberately stolen from Egyptology, where it is used to explain(?) the contradictions inherent to Egyptian

conclusions resulting from our discussions. There is, of course, the anodyne conclusion that both the Sumerian and the Akkadian poetical languages were every bit as sophisticated, supple and effective as any other, and that, moreover, their basic characteristics are no cause for wonder, since they are firmly based upon the language systems involved. This is most true about the phonic features and their repetitive or parallelizing use;[4] but it applies to metaphor in its broadest sense as well, since by way of the basic nature, or even the essence, of the linguistic sign, which is that of asymmetric dualism,[5] ambiguity and hence whole systems of metaphorical discourse are squarely put within the domain proper to language itself.

Conceivably more to the point is the observation that this multiplicity illustrates the richness of the lode. The Mesopotamian Literature Group is well aware that it has only begun to sieve some gold dust, and to sample some nuggets. The real quarrying has yet to begin. The reflections, discussions and analyses presented here do not prescribe any or several ways in which this task would best be undertaken. Yet between the lines, and sometimes in them, a few pointers seem to become visible. First there is the perceived desirability, or even necessity, of studying poetic language, its features and its workings, in individual compositions or groups of closely related compositions. This is tacitly assumed by most authors, and directly illustrated in some of the present papers. But this analysis of individual compositions and/or closely-knit groups should of course be expanded, and take in much larger pieces than are dealt with here. In the case of Sumerian one might thus profitably analyse the language use in the narratives as against the hymns; and even within the hymns different modes seem detectable.[6] The same applies to the disputations and the Eduba essays etc. In Akkadian also the poeticality of the long narratives can be offset against the more reflective or hymnal pieces. The implication in every case is that on this basis fruitful comparative analyses can be undertaken in great detail.

That the matter of the reception of poetic language[7] will also prove a fertile field is illustrated in detail by two contributions; one explores the possibilities of constructing a modern reception, another reconstructs the ancient reception by way of a putative mode of performance. And indeed the topic of reception, and therefore effectiveness, of the poetic language is tied to matters of environment,[8] performance, context and

---

mythological and religious thinking. Since Egyptian civilization managed to get by perfectly well with this non-systematic system for over three millennia, we should not worry overmuch.

[4] See A. Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*, Bloomington: U. of Indiana Press 1985.

[5] See S. Karcevskij, "Du dualisme asymétrique du signe linguistique" in: *Travaux du cercle linguistique de Prague* 1 (1929) 88–92 [Translated by W. Steiner as "The Asymmetric Dualism of the Linguistic Sign", pp. 47–54 in P. Steiner (ed.), *The Prague School. Selected Writings, 1929–1946*. Austin: U. of Texas Press 1975.

[6] See Vanstiphout, " 'Verse Language' in Standard Sumerian Literature". Pp. 305–29 in: J.C. de Moor & W.G.E. Watson (eds.), *Verse in Ancient Near Eastern Prose*. Kevelaer/Neukirchen: Butzon & Bercker 1993 for an attempt on the basis of line structures. Note, by the way, that certainly in the large and unwieldy group of compositions which we refer to as 'hymns', the different modes of poetic language may be easily detectable; but they are far from being equally delectable.

[7] Or 'passive poeticality' to coin a phrase.

[8] See e.g. the heavy influence of the Eduba environment on some poetic texts, as splendidly illustrated in M. Civil, "Feeding Dumuzi's Sheep: The Lexicon as a Source of Literary Inspiration". Pp. 37–55 in F. Rochberg-Halton (ed.), *Language, Literature and History: Philological and Historical Studies Presented to Erica Reiner*, New Haven, CT: AOS 1987.

code, all of which had perhaps better be investigated from within the texts that we have, than from external sociological presuppositions.[9]

During our discussions the basic, though perhaps only gradual, difference between language's 'natural' poeticality and what is described so aptly as 'le haut langage'[10] was not treated as such, although there is at least one clear reference to it.[11] It appears from many points in these studies that one may envisage this difference as the difference between an unformed mass of natural poetic possibilities, inherent in the language system itself, and the formalization thereof, proceeding, in orthodox structuralist terminology, by articulation, selection and organization.[12] Now this 'higher' organization takes different forms, appears in different degrees of concentration and distribution, consists of different amalgamations of basic linguistic properties, shows different dominances, and seems to change significantly through time. To be sure, the process *finally* results in individual and discrete compositions; but it is hardly conceivable that this should happen in an immediate manner. Precisely the higher degree of organization, implying selection and articulation, argues for positing an intermediate system of rules governing the transformation from raw natural poetic language into discrete pieces. This system flows naturally, as it were, from the nature of language as a sign system. And that is the reason why the Group will devote its next meeting (Summer 1995) to generic and typological studies.

Groningen, March 1995.

---

[9] This is an important differentiation. The texts we possess are historical facts – or artefacts – from ancient times. Even the cleverest and most applicable sociological reconstructions we may make are also historical *artefacts*; but they belong to the late Twentieth Century, and one may wonder when and in how far the twain can be made to meet.

[10] 'Natural' poeticality: "I scream/you scream/we all scream/for ice cream"; for 'le haut langage' see the excellent essay by Jean Cohen, *Le haut langage*, Paris: Flammarion 1979.

[11] Michałowski's essay.

[12] In other words, de Saussure's 'double articulation'.

ABBREVIATIONS

AAAH	*Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* (Budapest)
AAAS	*Annales archéologiques arabes syriennes* (Damascus)
AASF	*Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae* (Helsinki)
AbB	*Altbabylonische Briefe* (Leiden)
ABL	R.F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters belonging to the K Collection of the British Museum* (University of Chicago Press 1892 – [Reprint 1977])
ACh	Ch. Virolleaud, *L'astrologie chaldéenne.* (Paris : Geuthner 1910-)
AcSum	*Acta Sumerologica.* (Hiroshima)
AfO	*Archiv für Orientforschung* (Berlin, later Graz)
AGE	K. Tallquist, *Akkadische Götterepitheta* (Helsinki 1992)
AHw	W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* (Wiesbaden 1965-)
AIUON	*Annali dell'istituto universitario orientale di Napoli* (Naples)
AMT	R. Campbell Thompson, *Assyrian Medical Texts from the Originals in the British Museum* (London: OUP 1923 [reprint 1982])
AnOr	*Analecta Orientalia* (Rome)
AnSt	*Anatolian Studies* (London)
AOAT	*Alter Orient und altes Testament* (Neukirchen-Vluyn etc.)
AoF	*Altorientalische Forschungen* (Berlin)
AOS	*American Oriental Series* (New Haven)
ARM	*Archives royales de Mari* (Paris)
ArOr	*Archiv Orientální* (Prague)
AS	*Assyriological Studies. The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (Chicago)
AuOr	*Aula Orientalis* (Barcelona)
B5, B10 ...	'balaĝ no. 5, no. 10 ...' numbered according to the catalogue in J.A. Black, *BiOr* **44** (1987) 32–79
BA	*Beiträge zur Assyriologie* (Leipzig)
BaF	*Baghdader Forschungen* (Mainz)
BaM	*Baghdader Mitteilungen* (Berlin)
BAR IS	*British Archeological Report. International Issue* (London)
BAROR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* (Baltimore)
BBVO	*Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient* (Berlin)
BCE	Before Common Era
BDB	Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver and C. A. Briggs. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1907 [Reprint 1972])
BE	*The Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania. Series A: Cuneiform Texts* (Philadelphia 1896-)
BH	Biblical Hebrew
BiOr	*Bibliotheca Orientalis* (Leiden)

BM	Signature of tablets in the British Museum
BMS	L.W. King, *Babylonian Magic and Sorcery* (London 1896 [Reprint 1975])
BWL	W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (OUP 1960)
CAD	*Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* (Chicago and Glückstadt)
CBS	Signature of the Nippur Collection tablets in the University Museum, Philadelphia, U.S.A. (older campaigns)
CE	Common Era
CLAM	M.E. Cohen, *The Canonical Lamentations of Ancient Mesopotamia* (Potomac: Capital Decisions 1988)
CM	*Cuneiform Monographs* (Groningen)
CNRS	Centre national de la recherche scientifique
CRRAI	*Compte rendu. Rencontre assyriologique internationale* :
- 17	A. Finet (ed.), *Actes de la XVIIe Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale. Université libre de Bruxelles, 30 juin - 4 juillet 1969* (Ham-sur-Heure: Comité belge de recherches en Mésopotamie 1970)
- 25	H.J. Nissen et.al. (eds.), *Mesopotamien und seine Nachbarn. XXV. Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* BBVO **1** (Berlin: D. Reimer 1978)
- 26	B. Alster (ed.), *Death in Mesopotamia. XXVIe Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag 1980)
- 28	H. Hirsch et.al. (eds.), *Vorträge gehalten auf der 28. Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale in Wien* (Horn: Berger 1982)
- 23	Hecker & W. Sommerfeld (eds.), *Keilschriftliche Literaturen. Ausgewählte Vorträge der XXXII. Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale.* BBVO **6** (Berlin: D. Reimer 1986)
- 33	J.-M. Durand (ed.), *La femme dans le Proche-Orient ancien. XXXIIe Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale (Paris, 7–10 juillet 1986)* (Paris: Editions Recherche sur les civilisations 1987)
- 35	M. de J. Ellis (ed.), *Nippur at the Centennial. Papers Read at the 35e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale (1988).* Occasional Publications of the S.N. Kramer Fund **14** (Philadelphia: University Museum 1992)
- 38	D. Charpin et.al. (eds.), *La circulation des biens, des personnes et des idées dans le Proche-Orient ancien*, (Paris: Recherche sur les civilisations 1991)
CT	*Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum* (London)
CUP	Cambridge University Press
DP	P. Allotte de la Füye, *Documents présargoniques* (Paris: Leroux 1908-)
EA	Siglum of Amarna tablets
ED	Early Dynastic
Ee	*Enūma eliš* (Akkadian literary composition)
ELA	*Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta* (Sumerian literary composition)

Erš.	Er-šemas numbered according to M.E. Cohen, *Sumerian Hymnology: the eršemma*. HUCA Suppl. 2 (Cincinnati 1981)
EWO	*Enki and the World Order* (Sumerian literary composition)
FAOS	*Freiburger altorientalische Studien* (Wiesbaden)
FUH	M.J. Geller, *Forerunners to Udug-hul*. FAOS **12** (Wiesbaden: Steiner 1985)
GD	*The Death of Gilgamesh* (Sumerian literary composition)
GE	*Epic of Gilgamesh* (Babylonian)
GEN	*Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Netherworld* (Sumerian literary composition)
GMA	P. Amiet, *La glyptique mésopotamienne archaique* (Paris: CNRS 1980_2)
Ḫḫ	ḪAR-ra *ḫubullu* (Thematic lexical series; see *MSL* volumes V-XI)
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual* (Cincinnati)
IB	Signature of tablets founds at Isin
IH	Israeli Hebrew
IM	Signature of tablets in the Iraq Museum, Baghdad.
ISET	*Istanbul Arkeoloji Müzelerinde Bulunan Sumer edebî tablet veparçaları* (Ankara)
JA	*Journal asiatique* (Paris)
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society* (New Haven, now Ann Arbor)
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature* (Cambridge, MS)
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies* (New Haven, then Philadelphia, now Baltimore)
JEOL	*Jaarbericht Ex Oriente Lux* (Leiden)
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (Chicago)
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (London)
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* (Sheffield)
K	Signature of tablets of the Kuyunjik Collection in the British Museum, London.
KAR	*Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*: WVDOG **28**, **34** (Leipzig 1919, 1923)
KBo	*Keilschrifttexte aus Boghaz-köy* (Leipzig)
Kich	H. de Genouillac, *Premières recherches archéologiques à Kich*. (Paris: Champion 1924–25) [also *PRAK*]
Kramer AV	B.L. Eichler (ed.), *Kramer Anniversary Volume. Cuneiform Studies in Honor of Samuel Noah Kramer*. AOAT **25** (Kevelaer etc.: Butzon & Bercker etc. 1976)
LAS	S. Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian Scholars to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal*. AOAT **5** (Kevelaer etc.: Butzon & Bercker etc. 1970)
LKA	E. Ebeling, *Literarische Keilschrifttexte aus Assur* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag 1953)

LKU	A. Falkenstein, *Literarische Keilschrifttexte aus Uruk* (Berlin: Staatliche Museen 1931 [Reprint 1979])
LOT	*Library of Oriental Texts* (Groningen)
MA	Middle Assyrian
LU	*Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur* (Sumerian literary composition)
MAD	*Materials for the Assyrian Dictionary* (Chicago)
MAOG	*Mitteilungen der Altorientalischen Gesellschaft* (Leipzig)
MB	Middle Babylonian
MIO	*Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung* (Berlin)
MLC	Signature of tablets in the J. Pierpont Morgan Library Collection, Yale University
MSL	*Materialien zum sumerischen Lexikon/Materials for the Sumerian Lexicon* (Rome)
NABU	*Nouvelles assyriologiques brèves et utilitaires* (Paris)
NB	Neo-Babylonian
NCBT	Signature of tablets in the Newell Collection of Babylonian Tablets, Yale University
OB	Old Babylonian
OBO	*Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis*
OBTI	S. Greengus, *Old Babylonian Tablets from Ishchali and Vicinity* (Istanbul 1979)
OECT	*Oxford Editions of Cuneiform Texts* (Oxford)
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford)
OIP	*Oriental Institute Publications* (Chicago)
OLP	*Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* (Leuven)
OUP	Oxford University Press
OrAnt	*Oriens Antiquus* (Rome)
Or NS	*Orientalia Nova Series* (Rome)
PAPS	*Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* (Philadelphia)
PBS	*Publications of the Babylonian Section of the University Museum, Philadelphia.* (Philadelphia)
PRAK	*Premières recherches archéologiques à Kich* [also *Kich*]
PRU	*Le palais royal d'Ugarit*
PSD	*Philadelphia Sumerian Dictionary* (Philadelphia)
PKG	*Propyläen Kunstgeschichte* (Berlin)
RA	*Revue d'Assyriologie* (Paris)
RAcc	F. Thureau-Dangin, *Rituels accadiens* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France 1921 [Reprint 1975])
RIMA	*The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia. Assyrian Periods* (University of Toronto Press 1991-)
RO	*Res Orientales* (Leuven)
ROr	*Rocznik Orientalistyczny* (Warsaw)
RlA	*Reallexikon der Assyriologie und vorderasiatischen Archäologie* (Berlin and New York)
SAA	*State Archives from Assyria* (Helsinki)

SAAS	*State Archives from Assyria. Studies* (Helsinki)
SANE	*Sources from the Ancient Near East*
SB	Standard Babylonian
SBH	G.R. Reisner, *Sumerische und babylonische Hymnen nach Thontafeln griechischer Zeit*. Mittheilungen aus den orientalischen Sammlungen **10** (Berlin: W. Spemann 1896)
SbTU	*Spätbabylonische Texte aus Uruk* (Mainz)
SCS	H. Frankfort, *Stratified Cylinder Seals from the Diyala Region*. OIP **72** (Chicago UP 1955)
Sec	Section
SGL	*Sumerische Götterlieder* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter 1959–1960)
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
SP	Sumerian Proverb Collections (with number)
SRT	E. Chiera, *Sumerian Religious Texts* (Upland, PA 1924)
SS	*Studi semitici* (Roma)
StOr	*Studia Orientalia* (Helsinki)
STVC	E. Chiera, *Sumerian Texts of Various Contents*. OIP **16** (University of Chicago Press 1934)
Studies Artzi	J. Klein et.al. (eds.), *Bar-Ilan Studies in Assyriology dedicated to Pinhas Artzi* (Bar-Ilan UP 1990)
Studies Birot	J.-M. Durand et.al. (eds.), *Miscellanea Babyloniaca. Mélanges offerts à Maurice Birot* (Paris: Recherches sur lescivilisations 1985)
Studies Finkelstein	M. de J. Ellis (ed.), *Essays on the Ancient Near East in Memory of Jacob Joel Finkelstein*. Memories of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences **19** (Hamden, CT: Archon Books 1977)
Studies Hallo	Mark e. Cohen et.al. (eds.), *The Tablet and the Scroll. Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William W. Hallo* (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press 1993)
Studies Iwry	A. Kort et. al. (eds.), *Biblical and Related Studies presented to Samuel Iwry* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns 1985)
Studies Jacobsen	S.J. Lieberman (ed.), *Sumerological Studies in Honor of Thorkild Jacobsen*. AS **20** (University of Chicago Press 1974)
Studies Kraus	G. van Driel et al. (eds.), *Zikir šumim. Assyriological Studies presented to F.R. Kraus* (Leiden: Brill 1982)
Studies Landsberger	M. Civil et.al. (eds.), *Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger on his seventy-fifth Birthday*. AS **16** (University of Chicago Press 1965)
Studies Leslau	S. Segert et.al. (eds.), *Ethiopian Studies dedicated to Wolf Leslau on the occasion of his seventy-fifth Birthday* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 1983)
Studies Mikasa	M. Mori et.al. (eds.), *Near Eastern Studies dedicated to H.I.H. Prince Takahito Mikasa on the occasion of the seventy-fifth Birthday* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 1991)
Studies Moran	T. Abusch et.al. (eds.), *Lingering over Words. Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William L. Moran* (Atlanta: Scholars Press 1990)

Studies Özguç	Kutlu Emre et.al. (eds.), *Anatolia and the Ancient Near East. Studies in Honor of Tahsin Özgüç.* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi 1989)
Studies Reiner	F. Rochberg-Halton (ed.), *Language, Literature and History: Philological and Historical Studies presented to Erica Reiner*: AOS **67** (New Haven 1987)
Studies Sachs	E. Leichty et.al. (eds.), *A Scientific Humanist. Studies in Memory of Abraham Sachs* (Philadelphia: University Museum 1985)
Studies Sjöberg	H. Behrens et.al. (eds.), *DUMU-E_2-DUB-BA-A. Studies in Honor of Åke W. Sjöberg* (Philadelphia: University Museum 1989)
Studies Talmon	M. Fishbane et.al. (eds.), *Sha'arei Talmon. Studies in the Bible, Qumran and the Ancient Near East presented to Shemaryahu Talmon* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns 1992)
TAS	*Inscriptions from Tell Abū Ṣalābīkh* [= *OIP* **99**]
TCL	*Textes cunéiformes du Louvre* (Paris)
TCS	*Texts from Cuneiform Sources* (Locust Valley, NY)
TH	Temple Hymn
TIM	*Texts in the Iraq Museum* (Wiesbaden)
TMH NF	*Texte und Materialien der Frau Professor Hilprecht Sammlung vorderasiatischer Altertümer im Eigentum der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität. Jena, Neue Folge* (Berlin)
UAVA	*Untersuchungen zur Assyriologie und vorderasiatischen Archäologie* (Berlin)
UE	*Ur Excavations* (London)
UET	*Ur Excavations: Texts* (London)
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen* (Kevelaer etc.)
VAB	*Vorderasiatische Bibliothek* (Leipzig)
VAS	*Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler* (Berlin [also VS])
VAT	*Signature of tablets in the Berlin collection.*
VO	*Vicino Oriente* (Firenze)
VS	*Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler* (Berlin [also VAS])
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
WO	*Die Welt des Orients* (Göttingen)
WVDOG	*Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* (Leipzig)
WZKM	*Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* (Vienna)
YBC	Signature of tablets in the Yale Babylonian collection
YBT	*Yale Babylonian Texts* (New Haven etc.)
YOS	*Yale Oriental Series* (New Haven etc.)
ZA	*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* (Berlin)
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* (Berlin)
ZDMG	*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft (Berlin)*

LITERARY ASPECTS OF SUMERIAN AND AKKADIAN PROVERBS

Bendt Alster

The reason for introducing proverbs as an aspect of a symposium dealing with literary language is the particular position held by ancient proverbs as a type of phraseology that relates to both spoken language and literary tradition. For dead languages, such as Sumerian and Akkadian, in which – at least as far as Sumerian goes – literary style is better attested than spoken language, one might ask whether proverbs could throw some light on the spoken language and its relations to the "high" style of literature.

Ancient proverbs have become known to us almost exclusively because they became an element of the classical literary heritage of their respective cultures.[1] In the case of Mesopotamia they were collected by literates, used for scribal exercises, incorporated in didactic poems, such as *Šuruppak's Instructions*, and presumably used in a wider sense for the instruction of pupils, and they were quoted in literary compositions to highlight climactic points. Nobody will deny that, apart from serving as models for scribal exercises, the purpose intended in accumulating the sayings was to provide the pupils with a stock of beautifully shaped rhetorical phrases that could be used in the school "dialogues", in which rhetorical techniques were undoubtedly practised.[2] Furthermore, it is reasonable to assume that the proverbs were used for instruction in a wider sense, *viz.* to implant a specific attitude in the minds of the pupils.

Although many people think that proverbs current in their own language or dialect are indicative of a specific cultural heritage which expresses their own particular mental attitude, proverbs are in fact extremely international, and many proverbs have spread in translated forms. Yet, as shown by Archer Taylor, the founder of modern proverb scholarship, proverbs stand apart from the diction created by literates, in that fundamentally *proverbs belong to the spoken language*.[3] Proverbs were not coined by academics, and they do not express learned philosophical ideas. On the contrary, the origin of most proverbs is to be found in the speech of ordinary people.

Basically, Archer Taylor discussed three aspects of proverbs, their *origins*, their *content*, and their *style*. In addition he devoted a chapter to what he called *proverbial*

[1] See Mieder 1978 for an international bibliography listing over 1100 studies in the use of proverbs and proverbial expressions in the literature of most of the world's linguistic areas. Mieder's annotated bibliography of international proverb scholarship (Mieder 1982), with two supplementary volumes (Mieder 1990 and 1993), is updated annually in *Proverbium*. (Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship), edited by Wolfgang Mieder at The University of Vermont. This succeeds the earlier series of *Proverbium*, edited by Matti Kuusi and Archer Taylor (25 issues, Helsinki 1965–1975).

[2] Rhetorical techniques were first discussed by Vanstiphout 1984: 249.

[3] Taylor is to be credited with the recognition that "Naturally such tradition draws its material from the interests and the world of the common man. There is little or no question of 'gesunkenes Kulturgut,' intellectual materials which were shaped in higher social circles and have descended from them to lower ones. Possibly the very fashion of proverbs as a manner of expression has descended this way; but certainly most proverbs actually current in oral tradition have been coined by the folk, whatever the ultimate models may have been" (Taylor 1931: 12–13).

phrases. These share all the normal characteristics of proverbs, except that they do not appear in a fixed syntactical form.

This is not a suitable place for a lengthy discussion of the definition of proverbs.[4] What is recognized here as a proverb is a saying in full sentence form, once current among a group of speakers. It must conform to some of the following stylistic criteria: straightforward syntax, categorical statements with no conditions, exceptions or modifications, frequent use of contrasting antithetic pairs (such as "good" and "bad"), and conciseness of expression. Fundamentally, a proverb is here considered to be an anonymous miniature piece of verbal art, used rhetorically to highlight an argument relating to human behaviour.[5] It is the recognizability of the saying, often combined with the linguistic delight involved in manipulating figurative speech, metaphors,[6] and humourously exaggerated categorical statements,[7] that gives the proverb its essential character. The precise meaning of a proverb depends on its application in a specific context;[8] the successful application of the proverb depends on its recognition as such by an audience. As used in daily speech, proverbs are unsystematic; they may contradict each other; and their purpose is not primarily to give moral instruction, but rather to support an argument by referring to what is tacitly assumed to be commonly accepted knowledge, whether or not the point is moral. In addition, proverbs fulfill a function as entertainment and linguistic pleasure.

When trying to make a point in saying that many of the sayings included in the Sumerian and Akkadian proverb collections qualify as proverbs with regard to their *origins*, my argument is based on consideration of their imagery and social references. Their imagery is fundamentally tied to daily life experiences, rather than to theoretical thinking or imaginative literary creativity. A number of sayings evidently refers to scribal activities, but these do not form a predominant group. The abstract way of expression characteristic of the sententious wisdom literature coined by literates simply does not occur here. Many sayings found their origin among the working people,

---

[4] Taylor 1931: 3, "The definition of a proverb is too difficult to repay the undertaking .... An incommunicable quality tells us this sentence is proverbial and that one is not. Hence no definition will enable us to identify positively a sentence as proverbial. Those who do not speak a language can never recognize all its proverbs ... Let us be content with recognizing that a proverb is a saying current among the folk".

[5] It has been suggested that the so-called "weather proverbs", as well as sententious "rules" relating to the changing of the seasons, agricultural farming and animal husbandry, etc., should be kept apart from proverbs in the strict sense (Holbek and Kjaer 1969: 19).

[6] In antiquity the metaphor was considered an essential characteristic of proverbs. According to Aristoteles, *Rhetoric* III c. 11 p. 1413.14, the metaphor, that is, a transition from one species into another within the same genus, was essential to the proverb. In modern proverb scholarship most authors agree that there is no need to restrict the category "proverb" to those sayings which are used metaphorically.

[7] Camartin 1991: 137, "Für das Sprichwort scheinen mir zwei Charakteristiken entscheidend: einmal ist die Ebene des 'Es ist so' wichtiger als die 'So soll es sein'. Allenfalls wäre von einer Normativität zu sprechen, die sich aus dem Faktischen konstituiert. Dann aber kommt noch ein Sprachästhetisches Phänomen hinzu. Das Sprichwort zieht seine Wirksamkeit nicht aus der Tatsache, daß schon die Alten etwas behaupteten, was auch für uns noch beherzigenswert bleibt. Seine Besonderheit liegt in der stilisierten Gestalt solcher Erfahrungen, in ihrer Anschaulichkeit und Einprägsamkeit, oft sogar in ihrer Sprachspielerischen Verarbeitung zu einem Scherz ... Die Tatsache, daß Sprichwörter nicht Furcht und Schrecken, sondern meistens doch Schmunzeln verbreiten, ist nicht das schlechteste Indiz für ihren Weisheitsgehalt. Was sie sagen, ist oft gestisch so überdeutlich und pointiert, daß sich der Hörer der Überzogenheit bewußt wird und die Übertreibung mitbelächelt".

[8] One should always keep in mind that when an ancient proverb is known exclusively from a proverb collection, any attempt to discuss what it meant in actual use can be no more than a tentative guess.

and describe the harvest, animal husbandry, and the relations between the household owners and their staff.

As to *content* and *style*, what is it that the sayings attested in the Mesopotamian proverb collections have in common with proverbs from other linguistic areas? The message is plain and categorical with no modifications or conditions. Like all proverbs they are concise in form. Their syntax is straightforward and simple. The vocabulary is characterized by strong and clear oppositions: good and bad, poor and rich, lord and slave, hatred and love, black and white, ... What sets the proverbs apart as something linguistically recognizable is the preference for juxtaposing parallel or contrasting notions, rhyme, alliteration and other stylistic features that may play a role in creating or preserving expressions not normally used in daily speech. Furthermore, many proverbs are coined in a fixed form which can generate new proverbs in the same pattern.

To avoid misunderstanding, it should be stated clearly that accepting Archer Taylor's description of a proverb as "a saying current among the folk",[9] does not involve any intention to revive the concept of "the folk" as the creator of poetry and proverbial wisdom in the sense that flourished in the era of romanticism. What is meant in the present study by the "folk" are specific groups of speakers who, in fortunate circumstances, can be identified in the proverbs or sayings themselves.

In the spoken language proverbs appear with argumentative strength in situations arising in and from daily life. It is therefore no cause for wonder that proverbs may well contradict each other. The widespread notion that proverbs are expressions of "wisdom" is not a criterion for the identification of proverbs.[10] When proverbs are taken over by literates, "wisdom" may rather be a layer of meaning superimposed on the proverbs by the collectors who wanted to propagate the proverbs as the wisdom of wise old sages,[11] or as the wisdom of the "folk". It is true that what appears to be commonly accepted knowledge is a very outspoken element in proverbs. Yet, collectors of all periods have had difficulties in harmonizing the occasionally unpolished vocabulary or unmistakably cynical attitude of some proverbs with that befitting sagacious wisdom.[12]

Since we know little about the actual use of proverbs in the spoken languages of Ancient Mesopotamia, and since our exclusive access to Mesopotamian proverbs

---

[9] See note 4 above.

[10] In Assyriological literature, "proverbs" and "proverb collections" are traditionally listed under the somewhat vague heading "wisdom literature" (so Gordon 1960, Lambert 1960: 222–280). This is justified in the sense that in Ancient Near Eastern literature the didactic poems and the proverbial phrases associated with them are usually thought of as expressions of a practically oriented, secular attitude different from that of sacred, religious literature. Yet in ancient Mesopotamia insight in religious matters was considered to be a manifestation of wisdom as well. Wisdom was an essential attribute of the deities Enki and Marduk, and both Gilgameš and Adapa stand out as exemplary models of ancient sages.

[11] The first to deal with proverbs from a theoretical point of view was Aristotle. His proverb collection is lost, but some of his fundamental ideas have come down to us. He is quoted to have said that proverbs "are remains of old philosophy that has been utterly destroyed in the greatest catastrophies of mankind, but have been saved because of their conciseness and acuteness" (*Synesius Encom. Calvit.* p. 85, B; see Leutsch and Schneidewin 1839: *Praefatio* I f.). Cf. also note 6 above.

[12] J.M. Sailer's *Die Weisheit auf der Gasse* (1810), is a classic example of proverbs promulgated as what was thought to be expressions of the universal "wisdom" of the people. Such an opinion inevitably led to a need to "defend" the vulgarity embedded in some proverbs against the more realistic approach of the moralists.

is through the medium of written sources, one might argue that it is futile to try to decide whether or not the sayings known to us are genuine proverbs. There is undoubtedly some truth to this.[13] Yet, this study will make a case in pointing out that, if we consider the social references in particular of the Sumerian proverbs, we get a clear impression of a group of speakers among whom many of these sayings were at home. It is even possible to detect a clear point of view in many sayings, which appear to express the opinion of specific social groups. The speakers were involved in the management of big households, in which agricultural farming and animal husbandry formed the basis of social life.[14] Furthermore, this study intends to point out that there are certain characteristics that can be observed in the transmission of the sayings, such as variants and truncated forms, which indicate that they had a life in a spoken language independent of their existence in the scribal tradition. The daily activities of the scribal schools were obviously an aspect of the sayings, but this was not where the bulk of them came from.

* * *

At this point, five initial statements are appropriate.

1 Assuming that the Mesopotamian proverb collections contain proverbs does not imply that every phrase included in those collections is a proverb. Also small animal tales are present, and off-hand there is every reason to assume that other types of sententious sayings were occasionally included. Some of these may have come from literary sources; others may have been created by the scribes in the pattern of already existing proverbs.

2. Like most ancient proverb collections the Mesopotamian ones did not come into being with a purpose in mind comparable to that of a modern scholarly proverb collection. The origin of the sayings, whether they came from the spoken language or from literary sources, what they meant in the contexts in which they were normally used, etc., – such questions were not within the primary scope of interest of the scribes. The sayings may well have been collected with a didactic purpose in mind not intended by the original users of the proverbs, and different from the scope of interest of a modern student of the history of proverbs.[15]

3 Once created the Mesopotamian proverb collections became literary compositions

[13] One may sympathize with the label "Sumerian Rhetoric Collection", introduced in 1980 in a dissertation of the University of Pennsylvania by R.S. Falkowitz, to replace "proverb collection". The argument would be the fact that some ancient so-called proverb collections contain few genuine proverbs, and rather consist of sententious sayings of literary origin. This is true of the Greek collections of Zenobius, Diogenianus (ca. 130 A.D.), and other Greek sources (edited by Leutsch und Schneidewin 1839). Erasmus of Rotterdam's *Adagiorum Chiliades* (repeatedly enlarged from 1500 onwards) is a classic example of what would conform to the designation "rhetoric collection", rather than "proverb collection". Yet, as far as the Sumerian collections go, "Sumerian Rhetoric Collection" is a misnomer, because they actually contain genuine proverbs. Typologically they are much closer to the Byzantine Greek proverb collections, which are the oldest collections of genuine popular proverbs in Greek (Kurtz 1886; Crusius 1887; Krumbacher 1887 and 1893).

[14] Cf. previously Alster 1992, and Alster 1993: 5, and 9–10.

[15] The Byzantine Greek proverb collections are classic examples of the use of proverbs for a purpose different from that intended by the original users. This appears from comments accompanying the proverbs with indications of how they can be used in sermons (cf. note 13 above).

in their own right. The scribes did not aim at providing exhaustive documentation for all the proverbs in current use in any linguistic environment at any given time. The large proverb collections were copied, and excerpts were made from them just as from any other literary composition. How the sayings included in the collections related to proverbs that may have been in current use by contemporary speakers was not an issue for the scribes. Such living proverbs may of course have influenced the scribal transmission, but the scribes were basically interested in transmitting what was already there, not in updating it.

4 A number of proverbs not included in the proverb collections can be found in Sumerian and Akkadian literary compositions as well as in Akkadian royal correspondence. Some literary compositions cite proverbs, some of which were, and some of which were not, included in the proverb collections. *Šuruppak's Instructions* is the outstanding example of a composition containing a number of proverbs not found in the proverb collections. The Sumerian school dialogues make frequent use of proverbs, and in some of the Sumerian epics and a few hymns proverbs occur sporadically.[16]

5 A number of lexical features typical of the Sumerian language, combined with the predominance of parallelism characteristic of Sumerian poetry, favours the creation of a poetic diction which automatically approaches the style of proverbs. Especially the limited number of primary nouns and verbs, the large number of compound nouns and composite phrasal verbs, as well as the general tendency to structure poems in parallel or antithetic units, contribute to this phenomenon.[17] The ambiguous and often figurative notions conveyed by composite lexemes is an important factor.[18] The very structure of the lexicon of the *Sumerian* language had a generative quality favouring the creation of proverbs in a way which can hardly be said to be typical of the *Akkadian* language. Especially in the school dialogues it is sometimes extremely hard for the modern reader to distinguish those phrases which may be genuine proverbs from those only looking like them.

* * *

[16] Most of the known Akkadian examples are listed by Lambert 1960: 280–282 (*ABL* 614, rev. 8–9, mentioned pp. 97 and 315, is related to *Counsels of Wisdom* p. 104, lines 143–147). Cf. Finet 1974; Moran 1978; Alster 1979; Alster 1989; also notes 104–106 below. A complete list of Sumerian examples has yet to be made. For the time being the discussion by Hallo 1990 is very helpful. A remarkable case of a quoted proverb can now be recognized in *Dumuzi's Dream* 121: šu-ni ^{giš}banšur-ra eme-ni é-gal-la, "his hand on the table, his tongue in the palace", presumably said of a flattering person who abuses his connections to the palace. This occurs now as *SP* **22** viii 6–7 (identical text). As in this case, what makes a proverb recognizable when cited in a poem is the "apparent incongruity of the epigrammatic saying in its narrative context" (Hallo 1990: 213).

[17] See *excursus* below.

[18] The fact that Akkadian translations provide the basis for our knowledge of the Sumerian language should not make us overlook that the aesthetic properties of the two languages are very different. Many of the specific imaginative allusions of Sumerian composite lexemes are lost when translated into Akkadian. An example: when a Sumerian love song uses the term ul gùr, it means "blossom bearer". The Akkadian equivalent of ul, *ulṣu*, "joy", does not convey the same notion. On the other hand, in Akkadian poetry sound patterning appears to be much more important.

Apart from what can be surmised from the proverb collections themselves,[19] a hint about what the Mesopotamians understood as being proverbs can be found in the designations sometimes accompanying proverbs quoted in Akkadian texts.[20] These are: *assurri kīma têltim ullūtim ša ummāmi*, "Just like the old saying that goes ..."[21]; *ina têlti ša pī nišī*^{meš} *šakin umma*, "It is stated in a proverbial saying that";[22] *ina têltimma ša pī šakin umma*, "it is stated even in a proverbial saying that";[23] *kī pī têlti*, "like the proverbial saying".[24] That a saying in another language could likewise be recognized as a proverb appears from "a saying (*têltum*) of the Hittites".[25] It is thus clear that the oral character of all those sayings which we call proverbs (*têltum*) was recognized.[26]

The Sumerian particle -e-še is used in the sense "as they say", and can accompany a proverb cited in a literary context.[27] However, this is not an unambiguous mark of a proverb, because -e-še is also used simply to denote quoted speech. Both functions appear in the proverb collections themselves.[28] The dual function shows that the oral character of proverbs was recognized. A Sumerian term, i-bi-lu, corresponding

---

[19] No theoretical discussion of literary terms is found in Akkadian and Sumerian texts. Aristotle is to be credited with the first theoretical discussion of the nature of proverbs (see notes 6 and 11 above). It is not by coincidence that no such attempt appears to have been made in Ancient Mesopotamia. The fact reflects the fundamental absense of abstract theoretical formulation in Mesopotamian culture. One may claim that an underlying analytical approach can be decoded in the lexical and grammatical series, where some grammatical terms were used, but linguistic analysis and classification unquestionably began with the Greek sophists in the fifth century BCE. The total absence of abstract linguistic formulation in Mesopotamian culture is put in striking relief by the Sanskrit grammar of Pānini, which anticipates the methodology of modern comparative linguistics. A different opinion is held by those who seek to "save" the Mesopotamians by arguing that they were as capable of abstract analysis as the Greeks, and that the only difference is the indirect way in which this comes to light. According to P. Michałowski (Michałowski 1990: 387–88), the Mesopotamian world was not devoid of reflexive analysis, the only difference being that it comes to light in a narrative technique with which it is expressed, not in a metalanguage. He compared this to the homonymic and synonymic word plays which he very aptly showed are apparent as a compositional principle in *Enūma eliš*. However, these should rather be compared to the word plays frequently found in Genesis, in Shakespeare's works, and in Sumerian mythological compositions as well, to mention a few examples. Michałowski also pointed to the principles of organization in some lexical series (*Nabnītu, Erimhuš*, and *Antagal*). He sees metonymic principles as decisive when one section follows another in the Akkadian translation columns. M. Roth's exposition (*MSL* **17**, 135–142) in my opinion clearly indicates that analytical linguistic principles in any modern sense do not come to light there.

[20] Cf. the examples cited by Lambert 1960: 280–282. Cf. also note 16 above, and notes 104–106 below.

[21] *ARM* **1** 5: 10. Cf. *ARM* **10** 150: 8: *kīma ša têltim ša*.

[22] R.F. Harper, *ABL* 403: 4–15. "Proverbial", literal translation: "of people's mouths".

[23] R.F. Harper, *ABL* 403: 13–14. "Proverbial", literal translation: "of mouth".

[24] R.F. Harper, *ABL* 1411: 12. "Proverbial", literal translation: "the mouth of the saying".

[25] *Ugaritica* **5**, 108, No. 35, line 5: *têltum ša amīlī*^{meš} ^{mat}*ḫatti*, in a letter from the king of Karkemiš to a king of Ugarit.

[26] *têltum* is also used in in the lexical lists in the sense "syllabic writing", or "phonetic value", cf. *AHw* s.v., and *MSL* **9**, 145. Hallo 1990: 207, note 34, also points to the expressions *pû nišī* (cf. note 22 above), and *pû mātim*, "proverb, proverbial usage". Cf. *Codex Hammurapi*, Prologue v 20–22: *kittam u mīšaram ina pī mātim aškun*, "I made justice and righteousness proverbial in the country".

[27] The proverb cited in *Gilgameš and Agga* 25–28 is followed by the ending -e-še. This occurs as *SP* 3.1, without -e-še.

[28] Many examples of -e-še denoting quoted speech occur in *Proverb Collections* **5**, **8**, and **13**. -e-še is also used to indicate the quoted speech included in a Wellerism, e.g. *SP* 5.39 (cf. p.10). Some examples of -e-še denoting "proverb" are *SP* 2.134 (cf. note 39), and *SP* 2.126 = *SP* 11.131, cf. *SP* 4.56. An interesting case is *SP* 11.150: ezem-ma-kam dam na-an-du$_{12}$-du$_{12}$-un-e-še, "do not choose a wife during a festival, as they say". This is also quoted as *Šuruppak's Instructions* 213 (208), but there -e-še is omitted: ezem-ma-kam dam na-an-du$_{12}$-du$_{12}$-e.

to *têltum*, is only attested in lexical texts,[29] with a single exception, i-bi-lu a-da-lu, where, however, the meaning is "riddle" rather than proverb.[30]

When in 1959 his edition of *Sumerian Proverb Collections One and Two* was first published, Gordon was not in doubt as to the true nature of his sources. This appears from the subtitle he very aptly gave his book, "Glimpses of Everyday life in Ancient Mesopotamia". Among international proverb scholars there seemed to be no doubt that the Sumerian proverb collections actually contain proverbs.[31] The fundamental problem for students of these collections is that in most cases we know nothing about the actual use of the sayings in daily speech; so we lack the most important criterion for classifying them as proverbs. It has been stated with regard to European proverb collections that, since the sayings were presented as proverbs, they must have been accepted as such by the collectors; therefore it is a legitimate working hypothesis to regard them as proverbs.

The following samples are chosen to illustrate and elaborate some of the statements just made.[32]

Imagery and social setting

– *SP* 3.26; *SP* 19 Sec. C 2; *SP* 24.9:[33] "When the sun is setting outside, and you cannot see hand in front of you, come in!"[34]

What creates the proverb in this case is the characteristic categorical form of the

---

[29] *Izi* V 31 ff: i-bi-lu = *ḫittu, têltu* ; i-bi-lu-dug$_4$ = *ḫiādu* ; i-bi-lu-ma-da-lu = *têlta têlu* (*MSL* **13**, 161: 32–34). W.G. Lambert, *AfO* **19** (1959–60) 58, note on line 129, compared the verb *ḫiādu*, "to make an enigmatic utterance" and the noun *ḫittu* with Hebrew *ḥîdah*, "riddle", and *ḥûd* (denominalized verb). Held 1985: 93–96, pointed out that *têltum* is equivalent of Hebrew *mašal*, and *ḫittum* of Hebrew *ḥīdah*, cf. the pair *mašal* and *ḥīdah*, "proverb and riddle", attested five times in Biblical Hebrew (Ezek 17: 2; Hab 2: 6; Ps 49: 5; 78:2; Prov 1:6). According to Hallo 1990: 207, n. 34, one of the two Sumerian equivalents of *têltum*, i-bi-lu-(dug$_4$-ga), means "proverb", whereas the other, ka-ka-si-ga, means "pronunciation, vernacular, substrate language(?)". The latter is only attested in lexical texts, and, since its literal translation is "that which is put in the mouth", one might actually surmise that it is a good Sumerian expression for "proverb".

[30] *UET 6.2* 345, see Civil, 1987: 24, with an addition in *NABU* 1988, p. 29, No. 43, suggested the translation "I will tell a riddle".

[31] In 1962, A. Taylor commented on Gordon's edition of *Sumerian Proverb Collections One and Two* as follows: (the book) "opens the way to historical and comparative studies of a much more general scope than we have been able to attempt before" (Taylor 1962: vi).

[32] In what follows, *SP* (followed by number) stands for *Sumerian Proverb Collections*. The numbers assigned to the collections are those suggested by Gordon 1960: 125–130, with a few exceptions. *SP* 20 is here considered to be the continuation of *SP* 8, as already suggested by Gordon 1960: 151. Gordon's collection 22 has been replaced by an unnumbered tablet in the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, used here with the kind permission of Prof. J.A. Brinkman, curator of the tablet collection of the Oriental Institute, and the kind help of Prof. M. Civil. *SP* 25 is *OECT* **5**: 35 (Ashmolean Museum). *SP* 26 is *CT* **58**: 69 (BM 80001). *SP* 27 is CBS 8283, with the duplicates N 4974 and *CT* **58**: 67 B. *SP* 28 is *UET* **6.2** 336. Unpublished tablets in the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania are cited with the kind permission of Prof. Å. Sjöberg, and those in the Yale Collection with the kind permission of Prof. W.W. Hallo, curators of the respective collections. In the translated sections, words in parentheses are not in the original text, but were added by the translator for the sake of clarity. Full documentation with all variants pertaining to the following samples will appear in my forthcoming monograph *The Proverbs of Sumer* which will contain complete editions of all Sumerian proverbs.

[33] ^{d}utu bar-ra ḫé-en-ni-šú / nĺ-zu šu nu-zu-àm ku$_4$-ni-ib. For the first verbal phrase the following variants are attested: ḫé-NE-[ni/ib]-šú; ḫé-en-[ni(?)-šú]; ḫé-en-ni-šú; ḫé-e[n-n]e-[ni(?)-šú].

[34] Literal translation: "and you yourself cannot recognize a hand". Cf. the English expression "I could not see a hand in front of me". This is also used in Danish "(man kan ikke) se en hånd for sig". This makes the alternative translation "you yourself come in unnoticed" less convincing. Gordon 1959: 59, n.1. suggested the meaning "unawares" for šu-nu-zu-a, and this fits the references quoted by him.

statement, expressed as a direct imperative, as well as the pointed linguistic formulation of the notion that utter darkness makes a hand invisible. The scene is unquestionably that of daily life. What "wisdom" is embedded here is a question of practical precaution, with no moral issues involved. It is the linguistic elegance with which the idea is phrased that makes the proverb a miniature piece of verbal art. As to the use of this particular proverb, a safe guess would be that it was addressed to someone doing a job outside, instructing him to come in when darkness makes conditions unsuitable outside. Yet, in theory, one could consider other possibilities. If this were addressed, say, by a thief to another thief, or by a girl to a lover, the implication would be just the opposite, namely that darkness creates the condition suitable for doing something inside. Such fundamental ambiguity dictates the ideal condition for the study of proverbs. The situation in any case would be one in which both speaker and hearer, as well as the actual circumstances in which it was spoken, are known. It is the lack of such crucial information that makes the study of ancient proverbs so challenging.

The following samples further illustrate how the social references of the Sumerian proverbs reflect situations arising from daily life:

– *SP* 1.51:[35] "His bread is finished."

Off-hand it is difficult to see how this could be a proverb. Yet, the implication becomes clear in light of *SP* 12 Sec. D 3:[36] "The man whose water-skin is not firmly tightened will make his friend angry." One may assume that the situation is that of a group of men working together in the fields, or possibly travelling together. If one man did not bring sufficient food with him, or did not secure his water supply, he would put pressure on his comrades to make them share their food or water with him, and so make himself unpopular. This explains why the expression "his food is finished" could become proverbial. The setting is that of the working people.

The following two entries similarly illustrate how situations arising in daily life activities, such as baking, provided the imagery of proverbs.

– *SP* 1.52; *SP* 26 rev. i 4:[37] "There is no baked cake in the middle of the dough."

– *SP* 1.53; *SP* 26 rev. i 5:[38] "My heart instigated me to bake two loaves out of a half. My hand could not even take them out of the oven."

Harvesting, animal husbandry, and the uncertainties involved in these are very much in the centre of the Sumerian proverbs. See the following entries:

– *SP* 2.134:[39] "He who cuts his hair gets more and more hair, and he who gleans barley gets more and more grain, as they say".

– *SP* 3.162:[40] "May an intelligent farmer live with you in the house."

– *SP* 3.74:[41] "The tenant established a household. Ploughing established a field."

– *SP* 3.23; *SP* 22 viii 41–42; *UET* **6.2** 265: 2–5; *TIM* **9**, 18 obv. 8–9:[42] "He who

---

35 ninda in-na-til-la-àm.

36 lú ^{kuš}a-gá-lá(-ni) nu-kéš-da ku-li-ni-da šà bí-in-dab$_5$.

37 ^{ninda}gúg-du$_6$ šà níg-sila$_5$-gá in-nu-ù.

38 ninda min sa$_9$-ta-àm du$_6$-ù-dè šà-mu àm-tùm-dè / šu-mu im-šu-rin-na-ta nu-ub-ta-è-dè-en.

39 sag sar-ra síg ba-an-tuku-tuku / ù lú še ri-ri-ga ^{d}ezinu ba-an-diri-diri-e-še

40 engar igi-gál-la é-a ḫu-mu-e-da-an-ti

41 ga-an-tuš-e é ba-an-gub / ur$_{11}$-ru-e a-šà ba-ab-gub

42 kù tuku šà an-húl še tuku ur$_5$ an-sa$_6$ / níg úr-limmu$_2$ tuku-e ù nu-un-ši-ku-ku.

has money is happy, he who has grain feels comfortable, but he who has live-stock cannot sleep."

The fear of starvation and hunger was very real and lies in the background of a number of proverbs. See the following two entries:
– *SP* 1.126; *SP* 24.42:[43] "A plant sweet like a husband does not grow in the steppe."
– *SP* 19 Sec. C 6; *SP* 22 i 20–21; *UET* **6.2** 284:[44] "(Let he who is) sweeter than a spouse, (let he who is) sweeter than a mother (variant: child), let Ezinu-Kusu (i.e., Grain) dwell with you in the house."

Conservatism of social outlook
Proverbs were understood by the ancients as expressions of social rules that had ages of authority behind them. It is this feature of proverbs that caused literates to promulgate the collections they had made of proverbs as the wisdom of the old sages – such as Šuruppak, father of Ziusudra, the hero of the flood story. However, when seen from the point of view of social history, one will appreciate the fact that, in reality, proverbs hardly ever express innovative thoughts or revolutionary ideas aiming at improving the living conditions of mankind. On the contrary, proverbs are extremely conservative. The lesson they teach aims at keeping things as they are. Proverbs do not raise questions regarding the validity of the existing social order. Those who belong to the bottom of the social scale are told to stay there. It is likewise characteristic that no compassion is expressed towards the underprivileged. The weak have to help themselves. Cf. *SP* 15 Sec. B 6;[45] *UET* **6.2** 305;[46] and *UET* **6.2** 330:[47] "Do not give a club for the halt man's arm! Let Enlil help him!"

Satirical proverbs
What might be called repressive social instruction is a characteristic feature of the Sumerian proverbs. Instead of explicit advice, the Sumerian proverbs often describe the behaviour of the fool as an example of bad conduct. A number of proverbs belonging to this group are cited in the disputations. By ridiculing the ludicrous behaviour of the opponent, these proverbs served in an indirect way to keep social norms on what was perceived to be the right track.

Doing the wrong thing at the wrong moment is a constantly recurring theme. Cf. *SP* 2.20; *SP* 26 Sec. D 4:[48] "He does not plough the field in winter. At the time of the harvest he applies his hand to carding". See also *SP* 7.29:[49] "He stretches linen out for the flea, he fills the basket for the dust-fly", which is applied to one of the antagonists in *Dialogue 1*, 14–15.[50]

---

[43] ú dam-gim zé-ba edin-na nu-un-mú
[44] ú dam-da zé-eb / ú ama(variant dumu)-da zé-eb / ^{d}ezinu ^{d}kù-sù é-a ḫé-me-da-an-ti
[45] an(sic!) ba-za ^{urudu}šukur na-nam(so copy; read na-sum or similar) / ^{d}en-líl á-daḫ-a-ni-im.
[46] á ba-(erasure)-[za] / ^{giš}tukul an-na-[sum] / ^{d}en-líl á-daḫ-ni-[im].
[47] á ba-za ^{giš}tukul na-sum / ^{d}en-líl-lá á-daḫ-ni.
[48] en-te-en-na-ka a-šà nu-ur$_{11}$-ru / u$_4$(?)-buru$_{14}$-a-ka šu-ni ga-ríg àm-dù-dù-e.
[49] *SP* 7.29, first part: [umun$_3$(UḪ)-e gada] ba-lá / [num-saḫar-ra] gi-KID-aš-rin [ba-e-si]. Cf. *BWL* 236 ii 8–10: [umun$_3$]-e gada ba-lá / [num]-saḫar-ra / [KID-aš-r]in-na ba-⌜x⌝ = *ana par-šá-'-i ki-tu-u ta-ri-is-s[u] ana la-am-ṣa-ti i-aš-rin-na ma-ḫi-si*, "Linen is stretched out for the flea. The basket is woven for the dust-fly".
[50] lú-im ùmun-e gada ba-an-lá / num-saḫar-ra KID-aš-rin-na ba-e-si.

A number of sayings describing the bad conduct of animals are presumably meant to be applied to humans. This is likely to have been the case with a saying such as *SP* 2.109:[51] "A sniffing dog entering all houses", in view of *Šuruppak's Instructions* 232 (227),[52] where the phrase, "she constantly enters all houses", is used of a specific type of woman.

Šuruppak's Instructions has some instances where an utterance is put in the mouth of a fool, whereby he uncovers his own folly.[53] In other cases the utterance is quoted with a brief comment, cf. the following examples: *SP* 2.96:[54] "(He who says) 'Let me flee' is followed by 'let me flee'." *SP* 2.161:[55] "'Let me go home', is what he prefers", which presumably relates to a person who shirks from work. *SP* 3.107:[56] "(To say:) 'I promise!' does not mean 'I promised!' (To say:) 'Something is finished' does not mean 'it is finished'. Things do not change." *SP* 3.147:[57] "It is characteristic of your harvesting, it is characteristic of your gleaning, that they say, 'he is gone, he is gone'."

The most outspoken form of a proverb containing quoted discourse is the "Wellerism",[58] that is, a proverb consisting of a short utterance combined with a description of the situation in which it is said, and normally the speaker is identified. Cf. *SP* 2.99:[59] "A lamentation priest hurled his son into the water (and said): 'Let the city grow like myself, let the people live like myself!'" As in this case, most of the Sumerian examples make the speaker reveal himself as self-conceited, pompous, haughty and unrealistic; so apart from the mere pleasure of presenting the joke, these proverbs also indirectly teach a social lesson.

Productive types

Some proverbs are structured in patterns that may generate new proverbs in the same pattern. Cf. the following examples.

– ED Proverbs 3:[60] "Like your mouth, like your vulva."[61]

– *SP* 2.137:[62] "Build like a [lord], walk like a slave! Build like a slave, walk like a lord!"

– Variant *SP* 19 Sec. B 3:[63] "Build like [a lord], live like a slave, Build like a slave, live like a lord".

– *Šuruppak's Instructions* 132–133:[64] "Collect like a slave girl, eat like a lady; Oh my son, to collect like a slave girl, to eat like a lady, thus shall it be indeed!"

---

[51] ur si-im-si-im é-é-a ku_4-ku_4.

[52] é-é-a i-in-ku_4-ku_4-ku_4.

[53] *Šuruppak's Instructions* 118–119 (/113–114); 116–117 (/121–122). Cf. previously Alster 1992: 7.

[54] ga-ab-kar-re ga-ba-kar-re an-ús.

[55] é-šè ga-gin-na sag ab-kal.

[56] níg ga-ti nu ga-ti níg ba-til nu ba-til níg nu-kúr-ra-àm.

[57] al-ur_4-ur_4-na-ka-nam / al-ri-ri-e-na-ka-nam / ba-an-gin ba-an-gin mu-ni-ib-bé-ne.

[58] Cf. previously Alster 1992: 7, with note 14. Cf. also note 28 above.

[59] gala-e dumu-ni a ḫa-ba-an-da-ra-ra / uru^{ki} mà-gim ḫé-dù un mà-e-gim ḫé-ti.

[60] ka-zu_5-gim gal_4-zu_5-gim.

[61] Cf. Alster, 1992: 6.

[62] [en]-gim dù sag-gim du / [sa]g-gim dù en-gim du.

[63] [en]-gim dù sag-gim ti / [s]ag-gim dù en-gim ti.

[64] $geme_2$-gim ri-ga-ab egi-gim gu_7-e / dumu-mu $geme_2$-gim ri egi-gim gu_7-a ur_5 ḫé-en-na-nam-ma-àm

Truncated and abbreviated proverbs

An observation that strongly suggests that the Sumerian proverbs do in fact belong to a living tradition of genuine proverbs is the presence of truncated proverbs, which only make sense to a person familiar with a more complete form of the saying.[65] These allusions clearly belong to the category of proverbial phrases. See the following examples:

– *SP* 2.71:[66] "Tell a lie, tell the truth, it will be counted as a lie." This saying also occurs in a truncated form, which presupposes knowledge of the complete form to make sense, in *SP* 7.89:[67] "Tell a lie, tell the truth."

Another set of examples appears by comparing the following entries:

– *SP* 3.157:[68] "The time passes, what did you gain?"

– *SP* 1.91:[69] "(If) the boat is sinking, (one should not too eagerly say), 'Let me throw the sacks overboard!' "

– *SP* 7.21:[70] "(If) the boat is sinking, (one should not too eagerly say:) 'Let me throw the sacks overboard!' (Because,) as the time passed, what did you gain? The boat floats, it did not sink."

Variant forms of proverbs

Variants can reflect different existing forms of a saying, or they may have been caused by reinterpretation by a scribe, or misunderstanding.

An interesting example is *SP* 2.120:[71] "How can the halt (ba-za) stand up?" The variant reading, *SP* 22 vii 28–30:[72] "How can the frog (bí-za-za) stand up, how can he sit down?" makes sense in itself. However, in view of quite a number of unusual variants in *SP* 22, one suspects that bí-za-za came into the text as a misunderstood ba-za, so that "the halt" was intended in both cases. Yet, the addition of the second part of the traditional pair gub // tuš, "to stand – to sit", "how can he sit down?" represents good phraseology.

An example of a variant caused by scribal error is *SP* 23 iii 7, where lú-lul-la, "the liar", represents the identical sign ka_5, of ka_5-a, "the fox", misinterpreted as lul.[73] In such a case the scribe obviously transmitted a saying not known to him from spoken language.

An intriguing problem is the occurrence of extended forms, where clusters of lines have been added to a saying that was already meaningful in its shorter form. In *SP* 3.7 one source adds "wealth comes close to the wind",[74] in front of "the *iterdum*-milk,

---

[65] Cf. the Early Dynastic examples observed by Alster 1992: 8–9.

[66] lul dug_4-ga-ab zi dug_4-ga-ab / lul ba-e-sé-ke.

[67] lul dug_4-ga-ab zi dug_4-ga-ab.

[68] u_4 mu-e-ši-zal a-na-àm šu mu-da(!)-t[i].

[69] ^{giš}ḫa-ba-su-su $bara_2$ ga-ba-ra-ab-ùr.

[70] má a-ba-su-su / $bara_2$ ga-ba-ra-ab-ùr / u_4 mu-da-zal / a-na me-e-ši-ti / ì-diri nu-su-su. Cf. *BWL* 274, BE unnumbered [...]-bi(?) / [...]-dug_4 / [... b]a-da-sù / [...] ⌜x⌝ bí-dug_4 / [... b]a-da-kud / [...] / [... bí]-dug_4 / [...] ⌜x⌝-è-šè / [...]-te = *eṭ-lum ú-ua$_x$ / iq-bi-ma / e-li-pa-šu iṭ-ṭe$_4$-bu / a-la-li iq-bi-ma / si-ka-an-šu it-te-eš-bi-ir / ú-ua$_x$ ù a-a-ru / iq-bi-ma / e-li-pa-šu a-na ki-ib-ri / iṭ-ṭe-ḫi.*

[71] ba-za a-na-àm gub-ba-b[i]. *PSD* B, p. 22, translates "how does a cripple stand up . . .?" Cf. Hallo 1969, Hallo 1990: 207, Alster 1992: 12 with note 15.

[72] bí-za-za a-na-àm gub-ba-ni a-na-àm tuš-a-ni.

[73] Cf. *SP* 2.62: ka_5-a-a. Cf. Alster 1988: 8.

[74] níg-gur_{11} líl-šè ba-an-te.

although it is no river mud, cleaves the ground."[75] These may rather be understood as separate entries not directly related to each other.

In *SP* 3.8, the same source adds "to serve beer with unwashed hands",[76] in front of "to spit without trampling upon it, to sneeze without covering it up with dust, to kiss with the tongue at midday without providing shade, are abominations to Utu."[77] In *SP* 3.15, the full form of the proverb reads: "To eat modestly does not kill a man, but gluttony is lethal. To eat a little is to live splendidly. When you walk around, put your feet on the ground!"[78] In some sources either the first or the second line is omitted. Such additions are likely to reflect variations in a living tradition of spoken proverbs.[79]

Explanatory additions

Occasionally phrases seem to have been added by the scribes as explanations, possibly addressed to pupils. An example is *SP* 2.28, where the main source reads: "Moving about lends strength to poverty."[80] Two sources, however, add the following line: "He who knows how to move about is stronger, he lives longer than the settled man."[81] The addition does not sound like a proverb, but much more like an intrusive gloss explaining one.

Clusters of proverbs

A fundamental difficulty involved in the study of ancient proverbs is that those proverbs which are known exclusively from the collections are devoid of context. Exceptions are cases where clusters of sayings support an interpretation that points in a specific direction. Thus, *SP* 1.5:[82] "Let me not go through his gate!" does not suggest any specific clues in itself, but since in the preceding entry Ningišzida is the gate keeper of the nether world, (*SP* 1.4:[83] "Do not say to Ningišzida: 'Let me live!' "), it is clear that the gate referred to is that of the underworld.

---

[75] ga-ì-ti-ir-da gú-en-na nu-me-a / ki-in-dar mu-da-ab-tar.

[76] šu nu-luḫ-ḫa kaš ì-dé-a.

[77] uš$_7$(variant uš)-dug$_4$-ga gìr nu-sig$_{18}$-a / kiri$_4$-te-en-na saḫar nu-gi$_4$-a / eme-ak an-bar$_7$ an-dùl nu-gá-gá / níg-gig ^{d}utu-kam.

[78] tur gu$_7$-a lú nu-til-le / igi-tùm-lá sag-giš-ra-ra / tur-bi gu$_7$-a maḫ-bi ti-la / dib-dib-bé gin-na giri$_3$ ki-a sì-bí-ib. There is no evidence for the translation "Almosen" for igi-tùm-lá, as suggested by Cl. Wilcke, *ZA* **68** (1978) 220 ff. Cf. Alster 1993: 18, note 11.

[79] In *SP* 3.37, some sources add geme$_2$ ig DU-da, in front of: geme$_2$-é-gal-la za-ra dug$_4$-dug$_4$ / arad-é-gal-la ga-ti-ba gu$_7$-gu$_7$, "A palace-slave-girl is haughty, a palace-slave devours goodwill". The implication of the additional sentence is not clear. One might consider "A slave girl stands(?) at(?) the door", but grammar would then require ig-e gub-bu-da.

[80] The short text is represented by sources A and *UET* 6.2 260: 1–2: du-du nam-uku$_2$-ra á bí-ib-gar. Cf. *SP* 22 vii 31-32: du-du nam-gir$_5$-ra á-bi in-gál.

[81] The addition is included in sources D + S and 3N-T 924 f: lú du-du-zu in-kalag ugu lú-tuš-a nam-ti bí-ib-daḫ-e. Civil, 1985: 78, explained this as a reference to nomadism, and translated "le nomadisme a vaincu la pauvreté, celui qui sait mener une vie nomade est fort, il a plus de vie que le sédentaire".

[82] ká-na nam-mu-e-ni-dib-bé. Cf. *BWL* Pl. 66 (BM 38283), 10–11: ká-na nam-mu-ni-íb-dib-bé-en-zé-en-e-še = *ba-ab-šu e tu-uš-bi-a-ni-[in-ni-mi]*.

[83] ^{d}nin-giš-zi-da-ra ga-ti na-an-na-ab-bé-en. Cf. *BWL* Pl. 66: 8–9: ^{d}nin-giš-zi-da-ra ga-ti na-an-ab-bé-en = *a-na* ^{d}*nin-giš-z[i-da] bu-lu-uṭ a-a iq-q[a-bi]*.

Increasing focus on religion in the didactic literature

In didactic literature, we find over the millennia a tendency to abandon the proverbial type of phraseology so abundantly present in *Šuruppak's Instructions*, in favour of a sententious type of poetry, in which the religious and cultic aspects of life have a much greater role. Proverbs and proverbial phrases were generally paraphrased or rephrased with the result that their proverbial character was lost.[84]

In contrast to the proverbs of some cultures,[85] references to deities are rare in Sumerian proverbs. Moreover, the mention of deities does not necessarily imply a theological issue. Cf. *SP* 3.59; *SP* 25.3:[86] "The lord (i.e. the god An) decides in Uruk, but the lady of Eanna (i.e. the goddess Inanna) decides for him."

Existential problems

True proverbs rarely comment on existential issues relating to life and death. The closest one can get is a set of often quoted phrases: "Even the tallest man cannot reach to heaven, even the widest man cannot cover the earth."[87] Perhaps this is not so much an expression of pessimism, but rather a realistic comment on *la condition humaine*. A similar case of the way of thinking characteristic of the *Gilgameš Epic* can perhaps be found in the poorly preserved passage *SP* 25.5:[88] "Unpleasant days, their number is endless(?)."[89]

Abstract Formulation

Occasionally it is possible to detect the beginnings of a more sophisticated abstract level of expression in the Sumerian proverb collections. Examples are the programmatic phrases introducing Proverb Collection One,[90] "Who compares with Justice? It creates life. Should Wickedness exert itself, how will Utu (i.e., the god of Justice) succeed!" Here the semi-personified abstract notions, Justice and Wickedness, give an impression of literary style.

---

[84] Some examples are cited by Alster 1993: 14. The tendency becomes easily apparent by comparing *Šuruppak's Instructions* with the corresponding Akkadian precept poems (Lambert 1960: 96–117). An example is cited in note 106 below.

[85] Africa in particular.

[86] en-e unu^{ki}-ga nam ba-e-ku$_5$-dè / ⌜e⌝-ne-ra nin-é-an-na-ke$_4$ nam mu-un-na-ku$_5$-dè. Cf. Falkowitz 1980: 187, "the woman behind the man".

[87] *Gilgameš and Huwawa* 28–29: lú-sukud-da an-šè nu-mu-un-da-lá / lú-dagal-la kur-ra la-ba-an-šú-šú. Cf. Hallo 1990: 216, who, following J. Nougayrol, refers to Job 11: 8, "Higher than heaven – what can you do? Deeper than Sheol – what can you know?". The pair is quoted in the Sumerian compositions *Níg-nam nu-kal*, and in the *Poem of Early Rulers* 16–17 (with some variants; cf. note 89 below). Furthermore in the Old Babylonian *Gilgameš Epic* (III iv 3), and the neo-Assyrian *Dialogue between a Master and his Servant* (Lambert 1960: 149: 83–84). In the Sumerian proverb collections two slightly corrupt versions occur, *SP* 17 Sec. B 2: [suk]ud-dè an-na šu nu-um-[da-lá] / [daga]l-e ki-a nu-um-ma-an-íl-íl / [ka]a-ga ki-ná ní nu-mu-un-gíd-dè (continuation not quoted). *SP* 22 vi 38–40: sukud-du an-na šu nu-un-lá / dagal-e ki-in-du ⌜la⌝(?)-[ba]-an-šú-šú / [kala-g]a ki-ná n[í n]u-mu-un-gíd-dè (continuation omitted).

[88] *SP* 25.5: u$_4$ nu-dùg-ga šid-⌜bi⌝ [nu(?)]-⌜ti⌝. The continuation, nam-ti nam-úš-a diri-[...]-ga-mu-dè, is somehow related to *SP* 1.57: uku$_2$ nam-ti-bi nam-úš-da n[u(?)-ub(?)-diri(?)], "the poor, their lives are no [more valuable(?)] than death".

[89] One should take care not to overestimate the "philosophical" implications of such sayings. One may here compare the *Poem of Early Rulers*, which has turned out to be a drinking song in which the extreme brevity of happy days compared to those of grief are used as a pretext for drinking good beer (Alster 1990: 23).

[90] *SP* 1.1 = YBC 8713.1: níg-gi-na-da a-ba in-da-sá nam-ti ì-ù-tu. *SP* 1.2 = YBC 8713.1: níg-érim-e(variant -me-e) á-bi ḫé-íb-kúš-ù ^{d}utu me-da tùm.

The argumentative force of Proverbs

Most of the limited number of proverbs quoted in Sumerian and Akkadian literary compositions as well as in Akkadian royal correspondence illustrate the function of proverbs which consists in lending force to an argument.[91] When quoting a proverb, the speaker appeals to what is assumed to be a commonly accepted fund of knowledge. The listener is persuaded to accept an opinion which in this way appears to be authoritative. Especially when the proverb uses a metaphor, forcing the hearer to accept an apparently irreversible analogy, this appeals to the subconscious mind of the audience, and this is what makes the successful quotation of a proverb persuasive. One hardly notices that the proverb in question assumes its precise meaning at the same time by its being applied to that specific context, and that, in fact, the same proverb might have different meanings, depending on positive, negative, ironic evaluation, etc.

In its most radical form, this quality of proverbs is exploited in some cultures in lawsuits, where the final verdict depends on an appropriate quotation of a proverb. This practice is actually illustrated in the Sumerian Disputation of *Laḫar and Ašnan*,[92] where the final verdict comes as a result of the citation of the following proverb: "He who has silver, he who has lapis lazuli, he who has a cow, he who has a sheep, must wait in the gate of the man who has grain."[93]

Metaphorical proverbs

One of the most characteristic features of proverbs is the metaphorical use of a simple statement; this means a transferred level of meaning. This common priciple has been used as a criterion for the proverb proper, so that phrases (maxims, apophthegms, adages, etc.) not used metaphorically were not included in the category of proverbs *stricto sensu*. Yet, as already stated, there are good reasons for including both types of saying in the discussion of proverbs, and to use the designation proverb for both of them.[94] In particular in discussions of ancient proverbs, the exclusion of non-metaphorical proverbs would be unfortunate, since with a few fortunate exceptions, we have to rely mainly on guesswork if we want to discuss how a phrase could have been used metaphorically. One such exception is the folktale *The Old Man and the Young Girl.*

We there find a proverb quoted, "My black mountain has produced white gypsum."[95] The context clearly shows that the black mountain stands for the man's black

---

[91] Cf. notes 16, above, and 104–106, below.

[92] Alster and Vanstiphout 1987: 29–30, *Laḫar and Ašnan* 189–190. The text reads: lú kù-tuku lú za-tuku ⌜lú gud⌝ tuku lú udu-⌜tuku⌝ ká lú še-tuku-e dúr ḫé-[gá-gá] u_4 ḫé-ni-ib-zal-zal, "The man who possesses precious metal, or precious stones, or cattle, or sheep, shall take a seat in the gate of the man who has grain, and wait for him there".

[93] In other words, the man who has grain is superior, because he has the food that everyone needs to survive. The sources are *UET* **6.2** 263 and 266: kù tuku-e za-gìn tuku-e / gud tuku-e udu tuku-e / ⌜ká⌝ lú še tuku-ka u_4 mi-ni-ib-zal-zal-e.

[94] Cf. note 6 above.

[95] The relevant section reads as follows: (27:) [gá-e(?) space for two signs here] ⌜šul⌝(?) dingir-mu usu-mu ^{d}lama-mu / (28:) nam-guruš-mu anše-kar-ra-gim ḫáš-gá ba-e-díb / (29:) ḫur-sag gi_6-mu níg-babbar ba-an-mú / (30:) ama-mu tir-ta lú mu-e-ši-in-gi_4 šu-dab_5-ba ba-an-sum-m[u] (Ni 4305: ama-mu-šè(? or: ur?) ^{giš}tir-[ta . . .] / šu-dab_5 mu-[. . .]) / (31:) ^{d}nin-kilim níg-ḫáb-ba gu_7-gu_7-mu kaš (or, rather: dug?) ì-nun-na-šè gú nu-mu-da-l[á-a] / (32:) zú-mu níg-kala-ga ì-ur_5-ra níg-kala-ge nu-ur_5-re / (33:) kàš-mu iz-zi

hair, which has become white in his old age.[96]

Another type of metaphor, in which the transferred level of meaning is contained in the proverb itself, occurs rarely in the Sumerian proverb collections. An example is *SP* 1.53 A:[97] "Bread is the boat, and water is the oar", i.e., water is equally important in relation to bread, as an oar in relation to a boat.

Differences between Sumerian and Akkadian proverbs

Most of the relatively few known examples of Akkadian proverbs cited in context are convincing examples of fluent speech, but the Sumerian proverbs tend to be stiffer, stylized as they are in parallel units and ambiguous compound lexemes. Compare the following two examples:

– *Šuruppak's Instructions* 187–188 (/192–193):[98] "When houses are destroyed, a house will be destroyed with them. When men are 'stirred', a man will be 'stirred' with them." This is approximately synonymous with *ARM* **10**, 150: 9–11:[99] "When a reed is devoured by fire, its 'girlfriend' is attentive."

Without exaggerating the importance of what are, after all, no more than a few attestations, one does gather the impression of a general difference in the style between the Sumerian proverbs and those in Akkadian. One reason is that many Sumerian compound lexemes, such as níg–tuku, "to possess something", or: "to be rich", opposed to níg–nu-tuku, "not to have somehing", or: "to be poor", appealed to proverb-making in a way different from the equivalent Akkadian pairs, such as *šarû*, "rich", and *lapnu*,

---

kala-ga ì-bùr (! U with an indistinct vertical through the top of the sign)-e ní-mu-ta ì-DU-zé-en / (34:) dumu-mu ì-ga-ra gu_7-gu_7-a níg-gu_7 nu-mu-na-sum-mu / (35:) ù $geme_2$-tur-mu a-ab-sa_{10}-e gal_5-lá-ḫul gig ba-ab-gar. Translation: (27:) "I (used to be) a warrior, but now my luck, my strength, my personal god, (28:) and my youthful vigour have left my loins like a runaway donkey. (29:) My black mountain has produced white gypsum. (30:) My mother turned a man from a forest toward me(?), he is giving me 'caught hands' (i.e., they are paralyzed?). (31:) My mongoose that used to eat strong-smelling things can no longer stretch its neck toward the jar(?) of good butter. (32:) My teeth that used chew strong things can no longer chew strong things. (33:) My urine that used to break a hole like a strong torrent, you have to extract it from myself. (34:) My son, whom I used to feed with cream and milk, I can no longer give him anything. (35:) And my slave girl, whom I bought, has become a demon that harrasses me." Cf. the edition by Alster 1975: 90–97. The interpretation of line 31 suggested there, that this is a metaphor for the old man's nose that has lost its ability to smell, can still be considered valid. J. Cooper suggests to me that this might rather be a sexual metaphor. Yet, this would destroy the parallelism with the following lines, especially 32, where it is quite clear that what is at stake is the man's basic physical abilities, chewing, walking, and urinating.

96 The same sequence is included in the following proverb collections: *SP* 10.9–12: [u]su anše [k]ar-ra-gim ḫáš ba-e-tag_4 / [ḫur-sag] ⌜gi_6⌝-mu ⌜im⌝-babbar ba-an-mú / ama-mu ^{giš}tir-ta lú mu-ši-in-gi_4 / šu-dab_5-mu ma-an-sum / ^{d}nin-kilim níg-ḫáb-ba gu_7-gu_7-mu / dug-ì-nun-na-šè gú nu-mu-un-ši-lá-e. *SP* 17 Sec. B 3: šul dingir-mu gìr ^{d}lama-⌜mu / nam-guruš anše kar-r[a-gim] / ḫáš-gá ba-an-[tag_4] / ḫur-sag gi_6-mu im-babbar b[a-an-mú] / ama-mu tir-ta ^{giš}dab_5-b[a(?)] šu-dab_5 mu-da-an-sum / ^{d}nin-kilim é níg-ḫáb-ba g[u_7-gu_7-mu] / dug(?)-é-nun-na-šè gú nu-mu-un-ši-lá-e. *SP* 19 Sec. A 1: [ḫur-sag gi_6]-mu / [níg-babbar ba]-an-mú / [ama-mu ^{giš}ti]r-ta / [lú m]u-ši-in-gi_4-in / [šu-dab_5-ba]-mu ma-an-sum / [^{d}ni]n-kilim níg-ḫáb-ba / [(x)] gu_7-gu_7-mu / [dug(?)-ì]-nun-na-šè / [gú nu-mu-da]-⌜an-lá⌝.

97 ninda ^{giš}má-àm a ^{giš}gi-muš-àm. The source is CBS 6139.

98 é gul-gul-lu-dè é ša-ba-da-an-gul-e / lú zi-zi-i-dè lú ša-ba-da-an-zi-zi-i. Cf. the previous brief remarks by Alster 1993: 15. If one insists that -dè represents the ergative marker -e, rather than an assimilated form of /-ed-a/, one will have to translate "He who destroyes houses will destroy a house. He who stirs men will stir a man".

99 *šu-up-pa-ta-am i-ša-tum i-ka-al-ma ù ta-ap-pa-ta-ša i-qú-ul-la*. Cf. Finet 1974: 44, with note 7. Cf. Horace, *Epist.* I xviii 84: *nam tua res agitur, paries cum proximus ardet*, "It is your safety that is at stake, when your neighbour's wall is in flames".

"poor."[100] Cf. lú níg-tuku lú níg-nu-tuku gig-šè im(var. in)-gar,[101] which, according to an Akkadian gloss,[102] means "the poor man has burdened the rich man with all types of worries." In this case the Sumerian language possesses an alternative term, uku_2(-r), for "poor", which might have yielded a smoother style.

One may add that the possibility cannot be excluded that the Sumerian scribes sometimes created artificial proverbs themselves, in which such compounds were spelled out in parallel units.

Separation of popular proverbs from literary tradition

A feature characteristic of the influence of scribal art is that, whenever literacy becomes a predominant element of education, popular proverbs tend to spread and develop independently from those incorporated in the literary curriculum. This is a well attested phenomenon in the Arabic world, where the proverbs of the spoken dialects differ widely from those of the classical tradition.[103] A number of examples, in particular in Akkadian royal letters and a royal inscription of the first millennium BCE, which quote proverbs not included in the proverb collections, show that the same situation may have occurred in the first millennium BCE. A single known example belongs to a tradition also reflected in the Syriac and Arabic versions of the legend of Ahiqar.[104]

There are a few indications of living proverbs from adjacent areas of the Ancient Near East, but not enough to support a detailed discussion. Two proverbs from the North-West Semitic area are quoted in letters from Amarna (14th cent. BCE), one of them from Byblos, the other from Shechem,[105] and one example is known from Ugarit.[106] Furthermore, a few examples of Hittite proverbs have been found.[107] The bilingual Sumerian-Akkadian proverb collections of the first millennium BCE partly go back to the unilingual Sumerian ones, and hardly had any direct contact with

---

[100] Cf. note 16 above.

[101] *Šuruppak's Instructions* 184 = *UET* **6.2** 367; variant from *TIM* **9**, 19 (IM 43438) obv. 12.

[102] *UET* **6.2** 367 (collated): *lapnum ana ša-r[i]-⌈im⌉ mimma murṣim šakinšum.*

[103] Cf. Goitein 1966.

[104] See Lambert 1960: 281, referring to *ABL* 403 obv. 4–7, and F.C. Conybeare, et al., *The Story of Aḥiḳar*^{2}, p. 125. Cf. also Bauer 1993, who suggests a parallel between a Sumerian proverb and a Syriac fable transmitted by Gregorius abu-l-Faraj (13th century CE). The relevant proverb is *SP* 8 Sec. A 4: šáḫ(-gim) šu ab-kar-kar-re $i\text{-}gi_4$-in-zu ní-te-a-ni(-šè) lugal-a-ni-šè-àm(-e-še). I translate "*He* runs like a pig as if it were for himself, but it is for his master". Bauer (p. 39) read: [d]ur_9 instead of šaḫ, and translated "Der Eselhengst eilt dahin, also ob es für ihn selbst wäre. (Doch) es ist für seinen Herrn". The implication seems to be than someone who runs on behalf of somebody else runs with less energy than someone whose own life is at stake. The text is preserved in *TMHNF* **3**, 45 obv. 4, and *UET* **6.2** 275.

[105] Cf. Albright 1955: 7. Byblos: "My field (territory) is likened to a woman without a husband, because it is not ploughed" (*Amarna Letters*, Knudtzon edition, 74: 17 f.; 74: 15 f.; 81: 37 f.; 90: 42 f.; this could be added to the examples of the sexual metaphor mentioned by Alster, *AcSum* 14 (1992) 43, n. 10). Shechem: "If ants are smitten, they do not accept (the smiting) quietly, but they bite the hands of the man who smites them" (*VAB* II 252 16–19, cf. Lambert 1960: 282).

[106] Letter of King Iturlim to the king of Ugarit, J. Nougayrol, *Le Palais Royal d'Ugarit* **IV**, p. 220, and Planche LXIX. Lines 21–25 read: "If I enter your territory and sow then you can harvest; and (now) you have entered my territory and I can reap." As seen by Watson 1970, this is reflected in John iv 37: "For here the proverb holds good: one sows, another reaps; I sent you to reap a harvest you had not worked for. Others worked for it; and you have come into the rewards of their trouble."

[107] Beckman 1986.

the spoken language, whereas other collections in the Akkadian language may reflect actually living proverbs.[108]

International type parallels

The large number of international type parallels that can be found for Sumerian and Akkadian proverbs corroborates the impression that these in fact represent the world's oldest known proverbs.[109] Some of them undoubtedly came into being independently as expression of common notions.[110] A single Akkadian proverb has survived in Arabic and European tradition,[111] but there seem to be few direct links connecting the oldest Mesopotamian proverbs to later Oriental and European tradition. Yet, the phraseology of a few Sumerian proverbs can be recognized in the Bible, and undoubtedly came from there to modern European languages.[112] This does not mean that they came directly from Mesopotamian sources, but the expressions involved may have been common to a number of languages in larger areas of the Ancient Near East, or they may have passed through the spoken Aramaic language, or written sources now lost.

Excursus: About the Sumerian Language.[113]

The suggestion has recently been made that the Sumerian language, and the Sumerians as well, did not "come" to Sumer from anywhere, but that the language came into being in the Uruk V and IV periods in Sumer itself, as a descendant of a pidgin that developed into a creole (Høyrup 1992). According to this theory the pidgin was the language in which the rulers and the large polygenous group of immigrants supposed to have come to the early city state of Uruk communicated with each other. They used compounds of commonly known nouns and verbs to express complex notions. The predominance of proverbs dealing with the relations between household owners and their servants in the Sumerian proverb collections, beginning with the Early Dynastic one, could be seen in this light.

Some of the arguments are the relatively simple phonology, simple syllable structure, the restricted number of primary nouns and a corresponding high number of

---

[108] Lambert 1960: 222–278. This also applies to the so-called popular sayings in Akkadian edited by Lambert 1960: 213–221.

[109] A number of type parallels were cited by Gordon 1959. The beginning of a systematic study was made by Moll 1966. Cf. also the brief remarks by Alster 1991: 103–109; Alster 1992: 6–7, and Alster 1993: 10–11.

[110] Hallo 1990: 215–216, discussed the "three-ply rope", mentioned in *Gilgameš and Huwawa* 108, reflected in the *Gilgameš Epic*, in the *Etana Legend*, as well as in Ecclesiastes 4: 12 b, "A threefold cord is not readily broken". One wonders if this is independent of "Altid er hvert godt reb trestrenget" ("Every three-ply rope is always good"), attested in the proverbs of Peder Laale, the only existing medieval proverb collection in Danish, printed 1506.

[111] *ARM* **1** 5: 10–13: *assurri kīma têltim ullītim ša ummāmi / kalbatum ina šu-te-pu-ri-ša ḫuppudūtim ūlid*, "The bitch in its hurry gave birth to blind puppies". Cf. Ital.: *Cagna frettolosa fa catellini ciechi*; Erasmus: *canis festinans caecos parit catulos*. Cf. Moran 1978; Alster 1979; Avishur 1981.

[112] Notes 110, and perhaps 34, (p.7) are possibly relevant. Cf. the remarks by Hallo 1990: 216. Alster 1993: 11, pointed to the following expressions, their forerunners, and their parallels in European languages, "the lion's mouth"; "to go in and out" (1. Kings 3: 7); "Fill every Valley! Level every Mountain" (Isaiah 40: 4).

[113] See above, pp. 5 and 15

compound nouns that look like pidgin circumlocutions "even within what could be regarded as the core vocabulary" (cf. níg-ba, "something given" = "gift"; lugal, "great man" = "king", etc.), the large number of compound verbs likewise "even within the core vocabulary" (p. 16, cf. šu ti, "to approach the hand" = "to receive", šu bar, "to open the hand" = "to let free", etc., cf. also cases like dam tuku, "to have a wife" = "to be married", níg tuku, "to possess something" = "to be rich", etc.), personal and non-personal gender distinction (rather than masculine-feminine gender distinction), enclitic use of what seems to be the third person plural pronoun as a noun-pluralizing device (-e-ne), as well as the nature of adjectives, which are syntactically and morphologically nothing but intransitive static verbs. A number of other features do not off-hand support the theory. One is the sentence structure (subject - object - verb), or, rather, noun phrase (i.e., ergative - absolute case (= object/subject) - verb), which is not characteristic of creoles (these have no developed grammatical case). Neither does the ergative character of the Sumerian language accord with creoles. Yet the lack of formal distinctions between verbs that can be used as transitive, intransitive and causative does. That the verbal prefix chains and the mode-indicating morphemes occurring after the verb can be interpreted as assimilated former free morphemes suggests a language whose history is fairly short. Yet is it certainly not inconceivable that a language characterized by this feature, as well as by a limited number of primary nouns and verbs, might be "old", so the evidence is far from conclusive.

It seems, rather, that what is important is not so much whether or not the Sumerian language conforms to a number of typological features of known creoles. After all, in their known forms these are a much more recent historical phenomenon whose definition has to fit another historical context. Had there been similar linguistic phenomena in the fourth millennium BCE, they might have been very different from the known examples, mostly based on European languages. What makes the theory worth considering is the new impulse and perspective it could bring into the study of the Sumerian language. Too much has been written about grammatical categories and distinctions that may not be relevant to the language at all. One cannot avoid the impression of a language which in the Fāra period possessed only some of the grammatical distinctions that appear in Standard Sumerian. A theory that could explain the history of the language as a development from a simple basis would be attractive. In the case of Sumerian, instead of searching back to an imaginary linguistic stage in which all grammatical distinctions were "plain" and easily definable, one might regard the language as a relatively recent one that started with a minimum of grammatical distinctions, perhaps in the Uruk period. Some of the grammatical forms known from Standard Sumerian texts hardly had any life in a spoken language, but are likely to have developed as spelling conventions in the Sumerian schools of the Isin-Larsa period. To find some of the essential features of Sumerian paralleled one does not have to look for creole languages. See the following features of modern English: the high number of phrasal verbs, apparent transitive verbs used as intransitive stative verbal forms (such as "the door won't lock", "the book sells well"), as well as a verbal system with no formal distinction between transitive, intransitive, and causative verbs. What is interesting from our point of view is the extremely mixed origin of the English language compared to "continental" European languages.

RERERENCES

Albright, W.F.
1955 "Some Canaanite-Phoenician Sources of Hebrew Wisdom", in: *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum*, Vol. 3, Leiden, 1–15.

Alster, B.
1974 *The Instructions of Šuruppak*. Mesopotamia. Copenhagen Studies in Assyriology 2, Copenhagen.
1975 *Studies in Sumerian Proverbs*. Mesopotamia. Copenhagen Studies in Assyriology 3, Copenhagen.
1979 "An Akkadian and a Greek Proverb: a Comparative Study", in: *WO* **10** 1–5.
1988 "Sumerian Literary Texts in the National Museum, Copenhagen", in: *AcSum* **10** 1–15 (pp. 4–10, 13–15: Sum. Proverb Collection 23).
1989 "An Akkadian Animal Proverb and the Assyrian Letter ABL 555", in: *JCS* **41** 187–93.
1990 "The Sumerian Poem of Early Rulers and Related Poems", in: *OLP* **21** 5–28.
1991 "Väterliche Weisheit in Mesopotamien". Pp. 103–15 in: A. Assmann (ed.), *Weisheit. Archäologie der literarischen Kommunikation* III. München, 103–115.
1992 "Early Dynastic Proverbs and Other Contributions to the Study of Literary Texts From Abū Ṣalābīkh", in: *AfO* **38–39** 1–51.
1993 "Proverbs From Ancient Mesopotamia: Their History and Social Implications", in: *Proverbium* **10** 1–20.

Alster, B. & H.L.J. Vanstiphout
1987 "Lahar and Ašnan", in: *AcSum* **9** 1–43.

Avishur, Y.
1981 "Additional Parallels of an Akkadian Proverb Found in Iraqi Vernacular Arabic", in: *WO* **12** 37–38.

Bauer, J.
1993 "Ein sumerisches Sprichwort", in: *Studies Hallo* 39–40.

Beckman, G.
1986 "Proverbs and Proverbial Allusions in Hittite", in: *JNES* **45** 19–30.

Camartin, I.
1991 "'Volksweisheit' in Sprichwörtern". Pp. 131-38 in: A. Assmann (ed.), *Weisheit. Archäologie der literarischen Kommunikation* III. München 131–138.

Civil, M.
1985 "Sur les 'livres d'écolier' à l'époque paléo-babylonienne", in : *Studies Birot* 67–78.

Crusius, O.
1887 "Ueber die Sprichwörtersammlung des Maximus Planudes", in: *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* **42** 386–425.

Desiderius Erasmus

Collectanea Adagiorum Veterum. (Leiden 1703 edition, reprinted Hildesheim 1961).

Falkowitz, R.S.
1980 *The Sumerian Rhetoric Collections.* Dissertation; University of Pennsylvania.

Finet, A.
1974 "Citations littéraires dans la correspondance de Mari", in: *RA* **68** 35–47.

Goitein, S.D.
1966 "The Present-Day Arabic Proverb as a Testimony to the Social History of the Middle East". Pp. 361–79 in: *id. Studies in Islamic History and Institutions*, Leiden: Brill.

Gordon, E.I.
1957 "Sumerian Proverbs: 'Collection Four'", in: *JAOS* **77** 67–79.
1958 "Sumerian Animal Proverbs and Fables: 'Collection Five'", in: *JCS* **12** 1–21 & 43–75.
1959 *Sumerian Proverbs. Glimpses of Everyday Life in Ancient Mesopotamia, with a chapter by Th. Jacobsen.* University Museum Monographs: University of Pennsylvania. (Repr. New York: Greenwood Publishers, 1968)
1960 "A New Look at the Wisdom of Sumer and Akkad", in: *BiOr* **17** 122–52.

Hallo, W.W.
1969 "The Lame and the Halt", in: *Eretz-Israel* **9** 66–70.
1990 "Proverbs Quoted in Epic", in: *Studies Moran* 203–17.

Held, M.
1985 "Marginal Notes to the Biblical Lexicon", in: *Studies Iwry*, 93–103.

Holbek, B. & I. Kjaer
1969 *Ordsprog i Danmark. 4000 ordsprog fra skrift og tale gennem 600 aar.* Koebenhavn.

Høyrup, J.
1992 "Sumerian: The Descendant of a Proto-Historical Creole?" in: *AIUON* **14** 21–74.

Krumbacher, K.
1887 "Eine Sammlung byzantinischer Sprichwörter", in: *Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-philologischen und der historischen Classe der königlich bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München*, 1887, Bd. II/1, 43–96.
1893 "Mittelgriechische Sprichwörter". *Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-philologischen und der historischen Classe der königlich bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München*, 1893, Bd. II. Repr. Hildesheim 1969.

Kurtz, E.
1886 *Die Sprichwörtersammlung des Maximus Planudes.* Leipzig.

Lambert, W.G.
1960 *Babylonian Wisdom Literature.* OUP.

Leutsch, E.L. & F.W. Schneidewin
Corpus Paroemiographorum Graecorum, Vol. I-II, Gottingae 1839–1851 (repr. Hildesheim 1958).

Mieder, W.
1978 *Proverbs in Literature: An International Bibliography*, Bern, Frankfurt/M.
1982- *International Proverb Scholarship. An Annotated Bibliography*. Garland Folklore Bibliographies Volume 3, New York 1982; Volume 15, New York 1990.
Supplement II (1982–1991). Garland Folklore Bibliographies 20. New York 1993.

Michałowski, P.
1990 "Presence at the Creation", in: *Studies Moran*, 381–96.

Moll, O.E.
1966 "Über die ältesten Sprichwörtersammlungen", in: *Proverbium* **6** 113–20.

Moran, W.L.
1978 "Puppies in Proverbs – From Šamši-Adad I to Archilochus?" in: *Eretz-Israel* **14** 32–37.

Sailer, J.M.
1810 *Die Weisheit auf der Gasse, oder der Sinn und Geist deutscher Sprichwörter*. Augsburg 1810, repr. Volkskundliche Quellen, Reihe VII.

Taylor, Archer
1931 *The Proverb*, Harvard University Press.
1934 *An Index to "The Proverb". Folklore Fellows Communications* No. 113. Helsinki 1934 [Both reprinted with a foreword by Archer Taylor, Hatboro, Penn., and Copenhagen 1962. Reprinted with an introduction and bibliography by Wolfgang Mieder, *Sprichwörterforschung*, Band 6, Bern 1985].

Vanstiphout, H.L.J.
1984 "On the Sumerian Disputation Between the Hoe and the Plough", in: *AuOr* **2** 239–51.

Watson, W.G.E.
1970 "Antecedents of a New Testament Proverb", in: *VT* **20** 368–70.

THE IMAGERY OF BIRDS IN SUMERIAN POETRY

Jeremy Black

Much laborious time and effort has been devoted to the physical reconstruction of the texts of ancient Mesopotamian literature as well as to the elucidation of the languages in which it is written, as preliminaries to its reading in such a way that can create the reflective and imaginative effects which would allow us to call it literary. These labours of reconstruction, while not precisely Sisyphean, will never in any sense be completed. In the meantime Mesopotamian literature has been studied as a social or historical source, and as a source for the history of thought or literary history (which has produced a certain amount of 'biographical romance'). More specifically literary approaches have been made more recently, mostly either the study of technical features on a small scale: parallelism, rhyme, assonance (an approach which has the attraction of seeming to yield palpable results) or else structural analysis on a larger scale (which has the disadvantage of often lapsing into prose-paraphrase of the contents).[1] But it seems to me that such study, in particular of Sumerian poetry, has so far hardly touched upon the use of what can be broadly called metaphorical language. As recently as 1968 Sam Kramer offered in "Sumerian similes" what he described as a 'a faint, faltering harbinger' of work yet to be done,[2] though it has to be said that this was only a catalogue of examples. Yet metaphorical language could be said to be the single most telling feature which ensures the 'otherness' of literature. Anyone reading Sumerian poetry for the first time will be struck by many exotic features: the idiosyncratic use of metaphorical language is perhaps the most striking of all these. It is habitual to refer to Wolfgang Heimpel's study of imagery, but the discussion seems not to have proceeded much further in a quarter of a century.[3]

I use 'imagery' as the general term. Some detailed definition is clearly desirable, but it is equally clear that an attempt to track down all the tropes of classical rhetoric in Mesopotamian poetry is pointless.[4] In fact there are good grammatical reasons for not trying too hard to distinguish between similes and metaphors in Sumerian.[5] Umberto Eco is content to follow the Venerable Bede in regarding metaphor as 'a genus of which all the other tropes are species';[6] Caroline Spurgeon emphasized that the content, not the form, of images was crucial.[7]

The frequency, density and nature of imagery in different types of composition are factors in all of which we should be able to find significance. Serious stylometric

---

[1] I include myself among the guilty: see Black 1992.

[2] Kramer 1969. Presidential Address to the American Oriental Society.

[3] Heimpel 1968. The corpus collected by Heimpel, while still useful, can now be amplified considerably and many of the passages can be cited in more complete versions, and assigned to specific compositions.

[4] As recently attempted by Bernhard Polentz, using definitions lifted from a dictionary of literary terms (Polentz 1989).

[5] See Heimpel 1968: esp. 24ff.

[6] Eco 1984: 87.

[7] Spurgeon 1935: 8.

study of Sumerian literature has yet to begin, although computerised textual databases can now simplify the labour involved. Rough and ready surveys show e.g that some Sumerian narrative poetry has, on average, about twice as much imagery as most of Shakespeare; that *Šulgi D* is rich in tree metaphors, and *The Cursing of Agade* in human metaphors. Eme-sal cult songs are dominated by a limited range of images: the sheepfold, the cattle pen, the abandoned ruin mounds etc. *Gilgameš and Ḫuwawa*, although rich in proverbial utterances, is poor in other imagery; *Enki and Ninmaḫ* appears to be altogether devoid of imagery. Typologies of metaphor are available and their usefulness for Sumerian literature will only become apparent by testing them. Is a metaphor or simile used simply to decorate a context, or as part of so-called 'running imagery' which lends atmosphere or creates a metaphorical subtext language? Does the density of imagery coincide with an increase in dramatic or emotional tension (as has been demonstrated for *The Merchant of Venice*)? How many points of comparison or identity are intended between an image and its tenor or reflex? For a dead language, a special problem arises with the identification of a whole spectrum from 'faded', worn-out or dead images (*leg* of table), through characteristic or typical metaphors, to vivid images created intentionally for a single context.

One approach would be to study the totality of images within a single literary work, which has the advantage of making possible some discussion of the significance of the range of subject matter of images, and also of any metaphorical subtext language; as well as of the grouping of images and the concatenation of multiple images. An alternative approach would be to pursue a pre-selected range of images throughout the literature. Advantages of this second approach are the potential for observing different uses of the same image in different contexts, and the possibility of including within the study the numerous fragmentary contexts of Sumerian literature, since individual occurrences of imagery are not necessarily tied to broader narrative structure. As an example of this second type of approach, the present paper takes as its topic the investigation of a limited range of imagery in narrative, cultic and other poetry, the imagery of 'small birds' (for which Sumerian has a generalised word) and 'rooks', and some 'pigeon' and 'swallow' images. A fairly pragmatic approach has been followed. The images discussed fall into two broad groups:

A. *images derived from the catching of birds*
   - catching birds in a net; Enlil the Fowler
   - 'the gods are small birds'
   - chasing birds from reed-beds, from their hiding places

B. *images derived from the behaviour of birds*
   - birds flocking together
   - birds wheeling around in the air
   - birds flying away (including swallows, pigeons)
   - birds rising suddenly into the air (mostly rooks but also locusts).[8]

[8] Graphically locusts are treated as 'birds' in cuneiform writing, so they have been included here where relevant.

As a preliminary contribution to the literary study of Sumerian imagery, these will be presented in detail, and the dynamic of their use in individual contexts assessed. How many are 'merely' topoi (commonplaces)? Can a distinction be made between formulaic ideas and formulaic expressions? Is a commonplace sometimes linked with a second image to make it more subtle? How far can, or should, originality of imagery be invoked as a measure of the richness of literary achievement? These are the sort of questions that can be approached.

PRELIMINARY NOTE[9]

One of the advantages of having, now, two volumes of a Sumerian dictionary is that one can easily consider all relevant usages of (some) words. In the *Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary* there are full entries collecting the occurrences of $buru_4$ 'rook' and $buru_5$ 'small bird (in general)'. My reason for choosing the particular subject matter studied here is therefore a trivial one of convenience: most of what follows is based on the words $buru_5^{(mušen)}$, $buru_4^{(mušen)}$ and $buru_4$-$dugud^{(mušen)}$. A similar reason was given by Heimpel in 1968, who was then writing in the wake of Landsberger's recently published studies of the Mesopotamian animal vocabulary.[10] On the other hand I have not attempted to discuss all occurrences of such imagery, although most are documented in footnotes if not in the text. Images with $uga^{mušen}$ 'raven' are few in comparison to those with $buru_4$ 'rook' and seem not to be related to these. Some passages which are cited are not strictly speaking images, but are included for illustrative purposes. A full study of the imagery of birds would have to include at least the words mušen 'bird', $súr\text{-}dù^{mušen}$ 'falcon' and $anzu^{mušen}$ 'anzu bird'.

There are problems with the reading of some bird names, as indicated by the accompanying table. Discussion of these images may help to clarify the choice of choosing between reading 'small birds', 'swallows' or 'locusts', and thus to improving translations of some passages. But my main aim is to illustrate a number of general points about images that can form the basis of further work.

This simplified table shows readings of some bird names. The word $buru_5^{mušen}$ means both 'small bird' and 'locust', distinguishable by context only.

$NAM^{mušen}$	$NAM.ERIN_2^{mušen*}$	$ŠIR.BUR^{mušen}$	$U.SUM.IR.GA^{mušen}$
read as:	*read as:*	*read as:*	*read as:*
$sim^{mušen}$ // $buru_5{}^{!mušen}$	$buru_5{}^{mušen}$	$buru_5{}^{mušen}$	$uga^{mušen}$
swallow // 1. small bird 2. locust	1. small bird 2. locust	rook, jackdaw, ? crow	raven

*and variants $NAMxERIN_2$, $MUŠEN.ŠE.ERIN_2$, $MUŠEN.ERIN_2$ etc.

[9] I am especially grateful to C.M. Perrins, Professor of Ornithology and Director of the Edward Grey Institute of Field Ornithology at Oxford, for answering a number of questions about the ethology and classification of bird species currently observable in Mesopotamia, and about traditional methods of fowling, and directing me to appropriate literature on the subject.

[10] Heimpel 1968: 1f. Landsberger's *MSL* **8.2** appeared in 1960–62 and his article in *WZKM* **57** in 1961.

A *CATCHING BIRDS*

A.1 Catching in a net (1–6; 1–4. Enlil the Fowler)

The image of catching birds in a net occurs especially in one extended topos in balaĝ songs and is used to convey a mystical reflection on the god's violent power. The immediate real (that is, historical) stimulus which is concentrated on in these passages appears to be, as so often in these compositions, destructive incursions into Babylonia by mountain peoples. However, it is not clear that the term 'enemy' here refers exclusively to these invaders. Rather, it seems to refer to all who can be considered Enlil's enemies, and to include all who are at the mercy of the god's destructive behaviour:

umun ^{d}mu-ul-líl-lá a ki-in-gi-ra kur-ra i-bí-dé
bēlu Mullil reḫût mātu ana šadî tarḫi
umun ka-naĝ-ĝá ^{d}mu-ul-líl a kur-ra ki-in-gi-ra i-bí-dé
bēlu mātu Ellil reḫût šadî ana māti tarḫâ
umun ^{d}mu-ul-líl-lá dumu ki-in-gi-ra kur-šè mu-un-e$_{11}$
bēlu Ellil māra mātu ana šadî tušēli
umun ka-naĝ-ĝá ^{d}mu-ul-líl dumu kur-ra ki-in-gi-šè mu-un-e$_{11}$
bēlu mātu Ellil māri šadî ana mātu tušēridu

Lord Enlil has poured forth the seed of Sumer on the mountains.
The Lord of the Land, Enlil, has poured forth the seed of the mountains on Sumer.
Lord Enlil has sent the sons of Sumer up into the mountains.
The Lord of the Land, Enlil, has sent the sons of the mountains down into Sumer.[11]

Enlil is declared to be responsible for these attacks, which seem incomprehensible and therefore create a problem of theodicy. In example **1**, which immediately precedes the above passage, Enlil is addressed by his titles 'Father' Enlil and 'Lord of the Land', creating an effect almost of oxymoron: the benevolent 'Father' as a destroyer of human kind.

We can explore the ramifications of the image, examples of which are collected below. Although the term mušen-dù 'fowler' is not mentioned explicitly (as it is in ex. **3**), it is clear from the reference to the net that the god Enlil is the fowler, a skilled huntsman who has made deliberate, careful preparations for catching his prey. This implies anything but violence; rather the god's deep and impenetrable mind, so often commented on in this poetry, are suggested. The fowler catches birds in accordance with a plan of his own: it is only when seen from the point of view of the birds, his victims, that that plan is not perceptible. To them his activities are terrifying and incomprehensible. In a net the fowler catches many small birds at once, so that large numbers of victims are implied. And as we shall see, with most of the images of bird-catching, there is an implication of the relative size of the (human) fowler and the (tiny) birds. The image of netting birds is interwoven with a parallel image of netting fish. Fishing and fowling are often linked.[12] Very broadly speaking,

[11] *SBH* p. 130 no. I 26ff. From the opening section of the balaĝ composition *ame amašana*, immediately following ex. **1**.
[12] See Salonen 1973: 23.

two types of bird net are used worldwide, those strung up vertically, which birds fly into and are caught in the meshes of, and those laid flat on the ground (sometimes stretched in wooden frames) which are clapped or snapped shut once enough birds have walked onto or between them. I think that the arrangement in these four lines is ABAB: fish–birds–fish–birds. This would mean that sa...sè(g) refers here to laying a fishnet (and a...lù to the technique of disturbing the water used to drive the fish into the net); gù/gu...dé (elsewhere gu...lá) to suspending a standing net (literally a 'line') for birds, and sa...nú to laying down a clap-net for birds.[13]

1

16 a-a ^{d}mu-ul-líl-lá sa bí-íb-sè-sè-ga sa-bi sa kúr-ra
abi Ellil šētu taddima šētu šī šētu nakrimma
18 umun ka-nag̃-g̃á gù in-dé-dé-e gù-bi gù kúr-ra
bēlu mātu tassi šisīt nakrimma (wrong translation! see ex. 2)
20 kur-gal ^{d}mu-ul-líl a in-lù-lù-e ku_6 in-dab_5-dab_5-bé
šadû rabû Ellil mê tadluḫma nūnu tabār
22 **umun ka-nag̃-g̃á sa in-ga-nú-e $buru_5$ in-ga-ur-ur-re**
bēlu mātu šētu taddima iṣṣūrātu tāšuš

Father Enlil will lay a net: that net is a net for the enemy.
The Lord of the Land will suspend a line: that line is a line for the enemy.
The Great Mountain will muddy the water: he will catch the fish.
And the Lord of the Land will lay down a net: and he will catch the small birds.[14]

The passage is taken from the initial section of the balag̃ composition *ame amašana*, a passage of mystic 'adoration' or contemplation of the violent power of Enlil.

---

[13] Fowling is a not uncommon image in Babylonian poetry too. The lines from *Išum and Erra* might be compared:

āšib Bābili šunūti šunu iṣṣūrumma arrašunu attama
ana šēti takmiššunūtima tābir tātabat qurādu Erra

Those inhabitants of Babylon – they are the bird, and you are their decoy.
You drew them into the net, you caught them and destroyed them, warrior Erra.

(IV 18f). Decoys are commonly used to lure birds into nets laid on the ground; the best bait is either a bird of the same species or, as bait for a hawk, a small bird. This does not seem a very adroit image: it functions only on the level of 'drawing into the net'. There are many Babylonians, but only one bird. Otherwise one might expect Erra to be the fowler and the Babylonians the prey. See the dictionaries s.v. *šētu* 'net', *arru* s. III 'decoy', *bunzerru* 'hide (reed fence)', 'blind' (*CAD*; = 'a place of concealment', *OED*), *itannu* 'interstice' for further examples. Detailed information on the design of traditional types of bird nets and traps, with numerous illustrations, can be found in Hans Bub 1991.

[14] *SBH* p. 130 no. I 16–23 = *CLAM* p. 154 l. 12. The Akkadian translation has the verbs in the 2nd person, and preterite, and other errors.

For gu alternating with sa, see *EWO* 279–81 (Enki appoints Nanna) (Civil's text):
[sa-pàr-ra-n]i ku_6 nu-è
níg̃-kéš-da-ni ⌜DI TU⌝ nu-è
gu lá-a-na mušen nu-è
No fish escapes his spread-net,
no ... escapes his ...,
no bird escapes his suspended net(/line).

with Falkenstein's commentary *ZA* **56** 79 ('277–79'), where gu is rendered 'Netz (wörtlich Faden)' – as compared with the parallel phrase in an OB hymn:
mušen-dù kù-zu-gim igi-te-en sa lá-ni mušen nu-è
like a clever fowler, no bird escapes the interstices of his suspended net: *Belleten* **16** pl. 63 ii 20 = *PBS* **12** 38 rev. 10; some further parallels apud van Dijk, *SGL* II 86 n. 16.

2 ii 9 sá bí-sè-sè-ge — ^{sa}sá-bi ^{sa}sá kúr-ra-àm
šētu uštēširma — *šētu šī šēt nakrimma*
11 ⌈gù⌉ in-dé-dé-e — ^{gu}gù-bi ^{gu}gù kúr-ra-àm
qâšu itruṣma — *qû šū qê nakrimma*
13 [ ]x-lù-lù — ku$_6$ in-dab$_5$-dab$_5$-bé
[ ]x-ma — *nūni ibār*
15 **[sa in]-⌈ga-an-nú⌉-e buru$_5$ in-ga-an-ur$_4$-re**
[šēta] id?-di-ma [iṣ-ṣu-ra-]⌈ti⌉ īšuš[15]

3 30 mušen-dù gúr-gurum-ma-zu-dè te ba-di-di-di-in
31 ^{d}mu-ul-líl ka-nag̃-g̃á gúr-gurum-ma-zu-dè te
(OB text: ^{d}mu-ul-líl a-a [ka]-na-ág̃-g̃á
32 umun du$_{11}$-ga zi-da gúr-gurum-ma-zu-dè te
33 a bí-lù ku$_6$ bí-dab
34 **sa ba-e-nú buru$_5$-mušen bí-laḫ$_X$(DU.DU)**[16]
(OB text: [...] in-ga-ur$_4$-ru)

Fowler, when you stoop down, what are you about(?)?
Enlil, when you stoop down over the Land, what are you about(?)?
Lord of the Good Word, when you stoop down over the Land, what are you about(?)?
You muddied the water, you caught the fish.
You laid down a net, you netted the small birds.[17]

This passage is taken from an er-šema of Enlil. The whole poem is concerned with the image of Enlil hanging up or stringing up a net/line (gu...lá) to catch birds.

4 **ḫul-du-zu! buru$_5$!(NAM)-mušen-gim ha-ra-ur$_4$-ru** (var.**-ur$_4$-ù**) **zar-re-eš ḫa-ra-ab-sal-e**

May you catch your malefactors like small birds; may you pile them up in heaps.[18]

In this line from a šìr-nam-gala of king Lipit-Ištar, Enlil (and Ninisina) bless the king. The second person subject of the sentence is almost certainly Enlil. The verb ur$_4$ means to 'catch' but is not specific, so that it is not clear that netting is the method of catching envisaged here; possibly other methods, such as are suggested by ex. 6 below. The second half of the line may belong to a separate image (piling up dead bodies in heaps, rather than dead birds), but on the other hand may possibly suggest piles of dead birds killed by e.g throwstick and sling (as in ex. **6**).

---

[15] *KAR* 375 ii 9–16f. (Eme-sal hymn?/balag̃ to Enlil; according to the present writer: partial duplicate of B 10 (mutin nunuz dima), parallel to B 16 (a-aba ḫuluḫa)). (B 10 etc.= 'balag̃ no. 10' numbered according to the catalogue in *BiOr* **44** (1987), cols. 32–79.) *CAD* s.v. *qû* translates the Sumerian as 'he pronounced the word, this word is a hostile word', the Akkadian as 'he stretched his net, this net is a hostile net', but perhaps because the passage is cited out of context.

[16] Lexically LAḪ$_4$ is equated with *ebēlu*.

[17] SB text of *Erš.* no. 160: 30–34. p. 128, commentary p. 190. The OB text is less well preserved but appears to be quite close.

[18] *UET* **6.1** 96 = 97 rev. 9 (Klein 1981: Lipit-Ištar no. 5). Cf. Krecher *ZA* **58** 319, Heimpel 1968: 446. For zar-re-eš...sal, see Volk 1989: index: 'spread out/pile up in heaps'.

5 **^{d}nergal e-ne-ra ḫul-du-ni buru$_5$$^{!}$(NAM)-mušen-gim za-e ur$_4$-ur$_4$-u$_4$-mu-na-ab**

Nergal, catch his malefactors for him like small birds.[19]

Similar to exx. **1–4**, only the subject is Nergal this time.

6 187 ki-bal-a un tar-tar-ra-[bi$^{?}$]

188 **giš-ilar kuš-IB$_2$-ùr-ĝu$_{10}$-[ù] buru$_5$$^{!}$(NAM)-gim ga-àm-mi-ur$_4$$^{?}$**

"The ... people of the rebel lands –
With my throwstick and sling I shall
catch them like small birds."[20]

Šulgi's battle prowess is the theme of this passage. Here the weapons are specified: Šulgi uses the throwstick to 'put up' (i.e. disturb) game, and then the sling (if that is the correct translation of the term) to kill individual small birds.[21] The use of both throwstick and sling requires skill, which is implied here. Whether these are methods which would be normally used in war, or whether they instead suggest the killing of the king's enemies as a form of sport, is unclear.[22]

---

[19] Sjöberg *ZA* **63** 5 no. 1: 60. Hymn (adab) to Nergal with prayer for Šu-ilišu (= Klein 1981: Šu-ilišu no.1). 'Nergal, gather like locusts for him those who do him evil' (Sjöberg). 'Nergal, collect for him those who do evil as if they were a flock of birds' (*PSD*). Also edited by Römer 1965: 91ff.: 'Nergal, die ihm böse sind, sammle du ihm wie Heuschrecken(?) ein'. Römer *ibid.*: 123, notes 'obwohl ich keine literarischen Belege für bur(u)$_6$^{mušen} "Heuschrecke" kenne' – but considers 'locusts' possible but not certain here, referring to the 'Vertilgung von Schädlingen' (extermination of pests). Klein 1981: 102, translates 'locusts' ad loc. However, in view of the other examples, the object is more likely to be birds. See Heimpel 1968: 45.

[20] *Šulgi D* 187–8. 'The crushed? people of the rebellious land / I will cut down with my throwstick and sling like locust' (sic, Klein 1981: 78). 'With my throwstick and sling I will collect them (the people of the rebellious land) like a flock of birds' (*PSD*). However, cf. 175f.:

di$_4$-di$_4$-lá/la zi-bi-da kar-ra-b[a$^{?}$]
zi-bi-a buru$_5$$^{!}$(NAM) šú-šú-a-gim saḫar sis-sis gi$_4$-bí-íb-kú
Its small ones who escaped with their lives –
I shall make them eat 'bitter soil' as long as they live, like ravenous locusts.
Klein's translation reads:
[Its [the rebel land's] small ones, who will have survived,
As long as they live, I will make them eat 'bitter dust', like the locust$^{?}$, which consumes everything.]

šú = *lêmu* 'consume'; kar = escape? Wilcke 1969: 80–1 and n. 337, translates *Lugalbanda I* 162 'Statt Gerste (še-gim) will ich dabei keine Salpeter-Erde (saḫar-sis(/sis)) essen', and refers to a parallel line in the *Nanše Hymn* (Heimpel 1981: 97: 'like grain in acid soil') and *CAD* s.v. *idru* 'alkali', salination, *idrānu*. Can -gim mean 'instead of'?

[21] Clearly these weapons would not be much use against locusts, which ensures the translation 'small birds'.

[22] Less well-preserved examples:

NAM$^{?!}$-e$^{!}$(mušen?)-gim TUG$_2$(?) mi-ni-in-ur$_4$-ur$_4$ mùš$^{?}$-zu ⌜be$^{?}$⌝-pàd-dè
UET **6.2** 146:12 (lament and prayer [possibly eršaḫuĝa type: not a balaĝ? Not in Maul 1988 nor in Cohen 1981]: difficult to read the copy).

[ĝin]-na dumu-ĝu$_{10}$ buru$_5$$^{!}$(MUŠEN.ERIN$_2$)^{mušen} an-sig$_7$-ga šu um-me-⌜ti⌝
Go, my son, catch a bird in the green sky
VAS **17** 11:15 (incantation)

buru$_5$^{mušen} bí-[x] / *i-ṣu-ra e-bi-il* [...]
Sm. 1507:9′–10′ (cf. *ebēlu* // LAḪ$_4$ 'catch in a net/line')

A.2 'The gods are small birds' (7–10)

7

7′ an a-ba-a in-dúb ĝe$_{26}$-e-me-en mu-un-dúb!
8′ ki a-ba-a in-sìg!-ga ĝe$_{26}$-e-me-en mu-un-sìg
9′ **diĝir buru$_5$-me-eš** a-na-ku ka-su-**ĝe$_{26}$-e mu-tin!-me-en**-su-nu
10′ ^{d}a-nun-na du$_7$!-du$_7$!-re-me-eš me-e sún ⌜zi-da!⌝-me-en

Who shakes the heavens? It is I who shake them.
Who smites the earth? It is I who smite it.
The gods are small birds: I am the falcon (Akk. 'their falcon').
The Anunna butt: (but) I am the good wild cow.[23]

8

dìm-me-er buru$_5$]-⌜mušen!⌝-meš me-e mu-tin-⌜ĝen⌝
DINGIR.MEŠ ⌜*iṣ*⌝-*ṣu-ru* [...]

SB text of the balaĝ *uru ammairabi*.[24]

9

27 **dìm-me-er buru$_5$-mušen-[me]-⌜eš⌝ me-⌜e⌝ mu-tin-[...]**
28 ^{d}a-nun-na du$_7$-du$_7$-me-eš me-e sún-ĝen [...][25]

From a šir-namšub of Inana.

10

21 **diĝir buru$_5$-me-eš me-e mu-tin-ĝen**
22 ^{d}a-nun-na di-da-me-eš me-e sún zi-ĝen
23 sún zi a-a ^{d}en-líl-la-ĝen
24 ù-sún zi saĝ-ĝá di-a-ni

The gods are small birds: I am the falcon.
The Anunna are milling about: I am the good wild cow.
I am the good wild cow of Father Enlil,
His good wild cow who goes at the front.[26]

---

[23] *TCL* **16** 69:7′–9′ = Cohen 1988: 658 c+52. OB balaĝ *uru ḫulake* of Inana, self-praise. Cohen's text is not very close to Genouillac's copy, which is the only ms. I do not know if he collated the tablet. Cf. ibid. 13′:

^{d}a-nun-na *šá*! *ki-ma ṣe-ni ir-te-<ú> ana-ku* e!-zé!-gim ⌜lu?⌝ lu ušumgal?-bi ĝe$_{26}$-e-me-en
The Anunna flock like sheep: I am their dragon?

[24] *SBH* p. 107 no. 56 rev. 9–10, Cohen 1988:. 583, Volk 1989: 199 and 43. An OB 'forerunner', Haddad kirugu 29 line 33 (Volk 1989: 43) has:

^{d}a-nun-na di-id-da-me-eš
The Anunna mill around.

In the next line, the SB version, tablet 21:56–7 (Volk 1989:199), has

[^{d}a-nun-n]a du$_7$-du$_7$-meš
^{d}*anunnakkū ittakkipū*
The Anunna butt each other

Cf. SB version: l. 61 p. 199:

^{d}a-nun-na e-zé-gim lu-a ušum-gal-bi-x⌝[ ]
^{d}*anunnakkū [ša kīma ṣ]ēnī irte"û [ ]*

[25] *CT* **42** pl. 35 no. 22 i 27 (OB šìr-nam-šub ^{d}inana-kam), ed. Cohen 1975: 605.

[26] *VAS* **10** 199 iii 21–4 ([...] ^{d}inana-kam) (according to the present writer: B 36 *uru ammairabi*, uncertain), not in Cohen 1988. 'The gods are birds, I (Inana) am a falcon' (*PSD*). Ed. by Römer *OrNS* **38** 98f.: 22ff. 'Die Anunna stossen (nur) wie (einfach) Rinder, ich – ich bin die hehre Wildkuh, ... seine hehre Wildkuh, die (allem) vorangeht.' Listed by Schretter 1990: 237; Heimpel 1968: 456; Cohen 1975: 605, 609.

The unexpected literary image of the gods pictured as a flock of small birds is used exclusively in Eme-sal cult poetry, in self-praise of Inana, where it forms, to some extent, a topos. The accompanying epithet which complements the image, of Inana as a falcon, finds parallels elsewhere, but with súr-dù, also 'falcon', rather than Eme-sal mu-tin:[27] she is called 'Inana, falcon of the gods'[28] in the poem *Inninšagura*, and Ninegalla is compared to a falcon screeching over the earth in a hymn to Inana.[29] In first-millennium zi-pa incantations, 'falcon of the gods' is also an epithet of the deity Šul-pa-e,[30] and elsewhere of Ningišzida 'as a fearful, destructive and unfathomable deity'.[31] However, in each of these passages, the corresponding description of the gods as small birds is absent. It seems that most commentators on these passages have interpreted the epithet as a 'falcon *among* the gods', who swoops on the gods' enemies; that is, all the gods are powerful, but the particular power of Inana (or Šul-pa-e or other deities) can be compared to that of a falcon.

In fact, it is small birds that are preyed on by falcons,[32] which 'stoop' on their victims as they fly, especially ducks, partridge or other game birds, usually catching one bird per day or per session. The genitive following 'falcon' refers then to the falcon's victims (as also when Lugal-kur-dub is called a 'falcon of the rebel land').[33] This is made explicit by the line in *Dumuzi's Dream* (not grammatically an image, but a part of his symbolic dream):

súr-dù^{mušen} gi-dub-ba-(an-)na-ka buru$_5$^{mušen} šu ba-ni-ib-ti
36 O: buru$_5$^{mušen} D: MUŠENxERIN$_2$^{mušen} M: REC 41-mušen
62 U: buru$_5$ O: sila$_4$(sic!)
a falcon caught a small bird in the reeds of the fence[34]

and by a passage in *Dumuzi and Geštinana*:

^{d}dumu-zi-dè mušen-šè súr-dù^{mušen}-dal-a-gin$_7$ zi-ni ur$_5$-da ì-šub-ba
ki-^{d}ğeštin-an-na-šè zi-ni ba-ši-in-de$_6$
Dumuzi, like a flying falcon after a bird, attentively swooping,
escaped safely to Ğeštin-ana.[35]

---

[27] Mu-tin is glossed as *kassūsu* 'falcon' in *Izi* G 96 and *CT* **18** 50 iii 3, and in the poetic passage cited as ex. **7** below, although etymologically it is a form of mušen (and is glossed as *iṣṣūru* in *Izi* G 95). *Hg.* C I 12 (*MSL* **8.2** p. 171) and (restored) *Hg.* B IV 243 (p. 166) suggest that *kassūsu* is a later or less literary word word than *surdû*, a loanword from Sumerian.

[28] ^{d}inana súr-dù^{mušen} [diğir-re-e-ne], see Sjöberg 1975: 180:32 (remainder of line restored from other mss.). Sjöberg translates 'the falcon among the gods'.

[29] *BE* **31** 12 rev. 26.

[30] [súr-dù]$^{\lceil mušen \rceil}$ diğir-re-e-ne-ke$_4$, with Akkadian translation *su-ur-de-e* DIĞIR.MEŠ, *LKA* 77 i 20–21 and duplicates; see Ebeling 1953: 36, and Falkenstein's remarks in *ZA* **55** 31: 'wonach Šulpa'e die Feinde der Götter wie ein Jagdfalke ereilt'.

[31] súr-dù^{mušen} diğir-re-e-ne, *UET* **6.1** 70:3 and dupl.: hymn to Ningišzida. See Kramer, *UET* **6.1**, introduction, p. 8.

[32] Falcons (*Falco*) form a distinct genus of birds of prey, with several species in Mesopotamia. Hawk is used as a general term for birds of prey other than falcons or eagles. While eagles might catch animals as large as small gazelles, and hawks are more likely to catch hares, falcons typically hunt ("stoop on") other birds, especially game birds. As such they are also used by men for fowling.

[33] mušen-súr-dù ki-bal-a , *Gudea Cyl. B* vii 19–22.

[34] *Dumuzi's Dream* 36; 62 (see also *Šumma ālu*, cited in Alster 1972: 95).

[35] *UET* **6.1** 11 36f. See Falkenstein *BiOr* **22** 281. Heimpel 1968: 422–3, says of his translation 'Die Übersetzung der schwierigen Stelle ist ein Versuch'; 'Dumuzi brachte, als er wie ein nach einem Vogel auffliegender Falke sein "Leben", das aus dem Körper gefallen war, gepackt hatte, sein "Leben" zu Geštinanna'. It introduces a verb 'gepackt hatte' for which no reflex exists in the Sumerian. Alster 1972:

If we then try to explore the ramifications of this image, we find an implication of the relative size and power of Inana to 'the (other) gods', a falcon compared with small birds. The choice of the falcon seems to be an allusion to her warlike nature.[36] But the principal, and somewhat sinister implication is that she does, or could, prey on or hunt the other gods. Note that the Old Babylonian gloss in Akkadian has *kassūssunu* 'their' falcon. It is not that she is a fierce falcon in comparison with the small, less powerful other gods. She is 'their' falcon, the falcon whose prey they are. I think this could only occur within the tradition of 'mystical' contemplation of Inana's personality found in this poetry.

Complementing the 'falcon' image is a second image, of a herd of wild bulls milling about (or in exx. **8** and **9** butting one another) with a pre-eminent cow. By contrast, the part of this image which refers to Inana lacks violent overtones and instead emphasizes the goddess' femininity and her uniqueness.

The line in the Akkadian narrative poem *Išum and Erra* : *āšib Bābili šunūti šunu iṣṣūrumma arrašunu atta* (IV 18) has a similar structure, and was probably suggested by this. A related image is found in *Angim* 122 (the gods are like small birds; but 'flapping their wings' in terror, so not an exact parallel):

121 diĝir àm-gig hur-saĝ-ĝá [...]
diĝir-re-e-ne [...]
DIĜIR.MEŠ [...]
122 $buru_5$-mušen-gim á-ba mu-un-da-⌜dúb⌝-[dúb]
$buru_5$-gim [...]
kīma iṣ-ṣu-ri x [...]
123 am ba_9-rá ú-a mu-un-su_8-ge-⌜eš⌝
á-bàd-bi ⌜ḫa-ba-an⌝-[su_8-ge-eš]
tabīnāssun lū il-li-⌜ku⌝-[ni]
The gods have become worried, [and fled(?)] to the mountains,
Like a swarm of birds they b[eat] their wings,
Like wild bulls ..., they stand (hiding) in the grass.
/They were indeed milling about in their pens.[37]

---

116 translates:
Dumuzi – breathless like a falcon flying after a bird –
saved his life at Geštinanna's place.
Sladek 1974: 233, has:
Dumuzi as a bird like the soaring falcon that can swoop down alive
brought himself alive to the dwelling of his sister Geštinanna.
Kramer 1963: 493, translated:
Dumuzi – his soul left him like a hawk flying towards a (mother) bird,
He carried off his soul to the home of Geštinanna.
It seems to me that ur_5-da (lexically equated with *utaqqû, puqqû* 'to pay attention to, fix one's attention on') here probably refers to the falcon's attentive fixing of its prey before it swoops; but I am uncertain what zi-ni ... ì-šub-ba could mean.

[36] The word *kassūsu* 'falcon' is glossed *qarrādu* 'hero, warrior' in the synonym list *Explicit Malku* I 107, although it is likely that there is a confusion with *kašūšu* 'overpowering divine weapon'.

[37] Cooper's translation (Cooper 1978). See Heimpel 1968: 387, 430, 456; *tabīnu* (here f. pl.) 'lean-to, shelter' // á-bàd ('side of wall'?).

A.3 Chasing birds from reed-beds, from their hiding place (11–14)

Examples **11**, **12** and **13** are virtually the same passage, and can be seen as the reverse of the image of Enlil the Fowler, that is, the situation viewed from the victim's point of view. Gula/Ninisina is chased from her temple, apparently by Enlil (again, as fowler) – in an allusion to a complex mythical background that it seems impossible to recapture (possibly a lost myth concerning the destruction of E-galmaḫ during Ninisina's absence in Arali).[38]

In each of these passages (and almost never elsewhere) the form is mušen-buru$_5$$^{(mušen)}$, which perhaps emphasizes the singular sense of buru$_5$ here.[39] The image then appears to be that of a fowler preying on a single (game-)bird in marshes or reed-beds. Again it is implied that the hunting of the goddess is deliberate. Again an image of scale is created – the goddess as a powerless waterfowl, Enlil as the human wild-fowler. The reed-bed, standing for the goddess' temple, is the safe, natural home of the bird, usually inviolate. It is large, extensive, shady, perhaps with many internal passages, as a temple might be. Perhaps an enclosed atmosphere is created too. The dreadful terror of the hunted bird, trying desperately to escape through the reeds that are normally its peaceful home, is a powerful image for the mythical narrative of the goddess' flight from her temple.

11 **ambar-gim ⌜mušen⌝-buru$_5$^{mušen} e-ne mu-un-sar-⌜sar⌝-[x x]**
He hunts me as if I were a mušen-buru$_5$ (small bird) in the marshes[40]

12 **a-⌜pa-ar⌝-gi mu-šè-bu-ru mu-ni-in!-sa-sa-re!**[41]

13 **ambar-gim mušen-bu-ur-ù-dal**(error for mušen?) **na-áĝ-gi$_{16}$-le-èĝ sar-sar-re**
Uncertain context. Self-lament of Gula (?) over destruction.[42]

14 **buru$_5$-mušen-gin$_7$ ⌜á⌝-[búr-bi sar-sar]-⌜ra⌝ ba-e-laḫ$_4$-eš**
They were caught like small birds chased from their hiding places[43]

---

[38] See Cohen 1981: 20.

[39] This point is not commented on by *PSD*. In *GEN* 92, mušen-buru$_5$^{mušen} refers to 'the birds' in general beginning to sing as dawn breaks; the corresponding line 48 appears to have simply buru$_5$.

[40] 'As if (in) a swamp he chased me out (like) a flock of birds'; Cohen 1981: 98 no. 171 76 (OB er-šema of Gula/Ninisina), commentary p. 175. Note the position of -gim; ambar ensures the translation 'small bird'; Heimpel 1968: 454.

[41] *VAS* **2** 94 rev. 60 (abbreviated version of Cohen 1981 no. 171 in syllabic spelling); Heimpel 1968: 454.

[42] *CT* **36** 43 ii′ 14′ (? also an er-šema of Gula; with sections kirugu, šabaTUK; a balaĝ according to Wilcke 1974: 258). No edition. The tablet BM 96694 was kindly collated by C.B.F. Walker and is exactly as the copy: -dal. Apparently no verbal prefix. Heimpel 1968: 454.

[43] *Eridu Lament* 4:15 (*JCS* **30** 127–67); damaged context. 'They went off like flocks of birds shooed from their hiding places' (Green), but I think perhaps one may read –laḫ$_4$– 'they caught them'. The exact sense of á-búr here is uncertain. Cf. OB *FUH* p. 34, 277f.:

[buru$_5$ á-búr-bi]-⌜ta ba-ra⌝-an-e$_{11}$-dè
[sim^{mušen} gùd]-⌜bi-ta ba-an-ra⌝-an-dal-dal-e-⌜ne⌝

restored from SB text *CT* **16** 9 i:

32 tu^{mušen} ab-lal-bi-ta ba-ra-an-dab-dab-bé-ne
su-um-ma-ti ina a-pa-ti-ši-na i-bar-rù
34 buru$_5$ á-búr-bi-ta ba-ra-e$_{11}$-ne
iṣ-ṣu-ru ina ab-ri-šú ú-še-el-lu-ú

This line from the *Eridu Lament* describes the desecration of the shrine by Šimaškians and Elamites, as the priests and other religious personnel are pursued through the temple, and is a related image to exx. **11–13**. This time the small birds appear to be plural (plural verb form). The 'hiding place' is again the temple, normally safe, inviolate, a place of sanctuary. Interestingly, this image is a literary link between Eme-sal cultic poetry and the City Lament genre.

B *BIRDS' BEHAVIOUR*

B.1 Flocking together (15)

15 **i-gi$_4$-in-zu buru$_5$-mušen-e u$_4$-gíd-da téš-bi KÉŠ-da-gim**
gú-ni gú-da mu-ni-in-lá ne mu-un-su-su-ub
A: buru$_4$-mušen-e AA: buru$_4$-az-mušen QQ: buru$_5$-da
amar-gàm-gàm^{mušen} gùd-ba tuš-a-gim
mu-ni-ib-kú-ù-ne mu-ni-ib-na$_8$-na$_8$-ne
Just as if they were small birds flocking together all day long,
they embraced him and kissed him.
As if he were a *gamgam* chick sitting in its nest
they fed him and gave him to drink.[44]

The reaction of Lugalbanda's brothers and friends is to embrace him and kiss him 'just as if they were small birds flocking together all day long', and to feed him and give him to drink 'as if he were a *gamgam* chick sitting in its nest'. In the first of these linked images, it is Lugalbanda's comrades who are compared to birds; in the second it is he himself who is the subject of the simile. The first image emphasizes the large number – a flock – of those who show their affection for him, the constricted space (KEŠ$_2$-da-gim) as they jostle around him, the extended duration of the scene (u$_4$-gíd-da, lit. 'all the long day'), as well as implying the disorderly noisiness of the action. The image does not attempt to include any reflex of the figure of Lugalbanda himself, at the centre of all this activity.

---

36 sim^{mušen} gùd-bi-ta ba-an-ra-an-dal-dal-e-ne
si-nun-tú ina qin-ni-šá ú-šap-ra-šu etc. (ba-an- sc. error for ba-)
See *FUH* pp. 99f. for discussion of á-búr; also *CAD abru* D, according to which the meaning assigned is based on the *CT* **16** passage and *Cursing of Agade* 220 only, and 'could be a scribal mistake'; presumably *AB-ri-šú* as an error for *ap-<pa->ri-šú*. Cf. Salonen 1973: 327. *The Cursing of Agade* passage reads:
219 tu^{mušen}-bi ab-làl-ba še ḫé-ni-in-ša$_4$ 'moan in their holes' (so Cooper)
220 buru$_5$^{mušen}-bi á-búr-ba níg̃ ḫé-ni-ib-ra 'may its birds be smitten in their nooks'
(Cf. *Dumuzi's Dream* 59 nì ... ra glossed *inêršu* (and p. 100); cf. 253)
221 tu^{mušen} ní-te-a-gim ur$_5$-da ḫé-ag-e 'may they pay attention like frightened pigeons' not 'may they, like frightened pigeons, become immobilized' (as Cooper, 1983, following *AHw*, ur$_5$-da ... ag = *nuppuqu* 'harden, become constipated' rather than *CAD* N [1980] 'pay attention'; Salonen 1973: 32 wrongly translates 'gurren') Cf. also *Inana and Bilulu* 150 (*JNES* **12** p. 178):
buru$_5$-ḫabrud^{mušen}-e á-búr-ba ad-e-eš ba-ni-ib-gi$_4$
'the partridge(?) took counsel in its shelter' (*PSD*)
For another (unsatisfactory) suggestion for ad-e-eš ... gi$_4$, 'hin und wieder rufen' see Salonen 1973: 337.
[44] *Lugalbanda II* 246–7, conceivably locusts; but in *Lugalbanda* we should expect birds. Cf. i-gi$_4$-in-zu ⌈buru$_5$?⌉ U$_4$.NE u$_4$-gíd-da téš-⌈bi⌉ [x x] ms. R, 225b (deviant line order); Heimpel 1968: 457.

Instead, the supplementary image which follows portrays him, probably sitting, at the centre of attention, as a baby bird in its nest being fed by its parents. The solicitude of those who offer the food is implied. The *gamgam* bird has not been definitely identified,[45] but is likely to have been a waterfowl with long feet. There are shortcomings with the second image, in that some implied elements of it find no correspondence in the narrative situation which it embellishes: a baby bird is fed by one or two parent birds, not by a whole crowd of friends; parent birds give their offspring food but not drink; a baby bird in its nest is helpless, whereas Lugalbanda is a hero. The second image, then, is used for one of its aspects only, that of a chick being fed food. This clarifies its function as a supplementary metaphor which discontinuously adds to the vivid image conveyed by the first, of noisy friends jostling around Lugalbanda. Central to the first image is their embracing and kissing him, central to the second is their feeding him and giving him drink; the first focusses on them, the second on Lugalbanda.

Inevitably there is a reflex in this image back to the episode at the beginning of the poem in which Lugalbanda feeds the Anzu chick in its nest. Now Lugalbanda is himself presented as the chick.

B.2 Birds wheeling around in the air (16–17)

16 **níĝ-gur$_{11}$ buru$_5$^{mušen} dal-dal ki-tuš nu-pà-dè-dam**

J, A?: buru$_5$-dal-dal-mušen

B: -da for -dam

Possessions are small birds flying around, unable to find a place to settle[46]

17 83 ú-numun-li-li-a-ni...-ma...-tuku mu-bi [hé?]

84 **níĝ-gur$_{11}$-bi buru$_5$^{mušen} ⌜dal⌝-dal-la-gin$_7$ ⌜x x x x (x)** ⌝

The man who killed you (Lu-dingira's father) ...

may his prosperous offspring be eradicated (or sim.), may their name...?

may their possessions be ... like small birds flying around.

This passage from the first of the *Two Elegies*[47] is to some extent illuminated by the proverb ex. **16**. Clearly a curse is intended, so that whatever is wished for should be something undesirable for the murderer. The crucial phrase in the proverb is ki-tuš nu-pà-dè-dam, 'unable to find a place to settle'. The image is of a flock of small birds (probably finches, sparrows or the like) wheeling around in the air, and settling briefly only to fly off again. They are numerous and small, perhaps inconsequential,

---

[45] The nexus of ancient lexical evidence links together the gàm-gàm (Akk. *gamgammu*), the gìr-gíd-da (Akk. *saqātu* and *šēp(šu)-arik*), and the gìr-gi-lum (Akk. *ṣayyāḫu*) with the first millennium names *mušku* and *arabû(a)*; see *MSL* **8.2**, pp. 169 and 175. The *saqātu* eats dates; the *ṣayyāḫu* is a 'laugher'; the *mušku/û* may be a 'snake-eater'; the gìr-gíd-da / *šēp(šu)-arik* is 'long-footed' (not, as often rendered, 'long-legged', from which it has been assumed that the bird was a wader): and the *arabû(a)* is certainly a waterfowl.

[46] Gordon 1959: 50 Coll. 1.18; 'possessions are migratory flocks of birds, unable to find a place to stay' (*PSD*); M. Lambert *RA* **48** (1954) 29–32 translates 'moineau' (sparrow); Landsberger 1934: 18, 122 'locusts'. Cf. Heimpel 1968: 451f.

[47] Kramer 1960: 84: 'may their possessions like flying (?) ... sparrows(?) ...' (sic); now Sjöberg 1983: 315ff. (but no new duplicates); Heimpel 1968: 452. Compare mu-un-ga ... buru$_4$^{mušen}-dugud ... zi (*LU* 275 = ex. **24** below).

and are consistently unable to settle. The implication in the proverb seems to be that possessions pass from one person to another and cannot belong to any one person for long, perhaps also that they should be disregarded or are unworthy of regard; similarly the murderer's material wealth should pass from his own possession.[48]

B.3 Birds flying away (18–22)

The small bird (buru$_5$) imagery collected here overlaps with pigeon and swallow imagery, and forms a heterogeneous group. It provides a good example of different, varied usages of the same image. Pigeons (mentioned in many other images not cited here) typically represent distressed humans – also they 'moan' or 'croon' (in Akkadian *bakû, damāmu*). A technical problem with this group of images (18–22) is created by the uncertainty whether to read the sign NAM as sim 'swallow' or buru$_5$!(NAM) 'small bird'.[49] Typically swallows nest in eaves and flit around 'their' houses, windows and doorways. They are chased away (perhaps also house sparrows in 20, 21) or fly away of their own accord (18) or fly away forever or migrate (19).

Pigeon imagery also typically includes a reference to 'window', often with a possessive suffix. Similarly NAM, where it occurs with 'window', 'house' or 'doorway', is more likely to be sim 'swallow' than buru$_5$!.[50]

18 ⌜un?⌝ **ní ba-da-te sim^{mušen}-gim ba-dal-e**

The people are frightened. They will fly away like swallows.[51]

The line is from the Old Babylonian version of *a é-an-na a gi$_6$-par$_4$ kù*, the ér-šèm-ma of the balaĝ composition *áb-gin$_7$ gù dé-dé*, and is part of a lament over destruction or abandonment of E-ana, caused by 'the storm', probably to be identified with Enlil (although this depends entirely on mention of ^{d}[mu-u]l-líl in line 38).

19 **sim^{mušen}** (var. omits mušen) **é-bi ba-ra-an-dal-a-gin$_7$ uru-ni-šè nu-gur-ru-dè**

(The gods decreed that Ibbi-Suen should be taken to Elam in fetters,)

---

[48] Other examples of buru$_5$...dal, in different contexts, are : [x] ba-an-TAR.TAR buru$_5^{mušen}$ mu-da-an-dal-dal B 10, see Cohen 1988: 225: a+34, Heimpel 1968: 453f.; bu-ru-tu-tu-mu ⌜x⌝ [...] mušen-mu ab-ta!-dal-⌜x⌝[...] 'my small(?) birds ..., my bird' *PRAK* **2** C 121 ii 8′–9′; cf. Krecher 1966: 32 n. 79, pp. 196f.; buru$_5^{mušen}$-ĝu$_{10}$ (ḫu-)mu-dal-dal: *LU* 282, Heimpel 1968: 453.

[49] *PSD* B p. 209 'Reading buru$_5$! for NAM is based on context and parallels; see sim.' (But it will be a long time before we get Pennsylvanian views on the word sim!) See the table above, p. 25.

[50] *CAD* gives three clear bilingual 'swallow' passages, including two images:

[mè sim]⌜mušen⌝-gim mi-ni-íb-dal-[dal]

ina tāḫāzi kīma sinunti at[tanapraš]

In battle I fly around like a swallow *SBH* p. 108 no. 56 rev. 43f.

me-e še-na^{mušen}-gim é-a ku$_4$-ku$_4$-da-ĝu$_{20}$-dè

anāku kīma sinunti bītāti ina iterrubiya

When I enter houses like a swallow *RA* **33** 104: 24

sim^{mušen} gùd-bi-ta ba-an-ra-an-dal-dal-e-ne

sinuntu ina qinniša ušapraššū

(The demons) make the swallow fly away from its nest *CT* **16** 9 i 36f. (See above fn. 43).

[51] *ISET* **1** 222 L. 1492: 53. 'The people(?) are afraid, they fly away like flocks of birds' (*PSD*, reading buru$_5$ without exclamation mark, although copy shows NAM). Cf. Cohen 1981: no. 32, p. 67, where he reads: ⌜un?⌝ ní ba-da-te sim^{mušen}-gin$_7$ ba-dal-e 'The people(?) are afraid; they fly away like swallows'. See Civil *Or NS* **41** 87.

that like a swallow which has flown from its house, he should not return to his city[52]

In this line from the *Lamentation over Sumer and Ur* the editor has translated 'like a bird that has flown from its nest'. I would prefer to read sim rather than $buru_5$! here. If this reading is accepted, we have here an image of a single swallow leaving the house where it has, perhaps, been born. Young swallows leave their birthplace at the end of their first season and do not return. Adult swallows also leave every year to migrate. (In actual fact individual birds generally return annually to exactly the same spot to nest and breed again, although this may not have been realised by pre-ornithological peoples.) This seems quite a straightforward, monochrome image. A swallow is attached to 'its' house just as the king is connected to his city. Since the bird flies away of its own accord, or in accordance with its own instincts, the parallel with king Ibbi-Suen, described as taken prisoner in fetters against his will, cannot be pushed. The point here is that it has been decreed that Ibbi-Suen has left, never to return, just as the bird will not return. Swallows leave quite irreversibly at the end of the summer in accordance with a law of nature. But the wider implications of the image (which might have included the observation that swallows, as a species, do return) cannot be pushed. Simply, as swallows leave their homes at the end of the summer, so Ibbi-Suen has left Ur.

20 **sim/buru$_5$!**(NAM)^{mušen}(var. omits mušen)-**gim**(var. ki-) **ab-ta ba-ra-an-dal-e**(several mss. -dal-en) **zi-ğu$_{10}$ um**(several mss. im)-**mi-gu$_7$**(var. adds -e)
He made me fly away like a swallow/bird from the window; my life is consumed[53]

In this line from a section of *Ninmešarra*, Inana speaks in the first person to describe how the god Nanna has driven her from her own temple. Here it is a little uncertain whether $buru_5$ or sim should be read, but the mention of the 'window' makes it more likely that the image is the relatively common one of a swallow flying away from the window opening which it regularly flits around, than that of any small bird flying from any window. The birds which perch on or flit around the window openings of temples are frequently referred to in poetry, and also used as an image for the personnel of the temples, so that the choice of this image for the goddess herself has an intrinsic relation to the reality and is an organic growth from the description of the building, rather than a structurally appropriate but otherwise unrelated metaphor.

21 **^{d}udug diğir?-bi ⌜buru$_5$⌝^{mušen} kar-ra-gin$_7$ ab-ta ⌜íb-x-dal⌝**
He made the udug demon, its god(?), fly out the window like a fleeing bird[54]

---

[52] Michałowski 1989: 38 l.37. His text gives $buru_5$ with no exclamation mark, but NAM is clear in three mss. '(They decreed) that, like a bird which has flown (from) its house, he will not return to his city' (*PSD*, reading $buru_5$!).

[53] Hallo and van Dijk 1968: 105, section where Nanna 'has driven me from the temple'. 'Like a bird he made me fly from my window' (*PSD*, reading $buru_5$!). Note the causative use of the verb.

[54] *STVC* 73 rev. 14 (*Išme-Dagan Hymn* no. 9, no edition). Sign unclear but probably $buru_5$; perhaps NAM was intended. Cf. Heimpel 1968: 457. Other examples of $buru_5$ ... kar, in difficult contexts, are: $buru_5$-kar-ra-bi [...]-dam 'captured', 'escaped' (?); NCBT 688:422 = B 36; Cohen 1988: 840–3; $buru_5$-kar-ra; *KAR* 298 rev. 23 (incantation); $buru_5$-KA-ra-bi [...]-e / su- [...]; *LKU* 14 ii 5′–6′ (cult song: part of *LKU* 13?).

This line is from a composition which is probably an adab of Nergal with prayer for Išme-Dagan. The subject of the sentence is probably Nergal, but it is a difficult context.

A comparable image occurs in this extremely difficult passage from the disputation between *Grain and Sheep*:

171 é-e gán-né izi in-ga-dúb-ba-gim
172 **é-bi ka-ba sim^{mušen} dal-la ba-ab-ra-ra-gim**
E: é-ba! ka!-ba! F: é-bi ka-ba (ka for ká 'doorway' of a house?)
U_3:]⌜mušen⌝-gim ⌜bí-⌝[x] x-dal-gim
173 èḫ si-ig kalam-ma-šè ba-ni-ib-ku$_4$-re-en
Like fires beaten out in houses and fields,
Like (a) flying swallow(s) which are fleeing/chased(?) from the doorway of a house,
You are made like the lame and weak of the Land"[55]

Here Grain speaks to Sheep on the theme of Sheep's exposure to dangerous living conditions. The image in line 172 seems to me more likely to refer to swallows (sim^{mušen}) flitting round the doorway of 'their' house, rather than to small birds (buru$_5$!(NAM)) being chased away (as taken by *PSD*; Alster and Vanstiphout have 'sparrows'). The sense of the verb is unclear: whether active 'fleeing' or passive 'chased', since the prefix ba- can be taken either as separative 'away' or passive.[56] Ms. U_3 seems to have the verb dal 'fly away'. So I would tentatively suggest that here the sense appears to be that the swallows darting around the doorway of a house are puny and exposed to danger, a simile for the life of the sheep. But this is very uncertain.

22 143 saĝ-gig tu^{mušen}-gim ab-lá-lá-šú :
mu-ru-uṣ qaq-qád ki-ma su-um-ma-tú ana ap-ti
144 **buru$_5$^{mušen}-gim an-na bal-e** :
ki-ma e-ri-bi ana AN-e
145 mušen-gim ki-daĝal-la-šè **ḫa-ba-ni-íb-dal-lu**
146 *ki-ma iṣ-ṣur AN-e ana a-šar rap-šú lit-tap-ri-iš*
May the headache fly away, like a pigeon to its window,
like a small bird/like locusts up into the sky,
like a bird into an open space[57]

---

[55] *Laḫar and Ašnan* 171–3 :
Like fires beaten out in houses and fields,
Like sparrows chased from the door of a house,
You are turned into the lame and weak of the Land (so Alster and Vanstiphout 1987). See *ZA* **57** 106.

[56] Lexically ra is usually transitive, but can be *rapādu* ; ra-ra = *mēlulu* (in 'play knucklebones').

[57] Von Weiher *SbTU* **II** p. 25 no. 2:143–6 (SB udug-ḫul-a-meš); dupl. *CT* **17** 22 139–44 with slight variants :
139 saĝ-gig tu$^{mušen!}$ [ ] ab-lá-šè
...
141 buru$_5$^{mušen}-gin$_7$ [ ]⌜an⌝-bal-šè
ki-ma a-ri-bi [ ] *x AN-e*
...
144 *ki-ma iṣ-ṣu-ri áš-ri rap-ši lit-tap-ra-áš*
may (the disease) fly away like a bird to the desert (lit. wide place) (*CAD* s.v. *iṣṣūru* 1(b)).

The interpretation of this sequence of images, occurring in the Standard Babylonian collection of incantations *udug-ḫul-a-meš*, is difficult. Possibly all three refer to birds (pigeon – small bird – bird). The Babylonian translator's view is not clear: either he thought that $buru_5$ here should be taken as *arību*/*erību* 'rook, jackdaw, raven' or as 'locusts' (Akk. *eribî* ≈ *aribî*). (As a logogram in Akkadian, $BURU_5$.MUŠEN is regularly to be interpreted as the latter.)

B.4 Birds rising suddenly into the air (23–5)

In this group of images, using the verb zi 'rise up', another technical problem occurs with identification. The bird concerned is regularly written $buru_4$-$dugud^{mušen}$ (or $buru_4{}^{(mušen)}$-dugud), literally 'heavy $buru_4$'. Although the *PSD* treats it simply as an expression for 'huge flocks of $buru_4$', this may well be a designation of a species (however that term is understood). In any case the bird in question is almost certainly the rook (German Saatkrähe), which is granivorous and gathers on fields in huge flocks.[58]

23 nimgir-e kur-kur-ra si gù ba-ni-ra
unug^{ki}-[ga] zi-ga lugal ba-da-ra-è-e
kul-aba^{ki} zi-ga en-me-er-kár-ra ḫé-ús-sa
unug^{ki} zi-ga-bi a-ma-<ru->kam
kul-aba^{ki} zi-ga-bi an dungu ĝar-ra
$muru_9$ dugud-gin$_7$ ki ḫé-ús-sa-ba
saḫar peš-peš-bi an-e mu-un-ši-ib-ús
$buru_4$-$dugud^{mušen}$ numun-saĝ-šè zi-zi-i-gim
lú-u_{18}-lu-ne na-an-ni-pà-dè
šeš šeš-a-ne ĝizkim na-an-ĝá-ĝá
lugal-bi saĝ-ba DU-a-ni

The herald made the horn signal sound in all the lands.
Levied Uruk took the field with the king,
Levied Kulaba followed Enmerkar.
Uruk's levy was a hurricane,
Kulaba's levy was a clouded sky.
Though they covered the ground like heavy fogs,
the thick clouds (whirled up) by them reached up to heaven.

[58] Several members of the family *Corvidae* are found in Mesopotamia. These are: (1) The Hooded or Pied crow (*Corvus corone capellanus*, a colour variant of the Carrion crow [*Corvus corone corone*]), with a white head or neck. These gather in flocks. There are no all-black crows in Mesopotamia. (2) The Rook [*Corvus frugilegus*], which gathers in huge flocks, and is granivorous. Meinertzhagen recorded a flock of 143,000 rooks near Khanaqin in the winter 1922/3. (3) The Jackdaw [*Corvus monedula*], which also flocks, sometimes in mixed flocks with rooks. This is the smallest of the *Corvidae*. However, 'crow' is colloquially used, as in 'scare-crow'. (4) The Raven [*Corvus corax*], the biggest of the *Corvidae* by far, found in small groups or solitary. Ravens eat rabbits, sometimes kill lambs, are scavengers, and are not granivorous. It seems likely that Sumerian uga is the raven; and that $buru_4$ is the rook (or the smaller jackdaw). Since the term $buru_4$-dugud may be an indication of size, it is possible that this distinguished rooks from jackdaws (which sometimes flock together with rooks).

As if to buru-dugud on the best seed, rising up,[59]
he called to the people.
Each one gave his fellow the sign.
Their king went at their head...

This passage from *Lugalbanda in the Mountain Cave* follows a description of the furious preparation by the army of Uruk, in which the soldiers are compared to various atmospheric phenomena. I tentatively translate line 32 according to the sense of zi, assuming the image to be that of a large flock of rooks, already 'on' or 'at' (-šè) the seed in a field, flying up into the air all at once when disturbed. When the order to set off is finally given, the dust-cloud caused by their sudden activity resembles a flock of birds suddenly rising upwards. It seems to me that the special power of this relatively common image is focussed in the sudden movement upwards. There may be a double comparison, both between the movement (on the ground) of the soldiers in setting off and the birds, as well as between the rising up into the air of the dust cloud caused by the soldiers and the birds. Probably there is also an implication of raucous noise.

24 **mu-un-ga-ĝu$_{10}$ buru$_4$(^{mušen})-dugud zi-ga-gim RI-RI(dal-dal?)-da ḫa-ba-ni-zi**

H: R[I.RI]-da? K: [R]I.RI-e-bi N: [RI.RI]-dè?[60]

My possessions have moved off, flying like buru-dugud rising up[61]

This passage from the *Lamentation for Ur* is from the beginning of a section of lament over the spoliation of the goddess's possessions. Superficially the image resembles the topos níĝ-gur$_{11}$... buru$_5$-mušen... dal (above, nos. **16**, **17**) with its reference to the

---

[59] *Lugalbanda I* 24–34; text after Wilcke 1969: 196; Civil, computer program *SPI*; and Wilcke 1976: 18. 'Like huge flocks of crows moving against the best seed' (so *PSD*). Wilcke 1969: 196 (where the Sumerian text has bur$_4$^{mušen} by mistake for buru$_4$-dugud^{mušen}): 'Wie Heuschrecken, die zur jungen Saat hin auffliegen, ruft er (es) den Leuten zu'; Heimpel 1968: 446ff.

[60] Kramer's text reads RI.RI-bi. Civil's text reads de$_5$-de$_5$-ga (so therefore 'struck down, lost, caused to perish' *maqātu* lex.?, not 'flying'; but the sense seems less good).

[61] *LU* 275; Vanstiphout's revision of Kramer's text apud *PSD*: 'my possessions have been moved away ... like huge flocks of crows on the move' (*PSD*); 'my stores forsooth rose, taking wings like the rising of a heavy cloud of locusts' (Jacobsen 1987 464); 'like *heavy locusts* on the move' (Kramer). But dugud is found only with buru$_4$ 'rook etc.' Cf. Heimpel 1968 452. Contrast the line using a quite different image, ibid. 282f. (text after Civil):

buru$_5$-mušen-ĝu$_{10}$ hu-mu-da-dal-dal a urú-ĝu$_{10}$ ga-àm-dug$_4$
gi$_4$-in-du$_5$-mu-ĝu$_{10}$ sahar-e ha-ba-ab-lah$_4$-e-eš a mu-lu-ĝu$_{10}$ ga-àm-dug$_4$
" My little birds have flown away from me: I shall cry 'alas, my city'.
my slave girls and boys have been caught (?taken away) ...: I shall cry 'alas, my people"'ect.,

which to me implies that here 'my little birds' are identified as 'my slave girls and boys' (taking laḫ$_4$ = *ebēlu* 'catch (birds) with a net/line'). The translation of Jacobson 1987: 465, reads:

Verily, ravens have made my birds
fly away from me.
Let me cry: 'Alas, my city!'
My child slave girls
were verily driven off from their mothers (?)
captive, let me cry: "Alas, my city!"

Another occurrence of buru$_4$-dugud^{mušen} is:

še-bi ki-du$_{10}$-ba nu-šub-ba buru$_4$^{mušen}-dugud-dè DU-a (var. RI-a)

'Its grain which had not fallen on fertile(?) soil is carried off by rooks' (*Summer and Winter* 279). 'Its grain which does not fall onto fertile(?) soil is taken away by huge flocks of crows' (*PSD*). Read instead še-bi ki-du$_{10}$-ba nu-šub-ba buru$_4$^{mušen}-dugud bí-de$_6$-a (the noun should not be in the agentive).

general transitoriness of possessions, but the bird name is written here as $buru_4$(^{mušen})-dugud, so it seems clearly an image derived from flocks of rooks rising up suddenly and flying off, rather than (as in exx. **16** and **17**) of flocks of small birds wheeling around into the air, settling only to rise again. On further consideration it appears completely different from the other image. Here the emphasis is on sudden, noisy movement up and away, as a metaphor for the violent, predatory spoliation of the goddess' possessions. The image in examples 16 and 17 is instead a generalised reflection on multiple events – the perpetual inability of material goods to remain in the same hands.

25 **gi $buru_4^{mušen}$-gim ú-numun-ba mu-un-zi**

Reed rose up as rooks (suddenly rise) from their alfalfa-grass[62]

The context here concerns the separation from each other of Tree and Reed, which have been born as twins to their mother Ki (Earth). Tree runs away from Reed and makes its shoots grow in the mountains.[63] Reed rises up (as described in this line) and causes thick reedbeds to grow in the marshes.

* * * * * * *

These examples of metaphorical language, selected according to subject matter from a wide range of contexts, should serve to illustrate some preliminary points about the nature of figurative imagery in Sumerian poetry. I have not been able to study here aspects such as running imagery, or broader images such as structural metaphors, e.g. the parent/child : god/man relation; or the way in which the setting of a narrative can itself be a symbolic metaphor, e.g. the dark tunnel through the mountain for Gilgameš' journey towards self-knowledge (in SB *Gilgameš*) or themes such as the motif of solitary trees. These require more detailed study of individual complete compositions, proposed at the beginning of this paper as an alternative approach, and must be deferred until another occasion.

None the less, certain observations can be made on the basis of this catalogue. It is interesting, although not directly relevant to the general use of imagery, that only

---

[62] *Tree and Reed* 16: 'The reed stood up like a crow in the ... grass' (*PSD*) – better "from their ... grass". Cf. Heimpel 1968: 448f. Civil, *AfO* **25** 65 (*Enlil and Namzitara*), has a note on uga 'raven' and $buru_4$, $buru_5$: '$buru_4$ is used almost exclusively in comparisons' (presumably as compared with uga): *Tree and Reed* 16, *Lugalbanda* I 32, *Ur Lament* 275, *Summer and Winter* 279. (The last three all have $buru_4$-dugud.) Images with $buru_5$ in its sense 'locust' are:

a-šà $buru_5$(var. $buru_4$)^{mušen}-gim zú e-da(var. <-an>)-ra-aḫ

"You can chew up the field(s) like locusts (var. rooks)" *SP* Coll. 3.183; *SP* Coll. 7.92. Alster *RA* **72** 104 (= 7.92) translates ($buru_4$!) 'the field was completely devoured by locusts'. Cf. Heimpel 1968: 457. This is the only case I know where $buru_5$ alternates in the mss. with $buru_4$. I take e-da- as derived from *a-e-da-.

$buru_5$(MUŠEN+ERIN$_2$)-zi-ga-gim / *ki-ma ti-bu-tu e-ri-*⌜*bi*⌝

CT **17** 7 iv 17–18, tablet 'N' of an incantation series similar to á-sàg gig-ga-meš. Here the Akkadian gloss suggests strongly that $buru_5$ should be taken as 'locusts'.

Cf. the difficult passage in *Death of Dumuzi* 77–8:

$buru_5^{mušen}$-$buru^{mušen}$-e edin-na mu-un-ḪAR edin ga-gin ì-ḪAR

ù $buru_5^{mušen}$ ğiš-ḫašḫur nu-me-a edin-na mu-un-ḪAR edin ga-gim ì-ḪAR

Swarms of locusts swirled(?) in the steppe, the steppe swirled(?) like milk (in a churn);

again the swarms – there being no apple-trees – swirled in the steppe, the steppe swirled like milk.

[63] Lines 14f.

certain aspects of birds[64] appear to feature in imagery. One might have expected birds to be characterized in terms of their brilliant colours or the noises they make – the aspects which strike *us* as typical or as specially beautiful or poetic. The chirping of birds (rather than birdsong as something beautiful) is referred to but not used as a simile.[65] The voracious appetites both of rooks and locusts forms the subject of images[66] (as does the eating of locusts by man).[67] Otherwise the aspects which are drawn on are the catching of small birds (both by human fowlers and by falcons); flocking together, flying or wheeling in the air, and especially fearfully flying away; and rooks flying up into the air in flocks.

Some images are relatively frequent, i.e. occur three or four times. However, this emphasizes the relatively small literature, even including fragmentary texts as I have deliberately tried to do. Whether we really have enough extant literature to establish true *topoi* (commonplaces) is debatable. Even the seemingly frequent pair túg-gim...dul, gada-gim...búr occurs only five times in the Nippur corpus (túg-gim...dul on its own a further five times). Conversely because an image is preserved only once we cannot claim that it is unique or original.

In any case, formulaic or multiple use of imagery is not quite the same as formulaic language. 'Formulaic' imagery is not always used for the same effect or with the same content. Investigation of differing individual contexts is crucial and reveals that such expressions by no means always express trite thoughts or the same thoughts.

Consideration of the imagery based on sim^{mušen}/buru$_5{}^{mušen}$...dal (swallows or small birds flying away; exx. **18–22**) shows this. The comparison of possessions to birds may be a formula, but they may be small birds wheeling around without settling (exx. **16–17**) or rooks taking wing suddenly from a cornfield (ex. 24). This observation is a particular result of following one species of imagery throughout the literature.

Some images are used in a way which may be called 'monochrome', i.e. draw upon only one point of comparison with their referents, and indeed would become inappropriate if more detailed correspondence were to be pressed. The description of Ibbi-Suen (ex. 19), leaving his city never to return, as a swallow flying away from the

---

[64] Here only buru$_5$, buru$_4$ and buru$_4$-dugud are discussed. However, it is clear that few other aspects of other birds form the subject of imagery, see Heimpel 1968: 380–457: the cooing of pigeons (no. 58), always interpreted as lamenting; mother and baby birds (57.11, 64.10); a pigeon picking at food on the ground (no. 59); the claws of eagles (76.4–9); the wingspan and screech of the anzu (no. 77); the (apparently agreeable) sighting of unusual birds (57.14, *Cursing of Agade*); colourfulness of *durdar* bird, but only in comparison with another bird (63.1).

[65] *GEN* 48: buru$_5$ u$_4$-zal-le šeg$_{11}$ gi$_4$-gi$_4$-da = 92 mušen-buru$_5{}^{mušen}$ etc. 'at daybreak when the birds begin to chirp'; *EWO* 99: buru$_5{}^{⌈mušen⌉}$-bi gùd$^{⌉}$-ba šeg$_{11}$ mu-da-an-gi$_4$-gi$_4$ 'its birds chirp to me in their nests'; *AfO* **23** 43 sect. IV 1–4 (incantation): á-gú-zi-ga-ta buru$_5$ zi-ga nu-um-me a bur$_5$-ra ka-bi nu-túm-ma / *ina šēri lām iṣṣūru ṣabāri mê ša iṣṣūr la ubla* 'at dawn, before the birds arise(?)(Akk. 'chirp'), before a bird's beak has picked up water'.

[66] See the proverb cited in fn. 62; Krebernik 1984: 54 no 8/1(a): kur buru$_5$ pèš-làl mu-gu$_7$-gim 'like a swarm of locusts eating "honey-figs" in the mountainous land' (Old Sumerian incantation from Šuruppag).

[67] In the notable simile describing the behaviour of the Asag, in *Lugale* 94:
edin-ba máš-anše-bi ú-gug mi-ni-íb-du$_{11}$ bur$_5$(var. adds ^{mušen})-re-eš(var. -éš) šu mi-ni-íb-ḫu-uz
[edin]-na máš-anše-bi ú-gug mi-ni-in-dù buru$_5$-gim šu mi-ni-íb-ḫu-$^{⌈}$uz$^{⌉}$
[*ša*!]$^{⌈}$EDIN$^{⌉}$ *bu-ul-šu uq-qú-uq ki-ma ar-bi-i* (var. *e-ri-bé-e*) *i-ša-a-me*
'He burns up the wild animals of the desert, he roasts them as if they were locusts'. Cf. 'He lets his herds starve on the steppe, he roasts them like locusts' (*PSD*); 'Le bétail de la steppe fut brûlé, fut rôti à la manière des sauterelles' (Attinger 1993: 734).

house where it has been born, is such a 'monochrome' simile. Several other aspects of the situation are quite unlike a swallow's departure: the king is forcibly taken away by external agents, against his will, in fetters.

Other images are much more than structural literary devices serving merely to decorate the text. Images such as those of Enlil the Fowler (exx. **1–4**) or 'The gods are small birds' (exx. **7–10**) are extremely rich and profound, and have many implications and ramifications. This is doubtless connected with the fact that their referents are the personae of deities, Enlil or Inana, and their context is contemplative and independent of time, rather than issuing from a linear narrative structure. These images verge on the religious or mystical rather than the literary, and they are closer to symbols. Then the image can become an object of exploratory contemplation in its own right in which greater depth can be lent to the comparison than is explicit in the details present in the text. The fertile image of Gula being chased like a bird from her temple (exx. **11–13**) is a reflex of that of Enlil the Fowler and belongs here too, as perhaps does the proverbial image of material possessions as flocks of small birds, unable to settle anywhere (exx. **16–17**).

Some images are an organic outgrowth of the real situation which they are intended to illuminate. Thus the swallow in a building (ex. **20**) is an appropriate choice to stand metaphorically for the building's goddess, because the actual building will itself be inhabited by swallows as well. These images too are closer to symbols, because there is some intrinsic connection between the *signifiant* and the *signifié*.

Rooks feeding on a cornfield may rise up suddenly (ex. **23**), raucously cawing; and the movement and noise of this can be used to illuminate the (relatively) sudden departure of an army when the word is at last given and passed along the line. At the same time the rooks rise in a flock into the air, and the army creates a (silent, but rising) dust cloud which billows upwards as the army sets off. In this case two aspects of a single image function separately to illuminate two aspects of the situation referred to.

A related phenomenon is that of paired or intertwined images, where one complements or fills out the implications of another. A pregnant example is the *Lugalbanda* passage (ex. 15), where the heroes of Uruk crowd Lugalbanda as if they were small birds, and then feed him as if he were a *gamgam* chick; the overall situation is illuminated by aspects of both images. In such pairs, either image or both may individually be used in a monochrome way. In "The gods are small birds" (exx. **7–10**) Inana is first a falcon preying on the other gods, then a single wild cow who walks ahead while the wild bulls mill about or butt each other. Such metaphorical structures are formally quite unlike the extended multi-line similes of Classical epic or the complex interlocking conceits of the European poetic tradition. Instead Sumerian poetry has the particular feature of image groups, which I have only touched on here and postpone a fuller discussion of to another occasion. The foregoing must suffice as a preliminary survey of some types of literary imagery in Sumerian. It is a fertile field for investigation, and its further study will draw out the close organisation, complexity, and subtlety of the Sumerian poetic corpus – in short, increase our appreciation of its literary qualities.

REFERENCES

Alster, B.
1972 *Dumuzi's Dream.* Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag.

Alster, B. & H.L.J. Vanstiphout
1987 "Lahar and Ashnan", in: *AcSum* **9** 1–43

Attinger, P.
1993 *Éléments de linguistique sumérienne* (*OBO* Sonderband). Fribourg/Göttingen: Éditions universitaires / Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Black, J.
1992 "Some Structural Features of Sumerian Narrative Poetry", in: Vogelzang & Vanstiphout 1992, 71–101.

Bub, H.
1991 *Bird Trapping and Bird Banding: a handbook for trapping methods all over the world* (English ed.; transl. F. Hamerstrom and K. Wurtz). Ithaca: Cornell UP.

Cohen, M.E.
1975 "The Incantation Hymn: Incantation or Hymn?" in: *JAOS* **95** 592–611.
1981 *Sumerian Hymnology: The Eršemma* (*HUCA Supplements* **2**). Cincinnati: KTAV.
1988 *The Canonical Lamentations of Ancient Mesopotamia.* Bethesda, MD: CDL Press.

Cooper, J.S.
1978 *The Return of Ninurta to Nippur* (*AnOr* **52**). Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute Press.

Ebeling, E.
1953 "Sammlungen von Beschwörungsformeln, teils in sumerischer-akkadischer, teils in sumerischer oder akkadischer Sprache", in: *ArOr* **21** 357ff..

Eco, U.
1984 *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language.* London: Macmillan.

Gordon, E.I.
1959 *Sumerian Proverbs. Glimpses of Everyday Life in Ancient Mesopotamia, with a chapter by Th. Jacobsen.* University Museum Monographs: University of Pennsylvania (Repr. New York: Greenwood Publishers, 1968).

Hallo, W.W. & J.J.A. van Dijk
1968 *The Exaltation of Inanna.* New Haven etc.: Yale UP.

Heimpel, W.
1968 *Tierbilder in der sumerischen Literatur* (*Studia Pohl* **2**). Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute Press.
1981 "The Nanše Hymn", in: *JCS* **33** 65–139.

Jacobsen, Th.
1987 *The Harps That Once* ... New Haven etc.: Yale UP.

Klein, J.
1981 *Three Šulgi Hymns*. Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan UP.

Kramer, S.N.
1960 *Two Elegies on a Pushkin Museum Tablet: A New Sumerian Literary Genre*. Moscow: Oriental Literature Publishing House

1963 "Cuneiform Studies and the History of Literature: The Sumerian Sacred Marriage Texts", in: *PAPS* **107/6** 485–527.

1969 "Sumerian Similes", in: *JAOS* **89** 1–10.

Krebernik, M.
1984 *Die Beschwörungen aus Fara und Ebla* (*TSO* **2**). Hildesheim etc.: Georg Olms.

Krecher, J.
1966 *Sumerische Kultlyrik*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Landsberger, B.
1934 *Die Fauna des alten Mesopotamien nach der 14. Tafel der Serie* ḪAR-RA = *ḫubullu*. Leipzig: Hirzel.

1961 "Einige unerkannt gebliebene oder verkannte Nomina des Akkadischen (2)", in: *WZKM* **57** 1ff.

Maul, S.
1988 *"Herzberuhigungsklagen": die sumerisch-akkadischen Eršaḫunga-Gebete*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Michałowski, P.
1989 *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.

Römer, W.H.Ph.
1965 *Sumerische 'Königshymnen' der Isin-Zeit*. Leiden: Brill.

Salonen, A.
1973 *Vögel und Vögelfang* (*AASF* Ser. B **180**). Helsinki.

Schretter, M.K.
1990 *Emesal-Studien*. Innsbruck: Univ.

Sjöberg, Å.
1975 "in-nin šà-gur$_4$-ra. A Hymn to the Goddess Inanna by the En-Priestess Enḫeduanna", in: *ZA* **65** 161–253.

1983 "The First Pushkin Museum Elegy and New Texts", in: *JAOS* **103** 315–20.

Sladek, W.
1974 *Inanna's Descent to the Netherworld*. Diss.: Johns Hopkins University.

Spurgeon, C.
1935 *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us*. Cambridge UP.

Polentz, B.
1989 *Die Eigenbegrifflichkeit babylonischer Redeformen*. Regensburg: S. Roderer.

Volk, K.
1989 *Die balaĝ-Komposition úru àm-ma-ir-ra-bi* (*FAOS* **18**). Stuttgart: Steiner.

Wilcke, C.
1969 *Das Lugalbandaepos*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

1976 *Kollationen zu den sumerischen literarischen Texten aus Nippur in der Hilprecht-Sammlung, Jena*. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag.

1974 "Formale Gesichtspunkte in der sumerischen Literatur", in: *Studies Jacobsen* 205–316.

MAGIC AND M(IS)USE: POETIC PROMISCUITY IN MESOPOTAMIAN RITUAL

Jerrold S. Cooper

The poetry of incantations has been the subject of a series of brilliant studies by (in chronological order) J. and A. Westenholz, P. Michałowski, E. Reiner, and most recently, Niek Veldhuis.[1] When the call for this second Groningen Workshop arrived, I had just finished reading the Old Babylonian love incantations from Isin published by Claus Wilcke,[2] and had been especially intrigued by the lines *araḫḫi ramānima araḫḫi pagri*, "I inseminate myself, I inseminate my body," which seemed either the height of literary narcissism or the literal fulfillment of a common American curse. In pursuing the parallels to these lines cited by Wilcke, to which A. Cavigneaux has kindly added an unpublished Old Babylonian text from Tell Hadad, I was struck by the fact that despite the appropriateness of the verb *reḫû* to an erotic context, none of the other parallels was used for love magic. Here was an opportunity then, to explore "the matter of linguistic selection in poetry," if not exactly in the sense intended by the conveners in their call for papers.

The Isin incantations are mostly recited by a female, and some seem to have male-female dialogue reminiscent, on a larger scale, of the old Akkadian love incantation *MAD* **5** 8.[3] Another peculiarity of the text is that two men are addressed by name, so it seems to have been compiled for a specific circumstance.[4] The phrases that interest us occur in the last incantation, or the last but one, if the two-line Sumerian text on the left edge is counted. The pronouns in the last four lines indicate that a woman is speaking, but a man probably speaks the first five, including those that we are investigating:

u x-mu-um inašši palā ramānišu
u alpum inašši palā ramānišu
kīma nārum irḫû kibrīša
115 *[a]raḫḫi ramānima*
araḫḫi pagri

---

[1] J. and A. Westenholz 1977; P. Michałowski 1981; E. Reiner 1985; N. Veldhuis 1990 and 1991.

[2] Wilcke 1985.

[3] At least lines 25–29 there are spoken by a woman, and not, as the Westenholzes in Westenholz 1977 argue, by a magician.

[4] I agree with Scurlock 1990 that Wilcke's *entu*-priestess Eṭirtum does not exist (read, with Scurlock, *piṭirtum*), and that his reconstruction of the text's scenario is fanciful. However, she is surely incorrect to de-eroticize the import of the incantations whose rubrics are not specifically marked "for love." In the *piṭirtum* incantation, for example, if we take *ina libbika* of l. 57 as syntactically part of of l. 56, the woman is saying to the man: "Why am I absent, am I not present in your heart? The dog lies, the boar lies, You, now, lie with me, so I can yank on your 'bristles!' Take me for what is yours, and make it mine!" This is very close to the ending of the first incantation on the tablet (20ff.): "May no strange woman come to you! The dog is lying down, the boar is lying down. You! Lie ever down between my legs!" In other cases, Scurlock's argument that the incantations resemble more general incantations for control or advantage or assuaging anger is apt, but this is because these more general incantations have been adapted in the Isin compilation to erotic purposes (see below).

uptettikum sebet bābīya erra-bani
[x x] x x zu ka ri ka ta am uš-ta-ad?-di?-ir
[x (x) G]A-am aptašar šâti
[at]akkul libbika šutaqtiam ina ṣēriya
(*man*):
And the ...[5] lifts up its own rod
And the bull lifts up its own rod
Like the river inseminates its banks,
I inseminate myself,
I inseminate my body!
(*woman*):
I have opened up for you my seven orifices, O Erra-bani![6]
... ...
... I have released/loosened it,
Whatever is constantly [con]suming? your heart – bring it to an end with respect to me!

Given the tenor of the rest of the composition, it seems like a masturbating man is taunting a love-hungry woman, who replies that her orifices lie waiting at his disposal,[7] recalling her boast near the beginning of the tablet (16ff.):

I have detained you in my hairy 'mouth,'
In my urine-genitals,
In my mucus-'mouth,'
In my urine-genitals.

The lifted rods seemingly need no explanation, though they have no parallels elsewhere. The image of the river which builds up its own banks with fertile soil is particularly appropriate to the theme of self-insemination, and occurs again with our phrases on the Old Babylonian tablet *YOS* **11** 2:

araḫḫi ramāni araḫḫi pagri
kīma nārum irḫû kibrīša
kirbān sūqim
eper šulîm
šerḫān šīqim
šūm kirîm
x-a-nu-ú-ma zuqiqīpum
illakuma
inaddûma
la inammušu
I inseminate myself, I inseminate my body,
Like the river inseminates its banks,
Clods of the street

[5] According to Wilcke, the first sign cannot be RI (for *rīmum* "wild bull"), and he tentatively reads ŠU (*šūmum* "leek"), imagining, I suppose, the tall stalks of alliaceous plants.
[6] Note how the proper name is tacked onto an already long line. In lines 30ff. it is especially apparent from the rhythm that the personal name in l. 30 is extraneous. The same is true for Iddin-Damu in l. 100.
[7] Note that *bābu* is attested as the opening of the vagina, anus and mouth. If "seven" is to be taken literally, the four remaining orifices are the ears and nostrils, but perhaps the number is an allusion to the seven gates of hell.

The dirt of the alley,
A torrent of irrigation
The thirst of the garden.
The scorpion ...
They shall come,
They shall cast/settle,
But they must not move/go away.

Following Werner Mayer,[8] the image of the river in this text is followed, not entirely appropriately, by the image of clods of dirt in a street ultimately being trampled down into the hard dirt surface, and a dry garden moistened by the flow of irrigation. But rather than love magic, we more probably have an incantation to protect against or heal scorpion stings. Here, the self-insemination can hardly be an auto-erotic boast. What it signifies, as Mayer already understood, is made clear by an unpublished text from OB Tell Hadad that Antoine Cavigneaux has shared with me:

APIN! (AK) *erṣetam iraḫḫi*
^{d}*šakkan ramānašu uššap*
lūšimma ramāni lūšip šiptam
biṣṣūr kalbatim ...
biṣṣūr sinništim ...
^{d}*šakkan ramānašu uššap*
lūšip ramāni lūšip šiptam
kīma ^{d}*šakkan uššapu ramānšu*
aḫ-zu$^{?}$ *immerū kalūmū*
aḫza kalūmātum maḫ$^{?}$*-ri-šu*
šipat ramāniya yâti aḫzini

The plow inseminates the earth,
Šakkan enchants himself.
Let me enchant myself, let me enchant with a spell!
The vagina of a bitch ...,
The vagina of a woman ...,
Šakkan enchants himself,
Let me enchant myself, let me enchant with a spell!
As when Šakkan enchants himself, and
The rams and lambs are 'seized,'
The female lambs are 'seized' before him,
So, spell (that I cast) on myself, seize me!

In this text, *reḫû* is replaced by *wašāpu*, "to cast a spell (*šiptu*), enchant," calling to mind the non-sexual use of *reḫû*, as when sleep or disease are said to envelop or perhaps, better, penetrate an individual,[9] its use in the D-stem for "to bewitch," as well as the noun *ruḫû* "witchcraft," and other derived forms. The speaker is casting a protective spell on himself. Despite the vaginas, there is no love magic here; the speaker wants his spell to take hold of him (l. 11), just as a vagina holds on to a penis,[10] and the sexual imagery was no doubt suggested by *reḫû* in the first line.

[8] Mayer 1992: 378.
[9] See Mayer 1992: 378; Stol 1993: 16 and 61f.
[10] See note 16.

The seeder-plow does indeed inseminate the earth,[11] but it is not the good parallel to self-insemination or self-enchantment that the image of the river and its bank is. And what of Šakkan? What is referred to by a self-enchantment of Šakkan that causes sheep to be 'seized'? We will return to this question later.

Cavigneaux's discovery of this unequivocal use of *wašāpu* allowed him to find the verb at the beginning of another OB parallel (*TIM* **9** 73 rev.), which follows an incantation for dog bite:

⌈*uš-ša*⌉*-ap-ka ramāni*
a-[ra-a]ḫ-ḫi-ka pagri
kīma a-sa-lu-uḫ da x [ ]
irḫû ra-ma-a[n-šu/ša]
TU EN.NE.NU.RI

I enchant you, O myself!
I inseminate you, O my body!
Just like ...
Inseminates itself.

And again, he found the same verb in a first millennium parallel (*AMT* 67 3):

EN_2 *uš-ša-ap*[!] (so Cavigneaux) *ramāni araḫḫik[a pagri*[?]*]*
kīma ^{d}*šakkan irḫû būlšu* UZ_3 *k[a-]*[12]
U_8 *immeraša* MI_2.ANŠE *mūraša* AM TU_6.EN_2

I enchant myself, I inseminate y[ou, O my body,]
Like Šakkan inseminates his flocks, the she-goat its ...,
The ewe its ram, the she-ass its foal.

Here is Šakkan with his flocks again, and he appears once more, together with the seeder-plow, in *Maqlû* VII:

EN_2 *araḫḫika ramāni MIN pagri*
kīma ^{d}*šakkan irḫû būlšu*
U_8 *immerša* MAŠ.DA_3 *armaša* MI_2.ANŠE *mūrša*
epinnu erṣeti irḫû erṣeti imḫuru zērša
addi šipta ana ramāniya
lirḫi ramānima lišēṣi lumnu
u kišpī ša zumriya lissuḫu
ilū rabûtu

I inseminate you, O myself, I inseminate you, O my body,
Like Šakkan inseminates his flocks,
The ewe its ram, the gazelle its buck, the she-ass its foal,
(As) the plow inseminates the earth and the earth receives its seed,
I have cast a spell on myself.
May it inseminate me, may it expel the evil,
And may the great gods (thereby) remove the witchcraft (from) within me!

Similar, but briefer, is the final parallel, from a collection of sa-gal-la incantations (*CT* **23** 10f. iii 26ff.//4: 9ff.):

araḫḫi ramāni araḫḫi pagri

[11] For the sexuality of the plow, see Wilcke 1987.
[12] See note 15 for possible restorations.

kīma (B omits ?) *kalbu* (A adds *u*) *kalbata šaḫû šaḫīta* ⌜*irta*⌝*kbu* (B *littabku*) *ina ṣērišu*
kīma epinnu erṣetu irḫû erṣetu imḫuru zēr[1]*-šu*
limḫur (B *irḫi*) *ramāni lirḫi ramāni* T[U_6.EN_2]
I inseminate myself, I inseminate my body,
Like a dog mounts a bitch, a boar a sow ...,
Like the plow inseminates the earth and the earth receives its seed,
May myself accept (the spell), may it inseminate myself!

Curiously, none of the first millennium examples retained the river bank simile, the most apt image for the theme of self-insemination. Most problematic is Šakkan inseminating his flocks, rather than, as at Tell Hadad, enchanting (or inseminating) himself. At Tell Hadad, Šakkan's action protects ovines young and old, male and female. In *Maqlû* VII and *AMT* 67, we must have, because of the phonetic attraction of *reḫû*, a corruption of a passage in which Šakkan, as we expect and J. and A. Westenholz suggested,[13] is tending, *re'û* , not inseminating (*reḫû*), his flocks.[14] The pairs that follow should be mothers and young, as is the final pair (she-ass and foal), suggesting that as Šakkan tends the flocks, the she-animals tend their young. But because of the shift from tending to inseminating, the young were replaced by mates in the case of the ewe and the gazelle.[15] This incomplete transformation, as well as the failure to invert the order so that the male would come first, make for syntactic and semantic awkwardness of the first order, as J. and A. Westenholz noted. No wonder that the Šakkan theme was omitted altogether in the sa-gal-la incantation, replaced instead by copulating dogs and pigs, two animals which also occur together as exemplars of animal sexuality in the Isin love incantations.[16]

At this point it is important to emphasize that the versions of the *araḫḫi* incantations are not as close to one another as the versions of the "*Cow of Sîn*," "*Heart Grass*," or

[13] J.& A. Westenholz 1977: 215 n. 31.

[14] Unless, of course, there is a story about Šakkan making love to his animals that we do not know. His behaviour in the *Dunnu Theogony* betrays a healthy sexual appetite, and we know that the moon-god both tends and loves his herds.

[15] In *AMT* 67 the she-goat is paired with *k[a-]*, which might be restored *kazzu*, a young, sexually mature buck, or *kalūmu*, usually designating a lamb, but once, in an exact parallel to the *AMT* 67 series in *MAD* **5** 8, used for "kid" : UZ_3 *kà-lu-ma-sa*$_{10}$ U_8 $SILA_4$-⌜*áš*⌝ *a-tá-num mu-ra-áš*. Cf. A. and J. Westenholz 1977.

[16] Wilcke 1985:21 and 200:57f. The dog is an apt choice, since during copulation its penis swells inside the bitch's vagina and the vagina constricts around it, creating the very tight "copulatory tie" alluded to in the Tell Hadad incantation cited above, and explicitly evoked in a šà-zi-ga incantation: "My vagina is the vagina of a bitch! His penis is the penis of a dog! As the vagina of a bitch holds fast the penis of a dog, (so may my vagina hold fast his penis)!" (Biggs 1967: 33:9ff.). Also *AbB* **12** 181 rev. 7f.: *[b]iṣ-ṣūrum [š]a la ika[ll]û* "a vagina that does not confine" (or perhaps, given the context, "a vagina that never stops"). Cf. Fuller and Dubuis 1962 (reference courtesy T. Holm). The boar was probably chosen because of its characteristic corkscrew-shaped penis, or – less likely – because of the comparatively great volume of semen that boars ejaculate. Cf. Pond and Houpt 1978: 159, and Cole and Cupps 1959: 151 (references courtesy T. Holm). The anguished terror of an Assyrian prince is likened to the orgasmic spasms of a young boar in *The Underworld Vision of an Assyrian Prince* (*SAA* **3** 76:30), but an unpublished terracotta plaque of copulating pigs in the Iraq Museum certainly belies the testimony of Wilcke's zoological informant that "der Koitus von Hunden und Schweinen dem menschlichen sehr ähnlich [ist]" (Wilcke 1985:206). Dogs and pigs, both animals who are found in town and eat scraps, often appear together in Akkadian texts, and once can even be found copulating together (*CAD* s.v. *šaḫû*).

Michałowski's "*Gall*." Particularly for our texts, Veldhuis' strictures against the notion of an original text are valid,[17] but if we are going to follow his injunction to make sense of each version whenever possible, and try to discover how the user of each version may have understood it, and, especially, why and how incantations get reworked,[18] then we must insist on including a diachronic dimension to our investigation. Unlike the "*Cow of Sîn*," "*Heart Grass*," or even "*Gall*," there is no narrative structure in our incantations, and there would be none in a hypothetical Urtext, if we happened to believe in such a thing. Rather, a single performative phrase – "I inseminate (enchant) myself" – is augmented by similes and metaphors that serve to both explicate and intensify the prophylactic measure of self-enchantment. Since, as Veldhuis reminds us, metaphor and simile are basic to both poetry and sympathetic magic, so that "the effectiveness of an incantation is dependent on its poetical quality,"[19] incantations are poems, but poems of a particular type. On the one hand, "the incantation is not just a poem, it is part of a magical ceremony which is intended to influence the future,"[20] which cannot but restrict drastically the poetic choices of the author. On the other hand, the "mechanics of tradition" are not the same for incantations as they are for other literary texts, and the "phrases and structures" of magical language are flexible and adjustable. As oral rites, incantations are very susceptible to change, but because they have a definite purpose, there is a limit to the variation, which, as Veldhuis puts it, accounts for both synchronic differences and diachronic similarities.[21]

When Veldhuis writes of an incantation's "poetical quality," I am certain that he means "its quality of being a poem" and not "the quality of its poetry." As we have already seen, the metaphors and similes chosen to reinforce self-insemination vary in their aptness and, in the sequence of Šakkan's animals, can be confused. Of the three reinforcing figures that occur more than once, the image of a river fertilizing its own banks is the most appropriate. The image of the seeder-plow fertilizing the earth reinforces *reḫû*, true, but reflects nothing of the do-it-yourself character of *araḫḫi ramāni*. And the episode of Šakkan and his flocks, as suggested earlier, must have gravitated to this incantation solely because of the phonetic attraction of *reḫû* for an original *re'û*.

The incantation has an essentially prophylactic purpose: the reciter is enchanting himself, inseminating himself with the power of a spell to keep him from harm. This is most explicit in the unpublished Tell Hadad version, where instead of the ambiguous verb *reḫû* "inseminate," we have only the rare *wašāpu* "to enchant, cast a spell," the verbal cognate of *šiptu* "spell, incantation." But behind the Tell Hadad text must lie one that included the verb *reḫû*; otherwise, there would be no way to account for the first line, *epinnum erṣetam iraḫḫi* "the plow inseminates the earth," nor would the presence of Šakkan be explicable, since, as we have shown, he, too, is part of the imagery of these incantations because of the presence of the verb *reḫû*. Ironically, that verb was replaced by *wašāpu* even when used of Šakkan in the Tell Hadad text.

If I can be excused for positing the "Urtext" of just a single phrase, I would suggest

---

[17] Veldhuis 1991: 6.
[18] Veldhuis 1990: 41f.
[19] Veldhuis 1990: 58f. See also Michałowski 1981: 12 with n. 35.
[20] Veldhuis 1991: 17.
[21] Veldhuis 1990: 41f.

that the "original" self-insemination theme was, as preserved in *TIM* **9** 73 and *AMT* 67 3, *uššapka ramāni araḫḫika pagri* "I enchant you, O myself, I inseminate you, O my body." As the first verb, *wašāpu*, passed from use, it was replaced by the second, *reḫû*, which was well-known, if ambiguous. Both patterns of parallelism, ABA'B' and ABAB' are common in Mesopotamian poetry. Only the Tell Hadad text goes the other way. Unable to tolerate the ambiguity of *reḫû*, it retains just the already rare *wašāpu*, dropping the *reḫû* half of the phrase and replacing it with a repetition of *wašāpu* together with a cognate accusative, *šiptam* "spell," thereby explaining the rare verb by means of the common noun. This quasi-Midrashic character asserts itself again the end of the incantation. Most versions leave out the "petition," as is common in incantations of this type and in oaths, although one version asks "may myself accept (the spell), may it inseminate myself" (*CT* **23** 10f). The Tell Hadad version, however, not only names but directly addresses the spell: "O spell on myself, take hold of me!"

The only other version that is explicit in its intention is in *Maqlû* VII: "I have cast a spell on myself. May it (the spell) inseminate myself, may it expel the evil, and may thereby the great gods remove the witchcraft from my body!" Here our formula is no longer prophylactic, a self-administered spell designed to protect against various dangers, but has been transformed into an exorcistic incantation intended to eradicate witchcraft.[22] This transformation has been accomplished by developing the idea of insemination inherent in *reḫû* : just as the plow inseminates the earth and the earth receives its seed (implied: and then sends forth shoots), so may the spell inseminate my body and then send forth (implied: like a foetus) evil. The evil is to be externalized in a birthing process. A similar notion is found in the Neo-Assyrian royal ritual published by Werner Mayer: "On the 9th day you bring a virgin before the king and he inseminates her and sends her to the border of the enemy land. When he has copulated with the virgin, he will, on the 3rd day, bathe in juniper-scented water."[23] That is, evil is transferred by intercourse from the king to the virgin, who in turn will eventually expel the evil in the form of a new-born in enemy territory.[24]

---

[22] See Abusch 1987 ch. 1 for the adaptation of more general incantations to witchcraft-specific incantations in *Maqlû* .

[23] Mayer 1989. As Mayer notes, the actual performance of the ritual is discussed in *LAS* 137–139. Thanks to Dr. S. Maul for an informative discussion of this ritual and its problems.

[24] Mayer misinterprets the ritual as meaning that the semen of the king bears numinous royal power which, when brought by the girl to the enemy land, will ward off the enemy. But the argument on pp. 152ff. n. 11 against his own position is more convincing. The royal semen carries the pollution that endangers the king (and country), as do the cut hair mentioned in the fragmentary beginning of the ritual and in the similar royal ritual *RAcc* 36: 20ff., and the clipped royal nails in *LAS* 137. All of these are sent off "to the border of the enemy land," i.e. gotten out of Assyria. Since the hair in *RAcc* 36 and the nails in *LAS* 137 are sealed in a jar for their journey, we may consider the inseminated virgin an analogue of the sealed jar; the purpose of the ritual would then not necessarily be to impregnate her and have her actually give birth in the enemy land, but just to carry off the polluted semen and remain abroad with it. However, the insistence on an unmarried woman suggests that she was not just a vessel for the semen – any woman would do for that – but was meant to conceive. Her virginity would guarantee that the child really was engendered by the polluted royal semen. I would not like to speculate on the eventual fate of mother and child. Sending polluted bodily fluids off to "the border of the enemy land" not only gets them out of Assyria, but, of course, contaminates the enemy land as well. A recent version of this ancient practice can be found in the reported threat that Russian politician Vladimir Zhirinovsky addressed to the Lithuanians: "I will destroy you! I will bury radio-active waste on your borders and all the Lithuanians will die of radiation poisoning!"

Maqlû has effected its transformation of the incantation by developing the reproductive implications of *reḫû*. In the Isin love incantations, our phrases seem to have been incorporated solely because of the association of *reḫû* with the theme of love. There is no prophylaxis there: as suggested above, at best *araḫḫi ramānima araḫḫi pagri* can be understood as part of a raunchy taunt by a man who would rather make love to himself than surrender to the woman who desires him. This uniquely casual use of the theme is perhaps explained by the *ad hoc* nature of the Isin compilation. The adaptation for love magic of these lines which "originally" had nothing whatsoever to do with love, can be compared to the way the same Isin compilation uses three well-known incantations against *uzzu* "anger, ferocity."[25] Lines 78–98 of the Isin tablet reproduce these incantations with a crucial difference from all other occurrences of them: at Isin, each one concludes *šeḫiṭ uzzu ša Nanāya* "Leap,[26] O ferocity of Nanaya!" Nanaya, of course, is the goddess of sexual love. Thus, what were apotropaic incantations to ward off or assuage anger, have become invocations of sexual frenzy![27] The only reason these *uzzu* incantations were incorporated into the Isin collection seems to be the possibility that the term *uzzu* could also be applied to sexual excitement.

That long-time student of Babylonian magic, Tzvi Abusch, assures us that anomalies in a specific version of an incantation can be explained in terms of that version's development: "It is to be assumed that every magical text, regardless of its present state, was at one time coherent."[28] Much of the variation and most of the anomalies in the *araḫḫi* incantations can be and have been, above, explained in the spirit of the studies invoked at the beginning of this contribution, even if the *araḫḫi* texts never attain the levels of complexity or the poetic quality of "*Heart Grass*," "*Cow of Sîn*," or "*Gall*." However, the incorporation of *araḫḫi* into the Isin love magic compilation, like that compilation's use of the *uzzu* incantations, moves beyond any previously established limits or principles for the use of magical texts. Whether we see *araḫḫi* there as a clever adaptation of stock magical phrases for an amorous dialogue, or as gratuitous inclusion only because *reḫû* has sexual connotations, it is no longer being used as a prophylactic incantation, nor has it been transformed into any other known type of incantation (as in *Maqlû*), despite its presence in a magical context. And the *uzzu* incantations in the Isin compilation seem entirely anomalous in that their newly added last line seems to invoke what the previous lines try to abolish.

---

[25] For the *uzzu* incantations, see Whiting 1985.

[26] The verb can mean, in addition to "jump, leap," also "mount" in a sexual sense, "jerk, convulse" and even "attack." The nuance here may or may not be sexual.

[27] Possibly, the *uzzu* incantations are being used in both senses. By themselves they serve to assuage the anger of the lover who is rejecting the female reciter, and with the addition of the final line they then invoke amorous excitement. B. Foster's epoch-making two-volume *Before the Muses. An Anthology of Akkadian Literature* (Bethesda: CDL Press, 1993) appeared after this paper was first submitted. I am pleased to see that he also attributes a possible sexual nuance to *uzzu* (vol. I. pp. 123 and 141), although, characteristically, his choice of "arousal" as the English equivalent is far more felicitous than my "excitement." However, for all the reasons given here, I would disagree with his translations of *araḫḫi ramāni* as "I spew over myself" and "I make myself moist" (I 129 and 145).

[28] Abusch 1987: 45.

The compiler of the Isin tablet seems to have browsed through the available magical literature and chosen incantations whose key-words had sexual connotations, even though the use of those words in the incantations themselves was entirely non-sexual. In the case of *reḫû*, we have seen that the incantation's imagery already exploited this ambiguity (though not in the variation selected by the Isin compiler). In the case of *uzzu*, it was quite a stretch. The texts themselves may be coherent, but in context they are justified only by the ambiguity of their key-words. Ambiguity certainly was a generating force in this compilation – Empson was also at Isin[29] – and it would be interesting to know if it is such a force elsewhere in the magical literature, or if such a loose principle of composition is confined to *ad hoc* compilations like this one.

[29] See H. Vanstiphout's contribution to this volume.

REFERENCES

Abusch, Tzvi
1987 *Babylonian Witchcraft Literature. Case Studies.* Atlanta: Scholars Press.

Biggs, Robert D.
1976 $ŠA_3$.ZI.GA. *Ancient Mesopotamian Potency Incantations.* (*TCS* **2**). Locust Valley: Augustin.

Cole, C.H. & P.T. Cupps
1959 *Reproduction in Domestic Animals.* New York: Academic Press.

Fuller, J.L. & E.M. Dubuis
1962 "The Behavior of Dogs", in: E. Hafez (ed.), *The Behavior of Domestic Animals.* Baltimore: Wilkens and Wilkens.

Mayer, W.
1989 "Die Verwendung der Negation im Akkadischen zur Bildung von Indefinit- bzw. Totalitätsausdrücken", in: *Or NS* **57** 145–70.

1992 "Das 'gnomische Präteritum' im literarischen Akkadisch", in: *Or NS* **61** 373–99.

Michałowski, Piotr
1981 "Carminative Magic: Towards an Understanding of Sumerian Poetics", in: *ZA* **71** 1–18.

Pond, W.G. & K.A. Houpt
1978 *The Biology of the Pig.* Ithaca: Cornell UP.

Reiner, Erica
1985 "The Heart Grass", Pp. 94–100 in id., *Your Thwarts in Pieces, Your Mooring Rope Cut. Poetry from Babylonia and Assyria.* Ann Arbor: Michigan Studies in the Humanities **5**.

Scurlock, Joan
1990 "Was there a 'Love-Hungry' *Entu* -priestess named Eṭirtum?" in: *AfO* **36/37** 107–12.

Stol, Marten
1993 *Epilepsy in Babylonia.* (*CM* **2**) Groningen: Styx Publications.

Veldhuis, Niek
1990 "The Heart Grass and Related Matters", in: *OLP* **21** 27–44.
1991 *A Cow of Sin.* (*LOT* **2**) Groningen: Styx Publications.

Westenholz, J. & A.
1977 "Help for Rejected Suitors: The Old Akkadian Love Incantation *MAD* **V** 8", in: *Or NS* **46** 198–219.

Whiting, R.M.
1985 "An Old Babylonian Incantation from Tell Asmar", in: *ZA* **75** 179–87.

Wilcke, Claus
1985 "Liebesbeschwörungen aus Isin", in: *ZA* **75** 188–209.
1987 "A Riding Tooth". Pp. 77–102 in M. Mindlin *et.al.* (eds.), *Figurative Language in the Ancient Near East.* London: School of Oriental and African Studies.

TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF LITERARINESS AS APPLIED TO AKKADIAN LITERATURE.

Brigitte Groneberg

1 *THE TERM LITERATURE.*

In the theory of Akkadian literature texts of different genres and of very different literary and poetic quality are taken as "literature" in a literal sense of that term.[1] There are two relatively recent comprehensive articles about Akkadian literature. One is E. Reiner's descriptive systematical approach of 1978;[2] the second is W. Röllig's systematical bibliographical article of 1987.[3] Reiner describes the content and to a lesser degree the style[4] of the following types of Akkadian literature: myths and epics, autobiography, hymns and prayers,[5] profane and magical poetry, wisdom literature, humour and prose. She includes royal inscriptions, which Röllig excludes.[6] In his definition literary texts are: narrative works, subdivided in mythological texts, epics, *narû*-literature and pseudo-autobiographical texts,[7] while other categories are: hymns, prayers and elegies, as well as letters, dialogues, wisdom literature, magical literature, farces, satires and propaganda literature.[8] In contrast to literary texts, "Gebrauchsliteratur",[9] such as letters, legal and economic documents but also scientific and astronomical notes are classified by Röllig as non-literary texts.[10]

---

[1] From Latin *litteratura* which means that which is written ("das Geschriebene, Buchstabenschrift, Sprachkunst".)

[2] Reiner 1978: 159: "Für die folgende Darstellung ... hätte ich all die Textarten aufzählen können, die üblicherweise unter dem Begriff "Literatur" subsumiert sind oder wenigstens jene, die meines Erachtens mit Recht so klassifiziert werden. Unter jedem Typ hätte ich dann all die bekannten Texte aufführen und eine mehr oder weniger ausführliche Beschreibung ihres Inhalts geben können[...] Ich habe deshalb die Methode gewählt, einige der literarischen Typen herauszugreifen und daran eine Diskussion des einen oder anderen Aspektes akkadischer Literatur anzuschließen."

[3] Which has in mind the development of possible well as their transition to Akkadian genres from the Sumerian literature.

[4] It was not the purpose of E. Reiner's study to establish points of literary style. The poetic style of some of the literary texts treated in the *Handbuch* she described in two later studies (see Reiner 1980 and 1985). The *Handbuch* aims to address a broader public than the *Reallexikon*.

[5] She classifies hymns and prayers as "poems".

[6] He refers to Renger's article "Königsinschriften" in the *Reallexikon*, where it is mentioned that some call this category "literature" and others not, see Renger, 1980 p.76f. § 11.

[7] And "other narrative texts".

[8] And "other": Röllig 1987: 65 §4.10: Note there: "Es ist eine Ermessensfrage, welche der zahlreichen in §§ 4.1.-9 nicht berücksichtigten Literaturwerke in akk[adischer] Sprache hier aufgeführt werden sollen. Es kommen lediglich einige in letzter Zeit diskutierte Texte zur Sprache" He lists among others "*tamītu*" texts and prophecies.

[9] For this term used in another sense see below p. 5f.

[10] Texte "des täglichen Gebrauchs wie Briefe[n], Rechts- und Wirtschaftsurkunden, aber auch ... wissenschaftliche[n] Literatur wie lexikalische[n] und grammatische[n] Listen, Omina, mathematische[n] und astronomische[n] Aufzeichnungen". See Röllig 1987: 48b.

Comparing both authors' enumeration of texts it is obvious that with a few exceptions[11] there is general consensus about the classification of Akkadian texts as being literary or not literary. However, when arranging certain texts according to genres discrepancies do occur.[12]

The distinction between documents as non-literary versus literary texts is based on the assumption that literary texts are composed and written in a specific style, which can be recognized as a balanced interrelation between a visual, grammatical and rhythmical form, the text's multifunctional semantic levels in the story as told, and the imagery in the language.[13] Though this description of literariness through formal stylistic rules[14] is generally not disputed in the theory of literature,[15] in the field of Akkadian studies it has been applied to very few literary categories.[16]

While in the theory of literature literary texts are identified in very different ways,[17] non-literary texts usually are not defined. The distinction between literary and non-literary rests not only on function, as non-literary texts are documentary texts for everyday need only, and literary texts are more than that; it also rests on stylistic differences which are more or less pronounced. Documentary texts use a particular language or code in order to attain their object: the demonstration, communication or registration of ideas and things. The language or code of a literary text on the contrary, does not only demonstrate, communicate, and certainly not merely registrate an idea or a thing, but communicates several additional bits of information which correspond to a certain community's artistic conventions, and uses the literary rules of the community language of that group.

As the acceptance of an object as a piece of art according to some (often unconscious) common artistic conventions is partly embedded in emotions, this definition of the literariness of a text is partly emotional. Furthermore it supposes the acceptance or recognition of rules by which a text becomes "literary". It also implies that literature is not written for private needs (not solely for the author of that piece of work), but purposely for an audience. It has the intention to create and express something special, namely a feeling, a knowledge, or a story while using the special literary style of that group.[18]

---

[11] For example, Röllig cites "divine and royal letters" among literature, see *ibid.* 57 § 4.5: "Die 'Gattung' des literarischen Briefes ist auch in der akkadischen Literatur bekannt, hat allerdings keine verbindliche literarische Gestaltung gefunden."

[12] Only one example: Röllig arranged "the great hymn to Šamaš" (*BWL* p. 121ff.) among the goal-oriented "instructions" and Reiner 1978 among "hymns". The problem of establishing genres for Akkadian literature will be discussed elsewhere.

[13] Imagery includes the symbolic and metaphorical level of expressions. See a description of the different semantic levels used in poems in Hendricks 1969, especially 423ff.

[14] In German terminology this is the correlation between "Form" and "Inhalt". See Doležel 1967: 377: ..."Für mich ist allein von Bedeutung, daß in einem literarischen Kunstwerk der Inhalt von der Form kontrolliert wird... in einem literarischen Kunstwerk hat alles, was ausgedrückt werden soll, seine spezifische Form...". Compare Petöfi 1971 for a definition of a piece of verbal art ("Sprachliches Kunstwerk"). Applied to Sumerian literature, see Vanstiphout 1993.

[15] See Culler 1977 chapter 6: literary competence; chapter 8: poetics of the lyric; chapter 9: poetics of the novel. In modern societies literature can be treated in less rigid style, see Hardt 1976: 55–60.

[16] Works known to me are Reiner 1980, 1985; Michałowski 1982; and Vanstiphout 1993.

[17] See Wellek & Warren 1980: 20–28.

[18] Or, in the terminology of the 'Informationsästhetik' established by Bense 1969, the author codes it and the audience is able to decode it, using a common aesthetic code. This theory has been modified by Eco

This definition, implying that individual style is dependent on a group's stylistic conventions and expectations, also implies the author's intuition of himself as being a poet creating something extraordinary in his group's artistic convention; conversely, a non-poetic writer who attempts to write a poem knows that it is of special interest only to him and possibly to the person he addresses.

In archaic Mesopotamian society authors (in the sense of personally creative composers of literary texts) can seldom be recognized: writing is normally reserved to scribes and seldom to authors.[19] It will be difficult to uncover the creation of a written poem, because the writing of a poem will normally have been the last step in a succession of oral transmittals. Moreover, the writing itself of the poem did not have the same impact as it has in our highly visually oriented society, where writing and reading are of uttermost importance.[20] Nevertheless, it can be seen by the arrangement of some texts on their tablets that the visual presentation has been done on purpose according to some universal rules of poetics, which usually establish the text's formal poetic structure. This must have been accomplished by one or several successive scribes who shared a feeling of the uniqueness of a piece of literature and who accepted it as being part of their tradition and who copied it. This supposes that they recognized the artistic style of a special text – and that that was the reason why they wrote it down – as likewise they may be assumed to have accepted the scientific and normative character of other non literary but scientific-documentary texts.

Non-literary texts on the contrary memorize deeds or thoughts of an individual or a group which have to be written down for practical and mundane reasons only. The reason could be to pass a message to someone who is absent, to make certain that an object described should not be forgotten or that for other, mostly technical, reasons something should be exactly recorded. This is the case with lists, which are scribe's manuals, or with rituals and omens which are to be consulted or excercised in a concise, scientific way.

Many of these documentary texts such as omens and rituals must have been of general interest for the ancient community since they were included in the famous catalogue of *Texts and Authors*.[21] This catalogue, though probably including real authors,[22] does not indicate literariness of a text, but may be regarded as a sign of the importance of that text for the cultural and religious system of Ancient Mesopotamia. These texts are memorized because they have to be consulted according to a certain convention; other possible texts, such as notably the *aḫû*-versions[23] are excluded. The

1972: 149–151; see further Baumgärtner 1969: 372ff. and Lotman 1972: 43ff.

[19] The authors in the *List of Authors* in Lambert 1962 range from gods and *apkallū* to real men. The line of gods and *apkallū* in the grey primordial world functioning as tradents of culture right down to the authors of *ludlul bēl nēmeqi* or the *Epic of Gilgameš* (in the SB version) shows that those authors did think themselves to be real authors, not scribes, transmitting culture on a "medium", the tablet, instead of only expressing it.

[20] The matter of oral or aural information has recently been discussed broadly by various authors in Vogelzang & Vanstiphout (eds.) 1992.

[21] See the commentary to ll. I 1, 2, 3, vi 13, 17, vii 3 in Lambert 1962.

[22] Lambert 1962: 72s. esp. 75; he does not treat the question whether *Sîn-leqê-unninī* is a real author. If the work is rightfully ascribed to him, the retelling of all the different episodes about Gilgameš in the Ninevite version, with all the well known artful narrative devices, certainly shows him to be a poet and not only a scribe merely writing down this great piece of literature.

[23] See Rochberg-Halton 1987.

texts to be memorized serve to master the ancient world, and they are a cultural gift of the gods. Yet, judged by the literary style of the group, they have only documentary character.

2 *THE INTRINSIC RULES OF LITERARY STYLE : PRELIMINARY REMARKS.*

I would submit some considerations helping towards the evaluation of the quality of a work as part of Akkadian literature. It must be established whether some texts are poetic or non-poetic; by which possible feature(s) lyrical or narrative texts can be distinguished; and with which determinative linguistic markers Akkadian poems are constructed.[24]

For my demonstration I will analyse six parts from four different texts taken from: "literature of everyday use" [**(a)** & **(f)**], lyrical texts [**(b)**, **(d)** & **(e)**], and a small narrative part [**(c)**] of a mixed narrative/lyrical text.

(a) *A šu-illa* prayer to Marduk[25]
(b) *Enūma eliš* T. IV 1ff.[26]
(c) *Enūma eliš* T. II 1 ff.
(d) *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*: *AnSt* 30, 101–108 + *BWL* 343[27]
(e) *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*: *BWL* p. 32, ll. 57–65
(f) The Heart Grass[28]

According to Röllig, examples **(b)** and **(c)** belong in the category "mythological narrative with the aim of instruction",[29] but Reiner uses the term "dramatic monologue" in her section "wisdom literature".[30] Text **(f)** is classified by Reiner as "folk-poetry".[31] Text **(a)** has been described by Abusch as a prayer. Texts **(d)** and **(e)** have been classified either as "wisdom literature" (Reiner) or as a "penitential psalm" (Röllig).[31a]

The following introductory discussion about Akkadian literature is directed at four aspects of literary analysis:[32]

- the formal structure of the literary text ("outer form"),
- the grammatical literary style ("inner form"),[33]

---

[24] For a critical assessment of a pure formal linguistic interpretation of a poem see Baumgärtner 1965a and 1965b.
[25] Abusch 1984. The English translation of ll. 1–9 is Abusch's.
[26] The transcription follows W.G. Lambert *Enūma eliš*, the translation Dalley 1990: 233ff.
[27] Gurney, *AnSt.* **30** (1980) 101ff. + joins and variants; see Moran 1984: 225–60, Groneberg 1987a: 323f., von Soden 1990: 110–35.
[28] Reiner 1980 and 1985: 94ff.
[29] Röllig 1987: 51 §4.1.1.–01.
[30] See Reiner 1978: 195.
[31] Reiner 1985: 94, following E. Stankiewitz, *Structural Poetics and Linguistics*, (ed.) T.A. Sebeok, Vol. 12.
[31a] Röllig 1987: 57 §4.4.5
[32] See Todorov 1964: 120–30 for reflections about form and content, also in contrast between prose and poetry.
[33] Compare Doležel 1967: 376–92 for some considerations.

- the imagery, such as symbols, metaphors and allegories, and
- their interrelations with the sound-scheme and stylistic and lexicographic redundancies.

The visual arrangement of a literary text is dependent on the period in which it is written. Since different genres of literary texts are visually markedly different, in Akkadian texts we certainly have a diatopic and diachronic distinction in poetics and literary texts.

Special grammatical forms, a distinct literary word order, and a particular selection of vocabulary are by now well-known features of literary texts. They create a special pattern of assonance and they serve to introduce redundancy. They presumably structure the text according to specific, i.e. narrative or lyric, sets. The grammatical literary style marks genres, and I assume that it changes only superficially over the periods.

The imagery of a literary text, the most important and distinctive literary feature, creates a meta-level of mental associations. It is this feature which distinguishes poetic (in a strict sense) from 'merely' literary texts. Without being able to prove it, we suppose that also in Akkadian literature the imagery evoked is accentuated by the sound pattern, since this is a universal phenomenon.

One more important aspect, the scenic setting of the literary text or the external style can here only be discussed superficially, though it is a very important literary feature as it can mark the generic identification of a text. Assyriologists often experience great difficulty when trying to assign a text to the dramatic mode.[34] Similarly, it may be problematic to define a text as satirical or humorous; see for example *The Poor Man from Nippur*.[35] From modern literature we know that the satirical level of literature in most languages is situationally determined. It can be expressed by extra-lingual signs such as the dress or behaviour of the speaker, or the scenic setting of the reading.[36] The satirical marker very often is a procedure which overlies in a funny fashion an otherwise serious or dull text.[37] Yet, judging by the difficulties we already have in distinguishing a statement from a query in a "simple" letter – where the interrogative pronoun or adverb is missing – I am of the opinion that we will never be able to recognize such scenic settings adequately in Akkadian.

There are some texts that have a distinctive visual poetic arrangement or some special grammatical literary forms, but that are without any imagery. Thus we have texts belonging to "magical literature" – and practice – which consist of a ritual part but also include "incantations" in the ritual process. This kind of literature I define as "literature for everyday use".[38]

---

[34] This has been supposed for the OB *juste souffrant*; see Nougayrol 1952.

[35] See Cooper 1975: 167 and Jason 1979: 189–215, both of whom describe the text as a folk-tale; Röllig 1987: 64 § 4.9.1b classifies it as "farce". See also George 1993 for another "joke" in Akkadian literature.

[36] Look for example at Molière's *Tartuffe* in the modern film version with Louis de Funès, where large parts of the funny scenic setting are done by Tartuffe's spectacular costuming as a peacock.

[37] This was for example D.O. Edzard's idea in analyzing the ritual of the divine "love lyrics"; see Edzard 1987: 57f.

[38] Some literary texts can be questionable; see already Groneberg 1987b: 13 and note 72.

An example of a *literary* but *non-poetic* text is the prayer to Marduk:
Example (**a**):

1	*gašru šūpû etel Eridug*	Famed mighty one, chieftain of Eridug,
	šr š t r d	
2	*rubû tizqāru bukur* ^{d}*Nudimmud*	Exalted Prince, first-born of Nudimmud,
	r b ti q r b k r di	
3	^{d}*Marduk šalbābu murīš E'engura*	Raging Marduk, restorer of rejoicing to E'engura.
	m r š m r š	
4	*bēl Esagila tukulti Bābili*	Lord of Esangila, hope of Babylon,
	l l l l	
5	*rā'im Ezida mušallim napišti*	Lover of Ezida, preserver of life,
	š š	
6	*ašarēd Emaḫtila mudeššû balāṭi*	Lone one of Emaḫtila, multiplier of living,
	š d tila d šš laṭi	
7	*ṣulūl māti gamil nišī rapšāti*	Protection of the Land, saviour of the multitudes of people,
	l l mati mil š šati	
8	*ušumgal kališ parakkê*	The single great one of chapels everywhere, –
	š gal kal š kki	
9	*šumka kališ ina pī nišī ṭāb*	Your name is sweetly hymned by the people everywhere!
	š ka ka š p š b	
...		...
12	***luš**tammar ilūtka*	I will praise your divinity;
	lu t lut	
13	*ēma uṣammaru **luk**šud*	I will reach whatever I wish;
	m mm lu	
14	*šuškin kittu ina pīya*	Let there be justice in my mouth;
	ki ki	
15	*šubši amāt damiqti ina libbiya*	Install a good word in my heart;
16	*tīru u nanzāzu liqbû damiqti*	tiru and nanzazu may speak my well-being;
	ti ti	
17	*ilī lizziz ina imniya*	My god may stand at my right side;
	li li	
18	*ištarī **li**zziz ina šumē**li**ya*	My goddess may stand at my left side;
	š li š li	
19	*ilu mušallimu idāya/ina idīya lū kayān*	The god who makes well my sides/ may be always at my side!
	l ll l	
20	*šurkamma qabâ šemâ u magāru*	Give me as a gift to speak, to listen and to agree!
	š rk mm q š m m g r	
...		...
26	*ilū ša kiššati likrubūka*	The gods of the universe may greet you;
	š k šš k k	
27	*ilū rabûti libbaka liṭibbū*	The great gods may make good your heart
	l b ti libb liti b	

The visual arrangement of this text is not as systematically structured as in some other poetic texts (about which more below). Only in some lines is the literary style determined by assonance, sometimes by heavy consonant (and vowel) assonance as in lines 20 and 27,[39] sometimes in a reduced form (lines 13, 17), and sometimes apparently without any system (lines 15, 19). The word order and the vocabulary itself are conventional and not distinctively "literary".[40]

However, there are undoubtedly some literary markers. In line 1 the adjective is placed before its noun: this is a definite poetic feature. In lines 12–13, which constitute a single verse, the word-order is chiastic: in line 12 the verb is placed at the beginning, while line 13 ends with the verb.

The literary style of the text is partly based on the sound-scheme and partly on the development of the text's theme. Abusch recognized that the approach, the meeting and prayer to Marduk take the form of a ring composition. It seems that the format of the text is determined by its religious purpose. Elements from the introduction are repeated at the end of the prayer. As will be shown by example **(d)**, another, "poetic", prayer to Marduk is very different.

3 *THE FORMAL STRUCTURE OF POETICAL TEXTS.*

Since von Soden's work of 1931,[41] we know of one marked feature for the presentation of literary texts: their arrangement in strophe and verse.[42] This feature of a "strophe" in a four-line or in a ten-line verse unit marks some OB lyrics or what have been called "hymns or prayers"; in post-OB times their characteristics can be different.

Ideally a strophe is shown on the tablet by a separating line which should mark off the passage as a semantic unit. This happens in quite a number of texts,[43] but there are other poetic texts that are underlined throughout, which is regular procedure in documentary texts of that time.[44] Yet is has to be kept in mind that the four-line strophe in OB times is typical for poetry only, and not for narrative texts.

In later periods the four-line strophe exists only rarely,[45] mostly in the "lyrical

---

[39] I only marked the assonances of consonants but left out vocalic assonance, except for a few obvious cases. Syllabically written Akkadian makes it difficult to distinguish the quality of the vowel. Later developments, especially in Elamite script (see Reiner 1969: 54–118 esp. p. 70), shows clearly that the nucleus of a CV/VC sign is the consonant and not the vowel. Though sometimes the quality of the used vowel offers itself as a possible assonance, this can be misleading. To a lesser degree this caution is applicable to the usual system of consonances as well. For example /m/ alternates in some dialects with Ø or /'/ (aleph), and so it is not always a sonoric labial. On the other hand, / š/ might be still nearer to /l/ even when written as /š/ (see Steiner 1977 and Voigt 1979). That is why I established the minimal and not the broadest possible system of dependencies.

[40] See in example **(f)** line 13 as identical with this line 13.

[41] Von Soden 1931: 171 n.2; *ZA* **49** (1950) 153; Held 1961: 3f.

[42] See for a definition Levy 1972: 17–41; in Semitic languages see Watson 1986.

[43] Four-liners: *VS* **10**, 215; 214; Thureau-Dangin, *RA* **22**, 170f.; ten-liners are attested in the OB Akkadian version of *Innin-šà-gur$_4$-ra* (unpublished except for *Sumer* **11**, pl. VI and 13, pl. I-VI).

[44] Single line structure or mostly single line structure: all three hymns from *CT* **15**, 1–6; Pinches, *JRAS Centenary Supplement* 1924, 63ff. (mostly single line structure); Lambert, *BiOr* **30** (1973), 359f.; see also single liners in many letters from Mari and pp. in OB letters.

[45] See Lambert, *OrNS* **36** (1967) 105ff.: LB version of the *Great Gula Hymn* in some exemplars: twelve-liners.

repetition" (see below: 4.4.).[46] The custom changes to two lines[47] or ten lines[48] per strophe, but there are many variants that show different line-markings or none at all.[49] In the later periods lyric poetry may be marked by a rigid outer structure, as happens in the great *Šamaš Hymn*,[50] the *Theodicy*, the *Gula Hymn* and especially the *Nabû Hymn*; or it may not, as in *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*.[51] Furthermore, line-marking can be used in post OB narrative texts: I found some lining in later texts of the *Etana* fable from Assur.[52] Similarly, one of the manuscripts of *Enūma eliš* (*STT* 1) is underlined, but the other *Enūma eliš* texts apparently are all without any such marks. So this marker of many of the Old Babylonian lyrical texts became apparently wearingless in post-Old Babylonian times. More important still is the fact that the underlining sometimes disrupts parallelism – for example in some lines in the great *Šamaš Hymn*.[53] This points to a purely formalistic treatment of underlining and to a secondary visual poetic "preparation" of the written text.

Another marker of the visual structure, *viz.* the indication, by leaving a blank space, of the caesura in the middle of a verse, can also mark a text as being poetic.[54]

Similarly, other particular methods of arrangement of the text on a tablet can indicate its genre.[55]

In contrast, there is no distinctive visual structure in narrative texts: apart from the rare feature of enjambment a phrase ends with the end of a line.[56]

4 *THE GRAMMATICAL LITERARY STYLE : THE "INNER FORM".*[57]

Criteria of grammatical style are unusual grammatical forms, aberrant word-order, assonances and parallelism.

4.1 *Selection of unusual grammatical forms and word order.*

In analyzing Standard Babylonian lyrics the following grammatical forms can be recognized as indicating literary or poetic works, even in a diachronical perspective:[58]

---

[46] Very regulary in the *Nabû Hymn* published by von Soden, *ZA* **51**, 50ff.; see Groneberg 1976: 183f.

[47] See the *Hymn to Šamaš*, *BWL* p. 125ff.; the *Hymn to Nanāya*, Reiner, *JNES* **33**, 221ff.; two *Marduk Hymns*, Lambert, *AfO* **19** 55ff., p. 61ff.

[48] See the *Hymn to Ištar*, Lambert, *AfO* **19**, 61ff.; the *Theodicy*, *BWL* 63ff. (except for the first strophe, which contains 11 lines).

[49] See *BA* **5/5**: 16 and some texts belonging to the *Marduk Hymn* in Lambert, *AfO* **19**, 61f. (Pl. xix).

[50] See *BWL* 125ff.

[51] See *BWL* 21ff.

[52] See Kinnier Wilson 1985 pl. 5–9.

[53] See lines 87–88/89–90/91–92/93–94; this arrangement has been changed by W.G. Lambert into : 85–86–87/88–89/90–91/92–93. Other changes took place in ll. 109–142, 151–158, 171–186.

[54] See for example the OB *Agušaya Hymn*, *VS* **10**, 214 and the copy *BWL* pl. 1 belonging to *ludlul bēl nēmeqi*. The new text (see note to example **(b)**) shows no caesura.

[55] How very distinguished the outer form of a text denotes its nature can be seen on texts from Emar, see e.g. *Emar* **VI/1** 205 (No. 651); compare to *šumma ālu* omina in *CT* **38–41**.

[56] See for example in *Agušaya*, Groneberg 1981: lines vii 18–19, and in purely narrative texts Hecker 1974: 110 and 142f. (with references).; Izre'el 1992: 179f.

[57] For the importance of this feature in literary texts see Todorov 1964.

[58] Groneberg 1976.

- Apocope of pronominal suffixes : *-š* in stead of *-šu/ša*; *-šnu*, *-šna* in stead of *-šunu* and *-šina*. These features appear in both OB lyrical and narrative literature, and in SB lyrical texts. They never occur in "literature of everyday use". They are, however, used quite often in royal inscriptions.[59]
- Nominal forms in *-iš* and *-um* + pronominal suffix occur frequently in OB and in SB lyrics but not so often in narrative texts and in royal inscriptions. They do not appear in incantations, not even in standard formulations like *tamiḫ qātuššu*.[60]
- Adverbs in *-iš* in a restricted semantic distribution (i.e. in topics) appear in all kinds of literature. But in new formulations, using a new vocabulary, they occur only in narrative or lyrical texts. Infinitives in *-iš* are also in general limited to lyrical and to narrative texts, but they do occur as conscious archaisms in the very learned SB 'scientific' texts.[61]
- There seems to be a tendency to use statives and participles in poetic texts, which might be less frequent in narrative and documentary texts. Both forms do appear frequently in royal inscriptions. I suppose that narrative texts use another inventory of forms from the so-called temporal system than lyrical texts.[62] The frequency of verb use in tn-forms appears not to be an indicator of whether a text is literary or documentary (see for example the frequent use of tn-forms in texts from Mari).[63]
- The word order in literary texts follows parallelism.
- The position of an adjective before the noun in lyrical and narrative texts is contrary to conventional grammar, but this occurs rarely in "literature of everyday use".[64]
- The verb, which in standard language[65] is placed at the end of the sentence, is arranged according to parallelism at the beginning of the line.[66]
- The distinctive poetic form of the genitival construction with *ša*, which I called NP 5 in my grammar, occurs only in poetic (lyrical and narrative) texts.[67]

4.2 *The Sound Pattern : Repetitions of "sounds" (assonance).*

Several years ago, I described the rhyming structure and sound patterning of Old Babylonian hymns.[68] In 1980 Erica Reiner developed a system of assonance for the poem *The Heart Grass* (see example **(f)**);[69]; recently Shlomo Izre'el (1992) described this feature as a poetic device in the *Theodicy*.[70]

---

[59] See Groneberg, *ibid.* 155f.
[60] Groneberg, *ibid.* 156–167.
[61] Groneberg, *ibid.* 171f.
[62] In example **(c)** a stative form occurs only in line 12; the other verb-forms are finite.
[63] The problem of the diatopical distribution of forms from the Akkadian "tempora" must be treated elsewhere in the near future.
[64] See example **(a)** line 1 (*gašru šūpû*)
[65] "Umgangssprache".
[66] See example **(d)** 15–16, **b** 14, 15 and *passim.*
[67] Groneberg 1986: 36. See example **(d)** line 5 and 11: *ša nagbe qātīšu lā našû šama'ī.*
[68] Groneberg 1971: 134f. and 159–167.
[69] Reiner 1985: 9ff.
[70] See Izre'el 1992: 170.

These days there is little doubt that assonance marks lines and passages of poetry. This sound pattern has now been described so aptly that I need not bring more examples from other lyrical or narrative texts. But since this feature depends upon the fact that phrases are bound to a line – which is characteristic not only of lyrical or narrative literature but of some royal inscriptions as well – there must be a similar pattern of assonance in some royal inscriptions.

The notable role of assonances can easily be seen in two literary texts (examples **(b)** and **(c)**), both taken from *Enūma eliš*.

Example **(b)**:[71] a lyrical passage.

1	*id-du-šum-ma*	*pa-rak ru-bu-ú-ti*	They founded a princely
	id - /	**p r r b** ti	shrine for him.
2	*ma-ḫa-ri-iš ab-be-e-šu*	*a-na ma-li-ku-ti ir-me*	He took up residence as ruler
	ma **r** š b š /	ma **r m**	before his fathers.
3	*at-ta-ma kab-ta-ta i-na ilānī rabûti*		"You are honoured among
	at a ka ta ta /	ra t	the great gods;
4	*ši-mat-ka la ša-na-an*	*sì-qar-ka ^{d}a-nu-um*	"Your destiny is unequalled,
	š ka š na n	-ka n	your word is Anu;
5	*^{d}Marduk kab-ta-ta*	*i-na ilā-nī rabūti*	"Marduk (etc. ...)
6	*ši-mat-ka la ša-na-an*	*sì-qar-ka ^{d}a-nu-um*	
7	*iš-tu u_4-mi-im-ma*	*la in-nen-na-a qí-bit-ka*	"From this day onwards your
	i- /	i- **-ka**	command shall not be
			altered:
8	*šu-uš-qu-ú ù šu-uš-pu-lu ši-i lu-ú qat-ka*		"Yours is the power to exalt
	š uš qu šu š luš lu q **-ka**		and abase;
9	*lu-ú ki-na-at ṣi-it pi-i-ka la sa-ra-ar sì-qar-ka*		"May your utterance be law,
	l k tṣ t **ka**/la sa r ar s qar-**ka**		your word never be
			falsified;
10	*ma-am-ma-an i-na ilāni i-tuk-ka la it-ti-iq*		"None of the gods shall
	i-n l n /i-t **-ka** i -t q		transgress your limit.
11	*za-na-nu-tum er-šat*	*pa-rak ilānima*	"May endowment, required
	n n r / r k n		for the shrines of the gods,
12	*a-šar sa-gi-šu-nu*	*lu-ú ku-un áš-ruk-ka*	Wherever they have temples,
	a š r a g š /	k aš r k-ka	be established for your
			place!
13	*^{d}Marduk at-ta-ma*	*mu-ter-ru gi-mil-li-ni*	"Marduk! you are our
	rd k t /	m t r g m **-ni**	champion!
14	*ni-id-din-ka šar-ru-tum*	*kiš-šat kal gim-re-e-ti*	"We hereby give you
	ni- d š r t /k š t k g r **-ti**		sovereignty over the
			whole universe.
15	*ti-šab-ma i-na puḫri*	*lu-ú šá-qa-ta a-mat-ka*	"Sit in the assembly and your
	ti-š /	š qa ta at-**ka**	word shall be pre-eminent;

[71] As in (c), the translation follows – with minimal changes – Dalley 1990: 249f.

16 *giš kakkē-ka ai-ip-pal-ṭu-ú li-ra-i-su na-ki-ri-ka* "May your weapons never
kak -ka / r k r -**ka** miss, may they smash
your enemies!"

Assonance is relatively poor in some lines: only half lines have dependencies in line 1 and 7. Line 2 shows a chiastic position of repetitive consonants (see the same in example **(c)**). This is a feature which can be regarded as a typical and general poetic device.

Some lines end in rhymes: lines 7, 8, 9. There is spectacular Tail-cum-Head rhyme in lines 13–15, which explains why *niddin* and *tišab* are chosen instead of 'regular' statives.

Considering the frequency of the occurrence of repetitive consonants in comparison to other poetic texts, the lyrical passage in *Enūma eliš* is built on this poetic feature, but not exclusively. There are other lyrical devices such as the "lyrical repetition" in lines 3–6 (see below) and the choice of a special grammatical style, which help identify this text as a poetic one.

Example **(c)**: the narrative extract.

1 *ú-kap-pit-ma ti-a-ma-tum pi-ti-iq-šu* Ti'amat assembled his
k p t / t t **p t q-šu** creatures,
2 *ta-ḫa-[za ik]-ta-ṣar a-na ilāni ni-ip-ri-šu* And collected battle-units
t z t ṣ r/ n n n r -**šu** against the gods his
offspring:

3 *aḫ-[ra e]-li apsî ú-lam-mi-in ti-amat* Ti'amat did even more evil
a l a / l for posterity than Apsu!
4 *a-na-an-ta ki-i iṣ-mi-da a-na ^{d}é-a ip-ta-šar* That she prepared for battle
a-na t da/ -na t was reported to Ea;
iš-me-ma ^{d}é-a a-ma-tum šu-a-tim Ea listened to that report,
š m / **m** t **š** t

6 *ne-ḫi-iš uš-ha-ri-ir-ma ša-qu-um-mi-iš uš-bu* Was dumbfounded
š š / š š and sat in silence.
7 *iš-tu im-tal-ku-ma uz-za-šu i-nu-ḫu* When he had pondered and
š u / šu his fury had subsided,
8 *mu-[ut-ti]-iš an-šár a-bi-šu šu-ú uš-tar-di* He made his way to Anšar
t š r š / š š t r his father;
9 *i-r[u-u]m-ma maḫ-ru a-bi a-li-id-šu an-šár* He came before Anšar the
ma/ma a a š š father who begot him,
10 *mi-im-mu-ú ti-amat ik-pu-du ú-ša-an-na-a a-na šá-a-šú* And began to repeat to
– – š š š him everything that
(+ vowels a-u?) Ti'amat had planned:
11 *a-bi ti-amat a-lit-ta-ni i-zi-ir-ra-an-na-ti* "Father : Ti'amat, who
a a t it / i ti bore us now rejects us;
12 *pu-úḫ-ru šit-ku-na-at-ma ag-giš la-ab-bat* "She has convened an
š t k / **g š** t assembly and is raging
out of control.

13	*is-ḫu-ru-šim-ma ilāni gi-mir-šu-un* r š / š	"The gods have turned to her, all of them;
14	*a-di šá at-tu-nu tab-na-a i-da-a-ša al-ku* a d š at n t a na da š a	"Even those, whom you begot have gone over to her side,
15	*im-ra-aṣ-ru-nim-ma i-du-uš ti-amat te-bu-ú-ni* i - i i d /t t -ni	"Have crowded round and rallied beside Ti'amat!"

In this narrative passage the same pattern of chiastic consonantal arrangement which I already mentioned for text **(b)** occurs in lines 1 and 12. There are some very dense lines (8 and 14). Note the artful alliteration in line 4. In general the literariness of this passage is not constructed on a pattern of assonance, but on redundancy and rareness[72] of vocabulary. For example, in line 9 "father" is expressed by three words: *abu*, *ālidu*, *anšar*; the same device is used in lines 13–14 : "all" is expressed by *ilāni gimiršun* and *adi ša attunu tabnâ*; in lines 13 to 15 there is a cumulative pleonasm: creatures assemble around Ti'amat as is expressed by *saḫāru* and *maṣāru*; finally they even "rise up" (*tebûni*).

When comparing this with the other examples, it can be seen that the pattern of assonances in the *Marduk Hymn* (example **(d)**) is very regular: the consonants of a line form a pattern, they are restricted in variety and so the repetitivity is dense. The other passage cited from *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* – example **(e)** – has a reduced but regular pattern as well (see both below).

Most spectacular are assonances in example **(f)** – the poem of the *Heart Grass* – where they play an important role. But this is exclusively due to the fact, that the vocabulary is restricted and words are repeated, which is not at all the case in the other examples of cited texts. On the surface the sound scheme is distinctive for literary texts. But example **(f)** calls for caution. There must be a broad semantic selection in interdependence with the sound scheme to mark a text as poetic.

4.3 *Redundancies: Repetitions of words, syntagms and passages.*

With Izre'el[73] I define parallelism as a kind of repetition. Repetitions may take many different forms. There is a minimal variant, the "formulaic repetition", using small stereotyped expressions as described by Hecker,[74] and there is large scale variant: the wholesale repetition of passages, already remarked upon by many other authors like Cooper,[75] Tigay[76] and Vogelzang.[77] Repetition can also exist in the guise of enumerations with minimal variation, but there can be repetitions with the exchange of one word like the "lyrical repetition" pattern (see below).

---

[72] Rare words are: *pitqu* and *nipru*; *pitqu* designates something concrete: the form of a pillar, a statue etc. yet here it means some "living creatures", only in one more literary text the word is used for persons. *Nipru* <*niplu*? occurs as *niplu* only in lists and as *nipru* only in two literary texts. The combination of *anantum* and *ṣamādum* is unusual: a combat cannot be harnessed. l. 6: There are two synonyms with a minimal semantic variance *nēḫiš ušḫarrirma* = *šaqummiš*. l.12: *agāgu* and *labābu* are synonyms.

[73] Izre'el 1992: 173–179.

[74] See Hecker 1974: 161–180.

[75] See Cooper 1977: 39ff. esp. 40.

[76] See Tigay 1982: 100ff. and 235ff.

[77] See Vogelzang 1988 *passim*.

Some literary texts can be classified according to the variety of repetitions they use. Thus narrativity is without doubt distinctively marked by means of all kinds of broad "parallelism". Prominent repetition patterns are repetitions of speech-parts in narrative texts, according to the scheme:

A orders B to tell C a story;

B goes to C and recounts to C conditions under which A gave the message, especially "that A tells B to go to C to tell the story" followed by the message itself.

An excellent example occurs in the story of *Anzû* where such an order is repeated in tablet II lines 59–69; 73–84; 89–99. Another repetition pattern occurs in tablet I lines 92–114; 115–135; 136–157, and again as a third repetition in tablet III 104–122 and 126–144. The first repetition scheme has been transported into *Enūma eliš*, where in tablet III Anshar orders the messenger god Kakka to deliver a message to Laḫmu and Laḫamu (lines 13–66). The message is delivered in lines 68–124, and reverts to a literal rendering of the actual plot in I 128–162, as it was first told – without any messenger – by Ea to Anšar in II 4–49.

The repetition pattern also accounts for great parts of the SB *Gilgameš*. One set of repetitions is the dream pattern, already analyzed by Cooper; another example is the story of Enkidu's death, which Gilgameš repeats to Siduri, to Uršanabi and to Utnapištim and his wife.[78] Similar patterns can be found in the mythological tales about *Nergal and Ereškigal* and *Atramḫasis*. Repetitions of whole passages via messengers or other media can be used as a marker to classify works of Akkadian literature as narrative texts, which thus can be distinguished from other literary texts.[79]

Poems do not have that feature, though they share with other literature the "formulaic repetition scheme", i.e. the minimal repetition pattern, the common repetition of distichs, and the "lyrical repetition pattern". The "lyrical repetition pattern" consists in the exchange of one dominant element, like "*ša*" or "*ludlul*" in the first line of the strophe, with the name of the god/goddess as the first word in the repetition. We saw this kind of repetition in example **(b)** line 3//5 (*attā-ma//Marduk*) and **(d)** line 1//3 (*ludlul//Marduk*). Both these passages can be classified as so-called "hymns", yet one is part of *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*, the other is part of *Enūma eliš*; i.e. one is part of what has been called "wisdom literature/penitential psalm", the other is part of the so called "myth/epic literature". In terms of literary analysis *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* should be classified as a lyrical text and *Enūma eliš* as a narrative text with lyrical passages.

The marked difference in the structure of the narrative versus the lyrical text depends on the different functionality of the two: lyrical poems describe the feeling for an object or for a situation; narrative texts describe the object and the procedure of the situation's story; they present a plot.[80] This is done by various stylistic means. The lyrical situation can be defined as static; though sometimes dramatically intensified

[78] See Dalley 1990: 101ff. : Tablet X, i 34ff., repeated in iii 8–31, iv 50–22.

[79] That texts can be very different can be shown by the story of *Etana*, where this pattern of repetitions does not occur.

[80] See T. van Dijk (1972) p. 159 (in a resumé of Greimas (1972)): " ... die semiotischen Kategorien "Statik" (oder "Qualität") vs "Dynamik" (oder "Funktion") werden zur Unterscheidung der Typen "lyrisch" und "narrativ" herangezogen. Tatsächlich präsentiert sich das Gedicht durch Verminderung seiner "Funktionen" (im syntagmatischen Sinne, den "Funktionen" Propps verwandt) als ein wesensmäßig statischer, deskriptiver Text-Modus, der über einem relativ bekannten Argument-Thema moduliert und sich kaum verändert."

it is seen as a permanent situation.[81] The poet expresses an emotion or an attitude: adoration, complaint, joy, fear, awe etc. Statives (=permansives), participles, tn-stems and nominal phrases are used commonly to express this situation. In describing the lyrical object of the poem, verbs are chosen without a semantic range of internal dynamism.

As an example of this lyrical situation we may take text **(d)**, *the Marduk Hymn*, which opens *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*.

Example **(d)**: a lyrical text (hymn to Marduk)[82]

1 *[ludlul] bēl né-me-qí ilum muš-[ta-lum]* [ ] b **l** n **m** q **l** **m** š [t **l**]	I shall praise the lord of wisdom, the judicious god,
2 *[e-zi-]iz mu-ši mu-up-pa-šìr [ur-ru]* [ ] z **muš** **mu** p **š** r [r]	Who is angry at night and forgives during the day
3 [^{d}*Marduk] bēl né-me-qí ilum muš-t[a-lum]*	Marduk (etc. ...)
4 *[e?-z]i-iz mu-ši mu(-up)-pa-(áš-)šìr*[83]*ur-r[u]*	
5 *[ša kīma] u*$_4$*-mi me-ḫe-e la!-mu-ú*[84]*ug-gat-su* [k] **mi** **me** ḫe l **m** g (t s/ss)	He who is surrounded [as by a ga]le with his anger,
6 *[u ki-i] ma-nit še-re-ti zaq-šú ṭa-a-bu*[85] [k] m -n t š r **t** z q **š** **ṭ** b	[Yet whose] breath is fresh as the morning breeze –
7 *[uz-z]u-uš-šú la ma-ḫar*[86]a-bu-bu ru-ub-šu [z] **š** l m ḫ **r** **b** **b** **r** **b** š	In [his anger] he is unequalled, his anger is the rising tide;
8 *mu-us-saḫ-ḫ[ir k]a-ra-as-su ka-ba-at-ta-šú ta-a-a-rat* mu **s** ḫ **r** **k** **r** **s** **k** b **t** **š** **t** **r** **t**	Within he is friendly, his soul is merciful.
9 *[šá] nag-bi*[87]*qa-[ti-šú] la i-na-áš-šú-ú šá-ma-i*[88] [**š**] **n** **g** b **q** [t **š**] l **n** **š** **š** **m**	Do his hands from the depth not bear the heavens?

[81] Static means without any actual movement; though things may happen to the poem's "acting" figure, he remains in a passive situation.

[82] See *BWL* p. 32ff. + Wiseman, *AnSt.* **30** (1980) pp. 101–108, see W. Moran, *JAOS* **103**, p. 255ff. See appendix.

[83] Minimal variations like *ziz/zi-iz* or *šìr/šer* are not noted.

[84] Von Soden 1990: 115 reads *na-mu-ú* instead of *la!-mu-ú* : "dessen Zorn eine Steppe bewirkt", which seems to give no good sense though the text writes NA.

[85] Var. dug$_4$-ga (*LKA* 24:6)

[86] Var. *maḫ-ri* (*LKA* 24:7)

[87] *nag-be* ŠU.MEŠ-*šú* in *LKA* 24:9

[88] Von Soden *ibid.* translates *ša-ma-i* as a nominative: "bei dem das schwere Gewicht (*nak-bat*!) seiner Hände der Himmel nicht tragen kann". He assumes that *nag-bi* is a mistake for *nak-be(bat)*. The line is grammatically difficult: as Moran 1990: 571a points out, the verb-form should be *inaššâ* and not *inašsû* if the subject of the phrase is *qâtu* (which I presume). But the problem remains with *nak-bat* ; *ša-ma-i* as a subject of the phrase would be unusual.

10	*rit-tuš rab-bat ú-kaš-šú mi-i- ta*[89] **r t šr** b **t** k š m **-ta**	His hand is soft – he draws (away) the dying
11	*[d]Marduk ša n[ag-bi q]a-ti-šú*[90a] *la i-na-áš-šú-ú šá-ma-i*	Marduk, (etc. ...)
12	*rab-ba-tu*$_4$ *rit-t[a]-šu ú-kaš-šú mi-i-ta*	
13	*i-na lìb-ba-ti* ⌜*up!*⌝*-ta-at-ta-a qab-ra-a-tu*$_4$ **l b t p t t** q **b** r **t**	When the graves are opened in anger,
14	*e-nu-uš-šú*[90] *ina ka-ra-še-e ú-šat-bi ma-aq-tú* n **š k** r **š š t** b m **q t**	Through his transformation, he raises the slain;
15	*ik-ke-lem-mu-ma i-né-es-su-ú [d]lamma u [d]alad* ? vowels?	When he frowns, Lamma and Aladlammu flee.
16	*ip-pal-la-as-ma ana šá is-ki-pu-šú ilu-šú i[s]-saḫ-ḫar-šú* **p** l **s** m **š** s k **p šu** l **šu** s **ḫ šu**	When he regards (the penitent), his god adresses him (again).

In this text we find a series of statives: *eziz*, *lamû*, *ṭâb*, *tajjāru*, *rabbu* (ll: 2/4,5,6,8);[91] in line 7 the static situation is expressed by nominal phrases.[92]

The other lyrical marker is the redundancy of vocabulary: a rich choice of words (not only synonyms) is used for one and the same thing, one situation, one emotion. We are presented with different aspects of one situation described in different wording. As an example the first lines in **(d)** can be taken: the basic meaning of this passage is "Marduk is a raging god, who must be appeased". This is expressed by contrastive parallelism, which underlines the god's fury by pairing it with his lenient side (lines 6, 8, 10, 14, 16).

In lines 7 and 8 the meaning of the first half of the lines is stressed through tautology: the second half of the line stresses the meaning of the first part. Lines 5–6 have the same "image" in contrastive parallelism.[93] In lines 9–10 homonyms are used: *rittu* and *qātu*. In lines 12 and 14: *mītu* "the dead" and *maqtu* "the slain" have a close semantic resemblance; the word *maqtu* is used (instead of *mītu*) because of the contrastive parallelism to *tebû* Š: the slain (*maqtu*) is raised (*šutbû*). Again in lines 15 and 16 synonyms are used: *nekelmû* means: to look at sb. (angrily), as *palāsu* N: to look at.

Therefore the first lines of the poem *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* are certainly lyrical in using all kinds of redundancy, even if the vocabulary is styled on the surface by (artificial) dynamism. Line 14, for example, holds an inner dynamism: "in changing himself he makes the slain rise" (both verbs are action-verbs): the second part of the verse mimics the changing Marduk who immediately becomes merciful. But also the rest of the poem is lyrical. There is one dominant state of affairs: a sick person's unwanted

---

[89] Note: *ukaššu* instead of *ukaššâ* and *inaššu* instead of *inaššâ* ; for *ukaššû* see Moran 1984. Note that there is perhaps sandhi in *rabbat(u)kaššu* ; this implies that *kâšu* would be used in the **G** stem, hitherto unattested!

[90a] *ša nag-be* ŠU.MEŠ-*šú*: *LKA* 24:11

[90] Von Soden 1990: 115 emends to *e-<ne->nu-uš-šú*: "durch sein Erbarmen".

[91] Compare in the other lyrical text (**b**): *kabtu*, *kânu*, *muterru*, *šaqû* (ll: 4/6,9,12,15).

[92] As in (b) line 8: *šu-uš-qu-ú 'u šu-uš-pu-lu ši-i lu-ú qat-ka.*

[93] The image is "a mild wind // a raging storm".

and undeserved isolation which is finally solved by the god Marduk. Yet this state is told in many different expressions describing the poem's "speaking" figure becoming more and more isolated by means of scenic settings that become increasingly dramatic. Therefore, one important artistic device of the lyrical text is the choice of many words and their arrangement.

In lyric poetry we seem to have a development from short lyrical poems without scenic settings and possessing a rigid formal and stylistic structure in Old Babylonian times, to long poems with a more dramatic inner form and a less rigid outer form in Standard Babylonian.

In example **(e)** *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* lines 57–65 start off the description of the unfortunate situation of the "speaking" figure by picturing him as being driven out of his home and encountering bad omens. He mistrusts and suspects his colleagues. They are described like the ominous *sebettu*-demons, attacking him in body and soul.

Example **(e)**[94] *BWL* p. 32 lines 57ff.

57	*na-an-za-zu tas-li-tu uš-ta-na-ad-da-nu elī-ja* na t l t na d l	The courtiers plot hostile action against me;
58	*paḫ-ru-ma ra-man-šu-nu ú-šaḫ-ḫa-zu nu-ul-la-a-ti* r m r m /š nu š nu	They gather together and utter impious words.
59	*šum-ma iš-ten-ma na-piš-ta-šu ú-šat-bak-šu* š m š n m/ n p š t š š t b š	Thus the first: 'I will make him pour out his life!'
60	*i-qab-bi šá-nu-ú ú-šat-bi ter-tu-uš* q š š t b t t š	The second says: 'I will make him lose his post!'
61	*šá ki-ma šal-ši qip-ta-šú a-tam-ma-aḫ* š k m š š / q t š t m	On this wise the third: 'I will take over his position!'
62	*er-ru-ub bīt-uš-šu rebû i-tam-mi* r b b r b	'I will take over his estate!', says the fourth.
63	*ḫa-áš-šu pi-i ḫa-še-e šu-bal-kut* h š p h š š b	The fifth crosses "the mouth of the *ḫašê*";
64	*šeš-šu u si-bu-u i-red-du-u še-du-uš-šú* š d š d š	The sixth and the seventh will prosecute his *šēdu*;
65	*ik-ṣu-ru-nim-ma ri-kis sibit il-lat-su-nu* k ṣ r r k ss t l t s	The clique of seven have assembled their forces!

As far as I can judge this text is not arranged in smaller units than the eight lines cited here. The vocabulary is unusual: *taslītu* is only attested twice more – and once in a lexical text; *pī ḫaššê* is unknown; perhaps there is a word play on *ḫaššû* "the fifth". Exceptional, too, are the varying expressions for "he speaks" in lines 59–62: (59) *šumma* stands for "*šumma iqabbi*"; then follow : (60) *iqabbi* ; (61) *ša kīma <iqabbi>*; (62) *itammi*. In six lines, with four different introductions into direct speech, seven persons threaten the "speaker" in different ways. The ring composition which we already found in example **(a)** is used here as well; parallelism is used as a stylistic

[94] The English translation is based upon Lambert, *BWL* p. 33 with very few changes.

figure in the cumulative parallelism of a bow pointing back.[95] Superficially these motifs might be regarded as actions. But they do not function as actions; they are signs of danger, and they trigger the motion of fear. They express a situation, but they are not the situation described. This fact is even expressed in the poem through direct speech: by this means the situation is neutralized as being hearsay; and a procedure is evoked by speaking about it.

Assonance is very pronounced. The density of the poetic language seems to be based on this feature and on the choice of words.

4. 4 *The metrical system.*

Another arrangement in style which marks poeticity in many cultures, viz. the metrical system, has last been treated by von Soden in the *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* (1981 and 1984). His analysis has been convincingly rejected by Edzard (1993). He thinks that it is impossible to recognize a metrical system in a written language without having a notion of the pronunciation of words. There might be a metrical system, perhaps even distinguishing lyrical from narrative texts, but we do not know it. As in other fields, the Akkadians did not formulate any theory about their own verse language.

5 *THE META-LEVEL: MEANING AND IMAGERY.*[96]

In the preceding synopsis of some markers for grammatical literary style (the "inner form") it could be seen that, with a few exceptions, we cannot identify dominating literary or poetic devices that exclusively classify texts as poetic, neither on the level of assonance nor on the level of special grammatical forms. This indicates that the artistic form of a poem cannot be determined on these features alone, but must be based on other features as well. I suggest these are the variety of vocabulary and the stylistic arrangement of words according to parallelism and imagery. Assonance, parallelism and word order in parallelism do not exclusively determine a text as poetic or even as literary.

In a telephone guide there is an enumeration of names, arranged according to alliteration and sometimes even according to rhyme. Moreover, the telephone guide is marked by one of the essential conditions of literariness: it has wide public acceptance and can be universally decoded. According to a very formalistic definition of the inner and outer form of modern poetry it could be defined as literature.[97] In this modern understanding of literature, even an Akkadian word-list would be literary. Still we know it is not, because it does not have one of the essentials of all archaic literature: a rigid formal structure, a diversity of different repetitions. But also the telephone guide is not literary. Something is missing. We, the users, do not experience any literariness in the telephone guide. Though full of assonance and nicely arranged, it is

[95] The speaker's life is in danger; his office has been taken over; his house is gone; his guardian angel has been driven away – which points back to the beginning: when the guardian angel leaves, life is in danger, etc., etc. ....

[96] Compare Todorov 1964 for the interrelation of imagery and poetics in contrast to prose.

[97] See again Hardt 1976: 55ff.

not experienced as being beautiful; it does not touch our emotions, because it does not evoke an imagery neither by its assonance nor by its semantic selection and structure. Similarly, imagery is missing from example **(f)**:

(f): Heart Grass

1	šammu ša libbi ina šadi aṣīma		assuḫšuma iṣṣabat libbī		
2	ana	šamaš	aqbīma iṣṣabat libbi šamaš		
3	ana	umāmi	aqbīma iṣṣabat libbi umāmi		
4	ana	sēri u bamāti	aqbīma iṣṣabat libbi ṣēri u bamāti		
5	ana	sadî u ḫarrī	aqbīma iṣṣabat libbi šadî u ḫarrī		
6	ana	asalluḫi bēlija bēl āšipūti	aqbīma	umma libbī	**lippašir**
7	kīma	libbī	ippašir	libbi šamaš	**lippašir**
8	kīma	libbi šamaš	ippašir	libbi umāmi	**lippašir**
9	kīma	libbi umāmi	ippaširma	libbi ṣēri u bamāti	**lippašir**
10	kīma	libbi ṣēri u bamāti	ippaširma	libbi šadi u ḫarri	**lippašir**
11	šamaš šammu annû šammaka				šātīšu liblut
12	šatīšu līšir		šatīšu murṣašu limtaššir		šatīšu lislim
13	šatīšu		ēma uṣammaru		liksud

1	The heart grass grows in the mountains; I pulled it up and it seized my heart.			
2	I spoke to	Šamaš	—it seized the heart of Šamaš.	
3	I spoke to	the beasts	—it seized the heart of the beasts.	
4	I spoke to	the fields and plains	—it seized the heart of the fields and plains.	
5	I spoke to	the hills and vales	—it seized the heart of the hills and vales.	
6	I spoke to	my lord Asalluḫi, the lord of exorcism:	Let my heart	**be soothed.**
7	As my heart	is soothed,	so may the heart of Šamaš.	**be soothed.**
8	As the heart of Šamaš	is soothed,	so may the hearts of the fields and plains	**be soothed.**
9	As the hearts of the beasts	are soothed,	so may the hearts of the beasts.	**be soothed.**
10	As the hearts of the fields and plains	are soothed,	so may the heart of the hills and vales	**be soothed.**
11	O Šamaš, this grass is your grass:			he who drinks it shall revive,
12	He who drinks it shall recover, he who drinks it shall be rid of his illness, he who drinks it shall regain health,			
13	He who drinks is shall attain his desires.			

Note the following features:
(a) In lines, 11, 12, 13: alliteration of s; follows: a,i
(b) In lines 2–10: Schüttelreim-cluster: exchange of words according to a certain scheme
(See Reiner, *op.cit.* pp. 96–98)

Here we have a closed system of assonances on the sound level; we have a linear parallelism and repetition with minimal changes. In addition we have minimal lexical variation. The beginning is nice and mysterious: a *Heart Grass* – which does not exist – but which sprouts in the mountain (far away and strange), takes over my heart (mysterious, fantastic). The rest of the lines are rather meaningless, arranged in a well-known scheme of enumerations; the elements in the second part of the poem are juxtaposed.

This poem might have been murmured over an oblation of grass and water to Šamaš, because the sound system might be experienced as having a lulling effect.

There is no further imagery; the purpose of this poem is simply the fulfilling of the incantation.[98] Though my evaluation of this text is to some extent intuitive, it is based on the knowledge that there are other Akkadian poems with a differentiated imagery.

One of these is our example **(d)**. There are two different metaphors in line 4 and in lines 7–8 describing Marduk's wrath. Then his power is evoked by means of his hands, which touch the depth (*nagbu*) and the heavens (line 9//11). "He pardons" is expressed by the phrase "his soft hand touches the nearly dead" and he saves people from danger by "attributing guardian angels" (lines 15–16). The same situation is expressed in a conventional, not at all imagery-laden way in example **(a)** lines 17 and 18. We do recognize that in text **(d)** imagery is evoked, but not in **(f)** and **(a)**, which inform about concrete or invented facts. The alluring character of **(f)** is the sound scheme and its absurd information, yet like **(a)** it is a literary text with "every-day use character".

In text **(c)**, which is a narrative passage, imagery is evoked by rare vocabulary: *pitqu* means the raw form of an (inanimate) object, and is used here for Ti'amat's creatures, which belong to the class "animate objects". *Anantu ṣamādu* is impossible: you cannot put "battle" before a chariot. Both images derive from a common literary semantic device: they combine verbs which usually are associated with objects from the semantic class "inanimate objects" with animate objects and vice versa.[99] The imagery of the next lines is built upon a scene developing slowly: Ea listens, he rages (expressed by the *contrary* expression which means in a literal sense: he is very quiet!), he thinks matters over carefully, he calms down, he makes his way to his father, enters his room ('room' is omitted) and finally he addresses him. If we were to change the passage of lines 5–9 into a lyrical text we would omit the scene of Ea slowly making his way to his father and we would concentrate on the god's anger, which would be described lengthily and then finally we would leave him standing before his father whose description would be the theme of the next few lines.

CONCLUSION

After a discussion of the difference between literary and documentary texts, I have tried to demonstrate that different levels of literariness or poeticality can be discerned in Akkadian literature.

A precise visual structure by arrangement in strophes and a detailed "inner form" are important poetic features but do not exclusively mark poetics. We need the meta-level of mental assonances, the imagery, to recognize a literary text as a piece of art. This semantic device seems to be at the core of literary style.

A very dense literary style in written Akkadian literature is the lyric style in a completely closed system of dependencies of formal structure and content. Narrative style has passages of deep interdependencies, but also large sections constructed with formulae or large-scale repetitions, which then have the function to develop the plot. They stop the narrative to picture for the 'present' situation and to build up tension.

---

[98] See Veldhuis 1990 for a careful study of this and related poems.
[99] For this method see Petöfi 1971 and Todorov 1966.

Literary texts, which are marked by a dense cluster or interdependency of a formal structure, a concise "inner form" and especially a corresponding imagery, I would like to classify as poetic whereas texts with a lesser density and without any imagery I would propose to define as "only" literary.

The present study is meant as a prolegomenon to a necessary discussion about genres in Mesopotamian literature.

Appendix: Notes on *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*, 1–16.

1. The formal structure of the text:[100]
None of the manuscripts have underlined passages. But clearly the text is structured into strophes of four lines. Twice we have a lyrical repetition: line 1–2//3–4 and line 9–10/11–12. Lines 5–8 is a four liner with verses of two parallel lines.

2. The "inner form":
   - The parallelism of the first lines is obvious; the vocabulary is attested in other Marduk hymns (see Moran 1984: 256) and generally in other SB prayers; they have topic character. The special poetic marker here seems to be the unusual beginning: ***ludlul*** *bēl nēmeqi* instead of "*ša*" *bēl nēmeqi*; "*ludlul*" stands for "Marduk".
   - The next four lines are built on a contrastive parallelism : "anger" <–> "soothing", consisting of two metaphors, which evoke the imagery: wild angry god ≠ clad in a storm, ≠≠ his fury. He is a mild god ≠≠ breathes softly ≠ the soothing morning-breeze.
   - Lines 7–8 are conventional in contrastive parallelism but again metaphorical: his fury is not to be opposed ≠ like a wild flood cannot be confronted <–> yet his heart is mild.
   - The phraseology of the next four lines is exceptional. Line 9//11 is difficult. Presumably it means that Marduk supports the high sky with his hands, which, by parallelism should be rooted deep in the *nagbu*. However, this interpretation poses grammatical problems (s. note 88). The next parallel lines 10//12 are structured on a very learned grammatical juxtaposition in the first half part of the line and perhaps on a slight differentiation in meaning: *rittuš rabbat* : *rabbatu rittašu*, 'his hand is mild: his mild hands'.
   - The next four lines contain two more verses of each two lines, based both on contrastive parallelism. Line 13 is, if read correctly, very unusual. Line 14 means, very simply, that the one who is nearly dead is saved, because Marduk changed his mind (very suddenly: see theme of lines 17ff.); this is expressed by contrastive parallelism: the slain (*maqtu*) <–> is being raised up. The same situation is developed systematically in lines 15–16: if the god is angry ≠ angels leave man ≠ man is in danger of death <–> if the god is kind ≠ the personal god comes back ≠≠ man can live.

So in this part of the text the poem is based on contrastive parallelism with all the markers of poetry of the formal structure and of the content:

arrangement in strophes and verses,
lyrical repetition,
assonance [but only dominating lines 9–12, 14 and 16] of literary grammatical forms
apocopation of the suffix pronoun (*rittuš*);
and of poetic grammatical forms:
adverbial constructs (*uzzuššu, enuššu*), which are not attested in that vocabulary

[100] <–> contrasts of expression; ≠ transfers to the level of metaphors; ≠≠ transfers to the basic meaning.

elsewhere;
unusual stems (*muppaššir*, *mussaḫḫir*: ND stem!)

The syntax is poetic by the following criteria:
the adjective comes before the noun (*rabbatu rittašu*),
the construction : "*ša kīma ūmi meḫê lamû uggatsu*" or "*ša nagbi qātīšu la inaššû šamā'i*" is used (the verb is included in the noun phrase); this construction appears only in poetic texts.
Only the following choice of vocabulary is exceptional and unusual:
kâšu "to help" is poetic as well as *mānit šērēti* "morning breeze".

3. On the meta-level the imagery is very expressive: Marduk is surrounded by his fury like a cloud ≠ he is angry (line 5); his breath is a morning breeze ≠ he is friendly (line 6); his hands reach form depth to sky ≠ he is almighty (9/11); his mild hands touch man ≠ he saves his life (10/12); he lets the misery-stricken "be raised" from misfortune ≠ he saves him (14); he ignores man, so that the angels go away ≠ danger of life (15) he looks at man, so that the personal god is at his side again ≠ safety (16). Over sixteen lines there are seven quite unusual formulations; the other lines reinforce these motifs.

REFERENCES

Abusch, Tzvi
1984 "The Form and Meaning of a Babylonian Prayer to Marduk", in: *JAOS* **103** 3–15

Baumgärtner, K.
1965a "Formale Erklärung poetischer Texte", in: Ihwe 1971, 534–53.

1965b "Poetik und Linguistik", in: Ihwe 1971, 568–86.

1969 "Der methodische Stand einer linguistischen Poetik", in: Ihwe 1971, 371–402.

Benjamin, W.
1981 *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit.* Stuttgart: Suhrkamp (1981^{12})

Bense, M.
1969 *Einführung in die Informationstheoretische Ästhetik. Grundlegung und Anwendung in der Texttheorie.* Reinbek b. Hamburg.

Cooper, Jerrold S.
1975 "Structure, Humor and Satire in The Poor Man of Nippur", in:*JCS* **27** 163–74.

1977 "Gilgameš Dreams of Enkidu: The Evolution and Dilution of Narrative", in: *Studies Finkelstein* 39–44

Culler, Jonathan
1977^2 *Structuralist Poetics. Structuralism, linguistics and the study of literature.* London etc.: CUP.

Dalley, Stephanie
1990^2 *Myths from Mesopotamia. Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others.* London etc.: OUP.

de Moor, Johannes & Wilfred G.E. Watson (eds.)
1993 *Verse in Ancient Near Eastern Prose* (*AOAT* **42**). Neukirchen-Vluyn etc.: Neukirchener Verlag etc..

Doležel, Lubomir
1967 "Die Typologie des Erzählers: 'Erzählsituationen' ", in: Ihwe 1972b, 376–92.

Eco, Umberto
1972 *Einführung in die Semiotik.* (*UTB* **105**) Paderborn: Schöningh

Edzard, Dietz Otto
1987 "Zur Ritualtafel der sog. 'Love Lyrics' ", in: *Studies Reiner* 57–69.

1993 "Metrik", in: *RlA* **7** 148–49.

Falkenstein, Adam & W. von Soden
1953 *Sumerische und Akkadische Hymnen und Gebete.* Zürich: Artemis.

George, Andrew R.
1993 "Ninurta-Pāqidāt's Dog Bite and Notes on Other Comic Tales", in: *Iraq* **55** 63–75.

Groneberg, Brigitte
1971 *Untersuchungen zum hymnisch-epischen Dialekt der altbabylonischen literarischen Texte.* Diss. Münster.

1981 "Philologische Bearbeitung des Agušaya-Hymnus", in: *RA* **75** 107–34.

1987a (Review of *Studies Kramer*) *JAOS* **107** 321ff.

1987b *Syntax, Morphologie und Stil der jungbabylonischen 'hymnischen' Literatur. Teil 1 u. 2.* (*FAOS* **14**). Stuttgart: Steiner.

Hardt, M.
1976 *Poetik und Semiotik. das Zeichensystem der Dichtung. Konzepte der Sprach-und Literaturwissenschaft.* Tübingen.

Hecker, Karl
1974 *Untersuchungen zur Akkadischen Epik* (*AOAT* **8**). Neukirchen-Vluyn etc.: Neukirchener Verlag etc.

Held, Moshe,
1961 "A Faithful Lover in an OB Dialogue", in: *JCS* **15** 1–25

Hendricks, W.O.
1969 "Drei Modelle zur Beschreibung von Dichtung", in: Ihwe 1971, 403–31.

Ihwe, J. (ed.)
1971 *Literaturwissenchaft und Linguistik. Ergebnisse und Perspektiven,* Bd. II/2. *Zur linguistischen Basis der Literaturwisenschaft,* I. Frankfurt.

1972a *Literaturwissenchaft und Linguistik. Ergebnisse und Perspektiven,* Bd. I. *Grundlagen und Voraussetzungen.* Frankfurt. [1972^2]

1972b *Literaturwissenchaft und Linguistik. Ergebnisse und Perspektiven,* Bd. III. *Zur linguistischen Basis der Literaturwisenschaft,* II. Frankfurt.

Izre'el, Shlomo
1992 "The Study of Oral Poetry: Reflections of a Neophyte. Can we Learn Anything on Orality from the Study of Akkadian Poetics, especially in Akhetaton?" in: Vogelzang & Vanstiphout 1992, 155–225.

Jason, Hedda
1979 "The Poor Man of Nippur: An Ethnopoetic Analysis", in: *JCS* **31**189–215.

Kinnier Wilson, J.V.
1985 *The Legend of Etana. A New Edition.* Warminster: Aris &Phillips.

Lambert, Wilfred G.
1960 *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (= *BWL*). OUP.

1962 "A Catalogue of Texts and Authors", in: *JCS* **16** 59–77.

Levy, Jiri
1965 "Die Theorie des Verses – ihre mathematischen Aspekte", in: Ihwe 1972b, 17–41.

Lotman, Jurij
1972 *Die Struktur literarischer Texte.* (*UTB* **103**) Paderborn: Schöningh.

Michałowski, Piotr
1981 "Carminative Magic: Towards an Understanding of Sumerian Poetics", in: *ZA* **71** 1–18.

Mindlin, M. , M.J. Geller & J.E. Wansbrough (eds.)
1987 *Figurative Language in the Ancient Near East* . London: SOAS.

Moran, William L.
1984 "Notes on the Hymn to Marduk in *ludlul bēl nēmeqi*", in: *JAOS* **103** 255–60.
1990 (Review of Groneberg 1987b) in: *JAOS* **110** 568–71

Nougayrol, Jean
1952 "Le juste souffrant", in: *RB* **49** 239–50.

Petöfi, J.S.
1971 "Zur strukturellen Analyse sprachlicher Kunstwerke", in: Ihwe 1971, 508–22.

Reiner, Erica
1969 "The Elamite Language", in: B. Spuler (ed.) *Handbuch der Orientalistik* Bd. I 2.1. *Altkleinasiatische Sprachen.* Leiden: Brill, 54–118.
1978 "Die akkadische Literatur", in: Röllig 1978, 151–210.
1980 *Thirty Pieces of Silver.* (Ryerson Lecture) Chicago UP.
1985 *Your Thwarts in Pieces, Your Mooring Rope Cut. Poetry from Babylonia and Assyria.* Ann Arbor: Michigan Studies in the Humanities **5**.

Renger, Johannes
1980 "Köningsinschriften. B. Akkadisch", in *RlA* **6** 65–77.

Rochberg-Halton, Francesca
1987 "The Assumed 29th *Aḫû* Tablet of '*Enūma Anu Enlil*' ", in: *Studies Reiner* 327–50.

Röllig, Wolfgang
1987 "Überblick über die akkadische Literatur", in *RlA* **7** 48–66.

Röllig, Wolfgang (ed.)
1978 *Neues Handbuch der Literaturwissenschaft* Bd. 1, *Altorientalische Literaturen.* Wiesbaden: Athenaion.

von Soden, Wolfram
1931 "Der hymnisch-epische Dialekt des Akkadischen", in: *ZA* **40** 163–227.
1950 "Ein Zwiegespräch Hammurabis mit einer Frau", in: *ZA* **49** 151–94.
1990 *Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testamentes* (*TUAT*) Bd. III Lief. 1. (110–35)

Steiner, R.C.
1977 *The Case for Fricative-Laterals in Proto-Semitic* . (*AOS* **59**) New Haven, Conn.

Tigay, Jeff H.
1982 *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic.* Philadelphia: Un. of Pennsylvania Press.

Todorov, Tzvetan
1964 "Die Beschreibung der Bedeutung in der Literatur", in: Ihwe 1972b, 120–30.
1966 "Die semantischen Anomalien", in: Ihwe 1972a, 359–83.

Träger, Christian
1986 *Wörterbuch der Literaturwissenschaft.* Leipzig.

Tremper Longman III
1991 *Fictional Akkadian Autobiography: A Generic and Comparative Study*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.

van Dijk, Teun
1970 "Neuere Entwicklungen in der literarischen Semantik", in: Ihwe 1972b, 153–76.

Vanstiphout, H.L.J.
1993 "'Verse Language' in Standard Sumerian Literature", in: de Moor & Watson 1993, 305–29

Veldhuis, Niek
1990 "The Heart Grass and Related Matters", in: *OLP* **21** 27–44.

Vogelzang, Marianna E. & H.L.J. Vanstiphout (eds.)
1992 *Mesopotamian Epic Literature. Oral or Aural?* Lewiston etc.: Mellen Press

Vogelzang, Marianna E.
1988 *Bin šar dadmê. Edition and Analysis of the Akkadian Anzû Poem*. Groningen: Styx.

Voigt, R.M.
1979 "Die Laterale im Semitischen", in: *WO* **10** 93–114.

Watson, Wilfred G.
1986[2] *Classical Hebrew Poetry. A Guide to its Techniques*. (*JSOT* Supplementary Series **26**). Sheffield.

Wellek, René & Austin Warren
1980[6] *Theory of Literature*. New York: Harcourt, Brace etc.

Wiseman, Donald J.
1980 "A New Text of the Babylonian Poem of the Righteous Sufferer", in: *AnSt* **30** 101–07.

MESOPOTAMIAN LITERATURE IN CONTEMPORARY SETTING: TRANSLATING AKKADIAN MYTHS[1]

Shlomo Izre'el

LITERARY FORMS IN AKKADIAN AND MYTHIC LITERATURE

Akkadian literature in the broader sense includes many types of texts. Administrative documents of various types, letters, historical accounts, omens, rituals, hymns, wisdom literature and myths are only a selection of examples of the manifold genres handled by scribes of Akkadian during the two and a half millennia of its recorded history. Although we know about the spoken varieties of Akkadian at any stage of its existence, we may take for granted the fact that oral registers had an important effect on some registers of written Akkadian.

The question of former or contemporary orality in Akkadian belles-lettres is quite complex, since there can be no formal textual proof for that stage. The Mesopotamian Literature Group dealt with this issue elaborately in its first meeting,[2] reaching a consensus that one can regard as axiomatic, that storytelling did not have its start together with the emergence of writing. An oral tradition of this type of literature, as is the case with poetry, must have existed in any society during its preliterate period. Coexistence of oral and literate compositions of Akkadian mythology may also be postulated, and some indications, although oblique in nature, have been suggested to support this assumption.[3] We have also seen that there is no point in speaking of ancient traditional storytelling or poetry without assuming an aural aspect of that tradition. Storytelling and poetry are intrinsically associated with listening, especially in societies where literacy is restricted, as was the case in ancient times. Aurality equals traditionality, and its manifestations within a text are to be regarded as stylistic devices.[4]

We have hitherto mentioned storytelling as separate from poetry. Yet, as is the case in many other cultures, either ancient or contemporary, mythological literature in the Akkadophone cultures was one of the subgenres of poetry, in the sense that it had verse structure and rhythm. Sound patterning and other poetic devices can also be found in Akkadian myths to a much larger extent than in any type of prose literature.

[1] I thank Meir Sternberg and Gideon Toury for their invaluable comments on a former version of this paper. I thank Tamar Kamionkowski for her help in improving the final draft.

[2] Vogelzang and Vanstiphout 1992.

[3] Westenholz 1992.

[4] Izre'el 1992.

The main difference between experiencing a literary work of art in our society and in ancient times is that between reading and hearing. Our contemporary societies are literate to such a degree that we have come to think of any literary work in written rather than oral terms. This includes the most intimate poems, which are nowadays being composed with much attention to their printed visual characteristics. There are very few genres which are composed for hearing rather than reading, and these are aimed mainly at the mass media, and usually involve either music or visual effects, or both.

Although it is hard to restore – and by implication also hard to perceive – the way in which an ancient text would have sounded to its original audience, we do have some clues which enable us to make some judgments about the appeal of such a text through the investigation of its structural traits.[5] Scholarship has only recently, and quite scantily, started to touch upon the literary and poetic style of Ancient Near Eastern literature and of the possibilities of its transmission to modern societies.[6] This is not just a matter of the overt components of the text, such as sound patterning, meter, or word play, but also a matter of connotations and associations, to which we can hardly have access in dead languages.

Yet, leaving aside the latter issue despite its importance, we also have the problem of lacking any knowledge of the cultural background by any potential non-professional audience. Demarcating the audience is, indeed, the first thing one should do when planning to translate a text, along with determining the justification for translating the specific text and defining the goals of the translation. This paper intends to stress, above all, the importance of trying to make our beloved texts more appealing to the general audience.

> Just to give some illustration of the possibilities at hand, let me cite one passage from the Amarna recension of *Nergal and Ereškigal*, where consonance is extremely impressive. After Nergal has protruded into Ereškigal's palace, he seizes her, and
>
> > *ina šartiša uqeddidaššima ištu kussî ana qaqqari qaqqassa ana nakāsi*
> > (EA 357: 78–9)
>
> A fair, yet non-poetic translation, would be something like: "He bent her from the chair to the ground, in order to cut her head". This may be fine for a scholarly work. Compare, however, Bottéro's translation of this line:
>
> > Et, par sa chevelure, la tira de son trône à terre, pour lui trancher la tête
> > (Bottéro and Kramer 1989: 44).
>
> To match the use of *k - q - s* in the original,[7] Bottéro made excessive usage of the *t* and *r* sounds to convey a similar impression. Although less powerful than the original, Bottéro's translation seems to be much more successful than any other translations of this passage known to me. (Let me emphasize that consonance has been chosen as an illustration since it is the most overt type

[5] For Akkadian see e.g. the contributions of Groneberg, Kilmer and Vogelzang in this volume.
[6] Maier 1984; Gardner and Maier 1984: Appendix, pp. 273–304; Kramer and Maier 1989: chapter 10; Parker 1990; cf. Jackson 1992: xxxvii-xxxviii.
[7] Izre'el 1992: 162–3.

of poetic decoration; other poetic features like meter, puns etc. are of no less, and in fact can be of much greater, importance than consonance.)

Mythological texts are good candidates for modern rendering, being so attractive in both their narrative form and their meaning. Their everlasting virtue, their concern with the most basic human characteristics and with the deepest questions which have troubled mankind since antiquity, make them appropriate to be heard and acknowledged by all people. Unfortunately, very few of the existing translations of Ancient Near Eastern myths were made with due care to their formal features. Indeed, there is always a tension between the wish to be accurate and the need to pay attention to the literary structure. Yet, the worn out *traduttore traditore* should refer not only to translation in general, but especially to literal translation, so common in our fields.[8] In spite of this, and together with trying to arrive at an appealing translation, accuracy must not be neglected in favour of literary form. This general rule is even more important in the special case of myths, where I believe language plays a significant role in conveying the meaning, sometimes using most subtle and sophisticated techniques. The difference in form is to be taken into account also. In our modern societies, a narrative like a myth would probably be told, or rather written and read, in prose. Even the most ancient myths of our society, namely the ones transmitted from Mesopotamia into the first chapters of the Bible, have reached us in prose. Yet, I believe that the cultural background cannot – and must not – be dismissed as negligible even if an ancient work of art like a myth is existential and has an everlasting virtue. In order to convey in some respect the antiquity of the text, I maintain that the primary human questions involved therein must be presented in their authentic clothing, in the original form of an ancient myth. An Akkadian myth should not be brought to a modern audience merely as a narrative in a modern format, but as much as possible as a whole experience which would imitate to some degree the experience which an ancient audience might have had while listening to it.

The translation of a myth should strive to be easily and immediately intelligible to a *listener*, whether it be merely recited or sung to music. I would therefore attempt to translate a text as if it were intended for an oral production, possibly with musical accompaniment. Within an exposition involving other artistic media, the text should be performed in its pure form, either in recitation or as a recitative, so that any additional medium would be adapted to the text rather than vice versa. In order to achieve this goal in a way as closely related as possible to the environmental exposition and production of the genuine text, I find it necessary to adhere to the intrinsic nature of the translated text, namely its structure as a piece of narrative verse. Although such an exposition is not common in a modern literate society (a readable translation would be expected), one must take cognizance of the possibility of oral production.

As a test case, I have translated the myth of *Adapa and the South Wind* into my native tongue, Israeli Hebrew. Both the theoretical approach and some practical problems and solutions will be presented below. While some problems and solutions may be specific to the target language, others are of a more general nature, and implications may be drawn for the act of translating Akkadian myths both for the

[8] Parker 1990: 258

general audience as well as for professional needs. I wish to stress at this juncture that there is a great benefit in translating myths with an appealing literary outcome in mind. As will be seen below, a thorough grammatical analysis of the Akkadian text was undertaken. This, together with the endless struggle to find the correct and apt word or phrase, which would fit not only a specific verse but the structural phraseological relations within the text, has much deepened the translator's understanding of the myth.

THE INCENTIVE FOR TRANSLATING *ADAPA* INTO HEBREW

The myth of *Adapa and the South Wind* has an existential value. It discusses in a sophisticated and subtle manner the question of life and death and its relationship to human knowledge. This ancient story has therefore strong ties to the story of the tree of life and the tree of knowledge-of-good-and-evil in the Garden of Eden. In their very essence, both tales encapsulate the basic human dichotomy of life and death versus the no less basic dichotomy of knowledge and ignorance, or rather that of awareness and innocence.

> The primeval Mesopotamian sage, Adapa, was known to have risen from the sea. He was created by the god of the deep water and wisdom, Ea. Ea "perfected him with great intelligence, to instruct the ordinance of the earth. He gave him wisdom; he did not give him eternal life." Adapa was a servant of Ea. Respected and adored by his community, he did the chores needed to perform the daily rituals, which included, among others, supplying fish from the nearby sea.
>
> One day, while Ea was still "lingering in bed", Adapa's journey to the vast sea ended unexpectedly by a sudden burst of the South Wind, which threatened to drown him. Adapa, who for the first time in his life met with some difficulty, could only utter a curse against the blowing wind, wishing that its wing be broken. And so it was: as soon as he uttered his words the wing of the South Wind broke. This, indeed, saved Adapa's life, yet it also caused a drought upon the earth, since the furious South Wind is not only violent and dangerous; it also brings humidity and fertility to the lands of southern Mesopotamia.
>
> Nothing could be done against Adapa's spell, and Anu, the god of heaven and the head of the Mesopotamian pantheon, had to summon Adapa for questioning. The situation was indeed unpleasant for the disciple of Ea. Yet a god like Ea would not risk a meeting of his loyal servant with Anu without proper preparation. As appropriate for the god of wisdom, Ea, well known for his character as a trickster, supplied Adapa with minute instructions which were supposed to save his life. Among these were strict orders to avoid any food or drink offered to him in heaven, for they might be lethal.
>
> However, the situation turned out to be rather different from that anticipated by Adapa. While in heaven, Anu's anger was appeased by two deities, Tammuz and Gizzida. They were standing at the gate of heaven, and Adapa paid a flattering tribute to them, thus following Ea's instructions. Instead of being offered deadly food and drink, Adapa was offered the food and water of life.

He refused these, and thus – at least according to one tradition – lost the unique and irreversible opportunity for eternal life.

Besides its sheer value as a tale of philosophical insight, the Adapa story offers an appealing narrative and other literary qualities. Its universally human values, its origins in the ancestral lands of the Jewish people and its (non-coincidental) closeness to Biblical mythology and to more advanced Jewish thought in later times are additional reasons for trying to present it in translation to the Hebrew speaking people in modern Israel. Yet the prime incentive for this translation was a study of this text as a scholarly and educational composition in the context of a broader Mesopotamian cultural background.[9] This study, which was followed by a second one on the relationship between oral and written literature in Akkadian and discussed in the first workshop of the Mesopotamian Literature Group at Groningen,[10] has yielded a theory with regard to Akkadian meter and its application to this text. It is this study, which started my Adapus complex,[11] that tempted me to venture a translation of the Adapa myth into Hebrew.

THE MILIEU OF THE *ADAPA* RECENSION FROM AMARNA

The myth of *Adapa and the South Wind* has reached us through a few fragments, of which the largest and most important one was discovered in Egypt.[12] In fact it has been known to the scholarly world only since the discovery of the ancient city of Akhetaton in Tell el-Amarna in Egypt more than a century ago. In the 14th century BCE Akhetaton was the capital of the Egyptian king Akhenaton, or Amenophis IV. Among other texts, this myth seems to have served as part of the curriculum for the study of the Mesopotamian script, languages and culture at ancient Akhetaton. The other fragments[13] were part of the library of the Assyrian king Assurbanipal, and represent this myth as it was known in Assyria about seven centuries later.

The Amarna fragment contains the main narrative. It starts at the moment when Adapa curses the South Wind and breaks its wing doing so, and ends when Anu, the chief god, laughing at Ea's false instructions to Adapa, sends the human back to earth, destined for doom which he describes as an intrinsic aspect of human life. The other fragments wrap the narrative in some background and offer a different conclusion than the one suggested by the Amarna recension.

The Adapa text is much less formulaic than an average Akkadian myth. Hence the poetic nature of the text was under debate for quite a long time. Yet the poetic structure of this text seems to be established, and it has now become generally accepted that indeed this myth has the intrinsic features of poetry as defined above, i.e., it has rhythm and it is verse-structured. Although – unlike other mythological texts from Mesopotamia proper – there is no agreement in the Amarna recension of *Adapa*

[9] Izre'el 1991.
[10] Izre'el 1992.
[11] Which will hopefully reach its climax in my forthcoming monograph on this myth; see the references.
[12] EA 356; "Fragment B" in Picchioni's edition, 1981.
[13] Fragments A, A_1, C, D.

between line endings on the actual tablet and verse boundaries, the verse structure can be very easily established, and can be proved by comparison to the other, later recensions.[14]

The Amarna recension of *Adapa*, even when complete, seems to have been shorter than the later versions, which conforms to the common theory of natural development (by expansion) of Akkadian myths.[15] Furthermore, it uses relatively simple language. For example, and most significantly, it does not use formulae introducing direct speech, a poetic device very widespread in Akkadian mythological literature. Its nature as a school text, also supported by other factors, may perhaps be the reason for these aspects of the text, because we might expect a school text to be simplified or shortened. It has even been suggested that this specific recension was a written version of a show-like production intended to facilitate learning.[16] Yet I did not attempt a transmission of the story as a scholarly composition or as part of a scholarly curriculum, neither in Egypt nor in Babylon. The point was to attempt a transmission of this work of art as a genuine Mesopotamian piece, perhaps a popular one, in both content and form. Two of the more recent fragments of the narrative seem to confirm the assumption that there have not been drastic divergencies among the attested recensions of this myth. This fact, together with other considerations, definitely puts us on safe ground when we assume that the Amarna recension, although discovered in Egypt, is an exact or near exact copy of a genuine Babylonian recension of this tale, as I have shown in my first study of this text.[17] As we shall see below, the Amarna recension of *Adapa* gives us some clues regarding an oral production. Thus the hypothesis of an oral production in any Mesopotamian city is the actual scene we should keep in mind for the transmission of a similar experience to our modern audience.

THE LANGUAGES INVOLVED

Akkadian and Hebrew belong to the closely-knit Semitic family of languages; naturally they share many lexical and grammatical features. Thus there are many typological affinities between Akkadian and Hebrew. Going back in history in order to save the antique flavour of the text, an easy way of presenting an Akkadian myth might be to translate it into an imitation of Biblical Hebrew. Before and during the early stages of the restoration of Hebrew as a spoken language in this century, such imitations were widespread in the Enlightenment period of the 18th-19th century, and the principle was in use until almost the middle of the 20th century, especially in children's books. In fact, one of the most important Hebrew poets of the beginning at the 20th century, Shaul Tchernichowsky, did indeed translate Akkadian myths and classical poetic texts into Hebrew, using just such an imitation of Biblical Hebrew.[18] However, as will

[14] Picchioni 1981.
[15] Cooper 1977; Tigay 1982: 61, 107, 125, 128, 222–4; Vogelzang 1988: 202–224.
[16] Vogelzang 1992.
[17] Izre'el 1991. Some expansion of the text as it is attested in at least one of its late fragments (Fragment C) gives further support to this hypothesis.
[18] Tchernichowsky 1924; 1937: 573–633.

become clear below, this seems to miss the point of providing a suitable translation for the modern Israeli Hebrew speaker.

A few words on the nature of Israeli Hebrew and its relationship to Biblical Hebrew might not come amiss. Israeli Hebrew is the end product of a linguistic change of two types: the more or less gradual change of a language which has existed for more than a millennium and a half only in a literary, written form, and the abrupt emergence of a spoken language which followed. Since the beginning of this century, Hebrew has become a full-fledged language in both usage and structure, serving all the needs of a modern western literate society. The Semitic nature of Israeli Hebrew has not been drastically altered as a result of the abrupt transformation into a spoken language. This unprecedented outcome is the result of both the uninterrupted usage of Hebrew in writing and – which is no less important – the nature of its basic morphology, transparent to a large degree and thus enabling a large-scale productivity, so much needed for an emerging modern society.

The specific history of Hebrew, documented since the Biblical period, has eventually resulted in a continuum of registers in the linguistic life of the modern State of Israel. A more or less smooth gradation of registral linguistic lects[19] can be drawn between the colloquial forms at one extreme and those contemporary linguistic structures which are closer to Mishnaic Hebrew at the other. Yet the language of the Bible, although not without strong ties to the synchronic stretch just described, must be separated from this continuum, and should be regarded as a distinct linguistic entity. In other words, Biblical Hebrew (henceforth: BH) and Israeli Hebrew (henceforth: IH) are distinctive to a large degree in both semantics and form, and can be determined as individual linguistic entities on the basis of many structural features.[20]

While the latter observation seems correct from the point of view of linguistics, this would be far more difficult to ascertain on a sociolinguistic level. On the contrary, from a purely sociological point of view, such a distinction between IH and BH seems to be incorrect. This means that not only the average Israeli, but also the more educated members of the community would regard the language of the Bible and their own language as one and the same. This is the result of a widespread knowledge of the history of the Hebrew language from Biblical times till its so-called revival, as well as of the fact that any literate individual is trained in reading the Hebrew Bible from the second grade of elementary school as part of the curriculum, while absorbing the conviction that the language of the Bible is virtually his own mother tongue. Yet, in effect, no practical register (oral or written) of Modern Hebrew as it is used in Israel makes any regular use of salient or distinctive BH forms. Apart from formulaic chunks or literary and other imitations, the usage of BH is – to the best of my judgment – restricted to reading or citing the Bible itself.

Thus a type of language imitating BH seems to be unfit to serve the purpose of presenting an ancient myth, or any ancient work of art, to a Hebrew speaking

[19] A lect is a distinctive linguistic system in that it comprises a single, unified linguistic structure. A lect is distinguished from a dialect or a register in that the latter terms each indicate an ideal grammatical model with variation, while a lect is any distinct variety therein, actually existing in practice. For a more general study of this term one may consult e.g. Berrendonner, Guern and Puech 1983: chapter 1.

[20] For the history of Hebrew and the status of IH see e.g. Kutscher 1982; Rosén 1977: chapter 1.

audience if it is intended to convey an experience which is similar (in principle) to that encountered by the ancient people for whom that specific work was formulated.[21]

THE QUESTION OF METER

In contrast to its linguistic form, the verse structure of BH poetry is truly absorbed into the cultural sphere of Israeli Jews. This is not only due to their acquaintance with the Hebrew Bible through learning, but also due to many popular songs of which the words are taken from the Bible, or which are actually Biblical poems to which tunes have been composed.

Regarding IH, some written compositions of its contemporary pop songs, and especially adaptations of new words to preexisting melodies, seem to follow a similar patterning to those found in ancient Semitic poetry. The same applies to intuitive impromptu rhymes composed by individuals or groups, like children during their play and troops while marching. Although research in these areas is still lacking, a brief survey of some (usually oral) compositions suggests that in such pieces of IH poetry, the number of syllables is much less important than the number of syntactic units and the place of accent. This conforms – at least to some extent – to the theoretical premises I hold for Akkadian meter.

The Amarna recension of *Adapa*, together with another Akkadian myth found at Tell el-Amarna, are unique among the extant cuneiform literature in that they have been supplied – in Egypt – with a tutorial device which can reveal to us the way students in Egypt learned to read, and more specifically, how to recite these texts. Upon the surface of the clay tablet, either above or just following an inscribed cuneiform sign, red tinted dots were applied. These red dots were applied systematically, and I have suggested that they mark what I termed metreme boundaries, i.e., the boundaries between the minimal metrical units of this text. In other words, an investigation of these red points tells us something about the metrical structure of this piece of poetry.[22] Further investigation has shown that also other Akkadian poetic texts suggest a similar metrical disposition,[23] so that the metrical structure of *Adapa* is not specific to this text. The two cuneiform tablets with red points have, thus, a unique feature that can supply us with formal features concerning the vocal aspects of a text, otherwise attainable, if at all, only with great difficulty and by highly speculative premises.

Another feature which was of great help in unraveling the mystery of the red points and some features of the actual pronunciation of their Akkadian was the system of plene spelling of these two texts. It should be recalled that plene spellings in Akkadian

---

[21] I have learned from my colleagues in the Department of Poetics of Tel Aviv University that students find Tchernichowsky's translations of the Akkadian myths incomprehensible to a large extent and hence unappealing. An extensive project of translating the major Akkadian and Sumerian literary compositions is currently been undertaken by the Assyriologist Jacob Klein and the Hebrew poet Sh. Shifra. Of the several texts already published (*Proza* **79–80**, 1985: 11–25; *Ha'aretz*, 23.4.86: 17; *Iltam Zumra: A Hymn to the Goddess*, 1990; *Alpayim* **2**, 1990: 79-93), one can tell that a Modern Hebrew register has been adopted. Aiming, naturally, at a literate audience, many BH grammatical forms have been used, yet the translations seem to be appealing.

[22] Izre'el 1991.

[23] Izre'el 1992.

mark long or accented vowels. By implication, the accentual patterning of several key words in these poetic texts could have been unveiled. My definition of the Akkadian metreme (i.e., the minimal metrical unit) is based on syntactical patterning. Similar, if not identical suggestions concerning the metrical system have been posited for BH poetry.[24] I further suggested that it is not enough to define a metreme on syntactic bases within a metrical disposition determined as a series of single accents. It has been shown that the place of the accent within a metreme also plays an important role in the metrical patterning of a verse.[25]

A working hypothesis for future research has started to emerge from hints already found in my previous studies, one which can perhaps be formulated thus: If a cross-cultural examination, especially within illiterate and ancient cultures, will reveal a strong tendency to form a metreme on syntactic and semantic bases, then metrical systems in the poetry of the Ancient Near Eastern cultures, and more specifically, the nature of a metreme as it was found in Akkadian, may prove to be a basic, cognitive production of the human mind, much more than other metremes like the foot or a syllable count, which might be the result of culture-specific evolutionary traditions. Since IH emerged out of cross-cultural contact, cognitive processes may have well been factors in the development of metrical templates in IH, although one may also think of transmission of the BH option into these pattern makings.[26]

By intuition and through some informal research, I found that IH uses at least some of the same fundamentals for the production of automatic or intuitive (i.e. unlearned) verse. The tendency to use "free verse" in modern IH written poetry, recalling BH poetry, yet deriving from European traditions, may also fit into this setting.[27] Free verse makes European poetry similar not only to that of IH, but also to the Ancient Semitic verse structure. This makes my discussion here applicable to translating Akkadian myths to European languages as well, although further study of the terms and possibilities is of course needed.

As we shall see below, the resemblance in the process of producing metrical templates between Akkadian, BH and IH, has enabled me, as native to the Israeli culture, to decide on taking an intuitive approach with regard to meter when getting into the practical translation of *Adapa*.

SOME PRACTICAL PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

It is with these theoretical premises that I started to think of a Hebrew translation of the myth of *Adapa and the South Wind*:

(1) Keeping in mind the scenario of an oral production of the myth, whether read aloud from the written source or after having learned the inscribed text by heart. Such a scenario, possible albeit hypothetical, in ancient times, is to be rendered as such for the benefit of a modern western audience.

(2) The existence of possible cross-cultural metrical (or rhythmic) fundamentals

[24] See especially O'Connor 1980; cf. Kuryłowicz 1972: ch. 10; for Akkadian see also Buccellati 1990.
[25] Izre'el 1991 & 1992.
[26] I thank Meir Sternberg for the latter observation.
[27] Hrushovski 1960 & 1971.

which are traceable in one of the most ancient cultures known to us and – at least to some extent – also in my own native linguistic culture.

Having established the theoretical premises, and having reached some methodological notion on the mode of translation from the poetical point of view, the road is now open for the act of translation itself. A translation of *Adapa* into IH which could be presented to a modern audience in an Israeli cultural environment is needed. Such a translation should be presented in an oral performance, and thus must involve simple, easy to follow language and poetic structure. The story should be told in verse, the metrical system of which would be perceived intuitively. Although aimed at a modern audience, strong links with the form of the ancient text should be maintained. This should be done in order to convey both its existential value and its antiquity.

What to transmit? What is transmissible?

Part of the difficulty in translating any text from a dead language, and especially a myth from a culture long dead, is the need to supply some background which is presumed to have been possessed by any casual hearer of that story in antiquity. This is not at all an easy task, since much of our own knowledge of the cultural background, of the communal perception of the area in which both the events and their telling took place, of the religious concepts conveyed by that tale, of the acting figures, and of many other features of the content and of the context, have been drawn from that very same and similar texts. Since the cultural context cannot be part of the textual translation itself, but only, at the most, pertain to its performance, I shall not deal with practical ways to overcome this initial difficulty. Nevertheless, a few remarks are called for.

For a text which is existential in nature, one might find it suitable to take some liberty in presenting it to a modern audience, supplying only a minimal background such as some knowledge of the main acting figures without which the text could never be understood. Even if one could replace the acting figures or transpose the cultural background into a better known environment, such a procedure would place the final product into an environment alien to its original producers.

In our case, Ea and Anu should be identified, and perhaps also Tammuz and Gizzida, the minor deities who played an important role in introducing Adapa to Anu, with regard to the way in which they could be persuaded to act as Adapa's attorneys. Precisely at this point it is interesting to note that the name of Tammuz is known as a month name still used in Jewish (and Muslim) calendars; the story of Tammuz and his role in the Babylonian Pantheon has some reflections in the Hebrew Bible (Ezekiel 8: 14) and, more than that, in the Greek mythology (the myth of Adonis). On the other hand, nothing much is known about Gizzida. Yet it may well be that it is Gizzida, rather than Tammuz, who is of greater importance for the modern western audience, since being associated with a tree of life in its Sumerian connotations and associations, Gizzida connotes the story of the Garden of Eden and the trees therein. The mention of the two deities as a pair is also significant. Indeed, our own specialist understanding

of those aspects of cultural background so much attached to the narrative of Adapa in heaven still leaves much to be desired.[28]

Textual coherence

A preliminary concern is the original structure and sequence of the text. In the case of *Adapa*, it seems that all fragments agree with regard to the sequence of the story, and complement each other with regard to its contents. Yet, there are still two problems which concern us, as we try to construct a coherent text for presentation in a hopefully fluent and eloquent configuration:

(1) The fragment which contains the beginning of the myth starts not at the very first line of the text, so that the opening of the introductory verses is still missing. Furthermore, there is a gap in the story between the introduction and the main fragments: the first fragment ends at the moment when Adapa goes out to the sea to do his fishing, and the Amarna version, which is the main fragment, starts only after Adapa has already been thrown into the sea by the wind.

(2) The Amarna fragment ends at the moment when Anu sends Adapa back to earth. Although it is clear that this was not the end of the story inscribed on that tablet, this may well be the message of the text, namely the loss of the chance to gain immortality. The later fragment which contains the conclusion of the narrative tells how Anu released Adapa from the service of his former patron, Ea, and installed him at his own, i.e., Anu's, service, making him admire his awesomeness. The very end of that fragment includes an incantation against some illnesses, which puts the myth of Adapa in a more practical context than just a mythological tale.

The restoration of the gap between the first and the second fragments was not really difficult, since the events which had to be put in are told later in the story by Adapa himself. A slight adaptation, involving mainly the change from the first to the third personal pronoun, was sufficient. This has also created a repetition, which was lost from the existing fragments of the original text, but is a common building technique of ancient narrative verse. As for the opening of the text, I had to add a line myself, mentioning the formation of Adapa by Ea. Scholars are still debating whether Adapa was actually created or just chosen by Ea from among the people of his city, Eridu. I have chosen the second option: to the best of my knowledge, both philological and contextual analyses suggest that in this myth Adapa is a full human rather than half human and half god, as has been repeatedly suggested.[29]

Regarding the conclusion of the myth, this question actually involves a two-stage decision: (a) Which of the two available conclusions to adopt for the translated text? (b) If the conclusion of the later version is adopted, should the incantation be included or left out? My first decision was not to give the text the further nuance of the incantation, which might put it in a contextual environment different from presenting the pure myth with its philosophical message.[30] Later I decided *not* to choose between the distinct conclusions, but to give them both. The matter of performance would be left for the time when the text was prepared for the stage. In fact, even at this later

[28] For Gizzida, cf. Lambert 1990: 295–300; for the other figures, see Picchioni 1981.

[29] Even very recently : e.g. McCall 1990: 65; cf. Izre'el, forthcoming.

[30] The Amarna recension most probably did not include this addition.

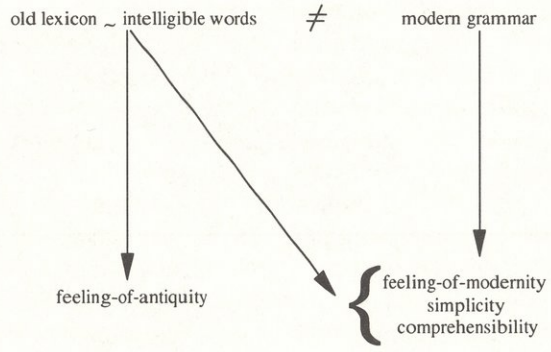
stage one could make use of both endings; e.g., the music to be composed could make use of both passages either synchronically or otherwise.

Antiquity and modernity

One of the main problems encountered at the very beginning of the process of translation was how to give an ancient flavour to the text. The first practical decision was to make as much use as possible of BH lexical items that would be understood by modern speakers of Hebrew *in their original meanings*, even if these lexemes are not used in the currently practised registers of IH. On the other hand, in order to make the text fluent and modern, I decided to avoid those BH grammatical constructions that have become obsolete. In both grammar and lexicon, I strove towards simplicity, especially since the text had to be perceived in an oral transmission.

This practical methodology seems to rest on a solid theoretical postulate. The fundamental difference between lexicon and grammar is usually the one from which linguistic attribution is intuitively made. For example, a pidgin or a creole language is usually regarded by laymen to be related to its model language, only because much of its lexicon is extracted from that language. This impressionistic perception of language is the reason for the most common terminology which would include the name of the model language in the name of the derived pidgin. Thus, e.g., "Pidgin English" is based on English lexicon rather than on English grammar. A Nigerian student at Tel Aviv University once told me of two varieties of English used in Nigeria: "Pidgin English" and "Grammar English". Pidgin English, he explained to me, has "no grammar, but people understand."[31] In our case, the lexicon (including phraseology and idiomatics) would serve to give an ancient flavour to the text; the grammar would serve to enable modern perception. Note that obsolete lexical items – in our case BH lexemes which are no longer commonly used – tend to be employed in IH poetry, and elsewhere, much more than obsolete grammatical forms. Accordingly, links between BH and IH are much more tangible in lexicon than in grammar.

The chart below describes the means used to convey the feeling of the text as I wished it to be:



[31] Although simplified and much reduced, pidgin languages do have grammar, of course. For the structure and grammatical affinities of pidgin languages see, for example, Mühlhaüsler 1986; Romaine 1988.

Divergences from this basic programme proved to be, as might be expected, a necessity. In the case of the IH continuum and its strong ties with BH, the problem was essentially not how to avoid excessive usage of BH forms, but the contrary: how to avoid usage of explicitly modern forms, i.e., forms which might be recognized by the audience as modern and thus imply a modern origin.

The lexicon; phraseology and idioms

A salient example of the need to use as much of the lexicon from BH as possible is the IH particle *šel* "of'. This particle did not exist in Biblical times, and accordingly never occurs in BH. In contrast, IH uses this particle very often, especially since it tends towards analytical constructions, which phenomenon is especially manifest when compared to respective BH usages. Accordingly, spoken IH is very sparing in construing two adjacent nouns as possessive compounds, and uses instead an analytical phrase construed with the particle *šel*; e.g., for BH *ben-'iš* "a man's son" (lit: "son+man"), IH would use *ben šel iš* (lit: "son of man"). Although seeking a modern transmission for this ancient myth, excessive usage of this word would give the text an overall air of modernity, thus undermining the need of conveying the antiquity of the text. Failure in transmitting an antique flavour with the translated text would further result in at least some deficiency in conveying the cultural background which the translated text (and its performance) was meant to do. As for eliminating the frequent need to use the particle *šel* for genitive constructions, this problem finds an easy solution by using instead compounds of genitive constructs of the Biblical type exemplified above. Such compounds are not rare in IH, and are especially frequent in literary registers; they definitely do not pose any problem in terms of intelligibility.

It must be noted at this juncture that the demand for simple language is not contradictory to using lexical material from literary registers or from the Hebrew Bible. Simplicity does not necessarily mean colloquialism or slang. On the contrary: it is a story that we are telling, and we tell it in verse; it would hence be preferable that the register used suited this genre. One must remember that since early childhood, even infancy, Israelis learn to differentiate between everyday and literary registers, as they are exposed from a very early age to stories, poems and songs either read to them by their parents and teachers from books or through electronic media.

The lexicon, and, in particular, phraseology and idioms, may contribute to retaining the flavour of Biblical times. Recall that, unlike Old English, for example, BH is still basically intelligible to speakers of IH. The following examples are intended to be illustrative of the use of lexemes and expressions where a Biblical or at least an ancient origin was meant to be conspicuous.

1. *da'at*[32] "knowledge, wisdom" is typically BH (in the form *da'at*), and is used very frequently. The BH synonym (derived from the same root) *dē'ā* is used in IH (in the form *de'a*) in the sense "opinion, point of view" (another BH derivative, *dēa'* is not used in IH). IH uses the newly derived *yedi'a* for "knowledge, knowing" or "news", *xoxma* for "wisdom". It is important that the lexeme *daat* connotes quite vigorously, I believe, the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden in the

[32] Transliteration: BH *ḥ* > IH *x* (=[ẖ]); BH *q* > IH *k* ; BH *ṣ* = IH *c* (= [ts]); BH *ṭ* > IH *t* ; BH *'* ,*'* > IH [ø]. Vowels in vocalic sequences are to be pronounced separately (e.g. for *haadon* read *ha-a-don*); a hiatus is sometimes marked by an apostrophe.

mind of every potential hearer of this text.

2. *higid* "said" (<BH *higgīd*) is interesting. IH uses verbal derivatives from this root only for future (and infinitive) denotation, while in the past and in the present tenses a suppletive root is used (*amar*; *omer*). *higid* is obsolete in almost all registers of IH. However, it is used by children in early ages, as an analogical formation to the future tense. In the context of a poetical text, occurring in collocation with *davar* "thing, something", which in BH (in the form *dābār*) means "speech", *higid* would definitely be perceived as connoting Bible-like antiquity rather than child language.
3. BH *karav* (<*qārab*) "drew near" has been replaced in IH by the derivative of the same root *hitkarev* or by the verb *nigaš*.
4. *nagid beamo* "a leader among his people" has an obvious Biblical connotation. The BH lexeme *nāgīd*, either on its own and in collocation with *'am* "people", would connote the Biblical tradition. The preposition, [*be*] (phonologically /*b*/), although attested with *nāgīd* in BH, is much less common than *al* in this context. I have chosen, however, to use *b* here since it is a general tendency in IH to replace *b* by *al* (BH *'al*) in various environments. The usage of al instead of *b* here would, to my mind, be perceived as a salient IH usage.
5. *xikrey-erec* "conception of the earth" is an ad hoc compound consisting of two existing BH nouns, which also exist in IH, yet in slightly different meanings. The compound sounds biblical precisely because it is not used as such in IH. The first component of this genitive compound is the plural construct state of *xeker* "study, conception", which seems to be used in IH only in the singular. *erec* "earth, world" will not be used to denote "world" in this and similar contexts. BH actually attests the cognate compound *meḥqrē-'ereṣ* (Psalms 95:4), yet the same lexeme in IH, namely *mexkar*, is very commonly used in the sense of "research", and would thus be unfitting here. The plural construct state *ḥiqrē* is attested in BH in collocation with *lēb* "heart": *ḥiqrē lēb* (Judges 5: 16); *ḥēqer-thōm* "the conception of the sea" (Job 38:16) is complementary to *ḥiqrē-ereṣ*.
6. *et briax ha'ir hisia* "he would unbolt the city-(gate) bar" would have an ancient flavour by the mere notions of both a city having a gate and that gate having a bar. In addition, the collocation with the verb *hisia* (BH *hissia'*) is unthinkable in IH: IH would use the verb *patax* "open" (colloquially) or *hesir* "remove" (in the written and literary registers) in collocation with *bariax* "lock, gate-bar". The verb *hisia* means by far more frequently "to drive (someone or something in) a vehicle".
7. *holexet hasfina* "the ship goes" uses the verb "to go", which is attested in BH in collocation with "boat" or "ship" (BDB: 232a). IH would never use this verb here, but rather use *shata* "sails",[33] employed in a parallel verse of my translation in collocation with *sira*. Incidentally, *sfina* is mostly attested in Mishnaic Hebrew, yet it occurs once in the Bible. Both *sira* "boat" and *oniya* "ship" might be perceived as belonging to the colloquial registers, while *sfina* is more literary, and seems to connote a smaller craft than *oniya* "ship". I have used *sfina* three times, *sira* once, for the sake of variation.

[33] Colloquial IH also *nosaat* "goes, travels".

8. *hišmin levavo* "he (Anu) fattened his (Adapa's) heart" has been employed as a translation of *libba kabra iškunšu* "installed (in) him a fat heart". The Akkadian idiom is difficult to interpret, and I am rather puzzled by the exact nuance of the collocation "fat heart", whether it denotes wisdom or pride, bravery, or more than one of these qualities. BH uses the collocation "wide heart" for "wisdom", "fat heart" for stupidity (cf. English "thick"), pride and evil. I have chosen the latter translation first of all because I think that the Akkadian collocation may have also been meant for the evil action of Adapa, a notion conveyed in the preceding verse (cf. the notion of the tree of knowledge of good and evil). Furthermore, one of the biblical idioms using a similar notion of fattening as pride is very well known in the culture of literate Israelis, namely *wayyišman y^{e}šurun wayyiḇ'aṭ*. This poetical metaphor means literally "and Yeshurun (=Israel) grew fat and kicked" (Deuteronomy 32:15), and is usually conveyed to indicate a person or a group of people who have got too much wealth and a too easy life, and so throw away all morals (and become ungrateful).

Phonology and phonetics

Regarding phonology and phonetics there is no room for elaboration in this context, since my aim here is to discuss matters of translation rather than production. Production is referred to only when it has a direct effect on the translation or on the translational process. At this point I would only mention that there has been no deviation from normative IH phonology as performed in the mass media, and as is common in poetry reading by professional readers. The major difference between this phonology and the reading pronunciation of BH in Israel is the *lenis* or fricative pronunciation of the stops *bkp* in initial position of the second component in a genitive construct compound. For example, a compound like *nqy-kpym*[34] "pure, innocent (literally: "clean+hands")" will be pronounced *n^{e}ki xapa(y)im* while reading the Bible, but *n^{e}ki kapa(y)im* otherwise. This very compound is the only occurrence in our text of such a case. In its lexical connotation it has a very strong BH flavour; IH would use *tahor* in a religious context and *xaf-mipesha* in a legal one; colloquially also *naki*. It might also use the collocation *yadaim n^{e}kiyot* "clean hands" in the context of innocence or honesty. This collocation has been used elsewhere in my translation of *Adapa* (cf. below). For the former collocation, I have chosen to follow the BH practice, and to instruct the reciting artist to pronounce the phoneme /*k*/ at the beginning of the second component as [x].

Morphology and TMA

The main morphological deviation of BH from any later Hebrew dialect is inherently related to the change in the TMA (= tense-mood-aspect) system. Diachronically this change marks the transition between Biblical and Mishnaic Hebrew. BH has two verbal conjugations: the suffix conjugation and the prefix conjugation. Both conjugations exist also in later Hebrew. The difference lies mainly in the usage and forms of variants of the prefix conjugation, which in BH mark the difference between the modal and the

[34] Here transliterated according to the consonantal spelling without the vocalic punctuation. Note that the BH phoneme /*q*/, still reflected in IH spelling, is nowadays pronounced [k]. The (BH) phonological sequence is /*nqi kappayim*/.

non-modal, and especially between the foreground form (which marks the narrative sequence) and background forms.[35] For example, a direct speech introductory sentence would sound in (the modern pronunciation of) BH something like

wayikra *anu el ilabrat hasar* "and Anu called upon Ilabrat, the minister:"

or

wayaan *ilabrat hasar* "and Ilabrat, the minister, answered:"[36]

My actual translation of these sentences makes use of the suffix conjugation of the respective etyma, which is the proper form used in narrative sequences in (literary) IH:

kara *anu el ilabrat hasar* (for Akkadian: *anu [ana š]ukkallišu ilabrat iša[s]si*) "Anu called upon Ilabrat, the minister" (Fragment B: 7′–8′; in Akkadian: his *sukkallu*).

and

ana *ilabrat hasar* (for Akkadian: *[š]ukkallašu ilabrat ippalšu*) "Ilabrat, the minister, answered" (Fragment B: 10′; in Akkadian: his *sukkallu*).

respectively. (For the word order see below.)

BH uses the prefix conjugation in its non-apocopated forms to convey habituality or continuity. This way of expressing habituality is practically non-existent in the colloquial and more common written registers of IH, where the so called *benoni*-pattern (*CoCeC*) is used instead. Yet some usage of the prefix conjugation for the expression of habituality does exist in some of the literary registers of IH, recalling older and higher registers of linguistic patterning. This form was thus required, and used quite often, for the indication of habituality or continuity in my translation, as in the verses describing the daily tasks of Adapa at Ea's sanctuary:

yadav hanekiyot šulxan yaarxu
šulxan bil'adav lo yefanu;
sirat-duga yinhag, *daga le'eridu* yavi.

His clean hands set the table,
The table is not cleared without him.
He steers a boat, he brings fish for Eridu.[37]

The original Akkadian has:

[*ina*] *qātišu ellēti paššūra* irakkas
[*ina*] *balušš̆u paššūra ul* ippaṭṭar
eleppa umaḫḫar *šuḫaddākūta ša eridu* ippuš

With his clean hands he sets the table,
Without him the table is not cleared.
He steers the boat, he does the fishing for Eridu.

(Fragment A: 13′–15′)

I have used a BH modal form once. This was done in order to keep a required accentual pattern of a verse:[38]

uma anaxnu náas lo? (for Akkadian *nīnu mīna nippu[ss]u*) "And we – what shall

[35] For these terms and the respective forms in BH see Longacre 1981 and especially Hatav 1989 with previous literature.

[36] Verbs are marked by roman characters.

[37] Note that the English translations of both the Hebrew and the Akkadian passages are not meant to be poetical, but aim at giving a literal rendering of the respective texts.

[38] See below for a discussion of meter.

we do for him?"
(Fragment B: 60′).

The normal IH verb which would be expected here is identical in form with the non-modal BH verbal form, namely *na'asé*. The jussive, or as it is commonly labeled in Israel, the "short future", is well known to any literate IH speaker, and serves here, besides complying with the accentual pattern, also as a hint of the antiquity of the text, as well as a purely poetic device. Similar verbal forms – precisely because they connote Biblical narratives, and perhaps also sometimes due to rhythmical constraints – can be found occasionally in IH poetry as well. Such periodic use of ancient modal forms (though not necessarily with modal meaning), in contrast to a full scale usage of similar and other BH verbal forms as e.g. done by Tchernichowsky in his translations of Akkadian myths, does not reduce the accessibility of the text to the audience. This is all the more so since, as has already been said, such short forms are sometimes also used as mere poetical reminders (and remainders) in modern IH.

Word order

IH is basically an SVO (= subject-verb-object) language, but free variation on stylistic grounds is very common. Furthermore, this basic word order can change into VSO under some grammatical and pragmatic constraints. BH is basically a VSO language, of which change in order (significantly to SVO) is, again, constrained either grammatically or pragmatically. Akkadian, in contrast, is an SOV language. In administrative Akkadian this word order is fixed in all possible contexts. In contrast, literary Akkadian has a free word order, which is very flexible and may be subject to poetic and stylistic rules. Therefore, it is surprising to note that *Adapa*, in all its recensions known to us, almost always has an SOV word order, and deviations from this norm are quite rare.

Taking cognizance of these rules in both Akkadian and Hebrew, I first tried – while translating simplex sentences, i.e., sentences unmarked for word order – to adhere to the rules of word order in IH storytelling. Doing this, I sought to avoid SOV (simplex) sentences, and employed SVO and VSO sequences according to my best judgment of their occurrence in oral IH storytelling. Having at hand the first versions of my translation, I discovered that the outcome was unsuccessful, since this attempt to adhere to either an SVO or a VSO word order was in too many cases incompatible with another requirement, a rather basic one: the requirement for rhythm.

When I then tried to leave aside the theoretical premises and translate intuitively, I found myself using an SOV order in many cases. It has become one of unmarked order, and seems thus to be constrained by the poetic nature of the text. For example:[39]

baet hahi, ***adapa, ben-eridu,***
(*od-**ea** **hamelex** al-miškavo* šoxev)
k^{e}*midey yom et briax ha'ir* hisia,
uvanamal hacax, b^{e}*xof hasahar, bisfinat mifras* ***hu*** yarád
At that time, Adapa, a native of Eridu,
(While King Ea was still lying on his bed,)

[39] Verbs are marked by roman characters, subjects by boldface characters. It should be noted that in Hebrew, as in other Semitic languages, the subject may be implicit within the verbal form.

Like daily he removed the city-bar,
And at the pure harbour, the crescent harbour, he embarked on a sailing boat

The original Akkadian has:

inūmišu adapa mār eridu
[šar]ru? *ea ina mayyāli ina šadādi*
[ū]mišamma šigar eridu iššar
[ina k]āri elli kār uskāri šaḫḫīta irkabma
At that time, Adapa, a native of Eridu,
While [Ki]ng? Ea (still) lingers in bed,
Would [da]ily unbolt of the gate-bar of Eridu.
[At the] holy [h]arbour, the crescent harbour, he embarked on a sailboat
(Fragment A: 16′–19′)

Seeking an explanation for this phenomenon, I of course first went back to the Akkadian, asking myself if I was not guided by the sequence of the respective grammatical forms in the original, which has as its norm the SOV word order. A comparison between the Akkadian original and the Hebrew translation has shown that about a fourth of the translated sentences do not match the original ones in terms of word order. In some cases either a lexical or a grammatical constraint may be responsible for this. For example, it was interesting to discover that a considerable percentage of cases, where the Hebrew translation exhibited a verb-initial structure, had a direct speech introductory verb in them, which is a salient constraint common in storytelling in IH. Another case to be mentioned are infinitival constructions, in which the Akkadian had the complements preceding the infinitive, while the Hebrew translation had the reverse order. This latter difference is a clear result of the difference in word order in the respective languages. I have further noticed a slight tendency on my part to use chiasm in my translation, which recalls a common poetic tradition in Ancient Semitic and other languages, yet is practically non-existent (except once) in *Adapa* in the recensions which have reached us.

Yet I became convinced of my "innocence" on this point only when I encountered, by mere chance, a children's story I was telling to my son, in which a similar phenomenon occurred: the simplex word order suddenly changed to a verb-final order for the sake of rhythmical convenience of repeatedly occurring actions:

bama'ader oderet, *bamagrefa* m^{e}yašeret, *bamakoš* m^{e}nakešet, *et haasavim hara'im* tolešet, *uvamazlef* ***hi*** maška *et hagina maim.*

She grubs with a hoe, she straightens with a rake, she weeds with a mattock, she roots out the weeds, and with a sprinkling can she waters the garden. (Levin Kipnis, *Hadaxlil*, Tel Aviv 1988: 4)

Verb-final order may serve to add extra emphasis to the action conveyed.[40] This might be the case in the passage from the children's tale just cited, and also seems to be true for some passages in my translation of *Adapa*, as in the passage cited above. Yet it was rhythm, achieved by putting the same part of speech at the end of each of the repetitive syntactical units, that constrained, more than anything else, this salient change of word order here. This device is more prominent with verbs, which are similar in form and structure. Note further the last sentence, where a conclusion is

[40] I thank Baruch Podolsky for this insight.

made to the rhythmical sequence both by a lengthier clause[41] and by a change in word order. While this is by no means standard procedure in IH storytelling, I nevertheless think that this example is illustrative of the constraints which may act upon word order when rhythm is introduced.

In some cases an SOV word order was possibly attracted by the need for rhyming (on rhyming see further below; note, incidentally, that the four verb-final sentences in the IH passage cited above also rhyme). In the following passage, the first verse has verb-initial order while the second verse is verb-final, with no rhyming constraints (if we do not count the following quoted verses); yet the rest of the verses have verb-final structures and rhyming:

ana ***adapa*** *leanu: "adoni!*
dagim levet ea adoni b^{e}lev hayam dag**ti**.
sufat hanegev **našva**,
et-hayam lišnayim bak'**a** – *v^{e}oti l^{e}hatbia* xiš**va**.
el-bet haadon calal**ti**,
uv^{e}saar libi et haruax kilal**ti**."

Adapa answered Anu: "My lord,
I was catching fish for my lord's household in the middle of the sea.
The South Wind was blowing,
She cut the sea in two parts, and She thought of drowning me.
I sank into the home of the lord,
and in the rage of my heart I cursed the wind."

The original Akkadian has:

adapa ana ippal bēlī
ana bīt bēliya ina qablât tâmti nūnī abâr
tâmta ina mešēli inšilma
šūtu iẓiqqamma iâši uṭṭebbânni
[an]a bīt bēli ultamṣil
ina uggat libbiya [šūt]a[?] *atta(z)zar*

Adapa answered Anu: "My lord!
For my lord's household I was catching fish in the middle of the sea.
She cut the sea in its midst, and
the South Wind was blowing at me, and as for me – She drowned me.
I was plunged into the lord's house.
In the rage of my heart I cursed the South Wind[?]."

(Fragment B: 49′-54′)

Word order in IH, in both its grammatical and its pragmatic or stylistic aspects has, unfortunately, never attracted thorough scientific concern. Hence, I am unable to determine in full the constraints which have been working on my intuitive construction of sentences in this translation. It must be recalled that *Adapa* is also exceptional in its usage of verb-final order, which is much more frequent here than in other Akkadian myths. Are we to deal with similarities between the Akkadian and the IH structural features on a typological level? This most interesting question must be left for future research.

[41] For this cross-cultural device see Gil 1990.

Prosody; poetic devices

The premise that IH impromptu meter has constraints similar to the ancient Semitic ones led me to take an intuitive approach to the practical process of translation. This was, in a way, easier than considering the order of words, which could be changed at will without disturbing the linguistic intuition. Rhythm is more demanding than word order: diverging from what is actually constrained by hearing was immediately felt. It is therefore interesting to note that, by and large, the outcome complies with the general idea that IH meter has similar constraints as the ancient Semitic ones.[42] Indeed, the overall metrical structure of the translated text is very similar to the original one, and many of the comparable verses actually have very similar metrical structure. Examples:[43]

(1) Akk. *malâ ušteššīšu | karra ultalbissuma | ṭēma išakkanšu*
He made him wear the hair unkempt, dressed him with a mourning cloth, and gave him instructions.
Heb. *s^{e}aró satár | sák-lo xagár | higíd-lo davár*
He tousled his hair, wrapped him in sackcloth, and told him (some)thing.
(Fragment B: 15′–16′)

(2) Akk. *kīma ina-pîšu iqbû | ša-šūti-kappaša ittešbir*
sebe-ūmī šūtu ana-māti ul-iziqqa
While he was still talking in his mouth, the wing of the South Wind broke;
For seven days the South Wind did not blow toward the land.
Heb. *od-hu medabér | nišb^{e}rá knaf-hasufá,*
šiv'a-yamím el-tox-haárec lo-našvá.
While he was still talking, the wing of the South Wind broke;
For seven days it was not blowing into the land.
(Fragment B: 5′–6′)

In fact, the close overall similarity of the two systems, including both language and poetic structure, made possible and actually inspired an endeavour to adhere as closely as possible to the original text, yet not without keeping alert at all times to the possible loss of awareness of the need to present the text to a modern audience in a readily accessible format. We shall later see some examples where this closeness opened the way for an almost word-for-word translation, and for using similar etyma. Here I would like to mention the occasional need for deviating from the operative premises in order to achieve a smoother poetical presentation. The verses just quoted are useful also in exemplifying this necessity.

The second example, although it shows that in IH, as in Akkadian, a metreme consisting of three words is possible (*el-tox-haárec*), also shows that the last metreme of its first verse was not composed of the common two-word genitive construction which elsewhere is used to translate Akkadian *šūtu* "South Wind", namely *sufat-négev*.

---

[42] There seems to be, however, one exception: while both Akkadian and BH probably did not have any constraints on the number of syllables within a verse or a colon, this seems not to be absolutely true for IH meter. Although I cannot yet posit definite rules for these constraints, I think that in some cases it is the actual length of a verse, or rather of a colon, that seems to be constrained. Besides, it seems to me that the semantic or syntactical structure of a IH metreme is more flexible than that of Akkadian.

[43] Metremes in both Akkadian and IH are marked, wherever they consist of more than a single word, by hyphen-coordination. IH metremes are further indicated in the transcription by accent marking. A vertical line marks the boundary between cola.

Instead, it uses the shorter *sufá* "wind, storm". That a longer string consisting of more than one or two nouns is indeed possible to form a single metreme is proved by its occurrence elsewhere in the Hebrew text:

ádapa et-knaf-sufat-hanégev šavár | havi'énnu eláy.

"Adapa broke the wing of the South Wind | bring him to me."

for the Akkadian:

adapa ša-šūti-kappaša išbir | ana-muḫḫiya šūbilaššu

(Fragment B: 36′)

This was constrained, I believe, both by the need to cope with the accentual pattern of the preceding colon, where the accent falls on its last syllable (*medabér*), and also, perhaps dominantly, by the need for rhyming (*sufá* ← *našvá*).

With regard to rhyming, note that my intuitive perception of the status of a colon vis-à-vis a verse was as if they were almost equal. A salient example is the following, where the structure (starting at the end of the second verse) is A-B-C-C-A, i.e., rhyming is applied not only at verse ends, but also at the ends of cola:

blí mašót | sirató šáta
blí hége | sfinató yinhág.
holéxet hasfiná | bayám haraxáv
v^{e}Ádapa l^{e}vet-ēa adonáv | dagím b^{e}lev-hayám hu-dág.

Without a rudder his boat drifts along,
Without a punting pole he steers the boat.
The boat goes in the wide sea
and Adapa – for his lord's household – is catching fish in the midst of the sea.

The original Akkadian has:

[*balu*]*sikannima | eleppašu iqqeleppu*
[*balu gi*]*muššima | eleppašu umaḫḫar*
[*ina tâmt*]*i rapašti*
[*ana bīt bēlišu | ina qablat tâmti nūnī ibâr*]

Without a rudder his boat drifts along,
Without a punting pole he steers the boat.
[The boat goes in the] wide [se]a.
[Adapa – for his lord's household – is catching fish in the midst of the sea.]

(Fragment A: 20′–22′ + restoration after Fragment B: 50′–51′)

See further the following example, where, again, rhyming is between the two cola of the same verse:

láma-ze yamím šiv'á | el-ha'árec lo-tišóv sufá?

(For the Akkadian: *ammīni šūtu ištu 7 ūmi ana māti lā iziqqa*)

Why has the South Wind not blown toward the land for seven days?

(Note also the assonance of the sound [v] and [f] at the end of either colon.)

By and large, the Hebrew translation includes ca. 40% rhyming cola or verses, while the Akkadian original has rhymes in ca. 25% of its respective metrical units.[44] An obvious explanation for the excessive usage of rhyming in my translation (in spite of a deliberate intention to avoid it) is that rhyming is perceived by IH speakers as a

[44] Rhyming is not salient in Akkadian poetry, and seems to be occasional rather than deliberate.

salient feature of some genres of poetry and narrative verse (lyrics, ballads, etc.). More specifically, a genre consisting of verse structure using popular-intuitive rhythm, and of which rhyming is its most salient feature, actually exists in IH linguistic culture. This is the genre used in the composition of congratulations, end-of-year speeches at school, in the army, and the like. It is notable that this genre or mode of discourse is quite widespread as an aural one, in the sense that people listen to texts composed in this genre rather than read them.

This linkage to rhyming is not specific to IH, and it is illuminating to quote here Anne Kilmer's translation of the last two verses of *Atra-ḫasīs* (in this volume), where rhyming has been used:

abūba ana kullat nišī
uzammer šimeā
Of the Flood to all who fear
I sing, you hear.
(Tablet III, viii: 18–19)[45]

An exemplified conspectus

In order to illustrate the process of poetic analysis and translation involved, I would like to cite a passage in which many of the issues encountered during my work have been epitomized. This is, to my mind, the most important passage of the myth. In fact, what we have here is two repetitive passages. The first is part of Ea's instructions to Adapa regarding his behaviour in heaven; the second is the materialization of this situation. Let us first consider the passage which contains the instructions of Ea:

(a) *akala-ša-mūti ukallūnikkumma | lā takkal* metremes: 3+2
(b) *mê-mūti ukallūnikkumma | lā-tašatti* 2+1
(c) *lubāra ukallūnikkumma | litbaš* 2+1
(d) *šamna ukallūnikkumma | pišša*š 2+1

You will be offered food of death, so do not eat;
You will be offered deadly water, so do not drink;
You will be offered a garment, then put it on;
You will be offered oil, then anoint yourself.
(Fragment B: 29′–32′)

In a way, the two repetitive passages form a concise summary of the whole myth. No wonder then that the most elaborate poetic devices have been orchestrated in them. First must be noted the metrical disposition of these verses: each verse is shorter than the previous one both in phonemic strings and in the number of metremes. Note also that all four verses have the same number of major syntactical units. While verse (a) has three metremes in its first part and two in its second, verse (b) has only two metremes in the first part and only one in the second. Verses (c) and (d) each have two metremes in their first part, and one metreme in their second. As for the first colon of verse (a), the partition of the first semantic unit into two metremes (*akala ša mūti* "food of death") is achieved by using the technique of an analytical construction instead of the genitive compound used in the second verse (*mê mūti* "deadly water"). This analytical genitive construction makes use of the relative particle *ša*.

[45] I wonder why line boundaries have not been respected in Lambert and Millard's edition (1969: 105).

In its second occurrence, i.e., when the events actually take place, this passage is preceded by the order of Anu:

akal-balāṭi leqâniššumma | līkul

Bring him food of life, that he may eat.

(Fragment B: 60′–61′)

The ritual of hospitality is now to be narrated, and, in order to keep to the form and metreme sequence already begun by Anu's orders, the analytical construction is not employed:

akal-balāṭi ilqûniššumma | ul-īkul
mê-balāṭi ilqûniššumma | ul-ilti
lubāra ilqûniššumma | ittalbaš
šamna ilqûniššumma | ittapšiš

They brought him food of life; he did not eat;
They brought him water of life; he did not drink;
They brought him a garment; he did dress;
They brought him oil; he did anoint himself.

(Fragment B: 61′–65′)

At the beginning of our discussion of the process of translation (see above under "The lexicon; phraseology and idioms") attention was given to the IH particle *šel* "of". It has been mentioned that BH does not yet use this particle. Furthermore, BH rarely uses the etymologically related relative particle *še*, while both in Akkadian and in IH these cognate particles (*ša* and *še* respectively) are extremely frequent. In my translation I tried to avoid as much as possible both the usage of the relative particle *še* and that of the particle *šel*. Instead of using IH *še*, I used BH *'ašer*, still in use in various IH written and formal registers. To express genitive, and especially possessive relations, I tried to use as much as possible synthetic rather than analytical constructions, i.e., nominal compounds. A salient example is my translation of the frequent expression *ša šūti kappaša* "the wing of the South Wind", lit. "of South-Wind wing-(of-)her" as *knaf hasufa*, lit. "wing(-of) the-storm" or *knaf sufat hanegev*, lit. "wing(-of) storm(-of) the-South". The respective Akkadian and IH expressions usually equal a single metreme in the respective poetic structures.

Nevertheless, in the passage relating Ea's instructions to Adapa, the poetic structure necessitated the use of the particle *šel*, since the number of metremes had to be greater in the first verse. Similarly, this has been achieved in the original Akkadian by a genitive construction with the related particle *ša*, which I though it best to imitate:

léxem šel-mávet lᵉxa-yavíu | ál toxál
mey-mávet lᵉxa-yavíu | al-tišté
béged lᵉxa-yavíu | lᵉváš
šémen lᵉxa-yavíu | mᵉšáx.

Again, the sporadic use of modern words, and especially, as is the case here, of grammatical words, seems not to have affected the overall impression of the antiquity of the lexicon.

Some attention must also be given to the transmission into IH of the sound patterning of these passages. The elaborate consonance in these passages is very salient

indeed. It also connotes other verses which are related to the content of this passage.[46] The genetic relationship between Akkadian and Hebrew also helped in keeping some of the rich consonant patterning of this passage. I could have retained the consonance of the sounds [l] and [š], used also in the original, and, although I could not adhere to the overpowering frequency of [k], I have managed to make some use of the sound [x] instead. Akkadian has further used phonetically similar roots for "offer" (*kullu*) and "brought" (*leqû*) in the respective parallel passages, where again [l], [k] and [q] have been used very effectively. The IH translation, which is, alas, much poorer, made use of only a single verb, patterned in a single conjugation, a verb of which the root has only one consonantal radical (*yavíu / hevíu* "they will bring / they brought"). Thus, the use of the so-called "weak" verb in the *hif'il* pattern was helpful both in avoiding the introduction of extra consonants, and in keeping the similarity between the two repetitive passages:

lexem-xayím havíu-lo | yoxál!
lexem-xayím hevíu-lo | lo-axál
mey-xayím hevíu-lo | lo-šatá
béged hevíu-lo | laváš
šémen hevíu-lo | mašáx.[47]

In many other cases I tried to stay close to the original consonance of the Akkadian original, and to make use of the etymological proximity of the two languages. I must admit that in several cases I was tempted to exploit the genetic affiliation between Hebrew and Akkadian to its extreme. I found this playful manipulation of etymology and sounds helpful in stressing the nature of the text as a piece of poetry and in retaining the ancient flavour of the text. An extreme example is the verse reciting the moment when Anu was appeased and became calm:

Akk. *ittūḫ libbašu issakat*
Heb. *šáx levav-Ánu, šakát*
His/Anu's heart has calmed,
he has become silent.
(Fragment B: 56′)

In this case, I have gone back to an obsolete BH verbal form, which has helped in retaining the [š]-[s] consonance, so meaningful in the Akkadian verse, achieved by the proximity of the third singular masculine genitive personal pronoun *-šu* and by the */ss/* of the Akkadian verb for "become quiet".[48] The alternative, IH *nax* "rested", which is etymologically related to *ittūḫ*, would have been, I believe, a poorer choice. Not only would it loose the phonetic effect (IH would translate Akkadian *-šu* by *-o*), but it would be awkward to the ear of an IH speaker, since this collocation of "heart resting" is practically nonexistent in his language. In contrast, BH *šax* would not disturb the linguistic intuition of the hearer. Although obsolete, both the context and related forms in IH (cf. *šaxax* "calmed", said of wind) have enabled me to use this

[46] Izre'el 1992.
[47] In an earlier version I used two different verbs: *yacíu* "They will offer" vs. *hevíu* "they brought". In this case, there was a difference in the only (overt) consonant of the respective roots, whereas the combination of the vocalic patterning and the so-called "weak" roots was helpful in keeping at least some of the consonance effect, and especially the similarity between the two repetitive passages.
[48] Akkadian /š/ was probably pronounced as an unvoiced lateral rather than as a palato-alveolar consonant (Steiner 1977: chapter XIX; Diakonoff 1980: 10–11).

verb, thus gaining both comprehensibility and an ancient flavour, as well as helping to preserve the meaningful sound sequence of the original.[49]

Another example of my exploitation of the genetic relationship between Akkadian and Hebrew is the verse treating the moment where Anu, just before ordering the return of Adapa to earth, expresses the distress of the state of being human:

Akk. *alka adapa | ammīni lā-tākul lā-taltima*
lā-balṭāta | ayya nišī dallāti
Heb. *bó, ádapa, | láma lo-axálta? | láma lo-tišté?*
káxa lo-tixyé! | oyá laenóš ki dál!
Come, Adapa, why did you not eat or drink?
Hence you cannot live! Alas, poor humanity!
(Fragment B: 67–8)

Note first the change of verbal forms between *axalta* and *tište*, which brings forth a Biblical poetic recollection, although I suspect that the change had been constrained by the need to use a non-past form in the next verb, namely *tixye*, i.e. for rhyming. In BH the form *tište* would imply durativity or generality, while in IH it has a modal implication in this context. Note further, especially, the last colon, where the Akkadian *ayya* "alas" is transmitted by Hebrew *oya, nišī* "human" by *enoš*, and Akkadian *dallāti* by *dal*. The syntax has been changed, in this case into a pure BH syntax, which seems to better serve this ancient, yet currently relevant and still distressful moral of this myth.

CONCLUSION

Modern translators of Akkadian literature do not usually take into consideration that a text must be appealing to their audience. They try to make the ancient text intelligible, and to convey its contents to the best of their knowledge. I claim that this is not enough. Our texts should be rendered not only accurately, but also readably. A myth in particular should furthermore be attractive. I for my part have ventured such a translation of *Adapa* into Israeli Hebrew, which is, I admit, easier in some respects than a transposition of an Akkadian text into non-Semitic languages. Yet, in other respects, this translation involves other difficulties, which are sometimes more complicated to solve precisely because of the special relationship between the originating and the target languages, and due to the special history of Hebrew and its being a Semitic language, genetically affiliated to Akkadian.

Having in mind an oral production for a Hebrew speaking audience in contemporary Israel, I tackled problems of transposition of the myth of *Adapa and the South Wind* in both poetics and language. The generic and linguistic gaps have been bridged

[49] Note, interestingly, that IH speakers may further connote here another verb with the same phonetic (rather than phonological) sequence, namely [šax], with the meaning "be low, bend, be low in spirit". This verb, which may be brought to mind upon hearing, would be perceived with its proper nuance upon continuing along the verse. Listening to it in a recitation rather than having it read would be crucial in this case, since the spelling of these two homophones is different. An alternative translation of this verse might be *šaxáx za'apó, šakát* "his anger was appeased; he became silent". The (poetical) expression *šaxax zaapo*, collocating *šaxax* "calmed down" (cf. above) with *záaf* "anger", would connote the calming of the sea after a storm, which would be nice in the context of Adapa's case.

by the actual likeness of the two literary cultures with regard to poetic meter. I hope that by bringing into the open both the theoretical aspects which lie behind my work, and the process of my work along with the problems I tackled, some implications can be made for the translation of Akkadian myths and other texts into other languages, more widespread than Israeli Hebrew, in order to make our texts not only intelligible, but also appealing to the larger public.

APPENDIX 1

It is a great pleasure to present here Anne Kilmer's verse translation of the Amarna fragment of Adapa. I wish to thank Prof. Kilmer heartily for her willingness and enthusiasm, and especially for making Adapa so pleasantly and cheerfully accessible to an English speaking audience.

Verse Translation of Adapa (Amarna version)

Anne Kilmer

Unlike many other examples of Akkadian poetry which displays in large part four beats to the line, the Amarna version of Adapa defies attempts to scan the lines in a consistent manner. Even when we can easily perceive four beats to a written line, the line divisions may cross syntactic units/meaning phrases; e.g.,

sukkállašu Ilábrat ippálšu: bēlī
Adápa mār Éa ša šūtu kappáša
(ll. 10–11)

but the verb *ištebir*, which must belong at least with "of Šutu her wing he broke" is written at the beginning of l. 12.

Nevertheless, in the spirit of the contribution of Shlomo Izre'el, and for the benevolent reader's entertainment, this attempt is offered. It is an exercise in rendering Akkadian poetry in four beats per "divisive verse" line, a beat that was used in Akkadian and which was and is used in many parts of the world for many languages, a common "Folk meter". To capture the spirit of the original without wandering too far from the Akkadian was our intention. However,

some liberties have been taken from time to time
when yielding to the temptation of catching a rhyme.

Probable and possible word-play should also be noted. Lines 29–30:

29 *akala ša mūti* "food of death"
akala šamūti "food of heavenlies" (even though, normally, *šamūti* means "rain")

as observed by Dalley, *Myths*, p. 188 note 9.

30 *mê mūti* "water of death"
mê emūti "water of transformation" (here rendered as "water of breath" for the sake of rhyme)

as suggested here by Kilmer.

[By her strong wind tempest toss'd
By Shutu's wing near all was lost...]
"Oh Southwind, [you evil thing]
I, e'en I will break your wing!"
No sooner spoken, her wing was broken.
Seven days Southwind on land blew not.
An to his servant Ilabrat he cries,
"Why Southwind seven days blows not?"
His servant Ilabrat answers his lord,
"Ea's Adapa, he broke her wing!"
This very word when it was heard,
"Oh help!" he cried, rose from his throne:
"Send for him and bring him home!"
But Ea who knows the ways of Heaven
He touched his son with matted hair
And mourning clothes he made him wear.
He set for him a cunning plan:
"Adapa, before King An you'll go,
Up to the heavens you'll ascend.
Up to the heavens when you ascend—
Up to An's gate when you arrive—
At An's gate there will stand
Dumu-zi and Giz-zida.
They'll look at you, start questioning:
'Young man, for whom became you thus?
Pray, Adapa, for whom d'you mourn?'
'From our land two gods are lost.
Thus I appear the way you see.'
'Which two gods from land are lost?'
'Dumu-zi and Giz-zida.'
They'll look, they'll laugh, will those two.
But to An good words they'll say,
An's good side they will display.
When 'fore An you do stand
The food of death/heaven to you they'll hand,
This indeed you shall not eat.
The water of death/breath to you they'll hand,
This indeed you shall not drink.
They'll give a robe for you to don,
This indeed you shall put on.
Then some oil they will appoint,
With this indeed you shall anoint.
The plan I've set do not forsake!
Keep close to heart the words I spake!"

The messengers of An arrived:
"That Adapa who broke her wing
Up to me you must bring!"
The path to Heaven they made him take,
Up to Heaven he did ascend.
When to Heaven he did ascend—
When to An's gate he did arrive—
At An's gate there did stand:
Dumu-zi and Giz-zida!
They spied Adapa—"Help!", they cried,
"Young man, for whom became you thus?
Pray, Adapa, for whom d'you mourn?"
"From our land two gods are lost,
Thus I'm clothed in mourning garb."
"Which two gods from land are lost?"
"Dumu-zi and Giz-zida."
They looked, they laughed, did those two.
When he approached before King An,
An saw him and cried out, "Come here!
Oh Adapa, why did you, why
Break Shutu's wing up in the sky?"
Adapa answered An the King,
"Lord, I was fishing for my lord's house
In the middle of the sea.
Southwind blew and halved the sea,
Nearly, nearly drowning me.
In my lords' abode she would me house
But this my anger did arouse.
And so my (fateful) curse I spoke."
Then answered well and at his side:
Dumu-zi and Giz-zida.
On his behalf they talked to An.
An was calmed, his heart took rest.
"Why did Ea to mankind display
What is not good for Heaven or Earth?
He gave (this) man a heart so stout—
'Twas he himself who worked it out!
What can we now do for him?
Hand him now the bread of life."
They gave it him but he ate not.
"Hand him then the water of life."
They gave it him but he drank not.
"Hand him now the special garb."
This indeed he did put on.
They gave him oil; he did anoint.
Anu looked and laughed at him:

"Come, Adapa, why won't you eat?
Will you not drink? Would you not live?
  Oh perverse humanity!"
"But Ea, my lord, commanded me:
'You shall not eat, you shall not drink!"
"Take him, then, right back to earth!"
[And so they did, to Anu's mirth.]

Fragment A:

[אֲאה את אדפה עשה,]
וּדְבָרוֹ כְּדָבַר אֲנוּ הָאֵל היה׃
הכלילוֹ שכל טוב / לגלות חקרי אֶרץ.
דעת נתן לוֹ / חיי-עוֹלם לא נתן לוֹ.
בימים ההם, בעת ההיא, / אאה הֶחכם את בן ארידוּ בחר,
נגיד בעמוֹ יצר.
את פי הֶחכם / איש לא ימרה׃
כל-יכוֹל, רב-תבונה, / לאלי הארץ הוּא.
טהוֹר, נקי-כפים, / המוֹשח בשֶמן, המנצח על הטקס׃
עם הטבחים / זבח יביא,
עם טבחיה של אריד / את הזבח יביא,
לחם וּמים לאריד / מדי יוֹם ביוֹמוֹ יביא׃
ידיו הנקיוֹת / שולחן יערכוּ,
שולחן בלעדיו / לא יַפנוּ׃
סירת דוּגה ינהג / דגה לאריד יביא.
בעת ההיא, אדפה, בן אריד,
- עוֹד אאה המלך / על משכבוֹ שוֹכב -
כמדי יוֹם את בריח העיר הסיע,
וּבנמל הצח, בחוֹף הסהר / בספינת מפרש הוּא ירד.
בלי משוֹט / סירתוֹ שטה,
בלי הגה / ספינתוֹ ינהג.
[הוֹלכת הספינה] / בים הרחב,

Linking between Fragments A and B, restored after Fragment B, ll. 50'-53', followed by Fragment B:

[ואדפה לבית אאה אדוֹניו / דגים בלב הים הוּא דג.
פתע באה רוּח סוּפה,
את הים לשנים בָּקעה, / את אדפה להטביע חישבה.
אל משכן האדון הוּא צלל,
וּבסער לבוֹ / חרד וקרא׃
"לא תוּכלי לי,] סוּפה!
כי-אני כנגדך אתגבר.
[קראי,] סוּפת נגב / לכל רוּחוֹת השמים!
גם כי ת[חזקנה] / אני את כנפך אֲשַבֵּר."
עוֹד הוּא מדבר / נשברה כנף הסוּפה,
שבעה ימים אל תוך הארץ לא נשבה.
קרא אנוּ אל אַלַבְּרַת השר׃
"למה זה ימים שבעה / אל תוך הארץ לא תישוב סוּפה?"
ענה אַלברת השר׃
"אדוֹני! אדפה בן אאה / את כנף סוּפת הנגב שבר."
אנוּ שמע / וצעק "אללי!"
מעל הכסא / על רגליו הוּא קם׃
"ישלח ויביאוּהוּ לכאן!"
אאה יוֹדע אֲרחוֹת שמים / נגע באדפה,
שערוֹ סתר, / שק לוֹ חגר,
הגיד לוֹ דבר׃

"אדפה, אל אנוּ המלך אתה הוֹלך / אל השמים תעלה.
וּבעלוֹתך השמימה / בהגיעך אל שערי אנוּ,
שם בשער / תמוּז וגיזידה עוֹמדים.
יראוּך, ישאלוּך:
'בחוּר, על מי כה אבלת? / אדפה, בשל מי שק חגרת?'
'אלים שְׁנַיִם מארצנוּ אבדוּ / על כן אני זאת עשיתי.'
'מיהם האלים השְׁנַיִם / אשר מן הארץ אבדוּ?'
'תמוּז וגיזידה.'
זה אל זה יביטוּ, יחייכוּ,
עליך דבר טוֹב לאנוּ יאמרוּ,
ואת פני אנוּ היפים יַראוּך.
בעָמְדָך לפני אנוּ
לחם של מוות לך יביאוּ / אל תאכל,
מי מוות לך יביאוּ / אל תשתה,
בגד לך יביאוּ / לְבש,
שמן לך יביאוּ / מְשח.
אל תימַך אמרי אשר הגדתי / את דברַי נצור."
והנה השליח של אנוּ:
"אדפה את כנף סוּפת הנגב שבר / הביאֶנוּ אלי!"
אל דרך השמים הנחהוּ / והוּא אל השמים עלה.
בעלוֹתוֹ השמימה / בקרבוֹ אל שערי אנוּ,
שם בשער / תמוּז וגיזידה עמדוּ.
ראוּ את אדפה / צעקוּ: "אללי!
בחוּר, על מי כה אבלת? / אדפה, בשל מי שק חגרת?"
"אלים שנים מן הארץ אבדוּ / על כן אני שק חגרתי."
"מיהם האלים השנים / אשר מן הארץ אבדוּ?"
"תמוּז וגיזידה."
זה אל זה הביטוּ, חייכוּ.
קרב אדפה לפני אנוּ המלך.
ראה אותו אנוּ / וקרא "בוא!
אדפה, למה את כנף הסוּפה שברת?"
ענה אדפה לאנוּ: "אדוֹני!
דגים לבית אאה אדוֹני / בלב הים דגתי.
סוּפת הנגב נשבה,
את הים לשנים בקעה / ואוֹתי להטביע חישבה.
אל משכן האדון צללתי,
וּבסער לבי / את הרוח קיללתי."
תמוּז וגיזידה / לצידו עמדו,
את דבריו הטובים / לאנו סיפרו.
שך לבב אנוּ, שקט.
"מדוּע לאדם גילה אאה / את רוע השמים והארץ?
מדוע השמין לבבו?
הנה אאה - הוּא עשאוֹ / ומה אנחנוּ נעש לוֹ?
לחם חיים לוֹ הָביאוּ / יאכל."
לחם חיים לוֹ הָביאוּ / לא אכל,
מי חיים לוֹ הָביאוּ / לא שתה,
בגד לוֹ הָביאוּ / לָבש,
שמן לוֹ הָביאוּ / מָשח.
הביט בוֹ אנוּ / צחק לוֹ.

"בוא, אדפה, / למה לא אכלת? / למה לא תשתה?
ככה לא תחיה! / אויה לאנוש כי דל!"
"אאה אדוני ציווני / 'אל תאכל, אל תשתה!'"
"קחוּהוּ. לָאָרץ השיבוּהוּ!"

Conclusion of the myth from Fragment D:

אנוּ על מעשה אאה צחק בקול:
"באלי השמים והארץ, אף כי רבוּ, / מי כה יעשה?
אנוּ האל - כה עצמוּ דבריו; / מי ישא ראש בפניו?"
נשא אנוּ את אדפה, / חוג שמים הדריכוֹ;
השקיף אדפה, / יראת אנוּ ראה.
אז לקח אותוֹ אנוּ / אליו לשרתוֹ,
מֵעִם אאה / קרא לוֹ דרור.
וּשׂררה נתן לוֹ / להראות לְימים מָשׁלוֹ.

APPENDIX 3

The Akkadian text as set for translation.

Fragment A (||A_1):

1 [*š]īmtu*[?] [
2 *qibīssu kīma qibīt [Anu] lū uma"ar*[?]
3 *uzna rapašta ušaklilšu uṣurāt māti kullumu*
4 *ana šuātu nēmeqa iddiššu napišta darīta ul iddiššu*
5 *ina ūmēšuma ina šanāti šināti apkallu mār eridu*
6 *ea kīma riddi ina amēlūti ibnišu*
7 *apkallu qibīssu mamman ul ušamsak*
8 *lē'û atra ḫasīsa ša anunnaki šūma*
9 *ebbu ella qātī pašīšu mušte'u parṣī*
10 *itti nuḫatimmē nuḫatimmūta ippuš*
11 *itti nuḫatimmē ša eridu nuḫatimmūta ippuš*
12 *akala u mê ša eridu ūmišamma ippuš*
13 *ina qātīšu ellēti paššūra irakkas*
14 *ina balušši paššūra ul ippaṭṭar*
15 *eleppa umaḫḫar šuḫaddākūta ša eridu ippuš*
16 *inūmišu adapa mār eridu*
17 *[šar]ru*[?] *ea ina mayyāli ina šadādi*
18 *ūmišamma šigar eridu iššar*
19 *ina kāri elli kār uskāri šaḫḫīta irkabma*
20 *balu sikannimma eleppašu iqqeleppu*
21 *balu gimuššimma eleppašu umaḫḫar*
22 [*ina tâmt]i rapašti*

Fragment B:

1 *ēpu[š*
2 *šūtu x* [
3 *ana pî t[u-x-i]a ušamṣī*
4 [ ] *šūtu [šā]rāni | aḫḫēki mala i[danninū*[?]*]*
5 *ka[ppa]ki lušebbir*
kīma ina pîš[u i]qbû |[6] *ša [šū]ti kappaša ittešbir*
7 ūmī [7] *[šūt]u ana māti ul iziqqa anu* [8] *[ana š]ukkallišu ilabrat iša[s]si*
9 *[am]mīni šūtu ištu 7 ūmī ana māti lā iziqqa*
10 *[š]ukkallašu ilabrat ippalšu*
bē[l]ī [11] *adapa mār ea | ša šūti kappaša* [12] *ištebir*
anu āmata annīta ina šemi[š]u |[13] *ilsi nārāru ittibi ina kussišu*
šup[urma li]lqûnišši [14] *annikâ*
ea ša šamê īde ilpus[su]m[a] [15] *[adapa]*
malâ ušteššišu | karra [16] *[ultalbissu*
ṭē]ma išakkanšu

17 [adapa ana pānī ani š]arri atta tallak | 18 [ana šamê tellim]a
ana š[amê] 19 [ina]elîk[a | ana bāb ani ina ṭe]ḫîka
20 [in]a bābu an[i | dumuzi u gizzi]da 21 izzazzū
immarūka ilt[an]a"alūka
eṭ[lu] 22 ana manni kâ emāta | a[dap]a ana manni 23 karra labšāta
ina mātini ilū šina ḫal[q]ūma | 24 anāku akanna epšēku
mannu ilū šena | ša ina māti 25 ḫalqū
dumuzi u gizzida
šunu aḫāmiš | ? ippallasūma 26 iṣṣeneḫḫū
šunu āmata damiqta | ? 27 ana ani iqabbû
pānī banûti ša ani | 28 šunu ukallamūka
ana pānī ani ina uzuzzika
29 akala ša mūti ukallūnikkumma | 30 lā takkal
mê mūti ukallūnikkumma | 31 lā tašatti
lubāra ukallūnikkumma | 32 litbaš
šamna ukallūnikkumma | piššaš
33 ṭēma ša aškunuka lā temekki | āmata 34 ša aqbâkku lū ṣabtāta
mār šipri 35 ša ani iktalda
adapa ša šūti 36 [k]appaša išbir | ana muḫḫiya šūbilaššu
37 [ḫarr]ān šamê ušeṣbissuma | a[n]a šamê īt[eli]
38 ana šamê ina elîšu | ana bāb ani ina ṭeḫîšu
39 ina bābu ani | dumuzi gizzida izzazzū
40 īmurūšuma adapa ilsû nārāru
41 eṭlu ana manni kâ emāta | adapa 42 ana manni karra labšāta
43 ina māti ilū šena ḫalqūma | anāku karra 44 labšāku
mannu ilū šina | ša ina māti ḫalqū
45 dumuzi gizzida
aḫāmiš ippalsūma 46 iṣṣeneḫḫū
adapa ana pānī ani šarri 47 ina qerēbišu
īmuršuma anu ilsima 48 alka
adapa ammīni ša šūti kappaša 49 tešbir
adapa ana ippal? bēlī
50 ana bīt bēliya | ina qablât tâmti | 51 nūnī abâr
tâmta ina mešēli inšilma
52 šūtu izīqamma | iâši uṭṭebbânni
53 [an]a bīt bēli ultamṣil
ina uggat libbiya | 54 [šūt]a? attazar
ippalū idāšu[| du]m[uzi] 55 [u] gizzida
āmassu ba[nī]ta | ana ani 56 iqabbû
ittūḫ libbašu issakat
57 ammīni ea amīlūta lā banīta | ša šamê 58 u erṣeti ukillinši
libba 59 kabra iškunšu
šūma ītepussu | 60 nīnu mīna nippu[ss]u
akal balāṭi 61 leqâniššumma | līkul[
ak]al balāṭi 62 [i]lqûniššumma | ul īkul
mê balāṭi 63 [i]lqûniššumma | ul il[ti]

lubāra [64] *[ilq]ûniššumma | ittal[b]aš*
šamna [65] *[il]qûniššumma | ittapšiš*
[66] *idgulšuma anu | iṣṣīḫ ina muḫḫišu*
[67] *alka adapa | ammīni lā tākul lā taltima*
[68] *lā balṭāta | ayya nišī da[llāt]i*
ea bēlī [69] *iqbâ | lā takkal lā taš[a]tti*
[70] *liqâšuma[ter]rāšu ana qaqqarišu*
[71] *[id]gulšu[*

Fragment D:

[1] *anu ana epšet ea šaqîš iṣīḫma*
[2] *ina ilāni ša šamê u erṣeti mala bašû mannu kīam ippuš*
[3] *qibīssu ša kīma qibīt anu mannu uattar*
[4] *[ ] adapa ištu išid šamê ana elât šamê*
[5] *[gabba ip]palisma puluḫtašu īmur*
[6] *[ina ūm]išu anu ša adapa elîšu maṣṣarta išk[un]*
[7] *[ ] ki ša ea šubarrâšu iškun*
[8] *[anu] bēlūssu ana arkat ūmē ana šūpî šīmta iš[īm]*

REFERENCES

Berrendonner, A., M. Le Guern, G. Puech
1983 *Principes de grammaire polylectale.* (Linguistique et sémiologie). Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon.

Bottéro, Jean and S. N. Kramer
1989 *Lorsque les dieux faisaient l'homme: Mythologie mésopotamienne.* Paris: NRF/Gallimard.

Buccellati, Giorgio
1990 "On Poetry Super-Jambic Strophe", in: *Hebrew Linguistics* 28–30 211–221. (In Hebrew)

Cooper, Jerrold S.
1977 "Symmetry and Repetition in Akkadian Narrative", in: *JAOS* **97** 508–12

Diakonoff, I.M.
1980 "Towards the Pronunciation of a Dead Language: Akkadian". Pp. 7–11 in : I.M. Diakonoff et al. (eds.) *Assyriological Miscellanies 1.* Copenhagen.

Gardner, John an J. Maier
1984 *Gilgamesh. Translated from the Sîn-legi-unninnī Version.* New York: Vintage Books

Gil, David
1990 "Aspect in Prosodic Theory: The Jambic-Super-Jambic Strophe", in: *Hebrew Linquistics* **28–30** 211–221. (In Hebrew)

Hatav, Galia
1989 *The Aspect System and Foreground-Background Relations in the Biblical Hebrew Prose.* PhD Dissertation, Tel Aviv University.

Hrushovski, Benjamin
1960 "On Free Rhythms in Modern Poetry". Pp. 173–90 in: Sebeok, Thomas A. (ed.). *Style in Language.* Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press.

1971 "Prosody, Hebrew". Pp. 1195–240 in: *Encyclopedia Judaica.* **13**. Jerusalem: Keter.

Izre'el, Shlomo
1991 "See Red: Reflections on the Amarna Recension of Adapa", in: Alan S. Kaye (ed.) *Semitic Studies in Honor of Wolf Leslau on the Occasion of His Eighty-fifth Birthday*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 1991, 746–72.

1992 "The Study of Oral Poetry: Reflections of a Neophyte. Can We Learn Anything on Orality from the Study of Akkadian Poetry, Especially in Akhetaton?" in: Vogelzang and Vanstiphout 1992, 155–225.

forthc. *Language Has Power of Life and Death: The Mesopotamian Myth of Adapa and the South Wind.*

Jackson, Danny P.
1992 *The Epic of Gilgamesh.* Wauconda, Illinois: Bolchazy-Carducci.

Kramer, Samuel Noah and John Maier
1989 *Myths of Enki, The Crafty God.* New York: Oxford UP.

Kuryłowicz, Jerzy
1972 *Studies in Semitic Grammar and Metrics.* (Polska Akademia Nauk, Komitet Jezykoznawcze, Prace Jezykoznawcze, **67**.) Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy Imienia Ossoliń gonekskich Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk.

Kutscher, Edward Yechezkel
1982 *A History of the Hebrew Language.* (Edited by Raphael Kutscher.) Jerusalem: Magnes.

Lambert, W. G. and A. R. Millard
1969 *Atra-Ḫasīs: The Babylonian Story of the Flood.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Lambert, W. G.
1990 "A New Babylonian Descent to the Netherworld", in: *Studies Moran* 289–300.

Longacre, Robert E.
1981 "A Spectrum and Profile Approach to Discourse Analysis", in *Text* **1** 337–359.

Maier, John R.
1984 "Three Voices of Enki: Strategies in the Translation of Archaic Literature", in *Comparative Criticism* **6** 101–117.

McCall, Henrietta
1990 *Mesopotamian Myths* (The Legendary Past). Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.

Mühlhäusler, Peter
1986 *Pidgin and Creole Linguistics* (Language in Society **11**). Oxford: Blackwell.

O'Connor, M.
1980 *Hebrew Verse Structure.* Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.

Parker, Simon B.
1990 "Toward Literary Translation of Ugaritic Poetry," in *UF* **22** 257–70.

Picchioni, S. A.
1981 *Il poemetto di Adapa.* Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem.

Romaine, Suzanne
1988 *Pidgin and Creole Languages* (Longmans Linguistics Library). London: Longmans.

Rosén, Haiim B.
1977 *Contemporary Hebrew.* The Hague: Mouton.

Steiner, Richard C.
1977 *The Case for Fricative-Laterals in Proto-Semitic* (American Oriental Series **59**). New Haven, Connecticut: American oriental Society.

Tchernichowsky, Shaul
1924 *'Alilot Gilgameš.* Warsaw: Stiebel.

Tchernichowsky, Shaul
1937 *Kol Shirey Shaul Tchenichowsky.* Jerusalem: Schoken.

Tigay, Jeffrey H.
1982 *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Vogelzang, Marianna E.
1988 *Bin Šar Dadmē: Edition and Analysis of the Akkadian Anzu Poem* (Dissertation, Rijksuniveriteit Groningen). Groningen: Styx.
1992 "Some Aspects of Oral and Written Tradition in Akkadian", in: Vogelzang and Vanstiphout 1992, 265–78.

Vogelzang, Marianna E. and Herman L. J. Vanstiphout (eds.)
1992 *Mesopotamian Epic Literature: Oral or Aural?* Lewiston, NY: Mellen.

Westenholz, Joan
1992 "Oral Traditions and Written Texts in the Cycle of Akkade", in: Vogelzang and Vanstiphout 1992, 123–54.

FUGAL FEATURES OF ATRAḪASĪS: THE BIRTH THEME

Anne Draffkorn Kilmer

I begin my presentation with the observation that there are many thematic repetitions in the Akkadian *Atraḫasīs Epic*. The Chart was prepared with the intention of displaying certain features of the story telling as they unfold. See below for a detailed description of the contents of the columns of the Chart which display similar or identical words, phrases, verbal roots, direct speeches and so forth. I have used primarily the Old Babylonian version of this tale of Creation and the Flood, but some lines from the later versions and from the 11th tablet of the *Gilgamesh Epic* ("G") are also included.

One way of looking at the *Atraḫasīs Epic* is that it has three main thematic events that deal with Creation in stages: Design, Formation and Execution. The Old Babylonian version is written on three tablets, and a main event occurs on each of them. Further varied sub-stages are: the assignment of the task (*šipru*); conditional acceptance of the assignment; plan and design stage; execution of a model; successful action of the task itself.

The First Event is the creation of the Matrix from which *Lullu*, Humankind, is eventually made. Humans were to be substituted for the worker gods who toiled to the point of desperation and rebellion. The second and third Main Events mirror the First. The Second Event is that of the *Abubu*, the Flood monster designed to destroy all of creation. The Third Event is the construction of the Ark, designed to save a representative sample of all creation and to effect a new beginning or a kind of rebirth.

This contribution is entitled "Fugal Features" in order to reflect the patterns of repetitive language that announce and re-announce the themes and sub-themes involved in the creative acts. Similar plottings can be done for repetitious phrasing related to other themes in the story. For example, the topic of the land's expansion with population, the attempts to reduce mankind's numbers by plague and drought, the ploys to obviate them, etc.

We know that this text, and other poetic texts, were performed musically. This text tells us so at its conclusion. We now ask the following questions. Might the music have been the same each time the themes are introduced? Was the direct speech of the gods given special musical modes or accompaniment? The "fugal features" of the composition suggest a more colourful performance than most of us have probably assumed – namely, a drone-like incanting of the words of the text, possibly with a percussive beat or a background strumming on a stringed instrument.

It could also be suggested that the repetitive nature of Mesopotamian epic poetry is largely a product of its musical nature. That is, unlike prose narrative where repetition is relatively limited or even out of place, musical performance demands it.

What are the possibilities and probabilities for the musical performance of this composition and others? Unfortunately, no version of *Atraḫasīs* is completely intact;

nevertheless, we can make some educated guesses and some thought-provoking suggestions if we are permitted to be *imaginative*.[1]

First of all: what was available musically? All main types of instruments were in use: strings (lyres, harps and lutes), winds (reeds, metal and bone), and percussion (membranophones and ideophones). Orchestral performances, smaller and larger ensembles, existed as did choral groups and solo performers.

If we deduce correctly the information gleaned from Sumerian hymn rubrics, there was a family of set modes and melodic patterns. Some types of Sumerian hymns indicate the places in the hymn where tuning changes occurred. But the absence of such rubrics, or any other explicit indicators, in Akkadian epic poetry makes us think that Akkadian epic did not use the same kinds of modes or patterns.

There also existed, from at least as early as the Old Babylonian period, a set of heptatonic, diatonic tunings or scales. There were seven of them,[2] and each of these had a "lateral" tuning which formed a pair with it. We have seen that explicit instructions using the intervals and scales of this identifiable system were recorded for at least one Sumerian royal hymn;[3] the tablet is fragmentary, unfortunately. We also know that this musical system was used for Hurrian hymns from Ras Shamra/Ugarit in ancient Syria, dating to the middle of the second millennium BCE.

In short, there were ample opportunities for the ancient Mesopotamian composers to engage in modal and key changes during the course of a musical performance of poetry.

Let us now return to the "fugal features" by means of which the Atraḫasīs story introduces and re-introduces semantic groupings – with variations – more than seven times in connection with the Birth or Creation themes. Central features are:

* Assigning the design stage to DN/PN	(let PN make ...)
* Deferring to another	(task/skill lies with ...)
* Assigning credit/blame	(I did it ...)
* New title or status conferred	(Before, we called you ...)
* Counting [days, months, years] and keeping track of time	(*manû* ...)
* Birth [pregnancy, parturition, midwifery]	(he/she opened ...)
* Light/Darkness	(*namru*, *urru* ...)
* Noise/Silence	(*rigmu*, *ḫubūru* ...)

In Tablet I of the Old Babylonian version, the main creation event is that of the Matrix for mankind and human procreation; associated, then, are Creation, Light, Credit and Noise. In Tablet II, the Abubu Flood is brought into being; associated with it are Destruction, Darkness, Blame and Noise. In Tablet III, the Ark is built; associated with it are Creation, Light, Credit and Silence.

Coming back to the Noise theme: we should also note that some explicit noises are indicated in the text itself. The sound of the *uppu*, a beating sound, with the verb *šemû* "to hear" which occurs at the beginning, the middle and right at the very end

[1] A term I prefer to "eccentric".
[2] One being the same as our major scale.
[3] *Lipit-Ištar B*; see Kilmer 1992.

with the exhortation *šimēa!* "listen!". The Flood roars and the land is shattered like a pot. In addition, the buzzing sound of flies is implied by the mention of flies several times throughout the story. This is not a *quiet* text.

FUGAL FEATURES IN ATRAHASIS

	PḪR	QABLU	BEINGS/THINGS to CREATE/MAKE
INTRODUCTION	puḫru I 122	niblula qablam I 62	ilū awîlu I 1
		qablum iruṣa I 81, 183, 110	libnima lullâ p. 54 l.9
1. MATRIX PLANNED	puḫḫuru I 213		binīma lullâ I 195
	puḫru I 224		iluma u awilum libtallilū I 212,221
2. MATRIX FORMED			We-ila I 223
3. PROCREATION PROCESS			
DESIGNED			
4. HUMAN PROCESS	puḫḫuru I 277	qabliša itēzib! I 286	
INVENTED			
5. REAL BABY			šerru(/la'û) I 307
6. YEAST-MALT MONOPOLY	upaḫḫir I 386		
(twice)			
7. ABUBU	pḫr III i 39	kīma qabli III iii 12	lû (la'û) III iii 15
8. THE ARK			bini eleppa III i 22
			napišta bulliṭ III i 24
9. REBIRTH OF UTN. & CO.	paḫru III vi 27		
10. REDESIGN	puḫru III vi 44		bāniat šimāti III vi 47
			libnīma ina nīšē . . . III vii 1
FINALE		qabla III viii 13	awīlum ibluṭu III viii 10

FUGAL FEATURES IN ATRAHASIS

	NOISE	DISCLAIMER OF ABILITY	DESIGN/SAVE/SECRET
			ʿṣr / nṣr
INTRO.	rigma išemmû I 77		
1.		ittijama la naṭû	
		iti Enkīma ibašši šipri I 200–201	
2.			
3.			uṣurāti . . . uṣar Mami "s" I 14
4.			iṣir I 288
5.	mātum kima li'u išabbu I 354, II 3		
	rigim/ḫuburi awilūti I 358		
6.	rigma lišebbû		
7.	rigim Abūbi III iii 23	abuba ša taqabbaninni – II 44	
	Abuba kīma li'i išabbu III iii 15	anākuma ullada Abuba? – II 46	
	Adad išaggum III ii 53	šiprišu ibašši itti [Adad] II vii 47	
8.		matīma eleppa ul ēpiš? W 13	šipra . . . šuṣṣir III i 19
		ina qaqqari eṣir uṣurtu (DT 42)	uṣur adanna ša ašapparakka
			ina qaqqari eṣir uṣurtu (DT 42)
	rigmu silenced		
9.			uštaṣṣira napištam III vi 19, viii [11]
			(note Mt. Niṣir in G.)
10.			uṣurat nišī R5
FIN.	šime'a III viii 19		

FUGAL FEATURES IN ATRAHASIS

	PREGNANCY/PARTURITION	COUNTING	THE NUMBER 7, EDIBLES	ummi šerri
	MIDWIFERY		k r ṣ	mimmu šēri
INTRO.		šanāti imnû l 34, 36	7 Anunnaki l 5	
			ikkalū karṣi l 39	
			karṣišunu nikkal? l 176	
1.	šassuru l 89 etc.	ina arḫi sebûti u šapatti l 206		
	šassurrātum puḫḫurāma l 251, 277			
2.				
3.	libitti l 259	ušamnaši l 254	kirṣi uktarriṣ l 256	
			7 + 7 kirṣi takriṣ 11s" l 5	
4.	u'pur qaqqassa l 284	imannu arḫi l 279	qēma u libitti iddi l 288	ummi šerri l 292
	ali alittum ulladuma l 291	simanu šimāti issû ešra arḫa l 280		
	uḫarrur ramanša l 293			
5.	bātiq abunnati "s" iii 7	simanu šimti l 305		
	Ištar > Išḫara/ḫrš l 304			
6.		šibūti simmâni šumnia l 374 f.	bila epīta l 396	
7.	ullad Abuba ll vii [46]		šīḫtu īkulšu ll vi 16, 18	mimmu šēri (G)
	elija ipaḫḫar mātum (G)		tēqītu ll vi 19	
	išissi Ištar kīma alitti (G)	adannuši iktalda (G)		
	(Flood waters/Birth waters)		7 umi 7 mušiātim lll iv 24	
8.	šibūti upaḫḫir lll i 39		aptarras ana 7–šu (g)	
			kukki u kibāti (G)	
	eleppa erumma . . . W6		iṣṣurī u nunē lll i 35, X rev. ii	
	ṣullilši lll i 29		21, 22, 37, 38	
	iprû markasa lll ii 55			
9.			7 + 7 niqē (G)	
			(cf. 7 loaves in G. where he is	
			reborn after the 7 day sleep)	
10.				
FIN.				

FUGAL FEATURES IN ATRAHASIS

	CREDIT/BLAME	NEW TITLE, NAME	WOMB OPENING,
		STATUS	LIGHT
INTRO.			
1.			
2.	šipri taqbiannima ušaklil I 237	pānami Mami nišassiki –	
		inanna Bēlet-kala-ilī lū šumki I 246–47	
3.			
4.	anakumi abni ipušā qatāja I 289	(itâd keša) I 289	silîtam ipte namrūma I 282 f.
			hadû panūša I 283
		(Ištar > Išḫara) I 304	
5.			
6.			
7.			ina namāri (G)
			tarkulli . . . [linassiḫ]
			ina namririšunu –
			uḫammaṭū mātum (G)
8.	bēlī ša taqbâu W17	nāṣirat napištim šumšu	
		(CBS 13532)	
9.	lu ēpuš ina pānikunu II vi 18	ina pāna Uta-napištam amēlūtum –	aptēma nappašam urru –
		eninnama Utn. u sinništišu lu –	imtaqut eli dur appija (G)
		emû kī ilāni (G)	
10.	(Enlil is blamed)		
	šanittiška . . . lišmû III viii 14–16		
FIN.	liṣṣirū narbîka III viii 17		

*EXPLANATION OF THE CHART**

The Chart tracks the keywords and homonymous or synonymous associations to the birth themes. Some of the sets are the following:

* *ilu awīlu / lullu / wê-ilu // li'u (la'û / lû)*
* *ummi šerri / mimmu šēri / (alittu)*[4]
* BN' : *lullu / eleppu* // WLD : *šerru / abūbu*
* ŠM' / ŠB' / ŠGM : *rigmu / ḫubūru*
* MN' : *simanu šīmāti / šībūti simmānû*[5] */ adannu*
* 'ṢR / NṢR
* KRṢ : *karṣu / kirṣu*
* 7 : *Anunnaki / kirṣi / ūmi-mūši / niqû* / (the ark's divisions)
* BLL : *qablu / ilu-awīlu*
* 'KL : *karṣu / qēmu / epītu / niqû // ṣīḫtu*
* PT' : *silītu / nappašu* // NSḪ : *tarkullu*
* NMR : *pānu / mātu / dur appi* / (inside the ark)

While difficult to represent visually, it is hoped that the features indicated in the eleven columns will successfully display the repetitions and evocative variations. The first two columns indicate the frequency of PḪR "to assemble" and the word *qablu*, both "battle" and "inner/middle".

It is conceivable that certain word choices of the text, e.g. *qudmu* (instead of *maḫru* (?) in the *simmānû* "malt" passages), were intended as musical cues such as modal changes.[6] It is also possible that some words, by word-play, could have had reference to music.[7]

Unlike the Sumerian hymns which provide indicators for musical changes at certain places in the written text, the *Atraḫasīs Epic* and others do not, even though these pieces are written *ana zamāri*, "for singing".

Is it too far-fetched to suggest that each time a theme is introduced, a familiar melodic pattern or accompaniment returns? Could there have been a "drum roll" when the word *uppu* occurs? Was there an impressive "lyre-strum" every time the Weather god Adad appears, or the Abubu is mentioned? We even know what scale was probably used for Adad, for an astrological commentary tells is that the *rigmu* of Adad (meaning his thunder) is the *nīd qabli* scale, which is either our major scale, the Greek Lydian, or the *išartu* scale, the Greek Dorian,[8] depending on whose musicological interpretation you follow.[9]

* **PLEASE DO READ THE CHART AS A WHOLE RUNNING FROM P. 129 THROUGH P. 132.**

---

[4] Cf. in *Enūma eliš* : *mummu Tiamat / mimmu Tiamat / ummu Tiamat* in I 4, II 10, III 15 respectively.
[5] Reading I 374f. *šībūti simmānû šumni'a qereb bītiška* after W. Heimpel, private communication.
[6] *qudmu* being the technical name of the first musical string.
[7] E.g. *li'u* "bull" : *lû* "musical string".
[8] This is e-e on the white keys of the piano.
[9] The noise of Adad is also likened to the percussion instruments *ḫalḫallatu* or *lilissu*. See Kilmer 1965: 263 with note 19.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Any attempt at even imagining what a musical performance of our ancient poetry would have been like must consider **BEAT** and **RHYTHM**. Generally speaking, the *Atraḫasīs Epic* appears to have (the universally common) four beats to the line and operates according to the principle that musicologist David Wulstan calls "divisive verse" : roughly the length of time the ordinary person needs to say or sing so many words in a single breath, and where the number of beats in a line is symmetrical but the number of syllables varies, 4 to 12 being common.[10]

Here are a few examples of four-line units from the *Atraḫasīs Epic*:

Type A. **I** 70ff. Every line has 4 vocalized beats :

míšil maṣṣárti múšum ibášši
bítu láwi ílu ul ídi
míšil maṣṣárti múšum ibášši
Ékur láwi Énlil ul ídi
(ending on trochees)

Or, as rendered in English to reflect the beat, but ending on iambs:

Hálf the wátch of níght it wás
The hóuse surróunded, the gód knew nót
Hálf the wátch of níght it wás
Ékur surróunded, Énlil knew nót

Type B. **I** 57ff. with apparent missing vocalization – here represented by "BLANK", i.e. one unfilled beat.[11]

BLÁNK *málik ilí qurádam*
alká i nišší́a ína šubtíšu
Énlil málik ilí qurádam
alká i nišší́a ína šubtíšu

BLÁNK the bóss of góds the héro
Cóme let's gét him ín his hóuse
Énlil the bóss of góds the héro
Cóme let's gét him ín his hóuse

The very beginning of the epic is similar :

BLÁNK *enúma ílu awílum*
úblu dúlla izbílu šupšíkka
BLÁNK *šúpšik ilí rabíma*
dúllum kábit má'ad šapšáqum

BLÁNK Whén the góds were sláves
They cárried the yóke the básket they bóre

[10] This information is derived from an interdisciplinary graduate seminar on ancient music taught by Profs. David Wulstan, Richard Crocker and the writer in Berkeley in 1977.

[11] On beat one ?: probably for the sake of performance dynamics; note that simple narrator's lines may not do this, as in "He opened his mouth to speak ...".

BLÁNK the wórk of the góds was gréat
Héavy the yóke and múch the páin

Type C. A double BLANK at the very last lines of the last tablet :
Abúba ána kúllat niší
BLÁNK BLÁNK *uzámmer šiméa*!

Óf the Flóod to áll who féar
BLÁNK BLÁNK I síng, you héar!

SUBLIMINAL CLUES ?

Are there covert musical cues or clues in the body of such a text?

We may note that the Sumerian text "Geštinanna as Singer and the Chorus of Zabalam" published by Bendt Alster[12] contains several musical technical terms as part of the text. Regardless of one's favourite musicological interpretation of these terms, they are known to be musical terms:

zi-zi "raising"
gá-gá "setting"

Other terms that may be technical music terms or that refer (by word play) to music terms are also found in that text:

SAG	the "head" of the song	(šir)
GABA	"breast", "front"	(or referring to an *irtu* -song?)
$MURUB_4$	"centre"[13]	(= *qablu* ?)
TI.LA	"living" *and* referring to TIL "end"?	

These last four terms have close or exact counterparts, as it happens, in the Sanskrit terms for the most important notes: "Starter", "Predominant", "Centre" and "Final".[14] KI.GUB "resting place / position", and AD.DA "sounds" also occur in the Geštinanna composition;[15] if they are placed there purposely – because they evoke a technical music vocabulary – then they are there covertly, so to speak.[16]

Likewise in the *Atraḫasīs Epic* there are many terms which can be used musically elsewhere. E.g.:

qablu	"Middle"; used in two interval/scale names : *qablītu* and *nīd qabli.*
manû	"to count" (or "to recite").[17] I will return below to the subject of "counting" and its importance in musical performance.
qudmu	"fore-part" is the name of the first musical string.[18]

---

[12] Alster 1985.
[13] "She dwelled in their midst".
[14] I do not know if we should attach any significance to this fact. See Kilmer 1992: 106.
[15] As well as other words that are known to relate to music such as si-sá, imin ....
[16] SAG and KI.GUB also occur in the *Nanše Hymn* l. 109.
[17] This is expressed as ŠID in line 24 of the Sumerian portion of the Old Babylonian school text known as *Examenstext A*, published by Sjöberg 1975: 137–76.
[18] See *Nabnitu* 32.

lû A word for a musical string could be implied by the term *li'u* "bull".[19]

Other terms that could possibly be clues are :

puḫru "ensemble". Any reference to unison music or an ensemble??

šerru "baby". It *sounds like* the word for "song", *šēru*, which also serves as the name of an interval.

Note also *Gilgamesh* II (OB col. v): "The *lusanu*-instrument plays for the young man who is *išaru* "upright"; a *meḫru* "match" is found at last for Gilgameš".[20] Note that *išaru* is nearly the same word as *išartu*, another musical term, and that *meḫru* is one too. *išartu* is an interval and scale name; *meḫru* may mean "antiphonal response" or indicate a tuning change.

We could get more aggressive in our search: *pītu* "open" is a tuning name as is *kitmu* "closed"; if we see verbal forms from such roots in *Atraḫasīs* should we be seeing musical clues?

Before any concern arises about the sanity of the writer, however, let me hasten to say that looking for musical clues in the random sprinkling of vocabulary would surely send us on a fool's mission. That road is probably not worth following.

Let us instead now consider the ancient composer who may also be the writer of the words.

1. He or she knows that the piece will be performed and that repetitive passages are required for reasons of musical style.
2. For the three tablets of *Atraḫasīs* this works out as follows :

In Tablet I the story is set up and a main event (Creation of Humankind) takes place in 416 lines.

In Tablet II, 439 lines, the Abubu is created.

In Tablet III, 390 lines, the Ark is created and the story concludes.

3. Each line of the poem could be looked at as the equivalent of a "bar" or "measure" of the music's words in four beat time. Tablet I, therefore, has 416 "measures".[21]
4. The composer can plan where the dramatic points will occur in the Message as well as in the Music. E.g., at what line does the "Blessed Event" – the successful birth of the first human baby – occur in *Atraḫasīs* I? Answer: probably between lines 305 and 320, or at three fourths of the way through the first tablet. Alas, that section of the tablet is broken, but the context is clear enough, and traces of the word for "baby" can be read in 307.[22]

DETOUR: GAMELAN MUSIC

While I am not very knowledgeable about Southeast Asian gamelan compositions, I have heard a few concerts, some lectures by ethno-musicologists, and I once played in a gamelan group for a couple of months.[23]

---

[19] With word-play on *la'û* "baby"?

[20] S. Dalley's translation.

[21] Unfortunately, not one of the three tablets is complete, but Tablet I has the most lines preserved.

[22] Reading *[. . .š]i-er-⌜ri⌝*. In *Enūma eliš*, by the way, baby god Marduk is born *exactly* at the half-way point of Tablet I : lines 81–82 say twice that Marduk is born in the midst of the Apsu. Observation courtesy of Allan Estes.

[23] The Gamelan Sekar Jaya of Berkeley.

The beats and rhythms are established by a drummer-leader who alerts the performers – by means of his drumming – to the changes coming up in rhythmic or melodic patterns which are, in fact, taught on the spot, no written music being used. The instrumental performers, each responsible for an individual gong or other percussive instrument, must perform the piece from memory. Learning to count the number of measures to play the same melody and how many rhythmic sets to play is basic.

For at least some compositions the musical structure may be plotted like the ticking of a clock's hands: when the main melody and rhythmic sets get going ("raised" and "set" as they may have put it in Sumerian), BIG GONG, for example, might come in only "on the hour"; middle-sized gong on the half-hour; smaller gongs on the quarter hour; small metal drummable resonators/clackers on the minute, while the metal xylophones play the melodies on the seconds. This is an over-simplification of a lecture I heard in the mid-seventies by Professor of Ethnomusicology Judith Becker of the University of Michigan, but I hope the possible connection is apparent.

BACK TO ATRAḪASĪS

Tablet I has 416 lines. Dividing the lines by four, we note the following events at each quarter:

One fourth of the way from the beginning, at line 104, Enlil "rose up" and reported to the divine assembly that the worker gods had rebelled against him. At "half time", line 208, the creator god Enki/Ea says "let them slay a single god" in order to start the process of creating the Matrix. At approximately three fourths of the way (line 312 is not preserved), the first real human baby may be born (line 307). And, at line 412, almost at the last line, we learn the "the plague left them". It seems clear that these four points are significant ones in the telling of the story.

My purpose in suggesting that we even notice such a compositional structure is to provide us with food for thought about the possible dramatic and musical profile of such long epic poems. It would be easy enough to test if all the lines and tablets were complete.

It is pretty certain that "counting" must have been as important to the musicians of ancient times as it is to musicians today. The examiner of the student in the bilingual *Examenstext A* asks meaningful musical questions : "Do you know how to separate the sections? Do you know the places to re-tune (or the places of the antiphons)? How to *count* (ŠID in the Sumerian version) or *change* (*enû* in the Akkadian version)?"

May we now reconsider our understanding of the line-number information provided at the end of each tablet? "MU.ŠID.BI 416" could mean "its count lines (are) 416"[24] and have reference to that many musical "measures".

CONCLUSION

I might venture a few words about the musical vocalization of epic poems. It is probable that they would have used a combination of what we call recitative in later music for the narrational/informational lines: "So and so opened his mouth and said ...".

[24] Instead of simply "416 lines".

There may have been some unison singing when a group is speaking: "All we gods decided a decision ..." (II v 14).

Individual divine speakers/singers may have had individual modalities. And critical high points in the story may have had musical embellishments. For example, "Let us hear the *uppu* forever after ..." may have been accompanied by a percussive display.

The performance of epic poetry was probably more colourful musically than most of us have thought. If a solo singer sang the entire three tablets, the accompaniment could have varied by dramatic changes in tempo, rhythm and modality. A Sumerian proverb (2:39) says: "If a musician (NAR) knows but a single song, but he performs well the AD.ŠA$_4$ = *nissatu* = "tremolo" (?), then he is indeed a musician!".[25] If the different characters were sung by more than one performer, the performance would have been more "operatic" than expected.

The evocative repetitions and the abundance of word play throughout the composition should have entertained the listener, however, even with the simplest singing and accompaniment.

At the very end of the Old Babylonian *Atraḫasīs Epic*, for example, we may have a bit of a "sour note" sounded to the god Enlil who was responsible for and who got the blame for bringing on the Flood. He is in some sense accused of bullying the other gods into agreeing to the disastrous act. The last speaker (is it Adad?) addresses Enlil:

BLÁNK *kíma niškúnu abúba*
awílum iblútu ína karáši
attá málik ilí rabúti
terétiška ušábši qábla

BLÁNK that wé brought abóut the Flóod
But mán survíved in thé melée
Yóu oh bóss of the gréat góds
By yóur commánd the Flóod I máde.

And then he says :

BLÁNK *šanittiška anniam zamāra*
lišmûma Igigu liṣṣirū narbîka

which, on the face of it, means "Your praise by this song let the Igigi-gods hear; let them make famous your greatness". But we may have some double meanings here:[26] because *šanittu* is "praise" but *šanītu* is "hostility", while *narbû* is "greatness", but *narbu* is "softness", and the nearly synonymous *narrubu* is "rout" or "flight" and could refer to Enlil's cowardice at the time of the worker gods' rebellion and to the fact that he himself was apparently *in absentia* during the most terrifying part of the Flood.

[25] Following Gordon 1959.
[26] Word play would be a wonderful subject for another conference of the group.

REFERENCES

Alster, B.
1985 "Geštinanna as Singer and the Chorus of Uruk and Zabalam: UET 6/1 22", in: *JCS* **37** 219–28.

Dalley, S.
1989 *Myths from Mesopotamia.* OUP.

Gordon, E.I.
1959 *Sumerian Proverbs. Glimpses of Everyday Life in Ancient Mesopotamia, with a chapter by Th. Jacobsen.* University Museum Monographs: University of Pennsylvania (Repr. New York: Greenwood Publishers, 1968).

Heimpel, W.
1981 "The Nanše Hymn", in: *JCS* **33** 65–139.

Kilmer, A.
1965 "The Strings of Musical Instruments: Their Names, Numbers and Significance", in: *Studies Landsberger* 261–72.
1992 "Musical Practice in Nippur", in: *CRRAI* **35** 101–12.

Lambert, W. & A. Millard
1969 *Atra-hasis. The Babylonian Story of the Flood.* OUP.

Pearce, L.
1993 "Statements of Purpose: Why the Scribes Wrote", in: *Studies Moran* 185–93.

Sjöberg, Å.
1975 "Der Examenstext A", in: *ZA* **64** 137–76.

Vanstiphout, H.
1978 "Lipit-Eštar's Praise in the Edubba", in: *JCS* **30** 33–39.

ANCIENT POETICS

Piotr Michałowski

Conference papers do not always successfully survive conversion to print. The present short essay was intended as a continuation of the issues raised in my paper from our previous meeting. While the former was directed towards a specific topic – orality and epics – the present one contains some general thoughts about Sumerian poetics. It is neither exhaustive nor is it fully documented; unwittingly it became the preview of the one I intend to read at our next gathering, on genre. Much of what I read at the conference has been deleted; I raised various problems to elicit discussion, and there would be little purpose in repeating some of my arguments and polemics here.

Our topic here is the language of poetry of Ancient Mesopotamia, and I have been asked to make some general theoretical remarks. Rather than deal with the precise details of this or that poetic system, I would like to recall some of the general issues at stake, and to set out some of the special problems that arise when one studies the verbal art of these long lost civilisations.

We have much to do. A quick glance at the scholarly literature of Assyriology will reveal neglect of Ancient Mesopotamian poetics. The exceptions have been rather unexceptional. The lack of theoretical reflection, so characteristic of a certain type of philology, is particularly visible in this area. While some important progress has been made (Buccellati 1976, Reiner 1985), the analysis of Akkadian poetic language has been limited to a few studies on metaphor, and to prosodic studies that attempt to fit Babylonian poetry into classical forms known to the authors from their gymnasium acquaintance with Greek and Latin poetry. Most of this work has been summarized by von Soden (1981). His own work on the subject (1981, 1984), while more sophisticated than most of the earlier attempts, is still very much dependent on analogies with systems found in European languages. Much the same can be said about Sumerian, some minor work on parallelism (Heimpel 1970, Limet 1976, Michałowski 1981) and verse/strophe structure (Cooper 1978, Berlin 1979, Vanstiphout 1993) notwithstanding. Sumerian poetry has been the subject of some rather bizarre work on rhyme and meter (Sauren 1971–2), and has been dissected for catalogs of topical imagery. Although I cannot claim that I will be able to make up for this state of affairs, I would like to set out certain matters for discussion. I will begin with some comments on the very notion of poetic language, proceed with a brief characterization of Mesopotamian verbal art, and conclude with some general observations on Sumerian and Akkadian poetics.

The study of poetics has acquired so many different partisans since the time of Aristotle that one could be lost for a place to start a discussion. Without entering into the more arcane debates about the futility of theory, I would like to begin with quoting a recent statement by the linguist William Bright. Commenting on the differences between European and Native American poetry, Bright states (1990: 437):

> With less ethnocentricity, it may be better simply to observe that all societies seem to use a variety of patterns for discourses which serve distinct functions – such as songs, prayers, mythic narratives, ceremonial performances, sermons, political speeches, debates, autobiographical reminiscence, jokes, or riddles. Within this range of discourse types some of the most highly structured are those which involve an organization in terms of line, a unit which is partially independent of syntactic units such as phrases, clauses, and sentences.

This uncomplicated comparative statement is typical of certain trends in North American ethnopoetics that are concerned with both microanalysis of texts and with the study of ethnographic context. The intellectual foundation of these approaches is complex, reaching back to the work of Boas and Sapir. Nevertheless, the tenor of this kind of work is decidedly structuralist in nature, with acknowledged Western and Central European influences. Much of post-structuralist poetics has taken on ideological and culturological problems, and there has been less emphasis on poetic language and the study of textures of texts. Indeed, the projects of narratology and narrative poetics have been criticized for rigid formalism and for naive positivist first principles. Narrative grammars are definitely out of fashion as post-this-or-that critics have questioned the very possibilities of such undertakings. Be that as it may, the foundations of twentieth century poetics were and are structuralist, and since we are concerned here with poetic language, we must once again invoke the work of those who have contributed most to defining the problems that lie before us.

One of the crucial concepts of poetics has been the nature of poetic language. Already certain thinkers of the so-called Russian Formalist movement rejected the strict distinction between poetry and prose in favor of a semiotic notion of poetic language and linked this with the notion of different functions within language. One of the basic functional distinctions, that between verse and prose, was a crucial component in the thinking of Jurij Tynjanov, a major "Formalist" theoretician. For Tynjanov the distinctive characteristic of verse was rhythm, but that does not mean that this element was necessarily absent from prose language. It was the dominance of a given function that was the defining characteristic; each functional type contained a mixture of similar functions but the crucial element was the dominating function. The concept of the dominant, although much expanded, was an important element in Roman Jakobson's later theories of language; indeed he even wrote a separate essay on the subject in which he stated that (1987a [1935]: 41) "the dominant may be defined as the focussing component of a work of art; it rules, determines, and transforms the remaining components. It is the dominant which guarantees the integrity of the structure." The integrating nature of structure is also asserted in a manifesto on the study of language and literature that Jakobson co-authored with his friend Tynjanov in 1928 (1987b).

Jakobson dealt with problems of poetic language throughout his long life and this is not the place to describe the development of his rich and varied ideas on the subject. The later stages of his work on poetics have been the most influential, and therefore they deserve to be highlighted here. The fate or impact of his writings has varied, as fashions have come and gone, but the richness of his ideas, and the broad nature of

his investigations remain unmatched and continue to provide a foundation for the development of poetics. His notions of poetic language are embedded in a larger frame of communicative functions. This picture was not completely original, and was built on the work of earlier thinkers such as Karl Bühler (1990 [1934]), Jan Mukařovský (1977 [1938]) and, of course, Tynjanov. In its fullest incarnation, the communication matrix consisted of an addresser, addressee, a message as well as a point of contact, a context of communication and a specific code in which the communication takes place (Jakobson 1960). Within this semiotic context of natural language, the medium of verbal communication, six functions defined speech: the emotive, conative, metalinguistic, referential, phatic, and the poetic. The dominant, which was so important to the Prague school thinking in general, is a crucial component here, for none of these functions exists alone: in any given speech act all six may be present. The nature of the communication is defined not by the presence of one element, but by the hierarchical arrangement of the functions, and of the dominance of one. In the case of poetic or artistic language, it is the *dominance* of the poetic function that makes a text a poem, not its mere presence. This is important as it is the most misunderstood and neglected part of Jakobson's thesis. Indeed, certain socio-linguists have recently discovered, much to their own surprise, that most spoken utterances contain, in various degrees, most if not all of the formal characteristics of verse, and hence we have been subjected to a deluge of publications on the poetic nature of spoken language.

I have already noted that most studies of ancient poetics begin with an attempt to recover a formal metrical system. The search for rhyme and meter in Mesopotamian poetry – particularly in Akkadian – is a curious gesture and one that is almost perversely eurocentric. We should know better, for the study of parallelism, which has permeated the analysis of almost all non-European literatures of the globe, was first proposed, as far as one knows, by a proponent of Biblical Studies. The Reverend Robert Lowth, Professor of Hebrew at Oxford, and future Lord Bishop of London, wrote in 1753 that (quoted in Fox 1988)

> The poetic confrontation of the sentences, which has been so often alluded to as characteristic of Hebrew poetry, consists chiefly of a certain equality, resemblance, or parallelism between members of each period; so that in two lines (or members of the same period) things for the most part shall answer to things, and words to words, as if they fitted each other by a kind of rule or measure.

One could argue that this statement anticipates much of what has been written on the subject in this century. The analysis of Biblical poetry has been the subject of various analytical approaches. Some have reduced this study to mere syllable counting, while others have refined linguistic poetics to a fine, if complex, art (O'Connor 1980). This is a rare instance in which an intellectual accomplishment in ancient Near Eastern studies has had a visible impact on other fields; even Jakobson (1987c [1966]: 147) was prompted to write that "the reconstruction and philological interpretation of early biblical poetic remains is a spectacular achievement of modern research." Assyriologists are still behind, but we should not make too much of the comparison with our field. The tradition of Bible studies is much longer, and we know much more about the Hebrew language than we do about Sumerian. But even if the fine threads have

not been unraveled, there is some agreement about the general properties of Sumerian verbal art.

The poetics of a Sumerian text may include a variety of levels of organization – the line, the couplet, the stanza – as well as possible generic constraints. Rhetorical conventions may be characteristic of one kind of text or another, and subject matter as well as performance context may dictate certain features that are not immediately transparent. Beginnings may have certain qualities that may not necessarily be present in the rest of a text. One thing is certainly clear, however: Mesopotamian poetry did not formally resemble the syllabo-tonic systems that the West inherited from its classical literary ancestors. The *Poetics* of Aristotle, with its prescriptive pronouncements, has had a long shelf life in our culture, and it colors our view of literary structure – hence our obsession with beginnings, middles, and ends, our versification and our notions of genre. The latter is particularly important, and requires attention to details that may not be recoverable. For example, we have no idea whether there was actually a difference in diction, or, let us say, pronunciation, between different generic types in the ancient Near East. Indeed, the so-called generic labels – I will not enter the argument on their true identity – are, whatever other implications they might hold, revealing for our purposes (Vanstiphout 1976). Some of them are indicative of performance occasions, such as eršaḫuĝa, "lament to appease the heart." Other terms tell us about the musical context of performance, as in balaĝ or eršema; that is, compositions that were to be recited or sung together with the beating of the large or middle sized drums balaĝ and šem. Our ignorance of these matters is so large that scholars are still debating whether the balaĝ was a harp or a drum; but this matters little, since they will stay silent for eternity.

The melismic element in Sumerian poetry cannot be reconstructed, but it cannot be ignored. First of all it reminds us once more that while to us these ancient texts are written artifacts, for the Mesopotamians, at least in the early periods, they were primarily oral. By this I do not refer to oral composition. Sumerian poetry was primarily written, but was composed for vocal expression, be it in ceremony, in school recitation, or in the lip-synching memories of scholars and priests; hence the voice was an integral part of the text (Michałowski 1992). The rhythm and patterns of the poetry obviously went hand in glove with musical expression. How this actually worked, we shall obviously never know.

Moreover, the detailed analysis of poetics is made difficult by the structure of cuneiform writing and by the very nature of our transliteration system. This system was devised many decades ago and is a conventional rendering of graphemes, not a transcription of phonemic segments. The conventions were established when we knew even less of Sumerian phonology than we do today, and the standard transliterations scheme does not recognize the existence of certain phonemes such as the nasalized /g̃/, or /g^{w}/ and /g^{b}/ (Civil 1973), glides (Civil 1984), nor any morphonemic rules. Other rules, such as the change of final /m/ to /n/ at word boundary (ezen "festival," but ezem-ma) are often not noted. Moreover, non-specialists who try to analyze Sumerian poetics are misled by writing conventions that are purely graphemic, such as the use of C(onsonant)-V(owel) signs to represent a vowel as well as the last consonant of the previous grapheme. Thus a writing such as kal-la for the adjective kala in no

way indicates the presence of a double consonant. A further misunderstanding arises from the wrong interpretation of the structure of the writing system. The so-called homonymity of signs, which has led some to posit tone systems, is very much a fiction as there are actually very few true homonyms in the graphemic inventory of Sumerian. Another factor that has to be taken into account is the issue of written semantic classifiers, commonly designated as "determinatives." Some were read aloud, while others clearly were not; but these reading habits changed historically and the issue requires a thorough investigation. Thus in certain periods and with certain words, the classifier lú, which preceded occupational names, was pronounced, while in others it was not. Most of what I have noted here is well known to Sumerologists, but it is rarely explained to outsiders who might show an interest in Sumerian poetry, and much of it is sometimes misunderstood even by specialists in Akkadian who have not kept up with recent advances in the knowledge of Sumerian.

There is another issue that complicates the interpretation of poetics, and this might be termed socio-linguistic. If one assumes that most Sumerian poetry that has come down to us was written when the language was no longer generally spoken, then one must make certain allowances for the life of poetry in a dead language. Conventions of recitation are no more than that: conventions. Under certain circumstances these may change, and conscious archaisms as well as hyper-corrections may be brought into play. Whether or not these would leave any trace in the written form of the texts is a matter for debate, and perhaps we should look at the syllabically written cultic texts for traces of such changes. Related to this issue is the matter of the interference from Akkadian and other Semitic languages. One would like to ask: was there any superimposition of Sumerian and Akkadian in one text or in a set of texts? There is some evidence for the mixture of languages in magical rituals, but we have yet to establish the context for the different languages and indeed for their distribution in literature. Even more complicated is the issue of writing in one language and reading it, or commenting upon it in another. We should not exclude the possibility that Sumerian texts could, under certain circumstances, be read aloud in another language for those who could not possibly understand the long dead tongue.

I mentioned briefly the matter of music. I must defer to Anne Kilmer on this matter, as she is the expert on such issues. I would only comment that it is instructive to compare the situation found in the few Near Eastern musical texts with what we know about archaic Greek poetry and music. As is the case for our material there is, of course, no way of hearing any melody from archaic or classical times. From the descriptions found in such sources as Pseudo-Plutarch, we know that the melody line in early times simply followed the verse and that there was no such thing as harmony or polyphony in the modern sense, or at least in the way in which we perceive it since the Flemish polyphonists or Monteverdi. The introduction, in the fifth century, of Ionian and Lydian modes from the east points to habits found in areas close to our interests, but they remained simple melodies (Gentili 1988: 24–31). This is weak analogy, but it raises the probability that ancient Near Eastern music was similarly construed and that the musical instruments were played in unison with the chanted text. This is, admittedly, little to go on, but without any native descriptions of musical events there is very little that one can say.

Although this loss of musical content impoverishes our perception of many texts, stylistic analysis demonstrates that there is nothing unique about Sumerian poetry. The parallelistic devices that are much in use in most of these ancient poems can be discerned in many literatures from around the globe. That in itself is neither startling nor is it terribly interesting. Consider, for example, the following excerpt from an "appelation poem" sometimes referred to as a "praise poem" from Ghana, written in the Akan language, which is structurally quite different from Sumerian (Anyidoho 1991):

> Agyeman, Condolence!
> Osafuro Adu Amakwatia,
> Yirifo Ahoma Asanke Kotoko, the female eagle,
> Who conquers kings for kings,
> The mighty war leader from Suntreso who is always victorious,
> Son of a king, who asks the king and gets prior information about wars,
> The ferocious and immortal bear who kills people and makes fun of them ...

One could compare this quite easily with a random passage from almost any Shulgi hymn (Klein 1981: 73):

> O, my king, the great bull with speckled arms, dragon, lion-eyed,
> Shepherd Shulgi, the great bull with speckled arms, dragon, lion-eyed,
> Young bull, born in the enclosure, thriving there,
> Mighty, fit for great deeds, ornament of the land,
> Righteous man, invested with justice by the god Utu ...

The use of parallelism, particularly of syntactic parallelism, the preponderance of nominal clauses, the use of personal names for poetic effect, and the rhetoric of power and might are similar even though the substance of the metaphors differs in culturally bound ways. The main differences between the two texts lie in their *pragmatic* contexts, or rather in the information that we have on these matters. Quite obviously, we can reconstruct the context for the African poem, which comes to us from a living culture, while our knowledge of the context of the Sumerian text, preserved in school copies and thus already removed from its original moments of performance, is forever lost. Once we acknowledge this loss, which is less severe for certain types of texts than for others, we are forced to move in two directions: the specific devices of verbal art and the larger question of poetic language. For a variety of reasons, my further comments will be primarily addressed to problems of Sumerian.

Most of us would acknowledge the obvious fact that the majority of non-administrative texts are poems. By the same token most specialists would agree that the limited examples of narrative prose are highly structured and exhibit many of the same qualities as do the more obviously poetic texts. But having said that, once one rejects the search for syllabo-tonic versification, it makes little sense to separate poetry from prose. Rather one should proceed with micro-analyses of individual texts regardless of prose or poetic profile. I see no alternative: the disembodied listing of poetic devices, so dear to the philological mind and reminiscent of some formalist excesses, will not lead us to any better understanding of Sumerian poetics. For example, the philologist wants to collect examples of metaphors of a certain class. This dry listing

maybe useful to a beginning student who needs help with the language, and it may be of assistance in the study of repetition, intertextuality and cliché, but it will not help in the analysis of a particular poem. This is not meant to disparage seminal collections a of metaphors and similes that were written at a time when the reconstruction of Sumerian literary texts and of the literary language were still very much in a basic stage; Heimpel's (1968) collection of animal imagery was in fact a pioneering effort. But we must now proceed beyond collecting amputated examples of textual snippets, for this destroys the *energeia* of language and violates the integrity of the text. The projection of metaphor upon metonymy, which is the central part of Jakobson's definition of the poetic function, requires that we analyze each instance of a formal metaphor within its context and that we must understand the other, less dominant, language functions that coexist in the text. I therefore see no alternative to the micro-analysis of individual texts.

And finally, what of the larger linguistic context? Can we readily find a locus for poetic language in the complex socio-linguistic web of ancient Mesopotamia? This is a question that deserves a separate treatment, and so my remarks here will be brief. To recapitulate what has been stated earlier, one may propose that beginning perhaps as early as the late third millennium, Sumerian was, simply speaking, the poetic language. This is to say that one must view all the ancient languages as a hierarchy within a world of discourse, and not as completely distinct entities. Within this socio-linguistic matrix Sumerian was, by its distribution, marked for poetic function pure and simple. There was even a hierarchy within Sumerian. A purely literary "dialect," designated as eme-sal, literally the "high-pitched/thin language", was used only for direct speech of women and goddesses in myths and for specific ritual observances, primarily for the cultic practices of the gala priests. There is much controversy about the nature of this "dialect," but for our purposes it will suffice to state that if Standard Sumerian was marked for poetic function, eme-sal was marked to an even higher degree. No wonder that some have had a hard time constructing a formal grammar of Sumerian – they did not realize that they were working with art!

Having said that, we must step back and acknowledge the difficulties before us. The isolation of poetic elements, other than obvious parallelism, is not an easy task, and is more problematical than might appear at first glance. The concept of a marked poetic language creates difficulties in the definition of poetry and prose, and, as I have already remarked, we may have to abandon the distinction altogether for the present time. Consider one small example. In certain Sumerian poems one encounters word pairs such as ḫar-ra-an and kaskal. Taken individually, these words are synonyms, and they can appear either in parallelism (a), or linked together, in what is traditionally labeled as "hendiadys" (b).

a. ^{d}utu ḫar-ra-an kaskal-e nam ba-an-kud-a-ba (*LSU* 26)
'After (the god) Utu had cursed the highways ...'

b. nita ḫar-ra-an-na du kaskal-e gi_6 ba-ab-da-sá-a (*Šulgi A* 34)
'So that a man travelling the highway could spend the night safely on the road ...'

The two texts I have chosen to cite, *The Lamentation of the Destruction of Sumer and Ur* (Michałowski 1989) and *Šulgi Hymn A* (Klein 1981) are undoubtedly poetry by anyone's definition. The lines, taken out of context, are not very meaningful, and have to be read in relationship with the surrounding text.

The use of the word pair in (b) would normally be taken as a typical use of synonyms for poetic repetition, that is as an example of the poetic function of language. What are we to make of example (a)? When described as "hendiadys" the linking of the two words becomes a rhetorical figure of sorts. What is interesting about this synonymic pair is that the first word, ḫar-ra-an, is a loan from Akkadian *ḫarranum*, while the second is the normal Sumerian word for "road, highway." Sumerian texts use both words independently, but the use of synonymic parallelism appears to be a poetic device. This kind of pairing is not unique to Sumerian; examples can be found in languages as diverse as Georgian, Tok Pisin, Provençal, Middle English, Thai or Hindi. There have been many discussions of this phenomenon, and it appears that various factors are involved in the formation and use of such synomymic pairs (Boeder 1991), that is of the simultaneous use of two synonymic words, of which one, usually the first, is a loanword. In a recent discussion Winfred Boeder has stressed the multifunctional use of such compounds, which originate in multilingual situations and can signal knowledge of prestige languages, as well as carry pragmatic value. Interestingly enough they are often lexicalized in poetic contexts. I plan to discuss these problems at length elsewhere; here I only want to draw attention to one set of problems that comes to mind.

The poetic use of synonymic parallelism seems obvious. It is therefore somewhat disturbing to encounter it in a letter. There is an epistle addressed to king Shulgi from his high vizier, Aradmu, that was used for instruction in Sumerian in Old Babylonia schools. The opening lines read as follows (Ali 1970, revised):

1. lugal-mu-ra ù-na-a-dug$_4$
2. $^{\text{I}}$arad$_2$-mu arad$_2$-zu na-ab-bé-a
3. kur su-bir$_4^{\text{ki}}$ ḫar-ra-an kaskal si sá-sá-e-ra
4. gun ma-da-zu ge-en-ge-né-dè
5. a-rá ma-da zu-zu-dè

"Speak to His Majesty; thus says Aradmu, your servant: (you instructed me)
to take the road (ḫar-ra-an kaskal) to the land of Subir,
to organize the provincial taxes (due) to you,
to discern the mood of the land ..."

The passage was selected because a strict distinction between prose and poetry might not predict the use of the synonymic word pair in the third line. One could also simply see in this a lexicalization of the compound and leave it at that, were it not for the obvious highlighting of syntagmatic elements in lines 3–5. Most importantly, the lines are organized as *lines*; they are to be perceived visually as distinct, and heard in parallelism. The non-finite verbal forms at the end unite all three, the reduplicated roots at the end of 4 and 5, as well as the repetition of ma-da, "land, territory", itself a loan from Semitic *mātum*, and a partial synonym of kur in the previous line create a complex system of parallelism and repetition that is characteristic of Sumerian poetic texts. One does not expect such things in a letter. We perceive literature as a distinct

form of language and action. In the words of Peter Steiner (1982: 508):

> But unlike other written forms, literary discourse is especially vulnerable because it is impersonal. Personal written communication benefits from the mutual acquaintance between the communicants since this helps in bringing their respective semantic contexts together ... But literary communication appears through an institutionalized channel and undergoes editing, grammatical and typographical standardization and commercial dissemination.

This is a useful perspective for us. Consider that we are dealing with epistolary communication, normally the opposite of "literary discourse", and yet we appear to be in the realm of poetic language. The institutionalized channel is the study curriculum that was used in schooling children in southern Mesopotamian cities such as Nippur, Isin, and Ur during the Old Babylonian period. The letters that were copied, edited, and redacted by scribes and teachers were no longer bound to the immediate context of communication; they *became* literary texts, no different contextually from the hymns, epics, and other literary works inherited from the time of the Third Dynasty of Ur. Thus even documents could become art, either by simple appropriation or by extensive reworking.

As has been noted, this art was not silent, but was bound to performance, with chanting, singing, and recitation. The larger context of performance is not recoverable, however. We can investigate certain issues and play with a variety of approaches to the problem, as long as we do not deceive ourselves that we can actually reconstruct a full native experience of a text, nor that this is even desirable. The Sumerian royal hymns are a good example. As a result of the fundamental work done by Adam Falkenstein and his students, as well as by W.W. Hallo and Jacob Klein, we have a fairly good knowledge of these compositions. There have been interesting proposals about their original context and ideological importance (Hallo 1963), as well as about the intertextual relationship between patrons from different historical periods (Klein 1990). And yet because they led multiple lives, were composed for specific occasions, but then selected for preservation and given a new identity in school instruction, they are difficult to categorize and analyze as a class of literary objects. This is where the matter of literary kinds, or genres, comes into play and this is where we will have to pick up the poetic thread at our next meeting, on that very subject.

REFERENCES

Ali, F.A.
1970 "Three Sumerian Letters", in: *Sumer* **26** 146–79.

Anyihodo, Akosua
1991 "Linguistic Parallels in Traditional Akan Appellation Poetry", in: *Research in African Literatures* **22** 67–81.

Berlin, Adele
1979 *Enmerkar and Ensuḫkešdanna. A Sumerian Narrative Poem* (Occasional Publications of the Babylonian Fund **2**). Philadelphia: University Museum

Boeder, Winfred
1991 "A Note on Synonymic Parallelism and Bilingualism", in: *Studia Linguistica* **45** 97–126.

Bright, William
1990 " 'With one lip, with two lips': Parallelism in Nahuatl", in: *Language* **66** 437–52.

Buccellati, Giorgio
1976 "Towards a Typology of Akkadian Similes", in: *Kramer AV* 59–70.

Bühler, Karl
1965 *Sprachtheorie. Die Darstellungsfunktion der Sprache.* Second Edition. Stuttgart: Fischer [Originally published in 1934] (English translation : *Theory of Language: The Representational Function of Language.* Amsterdam: Benjamins 1990).

Civil, Miguel
1973 "From Enki's Headaches to Phonology", in *JNES* **32** 57–61.
1984 "Bilingualism in Logographically Written Languages: Sumerian in Ebla." Pp. 75–97 in L. Cagni (ed.), *Il bilinguismo a Ebla.* Napoli: Istituto universitario orientale.

Cooper, Jerrold S.
1978 *The Return of Ninurta to Nippur* (*Analecta Orientalia* **52**). Roma: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum.

Fox, James J.
1988 "Introduction." Pp. 1–18 in James J. Fox (ed.), *To Speak in Pairs*: *Essays on the Ritual languages of Eastern Indonesia.* Cambridge UP.

Gentili, Bruno
1988 *Poetry and its Public in Ancient Greece: From Homer to the Fifth Century.* (Translated by A. Thomas Cole) Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP.

Hallo, William W.
1963 "Royal Hymns and Mesopotamian Unity", in: *JCS* **17** 112–18.

Heimpel, Wolfgang
1968 *Tierbilder in der sumerischen Literatur.* Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum.

1970 "Observations of Rhythmical Structure in Sumerian Literary Texts", in: *Or NS* **39** 492–95.

Jakobson, Roman

1960 "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics." Pp. 350–77 in T.A. Sebeok (ed.), *Style in Language*. Cambridge, MS.: MIT Press [Reprinted as "Linguistics and Poetics." Pp. 62–94 in Krysztyna Pomorska & Stephen Rudy (eds.), *Roman Jakobson: Language in Literature*. Cambridge, MS. : Harvard UP].

1987a "The Dominant." Pp. 41–46 in Krysztyna Pomorska & Stephen Rudy (eds.), *Roman Jakobson: Language in Literature*. Cambridge, MS. : Harvard UP. [Originally written in 1935]

1987b "Problems in the Study of Language and Literature." (with Jurij Tynjanov) Pp. 47–49 in Krysztyna Pomorska & Stephen Rudy (eds.), *Roman Jakobson: Language in Literature*. Cambridge, MS.: Harvard UP. [Originally written in 1928]

1987c "Grammatical Parallelism and Its Russian Facet." Pp. 145–79 in Krysztyna Pomorska & Stephen Rudy (eds.), *Roman Jakobson: Language in Literature*. Cambridge, MS. : Harvard UP. [Originally written in 1966]

Klein, Jacob

1981 *Three Šulgi Hymns. Sumerian Royal Hymns Glorifying King Šulgi of Ur*. Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan UP.

1990 "Šulgi and Išme-Dagan: Originality and Dependence in Sumerian Royal Hymnology." Pp. 65–136 in *Studies Artzi*.

Limet, Henri

1976 "Essai de poétique sumérienne." Pp. 327–34 in *Kramer AV*.

Michałowski, Piotr

1981 "Carminative Magic: Towards an Understanding of Sumerian Poetics", in: *ZA* **71** 1–18.

1989 *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur*. (Mesopotamian Civilizations 1). Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.

1992 "Orality, Literacy and Early Mesopotamian Literature." Pp. 227–45 in M. E. Vogelzang & H.L.J. Vanstiphout (eds.), *Mesopotamian Epic Literature: Oral or Aural?* Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press.

Mukařovský, Jan

1977 "Poetic Designation and the Aesthetic Function of Language." Pp. 65–73 in J. Burbank & P. Steiner (eds.), *The Word and Verbal Art: Selected Essays by Jan Mukařovský*. New Haven: Yale UP. [Originally published in 1938]

O'Connor, Michael Patrick

1980 *Hebrew Verse Structure*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.

Reiner, Erica

1985 *Your Thwarts in Pieces, Your Mooring Rope Cut. Poetry from Babylonia and Assyria*. (Michigan Studies in the Humanities **5**). Ann Arbor: Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies at the University of Michigan.

Sauren, Herbert

1971–72 "Beispiele sumerischer Poesie", in: *JEOL* **22** 255–306.

Steiner, Peter
1982 "The Semiotics of Literary Reception." Pp. 503–20 in P. Steiner, M. Cervenka & R. Vroon (eds.), *The Structure of the Literary Process: Studies Dedicated to the Memory of Felix Vodička*. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins.

Vanstiphout, Herman L.J.
1986 "Some Thoughts on Genre in Mesopotamian Literature." Pp. 1–11 in *CRRAI* **32**.
1993 " 'Verse Language' in Standard Sumerian Literature." Pp. 305–29 in J.C. de Moor & W.G.E. Watson (eds.), *Verse in Ancient Near Eastern Prose* (AOAT **42**), Kevelaer/Neukirchen: Butzon & Bercker.

von Soden, Wolfram
1981 "Untersuchungen zur babylonischen Metrik, Teil I", in: *ZA* **71** 161–204.
1984 "Untersuchungen zur babylonischen Metrik, Teil II", in: *ZA* **74** 213–34.

AMBIGUITY AS A GENERATIVE FORCE IN STANDARD SUMERIAN LITERATURE, OR EMPSON IN NIPPUR

H. L. J. Vanstiphout
Rijksuniversiteit Groningen.

0 Of course it is tempting to try to identify and interpret Standard Sumerian examples or instances of each of the seven main types of literary ambiguity as they are described by William Empson in his *Seven Types of Ambiguity*,[1] one of the great pieces of criticism of all times. However, since such a procedure would mean only affirmation of the universality of Empson's principles, I suspect that the reader would not be content with this. Neither would Empson. In the first place, as sometimes escapes attention, he has himself returned twice to the important matter of ambiguity.[2] Secondly, to have done so would merely imply that I had read more of the *Seven Types* than the remarkably lucid description of contents – a procedure less widespread than commonly believed and therefore honourable in itself. Yet Empson and the reader may well expect something more, and above all, something else.

1 Two preliminary remarks seem to be in order. First, as Empson himself insists throughout the book, but mostly so in his final chapter, ambiguity belongs to the very core, or to the very nature, of poetic language. As he repeatedly states[3] this is partly because if an alternative interpretation is at all possible, it was already implied in the other or, if one prefers, original interpretation. This can happen at both ends of the piece of poetic language communicated: that is, in the mind of the author as well as in the mind of the audience.

Furthermore, at both ends it may happen consciously, or unconsciously, or in between, by which I mean as an afterthought. Technically the latter mode accounts, of course, for variant readings in subsequent stages of tradition,[4] at least if these go

---

[1] Empson 1930.

[2] Once on the grander generic scale, in his *Some Versions of Pastoral* (Empson 1935) – which was already announced in the third chapter of Empson 1930 – , and once on the basic level of word meanings, in the second chapter of *The Structure of Complex Words* (Empson 1950).

[3] There seems to be no need for a precise reference, since the principle is basic to his system of analysis as such.

[4] There is a marvellous instance in the disputation between *Tree and Reed*. Line 13 should read (with AO 6715=*TRS* 53):

giš gi-da tab-ba pa-mul-ba ní silim-šè mu-un-e

"Tree with Reed was friends, and with its starry (?) branches (or foliage) it spoke/gave a valedictory greeting".

One source (Ni 4598=*ISET* **1** 166) has ... mu-un-è: "... it went out". It is presumed that the scribe read KI for DI (a common enough mistake, occurring also in the *Codex Hammurabi*) and amended the verb minimally from /e/ "to speak/to do" into /è/ "to go out to IM.KI," which makes perfect sense as an isolated line, but no sense in the context. Someone should sample such examples one day. The matter of the "starry branches" should also be gone into. Is the reference to the shining or perhaps grey or whitish or silvery surface of the hard leaves of a certain kind of tree, or to the fact that the tree shows a multitude of individual leaves held together as a bunch or cluster, but motile only in its outer form?

beyond the trivial or the silly or the downright stupid. The tension between conscious and unconscious ambiguity, or between a conscious intent and an unconscious interpretation – or vice versa – is a difficult matter, but it is perhaps not a very important one. We see that Empson did not categorize his types along this distinction, with the possible exception of his fifth type, called "fortunate confusion".[5] In our field the unconscious mode will probably not be a useful line to proceed with, since we are much too far away from the sensibilities one might normally expect to be aware of.

The second point is that I take the view that poetical language as such is, on more than one level, 'complete' or 'full' language, of which referential, phatic etc. language uses are merely truncated forms.[6] I may be allowed to repeat a remark I made elsewhere recently : one of the characteristics of poetical language is that it introduces in principle the legitimate use of the whole range of features linguistically *possible* for a given part of language – including, of course, 'meaning'.[7]

Since the phenomenon at hand is thus deemed to be basic, it should also be structurally basic. And, put in somewhat simple terms, structurally basic must mean 'generative'. Therefore I propose to look at some ways in which the principle – or the technique – of ambiguity may be found to generate the poetic text in Standard Sumerian Literature.

2 It seems most appropriate to start with the first type of ambiguity.[8] This first type very generally speaking relates to, but is not identical with, metaphor, likeness, etc. – in short, imagery. I can be mercifully brief here, since many of the contributions to this volume give much more precise and relevant insights in this matter than I would be able to provide.

As to 'pure' or 'simple' imagery of sundry kinds, I will merely make a few random and marginal notes.

---

[5] In Empson's words : '... the author is discovering his idea in the act of writing,... so that, for instance, there is a simile which applies to nothing exactly, but lies between two things when the author is moving from one to the other'. The famous image of the messenger of Enmerkar reaching the outskirts of Aratta on his final journey might well qualify:

ur-bar-ra máš-e ús-sa-gin$_7$ gur$_5$-uš ì-búr-búr-re

'Like a wolf closing in on a buck he bared his fangs (hurrying to the kill)'.

[6] The reference is of course to Roman Jakobson's scheme of language functions. The clearest exposition is found in Waugh 1976, but see also Jakobson 1976. Yet in our case – the case of poetic language – Karcevskij's principle of asymmetric dualism (Karcevskij 1929) is very important, in that it virtually enforces ambiguity. I take the view that it is a specific property of 'poetic language', when dominant, to marshal, mix, arrange and correlate the other language functions more or less at will. Apart from the undoubted fact that Jakobson's theory of dominance has not been well understood, and the application of the principle has not found very much practice outside of the work of the master himself (see P. Michałowski in this volume), I also think that the *ways in which* the different functions of language-as-communication *become* dominant, or assert and execute their dominance, have not been sufficiently investigated in our field as in others. That it is not at least categorically an impossible task to do so has been shown splendidly by Roland Barthes quite some time ago. At the same time I realize that such an investigation, certainly in a somewhat adapted barthesian manner, may well be said to be co-extensive with micro-analysis of individual (groups of) compositions, as required by P. Michałowski (in this volume) and myself (Vanstiphout 1993 and this volume), illustrated in diverse ways by J. Cooper and A. Kilmer (this volume), and hinted at by J. Black (this volume). So we seem to have found a broad area of agreement.

[7] See Vanstiphout 1993: 306–09.

[8] We will not go down Empson's list. But his first type ("Ambiguities of the first type arise when a detail is effective in several ways at once.") is so general that one cannot but start with it.

(a) First, there is the remark that all kinds of metaphor – to be taken in the sense that Eco gives it, as Jeremy Black reminds us[9] – are unavoidably ambiguous. I mean that it is not immediately obvious whether the likeness expressed is meant to denote (partial) identity, or a particular versus a general state, or a virtually shared feature, or a comparison in the accepted meaning. This feature is well illustrated by the Sumerian equative postposition /-gin$_7$/,[10] which can and does mean "(because) it is,"[11] "in the quality or form of,"[12] "as if it were,"[13] "alike unto,"[14] "the same as,"[15] "as well,"[16] but the principle applies to unmarked metaphors as well.

(b) As to the generative force of straight imagery it is clear that it does generate a heightening and tightening of the overall message. But this is merely the function of imagery as such, and ambiguity would not seem to play a very important role in this process. Yet there are instances where the image itself unmistakably contains double meaning. A straightforward example is *ELA* l. 508 ; the messenger is arriving at Aratta for the last time, and the line says in essence:

"Like the wolf closing in on the buck he hurried to the kill,"

which, unlike most of the imagery used in the previous descriptions of the arduous voyage, conveys not merely the idea of swiftness and power, but also of finality which in the linear development is now the most important feature. The obviously intended ambiguity here resides, of course, in the identity of the subject of the verb : wolf or messenger?[17] Such double intention of imagery can be found in many other places as well, and I suspect that f.i. the *Temple Hymns* and more abstruse pieces like the *Hymn to the Hoe* would be good places to look.

(c) Imagery in itself also generates seriality and multiplication of images. The reason for this is, again, the image's ambiguity: on the one hand it 'stands for' what

---

[9] See the introduction to his contribution to this volume.

[10] See in general Heimpel 1968: 24–42. Perhaps a new study of the equative postposition should be undertaken, since much more material is now available, and our understanding of the texts has grown appreciably in the last quarter century. The random list mentioned here does not include the temporal use of the postposition, as f.i. in *Gilgameš and Agga* l. 93 : bí-in-dug$_4$-ga-gin$_7$-nam 'When he had said this'.

[11] See *ASKT* 115: 3′-4′:

[gá-e e]-ri-za kúš-ù-gin$_7$ gù [mu-ra-an-dé-e]

[ana-ku] arad-ki šu-nu-ḫu a-šá-as-si-ki

'(Sum.) Since I am your exhausted servant, I cry to you!'

'(Akk.) I, your exhausted servant, cry to you!'

[12] See *Gudea Cyl.* A xxiv 18:

dub-lá-bi am-gin$_7$ mu-šu$_4$-šu$_4$

'(At) its gate he erected (things) like wild buffaloes'

[13] See *LH* l. 165: še-gin$_7$ saḫar-šeš-a nam-ba-da-gu$_7$-e-en 'Make me not eat bitter dust instead of grain!'

[14] See *The Cursing of Agade* l. 221:

tu^{mušen} ní-te-a-gin$_7$ ur$_5$-da ḫé-ak-e

'May they, like frightened pigeons, become immobilized' (J. Cooper's translation; see Cooper 1983: 60–61).

[15] See *Enlil and Namzitarra* l. 25 : mu-zu-gin$_7$ nam-zu ḫé-tar-re 'As your name will/may be your fate!'

[16] I.e. not a 'real' comparison, but a statement that X happens to A as well as to B. This sometimes leads to very slight variants, which only have significance from this point of view: *LSUr* l. 412 reads:

gud du$_7$-du$_7$-bi udu ú gu$_7$-a-bi ^{giš}tukul-e ba-an-sìg-sìg

'Its unblemished oxen and grass-fed cows were slaughtered' [P. Michałowski's translation; Michałowski 1989: 62–3]. But one manuscript (*UET* **6** 132) has : . . . udu ú gu$_7$-a-gin$_7$ . . ., probably : . . . and the grass-fed sheep as well . . . .

[17] See footnote 5, where this line was quoted as a possible example of Empson's 'fortunate confusion'.

it is not; on the other, the *signifiant* naturally holds on to its own portion of reality.[18] Two passages chosen randomly, though admittedly from related generic registers, show that this ambiguity, inherent to the 'image' or the 'equation', or the 'metaphor', indeed engenders poetic discourse precisely by playing upon the said ambiguity.

In the first example, taken from *LSUr*, the image is stripped of its referential function, and developed further in its own right, being made subservient only to the greater metaphor overlying the poem as a whole: the destruction of all things, natural and cultural, means the destruction of the Sumerian world. The passage[19] runs:

412a [giš]nimbar-gin$_7$ gú-gur$_5$-ru ba-ab-dug$_4$ ur-bi ba-ra-an-kad$_4$[20]
413 giš nimbar urudu níg-kal-ga á nam-ur-sag-gá
414 ú numun$_2$-gin$_7$ ba-bu ú numun$_2$-gin$_7$ ba-zé úr-ba ti mi-ni-ib-bal
415 sag saḫar-ra ki ba-ni-ib-ú-ús lú zi-zi la-ba-tuku
416 giš zé-na-bi gú ba-an-gur$_5$-uš sag šu bí-in-ḫu-ḫu-uz
417 á-an-su$_{11}$-lum-ma-bi pú du$_7$-du$_7$ ba-ra-an-BU.BU-dè-eš

They were cut down as if they were date palms, and their (carcasses) were tied together
The palm tree, (strong) as mighty copper, the heroic weapon,
Was torn out like (mere) rushes, was plucked like (mere) rushes, its trunk was turned sideways,
Its top lay in the dust, there was no one to raise it,
The midriffs of its palm fronds were cut off and their tops were burnt off,
Its date clusters that used to fall on the well were torn out.

Note that here the image is obviously used in its own right, after having served its primary purpose.[21] The cattle (or humans?) are likened to cut palm trees. The palm trees themselves are also cut down. What is more: the 'reified' image is now not only incorporated in the main argument for its own sake; it is also described in some detail, which is another way in which one may see ambiguity engendering text. This technique is used frequently, and deserves a special study. Often things, or complexes of things, or concepts are introduced into the flow of narrative or descriptive or rhetorical discourse, and are then described in detail, sometimes minutely, and even sometimes adorned with ulterior meaning. This happens with so much emphasis in *Lugalbanda*[22] that it may be deemed characteristic for the composer of those twin poems. From

---

[18] Of course, this again illustrates Karcevskij's asymmetry. See footnote 6.

[19] Michałowski 1989: 62–63.

[20] This is admittedly an intrusive line, which occurs earlier as l. 195 in the composition, and which is found in only one manuscript at this point. The point is that at least *this* scribe very clearly saw the point I am making, and used it in a grand manner.

[21] But see preceding footnote.

[22] The notions or concepts of sleep, dream, beer, and some others, are accompanied by relatively long digressions, explaining what sleep, dream, beer, etc. 'mean'. It is important to note that 'dream' means nothing, or rather it means only what one wishes it to mean: see *LH* ll. 337ff.:

lul-da lul-di-da zi-da zi-di-dam
lú-ḫúl-ḫúl-le-dè lú-šìr-šìr-re-dè
To the liar it speaks lies; to the truthful the truth;
It makes one happy, makes one sing –
(But) it is the *closed archive* of the gods.(The term is gi pisan-kad$_5$)

See my forthcoming studies "The Matter of Aratta: An Overview' (*OLP* 1995) and "The Dream of Lugalbanda".

the viewpoint of literary history this is interesting, for it exemplifies an unmistakably perceived link between school and literature, between scribal 'knowledge' or 'science' and aesthetics, between intellect and truth.[23]

The second example shows how the generating force of imagery, resulting from its inherent ambiguity, can also work in the other direction, or, as it happens, in a circular way. The *Cursing of Agade*, lines 215ff. reads:

215 lú lú ù-zu-dè na-an-ni-in-pàd-dè
216 šeš-e šeš-a-né giskim na-an-ni-in-è
217 ki-sikil-bi ama_5-na giš ḫul ḫé-en-da-ab-ra
218 ad-da-bi é dam ug_7-a-na gù gig-bi ḫé-em-me
219 $tu^{mušen}$-bi ab-làl-ba še ḫé-ni-in-$ša_4$
220 $buru_5^{mušen}$-bi á-búr-ba níg ḫé-ni-ib-ra
221 $tu^{mušen}$ ní-te-a-gin_7 ur_5-da ḫé-ak-e[24]

May no one find his acquaintance there,
May brother not recognize brother!
May its young woman be cruelly killed in her woman's domain,
May its old man cry bitterly for his slain wife!
May its pigeons moan in their holes,
May its birds be smitten in their nooks,
May they, like frightened pigeons, become immobilized! (Cooper's translation.)[25]

The point is clear, though advisedly ambiguous: who are the 'they' in line 221: the people, or the pigeons?

Still, in a way these examples, which could easily be multiplied, are somewhat straightforward from the stylistic point of view. In many instances however, the technique which plays upon the metaphorical ambiguity leads to high density complexes which by the very accumulation become even more ambiguous : a famous example is the stanza 219–24 of *LU*:

219 lú ^{urudu}ḫa-zi-in-e im-til-la-gin_7 sag-túg la-ba-ab-dul-le-eš
220 maš-da giš-bùr-ra dab_5-ba-gin_7 ka-saḫar-ra bí-in-ús
221 lú-^{giš}gíd-da mu-un-ra-gin_7 ^{túg}níg-lá ba-ra-bí-in-lá-e-eš
222 i-gi_4-in-zu ki-ḫa-ri-iš-tum ama-ba-ka múd-bi-a mu-un-sa_4-eš
223 lú ^{giš}meddu-e im-til-la-gin_7 šu-ne ba-ra-bí-in-lá-eš
224 lú kurun-nag-a nu-me-eš gú-zag-ga bí-in-la-e-eš

As if killed by the axe, they were not covered with head-cloths
But lay biting the dust as a deer caught in a trap;
Like people struck by a spear, they were not dressed with bandages
But lay in their blood as if at the place of their mothers birth–giving;
Like those struck with a mace, they were not bound with poultices
But lay head over shoulder though they had not taken strong drink.

---

[23] In later times such scribal or inkhorn *fiorituri* tend to descend to crude graphic puns, to abstruse glossing, and to kabbalistics. See e.g. Parpola 1993.
[24] See above, footnote 14.
[25] Cooper 1983: 60–61.

Here the wealth as well as the triple register of imagery clearly amounts to intended confusion. One may well ask : were they killed by the axe etc. or not; what is the salient reality relation;[26] why use the equative postposition in the odd lines, mentioning the weapons,[27] and other grammatical features in the even lines?[28] In any case, this is consummate poetical craftsmanship.

3 There is of course also a mode of ambiguity wherein ostensibly straightforward bits of text take on a double meaning in the wider context. Here imagery may be involved, but need not be.

3.1 A good example to start with is *Hoe and Plough*[29] l. 145, which says :

[^{giš}kiri$_6$] ù-mu-un-nigin$_2$ im-dù-a zag-bi ù-bí-tuš inim téš-a ù-bí-in-sum

When the garden is walled in, the sidewalls have been put up, and the agreements reached...

The point here is that the last phrase looks deceptively either as a somewhat superfluous and incongruent completion of the two preceding bits, or as a bland statement expressing that one requires agreement before starting fences and sidewalls. But in comparison to preceding passages, where builders, labourers and shipwrights have been mentioned from the point of view of Hoe's value for them – as in the recurring phrase "Thus I enable the labourer to support his wife and children"[30] – it is clear that this innocent phrase serves at the same time as a kind of *closure* of this series of passages, and as a *pivot* for turning from this series to a new list of Hoe's values. I mean that the bald statement about agreement is to be seen as (a) on a par with the happiness Hoe brings to the working people, (b) as a condition for this happiness, thus generalizing the concept, and (c) in real terms as the condition for Hoe's uninterrupted availability and necessity, for the next line has : "People then again take up the hoe".[31]

The ambiguity here travels full circle, from bland 'realistic' application, through generalized allusive meaning (: agreement means happiness for everyone involved) back to the daily down-to-earth tasks. That this is not merely in my imagination is indicated by the fact that the next passage ultimately leads to the 'simple people' telling each other around the fire of how, when Enlil finally ends his 'frowning at the land', it is again Hoe which first strikes the earth:

162 edin par-rim$_4$ ki-dur$_5$ nu-gál-la
163 pú a-dùg-ga-bi ù-mu-ba-al
164 lú-enmen-tuku gú-pú-gá-šè zi-ni mu-ši-in-tùm
165 ì-ne-eš lú-lú-ra a-na an-na-an-dug$_4$
166 lú-um-lú-um-ra a-na an-na-ab-daḫ-e
167 sipad-dè ⌜X⌝ ùr-ni edin me-te-aš bí-ib-gál

---

[26] I suspect the second register : they were not cared for.
[27] 219, 221, 223.
[28] The postposition again in 220; i-gi$_4$-in-zu construction in 222; nu-me-eš construction in 224.
[29] See Vanstiphout 1984, 1990, 1991, 1992a.
[30] The lines read: guruš(má-laḫ...)-ra dam-dumu-ni á mu-un-da-an-è.
[31] The line reads: un-e ^{giš}al-àm šu im-ma-an-ti-eš.

168 u_4 an-né sig_{11} ḫé-bí-in-dug_4-ga-ta
169 ki-en-gi-da gig ba-ab-dug_4-ga-ta
170 é-dù-a a-a sug-dè téš mu-ni-in-lá-a-ba
171 ^{d}en-líl-le ma-da sag-ki ba-da-gíd-da-ba
172 sibir-^{d}en-líl-lá mu-un-zu-a-ta
172 maḫ ^{d}en-líl-le mu-un-ak-a-ta
173 ^{d}en-líl-le šu nu-me-en-[?]
174 ^{giš}al zú-dili par-rim_4-šè ba-an-sì

On the plains, where no moisture is found,
When I have dug up the sweet water,
The thirsty ones come back to life at the side of my wells!
And what then says one to the other?
What do they tell one another?
'The shepherd's hoe is surely set up as an ornament on the plains!
'For when An had ordered his punishment,
'And the bitterness had been ordained over Sumer,
'And the waters of the well-built house had collected in the swamp,
'And Enlil had frowned upon the Land,
'Even the shepherd's crook of Enlil had been made felt,
'When great Enlil had acted thus,
'Enlil did not restrain his hand.
'Then the Hoe, with its single tooth, struck the dry earth!'

This passage by the way is itself also highly ambiguous, since it works at the same time on the level of the annual cycle of seasons and on the cosmogonic level.[32] Thus it is quite clear that here it is the ambiguity itself which helps along the argument and the poetic text.

3.2 In fact, this kind of ambiguity seems to me to be one of the main ingredients of the *Disputes* as such. Time and again, as I have argued before,[33] ambiguity lies at the root of the development of the debate.[34] Time and again arguments are countered by pointing out the ambiguous nature of the opponent's claim in such a way that what he (the opponent) says may be quite true, but can also be construed in another way. This happens in *Hoe and Plough* where the pompous progress of the pageant accompanying the Plough is turned into the cursing ploughman and the chapter of workers trying to fix the unwieldy implement, and crowning it with a stinking hide. It also occurs in *Ewe and Grain*,[35] where the finery of the gods' statues and the king's body, made from dazzlingly white wool, is changed into Ewe's fleece, turned inside out and hanging from the carcass of the slaughtered sheep. At another occasion I have referred to the ambiguity underlying this text's preponderant use of the motif of a banquet.

---

[32] The passage also gives us the *only* unequivocal indication of the circumstances under which 'cosmogonic truths' in the form of what we like to call 'myths' were actually *told*. And these circumstances are somewhat unexpected, to say the least.

[33] See the references given in footnote 29, specifically Vanstiphout 1991.

[34] Which in a manner of speaking is always about matters of *sic-et-non*.

[35] See Alster & Vanstiphout 1987. For a discussion of the point raised here, and that in connection with *Hoe and Plough*, see Vanstiphout 1991.

4 Yet another mode of generating text by means of ambiguity consists of these cases where an ambiguity engenders, as it were, the mechanics of the story itself. I shall confine myself to two examples.

4.1 In *Enlil and Ninlil*[36] it is quite obvious that the series of Enlil's disguises is highly ambiguous – an ambiguity which quite intentionally is not resolved. Is Ninlil unaware that Enlil is in fact the doorman etc. in disguise? I doubt it, simply because of the fact that she follows him of her own volition. The story line requires, however, that this assumption is not to be made explicit. Therefore the motif of Ninlil's following Enlil stands in sharp contrast to the wording of the series of love acts. Yet since we assume, as I think we must,[37] that she knows perfectly well who is who we may put it that it is this contradiction itself, the thread of the story, which is ambiguous.

4.2 A second and perhaps more sophisticated example is that of the central plot of *ELA*: the three challenges.[38] The means by which Enmerkar arrives at a solution is not the most important feature here. More important is the evaluation of the challenges themselves. We must remember that the challenges are laid down by the Lord of Aratta. Although not stated explicitly, there is here also a basic ambiguity. For consider that the Lord of Aratta requires (a) grain, (b) a sceptre, and (c) a champion – of whatever nature. He thinks he is being very clever, for even if Enmerkar were to be able to find the appropriate solution – an impossibility as far as the Lord of Aratta is concerned – the result would still be that Enmerkar has given over to him his tribute (grain), his sceptre (his token of sovereignty), his military power (the champion). So in fact Uruk would have submitted to Aratta; or so the Lord of Aratta thinks. In the evolution of the story the ambiguous character becomes clear, and it is here that the solutions to the challenges take on their significance. The ways in which Enmerkar foils Aratta's plans, combined with the imposition of the one language arrived at through the spell of Nudimmud,[39] and the invention of writing,[40] which stunts the Lord of Aratta's ambitions, resolve the ambiguity in Uruk's favour. Aratta becomes hoist with its own petard – an ambiguous situation if ever there was one. I presume one can say that this central ambiguity *is* the story. And this should not surprise us : the bone of contention is, after all, Inana's position, explicitly presented as ambiguous.

5 Inana the ambiguous, the irrepressible, is also otherwise relevant for our purpose : her ambiguous relationship with Dumuzi makes his position ambiguous as well. And here we perceive very clearly how a central ambiguity has engendered a whole body of contradictory and thus ambiguous literature. This is a structural or phenomenal

---

[36] Edition Behrens 1978. But see also the very important review by Cooper (1980) and the fine new translations in Jacobsen 1987: 167–80, and Bottéro & Kramer 1989: 105–15. For the conceptual structure underlying this and some other procreation stories, see Vanstiphout 1987.

[37] After all, she is wilfully disobedient from the very beginning.

[38] For the Aratta material in general, see my study 'The Matter of Aratta: An Overview' in *OLP* 1995, which also discusses the motif of the three tasks and their solutions in some detail.

[39] See my study 'Another Attempt at the Spell of Nudimmud', to appear in *RA*, which tries to refute Jacobsen's recent interpretation (Jacobsen 1992).

[40] See Vanstiphout 1989.

ambiguity residing in the person of Inana, but thereby of course spreading over into Dumuzi's personality. This much would seem rather obvious; but there are two observable ways in which one can see clearly that this ambiguity was consciously used as a literary or poetical tool.

5.1 The first one is not really surprising, although I do not remember seeing it put explicitly in print. In many of the *Love Lyrics*[41] the young girl is described as adorning herself much in the way of Inana's preparations for her journey to the Nether World – whether the girl is specifically identified with Inana or not.[42] This is a fine instance of intended though subdued intertextuality. But it also illustrates the ambiguity of the love relationship itself. The ambiguity here is a double one. On the one hand the adornments allude to and therefore imply the tragic and so-called serious journey of Inana to the realm of the dead. In doing so they also imply the danger they constitute to young and amorous Dumuzi.

5.2 Or is it about Dumuzi and Inana at all? I think that there is a third, and overarching ambiguity present in the whole cycle of love songs. This is the ambiguity anent to the personages themselves. Are they really and always Inana and Dumuzi – or King and Queen for that matter?[43] I would submit that they are at the same time any couple of young lovers. To my mind the very tenderness and the joy make this probable. But then the cycle also implies a realization of the ambiguous nature of sensual love itself – an ambiguity enhanced by using the divine pair of lovers as standing for any couple. In fact, this also should not come as a surprise, since most of the world's love poetry is basically about the ambiguous nature of love. The cleverness of our cycle resides in the substitution of the divine but ambiguous lovers for any couple in love, since the intellectual and literary community will immediately relate the cycle of love to the cycle of betrayal.

I would conclude this section by pointing out again that in these two cycles the mainspring, indeed the subject matter, as well as the execution of both, lies in their relation to each other, a relationship which is itself ambiguous. Therefore ambiguity as such is treated as a literary theme. By the way I would suggest that this is a possible reason why there are no real disputes about love in Standard Sumerian. The Disputes, thriving on ambiguities as they do, did not need in general to treat this universally human ambiguity as well in the presence of a whole class of literary works devoted to it in another way. But still there is the poem about *Dumuzi and Enkimdu*,[44] which is in a way intermediate between the two generic classes.

---

[41] For the Love Lyrics in general see Alster 1985 & 1993, and J.Goodnick Westenholz 1992. A study in depth of the genre in relation to the 'other' Dumuzi-Inana compositions, to other courtly poetry, to Akkadian love poetry (see J. Cooper's contribution to this volume), and from a general comparative point of view, is highly desirable.

[42] See e.g. the splendidly moving 'Let Him Come!' (= *SRT* 5) in Jacobsen 1987.

[43] Also Alster 1993 raises some doubts on this matter.

[44] See Van Dijk 1953: 65–86. A new study of this intriguing text should be undertaken.

6 Lastly, there are texts which take themselves in an ambiguous way. Some of them are to be regarded as satires or related kinds, such as the *Lagash King List*.[45] But this does not seem to be necessary : as I have defended elsewhere,[46] a piece like *Ewe and Grain*, using the *mise en abyme* in a somewhat grand manner, can do so very effectively and thoroughly because it is ambiguous about itself. Consider f.i. how we have to take Ewe and Grain as participants in the banquet. They obviously take part in it, for they become inebriated. But at the same time they are being consumed at that selfsame banquet, and they quarrel about their relative merits for that banquet. It is a pity that we do not have more compositions which show this internalized ambiguity in the same clear manner.

7 I would like to conclude by expressing my belief that on the various levels I have tried to indicate, ambiguity was recognized and consciously used as a technical tool or even as a subject for poetic language. I have refrained from touching upon the possibly observable reason for this : by their education the poets who composed Standard Sumerian Literature were exposed every day to the ambiguities laid down in – or at any rate resulting from – their daily sustenance, *viz.* the lexical and sign lists. This fact, by the way, would add to Empson's seven types an eighth one, perhaps typical for and exclusive to Mesopotamian literary culture: the ambiguity arising from the 'external' features of their written language. This should prove a fruitful field for investigation, but offhand one can already say that our scribes and poets would have no truck with one of the banes of 'western scientific culture' of sorts, *viz.* the intolerance of ambiguity.

On the point of further investigation, I would also plead for recognition of the principle of ambiguity as a generative force on different levels. And I think that this could be done best by thorough analysis of individual compositions, and in relation with analysis of other features of the texture and structure of these pieces, since I presume that very often an intended or fortunate ambiguity may be detected as having triggered some of these other features. I feel indeed that we should stop behaving with what Empson would call "doctrinaire sluttishness", by which he means presenting all you think you know, or you have been able to find out from elsewhere, about a text, and presenting this in an unstructured way, in the naive hope that the text will thereby have a more immediate impact.

[45] Edited in Sollberger 1967 – and then apparently quietly forgotten.
[46] Vanstiphout 1992b.

REFERENCES

Alster, Bendt
1985 "Sumerian Love Songs", in: *RA* **79** 127–59.
1993 "Marriage and Love in the Sumerian Love Songs, with Some Notes on the Manchester Tammuz", in: *Studies Hallo* 15–27.

Alster, Bendt & H. Vanstiphout
1987 "Lahar and Ashnan. Presentation and Analysis of a Sumerian Disputation", in: *AcSum* **9** 1–43.

Behrens, Hermann
1978 *Enlil und Ninlil. Ein sumerischer Mythos aus Nippur*. Rome: Biblical Institute Press.

Bottéro, Jean & S.N. Kramer
1989 *Lorsque les dieux faisaient l'homme*. Paris: NRF/Gallimard.

Cooper, Jerrold S.
1980 [Review of Behrens 1978] in: *JCS* **32** 175–88.
1983 *The Curse of Agade*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP.

Empson, William
1930 *Seven Types of Ambiguity*. London: Chatto & Windus (revised editions in 1947 and 1961).
1935 *Some Versions of Pastoral*. London: Chatto & Windus.
1950 *The Structure of Complex Words*. London: Chatto & Windus.

Goodnick Westenholz, Joan
1992 "Metaphorical Language in the Poetry of Love in the Ancient Near East", in: *CRRAI* **38** 381–87.

Heimpel, Wolfgang
1968 *Tierbilder in der sumerischen Literatur*. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute.

Jacobsen, Thorkild
1987 *The Harps That Once ... Sumerian Poetry in Translation*. New Haven: Yale UP.
1992 "The Spell of Nudimmud", in: *Studies Talmon* 403–16.

Jakobson, Roman
1982 *Six leçons sur le son et le sens*. Paris: Éditions de Minuit (series of lectures delivered in 1942!).

Karcevskij, Sergej
1929 "Du dualisme asymétrique du signe linguistique", in: *Travaux du cercle linguistique de Prague* **1** 88–92 [Translated by W. Steiner as "The Asymmetric Dualism of the Linguistic Sign", pp. 47–54 in P. Steiner (ed.), *The Prague School. Selected Writings, 1929–1946*. Austin: University of Texas Press 1975.]

Michałowski, Piotr
1989 *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.

Parpola, Simo
1993 "The Assyrian Tree of Life: Tracing the Origins of Jewish Monotheism and Greek Philosophy", in: *JNES* **52** 161–208.

Sollberger, E.
1967 "The Rulers of Lagaš", in: *JCS* **21** 279–91.
Van Dijk, J.J.A.
1953 *La sagesse suméro-accadienne*. Leiden: Brill.
Vanstiphout, H.L.J.
1984 "On the Sumerian Disputation between the Hoe and the Plough", in: *AuOr* **2** 239–51.
1987 "*Un carré d'amour sumérien*, or Ways to Win a Woman", in: *CRRAI* **33** 163–78.
1989 "Enmerkar's Invention of Writing Revisited", in: *Studies Sjöberg* 515–24.
1990 "The Mesopotamian Debate Poems. A General Presentation (Part I)", in: *AcSum* **12** 271–318.
1991 "Lore, Learning and Levity in the Sumerian Disputations: A Matter of Form, or Substance?" Pp. 23–46 in: H. Vanstiphout & G.J. Reinink (eds.), *Dispute Poems and Dialogues in the Ancient and Mediaeval Near East. Forms and Types of Literary Debates in Semitic and Related Literatures*. Leuven: Peeters.
1992a "The Mesopotamian Debate Poems. A General Presentation. Part II : The Subject", in: *AcSum* **14** 339–67.
1992b "The Banquet Scene in the Sumerian Debate Poems", in: *RO* **4** 37–63.
1993 " 'Verse Language' in Standard Sumerian Literature". Pp. 305–29 in: J.C. de Moor & W.G.E. Watson (eds.), *Verse in Ancient Near Eastern Prose*. Kevelaer/Neukirchen: Butzon & Bercker.
Waugh, Linda R.
1976 *Roman Jakobson's Science of Language*. Lisse: Peter de Ridder.

REPETITION AS A POETIC DEVICE IN AKKADIAN

M.E. Vogelzang

Introductory

Reading Akkadian poetry and enjoying it as 'poetry' is not easy. This is caused in particular by the cuneiform system of writing, which is syllabic and not alphabetic. In general, it is only after the transcription, transliteration and translation of the Akkadian (or Sumerian) cuneiform into a language more congenial to a modern reader that understanding and eventual appreciation of the poetic content can begin. And it is clear that in many cases appreciation of an Akkadian poem goes hand in hand with the quality of the translation *and* the language into which it has been translated. It must be emphasized, however, that our knowledge of Akkadian and Sumerian is a *passive* one. These ancient texts only exist in a written form; we will never be able to hear these poems spoken by a native speaker. The magic and music of the human voice is missing. Assyriology also lacks what little assistance can occasionally be afforded by the degree of help given by the sound of a more or less modern variant of the language concerned. This is possible, for example, with ancient Hebrew and ancient Greek texts. Homer, read by a native speaker of modern Greek, not only sounds 'much better', but such a reading also contains much more musical expression and emotional understanding than when read by a northern European, who has only an academic, passive knowledge of the language.

It should be pointed out that for poetry much more than for prose, vocal interpretation is of great importance. Rhythm and phonetic form: similarities, repetitions or sharp differences between the sounds of vowels and consonants, the special intonations during reading (aloud or in silence) which are imposed by emotion, form patterns which make an important contribution to the musical and emotional effect of poetry.[1] The musical sound effects of the spoken language are lacking in Akkadian, and the emotional effects of its poetry are therefore determined by the quality of the translation, the (modern) language, and also the typographical form in which that same poetry is rendered. Nor must we forget the indispensable involvement and openness of mind of the modern reader of ancient poetry. This same involvement, however, may sometimes turn out to have a negative effect, especially when non-Assyriologists translate texts already translated by Assyriologists.

As an example one may point to the regular appearance of new 'free' translations of the Gilgamesh epic. On the one hand, this may be called a positive development – why not – since it makes this beautiful epic accessible to a broader, or a more specifically interested public, as for instance when a studio project took "the brave decision to stage Gilgamesh, in a spirited translation by Robert Temple"[2] – in which

[1] See in general Finnegan 1977, esp. Chapter I, 1–29.

[2] R.Temple, He Who Saw Everything: A Verse Translation of *The Epic of Gilgamesh*; Cottesloe Theatre

"Gilgamesh makes a powerful first entry as a cross between a nightclub bouncer and a Tonton Macoute".[3] But apart from these positive effects new 'free' renderings may also constitute a negative development: the 'translation' becomes more and more 'beautiful'; by this I mean that it becomes more understandable for a modern reader, and more adapted to modern Western taste and general ideas about what "poetry" really is. But this does not always do justice to the specific literary and poetic features of the Akkadian (and Sumerian) language and culture itself. I cannot help thinking that the *content*, the literary *themes* of the original text, are brought more and more to the fore; and that the *original* poetic language and language forms are increasingly pushed into the background.

Therefore the topic of this meeting is important: the study of the original poetic language itself. For, as A.L. Oppenheim[4] once stated:

> The poetic impression is conveyed by a number of factors – the careful segmentation of the information into small meaning units, the elaborate echoing, repeating and counterpointing, of these units by means of the skeleton of the over-all verse arrangement. Texture is added through the selection of words that are subtly distinguished either through semantic nuances or through rare or artificial morphological features. Much still escapes us of the poetry inherent in certain modifications of the verbal stem, the choice of noun formation, the applications of a sophisticated synonymy which weights not only words but syllables.

Repetition forms one of the most marked features of poetry in general and of Akkadian poetry in particular. Extensive use of repetition in Akkadian narrative – in all of its various manifestations – shows it to be a favourite storytelling device.

It adds body to the narrative, heightens tension, allows the development of details and the introduction of subjective elements, sometimes in a very subtle way. It may bring two (or more) events together through which the second becomes more significant by means of its associations with the first; and it may in a very specific and poetical way work towards a climax through cumulations of identical expectations, only realised at the end, but already predicted at the beginning.[5]

In its broadest sense repetition is part of all poetry: "The collocations of line or stanza and refrain are based on their repeated recurrence; metre, rhythm or stylistic features like alliteration or parallelism are also based on repeated patterns of sound, syntax or meaning".[6] Metaphors, similes and rhetorical questions also tend to come in series. Evidently these too are forms of repetition. And sound repetitions, such as rhyme, alliteration, assonance and the repetition of verbs and nouns with more or less the same meaning, can also add an important element to poetry.

The study of repetition is of course more than just recording the fact that whole

---

(1993) ; Ferry 1993.

[3] See John Ray, *TLS*, May 28, 1993. In his review of Ferry 1993 John Ray also points out an important difficulty in dramatizing Gilgamesh, namely "the amount of repetition it contains. This technique is familiar in oral poetry; it gives the narrator a chance to show his skill while thinking of what comes next, and it involves the audience in a feeling of complicity. On the printed page, this repetition regains its power"(...).

[4] Oppenheim 1977: 251.

[5] Such as Prologue – Narrative – Epilogue . See, for instance *Anzu* (younger version).

[6] See Finnegan 1977: 90.

sentences, words or word pairs are being repeated. In addition to the how, the why is important. After all: "... poetic devices do not occur in isolation, but within the context of a poem. They therefore relate to each other and can often only be understood within the setting of another device or of the poem in whole or in part".[7]

It is well-known that magical texts too make great use of repetition.[8] To quote M. Boulton:

> In many folk-tales something has to be done or said three or seven times; religious rituals, which are more or less akin to primitive magic, depending on the degree of intellectual development, make great use of repetition with prayers for the various occasions of life, prayers-wheels, rosaries and repeated observances; and repetition plays a great part in the more primitive emotional parts of our lives. Magic spells, in very diverse cultures all over the world, are almost invariably very repetitive.[9]

Incidentally, I do not really see the need for the word 'primitive' in this passage or, even worse, the phrase 'depending on the degree of intellectual development', since these forms of magical repetition, at least to my mind, are universal and timeless. This is evident from the use of the rosary and the so-called *komboloi* in southern Europe, particularly in the Balkans and the *subḥa/misbaḥa* in the Near East.

Repetition and Poetry

Repetition, in its broadest sense, may evoke poetical feelings and keep the reader or listener on the right track, but it may also repel. The sometimes rigid carrying through of whole series of repetitions in Akkadian are often a blessing for the translator, but may also form a real obstacle to the stimulation of (*our*) poetic feelings, especially when reading longish texts.

A comparison between Old Babylonian texts and the later canonical versions often reveals that the later version is expanded, in that the tendency toward symmetry and repetition is more pronounced. These repetitions may be divided into two categories: one we might call *external* repetition and the other *internal* repetition. The first affects the structural and textual form of the narrative; the second is akin to the prosodic system, affecting the linguistic texture more than the structure. Of course such a division is rather theoretical, because both types of repetition are interwoven, and both affect the outcome of the whole story. Both contribute to the existence of the text as a poem.[10]

As to the actual *types* of repetition, we may discern three groups.

1 A first kind of repetition of the external or structural category heightens

---

[7] See Watson 1986: 273.

[8] Work on this feature of magical texts in our field has been done by Michałowski (1981) and Veldhuis (1990a, 1990b and 1993).

[9] See Boulton 1982: 89.

[10] In Ruth Finnegan's words: "Repetition – whether as parallelism, or in phrases called 'formulae' – has great literary and aesthetic effect. (...). The use of repetition in oral poetry is not just a utilitarian tool, but something which lies at the heart of all poetry. It is one of the main criteria by which we tend to distinguish poetry from prose, in both familiar and unfamiliar cultural traditions. It may well be that repetition gives peculiar pleasure and artistic effectiveness in oral poetry, but it is a common device of poetic expression. The 'aesthetics of regularity' can be found in all poetry, oral as well as written". (Finnegan 1977: 131).

tension and adds to the narrative body. This kind of repetition also seems to emphasize the importance of the repeated text.

2 A second type of repetition is used to show the difference between a first and a second occurrence of an event, or to provide a kind of *encore* of an action or scene performed earlier. Two events are thus brought together, and the second becomes more significant through its associations with the first.

3 A third type of repetition is the one that works toward a climax through cumulations of identical expectations, only realised at the end of the story, but already predicted at the beginning.[11]

Besides the *types* of repetition, we may also roughly discern *forms* of repetition and *devices* using repetition:

a *Forms*:
Sound repetition: rhyme, alliteration, assonance, word play.
Pure repetition: initial repetition, end repetition, immediate repetition, identical word pairs.

b *Devices*:
Refrain, envelope figure, and other related forms, such as keywords, chiasmus, symmetry and parallelism, word pairs.[12]

It is impossible to discuss all these forms or devices here in detail, but by means of some examples from well-preserved texts, I hope to present a more or less general overview of certain interesting forms and devices of repetition as they appear in Akkadian poetry. For besides the general patterning through repetition that underlies most of the devices there are some forms of repetition that deserve special mention.

As stated before, parallelism is an important structural device in poetry. It basically consists of a type of repetition (usually a binary pattern) in which one element is changed; the other, usually the syntactic frame itself, remains constant. One form of parallelism which is popular in Akkadian can be illustrated by the following two examples: one from a hymn to Ishtar[13] – and one from *Atraḫasīs* I, 70–73 (OB/NA):[14]

[1] *Ishtar hymn*

Sing of a **goddess**, most awe-inspiring goddess,
Let her be praised, mistress of **people**
greatest of the Igigi-gods.

Sing of **Ishtar**, most awe-inspiring goddess,
Let her be praised, mistress of **women**
greatest of the Igigi-gods.

[11] Examples of these three types of repetition can be found in the *Anzu* poem: see Ninurta's instructions to Adad and Ea's tactical advice to Ninurta, and compare with the nearly identical passages which describe Ninurta's reaction, and also the passage which contains the reward promised to the champion-to-be. See Vogelzang 1988: 202–224.

[12] See also Watson 1986: 273 ff.

[13] See Foster 1993: 14.

[14] See the edition by Lambert & Millard 1969.

[2] *Atraḫasīs*:

It was night, half-way through the watch,
The temple was surrounded, but **the god** did not know.

It was night, half-way through the watch,
Ekur was surrounded, but **Enlil** did not know.

The parallelism is obvious. Both examples show that the difference between parallelism and repetition is subtle and small; yet there is a difference: whereas *parallelism* generally implies the reformulation of a thought by means of different words, or better still by using more explanatory words, *repetition* generally means a literal repetition, or a statement with only very small changes.

A more complex example of parallelism can be found in the *Counsels of Wisdom*:

[3] Do not marry a **prostitute**, whose husbands are *legion*,
a ***temple*** **harlot** who is dedicated to a *god*,
a **courtesan** whose favours are *many*.
In your **trouble** she will *not support* you,
In your **dispute** she will be *a mocker*.[15]

Now parallelism can be discussed as a category on its own, but it cannot be divorced from the wider topic of repetition generally. It is, after all, a type of repetition. But I do not intend to discuss this form of repetition any further here. The two clear examples above will have to suffice.

Another popular type of repetition can be found in a Late Babylonian fragment of *Atraḫasīs*:[16]

[4] "Command that there be plague,
Let Namtar diminish their noise.
Let Disease, sickness, plague and pestilence,
Blow upon them like a tornado!"

They commanded, and there was plague,
Namtar diminished their noise.
Disease, sickness, plague and pestilence

[15] Lambert 1960 (= *BWL*): 102–03; ll. 72–76.

[16] Assyrian version, rev. iv, ll. 9–16; Lambert & Millard 1969: 106-107. Compare certain episodes in the Anzu story, f.i. tablet I (younger version), ll.171–179, in which Ninshiku (Ea) tells his plan to Anu and Dagan:

"Let them summon Belet-ili, the sister of the gods,
The sagacious one, the coun[sellor of] the gods, [her brothers],
Her supreme dignity let them proclaim in the as[sembly],
The gods must honor [her] in their assembly.
The plan that is in my heart, [I will tell] her!"

They summoned ..... etc.

Blew upon them like a tornado.

The short, indeed staccato, transition from the direct speech in the precative to the preterite in the telling illustrates the passage from instruction to enforcement.

On a first reading, this way of composing sounds rather dull, yet it does possess a certain poetic expression which only finds its full expression when the whole text is read, and not just a quotation, torn from its context, as it is presented here. It is the regularly maintained repetition of other fragments that brings about a certain rhythm which starts to sound familiar and thus may evoke a certain poetic feeling.

The two forms of repetition as mentioned before, viz. (a): sound repetition and direct repetition; and (b) devices using repetitions, can be illustrated by the following examples:

A nice example from group (a), the group that uses *initial* repetition, in which a series of two or more consecutive lines begin with the same word or phrase, can be found in *Atraḫasīs* II, ii 9–10:

[5] *ē taplaḫā ilīkun* "Do not reverence your gods,
ē tusalliā ištarkun Do not pray to your goddesses".

Note the negation *ē* and the opposition masculine vs. feminine.

Another example occurs in *Ishtar's Descent*: the five-fold initial repetition of *muruṣ* 'disease':[17]

[6] "Send out against her the sixty diseases [against] Ishtar:
Disease of the eyes to her [eyes],
Disease of the arms to her [arms],
Disease of the feet to her [feet],
Disease of the heart to her [heart],
Disease of the head [to her head],
To every part of her and to [...]".[18]

The same technique is used in the form of *end* repetition in *Erra* IV 104–111, where we have an eight-fold repetition of the refrain-like *tuštamīt* "You have put to death".[19]

[7] "O warrior Erra, the just you have put to death;
The unjust you have put to death.

---

[17] Text: *CT* **15**, 46: 69–75.

[18] See Watson 1986: 278, note 21: " ... this list has both an initial and a final total". The composer, quite understandably, seems to have thought it a bit too much of a good thing to mention all sixty of them.

[19] See Cagni 1969: 114–116.

The man who sinned against you you have put to death;
The man who did not sin against you you have put to death.

The *en*-priest who made *taklīmu*-offerings promptly
you have put to death;
The courtier who served the king you have put to death.

Old men on the porch you have put to death;
Youngs girls in their bedrooms you have put to death."

Notice here also the four-fold oppositions: just : unjust // sinner : pious // religious service : worldly service // old age : youth (tripled by male : female and by outside : inside!). This end repetition is also used more or less as a keyword, as death plays an important role in this epic. I will return to keywords later.

A nice example of *direct* repetition, where a word or phrase is used and repeated immediately afterwards, without a break, can be found in *Gilgamesh* XI, 21–22.[20]

[8]

kikkiš kikkiš	"Reed-wall, reed-wall!
igār igār	Wall! Wall!
kikkišu šimema	Reed-wall, listen!
igāru ḫissas	Wall, pay attention!"

This is a form of repetition reflecting stealth as well as haste and raises tension, especially when read aloud.

This *Gilgamesh* fragment, by the way, shows a striking contrast with the OB parallel, as used in *Atraḫasīs* III i, 20–21. There the effect is less dramatic, precisely because of the lack of repetition; and the result is much more straightforward and formal:

[9]

igāru šitammianni	"Wall, listen to me!
kikišu šuṣṣiri kala siqria	Reed-wall, observe all my words!"

Generally speaking, these forms of repetition are explained as follows:

(...) with particular reference to the oral aspect of poetry, repetition enables the audience to re-hear a verse which they may have missed through inattention or on account of interference ('noise'). Repetition also reduces the need for a poet to invent new material: it helps 'fill up' a poem. Repetition also reinforces the *structure* of a poem, and helps to link its components.[21]

These observations are more or less correct, but they remain technical. What is not mentioned is the poetic impact of this type of repetition. Poetic techniques serve a dual purpose: they do not only support the external poetic form, but also the internal poetic form.

[20] Also quoted by Watson 1986: 277, note 14.
[21] See Watson 1986: 278–279.

Concerning the second group (b), viz. the *devices* that use repetition, one observes a recurring phenomenon: the use of the so-called "envelope figure" or "frame", being the repetition of the same sentence or phrase at the beginning and/or the end of a certain stanza in a poem, a (sometimes large) section of a text, or of a poem as a whole. Part of the text becomes, as it were, framed between two identical sentences.[22] Here are two examples:

[10] *Erra* I 40b–44[23]

When Anu had decreed the destinies of all the Sebitti,
He gave them to Erra, warrior of the gods:

"*Let them march at your side*!
Whenever the noise of settled people becomes unbearable to you,
And you want to wreak destruction,
To kill off some black-headed people and lay low Shakkan's cattle,
These shall act as your fierce weapons,
Let them march at your side"!

The beginning and closure of Anu's speech are marked by the sentence in the precative: *lillikū idâka*, in order to provoke Erra into combat.

Another example is given by three passages in the *Shamash Hymn*.[24] This example is not as straightforward as the one mentioned above. These lines only form a frame or envelope figure when they are read directly after each other. All three rather short passages end with the line:

[11] *ṭabi eli šamaš balāṭa uttar* "He is pleasing to Shamash and he will prolong his life"!

which occurs at the lines 100, 106 and 119. The three passages in question contain remarks concerning honesty and justice, the comings and goings of individuals, judges and merchants. The threefold repetition of an identical line, by its somewhat solemn character, contributes to the poeticality of this rather difficult text. I will presently return to this example.

A very interesting technique is formed by the use of so-called *keywords*, in which a single noun – and this includes prepositions, particles, adverbs, etc. – or verb is repeated many times, and in this way dominates a whole text or part of it. Sometimes this is done in a very subtle way: instead of the same word, a series of synonyms is used and the poet shows his skill by trying to find noun or verbs with more or less the same meaning.

This is actually a fascinating way of *avoiding* strict repetition, and apart from the special poetic effect this may have had in ancient times, the modern reader is often

[22] The term was coined by Jeremy Black, who studied the effects of the technique on narrativity in the context of the orality debate (see Black 1992). Here the context is that of poeticality.
[23] See Cagni 1969: 62.
[24] See Lambert 1960 (= *BWL*): 121–138.

faced with translation problems when trying to do justice to the original text. A lot depends on the choice one makes from the dictionary. This will determine the poetic content of the text concerned. In addition we are faced with the subjective notion of "poetic content", as appears from the fact that no modern translation produces the same *poetic* result. The functions of keywords are clear: they express the most important theme of a poem or poetic text, and are responsible for its coherent structure. In addition, they often serve as catchwords which connect seperate verses or stanzas.

The tracing of these keywords is a highly rewarding business. Therefore I shall restrict myself to the discussion, in some detail, three examples.

A The first example is found in *Ludlul bēl Nēmeqi* and is formed by the first 22 lines of Tablet II.[25] In the introductory line, followed by the desperate exclamation *lemun lemunma* 'it is terrible, terrible!', the 'poet' looks back upon his life, and notices that nothing in his life has lead to anything. In these 7 lines, 3–9, the negation *ūl* is used 7 times:

[12.1] My ill luck has increased, and I do not find the right.
I called to my god, but he did not show his face.
I prayed to my goddess, but she did not raise her head.
The diviner with his inspection has not got to the root of the matter.
Nor has the dream priest with his libation elucidated my case.
I sought the favour of the *zaqīqu*-spirit, but he did not enlighten me;
And the incantation priest with his ritual did not appease the divine wrath against me.

Lines 10 and 11 again form a desperate exclamation:

[12.2] What strange conditions everywhere!
When I look behind, there is persecution, trouble!"

In lines 12–20 the negation *lā* is also used seven times, but not in lines 15–17. There use is made of the subtle technique I mentioned above: to avoid exact repetition, use is made of verbs with more or less the same meaning with the intention of avoiding the negative particle. Whether this has something to do with the maintaining of the number 7 or just poetical feeling for harmony, I do not know. The verbs used in lines 15–17 have more or less the same negative meaning, so that the negative particle is not needed: *naparkû*, *baṭālu*, *šêṭu*, *nadû*, *mêšu*.

Lines 21–22 end with the bitter remark:

[12.3] Like one who has grown 'torpid' and forgotten his lord,
Has frivolously sworn a solemn oath by his god, (like such a one) do I appear (*anāku amšal*)!

We can see here that the first 22 lines are ingeniously composed. The lines 1–2 / 10–11 / 21–22 form a *frame*, not by way of a repeated line or stanza (remember the example from *Erra* mentioned earlier: *lillikū idâka*), but formed by the poetic *content*. The manner in which the negative particle has found its position in the written text as we now have it is also interesting. It undoubtedly had an impact on the eventual oral performance.

---

[25] See Lambert 1960 (=*BWL*): 38–39.

The first twenty-two lines of *Ludlul* show how interesting the discovery of certain keywords can be. Because when we repeatedly read and review this passage, something else emerges, which is related to the internal and external form. In a way the form and content of this poetic episode does ring a bell: textual episodes which also end with the word *anāku(ma)*. There are texts which do not end with the exact concluding words *anākuma amšal*, but conclude in a positive way: such and such a person "I am" ..... *anāku(ma)*! In the second millennium – the Prologue and Epilogue of the *Codex Hammurabi* come to mind – and even more so in the New Babylonian and New Assyrian period, royal inscriptions with self-presentations of kings often start with a more or less elaborate enumeration of the evidently positive characteristics of a king and are introduced by: "I am ..... so and so, I did this and this.....";
especially in the first millennium they concluded with: ... *anāku(ma)*: "such and such a person... I am". These 'characteristics' are usually expressed by:

1. Purely nominal forms: "king of...; priest so and so of...; servant of ...".
2. Adjectives: "strong, mighty, loyal, pious ..."
3. Stative/participial forms: "who constantly cares for ..., who looks after ..., who is taking care of the rites of god so and so, who rebuilds ...", etc.

In the present passage of *Ludlul*, the text ends with the remark: ... *anāku amšal*: "(such and such a person) I resemble!"; but here this is to be taken in the negative way: '*I am like* a person who did *not* do all these positive things'!

And indeed, after this the text continues with the rather frustrated complaint:

[12.4] But I *did* pay attention to supplication and prayer,
To me prayer was discretion, sacrifice my rule!
The day for reverencing the god was a joy to my heart;
The day of the goddess's procession was profit and gain.
The king's prayer – that was my joy!
And the accompanying music became a delight for me.
I instructed my land to keep the god's rites,
And provoked my people to value the goddess's name.
I made praise for the king like a god's,
And taught the populace reverence for the palace.

The passage ends with the sigh:

[12.5] I wish I knew that these things were pleasing to one's gods![26]

This repetitive, literary internal and external form can be found, in a beautifully elaborate way, in the *Gula Hymn of Bulluṭsa-rabi*[27] which, like the *Shamash Hymn*, counts 200 lines. The hymn is composed in several alternating sections and shows a clear harmony and rhythm in content and textual form. In the first four sections of 34 lines, Gula, through the voice of the poet, praises herself and her husband Ninurta. These four sections are divided into eight lines for herself, then nine lines for Ninurta,

[26] Or should we read: 'I wish I knew what things are pleasing to one's gods!'?
[27] See Lambert 1967.

then eight for herself, and so on. From then on, the self-laudatory sections all end with *anākuma*, eight times altogether, and in all the *anākuma* sentences she refers to herself by one of her divine names. Thanks to a study by M. Barré[28] we now know that "the concept of 'healing' stands out as the dominant motif of lines 79–83, which form a self-contained subsection over against lines 84–87. The key word in lines 79–87 is 'to heal' (*balāṭu*)".

B A second example can be found in a passage from the *Shamash Hymn*:[29] in lines 132–148 abundant use is made of the verb *maḫāru*, which means: 'to receive, confront'. Not only the verb, but also the prepositional form "*ina maḫrīka*" 'before you' is used. The use of this verb expresses the important role of the sun god Shamash as a righteous judge, to whom earthly civilians, judges and merchants can appeal, realizing that the sun god sees everything with his shining light during his eternal journey through the upper and the nether world.

The repetition of this lexical item is reinforced by both the symmetry and the asymmetry of its position.[30] Note also the positioning of *ūl* and *lā* in the *Ludlul* fragment already mentioned: twice at the end (134 / 136), twice at the beginning; followed by twice at the end (142 / 144) and twice in the middle.[31]

The whole of the *Shamash Hymn* turns out to be a goldmine when one is searching for forms of general patterning by repetition. Complete lines are repeated, or parts of lines; there are puns, often very subtle; and the text shows a marked tendency to avoid exact syntactic repetition. I cannot enter into great detail here, but I will give a few examples, just to illustrate how thoughtfully this hymn been composed.
First there are the lines 101–106,[32] worth giving in Akkadian.

[13.1] *da-a-a-na muš-ta-lum šá di-in me-šá-ri i-di-nu*
ú-gam-mar ēkallu šu-bat rubêmeš mu-šab-šú

na-din kaspa a-na šid-di ḫab-bi-lu mi-na-a ut-tar
uš-ta-kaz-zab a-na né-me-li-ma ú-ḫal-laq kīsa

na-din kas-pa a-na šid-di rūqūti mu-ter ištēn šiqla a-na še- x - x
ṭa-a-bi eli ^{d}*šamaš balāṭa ut-[tar]*

Lines 101–102 show how the poet plays with sound repetitions: *da-a-a-na*, *di-in* and

---

[28] See Barré 1981.
[29] Lambert 1960 (=*BWL*): 126–138.
[30] See Reiner 1985: 75.
[31] Another example: the same tendency to avoid exact syntactical repetition is present in Belet-ili's speech in the Neo-Assyrian mss. L/M from Sultantepe, ll.7–11 (representing a deviant *Anzu* story): Short lines alternate with long ones. The verbs change their position in every line, almost at any cost. Compare lines 1-3; the first line opens with the verb (*bí-riq*), the second line ends with it (*šu-ṣi*), and the third line has it in the middle (*de-ki*). This deliberate changing of the position of the verb results in a line like line 3: *gu-um-mur-ta de-ki qa-bal-ka* "Mobilize your entire battle-array!" The same procedure for creating the precatives can be seen in ll.7–11: middle / end / begin / end / middle. For the manuscripts see Gurney & Finkelstein 1957: 51/91A+37 and 52/187. See also Vogelzang 1988: 225–234 and Wiggermann 1982: 418–425.
[32] See footnote 26.

i-di-nu, and also plays semantically with the words *ēkallu* and *rubû*. In lines 103–106 we see that the first halves of lines 103 and 105 are repeated; there is sound play with *uttar*, *muter*, *uttar*; and perhaps also with *mina* as an interrogative particle and a noun as well. See *mīnu* = 'what, why?', but also 'place, number'; *šiqlu* = 'shekel, weight of metal', but also 'measure of height'. Thus the content of this fragment refers in a subtle way to the following moralistic thought: "He who acts honestly, will attain a deserved and high-ranking place in society". This positive behaviour will be "pleasing to Shamash, and he will prolong his life!" (l.106): *ṭa-a-bi eli* ^{d}*šamaš balāṭa ut-[tar].*

C Lastly, the reader is invited to look at the lines 107–119 of the same hymn:

ṣa-bit ^{giš}*zi-ba-[ni-ti e-piš ṣ]i-lip-ti*
muš-te-nu-ú [a-b]a-an ki-i-su ⌜*ú*⌝*-x x (x) [ú]-šap-pal*
uš-ta-kaz-za-ab a-na né-me-li-im-ma ú-hal-l[aq ki-i-sa] (=l. 104).
šá ki-ni ṣa-bit ^{giš}*zi-ba-ni-ti ma-'-d[a ...]*
mim-ma šum-šu ma-'-d[i] qi-šá-áš-šu [...]

ṣa-bit sūti e-piš ṣi-l[íp-ti]
na-din ši-qa-a-ti a-na bi-ri-i mu-šad-din at-ra

ina **la** u_4*-me-*⌜*šú*⌝ *[a]r-rat niši*^{meš} *i-kaš-šad-su*
ina **la** *a-dan-ni-šú* ⌜*i*⌝*-šá-al i-raš-ši bil-ta*

makkūr-šú **ul** *i-be-el apal-šú*
a-na bīti-šú **ul** *ir-ru-bu [š]u-nu aḫḫu*^{meš}*-šú*

um-ma-ni ki-nu na-din še-em i -na [kab-ri]m pān ú-šat-tar dum-qu
ṭa-a-ab eli ^{d}*šamaš balāṭa ut-tar!*

The merchant who [practises] trickery as he holds the balances,
Who uses two sets of weights, thus lowering the ...,
He is disappointed in the matter of profit and loses [his capital.]

The honest merchant who holds the balances [and gives] good weight -
Everything is presented to him in good measure [...]

The merchant who practices trickery as he holds the corn measure,
Who weighs out loans (or corn) by the minimum standard, but requires
the larger quantity in repayment,

The curse of the people will overtake him before his time,
If he demanded repayment before the agreed date, there will be guilt upon him.

His heir will not assume control of his property,
Nor will his brothers take over his estate.

The honest merchant who weighs out loans (of corn) by the
maximum standard, thus multiplying kindness,
He is pleasing to Shamas, and he will prolong his life.

Look at the way in which lines 107–113 are composed, the way in which ***ṣābit*** is repeated and syntactically placed; at the way in which parts of the sentences are repeated and how the poet plays with the negative particle in lines 114–117; with the words *ūmešu* and *adannišu* – with *makkūršu* and *bītišu*; with *ibēl* and *irrubū*, *apalšu* and *aḫḫūšu*. The passage again ends with the line: "He is pleasing to Shamash and he will prolong his life!" (119).

Note finally also the following features in the same composition:

(a) Repetitions in lines 27–30:

te-te-ni-ti-iq gi-na-a ***šá-ma-mi***
[š]u-um-dul-ta ***er-ṣe-tu ta-ba-'a*** u_4***-me-šam***

mīl tâmti ḫur-sa-a-ni ***er-ṣe-ta šá-ma-mi***
ki-i gán *x si* ***gi-na-a ta-ba-'a*** u_4***-mi-šam***

You keep crossing the sky faithfully;
You pass over the wide earth every day.

Over high seas, mountains, earth and sky;
Like ... you pass faithfully every day".

(b) Assonance in lines 43–44:

⌜a⌝-na šid-di šá la i-di ni-su-ti u bi-ri la ma-n[u-ti] <***i***>
^{d}*šamaš dal-pa-ta šá ur-ra tal-li-ka u mu-šá ta-saḫ-r[a]* <***a***>

To unknown distant regions and for uncounted leagues
You press on, Shamash, going by day and returning by night.

(c) Puns in lines 55–56:

xxx šá rik-sa-a-ti kit-mu-sa ma-ḫar-ka
[i-na ma]ḫ-ri-ka kit-mu-su rag-gu u ke-e-num

Those who make sworn treaties are on their knees before you;
Before you on their knees are the wicked and the just alike.

These examples could easily be multiplied tenfold.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude with the following remarks. As I have tried to explain above, the concept of poetry turns out to be a relative one, depending on a combination of

stylistic elements, which need not all necessarily and invariably be present at the same time. What we as Assyriologists must look for in the first place, in my opinion at least, is not one single absolute criterion, but a range of stylistic and formal attributes – or poetic features in the Akkadian and Sumerian languages – such as heightened language, metaphorical expression, musical form or accompaniment, structural repetition (like the recurrence of stanzas, lines or refrains, key words), prosodic features like metre, alliteration; parallelism, etc. Diligently counting adjectives and sound-patterns, and detecting all of these poetical features is one thing; talking about the poetic impact, the *poetic language*, is quite another. It remains an interesting question why some poetic texts are more attractive, more appealing to us than others.[33] Is it caused by the attractiveness of the story as such, the content, the literary themes, which in many cases are universal or nearly so; or is it due to the literary techniques which I have tried to illustrate with a few examples? Or may it be that the narrative devices used to compose or to structure the text and which are therefore responsible for the final literary work of art infuse, *by themselves*, an otherwise anodyne 'message' with real interest and importance?[34] Or is it all of these together, in changing combinations?

Even after a purposeful search for repetition in its broadest sense, and after some general technical remarks about how skillfully texts like *Ludlul bēl Nēmeqi*, the *Shamash Hymn*, *Atraḫasīs*, the epic of *Erra*, *Ishtar's Descent* and of course *Gilgamesh*, all differing from each other in form and content, are composed, the fundamental problem of dealing with a language of which we only possess passive knowledge, for which we lack the emotional and musical sound of the active language, so important for poetry in general, will always remain.

[33] See Vogelzang, 1990.

[34] *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and even *Romeo and Julia*, if pared down to the so-called 'pure' *story* level, are of no great interest to anybody. In each case the 'story' can be told in very few sentences.

REFERENCES

Barré, Michael L.
1981 "Bulluṭsa-rabi's Hymn to Gula and Hosea 6:1–2", in: *Or NS* **50** 241–45.

Black, Jeremy
1992 "Some Structural Features of Sumerian Narrative Poetry". Pp. 71–101 in: M.E. Vogelzang & H. Vanstiphout (eds.), *Mesopotamian Epic Literature. Oral or Aural?* Lewiston etc.: Edwin Mellen.

Boulton, Marjorie
1982 *The Anatomy of Poetry*, (rev.ed. [or. ed.1953]) London.

Cagni, Luigi
1969 *L'epopea di Erra* (*Studi Semitici* **34**), Napoli.

Ferry, David
1993 *Gilgamesh: A New Rendering into English verse*. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Bloodaxe.

Finnegan, Ruth
1977 *Oral Poetry: Its nature, significance and social context*. Cambridge UP.

Foster, Benjamin R.
1993 *Before the Muses. An Anthology of Akkadian Literature*. Bethesda, MD: CDL Press. (2 vols.)

Gurney, Oliver R. & J.J. Finkelstein
1957 *The Sultantepe Tablets I*. London: British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara.

Lambert, Wilfred G.
1960 *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
1967 "The Gula Hymn of Bulluṭsa-rabi", in: *Or NS* **36** 105–132.

Lambert, Wilfred G. & A.R.Millard
1969 *Atraḫasīs: The Babylonian Story of the Flood*. Oxford UP.

Michałowski, Piotr
1981 "Carminative Magic: Towards an Understanding of Sumerian Poetics", in: *ZA* **71**: 1–18.

Oppenheim, A. Leo
1977 *Ancient Mesopotamia. Portrait of a Dead Civilization*. Chicago UP.

Reiner, Erica
1985 *Your Thwarts in Pieces, Your Mooring Rope Cut: Poetry from Babylonia and Assyria*. Michigan UP.

Veldhuis, Niek
1990a "The Heart Grass and Related Matters", in: *OLP* **21** 27–44.
1990b *A Cow of Sîn*. Groningen: Styx Publications.
1993 "The Fly, the Worm, and the Chain. Old Babylonian Chain Incantations", in: *OLP* **24** 41–64.

Vogelzang, Marianna E.
1988 *Bin Šar Dadmē, Edition and Analysis of the Akkadian Anzu Poem* (diss.) Groningen: Styx Publications.

1990 "Patterns Introducing Speech in Akkadian Literary Texts", in: *JCS* **42/1** 50–70.

Watson, Wilfred G.E.
1986 *Classical Hebrew Poetry : a Guide to its Techniques* (2nd ed), Sheffield.

Wiggermann, Franz A.M.
1982 "On *Bin Šar Dadmē*, the Anzu-myth", in: G.van Driel (et.al. eds.), *Zikir Šumim* (= *Studies Kraus*). Leiden: Brill.

SYMBOLIC LANGUAGE IN AKKADIAN NARRATIVE POETRY: THE METAPHORICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POETICAL IMAGES AND THE REAL WORLD

Joan Goodnick Westenholz

īnīma ṣillum piti katimti
"What I see is (but) shadow,
expose what is hidden from me!
Legend of Etana,
Old Babylonian version MLC 1363 vi 8

This investigation into the subject of symbolic language in Akkadian literature will begin with a description of broad goals, defining terms and tools of investigation. It will then outline some problems of metaphorical identification and analyze certain simple metaphors and complex multilayered metaphors.

First, whether we approach this problem from the semiological and linguistic point of view, where we speak of signs, signification, signified and signifier, or from the point of view of the literary critic, where we deal with similes, metaphors, metonymy, etc., the investigator of poetic diction must analyze these ancient rhetorical devices. These include "figures of speech," which may be defined as words and expressions used in ways that are out of the ordinary, and "figures of thought" – words and expressions used in different senses from those which are thought to properly belong to them. In this context, it is important to note that some figures of speech belong to general language use and are not particular to literature.[1]

Our goal is thus to understand figurative language. The usual means of reaching this goal, however, actually constitute obstacles, in the shape of varied terminologies, usually of a binary character.[2] Certain theoreticians of metaphor also object to reducing metaphorical processes to the alternation between two modalities of association either by contiguity or by similarity.[3] I have thus used the term "symbolic language" in the title of this article in order to convey the generic human trait. As has been observed from the anthropological perspective, "Man is a cultural being, which in essence means that he is a symbol-using animal. Indeed, his capacity to symbolize is often proposed as a criterion placing him apart from the beasts. Language may be the most important kind of symbolization."[4] Symbols can be of two kinds: conventional but wholly arbitrary, where the symbol is culturally conditioned, or individual and formed

[1] For a study of colloquial tropes, cf. Wilcke 1987.
[2] Examples of such binary oppositions include symbol/sign = metaphor/metonymy = paradigmatic association/syntagmatic chain, cf. Jakobson & Halle 1956: Chapter V: "The Metaphorical and Metonymic Poles" 76–82, on the universality of this binary opposition. Of the other binary appoaches, the most influential has been Richards' tenor/vehicle (see Richards 1936).
[3] Ricœur 1978a: 144.
[4] Lessa & Vogt 1979:90.

by association, in which case they are arbitrary but not conventional. In traditional societies, such as that of Mesopotamia, it is difficult to differentiate between the two kinds of symbol. Thus, the holistic approach which includes all types of imagery without distinction seems most suitable. The aim of this investigation is to present a systematic descriptive account of symbolic language in Akkadian literature. In this analysis, I found it helpful to systematize the various predication types in algebraic formulation.[5] The first, and as far as I know the only, Assyriologist to attempt a formal typology of Akkadian expressions of similitude and who also employed an algebraic formulation was A. Schott. In his 1926 monograph on the subject,[6] Schott provided fourteen formulations, combining syntactic and semantic indicators. In the following endeavour, however, the semantic structure is solely under scrutiny in a heuristic typology which externalizes and objectifies the figurative process.

[1] *Congruence* : A ~ B, signifying A is (like) B
This formula represents a one-to-one comparison in which an assertion of similarity[7] is made.
(a) concrete image to concrete image

isinna ippušū ki-i (var. *ki-ma*) *ūmi akītimma* "they made a festival like that of the New Year's Day" [*Gilgameš Epic* XI 74].
(b) abstract quality to concrete image

An abstraction such as fear or terror can be likened to garments – *naḫlapti apluḫti pulḫāti ḫalip* "(Marduk) is enveloped in an armoured garment of fear" [*Enūma eliš* IV 57] – Marduk is surrounded with awe-inspiring terror as if he were dressed in a garment. This image occurs also without the explicit mention of the garment: *pulḫāti ušalbišma* "she (Tiamat) clothed (the terrible ušumgallu's) in fear" [*Enūma eliš* III 27].[8]
(c) A likened to some aspect of B

ša šāri lemni kīma iṣṣūri akassâ idāšu "I shall bind the arms of the evil wind like (those of) a bird" [*Erra* I 187]; note the personification of wind.

The predication can be not only nominal but also verbal: *ikṣuṣ kīma ūmim* "he (Anzû) gnashed (his teeth) like an *ūmu*-demon (gnashes his teeth)" [OB *Anzû* Aa 82].

---

[5] I realize that metaphor has been considered a non-logical mode of connection and that it should thus be impossible to formulate. Certain theoreticians hold that metaphor is not a rhetorical device but rather a mode of apprehension, a means of perceiving and expressing moral truths radically different from that of prose. Metaphorical language would then occur when widely disparate and hitherto unconnected elements become unified in a poem "for the sake of the effects upon attitude and impulse which spring from their collocation and from the combinations which the mind then establishes between them. There are few metaphors whose effect, if carefully examined, can be traced to the logical relations involved" (Richards 1952: 240). Following the Aristotelian view that the language of poetry is distinct from the language of logic and rhetoric and that the difference is largely a matter of metaphor, certain modern critics continue to maintain that metaphor marks off the poetic mode of vision from the logical mode (Warnke 1974:490).

[6] Schott 1926: 3–8; see also Buccellati 1976, who limited himself to a syntactical study of phrases or clauses introduced by *kī* and *kīma*.

[7] The similarity is found in the general combination or association of ideas, pictures, moods or sensations – "cold" = ice, wind, polar bear. When we wish to express the idea of thickness forcefully, we search about in our minds for something which we associate with thickness and we say, perhaps, that the fog is so thick that we could cut it with a knife. Poetry, however, uses similes with more care and with more imagination, attempting to reveal a new or unexpected resemblance between objects or ideas that seem dissimilar.

[8] See further Waldman 1989.

The metaphorical relationship in this type of predication can be expressed as simile or metaphor, explicit or implicit: *bēlī* / ^{d}*Enlil bīnu būnūka* "My lord/Enlil, your face is (pale? like) a tamarisk" [*Atra-ḫasīs* I 93, 95], where a metaphorical comparison is implied rather than stated.

[2] *Analogy*: A : X :: B : Y, signifying A is as B = A is [to X] as B is [to Y]

This predication expresses an analogical relationship. At times the metaphorical relationship is explicit: *āšib Bābili šunūti šunu iṣṣūrumma arrašunu attāma* "the inhabitants of Babylon – they the bird, you their decoy" [*Erra* IV 18] = the inhabitants of Babylon : Erra :: bird : decoy, which means that the innocent inhabitants of Babylon are entrapped by Erra as a bird is captured by the use of a decoy. At times the metaphorical relationship is implicit: *šūt kīma kakkabī ugari saḫpū* "those who like the stars covered the plain" which encodes "those warriors covered the plain like the stars fill the sky" [*Legends of the Kings of Akkade* 6:55f.] = warriors : plain :: stars : sky, which describes the warriors overwhelming the field (of battle) as the stars covering the night sky.

Unfortunately, this type of analogic figure occasionally results in a catachrestic metaphor: *[u]šaznan i-nakrāti tuqmāta ša ki nablī* "I (Ishtar) let the battles which are like flames rain down on enemy (land)s" [*VAS* **10** 213:5 (OB Hymn of Ishtar)]. This tripartite analogic relationship is senseless – rain : nourish earth :: flames : destroy :: battle : enemy lands. What has happened here is that *zanānu* "raining down" has become a frozen figurative trope; any object, both concrete[9] and abstract, can rain down.

[3] *Identity* : A = B, signifying A is B

This predication renders a momentary or hypothetical identity in which it is postulated that no intrinsic prior relationship existed between A and B: *Išum daltumma edil panuššun* "Išum was a door bolted in their (the Sebettu's) face" [*Erra* I 27]. In this verse, Išum is not literally a door but functions as one. Išum is restraining the Sebettu from fighting not by literal incarceration but simply by his command.[10] This type of relationship has been termed parataxis, the juxtaposition of two terms. Note that A and B belong in different semantic fields.

One peculiarity of parataxis is transference of traits from A, whom they rightfully characterize, to B to whom they are inapplicable. For example, *palsākim ki šamaš nišū nūriški* "people look at your light as to that of the sun" [*VAS* **10** 215:24 (Hymn to Nanaya)], even though there is no light emanating from Nanaya.

[4] *Semantic Transformation* : A → B / (X), signifying A may be substituted by B within a certain semantic field.

This predication includes metonymy, in which one word is substituted for another with which it stands in close relationship. This may also be characterized as association by contiguity, as in synecdoche where the part can stand for the whole.[11]

---

[9] Cf. Millard 1987.

[10] Lambert 1980.

[11] This is the classical transference expounded by Aristotle in the *Poetics* 1457b: genus to species, species to genus, and vice versa.

An example is *emqam birkim šūtātû qurdam* "The skilled-of-knee find each other in heroism" [*Legends of the Kings of Akkade* 6:53f.]; the skilled-of-knee substituting for warrior. The same semantic field is an optional variable,[12] and thus expressions are created where B can only be understood literally, while its metaphorical intent and substitutional significance (A) remain unknown: *namzaq ilāni rabûti ana alākīja u zaqīqīja ul iddinamma* "the 'Latch-hook' of the great gods did not give me permission for my going and my demonical onrush" [*Legends of the Kings of Akkade* 22:78, cf. l. 127].

Other specific sub-types of imagery represented by this predication are personification and allegory. An example of the former might be: *[ki]bru dannu ṣulūl ummānīšu* "the strong embankment, protection of his troops" (said of Gilgamesh) [*Gilgameš Epic* I i 31]. An allegorical tale of an Assyrian king fighting his enemies in the guise of a hunter dealing with an insolent pack of wild asses is found in *LKA* 62.

Having explained the processes of symbolic language which result in figurative discourse, we must now face the problems of identification of figurative discourse encoded in Akkadian poetry. The first problem of the identification involves grammar, or morphemic identification.

Morphemes, the minimal meaningful unit of language, can mark explicit similes and metaphors. Free unbound prepositions such as *ki*,[13] *kī*, *kīma*, as well as bound affixed postpositions such as *-āni*,[14] *-iš*,[15] *-āniš*, indicate that a comparison or association is being made. In Old Babylonian poetry, when similes are employed in close

[12] Note also that "The borderlines between the different figurae are quite often hard to establish in idioms as soon as they develop the tendency to emancipate themselves from their original semantic field" (Wilcke 1987: 86).

[13] *ki* written with a short i is found commonly in Old Babylonian poetry: *ki* ^{d}*šamaš* [*VAS* **10** 215:24 (OB Hymn to Nanaja for Samsuiluna), *Legends of the Kings of Akkade* 14 iii 13], *ki nannarim* [*VAS* **10** 215: 52 (OB Hymn to Nanaya for Samsuiluna)], *ki ūmi* [*CT* **15** 4 ii 10 (OB Hymn to Adad)], *ki ūmi* [Genouillac *Kich* B 472 ii 4′, 6′ (love poem)], *ki li'im* [*Legends of the Kings of Akkade* 14 vi 12], *ki qadmim* [ibid. vii 5 and passim], *ki nablī* [*VAS* **10** 213: 5 (OB Hymn of Ishtar)], *ki libši* [VAS **10** 214 vi 6 (OB Hymn of Agušaya)]. A formal distinction between *ki* as preposition and *kī* as conjunction in the earlier periods is probable, assuming that the former was a bound/shortened form of the preposition *kīma*. The diachronic distribution of *kī* and *kīma* has been noted, in which the earlier preference was *kīma*; only later were expressions of similitude also constructed with *kī*, cf. Schott 1926: 26ff.

[14] The argument for this morpheme is given by Farber 1982, where he based his conclusion on the hypothesis that the use of both markers *-āni* and *-iš* is redundant and not to be expected at this period, in addition to three possible examples of the postposition *-āni* indicating simile. However, since his article was published, new evidence has come to light. In reference to his first example, the evidence for the date of the "OB" Anzû tablets is now questionable, and they appear to be Middle or Neo-Babylonian in date (Vogelzang1988: 111–118). Thus the example *gallāni* cannot be used with confidence as an example of an Old Babylonian form. In reference to Farber's second example *rīmāni* (now treated together with other manuscripts in Whiting 1985, with discussion of this point on p.182), another Old Babylonian manuscript of the text is now known, in which *-āniš* definitely occurs (Wilcke 1985: 202: lls. 86,87 and note to text 208), which lends more credence to such a restoration in the more broken texts. In addition, new testimony to this morpheme has recently appeared: *arḫāni ša išbû li'āni* "like a cow which roared like a bull" (Shaffer 1993: 209 lls. 1,5). On the other hand, note the possible appearance of *-ān* with *-iš* in: *-ašan/-iššan*; see Lambert 1989: 335 ad l.100.

[15] As has been repeatedly remarked, there is no definite evidence that the morpheme *-iš* occurs in comparative constructions in Old Babylonian literary texts, in accord with von Soden in *GAG* §67c, with the exception of constructions in combination with the verb *ewû*. Here the verb carries the semantic component of the comparative rather than the terminative adverbial postposition; cf. the description of the diachronic distribution of this morpheme by Groneberg 1987:161f. Another morphemic anomaly is the use of the pronominal *-šu* in place of *-iš*: *īwi daddaršu* "... has become like stinkwort," [Lambert 1987: 190:29].

proximity, the choice of the particular morpheme is varied. For example, the process of the humanization of Enkidu is described as: *šamnam iptašašma awēliš iwi ilbaš libšam kīma muti ibašši* "He anointed his body with oil, he turned human, he put on clothing, became as a man" [*Gilgameš Epic* P iii 24–27].

This variety includes alternating verses of unmarked and marked metaphors, as in the following:

birbirrūka girri rigimka addum
kīma nēšimmi naḫīrim tabašši
bašmummi pīka Anzum ṣuprāka

Your radiance is fire, your voice is the thunderstorm.
You are as a raging lion.
Your mouth is (that) of the Venomous Viper, your nails are (those of) the Anzû.

[*Legends of the Kings of Akkade* 12 v 1–3]

This example may reflect incremental parallelism. The first comparison could be a simple unmarked [1] comparison of concrete image to concrete image: the life-force of Naram-Sin is considered as consuming as fire, his battle cry as loud as a thunderstorm. On the other hand, it may be a mythic [3] identification of Naram-Sin with Girra and Adad, the gods manifested in these phenomena. These similes appear in other literary texts. The fire image usually refers to the mouth, cf. ka-zu giš-bar-re ḫuš-a [CBS 4503+:21′ (prayer for Hammurabi)];[16] *pīšu* ^{d}BIL.GI-*ma* [*Gilgameš Epic* Y v 17 (speaking of Huwawa)]. However, Naram-Sin's mouth is compared to that of the Venomous Viper. On the other hand, his voice is compared to that of the god of the thunderstorm: $šeg_x$-gi_4-a-ni ^{d}Iškur-gin_7 [*Innin-šagura* l. 52],[17] za-pa-ág-zu ^{d}Iškur [CBS 4503+:20′ (prayer for Hammurabi)].[18] The second line contains an explicitly marked comparison. Naram-Sin is associated with the raging lion, the predator who is the archetypical enemy of civilized life and represents uncontrolled might. The third line sets up an unmarked mythic [4] metonymic(?) relationship in which Franz Wiggermann's diabolical creatures appear: the Venomous Viper and the Lion-headed eagle Anzû. The latter's infamous nails rent the heavens open in *Atra-ḫasīs*.[19] These similes paint a terrifying picture: a combination of the Viper's venom-laden mouth with protruding tongue and the talons of the monstrous Lion-headed eagle.[20]

If the verse is unmarked, it is not obvious whether or not there is any metaphorical relationship expressed. The lack of morphological marking in the implicit identity can create problems of interpretation. Implicit morphological relationships commonly appear as predicative nominatives: *bēlī attāma lū labbu* "My lord, verily you are a lion." [*Legends of the Kings of Akkade* 12 v 18]; *mimma ša īteneppušu šārumma*

---

[16] Sjöberg 1972: 61.
[17] Sjöberg 1975: 182.
[18] Sjöberg 1972: 61.
[19] III iii 7ff., late version p. 124 rev. 16–7.
[20] For the identification of the *bašmu*-snake as the Venomous Horned Viper, see Wiggermann 1992: discussion pp. 166ff. and illustration p. 186: fig. 2; Black & Green 1992: 168. For the latest discussion of Anzû, see Wiggermann 1992: discussion 159ff. and illustration 187: fig. 11; also Black & Green 1992: 107f.

"anything which he does is wind" (i. e.,worthless[21]) [*Gilgameš Epic* Y iv 8].

A clear example of the cognitive problems caused by a metaphor is one of the cruxes of Akkadian narrative literature – the first line of *Atra-ḫasīs* : *inūma ilū awīlum* [*Atra-ḫasīs* I 1 OB]. As Moran recently stated: "There is general, if not universal, agreement that the poet refers to the gods doing the work that later was to be man's, but for reasons that escape us most interpreters choke at what seems an obvious metaphor."[22] He had first suggested the metaphorical interpretation in 1971[23] and had translated "When (some) gods were mankind."

A review of the solutions proposed and interpretations offered by other scholars illuminates the multifarious problems in understanding Akkadian metaphor. In his first treatment in 1969,[24] Lambert held that the verse should be understood as the beginning of a verbal subordinate clause introduced by *inūma* and ending with *izbilū šupšikka*. It should thus be translated "When the gods like men (bore the work)" because, as he states, "*a-wi-lum* has the locative *-um* with the meaning of the comparative *-iš* ... These are the first examples to be noted of comparative *-um*, but they need cause no difficulty as *-um* and *-iš* interchange freely before suffixes, so it is fully conceivable that they might do the same without suffixes also." He found supporting evidence for this *ad hoc* theory in a late copy bearing an Assyrian colophon with the library stamp of Ashurbanipal, with the title of the composition given as: *inūma ilū* ^{MEŠ}*kī (ki-i) amīli*.[25] As Lambert states: "The Assyrian recension commonly replaces obscure words with better known ones and there is every reason therefore to hold that *kī amīli* was intended as a clarification of the Old Babylonian *awīlum*."[26] We all agree with that statement, but not with the conclusion that the original first line was also a morphemically marked comparative. In discussing this verse, Brigitte Groneberg convincingly argued that a noun may be used in the nominative to express comparison as a semantic interpretation rather than a morphological category.[27] Consequently, the unmarked nominative could express a type [1] comparative.

Von Soden[28] had been the first to oppose the interpretation of the locative adverbial suffix *-um* as having the function of the comparative, and instead had proposed that *awīlum* should be considered a predicate nominative of a nominal sentence whose subject was *ilū*. However, his semantic interpretation has always been a literal interpretation of this line to the exclusion of any simile or metaphoric sense – "Als die Götter (auch noch) Mensch waren" – meaning that in the beginning there was no differentiation between god and man: they were the same kind.[29] Since man had yet

---

[21] Cf. Ecclesiastes i 14: "I observed all the deeds done under the sun and saw that all was an empty breath and a grasping at the wind."

[22] Moran 1987: 247, n. 7.

[23] Moran 1971: 59, n. 2.

[24] Lambert & Millard 1969: 146.

[25] Lambert 1969.

[26] Lambert 1969: 534f.

[27] Groneberg 1979: 20.

[28] Von Soden 1969a, 1969b, 1978, 1979, 1982.

[29] Labat 1970 follows von Soden's interpretation: p. 26: "*Lorsque les dieux étaient (encore) hommes.*" Other non-metaphorical interpretations were proposed by van Dijk, who understood the verse as "als der Gott-Mensch" relating it to a dingir-lú-ùlu in van Dijk 1969: 538 (*sub* Gott), and by Jacobsen who translated "When Ilu (i.e. Enlil) was the boss" in Jacobsen 1977. These interpretations solve the grammatical difficulty presented by the plural subject and singular predicate which some of the following suggestions ignore.

to be created, it seems doubtful that the poet intended such a literal meaning but, on the other hand, it may be more than simple metaphor. I would seek the solution in the meaning of the myth. If the epic recounts the developing cosmic order, in which the spheres of gods and of humans are delineated, the opening line expresses the original perverse state of non-differentiation. It seems to be done with a type [3] parataxis.[30] The imagery used describes divine matter out of place.

Other semantic interpretations of the first verse as an independent nominative sentence have been suggested. These include metaphorical interpretations based on predication type [1] congruence and type [2] analogy. An example of the first was offered by Bottéro who translated: "Lorsque les dieux (faisaient) l'homme,"[31] which was given in English as: "When the gods (acted like) men" ... "the word has to be understood in the sense of 'had the role of'."[32] An analysis using a type [2] analogy was given by Wilcke, who translated "Als Götter Mensch waren"[33] and interpreted the translation as: "als Götter das waren, was jetzt (die) Menschen sind, nämlich Kanalarbeiter." Seux also explained it similarly but was vague as to the specific human burden: "Lorsque les dieux : homme" ... au sens de "Lorsque les dieux devaient remplir la tâche des hommes" or "Lorsque les dieux devaient remplir la tâche qui sera celle des hommes."[34]

In addition to predicative nominatives, there are other types of unmarked nominal metaphorical propositions, such as epithets both in apposition, e.g. *labbum Anum* "the lion, Anum" [*VAS* **10** 215:17 (Hymn to Nanaya)] and alone in a substitution [4] type: *rapšam irtim muttabbilu sibittam qabli* "The Broad-of-Chest who knows how to handle the Seven-of-Battle" [OB *Anzû* Aa 38, 40].

Although it has been stated that nominal metaphors are commonly unmarked,[35] verbal metaphorical relationships are also unmarked, as in the terrible picture of battle as a thunderstorm: *erpēt mūti izannunu ibarriq uṣṣi iš-ta-us ina bīrīšunu irammum qablu* "the clouds of death rained, the arrow flashed (lightning), it ... between them, the battle thundered" [SB *Anzû* II 55–6].

The nominal and verbal elements can form an extended metaphor: *išāt libbi muti napiḫtum ibli* "the burning fire within the warrior was extinguished" [*Legends of the Kings of Akkade* 12 v 11].

The second problem of identification is the semantic identification of metaphor. We can read in or decode out of the text our own subjective semantic system. The question is: when should the picture be taken literally and/or not symbolically?

I would like to discuss one of the cruxes of the Sargon texts, the expression "those of iron", in terms of this problem. Leaving aside the metallurgical problems associated with these references, should the expression be taken as literally referring to people bearing iron weapons or ornaments, or as a figure of speech signifying "those as strong as iron"? Is it an echo of Old Ironsides? The original editor of the text, Nougayrol,

---

[30] Similarly, the crime which occasioned the flood may be the human tendency to reach ever higher and to approach ever closer to the gods – thus necessitating the imposition of a boundary between men and gods (von Soden & Ogden 1982; cf also Kümmel 1973).

[31] For his latest edition, see Bottéro 1989 : 530.

[32] Bottéro 1992: 222.

[33] Wilcke 1977: 160 and n. 12.

[34] Seux 1981.

[35] Buccellati 1976: 67.

opted for a metaphorical interpretation: "Mais on peut se demander si de tels guerriers sont seulement précieux comme le fer, ou encore durs, robustes, invincibles, comme ce métal, fort rare à cette époque, mais dont les qualités exceptionnelles devaient être déjà reconnues."[36] The two references are as follows:

46. šūt inālim 3-šu qu[rādūtim]
47. šūt taq[ribātim(?)]
48. irat ḫurāṣ ḫapī[ru]
49. [in]a kār ḫašimma
50. šūt parzilli
51. našu rēš napluḫātim
52. nalbaš šūt kitî šaddū[tim]

46. Those from the city, threefold heroic,
47. Those of the escort,
48. Adorned with a gold breastplate,
49. From the market place of Ḫašum.
50. The iron-clad,
51. Raising (their) frightful head;
52. The linen-cloaked dressed in mountain-gear;

[*Legends of the Kings of Akkade* 6]

10′. ⌜ki il-la-ab⌝-<šu> šu-nu ki-ta-a-ti-im [...] x
11′. ga/ša [x (x)] ša-at ri-èš x tu [... ša-at] pa-ar-zi-li-im
12′. ša-⌜šu?-x-x⌝šu-nu ú-ra-[... k]a? šu ma-ti

10′. As they were clad in linen, [...]
11′. [...], who [bore a ...] countenance, [bearing] iron (weapons)
12′. [...]. They [...]. As soon as(?) it

[*Legends of the Kings of Akkade* 7]

From archaeological and textual sources, we know that iron was a precious metal used mainly for small items, particularly jewelry. The only exception is the rare documentation of isolated examples of iron daggers. Consequently, there is no problem with the literal understanding of the verse that "those of iron" refers to people wearing iron decorations or bearing iron weapons. However, the designation "those of iron" in this composition could not be a metaphor for hardihood and fortitude in battle because such an interpretation would be anachronistic. The wrought form of iron known in this period was not very hard. On the other hand, the metaphor might relate to the rust which forms on iron, thus meaning that the soldiers looked rusty or reddish-brown. However, taking the whole context of the reference into account and noting that these groups of soldiers were distinguished by exotic goods and foreign origins, the most probable conclusion is that the term "those of iron" relates to a literal description of the warriors as belonging to an ethnic group characterized by its use of iron.

The third problem of identification is on the literal level, the identification of the comparison, particularly in the predication type [4] A → B /(X). Examples of this type of problem would be the imagery of precious stones and jewelry in love poetry[37] and the sign of the flood.[38] The search for the literal level of a metaphor has been thought

[36] Nougayrol 1951: 173, note to l. 50.
[37] Goodnick Westenholz 1992.
[38] Millard 1987.

to end in the revelation of the truth behind the metaphor. This conclusion that the metaphor can only be fully understood when the symbolic language has been peeled off is invalid. Metaphoric predications are relationships, and to appreciate them one must realize that they are to be understood on all levels simultaneously.

SAMPLE TYPES OF IMAGERY

A. SIMPLE IMAGES

One common type of simile as well as metaphor is derived from the animal kingdom. Indeed, this type is so common and so well-known that my analysis will be limited to certain comparisons of human beings with bovines. From prehistoric times onwards, bovine images adorned sacred areas and humans took on animal shape and assumed animal identities, such as the dancing sorcerer who appears in the Palaeolithic painting in the cave of Trois Frères, France. In Sumerian representations, both literary and artistic, divine forces were seen in their anthropomorphic and non-anthropomorphic manifestations. The bull came to symbolize potent divinity. It is important to note that the domesticated bovines were distinguished from their wild cousins; they became symbols of strength, fecundity and potency versus kinetic energy and power out of control.[39] The opposition is sometimes assumed by the lion,[40] for example, *gēr būli lāba* "the lion, the enemy of the herds" [*BWL* 74:61 (Theodicy)]. Of the various types of metaphors based on animal associations, one of the most common is the comparison of the domestic herds with the human populace, and sometimes the equation of the two, for example: *kīma būlu ummāni iḫatti* "people low like cattle" [Thompson *Gilgameš Epic* pl. 59:9 (lamentation)]. Thus, it is possible that the herds of Shakkan in the *Erra Epic* really refer to humanity. Although certain references in this composition may be ambiguous, the following parallelisms seem obvious: *ṣalmat qaqqadi ana šumutti šumqutu būl* ^{d}*Šakkan* "to kill the dark-headed (people), to slaughter Shakkan's herds"[*Erra* I 43]; ^{d}*Anunnakkī ina ḫubūr nišī ul ireḫḫû šittum napišti māti gipara raḫiṣ būlum* "because of men's noise, the Anunnaki cannot go to sleep, the herds are trampling the grazing grounds" [*Erra* I 82–3]; *nišīma redâta būlamma re'âta* "you govern men, you shepherd the herds" [*Erra* III D 6]; *nišīšu būlumma māḫiṣu ilšin* "its people (are) the herds and their god (is) the slaughterer" [*Erra* IV 93].

A hitherto obscure image appears in the legends of the Akkadian kings, where the soldiers are represented as domestic bovines. The clearest example is: *qarrādūšu aplūnišu alpū rabûtu* "His heroes answered him, the great bulls" [*Legends of the Kings of Akkade* 7 i 17], based on *alpu*, the generic term for males of the Bovidae family.[41] The second case was *mīrī dannūtim ālilī uš[tālik]* "the strong bulls, the warriors he put into action" [*Legends of the Kings of Akkade* 6:44], which was based on a rare lexeme *mīru*, used once in Akkadian literature.[42] The third case rests on probability and the

---

[39] For an analysis of the metaphorical associations of gu_4, see Heimpel 1968: 16f., 133ff.

[40] In Sumerian, note the connection between raging storm, fierce wild bull and furious lion.

[41] *Ḫḫ* **XIII** 280 gud = *alpu*. This is usually translated as "ox", but this is misleading, since the English term "ox" usually implies that the animal has been castrated.

[42] *Ḫḫ* **XIII** 282 gud.áb = *mi-i-rum*, Hg., the breed bull. The discontinuance of the word *mīru* is discussed in *MSL* **VIII/1** p. 70, n.1. The Akkadian literary example is: *ana muḫḫi litti ištaḫiṭ mīru ekdu* "the fierce bull

other cases: x-x-*ú]z-zu-zu* GUŠKIN UR.SAG LUGAL.GI-*en liddinu šūrū* KU_3.BABBAR "Let the warrior(s) of Sargon [...] gold, Let the steers give silver" [*Legends of the Kings of Akkade* 9B obv. 20].[43]

The opposite, the non-domesticated wild bull, is the naked aggressor.[44] As it is said of Erra: *ina šamê rīmāku ina erṣetim labbāku* "in the skies I am the wild bull, on earth I am the lion" [*Erra* I 109]. If both the realistic level and the symbolic meaning of this metaphor are understood, then the image of Gilgamesh as a goring wild bull *rīmu muttakpu* [*Gilgameš Epic* I i 28] becomes stronger and more vivid. Gilgamesh is power out of control, and thus the wild bull image of Gilgamesh is developed in the first tablet: *ugdaššar rīmāniš šaqû rēšušu* "Formidable like a wild bull, his head held high" [*Gilgameš Epic* I ii 8]; *tultabšimâ rīma kadra* [^{d}*Aruru*] "Did not Aruru bring forth this impetuous wild bull?" [*Gilgameš Epic* I ii 20]; *kî rīmi ugdaššaru eli nišī* "Like a wild bull, he overpowers the people" [*Gilgameš Epic* I iv 39, 46]. In English, we have the same metaphor: bull // bully (the relation is not etymological): Gilgamesh was a bully.

It is important to emphasize here that all levels of understanding are important to this imagery. Without the knowledge of realia – which animals are domesticated and which wild – one cannot begin to appreciate the metaphor. Both knowledge of realia and understanding of symbols are needed to discern the pictorial and mythopoeic imagery of the confrontation between the wild and the tame through five millennia in the Near East.

Another approach to looking at metaphors is to take a thematic subject and look at the imagery it evokes. For example, the subject of battle is one of the most frequent topoi in all Akkadian literature. Battle in the eyes of the heroes is a festive celebration:

anna mitḫurumma ša qarrādī
urram qablam akkadî ušarra
isinnum ša mutī inneppuš
Here, then, is the clashing of heroes.
Tomorrow, Akkade will commence battle.
A festival of men-at-arms will be celebrated.
[*Legends of the Kings of Akkade* 6 lls. 17–19]

The image of a battle as a festival also appears in the *Tukulti-Ninurta Epic*, as well as in several other texts, all of which are heroic poetry: *Agušaya*, *Erra* (I 51), *Lugal-e*. The ambiguity of the word *mu-ti* (*mūtu* "death" versus *mutu* "warrior") seems deliberate.[45] The speaker thus conveys the idea of battle as the test of manhood as well as the fight to the death.

Just as we speak of bloodshed as a synonym for warfare, the strongest image related to battle is the shedding of blood. Typically rivers and other bodies of water are described as running with blood:

---

mounted the cow"; for the latest treatment of this poetic narrative text embedded in childbirth incantations, see Veldhuis 1991: 8, line 19.

[43] Although *šūru* and steer in English are etymologically related, steer in English usually refers to castrated bulls raised for their meat. It is a rare lexeme in Akkadian and it is equated in *Malku* = *šarru* as: *šu-u-ri* = *al-pu* (*MSL* **VIII/1** p. 74:37c,d).

[44] The lexical texts give the equivalents as: <gud>.am = *ri-i-[mu]* *Ḫḫ* **XIII** 280; section of am = *rīmu* *Ḫḫ* **XIV** 48ff. This refers to the wild aurochs, *bos primigenius*.

[45] For a discussion of ambiguity as a literary device, see the contribution of H. Vanstiphout in this volume.

damēšunu kīma mê raṭi tušaṣbita ribīt āli
umunnašunu taptēma tušābil nāra

You shed their blood, as it were drain-water, in the squares of the city.
You slashed their veins and made the river flow.

[*Erra* IV 34–5]

The purpose of this juxtaposition of body of water and blood is appalling; the perspective shifts and one realizes with a jolt of sickening horror that this is no river but a stream of blood. Blood is spilt not only on the battlefield but in the process of childbirth; the bringing forth of life and death. The images are related:

iḫillā ḫāḫilātum
urtammakā dāma ālittān

The women in labor are in travail.
Two women giving birth are drenched in blood.

[*Legends of the Kings of Akkade* 6:20–21]

This couplet conveys the life and death struggle of women in labor as a metaphor for battle, a type [3] identity. As stated above, this type of metaphor is one that involves transference and sharing of semantic fields. Thus, as warriors are drenched in blood like women in childbirth, so also are women in childbirth drenched in blood like warriors: *kî qarrādi muttaḫḫiṣ ina damēša ṣallat* "Like a fighting warrior, she (the woman in childbirth) struggles in her own blood" [*Iraq* **31** 31:40 (MA medical text containing the tale *A Cow of Sin*)].

B. COMPLEX MULTI-LAYERED IMAGES

Polysemic images simultaneously embodying several layers of meaning – the literal, metaphorical/figurative and symbolic/mythic – bring with them complexes of meanings. An example of these three levels functioning simultaneously can be seen in the image of the sun – the literal "sun" = the mythic god Shamash, symbolizing protection for the righteous, justice for the evil and advice to mankind. The image can be used metaphorically of other beings,[46] such as *iltam šamaš nišīša* "goddess, sun of her people" [*VAS* **10** 215:1 (Hymn to Nanaya)]. When this metaphor is extended, a complex association may take place: *palsākim ki šamaš nišū nūriški* "people look at your light as to that of the sun" [*VAS* **10** 215:24]. This seems to be an analogic metaphor, i.e., [2] A is as B = A is [to X] as B is [to Y], but if we analyze it according to the algebraic formula, the non-logical metaphorical relationship appears: light : sun :: xx : Nanaya. Further, no light emanates from Nanaya. We have here a type [3] predication, the postulation of a momentary or hypothetical identity: Nanaya is the sun. The traits of the semantic field of "sun" are then transferred to Nanaya: *palsākim ki šamaš nišū nūriški* "people look at your light as to that of the sun."

The most noteworthy feature of these symbols and metaphors is their extreme flexibility and their capability to refer to several levels of perception at the same time. A metaphor may have several meanings at the same time in the same text. It is difficult to read love lyrics without sensing that the distinction between the metaphorical and the literal meanings of the words vanishes like smoke.[47]

---

[46] For examples of the king as sun of his people, see references discussed by Dalley 1986.
[47] Goodnick Westenholz 1992: 383.

When analyzing metaphor in Akkadian literature, it is important not to concentrate on the literal and figurative levels to the exclusion of the symbolic system and mythical representations – the mythical matrix. Two important images derived from meteorological phenomena have been transposed to this matrix: the raging storm (u_4 : *ūmu*) and the flood motif (a-ma-ru : *abūbu*). After the mythic association has become an integral part of the image, repeated uses of the image carry the mythic matrix with it. Further, since the mythic association arose in the initial stages of Mesopotamian religious thought, the image developed in Sumerian symbolic language before it became an Akkadian figure of thought.

Since the raging storm was seen as the manifestation of divine wrath, aggressiveness and destructiveness, it was regarded as an emanation of anything divine and thus was associated with temples,[48] gods[49] and deified kings.[50] The raging storm was characterized by its ferocious roaring and howling.[51] On the other hand, a natural storm can be described in mythic terms. In the following example, the meteorological phenomena are described and associated with the storm god:

u_4-bi-a u_4-dè gù ḫé-eb-bé mar-URU$_5$ ḫé-nigín-nigín
im-mir-mir-ra im-u_{18}-lu ur$_5$-bi ní-bi-a ḫu-mu-un-ša$_4$
nim-gír-gír im-imin-bi-ta an-na téš ḫé-ni-kú
u_4-te-eš-du$_{11}$-ga ki ḫé-em-TUK$_4$-TUK$_4$
^{d}Iškur-re an-ni-dagal-la-ba gù ḫu-mu-ni-dúb-dúb

On that day, the storm shrieked, the tempest whirled,
The north wind and the south wind howled at each other,
Lightning and the 'seven winds' devoured each other in heaven,
The roaring storm made the earth quake,
Iškur roared in the broad heavens,

[*Šulgi A* 62–66]

When the storm is associated with a human being, it becomes a metaphorical association, but carries with it both the underlying meteorological phenomenon and the divine overtones. For instance, u_4-gin$_7$ sig$_4$-gi$_4$-gi$_4$-da-zu-dè kur gi-bad-du-NE-da-ḫur-sag-ge-gin$_7$ sag im-mi-sìg-sìg "When you howled like the storm, the foreign land was shaking like a ... reed of(?) the mountain" [*Šulgi X* 114f.].

Thus, this association was employed in figurative expressions in descriptions of conflict and battle: erím-gál-za u_4-gin$_7$ gù bí-ra "you roar against your enemy like a storm" [*CT* **36** 29:42, referring to the king Ur-Ninurta].[52] Consequently, the storm can become a weapon of battle (á-mè): á-mè u_4-ḫuš lú-ra sù-sù "the arm of battle, a raging storm which envelops men" [*Temple Hymns* l. 243].

All these images appear in Akkadian literature. Parallels to the Sumerian examples

---

[48] For example: èš-uri^{ki} u_4-ḫuš-ki-en-gi-ra mè ki-ús-sa "Shrine (of) Ur, the raging storm of Sumer, a battle firmly founded" [*Šulgi O* l. 2], see Klein 1976: 274.

[49] For example: en u_4-gal me-maḫ-zu du$_7$-ru IM-u_{18}-lu kalam-ma dul-lu "Lord, great storm, your exalted divine principles are complete, the southwind which covers the land" [*SRT* 12:6 (Hymn to Nergal with prayer for Šu-ilišu)], see Römer 1965: 91, 93 and 100.

[50] For example: du$_{10}$-tuku u_4-mar-URU$_5$ "the swift runner, the storm (in) the tempest," [*SRT* 13:13] see Klein 1985. For a lexical study of the lexeme mar-URU$_5$, see Eichler 1992. As Eichler noted (p. 93), the two lexemes mar-URU$_5$ and a-ma-ru were already confused in the Old Babylonian period.

[51] Sjöberg 1969:100.

[52] See Sjöberg 1977: 191:44.

above include: the storm representing aggressive power, particularly manifested in the storm of battle: *tukulti-ninurta ūmu ekdu la pādû* "Tukulti-ninurta, the merciless, fierce storm" [*Tukulti-Ninurta Epic* "iii" 41]; *k[ī]ma ūme ninduru ašīta šaknu* "Like the storm, they [the enemies] raged, instituting anarchy" [*LKA* 63:17′]. In addition, Akkadian literature has one further association : the storm symbolized as a monster, the *ūmu*-demon,[53] with definite features and a conventional appearance. However, the difficulty of matching existing representations with literary texts poses a problem. Further, the storm may be realized as a lion-monster in form, but not every lion need represent the storm. Also, not every appearance of a storm need indicate its monstrous form. This leads to uncertainty in translating the above passages: *tukulti-ninurta ūmu ekdu la pādû* "Tukulti-ninurta the merciless, fierce *ūmu*-demon/storm" [*Tukulti-Ninurta Epic* "iii" 41]; *k[ī]ma ūme ninduru ašīta šaknu* "Like an *ūmu*-demon/ the storm, they [the enemies] raged, instituting anarchy" [*LKA* 63:17′].

The raging storms lead thematically to the devastating deluge – closely connected both meteorologically and thematically. Again the parallels between Akkadian and Sumerian symbolism stand out. I will quote the *CAD abūbu* definition in order to demonstrate the parallelism between the two sets of symbolism, going backward in time:

"1. *The Deluge as cosmic event*:" im-ḫul-im-ḫul im-si-si-ig dù-a-bi téš-bi ì-su_8-ge-eš a-ma-ru ugu-kab-du_{11}-ga ba-an-da-ab-ùr-e u_4-7-àm gi_6-7-àm a-ma-ru kalam-ma ba-ùr-ra-ta "all the destructive winds (and) gales were present, the Deluge swept over the capitals. After the Deluge had swept over the land for seven days and seven nights ...": [*Sumerian Flood Story* 201–204], and 7 *ūmi* 7 *mūš[iātim] illik rādu meḫû [abūbu]* "For seven days and seven nights, came the downpour, the tempest, the Deluge" [*Atra-ḫasīs* III iv 24f]. The Deluge is also an agent of devastation sent by Enlil.[54]

"2. *The Deluge personified as the ultimate of wrath, aggressiveness and destructiveness*:" As an emanation of the gods: Ningirsu a-ma-ru-^{d}En-líl-lá "the Deluge of Enlil" [*Gudea Cylinder A* x 2 and xxiii 14]; lugal zi-ga-ni a-ma-ru na-me sag nu-sum-mu "the lord (Ninurta) whose rising is a flood which nobody can move against" [Hymn to Ninurta with a prayer for Bur-Sin of Isin l.144; see Sjöberg 1976: 420]; Marduk *ša ezēssu abūbu* "whose fury is the Deluge" [*BMS* 11:1 and duplicates].[55]

This aggressiveness of the deluge led to its use in metaphors for battle and warfare: u_4-ba ^{d}En-líl-le gu-ti-um^{ki} kur-ta im-ta-an-è DU-bi a-ma-ru-^{d}En-líl-lá gaba-gi_4 nu-tuku-àm "On that day, Enlil brought down the Gutians from the mountainous land, their coming was a flood (sent) by Enlil, it had no opposition" [*Lamentation over Sumer and Ur* 75–6]; *ušardi* IM *abūba eli tāḫāzīšunu* ^{d}*Adad uršanu* "Adad, the hero, let a deluge flow over their battle" [*Tukulti-Ninurta Epic* "ii" 29].

---

[53] For a discussion of the word *ūmu* "storm" found in designations of various monsters, see Wiggermann 1992: 147ff. He designates *ūmu* as the *ūmu*-demon "personified day," "leonine monster," a manifestation of divine will, both beneficial and hostile (p. 171). Thus, the *ūmu*-demon was an instrument of divine decisions and an enforcer of divine will. Note that Wiggermann's discussion outlines an evolutionary developmental sequence. The need to represent awe-inspiring natural phenomena gave rise to the development of a visible representation in monster form. However, Wiggermann does not believe that the monsters are identical with the meteorological phenomena but thinks they are agents, causes and/or personified abstractions.

[54] Vanstiphout 1980, who was searching for the literal realistic level.

[55] See Mayer 1976: 395: sub Marduk 4.

Whereas in Sumerian literature the deluge is an emanation of the divine (gods and thus divine kings), in Akkadian literature not only the gods but also human kings can personify the devastating flood. As in royal inscriptions so also in heroic poetry, i. e. royal hymns and such, kings are inescapable forces. Hammurapi is mar-URU$_5$ giš-giš-lá : *abūb tuqumātim* "Tempest of battles (Sum.) : Deluge of battles (Akk.)" [*CT* **21** 42 iv 8]. As to Tiglath-Pileser I, he can cause a deluge:

> All of their cult centers he conquers completely.
> Their lofty cities he smashes to the last one.
> From the fields of their sustenance he rips out the grain.
> He cuts down the fruit, the orchards he destroys.
> *eli ḫuršānīšunu abūba ušba'a*
> Over their mountain lands, he causes a deluge to pass.
> [*LKA* 63 rev. 18 (MA *Tiglat-pileser I*)]

"3. *The Deluge mythologized as a monster with definite features*:" In representations as a great monster: in the *Uruk Lament*, Enlil proclaimed a devastating deluge, called it "war" and then described its physical appearance from front to back with special attention to its countenance. All the description is figurative, however, whereas the representations described in the Akkadian texts are of actual reliefs or statues. Other inescapable forces and demons may be metaphorically associated with the flood, e.g. (Humbaba) *rigmašu abūbu* [*Gilgameš Epic* II v 3, cf. *Gilgameš Epic* Y iii 109, v 196 (with the sound of the flood)]. However, the first definite evidence of the deluge mythologized as an individual monster with definite features appears in the late second millennium.

The flood as a weapon appears in parallelism with other weapons: eme-giri$_3$ mitum ^{giš}a-ma-ru "the sword blade, the *mitum*-mace, the flood-weapon" [*Gudea Cylinder B* vii 14], held by Sharur; *kakkēšunu dannūti abūb tamḫāri qātī lušatmeḫu* "they (the gods) put into my hand their mighty weapons, the flood-weapon of battle" [*RIMA* **2** 13, A.0.87.1 i 49–51 (*Tiglat-pileser I*)]. The flood as a weapon is a common motif in Akkadian literature: *iššīma bēlum abūba kakkašu rabâ* "the lord raised his mighty weapon, the Deluge," [*Enūma eliš* IV 49].

"4. *Devastating flood*:" mu ^{d}I-bi-^{d}Sin lugal urí^{ki}-ma-ke$_4$ a-ma-ru níg-du$_{11}$-ga-dingir-re-ne-ke$_4$ zag-an-ki im-sùḫ-sùḫ-a urí^{ki} URUxUD.KI tab-ba bí-in-ge-en "Year when Ibbi-Sin, the king of Ur stabilized Ur and Uru (after) a flood ordered by the gods had brought confusion to the limits of heaven and earth" [Ibbi-Sin year 22]; *abūb našpanti iššakkan* "there will occur a devastating flood" [*ACh* Adad 4:40f].

These four meanings of the "flood" render four different levels: 1. mythic, 2. metaphoric, 3. personificatory, 4. literal. The metaphoric level can be analyzed in accordance with the predication types listed above. In both Sumerian and Akkadian, flood and battle are linked in all four types of metaphor. The type [1] congruence is common, and battle can be likened to flood or flood to battle. Different qualities are compared when (A) battle is likened to (B) flood. The primary aspect is the ruins left in its wake: a-ma-ru$_{12}$-gin$_7$ U$_2$.URUxA gul-gul-zu "your (Ningirsu's) destroying cities like a flood" [*Gudea Cylinder A* viii 26]; *kīma tīl abūbe asḫup* "I flattened (the cities so that they became) like hills of ruins made by the Deluge"[*RIMA* **2** 18f. A.0.87.1 iii 75–6 (*Tiglat-pileser I*)]. Sometimes, it is the aspect of noise that is compared: *išassû elišu rigmu šarri kīma abūbu našpante dannu* "they shout over it

the king's battle cry, as mighty as the devastating Deluge" [*RIMA* **2** 151 A.0.99.2 67 (*Adad-nīrāri II*)].[56] Whereas the congruence predication is expressed as simile in historical texts, this metaphorical relationship can be expressed implicitly in literary texts: ^{d}*Huwawa rigmašu abūbu* "Huwawa's roaring is the Deluge" [*Gilgameš Epic* Y v 16]. Just as battle can be depicted as a flood, so also can flood be likened to battle in this restoration by Lambert: *[kīma qabl]i eli nišī iba' kašūšu* "Its might came upon the peoples [like the (force) of battle]" [*Atra-ḫasīs* III iii 12, U rev. 19].

The analogical metaphor [2] is made: flood : devastation :: weapon : battle. Since both flood and weapons are means for similar ends, flood can thus also be a weapon: The flood as a weapon appears in parallelism with other weapons: eme-giri$_3$ mi-tum ^{giš}a-ma-ru "the sword blade, the *mitum*-mace, the flood-weapon" [*Gudea Cylinder B* vii 14], held by Sharur; *kakkēšunu dannūti abūb tamḫāri qātī lušatmeḫu* "they (the gods) put into my hand their mighty weapons, the flood-weapon for the battle" [*RIMA* **2** 13 A.0.87.1 i 49–51(*Tiglat-pileser I*)]. The flood as a weapon is a common motif in Akkadian literature: *iššīma bēlum abūba kakkašu rabâ* "the lord (Marduk) raised his mighty weapon, the Deluge" [*Enūma eliš* IV 49].

The identity predication [3] and the transference of traits has also already been seen; it occurs commonly when a god is identified as the Deluge. This is especially true of the warrior gods: Ningirsu is a-ma-ru-^{d}En-líl-lá "the Deluge of Enlil" [*Gudea Cylinder A* x 2 and xxiii 14]; lugal zi-ga-ni a-ma-ru na-me sag nu-sum-mu "the lord (Ninurta) whose rising is a flood which nobody can move against" [Hymn to Ninurta with a prayer for Bur-Sin of Isin l.144, see Sjöberg 1976: 420]. It is interesting to note the learned pun using a Sumerian etymology of Marduk's name and his personification as the deluge in spite of the absence of any mythological connection: ^{d}*Marduk ša amāruk šibbu gapaš a-bu-ši-in* (var. *a-bu-sin*) "Marduk, your stare/flood is a serpent (a mythological weapon associated with the Deluge), a massive deluge(!?)," [Lambert 1960: 55 Prayer to Marduk No.1:5].[57] See also l. 7 and further *Enūma eliš* IV 49 in above paragraph.

The type [4] semantic transformation occurs in both directions, in which (A) flood can be substituted for (B) battle and (B) battle can be substituted for (A) flood. The better known transformation is when battle becomes a flood: *eli karāšīka kīma* ^{d}*Addi ušettaqu abūb naspanti* "(which) will send over your camp a devastating flood like the storm-god" [*Tukulti-Ninurta Epic* "iii" 33]. A less well-known type of metaphor is when battle is substituted for the Deluge: *têrētiška ušabši qa[bla]* "at your decree I brought forth battle" [*Atra-ḫasīs* III viii 12]; *ana ḫulluq nišīja qabla aqbīma* "I invoked battle to destroy my people" [*Gilgameš Epic* XI 121]. In this way, the two semantic fields used in this metaphor have become inextricably intertwined.

The metaphoric representation of battle can thus be expressed either by the raging storm or the Deluge or both, as in the following example: du$_{10}$-tuku u$_4$-mar-URU$_5$ "the

---

[56] The translation of this verse is according to *CAD* and not according to *RIMA* **2** since *rigmu* and *abūbu* are usually linked in the same trope.

[57] This exegesis on the name of Marduk construes it as (A) mar(u)tuku(l) and expounds it as based on the Sumerian word for Deluge, a-ma-ru and the Sumerian word for weapon, tukul. The same etymology was proposed by Lambert, apud Foster 1993: 594, note 2, discussing the reference to *BMS* 12 l. 6 "Deluge-weapon, [hopeless] to combat, [whose onslaught] is furious!." Note also the explanatory name of Marduk ^{d}MAR.URU$_5$.GIŠ.TUKUL = *abūb* GIŠ.TUKUL.MEŠ given in *An = Anum*, treated by M. Krebernik, "Mar(u)ru-tukul," *RlA* 7 (1989) 440. For the confusion between mar-URU$_5$ and a-ma-ru, see note 50.

swift runner, the storm (in) the tempest," zi-ga-ni u_{18}-lu a-ma-ru im súr-ba du-a "(He) whose rising is a hurricane, a flood, a wind blowing in its fury" [Klein 1985: 7* ff. l. 13, 48].

Consequently, the Deluge a-ma-ru is used metaphorically, associated with certain gods, and related to the more common raging storm (u_4, the *ūmu*-demon) in descriptions of catastrophes and the devastation of Sumer and its cities.[58]

Now, let us look at the development of the expanded metaphor of the Deluge catastrophe over time. All the familiar elements that characterize the flood motif already appear in the *Curse of Agade*:

a-ga-dè^{ki} dím-ma-bi ba-ra-è
... umuš a-ga-dè^{ki} ba-kúr
u_4-te-eš-du_{11}-ga kalam téš-a gar-ra
a-ma-ru zi-ga gaba-šu-gar nu-tuk
so was the good sense of Agade removed,
... and Agade's intelligence was alienated/altered
the roaring storm that subjugates the land entirely
the rising deluge that cannot be confronted
(subject Enlil)
[*Curse of Agade* 147–150 (OB Ms.)]

The parallelism of this quotation is significant. It includes the other factors that compose the expanded metaphor of the flood: the human cause or prerequisites that must precede a devastating deluge – the derangement of dím-ma // umuš. These paired Sumerian nouns have their Akkadian counterparts in the flood motif: dím-ma // umuš :: *ḫubūru* // *ṭēmu*.[59] It is interesting that the etymological correspondence dím-ma = *ṭēmu* is not employed in the same order. Further, the roaring of the storm te-eš-du_{11} was lexically equated with *rigmu* "noise, tumult," the keynote of the Deluge [*Nabnītu* B 203–204] and *naspantu* "levelling, annihilation."[60]

The Deluge catastrophe imagery became a building block in the creation of literary figures and passed from the Sumerian into the Akkadian:

4'. x x x ša ^{d}Adad issû eli mā[tim]
5'. ḫubūrša iktabas ṭēmša ispuḫ
6'. alāni tīlāni u parakkī ispun
7'. mitḫariš kališ uštēmi
8'. kīma abūb mê ša ibbašû
9'. ina niši mazriāti
10'. māt Akkadī uštēmi
11'. uḫtalliq mātam
12'. kīma la nabšî kalaša ussaḫḫir
13'. sapnat mātum šusḫurat kaluš[a]
14'. ina ezēz ilāni ma ru us ib [...]
15'. alāni ubbutu tīlānu sapnu
16'. ḫubūr māt[im] u-x-eq-qi-ma iktabas

[58] Cooper 1983: 23 and his references. Further, Green 1984: 269 l. 3.3 .
[59] Two Neo-Assyrian bilingual chronicle fragments that include the flood story give the correspondence mu_7-mu_7 [...] :: *ḫubūr* [...], see Lambert 1973: 274 K. 11261+: 17,18 and p. 278 79–7–8, 333+:17,18.
[60] Sjöberg 1969: 74.

17′. kīma abūb palgi mātam uštēmi

4′. The ... of Adad roared over the land.
5′. Having trampled its activity, it confused its mind.
6′. It leveled cities, tells and temples.
7′. It transformed everywhere equally.
8′. Like a deluge of water which had broken loose
9′. Among the scattered masses,
10′. It transformed the land of Akkade.
11′. It destroyed the land.
12′. As if it had never existed, it turned back/reduced it all (to almost nothingness).
13′. Leveled was the land, turned around was all of it.
14′. By the fury of the gods, ...
15′. Cities were obliterated, the tells were leveled.
16′. The activity of the land was ... and trampled
17′. Like the flood (overflowing the banks) of the canal, it transformed the land.

[*Naram-Sin and the Enemy Hordes* OB version I iv]

What is compelling about this expanded metaphor is that it is couched in the same terms as the *Curse of Agade* on the one hand and the *Flood Story* on the other. Paralleling the *Curse of Agade*, the insidious human qualities, *ḫubūru* // *ṭēmu*, are deranged, destroyed. The latter term has been variously understood as "sense, personality, understanding" while the former has been understood as "noise, tumult." The "noise" of mankind has been seen as the major motif of the flood narratives and thus as being basic to the flood metaphor wherever it occurs, e.g., *Atra-ḫasīs* Tablet II, *Erra* I 41 and *passim*. The word *ḫubūru* has been reinterpreted by W. von Soden to mean "lautes Tun, larmende Aktivität;"[61] a similar conclusion was reached by W. Moran.[62] On the other hand, *ḫubūru* has also been interpreted in the light of its Sumerian equivalents as "deliberation, consideration" in addition to "movement."[63] The stanza quoted here from *Naram-Sin and the Enemy Hordes* would thus describe the derangement of the human intelligence as the first step of the catastrophe, the cessation of all physical and mental activities as in the Sumerian descriptions. It is interesting to note that the origin of the human quality *ṭēmu* described in *Atra-ḫasīs* I 223, 239 was divine. The clay was mixed with the blood and flesh of the god who had *ṭēmu*. The blood gave life during the human lifetime but the flesh gave life after death – the flesh of the god gave rise to the *eṭemmu*. The divine spirit must be removed from the human body just as the gods must leave their cities before the destruction.

When this expanded metaphor is reused in the *Flood Story*, the qualities *ḫubūru* // *rigmu* are the cause of the flood, rather than the first step of the catastrophe. This change in the structure of the story together with the substitution of *rigmu* for *ṭēmu*, both god-given human qualities, changes the import of the story – the replacement

---

[61] Von Soden 1973: 353. See most recently: Michałowski "noise as activity, creation, independence" (1990: 387ff.).

[62] Moran 1987: 251ff. and note 37.

[63] Sjöberg 1961: 58f. fn. 15, who based his reasoning on the paired Sumerian nouns and their Akkadian counterparts: dím-ma // umuš :: *ḫubūru* // *ṭēmu* mentioned above.

of the "cry of rebels, complaint of plaintiffs" for "sense, personality, understanding" sets up a situation of conflict in place of a description of the human condition. While the qualities are still linked with the appearance of the Deluge, their position in this Akkadian reworking of the literary building block has changed their significance; a different metaphoric analogy has been set up – noise and silence have become symbols of action and inaction.[64] On the other hand, the Sumerian tales of catastrophe and the Akkadian tale of *Naram-Sin and the Enemy Hordes* are using an expanded metaphor for battle and destruction whereas there is no such metaphorical intent in the Akkadian flood story – a mythic battle of the gods against humans. Whether or not the original flood story is reflected in the *Atra-ḫasīs* version, the Old Babylonian version of *Naram-Sin and the Enemy Hordes* dates from the same period and juxtaposes the mythic level of the battle of the gods against humans with the metaphoric level of the battle of the Akkadians against the barbarians.

In the later Standard Babylonian version of the epic of *Naram-Sin and the Enemy Hordes*, the Deluge catastrophe motif is handled poorly and apparently inserted for no particular reason. Naram-Sin's monologue, full of pathos, is followed by a description of the plagues which accompany the enemy hordes as they sweep down from the steppe. Then the text continues:

97. elênuma ina pu[ḫri i]ššakin abūbu
98. šaplānu ina [erṣeti abū]bu baši
99. Ea bēl n[aqbi pāšu īpušma] iqabbi
100. izzakkara ana [ilāni aḫḫ]ēšu
101. ilānu rabûtu [mīna tēpu]šā
102. taqbânimma [abūba ad]ki

97. Above, in co[uncil,] the flood was decided.
98. Below, on the [earth] the fl[ood] came into being.
99. Ea, the lord of the d[eep, opened his mouth], saying,
100. Speaking to the [gods, his bro]thers:
101. "O great gods, [what have you do]ne?
102. "You spoke and I sum[moned a deluge].

The text then continues with the account of the fourth year. The metaphor of the flood theme as the onslaught of the enemy hordes is not connected to the flow of the narrative and is left hanging in the air. The flood metaphor has been reused and has become meaningless. Thus, a search among the Akkadian literary figures for the reuse of figures / clichés / classical allusions comes up with the primal deluge motif, which reappears in almost every Akkadian narrative – not only the *Gilgamesh Epic*.[65] It is the most productive and sustained of all Akkadian images. What is fascinating about *Atra-ḫasīs* and the *Gilgameš Epic* is that the *Flood Story* has been used in both compositions for its concept of cosmology as well as for the definition of divine and human spheres.

[64] Machinist 1983; Michałowski 1990: 385.
[65] *Erra* Tablet I 133: (Enlil speaks to Erra): "I got angry long ago: I rose from my seat and contrived the deluge," followed by lines 134–139 which detail the devastation.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The above survey is a rudimentary attempt to outline the metaphoric process, its problems and types in Akkadian narrative literature. In addition, an adequate understanding of the texts requires at least some understanding of their cultural context, the "world of the text."

Our understanding of the Mesopotamians' use of metaphor depends on our comprehension of their use of sign and symbol. Their Weltanschauung was characterized by a world full of metaphors, constructed by the gods to communicate a meaning to human society when properly interpreted. Words signified things but things themselves had significance at another, higher level.

On the non-metaphorical level, there is no absolute reality but "that thinking makes it so". It is an accepted truth of anthropology that language orders the universe from a chaotic continuum into discrete words. It is not that we are dealing solely with the pre-logical "savage mind," but that we are not listening to the richly ambiguous multi-level meanings of the voice. To return to our earlier conference theme, texts were not read but were declaimed (*šasû*) and heard by listeners.[66] Their mind-set was not programmed by the evenly spaced single level clarity of the written word – they did not have a religion of the book. Their scientific literature may have been canonized but their religious and literary works were certainly not. Therefore, I believe that metaphorical definitions and theories related to the *word* will not advance our inquiries.[67]

There is much further research to be done. At times, different metaphoric approaches may be needed. A useful tool may be found in the interaction view of contextualisation – by which I mean that the new context or discourse imposes an extension of meaning upon A and B; they participate in an interactive event where the semantic fields meet and traits are shared by both, as I have indicated above. Such a theoretical tension/event interaction approach is also important with abstract images, such as the biblical "God is love," which existed in Mesopotamian garb as "My god, my lover" – a formulation which could be considered one of the root metaphors in Sumerian and Akkadian religious philosophy and theology.

With concrete metaphors concerning the definition of the universe and the knowledge of realia, whole semantic fields need to be analyzed, since the world view is culture-specific. In this enterprise, we are aided by native texts – the ancient commentaries and the lexical texts which testify to the ancient scribes' language use. The first group demonstrates the elaboration of homonymic and synonymic principles, while the lexical texts from the late second and early first millennia were organized on metonymic principles.[68] Such an approach should be productive in the investigation of metal imagery in Mesopotamia.

To sum up, I believe that it is possible for us to reconstruct the Mesopotamian view of metaphor. Based on their principles of a well-ordered world, in which all elements

---

[66] See *Mesopotamian Epic Literature: Oral or Aural*, ed. by M. E. Vogelzang and H. Vanstiphout, Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992.

[67] See, for instance, Smit 1991. The metaphor has been defined as a word in counter-determining context, see the critical discussion of Ricœur 1978b, particularly pp. 101–133.

[68] See the discussion by Michałowski 1990: 386f.

were arranged in their proper classes, metaphoric associations can be ascertained and described within the predications set forth in this article. Further, in order to build a morphology of literary symbolism within Akkadian literature, one must start with Sumerian literature and observe the developments and changes that occur over the millennia.

REFERENCES

Black, J. & A. Green
1992 *Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia*. London: British Museum Press.

Bottéro, J.
1989 *Lorsque les dieux faisaient l'homme*. Paris: Éditions Gallimard.
1992 *Mesopotamia: Writing , Reasoning, and the Gods*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Buccellati, G.
1976 "Towards a Formal Typology of Akkadian Similes", in: *Kramer AV* 59–70.

Cooper, J.S.
1983 *The Curse of Agade*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Dalley, St.
1986 "The god Šalmu and the winged disk", in: *Iraq* **48** 98–99.

van Dijk, J.J.A.
1969 "Gott", in: *RlA* **3** 532–43.

Eichler, B.L.
1993 "mar-URU$_5$: Tempest in a Deluge", in: *Studies Hallo* 90–94.

Farber, W.
1982 "Altbabylonischen Adverbialbildungen auf *-ĀNI*", in: *Studies Kraus* 34–47.

Foster, B.R.
1993 *Before the Muses*. Bethesda, MD: CDL Press.

Goodnick Westenholz, J.
1992 "Metaphorical Language in the Poetry of Love in the Ancient Near East", in: *CRRAI* **38** 381–387.

Green, M.W.
1984 "The Uruk Lament", in: *JAOS* **104** 253–79.

Groneberg, B.
1979 "Terminativ- und Lokativadverbialis in altbabylonischen literarischen Texten", in: *AfO* **26** 15–29.
1987 *Syntax, Morphologie und Stil der jungbabylonischen "hymnischen" Literatur*. (*FAOS* **14**) Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.

Heimpel, W.
1968 *Tierbilder in der sumerischen Literatur* (*Studia Pohl* **2**). Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute.

Jacobsen, Th.
1977 "*Inuma Ilu awīlum*", in: *Studies Finkelstein* 113–17.

Jakobson, R. & M. Halle
1956 *Fundamentals of Language*. The Hague: Mouton & Co.

Klein, J.
1976 "Šulgi and Gilgameš: Two Brother-Peers (Šulgi O)", in: *Kramer AV* 271–92.

1985 "Šulgi and Išmedagan: Runners in the Service of the Gods (SRT 13)", in: *Beer-Sheva* **2** 7*ff.

Kümmel, H.
1973 "Bemerkungen zu den altorientalischen Berichten von den Menschenschöpfung", in: *WO* **7** 25–38.

Labat, R.
1970 *Les Religions du Proche-Orient asiatique*. Paris: Fayard/Denoël.

Lambert, W.G.
1960 "Three Literary Prayers of the Babylonians", in: *AfO* **19** 47–66.
1969 "New Evidence for the First Line of Atra-ḫasīs", in: *Or NS* **38** 533–38.
1973 "A New Fragment from a List of Antediluvian Kings and Marduk's Chariot", in: *Symbolae Böhl*, Leiden, Brill, 271–80.
1980 "Line 10 of the Etana Legend", in: *JCS* **32** 83.
1987 "The Babylonian 'Man and his God"', in: *Studies Reiner*, 187–202.
1989 "A Babylonian Prayer to Anūna", in: *Studies Sjöberg*, 321–36.

Lambert, W.G. & A.R. Millard
1969 *Atra-ḫasīs. The Babylonian Story of the Flood*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Lessa, W.A. & E. Z. Vogt
1979 "The Interpretation of Symbolism", in: *Reader in Comparative Religion*. New York: Harper & Row.

Machinist, P.
1983 "Rest and Violence in the Poem of Erra", in: *JAOS* **103** 221–26.

Mayer, W.
1976 *Untersuchungen zur Formensprache der babylonischen "Gebetsbeschwörungen"*. Rome: Biblical Institute Press.

Michałowski, P.
1990 "Presence at the Creation", in: *Studies Moran*, 381–96.

Millard, A.R.
1987 "The Sign of the Flood", in: *Iraq* **49** 63–69

Moran, W.L.
1971 "Atra-hasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood", in: *Biblica* **52** 51–61.
1987 "Some Considerations of Form and Interpretation in *Atra-ḫasīs*", in: *Studies Reiner* 245–55.

Nougayrol, J.
1951 "Un chef-d'œuvre inédit de la litterature babylonienne", in: *RA* **45** 169–80.

Richards, I.A.
1936 *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
1952 *Principles of Literary Criticism*. London.

Ricœur, P.
1978a "The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination and Feeling", in: *On Metaphor*, ed. by S. Sacks, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 141–57.

1978b *The Rule of Metaphor*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Römer, W.H.Ph.
1965 *Sumerische 'Königshymnen' der Isin-Zeit*. Leiden: Brill.

Schaffer, A.
1993 "From the Bookshelf of a Profesional Wailer", in: *Studies Hallo* 209–210.

Schott, A.
1926 *Die Vergleiche in den akkadischen Königsinschriften* (*MVAG* **30/2**). Leipzig: Hinrichs.

Seux, M.-J.
1981 "Atra-ḫasīs I i 1", in: *RA* **75** 190–91.

Sjöberg, Å.W.
1961 "Ein Selbstpreis des Königs Ḫammurabi von Babylon", in: *ZA* **54** 51–70.
1969 *The Collection of Sumerian Temple Hymns*. (*TCS* **3**). Locust Valley: Augustin.
1972 "Prayers for King Ḫammurabi of Babylon", in: *Ex Orbe Religionum. Studia Geo Widengren oblata*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 58–71
1975 "In-nin-šà-gur$_4$-ra: A Hymn to the Goddess Inanna by the en-Priestess Enḫeduanna", in: *ZA* **65** 92–181.
1976 "Hymns to Ninurta with Prayers for Šūsîn of Ur and Būrsîn of Isin", in: *Kramer AV* 411–26.
1977 "A Blessing of King Urninurta", in: *Studies Finkelstein*, 189–95.

Smit, J.A.
1991 "Theoretical Perspectives: Contextualisation as Metaphoric Activity", in: *Neotestamentica* **25** 1–15.

von Soden, W.
1969a " 'Als die Götter (auch noch) Mensch waren'. Einige Grundgedanken des altbabylonischen Atramḫasīs-Mythus", in: *OrNS* **38** 415–32.
1969b "Einige Fragen zur Deutung des altbabylonischen Atramḫasīs-Mythus", in: *CRRAI* **17** 142–46.
1973 "Der Mensch bescheidet sich nicht. Überlegungen zu Schöpfungserzählungen in Babylonien und Israel", in: *Symbolae Böhl*, Leiden, Brill 349–58.
1978 "Die erste Tafel des altbabylonischen Atramḫasīs-Mythus. 'Haupttext' und Parallelversionen", in: *ZA* **68** 50–94.
1979 "Konflikte und ihre Bewältigung in babylonischen Schöpfungs- und Fluterzählungen", in: *MDOG* **111** 1–33.
1982 "Mottoverse zu Beginn babylonischer und antiken Epen, Mottosätze in der Bibel", in: *UF* **14** 235–39.

von Soden, W. & R. Ogden
1982 "Divine Aspirations in Atrahasis and in Genesis 1–11", in: *ZAW* **93** 199–200.

Vogelzang, M.E.
1988 *Bin Šar Dadmē*. Groningen: Styx Publications.

Waldman, N.
1989 "The Imagery of Clothing, Covering, and Overpowering", in: *JANES* **19** 161–170.

Vanstiphout, H.
1980 "The Death of an Era: the Great Mortality in the Sumerian City Laments", in: *CRRAI* **26** 83–89.

Veldhuis, N.
1991 *A Cow of Sin.* (*LOT* **2**). Groningen: Styx Publications.

Warnke, F.J.
1974 "Metaphor", in: *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. A. Preminger, Princeton.

Whiting, R.M.
1985 "An Old Babylonian Incantation from Tell Asmar", in: *ZA* **75** 179–87.

Wiggermann, F.A.M.
1992 *Mesopotamian Protective Spirits, the Ritual Texts.* (*CM* **1**). Groningen: Styx Publications.

Wilcke, C.
1977 "Die Anfänge der babylonischen Epen", in: *ZA* **67** 153–216.
1985 "Liebesbeschwörungen aus Isin", in: *ZA* **75** 188–209.
1987 "A Riding Tooth: Metaphor, Metonymy and Synecdoche, Quick and Frozen in Everyday Language", in: M. Mindlin et. al. eds. *Figurative Language in the Ancient Near East*, London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 77–102.

SCENES FROM THE SHADOW SIDE

Frans Wiggermann

INTRODUCTION

In his recent book *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought* James S. Romm[1] discusses in detail the tensions between empirical geography and mythological world view in classical antiquity. It appears that earlier Greek authors rounded off the unknown edges of the earth by positing a mythical Okeanos, while later, more critical geographers such as Herodotus, Strabo, and Pliny still allow human and animal nature to diverge with their distance from the centre. The sparse reports of explorers did but slowly expand the empirical record, since they repeated hearsay which could not be disproved, and added new wonders of the sort their audiences were taught to expect. Thus, for instance, Aristeas' one-eyed Arimasps and gold-guarding griffins live on through Herodotus and Strabo to Pliny,[2] and increasingly eerie phenomena are reported by Hanno, the fifth century BCE Carthaginian explorer who sailed south along the coast of Africa: phantom music heard in the dark, rivers of flame, and a mountain named "chariot of the gods" which seemed to catch fire after nightfall. At his point of furthest progress Hanno encounters "hairy wild men" whom his native guides call *gorillas*. He catches three of them, and brings their skins back to Carthago.[3] Himilco, another Carthaginian explorer roughly contemporary with Hanno, observed while progressing northward from the Pillars of Hercules that "wild sea-creatures stand in the way on all sides, and sea-monsters swim among the sluggish and lazily crawling ships".[4] Tribes of *Hemikunes*, "Half-Dogs" or *Kunokephaloi*, "Dog-Heads" are known to live in the remote regions of India. According to Ctesias "they understand the speech of the Indians, but cannot respond to them; instead they bark and signal with their hands and fingers, as do mutes".[5] They do not make fire but eat their food broiled in the hot sun.[6]

Okeanos, rejected by Herodotus as geographically irrelevant,[7] was for Homer and the other early poets a primordial element surrounding the inhabited earth.[8] It is similar in nature to Erebos and Tartaros, and to the "boundaries of the earth", where Zeus imprisoned the Giants, Titans, and other rebels who had challenged his dominion.[9] A kingdom of the dead beyond Okeanos is attested in some early poetical sources, while

---

[1] Romm 1992; see also Henning 1944.
[2] Romm 1992: 67ff.; Henning 1944: 68ff.
[3] Romm 1992: 19f.; Henning 1944: 86ff.
[4] Romm 1992: 20f.; Henning 1944: 116ff.
[5] Romm 1992: 77ff.
[6] Romm 1992: 79, and note 80 for the eating of raw food as a custom among uncivilized or bestial peoples.
[7] Romm 1992: 32ff.
[8] Romm 1992: 23f.
[9] Romm 1992: 24f.

in others it lies directly underneath the earth.[10] On Hesiod's Islands of the Blessed primeval Kronos is king, and the earth bears fruit thrice a year.

The tension between empirical geography and mythological world view, and the lack of a firm boundary between the two, can be observed not only in the Classical West, but also in Ancient Mesopotamia. In fact this is exactly what one would expect, since bits of practical geographical knowledge do not add up to a complete geography without a general idea of the form of the world and the whereabouts of its boundaries. In a civilization without science such general notions are by necessity mythological.

AN OCEAN ENCIRCLING THE WORLD

The Greek parallels adduced above contribute to the understanding of a well known Late Babylonian document commonly referred to as the *Mappa Mundi* or *Map of the World* (fig. 1).[11] On the drawn map the cosmic river surrounding the earth is called *marratu*, "ocean", and in the descriptive part of the obverse it is explained as *Tâmtu*, "Sea", the name of Marduk's arch-enemy in *Enūma eliš*. Beyond Sea there are eight islands, and the text on the reverse describes their wondrous features. On Sea Marduk settles the "destroyed gods", presumably his former enemies, and the two dragons Viper (*bašmu*) and Dreadful Snake (*mušḫuššu*), children of Sea and members of her army defeated by Marduk in the cosmic battle which founded his universal rule.[12] On top of "restless Sea" Marduk created a series of wild animals: mountain goat, gazelle, water buffalo, panther, lion, wolf, red deer, hyena, monkey, female monkey, ibex, ostrich, cat, chameleon, and three fabulous monsters: the Anzû-bird, the Scorpion Man (*girtablullû*), and the Bull Man (*kusarikku*).[13] In some way – the text is broken at this point – they are connected with the hero of the flood Ut-napištim , who is known to live on a mythical island in the ocean,[14] with the daring conqueror Sargon and his distant adversary Nur-Dagan, and generally with "[beings] supplied with wings,[15] [besides whom] nobody knows their interior". This association of the wild, monstrous and primeval results in a mixed empirical-mythical geography of the same type as that of the early Greeks.

Other Mesopotamian sources, though not as detailed as the *Mappa Mundi*, confirm the existence of these notions at a much earlier period. The earliest is an Early Dynastic IIIa tablet from Fara[16] which has on one side a copy of the best known list of professional names,[17] and on the other a drawing that can hardly be anything but a map of the world (Fig. 2). In the centre of the inhabited world, represented by

[10] Romm 1992: 15 n. 19; 65; 156f.; Vermeule 1979: 72f.; Burkert 1985: 194ff.; Ch. IV/2.

[11] *CT* **22**, 48, recopied, transliterated, and translated in Horowitz 1988; see also the comments by Millard 1987, Stol 1988; generally on Babylonian cartography, see Hallo 1964, Röllig 1980–1983, Nemet-Nejat 1982: 5ff., Ch. 1.

[12] Wiggermann 1992b: 163ff., 166ff.

[13] Wiggermann 1992b: 180f. (*girtablullû*), 174f. (*kusarikku*); Wiggermann & Green 1994 A § 4, "Fabeltier".

[14] The Sumerian flood hero lives on the island of Dilmun (Bahrain) in the Persian Gulf; the Akkadian flood hero lives beyond the waters of death on an island (?) at the mouth of the two rivers. Cf. Alster 1983: 52ff.; Groneberg 1990: 248.

[15] Reading *[ša k]a-ap-pi* MUŠEN *šak<-nu->-ma* in obv. 11′.

[16] *WVDOG* **43** (*SF*) no. 76, Photo Pl. VIII; cf. Deimel's comments on p. 24 and Hallo 1964: 57.

[17] ED *Lu A*; edited *MSL* **12** 4–12.

four times the sign ašag$_x$ (GANA$_2$), "field", lies kur, "mountain", undoubtedly referring to the city of Nippur and the Ekur, "Mountain House", whence Enlil, surnamed the "Great Mountain" (^{d}kur-gal), rules his human subjects. The community of mankind, effectively ordered, is outlined on the other side of the tablet by means of the list of professional names. Encircling the *oikumene* are, somewhat roughly drawn, four rivers from which the fields apparently draw their water. Indeed, from the Akkad period onwards the world as ruled by Mesopotamian kings on behalf of Enlil is called in Sumerian an-ub-da-limmu$_2$-ba, the "four-corners-and-sides", and in Akkadian *kibrātum arba'um*, the "four banks".[18] A roughly contemporaneous tablet from Abu Salabikh has on one side a copy of the same list of professional names as the Fara tablet, and on the other a drawing that seems to be an abstract version of the cosmic geography (Fig. 3).[19] That the wheel-of-four-figures which occurs all through the third and well into the second millennium denotes the four quarters of the inhabited world is highly likely, but cannot easily be proven.[20]

A further piece of evidence concerning Mesopotamian cosmic geography comes from the SB legend of *Etana*, composed probably in the Old Babylonian period, but to be dated in any case somewhere between the Fara tablet and the *Mappa Mundi*. In this legend Etana flies to heaven on the back of an eagle; looking down, he sees the earth reduced to a fifth of its size "and the wide sea to an animal enclosure".[21] The image clearly points to an ocean encircling the earth and the creatures living on it.[22]

THE OUTER REGIONS AND THEIR INHABITANTS

With the expansion of their commercial interests from the late fourth millennium onwards, the Mesopotamians undoubtedly acquired and digested an enormous amount of relevant geographical and ethnographical knowledge. This knowledge, however, was used not only for straightforward practical purposes; it also served, reworked and edited, to define the nature and extent of Mesopotamian civilization in contrast to the outside world.[23] The sources reflect these different purposes, but without sharp demarcation of fact and fantasy. Mostly practical are the economic texts,[24] lexical

---

[18] Seux 1967: 305ff.; 421; Steiner 1982: 646.

[19] *OIP* **99** (*TAS*) no. 2, photo of reverse on p. 31 Fig. 29. Comparable configurations occur on the ED I city seals from Ur; cf. Legrain UE III 461 (new drawing Moorey *Iraq* **41** 106: 461), 412, 462, 454 (needs further study). A different drawing, perhaps an abstraction of the cosmic geography as well, is attested in *WVDOG* **43** no. 34 (ED Lu A) and in *OIP* **99** nos. 47 (drawing p. 30 Fig. 28; at least in part a list of temple officials and cultic personnel), 60 (ED Lu, edited in *MSL* **12** 16–21), and 282 (Literary text; cf. Alster *JCS* **28** 123); see Fig. 4.

[20] Erkanal 1975–76; Wiggermann 1983: 79 (2,3), 100 (2), 103 (7) (cosmic *laḫmu* in the *Göttertypentext* holding each other and Heaven and Earth – perhaps related to the *laḫmu* of the wheel of four figures); Wiggermann & Green 1994 § 2.4 (cosmic *laḫmu*). Cycladic and Minoan spiral constructions are perhaps very distant relatives (Schachermeyr 1967: 42ff., Fig. XXVII; comparable figures are interpreted by Gimbutas 1982: 89ff. as the four corners of the world) of the Syrian guilloche, a representation of (cosmic) water as well (Maxwell-Hyslop 1989); see Fig. 5.

[21] Kinnier Wilson 1985: 116, 32f. In the same text the world as seen from above is described with a number of further images that have the same implication.

[22] Mesopotamian cosmology is discussed by Lambert 1975 and 1980–83; Livingstone 1986: 71ff. For the possible spherical shape of the cosmos see Oppenheim 1978: 656 n. 48, citing *KAR* 23: 16.

[23] Michałowski 1986; Jonker 1993.

[24] All geographical names (most of them from economic texts) are collected in Röllig ed. 1977-.

lists,[25] itineraries,[26] maps[27] and registers[28] of limited areas, and mostly ideological are the royal inscriptions,[29] the *Sargon Geography*,[30] and the legends told about heroes[31] and kings[32] of old.

The reworking and editing of geographical knowledge, however, was not limited to pseudo-ethnographic depictions of foreign countries in literary texts.[33] As the *Mappa Mundi* already indicated, it takes on a much larger mythological dimension which can be fitted into into the general framework of Mesopotamian theology. The contrastive elements which play a part in the native definition of Mesopotamian civilization can be charted as follows:

	Centre	Periphery
PLACE	1. Lowland cities	Deserts, border rivers, foreign nations, mountains, sea[34]
	2. Surface of the earth	Underworld[35]
	3. Surface of the earth	Sky[36]
TIME	4. Present (being)	(Primordial) past (becoming)[37]
SOCIETY	5. Civilization, just rule	Barbarian, enemy, witch[38]
	6. Bound to gods	Ungodly[39]
	7. Living beings, noise	Spirits of the dead, silence[40]
ANIMALS	8. Domesticated	Wild[41]

[25] Green 1977; Mander 1980; Pettinato 1978; *MSL* **11**.
[26] Hallo 1964; Edzard 1976/80; Röllig 1983.
[27] Röllig 1980/83; Nemet-Nejat 1982: 5ff.
[28] Kraus 1955.
[29] Oppenheim 1978: 636 (colourful details in Sargon II's report of his campaign into Urartu); Zaccagnini 1982 (ideological descriptions of enemies).
[30] Grayson 1974.
[31] Especially Enmerkar, Lugalbanda, and Gilgamesh.
[32] Especially Sargon and Naram-Sin; cf. Goodnick-Westenholz 1984.
[33] Michałowski 1986: 144.
[34] Bruschweiler 1987 Part I (extensive discussion of kur in Mesopotamian mythology); Wiggermann & Green 1994 A §2.2 (mountains and sea as focus of monster mythology); Lackenbacher 1984 (steppe, desert, inhabited by barbarians, demons, and the dead); Zaccagnini 1982 (standardized descriptions of the mountains, seas, marshes and deserts where the enemy lives in Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions).
[35] Names and inhabitants of the underworld: Tallqvist 1934; Kramer 1960; Wächter 1969; Bottéro 1980: 30; 1983: 196ff.; Groneberg 1990 (underworld and other world are not always distinguished by these authors); Tsukimoto 1985 (all subjects).
[36] The primordial element sky – to be distinguished from the Sky god An; see Wiggermann 1992a: 284 – is a source of demons and diseases; cf. Oppenheim 1978: 657 n. 77; Stol 1993: 12ff.; Wiggermann 1992a: 295d. Unfortunately very little is known of the mythology which placed the monsters in the sky as stars and constellations; cf. Wiggermann 1994 A §2.4.
[37] Alster 1978; Bauer 1982 (past history of mankind); Wiggermann 1992a (past history of cosmos).
[38] Cooper 1983: 30ff.; Michałowski 1986: 130ff.; Malbran-Labat 1980 (subhuman barbarian); Haas 1980; Steiner 1982: 643f. (cluster foreign⇒inimical⇒demonic⇒mythical); Liverani 1979; Zaccagnini 1982; Fales 1982 (Assyrian political ideology and the image of the enemy); Soysal 1988 (*Menschenfressertext KBo* III 60; doubts about the demonic or human nature of the enemy in this text and the *Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sin*, Gurney 1955); foreign women as witches : Haas 1980: 38.
[39] Examples can be found in the descriptions of the subhuman barbarian (previous note).
[40] Bottéro 1980; 1983; Groneberg 1990; Jonker 1993 (Ch. 7); Tsukimoto 1985; Cassin 1968: 27–52 (opposition noise/life :: silence/death); Michałowski 1990: 385ff.; 396 (noise and silence).
[41] See end of paragraph.

	9.	Acting normally	Acting abnormally[42]
SUPERNATURAL	10.	Gods (cult)	Demons (no cult), mountain gods[43]
	11.	Anthropomorphism	Animal gods, monsters, monstrosities[44]

Most of the elements in this scheme have been discussed in detail elsewhere, so that we can limit ourselves here to an outline highlighting those features which lead up to our main subject.

The peripheral world of the right hand column can be defined as the shadow side of the familiar world in the left hand column.[45] The two spheres do not normally intermingle, and enemies,[46] wild animals,[47] spirits,[48] demons,[49] or monsters[50] infringing upon the civilized world are regarded as signs of divine displeasure with a king or with individual citizens. The fact that peripheral elements can and do infringe upon civilization shows that there is no impassable boundary between the two spheres. In contrast to legendary heroes such as Lugalbanda and Gilgamesh, mere human travellers do not like to venture deep into the unknown; and even the former when they do so seek protection in the performance of the proper rituals.[51] The dead, however, have no choice in the matter; they must travel westwards through the desert[52] and

---

[42] See next paragraph.

[43] Demons come out of the desert, the mountains (note 34), the sea (note 64), the underworld (note 35), the sky (note 36) and the past (note 37) – to which places of origin they are sent back (*Lamaštu*, spirits of the dead: cf. Bottéro 1983: 191ff.; *mamîtu*, "oath", *KAR* **74**: cf. Landsberger *ZDMG* **74** 442; witches: cf. G. Meier *Maqlû* III 128ff., VIII 33ff., IX 52ff.). As concerns their influence on man they resemble enemies, witches (note 38), and spirits of the dead (note 40). They "cannot distinguish between good and evil" (Sladek, *Inanna's Descent* 229: 52; see Groneberg 1990: 259). See further Wiggermann & Green 1994 A §3.2 (the rebellious mountain gods Sagar and Ebiḫ represent real enemies, also in art). For cannibalistic mountain gods, see note 91.

[44] Anthropomorphism versus animal or monster form, monsters as defeated enemies, mythology couched in political language : Wiggermann & Green 1994 A §2.1, 2.2., 3; monstrosities: *ibid.* 3.3.; Groneberg 1986.

[45] Ethnocentric ideology and image of the enemy and the inimical: Steiner 1982 (earlier periods); Liverani 1979; Zaccagnini 1982; (Neo-Assyrian); Fales 1982 (Neo-Assyrian; general literature); Groneberg 1990: 260 (motif of reversed world); Cassin 1968: 27ff. (opposition cosmos/light :: chaos/darkness).

[46] *Curse of Agade* (Cooper 1983); *Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sin* (Gurney 1955; uncertainty as to the human or demonic nature of the enemy); *Epic of Erra* (Cagni 1969 I 120ff.).

[47] Caplice *Or NS* **36** (1967) 14ff. (*namburbi* against the danger of wild animals).

[48] Jonker 1993 Ch. 7.

[49] Wiggermann 1992b: 91ff. (personification of diseases and representations of the plague as an enemy army).

[50] Monsters sometimes act destructively under the orders of the gods: cf. Wiggermann 1992b: 169f. (*uġallu*), 168 (*mušḫuššu* in *CT* **13** 33f.).

[51] Vanstiphout 1977; Thureau-Dangin *RA* **21** (1924) 127ff. Curiously the Assyrian royal inscriptions – the most extensive travel reports we possess – contain few sightings of wondrous scenes. Exceptions are the two-headed snakes, "whose [...] is death" and the winged yellow [snakes] Esarhaddon encountered in the Egyptian desert (R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons König von Assyrien* 112 Rev. 5ff.), and the fabulous monsters next to humans in ships on the seascapes of Sargon (Orthmann *PKG* XIV Abb. 223).

[52] Bottéro 1980: 31f. The same route is taken by *Lamaštu* and by witches (note 43), and once a year by Dumuzi who takes the dead with him (Bottéro 1983: 191ff.). They travel by means of a chariot (Bottéro 1980: 48 n. 94), a donkey, and a boat (especially clear in the case of *Lamaštu* : see Farber 1987: 85ff.; relevant are also the ships found in tombs, especially those from the royal tombs of Ur: see Strommenger *RlA* **3** 607 and the paragraph below).

cross the Ḫubur[53] to reach the kur, "mountainland",[54] the other world.

The other world may be located directly underneath the earth,[55] but also at the edges of the world. The latter we suspect to be the older view, since the geographical terminology stems largely from the third millennium, and Sumerian cosmogony lacks an underworld and a god ruling it.[56] The geographical terminology used to denote the Other World and its features derives in part from real geography and shows clearly the gradual shift from dreadful reality to the demonic. At the outer edge is *ajabba* or *Tâmtu*, "Okeanos",[57] terms used for real seas as well. Sea is surnamed "mother Ḫubur, who fashions all things" in *Enūma eliš*,[58] and alternates in SB incantations with Ulaya.[59] The Ulaya is a real river in Elam, and Ḫubur is the Ḫabur, a tributary of the Euphrates in the West, far distant from the heartland of cities. Apparently these two rivers were felt to mark the outer limits of the familiar world. The most common term for the Other World is kur, "mountain land", which is in opposition to kalam, "own country".[60] This kur is where the dead go, and where rebellious mountain gods,[61] demons, and monsters[62] are at home. Human enemies as well descend from the mountains,[63] and sometimes they are so dreadful that they cannot be distinguished from demons, the brood of Sea.[64] Another common term is edin ≈ *ṣēru*, "steppe", with roughly the same connotations as kur.[65] Both steppe and mountains harbour a host of wild animals[66] which are hunted and killed by Mesopotamian rulers from the late Uruk period onwards;[67] they are brought to the capital as spoils or tribute, and symbolically express the wide extent of just rule. Assyrian kings make statues of some of the more exotic animals,[68] and stand them as guardians at the entrances of their palaces as apotropaic monsters. Finally there is (Ḫ)arali, the "distant mountain

---

[53] Bottéro 1980: 31f.; 1983: 191f.; 195. Sumerian knows an i_7-kur-ra, "river of the Mountain" which "eats men" (*Enlil and Ninlil* I 93f.; cf. Cooper *JCS* **32** 183f.) as the river of the other world. See Tsukimoto 1985:8.

[54] See notes 34 and 35.

[55] Bottéro 1980: 29ff.; Lambert *JNES* **33** 296 (demons splitting the earth's crust like grass). In an Old Akkadian school text the chthonic god Tišpak (≈ Ninazu : see Wiggermann & Green 1994 A § 3) is called *abarak tiamtim*, "Steward of Sea" (A. Westenholz, *AfO* **25** 102), which shows the conceptual similarity of the underworld and the ocean already at this early period. See also note 76 on the confusion regarding the role of Utu.

[56] Wiggermann 1992a: 300 n. 32; Lambert 1980: 59ff. Ninazu and his son Ningišzida are in origin not so much underworld gods as chthonic gods (see note 55).

[57] *CAD* s.v. *ajabba* ; A. Goetze *JCS* **9** 16 n. 58; van Dijk *Or NS* **42** 503:5 ; Stol *BiOr* **48** 864.

[58] *Ee* I 133; cf. Michałowski 1990: 385f., who translates "Mother Noise" (*ḫubūru* "noise").

[59] The daughters of Anu draw water from *Ajabba* (≈ *tâmti*) or Ulaya; cf. Farber *JNES* **49** 299ff.; ^{id}*Ulaya ša bāb irkalli* : Kwasman *SAA* VI 288: 16.

[60] Steiner 1982 (cluster foreign⇒inimical⇒demonic⇒mythical: 643f.; the extent of kalam depends on the political situation of the moment); Jonker 1993 (extent of Old Akkadian empire as model for the later ideas of the home country). For idealized distant lands, see note 70.

[61] See note 43 and below note 91.

[62] See note 34.

[63] See note 38.

[64] See note 38 (Soysal 1988: *Menschenfressertext* and *Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sin*).

[65] See note 34.

[66] Lists similar to that of the *Mappa Mundi* (Oppenheim 1878: 656 n. 39) occur in texts from the late third millennium onwards; see Lion 1992; Lackenbacher 1984. The most common animals are onager, lion and gazelle.

[67] Magen 1986: 29ff.; Lackenbacher 1984; Lion 1992.

[68] Wiggermann & Green 1994 A § 4.

land",[69] originally the name of a legendary gold producing country, but at least from the early second millennium onwards only another name for the realm of the dead.[70]

The god who by nature supervises the deserts and distant mountains is the Sun God Utu ≈ *Šamaš*,[71] the "sheikh of the Big City (Other World) in the East",[72] "the one who provides food for the living creatures of the steppe",[73] he who "knows the depth and width of the inner part of the mountains",[74] and the judge of the dead.[75] The "place where the sun sets", the West, is a name for the world of the dead from the late third millennium onwards.[76] The Sun God is closely associated with three monsters,[77] the Scorpion Man (*girtablullû*),[78] the Bull Man (*kusarikku*),[79] and the Man-Faced Bison (alim).[80] The first two we met already on the *Mappa Mundi* as inhabitants of the outer regions; the third passed into oblivion after the end of the third millennium. Utu's son Sumugan, a donkey god and lord of the animals of the steppe, like his father, has unmistakable connections with the realm of the dead.[81]

---

[69] M. Civil *JAOS* **103** (1983) 56: 124.

[70] Komoróczy 1972; differently Jacobsen *JAOS* **103** (1983) 195 (name of the desert between Badtibira and Uruk, where Dumuzi herded his flocks and where he was killed ... only later Netherworld connections). Occasionally distant lands are idealized (Steiner 1982: 644 : Dilmun, Aratta; Oppenheim 1978: 640 : where the gods live; cf. also OB *Gilgamesh* : Greengus *OBTI* 277 rev. 20; *TIM* IX 46:16 with a seat of the gods in the cedar forest, interpreted, however, by Lambert *BWL* 12 n. 1 as revealing Amorite influence on Old Babylonian literature). The topic recurs in Herodotus 3.106 and 116: "at any rate the outer regions which surround the rest of the world and enclose it within, seem to possess the things we consider most lovely and rarest" (quoted after Romm 1992: 38). For distant lands as the source of valuable imports see Steiner 1982: 643f.

[71] Abundantly attested as such in third millennium iconography; see next section.

[72] *EWO* l. 375. East and West are not clearly distinguished in this contexts; see note 76.

[73] Alster *AcSum* **13** (1991) 39: 12.

[74] Alster *AcSum* **13** (1991) 41: 20.

[75] Alster *AcSum* **13** (1991) 55: 113ff.; Tsukimoto 1985: 14ff. (judgment of the dead). See Heimpel 1986: 148 (judges the dead in the general vicinity of the western horizon); Healey *CRRAI* **26** 239f. (in Akkadian texts); Groneberg 1990: 255f. (Als Garant der Totenpflege ... Grenzgänger zwischen Diesseits und Jenseits); Kramer 1960: 66 n. 10; Bottéro 1983: 200f. In connection with trade and travel : Lambert *BWL* 122; Lambert 1989 (ED hymn).

[76] Nergal is the "Lord of (the place where) the sun sets" (u_4-šú-[a]) in *TH* 464 (Sjöberg *TCS* III 136); Ereškigal is "queen of the place where the sun sets" (ki-u_4-$šu_4$) in *YBT* **1** 14 (Ur III dedicatory inscription). See Bottéro 1980: 30; Lambert 1980: 62; for the journey to the West see Bottéro 1983: 191ff.; for the abul-^{d}Utu-šú-a (*CT* **16** 9: 11 // *UET* **6** 391: 8), "gate of the (place where) the sun sets", from which demons come forth, cf. Bottéro 1980: 32, and differently Heimpel 1986: 148 n. 58. The relation with the ki-u_4-è-a, the "place where the sun rises" (Sjöberg *TCS* III 89f.), which in *EWO* 375 is the location of the uru-gal "netherworld" (literally "big city") remains unspecified, which in view of the confusion of the traditions concerning the mountains of sunrise and sunset (Heimpel 1986: 140ff.) is perhaps not surprising. It seems that the remaining "conceptual discontinuity" concerning the Sun's activities and properties in the other World (Heimpel 1986: 149f.: the Sun judges the dead, while the underworld where they live is in darkness) is at least in part explained by the early (cf. note 55) fusion of the two different Other World concepts : the distant shore and the dreary underworld.

[77] All three have cosmic functions: Wiggermann & Green 1994 A §2.4.

[78] Wiggermann & Green 1994 A, B no. 4.

[79] Wiggermann & Green 1994 A, B no.3.

[80] Wiggermann & Green 1994 A, B no. 17a; Wiggermann 1992b index s.v. alim. For the quadruped associated with Utu (and other gods) spelled ($EREN_2$)+X in ED III texts (cf. Lambert 1989; 11ff.) we propose, more or less in agreement with Lambert, the reading $alim_x(^{rín})$. This reading fits the evidence collected by Lambert (in personal names it can be understood as *kabtu*, or perhaps even, with Lambert, *qurādu*), and it has the advantage that the amissability of the element $EREN_2$ becomes understandable (spelling comparable to lulim and alim). In view of the Akkadian loan *kusarikku* from gud-alim (Wiggermann 1992b: 175, 8) the form arin/m indicated by the phonetic complement poses no problem.

[81] *EWO* 348ff. (lord of the steppe and its animals); underworld connections : Tallqvist *AGE* 451; Bottéro

While the gods and kings of the civilized centre to their mutual benefit keep life under tight control, the primeval past lingers on in the eerie periphery. The du_6-kù, "holy mound", which was thought to have created Enlil and the other gods according to third millennium mythology, sinks into the deep after the universe is organized, and becomes a retreat for demons, themselves the produce of the primordial cosmos.[82] The demonic brood of Sea, the mother of gods in later mythology,[83] still roams the fringes of civilization;[84] the destroyed primeval gods are banished to the ocean[85] or to the underworld,[86] or their spirits are made to roam the desert in the shape of wild animals, such as the onager (Enlil), the wolf (Anu), the camel (Tiamat) or the gazelles (the daughters of Anu).[87] The sneering description of mountain and desert dwellers, subhuman barbarians,[88] resembles that of Enkidu before he was civilized by the courtesan,[89] of primordial man before he was taught the arts and crafts of civilization,[90] and of the gods of the mountains who do not build houses or cities, and eat men.[91] The gradual shift from the strange and different past into the present is shown by figures such as Gilgamesh, who was two-thirds divine and one-third human, and by Lu-Nanna who lived at the time of Šulgi and, unlike his predecessors, was only two-thirds of an *apkallu* (sage) according to a tradition recorded in the series *bīt mēseri*.[92]

Although dangerous animals are feared as much as human enemies,[93] their bloodthirsty behaviour was considered lawful and in some way contributing to the welfare of god and man: "Utu, without you the wolf could not kill the lamb; the lion hiding itself in the field could not snatch away the kid".[94] Unnaturally benign predators, who leave their prey in peace, are attested in a Sumerian myth describing primeval times on the island of Dilmun,[95] but the interpretation of the passage is debated.[96] In any case, whether primeval or not, animals not behaving in their usual way should be considered as lacking the guidance of the gods, as "uncivilized" creatures, or, in

---

1983: 198f.; *GD* B 20 (Kramer *BASOR* **94** 8; spelled ^{d}*su-mu-kal*); *GE* VII iv 50; *AMT* **52** 1/11 ("his hands are filled with the dust of death"); *CT* **46** 43 (primordial god, killed by successor; cf. Jacobsen *SANE* 2/3).

[82] Wiggermann 1992a: 295d.

[83] *SbTU* II 5 obv. 7.

[84] Gurney 1955 (enemies of Naram-Sin mistaken for demons suckled by Tiamat); king of the Mandai called "creature of Tiamat" by Assurbanipal (Streck *Assurbanipal* 281: 20ff.; see also the description of Te-uman, king of Elam, *ibid.* 109: 69f.).

[85] I.e. on the *Mappa Mundi* (see above).

[86] Wiggermann 1992a; Bottéro 1983: 199; Heimpel 1986: 146.

[87] *KAR* 307 rev. 11ff. See Livingstone 1986: 82, 89 (An and Enlil here are gods defeated by Marduk; some evidence for gods and demons in the shape of animals).

[88] Cooper 1983: 30ff.; see note 38.

[89] Tigay 1982: 196ff.; Lackenbacher 1984: 69 (both authors discuss the differences between the descriptions of Enkidu and those of the nomads).

[90] Bauer 1982; Tigay 1982: 202ff.

[91] Alster 1975: 138: 271f., (*Instructions of Šuruppak*); see Cooper 1983: 35 n. 59 and for the cannibalism note 53 and Soysal 1988.

[92] Wilcke 1988: 128f.; Wiggermann 1992b: 73ff. (*apkallu* types and their histories).

[93] *ELA* 136–155 (the Babel of Tongues passage); cf. Alster 1983: 57f.; Vanstiphout forthc.

[94] Alster *AcSum* **13** (1991) 45: 47f. (Sumerian incantation to Utu), and his comments on p. 81 (with parallel).

[95] Attinger *ZA* **74** (1984) 1ff.; Alster 1983: 61ff. (text), 52ff. (the alleged paradise in Sumerian myth and literature).

[96] Alster 1983: 52ff. (the point is whether dangerous animals did not exist at all, or whether they only lacked their "civilized" dangerousness); Vanstiphout forthc.

other words, as peripheral elements. Excluding the special case of animal fables,[97] such animals are rare in the literary tradition but they do occur. One may adduce the animals preceding Etana in the *Sumerian King List*,[98] and emphatically so – in a symbolic way – the Middle Assyrian text referred to in the final paragraph. In art these animals are not uncommon,[99] and in the next paragraph we will meet several of them neatly situated in their peripheral environment.

It appears then that the properties of the elements in the right hand column of our scheme are more or less interchangeable: that the inimical fuses with the demonic, and the peripheral with death and the underworld, thus resulting in a more or less unified image of all that is evil and conspires against civilized life, i.e. zi-šà-gál.[100] The geography involved is marked by an increasing loss of empirical content, until finally the Land of No Return is reached; this is the realm of the dead, whence no traveller can bring back reliable information.

The evidence adduced so far stems mostly from literary texts, and is often difficult to date. In order to fix the peripheral world in history we will now use another type of source, easier to date than literature : iconography.

SCENES FROM THE SHADOW SIDE

One of the demonic peripheral animals is the aurochs of the mountains (am-kur-ra), described in its setting in *Lugalbanda I* 292ff.[101] It is hunted by Lugalbanda himself (*ibid.* 300ff.) as well as by the Anzû bird (*Lugalbanda II* 63ff.),[102] who lives deep in the mountains. The Anzû-bird hunting in the mountains is known not only from this literary source, but also from seals and other artefacts of the ED III period, on which we see him hunting the aurochs (Fig. 6),[103] but more often the Man-Faced Bison (alim), a mythological creature associated with the Sun God (Fig. 7,8).[104] The relation between these elements is made entirely clear by a further seal on which the mountain of sunrise has the form of a recumbent bison attacked by the Anzû-bird.[105] The most explicit scene combining a whole host of peripheral elements occurs on a seal from Ur (Fig. 8). The upper register shows a mountain with vegetation and two Man-Faced Bisons attacked by an Anzû and by the forerunner of the *ukaduḫḫa*, the monster which belonged to Adad in the Akkad period.[106] Between them lies a stag, the animal of

[97] Falkowitz 1984; Vanstiphout 1988: 196f.; 1989.

[98] Wilcke 1988: 134f.; 1989: 567f. (Etana becomes King of the Animals and is addressed as such by the snake; see Kinnier Wilson 1985: 60:8; Etana's peripheral qualities are stressed by the fact that he becomes an underworld god: Kramer *Two Elegies* 54:97; *GE* VI iv 50).

[99] Wiggermann & Green 1994 A § 4.

[100] Bauer 1982; differently Alster & Vanstiphout *AcSum* **9** 41 n. 9.

[101] Hallo *JAOS* **103** (1983) 165–180.

[102] Wilcke *Das Lugalbandaepos* 1969: 63ff.

[103] Fuhr-Jaeppelt 1972: 80 with Abb. 46a; see also Amiet *GMA* 1062, 1282; earlier (ED I/II) examples Fuhr-Jaeppelt 1972 Abb. 69,70,74.

[104] Fig. 7: Fuhr-Jaeppelt 1972 Abb. 20; Fig. 8: *ibid.* Abb. 77 = *PKG* XIV 132a = *GMA* 1268. This hunting Anzû is to be distinguished from the heraldic Anzû (probably representing Enlil) who stretches out his wings above two antithetically placed animals (probably in some cases representing another god); cf. Wiggermann & Green 1994 A § 2.1.

[105] Fuhr-Jaeppelt 1972 Abb. 97 = *GMA* 1260. For the cosmological role of the Man-Faced Bison see Wiggermann & Green 1994 A § 2.4.

[106] Wiggermann & Green 1994 Type 25.

Ninḫursaga, the "Lady of the Foothills".[107] The lower register again shows a mountain with vegetation, and on it a monkey playing a flute. Real monkeys do not play the flute,[108] and thus the creature belongs to the class of unnatural, peripheral animals as defined as the preceding paragraph.[109] The rest of the field is filled with elements well known from a group of roughly contemporaneous seals showing the Sun God (or the Moon God)[110] travelling by boat across a mythical sea[111] : star, moon, a plough, a Bird Man[112] holding a stalk of vegetation, and the Man-Faced Lion.[113] The latter two monsters remain unidentified, but the Bird Man is known to be an enemy of the gods in the Akkad period, and as such he is a peripheral being.[114] Finally, the plough is associated with gods of agriculture, in later periods with Ningirsu, but earlier with the chthonic god Ninazu/Tišpak,[115] who has Other World connections as well.[116] Just as the hunt of Anzû in the *Lugalbanda Epic* is but a colourful detail unrelated to the story line, the scenes on the seals are static and probably do not purport more than to evoke the image of the Other World.

The Other World imagery of the seals sets the stage for the analysis of a much more important document, the panel on the ED IIIa lyre from grave PG 789 in Ur (Fig. 9).[117] The lower register shows from left to right a Scorpion Man (*girtablullû*)[118] holding a dipper,[119] a gazelle holding two beakers, and a large container with a dipper; the second register has a *Tierkapelle* with a donkey or onager playing the lyre, a fawn, a jerboa[120] or jackal[121] with a sistrum and on its knees a small drum, and finally a

---

[107] Wiggermann & Green 1994 A § 2.1.

[108] Dunham 1985: 245ff. (monkeys and music), with addendum 1990 (there is no evidence in the literature on monkeys ever having been trained to play a wind instrument).

[109] Wiggermann & Green 1994 A § 4. There is another unnatural animal (monkey?) on the seal cited in note 105.

[110] Even though the god travelling in the barge is depicted with rays (ED : Amiet *GMA* 1430, 1431, 1435; Akkadian: 1500, 1504–1506) or even with rays and a saw (? ED : *GMA* 1435), his identity is not completely ascertained (Collon 1992a: 28f.). The Moon God, on the other hand, is present on most of the seals in the shape of a crescent, and thus might not be the god travelling in the barge.

[111] Wiggermann & Green 1994 A § 2.4; examples collected in Amiet *GMA* pl. 106–109; 113 (Akkad period), 132; Furlong 1987: 170ff.

[112] Wiggermann & Green 1994 A § 1, 2.4, Type 2.

[113] Wiggermann & Green 1994 A § 2.4, Type 17b.

[114] The Bird Man is sometimes mistakenly indentified with Anzû.

[115] Amiet *CRRAI* **20** 144ff. Fig. 12 (Akkadian; god on *mušḫuššu* holding a plough); Frankfort *SCS* 609 (god with plough introduced to Enki; inscription mentions Tišpak); Jacobsen *OIP* **43** Year Name 84 (plough of (the temple of) Tišpak; cf. p. 186: ploughs in other temples). Ninazu is a god of grain in the myth *How Grain Came to Sumer* (see Römer *BiOr* **35** 182f.; Bruschweiler 1987: 54f.). Plough of Ningirsu : Seidl *BaM* **4** 7ff. Symbol XIV.

[116] Chthonic gods are the subject of a forthcoming article; see provisionally Wiggermann & Green 1994 A § 3.1. and above notes 55f.

[117] *PKG* XIV Fig. IX and p. 192; Bleibtreu 1974 (with previous literature); Rashid 1984: 40f.; Frankfort, *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* (1970) 75f.; A. D. Kilmer & D. Collon , art. *Leier* in *RlA* VI 572ff. For animal symposia in general see Bleibtreu 1974; Wiggermann & Green 1994 A § 4 (Fabeltier). See also Stauder 1969 (Mediaeval European parallels; reference courtesy A.D. Kilmer) and Kenner 1970 (broad study of the theme of the reversed world in antiquity; reference courtesy B. Groneberg).

[118] The raised arms are typical for the Scorpion Man, and derive from the scorpion's pinchers.

[119] For the object see Boese *UAVA* 6 Pl. XVII/1, XVII/1, XXIV/1; Börker-Klähn *BaF* **6** no. 12; the native name of the object is ^{gi}a-lá = *nasbû* (cf. *CAD* N.2 24 for further Sumerian equivalences).

[120] Frankfort *op. cit.* (in note 117) 75.

[121] E. Douglas van Buren, *The Fauna of Ancient Mesopotamia* (1939) 14 (jackal, not ichneumon); Bleibtreu 1975: 7f.

dancing bear; above it are a wolf (?)[122] – as butcher – with the butcher's knife in his belt[123] and holding a serving table with a lamb's head, a boar's head, a leg of mutton, and a lion with a large vessel[124] and in its right hand a lamp;[125] the upper register contrasts with the three below it, and has a static scene: a hairy hero (*laḫmu*)[126] holding two Man-Faced Bisons (alim).

The lower register is the smallest, and so probably the least important, indicating that, as is the case more often, the monument has to be 'read' from bottom to top. The contents of the monument support this way of reading: what is being shown is clearly the preparation for a festive meal, the reception of a guest.[127] As was observed already by Frankfort,[128] however, the guest is conspicuously absent or, in other words, is yet to arrive; and this is exactly what the lower register expresses: the Scorpion Man appears here in the function he is known to have from the *Gilgamesh Epic*, *viz.* that of a doorman at the entrance to the Other World, here he stands ready to welcome the expected guest with a refreshing drink.[129] Indeed, the remainder of the imagery has strong Other World connections as well: the heraldic Man-Faced Bisons of the upper register signify the dominion of Utu, and the wild animals behaving unnaturally signify the shift into the demonic which is typical for the periphery.

A final question must be asked. Who is the expected guest? Before this can be answered, however, we must make one further observation, that concerns the way in which the panel refers to the object it is part of. That object is a lyre with a bull-shaped body – the same type of lyre that is being played by the wild ass. It does not require a great stretch of imagination to conclude that with this self-reference the lyre reveals its purpose. It will serve at a banquet similar to the one depicted on the panel: a feast to be held at the Other Side. With this conclusion all elements fall into place; the expected guest is the person to be laid to rest in grave PG 789, and the lyre is among the gifts to the inhabitants of the Other Side, the world of the dead.[130] The scenes on the panel reveal how the dead person and his contemporaries imagined their future as ghosts.[131]

Thus the association of wild animals and monsters, specifically Anzû and the *girtablullû*, which we found in the Late Babylonian *Mappa Mundi* in the context of an other world can be observed as early as the ED III period. Two of the other demonic elements mentioned by the *Mappa Mundi*, the *kusarikku* and the destroyed enemy

---

122 The identity of the animal is doubtful; cf. Bleibtreu 1975: 6f.

123 Frankfort *op. cit.* (in note 117) 75: carving knife (not dagger); cf. $giri_2$-lá = *ṭābiḫu* "butcher".

124 See Waetzoldt *WO* **6** 22 (^{dug}šagan); cf. Bleibtreu 1975: 6 (Bierkrug).

125 See Bleibtreu 1975: 6f.

126 This being does not have a specific relation to Utu, but does occur elsewhere in a mountainous environment; see f.i. *PKG* XIV 135c (Akkadian seal).

127 See Glassner 1990 (visitor received with drinks, food, and a garment; contests); Vanstiphout 1992 (disputes at banquets); Collon 1992b (banquets in art).

128 Frankfort *op. cit.* (in note 117) 75.

129 Cool water, beer, and wine are among the drinks served in Sumerian texts; cf. Glassner 1990.

130 Gifts for the gods of the netherworld and a banquet upon arrival there occur in the Sumerian composition (Ur III) *The Death of Ur-Namma* (see most recently S.N. Kramer, 1991). Lyres as grave gifts are attested in Presargonic Lagash.

131 The question of the gates and entries to the Other World has been treated by Heimpel 1986: 140ff. In our opinion this author takes the material too literally, as if based upon reports from trustworthy travellers.

gods,[132] are most easily shown to have existed as such in the third millennium by a series of Akkadian seals.[133] These show Utu, the members of his court, and sometimes his sister Inanna defeating gods and monsters in a mountainous environment. The example presented here (Fig. 10)[134] shows a *kusarikku* as the defeated monster. These defeated gods are not the members of an earlier generation of gods replaced by a younger generation after a cosmic battle. This appears from two observations: firstly, Utu and Inanna are not expected to be the champions of the younger generation, since they are never attested as such. Secondly, there is a matter of dress: the defeated gods are usually though not always naked, while the victors are generally though not always fully clothed. If the battle was a primeval one this difference would be hard to explain, since both groups would be living in the same world, either with or without the gifts of Laḫar (sheep) and Uttu (Spider; goddess of weaving). The defeated gods are rather rebellious mountain gods of the type of Ebiḫ and Sagar, defeated by Inanna and Ningirsu respectively.[135] Since such mountain gods "do not build houses or cities, and eat men",[136] their nudity is best understood as a peripheral feature distinguishing them from the "civilized" gods of Sumer and Akkad.[137]

Obviously the successful battles of the home gods against their named (Ebiḫ and Sagar) or unnamed (on the seals) opponents serve to support a reassuring interpretation of reality, in which, no matter what seems to happen, foreign evil is defeated and the gods are on our side.

Thus, on the basis of the iconographic sources we conclude that a geographical interpretation of the own and the foreign, the safe and the threatening, the divine and the demonic, of life and death, was fully operative in the third millennium.

***

Undoubtedly it is possible to supplement this somewhat schematic discussion with further examples from all periods.[138] More interesting, however, is the point that elements of the symbolic code as presented above were consciously applied by first millennium literary artists in their work. The most striking cases are the *Underworld Vision*, the *Göttertypentext*, and a curious poem from Assur concerning a hunter and his prey.

---

[132] For the *bašmu* and *mušḫuššu* of the *Mappa Mundi* see the literature cited in note 11 above; for the winged demonic beings see Wiggermann & Green 1994 A § 5. For the shift from mountains to sea as the habitat of monsters see ibid. § 2.2.

[133] Boehmer *UAVA* **4** (1965) Abb. 300ff.; cf Wiggermann & Green 1994 A § 2.2.

[134] Boehmer *UAVA* **4** (1965) Abb. 300.

[135] Wiggermann & Green 1994 A § 2.2.

[136] See note 91 above.

[137] The way men and the gods dress is an issue in the descriptions of primeval times (Alster & Vanstiphout *AcSum* **9** 14: 5ff.; no clothes for the gods before Laḫar and Uttu; the late appearance of Uttu and flax in *Enki and Ninḫursag* probably implies initial nudity of the gods as well; see Jacobsen *JBL* **100** 516f. with n. 7; Bauer 1982: 377), of Enkidu (Tigay 1982: 200: naked or in some sort of rustic garment), and of the dead, for instance in *Inanna's Descent*.

[138] One case worth mentioning in passing is the so-called *kudurru* Seidl *BaM* **4** no. 40 from Susa, with a procession of gods making merry and unnaturally sedate wild animals. Below this procession are the walls of a "Big City", resting on a *bašmu* snake, and above it a series of divine symbols. The stone is guarded by the viper of Ištaran lying on top. A, Moortgat, *Bergvölker* (1932) 99 and *Bildwerk und Volkstum Vorderasiens zur Hethiterzeit* (1934) 12f. considers it as the "Wiedergabe eines mythischen Weltsystems."

In the *Underworld Vision*[139] an Assyrian prince sees in a dream the lord of the underworld, Nergal, surrounded by his court. The members of Nergal's court are described in detail, and while most of their names are known from other sources, the figures described do not occur in art. Apparently they are inventions created on the basis of a general rule: the dreadful inhabitants of the underworld are monsters generally composed out of parts of deadly animals.[140] Thus Death (*Mūtu*) has the head of a Snake-Dragon, Evil Genius (*Šēdu lemnu*) the talons of an eagle, and Take-Away-Quickly (*Ḫumuṭ-tabal*), the ferryman of the underworld, has the head of an Anzû. In this case it might be argued that the beings described are not so much the inventions of an artist as what the prince reported to have seen in his dream; but even so the monsters remain new inventions created on the basis of a general rule.

The unique iconographic programme of the *Göttertypentext*,[141] whether it was ever executed in pictorial art or not, reveals an unexpected tendency to visualize abstractions as active beings. The text personifies nouns which are not personified elsewhere, and represents these as monsters: Conflict (*adammû*) and Struggle (*ippiru*) grasping each other in a configuration that may derive from the wheel of four figures,[142] together with Zeal (*ḫinṭu*), and Grief (*niziqtu*). That these beings are monsters is quite in accordance with their unpleasant character; but the detailed descriptions specify monsters never attested in art, which goes to show that they were invented to match the newly created demonic abstractions. That the designer of the *Göttertypen* freely invented personified abstractions opens our eyes to the possibility that other actors of Mesopotamian iconography may have had such abstract connotations as well. In fact, the interpretation of royal ritual in mythological terms in a text type generally considered to be highly esoterical, but which may actually reflect more common patterns of thought, *viz.* the commentary,[143] is related to such an abstract intrepretation of art figures. Quotation of a few lines may suffice : "the king, who from inside the Ekur wears on his head a gold crown and sits on a sedan chair ... (it is) Ninurta, who avenged his father; ... the horses that are harnessed to it (the chariot of the king), (they are) the ghost of Anzû".[144] A representation of the king triumphing over his enemies with the same mythological interpretation is attested on the bronze doors of Sennacherib's *akītu* chapel, where it is parallel to Assur triumphing over the powers of chaos.[145] A similar symbolic interpretation is given to the royal hunt,[146] and undoubtedly artistic representations of the royal hunt connote divine support against evil. Assyrian kings show their symbolic understanding of the hunt by placing representations of their most exotic trophies, such as a female water buffalo (*apsasîtu*), a whale (*naḫiru*) and a yak (*burḫiš*), at the gates of their palaces as if they were apotropaic beings.[147]

The symbolic quality of the royal hunt and the demonic nature of the quarry

---

[139] A. Livingstone *SAA* III (1989) 68ff.; cf. K. Frank *MAOG* 14/2 (1941) 24ff.; Wiggermann & Green 1994 A § 1.
[140] But not only of dangerous animals. *Mamîtu*, 'oath' has a goat's head.
[141] F. Köcher, *MIO* **1** (1953) 57ff.; W.G. Lambert, *Or NS* **54** (1985) 197f.
[142] See note 20 above.
[143] Edited in Livingstone 1986.
[144] Livingstone 1986: 25.
[145] B. Menzel, *Assyrische Tempel* (1981) 56.
[146] U. Magen, *BaF* **9** (1986) 29ff.; Lion 1992; S. Herbordt *SAAS* **1** (1992) 95.
[147] See note 68 above.

is brought out unequivocally in a unique Assyrian poem composed perhaps during the reign of Tiglath-Pileser I.[148] A hunter, clearly the Assyrian king, plans to attack the wild donkeys who, thinking themselves safe in their mountain fastnesses, decide to oppose him. After an extispicy the hunter and his warriors seek out the enemy, and punish them for their sins against Assur. We already met the wild donkey as a peripheral element on the *Mappa Mundi*, and the donkeys in the poem, endowed with the faculty of speech, are every bit as eerie as the ones making merry on first millennium seals.[149] It is therefore probably no coincidence that the tablet continues with a version of *Ištar's Descent* : the subjects are related. The purpose of the poem may have been to express in words the symbolic quality of the royal donkey hunt.[150]

[148] Ebeling 1949; cf. Hurowitz & Goodnick Westenholz 1990: 46ff.

[149] D. Collon, *First Impressions* (1987) 937, 938; S. Herbordt, *SAAS* **1** (1992) 207 (Nimrūd 143); B. Teissier, *Ancient Near Eastern Seals in the Marcopoli Collection* (1984) 208; Wiggermann & Green 1994 A § 4 (relation with third millennium animal symposia undeniable).

[150] In the later second and first millennium art wild animals (horse, wild goat, bull) and monsters can be supplied with wings (Wiggermann & Green 1994 A § 5), another peripheral feature covered by the *Mappa Mundi* (see note 15). Earlier wings belong to beings at home in the sky or related to Iškur/Adad.

REFERENCES

Alster, B.
1975 *Studies in Sumerian Proverbs*. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag.

1978 "Enki and Ninhursag. The Creation of the First Woman", in: *UF* **10** 15–27.

1983 "Dilmun, Bahrein, and the Alleged Paradise in Sumerian Myth and Literature." Pp.39–75 in: D.T. Potts ed., *Dilmun. New Studies in the Archaeology and Early History of Bahrein*. (*BBVO* **2**).

Bauer, J.
1982 "Leben in der Urzeit Mesopotamiens", in: *CRRAI* **28** 377–83.

Bleibtreu, E.
1975 "Zur Problematik von 'Tierkapelle' und Tiersymposion' in der mesopotamischen Flachbildkunst", in: *WZKM* **67** 1–19.

Bottéro, J.
1980 "La mythologie de la mort en Mésopotamie ancienne", in: *CRRAI* **26** 25–52.

1983 "Les morts et l'au-delà dans les rituels en Accadien contre l'action des revenants"', in: *ZA* **73** 153–203.

Bruschweiler, F.
1987 *Inanna. La déesse triomphante en vaincue dans la cosmologie sumérienne*. Leuven: Peeters.

Burkert, W.
1985 *Greek Religion*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Cagni, L.
1969 *L'epopea di Erra*. Studi semitici **34**. Roma: Instituto di Studi del Vicino Oriente dell' Università.

Cassin, E.
1968 *La splendeur divine*. Paris: Maisonneuve.

Collon, D.
1992a "The Near-Eastern Moon God." Pp. 19–37 in: D. Meijer (ed.), *Natural Phenomena. Their Meaning, Depiction and Description in the Ancient Near East*. Amsterdam: KNAW.

1992b "Banquets in the Art of the Ancient near East", in: *RO* **4** 23–9.

Cooper, J.S.
1983 *The Curse of Agade*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP.

Dunham, S.
1985 "The Monkey in the Middle", in: *ZA* **75** 234–64.

Ebeling, E.
1949 "Ein Heldenlied auf Tiglathpileser I. und der Anfang einer neuen Version von 'Ištar's Höllenfahrt' nach einer Schülertafel aus Assur", in: *Or NS* **18** 30–9.

Edzard, D.O.
1976–80 "Itinerare" in: *RlA* **5** 216–20.

Erkanal, A.
1975–76 "Eine Untersuchung zur 'Viermenschenradmotiv"', in: *Anadolu* **19** 90–105.

Fales, F.M.
1982 "The Enemy in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: 'The Moral Judgment"', in: *CRRAI* **25** 425–35.

Falkowitz, R.S.
1984 "Discrimination and Condensation of Sacred categories: The Fable in Early Mesopotamian Literature", in: *Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique* **30** 1–32.

Farber, W.
1987 "Tamarisken – Fibeln – Skolopender", in : *Studies Reiner* 85–105.

Fuhr-Jaeppelt, I.
1972 *Materialien zur Ikonographie des Löwenadlers Anzu-Imdugud*. München: Scharl und Strohmayer.

Furlong, I.
1987 *Divine Headdresses of Mesopotamia in the Early Dynastic Period. BAR IS* **334** (1987).

Gimbutas, M.
1982 *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe. Myths and Cult Images*. London: Thames and Hudson.

Glassner, J.-J.
1990 "L'hospitalité en Mésopotamie ancienne: aspects de la question de l'étranger", in: *ZA* **80** 60–75.

Grayson, A.K.
1974 "The Empire of Sargon of Akkad", in: *AfO* **25** 56–64.

Green, M.W.
1974 "A Note on the Archaic Period Geographical List from Warka", in: *JNES* **36** 293–94.

Groneberg, B.
1987 "Die sumerisch-akkadische Inanna/Ištar, Hermaphroditos", in: *WO* **8** 26–46.

1990 "Zu den mesopotamischen Unterweltsvorstellungen: Das Jenseits als Fortsetzung des Diesseits", in: *AoF* **17** 244–61.

Goodnick Westenholz, J.
1984 "Heroes of Akkad", in: *JAOS* **103** 327–36.

Gurney, O.R.
1955 "The Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sin", in: *AnSt* **5** 93–113.

Haas, V
1980 "Die Dämonisierung des Fremden und des Feindes im Alten Orient", in: *ROr* **41.2** 37–44.

Hallo, W.W.
1964 "The Road to Emar", in: *JCS* **18** 57–88.

Heimpel, W.
1986 "The Sun at Night and the Doors of Heaven in Babylonian Texts", in: *JCS* **38** 127–51.

Henning, R.
1944 *Terrae Incognitae: Eine Zusammenstellung und kritische Bewertung der wichtigsten vorcolumbischen Entdeckungsreisen an Hand der darüber vorliegende Originalberichte*. 2. Auflage. Leiden: Brill.

Horowitz, W.
1988 "The Babylonian Map of the World", in: *Iraq* **50** 147–65.
Hurowitz, V. & J. Goodnick Westenholz
1990 "*LKA* 63: A Heroic Poem in Celebration of Tiglath-Pileser I's Muṣru-Qumanu Campaign", in: *JCS* **42** 1–9.
Jacobsen, Th.
1985 "The Asakku in Lugal-e", in: *Studies Sachs* 225–32.
Jonker, G.
1993 *De Topografie van de Herinnering*. RU Groningen Diss.
1995 *The Topography of Remembrance*. Leiden: Brill.
Kenner, H.
1970 *Das Phänomen der verkehrten Welt in der griechisch-römischen Antike*. Klagenfurt: Verlag des Geschichtsvereins für Kärnten.
Kinnier Wilson, J.V.
1985 *The Legend of Etana*. Warminster: Aris & Philips.
Komoróczy, G.
1972 "Das mythische Goldland Harali im Alten Orient", in: *AAAH* **26** 113–23.
Kramer, S.N.
1960 "Death and the Nether World according to the Sumerian Literary Texts", in: *Iraq* **22** 59–69.
1991 "The Death of Urnammu", in: *Studies Mikasa* 193–214.
Kraus, F.R. "Provinzen des neusumerischen Reiches von Ur", in: *ZA* **51** 45–75.
Lackenbacher, S.
1984 "L'image du désert d'après les textes littéraires assyro-babyloniens." Pp 67–79 in: Anon. *Le désert. Actes du colloque de Cartigny 1983*.
Lambert, W.G.
1975 "The Cosmology of Sumer and Babylon." Pp. 42–62 in: C. Blacker & M. Loewe (eds.) *Ancient Cosmologies*, Cambridge UP.
1980 "The Theology of Death", in: *CRRAI* **26** 53–66.
1983 "Kosmogonie" in: *RlA* **6** 218–22.
1989 "Notes on a Work of the Most Ancient Semitic Literature", in: *JCS* **41** 1–33.
Lion, B.
1992 "La circulation des animaux exotiques au Proche-Orient antique", in: *CRRAI* **38** 357–65.
Liverani, M.
1979 "The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire." Pp. 297–317 in: M.T. Larsen (ed.), *Power and Propaganda*. Copenhagen, 297–317.
Livingstone, A.
1986 *Mystical and Mythological Explanatory Works of Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars*. Oxford UP.
Magen, U.
1986 *Assyrische Königsdarstellungen. Aspekte der Herrschaft*. Mainz: Philipp von Zabern.

Malbran-Labat, F.
1980 "Élements pour une récherche sur le nomadisme au premier millénaire av. J.-C., I: l'image du nomade", in: *JA* **268** 123–151.

Mander, P.
1980 "Brevi considerazioni sul testo 'lessicale' SF 23 = SF 24 e paralleli da Abu Ṣalābīkh", in: *OrAnt* **19** 187–92.

Maxwell-Hyslop, R.
1989 "An Early Group of Quadruple Spirals", in: *Studies Özguç* 219–23.

Meier, G.
1939 "Ritual für das Reisen über Land", in: *AfO* **12** 141–44.

Michałowski, P.
1986 "Mental Maps and Ideology: Reflections on Subartu." Pp. 129–56 in: H. Weiss (ed.), *The Origins of Cities in Dry-Farming Syria and Mesopotamia in the Third Millennium B.C.*

1990 "Presence at the Creation", in: *Studies Moran* 381–96.

Millard, A.R.
1987 "Cartography in the Ancient Near East." Pp. 107–16 in: J.B. Harley & D. Woodward (eds.), *The History of Cartography Vol. I: Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean.*

Nemet-Nejat, K.R.
1982 *Late Babylonian Field Plans in the British Museum.* (*Studia Pohl* **11**) Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute.

Oppenheim, A.L.
1978 "Man and Nature in Ancient Mesopotamia", in: *Dictionary of Scientific Bibliography* **15** 634–66.

Pettinato, G.
1978 "L'atlante geografico del Vicino Oriente antico attestato ad Ebla e ad Abu Ṣalābīkh", in: *Or NS* **47** 50–73.

Rashid, S.A.
1984 *Musikgeschichte in Bildern. Bd. II/2: Musik des Altertums. Mesopotamien.* Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik.

Röllig, W.
1977- *Répertoire géographique des textes cunéiformes.* (ed.) Wiesbaden: Reichert.

1983a "Landkarten" in: *RlA* **6** 464–67.

1983b "Ein Itinerar aus Dur-Katlimmu", in: *Damaszener Mitteilungen* **1** 279–84.

Romm, J.S.
1992 *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought: Geography, Exploration, and Fiction.* Princeton UP.

Schachermeyr, F.
1967 *Ägäis und Orient.* Wien: Böhlaus.

Seux, M.-J.
1967 *Épithètes royales akkadiennes et sumériennes.* Paris: Letouzey et Ané.

Soysal, O.
1988 "Einige Überlegungen zu KBo III 60", in. *VO* **7** 107–28.

Stauder, W.
1969 "Asinus ad lyram." Pp. 25–32 in: U. Aarburg and P. Cahn eds., *Helmuth Osthoff zu seinem 70. Geburtstag*. Frankfurter musikhistorische Studien, Tutzig: Schneider.

Steiner, G.
1982 "Der Gegensatz 'Eigenes land' : 'Ausland, Fremdland, Feindland' in der Vorstellung des Alten Orients", in : *CRRAI* **25** 633–64

Stol, M.
1988 "De Babylonische Wereldkaart", in: *Phoenix* **34.2** 29–35.
1993 *Epilepsy in Babylonia* (*CM* **2**). Groningen: Styx Publications.

Tallqvist, K.
1934 *Sumerisch-Akkadische Namen der Totenwelt* (*StOr* **5.4**). Helsinki.

Teixidor, J.
1989 "Géographies du voyageur au Proche-Orient ancien", in: *AuOr* **7** 105–15.

Tigay, J.H.
1982 *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic*. Philadelphia: U. of Pennsylvania Press.

Tsukimoto, A.
1985 *Untersuchungen zur Totenpflege (kispum) im Alten Mesopotamien*. (*AOAT* **216**). Neukirchen.

Vanstiphout, H.L.J.
1977 "A Note on the Series 'Travel in the Desert'", in: *JCS* **29** 52–56.
1988 "The Importance of the 'Tale of the Fox'", in: *AcSum* **10** 191–227.
1989 "Fabels uit Mesopotamië", in: *Phoenix* **34.2** 15–28.
1992 "The Banquet Scene in the Mesopotamian Debate Poems", in: *RO* **4** 9–22.
forthc. "Another Attempt at the 'Spell of Nudimmud'", (forthcoming in *RA*)

Vermeule, E.
1979 *Apects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.

Wächter, L.
1969 "Unterweltsvorstellungen und Unterweltsnamen in Babylonien, Israel und Ugarit", in: *MIO* **15** 327–35.

Wiggermann, F.A.M.
1983 "Exit Talim. Studies in Babylonian Demonology I", in: *JEOL* **27** 90–105.
1992a "Mythological Foundations of Nature." Pp. 279–304 in: D. Meijer (ed.), *Natural Phenomena. Their Meaning, Depiction and Description in the Ancient Near East*. Amsterdam: KNAW.
1992b *Mesopotamian Protective Spirits. The Ritual Texts*. (*CM* **1**), Groningen: Styx Publications.
forthc. "*mušḫuššu*" in: *RlA*.

Wiggermann, F.A.M. & A.R. Green
1994 "Mischwesen", in: *RlA* **7** 222–264.

Wilcke, C.
1988 "Die sumerische Königsliste und erzählte Vergangenheit." Pp. 113–40 in: J. von Ungern-Sternberg & H. Reinau (eds.), *Vergangenheit in mündlicher Überlieferung*. Stuttgart: Teubner, 113–40.
1989 "Genealogical and Geographical Thought in the Sumerian King List", in: *Studies Sjöberg* 557–71.

Zaccagnini, C.
1982 "The Enemy in the Neo-Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: the 'Ethnographic' Descriptions", in: *CRRAI* **25** 409–25.

Captions to the figures

Fig. 1. Late Babylonian *Mappa Mundi*, drawn after the photograph in M.A. Beek, *Atlas van het Tweestromenland* (1960) pl. 155. The numbers (after Horowitz 1988) indicate the inscriptions: 1 mountain, 2 city, 3 Urartu, 4 Assur, 5 Der, 6 (broken), 7 swamp, 8 Susa, 9 channel, 10 Bit Yakin, 11 city, 12 Habban, 13 Babylon, 14–17 Ocean, 18 'where the sun is not seen', 18–22 (measures of distances), 23–25 (no inscriptions). See note 11.

Fig. 2. Early Dynastic III map from Fara, drawn after the photograph in Deimel *WVDOG* **43** (*SF*) pl. VIII. See notes 16–17.

Fig. 3. Early Dynastic III abstract map from Abu Salabikh, from photograph *OIP* **99** (*TAS*) p. 31 fig. 29. See note 19.

Fig. 4. Possibly another Early Dynastic III abstract map, drawn after *OIP* **99** (*TAS*) no. 47, and *ibid.* p. 30 fig. 28. See note 19.

Fig. 5. *a* Wheel of four figures, from Ur. After Legrain, *UE* **3** no. 393. ED I.

b Wheel of four figures, from Ur. After Legrain, *UE* **3** no. 518. ED III (Seal of Mesannepada).

c Related configuration of two figures (*laḫmu*'s) from Lagaš. After Allotte de la Fuÿe, *DP* pl. VIII no. 24 (Presargonic). See note 142. From the OB period onwards the figures in the wheel of four figures are recognizable as *laḫmu*'s and associated with flowing vases and water (Wiggermann *JEOL* **27** 100). See notes 20, 142.

Fig. 6. Anzû attacking aurochs in the mountains, ED III. See note 103.

Fig. 7. Anzû attacking Man-Faced Bison in the mountains, ED III. See note 104.

Fig. 8. Anzû hunting and in the lower register a flute-playing monkey and associates of the Sun god. From Ur, ED III. See note 104.

Fig. 9. Scorpion Man, Man-Faced Bisons, and animals behaving unnaturally; ED III. See note 117.

Fig. 10. Mountain god and *kusarikku* defeated by Utu and members of his court. Akkadian. See note 134.

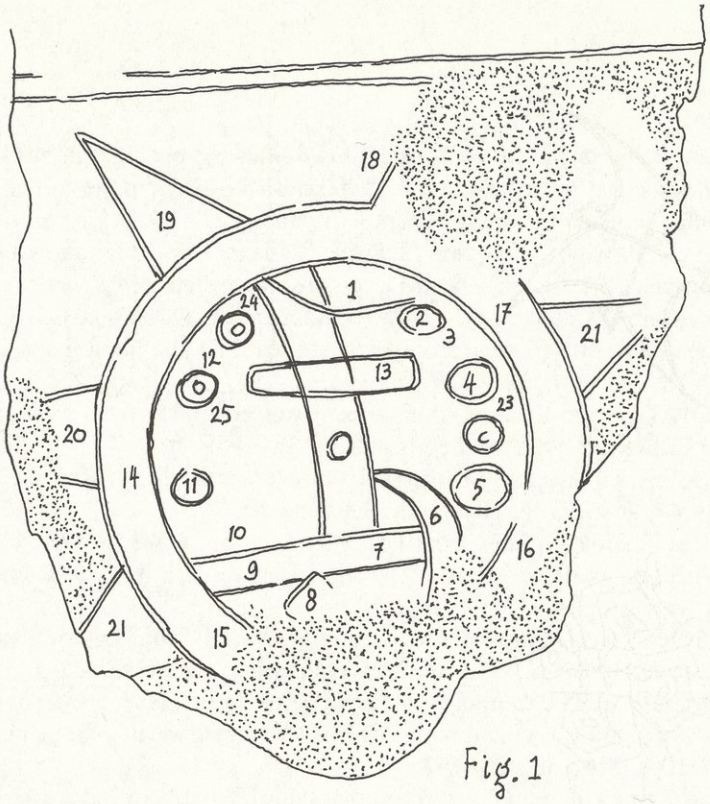


Fig. 1

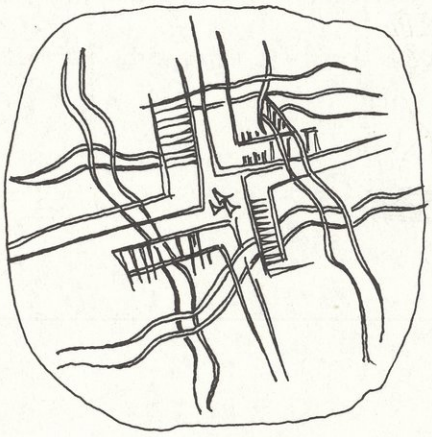


Fig. 2

Fig. 3

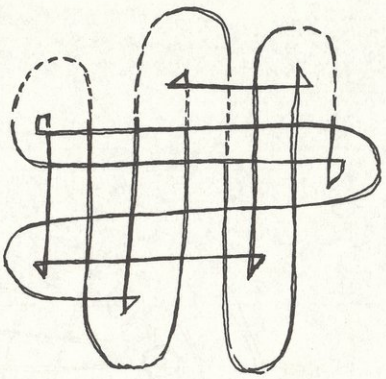


Fig. 4

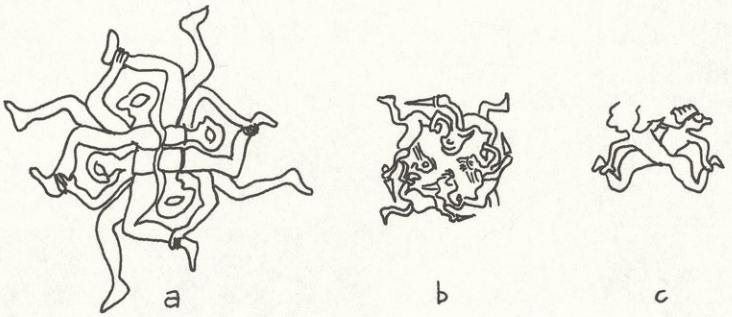


Fig. 5

Fig. 6

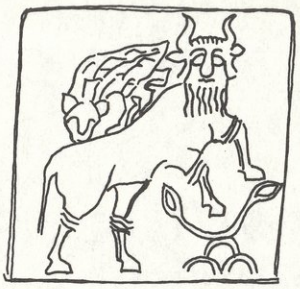


Fig. 7

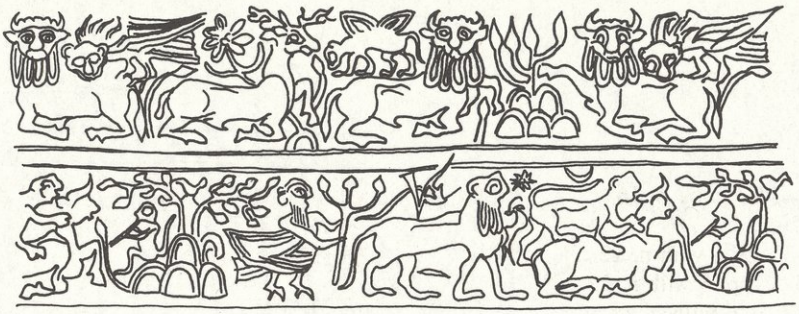


Fig. 8

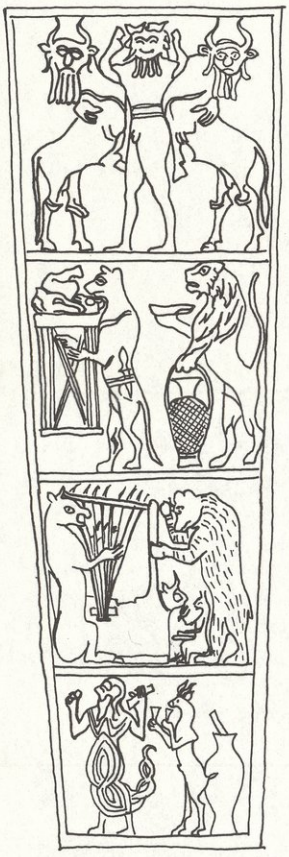


Fig. 9

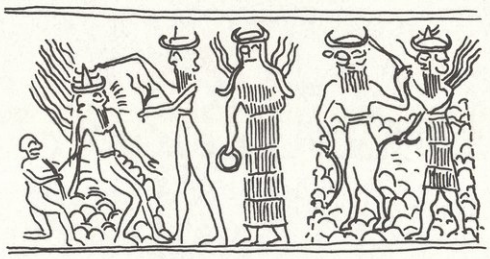


Fig. 10

INDEX LOCORUM

AbB **12**
181 rev. 7f.: p. 51 n. 16
ABL
403 4–15: p. 6 with n. 22
403 13–14: p. 6 with n. 23
1411 12: p. 6 with n. 24
ACh
Adad 4 40f.: p. 186
Adapa
– *passim* p. 85–121
Agušaya
– p. 182
Amarna Letters
74 15f.: p. 16 n. 105
74 17f.: p. 16 n. 105
81 37f.: p. 16 n. 105
90 42f.: p. 16 n. 105
AMT
67 3 3–5: p. 50
Angim
121–3: p. 32
Anzu OB
Aa 38/40: p. 179
Aa 82: p. 174
Anzu SB
I 171–9: p. 161 n. 16
II 55–6: p. 179
ARM **1**
5 10: p. 6 n. 21
5 10–13: p. 17 n. 111
ARM **10**
150 8: p. 6 n. 21
150 9–11: p. 15 with n. 99
ASKT **115**
3′–4′: p. 157 n. 11
Atraḫasīs
– passim p. 127–38; 189–90
I 1: p. 178–9
I 93/5: p. 175
I 70–3: p. 160–1
II ii 9–10: p. 162
III i 20–1: p. 163
III iii 7ff.: p. 177 with n. 19
III iii 12: p. 187
III iv 24f.: p. 185
III viii 12: p. 187
III viii 18–9: p. 106
S iv 9–16: p. 161–2 with n. 16
Belleten **16**
pl. 63 ii 20: p. 27 n. 14
BE **31**
12 rev. 26: p. 31 with n. 29
BMS
11 1: p. 185
BWL
236 ii 8–10: p. 9 n. 49
pl. 66 8–11: p. 12 n. 82–3
CBS 4503+
20′: p. 177
21′: p. 177
CLAM
154 12: p. 27 with n. 14
Codex Ḫammurapi
v 20–22: p. 6 n. 26
Counsels of Wisdom
72–6: p. 161 with n. 15
Cow of Sîn
– p. 51; 54
19: p. 181–2 n. 42
CT **15**
4 ii 10: p. 176 n. 13
46 69–75: p. 162
CT **16**
9 i 32–7: p. 33–4 n. 43; p. 36 n. 50
CT **17**
7 iv 17–8: p. 41 n. 62
22 141–4: p. 38 n. 57
CT **21**
42 iv 8: p. 186
CT **23**
4 9ff.: p. 50–51
10 iii 26ff.: p. 50–51
CT **36**
29 42: p. 184
43 ii′ 14′: p. 33 with n. 42
CT **42**
22 i 27: p. 30 with n. 25
Cursing of Agade
– p. 24, 189
147–50: p. 188
215–21: p. 159
219–21: p. 34 with n. 43

221: p. 157 n. 14
Death of Dumuzi
77–8: p. 41 n. 62
Death of Ur-Namma
– p. 207 n. 130
Deut
32:15: p. 99
Dialogue 1
14–15: p. 9 with n. 50
Dumuzi's Dream
36/62: p. 31 with n. 34
59: p. 34 with n. 43
121: p. 5 n. 16
Dumuzi and Enkimdu
– p. 163
Dumuzi and Geštinana
– p. 31 with n. 35
Dunnu Theology
– p. 51 n. 14
EA 357
78–9: p. 86
Enki and Ninḫursag
– p. 208 n. 137
Enki and Ninmaḫ
– p. 24
Enlil and Namzitarra
25: p. 157 n. 15
Enlil and Ninlil
– p. 162
Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta
– p. 162
136–55: p. 204 with n. 93
508 p. 156 n. 5; 157
Enūma eliš
– p. 198
I 4: p. 133 n. 4
I 81–2: p. 136 n. 22
I 133: p. 202 with n. 58
II 1–15: p. 69–70
II 10: p. 133 n. 4
III 15: p. 133 n. 4
III 27: p. 174
IV 1–16: p. 68–9
IV 49: p. 186, 187
IV 57: p. 174
Eršemma
160 30–4: p. 28 with n. 17
Etana
– p. 199; 205 with n. 98
Ewe and Grain
– p. 161, 164
EWO
99: p. 42 p. 65
279–81: p. 27 n. 14
Examination Text A
– p. 135 n. 17
Ezek
17:2: p. 7 n. 29
Gall
– p. 51; 54
GEN
48: p. 42 n. 65
92: p. 33 n. 39
Geštinanna as Singer
– p. 135
Gilgameš and Akka
25–28: p. 6 n. 27
93 p. 157 n. 10
Gilgameš Epic OB
II v: p. 136
III iv 3: P. 13 n. 87
Gilgameš Epic P
iv 8: p. 177–8
iii 24–7: p. 177
Gilgameš Epic Y
iii 109: p. 186
v 16: p. 187
v 17: p. 177
Gilgameš Epic SB
– p. 61 n. 19; 127; 157–8; 190; 207
I i 28: p. 182
I i 31: p. 176
I ii 8: p. 182
I ii 20: p. 182
I iv 39/46: p. 182
II v 3: p. 186
VI iv 50: p. 205 n. 98
XI 21–2: p. 163
XI 47: p. 174
XI 121: p. 187
Gilgameš and Ḫuwawa
– p. 24
28–9: p. 13 with n. 87
108: p. 17 n. 110
Göttertypentext
– p. 209
Gudea Cylinder A
viii 26: p. 186
x 2: p. 185, 187
xxiii 14: p. 185, 187
xxiv 18: p. 157 n. 12
Gudea Cylinder B

vii 14: p. 186, 187
vii 19–22: p. 31 with n. 33
Gula Hymn of Bulluṭsa-rabi
– p. 166–7
Hab
2:6: p. 7 n. 29
Heart Grass
– p. 51; 54
1–13: p. 76–7
Ḫḫ
XIII 280: p. 181 n. 41; 182 n. 44
XIII 282: p. 181 n. 42
XIV 48ff.: p. 182 n. 44
Hoe and Plough
145: p. 160 with n. 30–1
162–74: p. 160–1
How Grain Came to Sumer
– p. 206 n. 115
Hymn to the Hoe
– p. 157
Ibbi-Sîn year 22
– p. 186
Inana and Bilulu
150: p. 34 n. 43
Inana's Descent
– p. 208 n. 137
Incantation to Utu (*Sumerian*)
47f.: p. 204 with n. 94
Inninšagura
32: p. 31 with n. 28
52: p. 177
Iraq **31**
31 40: p. 183
ISET **1**
222 (Ni 1492) 53:
p. 36 with n. 51
Išmedagan **9**
rev. 14: p. 37 with n. 54
Išum and Erra
I 27: p. 175
I 40b–4: p. 164
I 43: p. 181
I 51: p. 182
I 82–3: p. 181
I 109: p. 182
I 133: p. 190 n. 65
I 187: p. 174
III D 6: p. 181
IV 18f.: p. 27 n. 13; p. 32
IV 34–5: p. 183
IV 93: p. 181
IV 104–11: p. 162–3
Izi
V 31ff.: p. 7 n. 29
Job
11:8: p. 13 n. 87
38:16: p. 98
Judges
5:16: p. 98
KAR
298 rev. 23: p. 37 n. 54
375 ii 15f.: p. 28 with n. 15
Lagash King List
– p. 164
Laḫar and Ašnan
171–3: p. 38 with n. 55
189–9-: p. 14 with n. 92–3
Lamentation over Eridu (*LEr*)
4 15: p. 33 with n. 43
Lamentation over Sumer and Ur (*LSU*)
26: p. 147
37: p. 36–7 with n. 52
75–6: p. 185–6
412a–17: p. 158
Lamentation over Ur (*LU*)
219–24: p. 159–60
275: p. 35 n. 47; p. 40 with n. 60–1
282: p. 40 n. 61
412: p. 157 n. 16
LAS 137
– p. 53 n. 24
Legends of the Kings of Akkade **6**
17–9: p. 182
20–1: p. 183
44: p. 181
46–52: p. 180
53f.: p. 176
55f.: p. 175
Legends of the Kings of Akkade **7**
10′–2′: p. 180
i 17: p. 181
Legends of the Kings of Akkade **9B**
obv. 20: p. 182
Legends of the Kings of Akkade **12**
v 1–3: p. 177
v 11: p. 179
v 18: p. 177
Legends of the Kings of Akkade **14**
iii 13: p. 176 n. 13
vi 12: p. 176 n. 13
vii 5: p. 176 n. 13
Legends of the Kings of Akkade **22**

78: p. 176
Letter to Aradmu
1–5: p. 148
Lipit-Ištar B
– p. 128 with n. 3
List of Authors
– p. 61 with n. 19
LKA 62
– p. 176
LKA 63
– p. 209–10
17′: p. 185
rev. 18: p. 186
LKA 77
i 20–1: p. 31 n. 30
LKU
14 ii 5′–6′: p. 37 n. 54
Love Lyrics
– p. 163
Ludlul bēl nēmeqi
– p. 61 n. 19
I 1–16: p. 72–4; 79–80
I 57–65: p. 74–5
II 3–11: p. 165
II 21–2: p. 165
II 23–32: p. 166
II 33: p. 166
Lugalbanda I
24–34: p. 39–40 with n. 59
165: p. 157 n. 13
292f.: p. 205 with n. 101
300ff.: p. 205
337–8: p. 158 with n. 22
Lugalbanda II
– p. 206
63ff.: p. 205
246–7: p. 34 with n. 44
Lugale
– p. 182
94: p. 42 n. 67
Malku = Šarru
37c,d: p. 182 n. 43
Mappa Mundi
– passim p. 197–205
Maqlû
VII 23–30: p. 50
Marduk šu-illa
1–27: p. 64–5
Nabnitu
32 p. 135 n. 18
Nanše Hymn
109 p. 135 n. 16
Naram-Sin and the Enemy Hordes (OB)
I iv 4′–17′: p. 188–9
Naram-Sin and the Enemy Hordes (SB)
– p. 190
97–102: p. 190
Ninegalla
– p. 31 with n. 29
Ninmešarra
105: p. 37 with n. 53
Old Man and Young Girl
27–35: p. 14–5 with n. 95
PBS **12**
38 rev. 10: p. 27 n. 14
Poem of Early Rulers
16–7: p. 13 n. 87
PRAK
B 472 ii 4′/6′: p. 176 n. 13
Prov
1:6: p. 7 n. 29
PRU
pl. 69 21–5: p. 16 n. 106
Ps
49:5: p. 7 n. 29
78:2: p. 7 n. 29
95:4: p. 98
RA **22**
170ff. 1–4: p. 160
RA **33**
p. 104 24: p. 36 n. 50
RAcc 36
– p. 53 n. 24
RIMA **2**
A.0.87.1 i 49–51:
p. 186, 187
A.0.87.1 iii 75–6:
p. 186–7
A.0,99.2 67:
p. 187
Sargon Geography
– p. 200
SBH
107 56 rev. 9–10:
p. 30 with n. 24
108 56 rev. 43f.:
p. 36 n. 50
130 I 22–3: p. 27 with n. 14
130 I 26ff.: p. 26
SbTU **II**
2 144–6: p. 38 with n. 57
SRT
12 6: p. 184 n. 49

13 13: p. 184 n. 50
Sumerian Flood Story
– p. 189–90
201–4: p. 185
Sumerian King List
– p. 205
Sumerian Proverbs
General: passim pp. 1–17
ED Proverbs
3: p. 10 with n. 60
SP **1**
1: p. 13 with n. 90
2: p. 13 with n. 90
4: p. 12 with n. 83
5: p. 12 with n. 82
18: p. 35 with n. 46
51: p. 8 with n. 35
52: p. 8 with n. 37
53: p. 8 with n. 38
53 A: p. 15 with n. 97
91: p. 11 with n. 69
126: p. 9 with n. 43
SP **2**
20: p. 9 with n. 48
28: p. 12 with n. 80–1
62: p. 11 n. 73
71: p. 11 with n. 66
96: p. 10 with n. 54
99: p. 10 with n. 59
109: p. 10 with n. 51
120: p. 11 with n. 71
126: p. 6 n. 28
134: p. 6 n. 28; p. 8 with n. 39
137: p. 10 with n. 62
161: p. 10 with n.55
SP **3**
7: p. 11–2 with n. 74–5
8: p. 12 with n. 76–7
15: p. 12 with n. 78
23: p. 8–9 with n.42
26: p. 7 with n. 33
37: p. 12 n. 79
59: p. 13 with n. 86
74: p. 8 with n. 41
147: p. 10 n. 57
157: p. 11 with n. 68
162: p. 8 with n. 40
183: p. 41 n. 62
SP **4**
56: p. 6 n. 28
SP **5**
39: p. 6 n. 28
SP **7**
21: p. 11 with n. 70
29: p. 9 with n. 49
89: p. 11 with n. 67
92: p. 40 n. 62
SP **8**
Sec. A 4: p. 16 n. 104
SP **10**
9–12: p. 15 n. 96
SP **11**
131: p. 6 n. 28
150: p. 6 n. 28
SP **12**
Sec. D 3: p. 8 with n. 36
SP **15**
Sec. B 6: p. 9 with n.45
SP **17**
Sec. B 2: p. 13 n. 87
Sec. B 3: p. 15 n. 96
SP **19**
Sec. A 1: p. 15 n. 96
Sec. B 3: p. 10 with n. 63
Sec. C 2: p. 7 with n. 33
Sec. C 6: p. 9 with n. 44
SP **22**
i 20–21: p. 9 with n. 44
vi 38–40: p. 13 n. 87
vii 28–30: p. 11 with n. 72
viii 6–7: p. 5 n. 16
viii 41–42: p. 8–9 with n. 42
SP **23**
iii 7 p. 11
SP **24**
9: p. 7 with n. 33
42: p. 9 with n. 43
SP **25**
– p. 7 n.32
3: p. 13 with n. 86
5: p. 13 with n. 88
SP **26**
– p. 7 n. 32
Sec. D 4: p. 9 with n.48
rev. i 4: p. 8 with n. 37
rev. i 5: p. 8 with n. 38
SP **27**
– p. 7 n. 32
SP **28**
– p. 7 n. 32
Summer and Winter
279: p. 40 n. 61
Šamaš Hymn

27–30: p. 169
43–4: p. 169
55–6: p. 169
100: p. 164
101–6: p. 167–8
106: p. 164
107–19: p. 168–9
119: p. 164
Šulgi A
34 p. 147
62–6: p. 184
Šulgi D
– p. 24
1–5 p. 146
175–6: p. 29 n. 20
187–8: p. 29 with n. 20
Šulgi O
2 p. 184 n. 48
Šulgi X
114–5: p. 184
Šuruppak's Instructions
– p. 1; 5;
116–7: p. 10 n. 53
118–9: p. 10 n. 53
132–3: p. 10 with n. 64
184: p. 16 with n. 101
187–8: p. 15 with n. 98
213(208): p. 5 n. 26
217f.: p. 204 with n. 91
232(227): p. 10 with n. 52
TCL **16**
69 7′–10′: p. 30 with n. 23
69 13′: p. 30 n. 23
Temple Hymns
– p. 157
243: p. 184–5
Theodicy
61: p. 181
Thompson GE
59:9: p. 181
TIM **9**
18 obv. 8–9: p. 8–9 with n. 42
19 obv. 12: p. 15 with n. 101
73 rev. 4–8: p. 50
Tree and Reed
13: p. 155 n. 4
16: p. 41 with n. 62
Tukulti-Ninurta Epic
– p. 182
'ii' 29: p. 186
'iii' 33: p. 187
'iii' 41: p. 185
Two Elegies
83–4: p. 35 with n. 47
97: p. 205 n. 98
UET **6.1**
11 36–7: p. 31 n. 35
70 3: p. 31 n. 31
96 rev. 9: p. 28 with n. 18
146 12: p. 29 n. 22
UET **6.2**
263/6: p. 14 n. 93
265: p. 8–9 with n. 42
284: p. 9 with n. 44
305: p. 9 with n. 46
330: p. 9 with n. 47
345: p. 7 n. 30
367: p.16 with n. 101–2
Ugaritica **5**
108 no. 35 l. 5:
p. 5 with n. 25
Underworld Vision of an Assyrian Prince
– p. 51 n. 16; 209
VAS **2**
94 rev. 60: p. 33 with n. 41
VAS **10**
199 iii 21–4: p. 30 with n. 26
213 5: p. 175; 176 n. 13
214 vi 6: p. 176 n. 13
215 1: p. 183
215 17: p. 179
215 24: p. 175; 176 n. 13; 183
215 52: p. 176 n. 13
VAS **17**
11 15: p. 29 n. 22
YOS **11**
2 1–10: p. 48–9
ZA **63**
p. 5 no.1 60:
p. 29 with n. 19
ZA **75** 188ff (=IB 1554)
– passim pp.47–55
112–20: p. 47–8