GENRE, GENDER,
AND THE SUMERIAN LAMENTATION

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T. F.-K. in memoriam

In a trail-blazing 1986 article on genre in Meso-potamian literature, H. Vanstiphout, building on the theories of A. Fowler, discussed the three-stage "pattern of the natural 'life'" of Sumerian historical (or city) laments.[1]

LSUr represents a "primary, or aggregation phase" in which the major themes are all present, but less distin-guished and structured than in the other laments. "The genre seems to find its definitive 'format' in" *LU*, which sits "astride the primary and the secondary phase." In the full "secondary or classical phase ... the format re-sulting from the primary stage" becomes a "normative prescription for composing new texts," which are rep-resented by *LEr* and *LW*, and especially *LN*, whose innovation, however, "already announces the tertiary

stage." This "final phase in the life cycle of a historical genre usually consists of a more or less radically new use of the formal features of the type. This may be anti-thetic, or burlesque, or the form may degrade into a hollow shell for a completely different content." He sees *LN* straddling the secondary and tertiary phases, experimental but still within the rules. The true ter-tiary phase sees the end of the historical lament genre: "many of the formal characteristics of the genre are taken over by the liturgical laments ... the form as such ceases to be a purely literary entity by being degraded to consumer, or even throw-away texts." Regarding the origin of the materials in *LSUr*, what we might call the pre-primary phase, a diagram of his scheme shows as sources "lists," "historical literature," and "(?)." (Vanstiphout 1986: 7–9)

Three years later, Michalowski accepted most of Vanstiphout's scheme, but discussed more fully *LSUr* as the first of the group. In looking for the sources of *LSUr*, he briefly mentions the so-called Urukagina Lament. He doubts that there was any real continuity from late Early Dynastic Lagash (ca. 2350 B.C.) to the Isin period (ca. 2000–1800), but, he "cannot dismiss [it] out of hand, for it is possibly but a singular survivor of a more common type of text from the Early Dynastic period." For Michalowski, however, the real "prior text" of *LSUr* is the Curse of Akkade, a text written in the Ur III period (ca. 2100–2000 B.C.)[2] "or perhaps

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1. This essay was originally written for a conference on genre organized by Vanstiphout in 1995. At the urging of several colleagues, I am publishing it here, through the kind-ness of the editor. Little or no notice could be taken of works published after 1997, and the important contributions made by Tinney (1996) to the discussion of lamentation and genre have been acknowledged mainly in the notes. See also Bauer et al. (1998: 435–36) for the suggestion that emesal was the local dialect of Lagash, and Whittaker (2002) for Emesal as a women's language. Note that much of the substance of my contribution here was anticipated by Frymer-Kensky (1992: 43–44).

The following abbreviations for Sumerian compositions are used; the sources can be found in the bibliography of *PSD* (Sjöberg et al. 1984–) vol. 1/III:

CA	Curse of Agade
LEr	Eridu Lament
LN	Nippur Lament
LSUr	Lamentation over Sumer and Ur
LU	Lamentation over Ur (now Römer 2004)
LW	Uruk Lament

2. Cf. Tinney's view (1996: 84) of *CA* as the complement of the Nippur Lament: the former relates the wrong way for a king to treat Nippur, and the latter the correct way. In view of

even earlier." The switch of accent, from guilty to innocent protagonist, from curse upon the destroyed city to a curse upon those who fulfilled the destiny pronounced by the gods and who took part in the destruction of Sumer, is a fundamental element in the *relationship* between the two compositions and the key to the intertextual nature of this type of writing. *LSUr* cannot really be understood without recourse to *CA*, for the relationship between the two is truly dialectical with mutual contradictions bound to similarities. The new order results from a change in perspective but this change can only be grasped against the evidence of the older text (Michalowski 1989: 4–9).

I myself had pointed out the relationship between the Curse of Akkade and the city laments in my edition of that text (1983: 8 and chapter III), and discussed the matter further in a later article (1993). The Curse of Akkade, I claimed, was written in Ur III to explain the fall of "the first world empire" in terms that would not prove threatening to the rulers of the second world empire, the kings of Ur. The city laments were produced in the Isin period as an alternative model of political alienation, with the purpose of legitimizing the rulers of Isin as the successors of the kings of Ur, as Michalowski had already stated. But if we agree that *CA* is the "prior text" for *LSUr* and hence for all of the city laments, where did *CA* come from?

Despite its closeness in both language and content to the city laments, *CA* has none of the internal divisions that characterize the laments, and it ends with a doxology (zà-mí) characteristic of epics, myths, wisdom literature, and certain hymns, but never found in a lament.[3] The *CA* is

also marked as part of series of at least two texts explaining the rise and fall of the dynasty of Akkade: The beginning of *CA*, which tells of the dynasty's fall, sets the historical scene in very similar ways to the beginning of the Sumerian Sargon Legend, which tells of the dynasty's rise, and the two compositions share other parallels as well.[4] Thus, *CA* combines features of historical narrative *and* lamentation, subverting the fundamental goal of each: instead of narrating a ruler's rise to power and triumph, it describes a ruler's disgrace and fall from power; instead of using the language of lament to pray for restoration, it prays for the opposite, Akkade's utter destruction. That is, whereas lamentations depict scenes of ruin only to deplore them, *CA* depicts similar scenes as a desired outcome. But this subversion of genre is only possible if there is already a genre to subvert! And surely no one would want to maintain that the rich vocabulary of lamentation in *CA*, with its many parallels in both city and ritual laments, was an innovation of the author of *CA*.

Rather, one can only agree with the analysis of F. Dobbs-Allsop in his study of city lament in the Hebrew Bible:

While Vanstiphout's sketch of the city-lament genre accounts for the genre as it is presently known, the actual historical reality may nevertheless be more complex. The "Curse of Agade" . . . predates all the known historical city laments and already contains much of the genre's generic repertoire, suggesting that other early exemplars of the city-lament genre may have existed but have not survived. . . . Furthermore, it is not clear whether or not the historical city laments circulated contemporaneously with the *balag*s and *eršemma*s. Nonetheless, Vanstiphout's analysis has developmental

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the Ur III manuscripts of *CA* (Cooper 1983a: 41–43; add Alster 1993: 1–3), it is difficult to understand how Liverani (1993: 57) can date the composition to the time of Išme-Dagan of Isin. Similarly, Cohen (1988, I: 34), who cites *CA* as "another example [alongside the city laments] of the emergence of the lamentation type work during the Old Babylonian period." According to R. Zettler (personal communication), the Ur III manuscripts of Curse of Akkade were found in late fill at the Inana temple in Nippur, together with dated Ur III archival texts.

3. See the table in Wilcke (1975: 258), and cf. Black (1992).

4. Cooper and Heimpel (1983); Cooper (1983a: 27; 1993: 17–18). Alster (1987: 169 n. 1 and 172 n. 9) separates *TCL* 16, 73 from 3N-T 296: "Unlike Cooper/Heimpel I do not consider *TCL* 16, 73 and 3N-T 296 the immediate continuation of each other. There is either a large gap between them, or, rather, they belong to two different compositions" (n. 1); "Unlike Cooper/ Heimpel I understand *TCL* 16, 73 rev. as part of a later section of the story, or perhaps rather as part of another composition in which Sargon is already described as king of Akkad." However, what Heimpel and I said was that the episode on 3N-T 296 comes in between *TCL* 16, 73 obv. and *TCL* 16, 73 rev., a conclusion that is unavoidable, however one wants to imagine the story's unfolding. See now, also, J. Westenholz (1997: 51–55).

significance and effectively demonstrates the advantages of analyzing the Mesopotamian laments according to recent genre theory. It explains the laments' family resemblances as well as their heterogeneity, accounts for the prototypical form of LU, and provides a plausible explanation of how the *balag*s and *eršemma*s relate to the historical city laments. (Dobbs-Allsopp 1993: 20)

A careful reading of this statement suggests that the author admires Vanstiphout's theoretically informed treatment of the known city-laments and their interrelationships, but has doubts about Vanstiphout's account of the genre's origins as well as its end stage. Dobbs-Allsopp continues a page later:

two alternative explanations of how *CA* relates to the city-lament genre suggest themselves.... Cooper ... believes *CA* shares characteristics from both [city laments and literary-historical texts]. One could suggest that *CA* is a hybrid which has resulted from the mixing of two generic repertoires. Or ... one of the contributing genres should be identified as a mode.... one might suppose that the author uses the literary-historical mode to modify the more dominant city-lament genre ... Michalowski observes that the author of *LSUr* uses much of the structure of *CA*, but reshapes it for his own purposes ... this represents an example of what Fowler describes as a counterstatement or countergenre ... Obviously more work would be required to prove either case, if they can be proved at all. However, their hypothetical nature notwithstanding, both examples indicate possible ways in which *CA* could belong peripherally to the city-lament genre and illustrate the importance of generic categories for the interpretive process. (Dobbs-Allsopp 1993: 21–22)

If we strip away the author's enthusiasm for genre theory, the facts as he understands them lead to discouraging conclusions about the usefulness of theory in understanding the early history of Sumerian laments. It makes little difference, after all, if we denominate *CA* as a hybrid or as a city-lament modified by the literary-historical mode. And to say that the entire group of city-laments is a countergenre generated by the unique *CA* places a burden on *CA* that it cannot possibly sustain.

Vanstiphout and Michalowski have done a brilliant job explaining the relationship of the city laments to one another, and the importance

of *CA* as the prior text to the entire series, but the explicit or implicit acceptance of Fowler's biological model—aggregation, floruit, decay—can only lead us astray in our attempt to understand the origins of the city laments and their relation to the ritual laments. If, as I have suggested, *CA* is a kind of subverted city lament that is witness to an already rich repertoire of stock phrases and topoi that appear later in the city and ritual laments, what evidence is there for the sources of this repertoire, for city and ritual laments in Babylonia of the Ur III period and earlier?

Our first evidence comes from *CA* itself. After the depredations of the Guti, the survivors performed a lamentation at Nippur:

The old women who survived those days,
The old men who survived those days,
The chief gala who survived those years—
For seven days and seven nights
Put in place seven balag-drums, as if they stood at
    heaven's base, and
Made ub, meze, and lilis-drums resonate for him
    (Enlil) among them.
The old women did not restrain (the cry) "Alas my city!"
The old men did not restrain (the cry) "Alas its people!"
The gala did not restrain (the cry) "Alas the Ekur!"
Its young women did not restrain from tearing their hair,
Its young men did not restrain from sharpening their
    knives.
Their laments were the laments for Enlil's ancestors—
They perform them in the awe-inspiring duku, Enlil's
    holy lap.[5]

Here we have all of the classic elements of the ritual lament: the gala, in whose repertoire the ritual laments lay, the balag-drum,[6] stock phrases

5. Cooper (1983a lines 200–208). See the interesting discussion of Horowitz (1993: 39–40). Hallo (1991: 181; also 1996: 128–29), grasping for biblical parallels, sees this passage as describing a seven-day mourning period for Naram-Sin, which is hardly possible since his death is never mentioned, and he, after all, was directly responsible for the catastrophe whose survivors are performing the lament.

6. I agree completely with Black (1991: 28, n. 39), that the balag must be a drum, and not a harp or lyre. But he is wrong in claiming that Falkenstein, and Green, and Nissen after him (1987), erred in identifying *ZATU* 47 with BALAG. In fact, the entries gal-nar, gal-*ZATU* 47, GAL ŠU$_{12}$, GAL ZAG in Archaic Lú A 105–7 (*ATU* 3 16) are the precise equivalents of ED Lú A 77–79 gal-nar, gal-balag, GAL ŠU$_{12}$, GAL ZAG (*MSL* 12 11 = Arcari 1982: 24). And there is no mistaking that *ZATU* 47 looks

and topoi known from later laments (Cooper 1983a: 252), and a clear reference to a lamentation rite known from the Ur III period through the first millennium.[7] A similar, but less formal lament is represented in *LN* 38–40.[8]

In the *CA* lamentation scene, the old women's cry "Alas my city!" is in emesal, the language of the ritual laments. No Ur III manuscript of *CA* preserves this line, but there is no reason to imagine that the emesal form uru$_2$ is an Old Babylonian innovation. No Emesal texts per se are preserved from the Ur III period,[9] but Sallaberger points to the use of Emesal in Shulgi X, certainly an Ur III composition, and the allusion to the emesal lament eden-na ú-sag-gá in UN A (Death of Ur-Nammu), almost certainly also an Ur III composition, as evidence for the use of Emesal in the Ur III period.[10] In fact, the rite for which eden-na ú-sag-gá was composed was celebrated at Umma during Ur III (Sallaberger 1993, I: 234). Also attested in Ur III administrative texts is the participation of the gala in lamentation rites (ér-siskur-ra; Sallaberger 1993, I: 149–50).

There is no direct evidence for emesal or specific ritual laments earlier than the Ur III period, but the gala[11] himself is attested from the Fara period (ca. 2600 B.C.; e.g., Pomponio and Visicato

1994: 63), and at Lagash in the late-pre-Sargonic period and under Gudea the gala is associated with funerals, certainly an appropriate context for lamentations to be recited. At the funeral for Baranamtara, mourners consisted of, in addition to kin and women workers, numerous gala and dam-ab-ba, probably "old women" (see Chiodi 1994: 393–95). Gudea's Statue B reports that during the purification of Girsu prior to rebuilding the Eninnu,

The pickax was not wielded in the city's cemetery, corpses were not buried, the gala did not set up his balag-drum and bring forth laments from it, the woman lamenter did not utter laments.[12]

Here is the gala with his balag performing lamentations (ér) again! It is the gala's balag-drum, of course, that provides the generic name for the most frequent kind of lament in the gala's repertoire, and balag has this connotation ("lament") at least from Fara on, as evidenced by the term balag-di, "lamentation performer."[13] It is most probably the predecessor of this same balag-di who lurks behind the gal-balag who occurs just following the gal-nar in ED Lu A, attested already in the archaic texts from Uruk (ca. 3100 B.C.).[14]

As early as Ur III, then, the gala officiates at lamentation rites that could well be using Emesal liturgies, even some of the same liturgies known from the OB and later corpora. The gala first appears five hundred years prior to Ur III, and the balag-performer is attested five hundred years earlier still, in the earliest cuneiform lexical lists. I would postulate an ancient and rich tradition of ritual lamentation as the source of the tenor and language of much of both *CA* and the city laments.[15]

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exactly like a Sumerian harp (see the sign and the harps illustrated in *RlA* 4 115–16). As Black points out, *ZATU* 47 looks nothing like its successor, *LAK* 41, but that sign, too, if it looks like anything, looks more like a stringed instrument than a percussion instrument. Furthermore, reconstructed Hh VII B, as described in *RlA* 6, 573, makes it appear that that text treated the *balag* as a harp. Finally, the Ebla equation of balag with Semitic *kinarum* cannot just be dismissed by Black's "I am at a loss to account for." Clearly, the Ebla tradition also considered the balag to be a stringed instrument. But I can offer no suggestion of my own to reconcile the contradictory evidence about the balag.

7. For the rites for Enlil's ancestors at the duku, see Tsukimoto (1985: 204–6); Sallaberger (1993, I: 130).

8. Other allusions in the city laments to the performance of laments are cited by Tinney (1996: 23–24).

9. See the convenient summary of the evidence for Emesal in Schretter (1990).

10. Sallaberger (1993, I: 150 n. 708). Tinney (1996: 48 n. 160), too readily dismisses the evidence of Ur-Nammu A and Shulgi X.

11. The evidence is collected by Schretter (1990); see also Black (1991); Volk (1994: 160–202); *RlA* 10, 634.

12. Edzard, *RIME* 1997, 1.7 St B v 1–4.

13. *PSD* s.v. and Attinger (1993: 451–53). Cf. the collocation of gala and balag in the late ED document published by K. Volk (1988). For the balag-di at Ebla, see Tonietti (1997).

14. See the references in n. 6.

15. Tinney (1996: 51–52) also concluded as much when he mentioned "earlier traditions which may have provided a common milieu for their [the city laments and emesal liturgies] development." He is right on the mark when he attributes the contrast between "the relative textual stability of the city lament" and "the relative textual fluidity" of the liturgies to

The adaptation of this tradition to interpret specific historical events may not be original to *CA* and the city laments; Michalowski was correct not to "dismiss out of hand" the Urukagina lament (cf. Krecher 1981). In addition to the similarities of structure and content cited by him, we can point to the specific similarity of *LSUr* 168–169—

He brought fire right up into Ninmar's shrine Guabba, (and)
Transported its precious metals and gems on large boats

—to the litany in the Urukagina Lament, which, in one instance, reads

He set fire to the temple of Gatumdug, (and)
Bundled off its precious metals and gems.
(Steible 1982: Ukg. 16 iii 13–15)

Now, one major difference between the Emesal ritual laments and and the city laments (including *CA*) is precisely the litany, the tedious repetition of the same phrases with only the subject changing (Krecher 1966: 42–44). These phrases may occur in *CA* or the city laments, but, with the exception, perhaps, of *LU*, they are not endlessly repeated, which is why we tend to think of *CA* and the city laments as real literature, but consider most ritual laments just plain boring (e.g., Sollberger 1968: 47). That the scribes of Presargonic Lagash chose to continue the long finger-pointing tradition of Lagashite historiography (see Cooper 1983b) with a lament-like litany strongly suggests that such litanies were already common in the cult.

Thus, the emesal ritual laments, far from being the product of decay of the city laments, are probably of greater antiquity and provided the model for the latter.[16] Until we find texts that prove otherwise, I would agree with Black that the ritual laments used in the cult were transmitted orally, and his hypothesis that many extant ritual laments seem inspired by the breakdown of settled life in southern Babylonia and were written down only in the later Old Babylonian period when parts of the southern clergy settled in northern Babylonia is very plausible.[17] There is no way to know how these first written ritual laments relate to earlier Emesal laments, but the evidence that at least one balag existed already in Ur III (see above) suggests a situation of both continuity and change, much like the case of Sumerian incantations as delineated by Michalowski.[18]

The turn now from genre to gender is not a gratuitous gesture, but rather seeks to elucidate the context out of which cultic ritual lament arose, and explain certain peculiarities of the performers of the laments and their language. We have seen that the earliest documented context for the gala's performance is funerary, and that at both Bara-namtara's funeral and the non-funeral in Gudea Statue B, the gala is accompanied by women lamenters. Women may actually have served as gala in Presargonic Lagash,[19] as they did later in the Diyala region according to the Old Akkadian or early Old Babylonian letters published by Al-Rawi (Al-Rawi 1992; cf. Black 1991: 26–27). Other Old Akkadian documents from the Diyala mention women lamenters, MUNUS.BALAG.DI, and a "women lamenters' organization" (É.MUNUS. BALAG.DI; Steinkeller 1982: 367).

Ethnomusicological studies represent lamentation, especially at funerals, as the musical province *par excellence* of women.[20] Even in cultures where

the fact that the city laments were "composed for specific purposes, after which they entered the school curriculum and were simply copied . . . in a fixed form," whereas the liturgies were in active use in cyclical rituals, and were "copied anew . . . not with reference to a fixed curricular tradition but in relation to different performances of the texts."

16. Similar conclusions are reached by Krecher (1981) but for somewhat different reasons.

17. Black (1991: 31–33). Schretter (1990: 99–100 and 138) proposes that the reason Emesal texts first appear in OB is that they could only be written once Sumerian orthography fell under the influence of phonetic semitic orthography, and could express dialectal differences. Previous to OB there were emesal texts, but they were written with main dialect Sumerian orthography. But he puts forward no candidates for such texts, and none suggests itself.

18. Michalowski (1992). These two ancient genres, ritual laments and incantations, are the two kinds of Sumerian texts that survive beyond the Old Babylonian period in strength, and they continued to be used, often side-by-side, almost into our own era.

19. Schretter (1990: 128), with discussion on p. 132 of Gelb's opposing view; see now *RlA* 10, 634, 636.

20. See, e.g., the literature cited by Feld and Fox (1994: 39).

any musical performance by women is frowned upon, women sing laments. The one other context in which women's musical performance is nearly universal is courtship and weddings, and in a previous study, I suggested that Sumerian love songs (Sefati 1998) were derived from actual women's songs, and, noting that the divine lovers of the love songs, Inana and Dumuzi, also featured prominently in laments, I asked whether Sumerian laments might also derive from women's music (Cooper 1997). In what follows, I will propose an affirmative answer.

Although Sumerian love songs and laments share the paradigmatic couple, Inana and Dumuzi, lovers in the former but mourner and corpse in the latter, and the two genres share the use of the Emesal dialect, the style and content of love songs and lament could not be more different. This is very unlike the case in China, where women's laments at both funerals and weddings are similar, and weddings, for women, are sad occasions that mark a definitive parting from family and childhood friends.[21] A similar phenomenon has been observed in Finnish Karelia (Tolbert 1994: 182–83). In ancient Greece, the connection between weddings and funerals was more at the level of shared symbols and symbolic acts, but the similarity was recognized by the ancients (Rehm 1994). We know too little (practically nothing) about weddings or funerals in ancient Babylonia to know if such similarities existed there, but a case has been made for a relationship between the two, or, more broadly, between love and death, in the ancient Near East in general (Pope 1977). That Inana-Ishtar should be at the nexus of love and death is very fitting for a deity who is patron of both prostitution and battle. She is also associated with transformation and inversion (see Groneberg 1986 and Harris 1991), and weddings and funerals are the only two transformative life-cycle rituals in ancient Mesopotamia of which we are aware.

In ancient Greece, the energy and language of women's funeral laments was brought under

control and channeled into male-dominated ritual or literary enterprise (encomium, epitaph, tragedy; Holst-Warhaft 1992; see also, Segal 1994). It seems quite probable that in Mesopotamia too the tone and vocabulary of funeral laments both preceded, and would be adapted for, cultic lamentation. If the origin of the balag and other ritual laments can be sought in women's funerary lament, and if, as the evidence cited above suggests, in early periods women also shared in the cultic performance of ritual laments, we would have a neat explanation of both the use of the Emesal dialect in these laments, and the peculiar reputation of the gala.

However the term emesal is to be interpreted,[22] the only documented use of the Emesal dialect in Sumerian is for the speech of women and goddesses in many literary texts, and for ritual laments. If lamentation's origins are in women's funeral songs, it explains why the dialect of lamentation is a dialect otherwise associated only with women. If the repertoire of the gala used a women's dialect, and if women at one time performed with galas in cultic lament, and galas with women at funerals, then the ambiguous image of the gala[23]—a ridiculous figure of uncertain sexuality according to some literary texts; a respected cleric with wife and children in many documents—becomes more intelligible.[24] So too, in light of the close relationship between the songs of love and death, expressed in Mesopotamia by the common dialect and protagonists in both, does the early

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21. See the essays by Watson, Thompson, Johnson, and Martin in Watson and Rawski (1988).

22. See the exhaustive survey and discussion of Schretter (1990).

23. See Schretter (1990) and Black (1991), with previous literature (of which, see especially Gelb).

24. Of course, we needn't imagine that the gala functioned in the same way in every period or in every context. The evidence suggests a social status ranging from slave to high clergy, and there is unmistakable evidence for homoerotic or effeminate behavior for some. There may well also have been gala prebenders who would have to be distinguished from professional galas. Perhaps, too, the galas of Inana had a quite different array of duties than the galas of, say, Enlil or Enki. Steinkeller (1992: 37) suggests that the correct interpretation of the logogram for gala, UŠ.TUŠ, is GÌŠ.DÚR, "penis + anus," implying that the gala was originally considered to be homosexual, but the interpretation is not compelling, and others suggest themselves.

and continued involvement of the gala-mah, the "chief lamentation specialist," with the supervision of prostitutes.[25]

We are very close to the old position of that relentless positivist Falkenstein, who was not sure if Emesal was an actually spoken dialect or simply a literary one. But, he continued, "Sicher ist dagegen, dass durchweg im Emesal abgefasste Gattungen wie zum Beispiel die *erschemma*-Lieder wenigstens ursprünglich von Priesterinnen oder Sängerinnen vorgetragen worden sind" (Falkenstein and Von Soden 1953: 29). These priestesses or songstresses, I suggest, were later joined by male colleagues who eventually replaced them as performers of ritual laments, males who retained both the dialect and the opprobrium that reflected the gendered beginnings of their genre.

The ritual lament, then, is a text type that was antecedent to, contemporary with, as well as subsequent to *CA* and the city laments. The longevity of the ritual laments is doubtless due, as Cohen has emphasized (1988, I: 12–13), to their rootedness in the cult. The tone and topoi of the laments were drawn upon by *CA* and the city laments, but those texts were not cultic compositions but rather ideological tracts responding to the political moment.[26] Despite their literary brilliance, *CA* and the city laments survived those political moments by only several centuries and then disappeared, while the ritual laments, situated in a conservative and nearly indestructible cult, persisted another millennium and a half, until the beginning of the common era.[27]

Postscript

Piotr Michalowski's illuminating analysis in this issue of the function of the gala in Ur III documents demonstrates that just as the role of women's performance of lamentation became co-opted and professionalized by males (see above), so, too, the other realm of women's performance and Emesal usage, courtship and wedding song (Cooper 1997), came to be, at least for the elite, dominated by male performers.

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25. At Fara, the gala-mah was in charge of allocations to other gala, and to midwives, prostitutes (géme-kar-kíd), and nu-gig (Visicato 1995: 105–7). At Old Babylonian Sippar, where the gala-mah supervised prostitutes (Gallery 1980; Van Lerberghe and Voet 1991), one gala-mah was married to a nu-gig (Janssen 1992). See now Cooper, *RlA* s.v. "Prostitution," and Assante 1998, who questions accepted notions of Mesopotamian prostitution.

26. Similarly, 1500 years later, Judean exiles would draw on Babylonian Emesal laments, probably the most-frequently performed cultic texts in the first millennium (see Black 1991: 29), to respond to their own political circumstances (see Dobbs-Allsopp 1993). For a modern example of the adaptation of women's funeral lament to commemorate political tragedy, see Tolbert (1994: 184–86)

27. For the survival of Sumero-Akkadian writing into Parthian-Roman times, see Cooper in Houston et al. (2003: 450–56).

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