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"Another Janus Parallelism in the Atra-Hasis Epic."

We thus seem to have here a deliberate ambiguity in the text, the employment of a word which connotes two meanings: 1. army, troops, and 2. woman in labor. The first meaning echoes the preceding line, and the second anticipates the following. Furthermore, via their use as similes in the process of drawing a picture of a raging storm, these two meanings, though aparently unrelated, seem to fall together nicely and convey quite a lively and realistic picture of a stormy and devastating flood.

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Another Janus Parallelism in the Atraḫasīs Epic

Janus parallelism is a literary device in which a pun faces back to a previous stich of poetry in one of its meanings and ahead to a following stich in another. The polysemy can occur either in two stichs ("asymmetrical Janus parallelism") or three ("symmetrical Janus parallelism") and both types are attested in biblical Hebrew and Akkadian.[1]

Since my initial discovery and publication of two Janus parallels in the Gilgamesh flood story,[2] additional examples of the device have been discovered in Akkadian literature[3] making it increasingly clear that the device was one of many in the sophisticated repertoire of the ancient Mesopotamian bards.

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1. For biblical examples see C. H. Gordon, "Asymmetric Janus Parallelism," *Eretz Israel (Harry M. Orlinsky Volume)*, v. 16, 80* and "'This Time' (Genesis 2:23)," in *"Sha'arei Talmon: Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon* (Winona Lake, IN.: Eisenbrauns, 1992), pp. 50-51.

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* 43 (1994), 59; Scott B. Noegel, *Janus Parallelism in the Book of Job and Its Literary Significance, with Excurses on the Device in Extra-Jobian and Other Ancient Near Eastern Literature* (Ph.D. Dissertation; Cornell University: Ithaca, NY, 1995; Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1995), pp. 260-266, 286-310.

I turn now to yet another example of Janus parallelism in Akkadian, this time, in the Old Babylonian version of the Atraḫasīs epic III: viii, 9–17.[4]

9. *kīma niškunu [abūba]*
   How we have brought about [the flood]
10. *awīlum ibluṭu ina karašî*
    yet a man survived [the cataclysm].
11. *attā mālik ilī rabûti*
    You, counsellor of the great gods,
12. *tēretiš[ka]*
    at [your] command
13. *ušabši [qabla]*
    I caused the [destruction].
14. *šanittiška*
    For your *šanittiš*
15. *annīam zamāra*
    this song
16. *lišmūma Igigi*
    let the Igigi-gods hear;
17. *liṣṣirū narbîka*
    let them make famous your greatness!

As A. D. Kilmer notes,[5] the word *šanittiš* in l. 14 is a pun which can mean both "praise" (from *nadû*)[6] and "hostile, inimical word or matter" (from *šanītu*).[7] As the former, the Janus pun faces ahead to *zamāra* "song" and *lišmūma Igigi liṣṣirū narbîka* "let the Igigi-gods hear; let them make famous your greatness!" As "hostile word," *šanittiš* looks backwards to the "flood" *abūbu*, "cataclysm" *karašî*, and "destruction" *qablu*. The Janus is reinforced by yet another pun on *narbû*, both "greatness"[8] and "softness/cowardice."[9]

Other studies on wordplay in the Atraḫasīs epic have shown puns and paronoma-

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4. I have adopted the numeration of W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, *Atra-ḫasīs: The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 105.

5. Though she notes the presence of the puns discussed here, she did not catch the presence of a Janus parallelism. See, Anne Draffkorn Kilmer, "Fugal Features of Atraḫasīs: The Birth Theme," in *Proceedings of the Mesopotamian Literature Group*, Vol. 2. M. E. Vogelzang and H. L. J. Vanstiphout, eds. (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1995), p. 10.

6. *CAD* N 1, 101, s.v. *nadû*; *AHw* 1319, s.v. *tanittu*.

7. *CAD* Š 1, 388, s.v. *šanītu*; *AHw* 1164, s.v. *šanītu*.

8. *CAD* N 1, 351, s.v. *narbû*; *AHw* 746, s.v. *narbû*.

9. *CAD* N 1, 350, s.v. *narbu*; *AHw* 746, s.v. *narbu*.

sia to serve emphatic or referential roles in the story.[10] Here both functions are at work. As the last lines of the poem, the puns underscore the ambiguity of Enlil's role in the story by referring the reader to a previous event in the poem. As A. D. Kilmer comments, the puns "refer to Enlil's cowardice at the time of the worker god's rebellion and to the fact that he himself was apparently *in absentia* during the most terrifying part of the Flood."[11] Thus, the Janus parallelism connects Enlil's hostile, yet cowardly act, with his follower's praise of his greatness.

Moreover, as A. D. Kilmer also has demonstrated, clues to the presence of the puns often appear in the text. Accordingly, we may wonder if the poet has flagged the puns for us by emphatically concluding with an exhortation to "listen!" (*šimā*).

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On the Reading of Naĝ-su^ki

In a brief communication published in *N.A.B.U.* 1991/No. 1, pp.3–4 (4. The Container *kabkuru*), Piotr Steinkeller has pointed out the possibility that /naĝ/ has a phonetic value /káb/. This view was also followed by W. Sallaberger in a brief communication entitled "Zur Lesung der Bewässerungs-einrichtung NAG-kud = káb-kud", *N.A.B.U.* 1991/No. 2, pp.31–32, and further by Josef Bauer in Altorientalistische

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10. See, e.g., Anne Draffkorn Kilmer, "A Note on an Overlooked Word-Play in the Akkadian Gilgamesh," in *Zikir Šumin: Assyriological Studies Presented to F. R. Kraus on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, G. van Driel, Th. J. H. Krispijn, M. Stol, K. R. Veenhof, eds. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982), pp. 128–132; "Les jeux de mots dans les reves de Gilgamesh et d'Atraḫasīs," Paper read at the Universaire des Sciences Humaines, Strasbourg, 1983 (courtesy of Prof. Kilmer), pp. 1–7; "The Symbolism of the Flies in the Mesopotamian Flood Myth and Some Further Implications," in Francesca Rochberg-Halton, ed. *Language, Literature, and History: Philological and Historical Studies Presented to Erica Reiner* (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1987), pp. 175–180; Stephen A. Geller, "Some Sound and Word Plays in the First Tablet of the Old Babylonian Atramḫasīs Epic," in *Frank Talmage Memorial Volume* I, Barry Walfish, ed. (Haifa: University of Haifa, 1993), pp. 63–70.

11. Kilmer, "Fugal Features of Atraḫasīs: The Birth Theme," p. 10.