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“Janus Parallelism Clusters in Akkadian Literature.”

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is known from the metrological system used to quantify measures of liquids and semi-liquids, according to which N_8 (Uruk IV) // N_2 (Uruk IV/III) = $1/10 N_1$ (jar : s. ATU 2. 129-131), still a small leap of faith would have to precede removal of our question mark.

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39) Janus Parallelism Clusters in Akkadian Literature – Janus Parallelism is a literary device in which a lexeme parallels in a polysemous way both the preceding and following lines. The polysemy can occur either in two stichs (« asymmetrical Janus Parallelism ») or in three (« symmetrical Janus Parallelism »).¹ Though the device is known primarily from the Hebrew Bible, this writer has discovered it in Akkadian literature as well,² and in the last two years, at least four more examples have been published.³

In addition to the regular appearance of Janus Parallelism, there is what I prefer to call a « Janus Parallelism Cluster, » i.e., a more sophisticated version of the feature in which several Janus Parallelisms appear in close proximity.⁴ The result is a text that challenges the reader and gives cause for contemplation of its interpretation. To illustrate such a cluster I turn to the Epic of Gilgameš XI : 16-20 :

16. *malikšunu qurādu* ^dEnlil
Their counsellor was the hero ^dEnlil
17. *guzalāšunu* ^dNinurta
Their Chairbearer was ^dNinurta
18. *gugallāšunu* ^dEnnugi
Their Canal Inspector was ^dEnnugi
19. ^dNin-ši-kù ^dEa ittišunu ta-me-ma
^dNiššiku, ^dEa, swore an oath with them.
20. *amassunu ušannā ana kikkišu*
So he repeated their words to the reed house.

Of interest here is line 19: ^dNin-ši-kù ^dEa ittišunu ta-me-ma which contains no less than three polysemous elements: *niššiku*, which can be read both as an epithet of ^dEa and as the noun « prince »;⁵ *ittišunu*, both as « with them » and « their sign »;⁶ and *tamēma* « he swore an oath »;⁷ which also can be read *tašibma* « you (Uta-napištim) sat ».⁸ Such polysemy imbues the composition with multiple possibilities for reading including « ^dNiššiku, ^dEa, spoke a sign, » or « ^dNiššiku, ^dEa, swore an oath with them, » « You (Uta-napištim) sat with the prince ^dEa, » and/or « You (Uta-napištim) sat with the ^dNiššiku, ^dEa. » Note how the latter harks back to the answer to Gilgameš's question in XI : 7 : « How is it that you have stood in the assembly of the gods and have found life? »

The type of triple polysemy here functions as a series of Janus Parallelisms. As « ^dNiššiku, ^dEa, swore an oath with them, » the line points ahead to *amassunu ušannā ana kikkišu* « So he repeated their words to the reed house, » and as « You (Uta-napištim) sat with the prince ^dEa, » the line faces back to the list of occupations, i.e., *malikšunu*, *guzalāšunu*, and *gugallāšunu*, by reference to ^dEa as a « prince. » Note that as « you sat » (*tašibma*) the line also parallels *guzalāšunu* « their Chairbearer, » by reference to one who brings an item on which one sits. Moreover, if we read ^dNiššiku as an epithet for ^dEa, it parallels ^dEa which follows immediately upon it. Finally, a word must be said about *ittišunu* which when read as « with them » parallels the list of gods present in the assembly, and as « omen, sign, » it parallels « their words » (*amassunu*) in the following line.

Another example of a Janus Parallelism Cluster appears in the Descent of Ištar lines 89-92.

89. *itil ešlu ina kummišu*
The young man lies in his chamber
90. *itil ardatum ina ahiša*
The young woman lies on *ahiša*
91. ^dEa ina emqi libbišu ibtani [zik]ru
Ea in the wisdom of his mind, made a *zikru*
92. *ibnīma* Asu-šunamir ^{ld}assinnu
He created Asu-šunamir, a castrated male servant.

Lines 90 and 91 of the Descent of Ištar contain a Janus Parallelism Cluster. Both *zikru* and *ahiša* can be read in two ways : the former as « man » and « penis »⁹ and the latter as « her quarters (lit. her side) » and « her chaperones (lit. brothers).¹⁰ » The polysemes here allow the poet to charge the lines with allusion. As « man » *zikru* is a befitting parallel for the preceding mention of *ahiša* as « her brothers. » As « penis » *zikru* parallels (humorously?) *assinnu* « a castrated male servant »¹¹ in the following verse. Similarly, *ahiša*, when read as « her brothers » parallels *zikru* as « man, » but when read as « her chambers » it parallels *kummišu* « her

chamber»¹² in the previous line. In addition, *zikru* also may be read as «idea»¹³ suggesting the possibility of reading *zikru* as a parallel with *libbišu* as «his mind,» rather than as «his heart.»

1. For a complete catalogue and in-depth discussion of Janus Parallelism in biblical and Akkadian literature see Scott B. Noegel, *Janus Parallelism in the Book of Job and Its Literary Significance, with Excurses on the Deive in Extra-Jobian and Other Ancient Near Eastern Literature* (Ph.D. Dissertation; Cornell University: Ithaca, NY, 1995; Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1995). Since this dissertation four additional biblical examples have been published: Jack Sasson, «Divine Divide: re FM 2: 71: 5,» *NABU* 67 (1994), 39-40; Anthony R. Ceresko, «Janus Parallelism in Amos's "Oracles Against the Nations" (Amos 1: 3-2: 16),» *JBL* 113 (1994) 485-490.; Avi Hurvitz, «Toward a Precise Definition of the Term 'amdn in Prov 8: 30.» *The Bible in the Light of Its Interpreters: Sarah Kamin-Memorial Volume* (ed. Sara Japhet; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1994), pp. 647-650 (in Hebrew); Scott B. Noegel, «Janus Parallelism in Job and Its Literary Significance,» *JBL* (in press).

2. Scott B. Noegel, «A Janus Parallelism in the Gilgamesh Flood Story,» *ASJ* 13 (1991), 419-421; «An Asymmetrical Janus Parallelism in the Gilgamesh Flood Story,» *ASJ* 16 (1994), 306-308.

3. Jean-Georges Heintz, «Myth(olog)èmes d'époque amorrite et amphibologie en ARMT XXVI, 419, ll. 3'-21'?,» *NABU* 1994/68, 59; W. Horowitz and Sh. Paul, «Two Proposed Janus Parallelisms in Akkadian Literature,» *NABU* 1995/70, 11-12; Scott B. Noegel, «Another Janus Parallelism in the Atrahasis Epic,» *ASJ* (in press).

4. I have adopted the coinage of the term «cluster» from Jonas C. Greenfield, «The Cluster in Biblical Poetry,» *maarav* 55-56 (1990), 159-168.

5. CAD N/2 282-3, s.v. *nišiku*; AHw 976, s.v. *nišiku*.

6. CAD I 304-10, s.v. *imu*; CAD I 302-3, s.v. *itti*; AHw 405, s.v. *itti*; 406, s.v. *itru*.

7. AHw 1317-1318, s.v. *tamû*. So also M. B. Rowton, «The Permissive in Classic Babylonian,» *JNES* 21 (1962), p. 275.

8. For the interchange between the *me* and *šib* signs, see Rene Labat, *Manuel d'Épigraphie akkadienne* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1988), p. 219. CAD N/2 386-408, s.v. *wašābu*; AHw 1480-1484, s.v. (w) *ašābu*.

9. CAD Z 110-112, 116-117; AHw 1526-1527, s.v. *zikru*.

10. CAD A/1 195-210, s.v. *ahu*; AHw 21-22, s.v. *ahu*.

11. CAD A/2 341-342, s.v. *assinnu*; AHw 75-76, s.v. *assinnu*. See also Anne Draffkorn Kilmer, «A Note on an Overlooked Word-Play in the Akkadian Gilgamesh,» in G. Van Driel, Th. J. H. Krispijn, M. Stol, K. R. Veenhof, eds. *Zikir Šumim: Assyriological Studies Presented to F. R. Kraus on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982), pp. 128-132.

12. CAD K 533-534, s.v. *kummu*; AHw 506, s.v. *kummu*.

13. CAD Z 116, s.v. *zikru*; AHw 1526-1527, s.v. *zikru*.

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40) Zu einem neu- oder spätbabylonischen Brief über eine Majestätsbeleidigung und eine Denunziation – Als «Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient, Texte 3» veröffentlichte 1994 D. Arnaud einen Band mit Texten aus Larsa ganz überwiegend aus altbabylonischer Zeit. In den sehr verschiedenen Inhalt dieser jetzt nur in Keilschriftkopien vorliegenden Texte führt die Einleitung des Herausgebers ein. Nur vier von diesen Texten – Nr. 43, 54, 62 und 70 – stammen aus neu- oder spätbabylonischer Zeit. Der wichtigste unter diesen ist der überwiegend gut erhaltene Brief Nr. 54, dessen Inhalt die Einleitung auf S. 8 ganz kurz skizziert. Der Schreiber dieses Briefes nennt sich nicht. Er berichtet seinen Vorgesetzten über den Stand eines Verfahrens wegen Majestätsbeleidigung und eine Denunziation, die offenbar falsch war. Der Brief bedarf einer Gesamtbearbeitung, die aber etliche Kollationen im Iraq Museum voraussetzt (IM 73354). Hier möchte ich den Blick vor allem auf zwei Substantive lenken, deren richtige Deutung für das Verständnis der Briefes eine grosse Bedeutung hat. Eines von diesen war bisher nur dürftig bezeugt und das andere m.W. überhaupt nicht.

Nach dem Hinweis in Z. 5 dass es hier um «eine sehr unguete Sache» (*a-mat la ša-ab-tu₄*) geht, und der Nennung einiger Namen begegnet in überwiegend zerstörtem Kontext das Wort *še-er-di*. Ich konnte in AHw. 1388b sub *še/irdu* 3 nur sehr wenige Belege aus spätbabylonischen Urkunden nennen¹. Die damals erschlossene Bedeutung «Nachprüfungsaktion» wird durch den neuen Beleg bestätigt; denn es geht ja in dem Brief um die Aufklärung einer falschen Denunziation. Wir dürfen auf weitere Belege gespannt sein, in denen *šerdu* vielleicht als Objekt zu einem Verbum erscheint.

Die Zeilen 10-15 möchte ich hier im vollen Wortlaut zitieren:

- 10 *la-pa-ni šupšar*(^{lú}SANGA) *Larsa!*(UD.UNU^{ki2}) *a-na*
lib-bi ú-šu-uš-tu₄
- 12 *ú-ri-du u gu-ú-zu šarri*(LUGAL)
iš-ba-at ^{lú}*šupšar* *Larsa*^{ki}
- 14 *In iš-me-šú ul-tu lib-bi*