

OFFPRINT FROM

STRINGS AND THREADS

*A Celebration of the Work of
Anne Draffkorn Kilmer*



Edited by
WOLFGANG HEIMPEL and GABRIELLA FRANTZ - SZABÓ

Winona Lake, Indiana
EISENBRAUNS
2011

© 2011 by Eisenbrauns Inc.
All rights reserved
Printed in the United States of America

www.eisenbrauns.com

Drawing on the cover and beneath the title on p. iii
by Cornelia Wolff, Munich,
after C. L. Wooley, *Ur Excavations* 2 (1934), 105.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Strings and threads : a celebration of the work of Anne Draffkorn Kilmer / edited by Wolfgang Heimpel and Gabriella Frantz-Szabó.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-57506-227-3 (hardback : alk. paper)

1. Kilmer, Anne Draffkorn. 2. Music—Middle East—History and criticism. 3. Music archaeology—Middle East. I. Kilmer, Anne Draffkorn. II. Heimpel, Wolfgang. III. Frantz-Szabó, Gabriella.

ML55.K55S77 2011

780.9—dc22

2011036676

Contents

Preface		vii
Abbreviations		ix
GUITTY AZARPAY	The Imagery of the Manichean ‘Call’ on a Sogdian Funerary Relief from China	1
DOMINIQUE COLLON	Chinless Wonders.....	19
JERROLD S. COOPER	Puns and Prebends: The Tale of Enlil and Namzitara. . . .	39
RICHARD L. CROCKER	No Polyphony before A.D. 900!.	45
DANIEL A. FOXVOG	Aspects of Name-Giving in Presargonic Lagash	59
JOHN CURTIS FRANKLIN	“Sweet Psalmist of Israel”: The <i>Kinnôr</i> and Royal Ideology in the United Monarchy	99
ELLEN HICKMANN	Music Archaeology as a Field of Interdisciplinary Research	115
A. BERNARD KNAPP	Sound of Silence: Music and Musical Practice in Late Bronze–Iron Age Cyprus.....	121
ERLE LEICHTY	A New Fragment of <i>Ludlul Bêl Nēmeqi</i>	133
SHERRY LOU MACGREGOR	Foreign Musicians in Neo-Assyrian Royal Courts	137
SCOTT B. NOEGEL	“Wordplay” in the Song of Erra	161
DIANA PICKWORTH	Dug Ubur-Imin: A Seven-Nipple Lid and Seven-Nipple Vessels	195
ELEANOR ROBSON	The Discovery of Professor von Saalbrandt: A Philadelphia Story.	207
JENNIFER C. ROSS	Lost: The Missing Lexical Lists of the Archaic Period . . .	231
DENISE SCHMANDT-BESSERAT	Spirits and Demons of All Times.	243
DAVID STRONACH	A Pipes Player and a Lyre Player: Notes on Three Achaemenid or Near-Achaemenid Silver Rhyta Found in the Vicinity of Erebuni, Armenia .	251
RICHARD L. ZETTLER	Banqueting and Music: An Early Dynastic I Sealing from Nippur	275
Bibliography of Anne Draffkorn Kilmer’s Works		287
Index of Anne Draffkorn Kilmer’s Works		295

Puns and Prebends: The Tale of Enlil and Namzitara

JERROLD S. COOPER

The Johns Hopkins University

In 1974, Miguel Civil, who had come to Chicago in 1963 to succeed Anne Kilmer as Landsberger’s assistant, published a Sumerian tale about Namzitara. The story begins when Namzitara, returning from serving his turn as *gudu*-priest in Ekur, the temple of the god Enlil, encounters that very deity. The upshot of this encounter is that Enlil blesses Namzitara by granting his descendants regular access to Enlil’s temple—that is, as Civil noted, a heritable prebend (temple office), “one of the most important sources of familial wealth in Old Babylonian Nippur” (Civil 1974: 65).¹ The text has since been treated by Vanstiphout (1980), Lambert (1989), Klein (1990), Kämmerer (1998), and extensively by Alster (2005). *Enlil and Namzitara* is one of the few Old Babylonian Sumerian literary texts to be transmitted in a Middle Babylonian version, and that version, known mainly from Emar, was the focus of the contributions of J. Klein and T. Kämmerer and taken into account in the discussion of B. Alster.²

The tale’s primary pun is an explicit one: Namzitara’s name means “granted a good/reliable destiny,” and Enlil tells him that the blessing he gives him will be in accord with his name, so, as Vanstiphout labeled it, *nomen sit omen* (1980: 68). Sumerian *namtar*, as a noun (also *nam* alone), “destiny, fate,” and as a verb, “to determine/decide destiny/fate,” has been exhaustively treated by Polansky (2002; and see *RIA* “Schicksal. A. In Mesopotamien”), but its use in this text requires some comment. In the vast majority of cases, it refers to cosmic destiny or the not necessarily unalterable destiny or fate of a polity, ruler or individual, or even to the function or use of things. This is certainly the sense of the term in Namzitara’s name, which expresses the hope that his life course will be one of good fortune. But the term can also refer to granting a blessing or a wish, perhaps best known from *Lugalbanda’s Return* (Vanstiphout 2003), also known as *Lugalbanda and Anzu* (ETCSL). There, the mythic eagle Anzu is so pleased with how Lugalbanda has treated his chicks that he wants to converse with him and befriend him if he be a god, or, if a human, he will bless him (lú-ulu₃ hé-me-en nam ga-mu-ri-ib-tar; Vanstiphout 2003: 140, line 108). Four times the bird blesses Lugalbanda—with agricultural bounty, with magic, with martial valor, and with abundant dairy products—and each time the blessing is refused. Finally, Anzu asks Lugalbanda what he wants—the power to travel speedily wherever he chooses—and grants it to him.

1. For prebends, see now *RIA* “Pfründe.” The composition may, in fact, serve as an etiology for the heritability and alienability of prebendal functions.

2. I had not seen the small fragment from Ugarit (Arnaud 2007: no. 47) when this contribution was first written. I thank Y. Cohen for bringing it to my attention.

A similar use of *namtar* is found in *Inana's Descent*. Enki has created two creatures whom he has sent to the Netherworld to revive and retrieve Inana, captive of the Netherworld's queen, Ereškigal. Their kind words to Ereškigal cheer her, and, in nearly the same words that Anzu used for Lugalbanda, she offers conversation if they are gods, or a blessing if they are human ([lú-ulu₃ hé-me]-en-zé-en nam-zu-ne ga-mu-ri-ib-tar; ETCSL line 270). They refuse two offered gifts—a river with all its water, a field with all its grain—and ask instead for Inana's corpse, which they then revive. Like Lugalbanda, Enki's creatures obtain blessings or the granting of a wish through sympathetic contact with a divine being (even if, in the latter instance, the contact was a deliberate deception). In neither instance is a general fate or destiny being assigned but rather a specific quality or gift, a blessing. In the cases of both Lugalbanda and Enki's creatures, Anne Kilmer (1971) has taught us that the blessings can be understood as the hospitality obligation of host (Anzu, Ereškigal) to guest (Lugalbanda, Enki's creatures).

In *Enlil and Namzitara*, the reason for Enlil's blessing is less clear. Namzitara, in my interpretation, insistently demands a blessing: "You're Enlil! Bless me!" Why does he expect a blessing from Enlil? It can only be because he has recognized Enlil, seen through his disguise.³ As Civil already noted, he does this by means of a pun: Enlil had disguised himself as a raven (*uga*), but Namzitara remembered that Enlil's triumphant utterance on becoming the supreme deity contained the syllables *u* and *ga*. My interpretation depends on understanding what had been read in lines 16 and 22 as *nam mu-tar-ra* "the one who decides destinies," thought to be an epithet of Enlil, as, rather, *nam-mu tar-ra* "Decide my destiny!" or, in this context, "Bless me!" Enlil, for his part, tries to avoid dispensing his blessing, first, in line 16, by challenging the identification, then, in lines 19–21, by citing the vanity of any material blessings he might offer. Yet, when Namzitara again claims the blessing (line 22), Enlil relents and blesses Namzitara with a heritable office in Enlil's temple.

But there is more. In the Old Babylonian period, prebends were designated by the Sumerian *nam* plus the name of the temple office in question. Namzitara's *gudu* prebend was *nam-gudu*₄, the most common temple office in Old Babylonian Nippur.⁴ Thus, when, in line 25, Enlil says that Namzitara's blessing will accord with his name (*mu-zu-gin*₇ *nam-zu hé-tar-re*), it means not only that his blessing/destiny (*nam*) will be good/reliable (*zi*) but that the *nam* that is determined for him will itself be a reliable *nam*, the heritable *namgudu* office that his heirs will enjoy.

The composition is one of a group of short "wisdom" compositions that are often found together on compilation tablets.⁵ The translation below follows Civil's line numbering, as have all subsequent treatments, but the constitution of the lines is somewhat arbitrary, since several of the manuscripts have short lines (from one to four short lines per long line as represented below), and the manuscripts with long lines do not always agree with one another. Four of the seven manuscripts identified by Civil remain unpublished.⁶

3. One of the inconsistencies of the text is that Enlil has already identified himself in line 11, yet in line 16 asks how Namzitara knows he is Enlil. Similarly, Enlil hails Namzitara by name in line 3, yet asks him what his name is in line 23.

4. *RIA* "Pfründe" §2.

5. Civil 1974: 67; Alster 2005: 275. For compilation tablets, see *RIA* "Sammeltafel" and the extensive discussion in Kleinerman 2009.

6. Thanks to A. Kleinerman, P. Michalowski, E. Frahm, and B. Alster for their comments and suggestions. G. Rubio kindly made excellent photos of Civil's ms. A for me (see the photos in Alster 2005: pls. 36–39), and P. Jones photographed the manuscripts in the University Museum, which I subsequently collated. I will publish new photos of all the OB manuscripts, together with textual matrixes, in a forthcoming article.

- 1 Namzitara was *passing by* (mu-zal-le) Enlil, (and)
 2 He (Enlil) spoke to him:
 3 “Where (are you coming) from, Namzitara?”
 4 [N:] “From the temple of Enlil—
 5 “My turn of service has been completed.
 6 “I serve with the *gudu*-priests and their sheep, (but now)
 7 “I am going home.
 8 “Don’t stand in the way!
 9 “My journey is hurried!
 10 “(And) who are you to be asking me questions?”
 11 [E:] “I am Enlil!”
 12 Enlil changed his appearance, (and)
 13 After he had changed into a raven (*uga*),
 14 He (Enlil) was making (bird-) calls.⁷
 15 [N:] “You’re no raven, you’re Enlil!
 16 “Bless me!” (E:) “How do you know I’m Enlil?”
 17 (N:) “When Enmešara, your father’s brother, was captured,
 18 “You carried off Enlilship saying, ‘As of this day (*u*), I shall (*ga*) assign destinies/
 blessings!’” (u₄-ne-en-gin₇ nam ga-zu-e-še)
 19 (E:) “You may acquire precious metals, you may acquire precious stones, you may
 acquire herds, you may acquire flocks, (but when)
 20 “The time of a human being has come (al-ku-nu),
 21 “Where will your acquisitions lead?”
 22 [N:] “You’re Enlil! Bless me!”
 23 [E:] “What is your name?”
 24 [N:] “Namzitara (‘given a good/reliable destiny/blessing’) is my name.”
 25 [E:] “You shall be blessed according to your name:
 26 “*Be outstanding* (è-a) in the temple of your lord (é lugal-za-ka), (and)
 27 “May your heirs pass through my temple on a regular basis!”

It goes without saying that I have not solved all the problems that this composition presents. Lexically, there is the unusual usage of the verb *zal* in line 1, normally used for time passing, but hardly for humans. The appearance of the rare verb *ku-nu* in line 20 is a surprise, and *è* in line 26 is used perhaps as it is for the rising sun or moon or in the sense of *pa-è*, “to appear, shine,” the idea being that he is to continue to serve proudly and his heirs will inherit his prebend.⁸ Syntactic ambiguity abounds, since changes of speaker are usually unannounced, and interpretive ambiguity is caused by the homonymy of first- and second-person forms (for example, ^den-líl-me-en can mean “I am Enlil” or “You are Enlil”). Cultural knowledge is taken for granted but leaves us wondering: What is the symbolism of the raven and its relationship to Enlil?⁹ How did Enlil become

7. For *gù-dé* used for bird cries, see Veldhuis 2004: Index.

8. Others have understood the line to mean “leaving the house of your master” and saw Namzitara as a lowly servant whose status is raised by Enlil’s blessing. But we would then expect *é-lugal-za-ta*, and, in any case, Namzitara has already been described as completing a turn of service as a *gudu*-priest.

9. For the raven in Sumerian literature, see Veldhuis 2004: 299–301.



chief of the pantheon at the expense of Enmešara?¹⁰ Why, exactly, did Namzitara have the right to demand a blessing from Enlil?

Interestingly, it is precisely these very specific cultural matters that seem to disappear from the version of the tale circulated at Emar, but this is uncertain. The reconstruction of the Emar version by Kämmerer (1998: 222–25), followed by Alster (2005: 336–38), puts the initial confrontation of Enlil and Namzitara at the beginning of Msk. 74174a = Arnaud 1987 VI/4 No. 771, but the actual beginning must be, as Civil already pointed out (1989: 7), on Msk. 742381 = Arnaud 1987 VI/4 No. 773. Since Civil showed there that the verb *mu-zal-le* in line 1 of the OB text appears on Arnaud No. 773 as *mu-tal-[]*, Kämmerer’s restoration of [mu-zal-le] on Arnaud No. 771 obv. 8’ cannot be correct. Since lines 9’–10’ there correspond to OB 23–24, it is possible that the entire story of Enlil as raven, the conflict with Enmešara, and the demand for a blessing (cf. Arnaud No. 771 obv. 7’) might have been present in the gap between Arnaud Nos. 773 and 771.

Whatever the case, at Emar, instead of a blessing, Namzitara gets an overly long disquisition on the “vanity theme” (for which see the excellent discussion in Alster 2005), in which the possible extent of a human life span is put at 120 years, and no more.¹¹ Upon hearing what should seem like a very optimistic limit to his existence, Namzitara, echoing lines 7–9 of the OB composition, announces that he’s going home and tells Enlil to get out of his way. Whether he has just lost patience with Enlil’s sermon or, with Alster (2005: 330), he has taken it so to heart that he is “preparing himself for his final destination, that is, death,” depends on one’s interpretive proclivities.

I hope that our honoree, pun detective extraordinaire, will not react like Emar’s Namzitara, when I wish her many more years (to 120!) explicating the literature and music of our Babylonian forebears!

10. The little we know about Enmešara has been set forth by Civil 1974: 66–67, with comments in Lambert 1989 and Alster 2005: 328–29. I agree with those who see the transfer of power from Enmešara to Enlil as a succession myth rather than a foiled usurpation in the manner of *Anzu* or *Ninurta and the Turtle*. The name Enmešara itself, “Lord of Myriad Powers,” suggests that he was originally the legitimate ruler of the gods. The equation in first-millennium texts of Enmešara with Anu (Livingstone 1986: 190–91, line 2) supports this, and the equation of Enmešara with Kingu (Livingstone 1986: 198–99, rev. 2), from whom Marduk wrested the Tablet of Destinies, supports the notion of a succession myth.

11. See Klein 1990. Setting the limit for human life at 120 (60×2) must be originally Babylonian, which says nothing about when the idea moved westward. Rather than translating *níg-gig* = *ikkibu* as “bane” (Klein) or “abomination” (Alster), I prefer to understand it in this context as an absolute limit, beyond which a human life is not allowed to extend.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alster, B.
 2005 *Wisdom of Ancient Sumer*. Bethesda, MD: CDL.
- Arnaud, D.
 1987 *Recherches au pays d’Aštata. Emar VI/4*. Paris: Éditions Recherches sur les Civilisations.
 2007 *Corpus des textes de bibliothèque de Ras Shamra-Ougarit (1936–2000)*. Aula Orientalis Suppl. 23. Barcelona: Editorial AUSA.
- Civil, M.
 1974 Enlil and Namzitara. *AfO* 25: 65–71.
 1989 The Texts from Emar. *Aula Orientalis* 7: 5–25.

- Kämmerer, T.
 1998 *Šimâ milka: Induktion und Reception der mittelbabylonischen Dichtung von Ugarit, Emar und Tell el-Amarna*. AOAT 251. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag.
- Kilmer, A.
 1971 How Was Queen Ereshkigal Tricked? *UF* 3: 299–309.
- Klein, J.
 1990 The “Bane” of Humanity: A lifespan of One Hundred Twenty Years. *ASJ* 12: 57–70.
- Kleinerman, A.
 2009 *The Sumerian Epistolary Miscellany*. Ph.D. dissertation. Johns Hopkins University.
- Lambert, W. G.
 1989 A New Interpretation of Enlil and Namzitarra. *Orientalia* 58: 508–9.
- Livingstone, A.
 1986 *Mystical and Mythological Explanatory Works of Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; reprinted, Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008.
- Polansky, J.
 2002 *The Rise of the Sun-God and the Determination of Destiny in Mesopotamia*. Ph.D. dissertation. University of Pennsylvania.
- Vanstiphout, H.
 1980 Some Notes on ‘Enlil and Namzitarra.’ *RA* 74: 67–71.
 2003 *Epics of Sumerian Kings*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- Veldhuis, N.
 2004 *Religion, Literature, and Scholarship: The Sumerian Composition “Nanše and the Birds.”* CM 22. Leiden: Brill/Styx.



