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A Conceptual Metaphor Theory Approach to Divine Enumerative Description in Akkadian

By

Matthew Christopher Ong

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

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in

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of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Niek Veldhuis, Chair

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Professor Eve Sweetser

Summer 2024

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Matthew Christopher Ong

Abstract

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This thesis argues for the existence of a particular form of image-making in Akkadian we call ‘divine enumerative description.’ Roughly consisting of a set of structurally parallel lines which exhaustively enumerate the facets of a Mesopotamian divine figure, divine enumerative description is a very ‘Mesopotamian’ way of waxing poetic. It constitutes a coherent poetic form most evident in some of the divine hymns of the latter second and first millennium. While both the scribal conception of the gods and the rhetorical dimensions of enumerative composition are established subjects in Assyriology, this thesis is novel in studying the intersection of the two topics using modern cognitive linguistic theory. We use this framework to illustrate how divine enumerative description operates not just in terms of explicit linguistic structure, but also implicitly beneath genre or communicative purposes of a text. Here, content and form mutually constrain each other to allow for a kind of structured imagination we typically associate with traditional western forms of literary creativity.

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Introduction

In modern literary studies, literary creativity is sometimes viewed in a way that makes it seem existentially dependent on specific genres or rhetorical traditions it occurs in. These culturally specific forms (often fairly modern or western in character) are seen as enabling not just the production of beauty and sophistication, but also novel image-making. A side-effect of this view is that the literary study of an ancient, and arguably more foreign written tradition like Akkadian is automatically modeled on its modern western counterpart. Certain assumptions about how literature (as well as poetry and other connected concepts) should be defined unfortunately preclude consideration of how Akkadian, as a conservative but very long lasting scribal tradition, displays interesting literary phenomena beyond what emerges from traditional studies of the great epics and hymns.

This thesis is an attempt to bring some of those phenomena to the attention of Assyriologists. It is a cognitive linguistic study of a particular Akkadian poetic modality which we call ‘divine enumerative description,’ a term meant to reflect a combination of both content and form, or put another way, meaning and the way that meaning is expressed. The content centers on the elite scribal conception of the gods in the latter second and first millennium, particularly where syncretic, henotheistic, or speculative tendencies are operative. The form involves, crudely speaking, a prolonged itemized description of the gods of an evocative or imaginative character. While both the scribal conception of the gods and the rhetorical dimensions of enumerative composition are established subjects in Assyriology, this thesis is novel in studying the intersection of the two topics using modern cognitive linguistic theory. We use this framework to argue that divine enumerative description can be seen as an implicit poetic modality often operating beneath explicit genre or communicative purposes of the text. Here, content and form mutually constrain each other to allow for a kind of structured imagination we typically associate with traditional western forms of literary creativity.

In speaking of a ‘poetic modality,’ we primarily mean a way of writing which engages the image-generating capacities of the writer or reader in an underdeterminative manner. That is to say, the linguistic forms that the writer of a text commits to using (or a reader commits to interpreting) are designed not only to elaborate on an image beyond mundane communicative expectations, they often require that person to contribute their own experiential resources to fleshing out that image in their mind. While one could say this effect is

‘designed’ in the sense that it stems from cultural conventions of composition and interpretation and assumptions about the reader’s background knowledge (especially regarding the interpretation of specific linguistic structures), it need not result from a conscious choice. What matters is the conditioning textual environment that in some way licenses distinctive patterns of language use (i.e. a modality). The appeal to a ‘poetic’ modality is meant to capture the notion of language use that both facilitates imaginative expression and recruits linguistic structure itself to contribute to the interpretive experience.

Modern western culture affords the specific category of ‘literature’ for this type of language use, where the above poetic mode becomes the explicit communicative purpose of writing. We will argue that divine enumerative description affords much of the same thing in the Akkadian scribal tradition save that it occurs at an indirect or implicit level. This is not to deny that there are many other forms of Akkadian that could be called literary according to other definitions. Our main interest, though, is the study of one particular textual configuration (divine enumerative description) where cognitive linguistics can help elucidate its grammatical constructions, conceptual structures, and rhetorical devices which previously have not been considered in a poetic light. If it indeed turns out that divine enumerative description draws on a range of poetic strategies that result in creative image-making regardless of the scribe’s conscious goals in writing, this ultimately prompts us to reconsider what the term ‘literary creativity,’ perhaps even ‘literature’ itself, means in an Akkadian scribal context.

In more specific terms, the theoretical linguistic framework we will use to study divine enumerative description is based on Conceptual Metaphor Theory. This theory is gaining traction in various disciplines within the humanities, ranging from anthropology to comparative literature, and Assyriology is no exception.¹ Not only does the representation of divinity in Akkadian frequently involve conceptual metaphor and other related devices, this thesis argues that metaphor is in fact ‘baked in’ to the conception of divinity in a way that allows a well-versed scribe great imaginative play in certain situations, such as the great literary or syncretic hymns. We aim to show at the cognitive level that the kind of poetic strategies at play in these environments justify speaking of a certain imaginative mode one could term ‘literary,’ where both creativity and structure interact in ways best described by Conceptual Metaphor Theory. The linguistic strategies and rhetorical phenomena examined in this thesis range from simple grammatical constructions to broad notions of conceptual coherence and metaphorical performativity. Beyond supporting the claim for an implicit poetic mode in Akkadian, our hope is that the arguments here will expand our awareness of the forms literary imagination can take in Akkadian scribal culture beyond what has been recognized by researchers so far.

In using the term ‘divine enumerative description,’ we wish to indicate a semi-technical notion that shares only certain overlap with the Greek concept of ekphrasis and its putative analogue in Akkadian or Sumerian. It is thus appropriate to briefly discuss that concept here.

¹See e.g. Böck 2013, Wee 2017, J. C. Johnson 2018, and Nadali 2020.

Ekphrasis has classically meant the elaborate third person description of a work of art with an eye towards aesthetic appreciation and rhetorical virtuosity. The object being described is meant to be held as a mental representation in the mind of the reader rather than being physically present before them. Yet as Irene Winter has argued, some of the features of Greek ekphrasis are not appropriate in a Mesopotamian context, where manifesting presence of an ideal type is more important than accurate description of a specific object.² By presencing, Winter means that when a person views or otherwise senses a symbolic object (which could be the words of a text or a wall relief) that object makes the person feel as if the referent of the object is somehow present in the physical space around them. A modern example would be someone seeing a cross and feeling that Jesus is somehow standing next to them. By ideal types, Winter means that the mental image conjured in the mind of the conceptualizer is held to be ‘ideal,’ i.e. realizing the maximal or best version of something within an implicit category. For instance, Superman might be regarded as an ideal type for super heroes in that no one is supposed to be stronger or faster than him. Thus Winters is saying that in Mesopotamian contexts, detailed images are often meant to presence the referents of those images as an ideal within a certain category, rather than serve as a physically accurate representation without connection to the immediate space around the conceptualizer.

Recognizing this fact, Cale Johnson has recently argued for a revised conception of ekphrasis in the case of Sumerian Tigi hymns, where the votive object of description is taken to ‘interact’ with the person describing it (usually a king or elite intending to present the object before a deity).³ This interaction is based on a presencing of the intended receiver (often a god or king) via a statue or other material stand in. Johnson argues that the rhetorical markers of this ekphrasis include implied or explicit second person address to the deity as well as an enumeration of features of the votive object based on a lemma-comment structure from the lexicographic tradition.⁴ Here, lemma-comment structure refers to linguistic pattern in which one first posits an item for discussion, usually belonging to a family of related items, and then makes a comment about that item. One then presents another such pairing on the next line, and so forth. A good example of this is the list of domestic animals in one’s culture, where next to each animal’s name one provides a translation of that name into a fixed target language. Johnson sees this lemma-comment structure, first observed by Civil as a basic feature of much of Sumerian literature,⁵ also at work in certain Akkadian texts like the Syncretic Hymn to Ninurta, the *Göttertypentext*, as well as the so-called Body Description Texts,⁶ and indicative of a cline of representational strategies in Sumerian and Akkadian emphasizing different degrees of presence.⁷

In relation to the above work on Mesopotamian-style ekphrasis, our notion of divine

²Winter 1989.

³J. C. Johnson 2019.

⁴J. C. Johnson 2019: 16.

⁵Civil 1987.

⁶See Pongratz-Leisten 2015a.

⁷J. C. Johnson 2019: 22-23.

enumerative description is similar to Johnson's schema to the degree that it takes presenting as a prototypical but not essential feature of the representation. It is still fundamentally rooted in the idea of enumerative description based on paratactic rather than hypotactic syntax.⁸ Yet our notion differs from Johnson's schema in that within our framework, the object of description is prototypically not a votive offering but the divinity itself. The particular lemma-comment format in Johnson's scheme (or in fact any phrasal-level grammatical structure) is also not as crucial in our framework as the representational content evoked. Indeed, as we shall argue, divine enumerative description as a poetic mode goes hand in hand with a particular conceptualization of divinity itself, one which we call the **divine frame complex** (chapter 2). While this notion may ultimately reflect how divine beings are conceptualized in all human cultures, we believe it has particular explanatory benefit when discussing Mesopotamian divinity. This key notion crystallizes the general observation in the Assyriological literature that gods have multiple guises that nevertheless seem to 'belong' to a single anthropomorphic entity. In terms of the divine frame complex, one may regard divine enumerative description as a very powerful and elegant way of representing the gods in Akkadian.

What kind of texts or textual environments are characterized by divine enumerative description, and can one separate the poetic mode of description from the type of texts it appears in? The brief definition of divine enumerative description given above is a rough indication of the time period of interest to us. The latter half of the second millennium and the first millennium (especially the first half), encompassing what Ben Foster termed the Mature Period (1500-1000 BCE) and the Late Period (1000-100 BCE) of Akkadian literature,⁹ were characterized by a number of features relevant for our arguments. These include a long-developed scribal tradition that had both developed various text genres and experimented with creative deviations from them, the growth of theological syncretisms and the elevation of certain gods like Marduk to a new cosmic status, the overall growth of speculative thinking as expressed in the above text genres, and ultimately a learned facility with one of the time-honored means of talking about the gods - the divine hymn.

Within this time frame, our approach to the study of divine enumerative description proceeds by representative examples, starting with central, prototypical instances and proceeding outward to less prototypical ones (Figure 0.1). On the one hand, this approach sets a necessary limit on the domain of texts we consider here. On the other hand, it also helps illustrate that divine enumerative description is a poetic modality naturally motivated by a certain type of text even as it shows partial independence from it. While 'the certain way one speaks about the gods' and 'the type of text where one speaks about them in that certain way' may at one point have been one and the same, the range of texts that divine enumerative description ultimately appears in still justifies regarding the phenomenon as an

⁸Paratactic syntax refers to a combination of two phrases in which neither phrase is syntactically subordinate to or governed by the other (e.g. coordination or topic-comment) whereas hypotactic syntax makes one phrase subordinate to the other (e.g. noun and relative clause, or main sentence with temporal clause).

⁹Foster 2005.

actual poetic modality, a way of talking about something that can be employed in different contexts.

The prototypical instance of divine enumerative description is found in divine hymns, especially long ones. Highly structured songs of praise to a major divinity such as the Shamash Hymn, the Marduk hymns, and the Great Ishtar Hymn feature lengthy descriptions of the god for multiple reasons. As will be discussed in later chapters, such descriptions not only communicate an appropriate reverential attitude of the hymn's reciter (who is usually a petitioner or their stand-in). They are also crucial to rendering the divinity present in all its major aspects. Whether they are used in explicit performative rituals or merely retain the form of such performative texts, divine hymns as a class constitute a kind of divine enumerative description. Note, however, that some of the poetic techniques we will be studying become apparent only in hymns of substantial length or compositional sophistication. The scribe requires, so to speak, enough 'runway length' on the tablet to give his imagination the necessary lift-off.¹⁰

Divine enumerative description is not a phenomenon restricted to prototypical divine hymns. Sections of certain structurally complex works such as *Enūma elish* and *Ludlul* feature divine enumerative description, even as they also have features that distinguish them from prototypical divine hymns. We include these sections in our study as examples of non-prototypical divine hymns. They still retain some salient characteristics of the prototypical version (such as enumerative description of a god, relatively fixed syntactic structure, and rhetorical purpose of praise), even as they have other qualities deriving from the larger text they are embedded in (less clear performative function, different narrative structure and tone). Even less prototypical examples of divine hymns that we consider are the syncretic hymns to Ninurta and Marduk. The highly marked grammatical structure of these texts is a reflection of their highly speculative content.¹¹ Nevertheless, we will argue that they feature the same basic type of divine enumerative description as texts like the Great Ishtar Hymn. At the furthest extreme of our study is the *Göttertypentext*, which retains only minimal features of a divine hymn and is chiefly thought of as a written encoding of a visual display. Nevertheless, we will argue that this text also represents divine enumerative description of a surprisingly creative character.

We should also add that restricting our analysis to Akkadian language texts is partly out of pragmatic considerations and partly out of theoretical ones. Sumerian divine hymns and texts with more complex narrative structure, such as *Lugal-e*, certainly do contain

¹⁰Recognizing that many, if not most divine hymns are either of short or uncertain length, our intended sense of prototypicality here is with regards to structure rather than text length.

¹¹The term 'speculative' was originally used by Alasdair Livingstone in his edition of some of these texts (Livingstone 1986: 50-51). Speculative Akkadian texts elaborate on significant aspects of human experience or the world via abstruse and often innovative symbolic correspondences based in a single conceptual domain. For instance, the syncretic Marduk hymn (CT 24, 50) expresses many of the primary functions of the chief Mesopotamian gods in terms of the guises of Marduk. One may therefore say that the speculative Akkadian texts aim at erudite, even arcane cosmological description and have something of a philosophical character.

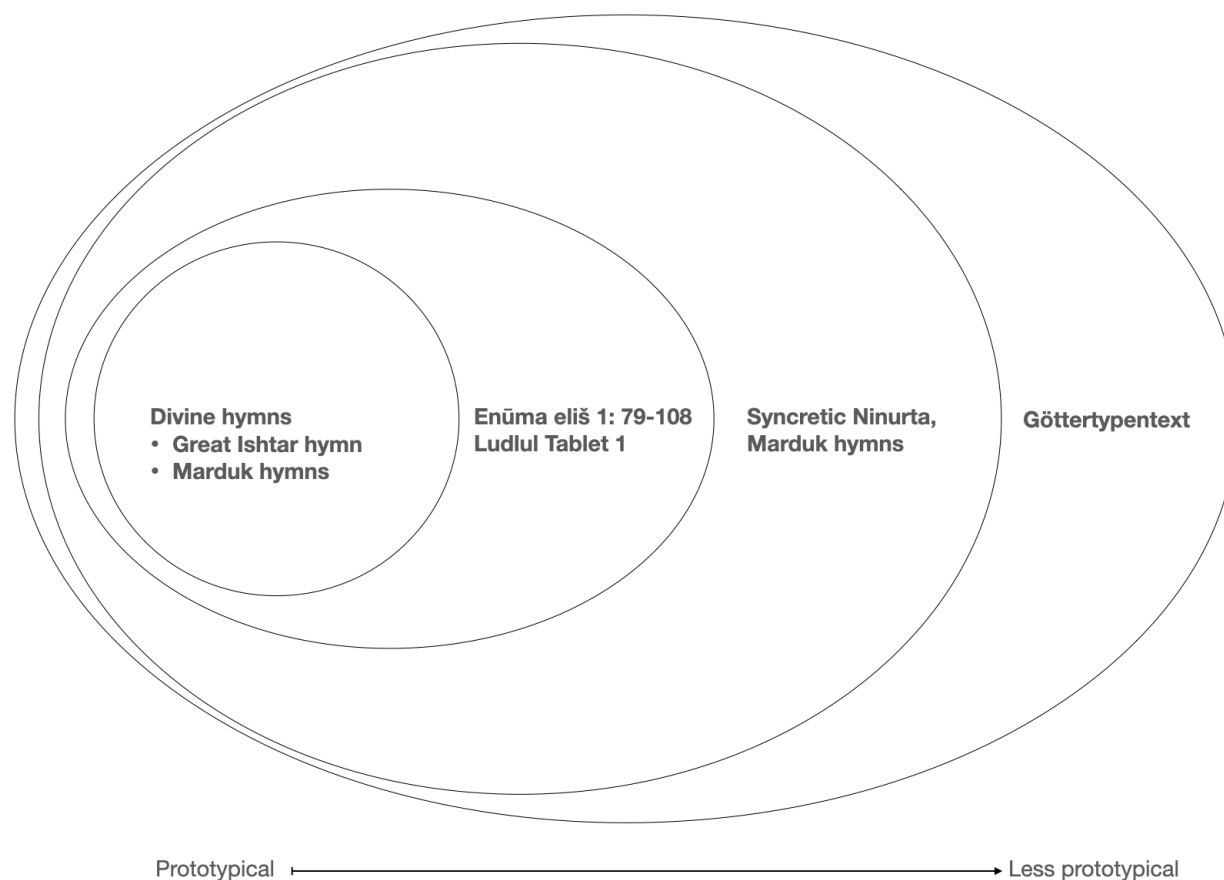


Figure 0.1: Texts or passages studied in this thesis that reflect divine enumerative description, arranged by degree of prototypicality

instances of divine enumerative description on the same basic level that their Akkadian counterparts do. However, perhaps owing to political and cultural developments that arose only in the late second and first millennium (after Sumerian had died out as the primary literary language of Mesopotamia), the Sumerian corpus is less rich than Akkadian in the syncretic and speculative treatment of divine identity that forms an important part of this thesis. Our better understanding of Akkadian grammar and lexical items also make Akkadian the more useful choice for a linguistically-oriented study of metaphor and poetic devices. In addition, the Akkadian corpus is large enough itself to fully occupy a single thesis, and while prototypical Sumerian divine hymns might illuminate some of the basic features of divine enumerative description just as well as prototypical Akkadian ones, to attempt a broader coverage of both languages would likely either duplicate illustrative examples or leave too much material to cover.

The connecting thread through most of the chapters of this thesis is Conceptual Metaphor Theory. In chapter 1 we introduce the aspects of the theory needed for later arguments and explain the capabilities as well as limitations of applying it to a field like Assyriology. In chapter 2 we argue on the basis of anthropological and cognitive evidence that (at least from the mid-second millennium onward) major Mesopotamian gods like Ishtar or Marduk are best understood via a model of personhood divided into three levels of features. We then develop this idea further, arguing that from the perspective of Conceptual Metaphor Theory the identity of Mesopotamian gods can be captured by what we call the ‘divine frame complex.’ This concept will be crucial in all later chapters.

Each subsequent chapter applies the arguments of chapter 1 and chapter 2 to a sample text or passage to illustrate one or more features of divine enumerative description as a poetic mode. These features are, in brief: the phenomena of performativity and presencing in the Great Ishtar Hymn (chapter 3), including how they are modulated by so-called convergent versus divergent rhetorical styles; the structure of metaphors for the anger of Marduk in *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* and certain Marduk hymns (chapter 4); the use of three grammatical constructions (including, as we will argue, proper names) to facilitate abstract description in the syncretic Ninurta and Marduk hymns (chapter 5); and evidence of what we will call ‘combinatorial creativity’ in the *Göttertypentext* (chapter 6).

Overall, one may think of the above chapters as case studies in how culturally-specific patterns of writing and thinking about the world structure aspects of the Akkadian scribal imagination, creating unexpected spaces in which compositional talent, depth of knowledge, and creative impulse can unfold. These case studies are also illustrations of the growing interdisciplinary application of cognitive linguistics to older fields in the humanities,¹² one which is expanding the kind of arguments we can make about how ancient peoples thought. Mapping out the consequences of this reorientation for Assyriology, in particular what we mean by ‘the Akkadian scribal imagination,’ forms the larger horizon within which this thesis should be situated.

¹²See Turner 1998.

Chapter 1

Cognitive linguistics and the study of Akkadian

In adopting a modern cognitive framework for the study of divine enumerative description in Akkadian, the first thing we must do is explain in some detail what that framework is, why we are justified in applying it to textual artifacts from a long dead civilization, and what the value is to Assyriology in adopting this perspective. We are, more or less, making arguments about how the ancient scribes of those texts thought using a modern theory of cognition developed in the modern English-speaking world. How valid is that theory even in the present? What kind of cognitive universals are we claiming, and how can we be sure they apply to the Akkadian scribes? What kind of variation are we allowing for in differences in culture and how does the theory handle them? Exactly how ‘deep’ into the mind are we going with this theory, and does that depth seem justified given how little we know about the context in which the Akkadian texts were produced?

Answering these questions is the goal of the first section of this chapter. We will argue that the approach we adopt is well-tested as a modern theory of cognition on its own terms. The theory occupies a reasonable position between the opposing poles of cultural relativism and cognitive universalism, and hence it is reasonable to use it in studying cultures that are foreign both in space and time. Ultimately, we argue that using the modern cognitive approach to the Akkadian texts is as reasonable as any other approach that Assyriologists have taken to their texts, and that in fact much is to be gained by it.

Section 1.1 introduces the philosophical framework within which this thesis is situated, indicating that the tools we will make use of are naturally motivated within a robust theory of mind. Section 1.2 introduces various parts of the theoretical apparatus, which we will generally refer to as Conceptual Metaphor Theory.¹ Finally, Section 1.3 steps back and addresses questions of cognitive universality versus cultural particularity and how they apply

¹Unless otherwise noted, when we use the term ‘metaphor’ in this thesis it will be as understood in the sense of Conceptual Metaphor Theory.

to the study of Akkadian texts.

1.1 Setting up the framework: what is embodied cognition?

The concepts we present in this chapter fit within the philosophical worldview known as **embodied cognition** (or **embodied realism**). This worldview draws on the work of the nineteenth and twentieth century phenomenologists like Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) alongside American pragmatists like John Dewey (1859-1952). In addition, it draws on related developments in psychology (especially James Gibson's theory of affordances), sociology (Ervin Goffman's theory of frames), and mid-twentieth century cognitive science (e.g. Eleanor Rosch's work on perceptual categories). Embodied cognition should be seen as a general framework within which many research disciplines work, each having their own body of empirical support and driving questions.² It can thus be seen as a general theory of mind within which the more specific linguistic concepts used by this thesis are clustered (Figure 1.1). While there is ongoing debate and research about how the various sub-branches of embodied cognition should relate to one another to produce the most empirically accurate theory of mind, this thesis touches on those issues only to a limited extent.

Embodied cognition is an understanding of reality which centers on the status of the conscious subject as a physical part of the world they interact with. It is realist in that it presumes a world external to and independent of the subject, and physicalist in that the constituting nature of that world is material rather than mental or spiritual, or a situation where the material and mental are on equal footing with each other. Embodied cognition rejects many of the tenets of Cartesianism and early twentieth century analytic philosophy which one might describe as objectivist. It rejects the idea of a subject a priori defined by the mental over and above any material instantiation of the mind. It rejects the notion of rationality as a disembodied form of reasoning that is ultimately independent of the way the thinking subject is embodied in the world. Likewise, it rejects the idea that there is a sharp line between what we call conscious and unconscious thought. It also rejects the idea that our conceptual categories of the world have a natural basis independent of our embodied relation to that world. Instead, embodied cognition sees meaning (including emotion) as generated out of a given embodied being's specific survival needs relative to its environment. The operative principle in this paradigm is that the mind effectively becomes a state of body in interaction with the world. Thus to learn more about the mind, one starts out by looking at the particularities of the body that the mind inhabits and the typical environment the body operates in. The products of the human mind (i.e. thought) are not constituted by

²See Lakoff 1987 and Lakoff and M. Johnson 1999.

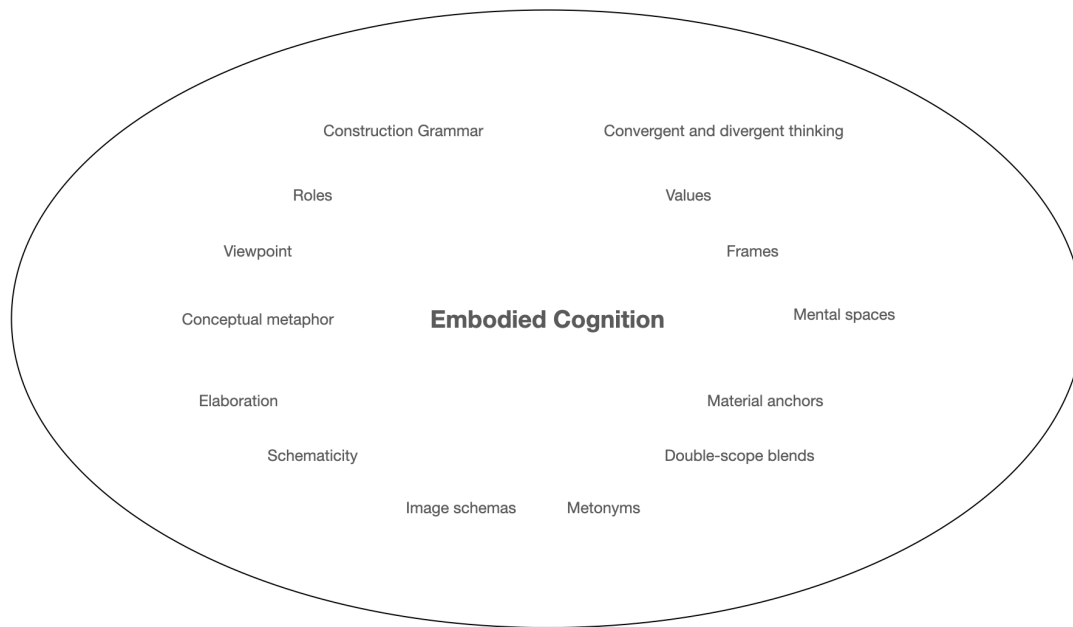


Figure 1.1: Some of the cognitive linguistic concepts used in this thesis, all developed within the framework of embodied cognition

any metaphorical ‘apperception’ of viewer-independent reality, but instead shaped by the body’s needs of and interactions with the environment as it recognizes it.

We should note that all the above does not mean that embodied cognition tries to explain away or reduce mental experience to pure physical processes. It is not really interested in explaining consciousness or mental representations in a fundamental physicalist way. Rather, it explores the classical division between mind and body to better account for how human cognition works, tying the former in a much more detailed and conditioned way to the particular characteristics of the latter. The specific physical constitution, biological needs, and early bodily experiences of the subject end up playing a crucial role in shaping more abstract concepts and conditioning the very sense in which the subject is said to understand new ideas.

Nevertheless, embodied cognition has been criticized in recent decades as unnecessarily committed to certain aspects of earlier objectivist models of cognition.³ The theory has sometimes been seen as a hold-over in the sense that it argues the higher levels of human

³In particular, the symbolic theories of cognition that drove much of the earlier twentieth century work in artificial intelligence. See Chemero 2009: Chapter 2.

cognition⁴ still operate at the level of mental representations. It is argued that these mental representations, however enriched and grounded in the thinking organism's embodied interaction with the environment, are still symbols in need of an inner homunculus to assign them meaning. If the goal of embodied cognition is to show us what the basic units of human cognition really 'are' (as opposed to simply how they work), it encounters some element of the same mind/body problem that older objectivist theories do.

Given such issues, why has this thesis chosen to work within 'mere' embodied cognition, with its hybrid commitment to both embodiment as well as mental representations, rather than more recent theories that avoid lingering criticisms of objectivism? There are a number of reasons why. One is the restricted set of phenomena we are considering. We are not saying that embodied cognition is free of problems as a general description of human cognition. It is probably true that newer theories like radical embodied cognition, which is anti-representational in nature,⁵ do give a more accurate picture of human cognition overall. But it is still the case that for the range of phenomena we are considering in this thesis, embodied cognition remains both empirically adequate and analytically more insightful than even older theories of mind. The language of mental representations is simply a necessity for analyzing the kind of phenomena we are interested in as well as for making that analysis comprehensible to a general audience. Beyond this, embodied cognition already provides a rich framework that can be fruitfully applied to Assyriology to highlight interesting phenomena, provide a more unified analysis of certain observations in the Assyriological literature, and even help Assyriology be brought into the orbit of new research trends involving the classical humanities and modern cognitive science.⁶ While there is in fact a certain amount of conceptual metaphor work being done on ancient Mesopotamia,⁷ the scope of that work is

⁴Say, those higher than the image schema (see 1.2.2).

⁵Radical embodied cognition does away with interior mental representations altogether and models both mind and world as inseparable partners engaged in a tight, reciprocal dynamic (see Thompson and Varela 2001 and Chemero 2009). This approach is sometimes described as enactivism (Nöe 2004, and Varela, Thompson, and Rosch 2016). No representations of the world, and thus no hidden homunculus, play a role in this theory. It instead models human cognition as a non-linear dynamical system somewhat akin to how weather or climate conditions are modeled (see Spivey 2007 for concrete examples.) Many of its early and most productive applications have been to 'low-level' cognitive processes such as robotics and perception-motor control dynamics (Beer 1995, Harvey et al. 1997). The essence of this approach is dynamical in the sense that it tracks whole time sequences of cognitive activity in an individual mind (e.g. as a person perceiving and reacting to an object coming towards them, or a reader scanning across a text) as well as interactive effects between two interlocutors or even multiple speakers operating in a language community. In contrast, the by now fairly developed tools of embodied cognition such as Conceptual Metaphor Theory (1.2.4) may be considered 'static' in that they were not explicitly formulated to account for things like time-course phenomena or interactive effects among multiple speakers. This is not to say embodied cognition rejects the existence of such phenomena, but the practical tools it uses are not designed to tackle them.

⁶These trends have already been making inroads in ancient culture studies. Representative works include Ortman 2000 (archaeology), Jindo 2018 (Biblical studies), Short 2016 (classics), Slingerland 2004 (early China studies), and Goldwasser 2005 (Egyptology), to say nothing of the already substantial work on modern language studies such as English.

⁷See Wiseman 2015 and Wee 2017. For older Assyriological studies of metaphor in a classical framework,

often focused on conceptions of the body in medical texts, or does not use certain newer tools like conceptual blending. The approach taken in this thesis aims to make use of embodied cognition in a more robust way.

1.2 Conceptual Metaphor Theory

If embodied cognition forms the philosophical backdrop to this thesis, the primary conceptual machinery it uses comes from a number of concepts usefully grouped under the heading of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (sometimes abbreviated CMT). It is through CMT that we will come to understand the basic building blocks behind divine enumerative description that are discussed in the following chapters. While not everything discussed in this chapter may technically be classified as a part of that theory, CMT is the analytical core around which those other concepts logically cluster. Thus we will sometimes take CMT as a cover term for the entire set of cognitive tools used in this thesis, unless clarity requires otherwise.

This section will begin with a fundamental concept in cognitive linguistics which underpins much CMT, namely frames.

1.2.1 Frames

One of the most important conceptual structures in CMT is the **frame**. Embodied cognition has made a strong argument that the way we categorize and represent the world around us is in terms of bundles of sensations, experiential associations, and prompts for action that are tightly integrated. One can best think of these bundles as whole virtual scenarios specified in our minds by, among other things, relevant roles of agents and objects, actions, emotional associations, causal relations, motor instructions, and a particular vantage point. To take the classic example of Roger Schank and Robert Abelson,⁸ most modern urban humans have internalized the RESTAURANT frame,⁹ which consists of roles for waiters, customers, and the cook, the food, money used to pay for the food, menus, and a building to do business in. We know that when we are in a restaurant there are certain procedures we must follow to reflect the restaurant experience, such as telling the person up front we want a table, asking for a menu from the waiter, only ordering things we can pay for, paying for the food after we've eaten it, etc. We understand the causal connections between the events that take place in a restaurant, such as sitting down at a clean table causes the waiter to give us a menu, which then causes us to order our food. In America, we typically pay for the food after eating it rather than before. We know that to get the waiter's attention

see Buccellati 1976 and Wasserman 2003: 99ff.

⁸Schank and Abelson 1977: 42ff.

⁹In this thesis, frame labels will be written in small capital letters. More generally, when a term is written in small capital letters we mean the concept associated with the term and not the real world referent.

we typically raise our arm or politely call to them. We also have emotional associations with what goes on in a restaurant which may depend on our individual experience, such as restaurants being pleasant places to eat and meet friends, or stressful places of business that we have to manage as a proprietor. Finally, although the RESTAURANT frame has roles for many different human actors with their own subjective viewpoints, when we envisage this frame we must take a particular perspective. It may be the viewpoint of the customer, or the cook, or the waiter. The sense of a third-person ‘neutral’ perspective may be approximated by that of a fly on the wall, or by insisting that our depiction of the scene limit itself as much as possible to inter-subjective details (thus minimizing any ‘first person’ contribution). But there can be no frame without a viewpoint nor a viewpoint that is completely objective, lacking any experiential commitment to the scene.¹⁰

Equally important, a frame works like a dynamic simulation in our mind. When we visualize the RESTAURANT frame, we actually run through the scenario in our heads based on a particular viewpoint or actor. If we imagine ourselves as the customer, we might begin by walking through the front door, then talking to the person at the front, then being led to a table, etc. If we imagine ourselves to be a random customer already seated at a table, we will watch all the action unfold from a fairly inert position. The degree of simulation is such that our sensorimotor cortex controlling our muscles actually shows some activation consistent with a person actually involved in the frame, even as our mind is very good at suppressing those signals, ensuring that we remain oblivious to them and that no detectable muscle activity occurs.¹¹ The effects of simulation extend to bodily processes associated with emotions like fear, hunger, excitement, and sadness (as most people can attest to when asked to imagine themselves eating a delicious cookie). These affective dimensions can be considered part of the viewpoint.

To represent the content of a frame visually we can draw a box filled with words that represent the important aspects of that frame (Figure 1.2).¹²

The ‘aspects’ of the frame we will often simply call **elements** or **items**. Sometimes we will denote them in prose with small block capitals. Often, however, context will make clear what we are talking about and we may dispense with this capitalization. Actions, colors of surfaces, emotions, light intensity, utterances, people, basically anything that can be conceptualized can serve as elements of a frame. In Figure 1.2, certain elements are in bold, which is a way to indicate that in whatever context the frame is being imagined (including viewpoint), those elements are particularly salient or the focus of attention for the person thinking about them. Thus when imagining the scene of a restaurant, most of us imagine most readily and strongly the waiter, customer, food, and menu.

Also note that frames can serve as elements embedded in other frames, illustrated in

¹⁰See Dancygier and Sweetser 2012: 1.

¹¹See R. Gibbs and Matlock 2008, Barsalou 2009. The activation of the sensorimotor cortex is most easily measured in cases of very simple action frames like pedaling a bicycle or walking.

¹²This diagram notation is a loose variant of that found in Sullivan 2013.

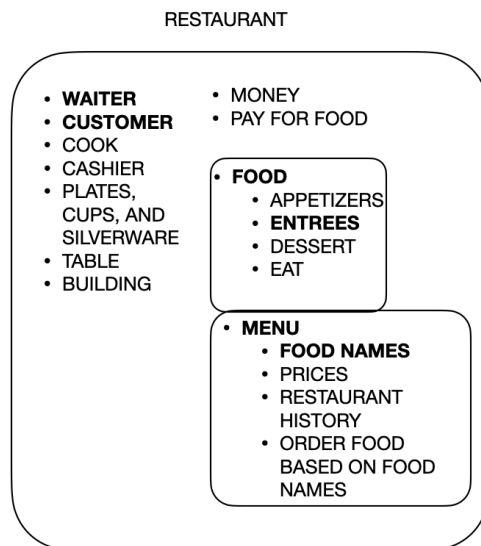


Figure 1.2: Visual representation of some aspects of the RESTAURANT frame.

Figure 1.2 by the subframes FOOD and MENU.¹³

Finally, a frame is foremost a concept and not a linguistic expression. Seeing or hearing the word *restaurant* will likely conjure up (or **evoke**) the RESTAURANT frame in our mind, but exposure to many other words might do the same (such as *waiter* or *Denny's* or *pizza*), each introducing their own viewpoints or other subtle differences. Seeing a picture of a restaurant can evoke the RESTAURANT frame, as can listening to the typical noises and chatter made in a restaurant, or even physically acting out the gestures of a restaurant cook. Note also that thinking of a particular element of a frame will sometimes cause us to imagine another frame involving that element, as in thinking of the food element of the RESTAURANT frame will likely call forth the frame EATING. Thus one should think of frames as having many different access points in the world of experience or memory, only some of which reflect the classical notion of linguistic denotation (e.g. the word *restaurant* denotes the idea of a

¹³Technically, what we have been calling the elements of a frame can, from another perspective, also be considered frames. For instance, when we think of a waiter, we do not just imagine a prototypical image of a person dressed as a waiter. We think of the actions a waiter does, how we are supposed to interact with them, whether waiters characteristically bring up positive or negative associations with us, the fact that waiters work in a restaurant, etc. Thus instead of positing two types of mental objects (frames and elements), we can posit one object (frames) viewed from two angles. For instance, we can think of frames as ultimately being ‘patched’ together using parts of many other frames. In Figure 1.2 we ‘patch’ the WAITER frame into the RESTAURANT frame by specifying the human agent in WAITER fills the role of the person in RESTAURANT who takes orders from customers, brings them their food, etc. This process of ‘patching’ can be regarded as conceptual blending (1.2.6).

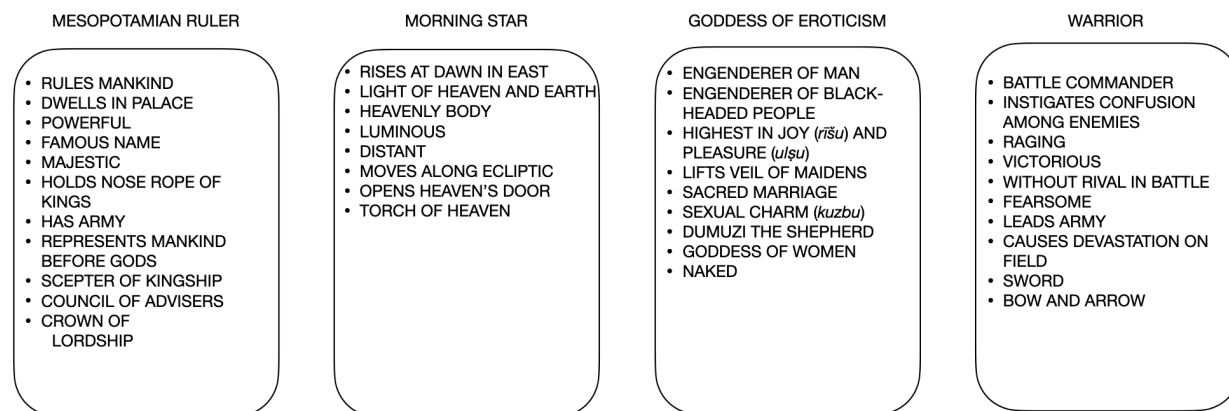


Figure 1.3: Frames representing Ishtar in the Great Ishtar Hymn

restaurant).

Another example of frames more pertinent to Assyriology is the representation of Ishtar in Akkadian hymns. As will be discussed in 2.2.3 and chapter 3, there are different ways of talking about the goddess Ishtar which are best encapsulated in the language of frames. Within the Great Ishtar Hymn, the goddess is described as (among other things) a Mesopotamian ruler, the morning star, a goddess of eroticism, and a warrior. Each of these concepts is represented by its own frame in Akkadian, and although there are many epithets in the hymn which use different wording to activate or instantiate these concepts, it is the same four frames which are always evoked (see Figure 1.3).¹⁴

The value of casting these identities of Ishtar in the language of frames is that it clearly demarcates the conceptual domains involved, distinguishing what we might call the more ‘literal’ properties of the identities from the metaphorical or emergent ones. As we will argue in later chapters, these emergent identities are a prominent trait of divine enumerative description. Although the full explanation of these statements can only be made in chapter 2, what can be said here is that frames help us to tease apart conceptual identifications often made quite habitually in a given language, highlighting what how many seemingly inherent elements of a frame actually stem from metaphor, metonymy, and blending (see 1.2.6). For example, in Figure 1.3 we do not specify that the MORNING STAR or the WARRIOR frame has an element STAR OF BATTLE (which is evoked by line 9 of the Ishtar Hymn). This is because that element arises as an aspect of Ishtar only once the MORNING STAR and WARRIOR frames are blended and new material emerges from the result. Similarly, we do not indicate that the MESOPOTAMIAN RULER frame has the element CLOTHED IN FEAR because the latter

¹⁴To say that a representation in a person’s mind is evoked or activated by a certain expression means that when the person perceives that expression, their mind engages that representation.

arises from a metaphor that requires another frame. Overall, the fact that there are many separate frames which effectively ‘generate’ Ishtar reflects the important role of conceptual combination in constructing her identity.

A few points should be kept in mind when regarding diagrams like Figure 1.2 and Figure 1.3. One is that the elements listed represent only a portion of the content of the frame. For instance, there are many more things that go into the RESTAURANT frame than what is listed in Figure 1.2, including things that have no specific term denoting them (such as the ‘person in the front’ who usually seats customers at low-end American restaurants). Equally important is that all the elements of a frame form what in psychology is called a **Gestalt**. Frames come as integral packages whose meaning is determined from the top down rather than bottom up. This is easier to see for a frame like WEEK.¹⁵ The most salient elements of the frame WEEK (meaning the time period that starts with Sunday and ends with Saturday) are the seven days of the week (Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, etc.). Yet each of the concepts of Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, etc. cannot be fully understood on their own terms apart from that of a week. Sunday is defined as being the first day of the week, Monday the second, Tuesday the third, etc. Moreover, we cannot arrive at the concept of a week by first taking the seemingly more basic concept of a day and saying that seven consecutive days make a week. The time period of Tuesday to next Tuesday is not what we mean by a week. Thus although we can say Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, etc. are elements of the frame WEEK, those elements are conceptually more complex than the macro object they participate in. Put the other way around, all of the elements SUNDAY, MONDAY, TUESDAY, etc. are conceptually inseparable from their parent frame of WEEK. When we speak of Sunday, the frame of WEEK is always conceptually tied to it in our mind.

1.2.2 Image schemas

Bringing in frames requires that we briefly discuss how they are acquired by a human being in the world, and in particular, the role of image schemes and primary metaphors in this process. These notions will become important in chapter 4, as we will use them to argue that certain emotion metaphors in *Ludlul* constitute a form of divine enumerative description. They will also become relevant in 1.3, where we address the issue of cultural relativism and CMT.

Embodied cognition states that the concepts we acquire as individuals depend on how we interact physically with the environment. Crucially related to this idea is the conception of the mind as a neural network that learns through general association. For example, when we see a hot stove and touch it with our hand, we suffer pain. The memory of this pain becomes strongly associated in our mind to the image of a hot stove. The concept of a hot stove then becomes partially constituted by the notion of pain.

¹⁵Cf. Lakoff 1987: 68ff.

The deeper consequence of this fact for CMT¹⁶ is that the mental representations (i.e. concepts) we acquire while growing up obey a dependency hierarchy determined by the most immediate, biologically crucial aspects of our early existence. These early experiences (called **primary scenes**) are responsible for the most basic elements of our conceptual repertoire, called **image schemas**. These are essentially sub-conceptual structures of the mind capturing rough contours of sensorimotor experience. They are so fundamental that they are both practically universal to all humans and occupy a kind of liminal status in our conscious awareness.¹⁷ For instance, all babies born on earth experience the effects of gravity on themselves. Their brains quite early learn to filter everything they experience in terms of a preferred direction in which things fall (and ultimately hit something called the ground). This idea of VERTICALITY is a skeletal concept in the sense that we cannot conjure up a concrete image of it in our mind (only specific things that are ‘vertical’ or falling), yet we can clearly dismiss it from our mind (for example, when imagining life on a space station). Thus VERTICALITY is a schematic kind of image¹⁸ different from the concept of DOG or even DEMOCRACY. Other examples of image schemas include CONTAINMENT, PATH, FORCE, BALANCE, CONTROL, CENTER/PERIPHERY, QUANTITY, SCALARITY, and LINK.¹⁹

Image schemas are some of the most important building blocks upon which all of our more familiar concepts are built. Any notion of DOG automatically depends on the schema of VERTICALITY (affecting which way of the dog is ‘up’, how it moves, how we measure how big it is). Any notion of the self depends on CONTAINMENT (where our physical selves are constituted by an INTERIOR that is divided from the EXTERIOR by a BOUNDARY). Any notion of directed motion relies on the all important SOURCE-PATH-GOAL schema. Because image schemas are the things which define our sense of space and motion, they are often metaphorically described as the skeleton underlying higher level concepts and frames.

This metaphor is appropriate to the degree that we are often interested in the (spatial) structural features of frames. For instance, a frame like DEPOSIT is based on the SOURCE-PATH-GOAL and CONTAINER schemas. In this metaphor, the ‘flesh’ of the frame includes perceptual details and cultural associations beyond the bare ‘physics’ of the situation constituted by the image schemas. However, as Mark Johnson has noted, physical structure

¹⁶Part of what has been called the Experiential-Correlation theory of metaphor (see M. Johnson 1987, Grady 1997, and Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 22ff).

¹⁷This claim does not conflict with the claim that image schemas are always acquired in specific cultural settings which affect how they are elaborated upon and otherwise implemented in a particular language (see Sinha 2002). Some scholars have argued for a greater role of situational acquisition of basic image schemas, where culturally-specific factors can affect the composition of so-called compound image schemas, or otherwise influence how basic image schemas pattern across the entire culture (Kimmel 2008).

¹⁸Image is taken here in the general cognitive sense of a mental representation drawing on all our perceptual modalities such as sight, smell, touch, but also sense of bodily configuration (proprioception) and internal constitution (interoception).

¹⁹There are at least a few dozen image schemas operative across all humans. See M. Johnson 1987 and Lakoff and M. Johnson 1999 for separate, non-exhaustive lists of image schemas, as well as Hampe 2008b for a comparison of various lists in the literature.

is not the only basic ingredient of our experience.²⁰ Intangible qualities like desire, positive/negative valuation, and emotion also form basic parts of frames and can be argued (as Johnson does) to be equally important to their meaning. Affective qualities are also baked into various image schemas. The SOURCE-PATH-GOAL schema necessarily includes the ideas of intentional motion and a desired destination. Thus we should remember that while the most salient aspects of frames and image schemas are usually structural features, they are not the only elements going into their constitution.

1.2.3 Primary metaphors

Alongside image schemas, Conceptual Metaphor Theory holds some of the most important building blocks of human cognition are experiential correlations that Joe Grady called **primary metaphors**.²¹ The scenarios in which these correlations are formed are then called **primary scenes**. Examples of primary metaphors include the systematic correlation between HUMAN AFFECTION and PHYSICAL WARMTH and between PHYSICAL POWER and PHYSICAL HEIGHT. Because they are mammals, when babies experience human affection it usually is accompanied with the sensation of physical warmth. In their early formative experiences, when humans feel powerful (or observe powerful people) it tends to be when they are erect, standing up, or taller than the things around them because such positions enable them to exercise power over things that are lower than them. Such metaphors are primary in that young children acquire them when they learn to disambiguate two closely related but nevertheless conceptually distinct phenomena. For instance, children will observe that the more water you pour into a given glass, the higher the water level becomes, or the more books you put on a stack, the higher the stack becomes. Such primary scenes establish a correspondence between HEIGHT and QUANTITY essential to the primary metaphor QUANTITY IS HEIGHT (*the **number** of people living in America is **going up***). Eventually children also learn that HEIGHT is not always a good cue for QUANTITY (take a cylindrical glass filled with water and pour it into another cylindrical glass with bigger base and observe how the water level is now lower), which not only further distinguishes the two domains but makes the height/quantity correspondence asymmetric. It is the identification of two distinct domains that are nevertheless strongly and asymmetrically correlated that crystallizes the metaphor in the minds of the children.²²

Furthermore, primary metaphors serve as the basis for more complicated metaphors. For example, the metaphor evoked by the phrase *climbing the corporate ladder* expresses the notion of gaining more authority in a corporation via the idea of ascending a ladder. This metaphor is an elaboration of POWER IS UP in the sense that additional conceptual details are added to the latter to get the former. Rather than the vague notion of going up, one has

²⁰M. Johnson 2008.

²¹Grady 1997 and C. Johnson 1997.

²²This fact about child development owes much to the work of Jean Piaget (1896-1980). See Piaget 1985 and Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 25.

the idea of physically climbing a ladder. Instead of the schematic distinction between high and low, one has the top rung of a ladder versus the bottom one, with graded positions of height represented by the intermediate rungs.

Other examples of primary metaphors include KNOWING IS SEEING (*I **see** what you mean*), PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS (*we have **reached** our monthly quota*), and ASSOCIATION IS CONNECTION (*these two concepts are closely **connected***).²³ Just as image schemas are the building blocks for frames, primary metaphors are the building blocks for more complicated metaphors that structure many of the concepts we deal with as adults.

It should be emphasized that primary metaphors rely on experientially-based correlation in ways that many more complex metaphors do not. Many metaphors such as ARGUMENT IS WAR arise when the more concrete source domain actually generates much of the structure of the more abstract target domain. This is possible when both source and target domain initially share some skeletal features on which to base the map. It is a reflection of the intuitive idea that metaphors allow one to ‘understand the abstract via the concrete.’ However, Grady 1999 argued that primary metaphors can be considered **correlational metaphors** in the sense that the basic domains they involve are crucially connected by experiential correlation rather than shared features. For instance, babies acquire the primary metaphor MORE IS UP because when they observe piles of objects on the ground, piles with greater heights signal bigger piles. While initially MORE and UP are conflated in young children’s minds, the children eventually learn to disentangle the correlation into separate image schemas which in turn structure abstract frames of their own (see Figure 1.4).²⁴ Because MORE and UP were image schemas originally associated via experiential correlation, we cannot say that the target domain is structured by the source domain nor that source and target domain a priori have skeletal features in common. Rather, both MORE and UP seem to be structurally simple domains without any common features, where only correlation ties them together.²⁵ Nevertheless MORE IS UP is indeed a unidirectional mapping because the underlying correlation is also one way (a concept known as cue validity). To see this, note that increasing a substance’s height is a good indicator of increasing quantity, but not vice versa (think of spreading dirt out horizontally on a concrete surface).

This notion of correlation-based metaphors is important because it will appear again in 4.1, where we discuss metaphors for emotions of the gods in Akkadian. To give a preview of the discussion, scholars like Kövecses have argued that any correlation-based metaphor A IS B arises out of an initial metonymy B FOR A, whereby either the sub-frame B or the parent frame A is generalized to be independent.²⁶ It is known in particular that there are observable behavioral and physiological correlates to experiences of anger, such as elevated blood pressure and elevated temperature, skin resistance, and muscle tension in parts of the

²³See Grady 1997: Chapter 4.

²⁴See C. Johnson 1997 for a study of this for the case involving the concept SEE.

²⁵Grady 1999: 86.

²⁶Kövecses 2008: 382, Kövecses 2020: 36ff.

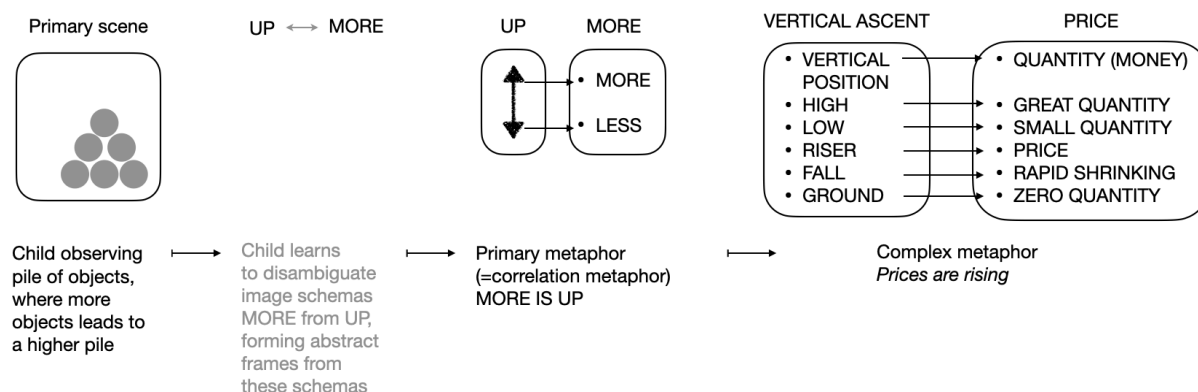


Figure 1.4: Illustration of how correlation-based metaphors are created.

body.²⁷ These experientially-basic correlates, being inter-subjective means to refer to the subjective emotion of anger, can serve as convenient cues/metonyms in various languages for the whole frame of ANGER. For instance, the English expression *he's red in the face* reflects the metonym RED FACE FOR ANGER. The frame RED FACE involves the concepts of elevated body temperature and/or energized blood flow around the face. It can then be schematized to leave out information about the body entirely, yielding frames like HEAT and HOT LIQUID IN A CONTAINER which are mostly distinct from RED FACE. The frames HEAT and HOT LIQUID IN A CONTAINER can then be specialized to various concrete frames like FIRE or BOILING LIQUID, which yield actual English metaphors like *he is burning with anger* or *he is boiling with anger*. In this selective process of abstraction and specification, metonymic conceptions for anger in English produce multiple metaphoric expressions for anger.

However in Akkadian, metaphorical expressions for anger in the gods do not follow this pattern. Akkadian chooses to externalize the metaphoric image, defining it in terms of its effect on the human target rather than the god. Thus when one says that Marduk's anger is like a flood, Marduk is not feeling the effects of the flood (compare the English metaphor *I am awash with anger*). Rather, Marduk in his anger bearing down on humans feels to those humans like a flood. This rhetorical strategy is not due to any inherent property of Akkadian, but rather cultural reasons whose nature will be discussed in 4.1.

1.2.4 Conceptual Metaphor Theory

The previous sections have introduced the ideas we now need to explain Conceptual Metaphor Theory proper. Indeed, up until now we have not actually said what a metaphor is, cognitively speaking. Understanding what we mean by metaphor will not only be crucial for

²⁷Ekman, Levenson, and Friesen 1983.

the theoretical understanding of divine enumerative description in all subsequent chapters, it will also allow us to address more concretely concerns about cultural relativism and cognitive universals in 1.3.

As a theory of language, CMT emerged from the work of a number of linguists and philosophers in the 60's and 70's including George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, and Charles Fillmore. Its classical expression can be found in Lakoff and Johnson's popular work, *Metaphors We Live By*. As a branch of cognitive linguistics, CMT sees syntax, semantics, phonology, and even parts of pragmatics as interdependent aspects of language based in experientially driven cognition. That is to say, unlike in Chomsky's generative tradition, syntax, semantics, and phonology are not divided into modules operating independently of one another, nor are those modules governed by abstract rules built into the very structure of the brain. Rather, in CMT the mind is modelled as a neural network that learns by general association. There are no special language modules found at birth, and the human ability to learn language with great facility proceeds the same way it learns other things. On the other hand, the language learner's status as an embodied agent in the world means that the syntactic, semantic, and phonological aspects of language are bundled by the mind into meaningful cognitive units based on how the agent interacts with the world. It is the degree to which a particular language learner's early experiences are similar to those around him that determine whether his linguistic categories mirror others'.

A particular consequence of the above view of language is that metaphors are no longer merely a surface aspect of language but rather are rooted in the conceptual domains that serve as the foundation of language. In CMT, metaphors are seen as mappings from a source conceptual domain to a target domain in which the conceptual relations within the source structure those of the target. A single conceptual metaphor can be expressed in various linguistic forms ultimately reflecting the same conceptual map.

A suitable illustration of conceptual metaphor can be found in Akkadian, where a king is often understood in terms of a shepherd. This metaphor is instantiated by numerous expressions in the Akkadian corpus, such as *rē'û kēnu pāqid nišišu* '(Assurbanipal) true shepherd, carer of his people' (RINAP 5/1 211 obv. 23), *sittūti...kīma šēni uza"iz...* 'I divided up the rest (of the prisoners) like sheep and goats (among my governors, etc.)' (RINAP 5/1 11 vii 6), and *nišī qereb Labnāni aburriš ušarbiš-ma* 'I (Nebuchadnezzar) caused the people in Lebanon to lie down in sweet meadows' (WBC IX, 47 - see Da Riva 2012, 62). The metaphor takes the frame of SHEPHERD, which includes elements like the shepherd, the sheep, hostile predators, perhaps a guard dog, fields for pasture, sheep-pens, a shepherd's staff and cloak, and maps it in one to one fashion to the frame of KING. Thus the shepherd is mapped to the king, the sheep to the people, hostile predators to foreign enemies, etc. See Figure 1.5.

We denote this metaphor by KING IS SHEPHERD, where the term on the left side of the expression (KING) denotes the **target domain** of the mapping and the term on the

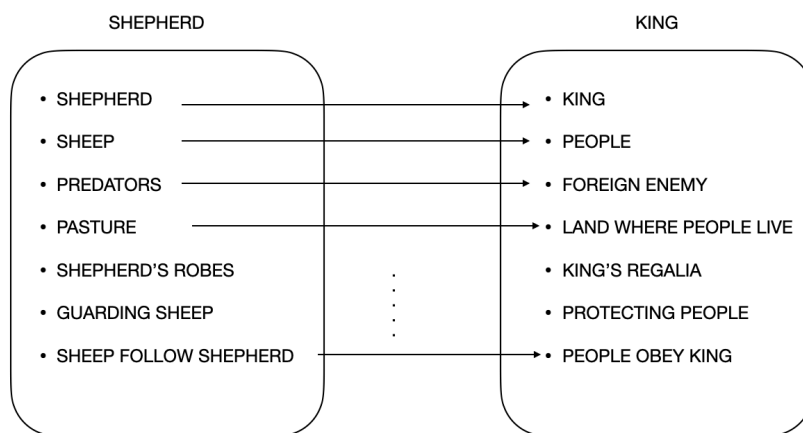


Figure 1.5: Visual depiction of the metaphor KING IS SHEPHERD

right (SHEPHERD) denotes the **source domain**.²⁸ Although we have used here the terms source domain and target domain to emphasize that a conceptual metaphor is an asymmetric mapping between two objects, in this thesis one may view them as frames. More broadly there is a certain variation in the literature about the term ‘domain’, which at times can refer to a certain conceptual structure made up of multiple frames (see 1.3.1), at times means the source or target of a conceptual metaphor, and at times has its general English usage of ‘area’ or ‘field.’²⁹ In this thesis, frames are what technically constitute the source and target of a conceptual metaphor map.

A number of important points go with this basic idea of conceptual metaphor. The first is that conceptual metaphors are structure-inducing maps. In the above example, the structure in the SHEPHERD domain is preserved under the mapping to the KING domain. The fact that a shepherd’s flock can be attacked by natural predators maps to the fact that the king’s subjects can be attacked by foreign enemies. Just as there cannot be more than one shepherd over a flock, there cannot be more than one king over his people. In general, not only must the logical entailments and image schematic relations constituting the source domain carry over to the target domain (Lakoff and Turner’s **Invariance Principle**), to a large degree these relations in fact define most of the target. In this sense metaphors differ

²⁸Note that this order is the opposite of the way most graphical depictions of metaphor follow, including Figure 1.5.

²⁹There currently exists no agreed upon technical definition among cognitive linguists for the term ‘domain’. Examples proposed in the literature include notions like ECONOMY and BODY, which seem to lack a single activity or ‘scene’ defining them (see Sullivan 2013: 24ff.). More importantly, such domains do not get mapped under metaphors. Only more specific frames related to them do (e.g. EXERCISING THE BODY, IMMUNE SYSTEM OF BODY).

both from double-scope blends (1.2.6) and similes. This structure-projecting property of metaphor is a reflection of a basic claim of embodied cognition: that our understanding of the world is based on our bodily-conditioned interaction with our environment, which is then projected into higher level abstraction by (among other things) metaphor.

Secondly, a conceptual metaphor does not necessarily map all of the elements of a source domain to the target domain. For instance, the SHEPHERD frame in Mesopotamia specifies a role for a guard dog,³⁰ but that element usually does not figure in the metaphor for kings. What source elements are included in a map depend on the structurally important elements of a frame such image schemas (but also strong valency associations like positivity or negativity), and the culturally conditioned way in which a metaphor is conventionalized. Such a conventionalized map can, nevertheless, be modified under creative elaboration.³¹

Better understanding the subtleties involved with what gets mapped under a metaphor will help shed light on the degree to which metaphors are culturally dependent, an issue we will address more explicitly in 1.3. Let us illustrate with a common English example. When we use the metaphor THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS (*his theory has a solid foundation, he bulldozed that argument quickly*), we normally do not use metaphorical expressions involving the bricks and mortar of a building. This has to do foremost with the fact that (in English) THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS is conventionally structured by the composition of two simpler metaphors, ABSTRACT ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE and PERSISTENCE IS REMAINING ERECT.³² Similarly, the domain of BUILDINGS is partly structured by the frames PHYSICAL STRUCTURE and REMAINING ERECT. In these two metaphors, concepts like the foundation of an erected structure, the fact that higher structural elements depend on lower ones but not vice versa, and whether the structure remains upright are all natural elements to map onto the target. But bricks and mortar are not necessary elements of the source domains PHYSICAL STRUCTURE and REMAINING ERECT. The fact that we prefer to conceive of the metaphor using the whole source domain BUILDING arises from the fact that English has common words like *building* and *tower* that evoke that frame but no convenient words to express only PHYSICAL STRUCTURE and REMAINING ERECT. Nevertheless, if a person understands the conventional map behind THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS he can creatively elaborate upon it with the phrase *these facts are the brick and mortar of my theory* (Lakoff and M. Johnson 1980: 53). Such a statement brings in the additional frame within the source domain of the mapping, namely CONSTRUCTING BUILDING. This frame includes the bricks and mortar of a building, allowing us to creatively elaborate on the original metaphor. A similar process stands behind the creative metaphor *his theory has thousands of little rooms and long, winding corridors* (meaning roughly that there are many aspects and ideas in

³⁰Cf. the shepherd's dog (ur nam-sipa-da-zu) which is mentioned in *Dumuzi's Dream* (ETCSL 1.4.3 95). See also Pascal Attinger's edition (updated 2019) at <https://zenodo.org/record/2599639#.YOaUfhNucTU> (accessed 9/5/2023).

³¹For instance, the phrase *the king's shepherd dog* might lead one to imagine a minister of war or general who uses force to protect and coerce the king's subjects.

³²Grady 1997, Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 53ff.

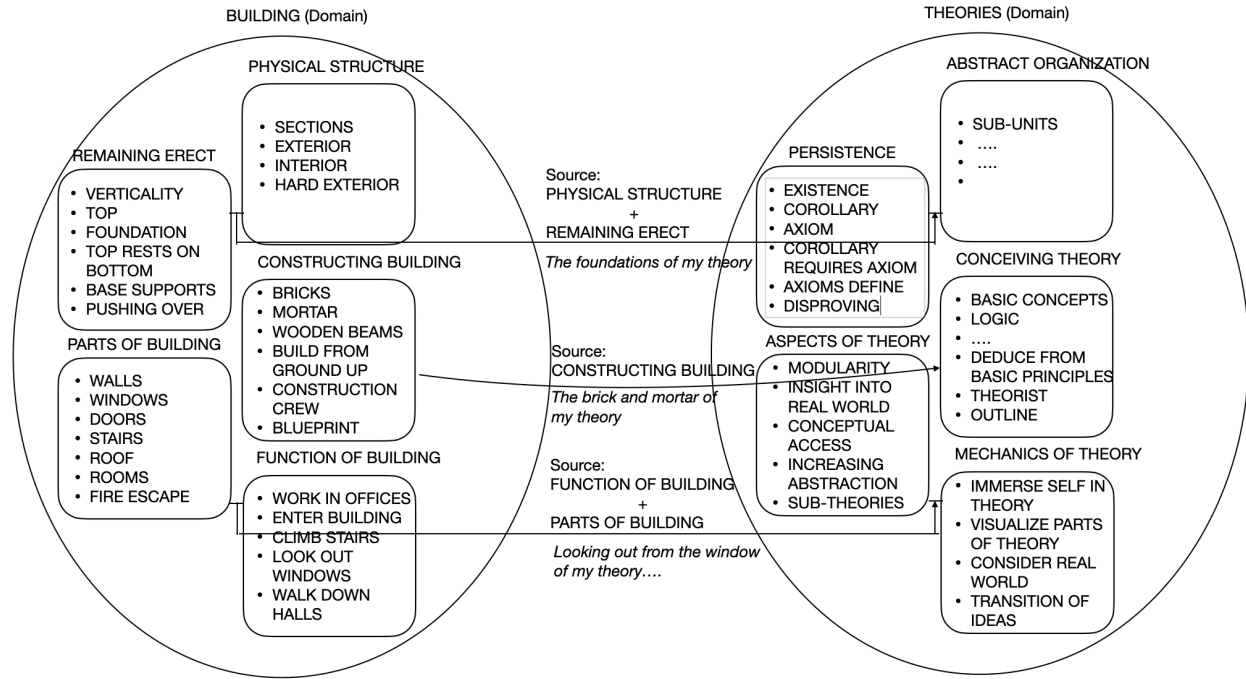


Figure 1.6: Frames within the domain of BUILDING, and some associated metaphors

the theory that one can be mentally preoccupied with and which afford a vantage on the broader world). This metaphor recruits the frames PARTS OF BUILDING and FUNCTION OF BUILDING (see Figure 1.6). Although we have not yet specified how these new frames get integrated with the original frames in their respective source and target domains (see 1.2.6), overall we may say that both the above metaphors elaborate upon the source domain of a conventionalized metaphor. This is, in fact, one of the most common ways culturally specific or poetic metaphors are created.³³

This more sophisticated view of source and target domains allows us to incorporate some of the cultural or creative variation in metaphor production within the general claims of the theory itself. We can say that while generic level metaphors like THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS are built upon fairly universal primary metaphors, actual metaphorical language (whether conventional or creative) involves a fair amount of selective profiling or de-emphasis of a common cognitive domain. This fits in with the embodied approach to language, which holds that much of the variation in language results from different emphases in viewpoint, choice of what to background or foreground, and how lexical items like prepositions partition a shared set of spatial relations.³⁴ This idea of selective profiling and combination as a major

³³Musolf 2001, Kövecses 2005: 226, Kövecses 2010a.

³⁴Dancygier and Sweetser 2012.

generator of cultural and creative variation in metaphor will be taken up in more detail in 1.3, where we address the applicability of CMT to the study of Akkadian texts.

1.2.5 Mental spaces

The analysis of the metaphor THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS has indicated the need for a more sophisticated way of thinking about frames, in particular how to combine them consistently under metaphor mapping. In this section we will discuss how cognitive linguistics has addressed this challenge. We do so not only to fill a gap in the previous section's discussion of primary metaphor. More importantly, we will see in all subsequent chapters that the more sophisticated approach to frames we introduce in this section and 1.2.6 will, in fact, play an important role in understanding why divine enumerative description is a 'combinatorially creative' mechanism. It is not just in the enumeration of individual frames that the poetic mode functions, but also their combination.

Giving a proper explanation of this method of combining frames requires the introduction of a bit more theoretical formalism. We do this not only to keep our discussion faithful to the sources that developed the idea, but also because this formalism will be used in chapter 5 where we discuss the cognitive structure of the syncretic Ninurta and Marduk hymns.

While Conceptual Metaphor Theory in the time of Lakoff's *Metaphors We Live By* was effectively based on mappings between single frames, substantial advances in metaphor analysis came with observation that many metaphors are in fact a more complicated structure known as a **conceptual blend**. In order to understand conceptual blends, one first needs to understand **mental spaces**. Developed primarily by Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner,³⁵ mental spaces were designed to reflect the way language users conceptualize the scenes they are describing as a discourse unfolds. True to the spirit of embodied cognition, mental spaces capture the fact that we make sense of utterances by trying to assign frame-oriented roles to the entities being mentioned and that the mental scenes we construct from those utterances are structured by analogy.³⁶ Many of our more complex linguistic utterances involve not just one scene, but multiple scenes sharing complicated grammatical, epistemological, and pragmatic relations to one another. Because of the way they have been formulated, mental spaces have provided an elegant account for constructions such as conditionals (*if...then*) and propositional attitude verbs (*I believe that...*).³⁷

Fauconnier and Turner describe mental spaces as "small conceptual packets constructed as we think and talk, for purposes of local understanding and action."³⁸ In this thesis we can effectively think of them as locally constructed scenes (where 'local' means delimited to a particular part of the discourse) involving specific actors, actions, a particular viewpoint, emotional attitudes, etc. Mental spaces differ from frames in that frames tend to be more

³⁵See e.g. Turner and Fauconnier 1995, Fauconnier and Turner 2002.

³⁶Fauconnier 1997: 18.

³⁷See e.g. Sweetser 1990 and Dancygier and Sweetser 2005.

³⁸Fauconnier and Turner 2002: 40.

schematic and lack features like specific time and place markers. Frames also tend to be conventional, ‘pre-given’ objects stored in the mind, upon which mental spaces draw for structure.

One of the ways we will make use of mental spaces in this thesis is how they allow us to distinguish **roles** from **values** when interpreting linguistic expressions. In order to understand roles and values, we will use an example from modern English. Take the following sentence uttered in 2021: *In 1945, the president of the United States was a baby*. This sentence has two readings. The sensible reading is that *the president* refers to the person Joe Biden. The fact that Joe Biden occupies the role of the president (in 2021) matters only so far as it functions as a label for the person. We say that Joe Biden is the **value** for the **role** of president. It is then true that in 1945 Joe Biden (born in 1943) was a baby. On the other hand, the other reading for the sentence is that *the president* refers to the role of the president and not any particular individual (i.e. value). The sentence then means in 1945, the person serving as president at that time (Truman) was a baby. This is absurd.

What mental spaces make clear is that the speaker of the above sentence is actually constructing two mental spaces: one for 2021 and one for 1945. The difference in readings follows from how one maps elements of the 2021 space to the 1945 one. This can be illustrated visually (Figure 1.7).

The circles in Figure 1.7 represent individual mental spaces. In both readings of *In 1945, the president was a baby*, the speaker initially constructs the 2021 space using the contextual knowledge that this year is 2021. He also knows to build the 1945 space because he hears the phrase *in 1945* (thus we say *in 1945* is a **constructor** for the 1945 space). In the 2021 space, J represents the value of Joe Biden, while President() represents the role of the present. The fact that in 2021 Joe Biden has the role of president is represented by President(J).

The two separate readings for the sentence stem from the different ways the 1945 space is constructed and how it relates to the 2021 space. In the sensible reading the speaker knows that *the president* refers to the value J = Joe Biden and not the role President(). He posits an entity J' in the 1945 space which is the correlate of J in the 2021 space. This equation is indicated by the line connecting J with J'. The 1945 space has another role Baby() which is assigned the value J'. Altogether this means that the entity J' in 1945 that is the correlate of J = Joe Biden in 2021 is a baby. The non-sensible reading posits a role President'() in 1945 that is analogous to the role of president in 2021, but says that in 1945 the role of president was equivalent to the role of a baby.

It is important to realize that grammatical constructions of all sorts can serve as constructors for new mental spaces, not just individual lexical items. In the above example, the phrase *in 1945* is an example of the grammatical construction ‘in X’, where X is a time or place. This construction is a constructor signaling to the listener to construct a derivative mental space representing time or space X and possibly connect entities (like Joe Biden) in that new space to the pre-existing **base space** defined by the discourse.³⁹

³⁹The base space of a discourse (measured relative to a particular participant in the discourse) represents

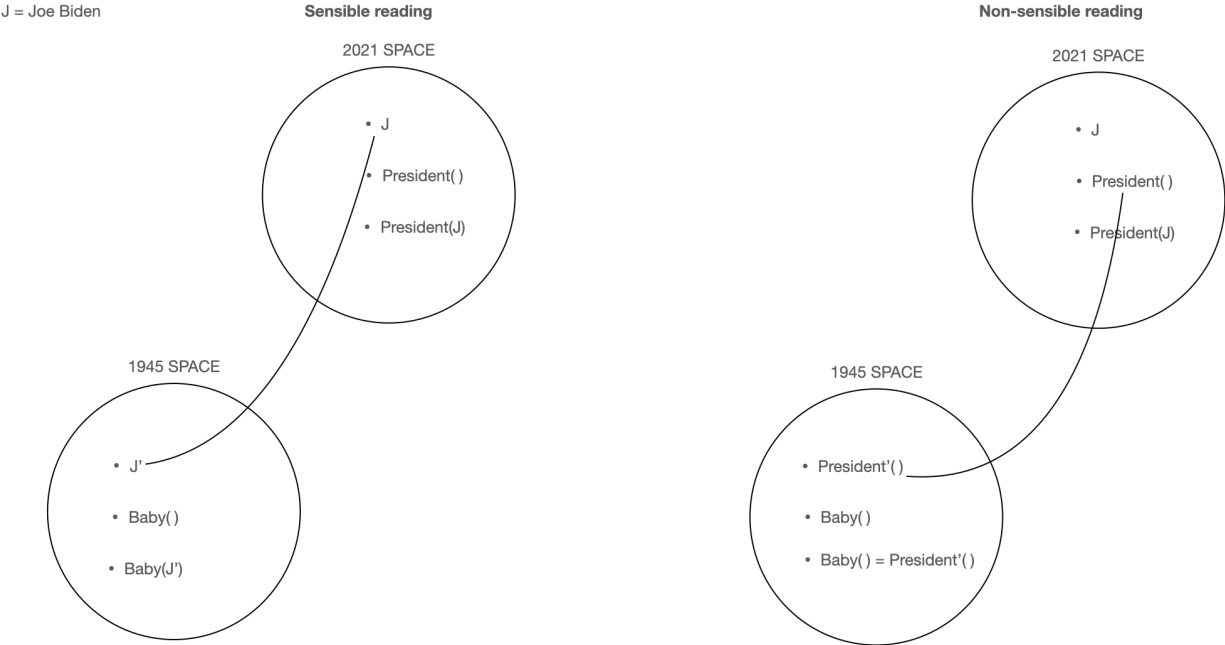


Figure 1.7: Depiction using mental spaces for the two interpretations of *In 1945, the president was a baby*.

This fact will be further explored in 5.2. There we will discuss how the Syncretic Marduk Hymn CT 24, 50 is entirely based around the Akkadian construction of the form ‘X Y ša Z’ (where X, Y, and Z are noun phrases). This version of the so-called XYZ construction evokes two parallel mental spaces involving the referents of X, Y, Z, and an implicit fourth term. These spaces are not evoked simply by the individual items X, Y, and Z, but those items in the particular grammatical arrangement specified by the XYZ construction. The fact that grammatical constructions are the operative principle in the Syncretic Marduk Hymn will be part of our larger argument that divine enumerative description gives the Akkadian scribe creative flexibility in conceiving of Mesopotamian divinities in ‘different ways,’ where the key variation lies both in how those divinities are interpreted as frames and how those frames combine with others. Ultimately, it is the implicit grammatical structures within divine

the way that participant views the world Here and Now. It is the background against which new information in the discourse is evaluated by that participant. Note that in certain contexts one can have embedded base spaces, as when a group of individuals gather to role-play in a fantasy world for entertainment. In this case, the embedded base space for those individuals is the fantasy world with its particular laws, characters, time, and space. It is embedded in the larger (base) space given by those individuals in their normal identities as part of the real world.

enumerative description, and not just the vocabulary, that help make it a poetic modality.

Although mental spaces were not originally designed as a formal part of Lakoff's theory of conceptual metaphor theory, they are now often considered a different way of phrasing CMT.⁴⁰ Thus in this thesis, references to CMT will assume the inclusion of mental spaces and other concepts dependent on them (such as blending).

1.2.6 Blending

Mental spaces serve as the fundamental inputs to the phenomenon known as conceptual blending. The notion of blending is an essential element in our treatment of the Mesopotamian conception of divinity and how it relates to divine enumerative description. More than anything else, blending is the mechanism by which divine enumerative description can combine basic images and concepts in interesting, 'poetic' ways.

To introduce this concept, one should realize that although conceptual metaphors (along with metonymy) account for a substantial portion of figurative language use, many of the most interesting examples of figurative language involve more complicated combinations of two domains where neither one fundamentally structures the other. This fact can be illustrated by a common example found in the literature.⁴¹ The figure of the Grim Reaper in medieval culture represents a combination of items from two distinct frames, that of grain cultivation and that of Christian death and burial rituals. From the *GRAIN CULTIVATION* frame this figure draws on the human farmer, the sickle, and the grain. Grain starts out as a sprout and grows until it is ripe, at which point it is to be cut down. The sickle is used to cut the grain. From the *MEDIEVAL DEATH* frame the figure draws on the skeleton of a person who dies and the robes of a medieval monk who performs burial rites for the dead. In general a person starts life young and vigorous, but as they grow they eventually die (from various causes).

These two frames are represented by two mental spaces serving as **input spaces** to the blend (Figure 1.8). Input space 1 represents the *GRAIN CULTIVATION* frame while Input space 2 represents the *MEDIEVAL DEATH* frame. There is a structural analogy between the grain and person, cutting of the grain and dying of the person, and farmer and death as an abstract cause of dying. These correspondences are represented by the horizontal lines between the input spaces. The fact that there is shared structure between these elements is also expressed by the connections to the **Generic space** above, which represents the shared schematic content of the input spaces. The results of equating the grain and person, cutting of grain and dying of the person etc. are expressed below in the **Output space**.

What makes the Grim Reaper a blend, and not a metaphor of 'death as grain cultivation,' is the **compression** of metonyms in the two input spaces which give the Grim Reaper his signature appearance. In the *GRAIN CULTIVATION* frame (Input space 1), the sickle is a

⁴⁰See Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: Chapter 4, and Kövecses 2020.

⁴¹Adapted from Fauconnier and Turner 2002: 292ff. and Turner and Fauconnier 2012.

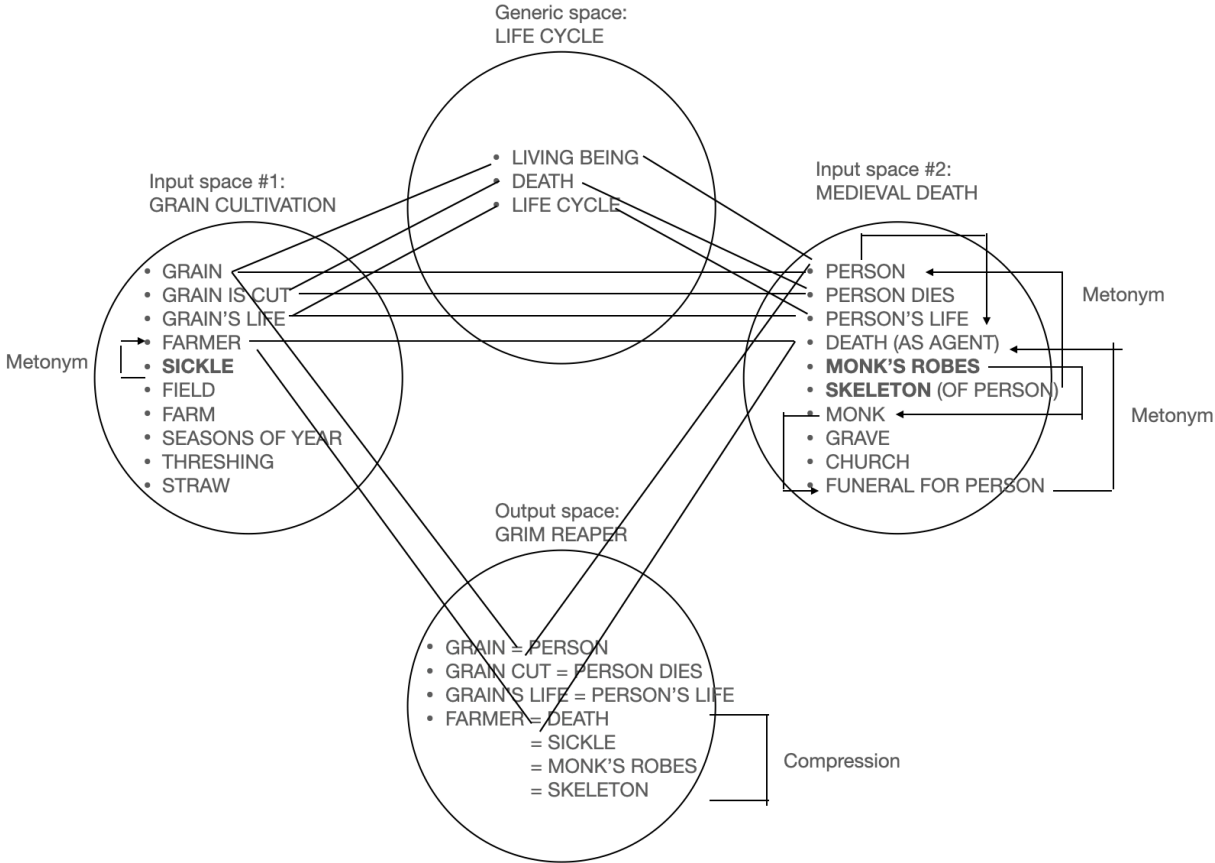


Figure 1.8: Visual depiction of blend for the Grim Reaper.

characteristic metonym for the farmer. When we see a sickle, we think of a farmer. In the MEDIEVAL DEATH frame (Input space 2), the skeleton is a characteristic metonym for a person who has died, which is metonymic for death as an abstract cause. The monk's robes, on the other hand, are metonymic for the monk, who is metonymic for the funeral of a dead person, which in turn is metonymic for death. All of these metonyms are collapsed into representing aspects of the farmer = death (i.e. the Grim Reaper) in the blend output.

One can see that the term 'blend' is appropriate for this construction as it combines elements from two different frames, neither one of which structures the other completely (as in a metaphor). While both GRAIN CULTIVATION and MEDIEVAL DEATH share partial structure of a LIFE CYCLE (for grain and people, respectively), other aspects of the frames are not parallel. There is nothing in the MEDIEVAL DEATH frame corresponding to the field, seasons of the year, threshing, the straw, etc. Similarly, there is nothing in the GRAIN CULTIVATION frame corresponding to the monk, or funeral, or grave for the dead person.

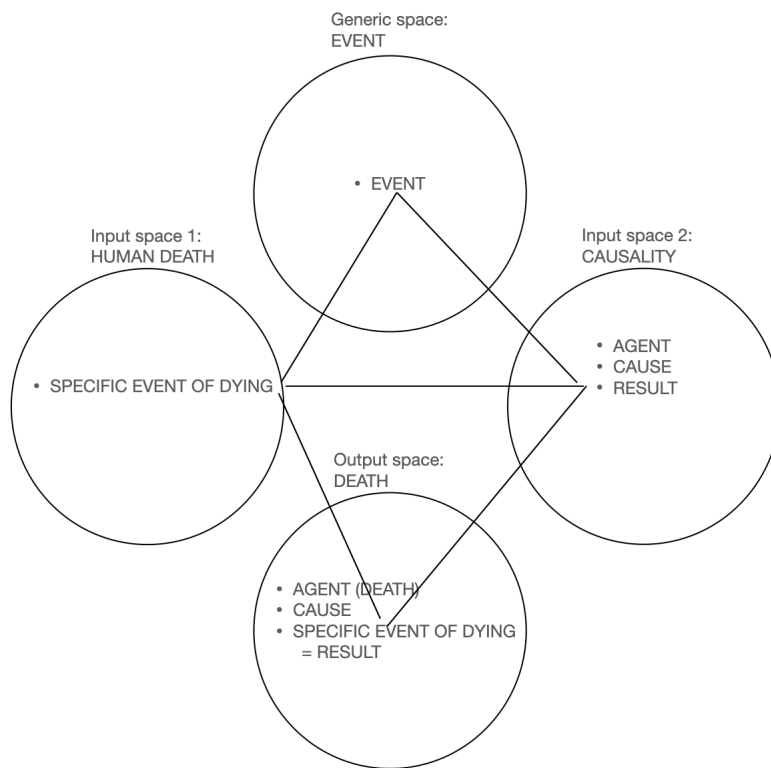


Figure 1.9: The blend for death as an abstract cause (cf. Fauconnier and Turner 2002: 292)

On a more subtle level, while the sickle in the *GRAIN CULTIVATION* frame is the instrument by which the farmer causes the grain to be cut and die, there is no corresponding instrument in the *MEDIEVAL DEATH* frame by which death kills a generic person. This is ultimately because the notion of death as an entity is itself a concept invented (via a blend) so that we may speak of all the various specific events of individuals dying as being caused by a singular agent. In literal terms, all we have in the world are people dying from specific causes (heart attacks, car accidents, murder, etc.). We can use the generic frame of *CAUSALITY* to specify an agent who stands in an abstract *CAUSE* relation to a person's death, but this abstract causal relation says nothing about an instrument, or if one prefers, the instrument is practically identical with the cause itself in a metonymic sense (Figure 1.9).

It is typical of blends that their visual representation consists of salient metonyms drawn from both input domains. Indeed, all so-called *Mischwesen* or hybrid beings in ancient cultures such as centaurs or harpies are conceptual blends, where the physical components of the compound creature are meant to evoke background traits of the original animals they point to. Put more theoretically, the metonyms are cues to the viewer to evoke the separate frames that the metonyms point to. *Mischwesen* are in fact prototypical examples

of blends in the sense that these metonymic ‘pointers’ to the associated input frames are fused in a single body. For example the CENTAUR is a blend of the HORSE domain and HUMAN domain, where the waist of the human is identified with the mid-section of a horse. Within the CENTAUR blend, the upper section of the human body is a metonym for the HUMAN domain (including all the typical things a human does or is associated with) while the lower section of a horse body is a metonym for the HORSE domain (which includes all the things typically associated with horses). In other words, the CENTAUR domain is not just about the body of the centaur. It includes affordances, affective associations, and other elements determined by the input spaces which are not visually presented in the centaur’s body. For *Mischwesen* in general, the maximally salient elements of the cognitive domain are maximally recognizable *qua* metonyms as embodiments of those domains. Multiple domains are compressed into a compact blend that is most effectively evoked by a composite being, and whose input domains are most effectively evoked by the body parts making up that composite being.

This property of blending will be taken up in chapter 6, when we argue that the description of the *Mischwesen* in the *Göttertypentext* is a form of divine enumerative description where combinatorial creativity plays an important role. More than just presenting a series of creatures with mixed body parts, the *Göttertypentext* shows how a scribe practicing divine enumerative description can have a constrained poetic freedom in choosing what images are evoked in the reader of the text. This combinatorial creativity, while evident only implicitly, crucially relies on the way metonyms function in blends.

A few other things should be noted here about blends. At least in formal terms,⁴² conceptual metaphors can be expressed as particularly simple types of conceptual blends. In this case one input space is the source domain, the other the target domain. The output space then represents the metaphor map itself. One can then speak of metaphors as **single scope blends**, whereas the Grim Reaper example is a **double scope blend** (since both input spaces contribute structure to the output).⁴³ While metaphors are usually discussed in terms of frames, blends are usually discussed in terms of mental spaces (whose contents ultimately are frames). Because mental spaces can incorporate notions like tense (i.e. time relative to act of discourse), spatial deixis, and general viewpoint, they can combine in blends to achieve subtle discourse effects. On the other hand, whereas mental spaces are objects often constructed ‘on the fly’ during discourse, frames are usually seen as more schematic, stored representations that generate mental spaces during discourse (see 1.3.1). However, for practical purposes in this thesis we can usually switch between talking about frames or mental spaces as the inputs to blends, at least if we are not concerned about issues specific

⁴²Originating in slightly different frameworks (see Fauconnier and Lakoff 2009), Conceptual Metaphor Theory and conceptual blending aim at somewhat different phenomena and levels of cognition. Being based in mental spaces, conceptual blending is often seen as describing what happens at discourse time whereas CMT focuses on stored mental representations. See 1.3.1 and R. Gibbs 2009, as well as Fauconnier and Lakoff 2009.

⁴³These terms describing types of blends were coined by Fauconnier. See Fauconnier and Turner 2002.

to mental spaces.⁴⁴

Second, blends are often about partially collapsing distinctions so that items from different domains can be juxtaposed or overlap. The nature of the metonymic references involved can be fairly complex. In the Grim Reaper, the indirect metonymy from the monk's robes to the monk to the funeral to death was compressed into the metonym of monk's robes for death, because the intermediate references are not essential to evoking the MEDIEVAL DEATH domain. The Grim Reaper with his robes holds a sickle that represents the GRAIN CULTIVATION domain, allowing one to easily (if only implicitly) comprehend that two different domains are represented in one person.

Third, in double scope blends the input spaces partially conflict with each other. This was illustrated in the Grim Reaper blend for the sickle, as well as the fact that there are no parallels for things like the funeral in the MEDIEVAL DEATH frame or threshing in the GRAIN CULTIVATION frame. One should thus not imagine that double scope blends are entirely 'consistent' in the sense that the frames they evoke perfectly align with one another. Rather, they are a way of partially identifying multiple frames in a common (embodied) locus that can, so to speak, present different concrete guises depending on which metonymic pointers the conceptualizer focuses on.

1.3 Why are we justified in applying Conceptual Metaphor Theory to the study of Akkadian?

Assyriologists may naturally want to know, from a methodological standpoint, to what degree we are justified in applying CMT to the study of Akkadian texts. CMT and related tools make specific claims about how people think in connection with how they speak. It was originally developed through the study of modern languages (particularly English) with the benefit of native speaker intuitions, a large corpus of examples, a cultural framework shared with its subjects of study, and empirical support from neurological and psychological studies.⁴⁵ On the other hand, Akkadian is a long dead language, spoken and written in the often unfamiliar cultural framework of ancient Mesopotamia. Moreover, Assyriologists' main point of contact with the language is tablets which are often only loosely datable and whose context of composition and use are often largely unknown. How much can really be extrapolated from texts in this situation?

⁴⁴Cf. Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 78.

⁴⁵This historical fact, however, does not reflect the current status of CMT within linguistics and related fields. Since its original conception decades ago, CMT has been fruitfully applied to a variety of languages such as Japanese (Miyamasu 2020), Arabic (Jumaah et al. 2020), Aymara (Núñez and Sweetser 2006), and American Sign Language (Taub 2001). The range within which CMT has been tested has also come to include dead languages, such as Latin (Buccheri et al. 2021), Biblical Hebrew (Lancaster 2021), and classical Chinese (Yu 2009).

This section tries to make the case that CMT and cognitive linguistics in general are valid tools to use in Assyriology. The discussion can usefully be divided into two sections. One section deals with the different levels of cognition that CMT posits to be in play with respect to metaphor. This might be called a vertical cognitive issue, where ‘low’ level aspects of metaphor are more rooted in biologically inherent cognitive processes while ‘high’ level ones deal with culturally conditioned factors. This section is important because it makes clear the position that cultural variation occupies within CMT, arguing that the former is not a contradiction to the latter. The second part of the discussion is a kind of elaboration of this last point. It deals with different kinds of cultural influence on metaphor, taking cultural metaphors for anger as an illustrative example. While the first section discusses metaphor variation in terms of verticality (‘high’ versus ‘low’ aspects of cognition), the second section uses the image of ‘horizontal’ in the sense that it deals with metaphor variation as a parametric ‘spread’ across various cultures.

The choice of the terms ‘vertical’ and ‘horizontal’ is not accidental. To a certain degree they characterize the role of cognitive linguistics itself among other academic disciplines related to cultural studies and history. One may say that cognitive linguistics occupies a middle rung on the ladder connecting more foundational sciences like neuroscience with those dealing with social groups, such as sociolinguistics and anthropology.⁴⁶ One may take this as an analogy for how this thesis situates itself relative to the sub-fields of Assyriology, i.e. somewhere between core philology and broad social theorizing. Hopefully it will become clear that from this perspective CMT can offer numerous insights to Assyriology.

1.3.1 The vertical direction: CMT and cognitive depth

When speaking of the workings of the mind, the metaphor of ‘cognitive depth’ is meant to help give a picture of the functional dependence and ontological reducibility of the things we take the mind to be working with. Thus neural circuits are made up of individual neurons, the ability to recognize a human face is dependent on the ability to judge edges and shadows, etc. In a parallel fashion, cognitive depth can be used to describe the asymmetric relation of certain sciences to one another. For instance, biology is a ‘higher’ science than chemistry because, simply on a conceptual level, biology depends on the principles and findings of chemistry to define its object of study and to do its work.

Both of these senses of cognitive depth will be helpful in our discussion of CMT and cultural relativism. They will help us to speak more accurately about the various kinds of ‘context’ that come into play when considering language in society and history, and thus specify the ways in which CMT is a valid tool for use in Assyriology.

⁴⁶For a thorough discussion of the vertical direction as it applies to the humanities, see Slingerland 2008: Chapter 5.

What we mean by ‘context’

Let us start with what CMT says about the individual mind. Since the early formulation of CMT represented in Lakoff and M. Johnson 1980, it has been increasingly recognized that what we generally mean by ‘context’ affects both the interpretation and use of metaphor in actual human discourse. Although one may posit that abstract structures like frames and the maps between them are represented in the brain and can be evoked by perceptual cues (e.g. spoken language, visual icons), metaphor use in actual discourse shows more variation and subtlety than can be captured solely by a general frame-based analysis. Culture itself is commonly taken to be a very general contextual factor influencing metaphor use, but there are effects even at the level of the discourse itself, including whether a related metaphor has been used previously in the discourse, how one reacts to an interlocutor, rhetorical and creative strategies, the physical setting of the discourse, and bodily dynamics of the speaker.⁴⁷ Overall, metaphor studies based on corpus surveys⁴⁸ and psycholinguistic studies of real-time language use⁴⁹ seem to show that certain aspects of how ‘real metaphors’ behave in actual language examples go against the idea of hard-wired structures in the brain.

While critics of CMT have been right to point out these issues, they do not fundamentally undermine either the embodied cognition approach to CMT or its analytical claims about metaphor structure.⁵⁰ Rather, they signal a need for extensions and complications of the theory taking into account the above types of context (discourse effects, situational and bodily dynamics, and rhetorical choices) as well as a more refined analysis of certain types of metaphor. The latter area has been helped by the development of conceptual blending theory (1.2.6), which can be taken as a modified version of CMT.⁵¹ Conceptual blending has elucidated the structure of certain putative examples of metaphor cited by critics as problematic for CMT, showing how those examples should be actually taken as blends rather than straight-forward metaphors.⁵²

The main issue is thus how ‘context’ complicates rather than undermines CMT. Apart from the dynamical systems approach, scholars have spent effort clarifying and expanding the vertical levels of cognitive organization in CMT that define its basic notion of maps between static cognitive structures. In doing so, they contribute to a version of CMT that can handle issues of relative context. The best example of this is Kövecses’ recent approach to conceptual metaphor under what he calls ‘Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory.’⁵³ Seeking to unify the sometimes confusing and conflicting terminology in the literature, Kövecses proposes a

⁴⁷For contextual affects arising in dialogue, see Cameron 2007, R. W. Gibbs and Cameron 2008, and Cameron et al. 2009. For physical setting, body dynamics, and creative effects, see Kövecses 2005, Kövecses 2010a, and Kövecses 2015: Chapter 7.

⁴⁸Crisp et al. 2007.

⁴⁹For summary of the experiments, see R. Gibbs 2011: 544ff.

⁵⁰See Kövecses 2008 for a lengthy address to CMT critics about the issue of context.

⁵¹Cf. Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 73ff.

⁵²For an example, see Sullivan and Sweetser 2010.

⁵³Kövecses 2020.

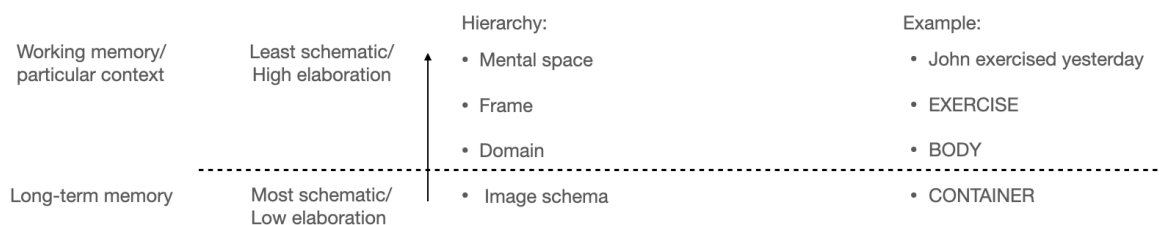


Figure 1.10: Kövecses' hierarchy of cognitive structures for Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory (adapted from Kövecses 2020: 52)

hierarchy of four cognitive structures that can preserve much of CMT's approach to frames and image schemas while also finding a place for real world dynamical context (Figure 1.10).

This hierarchy (which is largely followed by Dancygier and Sweetser 2014), relates the conceptual structures of image schema, domain, frame, and mental space according to their degree of schematicity. Recall that schematicity is the degree to which a structure lacks 'specification' along the various dimensions that define it, or alternatively how much detail elaborates that structure. In Kövecses' hierarchy the most schematic structures are the image schemas, which are largely sub-conceptual.

While on the whole, keeping track of the technical difference between a domain and a frame is not too important in this thesis, here a more important point is being made. Although there is no universal consensus on what distinguishes a domain from a frame,⁵⁴ as a rule of thumb one may say that a domain is a very schematic concept abstracted from any particular scene (such as BODY), while a frame has roles, actions, and relations that elaborate on some aspect of a domain to indicate a scene or event (such as Exercise).⁵⁵ Alternatively, one may think of a domain as being composed of multiple frames which highlight various aspects of it. Thus from the domain of BODY we can isolate the frames EXERCISE, DIGESTION, REPRODUCTION, etc.

Room for discourse context and situation is largely afforded by the highest (i.e. most elaborate) level in Figure 1.10, that of the mental space. In Kövecses' approach, mental spaces are constructed online (i.e. in working memory) as a discourse unfolds. Such a structure thus takes into account specific time, place, actors, as well as many other contextual factors that have been cited as shortcomings of classic CMT. One can see here that defining mental spaces as dynamically constructed objects in specific language situations allows frames to be specified as a part of long-term memory, and thus reflect the more schematic properties of metaphor.

⁵⁴See Cienki 2007. In general, there is no consensus on the technical definition of a domain itself.

⁵⁵Cf. Kövecses 2020: 54.

It can be the case that there is little structural elaboration undertaken when one instantiates (i.e. makes an instance of) a frame into a mental space, beyond the assignment of specific roles, actions, and relations. For instance, if a speaker invokes the RESTAURANT frame and constructs a mental space based on it to tell his friend about his experience at a restaurant the night before, the discourse context may not require much elaboration of the scene beyond talking about the specific waiter, food, and bill, nor may the speaker be assuming an ironic, creative, or otherwise marked use of the RESTAURANT frame.

On the other hand, the exact shape and context of a linguistic utterance generating the mental space may serve to elicit a non-conventional frame within the governing domain. Here the mental space plays a more crucial role. We can understand how this works by returning to a metaphor we discussed earlier, namely THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS (cf. Figure 1.6). Phrases like *his theory has thousands of little rooms and long, winding corridors*⁵⁶ and *we are delighted that Germany's unification takes place under the European roof*⁵⁷ evoke non-conventional metaphors because building components like corridors, rooms, and roofs are not typically featured in the conventional metaphor THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS. The conventional metaphor is based on frames within the BUILDING domain specifying either the process of building or the building's structural integrity.⁵⁸ Instead, when the listener of the above phrases hears the special terms *corridors*, *rooms*, or *roof*, he takes the structural correspondences already established via the source domain BUILDING (where the building foundation corresponds to the theory's basic principles, etc.) and dynamically includes those unconventional items.⁵⁹ This requires frames like PARTS OF BUILDINGS and FUNCTIONS OF BUILDINGS that are unconventional in terms of metaphorical usage but common enough on their own terms (see Figure 1.11). When the mental space tracking the discourse context is being dynamically constructed, marked context may lead it to activate an unconventional frame over a conventional one. Alternatively, the fact that the mental space is being dynamically constructed can lead it to effectively form a novel frame as a result of conceptual blending (Figure 1.12).⁶⁰

Kövecses' Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory thus offers a kind of 'bottom-up' approach to the issue of unconventional metaphor structure, showing how low-order structures like image schemas and domains feed into novel metaphor interpretation. Roughly speaking, aspects of interpretation at the frame level and below can be said to be fairly static, ready to be deployed in different, contextually dependent ways at the level of mental spaces. This means that it is at the level of mental spaces that discourse-related influences on metaphor interpretation become the most relevant. For example, Kövecses discusses a sentence from a USA TODAY article dealing with the survivors of Hurricane Katrina in 2005.⁶¹ The sentence

⁵⁶Lakoff and M. Johnson 1980: 53.

⁵⁷Musolff 2001: 220.

⁵⁸See Grady 1997: 37ff. and Kövecses 2020: 59ff.

⁵⁹Kövecses 2005: 226.

⁶⁰Cf. Kövecses 2020: 65.

⁶¹Analyzed in Kövecses 2015: 103 and Kövecses 2020: 155.

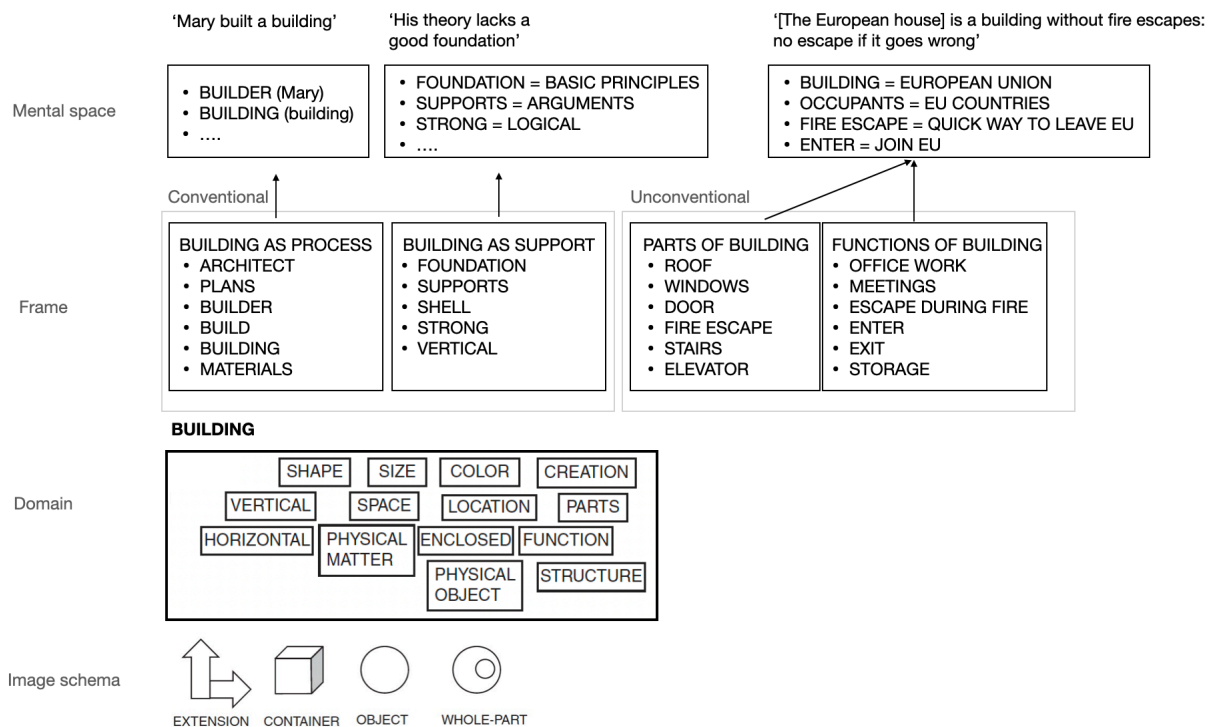


Figure 1.11: Illustration of conventional and unconventional metaphor construction in Kövecses' hierarchy (adapted from Kövecses 2020: 66)

reads

The 2005 hurricane **capsized** Domino's life, though he's loath to confess any inconvenience or misery outside of missing his social circle...⁶²

Kövecses observes that the basic metaphor evoked here is LIFE IS A (SEA) JOURNEY. Yet the use of the verb *capsize* is unconventional for that metaphor, which often uses expressions like *bumpy journey* or *obstacle to progress*. The image of a ship sunk by a sea storm is influenced, Kövecses argues, by the immediate physical context of the scene depicted, namely a hurricane which literally capsized many boats off the coast of New Orleans. Without taking into account this context it would be difficult to explain why the verb *capsize* was used for the conventional metaphor LIFE IS A (SEA) JOURNEY. This issue is resolved by positing an unconventional frame of a boat sailing somewhere and capsizing in a hurricane, which is an elaboration of the conventional frame of a boat generally traveling at sea. Somewhat similar

⁶²From USA TODAY, 2007, September 21, Section 6B (with my emphases).

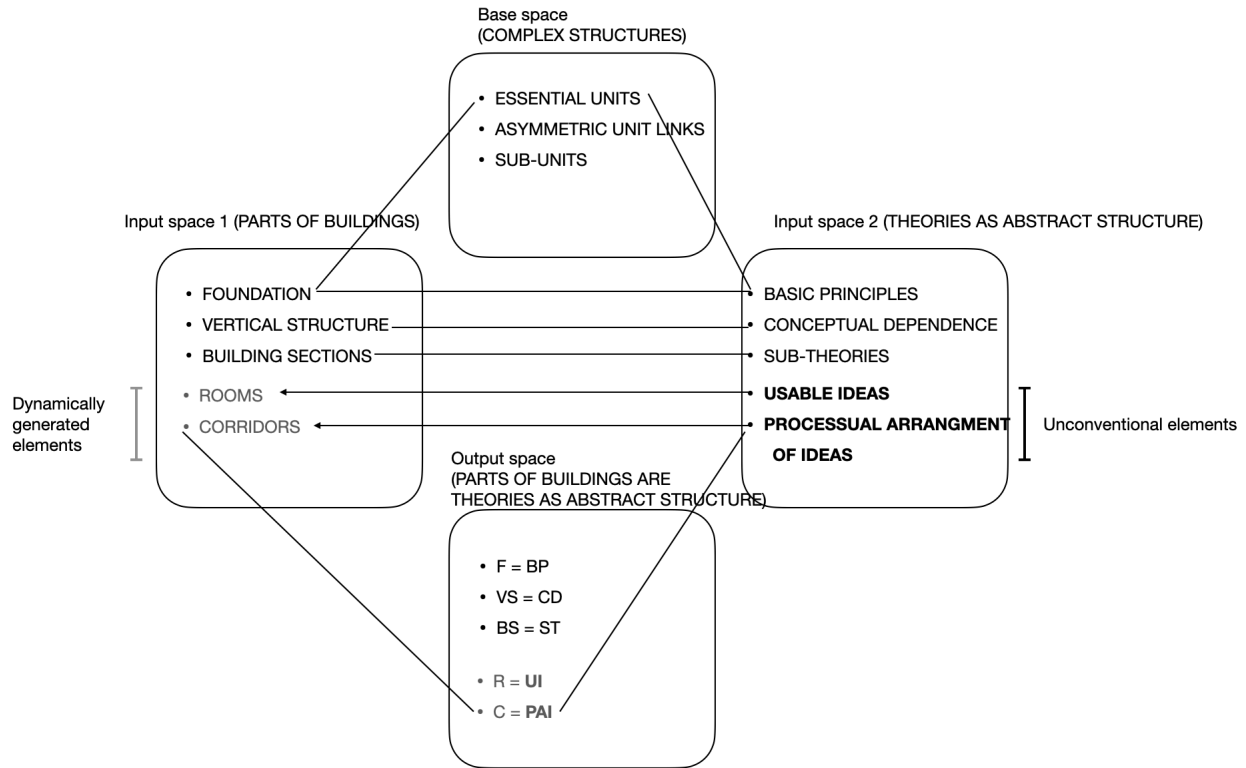


Figure 1.12: Dynamically constructed blend for *his theory has thousands of little rooms and long, winding corridors*

to the process illustrated in Figure 1.11, the discourse context of the above sentence makes salient elements of the SEA domain belonging to the unconventional frame, which in turn makes salient the word *capsize* at the level of the mental space.

This same approach can account for places where linguistic context not only influences which keywords are used to elicit a metaphor, but also the interpretation of those keywords. The following selection from a newspaper article illustrates this:

When the Electoral Commission came to make its choice between referring the case to the police and taking no action it was this defence, described by an authoritative source as showing “contempt” for the law, which helped to tilt the balance — and Mr. Hain — over the edge. (*The Times* Friday January 25, 2008, News 7)

Kövecses argues that the metaphorical expression *tilt the balance over the edge* provides the context and motivation for the second expression *tilt Mr. Hain over the edge*. His

reasoning is as follows:⁶³ the conceptual metaphor governing the first expression (about the commission's final decision) is CERTAINTY IS LACK OF BALANCE, which is a conventional metaphor based on the primary scene of physical scales precariously balanced against one another. The second metaphor (about Mr. Hain's loss of reason) is the less conventional metaphor LOSS OF RATIONAL CONTROL IS LOSS OF PHYSICAL CONTROL. The second metaphor is motivated by the fact that the verb *tilt* typically evokes the image of an imbalanced vertical structure falling to one side (such as scales). However, this metaphor takes advantage of the fact that the same verb can describe the more unusual scene of a human tilting over and falling down into, say, a deep hole. Thus as a reader of the above passage is constructing the mental space corresponding to what reads, the first expression *tilt the balance over the edge* initially primes the conventional metaphor. Upon encountering the second expression, the priming of the conventional metaphor makes accessible the unconventional one (because both involve the verb *tilt*). Discourse context ultimately activates the unconventional metaphor to complete the mental space.

The above two examples illustrate how Kövecses' Extended Metaphor Theory and its vertical hierarchy can accommodate discourse context. However, other context-related issues have been invoked as problematic for CMT, including the speaker's personal knowledge base, his knowledge of the knowledge base of the addressee, and his knowledge of the specific entities playing a role in the metaphor.⁶⁴ Broad cultural factors can also influence metaphor usage patterns beyond a more basic, shared set of primary metaphors. Thus Annette Kolodny observed that before the twentieth century American men and women differed in their choice of metaphors to describe frontier life.⁶⁵ Men tended to speak of the frontier as virgin land to be taken while women spoke of it as a garden to be cultivated. Frank Boers and Murielle Demecheleer have argued that metaphors about HAT and SHIP are more productive in English than in French.⁶⁶

Yet as Raymond Gibbs points out, the above issues should be seen as complications for CMT or areas where the theory needs to be supplemented by other frameworks, rather than invalidation of the theory itself.⁶⁷ Kövecses, in turn, has described the issue as a competition between the pressure of embodiment and the pressure of context.⁶⁸ If the principle of embodiment (i.e. embodied cognition) argues for universal cognitive structures and processes, the principle of context argues for the particularities of local culture. Sometimes these competing pressures lead to fairly conventional or universal metaphor usage, while other times highly creative or unusual ones. What is not being seriously challenged, however, is the applicability of CMT to cognitive levels ranging from image schema to frame. The empirical evidence and explanatory power of the theory is too robust. What should be kept in mind

⁶³Kövecses 2010a: 677.

⁶⁴See Kövecses 2010a for a discussion of these issues with examples.

⁶⁵Kolodny 1975 and Kolodny 1984.

⁶⁶Boers and Demecheleer 2001.

⁶⁷R. Gibbs 2011: 556.

⁶⁸Kövecses 2008.

is the scale of linguistic analysis one is aiming at, as more local processes such as lexically evoked metaphor are the bread and butter of CMT, on top of which higher order pragmatic or other contextual effects should be considered.

This informal dividing line at the level of frames has relevance for the degree to which CMT can be applied to Assyriological work. Effectively, there is no reason why CMT stands at any more a disadvantage for an interpretation of the texts than any other approach provided one believes we have the ability to interpret the ‘low-order’ linguistic structures. This is ultimately because CMT is not a free-floating theory of metaphor, but rather sits embedded in an empirically validated theory of general language and cognition that relativist criticisms have not succeeded in discrediting. It is true that the study of the ancient cuneiform sources is often hampered by a lack of knowledge of the many things that accompany the text itself. We often have no biographical information on the scribes who composed various texts. Did a certain word have a special significance for him? Did his personal background give the meaning he imparted to the text a certain ironic air? We can also often only make general guesses about the local cultural context (i.e. physical, temporal, and social occasion) of a given text’s composition. Was the text meant to be read aloud or be performed in a temple? Sometimes texts are fragmentary, making large scale discourse analysis difficult. All this unsurprisingly presents a mixed picture as far as the case for CMT in Assyriology is concerned, but it roughly follows the accepted boundaries of textual interpretation in Assyriology precisely because the discipline has traditionally been so philological in its approach. Do we believe we can understand the typical meanings of the individual words or small phrases in a text? Do we believe we understand Akkadian grammar? That already is quite enough for CMT to work with at the level of frames. On the one hand, if no one knows the performance context of a text, what we lose are those effects primarily operating at the higher discourse level of the mental space level of cognition. If we are blind to a temporally or geographically specific way that readers of a text took a particular metaphorical expression (much like the example about Hurricane Katrina above), that is likely not just a problem for CMT. It is a problem for anyone wanting to make sense of the text. Linguistic analyses of a text drawing on CMT or similar theories can in fact prove their usefulness by more clearly justifying interpretive intuitions in a text based on cognitive principles rather than vague individual preference.

1.3.2 The status of cultural metaphors

The previous sections have discussed relativist criticisms of CMT from the perspective of the individual mind. Yet there is another approach relativist criticism may take that should be addressed. While embodied cognition argues that similar primary scenes lead to similar cognitive structures in a conceptualizer, many metaphors seem to be limited to a particular culture or community (which can be defined by language). These we call **cultural metaphors**. Given that they are not so easily seen as things resulting from the interaction of the conceptualizer with their environment in a primary scene, one can question how cultural

metaphors should be defined and whether it makes a categorical difference to the structure of a cultural metaphor when such an object is found in the heads of all the members of a society as opposed to a single brain. In this section we will argue that as far as the ontological question goes, we can in fact define such metaphors. The more concrete question of how culture and cognition contribute to the content of cultural metaphors we will address afterwards.

Taking a cue from cognitive science, anthropologists have proposed the notion of a **cultural model** as the thing which links culture in so far as it resides ‘in the head’. This is the cognitive aspect of culture which sits alongside culture as defined by collective social structures and actions. A cultural model can roughly be defined as a mental representation that is shared by members of a culture for the purposes of letting those members smoothly interact with each other in some domain.⁶⁹ Examples of cultural models in American culture include courtship leading to marriage, having a conversation over the phone, how boys and girls dress to go to school, and going to eat at a restaurant. What it means for this mental representation to be shared among members of a culture is to say not only that the ‘same’ representation is found in the heads of all the members, but that the model comes with what has variously been called ‘joint attention’, ‘joint commitment’, or ‘collective intentionality.’⁷⁰ Roughly speaking, collective intentionality occurs when all the members of a group individually focus on the same thing and are aware that all the other members are focusing on that thing ‘as a group’. It is not enough to say that all the individuals focus on the same thing or even that all the individuals are aware all the others are focusing on it. There must be mutual understanding of a shared script among all the members, with common recognition of the roles assigned to each member or to various objects in the environment. When any individual fails to enact their designated behavior the entire script is felt to break down among the other members.

To illustrate using an example of Searle’s,⁷¹ all the members of a football team know that for a given play they have a specific role that is coordinated with others. If the team is executing a pass play and an individual has the role of blocking the defensive end, he may as a matter of individual intentionality think, ‘I am blocking the defensive end.’ But this is different from the collectively intentional thought, ‘We (as a team) are making a pass play.’ Thus the individual members of the team can have certain intentions particular to them while also sharing in a group intention.

One can see how the above cultural models of courtship, having a phone conversation etc. require collective intentionality. One can also see how with collective intentionality cultural models maintain one foot in the mind of the individual via a certain mental representation as well as in the social and physical environment. The public side of a cultural model can be called a ‘social fact’ in the sense that it is presumed by the individual (but not proven)

⁶⁹See Bennardo and De Munck 2013: 3, Shore 1996: 45ff.

⁷⁰See e.g. Searle 1996, Tomasello 2008, and Gilbert 2011.

⁷¹Searle 1996: 38.

to be a representation held by all the other members of society, and that if doubt about its being shared were to crop up among the various members, the efficacy of the cultural model would vanish. As Bennardo and de Munck put it,

The collective representation — that is, culture or the cultural model — does not and indeed cannot exist *per se* as a purely collective representation, except as a construct of the researcher. There is no “it” to be found. Each of us thus has an individual collective representation that is not identical to anyone else’s, due to our own experiences, partial understandings, personality quirks, and so forth. Yet, it matches well enough in social circumstances to establish a belief in a singular collective representation that mediates relations among members of a group.’ (Bennardo and De Munck 2013: 33)

One can see on the one hand how cultural metaphors or cultural frames (i.e. frames defined and operative within a given culture) can be considered cultural models. Their existence as mental representations in an individual mind is a basic assertion of CMT. To the degree that they specify a culturally specific script involving various agents and roles, they reflect collective intentionality. One could also integrate the understanding of universal cognitive metaphors and frames into cultural models by simply viewing them as operative within the shared substrate of all human cultures.

This gives us the answer to the question raised in the beginning about the ontological status of a cultural metaphor. It is effectively a conceptual metaphor in the heads of all the members of the community, where each member believes that all the other members know that same metaphor and where the scenes constituting it can be simulated under collective intentionality.

Given that humans think of culture in general the same way they do its various cultural models (as a social fact shared among all individual members of a society without hard proof),⁷² a certain transparency should be allowed in the discussion of the cultural frames and metaphors in this thesis between the individual perspective and the inter-subjective (or ‘social’) one. The tools of CMT technically yield conclusions for the individual mind. But provided our knowledge of the cultural context of a given figurative expression is robust enough, we can also speak of those conclusions as cultural traits, understanding that while the representations are always in individual minds, they can figuratively be seen as an object owned by the group as a whole.

1.3.3 The horizontal direction: cultural diversity versus cognitive universality

We began section 1.3 by breaking down the issue of CMT as a tool of cultural and linguistic analysis into two figurative aspects. The ‘vertical direction’ concerned at what

⁷²See Bennardo and De Munck 2013: 33ff.

level(s) in human cognition CMT applies and how what we vaguely referred to as ‘context’ should be factored into that theory. Having argued in 1.3.2 that culturally specific conceptual metaphors can be coherently defined, we now proceed to address the degree to which CMT can be applied to them. Here we appeal to the image of the horizontal direction as a way to discuss the question of cultural variation in relation to cognition. More specifically we ask: to what degree can a theory initially formulated with regards to modern English hold for other languages and cultures? In answering this question, we will preview some of the ideas in chapter 4 regarding how divine enumerative description can represent the emotions of the gods.

We will argue that cultural variation in metaphor often arises in the modification or elaboration of metaphors mapping widely shared cognitive domains. While universal embodied experience provides a common set of cognitive domains for specific cultures to draw on, those domains are often elaborated by different cultures in ways that can make the resulting metaphors seeming heterogeneous.

As discussed in 1.3.2, in this thesis ‘culture’ is understood primarily in cognitive anthropological terms, i.e. as a set of shared understandings characteristic of a given social group.⁷³ The ‘understandings’ are cultural models, which are cognitive frames that, in so far as they involve group action, come with a sense of collective intentionality. However, we should also add that because cultural models are defined in the framework of embodied cognition, they also have an important material dimension in the form of physical artifacts, places, and actions that are required to make the models function smoothly. For instance, the cultural model of a soccer match requires the soccer ball, goal posts, a suitable field, the ability of the players to kick and run, etc.

According to this definition, frames, metaphors, and blends can be considered cultural models making up a part of a given culture. But how widespread are the various models among humans, and how deeply does conceptual metaphor characterize their formation? One may get a sense of the answer to the latter question by considering recent views on human evolution. There are numerous arguments by anthropologists and cognitive linguists that the cognitive power provided by conceptual blending was integral to the very development of complex culture among *Homo sapiens* approximately 50,000 years ago.⁷⁴ One of the leading versions of this school of thought has been argued extensively by Michael Tomasello, who rejects the popular idea that language itself was the catalyst for culture or that it was the direct outcome of evolution in the human brain and vocal apparatus. Rather, both language and complex culture were the development of collective intentionality, which itself developed as a evolutionary advantage in a cooperative social environment.⁷⁵ In this view, symbolic thinking such as conceptual metaphor and blending were part and parcel of the development of early human culture and language, and given a certain set of shared image schemas and

⁷³Strauss and Quinn 1997: 6ff., Kövecses 2005: 2.

⁷⁴See Fauconnier and Turner 2002: 183-187.

⁷⁵Tomasello 2008, Tomasello 2014, and Tomasello 2019.

primary scenes among humans (for example, warmth and intimacy, or height and power), it is not surprising to find various basic metaphors operating in all cultures even as they are usually not recognized as metaphors at all.

More interesting is the first question about the issue of how the products of these common cognitive processes are distributed across various cultures. These questions have been extensively studied by more recent work of Zoltán Kövecses, who has researched many of the ways that metaphor manifests itself between the competing pressure of embodiment and the pressure of context and culture.⁷⁶ As a first approximation, one may say that while the principle of embodiment provides all cultures with a common stock of image schemas, primary metaphors, and domains, how those basic units are combined, elaborated, modified, and profiled often depends on historical and cultural factors. More simply put, CMT can provide **motivating** reasons for why a given culture has a particular metaphor or seems impoverished in a given form of expression, but it can rarely give a full, deterministic explanation.

To get a sense of the kinds of variation and universality in metaphor that occurs across cultures, we will discuss one of the better documented examples in the literature having to do with the conception of anger.⁷⁷

We said above that different cultures often utilize the same conceptual domains as the source and target for conceptual metaphors, but profile or elaborate on those domains in different ways. One well-documented example are metaphors used for anger. On the one hand, there are languages such as Tsou (an Austronesian language spoken in Taiwan) that only marginally use metaphor or metonymy to express emotions. Huang 2002 observes that in Tsou emotion can only be expressed by a verb. Because the language is almost totally devoid of deverbal nouns (e.g. English *hatred* < *to hate*), Tsou cannot form the large family of metaphors for emotion found in languages like English (e.g. *he was boiling with rage*). Instead, more figurative expressions involving emotion are expressed grammatically involving verbal prefixes.⁷⁸

More typical, however, are languages that choose various source domains to metaphorically express anger. English frequently conceives of anger as a hot fluid contained in the body (e.g. *he was boiling with rage* and *he blew a gasket*). In Chinese, anger is conceived as a gas called *qi* contained within a pressurized container. Yet unlike English, the *qi* is not necessarily heated and the container is usually a particular body part such as the heart.⁷⁹

⁷⁶See e.g. Kövecses 2005, Kövecses 2015, and Kövecses 2020.

⁷⁷Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 162-182 provide a more extensive discussion of various cross-linguistic metaphors, including conceptions of time. Their conclusions support what is argued here, namely that there are a number of experiential domains which, in terms of the lower end of the cognitive hierarchy, speakers of the world's various languages seem to conceptualize the same way (e.g. image schemas). However, cultural variation can lead to higher order structures within those domains (such as frames) showing variation, which in turn yields differently structured metaphorical maps between those frames.

⁷⁸Huang 2002: 175ff.

⁷⁹Thus the expression *tā xīnzhōng yǒu qì* 'his heart has *qi*' = 'he is angry'. See King 2006, Yu 1995, and Kövecses 2010b: 201.

Both the English and Chinese metaphors are rooted in the source domain FLUID/GAS IN A CONTAINER but elaborated in different ways. For English, the metaphor is ANGER IS A HOT (PRESSURIZED) FLUID IN THE BODY while for Chinese it is ANGER IS A PRESSURIZED GAS IN A BODY PART.

What is interesting in the above case is that we are fairly certain what cultural context motivated these two different metaphors in ways that go beyond shared embodied experience. Although both cases involve a common correlation between anger and body heat (cf. 1.2.3), this relation is not specific enough to motivate either anger as a hot liquid or a pressurized gas.

For the English case, in the classical west the prevailing theory of emotions was based on the concept of the four humours (phlegm, black bile, yellow bile, and blood) which circulated in the body and regulated various functions. Yellow bile in particular was responsible for anger or angry personalities. Geeraerts and Grondelaers have presented arguments for how the theory of humours motivates the particular metaphor of anger as a hot fluid in the body.⁸⁰ They observe that the theory specifically rests on the effect of liquids (not gases or solids), and that in order to make liquid produce more pressure on its surrounding container, it must become hotter. Moreover, the fact that one speaks of one's blood boiling rather than one's yellow bile boiling may stem from the fact that in the four humours theory blood also carries the other three humours around the body, so that boiling blood would also boil yellow bile.⁸¹

On the other hand, Ning Yu has shown that in Chinese the relevant cultural theories for anger are those of Yin/Yang and the Five Phases (earth, metal, air, water, and wood).⁸² In particular, the fact that anger (which is associated on physiological grounds with heat) is conceived of as a gas seems based on the stipulation in the Five Phases theory that *qi* naturally pairs with fire/heat, whereas water and other liquids are considered cold. For gases, pressure becomes the more salient quality by which the substance affects its container.⁸³ The fact that individual body parts are the containers for angry *qi* rather than the body as a whole also stems from the Five Phases theory. Not only are specific organs dominated by one of the five phases, but the causal relations among the five phases are mapped onto the organs in a way that reflects Chinese understanding of inter-organ and whole-body processes.⁸⁴

One can see in the above discussion of English and Chinese illustrates how culturally specific metaphors reflect the pressures of both universal embodiment and specific culture. The English and Chinese metaphors for anger are based in common metonymic experience (BODY HEAT FOR ANGER) plus the primary metaphor THE BODY IS A CONTAINER.⁸⁵ Both English and Chinese (as a matter of universal cognitive processes) combine these two maps

⁸⁰Geeraerts and Grondelaers 1995.

⁸¹Geeraerts and Grondelaers 1995: 164.

⁸²Yu 1995.

⁸³Yu 1995: 82.

⁸⁴See Yu 1995: 83ff. for the details of this correspondence.

⁸⁵Lakoff 1987: 380ff., Kövecses 2010b: 197, Kövecses 2015: 157.

into the metaphor ANGER IS HEATED SUBSTANCE IN A CONTAINER. From then on, however, culturally specific factors influence how the base metaphor is elaborated and profiled into ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN THE BODY (for English) and ANGER IS A PRESSURIZED GAS IN A BODY PART (for Chinese).

Not only can different languages choose different elaborations and profiles of the same source domain when constructing their metaphors, they can have similar variations in the target domain. The cultural models for anger in Japanese, Akkadian, Ilongot, and Ifaluk involve important distinctions from the model for anger in American English. Matsuki 1995 explains the subtle differences of the Japanese case. In that language, there is a general term *ikari* which denotes anger expressed as a hot fluid throughout the whole body. But there is also the term *hara*, which in its base meaning refers to the belly/stomach area (which is a seat of the emotions), but by metonymic extension also the anger that resides in the belly as well as the conceptual contents behind such anger. *Hara* is specifically associated with the truth and real intentions of *honno*, the private self that contrasts with *tatema*, or the social face one wears in public. Anger starts out in the belly (*hara*) and as it intensifies, rises to the chest (*mune*) and finally the head (*atama*). Because of the strong social pressure to save face in Japanese society, a Japanese person with low to moderate levels of anger tries to control it by dissociating their private self (*honno*) from their public self (*tatema*), presenting a calm face at variance with one's true inner thoughts. It is expected that the person try harder to contain his anger and prevent it from showing. Thus in the metaphors for *hara* anger there is a presumed distinction between a person's external demeanor and inner turmoil, unless the anger is so great he loses control.⁸⁶

Another linguistic consequence of the Japanese cultural model for anger is that degrees of anger (and correlated lack of control) are measured by how far it rises in the body. One speaks of low level or mastered anger as remaining in the belly (*hara*), intermediate level anger rising to the chest (*mune*), while anger rising to the head (*atama*) is out of control.⁸⁷

Here we may illustrate how certain Akkadian metaphors for anger fit within this cross-cultural comparison via a preview of what we will cover in 4.1. As that section will argue, Akkadian descriptions of the anger of the gods fit into three categories. The most literal category is covered by conventional verbs of anger like *agāgu*, *šabāsu*, and *zenû*. To the degree they can be etymologized, these verbs reflect Kövecses' claim that metaphorical expressions for basic emotions start out as common metonyms, where a salient physical reaction stands for the emotion. This would appear to be a near cognitive universal. The second category of expressions involve the common metaphor of body parts as containers for the emotion. Thus the expression *libbašu ikkašir-ma* 'he (Marduk) became angry' (*Ludlul* 1, 56) regards Marduk's heart as the physical seat of emotion. Such metaphors are frequent in other semitic languages as well as more distant languages like Chinese and Japanese (as we have just seen). The third category, however, is both creative and culturally marked. Certain poetic passages

⁸⁶Matsuki 1995: 144, Kövecses 2005: 235.

⁸⁷Matsuki 1995: 145.

describe the anger of great gods like Marduk as a force of nature, such as a flood (*abūbu*) or whirlwind (*mehû*). What this actually means, however, is that Marduk's anger is like a flood or whirlwind insofar as its effects on a human observer, not the god himself. No comment is being made about the mental state of the god beyond the literal fact that he is angry. This way of talking about the anger of the gods appears to stem both from the idea that the high gods are inscrutable (meaning no one can tell what is going on in their hearts) and that such gods are incapable of being moved against their will (which is what emotions do). Note that this dynamic involving theology and language is more evident in Akkadian than in Hebrew. While the notion of God as inscrutable or autonomous is also found in the Hebrew Bible, there are more conventional metaphors for God's anger in which God is affected by a metaphorical force. For instance, Genesis 6:6 describes Yahweh as angry using the verb *nḥm* (literally 'to breathe pantingly' - see Kotzé 2005: 119). In summary then, we may say that beyond the literal or conventional metaphorical level, Akkadian has metaphors for anger which significantly depart from English patterns, and that it does so seemingly for theological reasons.

Beyond the above four languages, the cultural models for anger in Ilongot and Ifaluk are even more different from American English. Ilongot is the language of a former head-hunting tribe in the Philippines that has been studied extensively by anthropologist Michelle Rosaldo.⁸⁸ She reports that the Ilongot term which corresponds roughly to English 'anger' is *liget*. Yet the cultural model evoked by *liget* is more concentrated in the sense of youthful vigor and arousal. While in English anger is opposed to a sense of calm or well-meaning, in Ilongot it is opposed to a sense of passivity, dullness, or cowardice. Moreover, while *liget* is the term used to justify the intent to go head-hunting among potential victims, it is also used to describe a man gracefully dancing or perspiring from hard work.⁸⁹ In social terms, *liget* is an important feeling that mediates relations between youths eager to express their passions in taking their first head and their patron elders who wish to mould their descendants in their own image.⁹⁰ If a youth does not get the chance to experience the rush of *liget* in a headhunting raid, he is thought to lack achievement. Note that this cultural model of anger differs from that found in, say, the *Iliad*, where anger is primarily the expected response to dishonor,⁹¹ is an individual affair, and is not particularly associated with any social institution like male rites of passage.

A similar point can be made by looking at the cultural model for anger in Ifaluk, a language spoken in Micronesia. Catherine Lutz's work on the native conception of emotion in this language highlights the degree to which emotional meaning is structured by cultural systems and social and physical environments, deriving part of their meaning from communicative and moral purposes beyond labels for internal states.⁹² In Ifaluk, the rough

⁸⁸Rosaldo 1980.

⁸⁹Rosaldo 1980: 22-24.

⁹⁰Rosaldo 1980: 148.

⁹¹Rosaldo 1980: 222.

⁹²Lutz 1988: 4.

counterpart of English anger is *song*. It is like English anger in that it is an unpleasant feeling occasioned by a sense of unwarranted injury to self or other. Yet while in (American) English anger is largely seen as an anti-social emotion that should be vented in small doses in preference to a big explosion, *song* has strong pro-social aspects, wherein the person who is *song* works to redress moral transgressions and work towards peace and well-being. In America, an angry person often feels subsequent shame because anger is normally seen as chaotic and irrational. It leads to a perceived loss of control and transgression of social boundaries, and when people talk about their anger, it is an ego-centered attempt to justify their individual outburst. Among Ifaluk speakers, *song* is an expected way to react to offenses to group morality. Someone describing their *song* is attempting to justify a claim about the world seen from a third person perspective. As a consequence, while English possesses a large number of metaphors dealing with how the individual copes with anger but few dealing with how they cope with anger in others, the reverse is the case in Ifaluk.⁹³

As a useful summary, Lutz characterizes the cultural model for *song* in terms of Fillmore's notion of frames, stating that the emotion involves the following actors and events:⁹⁴

- 1) There is a rule or value violation.
- 2) It is pointed out by someone.
- 3) That person simultaneously calls for condemnation of the act.
- 4) The perpetrator reacts in fear to that anger.
- 5) The perpetrator amends his or her ways.

Thus *song* is better described as justifiable anger or righteous indignation. Instead of focusing on the internal turmoil of the person feeling angry or the potential targets of their wrath, *song* conveys an external dynamic of moral condemnation and expected redress. In frame theoretic terms, then, the concept of *song* illustrates an Ifaluk frame of ANGER differently structured than, say, the American frame. Or put more bluntly, Ifaluk *song* and American anger are technically different frames, the former better labeled as RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION.

This example shows, incidentally, the potential for a certain logical fallacy in comparative metaphor analysis. The fact that different languages can have somewhat different frames within a single broad experiential domain can lead to the perception that different languages have different metaphors for the same concept, when in fact the metaphors are working with different target domains. For instance, Taiwanese speakers can describe romantic relationships between young men and women in terms of kite flying (Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 8). While it may appear that this is a metaphor for 'love' that is different from the one expressed by *I am **burning** with passion for you*, in fact the target domains of the two

⁹³Lutz 1988: 10, 156, 180.

⁹⁴Lutz 1988: 157. Cf. Kövecses 2005: 251.

metaphors are different. The Taiwanese case is better described as ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT and the other might be said to be LUST or ROMANTIC PURSUIT. Thus comparative metaphor analysis requires not just an analysis of the mapping between input frames, but also whether the input frames mean what we think they do.

Despite the differences in the above languages, it should be pointed out that even in the more radical cases of Tsou, Ilongot, and Ifaluk, embodiment still plays a role in metaphorical conceptions of anger. We said above that Tsou largely avoids metaphorical expressions for emotions. Nevertheless the ear (*koyu*) is regarded as the seat of mentation and emotion (reflecting the experiential metonym ORGAN OF PERCEPTION FOR MIND IN THE MODALITY OF THE ORGAN),⁹⁵ and anger can be expressed via the verbal metaphor ANGER IS EXCESS AIR IN A CONTAINER.⁹⁶ In Ilongot, the heart is the seat of anger (*liget*), and is often described as knotted or tense, or sparking like fire.⁹⁷ In Ifaluk, *song* is conceived of as an energizing force. All of these features stem from embodied experiences at the level of image schemas or body-centered frames.

The above cross-cultural comparison of metaphors and cultural models for anger is meant to illustrate the kinds of similarity in body and variety in culture that CMT must reckon with. It is apparent that the culturally distinct ways of expressing anger do not so much represent totally separate conceptions as different focuses and elaborations of a shared embodiment. As an example, while the prototypical cultural model for anger in American English centers on the individual and his internal thought processes, it also does have the model of justified anger that at a schematic level functions like *song* in Ifaluk. Conversely, Ifaluk has a number of other terms for anger-like emotions that focus just on the individual, but which are sharply distinguished from the central concept of *song*.⁹⁸ While English often conceives of anger as a hot liquid and Chinese sees it as a pressurized gas, these situations can be thought of as different profiles of the same basic situation: a heat source is applied to a non-solid in a container.⁹⁹ For a liquid, temperature is the better cue for how much heat is applied to the substance. For a gas, it is pressure. Nevertheless both a liquid and a gas possess a temperature and pressure.

Similarly, Akkadian conventional metaphors for the gods' anger are common to many other languages. On a literal level the Akkadian scribes understand that the high gods can be moved, yet when they choose to elaborate on this idea with creative metaphors they choose to invert the perspective and focus on the human observer. While this choice would appear unmotivated within the specific passages dealing with the gods' anger, our knowledge of Mesopotamian theology provides the appropriate context for the phenomenon. Note, however, that without the aid of CMT it would be harder to see how the specific patterns in

⁹⁵Cf. English: *my ears don't like what you're saying*. Also note the role that the term *ĝeštug* 'ear' plays in Sumerian.

⁹⁶Huang 2002: 173-174.

⁹⁷Rosaldo 1980: 39-40.

⁹⁸Lutz 1988: 157.

⁹⁹Cf. Yu 1995: 65.

Akkadian represent culturally-influenced selection or profiling of a general cognitive scheme. The Akkadian metaphors are generated by features of embodied cognition common to all languages (image schemas, frames, metonymy and metaphor, etc.), but the choice of what to highlight or elaborate depends on cultural considerations.

1.3.4 Summary

In the previous sections we have argued that CMT is a legitimate theory to use in Assyriology because the ‘lower’ end of the processes it describes are based in shared embodied cognition, to which the ‘upper’ end of processes contribute contextual or culturally specific modifications (1.3.1). This dividing line between the lower and upper processes does, in turn, match fairly well established philological approaches to text interpretation as well as the ‘horizontal’ variation we see in various cultures to a particular metaphor rooted in embodied cognition (1.3.3).

In a crude sense, what CMT claims to be truly universal are basic cognitive mechanisms of concept formation, combination, and elaboration. These are processes we will explore in depth in subsequent chapters, where they provide a more technical way of appreciating how divine enumerative description can be ‘poetic’ without necessary recourse to prototypical properties of poetry or creative writing found in the modern west. Instead, divine enumerative description makes recourse to various properties of elite Akkadian scribal tradition. While the above cognitive mechanisms facilitate the generation and structural interdependence of image schemas, domains, frames, metaphors, and blends found in the Akkadian tradition, the more subtle content of those items will be seen to be shaped by culture.

One should also remember that CMT aims more at motivation, not prediction or causal attribution. While there are important high-level debates within cognitive linguistics of how much of the conception of emotion is universal versus culturally specific, how exactly online language processing works versus stored representations, or whether mental representations fundamentally exist at all, the more powerful insight CMT brings to specific culture studies is an enriched description of that culture’s language use in connection to salient modes of thinking and acting. In a specific culture, CMT can highlight patterns of language use that do connect to notable ways of thinking (and vice versa), even as it does not categorically rule out other linguistic patterns or thought. Thus in the case of Akkadian, we cannot conclude categorically from the fact that the high gods are held to be inscrutable that English-style metaphors for anger cannot be applied to them. Not only does the Biblical Hebrew case show that conventional metaphor can hide a potential conflict with theology, more importantly, individual creativity or a change in historical circumstances can easily break hard and fast rules. Understandably, the more specific contextual knowledge a researcher of a particular culture brings to complement CMT, the more sound and informative the results will be. Thus the guiding model for how CMT will be used in this thesis is studying the motivated selection, salience, and pathways of development within embodied culture, rather than putting too much emphasis on universality or predicted constructs. While a text has no single meaning

independent of the community that reads or uses it, CMT can help assess the likelihood of a certain meaning in a given context. As such, CMT should be seen as a powerful addition to the interpretive tools a modern researcher can draw on.

Chapter 2

A frame-based approach to Mesopotamian divinity

Having explained the theory of frames and Conceptual Metaphor Theory in chapter 1, we can now use it in outlining the model of Mesopotamian divinity which will be used in the rest of this thesis to study divine enumerative description. Because how one thinks of an object plays a heavy role in how one talks about it, we discuss here up front how we believe elite Akkadian scribes thought of divinity. The argument will be that their divinity drew on a Mesopotamian model of personhood that favored certain forms of frame metonymy and conceptual blending. This view will hopefully bring some clarity to recent discussions what constituted a locus of Mesopotamian divinity. We will argue that while such divinity has a schematic basis in anthropomorphism, its concrete expression allows for a wide variety of images playing to the possibilities inherent in divine enumerative description.

Much of our argument draws on earlier work in Mesopotamian art and material culture about the representation of divinity. Our task here is to reformulate this work in terms that are amenable to Conceptual Metaphor Theory, with the crucial point being that the conceptual space of Mesopotamian divinity can be thought of as constituted by a complex of frames we call the **divine frame complex**, whose components are blended together around a skeletal anthropomorphic representation we call the **divine person**. It is the divine person within a given divine frame complex that justifies thinking of Mesopotamian divinity as centered on what we call ‘gods,’ even as the entire frame complex is required to account for the different representations connected with the divine person that are found in written and iconographic material.

Once the necessary theory and definitions have been established, we will illustrate how the divine frame complex and divine person work within divine enumerative description using three fairly prototypical examples. The first is the procession of the Marduk statue during the (Hellenistic) Babylonian New Year festival. The second is a passage about Marduk in *Enūma elish* 1:79-108, and the third is the Great Ishtar Hymn. This will establish the basic mechanics of divine enumerative description, after which later chapters will focus on

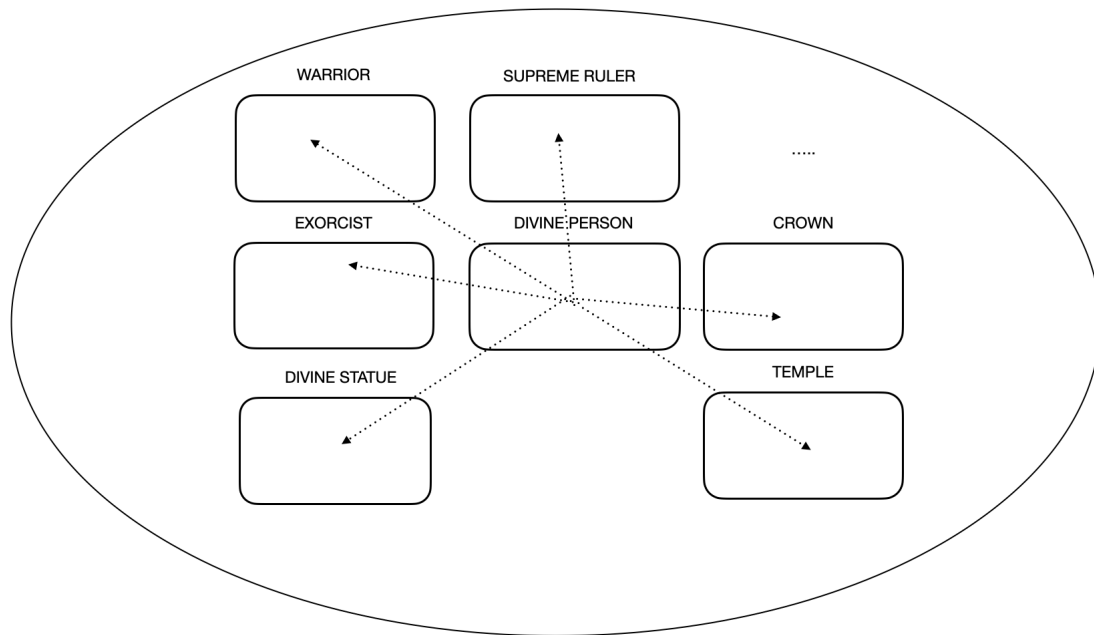


Figure 2.1: Frame complex defining a god

exploring aspects of it as a poetic mode.

2.1 An overview of the Mesopotamian conception of divinity

Assyriological literature uses various terms which refer to how Mesopotamians represented their gods, whether in their own minds or physical media. They include ‘embodiment,’ ‘sign,’ ‘anthropomorphic’ versus ‘non-anthropomorphic,’ ‘personification,’ ‘symbolization,’ ‘essence,’ and ‘manifestation.’ These terms capture different aspects of divinity, but it is not clear what unites these aspects conceptually (if anything), and in particular whether one can speak of an essential ‘godhood’ sitting above particular representations.

This section proposes an answer to these issues by drawing on Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Roughly speaking, the basic conceptual unit of divinity in Mesopotamia is the god, defined as a collection of frames centered on a *DIVINE PERSON* frame representing the god’s core anthropomorphic aspects (Figure 2.1).

The *DIVINE PERSON* frame is central to the frame complex in that it blends with the more peripheral aspects of the divinity. Representing only the schematic outlines of a person,

this frame encapsulates core properties such as animacy and spatial localization that are prototypically found in what we would call anthropomorphic gods. For a conceptually simple divinity the frame complex defining it can be very straightforward, essentially being just the DIVINE PERSON frame standing for the anthropomorphic core with a few prototypical metonymic elements (e.g. SWORD FOR WARRIOR). An example of such a divinity might be a divinized ancestor or ruler who is not assigned an astral representation or conventionally associated with animals like bulls or lions, and who may even lack visual depictions. For more complicated cases, blending and various non-prototypical metonyms are employed. The metonyms often serve as **material anchors** for aspects of the divinity, physical objects found in a particular setting which unequivocally evoke certain frames within the divine frame complex. They often serve as the locus for the divinity's presence.¹ While these metonyms are the most concrete parts of the frame complex defining a divinity, they also often have a usage or artifact relationship to the central DIVINE PERSON frame (e.g. a favorite weapon or piece of clothing of the god).

Before providing examples of frame complexes for actual gods, we need to justify the above model with a more detailed discussion of the notions of divinity and personhood in Mesopotamia. This is done in the next two sections. Section 2.1.1 translates the current Assyriological discourse about Mesopotamian divinity into cognitive terms. Then, in section 2.1.2 we go beyond this discussion by proposing a model of divinity based on Conceptual Metaphor Theory.

2.1.1 Two views of divinity

Our interest in this chapter is taking what has already been labeled as divinity in the Assyriological literature and analyzing it primarily from the cognitive viewpoint. Thus while divinity is often approached as an aspect of religion, we leave aside what we mean by the latter term save to say that Mesopotamian religion centers on the worship and concern for the gods. The two operative concepts of this chapter are thus divinity and the gods.

To better understand how, roughly speaking, the Mesopotamians thought of their gods, we start with the approach of Rochberg 2009. In that study of divine astral representations, Francesca Rochberg anchors her discussion of godhood in orthographic classification, saying, ‘the term *deity* or *god* will represent a personalized being denoted by a personal name and written with the divine determinative.’² A more expanded form of this approach has been formulated by Barbara Porter, who understands Mesopotamian godhood in a three-fold sense: gods may be marked with the Sumerian divine determinative DINGIR; they may be called a god (Akkadian *ilu*) explicitly or behave in ways characteristic of the gods, such as conferring blessings or receiving prayers; or they may receive special food offerings in the temples

¹For more on the role of material anchors as an aspect of distributed cognition and blending, see Hutchins 2005 and Dancygier and Sweetser 2014.

²Rochberg 2009: 42.

such as the *ginû* or *satukku*. This last category is interesting in that it does include various concrete, non-anthropomorphic objects even as the notion of godhood otherwise applies only to entities designated with the DINGIR sign or by Akkadian *ilu*, which are typically represented in anthropomorphic form.³ The one emendation we make to Porter's definition at this point is to clarify that the 'characteristic ways' the gods behave is understood with explicit reference to prototypical, anthropomorphic gods.

Following Rochberg's working definition given above, we will argue Mesopotamian divinity is a so-called **radial category** whose prototypical examples are centered on the anthropomorphic and into which less typical, non-anthropomorphic examples are incorporated by experiential correlation. The divine frame complex, in turn, is a conceptual blend that connects various elements throughout this category into what we call a god.

Viewing Mesopotamian divinity as a radial category captures the intuition among scholars that it is a somewhat diffuse and gradient property of things, whose definition seems to proceed from induction. Thus the major gods of the Mesopotamian pantheon are prototypical examples of divine beings in that they command reverence and fear, are intentional agents, and have superhuman abilities. But other instances of divinity are defined via their relation to these gods. Thus legendary heroes and kings possess a measure of divinity by virtue of their proximity to the gods in terms of power, genealogy, social status, and deeds. Cultic implements are divine because they are used in ceremonies involving the god or its representative, etc.⁴

While the above might be called a diagnostic approach to divinity centering on the prototypical sense of godhood, it will help our discussions in later chapters to supplement the above notions with a more loose fitting and phenomenologically basic one. Drawing on comparisons with Roman religion and other ancient near eastern cultures, Pongratz-Leisten has argued that rather than seeing Mesopotamian divinity as a species-like quality (e.g. immortal gods as a species are divine, mortal humans are not), we should think of divinity as a distinction in status within a network of actors (king versus commoner, ancestor versus contemporary, god versus man).⁵ The divine world thus blends into the mundane on the basis of significant power differentials, ritualized forms of petition and patronage, the public display of reverence, and the importance of social agency as an effective power in the world. This relational and contextual notion of divinity means that in its phenomenological aspects it can only partially be captured through properties such as 'immortality,' 'living in heaven,' 'omniscient,' or 'receives offerings.' In particular, from a cognitive point of view Mesopotamian divinity can only in certain cases be conceived of as a literal substance within the body of a given being,⁶ and only in a metaphorical sense can it be understood as a contagion or transfer.⁷

³Porter 2009: 161. Cf. Hundley 2013: 72.

⁴Cf. Porter 2009: 191, Pongratz-Leisten 2011b: 141.

⁵Pongratz-Leisten 2011a: 141, Pongratz-Leisten 2015b: 7.

⁶For the cases of gold, silver, and other precious metals, see Benzel 2015.

⁷See Porter 2009: 191.

In this phenomenological approach, divinity has a kind of ‘background’ or ‘meta’ quality bound up with the overall *Gestalt* of an entity. While properties like luminance concretely mark divinity in a thing, there is an affective dimension to divinity that must recognize the state of the human subject relative to the nature of the divine object (e.g. fear, reverence, warmth). Here, divinity ‘colors’ our perception of the entity in the way we react to it as well as the other elements in its frame. Thus it is as much about ‘us’ as it is about the divine thing itself. This view goes back to certain early modern scholars of religion such as Rudolf Otto (1869-1937) and William James (1842-1910), who were interested in the individual experience of religion.⁸ In the frame-theoretic approach adopted in this thesis, the affective dimension of divinity is based on the non-image schematic properties of the frame defining a given entity. In particular it is not rooted in perceptual features or image schemas defining things like UP-DOWN and CONTAINMENT, which are taken to be constitutive of what we call ‘concepts.’⁹ In addition, the affective dimension of divinity involves frame viewpoint in so far as the scene in which the divinity occurs is evaluated with respect to a subject (usually human) standing in a certain relation to the other elements of the frame.

A helpful parallel here can be found in ordinary emotion. Cognitive linguists argue that emotion and valence are just as important in constituting our mental representations as perceptual and structural properties, even if the latter are more concrete and salient.¹⁰ For all (seeing) humans, the DOG frame is predominantly constituted by the image schema of what a dog looks and acts like (e.g. a vague outline of its body, its motivic capabilities, behavior, and interior composition). But for people who are afraid of dogs (say because they had bad experiences with them as a child), the DOG frame is also qualified by the emotion of fear. One cannot point to anything perceptually concrete within the frame as ‘the fear’ itself, but imagining any element within the frame (e.g. a dog leash, a dog bark, the prototypical dog-name ‘Fido’) will also evoke the emotion, including more indirect associations linked to the frame (places dogs tend to be, your tenth birthday when you were bitten by a dog, your best friend who always seems to be around dogs, etc.). It also crucially involves viewpoint in that there must be an experiencer of the fear standing in a certain relation to the dog and its associations. Overall, then, while the fear element of the DOG frame certainly involves conceptual elements (the shape of the dog’s body, the sound of its bark, the motion of it running after you), it is not reducible to them. Yet it still manages to ‘cling’ to those elements as a matter of associative recall based on situational correlation.

In asserting that divinity has a recognizable affective dimension, we are wading into currently contested waters of scholarship not only on the concept of divinity, but also on the anatomy of human cognitive experience. On the more basic cognitive level, there are still debates about the exact nature of image schemas and their relation to emotion and other

⁸See e.g. Otto 1958, James 1982.

⁹For more on the nature of concepts and their relation to affect, see Langacker 1991: chapter 1, Carruthers 2017: 22-24.

¹⁰See e.g. Damasio 1994, Lakoff and M. Johnson 1999, and especially M. Johnson 2005.

affective dimensions to experience.¹¹ Part of the issue is evident in the above discussion about frame elements. Does emotion inherently require, in addition to a subjective experimenter, a conceptual object of attention (i.e. is emotional intentional)?¹² To what degree are emotions fundamentally structured by image schemas and the conceptual metaphors built on them?¹³ On the other hand, one may ask whether the phenomenological notion of divinity, somewhat like religion itself,¹⁴ is a pseudo-concept better described as an assemblage of more empirically motivated affective phenomena (e.g. mortal fear, ‘sensory overload,’ sense of supreme domination). In particular, when adopting Pongratz-Leisten’s notion of divinity as a distinction in status within a network of actors, does the affective side of this distinction ‘merely’ boil down to the affective side of hierarchical social encounters?

Fortunately, the specific concerns of this thesis allow us to focus on only a small portion of these debates. We are concerned above all with the ‘contagious’ aspect of divinity (both in its affective and conceptual dimensions), understood from a cognitive viewpoint. Provided one accepts the phenomenological basis for certain prototypical instances of divinity (say the feelings of reverence or fear before anthropomorphic deities), also accepting the cognitive underpinnings of how non-prototypical instances get their divinity from prototypical instances will be sufficient. In its strongest form, the spread of divinity is attended both by a transfer of causal efficacy¹⁵ and affective associations, as documented both within Assyriology and religious studies more generally.¹⁶ In this sense divinity can be argued to function much like certain forms of category essentialism studied in biology, psychology, and anthropology.¹⁷ The contagious properties of divinity, race, and celebrity (or infamy) are all initially fueled by associative cognitive processes like frame metonymy and metaphor, as illustrated by the DOG frame example above. While this associative logic can take place for practically any phenomena, in cases where the notable surface features, behavior, or treatment of the newly infected object cannot be adequately explained on general associative logic, essentialism is recruited as a surrogate causal explanation. For instance, Gelman and Hirschfeld 1999 discuss the tendency for people to attribute the hypervaluation of a set of faux pearls once owned by Jackie Onassis, and their sense of disgust at wearing what was allegedly a sweater once worn by Hitler, to a causal essence. In Gelman and Hirschfeld’s reasoning, when people

¹¹See Hampe 2008a for a survey of issues.

¹²The framing of the issue in terms of intentionality has been a particular mainstay in philosophical circles (e.g. Searle 1983, Tye 2008, and more recently Ratcliffe 2019).

¹³While the work of conceptual metaphor theorists such as Lakoff, Johnson, and Kövecses show that our folk conceptions of emotion are deeply structured by conceptual metaphor (see chapter 4), this is not quite the same as how emotions are directly experienced alongside or even prior to conceptual scaffolding (see Crawford 2009).

¹⁴See McCutcheon 1997.

¹⁵By ‘causal efficacy’ we simply mean that if divine object X causes people to behave a certain way towards it (say giving offerings, bowing down, referring to it with a DINGIR sign) and X imparts its divine qualities to Y, then Y will also cause people to behave the same way.

¹⁶For Assyriology, see Porter 2006. For the notion of the sacred as contagious, see Durkheim 1995: 322.

¹⁷See Gelman and Hirschfeld 1999, Atran, Medin, and Sousa 2002.

felt the faux pearls should command such a high price or they felt such disgust at putting on Hitler's sweater, they could not rationalize this reaction through general association with the previous owner. Hence they posited an imperceptible cause inherent in the object (for instance, 'the touch of celebrity' or 'the moral contagion of Hitler').

We should note, though, that the above 'essentialist' view of divine contagion is not technically necessary for the types of arguments made in this thesis.¹⁸ The guiding theoretical framework is Conceptual Metaphor Theory, in which frame metonymy and metaphor are the bread and butter concepts. These two processes are adequate for our arguments concerning the forms of divine contagion discussed in the Assyriological literature. The clearest examples of metonymically-inspired divine contagion are cultic artifacts such as chariots, boats, bows, beds, and crowns, which seem to get their divine status from their affordances, or use-properties, with respect to the god that owns them. Such objects are understood to be artifacts crafted for a use-purpose which an anthropomorphic god facilitates. One can have the artifact in front of oneself without the god to understand the nature of the object. The god thus stands in background of the frame defining the object, contributing to its divinity indirectly.

It is true, nevertheless, that certain perceptual forms of divinity do not derive from anthropomorphic relations, but rather more basic affective qualities featured in primary scenes and metaphors. The various studies of radiance in Mesopotamia have noted how brilliance and luster are closely associated with purity and awesomeness, and all four in turn are markers of divinity.¹⁹ For example, the portrayals of astral gods such as Venus, Shamash, and Sin frequently emphasize their light-plus-sheen. The literal luminance properties of the celestial body metonymically evoke the divinity within the entire frame defining the astral god. On the other hand, anthropomorphized divine beings are often said to be clothed in radiance (and fear). For instance, the angelic visitor appearing in the Sufferer's dreams in *Ludlul III: 12* is described as *melamme halip labiš pulhāti* 'dressed in divine radiance, clothed in fear.'²⁰ Here, the metonym LIGHT FOR DIVINITY is supplemented by the metaphor LIGHT IS CLOTHING, where the clothing of the messenger is a luminous surface metaphorically projecting divinity. As a matter of evolutionary psychology, the association of these qualities with divinity is likely rooted in fundamental evaluative metaphors such as HAPPY IS BRIGHT (see chapter 4) and GOOD/HOLY IS CLEAN, although in its culturally specific instantiation, Mesopotamian luminosity's association with divinity is strengthened by frame metonymy (e.g. shiny gold is often used in divine artifacts, so the divinity of the artifacts transfers to the shiny gold).

Indeed, the use of gold, silver, lapis lazuli, and jewels in the production of cultic objects

¹⁸One may also object that arguments about folk theories of causal essence in an ancient culture come with a greater burden of evidential support than arguments about processes of metaphor and metonymic association, even if both ultimately derive their explanatory power from being modern, empirically driven theories of cognition.

¹⁹See e.g. Cassin 1968, Bruschiweiler 1987, and Winter 1994.

²⁰Oshima 2014: 94.

(such as divine statues) conveys more than just the notion of expensive craftsmanship. Kim Benzel has shown that the luster of such materials was understood to be a divine property which inhered in the cultic object made from them. The luminance properties were what made the precious metals divine by nature, and the inclusion of such metals in the production of cultic objects made the latter divine by metonymic association.²¹

To summarize, our understanding of divinity in this chapter is based on two approaches. On the one hand there are diagnostic criteria used to determine whether something is divine based on whether it is written with a divine determinative, receives offerings, behaves like a prototypical god, etc. These criteria are ‘high-level’ in that it does not matter through what cultural-historical process a thing came to have its divine status. We accept it based on categorical analogy with things we intuitively agree are divine. On the other hand there is a more low-level, phenomenological approach to divinity that largely views it as a property of frames. It collocates notions of major status differential, effective social agency, and obligatory patronage and petition dynamics, expressed concretely in feelings of awe, fear, and reverence. Frequently this divinity is metonymically and metaphorically indicated through phrases such as ‘clothed in light.’ For the special case of precious metals, this divinity is inherent in a substance. These two approaches are not meant to encompass divinity in all its phenomenological aspects nor exhaustively capture everything we might consider divine in Mesopotamia. Rather, they seem reasonable for the cognitive-based arguments about divinity made in this chapter and beyond.

2.1.2 The partible person, distributed agency, and presence

The previous section outlined ways we can decide whether (or to what degree) something was considered an exponent of Mesopotamian divinity. But what about the finer details of how such an exponent was conceived, provided we agree it was considered divine? Our answer to this question is the divine frame complex, a conceptual schema we will argue relies heavily on the Mesopotamian conception of personhood. Both this section and section 2.1.3 are occupied with establishing the link between the representation of divinity and personhood.

²¹This is how we take Benzel’s description of the relationship between holiness, precious metals, and the cultic artifacts made from them:

Thus, I would like to submit that, in certain contexts, the natural, inherent *properties* of certain materials have the intrinsic potential to give to humans (the makers and consumers) a perception of inherent sacredness, holiness, or divinity that, in turn, allows for those makers and consumers to assign sacredness, holiness or divinity as a *quality* back to the material itself, not just to the object it becomes. Such an object, in its finished form, can therefore be perceived as sacred, holy, or divine both because of the materials of which it is made *and* because of its functional association with the sacred, holy, or divine (Benzel 2015: 96).

The way properties of certain materials evoke the perception of a global quality in them is, we believe, an instance of metonymy.

Pongratz-Leisten has argued that a number of the most important features of the Mesopotamian conception of divinity are rooted in the understanding of the person as an extendable, social agent.²² Essentially, the person in Mesopotamia was seen as a multi-faceted assemblage of roles rooted in the body, where each role was defined in a particular social setting. The person was also not strictly limited to the physical borders of the human body, but could be extended to include certain accoutrements or substances. Note that these phenomena are not unique to ancient Mesopotamian culture, as even in modern western society individuals take on different social roles depending on context. But there is an overall salience to the phenomena in Mesopotamia (as well as other ancient cultures) compared to modernity that makes a difference in how the gods were represented. Because the prototypical aspects of Mesopotamian divinity were modeled on the human social world, it is important to understand the salient aspects of Mesopotamian personhood, as these become the salient aspects of Mesopotamian godhood.

The idea of Mesopotamian personhood as a composite phenomenon has been informed by recent anthropological and ethnographic comparisons of the idea of individuality and social agency from around the world. A few important points of this literature will be mentioned, as they will be directly relevant to the divine frame complex discussed in 2.2.

In her book *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia*, Marilyn Strathern proposed the idea of the ‘partible person’ as a way to make sense of personal identity, social agency, and gift exchange in Melanesian society. The term ‘partible’ refers to the idea that when the Melanese exchange items with each other across various kinship and geographical lines, those items can bear aspects of the owner’s identity (in particular gender) which become incorporated into the receiver’s identity. In some instances one physical substance can be seen as the partible equivalent of another, as when men seek to consume the juices and fats of meat in order to replenish their seminal fluid.²³ Even the parts of the body can bear a different gender identity based on how they function in their owner’s social relations. ‘Thus,’ Strathern says, ‘we may apprehend the apparent paradox that much ritual attention is paid to sexual organs not because the organs sex the person, as it were, but because in her or his relations with others, the person sexes the organs. They then become evidence of the successful activation of those relations.’²⁴ In saying that ‘the person sexes the organs,’ Strathern means that the gender properties of one’s sexual organs are not determined simply by their biological characteristics, but by how they are used by the person in interactions with others. Using them in a ‘male’ way confers male gender on them, while using them in a ‘female’ way gives them female gender. Further replications of this type of gender assignment can hold for products deriving gendered social interactions. Overall, Strathern sees the idea of partible identity as effecting a kind of gender replication throughout the society where male gender promotes male gender, and similarly for female

²²See e.g. Pongratz-Leisten 2011a, Pongratz-Leisten 2015a, and Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik 2015a.

²³Strathern 1988: 208.

²⁴Strathern 1988: 208.

gender.

We will see how this kind of replication parallels aspects of Mesopotamian divinity in 2.2. Just as personal identity in Melanesian society is a composite construct piece-wise defined through social roles and gift exchange, Mesopotamian divinity suffuses the frame complex defining a god via the blends connecting the divine person with its various social roles and material anchors. Replication is particularly evident in artifact-like representations, where divinity can be thought of as ‘spreading’ to an object because of its usage relation to the divine person. While the language we use here is reminiscent of the discussion of divine ‘contagion’ in 2.1.1, here our interest is more specific, focusing on the realm of the social person as the enabling framework for divine association.

The idea of personhood as a complex construct has also benefited from the notion of distributed agency. Alfred Gell introduced this concept in his anthropological study of cultures of art around the world, titled *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*. Gell viewed particular works of art as fitting into a network of agents connected by efforts at social change. He thus studied a work of art in terms of how it extended the artist’s ability to causally affect the viewer (or patron, or even herself). This approach allowed Gell to go beyond the traditional (western) study of artworks as a matter of individual aesthetics or abstract meaning, and instead see them as physical mediators of social relationships, as well as objects with a functionality determined by how they were embedded in the network of actors. In Gell’s framework, individual artworks can be considered ‘indices’ or ‘secondary agents’ extending the purpose and causal influence of the (human) ‘primary agents’ standing behind their creation.²⁵ The fundamental role of agency in the conceptualization of artworks tends to accommodate itself to the cultural attitudes about the nature of the artwork itself. For instance, if the artwork is thought to be a divine object (such as a weapon or piece of clothing), the gods become primary agents.²⁶ This is partly because a divine object is generally seen as the property of the gods or at least indirectly created by them, and so the gods are the ultimate cause for the object’s existence and any purpose it may have. A prominent example of secondary agency that Gell gives is the prow-boards on the canoes of the Trobrianders, richly painted objects showing high craftsmanship that are designed to psychologically unsettle trading partners and instill an overall sense of inferiority.²⁷ The term that Gell used to describe this effective power was ‘enchantment,’ a designation that provides a helpful way of thinking about divine icons and implements in Mesopotamian culture.²⁸ Gell attributes a kind of hybrid status to artworks as secondary agents in a way that mirrors how divine objects seem to be both ‘god-like’ but also ‘thing-like.’ Such objects have some divinity because they extend the scope of action of the divine person either as an implement or an embodiment. But they are less divine because they lack quintessential human traits like intentionality and because they are physically constrained and corruptible

²⁵Gell 1998: 16ff.

²⁶Gell 1998: 25ff.

²⁷Gell 1998: 69.

²⁸Gell 1992.

(e.g. statues cannot totally reflect a god's nature because they are stuck on the ground and can be destroyed).

Assyriologists have, in their own terms, argued that these features of partibility and distributed agency are at work in Mesopotamian conceptions of personhood.²⁹ For our purposes, we wish to stress how both notions rely on frame metonymy and blending. Partibility and distributed agency can roughly be seen as 'corporeal' versus 'mental'-based aspects of frame metonymy, given that partibility is a substance metaphor while agency deals with causal interpretation.³⁰ From a cognitive point of view, the ability of ceremonial objects and divine icons to charge a space with the presence of a divinity, or otherwise stand in for the divinity in a given space, is effectively about a sub-frame with a prominent material aspect (the icon, implement, etc.) metonymically evoking a larger, more abstract parent frame (the divinity itself). On the other hand, the causal efficacy of such physical items, how they function in a network of social actors (both human and divine), is largely a matter of the roles and logical entailments attached to the parent frame (which are a matter of blending).

In addition to the notions of the partible person and distributed agency, the concept of 'presence' or 'presencing' has been shown to play an important role in the Mesopotamian conception of divinity. Hans Gumbrecht has treated presence as an immediate, non-representational kind of experience anchored in time and space.³¹ He contrasted presence with (western) mimesis and its traditional emphasis on interpretation, signification, and abstracted meaning. A prototypical example is the Christian eucharist.³² There the bread and wine are not seen as mediating signifiers for Christ's body and blood, but rather in an unmediated, unanalyzed way actually become the body and blood as far as such items have a special effect on the worshipper. Indeed, Gumbrecht expressed presence as the convergence of event and effect in a material form.³³ What is relevant in Gumbrecht's discussion as far as frames are concerned is the dual role that presence plays. On the one hand it is another type of frame metonymy, where the affective dimensions of the frame (emotional responses, image schemas associated with personhood) are evoked by a perceptually salient metonym such as a material anchor. On the other hand presence is a kind of blend, where the symbol or icon that does the 'referring' is originally part of a frame separate from that of the referent, but becomes identified with that referent under the blend. This sense that the Mesopotamian gods are physically present before a human worshipper in some material object, complete with some sense of reverence or fear in the human, is an example of presencing that will be explored further in chapter 3.

²⁹See e.g. Bahrani 2003, Bahrani 2008, Pongratz-Leisten 2011a: 138ff., Steinert 2012: 121ff., Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik 2015a.

³⁰Cf. Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik 2015a: 6, n.10.

³¹Gumbrecht 1999: 355ff.

³²Gumbrecht 1999: 356.

³³Gumbrecht 1999: 361.

2.1.3 Ideal types and the three levels of personhood representation

The notions of partibility, distributed agency, and presence have important effects on Mesopotamian conventions for representing persons. This has to do with the dominant role of ideal types in Mesopotamian representations of person in relation to individual identity. This representational convention is extensively attested in cuneiform and iconographic sources from the third to first millennium BCE. This section proposes a three-tiered model for understanding such representations with an outsized role for the middle level, which is predominantly expressed via metonymic references to ideal types. This three-tiered model carries over to representations of the gods and will clarify why divine enumerative description is so prevalent in that domain.

We can begin with certain basic features of Mesopotamian culture evident from the Akkadian and Sumerian lexicon. The Akkadian word *šalmu* ‘image’ (Sumerian ALAN) is a relational term involving two objects and a particular viewpoint. When we say X *šalam* Y (‘X is the image of Y’), Y is the landmark, or background object (often understood as the ‘original’ or ‘source’), and X is the trajector, or foreground object (often understood as being derivative or secondary). The foreground object is measured against the background object, where the latter commands a certain standard of likeness. Research on the term *šalmu* and others like it has shown that with regard to human-like objects, the relevant standard of likeness is not primarily physiognomic resemblance but rather a more general sense of what Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik call ‘cognitive recognition.’³⁴ As the psychologist Edward Goffman defined the term, cognitive recognition is a contextually defined process that places an individual in a sufficiently narrow category for the purposes given by the context. This typically links the individual to information unique to him (such as full name and biographical narrative), but it can also simply be identifying the class or social function of an individual (Goffman gives the example of detectives identifying a pickpocket within a crowd who is otherwise unknown to them).³⁵ In Mesopotamia it is this latter type of cognitive recognition that is usually the most salient in representations of person, as it rests on the partible nature of Mesopotamian personal identity. Not only that, but the identifying category being applied to the person is often structured by ideal types. For instance, Irene Winter has cited the Gudea statues as an example of royal iconography where the physical details of the statues allow the recognition of proper embodied kingship rather than the specific individual in a private capacity. The statues accurately reflect Gudea’s physical features at a generic level in so far as they depict a human (male) figure. But the depiction of a muscular arm involves a culturally mediated archetype, reflecting how Gudea as a proper ruler was given ‘strength’ by his patron deities.³⁶

³⁴See Pongratz-Leisten 2015a: 25, Sonik 2015, and further references in Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik 2015b: 12. For more on cognitive recognition, see Winter 2009b: 267.

³⁵Goffman 1963: 113.

³⁶Winter 1997: 369.

Similarly, Winter observes how in Assyrian inscriptions the term usually translated as the ‘royal image’ is *šalam šarrūtiya* (lit. ‘image of my kingship’) rather than *šalam šarri* (‘image of the king’).³⁷ The abstract noun *šarrūtu* refers to the office of the king, and hence the features of king shown in the *šalmu* reflect how he fulfills that office in ideal fashion. For instance, besides indicators of vigor and maturity like a flowing beard, the image can include stylization of the king’s clothing and accoutrements evocative of mythical heroes or gods.

The above discussion illustrates how Mesopotamian representations of (elite) person strongly emphasize a certain middle ‘layer’ of personal identity located between individual specificity and schematic properties of being human. Cognitive recognition works with what Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik call ‘qualities’ or ‘qualitative properties.’³⁸ These are meant to capture social roles, statuses, and dispositions of the person that do not reduce to bare perceptual features. In other words, cognitive recognition metonymically evokes whole frames characteristic of types rather than tokens (i.e. kinds of people rather than a unique individual).³⁹ Furthermore, representational convention requires that the subject be understood as an ideal exemplar, not a prototypical one. The muscular arm on the Gudea statues signals not just that Gudea has the force to compel subjecthood (which any king has), but that his strength was given to him by the gods to protect the people as an ideal king would. Assyrian kings are depicted with long beards not just because actual kings were required to grow them out, but also because such beards signaled ideal strength (both physical and metaphorical).

Relative to this flexible layer of idealized frame metonymy, we may say the Mesopotamian representation of personhood (at least in elite contexts) involves three levels of representation. Level One is a straightforward resemblance for the subject’s crude generic-level or image-schematic features. Level Two is a piecewise frame metonymic and/or iconic representation based on more local details. Level Three provides further linguistic details or other contextual clues beyond the central image that zero in on the specific individual (see Figure 2.2).⁴⁰

Level One of this scheme serves as the locus of basic properties which under metaphorical extension constitute the ‘anthropomorphic’ nature of a prototypical god. The features MAIN BODY and FACE are meant to reflect the fact that image schematic concepts of intentional

³⁷Winter 2009b: 266.

³⁸Pongratz-Leisten 2015b: 24, Pongratz-Leisten 2015a: 120.

³⁹Cf. Selz’s remarks about prototypicality in late third millennium iconography and administrative documents (Selz 2008: 18).

⁴⁰One can compare this schema with other ‘tripartite’ models of the person, including those in Morris 1994 and Marin 1988. Marin’s example of Hyacinthe Rigaud’s portrait of Louis XIV illustrates fairly well what our model is meant to capture (see also Winter 2009b: 266.). Marin argues the portrait reflects the king in three ways: as a historical individual, as holder of the office of king, and as sacral body of the Church (pg. 13). As indicated by the role that the Eucharist and transubstantiation has in the third item, the sacral body conveys a notion of divine essence or presence within the king. In the Mesopotamian case, an analogous sacral body could clearly be said to hold for representations of anthropomorphic divinities. Furthermore, the fact that the Atrahasis epic has mankind being made from the blood of a slain god is a further nod to something of the gods being in the Mesopotamian person. Nevertheless, the role our model plays in the Mesopotamian conception of divinity does not require this feature to be built into basic personhood.

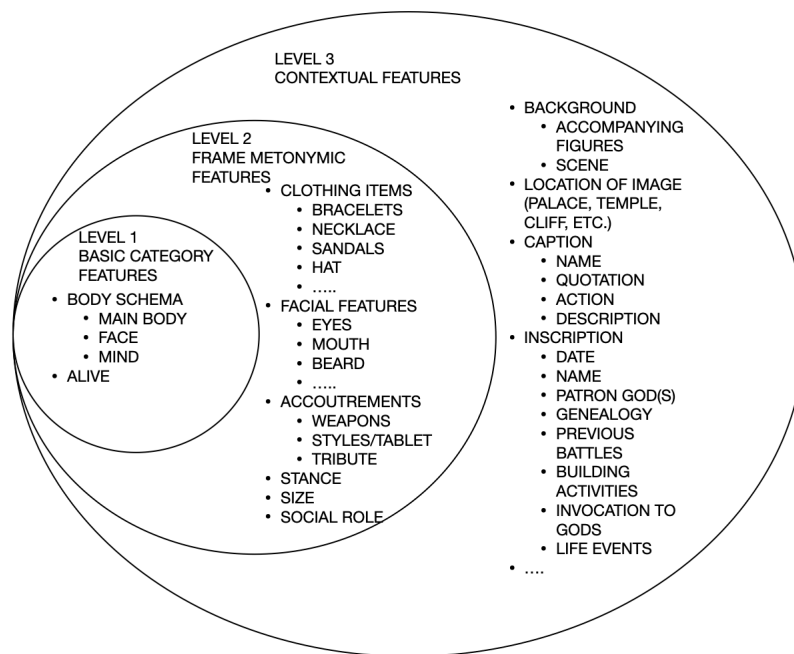


Figure 2.2: The three levels of representation for personhood

agents include a sense of directed attention and means of expressing mental states (via a ‘face’). One should remember that with this skeletal anthropomorphic form we are not trying to account for all attested forms of Mesopotamian divinity. Rather, here we are speaking about prototypical examples of ‘gods’ that have a clearly recognized ‘anthropomorphic’ core (e.g. Ishtar, Marduk, Ninurta). When talking about such basic anthropomorphic properties, we usually mean the highly schematic features of personhood.

This isolation of properties within Level One brings the above schema for Mesopotamian personhood in line with what we have said above about the partible person and distributed agency. For instance, Gell’s notion of primary agency rests on embodiment and intentionality, as the causal chain reflecting an artwork’s social history gets its primary meaning from the embodied, intentional agent constituting the chain’s head. Schematic embodiedness and intentionality are properties encapsulated in the Level One features of personhood. Level One also reflects the core features of prototypical (i.e. anthropomorphic) divinity. For instance, scholars in the cognitive study of religion have argued that the conceptual origins of divinity (as we have defined it) stem from a built-in cognitive module that pushes humans to attribute agency to various phenomena in the environment.⁴¹ Sometimes called the Hypersensitive Agency Detection Device (HADD), this ability arose in early hominids,

⁴¹See e.g. Boyer 2003, Guthrie 2007, Barrett 2007, Hundley 2013: 79.

who found it evolutionarily advantageous to attribute intentional causality to hidden parts of their environment. For instance, a rustle in the bushes, a rock that suddenly comes flying into view, or unexpected noises during the night are all events that lack a clear causal agent, yet would also motivate at least suspecting there to be one out of sight. This adaptive cognitive process was a matter of ‘better safe than sorry,’ as the cost of ignoring an actual causal agent (say a dangerous predator) far outweighed the cost of mistakenly assuming one that actually wasn’t there. There is a fair amount of evidence indicating that this process holds both phylogenetically (meaning in the evolutionary history of humanity) and ontogenetically (meaning in the early development of modern day humans).⁴²

Our purpose in bringing up these facts is to show how deeply the concept of social agency and personhood is intertwined with the concept of divinity, and in particular to motivate putting the features of schematic humanoid embodiment and intentionality in their own level of representation of Mesopotamian personhood. While cultural mediation heavily influences how this schematic agency has developed in human history (including Mesopotamia), the above discussion gives empirical support to the centering of Mesopotamian divinity in the core conceptual layer of the person rather than elsewhere.

One issue should be addressed here regarding the modest aims of our model. It is meant to reflect a schematic minimum without comment on potential elaborations made to its components. The Level One features could largely be said to be universal in a cognitive sense. In particular we have indicated the features of intentionality, desire, and belief in Level One with the term ‘mind’ (Figure 2.2), placing it under the heading of ‘body schema.’ Cognitively speaking, this arrangement reflects the fact that the image schema is the most basic level at which the body is conceived, most crucially in terms of spatio-temporal localization. It is relative to this that the mind is conceived. Culturally specific views of mind and body begin from this point even if they later undergo extensive elaboration. Indeed, while cognitive science has established that mind and body are in fact interactive features of one single entity (an essential feature of embodied realism),⁴³ it is practically impossible in any culture to speak of the mind without metaphor. Even to say the mind is where emotion, thought, and phenomenal consciousness occur is effectively the conventional metaphor MIND IS A CONTAINER, where the container is based on the image schema of body. Mesopotamia, like practically every culture, uses certain elaborated versions of this metaphor including the idea that emotions are in the heart or guts (*libbu*, *kabattu*, etc.), organs which are all located in the central body. Beyond this basic containment relation, however, aspects of the mind as encoded in Akkadian ramify in ways largely irrelevant for our arguments about Mesopotamian divinity.⁴⁴ For this reason, the further complexities of the Akkadian understanding of mind are not included in the model here.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, we do note that

⁴²See Atran 2002: 59ff., Guthrie 2007: 45ff., Guthrie 2021.

⁴³See Lakoff and M. Johnson 1999: 16.

⁴⁴A partial exception is metaphorical descriptions of emotions of high gods like Marduk, which will be discussed in chapter 4.

⁴⁵For an overarching interpretation of mentally-related terms like *ṭēmu*, *eṭemmu*, and *zaqīqu*, see Steinert

one of the important properties of mind that gets attributed to anthropomorphic divinity is facility in language or symbolic communication. That is what incorporates an intentional agent fully into the social realm of the human observer, and it is this property which elite scribal culture in Mesopotamia elaborates to a great extent.

In what we have termed the Level Two of the representation of person, culturally specific features such as flowing beards, muscular arms, weapons, and distinctive poses are discrete frame elements that can be added and subtracted largely at will. For this reason we can call them ‘combinatorial’ aspects of the representation. Moreover, from a cognitive standpoint such features should generally be thought of as instances of metonymy rather than, as is often the case in Assyriological literature, ‘iconography.’ Technically, an iconic map is a metaphoric map where only the perceptual image component of the source frame is mapped to the target frame. It is thus a map between form and meaning.⁴⁶ A common example of iconicity is the car brand known as the Volkswagen Beetle. The exterior appearance of the car is meant to evoke the shape of a beetle. However, nothing else about the car is meant to reflect the properties of a beetle (e.g. how it behaves or the function of its body parts). Another instance is the English word *meow*, whose pronunciation directly reflects its meaning (the sound of a cat meowing). Metonyms, on the other hand, are ultimately about frame evocation. A beard appearing in the relief of an Assyrian king refers not just to the actual king’s beard, but the complex of associations which go with it (physical and psychological strength, maturity, vitality). The warrior’s pose refers not just to the fact that the king himself stands like a warrior, but also uses that stance when going hunting or fighting on the battlefield.

Some of these Level Two features also acquire a metaphorical dimension, such as how the warrior’s pose in Assyrian relief refers to the king’s ability to subdue the abstract forces of chaos threatening the empire (ABSTRACT ENEMIES ARE PHYSICAL ENEMIES). The strong arm of the Gudea statue refers not just to Gudea’s healthy physique but also his ability as a ruler to defend his kingdom (MILITARY STRENGTH IS PHYSICAL STRENGTH). These Level Two metonymic features of personhood seem to acquire a metaphorical dimension because the representational conventions they operate under are already heavily geared towards symbolism and ideals. For instance, various nominal and adjectival terms based on the verb *banû* ‘to build’ are used to refer to the physical features of rulers, gods, and heroes (e.g. *nabnîtu*, *bunnannû*). Not only does the verbal adjective *banû* that describes such features connote ideal shape and fineness,⁴⁷ the context in which such features are discussed reflects the idea that the proportions are ideal and their bearer has been invested with the approving mark of the gods.⁴⁸ Thus Adad-nirari II (911-891) describes in his royal inscriptions how

2012.

⁴⁶See Hiraga 2004: 25ff. Rather than speaking of ‘iconography,’ cognitive linguists use the terms ‘iconic’ and ‘iconicity’ (Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 179).

⁴⁷CAD B s.v. *banû*

⁴⁸Winter 2009a: 85-86.

the gods ‘shaped’ him to be fit for kingship.⁴⁹ Since the Akkadian notion of proper form does not center so strictly on direct perceptual fidelity, it is free to acquire more abstract, hence metaphorical dimensions. Thus the warrior stance given to the Assyrian king in his relief not only shows him to be a good hunter, but almost necessarily it also means the king can subdue abstract forces of chaos. The archetype comes to include all culturally relevant metaphorical meanings evoked by its discrete perceptual features, because to do anything less would not present the subject as the ideal in general.

It may be helpful to look at some examples of how all three levels of personhood play out in a given representation. The first is the Gudea statues. In terms of basic-level categories Gudea is a human. This is reflected directly in his statues, which are all based on the Mesopotamian vision of a prototypical human being (Level One). But what kind of human Gudea is is given by the individual features grafted onto the prototype, such as the muscular arm, the hand-clasp, the chin,⁵⁰ and the attentive pose (Level Two). The inscriptions on the back of the statues actually identify Gudea by giving his name and title (Level Three).

Similarly, the reliefs of Assurnasirpal II (r. 883-859) clearly depict a human male in broad outlines (Level One), disregarding the items and clothing accompanying that person. But at the featural level the reliefs are more evocative. They show a rich, flowing beard with curls meant to signify full manhood, even as beards are characteristic of all Neo-Assyrian rulers.⁵¹ Accoutrements like the bow reflect the king’s role as hunter or Ninurta archetype. The stance of Assurnasirpal in the reliefs similarly conveys the confidence to lead and the attentiveness to the gods appropriate for an Assyrian monarch (Level Two). Yet such features do not serve to distinguish Assurnasirpal from the depictions of his son, Shalmaneser III (858-824).⁵² In fact, the basic features of royal iconography remained the same throughout the Neo-Assyrian period.⁵³ It is the location and date of the visual images, attending captions or inscriptions, and details of the scene in which the king is embedded that change the representation from one of archetype to specific individual (Level Three). See Figure 2.3.

The following sections of this chapter will take the above notions of Mesopotamian personhood as the basis for a frame-based account of divinity, arguing that the concepts developed in chapter 1 allow us to see the Mesopotamian conception of divinity as built on the divine frame complex. This divine frame complex, in turn, is closely related to the imaginative strategy of divine enumerative description that stands behind the text passages discussed in later chapters.

⁴⁹*ki-niš ib-nu-ni* [...] *ṛnab-ni-teṽ a-na nab-ni-ti EN-ti uš-te-en₆-nu-u₂ ši-ṛkin₂ bu-na-niṽ-ia i-še-riš u₂-šek₂-li-lu-ma zu-mur EN-ti-ia iš-pu-uk ṛtaṽ-ši-im-ṛtaṽ* EGIR ‘They (the gods) built me properly...they turned my features into the features of lordship. They completely perfected the composition of my form, heaping up wisdom into the body of my lordship’ (RIMA 2: A.0.99.2, 5-7 = Grayson 1996: 147).

⁵⁰Winter 2009b: 258 in fact regards the chin as Gudea’s ‘signature’ feature.

⁵¹Winter 1997: 371.

⁵²Winter 1997: 369.

⁵³Morandi 1988: 135.

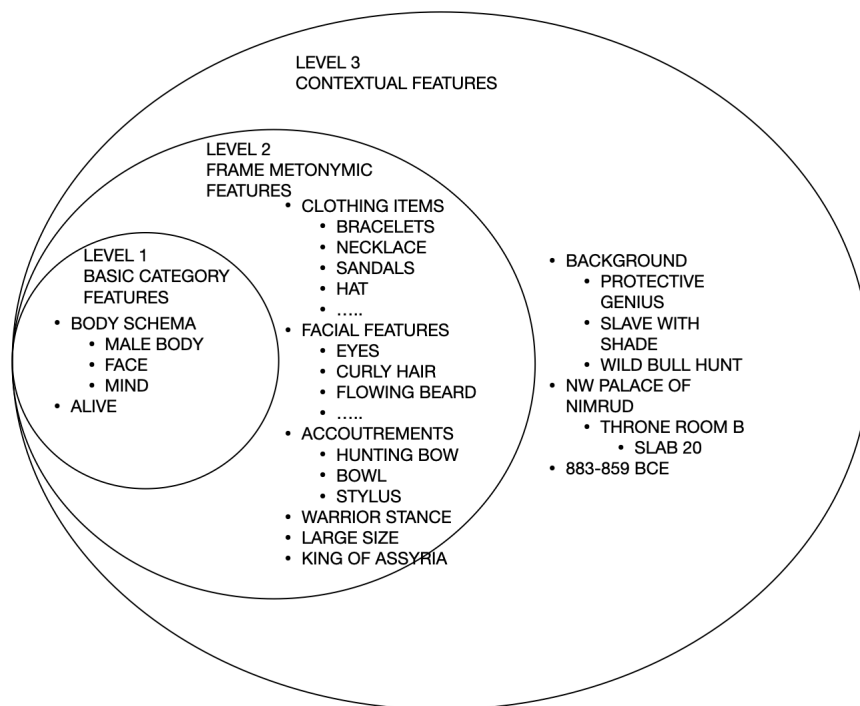


Figure 2.3: Example of the three levels of representation for personhood with respect to a relief of Assurnasirpal II at Nimrud (cf. Winter 1997: 371)

2.2 The divine frame complex and divine enumerative description

The divine frame complex is the primary conceptual resource which divine enumerative description works with. It is centered on a skeletal anthropomorphic frame we will call the *DIVINE PERSON*. One can think of the divine person as the ontological root of the complex from which the various conceptual elaborations of the divinity extend, producing a structure that overall parallels the three levels of personhood representation. Under that parallelism, the *DIVINE PERSON* frame is a minimal expansion of Level One. Overall there are a large number and great diversity of representations of the divinity corresponding to the Level Two layer in the personhood model, as it is at that level that most hypostases, syncretisms, and duties of the divinity are expressed. Not only are the roles and objects in Level Two usually characterized by ideal types (2.1.3), but it is at Level Two that divine enumerative description finds its base material.

Certain previous discussions of divinity in the Assyriological literature already express

the intuition behind our frame-based approach. In his survey of the forms of Mesopotamian divinity, Michael Hundley has described the Mesopotamian god as a ‘divine constellation’ of elements tied to a core entity that is usually anthropomorphic in nature. He speaks of the various aspects of a god as representing domain competencies that are both ‘additive’ and partially conflicting in nature.⁵⁴ Pongratz-Leisten has expressed the Mesopotamian concept of the person (which heavily informs Mesopotamian divinity) as a multifaceted assemblage of parts, including an organic body, name, roles, and images, which operated in specific social contexts.⁵⁵ Similarly, in her analysis of the depiction of divinity in the *Göttertypentext*, Pongratz-Leisten speaks of an ‘iconographic bodyscape’ composed of culturally-marked attributes aiming at recognition of a god rather than resemblance.⁵⁶

There is thus the recognition in the literature that Mesopotamian godhood consists of a set of heterogeneous conceptual units connected to an anthropomorphic hub. These conceptual units feature roles and perceptual attributes whose meaning depends on particular social functions or means of embodiment. Reflecting back on chapter 1, we can see how the language of frames captures these ideas exactly. From an Assyriological point of view, the benefit of expressing things in terms of frames is twofold. First, the empirical validity of frames as a model of human cognition strengthens the above Assyriological claims about Mesopotamian conceptions of divinity on scientific grounds. More importantly, viewing Mesopotamian divinity in terms of frames highlights how naturally divine enumerative description pairs with it as a means of poetic expression. If frames are the clearest analytic units for understanding Mesopotamian divinity, divine enumerative description is a means of building images with those units in surprisingly subtle and imaginative ways. In more specific terms, we present here some of the key features of the divine frame complex and how it interfaces with divine enumerative description:

- 1.) The multi-faceted nature of a divine agent’s representation is combinatorial. The various roles and attributes of a divine agent are ‘loosely’ associated with each other in the sense of semi-independent frames that may be added or subtracted from the representation of the agent. Hierarchical relationships between these frames are usually not important. The frames usually have a meaning on their own.
- 2.) The representation of the frames defining the aspects of the divine agent is metonymic in a two-fold sense. First, a given frame F is instantiated by some concrete object belonging to it. That is to say, the concrete object generates its own highly salient sub-frame that metonymically evokes the parent frame F in the mind of the observer. But secondly, F itself is but one of many frames interconnected within the divine frame complex. Activating F also metonymically activates the entire frame complex.
- 3.) What can thus be called the ‘combinatorial metonymic nature’ of the concept defining the divine agent allows for partial contradictions or contrasts between aspects of that

⁵⁴Hundley 2013: 81. See also Selz 2004: 39

⁵⁵Pongratz-Leisten 2011b: 139-140.

⁵⁶Pongratz-Leisten 2015a: 126. For more on the *Göttertypentext*, see 6.3.

agent. These contradictory aspects correspond to parts of frames that are not collapsed under blending. They can all exist in the frame complex defining the divinity because they are never evoked simultaneously in visual or linguistic depiction.

- 4.) Prototypes provide a measure of which frames, metonyms, or frame elements appear to constitute the most ‘central’ or ‘basic’ aspects of the divine agent.
- 5.) Because of the loosely associated nature of the frames constituting the divine agent, there are a large number of ‘access points’ for cognitively recognizing the agent in visual or linguistic representation (e.g. reliefs, linguistic tropes, cultic objects, and locations).
- 6.) The divine essence in the frame complex defining a divinity is heterogeneous in nature. One type of essence is generated in the DIVINE PERSON frame and extends to other parts of the complex by blending and metonymy. Another type is found in divine substances such as gold and silver. The heterogeneity of divine essence in the frame complex reflects the diversity of forms of representation that complex contains.

The above points can be illustrated by three examples of what we would characterize as divine enumerative description. While two of the examples are drawn from the very type of text that will be studied in later chapters, the first takes a step back from the textual material to consider the use of Marduk’s statue in the Babylonian New Year Festival. We present this example first because it most concretely illustrates the points outlined above. Moreover, in addition to being a form of divine enumerative description in its own right, the New Year Festival makes clearer some of the issues involving anthropomorphism and performativity that will be taken up in subsequent chapters.

2.2.1 Marduk in the New Year Festival

This first example is a situation where the presence of a god remains focused on a single material anchor that sequentially presents different guises during a procession. This makes clear how a god can be conceived of as a complex of frames whose member frames are instantiated by the same anchor at different times. Although this is not a text-based example of divine enumerative description, it still reflects how one may ‘enumeratively describe’ a god by visually moving through various metonymic representations of it. While textually-based divine enumerative description demonstrates poetic sensibility through things like word choice and syntax, this visually-based example works similarly through choice of physical symbol and flow of the procession.

During the Babylonian New Year Festival, the statue of Marduk is taken out of the Esagil and conducted on a procession that includes a boat trip to Borsippa, a visit to the Akitu house outside of Babylon, and a presentation of the local gods back in the city. As this section will argue, the various aspects of Marduk which are instantiated during the festival reflect a kind of divine enumerative description stemming largely from the Level Two aspects of personhood. The fact that there is a single humanoid anchor for the god throughout the

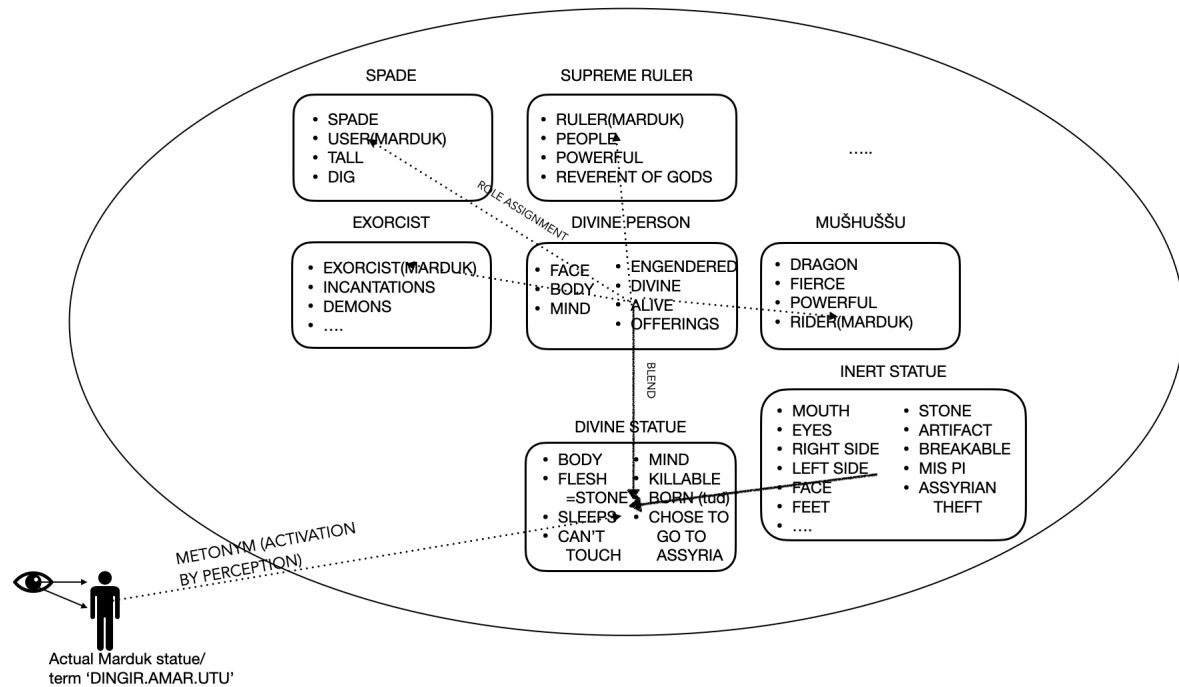


Figure 2.4: The frame complex for Marduk activated in the New Year Festival

ceremony will help simplify what is going on. The basic framework set up by this section will become more complicated in later examples.

Throughout the New Year Festival, the statue of Marduk is not just a locus for the presence of the deity, but rather an anthropomorphic embodiment of it. Figure 2.4 shows a sketch of the entire frame complex defining Marduk (Hundley’s ‘constellation of divinity’). The oval represents the entire complex, while the frames which populate the oval stand for the various aspects of Marduk, all linked by blends (represented by the various arrows). In the bottom part of the oval, the frame defining the Marduk statue as embodiment of the god is the *DIVINE STATUE*. This frame is the result of blending the *DIVINE PERSON* with the *INERT STATUE*, where the latter is the frame defining the Marduk statue purely as a human artifact (before it is ‘activated’ by the *mis pi* ritual). The *INERT STATUE* frame specifies that the statue has a (facsimile) mouth, eyes, feet, etc., is a human artifact, and is breakable, as well as being subject to historical facts like abduction by Sennacherib.

The physical features of the statue readily match and elaborate upon the skeletal aspects of personhood encoded by the *DIVINE PERSON* frame. Comparison between Figure 2.2 and Figure 2.4 shows how the *DIVINE PERSON* frame is a minimal expansion of the Level One features of personhood. The *DIVINE PERSON* is the basic locus of divine personhood discussed in 2.1.2, the main target of petitions and prayers, the source of fear and superhuman powers,

and more generally the distal pole in human-divine social interactions. Hence the frame element OFFERINGS is meant to convey the quasi-dependent relation of the gods upon man via symbolic offerings, while the element DIVINITY indicates the ways the gods go beyond man in their status and capacities. The divinity referred to by this field element is the low-level, phenomenological divinity discussed in 2.1.1, and is meant in a fairly minimal sense. It is the conceptual sprout of more elaborated notions like vastly superior social status, terror, luminosity, heavenly residence, expansive knowledge, and superhuman causal efficacy. It does not necessarily reflect ‘immortality’ since texts like the Atrahasis epic, *Enūma elish*, and the Esagil Chronicle indicate gods can be killed.⁵⁷ The particular choice of what features to build into the DIVINE PERSON frame (e.g. need for offerings versus excluding immortality) is partly a matter of model elegance. For instance, we think it is easier to leave the DIVINE PERSON frame unmarked for mortality or immortality and specify it as an implicit feature of major gods like Enlil and Marduk that they are immortal, then to insist that all anthropomorphic divinities are immortal and make special exceptions for the killable ones. However, other arrangements are possible.

We can see how the DIVINE STATUE frame represents an elaboration of the DIVINE PERSON, particularly in the features of MIND, FACE, and BODY. The statue’s eyes are part of the face, expressing intentionality and presence of mind. Its arms and legs extend the body and indicate prototypical means of environment manipulation. Its mouth indicates speech capacity and need for symbolic food. Even the size and weight of the statue reflect superhuman aspects of divinity such as social importance and value (*kabtu*).

More interesting details emerge when we look at the technical construction of the DIVINE STATUE frame. While blending the DIVINE PERSON with the INERT STATUE does straightforwardly equate certain core features of both frames, non-trivial results also occur for the DIVINE STATUE (Figure 2.5).

The more specific body features of the inert statue straightforwardly elaborate on the body schema of the divine person (e.g. the face acquires eyes, mouth, and nose, the main body gets arms and legs, etc.). New inferences form about the divine person in light of these elaborations, such as how the divine person now uses its nose to breathe air and survive. The fact that the inert statue is a breakable artifact builds off of these new inferences, as the attested means of damaging a statue (defacing or gouging out parts, breaking off appendages, and shattering the whole sculpture) show.⁵⁸ Such acts were interpreted as harming or killing the divine person. Thus the effacement of the statue’s mouth prevents the divine person from eating, and chopping off the head of the statue amounts to killing the divine person.⁵⁹

There are, however, also subtle tensions in the blend between the INERT STATUE and DIVINE PERSON frame. A person is engendered by their individual father, and the same generally holds for anthropomorphic divinities (as shown by divine genealogies). In the

⁵⁷See Schaudig 2012 for a discussion of killable gods in Mesopotamia.

⁵⁸See May 2012: 12ff. for a discussion of the various ways of defacing and destroying statues in Mesopotamia.

⁵⁹Schaudig 2012.

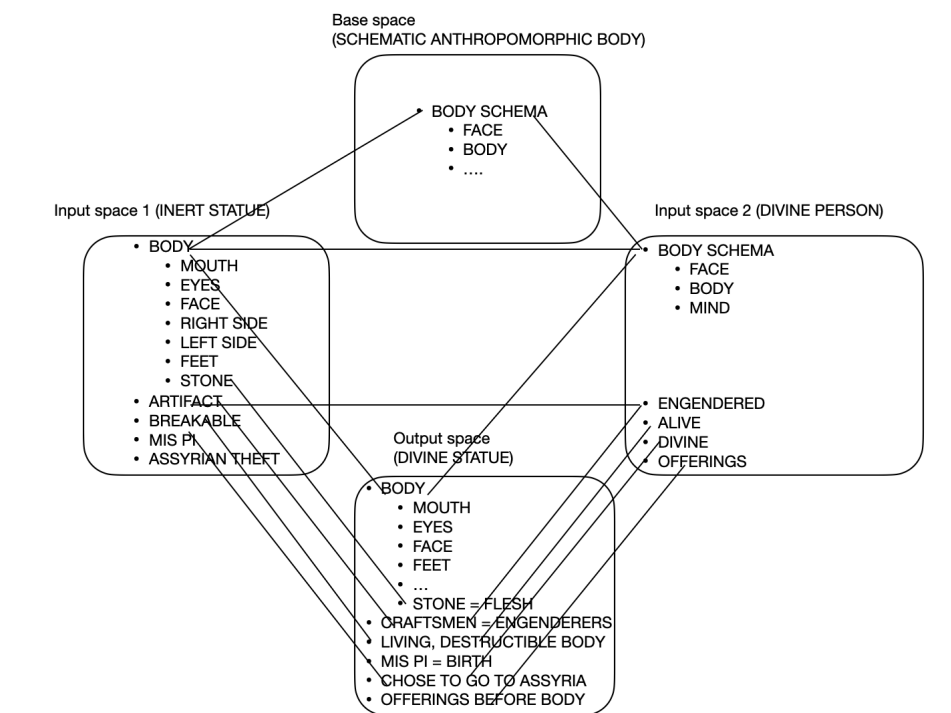


Figure 2.5: The blend for the DIVINE STATUE frame within the Marduk frame complex

blend, the multiple craftsmen who create the statue should correspond to the multiple divine fathers who cooperate to engender the divine person, a thing which does not seem to happen in the mythological texts.⁶⁰ The implied mother in the DIVINE PERSON frame who gives birth to the divine person should have a correlate with a female figure in the INERT STATUE frame, but this also seems not to be the case.⁶¹

Overall, the blending of the DIVINE PERSON frame with the INERT STATUE frame leads to an embodied presence of the god that we call an ‘animate-like’ representation. It is animate because the material anchor for this representation (the statue) is understood as an animate being with the mind of Marduk in it. This follows from the nature of the blend defining the DIVINE STATUE (Figure 2.5). In this blend, when the divine person of Marduk wants

⁶⁰In Atrahasis, several gods including Ea contribute to the material that eventually develops into the first humans, but only the birth goddess Nintu actually gives birth to man (Lambert and Millard 1969: 63). In both the Assyrian and Babylonian tablets describing the *mis pī* ritual, Ea (and no one else) is acknowledged as the father of the divine statue (Walker and Dick 2001: 57, 77). According to CAD A/1 s.v. *alādu*, the active stems of the verb take singular subjects when describing a human object. It is possible, however, that the entire group of craftsmen stands metonymically for the individuals.

⁶¹If the actual ‘birth’ (Sum. *tud*) of the divine person occurs when the ritual expert (who is usually an *āšīpu* - Walker and Dick 2001: 15) concludes the *mis pī* ritual, then the ritual expert would be that female figure.

something, he expresses it directly through the embodied form, and when something happens to the embodied form, it directly affects the divine person. As the discussion proceeds we will see how this kind of representation differs from ‘artifact-like’ representations in other parts of the frame complex defining Marduk.

While the frame complex is embodied by an anthropomorphic statue in the New Year Festival, there are other frames in the complex related to the god’s social roles (such as an exorcist and a supreme ruler) as well as a number of symbolic objects or animals signalling his presence (such as the spade and *mušhuššu* dragon), which are also activated during the festival. The illustration of how these representation are put together is found in the upper part of Figure 2.4.

The fundamental pattern for all the blends involving those frames is that the DIVINE PERSON frame elaborates upon an agent role in the frame. When the agent role is the main constitutive element of the frame, we get what we call an **animate-like** representation. For instance, the EXORCIST frame requires a generic human-like agent to play the role of the exorcist, who is the main element of the frame. As Figure 2.6 shows, the blend involves important contributions from both input spaces. The EXORCIST frame contributes features about the body and its activities. The BODY SCHEMA element of the DIVINE PERSON frame is a more generic version of the EXORCIST BODY element, which specifically includes a MOUTH for chanting incantations. The fact that the exorcist chants incantations against demons also elaborates on the divine person. On the other hand, the DIVINE PERSON contributes divine nature to the output space, since Marduk as exorcist is still divine and receives offerings.

The exorcist blend is like the divine statue blend in that the divine person of Marduk substantially resides in the material anchor, the body of the exorcist. Alternatively, we can say that the exorcist body elaborates on the divine person’s body schema. It is in this sense that the exorcist identity represents an embodiment of the divine person. Other aspects of the Marduk frame complex, however, do not work this way.

An example of this is the SPADE frame, which centers on an artifact used by Marduk in his labors.⁶² Here the frame represents not an elaboration of the divine person’s body schema, but a less salient element. The SPADE frame involves a slightly more complicated blend (see Figure 2.7). Here one can see how the theory of frames and blending does non-trivial work. Although the SPADE frame’s most salient element is the spade tool (noted in bold), there are other elements of that frame including the spade user and what he does with the spade. The specification of a spade user and the actions he does with the spade constitute some of the **affordances** of the object, i.e. ways that the object proves relevant to us as embodied subjects with certain basic needs, desires, and capabilities.⁶³ Indeed, affordances are so fundamental to our perception of the world they form part of almost every frame. While for certain objects the user-relevant actions, provisions, and required agent properties

⁶²The spade (*marru*) was primarily a tool used for digging out and dredging canals, consistent with Marduk’s early identity as a canal god (Oshima 2006).

⁶³The theory of affordances was initially developed by James Gibson (see Gibson 1966, Gibson 1977).

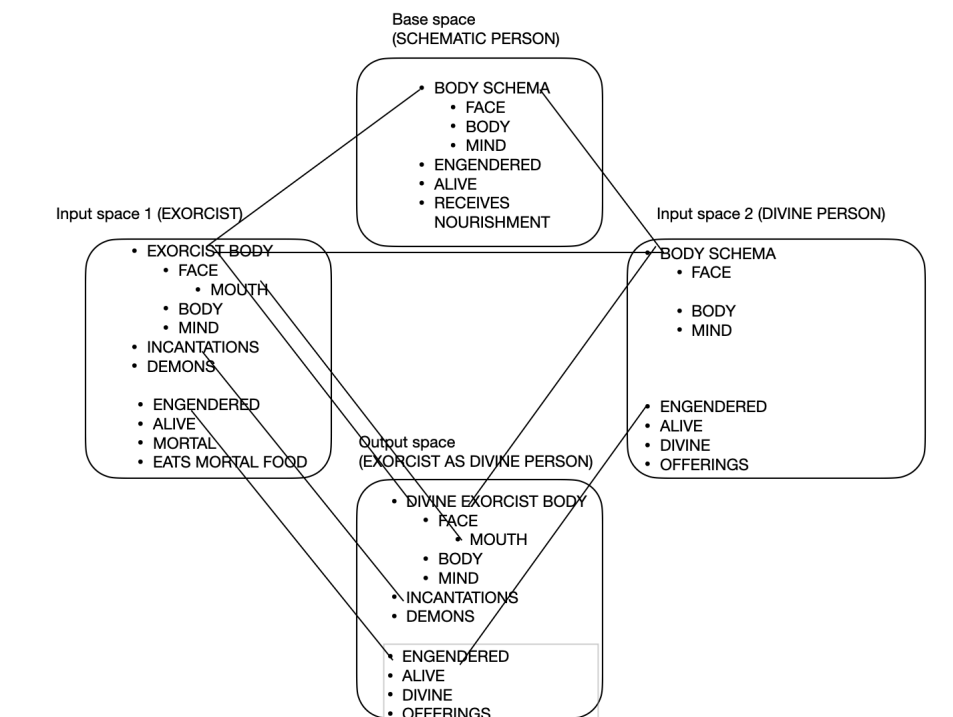


Figure 2.6: Detailed illustration of how the DIVINE PERSON frame for Marduk blends into the role of exorcist.

they afford are fairly vague (e.g. small rocks can be used by anyone for bashing, for standing on, for throwing, for weighing things down), culturally specific artifacts determine frames whose affordances, in particular the role of user, are highly marked. It is precisely the role of spade user that serves as the elaboration site for the DIVINE PERSON frame, i.e. it is key role which pairs with the role-filler of the divine person, and the link that incorporates the SPADE frame into the divine frame complex for Marduk. At the same time, the material anchor of the SPADE frame is not the spade user but the spade itself. Because of this, we call the associated representation of the divinity **artifact-like**, as it centers on an artifact rather than an animate agent.

The frames in Figure 2.4 that circle around the DIVINE PERSON count as either animate-like and artifact-like. The SUPREME RULER frame, which represents Marduk as ruler of all mankind, or the gods (or both) is animate-like. The MUŠHUŠŠU frame, however, is artifact-like because Marduk generally stands on *mušhuššu* dragons or uses them in some other vehicular capacity.⁶⁴ One may ask whether a certain arbitrary distinction is being introduced here that distinguishes animate-like and artifact-like representations. It is possible to say,

⁶⁴See Wiggerman, RIA *Mušhuššu*, section 3.4.

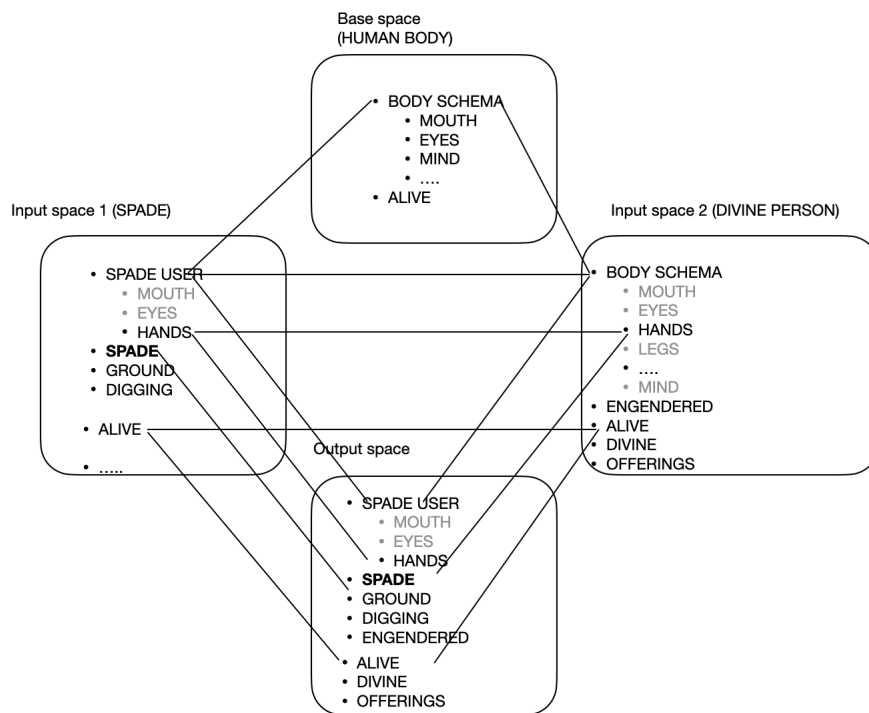


Figure 2.7: Detailed illustration of how the DIVINE PERSON frame for Marduk blends into the role of spade user

for instance, that the SPADE frame involves an animate user and we could just as well call it the SPADE USER frame, claiming that the frame centers on the agent rather than the artifact. The difference between the two is that the visual depictions of Marduk tend to feature the spade itself as the material anchor rather than Marduk as a spade user. There is even a divine spade of Marduk (*Marru-ša-Marduk*) attested in the Old Babylonian period at Kutalla (near Ur), upon which legal parties would swear oaths.⁶⁵ In such a context the divine spade should be seen as an artifact-like representation even though it is also regarded as divine.

This does not mean the Marduk frame complex does not feature a representation of the god in the capacity of a spade user. Hymns and literary works from the Middle Babylonian Period and later depict Marduk as a god of waterways and springs, and the fact that the spade appears in Middle Babylonian *kudurrus* and cylinder seals next to Marduk as the latter stands on top of a *mušhuššu* dragon, all suggest that Marduk was once thought to use the spade (Figure 2.8).⁶⁶ These examples might justify including a CANAL DIGGER frame in

⁶⁵Frayne and Stuckey 2021: 204.

⁶⁶See Oshima 2006 for the collected evidence for Marduk as a canal digger.



Figure 2.8: *Kudurru* from the time of Meli-šipak (ca. 1186-1172). From King, BBst., Pl. XXI.

the Marduk frame complex that works like the EXORCIST frame’s embodied, animate-like representation. However, when appearing by itself the spade is a metonymic, artifact-like representation of a qualitatively different nature.

A more general comment should be made here about mixed cases between artifact-like and animate-like representations involving divinized forces of nature that are used as weapons by gods.⁶⁷ Such cases fall on a spectrum between the artifact-like and animate-like ends. Towards the animate end of this spectrum are the four destructive winds wielded by Marduk in *Enūma elish*. Line 1:105 states that they are begotten (*uwallid*)⁶⁸ by An, and thus they can be considered animate divinities according to the criteria of 2.1.1. They may also be considered secondary agents because in 4:42 Marduk stations or arranges them (*uštešbita*)

⁶⁷Note that as far as the category of ‘divine weapons’ goes, we are being more strict in meaning than how the term is sometimes understood in the literature. It is not enough that a weapon be habitually used by an anthropomorphic divinity to count as a divine weapon. The object itself should be viewed in light of the criteria of 2.1.1 (referred to by divine determinative, receives offerings, or behaves in a ‘human-like’ way). This allows for many divinized weapons in the cuneiform record that are inanimate objects (e.g. real bows and axes in temples), but fewer literary examples involving natural forces.

⁶⁸See CAD A/1 *alādu* 2 a).

around Tiamat to prevent her escape.⁶⁹ The affordance in this case (if any) is rather weak, essentially reflecting the god’s ability to order or compel another animate being to attack a target. Another example is the personified mace Šar-ur ‘multitude mower’ in *Lugal-e*, which itself commands the storm flood and initiates acts of destruction.⁷⁰ On the other hand, towards the artifact end of the spectrum is Marduk’s storm-flood mentioned in *Enūma elish* 4:49. The god is said to take up (*išši*) the item, which is explicitly called a weapon (*kakku*).⁷¹ Yet in *Enūma elish* there is little indication the storm-flood is divine in the sense of 2.1.1, other than more indirect associations such as the flood as a cause of great terror in men,⁷² the frequent divination of rivers, floods as being caused by the great gods and often a way of expressing their anger at men. In summary, we may say that forces of nature that are divinized in the narrow sense of 2.1.1 are harder to represent as true instruments. Only in a looser associative sense do they become instrumental.

Let us bring the discussion back to the New Year Festival. As we have it now the Marduk frame complex (i.e. divine frame complex for Marduk) has a conceptual core in the DIVINE PERSON frame, which blends with more peripheral frames to produce both animate-like and artifact-like representations. These representations can be successively activated during the course of the procession, depending on what scene is being performed. If we follow the schedule of the festival reconstructed for Hellenistic Babylon in Nisannu,⁷³ Marduk (i.e. his divine statue) spends Day 1 to 3 in the Esagil where he is the recipient of offerings and prayers. One of these prayers proclaims him ruler of mankind, diviner, and hero who subjugates the recalcitrant.⁷⁴ Here the DIVINE STATUE, SUPREME RULER, DIVINER, and WARRIOR frames are activated. On Day 4 *Enūma elish* is recited, which activates (among other things) what we might call the SLAYER OF TIAMAT frame. This is effectively a blend of Marduk’s DIVINE STATUE frame with the NINURTA frame from the Anzu epic and the BAAL frame from the Ugaritic Baal Cycle. The most important contribution from the BAAL

⁶⁹Lambert 2013: 89 translates *uštešbita* as ‘stationed’ while the edition in eBL translates it as ‘deployed’. In SB Anzu 2:31 there is a similar situation with Ninurta and the seven evil winds using the same verb form. Annus 2001: 47 translates the form as ‘harness’ while the CAD translates it as ‘hitched in a team’ (CAD § s.v. *šabātu* 12 a 4’). In both SB Anzu and *Enūma elish*, the context of the form indicates the winds are seen as part of the god’s arsenal even as they have some agency of their own.

⁷⁰šar₂-ur₃-e im an-še₃ ba-te uḡ₃-bi sag₂ ba-ab-du₁₁ (van Dijk 1983: 83, line 253).

⁷¹The item here may, however, actually be meant as more of a conventional weapon or even creature, since the Ninurta/Ningirsu tradition behind this trope also associates the flood with a bow, mace, or serpent (*šibbu*). The possible figurative interpretations for the deluge in this passage are numerous (see Westenholz 1996: 195ff. and CAD A/1 s.v. *abūbu* 3b). Here, however, we are assuming the literal reading of an actual flood.

⁷²Note however that in SB Gilgamesh 11.14 the Deluge as a cosmic event is a terror even to the gods (*ilū iplahū abūbam-ma*).

⁷³Linssen 2004: 78-86 provides a synopsis of events reconstructed from various texts, in particular Tablets 22 and 23 of the ritual series describing the Hellenistic New Year Festival at Babylon. See also RAcc. 127-154. In what follows, references to those tablets follow Linssen’s edition of them (Linssen 2004: 215-237).

⁷⁴Linssen, lines 6-32.

frame is the idea of *Chaoskampf* against a monster personified as the ocean (Akk. *tiāmtu*).⁷⁵ On Day 5 hymns are sung to Marduk which equate the god with various stars and planets, including Jupiter, Sirius, and the sun.⁷⁶ As we will argue in 2.2.3, these kinds of astral representations should be understood as animate-like representations, i.e. embodiments of the divine person in the celestial body. Still on Day 5, Marduk is said to ritually clean the temple space, activating the EXORCIST frame.⁷⁷ Later the king enters the Esagil and is subjected to the High Priest's ritual humiliation before Marduk. The god may be represented here simply via the DIVINE STATUE or perhaps a special CITY GOD OF BABYLON frame. On Day 11, Marduk decrees the destinies for the new year, evoking what we call the DIRECTOR OF DESTINIES frame (see 2.2.2).

The above represents only a portion of the various frames activated within Marduk's frame complex during the New Year Festival. One should note how the various representations fall within what we called the Level Two aspects of Mesopotamian personhood. In general, the Level Two features of personhood are largely metonymic pointers to ideal types and they elaborate the core Level One features of skeletal body and mind. The types of frames evoked during the New Year Festival seem to fit this description, as they are instantiated in a divine statue that is the sole constant during the ceremony (from Marduk's point of view at least). Moreover, we mentioned in 2.1.3 how in the visual domain such Level Two features were spatially (and conceptually) independent from each other. For instance, Gudea's strong-looking arm is separate from his signature hand-clasp and his robe. The flowing beard of Assurnasirpal II in his wall relief is separate from his warrior's pose. An analogous discreteness holds for Marduk in the New Year Festival, save that the space dimension is largely replaced by time. The DIVINE STATUE frame is active at each moment of the festival and reflects the Level One skeletal person. Periodically a Level Two frame is metonymically evoked, such as the SLAYER OF TIAMAT or EXORCIST frame. No two of these frames is at the forefront at the same time. Even when Marduk's divine person is vocally assigned the various astral representations in quick succession, the ritual tablets specify that those equations are to be read out line by line in parallel format, allowing one celestial body to easily replace another in the template of representation. Ultimately it is the very format of the festival's ritual specifications that facilitates the distribution of metonyms across the time dimension as a form of divine enumerative description (Table 2.1).

⁷⁵In arguing for the decomposition of the SLAYER OF TIAMAT frame into components including the BAAL and NINURTA frames, we are making certain assumptions about the person who hears/reads *Enūma elish* and observes the New Year Festival. Namely, we assume that they have the cultural background knowledge of the Ugaritic Baal cycle as well as the Anzu Epic. Yet basic recognition of these frames need not require knowledge of where they originated from historically. What is required is that these aspects of Marduk be recognized as realizing different roles or having different functions of the god. Elite Akkadian scribes would have made this distinction. Even for observers of the festival (or readers of *Enūma elish*) who could not analyze the SLAYER OF TIAMAT frame this way, they would likely have recognized the distinctness of the other guises of Marduk appearing elsewhere during the festival (e.g. exorcist, ruler, star).

⁷⁶Lines 301-316. See also Linssen's remarks about this passage on page 81, fn. 428.

⁷⁷Line 378.

Time	Metonym	Frame
Day 1-3	<i>ina tērtika tahât tērtika</i> (20) You explore the signs in your omens	DIVINER
Day 4	Passages from <i>Enūma elish</i>	SLAYER OF TIAMAT
Day 5	<i>kakkabu pēšu nāš ṣaddi ana kalāma</i> (305) Jupiter, which holds a sign for all	DIVINE STAR (JUPITER)
	<i>šihṭu mušaznin zunni</i> (306) Mercury, which provides rain	DIVINE STAR (MERCURY)
	<i>kayyamānu kakkabu kitti u mīšar</i> (307) Saturn, star of truth and justice	DIVINE STAR (SATURN)
Day 11	^d DIM ₃ .ME.ER.AN.KI.A <i>mušm šimāti</i> (301) ⁷⁸ Dimmerankia, director of destinies	DIRECTOR OF DESTINIES

Table 2.1: Metonymic evocations of various Level Two features of the Marduk frame complex during the New Year Festival. Numbers in parenthesis refer to line numbers in Linssen 2004:215ff.

One may ask where the Level Three features of Marduk’s identity are found in the New Year Festival. These would be things identifying Marduk as the (unique) chief god of Babylon. As such, they are scattered throughout the eleven days of the festival. The Day 5 ceremonies involving the ritual humiliation of the king before Marduk’s divine statue feature a heavy focus on these features, as they implicitly recount the biographical history of Marduk’s statue and his city in the post-Kassite period. Sections of the *Enūma elish* recitation on Day 4 proclaiming Marduk the son of Ea and the ruler of Babylon should likewise be included. The fact that the divine statue resides in the Esagil and may be adorned with identifying clothing also counts.⁷⁹ One can see how these individualizing details reflect a combination of strategies from visual iconography and narrative biography. For example, the physical and temporal location of the divine statue, as well as whatever unique visual features it has, reflect the visual strategy of the Neo Assyrian reliefs. On the other hand, some of the narrative elements in the performative ritual (e.g. scene involving the humiliation of the king before the statue) reflect the biographical strategy of Idrimi.

To review the main arguments of this section: the representations of Marduk during the Babylonian New Year Festival illustrate how one can conceptualize a divinity as a complex of frames centered around the divine person. The member frames of this complex can mostly be classified as either animate-like or artifact-like depending on whether they instantiate an embodied presence of the divine person or an artifact-like, metonymic one. The animate-

⁷⁸See Linssen 2004: 83 fn. 442.

⁷⁹For garments of the Marduk statue, see e.g. A. L. Oppenheim 1949: 172, Livingstone 1989: 85, 87, 89 (Marduk Ordeal), and Matsushima 1993.

like member frames constitute archetypes or ideal roles. The actual events of the New Year Festival centering on the divine statue illustrate the predominance of the Level Two features in representing a divinity, which as they play out in time form an example of divine enumerative description.

The next section will consider an example of divine enumerative description in another medium, namely literary epic.

2.2.2 Marduk in *Enūma elish* 1:79-108

The depiction of Marduk in Tablet 1, lines 79-108 of *Enūma elish*⁸⁰ is a clear example of divine enumerative description where both the god's divine person and his Level Two features receive substantial elaboration. In contrast to the Marduk statue example discussed in 2.2.1, here we are dealing strictly with textual representation. Table 2.2 shows a representative selection of lines from the passage.

The roles and properties in Table 2.2 are more heterogeneous in nature than what was discussed in 2.2.1. One reason for this is that the representations are purely linguistic in nature. This allows one to elaborate on the DIVINE PERSON frame directly by specifying core psychological and even physical attributes which are based in the Level One divine person. For example, line 97 (which calls Marduk wise) and line 100 (which gives him long limbs) can be seen as elaborations on the divine person itself. The other properties belong to Level Two. Some of them are metonymically evoked just as in 2.2.1. Line 96 says Marduk speaks in flames (*šaptišu ina šutābuli girra ittānṣah*), a metonym for the EXORCIST frame. Line 88 says Marduk was 'mighty at birth' (*uṭṭulat šitašu*), which metonymically evokes the NINURTA frame.

The resulting frame complex is shown in Figure 2.9.⁸² The figure can be thought of as an illustration of how a reader or hearer of lines 79-108 evokes and elaborates on the divine frame complex of Marduk upon reading through the passage. The lower left corner shows how the reader or hearer's encounter with the phrase *ina qereb apsī ibbani Marduk* metonymically evokes the basic DIVINE PERSON frame in the center, which is then elaborated with certain core physical and mental characteristics enumerated by the passage.

The divine person supplies the anthropomorphic agent who fills the appropriate role slots in the surrounding frames around the edge of the figure, indicated by the dotted arrows going from the center frame to the MARDUK term in bold. These peripheral frames represent the various Level Two guises of the god. Some of them (such as DIRECTOR OF DESTINIES) are

⁸⁰Working from the edition in Lambert 2013.

⁸¹The 'son' is understood to be son of Ea. This reading follows Lambert 2013 and the eBL edition in contrast to Talon 2005 and Kammerer and Metzler 2012, who translate the line 'son of Shamash, Shamash of the gods.' Among Lambert's arguments (page 164), there is a rough parallel to this line in 6:127 given by *lū māru šamši ša ilāni* 'Indeed, he is the son, Shamash of the gods.' Moreover, since Marduk is clearly established as the son of Ea, there would be a conflict in asserting he was also the son of Shamash.

⁸²From here on role assignments will sometimes be abbreviated by parentheses.

Line No.	Text	Role/Property
79-80	<i>ina kišši šimāti...uštarhi</i> <i>apkal ilāni</i>	director of destinies apkallu of the gods
81	<i>ina qereb apsi ibbani</i>	born in the apsu
83	<i>ibnāšū-ma Ea abūšu</i>	son of Ea
85	<i>īteniḡ-ma šerret Ištarāti</i>	nurseling of goddesses
86	<i>pulhāta ušmalli</i>	full of fear
87	<i>šamhat nabnissu</i> <i>šarir nāš īnišu</i>	luxuriant form flashing eyes
88	<i>uttulat šitašu</i>	mighty at birth
91	<i>uštašbīšū-ma šunnat ilūssu</i>	perfect godhood
92	<i>šušqū mādiš</i>	lofty
93-94	<i>nukkulā mīnātišu</i> <i>hasāsiš lā naṭā amāriš pašqā</i>	well-shaped limbs that are difficult to conceive of
95	<i>erba ināšu erba uznāšu</i>	sees/hears all
96	<i>šaptišu ina šutābuli Girra ittanpah</i>	speaks in flames
97	<i>irtebū erba hasīsā</i>	wise
98	<i>īnān kīma šuātu ibarra gimrāti</i>	sees all
99	<i>šūtur lanšu</i>	perfect form
100	<i>mešrēssu šuttuhā</i>	long limbs
102	<i>mār šamši šamši ša ilāni</i>	son, Shamash, Shamash of the gods ⁸¹
103	<i>labiš melammi ešret ilāni</i>	dressed in aura of the ten gods
104	<i>pulhātu hamšassina elišu kamrā</i>	fifty dreads piled upon him
106	<i>qatuššu umalli</i>	four winds in his hand

Table 2.2: Functions and roles of Marduk in *Enūma elish* 1:79-108

integrated into the divine frame complex simply by filling a single required role via the divine person, with little in the way of systematic mapping. Other guises, however, are integrated through more expansive metaphorical mappings or blends that specifically target Level Two of the personhood model.⁸³ Thus line 103 says Marduk is dressed in the aura of the gods (*labiš melammi ešret ilāni*), instantiating the metaphor LIGHT IS CLOTHING. Line 102 calls Marduk the Shamash of the gods (*šamši ša ilāni*) while line 80 states he is the sage of the gods (*apkal ilāni*).

Note in addition that the maps integrating the peripheral frames with the divine person do not necessarily rely only on a salient semantic compatibility between them. Morpho-

⁸³Within the framework of conceptual blending, both these possibilities represent opposite poles on a spectrum of possible forms of blending. Rather than seeing them as discrete categories, one should see them as part of a rough continuum. For more on this, see Sullivan and Sweetser 2010.

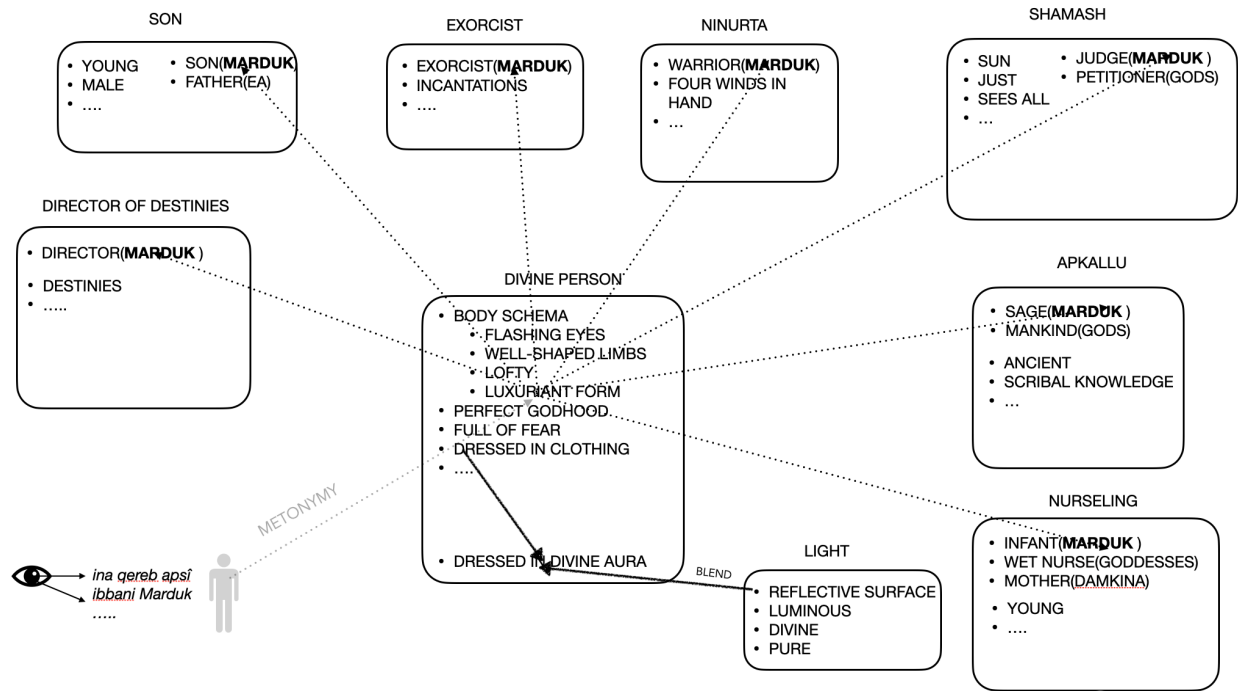


Figure 2.9: The representation of the divine person in *Enūma elish* 1:79-108

syntactic configuration can also play a role in facilitating the map. Both of the last two expressions discussed above are examples of the so-called XYZ construction, a grammatical pattern that will be discussed in 5.1 in the context of the syncretic Ninurta hymn. This construction facilitates a metaphorical role assignment belonging to Level Two. For example, the blend evoked by line 102 (Shamash of the gods) is shown in Figure 2.10. Note that for this metaphorical role assignment, it is the JUDGE role of Shamash that dominates the blend with the DIVINE PERSON frame.

Overall there is more ambiguity in some of the tropes in the *Enūma elish* passage as to whether they elaborate on the divine person, specify an ideal role or archetype, or do something in-between. The phrase ‘mighty at birth’ (*uṭṭulat šitašu*) might be taken as a description of who Marduk is at his anthropomorphic core, prior to any particular roles he adopts. We think it better describes the Ninurta role because the context of lines 79-108 is partially about how Marduk has the necessary qualities to challenge Tiamat (the analogue of Anzu). A similar question holds for line 93 (well-shaped limbs) and 87 (flashing eyes). Do these describe basic properties of the divine person or are they metonyms for certain roles? These two phrases as descriptions of a god are not duplicated elsewhere, although synonymous expressions describing divinities do occur.⁸⁴

⁸⁴Agušaja also has her figure praised (*šunnât miniātīm*) in Agušaja A (= VS 10, 214). See the recent

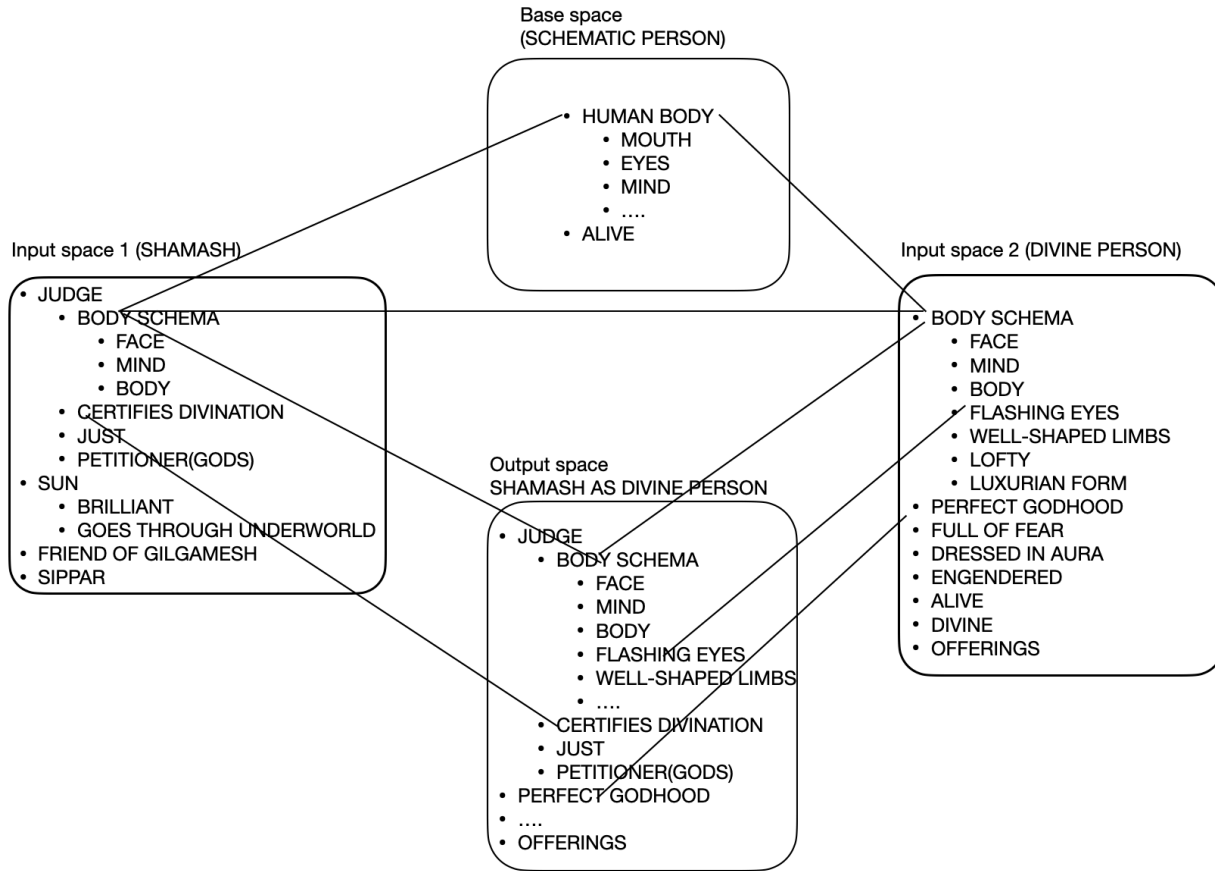


Figure 2.10: Blend describing the metaphorical role for Marduk as ‘Shamash of the gods’ in *Enūma elish* 1:79-108

One may ask what the Level Three features of personhood in this representation are. This may depend on whether the passage has a specific performance context. In the case of a recitation of *Enūma elish* during the New Year Festival, one might consider the divine statue itself as the unique referent. The description of Marduk’s body in 1:79-108 then becomes the description of the statue. In the absence of such a scenario, however, it would seem that it is the genealogical information of the passage that uniquely identifies the figure. The text establishes that Ea and Damkina produced Marduk in the Apsu near the beginning of creation, and that his grandfather is An. This distinguishes the figure from Ninurta, who in the SB Anzu epic is the son of Enlil and an offspring of the Ekur.

edition at Sources for Early Akkadian Literature, SEAL no. 7493, rev. col. v 36’ and 40’ as well as the edition in Pohl 2022: 124-175. Under the assumption that the form *šarir* in *Enūma elish* 1:87 is derived from *šarāru* B ‘to flash, to flit’, the expression *šarir nāš īnišu* may reflect the idea of shooting stars or the flitting/flashing of demons (see CAD Š s.v. *šarāru* B).

This section has provided an example of a textual depiction of divinity that works much like a visual one in its use of divine enumerative description. Unlike the Marduk statue of the previous section, however, the linguistic medium here affords greater flexibility in depicting the divine person's psychological characteristics as well as in using metaphors to describe Level Two roles and functions. Indeed, metaphor and blending are prominent ways that new roles and functions can be added to the frame complex defining a divinity. The final example of this chapter illustrates this last point.

2.2.3 Ishtar in the Great Ishtar Hymn

The examples in 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 show how divine enumerative description functions for anthropomorphic representations of divinity. However, those examples fail to highlight the ways Mesopotamian conceptions of divinity can center on non-anthropomorphic images. In more sophisticated examples of divine enumerative description, a material anchor may be present in the form of an artifact, animal shape, or celestial body. For celestial bodies in particular the cognitive relation of the material anchor to the rest of a divinity's frame complex is not transparent. Is a star meant to stand in for the divine person? How does it relate to the idea that the stars are the 'heavenly writing' of the gods? The example we present in this section is meant to provide answers to these questions, highlighting how even when the objects being represented seem quite heterogeneous, divine enumerative description is indeed enumerating aspects of a single divinity.

Our example comes from the depiction of Ishtar in the Great Ishtar Hymn. Some of the frames evoked by the hymn were discussed in 1.2.1 (cf. Figure 1.3). Table 2.3 lists more of these frames. Looking at the table, one can see there are multiple metaphorical roles for Ishtar in the hymn. For instance, in line 14 the goddess is said to be an icon or statue within a place of worship.⁸⁵ We take this as an animate-like representation embodying the divine person in the icon. A complication arises in line 52, where Ishtar is called a raging bull. In our interpretation of the blend underlying this expression, there is no default correlate in the DIVINE PERSON frame for the bull's horns, as the horns are the weapons the bull uses to attack its enemies. But given that the meaning of line 52 stresses how Ishtar is angry and impetuous in how she destroys her enemies on the battlefield, the blend effectively requires that there be an element in the DIVINE PERSON frame matching the bull's horns and mapping to the output space. The divine person of Ishtar thus acquires in this context weapons functioning like the horns of a bull (e.g. used in close combat, closely connected to the body, possibly coming in pairs). This is an example of an **emergent property** of a blend, where the combination of the two frames generates new structure in the output. This new structure also back-projects to the DIVINE PERSON frame, as shown in Figure 2.11.⁸⁷

⁸⁵See Zerneck 2011: 154.

⁸⁶*sukkū ešrēti nēmeda ū parakkī upaqqu kâšī* 'shrines, sanctuaries, cult-platforms, and daises heed only you.' Cf. CAD S s.v. *sukku* b and CAD P s.v. *puqu* 1.

⁸⁷An alternative interpretation for the blend is that the bull horns correspond to a horned crown worn

Line No.	Text	Role/Property
2	<i>šarrati kullat dadmē muštēširat tenēšēti</i>	Mesopotamian Ruler
4	<i>rabû qurdūki</i>	Hero
5	<i>nannarat šamê u eršeti</i>	Morning star
5	<i>mārat Sin</i>	Daughter of Sin
6	<i>muttabbilat kakkī šākinat tuqunti</i>	Warrior
8	<i>šūpū narbūki</i>	Manifest greatness
12	<i>Gušea ša tuqunta halpat labšat hurbaša</i>	Terrifying
14	<i>sukkū ešrēti nēmeda u parakkī upaqqū kâši</i>	Mesopotamian idol
25	<i>dīn baḥūlāti ina kitti u mišari tadinnī attī</i>	Judge
26	<i>ašar tappallasī iballuṭ mītu itebbi maršu</i>	Reviver of the ill
31	<i>labbat Igigi</i>	Lioness of the Igigi
33	<i>pētāt pusummē ša kalīšina ardāti</i>	Goddess of eroticism
35	<i>namirtu dipār šamê u eršeti</i>	Brilliant
39	<i>ilat etlūti</i>	Ishtar cult ⁸⁵
39	<i>lā ilammadu milikšu mamman</i>	Counselor
52	<i>rīmu šabbasū</i>	Raging bull
93	<i>adi mati bēltī raḫbātī-ma uzzuzat kabtatki</i>	Angry

Table 2.3: Roles and properties for Ishtar evoked within the Great Ishtar Hymn

The crucial difference between this representation of Ishtar and the *Enūma elish* representation of Marduk is the nature of the material anchor it rests on. The Great Ishtar Hymn is a *šūilla*, a prayer to a god seeking the fulfillment of a wish of a worshipper. It is meant to be recited by a ritual expert at dawn on behalf of a client making a petition to the goddess. The recitation is preceded by the purification of a ritual space and concluded with an expression of thanks to the goddess. These actions delimit a special interpretive context for the recitation indicating it is a performative metaphor, and in that setting the newly risen morning star of Venus becomes a material anchor for the frame complex defining Ishtar.

by major Mesopotamian divinities. Since horned crowns are not a universal feature in representations of the gods, and since the divine person of a god is meant to be a generic, schematic outline of divinity as a human-like agent (2.1.2), the output space would generate the horned crown as an emergent property.

Note that this is an instance where we should actually distinguish between lexicalized frames and dynamically generated mental spaces. In 1.3.1 we discussed Kövecses' hierarchy of cognitive structures in which many, if not most, frames are 'lexicalized' in the sense that they are stored long-term in the mind and evoked on a given occasion as inputs for a mental space blend. The modifications to the input mental spaces arising from the blend (e.g. emergence) do not necessarily feed back and alter the permanent structure of the corresponding frames, particularly if the blend is novel or highly unusual. Repeated invocation of such a blend can, however, lead to permanent modification. Given the close connection between Ishtar and raging bulls (e.g. SB Gilgamesh), her DIVINE PERSON frame may already encode 'horn-like' weapons.

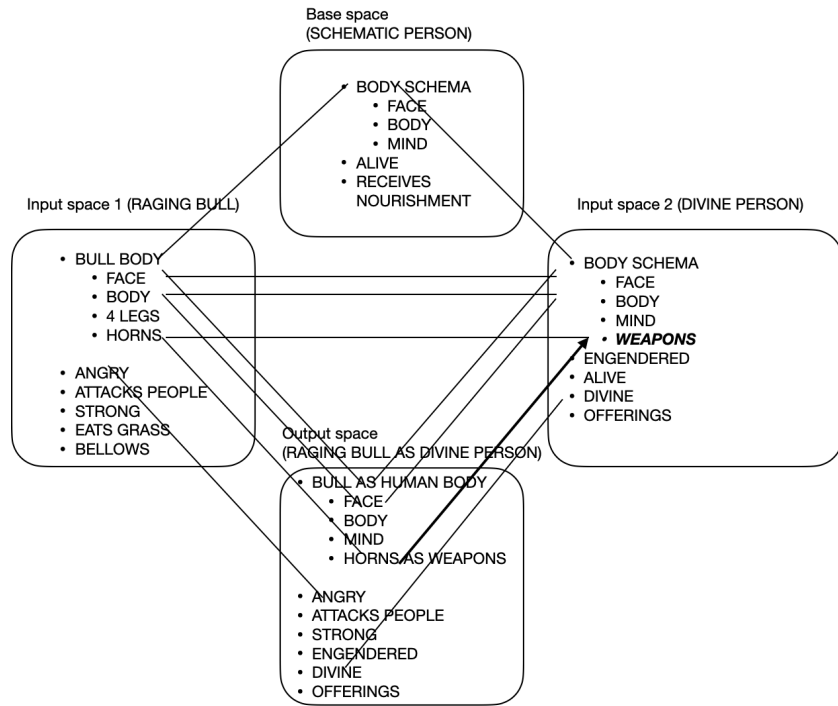


Figure 2.11: The ‘bull’ representation of Ishtar in the Great Ishtar Hymn

Figure 2.12 illustrates how the activation of the frame complex would work during the *šuilīla* performance. Most of the diagram has been shaded in grey to focus on the blend and material anchors present during the performance. The petitioner or ritual expert sees the physical star of Venus, which is a metonym for the MORNING STAR frame. Like the INERT STATUE frame in the Marduk statue example, the MORNING STAR frame represents Venus as a celestial body only. It should be noted, though, that given the Mesopotamian understanding of the heavens, the MORNING STAR frame is more skeletal than the INERT STATUE frame. For instance, unlike with statues, the MORNING STAR frame does not clearly specify a material out of which the celestial body is made. As with the DIVINE PERSON frame, we should thus think of the MORNING STAR frame as specifying a schematic body with the physical and phenomenal properties of the celestial body (rises in the east, is relatively bright, etc.).

The performative context of the ritual triggers a blend between the MORNING STAR and DIVINE PERSON frame to produce the DIVINE STAR frame, which is how the star acquires divine presence during the ritual (Figure 2.12). As with the Marduk statue example, it is because the divine person becomes embodied in the star that the representation counts as animate-like. Other roles for Ishtar, such as the supreme ruler and judge, are satisfied by the divine person on a near literal level. Frames such as the BULL, however, involve a more complicated blend (see below). Unlike the Marduk statue example, the morning star is a

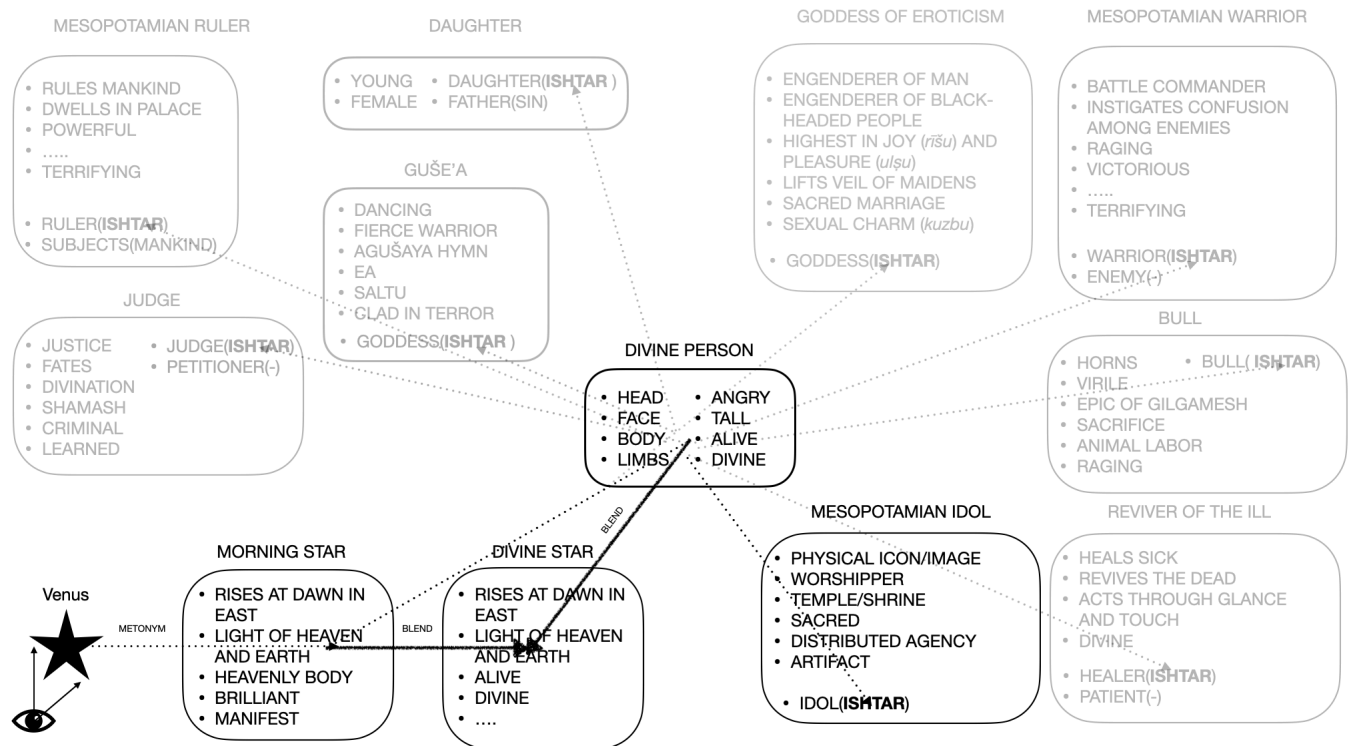


Figure 2.12: The representation of Ishtar in the Great Ishtar Hymn

material anchor that is not anthropomorphic in basic appearance, but rather becomes anthropomorphic as an animate-like representation. At the same time, it stands alongside other anthropomorphic and theriomorphic representations which are only linguistically evoked by the *šulla*.

The most interesting aspect of the morning star, however, is the fact that it is responsible for two different roles within the frame complex, one animate-like and one artifact-like. This follows from the way celestial bodies function in Mesopotamian astronomy. On the one hand, Francesca Rochberg has shown that heavenly bodies in Mesopotamia were often considered divine according to the diagnostic criteria laid out in 2.1.1. Besides actually being labeled with the main name of a god (Sin, Ishtar, Shamash, etc.), their general written designation could also be accompanied by the DINGIR determinative. They could be the objects of address in prayers (e.g. the OB Prayer to the Gods of the Night), had their own agency over terrestrial affairs, could pronounce divine legal verdicts, could receive offerings, and were sometimes explicitly said to be gods (*ilu*).⁸⁸ For these reasons the morning star can function as an embodiment of Ishtar’s divine person, i.e. serve as an animate-like representation.

⁸⁸Rochberg 2009.

Yet as Rochberg also notes, celestial bodies could play a more functional or derivative role within the broader sense of Mesopotamian godhood. In our terms, this amounts to an artifact-like representation. As *Enūma elish* 5:1-2 and the concluding section of *Enūma Anu Enlil* 22 show,⁸⁹ the constellations (*lumaššu*) were seen as the ‘likeness’ (*tamšīlu*) of the great gods. Certain passages elsewhere elaborate on what this means. A hymn to Marduk speaks of the god taking on the name SAG.ME.GAR (Jupiter) when visible (*šūpū*),⁹⁰ and a list of star names calls Marduk a bearer of signs for the inhabited world.⁹¹ Note that like *šalmu*, the concept of *tamšīlu* connotes an asymmetric matching of the properties of one thing to the normative ideals and functions embodied in another.⁹² Indeed, the above statements about Marduk and Jupiter indicate that the celestial body (Marduk as Jupiter) derives its status relative to a more central, anthropomorphic locus of divinity (the gods who give the sign). This is very much like Guthrie’s notion of secondary agency, where the artwork serves as a carrier or substitute for social agency. Within the Great Ishtar Hymn itself, the morning star may have such secondary agency as a signaler of battle-strife. This is, at least, one way to take the metaphor in line 9, where Ishtar is said to be *kakkab tanūqāti muštamhišat ahhē mitgurūti* ‘star of battle-cries who makes harmonious brothers fight one another.’ According to the CAD, *tanūqātu* generally refers to shouting in the heat of battle.⁹³ Given that both the morning star and the occurrence of strife and battle feature regularly in Mesopotamian omens,⁹⁴ line 9 may mean that the appearance of the morning star in the heavens heralds strife and battle on earth. In this case, the morning star serves as a material anchor for an artifact-like representation.

A question arises here about a potential logical conflict between these animate-like and artifact-like representations of a celestial body. It is unusual to regard the divine person of a major deity like Marduk, Shamash, Ninurta, or Ishtar as a passive sign, since such deities are usually seen as autonomous agents. How can an autonomous god be ‘made’ into a sign for humans? Yet the celestial body associated with that god seems to represent both possibilities. This issue appears elsewhere. A letter to the Assyrian king from the exorcist Marduk-šakin-šumi discusses how *šuilla* prayers were directed to the moon (conventionally an astral deity) even as the exorcist also speaks of an impending observation of the moon (astronomical omen).⁹⁵ On the other hand, *Enūma Anu Enlil* sometimes describe the eclipse of the moon (astronomical object) in metaphorical terms of the moon god being in grief (*lumun libbi*), mourning (*adirtu*), or distress (*maruštu*).⁹⁶

This observation may seem to be a problem for the conceptual validity of the divine

⁸⁹Rochberg 1988: 271 (passage found in witness E only).

⁹⁰ABRT 1, 30: 41-42.

⁹¹*nāš šaddi ana dadmē* (5R 46, No. 1:39). See also CAD § s.v. *šaddu* b 2’.

⁹²Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik 2015a: 24, n. 56; Pongratz-Leisten 2015a: 120.

⁹³CAD T s.v. *tanūqātu*.

⁹⁴See e.g. Virolleaud, ACh. fascicle 7 and Supp. Ishtar.

⁹⁵SAA 10, 240: obv. 6 and rev. 14-15. Cf. Rochberg 2009: 81. The moon is designated both times by ^d30, a common representation for the moon in astral contexts.

⁹⁶See Rochberg 2004: 167ff. Rochberg argues that these metaphorical expressions refer to astronomical

frame complex. However, this is not actually a problem for blends in general, and in fact it highlights how divine enumerative description is a culturally specific and motivated poetic modality. At the technical level, the coexistence of both the animate-like and artifact-like representations in the same frame complex is acceptable because there is no requirement among the various inputs to a blend that they be globally compatible. Whether it is the Grim Reaper or the goddess Ishtar, two different components of a blend may metonymically evoke frames that are not completely compatible with each other because those two frames are never simultaneously conceptualized in the mind. Either one or the other is, or the blend of them both. Attempts to conceive what is the ‘essence’ or point of commonality between the inputs take one back to the base space of the blend.

What is significant about these partial incompatibilities is that divine enumerative description seems eminently suited to working with them. This is, on the one hand, a consequence of the nature of the object being described (the divine frame complex). But the nature of enumerative description also plays a role, one which includes certain aesthetic preferences. Per scribal convention, each line of the description is (ideally) devoted to a single input of the divine frame complex. Although the images evoked by different lines may partially conflict with each other, the fact that the lines together are viewed as an exhaustive, consecutive elaboration of the divinity is taken as sign of their overall coherence. Crudely speaking, the supreme emphasis on the exhaustive nature of the description excuses or perhaps even valorizes the local contradictions within it. The scribe wants to tell us *all* the ways a divinity manifests itself, even if individual items partially contradict with one another.

Regardless of whether it occurs in the Great Ishtar Hymn, the morning star in general can serve as an astral omen. The question then becomes how we formalize this fact within the frame complex defining Ishtar. An answer is provided in Figure 2.13. Much of the divine frame complex has been greyed out to focus only on the blends of five different frames, indicated by the solid black arrows. As the diagram shows, we can specify that the frame complex for a deity with an astral aspect includes a CELESTIAL OMEN frame. This frame has a material anchor in the celestial body itself, as well as roles for the gods as initiators of the omen and a role for mankind as its recipient. We can even go further. Given the very general role the gods play as initiators of omens of all sorts (not just celestial ones), it is economical to express the CELESTIAL OMEN frame as a blend of a more general OMEN frame with the frame for the celestial body as physical object (which is what the MORNING STAR frame stands for in the case of Ishtar). The DIVINE PERSON frame can then satisfy the omen initiator role of CELESTIAL OMEN frame.

The frame-based approach to defining the gods implies that the descriptions for the behavior of the moon in terms of human emotions (e.g. ‘Sin is in mourning’ = lunar eclipse) are generated by a blend between the DIVINE PERSON frame and MORNING STAR frame, yielding the DIVINE STAR frame (Figure 2.14). The map that generates the DIVINE STAR events and do not have a more removed mythological import.

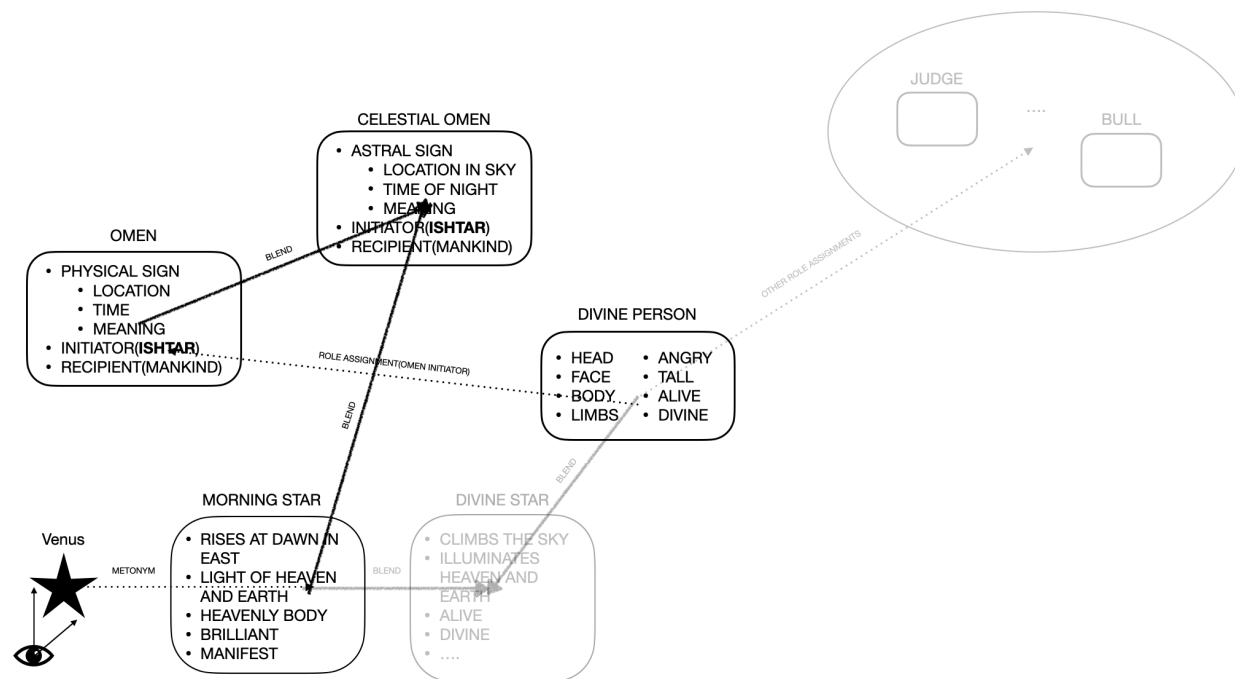


Figure 2.13: The celestial omen representation of Ishtar in the Great Ishtar Hymn. Solid black arrows represent blends into an output frame.

frame is significantly different from that which generates the CELESTIAL OMEN frame. The former is an animate-like metaphorical map that embodies the divine person as the moon. The latter is an artifact-like map which blends the OMEN and MORNING STAR frames, and has the divine person fill the role of omen initiator. ‘Ishtar’ as the divine person has two distinct functions in these maps. Even if one wants to say that when Akkadian scribes read a statement like ‘Sin is in morning’ they understood it as a statement about a celestial omen, that is only true in the same way that they would have imagined Marduk both as exorcist and as a supreme ruler - namely only in part. In the case of the moon, our own intuitions do not separate us from the scribes in presenting a semblance of unity between the CELESTIAL OMEN and DIVINE STAR frames even as in reality they partially conflict. One might even take this ‘confusion’ as an example of how divine enumerative description felt to the scribes themselves, where the question of contradiction never even arose. Regardless, the consequence of the frame-based approach to Mesopotamian divinity is that even within the astral realm, deities can have multiple representations that partly conflict.

Beyond the fact that Ishtar as the divine person has two functions here, the animate-like map is unusual because it looks like the source domain of the metaphorical map is more abstract than the target domain. Celestial phenomena by inter-subjectively accessible.

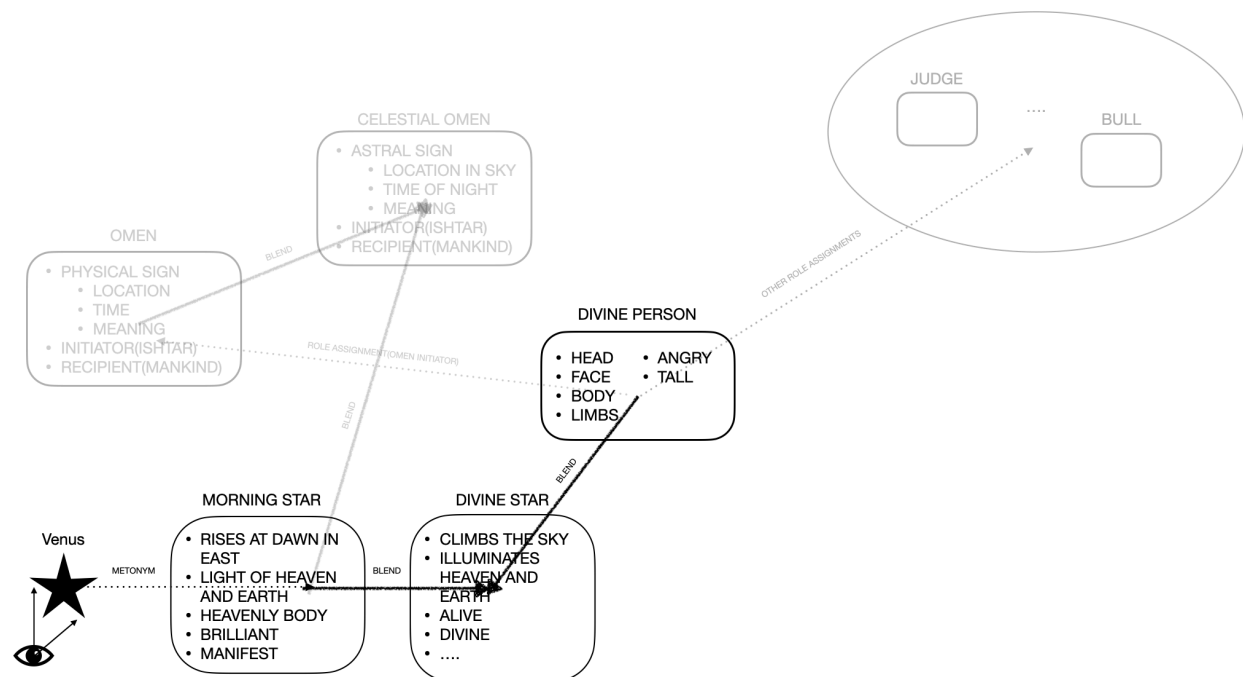


Figure 2.14: Blend facilitating description of celestial object as embodiment of an anthropomorphic divinity

Everyone can see a lunar eclipse and agree they are seeing the same thing. But can everyone just as easily point to something and say it is the divine person in ‘grief’ (*lumun libbi*), ‘mourning’ (*adirtu*), ‘distress’ (*maruštu*), or that it is ‘crying’ (*bakû*)?⁹⁷

One suggestion is that these emotional terms at some point acquired idiomatic astronomical meanings when used in the context of astral divination. The idiomatic usage would have continued even when the original metaphor became opaque.⁹⁸ This, however, still does not explain what the original motivating metaphor was that produced the idioms. Surveying many of the ‘metaphorical’ or ‘idiomatic’ terms in Akkadian used to describe astral phenomena, it appears that multiple linguistic processes are behind such figurative descriptions. On the one hand, the term *ziqnu zaqnat* ‘sports a beard’ is used to describe the radiance of Venus

⁹⁷The status of eclipses as events that are more abstract or difficult to describe in words likely stems in part from the technical manner in which the occultation occurs. In an eclipse the sun or moon begins to show a portion of itself missing or discolored in the shape of a section of a disk (cf. Greek *ekleipsis* < *ek* ‘out’ + *leipein* ‘to leave’). The missing section can grow, shift position, and/or shrink. This dynamic process can be difficult to indicate literally, and invites metaphorical interpretation. For example, in modern Chinese the terms for a solar eclipse (*rìshí* lit. ‘eat the sun’) and lunar eclipse (*yùeshí* ‘eat the moon’) are conventional metaphors of something ‘devouring’ the celestial body in a gradual fashion.

⁹⁸Rochberg 2004: 173.

(where beams of light stream out from the star).⁹⁹ This is presumably an iconic map (2.1.2) in which only the image component of the source domain (beards) is mapped to the target (stars). The light streaming from Venus is said to have the appearance of a beard, as the latter ‘streams’ in one direction from the face. The term *adirtu* ‘mourning’ (< *adāru* ‘to be dark/to be worried’) and its astronomical equivalent for eclipses likely reflect Kövecses’ claim that metaphorical expressions for basic emotions start out as metonyms (1.3.3). Although it has been stated that the primary meaning of *adāru* is ‘to be worried’ while the derivative meaning is ‘to be darkened,’¹⁰⁰ from the standpoint of embodied realism and Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the dependency should be reversed. There is a cross-cultural correlation between negative emotions such as sadness, despondency, and sometimes anger on the one hand and terms for darkness on the other.¹⁰¹ Thus in English one may say *he is in a dark mood = he is sad/despondent* and *there was a tinge of sadness in his voice*.¹⁰² For *adāru*, the derived meaning ‘to be worried’ would arise because in primary scenes feelings of worry are accompanied by a complex of factors such as lack of light, limited openness, and low energy.¹⁰³ What is initially the metonym of darkness for the entire frame of sadness/worry within a context of darkness thus becomes a correlation-based metaphor (1.2.3). The term *maruštu* may be the feminine form of the adjective *waršu* ‘dirty,’¹⁰⁴ which would yield the astronomical meaning ‘eclipse’ via the correlation of dirtiness with darkness.¹⁰⁵ Since the term *lumun libbi* is stated to be a synonym of *maruštu* and *adirtu* in an OB lexical equation,¹⁰⁶ one might think *lumnu* ‘evil, misery’ < *lemēnu* ‘to be bad’ goes back to a term for darkness as well. Note that when the subject of *lemēnu* in the G or D is *libbu* ‘heart,’ the verb phrase can mean to become angry or make someone angry, respectively.¹⁰⁷ However, no clear etymology for *lemēnu* has been found. Von Soden suggests it is derived from **lā imnu* ‘not-right,’¹⁰⁸ relying on the cross-cultural tendency to view the right side as positive, auspicious, strong, or straight and the left side as negative, inauspicious, weak, or bent.¹⁰⁹ This would not give *lemnu* a base meaning related to darkness, however. Similarly, the verb *bakû* can mean either ‘weep’ or ‘cry out (in distress, mourning, etc.),’ likely mirroring the fact that in Indo-European languages, the main verb for weeping is derived by metonymic

⁹⁹See CAD Z s.v. *ziqnu* b and *zaqnu* lexical section.

¹⁰⁰See Rochberg 2004: 168 and CAD A/1 s.v. *adāru* A.

¹⁰¹See Barcelona 2000, Kövecses 2000: 25, Moradi 2013.

¹⁰²See Esenova 2011: 100.

¹⁰³Barcelona 1986, Ekman, Levenson, and Friesen 1983. This argument may also support a derivation of *adāru* B ‘to fear, respect’ from *adāru* A ‘to be dark.’ The common cross-cultural metaphor ANGER IS DARKNESS (Kövecses 2000) may also motivate deriving *nadāru* ‘to rage’ from *adāru* A, philological issues summarized in the CAD notwithstanding.

¹⁰⁴CAD A/2 s.v. *aršu*.

¹⁰⁵Cf. Rochberg 2004: 168.

¹⁰⁶ka-la ne-in-gi-ga ša-hu-ul-gi (= kala nig₂.gig.ga ša₃.hul.gig) : *e-di-ir-tum ma-ru-uš-tum lu-mu-un(ur!) li-bi-im*, Sumer 13 73:5, 7 (see CAD L s.v. *lumun libbi* lexical section).

¹⁰⁷CAD L s.v. *lemēnu*.

¹⁰⁸AHw 543.

¹⁰⁹Cf. Buck 1949: 865-867, Kogan and Krebernik 2020: 379 n. 74.

association from the verb to cry out or beat.¹¹⁰ Yet this, too, would not motivate the astronomical interpretation of being eclipsed. It is possible that the astronomical meanings for *lemnu* and *bakû* are based on pure analogy with *adāru*.¹¹¹

Further support for elite scribes constructing metaphorical maps from the DIVINE PERSON frame to the CELESTIAL OMEN frame comes from passages that are not using divine enumerative description. In particular, there are metaphorical terms in astrological reports describing lunar phenomena besides eclipses that seem to go beyond cross-culturally attested metaphors and include blends with more culturally specific frames. A Neo-Assyrian astrological report states that the moon set with ‘unwashed feet’ (*qadu šēpēšu lā masûti*).¹¹² This term was understood by Weidner to mean the darkening of the part of the lunar disk containing the feet of the ‘Man in the Moon.’¹¹³ The reference in another Neo-Assyrian astrological report to the moon ‘riding a chariot’ (GIŠ.GIGIR *rakib*)¹¹⁴ has been understood to refer to a lunar halo, or possibly the conjunction of the moon with the constellation known as ‘The Chariot.’¹¹⁵ Since in the astrological reports the aim of such figurative language is to succinctly and clearly describe some visible aspect of the moon, it is likely many of the unsolved metaphors for the moon as celestial omen are based on iconic maps (cf. *ziqnu zaqnat* ‘sports a beard’ = radiates beams of light) involving some culturally specific imagery.

Let us summarize the preceding discussion. The argument above has been that figurative phrases for celestial phenomena are based on maps from the DIVINE PERSON frame to the CELESTIAL OMEN frame. Those maps are either iconic maps (e.g. ‘sports a beard’) or metaphorical, anthropomorphizing maps (e.g. ‘Sin is in mourning’). We gave arguments for some of the more common metaphorical phrases being rooted in cross-cultural metaphors for emotions such as SADNESS IS DARKNESS. Even if certain expressions in their metaphorical sense (such as *adirtu* for ‘distress’) eventually became conventionalized, as long as the logic of the metaphorical map was implicitly understood by the scribes they counted as productive.¹¹⁶

More clearly than in the previous two sections, we can see in the Ishtar hymn the value of the frame complex as an analytical device for understanding the conceptual structure of a divinity. It has allowed us to more precisely formulate and propose answers to questions like ‘is the statement “the moon rides a chariot” to be understood literally or metaphorically?’ (answer: it is either iconic or metaphorical) as well as ‘is the morning star meant to represent the “essence” of Ishtar in the hymn?’ (answer: yes in so far as it is an animate-like representation called the DIVINE STAR frame). Looking again at the frame complexes in

¹¹⁰Buck 1949: 1128.

¹¹¹Cf. the proposal that the formation of the Old English verb *understandan* ‘understand’ is based on pure analogy with other verbs of metaphorical comprehension, such as *undergietan* ‘get (from) among’ → ‘comprehend’ and *forstandan* ‘stand before/against(?)’ → ‘comprehend’ (see Liberman 2008: 210).

¹¹²SAA 8, 103: obv. 7.

¹¹³Weidner 1967: 8.

¹¹⁴SAA 8, 112: rev. 3.

¹¹⁵Rochberg 2004: 169-170.

¹¹⁶By Seleucid times such metaphors may have become opaque (Rochberg 2004: 173).

Figure 2.13 and Figure 2.14, we can see how the morning star and the divine person are involved in two partially incompatible maps within the divine frame complex. The fact that even we with our modern intuitions can be mistaken in identifying different elements of this frame complex suggests that the ancient scribes likely thought of that complex as an even more internally coherent object.

The last point to be made is about the motivating conditions that connect the divine person to a celestial body. We can state that the celestial body acts as a material anchor for the frame complex of a divinity with astral aspect, but is there anything else motivating the link between celestial body and divine person? If stars in Mesopotamia were not inherently seen as the incarnation of a divinity in the Platonic sense, in what cognitive sense would a Mesopotamian scribe have thought that stars and anthropomorphically conceived gods belonged together? It is true that a frame brings elements together on the basis of correlated experience. Once Mesopotamia had come to incorporate celestial bodies into the cultural model of their gods,¹¹⁷ a young scribe may have internalized that model without attributing deeper structure to the connection. But as the Babylonian Diviner's Manual indicates, both the sky and earth produce portents, and heavenly signs work like earthly ones.¹¹⁸ Given that celestial objects so saliently occupy the role of omens, a better proposal is that there is a motivated cognitive link precisely in the role assignment connecting the DIVINE PERSON frame with the OMEN frame (i.e. the small dotted arrow in Figure 2.13). Both individually and as a group, the gods are seen as beings that express their will through signs in heaven and earth. This can be encoded in the frame complex via the INITIATOR role of the OMEN frame.

To recap the results of this section: the Great Ishtar Hymn provides an example of divine enumerative description of Ishtar with the morning star as a material anchor. In addition to formalizing the notion of the celestial body as an embodiment of the divine person (i.e. an animate-like representation), we showed how the celestial body as omen was a kind of artifact-like representation. The divine person takes on the Level Two role of omen initiator whereas the celestial body assumes the role of omen. We made arguments for understanding the figurative descriptions of eclipses and other celestial phenomena in terms of human emotions as blends between the DIVINE PERSON frame and the MORNING STAR frame. In relation to this, we proposed etymologies for certain metaphorical expressions involving lunar phenomena based on early experiential correlation. Finally, we argued that the example of this section illustrates the conceptual utility of the divine frame complex as a way to understand Mesopotamian astral divinity. The complex highlights how most of the representations of a divinity largely reflect Level Two properties of personhood, which rely on the central DIVINE PERSON frame as a point of reference to shuffle in and out of focus like slides in a projector. The fact that the astral aspects of this complex can confuse even

¹¹⁷The pattern may have been based a few initial exemplars such as Shamash (sun), Sin (moon), and Ishtar (morning star). This last case is present at archaic Uruk and likely even before that (Szarzynska 2000).

¹¹⁸Lines 38-49 (L. Oppenheim 1974: 200).

us suggests that elite Akkadian scribes believed in the integral quality of divine enumerative description to an even greater degree.

2.3 Summary

This chapter has effectively taken existing proposals for how to think of Mesopotamian divinity and formalized them into a theory highlighting its rich conceptual structure. The basic object is the divine frame complex, an item which not only unifies the various aspects of a god in a cognitively plausible structure, but also defines those aspects in a cognitively clearer way. We proposed a way of thinking about Mesopotamian divinity which reflects basic representational conventions of personhood in Mesopotamian art and biography (the three levels of personhood) and which conforms to the makeup of the divine frame complex. We analyzed three prototypical examples of divine enumerative description (the parade of the Marduk statue during the Babylonian New Year, *Enūma elish* 1:79-108, and the Great Ishtar Hymn) and argued that as a rhetorical mode it seems particularly well-suited to representing the divine frame complex.

Having established what divine enumerative description is and how it works at a basic cognitive level, in the following chapters we will focus more on what makes divine enumerative description a poetic mode. What kind of rhetorical uses might a passage featuring divine enumerative description see? Although it by definition describes the gods, does it seem to focus on aspects of Mesopotamian divinity that lend themselves more to creative image generation? Does it seem to take advantage of certain grammatical constructions to facilitate that image generation? Does it seem to be facilitate speculative or innovative thinking at a high level? Does it seem to at least partially challenge strict conventions of genre and appear in unusual places? Drawing on a number of example texts for discussion, our answer to these questions will be yes.

Chapter 3

Performativity and presence in the Great Ishtar Hymn

Our study of the Great Ishtar Hymn in this chapter is the first in a series of examples that explore how divine enumerative description functions as a poetic modality. One significant way in which such a modality can manifest itself is in the production of powerful or commanding images. Within the context of divine enumerative description, this often translates to what is known as presencing¹ of the deity. In this chapter we will explore how such presencing works in the Great Ishtar Hymn, both at a fairly general level and at a technical one. While the hymn was first discussed in 2.2.3 as part of our outline of the frame-based approach to Mesopotamian divinity, here we take a deeper look at its performative function, arguing that that function is sensitive to certain competing poetic pressures on divine enumerative description. This interesting dynamic between form and content is part of the reason one might speak of divine enumerative description as a poetic mode, and is something that will be further explored in later chapters. In this case, we will specifically argue that as a *šuwilla*, the Great Ishtar Hymn demonstrates a particular aspect of presencing not immediately evident from examples discussed in the literature, one drawing on both the nature of the underlying object of description (i.e. the divine frame complex) and poetic features of the *šuwilla* as a genre.

The outline of this chapter is as follows. 3.1 introduces the general idea of a performative blend, which is essentially like the cognitive blends discussed in 1.2.6 save that part of the input is asserted rather than described. In 3.2 this theory is applied to the Great Ishtar Hymn, which as a *šuwilla* seeks to establish the presencing of the goddess (and petitioner) within a specially marked ritual space. More specifically, the recitation of the hymn is a performative act that establishes the goddess and petitioner within a traditional Mesopotamian court setting. In this context, the petitioner's long, ceremonial address to the goddess is the primary way of establishing her multi-dimensional presence, a prerequisite if the petition is

¹In this thesis the term 'presencing' may alternate with 'presence'. Both mean the same thing.

to be effective. The subtleties of this process are discussed in 3.2.2 and 3.2.3. The metric of evaluation for presence that we will use here is the idea of convergent versus divergent style, a notion that is taken from the cognitive study of literature.

What we will see in this chapter is that for a lengthy performative text such as the Great Ishtar Hymn, factors of form and content interact to constrain how presence is either enhanced or restricted. The content of the hymn has already been introduced in 2.2.3, where we argued that the divine frame complex defining Ishtar consists of various conceptual extensions of the core divine person, many of which partially conflict with one another. This ‘diffuse’ conceptualization of the goddess gets spelled out in the Great Ishtar Hymn via divine enumerative description, as the different frames of the divine complex fall out across successive lines of the text, with one image of the goddess giving way to another. However, unlike the Marduk procession example discussed in 2.2.1, the representational compactness and subtlety of the Ishtar hymn gives us a closer look at how presence can depend on certain linguistic and rhetorical aspects of Akkadian poetics. Issues of elaboration versus schematicity, perceptual imagery versus affect, and coherence versus variation, all can subtly influence the presence of an invoked deity. The degree to which an elite scribe understood and manipulated these factors was likely part of what made composing divine hymns an implicit art, where the aesthetic dimension of the hymn aligns with the practical.

But at the outset of this chapter, we must first understand what presence is from a cognitive linguistic standpoint. This requires a discussion of performative blending, which is taken up in the next section.

3.1 Performative blending

The notion of a performative utterance was succinctly defined by Austin as an utterance that does not describe things in the world but rather is part of an action (e.g. a priest declaring at a wedding ‘I do thee wed’).² Searle later expanded Austin’s theory considerably in important ways. First he noted that what makes an utterance performative is not necessarily the grammatical form of the utterance but whether it occurs in an institutional context that both grants the speaker the authority to effect the change and makes the performative utterance interpretable. Searle 1969: 51-52 calls such a statement (i.e. one that has meaning only within a given social institution) an ‘institutional fact.’ As a matter of communal agreement, a social institution assigns special meaning to select objects and actions, and specifies rules governing what one can and cannot do there. Institutional facts get their meaning from that same set of objects, actions, and rules. Utterances made as part of the institution are a special case of this. An example of an institutional fact is when an umpire in a baseball game says ‘that’s an out.’ Here, because the institution of baseball grants the umpire the authority to declare a player out, his statement can function as a performative.

²Austin 1962: 5.

The second notion Searle introduced was of the direction of fit between world and word.³ Generally speaking, an utterance conjures up an image in the mind of the hearer. When the image associated with the utterance is conditionally held against the hearer's pre-existing image of the world and rejected if it is incompatible, we say the utterance is in the word to world direction. Descriptive statements fall in this category. They are utterances meant to fit an established world assumed by the speaker and addressee, and hence are evaluated as either true (fitting) or false (not fitting). One can say they are word to world utterances. On the other hand, imperatives, performative utterances, wishes, and related speech acts have a world to word fit in that they seek to make the world conform to the word. The image of the world, so to speak, is modified or rejected to accommodate that of the utterance. Such statements are evaluated by whether they are felicitous (fitting) or non-felicitous (not fitting).

Sweetser 2001 has applied a mental space framework to the above classical notion of performativity, whereby direction of fit becomes a simple asymmetric relation between two spaces that ultimately feed into a blend. One space consists of the mental representation evoked by performative utterance, while the other is a representation shared by the speech act participants (usually corresponding to their common social reality). A second advantage of using mental spaces is that non-linguistic communicative acts are treated the same as linguistic acts, allowing for a unified treatment of complex performative rituals (Figure 3.1).

We will explain how this model works using Sweetser's own example, subject to some simplifications.⁴ Initially, people are assigned roles for a mock hunt where most of them are hunters and one person plays the buffalo. The people playing the hunters are given mock weapons that cannot hurt anyone, while the person playing the buffalo is given a buffalo skin to wear. After a prearranged signal indicating the ritual has started, the pretend hunters run after the person playing the buffalo at a slower speed than in a real hunt. The buffalo-player likewise runs about at a slower speed, trying to evade the hunters and their weapons. The pretend hunters try to hit the buffalo-player with their weapons but do not intend to kill or injure him. After some time, if the buffalo-player has still not been hit he may reduce his speed even more or make himself an easier target until he is struck. This ends the ritual.

The performative blend for this ritual is given in Figure 3.2. Input space 1 represents the current real world, where the buffalo-player is recognized as a person in buffalo skin, the mock weapons are recognized as props, the buffalo-player being struck is recognized as non-lethal, etc. Input space 2 represents the future hunt where there is a real buffalo and real weapons. The output space represents the ritual itself, where the person in buffalo skin is identified with the buffalo, the mock weapons with their real counterparts. Because the ritual is performative, the direction of fit goes from Input space 1 to Input space 2 in the sense that crucial structure from Input space 1 maps onto Input space 2. In particular the fact that the performers hit the person dressed in buffalo skin maps to the hunters in the

³Searle 1985: 3ff.

⁴See Sweetser 2001: 319ff.

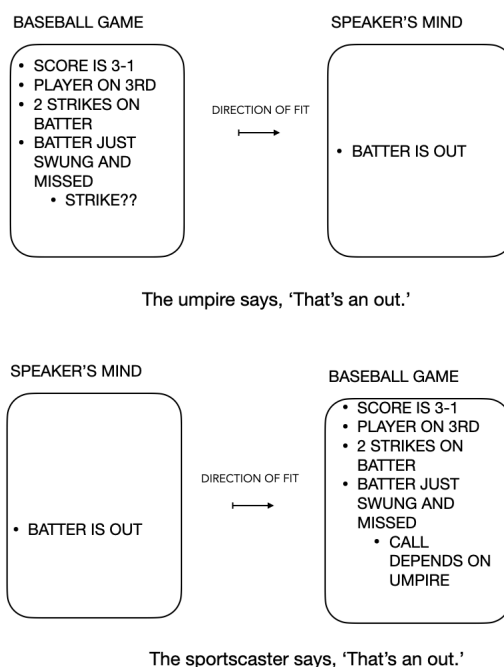


Figure 3.1: Two directions of fit for the phrase ‘That’s an out.’ The top example models world to word fit (performative), while the bottom models word to world fit (descriptive).

future striking and killing an actual buffalo.

The flexibility of the mental space framework is how easily it accommodates performative metaphorical maps. While the ritual buffalo hunt features numerous literal identifications (e.g. physical chasing and throwing items in the real space maps to physical chasing and throwing items in the other), one can consider a more metaphorical identification with Sweetser’s ‘baby ascending’ blend.⁵ In this ritual (supposedly based on Italian provincial culture), a newborn baby is ceremoniously carried from the base of stairs up to the top. On the one hand, the act is metaphorical in that the rise of the vertical position of the baby corresponds to improvement in social standing and fortune during its adult years. There is no vertical rising going on in the baby’s future. Note that if the person carrying the baby up the stairs were to stumble, this would be interpreted as a disaster in the baby’s future life. On the other hand, the act is performative in that it does not just describe some pre-existing situation but brings it about by fiat. Just as with the ritual buffalo hunt, one could construct a blend diagram where Input space 1 represents a person carrying the baby up the stairs, while Input space 2 represents the adult life of the baby. As with the ritual buffalo hunt,

⁵Sweetser 2001: 312, 321ff.

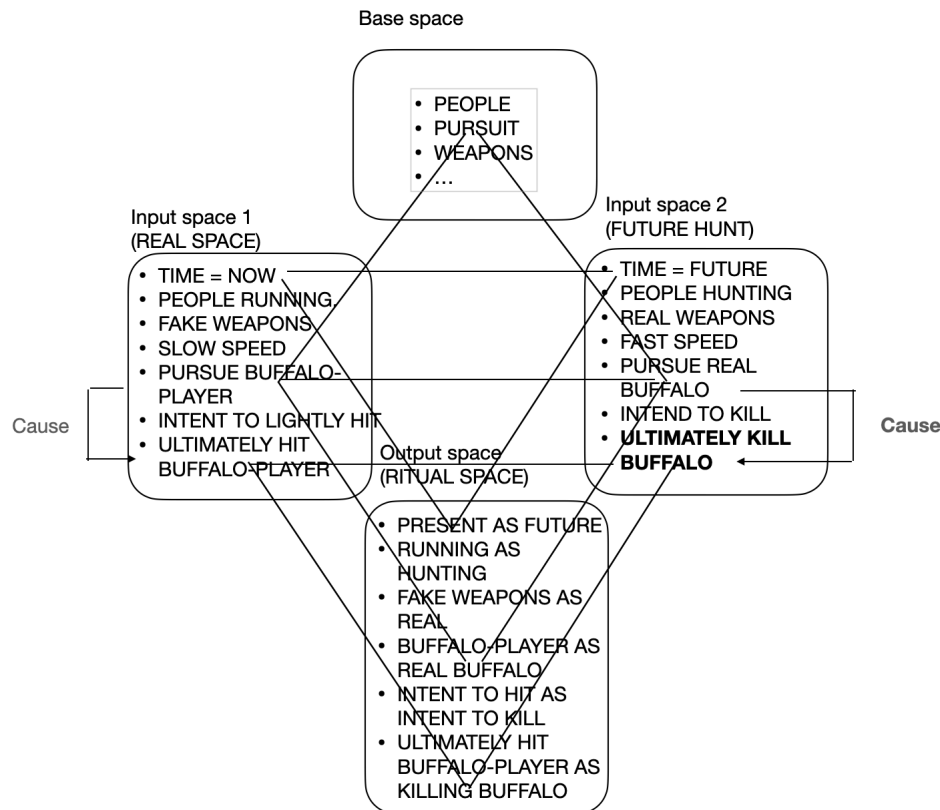


Figure 3.2: Performative blend for a ritual buffalo hunt (adapted from Sweetser 2001: 320).

in the baby’s ascending ritual the arrival of the baby at the top of the stairs constitutes the future adult’s success in life as a matter of fiat (Figure 3.3).

One final note should be made about both the above performative blends. In both the ritual buffalo hunt and the baby’s ascent, the participants have the socially invested authority to perform the blend, but the desired change (the killing of a buffalo or the baby’s future social status) occurs in a hypothetical future space that the actors do not in fact control. Observers of the initial ritual may only hope it succeeds in producing a change in the future or even be skeptical of that possibility. But in all cases the observers regard the ritual as a (possibly failed or meaningless) performative, not as descriptive. Because of this fact, we are allowed a certain agnosticism about individual attitudes towards performative blends, provided the blend is originally understood as performative. We may thus concentrate on the structure of the blend as a form of divine enumerative description, rather than how much the participants actually believed in its efficacy. This is how we will approach the hymn to Ishtar in the next section.

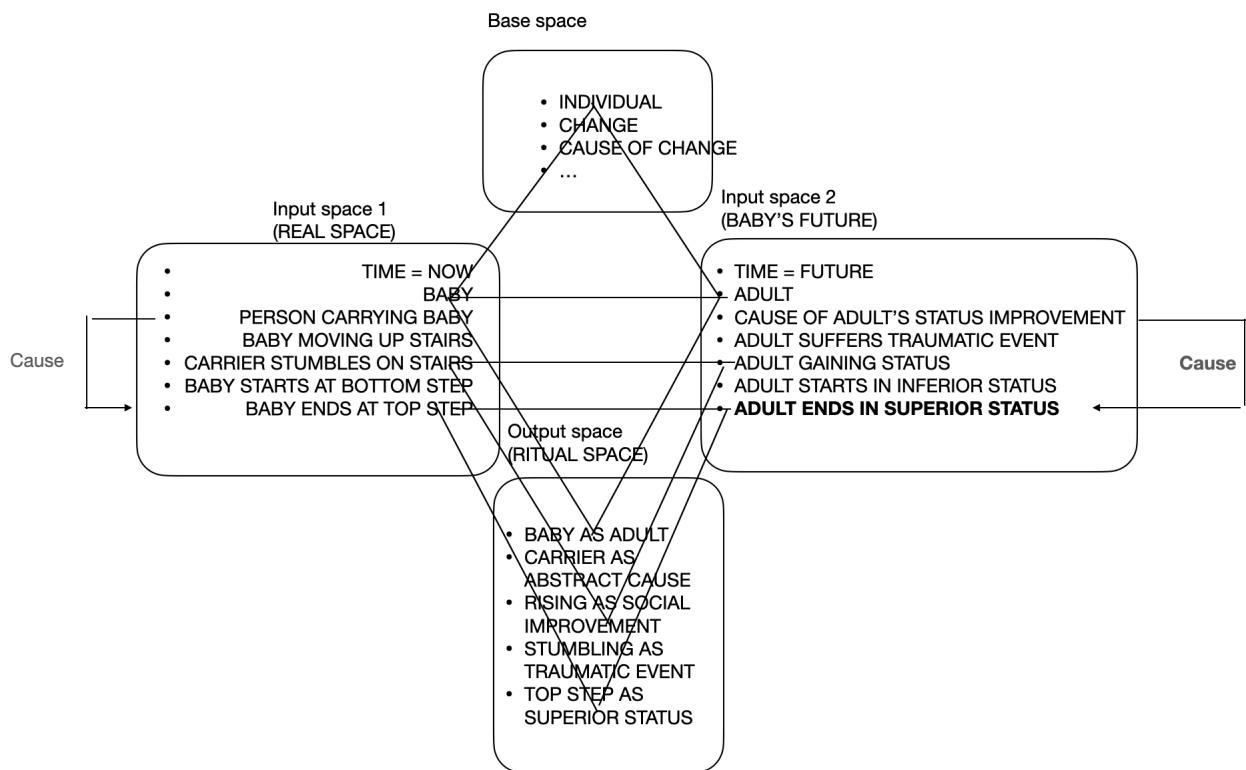


Figure 3.3: Metaphorical performative blend for Baby’s ascent (adapted from Sweetser 2001: 323).

3.2 The Great Ishtar Hymn: Performativity as a part of Mesopotamian worship

3.2.1 The performative nature of the text

The Great Ishtar Hymn is the longest known *šuilla* prayer to the goddess.⁶ Also known as Ishtar 2 due to its place in Werner Mayer’s catalogue of Ishtar hymns,⁷ the text is representative of the basic function of *šuillas* in general as well as a variety of tropes and epithets found in the dozen or so other *šuillas* specific to Ishtar. In particular, it illustrates how

⁶Much of the structural and functional analysis of this text has been done by Christopher Frechette, Anna Elise Zerneck, and Annette Zgoll. Zgoll in particular has a more recent edition of the text based on a handful of manuscripts (Zgoll 2003a: 42ff). The ensuing discussion of the prayer will be based on Zgoll’s text A, the sole fully preserved manuscript of the text.

⁷See Mayer 1976: 389.

Phase of audience (ROYAL AUDIENCE)	Specific form in Ishtar 2 (ŠUILLA)	Line(s)
Announcement of the petitioner	Ritual expert prepares space	107
Approach before the ruler	Morning star rising	-
Presentation of gift	Making offerings	108
Gesture of greeting by petitioner	Proskynesis, lifting of hands	-
Words of greeting by petitioner	Invocation section of text	1-41
Presentation of petition	Complaint section of text	42-78
Expression of gratitude	Praise of the god	79-106
Proskynesis before god	Proskynesis before morning star	110

Table 3.1: Implementation of the stages of a *šulla* in the Great Ishtar Hymn (cf. Zgoll 2003b: 196).

performative blends in Akkadian can instantiate the presence of a god while being subject to poetic considerations of divine enumerative description.

Christopher Franchette has shown that the term *šulla* does not designate a text genre per se but rather an indication of function.⁸ Texts labelled as *šullas* were to be recited either by an individual recently fallen into trouble with respect to a particular god, or by a ritual expert acting on his behalf. Through the recitation, the petitioner sought to restore favor with the deity via a request for forgiveness along with promises of future praise or sacrifices for the god.

This process was facilitated by means of a performative blend involving multiple metaphorical models. At the most general level, Zgoll has argued that the ritual actions and recitation of the *šulla* reflected an engagement with the god in the setting of a royal Mesopotamian court appearance.⁹ In Conceptual Metaphor Theory, we would describe this by saying we have a performative blend between the ŠUILLA frame and the ROYAL AUDIENCE frame. Under that blend, the petitioner is a lowly subject and the god is his king. If a ritual expert is present, he plays the role of a door-warder or other court servant who brings the petitioner before the king. The performance of the gesture called *šulla* signals the initiation of the subject's words to the king.¹⁰ After recitation the petitioner/ritual expert performs proskynesis to the god, signalling his petition is over. This maps to the subject performing proskynesis to the king signalling his audience is over.

Table 3.1 shows how Zgoll's schema applies to the structure of the Ishtar hymn. The initial parts of the performative blend are described in the ritual instructions following the

⁸See Franchette 2012 section 2.3.

⁹Zgoll 2003a, Zgoll 2003c.

¹⁰Franchette argues that although there is uncertainty about what the *šulla* gesture actually consisted of, it was clearly a gesture addressed to a deity, and hence a (performative) communicative act (Franchette 2012: 42).

hymn in lines 107-110. These lines state the following:

107) KID₃.KID₃.BI KI GIR₃ KUD-*at* UR₃ SAR A KU₃ SU₃ 4 SIG4.HI.A *ša₃-ha-a* ŠUB-*di* 108) *lu-te-e* GIŠ.ASAL₂ *te-še-en* IZI ŠUB-*di* ŠIM.HI.A ZI₃.MAD.GA₂ ŠIM.LI 109) DUB-*ak mi-iḫ-ḫa* BAL-*qi₂-ma* NU *tuš-ken mi-nu-tu₂ an-ni-tu₂ ana* IGI ^d*iš-tar* 110) 3-*šu₂* ŠID-*nu* KI.ZA.ZA-*ma ana* EGIR-*ka* NU IGI.BAR

107) Its ritual: In an inaccessible place (lit., where the foot is kept away) you sweep the roof, you sprinkle pure water, and you lay four bricks at *right angles to one another*.¹¹ 108) You heap twigs of the Euphrates poplar (on the brazier), and you kindle the fire. Aromatic plants, scented flour, and juniper wood 109) you strew. You pour out beer. You do not prostrate yourself. This recitation before Ishtar 110) you recite three times. You prostrate yourself, and you do not look behind you.

As the term KID₃.KID₃.BI = *kikkittû* indicates,¹² lines 107-110 are instructions to the petitioner (or ritual expert) which encompass an entire performative blend, only one part of which is the reading of the text. The reciter is to choose a remote place and sweep the roof and then sprinkle pure water over the area. While the acts of sweeping the ground and sprinkling water on it might be understood as bare physical acts of cleansing in preparation for the upcoming ritual performance, they in fact can be interpreted as elements within the performative blend itself. In this sense, the act of sweeping and sprinkling water becomes an actual declaration that the ground is purified of abstract evil influences.¹³ We thus have in the text our first example of a performative action, where the sweeping and sprinkling is at once metonymic for the frame of cleaning a floor space in general, and then in turn metaphoric for the purging of the meeting space of abstract evil influences.¹⁴

Subsequent lines continue the performative blend. The burning of twigs, strewing of aromatic plants, and pouring of beer (lines 108-109) are metaphorical elements of the performance space corresponding to the audience gifts presented to the god. These items provide a different modality to the blend via the aromatic quality of the spilt beer, burnt twigs, and scattered plants, which contrasts with the visual and aural modalities dominant in other areas of the ritual.

¹¹The meaning of *šahâ* seems to mean something like ‘edge to edge’ or ‘at angles.’ See CAD Š/1 s.v. *šahâ* and Lenzi 2011: 278.

¹²The term KID₃.KID₃.BI appears frequently in *šulla* and incantation texts with the function it has here. See CAD K s.v. *kikkittû*.

¹³This kind of preparatory cleansing is attested in other *šulla*’s as well as *namburbi*’s. See Zgoll 2003c: 29, Frechette 2012: 149.

¹⁴This interpretation is aided by the initial phrase KI GIR₃ KUD-*at* ‘an inaccessible place,’ which indicates the ground is not to be disturbed by random intrusions and will serve to protect surrounding bystanders from the evil influence to be purged from the petitioner (see Frechette 2012: 151, 209).

Given the references to Ishtar’s quality as an astral deity in the text, it is highly likely the *šuilla* was recited at dawn with the rising of the morning star.¹⁵ As discussed in 2.2.3, the morning star can serve as a material anchor for Ishtar’s frame complex. Here the star is not a celestial omen but a divine star (i.e. the embodiment of Ishtar’s divine person, and thus an animate-like representation). Given that no implement in the ritual instructions seems to stand for Ishtar, the morning star is *the* material representation of the goddess in the performative blend, with the added qualification that the divine star is also identified with the ruler of the ROYAL AUDIENCE frame (cf. Table 3.1).

As a *šuilla* the Great Ishtar Hymn is distinguished by its great length. It has 110 lines including ritual instructions, compared to shorter *šuillas* consisting of a dozen to some fifty lines. Nevertheless the unusual length of the hymn does not change the structure or formal function of the text so much as elaborate on the presence of the god. In terms of the divine frame complex, one may characterize this elaboration as a reinforcing or strengthening of the presence at the level of the divine person while also extending it to the more peripheral frames. To illustrate what we mean, in the next section we present an inventory of the representations appearing in the text.

3.2.2 Inventory of representations in the text

Beyond the physical actions and ritual items discussed in the previous section, the main way the Great Ishtar Hymn effects presence is through the many metaphors and metonyms within the text itself, and the nature of these figurative devices reflecting interesting properties of divine enumerative description. Within a performative context one might consider these poetic devices as ‘weak’ material anchors in that they provide concrete mental representations of the deity which, thanks to the performative interpretation, are taken to constitute a part of shared social reality.

Yet the fact that many of these representations lack an actual material anchor¹⁶ means that the relative order and salience of those images exercises a subtle influence on how the text facilitates presence. This effect of the sequential order of images can in fact be considered a poetic phenomenon, since it rests on the scribe’s choice of what images to introduce when. The rest of this chapter is dedicated to exploring this issue, an example of what Reuven Tsur has called convergent versus divergent composition style. We will ultimately argue that convergent/divergent alternation within the Great Ishtar Hymn is an example of how divine enumerative description constitutes a poetic modality.

First, however, it will be helpful to make a survey of the various metaphors and metonyms in the text that contribute to the presence of the goddess. Table 3.2 provides a preliminary sense of the variety and frequency of the activating items. Because the target domains of

¹⁵See Frechette 2012: 150. Also see line 34 of the text and Zgoll’s interpretation of that line as the rising and setting of Venus (Zgoll 2003a: 50, n. 130).

¹⁶Exceptional are the references in the text to Ishtar in her astral representation, which do in fact have a material basis in the morning star itself.

all the mappings are the same (Ishtar’s divine person), the table lists only source frames. It turns out that all of the representations of Ishtar in the text are animate-like rather than artifact-like (i.e. embodiments of Ishtar’s divine person rather than metonymic stand-ins). This is likely because the entire hymn is a direct address to Ishtar, requiring the addressee to be animate.

What Table 3.2 shows is the extensive degree to which schematic or conventional frames are used to depict Ishtar. The most frequent frames are APEX OF SOCIAL HIERARCHY and SUPREME RULER, both of which lack much sensory detail in either their description of the goddess or her actions. Thus Ishtar is called *bēlet bēlēti* ‘lady of ladies’ (line 1), *rabāti u šīrāti* ‘great and august’ (line 23), and *āpirat agē bēlūti* ‘wearing the crown of lordship’ (line 7). Contrast this with rarer frames like ANGRY GOD and TERRIFYING GOD, which describe Ishtar as *labiṣat hurbāša* ‘clothed in frost’ (line 12) and which bid the goddess to soothe her anger like water flowing in a canal (*kīma mē pašīr nāru*).¹⁷

In Table 3.2, a comparison between the number of line attestations in the left column with the type of representations in the right two columns shows a general correlation of frame frequency with schematicity. The most common frame, APEX OF SOCIAL HIERARCHY, is typically evoked by phrases like *bēlet bēlēti* ‘lady of ladies’ which are highly schematic. On the other hand, the DIVINE STAR frame is evoked only once but features the image of a battle cry. The frame FOCUS OF TEMPLE WORSHIP is evoked four times by phrases like *hāmimat gimir parsī* ‘gatherer of all the rituals,’ and could be regarded as falling midway between the previous two examples in terms of schematicity.

The correlation of frame frequency with schematicity is certainly not exact. Some lines involving less common frames for Ishtar nevertheless use schematic imagery to evoke them, or conversely for common frames describing Ishtar fairly elaborate imagery is used. For example, line 39 evokes the WISE COUNSELOR frame with the phrase *lā ilammadu milikšu mamman* ‘whose counsel no one knows’ (uncommon frame, schematic imagery), while line 32 evokes the SUPREME RULER FRAME (or perhaps WARRIOR frame) with *šābtat šerret šarrī* ‘holder of the nose-rope of kings’ (common frame, elaborate imagery).

Even among lines that evoke the same frame, a certain amount of variation in degree of elaboration is evident. Table 3.3 shows all lines in the hymn which describe the goddess using the ILLUMINATION SOURCE frame (only the relevant portion of the line evoking the frame is shown). Among that group, one line calls Ishtar a torch (*dipāru*) and another a twinkling or flickering star (*mummiltu*). The other lines call the goddess things like ‘illuminator’ (*nannarat*) and ‘brilliant’ (*namirtu*).

Nevertheless there is a subtle pattern. Support for the frequency/schematicity correlation is strengthened when we look at the representations of the petitioner in the hymn. Table 3.4 lists the frames or thematic domains evoked by lines describing either the peti-

¹⁷There are slight disagreements among the translators of this line about its precise meaning. For a discussion of the possibilities, see Zgoll 2003a: 66-67.

¹⁸Taking *mummiltu* to be from *wummulu*, which in astral contexts von Soden defines as ‘szintillierenden Sternen’ (AHw: 1459). See also Zernecke 2011.

tioner himself or entities related to him.¹⁹ The frames are grouped under thematic headings where appropriate. As with the frames describing Ishtar, in Table 3.4 some of the most frequently occurring frames are fairly schematic (GENERAL ILLS, CRIES AND LAMENTS), while the rarest involve the most elaborate metaphors (such as SOARING BIRD and STORMY WAVE). It is sometimes the case that within a general thematic group one or a few frames seem distinctive, such as the WITCHCRAFT frame under the BODY category or the GLARING ACCUSATION frame under the LAW AND REPUTATION group.

¹⁹The petitioner's situation is sometimes discussed in literal terms rather than metaphorical ones. Thus in Table 3.4 sometimes the listed frame or domain is not part of a metaphoric map, or it describes a more oblique aspect of the petitioner's life.

Table 3.4: Frames evoked by Ishtar hymn representing the petitioner or related entities.

Line	Frame	Example
42,47,66,69	BODY GENERAL ILLS	<i>anhu, šūnuhu, šumruṣu</i> I am tired, fatigued, made sick
46,47,49,50,66	CRIES AND LAMENTS	<i>ua, aia!</i> Oh woe!
69	HEADACHE	<i>šaknūnim-ma...di'i</i> I am beset with...headache
55	WITCHCRAFT	<i>ukkišī upīša lemnūti ša zumrīya</i> drive away the evil practices upon my body
79	ATTENTIVENESS	<i>ibšâki uznāya</i> I am all ears for you
57-58,73	LAW AND REPUTATION PERSECUTION	<i>ina surrāti u lā kīnāti ikappudūni lemnēti</i> With lies and untruths they plot evil against me
56	GLARING ACCUSATION	<i>adi mati bēltīya bēlū dabābiya nekelmūnim-ma</i> How long, my lady, will my accusers glare at me?
80-83	SIN AND CRIME	<i>e'ilti puṭrī</i> Release my sin
49,76,77	HOUSE AND PERSONAL HOUSE	<i>bītīya šudlupu ša unassasu bikāti</i> my house is sleepless, a place where there is mourning and tears
75,77	PERSONAL GOD	<i>šuharrur sagēya šuharrurat aširtī</i> my shrine is desolate, my chapel deathly silent
78	SCATTERED CLAN	<i>saphat illatī tabīnī purrur</i> my clan is scattered, my shelter destroyed
59-61	SOCIAL INVERSION	<i>adi mati bēlti lillu akû ibâ³anni</i> how long, my lady, will fools and cripples overtake me?
70,71	FEAR AND ANGER	<i>šaknāni pardāti suhhur pānî u malê libbāti</i> I am set upon with fears, turning of face, plenitude of anger
84,101	STREET	<i>šutēširī kibsī namriš etelliš itti balṭūti lubâ³ sūqa</i> Guide my path in light and princeliness, so I may pass the street with living men
97,98	TRAMPLING AND SUBMISSION	<i>ekdūtīya kīma qaqqāru lukabbis</i>

Continued on next page

Line	Frame	Example
72	DARKNESS	Let me trample like the earth those who defy me <i>ātamar bēlti ūmī ukkulūti arḫī nandurūti</i> I have seen, my Lady, days of darkness, months of gloom
48	DIVINATION	<i>têrētīya nassāti ešāti u dalḫāti</i> my omens are wretched, confused, and disturbed
69	BUSINESS LOSS	<i>huluqqū u šahluqtu</i> business losses and destruction
62	STORMY WAVE	<i>asabbu² kīma agī ša uppaqu šāru lemnu</i> I rock like a wave which an evil wind whips up
63	SOARING BIRD	<i>išâ' ittanapraš libbī kīma iššūr šamāmī</i> My heart flits about like a bird of the sky
64	WEEPING DOVE	<i>adammum kīma summatu mūši u urra</i> I weep like a dove night and day
65	HOT WEEPING	<i>nangulākū-ma abakki šarpiš</i> I 'burn' ²⁰ as I weep hotly

Both Table 3.2 and Table 3.4 give a sense of the types of metaphors and frames used to represent the two main entities in the Ishtar hymn, the goddess and the petitioner. In both cases there is a rough correlation between the frequency that a frame appears in the text and the degree of schematicity with which that frame is evoked.

Given this pattern, Table 3.5 shows how just the elaborated frames (and thus the metaphors and metonyms they define) are distributed across all the lines of the hymn. While Table 3.2 and Table 3.4 list the frames representing the goddess and petitioner and which lines those frames appear in, Table 3.5 indicates, for each line of the text, whether the frame instantiated there is elaborated or schematic. Here again there is a rough pattern. Comparing Table 3.5 against Table 3.2 and Table 3.4, one can see that the most schematic metaphors and frames appear the most often and are often bunched together. Highly elaborated²¹ metaphors and frames are much rarer and are generally separated from each other, although there are a few counterexamples (specifically in lines 37-40 and 59-66) which will be discussed in 3.2.3.

The distribution in Table 3.5 does involve a certain amount of subjectivity along both of its constitutive dimensions, namely the degree of frame frequency versus the degree of frame elaboration. Nevertheless the patterns derived from the distribution are sufficiently robust under reasonable alternative judgments about frames and elaboration. For instance,

²⁰See Zgoll 2003a: 52, 65 for the interpretation of *nangulu* as a kind of burning or disease symptom.

²¹Here 'elaborated' means defined by significant elaboration in details in the underlying frame(s). It may be taken as the opposite of 'schematic'.

Table 3.2 and Table 3.4 involve choices of how to categorize the lines of the text into various frames. Here a fairly coarse-grained degree of categorization has been adopted which, by definition, tends to ignore more subtle differences among the lines. The main alternative to this is to make a more refined filter in order to identify more specific types of frames. For instance, what we call APEX OF SOCIAL HIERARCHY is evoked by lines speaking of Ishtar as (among other things) preeminent among the Igigi (line 19), preeminent among all goddesses (line 1), and the one who convenes assemblies (line 38). We could replace the APEX OF SOCIAL HIERARCHY frame with more specific ones such as HEAD OF ASSEMBLY and HEAD OF IGIGI. However, doing this would still largely preserve our asserted variation based on frame frequency because with only one exception (line 66), the highlighted lines already instantiate low-frequency frames (i.e. frames instantiated at most three times).

On the other hand, the decision of when to categorize a frame instantiation as ‘elaborate’ versus ‘schematic’ boils down to an awareness of the kind of language employed in *šuilas* and related Akkadian hymns. For instance, looking at the first ten lines of the hymn, one can see that the majority of expressions there are generic terms referring to Ishtar’s regal, celestial, martial, and priestly qualities (e.g. *bēlet belēti*, *muttallati*, *gašrāti*, *nannarat šamê u eršeti*, *muttabbilat kakkī*). If there is room for disagreement about which terms evoke elaborate imagery, it might be in line 7 with *āpirat agê bēlūti* ‘wearing the crown of lordship’, or perhaps line 9 with *kakkab tanūqāti* ‘star of battle(s).’²² At an even lower level of elaboration might be lines 3 and 5, with the epithets *Irnini* and *mārat Šin* indirectly evoking, say, lunar imagery or some aspect of Inanna. Yet even if one wishes to consider these lines as instances of ‘elaborate’ frames, they are spaced out from each other by at least one schematic line and do not fall in direct sequence, and if we take into account the relative degree of elaboration within these added lines we see that the most elaborated frame (*āpirat agê bēlūti* of line 7) has as its closest competitor the phrase *labšat hurbāša* ‘dressed in terror’ in line 12. Thus, as with the discussion above concerning frame frequency, Table 3.5 reflects a fairly coarse-grained scheme for detecting frame elaboration. If a more refined scheme is used, only less elaborate instantiations are added which preserve the overall correlation. This is to set aside the sequences 37-40 and 59-66, which will be discussed in the next section.

Overall, the distribution indicated by Table 3.5 has a subtle yet cumulative affect on the way the performative ritual presences the goddess as well as how the petitioner represents themselves in the blend (which might also be considered a type of ‘presence’). Both forms of representation involve questions of how consistently (in terms of metaphor/frame coherence) and richly (in terms of elaboration) the hymn constructs an image of each entity across the length of the hymn. This phenomenon is an example of convergent versus divergent styles in poetry, and the way it affects presence provides an example of how divine enumerative description subtly reflects a kind of scribal poetics. We will discuss this phenomenon in the next section.

²²Although the uncertain meaning of the latter complicates matters. See the discussion of this line on page 83.

3.2.3 Convergent versus divergent style and their relationship to presence

The metaphor/frame distribution introduced in the previous section is an example of what Reuven Tsur has called the divergent versus convergent style in poetry. Although Tsur calls the phenomenon a ‘style,’ his cognitive-oriented approach to poetics makes it clear that divergence and convergence are ultimately to be understood as effects on cognition apart from prescriptive notions. Divergent and convergent thinking has been a subject of study by psychologists, cognitive scientists, and scholars of art and creativity for some decades now, and it is discussed further in chapter 6.²³ In Tsur’s approach to poetry,²⁴ divergence and convergence concern all levels of the cognitive representation of a poem ranging from phonetic segments and prosody all the way up to global imagery. As Tsur puts it,

As for its structure, ‘convergent’ style is marked by clear-cut shapes, both in content and structure; it is inclined towards definite directions and clear contrasts (prosodic or semantic); as for its perceptual quality, it is inclined towards an atmosphere of certainty, a quality of intellectual control. From the structural point of view, ‘divergent style’ is marked by blurred shapes, both in content and structure; it exhibits general tendencies (rather than definite directions) and blurred contrasts (prosodic or semantic); from the point of view of perceptual quality, it is inclined towards an atmosphere of uncertainty, an emotional quality. Convergence appeals to the actively organizing mind, divergence to a more passively and flexibly receptive attitude. (Tsur 2008: 84-85)

As Tsur also notes, the convergence/divergence distinction roughly parallels the gradient between reasoning and emotion. While reasoning implies a certain control over our mental faculties, emotion involves a certain loss of control over our state of mind.²⁵ This patterns with a greater sense of structure, organized detail, and directed purpose on the one hand (convergence) and frustrated structure, incompatible detail, and inconsistent purpose on the other (divergence). In a poem showing convergent style, rhythmic, syntactic, and figurative devices are condensed within the text, obey regular patterning within themselves, and aim at a single highly-coherent image. For instance, a poem with a totally consistent rhyme scheme *abcabcabc...* would be a convergent use of rhyming, while one that disrupts the pattern (say *abcabccba*) would involve divergent rhyming.

Another aspect of convergence and divergence is what Tsur calls high and low categorization.²⁶ Inter-subjectively accessible concepts such as a dog and the sun we have no trouble

²³The terms ‘convergent thinking’ and ‘divergent thinking’ were coined by psychologist John Guilford (Guilford 1970).

²⁴Outlined in detail in Tsur 2008.

²⁵Tsur 2008: 60.

²⁶Tsur 1977: 20ff.

communicating to each other in language. The more elaborately they are conceived, the more precise language we can use to communicate them. We feel they are clearly ‘things’ which can bear many properties. On the other hand, highly subjective phenomena like emotions or basic image schemas are difficult to communicate in language, sometimes to the point of being nearly ineffable. Rather than being clear things with properties, they are properties without clear things to belong to. These latter concepts Tsur sees as involving low categorization or even pre-categorialization, while the former concepts are highly categorized.²⁷ Very roughly speaking, one may say that high categorization more concerns the perceptual aspects of frames while low categorization the affective.

It should be reiterated that convergence and divergence are contextually dependent phenomena. A sharp, detailed metaphor may constitute convergent style when it appears amidst a sea of vague literal descriptors, but when juxtaposed with multiple equally sharp but incompatible metaphors it instead contributes to divergent style. In a poem with no creative metaphors, the degree of elaboration among specific lexical items may be the only significant measure of convergence or divergence.

In the case of the Great Ishtar Hymn, the structural levels of analysis most relevant in terms of their affect on presence span a range running from lexical semantics to entire frames. While choice of lexical item itself directly contributes to the degree of convergence versus divergence (since the hymn is partitioned by line-level units that evoke one or occasionally two frames), the relative consistency and degree or manner of elaboration among those line-level frames/metaphors also matters.

How convergence and divergence affect presence seems to divide along the perceptual versus affective dimensions. Convergence facilitates presence in that it allows for a single, elaborated representation of the god as an entity with various consistent properties (Tsur’s high categorization). No new material anchor is introduced in the hymn section of the Ishtar Hymn proper, but having the mind of the ritual participant focus on a single elaborated entity produces something of a secondary effect akin to it. Divergence, on the other hand, works against presence in so far as it reorients the focus of the participant to new images that conflict with the old one. Yet because divergence also concerns Tsur’s low categorization (e.g. affect, properties apart from their bearing entity), it can contribute to the presencing of the outward-directed dimensions of the goddess’ emotions (projection of anger, mercy onto the observer)²⁸ as well as the emotions of the petitioner herself (e.g. fear, confusion), provided the representations are consistent (see Table 3.6).

Looking back at Table 3.5, there are several sections of the hymn which illustrate the dynamic nature of convergence and divergence. An example is lines 1-12, which constitute an uneven contour. Lines 1-4 all feature frames representing Ishtar as a ruler, goddess, or social superior. The lexical items themselves are mostly commonplace and generic within those

²⁷The developmental sequence that Tsur imagines, in which ‘pre-categorialization’ occurs before ‘low’ or ‘high’ categorialization would seem to be ontogenetic (i.e. according to the mental development of a infant as it acquires concepts through interacting with its environment).

²⁸See 4.1.

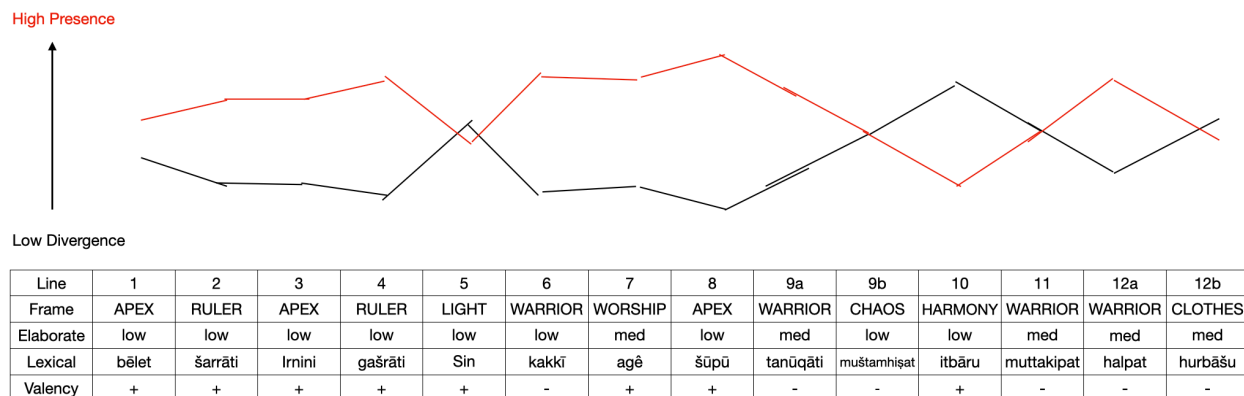


Figure 3.4: Measure of divergent style (**black**) and presence (**red**) in lines 1-12 of the Great Ishtar Hymn.

frames (*bēltu*, *iltu*, *gašru*, *šīru*) although there are the more specific terms Irnini and Igi in line 3. The common theme of rulership and social superiority is disrupted in lines 5, 6, and 7. Here each line evokes significantly different frames of ILLUMINATION SOURCE, WARRIOR, and FOCUS OF TEMPLE WORSHIP. While most of the lexical items are commonplace and generic in their respective domains, in line 5 the proper name Sin is used while in line 7 there is a more concrete phrase *āpirat agē bēlūti* ‘wearing the crown of lordship.’ Line 9 returns to the WARRIOR frame but here blends it with the DIVINE STAR frame to create a more arresting image. In addition, the line evokes the frame portraying Ishtar as SOCIAL CHAOS. Line 10 directly contrasts this with the frame of SOCIAL HARMONY. Line 11 returns to the WARRIOR frame but use the more concrete images of *bēlet tūšari* ‘lady of the (battle) plain’ and *muttakkipāt šadia* ‘who repeatedly charges at the mountains.’ Line 12 also evokes the WARRIOR frame but qualifies the goddess with a rarer metonym and metaphor, *tuqunta halpat* ‘clad in battle’ (i.e. clad in battle armor) and *labšat hurbāša* ‘dressed in terror (lit. ‘frost’).’ Note that these last two figures semantically clash weakly in that Ishtar is being ‘dressed’ in two different ways.

Figure 3.4 charts the contributions within lines 1-12 of frame, elaboration, lexical item, and valency to the relative balance of convergent versus divergent style. To understand the graph, note that the horizontal axis tracks the successive frames of the text while the vertical axis indicates how each frame affects the degree of divergence (black line) and presence (red line) of the image, with greater divergence and presence indicated by the up direction. The use of the notion of divergence here rather than convergence is partly for illustrative reasons. In charting the semantic changes from line to line, large shifts in imagery correlate with an uptick in divergence rather than convergence and are easier to depict in a graph. According to Table 3.6, the degree of divergence is to a large degree inversely proportional to the degree

of presence, save that the affective aspects of the frames can potentially have a constructive effect. This relationship is expressed by the fact that the red and black lines are largely inverses of each other.²⁹

To understand the general principles on which a divergence contour is constructed, one starts with the first frame of the series (on the left) and proceeds frame by frame, noting in the current frame the relative difference or alignment of each of the labelled factors (frame, elaboration, lexical, and valency) to everything that has preceded it. The further back a clash or alignment occurs with the current frame, the less its contribution at the current point (since the most recent frame is remembered most saliently). Successive alignment of factors brings the divergence contour downward and while successive differences brings it up (less divergence equals greater convergence). The opposite occurs for the convergence, or presence contour. The degree of clash or alignment among successive frame types as well as the individual degrees of elaboration of each frame make the greatest impact on the contour, while the nature of the lexical items and their valency have less impact. Note that valency is measured with respect to the human observer, who is also the beholder of presence. Hence frames which put the goddess in a high social position such as a ruler or focus of cult worship, deal with luminosity, or project benefit on mankind are taken to be positive. Frames dealing with the goddess as violent warrior or her ability to project strife or fear are taken to be negative. In general, the valency contribution to divergence is fairly limited for frames focusing only on the goddess, while frames which noticeably affect humans influence it more. Frames whose imagery specifically deals with the goddess's emotional affect on humans (such as line 12b) provide an even greater effect.

In terms of the passage at hand (lines 1-12), within lines 1-3 the contour starts with a middle degree of divergence and decreases gradually. This is because the frames APEX (OF SOCIAL HIERARCHY), RULER, and APEX frame are largely compatible in structural terms (i.e. in terms their fundamental roles, actions, and underlying image schemas) and in terms of valency (hence downward slope), but they are also of low elaboration (middle vertical position). Because the frame in line 3 repeats that in line 1 only after the intervening line 2, the greater convergence (or less divergence) achieved by lines 1 and 3 is less than if the lines were right next to each other (hence more gentle slope at line 3). A similar relation holds between lines 4 and 2, thus continuing the gentle downward slope. In line 5 the frame labelled LIGHT (= ILLUMINATION SOURCE in Table 3.2) is significantly different in structure from everything preceding it, leading to a sharp uptick in divergence. In line 6 the WARRIOR frame is structurally similar to lines 1-4 save for the difference in valency, meaning the contour slopes back down again but not quite to the position of line 4. Over the stretch in lines 6-8, the (FOCUS OF TEMPLE) WORSHIP frame in line 7 differs slightly in structure and valency from line 6 (hence gentle slope up) while line 8 returns us to the early set of

²⁹Instead of divergence we could have plotted convergence alongside presence. In that case the contours reflecting converge and presence would coincide rather than be inverses of each other. However, since the ultimate purpose of the graph is to highlight salient differences in imagery across the lines, divergence is plotted.

frames in 1-4. In lines 9a-10 we have a triplet of frames significantly different in structure: WARRIOR, (SOCIAL) CHAOS, (SOCIAL) HARMONY), with partial differences in elaboration and valency. This leads to the sharp increase of the contour to one of its highest points of divergence at the transition from CHAOS to HARMONY. After a gradual decrease due to the two consistent WARRIOR frames, divergence arises again because of the special lexical item *hurbāša*, whose connotations of frost and terror differ significantly from what has preceded it.

In our analysis, the consideration of lexical items that evoke a frame is meant to account for linguistically-specific influences on convergence/divergence (often phonological in nature) which run parallel to the others discussed above. For instance, line 10 ends with *itbāru* ‘friend/friendship’ and line 11 begins with *itburti*, which the CAD tentatively takes to mean ‘strong.’³⁰ The juxtaposition of these two words is likely a conscious play on words, where the phonological similarity contributes to convergence. In a similar manner, the collocation in line 12 of the synonyms *halpat*, *labšat* contributes a minor degree of convergence.

Regardless of the details of the preceding discussion, the overall purpose of Figure 3.4 is to indicate that in lines 1-12 there are three noticeable peaks of divergence separated by a relatively calm sea of convergence, and that the primary determiner of divergence versus convergence is frame type (i.e. conceptual structure) and degree of elaboration. These distinctions are, we believe, salient enough to hold across individual subjective impressions. Once one understands how the four factors above work (frame type, degree of elaboration, lexical item, and valency), the pattern can also largely be intuited simply by a poetically attentive reading of the text. The virtue of the extended discussion and the graph is in making explicit the more subtle details of the pattern.

Lines 59-66 provide an interesting contrast to lines 1-12 in that they feature a sequence of highly vivid yet contrasting images which stand out against moderately vivid and consistent ones both before and after. The result is, so to speak, a high plateau of divergence that tapers off into convergence in both directions (Figure 3.5). Because the affective components of all the lines in 59-66 concern the petitioner’s fear and sadness (and hence are consonant with each other), they do not change the overall shape of the divergence contour. Only the base height is affected relative to the rest of the hymn.

The most notable feature of lines 59-66 is the series of metaphors and metonyms in 62-64 (see Table 3.7). These are among the most concrete and poetic images of the entire hymn.³¹ As a group, they may be considered the most vivid of all the descriptors of the petitioner, and

³⁰Zgoll also takes *itburti* to mean ‘strong’ (Zgoll 2003a: 62).

³¹This is not to say the images are uniquely creative in the Akkadian poetic corpus. Line 62 says the petitioner rocks like a wave (*agû*) whipped up like an evil wind. There are numerous metaphors in other texts involving a wave, though they usually refer to anger or destructive physical force (see Streck 1999: 105, 112). Line 63 compares the petitioner’s heart to a bird flitting in the sky. There are other metaphorical uses of the flying verbs used in that line (*šâ’u* and *naprušu*), although those are mostly used to describe people and there is no other combination involving *libbu* (see CAD Š/2 s.v. *šâ’u* and CAD N/1 s.v. *naprušu*). Line 64, which compares the petitioner to a weeping dove (*summatu*), has parallels in SB Gilgamesh and Nergal and Ereshkigal (see Streck 1999: 64). The crucial point here is that the images in lines 62-64 are relatively

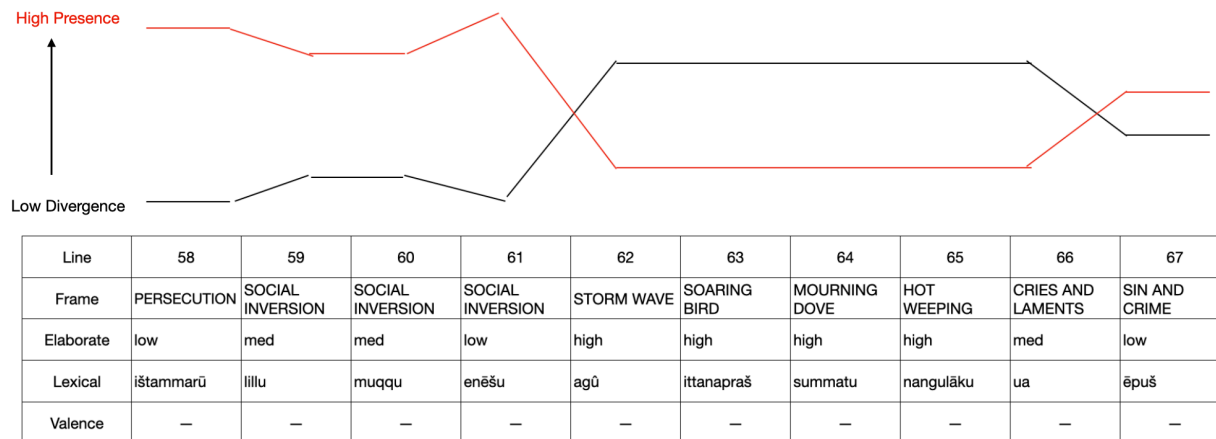


Figure 3.5: Measure of convergent vs. divergent style in lines 59-66 of the Great Ishtar Hymn

they dominate the entire section under discussion. The closest rivalling images to this set occur in 51-52, comparing Ishtar to a raging lion and bull, and 96, comparing the appeasement of Ishtar’s anger to water flowing from a canal (cf. Table 3.5).

Compared to the surrounding lines, 62-64 evoke images that are distinctive not only in terms of content but also their clear function as comparisons. The lines preceding and following 62-64 can be interpreted as literal descriptions. Lines 56-58 deal with enemies at court or public accusers while 66-68 deal with personal grief and personal gods. Lines 62-64, however, explicitly compare the petitioner’s emotions with birds and forces of nature. Each of these comparisons involves a frame that is structurally dissonant with what precedes it, as one goes from storm-tossed ocean waves (rocking or shaking) to a frantic flying bird (flitting) to a crying dove (mourning).³² There is no consistent image here representing how the petitioner feels apart from a common negative valency or perhaps sense of desperate mourning.

Note that the comparative frames in 62-64 also serve to disrupt the courtroom-like setting of the petitioner’s speech (which Zgoll terms the ‘presentation of petition’ stage of the hymn - cf. Table 3.1), with its list of complaints from the human social world, with a series of

distinctive and elaborate within the context of the hymn.

³²One might consider line 65 partially akin to 62-64 in that the word *nangulu* seems to have a metaphorical meaning. The fact that the word is used to describe a luminous quality of stars, rainbows, the awning of a house, the appearance of human skin, and acts of mourning suggests this (see CAD N/1 s.v. *naḡālu*). Von Soden (AHw: 709) offers a base meaning of ‘gleissen, glühen’ (=gleam, glow) which in the context of our line could work. Note there is a similar phrase in the Fable of the Fox: *ibakki šarpiš nangul libbašu mali dīmta*, which Kienast follows von Soden in translating as ‘Hitzig erregt war sein Hertz’ (Kienast 2003: 47, 66). However, the lack of an explicit comparative in our line 65 may indicate it is only conventional metaphor whose metaphorical quality is not evident to the scribe.

naturalistic images reflecting the petitioner's inner emotions. Not only does this involve switching from the objective to subjective viewpoint, but also from (near) literal to the comparative.

The type of clash in 62-64 can be compared with lines 59-61, where due to the lower degree of elaboration the effect is weaker. Lines 59-60, which speak of fools, indigents, and weaklings passing ahead of the petitioner (a metaphorical race), partially conflict with line 61, which speaks of the weak becoming strong while the petitioner becomes weak (a notion of inversion). However, the relatively low degree of elaboration in these lines can be seen in the main verbs, which involve simple horizontal translation (*bâ'u*, *namarkû* < *warkû*) or are generic status verbs (*danānu*, *enēšu*). The nouns involved do indicate marked social classes but do not go into physical descriptions of them. This weakens the existing semantic clash and hence the overall divergence effect. This result is represented graphically by the relatively low, flat areas in 58-61 and 67.

We mention in passing here that the analysis of lines 37-40 (the other connected string of conflicting frames) follows the same spirit as what was done for 59-66. Figure 3.6 illustrates the divergence contour. We note that it consists of a gradual rise ending in a short plateau. More specifically, there is a slightly divergence between lines 37 and 38 at the lexical level. Both lines instantiate ILLUMINATION SOURCE but 37 uses the rare word *akukūtu* 'firebrand' while 38 uses the slightly uncommon word *mummiltu* 'flickering.'³³ The peak divergence occurs between lines 38 and 39, where the moderately elaborated and positive frame of Ishtar as flickering star (*mummiltu Ištar*) gives way to the structurally distinct, low elaborate, and positive(?) frame of Ishtar as erotic goddess of youthful men and women (*ilat eḫlūti Ištar sinnišāti*). The transition to line 40 changes the frame structure (EROTIC INITIATOR to SAVIOR - cf. Table 3.2) but both lines feature balanced sub-roles, (erotic goddess of men/women versus healer of the dead/sick), have positive valency, and low elaboration. This would be represented graphically as a flat or slightly downward sloping segment.

The above analysis of lines 1-12, 37-40, and 59-66, as well as the correlation between frame frequency and schematicity, has mostly considered only fairly high-level poetic structures of the hymn to the neglect of phonetics and prosody. Nevertheless it is sufficient to show how the degree of convergence (and hence presence) achieved by the hymn is not a static effect throughout the performative blend, but rather a dynamic process with ebbs and flows.

If one wonders why these patterns take a certain shape, why the 'peaks' of the divergence contours appear where they do, it seems to be largely a matter of the scribe's poetic or aesthetic sensibilities. We cannot point to concrete rules explaining why the contours look exactly as they do, but certain general considerations point to a kind of restrained creativity. Since the hymn aims to represent each aspect of the goddess 'sufficiently' well, crowding too many of the sharpest images together in one place would both reduce the overall space each image has to assert its salience and leave the rest of the hymn relatively ineffective. Yet evi-

³³This assumes the form *mummiltu* is the D verbal adjective of *wamālu* 'to veil, darken, eclipse' (see Table 18).

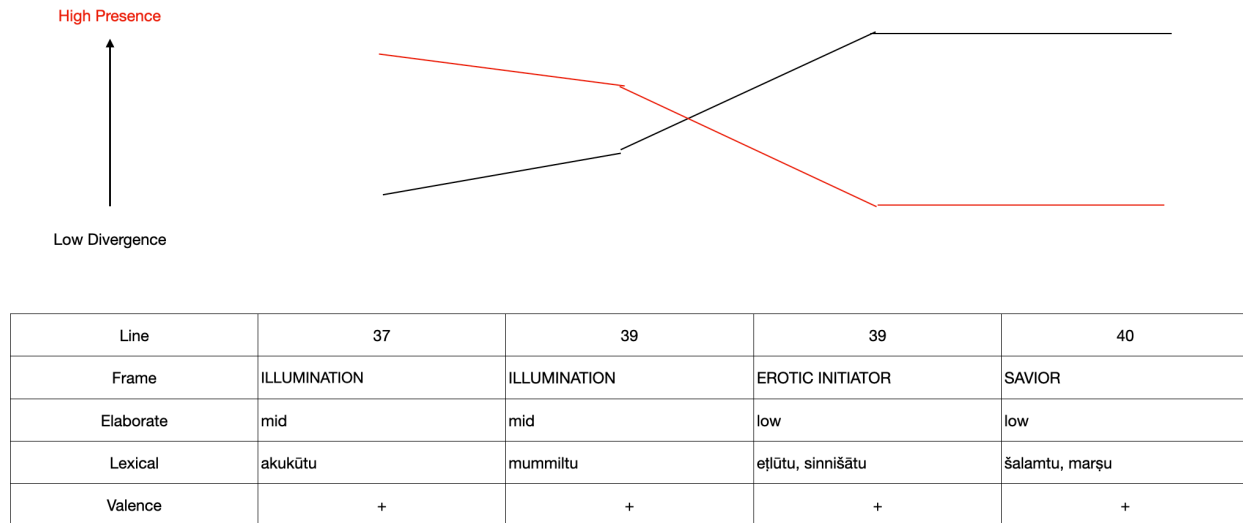


Figure 3.6: Measure of convergent vs. divergent style in lines 37-40 of the Great Ishtar Hymn

dently the scribe did not want (or was sufficiently unconcerned) to lay out the aspects of the goddess in a mechanical, grid-like fashion, an act which would have required premeditation of all the necessary tropes and their placement.

Indeed, this approach would have made the act of composition more like filling out a bureaucratic form rather than an creative display of scribal ability. As will be discussed in the context of the *Göttertypentext* in chapter 6, the compositional process seems to reflect the competing pressures of combinatorial virtuosity and structural convention. On the one hand, the scribe can draw on his trained instincts and considerable knowledge of cuneiform lore to generate many powerful images, many combinations of phrase, line, or passage. But he is subject both to the fairly rigid structural rules of the genre he is writing in (which represent a form of divine enumerative description) and to the rhetorical expectation that he is presencing something pre-given. Nevertheless, the arguments above show that for a scribe with sufficient skill (such as this one), poetically-sensitive image management is indeed possible. The Great Ishtar Hymn features an impressionistic contour of images that is neither required nor defined by genre convention. As mentioned in 3.2.2, even the general rule of dispersed image generation discussed above admits minor exception. Lines 59-66 contain a quick succession of naturalistic images that contravenes the dispersion principle. Yet in its place is an emotional crescendo just before the end of the petition section, something which requires temporarily breaking the general proscription on clustering images. The scribe achieves this effect by remaining within a suitable semantic and tonal domain (frightening or despondent natural scenes) while heuristically varying the specific details. The very clash

of images, in fact, adds to the sense of terror and despondency. No extensive premeditation by the scribe was necessary here as long as his poetic instincts and training were good enough. As with improvisational music composition, the scribe need consciously plan only so far out ahead as to fill out the pattern of the moment, keeping in mind a sketch of the global design.

3.2.4 Poetics emergent from competing rhetorical objectives

At a more abstract level, the patterns observed in the Great Ishtar Hymn reflect the scribe's constant awareness of the importance of presence. But the scribe does not pursue this concern in a simple-minded manner, a fact shown in a way that may not be quite as evident when discussing a single physical statue or brief incantation. The Great Ishtar Hymn shows how Akkadian scribal poetics can modulate presence to a surprisingly subtle degree. This capability seems to rest on a powerful combination of the linguistic features of *šuillas* as a text type alongside the conceptual structure of the main entities portrayed in those *šuillas*. A *šuilla* (and the performative blend it enables) essentially represents only two subjects: a divinity and a petitioner.³⁴ The clear structural divisions of a *šuilla* (cf. Table 3.1) allow each of those subjects to be the sole focus of attention, and since the hymn underlies a performative blend where the petitioner seeks to sway the will of the addressed divinity, the effectiveness of the petition depends on the degree of presence achieved for both the human petitioner and divine addressee (who are supposed to act within a courtly setting). This, in turn, drives the composer of the text to represent as many aspects of the god and man as possible using the Level Two features of personhood discussed in 2.1.2. Thus the *šuilla* provides the same conducive setting for the exercise of divine enumerative description as seen in the Marduk procession (2.2.1). For a *šuilla* like the Great Ishtar Hymn, dozens of sequential lines can be dedicated to each subject at a single time, which gives room for the scribe's representational efforts to play out in dynamic contours of presence not visible in more compact settings (such as gazing at an isolated statue). The difference with the Marduk procession is, among other things, a matter of time scale. The varying identities of Marduk unfold over a series of days, whereas in the Great Ishtar Hymn the goddess changes guises with every line. Because of the hymn's compressed time scale we are able to notice the subtle effects of convergence and divergence much more easily.

Given the practical function of a *šuilla* as an effort to persuade a divinity in the setting of a performative blend, one may wonder why the Great Ishtar Hymn is not written in a way that maximizes its convergent imagery for the sake of presence in the blend. The answer seems to be that a *šuilla* as complex as the Great Ishtar Hymn is not just a recipe for persuasion but a scribal artifact as well. It is worth considering this issue in more detail

³⁴Frechette 2012: 133-137 notes that *šuillas* typically avoid being addressed to multiple deities and avoid having the petitioner introduced by an intermediary. Even though an exorcist is usually required to perform parts of the ritual and recite the hymn for the petitioner, he plays no part in the interaction between the petitioner and the god.

because it illustrates how strongly an elite Akkadian scribe is guided by his own complex tradition of poetics, to the degree that his poetics seem to uncannily mirror the cognitive structures of the things he is imagining.

Concretely speaking, the conflict between a *šuwilla*'s form and function seems to boil down to the following four factors: 1) the amount of space in the text dedicated to the addressed god and the petitioner, 2) the elevated rhetorical style characteristic of the *šuwilla*; 3) the general preference in Akkadian for shorter comparative phrases rather than longer ones; and 4) the distributed nature of the divinity addressed (i.e. the divine frame complex).

Regarding the first point, a *šuwilla* addresses only one god rather than several. In certain other lengthy hymns such as the Gula Hymn of Bulluṣa-rabi (Lambert 1967), the inclusion of additional deities to be praised not only reduces the amount of space that can be dedicated to any one of them, but actively interferes in that single god's presence. Thus the *šuwilla* favors the convergent style and tendency toward unipolar imagery, under the restriction that the hymn must devote sufficient space to the petitioner in order for his petition to seem significant. In this sense the hymn essentially divides its efforts even if more effort is put on the god. Note that in comparison to incantations, a *šuwilla* dedicates more space to the god than to its human participant, and in particular the initial address to the god is typically longer than other prayers.³⁵ This can reach the point where it occupies as much as fifty percent of the entire *šuwilla*.³⁶ While there does not seem to be a strict reason why the proportion of lines a *šuwilla* dedicates to the god could not vastly outweigh what it dedicates to the petitioner,³⁷ as long as the *šuwilla* retains its performative function there must be some space for the petitioner's complain and ritual actions on his behalf (cf. Table 3.1).

The second point concerns the elevated style of a *šuwilla*, one of whose manifestations is phrasal repetition. Frechette notes the usage in *šuwillas* of the Sumerian formula whereby a couplet features epithets for a god without explicitly naming it followed by another couplet where the name is inserted.³⁸ However, repetition can be found at an even more general level in the duplication of key phrases across several lines to express the same general idea. In the Great Ishtar Hymn, for example, lines 15-17 all follow the pattern *ekām lā* X *ekām lā* Y, where X and Y are various terms relating to the divine majesty of Ishtar. Other such phrases in the text include *ahulap* 'enough!' (27-30,45-50), *attī-ma* (5,23), and *adi mati* (56,59,93-94).³⁹ This factor favors convergence.

³⁵Frechette notes that one of the distinguishing characteristics of a *šuwilla* in comparison to incantations is the length of its laudatory address to the god (Frechette 2012: 134).

³⁶Zgoll 2003c: 34. Note, however, that individual *šuwillas* may vary. Ishtar 10 in Mayer's catalogue has only 6 out of 42 lines constituting the address (Zgoll 2003a: 32, 116). In the case of the Great Ishtar Hymn, the address occupies 41 out of 105 lines.

³⁷Note that other hymns to gods involving a petition can be quite 'imbalanced'. The Gula Hymn of Bulluṣa-rabi (Lambert 1967) allocates little more than ten of its two hundred or so lines to the petitioner's plea, with the rest consisting of first person statements by Gula about herself or her husband Ninurta.

³⁸Frechette 2012: 135. For an example of this formula in a *šuwilla*, see Mayer's Papsukkal 1:1-4 and associated references given in Mayer 1976: 40.

³⁹Note related remarks on these and related expressions in Zgoll 2003a: 255ff.

The third point involves poetics, specifically the type of similes, comparisons, and poetic images that appear in a *šuilla*. While elevated poetic register emphasizes repetition and parallelism, it also prefers the line as a natural phrasal unit, or two half-lines with parallel structure. This is especially true when the hymn is listing basic attributes of the god or lavishing it with praise.⁴⁰ This makes it difficult for a *šuilla* to construct a complex simile, metaphor, or even individual frame that necessarily spans several lines unless some structural redundancy is involved and individual components are laid out in parallel. The result, clearly evident from the Great Ishtar Hymn, is that in *šuillas* poetic images rarely occupy more than a single line or doublet.

Note that in general the Akkadian corpus is not lacking in examples of individual figures of speech spread across several lines. Two extended similes are found in the Underworld Dream of an Assyrian Prince where the scribe compares the waking prince to a fugitive in the reeds and to a bull during mating.⁴¹ Similes of similar length are found among the incantations of Šurpu V-VI equating objects thrown into a fire to the evil the client seeks to eliminate.⁴² Images like these involve multiple clauses going beyond the mono-clausal or bi-clausal structures found in *šuillas*. Moreover, while it may be true that Akkadian prefers coordinated clauses in *-mā* to subordinate structures such as comparative *kīma*-clauses,⁴³ there are direct metaphors found in proverbs that span two or more lines.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, such extended figures of speech come from genres other than *šuillas* which feature a third person narrative, the description of an ongoing ritual procedure, or proverbs. These features seem to be related to one another (e.g. proverbs occurring in the third person, descriptions of ritual procedures focusing on something other than the reading/speaking subject, etc.). The absence of such figures of speech from *šuillas* would thus seem to be partly a result of basic structural requirements (first person narrative, direct address to a god, discourse modelled on court petitions, elevated poetic register) along with a conservative compositional tradition that likes to recycle clause-level tropes from the Akkadian corpus. Indeed, many of the lines used in one *šuilla* are reused (perhaps with minor modification) in another.

Behind these issues, however, stands a more fundamental fact about the cognitive representation of Mesopotamian divinity. It is because major deities like Ishtar are conceptualized in terms of an elaborate frame complex that sustained treatments of them in divine hymns

⁴⁰See Hecker 1974: 77ff. for a discussion of these stylistic features within certain Ishtar hymns.

⁴¹Livingstone 1989: 76.

⁴²Reiner 1958b: 31ff.

⁴³Buccellati 1976: 67.

⁴⁴An example comes from lines 51-52 of the Dialogue of Pessimism (Fadhil 2022, Lambert 1960: 146):

sinništu būrtu būrtu šuttatu hirītu

sinništu patri parzilli šēlu ša ikkisu kišād etli

Woman is a pitfall, a pitfall, a trap, a ditch,

Woman is a sharp iron dagger that cuts a young man's throat.

like *šuilla*'s tend towards a more divergent style. Most lines in a *šuilla* evoke the divinity via metonyms for the divine frame complex, which are essentially Level Two features of the divine person. While the conceptual core of the god (the schematic divine person) manifests itself within the *šuilla* in the few 'generic' lines speaking about the god's anger or great divinity, most of the *šuilla* rests on richer frames evoked by the various epithets and descriptive phrases of the god's Level Two features. The cultural salience and relative independence of most of these frames easily fits the punctuated, shifting style of the *šuilla* in much the same way that the current role of Marduk shifts throughout the separate days and locations of the New Year Festival.

At the same time, the multi-faceted nature of Mesopotamian divinity in fact complicates or presents a challenge to the straightforward presencing of that divinity in a compact performative blend. The scribe theoretically 'could' prioritize global coherence over the comprehensive portrayal of the subject of the hymn. But that would seem to put the cart before the horse. The primary goal of a *šuilla* is to presence the divinity in all of its aspects and by such the multitude of such positive portrayals earn its good will. Leaving out some of the aspects of the god's divine frame complex would be both a deficient representation and a deficient honoring of the god.⁴⁵ Thus maximal convergence, and maximally coherent presence, come second in priority.⁴⁶

We could say, then, that the answer to the question of why the composer of the *šuilla* does not aim for maximally convergent imagery is that in the performative context the very conceptualization of the gods gives him a higher priority. The scribe is not just engaging in an exercise of verisimilitude or logical coherence. He is trying to presence the god before someone and obtain its good will by praising it according to the dictates of his own elite culture and poetic craft. Both require a certain fullness of representation that favors comprehensiveness over depth. This means evoking each aspect of the divine frame complex, which tends to fit nicely into the linguistic slots provided by the hymn's poetic structure. The important thing is that there is 'enough' presence of each aspect of the complex as determined by the scribe's poetic judgement.

⁴⁵Scholars of Mesopotamian art have noted the important connection between making an object visibly manifest and asserting that object's value in the eye of the beholder (Winter 2000, Winter 2002). In the case of a performative blend like the Great Ishtar Hymn, visible manifestation is tied to linguistic assertion.

⁴⁶Much of the above reasoning about the divinity holds for the divergent representation of the petitioner. The core emotions of sadness, fatigue, or fear or basic body pains expressed in his petition draw on Level One aspects of his personhood model, whereas the petitioner's social life, family, relations with personal or major gods, and more complex forms of body pain (such as the witchcraft-induced torture of line 55) pertain to Level Two. The formulaic nature of the *šuilla* prevents Level Three (individual biographical information) from appearing altogether. The result is a similar poetic effect to that of the goddess.

3.3 Summary

This chapter has laid out an formulation of performativity within the theory of conceptual blending, and applied that formulation to the Great Ishtar Hymn in order to show how presence can be subtly affected by poetic aspects of divine enumerative description. At a very general level, one can see this fact as a result of both the content of the text and its form. Content is relevant because the subject of representation (the goddess) is a divine frame complex whose multiple, contradictory aspects all need to be evoked within the hymn. Form is relevant because the hymn, as a *šūilla*, is a performative blend that seeks to maximize the presence of the deity within the structural limitations of the genre. We showed how this balancing act results in certain kinds of contours within the text reflecting Reuven Tsur's notion of convergent versus divergent style. We then argued that within the restrictions established by both form and content the scribe nevertheless is able to exercise a kind of trained creativity reflecting emotional, theological, and linguistic sensitivities. Examining the Great Ishtar Hymn in its capacity of a performative blend thus illustrates another area in which divine enumerative description allows for surprisingly rich opportunities for the scribal imagination within a well-established compositional genre.

Lines	Frame	Example
1,3,8,17,19,23,38,103-105	APEX OF SOCIAL HIERARCHY	<i>bēlet bēlēti ilat ilāti</i> lady of ladies, goddess of goddesses
2,4,7,18,27,32,38,103-104	SUPREME RULER	<i>Ištar šarrati kullat dadmē</i> Ishtar, queen of the whole inhabited world
6,9,11,12	WARRIOR	<i>muttabbilat kakkī šākinat tuquntī</i> holding weapons, setting battle
30,31,36	HERO	<i>rabû qurdiki</i> great is your heroism
4,5,11,24,29	HERO	<i>dīn baḥūlāti ina kitti u mišari tadinnī attī</i> you judge the verdicts for subject peoples in righteousness and justice
34,102	JUDGE	
13,25,55-58	JUDGE	
5,35,38,54-55	ILLUMINATION SOURCE	<i>nannarat šamē u eršetim</i> illuminator of heaven and earth
105		
7,14,16,28	FOCUS OF TEMPLE WORSHIP	<i>ḥāmimat gimir parṣī</i> gatherer of all the rituals
93,94,96	ANGRY GOD	<i>adi mati bēlti ra³bātī-ma uzzuzat kabtatki</i> how long my lady will you be wroth with me?
12,20-22	TERRIFYING GOD	<i>ana ḥissat šumēki šamû u eršetu irubbû</i> at the mention of your name, heaven and earth shake
31,51,52	WILD ANIMAL RAGING	<i>labbat Igiġi</i> lioness of the Igiġi
26,40,41	SAVIOR	<i>ašar tappallasī iballuṭ mītu itebbi marṣu</i> wherever you direct your glance, the dead live, the sick get up
33,39	EROTIC INITIATION	<i>pētât pūsummē ša kalīšina ardāti</i> opener of veil of maidens
16,39	WISE COUNSELOR	<i>ša lā ilammadu milikšu mamman</i> whose counsel no one knows
37	FIREBRAND	<i>akukūtu ša ana ayyābī naphat šākinat šahluṭti ekdūti</i> firebrand which ignites against the enemy and destroys the fierce
9	DIVINE STAR	<i>kabbab tanūqāti</i> star of the battle cry
9	SOCIAL CHAOS	<i>muštamhiṣat ahhē mitgurūti</i> who brings amicable brothers to blows
10	SOCIAL HARMONY	<i>muttaddīnat itbāru</i> who sends a friend
12	FEAR IS CLOTHING	<i>labšat hurbāša</i> dressed in terror

Table 3.2: Frames evoked by the Great Ishtar Hymn representing the goddess

Line	Akkadian Term	Translation
5	<i>nannarat šamê u eršetim, mārat Sîn</i>	illuminator of heaven and earth, daughter of Sin
35	<i>namirtu dipār šamê u eršeti šarūr kal dadmē</i>	brilliant, torch of heaven and earth, brilliance of the whole inhabited world,
38	<i>mummiltu</i>	twinkling/flickering (star) ¹⁸
54	<i>ina būnāki namrūti kīniš nāplisīnni yāši</i>	Look upon me with your brilliant face
55	<i>nūrki namru lūmur</i>	let me see your bright light
84	<i>šutēšīri kibsi namriš</i>	guide my path in light
105	<i>mārat Sîn</i>	daughter of Sin

Table 3.3: Lines in Ishtar hymn representing the goddess as illumination source

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
101	102	103	104	105					

Table 3.5: Distribution of elaborated frames and metaphors representing Ishtar (**bold**) and the petitioner (**red**).

	Perceptual aspect	Affective aspect
Convergence	+	+
Divergence	-	±

Table 3.6: Relationship between convergent/divergent style and aspects of presence. The ± signs indicate whether the given item contributes to (+) or detracts (-) from presence.

61)	<i>enšūti idninū-ma anāku eniš</i>	The weak have become strong while I have become weak
<hr/>		
62)	<i>asabbu² kīma agî ša uppaqu šāru lemnu</i>	I rock like a wave which an evil wind whips up
63)	<i>išâ' ittanapraš libbī kīma iššūr šamāmī</i>	My heart flits about like a bird of the sky
64)	<i>adammum kīma summatu mūšī u urra</i>	I weep like a dove night and day
<hr/>		
65)	<i>nangulākū-ma abakki šarpiš</i>	I 'burn' as I weep hotly

Table 3.7: Lines 61-65 of the Great Ishtar Hymn.

Chapter 4

Metaphors for the emotions of Marduk in *Ludlul*

This chapter looks at examples of divine hymns from the late second and first millennium that seek to convey the emotional state of a major Mesopotamian deity. If one thinks of a poetic modality as a discourse mode that relies on metaphor to describe something when more direct expression seems inadequate or unacceptable, we will argue that the examples of divine enumerative description in this chapter clearly demonstrate that property. Moreover, just as in chapter 3, we will also argue that there are specific traits of the elite Akkadian scribal tradition motivating this aspect of divine enumerative description.

The core example studied here is the description of Marduk at the beginning of Tablet 1 of *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*. Although this text is sometimes understood as an example of ‘wisdom literature’ akin to the Hebrew Book of Job, Oshima has argued that the work was originally composed or commissioned as an elaborate praise poem to Marduk, recognizing the god’s crucial role in allowing a particular historical person to recover from serious illness, even as it warns others about that same god’s potential for wrath.¹ Because of *Ludlul*’s original compositional context and function it is reasonable to consider it as a non-prototypical divine hymn. In particular the beginning of Tablet 1, which describes aspects of Marduk’s wrath and mercy, can be considered an example of divine enumerative description.

This passage and others like it serve as interesting instances of divine enumerative description in that the underlying conceptual material of the representation (the mental state of a god) is almost necessarily subject to metaphorical elaboration centered on the human observer rather than the deity. The push towards this kind of metaphorical depiction stems from the predominant theological notion in later Mesopotamian history of the inscrutability of the gods, an idea operative at least implicitly in hymns to major deities like Marduk. Beyond illuminating the conceptual structure of these metaphorical depictions, we also argue that they can be understood within the Mesopotamian model of personhood outlined in

¹Oshima 2014: 28ff. See also Lenzi 2023: 285ff.

2.1. Rather than thinking of these emotional descriptions as tapping into what we might consider inner psychological traits of the god, they are more akin to Level Two features of divinity which comprise the roles and personas of the god within the divine frame complex.

This chapter seeks to highlight another way in which the poetic mode of divine enumerative description is shaped by culturally specific factors involving both content and form. The theological principle of inscrutability (a matter of content) combines with the stylistic insistence on enumerative description (a matter of form) to promote descriptions that externalize the emotion of the gods. It thus combines with chapter 3 as an illustration of how the poetic mode that is divine enumerative description is neither simplistic in structure nor limited in expressive power, but in fact draws on some of the most conceptually rich aspects of the late cuneiform scribal tradition.

Section 4.1 of this chapter establishes basic facts about the inscrutability of the gods within second and first millennium Mesopotamia, with a focus on the Marduk theology. Section 4.2 then outlines Kövecses' cognitive model of emotions, an analysis of one of the most predominant folk theories of emotion in use today. This is a model not necessarily of what emotions objectively are but how people think about them as evidenced in metaphor, and as a matter of metaphor it fits well with the model of cognitive linguistics described in chapter 1. This model is then brought into play in 4.3, where we look at how certain passages conforming with the Marduk theology address Marduk's emotions. In that section we argue that Kövecses' model must be modified to account for the consistent externalized perspective in metaphorical descriptions of the Mesopotamian god's emotion. Finally, in 4.4, we argue that this externalized representation of Marduk's emotions effectively turns them into Level Two personhood features within the divine frame complex. In divine hymns or similar instances of divine enumerative description, talking about the god's emotions is like talking about other aspects of his identity at a certain rhetorical and conceptual level, where the representation driven by competing priorities of content and form. The section concludes with a brief discussion of how these results extend to other major Mesopotamian gods.

4.1 The inscrutability of the gods

By the end of the third millennium it is evident that some Mesopotamian scribes were implicitly aware of a difficulty in how they represented the gods. As the following passage from the Lament of Sumer and Ur indicates, the great gods hold final sway over the fortunes of man and their will cannot be countermanded:

The word of An and Enlil knows no overturning. Ur was indeed given kingship but it was not given an eternal reign. From time immemorial, since the Land

was founded, until people multiplied, who has ever seen a reign of kingship that would take precedence for ever?²

The passage indicates that Ur fell because An and Enlil willed it so. While there is the attendant claim that no line of kings lasts forever, this principle is largely backgrounded against the finality of the decisions of the gods. Those decisions are not inexorably governed by principles higher than the gods because that conflicts with the portrayal of the gods as autonomous beings whose agency and thoughts are determinative of their actions in the way humans' are.

Yet at the same time, the scribes do not go into much detail as to why the gods act the way they do towards man. Thus in the Old Babylonian text *A Man and His God*,³ a penitent recounts his unjust sufferings to a god who ultimately relieves him. He plaintively asks his god why he is neglected by him (line 100) even as he indicates he has committed some sin of unknown type (113). The god is appeased by the penitent's offerings and contrition and ultimately restores the man (121ff.), but we are given no insight into what the god is thinking. A similar dynamic lies at the heart of *Ludlul*. More generally, while the main purpose of divination in Mesopotamia is to understand the will of the gods, this method produces signs that required interpretation. Putting aside the ways divination could be ambiguous or frustrated, there is thus always a certain opaqueness to the gods' inner thoughts that man cannot see through. What matters in the end is what the gods wanted from man, not whatever complex inner experiences they go through to arrive at that desire.

This did not mean, however, that the gods have no interior mental lives. Thus in *Enuma elish* 7.35, Marduk is called Šazu ('he who knows the inside'), a designation indicating he knows what the other gods are thinking and feeling (and hence the gods do think and feel).⁴ Moreover, the basic psychological dynamic in petitionary prayers to the gods like the *šūilla* is that the gods are pleased by behavior they do approve of and become angry at what they do not. So the gods evidently do think and feel like humans do within a certain psychological range, even as scribes are reluctant to elaborate on the nature of those inner experiences.

The scribes in particular have a concern with the anger of the major deities as well as their capacity for destruction. This is well represented in Sumerian and Akkadian hymns of the first millennium. Many of the Sumerian cultic lamentations of this period focus on the angry, destructive acts of gods like Enlil, Ninurta, and Adad/Iškur against entire cities. Thus in an *eršemma* to Nintinuga, the goddess of Girsu-Lagash laments Enlil's destruction of her city:⁵

20) In rage, the honored one left me alive!

²ETCSL 2.2.3 365-368.

³Lambert 1987. See also ETCSL 5.2.4.

⁴*d*ša₃-zu mu-de-e lib-bi DINGIR.DINGIR ša₂ i-bar-ru-u kar-šu₂ (Lambert 2013: 126-127).

⁵No. 10 in Gabbay 2015, pp. 72ff.

- 21) In rage, the Great Mountain left me alive!
- 22) The lord Mullil left me alive!
- 23) “Woe!” I say! “Woe!” I say! Because of the *plunder*—that is why I cannot be happy!
- 24) My House! That destruction! Tears because of him (= Enlil)! Sighs because of him!
- 25) My city! That desecration! Tears because of him! Sighs because of him!
- 26) That destroyed cattle-pen! Tears because [of him]! Sighs (because of him)!
- 27) That uprooted sheepfold! Tears because of him! Sighs (because of him)!
- 28) His (= Enlil’s) destruction of the House! Tears because of him! Who could pacify me?

Yet the sense of divine inscrutability before humans probably reaches its most extreme form in the major hymns to the high god Marduk. Not only are humans unable to know what is in Marduk’s heart, but lesser gods cannot tell either. Thus *Ludlul* 1:29-32 states

- 29) *bēlu mimma libbi ilī ibarri*
- 30) *manāma i[na] il[ī] alaktašu ul īdi*
- 31) *Marduk mimma ina libbi ilī ibarri*
- 32) *ilu ayyumma ul ilammad tēmšu*

- 29) The lord sees whatever is in the heart of the gods,
- 30) but no one among the gods can understand his way.
- 31) Marduk sees whatever is in the heart of the gods,
- 32) but no god can comprehend his design.⁶

The specification that it is the way (*alaktu*) and design (*tēmu*) of Marduk which is unfathomable indicates that the scribes saw a close connection between the god’s thoughts and his deeds. But with thoughts come feelings. Given the complexity of the world Marduk was held to oversee (which included the actions and intentions of its human inhabitants) an accurate knowledge of the god’s motives would have included the reasons behind his emotional states as well as the conceptual content that accompanied them. Yet the above passage tells us that such things cannot be known to man, including the scribe who is tasked with giving substance to this very aspect of the god. How does he proceed?

The general strategy is illustrated by a passage from the beginning of *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* Tablet 1, dealing with the wrath and mercy of Marduk:

⁶All text citations of *Ludlul* are from the composite edition of Oshima 2014. Translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

- 5) *ša kīma ūmu mehê namu uggassu*
 6) *ū kīma manīt šērēti zâqšu tab*
 7) *uzzussu lā mahar abūbu ru'ubšū*
 8) *mussahhir karassu kabattašu tayyārat*
- 5) He whose wrath is like a **storm-wind in the steppe**
 6) but like **the morning breeze**, his blowing is pleasant
 7) His anger is unstoppable, **his rage is a flood**
 8) yet **his mood relents** and **his disposition is merciful**

What is interesting about lines 5-8 is that despite their elaborate, metaphorical content they do not elaborate on Marduk's interior mental state. The description clearly involves the basic parameters of that mental state, as line 5 says we are dealing with Marduk's wrath (*uggassu*), while line 6 speaks of Marduk's rage or 'shaking' (*ru'ubšū*). Line 8 speaks of inner body parts of Marduk as metaphorical containers for emotion. But all of these descriptions are at most highly conventional metaphors and metonyms.

The explicitly poetic content of the passage is in fact not rooted in Marduk's inner experience. Under cursory inspection one may think that the storm, flood, and breeze are metaphorical expressions for the god's emotions akin to how we often speak of our own internal feelings (e.g. *I'm in a stormy mood*), but this is not the case. Rather, as we will argue in the next section, such metaphors are externally viewpointed and describe the effects of Marduk's emotion on the human observer. To make such an argument, we will need to first look at how emotion metaphors work in general.

4.2 Kövecses' analysis of emotions

Over decades of work, Zoltán Kövecses has applied Conceptual Metaphor Theory to understanding how emotions are expressed in various languages, and what that tells us about how such emotions are conceived metaphorically. Kövecses has long argued⁷ that there is a widespread folk model of emotion that can be diagrammed as an image schema relating five mental states via causal links (see Kövecses 2000: 58):

Cause(Cau) → Emotion (Emo) → Control (Con)
 → Loss of Control (LoCon) → Behavioral Response (BeRe)

The causal links in Kövecses' model (i.e. the arrows in the above diagram) indicate the conceptual areas codable for metaphorical expressions. The diagram illustrates how a single person's experience of emotion can be analyzed in terms of various causes and states. At

⁷E.g. Kövecses and Lakoff 1987, Kövecses 1990, Kövecses 2000.

Type	Metaphor	Example
Cause	EMOTION IS A MECHANICAL FORCE EMOTION IS AN ELECTRIC FORCE EMOTION IS A GRAVITATIONAL FORCE EMOTION IS A MAGNETIC FORCE	When I found out, it <i>hit me hard</i> . It was an <i>electrifying</i> experience. They felt <i>drawn towards each other</i> . That kind of behavior <i>repels</i> me.
Effect	EMOTION IS A SOCIAL FORCE EMOTION IS AN OPPONENT EMOTION IS A NATURAL FORCE EMOTION IS A MENTAL FORCE EMOTION IS INSANITY	He is <i>governed</i> by his passions. He was <i>seized</i> with emotion. It was a <i>stormy</i> meeting. She was <i>misled</i> by her emotions. He was <i>mad</i> with rage.
Both	EMOTION IS HUNGER (Cause) EMOTION IS HUNGER (Effect) EMOTION IS FIRE (Cause) EMOTION IS FIRE (Effect)	I'm <i>starving</i> for affection. His anger is <i>insatiable</i> . She <i>kindled a fire</i> in his heart. He was <i>burning</i> with passion for her.

Table 4.1: Three main categories of metaphors for emotions, according to Kövecses' five-point cognitive model (examples based on Kövecses 2000).

the top of the chain, there is a Cause which takes the person from a non-emotional state to an emotional one (Emotion). The person may try to resist the influence of the emotion (Control), but if he experiences Loss of Control, he will exhibit a Behavioral Response.

The above cognitive model provides a skeletal concept for how many languages express emotion. Furthermore, Kövecses found that linguistic expressions for emotion generally deal with either the cause of the emotion (Cause → Emotion) or the effect of the emotion on the subject (Emotion → Control → Loss of Control → Behavioral Response). Some however deal with both. A number of examples of how this classification works are given in Table 4.1.

Important in Kövecses' cognitive model is that the subject or experiencer of the emotion is always acted upon by a force. This holds true for linguistic expressions that describe the Cause of the emotion as well as the Effect. The subtle difference between these two cases is illustrated by the examples in Table 4.1, and it may help to discuss some of them.

In the sentence *when I found out, it hit me hard*, the emotion metaphor deals with the cause of the emotion because it takes the cause of the person's emotional state (finding out the new information) and describes it metaphorically as a heavy object hitting their body. The new information induces an emotional state in the person in the same way a heavy object hits the body, which is to say it induces a seriously negative emotion, perhaps felt acutely in

the gut or chest. Similarly, in the sentence *it was an electrifying experience* it is the unstated event and how the person experiences it which causes them to enter into the emotional state. This cause is described metaphorically as the person's body being electrified. The experience thus induces the emotion all over their body just like being electrocuted feels. In *that kind of behavior repels me*, the behavior is what causes the person to feel an emotion (namely disgust). Here that cause is described as a magnetic force that repels the person when understood as a charged entity.

On the other hand, in *he was seized with emotion* it cannot logically be the emotion which causes the person to enter the emotional state. Rather, the sentence at the literal level describes the effect of the emotion, which is how the person fails to completely control their expression of the emotional state. This effect is described metaphorically as the person struggling against an opponent who seizes their body. Similarly, the sentence *she was misled by her emotions* literally describes how the person's failure to control their emotional state effects their subsequent judgment. This is imagined as the emotions serving as bad guides for the person's physical movement.

A rule of thumb for distinguishing Cause metaphors of emotion from Effect metaphors is to look at the nature of the other participants in the metaphor. If those participants are emotions then the metaphor is Effect. If it is an external agent it is Cause. Thus under the 'Both' category of Table 4.1, the sentence *I'm starving for affection* deals with how affection, as an outside agent, causes you to feel a certain emotion (namely the desiring of the affection). It is expressed metaphorically as a hunger for food. However the superficially similar sentence *his anger is insatiable* describes how the person is affected once they are in an angry state. They keep looking for things to take that anger out on, and no matter how much they take that anger out on things, the anger still drives them. The person is described metaphorically as an animal that hungers for food but can never be satisfied no matter how much it eats.

While EMOTIONS ARE FORCES is the most typical metaphor that exemplifies Kövecses' cognitive model, for certain emotions other cultural models are prevalent. Emotions like fear, joy, and anger have a clear dynamic profile consisting of a cause, onset, resistance, and fairly limited duration. Feelings like happiness or sadness are usually less intense, have vague or practically no sense of cause or resistance, and seem to reflect durable states rather than impulses. The metaphors for these emotions Kövecses has called 'evaluative', as they are often based on a notion of static positivity/negativity or scalar value.⁸ They are also expressive in that they deal with the outward expression of the emotion rather than behavioral or phenomenological dimensions (which tend to go with the general modeling of emotions as forces). An example is *happiness is light*, as in *her face was bright with happiness*. Here, the face is not literally bright (typically it shows a smile). Rather, because of the experiential correlations between the inner sense of happiness and its accompanying physical conditions,⁹

⁸See Kövecses 1991.

⁹Kövecses 1991 lists several of the correlations. We associate warm and light environments with con-

brightness represents the positive valence of the underlying emotion.

4.3 Marduk's emotions from an external viewpoint

The theory discussed in the previous section does not take into account Akkadian metaphors. The purpose of this section is to argue that an important modification to Kövecses' model of emotion must be made to account for the way Akkadian scribes metaphorically describe the emotions of Marduk:

Emotion (Emo) → Control (Con) → Loss of Control (LoCon) → Behavioral
Response (BeRe) → **Effect on Humans (EoH)**

In this modified model, the phase specifying the god's loss of control is backgrounded while a new phase dealing with the emotion's effect on humans is emphasized.

More specifically, the passages analyzed below will show how metaphorical depictions of the god's emotions involve an externalized viewpoint centered on the human observer. As will be argued in 4.4, this externalized description makes Marduk's emotional profile more akin to a guise or even role that the deity adopts rather than an inner psychological process. As a matter of personal identity, this distinction between external role and internal process is captured by the difference between the Level Two and Level One personhood features outlined in 2.1.

It is important to recognize here that the operative distinction being drawn is between the metaphorical description of the god's emotion and the (near) literal one. We are not saying the Mesopotamian scribes did not believe the gods felt emotions internally or that they did not say so in the texts examined here. Any statement about a god feeling an emotion *implies* that god is moved internally. But the image of what that resisted movement looks like can be so vague as to be practically empty. This is what we claim happens for the 'literal' descriptions of Marduk's emotion, which include many basic verbs and conventional phrases for emotion detailed below. Those expressions are internally viewpointed, but lack all save the most schematic meaning. We claim, however, that once the scribe begins to use clear metaphors beyond those conventional expressions, those metaphors are necessarily externally viewpointed and involve in some substantive way how the human observer is affected.

Let us first return to the description of Marduk in *Ludlul*, Tablet 1:

5) *ša kīma ūmu mehê namu uggassu*

tentedness but dark, cold ones with sadness. Natural light tends to come from above, which correlates with positive experience. In the west, being up correlates with the sky and heaven, which is a happy and light place. When we smile, our white teeth show, connoting brightness. Also, our smile causes facial muscles to pull parts of our face upward. Finally, since happiness is a feeling that tends to spread to others when they see your face (not other body parts), it is analogous to beams of light spreading out from your face.

- 6) *u kīma manīt šērēti zâqšu t̄āb*
 7) *uzzussu lā mahar abūbu ru'ubšu*
 8) *mussahhir karaassu kabattašu tayyārat*

- 5) He whose wrath is like a **storm-wind in the steppe**
 6) but like **the morning breeze**, his blowing is pleasant
 7) His anger is unstoppable, **his rage is a flood**
 8) yet **his mood relents** and **his disposition is merciful**

Line 5 is a simile about anger, comparing Marduk's wrath to a storm-wind in the steppe. Line 7 involves a metaphor equating his rage to a flood. When we look at Kövecses' five-point cognitive model it seems that these expressions do not actually describe either the Cause of Marduk's anger or the Effect upon Marduk himself. This makes sense in terms of the passage's rhetorical aim. In the introductory section of *Ludlul*, the emphasis is on how Marduk's disposition affects humans or their associates, not Marduk himself. Thus in line 15, when Marduk becomes angry the protective spirits of a man leave him. In line 27 the floods of Adad multiply, affecting human crops. In line 22 the body of the petitioner is racked with blows while in 25 evil demons haunt him. None of these descriptions say anything about how the anger affects Marduk himself.

From a cognitive linguistics standpoint, the above metaphors for Marduk's wrath have their viewpoint centered on the human object rather than the divinity. They seem to constitute an exception to Kövecses' model of emotions. To speak of Marduk's anger as a storm-wind or a flood tells us how it feels for a human to be the brunt of the rage, not how Marduk resists and is carried away by his emotion. In general, when the term for flood (*abūbu*) describes acts of destruction it is aimed at humans or evil (hence inferior) divinities.¹⁰ The term for storm-wind (*mehû*) has a more flexible sense that can include violent force, although in that case the targets of force are always humans or objects.¹¹

One may wonder whether the scribe chooses an external viewpoint for his metaphorical descriptions of Marduk's emotions primarily because the story is meant to be told from the penitent's point of view, or because the autonomy of Marduk is meant to be contrasted with the penitent's helpless state. In situations where the narrator is less visible or where Marduk's role is more passive, one might expect elaborations of Marduk's emotional state that are consistent with Kövecses' model. Yet within texts of the later second and first millennium (i.e. texts reflecting the Marduk theology), we find this is not the case.

¹⁰CAD A/1 s.v. *abūbu*. There is the idiomatic use of *abūbu* to mean an urgent or pressing situation (meaning 4c), however the metaphorical force of that sense acts on humans and not gods.

¹¹CAD M/II s.v. *mehû* A. Note, however, a pure literal use under meaning a): *me-hu-u₂ itbām ipir pa-ni-šu₂(!) iktumu* 'a storm arose and covered his face with dust' (BRM 4 6:8), as well as the possible emotive sense under meaning d): *...ibrūtka mi-hu-u₂ abūbu* '...your friendship is a storm, a flood' (BM 55470 obv. 20, see Lambert 1960: 208).

For instance, in *Enuma elish* Marduk is one god acting alongside many others. All his interactions are with other divine beings and involve either having a dialogue with them or fighting them. There are no humans on the scene. Yet in the sections of the text touching on what should involve Marduk's mental state, the metaphors are either conventional or externally viewpointed:

2.153 *ihdū-ma bēlu ana amāt abīšu*

2.154 *īliš libbašū-ma ana abīšu izakkar*

Bel was pleased at his father's words.

His heart rejoiced, and he spoke to his father.

3.56 *mahāriš Tiamat libbašu arâ ubla*

He (Marduk) decided to go against Tiamat

6.1 *Marduk zikrī ilāni ina šemīšu*

6.2 *ubbal libbašu ibannâ niklāti*

When Marduk heard the words of the gods

he decided to make intricate things

6.3 *īpuš pīšu ana Ea iqabbi*

6.4 *ša ina libbīšu uštāmû inandin milka*

He opened his mouth and spoke to Ea,

giving him the advice which he deliberated in his heart

6.55 *Marduk annūta ina šemēšu*

6.56 *kima ūmu immerū zīmūšu*

When Marduk heard this

his face beamed like daylight¹²

It is true that the exultant tone of *Enūma elish* makes it natural that Marduk, as hero of the story, never be described as deeply fearful, sad, or worried. In his battle with Tiamat he is not even said to become angry.¹³ Nevertheless, as the above passages show, Marduk does express pleasure or consent at proposals from the other gods that naturally align with his own destiny. Most of these descriptions are either literal or involve highly conventional metaphor. Literal description is found in 2.153, where Marduk's pleasure is expressed simply with the verb *ihdu*. Other lines are based on the conventional metaphor HEART IS A CONTAINER FOR THOUGHT/EMOTIONS, where the physical organ is seen as the seat of one's dispositions,

¹²Citations based on the edition in Lambert 2013. Translation are my own.

¹³Other gods in the story certainly are described as angry, such as Anšar after finding out both An and Ea have failed to defeat Tiamat (2.126), or Ea upon learning that Tiamat is planning revenge against the younger gods (2.7).

intentions, and feelings. Thus in 2.154 the heart as container ‘swells’ (*īliš*) in size to indicate an increase in joy. In 6.4 the heart is the space within which Marduk discusses with himself (*uštāmû*) his advice. In 3.56 and 6.2 the heart is a container for the intention that ‘carries’ (*ubla/ubbal*) Marduk to the state where he has decided to enact that intention. The one instance in *Enūma elish* where the expression of Marduk’s happiness might be seen as non-conventional metaphor is in 6.56. There the god’s emotion is described as a beaming on the face akin to daylight. Yet as discussed in 4.2, the notion of a face beaming with happiness is an evaluative metaphor expressing positive valuation as light intensity. The light radiates outward from the one experiencing happiness, and hence the metaphor is externally viewpointed.

In addition, among the examples above there is no instance specifying a particular force that brings Marduk into an emotional state (Kövecses’ Cause → Emotion) beyond an aspect of Marduk himself. Nor is there a clear instance of a forceful surface expression of that emotion (Emotion → Effect). While we must assume the existence of such forces as part of the basic meaning of emotion, they are not elaborated on beyond the near literal statement of the emotion itself (e.g. *ihdu*, *īliš*).

Opaque references to Marduk’s emotions are not a feature limited to divine hymns and epics. Less typical instances of divine enumerative description also function this way. In Esarhaddon’s Babylonian Prism A, the Assyrian king tells how the Babylonians abandoned the rites of their native gods, plundered the treasure of Marduk’s temple, and used it to bribe the Elamites for help. One might see these actions as the external forces which move the god to anger:

(i 34) *īgug-ma Enlil ilāni Marduk ana sapān māti hulluq nišša iktapud lemnūti*
 (i 38) *Arahtu nār hegalli agû ezzi edû šamru mīlu gapšu tamšil abūbi*
ibblam-ma ālu šubassu mē ušbī’-ma (i 43) ušēme karmiš ...

(i 34) The Enlil of the gods, Marduk, **became angry** and **plotted evilly** to level the land and destroy its people. (i 38) The Arahtu river, a river of abundance, turned into **an angry wave, a raging tide, a huge flood like the deluge**. It swept its waters across the dwellings of the city and (i 43) turned them into ruins.¹⁴

Although the content of the passage refers to the historically attested flooding of Babylon by Sennacherib in 689, the poetic strategy it adopts is to express key aspects of the event in terms of Marduk’s anger. On the one hand, this ‘historical’ passage differs from prototypical examples of divine enumerative description in a few ways. It is less list-like in that phrases and units of thought can span multiple lines, and there is clear narrative structure in the passage featuring dynamic change. Thus line 34 describes Marduk actually turning angry (*īgug*) while 37 has the god planning his actions (*iktapud*) before implementing them.

¹⁴RINAP 4 104: i 34-43 (Leichty 2011: 193ff.). Translation my own.

Yet despite the differences with the kind of divine enumerative description encountered in divine hymns, the above passage from Babylonian Prism E is like the prototype examples in not elaborating on the forces presumed to act on Marduk as part of the god's emotional experience. The cause of Marduk's anger is straightforwardly described in lines 25-33, which explain how the Babylonians abandoned the rites of their local gods and despoiled the Esagil. Yet the fact that these events moved Marduk to anger is only implied in the following line by the bare verb *īgug* 'he became angry'. While lines 38-43 express the flooding of the Arahtu canal and its destruction of the city as an angry wave akin to the deluge (*agû ezzi edû šamru mīlu gapšu tamšil abūbi*), the metaphor is viewpointed on the residents' experience of the flood. Much as how Marduk's anger in *Ludlul* 1.4 is likened to a storm-wind, the forces acting on the god are backgrounded while the impact of the emotion on an external observer is foregrounded.

Even when Marduk is a character acting under direction from another god, we do not find elaboration of his mental state. In the Erra Epic, Marduk is in a similar position of having been angered by the Babylonians' neglect of his cult. In Tablet 1 lines 121-123, Erra tells his vizier Išum about how the Babylonians have not sufficiently feared the god's name and deserve punishment:

- 121) *anāku aššu lā išhutū zikrī*
 122) *u ša rubê Marduk amāssu iddū-ma [i]ppuš kī libbušu*
 123) *rubâ Marduk ušaggag-ma ina šubtišu adekkī-ma nišī asappan*

Because they have not feared my name

and abandoned the word of Marduk, so that **h[e] can do as he pleases.**

I will make Marduk angry, and make him rise from his seat so that I may destroy the people!¹⁵

In this passage, Erra is the proximal causal agent for Marduk's wrath. Since the Babylonians have not feared his name (*lā išhutū zikrī*), Erra will punish the people by causing Marduk to become angry, which in turn will make the Babylonian god abandon his temple and any claim to order. Yet even here there is only a bare literal statement of Erra causing Marduk to become angry, expressed as a causative of the basic verb for anger *agāgu*.¹⁶

¹⁵Citations from the edition in Cagni 1969. Translation my own.

¹⁶Besides this passage, there is only one other instance in the Erra Epic of a Š stem with a meaning 'X makes Y angry,' and it likely does not involve Marduk. In Tablet 3, fragment A, line 16 (Cagni 1969: 92), Erra declares how he will cause trouble for mankind, saying *...ušasbas-ma iparras tālitta* 'I will make [...] angry so that she stops childbirth.' Due to the badly eroded signs at the beginning of the line, the reading and interpretation is uncertain. In his commentary, Cagni discusses various proposals for interpretation, including who or what goes at the beginning. Frankena has suggested ^dNIN.MEN.AN.NA (= Bēlet-ilī) (Frankena 1965: 129 n.2). Reiner actually takes the verb to be *ušašbat* 'I will cause him to seize' and reads the beginning of the line ^dUDUG ARHUŠ, yielding 'I will cause *utukku*-demons to seize the womb' (Reiner 1958a: 47 n. 14). As Cagni's discussion of the suggestions offered indicates, the object of the verb is likely

Although there are other lines in the Erra Epic describing Marduk's emotional state,¹⁷ there is only one that might be interpreted as metaphorical. In Tablet 1, line 144, Marduk says *zīmūya tubbū-ma galit niṭlī* 'My visage is lofty, my gaze terrifying.'¹⁸ The verbal adjective *galtu* 'fearsome' is derived from *galātu* 'to shake, tremble.' Kouwenberg has observed a similar relationship in meaning with the verbs *ra'ābu* 'to shake (with fear/anger) or be furious' and *nakādu* 'to palpitate (of the heart), to worry.' He suggests that the various emotion verbs in Akkadian originally referred to bodily activities accompanying the onset of emotion, and later only referred to the inner experience of the emotion via semantic bleaching.¹⁹ In cognitive linguistic terms, this means that these Akkadian emotion verbs were originally metonymic for the entire (exterior viewpoint) frame of an emotion, a pattern which linguists have noted elsewhere.²⁰

The above survey suggests that in Akkadian texts of the late second and first millennium (i.e. texts characterized by the Marduk theology), scribes do make metaphorical descriptions of the emotions of a high god like Marduk but when they do they take an external perspective centered on what the emotion means to the human observer. We can express this scribal 'folk model' of divine emotions as a modification of Kövecses' own theory:

Emotion (Emo) → Control (Con) → Loss of Control (LoCon) → Behavioral
Response (BeRe) → **Effect on Humans (EoH)**

Fundamentally, the scribe cannot escape the need to make some reference to the god being moved to an emotional response. This is reflected in the prevalent use of basic verbs for anger and joy cited above. But under poetic impulse the scribe can de-emphasize (or perhaps 'abstract') that aspect of the emotional experience in favor of elaborating on its impact on humans.

One can see this as another content-form dynamic akin to what was observed in the Great Ishtar Hymn and other *šuilas* from chapter 3. Like those hymns, sections of *Ludlul* and *Enūma elish* which describe Marduk feature a tension between the drive to make the god manifest in linguistic representation and a restrictive norm that limits that expression. For the Ishtar hymn and other *šuilas*, the restriction involved genre and stylistic assumptions. In this chapter the restriction is more abstract, basically amounting to the theological

a female deity or a demon who can prevent childbirth. This would exclude Marduk.

¹⁷In two places we have bare statements of anger or joy. Tablet 1, line 132 has an instance of *agāgu* with *ultu ullu āgugū-ma ina šubtīya atbū-ma aškun abūba* 'long ago I became angry. I rose from my seat and let loose a flood.' Tablet 1, line 191 features *ṭiābu* with *amāt Erra iqbū elīšu iṭīb* 'what Erra said pleased him.' Finally, in Tablet 4, line 36 there is a conventional metaphor for anxiety or sadness, *libbašu iṣṣabat* 'he mourned.'

¹⁸Cagni 1969 notes in his commentary to this line (pg. 189) that there is a parallel with *Enuma elish* 4.77: *mi-na-a tub-ba-a-ti e-liš na-ša₂-ti-ma* '(Tiamat) perché ti sei elevata (con alterigia) e ti sei posta in alto?' ((Tiamat), why have you stood tall with pride, exalted yourself?).

¹⁹Kouwenberg 2010: 74, n. 98.

²⁰Kövecses 1990: 15. For the same pattern in early American English, see Stearns 1994: 66-67.

assumption that while high gods like Marduk are anthropomorphic to the degree they are capable of all the basic human emotions, their august standing as absolute sovereigns of the world prevents the scribe from portraying the inner dynamic of their emotions. Not only would such elaborate portrayal rhetorically work against the sense of the god's absolute autonomy, it would imply the scribe has substantive knowledge of how the god thinks and feels.

In the next section we will discuss a more specific consequence of this content-form dynamic in divine hymns, namely that the metaphorical descriptions of the god's emotions function more like a Level Two personhood feature than a core Level One feature. As a result, poetic representations of divine emotions play a meaningful part of divine enumerative description due to the culturally-specific features of the divine frame complex.

4.4 Viewpoint externalization as Level Two personhood feature

In chapter 2 we argued for a conception of the major Mesopotamian gods in terms of the divine frame complex. This complex consisted of a core frame defining the god in its basic anthropomorphic features (the DIVINE PERSON), which pairwise blended with other frames that defined the god's various roles and aspects. This was a *Gestalt* structure in that evoking any of the satellite frames evoked the entire complex (metonymy). It also reflected our model of Mesopotamian personhood in that the DIVINE PERSON frame represented the Level One features of the god's personhood, while the satellite frames as a group constituted the god's Level Two features (Figure 2.1).

In our initial discussion of the divine frame complex, the emotions of the gods were largely skipped over. We treated them as non-conceptual, affective elements of the divine person because at the most basic, literal level divine emotions are modelled on human ones. When a god becomes angry, happy, or sad, that is something rooted in the core mental and somatic aspects of their person. In light of our discussion in 4.3, however, we cannot hold that more elaborate representations of emotions for high gods like Marduk are restricted to the DIVINE PERSON frame. Whether it is in terms of the particular viewpoint from which they are elaborated (content) or how their linguistic encapsulation functions rhetorically (form), the metaphorical representation of divine emotions²¹ belongs to the Level Two features of personhood.

One might already see how this claim is motivated by the formulation of the divine frame complex, the associated model of personhood, and even divine enumerative representation itself. The Level Two features of personhood deal with visages, accoutrements, social roles, and dispositions that are manifest to an external observer rather than implicit or indiscernible. These features are also ideal to the extent that they assume extreme or perfect

²¹For the rest of this chapter, the term 'divine emotions' refers to the emotions of high gods like Marduk.

- 9) *ša nakbat qātīšu lā inaššû šamā'û*
 10) *rittuš rabbat ukašša mīta*
 11) *Marduk ša nakbat qātīšu lā inaššû šamā'û*
 12) *rabbat rittuš ukašša mīta*

He the weight of whose hand the heavens cannot bear
 his hand is mild and saves the dead
 Marduk, the weight of whose hand the heavens cannot bear
 mild is his hand and saves the dead

-
- 17) *akṣat ana surra ennettašu kabittu*
 18) *ikkariṭ-ma zamar itâr alittuš*
 19) *iddud-ma rīmašu uganna*
 20) *kī arah būri ittanashara arkīšu*

His heavy punishment quickly becomes severe
 But when he relents he quickly turns into his (i.e. petitioner's) mother
 When he is *sharp*²² he butts his wild bull²³
 Like a cow to a calf he repeatedly looks after him

Table 4.2: *Ludlul* 1:9-12,17-20 (Oshima 2014: 71.)

values where possible. For instance, in the description of Marduk in *Enūma elish* 1:79-108 (Table 2.2), the god is said to be full of fear (*pulhāta ušmalli*) rather than having merely 'some' fear. He is lofty (*šušqû mādiš*) and sees all (*inān kīma šuātu ibarra gimrāti*) rather than being merely 'tall' (*arku*) or seeing 'most' things.

Moreover, the metaphorical descriptions of divine emotion imply a transience or even mutual incompatibility characteristic of a visage or hypostasis rather than permanent property. This is evident in the first third of tablet one of *Ludlul*, where the petitioner emphasizes how Marduk's mood can quickly switch from anger to mercy. The passage is divided into quatrains, each one of which has half dedicated to anger, the other to mercy. Two of these quatrains are given in Table 4.2.

Acknowledging the philological complexities of these lines, it is clear that they treat two opposite emotional dispositions of Marduk through externalized metaphorical description. Thus in lines 9-12 Marduk's hand is said to be heavy (*kabittu*) or mild (*rabbat*), but this a

²²Oshima 2014: 177ff. discusses the possible meanings of these lines, speculating that they refer to Marduk in the capacity of a waxing crescent moon, a raging bull who butts his adversaries, and even a storm god.

²³For the possibility that the end of this line is to be read *rīmāniš uganna* 'like a wild bull' see Lenzi 2023: 98

metonymic reference to the sternness or compassion Marduk feels towards humans. In 17-20 Marduk is likened to a caring human mother, raging bull, and cow nurturing its calf. In going through these lines we can sometimes forget that their literal meaning is how Marduk is moved by human actions rather than how the consequences of the emotions impact us.

Moreover, the salient, balanced alternation between the two classes of images (angry and kind) emphasizes that neither wrath nor mercy are perduring mental qualities in Marduk. At the theological level this alternation makes clear that Marduk's wrath and mercy are two complementary aspects of his absolute authority and the need for humans to provide absolute submission.²⁴ But as a poetic technique, the metaphorical representations of both emotions give the scribe discrete images that he can 'switch out' much like other aspects of the god's identity.

This parallel status between the emotional descriptions of Marduk and other aspects of his identity can be better appreciated when they both occur within the same text. Oshima's Prayer to Marduk No. 2 (Oshima 2011: 216-270) is a *šuwilla* to Marduk which presents multiple roles of the god in the introductory section (see Table 4.3).²⁷ Due to the syntactic and semantic parallelism among these lines, the passage can be considered an instance of divine enumerative description. At the top level of organization, these lines present Marduk in three parallel guises: Ea - who supplies ground water to the earth, Adad - who supplies rain water to the fields, and a god who maintains the offerings and temple space of the Igigi and Anunnaki. But even within each guise there are separate sub-roles. Thus in 5-7 Marduk maintains the rivers, natural springs, and flood waters respectively. In 9 he makes dew (*nalšu*) fall while in 10 he blows drops of water over the plain.²⁸ Finally, in lines 13-16 Marduk both provides offerings for the gods and maintains the doors to their sacred spaces.

These descriptions can be compared to lines 43-47 of the same text, which contain metaphorical descriptions of Marduk's rage:

- 43) [k]ī agê tamhari tām̄t[i (x)] rimma[?] tupp̄aq gapšiš
 44) [k]ī Girri ezzi zā'irī tasarrap
 45) ušumgalli uzzaka takammi šēnī
 46) ēpiš kāšir bārti tēnāna takaššad
 47) ētiq libbi aršāte ša zā'irī tušahmaṭ lumna

[Li]ke a wave of battle in(?) the ocean, you make the *roar* swell mightily²⁹
 [li]ke furious Girra you burn up the enemy

²⁴Oshima 2014: 9ff.

²⁵The reconstruction of the beginning of line 8 is tentative (Oshima 2011: 228, 240).

²⁶Beginning of line 13 uncertain (Oshima 2011: 223, 255).

²⁷Citations are from Oshima's composite edition and translations my own unless otherwise noted.

²⁸*nalšu* is particularly associated with night time condensation or precipitation and is contrasted with rain (*zunnu*). See CAD N/I s.v. *nalšu*.

²⁹Interpretation of line somewhat unclear. Cf. Oshima 2011: 226, 243, 247.

- 5) *muštēšir nārī ina qereb šadî*
 6) *mupattû bûr kuppi ina qereb huršāni*
 7) *našir mûl hegalli ana gimir kal dadmē*
 8) *[m]udešši[?] šerkēt eršeti rapašti ašnan²⁵*
- 9) *[muša]znin nalši ina šerret šamāmi*
 10) *[mušabi]l šāri tik mē elu qarbatî*
 11) *[bābil i]špikki tuhdi ana mēreš šēm ugāri*
 12) *[mušabši š]imrī kubbutê išpik tattūri*
- 13) *[muzannin[?] taklim]ē^{??} ana Igigi nindabê rabûti²⁶*
 14) *mušall[ik An]unnaki ana gimir parakkî*
 15) *pāqid kal b[ābī šāpi]k piššāti elu sigarî*
 16) *muṭahhi[d šikari] kurunni naptan zībi šagigurrî*

The one who directs rivers within the mountains
 who opens the spring wells in the mountain region
 who pours out bounteous flood to the entire inhabited world
 who su[pplies(?)] gifts from the wide earth - grain

[who makes dew] fall from the teat of heaven
 [who makes] the wind [carr]y(?) drops of water over the plain
 [who brings h]eaps of abundance to the cultivated fields of barley - the meadow
 [who provides] abundant [w]ealth and great quantities of produce

who ra[ins gifts(?)] upon the Igigi, great offerings
 who makes the [An]unnaki su[itable] for all the daises
 who inspects all the doo[rs and pou]rs anointing oil over the bolts
 who makes abund[ant beer], wine, meal offerings, and free-will offerings

Table 4.3: Marduk Prayer No. 2: 5-16 (Oshima 2011: 240)

The *ušumgallu* dragon is your rage, you subjugate the wicked
 You conquer the one who makes and plots revolt, the *rebellious one*³⁰
 You burn up the evil one who passes through *unclean things*³¹ of the enemy

The first three lines of this section feature non-conventional metaphors describing Marduk's anger, one (seemingly) dealing with an ocean wave, another with the fire god Girra burning enemies, and the third the *ušumgallu* dragon subjugating them. The images are viewpointed on the external observer, and they are partially incompatible with each other even as they succeed each other in quick order. Lines 46-47 do not specifically use terms for emotion, but the fact that they come directly after three lines which do center on the god's anger and the close association in *šuilla*s between punishment and divine wrath both indicate Marduk's emotions are the basis of the lines as well.

It should be emphasized that beyond the poetic commonalities between this hymn's emotional descriptions and role/function descriptions of Marduk (as they function within divine enumerative description), both kinds of representation also have structural commonalities in that they are metaphorical extensions of the DIVINE PERSON. The metaphorical character is easier to see for the emotional images due to (among other reasons) the explicit comparison marker *kī*, the common metaphorical expression *agê tamhari* 'wave of battle,' and the fact that divine punishment of people is a very abstract notion while the destructive aspects of Girra or the *ušumgallu* dragon are quite concrete. Yet the sense of analogical mapping is still generally present for the role/function descriptions. Above in lines 5-8 and 9-12, the quatrains evoke the gods Ea and Adad, while the quatrain in 13-16 evokes the scene of a temple functionary attending to the daily care of the divine statues. In each case there is some sense of the image components forming an archetype whose defining features are evident to human observers. To say that Marduk assumes these roles within the *šuilla* is another way of talking about the pairwise blends within the divine frame complex between the DIVINE PERSON and the various frames that give that schematic core its concrete identities (cf. Figure 2.1).

Overall then, the above parallelisms between the emotional and role/functional aspects of Marduk are reasons for considering both of them Level Two features of personhood, and for considering the way they are instantiated within the *šuilla* as parallel within the context of divine enumerative representation.

Although we have presented the above facts as a matter of viewpoint externalization, there is an alternative way of thinking about them which connects to other cognitive literary phenomena. The shift in emphasis from how Marduk feels on the inside to how others perceive his reaction on the outside can often be seen as identifying an effect with its cause.

To see this, note that within the divine hymns there is the theological assumption that Marduk's anger never targets random individuals. The targets the god picks, and the way his anger is expressed, seems to directly reflect how the god feels even if the full consequences

³⁰Cf. Oshima 2011: 258, CAD T s.v. *tēnānu*.

³¹Assuming the form is from *warāšu* 'to be dirty.' See Oshima 2011: 257.

of that assumption are not explored. For example, *Ludlul* 1:13-14 describes the consequences of Marduk's rage for the buried dead:³²

- 13) *ša ina libbātīšu uptattâ qabrātu*
 14) *inūšu ina karāšē ušatbi maqtam*

He, by whose rage burial chambers are opened,³³
 then raises the dead from annihilation

From the statement that *when* Marduk is angry he raises the dead, one concludes that *because* Marduk is angry he raises the dead, and hence Marduk's raising of the dead is a causal consequence of his becoming angry. Similarly, when line 17 states that Marduk's heavy punishment is quick and terrible,³⁴ the heavy and terrible nature of the punishment can be taken as indicative of the (metaphorically) heavy and terrible nature of the god's anger.

Even when an intermediary is recruited to implement the god's wishes, important elements of the intermediary's actions can be transferred back to Marduk's mental state. A passage slightly later on in *Ludlul* describes how Marduk allows certain divine agents to cause suffering at his insistence:

- 25) *šū-ma utukka ra'ibu ušarši*
 26) *ina tēšu elli ušt[ap]par šuruppâ u hurbaša*
 27) *mušmiddi? [rih]iṣti Adad mihiṣti Erra*³⁵

He causes him to suffer from the *ra'ibu* demon
 By his pure incantation frost and chill are sent away
 He multiplies the floods of Adad and the blows of Erra

Line 25 describes how Marduk causes the *utukku* demon associated with the *ra'ibu* disease to torment a person that he is angry at, while line 27 says that Marduk augments the power of the floods (*rihiṣti*) of Adad and the blows (*mihīṣti*) of Erra. Oshima points out how it was

³²Oshima 2014: 78.

³³The eBL interprets this line somewhat differently, translating it as 'In the brunt of his anger, tombs are readied'. The issue is whether one thinks Marduk is so angry he opens up already sealed tombs in order to raise the dead, or he is so angry he kills many people, expressed metonymically as the preparing of graves.

³⁴See page 135.

³⁵See Oshima 2014: 183-184 for the reading of these lines.

generally believed that demons and lesser deities harmed people in the capacity of agents under the command of the high gods. Much like functionaries in a judicial system, they meted out punishment ordered by higher authorities.³⁶ Since lines 25 and 27 occur in the context of an elaboration of the ways Marduk expresses his own anger, the animosity of the intermediaries crucially reflects the animosity in Marduk himself.

That one should find in divine hymns the metonymic substitution of cause of emotion for effect of emotion (or even the derivation of cause from effect) is ultimately not surprising, given that this is a kind of blending drawing on the most basic, embodied aspects of our existence. It is fundamentally the same cognitive process when we speak of death as an abstract force that causes all the specific deaths we observe in our life, or construct similar abstractions motivating diverse instances of love, hate, and other human emotions. Once the effects have been blended into a single cause, that cause can acquire the properties of a prototypical agent, including intentionality.³⁷

Our point here is simply to illustrate the ease with which a reader (or writer) of *Ludlul* may find themselves ‘slipping’ into interpreting lines metaphorically and metonymically describing the external effect of Marduk’s emotions with an inner emotional state of the god. There are, on the one hand, the culturally specific theological and rhetorical reasons why externally-viewpointed emotion metaphors are prevalent within the Marduk hymns. But the fact that one may engage with such a text and not consciously recognize them as externally-viewpointed, that one could truly think of them as elaborating on the emotions of Marduk, this follows from a deeper fact of human cognition. One might consider it an additional, though weak, factor why such metaphors in the divine hymns were thought to be rhetorically effective in the first place.

4.5 Applicability to the Great Ishtar Hymn

We briefly discuss here how what has been argued about Marduk also holds to a certain degree for the other complex divinity discussed in this thesis, Ishtar. According to the arguments in 4.3, the key question is whether the goddess has multiple emotional profiles along with her multiple roles or functions, and whether the goddess’s will is inscrutable. This is evident for the depiction of Ishtar in the Great Ishtar Hymn. Inscrutability is stated clearly in line 39. The hymn also features explicit reference to the goddess’ rage or aggression on both a literal level (e.g. *ezzet qablu* in line 36) and a metaphorical level (e.g. *rīmu šabbasû* in line 52). The theological assumptions of the hymn (a *švilla* much like Oshima’s Prayer to Marduk No. 2) attribute justifiable wrath to the goddess’ destructive acts towards man and mercy or pleasure to her beneficial ones. Just like the representations of Marduk’s anger in the Marduk hymns, in the Great Ishtar Hymn the representations of the goddess’ anger are

³⁶Oshima 2014: 34ff.

³⁷See Fauconnier and Turner 2002: 291ff.

overall balanced with feelings of favor or mercy, and enumerating both of these aspects in their varying concrete manifestations is seen as essential to a full picture of the divinity.³⁸

Table 4.4 surveys the basic emotion types in the frames of Ishtar evoked in the hymn (cf. Table 3.5). This tablet shows which lines in the hymn evoke the image of an angry Ishtar, merciful or pleased one, or even erotic one. We believe the decision of whether a given description connotes the emotional state of the goddess should depend on whether it involves an action or clear attitude of the goddess directed towards humans, and whether the action is characteristically understood to reflect a certain emotion. For example, line 6 describes Ishtar as someone who instigates battle (*muttabilat kakkī šākinat tuquntī*). Mesopotamian gods who bring war to humans are understood to be angry. Conversely, Ishtar is often said or asked to ‘look upon’ certain humans (*naplusu*) in a favorable or concerned way (e.g. lines 26, 92). This and related situations are judged to reflect a merciful or pleased emotional state. Situations where the goddess is described as ruling over the gods or men, directing the order of the world, or serving in a luminary quality (star, torch, etc.), are regarded as neutral or unclear.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
101	102	103	104	105					

Table 4.4: Distribution of emotion types for the frames of Ishtar evoked in the Great Ishtar Hymn. The color code is: **angry**, **merciful/pleased**, **erotic**.

As one can see, the presentation of Ishtar in the hymn is roughly balanced between an angry goddess and a merciful or pleased one. In the language of personal identity, we could say the wrathful and merciful states of Ishtar belong to the Level Two metonymic features of the goddess’ personhood, each being evoked in alternation with the other. Unlike Marduk, however, Ishtar has a third, erotic aspect to her identity that is only briefly evoked in the hymn. Given the rich literary and iconographic tradition of Ishtar as an erotic goddess, the fact that this aspect of her emotional identity (or, for that matter, her jealous and petulant

³⁸See Oshima 2011: 72-74 for a detailed comparison between the features of Ishtar and Marduk.

side) is scarcely touched upon in the Great Ishtar Hymn is probably due to the thematic requirements of a *šuilla* more than anything else. The meek petitioner simply cannot assume they are an amorous interest of the great goddess. The epic stature of Gilgamesh may permit the Urukian king to metonymically evoke Ishtar's erotic and jealous personhood features to her face,³⁹ but the rhetorical purpose of Gilgamesh's address is entirely different. Nevertheless it is interesting to note that despite their differences in genre and rhetorical aim, both the SB Gilgamesh address and the *šuilla* aim at a sense of descriptive balance and completion. Both are instances of divine enumerative description where the enumerative aim is in tension with the requirements of form (balance) and function (requesting aid or rejecting amorous advances). Both texts require the suppression of a third aspect of Ishtar's identity, mercy in the case of SB Gilgamesh, eroticism in the case of the *šuilla*.

While other texts such as the Old Babylonian Agushaya Hymn and Enki and the World Order also highlight Ishtar's profoundly contradictory or mercurial nature,⁴⁰ our purpose here has only been to show how the metaphorical expression of the basic emotions behind some of those identities function in a specific poetic configuration, that of divine enumerative description. While the full divine frame complex of Ishtar differs noticeably from that of Marduk in the late second/first millennium, our argument has been that the metaphorical expressions of emotion for both divinities should be seen more as guises or roles rather than dimensions of an inner psychological realm. This follows from the theological presupposition of inscrutability, the poetic features of divine enumerative description, and a multi-dimensional emotional profile to the god being depicted. If one changes any of these conditions, a different representation of these gods may result.

4.6 Summary

This chapter has explored another dimension along which divine enumerative description can be considered a kind of poetic modality, particularly in regards to issues of both content and form. We argued that in divine hymns to Marduk or literary texts sufficiently like them (such as Tablet 1 of *Ludlul*, or the Great Ishtar Hymn), metaphorical descriptions of the god's emotions necessarily took an external viewpoint. Such metaphors were designed to elaborate on the experience of the human observer of the god's emotion rather than the internal mental state of the god itself. This is not to deny that bare literal or conventional statements about the god's emotion imply something about that internal state, but any metaphorical elaboration is externally viewpointed. We argued that this fact arose in divine hymns because of the competing requirements about the inscrutability of the gods on the one hand and the poetic drive for enumerative elaboration on the other. There is no conceptual reason the Akkadian scribe could not speak of Marduk's anger or fear the way we metaphorically describe our own anger or fear, just as the Akkadian language provides many metaphors to

³⁹SB Gilgamesh 6:22-79 (George 2003: 619-623).

⁴⁰See Vanstiphout 1984.

speak about such emotions if the scribe wishes to use them. Our discussion of the Great Ishtar Hymn revealed a pattern of emotion metaphor usage similar to *Ludlul*, indicating a shared set of theological and rhetorical assumptions behind both texts.

It is thus hoped that this chapter has revealed how the above way of talking about the emotions of a god is a robust rhetorical technique, one shaped by both specific compositional commitments as well as general cognitive structures. Like the phenomena discussed in the previous chapter and in those to come, the externalized and metaphorical description of divine emotion in Akkadian can be seen as a kind of constrained poetic creativity.

Chapter 5

Blending gods in the syncretic Ninurta and Marduk hymns

In this chapter we go beyond traditional literary hymns to discuss three grammatical constructions prominent in more speculative works featuring divine enumerative description. These constructions are among the syntactically most simple structures one can imagine, namely copular sentences involving nominal subject and predicate, an expanded version of such copular sentences known as the ‘X is the Y of Z’ construction, and finally apposition of divine names. As will be discussed below, within the context of divine enumerative description these constructions allow the scribe to say much with little. While at the phrasal level these constructions are highly ambiguous in meaning, the higher level organization provided by divine enumerative description ‘orients’ them, so to speak, like scattered dipole moments suddenly aligned in a piece of magnetized iron. Just like the piece of magnetized iron in comparison to its contributing dipoles, the creative meaning of the texts we will study in this chapter is the result of the semantic possibilities inherent in individual lines harnessed together in a coherent way. The fact that these texts are a form of divine enumerative description is important, both in terms of grammatical structure and descriptive content.

Our choice of texts in this chapter follows Figure 0.1 in that we wish to argue that divine enumerative description is not an accidental property of prototypical divine hymns or even what are traditionally regarded as literary hymns, but actually a culturally conditioned rhetorical mode on its own right. That there is some conceptual overlap between divine enumerative description and literary hymns follows as a matter of definition of those hymns. But if divine enumerative description is a way of talking about the gods, and literary hymns are the most common but not exclusive places where the gods are talked about at significant length, that leaves open the possibility of finding other places that use it. This chapter offers examples of these places. In addition, by looking at specific grammatical features of certain works we seek to show specific ways in which divine enumerative description is grammatically generated. If poetry is regarded as something that leverages certain grammatical constructions or other linguistic properties for their ability to generate new images, we will

use the examples studied in this chapter to argue that divine enumerative description has this property.

More specifically, we will argue that within the Syncretic Hymn to Ninurta and the Syncretic Hymn to Marduk¹ there are three particular grammatical constructions which constitute the functional core of the divine enumerative description found there. The Ninurta and Marduk hymns illustrate, in a way that more traditional divine hymns do not, how specific grammatical constructions can carry the semantic weight of a text. In particular, these hymns highlight how such constructions can be seen as tools particularly suited to Akkadian poetics whose expressive power belies their surface simplicity. While in previous chapters the role of grammatical constructions was simplified or left to the side, here we focus on them for their ability to facilitate the blends responsible for the overall content of divine enumerative description.

The two texts examined here are not prototypical examples of divine hymns in that rather than treating the properties of one god, they deal with aspects of multiple gods in a way that goes beyond the isolated divine epithet or metaphor seen in previous chapters. The texts also differ from prototypical divine hymns in that from what is preserved of them there are no instructions for ritual recitation or other indication of a performative context. The scope of the divine identifications made in the texts is both cosmic and learned, characteristic of what Alasdair Livingston has called mystical explanatory works.² In the case of the Marduk hymn it is not even the case that Marduk is the central object of description. Rather, Marduk seems to be used to describe other gods.

Nevertheless, the Ninurta and Marduk hymns possess a number of key features characteristic of divine enumerative description. There is paratactic description involving a major Mesopotamian deity (Ninurta or Marduk), with at least an implicit tone of praise. The description involves both scholarly lore and a certain imaginative freedom based on metaphor. The description runs for many lines and thus is not a formula or frozen trope, and it is ‘comprehensive’ in that an entire semantic domain or set of objects is evidently being covered (the body of Ninurta in one case, the different aspects of human social life on the other). These structural and semantic similarities with the divine enumerative description found in prototypical divine hymns justify including the Ninurta and Marduk hymns in our analysis.

The outline of this chapter is as follows. Section 5.1 discusses portions of the Ninurta hymn which are based on the copular construction ‘X is Y’. Despite its simple appearance, this grammatical construction is highly ambiguous (both in Akkadian and English) and can either signal identity between two referents X and Y, serve as a descriptive phrase Y of an entity X, or be a metaphor mapping between frames evoked by X and Y. In this section we will discuss how the Ninurta hymn, as an instance of divine enumerative description, favors this third reading of the copular construction, facilitating a non-trivial blend between the

¹In what follows, these texts will sometimes be referred to simply as the Ninurta hymn and the Marduk hymn, respectfully.

²Livingstone 1986, Livingstone 1989: 81-106.

frames evoked by X and Y, where contextually salient properties of Y are asserted to hold for X. In the Ninurta hymn, the linguistic effect of this blend is, strangely enough, to map appropriate properties of various divinities onto the body parts of Ninurta (rather than vice versa).

Section 5.2 discusses the Marduk hymn, which uses the more complex construction ‘X is the Y of Z’ (also known in cognitive linguistics literature as the XYZ-construction).³ The general meaning of this construction involves interpreting Y as a role in a certain frame together with positing an implicit role W in that frame such that there is a structural correspondence between the pairs X:Z and Y:W. In the context of the Marduk hymn, this translates to seeing Marduk in a generalized role which we denote by HighGod(), as well as positing an implicit domain of mastery denoted by Domain(). The role HighGod() indicates generic mastery by a preeminent god, and is effectively the common denominator of all the particular guises of Marduk blended together according to the Marduk theology. For any line in the Marduk hymn of the form ‘X_{god} is Marduk of Z_{domain}’, the construction asserts the analogy $X_{\text{god}}:Z_{\text{domain}} = \text{HighGod}():\text{Domain}()$.

Finally, Section 5.3 deals with a third construction undergirding the divine enumerative description within both the Ninurta and Marduk hymns. Although as lexical units proper names are not normally regarded as ‘grammatical constructions,’ this section invokes a cognitive linguistic analysis to argue that within the context of the syncretic hymns they should be understood that way. We argue that constructions like the divine name and copula in divine enumerative description are such deceptively powerful tools because they are the result of competing tendencies within the scribal tradition of the late second and first millennium. The syncretic hymns can in fact be regarded as a type of poetry whose ‘vocabulary’ is divine names and whose ‘grammar’ is the copular or XYZ-construction.

5.1 Partial equations of gods: Ninurta

This section discusses the key grammatical construction underlying the Syncretic Hymn to Ninurta and how it is a linchpin in the text as a form of divine enumerative description. Although the copular construction in Akkadian is syntactically quite simple and bare in appearance, we will argue that it facilitates a sophisticated blend that the scribe of the Ninurta hymn exploits to great poetic effect. In the context of divine enumerative description, the copular construction is an excellent illustration of how Akkadian poetics can ‘say more with less,’ relying on implicit cognitive structures and culturally specific frames to express its meaning.

We first start with previous studies of the text.⁴ In her discussion of the Ninurta hymn,

³Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 151.

⁴The discussion here of the Ninurta hymn was finalized before the publication of a new manuscript in the recent edition of Fadhil and Jiménez 2023, which provides many new lines of the text. Our treatment of the text is consistent with Fadhil and Jimenez’s discussion, which identifies the Ninurta hymn as a particularly

Barbara Porter argues that the original composition may go back to the late second millennium based on certain Middle Assyrian signs found in two of the manuscripts, and that the fact that the text was copied by Assyrian scribal students at first millennium Sultantepe reflects the popularity of the text's syncretic theology.⁵ Our concern here is to take the Assyriological observations about this syncretic theology and translate them into our cognitive framework, showing how they crucially depend on the copular construction as a form of divine enumerative description.

Barbara Porter has divided this hymn into three sections.⁶ The copular construction is primarily operative in the latter two parts. The first section (lines 1-9) exalts Ninurta in the assembly of the gods in his capacity of ruler and warrior, largely along the lines of the divine hymns we have considered earlier. The second section (lines 10-20) identifies parts of Ninurta's head with astral aspects of various divinities. The celestial interpretation of the entities appearing in this section is sometimes quite evident, with references to Shamash and Sin or phrases like 'Ishtar of the stars' (*Ištar kakkābī*) and 'the circumference of heaven and earth' (*kippat šamê eršetī*). The celestial aspect of other gods is evident upon comparison with other hymns or broader scribal lore. Thus an incantation to Gula and Belet-ili describes both deities as aspects of a single mother goddess dwelling in the heavens.⁷ Pabilsag is known in the first millennium to have an astral aspect,⁸ while the Seven (*Sebettu*) are a reference to the Pleiades. The identification of Enlil and Ninlil in line 11 as celestial beings is more difficult. Porter cites Jacobsen's old etymology of Enlil as 'lord wind' and suggests that the pair be understood as a lord and his consort who move across the sky in a set path.⁹ While there is first millennium lexical evidence that the LIL₂ sign in Enlil's (and Ninlil's) name could be interpreted as referring to the idea of wind or air,¹⁰ it is not clear whether this counts as an astral aspect. There may also be an astral connection with the path of Enlil from Babylonian astronomy, although to see how Ninlil would fit into that idea. Overall, the fact that the other deities in the first section have an astral interpretation makes the astral interpretation of the few difficult cases like Enlil/Ninlil plausible even if the reasoning escapes us. For its part, the third section of the hymn (lines 21 - break) equates Ninurta's other body parts with various deities seemingly in the capacity of a terrestrial force or phenomenon. For the following discussion, lines 10-31 are given in transliteration and translation below:¹¹

imaginative example of 'Gleichsetzungstheologie' equating various gods with aspects of another (pg. 194). While Fadhil and Jimenez discuss the representation of Ninurta in terms of macanthropy (i.e. a body of gigantic size), our focus is on the grammatical structure of the individual lines.

⁵Porter 2000: 241. See also Pongratz-Leisten 2015a: 122ff.

⁶Porter 2000: 248-251.

⁷BMS 7: obv. 9. See also Porter 2000: 249.

⁸See Krebernik, RIA 10: 163.

⁹Porter 2000: 249. Cf. Jacobsen 1978: 98, Jacobsen 1989. Technically the idea that the name Enlil means 'lord wind' was already suggested by Nötscher 1927 (see Wang 2011: 6ff).

¹⁰See CAD s.v. *zaqīqu* lexical section.

¹¹Based on edition in Annus 2002, Appendix 1 (cf. Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik 2015b: 122-123). An online version of Annus' translation is found in the Melammu Project database (<http://melammu-project.eu/>).

- 10) *be-lum pa-nu-ka* ^d*Šam-šu qim-mat-ka* ^d[*Nisaba*]
- 11) IGI.2.MEŠ-*ka be-lum* ^d*En-lil₂ u₃* ^d[*Nin-lil₂*]
- 12) ^dLAMMA-*at₂* IGI.2.MEŠ-*ka* ^d*Gu-la* ^d*Be-let-i₃-l*[*i₂ x x x*]
- 13) SIG₇ IGI.2.MEŠ-*ka be-lum maš-še-e* ^d30 [*x x x (x)*]
- 14) *a-gap-pi* IGI.2.MEŠ-*ka ša-ru-ur* ^d*Šam-ši ša* [*x x x x*]
- 15) *ši-kin₂* KA-*ka be-lum* ^d*Iš-tar* MUL.MEŠ [*x x x*]
- 16) ^d*A-nu-um u An-tum* NUNDUM.2-*ka qi₂-bit-ka* *x*[*x x x*]
- 17) *mul-ta-bil₂-ta-ka* ^d*Pa-bil₂-sag ša₂ e-la-an* *x*[*x x x*]
- 18) AN-*e* KA-*ka be-lum kip-pat* AN-*e* KI-*ti šu-bat* DINGIR.[MEŠ GAL.MEŠ]
- 19) ZU₂.MEŠ-*ka* ^d7.BI *mu-šam-qi₂-tu lem-nu-[ti]*
- 20) *te-eh* TE.MEŠ-*ka be-lum ši-it* MUL.MEŠ *na*[*m¹-ru-ti*]
- 21) GEŠTUG.2-*ka* ^d*E-a* ^d*Dam-ki-na* NUN.ME *ne₂-me-qi₂* [*x x x x*]
- 22) SAG.DU-*ka* ^dIM *ša₂ AN-u₂ KI-tim* GIM *kiš-kat₃-te*-^Γ*e*^Γ[*x x x*]
- 23) SAG.KI-*ka* ^d*Ša-la* [*hi*]-*ir-tu na-ra-am-tu mu-tib-*[*bat ka-bat-ti* ^dIM]
- 24) GU₂-*ka* ^dAMAR.UTU DI.KUD AN-*e* [*u* KI-*tim*] *a-bu-ub* [*x x x*]
- 25) *nap-šat-ka* ^d*Zar-pa-ni-tum ba-n*[*a-at* U]N.MES *ša₂* ^Γ*ri*^Γ-*x*[*x x x x*]
- 26) GABA-*ka* ^dPA *ba-ru-u₂* *x*[*x*.ME]Š *a*-[*x x*]
- 27) MAS.QA.MEŠ-*ka* ^dLUGAL *ša₂-kin₂ h*[*i-iš-bi m*]*u-ša₂-az-*[*ni-in nu-uh-ši*]
- 28) [ZA]G-*ka* ^d*Utu-u₁₈¹-lu bi-x*[*x x a₂*]*š*[?] *a*-[*x x x x*]
- 29) [GU]B₃-*ka* ^d*Nin-pap-nigin₃-gar-r*[*a x x*]-*lu mu-x*[*x x x*]
- 30) [Š]U.SI.MEŠ KIŠIB.MEŠ-*ka* *ša₂-q*[*u-ti x x a*]-*gi-e* [*x x x*]
- 31) [UM]BIN.MEŠ-*ka be-lum*^{mu}[*x x x n*]*a-bu-u₂* [*x x x x*]
- 32) [*x*]*x*.MEŠ-*ka* ^d*Da-gan ša₂* ^Γ*x*^Γ[*x x x x x x x*] *x*[*x x x*]

...

- 10) lord, your face is Shamash, you locks [Nisaba],
- 11) your two eyes, lord are Enlil and Ninlil,
- 12) your eyeballs are Gula and Belet-il[i]
- 13) your eyelids, lord are the twins Sin and [Shamash],
- 14) your eyebrows are brilliance of Shamash, which [...],
- 15) your mouth's shape, lord - Ishtar of the stars [...],
- 16) Anu and Antu are your lips, your speech - [...],
- 17) your Mover (= tongue?) is Pabilsag, who [...] on high,
- 18) the 'heaven' of your mouth, lord is circumference of heaven and earth, dwelling place of the [great] gods,
- 19) your teeth are the Seven, the slayers of evil,
- 20) your cheeks, O Lord are the rising of bri[[lliant] stars,
- 21) your ears are Ea and Damkina, sages of wisdom [...]

Another translation also found in Foster 2005: 713-714. For a discussion of the text, see Porter 2000, pp. 248-251.

- 22) your head is Adad, who [makes] heaven and earth [...] like a kiln,
- 23) your brow is Sala, beloved spouse, who makes [Adad's heart feel happy],
- 24) your neck is Marduk, judge of heaven [and Netherworld], deluge [...],
- 25) your throat is Zarpanitu, creat[ress of peop]le, who [...]
- 26) your chest is Sullat, who examines [...]
- 27) your shoulders are Hanis, who establishes p[lenty, r]ains down abundance,
- 28) your right side is Uta'ulu [...],
- 29) your left side is Ninpanigarra [...],
- 30) the fingers of your fists are [...],
- 31) your nails are the bright star [...],
- 32) your [...] are Dagan, who [...],

While the first section of the hymn is largely like a traditional divine hymn in its syntax and meaning (praising Ninurta's heroism and kingly qualities through epithets and verbal predicates), the second and third parts are significantly different in that each line is based on the copular construction 'X is Y'. While line 16 has the predicate before the subject, all other extant lines have X as the subject, Y the predicate.¹²

The simplicity of this copular construction belies the complexity of its possible meanings. Our first point to be made about it here is a fairly high-level observation, namely that the instances of the copular construction in the Ninurta hymn can be analyzed as double-scope blends (1.2.6). This is based on similarities with how English copular constructions work. Sullivan and Sweetser have looked at the construction 'X is Y' in English where X is a definite nominal expression and Y is an indefinite one, such as *this journal is a gem* and *Joan is an angel*.¹³ They argue that the construction signals a blend between the frames evoked by X and Y, where the exact nature of the blend depends heavily on the semantic properties of X and Y, as well as the context. Generally Y is interpreted as a prototype within its relevant semantic category, and structural parallelism maps features important for Y onto X. In fact, the most salient properties of Y then become definitive of X in the resulting output. Depending on the nature of its inputs, the resulting blend can be a metonym, a metaphor, or something in between.¹⁴

These points about blending can best be understood from one of Sullivan and Sweetser's examples: *this journal is a gem*. Here Y = *gem* is a prototype for the category of valuable objects (= Input Space 1). X = *journal* evokes the frame of JOURNAL (= Input Space 2), which is fairly distinct from the frame of GEM (as VALUABLE OBJECT). The map is determined by the generic space, the frame that represents common substructure to the

¹²Line 10 has two such copular constructions.

¹³Sullivan and Sweetser 2010.

¹⁴The blending analysis also incorporates the linguistic observation that copular sentences can be divided into instances of identification (*Linda is the woman on the balcony*), predication (*Linda is an excellent teacher*), and specification (*Linda is the department chair*). See Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 136-138, as well as section 5.2. For a more extensive discussion of English copular sentences, see Mikkelsen 2005.

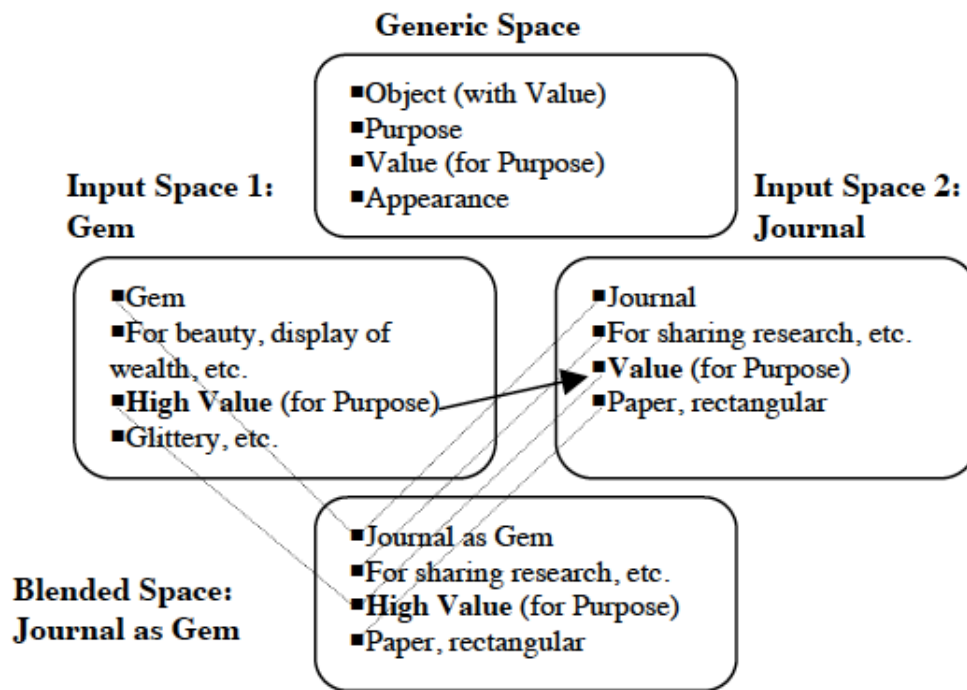


Figure 5.1: Blend for *this journal is a gem* (from Sullivan and Sweetser 2010)

input spaces. Here it is simply VALUED/USEFUL OBJECT WITH A PURPOSE.

The crux of the map is the property of HIGH VALUE in the GEM frame. Gems not only have value, but a high value that is definitive of their status as gems as opposed to ordinary stones. In other words, it is the property of HIGH VALUE that makes gems prototypical members of the category of valuable objects. In the blend it is mapped onto the VALUE property of JOURNAL (which is not particularly salient in that frame) in a way that effectively asserts (or defines) this particular journal as having high value. Other features like the appearance and purpose of the JOURNAL frame further contribute to the blend (see Figure 5.1).

Crucially, because most of the other properties of the blend come from the JOURNAL frame, the HIGH VALUE of the blend is interpreted relative to a journal's features (e.g. high research quality and production value) rather than a gem's (e.g. luster, hardness, color).

One can see in this example how both input frames contribute to the blend and that their structural relation to each other matters. The predicating part of the copular expression (i.e. $Y = gem$) maps only a portion of its identity onto the subject $X = journal$. What gets mapped from Y to X depends on salient, prototypical properties of Y within a contextually defined category. If we assume that *this journal is a gem* is uttered in a context evaluating the production quality of a journal as a certain type of publication (as opposed to a particular

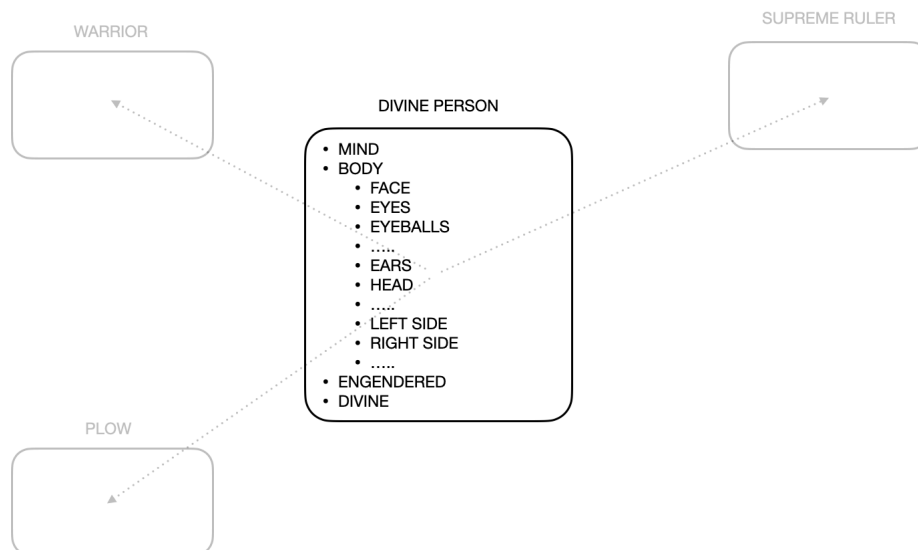


Figure 5.2: The DIVINE PERSON frame evoked by the body part terms in the Syncretic Hymn to Ninurta.

piece of paper), and gems are understood as rare but concrete physical objects, then the gem and journal share only very schematic structure. We identify them structurally only at the level of abstract objects with a certain purpose, value, and appearance (cf. the Generic Space in Figure 5.1). However, because high value is the salient property of gems in the category of such objects, the meaning of the copular construction tells us to map this HIGH VALUE onto the VALUE element in the JOURNAL frame. Because *journal* is the subject of the copular construction and the remaining elements in the GEM frame are semantically incompatible with the JOURNAL frame, the remaining structure of the blend is determined by the JOURNAL frame.

The general functional equivalence between the copular construction in English and Akkadian¹⁵ allows us to apply the same analysis above to the Ninurta hymn. Most of the subject terms in lines 10-31 are body parts which we can take to evoke a slightly elaborated form of the DIVINE PERSON frame for Ninurta (Figure 5.2).

In terms of the other half of the copular construction, lines 10-20 involve predicate terms which, as context indicates, are to be understood as celestial bodies. Porter notes that this is true even though the predicates are modified by a divine determiner and often involve the proper name of a deity (such as Enlil and Ninlil in line 11).¹⁶ The meaning of these lines

¹⁵See e.g. GAG section 126, Huehnergard 1986, Buccellati 1996: 351.

¹⁶Porter 2000: 242, 250.

can easily be expressed in terms of the divine frame complex and the copular construction. The proper names (or proper nouns) in these predicate terms (which are traditionally accompanied by the divine determinative) function as highly salient metonyms for the entire divine frame complexes of the relevant gods. When these divine frame complexes are fed into the blend specified by the copular construction, context isolates the appropriate CELESTIAL BODY frame within the complex and partially merges it with the DIVINE PERSON frame for Ninurta. We say ‘partially merge’ here because most of the time the blend involves an iconic map between the shape of the relevant body part of Ninurta and the shape of the celestial body associated with the other god. This happens in part because the shape of the celestial body (sun, moon, constellation, etc.) is one of the most salient features of the CELESTIAL BODY frame, just as the shape of most of Ninurta’s body parts listed in lines 10-20 are highly salient metonyms of the DIVINE PERSON. At the same time, the blend can also bring in affordances and affective elements from the complex evoked by the predicate terms.

For instance, in line 10 the salient features of Shamash as a celestial body are mapped onto Ninurta’s face (*pānu*), understood as a part of the body. Two such features are the round shape of the sun and its radiant glow. The round disc maps iconically onto the roughly round shape of a humanoid’s face. This is the implicit structural component of the map which does not make up the asserted content of the sentence. The asserted content comes from more specific aspects of the map. Thus the fact that the face of the sun glows should mean that Ninurta’s face also glows. This, however, must be interpreted metaphorically. Like the English evaluative metaphors discussed at the end of 4.2, the image of the god’s face glowing reflects emotional or other subjective experiences that correlate with the phenomenon of luminosity. However, unlike the English case, the correlative experience here is not the happiness of the person ‘glowing,’ but rather the receptive experience of divine presence felt by a human observer when subject to the awareness of the god.

This subject-oriented aspect of divine luminosity was previously noticed by Irene Winter in her study of radiance as an aesthetic concept, as well as more recently by Kim Benzel as a property of shiny metals viewed as raw material.¹⁷ The value of the cognitive linguistics perspective is that it highlights how the instance of divine luminosity in line 10 can also be seen as a variant of the divine emotion metaphors discussed in chapter 4, and that the blend responsible for this interpretation is evoked by the copular construction. Some of the content of the luminosity metaphor rests of the experience of the human observer of the god rather than the god’s internal mental state, even as there are basic aspects of the imagery that do involve the god (such the god’s orientation towards the human and objective aspects of purity). Figure 5.3 shows the details of the blend. The first input space involves both the DIVINE PERSON of Ninurta and the frame of the human observer (these two are technically blended together). The other input space is the frame of the sun, here understood as part of the divine frame complex of Shamash. Objective properties of the sun such as the fact that it emits light and has a round appearance map to physical aspects of Ninurta. They are

¹⁷Winter 1994, Benzel 2015.

objective in the sense that they spring from near universal features of human perception and cognition. But the specific cultural connotations of brightness in Mesopotamia condition the other parts of the map. Thus the bright color¹⁸ of the sun maps to the divine purity of Ninurta's face, while the dazzling nature of the sun maps to the human observer's awed experience of divine presence.¹⁹ Because the salient properties of the sun, when viewed as a prototypical celestial object, are its bright color and dazzling affect on human observers, these properties become definitive within the output product of the blend. Just as *this journal is a gem* is an assertion about how the value of the journal has a magnitude as great as that of a gem's value but a quality specific to the JOURNAL frame, the copular construction in line 10 is an assertion about how the purity of Ninurta's divinity and effect of his presence on human observers is as great as that of the sun's brilliance, both in its objective aspect and its impression on a human viewer.

Other lines in the Ninurta hymn involve a more complicated analysis. In particular, a composite predicative term can generate its own blend before feeding into the copular construction with the subject. An example of this is found in line 19. Here the predicative term involves both a proper name and a divine epithet. As Porter notes, the astral interpretation of the main predicate term 'the Seven' (*Sebettu*) evokes the constellation of the Pleiades.²⁰ However, the phrase 'slayers of evil' (*mušamqitū lemnūti*) evokes the image of divine warriors. In Verderame's concise survey of the term, the *Sebettu* in the capacity of anthropomorphic entities can refer either to seven main ruling gods An, Enlil, Ea, Shamash, Sin, Ishtar, and Ninhursag/Ereškigal, or alternatively to seven destructive demons associated with war and the netherworld.²¹ Given that the subject of the hymn is Ninurta, it is likely that the demonic group is meant in this line.²² The whole predicate is thus a blend between the frames of the Pleiades and the Seven. Beyond the identification of each star in the Pleiades constellation with a particular demon, the output space of the blend identifies the stars' heliacal rising with the demons' seasonal emergence from the underworld around the month of Ayyaru.²³ However, the frame for the Seven separately contributes the martial features of the demons while the frame for the Pleiades contributes the luminous qualities of the stars (Figure 5.4).

The copular construction specifies that the salient aspects of this star/warrior blend are then applied to the subject of the line, which is the teeth of Ninurta. Similar to the

¹⁸Within the Akkadian sources, brightness is the most prominent dimension of color perception (see Thavapalan 2020). In distinguishing the brightness property from the dazzling property, we are indicating the (more or less) objective versus subjective aspects of the appearance of the sun, respectively.

¹⁹To a certain degree, brightness and purity are qualities that involve the human observer as well. This fact is recognized in the blend to the extent that Input space 1 already involves a blend between the Divine Person of Ninurta and the frame of the human observer. This blend is necessary to reflect the interactive aspect of the god and human.

²⁰Porter 2000: 249.

²¹Verderame 2016: 110.

²²Cf. Konstantopoulos 2015: 202.

²³Verderame 2016: 115.

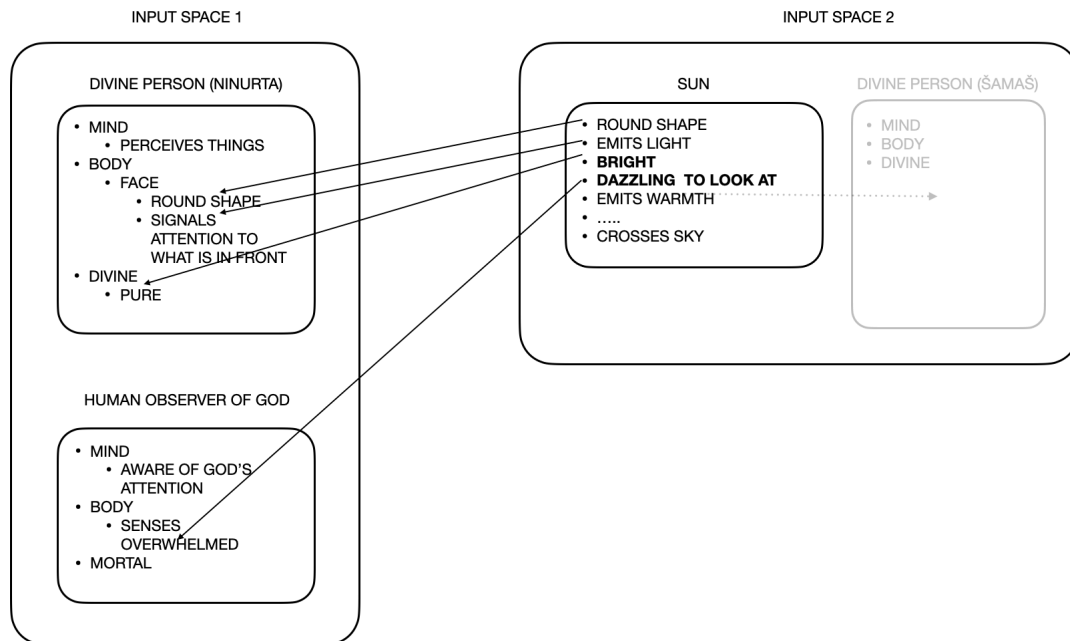


Figure 5.3: Blend evoked by the copular construction in line 10 of the Ninurta hymn (Generic and Output spaces not shown). Salient features associated with the predicate term (Shamash) are bolded. Input Space 1 involves both the DIVINE PERSON of Ninurta and the frame of the human observer, while Input Space 2 is the sun as part of the divine frame complex for Shamash.

blend between Ninurta's face and the sun/Shamash in line 10 (Figure 5.3), one needs to consider the human observer to fully capture the meaning of the blend (Figure 5.5). Here the brightness of the Pleiades maps to appearance of Ninurta's teeth while the fearsome nature of the *Sebettu* maps to the subjective impression of the human observer. This scene is possibly unlike that in line 10 in that here the human may be observing Ninurta's teeth attacking a separate enemy (as opposed to the observer himself). In contrast, the radiance of the divine sun in line 10 requires no reference to a third party.

The special role of an epithet or qualifying phrase to the main element of the predicate term becomes particularly clear in lines 21-31. In lines 10-20, the context makes it clear that the proper name of a given divinity refers to that divinity in its celestial guise. Qualifying phrases for the proper name are not needed for disambiguation. In 21-31 there is no such selective context. Instead, the proper name in each line is accompanied by a qualifying phrase that describes some function or characteristic action of the divinity. Syntactically combining the qualifying phrase and proper noun has the effect of selecting only a particular aspect of the god. In the language of frames, the qualifying phrase selects a frame from

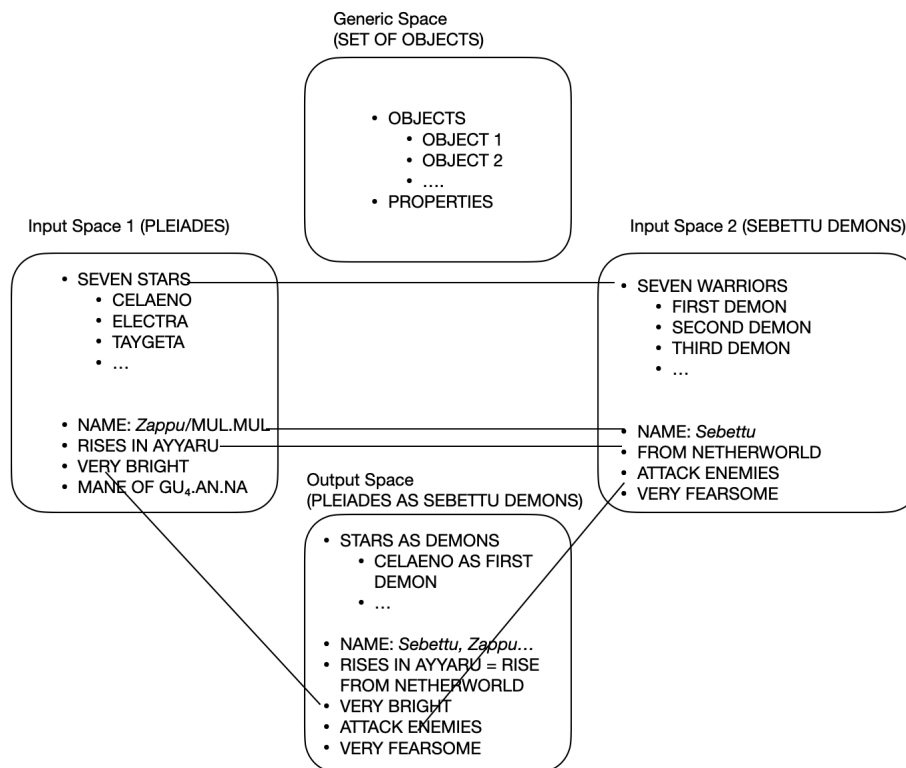


Figure 5.4: Blend between the Pleiades and *Sebettu* demons in line 19 of the Ninurta hymn.

the entire divine frame complex evoked by the proper name. Without this selection, the predicate term consisting only of the proper name cannot be comprehensibly blended with the subject term.

For example, line 21 states Ninurta’s ears are ‘Ea and Damkina, sages of wisdom...’²⁴. Despite the missing end of the predicate, the surviving part of the line is comprehensible, and its meaning can be calculated just like in line 19. The proper names Ea and Damkina evoke the entire divine frame complexes for their respective gods, and each of these complexes is blended with a copy of the SAGE frame (\approx WISE COUNSELLOR frame in Table 3.2). These blends effectively involve the portion from each divine frame complex consisting of the DIVINE PERSON blended with the SAGE frame (Figure 5.6).

The blend involving the subject term ‘your ears’ (GEŠTUG.2-ka) is shown in Figure 5.7. The status of Ea and Damkina as a natural pair of objects (husband and wife) provides a structural similarity with the two ears of Ninurta that underlies the map. Ea in the guise of a divine sage maps to (say) the left ear of the DIVINE PERSON of Ninurta, while Damkina in a similar guise maps the right ear. The salient property of each of these divine sages

²⁴GEŠTUG.2-ka ^dE-a ^dDam-ki-na NUN.ME ne₂-me-qi₂ [x x x x]

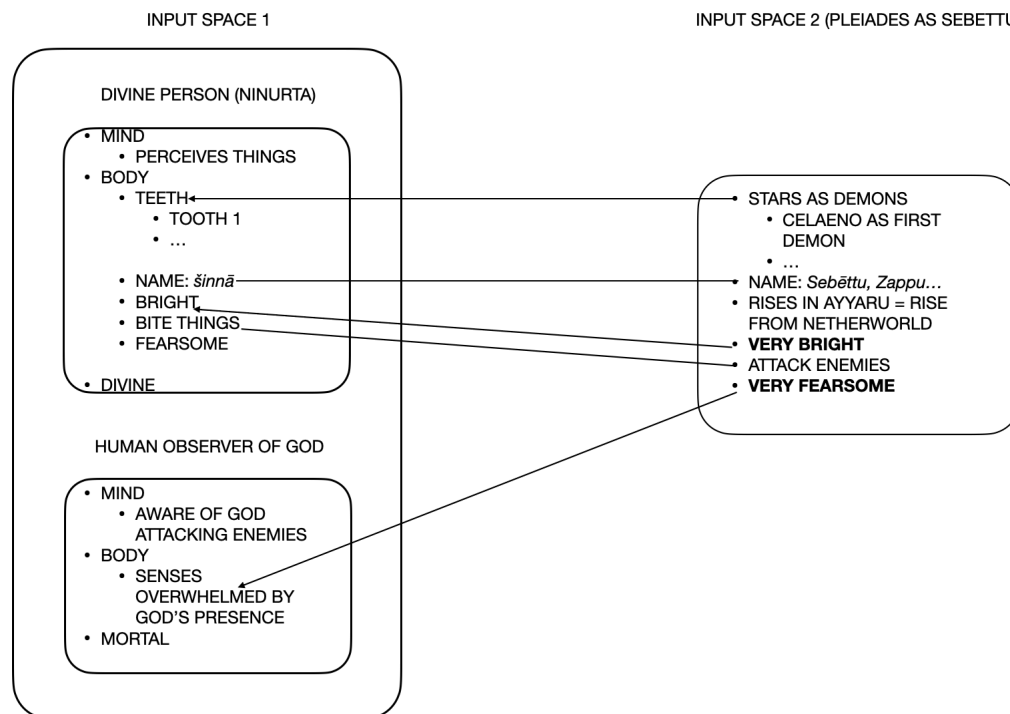


Figure 5.5: Blend evoked by the copular construction in line 19 of the Ninurta hymn (Generic and Output Spaces not shown). Salient features associated with the predicate term (Pleiades/*Sebettu*) are bolded.

relevant for the map is that they use their ears to hear a great amount of wisdom (indicated in Figure 5.7 by bolded terms). This salient property is then mapped to each of Ninurta's ears.

In Figure 5.7 the role of the human observer is practically absent since the asserted property of the blend (that Ninurta's ears hear much wisdom) does not involve human interaction in any salient way. But we can see how the human observer comes back in line 24, which states 'your neck ($GU_2 = kišādu$) is Marduk, judge of heaven [and Netherworld], deluge [...]'.²⁵ The surviving parts of the line indicate that Marduk is modified by two phrases, one describing him as a judge of heaven and the underworld and the other in relation to a flood (*abūbu*). These are two different guises which are picked out from Marduk's divine frame complex. The copular construction requires that the guises provide salient properties within their respective frames that map coherently to the DIVINE PERSON of Ninurta centered on his neck. There are references to major Mesopotamian gods (including Marduk) turning

²⁵ GU_2 -ka dAMAR.UTU DI.KUD AN-e [u KI-tim].

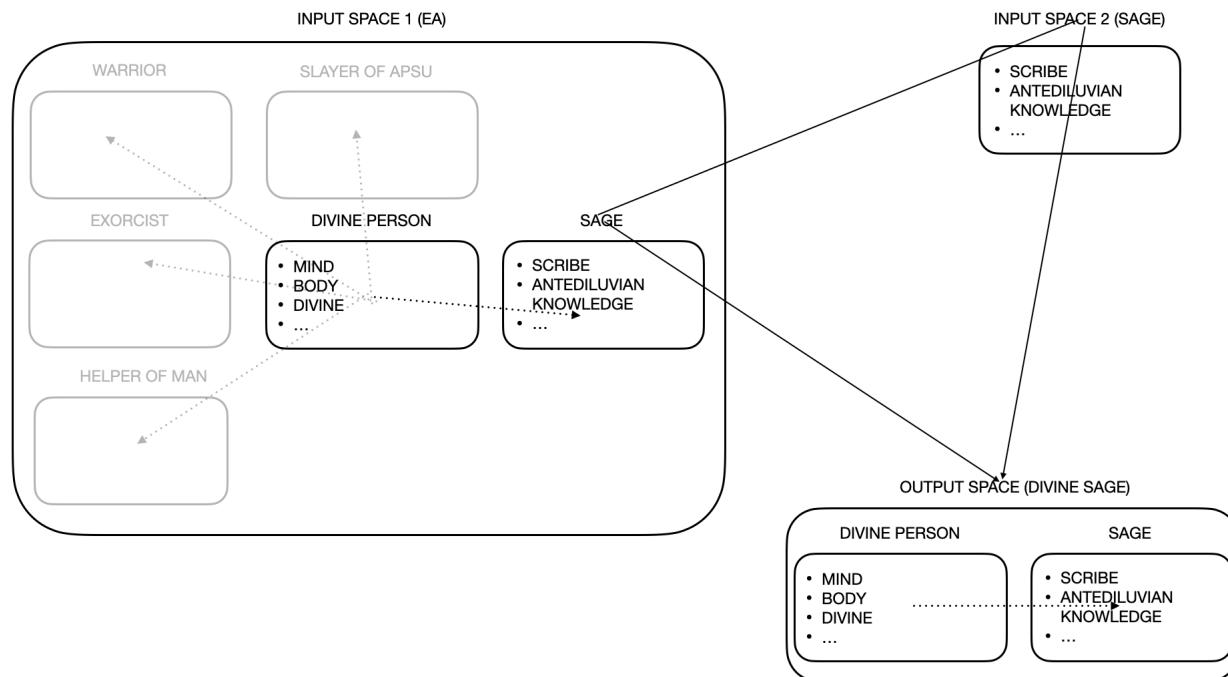


Figure 5.6: Blend corresponding to the phrase ‘Ea, sage of wisdom’ in line 21 of the Ninurta hymn (Generic Space not shown).

their neck (*kišādu*) from humans as a sign of anger or displeasure at them.²⁶ This is likely the association the scribe has in mind in line 24 connecting Ninurta’s neck and Marduk as universal judge. But the connection between Marduk as universal judge and Marduk as flood is of a different nature, and rests on the fact that the impression of the judge’s anger on the criminal is like a devastating flood.

In the highest level blend of line 24, the two different aspects of Marduk assert asymmetrically related properties of the frame evoked by Ninurta’s neck (Figure 5.8). Marduk as judge provides the foundation for the whole map, telling us to think of Ninurta’s neck in the context of a judge angrily turning his neck away from a criminal. Within this context, Marduk as flood then asserts that the effect of Ninurta as judge angrily turning his neck away on the guilty human observer is as destructive as a flood.

Looking back on the three examples above, we can see how in each case the copular construction relies on a backgrounded iconic map to anchor the correspondences between a body part of Ninurta and an aspect of another god’s divine frame complex. In line 10 the iconic map equates Ninurta’s round face with the round sun. In line 19 it equates Ninurta’s

²⁶One example is in the Great Ishtar Hymn, line 95: *terrī kišādki ša taddī*. For other instances, see CAD K s.v. *kišādu* 1a and CAD Š/1 s.v. *šabāsu* 1a-1’.

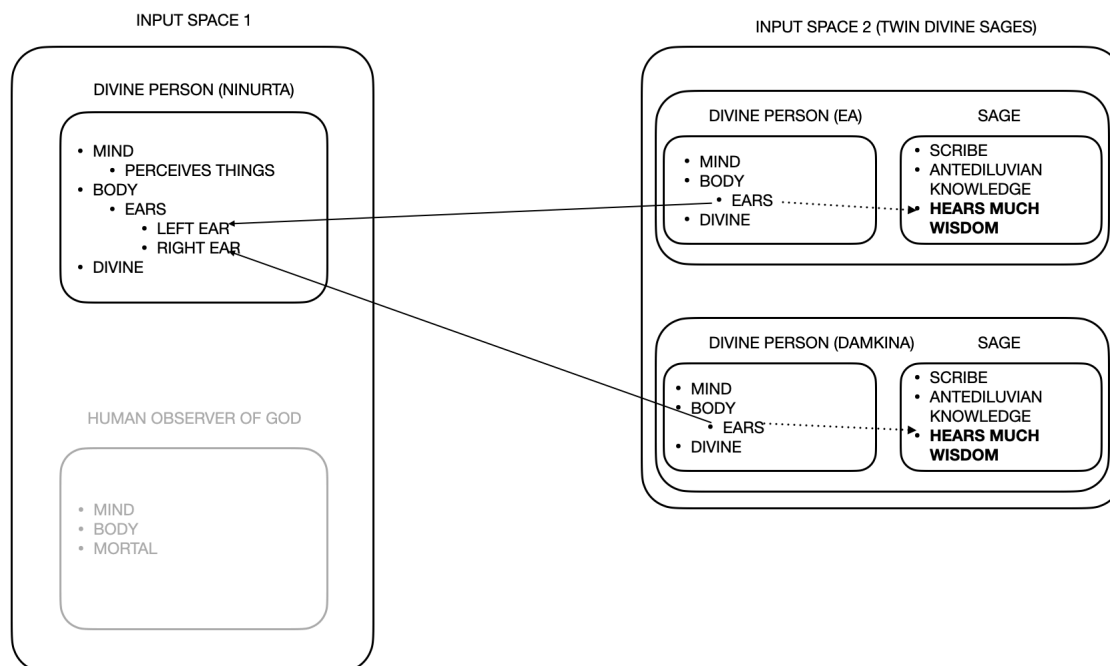


Figure 5.7: Blend evoked by the copular construction in line 21 of the Ninurta hymn (Generic and Output spaces not shown).

(seven) teeth as discrete objects with the seven stars in the Pleiades/*Sebettu* demons. In line 21 it equates Ninurta's neck with the turning neck of Marduk as angry judge. These correspondences serve as background against which the rhetorical effect of the copular construction is found, namely, to assert that salient but unspoken properties of the predicate term (measured relative to the background) hold for the subject term. Just as with *this journal is a gem*, these property assertions reflect ideal or extreme traits modeled on the predicate terms. Ninurta's face has extreme divine luminance. His teeth sparkle and are extremely deadly like the savage *Sebettu* demons. His neck, when turned, signals extreme destructive anger, etc.

The ability to identify the implicit assertions in the Ninurta hymn signaled by the copular construction requires sophisticated scribal knowledge about many domains of experience, and thus reflects the speculative nature of the hymn. Our analysis of these constructions as a form of divine enumerative description illustrates how that scribal knowledge is evoked and manipulated in a highly indirect, linguistically specific way. From a cognitive linguistics standpoint, the proper name of a major Mesopotamian god is on its own terms a highly ambiguous linguistic token. The proper name is usually associated with the DIVINE PERSON of the god, the central frame in an otherwise multi-faceted frame complex. But in marked

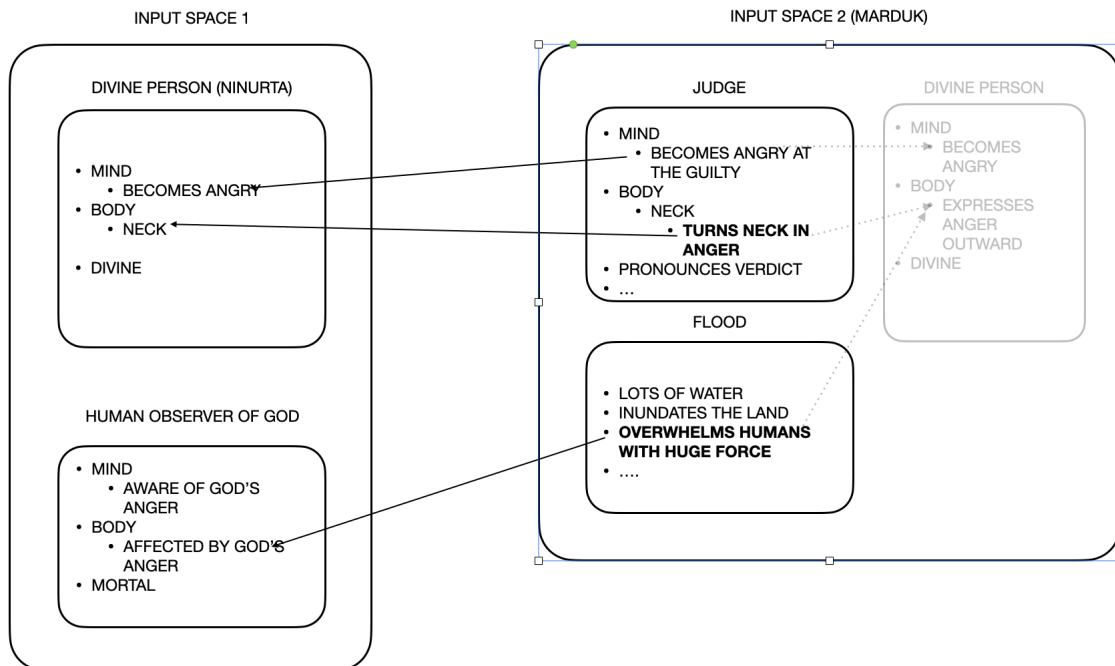


Figure 5.8: Blend evoked by the copular construction in line 21 of the Ninurta hymn (Generic and Output spaces not shown)

grammatical contexts the proper name can signal another part of the divine frame complex. In the Ninurta hymn, proper names of divinities are insufficient on their own to satisfy the requirements of the copular construction. The relevant part of the divine frame complex must be sufficiently narrowed down, either by parallelism (e.g. the parallelism in lines 10-20 requiring that the predicate be understood as a celestial body) or predicate-specific modifiers (e.g. the modifier in line 21 that specifies Ea and Damkina be understood as divine sages). The fact that these modifiers describe the deity in the predicate rather than the subject thus makes the final assertion of properties feel particularly indirect and mediated even if it ultimately follows the same logic as the English expression *this journal is a gem*.

The fact that the Ninurta hymn can rely on such a simple grammatical construction to facilitate a wide variety of blends owes itself largely to the highly polysemous nature of the divine frame complex, a conceptual object whose full content is ‘unlocked’ so to speak by the licensing features of divine enumerate description. In most linguistic contexts, a name like Ninurta likely only evokes the divine person or one very clear guise (e.g. ‘Ninurta is angry with you’ or ‘Provide Ninurta with his daily meal’). The divine enumerate description found in the Ninurta hymn makes it clear that a variety of aspects of the gods appearing in the predicate terms are being evoked by the proper names. The syntactic parallelism across

multiple lines signals enumeration, while the semantic anomaly of asserting that body parts of Ninurta's divine person are to be equated with various gods blocks the most conventional interpretation of the divine names.

In this sense, we might say that the copular construction, the semantic 'narrowing' construction given by epithets or modifying attributes attached to divine names, and even the divine names themselves (a topic to be revisited in 5.3) all constitute poetic devices the scribe can be used to great expressive effect. These devices rely on highly specific rhetorical contexts to evoke implicit aspects of the linguistic terms that are fed into them. Ultimately the scribe is 'saying much by saying little' in ways that specifically rely on interpretive features of his elite scribal tradition.

5.2 Partial equations of gods: Marduk

The form of divine enumerative description in the Syncretic Ninurta Hymn was based on the blending evoked by the copular construction. In the Syncretic Marduk Hymn (CT 24, 50) we see divine enumerative description realized by a somewhat different device known as the XYZ-construction. This section will analyze the Marduk hymn much in the way the previous section did the Ninurta hymn.

CT 24, 50 has been called a syncretic hymn about Marduk,²⁷ even though Marduk never functions as the thematic subject in any line of the text. Parpola believes that the text is a post-Kassite Babylonian mystical explanatory work borrowing from an Assyrian theological model, where the high god was seen as the king and the main gods of the pantheon adopted the chief offices of state.²⁸ The tablet has somewhat different content on the obverse as opposed to the reverse. The obverse, Parpola argues, effectively equates Marduk with Ninurta under the guises of various gods while the reverse interprets eight Babylonian magnates as images (*šalmu*) of some of those same divinities, all as a reflection of Marduk as god of victory.²⁹ Here we are concerned only with the obverse. Below is a transliteration and translation, slightly modified from Parpola 1995: 399.³⁰

- 1) [d]URAŠ dAMAR.UTU ša₂ e-re-šu₂
- 2) dLUGAL.A.KI.A dAMAR.UTU ša₂ nag-bi
- 3) dNIN.URTA dAMAR.UTU ša₂ al-li
- 4) dNE₃.ERI₁₁.GAL dAMAR.UTU ša₂ qab-lu
- 5) dZA.BA₄.BA₄ dAMAR.UTU ša₂ ta-ha-zi
- 6) dEN.LIL₂ dAMAR.UTU ša₂ be-lu-tu₂ u mit-lu-uk-ti

²⁷Oshima 2011, 391.

²⁸Parpola 1995: 387.

²⁹Parpola 1995: 398-401. More summary discussions of this text can be found in Hutter 1996: 38, Krebernik 2002: 45, Beaulieu 1995: 189, Lambert 1975: 197-198, and Lambert 2013: 264-265.

³⁰A slightly different transliteration and translation is found in Lambert 2013: 264-265.

- 7) ^dna-bi-um ^dAMAR.UTU *ša₂ NIG₂.ŠID*
 - 8) ^dEN.ZU ^dAMAR.UTU *mu-nam-mir mu-ši*
 - 9) ^dUTU ^dAMAR.UTU *ša₂ ki-na-a-ti*
 - 10) ^dIM ^dAMAR.UTU *ša₂ zu-un-nu*
 - 11) ^dTIŠPAK ^dAMAR.UTU *ša₂ um-ma-nu*
 - 12) AN.GAL ^dAMAR.UTU *ša₂ KUR₄-zi-zi*
 - 13) ^dšu-qa-mu-nu ^dAMAR.UTU *ša₂ pi-sa-an-nu*
 - 14) [^dma]-^rmi⁷ ^d[AMAR.UTU *ša₂ ku*]l-la-ti
rest broken
- 1) Uraš is the Marduk of planting (*erēšu*).
 - 2) Lugalakia is the Marduk of the ground water (*nagbu*).
 - 3) Ninurta is the Marduk of the hoe (*allu*).
 - 4) Nergal is the Marduk of war (*qablu*).
 - 5) Zababa is the Marduk of battle (*tāhāzu*).
 - 6) Enlil is the Marduk of lordship and deliberation (*bēlūtu u mitluku*).
 - 7) Nabu is the Marduk of accounting (*nikkassu*).
 - 8) Sin is the Marduk as illuminator of the night (*munammir mūši*).
 - 9) Shamash is the Marduk of justice (*kīnātu*).
 - 10) Adad is the Marduk of rain (*zunnu*).
 - 11) Tishpak is the Marduk of hosts (*ummānu*).
 - 12) Ishtaran is the Marduk of ... (KUR₄ *zi-zi*)
 - 13) Šuqamunu is the Marduk of the basket (*pisannu*).
 - 14) Ma[mi] is [the Marduk of the potte]r's clay (*kullatu*)
- ...

Each line of this section is of the form ‘X is the Y of Z,’ where X is the proper name of a god, Y = Marduk, and Z is a common noun.³¹ Like the copular construction discussed in 5.1, the XYZ construction is more interesting than it looks. We will look first at how the construction behaves in English and then apply that analysis to the Akkadian hymn.³²

To understand how the XYZ construction works from a cognitive standpoint, we need to first discuss the difference between values and roles. These terms describe two different ways of interpreting an equation between two nominal expressions. Values describe a specific thing in the world while roles describe a type of such things. A minimally contrastive example is given below:

³¹The exception is line 8. Here the last two nominal elements of the line still form a genitive relationship (*munammir mūši*), but this construct form is in apposition to Marduk. The lack of space in the line may have meant the scribe chose to omit the *ša* particle that appears in every other line. On the other hand, *munammir mūši* refers to an agentive being whereas every other line features an abstract noun.

³²The following discussion is based on Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 151ff. Further discussion of the English examples can be found in Mikkelsen 2005.

- (1) a. Q: *What does Linda do?*
 b. A: *Linda is the department chair.*
- (2) (Looking at wall with pictures and titles of faculty members)
 a. Q: *Which one of these people is Linda?*
 b. A: *Linda is the department chair.*

On the one hand, item (1-b) says that Linda's role (in the current contextual frame) is that of the department chair. She does what a department chair does. A copular sentence of the form 'X is Y,' where Y specifies a role for the entity X, is called a *specificational* mapping. Under the specificational map, we say the value X is mapped to the role Y. On the other hand, item (2-b) says that the identity of Linda (the X term) is equal to the identity of the person denoted by 'the department chair' (the Y term). This type of copular sentence is called an *identificational* mapping.

For technical clarity in discussing copular constructions we will adopt the following notation. Given a sentence 'X is Y,' to signal that Y is a role rather than a value, we refer to it as Y(). The notation Y(X) indicates the interpretive result of the specificational map, where the value X is assigned the role Y(). When Y is a value, we indicate the mapping X to Y using the notation X = Y.

Now let us turn to the XYZ construction, again looking at an example.

- (3) a. *Paris is the capital of France*

The sentence *Paris is the capital of France* involves two specificational mappings. The pair of values (Paris, France) is mapped to the pair of roles (Capital(), Country()), where the role Country() is inferred from parallelism required by the XYZ construction and the frame evoked by the words *Paris* and *France* (see Figure 5.9).

Note that the same structural relation CAPITAL OF holds between the role pair and the value pair. A capital is the administrative center of a country, just as Paris is the administrative center of France. Thus one can say that the specificational map induces a further map from the structured relation (Paris, France) to the structured relation (Capital(), Country()).

Like the copular construction, the XYZ construction is ultimately based on a blend that chooses certain profiles on, or highlights certain elements in, the frames that are fed into it. This is the case for the sentence *the Rockies are the Alps of North America*. Here more inference is needed to determine both the missing role term (analogous to the role Country() in item (3-a)) as well as the nature of the map assigning the values to their roles. The terms *the Alps* and *North America* suggest a frame involving the roles of mountain ranges and geographical continents, respectively. Just as the Rockies are to North America, the Alps should be to the continent of Europe. This would suggest that our implicit role term is Continent(). But despite the fact that *the Alps* is a proper noun, here it does not function

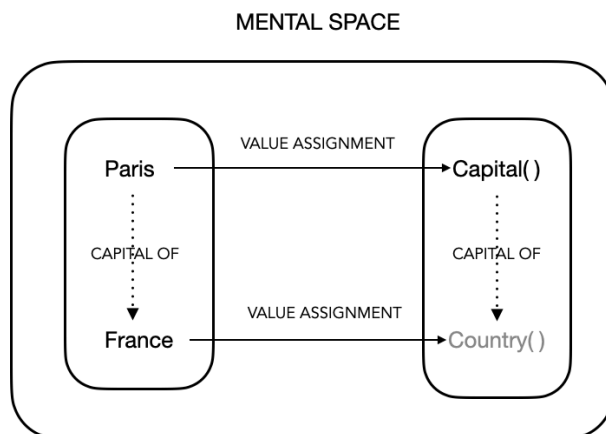


Figure 5.9: Mental space for the XYZ construction *Paris is the capital of France*. The role *Country()* is inferred.

as a value. Just as *Capital()* relates in a certain way to *Country()* in item (3-a), we need to find a role *r()* for *the Alps* such that *r()* relates to *Continent()* just as the Rocky Mountains relate to North America. A reasonable interpretation is the Alps in their role as the most formidable mountain range to run across Europe, where Europe is in the role of continent. The relation between *Alps()* and *Continent()* then determines the relation between the Rocky Mountains and North America (see Figure 5.10).

From a cognitive linguistics standpoint, the choice to see the Alps in their capacity as the most formidable mountain range in Europe amounts to a conceptual profiling of the given entity. On its own, the term *the Alps* can evoke different frames all involving the physical mountains in different capacities. Besides the frame of the Alps as the most formidable mountain range (to climb) in Europe, there is also the frame of the Alps as a highly salient tall, snowy mountain range in Europe, or the Alps as a mountain range separating two culturally distinct regions of Europe as a political entity, or the Alps as a highly salient location to go skiing. The selection of frame depends on the other elements in the XYZ construction.

Finally, just as with the copular construction, the XYZ construction can feature metaphorical interpretations. This amounts to saying that the VALUE ASSIGNMENT map in diagrams like Figure 5.9 and Figure 5.10 can involve a metaphoric map between the role and value frames. For instance, the sentence *vanity is the quicksand of reason* requires a metaphorical interpretation, with a plausible one being PURPOSEFUL THINKING IS MOTION ALONG A DIRECTED PATH.³³ The source domain for the metaphor is given by a traveller along a

³³Cf. Turner 1998: 53. See also Dancygier and Sweetser 2014: 153.

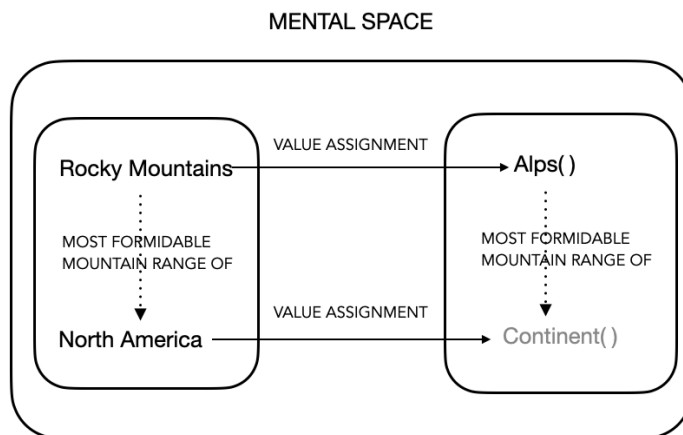


Figure 5.10: Mental space for the XYZ construction *the Rockies are the Alps of North America*.

directed path with quicksand on it. Quicksand looks harmless until the traveller steps in it, after which he gets stuck and slowly sinks to his death. The target domain is guided rational thinking, where vain thinking causes one's thoughts to lose coherence and ultimately lose all sense. The entire blend connecting roles to values, including the metaphorical mapping, is given in Figure 5.11.

What the above English examples show is that the explicit role term in the XYZ construction behaves in some ways similar to the proper name of a Mesopotamian god in copular constructions and descriptive modifiers. On its own, a given noun Y can evoke a multiplicity of frames corresponding to specific functions or guises of the underlying object. Our discussion of the term *the Alps* illustrates this. Once it sits inside the governing XYZ construction, however, only one relevant frame is highlighted. This is similar to our discussion in 5.1, where the proper name of a god could metonymically activate the entire divine frame complex by targeting the central DIVINE PERSON, but when it was placed inside a governing copular or modifying construction, only a portion of the complex was selected to provide meaning.

One might suspect that other aspects of the XYZ construction in English likewise hold for the Akkadian instances within the Syncretic Marduk Hymn. This is indeed the case. With the exception of line 8, every line in the hymn is an XYZ construction of the form DN *Marduk* ša Z, where DN is the proper name of a god and Z is a noun phrase. To interpret such an expression we need a mapping between suitably defined frames involving the value pair (DN, Z) and the role pair (HighGod(), Domain()), where HighGod() is a divine role associated with the Level One features of personhood 'plus a little more' (in a sense to be

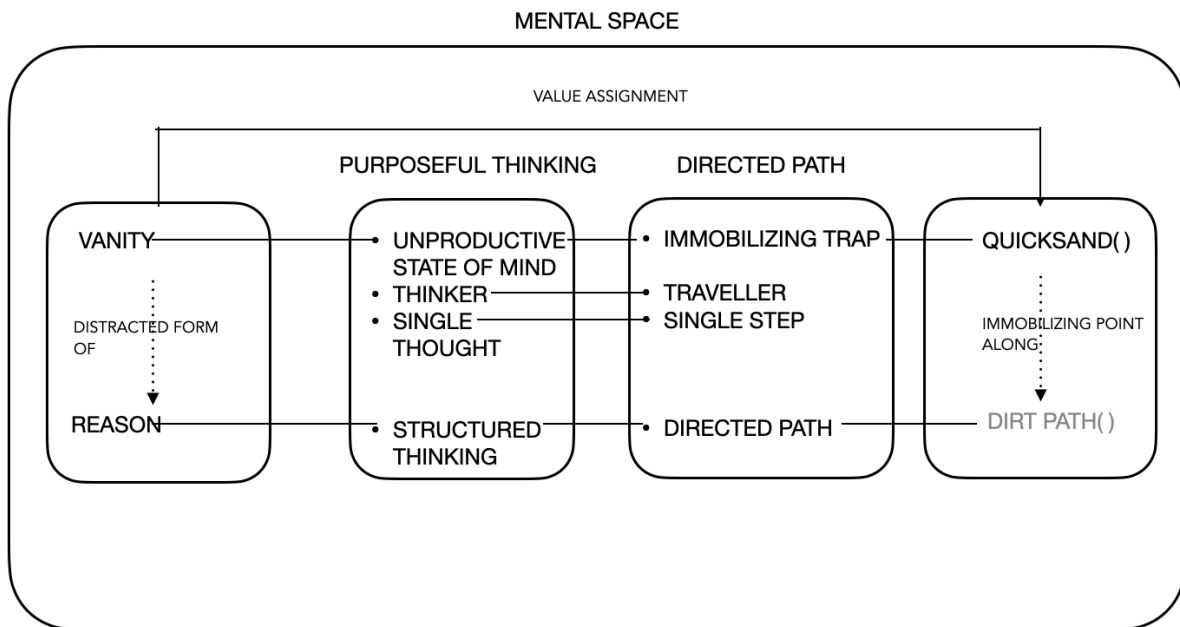


Figure 5.11: Mental space for the XYZ construction *vanity is the quicksand of reason*. The inner two frames are the source and target domains of the metaphor PURPOSEFUL THINKING IS MOTION ALONG A DIRECTED PATH.

explained shortly), and Domain() is the experiential domain that HighGod() can operate in. Both roles are determined from the other elements of the construction and background scribal knowledge.

One important element of background scribal knowledge relevant for each line is that Marduk is the supreme god of the Babylonian pantheon. Here, supremacy can be thought of as a scalar measure averaging over a number of Marduk's aspects such as social standing among the gods, strength, majesty, and profound wisdom. We can characterize each of these aspects almost tautologically as those domains in which Marduk becomes an ideal or archetypal representative (according to the Marduk Theology). But since we are interested in generalizing beyond the specific god Marduk and the domains he excels in (i.e. generalizing from specific values to roles), we can say that Domain() is a generic experiential domain that a major Mesopotamian deity HighGod() can operate in or influence. The relationship between HighGod() and Domain() is that the HighGod() is supreme in or excels in Domain().

For each line of the hymn, it is this ideal relationship between HighGod() and Domain() that is being asserted about the terms DN and Z. For example, in line 1 (DN, Z) = (Uraš, planting). Uraš is usually seen as a goddess of the earth set in complement to An as god of

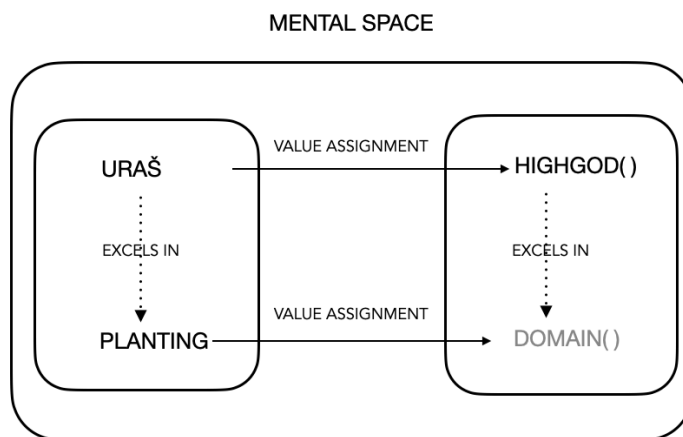


Figure 5.12: Blend for line 1 of the Marduk Hymn (*Uraš is the Marduk of planting*). The role HighGod() is evoked by the term ‘Marduk’.

heaven.³⁴ This suggests that the term for planting, *erēšu*, evokes the frame for agriculture in which Uraš takes the role of controller of the area where planting takes place (see Figure 5.12).

Some of the lines in the hymn use metonymy to evoke the implicit role Domain(). Thus in line 3, Ninurta is said to be the Marduk of the hoe (*allu*). The hoe is a salient metonym for the frame of agriculture.³⁵ In line 14 the creator goddess Mami is the Marduk of potter’s clay (*kullatu*), a metonym for the domain of artifact creation from clay. In line 13 Šuqamunu is the Marduk of the basket (*pisannu*). The intended conceptual domain of this metonym is not clear.³⁶

The radically reductive function of the term ‘Marduk’ in this hymn can be seen in the way it is compatible with the variety of domains serving as the Z term in the XYZ construction (Table 5.1). This table shows the function of the X and Z terms in each line relative to the frame governing each of them. There is a certain amount of flexibility in determining what the intended functions are, as the scope of the god’s involvement in the experiential domain is fairly broad. Thus Adad can be seen as a god that provides the substance of rain water as well as the enabler of the activity of raining. Shamash is a god who enables just verdicts as well as someone who punishes the guilty. Zababa both enables war to happen and provides the successful victory at the end of war, etc. The point of the table is to

³⁴The name Uraš may be etymologically related to *erēšu*. See M. Krebernik, ‘Uraš A’, *RIA* 14:401 and Frayne and Stucky 2021: 357.

³⁵The reference to the hoe may reflect Ninurta’s role in either agriculture or, much less saliently, war. Thus in the *Song of the Hoe*, ll. 59-70, Ninurta uses the hoe to domesticate the land and destroy recalcitrant enemies. See Annus 2002: 154.

³⁶Cf. M. Krebernik and U. Seidl, ‘Šuqamuna’, *RIA* 13: 325.

X	Z	X-type	Z-type
Uraš	planting	enabler	agriculture
Lugalakia	ground water	personification/controller	substance/place
Ninurta	hoe	enabler	agriculture/war
Zababa	battle	enabler	war
Enlil	lordship and deliberation	enabler	rulership
Nabu	accounting	enabler	record keeping
Sin	illuminator of night ³⁷	agent	activity
Shamash	justice	enabler	just verdicts
Adad	rain	provider	substance
Tišpak	hosts	leader	group
Mami	clay	manipulator	substance

Table 5.1: Function of the X and Z terms in the Marduk Hymn. Lines 12 and 13 are not considered.

illustrate both the varied experiential domains that the hymn covers as well as the different schematic roles the god plays in the relevant frame. Only a fairly restricted aspect of the divine frame complex for Marduk could satisfy all of these conditions simultaneously. Thus while the term ‘Marduk’ initially evokes an entire divine frame complex, it is the remaining parts of the XYZ construction that narrow the term down to the highly schematic aspects of excellence and archtypicality captured by the HighGod() role.

Indeed, our analysis of this hymn argues that Marduk is not being seen as a particular god but a schematic type of god designated by HighGod(). This representation is largely a result of the XYZ construction used throughout the hymn. Like the copular construction in the Ninurta hymn, the XYZ construction possesses a complex meaning not indicated at an express linguistic level. It gives meaning to the Marduk hymn largely through how it operates on whole frames rather than on only concrete referents. In particular, it portrays Marduk as a god so generic that it retains only a few abstract properties beyond its skeletal divine person.

Yet the suitability of Marduk as the Y term in the XYZ construction here largely depends on the rich, multi-faceted nature of that god’s divine frame complex. Gods with a very particular identity cannot be substituted for the Y role even if they have an associated domain of excellence. Thus

- (4) a. *Uraš is the Nergal of planting³⁸
 b. *Shamash is the Pazuzu of justice

³⁷Although line 8 is technically not an XYZ construction, the modifying phrase *munammir mūši* still implicitly specifies an actor and domain of action.

³⁸In these examples, * represents semantically anomalous sentences, while ? represents questionable ones.

- c. ??Mami is the Ishtar of the potter's clay
- d. ?Nabu is the An of accounting

In item (4-a), Nergal is an archetypal god of death and pestilence, but in this identity it is the salience of that experiential domain (death and pestilence) rather than the archetypal status of Nergal vis-a-vis that domain that controls the interpretation of the XYZ construction. Hence we tend to think of item (4-a) as saying Uraš relates to planting in a 'pestilential' way. In item (4-b), Pazuzu is a prominent wind demon who in the first millennium was seen as an apotropaic agent against all sorts of evil influences.³⁹ Here, too, the deity's single, salient identity is incompatible with the other terms in the XYZ construction. In item (4-c), the goddess Ishtar does have multiple guises. For instance, in the Great Ishtar Hymn she is identified as queen of the inhabited world, preeminent goddess of war and strife, one who is great and august in all places.⁴⁰ However, generally speaking these ideal roles still do not clearly converge on the sense of a generic god of excellence because some of the goddess' most salient identities (e.g. goddess of love and war, the bright star Venus) still strongly color her identity. Only in a special context that does not require such a radical, schematic reduction of her identity (such as the Great Ishtar Hymn), can Ishtar in her capacity of overall excellence become a salient reading.⁴¹ Finally, in item (4-d) An is indeed a god who for much of his history has lacked a singular concrete domain of excellence, beyond that of being father of the gods or head of the ancient divine council. But for much of the second and first millennium he was not seen as a preeminent god, having given up that position to Marduk.⁴²

For the last two of these examples one can conceivably find a special context in which the god in question (corresponding to the Y term of the XYZ construction) renders the sentence acceptable. But our purpose here has been to show that the salient excellence of a deity in a particular or even multiple experiential domains is not enough to give it the role HighGod() required of the XYZ construction. What is evidently required is more rampant generalization from a discrete set of particular roles to a more generic one. Thus in *Enūma elish*, the fifty names of Marduk in Tablet Seven do not just indicate Marduk commands the fifty domains in that list. They suggest that Marduk can command any domain, and hence allow a learned scribe to see him as a role HighGod() like in the Marduk hymn.

We can express this idea in cognitive linguistic terms by saying that the rampant syncretization of a god like Marduk effectively expands the DIVINE PERSON frame within the divine frame complex to a slightly more elaborated anthropomorphic frame beyond the Level One personhood features, whose salient qualities are reflected in the role of HighGod() as

³⁹Frayne and Stuckey 2021: 292.

⁴⁰Cf. Table 2.3.

⁴¹Another possible context is the theology reflected in BM 65454+68069+82954+93050, which Lambert has called a syncretic hymn to Ishtar (Lambert 2003).

⁴²A major exception to this is the antiquarian cult of An in late Achaemenid and Seleucid Uruk, in which An assumed henotheistic tendencies (see Krul 2018: 82).

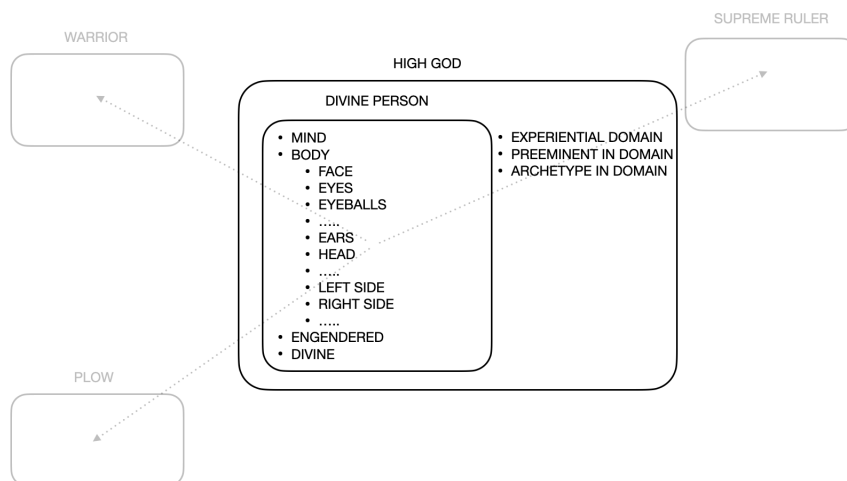


Figure 5.13: The elaboration of the Divine Person under rampant syncretization to facilitate the HighGod() role.

an archetype in a general experiential domain (see Figure 5.13; cf. Figure 5.2).

Stepping back a bit from the XYZ construction and looking at the text as a whole, we can see how the Marduk hymn represents an unusual instance of divine enumerative description as measured relative to prototypical divine hymns. It seems to sacrifice the variety of linguistic structures found in things like the Great Ishtar Hymn and place more descriptive weight on only a few constructions. The Marduk hymn still involves the divine frame complex of a major Mesopotamian deity, line by line descriptions using that complex, and an imaginative dimension contributing to the text’s poetic function (which in this case is a mystical explanatory work). Yet the hymn ultimately makes use of Marduk’s divine frame complex only in a very narrow, abstract capacity. Rather than being described in all his different, concrete aspects, Marduk is abstracted to describe the narrow identities of many other lesser gods. Far from instantiating the different facets of Marduk’s divine frame complex with qualifying modifiers or copular constructions, the Marduk hymn uses the more complicated XYZ construction to invert the order of description, so that Marduk becomes a universal qualifier for other gods and their particular domains of excellence.

A comparison of the above discussion about the Marduk hymn to the discussion of the Ninurta hymn reveals that both texts use proper names of divinities and a particular grammatical construction to express their meaning. In both cases, the grammatical construction selects a portion of the divine frame complex and asserts that the salient, highly valued characteristics within that portion hold for the subject of description. The fact that proper names can be used in two fairly different configurations invites a brief discussion of some of their linguistic properties and how they can serve the poetic functions of divine enumerative

description.

5.3 Divine names as poetic functions

Sections 5.1 and 5.2 have argued that when they are used in divine enumerative description, divine proper names can function as implicit descriptive phrases. The purpose of this section is to show that when used in divine enumerative description, proper names can actually be seen as a fully fledged grammatical construction qualitatively on par with the copular construction, XYZ-construction, and nominal modifier constructions discussed in the last two sections. Viewing divine names this way allows us to think of their status in the syncretic hymns (and perhaps more broadly) in a new and interesting light. Rather than being simple ‘tags’ for things in the world, divine names can be seen as a flexible poetic device available to the Akkadian scribe much like rhyming or Biblical allusion are pliant tools in the hands of a modern western poet. This helps us to see the syncretic hymns (and the divine enumerative description underlying them) as something beyond a mere list, and instead a kind of poetic mode whose ‘creative grammar’ has rich rules of expression.

This section also returns to the issue of content versus form raised in previous chapters. As a grammatical construction, divine names appearing within divine enumerative description are a poetic tool that ‘does much with little.’ Their surface linguistic form is quite simple, usually consisting of a single word. However, when combined with the other constructions discussed in this chapter they bring into play the full weight of the divine frame complex that constitutes their meaning. The resulting contrast between minimal form and maximal content is, we argue, yet again a reflection of competing priorities within the late Akkadian scribal tradition. In this sense divine names are similar to the other linguistic phenomena studied in this thesis, poetic techniques which have come to be selected and emphasized by elite Akkadian scribes for culturally specific reasons.

In order to understand the arguments about Akkadian divine names, we should first talk about certain proper names in English. Establishing these properties in the English case will allow us to understand the behavior of the divine names in the syncretic hymns.

Traditionally, proper names (or proper nouns) have been understood as expressions referring to a unique object in the world (or relevant contextually limited domain). They are sometimes viewed as classical predicates whose defining properties are so strict that only one object in the world satisfies them, namely the referent of the proper name. Thus ‘Fido’ defines the set of dogs who live in my house, who have white fur with black spots, whom I bought three years ago as a pet, whom I take for a walk every morning, etc. As a philosophical theory of names this view (known as the descriptive theory of names) has problems,⁴³ but we mention it here only as a contrast to the way proper names can be treated from a frame-theoretic perspective. It is this perspective which will enable us to connect the discussion in 5.1 and 5.2 to divine enumerative description more broadly.

⁴³See Searle 1969: 162ff and Kripke 1981.

To motivate the frame-theoretic perspective, we start by observing that proper nouns generally behave differently from common nouns. In English, they usually cannot be modified by adjectives or articles, cannot be pluralized, and seem to refer to an entity in an acontextual way rather than as an instance of a category with specific features (e.g. *a/the cat*).

Under certain situations proper nouns can, in fact, take articles (*Which Joe are you looking for? The Joe who lives upstairs or the Joe I work with?*) as well as certain modifiers (*a concerned Barack Obama spoke at the convention last week*). Certain terms like *Friday* or *winter* seem to have properties of both proper nouns and common nouns (compare the sentences *We visited them in December* and *Winter starts in December* \approx *The season winter starts in the month December*).⁴⁴ Although proper nouns have unique referents, those referents can be recognized as belonging to a class just like common nouns (*Paris is a city*). The discussion in 5.2 shows that proper names can, in situations like the XYZ construction, refer to roles rather than values (*the Rocky Mountains are the Alps of North America*). While it is often said that in examples such as these, the names are evidently functioning as common nouns rather than proper nouns, this does not explain how we should think of both categories at a deeper semantic level.

The frame-based approach to proper nouns accounts for these facts and others by arguing that proper nouns are not fundamentally different from common nouns. Both are associated with a referential capacity and a semantic class. Proper nouns do not a priori come with the assumption of unique reference. But a proper noun does metonymically evoke a particularly rich frame which in most contexts allows a speaker or hearer to identify a unique object described by that frame. It is important to note how this differs from classical understandings of proper nouns. In the classical view without frames, proper nouns simply refer to a unique object without regard to the conditioning environment that gives that object full meaning. In the frame-based approach, rather than being signifiers empty of all content save for unique reference, proper nouns are metonyms for whole frames whose conceptual richness is usually adequate for unique reference.

Equally important is the fact that all the features of proper names discussed above (their modification by articles or adjectives, the way they fit semantically into grammatical structures like the XYZ construction) are facilitated by conceptual blending. This integrates proper nouns into the frame-based treatment of other linguistic entities discussed in this thesis, such as epithets, metaphor, and copular equations.

As an example of how the frame-based analysis is applied to proper names, take one of the sentences mentioned above: *a concerned Barack Obama spoke at the convention last week*. The proper name *Barack Obama* is metonymic for a frame that includes the 44th president of America's physical appearance, personality, history in public life, accomplishments, etc. Such 'permanent' features of the frame are the most salient in many contexts. The adjective *concerned* can modify the proper noun because it does not match any of these salient permanent features. It targets either a non-salient feature or is simply compatible

⁴⁴Vandelanotte and Willemsse 2002: 12.

with the overall frame. As Barbara Dancygier notes, this explains why such modifying adjectives signal a temporary quality in the referent rather than a permanent one.⁴⁵ On the other hand, in an example like *today, in sunny California*, the modifier *sunny* does not refer to a temporary property of the proper noun, but rather highlights a characteristic sub-frame within the frame metonymically evoked by *California*.

The role of blending in interpreting proper nouns can be illustrated by *the president appointed an official to be the interim leader of the new Iraq*.⁴⁶ Generally the construction *the new X* signals a change in the referent (or value) for the role denoted by X. Thus there is a role Iraq() constituted by the country in Mesopotamia that largely speaks Arabic, whose name is currently ‘Iraq’, etc. The role Iraq() can take on different values constituted by the status of the country ‘Iraq’ at varying moments in history. Thus *the new Iraq* refers to the value defined by the country of Iraq organized under American occupation. This is opposed to the value defined by the country under Saddam Hussein. The current value is new in the sense that the role Iraq() took it only a short time ago. We can illustrate how the meaning of the whole phrase is constructed from its components in Figure 5.14. In that figure, Input Space 1 represents the adjective modifier *new*. It combines with a role with at least two values, and picks out the value with the property that it was assumed recently (relative to some context). Input Space 2 represents the role Iraq() evoked by the proper noun *Iraq*. This role is defined by (among other things) two specific values constituted by the status of the country ‘Iraq’ from 1979-2003 and 2004 onward. The context provided by the rest of the sentence tells us that when Input Space 1 is blended with Input Space 2, the relevant value for Iraq() to take is the country from 2004 onward.

A similar kind of blend analysis can be done for proper nouns in the grammatical structures discussed earlier in the chapter. In 5.2 we discussed the sentence *the Rockies are the Alps of North America* (an instance of the XYZ construction). There we said that the term *the Alps* evokes different frames centered on the European mountain range depending on the context, and that context in this case was the XYZ construction itself (along with the other nominal elements in it). We observed there was a functional analogue between the way the Y term in the XYZ construction behaved and the way proper names of Mesopotamian divinities behaved in copular and attribute modifier constructions. In both situations, the conditioning grammatical environment profiles a frame evoked by the term that renders the whole phrase interpretable. The above arguments show that in fact this parallelism is robust and deeply motivated, as it rests on two common facts about language - that linguistic signs are usually underdeterminative in meaning by themselves even as the specification of their meaning comes from the conditioning grammatical construction. Proper nouns of all sorts can be thought of as frame complexes whose various frames are in fact richly elaborated, even as in unmarked usage we are only concerned with the uniqueness of referent. Special environments like the XYZ construction or adjective modifier construction (e.g. *a hesitant*

⁴⁵Dancygier 2011a, 222.

⁴⁶Adapted from Dancygier 2011b: 223.

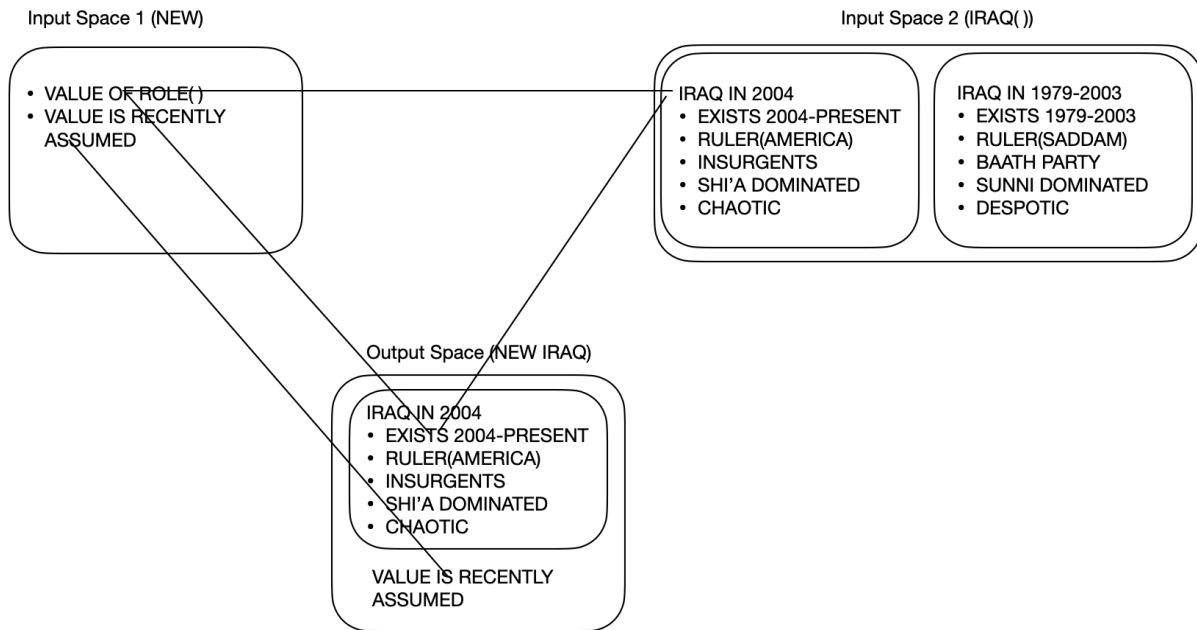


Figure 5.14: Blend for *new Iraq* (Generic Space not shown).

Barack Obama) reveal the frames hidden behind a proper noun, only a portion of which is ultimately selected by the surrounding grammatical construction to make the phrase interpretable. Not only are Mesopotamian divine names structurally similar to common nouns at the most schematic cognitive level, but the linguistic function of those names in the forms of divine enumerative description we have studied up till now is just a special case of how proper nouns in general behave.

The converse of this last statement implies that grammatical construction, rhetorical environment, and culturally-specific symbols all play a significant role in shaping the poetic possibilities for proper nouns in a given written culture. This chapter has outlined the ways that one configuration of those factors in Akkadian, syncretic hymns to deities in the latter second or first millennium, allows for the highly imaginative use of divine names within divine enumerative description. While previous Assyriological research has shown how these hymns reflect trends toward henotheism and speculative explanatory writing among elite Mesopotamian scribes, here we have focused on the texts in a specific poetic capacity. The divine enumerative description found in the syncretic Ninurta and Marduk hymns relies heavily on the copular construction and its more elaborate cousin (the XYZ construction) to convert the divine names of certain gods into descriptive modifiers of other gods. At a slightly broader level, the epithets and descriptive modifiers discussed in the syncretic

hymns as well as texts from chapter 3 and chapter 4 can be understood in a similar light. It is possible to look at this marked use of divine names not just as a reflection of theological trends (i.e. changing conception of certain gods under rampant syncretism and henotheism), but as a poetic functional adaptation as well.

Given that most of the constructions studied in this chapter are ultimately variants of the basic topic-comment structure identified by Civil and Johnson in early Sumerian literature and lexicography (which often feature proper nouns as topic or comment),⁴⁷ one can see very ancient grammatical and stylistic tendencies at work in the use of divine names in the syncretic hymns. We may thus say that the divine enumerative description found within these hymns involves a few particular elaborations of a (or perhaps *the*) foundational information structure in cuneiform literature. Yet that basic information structure is not enough in itself to generate the rich meaning of the hymns. While the syntactic form of the topic-comment structure remains fairly simple (copular, XYZ, or nominal modifier construction), the expressive content of that structure emerges only in combination with the divine names.

This fact, in turn, helps us to see divine names as a particularly marked grammatical construction that ‘does much with little.’ The polysemy of those nouns is highly implicit because it is triggered only by the marked context of divine enumerative description, and even there a rich set of cultural knowledge is required to disambiguate possible meanings. For example, when the term ‘Marduk’ appears in most grammatical environments (e.g. letters, royal inscriptions, epic narrative, administrative documents) it straightforwardly evokes either one of the god’s particular guises or perhaps just the divine person. There the capacity of the divine name to function like a common noun or adjective is not apparent. But when divine names appear within divine enumerative description, the rich cultural knowledge constituting the divine frame complex can be put to creative work by the scribe, allowing those names in effect to serve as highly polysemous descriptors. Divine enumerative description is, so to speak, one common way to unlock the dam holding back the expressive waters of the Mesopotamian divine name.

It is worth stepping back to consider how, as a poetic function, divine names fit within the cognitive linguistic structure of the syncretic hymns, Akkadian in general, and even basic language universals. This is illustrated by Figure 5.15. The diagram shows three stages of elaboration of the topic-comment construction (left) using traditional notation from Construction Grammar.⁴⁸ Each construction is represented by a box whose top half describes the meaning (i.e. semantic content) while the bottom half describes the syntactic and phonological form of the construction. The left-most construction is the most schematic form of the topic-comment construction found in all languages. The middle section describes how Akkadian elaborates the schematic version into the copular, XYZ, and nominal descriptive constructions analyzed earlier.⁴⁹ The right side indicates that the kind of divine enumerative description found in the syncretic hymns is achieved only we combine the middle column

⁴⁷See Civil 1987 and J. C. Johnson 2019, as well as the Introduction.

⁴⁸See e.g. Langacker 1991: 16ff.

⁴⁹Akkadian has many ways of elaborating on the basic topic-comment construction. The middle column

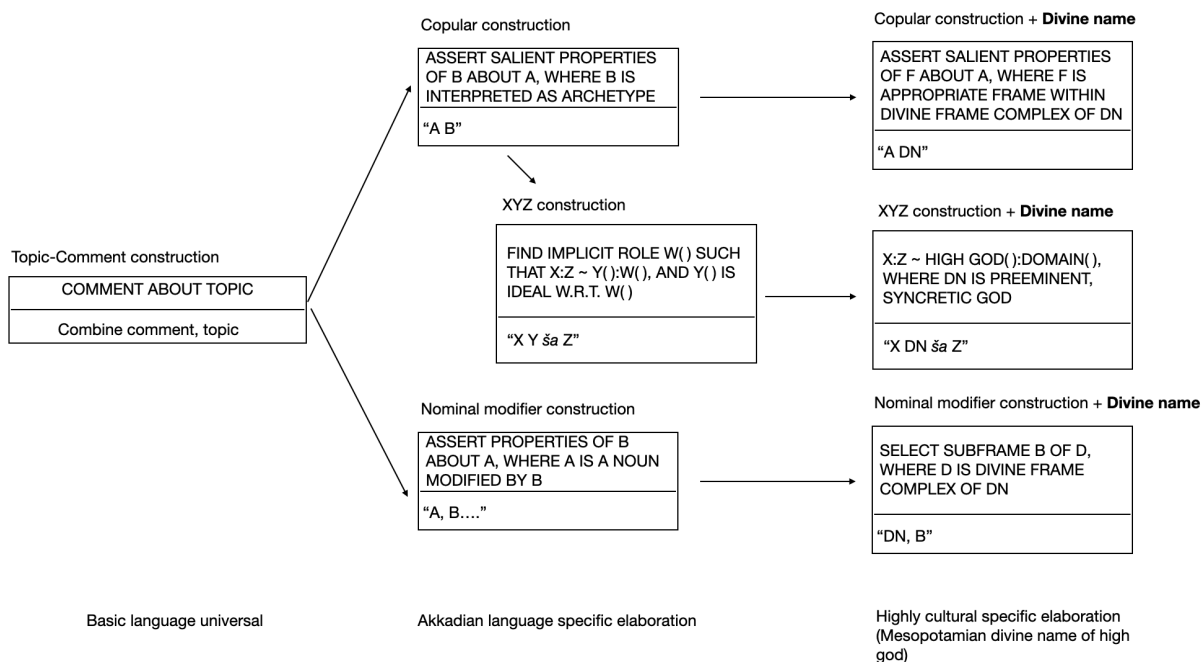


Figure 5.15: Schema of grammatical constructions appearing at the level of language universals, Akkadian in general, and syncretic hymns in particular.

constructions with the construction associated with certain divine names (whose meaning is the divine frame complex and whose form is a/the salient proper name of the divinity). Most of a syncretic hymn’s semantic content, creative implementation, and deciphering effort is concentrated in the divine name itself rather than other parts of the linguistic constructions. We could say, then, that the divine name is a complex grammatical construction with minimalized form but highly elaborate, culturally specific, meaning.

The intended emphasis of the above argument may be made clearer with a contrastive example from another language. In using this example we mean only to highlight the very marked way that the syncretic hymns depend on only a few grammatical constructions to express very broad meanings. Contrasting the syncretic hymns with another hymn of similar scope but relying on a very different profile of grammatical constructions may make this fact clearer.

One of the most well-known hymns in the Rig Veda of ancient India is the Puruṣa Hymn. It tells of the Vedic sacrifice of a giant man from whose parts the world is created. In Joel Brereton’s recent translation of the text, the first eight lines (grouped into four stanzas) are as follows:

shows only those relevant for the Marduk and Ninurta hymns.

1. saḥásraśīrṣā púruṣaḥ sahasrākṣáḥ saḥásrapāt |
sá bhúmiṃ viśváto vṛtvá áty atiṣṭhad daśāṅghulám ||
2. púruṣa evédám sārvaṃ yád bhūtám yác ca bháviyam |
utámṛtatvásyásāno yád ánnenátiróhati ||
3. etávān asya mahimá áto jyáyāṃś ca púruṣaḥ |
pádo ‘asy aviśvá bhūtáni tripád asyāmṛtaṃ diví ||
4. tripád ūrdhvá úd ait púruṣaḥ pádo ‘asyehábhavat púnaḥ |
táto víṣvaṃ vi akrāmat sāsānānaśaná abhí ||⁵⁰

1. The Man has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, and a thousand feet.
Having covered the earth on all sides, he extended ten fingers’ breadth beyond.
2. The Man alone is this whole (world): what has come into being and what is to be.
Moreover, he is master of immortality when he climbs beyond (this world) through food.
3. So much is his greatness, but the Man is more than this:
a quarter of him is all living beings; three quarters are the immortal in heaven.
4. With his three quarters the Man went upward, but a quarter of him came to be here again.
From there he strode out in different directions toward what eats and what does not eat.

Putting aside the deeper layers of meaning about the centrality of sacrifice in Vedic cosmology,⁵¹ the hymn has a ‘mystical explanatory’ function similar to that in the syncretic Ninurta or Marduk hymns. Here there is an object of description or topic (‘the Man’) and a correlation between the parts of that object and the world in general. Yet even from the translation, one can see the Vedic poet elaborates on this topic-comment structure in a way different from the Akkadian case. Rather than a copular or XYZ construction using proper nouns, the Vedic poet uses a combination of noun compounds, nominalized verbs, common nouns, genitive noun phrases, and verb phrases. He provides a rich diversity of linguistic forms which evoke (again, at the most basic level of meaning) easily interpretable frames and straightforward cognitive blends. In short, more of the meaning of the hymn is explicitly indicated at a syntactic and phonological level. The hymn’s complex prosodic structure provides a definite sense of flow, both visually and aurally. We might thus indicate the way this hymn elaborates on the topic-comment structure with Figure 5.16. In the diagram only the labels of the grammatical constructions are indicated, not the specification of their form or meaning.

This figure shows that many more general language level constructions are recruited within the specific context of the Puruṣa Hymn. Apart from perhaps Puruṣa himself, no

⁵⁰Jamison and Brereton 2017: 1539. Transliteration from Nooten and Holland 1995: 531, including metrical notation.

⁵¹See Jamison and Brereton’s commentary on this hymn (Jamison and Brereton 2017: 1537-1539).

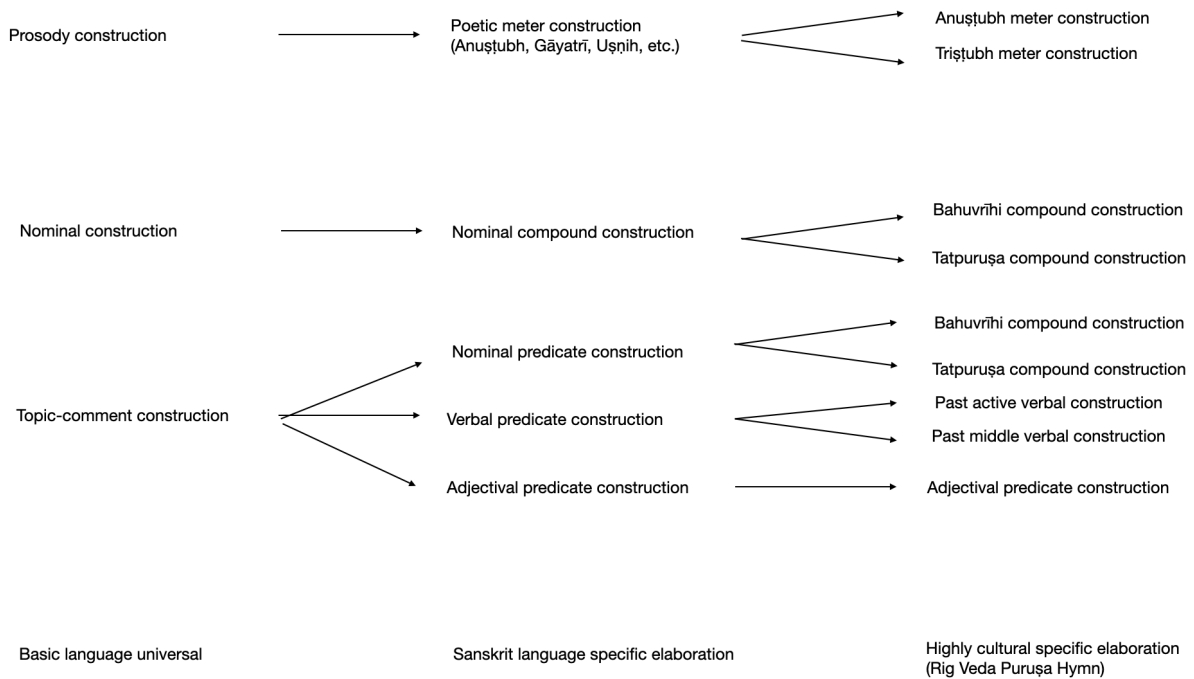


Figure 5.16: Schema of some of the grammatical constructions appearing at the level of language universals, Vedic Sanskrit in general, and the Rig Veda Puruṣa hymn in particular. Here only the labels of the constructions are indicated.

other proper names appear in this section (although there are a few appearing in the rest of the hymn). Apart from perhaps the poetic meters and compound nouns, the remaining constructions appearing in the middle column are also available to Akkadian. But they do not appear in the syncretic hymns.

A comparison of Figure 5.16 with Figure 5.15 shows the very specific and important role of divine names as a grammatical construction in the Akkadian syncretic hymns. While these syncretic hymns do not, in comparison to the Vedic Puruṣa hymn, employ as many distinct grammatical constructions that are available to the language in general, they do make heavy use of one (namely divine names) which lets them express complex cosmological concepts just as in the Puruṣa hymn. Despite the syntactic and morphological simplicity of this construction (i.e. simple proper names), its expressive power derives from what is implicit in its meaning rather than explicit. For the Ninurta hymn, the implicit element is the majority of guises or roles which constitute the divine frame complex beyond the DIVINE PERSON frame. For the Marduk hymn it is the common denominator of all of these guises which, for a deity like Marduk, constitutes the role HighGod() (cf. Figure 5.13).

Figure 5.15 is meant to show that although Mesopotamian divine names do not in general

evoke the full polysemous potential of the divine frame complex, in the instances of divine enumerative description found within the syncretic hymns, they do. Divine names may thus be seen as a grammatical construction fundamentally like any other in Akkadian, but which for specific cultural reasons (e.g. the deep influence of the Mesopotamian lexicographic tradition, tendency towards syncretism in major divinities, the importance of naming things in cosmological speculation) have assumed a marked poetic importance in particular environments. In the context of divine enumerative description, divine names become terms of poetry.

5.4 Summary

This chapter looked at the main grammatical constructions found within the syncretic hymns to Ninurta and Marduk. While these texts are not prototypical examples of divine hymns, we argued that they have enough features allowing them to be seen as a kind of divine enumerative description of a very interesting sort. Within that environment, a few simple grammatical constructions were responsible for generating highly complex meanings on the basis of blends among multiple divine frame complexes. We argued in particular that the divine names appearing in that marked context should be viewed as grammatical constructions rather than basic referring expressions. This allowed us to see all of the grammatical constructions used in the syncretic hymns (copular, XYZ, nominal descriptive, and divine name constructions) as flexible poetic devices that ‘do much with little,’ i.e. where the rich meaning of those devices was implicit rather than explicitly indicated. We also argued that this marked relation between content and form could be seen as a rhetorical, or poetic, phenomenon resulting from competing priorities within the late Akkadian scribal tradition. In this sense the particular kind of divine enumerative description studied in this chapter has much in common with the examples studied in previous chapters.

Chapter 6

Combinatorial creativity in the *Göttertypentext*

The previous four chapters have looked at examples of divine enumerative description from a variety of texts, arguing that those examples possessed features indicative of a poetic modality facilitated by the competing constraints and goals of elite Akkadian scribal practices. These texts do not just provide examples of salient blends and grammatical constructions within the late Akkadian literary corpus, they also show how implicit cognitive poetic structures and principles from the underlying scribal tradition motivate those blends and constructions. Rather than being a simple list or repository of metaphorical images and phrases, divine enumerative description is a structured focal point combining multiple, culturally-specific cognitive models in non-trivial ways.

Thus the discussions in the previous four chapters have sought not just to catalogue certain metaphorical images and phrases, but also connect them to generative cognitive processes from Akkadian scribal culture itself. Here, our arrangement of the text examples according to prototypicality proved useful. The prototypical form of divine enumerative description came from long divine hymns such as the Great Ishtar Hymn, whose core poetic features included a robust elaboration of a single divine frame complex and its modulating effects on the presencing of the goddess (section 2.2.3, chapter 3). Slightly less typical versions of divine enumerative description were found in other literary texts such as *Ludlul* and *Enūma elish*, where in addition to studying the elaboration of the divine frame complex for Marduk (2.2.2) we also explored how the scribe metaphorically ‘externalized’ the emotional state of the god (chapter 4). An even less typical example of divine enumerative description was found in the syncretic hymns to Ninurta and Marduk, whose capacity for poetic expression was based on the rich polysemy of their copular and proper name constructions (chapter 5). In each of these texts, we indicated how the cognitive representations facilitating its poetic expression emerged from competing pressures of the Akkadian scribal tradition on an implicit level. That is, rather than constituting the explicit purpose for composing the text, these poetic features were argued to be implicit processes adapted to conventional

form and style.

In this last chapter we extend the analysis one step further to an even less typical form of divine enumerative description, one which illustrates a subtle kind of creativity not evident in more prototypical forms. While creativity is an aspect of divine enumerative description that has been touched upon briefly in previous chapters, here we present a more formal theory of the phenomenon from a cognitive perspective. The operation of creativity within divine enumerative description adds another aspect to our claim that the latter is a poetic mode of composition born of the competing constraints and goals within elite Akkadian scribal practices. On the one hand, what separates creativity from mere formulaic production is the intentionally-driven surprise at the result. On the other hand, in the Introduction we loosely defined poetic modality as a form of composition which engages the image generating capacities of the writer or reader in an underdeterminative manner. Thus creativity is poetic when underdeterminative base material (e.g. a written form) elicits unexpected images in the mind of a reader or writer. With respect to the example of divine enumerative description chosen for this chapter, we will argue that the idea of ‘what is unexpected’ is more a function of what elements from the governing frames are explicitly represented and how they are juxtaposed. As with other elements of poetic modality within divine enumerative description, creativity is an implicit feature operating behind more salient cognitive structures governing compositional norms and basic image material.

Our chosen example is the *Göttertypentext*, a late second or first millennium composition based on divine enumerative description much like the syncretic hymns in its strong reliance on a basic form of the topic-comment construction.¹ The claim that the *Göttertypentext* exemplifies creativity may initially strike one as either straightforward or difficult to maintain, depending on how one thinks of the text and of creativity itself. Believed by some scholars to be the description of an actual set of statues or wall iconography,² the *Göttertypentext* might be considered a clear instance of ‘Akkadian-style mimesis’ in so far as it represents in language a physically instantiated visual scene using the compositional principles of the elite scribal arts. If this is so, the creativity in the text itself might be argued to be minimal since it is ‘just copying what is on the wall.’ On the other hand, the very fact that the text contains unusual, highly elaborated images in verbal form immediately suggests a creative element behind their formation, whether we see that element originating in a physical representation or a verbal one. However, our argument in this chapter is that the specific notion of *combinatorial creativity* is a significant aspect of the *Göttertypentext* itself, understanding that when speaking of the ‘text itself’ we are including the culturally conditioned frames and compositional principles behind them. Under our cognitive approach to Akkadian texts, what is not explicitly represented is as important as what is concretely present, and the categorical notion of prototypicality shapes our sense of what is novel or surprising. This will become evident in 6.3, which deals with features we label ‘optionality,’ ‘constrained

¹J. C. Johnson 2019: 21.

²Pongratz-Leisten 2015a: 125, Wiggerman 2018: 353.

combination,’ and ‘contentful novelty.’

Our discussion of the *Göttertypentext* is thus valuable in two ways. At a more general level, the text shares features with more prototypical examples of divine enumerative description, and an overview of those features strengthens our argument about thinking of divine enumerative description as a poetic modality. For example, the *Göttertypentext* features the divine frame complex, the copular or XYZ construction, and frame metonymy. To the degree that one can view these structures as poetic tools employed by the scribe for imaginative purposes, one can view the *Göttertypentext* as a text respecting implicit poetic forms and style.

More particularly, however, the *Göttertypentext* is an excellent example of how the above cognitive structures do not just reflect a culturally specific form of mimesis, but actually facilitate a particular kind of combinatorial creativity. Although the text is believed to be a linguistic reflection of a concrete visual depiction, our approach to creativity will argue that both the (reconstructed) visual depiction and its verbal correlate still involve notions of choice and elaboration typically associated with creativity.

6.1 Divine enumerative description in the *Göttertypentext*

The *Göttertypentext* is attested in manuscripts from a variety of sites including Assur, Nineveh, Nimrud, and Uruk.³ Two colophons state that the original comes from Babylon,⁴ and based on orthography and content, it is believed to date to the Middle Babylonian period.⁵ Wiggerman has suggested the chosen divinities and arrangement of the presumed visual scene reflect a ‘humanistic mappa mundi’ or tour through the different domains of human activity and life stages as embodied by different divinities. Thus some figures seem to serve as greeters or door guards. Others govern herding and agriculture, healing, grief, and birth and death. Such an interpretation would, in his view, qualify the *Göttertypentext* as a kind of mystical explanatory work.⁶

An example block is given below:⁷

- rev. iv 34) **SAG.DU** SAG.DU *ki-is-su-gi*
 35) **qu-ma-ar-šū₂** ša₂ ZAG ša₂ [L]U₂
 36) **si-si-it rit-ti** ša₂-k[in]
 37) **ri-it-ta-šū** ša₂ KAB L[U₂]

³For the list of witnesses, see Köcher 1953: 63 along with newer fragments in Wiggerman 2018: 353 n. 1.

⁴VAT 13991 + VAT 13992 + VAT 13995 + VAT 14358 + VAT 15606: rev. vi 25 and CT 51, 209.

⁵Lambert 1985: 197, Wiggerman 2018: 352.

⁶Wiggerman 2018: 352. Also note the diagrams on 355-356.

⁷All citations are from Köcher 1953, with translations my own unless otherwise noted.

- 38) *ina ki-la-te-šu* AN-*e ša-p[i-iš]*
 39) *me-sir₂-ra* ra-*k[i-is]*
 40) **GIR₃.II-šu ša ZAG**
 41) *er-še-ta ša-pi-iš*
 42) **SIG₄.GIR₃ ša₂ ZAG**
 43) UMBIN MUŠEN KUN UR.MAH GAR
 44) **GIR₃.II-šu₂ ša₂ KAB** tar-*ša-at-ma*
 45) *kin-ša* ša₂ tap-*pe-e-šu ša-bit*
 46) *pag-ru me-re-nu* ki-*is-su-gu*
 47) **MU.BI** a-*dam-mu-u₂*
 48) ^dlah₃-*mu šu-ut* ^de₂-*a*

- rev. iv 34.) The **head** is the head of a *kissugu*.
 35.) Its **right arm**(?) is of a man.
 36.) It has **wrists**.
 37.) Its **left hand** is of a man.
 38.) With **both hands** it grips the heavens.
 39.) It is girded with a **belt**.
 40.) With its **right foot**
 41.) it grips the earth.
 42.) The **flat part of its right foot**
 43.) is the claw of a bird, and it has the tail of a lion.
 44.) Its **left foot** is stretched out and
 45.) holds the **shin** of its partner.
 46.) The **naked body** is of a *kissugu*.
 47.) Its **name** is Adammû
 48.) It is a *lahmu* of Ea

The above descriptive pattern is representative of what happens in all twenty seven blocks.⁸ Even without going into the learned vocabulary and theology, one can see how the above block is an enumerative description of a divine creature. The creature is divine because it is said to be a *lahmu* of Ea, where that term is written with a divine determiner (line 48). The description is enumerative because the lines of the block are all based on the same ‘X (is) Y’ topic-comment construction discussed in chapter 4. Most of the lines describe, going from head to toe, the creature’s various body parts or accoutrements. In the penultimate line the creature’s name (Adammu) is stated, followed by the god it serves (Ea).

⁸The end section of the block can vary slightly, sometimes (on theological grounds) lacking a statement of who the divine being serves, sometimes including statements about the body as a whole, its physical stance, clothing, means of locomotion, or where the creature lives. These statements invariably qualify the representation at the top *Gestalt* level.

On a more refined level, however, we can see how the above description of Adammu rests on the same cognitive devices studied in earlier examples of divine enumerative description. The scribe schematizes Adammu into a discrete set of parts or features, and uses the copular or XYZ construction to describe them by piecewise analogy with other beings. In a given line, the predicate term is taken to be a prototypical representative of a contextually-defined category, and the frame elicited by the predicate blends with the frame elicited by the subject in a way that salient properties of the former are mapped onto the latter.

The effect of these devices is a description relying heavily on the metonymic evocation of background frames, where implicit properties of the subject are asserted along with physically tangible ones (see Figure 6.1). For instance, Wiggerman argues that the term *kissugu* in lines 34 and 46 is a neologism referring to a kind of *lahmu* with a naked male upper body and head with thick flowing hair, or just the head with thick flowing hair. The *lahmu*, in turn, is a kind of servant of a higher divinity such as Ea.⁹ Thus in asserting that head and naked body of Adammu correspond to those of a *kissugu*, the scribe also indicates Adammu is a servant of a divinity (a fact recapitulated in line 48). In line 43, the main purpose of stating that Adammu has the tail of a lion is to assert that he has great strength and ferocity, while stating that his right foot is that of a bird's is to assert he can brace himself firmly against things with it.

The above cognitively oriented discussion is an alternative way of expressing Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik's observation that the representations in the *Göttertypentext* are not mimetic in the classic western sense, but rather serve to identify the characteristic attributes of the divinities. As they put it, "The primary concern of this text, consequently, might be characterized as the creation of the iconographic bodyscape of the divinity as an iconic representation of its essence crystallized in the particular scope of its agency."¹⁰ For example, Ninurta's left and right foot are sequentially described in such a way to indicate the god is adopting a triumphant pose over Anzu, hence referencing the culturally salient feature of Ninurta as a warrior god. Body parts like the right and left hand are described with an eye towards how they are used or what they say about the divinity's characteristic actions.

Yet our alternative perspective also highlights the way that the style of representation in the *Göttertypentext* is generated both from the text's basic grammatical structure and the underlying conceptual material. Much as in the syncretic hymns to Marduk and Ninurta, the fact that the divinities of the *Göttertypentext* are presented with archetypal roles or functions stems from the meaning of the copular or XYZ constructions. The preponderance of these constructions in this instance of divine enumerative description, in turn, can be seen as a reflex of general rhetorical concerns, such as the balanced portrayal of many divine beings physically arranged in sequence and the descriptive, rather than evocative or performative, nature of the text. Such concerns are appropriate to a mystical explanatory work or world presentation, which Wiggerman argues the *Göttertypentext* to be. This rhetorical framework

⁹Wiggerman 2018: 367 n. 27.

¹⁰Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik 2015a: 126.

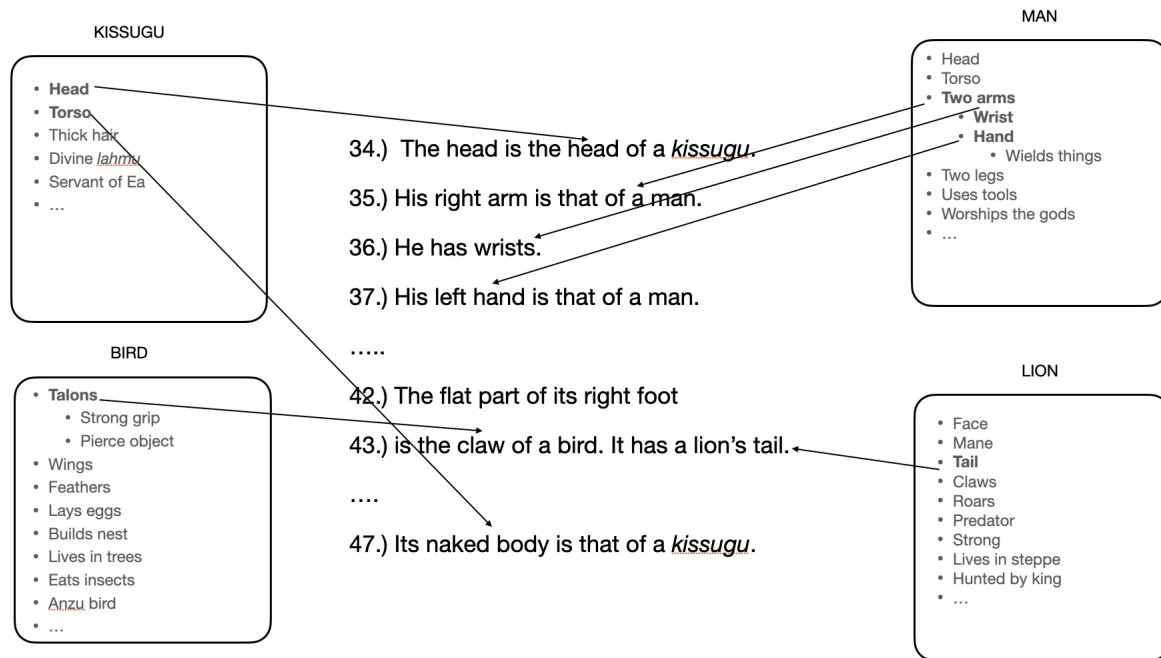


Figure 6.1: Input frames for the blend constituting Adammu. Bold-faced elements are salient or characteristic (i.e. metonymic) for their frame.

differs from that encountered in the Great Ishtar Hymn, which was focused on only one god, contained both performative and evocative aspects, and was explicitly viewpointed on the text's reciter. As a result, the Great Ishtar Hymn features a somewhat different arrangement of grammatical constructions, including prosodic level ones (3.2.3).

At the same time, we can also see how the very subject of the *Göttertypentext* and its underlying visual representation makes natural the representational style described by Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik. The divine frame complex of a divinity is largely constituted by its multiple archetypal roles and functions, things which we categorized as the Level Two features of Mesopotamian personhood (2.1). These various roles are usually evoked visually or linguistically by salient frame metonyms including weapons, prominent body parts, body stances, or items of clothing. Both of these features are evident in the *Göttertypentext*'s portrayal of the twenty seven divinities. The fact that most (but not all) of the divinities are poorly attested elsewhere in visual or written material suggests that rather than simply recalling a pre-existing image of those obscure divinities from memory, the designer of the scene effectively constructed the image under influence from the above structural features of the divine frame complex. In other words, given the obscure status of most of the divinities in the *Göttertypentext*, it is likely that at some point the scene designer's very conception

of what those divinities were, and what they should look like visually, was mediated by the template of the divine frame complex.

What distinguishes the instances of divine enumerative description in the *Göttertypentext* from some of those studied in previous chapters is a base physical consistency and objectivity¹¹ to the representation. Unlike the varied and conflicting descriptions of Ishtar in the Great Ishtar Hymn, it is possible to simultaneously depict all of the visual descriptions of Adammu in a wall scene or statue. Wiggerman's reconstruction of the figure (along with its partner Ippiru) is shown in Figure 6.2. It is largely thanks to the fact that the *Göttertypentext* uses mutually compatible frame metonyms centered on the humanoid body that it can simultaneously represent all of a deity's various roles. Thus no basic body part of Adammu (head, right hand, left hand, torso, etc.) is described more than once. At the same time, there is little ambiguity in how the frames evoked by those metonyms are to be blended with the subject terms. Thus lines 42-43 state that the flat part of the right foot is the claw of a bird, a blend easily resolvable by imagining a bird's claw fused onto the lower leg of a human. One may compare this blend to the more subjective ones from the syncretic Ninurta hymn, such as line 19: 'your teeth are the Seven, slayers of evil.' Here it is difficult to settle upon an agreed merging of physical elements between the TOOTH frame and that of the Seven.

Having argued that the *Göttertypentext* is a form of divine enumerative description, whose style of representation is strongly guided by the grammatical constructions, rhetorical aims, and underlying conceptual material that the text is based on, we will now show how those same poetic features facilitate a kind of 'combinatorial' creativity. The next section explains what we mean by this term, after which we will return to the *Göttertypentext*.

6.2 What is combinatorial creativity?

In recent decades, scholars from the fields of psychology, philosophy, cognitive science, history, and literature have contributed significantly to a more concrete notion of creativity from a cognitive point of view. From this perspective, creativity is an aspect of human experience that involves both individual human cognition and cultural value. Human minds generate mental representations all the time, but only some of them are valued as positively unexpected (either by themselves or others). Conversely, since an individual operates within a particular society that values (however implicitly) conceptual contributions on the basis of their unexpectedness, that individual can find himself adopting certain techniques, formats, or targets of representation as a matter of conforming to social norms.

Our approach to creativity in this chapter involves both aspects of individual cognition and of collective value. This requires discussing a number of concepts that first focus on the cognitive process of creativity before tying it back in to questions of social value.

¹¹Or 'inter-subjective accessibility.'

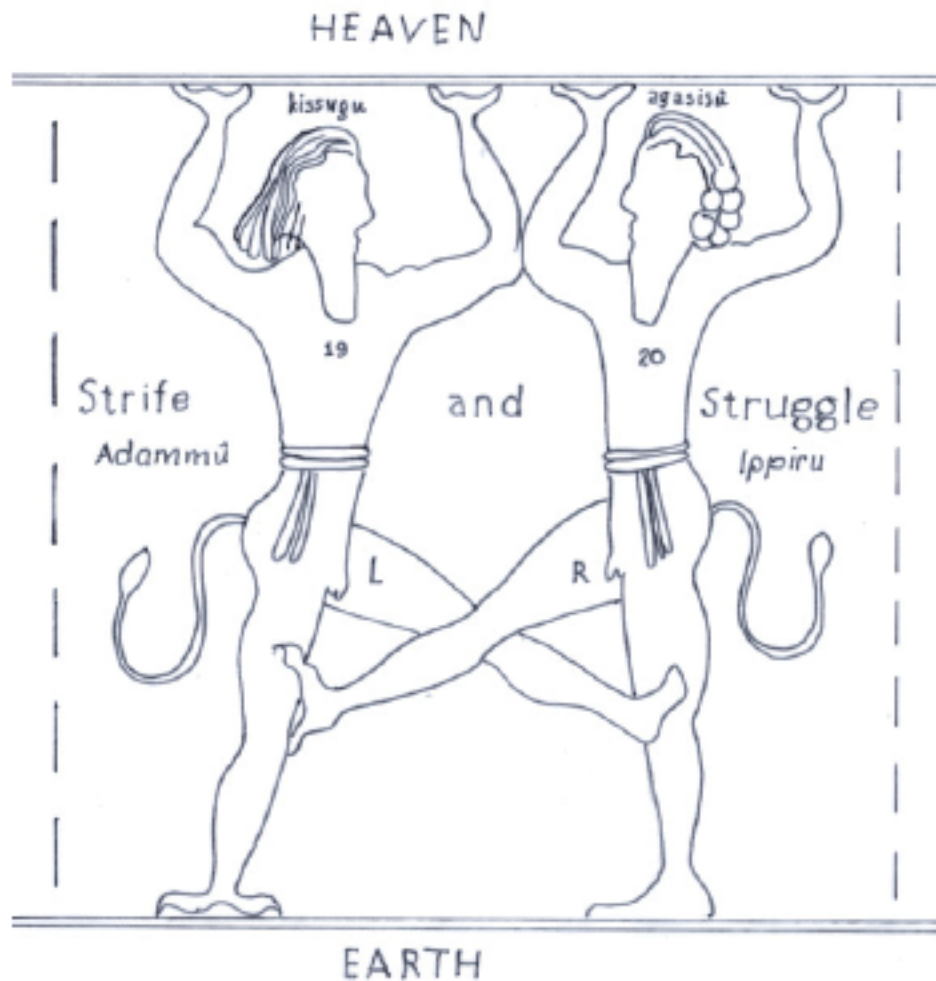


Figure 6.2: Wiggerman 2018’s interpretation of Adammū and Ippiru

Creativity as the new and surprising

In discussing the idea of creativity from a psychological or cognitive perspective, it is useful to adopt the framework of the scholar of creativity research Margaret Boden.¹² Boden observes that if one is interested in creativity as an individual cognitive process, it is helpful to distinguish what is a new thought for an individual from what is new in a particular society. She defines ‘P-creativity’ as an individual coming up with a surprising, valuable idea that is

¹²The following discussion is based on Boden 2004.

new to that person who thought it.¹³ It does not matter how conventional or obvious the idea is to others, or if everyone generates that idea as part of growing up. P-creativity is what the psychologist or cognitive scientist is often interested in. Boden contrasts P-creativity with H-creativity, which is when an individual comes up with a surprising, valuable idea that is new within his society. This latter notion of creativity has been a traditional concern of philosophers and historians, and is a much more complicated issue. For the most part this chapter is concerned with P-creativity (and hence will be called simply ‘creativity’).

Creativity is not just about new ideas. It is crucially about ideas that surprise us in appealing ways. Boden sees this element of surprise as a matter of contextual evaluation, whereby the product of one’s imagination not only exceeds what one knows to be the case (a kind of statistical evaluation), but also what one had previously thought possible (a kind of structural evaluation). Boden takes this basic insight and parses it into three kinds of surprise that are relevant for creativity. The most basic type of surprise involves the unfamiliar combination of familiar ideas, and the type of creativity derived from it is ‘combinatorial creativity.’

Boden observes that combinatorial creativity can be understood in the way one might take ordinary blocks and assemble them into an extraordinary superstructure. She gives the example of an early modern physicist comparing the structure of the atom to the solar system, where the elementary constituents of the former (proton, neutron, and electron) are arranged in the pattern of the latter to produce the Bohr model of the atom.¹⁴ A more literary example is Samuel Coleridge’s poetic description of ‘water snakes’ in *The Ancient Mariner*. The poet drew on images and lexical items found in sources ranging from the seventeenth century travelogue known as *Purchas’s Pilgrimage* to Priestley’s *Opticks*, combining them into a brilliant depiction of a sea-creature that went beyond an earlier attempt at combination using similarly bookish terms.¹⁵ Perhaps more illustrative of *combinatorial* creativity is the creation of a melodic theme in classical music. There are only a limited number of basic building blocks (values and lengths of notes) one can choose from, and one can combine them in a large but finite number of ways for a theme of a fixed length. This is what makes the composition process combinatorial. While most combinations are aesthetically unpleasing, a small number have a shape and power that seems to go beyond the sum of the contributing notes.

Within our cognitive framework, this notion of novel, transformative assembling or comparison can be analyzed as a kind of metaphorical blending, a fact already realized in a different theoretical framework by the psychologist Arthur Koestler in the 1960’s.¹⁶ While comparisons between random objects usually involve little structural correspondences and

¹³Boden 2004, 2.

¹⁴Boden 2004: 3.

¹⁵Boden 2004: 128-129.

¹⁶Koestler termed this kind of creative thinking ‘bisociation’ (Koestler 1964). This notion of Koestler’s, in which one views an object from two incompatible frames of reference, was a precursor to the modern theory of conceptual blending (Fauconnier and Turner 2002: 37).

are uninteresting, on occasion using the structure of one object to inform our understanding of the other (as in metaphor) or to create a third product out of part-wise comparison (as in double-scope blending) is quite illuminating. Something cognitively new is created, hence it is regarded as creative.

Boden observes that the ability to pursue combinatorial creativity rests on having a rich, interconnected store of knowledge.¹⁷ The more basic building blocks one starts out with, and the richer the set of associations one can make between them, the likelier one can put the blocks together into unexpected combinations. While it is true that throughout our daily experience our minds are constantly seeking analogical connections between frames,¹⁸ combinatorial creativity is enhanced by having a large set of culturally elaborate frames on hand which are highly compatible with each other under blending. Simonton 2003 has analogized the kind of structured knowledge set conducive for combinatorial creativity to a horizontal associative hierarchy (as opposed to a vertical one). In a horizontal associative hierarchy, each element is associated with many others, all of roughly the same probability of activation. In a vertical hierarchy on the other hand, each element is associated only with one or two other elements, leading to very predictable outcomes. Looking ahead, we will see how the conceptual structures in play within the *Göttertypentext* (divine frame complexes with frame metonyms consisting of, among other things, discrete body parts, personal accoutrements, and poses) relate to each other along the horizontal model more than the vertical one.

A highly interconnected knowledge base also facilitates creativity to the degree it allows for multi-modal points of access and *Gestalt*-activation. For example, when we think of the word ‘dog’, we activate a frame centered on the (visual) image schema of a prototypical dog. But that frame also includes the prototypical sound of a dog’s bark, the visual image of the word ‘dog’ and the acoustic image of that word’s pronunciation, and the motor-related image-schemas of how to pet a dog with the hand. These elements can serve as metonyms that facilitate access to other frames in a highly context dependent and difficult to predict fashion. Thus in suitable setting, the frame of a dog may be evoked in one’s mind by the metonym of a dog barking. Under a slight change in context, the metonym of barking can evoke the related frame of one trying to sleep at night despite the barking from the neighbor’s dog. This new frame can be then be evoked by the metonym of beams of moonlight shining on the bed, thereby also evoking the weather conditions outside and the feeling of cold wind on the skin.

6.3 Combinatorial creativity in the *Göttertypentext*

The previous sections will allow us to understand the way in which the *Göttertypentext*, as a certain type of divine enumerative description, reflects combinatorial creativity. This

¹⁷Boden 2004: 3.

¹⁸Fauconnier and Turner 2002: 18.

fact ultimately stems from the cognitive structures in play within the text and the conceptual material which feed into them. This section will make three arguments about these structures and their content, dealing with optionality, constrained combination, and explicit novelty. These arguments are meant to highlight how combinatorial creativity takes advantage of the flexible modularity evident within the *Göttertypentext*. The templatic nature of the text, repeated over each of the twenty-seven blocks, provides a sense of each figure being generated out of a certain number of discrete visual components that nevertheless implicitly function as a whole. On the one hand, the visual components are frame metonyms which evoke highly culturally-specific frames that feed into the blend representing the divinity. The overall functionality and coherence of the blend, the fact that it seems like a plausible entity at all in Mesopotamian theology, stems from the fact that it shares the same fundamental cognitive structure of more standard Mesopotamian deities, namely the divine frame complex. On the other hand, the fact that these metonyms are discrete body parts allows for a ‘compartmentalized’ visual representation in the sense that substituting one descriptive item for another (say a head in the shape of a lion being changed to a head in the shape of a snake) does not fundamentally affect the rest of the physical composition.

The fact that the *Göttertypentext* balances compartmentalizable representation against structural unity allows us to appreciate the creativity within the *Göttertypentext* as a matter of implicit poetics. The communicative purpose of the text is, seemingly, a description of external reality (twenty-seven visually represented deities arranged in a sequence of some significance). Nevertheless how that reality is described draws on a process of dynamic, creative image generation. The following sections describe the cognitive aspects of this process.

6.3.1 Optionality

Combinatorial creativity in the *Göttertypentext* is first of all evident in the optional nature in some of its representations. This is most evident in the well-attested divinities such as Ninurta (obv. i 51’-61’, ii 1-10):¹⁹

- obv. i
 51’) SAG.DU S[I] ṽ₃ ṣ[u-ku-su]
 52’) pa-nu L[U₂]
 53’) li-ta GAR-[in]
 54’) pur-sa₃-sa₃ GAR-[in]
 55’) ri-it-ta-šū L[U₂]
 56’) x x ṽ₃ na UGU-nu šu-qa-[at(?)...]
 57’) me-i[t-t]a x-[...]
 58’) i-na KAB-š[u...]

¹⁹See also the translation of this passage in Pongratz-Leisten 2015a: 125-126.

- 59') *šum-ma-an* $\ulcorner im$ -[...]
 60') *u₃ pa-x-x na-ši*
 61') $\ulcorner a \urcorner$ -*gu-uh-ha* [...] -x x MAŠ₂

obv. ii

- 1) [...-š]u *kut-tum₃*
- 2) [*me-sir₂-ra r*]a-*ki-is*
- 3) [*n*]e-[*bi-ha r*]a-*ki-is*
- 4) [*p*]a-*ag*-[*ru*] LU₂
- 5) *lu-bu-u*[š-*tum...*]-x
- 6) GIR₃.II-*šu ša* Z[AG] *i*[š-*t*]u [*pa-ti-x*]- $\ulcorner šu_2 \urcorner$
- 7) *pi-ta-at*-[*m*]a *iz-za-az*
- 8) GIR₃.II-*šu ša₂* KAB *pu-ri-da* $p \ulcorner i-t \urcorner a \ulcorner at \urcorner$ -*ma*
- 9) GIR₃.II-*šu* ^dIM.[DUG]UD^{mušen} *ka-bi-is*
- 10) MU.NI ^d*Ninurta*

obv. i

- 51') The head has horns and a *pol*[*os-crown*]
 52') The face is (of) a man
 53') He has a cheek (in profile)
 54') He has the *pursāsu* headdress
 55') His hands are (of) a man
 56') [...] is raised hig[h(?)...]
 57') A scep[ter...]
 58') In his lef[t hand...]
 59') The rope of [...]
 60') and he carries [...]
 61') and with a sheepskin sash [...]

obv. ii

- 1) Hi[s chest(?)] is covered
- 2) He is girded with [a *mesirru*-belt]
- 3) He is gird[ed] with a *nē*[*bihu*-sash(?)]
- 4) Th[e bo]dy is a man's
- 5) The clot[hing is...]
- 6) His right fo[ot] f[ro]m hi[s...]
- 7) is exposed an[d] stands upright
- 8) His left foot is expo[sed] up to the leg
- 9) His foot tramples Anzu
- 10) His name is Ninurta

The scene depicted for this deity is, in its most salient aspects, a triumphal stance of Ninurta over the defeated Anzu bird. Yet the scribe chooses a subset of elements from the divine frame complex defining Ninurta, sometimes letting the overall template of the text guide his choices. Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik observe that the description of Ninurta does not invoke some of the god's features found in Gudea Cylinder A col. 4, 14-18 (Gudea's dream of Ningirsu).²⁰ In that passage, Ningirsu is said to be as enormous as the sky and earth, a god with respect to his head, in his wings like the Anzu bird, and in his lower body like the flood.²¹ The description of Ninurta in the *Göttertypentext* says nothing about the god's head, wings, or size, even though these features are available from the divine frame complex. While one may question whether features of Ningirsu/Ninurta given in a third millennium Sumerian text were still known to a scribe of the first millennium, the wings at least have likely endured as part of the god's representation, as the depiction of Ninurta chasing the Anzu bird in the Nimrud reliefs indicates. Further, from among the terms conceivably fitting Ninurta that might go with the verb *rakāsu* 'to bind' (e.g. *kakku*, *paṭru*, *misarru*, *nēbihu*, *aguhhu*, *hušannu*) the scribe seemingly used only two (*misarru*, *nēbihu*). Overall, the scribe seems to make use only of a very limited subset of such terms throughout the whole text.²² A similar global pattern likely informs the statement in obv. i 59' that Ninurta has horns and a *polos*-crown (SI *u šukūsu*), since if a deity in the *Göttertypentext* wears any headgear, it is seemingly either the *polos* or 'turban' (*kubšu*).²³ The description (as far as is preserved) says nothing about a beard on the god's face, which also appears in the depiction of Ninurta and Anzu in the Nimrud reliefs. The nature of the god's eyes is also not described, nor does Ninurta carry the Tablet of Destinies. Acknowledging the broken nature of the passage, as well as the fact that the scene as a whole makes certain visual features natural to mention (e.g. Ninurta's leg stance), it is still evident that the scribe chose from a subset of possible frame metonyms in the divine frame complex.

One might also detect the principle of optionality in some of the lesser known divinities

²⁰Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik 2015b: 127.

²¹From Edzard 1997: 71 (translation mine):

- 14.) ša₃-ma-mu-da-ka lu₂-diš-am₃ an-gim ri-ba-ni
- 15.) ki-gim ri-ba-ni
- 16.) a-ne saĝ-ĝa₂-ni-še₃ diĝir-ra-am₃
- 17.) a₂-ni-še₃ AN.IM.MI.MUŠEN-dam
- 18.) sig-ba-a-ni-še₃ a-ma-ru-kam

In the dream there was a man who was massive like the heavens,
 massive like the earth
 With respect to his head he was a god
 With respect to his arms he was the Anzu bird
 With respect to his lower section he was a flood

²²Note though that the form in obv. ii 2 is reconstructed, and that many of the Akkadian terms believed to refer to belts and sashes are not attested with *rakāsu* (see CAD R s.v. *rakāsu* 3a-b).

²³Cf. the table in Wiggerman 2018: 367-368.

of the *Göttertypentext*. The Ugallu demon (obv. ii 44'-52') is described as a standing figure with a lion's head and ears, holding a *qulmû*-axe²⁴ in one hand and perhaps a shining star(?) in the other,²⁵ and girt with a dagger/sword (GIR₂). Yet these hand items are not, as Wiggerman notes, attested in the known visual representations of the Ugallu.²⁶ One may compare the description of the Ugallu in the *Göttertypentext* to the depiction in a pair of gypsum reliefs from the North Palace of Nineveh which show the figure holding a dagger in its raised right arm and perhaps a staff or stick in its left.²⁷ Given the *Göttertypentext*'s likely Babylonian origin, the difference in hand items may be a regional variation. Yet even so, the *Göttertypentext* chooses to say the Ugallu has a lion's head *and* ears, when the former could conceivably imply the latter.²⁸ While the gypsum relief also shows the Ugallu wearing a sash and garment around its torso, the *Göttertypentext* seemingly does not comment on clothing at all (besides the dagger/sword). The beginning four lines of the description (44'-47') are complete and do not mention clothing items, and the remain lines (48'-52'), while broken at the beginning, do not feature the predicates like *labiṣ* used with large clothes.²⁹ It is possible (though just a guess), that line 50' ([...] *ina ša₂-šal-li-šu*) may describe a lion's tail,³⁰ even as the gypsum reliefs show the Ugallu with no tail whatsoever.³¹

At an even more mundane level, the description of numerous figures seems to leave out items which are not a salient part of the creature's identity but which must nevertheless have been visually depicted. Often the form of the hands is not specified even if one could infer it from other body parts. Thus the description of Šerum (rev. iv 23-33) states that the being has the front two feet of a bull, the body of a lion, and that it walks on all fours. Yet it is not said that the back two feet are a lion's. Similar absences are found in figures with human heads or faces. While it is not unexpected that the verbal description of the figures in the *Göttertypentext* would focus on distinctive features or distinctive combinations of them, an element of scribal choice is still involved. There is both a fairly clear order to the elements in all the representations that starts with the head, then face or any horns and hair, then goes down part by part and finishes with overall body features and stances. For frequently appearing features (hats, belts, weapons, hands, feet, etc.) only a limited lexical set is used. Thus it is appropriate to say that the scribe is engaging in optionality in the sense that he

²⁴The fact that a *qulmû* is an axe-type weapon or tool and not a dagger or sword is clear from its use in felling trees, hewing stone, and digging. See CAD Q s.v. *qulmû* a-b and e.

²⁵After collation, Wiggerman reads the item in obv. ii 46' as [MU]L.UD.DA (Wiggerman 1992: 170).

²⁶Wiggerman 1992: 170.

²⁷BM 118918 (Barnett 1976: pl. IV)

²⁸Note similarly that the *lahmu* described in rev. v 43-51 is said to have the head of a dog with an open mouth, but no mention is made of the ears (which are presumably are those of a dog).

²⁹The predicate *šakin* in 48' and 51' is not used with clothes or similar accoutrements elsewhere in the *Göttertypentext*. It is possible that 49' ([...] *-is* GIR₂ *ra-ki-is*) may hide another accoutrement or clothing item in the break.

³⁰Cf. rev. iii 6: KUN UR.MAH *ana ša-š[al-li-šu]* 'the lion's tale is towards it[s ba]ck'

³¹Alternatively, line 50' may state that Ugallu's (lion) mane (*qimmatu*, *šartu*, or one of the other hair-denoting lexical items) goes down its back.

includes or excludes verbal elements that are both anticipated and partially redundant.

6.3.2 Constrained combination

Besides optionality in the description of a divinity with multiple guises, a second way in which combinatorial creativity is manifest in the *Göttertypentext* is the degree to which the scribe restricts himself to using the same set of terms for either the body parts across all the divinities or the descriptive modifiers which go with them. This is a combinatorial process in much the same way the composition of a musical theme is combinatorial (6.2). The basic building blocks (i.e. the ‘notes’) are the salient frame metonyms for the various guises (i.e. ‘musical themes’) within the divine frame complex (which include discrete body parts, accoutrements, and stances). All of these elements form a finite set which the artist can choose from to construct a visual representation of the divinity.

At the linguistic level the set of creative building blocks available to the scribe is greater than at the purely conceptual level, since multiple lexical items can evoke a single frame. Thus in evaluating the degree of combinatorial creativity in a passage, we need to keep track of the lexical encoding of the frame elements even in case of semantic overlap,³² as well as keep track of whether a given phrase appears when the descriptive template allows it. Most choices of frame metonyms and forms of combination will yield incoherent, uninformative, or unremarkable images. For instance, to represent Ninurta one could choose a left human leg (DIVINE PERSON frame), a right bird talon (BIRD frame), an axe blade for the torso (WARRIOR frame), a royal scepter for the head (SUPREME RULER frame), and rain clouds overhead (STORM frame). This is like an incoherent musical phrase, something allowed by the inventory of building blocks and rules of construction but hardly more than the sum of its parts. The choices of frame metonyms and their means of combination that yield plausible, interesting, and identifiable *Mischwesen* are the ones that count as a creative success.

This idea can be explained more precisely as follows. A typical line in the description of a divinity in the *Göttertypentext* has a simple subject-predicate structure. The subject term centers on a body part, article of clothing, or other accoutrement while the predicate term qualifies the subject’s appearance or use. Both aspects of this grammatical structure (the subject and the predicate) show constrained variation in that each side draws on a particular subset of terms with great frequency, without those terms being obligatory. Thus subject terms like SAG.DU ‘head,’ *lētu* ‘cheek/side of face,’ and *pagru* ‘body’ appear in many of the deities but not all of them. Similarly, predicate terms like LU₂ ‘person,’ UR.MAH ‘lion,’ and *zaqin* ‘bearded’ appear quite frequently when describing various subject terms but are not obligatorily present. Although these marked predicate terms are often restricted to specific subject terms (e.g. *zaqin* ‘bearded’ appears only with *lētu* ‘cheek/side of face’), they are taken from a broader set of terms. Thus the subject term *lētu* ‘cheek/side of face’ is paired with three predicate terms, *zaqin* ‘bearded,’ *zu’untu* ‘decorated,’ and GAR/*šakin*

³²For instance, to indicate a belt or sash, the *Göttertypentext* uses both the terms *mesirru* and *nēbihu*.

(indicating possession), all of which appear multiple times. For certain subject terms only one predicate term appears, but the frequency of those subject terms is high enough among the divinities that when the subject term does not appear in describing a divinity, the absence itself becomes noticeable. The absence effectively becomes a kind of ‘second value’ in the predicate. For example, eleven out of the twenty seven divinities (from what remains of the text) are said to have a belt or sash (*mesirru*, *nēbihu*). Both terms appear only with one predicate term, *rakis* ‘bound/tied.’ The high frequency of the *mesirru/nēbihu-rakis* pairing raises the pair’s salience as a descriptive item to the point where the absence of the pair in a given divinity becomes noted. Thus when the scribe does not mention that a divinity wears a *mesirru/nēbihu*, it has the effect of an explicit negative statement, i.e. that the divinity does not wear a belt. Hence terms like *mesirru/nēbihu* can be thought of as a standard property describing all the deities and taking two possible predicate values, either present (appearing with *rakis*) or not present (absence of subject term altogether).

A more direct appreciation of this constrained flexibility in *Göttertypentext* can be found in Table 6.1, which shows high frequency body parts or features appearing as subject terms in the text along with a count of the predicate terms that go with them.

Although it does not list all subject terms appearing in the *Göttertypentext*,³⁴ Table 6.1 indicates there is a high degree of constrained variation in how the scribe filled out the representation of each deity. This fact is evident in the predicate terms of the table to the degree that for a given subject term, there correspond multiple predicate terms with repetition. It is also evident in the subject terms themselves given that of the approximately fifty³⁵ terms in the text referring to a deity’s body or a personal item, nineteen of them appear in this table with repeated predicate terms. In other words, this is a substantial subset of body-accoutrement terms that sees heavy repetition in the text, outside of which subject terms are used more sporadically.

6.3.3 Contentful novelty

Besides optionality and constrained combination, the instances of divine enumerative description in the *Göttertypentext* also reflect combinatorial creativity in the degree that the representations have contentful novelty. We will argue in this section that the sense of novelty in the text should be measured by how far the blends therein depart from the prototypical Mesopotamian image. Our use of the term ‘image’ here is specifically with reference to the Akkadian term *šalmu*. We will argue that the prototypical Mesopotamian image, regardless of whether it has divine attributes, has both general positive valency (i.e. is regarded as

³³Wiggerman’s updated reading shows the figure in obv. ii 25’-32’ to be Mūtu ‘death,’ a male figure for which Köcher’s reconstruction in 26’ of [*paq-ru me-ri-n*]u SAL-*tum* would be anomalous. Wiggerman instead suggests the restoration [...*pa-n*]u SAL-*tum* ‘female face,’ a reference to beardlessness (Wiggerman 2018: 360 n. 17).

³⁴Most subject terms which have no repeating predicate term have been left out.

³⁵Thus not counting the references to an entity’s name, master, or irrecoverable terms in broken lines.

Body part	Descriptors
SAG.DU	SI <i>u šukusu</i> (5), SAG.DU <i>kissugi</i> (3), <i>kubšu u</i> SI (3), SAG.DU MUŠEN (2), SAG.DU UR.MAH, SAG.DU MUŠ, SAG.DU <i>bašmi, ša</i> UR, <i>kubšu</i> SI.MEŠ GU ₄ GAR
<i>aguhhu</i>	<i>ina</i> GABA-šu <i>labiš</i> (2), <i>ana šašallīšu nadi, ...-šu kuttum</i>
<i>pānu</i>	LU ₂ (10), SAL-tum (2) ³³
<i>lētu</i>	<i>zaqin</i> (3), <i>zu'untu</i> (3), GAR (4)
GESTUG ₂	UR.MAH, GU ₄ (4), UR, UDA.NITA ₂
<i>pursāsa</i>	GAR (7)
<i>šārtu</i>	<i>ištu birit</i> SI.MEŠ <i>ana šašallīšu nadat</i> (3), <i>ana šašallīšu ŠUB-at, ištu</i> SI.MEŠ-šu EN <i>tikkīšu ŠUB-at, sigbaru ana šašallīšu ŠUB-at</i>
<i>apparītu</i>	GAR-at, <i>ina lētīšu šakin</i> (2), <i>ištu</i> SAG.DU-ša <i>ana šašallīšu ŠUB-at</i>
<i>rittašu</i>	LU ₂ (8)
<i>ina kilattēšu</i>	AN-e <i>šapiš</i> (2), ^{giš} GU.ZA <i>naši, akala našat ana piša ukkal, bašmu kabis, NIG₂.NA našât</i>
<i>mesirru</i>	<i>rakis</i> (9)
<i>nēbihu</i>	<i>rakis</i> (2)
<i>ina ZAG-šu</i>	<i>ikarrab</i> (5), MUL.UD.DA DIB-it, <i>hurpala našī</i>
<i>ina KAB-šu</i>	<i>qulmû, šerra našat-ma</i> UBUR-ša <i>ikkal, BANŠUR našī, gišBAN u ganê našī, HE₂.GAL₂ našī</i>
<i>pagru</i>	LU ₂ (5), <i>mērēnu kissugu, mērēnu</i> SAL-tum, SAL-tum, SUHUR MUL.MEŠ <i>mali, KU₆ ana kutallīša kappat, UR.MAH</i>
<i>lubuštu</i>	<i>šunnuštu</i> (3), GADA.MAH (2), <i>lubbuš</i>
GIR3.II-šu	<i>huppa</i> GUB (3), <i>mahrātu ša</i> GU ₄
KUN	UR.MAH GAR (2), UR GAR, UR.MAH <i>ana šašallīšu šuqât...</i>
<i>kappī</i>	GAR (2), GAR-ma <i>rittaša ina</i> UGU <i>kappīša tarša, ZAG u</i> KAB GAR-at-ma KITA-nu <i>šuqallulu</i>

Table 6.1: Various body parts and personal features along with a count of their descriptors in the *Göttertypentext* in parentheses. Descriptors appearing without parentheses appear only once.

‘good’ by elite norms) and has high conceptual coherence. Then we will discuss examples of divine images from the text that deviate from this prototype in novel and substantive ways.

The prototypical Mesopotamian image

The discussion in 2.1.3 of the primary terms for an image in the Mesopotamian scribal tradition (Akk. *šalmu*, Sum. ALAM) noted how these terms measure the appropriateness

or conformity of an entity to an idealized role or function (i.e. the Level Two features of personhood), and suggest similarity at the general level of ‘cognitive recognition’ (i.e. frame metonymy) rather than accurate physiognomic resemblance. While idealized roles in general can have either a positive or negative valuation (e.g. a superhero, a villain, a demon, or a saint), in the Mesopotamian case the *prototypical* roles defining a *šalmu*/ALAM are positive ones based on an elite social figure. In statuary and wall reliefs of the second and first millennium, kings are a common subject for a *šalmu*/ALAM where they are represented fulfilling a social role such as judge, war leader, temple officiant. Deities are also common subjects of a *šalmu*/ALAM and often found in temples or inscribed in stela and other valuable surfaces, where they serve as the focus of worship or have apotropaic, authorizing, and status-giving functions in accordance with their power.³⁶

This is not to say that *šalmu*/ALAM can only be positive. Yet images with a uniformly negative character, such as those appearing in black magic and substitution rituals,³⁷ seem to be used in non-prototypical, or at least less typical, ways compared to their positive counterparts. For instance, evil demons without a counter-balancing apotropaic function are much less frequently depicted in monumental iconography or stela than good spirits and gods.³⁸ While images of the gods are frequently found in incantations to presence the deities during the performative ritual (a common function of images), the negatively valued images in those rituals are usually substitution figures which are meant to take up evil and be destroyed or buried for eternity (an uncommon function).³⁹ Note in addition that when images are used in an explicit comparative capacity (i.e. saying one thing is the image of something else), the comparanda are generally positive.⁴⁰ Ultimately, if images in Mesopotamia are not primarily defined by a detailed physiognomic fidelity, but rather a more abstract adherence to ideals and functions, then the simple fact that images prototypically represent gods, kings, temple officials, and warriors will lend that prototypical conception the positivity of those figures.

In the cases where positively valued images involve multiple roles blended together via frame metonymy, there is a high degree of coherency. Here coherency is a frame-based notion that includes both frame metonyms (e.g. body parts and personal accoutrements) and the background frames those metonyms evoke (warrior, sage, fish, etc.). It similarly encompasses situational correlations ranging from universal embodied experience (e.g. heavy things fall down and normal humans have four limbs) to abstract cultural concepts (e.g. horned hats go

³⁶Cf. CAD § s.v. *šalmu* a-c.

³⁷See CAD § s.v. *šalmu* d.

³⁸A notable exception is the Anzu bird, which in the late second and first millennium usually appears in a combat scene with Ninurta. However, much like the creatures defeated by Ningirsu/Ninurta whose images Gudea placed in the Eninnu (Gudea Cylinder A col. 25:24-26:14, cf. Edzard 1997: 85), or the images of the rebellious gods that Marduk places before the Abzu in *Enūma elish* 5:75, the Anzu bird is portrayed as a subdued enemy whose significance is dependent on the positive conqueror.

³⁹See Abusch 2002.

⁴⁰See CAD § s.v. *šalmu* f.

on gods). Thus as a matter of general embodied human experience, an image with human feet attached to human legs (even if those components are represented in an idealized or stylized form) is coherent in the sense that at a basic schematic level, human feet are usually attached to human legs. At a culturally more specific level, an image of a royal or divine figure holding the royal rod along with the royal ring is coherent in the sense that the rod and the ring often occur together in depictions of Mesopotamian royal ideology. In the example of the Gudea statue discussed in 2.1.3, there is a functional coherency evident in that Gudea's arm, depicted as that of a muscular youth, metonymically evokes the role of a powerful ruler defending his patron deities. This role, in turn, is highly coherent with other roles represented in the image, such as Gudea as attentive worshipper of those patron deities (as represented by the hand clasp). On the other hand, an anthropomorphic image of Marduk depicted with four ears on his head (c.f. *Enūma elish* 1: 95) would be incoherent at the level of the human body (because humans have two ears) but coherent at the background frame level since ears are a metonym for wisdom and the number four signifies totality.

Note that in such an argument about coherency, one should not confuse an image (*šalmu*/ALAM) with its conceptual referent. The image of a god can be an anthropomorphic statue, a disc-shaped icon, a characteristic accoutrement of that god's dominant function, etc. But the conceptual referent of all of those things is, in our cognitive approach to Mesopotamian divinity, the divine frame complex for the god. While it is often the case that major gods like Marduk, Ishtar, or Shamash take on heterogeneous roles which contribute incoherence to their divine frame complex, this is not necessarily reflected in the images of those gods. We do not see depictions of a sun wearing a horned hat, an anthropomorphic depiction of Marduk with a spade for an arm, or the star Venus shooting arrows from a bow. Rather, the images of the major positive gods often seem to be fixed metonyms for individual guises of a god or small groups of related guises (cf. Shamash as rising sun versus Shamash as judge with horned hat and saw).⁴¹

Deviations from prototypical images in the *Göttertypentext*

We have, up to this point, argued that prototypical images (*šalmu*/ALAM) in Mesopotamia are both positive and have a high degree of coherence. What, then, is the situation in the *Göttertypentext*? According to the final line of two of the manuscripts, the images of the text are 'distorted' or 'twisted' (*šalpu*). It is a highly marked way to describe an image in Akkadian, given both that *šalpu* does not normally describe terms like *šalmu* and that it has negative associations with perversion.⁴² This descriptor is, we argue, an acknowledgement

⁴¹One might consider Ishtar a slight deviation from this pattern in that her depiction in the Burney Relief (which shows a forward-facing naked female with wings and bird talons standing atop two lions) combines feminine sexuality and martial strength (two things which contrast in male-oriented, elite Mesopotamian culture). Yet this simply reflects the fact that Ishtar is a less prototypical god in her contradictory qualities (cf. Vanstiphout 1984).

⁴²See CAD § s.v. *šalpu*.

by the scribe that the figures in the text possess an element of surprise and intrigue in their status as images. They are, in other words, highly unlike prototypical images as discussed above. This can be seen in two ways that are certainly correlated but not conceptually identical. The first deals with the negative, or at least non-positive, valency of most of the images. Accepting Wiggerman's interpretation of the *Göttertypentext* as a reflection of the general life course or characteristic experiences a human undergoes from cradle till grave, the figures evoking the various life scenes often have some negative associations. They include [Girtab]lullu, who in Wiggerman's interpretation may have an apotropaic function, thus embodying elements of both fear/threat and protection.⁴³ There is also the figure of Death (Mūtu).⁴⁴ Although the visual depiction of this figure largely cannot be reconstructed from the text, the fact that its role as the bringer of death was supposed to be recognized by appearance alone indicates the representation would have had some negative associations. Similar reasoning holds for a number of other figures, such as Adammu and Ippiru ('Strife' and 'Conflict'), Ugallu (a lion-like storm demon), and Niziqtu ('Grief'). For these divinities, the very fact that they fulfill negative or ambiguous roles not clearly subordinated to positive figures renders them non-prototypical images, and hence more surprising to see depicted.

The clearer sense in which the figures of the *Göttertypentext* are non-prototypical images stems from their internal constitution. If images typically are based on blends whose components are mutually reinforcing or coherent, then novel and interesting images involve clash or low coherency. This may be evident in the metonymic components making up the physical image itself or in the background frames the metonyms evoke. The immediate physical presentation of some figures is aptly captured by the adjective *šalpu* 'twisted' in the sense that they reflect a highly heterogeneous combination of animal parts. A good example of this is the figure of Amma:⁴⁵

- rev. iv
- 5) SAG.DU *ku-ub-šu₂ hu-uṭ-ṭi-im-mu [p]a-gu-u₂*
 - 6) SI *ki* MAŠ.DA₃ DILI-*at ana ku-tal₂-li-ša₂ ki-ra-at*
 - 7) SI *ki* MAŠ.DA₃ DILI-*at ana pa-ni-ša₂ it-ra-at*
 - 8) *uz-nu* UDU.NITA₂ *rit-ta* LU₂
 - 9) *ina ki-la-te-ša₂ a-ka-la na-šat-ma*
 - 10) *ana* KA-*ša₂ u₂-kal*
 - 11) *pa-gar-ša* KU₆ *ana ku-tal₂-li-ša₂ kap-pat*
 - 12) *kan-tap-ša₂* GAR-*at*
 - 13) *šar-tum iš-tu bi-rit* SI.MEŠ-*ša₂*
 - 14) *ana ša-šal-li-ša na-da-at*

⁴³Wiggerman 2018: 358. Wiggerman also suggests an alternative reconstruction [Urmah]lullu, another apotropaic figure.

⁴⁴Obv. ii 25'-32'. See footnote 33.

⁴⁵Rev. iv 5-22 (Köcher 1953: 74). On the reconstruction of the name, see Wiggerman 2018: 361 n. 19 as well as Frayne and Stuckey 2021: 17.

- 15) *it-ti kan-tap-pi-ša₂ il-ta-ma-Γa^Γ*
- 16) *iš-tu MURUB-ša₂ a-di kan-tap-pi-ša₂ ka-[al-bu]*
- 17) *man-za-as ina lib₃-bi it-ta-na-z[az-zu]*
- 18) *a-gi-i i-ta-ad-da-a[t]*
- 19) *qu₂-lip-ta ki-ma SUHUR.KU₆ lab-ša₂-a[t]*
- 20) MU.BI ^d*Am-ma-[kur]*⁴⁶
- 21) *u₂-tu-ti ^dEreš-ki-g[al]*
- 22) *šu-ut ^dEreš-ki-g[al]*

rev. iv

- 5) The head is of a turban (*kubšu*), the snout (*huttimu*) is (of) a monkey
- 6) One horn like a gazelle's is short in the back
- 7) One horn like a gazelle's is very large in the front
- 8) The ears are (of) a sheep, the hands are (of) a man
- 9) with both she holds a piece of bread
- 10) and feeds it into her mouth
- 11) Her body is (of) a fish, she is bent at the back
- 12) She has the foot-like stand of a fish-man (*kantappu*)⁴⁷
- 13) The hair drops down from the middle of her horns
- 14) down to her back
- 15) and curls around her foot-like stand (*kantappu*)
- 16) From her waist to her foot-like stand she is a dog
- 17) The sockel (*manzāzu*) on which she stands
- 18) is set with a crown
- 19) She is dressed in the scales of a carp (SUHUR)
- 20) Her name is Amma
- 21) She is the doorwoman of Ereškigal
- 22) She belongs to Ereškigal

Not much is known about Amma beyond what is found in the *Göttertypentext*. Wiggerman understands her function here, as a doorwoman for Ereškigal, to involve welcoming the human soul on its death to the underworld.⁴⁸ Besides evidence internal to the text for this interpretation, in the god list An = *anum* Amma is equated with Eršetu and Irkalla and

⁴⁶Wiggerman 2018: 361 n. 19 notes there does not seem to be enough room for two KUR signs as in Köcher's edition.

⁴⁷Translation according to CAD K s.v. *kantappu*. Köcher translates the term as *Schwanzeflosse* (fin). See also Köcher's commentary to this line on page 98. Based on lines rev. iv 1-2, 16 and the putative example of *kantappu* in a Neo-Babylonian cylinder seal (Porada 1948, No. 785), the idea may be that Amma stands on dog legs protruding orthogonally from her lower body, with her fish tail sticking out horizontally into the air.

⁴⁸Wiggerman 2018: 361.

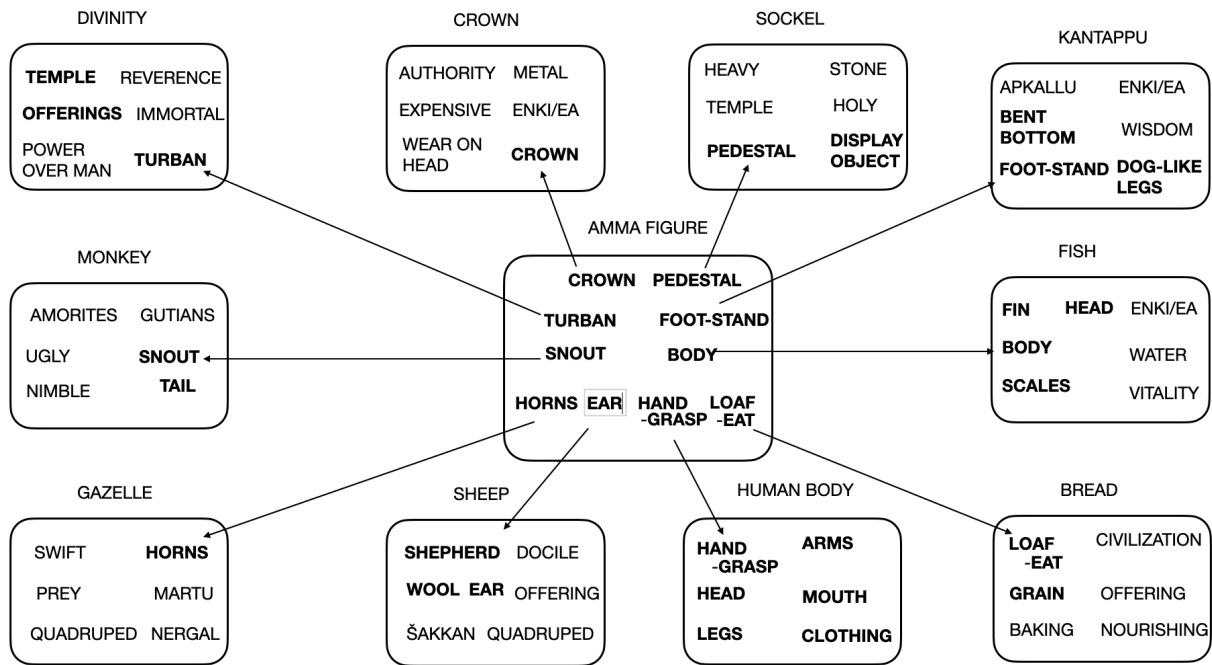


Figure 6.3: Divine frame complex for Amma. Bold-faced elements are salient or characteristic (i.e. metonymic) for their frame.

taken to be a variant of the earth goddess Allatu.⁴⁹

Nevertheless, the above passage from the *Göttertypentext* reveals a blend with a relatively low degree of coherence, and hence atypical for a Mesopotamian image. There are more than a dozen different frames which are metonymically evoked in it (a fairly high number for a figure of the *Göttertypentext*), many of which clash either at the level of the metonym or its associated background frame. The divine frame complex is shown in Figure 6.3. The monkey snout (line 5) is theriomorphically incongruous with the gazelle horns, sheep ears, human hands, and fish body, but the learned associations behind these metonyms suggest there is clash at the level of the entire MONKEY frame as well. For instance, in An = Anum one of the writings for the name of the divinity is simply ^dKUR, which is identified as a spouse of the Amorite god Martu.⁵⁰ The Amorites, in turn, are described in the Marriage of Martu as barbarians with monkey features.⁵¹ In that hymn the Amorites are also said to eat raw meat, have confused counsel, and be an abomination to the temples of the gods (because of

⁴⁹Litke 1998: 190, Lambert and Winters 2023: 196.

⁵⁰Litke 1998: 217-218, Lambert and Winters 2023: 224.

⁵¹Klein 1997: 112, line 127.

raiding?).⁵² Thus the MONKEY frame feeding into the blend in Figure 6.3 likely has elements for the Amorites (and by thematic association, perhaps also the Gutians), along with their general barbarity and ugliness. These elements clash with what we might call the DIVINITY frame evoked by Amma's turban, as that latter frame contains elements for the gods, and hence their temples, as well as general reverence for those gods. The MONKEY frame also conflicts with the FISH frame evoked by Amma's fish body and clothing (lines 11 and 19), as the latter contains elements for Enki and the apkallu, and by association wholesome counsel and fundamental knowledge of civilization. The depiction of Amma eating bread with human hands may indicate that the divinity received bread offerings from humans, thus conflicting with the Amorite associations of uncivilized eating habits.

On the other hand, Amma's sheep ears likely evoke the frame for Šakkan, as that god has associations with the underworld.⁵³ Yet at the same time, the frame complex for Šakkan has elements for the hills and steppe lands, since Šakkan is the lord of animal herds on the surface of the earth. This geographical trope conflicts with (among other things) the GAZELLE frame evoked by Amma's gazelle horns, since gazelle horns are an emblem of Nergal, who resides in the underworld.⁵⁴ In addition, the fact that Šakkan is a god of fecundity in herds clashes with the Nergal frame's element of death.

To be sure, the clashes among the frames for Amma's complex are only partial. We mentioned above how the gazelle horns evoke the Nergal frame, which contains the element of the underworld just as does the Šakkan frame complex. At the same time, the monkey face evokes the god Martu, a god of the steppe, which is also the primary identity of Šakkan. The metonym of eating bread with human hands evokes human offerings to the gods, an element shared with the DIVINITY frame as well as the Šakkan and Nergal frames. The metonyms of crown and turban evoke frames dealing with rulership and sovereignty, while the horns also evoke the gazelle as a herd animal, which is one of the concerns of Šakkan.

But these coherent aspects of the Amma blend still seem to be less salient than those of the Gudea statue of 2.1.3, or even those of the Ishtar blend in the Great Ishtar Hymn and the Marduk blend in *Enūma elish* 1: 79-108. This is largely because the representation of Amma and other figures of the *Göttertypentext* are almost entirely based on numerous distinct, 'body-centered'⁵⁵ metonyms for divine frame complexes. While the Gudea statue also has a frame metonymic decomposition (the hand clasp, the youthful strong arm, etc.), the frames evoked by these metonyms are not divine frame complexes but simply ideal roles or functions (which must be blended together to form the bulk of a divine frame complex). Similarly, in the Great Ishtar Hymn most of the lines directly evoke specific roles or functions, even as one can group these aspects into a small number of partially conflicting groups (e.g.

⁵²Klein 1997: 112, lines 131 and 136.

⁵³Frayne and Stuckey 2021: 319-320.

⁵⁴Frayne and Stuckey 2021: 302. Note also that in the Marriage of Martu, Martu participates in a hunt for gazelles (Klein 1997: 110).

⁵⁵By 'body-centered' metonyms we mean metonyms that are easily recognizable body parts, accoutrements, or articles of clothing.

warrior, erotic figure, astral deity - cf. Table 2.3). With Amma one has many concrete body components which not only at a basic experiential level present some disharmony - gazelle horns, a monkey snout, a fish body, dog legs, etc. - but also evoke the frame complexes of different deities such as Martu, Nergal, Šakkan, and Enki. These frame complexes are composed of many different roles and functions which may not only clash at a *Gestalt* level (e.g. Nergal as god of death versus Šakkan as god of (animal) birth and fecundity), but even the constituent actors, objects, locations, and actions of those roles can conflict or reinforce each other in complicated ways. Thus the steppe is the operative location of Martu as god of the Amorite steppe nomads as well as Šakkan as the god of herds, even as the steppe as a surface location contrasts with the underworld as the domain of Nergal, the lord of death.

These observations allow us to qualify Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik's statement that the figures of the *Göttertypentext* represent an iconographic bodyscape. Using the above analysis, we can situate the 'cognitive profile' of these figures relative to other images studied in this thesis. The physical components of the *Göttertypentext*'s bodyscape reflect just one set of extremes for the representational possibilities of divine enumerative description. The body-centered frame metonyms for figures like Amma are simple concrete objects which evoke multi-faceted divine frame complexes with secondary layers of coherence and clash. Here the evocative metonyms are very concrete (body part terms) while the evoked frames (major Mesopotamian deities) are structurally complex and often clashing. More prototypical instances of divine enumerative description such as the Great Ishtar Hymn rely less on simple body-centered frame metonyms. Instead, they often use more abstract metonyms (such as 'opener of veils' or 'queen of the inhabited world') to evoke specific roles or functions, which are less complex and present less clash. Compared to the *Göttertypentext* cases, the surface elements in the representations of the Great Ishtar Hymn are often more abstract or complex while the implicit content (the evoked frames) is simpler and more coherent (see Figure 6.4).

To summarize the results of this section: the blends found in the *Göttertypentext* are novel and surprising because they are non-prototypical Mesopotamian images (*šalmu*/ALAM). Prototypical Mesopotamian images are overall positive figures whose metonymic components as well as background frames are highly aligned. This is the case for figures like kings, priests, warriors, and major deities which often represent fundamental elite institutions and other 'positive' (from an elite perspective) aspects of constructed social life. However, the instances of divine enumerative description in the *Göttertypentext* are non-prototypical images either due to their overall negative or mixed connotations (e.g. Death), or more importantly, the relatively high degree of clash among the components of the image and background frames. They may thus be called contentful and novel images from a cognitive standpoint.



Figure 6.4: Charting concreteness in frame metonyms versus conceptual clash in evoked frames with respect to various examples of divine enumerative description studied in this thesis.

6.4 Summary

In this chapter, we argued that the *Göttertypentext* contains highly non-prototypical instances of divine enumerative description, showing how those descriptions involve a process we called ‘combinatorial creativity.’ Roughly speaking, this is a kind of creativity where the creator generates a complex structure by drawing on a limited number of components and combining them in surprising ways. This is not necessarily a conscious process, and in fact it is unlikely the creator of the *Göttertypentext* or its underlying visual iconography had this creativity explicitly in mind. Instead, we argued that combinatorial creativity emerged from the interaction between the very thematic domain and cognitive devices structuring those images, or more specifically, in the degree of optionality, constrained combination, and contentful novelty in the descriptions of the text.

As in other forms of divine enumerative description studied in this thesis, the poetic modality operative in the *Göttertypentext* reflects certain facts about both general cognitive principles and elite scribal culture of the late second and first millennium. The divine frame complex as the model for divinity and the degree of speculative syncretism it affords remains

prominent as always. But the specifically visual nature of the material underlying the text is very salient. This is evident above all in the fact that the images of the *Göttertypentext* are theriomorphic figures based on highly concrete, body-centered metonyms that facilitate the recognition of specific divine beings. As a matter of general descriptive possibility, there is no fundamental cognitive reason why the images of the *Göttertypentext* must respect this form. Other instances of Mesopotamian visual iconography use more abstract symbols like the Shamash disc or the Pleiades to reference divine figures, or they use cuneiform captions to augment their communicative power.⁵⁶ Visual depictions of human beings in the Neo-Assyrian reliefs often do not assume the ability to recognize specific historical personages like the king based on body-centered detail, even if broader context allows it. The visual images behind the *Göttertypentext*, and the descriptions in the text itself, likely take the form they do because they are meant to represent visually recognizable divine figures largely defined by recondite cultural associations from scribal lore. These images are not meant to be prayed to, given offerings, or praised in the comprehensive way that prototypical divine hymns are meant to facilitate. They are not meant to be presented for a particular ritual, nor is there is any concern with the mental state of any petitioner as in *Ludlul*. Rather, they are meant to be shown doing things or facilitating processes consonant with their diverse background functions. Unlike for ‘simple’ gods like Shamash or Ishtar, it is likely that there simply were not enough distinctive abstract symbols that could adequately identify such heterogeneous beings. Rather, it was necessary to depict a theriomorphic being with distinctive bodily characteristics, often in the midst of a specific action or pose. The result was, whether at the visual or textual level, a form of divine enumerative description centered on highly concrete, physically integral objects that nevertheless rested on the same mainstays of all divine enumerative description, namely frame metonymy and the divine frame complex.

⁵⁶This is not to say that captions could not have accompanied the images underlying the *Göttertypentext*. But the scribe of the text thought they were not necessary for visual recognition.

Conclusion

This thesis has argued that a certain way of talking about Mesopotamian divinity in Akkadian, what we call divine enumerative description, has features making it akin to creative poetry. We began the argument by introducing embodied cognition as our analytical framework (1.1) and conceptual metaphor theory as our main of analytical tool (1.2), arguing that it was methodologically sound to use these in the study of Akkadian alongside other approaches accepted by current Assyriology (1.3). We then sought to unpack the notion of Mesopotamian divinity in the language of frames, arguing that one should conceptualize the gods in terms of bundles of frames we dubbed the divine frame complex (2.1). With this theoretical background established, we illustrated how one could analyze certain typical instances of divine enumerative description from a cognitive viewpoint, appreciating the implicit possibilities for cognitive image generation they afforded (2.2).

Subsequent chapters expanded on this argument, seeking to show in various ways how divine enumerative descriptions was not just an accidental feature of Akkadian divine hymns but actually a vehicle for poetic expression crucially drawing on key features of the elite Akkadian scribal tradition. In chapter 3 we presented the Great Ishtar Hymn as an example of divine enumerative description that modulated the presencing of a divinity in surprisingly subtle ways. Under the competing pressures of maximizing the presence of the divinity and following the structural requirements of a *šūilla*, the Great Ishtar Hymn presents its images in an order that respects a loose balance between convergent versus divergent style (3.2.3). We summarized the poetic output of these competing pressures as an instance of content versus form, where the desire to say certain things about a god partially conflicted with the way the scribe could say it (3.2.4).

In chapter 4 we argued a similar result for *Ludlul* 1, where the scribe sought to metaphorically depict the emotional states of Marduk from an external viewpoint. In this case, the competition between content and form revolved around the Marduk theology and the paradoxical desire to elaborate on a theme ruled out by theological assumptions (namely that the high god cannot be moved in the way emotions actually require).

In chapter 5 we looked at the syncretic Ninurta and Marduk hymns as instances where the scribe made inventive use of certain basic grammatical constructions for speculative theological purposes. Here the copular construction, XYZ construction, and even proper names were the form through which the content of Mesopotamian divinity was filtered in

highly unusual ways allowing the scribe to represent entire conceptual landscapes through the guises of a single high deity.

Finally in chapter 6 we argued that the description of the *Mischwesen* in the *Göttertypentext* could be seen as an unusual form of divine enumerative description. Here, the templatic nature of each creature's description constrained the representational possibilities the scribe could choose from in just the right way. The result was a content/form dynamic in which the elaboration of non-prototypical Mesopotamian images (*šalmu*) competed with the combinatorial possibilities of erudite scribal lore (6.3).

If one accepts the above arguments, it would seem that from a cognitive standpoint that divine enumerative description in Akkadian is an example of 'poetry' or 'literature' not adequately captured by modern western understandings of these terms. Some parts of this idea have long been acknowledged in traditional Assyriology. On the one hand, prototypical divine hymns are regularly included in anthologies or surveys of Akkadian literature without extensive justification.⁵⁷ On the other hand, Assyriologists treating the question of literature have appealed to notions of marked stylism, rich imagery, and semantic creativity as reasonable markers of a text with literary qualities.⁵⁸ One may see in these two facts a recognition that prototypical divine hymns are literary due to their marked style and rich, creative images.

Nevertheless, this thesis has gone beyond such an established view in three ways. First, it has partially separated the notion of text from text structure. Rather than simply asking whether a certain text or passage counts as literary, we aim at a more abstract combination of form and content (divine enumerative description). These two notions do not appear separate as long as one remains within the realm of well attested genres like *šuwilla*'s. But when one begins considering highly non-prototypical examples of divine enumerative description (as in the syncretic hymns or *Göttertypentext*), the analytic value of divine enumerative description becomes clearer as it identifies precisely those properties which, from a cognitive standpoint, make those examples literary. We summarized those properties in terms of a content/form dynamic in which the rhetorical drive for (near) comprehensive elaboration of the divine frame complex competed with the structural condition of externally-viewpointed, paratactic description.

Secondly, our cognitive approach to the issue of 'literariness' yielded both a more technically nuanced understanding of that notion (e.g. convergent versus divergent style, performative blending, combinatorial creativity) and new poetic structures that contribute to it (e.g. divine emotion metaphors, copular constructions, divine names). While older studies of Akkadian poetics have yielded a rich inventory of phonologically and syntactically-based poetic devices, it is in the theoretical value of frames and conceptual metaphors that we have demonstrated a new avenue of exploration. This is because it is not just in the surface linguistic form or salient profile of an image that poetry exists, but also the grammatical

⁵⁷For example, Lenzi 2019, Foster 2005, Röllig 1987, Reiner 1978, and Lambert 1960.

⁵⁸See Foster 2005:45, Wasserman 2003:183, and Groneberg 1996.

structures and blends standing behind them. Frames and conceptual metaphor thus enrich our understanding of the content/form dynamic central to the cognitive approach to literature.

Finally, we have provided a somewhat different perspective on the underlying literary quality to the texts studied in this thesis, one more consonant with cognitive approaches to creativity and even digital humanities. Not only have we, as most Assyriologists involved in the question have done, recognized the importance of marked formalism as a property of Akkadian literature. We argued that a key property of divine enumerative description was how it was a ‘competition’ or ‘optimization’ between content and form. This notion of competition or optimization allows us to appreciate the creative aspects of the Akkadian scribal tradition in a more refined manner than before. Beyond the spectacular examples of creative image generating long recognized in the corpus, more frequent and subdued instances of creativity also become apparent with this perspective. This perspective also offers the possibility of new paths of exploration involving the historical conditions leading to the formation of certain text genres. If we view the scribe as trying to exercise his ability to cite lore or culturally prominent images while working within certain underdeterminative poetic restrictions, we may further appreciate places where creativity is at work in the Akkadian scribal tradition.

Considering that the methodological approach to Akkadian literary studies used within this thesis represents part of a broader movement within literary studies more generally,⁵⁹ we hope to have stimulated more interest within the Assyriological community to cognitive-based research methods as well as suggested new ways of thinking about Akkadian literature.

⁵⁹See Zunshine 2015 and Turner 1998.

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