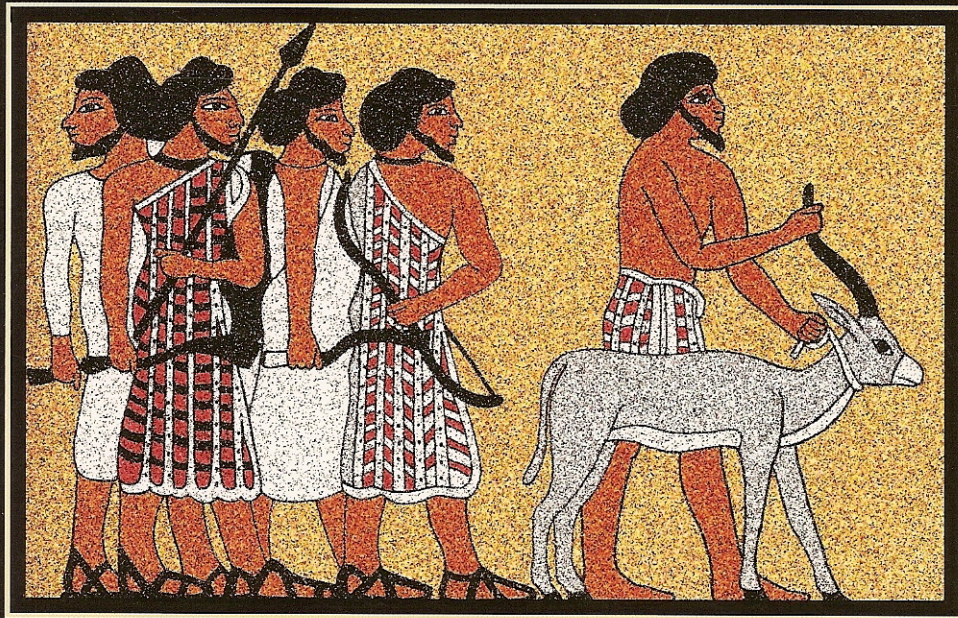


OLD TESTAMENT PARALLELS

LAWS AND STORIES FROM THE
ANCIENT NEAR EAST

FULLY REVISED AND EXPANDED THIRD EDITION



VICTOR H. MATTHEWS AND
DON C. BENJAMIN

Fully Revised and Expanded Third Edition (Paulist Press, 2006)

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FOREWORD

...we would like to thank Lawrence J. Boadt, C.S.P. (President and Publisher), Paul McMahon (Managing Editor) and the other members of the editorial staff at Paulist Press for their good work on this third, fully revised and expanded edition.

Victor H. Matthews, Ph.D.
Don C. Benjamin, Ph.D.

Genesis

Hymn To Ptah

 The The origins of a hymn to Ptah date to the Nineteenth Dynasty (1307-1196 BCE) at Memphis. One version, copied on of black granite known as the Shabaka Stela was recovered by British archaeologists in Egypt in the 1830's. It is written in an archaic style similar to the Pyramid Texts and is preserved in the British Museum in London (BM 498).



a slab
today

Ptah

Ancient Egypt 2002: 302

The Shabaka Stela was dedicated by the Pharaoh Neferkare of Kush also known as Pharaoh Shabaka (712-698 B.C.E.). Kush is south of Egypt in Sudan today. The stela is 3 x 4.5 ft in size. The text is arranged in 62 vertical columns and 2 horizontal rows across the top. Today there are deep grooves on surface of the stela. These were cut into the text on the stone when it was recycled as a millstone. Twenty-three of the columns have been worn away.

Shabaka continued to publish old Egyptian traditions as his predecessor Pharaoh Piye (750-712 B.C.E.) had done. Some of the restorations, like the Shabaka Stela, were based on written documents from sanctuary archives. The text on the Shebaka Stela says that it was copied from an worm-eaten papyrus from the sanctuary at Memphis.

Shabaka governed most of Egypt south of the Nile Delta governed by the pharaohs of Sais. Sais or Zau (Arabic: Sa el-Hagar) was the capital of a nome or a state in northern Egypt. Neith was the city's Godmother.



Neith was generally drawn as a woman wearing the crown of northern Egypt, holding either a scepter or a bow and two arrows. She had the head of a cat or a lion. Her sanctuary at Sais was called: "Sapi of the north" (Egyptian: *Sapi-Meht*).

Neith, Godmother of Sais

www.ladyoftheflame.co.uk/Deities.htm

Assembly".

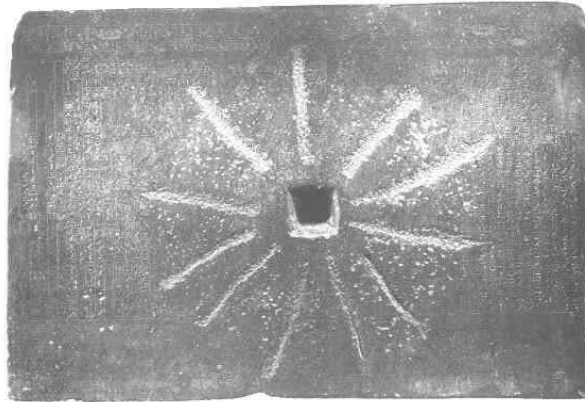
Neith was the wife of the Godfather Tem. Her titles included: "Great Lady", "Godmother", "Lady of Heaven" and "Mother of the Divine

Sais became the capital of Egypt under Pharaoh Tefnakhte (724-717 B.C.E.) and Pharaoh Bocchoris (717-712 B.C.E) when Sabaka was pharaoh of southern Egypt and the Sudan.

Shabaka died after ruling Egypt for fourteen years. He was buried in a steep-sided pyramid at el-Kurru. He was succeeded by his nephews Shebitku and Taharda who were the sons of his predecessor Piye.

Shabaka Stela

Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt



http://nefertiti.iwebland.com/texts/shabaka_stone.htm

Ptah's main sanctuary was at Memphis, hence the creation story on the Shabaka Stela is called the "Memphis Creation Story" or a "Hymn to Ptah". The hymn celebrates Ptah for creating every living thing.

*The ka-souls of every living thing were created in the image of Ptah.
All formed by the words of Ptah's tongue.*

Egyptians considered a complete personality to be composed of five qualities: the *ka* soul, the *rn* name, the *ba* soul, the *shut* shadow and the *akh* soul.¹ All made their home in the *khat* body. The connotations of these five qualities overlap and evolve from 3,000 B.C.E in Egypt until the Common Era. Consequently, there are no accurate English translations for them.

Khat Body

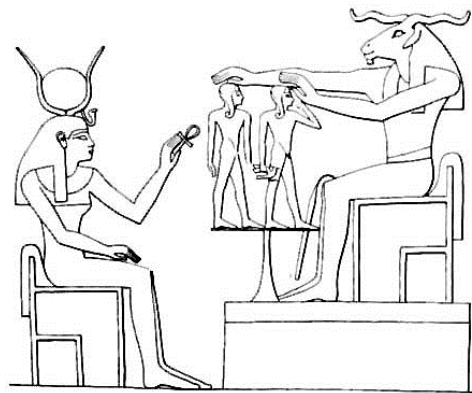
Khnum is a divine potter with the head of a ram. *Khnum* means "to create". Khnum represented Ptah and the *ennead* assembly at the potter's wheel when shaping the human *khat* body and the *ka* soul. The *khat* and *ka* were then artificially inseminated into the mother's womb with the father's sperm.

¹ Sometimes the *sahu* and *sekem* are also counted as qualities of the human personality creating a list of seven. The *sahu* is a spirit-body, a repository for the human personality. It is similar in form to the *khat* body, but is immortal. The *sekem* is the energy, power, and light of the person who has died. Sometimes the *akh* soul is replaced by the *khat* body on the list of five.

Khnum was also the divine patron of Elephantine Island, the divine patron of the cataract rapids in the Nile River and the divine patron of the annual Nile floods. Khnum and Satis were the parents of Anukis. The three made up the divine assembly of Elephantine Island. The Egyptians thought that the floods began in a cavern at the first cataract rapids on the Nile River at Elephantine Island.

The preservation of the body as a *saH* mummy in order to enable the dead to enjoy a life after death was at first only performed on the corpses of the pharaoh, but then became common for anyone who could afford it.

Khnum Creating Hatshepsut
1473-1458 B.C.E.
Wall Painting
Deir el-Bahri



The afterlife was a continuation on the human plane. Tombs were decorated with scenes of daily life. used by the dead during their life on were left in their graves for them to use afterlife. The wealthy were buried with of *shawabti* slaves who would come to when their tomb was sealed. These slaves would work the fields of the divine assembly in place of the dead to give them the leisure to enjoy the afterlife.

of life
 Things
 earth
 in the
 statues
 life

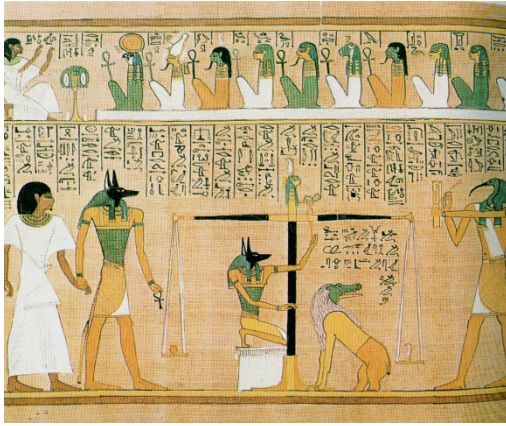
After its transformation into a mummy the body had to undergo the Opening of the Mouth ritual to have its senses restored so that it could make the twelve hour trial before various members of the divine assembly in order to pass from the human plane into the afterlife.

For Egyptians the most important organ in the human body was the *jb* heart. Today the heart is considered the emotional center of the human body. Then the emotional center of the human body was the abdomen.²

For Egyptians the heart was the intellectual and moral center of the human body. The human brain was of no significance in Egyptian anatomy. During embalming priests removed the brain by inserting a hook through the nose to dislodge the brain and break it into pieces. The inside of the skull was then flushed with salt water.³

² Schroer and Staubli 2001: 68-82.

³ Silvia Schroer and Thomas Staubli, Body Symbolism in the Bible. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2001: 41-55.



After the dead began their journey into the afterlife, the heart was weighed by Anubis against a feather representing Ma'at. If the heart was too heavy it was eaten by Ammit to prevent it from entering the afterlife.

Judgment of Hunefer
British Museum
1307-1196 B.C.E.
Papyrus
Baines and Malek 1980:218

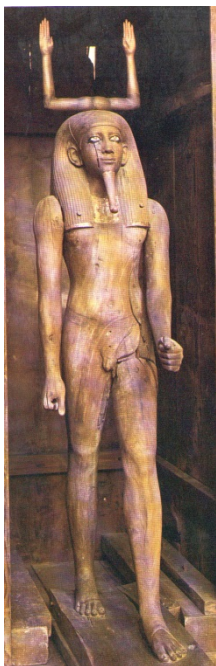
During the embalming the heart was not removed from the body. A scarab amulet was inserted into the mummy's bindings right above the heart to prevent it from testifying to Osiris against the dead.

Ka Soul

The *ka* soul is the fertility, potency or virility of the human personality. It is a human's "double", "spirit", "alter ego" or "twin". The *ka* soul was a constant companion of the body in life and death.

The hieroglyph for the *ka* soul is a pair of raised arms. Paintings of pharaohs and Horus always show their *ka* soul written behind their names.

The *ka* soul lives on after the physical body dies. An Egyptian idiom for "dying" was "meeting your *ka* soul". The tomb was the "House of the *Ka* Soul".



The *ka* soul had the same needs as the body. It ate and drank. Egyptians brought food and drinks to the false door in tombs for the *ka* soul to enjoy.

Ka Statue of Pharaoh Harawibra
1783-1640 B.C.E.
Wood
5 ½ ft high
Dahshur

Rn Name

Rn names give humans social status. Only humans with *rn* names can buy, sell, work, marry or serve in the army or in the government. Without *rn* names humans are socially invisible. The more *rn* names someone has, the more status they have. Every status has a different *rn* name. Osiris, the divine patron of the afterlife, had one hundred different *rn* names.

Rn names had divine power. To know an *rn* name was to be able to create someone or something Ptah, for example, creates every living thing by calling each by its *rn* name.

The ka souls of all the living were created in the image of Ptah.

All formed in his heart and by his tongue.

Horus was created from the thoughts of Ptah's heart.

Thoth was formed by the words of Ptah's tongue.

Ptah creates the Ennead with only teeth and lips,

Atum must create with hands and semen.

Atum had to masturbate to bring forth the Ennead.

Ptah had only to speak, and the Ennead came forth.

Ptah called the names of Shu and Tefnut,

The wind and the rain gave birth to the Ennead.

Sight, hearing, and smell all report to the heart,

The heart is the source of all knowledge.

The tongue speaks only the words of Ptah...

Ptah's heart grants the gift of life,

Ptah's tongue organizes life's abundance.

Ptah's heart grants life to the steady heart,

Ptah's tongue orders death for fools.

Rn names were bestowed on humans by their divine patrons. These names were often kept secret even from their human parents..

An important part of assuring life after death was saying the *rn* names of the dead. Only those whose *rn* names continued to be spoken by their households continued to live. Inscribing the *rn* names in stone gave them permanence. Erasing the *rn* names of the dead from their tombs avenged the suffering they had caused during their lives. For example, by erasing the *rn* names of Hatshepsut and Akhenaten on their monuments throughout Egypt, they were exiled from the afterlife, and were dead for all eternity.

The Egyptians immortalized their pharaohs by creating lists of their *rn* names inside a cartouche. The list of names brought the dead back to life. Medieval Christians sang litanies of their saints to bring them to life. The Vietnam Memorial in Washington D.C. listing all the U.S. casualties in the Vietnam War follows a similar tradition.

Ba Soul

For Egyptians the *ba* soul was a person's moral character or vocation – what they did or were supposed to do in life. Each *ba* soul was unique. It entered the body when a newborn took its first breath and when the dying exhaled their last breath.

Artistically *ba* souls are drawn as birds, generally with a human head perching on trees planted by the tomb. Like birds the *ba* souls of the moved freely between the afterlife and the human



dead plane.

ba
patron
Divine



Even the members of Egypt's divine assembly had souls. In fact each divine had more than one *ba* soul.

patrons who appeared to humans in order to help them were called "*ba* souls" or the "*ba* souls of Re". These divine patrons were sent by Re to help humans in one way or the other.

***Ba* Soul as a Bird**

Egyptians thought of the *akh* soul, *ba* soul and *ka* soul as immortal. Yet, these souls could only survive if their human bodies were preserved or mummified properly. If the body of a *ba* soul decayed or was unidentifiable, it was condemned to roam the human plane forever.

***Shut* Shadow**

In the light of the life-giving sun the *khat* body *shut* spirit or shadow are inseparable. But the pitch-shadow in Egyptian psychology was not an ordinary shadow. This shadow is depicted leaving the body's accompanied by the *ba* personality.



and its
black
grave

Tomb

Shadow and *ba*-Birds of Irinufer Thebes

The shadow which the *khat* body creates is a blessing for those who could rest in it. The members of the divine assembly cast shadows too that protected humans from harm. The pharaohs were the shadows of their divine patron, Horus. The sanctuaries at Amarna were called the "Shadow of Re".

***Akh* Soul**

The *akh* soul is the transfigured form that the dead took in the afterlife after their *ba* and *ka* souls had been reunited. The *akh* soul came into existence when the *ka* soul and the *ba* soul were united after death. The *akh* soul then ascended like a star – *akh* means *the shining one* -- into the divine plane to join the divine assembly, the *akhu*.

The *akh* soul was drawn as a *shawabti* mummy, although the hieroglyph for *akh* soul was a crested ibis (Latin: *geronticus eremita*).



Akh Ibis
2000 B.C.E.
Paint
6 in high
Coffin of Seni

Coffin Prayers and the Book of the Dead prayed that the *ka* soul and the *ba* soul would not die twice, but rather convert into the *akh* soul and successfully reach the afterlife. In the Sufferer and the Soul, a dispute over suicide composed between 2050-1800 B.C.E., an Egyptian and his *akh* soul debate Egypt's views of life and death.

Birth Story of Sargon I



Bronze sculpture of Sargon, Great King of Akkad

📖 Akkad was founded around 3000 B.C.E. near Bagdad (Iraq) today. Agriculture, trade and war soon made Akkad into an empire, and Sargon I (2334-2279 B.C.E.) a great king. Before 1900 British archaeologists recovered tablets from Uruk and Nippur, copied around 2000-1500 B.C.E., and one from Babylon. They told a *Birth Story of Sargon I* and the *Rise to Power of Sargon I*. All were written in cuneiform; some in the Assyrian dialect of the Akkadian language and one in the Babylonian dialect. They are preserved today in the British Museum (London)

A parallel to the *Birth Story of Sargon I* can be found in the *Birth Story of Moses* (Exod 1:22--2:10), where the motifs of unwanted pregnancy, secret birth, abandoning a newborn, being drawn out of the water, and adoption by a stranger also appear. Also just as Sargon who cares for trees goes on to care for the people of Akkad, David who cares for sheep goes on to care for the people of Israel Similarly, just as Ishtar, Sargon's divine patron, guides his career from poverty to power, Yahweh, David's divine patron, lifts him up (1 Sam 16:1-13). The *Birth Story of Sargon I* is also an apology defending the Great King against claims that he is not a legitimate ruler, which parallels the *Birth Story* of Moses defending him against claims that he too has no legitimate authority.¹

Call me Sargon.

¹ See Petrovich, Douglas, "Identifying Nimrod of Genesis 10 with Sargon of Akkad by Exegetical and Archaeological Means," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 56/ 2 (2013), 273-305

I am the one and only Great King of Akkad.

My mother was a priest,
My father was an unknown from a village in the mountains. ²

My mother gave birth to me in secret in the city of Azupiranu.
She hid me in a basket woven from rushes and sealed with tar.

My mother abandoned me on the bank of the Euphrates River.
The Euphrates carried my basket away, (Exod 2:2-3)

Aqqi lifted me out of the water as he dipped his bucket.
This good gardener reared me as his own son, (Exod 2:5-10)

Because Aqqi trained me to care for the royal orchards;
Because Ishtar, my godmother, watched over me.

I became a Great King.
I ruled all the peoples of the earth (Akkadian: *black headed people*) for 55 years.

I blazed trails through mountains with copper axes.
I scaled high peaks many times...

Three times I conquered Dilmun on the Persian Gulf.
I laid siege to Dor and destroyed Kazallu on the Mediterranean Sea...

I challenge any of the kings who come after me:

Let him rule for 55 years!
Let him become Great King of all the peoples of the earth!

Let him blaze trails through mountains with copper axes!
Let him repeatedly scale high peaks...

Let him conquer Dilmun three times!
Let him conquer Dor and Kazallu....


Bibliography

² The motif labelling a contested ruler as ...*coming from the mountains* appears in other Mesopotamian traditions: *A letter from Ibbisin of Isin to Puzumumusda, 1 the ensi of Kazallu, mentions ISbierra, a man from Mari, "that ape who has come down from its mountain" (ugu2 ugu4-bi kur-bi-ta eu-de3, line 162), whom Enlil has elevated to the status of shepherd (nam-sipa) over the land of Sumer (line 17) and given the kingship of the land even though he is not of Sumerian origin: numun-kien- gi-ra nu-me-a (line 19)* Ake W. Sjöberg, "The Ape from the Mountain Who Became the King of Isin," in *The Tablet and the Scroll: Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William W. Hallo* (Bethesda MD: CDL, 1993), 211.

Sjoberg, Ake W. "The Ape from the Mountain Who Became the King of Isin." In *The Tablet and the Scroll: Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William W. Hallo*, 211-220. Bethesda MD: CDL, 1993.

EXODUS

Hymn of Merneptah¹

 In 1896, the British archaeologist Flinders Petrie recovered a stela of granite almost seven and one-half feet high and three and one-quarter feet wide from the funeral chapel of Merneptah (1213-1204 B.C.E.) in the Valley of the Pharaohs (Luxor). Originally, the stela was inscribed by Amenophis III (1391-1353 B.C.E.) but was recycled by Merneptah to celebrate his victory over Libya and Syria-Palestine. This hymn is written in hieroglyphics and is now in the Egyptian Museum (Cairo).

Most hymns have two components: a *call to worship* and a *creation story*. Here the calls challenge Egyptians to celebrate Merneptah as the incarnation of Amun Re, their divine patron. Creation stories offer reasons for answering calls. Here the stories of Merneptah's victories in Libya and Syria-Palestine prove that Merneptah is the divine patron who protects them, from their enemies.

Like much poetry in Semitic languages the *Hymn of Merneptah* uses both parallelism and chiasm. The lines of the hymn's couplets or colons are parallel to one another. The opening couplets of the stanzas mirror its closing stanzas creating a chiasm. The technique is called a *chiasm* after the Greek letter *chi* which is printed X. The top shape of the letter is mirrored by its base shape just as the opening of the hymn is repeated in its closing.

The *Hymn of Merneptah* contains the only mention of Israel in New Kingdom inscriptions (1550-1070 B.C.E.). The hymn uses a throw-stick (Egyptian: *outsider*) with a seated man and woman (Egyptian: *people*) hieroglyphs to identify *Israel* as a *people*, rather than a *city* like Ashkelon, Gezer and Yanoam.² Some scholars use the hymn to date the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt to the reign of Ramesses II (1290-1224 B.C.E.) and the appearance of Israel in Syria-Palestine to 1250 B.C.E.

Parallels to the military itinerary contained in the *Hymn of Merneptah* appear in Joshua and Judges (Josh 10:33, 13:3), and in the annals of rulers of Israel and Judah in Samuel-Kings (1 Kgs 14:25-26; 2 Kgs 18:9-11).

¹ Attached is a revision of the Merneptah stele. I am convinced by Hoffmeier in COS 2, pp. 40-41 that this is a victory hymn rather than an annal. The Great Karnak Inscription of Merneptah is more typical of an Annal. The Stele is simply a summary of the pharaoh's victories over all of his enemies, including the Libyans and the people of Canaan (i.e., the "Nine Bows"). Vic

Problem with considering this a hymn is that there is no Call to Worship inviting Egyptians to acknowledge a divine patron who granted Merneptah this victory. There are biblical hymns without creation stories (Ps 150) and only with calls to worship, but the only biblical parallels without a clear call to worship (Ps 23) still mentions YHWH throughout. Nonetheless, I do agree with the use of parallelism here, which is not common in annals. DCB

² See K.A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biography*, vols. 4-5. Oxford: Blackwell, 1982; and Michael G. Hasel, "Israel in the Merneptah Stela," *BASOR* 296 (1994), 45-61.



Stela of Merneptah

Call to Worship

Let the rulers of my enemies (Egyptian: *the nine bows*) prostrate before me begging for peace;
Let none of my enemies raise their heads in revolt.

Creation Story

A I devastated Tehenu (Libya) in the west;
I put down revolt in the land of Hatti (Syria-Palestine) in the north.
B I plundered Canaan (Syria-Palestine) from one end to the other.
C I took slaves from the city of Ashkelon;
I conquered the city of Gezer.
C I razed the city of Yanoam to the ground;
I slaughtered the people of Israel and burned their grain
(Egyptian: *their seed is not*).³

³ Note the same parallel between *semen* and *seed* in Mesopotamian traditions *The Guteans continue to be mentioned in later sources around the Ur III period; in RIA J, 715, Hallo refers to some royal hymns where Gutium is mentioned: numun-gu-ti-um-ma se-sabar-ra-gin7 mu-bi-bi-re-a-ta "he dispersed the seed of the Gutians like seed-grain" Sulgi D 230 (second part of line restored) and 346; rnada-gu-ti-um (var. -gu-ti-rna) sa-ga-bur-sag-ga2-se3 "against the land of the Gutians, the ... of the mountain (I ...)" Sulgi E 211£; see further Sulgi E 234: ma-da-gu-*

B I left the land of Hurru (Syria-Palestine) a widow.
A I have pacified all lands....

Call to Worship

Let every rebel prostrate before Merneptah,
Before the Pharaoh of Southern and Northern Egypt,
Before the Divine presence of Amun-Re,
Before the Divine Assembly's Beloved, who dawns like the sun of Amun Re.




Hieroglyphics for Israel in the Annals of Merneptah

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tiiumki_ma gis-mu-bu-um-gin mu-GAM "I bent down the land of the Gutians as (if it were) a mubum-tree"; cf. Sulgi B 266-267: uri berem dumu-ki-en-gi-ra be2-em kigu- ti-umki lu2-i-dutu be2-em "be he an Akkadian, be he a Sumerian or be he an oppressor from the Guti-land!" Ake W. Sjöberg, "The Ape from the Mountain Who Became the King of Isin," in *The Tablet and the Scroll: Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William W. Hallo* (Bethesda MD: CDL, 1993), 212.

Stories of Kirta

 The Stories of Kirta, like the Stories of Aqhat, were recovered at Ugarit in Syria by C.A. Schaeffer and his French team (1929-1960). They are written on three clay tablets (CTA 14-16; KTU 1.14-16) in Ugaritic using an alphabetic cuneiform script. They are preserved today in the Louvre Museum in Paris. Although the stories probably developed as early as 2000 B.C.E., this version is signed by Ilimilku, a scribe of Niqmaddu II (1375-1345 B.C.E.).¹



Small Terra-cotta Statue of a Godmother

Kirta, ruler of Betu-Hubur, has no heir, is ill and his people have revolted against him. The stories open with Kirta celebrating an incubation ritual. He is sleeping in a sanctuary of El asking his divine patron to restore his household (Amos 2:8). In a dream, El tells Kirta to go to war, capture a bride and begin a new household. Kirta obeys, but fails to thank Asherah, his godmother, for her help. To punish Kirta, Asherah once again destroys his health. Nonetheless, El once again intervenes and Kirta recovers only to have his son, Yassub, revolt against him.

The death of Kirta's first household and its replacement with a second is parallel to the reversal in the book of Job (Job 42:10-17). Kirta's dreams are parallel to those of Jacob (Gen 28:10-7), and of Solomon (1 Kgs 3:4-15). The revolt of his son, Yassub, while Kirta was ill parallels the revolt of David's son, Absalom (2 Sam 15:1-6).

¹ Dennis Pardee, "The Kirta Epic," in *The Context of Scripture: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, Jr. (Leiden: Brill, 2003), vol. 1: 333-343.

Michael D. Coogan and Mark S. Smith, eds., *Stories from Ancient Canaan, Second Ed.* (Louisville: Westminster-John Knox, 2012), 64-95.

I.i:8-42

The household of the king was destroyed;
The authority of his seven brothers vanished.
The household of these eight sons of the same mother was ruined; (Mic 5:5)
Their authority was no more. (2 Kgs 9:8; Job 1:13-19)

Kirta's first wife was infertile;
The mother of his household did not bear him a child.

He married again, but his second wife vanished childless;
His mother's niece disappeared.

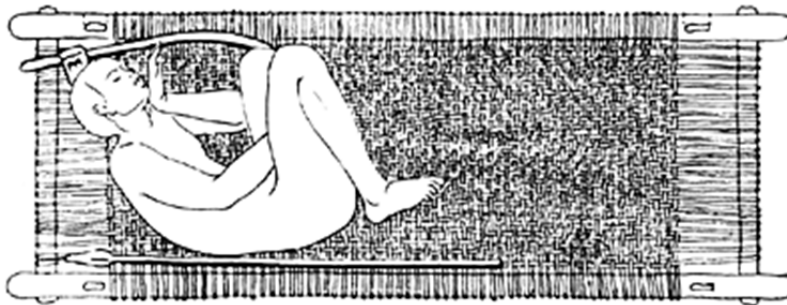
His third wife died childless in apparent good health, (Job 21:23)
His fourth wife died childless of disease.

His fifth wife perished childless from fever;
His sixth wife drowned childless at sea.

His seventh wife died childless during wartime . . .

Kirta locked himself in the sanctuary and mourned,
Going over each tragedy again and again. . . .
Exhausted from weeping, he fell asleep, (Gen 28:10-17)
Curled up on his couch soaked heavily with tears,
He began to dream. . . .

El appeared to Kirta in his dream, (Job 33:15)
The Father of All came to him in a vision. . . .
"Kirta, why are you crying?
Why is a client of El in tears?
Do you want to be a king like your godfather? (2 Sam 7:14)
Do you want to be powerful like the Father of All ?. . . ."



Warrior from Syria-Palestine Buried on his Bed with a Spear and Axe

I.ii:5-24

"Do I need silver or gold? (2 Sam 21:3-4; Prov 22:1)

Do I need land or slaves or horses?"

Do I need a chariot in my courtyard?

Do I need a child by a slave? (Gen 16:1-4)

"Give me sons," Kirta pleaded. (1 Sam 1:11)

"I need a household," he begged.

El replied: "Stop your mourning, Kirta,

Dry your tears, client of El.

Wash your face with water, (Exod 29:4)

Anoint your face with oil.

Bathe your arms to the elbow,

Scrub the dirt from your fingertips to your shoulders.

Enter the shade of your tents.

Prepare a sacrifice.

Pick out the sheep with your right hand;

Hold a lamb with both hands.

Measure out the food for a sacrifice.

Find a bird suitable for sacrifice,

Pour wine from a silver cup,

Drip honey from a golden bowl.

Climb to the top of the tower,

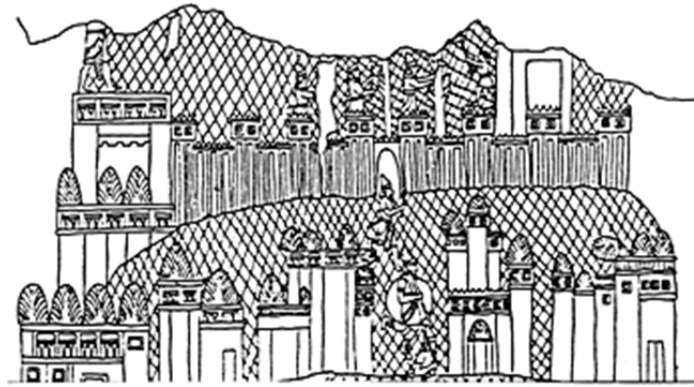
Climb to the heights of the wall.

Raise your hands to heaven,


Sacrifice to your godfather, El the Bull."



Sumerians Bring Offerings to a Sanctuary



City with a Lower Wall and an Upper Wall

 After El teaches Kirta how to offer sacrifice, he tells him to gather a six-month supply of food for a vast army of innumerable soldiers and archers, and lay siege to Udim. The army is not to attack the walls of the city, but blockade the city for seven days until Pabil, the ruler of Udim, sues for peace (Josh 6:1-16: 2 Sam 11:14-27).

Liii:1-49

Your army will cover the fields like locusts, (Joel 1:4; Nah 3:15-17)

Like crickets carpeting the fringe of the steppe.

March for seven days until you reach the great city of Udim. (Josh 5:13—6:27)

Pillage its cities and villages.

Women gathering firewood will run from the fields,

Women picking up straw will abandon the threshing floor.

Women drawing water will flee the well, (Gen 24:11)

Women filling jars will escape from the spring.

Then wait for six days;

Do not shoot a single arrow into the city;

Do not fling a single stone at its towers.

When, King Pabil, has been kept awake for seven days, (Josh 6:3-4)

by cattle bellowing,

by asses screaming,

by oxen groaning,

by dogs barking,

Then the King of Udim will send messengers to sue for peace.

“Accept these peace offerings, Kirta,

Spare my palace.


Leave my land, Kirta....”

Send the messengers back to King Pabil with this demand:

“What need have I for gold and silver,


Give me what the household of Kirta lacks,

Give me the beautiful Hurriya, your first-born child. . . .
As El has decreed, she will bear a child for Kirta?
Let her give birth to a son for the Son of El.”

 After waking from his dream, Kirta carries out the instructions of El and plans to negotiate a covenant between Ugarit and Udum by marrying Hurriya, a daughter of Pabil. On the third day of the march, Kirta stops his army at a sanctuary of Asherah of Tyre and makes a vow (Judg 11:30-31; 1 Sam 14:24).

I.iv:38-43


Kirta made this vow to Asherah, divine patron of Tyre, (Judg 8:19; Ruth 3:13)
Promised this gift to the divine patron of Sidon: (1 Sam 19:6)
If I can marry Hurriya,
If I can bring this woman into my palace,
Then I will give Asherah double her bride price in silver,
I will endow your sanctuary with three times the value of Hurriya in gold.”

 All proceeds as described in the dream from El. Although the text is broken, it is clear that Kirta and Pabil successfully conclude their negotiations and Kirta and Hurriya subsequently celebrate their marriage before the divine assembly.

II.ii:12-iii:16

When the divine assembly convenes (Ps 82:1)
The mighty Baal proposes a toast.
“May El the kind, the compassionate, bless Kirta the powerful,
Show favor to the client of El.”

El takes his cup in his hand;
He takes his goblet in his right hand.
El blesses his servant, Kirta the powerful,
He shows favor to the client of El.
“Kirta, you have obtained a wife,
You have taken a wife into your household,
You have brought a young woman into your palace.
She will bear you seven sons, (Ruth 4:11-2; Isa 32:15)
Eight sons she will bear for you. (Job 42:10-5)
She will bear for you Yassub,
Who will nurse from Astarte,
Who will feed from the breasts of Anat.”

 Hurriya has many sons and daughters. Kirta, however, does not fulfill his vow to endow the sanctuary of Asherah. To remind him of his vow, Asherah inflicts Kirta with a fever no one can cure. Royal officials and the household of Kirta go into mourning to prepare for his death.

Finally, El hears their prayers and responds by polling the other members of the divine assembly to see if any of them will cure Kirta. None of the divine assembly wishes to undertake so dangerous a mission, so El creates Sha'taqat the Exorcist to cure him by exorcising his fever (2 Kgs 4:34-7; 5:10-4).

III.vi:1-18

El orders: "Drive out this fever!"

He commands: "Sha'taqat, Remain strong!"

Sha'taqat sets out from the divine assembly;

She arrives at the household of Kirta.

She enters to the sounds of mourning,

Weeping fills the palace....

Sha'taqat wipes the sweat from Kirta's brow,

She feeds him like a child...

Death is driven out.

Sha'taqat is victorious.

(2 Kgs 20:1-11)

Then Kirta the powerful commands,


He shouts in a mighty voice:

"Hear me, Hurriya,

Butcher a lamb for me to eat,

Prepare a sheep for my supper."

(Gen 18:1-15)

 Kirta once again sits upon his throne and all appears to be well. Kirta's illness, however, had given his son, Yassub, an opportunity to seize the throne, so he demands that Kirta abdicate (2 Sam 15:1-14).

III.vi:41-54

Yassub indicts Kirta:

"Enemies invaded the land

Creditors oppressed debtors,

Your illness made you derelict.

You did not hear the cases of widows.

(Deut 10:18; Isa 1:17)

You did not hear the cases of the poor.

(Amos 2:6-7; 5:12)

You did not drive out oppressors.

(Ps 82:2)

You did not feed orphans in the city.

(Isa 10:2; Ezek 22:7)

You did not feed widows in the country.

(Ps 68:5; Prov 29:14-16)

The sickbed became your brother,

(Ps 41:3)


The pallet your best friend.

Now step down from the kingship,

Allow me to reign.

Relinquish your power;

Let me sit on the throne. . . ."

 The story breaks off with Kirta pronouncing a curse and calling on the divine assembly to crush his rebellious son. The failure to keep his vow to Asherah cost him his household and his health, and, left him with only his youngest daughter as his heir (Josh 6:26; Judg 11:1-40).

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Qeiyafa Annals

The site of Khirbet Qeiyafa is a hill-top on the north side of the valley of Elah, between Azekah and Socoh. Excavators identify the site with ancient *Shaarayim* – *Two Gates* (1 Sam 17:52). For some scholars the *Qeiyafa Annals*, recovered in 2008 from the only city in Judah dated to the time of Saul and David (1200-1000 B.C.E.), announce the installation of a centralized royal administration.



Few samples of writing from the Iron I period like the annals have been recovered. Because the letters are difficult to read, other scholars the inscription is a list of Hebrew and Canaanite names copied by a student at a scribal school in Hebrew, Canaanite, Phoenician or Moabite.

LITERAL OR DIRECT TRANSLATION¹

Do not oppress, and serve God...despoiled him/her
The judge and the widow wept; he had the power
Over the resident alien and the child, he eliminated them together
The men and chiefs/officers have established a king
He marked 60 [?] servants among the communities/habitations/generation.

FUNCTIONAL OR DYNAMIC EQUIVALENT TRANSLATION: VHM-DCB

While you oppress judges,
While you plunder widows and make them weep,
You cannot claim to serve our divine patron,
Who protects liminal households and orphans,
Who delivers them both.
So our warriors and their chiefs appointed a monarch,
Who appointed 60 officials to watch over the villages.

¹ French epigrapher Émile Puech's translation of the Qeiyafa Ostrakon

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The Annals of Idrimi

Leonard Woolley recovered an extraordinary statue of Idrimi, a ruler of Alalakh (Amuq Valley in southern Turkey) in a temple at Tell Atchana. The statue had been toppled from its stone throne, presumably at the time of the final destruction of the city (1100 B.C.E.) Now in the British Museum, the statue's head, with inlaid glass eyes, and its feet had been broken off. The eyebrows and eyelids had originally been inlaid and the marks of a tubular drill can be seen, probably part of the process of manufacture.



**Idrimi, Ruler of Alalakh
Tell Atchana(1500-1200 B.C.E.)**

In contrast to the high style of the statue itself, the grammar and the style of writing of the Stories of Idrimi inscribed on it are poorly done, probably by a scribe who incorporates Old Assyrian, Hurrian and West Semitic variants on standard Old Babylonian orthography including the confusion of the cuneiform signs for “s” and “sh”, and the inscription is signed. Therefore, it is likely that the statue and the inscription were done at different times.

Idrimi was one of the sons of the royal household of Aleppo (Syria), which was subject to the powerful Hurrian kingdom of Mitanni (north central Iraq). The territory of Aleppo included the smaller city state of Alalakh. Following a failed revolt, Idrimi and some of his household were forced to flee east to Emar (Syria) on the Euphrates River, which was ruled by his mother's household. From there he went south to live among the ‘apiru in Syria-Palestine, referred to as Canaan – one of the earliest uses of this geographic term.¹

Idrimi raised troops at Emar and received popular support and help from his mother's household.² He petitioned Parattarna, ruler of Mitanni to recognize his right to rule Alalakh. The inscription states that he had been ruling for 30 years when he had the statue inscribed, although the text itself was actually added to the statue about 300 years after Idrimi's death. The inscription ends with curses on anyone who would destroy the statue.

Parallels to the Stories of Idrimi appear in the story of Joseph's reunion with his brothers in Genesis, the stories of Abimelech and Jephthah in Judges and the stories about David during his “outlaw period” in 1 Samuel and in the 14th century BCE Amarna correspondence.

¹ A Sumerian text in Syria (18th century B.C.E.) also mentions *Canaan*. The ethnic name *ga-na-na* at Tell Mardikh in Syria (24th century B.C.E.) may also be a reference to *Canaan*.

² See Abimelech in Judg 9:1-6.

I, Idrimi, was forced to flee Aleppo,³ my ancestral home, and seek refuge in Emar with my mother's relatives. My older brothers accompanied me, but none of them shared my ambitions. So I, Idrimi, the son of Ilim-ilimma, client of Adad, Ḫebat, and my godmother Ištar of Alalah, thought to myself: *A great nobleman seeks to regain his patrimony, but a vassal remains on Emar.* Therefore, I took my horse, chariot, and groom and left that place.

As I crossed the desert I spent the night with some Sutean warriors, and the next day I traveled on to Canaan and the city of Ammiya. There I was joined by other people⁴ from Aleppo, Mukišše, Ni'I, and Nuḫašše, who were living in Ammiya. Recognizing me as their patron's son, they accepted my role as their ruler. I stayed among the Ḫapiru warriors seven years⁵ and during that time I continually consulted the divine assembly, releasing birds and practicing extispacy.

In the seventh year of my exile, Adad showed me favor and therefore I mounted an expedition, sailing my troop ships to Mukišše. I reached land at Mt. Casius and immediately went ashore. When word spread of my return the people brought me large and small cattle, and, in unison with the states of Ni'I, Nuḫašše, Mukišše, and my own city of Alalah they restored me to power.⁶ Similarly, my allies came to me and they concluded a vassal covenant⁷ with me.

For seven years Barattarna, the mighty king of the Hurrian warriors, was my enemy. However, in the seventh year I sent my envoy, Anwanda, to Barattarna to remind him of the covenants that my ancestors had made with previous Hurrian kings, and assured him that binding agreements⁸ had been concluded with these former kings of the Hurrian warriors.

When the great king heard of the terms of these former covenants made by my predecessors, he chose to receive my tribute.⁹ I made the appropriate gestures of a loyal client,¹⁰ offered great sacrifices, and restored to him a lost estate.¹¹ I then swore a binding oath as his loyal vassal.¹²

³ See David's flight from Jerusalem in the face of Absalom's revolt (2 Sam 15:13-14).

⁴ See Jephthah (Judg 11:3) and David gathering followers in 1 Sam 22:1-2.

⁵ See use of number of seven as a completion number in Gen 29:20, 30 (Jacob serving Laban); Gen 41:29-30 (plenty and famine in Egypt; 2 Sam 5:5 and 1 Kgs 2:11 (David's reign in Hebron).

⁶ See the extended narrative of how the people "brought back" David to power in 2 Sam 19:9-43.

⁷ See Gibeonite treaty with Joshua (Josh 9:6-16); the proposed treaty between Jabesh-gilead and Nahash in 1 Sam 11:1; covenant between Solomon and Hiram in 1 Kgs 5:12.

⁸ See Jephthah's message to the Ammonites in Judg 11:12-27.

⁹ See the terms of vassalage with Assyria in Hos 12:1 and 2 Kgs 17:3.

¹⁰ See David's obeisance to Saul in 1 Sam 24:8; the Amalekite to David in 2 Sam 1:2; and Mephibosheth to David in 2 Sam 9:6.

¹¹ See the restitution of cities and bazaars in 1 Kgs 20:34 as part of a covenant arrangement with Ben-hadad.

¹² See the consequences of breaking an oath of vassalage in 2 Kgs 17:3-4.

Having become ruler of Alalah, the surrounding kings attacked me. However, just as they previously had heaped up the corpses of my ancestors,¹³ I now made a great heap of their corpses and put an end to their aggression.

With this accomplished, I took my troops and attacked the land of Hatti, attacking and destroying the seven border cities of Paššaḥe, Damarut-re'I, Hulaḥḥan, Zise, Ie, Uluzina, and Zaruna. When the forces of Hatti-land did not retaliate, I continued to do what I pleased. I took captives and their possessions and distributed them among my soldiers,¹⁴ my household, and my clients.

I returned to Mukišḥe, entering my capital city of Alalah¹⁵ and displayed my captives and all the spoil which I had taken from the land of Hatti. I had a palace built¹⁶ and made my regime become like the regime of kings. I made my brothers nobles, my sons like the sons of kings, and my relatives part of the royal household. I caused all of the inhabitants of my land to dwell securely.¹⁷

Then I organized the administration of my land,¹⁸ and restored the cities as they had been before. I regularly performed the sacred rites established by our ancestors to honor the divine assembly of Alalah. All these things I did, and I entrusted them to my son Adad-nirari.

May the divine patron of Heaven curse anyone who effaces this statue; may the divine patron of the Earth destroy his progeny; may the divine assembly of Heaven and Earth diminish his kingship (Josh 6:26; Prov 3:33).¹⁹ Let him be hung by a rope until dead (2 Sam 8:2). Whosoever changes or erases its inscription, may Adad, the lord of heaven and earth, and the great gods extinguish his household.

Šarruwa, the scribe has written, copied and reviewed the text of this inscription. May the divine patrons of heaven and earth keep Šarruwa, the scribe, in good health, protect him, and be his guardian. May Šamaš, divine patron of the upper and lower worlds, divine patron of the spirits, be his protector.

I reigned for 30 years. I have inscribed my achievements upon my statue. Let the people read it and continue to bless me (Neh 13:30-31).²⁰

¹³ See this image of “heaped” corpses in Lev 26:30; Judg 15:16; 2 Kgs 10:8; Wis 18:23.

¹⁴ See Exod 15:9; Num 31:7-12; ; Josh 22:8; Judg 5:30; and David’s distribution of spoil in 1 Sam 30:18-31.

¹⁵ See David’s entry into Jerusalem in 2 Sam 5:12-15.

¹⁶ See the summary of Solomon’s construction of his palace (1 Kgs 7:1-12) and restoration projects in 1 Kgs 9:10-25.

¹⁷ See this idea of living securely in Lev 25:18-19; 26:5; Ezek 38:14.

¹⁸ See Solomon’s administrative reforms in 1 Kgs 4:1-28.

¹⁹ See Joshua’s curse in Josh 6:26 and Prov 3:33.

²⁰ See Nehemiah’s claim and plea in Neh 13:30-31.

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PSALMS, LAMENTATIONS

Hymns of Enheduanna

Enheduanna is the first named male or female writer in the world of the Bible to date. Copies of her hymns to Inanna and the divine patrons of temples throughout the empire of Akkad were preserved in the royal archives of Nippur, Ur and Lagash in Iraq.



The British Museum and University of Pennsylvania Museum excavations at Ur directed by C. Leonard Woolley in 1927 recovered an alabaster disk -- 10 inches diameter, 3 inches thick -- from the gipar palace of the high priest. The disk is shaped like a full moon -- the symbol of Nanna, whom Enheduanna served as high priest. On the disk Enheduanna wears a layered dress and the rolled brimmed aga crown of the high priest. She stands second in a line of four figures preparing to water the tree of life. The inscription reads: Enheduanna ...wife of Nanna and daughter of the Great King Sargon, dedicating the Temple of Inanna.... The disk is preserved today in the University of Pennsylvania Museum (#CBS 166665).¹

Hymn to Inanna

(Akkadian: *in-nin-sa-gur-ra*)

Sargon of Akkad (2334–2279 B.C.E.) appointed Enheduanna to be High Priest of Nanna, godfather of the moon at Ur in Sumer to oversee Sumer's loyalty to Akkad. Enheduanna was celebrated as the incarnation of Ningal, the wife of Nanna and divine patron of the reed marshes. The child of Nanna and Ningal was Inanna -- godmother of Venus. Enheduanna elevated her goddaughter to replace An and Enlil as the principle representative of the divine assembly on the human plane. Inanna's title: Lady of Largest Heart – here translated Wise

¹ Irene J. Winter, "Women in Public: The Disk of Enheduanna, the Beginning of the Office of En-Priestess, the Weight of the Visual Evidence," in *La Femme Dan Le Proche-Orient Antique* (Paris: Editions Recherche sur les Civilizations, 1987). Joan Goodnick Westenholz, "Enheduanna, En-Priestess, Hen of Nanna, Spouse of Nanna," in *Dumu-E-Dub-Ba-A: studies in Honor of Ake W. Sjöberg*, eds. Hermann Bherens, Darlene Loding and Martha T. Roth (Philadelphia: Univ Museum, 1989), 539-556.

Woman -- *does not remember her for her feelings, but rather for her intelligence. The world of the Bible identified the heart with intelligence; the seat of the emotions was the kidneys. This hymn with 274 surviving lines is Enheduanna's longest.*²

(1-14)

Sing of Inanna, the Wise Woman,
Sing of the Warrior Princess,
Sing of the favorite child of ancient Anunnaki elders.
Sing of the first daughter of Nanna, divine patron of the moon
Sing of Inanna, to whom all lands answer
Sing of Inanna, who towers over even the Great Kings.
Sing of the queen of remarkable deeds
Sing of Inanna, who endowed Sumer with all its cultural achievements,
Sing of Inanna, who gave Sumer more than An, father of the divine assembly.

Inanna is preeminent in the divine assembly
Her verdicts are final.
Her glowing planet – Venus -- rises above the Divine Mountain,
Her radiance stills traffic on the road.
Her battle cry panics the divine patrons of Sumer....
An – father of the divine assembly -- cannot make decisions without Inanna;
Enlil – whose sets our fate -- cannot guide our destiny without Inanna....

(45-55)

Inanna washes her weapons with blood and gore....
No one can oppose her in battle.
No one can challenge Inanna to a duel....

(116-124)

To run, to escape, to heal and to make peace are yours, Inanna.
To inform, to instruct, to inspect, to approve are yours, Inanna....

(219-274)

I am Enheduanna, High Priest of Nanna...
I beg your help, Inanna...
Relieve my grief, my hardship...
My Lady, show me ...mercycompassion....
I am yours!
I will always be....
Cool your anger against me;

² Carole R. Fontaine, "The Deceptive Goddess in Ancient Near Eastern Myth : Inanna and Inaraš," *Semeia*, no. 42 (01/01, 1988), 84-102. Åke W. Sjöberg, "A Hymn to Inanna and Her Self-Praise," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 40, no. 2 (09/01, 1988), 165-186.

I have had enough punishment....
My Lady, your greatness is manifest,
Find a way to put me back in place!
Your great deeds are unparalleled,
Your greatness is always praised,
Young woman, Inanna, your praise is sweet!

The Exaltation of Inanna

(Akkadian: *nin-me-sara*)

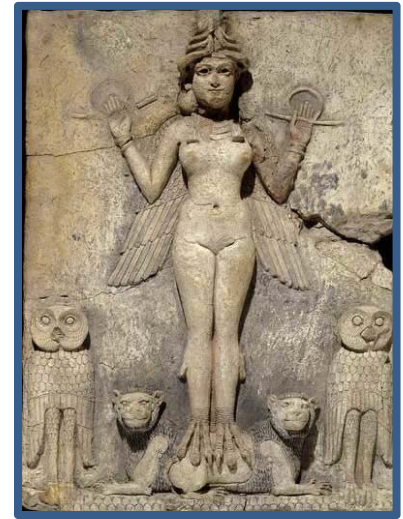
Some 153 lines of The Exaltation of Inanna have been reconstructed.³ Scribes catalogued more than 100 cultural achievements (Akkadian: me's) of Sumerian civilization -- mathematics, astronomy, law, art, science, architecture, military science, writing and literature. The hymn praises Inanna for endowing Sumer with more me's than An or Enki or any other member of the divine assembly.

Parallels to The Exaltation of Inanna appear in The Stories of Cain which celebrate his household for blessing humanity with endowments like cities, tent making, herding, music, metal work and a system of justice (Gen 4:3—5:32).

(i:1-8)

Sing of the all-powerful Inanna,
Sing of the source of all Sumer's cultural achievements.
Sing of the Great Woman clothed in Nanna's moon light,
Sing of the Beloved of the Heavens and Earth.
Sing of the Mother of the Household of An
Sing of the Guardian of the awards for Sumer's greatest cultural achievements
Sing of the woman who wears the crown of Nanna's high priest
Sing of the Custodian of the seven greatest cultural achievements....

You have acquired every great cultural achievement
Their medals hang from your hand



**Enheduanna as a Member of
the Divine Assembly**

³William W. Hallo and Van Dijk J.J.A., *The Exaltation of Inanna* (New Haven, Conn: Yale Univ Pr, 1969). William W. Hallo, "The Exaltation of Inanna (1.160)," in *The Context of Scripture: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, eds. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger Jr (Leiden: Brill, 2004), vol 1: 518-522. Annette Zgoll, *Der Rechtsfall Der En-Hedu-Ana Im Lied Nin-Me-Šara*, Vol. Bd. 246 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1997). Betty De Shong Meador, *Inanna, Lady of Largest Heart: Poems of the Sumerian High Priestess Enheduanna*, 1st ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000). Carol Lipson and Roberta A. Binkley, *Rhetoric before and Beyond the Greeks* (Albany: State University of New York, 2004), 267.

You have developed every great cultural achievement
You press their medals to your breast....

(ix:66-84)

During Sumer's bid for independence after Sargon's death, Lugal-ane convicted Enheduanna of exercising authority reserved to men and sent her into exile. Parallels appear in Instructions on Farming and Manufacturing (Deut 22:1-12) which teach men not to let women use male weapons.

At the dedication of your holy temple, Inanna
I, Enheduanna, carried your offering basket,
I, the high priest, sang your praise.

Now I have been cast out like a leper.
Day comes and its brightness is hidden from me.
Shadows cover the sun, drape it in sandstorms.
My beautiful voice stutters.
My vagina is dry as the dust of the earth....
I once sat triumphant.
Then Lugal-ane exiled me from the *Eanna* Temple.
The traitor made me fly from the window like a swallow,
He consumed my life.
He stripped me of the crown of high priest.
He made me carry a man's dagger and sword
With the indictment: *Assassins' weapons become you....*

Lugal-ane's revolt failed and Enheduanna was reinstated.

The Temple Hymns

The 42 Temple Hymns celebrate all the divine patrons in the empire of Akkad. They are reconstructed from 37 tablets dating from 2112-1600 B.C.E. Archaeologists recovered them at Ur and Nippur.

The hymns celebrate the divine patrons of diverse cultures conquered by Sargon in order to create a uniform world view for the empire of Akkad. Enheduanna artfully links one divine patron to another. Utu and Enki work together to bring the land of Akkad to life. She also confers titles originally unique to one divine on another. Eunir merges with E-dul-kug and E-engura; Enki merges with Nudimmud and the Prince of the Heavens and the Earth. Both these strategies were used by subsequent Mesopotamian cultures to add new members to the divine assembly or to reconfigure the status of its existing members.

Most hymns have two components. There is a call to worship and a creation story. Calls to worship challenge audiences to praise and acknowledge a member of the divine assembly as their divine patron. The creation story celebrates the great works of a divine patron. Enheduanna's creation stories are literary pilgrimages. As she enters the courtyard where pilgrims gather, she addresses the temple by name. As she enters the great room where sacrifices are prepared, she describes its furnishings or meals in progress. When she arrives at the holy of holies she salutes its divine patron with a profession of faith.

Parallels to Enheduanna's Temple Hymns appear in the pilgrim psalms (Ps 120-134) sung on the harvest feasts of Unleavened Bread in spring, of Weeks in summer and of Tabernacles in fall. (Exod 23:14-17; Exod 34:18-23; Isa 30:29). Pilgrims going up to Jerusalem sang these psalms (Deut 16:16; Ezra 2:1; 7:7).

1. Hymn to *Eunir* Temple of Enki

Enki, Anu and Enlil were the most powerful members of the divine assembly. Enki is godfather of fresh water beneath the city of Babylon (Akkadian: abzu). These waters are his semen which brings the earth to life.

Call to worship (1-7)

Sing of *Eunir* Temple which joins the heavens to the earth,
Sing of its *ziggurat* – a footstool for the divine assembly to the earth,
Sing of the divine banquet hall for the city of Eridug!
Sing of the temple on the shores of the primeval *abzu* waters,
Sing of *E-dul-kug* Temple on a hill
Where only the best food is sacrificed,
Where only pure water flows through its royal canal,
Where every inch is scrubbed clean,
Sing of the temple on the shores of the primeval *abzu* waters
Accompany your *tigi* hymns on divine drums.

Creation story (8-23)

Your great walls are solid.
No light enters your holy of holies where you meet your divine patron,
No light enters your great room,
No light enters your courtyard – *The Place of Beauty*.

Your tightly constructed house is sacred and has no equal.
Your great prince has placed a divine crown on the city of Eridug.
Covered with lush *asagu* vines,
Asagu vines sacred to the *susbu* priests.
Your temple built on the shores of the primeval *abzu* waters,
Your sanctuary is magnificent!
The Utu sun works with the Enki water to bless your sanctuary,

To bless your oven with bread to eat,
To bless your *ziggurat* reaching toward the heavens,
-- to bless your great oven big as a banquet hall.

Enki, our prince of the heavens and the earth lives forever,
Our creator, our teacher,
Enki has erected his *E-engura* Temple in our midst,
Our Lord Nudimmud has taken his seat upon its *ziggurat*.

7. Hymn to *Kesh* Temple of Ninhursag

Ninhursag is godmother of all human and animal life in the foothills and deserts of Akkad. Her totem is a wild ass.

Call to worship (87-95)

Sing of *Kesh* Temple towering above the heavens and the earth
Sing to the Temple shaped like a great, terrifying horned snake.
Sing to the *Lady of the Mountains*
Sing to Ninhursag's Temple built on a terrifying site

Creation story (89-99)

O Kesh Temple, like the lost kingdom of Aratta,
Your womb inside is dark and deep
Your towers outside rise above all

mposng one
great lon of the wldlands stalkng the hgh plans
great mountan
ncantatons fxd you n place
nsde the lght s dm
even moonlght (Nanna's lght) does not enter
only Ninhursag, Lady Nintur of Birth
makes t beautiful
O house of Kesh
the brck of brthgvng
your temple tower adorned wth a laps lazulcrown
your prncess
Prncess of Slence
unfalng great Lady of heaven
when she speaks heaven shakes
open-mouthed she roars

Ninhursag -- Enlil's sister Aruru
O house of Kesh

has bult ths house on your radant ste
and placed her seat upon your das

42. Hymn to *Eresh* Temple of Nisaba

*Nisaba is the godmother of domestic crops and wild reeds. Because scribes used her reeds as pens, she is also the divine patron of writing and accounting. In the creation story, Enheduanna introduces herself to Nisaba and offers her hymn as a gift.*⁴

Call to worship (529-534)

Sing to the *Shining House of Stars*.

Sing to *E-zagin-guna* – inlaid with lapis lazuli.

Sing to *Eresh* Temple – filled with pilgrims from all over the world.

Let the divine assembly sing to you every month.

Creation story (535-544)

Pink-blooming *saponaria* flowers -- the symbol of the young Nisaba -- cling to your *ziggurat*.

Nisaba, whose name spells: *saponaria* flowers.

Nisaba brought her power down from the heavens,

She added her power to your power -- *Eresh* Temple

She enriched the Temple established for worship.

Eresh Temple -- dedicated to the Faithful Woman, divine patron of wisdom,

Nisaba -- who recites from tablets inlaid with lapis lazuli,

The *saponaria* flower -- who gives advice to all lands.

Faithful woman to whom the *saponaria* flowers are sacred,

Divine patron of the reed pen,

Nisaba, who surveys the heavens cubit by cubit,

Faithful woman, who measures the land with a plumb line.

Sing to Nisaba

Whose pilgrim, Enheduanna, writes this hymn on a clay tablet;

A gift for my divine patron like none you have ever received.

⁴ Åke W. Sjöberg and E. Bergmann, *The Collection of Sumerian Temple Hymns* (Locust Valley, NY: Augustin, 1969). Betty De Shong Meador, *Princess, Priestess, Poet: The Sumerian Temple Hymns of Enheduanna* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009). J. A. Black et al., "The Temple Hymns of Enheduanna," *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature* (1998), February 25, 2014.

SONG OF SOLOMON

Love Songs of Inanna and Dumuzi

Enheduanna may have transformed these classic love songs from Sumerian into Akkadian.⁵ As she had done in the Temple hymns, Enheduanna merged the Inanna from the divine assembly of Sumer in the original love songs with Ishtar of from the divine assembly of Akkad in her translation in order to strengthen the covenant between the north and south.

The University Museum at the University of Pennsylvania excavated tablets containing the love songs of Inanna and Dumuzi at Nippur. The tablets were written about 1750 B.C.E., but the traditions are considerably older. The tablets are preserved at the University Museum, Philadelphia. In 1888 the University of Pennsylvania sponsored the first expedition ever to work in Mesopotamia. On the staff in that first season was Robert F. Harper, who later founded Assyriological Studies Program at the University of Chicago. The expedition worked at Nippur until 1900, finding more than 30,000 cuneiform tablets and hundreds of other objects.

Erotica and pornography both use sexually explicit metaphors, but the intentions of the genres are quite different.⁶ Pornography promotes violence against one sexual partner by the other. Erotica celebrates healthy and balanced sexual relationships. Erotica describes the pleasure of sexual intercourse in order to motivate men and women to make love. Parallels to Enheduanna's love songs appear in the Song of Solomon.

At the end of the dry season the male ruler and a female priest of Sumer would re-enact the courtship of Dumuzi – the divine gardener -- and Inanna to inaugurate the wet season and bring the fields to life. Ritual intercourse between monarchs and priests (Greek: ieros gamos) reminded Dumuzi to wet the land with just the right amount of rain to create a fertile land and a fertile people.

Parallels appear in a Trial of Jotham (Isa 5:1-7) where Yahweh and the farmers of Judah are not just working the land, they are making love to it. The story describes everything Yahweh and the farmers do for the beloved vineyard using the same erotic language that appears in the Song of Solomon. They farm or make love to the vineyard, and the fruit of their lovemaking is the harvest of grapes (Jer 31:39; Hab 3:17; Ezek 38:20). In Semitic languages the connotations of words for farming, sexual intercourse, war, sacrifice, eating, and learning overlap, because all six activities fully engage all five human senses. Lovemaking and farming are particularly interchangeable because fertility was understood as the ability of a household to have a child, which was the work of lovemaking, and to have a harvest, which was the work of farming.

Inanna sings:

⁵ Samuel Noah Kramer and Diane Wolkstein, *Inanna, Queen of Heaven and Earth: Her Stories and Hymns from Sumer* (Harper & Row, 1983).

⁶ Gwendolyn Leick, *Sex and Eroticism in Mesopotamian Literature* (London: Routledge, 1994).

Let singers compose songs from what I have to say.

Let both young and old hear and sing them.

My vagina is a horn

My vagina is a divine boat.

My vagina is full of promise like a new moon.

My vagina is an untilled and infertile field.

...Who will till my vagina?

Who will till my field?

Who will till my wet ground?

...Who will till my vagina?

Who will yoke an ox there?

Who will till my vagina?

Dumuzi sings:

My love, your king will till your vagina.

I, Dumuzi your king, will till your vagina.

Inanna sings:

Till my vagina, my love!

Till my vagina!

A cedar rises from my king's groin.

Plants spring up throughout the land.

Grain grows high throughout the land.

Gardens flourish luxuriantly.

Dumuzi and Akkad are both rise up;

Dumuzi and the land have bloomed.

Dumuzi is a garden planted by water.

He is the one my vagina loves.

My garden at the house is full,

My barley growing high in the field,

My quince tree bears fruit from top to bottom,

He is a garden planted by water.

My sweet man, my sweet man makes me sweet.

My love, the sweet man of the divine assembly, is the one my vagina loves.

His hand is sweet,

His foot is sweet,

He always makes me sweet.

My love caresses my navel,

My loves caresses my thighs,

He is the one my vagina loves,

He is a garden planted by water.

Dumuzi sings:

My love, your breasts are fertile fields.
Inanna, your breasts are fertile fields.
Your fields are full with crops.
Your fields are heavy with grain.
Water flows from them like a divine gift for a slave.
Beer flows from them like a divine gift for a slave.
Pour it out for me, Inanna.
I will drink it all.

Inanna sings:

Make your milk sweet and thick, my husband.
I will drink your fresh milk, my shepherd,.
Dumuzi, make your milk sweet and thick like a wild bull.
I will drink it all.
Let the milk of the goat flow into my sheepfold.
Fill my churn with sweet cheese.
My love, Dumuzi, I will drink your fresh milk.

My covenant partner, I will guard my sheepfold for you alone.
I will watch over my storehouse for you alone,
The shining quivering place which delights Sumer –
The house which decides the fates of the land,
The house which gives the breath of life to the people.
I, the mother of your house, will watch over your household.

Dumuzi sings:

My sister, I will go with you into my garden.
Inanna, I will go with you into my garden.
I will go with you into my orchard.
I will go with you to my quince tree.
There I will plant my sweet seed.

Inanna sings:

Dumuzi brings me into his garden.
My brother brings me into his garden.
I walk with him among the tall trees,
I stand with him among the downed trees,
By a quince tree I lay down with him.
I lay down with my brother who sings to me,
Who rises to me out of the poplar leaves,
Dumuzi comes to me in the heat of the day,
I lay down with my lover...,

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