READING BETWEEN THE 'LIKES'

Intertextuality and Meaning in Neo-Assyrian Expressions of Similarity, Metaphorical Identity, and Analogy

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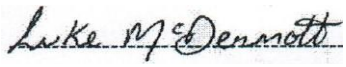
I, the Candidate, certify that this Thesis is all my own work and that I have not obtained a degree in this University or elsewhere on the basis of any of this work.

Signed:  Date: 1/08/2023.

Luke Mc Dermott

1 Introduction

1.1 General Introduction

Figurative language is, in essence, the act of synthesising disparate concepts into one communicative image. Rather than merely a poetic technique, this process is fundamental in general understanding and expression of abstract or new ideas. Moreover, metaphorical and non-literal statements echo and signal the cultural network of meaning to which they contribute in a way that literal statements do not. In this sense, metaphorical language is semantically open where the literal is closed. Simile is even more inherently self-exegetical. The expression of **X** in terms of **Y** on the basis of implicit or explicit similar characteristics is itself a process of interpretation by comparison. Simile is also a more literal type of formulation than straight metaphor. That is, simile 'has a job to do, and it does it: it proposes a comparison between two entities, in one particular respect, or at most in a few respects, as it is explicit in its comparative goal.'[1] Language which highlights a conceptual proximity between expressed referents functions as a key for the reader. It accentuates the characteristics of the expressed **X** which are deemed prominent and relevant by their commonality with those of the compared **Y**.

The style of expressing concepts in terms of one another, implicitly acknowledging their thematic or characteristic overlaps, is a technique that has been central throughout the Mesopotamian textual tradition. It does not just appear as a preserve of artistic or poetic writing, but is ubiquitous. As will be seen, this pattern-based expression is structurally integrated into such societal and ritual events as divination political accords, and substitute rituals.[2]

Using the framework of template expressions of conceptual proximity laid out in the table below (Fig.1), this dissertation will analyse the metaphorical and analogical language that pervades its case study, *The Underworld Vision of an Assyrian Prince* (henceforth *UWV*). This philological process produces a deep engagement with the text. During this slow reading, the sense will emerge that the ways of expressing conceptual proximity and communicating ideas through their nexus of cultural associations and intertextual correlates was also of intellectual interest to *UWV*'s author. It will be argued here that the author sets up and explores the relationships

[1] Donoghue, 2014, p.75
[2] On the latter, see Verderame (2013) for a discussion of the use of substitutes in Assyrian rituals

between ideas by means of intricate figurative language, wordplay, intertextuality, and even meta-textuality, where the scribal narrative voice itself explicitly engages with the "moral" of the tale as it tells it. This dissertation will follow the threads of intertextuality which can often be discerned within the incorporation of figurative language throughout the narrative. The gradation of intertextual resonances along a spectrum which ranges from echoes of a shared cultural context to deliberate and authorially fixed allusion is discussed below (Fig.2).

An overview of some of the contextual considerations that this study requires will be given below, such as the developments in the field of cognitive metaphor and the work that has thus far been done to bring this scholarship into the study of Mesopotamian writing. The following chapter will look at the central role and esteem that the culture of textuality enjoyed in the organisation of Mesopotamian society. It will show how important metaphorical language and the conceptualisation of ideas in terms of a comparandum were in central procedures of state and society. For example, it discusses how the protasis-apodosis relationship in divination was often an a priori association rooted in cultural or paronomastic affinities rather than any a posteriori observation of empirical causality. Moreover, Section 2.2 examines metaphorical language that manifested in the reification of a political accord.[3] This will serve to underline the importance that metaphorical language and thought had in a culture whose modes of communication were so intertwined with literacy and textuality.

The rest of this dissertation will be dedicated to a slow reading of the case study, *The Underworld Vision of an Assyrian Prince.* The emphasis of this reading will be on the figurative expressions of metaphorical predication and simile. Particular focus will be given to two passages, both coming on the reverse tablet. The first of these (r.2-10) is sequence of vivid descriptions, a catalogue of the various bodily compositions of the divine beings that the protagonist, Kummay, encounters on his journey through the underworld in a dream.[4] It will be appraised in its own right, but also in juxtaposition with the bodily descriptions that are found in other texts, particularly in the teratological divinatory series *Šumma izbu*[5] as well as the swapping of limbs between a spring lamb and the king of Arpad in a treaty between Aššur-nerari V and Mati'-ilu.[6] The other section (r.29-31) details the emotional maelstrom overcomes the prince upon waking

[3] Ed. Parpola & Watanabe, K, 1988, pp.8-13.
[4] On the rendering of the name, I follow the example of Sanders (2009) and Bach (2018).
[5] Ed. Leichty, 1970.
[6] Ed. Parpola & Watanabe, K, 1988, pp.8-13.

from his infernal experience. His anguish is captured in a uniquely complex double simile which likens him first to a man hiding in the thicket from hunters, and then to a pig at the height of carnal excitement. Of course, other incorporations of analogy and metaphor in the narrative will also be discussed. For example, a simile (r.23) which describes the legacy of a royal corpse that the protagonist is shown in the underworld, which bears an intertextual relationship with the *Letter of Gilgamesh.*[7]

Considering the level of influence that was borne by Mesopotamian culture upon those of surrounding communities, increased understanding of the value associations of the former will shed further light upon its relationships with the latter. For example, understanding more keenly the semiotics of metaphorical expressions within a given cultural context aids efforts to trace a metaphor across cultures. This facilitates more comparative work to problematise and evaluate the transmission and translation of particular metaphor between textual communities.

Throughout this dissertation, passages of text will generally draw on the translation work of other scholars, but also comment upon it; with deconstructions and suggestions of alternative interpretations offered where appropriate. In the instance of the primary case study, *UWV*, the translation of Livingstone[8] will be most represented, though the interpretation of other scholars, such as Foster[9] will also be incorporated. Where no notation is given, translation is my own. All of my own translation work, however, is based on the valuable transliteration from cuneiform of other scholars. Notation of the translation and edition used is given in each case throughout the dissertation.

1.2 Formulations Expressing Conceptual Proximity

Pattern-seeking plays a fundamental role in the human conceptualisation and expression of the world. Researchers can use this fact to interrogate qualitatively the values inherent in the patterns being conceptualised and expressed by a cultural, or textual, community. Work to this effect in the Mesopotamian context has been begun before, especially regarding the usage of animal imagery in similes. Foster acknowledges:

> 'Typological analysis of such figures in restricted groups of texts show what were considered the commonplace or self-evident characteristics of specific animals.' (Foster, 2002, p.282).

[7] Ed. Gurney, 1957, pp.127-136.
[8] Livingstone 1989, pp.68-76.
[9] Foster, 2005.

It is from here that an understanding of tone and literary function in texts can begin to be systematised. This project has grown out of that process of attempting to assess the ways in which similarity was expressed, and thus, which conceptual patterns drawn between ideas. The below table charts, with examples from the Mesopotamian textual corpus, different possible ways that the figurative expression of **A** in terms of **B**, or **X** in terms of **Y**, could be formulated, particularly through the techniques of metaphorical predication and comparative analogy. It not an exhaustive catalogue of every possible formulation of metaphorical predication and simile. Indeed, it does not include at all some other techniques of figurative language. For example, it omits the selection of verbs which conjure metaphorical associations, like *nakāmu* 'to pile up' in the line '[t]he king… has caused the totality of lands to be piled up like string' (cf.§3.5). Moreover, there can be multiple grammatical and syntactical ways to articulate a meaning represented by just one of the templates. All of this being acknowledged, the table serves as a useful, refinable tool to scaffold engagement with some of the ways that conceptual juxtaposition, comparison, and synthesis were expressed in Akkadian figurative writing.

Examples of the type **X** of **A** *[is]* **B** and **X** of **A** *[is]* **X** of **B**, are problematised and discussed in detail below (§3.4) in reference to their appearance in *UWV*. That is, whether a bodily description such as:

> *ú-tuk-ku lem-nu* SAG.DU UR.MAḪ ŠU.2 GÌR.2 *an-ẓu*.MUŠEN
> (*UWV*, r.6. Ed. Livingstone, 1989, p.72)

was to be translated, as per Livingstone, as part-swapping predication:

> 'The Evil Spirit had a lion's head, (his) hands and feet were those of Anzû' (Livingstone, 1989, p.72).

This would give us a predication of the type **X** of **A** *[is]* **X** of **B**. The alternative interpretive options which are discussed below are whether the divine limb is to be seen as the entirety of its predicate (**X** of **A** *[is]* **B**). The discussion also considers whether synecdoche as a figurative technique is deliberately implemented by the author in order to heighten the metaphorical and associative power in these predications.

Template	Example	Translation	Source
A *[is]* **B**	*a-ta di-pa-ru-um-ma*	'You are the torch'[10]	*Erra and Ishum* I:10 Ed. Cagni, 1969, p.59.
A is *like* **B**	*na-da-nu ki-ma ra-a-m[e sin-niš-t]i: ù tur-ru ki-ma a-la-di ma-ru*	'Making loans is like loving [a woman;] getting them back is like having children'	*Dialogue of Pessimism,* l.67. Ed. Lambert, 1963, p.149.
A *is* **X** of **B**	*[at-ta-ma tu]-kul-ti* ^{m}*AN.ŠAR-DU-A*	'[you are the t]rust of Assurbanipal'	*Dialogue between Assurbanipal and Nabû:* l.4 Ed. Livingstone, 1989, p.33.
A is *like* **X** of **B**	BE *iẕ-bu ki-ma si-ki-in* BI.ZA.ZA	'If an anomaly is like the form of a frog.'	*Šumma iẓbu XVII: 51.* Ed. Leichty, 1970, p.169.
X of **A** *is* **B**	KI.MIN [*sa sa-pu*]-*la-ki* MAS.DA ina EDIN	'Ditto, [whose] (lit. your: 2nd sing. Fem. Poss.) thighs are a gazelle in the plain! [Refrain.]'[11]	*Love Lyrics of Nabû and Tašmetu:* r.5. Ed. Livingstone, 1989, p.36.
X of **A** *[is]* **X** of **B**	*rit-ti nēši* (UR.MAH) *rit-ta-šu*	'His hands were a lion's paws.'	*Epic of Gilgamesh* SBV VII: 170. Ed. George, 2003: pp.642-3.
X of **A** is *like* **X** of **B**	BE UDU.NIT.Á KIMIN (var. SI.MEŠ-*šú*) *ki-ma* SI.MEŠ DÀR…	'If a ram's horns are like the horns of a mountain goat…'	*Šumma iẓbu* XVII: 91. Ed. Leichty, 1970, p.172
X of **A** is *like* **Y** of **B**	[BE *iẕ-bu* KA]-šu GIM IZI *nu-[ri*	'If an anomaly's nose is like the fire of a lamp—[…]'	*Šumma iẓbu XII:* 39. Ed. Leichty, 1970, p.146.
X of **A** *[is]* **Y** of **B**	AN-*e* KA-*ka be- lum kip-pat* AN-*e* Kl-*ti šu-bat* DINGIR.[MEŠ GAL.MEŠ]	'The "heaven"(i.e. roof) of your mouth, lord, is circumference of heaven and earth, dwelling place of the [great] gods'[12]	*Syncretic Hymn to Ninurta:* l.18. Ed. Annus, 2002, Pp.205-6.
(X of) **A,** *like* (X of) **B**, *[is]* **C**	*[l]i-ib-bi ili ki-ma qí-rib šamê né-si-ma*	'The divine mind, like the centre of the heavens, is remote.'	*The Babylonian Theodicy:* l.256. Ed. Lambert, 1963, pp.86-7.
A(+ verb) **'B**-*ly*	*i-lak-kid lab-biš ra-bi a-ḫi u-ru-uḫ-šu*	'The first-born son pursues his way like a lion (lit. lion-*ly*).'[13]	*The Babylonian Theodicy:* l.247. ed. Lambert, 1963, pp.84-5.
A *[is]* **B** *and/or* **C**[14]	*anāku šarru la mušallimu mātišu* *u rē'ûm la mušallimu ummānīšu*	'I am a king who does not keep his country safe, and a shepherd who does not safeguard his people.'	*The Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sin* SBV: ll.91-2. Ed Westenholz, 1997, p.319. cf. OBV: ll.11-12. p.273.
A is *like* **B** *and/or* **C**	*kīma šamê ù erṣetim*^{tim} *ba-bi-lu lu-ú x [x (x)]*	'Let Babylon be . [. .] like heaven and underworld.'	*The Toil of Babylon.* Col V: 11. Ed Lambert,

Fig.1. Example Formulations of Conceptual Proximity.

[10] 'Tu sei la fiaccola' Cagni, 1969, p.59.
[11] Round brackets added.
[12] Round brackets added.
[13] Round brackets added.
[14] The word for 'and' and the word for 'or' in Akkadian was *u/ù* and thus 'cannot be distinguished in written Akkadian' (CAD U, p.1).

1.3 Allegorical Predication

The allegorical predications that are being discussed in this dissertation are generally ones denoting direct description or identity, like the **A** *[is]* **B** shown in the table. Other interpretations and expressions of figurative predication are possible and can found in the Mesopotamian textual corpus. For example, Metcalf (2015) has written about the negative predications that exist in some Akkadian and Greek devotional hymns, which list a natural order of phenomena that would not occur without the god (e.g. Enlil) who is being praised.[15] This is a technique which allows the gods to 'define their spheres of influence with respect to the others.'[16] In a similar way, this dissertation will argue that the divine bodily-descriptive predications transcend the purely visual or physical, and depict something of the divine character and ambit of the beings under description.

A common way of expressing predication is by means of simple juxtaposition. That is, nouns are placed beside each other without using verbal copulae or other means of disambiguation, from which predication is inferred. This is why the predication templates in the table have the copula *[is]* in square brackets. It can also be expressed by using the verbal stative, though this is often impossible, e.g., when the predicate is a genitive construction or has a possessive suffix.[17] Both the subject and the predicate often stand in the nominative case but this is often left less than fully clear by grammatical affixes.[18] Sometimes, too, there a 'a connective verbal clitic *-ma*, used after predicates.'[19] For example, in the Old Babylonian line:

na-pi-iš-ti māt-i A.ŠA-*lum-**ma***

'The life (lit. breath) of the land is the field'

(*AbB*, 1981, vol.9, 48: 14-15. Ed. Stol [bold added]).[20]

Here, the suffixed '*-ma*' is denoting that the field (ŠA-*lum*) is the predicate. In *UWV,* particularly in the list of descriptions which detail the appearances of the divine beings met by Kummay in the underworld (r.3-9), this technique of simple juxtaposition is frequently employed, usually using logograms, whose rigid simplicity and lack of case-endings means that the interpreter of the text must supply the nuance of predication. Of course, in the Sumerian, this sort of predication would be done by means of a

[15] Metcalf, 2015, pp.151-174.
[16] Ibid, p.162.
[17] Worthington, 2010, p.187.
[18] Ibid, p.188.
[19] Civil, 2008, p.8. Here, he is talking generally about verbal predicates, rather than descriptive anatomical ones. See also Kogan, 2014, pp.42-55.
[20] AbB = *Altbabylonische Briefe in Umschrift und Obersetzung*

suffixed copula (e.g., '-am': 3rd sing.) though even this could be left unwritten. It is also possible to use verbs like *šakānu* 'to place' as a substantive verb. By substantive, I mean those verbs which function like 'to be' in English to denote existence and identity. The use of this verb is discussed in detail below (§3.3).

The technique of simple juxtaposition of nouns in the metaphorical predication of anatomy or identity plays a distinct role in heightening the metaphorical and associative aura of the comparison. That is, the style of placing two words beside one another is distinctly reminiscent of the ubiquitous lexical lists, which would categorise words by displaying them side-by-side on the basis of synonymity. These lists were a fundamental part of the scribal education, and would have been in the possession of most literate professionals.[21] Discussing the context of paratactic juxtaposition in body-descriptive predications (in this case, from KAR 307), Pongratz-Leisten says:

> 'Parataxis as a mode of linguistic reasoning, in this case juxtaposing two families of things, body parts and natural things, was intended to express their synonymous nature and thus to explain the essence of the monster or divinity so compositely described.' (Pongratz-Leisten, 2015, p.135).[22]

Thus, not only are the comparanda in the metaphorical predications swapped with one another, but the style of their representation renders them almost as synonyms. Often these lexical lists were bilingual, and used to help exegesis, both in translating, for example Sumerian, and also in interpreting omens, with the protasis and the apodosis often linked, as discussed elsewhere, by means of analogy or paronomasia. In this case, the predicative juxtaposition observed in *UWV*, can be read as a process of explaining the bodies and essences of figures being described in terms of the more conceptually accessible predicates placed beside them. Livingstone explains:

> 'It was usual for almost every type of information to be summarized and recorded by listing pairs of associated items, arranged in columns. This technique acquired specialised conventions appropriate to the particular subject matter involved. The principle of expressing information by simple juxtaposition is so universal in the literature that it is sometimes necessary to raise the question of the extent to which the actual thinking of the ancient scholars was influenced by this aspect of their practical methodology.' (Livingstone, 1986, p.2)

[21] Veldhuis, 2014, pp.351-392. Also, Lenzi, 2016, pp.145-201.
[22] For an edition of KAR 307 (or *Mystic Miscellanea*), see Livingstone, 1989, pp.99-102.

This clearly enhances the metaphorical aspect of these predications. In the case of synecdoche discussed below (§3.4.3), it makes it possible for the head, for example, to not only be swapped with that of a lion, but to become effectively synonymous with lion-*ness* itself.

1.4 The *kīma* Simile

Kīma is most frequently translated as 'like' or 'as' and is for that reason much more frequently associated with comparison than with direct predication. Originally, it was formed by joining the preposition *kī* and the emphatic particle *ma*. Evidence suggests that since in its earliest form, *kīma* was a marker of comparison (even though by the time it was first written it had already attained a certain polysemy, denoting also causal or temporal meanings). Sövegjártó corroborates this:

> '[T]he equative meaning belongs to the preposition, while the temporal and causal meanings are bound to the conjunction *kīma,* from which the preposition must be considered earlier.' (Sövegjártó, 2010, p.9).

As Deutscher shows, it has cognates used in similar ways to introduce comparisons in other semitic languages such as Ugaritic, Hebrew, Arabic, and Ethiopic.[23] He describes the strong cross-linguistic evidence that 'the route of semantic extension usually proceeds from comparative (and other modal meanings) to temporal and causal meanings, and not vice versa.'[24] A similar diachronic trajectory can be found in the English word 'as.' In its oldest form in Old English, it was *ealswa* and meant 'just so/wholly so' and was used entirely comparatively. From this usage, it over time developed temporal properties, and from there it was just a short jump to the causative.[25] It seems to have been a similar life-cycle for *kīma.* Moreover, the word 'as' seems to have taken on copular/substantive function in certain forms of expression in English: "he lives as a hermit" or "he works as a milkman." Something like this appears in Akkadian too, for example, in the omen series *Šumma ālu* (VI: 98-121) where the inclusion of GIM (the logogram for *kīma)* seems to function in the same way that 'as' does in 'he works as a milkman':

> DIŠ *e-ri-iš* E_2 LU_2 **GIM** KI.A.$^{d}ID_2$ E_2 BI *ina-aḫ-hiš*
>
> 'If the smell of a man's house is **like** sulphur, that house will flourish'
>
> (*Šumma ālu,* VI: 99. Tr. Freedman, 1998, v.1, p.119. Emphasis added).

[23] Deutscher, 2000, p.38.
[24] Ibid, p.39.
[25] Ibid, p.38.

Just as saying 'the man works as a milkman' implies that the man *is* a milkman (insofar as employment), saying that the smell of the house is *like* sulphur is tantamount to predicating that the smell *is* sulphur (insofar as aroma). The preposition-to-copula trajectory is an attested development in other languages. For example, Frajzyngier discusses its occurrence, both from locative and existential preposition to copula in various members of the Chadic language family. He makes the point that the presence of the preposition-copula:

> 'Allowed for better differentiation among several structures involving two NPs. The structure NP NP has a part-whole or possessive function… Copula is the only element in Mopun that distinguishes between an equational construction, which has the copula, and a part-whole construction, which does not'
> (Frajzyngier, 1986, p. 377).

There is a certain similarity between Mopun and Akkadian here, where predication is often constructed with asyndetic proximity of **A** and **B** within syntactically complex sentences.[26] In Akkadian too, part-whole and possessive constructions are assembled similarly. However, the preposition in these contexts that can be considered the copula is the disambiguating lexeme *ša*.

The present dissertation is not drawing strong linguistic conclusions about whether *kīma* developed in some cases a substantive or predicative edge. However, it is pertinent to observe this occurring in other languages, and to hold the trend in mind while parsing the ways in which analogy and conceptual affinity between objects was expressed.

1.5 The *-iš* Adverb

The life of adverbs in the history of Akkadian is an interesting one. By at least the second millennium, there were multiple different ways of forming an adverb. Often, these various affixes can indicate as to the intended adverbial function. Among all these potential adverbial formulations, the key one for the purposes of this dissertation is the method of adding *-iš* at the end of noun and adjective stems.[27] Huehnergard states:

> 'On nouns, *-iš* is no longer productive after the OB period and is restricted to a relatively small group of nouns, and, apart from a few

[26] See §3.4.

[27] For a discussion as to the history of this *-iš* adverbializer, whether it might come from the existential or the terminative, or otherwise; see Gensler, 2000. C.f. Mayer, 1995, pp.233-65.

> frozen expressions, almost exclusively to poetry and some personal names' (Huehnergard, 2000, p.311).

Hämeen-Anttila concurs, stating:

> 'Many new adverbs have been coined in NA. The old adverbial ending -iš is no longer productive, and the only productive ending is -atti, and even this is not frequently used' (Hämeen-Anttila, 2000, p.54).

However, the *-iš* ending does indeed seem to have been productive in the coining of descriptive noun-adverbs, especially in the animal imagery which appears (often as seeming hapax legomena) in the propagandistic narratives from the courts of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon.[28] Some extravagant examples from this period include:

> *a-na e-peš* LUGAL-*u-ti it-ti a-ḫa-meš it-tak-ki-pu* ***la-la-'i-iš***[29]
>
> 'They butted each other like kids for (the right to) exercise kingship.'
>
> (*Esarh.* 1. Col i:44. Trans. Leichty, 2011, p.13).

Or:

> *a-na* KUR.ELAM.MA.KI ***še-la-biš*** *in-na-bit*
>
> '(the enemy king) fled like a fox to the land Elam.'
>
> (*Esarh.*1. Col ii:55. Trans. Leichty, 2011, p.16).

Or:

> KUR.MEŠ *mar-ṣu-ú-ti* ***ri-ma-niš*** *áš-tam-di-iḫ*
>
> 'Marched over difficult mountains like a wild bull.'
>
> (*Esarh.* 34. Obv.11. Trans. Leichty, 2011, p.87).

There is one conspicuous noun-adverb in *UWV,* namely *šiltaḫiš* (r.31), which invites translation as a straight literary simile. It will be discussed in detail below (§3.6).

[28] For a list of the animal similes used in the royal inscriptions of these kings, see Marcus, 1977.
[29] In all cases, emphasis my own.

1.6 Intertextuality

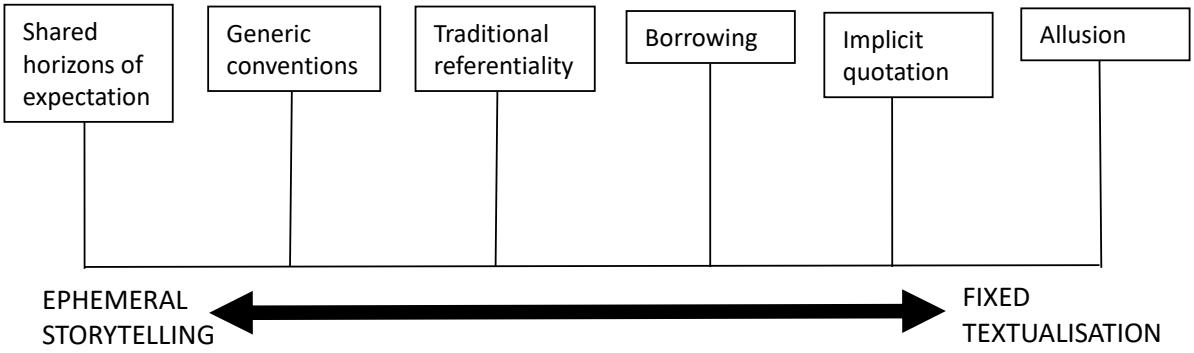


Fig. 2. Graded Scale of Intertextual Relationships (Clarke, 2019, p.32).

This dissertation will discuss moments of intertextuality that it encounters on a close reading of the case study. The degree, or gradation, of each intertextual note will be spread variously over a spectrum that can be represented by the above schema proposed by Clarke (2019).[30] Within *UWV,* the referential relationships throughout the text spans 'both the modelling of new texts on older forebears and the more overt kind of allusion in which the younger text actively evokes the older.'[31]

There is no zero-sum categorisation of motifs into fixed stations of the gradient, rather a visualisation of the range of intentionality and immediacy that an engagement with intertextuality requires. An example comes in image of dust being consumed as food. This appears, and will be discussed, both in the *adê* (or political treaty) between Mati'-ilu and Aššur-nerari V, and in *UWV*. The eating of dust had long been a characteristic of the dead in the literary and mythopoeic history of Mesopotamia, from Enkidu's dream in the *Epic of Gilgamesh,*[32] to the denizens of the underworld in the *Descent of Ishtar*[33] and *Nergal and Ereškigal.*[34] In the *adê,* the image appears as a part of a list of punishments that will be triggered by any who transgresses the terms of the treaty being struck. The image of the king and his people subsisting on dust emphasises the destitution and death that will be their fate upon any contravention of the accord. It would naturally be placed on the left-hand side of the above spectrum, and represents the 'generic conventions' about the conceptualisation of death and destitution within

[30] See Patria, 2020, for an adapted version of this spectrum with discussion with reference to intertextuality within the Skaldic poetic tradition.
[31] Clarke, 2019, p.31.
[32] Ed. George, 2003.
[33] Ed. Lapinkivi, 2010
[34] Ed. Gurney, 1960

this particular culture. Indeed, as discussed below (3.7.2), the image even forewarns destitution in certain dream omina, showing that the theme is one of a 'shared horizon of expectation.' In *UWV,* again the motif of dust being eaten appears. However, in this instance the image is being consciously explored and reinterpreted by the author. Upon waking from his underworld vision, the prince, in a fit of angst, runs out into the street and stuffs dust in his mouth. However, the image is one much changed from its common manifestation as being almost an epithet of the underworld. Indeed, it is *after* Kummay awakens from the netherworld, ostensibly having escaped the realm of the dead that he stuffs the dust from the street into his mouth. This moment falls within 'traditional referentiality,' where the 'new creation embodies, or varies, or even transforms or subverts the conventions of generic composition or narrative myth-making in the established tradition.'[35] It is suggested below (§3.7.2) that this is a subtle indication by the author that Kummay has not quite escaped Nergal's clutches.

As mentioned above, one of the places that the image dead subsisting on the dust of the underworld is found is in the dream sequence of Enkidu in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* (SBV VII: 188. Ed. George, 2003, p.645.). This tablet of the famous narrative also contains a description of a man whose grim visage seems to represent the figure of death itself. The description of such a figure appears in *UWV,* phrased with sufficient similarity to make George remark at it being 'identical.'[36] This moment in *UWV* seems to point directly towards that passage of Gilgamesh: as such, it asks to be placed along the right-hand side of the intertextuality spectrum, and can be considered a direct allusion.

The dissertation will also consider the interdisciplinary education of the learned scribal community in the world of Neo-Assyrian textuality, who were familiar with textual corpora from outside of their professional remits. This breadth of learning widens the scholarly 'horizons of expectation' for the initiated. Therefore, this project will analyse parts of literary writing that is infused with technical terminology or apparent specialist knowledge from professional fields as part of the engagement with intertextuality throughout *UWV*.

As seen in the examples given above, the use of a framework of intertextuality as demonstrated in Fig. 2 allows us to identify, assess, and interpret the cultural infusion and referentiality that exist within a given text.

[35] Clarke, 2019, p.32
[36] George, 2003, vol.2, p.849.

1.7 Overview of Cognitive Framework

The field of Cognitive Metaphor, inhabited and developed in the last decade with research by such scholars as Turner, Dancygier and Sweetster, and Bundgaard among others. These academics build on the seminal writings of Lakoff and Johnson, whose foundational work *Metaphors We Live By* has fundamentally influenced the understanding and vocabulary of consciousness, metaphor, and cognitive linguistics.[37] Despite the sustained modern attention being devoted to its research, metaphor has been a topic of scholarly discourse for millennia. Aristotle contemplated the use of metaphor as a literary, poetic technique. He described the fundamental process of creating metaphor as 'to observe similarities.'[38] Viewing it as a technique in rhetoric and literature, he considered those who could discern these similarities as being distinctly gifted.[39] In contrast, a key concept of cognitive metaphor theory is that 'the locus of metaphor is thought, not language.'[40] It states that metaphor is a psychological process rather than merely a literary or linguistic technique. Instead of being a prerogative of the gifted, the recognition of similarities and 'application of the name belonging to something else'[41] is an important mental process to all humans. It is necessary for humanity's rationalization of the world, and expression of abstract concepts such as love, life and death, emotions. One example of this is the metaphor 'ANGER IS HEAT.' Often, one might say something like 'he reached boiling point' or 'you need to cool off.' To do so is to take language and imagery from the HEAT lexicon (source domain) and applying it to the ANGER category (target domain).[42] Moreover the specific connotations attached to metaphors chosen over other conceptually eligible options can inform as to the tone in which the target domain is being addressed. On this, Dancygier and Sweetster tell us that the selection of source domain is significant:

> '[D]ifferent metaphors for the same target domain can produce quite different inferences […] If ANGER IS HEAT AND PRESSURE OF CONTAINED LIQUID, then "venting" your anger is good, since letting off excess pressure in a hydraulic system is good; if ANGER IS A DANGEROUS WILD BEAST, perhaps it would be better to conquer

[37] Turner, 2014; Dancygier and Sweetser, 2014; Bundgaard, 2019; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980
[38] Aristotle *Poetics* 1459a 8: *τὸ γὰρ εὖ μεταφέρειν τὸ τὸ ὅμοιον θεωρεῖν ἐστιν*
[39] Ibid: 1459a 6-8: *μόνον γὰρ τοῦτο οὔτε παρ' ἄλλου ἔστι λαβεῖν εὐφυΐας τε σημεῖόν ἐστι*
[40] Lakoff, 1993, p.204.
[41] Aristotle, *Poetics* 1457b 7 ὀνόματος ἀλλοτρίου ἐπιφορὰ
[42] See Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Turner, 2014 for further discussion and examples.

> or kill the animal, and therefore better to control or destroy your anger.' (Dancygier and Sweetser, 2014, p.39).

Importantly, this also shows us that source domains can be artistically fluid and subject to the preference of the author, rather than simply being a formality of archaic linguistic formulation – the Orwellian 'dead metaphor.'[43] Indeed, not just does the choice of source domain and metaphorical language influence the interpretive tone of the thing being spoken about, but so might the images not used, especially if expected – as a sort of linguistic opportunity cost. To give a simple example, the use of metaphoric language describing the king either as shepherd or lion is situationally specific in order to highlight the characteristics most desirable for the particular context: the former generally in a paternal or protective sense, the latter for fierceness or aggression. As Anthonioz points out, 'the matter of protection is indeed important and overlaps with the defensive and aggressive leonine aspects, the pacific asset is more essential to the image of the shepherd.'[44] Thus, she argues, 'it becomes clear that the two images of the lion and the shepherd interact with each other' and while both conceptually eligible as metaphors, the selection of one over the other is indicative of the tone and intention.[45] The commonness of both images also means that one's non-selection would be almost as informative in the interpretation as the inclusion of the other.

Cognitive Metaphor Theory (henceforth CMT) centres the importance of embodiment in humans' conceptualisation of the world. Bundgaard has summarised the layered functionality of Lakoff & Johnson's embodiment well:

> 'Human cognition is embodied; that is, conceptual structure arises and concepts are acquired by virtue of the make-up of the human body at several levels: a micro-level at which cognition is embodied and causally related to properties of the brain; a "meso"-level at which cognition is shaped by the properties of the human body (its verticality, its asymmetry, its movement patterns, its visual system, and so on and so forth) and the types of actions and interactions with its surrounding that this body affords; and, finally, also a macro-level in that the cognizing body is embedded in situations of different scope in which its meaning-making actions and interactions take place (from the immediate context

[43] Orwell, 1946.
[44] Anthonioz, 2020, p.19.
[45] Ibid. Anthonioz goes on to argue the twin images of the king as lion and shepherd work together to 'enrich the positive and forceful representation of sovereignty in Assyrian royal inscriptions.'

> of meaning-making to the larger socio-cultural context)' (Bundgaard, 2019, p.2.).[46]

That is, reasoning is tied fundamentally to biology, and 'the peculiar nature of our bodies shapes our very possibilities for conceptualization and categorization.'[47] The body in which cognition takes place, trivially, facilitates that cognition and reason. The lived experiences which fund rationalisations and ideas all occur in relation to the body, and are interpreted in terms of it. Embodiment theory states that there is no transcendent, unembodied rationality. A key consequent of the embodied mind is its tendency for categorisation, a process which Lakoff and Johnson state that all living beings, from the amoeba to the lion perform (between food and non-food, for example) as a fundamental part of sensory biology.[48] However, the blending of these categories together on the basis of recognised similarity, in order to construct and express new ideas and to distil the abstract into accessible sensory terminology, is the sole preserve of the human mind.

Recognising that embodiment is a fundamental tool for conceptualising experience and image-making prompts a deeper engagement with, for example, the semiotics inherent physical descriptions of divine and otherwise incorporeal entities. As will be discussed below (§3.4), the description of abstract beings in terms of the anatomical language used to describe them can be problematised. That is, whether the communicative priority actually lay with portraying a visually coherent image, or if the bodily terminology served to metaphorically distil the incorporeal and abstract, can be meaningfully scrutinised.

Smith writes that throughout history, humanity's physical embodiment has often been interpreted as representative of a fall from a higher, immaterial consciousness, and that to 'be a bodily thing, and to mistake the world for a world of bodily things, is to be a thing that is distracted from the divine.'[49] Humans' own embodiment means that the conceptualization and description of the world: natural and supernatural, physical and ethereal, is rendered in terms of their embodied perception. Despite the divine being seen as unencumbered by bodies in the same way as humans, their depiction frequently incorporates carnal imagery. Anatomical descriptions and bodily metaphor are common

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[46] C.f. Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Lakoff and Johnson 1999; Lakoff 1993.

[47] Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, p.19. Moreover, they state 'that human concepts are not just reflections of an external reality, but that they are crucially shaped by our bodies and brains, especially by our sensorimotor system.' Cf. R. W. Gibbs, P. L. C. Lima and E. Francozo, 2004.

[48] Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, p.18.

[49] Smith, 2017, p.3.

throughout Mesopotamian myth and literature. For example, in KAR 307, the natural world is catalogued in terms of a divine physiognomy.[50] It was necessary for Mesopotamian people to describe the incorporeal through metaphors perceived through their embodiment. Such metaphorical structuring represents the most practical way of 'communicating the otherworldly or extraordinary experience' that was so infused with all aspects of Mesopotamian social and daily organisation.[51] Thus, an understanding of metaphor theory should be incorporated with its study.

Robust debate remains as to the comprehensiveness of CMT as a theory of concepts, that is, whether abstract concepts mainly exist in the realm of the metaphor or whether, as Bundgaard argues, people are 'indeed capable of thinking and talking about abstract concepts, such as emotions, without resorting systematically to conceptual metaphors.'[52] This debate is not relevant to the present study, however. It is not concerned with whether, or to what extent, abstract concepts may exist outside of metaphor, but with those metaphors that *are* demonstrably employed in their expression. Its focus is upon the cultural and literary significance of the mappings which are drawn between conceptual domains.

Continued developments in the field of cognitive semiotics allow academics to gain a further glimpse into the minds of the ancients. Work by David Marcus comprises some early efforts to catalogue and interpret the animal comparanda in similes from the royal propaganda of Neo-Assyrian kings, chiefly Esarhaddon and Sennacherib. As he states:

> 'The similes themselves are for the most part literal proverbial comparisons which single out some obvious or familiar characteristic of the animal, e.g., rage like a lion, trample like a bull, fly like a bird, etc. To some animals, however, a less common characteristic is attributed.' (Marcus, 1977, p.86.)

Indeed, though the first set of examples that Marcus provides appear to us to be 'obvious' – they must not be taken for granted. Though certain metaphors may seem simple or intuitive to modern eyes, they cannot be seen as universal. The extent of temporal and cultural estrangement that exists between the Assyriologist and their subject matter should not be overlooked. To this end, Strawn points out:

[50] KAR 307 or *Mystic Miscellanea.* Ed. Livingstone, 1989, pp.99-102.
[51] Portuese and Pallavidini, 2020, p.1.
[52] Bundgaard, 2019, p.6.

> 'That is, metaphors are not only contextual on the linguistic or semantic levels, they are also *culturally* contextual. Not all cultures treat time as a commodity that can be spent, saved, or wasted *à la* the metaphor "Time Is Money." When someone uses such a metaphor, therefore, it implies, depends on, and requires a culture wherein such a metaphor makes sense.' (Strawn, 2005, p.10.)

For example, as Marcus goes on to acknowledge:

> 'Similarly, the pig, traditionally thought of (albeit incorrectly) as a stereotype of dirt and abuse, conveys in these similes an image of docility' (Marcus, 1977, p.87).

In fact, the image of the pig often carries with it distinctly sexual connotations, something which is far from what might be considered an obvious attribute today (see §3.7.1.1). Thus, that there is much to be learned about the associations that these people drew between constituent parts of their world, and about how those associations influenced their language and culture. The more that is known about characteristics that were seen as significant, or along which axes similarities were drawn in order to convey a metaphor, the more will be understood about their worldview, their literature, and society.

Though Akkadian metaphor has been of interest to scholars for many years, systematic engagement with it on its own terms and incorporating the modern theories of metaphor is still very new. This is understandable, as Geller explains in *Figurative Language in the Ancient Near East* that the study of Near Eastern sources along lines of literary or figurative theory had not been meaningfully undertaken yet 'because so much of the basic work of lexicography and the production of text editions remains to be done.'[53] The book in question represented the first such foray into the study of metaphor in Mesopotamia, recognising its role as more than mere literary ornament, but as being a functional and productive tool in language and communication. However, as Portuese and Pallavidini point out, in this early exploration of Akkadian figurative language: 'specific metaphor theories are not used.'[54] Again, this is somewhat to be expected, as Lakoff and Johnson's pioneering work on CMT was by this stage barely six years old, and still very much in its infancy as a model.

[53] Geller, 1987, p.1.
[54] Portuese and Pallavidini, 2020, p.4.

Interpretive work has been continued in different veins by multiple scholars. Ataç, for example, focuses on the semiotics of kingship, immortality, and animality in the cultural productions of chiefly Neo-Assyria.[55] He has also written about the hybrid divine bodies in *UWV* as representative of the intellectual inheritance of the enlightened scribal initiate.[56] Watanabe has also conducted valuable work on the animal symbolism that appears throughout Mesopotamian art.[57] However, it is the case that among 'scholars of the ancient Near East […] metaphor and its importance has been recognized but barely investigated according to a specific theory of metaphor.'[58] The first decade and a half of the 21st Century saw only intermittent treatment of metaphor in Mesopotamia. Within the last six to eight years, more concerted efforts to engage with metaphor incorporating metaphor theory by Assyriologists have begun to be conducted.[59] The diversity of epoch and context that characterises these editions' contents, from Ugaritic visualisations of death, to the Hittite conceptual world, to metaphor in Neo-Assyrian art; is testament to the richness of the field, and to the breadth of scholarship that remains to be conducted therein.[60]

In sources such as omens, when the protasis seems to a literal statement of appearance, value associations still remain significant. They can inform as to the outcome that their appearance portends. For example, in *Šumma izbu* III:

> BE SAL Ù.TU-*ma* GEŠTU 15-*šú ina TE-šú ṭe₄-ḫa-a-at* LÚ.LIL *ina* É LÚ Ù.TU
>
> 'If a woman gives birth, and the right ear (of the child) is near its cheek – a moron will be born in the house of the man.'
>
> BE SAL Ù.TU-*ma* GEŠTU 150-*šú ina* TE-*šú ṭe₄-ḫa-a-at* SAG.KA*L ina* É LÚ Ù.TU
>
> 'If a woman gives birth, and the left ear (of the child) is near its cheek – an outstanding person will be born in the house of the man'
>
> (*Šumma izbu* III: 11-12. Tr. Leichty, 1970, p.54).

[55] Ataç, 2010; 2018.
[56] Ataç, 2004.
[57] Watanabe, C, 2000; 2002.
[58] Portuese & Pallavidini, 2020, p.2.
[59] See as non-exhaustive but important examples: Koch, 2010, Wee et al., 2017; Portuese et al, 2020.
[60] Lam, 2020, pp.53-68; Pallavidini, 2020, pp.85-94; Portuese pp.115-140.

Here the appearance of a conspicuous attribute on the right side entails bad fortune, and if it appears on the left, good fortune. This theme recurs consistently enough to prompt Leichty to observe that:

> 'Throughout the entire series an ominous feature on the right is bad, an ominous feature on the left is good […] This association is so consistent throughout the series that we can only conclude that it is an absolute principle.'
>
> (Leichty, 1970, p.7).[61]

Going off such evidence of an 'absolute principle' of association between, in this case, direction, and values, one might tentatively propose an ancient conceptual metaphor LEFT IS GOOD. However, this is at odds with contexts other than *Šumma izbu* wherein 'it is well known that the right side is auspicious and the left side is inauspicious.'[62] Other instances where directional language is employed can be interrogated to see if meaning is similarly coloured on the basis of a corresponding metaphorical understanding. For example, in *Šumma izbu IX* 20-23 this right-left association is inverted. The bad omen comes from an apodosis emphasising protrusion of the left of a pair of horns, and the good omen comes from protrusion of the right. Thus, it might be justified to investigate whether, or in what way, the subversion of this 'absolute principle' is itself semiotically significant. The foregoing is but an example.[63] Elements of CMT may be harnessed in order to enhance an understanding of the semiotics inherent in the language of the ancients, and how a *Weltanschauung* is communicated through them.

The expression of one thing in terms of another is inherently an exercise of clarification or explanation of the image or idea being expressed, in terms of another idea or image. This allows us to interpret the shared characteristics of 'domains' as perceived by the image's composer, and to glean the attributes of the comparandum which were seen to be significant, or self-evident. Investigating the abounding examples of conceptual comparison and association with the theories of cognitive metaphor would help us to reconstruct a value-world as perceived by those who chose particular comparanda over others.

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[61] Though this is generally thematic, it is not universally the case.

[62] Guinan, 1989, p.230.

[63] Indeed, this binary association of left/right with good/bad is far more complex, and certainly not universal. See De Zorzi (2011) for further elucidation of this complexity.

2 Textuality in Myth and Society

Textuality was interwoven with the rites of daily, palatial and religious life. It did not just record but facilitated and participated in the events and set-pieces of life, from divination to religious performances. Textuality was entwined with the mythopoeic background for the intercommunication with the gods, providing the antediluvial, mystic knowledge claimed by Aššurbanipal, who said:

> [d]AG *ṭup-šar gim-ri ih-ẓi né-me-qi-šú i-qí-šá-an-ni a-na qiš-ti*
> 'Nabû, the scribe of the universe, bestowed on me the acquisition of all his wisdom as a present'
> *[…]*
> *[š]i-pir ap-kal-li a-da-pà a-äu-uẓ ni-ṣir-tú ka-tim-tú kul-lat ṭup-šar-ru-tú*
> 'I learnt the lore of the wise sage Adapa, the hidden secret, the whole of the scribal craft.'
> *[…]*
> *áš-ta-si kam-mu nak-lu šá* EME.GI$_7$ *ṣu-ul-lu-lu ak-ka-du-u ana šu-te-šu-ri áš-ṭu*
> 'I have read cunningly written text in Sumerian, dark Akkadian, the interpretation of which is difficult.'
> *ḫi-ṭa-a-ku* GU.SUM *ab-ni šá la-am a-bu-bi* {DIŠ*?*}*šá kak-ku sa-ak-ku bal-lu*
> 'I have examined stone inscriptions from before the flood, which are sealed, stopped up, mixed up.'
> (K 2694 + 3050 ll.10-18. Tr. Livingstone, 2007, p.100).

The most powerful divine artefact was itself a written document. The Tablet of Destinies, as seen from such important myths as the *Anẓû Myth* and *Enuma Eliš,* was of crucial significance to the gods. When Anzû stole the tablet from Enlil as he bathed, in the former example, it became powerful enough to repel the attacks of Ninurta, simply by commanding the shafts of the arrows he shot to 'go back to your thicket' and '[f]rame of the bow to your forests' – and so on for rest of the constituent parts of the god's weaponry. It is then made explicit that his authority and power to do this was '[b]ecause he held the tablet of destinies of the gods in his hand.'[64] Pongratz-Leisten has written about the divine authority that was achieved by the writing process:

> 'Part of the legibility of religion was the idea of the god himself using the medium of writing as reflected in the so-called letters of gods and the

[64] *Anẓû* (SBV) ll.60-66. Tr. Foster, 2005, p.570.

> textualization of divine speech as reflected in the Tablet of Destinies… Divine speech gained its ultimate character of inalterability in the written form.'
>
> (Pongratz-Leisten, 2014, p.10).

Indeed, as Lauinger points to, textual artefacts may become incorporated into the corpus of iconography, such as the *ṭuppa adê,* particularly *Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty*, which he argues are themselves 'considered to be Tablets of Destinies by their ancient producers and users… and so the tablets are at one and the same time texts and religious objects, perhaps closer akin to icons'.[65]

As discussed below, textuality and metaphorical thinking informed the very language used to convey omens. It even provided framework around which omen interpretation could be conceptualised, with certain omens clearly based on paranomasia or orthographic affinities. Textuality and conceptual analogy were also important in other types of texts which served functions beyond their literary merit, such as the *adê*, or political treaty.

2.1 Divination and Imaginative Literature

Divination is inextricably woven with the textual and scribal tradition that encompassed its recording. It 'functioned as a language of signs for reading the intersection of the human condition and the natural world.'[66] On a basic level, one needed literacy in order to gain access to the art of divination, as George says: 'In ancient Mesopotamia, divination was jealously guarded knowledge, and the illiterate were not privy to it.'[67] Indeed, the teaching of any of its secrets to an illiterate person or non-initiate 'could lead to royal punishment.'[68] Not only were the rituals, the omens, the reports, and all the details recorded in writing, but the very act of divination was itself seen as an act of communication with the gods, as often as not achieved through the medium of writing. The liver, the organ often scrutinized in extispicy, was referred to as the 'tablet of the gods' (*ṭuppu ša ili)*, upon which they would inscribe their message. Maul has written that:

> 'The richly structured surface of the liver was seen as a text, rather like the night sky, which described the world in an initially incomprehensible, but ultimately accessible manner. The various

[65] Lauinger, 2015, p.285.
[66] Pongratz-Leisten, 2014, p.5.
[67] George, 2010, p.333.
[68] Van der Toorn, 2007, p.66.

> observed individual phenomena were like ideograms of the cuneiform script which have more than one reading (and meaning) the correct one of which is made clear only through context.'
> (Maul, 2007, p.369).[69]

Similarly, we hear of the 'writing of the firmament' (*šiṭir šame/šiṭir barume).* In KAR 307, it is said that the very stars in the sky were engraved by a divine stylus:

> AN-*ú* KI.TA-MEŠ NA$_4$*.aš-pu-u ša* MUL *lu-ma-ši ša* DINGIR-MEŠ *ina* UGU *e-ṣir*
> 'The lower heaven of jasper is of the stars. He drew the constellations of the gods on it.' (o.33. Tr. Livingstone, 1989, p.100).

This is a relationship which is realised even on an interpretative level. Some omens are related with their consequents by virtue of homophony, or "spelling." Rochberg discusses 'instances of paranomasia between words in the antecedent and consequent':

> 'For example… "If the coils of the intestine look like the face of Huwawa (written logographically ^{d}*hum.hum*): it is the omen of the usurper king (also written logographically, *im.gi* = Akkadian *hamma'u*) who ruled all the lands'"
> Rochberg, 2010, p.20).

The relationship between the protasis and the apodosis has been, and continues to be, subject of academic debate. The general consensus, however, seems to be increasingly shifting away from the belief that the interaction between protasis and apodosis was of a largely empirical nature.[70] An empirically based relationship between the protasis and apodosis would mean that outcomes were offered on the basis of having actually been observed in conjunction with the occurrence of the conspicuous omen. There were some historical omens that had this as a basis, but increasingly it seems that the 'if-then' linkage was one achieved by different means.[71] It was 'a system that valued association over empirical relationships.'[72] These came in the form of paranomasia, metaphorical association, and more.

By the first millennium, any relationship between protasis and apodosis on empirical grounds seem to have largely disappeared. There is even evidence in the

[69] C.f. Frahm 2010, pp 93-143. C.f. Rochberg, 2010, & 2016.
[70] Rochberg, 2016, p.142. C.f. 1999 pp.559-569; 2009 pp.5-15; 2010 pp.19-29. Cf. also Veldhuis, 2010.
[71] For some examples and discussion of historical omens, see Guinan, 2002.
[72] Rochberg, 2016, p.142.

textual commentaries for this relationship to have been interpreted with reference to literary texts. For example, there is a *Šumma izbu* commentary which explicitly draws on wisdom literature in order to make sense of the omen, namely the Babylonian poem *Ludlul bel nemeqi:*

> *ši-pir* DUH DU DU*: ši-pi-ir tsu-uh-du il-lak : šal-fis / lib-bu-u ša-ad-di-hu <a>-ha-a-a ku-ta-at-tu-mu i-ta-ha-az / ša e-ti-li-iš at-tal-la-ku ha-la-liš al-ma-du / ina lud-lul en «E» ne-me-qa qa-bi*
>
> *'ši-pir* DUU DU DU: (is to be read and interpreted as) "He will walk (in) the 'work of abundance"' (*šipir tsuhdu illak*); (this means), "triumphantly," as in: "My far-reaching arms were kept continually covered, holding each other; I, who walked in a princely fashion, learnt slinking" - (this) is said in *Ludlul bel nemeqi*.' (Comm. On *Šumma izbu,* VII. Tr. Frahm, 2011. p.102).

Here, the ancient commentator, who seems to be struggling to understand the meaning of the omen, turns to lines from poetic material as a legend in order to interpret the prophecy. It is a moment that reminds us that 'the inalterability of writing does not preclude its ambiguity.'[73] Despite the authority of the omens as communications from the gods, they still required interpretation, and as in this case, the literary text *ludlul bel nemeqi* is used as a legend.

We also observe incorporation of divinatory language into imaginative and poetic literary texts. This does not simply mean the inclusion of divinatory rituals within a literary narrative, such as, for example, the episode with Calchas and the eagles in the *Cypria.* Rather, one can glean moments where the very language and textual mannerisms of divination is suffused into the writing of a piece of 'literature.' In the Gilgamesh flood story, there seems to be a very subtle, but significant inclusion of divinatory language. The conspicuous word included in the seemingly duplicitous message of Ea to the people of Šupparuk is *kukku.* It appears in the line:

> *ina še-er* ***ku-u[k-k]i*** *ina li-la-a-ti ú-šá-az-na-an-nu šá-mu-ut ki-ba-a-ti*
> 'in the morning he will rain down bread-cakes, in the evening, a torrent of wheat' (*Gilg.* SBV. XI 46; 88 & 91. Tr. George, 2003, pp. 707-9).

[73] Pongratz-Leisten, 2014, p.10.

The line is repeated, lending weight to it. *Kukku* appears throughout Babylonian divination, from *Šumma izbu* to extispicy, as is traced in depth by Worthington.[74] He summarises the basic argument for the divinatory portent of this line as championed by George:

> '[T]he word *kukku* constitutes an important link between Ea's message and a Middle Babylonian liver omen [...] According to the omen, the appearance of a *kukku*-like sign in the liver portends the wrath of Enlil, the very god whom […] Gilgamesh portrays as the Instigator of the Flood. George thus sees the omen as an indication that the word *kukku* in Ea's message would have sufficed to alert the people of Šuruppak that a dangerous intervention by Enlil lay ahead. In George's view […] the divinatory symbolism inherent in *kukku* might even obviate interpretations based on word-play' (Worthington, 2020, pp.373-374).[75]

Words are chosen very carefully for the articulation of ominous events and their meanings, as with poetry, and as with poetry, these word-choices can be undermined by the process of translation. The format of Mesopotamian divination has had influence on later Judaean poetic literature as well as prophecy.[76] In this way, one can interrogate the manner in which the protases and apodoses are expressed, the words chosen, the meanings and shades of meanings incorporated, in order to derive semiotic information. Struck has argued for the reception of divination in literary and allegorical terms in Ancient Greece:

> 'The poet-prophet axis was a central pillar in the traditional edifice of ancient views on poetry. To be sure, it was nuanced, modified, denatured into a literary trope, and even rejected by some, but it remained a remarkably durable view within the tradition' (Struck, 2005, pp.147-65).

Such literary potential certainly exists within the divination texts of Mesopotamia. Annus notes that the 'methods of divination may easily become linked to poetry.'[77] Certainly, the further ominous statements get from empirical observations and 'the physical and causal connections that we ourselves would make'[78] – the more they fall within the same

[74] Worthington, 2020, pp.202-223.
[75] C.f. George, 2010.
[76] De Jong, 2007. Cf. Long, 1973, pp.489-97.
[77] Annus, 2010, p.9.
[78] Rochberg, 2010, 23.

communicative zone as literary interpretation, of image, metaphor and conceptual blending.

The relationship between textuality and divination is such that there is little evidence non-textual or oral aetiology of predictive writing in Mesopotamia. Grayson noted that although Greek oracles 'were oral in origin ... There is no evidence for an oral background for Akkadian prophecies.'[79] Böck has pointed to 'one commentary to physiognomic omens preserved which according to its colophon goes back to oral interpretive tradition'[80] However, this is just the 'oral explanation' of an omen on the basis of associations drawn from an extra-literate cultural understanding.[81] It is not evidence for a robust oral divinatory tradition. Therefore, the divinatory tradition must be interpreted in the context of the breadth of technique and repertoire of sources at the disposal of the composer, rather than as the insights or musings of an extra-literate clairvoyant or haruspex. As mentioned above, there are number of omens whose protasis seems connected to its apodosis on the basis of spelling-based wordplay that 'requires and even presupposes a sensitivity to orthographic practice of the highly trained cuneiform scribe.'[82]

The existence of multiple alternative interpretations of omens is further evidence against an empiricist understanding of Mesopotamian divination, on which omens would be recorded or interpreted on the grounds of empirically observed and linked phenomena. This is particularly the case when the alternative interpretation is a metaphorical understanding. A striking example, offered by Winitzer, comes from an Old Babylonian source:

> *eleppum malītum itebbu* ***ū*** *(****u*** *[?]) erītum ina alādīša imât*
>
> 'The loaded boat will sink, **or** (**and** [?]): a pregnant woman will die while giving labor' (OBE 1, o.6. Tr Winitzer, 2011, p.80. [Bold retained]).[83]

Here, though Winitzer is hesitating between interpreting 'and' or 'or', the result in both cases is the double interpretation based on the metaphorical relationship between the two images. The image of a loaded boat is a common metaphor for a pregnant woman in Mesopotamian birth incantations. The two outcomes above are to be taken as two interpretations, 'the first a metaphorized rendering of the second.'[84]

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[79] Grayson, 1975, p.13.
[80] Böck, 2010, p.206.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Rochberg, 2010, 21.
[83] OBE = Old Babylonian Extispicy: Omen Texts in the British Museum (Jeyes 1989).
[84] Wintizer, 2011, p.80.

The observation and expression of analogies and patterns play a fundamental structural and conceptual role in divination, as they do in the metaphorical expressions of imaginative literature and divine narrative. The importance expressing **X** in terms of **Y** is therefore not just an artistic pursuit, but a structural procedure around which many of the characteristics of social, religious and (as discussed below) political life were organised.

2.2 The *adê* between Mati'-ilu and Aššur-nerari V

Another example of textuality being enmeshed in the actualisation of a ritualised event comes in the tradition of *adê* texts. These are often, though in Lauinger's view insufficiently, rendered as 'treaties' or 'loyalty oaths.'[85] a chief example is the *Succession Treaty of Esarhaddon*, which enshrines support for the king's son Aššurbanipal on pain of divine retribution. The list of punishments which would be tripped upon contravention of the treaty's terms bears conspicuous similarities to punishments delineated in Deuteronomy.[86] Rather than simply an oath or treaty however, Lauinger writes that the:

> '*adê* seems to have been an obligatory behavior that was imposed on an individual or group of individuals and transformed into a destiny by projecting it into the divine realm' (Lauinger, 2015, p.286.)[87]

He notes that:

> 'the various tablets were considered to be Tablets of Destinies by their ancient producers and users […] and so the tablets are at one and the same time texts and religious objects' (p.285.)

Once an *adê* transcends the mundane legality of a treaty and enter the supernatural conceptual real of a Tablet of Destinies and a fixed, but ascertainable future, it immediately becomes tangibly related to divination.

One *adê* comes in the form of an accord struck between King of Assyria, Aššur-nerari V and the King of Arpad, Mati'-ilu.[88] In it, the metaphorical language becomes consummated by the ritual most associated with extispicy: the slaughter of a sheep. Indeed, the very similarity of the act with that of divination is acknowledged and provided for:

> UDU.NIM *an-ni-ú* TA* ŠÀ *pit-qí-šú la a-na* UDU.SISKUR *še-lu-*[*a*]
> *la a-na qa-ri-ti še-lu-a la a-na qí-ni-ti še-*[*lu-a*]
> *la a-na mar-ṣi še-lu-a la a-na ṭa-ba-ḫi a-n*[*a* x x *še-lu-a*]

[85] Lauinger, 2015, pp.293-312
[86] Weinfeld, 1965.
[87] See Lauinger, 2013. Cf. Fales, 2012; Barcina Perez, 2017, pp.32-48.
[88] Ed. Parpola & Watanabe, K, 1988, pp.8-13.

a-na a-de-e šá ᵐaš-šur—ERIM.GABA MAN KUR—[*aš-šur*]

[T]A* ᵐ*ma-ti-iʾ*—DINGIR *šá-ka-ni še-[lu-a]*

'This spring lamb has not been brought out of its fold for sacrifice, nor f or a banquet, nor for a purchase, nor for (divination concerning) a sick man, nor to be slaughtered for […]: it has been brought to conclude the treaty of Aššur-nerari, King of Assyria with Mati'-ilu'

(SAA 02 002: I o.10-14. Tr. Parpola & Watanabe, 1988, p.8).

This recognition of the act's affinity with rites from other contexts is important. Even in its function as a disclaimer that the sheep is not being led out in order to fulfil any of these roles, the denial at once evokes the festive consummation and climax of a banquet, the transactional negotiation of a purchase, the divine witness and intercession of divination, etc. It weaves all of these associations into the culmination of the *adê* which is at once a consummatory, celebratory climax, a transactional accord, a 'truly theophorous'[89] moment of transformation 'from mundane directives into the actual destinies of the various persons whose names or positions were written on the *ṭuppi adê*.'[90]

The fact that the lamb is to represent Mati'-ilu and his sons, should any of the terms of the *adê* be transgressed is made explicit:

˹SAG˺.DU *an-ni-u la* SAG.DU *ša* UDU.NIM [*šu-tú*]

SAG.DU *šá* ᵐ*ma-ti-iʾ*—DINGIR [*šu-u-tú*]

SAG.DU *šá* DUMU.MEŠ-*šú* GAL.MEŠ-*šú* UN.MEŠ K[UR-*šú šu-tú*]

'This head is not the head of a spring lamb, it is the head of Mati'-ilu, it is the head of his sons, his magnates and the people of [his la]nd.'

[…]

UZU.ZAG ˹*an-ni*˺-*tú la* UZU.ZAG *šá* UDU.[NIM *ši-i-ti*]

UZU.ZAG *šá* ᵐKI.MIN *ši-i-ti* UZU.ZAG *šá* DU[MU-MEŠ-*šú* GAL-MEŠ-*šú*]

UN-MEŠ KUR-*šú ši-i-ti*

'This shoulder is not the shoulder of a spring lamb, it is the shoulder of Mati'-ilu, it is the shoulder of his so[ns, his magnates, and the people of his land'

(SAA 02 002, I o.21-31. Tr. Parpola & Watanabe, K, 1988, p.9).

[89] Lauinger, 2015, p. 286.
[90] Lauinger, 2013, p.113.

The cross-predication of limbs between beings is something reminiscent of the divine body description texts, the list of deities in *UWV*, and some omen texts like *Šumma izbu.* This text includes the particle *šá* in order to denote ownership of the limbs, a technique that is not universally, though occasionally, found in the comparable limb-predication sections of *UWV* and specialist contexts like the physiognomic omens in *Šumma izbu* (§3.4). Not only are the limbs of the lamb predicated as being those of Mati'-ilu and his people, but there is the explicit denial that the limbs still belong to the animal which had been moments ago led out.

Between the denial of the reasons the lamb might have been brought out, and the denial that its features belong to it, the literary technique of litotes is used heavily in order to foster the sense of gravitas throughout the piece. Its employment allows for the emotional and functional associations that would be attached to both the denied and affirmed metaphorical statements to be elicited. It gives space for the spring lamb to be seen its own right before the climax of the metaphor and sheep's exemplary execution. The inclusion of the negation adds the number of metaphorical statements made, emphasising and redoubling the semiotic force of the passage. It also facilitates the textual procession which seems to slowly metamorphose the head of the lamb into that of the king: first showing us the lamb as it is led out, then denying that the lamb's head is its own, before finally predicating it as that of the king and his people. Attention is drawn to the significance and weight of the metaphor at play, even while making it explicit. An active agency is provided along with the gravity and process of transubstantiation which would be lesser in a single, merely descriptive, metaphorical predication.

We see another example of the literary influence upon this text in the list of punishments that are due to Mati'-ilu and his family should they contravene the clauses in the distinctly literary motif of dust being their food 'SAḪAR-MEŠ *a-na* KÚ-*šú-nu'*. It is an image which will be discussed further below (§3.7.2), because of its inclusion in *UWV*, but also in such influential literary works such as the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and *Ishtar's Descent.*[91] In these texts it is said of the shades of the underworld, for whom their only subsistence is dust. In *UWV*, it is suggested below that the inclusion of the motif implies that Kummay has not fully escaped from the underworld. Here the implication seems to be even more direct, with an image that conjures not just destitution for the

[91] *Gilg.* SBV, VII: 188. Tr. George, 2003, p.645; *Descent of Ishtar.* I: o.8. Trans. Lapinkivi, 2010, p.29.

transgressor of the *adê,* but death. Its semiotic nature is made the more conspicuous by the fact that the subject of food has already been dealt with moments before in the line:

> 'May Adad, the canal inspector of heaven and earth, put an end to Mati'-ilu, his land, and the people of his land through hunger, want, and famine, may they eat the flesh of their sons and daughters, and may it taste as good to them as the flesh of spring lambs'
> (SAA 02 002, IV r.8-11. Tr. Parpola & Watanabe, K 1988, p.11).

This strongly suggests that the immediate about-face on what is to be eaten by the transgressors is indeed meant as an invocation of the idea of undead wraiths subsisting on the dust of the underworld. The motif drawn from the 'generic conventions' of a learned culture seen in the spectrum in Fig.2. In the *adê,* more strong examples can be seen of the affinity between textuality and the numinous; with literature and formal documents; and with the suffusion of metaphor and analogy throughout Neo-Assyrian thought.

3 Case Study: *The Underworld Vision of an Assyrian Prince*

3.1 Introduction to Text

In the years between 1903 and 1914, the German Oriental Society, under the direction of Walter Andrae, carried out a series of excavations in the ancient Assyrian city of Assur, modern day Qalʿat Sharqāṭ in northern Iraq. Beneath the ruins of a large Parthian building, were discovered the remains of a Neo-Assyrian private house. A number of tablets were discovered in this house, among which was VAT 10057, a completely unique literary text otherwise known as *The Underworld Vision of an Assyrian Prince.* Other texts were also found at the site, such as two tablets from the omen series *Šumma ālu,* (23 & 34) dealing with omens relating to the behaviour of snakes and mongooses respectively.[92] Also found were tablets IV, V, and VI of the incantation series *Šurpu;* tablets II, III, and IV of the anti-witchcraft series *Maqlu* as well as a *Namburbi* (prophylactic texts which deal with appeal against inauspicious omens) tablet about the warding off of a calamity forewarned by the storm god Adad in a dream (VAT 13679 + 13993+ 13994).[93] There were a number of other texts found at this site too, including prayers, lexical lists and deeds.[94] These texts were not all the product of

[92] *Šumma ālu* Ed. Freedman, 2006 (pp 6-34 & 223-231).
[93] *Šurpu.* Ed. Reiner, 1958 (pp. 25-36). *Maqlu.* Ed. Abusch, 2015 (pp. 54-100) *Namburbi* Ed. Abdulillah Fadhil, 2012 (pp 76-82).
[94] See Abdulillah Fadhil, 2012. See also Pedersén, 1986.

one scribe, nor likely to have been on the bookshelf of one scholar. From the close typographical and orthographical analysis conducted on the textual finds from this building, Abdulillah Fadhil was able only to confidently assert common scribal hand between four texts including two lexical lists, a prayer, and Tablet IV of *Šurpu.*[95]

The Underworld Vision of an Assyrian Prince came from the private library of the house of an incantation priest.[96] On why such literary texts, not directly relevant to the profession of its owner, might still find themselves in his possession, Abdulillah Fadhil says:

> '[T]he intellectuals in the city of Assur attached importance to the fact that their children – even if they were to follow them in their profession – were familiarised with other fields of knowledge within the scope of their education. For this purpose, they sent them to the establishments of those distinguished professionals who represented a very different discipline of knowledge than themselves. It seems that a student who once wanted to become a respected civil servant, priest or scholar, had to familiarise himself as a *šamallu* [assistant/apprentice] with the important fields of knowledge of his time during his youth' (2012, p.50).[97]

This interdisciplinary grounding for the scribes and scholars of the Neo-Assyrian literate milieu influenced a diversity of style and technique in their textual productions. It informed a rich culture of intertextual incorporation drawn from across the spectrum of genre and function, from the arcane and hieratic, to the narrative or poetic. The findings of Parpola's survey of library records from Assyria corroborate this idea of a wide, interdisciplinary education and interest by professionals and scholars:

> 'The exorcists are cited as possessing tablets containing astrological omens, lamentations, and dream omens but not a single tablet of *ašiputu;* the haruspices are in possession of various collections of unprovoked omens (*ālu, izbu, zaqiqu*), medical and exorcistic texts (*bulṭe, sakiqqū, ašiputu*), physiognomic omens (*alandimmu*), and rituals relating to

[95] Abdulillah Fadhil, 2012, pp. 13-15.

[96] Ibid.

[97] 'die Intellektuellen in der Stadt Assur Wert darauf legten, daß ihre Kinder – auch wenn sie ihnen in ihrem Beruf nachfolgen sollten – im Rahmen ihrer Ausbildung mit anderen Wissensgebieten vertraut gemacht wurden. Zu diesem Zweck schickten sie sie in die Betriebe jener angesehenen Fachleute, die eine ganz andere Wissensdisziplin als sie selber vertraten. Es scheint, als hätte ein Student, der einst ein geachteter Beamter, Priester oder Gelehrter werden wollte, in seiner Jugendzeit sich als šamallû mit den wichtigen Wissensgebieten seiner Zeit vertraut machen müssen.'

> offerings to ancestral spirits (*kispe*) but no single text of *barutu*; the scribes have exorcistic and anti-witchcraft literature but no omen collections. Since it would be absurd to assume that these men could have practiced their profession without any professional literature of their own, the inevitable conclusion is that the texts listed for them do not represent their entire private libraries but rather only that part of it which they did not need in their professional work' (1983, pp. 8-9).

This is evidence of the widespread engagement of the educated literati with a culture of textuality which transcended their own professions – to the extent that their own professional texts are not counted among the records of their library. It further emphasises the esteem placed on a robust and integrated engagement with literature and scholarship (once the scholar is properly initiated), as opposed to a necessarily insular or cloistered esotericism between disciplines and professions.[98]

Regardless of whether the actual texts found alongside VAT 10057 have themselves had any literary influence on the enigmatic piece of literature, that it was the possession of a professional incantation priest is further evidence of this culture of interdisciplinary literary and scholarly engagement. Thus, whether this owner was also its author, or not, it is likely that the composer of VAT 10057 was possessed of specialist knowledge, and would have been conversant with the scholarship in professional fields.

The Underworld Vision of an Assyrian Prince is a unique piece of literature within the Neo-Assyrian tradition. The author draws together structural techniques, as well as literary influence from a multitude of different genres, from hieratic to heroic narrative, and even colloquial idiomatic phrases. It is notable for its 'generic promiscuity, reworking previously separate features found in fictional royal autobiography, scholarly commentaries, scribal lists, royal inscriptions and epic.'[99] What emerges, then, is an entirely new voice, and a piece of literature, whose nearest direct thematic analogues seem to be in later texts like the biblical Book of Jeremiah[100] for its focus on the

[98] That is certainly not to say that there was no esoteric or guarded knowledge among initiated scholarly or sacerdotal circles. Certainly, the illiterate and sub-elite were not privy to the knowledge of the educated class. See Beaulieu (1992) for a discussion of this with reference to VAT 10057.

[99] Sanders, 2009, p.156.

[100] As pointed out by Buccelati, 1976, p.70. Though there is a suggestion that the very fragmentary account of *Adapa and Enermerkar* is a thematically close account of a descent to the underworld, the state of the existing tablets does not allow for any more than speculation at this point. Also, from what does remain of the tablet, the journey seems to have been a physical one, requiring the act of digging downwards, rather than the dream-transit of *UWV*.

psychological reaction of the visionary, and the 'otherworldly journeys of Enoch' for its exploration of the netherworld.[101] Early scholarship and discourse around this extraordinary text, first edited by Ebeling (1931)[102] and subsequently von Soden (1936)[103] was influenced by the zeitgeist fomented by the National Socialist movement in Germany, as well as a bitter personal rivalry.[104] It has been widely categorised, first by von Soden, as a piece of royal propaganda on behalf of Aššurbanipal.[105] However, the literary originality and richness of the piece makes stopping taxonomic efforts there unsatisfactory. That the different modes of expressing analogy and metaphorical affinity were themselves an intellectual consideration of the author will come to light over the course of a detailed reading of the text.

The following section will walk through the narrative of the text, paying particular attention to those moments where conceptual proximity is expressed, whether that be through simile, predication or in one case, a noun adverb which is best translatable as a full simile. Close analyses of particular significant episodes, techniques, or literary phenomena will thereafter be conducted in separate, self-contained segments.

3.2 The Narrative and its Imagery

The opening of the text is damaged beyond much legibility. The first strains of narrative that can be made sense of depict a fraught young man, seemingly a prince. He is frantically seeking advice and answers from diviners and scholars (o.2) to alleviate some uncertain woe (possibly that he has been overlooked by his father, the king, in the line of succession).[106] In lieu of immediate succour, the prince surrounds himself with luxury and indulgence:

> *ši-kar* KUR-*i* [*ma*]-*la ba-šú-ú ma-la* ^{d}*šá-maš e-li-šú na-ap-ḫ*[*u*]
>
> '…mountain beer as much as there was, as much as the sun shines on'
>
> (*UWV,* o.5. Tr. Livingstone, 1989, p.69).

Two successive similes are used sequentially to characterise the sheer abundance of treasure the prince hoarded:

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[101] Collins, 1997, p.148. C.f. Kvanvig, 1988, for discourse on the nature of influence that *UWV* bears on biblical apocalypticism and whether the piece bears more relevance to Enoch or Daniel.

[102] Ebeling, 1931, pp.1-9.

[103] Von Soden, 1936, pp.1-31.

[104] For an overview of this early, quite antagonistic discourse, see Sanders, 2009, pp.153-7. On the deep personal antipathy between the two scholars, see Borger's obituary of von Soden (Borger, 1997, pp.588-94).

[105] Von Soden, 1936, pp.6-7.

[106] Foster, 2005, p.832.

ki-ma A-MEŠ PÚ *mad-le-e ur-(ra) ù* MI *tiq-na-*[*a-t*]*i si-mat* LUGAL-*ú-ti ú-šá-az-na-an a*ʾ-[*n*]*a ga-nu-ni-šú*

'…like well water in buckets, day and night, he kept amassing jewels suitable for royalty into his treasuries'

[…]

[x x x x x x x x] *e-re-e-bi* NÍG.TUG *si*ʾ-[*mat x x x-m*]*a*ʾ-*a-ti ra-*ʾ*i-im te-ni-še-e-ti ki-ma it-te-*[*e*] *ù ku-up-ri ša ul-tu na-ag-bi* [*il*]-*lam-ma i*ʾ-*na*ʾ IGIʾ *suk*ʾ-[x x]

'…wealth [...], which mankind loves, became abundant like tar and bitumen which comes up from the underground source'

(o.8-9. Tr. Livingstone, 1989, p.69).

Indeed, the latter of these two similes is even doubled, and made to be of the type **A** is *like* **B** *and/or* **C** (Fig.1). The volume of the sequestered wealth is such that it takes two and a half similes to amply quantify. It seems possible too that the succeeding line is a further simile describing his riches, but the beginning of the line is too damaged to be certain. The image of the well-water in the former simile is repurposed later (see §3.8).

In a motif as old as time, the prince's preoccupation with this materialistic hedonism seems to cause him to neglect his spiritual duties and wellbeing (o.6-7). The following lines are quite badly damaged. Seemingly outside the walls of Assur, somebody speaks to the prince 'like a man,' (*ki-ma* LÚ) which is a curious expression but again the context is too damaged to interpret it more fully.[107] Similarly, it appears as though something is likened to a pig amid this very broken passage (o.16). This is another image which recurs later in the narrative. This effaced section seems to show the prince engaging in social customs while suffering vicissitudes of emotion (o.11-27).

Eventually, Kummay decides to attempt a crossing into the underworld in search of the answers that might ameliorate his unhappiness. He sets up a censer of juniper and attempts to incubate a dream-vision. Apparently, an aspect of his observation of the ritual, or perhaps his insistence on attempting it at all, upsets the underworld goddess Ereškigal (o.28-34). She appears to him in a *šuttu* dream (MÁŠ.MI) in the middle of the night, and sharply reprimands the prince, telling him 'I shall not answer' (*ul ap-pal-ka*).[108] The prince awakens, and the anguish he feels is likened to that of a bird:

[^{m}*ku-m*]*a-a-a ig-gal-ti-ma ki-ma su-um-me id-mu-um-ma*

[107] O.13., ed. Livingstone, 1989, p.69.
[108] O.36., ed, Livingstone, 1989, p71.

> 'Kumma awakened, mourned like a dove…'
> (o.37. Tr. Livingstone, 1989, p.69).

As will be seen later on in the tale, the intensity of emotion that the prince experiences each time he wakes is captured with an animal simile. Despite being rebuffed by Ereškigal, Kummay does not learn his lesson. Once more he prays to the gods in order to induce a dream (o.38.) He lays down to sleep once again. This time in his dream he is met with a *tabrītu* vision. The significance of the *tabrītu* in comparison with the *šuttu* is explained by Sanders:

> 'While a *šuttu* is simply a dream, *tabrītu* appears frequently in the vocabulary of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon to describe building projects—actually existing physical objects. It refers to awe-inspiring things seen with the eye. Far from a strictly mental event, numerous Sargonid occurrences of *tabrītu* refer to material things seen in daylight' (Sanders, 2009, p.158).[109]

This moment marks a sudden divergence in the narrative voice from the third to the first person in order to recount the prince's experience. It is a technique reminiscent of Enkidu's dream in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* (SBV VII: 163-255) where the narrative voice again changes from the omniscient third-person narrator to the anecdotal first-person recitation from Enkidu's perspective.

What follows is a description of Kummay's oneiric passage through the underworld. He encounters an array of divine beings along the way, whose bodies are an assemblage from the limbs of other creatures, real and mythical (r.2-10). The stylistic mode of description of the divine bodies is another aspect of the continuous engagement by the author with the techniques of expressing conceptual proximity (see §3.4). The first figure Kummay sees is Namtar, introduced as the creator of omens (*ba-nu-u te-re-e-t*[*i*]) who is grasping the hair of an unfortunate human in one hand, and brandishing a knife in the other (r.2). Next, he sees the feminized version of Namtar, whose body is described:

> [^{d}*n*]*am-tar-tu* MÍ.ERIM SAG.DU *ku-ri-i-bi šak-na-at* ŠU.2 GÌR.2 *ša* LÚ
> 'Namtartu, his wife, had the head of a cherub, (her) hands and feet being human' (r.3. Tr. Livingstone, 1989, p.71).

[109] C.f. Winter, 2000.

Other beings are introduced and described, such as Death itself (r.4); The Ghost (r.6) and Total Evil (r.7). The majority of the beings are described in an even more condensed style than Namtartu. For example, Oath:

> ʳᵈ¹[NAM].ERIM SAG.DU UDU.ÙZ ŠU.2 GÌR.2 LÚ-MEŠ
> 'The Oath had a goat's head, (his) hands and feet were human'
> (r.7. Tr. Livingstone, 1989, p.71).

After the first wave of fifteen gods, thirteen of whom he can name, two of whom he cannot identify; Kummay meets another being:

> 1-*en eṭ-lum ẓu-mur-šú ki-ma it-te-e ṣa-lim a-na ša an-ẓi-i pa-nu-šú ma-áš-lu*
> 'There was a man, his body black as pitch, his face resembling that of Anzû'
> (r.10. Tr. Livingstone, 1989, p.72).

This being, unnamed, though ostensibly similar to the other deities he has passed, comes in a different sequence to the first section. His appearance is given space of its own, rather than being listed as part of the foregoing catalogue. The description is widely recognised as an allusion to a similar being's cameo in Enkidu's dream in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.[110] The verb used here to denote the similarity between the man's face and Anzû is *mašālu*, 'to resemble.' Despite the many ways in which visual and conceptual similarity is expressed in *UWV*, and this is the only time in which the word *mašālu* is used in *UWV*. Its absence elsewhere in the text reinforces the intertextual affinity that the line bears with the corresponding line from the *Epic of Gilgamesh,* where it appears: *šá 1-en eṭ-lu uḳ-ḳu-lu pa-nu-šú / a-na šá an-ẓe-e pa-nu-šu maš-lu* (SBV VII: 168-9. Ed. George, 2003). This is clearly a deliberate allusion by the author to the culturally esteemed story of Gilgamesh, and can be plotted towards the right extreme of the above spectrum of intertextuality (Fig.2). It also exists as another, separate moment where the author of this piece weaves in a new technique of expressing analogy and similarity. Unlike *šakānu and rašû,* the only verbs used in the bodily descriptions above, *mašālu* is not substantive, denoting that a particular body part *is* that of another creature. Instead, it merely denotes approximation, that the being's head merely *resembled* that of Anzû.

At length, Kummay comes upon the throne of Nergal, and falls to his knees in fear and awe (r.11-14). Nergal is incensed, grabs Kummay by the hair, and makes as if to kill him. The god's wrath is represented in two similes co-occurring on the same line (r.15):

[110] See Bach, 2018, pp.80-81. C.f. Sanders, 2009, p. 158; George, 2003, vol.2, p.849.

[*ri-g*]*im-šu ú-dan-nin-am-ma ki-ma* UD-*me š*[*e-g*]*i-i ez-zi-iš e-li-ia i-šá-as-si šab-bi-ṭu si-mat* DINGIR-*ti-šú šá ki-ma ba-áš-me pu-luḫ-tu ma-lu-ú*

'He raised his voice, crying out like a howling storm in fury against me
and drawing toward me the sceptre, which is so fitting to his godhead,
and which is as dreadful as a viper (*kīma bašme*), to kill me.'
(r.15. Tr. Livingstone, 1989, p.72. [Round brackets added]).

His hand is stayed by his advisor, Išum, who suggests that Kummay be let go on the condition that he glorifies the name of Nergal among the living. Nergal acquiesces, but foretells suffering and insomnia for the prince. He points to a body lying in the distance and tells Kummay that it is an ancestor of his, who was a king of Assyria. He uses the common KING IS A SHEPHERD metaphor, and paints him in glowing terms, enumerating his deeds.[111]

This body is sometimes identified as Sennacherib, Aššurbanipal's grandfather, due to the mention of him building the *Akītu* house, which is the 'likeness' of Mount Lebanon (r. 24).[112] The word used here for 'likeness' is *tamšilu.* Similar to *mašālu, tamšīlu* also only occurs once in *UWV*. Also, like *mašālu*, '[l]e mot *tamšīlu* dérive d'une racine *mšl*' and denotes 'similarity' 'resemblance' or 'equality'.[113] The affinity denoted by *tamšīlu* is often said to reference the 'special relation' between king and god.[114] This sort of imagery, likening buildings to mountains is quite common throughout Mesopotamian literature, to the extent that Edzard was led to querying whether it was in fact 'a rather banal image?'[115] It is an important one, though, for in its description as 'a "mountain" the temple is a link between heaven and earth.'[116]

In his description of how the deceased king had forged a mighty empire, Nergal uses a simile which likens the land amassed to 'booty' according to Livingstone, or possibly 'thread'. This simile and its significance will be discussed below (§3.5).

Nergal then sounds a warning that any who are unfaithful to him will be reduced to wind (r.27). He dismisses Kummay, sending the prince back to the land of the living with the wish that his words sting 'like a thorn in your heart' (*ki-i gi-iṣ-ṣi ina*

[111] On this shepherd metaphor, see Anthonioz, 2020. C.f. Varhaug, 2019.
[112] See Sanders, 2009, p.160.
[113] Glassner, 2017, p.212.
[114] Nadali, 2020, p.77. Cf. Ulanowski, 2015, (pp.237-50) who discusses the propagandic resurgence of the term in this context under Aššurnasirpal.
[115] Edzard, 1987, p. 12.
[116] Ibid, p. 13. C.f. Guinan, 1989, p.235. She goes on to discuss omens wherein this idea is undermined, and having a mountain-like temple will trigger a negative apodosis.

ŠÀ-bi-ku-nu). Kummay awakes, and is taken by a fit of pure anguish which is captured by an elaborate double-simile:

> *a-gal-ti-m*[*a*] *ki-ma eṭ-li ta-pi-ik da-me šá ina ṣu-ṣe-e i-di-ši-šú it-tan-al-la-ku*
> EN—*bir-ki ik-tùm-mu-šú-ma i-tar-*[*ṛ*]*aʾ-ku* ŠÀ-*bu-u-š*[*ú*]
> 'I woke up, and like a man who has let blood, who roams alone in a reed thicket, whom a runner catches up with, so that his heart pounds,'
> *ù ki-ma lil-li-di* ŠÁḪ *ṣe-eḫ-ru šá ina* UGU *sin-niš-ti-šú e-lu-ú* ŠÀ-*bu-šú it-tan-am-pa-ḫu* TU*15 a*-[*n*]*a* KA-*šú ù* EGIR-*šú it-te-ni-iṣ-ṣi*
> 'Or like a just matured young boar, who has mounted on his mate, and whose innards inflate so that he gives out wind from his mouth and backside'
> (*UWV,* r.29-30. Tr. Livingstone, 1989, p.76).

The prince then rushes out into the street, stuffing dust into his mouth and crying out in dismay. Though his agony has not been resolved, he dutifully sets about praising the names of Nergal and Ereškigal, as per his agreement with the god of the underworld. The adverb (*šiltaḫis)* used to capture the urgency of Kummay's flight is discussed in §3.6. The significance of this image of dust being consumed is also examined elsewhere (§1.6 & §3.7.2).

The account of the prince ends here. However, the scribe who has seemingly been recording the story then steps in, and applies the story of the prince as an analogue to his own circumstances. He resolves to go and recount this story to the palace in order to expunge the stain of his own wrongdoing from himself. He hopes not to fall foul of Kummay's treaty (*adê*) with Nergal, into which all of humanity are included as cosignatories. The narrative ends here, with the scribe exclaiming '*lu* NAM.BÚR.BI-*ia'* – 'let this be my expiation!'[117]

The entire text contains, and concentrates a myriad of techniques expressing comparison and conceptual commonality, from common *kīma* simile, to what Buccellati describes as 'the most complex Akkadian simile I know.'[118] It also incorporates predication, descriptive adverbs that only seem translatable as similes; and words denoting likeness and resemblance. The extension of perspicuous literary expressions of similarity to the lines outside of the thematically central dream sequence, wherein one would more expect the highly stylised or literary technique, lends weight to the reader's

[117] R.35. Tr. Livingstone.
[118] Buccellati, 1976, p.65.

sense of importance placed upon comparison and conceptualisation of similarity as a central focus of the piece.

3.3 Esoteric Language and the use of *šakānu* in *UWV*

This section will examine some of the moments where learned and scholarly language, which is recognisable from other scribal contexts, is incorporated in *UWV*. This infusion of the author's breadth of learning is representative of the interdisciplinary education undergone by young scribes. It reflects a type of intertextual relationship which may be placed along the left side of the spectrum between 'generic conventions' and 'traditional referentiality' (Fig.2). Not necessarily deliberate literary allusion by the author, this language nonetheless represents the cultural context of scribal knowledge and learning within which *UWV* was composed. Moreover, as will be seen, the 'exegetical language' that is contained within the text is further evidence of an author who was intellectually engaged with expressing, considering, and interpreting formulations of analogical thought. To this end, it will offer a synchronic study of the verb *šakānu* for its role as part of hieratic, ritual and scholarly writing in a Neo-Assyrian context, and trace the instances of incorporation in *UWV*.

3.3.1 The Interspersal and Context of *šakānu* in *UWV*

A form of *šakānu* occurs four to six times in the surviving sections of *UWV*. Livingstone perceives it four times, thrice in the bodily description context, and once in a different ritualistic context. However, Sanders interprets it as appearing at least once more:

> '…describing this being's limbs the sign is best read here not with Soden and now Livingstone as a numeral, producing the unidiomatic "4 hands and feet", but rather GAR for *šakin'* (Sanders, 2009, p.158).

The being about whom Sanders says this is the dark-visaged figure with the Anzû head who corresponds with Enkidu's foe in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* VII (r.10). Livingstone has not, in fact attributed four '4 hand and feet' to this character. However, he does give this interpretation twice elsewhere in the descriptions of the divine bodies, one of whom is the ferryman of the underworld, who is also in possession of an Anzû-head (r.5). Perhaps this is the confusion. The other interpretation of a being with four hands and feet is in the description of Alluhappu (r.4). Thus, a form of *šakānu* appears

between four to six times in the surviving lines, all but once in the passage of divine bodily descriptions.[119]

In meaning, *šakānu* spans from marking an object, to setting something up, often ritual apparatus, to appointing an official with much in between. It is very commonly used in ritual and divinatory contexts, and is used substantively in divine bodily descriptions. The first instance of *šakānu* in *UWV* is as follows:

> [N]ÍG.NA ŠEM.LI ***iš-kun-ma***
>
> 'He set up a censer of juniper'
>
> (*UWV,* o.29. Tr, Livingstone, 1989, p.70 [bold added]).

Here, Kummay is setting up the censer as part of his ritual preparations to incubate an ominous dream. However, though the section is preserved badly, he seems to have offended the gods during this process. The verb *šakānu* is relatively common in this sense, of arranging tools or apparatus for a ritual performance. For example, in the *Epic of Gilgamesh:*

> ***áš-kun*** *sur-qin-nu ina muḫḫi* (UGU) *ziq-qur-rat šadî* (KUR)[i]
>
> 'I strewed[120] incense on the peak of the mountain'
>
> (*Gilg. SBV*. XI, 157. Tr. George, 2003, pp. 713-4 [bold added]).

This is quite a literal use of the verb as placing or putting out offerings, but its context in ritual is significant, especially considering that all of the uses of the word in *UWV* come in a numinous context.

The rest of the places where a form of *šakānu* is used in *UWV* come in the catalogue of demons encountered by Kummay in the underworld (r.2-10). In this context, *šakānu* is used to denote the placement or existence of particular limbs. The bodies are described in a style that corresponds with other hieratic body-description texts, including the *Göttertypentext*; as well as others, like KAR 307.[121] It incorporates a similarly scholarly style, such as the listing in general order from head to toe of the limbs. Ataç has written about the metaphorical representation of these divine bodies in *UWV*. He argues they represent the mythopoeic, antediluvial epistemology inherited by the initiated court scribes and scholars 'as if the former *masters* of truth came to later times concealed as *monsters.*'[122] Their arrangement at the entrance to the throne-room of

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[119] L[U²].[G²]AR.MEŠ also occurs once as a noun to denote the governors/appointees of the prince (o.4).

[120] 'Strewed' here translated by George from *áš-kun*. However, also translated 'set out' elsewhere: as with *CAD Š* vol 1*:* p. 121; Dalley, 2009, p.114. Helle, (2021, p.106) has translated 'offered'.

[121] Bach, 2018, pp.76-9.

[122] Ataç, 2004, p.73. Italics retained.

Nergal echoes the protective *mischwesen* who guard the palaces and temples of the Assyrians. In this aspect it further echoes the *Göttertypentext* who also deals with the arrangement of cultic statues.[123] These divine bodies of intricate hybrid composition represent, argues Ataç, the guardians of the 'scribal-sacerdotal' enlightenment and wisdom of the literati. Thus, he says, Kummay's encounter of them as he passes into the presence of Nergal serves as running of the gauntlet towards scholarly initiation and knowledge.

3.3.2 *Šakānu* in *UWV,* Physiognomic Omens, and Ceremonial Inscriptions

Throughout the teratological omen series *Šumma izbu* 'three different verbs are used in the protasis to express the concept of a missing or present body part: *šakānu* 'to place,' *bašû* 'to exist,' and *rašû* 'to have'.'[124] Of these, it is the former which will receive the most attention here. Leichty noted that he has 'not made any attempt to differentiate' between these verbs in his translation, as they all perform the role of denoting existence or placement of the birth anomaly's ominous attribute.[125] This is not exclusively their role in the birth omens, for they also appear in the apodosis, where they can refer to the existence or possession of the consequence of the protasis. These three are all relatively common and multi-faceted verbs, whose *CAD* entries descend for pages. Of them, however, *šakānu* is the most common in the protases of *Šumma izbu.*

In *UWV*, all three of these verbs again occur. However, only *rašû* and *šakānu* are used in the context of body description, or during the descriptive sequence, as they are in the protases of *Šumma izbu.* Of the three, *bašû* is the one whose essential meaning makes it seem like the most natural candidate for use in noun-phrases requiring a substantive verb. However, it appears only once, towards the beginning of the narrative (o.5). It is the verb used to denote the abundance of 'mountain beer' which was made by the royal cook, Dada. In the case of *rašû,* it appears not in the description of a divine body *per se,* but in reference to divine radiance (r.8). Muhra possesses a divine or luminous splendour, the *melammu,* which, though not strictly a physical attribute, manifests as an aura or radiance, and is usually a prerogative of the gods or divine creatures.[126]

pu-ul-ḫi me-lam-me ***ra-ši***

[123] Köcher, 1953.
[124] Leichty, 1970, p. 26.
[125] Ibid.
[126] On *melammu* see Oppenheim, 1943; Ataç, 2007.

'He had a fearsomeness and a luminous splendour.'

(*UWV,* r.8 tr. Livingstone, 1989 [bold added]).

In this usage, it approximates the *rašu* in the protases of *Šumma izbu,* for example*:*

BE SAL DINGIR *ša bu-na* **TUK** Ù.TU LUGAL ŠÚ KUR *i-be-el.*

'If a woman gives birth to a "god" who has a face – a despotic king will rule the land.' (*Šumma izbu,* I, 24. Tr Leichty, 1970, p. 34 [bold added]).[127]

In the passage of divine body descriptions (r.2-9), the first being met by the unfortunate prince is Namtar, the divine "vizier" of the underworld.[128] The deity is introduced as the one who 'fashions the visceral omens.'[129] He is then depicted as holding a man by the hair and pressing a dagger to his throat, something which seems to foreshadow what Nergal will soon do to Kummay, and is itself 'another echo of Enkidu's death dream.'[130] This premonition is made more prominent by Namtar's previous epithet as fashioning omens and thereby communicating future events.

After the seemingly portentous appearance of Namtar, the feminized version of his name, Namtartu, is introduced as his wife (MI.ERIM). It is she who receives the first in a passage of bodily descriptions, immediately followed by the figure of death.

[^{d}*n*]*am-tar-tu* MÍ.ERIM SAG.DU *ku-ri-i-bi* ***šak-na-at*** ŠU.2 GÌR.2 *ša* LÚ ^{d}*mu-ú-*[*tu*] SAG.DU MUŠ.ḪUŠ ***šá-ki-in*** ŠU.2-*šú* LÚ-MEŠ GÌR.2-*šu*

'Namtartu, his wife, had the head of a cherub, (her) hands and feet being human. Death had the head of a dragon, his hands were human, his feet [...].'

(*UWV*. Tr. Livingstone, 1989, 71: r.3 [bold added]).

Here, rather than using the style of direct, paratactic juxtaposition of body-parts and their complement, or only including the *ša* to denote that the body-part was that *of* another being, as is done otherwise in the passage – forms of *šakānu* are used twice. In this context of describing notable body-compositions, the verb *šakānu* denotes placement or existence. It is used frequently in similar contexts of the protases in *Šumma izbu,* when describing the anomalous defects of new-borns. For example:

BE U_8 UR.MAḪ Ù.TU-*ma* IGI *Ḫu-wa-wa* **GAR** NUN GABA.RI NU TUK-*ši* KUR KÚR-*šu* KÚ[131]

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[127] As in this example, unlike its spelling in *UWV*, the appearance of *rašû* throughout *Šumma izbu* is predominantly written as the Logogram TUK (or TUK plus a complement).

[128] 'Vizier' translated from SUKKAL by Livingstone, (1989 p.71, r.2) though its cultural connotations make it an imperfect, if quite commonplace, choice.

[129] *ba-nu-u te-re-e-*⌜*ti*⌝ *a-mu-ur-ma* Livingstone, 1989 p.71, r.2.

[130] Sanders, 2009, p.159.

[131] This omen is also an example of *rašû* appearing in the apodosis to denote (lack of) possession for the addressee with (NU) TUK-*ši.*

> 'If a ewe gives birth to a lion, and it has the face of Humbaba – the prince will have no opponent; he will consume the land of his enemy.' (*Šumma izbu* V. 56. Tr. Leichty, 1970, p.78 [bold added]).

Or:

> [BE] *izbu le-et-su ša* <15> *pa-ni* UR.MAH **GAR-*at*** BÀ-*ut* […]
> If an anomaly's right cheek has the face of a lion on it – omen of […]
> (*Šumma izbu* VII. *63* Leichty, 1970, p.94 [bold added]).

Or, from an OB tablet:

> DIŠ *iz-bu-um i-na i-mi-ti-šu ša i-mi-tin ša-ra-rat* UR.MAḪ ***ša-ki-in*** *a-mu-ut Šar-ru-ki-in*
> If an anomaly has the hair of a lion on his right shoulder – omen of Sargon.
> (*Šumma izbu* OBV. 50. Leichty, 1970, p.207 [bold added]).

In another contextually similar text of divine body-description, KAR 307, *šakānu* is not used (nor are *bašû* or *rašû*). Instead, predications in this text are done entirely by paratactic verbless juxtaposition However, *šakānu* is used in some of the surviving tablets of the *Göttertypentext*, for example:

> [*ḫ*]*i-in-dur* MUŠEN **GAR-*in*** [KUN U]R **GAR-*in***[132]
> "'He has" the spur of a bird, "he has" the tail of a dog.

Though there are many non-ritual examples of *šakānu* being used, it very often carries a processional, divine, or formal seriousness; particularly when rendered GAR.[133] In *UWV* and indeed the *Göttertypentext,* both GAR (+/- complement) and *šakānu* occur.

The core meaning of *šakānu* as 'to place' would correspond with the conception of ominous bodily features being deliberately fixed by the divine communicator during divination. Indeed, the omens are also sometimes placed by use of *šakānu* in extispicy and *Šumma ālu.*[134] The addressees of omens can be metaphorically 'placed' using the verb, too. For example: 'if the threshold of the courtyard is higher than the house, the

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[132] K.2743, eBL edition (https://www.ebl.lmu.de/fragmentarium/K.5743), accessed 03/23. Translit. Peterson, 2022. (Translation my own).

[133] CAD Š vol.1 pp. 156-157. Though this is not absolutely exclusive, the use of GAR to represent the verb *šakānu* tends to be predominantly found in situations such as divination, referring to actions of the gods, or formal/processional placements. Of course, there are possible explanations for this, such as the scholarly connotations of Sumerian. In formulaic contexts like *Šumma izbu,* logograms were able enhance efficiency at the expense of detail.

[134] Examples for extispicy include *Šumma Manzāzu* (MS 3176/2) o.13; o.17; o.20; o.21; o.22. Tr George, 2013, pp 232-5. For *Šumma ālu,* see the series' very incipit: T1, ll 1-3. Ed. Freedman, 1998, vol.1, p.19.

mistress of the house will be put (GAR-*an*) above the owner of the house.'[135] In fact, with *Šumma ālu* in particular, such a metaphorical occurrence of the verb in the apodosis is even more significant from the perspective of signifying divine intent than it would be in the protasis. This is because the omens in this series are generally based on human or animal behaviours, or spontaneous observations, such as in the foregoing example, where the omen is based on architectural structures.[136] Considering that these tend to be the outcome of deliberate human action (excluding animal behaviour), or that fall within a human sphere of influence, they are therefore less likely to be a direct placement of a god. However, divine appraisal or judgement of these occurrences, as in the apodosis, is still required. To this end, divination is also suffused with legal language and connotations of juridical authority. As discussed by Rochberg, a key piece of legal terminology renders the omen as the divine 'verdict' (*purussû*). The structures are also related, with the format of 'if-then' statements common both to law-codes and omen lists.[137] The prayer known as *Hymn to Ninurta as Sirius,* while giving a list of epithets to the god Ninurta, lists the legal and divinatory beside one another in the same line, emphasising their analogousness: 'Judge of verdicts (*dayyān purussê*), diviner of oracle[s …] (*bārû têrēti*)'.[138] Indeed, not only are the ominous limbs of the anomalies "placed" on their bodies in *Šumma izbu*, but this same prayer shows that diviners wished a verdict itself to be "placed" using *šakānu* in 'a fitting illustration of the casting of divination in a juridical guise.'[139]

ina mimmû akpudu ***purussû šukunma***

'In all I have planned give [lit: place] a verdict.'

(*Hymn to Ninurta as Syrius.* Tr Foster, 2005, p. 715-6: 30 [bold added]).

Thus, it is both the omens themselves (protasis) and the verdict (apodosis) which can 'placed' by the gods, and represented by *šakānu*.

As seen above (§2.1), alternative language connotes a divine 'writing' in these divinatory contexts, too. A blending of the images of "placement" and "writing" occurs particularly in an Akkadian idiom which proliferated between Semitic textual communities in the Ancient Near East. The idiom: *šuma šakānu*, "to place the name" whose context is found 'mainly in victory and votive inscriptions' where a monument

[135] *Šumma ālu,* V, 115. Ed. Freedman, 1998, vol.1, p.94-5.

[136] 'Spontaneous' in the sense that the ominous observation is not the result of a staged ritual performance.

[137] Rochberg, 2016, pp 164-93.

[138] Pongratz-Leisten, 2015, p.124. After Foster, 2005, p.715.

[139] Shalom, 2011, pp 267-72.

would be solemnly inscribed with the name and deeds of the king or god who claimed its commission. Latterly, it attained a metaphorical connotation as 'to make one's name/fame/reputation.' The phrase finds itself borrowed most famously in Deuteronomy (*lĕšakkēn šeˇmô šām)*, in context about where Yahweh would cause his divine name to dwell as his 'central sanctuary'.[140] Here, there is a convergence between the "placement" of a name, and the inscription of one's deeds, will, and legacy, in a way which complements the imagery of both divine 'writing' and divine 'placement' of omens in divinatory contexts. These examples show the esoteric and scholarly infusion of meaning which *šakānu* contains and denotes when used in such hieratic and ceremonial contexts.

3.3.3 Conclusion of Present Section

The location *šakānu*, within *UWV* is significant. It only occurs in ritual or numinous contexts in the surviving lines of the narrative. The latter appearances intersperse (or bookend, according to Livingstone's interpretation) the list of body-descriptions of the fifteen figures met by Kummay as he passes through the underworld. The associations of the word with the "placement" of divine and authoritative will are strong, particularly with the physiognomic omens of *Šumma izbu,* where *šakānu* is also used to describe strange bodies. These connotations are made even more prominent by the fact that these scenes directly follow from the epithet of Namtar as being the one who 'fashions visceral omens.'[141] In the incorporation of this verb, combined with the general style of anatomical description, and the epithet of Namtar, the author seems to be echoing physiognomic omen literature. Meaning is found in the composition of anomalous, often hybrid bodies. Thus, they be read can and interpreted by a competent, literate practitioner in order to learn something of divine disposition. As Sanders notes:

> 'What is striking is the fusion of the text's mythic themes with this exegetical language, offering an interpretation of what is seen. This explanatory style fits with the vision's scholarly list of gods and demons that opens the vision, and the identification of the narrator as a scribe' (Sanders, 2009, p.162).

[140] Richter, 2002. See for an in-depth analysis of the idiom *šuma šakānu* in its original Akkadian context, metaphorical connotations; its transmission into other Semitic traditions such as Hebrew; and its appearance in Deuteronomy.

[141] Livingstone, 1989 p.71, r.2.

This is an example of the suffusion of literary writing with specialist knowledge, itself a deliberate authorial technique. The result is a heightened sense of hieratic mystique and scholarly language which pervades the text.

3.4 Part-Whole or Part-Swapping Predication?

This section will look closely at the list of divine body-descriptions in *UWV* (r.2-10). In it, the limbs of the beings that Kummay encounters are enumerated and predicated either with those of a different creature, or with a different creature's entirety. The formulation of these lines prompts a problematisation of their meaning. The uncertainty between whether it is the whole, or the part, of the creature being predicated is partly due to a lack of clear genitive disambiguation, if it is to be the latter. This will be examined. An interpretation that the predication is of the corresponding limbs of the complement would facilitate a more coherent visual and mental image of the body being described. However, this is not always the communicative goal of the author. The description of bodies by means of predication with other creatures or objects can transcend mere literal physical depiction. On this basis, the following section will examine the ways that these predications might be read. One suggestion which is explored is that synecdoche is a deliberate figurative technique used here by the author, as opposed to a side-effect of other stylistic decisions. That is, naming the entire being in place of the limb that belongs to it. The definitional and symbolic whole would thus be evoked alongside the physical part. This technique would allow the scribe to simultaneously compile semi-coherent divine anatomies, while also emphasising the entirety of the predicated creature for their figurative value in denoting the divine essence.

Upon Kummay's venture into the underworld during his second incubated dream, the reader is treated to an extravagant list of beings and deities that he meets on his way. In this passage (*UWV,* r.3-9) the beings are described so that their body-parts are related either with those of other beings, or with other beings in their entirety. It is a reminder that:

> 'For the Babylonians and Assyrians, the Egyptians, and perhaps other people of the Near East in antiquity as well, the individual was not bipartite but a multifaceted assemblage of parts' (Bahrani, 2003, p121).

An example is in the makeup of the 'Evil Genie' (r.4):

ᶠᵈ][AL]AD ḪUL SAG.DU ŠU.2 *ša* LÚ-MEŠ AGA *a-pi-ir* GÌR.2 ÉR.MUŠEN[142]

The Evil Genie, hands of a human, crowned with a tiara, two feet eagle[?].

The exact reading of ÉR.MUŠEN is uncertain, but it clearly seems to be some kind of bird. We can for now follow Livingstone in translating as 'eagle.'[143] The translation has been semi-normalised here, as opposed to Livingstone's complete normalisation, in order to highlight the current issue.[144] In the description of the being's hands and head, which are said to be those of humans, the particle *ša* is used to clarify that rather than having entire humans for his head and arms, he has hands *of* humans for his hands, and the head *of* a human for his head. However, in the latter description, there is no such clarification. GÌR.2 ÉR.MUŠEN simply states 'Two feet, "eagle"' and could technically as easily mean his two feet were entire eagles, or that where one would expect his feet to be, he just possessed the clawed, scaly appendages that an eagle would. Below will overview the issue presented by the presence and lack of explicit genitive constructions.

3.4.1 The Genitive Construction

Genitive constructions in a noun-phrase are generally formed either by placing the dependent noun in the construct state and the head noun in the genitive, or by using the particle *ša* to denote possession between a dependent in the nominative and head in the genitive (analytical state). Writing about an Old Babylonian context, Arkhipov and Loesov show that when a noun-phrase genitive construction is dealing with inalienable possession, such as limbs, it is formed using the construct state with overwhelming frequency.[145] However, with basic alienable possession, as with property or money, there was more variance between either the construct state or the analytical state appearing. This trend has yet to be diachronically traced into Neo-Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian.

In, for example, the treaty between Mati'-ilu and Aššur-nerari V, a text from the Neo-Assyrian period; the analytical genitive construction with *ša* is used to denote the inalienable limb possession of the head:

ᶠSAGᶠ.DU *an-ni-u la* SAG.DU ***ša*** UDU.NIM [*šu-tú*]

SAG.DU ***šá*** *ᵐma-ti-iʾ*—DINGIR [*šu-u-tú*]

[142] Ed. Livingstone, 1989, p. 71
[143] Livingstone, 1989, p. 71
[144] Ibid.
[145] Arkhipov and Loesov, 2019, pp.395-403.

Perhaps this is to highlight the circumstantial alienability of the limb, which is being denied to its original owner, the lamb, and predicated onto another, the king. In this example, like the body-descriptive passage of *UWV,* the nouns within these predications are consistently rendered as logograms, which would obscure the construct state. In the Sumerian from which these logograms are drawn, the genitive construction would have been marked at the end of a noun phrase with '-a.k'. However, these nuances of Sumerian grammar were not implemented alongside the noun-logograms in Neo-Assyrian writing. This ambiguity might also influence the decision to implement the analytical genitive construction, as in the *adê* (though as seen below it is otherwise specified by reduplication of the limb). However, the passage of divine body-descriptions in *UWV* only contains the analytical construction a minority of times, seemingly at random. The use of *ša* to disambiguate the predication disappears after the fifth figure's description (the 'Upholder of Evil' r.5). It appears again in the description of the dark visaged man (r.10) which corresponds with the *Epic of Gilgamesh* (SBV VII: 165:171), but this is not included in the same section of body-descriptions, as it is framed as separate. The rest of the predications are rendered by paratactic juxtaposition, as in: ⌜d⌝[NAM].ERIM SAG.DU UDU.ÙZ (r.7). This could be conceivably be intended as a genitive construction in the construct state. However, any such grammatical nuance as this is completely obscured by the use of logograms. Instead, the head (SAG.DU) and the goat (UDU.ÙZ) are simply placed beside each other. One might interpret that his head *is* a goat, as easily as they might that it is the head *of* a goat. This is especially the case because the 'head' is not reduplicated.

As was seen in Fig.1 (i.e., **X** of **A** *[is]* **X** of **B**), another mode of explicitly disambiguating between the "part" and the "whole" in metaphorical predication (in addition to the possessive *ša* mentioned above) is by reduplicating the limb as one might in English:

rit-ti nêši (UR.MAH) *rit-ta-šu*

'His hands were a lion's paws'

(*Gilg.* VII: 170. Tr. George, 2003: pp.642-3.)

Another example of this is the line displayed just above:

⌜SAG⌝.DU *an-ni-u la* SAG.DU *ša* UDU.NIM *[šu-tú]*

SAG.DU *šá ᵐma-ti-i'*—DINGIR *[šu-u-tú]*

'This head is not the head of a spring-lamb, it is the head of Mati'-ilu'

(SAA 02 002, I o.21-22. Tr. Parpola & Watanabe, K, 1988, p.9).

The fact that it was entirely possible, and quite common, for the specification to be made that the limb was that *of* an animal, or *like* that of an animal, rather than an entire animal in itself, places greater emphasis on those manifold moments like the example above when this is not done. This is especially true when, as with *UWV,* r.4 (above), the two techniques are employed in the description of the same being. [146]

3.4.2 Problematising the Communicative Image

Livingstone is of the opinion that in situations where a particular body-part 'is equated with the whole of an animal, it corresponds strictly only to a part, the eye of a lion or the face of a raven.'[147] This facilitates the construction of what might be considered a more visually coherent body. It is a preference informed by humans' own embodiment on their conceptualisation of metaphor and the abstract. That is:

> 'Consciously or unconsciously, the personal and daily experience of actually being a physical entity makes the body a natural base from which one perceives and thinks about the world and its components, and creates a certain immediacy in the way one responds to analogies based on the human body'
> (Couto-Ferreira, 2017, p.67).[148]

Of course, this is not necessarily a problem, as the composers of these descriptions were labouring under the same embodied interpretive tendencies.[149] The interpretation that the predicate is only donating a corresponding limb, rather than being predicated in its entirety, presupposes that these divine figures were at least roughly anthropomorphic. It requires that these divine limbs more-or-less correspond to those of a human, or can be mapped onto a humanoid shape. This was not necessarily the case in *UWV*. For example, Total Evil possessed two heads, one being (the head of) a lion, while the second head's identity is interrupted by lacuna (r.7). Multiple beings possess a number of limbs immediately incongruous with this tendency to

[146] Reynolds, 2002, pp. 215-218, & 2010, pp. 291-301 discusses this in relation to a later body-description text from Sippar.

[147] Livingstone, 1986, p. 98.

[148] C.f. R. W. Gibbs, P. L. C. Lima and E. Francozo, 2004.

[149] See Panayotov, 2017, pp204-247. Cf. Salin, 2020 pp.153-166 for a discussion of different 'metaphors and conceptual metaphors' of the body in diagnostic and medical texts.

anthropomorphise.[150] In fact, *Šulak* (r.6) was seemingly entirely a lion standing on his hind legs.[151]

There is clearly some ambiguity between whether the predication being drawn is implicitly part-swapping: the limb of **A** with the corresponding limb of **B** (**X** of **A** *[is]* **X** of **B**), or part-whole: the limb of **A** with **B** in its entirety (**X** of **A** *is* **B**). As just mentioned, the predilection for selecting the former is informed by the reader's own embodiment, and their insistence on viewing the body being described as roughly humanoid. However, this is not necessarily the correct reading. As Rochberg points out:

> 'the ontological implication for ideas about material things, and what makes them divisible into parts, or composed of such parts, will be quite different from what generally comes of more standard Western philosophical mereologies'
>
> (Rochberg, 2021, p.7).

A problem may lie the insistence on *viewing* the description in general, by prioritising the coherence of a visual image over the value-based, metaphorical description of characteristics. Other divine body-description texts which contain some limb-swapping predications, such as KAR 307, are written such that it is impossible to infer a cohesive humanoid shape. For example:

> ÁB.DÚB.*li-li-su* ŠÀ-*šú* GIŠ.GIŠIMMAR GÚ.SIG$_4$-*šú* GI-MEŠ ŠU.SI-MEŠ-*šú*
>
> 'The kettledrum is his heart. The date-palm is his back-bone. The reeds are his fingers'
>
> (KAR 307, o.11. Tr. Livingstone, 1989, p.99).

The body parts of the deity under description are being predicated as inanimate objects here, forcing the reader to interpret the limb as the whole object, and to forego a literal conceptualisation of the god as humanoid. The selection of the complement can be done on the basis of different associative values, such as shape, texture or colour.[152] Moreover, the list of body parts does include animals:

> UR.MAḪ ḪAR-MEŠ-*šú* GAL-MEŠ UR.KU ḪAR-MEŠ-*šú* TUR-MEŠ Ú.NAGA.MUŠEN *ki-pil-šú*.

[150] For example, Muhra (r.8) three feet; Alluhappu (r.4), Humuṭ-tabal (r.5) and Ghost (r.6) had four hands and feet apiece (unless it is trying to say that they had four in total, two of each); and The Upholder of Evil (r.5) had wings.

[151] ŠU.LAK UR.MAH *ka-a-a-ma-ni-ú ina* UGU GIR.2-*šú ár-ka-a-ti ú-šu-[uz]*. Ed. Livingstone, 1989, p.70.

[152] Reynolds, 2002, p.215.

> 'The lion is his larger *intestines*. The dog is his smaller *intestines*. The raven is his mole' (KAR 307, o.9. Tr. Livingstone, 1989, p.99. [Italics retained]).

In the context, it seems the reader is not supposed to think that his intestines or his mole were those *of* a lion, dog or raven respectively, but that they were entirely these beings, just as the heart was a kettledrum and the date-palm his spine. The bodies described in *UWV* (r.2-9) incorporate a very similar expressive format. Discussing a later, but stylistically related body-description text from Sippar, Reynolds also notes the interpretive difference between the part and the whole of a predicate: 'sometimes the corresponding body part of the complement is understood… but sometimes the body part is said to be composed of the complement.'[153]

There are two key differences between the formats of KAR 307 and *UWV* which likely inform a different reading. The bodies in *UWV* are described in roughly descending order from head to toe. This principle of describing bodies, organising lists and formatting texts from head to toe is a common and important methodology in Akkadian writing, from medicine to divination, to lexical lists, to poetic narrative literature.[154] This, combined with the fact that in *UWV*, the limb is placed before its predicate (or the owner of its predicate) in the syntax of the sentence, gives emphasis to the image of a body as the structural template of the descriptive endeavour. In contrast, the body described in KAR 307 does not descend 'from head to toe or the reverse, but [is] seemingly arbitrary.'[155] It also does not present the limb at the start of the line, but instead its comparandum, something which likely indicates a 'shift in focus from the god to the animals, plants, and objects' in an almost pantheistic sense.[156]

KAR 307 clearly predicates the divine limb with the entirety of its complement, rather than any one part of it. This is made explicit by the lack of subdivisible parts possessed by many of the objects being predicated which might coherently correspond with a limb. Thus, it is the whole essence, image and character of the object which is being predicated with the divine limb, whether that be a tamarisk, a kettledrum, or a lion. Many of the descriptions in *UWV* are phrased grammatically similarly to those in KAR 307, using simple paratactic juxtaposition. However, the complements are not as intuitively analogous in the physical categories of shape, texture or colour mentioned

[153] Reynolds, 2002, p. 215.
[154] Couto-Ferreira, 2017 pp 43-71.
[155] Livingstone, 1986, p.98.
[156] Reynolds, 2002. She also notes the dual usage of the analytical and the construct genitive constructions, though here the latter is generally unobscured.

above. Any disambiguation between whether the intended metaphorical swap is with the corresponding limbs of the associated creature, or with that creature in its entirety must be made on the basis of context and inference rather than grammar.

Another type of metaphorical limb predication which is not intended towards the portrayal of a physical body, is seen in the *adê* between Mati'-ilu and Aššur-nerari V. Therein, it is again not a visual image that is being constructed by the predication of limbs, but a metaphorically associated commonality of fates. The interpreter is not supposed to imagine the hybrid body of a king-sheep amalgamation. Not only is the head of the spring lamb predicated as being that of Mati'-ilu, but it is also said to be the 'head of his sons, his magnates and the people of [his la]nd.'[157] The subsequent inclusion of the king's people in the metaphor dilutes any literal or visual basis of predication. The limb-swap here is more purely metaphorical than in the body-description section of *UWV*. In the *adê*, there is no intention towards a description of any abstract body. Both the source and the target domain of the predication are (presumably) physically present and individually visible at the point of predication. There is only one plane of meaning for the metaphorical blending of the sheep's head with that of the king, and those of his people: a represented future. By contrast, in *UWV*, each limb's predicate seems to serve the dual role of eliciting the associative values of the complement, and providing a physical member in the assemblage of a multipartite body. These examples of metaphorical anatomical descriptions, which expressly build images that don't conform to a visually coherent humanoid shape, complicate our reading of the body-description section in *UWV*.

3.4.3 Synecdoche?

It is not purely a visual image being painted by the body-descriptions in *UWV* (r.2-10). There is a metaphorical value-picture being constructed, too. In these cases, it seems possible that the technique of synecdoche was intended.[158] By naming the whole instead of the part, the author synthesises the visual image of the body with the metaphorical values of its predicate. Bahrani recognises that, in the realm of Mesopotamian visual art:

> 'the body is never simply an imitation or a reflection of a physical body. Instead, it serves to represent the body as well as an entire range of cultural tropes' (Bahrani, 2001, p.40).

[157] SAA 02 002: I o.23-26. Tr. Parpola & Watanabe, K, 1988, p.9

[158] See for example Wilcke, 1987, pp 69-93 for a discussion of other moments of synecdoche and metonym in Akkadian.

The synecdoche at play between the whole of an animal and its limb summons the essence of the entire creature in place of the part. This charges the resulting image with a power of metaphorical meaning that would have been less prominent with a more visually cogent mapping of explicit limb-to-limb predication. It is an elucidation of the beings' essences and natures in terms of the metaphorical value of their constituent parts. Moreover, style of placing the limb and its complement next to each other unaccompanied by grammatical disambiguation is reminiscent of the textual reasoning by paratactic juxtaposition in the lexical lists and commentaries.[159] Thus, the limbs are imbued with something of the synonymous, definitional nature of their complements discussed in §1.3. The symbolic force of this scholarly, exegetical style would be diminished by the addition of grammatical nuance.

The synecdoche allows for a visual image to be conjured of constituent limbs drafted together in the physical assemblage of the divine *mischwesen* body. Simultaneously, the associations, essences, and meaning of each whole creature in the synecdochic predications are also assimilated as synonyms of their assigned limb, into a metaphorical, *definitional* synthesis. A a holistic visual and meaningful interpretation of the bodies and their essence is thereby achieved. However, if this is the case, and synecdoche is deliberately being incorporated as a literary technique, then it prompts discussion as to how these formulations should be translated. The symbolic force of the original wording may be weakened or obscured if we adopt a translation of such a description as if it simply substituted one limb for another, rather than representing a dynamic allusive technique. Thus, perhaps it is best to forego the inferential, exegetical translations which specify a limb-swap in favour of reproducing the full metaphorical predication of the divine limb with its predicate in order to preserve the figurative nuance therein.

3.5 A Simile about the Dead King's Legacy

As Nergal gestures about himself in *UWV*, displaying to our protagonist the contents and the inhabitants of the underworld, his attention alights upon the corpse of a king (r.22), introducing him by means of the common regal shepherd metaphor.[160] This person is introduced as the father of Kummay, though whether that is meant literally or in the sense of a forefather cannot be confirmed. The being may represent Sennacherib, as their listed deeds includes the building of an *Akītu* house which was the likeness

[159] Pongratz-Leisten, 2015, p.135
[160] On this metaphor, see particularly Anthonioz, 2020.

(*tamšil*) of Mount Lebanon (r.24).[161] One of these deeds tells of the influence that was borne on the land 'from east and west' by the deceased monarch. However, there is some debate as to the exact nature of the line (r.23):

> [LUGAL *š*]*á ul-tu a-* ṣ*e-e* ^{d}*šam-ši a-di e-reb*
> ^{d}UTU-*ši ma-ta-a-ti nap-har-ši-na ki-ma*
> *qe-e uš-tab-ru-ú-ma i-b*[*e*]*-lu gi-im-r*[*u*]
> 'The king who from east and west made all the lands be looked upon as booty; who ruled everything'
> (*UWV,* r.23. Tr. Livingstone, 1989, p.74).

The forgoing is based off a translation of *uš-tab-ru-ú-ma* as being the *Št* preterite passive form of *barû* ('to look upon'). However, Loktionov offers an alternative reading of the verb and sentence, noting that this form of *barû* is otherwise unattested:

> '[T]here is also another verb, *bitrû* ("to be continuous"), which has a relatively well-attested *Št*-stem. If so, the subject of the verb can be the king, with the vowel contraction in *uštabrûma* resulting from a subordinative suffix following a 3rd person singular form of this 3rd weak verb. In this case, the line could refer to his permanence, as *kīma qê* can also be translated as "like a thread" based on an alternative meaning of *qû* ("thread")'
> (Lokotniov, 2016, p. 13).

Lokotniov posits that this might give us a reading of the line as follows:

> 'The King who was permanent like a thread from east to west, who ruled everything.'[162]

Lokotniov's interpretation of *uštabrûma* coming from *bitrû* and signifying permanence would thematically congruent with the image in the following line (r.24). In it, one of his deeds is listed as building the *Akītu* house, the likeness of Mount Lebanon, whose legacy would last ana *du-ur da-[ri]* 'for ever and ever.'[163]

If his reading of the line is accurate, then Lokotniov sees it as being evidence of an 'Egyptianising influence' on the portrayal of the underworld's otherness at the very least, if not a literary influence of the author throughout.[164] This idea is something that

[161] See Livingstone, 1989 p. XXVIII.
[162] Lokotniov, 2016, p. 13.
[163] *UWV,* r.24. Tr. Livingstone, 1989, p.74.
[164] This is in addition to a number of other pieces of evidence that he perceives and discusses, chief among which the image of a bird-humanoid hybrid deity astride a crocodile (r.4)

Ataç also explores.[165] Lokotniov recognises in the regal 'all-encompassing thread simile' which he deems 'rare in Mesopotamia' an important Egyptian iconographic motif, where 'pharaonic cartouches were seen as looped ropes without beginning or end'.[166] Lokotniov's translation of *qe-e* as 'thread' does indeed seem to be more favourable than Livingstone's translation 'booty'. Seemingly nowhere else is this word rendered as approximating 'booty', though there is a less common meaning of the word as 'bronze' or 'copper' and it is likely from this sense of the word that Livingstone draws his interpretation. However, positing 'thread' instead of 'booty' does not necessitate an Egyptian influence. In fact, as seems to have generally escaped notice, there *does* exist an almost identical line and simile in a text from Sultantepe but seemingly from the Babylonian tradition, known as the *Letter of Gilgamesh* (l.6).[167] It is a fictitious literary correspondence which details a request made by Gilgamesh, represented as King of Ur, to the unknown king of another city, for absurdly vast sums of gifts and tributes, and the consequences which would befall him should they not be sent. Like *UWV,* the *Letter of Gilgamesh* is an extremely enigmatic text in form and content, and which has been designated 'the sole representative of a literary genre of its own.'[168] Indeed, the comical nature of his demands means that 'it may be regarded as a further example of Babylonian Humour.'[169]

The line is as follows:

šarru ša ul-tú [*ṣi-it* ^{d}*Samši a-d*]*i e-rib* ^{d}*Šamši mātāti* (KUR.KUR)
king; who; from; rise/East; Shamash/sun; as far as; to darken (3.m.sg.stat.); sun; lands (gen);

napḫar(NIGIN)*-ši-na kīma qi-e uš-ta-ti!-en-kám-ma*[170]
totatlity(+3.f.pl. poss.suff); like; string; "*nakāmu"* (?) 'to pile up' (*Št* 3.sg.perf).[171]

An idiomatic translation is offered below. First, note that, the similarity with the line in question from *UWV* (reproduced below for convenience) is profound, indeed very nearly identical.

[LUGAL *š*]*á ul-tu a-ṣe-e* ^{d}*šam-ši a-di e-reb*

^{d}UTU*-ši ma-ta-a-ti nap-har-ši-na ki-ma*

qe-e uš-tab-ru-ú-ma i-b[*e*]*-lu gi-im-r*[*u*]

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[165] Ataç, 2004 pp.67-76.
[166] Lokotniov, 2016, p. 13.
[167] Ed. Gurney, pp.127-136.
[168] Kraus, 1980, p. 114: 'Innerhalb der altmesopotamischen Literatur steht der Brief des Gilgames' mindestens fur uns allein als einziger Vertreter eines eigenen literarischen Genres.'
[169] Gurney, 1957, p.127.
[170] Ed. Gurney, 1957, p.128, l.6.
[171] The selection of *nakamu* is my own. See below for discussion.

(*UWV* r.23. Ed. Livingstone, 1989, p.74).

The most substantial difference between the two lines is the verb, where *UWV* uses *uštabrúma,* the other has *uš-ta-ti!-en-kám-ma*. As discussed above, *uštabrúma* in the *UWV* example is read by Livingstone as the *Št* stem of the verb *barû*. Lokotniov, while recognising that this is a perfectly valid reading, points out that this form of the verb is otherwise unattested. Similarly, in the line from the *Letter of Gilgamesh,* the verb that is met in the *Št* stem is *uš-ta-ti!-en-kám-ma*, which although its actual identity is unresolved, also appears to be hapax legomenon. For this verb, *CAD* provides *šutemkû* as an *Št* version of *mekû* 'to neglect/disregard.'[172] The former version's attestations are few and its meaning uncertain – they tentatively offer 'gathers in' – though admit that this has 'no plausible semantic connection with the verb *mekû*.'[173] This feels wholly unsatisfying. In contrast, the interpretation I offer in the above rendering, *nakāmu* represents a much better fit. Not only does *nakāmu* work perfectly within the structure of the third person singular *Št* passive perfect tense, but its meaning of 'to have caused to be piled/heaped up' is entirely sensible within the context of dominion over the land, while also assimilating the contextually inferred meaning of 'gathering' suggested by CAD. This would give us a reading of something like:

> 'The king, who from (where) the sun rises to where it sets, has caused
> the totality of lands to be piled up like string.'

Gurney has translated the verb as:

> '[T]he king who has subdued, as (with) a cord, all the countries from
> [the rising of the sun to] the setting of the sun.'
> (*Letter of Gilg.,* l.6. Tr, Gurney, 1957, p.128).

This is a somewhat different interpretation, seeming to take a contextual meaning of 'to have subdued' from *uš-ta-ti!-en-kám-ma.* Similarly, Foster has translated as 'put… under control'.[174] Kraus has also given '*sich unterworfen hat'* and points to *šutemkû* as offered by CAD.[175]

The two sections cited above are so similar as to entail some level of intertextuality. If one reads *uštabrúma* as being the *Št* stem of *barû* as after Livingstone, then the key difference between the two lines is the simultaneous use of hapax legomena. Even if Lokotniov's interpretation of *uštabrúma* as the elsewhere attested *Št*

[172] *CAD* M vol.2, p.9
[173] Ibid.
[174] Foster, 2005, p.1017
[175] Kraus, 1980, p.110.

stem of *bitrû* is accepted, it does little to diminish the general similarities and the argument for conscious intertextuality.

Furthermore, the sources become even more closely aligned when an earlier line in the *Letter of Gilgamesh* (l.4) is taken into consideration, which also bears close similarity to the line from *UWV*:

> *ša ki-ma qí-e [u]l-tu išid šamê* (AN.UR) *a-di elât šamê* (AN.PA) *mātāti* (KUR.KUR) *napḫar*(NIGIN)*- ši-na i-be-lu*
>
> '[W]ho rules all the countries from the horizon to the zenith as (with) a cord.'
>
> (*Letter of Gilg.,* l.4. Tr, Gurney, p.128).

Here the measurement of the king's dominion is taken slightly differently. Instead of '(where) the sun rises to where its sets' (l.6), appears *ultu išid šamê adi elât šamê* – 'from the horizon to the zenith.'[176] However, the fundamental meaning is the same, and the rest of the line is again extremely similar to both of the others (l.6 & *UWV* r.23). That said, although comparandum of the simile, namely the *qi-e* 'thread' (or booty as per Livingstone) remains the same, the verb changes. Rather than 'piling up' the lands, as above, here *ibelu,* 'they ruled' (3rd pl. G. pret.) is used. Note that in the relevant line from *UWV* (r.23) both *ibelu* and the verb in the *Št* stem appear, though *ibelu* is necessarily shuffled into a new clause which recapitulates and summarises the foregoing simile. Moreover, with *ibelu gimru* 'they ruled everything' the selection of *gimru* to denote everything is conspicuous. Its synonyms, like *naphar,* for example, used earlier in the line, or its other close synonyms (e.g., *kullatu, kiššatu*) are often used in similar contexts to denote the totality of kingdom. However, as Rochberg shows, *gimru* has 'somewhat different sense of totality' with a distinct connotation of meaning 'that which is gathered up':

> 'Another reference to *gimrētu*, or *gimrātu* is in a lexical synonym list where *gi-im-ra-tum* = MIN (=[*pu-uh-ru*]*),* and *puhru* stems from *pahāru* meaning to gather things together' (Rochberg, 2021, p. 11).

This harmonises with the interpretation of *uš-ta-ti!-en-kám-ma* as coming from *nakāmu*, with both of these lines now sharing an emphasis on the totality of the lands having

[176] The former formulation, which is similar in *UWV* and *A Letter of Gilgamesh*, is also seen elsewhere. For example, it appears at least once in what survives of Tablet XI of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* (SBV, l. 45). In this appearance, is describing the way in which Mount Māšu guards the sun from sunrise to sunset. However, the latter expression, 'from the horizon to the zenith' is also intertextual, and an 'inappropriate use of the phrase… paralleled only in the annals of the Assyrian king Tigleth-Pileser III.' (Gurney, 1957, p.127).

been physically amassed. Thus, both of these lines from the *Letter of Gilgamesh* are assimilated into its counterpart in *UWV*.

The very close affinity between the similes in *UWV* (r.23) and the *Letter of Gilgamesh* (l.6), is only blurred by the selection of differing unusual *Št* verbs. The similarity between these lines is reinforced by the language of the other approximate line (r.4) in the latter text corresponding with the extra verb in the former. Thus, we can quite confidently posit a striking but hitherto unnoticed piece of intertextuality between *UWV* and the *Letter of Gilgamesh,* each enigmatic and unique literary works in their own right. Though the exact dating of the latter text is uncertain, Gurney posits a dating at least after 745 BCE when Tigleth-Pileser III ascended to the throne.[177] However, as he points out, the surviving colophon claims that it was copied from an older original. The scholarly consensus of *UWV* asserts its composition to have been within the reign of Aššurbanipal.[178] These considerations tentatively place the creation of the respective texts within one hundred years of each other. The extent of the intertextual evidence between these two pieces of unique poetic literature which is concentrated in this conspicuous simile suggests a reading along the right half of the spectrum from 'traditional referentiality' to 'implicit quotation.' (Fig.2). However, more precise categorisation is impossible without further contextual knowledge about, for example, potential intermediary or related texts to which both present examples share some commonality.

3.6 An Interesting Noun-Adverb

Adverbs are used between six and nine times in the surviving lines of *UWV*.[179] There is one, however, that stands out as different from the rest, this difference rendered in even sharper relief by the presence of those others. Most of the adverbs are used to apply an abstract, intangible or emotional sense on the action being performed (and in at least one case the same root is used as an adjective elsewhere within the text). These are descriptive and literary functions in themselves, but there is one adverb whose usage implies an entire simile, an allusive piece of imagery that is worth investigating in more detail. It is also the only adverb in the text constructed from a noun, unless one reads the numeral 'one' to be a noun, as in the construction *ilten* (one) + *iš* to form the adverb

[177] Gurney, 1957, p.127.

[178] Examples of this universal consensus are in Von Soden, 1936; Sanders, 2009, and Bach, 2018.

[179] Adverbial appearances in *UWV*: *ilteniš*: "together", obv 4, r.24; *ez-zi-iš*: "furiously", r.15 c.f. *ez-zu-ti* (adj) r.14; *ha-an-tiš*: "quickly/instantly", r.27; *mar-ṣi-iš*: "bitterly", r.32. *Kayyamanu*: (adj./adv.) constantly/consistently/regular/veritable, o.27 and r.6; *šiltahiš*: arrowlike.

ilteniš (alt. *ištenišˇ*): 'together' ('one-ly'). It appears on the reverse side of the tablet (r.31), in an intensely descriptive moment at the climax of the extremely elaborate, 'almost Homeric' double-simile.[180] The prince, upon waking a second time from his dream, is taken in a fit of panic, and runs *šiltāḫiš* 'arrowlike' into the street:

ina su-ú-qí ***šil-ta-ḫiš u-ṣi-ma***

'He flew into the road like an arrow'

(*UWV,* r.31. Tr Livingstone, 1989, p.76 [bold added]).

The adverb seems only to invite translation as a straight simile. Occasionally, *šiltāḫu* is used in literary similes using *kīma,* as when Gilgamesh attacks a group of lions (IX, 17):

ki-ma šil-t[*a-ḫi a-na b*]*i-ri-šú-nu im-qut*

'Like an arrow he fell among them'

(*Gilg.* SBV. IX: 17. Tr. George, 2003, p. 668).[181]

However, as the adverb *šiltaḫiš,* it seems to appear only one other place in the entire surviving Akkadian tradition.[182] This comes in VAT 8807, a scholarly scribal anthology of Neo-Assyrian 'Popular Sayings' from 716 BCE.[183] It details the flight of a fox from the city gates, harassed by a pack of dogs:

ana šu-zub napšatiᵐᵉˢ-šu šil-ta-ḫi-iš ú-ṣi

'To save his life he departed like an arrow'

(VAT 8807, r.III:24. Tr. Lambert, 1963, pp.217-18)

In both cases, the adverb is followed immediately by the verb *uṣi(-ma)* the third-person singular form of *aṣu* in the G stem. The verb means 'to depart/go out/ escape' but in the case of these two lines, it clearly seems to function as a piece of wordplay on the noun *uṣu* 'arrow' which forms *uṣi* in the genitive. The correlation between *šiltāḫu* and *uṣu* as synonyms is an intimate one, too. The words appear together in multiple lexical synonym lists, such as *Malku=Šarru III,* and *HAR-ra=hubullu*[184], and even appearing side-by-side in a line from Esarhaddon:

ina uṣṣi šiltaḫi miḫiṣ la nablaṭi amḫassu

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[180] Bucellati, 1976, p.66. See below for further discussion of this complex double-simile.

[181] George (2003 v.2, p.863) also notes of the simile that there is 'something very similar in Sargon II.'

[182] CAD Š vol.2.

[183] Lambert, 1963, 213-222.

[184] Indeed, two tablets of *HAR-ra hubullu* were even excavated alongside the VAT 10057. Although orthographic analysis conducted by Anmar Abdulillah Fadhil shows that these were written by different hands, it certainly speaks to the proliferation of this lexical list and the synonyms therein.

> 'With arrow after arrow I afflicted him with a wound from which there is no recovery'
> (Tr. Borger, 1967, via CAD N vol.1, p.25).[185]

It seems likely that *šiltaḫis uṣi* could have been an idiomatic phrase to denote a hasty departure, with its distinct phonetic wordplay. Indeed, VAT 8807's account of popular sayings would be precisely the place one would expect to find small idiomatic formulations such as this. The fact that this idiomatic exact formulation is not attested elsewhere does not do much to subdue this likelihood, as it occurs in '(t)he only collection of such material'.[186] Its rarity does however, draw closer together the relationship between these two texts, be that thematic, intertextual, or contemporary. On the latter, Lambert confirms that VAT 8807 fits with the accepted time-period for the composition of *UWV*:

> '(T)he Assyrian tablet contains things which were in use in the late period, rather than older material which survived in written form. This conclusion is confirmed by the language, which is Late Assyrian dialect' (Lambert, 1963, p.213).

Continuous discourse remains about the precise categorisation and purpose of *UWV*. The inclusion of an adverb-pun, only elsewhere found in the recorded popular sayings of Neo-Assyrian people may inform as to the tone, provenance, or literary placement of the narrative. This is especially pertinent when, as shown below, this is not the only intertextual resonance in *UWV* with this same tablet of VAT 8807's collection of informal and humorous sayings. Both of these resonances, moreover, manifest as expressions of conceptual proximity, with the noun-adverb just discussed and the elaborate double-simile below. It seems increasingly clear that the technical consideration of expressing **X** in terms of **Y** was of interest for its author, and actively engaged with throughout the narrative.

3.7 An 'Almost Homeric' Double-Simile.[187]

The tone of *UWV* dwells on the reluctance of the prince to preach his message, and the psychological state behind that. He is afraid of potential consequences of a message which will be unpopular with the people. As Buccellati has noted, this is something almost unique in Mesopotamian literature, though echoes seem to be found in books of

[185] Leichty (2011; 98, r.41) uses the successive synonyms to simply pluralise: "by means of arrows, I inflicted him…"
[186] Lamber, 1963, p.213.
[187] Bucellati, 1976, p.66.

the Hebrew Bible such as Jeremiah.[188] This is epitomised in the double-simile that occurs as the prince awakens from the dream (r.29 and r.30). These lines liken the prince, in his anguish at the task given to him by the figure of Nergal in his dream, first to a young man who is being hunted, running around in the wilderness; and secondly to a wild pig, whose innards inflate with gas in the throes of lovemaking. These are vivid and intricate comparisons, whose similarity do not appear as straightforward or innate as in other, less elaborate similes.

> 'Here it must be pointed out, however, that imagery contained in the cluster of similes is so well developed as to almost become an end in itself. The author does more than give a fleeting reference to a point of comparison. He paints two vivid pictures which stand out, literarily, on their own merits - even apart, that is, from what they contribute to the main theme of the text as a whole. In the imaginative delight which goes into the portrait of the murderer and the young boar, Mesopotamian literature comes closest, perhaps, to the type of long and well developed "epic simile" that one finds for instance, in Homer?'
> (Buccellati, 1976, p.66).

Foster notes the thematic incongruity of the second half of the simile to its main-text comparandum, the young prince's agony:

> 'The case just cited seems at once dramatic and inelegant. If the cry of woe is compared to orgasmic moaning, the purpose of the allusion to porcine flatulence is less clear. Was this construed as a sign of vigor or was it a sign of the man's extreme agitation, in the grip of which he scoops up dirt from the street in his mouth, puffs and pants?' (Foster, 2002, p.283).

The imagery does not seem to render the initial image of the prince's woes any clearer. Indeed, if anything, it diverts attention from the emotional state it is describing. The result of this is increased attention being drawn to the simile itself, and justifies the scrutiny being applied to it:

> 'Comparisons formulated with greater complexity draw attention away from the subject compared to the term of comparison and to the figure itself'
> (Foster, 2002, p.283).

[188] Buccellati, 1976, p.70.

When one compares this double-simile to the foregoing passage (r.2-10), which describes the partially animalistic physiognomy of the gods encountered by Kummay in his dream, it is possible to identify a conceptual similarity between these two very different kinds of image expression which are juxtaposed so closely in this text. While in the first section, animal limbs are being grafted onto the humanoid structure of the body, in this simile, it is the situational, societal characteristics that are being swapped. Firstly, the young man finds himself alone in the wild, and then a young boar is having sex with a humanised female (*sinništišú*) whose only body-parts mentioned: SA-*bu-šu,* 'his heart' KA-*šú* 'his mouth' and EGIR-*šú* 'his backside' are all ones shared and easily blended with humans. Indeed, these body-parts are all also written as logograms, something that in the catalogue of deities is pronounced and concentrated.

Notable here is the close juxtaposition of two passages defined by very different styles of expressing affinity between concepts. One is a uniquely elaborate and vivid poetic double-simile. The other is the passage of dense, grammatically frugal body-descriptions whose style most closely resembles esoteric scholarly texts like the *Göttertypentext* and even lexical lists. The convergence, within one narrative, of completely opposing methodologies for the expression of analogical thought, is yet another piece of evidence that these methodologies were of conscious intellectual interest to the author.

3.7.1 The Double-Simile and the Humorous 'Popular Sayings'

In the image of a young man running around in the undergrowth, pulse racing, being hunted; and with a pig secreting gas during sex, the roles of the subjects seem amusingly reversed. The boar in the simile is copulating with *sinništišú,* a word for woman, which is uncommonly elsewhere applied to animals. In fact, it seems the only place in which *sinništu* is applied to an animal in a context similar to this one comes from the very same tablet of VAT 8807 is found the only ever other apparent attestation of *šiltaḫiš.* The two incidents are separated by four lines.

kalbu ina muhhi sin-niš-ti-šú ki-i [e-lu-ú]

'When a dog [mounted] his wife'

(VAT 8807, r.III:24. Tr. Lambert, 1963, 216-17).

Unfortunately, this passage is badly effaced. However, before breaking away, the next line begins to describe the physical effects that the excitement is having on the dog, much as the simile does with the pig, saying that 'his face was glowing, his heart …'[189]

[189] Lambert, 1963, pp.216-17

The word here that Lambert translates as 'his heart:" *lib-ba-šú* is the same as is used for the pig's 'insides' (as translated by Livingstone) in the corresponding line in *UWV*: *SA-bu-šú*.

There is levity inherent in these fables and sayings, in which the animals are anthropomorphised to the degree that they are capable of speech and irreverence. This relativises the use of the *sinništušú* in both of the respective lines, normally reserved for human women, to be in the VAT 8807 context a tool in the anthropomorphising of the animals in these fables, and in *UWV*: a highlighter of the humorous role-reversal element at play within the double-simile. Lambert's translation recognises this anthropomorphism, and does not translate *sinništušú* as his 'bitch' or 'mate' but as 'his wife'. This is a convention that Livingstone does not follow, translating the appearance of the pig's *šinništušú* as 'his mate.'[190] However, Lambert's translation of 'his wife' from VAT 8807 seems more applicable also for *UWV*. As well as being a more natural translation, it heightens the contrast of the anthropomorphised pig with the zoomorphism of the *eṭlu* being hunted in the wild from the preceding leg of the double-simile. That there is a relationship between the two texts is clear. Similar to the case of the *šiltaḫiš,* where the adverb in question is also followed by the verb *uṣi(ma),* in the case of the *sinništušú,* in both cases followed by the verb *elú* 'to go up/mount.' It can be noted too that a pig and its backside are also present in VAT 8807, and in relatively close proximity to the other two items, though not quite as related thematically.[191]

Role-reversal is a key tool in the expression of humour in Neo-Assyrian writing. Take, for example, the tale of the illiterate physician. This 'humorous scholastic tale' was likely written as a mnemonic aid to help scribes to learn their Sumerian, both by putting it into a neat narrative package, and by employing humour.[192] In it, a famous doctor stops to ask for directions from a poor vegetable seller, who responds in Sumerian. The doctor does not understand the woman speaking in the academic language of his own tradition, and accuses her of cursing him.[193] As D'Agostino writes that it is in 'the discrepancy between the expected roles of the two characters which are inverted in the story, the humour rises.'[194] Similarly, in the humorous folktale of the *Poor Man of Nippur*,

[190] Livingstone, 1989, p.76. Foster, 2005, p.838, also does this.

[191] Lambert, 1963, p. 215, r.III:13-14: The pig is unholy [. . . .] bespattering his backside / Making the streets smell [x] polluting the houses.

[192] Foster, 2005. P.937.

[193] *Why Do You Cuss Me?* Tr. Reiner, 1986, pp.1-6. Cf. Edition and transliteration with German translation by Cavigneaux, 1979, pp. 111-7.

[194] D'Agostino, 1998. C.f. With George (1993), who suggests that the humour has at least as much to do with the idea of the priest from a 'rival' town, who cannot understand the dialect of Nippur.

the beggar, Gimil-Ninurta comically dons the disguises and roles of a dignitary and a doctor, before employing another to play the role of him, in order to wreak revenge on the governor who wronged him.[195]

There is a certain ambiguity to the translation of the *eṭ-li ta-pi-ik da-me*, as to whether the man who has shed blood has shed his own or that of another person. The majority of the attestations of the word seem to align with a reading that he has shed someone else's blood, but it is not certain. The image of the man being himself bleeding as he runs around in the bushes would heighten the zoomorphism, and make more vivid the role-swap with the pig in the next leg of the simile. However, even if it is simply a man who has spilled the blood of another, this does not diminish the force of the contrast.

The biggest difference between the corresponding lines from *UWV* and VAT 8807 is that the animal who is seen to be mounting his wife in the former is a pig, and in the latter is a dog. The next section will examine the affinity between the portrayal of these two animals in Neo-Assyrian thought and expression. This will draw the interpretation of intertextuality between *UWV* and VAT 8807 even closer together, as it is seen that replacement of the dog for the pig in *UWV* corresponds with the two animals' tendency to be evoked together as images in a sexual context.

3.7.1.1 Excursus: Pig, Dog, and Woman

The foregoing section mentioned the apparently unique image of a sexually charged encounter between a pig and a human woman (or a heavily anthropomorphised one) in a narrative literary context. It seemed to further echo VAT 8807, to which a separate link had already been established for *UWV*, wherein it is a dog which is said to mount a woman (*sinništišû*). When the focus of enquiry is widened to the context of divinatory literature, and other texts which serve as functionaries in processional or magical contexts, this group of associations is less uncommon.

Though representing an inversion of the natural order, and thus being ominous, portrayals of sexual relations between a dog and woman, pig and woman, or dog and pig, are relatively frequent in divination. They are not unique in fulfilling this role: there are often omens about sexual encounters between other species. In omen lists that mention the significance of intercourse between multiple animals, the trio of the pig, the dog and the woman always seem to appear, generally the dog and the pig come next to

[195] *The Poor Man of Nippur* Ed. Gurney, 1956, pp. 145-164.

each other in the list, and usually they are in a prominent place on the list. What then might be the significance of this conceptual relationship?

Tablet 80 of the important omen list *Šumma ālu* is concerned with observable behavioural anomalies of humans and animals. It opens with a dog pursuing sex from a woman, and then from a pig.

DIŠ UR.GI$_7$ *ana* MUNUS TE TIL PAL-*e na-ẓaq* DINGIR GU$_7$ KUR

DIŠ UR.GI$_7$ *ana* MUNUS *ú-ḫa-an-*[*ni-iṣ* …]

DIŠ UR.GI$_7$ *ana* ŠAḪ [TE x] x [(x) x GÁL-*ši* NU …]

DIŠ UR.GI$_7$ *ana* ŠAḪ *ú-ḫ*[*a-an-ni-i*]*ṣ* ⌜NÍG⌝.GA DINGIR URU : ⌜TUR⌝-⌜*er*⌝

‘If a dog approaches a woman (for sex): end of the reign: worry (or) pestilence for the land.

If a dog ru[bs] itself against a woman: [...]

If a dog [approaches] a pig [(for sex): ... will occur; no ...]

If a dog r[ub]s itself against a pig: the property of the city god (will diminish): decline of...’

(*Šumma ālu* T80: 1-4. Tr. Boddy & Mittermayer, 2022, p.361).

The list continues on, with the dog then attempting to get sex from other animals: a fox, a sheep, and a wolf. Then other animals, including the pig, take their own turn to solicit inter-species relations. Furthermore, after the dog has completed its rounds of the other animals, the next animal to seek sex in the list is the pig:

DIŠ ⌜ŠAḪ⌝ ⌜*ana*⌝ ⌜MUNUS⌝ TE ŠUB-*e* É: [x] x

DIŠ ŠAḪ ⌜*ana*⌝ ⌜MUNUS⌝ *ú-ḫa-an-ni-iṣ* SU.GU$_7$: *bu-lì* ⌜x⌝-*šú*

IŠ ŠAḪ *ana* UR.GI$_7$ TE GAL.MEŠ TUR.MEŠ EN URU BI ⌜URU⌝-*šú* ⌜È⌝

DIŠ ŠAḪ *ana* UR.GI$_7$ *ú-ḫa-an-ni-iṣ su-un-nu-uq: su-un-qu ni-*[*ši* G]ÁL..MEŠ

‘If a pig approaches a woman (for sex): abandonment of the house (or) [...] ...

If a pig rubs itself against a woman: famine (of the land) (or) of the herd of cattle...

If a pig approaches a dog (for sex): the great will become small; the ruler of that city will leave? his city.

If a pig rubs itself against a dog: famine (or) famines of the people will occur.’

(*Šumma ālu* T80: 10-13. Tr. Boddy & Mittermayer, 2022, p.362).

After this, it is a sheep's turn, and an ox's and so on. However, after the account of the pig, the list of potential sexual partners for each animal is less long. The dog, and the pig, moreover, are also the only two of all the animals to try their luck with a human woman.

The intimacy of the semiotic relationship between pig, dog, and women in Mesopotamian writing was also possibly partially actualised in reality, with some evidence of women suckling piglets and puppies in order to be rid of excess breastmilk, and also as a vestigial process from the early days of these species' domestication.[196] Wiggerman points to various anthropologists who show that this is a habit which has been observable in multiple cultures around the world and continues to occur into the present. Furthermore, Wiggerman cites a tradition of depicting the Lamaštu suckling piglets and pups on apotropaic amulets, 'she expected the suckling animals to replace the human babies Lamaštu wanted to breast-feed and kill.'[197] This is partially corroborated by the idea of dogs and pigs biting the breasts of women in potential punishments of *Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty*:

> TA IGI-*ku-nu a-a ip-pi-ṭir' si-si šá ar-da-te-ku-nu/ mat-nat šá* LÚ.GURUŠ.MEŠ-*ku-nu ina ni-ṭil* IGI.2-*ku-nu* UR.KU ŠAH.MEŠ/ *ina re-bit* URU.aš-šur *li-in-da-šá-ru* LÚ.ÚŠ.MEŠ-*ku-nu* KI.TIM/ *a-a im-hur ina kar-ši* UR.KU ŠAH.MEŠ *lu na-aq-bar-ku-nu*
>
> 'Before your very eyes may dogs and swine drag the *teats* of your young women and the penises of your young men to and fro in the squares of Assur; may the earth not receive your corpses but may your burial place be in the belly of a dog or a pig' (SAA 02, o.481-484. Tr. Parpola & Watanabe, K, 1988, p.49 [italics retained]).

This seems to combine the suckling imagery with the fact that 'scavenging dogs and pigs preying upon exposed little children in the streets was a fairly normal sight in Mesopotamia.'[198]

The prevalence of the image of the dog having sex with the pig, and in turn, the dog or pig having sex with a woman, is an ominous indicator of the cosmic and social order being breached, and of role usurpation within this order. Streck asserts that the

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[196] Wiggerman, 2010, pp.407-414.

[197] Ibid. p.408.

[198] De Zorzi, 2022. De Zorzi here provides an excellent study of some of the semiotic associations between dogs and pigs in divinatory and other context, their distasteful sexual promiscuity and insolence, including how their appearance in omens correspond to women.

image of the pig often connotes a 'deterrent example of a selfish, egoistic person who lives without morals.'[199] This also conforms with the idea of the sexual connotations of the pig in the omens as being a distinctly perverted one, an inversion of the natural order. Thus, the apodoses of these events of sexuality with a pig tend to be negative. It perhaps informs too, the association with the lustful moaning of the pig with the wails of dismay that the prince lets out in *UWV* (r.30).

The author of *UWV* would have been quite conversant with such rituals and omens, due to the interdisciplinary education undergone by scribes, something reinforced by the circumstances of *UWV*'s find. He would also have been tuned into the network of cultural associations and which form a contextual backdrop for textual composition and the use of figurative language. Therefore, one can be justified in considering these thematic links while appraising the visceral moment wherein the protagonist Kummay's mental state is likened to a pig mounting what appears to be a human woman. This is both in its frenzied sexuality and its connotation of taboo and debasement. It also serves to draw closer together the intertextuality in the lines in question from *UWV* and VAT 8807, where the key difference is that the animal mounting its anthropomorphised wife is a pig in the former and a dog in the latter. This, combined with the evidence about the adverb *šiltaḫiš* discussed above, strongly prompts an ascription of intertextuality between *UWV* and VAT 8807. The nature of this referentiality is, while pronounced, somewhat oblique. The author was likely not trying to communicate the precise textual reference directly into the consciousness of the audience, as with an allusion. Instead, they were drawing on and reproducing themes and formulations from a textual source which is itself a compilation of cultural idioms and proverbs. This type of scribal incorporation might be classed along the right half of the gradient of intertextuality (Fig.2), not at its extreme as with fixed allusion, but between the descriptors of 'borrowing' and 'implicit quotation.'

3.7.2 The Double-Simile and Gilgamesh

It has been recognised that the SBV *Epic of Gilgamesh* (particularly Tablet VII) is one of the key hypotexts[200] for *UWV*.[201] This is true both thematically, as it is the tablet in which Enkidu shares his dream of the underworld that he has while he lies on his deathbed; and allusively, such as the mention of the dark-visaged man with the Anzû-

[199] Streck, 2012, p.790.
[200] Genette, 1997, p.5.
[201] Bach, 2018.

resembling head (see §3.2). It is noteworthy that in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* (SBV. VII 168-9), the lines quoted in *UWV* describing the appearance of the dark man come at the start of an intensely descriptive sequence with extravagant similes of its own, such as likening blows exchanged in a fist-fight to the motion of a skipping rope and to capsizing a raft (SBV VII: 172-4). The lines directly preceding this scene seem to contain an element of humour, too. After having cursed Shamhat to destitution and invoking the wives of her clients to bring claims against her, Enkidu swiftly about-faces and instead blesses her with the good fortune that '[n]o soldier shall be slow to drop his belt for you' and 'Ishtar [the ablest] of the gods, shall gain you entrance to the man whose home is secure and wealth heaped high! For you his wife shall be deserted, though mother of seven!'[202] The humour in the immediate reversal of the fortunes and attitude towards the prostitute seems clear, reminiscent in kind even of the slave's vicissitudes in the *Dialogue of Pessimism,*[203] despite the gravity of the scene, with Enkidu lying on his deathbed.

In this section of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* (SBV. VII)*,* Enkidu, in a fit of rage, curses those who caused him to become somewhat human: the hunter and the prostitute. These find another parallel in the dual simile from *UWV*, in which a man is being hunted in the wilderness; and an animal is having sex with a woman. Indeed, this simile comes as a comparison to the emotion felt by Kummay on awakening from his dreamt vision of hell – and it is with similar hysterical grief, having learned in a dream of his impending death, that Enkidu curses first the hunter and then Shamhat. Pryke also notes this moment as a consideration of the animal and human roles of Enkidu, calling it:

> '[A] further note illustrating further the blurring of the lines between humans and animals in Gilgamesh, it should be noted that, just like the allallu-bird, Enkidu is also presented as mourning the loss of his natural power, when cursing the prostitute and the trapper.' (Pryke, 2017, p.165).

The role inversion present in the double-simile is the same one as Enkidu is in this section lamenting having been forced to undergo, having embodied that uncomfortable liminality of being the "man" who is running like an animal in the wild, and the

[202] *Gilg.* SBV. *VII* 102-161. Ed. George, 2003, pp.638-43.

[203] Ed. Lambert, 1963, pp.139-149. Though there have been multiple interpretations, outlined by Foster (1974, p.81), of this famous text, there seems no doubt to be humour in it, even if the 'humor in it be as bitter as any open denunciation.'

"animal" having sex with a human woman. This is particularly pointed in light of the recent publication of the Cornell tablet of *Gilgamesh*, detailing the episode of Enkidu's intercourse with Shamhat to become human.[204] Previously it had been thought that the Old Babylonian and Standard Babylonian texts were slightly different versions of the scene, but the discovery showed the two sex scenes happening successively. This shows that Enkidu was not made human immediately upon his copulation with Shamhat, but instead it was a process over the course of two weeks, split into two separate bouts of sex. After the first of these, Enkidu expresses the wish to fight Gilgamesh, showing that he was still too animalistic. It is only after the second week of intercourse that he is deemed sufficiently human. Thus, there is a prolonged interlude during which Enkidu is still seen as an animal while engaging in sexual intercourse with a human woman, a state which is captured in the image of the pig from *UWV* (r.30).

Perhaps it was this very sense of confused dislocation between humanness and non-humanness that the simile is trying to evoke and apply to the lamentation of the young prince. The author may be subtly hinting at the idea that, upon waking from his oneiric journey to the underworld, the prince has not truly come away from the land where 'those who enter cannot leave.'[205] The prince, after running like an arrow into the street:

> *ep-ri* E.SÍR SILA.DAGAL.LA *a-na* KA-*šú ú-sa-ap*
> 'scooped up into his mouth the dust from street and square'
> (*UWV* r.31. Tr. Livingstone, 1989, p.76).

It is a frequent literary motif, one seen in *Epic of Gilgamesh* and the *Descent of Ishtar* that for the people of the Underworld: 'dust is their food, clay their bread.'[206] The *Descent of Ishtar* has also been established as influential for *UWV*.[207] Indeed, the motif of eating dust is also found in omina of an Assyrian dream book:

> DIS SA ḪAR.ḪI.A KÚ LIL-*a*' $DUG_4.DUG_4$ *i-ma-ki* KI BE DINGIR-*šú*
> GAR-*šú* MI-*šú*
> 'If he eats dust: he will become decrepit, . . . he will suffer want,
> alienation(?) of his god is in store for him, perplexity'
> (SM 2073: Y+10. Tr. Oppenheim, 1956, pp. 273 & 317).

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[204] George, 2018.
[205] *Gilg.* SBV, VII: 185. Trans. George, 2003 p.645.
[206] *Descent of Ishtar.* I. o.8. Ed. Lapinkivi, 2010, p.29. C.f. *Gilg.* SBV, VII: 188. Ed. George, 2003, p.645.
[207] See Bach, 2018, p.69: fn.2. Sanders, 2009, p.151.

It adds an additional layer of haunting portent to the final words that Nergal spoke to the prince before he awoke:

> *at-lak a-na e-la-a-ti a-di a-ḫa-sa-sa-ka*
> go forth up to the upper world **until I think of you.**
> (*UWV* r.29. Tr. Livingstone, 1989, p.76 [emphasis added]).

The raising of the dead is certainly within the wheelhouse of these gods, who in both the *Descent of Ishtar*, and *Nergal and Ereshkigal* threaten to do so to the extent that the dead will outnumber the living.[208] Perhaps then, the partial role-inversion which echoes the liminality of Enkidu's character is intended to express the existential limbo between the land of the living and the dead that is experienced by Kummay upon his awakening.

3.8 Repackaging an Image

The idea that *UWV* is a piece of literature which self-consciously explores the modes of expression of **X** in terms of **Y** is bolstered by the fact that in more than one case, the same image is treated multiple times, communicating a different sense in each usage. For example, well water is used in order to evoke a sense of abundance:

> *ki-ma* A-MEŠ PÚ *mad-le-e ur-(ra) ù* MI *tiq-na-*[*a-ī*]*i si-mat* LUGAL-*ú-ti ú-šá-az-na-an a*[?]-[*n*]*a ga-nu-ni-šú*
> '…like well water in buckets, day and night, he kept amassing jewels suitable for royalty into his treasuries.'
> (*UWV,* o.8. Tr. Livingstone, 1989, p.69).

However, the image is used again later, after Išum stays the hand of Nergal from killing Kummay. Here, though, the sense that the simile evokes is instead of the calmness that came over the underworld god:

> *ki-ma* A-MEŠ PÚ *el-lu-ú-*[t]i[?] *ú-ni-iḫ-*[*šú*]
> 'as calm as pure well water'
> (*UWV,* r.17. Tr. Livingstone, 1989, p.74).

In another such example, porcine images appear three times in the surviving sections of the narrative. In each case their use is seemingly figurative, though the context around the first two of its appearances (o.16 & o.40) is heavily damaged. As has been shown, the image of the pig in its third instantiation bears a substantial amount of semiotic significance. and seems to represent to various extents, sexual excitement, as well as role-displacement similar to that endured by Enkidu himself in his sexual bouts with

[208] *Nergal and Ereshkigal.* Col.V:11-12. Ed. Gurney, 1960. *Descent of Ishtar.* O.20. Ed. Lapinkivi, 2010.

Shamhat. The precise meaning to be communicated by the other two usages of the pig image difficult to glean. Although, as mentioned, the surrounding lines in both cases are significantly damaged, ŠAḪ is followed in both cases by *ú-nap-pal*, meaning 'turn upside-down' or 'dig out', perhaps to do with the image of the pig rolling around in the mud, trotters in the air, in order to protect itself from the sun. Alternatively, it could be to do with the wont of a pig to dig around in the dirt with its snout.[209] The first occurrence of the image appears in the line directly preceding the first mention of a DUMU LÚ.A.BA 'son of a scribe'[210] or who Foster suggests is a first encounter with the 'mysterious scribe' who is recording the events, and ultimately applies the morals to himself. [211] The copulating pig at the climax of the double-simile is accompanied by the word *lillidi,* denoting either offspring (especially when applied to humans) or general youthfulness. Though this is an interesting coincidence, the condition of the former is too poor to speculate any close thematic link.

The recurrence of images charged with different descriptive roles in *UWV* seems to be a deliberate technique, and one congruent with a wider conscious engagement with the use of simile and conceptual comparison as a whole.

4 Conclusion

Neo-Assyrian writing was suffused with a rich semiotics of thought and expression, which characterised a world where everything was ontologically connected, and images and concepts were articulated in terms of each other. The similarities and conceptual relationships perceived and expressed between objects and subjects entail a diverse repertoire of metaphor and analogy. This preponderance of associative language was not a literary filigree but an undergirding structure of social and textual organisation. Linguistic and connotative affinities between synonyms in lexical lists were expressed in the same formulation of proximal juxtaposition as the associations between target and source domain in allegorical predication.

The fundamental interweaving of analogical thinking into the patterns of expression and social structure justifies further research into the cognitive function of metaphor in Neo-Assyrian society and textuality. An example of this discussed above is in the explanation of the fate awaiting transgressors of a treaty in terms of exemplary

[209] Though Livingstone's (1989) transliteration and translation includes these instances of *ŠAḪ ú-nap-pal,* Foster (2005, pp.832-9), in his translation, omits both.

[210] Tr. Livingstone, 1989, p.69: o.17S.

[211] Foster, 2005, p832.

acts visited upon a lamb. Further research to this end can be conducted by applying some of the CMT theories outlined above as a theoretical framework to examples of Neo-Assyrian textuality from all genres and contexts. The important trend of travelling through descriptions or lists from head to toe is itself rooted in the embodiment of human experience and the way in which humans project bodily perceptions and structures onto the world at large.

Textuality itself was a fundamental part of the fabric of Neo-Assyrian society. The mythopoeic landscape was not only recorded by, but founded in, a literate appreciation for the power of writing. The mythological aetiology of the written word is founded in the divine, and it is explicitly through divine writing that such things as the marks on a liver, the verdict they entailed, and the very stars in the sky were provided. Indeed, the association between protasis and apodosis in a divinatory text, its interpretation and prognostication, was often done on the basis of perceived paronomasitc or orthographic similarities. The fates, not only of humanity but of the gods themselves, were recorded on the mythological Tablet of Destinies. Its possessor was granted the power even to dissuade a god's arrow from its flight, and to reinstate it to the bough it first grew from.

This project's key case study, *The Underworld Vision of an Assyrian Prince*, is itself already well commented upon for the author's erudition and the genre-defying narrative voice. As this dissertation has shown, there seems also to be a self-conscious engagement with the very technique of pattern-drawing. Intertextual works often have a tendency to be self-conscious, self-exegetical, even. So too, by nature, is the practise of expressing one object or concept in terms of another an exercise in explanation. As Bach pointed out, the author *UWV* is unafraid to use the intertextual notes (particularly, as discussed, with the *Epic of Gilgamesh*) as part of a conceptual discourse, rather than simply drawing from it to bolster his prose. He consciously 'takes up a clear counter-position to the *Gilgamesh Epic*, cleverly blending both hypotexts together in a very elegant way.'[212] Moreover, this narrator is even seen to be explicitly and meta-textually commenting on the pattern he draws between the primary story of Kummay's vision of the underworld, and how it interacts with his own circumstances (or those of this scribe as a character).

Tacit allusions to specialist knowledge of hieratic, religious and divinatory language in *UWV* can also be found in the choices of phraseology within these

[212] Bach, 2018, p83.

compact and non-verbose bodily descriptions. This is particularly the case in the judicious interspersal of the verb *šakānu,* a word whose connotations often include the divine placement of omens or verdicts upon the bodies of ominous creatures and objects.

The ways in which conceptual analogy is expressed within *UWV* are manifold. The style of predication of associated ideas by simple juxtaposition was common to all genres of texts in which such categorisation or assortment of concepts was necessary, such as with synonyms in lexical lists. This dissertation has suggested that synecdoche was an important figurative technique in the body-descriptions of *UWV*. It allowed for the metaphorical associations of the whole source domain be applied to the constituent, while retaining a coherent image of the body. The means by which these predications were often articulated heightened this idea that the synecdoche of part-whole body assemblage was also a metaphorical value metonymy. That is, the act of displaying the body-parts alongside the whole of its predicate rather than its corresponding limb, was an act of assimilating their conceptual value. It imbued the limb not only with the visual and physical appearance of its predicate, but with the definition and symbolism of it, rendering them almost as synonyms.

More than once, images in similes were reused, but into different contexts, in order to highlight different characteristics. Often within these formulations of conceptual affinity there was found to be evidence of intertextuality or infusions of specialist knowledge and meaning. A conspicuous complex simile (r.24) was interrogated to yield strong new evidence of intertextuality with the enigmatic literary writing in the *Letter of Gilgamesh* (for which a new translatory note was offered). Other methods through which similarity was expressed were also engaged with, as in *mašālu* and *tamšīlu.*

The *šiltāḫiš* adverb, only seemingly translatable as a simile, occurred in a paronomastic arrangement alongside the third-person singular form of *aṣu* in the G stem in order to evoke connotations with its synonym for arrow, *uṣi.* The possibility that this paronomastic construction constituted something of an idiomatic phrase was tentatively suggested. In any event, it served as another example of the ubiquitous pervasion of associative techniques in literature and *UWV* in particular. Moreover, it also drew intertextual attention to the only other surviving instance of its being written in the Mesopotamian textual corpus, which came in an anthology of proverbs and brief fables.

Conclusion

The foregoing recognition of intertextuality was strengthened within another moment of analogy in *UWV*. It came in a complex double simile which seems to be unique in size and elaborateness within the surviving corpus. The prince's dismay is likened to the sensations felt by a pig who has mounted his wife. The phraseology uses anthropomorphising language which is rare elsewhere. One of its only other attestations comes a mere four lines after the foregoing paranomastic phrase. It is applied to a dog instead of a pig, though as has been shown, these were often evoked alongside each other as images and shared associative characteristics. Further thematic similarities were also noted to the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. They correspond to the same tablet (VII) from which the verbatim quote about the appearance of the Anzû-headed man was drawn.

What emerged over the course of this dissertation is the distinct sense that the composer of *UWV* was consciously engaging in the various ways that conceptual proximity and analogical thought could be expressed through figurative language. How these assimilated images could be incorporated throughout a narrative was actively explored by the learned scribe responsible for *UWV*'s creation. Moreover, many of these formulations showed signs of intertextual affinity with other works. The possibility arises that the text presents a dynamic compilation of such techniques, synthesised into a textual whole held together by a narrative. Furthermore, more than one of these intertextual sources were humorous in nature, such as VAT 8807's pithy vignettes, and the ludicrous demands in the *Letter of Gilgamesh*. This is something which may inform about aspects of the tone in which *UWV* was composed.

This project has gone some way in exploring the depth of semiotic significance to be found in Neo-Assyrian expressions of metaphor and analogy, where separate concepts are brought together to form a new node of meaning. Particularly, it has done so in the context of its key case study, *The Underworld Vision of an Assyrian Prince*. This significance can be both cultural and intertextual, both deliberate and subconscious, as literary influence or conceptual association.

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